

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

**Fight Racism!
Defend Labour Councils!**

Campaign Forum Rally

Speakers include: Linda Bellos, Tony Benn,
Bernie Grant, Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner
Lambeth Town Hall, Monday 16 February, 7.30pm



SOLIDARITY with the NCU



NATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS
UNION



THE NCU STRIKE was solid this week as the union staged the first indefinite national strike in its history.

In Manchester, no local exchange is working properly and Barclays Bank's links with the City of London have been hit. Six exchanges are regularly going down in the north east. In Cardiff police transmitters went off the air and a number of local exchanges are down.

A 20,000-line exchange went down for a day in Swindon. In London 50 exchanges are affected, with four down altogether. Heathrow airport was seriously hit over the weekend.

This complete solidarity has smashed the first calculation of management — that a union with a right wing history and leadership wouldn't see its members show total

solidarity in an all-out strike.

British Telecom's strike-breaking HQ, set up in Camelford House in central London, is working greatly under capacity. Boasts by BT that they would break the action in a fortnight have evaporated as no response has come to a series of letters sent to BT workers calling for an individual return to work.

BT have hastily signed a deal with their supervisors union, and have sought to head off strike action by their 34,000 clerical staff fighting over their own claim, to try to isolate the NCU engineers. Having failed to dent the engineers strike, British Telecom are now concentrating on trying to recruit scab labour from among management and outside firms. Most seriously, they are also involved in negotiations held behind closed doors with the NCU leadership.

NCU general secretary John Golding has been reported in the national press as favouring a two-year deal on wages with separate talks on conditions, as part of the coming year's negotiations. This is part of Golding's long-term strategy of selling jobs in return for wage increases.

Golding has made an offer to the company that if they sign a 'no strings' deal to settle the outstanding 1986 claim he will put a deal on productivity to a ballot vote of the membership for 1987, with a recommendation to accept. This would allow BT to get away with the 'strings' simply a year later than they'd intended.

Given that BT wants to cut at least a further 30,000 jobs by 1990, this line is a disaster. Golding's supporters have been arguing that the strike is

simply to get BT to return to the negotiating table. But feeling in the union has hardened against such a deal.

The strike started as retaliation against victimisations during the union's overtime bad. But action is now firmly directed against any strings and for a decent, 10 per cent rise.

NCU members are getting organised. At key buildings, 24-hour pickets — essential to combat BT's plans for a scab workforce — are being set up. Union branches, locked out of their offices by BT, are organising strike headquarters. This rank and file involvement is the way both to defeat BT management and block Golding's manoeuvres.

The NCU is getting solidarity from other workers. Overtures to Standard Telephone and Cable which installs some BT equipment to provide

maintenance in BT buildings during the strike have been rebuffed by STC workers. Sacked printers at Wapping have joined picket lines.

Labour parliamentary candidates Diane Abbott, Sharon Atkin and Alan Simpson have been at picket lines and NCU mass meetings. London NCU branches have called a mass demonstration on 4 February.

These beginnings of support must be turned into a massive movement of solidarity by the labour movement, to ensure the NCU wins. A victory for the NCU would be a major blow to the Tory government and all employers. It would damage their privatisation plans for other nationalised industries.

A victory for the NCU would strengthen the labour movement as a whole. It is a strike the whole labour movement must support.

Socialist ACTION

The other side of Labour

SOCIALIST ACTION'S attention is normally on the developments going on in the left of the labour movement. It is here that a positive solution to Britain's crisis is going to emerge. But significant developments are taking place in the right and 'soft left', which the left will ignore at its peril.

The first is the resurgence of the Labour right. The theoretical organisation of this is being carried out by the revamped *New Statesman* under its new editor John Lloyd. The *New Statesman* has firmly broken out of its woolly rut and been given a sharp new right wing cutting edge. In successive weeks it has carried articles against unilateral nuclear disarmament, in favour of tactical voting for the Liberals and SDP, in favour of the alliance with the United States, and joining in the attack against so-called looney councils. The *New Statesman* has developed a sharp political cutting edge not seen on the Labour right for many years.

It is important to see where that has come from. John Lloyd was, of course, industrial editor of the *Financial Times* — as well as a guest contributor to *Marxism Today*. He is a reminder that the really powerful pro-coalition right wing force in the Labour Party is the right wing trade union bureaucracy — the AEU leadership, Hammons in the EETPU, Golding in the NCU — and the right wing of the parliamentary party. The PLP right wing has also been in action with the publication of Roy Hattersley's book *Choose Freedom*. The latter is evidently intended as the major intellectual statement of the resurgent Labour right — although the idea that the AEU, EETPU, or NCU leaderships are committed to 'equality', Hattersley's central theme, rather than stout defence of their members' differentials is rather laughable.

The other important development is inside the 'soft left'. In a major speech last week Tom Sawyer, deputy general secretary of NUPE, attempted to define a coherent soft left position in the unions, against the 'new realist' right. Sawyer tries to take into account the increasing role of women and black people in the labour movement, and the necessity of tighter, not looser, trade union links with the Labour Party.

But Sawyer was catastrophically wrong in how he saw these demands being taken up. While criticising the new realists, he sided with them in accepting the shackles on the trade unions proposed for a new Labour government.

If the unions are shackled there will be no defence of low paid workers — or anyone else for that matter. NUPE members should be seeking to bloc with Labour's campaign left, not the new realists — and Sawyer was dishonest in not pointing out that the greatest mobilisation of support of women and black people around a union ever seen was in the miners strike led by the so-called economic Arthur Scargill.

The other development on the soft left is the one we print at length on page three: the decision of the LCC consultative conference on Ireland to call for British withdrawal within the lifetime of one parliament. This is an important vote in our opinion. So far Labour's left has not succeeded in getting Ireland placed firmly on the political agenda in the way they have succeeded with Labour Party democracy, the demands of women, support for the black community or the demand for the withdrawal of US bases. The proposed decision by the LCC opens up the way to joint work between the Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Left Liaison and the LCC to call for British withdrawal from Ireland. It is also likely to provoke a vicious backlash by the right wing of the LCC itself.

Labour's campaign left is getting itself together politically and organisationally — with the Campaign Group forging closer links with black-led left Labour councils like Haringey and Lambeth, and the influence of the LLL extending out into the student field. But it must do so in a party where the right is strengthening and where the 'soft left' is becoming increasingly incoherent.

IGNORANCE won't fight AIDS

THE GOVERNMENT TV and leafletting campaign on AIDS is now in full swing. It is turning out to be just as dismal and reactionary a flop that it promised to be. ANNE KANE reviews the campaign so far.

VOLCANIC eruptions, a pneumatic drill pummeling a bare rock face, a chisel on an icy smooth granite tombstone hammering out its deadly message, an apocalyptic musical accompaniment. Or, for cinema goers, all the 'information' you can glean from icebergs floating menacingly above deep, dark, frozen seas. The chosen images for the Tory 'public education' campaign on AIDS impart more information about the sexuality, sexual practices and phobias of the Thatcher cabinet than it does about the acquired immunity deficiency syndrome.

Leaving aside for a moment the all-too-readable sexual imagery, this long resisted and then much vaunted media 'education' campaign is a bizarre combination of global admonishments to 'not ignore AIDS, it could be the death of you' with coy references to the fact that you can acquire AIDS through sexual contact... full stop!

Deaths

After six years of people suffering and dying from AIDS in Britain alone, the first few weeks of long-awaited government action on AIDS has produced a campaign that is nothing more than a palliative to a public outcry months before a general election. Instead of vital information on 'safer sex', high-risk sexual activity, preventative care, making help and advice easily available — information specific to heterosexual and gay men and women and to young people — through our television screens we have received a series of coded signals about 'sex'.

The well-publicised £20 million spent on this campaign has come six years after the first recorded AIDS sufferer in Britain and five years after the establishment of the Terence Higgins Trust. The government has sat back and watched the number of sufferers grow to a recorded total of 610 in December, 293 of whom have died already.

On government figures, an estimated 4000 people will die of AIDS in Britain over the next three years. A clear and infor-

mative campaign could have prevented this rapid growth of the disease, and still can prevent a complete explosion of it.

The government has made clear, with this campaign dedicated to innuendo and discretion, that it has no intention of willingly launching such a campaign, like that which has been left to a charity, the Terence Higgins Trust, to provide, combined with an intensive programme of research.

Research

Instead, until the end of 1986, the government had spent a pitiful £3.5 million total on publicity, research and treatment. Even the effectiveness of this sop has been hampered by health service cuts. While the government ministers were cautioning gay men and drug addicts not to give blood from August 1985, government cutbacks had prevented any blood monitoring between 1983 and 1985. This sheer lack of any adequate testing procedures due to government spending cuts lies behind the conflicting statements of the BMA and the DHSS some weeks ago over who could 'safely' donate blood.

The reason for the fanfare surrounding a purely electorally inspired publicity campaign since January is the need to cover up for this complete lack of funding into research, treatment and preventative health care and procedures. Indeed the 'information' campaign has gone hand-in-hand with declarations from Fowler that no cure is possible, that 'public education is the only vaccine we have.' Now we have the government praising 'community care' for AIDS sufferers. In short, the expense of patient care and necessarily longer term research has been ignored in favour of unenlightening pre-election razzmatazz.

This campaign is low on information and high on the 'Victorian Values' morality promoted by the government. The main emphasis, even of the 'explicit' leaflet delivered through your letter boxes, is not information but encouragement to monogamy.

The central idea is that

AIDS must be contained and controlled through strict regulation of sexual activity, rather than through serious and clear education geared at people's real lives and sexual practice, or through researching for effective treatment and cure. The 'explicit' information — which was kept off television, and merits the warning on the envelope — amounts to advice to use a condom.

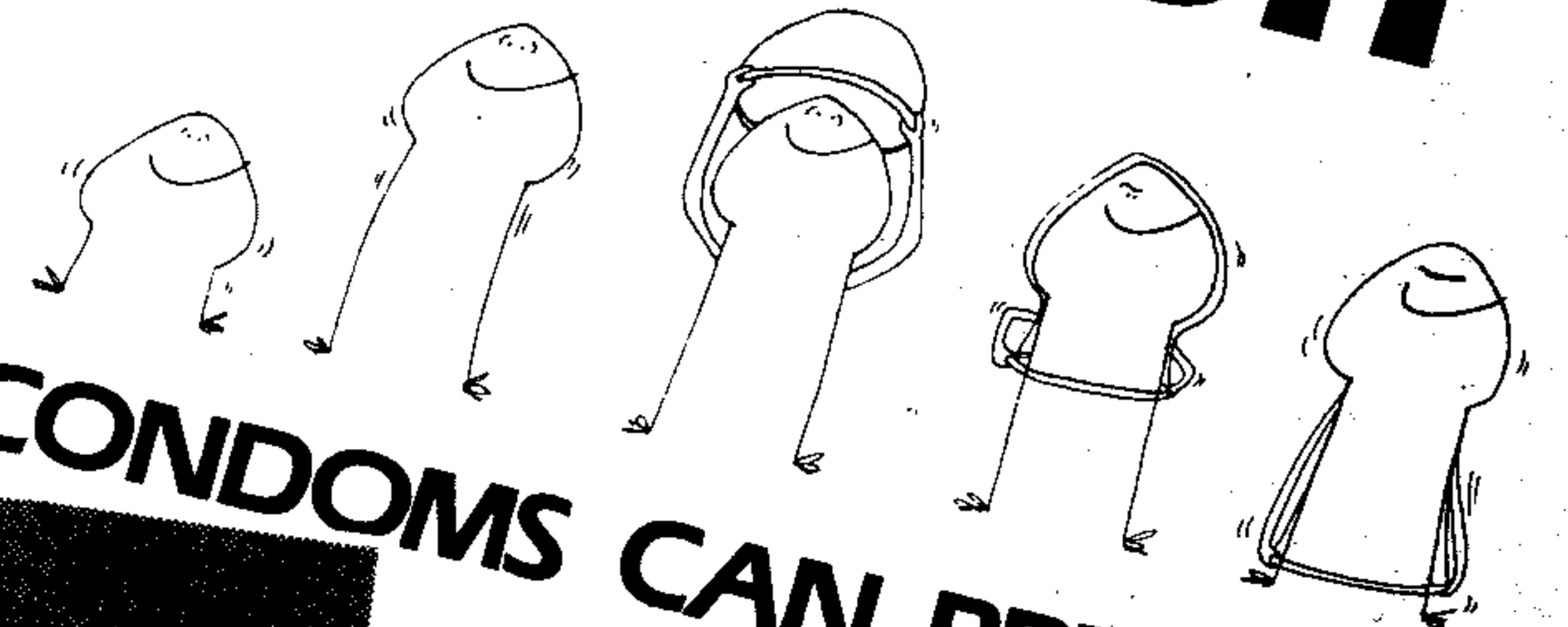
All explicit, or rather factual, references to high-risk sexual activity or guides to 'safe sex' have been left out. An alternative two-minute educational film which actually mentioned condoms was banned from television and will instead be shown only to cinema audiences over 18 in selected cinemas.

Moral code

The reasons for this excessively limited campaign are quite straightforward. The government is willing to take only the most minimal efforts to assure public opinion, in order not to breach its own reactionary moral code.

A serious educational campaign — such as flooding schools and colleges with clear factual material, and an open and funded campaign about 'safe sex' — would involve recognising the extent of sexual relationships among young people and

Have it on
before you
have it off



CONDOMS CAN PREVENT
AIDS

Cervical Cancer
Chlamydia
Gonorrhoea
Syphilis
Other STDs
PREGNANCY

AIDS
DON'T DIE

sanctioning to some degree lesbian and gay sexuality and sexual activity outside of marriage. Instead the government has wholly accommodated its campaign to its reactionary moral offensive, one which has included the Gillick ruling, the Powell Bill, the raids on bookshops like Gay's the Word, the media campaign against councils that promote a minimal educational awareness of lesbian and gay sexuality, and support for right wing councils such as Nottingham which refuse equal opportunities to lesbians and gay men.

Assaults

In this context police assaults on the gay community, such as raiding gay pubs and seizing literature at customs, are quite logically on the increase. While the central axis of the government's campaign is the bolstering of the family by arguing to contain AIDS through heterosexual monogamy, AIDS will continue to be falsely seen as a 'gay plague'. Violence against the gay community will continue in an atmosphere of fear and ignorance, and AIDS victims will still have nowhere to turn.

The real action needed on AIDS is clear. It is being avoided by the government at all costs.

A government-funded information campaign, low in terror and with the

kind of facts people need, must be fought for. It is a disgrace that such a campaign is left to the sole efforts of the Terence Higgins Trust.

A generation of young people will have learned little but fear from the government's media campaign. Even with this campaign several colleges have reported that students are simply not being supplied with the information material by the government.

A basic factual campaign still has to be organised and must be particularly directed at schools. Contrary to Mrs Gillick's opinion, condoms and sex education should be made easily available to all young people.

Resources

More than anything, huge resources must be channelled into the research for a cure. The demagoguery of Fowler that 'education is the only vaccine' is a cynical abuse of the failure to find a cure so far.

The real meaning is that money is being denied to research: there is no cure, there can be no cure, therefore we will not seriously fund research to develop one. This must be opposed and a campaign waged for adequate resources for research to prevent many thousands of deaths.

LCC votes for British withdrawal from Ireland

THE LABOUR Coordinating Committee (LCC) consultative conference on Ireland on 24 January voted by 30 votes to 18 in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland within the first parliamentary term of the next Labour government. The paper proposing this was moved by Peter Hain and supported by Ken Livingstone and Labour Committee on Ireland student officer Conor Foley. Opposition came from Brian Gibbons, Gary Kent of the ILP, and supporters of the Workers Party in Ireland — all of whom accepted the Unionist veto. The position will go to the next year's LCC conference for final vote.

This vote is extremely important. It opens up the way to both Labour's main pressure groups — the LCC and Labour Left Liaison — adopting a position in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland. Opponents of the position for withdrawal are expected to carry out an all out campaign to get the position reversed at the LCC AGM.

We are printing here in full PETER HAIN'S paper. We would not agree with every aspect of it. But we entirely agree with its central proposal — that Labour must withdraw from Ireland during the lifetime of one parliament. If that can be agreed as the central demand then united work can rapidly develop on this on the left.

THERE are no short or easy solutions to the so-called 'Irish Question'. For centuries the British presence in Ireland has directly affected British politics and the issue has accumulated layers of confusion and bitter mistrust over the years resulting in the bloody dissension of the present period. Neil Kinnock is right to identify the issue as one of the greatest political and moral challenges facing an incoming Labour administration.

Successive British policies since 1969 — from power sharing to direct rule and now the Anglo Irish Agreement — have all been short term and pragmatic. Far from providing a long term solution all have been obstacles to reaching such a solution. Meanwhile Labour Party policy, whilst committed to the goal of a united Ireland, contains no strategy for achieving it and in practice will allow the unionist veto to prevail. However, a radical Labour policy change must be engaged to unfreeze the present destructive deadlock and to unlock a new dynamic.

Any serious historical assessment of Britain's colonial and imperial presence in Ireland must conclude that the imposition of partition was and remains unjust and undemocratic. Throughout the world Britain's colonial policy of divide and rule was well known and in Ireland, faced with repeated rebellions, British policy was to promote and foster sectarian and religious division.

At the end of World War I, Britain faced a determined national independence movement and in the last all Ireland General Election of 1918 over 75 per cent of the people voted for a free and independent country and an end to British sovereignty. Britain reacted by imposing partition by retaining six counties in the North East and six counties in the North East be favourable to Britain's interests.

