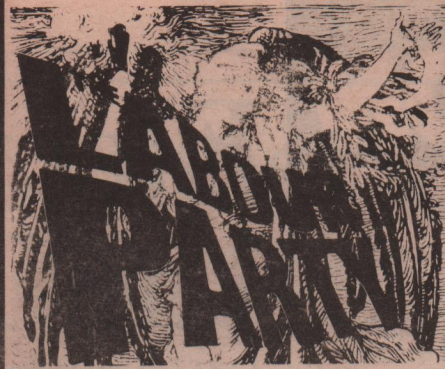


A Socialist ACTION



WOMENS CONFERENCE

SPECIAL ISSUE

LABOUR MUST BAN ALL NUCLEAR POWER

THIS WEEK the Labour leadership has thrown away a rare opportunity — that of taking a step that is clearly in the interests of every single person in Britain and across the world, and which at the same time, would be an enormously popular step electorally. That was to pledge that the next Labour government would put an end to the use of all nuclear power in this country. Instead the Labour shadow cabinet, and almost certainly the national executive, is going to pledge the opposite, that is to *maintain* Britain's deadly nuclear power stations.

Labour Party policy on nuclear power, adopted at last conference, is clear. The resolution, carried by 3.9 million votes, called for: 'a halt to the nuclear power programme and phasing out of all existing plants.' A

number of major trade unions, including the TGWU, NUM, NUPE, FBU, SOGAT and USDAW, helped to ensure that vote was carried with more than a 60 per cent majority.

The Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) have already used the policy as an opportunity to mount an excellent joint campaign with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, geared around Labour's conference policy and aimed at the labour movement. The Labour leadership, too, could have used that same policy as the bedrock of its response to the Chernobyl disaster, explaining that if a Labour government were to be elected to implement such a policy there could be no chance of a repeat accident in this country.

Such a policy is vital to the health and survival of the human race — and it is immediately seen as such by the majority of people in Britain. Furthermore, it is a policy which has clear

job conserving implications.

Every nuclear reactor built displaces 7000 mining-related jobs. Nuclear power is also gobbling up the research funds that could provide jobs in other industries. Research on safe renewable sources of energy, for example, has been cut to £14 million, while nuclear power research is running at almost 20 times that amount, at over £250 million. A grotesque £2400 million was spent on one neutron slow breeder reactor prototype alone.

But instead of seizing this opportunity, the Labour shadow cabinet is moving to overturn the conference policy. When Labour energy spokesperson Stan Orme reiterated that policy in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear power melt-down, environment spokesperson John Cunningham was quick to contradict him. Kinnock immediately jumped in to back up Cunningham. A Labour government, they said, would maintain nuclear power.

On the TV AM programme of 4 May, the Labour Party leader high-handedly announced that Labour would *go ahead* with the nuclear reprocessing plants at Sellafield and Dounreay, and maintain existing nuclear power stations. Last Tuesday the *Guardian* leaked the contents of a proposed statement to parliament and the NEC by Cunningham. It was prepared by a shadow cabinet meeting presided over by Kinnock.

That statement reaffirmed Kinnock's line that Labour would maintain all existing nuclear power stations. All a Labour government would do, according to the statement, is ban pressurised water reactors (PWRs) and call a temporary halt to new nuclear power plants being built. The statement simply calls for a public enquiry on Dounreay and an 'economic reappraisal' on the new Sellafield expansion.

But there *is* an alternative being put forward within the Labour

leadership. Tony Benn and Eric Heffer have presented a paper to the national executive, based on last year's conference resolution. That alternative calls for the decommissioning of *all* nuclear power stations in Britain, an end to reprocessing at Sellafield and the abandonment of the Dounreay development.

Every member of the Labour Party must reject the Kinnock and Cunningham line in favour of Benn and Heffer's alternative. From now the fight is on to win a two-thirds majority for the abolition of nuclear power at the next party conference in the autumn — a majority which will put total opposition to nuclear power into the next Labour manifesto and call a halt to yet another example of the leadership's attempts to undermine conference policy.

Winning that position for Labour is vital to winning the next general election. Even more important, it is vital to the survival of us all.

A Socialist ACTION

Bringing it all together

LAST WEEK'S local government election results showed a strengthening of the position of the Labour Party. But these changes in Labour's fortunes are taking place within the context of big events — such as the reaction to the US bombing of Libya and to the nuclear melt-down at Chernobyl — which are revealing an important clarification within the left wing of the labour movement.

What is happening is that a common agenda is beginning to be hammered out, an agenda that goes beyond the constitutional reforms achieved at the beginning of this decade, and beyond the unity which was created around support for the miners strike of 1984-85.

The key elements of that agenda for the left are already becoming clear. Some of these developments will come together at the Labour Party women's conference this weekend.

The first is the development of the demand for the withdrawal of all US bases from Britain. From being a fringe issue this has now been passed by both the Scottish TUC and ASTMS conferences. With the Campaign Group, Labour CND and others campaigning on this within the party, for the first time the whole issue of the bases is going to be raised at this year's conference with a serious minority supporting it. This is a real step forward for the left.

The second issue, tied to this, is growing hostility to the war drive against Nicaragua and other countries threatened by the United States and massive hostility to British and US collaboration with the apartheid regime in South Africa. The demonstrations against the attack on Libya represented a real step forward for CND. They tied together not simply the threat of nuclear war and the siting of cruise missiles in Britain, but also opposition to Reagan and Thatcher's attacks on semi-colonial countries.

South Africa, of course, always was a big issue in the labour movement. But the last 18 months of struggle in South Africa have raised consciousness and action on this to a quite new level.

The liberation of Britain's oldest and closest colony, Ireland, is also beginning to get a small fraction of the attention it deserves. This year's National Union of Students conference for the first time committed a mass organisation in Britain to British withdrawal from Ireland.

Put these development and others together with the already existing powerful sentiment against nuclear weapons and you get a mighty strengthening of the anti-imperialist consciousness and sentiment amongst important sections of the labour movement.

The other area of advance, also linked to this, is the dramatic rise of women's and black self-organisation and demands within the labour movement.

It is noticeable that Kinnock has so far had no success at all in rolling back this tide and maintaining a bureaucratic grip on these developments. The notorious Black and Asian Advisory Committee — Labour's own version of a bantustan aimed to head off Black Sections — is already in deep trouble and significant votes in favour of black self-organisation in the unions are being racked up at the summer union conference.

It remains to be seen how far a similar exercise aimed to head off women's demands within the party put forward to this year's Labour Party Women's Conference will fare.

Finally, the new element which has been introduced is the massive opposition to nuclear power. This already had a majority at last year's conference. It is likely to get close to the two-thirds majority it needs to go into the manifesto at this year's conference. And once more it is the left which is pushing this forward against the Kinnock leadership.

There are of course no grounds for easy optimism in the party. The witch-hunt is still going on. There is as yet no economic policy which is both a real solution to the crisis and generally accepted on the left — although some gains such as support for a national minimum wage are being made. The leadership of SOGAT is pushing through a severe defeat at Wapping. There is a debacle as regards organising left slates for this year's NEC elections.

But what is clear is that while six months ago the left was very isolated and on the defensive, today it is moving out of that isolation and taking the initiative in a series of key areas. A certain organisational strengthening of the left also reflects that process.

It would be foolish to be over optimistic. But, for the first time in a while, the left is beginning to get its act together.

Electoral disaster for the Tories

LAST THURSDAY'S local government and by-elections were the biggest electoral defeat suffered by the Thatcher government since 1981 — when the 'gang of four' broke from the Labour Party to form the SDP. Opposition to the Thatcher government was shown everywhere. But the SDP/Liberal Alliance continued to play its appointed role of trying to head off a majority Labour government. JOHN ROSS looks at the election results and their political impact.

The single most striking feature of the election results for Labour, and the most important for the future, was the consolidation of its support in the big cities and the driving back there of both the Alliance challenge and the Tory vote. Equally the Alliance smashed into the Tory vote in the rural areas — this being shown particularly dramatically in the two parliamentary by-elections.

Taken overall the Tories lost 705 seats in the local government elections — a disastrous result. Labour gained 484 seats and the Alliance 270. Labour gained control of 17 local councils.

Detail

If the results are looked at in detail they show that the situation in local government is now becoming almost catastrophic for the Conservative Party. The Tories now control only half as many local councils as Labour — 91 for Labour and 46 for the Tories.

Of the 36 Metropolitan districts in England the Tories now only control 1 — Solihull in the West Midlands. In terms of local government the Tories are rapidly becoming a secondary, or even fringe, party.

This process has gone even further in certain areas of the country, where the Tories are already literally a fringe party in local politics. In Scotland the Conservatives received only 16 per cent of the vote — compared to 44 per cent for Labour and 18 per cent for the Scottish National Party (SNP).

In Liverpool the Tories received only 13 per cent of the vote. In the North West of England only a single town, Macclesfield, is controlled by the Tories.

Advance

If Labour advanced strongly in the big cities, however, the Alliance cut drastically into the Tory vote in the suburbs and the rural areas — and here Labour did not advance to the same degree. The most dramatic expression of the Alliance advance of course was in the two Parliamentary by-elections.

In West Derbyshire the Tory vote fell from 56 per cent in the general election to 40 per cent, and they held the seat by less than 100 votes from the Alliance. In Ryedale the Tory vote fell from 59 per cent to 41 per cent, and a 16,000 Tory majority in the general election was turned into an Alliance majority of 5,000.

But the Alliance also advanced strongly in the prosperous suburbs in the

south west of London — Richmond, Kingston, and Sutton. In Richmond the Alliance have reduced the Tories to a rump on the council. Strong Alliance advances also came in Sussex, Hertfordshire, and the West of England.

Target

The Alliance has now gained 652 council seats in the last four years. With the preceding Liberal seats, the Alliance is now nearing its immediate target of 3,000 councillors.

It is difficult to project the local government results into the vote at a general election. Because the English country areas did not vote, the support of the Alliance was understated in the elections last Thursday. But all the differing calculations show roughly the same pattern — Labour with 38 per cent of the vote, the Tories 34 per cent, and the Alliance 26 per cent. Labour would be roughly 10-15 seats short of an overall majority on Thursday's results — despite Kinnock's false claim that a majority Labour government would have been elected on last week's results.

The outcome of these elections therefore leave politics still more clearly on course for a hung parliament after the next general election. This is still more likely as the Alliance has clearly failed in the optimistic goal that it, and sections of the bourgeoisie, set for itself when the SDP was founded — that of smashing the Labour Party and creating a two capitalist party system in Britain.

Peter Riddell, political editor of the *Financial Times*, noted that Thursday's vote: 'contrasts with



Biffin

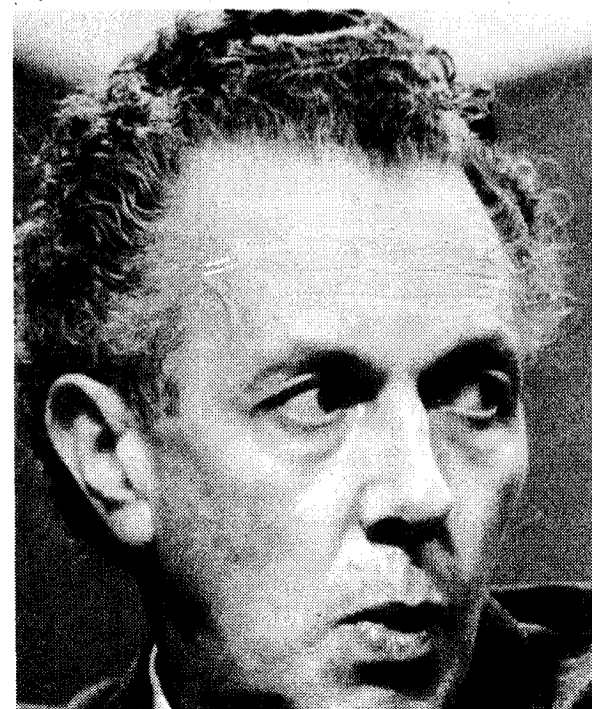
the original SDP hope of challenging Labour in its inner city and industrial heartlands. With rare exceptions like Islington (in North London), this has not happened.

This reality of Labour's strength in the North, Scotland and the big cities was confirmed by the local government results — as well as last month by the Fulham by-election. Of the three councils the Alliance gained, two — Sutton in London and Andover in Sussex — were directly from the Tories. The Alliance gained Tower Hamlets from Labour only because the rotten old guard Labour right ran candidates against the official Labour Party nominees. In general the Alliance has now begun to cut seriously into the Tory vote.

The other key results in the election were, of course, the major victories in Liverpool, Lambeth and Haringey where the left was under direct attack. In Liverpool Labour gained a seat — taking its seats on the council from 53 to 54. Given the unprecedented campaign of vilification carried out from every quarter against Derek Hatton, *Militant* and the Liverpool city council this was an excellent result.

In Haringey, Bernie Grant increased his majority despite a despicable and overt racist campaign by the Tories and local press. In Lambeth, where 31 councillors were disqualified, Labour increased its majority.

The *Financial Times*



Joseph

Gains and losses of seats in local government elections 1983-86

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1983-86
Tories	+128	-131	-55	-705	-763
Labour	+37	+46	-32	+484	+535
Alliance	+110	+143	+129	+270	+652

Source: Calculated from *Financial Times* 10 May 1986.

Party control of local councils in Britain

	Prior to 1986 elections	After 1986 elections	Change
Labour control	74	91	+17
No overall majority	42	53	+11
Conservative control	75	46	-29
Alliance control	3	6	+3

Source: Calculated from *Financial Times* 10 May 1986.

noted ruefully in its editorial after the elections that while voters were distinguishing strongly between Tories and all other candidates: 'the impressive support achieved by Mr Derek Hatton and his fellow *Militants* in Liverpool, and the return of the left wing councillors in Lambeth, will give the advocates of confrontational politics the ammunition they have been seeking.'

