

# A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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## South Africa

# SANCTIONS NOW!



THE SOUTH African apartheid regime showed its true face again on Monday when it launched three air and ground attacks on the frontline states of Zimbabwe and Botswana and, also on Zambia which shares no common border with South Africa. It claimed the raids were aimed at African National Congress bases in these countries.

The attacks show the growing crisis of the Botha regime. Despite the massive repression it has proved totally incapable of quelling the unrest in the Black townships, some of which have developed into virtual 'no-go' areas. On Sunday, it uncovered what it claimed to be a major arms cache of the ANC.

These attacks were regarded as an 'embarrassment' by the British government. They judged they would not stabilise the situation in southern Africa. They also raise questions about Reagan's attack on Libya and 'terrorism'. Foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe, was therefore forced to 'condemn' the raids. Commonwealth general secretary Rampal also attacked this abstacle to 'our attempt to end apartheid by peaceful means.'

Meanwhile black South Africans have responded to Pretoria's latest barbarities with increased protest and mobilisations in the townships. There have been major demonstrations in the colleges in South Africa in the 24 hours following attacks.

But as no effective action is going to come from the British or US governments the movement of international solidarity with South Africa must respond to the latest atrocities of the apartheid regime by stepping up the pressure for full sanctions against South Africa.

In Britain support is already growing for the Freedom March organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement on Sunday 28 June. The latest attacks make that even more urgent. As part of the lead up to that demonstration, labour movement activists and solidarity campaigners everywhere must step up the pressure — and centre this campaign on the demand for total sanctions now against the apartheid regime.

**Demonstrate! AAM's South Africa Freedom March, 28 June**



# Socialist ACTION

## The attack on WAC and the Black Section

LAST WEEK'S *Tribune*, together with associated events at the Labour Party women's conference, and at some of the major trade union conferences, was a major clarification in British labour movement politics.

The coordination of the events, and their nature, showed that they came from the very highest quarters — from those around Neil Kinnock.

Since Neil Kinnock was elected leader of the Labour Party *Tribune* and the LCC has been trying to play a dual role. It has claimed that it is possible simultaneously to support the path on which Neil Kinnock is taking the Labour Party and to support those most under attack by capital and by Thatcher — the miners, women, people of Ireland, being right at the top of that list.

The left of the party pointed out, with varying degrees of politeness, that such a combination was impossible. Either you supported Kinnock and his path or you supported those whose demands must be met.

Subsequent events clarified that choice very starkly. Kinnock successively attacked the miners, those in the local government fight, the people of Ireland, and then tried to defuse the wave of protest following the US bombing of Libya.

But on one area there was an attempted to maintain a left face. This was the question of women and black people within the party. *Tribune* and the LCC had an opening on this because the left was backward. A white male dominated left is not going to be a thorough going socialist left — that follows from the nature of socialism itself.

But progressively, and much too slowly and weakly, the left of the party has been beginning to move forward. The Arthur Scargill who in the early 1970s had defended pin ups in *The Miner* in 1984-85 linked up totally with Women Against Pit Closures — and fought for its affiliation to the NUM against the opposition of the Communist Party and Kinnock's supporters in South Wales. Support for the Black Section has also dramatically increased on the left.

The touchstone votes on the question of women and black people within the party are those on the Women's Action Committee and the Black Section's demands for self-organisation within the party. Because an alliance within the labour movement must be based on respect for autonomy and self-decision.

Women do not want men who 'understand' their needs — because there are no men who understand their needs. Black people do not want whites who 'understand' racism because there are no whites who 'understand' racism. Women and black people can only ally with the men in the labour movement on the precondition they control their own organisations.

The problem for Kinnock et al however is that if women and black people do control their own organisations they will give them a very different content and policies to the present ones.

For a long period *Tribune* and the LCC kept quiet on this. They tried to support Kinnock and defend the interests of women and black people in the party.

And last week *Tribune* chose. It carried a piece entitled 'Did anti-black prejudice cost Labour crucial seats?'. The *New Statesman*, another organ of Kinnock, carried a similar piece.

The not very coded message was 'black candidates lose votes'. The fact that it was the failure of the Labour Party to combat racism in an area like Wandsworth — as is pointed out in the Black Section statement on our page 5 this week — that was at stake in the elections was ignored in favour of the old right wing 'don't select black candidates or we'll lose' line.

And as we all know according to Kinnock 'we must win at all costs', and as, 'black candidates cost votes', there is only one conclusion that can be drawn from that combination.

Equally significantly *Tribune* carried a long piece 'Constitutional Change will not win women's votes' which is an attack on the demands of WAC.

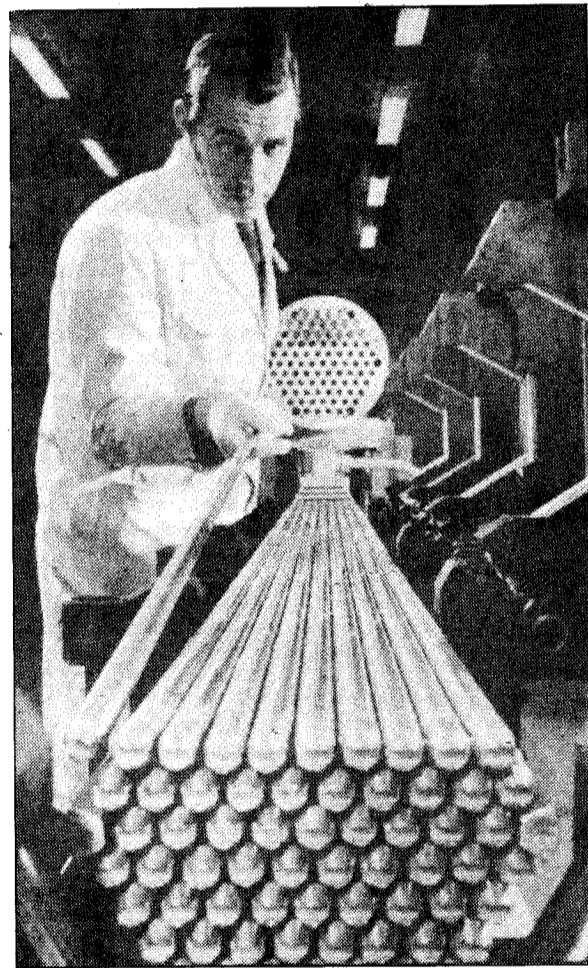
Simultaneously at the women's conference resolutions were moved to head off WAC's demands, and the party continued to attempt to boost the 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee against the Black Section.

Only one conclusion can be drawn. Kinnock's supporters have decided to move against WAC and the Black Section. The left should take careful note.

# Scargill demands nuclear free energy policy

ONE OF the key issues behind the miners strike was the government's running down of the mining industry in favour of unsafe nuclear power. Nuclear power now supplies 18 per cent of British electricity. Each nuclear power plant directly replaces 3,500 miners and a further 3,500 other jobs. The British nuclear power programme was openly aimed at weakening the National Union of Mineworkers — as was admitted in Cabinet minutes.

The Chernobyl disaster reminds us all that it is not just the NUM but everyone of us who are paying a catastrophic price in the threat posed by Britain's nuclear power programme. On last Saturday's *Any Questions* radio programme Arthur Scargill, president of the NUM, was asked his view on nuclear power. The following was his reply. It shows the enormous possibilities for the entire labour movement to campaign with the NUM against nuclear power, and for an energy policy based on coal and 'alternative' sources.



I FEEL very passionately about this question of nuclear power for two reasons. First of all being president of the NUM I've got a vested interest. But secondly, and far more important, I've got a vested interest as a member of the human race.

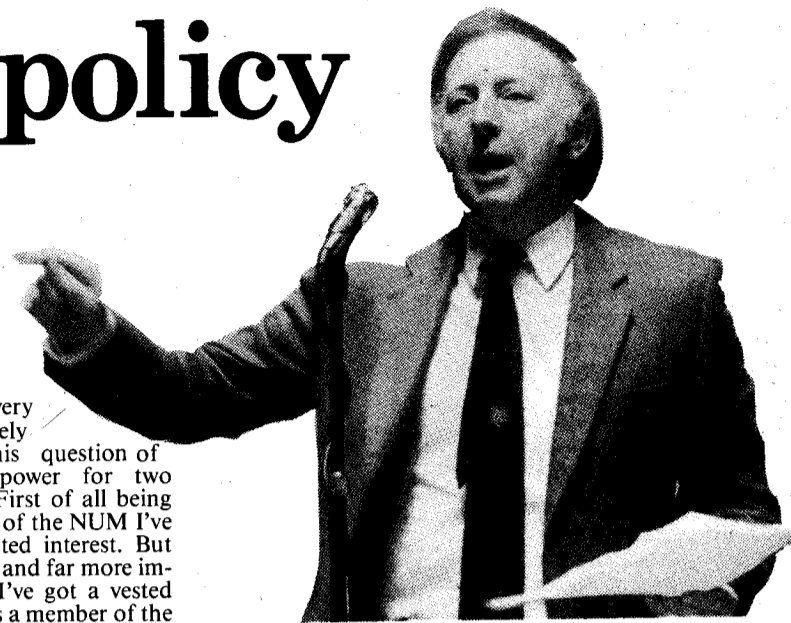
I have been for many years one of the leading members and the first chairperson of the British anti-nuclear campaign, which is opposed to all the development of nuclear power in Britain, whether it is Magnox or the Advanced Gas Reactor or the fast-breeder reactors.

Let's get a couple of things very clear. First we don't need nuclear power. Secondly, in terms of cost, if you take the cost of a new nuclear power station like Sizewell — which this government wants — and add to that the decommissioning costs as projected by the French, you're talking about £1680 million. Compare that with the cost of building a coal-fired station: at £737 million difference, the coal fired station is much cheaper.

Thirdly we have to take into account the safety factors. There is simply no solution to safety problems created by nuclear power.

I challenge anyone who supports nuclear power to answer four points.

One, can they guarantee that workers in the nuclear industry will not continue to become contaminated with radiation and as a consequence get cancer and leukemia as



they have done in British nuclear power stations?

Second, can they guarantee that there will not be another nuclear accident — not only like the one at Chernobyl but also like the one that we had at Windscale in 1957 when radiation levels were measured as far away as Norway and Sweden. We've still got people in this country dying as a consequence — with cancer deaths in Cumbria and Lancashire region 50 per cent higher?

### Pollute

Thirdly, can they guarantee that plutonium, which is produced by nuclear power for the production of atomic weapons, will not fall into the hands of some nuclear nut-case?

And fourthly can they guarantee that nuclear waste will not continue to pollute our planet and our seas, bearing in mind that the Irish sea is now the most polluted stretch of water in the world?

If the answer to any one of those questions is 'no', they can't guarantee it, that should be enough to stop the nuclear power programme. If the answer to all four questions is no, then there should be no

question that it should be stopped.

Finally let me say this. There is an alternative energy programme that should be put into effect. We, the NUM, reached an agreement and signed it with the government — not only the Labour government but the Tory government as well — based primarily on coal but looking towards the day when we have wind, wave, tide, barrage power, and solar energy. Because, if we're realists, then we ought to be developing alternative energy sources as well: alternative energy sources that are in the interests of people in this country. And therefore the answer is we want to stop nuclear power now and develop a real energy policy based initially on coal but with the alternative energy sources rapidly coming up behind.

### Stop

If we are honest with ourselves, we have not tackled the question in the wake of the disaster in the Soviet Union nor in the light of the evidence that's available. The answer is a simple one. We should stop nuclear power and develop an alternative energy policy, Now!

## Demand to close US bases grows

THE UNITED States attack on Libya launched from bases in Britain raised a massive sentiment in favour of closing all US bases in this country, including among rank and file members of the Labour Party. The first test of that feeling within the party came at last weekend's national Labour women's conference held in Rothsay on the Isle of Bute.

Conference carried an emergency resolution which noted the attack on Libya and called for the removal of all 'US bases from Britain' and a commitment from Labour to withdraw from the NATO alliance. A fringe meeting called by Labour CND on the theme of US Bases Out of Britain was one of the most popular and best attended at conference, attracting 150 delegates and visitors.

The audience heard Jo Richardson MP and Diane Abbott call for bases to be closed. Another speaker, Azucena Quinteros of the El Salvador women's organisation, AMES, pointed out the role of Reagan and his government in Central America and the massive aid to the liberation fight of peoples

in that region that the demand to close US bases in Britain would bring.

Diane Abbott also made the link between US

By Carol Turner

bases and the issue of nuclear power, calling for the resignation of environment spokesperson John Cunningham, whose main role in the public debate raised by the Chernobyl disaster has been to attack party policy and to insist that Labour is committed to maintaining civil nuclear power. Diane's call for his resignation was backed up by another speaker, Joan Ruddock of CND.

The same sentiment in favour of getting rid of all US bases from this country was expressed in a re-

cent meeting in Hackney, East London, attended by over 200 people. There Tony Benn stressed that: 'The word terrorism defines your attitude to who does a thing, not what it is they do.'

'Violence and killing,' he said, 'are what governments, like those of Britain and the United States, do in order to impose their will on the world. No one can believe the US stands for democracy and freedom when you think of the dictators they support and the elected governments they have overthrown.'

He stressed the need to strengthen Labour's policy by committing the next Labour government to removing all US bases from this country.

CND was also represented at that meeting by new general secretary Meg Beresford. The campaign has played a major role in mobilising against the attack on Libya by calling a sit-down demonstration outside the

US embassy on the Saturday following the bombing.