Thus not only was the most fundamental democratic right of all — the right of Irish people as a whole to determine their own future — flagrantly denied but also an artificial, unworkable, sectarian, discriminatory, undemocratic statelet created that remains the cause of dissension today. It is necessary to dismantle the injustice of partition, to face up to the recognition that Britain's presence is the root cause of the problem, to stand up to the sectarian legacy that earlier British administrations fostered, to remove the reactionary Unionist veto over political development, to facilitate the negotiation of Irish reunification so that the Irish people as a whole can determine their destiny.

British withdrawal holds the key to this. Until it occurs, the loyalists in the North will continue to play the unionist card and refuse to face up to the reality that they have to co-exist peacefully and equitably with the rest of the Irish people; similarly, the minority in the North will continue to respond in a reactive and at times violent manner.

Policy objective There will be a commitment to British withdrawal from Ireland within the life-time of the next Labour government, the dissolution of the Union and its replacement by a freely negotiated structure for the whole of Ireland in which the rights of each section of the community will be guaranteed.

Strategy A demand for immediate British withdrawal is simply not practical as it would leave a vacuum in which violence and dissension would continue. Instead the Government should declare its intention to withdraw within its term of office and immediately convene a constitutional conference to agree transitional arrangements and new structures. The dissolution of the union



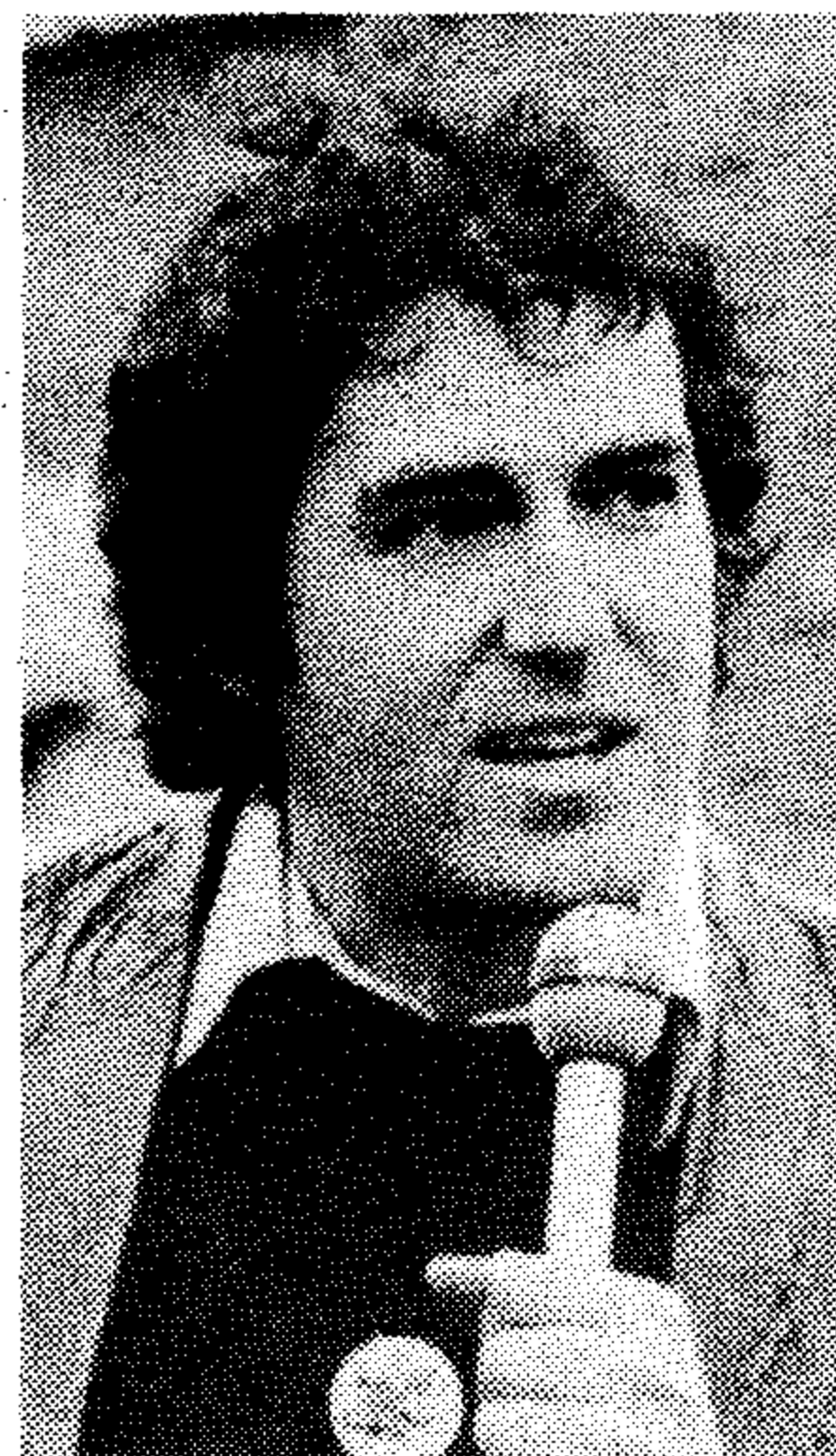
Relatives of Bloody Sunday victims on the commemoration march

and withdrawal will be accompanied by the endeavour to secure Unionist involvement as to the means, that is to the constitutional, political, economic and financial arrangements that would replace the Union, and the sequence and timetable of steps in the dissolution process.

Constitutional conference: It is proposed that a Constitutional Conference be established comprising elected representatives from parties North and South with terms of reference to determine the structures of a new Ireland and to enter into negotiations with Britain over the transitional arrangements or transfer of sovereignty.

The conference will be empowered to make majority decisions. It will be free to agree a new Ireland structure, whether federal or unitary or whatever. The only framework that the Labour Government will set out are that civil and religious liberties should be guaranteed and that rights to dual citizenship, whether British or Irish, will remain open for the people living throughout Ireland. Further that, at the outset of the process of the constitutional conference talks, the Labour government will enter into an agreement with the government of the Republic of Ireland, that in the event of a failure of a majority to agree within the Constitutional Conference, that the Labour Government will irrevocably dissolve the Union and transfer sovereignty to a unitary state of the Republic and elected representatives in the North within the five year lifetime of a Labour Parliament.

Economic support: The reconstruction fund: Given the historical role of the British presence and the effect of the 'troubles' on the Northern Ireland economy, it must be right that the Labour Govern-



Peter Hain

ment accepts the responsibility of providing immediate and indeed ongoing economic support and reconstruction along the lines of a socialist 'Marshal Aid' plan for Northern Ireland. Thus not only would the government provide economic investment now but also enter into agreement by treaty with the newly agreed constitutional entity to provide economic subventions for an agreed period into the future to guarantee the underpinning of the northern economy and its integration into an all Ireland context.

Further, Britain would join with the EEC and other countries to organise, with no strings attached, a long term package of economic aid. In the interim, further to relating and investing in and revitalising the northern economy, the Labour government undertakes via the Fair Employment Agency, to implement the MacBride principles to assist in the process of ending discriminatory employment practices.

Call for an end to hostilities: In the light of the Labour Government's declaration of intent to dissolve the union and establish the Constitutional Conference and the steps outlined above to ensure civil liberties and economic support, the

Labour Government would call for a cessation of all offensive military activity by all parties and organisations to allow the process of dialogue and discussion to take place in the best possible atmosphere to achieve a successful negotiated solution.

Policy statement: The LCC should campaign for a policy statement along these lines to be adopted by the Party. Only by embarking on this radical policy initiative with political conviction and determination can Labour permit the Irish people as a whole to determine their own path to peace and reconciliation and finally bring to an end enmity between Britain and Ireland. In the event of agreement on new Ireland structures within the constitutional conference then the union will be dissolved and sovereignty transferred to the agreed structures again within the five year lifetime of a Labour Parliament.

Creating the right conditions: There are many steps that the incoming Labour government can undertake on both the civil liberties and economic front to create the right conditions and atmosphere for a successful Constitutional Conference. Indeed, many of these steps should be taken within the first few days of the Labour Government coming to power.

Civil liberties: The Labour government will immediately allow to lapse, pending repeal, the operation of the PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) and the EPA (Emergency Powers Act) and to issue the relevant orders and guidelines to the military and police authorities to cease offensive, aggressive or provocative patrols or policing forthwith. Labour will also end the use of plastic bullets, the practice of

degrading strip searching, the abolition of the non-jury Diplock Courts, the use of supergrasses and refer to appeal courts or independent tribunals cases of convictions that give rise for concern.

Policing and prison policy: The Labour government will ensure the withdrawal of troops to barracks and institute an immediate review to determine the operational use of arms only for defensive purposes or protection of threatened communities. This review to be applied to the existing police force services as well. The UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment) will be immediately stood down and abolished with appropriate compensation

agreed. The Labour government will announce the establishment of a commission to draw up arrangements to provide for a new Northern Ireland police force with a central co-ordinating body that will be democratically accountable to local communities.

On prison policy, following the suspension and later repeal of various repressive Acts there should be a review of convictions under these Acts undertaken immediately and an undertaking offered that a general amnesty for prisoners convicted under scheduled offences categories be instituted as part of the constitutional conference talks process and British disengagement.

Sinn Féin

ELECTION FUND

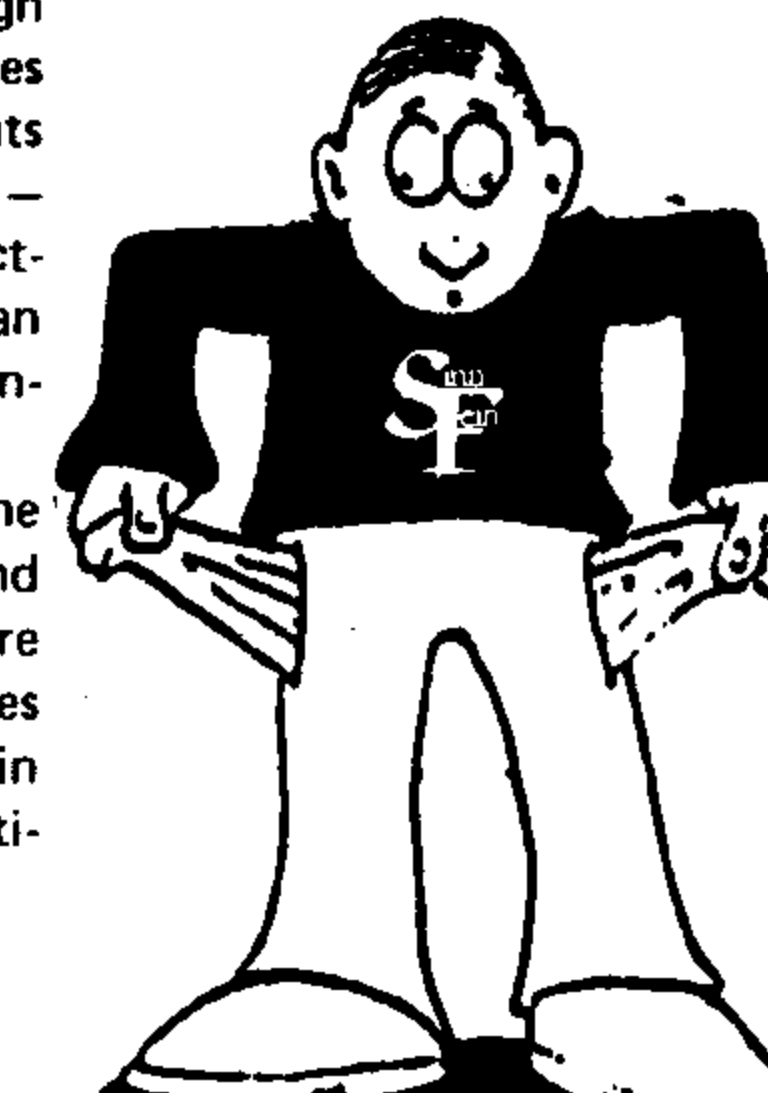
FIANNA FAIL say they'll be spending a cool million on the election campaign (we think they'll be spending five times as much!) The Progressive Democrats will be laying out half as much again — £1½ million. And another party collected £1½ million in the Securicor van robbery in Dublin's Fairview on Monday.

Whichever party got its hands on the Securicor cash, it wasn't Sinn Féin — and we're so strapped for cash that we're having to dodge paying our bus fares every time we hike down to RTE in Montrose to give out about its anti-republican bias.

In short — we're short.
Feeling the pinch.
Unable to make ends meet.

Posters, leaflets, manifestoes, envelopes, canvassing cards, transport, telephone calls, lighting (need we go on?) cost money.

Sinn Féin is standing 27 candidates in 24 constituencies and although we're wealthier than the establishment parties in commitment, energy and sound politics, we still need money to get our revolutionary message across to the voters.



Please send whatever you can, whether it's £1 or £100, to the Sinn Féin Election Fund 44 Parnell Square, Dublin

Ireland Unfree

Sinn Fein's election campaign

THE GENERAL election in the 26 Counties takes place on 17 February. Sinn Fein will be running 27 candidates in 24 constituencies.



John Joe McGirl

Amongst the 27 is John Joe McGirl, a lifelong republican and Sinn Fein's vice-president since 1983. McGirl has served on Leitrim County Council for 20 years and was elected a member of the Leinster House parliament in 1957, but refused to take his seat as part of Sinn Fein's abstention policy.

This will be the first 26 Counties election since that policy has been removed. The party considers that it will be the election after this that will be the first real test of the new policy. But the major parties will be doing all they can to ensure as small a vote as possible this year.

Prime minister, Garret FitzGerald has called for a united campaign against Sinn Fein and the government has ruled that Sinn Fein's candidates will be denied access to the Dublin broadcasting company, RTE.

Sinn Fein has issued a 14-page election manifesto, *For real change*. The manifesto spells out Sinn Fein's policies on unemployment; the debt crisis; agriculture; forestry and fisheries; social justice; women; youth; culture and the environment.

It explains that these policies are 'sensible short-term steps' but emphasises that 'neither this state nor the Six-County statelet can reach their full economic and social potential separately'.

The manifesto prioritises the policy of British withdrawal and the right to self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

'We stand on our record as the only party which has consistently asserted and worked for the right of the Irish people to national reunification and freedom' it states.

Trade union conference

A MAJOR trade union conference on Ireland is being planned for 28 November this year. Entitled 'Ireland — the cause of labour?' the conference is initiated by the Labour Committee on Ireland.

It will centre on employment discrimination in the North, where many firms have an openly discriminatory recruitment policy. Unemployment in the Six Counties is two-and-a-half times greater amongst Catholics than amongst Protestants.

Nobel peace prize winner and internationally respected lawyer, Sean MacBride is the conference patron. MacBride is associated with an anti-employment discrimination code, the 'MacBride Principles'.

The first session of the conference is called 'Are you listening?' and will be the occasion for Irish trade unionists to give a first-hand account of the situation.

Repression in the miners' strike and at Wapping has alerted many in the British labour movement to some of the realities of life in the north. The British NUM voted for British withdrawal at the Labour Party conference.

In NALGO, the national executive convened a meeting of branches which have moved resolutions on the Irish question over the past two years with a view to scheduling a major discussion at this year's annual conference. In ASTMS a number of weekend schools have been organised.

To build on such developments and promote the conference, fringe meetings are planned at many trade union conferences and a campaign for broad sponsorship for the conference is underway

The Broadwater Farm show trial

A SHOW TRIAL on a grand scale is taking place now at the Old Bailey. It began on 19 January, when six youths were charged with the murder of PC Blakelock during the uprising on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham which followed the death of Cynthia Jarrett. But it is not only the six youths, three of whom are juveniles, who are on trial there — it is the whole of the Broadwater Farm's black community. As the regular press releases from the BWF Defence Campaign point out, the state is 'not concerned with justice but with revenge on a community which defended itself'.

Many people have already appeared in court on frame-up charges arising from the 6 October 1985 uprising. Of those, many have been charged on the basis of 'confessions' made while in police custody immediately following the rebellion.

In some cases, the police simply haven't been able to make the charges stick. Recently, Hassan Muller, Stephen Edwards, Chris Newell and Peter Gray, all charged with affray on the basis of confessional evidence, were found not guilty. In fact, one of them was first named in an elaborate 50-page confession by another youth who was later proved to be outside London on the night concerned.

But other verdicts show the truth of the BWF Defence Campaign's claim that the trials are state-sanctioned revenge. Simon MacMinn, for example, got seven years for 'throwing three stones'. His sentence was reduced to three years on appeal. Jason Cobham was fined £200 for 'threatening behaviour'.

Many of those already brought to trial for such offenses were first charged with Blakelock's murder. Take the example of twins Earl and Mark Douglas who were sentenced to four and three and a half years respectively for affray and burglary.

The Douglases were arrested one month after the uprising, charged with murder. One police officer even claimed that one of the brothers was 'the ringleader in the death of PC Blakelock'.

They were interviewed for four hours during which a police officer

tricked Earl into writing a note which was then passed to Mark after which the 'confessions' were made. Having failed to establish that the two Douglases had anything to do with the death of Blakelock, the police then charged them with the offences they were eventually tried and found guilty of.

By Carol Turner

Or take the example of Simon Planter, a 20 year old who was sentenced to three and a half years for 'admitting' his role during the uprisings. He too was initially arrested for the murder of Blakelock. Planter's 'admission' was made to Detective Constable Rex Sargent who has a record for violently assaulting a youth.

What emerges in this series of trials is that the method of getting many of the Broadwater Farm defendants to 'confess' was the threat of their being charged with murder.

But the details of these frame-up trials hardly compare with the treatment of the six currently in the dock at the Old Bailey. Already the press has had a field-day.

