

Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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NO WITCH HUNT AGAINST THE BLACK SECTION

ON THE EVE of a general election, deputy leader of the Labour Party Roy Hattersley is attempting to orchestrate a witch hunt against Black Section supporters, including prospective parliamentary candidate Bernie Grant and Lambeth council leader Linda Bellos. This move comes in the wake of the recent national executive decision to threaten the Labour Party Black Section with disciplinary action for having the temerity to organise against the oppression of Black people.

In an obvious provocation, Hattersley wrote to Grant and Bellos demanding they cancel their commitment to speak at the Birmingham Labour Party Black Section meeting on Tuesday 7 April. To make sure this bombshell had the desired effect the letter was released to the press. This demand that Labour Party members do not speak in a city is unprecedented.

Together with four other right wing Birmingham MPs — Denis Howell, Jeff Rooker, Terry Davis and Robin Corbett — Hattersley states that 'neither Birmingham District Labour Party nor the city council needs any advice from you or Haringey and Lambeth councils'. To drive the message home, the letter goes on: 'if you do have spare time, you should come to Birmingham to learn how a sensible and progressive council — the largest Labour-led council in Britain — is dealing with this problem (of defending council services) instead of coming to give us the doubtful benefit of your advice'.

In a separate letter, Birmingham council leader Dick Knowles has also called on Grant and Bellos to keep out of the city. 'Such a meeting in Birmingham,' he said, 'will harm the Labour Party.'

Bernie Grant, who is ill in hospital, was unable to attend. Linda Bellos spoke. In a written reply to the Hattersley letter, Bellos pointed out that 'like most members of the Labour Party I am free to address issues outside the constituency where I live.'

She went on that Black people in this country had faced such experiences for centuries. She also pointed out her fear that opposition from Labour spokespeople to Black people meeting together would be construed as their not having the interests of Black communities at heart.

On the eve of the Birmingham Black Section meeting, Linda told Socialist Action: 'This letter signed by five white male Labour MPs is nothing more than an attempt to impose pass laws. It is tactless, arrogant and intimidating. I do not think their decision to send it to Bernie and me and to leak it to the press is a sound or rational judgement.'

Despite threats, the Birmingham Black Section meeting went ahead. The 250-strong audience heard Linda Bellos and prospective parliamentary candidate Sharon Atkin call for support for the Labour Party Black Section. Other speakers included a Walthamstow councillor who is a Black Section supporter and a representative of the Clinton McCorbyn Campaign. Contrary to press reports, Amir Khan also attended the meeting.

This attempt by Hattersley to ban Labour Party members from a city is one of the most grotesque attacks on the right of free speech in the Labour Party ever seen. Roy Hattersley has the perfect right to express his views — and frequently does so. Black party members have an equal right to express theirs. The entire witch hunt against the Labour Party Black Section, including this latest attempt to introduce pass laws for Black party members, must be thrown out.

Socialist ACTION

THE LABOUR movement has been stunned by the collapse in the Labour Party's support since its 1986 conference — and above all in the last weeks. From being four per cent ahead of the Tories in September 1986 Labour has now slumped to being third in the polls. The latest Gallup 9000 poll put Labour two per cent behind the Alliance and nine per cent behind the Tories. The MORI poll in the last *Sunday Times* put Labour 11 per cent behind the Tories.

There must be no illusions about the seriousness of what is at stake in this. The Labour Party was created in the first place because it is impossible to defend trade unions by purely trade union action. A catastrophic loss of political support by Labour will mean a continuously escalating assault on the unions — a real attempt by the bourgeoisie to drive down the trade unions from more than nine million members to perhaps only six to seven million.

An equal assault would be launched by a third Thatcher administration on local government — the second major bastion of the Labour movement in terms of provision of services for the working class, political support, and trade union organisation. Particularly in the inner cities, local councils provision of working class services will be cut drastically if there is a third Thatcher term.

This is the responsibility which faces the left. For literally millions of people a third Thatcher victory, worse still Labour being in third place, would be experienced as, and would be, a disaster. It would mean an assault on the organisations which the working class had built up over decades to protect itself. It would mean increased poverty, a rise in racism, assaults on women, a continuing military build up by Britain. The ramifications of such an election defeat would echo through every part of British society.