This lead has not been followed up however, despite a decision by the national council of the campaign that it would be.

Council instructed the CND leadership to draw up a petition noting the attack on Libya and calling for the removal of all US bases, the publication of secret treaties and opposition to Star Wars. This was intended to be handed to MPs at a lobby of parliament already called by CND for Tuesday 8 June.

However, when the petition was circulated at the end of last week, it became clear that the campaign leadership have — once again — decided to side-step on this issue.

The petition has actually been designed to be circulated constituency-wide and handed individually to each MP, thus dispersing the massive support which such a national initiative would be

likely to attract. Just in case that wasn't enough, the CND leadership have also decided to totally ignore the decision of national council and have called only for the removal of American nuclear bases.

While there is every indication that the sentiments roused by the US attack on Libya have not abated, the golden-gift opportunity this offered CND to rebuild the flagging fortunes of the campaign has been wasted. This is the responsibility of a misleadership that sees its job as toning things down rather than sharpening them up in line with world events.

A petition from CND on the lines decided by national council would have offered a clear focus for activists everywhere to continue the pressure for the removal of the bases. Instead the leadership has come up with yet another dead-duck of an idea designed to stifle effective protest.

# Cunningham pledges nuclear nightmare



After Chernobyl, Warsaw medics issue iodine to Polish children: Thatcher would have us believe that such an accident couldn't happen in Britain

'EVERY LABOUR government since Attlee has been committed to an expansion of civil nuclear power,' said Labour environment spokesperson Jack Cunningham on last Sunday's *This Week, Next Week*, 'and we are not going to change that because of one conference decision.' This is a position that he and party leader Neil Kinnock have doggedly maintained throughout the recent discussions sparked by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant meltdown, including in the parliamentary debate last week.

During that debate Stan Orme, shadow spokesperson on energy called for cutting down nuclear power, phasing out the oldest reactors and replacing them with coal-fired stations, and increasing research on alternative and renewable energy sources. While Orme did not argue for a planned phasing out pursued with urgency, along the lines of the conference resolution, his position at least more closely approached party policy.

Dr Cunningham suffered no such inhibitions. His speech stressed his commitment to civil nuclear power, dismissed any notion that it damaged the environment, and argued for more openness in the industry, the better to sell it to a sceptical public.

The main criticism of government policy during this debate was about

how, not whether, to develop the nuclear industry. But some Labour MPs — noticeably Tony Benn and Allan Roberts — forcefully argued for a nuclear free energy policy in line with party conference.

By Paul Atkin

Such a significant policy difference over nuclear power is reminiscent of the arguments over unilateral nuclear disarmament at the last general election, when figures such as Callaghan publicly attacked party policy and helped contribute to losing Labour the election.

The two issues, of course, are linked. The government is concerned to press ahead with shallow-site disposal of low level radioactive waste the quicker to proceed with development of a new generation of nuclear reactors and expansion of

reprocessing at Sellafield. This would make Britain one of the main producers of weapon grade plutonium, in a situation where the USA has frozen development of nuclear power since 1978. The development of nuclear power by its junior NATO partners is therefore crucial for the USA's war drive and rearmament programme.

In that context it is relevant to query the Labour front bench commitment to stop the military use of plutonium produced by civil nuclear power stations. The bottom line of the party defence policy is a blank cheque commitment to NATO. A Labour government which maintained nuclear power would be under intolerable pressure to supply the US with the weapons material it needs.

During the parliamentary debate both Jack Cunningham and Peter Walker, in a sickening display of bipartisanship, argued that the energy needs of a planet with an increasing population can only be met by nuclear power. The British government, in providing only £14 million for research into alternative energy supplies, seems determined to make that a fait accompli.

## Ban all nuclear power call

IN THE wake of Chernobyl, Kinnock and Cunningham have taken pains to point out that they have no intention of following party policy on nuclear power. In fact they support the development of that industry in Britain. TONY BENN and ERIC HEFFER however have produced a paper for the party's national executive which takes up the positions of last year's conference. 'The authors of the paper,' they say, 'believe that it is important that the public should be told the real position' and they call on the Labour NEC to set up a working party to prepare a statement for this year's conference. We reproduce in full below their paper to the NEC.

THIS paper argues that the Chernobyl disaster has now made it very urgent for the NEC to follow up the policy agreed at the 1985 annual conference calling for all nuclear power to be phased out when the Labour government takes office after the next election, and to spell out how it will be done. Members will recall that the conference resolution on fuel policy, which was carried by 3,902,000 votes to 2,408,000 was absolutely specific in its reference to nuclear power, as the text of the resolution set out below shows.

All nuclear science and technology was originally motivated by the desire to produce atomic weapons, and the effort by American and British scientists, and the money that went into it during the war, was for that purpose. After the war the US legislated to stop the exchange of information, and Britain found itself cut off from its old partners.

After Mr Attlee had decided that Britain needed an atom bomb, the work to produce one had to be done without US cooperation, and it required the building of a reactor to produce the warheads, a task that was undertaken at Windscale in a great hurry, and at a

time when little was known about the hazards involved.

Windscale is still a military installation, and though, while the UK continues to produce nuclear weapons, it will be needed for that purpose, the commitment of the party to close down our nuclear weapons programme will remove its reason for existence. Moreover much of the high cost of research and development of all nuclear technology is still paid for out of the defence budget, and when British nuclear weapons are decommissioned all these costs will fall entirely on the electricity consumer, radically altering the economic basis for nuclear power.

It is important to understand that, despite all the talk about Atoms for Peace, civil nuclear power is still seen primarily as a source for weapons grade plutonium, and the whole programme provides a 'safe' cover for nuclear weapons. One of the clearest examples of this has come to light recently when the government was forced to admit that for years — including all the years when Labour was in power — plutonium from our own civil power stations was going to the USA for military purposes. This also explains

why so many third world countries have wanted to build nuclear power stations, as the first step towards the production of their own.

Despite all the assurances about the relative cheapness of nuclear power, as compared to coal, the published figures often did not compare like with like, as for example on the costs of R and D (see above); the costs of decommissioning old nuclear stations, which the French now admit could run into hundreds of millions of pounds per station, and the cost of storing nuclear waste, for which no safe method has yet been found. Even allowing for all this the Department of Energy had to admit that there was no significant difference between the generating costs of a new coal or nuclear base-load station of the same size.

Although there are hazards in all energy industries the scale, duration and nature of the risks with nuclear power are in a class of their own, and cannot be compared to deaths or injuries in ordinary industrial accidents. This is in part because of the magnitude of the nuclear accidents that could occur, in part because the consequential hazards to life and the environment, which can cross frontiers and spread world-wide, and also because of the legacy of nuclear risks for future generations, which we cannot be sure they could handle.

The Chernobyl disaster underlines all these facts and we must not be put off by the arguments that are now being used to reassure the British people.

While it is essential that all governments be open

about nuclear matters the charges that the USSR is especially secretive and incompetent are wholly false. The USSR has always been widely respected for the skill of its nuclear scientists and, at the top academic level, there has always been the closest cooperation between Soviet, American, British and French atomic experts, who have a high regard for each other's abilities.

In particular the USSR has been the most meticulous nation in the efforts it has made to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, which cannot be said for some of the nuclear 'salesmen' in the West. The pursuit of that line of anti-Soviet argument is dictated by cold war factors that are completely contemptible, and are a part of the cover-up by the British government itself, to conceal the true facts of the nuclear danger from the British people.

The 'it could not happen here' argument is wholly untrue as we have had some major accidents, serious leakages, and some near misses too, as at Windscale and Bradwell, quite apart from the accidents in the USA. To pretend that we are exempt from the risks is to deceive people, and human error as well as a design fault could happen anywhere.

In the West we are open about nuclear matters' is wholly untrue too, since there have been endless cover-ups by the nuclear authorities in London, Washington and Paris, which can be easily documented. In particular, the CIA and the AEA collaborated in concealing, from British ministers the 1958 explosion at the Soviet reprocessing plant at Khyshym; and the theft of 200 tons of uranium from Euratom was similarly withheld.

For all these, and many other reasons the decision

taken at the 1985 conference was the correct one, and public opinion is now moving rapidly towards the same view, and will expect the Labour Party to have a crystal clear policy statement in its manifesto at the time of the next general election, and it must cover all aspects of the matter.

We therefore recommend to the NEC that we should reaffirm our support for the conference decision, and set up a working party immediately, to prepare a more detailed policy statement for this year's conference, designed to secure the following objectives when Labour returns to power:

- 1 The cancellation of the order for a PWR at Sizewell.
- 2 The abandonment of the plans for a new reprocessing plant at Dounreay.
- 3 The discontinuance of the reprocessing work at Sellafield, and the redirection of all work at that and

other establishments, towards nuclear safety, the clearing up of all the existing installations and the safe disposal of nuclear waste.

4 The progressive decommissioning of all nuclear power stations, starting with the oldest, and their replacement by coal and other sources of energy, diverting the necessary scientific, engineering and industrial effort to that purpose.

5 The implementation of this policy so as to maximise the use of the existing skills now available in the workforce at every level.

6 The development of an integrated energy policy for Britain, in consultation with the trade unions concerned, and providing for common ownership, democratic self-management, and full public accountability.

Tony Benn and Eric Heffer  
12 May 1986

### 1985 fuel policy resolution:

This conference views with abhorrence and anxiety the present exploitation and abuse of the environment, and in particular the potentially catastrophic effects upon the environment of the continued use of nuclear power.

1 Conference therefore calls for a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants because of:

- a) the links between the civil nuclear industry and the nuclear weapons programme,
- b) the obvious falseness of the Central Electricity Generating Board and the nuclear industry's claim that nuclear power produces 'cheap' electricity when neither can estimate the cost of decommissioning a nuclear power plant,
- c) the threat to civil liberties posed by maintaining security at power stations,
- d) the dangers of disposal of nuclear waste and the pollution frequently caused,
- e) all nuclear activity constitutes a long-term health danger through radiation (from generation, transportation and re-processing) to those who work in the industry as well as to the public, the environment and to the health

of future generations.

- 2 Conference calls upon the Labour opposition and the next Labour government to formulate and implement:
  - a) the funding of measures for the de-sulphurisation of coal to solve the acid rain problem;
  - b) the funding of research into the provision of alternative energy forms ie hydro-electricity, wind power etc;
  - c) the restoration of the research grant from the existing £5 million to its previous £25 million to the National Coal Board for research into producing liquid fuel from coal;
  - d) a national programme of energy saving;
  - e) the re-cycling of waste and pollution control;
  - f) research into safer means of nuclear waste disposal;
  - g) the stopping of the export of all plutonium abroad;
  - h) the setting up of policy working groups (at all levels) to carry out these policies.

- 3 Conference calls upon the Labour opposition to begin discussion with management and unions in the nuclear power and energy supply industries to plan for and provide alternative employment for those currently employed in the nuclear industry.



# Black Section successes in local government elections



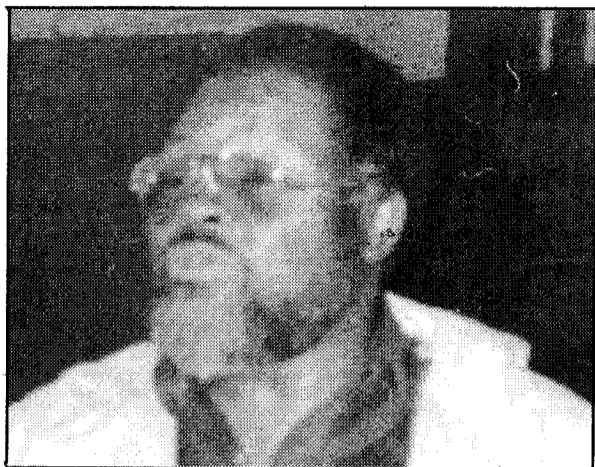
**THE LABOUR PARTY** Black Section campaign has scored spectacular victories in the local government elections. Nowhere has this been more significant than in London.

We predicted there would be a threefold increase in the number of black councillors elected four years ago, and with the total now standing at more than 200 that has come true.

The 45 strong ruling Labour group on the newly formed Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has 10 black members. Three black leaders of councils — all of them prominent supporters of Black Sections — have been elected in London town halls. Brent is now led by Merle Amory, Lambeth by Linda Bellos, vice chair of the black section national committee, and Haringey by Bernie Grant.

Fleet Street gutter press

had most hoped for a Labour defeat in Haringey. They were banking on what they described as the 'Bernie Factor' — an imagined backlash by racist voters against Bernie Grant's statement in defence of Tottenham black youth that the police got a 'bloody good hiding' during last year's rebellion. This 'Bernie Factor' turned out to be a resounding win for Labour in Haringey and a big increase in Bernie's own vote. The black electorate had spoken.



*Bernie Grant: his defence of black youth won Haringey an increased majority in the local elections*

Brent, the north London borough which is 55 per cent black, saw the largest increase — there are now 19 black councillors, more than a third

of the ruling Labour group. Meanwhile Lambeth in south London has kept its pre-election total of eight black councillors. To do this, six new black

candidates were found to replace the same number who were undemocratically removed by the Tory judges as a result of their stand in defence of jobs and services and against rate capping.

None of the new Lambeth eight is a 'back bencher' — such has been the impact of Black Section lobbying within the local Labour parties. The tally is one black leader, who has an automatic right to be on all the committees; one mayor; one deputy chief whip; three chairs of committees, (police, planning applications, and amenities) and six vice chairs. Black Section supporters have a real opportunity to effectively run the local state described under the previous

leader, Ted Knight, as the 'Socialist Republic of Lambeth'.