The impact of the crisis in education and the year long teachers' strikes was also clear. Labour did even better in the elections for the Inner London Education Authority than it did in the local government elections in the same areas.

The SDP education spokesperson Ms Anne Sofer lost her ILEA seat in Hampstead and Highgate. Bubbles Polyer, leader of the All London Parents Action Group which had backed the teachers in their strikes, won an ILEA seat. Elsie Horsted, one of the surcharged and disqualified Lambeth councillors, was elected to ILEA.

Disaster

The elections were of course universally regarded in the press as a disaster for the Tory Party. But as regards the political implications the *Financial Times* editorial on 10 May after the results noted: 'if the government has in the end got many of the big things right — such as coming to terms with Europe and the conquest of inflation or daring to tackle the Irish question — it has made a lamentable mess of some of the smaller ones. It spent an inordinate amount of parliamentary time on the relatively unimportant business of the abolition of the metropolitan (large scale urban) authorities and the Greater London Council.'

Pressure

'During the Westland affair, which led to the resignation of two cabinet ministers, the government all but ceased to function. It then backed down from its plans to dispose of BL to the Americans because of pressure from its own backbenchers.'

The conclusion of this analysis would of course be to consider the possibility a government which maintained the 'big things' of Thatcherism but

allowed some adjustment of the 'small things'. This is of course the perspective outlined by the SDP and the Alliance.

Given the decline of the Tory votes and the recovery of Labour, there has therefore been increasing discussion in the press recently of the desirability of an Alliance-Labour coalition as an alternative to the Tories after the next election — if Thatcher cannot recover her vote.

The *Economist*, in an editorial entitled 'The un-Tory majority' on 1 March, for example, wrote: 'Labour is not a mass party and never will be again. ... If Mr Kinnock is as keen on power as he says, he should be telling his party that the days of splendid isolation are over.'

Celebration

Peter Kellner, the political editor of the *New Statesman* wrote in the 28 March issue: 'This week, the fifth birthday of the SDP, marks an event of tribal rather than ideological significance. The SDP is celebrating the event. So are some on the Left — "good riddance to the traitors."

'But the only tribe that can take any real comfort is the collection of warriors with the blue face paint: the Conservative Party. As long as their opponents remain divided, they stand some chance of winning the major wars.'

Conclusions

The conclusions from the elections are clear. Labour has a real chance of winning the next election. But the representatives of capital, as well as sections of the labour movement, are increasing the pressure for Labour to be forced into a formal or informal coalition with the Alliance.

The best way for the left to deal with both situations is to go flat out for a Labour victory. The biggest possible vote for Labour in the general election will both deliver the biggest blow to Thatcherism and deprive Kinnock and the Labour right of any pretext for an agreement, or coalition, with the Alliance.

Thursdays results were a devastating blow to the Tories. The fight now is to turn them into an equally great victory for Labour. The major successes gained by the left in Liverpool, Haringey and Lambeth will make that task easier to achieve.

'Atom Jack' Cunningham must go!

EVEN AMONG an unpopular and right wing Labour front bench John Cunningham takes the biscuit. He was the person who single handedly headed the front bench attack on the struggle against rate-capping. Now he is heading the pro-atomic power lobby in the Labour Party — and has been openly defying conference policy to do so.

The policy on nuclear power passed by Labour Party conference last year, for the first time, was crystal clear. It unequivocally called for 'a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants'. That position received over 60 per cent of the vote — only five per cent short of the two thirds majority needed for automatic inclusion in the party's programme.

But Cunningham immediately and openly went out to defy conference policy — using his job as Labour Environment spokesperson to do so. The December 1985 issue of the *British Nuclear Fuels paper, BNFL News* contained the following

statement by Cunningham: 'The Labour Party has supported the development of civil nuclear power for decades. One conference decision won't change this and I don't expect it to be included in the next manifesto.'

In the 18 April issue of *Tribune* Cunningham returned to the attack — replying to that paper's call for the 'phasing out' of nuclear power.

Cunningham strongly argued in support of nuclear power. He said it now supplied 18 per cent of electric power. He stated: 'In Britain alone, the civil nuclear power industry employs directly and indirectly some 150,000 people on 19 major sites all

around the country. It provides about 15 per cent of all engineering apprenticeships. The industry is fully unionised.'

The real reason for Cunningham's particularly vehement personal defence of nuclear power is well known. He is the MP for Sellafield. Cunningham argued in his article the case for nuclear power to 'protect jobs'. He said: 'Take as an example the calls for the closure of Sellafield in my constituency, where 11,000 workers are directly affected, and perhaps as many again indirectly.'

Cunningham's position is a disgrace. First the health of the entire community takes precedence over the alleged threat to the jobs of one constituency — let alone the career of one ambitious right wing Labour MP. What Cunningham should be arguing for is planned

creation of jobs in Sellafield to replace the processing plant.

But in fact clearing up the incredible mess a Sellafield would itself require thousands of workers for many years. With even the smallest bit of planning there is no necessity whatever for a fall in employment even in Cunningham's constituency — although that is not the main point.

The real point is that the nuclear power industry is totally unsafe and a threat to everybody — including Sellafield.

Labour conference policy must be full reaffirmed — and strengthened. Labour must be committed to the elimination of all nuclear power during the lifetime of one parliament. And a first step to restoring any credibility of the Labour party on this question is the dismissal of 'atom Jack' Cunningham from his position on the Labour front bench.



John Cunningham

A Chernobyl in Britain?

THE GOVERNMENT in now mobilising all its propaganda to convince people that British nuclear power is safe, that a Chernobyl could never happen here. Linked to that the government is playing down the reality of Chernobyl itself. **PAUL ATKIN** looks at the real impact of Chernobyl and why it could, and probably will, happen here.

LORD Marshall of the CEBG remarked that Chernobyl's effect on health would be no worse than smoking an extra two cigarettes a year. Peter Walker, Minister for Energy, hastened to reassure us that there is three hundred and seventy times more radiation in bricks and stones than from nuclear power stations. These statements from the men in charge of Britain's energy programme are almost on a par with Reagan's famous 'most pollution comes from trees' for complacent and wilful disregard for the facts.

USSR

The immediate impact of Chernobyl on the USSR is deadly. Two people killed outright, one hundred rushed to emergency treatment in Moscow, six more already dead, eighteen in a serious condition. It is estimated that ten to one hundred people will die in the next few weeks, with between one thousand and ten thousand extra cancer cases in the next ten years. Beyond the USSR, Swedish scientists estimate an extra 80-8,000 cancers in Western Europe over the next 40 years.

These initial figures are also an underestimate. They are based on the levels of radioactivity measured in Sweden — hundreds of miles from Chernobyl. They assume immediate evacuation of the area around the plant. It is now clear that the 30,000 people of Chernobyl itself were not moved out until a week after the explosion. Over 50,000 people have had to be moved from the immediate area of the plant. 250,000 kids have

been moved out of Kiev, 60 miles away.

The land surrounding the plant up to 100 kilometers away is reckoned to be contaminated for decades. To bring it back into radiation free production would require the removal of the top four inches of soil. Land up to 600 kilometers away will be dangerous for a year.

Prices

An immediate knock on effect has been a sharp rise in grain prices on world stock markets as Ukrainian supplies are put in doubt. Although most of the radioactive material released has been Iodine 131, which disperses relatively quickly, Caesium has a half life of 30 years and binds with bitumen and other building materials.

The impact of the disaster has continued to spread outside the Soviet Union. Poland registered 500 times normal levels of radiation — 10 million children were fed Iodine tablets to try to avert thyroid cancer.

Levels

In Britain and France, radiation levels ten times normal were registered. Otto Huber, of the Swiss radioactivity monitoring Commission expressed surprise at such high levels radioactivity from just one accident such a long way away.

Yevgeny Velikov, writing in last Friday's *Pravda* stated: 'we are facing problems no one has seen before.'

The phrase 'no one expected it' should go down as the nuclear industry's epitaph for Chernobyl. Accidents like this are simply, not supposed to

happen. The industry 'calculates' the odds against it as one accident every 10,000 years of reactor life. But Chernobyl survived for just ten years, not 10,000.

Accidents of the type that finally culminated in Chernobyl are in fact not unusual. In 1967 a near melt down at the Enrico Fermi I plant in the US led one of the nuclear engineers to make the famous remark, 'We nearly lost Detroit'. Between 1969 and 1979 there were no less than 169 accidents that could have led to melt down in the Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR) stations in the USA. Ed Smit, a reactor designer and engineer, said last week that he expected accidents like Chernobyl to take place every five years.

Fire

In Britain, there have been 300 nuclear 'incidents' that we know of at Windscale/Sellafield alone since 1950. The 1957 Windscale reactor fire led to 30 deaths amongst 260 extra cancer cases.

There is no reason whatever to believe 'British' nuclear technology is any safer than 'Russian'. Peter Walker tried to reassure everyone that even if there was an explosion and fire at a British nuclear power plant, all would be well because they are all surrounded by a big concrete box. But even at that level he forgot the 26 Magnox reactors that don't have containment vessels.

Threat

The Hartlepool reactor, for instance, has no containment vessel, despite the stated view of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate that it is vulnerable to fire from the nearby Petro chemical plant.

The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate estimates that the greater population density in Britain would

mean a casualty rate form a serious nuclear accident at ten times the rate for the USA. Peter Taylor, of the Political Ecology Research group, estimates that a Chernobyl type disaster in Britain would lead to between 10,000 and 100,000 deaths.

Nor is there any reason to believe that evacuation and safety measures would proceed significantly more smoothly in Britain than in the Soviet Union. Despite protestations of openness from Peter Walker, and suggestions that we should all take day trips to Sellafield, how long would it take for a major disaster to melt through the concrete foundations of the industry's secrecy? What stage would a disaster have to reach before fear for public safety outweighed the combination of confidence in their ability to cope, and fear for the future of their industry, that must coexist in every nuclear technicians head? Just imagine a Chernobyl at Hartlepool, or at the reactors near Bristol. How quickly would it be possible to evacuate the populations of those cities? What would the human and economic costs be?

Effect

All this is simply to look at what is known, so far, of the effects of a catastrophic accident in the nuclear industry. The day to day running problems of this 'safe, clean form of energy', as Peter Walker puts it, are no more reassuring.

On 24 January this year, the Sellafield re-processing plant dumped half a ton of uranium in the Irish Sea. The inability to safely dispose of waste is well known. The effect on Nuclear Power workers health is becoming known — for instance, the British Medical Journal revealed last year that UK Atomic Energy Authority employees have a death rate from prostate cancer that is eight times the national

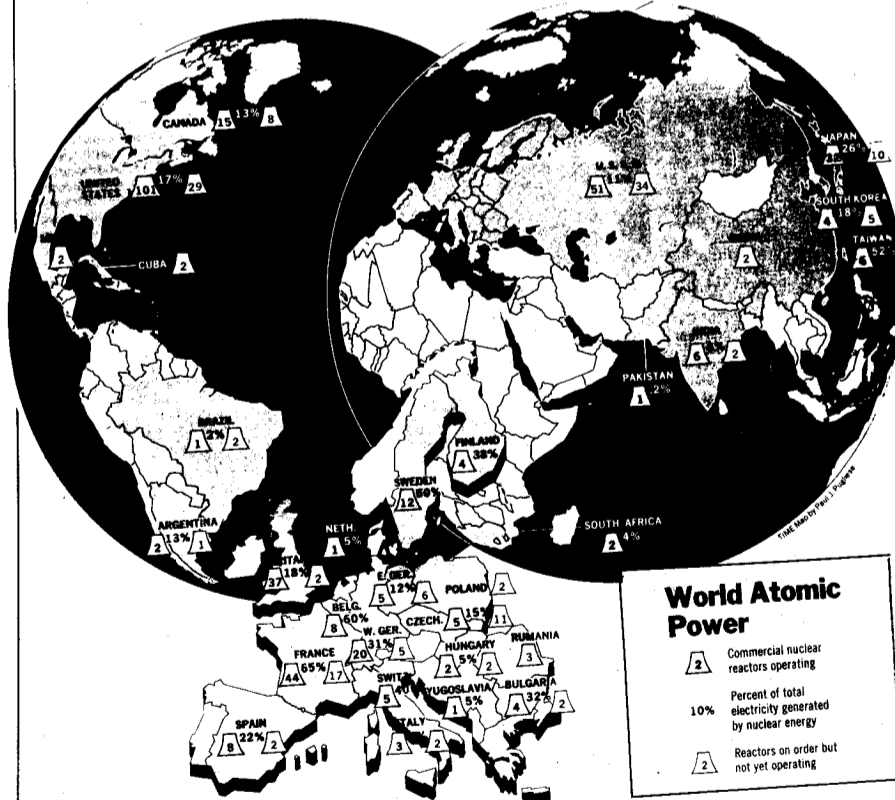
average.

The best way to assess the effect of Chernobyl on radiation levels across the whole country is that it

brought them up to just below the 'normal' levels of background radiation at Sellafield and that part of the Irish sea close to the

plant. Don't scream *Organise!* ● See — 'The deadly dust' p10.

Atomic power around the world



World Atomic Power

- Commercial nuclear reactors operating
- 10% Percent of total electricity generated by nuclear energy
- Reactors on order but not yet operating

THERE are 350 nuclear power plants in 38 countries:—

France: 47 plants built, 20 under construction. 65 per cent of electricity supplied from nuclear power. Commitment to nuclear power is such that at the high point of Chernobyl radioactivity across France no figures were being released to the public.

USSR: Up to Chernobyl, the current five year plan

envisaged doubling nuclear power capacity.

USA: No nuclear power stations built since the Three Mile Island accident in 1978. Wall Street is said to be sceptical of the economics of large scale nuclear power.

Denmark/Portugal: No nuclear capacity, no plans to develop any.

