

# A Socialist ACTION

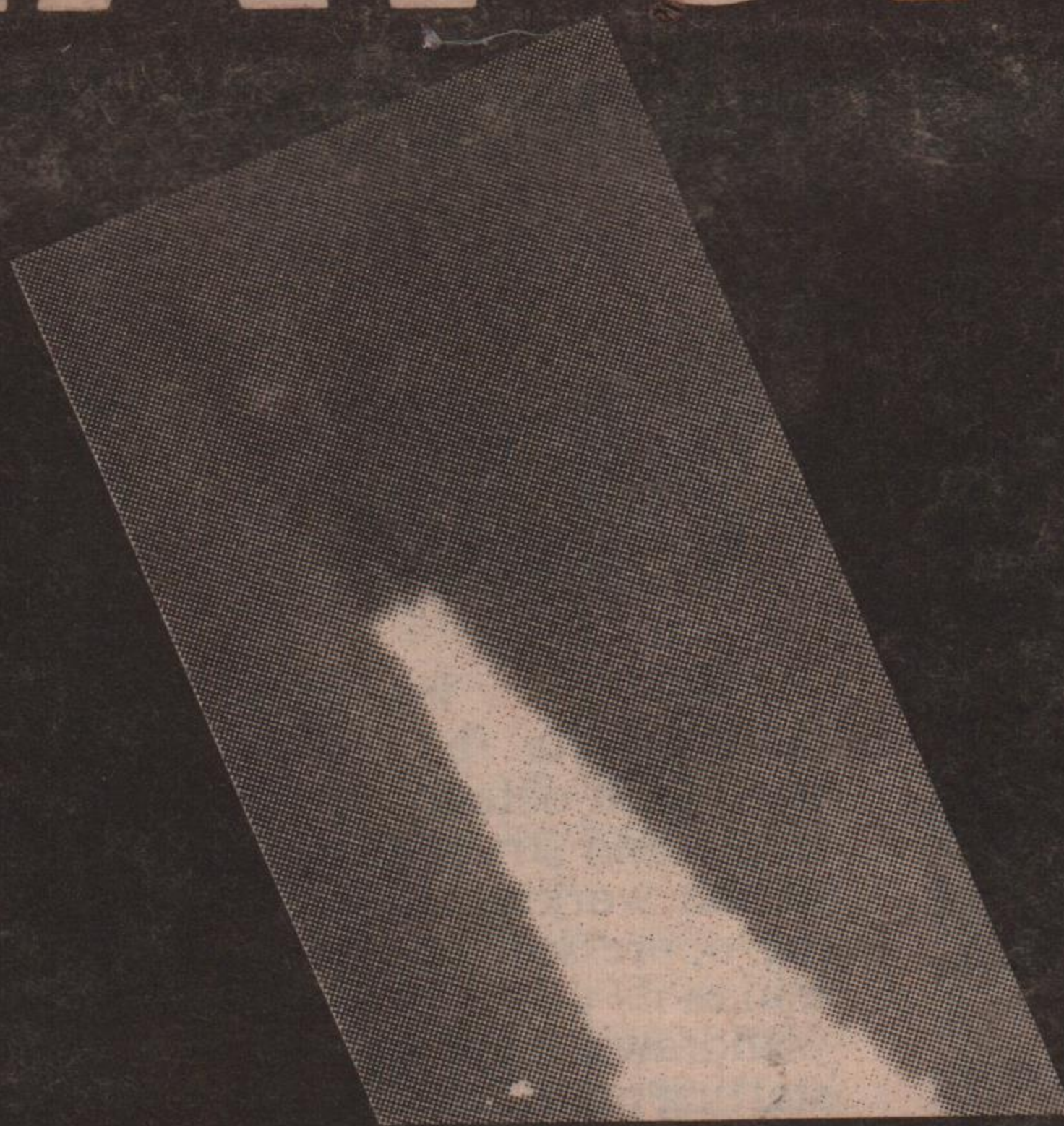
BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

- Why NATO needs the bomb
- Free Mike Hicks
- Revolt in France
- NUS conference
- Tribune attacks Labour councils on Ireland

## NO U.S. BASES!



## NO NATO!



## NO BOMB!



**LABOUR LAST** week launched a defence document *The Power to Defend Our Country* which is a disaster not only for the fight against nuclear weapons but for the Labour Party.

Of all policy gains made by the left in the Labour Party in the last ten years unilateral nuclear disarmament was by far the most important. The elimination of British nuclear weapons, the removal of all nuclear bases and facilities from Britain, would be a major contribution that Labour could make to peace and to the fight for freedom and socialism internationally.

While it is exaggerated to say, as the United States and others claim that a Britain which abandoned nuclear weapons would break up the Atlantic Alliance there is no doubt

that it would be the greatest crisis NATO had ever faced. And if NATO were weakened everyone in the world fighting for freedom, from Nicaragua to South Africa, would be able to sleep easier in their beds.

The weakening of NATO in western Europe would also be the best aid that anyone could give to those fighting for freedom in Eastern Europe — for it is the threat from the west which gives even the slightest threadbare justification for Soviet repression in Eastern Europe. But *The Power to Defend Our Country* is a disaster from the title onwards.

First it is not 'our' country at all. Just ask yourself which particular bit you own — as opposed to the ICIs, or GECs, or British Petroleums?

Second the policy has nothing to do with 'defence'. NATO does not exist to 'defend' anyone. It is the most

powerful military alliance, based on the most powerful economies, on earth. The people of Nicaragua, or Chile, or the black population of South Africa fighting against the British and American backed apartheid regime, are not being 'defended' by the powers that make up NATO. They are being threatened by them. NATO is an alliance to back imperialism throughout the world.

Third the document is incoherent. If there is a 'Soviet threat', as the document claims, then bluntly it is ridiculous to attempt to 'defend' ourselves against its nuclear weapons with conventional ones. The only way unilateralism makes sense is if there is no Soviet threat at all — which there isn't.

Fourthly it is easy to prove there is no Soviet threat. At the Reykjavic summit Gorbachev proposed the total

elimination of nuclear weapons — and the idea the Soviet Union is going to fight a conventional war to subjugate Europe is just as ridiculous. The governments which turned that down were those of the United States, Britain, France, and West Germany, Britain's NATO allies, not that of the Soviet Union.

The defence document even becomes ridiculous. It proudly announces in its preface: 'NATO was formed forty years ago when Britain had a Labour government. And it was a Labour foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, whose energy and drive were instrumental in creating the system of collective security based on NATO.' If Labour is going into an election attempting to portray itself as the party best equipped to defend us from the Soviet hordes it is going to get smashed. The policy is not merely wrong, it isn't even clever.

Kinnock *could* have launched Labour's unilateral nuclear disarmament campaign with a timely announcement that the proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons was the way forward. He could have attacked the hypocrisy of Thatcher and Reagan's 'multilateralism' for the fraud it was. He could have announced the elimination of British nuclear weapons as the first step to their elimination throughout the world. In other words, the Labour leadership could have launched a perfectly credible campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain — and it would have been the truth.

Instead, Labour chose a cold war line. The leadership chose to demonstrate to the ruling class that the imperialist NATO alliance is safe in Labour Party hands. That policy is not simply a lie. It will be an electoral disaster as well.



# Socialist ACTION

## Kinnock and the left

IT IS more and more clear that a new situation is opening up in both British politics and the labour movement. From the crushing defeat of June 1983 until the autumn of this year the political perspective of the majority of the labour movement was to win the general election. The chosen policy to do so was to achieve unity behind Neil Kinnock. Everything — the miners, the rate-capping struggle, the defence of Labour Party democracy, trade union freedom, the demands of women and black people in the labour movement — was to be sacrificed to this goal.

Kinnock traded on his credibility 'to win the election' to trample on most things which Labour Party activists and trade unionists held dear. What changed this autumn was that it became clear that by his means Kinnock was not going to win the election.

We do not mean by that it is statistically impossible that Labour, after polling, can get more seats in Westminster than the Tories. The Conservative government has got so many problems — from the M15 scandals, through the new poll tax, unemployment, up to the world economy — that it is perfectly possible, although not likely, that it could slump in the polls. It is clear that the Alliance will do better at a general election than it is doing in the opinion polls at present — and given the lottery represented by the British electoral system how votes will translate into seats is anyone's guess.

But what is clear is that even if Labour were to win the election it would not be because of but despite the policies being pursued by Kinnock. Labour's policies have now been dragged so far over to the right that it has surrendered the initiative almost totally to Thatcher.

Defence is simply the latest example of this drift. Labour, at present, looks like a very right wing social democratic party with a bizarrely left wing policy on nuclear weapons. That contradiction cannot last — because the combination is incoherent. Labour will either be taken to the left to fit it with its policy on unilateralism, or the policy on unilateralism will first be watered down, and then abandoned, to fit in with the general right wing policies. Given the record of the last three years there is no doubt that Kinnock and Hattersley will take the latter course. The right wing are already demanding that they do.

It is this logic which is causing the crisis in Labour's 'soft left' — those that claim both to be on the left and support Kinnock. What, after all, is the basis of the soft left? It is those who stood for the constitutional and policy gains of 1979-81 in the Labour Party and who then ratted — unlike the right wing who opposed these policies all along. Those policy gains were above all the reselection of MPs and unilateral nuclear disarmament. Both are now under attack by Kinnock — reselection quite openly and unilateralism in a defence policy which is moving further and further to the right. Kinnock is now smashing into his own base by attacking not simply anything new but the very policies passed by those who elected him in 1983.

The consequences of that are very different in different parts of the movement. There should be no illusions but that in the trade unions the majority breaking with the previous politics of the soft left are moving to the right.

In the constituencies, and it seems the student field, the development is different. Here a significant section is breaking with the politics of Kinnock to the left. What is more the left is being able to hammer out an agenda in opposition to British imperialism and its consequences. That is the common theme which knits together international solidarity, opposition to nuclear weapons, support for the demands of women and black people, supporting British withdrawal from Ireland, and fighting for democracy in the labour movement.

For in the final analysis, at best, Kinnock's are the politics of the white labour aristocracy. He wants a better welfare state — for British workers. He wants to defend 'his country' — including against the terrorist Irish. If you are a woman, or black, or an Arab, or happen to live in then don't expect anything from Neil Kinnock.

Very slowly, much too slowly for our liking, people are beginning to realise that Kinnock's politics, are not merely not socialist but they don't work either. And when those two ideas are brought together in the labour movement things are going to start to change.

## National Union of Students Xmas Conference NUS in crisis

LAST WEEK'S National Union of Students conference confirmed the crisis of its 'Democratic Left' leadership. The whole of the NUS executive's report and plan for the year ahead was referred back by an overwhelming vote. Only lack of time prevented motions of censure against the executive being discussed, for its failure to campaign on particular areas of work, like racism and fascism.

The situation of the 'Democratic Left' leadership of the NUS represents the most acute expression of the crisis of the soft left in the labour movement as a whole.

At the head of a union in which there are majorities for the politics of the Campaign Group and the campaigns in Labour Left Liaison on nearly every issue, NUS's inability to fight to implement these positions is manifest. That inability has produced widespread dissatisfaction with the NUS leadership.

By Polly Vittorini,  
NUS London Executive

Conference was mostly taken up with constitutional amendments, until the final morning when debates on grants, benefits and housing and on AIDS were taken. Sunday's commissions on specific areas of work consisted almost entirely of executive members trying to defend their record of inaction since the Easter conference. They met widespread censure.

Despite the fact that the NUS has consistently adopted strong campaigning policies on paper — for decent grants and accessible education in the face of Tory cuts — grants, benefits and loans were far and away given the most priority for debate by the colleges ballot. This is a symptom of the dissatisfaction with what the NUS executive has done so far.

Conference mandated the executive to organise a national demonstration next term, renewing the commitment to fighting the proposed cuts, total rejection of loans, the demand for the abolition of the parental contribution and a minimum grant for all students including those in the Further Education sector.

Delegates also voted to create a new post of NUS Women's Officer, which will be elected by NUS women's campaign conference. Socialist Students in NOLS, in a bulletin circulated to conference,

argued that the women's officer should not be elected by women's conference but national NUS conference. This gave the lie to their 'support' for the demands of the Labour Women's Action Committee.

Making themselves completely clear, SSiN's article in *Socialist Organiser* 'Feminism yes, democracy no' attacked NUS women's committee using the right wing and reactionary argument that women fabricate allegations of sexual harassment against men they can't politically defeat and use positive action demands to further their careers.

### NUS

SSiN finally withdrew their amendment (ostensibly due to 'compositing problems'), under intense pressure from NUS women's committee. At a women's meeting called by SSiN to explain their position, *Socialist Organiser*'s arguments were clearly lost — to the point where SSiN women explained their support for women's autonomy and the right of women to elect their own representatives, and distanced themselves from the declared SSiN position.

These politics and others, such as SSiN's support for a two-state solution in the Middle East and a federal Ireland against national liberation for the Irish people, mean that Socialist Students in NOLS are no alternative to the present 'Democratic Left' leadership of the student union. They are a 'left' which stands in opposition to the issues around which the left are uniting, such as women's self-organisation.

The lip-service paid to the campaigns of Labour Left Liaison is dumped in practice when it conflicts with their own sectarian interests. This was clearly shown by their attitude to the election of the NUS women's officer. SSiN placed their likely inability to win the officer elected from a conference of



women above the interests of all women students.

Despite these politics — directly counter to majority views in NUS — SSiN were equalling NOLS votes on conference floor, the clearest possible example that SSiN win votes because they have been allowed to be the only alternative to the present NOLS and NUS leadership.

### NUS

The leadership necessary for the NUS is one which defends the interests and struggles of all of the working class and the oppressed; one which makes its policy of British withdrawal from Ireland a starting point for real campaigning activity; one which turns its policy of sanctions against South Africa into a definite campaigning commitment; and one which implements a policy on Palestine consistent with these positions.

Faisal Owaideh, British representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation was nominated for guest speaker by more colleges than any other of the guest speakers. He was even invited to speak at conference by the NUS ex-

ecutive, but was not prioritised to speak by the speakers' ballot since neither NOLS nor SSiN called for a vote for him despite much publicity about the killings of Palestinian students by the Israeli army at Bir Zeit University last week.

A fringe meeting on the theme of "Freedom for Palestine" called by Campaign Student with speakers from the PLO and the Labour Party Black Sections was attended by one hundred people and was widely commended as the beginning of an open and reasoned debate on the issue in the NUS. This was the first time the PLO have had a platform at NUS conference in ten years. It is time NUS adopted a position of support for the PLO's demand for a democratic, secular Palestine, which would be consistent with its positions in support of British withdrawal from Ireland and sanctions against South Africa, and support for the ANC and SWAPO.

### NUS

The discussion taking place in NUS, over women's autonomy, black self-organisation, support for national liberation struggles and a leadership which stands on active

support for these parallel the debate in the labour movement as a whole. There is great interest in the Labour Women's Action Committee from women labour students. The number of students at the WAC AGM the week after the conference points the way to an important alliance which would strengthen WAC's campaign in the labour movement.

NOLS has already affiliated to the Labour Committee on Ireland. At its conference in February the National Organisation of Labour Students will be debating whether to affiliate to Labour Left Liaison. Affiliation to LLL would be consistent with the policies NOLS has or is likely to adopt on Ireland, black sections, and women's self-organisation amongst other issues.

Organising alongside the campaigning left in the labour movement would be a great step towards a NOLS which leads an active campaigning NUS and away from conferences dominated by censures of the leadership.

● Campaign Student meets Saturday 24 January, 2pm, U.C.L., London, to discuss its meeting at NOLS conference.

## Students Against Repression in Ireland launched

STUDENTS Against Repression in Ireland was launched at Xmas NUS conference, organised by students from Queen's university, Belfast, and chaired by Maeve Sherlock of the NUS executive.