On the morning following the first day of their trial, the scab *Sun* carried a front-page headline 'Face of man on riot PC murder charge' together with a half-page picture of a smiling black man, showing the confidence the British press is beginning to feel carrying such openly racist filth so prominently on its pages.

All the trial judge has done is warn jurors not to read the newspapers. No action whatsoever has



Photograph reproduced from the February issue of Campaign Group News: Joan Maynard addresses the Old Bailey picket on behalf of the Campaign Group on the first day of the show trial

been taken against papers like the *Sun*. Even the so-called liberal *Guardian* has carried the sort of gory blow-by-blow accounts of the prosecution evidence that are only a thinly-disguised racism.

In this climate it has been necessary to vet 400 potential jurors before 12 acceptable to all parties could be found. Out of those 400, only two black people were found. They have now been reduced to one black on a technicality.

The six on trial for Blakelock's murder have faced the same problems as other BWF defendants in relation to confessional evidence. After all the legal battles between defence and prosecution at the outset of the case, the judge has ruled that 'confessions' are admissible evidence.

What has emerged from the proceedings so far — and what no newspaper other than the *Guardian* had deigned to mention — is something the Broadwater Farm community has known all along: such a police raid to take over the estate as that which took place follow-

ing the death of Cynthia Jarrett was planned for a long time. That is why the BWF Defence Campaign and their supporters called for a public enquiry on the events of 6 October 1985, and why the police were so opposed to one.

Superintendent Couch has now admitted in court under oath, that such a police action as the one that followed Cynthia Jarrett's death was planned for at least a year. This has been corroborated by the evidence of other police officers.

Another reason that the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign called for an enquiry was to bring to light the lack of cover for the police during the raid, which created the conditions which led to Blakelock's death. That too has been brought out during the trial of the six. Police officers have testified that their manoeuvres on 6 October were dangerous, without cover by other police contingents, and that they anticipated they were so covered.

The police have always wanted this well hidden. Fleet Street's gutter press has obliged by not recount-

ing that aspect of the trial.

The outcome of the trial of the six Broadwater Farm youths charged with the murder of PC Blakelock is already a foregone conclusion. The proceedings at the Old Bailey should be called by their proper name: they are a show trial.

Martha Osamore told Socialist Action: 'The Broadwater Farm trials actually show that what black people have been warning about over the years is coming to light. The thing we have to learn from is that the same brutality and injustice that has been dished out to black people over the years is being dished out to the whole labour movement, from the miners to the print workers. We hope that these experiences will be used in a positive way to unite oppressed people against our oppressor.'

● For further information about the pickets and other activities organised by the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, contact: BWF Defence Campaign, 12-16 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, London N17 (01-8081 667/885 3752).

South Wales TASS attacks Black Sections

SUPPORT FOR black people's right to self-organise within the Labour Party will be an issue at the TASS annual conference this year. The South Wales region has submitted a resolution opposing Labour Party Black Sections for discussion in Bourenmouth at the end of April.

TASS general secretary Ken Gill is chair of the TUC race relations advisory sub-committee and of the equal opportunity committee to which it reports. So far he has studiously refused to take a position on the issue of Black Sections.

At least some of the *Morning Star* wing of the union's Broad Left are backing the South Wales resolution, which was passed by the all-white, preponderantly male meeting of the South Wales region. A crude resolution from the Cardiff branch of TASS was amended by

Swansea.

The Swansea version has now gone forward to the annual conference. But the line of both resolutions is the same.

By Annie Brady

Cardiff's references to Black Section, such as one which 'rejects the idea that an unrepresentative clique that has been self-appointed can represent the interests of the labour movement in its anti-racist struggle', have been amended out. The essence, however, remains the same.



Ken Gill

The assumption is that black people are separate from the working class and that their fighting for their particular interests is divisive. This is a familiar argument from *Militant* supporters within the Labour Party.

It is an argument which

Roy Hattersley and the rest of the right wing feel perfectly at home with. It is also one which has led the LPYS representative on the national executive committee, Linda Douglas, to sit on the scab Black and Asian Advisory Committee set up to deflect the struggle for black self-organisation and representation within the party.

The South Wales resolution argues that the creation of Black Sections leads to 'segregation' within the party. Its assertion that 'conference rejects any claim that the Labour Party is a racist organisation' deliberately ignores the institutional racism that exists across society including in the Labour Party. Its position that black party members struggling to

make their voice heard in the way they decide cuts across 'the real debate on how to fight inequality and racism in Britain', is totally unacceptable.

The backward politics which this resolution represents stand in ironic contrast to another resolution submitted to TASS conference by that region. TASS members in South Wales are resisting moves to abolish their regional structure and integrate their branches into an English region of the union.

The issues raised by the South Wales resolution on black self-organisation have already been firmly dealt with inside the Labour Party by Black Section and its supporters. They must be taken up inside TASS with equal force.

A pseudo socialist attack on women

The reactionary myth of "femocracy"

THE FIGHT over the principle of women's self-organisation has spilt into every section of the labour movement. In the Labour Party it has centred on the long running fight over the powers of the Labour women's conference — and the right of women to elect the women's places on the NEC. Inside the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) and the NUS the fight has taken the form of whether the women's officer of the NUS should be elected by women, at the NUS women's conference. Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN), politically dominated by *Socialist Organiser*, has opposed the right of women in NUS to elect their own women's officer.

But still more serious than the individual position has been the attempts to justify it. Prior to Christmas *Socialist Organiser* published an article entitled 'Feminism Yes, Femocracy No!' This put forward the disgraceful charge that women invent charges of sexual harassment in order to gain political advantage. It evacuated women's oppression of its material social content and in essence claimed that 'femocracy' is an example of 'reverse sexism'. This is a variant of *Militant* and the right wing's claim that black self-organisation is 'reverse racism', that Sinn Fein are 'green fascists' and so on. SARAH MANN, Leeds University Labour Club, replies.

TO coincide with NUS Conference, held in December 1986, Jane Ashworth and Michelle Carlisle of SSiN produced an article entitled 'Feminism Yes, Femocracy No!' (*Socialist Organiser* 4 December 1986) This outlined their position as to whether class or sex is the greater oppressor. The article is both misleading and crude, and underlies SSiN's decision to abandon their former policy of support for women's

autonomy. At 1987 NOLS Conference, they will now be calling on conference as a whole to elect the Women's Officer, rather than women themselves.

SSiN is a *Socialist Organiser* based organisation and their decision is no more than sectarian; a means of ensuring the election of a *Socialist Organiser* candidate. If this means forfeiting the principle of women's autonomy, then this they are prepared to do.

Socialist Organiser's

article begins by examining the nature of the word 'femocracy', which they define as 'a stealing of feminism and using it for personal career advancement'. Femocrats are compared with bureaucrats, and we are told of their reluctance to actually work within the labour movement. Throughout the article, the implication is that 'femocrats' have no real desire to fight alongside men for socialist ideals. In SSiN's words: 'They have distilled an objective truth which cannot be challenged because everyone else's view of the world is male.' Femocrats will not try to convince people and build campaigns. 'They are pure feminists, unfettered by left-wing or any other ideology.'

Yet simultaneously, SSiN continue by stating that femocrats 'only attack from the left'. So now we have an admission that there are femocrats within the Labour left. But wait a moment. Of course! Femocrats are not fighting for all women, or for working class socialism. They are using the Labour left purely for their own gain. They care not for their sisters, they care not for a redistribution of power in society between men and women. Their sole aims are to carve out notches for themselves within the corridors of the Commons. Femocrats are renegades; Margaret That-

chers in disguise!

We are told that it is no longer possible for a man to challenge a woman's politics, for fear of the word 'sexist' being thrown at him. 'Objective arguments don't matter, facts don't matter much either. It is impossible to win. The rules of their game forbid honest debate.' *Socialist Organiser's* position is that 'there is no doubt that some women cry "sexist" when politically challenged.'

What this means is that women really haven't got the political expertise to argue their own case. But rather than fade into the background (after all, that would be a wholly passive act of behaviour!) they rant and rave at men, winning their argument only on the grounds of making the male sex feel guilty. These poor left men are forced to retreat and have the ideas of petit-bourgeois women foisted upon them, because failure to accept these ideas would lead to female intimidation of men.

This in itself is ludicrous. How many meetings do we attend where women speak for at least half the time, or even speak for at least half the time, or even speak in relation to their numbers? Most political debate is by men, and about male experience. Most women would feel too intimidated

to speak out. And even if they did, and dared to call a man 'sexist' in public, the likely consequence would be the labelling of the woman as neurotic and 'hysterical'. If *Socialist Organiser* really believe that women have got the monopoly on the discussion of political ideas, they're walking around with blinkers on their eyes.

Socialist Organiser's criticisms have no limits. Femocrats, they tell us, have no objection to using their gender as a means of slandering men. We are told that femocrats invent incidents of sexual harassment, not just to win political arguments but to 'score points'. SSiN openly say that femocrats indulge in ruining men's reputations with accusations of harassment, justifying it as 'fair game'.

This is blatantly misogynist, and adds weight to the myth that women are mentally unbalanced and have nothing better to do than shout 'I'm being sexually harassed'. We only need to peddle the argument one step further and we have a situation where it's plausible to say 'women shout rape for the fun of it'.

In actual fact most women are frightened to reveal cases of sexual harassment for fear of adverse publicity and the knowledge that they will have to relive the incidents over and over again in their minds instead of try-



ing to forget them. Sexual harassment affects all women, and is not taken seriously enough. It is disgraceful that SSiN can peddle an argument which lays the blame for sexual harassment at women's feet!

Socialist Organiser's position can be summarised in an outrageously simplified paragraph stating that: 'the power that a working class man has over a working class woman is absolutely negligible when compared to the murdering, deca-

dent, crushing power of the international ruling class.' Try telling that to a working class woman who's being battered behind doors by her working class husband!

This article is now taking on a *Militant*/SWP outlook: that we should only fight for working class women. And not because they are women, but because they are members of the working class! Let me remind you, *Socialist Organiser* — rape affects all women; abortion affects all women. And it's not just working class women who are afraid to walk the streets at night!

Whilst we accept that there can be no women's liberation without socialism, it is no longer enough to say that female oppression is going to disappear overnight. Instead of attacking women, relentlessly, we could do better to examine and criticise the behaviour of men in the Labour left, for they are not without faults. It is important to remember that there can be no socialism without women's liberation.

Socialist Organiser's article on femocracy belittles women on the Labour left and tries to invalidate our experience as women. Women are portrayed as essentially apolitical, hostile to the idea of class conflict, and disinterested in promoting real struggle. *Socialist Organiser* say that we can do without 'femocracy' or 'femocrats'. Rather, I would say that the Labour left can do without this type of spiteful, sectarian and misogynistic writing.

● This article originally appeared in the bulletin of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Central America solidarity conference

LAST YEAR the United States Congress agreed \$100 million to the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua. In February the release of the last \$40 million of this aid is likely to be voted by Congress. Opponents are not expected to get the two thirds vote needed to stop this funding. President Reagan has announced plans for an additional \$105 million Contra aid, despite mounting public criticism of the Iran-Contra scandal.

But whatever the amount of source of aid to the Contra terrorists, they have failed to overturn the popular Sandinista led government of Nicaragua. Contra actions and a US economic blockade have created big problems for the Nicaraguan people. But the people have been able to make major strides with land reform, adoption of a democratic constitution, extended rights for the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast and in many other areas of life.

Jaime Wheelock, a member of the Sandinista Front National Directorate recently reported that Nicaraguan military victories over the US backed contras have boosted production and productivity.

He predicts an economic upturn for 1987.

The Nicaraguan people are not complacent about the deep crisis of US foreign policy. After a tour of the United States in December, Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramirez said of the

By Celia Pugh

US administration: 'The fact that it may feel weakened is not enough to persuade it to change its policy. Rather, we can expect desperate, aggressive actions which is what makes this a particularly dangerous period.'

As the Contra policy crumbles, the US will be faced with a choice of respecting Nicaraguan

sovereignty or using its own troops to overturn the government. The Sandinistas fear that the US will choose the second course. As the US government crisis reached a crescendo the US administration did not slow down its intervention in the region but took it to a new level.

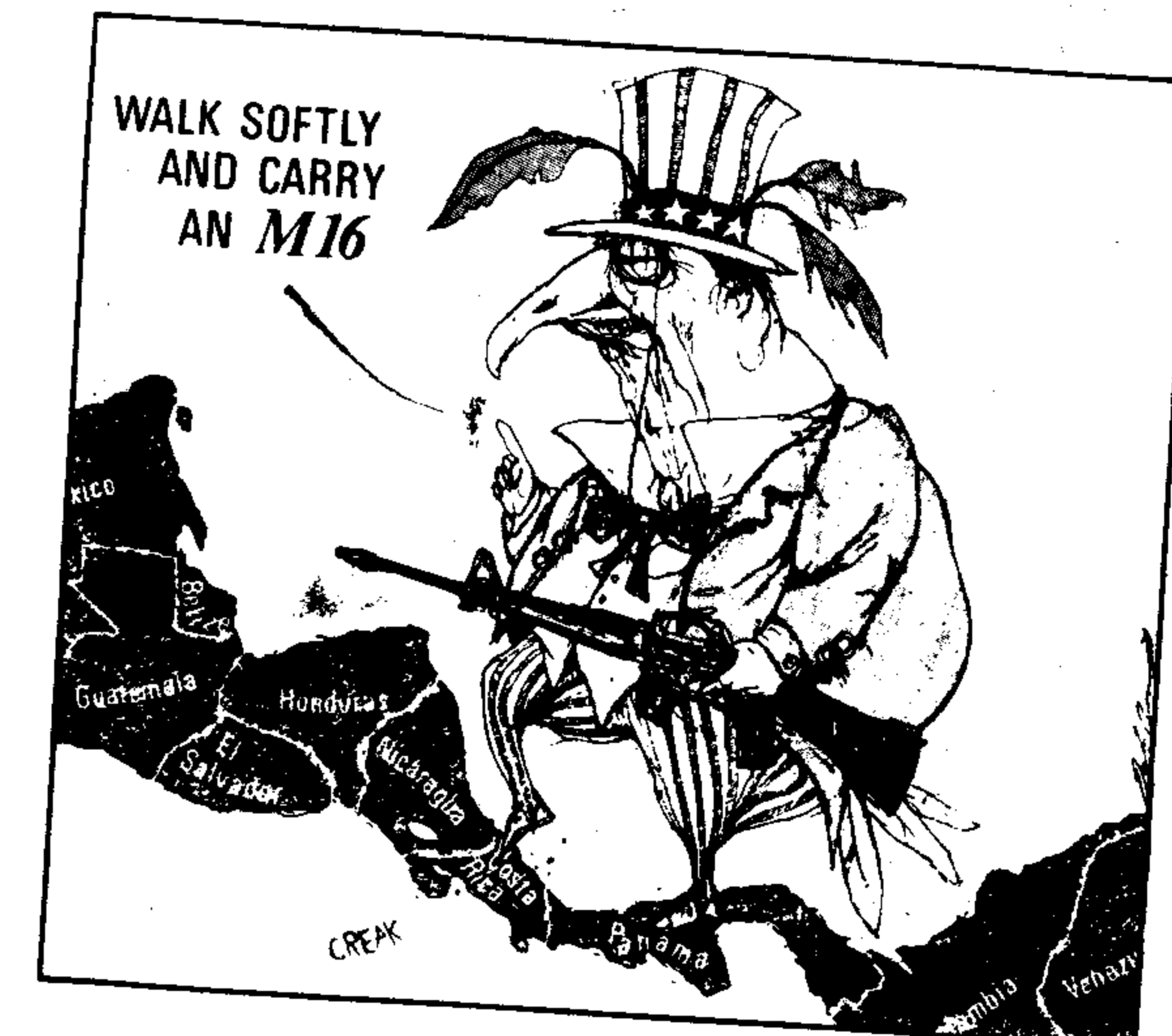
In December US aircraft flew from Honduras over northern Nicaragua, bombing civilian and military targets. US troops were deployed on the Nicaraguan border to assist this Honduran attack, on the phoney pretext of a Nicaraguan invasion of Honduran territory. In early 1987 thousands of US troops will take part in so called practice manoeuvres in Honduras. This is a cover for a permanent presence of US troops, the building of military installations and a military airport to back up the Contras and prepare for escalated US involvement.

Since November the US has set up a naval command post off the Atlantic and

Pacific coasts of Nicaragua, with an aircraft carrier, frigates and destroyers. The Nicaraguan government fears that the US will fabricate a border incident with Honduras as a pretext for the use of US ground troops. They argue that their best hope to prevent US invasion is a strengthened defence at home and a movement of protest abroad. They want to make the price of invasion just too high for the US administration to consider.

An invaded Nicaragua will not be another Grenada. It would spark a long and bloody regional war with thousands of US casualties. The North American people already face austerity because of the US economic crisis and will resist paying the human and financial cost of such a war.

The 28 February labour movement conference on peace in Central America will hear speakers from Nicaragua map out their solidarity needs. They will be joined by a representative of the broad unity organisation of El Salvador, the UNTS, and the libera-



tion front FMLN-FDR. El Salvador is used as a staging post for US military activity in the region and North American aid keeps in office the Duarte government, which has declared war on a people struggling for social justice.

The crisis of the Duarte government is deepened by its failure to meet the needs of the poor of San Salvador whose conditions were worsened by the October earthquake. Inadequate earthquake relief has been mismanaged and channelled to military ends. Vitaly

needed funds have not been transferred from the war budget and FDR-FMLN calls for a truce to aid reconstruction have been rejected.