The vast majority of black Labour councillors elected to the ILEA and town halls across the country are Black Section supporters. They will caucus together to demand a tight for anti-racist policies on employment, housing, education, policing and social services. But the black community, whose huge and loyal vote put them there, must play a continuing part as an organised voice inside and outside the Labour Party.

The alternative is disaster. In Wandsworth, which is more than 20 per cent black, the Tories held onto power by just one seat. There are just four black councillors — an increase of one. Two black

candidates placed in tough seats, narrowly lost. The local Labour parties, particularly Battersea, failed to select anything like a fair proportion of black candidates in winnable seats, and they paid the price. Black people will not be treated as voting fodder for white candidates.

The Black Section says organise for black representation and black rights now. Support your black councillors and hold them to account. Black Sections have put race equality and black representation firmly on Britain's political agenda. No political party can ever again ignore our demands.

**Marc Wadsworth,**  
National Chair Black Section

Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

## West Indian News attacks 'Black and Asian advisory committee'

**ATTACK'S ON** Labour's unelected and divisive 'Black and Asian advisory committee' have spread further into the black community. Last week's *West Indian News* devoted the greater part of a page to a slashing criticism of the committee under the headline 'Labour is under threat once more'. We are printing here major excerpts from that attack.



IN the midst of all its euphoria following last week's success at the polls, the Labour Party is choking over a small bone that is the black people who vote for the party.

To begin with, one out of every eight votes the Labour Party gets is cast by a black hand.

And over the last couple of years, those black hands have been reaching out for a say in how the country the Labour Party hopes to be running within the next year and a half should be run.

The Labour Party at first would have nothing to do with it. It tried to rubbish the movement but it just wouldn't disappear.

In desperation, the masterminds in Walworth Road came up with a peach of an idea. They would nominate — or in simpler language, put up — a few trusted people among whom would be a scattering of loyal black faces and they would talk for all the black people in the country.

Alas, this appears not to be working either.

The future of the Labour Party's race advisory committee is in serious doubt. Members are leaving left, right and centre.

Southall Constituency Labour Party, for instance, where the blessed leader Neil Kinnock lives — as does the senile white MP Sid Bidwell known to the local Asian godfathers as Bidwellsingh — is heavily under threat from pressure for a black candidate and is in turmoil over aforementioned race advisory committee.

Insiders say that having a race advisory committee is like having the kind of advisory committee set up in the colonies and composed of tame poodles of imperialist rulers of India, Africa and

the Caribbean, whatever that means.

I am not in the habit of vilifying our four legged friends — I have a fine alley cat called Beulah who gives me hours of pleasure just watching her sleep — but I get the message.

A lot of people have gotten the message as well. In fact so many people have got the message that the campaign mounted against the ah, race advisory committee, has resulted in some notable successes.

For example, Ms Trudi de Haney, the black trade union official who was nominated for one of the two East Midlands seats.

As we said last week, Ms de Haney 'would not want to be rubbing shoulders with the NEC (the Labour Party decision making body) under the guise of being representative of black comrades who in no way had asked me to represent them.'

And she has withdrawn. In other words, she has told the power brokers in Walworth Road to shove it.

I am informed that the other representative selected to speak for the East Midlands, Mr Keith Vaz, is also set to chuck it in as well.

So too is his sister, Valerie, who is harbouring Parliamentary ambitions for Southall. She is most likely to do the expedient thing and withdraw from her questionable role as 'observer'.

And London with its five candidates is soon to pull out which effectively puts the race advisory committee in a tailspin.

Meanwhile, I can disclose that Mr Virendra Sharma, a former Southall councillor, has been appointed the first black full time official at the People's Party headquarters.

Surprise! surprise! given the Kinnock connection.

Mr Sharma is an executive committee member of that well known rightist and paternalistic organisation known as the Fabians who argue that any problem can be solved if you throw sufficient brains at it.

As you can expect, Mr Sharma is a wobbly supporter of the black section. In other words, his support depends on his audience.

But his position is now untenable, having taken Mr Kinnock's bread and run.

His job as 'ethnic minorities officer' is to drum up black votes but there is no policy responsibility which has angered the black community or those elements of it who are in a position to get angry who are used to these antics in the discredited race relations industry.

Mr Sharma is on record in the house journal as saying that his job 'is not to confront Black Sections'.

But whether he likes it or not, his occupation of the hot seat will mean Black Sections will inevitably confront him.

The heart bleeds.

## TGWU members call for black section support

A BIRMINGHAM branch of the TGWU recently passed a resolution calling on the transport union to support Labour Party Black Section.

The resolution said: 'This branch in noting the serious under-representation of black members as full-time officials in the union welcomes the decision of the 1984 Trades Union Congress which called upon all affiliates to set up appropriate structures so that black members are adequately represented.'

'The relative success of the Labour Party Black Section campaign, in such a short time indicates that self-organisation by black workers can be a very effective way of combatting racism and creating equality. This branch calls upon the TGWU rules revision conference in Aberdeen to support the setting up of black caucuses within this union and Black Sections within the Labour Party'.

The resolution comes too late for submission to the rules revision conference, but a Black Section fringe meeting at the TGWU mid-June conference will go ahead. Lobbying is already underway to find ways of raising the resolution under emergency procedures and from the floor of conference.

● Labour Party Black Section fringe meeting at the TGWU conference will be held on Tuesday 17 June, 12-2pm, at the Gloucester Hotel, Union Street, Aberdeen (only a few minutes walk from the conference hall).

## Black Section advances in Birmingham

THE BLACK Section gained a major victory in the local government elections in Birmingham with the election of five new black Labour Party councillors — all supporters of the Black Section.

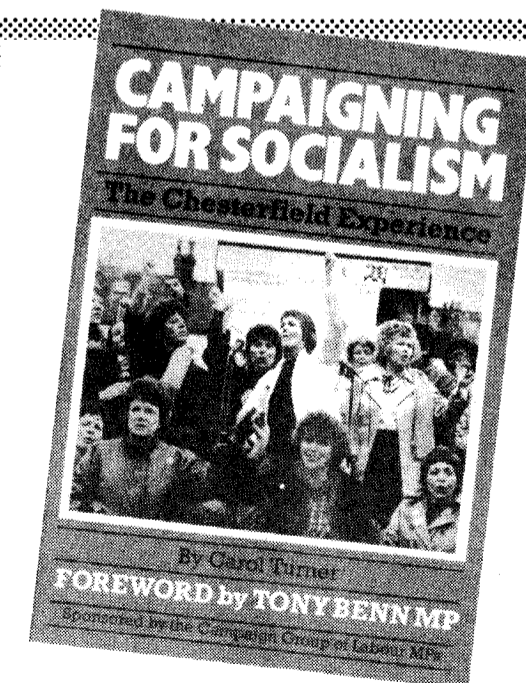
They included Gurdev

Manku, who moved the 1985 Ladywood resolution on Black Sections to the Labour Party conference, and Sibble Spence.

All are members of the Black 'Summerfield' caucus which has now been formed on Birmingham council.

## Reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally! Picket the Labour Party NEC!

The Black Section, supported by the Labour Committee on Ireland, have called a picket of the Labour Party national executive on Wednesday 28 May, starting at 10am outside the Walworth Road headquarters (nearest tube: Elephant and Castle). Be there — and take your Labour Party and trade union banners.



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



## News

# A turning point at women's conference

THE 1986 LABOUR women's conference which took place in Rothesay this weekend marked the most significant turning point in the development of the Labour women's organisation since the Newcastle women's conference which first passed some of the Women's Action Committee (WAC) demands. The realignment of the unions and sections of the Labour Party membership that Kinnock achieved in the Labour Party at last year's conference was introduced with a vengeance into the Rothesay women's conference.

The mechanism for this realignment was a resolution introduced by NUPE on women's organisation. The resolution proposed introducing a trade union block vote into women's conference, dressed up with worthy promises of a consultation exercise aimed at giving women's conference a more significant say.

Support for this resolution brought together an unholy alliance of NUPE with the hard right unions that have traditionally been totally hostile to any strengthening of the women's organisation — ASTMS, AUEW and the EETPU for example. Indeed Mel Read of ASTMS, who has frequently taken the platform at women's conference as the vanguard of the opposition to WAC, was once more to the fore — this time arguing for the NUPE resolution.

She made a sophisticated speech talking about the advances that women are making in the unions, and how this experience needs to be brought more centrally in-

to the women's conference in order to strengthen it. Her speech undoubtedly swayed a number of women from the women's sections.

By Jude Woodward

It might perhaps have had less effect had ASTMS's real hypocrisy been revealed. ASTMS has steadily reduced its delegation to women's conference over the last few years, so that this year its delegation consisted of Mel Read and only one other woman. This is what ASTMS thinks adequate to reflect its 77,000-plus members, when it could send up to 20 delegates.

Rather than women from the women's sections and councils ignoring the views of trade union women, the truth is that unions like ASTMS are concerned that rank and file union delegates to women's conference might well start to apply the WAC approach to the situation of women in the unions themselves.

The final piece in the

alliance of forces behind the resolution fell into place on the first morning of conference, when the LCC circulated a leaflet calling for support for the NUPE proposal. Indeed the resolution was seconded by Irene Dinning representing Glasgow Central, who is a leading member of the LCC in Scotland. She used her speech to sharply distance herself from WAC.

This is the first time that the LCC has directly opposed the positions of WAC in the women's conference. Indeed the LCC's entire claim to be a major component in WAC's support was finally exposed as a fraud at this conference. WAC's key campaigning initiative at conference was holding the shadow elections for the women's places on the NEC. The LCC did not play any role in nominating women to stand in the elections, and remained detached from the whole campaign.

This alliance of unions from NUPE through to the EETPU, together with the LCC, which came behind the NUPE resolution, is the same alliance that Kinnock brought together in the party as a whole last year. These forces were only narrowly defeated in the women's conference.

The NUPE resolution fell with 206 votes for and 256 against.

Those opposed to this alliance in the conference found themselves severely

weakened in that strong left unions which support WAC, like the NUM, do not send representatives to women's conference.

This will be used to strengthen the hand of all those ranged behind the NUPE resolution over the next year to argue that women's conference is not representative of the unions and to build up momentum behind the proposal to introduce the block vote.

Answering this campaign will have to be the key focus of WAC's attention in the coming year. We will have to start by explaining that few unions actually filled the present possible union delegation of 20 places to women's conference.

The problem is not that women's conference is unrepresentative of the trade unions, but that the unions do not bother sending their representatives to women's conference, preferring to ignore it. This year some have moved in.

All in all this was the most important women's conference for years. Previously the union bureaucracies have attempted to ignore the women's conference. But now it is too important. This time they moved in to try to take it over. They did so with proposals which were aimed not to strengthen the position of women, but to strengthen the hold of the union bureaucracy, the male

union bureaucracy, over women.

The impact is going to be very great. Because the problem women face is not the involvement of unions in the women's conference. The problem is how the vote of women in the unions is expressed in the conference. Will women, or men and the union bureaucracy, control that vote? The net effect of this year's conference will be that the whole question of women's relation to the Labour Party women's conference is going to be pushed into the unions themselves.

The Black Section has rightly made a major turn into the trade unions to stimulate black self-organisation there, and to fight against the trade union bureaucracy for the demands of the Black Section in the Labour Party. Women must adopt a similar policy. Strengthening or creating the self organisation of women within the unions, taking up there the fight for the demands of WAC within the Labour Party, by these means creating a movement, an organisation, of women across the entire labour movement.

Self organisation of women, control of their own organisations across both the Labour Party and unions always was the need. This year's women's conference shows it is now a burning necessity in both parts of the movement.

## Wales conference

NEIL KINNOCK in his address to the Wales Labour Party conference last weekend said that nuclear power would be phased out over decades. An emergency resolution in the wake of the Chernobyl accident, calling for the phasing out of nuclear power stations by a Labour government, should give him an indication of the strength of feeling among the party membership in Wales who passed the resolution with more than a two-thirds majority. An executive resolution condemning the US invasion of Libya was also passed, but an emergency resolution from Swansea, which called also for US bases out, was not put to conference.

Support for the print workers with strong condemnation of the EETPU was carried by conference. David Lewis of SOGAT said that: 'In purging our contempt we are not moving away from the dispute.' He also called for a Labour government to repeal existing anti-trade union legislation.

Resolutions calling for an end to the privatisation of British Rail, buses, British Telecom, water, forestry and the energy industry were all carried, but weakened by conference's refusal to accept clauses which called for nationalisation without compensation. Devolution and a Welsh assembly were back on the agenda, as movers were concerned that the Labour Party was losing votes both to the nationalists and the Alliance in Wales. However this resolution was remitted pending a final report of a regional executive working party.

Its interim report called on the next Labour government to establish a

'planning council for Wales' comprising the secretary of state, local government representatives, the Wales TUC and Wales CBI. Hardly devolution. But it is about time the national question was discussed by the Wales Labour Party.

By Maggie Simpson, Cardiff Women's Council Delegate (personal capacity)

WAC supporters were taken aback when the executive recommended a rule change so that the Wales women's conference could elect its own seats to the Wales executive. It was put to a card vote by the TGWU.

After years of struggle by WAC supporters, conference passed this rule change. WAC maintains reservations about the rule change as the executive has also seen fit to decide how the women's organisation

should hold its elections: two of the seats to be elected by women from the women's councils etc, two by women from the trade unions and affiliated organisations. Wales WAC believes that the women's conference should decide how these elections are organised.