NUS has already organised a speaking tour and provided an informa-

tion pack, and plans are underway for distributing more campaigning mater-

By Conor Foley, LCI Student Officer

ial and possibly organising a week of action in the second term. It is hoped that activists in the colleges will begin forming local groups to build for this and will highlight issues such as strip searching, plastic bullets, the PTA, and

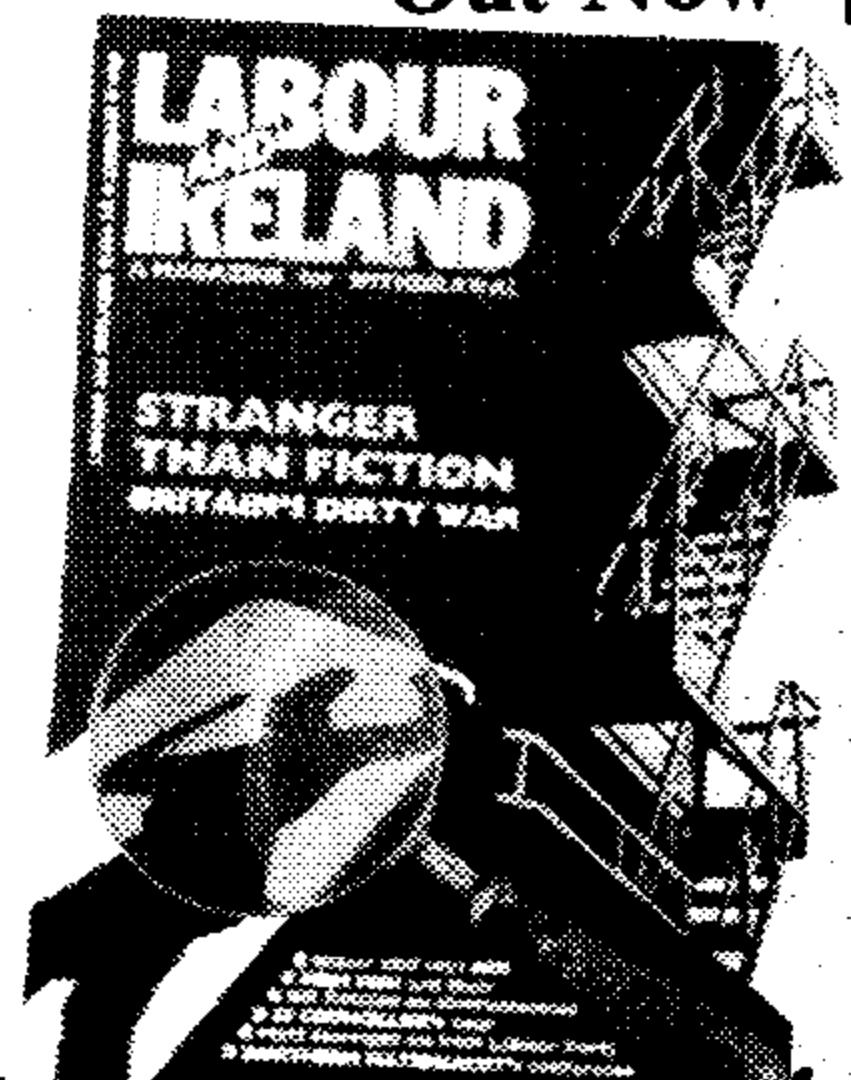
framed prisoners in British jails. For more information contact NUS, USI or the LCI.

● For information on Students Against Repression in Ireland contact: NUS, 461 Holloway Road London, N7 4LJ; or USI, 16 North Great George's St, Dublin. LCI can be contacted at BM Box 5355, London WCIN 3XX

Dec/Jan issue costs 60p from LCI, BM Box 5355, London WCIN 3XX.

Features include 'Stranger than fiction: Britain's dirty war', a report of ex-army captain Colin Wallace's revelations about Britain's secret service activities in Ireland, 'Ulster still says no', on Westminster's failure to convince Unionists that the Anglo-Accord was in their own best interests, reports from the Sinn Féin and Fheis, and of the SF councillors tour, Bill Rolston on discrimination, Matt Merrigan on the Irish Labour Party, the Northern Nationalists conference, and more.

Labour and Ireland Latest Issue Out Now





# Policy divisions deepen in 'soft left'

*Tribune*, the chief paper of Labour's 'soft left', should be compulsory reading for socialists at present. Because in its pages are being argued out the chief problems of perspective that now affects Labour's 'realigned left'. Most important the issues being confronted are now moving off personalities to the basic questions of policy.

The crisis registered in *Tribune* started with two articles that appeared in the paper's Labour conference issue. A front page article 'Whatever happened to realignment?' by editor Nigel Williamson admitted that the 'soft left' was now the 'least coherent' group in the party and raised issues of policy over such questions as the soft left's refusal to call for the removal of all US bases from Britain. The second article was a column by Ann Pettifor, co-chair of Labour Left Liaison (LLL) and member of the Labour Women's Action Committee Executive, spelling out some bases for unity and organisation on the left. Since then the political polemic has unfolded rapidly.

The first step was, a 68-48 vote in November by the soft left Labour Coordinating Committee AGM, to reject any work with Labour Left Liaison — with Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone, the NUPE representative, and LCC Scotland opposing this. This was followed by a *Tribune* column by Ken Livingstone attacking the LCC's decision and entitled 'Left must look to the future'. This reiterated opposition to the witch hunt, support for the demands of the women's conference and Black Sections and opposed re-opening the issue of reselection in the party. *Tribune* printed a reply to this by right wing LCC member Trevor Fisher — who supported the LCC majority position.

Fisher publicly took up the policy differences with Livingstone and made it clear the issues involved in the LCC were not simply tactical. Fisher openly justified the witch hunt and expulsions and, rather bizarrely given his overall political position, accused the LLL of subordinating class issues in the politics of 'race and gender', arguing: 'Nor is it clear that an alliance which makes gender and race politics the key at the expense of class politics is viable.'

Others weighing into battle in the same 5 December issue of *Tribune* were Kevin Scally and Stephen Twigg, LCC member of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and

Gay Rights. And in a separate but related development an extraordinary back page column by David Blunkett.

Scally publicly backed up Livingstone. He attributed his reinstatement in the party to a principled united campaign waged by the left — and made it clear that while he completely opposed the politics of *Militant* he was against both the expulsion of their supporters and the witch hunt atmosphere it created. Twigg called for Labour's campaign bodies to leave the LLL. Blunkett in practice backed up Kinnock's attack on 'looney left' councils and informed us: 'I am not prejudiced against gays and lesbians but there is no point in trying to delude myself that I feel anything but revulsion at the idea of touching another male.'

The differences continued to deepen in the 12 December issue. Vladimir Derer, secretary of the LLL, took up Livingstone and explained that while there was not a basis for unification between the LLL and the LCC, a proposal mooted by Livingstone, joint work on principled objectives — such as defence of reselection, defeating the witch hunt, and gaining the demands of the Women's Action Committee and Black Sections — was to be welcomed.

The LLL's co-chair Ann Pettifor, in a devastating column entitled 'White men ridden with



angst' took to pieces Trevor Fisher's arguments. She concluded: 'The campaigns within Labour Left Liaison have defined a political basis for unity on the left. This is based on: support for the right of women and black people to self-organisation, opposition to sectarianism and expulsions; support for the control of capital through the extension of public ownership, particularly of the financial institutions; the ending of Britain's imperialist role in Ireland and the expulsion of American bases from British soil.'

Following the writing of Pettifor's column, and the vote to re-open the issue of reselection by the NEC, the LLL added a clear policy opposing the re-opening of the issue of reselection of MPs by the party and leadership and defending the present system. *Tribune*, in a clear policy choice, also decided to run a centre-page article by John Hume, leader of the Irish Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), opposing the dialogue between Sinn Fein and sections of the Labour Party. The divisions within the LCC also translated themselves into

open policy splits in the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) at the National Union of Students conference.

What had started in October as a 'crisis of perspectives', and differences over tactics, had by December become a

full blown fight over basic policies. On one side, in the soft left, were those standing for policies such as opposition to the expulsions, defence of reselection, support for the demands of the Women's Action Committee and Black Sections, British withdrawal from Ireland, removal of all US bases and cooperation with Labour Left Liaison and the Campaign Group of MPs. On the other side were those standing for expulsions, for overturning the system of reselection of MPs, giving purely lip service but no practical support to the Women's Action Committee and Black Section, opposing practical steps towards creating conditions for British withdrawal from Ireland, allowing the maintaining of US bases in Britain, and opposing any practical cooperation with the LLL or Campaign Group. These are not 'tactical differences'. They are an absolutely fundamental split over just about some of the most fundamental issues of politics today.

What is not yet clear is what practical conclusions the sections of the soft left favouring collaboration with the LLL and Campaign Group are going to draw. In addition to public polemics different sections of the soft left have started to vote against each other — notably CLP representatives Michael Meacher and David Blunkett voting against re-opening the issue of reselection on the NEC and Tom Sawyer of NUPE and Eddie Haigh of the TGWU voting in favour of re-opening the issue.

The logical conclusion would be for those sections of the soft left that welcome collaboration with the 'hard left' to ignore the sectarian positions taken by the LCC and to start to carry out practical cooperation for common objectives. Whether they will do so remains to be seen.

But one thing is clear. The divisions on the 'soft left' are not even remotely tactical. They are around the most fundamental political questions of the day. It looks like we are in for another shake up on the left.

## Tribune attacks Labour councils on Ireland

THE 12 December *Tribune* carried a major centre-spread article by John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party of the North East six counties of Ireland. The article is a frontal attack on Labour councils and the section of the Labour left which has opened up a dialogue with Sinn Fein's elected representative in Ireland.

By Redmond O'Neill

Ken Livingstone, the former leader of the GLC who initiated the dialogue between Labour councils in Britain and Sinn Fein representatives, as well as progressive policies towards the Irish ethnic minority of more than four million in Britain, are singled out by Hume for special attack.

In itself Hume's article is unremarkable. Indeed it is on the same level as the sordid muck-raking and witch hunting that is pumped out in the gutter press against Sinn Fein and radical Labour councils which exercise their right to meet them.

More significant is the evident editorial intervention of the Kinnockite *Tribune*.

The article is introduced: 'In the wake of the invitation recently extended by a number of Labour councils to representatives of Sinn Fein, John Hume the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, circulated the following statement for discussion by the Labour Left. *Tribune* is delighted to reprint it here.'



Hume

*Tribune* is adding its voice to that of Neil Kinnock who 'firmly associated' himself with Thatcher in condemning the action of those (Labour) councils which welcomed Sinn Fein representatives in October this year, and to that of front bench spokesperson Clive Soley who circulated Labour Party branches calling upon them to disassociate themselves from the tour.

What is at stake here is the elementary democratic right of the representatives of the labour movement in Britain to find out what is being done by the British state in Ireland, by talking directly to those who the Irish people elect to represent them.

What the Tory Party, the press and the British state fear is very simple — it is the truth. The truth about what is done to the nationalist people in the north of Ireland in order to maintain British rule there and the partition of

Ireland.

Local councils in this country have a responsibility to find out and, indeed to expose what is done in their name by the British state in Ireland. Without access to the facts, as directly related by the elected representative of the nationalist people, it is impossible for the labour movement to do its duty towards Ireland. That is to formulate and act upon a policy of self-determination for the Irish people as a whole and complete British withdrawal from Ireland.

The actions of Labour councils like Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth and Manchester, in meeting Sinn Fein councillors are all the more disturbing to the British establishment because these councils cover huge Irish communities which are evidently all the more directly concerned with Britain's racist policy towards Ireland and the Irish.

Furthermore, as local delegations from the Divis flats in West Belfast to housing estates in Brixton and to the Broadwater Farm estate in Haringey show, oppressed black communities in Britain's inner cities can see some parallels between the treatment they receive and the repression which is a daily fact of life in the nationalist areas of the North of Ireland.

Kinnock, Soley and *Tribune* are contesting the right of Labour councils to help the people they represent to find out the truth about Ireland and act accordingly.

The truth is that Britain has no progressive role to play in Ireland. The only way to open the solution to any of the problems facing Ireland is British withdrawal. Any policy which blocks Labour Parties or Labour councils hearing the views of all those in Ireland favouring British withdrawal simply prolongs Ireland's agony and strengthens reaction in Britain.

At a time when Labour councils are facing a racist assault orchestrated by the Tory Party nationally, it is to be hoped that *Tribune* will be as delighted to open its pages to replies by the councils to Hume's attacks and will itself follow their lead and open up in its pages a dialogue with Sinn Fein representatives elected by people in the north of Ireland.

We are sure, for example, many Labour Parties would be fascinated to hear debates organised between SDLP and Sinn Fein representatives in British *Tribune* is delighted to open its pages to replies by the councils to Hume's attacks and will itself follow their lead and open up in its pages a dialogue with Sinn Fein representatives elected by people in the north of Ireland.

**Campaign Group News**  
PUBLISHED BY THE CAMPAIGN GROUP OF LABOUR MPs  
Brent, Haringey, Lambeth, Liverpool, Manchester...

**Defend Labour councils**

Send for your copy to Bob Clay, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA (30p + 13p p&p).

Greetings for 1987 to all those fighting for socialism and freedom in Britain and internationally from the Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

JUST OUT!

Campaign Group News,

January issue features —

- Bernie Grant on Labour councils
- Merle Amoury on Brent
- Mark Wadsworth on Black Section
- Khan and Scally
- Tony Benn on Labour's defence policy



## A tribute to Miriam James

MIRIAM JAMES a much-loved and tireless campaigner for Irish freedom died in London early on Sunday morning, 14 December, at the age of 69, after a three-month serious illness. Miriam spent her first 12 years in Scotland, moving to Dublin at 14, where she joined Cumann na nBan. She also helped set up Cumann na gCailini, its junior wing.

In 1934 Miriam joined the newly-formed Republican Congress and the briefly-resuscitated Irish Citizens Army, working with people who later fought and died in the International Brigade in Spain. Miriam herself was interned in Mountjoy jail from 27 June 1940 to 20 March 1943. Six years later she came to London. In 1977 she became involved in community politics in North Kensington. Soon afterwards she joined the Labour Party and, in June 1983, the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Miriam became secretary of LCI's London Committee, and also secretary of the organising committee for the major demonstration that was held on 19 August 1984 marking the fifteenth anniversary of British troops returning to Irish streets. In July 1984 she took a GLC-funded job establishing the Battersea and Wandsworth Irish Group. In May 1985 almost less than a year later she started work in the Ethnic Minorities Unit of the GLC, as a policy adviser on the needs of the Irish community where she helped organise numerous other events. Also in 1985, as a delegate to Labour Party conference, Miriam moved a resolution calling for British withdrawal from Ireland.

This year she saw the fruition of her work as secretary of the committee mobilising for the Bloody Sunday anniversary demonstration. When she fell ill and became unconscious in September she was helping to organise the Sinn Fein councillors visit to England, which took place in October. Miriam would have been delighted by its success. Her death will be a loss to the struggle for Irish freedom. Socialist Action extends its condolences to all Miriam James comrades and relatives.

## Campaign launched to rehabilitate Stalin's victims

PLANS for an international campaign to exonerate the victims of the 1930s Moscow Trials were discussed at a meeting held in the House of Commons on 3 December under the auspices of Eric Heffer MP.

By Eileen Gersch



About 30 people were present. Others, such as Tamara Deutscher and Lord Brockway, sent apologies. Many of those who attended were already active politically at the time of Stalin's witch hunt.

Next year, 1987, will be the centenary of the birth of Bukharin, one of those tried and condemned to death, whose reputation has been partially restored. This fact, and the complete or partial rehabilitation of a few of the other victims, make it a propitious time for such a campaign.

The perspective of the meeting was to reach out, through public meetings and the media, and to take resolutions from labour movement groups through the Russian embassy to the Soviet government, asking that the records of the Trials be reopened. This rehabilitation would include Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky, as well as Bukharin, the generals who were executed in 1937 including Tukhachevsky, and others. An ad hoc committee was formed to broaden participation before launching the campaign.