Government forces still kill, bomb and imprison trade unionists, peasants and other civilians. The UNTS and the FDR-FMLN are at the head of the Salvadorean people's efforts to get peace and a better life. Their appeals for much needed aid will be considered at the February labour movement conference.

Crisis in Labour's

IT IS vital for Labour's future, and for its prospects at the election, to build its youth organisations. One of the features of Labour's 'aristocratic' past was that it failed youth just as much as it failed women or the black community. In other countries socialist parties built mass youth movements. But Labour's was scarcely more than a rump. Today both Labour's main youth organisa-

tions, the LPYS and the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) are dominated by dead end politics: NOLS by the Kinnockite Democratic Left and the LPYS by *Militant*.

What is missing is the politics of Labour's campaign left — the politics of Labour Left Liaison. But the beginnings of this are beginning to emerge. Last year the Labour Par-

ty Black Section succeeded in rallying the non-*Militant* left around Kingsley Abram's campaign for the youth place on Labour's NEC. This year they are running their youth organiser Steve Jomoa for the same position. Meanwhile in NOLS a new current, *Campaign Student*, is beginning to develop against the twin dead ends represented by the Democratic Left and Socialist

Students in Socialist Organisations by STEVE JOMO secretary of VITTORINI Socialist Action forward for

The Democratic Left

THE ULTRA left in the Labour Party is declining in influence while simultaneously becoming more fragmented. The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) will not engage in dialogue with far left factions which merely seek to give renewed credibility to an emphasis upon internal conflict and crude attacks on the leadership.

To waste precious time on inner-left debates is to distract ourselves from our main aims of winning the support of young people for Labour and of developing the radical policy commitments which Labour already has; for example, the pledge to introduce a £35 a week minimum allowance for all in 16-19 further education — the one proposal which could do more than anything else to increase working class access to higher education.

Similar changes to what is happening on the left nationally are being mirrored, to an extent, within the left of the student movement. *Militant* are caught in a nose-dive of decline and don't seem to know, or even want to know. The *Socialist Organiser* front — SSiN — were finally exposed for their opportunism at NUS winter conference and greater clarity in political debate should further succeed in exposing the crudity of their aims.

Groups like SSiN pretend to be more sophisticated than *Militant's* approach which sees, for example, the women's movement as simply irrelevant and divisive. In fact, SSiN are little different and see women's demands as optional extras, welcome but dispensable additions to the 'real' class struggle. In the final analysis and in their refusal to support women students electing a NUS women's officer, the commitment of SSiN to feminism is exposed as superficial.

The emergence of *Campaign Student*, however, is significant in that there now exists a more formal representation of LLL within NOLS and I welcome this opportunity to enter into comradely debate with people who believe they are serious about left advance in the student movement. *Campaign Student* appears, at least temporarily, to recognise the dire need for a respite in head-banging. The response of the democratic left in NOLS to *Campaign Student* should not be negative but should not spend an excessive amount of time considering the nature of a possible relationship with what could easily become an incestuous process of inner-party bridge-building and bridge-burning.

Reject

I reject Polly Vittorini's claim (*Socialist Action*, 9 January) that the 'Democratic Left' only exists in order to keep Trotskyists out of the NOLS leadership. Democratic socialists lead NOLS primarily because we believe fundamentally in the ability of NOLS and the NUS to develop the ideas and build support for the politics of democratic socialism, not because of a fear as to what SSiN or *Militant* might do if they controlled Labour's largest youth section. Since Labour students have led the NUS there

has been a firm and clear shift to the left. The NUS is now a mass campaigning union clearly identified by a large number of students with the Labour Party. Hardly a result of what Polly refers to as 'crisis leadership'.

I would support an approach to *Campaign Student* which is non-sectarian but firm. I reject Polly's inference that it's not possible to support WAC or Black Sections if not affiliated to LLL. NOLS will continue to support the demands — and work with — WAC, Black Sections, the Labour Committee on Ireland, and groups like the LCLGR in a constructive and supportive way. NOLS does not, however, view these groups as in any way our property to be peddled as a sign of 'leftness'. I hope *Campaign Student* feels the same.

Furthermore, Polly and *Campaign Student* continue to talk of Kinnock as the major obstacle to be overcome and of Kinnock's 'anti-working class leadership' (*Socialist Action*, 9 January). While NOLS should be both cautious and entirely realistic about the potential of a Labour government under the current leadership, it is irresponsible and naive in the extreme to see Neil Kinnock as the main enemy facing the left. The left has got to cease defining its politics simply on the grounds of its relationship to the party leadership.

Role

By concentrating on the party leadership, the ultra left effectively see the role of social forces *outside* of the party in exactly the same way as the Labour right — ie social forces are seen to have a passive role. Class, sex and race are effectively displaced as driving forces behind societal change. At the same time and as part of the same process, the main axis for changing the character of the Labour Party flows through the changing of leaderships ie, more left wing *men* on the TUC general council, the NEC, NOLS and LPYS national committees, etc. For groups like the CLPD, the manoeuvrings and demands imposed by capitalism are thus combatted by simply getting the *right men* in.

NOLS will continue to see that the real test for the left is *not* therefore whether we can ditch Kinnock as party leader. The crucial issue is whether we are capable of breaking out of a parliamentarist tradition and a Labour chauvinism, and thereby generate a 'Third Road' strategy which will be necessary to defeat Thatcher and maintain a radical Labour government in office.

With SSiN combining oppositionalism with opportunism and *Militant's* ultra-conservatism, the democratic left of NOLS offers the only plausible alternative for a mass, politically campaigning NOLS. *Campaign Student* has a part to play in the political regeneration of the student movement, as Ken Livingstone has put it: 'We must not allow sectarianism to prevent us seizing the potential which is opening before us.' Let's win!!!

Rob Minshull,
NOLS National Secretary

This opportunity of a polemic with the national secretary of the National Organisation of Labour Students is welcome. It is also indicative of the growing impact of Labour's campaign left — in particular on those supporting the soft left Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) and its student co-thinkers, the Democratic Left.

We agree with Rob Minshull on one point — that the present developments on the left of the Labour Party have an echo in the student movement. In fact the political crisis of the LCC has its most pronounced character in the current position of the Democratic Left at the helm of the National Union of Students (NUS).

Socialists should pay special attention to the developments in the student movement today. The alliance with Britain's 1¼ million students is a vital one for the labour movement. That alliance can only be created by the labour movement fighting with the majority of students for the complete transformation of the education system to eliminate class privilege, racism, sexism, and anti-gay prejudice. A fundamental part of this must be the extension of access to education and therefore the defence of the living standards of students.

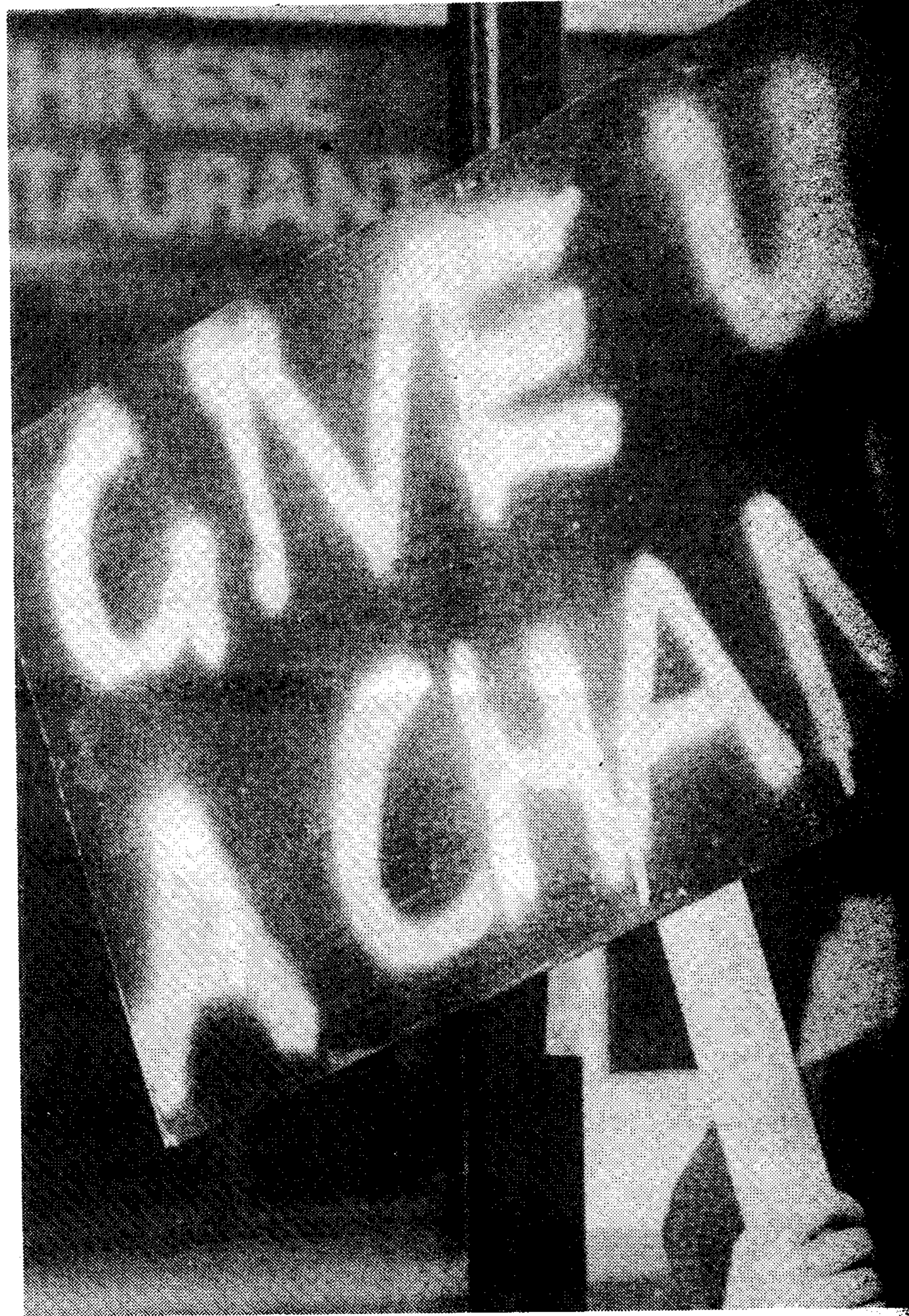
Disaster

A labour movement strategy involves convincing the student movement to take the side of the working class in all the great social and political struggles taking place both internationally and in British society. It includes fighting the Tories and other reactionaries, including in the labour movement, on such issues as defence of Nicaragua, anti-Apartheid, British withdrawal from Ireland, women's liberation, and for defence of the black communities as well as students immediate interests. These are all central issues around which the alliance between the majority of students and the labour movement can be created. It is also the significance of the attempts to overturn NOLS support for a democratic secular Palestine and therefore to commit it to supporting a Zionist state in Israel — which is against the Palestinian people and as a permanent threat to the Arab peoples of the Middle East.

Support

Within this framework, the majority of students have to know that the labour movement will support them around their grants, housing, access to education and similar matters.

The greatest blow to this alliance in recent years was the Labour government of Wilson and Callaghan. This cut back in spending on education, restricted access to education, reduced living standards, attacked student unions and did this as part and parcel of attacks on the working class. As a result the Tories gained more support than ever before in the student movement. Our point is that Rob Minshull and the Dem Left advocate a strategy of tying the leadership of NOLS and thereby of the NUS to a Labour Party leadership which is taking the party to the right. This has already had disastrous results within NUS.



Campaign Student, like the LLL, starts from what is necessary: to defend the labour movement against the Thatcher government, to fight apartheid, to free Ireland, to fight racism and sexism etc. However we find that when the miners take actions to defend their communities they get no support from Kinnock. Labour councils like Brent and Haringey attacked by the press and the Tories for fighting racism get no support. Even the workers at Wapping get nothing more than lukewarm scolding of Murdoch laced with denunciations of 'violence'. Kinnock, supported by the LCC, has opened a witch hunt in the party and started the process of trying to reverse such basic democratic reforms as the accountability of MPs. We don't start off by opposing Kinnock. He starts by opposing what is necessary.

Priorities

Consistent with its policy which starts from support for Kinnock, instead of what is necessary to defend the labour movement and the membership of NUS, the Democratic Left have refused to lead the type of militant action campaign necessary to defend students' grants and fight

education cutbacks. NUS conference was so outraged that it rejected the whole of the Democratic Left-dominated executives's report and plan overwhelmingly. Subordination of students living standards and education to what is acceptable to Kinnock will have catastrophic political results for the Labour Party in NUS. Similarly policies supporting women, black people and British withdrawal from Ireland have not been pushed by NOLS in the Labour Party so as to avoid conflict with Kinnock who opposes the demands of Labour women's conference, opposes Black Sections and opposes British withdrawal from Ireland.

Rob Minshull and part of the Democratic Left support NOLS affiliation to the LCC but reject affiliation to the Labour Left Liaison (LLL). Yet Labour Left Liaison is precisely the body created by WAC, the Black Section, CLPD and others to promote co-operation on the left around these issues. The LCC has given lip service to these campaigns but not real practical support.

The difference between the LCC and the LLL, however, is that the LLL

youth organisations

— a bloc led by and backed in the
 ... explains the
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the Black Section and WAC. Its positions on issues such as Ireland and Palestine are brutally against the interests of the Irish and Palestinian people — and bluntly we regard the position of women, black people, the lives of the people of Ireland, and 120 million Arab people threatened by the Zionist state of Israel as fundamental issues for the student movement. For that reason Socialist Action will not be calling for a vote for the SSiN slate in the elections in NOLS — although we can vote for individual candidates supported by SSiN who do not share their views on such questions as women, Ireland or Palestine. We regard the views of SSiN and *Militant*, with whom SSiN are in a bloc, as reactionary on these issues.

Instinctive

But equally obviously we are not going to call for a vote for the Democratic Left. Its politics on the witch hunt alone, let alone the other issues we have outlined, rule that out. Again we can support individual candidates who publicly reject the politics of the Democratic Left on issues such as the witch hunt and agree on the issues we have outlined could be supported. And, to make it clear, given the record of the LCC we regard every person on the Democratic Left slate as in favour of the witch hunt unless they publicly reject it — which naturally we call for candidates to do.

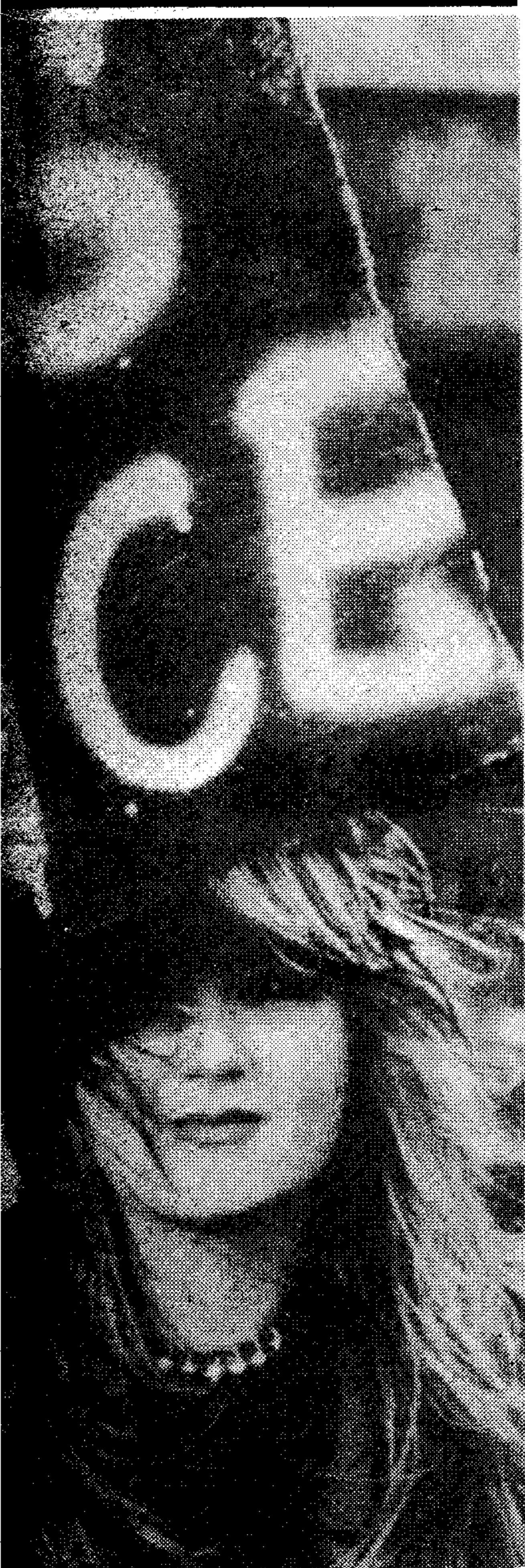
The truth is that both the Democratic Left and SSiN represent a dead end for students — the first trying to cover over policies such as, support for witch hunts, and a failure to fight on grants, by tokenistic positions on women and black people which are in practice not acted upon — and the latter covering over rotten politics on women, black people, and international politics by a souped up rhetoric on grants. Neither defends the interests of students as a whole or, most importantly, of the working class and oppressed as a whole.

We think that these twin dead ends are being exposed and the type of politics represented by Labour Left Liaison (LLL) and Labour's campaign left are gaining support.

Attempt

Rob and the Democratic Left attempt the impossible task of trying to marry support for women and black people and the demands of the left with support for Kinnock. This is the key to the crisis of the Democratic Left — because as the two are incompatible their combination produces paralysis. Finally since Kinnock's refusal recently to give a commitment to restore grants to their 1979 real value, it has become apparent that you can't even marry support for students' economic demands with support for Kinnock!