Sweden: Plans to phase out all nuclear power over 25 years. Positive

research into alternative energy sources.

Holland: Following the Swedish example as a result of Chernobyl.

Britain: 37 nuclear plants. Government plans to build one or two new ones every year as soon as Sizewell inquiry has reported. Government is very anxious not to allow Sir Frank Layfield, who is drafting the report, to take Chernobyl into account.

Conference Against the Witch hunt

**Saturday 21 June
Regents College
Inner Circle, Regents Park, London**

Comrade

We invite you and/or your organisation to sponsor a national conference against the witch hunt which is developing within the Labour Party.

The conference has been initiated by Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP, Hackney South & Shoreditch CLP and Vauxhall CLP. It is proposed to hold the conference on the 21st June in London, with delegates and observers from CLPs and affiliated organisations.

The political basis is provided by the following abbreviated resolution which was proposed to the Labour Party National Executive Committee by MPs Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Jo Richardson and Joan Maynard:-

'This conference is against the expulsions of any members because they read and support the views of journals of the left or right, within the Party.

'Within the labour movement, and reflected in the Labour Party, there have long been groups of different kinds, standing for certain political positions and views, who are organised, sometimes with paid staff, at varying levels.

'The Party, in our view, should not return to the days of proscribed lists and intolerance, but should accept the demand for diversification, groups, tendencies, strands of opinion, journals, newspapers of one kind or another, with widely differing views, are bound to exist.

'Our main test today is to work for the election of a Labour Government at the next General Election. To do that we are convinced that internal attacks on each other, leading to disciplinary action, can only help our political enemies, who are backed by an anti-labour press which is geared to do all in its power to stop Labour getting back into government.

'We ask all Party members to stop any witch hunts to get rid of the witch hunting atmosphere that is beginning to develop in the Party, and to concentrate on defeating Thatcher and her government at the next election.'

Along with your sponsorship we are asking for a donation of £10 towards the expenses of conference. We would also ask for any assistance you can give in publicising this event in the labour movement.

The conference is being organised through planning meetings open to those sponsoring it.



For news of the campaign read 'Witch Hunt News', available from 36 Melbourne Rd, London E17. Make cheques payable to 'Witch Hunt News' 20p per copy including postage, £1 for 10 copies including postage.

Socialist greetings
Toni Gorton on behalf of Hackney North CLP

Please return to HN & SN CLP c/o Toni Gorton
I/We wish to sponsor the conference against the witch hunt to be held in London in June.

Street

Town

..... Postal Code

I/We wish to be informed of all planning meetings

Name

Street

Town & Postal Code

Telephone

**Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency Labour Party
Party Offices: 96a Stoke Newington High Street, London N16**



THE LABOUR Party Black Section has mounted a major campaign against the 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee' established by the party leadership following last year's conference. The Black Section is calling for a boycott by all party organisations and members of this committee.

The boycott campaign has been gaining increasing support. Trudi de Hainey, one of the representatives from the East Midlands, has already withdrawn from the committee. Keith Vaz, the other representative from the East Midlands, has announced his resignation from it. A resolution is going to London Regional Executive to end all relations with this committee.

Socialist Action asked **MARC WADSWORTH, national chairperson of the Labour Party Black Section, to outline the Black Section's position on the 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee'.**

THE Black Section has taken a view on the 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee' both through local Black Sections and through its National Committee and Conference. There is no other decision which has been as thoroughly debated and decided upon as this.

After 1985 party conference we were asked what our position would be on

the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. We said we reserve judgement, because it wouldn't be right for us to give a position without thoroughly consulting the membership on something which was a clear concession — whether it be a good concession or a bad concession — from the party brought about by the Black Section struggle. For

us to have taken a precipitous decision on how we should relate to it would have been totally wrong. We had to consult the full membership and analyse precisely what it was all about.

We discovered that it is a body set up much like that which happened in the colonies with 'governor generals' advisory committees', or the Viceroy's advisory committee. Appointees were put onto a committee. They were not elected by black people. They are not accountable to anyone else except the party's white bosses.

Once we saw this, we discussed it all the way through the black section movement. The view we came to was that we should oppose this committee because it's committed to a destruction of our campaign and the gains that have been made.

It's a top down solution. It's not accountable,

it's not democratic. On that basis, not on the basis of sour grapes, but on the basis of its very fundamentally flawed structure, this committee cannot be justified.

Its structure explains the sort of people on it — Gwyneth Dunwoody, Roy Hattersley. How can you support people who have records which are far from anti-racist being on a committee talking about race — as well as their supporting this undemocratic structure?

We also see that the title 'Black and Asian' is divisive, when black section has clearly united Afro-Caribbean and Asian. Here instead you have a committee committed to separating 'Black' and 'Asian'.

Our Asian members, particularly were the most forceful in identifying this. Paul Sharma from Ladywood moved an amendment, Madav Patil from Southhall spoke pas-

sionately about the committee being divisive at our annual conference.

So for these reasons we're implacably opposed to the Advisory Committee. It is no substitute for a thorough going network of Black Section — representation at all levels of the movement, having its own structure the same as other sections of the movement with an annual conference, and bringing pressure to bear on the NEC for places elected by our conference.

This committee will whither away like all the advisory committees that have existed in the past on race — precisely because they were cynical black vote gathering committees comprising stooge grace and favour appointments. They had absolutely no commitment to fighting for anti-racist socialist policies and were not accountable to black people — that's why they keeled over and died.

Growing opposition to 'Bantustan Committee'

Keep up support for black sections

RESOLUTIONS FOR the annual Labour Party conference have to reach Walworth Road by 7 July. I'm always surprised when the date dawns. I was at the last conference only a few months ago, now here we go for next year's bash.

The Black Section has spent much of its time over the last six months or so fighting Amir Khan's expulsion, the scab 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee' and defending the Black Caucus and Black Community against *Militant* in Liverpool.

I understand that Walworth Road is knee deep in resolutions from constituency parties and trade union branches demanding Amir's reinstatement.

The Black Section had decided to concentrate our fight at conference on two fronts. The divisive 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee' must be killed. The district party in Liverpool must be educated about the particular problems of the black community in the city.

The Black and Asian Advisory Committee is the NEC's answer to demands for a fully constituted Black Section. The whole concept of this committee, that Black people are capable of advising on policy matters but not ready to participate in policy formation, is patronising and insulting.

The other major battleground in the struggle for Black Sections has been Liverpool. Whilst opposing the purge against *Militant* in Liverpool by Labour's leadership we are still amazed by *Militant's* support for the hard right's fight against the Black Sections. We see our task as educating the Liverpool party about the particular problems of our community in Liverpool.

The fight for Black Sections has now been going on for four years. For the last three years the regional Labour Party conferences and the national conference have received many resolutions in favour of Black Sections. This has allowed the campaigners to accelerate

the struggle. Many gains have been won. Ten Black parliamentary candidates, six

By Paul Sharma, National Committee, Labour Party Black Section

of whom are in safe Labour seats have been selected — including Diane Abbott, the first Black woman chosen for a safe seat.

There has been a 10 per cent increase in the number of Black local councillors.

The first Asian major, Mr Ajeeb, was elected in Bradford.

The largest and most powerful trade union in the country, the TGWU, appointed a supporter of black caucuses, Bill Morris, as its number two — although it must be said that he does not as yet support constitutional change to recognise Black Sections. Deputy general secretary Morris becomes the first Black person to hold a trade union post of such seniority.

On the policy front Black Sections have made major contributions on Azania — the name Black freedom fighters give to their home, South Africa. We asked why the Labour leadership thought simple rhetoric condemning apartheid was enough. The trade union movement could force an end to trade with the apartheid regime. The National Union of Seamen could boycott all ships ferrying goods to and from Azania. We demanded

that rhetoric was put into action.

The Black Sections campaign has received backing from nearly all the groups on the left of the party — Labour Coordinating Committee, Socialist Action, *Labour Briefing*, CLPD, Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and others.

However, my fear is that 'white liberals' may now be getting bored with Black Sections. Many will be suffering from support fatigue. To these comrades, whose support has been vital in the past, I say stick with us. Stick with us until we win. White comrades may have got bored — they may be waiting for fashions to change. Black people have no choice. We have got to continue the struggle for equality. At this moment in time the measure of equality in the Labour Party is judged by the success of Black sections.

I have no hesitation in demanding unwavering support from all comrades, Black and White.

Please circulate the resolutions the Black Section is putting forward in your constituency and attempt to get as much support as possible.



Black Sections model resolutions

THE LABOUR Party Black Section has adopted the following model resolutions for presentation to this year's party conference.

1. This Conference welcomes the increased representation of Black people at all levels within the Labour Party over the last year. Conference believes that this progress has been greatest in constituencies with Black Sections.

Despite this Black people are still under-represented at every level of the Party.

Conference notes with regret the failure of the 'Black & Asian Advisory Committee', recommended by the National Executive Committee and established by Conference last year.

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to implement the recommendation of its own Working Party which reported strongly in favour of establishing Black Sections at every level of the Party on the same lines as the Women's Sections and Youth Sections.

2. Conference notes the failure of the Liverpool District Labour Party, and the Liverpool City Council, to resolve its dispute with the black community over the issue of positive action against racism.

The black community have been settled in Liverpool for many centuries. Despite this, black citizens not only face racism but also suffer the brunt of mass unemployment and poor housing. Conference urges the Labour Party to help eradicate this racism which is inherent in British society.

Conference calls upon Labour Party members in Liverpool to accept the right of black people to organise in Black Sections and to send Black Section delegates to Constituency General Committees and also to the District Party when re-established.

The Labour Party Black Section urges Constituency Parties and trade unions to adopt one of the above resolutions as their Conference Resolution for Annual Conference 86.

Please vary the wording slightly of the resolution you adopt, as resolutions received by the Conference Arrangements Committee with the same wording from a number of different constituencies still only count as one resolution. A small change in wording by your CLP/Trade Union will ensure your resolution is counted in its own right.

For further information contact Labour Party Black Section Secretary Narendra Makanji, 01-889 7734.



WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The shadow elections

THE SHADOW elections for women's places on the Labour Party national executive committee are probably the most important aspect of this year's national Labour women's conference. WAC is concentrating on having the five women's places on the party national executive elected by women. We are asking no more than what already happens with other sections of the NEC.

By **Anni Marjoram**,
WAC Secretary

At women's conference in Rothsay on the Isle of Bute, Labour Party women will be showing that they simply won't take 'no' for an answer — from the NEC, the party leadership, annual conference, or anybody else.

These shadow elections have been organised by the National Labour Women's Committee (NLWC) in the face of fierce opposition

from Walworth Road. That committee deserves our thanks for the work they've done.

WAC is also concentrating this year on the demand that policy advances — researched by the women's rights study group and pioneered by local authority women's committees — are included in the party's manifesto for the next general election. We want a programme for women writ-

ten into that document and a campaign built around women as part of the general election campaign of the party.

This is what some of the WAC resolutions to women's conference instruct the NEC to do. But real policy advances can't be made *and held* unless women have status and power within the party.

We saw a recent example of what can happen to party policy after the Chernobyl nuclear power plant melt-down. Last year party conference clearly opposed nuclear power. But you'd never recognise that strong position of conference in the tortuous statements from the Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, or the shadow

environment spokesperson John Cunningham.

We've got to keep fighting, and that is why the shadow elections are so important. In various Labour Party regions, including my own South West, women are now elected to the regional executive committee from regional women's conference. That is a definite gain. It is that which we will be taking forward to annual conference.

I believe that the women who are going to be elected in the shadow elections at national women's conference will be the ones who have a record of working for women and who will be accountable to women. That's how it should be. Women directly electing women to the NEC will be a gain for the party as a whole. It will be a gain in terms of policy — because women's conference has consistently shown itself to be more radical and more in touch with what party policy should be on all important questions. And it will be a gain in terms of party democracy.

There are distinct signs that the democracy gains of the party are under threat. Making women accountable to women would be a great blow to that.



Photo: JEREMY NICHOLL

WAC's slate for the shadow elections

TWENTY-THREE women have been nominated for the five places in the shadow elections to the NEC women's places which will take place at national Labour women's conference. The Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC) is supporting: Diane Abbott, Joan Maynard, Mandy Moore, Frances Morrell, and Clare Short.

Sex, race and class

THE LATEST issue of *New Socialist* carries an extract of a debate on feminism and class politics which will appear in full in the summer issue of *Feminist Review*. In it **Bea Campbell** argues that: 'The defeat of feminist objectives within the working class movement has produced conservatism in the form of economism, chauvinism and managerialism of both right and left.' **DIANE ABBOTT** discussed the question of sex, race and class with **CAROL TURNER**, taking issue with Campbell line.

AS far as I'm concerned the relationship between feminism and class politics is very close. As a socialist I'm concerned with the politics which advances the interests of the *mass* of women, and that's obviously working class women.

There's a danger of assuming that if you take a position that's correct as a feminist position it must be obviously correct from a working class position as well. Feminists need to be careful to look at the way feminism and class politics interact. The same is true of racial politics.

To illustrate: in Hackney North Labour Party there were three deselections of black candidates for the local elections. Two appealed successfully. The ground was partially that of sexual harassment.

Try as I would, I could not get the party to realise that there was something odd about a purge on sexual harassment which only got black men in its net and white men went unscathed. They couldn't see that because all sexual harassment is wrong it isn't necessarily right for white women to go after just black men. If it applies to black men it should apply to white men.

When similar charges were brought against a white councillor he got off — because white women at the local government committee defended him. It's not that I support those black men or say they are right to sexually harass, but I suspect the reason that the LGC is willing to bring those charges and make them stick is *because* they're black.

That is a classic case. All Labour women were thinking of was sexual politics, without looking at wider issues of class or racial politics.

We all learned a lot from Bea Campbell, but part of the problem with her position is that she exaggerates the gains that

feminism made in the '70s, which is why she talks of defeat now. Her argu-



Photo: ANDREAS NICOLA

Diane Abbott

ments are distorted by her involvement in events inside the Communist Party. She is reading events in the Labour Party to prove points in her own party.