# WAC plans for a vital year

THE LABOUR Women's Action Committee AGM took place last weekend in Leeds. Attended by 75 women, the meeting concentrated its political energies on the proposals that LWAC will campaign for in the context of the consultation and review of the Labour Party women's organisation initiated by party conference in October.

The first priority of LWAC in the coming year will be to use the opportunity of the consultation process to step up the discussion around the key changes in the women's organisation that LWAC was formed to fight for. Central to this is the question of women's conference having the right to elect the five seats reserved for women on the NEC.

This has always been seen as one of LWAC's key demands, because all the other possible changes that could be made to the women's organisation would have little effect, unless the women's organisation has some real power in the party as a whole. Giving women the right to elect their own representatives on the party leadership is not only fair, but would be a real step to creating a powerful women's organisation that could exercise real influence over party policy.

Continuing the campaign to win the widest possible support for this principle will be the centre of LWAC's activity over the next months. The AGM agreed to take specific steps, both regionally and nationally, to ensure that this campaign is taken out into the broader labour movement. In particular LWAC wants to take every opportunity to discuss and campaign with women organised in the unions, through day schools, meetings at the women's TUC and union conferences, producing a broadsheet specially for women in the unions and giving a platform to the issues that women are organising around in the unions themselves.

It was also noted that LWAC has an important potential base of support among women in the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS). Student women are facing similar battles in the NUS

— including the fight for the right of NUS women's conference to elect the women's officer — to those that women are facing in the Labour Party. LWAC will seek to develop these links with women in the student movement by working with women in NOLS to win support from Labour Clubs and hopefully from NOLS as a whole.

By Jude Woodward, LWAC assistant secretary

However the main discussion at the AGM was devoted to the precise proposals that LWAC favours for the reorganisation of the women's conference. Most importantly LWAC agreed to campaign for the introduction of a weighted vote for the unions at women's conference, based on their women members, and that there should be parity of voting strength between women from women's sections, councils and CLPs on the one hand, and women from the unions on the other.

On the NEC women's division, it was agreed that LWAC would campaign for the election to be held at women's conference, but on the basis of some seats elected by the unions, and some by the women's sections. It was agreed that a system of parity should again apply on this. Therefore LWAC will campaign for the number of NEC places to be in-



WAC executive members Ann Pettifor and Diane Abbott



creased to six, and for these to be divided equally between the unions and the women's sections.

Some concern was expressed as to whether this was the best proposal to fight for. Arguments were presented against increasing the places to six, others argued against dividing the seats. However both these positions were held by small minorities, and there was general agreement that the proposal adopted was the best framework for campaigning.

Clearly LWAC faces a crucial year of hard work and vital campaigning. The AGM elected a new executive with the remit of carrying out this important campaigning work, and clearly the next major step will be to ensure that LWAC's proposals get fully discussed at national Labour women's conference. The AGM agreed to campaign for a full day of the women's conference to be set aside for a thorough discussion of the review of women's organisation. In order for this to occur it will be crucial to ensure that the maximum number of resolutions and amendments are tabled for the conference around this issue. Women's sections have very little time to do

this as resolutions have to be in January.

Ensuring that these issues are fully aired in the women's organisation will be LWAC's key priority in the coming weeks. It was agreed that more finances had to be raised in order to send out more frequent mailings to

our members.

Other issues touched on at the AGM included reports of LWAC's work in the last year including the work that has been achieved in developing closer links with the Black Section, CLPD, and the Campaign Group through Labour Left Liaison.

## Labour Party backs Central America conference

THE LABOUR Party's national executive committee has added its support to a conference on peace, self-determination and reconstruction in Central America.

By Celia Pugh

The conference, called by the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, will be held on 28 February at the TUC's Congress House.

Among the 13 national union sponsors are the TGWU, NUPE, NALGO, NUR, CPSA, UCW and USDAW. The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign also

backs the conference which will be addressed by representatives of the main trade union federations in Nicaragua and El Salvador — the CST and UNTS.

Other speakers include the FDR-FMLN of El Salvador, Ron Todd, a leader of the NUM and a leading Labour Party member. Audrey Wise, a member of the Labour Party national executive, will chair the event. Workshops will consider practical steps for solidarity.

• Delegates credentials and other information from ELSSOC, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1 (tel 01-928 3412).

## Black Section condemns Deptford reselection

THE LABOUR Party Black Section has attacked the reselection in the Deptford constituency. Despite covering an area which is fifty per cent black the constituency selected a 'soft-left' white candidate — Joan Ruddock.

The reselection followed months of interference by Walworth Rd and the sitting MP John Silkin to attempt to secure the candidate the party leadership wanted. The local Lewisham and Deptford Mercury last month ran a five page 'exposure' of the constituency party with extensive quotes from John Silkin. An atmosphere was whipped up where party members seriously feared

a Knowsley style imposition if they selected the 'wrong' candidate.

Sections of the left put forward black woman candidate, and surcharged Lambeth councillor, Amelda Inyang. In the event, despite the huge campaign, Ruddock only won nomination by the relatively small margin of 35 votes to 27 over another local black candidate Clifton Graham.

In another move the selection of a PPC by Streatham party is being disallowed because of the participation of the local Black Section in the selection procedure. This follows a similar earlier move by the NEC against Lewisham East. Black Section London organiser Paul Sharma was defeated in the selection.



# French youth teach Chirac a lesson

AFTER THREE weeks of massive mobilisations, university occupations, school strikes and bloody street battles, Jacques Chirac's right-wing coalition government was forced into a humiliating climb-down from its proposed 'reform' of higher education.

The government's defeat, just nine months after their election victory, will have repercussions far wider than the education sector.

By Hilary Eleanor in Paris

Alain Devaquet who, as minister for the university sector, gave his name to the 'reform bill' has been forced to resign — just the first casualty of the government's defeat.

The Devaquet bill was an attempt to bring the higher education system in-line with the demands of French capital and industry. At the core of its proposals were increased selection of students and the strengthening of the links between the private sector and the universities.

Devaquet's bill provided a spark which ignited a massive movement amongst youth afraid of unemployment, many of whom had been radicalised through the mass anti-racist movement 'SOS-Racisme'.

The first national student demonstration of Thursday 27 November saw one million students and trade unionists on the streets of Paris and towns throughout France. The 'Student Coordination', a national body of delegates elected from each faculty and school, appealed for the occupation of the universities after this magnificent show of strength. They also appealed for a national strike in the whole education sector, and for a demonstration in Paris on 4 December.

The movement set a shining example for the labour movement of determined leadership and democratic forms of self-organisation. At each facul-

ty, general assemblies were held frequently to discuss the next steps for the fightback. Delegates to higher bodies were instantly recallable and were mandated to vote by their general assembly.

This democratic functioning prevented successive attempts to sabotage and defuse the movement by both government manoeuvres and by media attempts to red-bait and divide the students.

The strikes by secondary school students gave an added depth to the campaign, broadening out the struggle and ensuring popular support for the withdrawal of the Devaquet bill.

On 4 December one million people brought Paris to a standstill in a huge show of force.

While education ministers washed their hands of the affair, the government announced the bill would go ahead and placed the matter in the hands of the minister of the interior, Charles Pasqua, who took over by unleashing the CRS riot police, water cannons and tear gas grenades on the demonstrators.

The news of the government's intransigence provoked an angry reaction but it was the provocations of the CRS that led to the bloody street battles that went on that night. The government was out to smash the movement by repression and to turn the tide of public opinion



One million bring Paris to a standstill

against the students by labelling them 'rioters'. But this attempt to retake the initiative dramatically backfired. On Friday 5 December, they announced that the most controversial points of the bill would be put on ice.

The national Student Coordination responded by demanding complete and total withdrawal of the bill. More street fights erupted that night as the CRS attempted to evict students from the occupation at the Sorbonne university. At least three teargas grenades hit human targets: one student lost an eye, another was knocked unconscious and a third's hand was ripped off in full view of TV cameras.

In CRS mopping up operation after the demons-

tration, Malik Oussekiné was brutally clubbed to death, provoking a wave of opposition. The Student Coordination called for a commemoration march for Malik on Saturday 6 December, token strikes and stoppages in workplaces the following Monday and another demonstration on the Wednesday.

In spite of the government declarations that there would be no 'retreat' by the government, the tidal wave of protests forced a climb-down. By 1pm on Monday, Chirac had announced that the bill would be withdrawn. The students decided to go head with a victory march on Wednesday 10 December but, given the death of Malik it was, as some of the banners said, 'a sad victory'. Again a

million demonstrators — youth and workers — showed their defiance to the government.

Following on from its defeat, the fragile coalition headed by Chirac is now in turmoil. It has had to temporarily withdraw its immediate projects including the new 'nationality code' (a racist measure aimed at stopping black people gaining French citizenship) and privatisation of the prisons.

Aside from the immediate problems created for the government this exemplary struggle will inspire others in the future. After years of hot air and constant surrender by the trade union leaderships, the youth showed it is possible to win.

## World in action

### Philippines ceasefire threatened

MASSIVE MOBILISATIONS greeted the signing of the 60-day ceasefire between the government of Corason Aquino and the New People's Army (NPA). Signed on 27 November, the ceasefire came into the force on 10 December.

But on the very day of the ceasefire's implementation, an NPA supporter was killed during a march in support of the ceasefire in Davao City. And on Monday 15 December armed forces chief Fidel Ramos was claiming breaches of the ceasefire as a pretext for further action against the NPA.

The armed forces have been opposed to any agreement with the NPA who had been calling for a ceasefire period of 100 days. The 60-day period was a compromise, with the Aquino government originally offering 30 days.

Under the agreement supporters of the NPA are to be allowed to set up headquarters in Manila. 'Absolute, binding, permanent and irrevocable immunity from search, arrest, and prosecution' is guaranteed to 'those accredited persons who will assist the NDF during peace talks'. The NDF (National Democratic Front) is a broad coalition that represented the NPA in the negotiations.

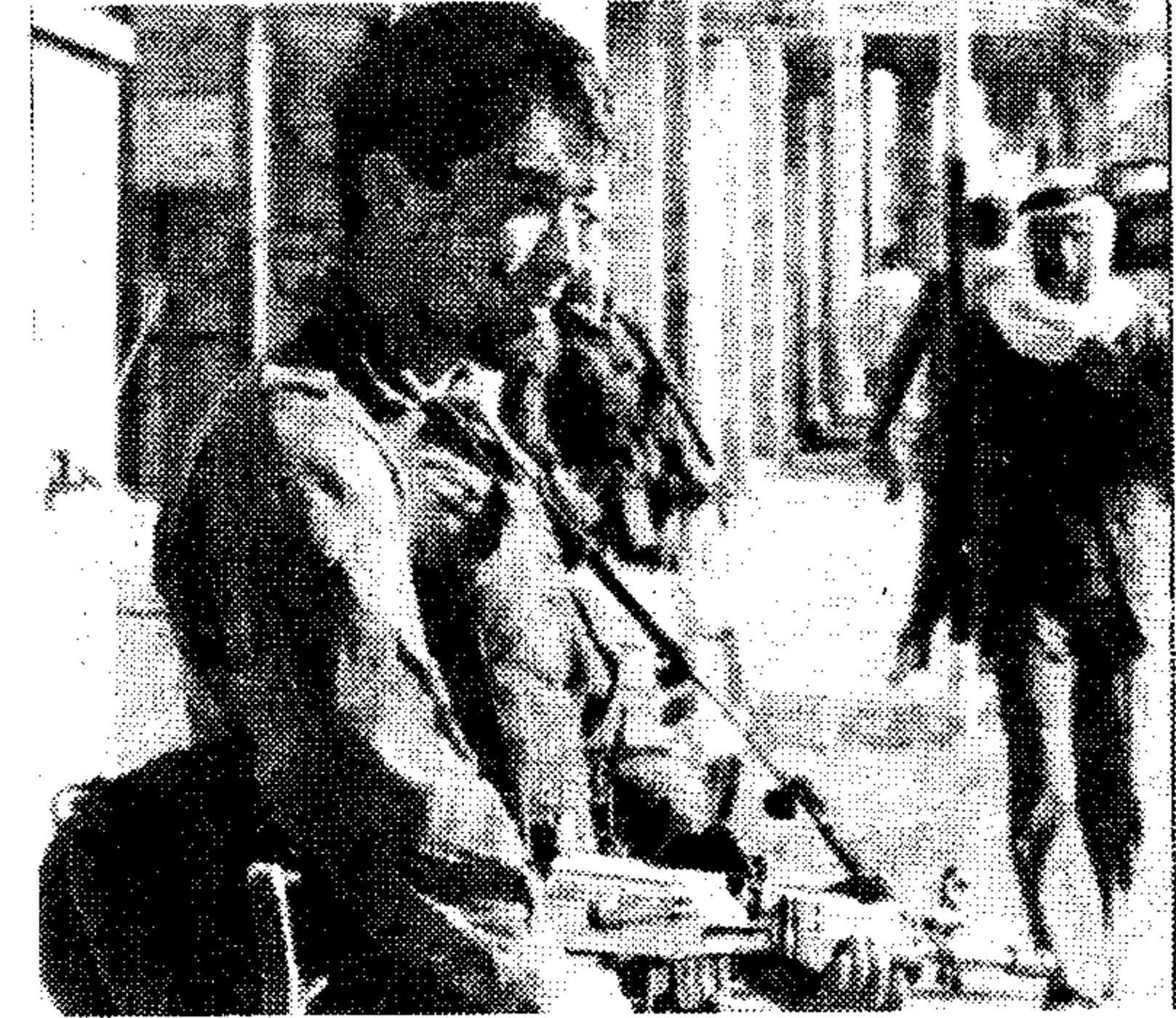
The agreement calls on the armed forces 'to disarm and punish abusive members and units in the field' including private armies of many landlords that continue to terrorise the rural population. However, the agreement also provides for 'government peace-keeping functions' — a formula often used to describe the armed forces military actions against the NPA — to continue.

The 60-day period comes to an end on 2 February, the date of a national plebiscite on a new constitution. In the meantime discussions will continue on an end to the war, during which the NDF will raise land redistribution and the occupation of Philippine territory by US military bases.

### Opposition mounts to Israeli terror in occupied territories

ALL SHOPS, offices and schools throughout the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip have been closed following the shooting of four Palestinian youths by Israeli soldiers. The UN have condemned the murders.

Israeli troops have now fired on a number of unarmed demonstrations injuring dozens of people. Those killed include two youths aged 12 to 14.



The demonstrations began at Bir Zeit university at the beginning of the month. The students were protesting at the Israeli support to attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. On 4 December, Israeli gunboats launched a two-hour bombardment on the Ein Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps, part of a concerted policy of seeking to prevent the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) from reestablishing itself in south Lebanon. In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon and inflicted brutal losses on the Palestinian community, including the infamous terror campaign in Shabra and Shatila. The PLO was driven out of the country by the Israeli invasion force. But four years later, the PLO is reestablishing itself, despite opposition from Israel and the Syrian-backed Amal militia.

Strong support for the PLO exists in Gaza and the West Bank which have been under ruthless military occupation for 19 years by Israel. In a recent poll taken in the area, 93.5 per cent said they considered the PLO their 'sole' representative. An entire new generation has been brought up in the area knowing nothing other than the experience of nightmare conditions and military occupation. 'Reagan, Reagan, you should know, we support the PLO' was the chant of the students at Bir Zeit.

### Tory backing for US contra mercenary attacks.

FURTHER EVIDENCE of direct British government support for the Nicaraguan contras was revealed by Labour's foreign affairs spokesperson last week. Speaking in the House of Commons on Thursday 11 December, George Foulkes charged the government of supporting terrorism in central America, writes NICK ADAMS.