The Women's Action Committee made further gains, and for the first time the WAC slate, comprising three WAC supporters and one supporter of the *Militant* newspaper, was elected to the Wales executive. There was also a shift to the 'soft left' in the constituency section.

Conference heavily defeated the resolution moved by the EETPU for reselection of parliamentary candidates to be on the basis of one member one vote. But the progressive work of the conference was put in jeopardy by the destructive resolution calling for the expulsion of all *Militant* supporters.

Neil Kinnock in his address demanded *Militant* supporters 'have the courage of their convictions' and set up a separate party. Delegates described *Militant* supporters as 'misfits', likened them to fascists, and called them 'cancers' and other such epithets. The executive called for support for the resolution, and with even the NUM delegation voting in favour, it was easily carried by conference.

## WAC victory in shadow elections

THE WAC slate for women's conference shadow elections won a comfortable victory last weekend.

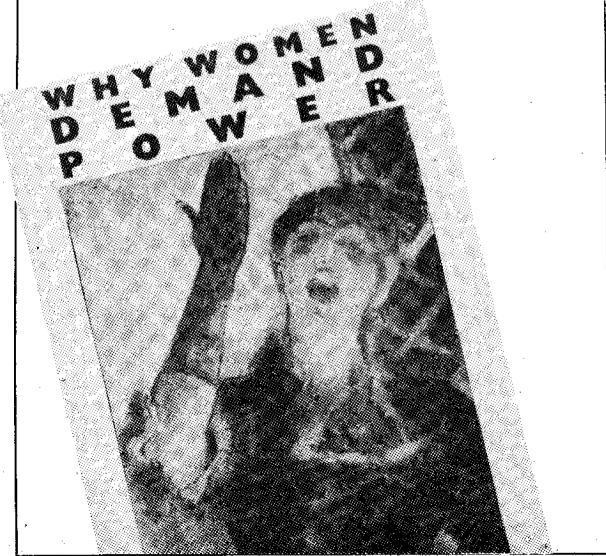
The five successful candidates were elected with the following votes: Diane Abbott 226, Clare Short 226, Joan Maynard 212, Mandy Moore 154 and Frances Morrell 99. In sixth place was Margaret Beckett with 90 votes.

The total number of ballot papers issued for the election was 381; 75 were

spoiled. A number of trade unions and some of the right wing from women's sections wrote 'unconstitutional' across their papers.

Nonetheless, the shadow elections represent a big victory for WAC. Conference passed a resolution to campaign for these women to be elected to the women's places on the national executive at this autumn's elections at party conference. Between now and then the fight is on to make sure that happens.

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



# IRELAND UNFREE

THE 8 MAY issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, carried an editorial marking an important Sinn Fein statement. It looked at the weaknesses of the Republican movement in relation to the Irish trade unions, and the bureaucratisation of these unions themselves. We are reprinting *An Phoblacht's* editorial.

THE trade union movement has made a major contribution to Irish society over the years in defending the interests of workers against the often violent opposition and venom of unscrupulous employers.

Folk memories of the Great Dublin Lock-out in 1913 are alive and well, as are memories of the general strikes during the Tan War and a host of isolated, though no less heroic gestures of workers' solidarity and commitment to achieving a new social and economic order.

The Irish trade union movement has been fortunate in having had the services of remarkable leaders such as James Connolly, James Larkin, and Peadar O'Donnell.

The story of trade unionism in Ireland is the story of a struggle against an establishment which stands with the interests of capitalism. Yet, unfortunately, it has all too often been the story of compromise between an out-of-touch trade union bureaucracy and that very same establishment.

While the trade union movement and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), in particular, remains the only mass organisation of the working class, it is difficult to see what the long-term objectives of the ICTU are and whether its leadership are on the same wavelength as the union membership they purport to represent.

Can union personnel who earn up to £40,000 plus perks, realistically represent the interests of the ordinary union membership, not to mention the interests of the growing number of unemployed? We think not.

The ICTU leadership and the entire professional bureaucracy which ordinary union members support financially is clearly operating along the same lines and the same standards that are part and parcel of capitalism — inequality.

James Connolly warned against the 'aristocracy of labour' which would divide craftworkers from labourers and so on. Yet today the trade unions are divided along those very lines. The situation is further complicated with the growth of clerical, professional and even managerial unions all negotiating on their own behalf and jealously protecting their position against the next strata in the pyramid.

Was this the objective of trade unionism — to create a mirror image of capitalist *me-feinism* and the 'I'm all right Jack' mentality, or was it about creating the socialist republic in which need rather than greed would be the basis of material reward in society?

If we take an honest look at the trade union movement in Ireland then we might wonder if Connolly has been forgotten. If we look at the well-fed bureaucrats and very revolutionary who constituted the majority of participants in the May Day parade in Dublin last week, we might well ask if the basic tenets of trade unionism have any relevance to the working-class people of this country, or if the careerists (who always seem to outnumber the genuine people on trade union platforms) have bored the people off the streets and into increased cynicism.

If this is the case then the Republican Movement is largely to blame because, for too many years, we abandoned the cause of labour and allowed the self-seekers and bureaucrats to abandon the socialist and republican principles upon which the Irish trade union movement was built. Through the efforts of the Sinn Fein Trade Union Department, this situation is changing. Sinn Fein members and supporters can accelerate this change by:

1. Being active in their union in an open and non-opportunistic manner.
2. Fighting for a republican position within the ICTU.
3. Working openly with all progressive and national forces and individuals within the ICTU on the basis of broad agreement on national, social and economic issues.
4. Working for the establishment of a trade union movement and leadership which is based on the principles of democracy and accountability and which is committed to ending fragmentation and disunity within the trade union movement.
5. Securing the building of alliances between the trade union movement and other oppressed and marginalised groups such as the unemployed, women, youth, travellers, tenants, small farmers, etc.
6. Securing effective solidarity action in support of workers and oppressed people generally.

In short — get involved!



SINCE THE end of last year a powerful new development of the struggle in South Africa has taken place. The launching of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) was widely reported in the world press. Alongside this the African National Congress (ANC) issued the call for the creation of street committees and similar mass elected organisations in the townships. In line with this the May Day appeal of Cosatu, calling for a general strike on that day, included a call for the creation of 'street and area committees'.

We print here an account of the development of the street committees. And excerpts from the article 'Dual power and the creation of people's committees' from the April issue of the ANC's magazine *Sechaba*. This explained the ANC's call for the creation of street committees.

The May Day appeal of Cosatu is reprinted on page 9 in our international coverage.



# A NEW P

establishment of people's power in these areas, however rudimentary and precarious, is of great significance for the further advancement of our struggle.

The 3 March *Sowetan*, a Black-run newspaper that all Black police as well as community council members, have been driven out of Langa and KwaNobuhle townships, outside Uitenhage. 'Because many activists are detained and subjected to alleged harassment once they become known to the police,' the *Sowetan* reported, 'community organisations have decided that street committees should run — more or less — the affairs of the townships. If a committee member is detained, another is selected to fill the vacuum. Anonymity is observed strictly.'

These anonymous activists are commonly called the 'comrades,' or in the Eastern Cape by the Xhosa-language equivalent, *maqabane*. Most are in their teens and 20s.

## The street committees

EARLIER THIS month, the South African army surrounded the black township of Alexandra near Johannesburg. Its aim was to attempt to smash the system of control of the township by its black inhabitants.

Elected street committees, area organisations, the Alexandra Action Committee, popular courts, elementary forms of taxation had been established. Coordination with Cosatu affiliated unions, such as the Metal and Allied Workers Union, had been created.

While the organisation of the population, and its lack of weapons, was not able to prevent the army and police entering the township the South African state was unable to establish any lasting control. It was purely and simply an army of occupation surrounded by a sea of an increasingly organised black population.

The development of mass organisation of the population in Alexandra was tremendously strengthened following four days of violent confrontations with the police and army in February. In the fighting between the population of the township and the police and army the apartheid regime's control of the town was smashed. Several dozen black fighters were killed. But all resident black police and members of the local quisling 'black municipal council' had to be evacuated from the township.

What is taking place in Alexandra is under way in other black townships as well. New forms of local mass organisation, commonly called 'street committees,' are emerging. In conjunction with other popular bodies, they help coordinate and direct the struggle against the hated apartheid system.

While still a new development limited to some parts of the country, this nevertheless reflects a significant deepening of the massive popular upheaval that has been rocking South Africa for more than a year and a half.

### Dual power

While the formation of these committees is a product of the situation in South Africa itself it is not a spontaneous development. The ANC has been strongly pushing forward the formation of street committees and other elected organisations. These began to be created towards the end of last year. In its 8 January message to South Africa the ANC called for a struggle to 'transform these areas (no-go-areas) into mass revolutionary bases.' The April issue of *Sechaba*, the ANC's magazine, carries a major article entitled: 'Dual power and the creation of people's committees'. This specifically addresses, and urges the emergence of 'dual power, embryonic

forms of self-government and popular power'.

The formation of street committees and other organisations is part of the ANC's policy of making South Africa ungovernable.

Key targets of this campaign have been Pretoria's community councils and Black local authorities, which function on a township level. Staffed by Black collaborators with the apartheid regime, these councils are responsible primarily for collecting rents and fees, issuing licenses, and carrying out other administrative tasks.

### Rent boycott

Provoked by sharp rent rises imposed by these councils, residents of Black townships around the country have been actively mobilising against them since late 1984. Several hundred councillors have been forced to resign under mass pressure, and some have been killed. Many municipal alcohol outlets — a key source of revenue for the councils — have been burned down. Widespread rent and utility-fee boycotts have further dried up council funding. In some areas, no rent has been paid since September 1984.

The isolation and destruction of these councils has gone the furthest in the Vaal Triangle region south of Johannesburg and in the Eastern Cape. Attempts to fill in vacancies in the Vaal Triangle councils failed when no-one came forward to run for the posts. According to the 16 March Johannesburg *Sunday Star*, 'Fewer than half the 45 community councils operating in the Eastern Cape are fulfilling their duties and there are many vacancies. The higher local authorities are either not functioning or have been severely hampered by constant attacks by their antagonists.'

As in Alexandra, residents of other townships have driven out Black police as well. Often the police are only able to return in force for periodic sweeps. Some Black police have also resigned under pressure from community organisations.

As the government's effective administration and control in many townships ground to a halt, popular organisations have begun to take on more and more authority.

Another factor influencing the greater emphasis on building up local township organisations has been the need to find new ways to resist Pretoria's repression.

### Crackdown

When President Pieter Botha proclaimed a state of emergency over parts of the country in July 1985, hundreds of top anti-apartheid leaders and organisers were detained. Most of those picked up by the security police belong-

ed to affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the two million member anti-apartheid coalition that has been leading most of the mass mobilisations. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the UDF's high school student affiliate, was outlawed. The regime's aim was clearly to behead the mass movement in the hopes of undercutting it.

This crackdown removed a layer of the most experienced leaders and made the coordination of national actions more difficult. The UDF was forced to close down its national offices in Johannesburg for a time.

But imprisoned UDF supporters kept in touch with each other through jail-cell study groups. They maintained contact with the movement outside through those who were released after brief spells of detention.

UDF leaders who managed to evade arrest developed newer, semiclandestine forms of functioning. 'We have an elaborate system of communication with our executive, our activists, and our members in the community,' declared Naseegh Jaffer, organiser of the UDF's interim executive committee in the Western Cape.

### Emergency

During the seven months of the state of emergency — which was finally lifted in early March — UDF national and regional executive committees continued to meet. Detained members were temporarily replaced. 'We have devised ways and means of operating that enable us to withstand extreme repression,' Transvaal UDF General Secretary Mohammed Valli said. Although the UDF will take full advantage of the end of the state of emergency to conduct more public activities, Valli went on, 'We won't go back to the way we were working before the state of emergency. Next time the state clamps down on us, they'll find it much more difficult to weaken us'.

One of the changes in the UDF has been a greater decentralisation of leadership structures, with activities being organised and coordinated more on the local and regional levels. This places greater responsibility on the township-based organisations — student and youth congresses, civic associations, parents' committees, trade unions, women's associations, and other groups. Hundreds of such organisations existed before the state of emergency was imposed, but new ones have been formed since then, particularly in smaller townships in more rural parts of the country. Many are affiliated to the UDF, but some are not.

The street committees emerged as part of this growth in township organisation.

Street committees developed in-

itially and most rapidly in Black townships around Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Cradock, East London, and other cities in the Eastern Cape. It is no coincidence that this is also a region that has long been a stronghold of popular support for the ANC.

The first street committees were established in 1984 in Lingelihle, a township of 17,000 Blacks outside Cradock, in the Eastern Cape. The initiative came from Matthew Goniwe, a leader of the Cradock Residents Association (Cradora), a key UDF affiliate in the area. According to Goniwe, 'Democracy for the people in Lingelihle should not be a vision of the future or an abstract ideal. It should be something real, something to give ordinary people the power to bring about changes.'

Cradora, along with the Cradock Women's Organisation, divided Lingelihle into seven zones. About 40 activists were assigned to organise them. Meetings were held in every zone to elect leaders, with each household voting for a street representative. This resulted in the collapse of the regime's Lingelihle community council when all the council members resigned in November 1984.

Lingelihle's street committees survived the June 1985 death-squad killings of Goniwe and other key activists in the area.

Following the imposition of the state of emergency in the Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth areas in July 1985, street committees spread further through the Eastern Cape. The organisers chose not to publicise their existence for several months.

Then at a 16 December, 1985, meeting in Port Elizabeth the existence of the street committees was publicly announced. Some 1,000 residents of Black townships in the Eastern Cape gathered to elect area committee members from the ranks of the local street communities. Among the speakers was A Peter, who had belonged to the ANC — when it was still legal.