She says, for instance, that the defeat of feminism has produced conservatism, economism, chauvinism, and managerialism. That's clearly not the case. These characteristics of the working class movement have their roots in imperialism. The British working class movement is, classically, conservative and chauvinistic — and that has to do with Britain's history of imperialism. The thing about the British tradition is that it is pre-Marxist. There are all sorts of traditions in the British labour movement which are non-class conscious, that are actually quite elitist.

As much as anything else the British labour movement has its origins in the notion of guildism, or organising skilled craftsmen as opposed to the rest. It is that concentration on the skilled elite in the working class which generates conservatism, chauvinism, 'economism and managerialism today.

I think feminism has made progress within the trade unions — not as much as we would like — but there is certainly no

kind of inevitable victory. There's got to be structural changes.

Bea Campbell says that: 'There are possibilities in the reconstruction of the Labour leadership that make it better than anything we have seen in our lifetime anyway.' She says that the last conference showed that the 'non-Trotskyist left has allowed itself to be hijacked' with disastrous results. Bea often talks about the GLC as if Ken Livingstone single-handedly generated the changes in the GLC and transformed County Hall. The thing that is very naughty is that she tends to separate off Ken Livingstone from the Trotskyist left which she regards as bad. What she doesn't understand is that the people who worked to take the GLC for the left in '82 were the very people she castigates.

I have a great deal of respect for Bea. She is one of the most creative and perceptive thinkers about feminism that we have on the left.

But just as it was a mistake to imagine that gender and race are entirely reducible to class, in other words that women and black people 'had to wait until after the revolution' it is also a mistake to completely separate off the feminist project and black people's aspirations from any notion of class politics. Everybody would be weakened by this.

In practice women and black people have proved the highly radicalising and class conscious forces within the labour movement. We only have to look at the policies of the women's conference on Ireland for instance, or the position that the black section has taken on issues such as South Africa and Libya to see that.

The only people who have anything to gain by effecting a theoretical splitting off of feminist aspirations and black aspirations from working class aspirations are the enemies of the working class — black and white, male and female. I believe very strongly in consciousness raising and the right of black people and women to organise autonomously, but ultimately we are talking about one struggle.

Women and Wapping

FIFTY per cent of the SOGAT joint chapels are women. They have come forward and played a strong role on the Wapping picket line and also in the operations room at Caxton House.

By **Carol Hall**, Deputy Mother of Chapel
The Times

The strike has made women more aware. Many have said to me: 'I didn't realise what it was like until I saw it with my own eyes.'

It isn't quite the same as the NUM because there are women in the membership of the union itself and they work through the unions structures. But what we find is that since

the miners' strike and the role women played, we are treated differently. For example, most of the requests for speakers are for women.

Tory legislation has annihilated this dispute. Anything you do is illegal. Those laws must be repealed.

Murdoch can do whatever he wants with the full strength of the government behind him, and the police can do what they did a few Saturday nights ago and get away scot-free. It should be illegal to sack 5,500 people.

Saturday 3 May, when the police launched a violent and unprovoked attack, was deliberate intimidation. They have been developing these tactics for 14 weeks. The police are doing it to frighten people away from

Wapping, to show they are in control.

They want to drive us on our knees to a settlement. But we are not after compensation — there is no compensation for being driven out of a job, nor can you build a labour movement newspaper out of a defeat for the labour movement.

Our chapel unanimously passed a motion opposing what Murdoch is now offering. It isn't what we came out for. We want our jobs back.

I feel the dispute should be escalated. While we are being attacked by these thugs, our fellow workers are printing other Fleet Street papers full of lies about what is happening. They should come out with us — and the wide labour movement should support us.



WOMENS CONFERENCE

NEW SOCIALIST is hosting a debate at Labour Women's Conference on the issue of 'sex versus class'. It follows up a round-table discussion between Bea Campbell, Michele Barratt, Angela Weir, Elizabeth Wilson and Anne Phillips which appears in the current issue of the magazine.

Bea Campbell's comments in *New Socialist* rather graphically reveal that her concern is not women's liberation. Scargill and the miners strike are attacked as one of the best examples of 'conservative class consciousness', and the chief enemy to be fought — despite the fact that the NUM supports the demands of both WAC and the Black Section. Neil Kinnock on the other hand Campbell describes as 'better than anything we have seen in our lifetimes' — despite the fact that he supports neither the demands of women or of black people.

JUDE WOODWARD looks at the real issues which confront this year's Women's Conference — and at Kinnock's attempt to limit the advance of women within the party.

THE RELATIONSHIP of women to society has gone through a veritable revolution since World War II, with the massive entry of women into the workforce. The number of married women in paid work has doubled since 1945, and for the first time the majority of women aged between 16 and 60 are in paid work. If we add into this the number of women seeking paid work, but currently unemployed, 66 per cent of women of working age in or seeking paid work — and these official figures understate the situation.

In the period of the 'post-war boom', capital had to expand the workforce in order to take advantage of a favourable economic situation. However with the overwhelming majority of white men already in employment, British capitalism had to open up paid work to whole new sectors of society. It met the demand for an expanded workforce by bringing women into paid work, and by organising the immigration of black workers from the old imperial colonies, especially the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The change in the composition of the working class that resulted is remarkable. Alongside the increase in the number of women workers, the black population rose from 75,000 to over 2 million between 1945 and 1983.

It is these structural changes in the composition of the working class that are impelling the movements of women and black people inside the labour movement — and which have found their most organised political expression inside the Labour Party in the Labour Women's Action Committee and the Black Section. These movements are driven forward by fun-



damental and irreversible forces in society that they cannot be ignored or brushed aside. Kinnock has to combine suppression of democracy with cosmetic, or even some real limited concessions to attempt to maintain the bureaucratic grip on the party.

It is fundamental to the success of the Kinnock leadership's project in the Labour Party that it finds some means of incorporating, accommodating and dividing the women's and black movements in the party. A whole series of initiatives taken over the last period of time are testimony to this.

The establishment of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee is a clear attempt to destroy the black section by replacing the self-organisation of black people with a series of appointees of the party leadership. The appointment of Bill Morris as the first black deputy general secretary of the TGWU was a similar response to make a partial concession while resisting the self-organisation of black people as a whole.

There are also a series of initiatives aimed specifically at derailing women's struggle for democracy. The decision by the LCC, undoubtedly with Kinnock's backing, to adopt Kinnockite

Joan Ruddock into their slate for the NEC is aimed at drawing a substantial element among women in the party behind their project of removing Benn Skinner or Heffer — some of the representatives of the left — from the NEC this year.

At women's conference this year we see an important intervention by NUPE with a resolution that proposes to install a bloc vote of the trade union bureaucracy at women's conference, to destroy that conference's real independence. The resolution dresses this proposal up with calls for other constitutional reforms presented as aiming to build the women's conference. Similar proposals for increasing trade union bureaucratic control of the youth section came forward in relation to the LPYS at the Scottish Labour Party conference last year.

In the case of women's organisation the aim is to destroy the independence of the most radical conference of the Labour Party. By these means the trade union bureaucracy would seek to have not only total control over annual party conference, but also over the youth conference and the women's conference.

The establishment of the Black and

Asian Advisory Committee is simply a different means to achieve the same end in relation to black people. Here we have the absurdity of a committee, headed by Roy Hattersley and Gwyneth Dunwoody, and composed exclusively of appointees, claiming to be more representative of black people than the Black Sections which black people themselves have set up.

All these manoeuvres by Kinnock testify that the development of the women's, and black movements in the party are based on such fundamental forces in British society that they will simply go on driving forward unless they can be diverted, divided, or bought off. They cannot simply be repressed.

The impact of the massive social changes since World War II is not confined to the labour movement itself. From the outset the SDP/Liberal Alliance had a conscious policy of appealing to the 'new' women voters. They understood that the image of women as mothers, carers and shoppers no longer sufficiently corresponded to the lives of a majority of women. Less than one in eight women now corresponds to the classical stereotype of a woman of working age who solely stays

W and Ki

at home looking after the house and children. Women are also workers, students and professionals, so the Alliance promoted women like Shirley Williams, Polly Toynbee and so on — the new 'feminist' professionals.

Even the Tories have been forced to understand that if they want to retain any substantial basis of support among women they have to break out of the Tory lady, jumble sale, tea and sandwiches image. The recent launch of the 'High Flyers' club, unofficially linked to the Tory Party, is evidence of this. 'High Flyers' promotes the 100 or so richest and most successful business and professional women, attempting to build up a new constituency of support among women on the basis that women can make it through the system.

All parties are being forced to shift in response to the huge advances made by women. The aim of Kinnock is to try to keep these changes to a minimum.

The movement of the Labour Women's Action Committee, and the responses to it, have to be understood in this overall context. The Labour Party as it was founded at the turn of the century by non-socialist trade unions, and with the constitution it adopted in 1918, failed to take up the key demands of women. Despite the massive struggle of women for the vote, the labour movement was not up to taking on board this demand, or of incorporating the concept of an independent, self-organised women's movement into its constitution. Nor was it up to understanding the need to support Irish independence, or the overthrow of British colonial and imperial rule world wide. Labour was an imperialist party, the trade unions were still massively influenced by the most white male, skilled and relatively privileged, sections of the working class. Women were scarcely unionised at all.

The labour movement of the turn of the century, when the modern Labour Party constitution was created, consisted of a combination of the craft unions — the old skilled male working class — and the new mass unions, composed of unskilled male manual workers. The craft unions had not even created an independent working class party. Whereas most other European countries had mass Socialist Parties by the end of the 19th century, in Britain the craft unions had supported the Liberals.

The development of the mass unskilled unions, and the foundation of the Labour Party, constituted an enormous leap forward in the power and consciousness of the British working class. But it was still not a sufficient leap forward to bring the labour movement up to the level of challenging the British imperialist ruling class — which was oppressing and exploiting half the world, bleeding Ireland, establishing the rule of racism in South Africa, exploiting women's labour in the home, and denying women all political rights. None of these policies of British imperialism was systematically challenged by the labour movement and the Labour Party. On the contrary Labour participated in this imperialist system of rule.

The changes in the composition of

WOMEN



Kinnock's "new model" Labour Party

the British working class which are impelling forward the movements of women and black people, are however today accompanied by the decline and rotting of British imperialism. Black people, coming in large part from countries which have seen at first hand the havoc wreaked by British colonial exploitation, never did think that their interests might be best served by backing up and supporting British imperialism. It is clear from the policy adopted by successive Labour Women's Conferences on Ireland, on nuclear weapons, on the Malvinas War, that women too are in the vanguard of understanding that their interests do not lie in bolstering British imperialism, and its policies.

But unfortunately the overwhelming majority of the forces of the labour movement still collude and combine



with the British ruling class in supporting its aggressive imperialist policy abroad, and the superexploitation of women and black people at home. Labour's consciousness has been that the more profits that British capital can make abroad, then the higher workers wages can be at home. And if it is best for profits for women to be kept at home, or on lower wages, then that's where they should be also. Oppression of women and black people was powerfully reinforced by British imperialism. Until after World War II the labour movement could largely get away with that policy. The working class itself was largely white, and male. But the changes since World War II are putting an end to all this. Women are not conveniently at home minding the kids, they are in the unions and in the labour movement. Black people are not somewhere else, on the other side of the world, but here, in the trade unions and in the labour movement. And British imperialism is not delivering the goods anyway.

The Labour Party and the labour movement as they were established at the turn of the century, both politically and organisationally, are totally out of date and out of line with the needs of reality. The self-serving 'I'm all right Jack' policy of a British white male labour movement, which was built into the very foundation of the labour movement has got to go. This is what LWAC and the Black Section are about.

LWAC and the Black Section will find that their allies are among every other section of the working class that has an interest in overthrowing this backward, chauvinistic, pro-imperialist

policy of the labour movement. Women and black people, for example, have interests in common with those fighting to win the labour movement to fight against British imperialism's role in Ireland.

There will be allies among these sections of the working class that are getting pushed to the bottom of the heap by Thatcher's policies — and the collusion of the labour movement leadership with them. That's why women and black people find that they have allies among the miners. This appears apparently contradictory with the fact that the NUM, as a union, is both exceedingly white and exceedingly male. But the attempt by Thatcher to smash up the mining communities by closing pits, and the spectacle of the inactivity of the majority of the trade union and Labour Party leaders faced with that,

drove the NUM into a collision course not just with the ruling class, but with the whole status quo in the labour movement.

Scargill discovered that the real allies of the miners were the women in Women Against Pit Closures and across the country, black people and the black communities, and the working class internationally. A labour movement that has women and black people at its vanguard, and which stands with these fighting against British imperialism, would give a thousand times more support to the NUM than it received from Willis and Kinnock. This is the reason why the NUM supports the demands of LWAC and the black section.

The NUM is simply the first to learn this lesson. Even sections of the 'aristocracy of labour', on the picket lines at Wapping, have found that when you are being forced to your knees it's women, black people, and the most oppressed and exploited, who are there to help you fight back — and this despite the fact the policies of the print unions on both women and black people have been among the worst in the entire labour movement.

In fact it is the prospect of just such an alliance developing between women and other militant sections of the labour movement that is putting the leaders of the TUC and the Labour Party into a lather about what to do. Because what is at stake in that is not just that space is made for a few women at the top, but involves a change in the whole character of the labour move-

ment that would leave the existing bureaucracy behind. The key goal and project of the Kinnock leadership is precisely to prevent such an alliance developing and driving its way through the labour movement.

The combined force of women and black people would be bad enough for the present set up. But add in the miners, and the Irish people, and populations of Liverpool and Lambeth and everyone else in struggle and what is beginning to come together is an unstoppable combination which could lead the entire labour movement forward onto a qualitatively different level.