He revealed that a representative of the British embassy in Costa Rica had attended a conference on 24 November of contra forces and others. The conference was allegedly aiming to establish a 'provisional government' in opposition to the Sandinistas.

He further revealed that a Foreign Office official had attended the recent pro-contra conference in London which was addressed by Arturo Cruz, a leading contra terrorist. In response to Foreign Office claims that no official support was implied by these actions, Foulkes said 'they must think we're totally naive. They are just putting up excuses'.

The evidence of increased British government support comes at a time of increasing difficulties for the contra terrorists. The so-called

'Irangate' revelations in the United States have shown conclusively that the US government was financing the contras at the very time that Congress had ruled against such aid. Les Aspin, US Congressional representative and head of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee said he considered that the revelations were bound to 'damage the prospects for continued aid'. His feelings were backed up by Danilo Lacayo, a contra leader. 'The present uproar worries us very much' he declared.

He's every right to be worried. As an article in the 27 November issue of the Sandinista daily, *Barricada*, explained the secret White House funding demonstrates the clear determination of the US administration to act outside both its own and international laws in order to try to overthrow the Sandinista Peoples's revolution. 'The (Reagan) administration is not trying to "exert pressure" on the Sandinistas', *Barricada* stressed, 'but is rather seeking to destroy the Sandinista revolution'.

*Barricada* goes on to show that the revelations have exposed the lie that the Sandinistas are 'terrorists'. Top White House officials have been supplying weapons to murder Nicaraguan civilians. This exposes the 'real terrorist'. And *Barricada* emphasised that the revelations expose another lie — that the contra aggression is a 'civil war', supposedly fueled by deep discontent with Sandinista policies. It confirms, on the contrary,

what the Sandinistas have said for years: that the war is a mercenary operation — run from the outside — with no popular base of support inside Nicaragua.

This outside activity escalated last week. Some 1500 mercenaries have been involved in many days of fighting along the Honduran border.

The mercenary force was trying to get into Nicaragua for terrorist and sabotage actions. They are fully backed by US troop and air support. Nicaraguan president, Daniel Ortega, said on 3 December that US troops in Honduras had moved within nine miles of the Nicaraguan border' writes Cindy Jaquith in the US socialist newsweekly, *The Militant*. 'Ortega warned that the situation was "genuinely grave. It could turn into a direct confrontation with US troops".'

Five days later two planes took off from the Palmerola air base in Honduras and bombed the town of Wiwili in Jinotega, 15 miles inside

the Nicaraguan border. 'Everything indicates that the planes were North American' said Miguel d'Escoto, Nicaraguan foreign affairs minister. Honduran radio stations claimed that the air attack was aimed to prevent a Nicaraguan incursion into Honduran territory. 'The Americans for some time now have been trying to provoke a border incident between the sister republic of Honduras and the Sandinista Popular Army' d'Escoto explained.

Despite the defeat suffered by the mercenaries in the latest fighting, similar incidents are bound to be repeated.

Honduran foreign ministry official, Roberto Suazo Tome was reported in *The Independent*, 10 December, as saying that the policy of the government is to 'maintain this situation of crisis and abnormality without reaching a war'. This would, of course, allow the US administration continuous opportunity to intervene, picking the occasion they consider appropriate.



# WHY NATO THE

WITHIN 24 hours of its launch last week, Labour's new 'defence' campaign had been held up to minute inspection and every inconsistency exposed. The media rubbed its collective hands in glee; Labour's right wing seized the opportunity to begin an open campaign to scrap unilateralism. To know why, you don't need to read a single word of the party's glossy literature — just cast a glimpse at the *Modern Britain* motif: a globe draped in the Union Jack! But to realise how thoroughly doomed this campaign really is — and why unilateral nuclear disarmament must still be fought for and applied — it is necessary to go far beyond what the Labour leadership imagines are the exigencies of the forthcoming election in Britain. It is necessary to grasp the real line up of economic, political and military forces in the post-war world. 1986 is a good time to start. It began with Gorbachev's proposals to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the world, and will end with the ramifications of Reykjavik echoing across the USA and West Europe. In Britain especially, 1986 will close with nuclear weapons at the very top of the political agenda. CAROL TURNER reviews Labour's defence campaign and explains why the West wants the bomb.

AT THE close of 1986, 'the West' is still deep in the aftermath of Reykjavik. For the second time in less than a year the Soviet Union has put forward proposals to scrap the nuclear weapons of the world — and for the second time the United States, backed by Britain, France, West Germany and the other members of the NATO alliance, has turned them down.

This sequence of events, more than any other, has exposed the 30-year old myth of 'multilateral' nuclear disarmament. The millions of column inches spewed out by the bourgeois press after the Iceland summit cannot paper over that crack. For the first time, the real position of the Western powers has been forced out into the open.

Since the rise of the anti-nuclear weapons movement in the 1950s, the case against unilateralism has been argued in terms of so-called multilateralism — as a different means of achieving the same end: the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Now the true content of that debate is shown for what it is. For multilateralists, the issue is not how to get rid of nuclear arsenals, but how to keep them.

To see the way this truth has emerged since Reykjavik, consider coverage

devoted to the summit by the US establishment's *Time Magazine*. No friend of the anti-nuclear weapons movement, *Time* has most clearly exposed the fake position of the United States government at the end of the Iceland talks. An article in the 27 October edition began:

'Flying home from Reykjavik at the start of last week, Ronald Reagan appeared to be winging from one debacle to another. The dejection in the president's carriage as he walked out of Hofdi house, the disappointment etched into every line of secretary of state Shultz's face as he briefed the press, has flashed an unmistakable message to TV watchers around the world: the summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev had ended in failure. Worse, headlines were already spreading the impression that Reagan had thrown away the promise of a nuclear-free world by clinging to his vision of a space-based defence — even if there might be no missiles to defend against.

'But even before Air Force One reached Washington, White House spokesman (sic) Larry Speakes and chief of staff Donald Regan launched a campaign to reverse the downbeat impressions.' With predictable cynicism, the United States has put a huge effort into squaring the Reykjavik circle since October last. *Time* outlined the US campaign with precision.



'Every speech, interview and appearance,' it reported, 'hammered at three main points. It was Gorbachev, not Reagan, who had blocked a drastic reduction in nuclear weapons. He did so by demanding as price he should have known Reagan would never pay: confining all work on the US Strategic Defence Initiative to laboratory research for 10 years.

'The president had no choice but to reject his demand, which would have killed SDI. Said Reagan at a Baltimore rally for Republican senatorial candidate Linda Chavez: "SDI is America's insurance policy that the Soviets will begin living up to the arms control agreements that they've agreed to. SDI is one of the chief reasons the Soviets went to the summit and one of the primary reasons they'll come back again. SDI is the key to a world free of nuclear blackmail".

'Most important, the summit was not a failure but, in its way, an astonishing success. It brought the world to the brink of a deal that seemed unimaginable before Reagan and Gorbachev arrived in Iceland: destruction of all intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe and a radical reduction of their number in Soviet Asia; a 50 per cent slash in the superpowers long-range ballistic missiles in five years and their total elimination after five more — to name only the most striking elements of the bargain that was almost struck.'

That is an accurate description of what Reykjavik could have achieved. All that the United States government has said and done since then has been aimed at fudging the issue. In particular, the USA is determined to conceal the fact that it is Gorbachev who proposed the elimination of all nuclear weapons and it is Reagan and his allies who reject it. As *Time* itself so coyly put it, the US case 'is not entirely consistent'.

How can Reykjavik simultaneously have 'showed the stopping of SDI to be Gorbachev's goal of goals' and 'brought a comprehensive arms deal much closer'? How can Reagan proclaim that his is a policy to make the

United States safe from nuclear attack and simultaneously reject the Gorbachev policy for the elimination of nuclear weapons — the one policy that would guarantee the US was totally safe from nuclear annihilation?

The truth is that Reagan's, not Gorbachev's, goals were laid bare in Iceland: building and keeping an offensive, first-strike nuclear armoury, a complete commitment to retaining nuclear weapons. The United States government, together with the British government — those arch-advocates of 'multilateralism' — have been caught with their fingers in the till.

Ronald Reagan was not alone in reacting as he did to the Soviet Union's proposals. On behalf of the Tories, Geoffrey Howe denounced as 'illogical and retrograde' Gorbachev's attempt to tie his proposals to a limitation of Star Wars. By the time that US and Soviet foreign ministers met in Vienna early last November, Kohl, Mitterand and a host of other West European politicians had joined the affray.

'Have we seen the ultimate in defence politics gymnastics?' the *Guardian's* John Palmer correctly asked, 'the leaders of the major European NATO states finding space to attack president Reagan's arms control strategy from the right. This is the only conclusion to be drawn from the remarkable, semi-clandestine campaign being waged by Mrs Thatcher, Herr Kohl, Messieurs Chirac-Mitterand to force the Americans away from a "zero-zero" deal on Euro-nuclear missiles. The European attack on the kind of "non-deal" which the superpowers claim they come so close to in Reykjavik, also involves pressure on the US to increase its short-range tactical nuclear weapons held in Europe. Meanwhile the British and French have as good as made it clear that zero-zero deal or not, deep cuts in US-Soviet strategic missiles or not, they intend keeping their own "national" nuclear weapons.'

Another *Guardian* report summed up Thatcher's position in a report of her recent Camp David visit. She was 'telling the Soviet Union that the nuclear deterrent, including Britain's independent nuclear forces, are here to stay'. Thatcher's main contribution to the attempted reshaping of the post-Reykjavik multilateralist position was 'you can't disinvent nuclear weapons'. Of course that is true, but not the point: modern surveillance techniques mean that the possibility of policing a ban on nuclear weapons is within easy reach.

The real thinking which has always lain behind the United States and NATO military strategy was admirably brought out in *First Strike: The Pentagon's Strategy for Nuclear War*, by Robert Aldridge, a Polaris designed turned anti-nuclear writer. He introduced his book (Pluto, 1983) with a quote from Tolstoy: 'Should you read upon an encounter with an elephant a sign saying buffalo, believe not your



eyes.' Aldridge systematically exposes the US buffalo for the nuclear aggressor it is.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed 'that when the United States had the ability to launch an unanswerable nuclear strike there was no reluctance to do so.' Then the Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons and the USA lost its edge. 'The announced nuclear policy of each country shifted to deterrence — the threat of mutual annihilation that was supposed to keep either nation from striking first. The truth, however, is that the Pentagon has pursued a more aggressive counterforce policy since the mid-1950s at least.

'Such a policy has not been generally advertised. What information available in the public domain is uncouched in military-scientific journals and is buried deep in technical journals, congressional hearing transcripts, military posture statements, government reports. Furthermore, the Pentagon has been successful in keeping the various weapons programs isolated from one another so that the more professional critics have a difficult time seeing how they interrelate to provide an aggressive capability.'

An analysis of NATO, the military alliance of the United States



Image on Labour's defence policy pamphlet — hankering to the empire?



# D NEEDS BOMB



the 1950s onwards, that insisted on the militarisation of Europe.

The USSR's first response to the formation of NATO was to attempt to secure a demilitarised mid-Europe. An underdeveloped country in comparison to West Europe and the USA, the economic and social resources of the Soviet Union had been heavily depleted by World War II. Far from wishing to prosecute a policy of aggression towards the capitalist West, the Soviet government's primary concern was to protect itself from invasion by those powers, especially the United States. In the 1940s and 1950s it put forward a number of proposals to demilitarise central Europe.

From the start, the response of the United States was to base its nuclear weapons in Western Europe. Initially this was carried out by means of bilateral treaties with its NATO allies. Then, in 1955, the alliance as a whole agreed to equip its forces with a nuclear arsenal.

NATO's initial policies were crude. During the 1950s and '60s its strategy was officially 'massive retaliation' — knows as mutually assured destruction, or MAD. In other words blast the enemy with everything you've got. This was based largely on the assumption that the USSR did not have sufficient delivery systems to launch a full-scale nuclear retaliation against the USA. Far from being 'mutually assured', the calculation was that USSR and Western Europe might suffer nuclear annihilation but the US would not.

As the Soviet Union's nuclear strength increased to the point where it could carry out a devastating nuclear retaliation against the United States, NATO strategy changed. In 1967 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation adopted a policy known as 'flexible response'. That remains the basis for the North Atlantic allies war-fighting plans to this day. But, whatever the specific changes, one point always remains constant: NATO's military strategy is based on nuclear weapons.

There are two reasons for this. First the Soviet Union cannot be attacked with conventional weapons — and neither, of course, can the United States. A conventional attack on the USSR would require 30-40 million deaths in prolonged fighting. The Western working class would never accept it. This is why *only* a fascist state, Nazi Germany, in which the workers movement had been utterly crushed, could attack the Soviet Union with conventional arms. Unless it is capable of imposing fascism throughout the West (and probably not even then), there is no possibility of any conventional war against the USSR being successful. To carry out an aggressive policy NATO *must* have nuclear weapons.

The second reason is economic. While there is continuous and correct, denunciation of the cost of nuclear weapons, in reality they are far cheaper than any conventional of equivalent

destructive power. One of the reasons the West stresses its nuclear plans is that it is cynically prepared to confront the world with nuclear annihilation rather than bear the cost of conventional weapons. Put more precisely, the economic strain of the arms race tells not only on the Soviet economy, it weighs down on the ability of the capitalist powers to compete with each other. That can be seen in the United States vast budget deficit. Nuclear weapons mean 'a bigger bomb for your buck'.

After Reykjavik the real policy of the West on nuclear weapons has been flushed out into the open. 'Multilateralism' is a fraud from beginning to end. The West is not interested in the elimination of nuclear weapons. Unilateralism and 'multilateralism' are not different roads to the same goal. The West *wants* nuclear weapons. The USSR does not. The Soviet Union has no need of a nuclear arsenal because it is in no position to launch a conventional attack on the West, anymore than the West can attack the USSR with conventional armies.

The purpose of 'multilateralism' is simple. One question that is never asked in the opinion polls is 'do you favour the elimination of all nuclear weapons?' Everyone knows the answer would be an overwhelming 'yes'. The working class has no interest whatever in dying — either to allow Western imperialism to attack Soviet Union or to keep military costs down.

By putting forward proposals for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, Gorbachev is doing exactly the right thing. In the 1970s, under Brezhnev, the USSR adopted an adventurist and militarist strategy for dealing with the arms race. It attempted to compete, when it could not possibly win. The NATO powers have twice the population, and seven times the gross national product of the Soviet Union. The only policy which can work for the USSR is one which puts the necessity of building military defence within the framework of a political struggle against the military policy of the West. That means the USSR must expose the truth: it is the Western powers alone that threaten the world with nuclear annihilation, and the Western powers alone that have aggressive ambitions in Europe.

Reykjavik gave Labour the opportunity to expound a wholly coherent defence policy, starting with full support for the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Labour should point out that multilateralism had been shown up as a total fraud, therefore Britain was unilaterally abandoning nuclear weapons.

That is coherent, credible, and the truth. It is based on what Reykjavik began to expose: the fact that only the West wants the bomb. That is the truth Labour should build on. That is what makes a unilateral nuclear disarmament defence policy coherent.

## Labour and 'defence'

AMID GRAND ceremony, Labour's long-awaited defence campaign was launched last week by Neil Kinnock, Dennis Healey and Denzil Davies. It was an instant flop. Beneath the tinsel of *Modern Britain in a Modern World* lay a position which is impossible to defend.

As *The Power to Defend Our Country* policy statement explains, a Labour government would roll back the Soviet hordes by 'strengthening Britain's conventional defences' and by 'modernising NATO'. Top of the Labour leadership's priorities is more guns and more tanks. This goes hand in hand with a renewed commitment to the North Atlantic alliance. 'As long as the Soviet Union poses a potential threat to Western Europe,' says the introduction to the defence statement, 'we need a strong NATO.'