With varying degrees of organisation, similar committees have since spread to other parts of the country, including Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, near Pretoria, and Kagiso and Munsieville, near Krugersdorp, west of Johannesburg.

### Comrades

In Alexandra, 18 street committees had already been formed by the end of January, with activists aiming to set up one for each of the township's 44 blocks. They established a central coordinating organisation called the Alexandra Action Committee.

In a 8 January address, ANC leader Oliver Tambo commented on the importance of such committees. 'In some areas of our country,' he said, 'having destroyed the puppet organs of government imposed on us by the apartheid regime, we have reached the situation where even the enemy has to deal with the democratic forces as the legitimate representatives of the people. The

### Activists

Through the street committees these 'comrades' carry out a wide variety of activities. According to Mkhusele Jack, a Port Elizabeth youth and community leader, 'The street and area committees are addressing specific problems arising from our situation. The consumer boycott of white businesses was conceived at such a meeting and it lasted for four months. At the moment we are tackling the presence of cops in the area and the education problem. The rent issues will be discussed soon.'

These activists likewise enforce township decisions on Blacks employed in Pretoria's local administration. 'I was invited to quit,' the Alexandra community council's public relations officer stated at a rally in March, 'and I quit. As you know, when the comrades ask, you listen.'

### Gratitude

'People's courts' have been set up in a number of townships to administer popular justice and to fill the vacuum left by the flight of Black police. 'Alexandra police station is no longer functioning and people say go and see the comrades,' explained Patric Banda, a leader of the Alexandra Youth Congress.

Atteridgeville, outside Pretoria, now has 12 people's courts, with a higher appeals court known as the Advice Office. These courts hear criminal cases, matrimonial disputes, and cases involving alleged collaborators with the apartheid regime.

In Kagiso and Munsieville, according to a report in the Johannesburg *Sunday Star*, residents have commended the 'comrades' for virtually eliminating rapes, murders, and similar serious crimes and 'freely express gratitude for what they see as their sterling work'.

The street committees, where they have become firmly established, have also served to draw into more organised activity the *amabuthu* (Xhosa for 'warriors'), the loose group of teenagers and preteenagers who are often in the forefront of clashes with the police. While generally supportive of the UDF and ANC, these *amabuthu* had nevertheless previously functioned largely outside the direct control of township organisations.

Above all, the street committees have provided a means for promoting greater popular participation in the freedom struggle. Activists use them to 'conscientise' community residents, the common term for raising their political awareness.

'When we have conscientised them all,' one activist in Alexandra told a reporter, 'then at a word from us we can stop all these factories with a strike or cripple the shops with a consumer boycott. That is how the struggle is going to be fought.'

'The people shall govern,' another Alexandra militant stated. 'The time has come for us to learn to govern ourselves.'







**THE LAND question is one of the central pillars of the democratic tasks of the revolution in South Africa. But what class character of state can resolve the land question in South Africa? Or can it be resolved by a 'classless state'.**

**JOHN ROSS looks at a recent pamphlet on this question by Ernest Harsch — *Apartheid's Great Land Theft*.**

THE deepening of the struggle in South Africa has meant that its basic course has become still clearer. It is worth outlining that dynamic briefly.

Over the last two years the African National Congress (ANC) has deepened its dominance of the situation in South Africa. Through the United Democratic Front (UDF) it has created the most powerful united front against apartheid seen in South African history.

The ANC made grave mistakes in relation to the trade unions in the 1970s — errors linked to a wrong characterisation of the regime as fascist. But it has shifted its course from these mistakes. It cemented its relation with the trade unions through the creation of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The initiation by the ANC of the call for organs of dual power — street committees, area committees, and other organisations — constitutes the correct next step in the struggle in South Africa.

The dynamic of the struggle in South Africa is clear. Starting with elementary demands — the struggle against the new constitution of Botha — the ANC has increasingly built up a united front of all those prepared to fight against the apartheid regime.

The organisational form of this united front, and the scope of its mass actions, has progressively deepened. The 1 May general strike in turn was the most powerful action of the working class in South African history.

The ANC has not gained its weight in this mass movement because of correctness on all tactical issues. On the contrary it has made major tactical mistakes — being outflanked both at the time of the Soweto uprising in 1976 and by the initial rise of the independent trade unions (in particular by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu)).

## Revolt

But the ANC has gained increasing dominance because of certain decisive political positions which are indispensable in any revolutionary strategy in South Africa — and on which it is correct against its critics.

The first of these is *non-racialism*. This was a basic position the ANC defended against both the split of the Pan African Congress in 1959 and in regard to the trade unions. It was this principle, adopted independently by Fosatu, which allowed the convergence of the trade unions which created Cosatu.

Second the ANC has fought for the united front of all those who are prepared to struggle on the basis of the democratic demands against the apartheid regime. This was explicit in the creation of the UDF. In a higher form it applies to the creation of the street committees and other organisations of the same type.

These positions of the ANC are not unconnected. Nor are they accidental. They flow from the ANC's definition of the struggle in South Africa as that of a *national democratic revolution* — that is a revolution which must carry out tasks, including the creation of a nation state, that were carried out in western Europe in the great bourgeois revolutions of the 16th-19th centuries. These national democratic tasks were also carried out in Russia through the October revolution of 1917.

The relation of such a character of revolution to the principles applied by the ANC in the fight against apartheid is clear. A national democratic revolution, by definition, is carrying out tasks of a *capitalist* revolution. It,



Peasants in the 'Pondo Rebellion' in the Transkei in 1960.

# State power and land in South Africa

among other tasks, creates the conditions for a free exchange of commodities by smashing down all 'pre-capitalist' obstacles.

In Russia, for example, the national democratic tasks of the revolution included smashing to pieces the pre-capitalist survivals of serf/landlord relations in agriculture. It also involved resolving the national question through destroying 'great Russian' domination of the oppressed nationalities of the Tsarist state and establishing the right of nations to self-determination.

South Africa differs in that the obstacles to normal commodity relations were created by a specific form of capitalist state, rather than pre-dating it. The legal prohibition of Black land ownership, the inability of Black workers to sell their labour power on a normal or equal basis with whites, the fact that the Black community has no right to vote or possess political power even of a bourgeois democratic kind, were all created by capitalism itself. But while the origin of such relations differs from Russia, the tasks involved on this field, that of smashing all such relations to pieces, are the same in South Africa.

## Alliance

Non-racialism is the ideology and position of such a revolution in the concrete conditions of South Africa. The unity in the struggle against apartheid is the correct unity of all those who are prepared to fight these relations and the state system that defends them.

The significance of the land question in this framework in the revolution in South Africa is evident. The 'law of dispossession', the 1913 Land Act, which granted 86 per cent of the land in South Africa to the whites, was the fundamental mechanism whereby the super-exploitation and oppression of the Black majority of South Africa was ensured.

Deprived of access to land, the Black population was forced to become a supply of super exploited cheap labour for the white owned economy.

The entire later structure of apartheid was based on this original foundation. Without destroying white capitalist ownership of land, without creating a Black farming class which replaces the white dominated capitalist agriculture, it is impossible to secure freedom for the Black majority.

This demand for land is correctly

summed up in the ANC's *Freedom Charter* as: 'The land shall be shared among those who work it! Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger.'

This task, from a social/economic point of view, is that of a *capitalist* revolution. The economic system produced by such a revolution in agriculture in South Africa will be one based essentially on free commodity production on land.

While different in form it is the same fundamental content of the revolution on the land that was carried through in Russia by the October 1917 revolution. Pre-capitalist survivals in Russian agriculture — survivals of serfdom, semi-feudal landlordism etc — were swept away and proper commodity relations in Russian agriculture established.

In industry, and large scale distribution, the Soviet state destroyed unfettered commodity relations. In land it established them for the first time. By 1921, when the New Economic Policy was introduced, and distortions of 'war communism' used during the civil war removed, Russia had a system of nationalised large scale industry with the elementary beginning of planning together with genuine commodity, including small scale capitalist, production in agriculture.

## Political

This system was not a 'concession' by the Bolsheviks but entirely correct. Any attempt to leap over a phase of commodity/small capitalist relations in agriculture is pure voluntarism and concretely catastrophic.

In the 1919 revolution in Hungary the Communist government of Bela Kun did not distribute land to the peasants. They therefore failed to support the revolution and it was crushed.

In Russia the system of 'war communism', including forcible seizure of food from the peasants, was necessary politically because of the emergency of the civil war. But it was economically disastrous — agricultural production collapsed and only began to increase again when the market was restored under the New Economic Policy.

The attempt by Stalin, starting in 1929, to leap over the development of commodity/capitalist agriculture by forcible collectivisation was a catastrophe setting back Soviet agriculture by sixty years.

The revolution that is occurring in South Africa will for the first time establish free access to commodity production in South African agriculture for the Black majority — as well as creating a single South African non racial nation state.

This also relates to the question of class alliances in the revolution. Even a directly *socialist* revolution is made by the working class leading the petty bourgeoisie — not against it.

The national democratic revolution in South Africa, also, not merely must be made by the working class leading the petty bourgeoisie, but it will actually create a massive Black petty-bourgeoisie — for in strict class terms a Black peasantry, which is what will be created by the revolution on the land in South Africa is a *rural* petty-bourgeoisie. While there will doubtless be exemplary state farms, encouragement of co-operatives etc, the fundamental class that will come into existence through the revolution on the land is a *Black peasantry*.

## Power

The land question also gives one of the criteria of what would constitute an abortion of the tasks of the national democratic revolution. It would mean, on this field, that the uprooting of white capitalist agriculture was not carried through. That, as in Zimbabwe or Kenya, the white capitalists continued to dominate, or make substantial inroads, into agriculture despite transfer of political power, in some form, to the Black population.

Finally this raises the question of *what type of state* can carry through this gigantic national democratic revolution on the land. It is here that Ernest Harsch's pamphlet, which contains much valuable factual information, goes completely off the rails. For it attempts to put the land question into a theoretical framework for which there is no factual evidence in the twentieth century — that of Lenin's 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'.

This is made even clearer in the introduction and an article to which the pamphlet refers — Jack Barnes' 'The Coming Revolution in South Africa' which appeared in *New International* Vol 2 No 2.

Many articles on this question have engaged in a great deal of exchange of quotations between Lenin and Trotsky. But by itself that is empty scholasticism. Fortunately, both

Lenin and Trotsky are subject to a higher criteria — *what actually happened*.

No 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' has ever come into existence in any country in history. Harsch cannot point to one such example. The national democratic tasks in Russia itself were not carried out by the February revolution — which failed to solve a single decisive democratic task in Russia — but through the October revolution.

However the October revolution created not a 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', but a state power which possesses an unbroken continuity from 7 November 1917 to the present day. A state power which did not defend capitalism but on the contrary was used to uproot it. The state power of a workers state, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The state created on 7 November 1917 first smashed to pieces pre-capitalist survivals in Russia — to carry out the tasks of the national democratic revolution — and then proceeded to uproot capitalist property.

As Lenin wrote: 'It was the Bolsheviks, and only the Bolsheviks, who, thanks to the victory of the *proletarian* revolution, helped the peasantry to carry the bourgeois democratic revolution really to its conclusion.' As Trotsky put it in *Permanent Revolution*: 'The bourgeois democratic revolution was realised (in Russia) as a coalition of workers and peasants.'

'During the Kerensky period (February to October 1917)? No, during the first period after October. Is that right? It is. But, as we now know it was not realised in the form of a democratic dictatorship, but in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

Socially the land question in Russia was resolved in two waves. But both waves were carried out under a *single*, proletarian, state power.

## Regime

This also relates directly to the land question in South Africa. The ANC's *Freedom Charter* states that political power will be transferred to 'the people'. But this is false. 'The people' have never held state power in history — and nor will they. There is no such thing as a 'people's state'.

State power is held by *classes*. The state which will emerge from the revolution in South Africa will have a definite *class* character. And what that class character is will determine the outcome of the revolution itself.

If the *bourgeoisie* holds state power in South Africa through the destruction of the apartheid regime then the tasks of the revolution, including the national democratic tasks, will be aborted. White capitalist agriculture will not be utterly uprooted, South Africa will not be desegregated, a single non-racial nation will not be forged.

This is confirmed not merely by any examination of the social reality of South Africa itself — the sheer scale of the democratic tasks which must be carried out — but by the entire history of the twentieth century.

In no country in which the dictatorship of the proletariat has not been established have the tasks of the national democratic revolution been carried through in a thorough going way in the twentieth century — Zimbabwe to South Africa's north is just the latest example. Only where the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established have the tasks of the national democratic revolution been carried through to their conclusion — Russia, China, and Vietnam being classical cases.

In his *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky wrote: 'In order that the peasant might clear and fence his land, the worker had to stand at the head of the state: that is the simplest formula of the October revolution.'

It is also the sole solution to the land question in South Africa. *Apartheid's Great Land Theft* is available price £1.08 from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



International

# Demonstrations shake South Korean dictatorship



**SOUTH KOREAN** riot police savagely attacked a peaceful demonstration in Seoul last Saturday in the bloodiest confrontation of recent months. The protest was part of a week of campus action in commemoration of the May 1980 Kwangju massacre, in which over 100 students were killed when they revolted against the dictatorship of General Park Chung Hee.

Since early March, well over 100,000 people have taken part in mass demonstrations in provincial cities across South Korea. The focus of these anti-government protests, which have ended in pitched battles with riot police on several occasions this year, has been the demand for direct presidential elections.