The tactics of the party leadership in dealing with this are straightforward and time-honoured. In the first instance there is the classic combination of the carrot and the big stick — which is so clearly the content of the NUPE resolution to women's conference that it is almost shocking. The carrot is the promise of some vague constitutional reform to give women's conference more say in the election of the NEC, the big stick is that women won't control the women's conference anymore due to the introduction of the trade union bloc vote which will be created outside of women in the unions having any mechanism to control how it is used.

The other time-honoured tactic is 'divide and rule', or more precisely buying off a small minority in order to derail the struggle of the rest. It is this which is involved in the proposal of the LCC to field Joan Ruddock in the constituency section of the NEC elections.

Joan Ruddock is in effect the female nominee of the party leadership — chosen because her politics are acceptable, and because she has shown herself useful already in the leadership of CND. From her position in the peace movement she helped engineer the takeover of CND by the coalitionist politics of *Marxism Today* — Hobsbawn's proposed alliances are already in place in the leadership of CND! The mass movement against the missiles was successfully steered behind the 'non-nuclear defence' programme as an alternative to campaigning for unilateral nuclear disarmament and against cruise and Trident. Joan Ruddock fully supported that move. The women at Greenham Common were the least popular people in the leadership of CND as they provided a focus for continuing the mass campaigning when CND itself was calling no actions against cruise and Trident.

Where Joan Ruddock stands on the black section, or the struggle of the women in the mining communities, on Ireland and many other questions is not clear. But these issues are of vital importance to women, because we are fighting for the liberation of the whole of our sex, not the election of one or two women to positions of prominence in a man's world.

In order to achieve the liberation and emancipation of the whole of the female sex it will be necessary to reconstruct the whole of society on different lines. A few more female faces in a system that is fundamentally un-

changed, and who are opposing the changes that are necessary to it, is not a policy that can enthuse and mobilise the great majority of women or meet their needs. To accomplish the liberation of women requires the achievement of virtually every other democratic and social demand, precisely because we are more than 50 per cent of humanity. How can women be liberated if their black sisters are oppressed due to the colour of their skin? Or while Irish women are fighting British soldiers on their streets? Or while the women of the mining communities have their homes and livelihoods destroyed?

All these aims cannot be achieved at once, but the women who we fight to have representing us are those women who will help, not hinder, the process towards achieving these goals. But this is not what Joan Ruddock represents, and therefore she cannot be a representative of women in the party.

However it has to be stated bluntly that the failure of Benn, Skinner, Heffer and the Campaign Group to take at all seriously the question of women and black candidates for the NEC is a blow for the left and for women. The attempt to pull women behind support for Joan Ruddock, and the project of getting one of Benn, Skinner or Heffer off the NEC, would be little more than a laughable joke if the Campaign Group's slate properly represented women and black people. There are obvious black and women candidates for the left to support. The failure of the Campaign Group will undoubtedly weaken the left. As it is a certain proportion of women will undoubtedly be won to supporting Joan Ruddock on a confused basis — despite her being the party leadership's latest nominee to try to defeat the left.

This would be a setback for women. For if Kinnock's manoeuvres can succeed in dividing women in the way he wishes, then not only will the alliance of forces that can transform the labour movement not come into being, but this will mean that LWAC's demands cannot be won. Kinnock, and the trade union bureaucracies that placed him in the leadership of the party, will never agree to, or be persuaded to, implement LWAC's demands. They will either be forced against their will to concede these demands, or they will succeed in controlling the women's organisation and nullifying it politically. It is the second which is their goal.

The only circumstance in which the party leadership might possibly allow the women's conference to elect the women's section of the NEC is if women no longer controlled the women's conference. It would be rather like the way imperialism has dealt with the demand of 'colonial' countries for national freedom — first they steal the wealth; then install British-owned companies to run the mines, the plantations and the factories; then help finance a massive army to police the country; then hand over control to a clique of paid lackeys; and then they call it 'national in-

dependence'.

The United States of America provides a model on how to try to do this with women. Women are told they are very liberated in the States, there are female faces everywhere — at the UN, governing cities, running oil companies. But women's real position in society is starkly indicated by the number of women in Congress. Out of 534 members there are only 23 women, that is 4.3 per cent. The only major countries with a worse figure are Barbados, Chile, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Turkey and the Philippines. Britain is only marginally ahead with 4.7 per cent women in parliament. Women, as a sex, remain fully oppressed in the United States. A few female faces are used to disguise a society which remains thoroughly sexist and capitalist. And it is the advance of women as a sex, not the advance of a few individuals, that both feminism and socialism are about.

There are two courses open for the labour movement and for women. One is the road of Neil Kinnock's 'new model Labour Party'. This will be a party which is actually the same as it has always been, with the same policies of collusion with British imperialism. One where women, black people and youth are subordinated to the trade union bureaucracy, and where the most militant sections of the working class are controlled and policed by the right wing. The 'new' thing about it will be that a small number of women, and black people, will be chosen on grounds of their loyalty to the leadership — and to the trade union bureaucracy that put it there. They will be given prominence in the party, to help change its image. The 'model' thing about it will be that opposition is either expelled, as with the left papers, or crushed, as with the proposals to introduce mechanisms of control into the women's organisation and the YS. A few women and black people will be invited into the bureaucracy. But women and black people, as a whole, will continue to be excluded.

The alternative road is that towards a total refounding of the Labour Party and the labour movement. Women, together with black people, those fighting British imperialism, the miners, and other progressive sections of the working class have to recreate the labour movement to meet today's needs. And this time on the basis of women organising themselves, electing their own representatives, and having a real say at every level of the movement — the same for black people. And this movement must exist to fight British imperialism and the British ruling class rather than being a mechanism for collaboration with it. Without that women cannot gain their demands. The two alternative courses for the labour movement can be summed up as for women's liberation, black liberation, anti-imperialism, democracy and militant class struggle on the one hand, with the only consistent alternative course being the maintenance of the status quo — albeit with a few cosmetic Kinnockite adjustments.



WOMENS CONFERENCE

Strip Searches

THE verdict on the seven Irish people charged with conspiracy over the 'seaside bomb' campaign and the Brighton bombing has already been given if you were to believe what you read in the newspapers.

The *Daily Mirror* described how the 'IRA planned to kill and maim British families by bombing seaside hotels in the height of the holiday season ... Police busted the biggest IRA cell ever known in Britain and found a diary of death'. After three women were arrested in the Sussex area they reported 'as far as we are aware the active service unit was arrested and detained in its entirety'. All three were subsequently released without charge.

Prejudicial reporting can only follow where the police totally control all the information available on those arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act who are being held incommunicado. Of more than 20 people arrested in a wave of press hysteria over the 'summer conspiracy' only a handful are being brought to trial.

Last July, the television news revealed the intention of the campaign when blatantly racist police were shown questioning hotel owners about whether they had any Irish people working for them, any Irish people as guests or had heard any Irish people discussing politics. The seven will not get a fair trial.

On 6 May, more than

50 people were prevented from demonstrating their support for the Irish prisoners. They were told by an Inspector Meadows that anyone demonstrating in the vicinity of the Old Bailey would be arrested.

Around the court, as in the trial of Maire O'Shea, the intrusive presence of sniffer dogs, armed police and restrictions on those allowed to observe the proceedings all give the message that a really dangerous trial is taking place. Again as in the Maire O'Shea trial, there is a strong suspicion that the jury has already been vetted.

For the defendants, daily harassment prevents a normal preparation for the trial, discussions with lawyers, etc. The most barbaric treatment has been reserved for the two women on trial — Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson. Since their arrest, both women have been subject to constant humiliation, constant sexual harassment through strip-searching, cell changes, denial of sleep and exercise restrictions.

Conspiracy charges themselves carry a guilt by association. The mass trial — common enough in Belfast — gives added weight to the conspiracy. Already newspapers talk of the Brighton bombing trial, even though only one of the defendants faces any charges in relation to that.

These defendants do not face a fair trial, the only just solution would be to drop the charges altogether.

Emergency resolution on strip-search

Conference notes that on 1 May 1986 the High Court refused to declare the persistent strip-searching of the two Irish women in Brixton prison unlawful. Conference believes that this ruling is tantamount to a legal mandate to continue a practice which doctors, lawyers, civil libertarians, women's groups know to be sexual harassment involving personal violation akin to rape. Conference requests the National Labour Women's Committee to press release and make our views widely and vociferously known, and to request the party leader to do likewise. Conference believes that this ruling makes the calling of a national labour movement demonstration even more urgent. Conference supports the proposal from Hornsey and Wood Green women's section for such a demonstration to coincide with the 4th anniversary of the introduction of strip-searching on 15 November to be organised jointly with Irish orgs, women's groups, to have high involvement from the TUC and to be led by Labour women and Irish spokespersons and Irish women. A mobilising committee to be immediately set up to organise and build for this demonstration.

The issues facing Labour women

The NUPE resolution

THE MAIN thrust of WAC's campaign at women's conference this month will be centred around the shadow elections to the women's section of the NEC and the need to follow through these elections with action at annual conference. The majority of the resolutions on the women's organisation section part of the conference agenda reflect this priority.

By Mandy Moore, WAC National Organiser

The resolution from NUPE is another matter. It amasses together a wide range of issues of concern to the women's organisation, and proposes a course of action to deal with them which WAC simply cannot support. If NUPE was trying to be helpful this resolution was certainly not the way to do it.

The major problem with the resolution is its call for 'the NEC to undertake a widespread con-

sultation exercise in conjunction with the national Labour women's committee' (NLWC) on a number of issues. The women's organisation does not need a consultation exercise — we have had one, it's called the women's conference. Year after year the women's organisation has made its policies known, and the NLWC has supported these policies sending a document to the NEC for action.

The problem is that men in the party are not prepared to listen. Are we now to consult men in the party who have consistent-



ly voted us down at annual conference because they are not prepared to give up some of their power? And when the results of this consultative exercise come through and the women's organisation gets offered a few crumbs from the men's table (if that), the NLWC will be in the invidious position of having been a party to the consultation exercise and therefore obliged to take notice of it. The women's organisation cannot com-

promise itself in this way.

Such an exercise would also mean that campaigning at annual conference this year would be impossible for women. We'd simply be told support could not be given to our resolutions because of the consultation exercise — and it wouldn't even be certain that an end to the exercise would be made in 1987 for action at the '87 annual conference. We cannot allow our campaigning to be stifled in this way.

The detail of the NUPE resolution is also of great concern. It talks about consultation on giving 'consideration to the national conference of Labour women playing a significant role in the election procedure for the women's seats on the NEC'. Sorry, we want to do it all.

The resolution says it wants to see consultation

on the 'elections to the national Labour women's committee with a view to allowing an additional say by the national conference of Labour women in the composition of the committee'. Women's conference policy is clear. We want to see the whole committee elected at women's conference, not have an 'additional say'.

It also lists a whole range of other complex issues without proposing clear options which would make a consultation exercise difficult, time-consuming and cumbersome to say the least.

WAC has asked NUPE to look again at its resolution and to withdraw it. If they are not prepared to do this then hopefully they will remit it to the NLWC. But if it goes to the vote at women's conference we will have to oppose it.

With friends like this, who needs enemies?



US bases out

THE attack on Libya by the United States government, supported by the Tory government, highlights the need to strengthen Labour Party policy.

By Carol Turner, Secretary, Labour CND

At present Labour is only committed to removing nuclear bases — something which would have made not one scrap of difference to the attack on Libya. Labour CND is circulating a model resolution to annual conference supported by the Campaign group of Labour MPs and Labour Action for Peace, which calls on the next Labour government to remove all US bases, and is also promoting an emergency resolution to women's conference.

It has been the consistent policy of women's conference to call for unilateral nuclear disar-

mament under a Labour government. On this, as on other important questions of policy, Labour

women have played a leading role in campaigning to change party policy.

On the issue of the closures of all bases, too, Labour CND is confident that women will continue to put forward the sort of radical positions which will improve the party policy.

A US Bases Out Campaign has been formed within the Labour Party, by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, LCND, LAP, and others, to build support for a change in Labour policy. A London rally is currently being organised. LCND and LAP are also planning a Bases Out fringe meeting at the coming annual conference in the autumn.

• Further information about the bases campaign, contact: Labour CND, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH.

Emergency resolution on US bases

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 communications bases, from British soil and waters.

British Telecom Pornline

AROUND 40 women and men picketed BT's London headquarters in Newgate Street, EC1, last week to protest in the latest protest against the 'dial a pornographic phonecall service'.

By Marcella Fitzgerald, London North Central Internal NCU

Support for the regular pickets is growing from BT's own employees. Last week's picket included several branches of the BT unions.

The new 'service', which costs 50p per minute, allows pitiable men to fantasise that the tape recording they hear is

a real woman talking only to them. The connection between the Petline and the encouragement of obscene phone calls to real women probably hasn't escaped BT management, but they also make profit by charging women £20 a week to intercept obscene phone calls.

Union members' fight to outlaw this pornography has nothing to do with the campaigns against Petline which national newspapers such as the *Mail* and the *Mirror* have run. In these papers, moralism sits side-by-side with their own, page-three variety of pornography. The union campaign is based on uniting the whole membership to combatting all forms of

discrimination and sexual disadvantage.

The Petline pickets, first taken up by Women Against Violence Against Women, are also being organised within BT by the NCU's women's support group and Women in Telecom, a cross-union organisation of women BT employees.

• Letters of protests etc should be copied to the NCU Women's Advisory Committee, Greystoke House, 150 Brunswick Road, London W5. Details about future pickets are available from Women In Telecoms, Union Room, BT Centre, 81 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AJ.

Women in the NUR

The shadow elections being held at this year's national Labour women's conference are on the agenda of the 1986 NUM annual conference in June.