NOLS has to make its alliance with the campaign left of the Labour Party if it wants to defend the interests of the working class, of the oppressed, and of students in this country. The first step in that is for NOLS to affiliate to Labour Left Liaison. That, not the excuses for Kinnock provided by Rob Minshull, is the way forward to create a real new leadership for NOLS and the NUS.



is entirely independent of Kinnock and pursues the demands of women and Black people as well as defending party democracy and opposing witch hunts whether Kinnock likes it or not. That is why the LLL, together with the Campaign Group, commands majority support in the constituency section of the Labour Party.

Policy

Neither can the policy of the LCC and the Democratic Left of subordinating the demands of women, students, black people and the Irish to Kinnock be justified even on grounds of electoral expediency. Kinnock's right-wing policies and attacks on party democracy have been an electoral disaster. They have allowed the Tories to set the political agenda with correspondingly disastrous results at the polls. Similarly, the democratic Left's subordination of politics and student living standards to what is acceptable to Kinnock will lose, not win, student votes for Labour.

To move on, evidently Socialist Action utterly rejects the politics of SSiN — which is increasingly clashing with

Black Section youth candidate for NEC

LABOUR PARTY Black Section is backing Steve Jomoa as its candidate in the election of the youth representative on the Labour Party national executive committee. Steve's campaign will build on the growing support for the demands of Black Section throughout the Labour Party, and will take up the need for the Labour's youth organisation to relate to the struggles of youth on the streets of Britain and solidarity with liberation struggles internationally.

'The campaign is about the core political programme of Black Section,' said chair Marc Wadsworth. 'It will develop specific issues relating to youth such as defence campaigns like Broadwater Farm and the rejection of the Sawyer proposals for the LPYS.' STEVE JOMOA explained his campaign to Socialist Action.

I AM standing as Black Section candidate for the Young Socialist place on the Labour Party national executive committee in order to promote a mass campaigning, socialist perspective in the youth organisation. This is crucial if Labour politics are to be seen as relevant to youth, especially black youth.

At present, the LPYS run by *Militant* is stagnant. They have no interest in building a mass campaigning youth organisation, one that relates to the real struggles of youth taking place on the streets of Britain, because they would not be able to control it. But to be relevant to youth in the 1980s that is exactly what the LPYS must do: support black youth who are fighting in the defence campaigns and against police harassment, support youth who are fighting unemployment and the cheap-labour system of YOPS and YTS schemes.

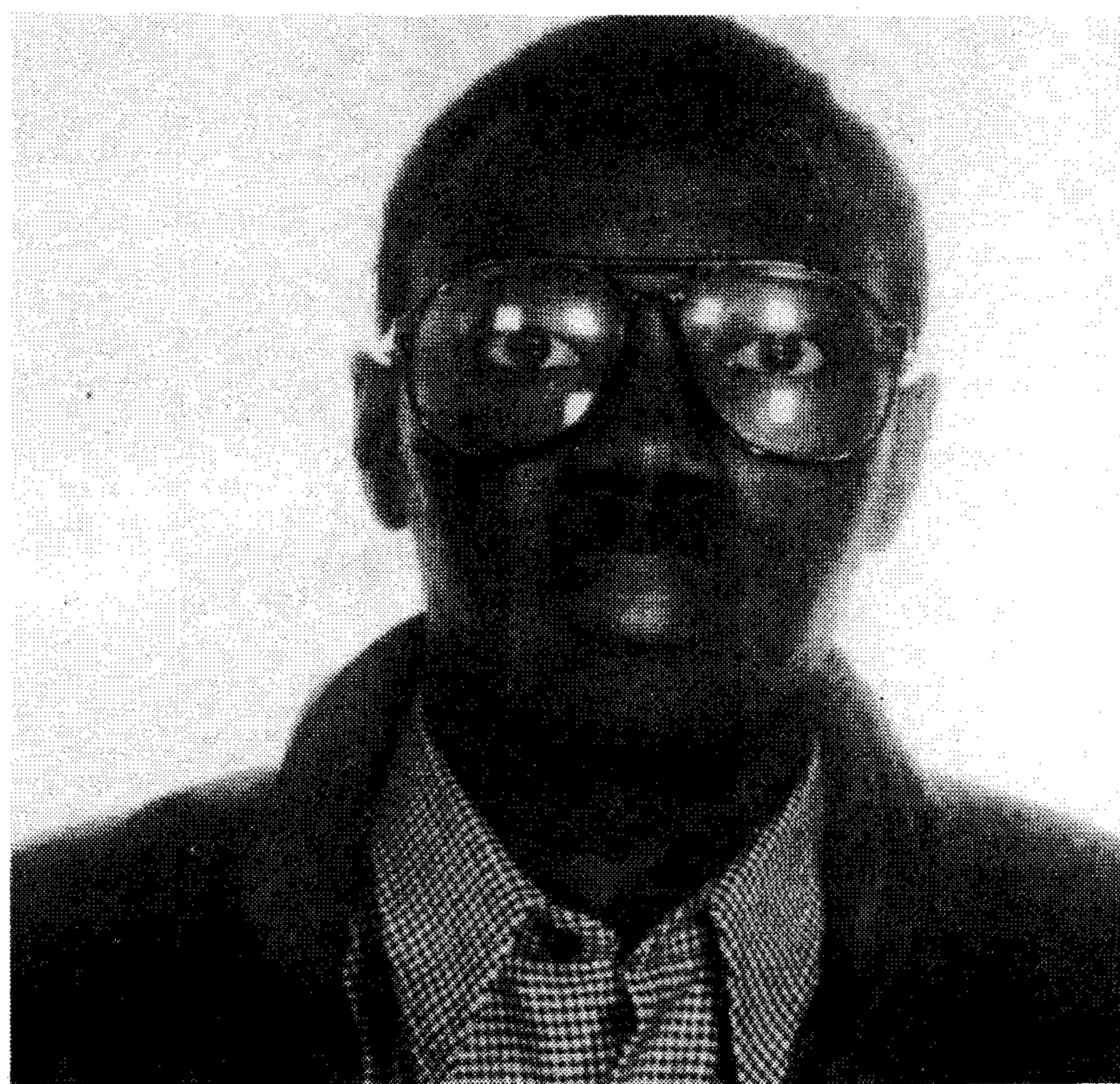
Youth

My campaign will reflect that perspective, taking up the struggles of black youth in particular. I will also be campaigning against the Sawyer proposals and for the independence of Labour's youth organisation. This is the best way to ensure that the LPYS is a mass movement of youth which reflects the politics of youth.

Black Section sees this campaign as an extension of the campaign we are carrying on throughout the whole labour movement and especially in the Labour Party.

So I will be developing the politics of the alliances Black Section believes it is necessary to build and which is reflected in our support for Labour Left Liaison and Campaign Forum. We want to see a labour movement which genuinely reflects and fights for the interests of the whole working class and oppressed in society, as opposed to the class reductionist politics of the *Militant* and others.

That means support for the self-organisation of black people and for the demands of women through the Labour Women's Action Committee; it means support for Irish self-determination; it means support for unilateral nuclear disarmament and campaigning for the removal of all US bases from Britain and withdrawal from NATO; it means support of the Palestinian people; it means support for the struggle of the people of Central America; and it means support for the black national liberation struggle in Azania.



Steve Jomoa

My campaign will be about recognising that women and black people are an integral part of the working class, not an addition to it. It will be about developing a consistent anti-imperialist framework of support for struggles for freedom and liberation internationally.

At the moment the LPYS is a well-oiled machine, but it hasn't got the politics capable of responding to the struggles of youth currently taking place in Britain and internationally. It hasn't got the anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-imperialist politics that can be translated into mass activity and that can attract thousands of new members into the Labour Party youth organisation.

Before the Black Section took this up, the LPYS was a sort of holy cow. You couldn't criticise it because it was run by 'the left'. But what sort of a left is it that doesn't relate to the sort of politics that I have mentioned? Since the Black Section campaigned last year for Kingsley Abrams to be elected as the LPYS representative on the NEC it has now become possible to criticise the LPYS.

Measure

Of course, we do that in a constructive way because we want to turn the youth organisation from being a stagnant and bureaucratic body into a mass campaigning force that attracts youth in this country. Under the presents LPYS leadership, the natural dynamism of youth is being suffocated.

My campaign is already being organised to reflect this objective. Black Section has launched the campaign in the black press. Articles have already appeared in the *Caribbean Times* and *West Indian News*, more interviews are taking place with the Asian and Afro-Caribbean press.

The meetings in support of my campaign will also reflect this. The first will be a fringe meeting at the West Midlands regional LPYS conference, supported and built by black youth from the Birmingham Black Section and organised by *Youth Action*. Another is planned in Bristol, where I will share a platform with

Jagun Akinshegun who is vice chair of the St Pauls community association and chair of the St Pauls apartheid free zone committee.

Struggles

Last year Kingsley Abrams' campaign raised the flag of Black Sections and the alliances we stand for inside the Labour Party Young Socialists. One measure of the success of that campaign was the refusal of the platform at the national LPYS conference to count the votes in favour of the Black Section resolution debated there. That was because of the closeness of the vote. Although it lost on the floor of conference, the size of the vote for Black Sections clearly demonstrated the wide support that exists for our demands, including at the base of *Militant*.

This year the LPYS representative on the NEC, Linda Douglas, is sitting on the bantustan Black and Asian Advisory Committee which the party leadership has established to head-off the demand for black self-organisation. The Black Section had been told by *Militant* supporters that Linda would not be sitting on that committee. Now she is not only participating in it, but at one point was jockeying to take the chair. It was only pressure brought to bear by the Black Section that made it impossible for her to do that. This issue is one of the clearest indications of the character of the current LPYS leadership; it gives cover and support to the right wing in the party.

Black Section ranks the importance of our campaign in the LPYS alongside the fight of black socialist councillors such as Bernie Grant, Linda Bellos and Merle Amoury, and with those black candidates who are standing for parliament. We have begun to reeducate the Labour left on the importance of youth if we are serious about building mass campaigns and mass support for socialist politics in the labour movement.

● Labour Party Black Section candidate Steve Jomoa can be contacted at 46 Somerhouse Avenue, Heston, Middlesex TW5 9BA, or by phoning (home) 01-577 50057 or (work) 01-570 7728 ext 3268.



National democratic and permanent revolution

THE theory of permanent revolution was first put forward by Marx as a result of conclusions drawn from the revolutions of 1848 — above all the German revolutions of that year. In all the previous great revolutionary struggles from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century — above all the Dutch revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English revolution of 1642-49, and the bourgeoisie had mobilised the widest masses in a struggle to smash to pieces the power of the old ruling classes. In Germany in 1848, however, the bourgeoisie capitulated to the feudal reaction at the crucial points and sabotaged the bourgeois democratic revolution itself.

In Germany the bourgeoisie, following victorious uprisings in Vienna and Berlin, did not proclaim a republic but offered the crown of Germany to King Frederick William of Prussia. When working class uprisings took place in Frankfurt and Vienna the German bourgeois parliament, assembled in Frankfurt, called the feudal armies into the cities to crush the rebellions — thereby also delivering the bourgeoisie into the hands of the feudal reaction. The 'German parliament' assembled in Frankfurt refused to call for distributing land to the peasants, attempted to limit the revolution, and sought to compromise with the old ruling class. It collapsed in a debacle in May 1849.

Capitalist

As Marx wrote of the lessons of these events: 'The bourgeoisie in France (in the French revolution) ... had broken down all obstacles to the rule of its own class. The bourgeoisie in Germany ... carried out the counter-revolution for its own tyrants.'¹

The reason the bourgeoisie turned to reaction, and failed to carry through even the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution, was that in earlier capitalist revolutions, for example England in 1642-49 or France in 1789-93, the bourgeoisie had been confronted with an extremely weak working class — one that had not even gained a modicum of independent organisation or politics. Therefore, prior to the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie had felt totally secure in its ability to control and utilise for its own purposes the struggles of the working class and peasantry. As Marx noted: 'In 1648 (in England) the bourgeoisie was allied with the modern aristocracy against the monarchy, the feudal aristocracy and the established church. In 1789 (in France) the bourgeoisie was allied with the people against the monarchy, the aristocracy and the established church. In both revolutions the bourgeoisie was the class that really headed the movement. The proletariat and the non-bourgeois strata of the middle class had either not yet evolved interests which were different from those of the bourgeoisie or they did not yet constitute independent class divisions.'²

By 1848 however a significant, if small, working class had begun to develop both internationally and in

IN THE struggle against apartheid South Africa faces today many of the same tasks that were confronted by countries such as Russia, Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century: the gaining of the right to land and its free development by the majority of the population; the forging of a nation state; the gaining of

political liberty. These are tasks referred to in Marxism as a 'national democratic revolution'. But today these national democratic tasks can only be carried through thoroughly by the working class taking state power into its own hands — in Marx's terms by establishing the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The

reality that in our epoch the thorough carrying out of the national democratic tasks requires the taking of state power by the working class is termed the process of 'permanent revolution'. JOHN ROSS looks at development of the theory of permanent revolution in the writings of Marx and Trotsky.



Germany. The bourgeoisie therefore know that any real mass revolutionary actions, of the type which alone could have thoroughly smashed the remnants of feudalism would begin to unleash that working class. As Marx put it: 'The German bourgeoisie ... at the moment when it confronted feudalism and absolutism, saw menacingly pitted against itself the proletariat and all sections of the middle class whose interests and ideas were related to those of the proletariat.'³

The result of this was that the bourgeoisie was now more scared of the working class, which threatened its existence, than it was of the old ruling classes — who permitted the bourgeoisie to exist even if limiting their rights and development. The key goal of the bourgeoisie had become not revolution but, as Marx put it: 'Suppression of every political move of the proletariat and of all social strata whose interests do not completely coincide with the interests of the class which believes itself to be standing at the helm of state.'⁴

New epoch

But by crushing the movement and power of the working class the bourgeoisie limited, or even destroyed, the bourgeois democratic revolution itself — because the previous order could only be smashed completely through mass mobilisations. As Marx noted: 'The commercial and industrial sections of the bourgeoisie threw themselves into the arms of the counter-revolution for fear of the revolution.'⁵

With the revolutions of 1848 a new epoch of class struggle had therefore opened up. Prior to 1848 the capitalist class had led the struggle to accomplish the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution even although it hesitated and vacillated on secondary questions. The revolutions of 1848 demonstrated that the bourgeoisie would, now take steps on secondary questions but would seek to limit the scope of the bourgeois democratic revolution and instead compromise with the previous rulers. The bourgeoisie therefore sought to limit, or even abort entirely, the

bourgeois democratic revolution itself.

The new class alignment which flowed from the revolutions of 1848 was correctly summarised by Lenin in explaining 'Marx's theory of the distinction between the three main forces in nineteenth-century revolutions. According to this theory the following forces take a stand against the old order, against the aristocracy, feudalism, and the serf-owning system: 1) the liberal big bourgeoisie, 2) the radical petty-bourgeoisie, 3) the proletariat. The first fights for nothing more than constitutional monarchy; the second for a democratic republic; the third for a socialist revolution.'⁶

Connolly

In Ireland this was brilliantly put into practice by Connolly in the Easter rising in Dublin of 1916 when he united in action the working class forces of the Irish Socialist Republican Party with the revolutionary nationalist Irish Republican Brotherhood. The working class has had to unite in action with revolutionary nationalist forces in a whole series of struggles in the twentieth century — for example with the FLN in the war for Algerian independence from France, with the MPLA and Frelimo in the struggle to free Angola and Mozambique from Portuguese rule, with the ANC against the regime in South Africa today. In Russia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba parties of the working class achieved hegemony in struggle, with revolutionary nationalist and revolutionary democratic forces occupying a subordinate or practically non-existent role, and themselves led the national democratic revolution.

The tasks and alliances which flowed from the fight for the bourgeois democratic revolution, and its tasks, were clear. The bourgeoisie now attempted to abort the bourgeois democratic revolution — and therefore the working class could not ally with it in the bourgeois democratic revolution. However the working class must ally with the revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie who still sought to carry through the tasks

of the bourgeois democratic revolution by revolutionary means — to achieve 'the democratic republic'. Overwhelmingly the most important part of the revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie was the peasantry.

In terms of the political expressions of these class forces this meant the working class could not ally with the bourgeois democrats, but it could and must seek to ally with petty-bourgeois revolutionary forces — revolutionary democrats and revolutionary nationalists. Again as Lenin put it: 'the question is: with which democrats can and should the proletariat march now? With the Cadet democrats, or the peasant revolutionary democrats? There can be only one answer to this question: not with the Cadet democrats, but with the revolutionary democrats: not with the liberals but with the masses of the peasantry.'⁷

The state

While the proletariat must march with the revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie in the struggle for the national democratic revolution against both the previous rulers and the bourgeoisie there is, however, an asymmetry in that class alliance. The petty bourgeoisie cannot hold state power — there has never been a petty bourgeois state in history. State power can only be held by one of the two fundamental classes of modern society — the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. If state power passes into the hands of the bourgeoisie through the revolution then, as we have seen, the bourgeois democratic tasks will be aborted. This occurred in Ireland in 1916-21 for example where bourgeois forces strengthened within the petty-bourgeois Sinn Fein and aborted the national democratic revolution — accepting the partition of the country and installing a reactionary church dominated state in the south. It occurred also in India, Kenya and other Asian and African countries — where formal independence was gained but a thorough going land reform was not carried through and the countries remained neo-colonies subordinated to imperialism.