Only then does the leadership address itself, entirely inadequately, to the question of getting rid of nuclear weapons. The message is that they are out-of-date. 'Just as the credibility of NATO's strategy of the 1950s (known as 'massive retaliation') was thrown into doubt by development of strategic parity between the USA and USSR, so today the strategy of the 1960s (known as 'flexible response') had been thrown into doubt by development of parity at lower levels.'

In the 1983 general election, Margaret Thatcher claimed that 'a Labour government would leave Britain defenceless'. By accepting yet again the Tory definition of 'the enemy', that we are threatened by a 'Soviet menace,' the Labour leadership has stepped squarely back onto that same terrain. Instead of campaigning for Labour's unilateral nuclear disarmament policies, the leadership is heading into the next general election apologising for them.

The *Financial Times* understood this. 'There are two questions about the British Labour Party's strategy for defence published yesterday,' began its editorial on 11 December 'One concerns how far it stands up as a serious statement of defence policy. The other is about the likely effect on Labour's electoral chances.' Not at all was its answer to the first question. And as far as the election was concerned, the *Financial Times* concluded that the Labour Party 'is unilaterally disarming itself'.

The *Economist* was of the view: 'Labour is trying to steal the government's clothes.' It equally sharply demolished Labour's chosen methods for trying to do so: 'Despite Labour's protestations, the awful truth is that nuclear weapons deliver far more bang for their buck than men and machine guns.'

In one sense these views are dead right. The last way for Labour to win the argument over defence is by adopting a cranky version of Tory political thinking.

If the Labour leadership accepts the cold war ideology of Thatcher and Reagan — and it does — then how can it possibly persuade the British electorate to vote for unilateral nuclear disarmament? If the enemy's ICBMs are pointed at your front door, there's little hope of defending yourself with a rifle or a tank.

Thatcher's arguments are coherent and Labour's aren't. The electorate is perfectly capable of seeing that. And she has already proved herself as Britain's number one cold-warrior. Why should people vote for the monkey when they can reelect the organ-grinder?

The right wing of the Labour movement also understand this argument perfectly well and are stepping up their campaign against unilateralism. The *New Statesman* of 5 December carried an editorial which began: 'The Labour Party must change its defence policy.' Its editor, John Lloyd, argued that Labour 'cannot convince that unilateralism is the best way of achieving its ends because, on the available evidence, it is not' (author's italics).

A week later Robert Maxwell joined the attack. The *Sunday Mirror* boasted a front-page banner headline 'Let the nation vote on defence'. Maxwell has launched a campaign for a referendum, complete with the address to which let-

ters of support can be sent, to get Neil Kinnock off the unilateralist hook.

The right wing have no qualms about ditching unilateralism. The only question for them is how? They are every bit as eager as the Tories to maintain Labour support for NATO. Until now though, it couldn't be done without the risk of blowing up the fragile balance that has been developed between the right and the 'soft left', allowing the leadership to jerk the party to the right.

Unilateralism presented a real problem for the project of the party leadership. It was the one issue where they judged, correctly, that any serious moves to abandon policy would blow their plans sky high. It was unilateralism more than any other issue which persuaded the rank and file, in 1983, to elect Neil Kinnock as a 'left' leader of the party.

Now the right wing feels the wind in its sails. There is no chance whatsoever of the bourgeoisie quietly accepting the election of a unilateralist Labour government. The secret services tapping Harold Wilson's phone is nothing compared to what the ruling class would do if there was any chance of a real nuclear disarming government being elected.

At the same time it is getting very close to an election, and every party activist remembers what happened to Labour in 1983. Not many constituency parties will like the defence campaign, but few will feel in a position to publicly denounce it.

That is why the fundamental conflict in Labour policy — support for unilateral nuclear disarmament and commitment to the rhetoric of NATO — was brought to the forefront in *Defence and Security for Britain* passed by annual conference in 1984. It is that contradiction which is now allowing the Labour right openly to act. The ground-work has already been laid by steady erosion of the conference policies which have been won over the years.

First the long-standing commitment to reduce arms spending has been 'modified' — to the point where shadow spokesperson Denzil Davies stood up in the House of Commons only one week before *Modern Britain* was launched and declared that a Labour government would maintain the defence budget, in real terms, for the duration of its office. What he didn't say was that the last seven years of Thatcher, defence spending has risen 20 per cent at today's prices.

That shift has been accompanied by an upping of Labour's pro-NATO profile. A 'firm commitment' to the alliance was restated first in the 1984 policy statement. But the most memorable, and most disgusting, high-point came at this year's party conference. Neil Kinnock's presidential speech was splattered with references to our 'friends in the United States' and the 'protection of freedom and democracy' that NATO afforded.

That same speech saw just the beginning of the frontal attack on unilateralism. US nuclear bases were 'redefined' in exactly the way that Denis Healey said they should be in the summer of 1984, when he welcomed the publication of *Defence and Security for Britain*. Out of the 130-odd nuclear facilities on British soil and in British waters, Kinnock pledged we'd get rid of four.

This process went one stage further Wednesday last. At the press launch of *Modern Britain*, Neil Kinnock admitted that nuclear bases *could* be removed from Britain in a short space of time, but their *actual* removal would be subject to 'discussions' with the USA.

The truth is that when it comes to a choice between NATO and unilateral nuclear disarmament then every word and every deed of the Labour leadership has shown NATO comes a clear first. There is no question that the United States will accept unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain.

Because the Labour leadership refuses to challenge cold war positions it cannot come up with any coherent 'defence' policy. The *Modern Britain* campaign announced that loud and clear last week. At the Wednesday press conference Kinnock, Hattersley and Davies handed Margaret Thatcher a whopping Xmas present.



# Developing a programme for Britain

SINCE LABOUR Party conference the 'campaign left' of the party has undoubtedly taken the political offensive against Labour's 'soft left'. The crisis of perspective in the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC), the main 'soft left' organisation in the Constituency Labour Parties, and in the 'Democratic Left' in the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), is quite open. The recent pages of *Tribune* are dominated by debate between different sections of the soft left over what attitude they should take to Labour Left Liaison (LLL).

In the unions the situation is different. Here right wing forces are gaining overall — with the most serious development in the TGWU. Signs of the emergence of a new 'soft left' grouping around NUPE, the GMBATU, and USDAW are only a small counterbalance to the threat of the left losing the support of the single largest union — one of whose vote it has been able to gain on important individual issues. The main areas of radicalisation in the trade unions today are in the public sector and white collar unions — the NUT and CPSEA being the most important examples. Blatant state repression is being prepared to try to decapitate the NUM.

In a number of ways the situation in the labour movement is moving more towards the pattern that existed from the 1920s to the late 1960s — with left wing CLPs and Labour youth organisations, and a clear right wing fake left majority in the unions. The tactics of socialists have to be to consolidate the left wing's position in the CLPs and youth organisations, and to build a left wing minority in the unions. The possibilities for this are more favourable than in the 1920s and the 1930s because the defeats suffered by the trade union movement today, while serious, are nothing like as crushing as in that interwar period.

Political developments within the Labour Party reflect this situation. The development of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, of Labour Left Liaison, of important constituency-based campaigns, and

most recently the establishment of *Campaign Group News*, fits in with the overall development. The left must consolidate its majority base in the CLPs, and, potentially, in Labour's youth organisation, connect up with the new radicalism in the public sector and low paid white collar unions, and use this as a platform in the labour movement from which it can help build up its position in the trade unions as a whole.

By John Ross

This task requires a programmatic development by the left in Britain and by Marxists. The CLPs and Labour's youth organisation are a base where the left today can maintain a majority — a platform for activity which must be consolidated. But the majority of the working class is never going to be in the CLPs and neither are youth the majority of the working class. Winning the majority of the working class means winning the majority of the working class organised in the trade unions — a task which will take very many years and very long-term effort. The fact that socialists are in a *protracted* struggle for socialism in Britain means they must have a long-term strategy and programmatic goals for that fight. This is particularly important as the Thatcher government *does* have a clear strategy for British society, both for the ruling class and the working class.

Within the ruling class Thatcher has promoted a concentration of capital and an expansion of its international operations. Never has British capital been so monopolistic, not since before World War II has its operations been so international. Thatcher has promoted the most powerful and international sectors of British capital — at the expense of the size of the domestic manufacturing base.

In its policy for the working class the Thatcher government has abandoned the 'one nation' framework that dominated the Tory Party from Disraeli to Heath. Unable any more to make concessions to all sections of society British imperialism is now consciously sawing society in two — attempting to consolidate a relatively privileged section of the population, including a significant section of the



working class, while perfecting methods of repressive rule against those to whom it can no longer offer concessions.

This policy is seen in every sphere: in the move to the system of 'core' and 'peripheral' workers in industry, in the increasing north-south division in politics, in the increasing pay differentials between skilled and unskilled workers, between men and women workers, white and black workers, older and young workers, between those in jobs and those who are unemployed, between the employed population and the pensioners. It can be seen again in the teachers pay dispute, in the attempt to widen the differences in pay between grades. Every differential and division within British society is being increased as the key to Thatcher's strategy.

To deal with this assault socialists must have a programme, as coherent and as all embracing as Thatcher's — a true hegemonic strategy in British society. This programme cannot be reached in one attempt. There must be systematic study of British society to develop such a programme. But starting that process is urgent if socialists are to capitalise on any gains made in the last period.

A central part of that programme, its starting point must be the international situation. Without a consistent attitude to imperialism to Eastern Europe, to the necessity of British withdrawal from Ireland, there cannot be a developing socialist strategy in Britain itself.

An equally crucial aspect, however, is to understand the internal structure of British society. As Trotsky wrote: 'It is false that world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are "merely supplementary to the general features," like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy for many years.'

The study of the overall structure of British society is amazingly neglected. A book such as *A Socialist Anatomy of Britain*, by Coates, Jonston and Bush, does not contain such a systematic overall study of British society. The result is that a series of studies and activities — class analysis, struggles of women, trade union activity, the fight against racism etc — go on in parallel without being integrated into an overall analysis of the structure of British society and the programme which flows from it. The aim of this article,

the first of a series, is therefore to outline briefly some of the chief features of British social structure and their implications.

The most general features of British society are shown in Table 1. The total population of the British state, excluding the north of Ireland, is approximately 54 million — with women, of course, outnumbering men by approximately 52 per cent to 48 per cent. Out of that population of 54 million approximately 12 million are under the school-leaving age and 9 million over the retirement age. Therefore 39 per cent of the population are not eligible for waged work.

Turning to those eligible for waged work the official statistics do not accord exactly with the categories a socialist would wish to use. Those living from the profit of capital are not specified: The figures for 'self-employment' mix up 'labour-only self employment' — which is frequently workers registered as self-employed for employers or their own tax reasons — and those that would be termed 'petty-bourgeois' — categories such as shopkeepers, small farmers, etc. The figures for employees, those living from wages and salaries, contain a significant proportion of simple flunkies of capital, and a few whose main source of income is profit from capital.

Despite these distortions, there is no reason to doubt that the official statistics give an overall accurate picture of the social structure of the country. Provided the figures are taken as indications of the orders of magnitude, and not as calculations to the nearest decimal point, the characteristics of the structure of the country are clear.

The first feature, of course, is the massive predominance of the working class in British society. 'Employees', those working for wages or salaries, and the unemployed, who are almost all looking for waged work, constitute 23 million people: 43 per cent of the entire population and 70 per cent of the population eligible for waged work. Furthermore this understates the real situation because a significant number of women who would take paid work do not register as unemployed.

After the working class the largest category is the 3.5 million people who look after the home, almost all women, who form 6 per cent of the total population and 11 per cent of the population of 'working age'. After these are 2.9 million self-employed, and 1.3 million students.

These figures show that, contrary to what is sometimes asserted, the

working class, those selling their labour power, are not the majority of society. What is clear, however, is that the working class community is the massive majority of society — that is, taking into account not simply those in work but the women in the working class community who are not in waged work, the children of working class families, and those who have retired as workers. Britain is completely dominated by the weight of that working class community.

That working class, and working class community, is however substantially divided. Approximately 4 per cent of the working class is black, a far higher proportion in the big cities. Almost 43 per cent are women.

While the standard caricature is still of white male worker the truth is that by 1984 only 55 per cent of the working class were white male — and the proportion is constantly falling. Already by 1984 45 per cent of the working class were either women or black. Add in the proportion who are gay and Irish and there is no doubt that white male British heterosexuals, the 'standard worker', are now a minority of the working class. Furthermore, as we will see, white male British workers are particularly concentrated in the most privileged sections of the working class. The majority of the most oppressed sections of the working class are *already* black, females, or Irish.

Inside the working class community, where women are the majority, the situation is clearer still. A reasonable guess would be that 60 per cent of the working class community, and the least privileged, are either women, black, or gay. Again if the Irish population is included the proportion is even higher.

This is why those in the labour movement who *counterpose* so-called class issues to the demands of women or black people are so wrong. Firstly these so-called class issues pointed to are almost invariably found to be *economic* issues — economic demands are counterposed to specific demands of women and black people, the least privileged sections of the working class. Second it is even more ludicrous to present women and black people, or lesbians and gays, or the Irish population, as being outside the working class. On the contrary they represent, as we have seen, almost 50 per cent of the working class, and the majority of the working class community.

What is true is that this working class is tremendously fragmented by industry, occupation, and other divisions. That is the feature we will look at in the next article in this series.

TABLE 1:

Structure of British society (1984)

	millions	% of total population	% of population of 'working age'
Under 16	11.7	21.7	-
Over retirement age	9.3	17.2	-
Total not eligible for waged work	21.0	17.2	-
Employees	20.1	37.2	60.9
Unemployed	2.9	5.4	8.8
Working class	23.0	42.6	69.7
Self-employed	2.5	4.6	7.6
Homemakers	3.5	6.5	10.6
Students	1.3	2.4	3.9
Sick and disabled	1.1	2.0	3.3
Retired	.3	.6	.9
Other	1.3	2.4	3.9
Total	54.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2:

Sexual and racial division of the working class

	millions	% of working class
White male workers	12.7	55.2
Black male workers	.5	2.0
Women workers	9.8	42.6
Total	23.0	100.0
All black workers	.9	3.9





Photo: Al Cane

WHAT was taking place in Grenada was not a socialist revolution, but a process of social changes. I believe that the basic factor that opened the door — that served the United States a pretext on a silver platter for invading that country, at a lower political price — were the activities of an ambitious and extremist sectarian group. In my view, the main responsibility for the domestic situation created there lies with (Bernard) Coard. An alleged theoretician of the revolution who had been professor of Marxism in Jamaica, he profited from his reputation as a theoretically well-prepared man and used this reputation as a theoretician to promote his personal ambitions and conspire against Bishop.

It is not impossible for the disease of extremism to take hold of some people; this often occurs even among petty-bourgeois elements who draw up utopias and try to put them into practice. Unfortunately, there have also been cases of extremism in other revolutionary processes.

In Grenada, however, I don't believe it was an extremist policy on Coard's part. Rather, I think, personal ambition was Coard's basic motivation and what really confused many people in whom he inculcated extremist ideas from supposedly revolutionary positions, as a means of gaining support. In the name of the purity of Marxist-Leninist principles, he portrayed Bishop as a man insufficiently prepared to lead the country. Very subtly, he did it very subtly.

He worked in the rank and file of the party, the armed forces, the Ministry of the Interior — always presenting himself as an apostle of the purity of ideas — and astutely, little by little, he created the image of a vacillating, reformist Bishop. Thus, he confused many people of good faith in the revolutionary ranks.

Bishop had great popular support and was well liked by the population. But Coard and his group — who belonged to one of the organisations that joined with Bishop to form the New Jewel Movement — didn't work with the masses. That is, the Coard group didn't work with the masses; it worked among the party members — who were a small group of about 200 — and with the cadres of the army and the Ministry of the Interior.