By Anne Henderson, NUR Delegation Member to National Labour Women's Conference

Delegates will be proposing that the NUM should support the right of women's conference to elect the women members of the Labour Party NEC, but there will be no women delegates at the NUR conference. Women members are working to ensure that delegates know the arguments before they arrive at conference. Women NUR members

who comprise this year's delegation to national Labour women's conference will be arguing for the union to support the shadow elections and WAC demands.

There are four resolutions on women at the NUR annual conference. This reflects a growing awareness that the union will have to take positive steps to involve its women members, and hopefully also increase the number of women in the industry. Despite the difficulties women NUR members are more organised. We have been bringing forward issues for discussion to branch meetings and grades conferences.

In 1982 a comprehensive resolution supporting the TUC Charter for Women was overwhelmingly rejected. A year later

the NUR adopted the same charter, and subsequently has agreed to look at structures similar to women's advisory committees in the union.

The British Rail Board themselves have been criticised for the discrimination within the workforce by the Equal Opportunities Commission. BR, through consultation with women in the workforce, has now issued guidelines to management for implementing their equal opportunities policy. A whole range of issues are being discussed, and we have to ensure that the rail unions put forward policy proposals.

Policy statements alone won't change things. But for the women in the rail industry, it gives us something to work for.

South Africa swept by general strike

THE NATIONAL general strike which swept South Africa on May Day was the most massive action taken by workers ever recorded in South African history. It confirmed Winnie Mandela's message to the Soweto May Day rally when she said: 'It is the worker's power which is going to liberate this country'.

By Doreen Wepler

The 'stayaway' was organised by the six-month old Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to mark the 100th anniversary of May Day and the historic 1946 miners strike. Federation officials estimate that at least 90 per cent of its 650,000 members didn't turn up for work. A total of two and a half million other workers mobilised behind the demand for May Day to be a paid holiday.

Workers faced every obstacle imaginable on the day. The apartheid government sent out police and army forces equipped with whips, teargas and guns to disrupt the rallies staged around the country. Despite this show of force by the state, nearly 100,000 attended COSATU rallies.

The miners, who are COSATU's powerful backbone, were targeted for repression alongside other workers. In total 270,000 miners from 45 mines refused to work. In Soweto, police fired teargas into a bus ferrying NUM members to the Orlando stadium, wounding two union officials.

Miners in other areas faced similar shows of state force. In the West Rand, for instance, busloads of miners were stopped by security forces. Organisers then sent for other buses in the hope these would get through. But they were blocked as well. The miners then tried to proceed on foot, but for the third time security forces stopped them.

Mamelodi was one area where the police and army prevented the COSATU rally. Workers were driven away from the venue at gunpoint. But even in this case, 2,000 regrouped in a nearby church and organised an

alternative rally. In Port Elizabeth the apartheid authorities banned Thursday's rally. COSATU responded by re-scheduling the rally for Monday and successfully extending the stayaway until it took place.

As Eija Barayi, president of COSATU, put it at the Soweto rally. 'Whether the South African government likes it or not, we are going to make this day a paid holiday. But we know we are going to achieve that through our blood.' It was this determination that led the vast majority of employers to decide to take no action against workers who stayed at home on May Day.

COSATU's call for action on the day raised other demands besides its rallying slogans for May Day to become a paid public holiday and for a 40-hour working week on a living wage. The official appeal also calls for the right to work and strike. It wants full maternity benefits for all working women. And the appeal promotes demands made by others struggling for their democratic rights — the right of students, for instance to form democratic student representative councils and 'to build an alternative system of people's education right now'.

Finally, the call to action on May Day demanded an end to influx controls and pass laws, the ending of the ban on political organisations such as the ANC and the release of all political prisoners. As COSATU explained, 'These demands mean a complete dismantling of apartheid.'

The lead COSATU has given to all those in South Africa fighting against apartheid rule explains the broad response on May Day. While workers led the actions, they were join-



ed by over a million pupils. Most black schools were empty from Thursday through Monday as pupils heeded COSATU's call for unity between students and workers. School students were joined in their stayaway by many university students as well. The success of the May Day action bodes well for the three-day stayaway called for this month to mark the anniversary of the Soweto uprising on 16 June.

As a COSATU official summarised the meaning behind the massive show of workers power in South Africa on May Day, 'This shows that workers have taken a decision to build South Africa into a democratic country. We will not rest until this goal is realised.'

Fake union launched

WHILE COSATU was carrying through a general strike against apartheid, May Day was also incongruously chosen for the launch of the so-called Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA).

This outfit is inspired by Gatsha Buthelezi, the Kwazulu Bantustan chief. It is being projected as a tribally-based rival to COSATU. Its real character as a 'union' is evident from the fact that its entire executive is drawn from management personnel. Inkatha, Buthelezi's political organisation

which collaborates with the apartheid regime, managed to mobilise 50,000 for the UWUSA rally thanks to free buses and trains which were laid on. Only three small unions representing fewer than 5000 workers were present. Buthelezi prepared for the launch with a scathing campaign of vitriol conducted against COSATU for the past six months. Not surprisingly, neither the Bantustan police nor South African state forces were used against participants at this rally.

The aim of 'UWUSA' is to break up the unity around COSATU and aid the apartheid regime.

Mass demonstration in El Salvador

ON 1 MAY 100,000 people took to the streets of San Salvador to oppose government austerity, demand a negotiated peace with the FMLN-FDR liberation organisations and the end to US military intervention in El Salvador.

At a London meeting on 10 May, Ezmeralda Martinez and executive member of the El Salvador Women's Federation, explained the significance of this.

'Until now government repression, which still goes on, has frightened people. But now they have had enough and want to express themselves on the streets.'

She said that the struggle in El Salvador has moved forward with the setting up in February of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS). This is a broad labour front of 100 organisations, with 300,000 members and includes the Popular

Democratic Union which previously backed Duarte.

By Celia Pugh

UNTS called a demonstration of 80,000 in February, followed by the 1 May call. As the working class took to the streets in San Salvador, the government has stepped up intimidation of the peasants in the countryside. This attempt to break support for the liberation and workers organisations has involved US equipped bombing of villages.

Ezmeralda reported that this bombardment has murdered 250 people, led to the disappearance of 200 people, the removal of 1200 people from their

homes and the destruction of 450 acres of land.

Azucena Quintos of the Association of Salvadoran Women (AMES) explained the Duarte regime's attacks on women in El Salvador and the fights against it: 'Today in El Salvador is mothers' day. But for Duarte and the government, mothers' day is a day for commerce. They do not meet the needs of women who are suffering — like those who see their children die in air attacks, the women locked in prisons or who queue there to see their children or husbands or the ones who see their families die of malnutrition.'

The only people in El Salvador who speak for these women are organisations like AMES and the Mothers of the Disappeared. In El Salvador,

she explained, there is only one maternity hospital and one children's hospital. There are many deaths as a result. AMES campaigns on these issues, but recognises that nothing will change with the present government and system in El Salvador.

'We also know' she said 'that we can't move ahead while the Yanquis back aggression against our people. We appeal for your solidarity against the violation of human rights, to stop the forcing of our people off the land in the countryside and for a negotiated peace. Women are suffering the most and we must stop more blood being shed.'

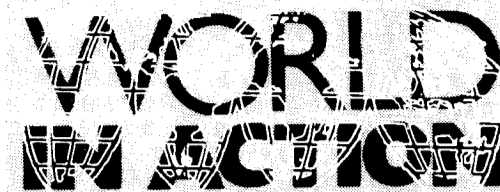
Azucena is hoping to take this message to delegates at conferences of ASTMS, the Society of Civil and Public Servants and to the Labour Party

womens conference on 17 May.

She will echo her warning to the London meeting: 'The American government is not interested in peace and negotiation in Central America. They are trying to paint the Nicaraguan government as terrorists. If they invade Nicaragua, that affects us too as we have the same enemy.'

'We don't see our fight in isolation. This is why AMES has contacts with women fighting across the world, like the women of Namibia and South Africa. We are preparing to oppose an invasion of Nicaragua and we hope you will support us.'

• For information about AMES and solidarity with El Salvador, contact ELSSOC, c/o SOGAT, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1.



Nicaragua:

Six leaders of the main southern contra group have broken with its leader Eden Pastora to join forces with the US-backed United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO). The UNO is dominated by the Honduran-based Nicaraguan Democratic Force, mainly composed of former Somoza national guard members.

Pastora himself was a Sandinista of some prominence known as 'Commandante Cero' who broke with the FSLN after the revolution. He kept his distance from the national guard and the CIA have been trying to eliminate him as a serious contra leader since 1983. He was recently the victim of a bomb attack widely believed to have been engineered by the CIA.

The southern group has been routed by the Sandinistas and its capacity to recover was severely limited when the Nicaraguan government concluded a joint defence treaty with the recently elected president of Costa Rica. Now it is under tighter US it will probably receive major military assistance, since the USA needs a southern front to invade Nicaragua.

China:

China is leaping forward in modern technology — even ahead of the USA. Last year it started exporting its own personal computer called the Great Wall. In June it starts exporting IBM computers under license and next year it is going to launch US satellites because all NASA's spaceships are grounded.

The Texas company, Teresat has signed an agreement with the Great Wall Industry Corporation to launch its Palapa B and Westar VI communications satellites in China's Long March 3 rocket which goes up next year. Beijing went into the commercial launch business last October and is undercutting its European and US rivals by 15 per cent.

Chile:

Pinochet, facing widespread mass demonstrations and strikes, has stepped up the repression. On Tuesday 22 April police opened fire on student demonstrators when he visited Tumuco in Southern Chile. Five were wounded, and there were over 60 arrests. A week earlier in Santiago, police and army occupied the universities for four days attacking students demonstrating for a democratic university system and against the expulsion of victimised professors. There were over 600 arrests.

Kurdistan:

A wave of revolt against the Baathist dictatorship has swept the Kurdish territories of Syria and the Kurdish minority in Damascus, the Syrian capital. On 21 March the national day of the Kurdish people, there were widespread demonstrations, clashes, and arrests which sparked even wider demonstrations. In Damascus, Kurdish workers and students marched beside left wing Arab activists on the presidential palace. Police, riot troops and intelligence agents blocked the route and a young worker was killed, eight others being injured.

Belgium:

Eighteen thousand coal miners went on indefinite strike on 21 April in Limbourg, Flanders. They struck because the Martens government refused to give assurances about job losses and closure. The miners are demanding no closures, no redundancies, and no job losses from natural wastage. The government wants to introduce Thatcher-style cuts in public spending which would probably mean closing the remaining five Belgian pits. Union leaders were forced to call the strike when two pits took unofficial action. Solidarity committees have sprung up and as early as 12 April there was a 20,000-strong demonstration in support of the miners.

• Contact: Comité de Greve, Winterslag, Turksa, Zereniging, Herenstraat 16, 3600 Genk, Belgium.



THE GOVERNMENT is attempting to conceal the real threat from atomic power in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster. That is no innovation at all. The nuclear industry started with a lie. It has continued as the most totally, and solely, destructive industry ever developed by humanity. Getting out the facts on nuclear power is therefore one of the most important tasks for the left. **JOHN ROSS** looks at a book and a pamphlet that do just that — *We All Live On Three Mile Island*, by Greg Adamson and *What Working People should Know About the Dangers of Nuclear Power* by Fred Halstead.

THE lie that began the nuclear industry was the claim by the US government that Nazi Germany was going to build an atomic bomb. In August 1939 Leo Szilard, a German physicist and refugee from Hitler, organised a letter to US president Roosevelt which was signed by Albert Einstein.

Reaction

This letter stated that through recent work in physics: 'it may be possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium ... This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of ... extremely powerful bombs.'

By 1941, however, the United States government already knew that Nazi Germany had no programme capable of producing atomic weapons. Not only had many of its physicists fled Germany, but above all it did not have the economic power.

But the fact that the US government knew that Germany could not construct the bomb was carefully concealed from the scientists who were working on the project. Einstein himself explained why when he looked back on the original letter he had been persuaded to send: 'If I had known that the Germans would not succeed in constructing the atom bomb, I would never have moved a finger.'

Enemies

When, by summer 1945, Germany had lost the war and it was evident Japan could both not build the bomb and was going to surrender, Szilard organised a petition of scientists working on the Manhattan Project against use of the bomb. It was promptly banned by the US government. Einstein explained the real role of the US in a speech he gave on 10 December 1945: 'We helped in creating this new weapon in order to prevent the enemies of mankind from achieving it ahead of us, which, given the mentality of the Nazis, would have meant inconceivable destruction and the enslavement of the rest of the world.'

We delivered this weapon into the hands of the American and British people as trustees of the

whole of mankind, as fighters for peace and liberty. But so far we fail to see any guarantees of peace, we do not see any guarantee of the freedoms that were promised to the nations in the Atlantic Charter? What those 'freedoms' the United States and British imperialism intended to grant was shown at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

But while the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were obliterated, and are still dying, those who were used by the US administration for its project also began to die.

The first recorded fatality was nuclear physicist Harry Daghalian who died on 22 August 1945 after an accident with radio active material. A second was when General Leslie M Groves, the person in charge of the Manhattan Project, attempted to prove the safety of the work done. In September 1945 Groves drove with reporters to the test site. He generously ordered his driver to get out of the car and climb down into the crater. Groves' driver died at the age of 42 of leukemia. It is estimated that he absorbed 100 rems of radiation during the short time spent in the crater — equivalent to 3,400 chest X-rays.

Since 1945 nuclear weapons have not been used in war. But their victims continue to multiply.

The first were victims of the atomic tests. On 1 March 1954, for example, the US exploded its first hydrogen bomb at Bikini atoll. The blast was equivalent to 14 million tons of high explosive — twice the expected force. The fall out hit not only the Marshall Islanders but the Japanese fishing boat *Fukuryu Maru*. Walter Patterson described the event in his book *Nuclear Power*.