Only if the leadership of the na-

tional democratic revolution passed into the hands of the working class — as in Russia, China, Vietnam and Cuba — were the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution carried through — and here, with state power passing into the hands of the working class, the proletariat then proceeded to implement socialist tasks. As Trotsky put it summarising the development later: 'Marx regarded the bourgeois revolution of 1848 as the direct prelude to the proletarian revolution, Marx "erred". Yet his error has a factual and not a methodological character. The revolution of 1848 did not turn into a socialist revolution. But that it is just why it also did not achieve democracy.'⁸

This analysis has been confirmed by the entire history of the 20th century. Where the dictatorship of the proletariat is not established naturally this does not mean that no steps forward have been taken. But it means that the bourgeois democratic tasks have been limited, aborted — as in Ireland, and then followed by Zimbabwe, India, and many other countries. Only where the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established have the bourgeois democratic tasks been carried through consistently — as in Russia, China Cuba Vietnam. The attempt of Lenin to formulate an alternative to this in the early part of the twentieth century in a theory of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and 'peasantry' has not been born out by history. No example of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has come into existence in any country.

These choices are what confront South Africa as well. The working class in South Africa is and must ally with the revolutionary nationalists, the ANC, in order to carry through the struggle against apartheid. However in that struggle there are two perspectives. If the destruction of the apartheid state is followed by the transfer of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie then the tasks of the national democratic revolution will be aborted. The land will not be thoroughly transferred into the hands of the black population, the desegregation of every aspect of life will not be carried through, a united nation will not be forged but remnants of racism and tribalism will continue. Only if state power is transferred into the hands of the working class will the national democratic tasks of the revolution be carried through to their conclusion.

Democracy

The tasks even of the Freedom Charter supported by the ANC, the tasks of a thorough going national democratic revolution in South Africa, cannot be carried out without transferring state power into the hands of the working class. This means the working class in South Africa today must even now seek to organise itself separately from, and define itself independently politically, in relation to all other classes — while seeking the closest possible alliance with the revolutionary nationalist ANC.

It was a dynamic described perfectly in Trotsky's book *Permanent Revolution* as: 'The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution.'¹¹ It was a perspective also outlined in the October 1985 resolution by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on South Africa: 'A proletarian leadership will be the only guarantee that the democratic and national questions are fully resolved. The real, complete solutions to these questions can only be carried out by the dictatorship of the proletariat as the decisive point in a process of permanent revolution. Even if certain socialist tasks must wait for later, only the dictatorship of the proletariat is capable of fulfilling and defending the demands of the national democratic revolution.'¹²

This perspective is confirmed not simply by Marxist theory but, most importantly, by the entire history of the twentieth century.

West Germany shifts left

THE OUTCOME of the general election held in West Germany on 25 January showed an important shift to the left in the federal republic's politics. This shift took place right across the political spectrum. The right wing Christian Democrats lost votes to the liberal Free Democrats (FDP). The liberals lost votes to the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The SPD lost votes to the Greens. The Green's increased their vote and gained an extra 15 seats in parliament.

For Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister organisation, the Christian Social Union (CSU) led by Franz Joseph Strauss, their vote of 44.3 per cent was the worst since 1949. The CDU-CSU lost two million votes and 21 seats. The junior partner in the right wing government, the FDP, gained two per cent — giving them 9.1 per cent of the vote and 46 seats.

It is estimated that 400,000 CDU-CSU voters switched support to the SPD and more than 700,000 abstained.

The biggest loser of all was the ultra-reactionary Strauss. He had campaigned for the CDU-CSU to gain an absolute majority in the elections and concentrated his attacks on the FDP. The outcome of the election, which was characterised by CDU leader Kohl as involving 'some painful losses', has discredited Strauss and led to public rows inside the right wing coalition.

But the clearest and most dramatic element in the West German election result was the vote of the Greens. From fighting the general election for the first time in 1983, they now command 8.3 per cent of the vote and 42 parliamentary seats. There were strong Green gains of seven per cent in Bavaria, the base of the CSU, ascribed to the proposal to build a nuclear reprocessing plant in the region.

It is now absolutely clear that the Green Party of West Germany is not the flash-in-the-pan that its opponents predicted.

The Greens, and the issues they represent, in particular opposition to the missiles, to nuclear power, and to NATO, are shown to be an abiding element in West German politics.

By Carol Turner

The 1987 election results confirm the shift that has taken place in the left of West German politics since the 1970s, one which has been accelerated by the rise of the anti-missiles movement at the turn of the decade and with which the Green Party has been most associated.

The CDU-CSU lost votes to its 'left' both to the liberals FDP and to the Social Democrats. The latter, while they have gained from that process, have not been able to provide the sort of policies that can stop the bleeding of their own vote to their left in favour of the Greens.

The results will increase the cracks which are already beginning to show in the ranks of the Social Democrats.

Johannes Rau, the SPD's candidate for chancellor, rose to power during the right-left jockeying that took place in his party after the arrival of the Greens on the federal parliamentary scene in 1983. Rau was pledged to have no truck with any deals with the Greens.

In an interview with *Guardian* writer Jonathan Steele at the beginning of January, SPD campaign manager Peter Glotz explained that even if his party won 40 per cent of the forthcoming vote and the Greens were left holding the balance of

parliamentary power 'our position is very clear. We couldn't cooperate with the Greens, either in a coalition or any other form. A minority government would govern the country, and whether the chancellor is the Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl or our Johannes Rau will depend on the result.'

The incoherence of the SPD's position came out clearly on the question of nuclear weapons. Like the British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, Rau is pledged to supporting NATO and to increased conventional defences. Like Kinnock he also intends to 'argue from within' that NATO should become non-nuclear. But unlike the British Labour Party, the SPD has no position in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament. On a visit to Britain in December last Rau emphasised to Kinnock that any changes in the siting of NATO's nuclear weapons

on West German soil were entirely a matter for the alliance.

This unsuccessful attempt to straddle positions on the nuclear disarmament issue was clearly a major factor in the election results and, together with issues such as nuclear power and the general right wing course of the SPD, resulted in the SPD declining from 38.2 per cent of the vote in 1983 to 37 per cent this year — while the more left wing Greens advanced from 5.6 per cent 8.3 per cent.

Relations with the Greens are now certain to dominate the internal developments in the SPD. In the regional elections in Saarland in 1983, Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the SPD left wing, captured the 'green' vote on an anti-nuclear ticket. The Greens won no seats in the regional parliament, as against the trend in other regions. Lafontaine has made it clear he is prepared to con-

sider an alliance with the Greens.

Rau was selected by the right wing SPD leadership as the party's candidate for chancellor precisely to head off this type of development. The failure of his perspective of 'winning an overall majority' once more opens up the debate on what attitude to take to the Greens.

The fight in the SPD is likely to break out around the election of the party chair. This is at present held by ex-SPD leader Willy Brandt, who is retiring next year. Lafontaine has already announced that he will be running for the post.

Lafontaine's positions include the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from West Germany, withdrawal from the NATO command structure and closing down nuclear power plants. Brandt has been giving Lafontaine backing — and also gave less than en-



Franz-Josef Strauss: his campaign for an absolute majority for the right wing CDU-CSU has left him discredited

thusiastic support to Rau during the election.

If Lafontaine wins this will open up the way for much closer relations between the SPD and Greens — something the right wing of the SPD will resist. But Rau's right wing policy has been weakened both by his failure to increase the SPD vote and, most important, the in-

creased support for the Greens.

The political perspective for West Germany today must be exactly that 'Green-Red alliance' — an SPD government with the Greens as an alternative to the right wing CDU-CSU-FDP coalition. The clear swing to the left in the German elections makes that perspective more credible and closer to realisation.

Pretoria cracks down on rail union

THE APARTHEID regime has moved in hard against the recently relaunched SARHWU — the South African Rail and Harbour Workers Union. In early January the union's general secretary, Ntai Sello was detained following a police raid on SARHWU's head office in Johannesburg. A similar raid took place at the Cape Town office.

During the raids numerous items were confiscated or 'lost'. These included copies of a petition calling on the South African Transport Services (SATS) — the government controlled transport corporation — to recognise SARHWU and thousands of signed letters from SATS workers resigning from the company-controlled union in favour of SARHWU.

Latest reports indicate that Ntai Sello has now been taken by police to Durban where he is still in custody.

The police action

follows the rapid growth of the rail union. The union was revived in 1983 and had a formal relaunch at a national conference in October of last year. SARHWU has already established a nationwide organisation with 20,000 members.

By Rob Higley

Organisation in the rail industry has been seen as vital by the 600,000-strong Confederation of South African Trade Unions, COSATU. All COSATU affiliates have participated in the recruitment and

drive. COSATU has issued a statement calling for the immediate release of Sello and the recognition of SARHWU as the legitimate representative of railway workers.

'The SATS management is determined to crush SARHWU,' the statement reads. 'They are using the security forces and the emergency regulations to smash the union. But SATS should realise that railway workers refuse to be seen as subservient, cheap and controlled to the benefit of the minority right-wing government and for capitalist profit.'

Such attacks on SARHWU have been the price railworkers have had to pay throughout the union's long and broken history, which dates back to 1936. The union has issued its own statement

on the recent raids.

'Since the revival of our union in 1983, we have been on the receiving end of various attempts by the security police and railway police to prevent our legitimate trade union activities. Our organisers have been harassed and detained. Our members have been threatened and victimised at work. These attacks have increased since we participated in forming COSATU — our federation.'

Outside of South Africa, news of such repression has been seriously curtailed since the imposition just before Xmas of the new government press censorship. Government regulations imposed at the end of January have tightened the censorship even further.

Despite this there is a growing movement of solidarity for SARHWU

within rail unions in Europe and North America. Special funds have been organised in Holland, Canada and Britain to help put organisers in the field. In Britain, the NUR has launched a campaign to raise £2000 in conjunction with union activists organised in Rail Against Apartheid, and has protested against the detentions.

● Letters of protest should be sent to PW Botha, Union Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa and to the South African embassy, Trafalgar Square, London SW1. Messages of support to SARHWU, PO Box 8059, Johannesburg, to SACTU, 8 Flowers Mews Upper Holloways, London N19 and to COSATU, COSATU House, 268 Jeppe Street, Johannesburg 2000.

World in action

Philippines

■ Cory Aquino's government was yet again under threat from pro-Marcos elements within the armed forces. The bodies of 18 peasants killed last week by the army in a demonstration outside the presidential palace in Manila to demand an agrarian reform had barely been buried when on 27 January Colonel Oscar Canlas attempted to overthrow the government. The latest coup attempt takes place in the wake of increasing unrest within the army hierarchy which is developing growing doubts about the Aquino government's ability to check the mass movement.

Canlas' rebel forces (less than 100 soldiers), which occupied radio and television stations in the capital, attracted a pathetically low level of support. The whole affair looks rather clownish. Ousted dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, was stopped by US authorities in Hawaii when he attempted to return from exile.

However, despite the low mass support, the chief of staff General Fidel Ramos never brought himself to use force against the rebels because of the sympathy for the rebels within the army officers corps. After the firing of some tear gas shells and long negotiations between Ramos and

Canlas, the coup ended with the announcement of the rebels formal surrender at a press conference, 48 hours after it had begun. The steps taken by Aquino and Ramos against the plotters are half hearted, despite the arrest of 13 high ranking officers and the order to arrest three more. Some form of deal is expected with those implicated in the abortive coup due to the enormous pressure the army is exerting on the government. (The people involved in last July's coup attempt were sentenced to do 30 press ups!) The army restlessness is due to the failure of the regime to control the mass movement.

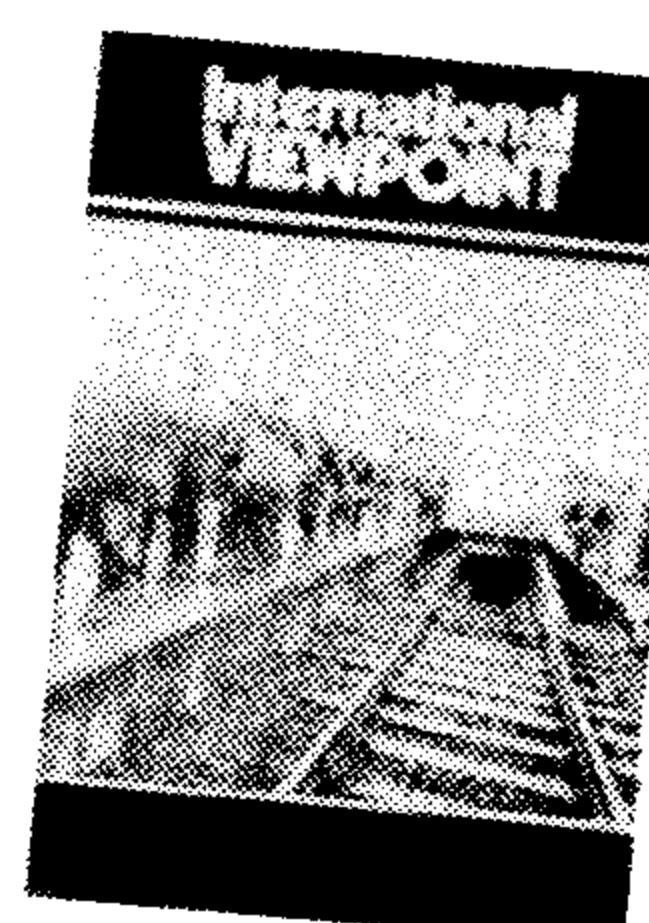
All this takes place in the context of the shift to the right by the regime. Juan Ponce Enrile, one of the most provocative pro-Marcos elements within the regime was sacked as minister of defence in last December's cabinet reshuffle but he was replaced by General Raphael Ielto, a counter-insurgency expert who enjoys the confidence of the Americans. The replacement of several minister by 'technocrats' who enjoy the confidence of financial, multinational and national capital in the December cabinet reshuffle indicates also that the government is bent on giving confidence to business circles.

The regimes' refusal to carry out a comprehensive agrarian reform lies at the heart of the growing peasant unrest and mobilisation. Workers demands for higher wages have not been met. The political democratisation of the country remains limited: the electoral commission has recently refused to recognise the left wing Bayan Party's right to participate in the election due in May.

The mass movement is seething with discontent, as the government faces increasing difficulties on the economic front: imperialism and business circles are not satisfied, they want the checking of the mass movement and the crashing of the communist insurgency of the National Democratic Front. The government strategy of offering a ceasefire to the NDF guerrilla forces while preparing for war to definitely stabilise that situation in favour of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism, is also in difficulties. The NDF has decided to suspend the peace talks they were conducting with the government.

Due to its nature the government simply refuses to embark on the only course capable of taking the country out of the crisis: turning to the mass movement to keep the pro-Marcos plotters in check; a radical agrarian reform; the elimination of the US military bases in the Philippines; repudiation of the external debt; and a thorough purging from the state apparatus of pro-Marcos elements.

The beleaguered Laban-Unido government coalition hopes to regain the political initiative by winning a decisive majority in the 2 February referendum to enact a new constitution. Canlas abortive coup attempt is a clear manifestation that the army and the ruling class do not favour the course pursued by the regime but can do little which is decisive at this stage. The mass movement on the other hand will not accept any curtailment of their hard-won democratic rights and freedom. The situation is polarising rapidly and a colossal confrontation looms large on the horizon.



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Letters

The Irish in Britain

SOCIALIST Action has begun to systematically analyse the position of women and black people in British society and in the working class.

However there is another feature of British society which must be taken into account — this is the consequences of Britain's long colonial rule over Ireland, its continued occupation of the six counties, and its neo-colonial economic domination of the south. British imperialist domination over Ireland is well known to have resulted in centuries of genocide, oppression and poverty for the Irish. But it also had significant consequences on the British social structure. There are at least three interrelated aspects.

First British domination over Ireland historically resulted in the depopulation of Ireland through mass murder, mass starvation, and mass emigration from Ireland to the USA, Australia and Britain. Ireland is the only

country in Western Europe whose population has been reduced over the past 200 years, and emigration has continued.

Emigration from Ireland was estimated to have reached 52,000 in the year July 1985 to July 1986. 38,000 of this total are estimated to have emigrated to Britain.

Second, this emigration to Britain has created a significant Irish ethnic minority within Britain. The 1981 census registered 850,397 Irish-born people permanently resident in Britain. This is certainly an underestimate and has subsequently increased. One estimate of the Irish population as a whole in Britain (first to third generation) would put this at four million (See *Irish in Britain* by Kevin O'Connor). This Irish population in Britain is extremely geographically concentrated. More than 45 per cent of the Irish-born population in 1981 were living in the South

East, 18 per cent in the North West and 12 per cent in the West Midlands. The table based on the 1966 census indicates the huge differentials between the Irish born and those born in England and Wales in terms of occupations.



There are 38 Irish prisoners in British jails

Thirdly, direct British rule in the six North East counties of Ireland maintains, and is bolstered by, a grotesque level of discrimination against the nationalist people of these six counties. A study from Queen's University Belfast in *Republican News* (8 January, 1987)

shows that the unemployment for 'non-catholics' in the six counties is 12.4 per cent. This is just 1.1 per cent above the average rate of unemployment for 'Great Britain'. But the rate of unemployment for catholic men in the six counties was a staggering 30.2 per cent — nearly three times the British level.

Only the social conditions which British society imposes on the Black communities is comparable to the results of British colonial rule for the nationalist areas of West Belfast, Derry and so on.

An analysis of British society must take into account Britain's relation to Ireland, not only for British politics, but also for British social structure.