This fifth column, this undermining of Bishop's authority, coalesced at a moment when Bishop — though he had the support of the immense majority of the people — lost the majority within the party, both in the Central Committee and among the membership. This was the fruit of the conspiracy led by Coard and his group. It explains the senseless and mad step of arresting Bishop and, even worse, of firing upon the people and assassinating Bishop. It was that unfortunate event that made it possible for the Reagan administration to perpetrate the cynical and opportunistic invasion of the country.

If Bishop had been alive leading the people, it would have been very difficult for the United States to orchestrate the political aspects of its intervention and bring together that group of Caribbean stooges in a so-called coalition that didn't include a single policeman from the Caribbean — it was exclusively US soldiers. In short, Coard and his group served the United States, on a silver platter, ideal conditions for the invasion of Grenada.



## Bernard Coard and the murder of Maurice Bishop

**ON 5 DECEMBER** a puppet court in Grenada sentenced to death Bernard Coard and 13 other former members of the New Jewel Movement, for the murder of Grenada's revolutionary prime minister Maurice Bishop. Coard was arrested following the US invasion of Grenada in October 1983.

**The trial was a farce. It was not aimed to find out the truth on Coard, the verdict was ordained from the outset, but to try to discredit the revolutionary government of Bishop.**

Obviously, the United States wanted a show of force, some muscle-flexing, to teach a lesson in Grenada. In my view, it committed one of the most inglorious and infamous deeds that a powerful country, such as the United States, could ever commit against a small country. The United States did not really do this in a spirit of justice, or out of solidarity with Bishop, or to punish those responsible for Bishop's death. Rather, it could have been grateful to that irresponsible group. It invaded Grenada to eradicate the revolution and to re-establish the former regime in that country. That's all.

The government (of Coard) could not have endured. We wouldn't have offered any support to that government after it murdered Bishop and fired on the people. After we had assumed that attitude, it would have been difficult for any other socialist or progressive country to support that group, because Bishop actually had great authority and great international prestige.

As soon as we had finished the international airport, we would have left Grenada.

We fully endorsed Bishop's policies, because they were realistic. They weren't extremist policies. They were based upon the country's situation and its level of development, and they were working for the people's well-being, for Grenada's development. I think the airport would have meant great economic progress for them. Grenada was receiving different kinds of assistance to develop

A campaign is being carried out by the *Morning Star* to present Coard as a martyr of the Grenadan revolution. But the truth is that Coard does bear full responsibility for the murder of Maurice Bishop — and would be brought to justice by the Grenadan people themselves. Coard staged the coup which overthrew Bishop and was responsible for his death — creating the pretext for the US invasion.

**Coard by his ultra-leftism, his personal ambition, and his**

its energy networks, roads, infrastructure, and agricultural production.

I spoke with Bishop when he stopped over in Cuba for the last time, both before and after a trip to several socialist countries. He went there to request credits and equipment for power plants and some light industries, and he returned very pleased. He highly appreciated our cooperation.

Despite everything that happened, the United States had no right to invade that nation. Nor does it even have the right to keep that extremist group in prison or to try them, because no invading force has the right to run the courts and enforce the laws. I think all that is illegal.

Those responsible for the situation — those who opened the door for the United States — showed that they weren't really such fanatics and extremists. None of the leaders fought against the US army; what they did was to surrender like cowards. Had they really been revolutionaries, with deep convictions, they would have died fighting the invading forces and would not have surrendered.

That is the sad story and the explanation of the events that enabled the United States to commit its shameful crime in Grenada.

Bishop was a man greatly loved by the people. He was the leader of the Grenadan people. He had the real, sincere, and enthusiastic support of the people. The group involved in the coup plotted against Bishop, arrested him, fired upon the people when they revolted, and, furthermore,

bureaucratic methods destroyed a revolution. The current campaign by the *Morning Star* to present Coard as a revolutionary hero and martyr reflects the Stalinist nature both of Coard and of that paper.

To set the record straight we are printing the account of the destruction of the Grenadan revolution by FIDEL CASTRO from his book *Nothing Can Stop the Course of History*. This exposes both the show trial staged by the United States and the criminal responsibility of Coard and his supporters themselves.

Naturally, this caused great outrage and confusion among the masses. The United States invaded, insisting that its sole purpose was the noble aim of liberating the country from those people and that it was going to punish Bishop's murderers and those who had fired upon the people. It was logical for a large number of people in that country — even most of the population — to be susceptible to accepting, that invasion as desirable.

We do not employ an intelligence apparatus, intelligence bodies, or intelligence methods to gather information about what may be happening in a country with whom we have relations of trust and friendship. The truth is we didn't know about the process that was evolving, and that has been one of our harshest criticisms of those in charge of co-operation with Grenada and our diplomatic representation there.

During that entire period, only one woman comrade from the Federation of Cuban Women — who had been there for a few days on an exchange visit — had written a brief report to her organisation on the problems she perceived there.

The wild idea of a split in the country's leadership was inconceivable. What really did happen? The party was made up of a small group of members — some 200. The leadership group was quite small. Coard worked with great subtlety. He did not work openly. He started placing cadre — that is, people from the group that had joined Bishop's party,

He did not work openly. He did not dissolve that group; he kept it as a faction. Very quietly, and gradually, he placed his sworn followers in key positions in the army, as political instructors, in the Ministry of Security, and in some positions in the party. He had even resigned his position as a member of the Bureau a year earlier as a gesture of selflessness. He went off to a small island and was there playing the role of an isolated man, self-isolated, but he continued being the spiritual guide.

That was his style. So, this developed very subtly, very quietly. And Coard gradually gained a majority on the Central Committee — and always in the name of principles.

Now then, there's no doubt that Bishop was very noble and, I'd say more, naive, because he never gave much thought to the problem. He never imagined that a tendency of this type, aimed at isolating him, could develop, and I believe he underestimated the importance of Coard's activities.

When Bishop stopped in Cuba on his way to Europe, he spoke with me in the house where he was staying. We talked a lot about the airport under construction, the economic situation, the way projects were going, and ideas for the future.

He returned to Cuba and stayed two days. The day before he left, we gave an intimate reception in his honor, to which I invited all the comrades in the Political Bureau, the comrade vice presidents of the executive committee of the government, and the ministers who had to do with co-operation in Grenada.

When Bishop returned to Cuba, he didn't say a single word about his problem. As I see it, this was for two reasons. First, he underestimated the problem and, second, he may have been embarrassed by the idea of raising an internal problem of his party.

By that time, Coard and his group — who by then had gained control of the majority of the leadership bodies — had already made some major decision. They decided to leave him as head of the government, but relieve him of his responsibilities as head of the party.

When Bishop arrived at the Grenada airport, Coard was not there to welcome him. A short time later — within a few days — there was a meeting, and he was now in an obvious minority. He was already in a minority in the party leadership! Events rushed ahead.

When the people's uprising took place, and Bishop was taken out of prison, one of Bishop's comrades went to the embassy to seek our support.

Frankly, it would have been a serious political mistake to have authorised Cuban personal to become involved in the Grenadian revolutionaries' domestic troubles. Bloody combat would have ensued, and, even if things had turned out in Bishop's favour and the US intervention hadn't occurred, Bishop would have had to rule the country without his party, without his army, without the police and security units, and without the revolutionary cadres. Coard had gained control of those institutions, and many of their members believed — almost blindly — that they were serving the revolution. It was an absurd situation. I would never, under any circumstances, have authorised the Cuban personnel to have become involved. Of that you can be sure. Our answer would have been 'No.' But there wasn't even time to answer; there was no need to answer.

When Bishop's assassination was reported, we issued a very harsh statement, making it clear that our political relations with the new leaders of Grenada would have to undergo profound and serious analysis.

What kept us from withdrawing? We might have had to withdraw in a week, in view of the tenseness of the relations between us. What kept us from doing so was the news that US intervention forces were sailing toward Grenada. That was the one moment when we couldn't withdraw from the country. And that's the objective truth.



# Give 'em Jazz

'ROUND MIDNIGHT is a magnificent film about the last days of a black American jazz musician, based on the real life experiences of two of the great practitioners of that art, Lester Young and Bud Powell. Not accidentally the film is made by a French director, and not an American.

The reason is not hard to discern. The attitude of white bourgeois America to black artists is a particularly distasteful one. On one level it parallels the more general exploitative black-white relationship; but worse the black community is more specifically denigrated as incapable of producing anything of aesthetic value. The best it can aspire to is to imitate the white intellectual and artistic world. The reverse side is to regard any achievements of the black population, such as jazz, as trivial, and low-grade, the 'it came out of a bordello, and that is where it belongs' syndrome!

The hypocrisy inherent in such an attitude is gross. Literally hundreds of white musicians have made their fame and fortune on the backs of black musical invention. The first jazz band to record was the all-white Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a far inferior outfit to black contemporaries such as Louis Armstrong. The self-styled King of Jazz was the aptly-named Paul Whiteman; Benny Goodman (not Duke Ellington or Count Basie) was dubbed King of Swing, and later Elvis Presley was named King of Rock and Roll rather than Little Richard or Chuck Berry. Musicians as diverse as Al

Jolson, Bing Crosby, Stan Kenton, and Dave Brubeck all benefitted from this historic rip-off of black music.

By Phil Waterhouse

White ownership and control of the strategic levers of the music industry, the record companies, booking agencies, the clubs, promotions outlets, magazines and radio stations, ensure that in the words of Archie Shepp, 'you owned the music, we make it'. Black artists were successfully ghettoised culturally (on separate race records for instance) just as the wider community were ghettoised geographically. They were reduced to working for low wages, in crummy clubs with no easy access to the mass media. A very small percentage were able to break out of this stranglehold, an even smaller minority did so without compromising their musical ideals, making their product more palatable for refined MOR white tastes. Many more died in penury and broken in spirit — as did both Lester Young and Bud Powell, the subjects of the film.

Both were leading innovators in black music. Young revolutionised sax-

ophone playing in the 1930s and spawned a thousand imitators. One group of white musicians went on to form the West Coast cool style of jazz in the early 1950s. Bleaching out all Afro-American stylisations to increase the accessibility and popularity to white taste, the style flourished under the patronage of the music industry establishment, to the detriment of the black artists. This, combined with the period of economic retrenchment and political reaction forced many black musicians abroad. The Blue Note in Paris became one of their favourite haunts, where much of the film is set.

Whilst many of his erstwhile, inferior imitators flourished, Lester Young, broken by his experiences of racism in the US army, died penniless and alcoholic in the dingy Hotel Alvin in New York, shortly after returning from Paris.

Bud Powell was a major component of the bebop revolution in jazz of the early 1940s. This was a conscious attempt to break with the stultifying clichés of the swing era, and create a black style which the white world could not steal. In essence it was a proto black cultural nationalism. Vicious assaults by the white music critics, and the subsequent difficulty in earning a living, forced Bud Powell and many of his contemporaries to live abroad. Like Lester Young and others Powell



sought partial relief from poverty and racist attitudes in the use of narcotics and alcohol. It is his particular experiences in Paris, the friendship he found from one particular fan, which forms the basis of the film's storyline. He also died penniless in the USA in 1966.

The movie itself is the first accurate account of the life of an American jazz musician. Previous, Hollywood versions have either been biographies of white bandleaders — Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa or Glenn Miller — or bizarre fantasies such as 'Young Man with a Horn'. The one major film based on the life of a black artist 'Lady Sings the Blues' about Billie Holiday, was an insult.

The use of actual musicians as actors, and playing live on the set gives the film a musical authenticity which is unique, and reveals the full flavour of the art. Right now the film is showing in London at the Lumiere cinema in the heart of theatre and pseud land. To portray the music of black America as an art is a worthy compliment. But the movie deserves a wider audience.

If you want to share the experience of a black artist in a racist and culturally indifferent environment go see this film. If you want to experience what that artist feels about this situation listen to the music of Lester Young, Bud Powell and Dexter Gordon.

## Reviews

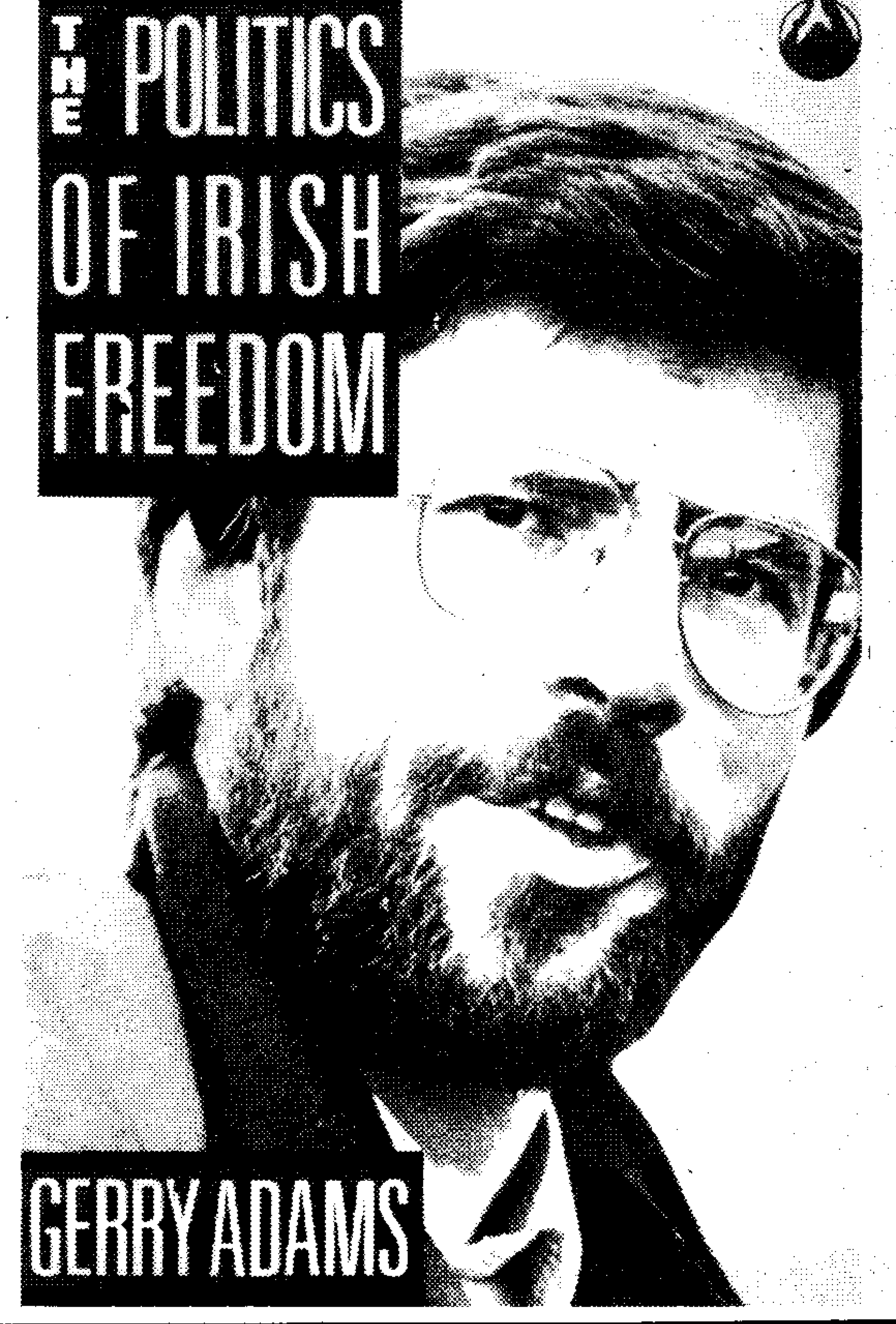
The politics of Irish freedom, by Gerry Adams, Brandon, 176 pages.

Available at £3.95 + 30p p&p from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to 'The Other Bookshop'.

'This book is neither an autobiography nor a statement of Sinn Fein's political programme. It is an expression by Gerry Adams of his politics. As President of Sinn Fein it falls to him to articulate party policy, but in this book he has set aside the narrow role of official spokesperson in order to be able to explore more widely and freely his politics as a republican.'