Symptoms

'By evening two of the crew were vomiting, and overcome by dizziness. By 3 March others were suffering similar symptoms, with aching eyes and itching skins...The fishing boat turned and made for its home port of Yaizu. It arrived a fortnight later, with all hands suffering from radiation sickness,

and the boat still contaminated with radioactivity. Six months later some of the crew were still in hospital. On 23 September 1954 the radio operator, Aiticki Kuboyana, died'.

In the United States between 1951 and 1958 the US military set off 97 atomic explosions above ground in Nevada. The radioactive debris fell on Utah, Arizona and Nevada. Children born in southern Utah during those seven days died from leukemia two and a half times more frequently than the average.

Testing

In December 1953, with eight years of nuclear testing already having taken place, US president Eisenhower announced a new phase of the atomic age. He called for 'atoms for peace'. A concerted drive began to convince public opinion that nuclear power was safe.

In reality from the very beginning the nuclear power programme was integrally connected to producing atomic weapons. The first atomic power station in the world — at Calder Hall in Britain — had its direct role producing plutonium for the British nuclear weapons programme. The British 'Magnox' reactors still working today, which closely resemble that at Chernobyl in their basic

the United States in the late 1930s, as the military implications of nuclear discoveries became clear. Twenty six million tons of tailings had to be disposed of in the US from 1945 to the early 1980s. There were supposedly perfectly safe — and were even offered to contractors to use as sand in construction sites.

In one case, 300,000 tons of tailings were used for the construction of over 700 buildings in Grand Junction, Colorado. Residents of Grand Junction today have a leukemia rate twice that of the average of the state as a whole. Needless to say, tailings are no longer proclaimed safe. The same announcements of 'safety' followed by deaths has occurred at each new stage of the nuclear power programme.

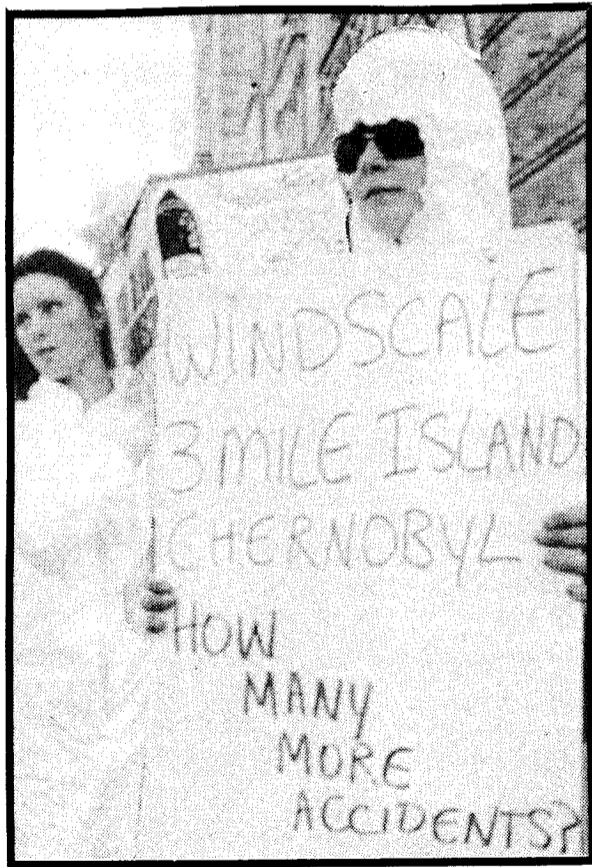
Accidents from atomic power began at once — despite continual assertions that such accidents were 'impossible', 'unthinkable', etc.

In 1952 a partial meltdown and release of almost a million gallons of radioactive water occurred at the NRX experimental test reactor at Chalk River, Ontario Canada.

In 1957 fire swept the Windscale nuclear plant in Britain releasing large amounts of radioactivity.

At Hanford in the US state of Washington —

The deadly dust



principle, were designed to help provide nuclear material for British bombs.

The claim continually made throughout the last thirty years, and of course still repeated today, is that nuclear power is safe. But the problem is that there is no level of nuclear radiation which does not produce increases in cancer and other health risks. Every single claim that 'safe' levels of radioactivity has been achieved has therefore always been followed by further deaths.

Debris

A typical example was the case of excavated debris from uranium mining — known as tailings. Uranium mining began in

A still greater scandal followed when the AEC attempted to persuade Tamplin to suppress his findings. He refused. Tamplin resigned and later wrote that the 'entire nuclear electricity industry had been developing under a set of totally false illusions of safety and economy. Not only was there a total lack of appreciation of the hazards of radiation for man, but there was a total absence of candour concerning the hazard of serious accidents.'

'Lack of candour' was actually the least of the methods used by supporters of atomic power. Far more drastic methods were resorted to by the atomic power industry to suppress the real record. The most notorious incident was the murder of Karen Silkwood on 13 November 1974, to prevent her passing documents on the safety record of the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant in Cimarron, Oklahoma, to the *New York Times*. In 1978 company officials admitted conspiring with the police to remove the records from Silkwood's crashed car.

Getting out the truth on nuclear power is one of the most urgent tasks for the left: This book and pamphlet were written before Chernobyl. But they will let you understand what it is about.

We all live on Three Mile Island: the case against nuclear power, Greg Adamson, Pathfinder Press, £3.95; *What Working People should know about the dangers of nuclear power*, Fred Halstead, Pathfinder Press, 80p plus 18p p&p. Both from: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Political victimisations

EXCLUSION FROM jobs and outright dismissal for union or political views or activities are fairly commonplace events in British industry. Most personnel managers are familiar with the different ways of vetting their employees backgrounds for any signs of militancy or 'unhealthy' independence. Many employers maintain lists of persons to be excluded, or they can approach a range of organisations who compile them as a service to their class.

Socialists and union activists regard the sack as an occupational hazard. But unlike most industrial hazards it has the fewest laws against it, and victimisation is never the reason cited for dismissal. Small wonder therefore that few cases ever make the headlines or become big battles. The burden of proof rests upon the victim.

But when two women were sacked recently at the giant Ford plant in Dagenham the union stepped in with a campaign backed by evidence of victimisation. Both women had been union representatives in their previous jobs, and they both worked for the same employer British Telecom. BT had already been exposed for its political vetting of employees by the *Observer* newspaper in October 1985.

In the course of the union's campaign the *Daily Mail* was forced to admit that a 'secret memo from the women's previous employers alerted Ford bosses. It revealed that the two, both shop stewares, had fomented industrial disruption'. The *Mail*, which has led the attack on the women and the TGWU 1/1107 branch which is defending them, has tried to portray such collusion between employers as routine and legitimate.

Stripped of all its rhetoric, the target of their hostility is anyone who presents an alternative political position, critical of our bosses, but because they cannot openly call upon all workers to renounce their right to hold views different from the bosses they have to create an offence and frame-up an enemy. In this instance it happens to be Socialist Action, but it could just as easily be the CP, SWP or the NUM.

Their campaign of outright lies and assertions is designed to prevent workers from fighting back for fear of being permanently victimised. It also aims to cut off any support from any potential allies in the fight for civil liberties.

So what is the offence? The women are charged with being dispirited, wreckers and 'parachutists' into industry. Their motives are questioned and held up for condemnation. Yet there is not a single piece of evidence given for any of the charges.

BT bosses have divulged information which has no relevance to whether the women can do the job they applied for. And despite both women having excellent work and sick records, and having proved themselves capable of the work they are dismissed. They have been sacked for holding socialist ideas which are perfectly legal to hold, and for activities which again are quite legal and legitimate — namely, to represent their co-workers in a union. The activities of BT managers and the collusion of Ford bosses is a clear breach of civil and political rights. Both sets of employers are claiming the right to vet people's ideas, and to deny them employment on that basis alone. In short, they hold that proven socialists and union activists have no right to employment, especially in industry.

The issues in these cases are of safeguarding our fundamental political rights. How did Ford obtain the information on the women? How much information did BT bosses provide to Ford? Should BT be allowed to vet all its employees, and deny them access to their political records? Is it acceptable that companies can compile lists of left-wingers and union militants? Should organisations who provide these lists to companies be outlawed?

British management of course are not prepared to admit that these are their real aims in the exclusion lists they compile, or the victimisations they conduct. Their chosen weapon is bad timekeeping, undisclosed information on application forms, sickness, or unsatisfactory probation. And to cover their true purposes they bring in the tame journalist to create a red-scare or a witch-hunt.

Individual cases of victimisation are difficult to fight. But these are not two isolated instances. They are part of a vast vetting operation conducted by BT. Its effects are, and will be, to permanently exclude from employment all BT employees who have been active trade unionists or whose political views are suspect in the opinion of their bosses. The BT vetting operation is national in scope. The response by the labour movement must also be to wage a national campaign.

Correctly, the National Communications Union has already called upon the National Council for Civil Liberties, and the TUC to take up the fight. Our aims should be to expose the extent of victimisation, to challenge its legality, and where the laws prove ineffective to frame new legislation which guarantees the right of workers to be active trade unionists free from exclusion lists and victimisation for their political beliefs.

Wapping: a deliberate police attack

Tony Benn eyewitness account

I MARCHED in with the marchers in the early evening of Saturday 3 May. There were two marches, both of them perfectly peaceful with families and children. They converged outside the Wapping plant at about 9.30pm. I positioned myself right opposite the plant where I was able to see the massed ranks of mounted police. They were clearly riot police, with short-shields and long-shields.

At a certain point there was a puff of smoke. That was a signal for the mounted police to move out. They came out of the plant into the crowd which was gathered there. From then on, there were continual forays by the mounted police, short-

shield and long-shield police.

When we tried to begin the public meeting, the riot police came out and completely surrounded the area, thus in a way imprisoning some thousands of people who gathered around the platform.

The police rushed out with their truncheons and chased people along the street.

At about this stage, in the early part of the evening, one of the marchers who had come all the way down from Glasgow had a heart attack, and he had to make an appeal over the loud speaker to allow an ambulance to come to pick him up. The police however continued to occupy that road and would not allow the ambulance in for quite a substantial period.

The meeting itself was almost drowned out, although from the vantage of the platform it was possible to see the police tactics, as they poured around the streets imprisoning those who were nearest to the platform and indeed coming right up to within a few feet of the platform so that at one stage it looked as if the police would mount the platform and clear it of those who were there to speak.

It was reported, that the police had broken the lights of some of the television camera units. Certainly an ITN camera unit got into the bus and was able to take a close up photograph of one of the most badly-wounded men with blood pouring out of his head and down his neck.

There was a BBC2 interview well after midnight with myself and Bob Gillespie from SOGAT which I know is available. IRN had a woman reporter who did at least three interviews with me.

In addition there were two Press Association reporters and a Sunday Mirror reporter. So we know that that information was gathered and it is against that that we can check what actually appeared.

What we witnessed was an absolutely systematic and, in my judgement, wholly unjustified police attack upon 10,000 people who had come for the meeting outside the plant over the May Day weekend. This must have been planned by the police deliberately, no doubt on the instructions of the

Home Secretary, so that anybody who opposes this government and its policy will face an attempt to blacken them, and then entitle the police to attack them.

I hope the whole labour movement rallies round. Every journalist and printer throughout the country should seriously consider now taking immediate action in support of the Wapping print workers. The TUC and the Labour Party at national level and members of parliament should make this a central issue. If we do not stop this now there is absolutely no limit to which the police will not go to crush dissent in Britain against the policies of the government that create unemployment and deprive us of the services we used.

Support the NUM solidarity fund

AT its delegate meeting this coming weekend in Sheffield, the national Justice for Mineworkers campaign will be launching a further drive for funds for victimised miners.

A leaflet is being prepared for circulation throughout the labour movement, with an appeal from NUM President Arthur Scargill, calling financial support to the NUM's national solidarity fund to be stepped up. 'One of the biggest commitments of the Justice Campaign', said Anne Suddick of Durham Women Against Pit Closures, 'is to build financial support for the solidarity fund. News that the fund is in a not-

altogether healthy state means that we will be making every effort, inside the union and out, to increase the support for our victimised colleagues'.

Further information about victimised NUM members and what you

can do to help, contact: NUM, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield, S1 2EX (phone: 0742 700388). More information on the Justice campaign, contact: Durham Mechanics Offices, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED.

An urgent appeal from the National Union of Mineworkers to miners support groups throughout the UK:

There are 502 NUM members who are still locked out, victimised by the National Coal Board because they fought to save their pits, jobs and communities. They still need the magnificent help given by the many miners' support groups throughout the United Kingdom both during and since the end of the 1984/85 strike.

Teachers fight betrayed

THE AGREEMENT reached in the Burnham committee on 9 May represents a major blow to the effort of teachers to win back the 34 per cent lost over the last 10 years. Although it is portrayed as an interim settlement, the Labour-dominated employers, like the Tory government, are insisting that any further increase this year will only be granted in return for teachers accepting far worsened conditions of employment.

Hailed by the broad alliance leadership of the National Union of Teachers as a victory, the settlement plays right into the hands of the employers. Whilst many teachers will welcome the money — £519 or 5.5 per cent — the sacrifices they are being asked to make in return are totally unacceptable.

By Bernard Regan, NUT Executive (personal capacity)

Under the terms of the agreement the NUT leadership gave a commitment to restore 'peace and calm' in the schools. In particular this will hit the 'no-cover' action.

Most secondary school teachers have been refusing to cover any teacher absences in schools, a tactic which has exposed the massive understaffing in education. As a result hundreds of thousands of pupils have been sent home. In primary school teachers have been covering for the first day of absence only.