One result of the exposure of the anti-Irish frameups in the cases of the Birmingham 6, the Guildford 4, and others will be to encourage the Irish in Britain — whom the frame-ups and the Prevention of Terrorism Act were designed to intimidate — to increasingly make their presence felt.

Redmond O'Neill

Inside the unions

NUT fight hots up

KENNETH BAKER'S Bill to abolish the negotiating rights of 400,000 teachers looks set to become law by the beginning of March. The Bill has gone through the House of Lords with only one minor amendment.

Inside the union demands are growing for a one-day national strike. Throughout the country local teacher associations — branches of the NUT — have been holding special meetings and have passed resolutions to this effect: from Leeds to Trafford in Manchester to Suffolk. In London, the bulk of associations have also endorsed the call.

Such an action would be a major blow to the Tory government's plans. It would be the launching pad to a continuing campaign of resistance to any imposition of conditions under provisions of the legislation and ultimately for its repeal. It would be a focus for a campaign of support by the wider labour movement and by parents.

By Bernard Regan, Suspended National Executive Member and ILTA Officer, (personal capacity)

A report in the *Observer* on 1 February by Judith Judd said that the union leaders were considering stepping up the action. Up till now the leadership of the NUT has insisted that the campaign against Baker should be a low profile one concentrating on writing to MPs and petitioning Margaret Thatcher. These suggestions were to be coupled with an appeal to one of the European courts to protest at the removal of our democratic rights.

When the House of Lords adopted the Baker proposals without amendment and the European court dismissed the case of the GCHQ workers the bankruptcy of these ideas became clear for all to see.

Although protesting that the NUT is a 'non-political' union, the Kinnockites who lead it have been trying to sell the idea that teachers should hang on and wait for the next general election when all will be put right. The fluctuations in the opinion polls however make this an equally dubious approach in the eyes of the mass of the members.

Even if Labour is returned at the election, a real campaign of resistance to the Baker Bill today will be the best way to ensure that its repeal is high on the Labour government's agenda. But instead of mapping out such a strategy, the leadership of the NUT has turned on the centre of resistance to the Baker Bill today — the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA).

Fifty members of the ILTA council, which represents 13,500 NUT members in the Inner London Education Authority area have been suspended from the union for organising a one-day strike against the Baker Bill. On 13 January, this year 6000 ILTA members took strike action despite threats from their employers and Fred Jarvis, NUT general secretary. Some 3000 marched through the centre of London on the coldest day of the century.

The mass meeting which followed the march voted unanimously for further action. The local associations pay action conference (LAPAC) meeting on Saturday 31 January fixed 5 March for the action.

Activists inside the NUT will be stepping up pressure on the leadership to call official national action and to immediately and unconditionally reinstate the whole of the ILTA council including the seven suspended officers.

The ILTA Defence Campaign received a boost last week when Peter Heathfield, NUM general secretary, added his name to the call for ILTA's reinstatement alongside that of the Campaign Group of Labor MPs, Silentnight strikers, Wapping print workers and others.

The fight to defend ILTA is an important one. When leading Broad Left supporter, Don Winters, treasurer of the NUT starts, using Margaret Thatcher's expression 'the enemy within' to describe critics of the executive then it is clear that some in the union are hoping that the ILTA leadership will be expelled.

● Messages of support to ILTA Defence Campaign, 25 John Campbell Road, London N16. Copies should be sent to Fred Jarvis, NUT General Secretary, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, WCI.

	Born in Ireland	Born in England and Wales
Professional workers	1.0%	3.1%
Employers and Managers	3.6%	8.3%
Non-Manual	13.2%	22.1%
Skilled Manual	36.5%	39.9%
Semi-skilled Manual	19.7%	15.7%
Unskilled Manual	24.8%	9.9%

Labour's women's organisation

AN article in your paper of 23 Jan has been forwarded to me in which you give a misleading and factually incorrect account of a meeting of the National Committee of Labour Women (NCLW) which considered reorganisation.

You write as if the NCLW is under some sort of obligation to accept without question the decisions of the WAC AGM. How many women's sections, councils and trade unions were officially represented at that gathering?

The North West Region Women's Committee has made proposals which disagree on some points with WAC. For example we are opposed to the abstract allocation of a proportion of votes (50-50), which takes no account of the level of active participation and is no incentive to build the Labour women's organisation. The decision to include both proposals concerning the election of the NLWC, ie either at Regional or National Conference, was done because although the national conference may have agreed to the change, all but London in the Regions haven't. This isn't the case of a new right but of actually removing a right already

enjoyed by the regions. It would be undemocratic therefore not to report their opposition.

Your comment that regional conferences are less representative than national conference only reveals the ignorance of both yourself and your informant. The total number of delegates notified to National Conference was 427, the total number in the Regions was 1,227. You report that supporters of Marxist ideas have been elected in some cases by these actually more representative conferences. Perhaps it's just that the working class women in the North West, for example, place more importance on fighting nursery closures, supporting industrial disputes,

fighting racist immigration legislation and a determination to build an active campaigning women's organisation than they do on the question of the election of the five seats on the NEC.

Please produce your evidence that *Militant* historically opposed the Labour women's organisation or stop repeating the old lie.

At the meeting you refer to, the initial timetable proposed by an officer was rejected! It was felt that a minimum of three months would be necessary for a thorough discussion. You appear to believe that the quicker the consultation, ie the fewer involved and the less time for thought, the more successful you would be in getting your

proposals adopted. You're probably right. You say 'time is no guarantee that the trade union rank and file will be consulted'. That's true but lack of time will guarantee that they aren't — and then the responsibility would rest not with trade union bureaucrats who may be afraid to take the issue to their rank and file but with the NLWC.

Finally, you say *Militant* should no longer be supported as a section of the real left. Neither the right wing, nor much more importantly, the working class is likely to take the slightest notice of you.

Margaret Creear
● Socialist Action will be replying to Margaret Creear's letter in our next issue.

Democracy in the NUS

WE are writing to you in the interests of democracy and debate in the student movement.

On 24 January 1987 Campaign Student held a meeting to prepare for the National Organisation of Labour Students conference in February. The meeting was broken up by members of Socialist Students in NOLS, led by Socialist Organiser supporters. They flooded the meeting demanding votes, attempted to

scrap proposals on candidates, shouted speakers down — including the chair — throughout the meeting. One visitor, not even a student, proposed to delete a commitment to a democratic, secular Palestine from Campaign Student's platform for candidates in elections. SSiN even accused Campaign Student supporters of being sectarian for refusing to allow them to outvote us in our own meeting!

The meeting was forced to close with no vote taken, and Campaign Student was prevented from adopting criteria for

endorsing candidates in NOLS and NUS elections.

Clearly it is indefensible that any organisation in the labour movement such as SSiN should use these gangster tactics to prevent a current with which it disagrees from organising.

Campaign Student's aims are to build support for the self-organisation and the demands of women and black people, against all witch hunts of socialists from the Labour Party, for lesbian and gay rights, for British withdrawal from Ireland and for a united Ireland, for removal of

all US bases from Britain, for breaking all links with apartheid, for a democratic secular Palestine and against US aggression in Central America. Campaign Student is fighting for NOLS to affiliate to Labour Left Liaison and its constituent campaigns.

This platform makes Campaign Student a clear alternative to other currents in NOLS and NUS. SSiN's politics are quite counter to the above. For instance, at December NUS conference SSiN opposed the right of women students to elect their own representative onto the NUS executive.

SSiN also oppose the right of the people of Palestine to return to their homeland and support the continued existence of the Zionist state of Israel.

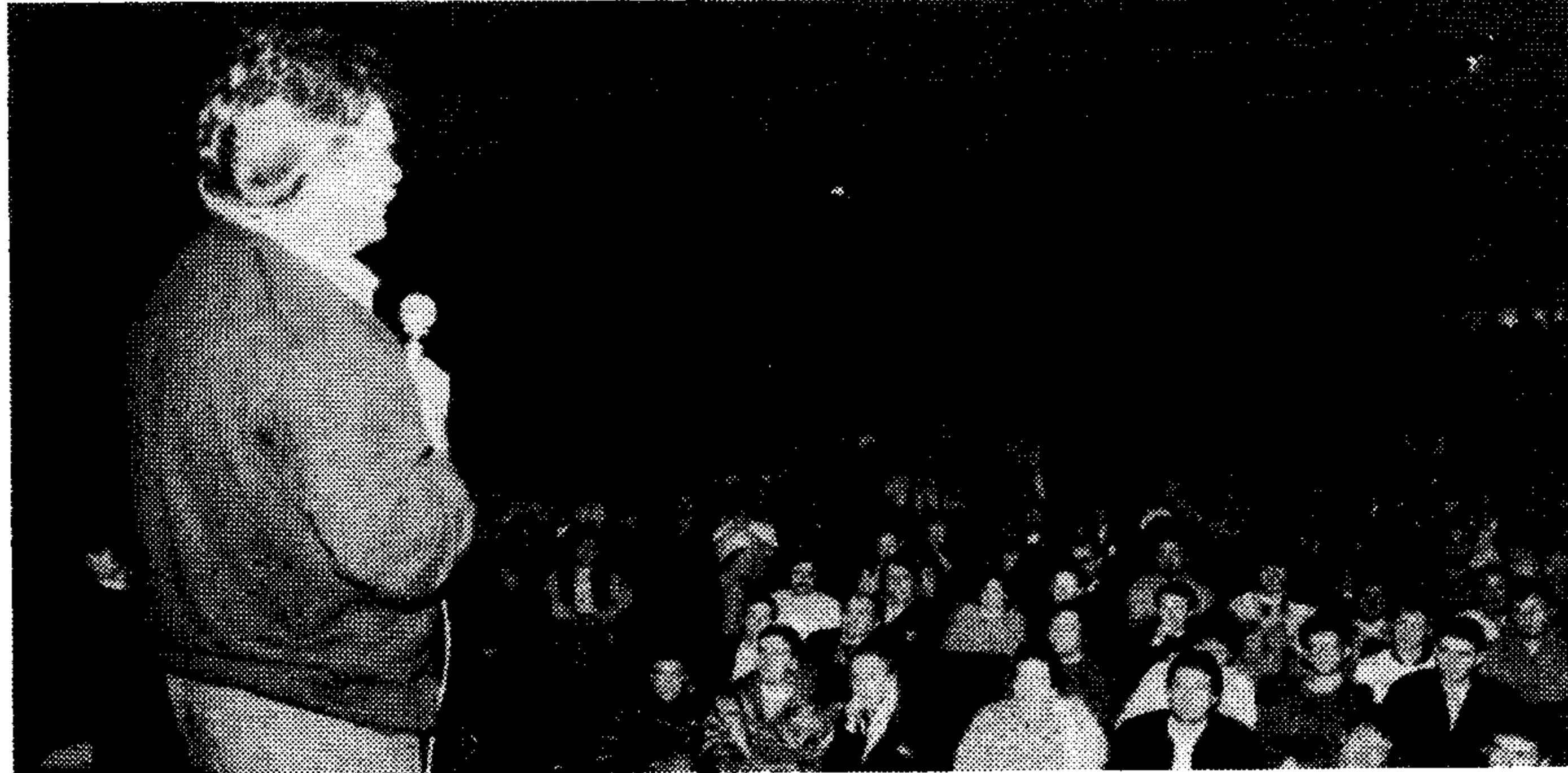
Campaign Student will continue to organise, and assert its right to do so without intimidation, disruption or wrecking. We call on all organisations of the left to publicly support our right to organise in NOLS and NUS. **Kingsley Abrams South Bank Polytechnic, Robin Laney Kings College London, and Polly Vittorini NUS London executive. (Officers of Campaign Student).**

Wapping, miners..

Lessons for the NCU

'NO MATTER what the super-profits of BT are, if the telecom workers lose this one it'll effect our wages and conditions for years to come'. That was the verdict of an NCU rep after London's North Central Internal Branch had voted for all-out strike action. The BT strike is the first major national strike since the end of the miners dispute.

If the stakes are high for the NCU and the labour movement, they are equally high for the employers and the government. Thatcher and BT management are doing everything in their power to keep the Telecom engineers isolated. JIM DREW looks at the lessons of the miners strike and the Wapping dispute for the NCU.



LNCI officer John Moynihan addresses mass meeting

UNDERSTANDING that this is a class battle is vital if the NCU are to map out a strategy to win.

The NCU no more chose a strike against BT than did the NUM or the print unions. BT suspended its own employees for the 'crime' of refusing to work overtime. The union's members had only the choice of seeing the entire ability of the union to regulate the situation at work destroyed or engaging in an all out strike.

Despite their denials the government is right behind the newly privatised BT management — just as it is behind Murdoch's multinational and just as it was behind the nationalised Coal Board. The government needs the BT management to crush the NCU for the success of its entire privatisation programme. Then it can do a deal on an 'orderly' programme of mass redundancies with a house trained business union.

The government enacted its trade union laws in 1980 and 1984 precisely for these situations. They have already been put to use against SOGAT and the NGA to seize those unions funds — the NUM was attacked under earlier legislation. The government and courts will be after the NCU the moment they feel the industrial action is biting.

Both Wapping and the

NCU dispute show the fraud of the government's claim that the core of its trade union proposals were secret ballots and 'giving the unions back to the members'. The print unions have balloted over and over again. They still had their assets seized — and are facing seizure again. The NCU balloted — but that won't stop the courts if they feel it is necessary to intervene. No union is controlled by its members when its funds are held by a judge. Not 'giving the unions over to their members' but 'giving the unions over to the courts' is more accurately the aim of the legislation.

Scabbing is likely to be a key question in the NCU strike, if it develops, just as it was in the miners strike.

To try to break the NCU strike private contractors and first line managers can be roped in, and workers in other unions will be urged to cross picket lines. The media is already pitching in on the side of BT — upholding the 'rule of law' against so-called 'saboteurs' and 'vandals'.

If the BT workers are going to win in the face of such forces, the NCU will have to mobilise its entire arsenal. It was such mobilisation that kept the miners strike going for a year. And it was the same with Wapping.

The mass meetings, the mass pickets, the demonstrations which were

such a hallmark of the miners and Wapping disputes are hated by the bosses. But they keep the strikers united, active and informed. They strengthen the struggle and provide a focus for solidarity by other sections of workers. It is exactly for these reasons that Golding, and the right wing on the executive, are trying to limit self organisation in the strike, preventing democratic organisation of the strike, and blocking picketing.

Solidarity is the key to victory. That's why it's targeted by the Tory anti-union laws. They've even invented a new name for solidarity — 'secondary action'. They have declared it illegal.

The NCU has already been hit by the law on secondary action in 1983 during the fight against the privatisation of BT. Mercury gained an injunction against the POEU, as it then was, and the union leadership threw in the towel. The same mistake must not be made again. Legal or not, solidarity action will be vital if the telecom engineers are going to win.

The labour movement has already begun to express solidarity with the NCU. Golding announced that the union has been given assurances that the

AEU and EETPU will instruct their members not to cross picket lines. At the Wapping anniversary demonstration on 24 January a telecom workers contingent was welcomed and many speakers at the rally expressed their support for the NCU.

This must now be deepened with Labour MPs going on picket lines — and the Labour Party leadership clearly stating that it supports the NCU, in government would settle the NCU's claim in full, and will renationalise the telecoms industry.

The Campaign Group of Labour MPs has already indicated its support for the strikers. The Campaign Group was an important builder of solidarity with the miners.

In a highly profitable industry, which is not going to be closed down in the way the mines have been, the NCU has the chance to win — even if its going to be a tough battle. The union however has a crucial disadvantage the miners did not have. The NUM leadership did everything it could to inspire and aid its members — and was able to keep them out for a year against the greatest assault any trade union has had to face since the general strike of 1926. The NCU under Golding, in contrast, has one of the most right wing leaderships of any British trade union.

Golding's, and the right wing's strategy for the NCU is clear. They want to sell jobs for pay increases — to have small highly paid BT workforce who will have sold away thousands of jobs. Golding has only been stopped in that strategy so far because BT management wanted to try to break the power of the NCU altogether. That is why the demand for a pay deal without strings is so important.

Golding will try to sabotage the strike at every step — and is already doing so. In addition to the immediate battle with BT, NCU members will have to build an alternative to Golding and the right wing inside the union.

The NCU Broad Left, dominated by *Militant* failed in the fight against privatisation. It has been an electoral machine. Its capability is now going to be tested in struggle in the strike, which may well produce divisions within the Broad Left.

But the Broad Left is the only credible alternative to Golding. Part of the fight in the strike must be to build the Broad Left — and turn it from an electoral machine into a real fighting force in the union. This means drawing the lessons not just of this dispute, but of the others that have taken place against this Tory government.



Picket points

● **Leicester** The local union branch has published a 'hotline' to advise the flood of BT's much-lauded worker-shareholders now selling up to finance the strike.

● **Birmingham** Five hundred engineers, clerical staff and supporters marched on 30 January. Chants of 'What do we want? — No strings!' echoed through the city centre.

● **Nottingham** Known as a traditionally 'moderate' area, the NCU is 100 per cent solid. Twice weekly mass meetings are attended by 1000 engineers. Prospective Labour parliamentary candidates have visited picket lines as part of broad labour movement support.

● **North London** Strike headquarters are being shared with the local Wapping printworkers support group after the branch was locked out by BT.

● **North-west London** Letters have been sent to ex-BT employees inviting them to strike-break. Heinz workers have shown support by donating soup to pickets as they did during the miners strike.

● **Western London** Supervisors have been asked to fill in questionnaires after talking to pickets in a management effort to regauge the mood of the rank and file after their disastrous errors of judgement to date.