Slogans such as 'down with the military dictatorship' and 'down with the government' have echoed in the streets of Pusan, Kwangju, Taegu, Taejeon, Chongju, and other cities. In addition, tens of thousands of students throughout South Korea have demonstrated.

Under the constitution imposed by South Korea's current president, Chun Doo Hwan, after he seized power in a 1980 military coup, a new head of state is to be chosen in 1988 by a 5000 member electoral college. Opponents of Chun's dictatorship fear that the indirect election will lead

to the selection of Chun's handpicked successor. They have been organising mass rallies to support collection of 10 million signatures on a petition demanding direct presidential elections in 1987. South Korea's population is 40 million.

The Chun regime responded to the announcement of the petition campaign in February with a wave of arrests and police raids. Hundreds of activists were placed under house arrest.

But the repression was unable to break the movement, as seen in the succession of mass demonstrations throughout South Korea in March and April.

The current protests reflect the continued inability of Washington and its local allies to establish stable forms of political rule in South Korea. Since the US-imposed partition of Korea in 1945, South Korea has been ruled by a succession of US-backed civilian and military dic-

tatorships, each of which has been driven from power by mass protests or ousted by a military coup.

Syngman Rhee was the first of these in the aftermath of the Korean War. He had himself elected president for life by the National Assembly.

In April 1960 giant student demonstrations protesting Rhee's claim to have won 90 per cent of the vote in elections the previous month brought South Korea to the brink of open civil war and forced Rhee to flee to exile in Hawaii, where he died in 1965.

During a brief nine-month interlude, South Korea had a parliamentary government. But a military junta took power on 16 May, 1961, dissolving the National Assembly and banning dissident political activity. South Korea was placed under martial law and ruled by a Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, headed by Major General Park Chung Hee.

Under General Park, South Korea adopted its present economic orientation. With the advantages of huge, low-interest government loans and protection from competition, a handful of con-

glomerates based on Japanese know-how and abysmal wages of South Korean workers, dominate the economy.

Despite pervasive repression, South Korea has periodically exploded in unrest as grievances accumulate. Such an explosion led to the overthrow of the Park Chung Hee dictatorship in 1980. This was the result of actions taken by students and youth, starting with massive mobilisation in Pusan in October 1979. In clashes with police, a number of police posts were destroyed. In the same month in Masan, students, joined by factory workers, stormed police and government offices. The protests then spread to Kwangju, Ulsan, and Taegu.

The growing protests triggered a palace coup, in which Park and five of his bodyguards were killed. The new military regime attempted to quell the unrest by promising to move toward civilian rule and ease up on repression. Throughout early 1980, South Korea was swept by sit-down strikes, slowdowns, and other labour actions.

After weeks of mounting protests and strikes in a series of cities, the

military authorities closed all universities, banned all political gatherings and strikes, imposed press censorship, and extended martial law throughout the country.

But in Kwangju, with a population of 800,000 the people rose up and seized control of the city in the most massive political uprising since the end of the Korean War.

Protests in Kwangju began on 18 May 1980 the day martial law was announced. Daily demonstrations grew in size and were viciously attacked by police and army troops. Twenty-one police stations and 13 government buildings were destroyed or severely damaged. Thousands of people — including miners armed with explosives — flocked into the city from surrounding areas. As the uprising spread to over a dozen towns, by 22 May the port of Mokpo and the towns of Hwasun and Polkyo were seized by the rebels.

The regime struck back on 27 May. South Korean paratroopers and infantrymen, using tanks, helicopters, machine guns, and assault weapons, recaptured Kwangju's city government building after a fierce three-hour gun battle.

With this experience of struggle, it's not surprising that Kwangju has been the site of some of the largest rallies in the present round of mass demonstrations for direct presidential elections. On 30 March, more than 50,000 residents of the city gathered in the downtown plaza that has come to be known as 'Democracy Square'.

The answer of Chun has been to step up the violence against the wave of opposition which continues to mount. But much has happened since 1980. Today Chun Doo Hwan can hardly avoid reflecting on the fate of his predecessors, Rhee and Park. And both Chun and the Korean opposition forces are drawing their own lessons from the overthrow of the Marcos tyranny in the nearby Philippines.

## May Day message from COSATU president

ON 1 MAY the largest general strike in South African history brought the country to a halt. The following declaration was issued by Elijah Barayi, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).



**COSATU**

COMRADES, this is the 100th anniversary of May-Day, the 100th year since workers organised themselves to fight against the exploitation and domination of big business.

In South Africa itself we know that the discovery of gold in 1886 brought slavery to our people. Our people spend their lives in the dark pits of the mines, the inside of factories and working long hours in the sun on the farms. We made South Africa rich. We built the roads, the cars, the clothes we wear, the shops, houses, factories and the

food we eat.

But in South Africa millions of workers and their families live in poverty, hunger and starvation. Our lives and families are broken by the pass laws and migrant labour, we live in matchbox houses with no families. Our children are given a slave education which condemns them to the factories and mines.

While a minority live in wealth so great that they are amongst the richest in the world. Their wealth is made through the blood, sweat and toil of the working class.

Therefore as Cosatu we must challenge this domination. Our demands are clear. We want our freedom from apartheid and the cheap wage system. We must mobilise and build organisation everywhere in the fac-

tries, farms, mines, schools, townships and rural areas.

We must build shop stewards, shaft stewards, street and area committees everywhere. This is the basis of our people taking power. The working class must play a leading role in the struggle for freedom. We must involve ourselves in all spheres of struggle from fighting for a living wage and the right to strike, to support the struggle of students for democratic SRCs (Student Representative Councils), unbanning of Cosas (Congress of South African Students), to demand the release of comrade Nelson Mandela, Oscar Mpethe and all political prisoners, the unbanning of all political prisoners, the unbanning of all banned organisations, and the end to influx

control and the pass laws.

Cosatu is committed to campaign for these rights for our freedom, and we urge all worker leaders, members and all patriots in South Africa to work together, plan and co-ordinate our actions to win our freedom and break the chains of poverty and cheap labour which bind the majority of people in South Africa today.

Let us make this one hundredth May Day the biggest and most successful in our history. Let it inspire us to redouble our efforts to organise and mobilise South Africa's workers so that it will not be long before we achieve our liberation.

Viva Cosatu!  
Amandla Ngawethu!  
Matla Ke A Rona!  
Aluta Continua!  
Elijah Barayi  
Cosatu President



### Nicaragua:

Eden Pastora, the Nicaraguan contras most famous leader, has surrendered to the Costa Rican authorities with his supporters. He is seeking political asylum. 'We are not going to continue giving Nicaraguan blood for the United States game of war,' said Carol Prado, one of his spokespersons, explaining the decision.

Earlier this month Pastora's organisation was badly damaged when the CIA lured away seven of his chief lieutenants into the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), which is backed by the USA and dominated by ex-members of former dictator Somoza's national guard. Pastora, more popularly known as Commandante Ceri was a former Sandinista who went into opposition but refused to work with Somoza's henchmen.

He has for a long time been a CIA target because he stands in the way of a pliant and servile contra army. UNO representatives in Madrid have launched a Europe-wide campaign to persuade 'businessmen, trade unions, and governments' that the Sandinistas are 'nothing more than a totalitarian satellite of the Soviet Union and Cuba.'

### USA:

More than 20,000 mishaps have occurred in US nuclear plants since the Three Mile Island disaster, according to Public Citizen, a monitoring group formed by consumer rights crusader Ralph Nader. More than 1000 of these incidents were considered significant by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the group revealed in a recent report. Six US nuclear plants are currently shut down for safety reasons.

The US nuclear lobby has just launched an appeal to persuade Congress to limit its members accident insurance liability to \$2.4 billion. Congress wants to raise it to \$8 billion. A spokesperson for the group claims that the appeal will prove that 'US technology, engineering, operating procedures and commitment to safety is altogether superior to the Russians'. It is not known whether NASA is involved in the lobby.

### Philippines:

As the trigger happy Philippines army goes gunning for the guerillas — the death rate is now thought to be equal to what it was before Marcos went — information is now surfacing on the extent to which US firms were involved in Marcos dictatorship. According to *International Business Week* it is estimated that of the top 1000 US companies in the Philippines, 700 have links, ownership, or contracts with Ferdinand Marcos in person.

A case in point is the United Brands Company, which set up a banana business in 1969 with the help of Antonio O Floirendo, a close associate of Marcos, who has now fled the country. He apparently used his connections to lease cheap land on a penal colony in Mindanao from the justice ministry, where 700 prisoners produced bananas for him, literally for nothing. His company became the United Brand Companies sole supplier. Also under investigation is the British based Cable and Wireless whose Manila operation has been taken over by Aquino's investigatory commission.

### Austria:

Former brown shirt Kurt Waldheim is now favourite to win the 8 June presidential elections, despite revelations about his Nazi past, on the election slogan 'An Austrian the whole world trusts'. The Socialist Party, which has held a parliamentary majority for 40 years, is quietly dropping a campaign to unmask him which seems to have won him more support than it lost him.

Waldheim, whatever the dispute about his direct involvement in Nazi atrocities, was a 'career Nazi'. He was a member of the Nazi student organisation and the SA (brown-shirts). By 1943 he had surfaced in a leading role in one of the Nazi's bloodiest campaigns, the Balkans. He was attached as an interpreter and a high officer to the 12th Army Command in Salonika.

His office, Army Group E, dealt with counter-intelligence. It was closely implicated in deporting and killing up to 40,000 Greek Jews and in a brutal anti-partisan war. He was decorated by the Nazi puppet Croatian state for 'services under hostile fire' at the end of a joint campaign involving the German army and the SS. Out of this campaign 825 documented cases have arisen in which Serbian hostages were shot, and 880 cases in which Croatian hostages were shot, as reprisal for acts of sabotage.

The left wing magazine *Die Linke* comments that Waldheim proved that with the right qualifications, you can make a career in diplomacy as easily as in war service to the Nazis.



# Briefing's sectarian course

LABOUR BRIEFING'S annual conference on 10 May marked a qualitative turning point for that journal. It deepened the sectarian course adopted by *Briefing* since the middle of the miners strike. The conference decided, in effect, to transform *Briefing* from an open journal, which played an important role in the left's victories at the GLC and other London councils, into a narrow newspaper with increasingly sectarian politics. This was opposed by many of the local *Briefing* groups but carried by the central *Briefing* team.

The change in the character of *Briefing* was most clearly signified by the programme which it adopted. All documents presented to the conference stated that *Briefing* would maintain its previous 'broad united front character.' But this declaration was rendered meaningless by the programme adopted.

This programme contained nothing on the key issues on which today united action is indeed possible — for example the campaign of the Black Section, or women's demands within the party. Instead the programme called for the replacement of the police by a workers militia, political revolution in the 'Stalinist states', and action to 'smash the system itself.'

As a 'broad united front paper' evidently cannot be based on such a programme, declarations regarding maintaining the previous character of *Briefing* are meaningless.

*Briefing* has, in effect, been transformed from a united front paper into the journal of a definite current in the labour movement.

There is of course nothing wrong in and of itself in doing that — although it is sectarian to conceal this from the local groups and maintain that the existing character of *Briefing* is being maintained when it is in fact being overturned. But more serious is the increasingly sectarian politics on which *Briefing* is now being promoted.

This came out clearly in the claims at the conference that the Justice for Mineworkers campaign had been taken over by a 'combination of the Campaign Group, Socialist Action and the Communist Party' because it had rejected *Briefing's* model resolutions to the TUC and Labour Party conferences. These would have committed the campaign to calling for resolutions publicly censuring the

TUC General Council and the Labour Party NEC. This would obviously have wrecked the Justice campaign and it was totally correct to throw these resolutions out.

Similarly the Labour committee on Ireland came under fire for allegedly having been taken over by the 'right wing' — because its AGM rejected *Briefing's* refusal to work with anyone who did not vote against the Anglo-Irish Accord, and because it had rejected *Briefing's* proposal that control of *Labour & Ireland* should be taken over by members based in London.

Positions such as these have progressively isolated *Briefing* within the left wing of the labour movement as they are deeply destructive of the campaigns involved. The decisions of the *Briefing* conference accelerates this self-imposed isolation.

The local *Briefing* groups represented at the meeting were clearly unhappy with many of its decisions — particularly its rejection of their request for local groups to have the final decision on any change in *Briefing's* format. It was also reported to the conference that no *Briefing* groups exist north of Birmingham.

In reality, of course the left in major areas of the

LONDON LABOUR 30p  
**BRIEFING**  
No 20 JUNE 1982

Camden, Southwark, Hackney and Haringey.  
unite behind

**FORTRESS ISLINGTON!**

LABOUR 20p  
**BRIEFING**  
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT  
No. 18 June 1985

**PREPARING FOR GOVERNMENT**

country looks not to *Briefing* but to the Campaign group of MPs, the Scargill wing of the NUM, the Black Section and so on. Increasingly local Campaign groups are being established. *Briefing* simply cannot provide any sort of framework for the left — and is particularly incapable of doing so with its politics. Its new sectarian turn in almost all campaigns will deepen its isolation further.

When a number of supporters of Socialist Action decided to leave its

editorial board last year the national project they counterposed to it was building *Briefing*. This was a sectarian turn. And during the last six months *Briefing* itself has greatly deepened its sectarianism.

Surely it is time for the comrades who embarked on this disastrous policy to reconsider its increasing sectarian course and restate their support for Socialist Action. This *Briefing* conference is certainly going to deepen their sectarian isolation — which is a loss.