There is no way out of that situation, as liberals from *Marxism Today* to the *Guardian* believe, by supporting the Alliance — or an Alliance-Labour bloc. David Owen, and David Steele's, goal is clear. They are not out to strengthen but to weaken all the organisations of the working class.

The tasks that confront the left in that situation are simple. The left does not bear the responsibility for getting the labour movement into this mess. But it is going to have to take the responsibility of leading the labour movement out of it.

The tasks which are to be confronted are very much less glamorous than those that one would prefer to confront. They are not 'building the anti-Kinnock left', 'preparing for power', 'fighting for workers government' or any other of the nostrums fashionable on the left. It is the brutal painstaking task of defending the trade unions, defending the services, Labour councils under attack, and, yes, rebuilding Labour's support. The left has to take the responsibility for defending and rebuilding the labour movement in every way.

What is happening is that an historical truth is becoming an immediate truth. The historical role of the bureaucracy is to defend the bourgeoisie and sabotage the workers movement. It was the role of the TUC in isolating the miners, Dean in sabotaging the Wapping struggle, Golding in selling out the NCU dispute, that broke the key mass struggles that could have defeated the Thatcher government and in doing so broken up its electoral support. It was Kinnock and his supporters which both distanced Labour from these struggles and from the policies, above all on women and black people, which could have won the new sections of the working class, and its allies, to support Labour. The bureaucracy sabotaged not only the direct struggles of the working class but even Labour's electoral chances.

That is what the left now has to overcome. It has to support every struggle against the Thatcher government — because no matter how good, and vital, policies on anything else it is only mass struggle that can defeat the bourgeoisie and its government. It has to develop policies which can rebuild Labour's support and its organisational connection to the working class. It must be the left that leads that long hard struggle to defend and rebuild the labour movement against the attacks that are launched on it.

DEFEND LABOUR

ON WEDNESDAY 25 March the Labour Party national executive committee embarked on witch hunt, with the most unpleasant racist overtones. Under the terms of the resolution reprinted below any Black Section supporter or prospective parliamentary candidate could be up for the chop if they so much as put one foot out of line with the party leadership. The ink was hardly dry before deputy leader Roy Hattersley launched the first attack, by attempting to stop Bernie Grant and Linda Bellos attending a Birmingham Black Section meeting. This witch hunt is potentially the most serious of all that the Labour leadership has yet launched. It must be rebuffed — now, and by every party member.

In its four-year history, the Labour Party Black Section has won widespread recognition as the black voice within the party. It has done so against great odds and despite repeated attempts by the party leadership to thwart its development.

As far as Britain's black communities are concerned, an attack on Black Section is seen as an attack on them. They are quite right.

Since its inception, the Labour leadership has done its best to head off the

development of the Labour Party Black Section as an independent Black voice within the party. They knew that an organisation of Black members would demand a serious struggle by the Labour Party against racism.

By Carol Turner

The first attack by the party leadership was the setting up of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee — now the Black and Asian

Committee. This was presented as a response to the demand of Black party members for action against racism and for equality within the party's own structures. But it denied Black members the right to elect the committee that was supposed to represent them. It naturally didn't work.

The Black Section's campaign against the Black and Asian Advisory Committee exposed and discredited the leadership's attempt to construct a tame alternative to Black self-organisation. This meant the party leadership then either had to begin to move towards accepting Black Sections or choose a pretext to launch a witch hunt against them.

The Labour Party Black Section has already shown itself to be a trenchant fighter both on Black representation within the party and on the main issues confronting Britain's Black communities. That is precisely why such a development as Black Sections was unsafe as far as the party leadership is concerned.

The issue became particularly acute when Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and the rest showed that they were not prepared to take the steps necessary to fight racism in this country and began to join in the Tory attacks on Brent, Haringey and Lambeth councils which have Black leaders and anti-racist policies.