● **Manchester** Manchester STE voted for all-out strike action if any STE member is suspended. They are refusing to do engineers work, have put a weekly £10 levy on their members, collected £900 at one meeting for the engineers and donated £2000 from funds.

● **East London** Diane Abbott, Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney North has toured picket lines to express support. City NCU has produced a strike bulletin and solidarity sticker.

● **Wapping** Taking advantage of the dispute striking printers succeeded in marooning News International's editorial office through a coordinated call-in on Monday.

● **Newcastle** Media claims of sabotage by telecom strikers in Newcastle have been found to be completely unfounded. The cables were sawn through and reported a full week before the strike started! Needless to say, the gutter press have not printed corrections.

● **'Phone-tapping** NCU general secretary, John Golding's phone is being tapped. He has firm evidence that the state is organising against the strike at the highest level. But Golding didn't complain about the tapping — just that it was being done inefficiently!

● **TOS** An NCU member with a week to go before retirement at the beginning of the dispute went to work. He was given a list of numbers to put 'temporarily out of service'. They included a number of local NCU branch officers. It doesn't just happen to miners!

● **New members** The union is winning new members as a result of the action. Forty in Manchester, 100 in Birmingham; in the Black Country former members of the management 'sweetheart' organisation, EOTA, have come over to the NCU.

In Brief

Caterpillar

SHOP STEWARDS from throughout Scotland have been called to a special conference on Thursday 5 February in solidarity with the Caterpillar factory occupation. Organised by the Scottish TUC, the conference has the backing of Glasgow Trades Council.

It is the latest show of support for the Caterpillar workers who took over the plant in Uddingston, Lanarkshire, to fight against the company's closure decision.

The closure decision has been motivated by the US-based multi-national on the basis of their international corporate plan. It has nothing whatever to do with

people's needs and everything to do with private profit. Two factories in the US are also to be closed.

The Scottish workers have used the occupation as a rallying focus for support for their struggle. They have also taken the time to assemble a 'Pink Panther' tractor which they are giving to famine relief via Bob Geldof.

The workers' determination to feed the world and save their jobs has received support from workers in Caterpillar factories in Europe and the US. American union leaders sent a message of support. Bill Knudsen, chair of the United Auto Workers branch in Iowa where 1300 Caterpillar workers' jobs are threatened marvelled at the Uddingston workers' determination. It shows 'the force of feeling' he said, 'they're real fighters'.

Caterpillar bosses at the firm's headquarters in Illinois are reported to be

baffled by the sit-in. One advisor declared 'We just can't understand why your cops aren't in there busting heads!'

The workers have received backing from leaders of all unions on site. Labour's front bench spokesperson on industry, John Smith, has visited the occupation as has AEU general secretary Gavin Laird.

John Brannan, the convenor said 'We recognise the hardships that may follow when the money dries up, but there is no time limit to our determination. We have nowhere else to go and we have justice on our side.'

Brum

ONE hundred and eleven workers have been locked out by Joseph Fray Ltd in Birmingham.

The workers, members of the TGWU, walked out in November 1986 when two of them were sacked for working-

to-rule in support of a 15 per cent pay claim.

The average gross wage is between £80-£85 for a 39 hour week. Management offered 3.2 per cent — an extra 6p per hour — and demanded they return to work by 5 January. Those that refused were sacked. The dispute is official. Major shareholders include local Tory councillor Anthony Coombs and Neville Bosworth, leader of the Tory group in Birmingham city council.

● For further information phone 021-525 5275. Messages of support and donations to: J Fray Strike Fund, 324 High Street, West Bromwich B170 8DT.

NUM

FOR THE first time since the establishment of the UDM, the Coal Board has given the NUM certain recognition in Nottinghamshire. At Bolsover colliery where the NUM has always maintained majority mem-

bership the Board has recognised the NUM's right to carry out inspection as specified under the Mines and Quarries Act.

Merseyside

BUS DRIVERS sacked by the Chester-based Crossville firm have occupied the Liverpool depot. They were sacked on 26 January after taking strike action on 5 January rather than take out secondhand buses with serious steering problems.

The dispute is the product of the Tory government's deregulation of the bus service which came into effect on 26 October last year. Deregulation involves the dissolution of the old passenger transport executives and the reorganisation of local transport on the principle of all services making a profit.

Many services put out to tender in Liverpool

Tommy Hanley

TOMMY HANLEY was Cardiff branch Secretary of the National Union of Seamen, and a Communist Party member. He died last month in tragic circumstances, aged 47.

Tommy was highly respected in the South Wales labour movement. As well as fighting for the interests of seafarers he gave unstinting support to many different struggles,

Three hundred people attended his funeral, representing many different organisations in South Wales, including the NUM executive, several NUM lodges, the

Labour Party, the Communist Party, Women Against Pit Closures and large numbers of seafarers.

An NUM lodge banner was placed near the coffin in tribute.

Musa Nogan, local seafarers leader, who worked closely with Tommy, said 'Tommy had remarkable qualities. He learned the hard way and was entirely self-taught. He was the most honest person I've met in my life. His commitment to struggle and trade unionism was total. We will miss him. But at the same time, we have to be glad for his life and the example he gave us.'

were snapped up by Crossville who proceeded to put into service buses they'd got from the West Midlands which had been mothballed there after a September '85 report said

they'd especially heavy steering.

The occupation has been supported by strike action by drivers from Crossville's other Merseyside depots.

Socialist ACTION

Wapping After the Police riot

FOLLOWING THE police riot at Wapping on 24 January, when the 25,000 strong demonstration commemorating the first anniversary of the strike was brutally attacked, Rupert Murdoch is now turning to the courts again for a further attack on SOGAT and the NGA. He is suing the two unions for damages for activities at Wapping — which threatens fines of up to £250,000 each.

Subsequently, a meeting of union chapel committees at Rupert Murdoch's News International adopted a motion calling for a 24-hour strike of Fleet St in solidarity with the year long Wapping dispute.

The determination of the strikers has forced this dispute to the attention of wide layers of labour movement activists. With the telecoms strike, a new audience for the strike is opened up.

The police riot on 24 January was part of a decision to try to bring to an end the year long strike.

They hope to end the twice weekly demonstrations to the Wapping plant which have helped maintain the strike. Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has threatened to introduce new powers to prevent these demonstrations taking place. The new Public Order Act which comes into force in April will extend powers of the police to stop such demonstrations on what are in effect political grounds.

Evidence about the police riot continues to come out.

Two press photographers were attacked — one ended up with cuts and bruises to his head, the other, the *Morning Star's* Ernie Greenwood, was hospitalised. The BBC's Kate Adie was attacked as police indiscriminately lashed out at all and sundry.

The riot ran late into the night. At least four local pubs were raided at closing time. At midnight, police

snatch squads were continuing their intimidation.

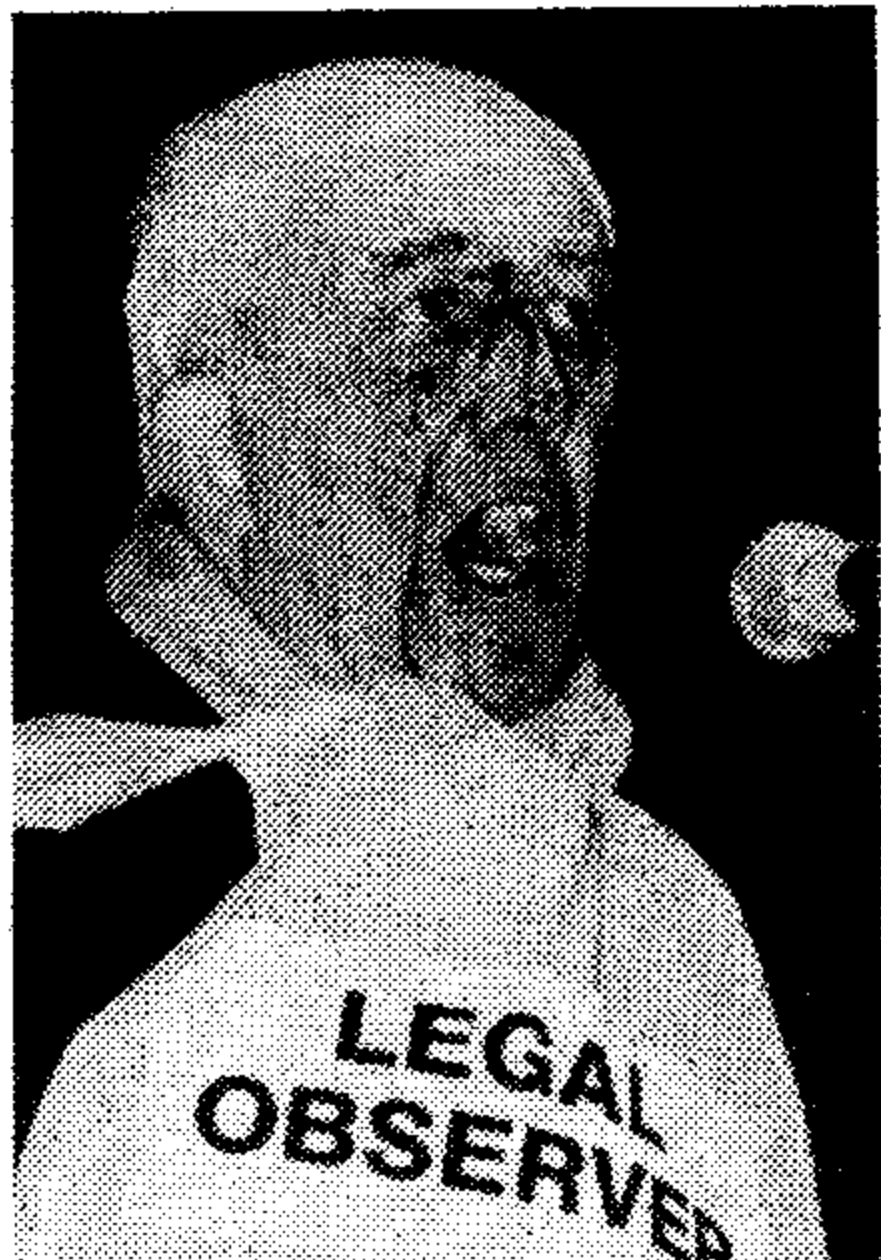
The police riot was roundly denounced by Arthur Scargill who reminded the rally of similar action during the miners strike.

Legal observer John Bowden was another speaker to give evidence of the police violence. Dripping with blood from his face, Bowden held up what was left of his glasses after he'd been given a crack from a truncheon simply for doing his job as a legal observer on behalf of SOGAT. Bowden pointed out that the police violence was all of a part with the imprisonment of Mike Hicks but that nothing the police could do would stop people coming back and exercising their right to demonstrate.

New police tactics included the spraying of indelible red dye on demonstrators who could be subject to arrest perhaps a week later simply for the 'crime' of having been to Wapping.

As the police riot raged in the form of successive forays and charges — now be the cavalry, now by 'gladiators' — speakers at the rally condemned their action.

SOGAT general secretary Brenda Dean started her speech with a condemnation of the police action. 'While we've been stood on this platform' she said 'we've seen the police at the back quite deliberately attacking our people — and for no reason at all'. Dean called on the press to 'take



John Bowden

note of that.

Peter Shore, the local MP and a member of Labour's front bench described the demonstration as 'orderly' and an example of people's 'free right'. Shore gave some background to the police activity pointing to the way they'd disrupted the lives of local residents over the past year.

A report conducted by 25 legal observers present at the march found 'incontrovertible' evidence that police tactics were 'provocative, unlawful and unnecessarily violent'. The legal observers found that the tactics contravened guidelines issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers and 'were extremely dangerous'.

They have called for an independent public enquiry. The call for a public enquiry has also been made by the print unions, the AEU and the Labour Party.

Women Against Murdoch has decided to organise a picket of the Home Office to protest at the police violence and push for a public enquiry.

The aftermath of the police riot is the new return to the courts by Murdoch. SOGAT '82 is already in a financial crisis and Murdoch's aim is to force the unions to withdraw effective backing from the strike. So far the print unions have not mobilised their strength in Fleet Street, where all print workers are facing similar attacks, to win the strike — and other unions have not come to the aid of the NGA and SOGAT. The police riot and new legal attack show just how criminal that policy is. The call for a 24 hour strike in Fleet Street must be used to help turn that around.

ZIRCON

Thatcher's security fraud

'NOTHING to do with security and everything to do with the government's own political embarrassment.' That was how MP Robin Cook reacted to news of the BBC's ban on the Project Zircon film, one of six due to be screened as part of *The Secret Society* series. Cook was right. The unprecedented series of police raids launched since the publication of the *New Statesman* story on the Zircon project are aimed to whip up patriotic frenzy and cover over a potential political embarrassment for the government.

The police have officially raided *New Statesman* and BBC offices as well as Campbell's home, and all of the five other films in the series have been seized. Margaret Thatcher and her government claim this has been done in the interest of 'national security'. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As Campbell's *New Statesman* article points out, material on the spy satellite project is already publicly available. His contribution has been to gather it together in one place.

But as Campbell's article outlines, government embarrassment is two-fold. First: 'GCHQ's directors have, from the beginning, faced a major problem with Zircon — hiding tons of sophisticated electronics that, to operate at all, has to be launched into space and left in orbit — where everyone can see it.'

'So, from 1982 onwards, according to MoD sources it was clear to GCHQ and defence planners that there would have to be a specially devised cover story for public and international consumption. But the cover story plan has already fallen apart.'

'When any object is launched into space, its existence must be announced under the terms of a United Nations treaty. So you can't pretend it doesn't exist. But you can lie or dissemble about its functions, in order to disguise its real job as the Americans do — their spy satellites have been routinely announced as "communications" or "data relay", or just launched without comment ...

Launch

'If Britain launches a satellite and doesn't say what its function is, that's the same as saying it's an intelligence satellite. So any cover story, to be effective, would have to involve Skynet.'

Campbell has exposed how the government intended to spy on the Soviet Union and the Middle East and the fact that these plans have now been foiled. He has also exposed the reasons.

According to Sir Frank Cooper, permanent secretary at the ministry of defence when the Zircon decision was taken: 'the new GCHQ satellite was a matter of "macho politics". Britain's international standing, he explained, was essentially based on trying to stand beside the Americans and maintain a special relationship on intelligence and nuclear policy.'

By Carol Turner

'The intelligence link, now dominated by signals intelligence (sigint) was critical — and to keep up with the Americans in this area, Britain's sigint organisation, GCHQ Cheltenham, badly wanted its own spy satellite. The satellite would, he said, "give us a standing in our relations particularly with the United States and our European allies".'

Revealed

Secondly — and the factor that is causing most public embarrassment to Mrs Thatcher and her cabinet — Campbell revealed that: 'The satellite's existence and huge cost has, till now, remained completely secret from parliament — despite a solemn undertaking in 1982 that, after both Labour and Conservative governments had deceived MPs about £1 billion secretly spent on modernising Polaris nuclear warheads — the Chevaline programme — the Commons public accounts committee would always receive advance information about expenditure on major defence projects ...

'Normally, intelligence projects like Zircon would be paid for by the intelligence budget, now nearly £1 billion a year. About half of this goes to GCHQ, much of it "laundered" by being misleadingly presented to parliament as expenditure on such diverse but innocuous items as "RAF electronics" or "army barracks services". But with Zircon costing an entire year's budget for the whole of GCHQ, it was decided in 1983 that it had to be funded directly inside the real defence budget.'

NEW STATESMAN

Kellner on the politics of city scandals • Arming for survival • Ars longa, Buchan brevis • Labour must be fashionable • Irving Penn • Tarkovsky

SPY IN THE SKY



New Statesman offices were raided by police after this article appeared

'As a result, defence secretary Michael Heseltine had to agree the project at a time when normal defence expenditure was already being cut to meet the costs of the Trident programme. The project was also approved by the top level permanent secretaries committee on the intelligence services (PSIS) and would have then been passed to the prime minister.'

This deceit has left the Tory cabinet red in the face. But Mrs Thatcher has found an unexpected ally in the Zircon debacle in none other than Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock.

From the start, Kinnock has been first on his feet to deplore 'breaches of security' and defend 'the national interest'. He has taken every occasion to attack the Tories for not doing enough to cover up the Zircon fiasco!

Demands

Hugo Young in the *Guardian* of 29 January reports that not only did Kinnock go along with Geoffrey Howe's demand that Labour toe the line for reasons of state security, but he also supported the injunction against Campbell's article (ineffective because it was issued after the *New Statesman* hit the streets) and supported the ban on showing the Zircon film in the House of Commons.

The *Guardian* editorial described Kinnock's comments as 'pitiful'. And pitiful indeed they are. At a time when the Labour leadership could have seiz-

ed the opportunity to expose the real nature of the Tory government Neil Kinnock has chosen to side with Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet.

Methods

What the Zircon affair reveals is *not* the need for tighter security, but the police-state methods of the Thatcher government. Even the Liberal-SDP Alliance have approached the issue from the point of view of freedom of information. David Owen and others have attacked Thatcher for 'deceiving parliament'.

The purpose of the spy satellite is to keep Britain up with the nuclear Jones and enhance its standing among the world imperialist powers. The Tories are doing this at the expense of ordinary people's jobs and freedom — and that unpopular fact is what they are desperate to keep hidden.

Labour's job must be to expose this. To compare the secretive nature of Margaret Thatcher's state with the consistent and growing attacks on trade union rights, on the black communities, on Irish people, and on the women of Greenham Common. To compare the waste of resources on spy satellites with the growing dole queues up and down the country.

Instead of standing in line to support Margaret Thatcher and 'the national interest', Neil Kinnock should have been denouncing her across the land.

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