## First Success in defending the weekly paper

WE HAVE gained our first success in the fight for a weekly paper. As we announced two weeks ago, we would have to miss definite issues in our weekly schedule if we did not increase the regular income to the paper by £250 a week. For each £250 raised we would reinstate a threatened issue of the paper.

As reported last week, readers in British Telecom launched a fund to ensure that we did not miss the issue of the paper for 30 May. They set a target of £400. They have got pledges in excess of this figure already. We are

therefore able to go ahead and reinstate the issue for 30 May.

Our supporters in West London have also been active as we said last week. They held a very successful book and bric a brac jumble sale at the Turnham Green fair and netted a cool £142.28.

Supporters renewing their subscriptions have also begun to respond to our appeal. Des Stevens from Surrey recently sent us a 'little topping up for your fund'. Tim Gregory from South Humberside also sent us 'something extra as a donation'.

We need to keep up the good work. But that requires that we meet our £15,000 fund by Whit. We

have made a good start — but there is still a long way to go. What are you doing? If you have some scheme or are thinking of a pledge, let us know. Even if it matures after the end of the fund, we'll still include it if you contact us. Remember there's only just over a week to go.

Total so far (not including the pledge from our Telecom supporters) £13,210.

The next issue of the paper threatened is that for 13 June. The next goal we are asking our readers for therefore is £250 to ensure that issue comes out.

Meanwhile next week's reinstated issue will be the first sign of success in the fund drive!

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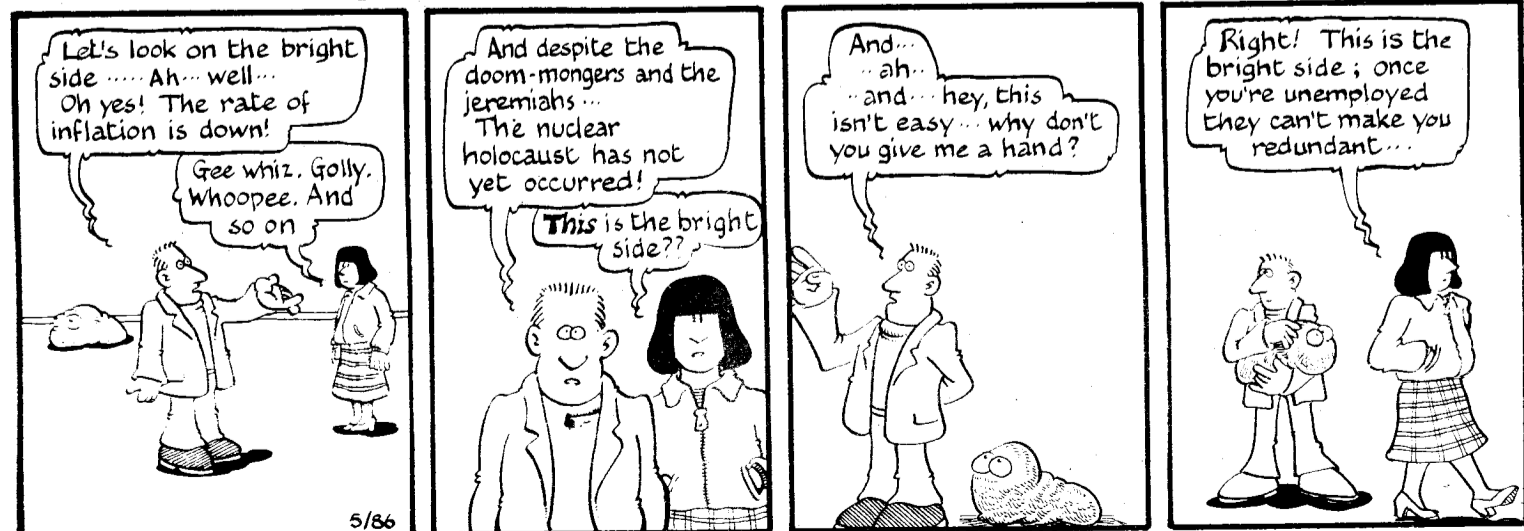
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## A PIECE of the ACTION

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## A new Taff Vale judgement

THE RIGHT to strike has received another severe blow in the courts. This time a ruling, reminiscent of the Taff Vale judgement made at the turn of the century, targetted the two major rail unions. The case was brought against the National Union of Railwaymen and the drivers' union, ASLEF, by Angus Falconer, a Sheffield businessman.

By Brian Grogan

In launching his legal attack, Falconer alleged he was forced to stay in London overnight because of a 24-hour train stoppage called in support of the miners' strike last year. He won damages because the strike had been called without a ballot. This makes it illegal according to Tory laws.

This case was the second recent court action taken against the NUR. The union is currently being forced to re-run the elections for its National Executive Committee. Although the third of the NEC which was up for re-election this year won their positions according to the union's rule book, by votes cast at branch meetings, the courts judged that a secret ballot of every union member was required.

The implications of this more recent case are, however, much more far reaching and could be used to attack other unions. The judge ruled that the rail unions had unlawfully interfered with a contract between British Rail and Falconer — who was the holder of a return ticket.

This takes us back to the situation that prevailed after the Taff Vale decision. Here, in 1901, the forerunner of the railworkers union was found liable to extensive damages incurred as a result of its strike against the Taff Vale Railway Company. The strike was held to be legal but the union had to pay civil damages for those who lost from it.

The threat of this judgement being applied in other cases was felt throughout the labour movement. The agitation against it gave a great impetus to the strengthening of the Labour Party. Frightened by the protests against this ruling, the Liberal government restored union legal protection in the 1906 Trades Disputes Act. This law governed the legal framework of union activity until the recent anti-union legislation.

This new ruling does not open unions to damages in every case, as did Taff Vale. It only applies to those disputes which are conducted outside Tory laws. But today any union which sticks to these laws are almost guaranteed defeat against the employers. So the maintenance of this ruling could have a profound meaning for the legal framework of trade union struggles.

The ruling is particularly significant because it fits in with an attempt by the ruling class to re-cast legal union activity. It wants to move away from legal immunities framework, to a US and West German style 'positive rights' one. This allows unions to do only what is specifically legislated for. It brings the power of the state directly behind employers and limits strike action. Moreover, it's the courts — not the membership — which become the arbiters of union decision-making and intra-union disputes.

The ruling class has been attempting to achieve this for two decades. In 1968, the Tory Party anti-union policy paper, inappropriately entitled 'Fair Deal at Work', first called for 'putting collective agreements on par with any other type of contract — no more and no less'.

Three years later, the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act attempted to put this into practice. The Act made all union agreements, including dispute procedures, legally binding unless there was an explicit clause to the contrary. However, this policy was defeated.

So, in 1981, the attempt to impose legally binding agreements was once again raised. This time it came from the Thatcher government's 'consultative' Green paper on the trade unions. Whilst not yet daring to attempt to make all union contracts legally binding, the Tories have encouraged employers such as Rupert Murdoch to impose such agreements at Wapping.

Clearly the Court ruling against the NUR has broad ramifications. A fight against the Court attacks could provide a springboard for a broad campaign to once again stymie Tory plans. The call by London Transport District Council of the NUR for a rally on 29 May to defend the union against these attacks has already won backing from several hundred branch officers.

Actions like this will make it that much more difficult for the antics of the Neil Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party and a section of the TUC which now extends beyond the electricians and the engineers. For today these leaders are toying with the idea of a 'positive rights' framework for the unions, rather than taking a clear stand to repeal all Tory anti-union legislation. Successes in the rail union could dramatically extend the alternative voice in the TUC currently led by the miners.



# An appeal for funds

**THE NUM is circulating an urgent appeal for funds through the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. We print this appeal, signed by Arthur Scargill, honorary president of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.**

**NUM Members struggled valiantly through a whole year of strike action in order to defend their jobs, their pits and their communities. Their fight was widely seen as a struggle not only for miners jobs but as a struggle on behalf of all trade unionists against the callous policies of employers and governments which place profits before the livelihoods of millions of working people.**

One of the many weapons used by the State in their attempt to crush the strike was the legal system. Large numbers of activists were criminalised by this system.

During the strike a total of over 11,000 criminal charges were brought. Thousands more were arrested but released without being charged.

Over 1,000 mine-workers were sacked as a result of their participation in the strike. Branch officials were singled out for victimisation. Throughout England, Wales and Scotland 127 of the sacked mine-workers were branch officials. In Scotland where 203 mine-workers have been sacked, forty per cent of these are branch officials. From this and other evidence it is quite clear that the sackings are part of an all-out assault on the NUM's organisation. This onslaught, and the attempts to smash the print unions which are currently being mounted by Murdoch's News International organisation, demonstrates that there is at present a very serious threat to the whole trade union movement.

## Pressure

Ninety three mine-workers were sent to prison as a result of incidents during the strike. We are still supporting six imprisoned mine-workers.

As a result of the vigorous efforts of the NUM, 493 jobs have been won back. At the present time however only a small proportion of these 'jobs won back' are reinstatements. Most are re-engagements, which means that many rights and benefits have been lost. 503 NUM members still remain sacked.

According to the Coal Board's written evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Employment (Wednesday, 22nd May 1985) they have

instructed Areas that they may not re-employ anyone who has been dismissed following conviction for offences of serious violence, intimidation or vandalism. Yet less than 6 per cent of the sackings were for alleged damage to NCB property. If the Board actually carried out what they claim are their criteria for re-employment, then almost 90 per cent of miners sacked would by now have been reinstated. The NCB ignored the Select Committee's recommendation that all cases should be reviewed.

A little-known fact is that some mine-workers who have been tried in the Courts and found guilty of any offence have nevertheless been dismissed. The reason given for the dismissal is usually the



alleged offence — of which the Courts have found them not guilty! Some mine-workers who have been dismissed have never been charged with any offence.

## Target

The NUM will not rest until they have secured the reinstatement of every victimised member. Meanwhile, sacked miners and their families have to find



enough money on which to live. We have an obligation to support them. NUM funds however are still in the hands of the Receiver,

and cannot be used to support sacked mine-workers.

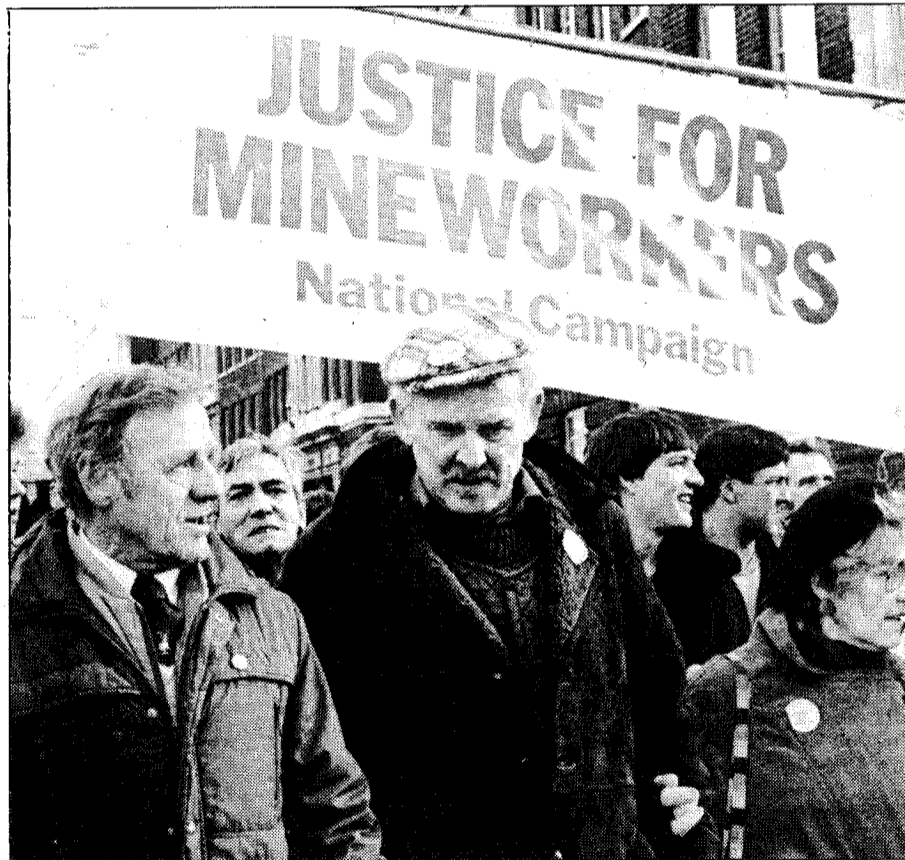
Because of this situation all donations for the relief of hardship among victimised miners should be sent to the Miners' Solidarity Fund at the address given below. This Fund, whose Trustees are Bill Michie MP, Richard Caborn MP and David Blunkett, is used solely for the relief of hardship.

Through Justice for Mineworkers, the NUM is appealing to you and to your organisation to ensure that we can continue to support our victimised members until we can secure their reinstatement. A regular flow of cash is urgently required.

You supported the miners during the strike — please do not abandon us now. Our victimised members and their families are relying on your support. Please complete the Standing Order Form and send it to your bank.

If you are unable to make a regular donation, then please hold collections whenever possible and send the cheques/postal orders to the Miners' Solidarity Fund, c/o NUM, St. James House, Sheffield, S1 2EX.

Arthur Scargill  
Honorary President



The Heathfields on the 2 March Justice demonstration which publicly launched the campaign.