On Monday 12 May the NUT executive agreed

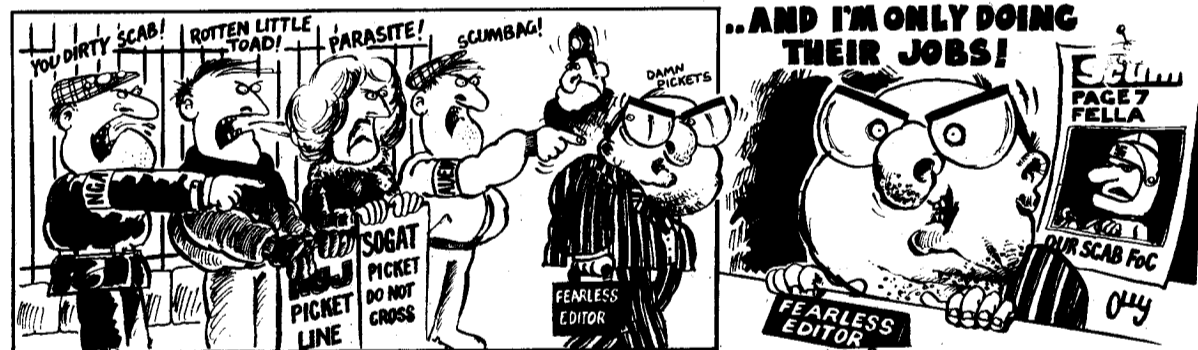
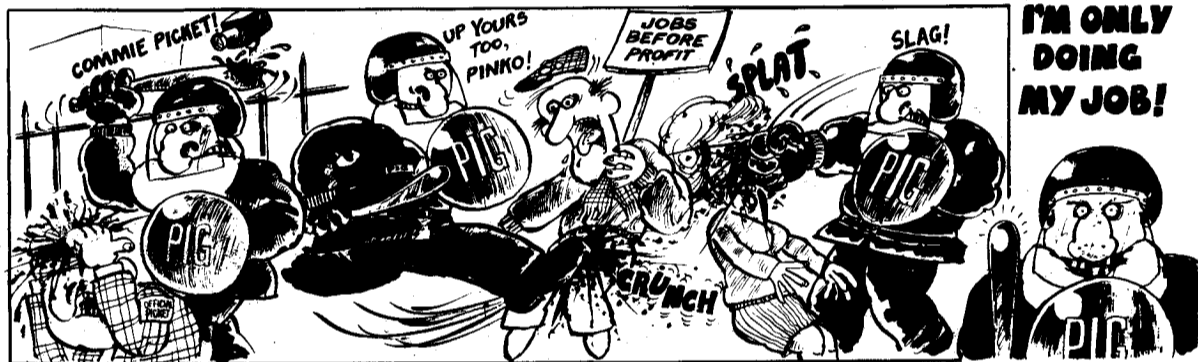
that teachers should cover after the first day of absence. This will create a split between primary and secondary school teachers, and leave many teachers to face disciplinary action by local authority employers.

After 15 months of no-cover action the overwhelming majority of teachers are determined not to return to cover. Terrified of the backlash they will receive because of their move, the executive cancelled a briefing conference planned for this

Saturday and has refused to hold a special salaries conference to discuss the settlement.

The deal is a betrayal of teachers. Behind the scenes Neil Kinnock and Giles Radice, Labour education spokesperson, were instrumental in getting the deal agreed. Every trade unionist needs to look at what is happening to teachers to see exactly what kind of wages policies a future Labour government is likely to introduce.

The fight is by no means over however. Socialist Teachers Alliance will be taking steps to organise a fightback conference that will aim to defend the no-cover action and prepare the ground for renewing the wages fight which must take place from September.



THIS CARTOON IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE STRIKERS FROM NEWS INTERNATIONAL WHO ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR JOBS AND THEIR UNIONS

Left successes at ASTMS conference

THE ASTMS conference, meeting in Bournemouth this week took a series of key policy decision which marked an important step forward for the union.

Delegates overturned the position taken by the NEC at last year's Labour Party conference on the resolution in support of sacked and jailed miners. At the 1985 TUC Congress ASTMS had voted in favour of the NUM resolution. At the Labour Party conference however Kinnock had applied pressure to the union and it had reversed its decision. The 1986 conference overruled the NEC, supported the miners resolution, and voted to affiliate to the Justice for Mineworkers campaign.

On Libya the conference passed a resolution condemning the US attack and calling for the withdrawal of all US bases from Britain. The resolution stated: 'This annual conference utterly abhors the act of war perpetrated by the US government against the Libyan people.'

This conference furthermore condemns the prime minister for permitting the use of bases in Britain by the US air force in order to take part in this act of aggression. 'This conference calls on the next Labour government to end the agreement which allows foreign armed forces to be based in the UK.'

On Ireland the conference voted to open a discussion in the union. The resolution passed included, 'this annual conference notes the Labour Party's commitment to the reunification of Ireland,' encouraged, 'divisions and branches to obtain information about the situation in Ireland,' decided to 'promote open discussion on Irish issues throughout the association and in the union journals,' and to 'organise day and

weekend schools at national and divisional levels.'

This resolution was won against the opposition of the NEC and the No 10, Ireland, division which sought to insert an amendment which stated that 'while recognising that this is hardly a priority issue for most ASTMS members there is no reason why the issue of Ireland should not be discussed' and called for this discussion specifically 'to include the views of No 10 division.'

No 10 division always

votes under the pressure of protestant Unionist members in the north of Ireland.

An extremely successful fringe meeting was held on Ireland with Bernadette McAliskey and Maire O'Shea — who is an ASTMS member. The meeting was attended by 150 people.

The conference voted to end the election of the union's representative on the TUC general council by postal ballot. From next year the union's representative will be elected at conference.

ARE YOUR WAGES BEING CUT?



PUBLIC MEETING ON THE GOVT'S WAGES BILL

Speakers: John Prescott MP and Clare Short MP, Shadow Spokespersons on Employment
Kamal Kureshi, Employment Worker, Federation of Bangladeshi Youth Organisations
Dan Jones, Tower Hamlets Trades Council
Chair: Ian Mikardo MP, Bow & Poplar

DATE: Wed., 21st MAY 1986 TIME: 7.30 p.m.
VENUE: Brady Centre, 192-6 Hanbury St. London E1

**Stop the expulsions
Reinstate Khan and Scally**
Wednesday 21 May, 7.30pm
Digbeth Civic Hall

Speakers include Diane Abbott and Ken Livingstone
Meeting supported by: Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Black Section, LCI, Birmingham Trades Council, Birmingham and West Midlands LCC, Birmingham Labour Briefing.

A Socialist ACTION

WAPPING IN DANGER



Fantastic response in aid of weekly paper

THERE has been an immediate response to our emergency appeal last week to defend the weekly Socialist Action. Because our financial position dictated missing some issues of the paper, it was announced last week that we would not be publishing the issue on 30 May. This was the week of the National Communications Union national conference in the first week of June. Socialist Action readers plan to be very active there. So they have decided to raise a fund to ensure publication that week.

Their aim is to raise a minimum of £400 by a series of measures:

- By London readers contributing the major

By Brian Grogan

part of their London weighting award due for payment this month

- By readers who are delegates to the NCU conference or to the Labour women's conference forgoing some entertainment and donating their expenses
- By all Socialist Action supporters who work for British Telecoms to be asked to make a £5 or £10 donation.

This is the sort of response we hoped would be forthcoming. This is the way to save the other threatened issues. If this response is kept up we need not miss a single issue.

In addition, readers in North London have sent in £200 and those in North West London £30. And another £60 has been

received from various other donations.

This brings the current total to £13,062 counting towards our £15,000 target by Whit. We also hear readers in Southall organised a very successful jumble sale. More about this next week. What are you doing?

Here is the area by area breakdown:

Aberdeen	£50
Birmingham	£100
Bristol	£10
Cardiff/Cynon	£275
Coventry	£40
Glasgow	£125
Huddersfield	£70
Leeds	£91
Leicester	£18
Liverpool	£8
Manchester	£333
Newport	£176
Notts	£205
S Yorks	£683
Swindon	-
Swansea	-
E London	£1808
N London	£926
NW London	£539
SE London	£325
SW London	£149
OW London	£191

Individual contributions	£6126
Contributions from areas	£6134
Supporters in the NUR, AUEW, NCU	£527
Public meeting	£75
Total	£13,062

SUBSCRIBE

Free Book Offer!

Take out a years inland subscription and we will send you free one of these books:

JUSTICE: The Miners Strike 1984-86
by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs

On Afro American History by Malcolm X

OR The Struggle is My Life by Nelson Mandela

THE WAPPING dispute over the fight to re-instate the 5,500 printers sacked by Rupert Murdoch's News International is at a very dangerous turning point. The tactics employed by the national leadership of the print union SOGAT which has relied exclusively on a consumer boycott of the News International titles, have clearly failed. Unfortunately instead of reorienting their tactics for a real fight, the leadership is preparing to sell out. The purging of the unions contempt of court is the first step. They are now to meet Rupert Murdoch to agree some face-saving formula which capitulates on reinstatement of the sacked printers and forgoes direct union recognition.

But the striking printers are not taking these moves lying down. SOGAT's London district council registered its 'disgust and contempt' at the purging of the unions contempt of court.

The London clerical branch is to adopt a motion of no confidence in the national executive. And, best news of all, there is to be a mass meeting of printers next Monday 19 May at Central Hall, Westminster, to boost the Wapping picket and the involvement of the ranks in Wapping and to extend

THE purging of the contempt is a blow to the 16 weeks of bitter struggle we've been through.

The Brenda Dean leadership was wrong to think, though, that this action would kill us off. The reverse has happened.

It has made the London leadership and the sacked printers more resolved to win the dispute and secure the rights of all trade unionists. We will not be a plaything in the hands of the leadership.

Dean argued the need to purge the contempt supposedly to retrieve union funds and therefore be in a stronger position to prosecute the dispute. This was rubbish.

The essence of the union is its membership and not finances especially the salaries of the officials. As the miners showed, money and promises can always be secured from other unions and the rest of the labour movement.

All the London branches have rejected the NEC steps towards the court. Dean was left in no doubt about the member-

their picketing to the wholesalers depots.

By Brian Grogan

The main effect of the purging of the contempt is to lift the boycott of News International titles by the wholesalers which had been particularly effective in London. However, the central London branch which covers SOGAT's members in London wholesalers has pledged that it will continue the boycott action in defiance of the court and the leadership.

ship feeling when she addressed the FOC's and deputy FOC's who were on the lobby of the NEC. Danny Sergeant, presi-

By Jim Mason
SOGAT, Deputy FOC
Sun Clerical

dent of SOGAT, created uproar when he insisted that the decision was not up for discussion. The NEC was shown to be quite prepared to wheel-and-deal above our heads.

We are now determined in London to take control of the dispute. This is the place where it's been shown the real trade unionists are. Carrying a SOGAT card doesn't make you a trade unionist. You need also to fight for the aims of the union.

We now intend to take our message directly to them. If they don't listen they will have to face the same appeals and demonstrations as we have regularly seen at Wapping.

Dean's sell out moves have spurred us to get more organised. The young printers, especially are coming to the fore. We

Meanwhile, moves are underfoot to end mass picketing of the Wapping plant. This remarkable action has now mobilised several thousands every Saturday night for 16 weeks. Whilst it has so far failed to stop transport union-staffed TNT lorries from conveying the papers out of the plant, it continues to offer a political focus for mass protest.

In recent weeks, the picketing has been taken over by the rank and file leadership and is becoming more effective. It is now a real question that Murdoch's lorries could be stopped.

This is why the police rioted on 3 May. The aim was to intimidate the thousands of new supporters that had been mobilised that day and to lay the basis for court action to limit the size of the picketing. Already, the High Court judge in releasing SOGAT's fund after the purge of contempt suggested that 'intimidation' outside the

Wapping plant could represent a breach of the court order.

In the miners' strike, the courts instructed the South Wales area to limit its pickets of the pits to six on the grounds 'that a daily congregation of 50 to 70 men hurling abuse represents unreasonable harassment of working miners'.

The SOGAT leadership's reaction has been to move to collaborate with the police in controlling the picket. Despite this, the police launched yet another vicious and unprovoked attack on demonstrators last Saturday.

Now is not the time to retreat. Now is the time to take the gloves off and end the phoney war.

A first step in this is the planned mass meeting which can bring the striking printers more fully into the dispute as we saw in the miners strike. This is the best way to reach out to other members of the

union, especially in London. The London branches are the backbone of SOGAT.

Then, the membership needs to be organised to fan out into the rest of the labour movement transforming the paper support that exists into action. A renewed appeal needs to go to the miners and women against pit closures.

The failure of the national leadership to make any official appeal needs to be remedied by the London district committee. Other key allies, especially the as yet unapproached black community needs to be mobilised.

Finally, the London leadership would go a long way to stymie Brenda Dean's sell-out plans if it made clear that it would continue the dispute through its own resources even if the national union tried to throw in the towel. But this means turning to the ranks.

● Eyewitness report at Wapping, Tony Benn, p11.

Printers reject court deal



want a real union to inherit. A rank and file group has been established which will help force more militant action from the union. And there is to be a mass meeting of London strikers on 19 May.

We will not be intimidated by police violence. But they are intent on provocation.

I was witness to the police letting off the two smoke cannisters which was the signal for the police riots on 3 May. The Special Patrol Group was so out of control that it was not only attacking the demonstrators, not only preventing the ambulances from getting to the injured, but attacking other policemen presumably in order to up the police casualty figures. They even went so far as to attack the ITN cameramen and lights. So what was seen on the TV was the police film.

If this had happened in Poland this would be front page news. So much for our 'free press'.

I hope that the further unprovoked police attack on our peaceful picket last weekend will convince

Dean that appeasement only encourages the aggressor. The much vaunted 'agreement' between Dean the police worked fine until they wanted to let the convoy out. Then, they tore up the agreement and sent out their horses and riot shields.

Our aim is to step up the action. We will be out

at all the wholesalers. We went for the EETPU scabs by lobbying their conference. We are pushing for the transport union TNT drivers to be disciplined.

We can win. We just need the power and energy of the ranks to be unleashed. Its a race against time before Dean can do her dirty business. But we will do our bit.