(From the introduction).

### THE POLITICS OF IRISH FREEDOM



GERRY ADAMS

## Letters

### Support Iran?

I WOULD like to take issue with the article 'Reagan's Watergate?' (Socialist Action 5 Dec.) It's timely and correct, to expose the lies of the Reagan administration, and to show its intentions to destabilise the Iranian government. But the article didn't answer a key question — should socialists support supplying arms to the Iranians?

The article correctly attacked the 'Tweedeldum and Tweedledee' approach of the Democrats in disagreeing only on the tactics of removing the Iranian thorn from their side. But it lets Kinnock off the hook to simply

comment that 'the Labour Party unfortunately allowed itself to be stampeded into denouncing arms sales to Iran — whilst applying no such criteria to Iraq.'

Kinnock is consciously lining up with the imperialist project in the Persian Gulf; the isolation and final overthrow of the Iranian Revolution, including victory to Iraq in the war.

The article's confusion is expressed when it states: 'Imperialism has continued to arm Iraq. Now it is clear that the US, as well as the Israelis, have been supplying arms to Iran. The Iran-Iraq war has become a totally reactionary war on both sides.' This seems to be clucking at straws. It's no secret that Iran is high up on Reagan's 'hit list', and that imperialism is not 'neutral' in the war, nor does it support the

victory of ... both sides! Since Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, Washington has poured 35 billion dollars into Iraq, via Saudi Arabia. Its war is sponsored by the imperialists.

Washington's crime is not that it has supplied Iran with small amounts of arms, but that it has done so in a framework of seeking each and every avenue to subvert that country. The call should be made — Hands off Iran! All embargoes on arms should be lifted, diplomatic relations re-established, US forces pulled out of the region, and Washington must return the billions of dollars worth of Iranian assets that it stole in 1980. There is a 'stampede' to denounce arms sales to Iran, and the socialist view should be clear.

Martin Marriott

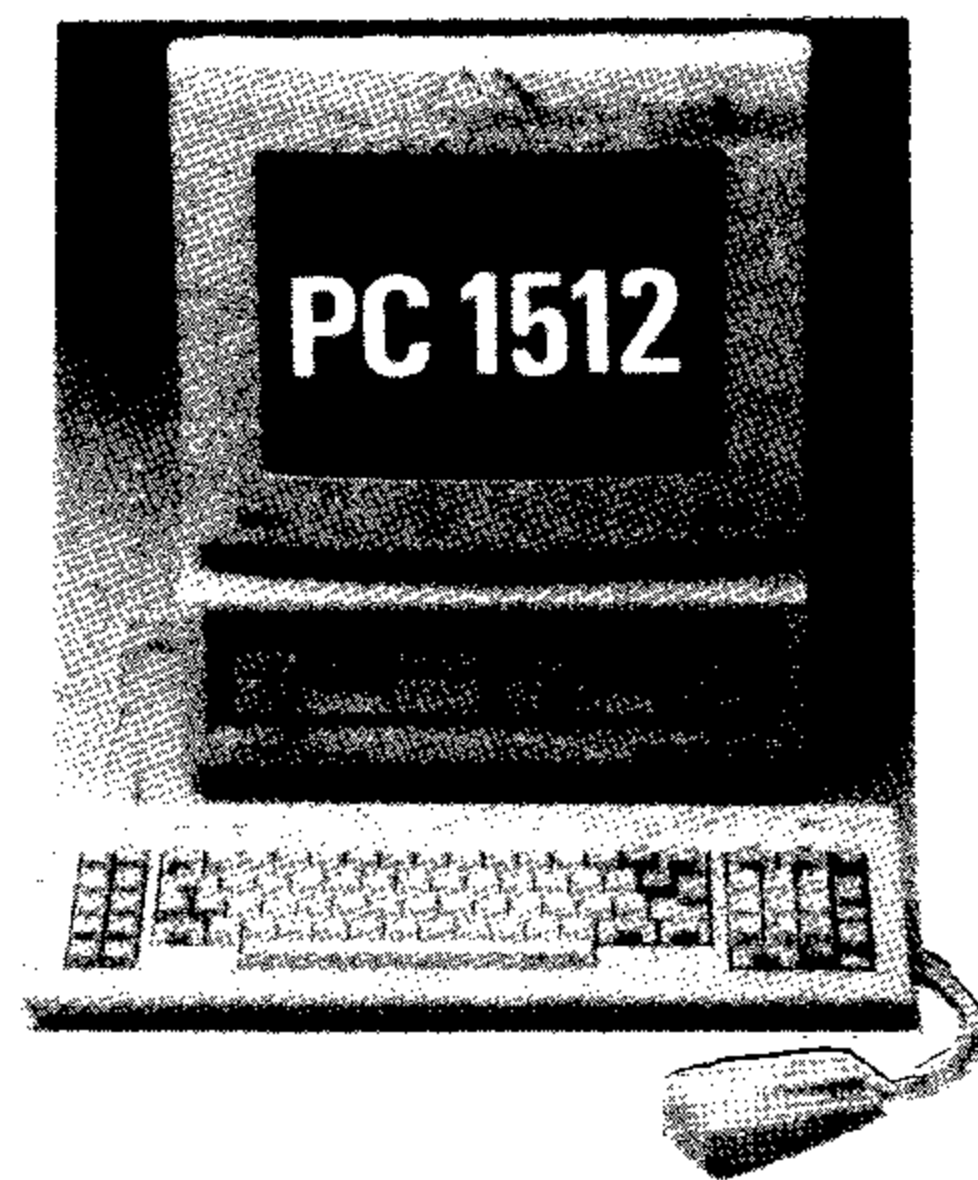
Support  
Silentnight  
Xmas  
Appeal

FTAT strikers have been out for 18 months now. they need your support. Burnley women's council has produced Xmas cards at 15p each or £1 for a pack of 10 (plus 25p per pack p&p). All proceeds to Silentnight strikers. Write to: Ruth, 2 Brooklands Road, Burnley, Lancs. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'SWG Children's Fund'.

## Fund drive

### A big financial effort for your paper

WITH just two weeks left to the draw for Socialist Action's raffle on New Year's Eve, all our supporters will be wanting to make a final sales push. Reports from round the country confirm that the tickets are selling well. Winning the new Amstrad personal computer or its cash equivalent would be a seasonal boost to the lucky winner. So rush out to workmates, political acquaintances, friends and relatives and ensure that we get a seasonal boost too!

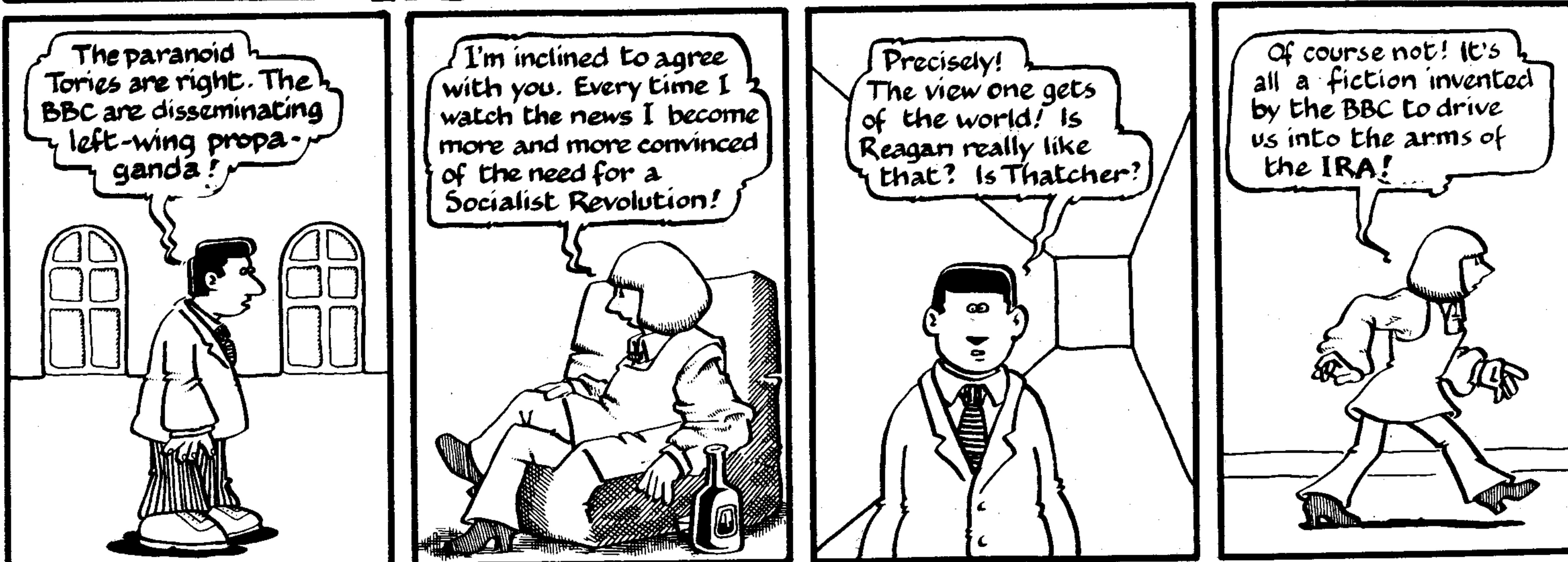


By law, all the counterfoils must be in our office by the time of the draw — which makes the very final date for first class posting Monday 29 December. The result will be announced in our first issue in the new year.

Now's a good time of the year to think about Socialist Action's hard-pressed finances. Fund-raising socials, donations from bumper wage packets, what about giving a subscription as a present? Every little bit helps in our fight to get back to a weekly schedule.

## a PIECE of the ACTION

© Cormac





# Free Mike Hicks

THOUSANDS OF marchers converged on the Wapping fortress last Saturday in the biggest show of force for some time in the 11-month dispute. At the head of the Tower Hill leg of the demonstration was Rosemary Hicks, wife of Mike Hicks, a member of the SOGAT national executive committee, jailed on 5 December. Hicks, who is closely identified with the dispute, was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, eight of them suspended, for an incident alleged to have occurred during one of the regular peaceful Saturday night demonstrations at Wapping.

Rosemary was one of the speakers at the end-of-march rally. She thanked everyone for turning out and expressed her confidence that, with united action, Mike Hicks could be got out.

Another member of the Hicks family to address the marchers was Mike's brother, Pat — himself a transport union branch secretary. Pat Hicks won big applause as he appealed for extending the struggle. 'They may lock Michael up, but they can't lock up his ideas' he said.

Along with members of the Hicks family, the best received speaker at the rally was Tony Benn who explained that he was there in support of the Chesterfield women, who'd turned out in force for the special women's leg of the demonstration.

'The growth of the movement to defeat Murdoch is the single most important political development in Britain today' Benn said. He lambasted the scab titles, saying they're produced 'with 50 per cent scab labour and 50 per cent metropolitan police'.

Benn explained that the importance of the press to those who rule in this country is that it helps to divide us — men from women, employed from unemployed, black from white.

'We're here in Wapping not just to support the printers and their families. Here in Wapping, we're rebuilding the labour movement from the bottom up. What Murdoch's trying to do with the help of Thatcher and the police is to crush that movement. That's why Mike Hicks is in jail, that's why Terry French is in jail' he con-

cluded to huge applause.

Another speaker to take up defence of Mike Hicks and victimised miner Terry French was Labour MP, Jeremy Corbyn. 'We've got a message for the TUC and Labour leadership' Corbyn said. 'If we stand aside and allow them to walk over us here, they will walk over every industrial dispute in the future'. The miners union national executive has also called for the 'immediate release' of Mike Hicks.

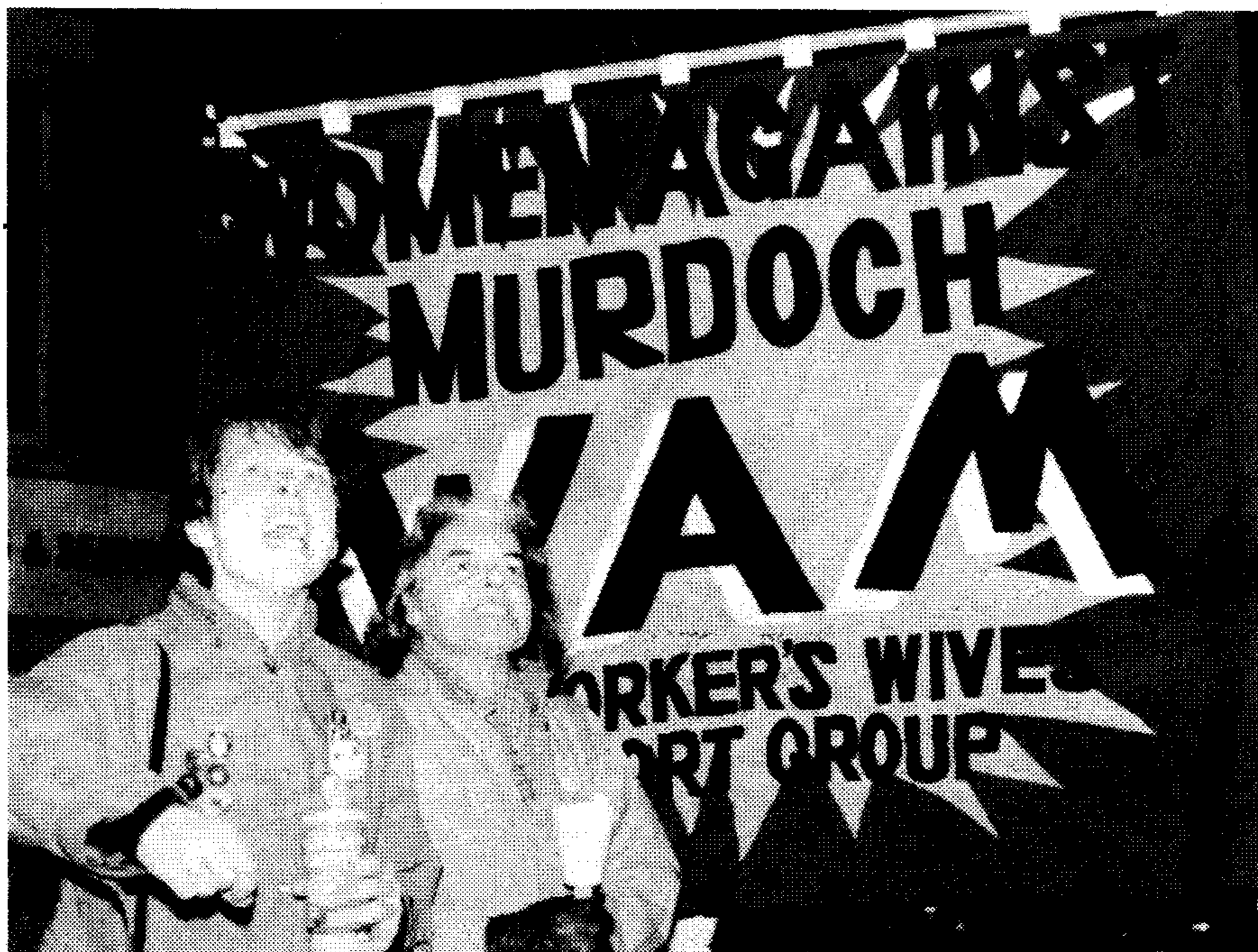
All the speakers captured the new mood of confidence of the sacked printers — both in the battle to free Mike Hicks and for jobs and union recognition.

On Thursday, 11 December, an inter-union conference of activists from all four unions involved discussed how to escalate the dispute. A resolution was adopted calling for a recalled TUC in light of the general council's refusal to implement congress policy on Wapping.

The meeting called for a week of action leading up to a major demonstration on 24 January to mark the first anniversary of the dispute. The TUC will be called on to support the action campaign. Speakers at the 24 January demonstration will include Brenda Dean, Tony Dubbins, Ron Todd and Tony Benn. Printers leaders were confidently predicting that the rally would be chaired by Mike Hicks.