## Justice campaign

**THE first meeting of the national council of the Justice for Mine-workers Campaign was held on 17 May.**

From humble beginnings the campaign now includes the NUM and Women Against Pit Closures amongst its 200-plus affiliates. The campaign council itself is composed of delegates from the majority of NUM and WAPC areas, along with regional Justice Campaigns.

The main priority over the next period will be raising an urgent injection of money to maintain regular support for the sacked

miners.

A national lottery is also soon to be launched. Other fund raising activities include the establishment of a badge collectors club, an art exhibition and auction at TUC and Labour Party conferences, and Justice mugs, badges and T-shirts.

A major *Heroes* concert is to be organised at the Glasgow Apollo in the early autumn with the Scottish TUC. Yorkshire NUM are discussing organising a concert in Sheffield, and another is to be organised in Nottingham.

The Notts Justice Campaign is also organis-

ing a gala on 6 September, and last weekend's campaign council decided to build support for this from other areas. The *Heroes* organisation are establishing a travelling road show for the use of local campaigns.

A number of trade union conferences have already passed policy this year in support of the victimised miners and the Justice Campaign.

Concerted effort to raise further support is planned for this year's TUC and Labour Party conferences. Stalls have already been booked and a *Heroes* concert is planned

for the Labour Party conference.

The campaign will also be making a big push in the next two months to establish regional and local justice campaigns.

At last weekend's meeting, Dick Witcombe was elected as new national secretary of the campaign with a special responsibility to tour the regions and assist in building such campaigns. In particular it is hoped to build up support for the Sacked Miners Association in a number of areas. A speakers panel of sacked miners is being drawn up and a series of tours are planned.

## Flashlight conference

**A NATIONAL EETPU Broad Left conference took place in Manchester on 17 May. The conference which was organised by Flashlight, the Broad Left organisation in the EETPU, was attended by over 70 delegates representing thousands of EETPU members.**

Delegates demanded that all EETPU members working at 'fortress Wapping' should be brought out on strike. This followed the picket that had been organised by print workers of the EETPU conference the previous week. This picket had been joined by two coachloads of electricians from Liverpool. The reaction to general secretary Eric Hammond's line on Wapping shows that a groundswell of opposition was developing inside the EETPU.

Hammond now finds himself rather isolated in

the trade union movement over his Wapping stand. This has prevented him

### Ray Sinfield power distribution shop steward, (personal capacity)

from using the traditional red-baiting card against any critical opponents in the EETPU.

It was in this framework that the conference debated the leadership's splittist policies of 'no-strike' deals and single union agreements which,

over Wapping, led the union to the point of expulsion from the TUC. The conference rightly rejected the idea of splitting from the union or members tearing up their cards in disgust.

The conference reaffirmed its approach to democratic reform of the union through the ending of the appointment system.

Unfortunately, even though the conference passed these important resolutions in support of the printers and for democratic reform of the union, it failed to seize the time by changing the methods of struggle it has hitherto advocated which have so dismally failed to deal with the right wing leadership.

## Teachers struggle continues

**DESPITE THE agreement by teachers leaders that they could ensure a return to 'peace and calm' in the schools, reports are coming in that the action is continuing.**

The award, which gave £519 to the lowest paid and £1307 to the headteachers of the largest schools, was made by the Labour authorities on condition that the teachers action was called off.

For the last 15 months, members of the National Union of Teachers have been involved in refusing to cover the class of absent colleagues, coupled with a wide range of other sanctions which have included not attending meetings outside school

hours and refusing to supervise school lunches.

These actions have exposed the massive lack of

By Bernard Regan, NUT executive, personal capacity

funding in education. When NUT members in the Inner London Education Authority refused to supervise school meals, the Authority was forced to take on 1500 extra workers.

The continuation of the 'no-cover' action is vital. Teachers in most schools are covering for the first day of an unforeseen absence, whilst most secondary schools are continuing the action of providing absolutely no cover

which was begun in the pay campaign. One of the first tasks is to force employers to create 'supply' jobs on permanent contracts to cover all absences.

From 19 May, leaders of the NUT will be engaged in talks established through the Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service. These talks aim to force teachers to trade off any future increases in pay for a much tighter contract and worsened conditions.

Despite criticism of the Tory Education secretary, Sir Keith Joseph, the Labour local authorities want the same as he does. Constituency parties should make it clear that they are opposed to this approach and demand that local authority policy is changed.

## The threat of political vettings

**THE TORIES anti-union laws are class laws, tailored for employers to dramatically circumscribe the power of the unions. Additionally these laws have given the green light to the bosses to single out union militants. For, running parallel to the direct assaults on workers as in the miners strike or at Wapping, is the growing sinister hand of political vettings and the listing of 'suspect workers'.**

The most extreme example of this is GCHQ where any union member is seen as politically suspect. Political vettings went on at the BBC until the strike action of BBC employees.

Recently, it has come to light that similar vettings go on at British Telecoms. This, it is now apparent, is so draconian that it has resulted in the sackings by Fords of two women ex-employees of BT. The main Transport Union branch at Fords has been campaigning in defence of the women. Now several National Communication Union branches have written to the T&G branch to express their support.

A motion submitted by the NCU to the Labour Party women's conference denouncing the sacking of these women and the system of political vettings was carried without opposition, giving a boost to the campaign to win the women's re-instatement.

The sackings have also highlighted demands in the NCU to abolish political vettings by BT. Both women were active NCU stewards before working for Fords.

In an article published in the *Observer* last October, the union disclosed a confidential personnel

questionnaire which was being used to secretly collect information on BT employees. The ques-

By Rob Jones

tionnaire asks about interests or activities 'outside normal duties' which might influence the subjects 'attitude to security matters'. Even more alarmingly, it asks for the name and address of the subjects next employer if they have left BT.

Although BT have denied compiling such a list, an article which appeared in the *Daily Mail* earlier this month referred to a secret memo sent by BT to Fords. The sackings seem most likely to have been triggered by the forwarding of such secret files by BT.

In December, the NCU executive passed a series of resolutions calling for an end to so called political vetting by BT. A joint meeting with the BBC unions, who took industrial action last year against political vetting of BBC journalists, was held last month, Michael Bett, BT Board member, and, until recently, head of personnel, was previously in charge of setting up the political vetting procedures at the BBC — in collaboration with MI5, the secret political police.

It is thought likely that Bett was responsible for establishing a similar set-up in BT. The resolutions passed by the NCU EC also committed the union's representatives in the TUC General Council, and in Parliament, to campaign against political vetting and blacklisting.

Brian Macey, NCU (Engineering) executive member, told *Socialist Action* 'Many NCU members currently employed by BT were victims of blacklisting in the engineering industry. We have to make all our union members aware of what BT could mean. We must campaign on the basis of union policy to put a stop to it.'

Branches have submitted emergency motions to the NCU conference in June demanding BT release the secret files sent to Fords.

It is a regular event for workers to be sacked because of alleged 'bad references'. This is an easy excuse for a company to use while they are allowed to keep the references secret. In an interview with *Fleet News* the general manager of TNT, Alan Jones, revealed a recent case. One of their drivers refused to cross the picket line at Wapping. Jones said 'He got out of his vehicle and took an NGA official back to the depot... the incident occurred with our receiving references from his previous employer which were found to be unsuitable. As a result he was dismissed.'



# Socialist ACTION

## Stop the Labour Party purge!

THIS WEDNESDAY and Thursday sees a special Labour Party national executive meeting convened to carry through the purge of Liverpool party members. The meeting follows the 18 April special NEC which changed the executive quorum to give the right wing a decisive majority and amended the procedure for carrying out the expulsions. This followed national executive's abortive attempt to expel the Liverpool 12 on 26 March.

The March meeting failed to carry out expulsions when seven executive members — Tony Benn, Eric Clarke, Francis Curran, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson and Dennis Skinner — closed it down in protest against the breach in natural justice which the original NEC trial procedures clearly represented. The seven demanded that a transcript of the court case ruling of the previous day be made available to the NEC and that written procedures be laid before the executive in advance of the NEC trial.

The procedure decisions adopted by the April meeting completely vindicate the action of the seven. Both their demands were adopted by that NEC. In addition, general secretary Larry Whitty has now decided to drop charges against one of the Liverpool 12, Cheryl Varley, and is considering dropping them against another, Richard Knights.

Events following the March meeting, however, show Kinnock and company are as determined as ever to carry through their purge of socialists in the party.

The procedural rearrangements indicate nothing more than an attempt to whip any 'soft left' waverers into line behind Kinnock and the

right wing, and a desire to avoid the use of the courts against the leadership's undemocratic practices.

By Carol Turner

After the failed expulsion attempt in March, Kinnock was criticised as incompetent by the daily press. This time round the Labour leadership simply want to ensure that the expulsions are carried through with the minimum fuss. The changes in procedure in no way signal a fair hearing for the Liverpool party members when they appear.

'I have read the papers for the NEC,' Eric Heffer told Socialist Action, 'and on the basis of the information submitted by various witnesses I would say that there is no serious case to answer against Mulhearn or any of the others appearing before the executive. These papers underline the fact that something is being built of nothing against the Liverpool party members.'

Meanwhile, the witch-hunt has registered a significant gain. NUPE, the TGWU and other unions have clearly lined up behind the party leadership's attempts to silence

the left wing.

Two conferences last weekend, however, showed contradictory progress within the party for Kinnock's project. Wales regional conference carried a resolution calling for the expulsion of all supporters of the *Militant* newspaper, while Labour women's conference passed two resolutions opposing the witch-hunt and supporting the stand taken by the seven NEC members.

Alongside the Liverpool expulsions, the leadership is pursuing further attacks on party democracy. The April special meeting — with the support of TGWU votes — decided that Pat Wall, Labour candidate for Bradford North, will have to appear before a national executive committee before his candidature is ratified. The same meeting also set up a six-person working group, on the recommendation of John Evans and nominated by Neil Kinnock, to investigate 'widening the franchise' on reselection. This is yet another attempt to get rid of automatic reselection which remains as unpopular as ever among party leaders.

The Liverpool expulsions are the tip of the iceberg. They represent a step towards clawing back the gains for party democracy made in the past decade and establishing a quiescent membership for party leaders to preside over. In the interests of the party as a whole, it is up to every single member to call a halt to this witch-hunt — and call it now.



## Wapping meeting ends phoney war

The 3000 strong mass meeting of sacked printworkers from Rupert Murdoch's News International unanimously decided to escalate the action to win reinstatement and union recognition at the Wapping plant.

SOGAT president for life, Brenda Dean unsuccessfully attempted to defend the leadership's imminent capitulation to Murdoch in the face of slow handclaps and jeering. She argued that the SOGAT leadership had fought hard to win the dispute but 'had been let down by the membership'. Because of the hostility of the meeting, she left well before the end claiming that it had no constituted authority.

The meeting had been called by the London District Council in the wake of the union purging its contempt of court which the London District had rejected with 'disgust and contempt'. The motion the London District put to the meeting signified its intention to take over the running of the dispute and end the phoney war which the Dean leadership has hitherto been conducting.

The meeting unanimously decided that it would escalate the picketing at Wapping and at Murdoch's Fleet Street premises. This will include an increase in the morning picketing — like that carried out by the clerical branch which resulted in a number of coaches carrying the scabs being turned away from Wapping.

It also decided to reinstate the picketing of the wholesalers which was called off by Dean after her grovelling apology to

the High Court. Other Murdoch production centres are to be hit.

As a sign of the real intent of the decisions 20

By Brian Grogan

pickets were immediately dispatched to Bemrose, Liverpool, where the *News of the World* colour supplement is produced. These will be re-inforced later. London District secretary, Chris Robbins said to loud applause that if this meant incurring the wrath of the courts and the sequestration of London branch funds, then so be it.

Dean was told that the purge decision nonetheless needed to be reversed to allow the union to appeal for support for such picketing to the rest of the trades union movement.

To monitor the dispute, there will be a weekly meeting of all London branch officers, all Mothers and Fathers of the chapels, represen-

tatives of the National Picketing Office, and officers of all other unions involved in the dispute. This will operate as a de facto strike committee.

An opportunity now exists to renew support in the rest of the labour movement for the fight for re-instatement and union recognition at Wapping. It is now vital to span out to the rest of the trades union movement.

The miners hit every trades union conference looking for political and financial support. So should the printers. The TUC and the Labour Party Conference have to be targeted to back the dispute.

Other Fleet Street workers are now facing similar attacks. We have already seen the imposition of draconian conditions at the Express and Mirror. Now, the management of the *Telegraph* are limbering up for a Wapping-style push against the unions. A united Fleet Street response is possible and indispensable.

Prior to this meeting rank and file print workers had been organising to begin precisely this sort of fightback. Now is the time for them to identify with and lead the fight to implement this resolution.

Instead of standing on ceremony about formally electing a democratic strike committee. Militants should recognise

the tremendous opening provided by the weekly meeting of branch and chapel officers and the potential to use this as a strike committee.

But, most important of all, such militants must use these decisions to reach out to the thousands of supporters of the printworkers in other unions, in the mining communities, and in the black communities. The proposal for 'Welsh week' this coming weekend at Wapping should be followed up with other such proposals to different areas of the country, to different unions, to women, and to the black community.

The decisions of Monday's meeting provide a basis for renewing the appeal to the rest of the labour movement to put their words of support into action in support of the sacked printers. Thatcher is presently clearly reeling from a series of blows. Murdoch is a worthy symbol of the callous money-grubbing stance of her government. Wapping has the potential to become a further real crisis for this government.

The week of action which the South East Region of the TUC announced at Monday's meeting to boost the boycott campaign can be made into a focus for the massive support that still exists for the printworkers — and against Murdoch and Thatcher.

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