Mike Hicks, on loud-hailer, greets release of 'Pentonville 5' dockers in 1972 (Photo: Morning Star).



Hundreds of women marched behind the Women Against Murdoch banner in a special women's leg of Saturday's demonstration to Fortress Wapping. WAM is a growing force in the dispute, boosting the morale of the sacked printers and broadening support for the pickets.

Women Against Pit Closures were represented on Saturday's march by contingents including from North Derbyshire where WAM were recently guests at a social. WAM have now been invited to Kent where they will be guests of WAPC there.

Brenda Dean responded to WAM's call to attend the demonstration. Dean called on the TUC to 'get off its knees and stand on its feet' beside the sacked printers. WAM has raised thousands of pounds as part of the Wapping 'toys and turkeys' Christmas appeal

• Donations and requests for speakers to WAM's secretary, Eileen Beer, c/o Kingsway London Women's Centre, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WCL.

## Fight Baker's law

KENNETH BAKER, Secretary of State for Education, was successful in pushing his Bill on teachers' pay and conditions of service through Parliament on Thursday, 11 December despite Labour MPs submitting over 250 amendments for debate. The Bill, which now goes to the House of Lords, will abolish all existing negotiating machinery, establish an 'Advisory Committee' which will report to him and give him the sole rights to determine the pay and conditions of service of 400,000 teachers.

It represents one of the most vicious attacks on trade union rights in the lifetime of this Government. It is similar to the attack on the GCHQ workers and confirms that the Tories' threat to ban industrial action in certain 'emergency' industries was simply a cover for a full-scale assault on trade union rights.

Giles Radice MP, Labour Party spokesperson on education, addressing a mass lobby organised by the National Union of Teachers on Wednesday 10 December, declared that a future Labour Government would, as one of its first acts, repeal this legislation if it becomes law. The TUC has declared its opposition to the Bill and even the SDP/Liberal Alliance came

out against it. Declarations of opposition will not be enough however. Industrial action

By Bernard Regan

will be needed to defeat the bill. But at the last meeting of the Executive of the NUT, the right wing leadership rejected a proposal from the Inner London Teachers' Association for a



Baker

one day national strike and demonstration early in the New Year to put across the strength of opposition to the Bill.

The arguments used against the proposal ranged from the fake left one that a one day strike will not be enough to defeat the Bill, to the now familiar one that the task is to win the battle

for public support and that strike action should not be considered. In effect the so-called Broad Left leadership of the NUT, consisting of the Kinnockites, Communist Party members, supporters of the New Communist Party, Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and others, having spent £52,000 on an advertising campaign in *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *Daily Telegraph* and the *London Standard* have no plans for continuing the campaign. For some the only idea they have is waiting for the next General Election and hoping that a Labour Government will be returned. Rather than really fighting Baker's law, they seem more intent on an attacking those in the union who do want to fight.

The ability of teachers to launch a real fightback against Baker's law depends very much on the result of the ballot that has been taking place on the deal struck by the NUT with the Labour led Local Education Authority employers

and ratified in ACAS.

Many areas inside the NUT are totally opposed to the deal and a strong show of opposition to the deal will strengthen the fight against his dictatorial measure.

Without doubt, the possibility of a fightback is there. Labour Authorities should take Giles Radice at his word and declare that they will not discipline any teacher who refuses to accept any conditions imposed by the Tories using Baker's legislation. Other Town Hall unions should declare that they will not participate in any disciplinary measures against teachers resulting from this attack. The TUC and the Labour Party should back a national demonstration against the Tory Bill.

The Local Association Pay Action Campaign will be holding a conference on January 31 at the University of London Union, Malet Street and it is to be hoped that a massive campaign of resistance will be built through that which will help to turn the tide.

## Inside the unions

### Choices facing TGWU

THE LAST YEAR has seen an escalating power struggle in Britain's largest union, the TGWU. This has seen the 'soft left' Tribune leaders Ron Todd, the general secretary, and Bill Morris, deputy general secretary, opposed by the executive led by Brian Nicholson — the chair of the TGWU.

This year's TGWU national executive elections saw a swing to the right. Under the new trade union laws elections at trade group conferences were replaced by direct ballot elections.

By Steve Vokes, TGWU

The first meeting of the new executive saw right winger Duffy, from the northern region, elected as vice chair on a 21:20 vote at the EC, followed by the unprecedented move of not allowing the union's new black deputy general secretary, Bill Morris, a place either on the TUC general council or the Labour Party national executive committee.

The struggle continued through the summer and autumn. At the rules revision conference in July, the executive of the union advised delegates against voting for any amendments to the rule book claiming 'it was perfect'.

Labour Party conference saw further trouble as Nicholson tried to overrule Todd in the voting for the women's section of the NEC. Todd called for the union delegates to vote for Joan Maynard and Margaret Beckett, both TGWU sponsored MPs. Nicholson argued they were 'too left' for the union. Todd's view was only carried on the votes of the full-time officials of the union.

This fight around who controls the TGWU has now reached a new stage over the replacements for retiring regional secretaries — the most powerful full-time TGWU officials after the national officers, who virtually run the union's 11 regions. Twice in recent months the regional executive's advice on filling posts in the Scottish region and the south west region has been ignored by the national executive.

Todd has supported the regions' right to nominate from within their areas. The right wing led executive has wanted the jobs to go outside the region, so that a candidate of their choice could be imposed. Last week Todd lost the latest round in the battle when the executive voted 16-15 to interview applicants from outside Region 3 (south west) to fill the regional secretary's job.

This divide in the largest union in the country can scarcely be underestimated. Behind the manoeuvring lies different conceptions of the role of the TGWU. Todd is a traditional leader in the mould of Jack Jones and Moss Evans. He is 'centre left' and, like his predecessors, elected with the help of the CP influenced Broad Left.

Nicholson, by contrast, wants to turn the union much more to the right — he is reputed to want 'more industrial trade unionism and less political posturing' according to some of his supporters, and 'more support for Neil Kinnock'. In other words he would draw the TGWU closer to the path of the right wing unions.

Clearly with such a slim majority Nicholson has to tread carefully but the warning signs are clear. It is expected that next year's bi-annual delegate conference, the highest body of the union, will see a swing to the right with changes in policy in the union — carried on the basis of recommendations by the Nicholson controlled executive.

The problem for the left in the TGWU is similar to that experienced in the AEU 10 years ago. The so-called Broad Left is nothing but an election machine. It never meets nationally except at bi-annual delegate conference — and then by invitation only. It does not have a coherent strategy for the union.

The results are now becoming clear. By not campaigning and winning support in all the regions of the TGWU the Broad Left has allowed the right wing to consolidate a power base in its regions. This right wing has now gone onto the offensive around the questions of 'new' trade unionism and 'loyalty to Kinnock' — meaning support for right wing political policies.

Only if the left in the TGWU begins to organise and develop a coherent strategy can a fightback take place. The stakes could not be higher. Because a right wing dominated TGWU would shift the entire situation in the labour movement to the right.

At the present time the right wing is gaining. Only if there is a political awareness, a strategy, and a will to organise among the left is that situation going to be reversed.



# Socialist ACTION

## Sanctions Year in '87

THIS YEAR has seen a number of successes for the international campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. The crisis-ridden South African economy has taken its toll with both the undermining of business confidence and the beginning of international sanctions, writes PHIL WATERHOUSE.

The British government remains a bulwark against the international tide of opinion and action. Against this background the National Committee of the AAM launched its new strategy for sanctions in 1987. This 'Offensive for Sanctions' is meant to put the issue firmly back on the agenda right from the beginning of the year. As the document states, 'we need to hit much harder at those directly involved in collaborating with the apartheid regime; and we need to be able to present the case for comprehensive sanctions ie the total isolation of the apartheid regime, with much greater effect.'



There is a danger in the incremental application of partial sanctions packages against Pretoria in that it gives an opportunity for the South African economy to adapt. Moreover, there is really no time for a strategy of an escalating series of sanctions over a period of time. AAM President Abdul Minty wrote in AA News that in 'the present situation, the AAM's traditional and consistent policy of demanding comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against South Africa takes on a new importance.'

The new package of offensive actions gives 'people's' and 'trade union' sanctions a central role. Local AA groups are asked to start the ball rolling by calling local co-ordinating meetings. These will lead to a national Month of Action in March aimed especially at action by the trade union movement. An 'Appeal

for People's Sanctions' will be published to identify the range of popular actions which could be undertaken.

A 'National Convention for Sanctions' will be held in June to prepare for the next stage in the campaign.



The whole programme for 1987 is to be rounded off with a major national demonstration at the end of October. The AAM will publish a 'Manifesto for Sanctions', arguing the 'case for sanctions and exposure of British policy'. The manifesto, while not in itself a comprehensive package for sanctions against South Africa, is seen as part of such a necessary package, demanding the implementation of what has already been agreed to in principle. It is planned to get the manifesto adopted by local councils, trade union bodies and other organisations. Candidates and parties are to be approached during the general election to sponsor the manifesto, giving an opportunity for the Labour Party to give a clear commitment as to what it would do in government as opposed to what it would like the UN to implement.



Within this overall campaign the AAM will concentrate its energies on two particular companies with the deepest links in apartheid South Africa — Shell and Barclays.

Shell has already been the target of an internationally co-ordinated series of actions this year, in Holland and the US as well as Britain.



A statement on Barclays was issued jointly by the AAM and End Loans to South Africa (ELTSA). It registered the decision to sell up its South Africa holdings as an important victory for the sanctions campaign. At the same time it explains that Barclays by no means has withdrawn completely from apartheid. They intend to maintain a corresponding relationship with the new bank, involving training and technology assistance; they will continue credit lines; the slow repatriation of the sales proceeds means that Barclays still have substantial investments in the country, they have already colluded on a rescheduling of the £¼ billion outstanding debt to them. The campaign against Barclays will continue, with a six month moratorium to demand that Barclays actually complete its withdrawal from South Africa, and completely repatriate all its concerns from South Africa. The bank is worried and have requested a meeting with AAM.



The National Committee took a series of further important discussions — to regularise the financial situation of the movement, to finalise details of the AGM and to repeat the very successful week of action over Namibia next year. All the proposals will be put to the movement's annual general meeting on 10/11 January.

# SOUTH AFRICA

## '...MORE AND MORE VIOLENCE'

WINNIE MANDELA



FANIE GODUKI is an 11-year-old schoolboy from Alexandra township, near Johannesburg. Last year he was arrested sheltering from the rain. 'The police wanted me to say I was throwing stones. I told them I did nothing and they said they would hit me until I told the truth. They started to hit me with pipes and with their fists. They kicked me all over with their big boots. They only stopped when my tooth came out. I was bleeding a lot and very sore.'

Fanie eventually 'confessed'. He was locked up with 12 adults in the main police station in Johannesburg. He stayed there for 57 days — one of some 8,000 youths aged between 9 and 18 detained under the present state of emergency — until his mother finally got him released on bail. Last January he was charged with public violence, and found not guilty.

Under South Africa's new press censorship it is now illegal to publish Fanie's story. It is illegal to publish any material about the detention, treatment or release of detainees held under the 'emergency regulations'. It is even illegal to leave blank spaces in newspapers, symbolising words struck out by censors. Nothing may be printed about anti-apartheid organisations, boycotts, strikes or campaigns of civil disobedience.

Winnie Mandela responded to the censorship saying that the regime only takes such action 'when it has a lot to hide'. Admitted a wave of international condemnation, Labour's front bench spokesperson, Donald Anderson said the measures implied 'a major stride toward a military dictatorship'. And National Union of Journalists general secretary, Harry Conroy, said the union was calling an urgent leadership meeting to respond to 'this latest act of repression', particularly in relation to its members working there.

But the new censorship laws have implications which go beyond press freedom, important as that is. In reality they are simply the latest in a series of measures aimed at crushing the liberation struggle in the entire region.

A spokesperson of the

African National Congress (ANC) in London said that the state of emergency imposed in June had already hidden from view a great deal of the killings, detentions and forced removals. 'With these measures the apartheid regime are trying to totally crush the democratic movement in our country.'

By Jon Silberman

The state of emergency was imposed against a background of rising mass struggle — the growth of the United Democratic Front which now has 22 million members and 700 organisations under its umbrella, the formation of COSATU, the trade union confederation of more than half a million, with the fast-growing miners union as its backbone, the mushrooming of community organisations.

The apartheid regime needed to attack this massive movement at its root. The hugely successful strike on May Day and the wave of struggles in the townships — in which collaborators with the apartheid regime were roundly defeated — and the imminent mobilisations in Soweto were the immediate occasion for the crackdown.

The state of emergency was imposed. Using the sweeping powers of the emergency declaration police and troops swamped the townships in a counter-offensive aimed at bolstering their tottering supporters.

They have detained some 25,000 people, meanwhile seeking to divide the popular movement along tribal, national and faction lines.

In October, the government declared the UDF an 'affected organisation' — cutting off all financial

assistance to it from outside the country.

The regime expelled 69,000 Mozambican workers, signalling a new offensive against the frontline states which has seen the murder of Samora Machel, heightened military attacks on Mozambique and Angola, the killing of anti-apartheid leaders in Lesotho and a massively increased campaign of repression in Namibia.

Last month, the courts confirmed that 1987 would witness a marathon trial of 19 anti-apartheid activists aimed at outlawing the UDF.

The press censorship laws are proof positive that despite such repressive measures, the regime has been unable to stem the tide of the liberation struggle.

The spokesperson of the ANC said the move was 'a sign of the regime's desperation. It is unable to quell the nationwide resistance to its policies'.

Since the imposition of the state of emergency, all sections of the democratic movement have been engaged in struggle against the regime. From 300,000 students on strike or locked out of the schools in their fight against repressive regulations introduced in July; to over 600,000 workers, including 300,000 miners who struck in response to the Kinross disaster and to the 30,000 miners who took strike action against Gold Fields; to the situation in the

townships where authoritative 'street committees', exist in what Albertina Sisulu, president of the UDF, calls 'the broadest scale grass-roots organisation ever.' Despite the sharply increased repression the regime has not succeeded in breaking the mass movement.

Extremely important has been the development of the struggle in Namibia, which has seen mass mobilisations and the formation of a new powerful miners union. Increasing South African attacks on the 'frontline' states have been partially countered by the formation of SADCC (South Africa Development Co-ordinating Committee) and the sending of thousands of Zimbabwean troops to aid the Mozambican government against the apartheid backed Renamo terrorists.

The apartheid state can make no real concessions to the mass movement. Every so-called 'modification' it has introduced, such as to the pass laws, has had its counter-policy rendering the whole reform illusory. In the case of the 'reform' of the Group Areas Act, no sooner had it been floated than was it shelved. Violent repression is endemic to the apartheid system. As Winnie Mandela put it, 'our country faces grimmer days ahead. It is facing more and more violence.'

## Birmingham ANC rally — a big success

MORE THAN 500 people turned out for an ANC children's Xmas appeal and solidarity rally in Birmingham town hall on 8 December, writes BOB SMITH.

The event was sponsored by Birmingham City council, the West Midlands regional TUC and Birmingham district Labour Party.

Over £5000 was raised for the ANC's Solomon

Mahlangu freedom centre. Situated in Tanzania, the centre contains a nursery and hospital as well as primary, secondary and technical schools for the families of those fighting apartheid in South Africa. Since it is not a charity, clothes, books, stationery etc are always urgently needed.

• Cheques for the freedom centre should be made payable to ANC Children's Xmas Appeal and sent to AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1.

# SUBSCRIBE

# Socialist ACTION

RATES:  
Inland  
6 months £8;  
12 months £15  
Overseas  
(12 months only)  
Europe £17; Air Mail £24  
(Double these rates for multi-reader institutions)

Name .....

Address .....

I enclose cheque/PO payable to Socialist Action for £ .....

Send to: Socialist Action Subs, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.