Struggle

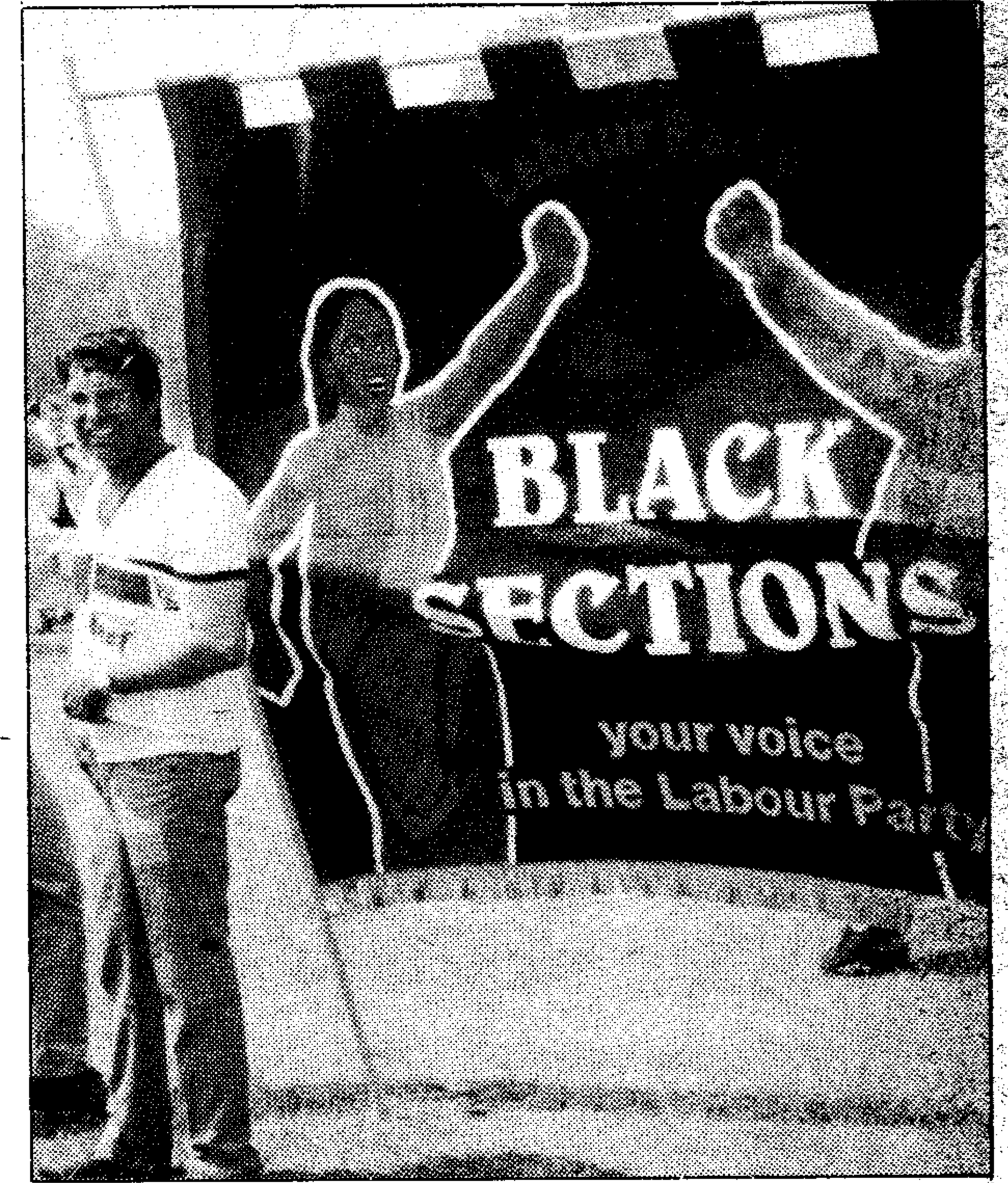
The Tories and their media friends have labelled Black council leaders like Bernie Grant, Merle Amory and Linda Bellos, in the forefront of the struggle against discrimination of all kinds, as Labour's 'looney left'. The Labour Party leadership has gone along with that smear.

The Black community recognises that the Black Section is waging a fight to make the Labour Party genuinely defend the interests of Black people in Britain. When Black Section comes under attack from the party leadership, the Black community knows what fight is going on, and whose side they are on in that fight.

among the Black community, as to whether Black Sections are the right way of organising within the party, and it is easy to understand the arguments on both sides. But it is quite another thing to threaten those who do support them with expulsion, even if they are aiming to secure a reversal of present conference policy which does not support Black Sections.

Therefore the issue confronting the party goes well beyond the Black community and should be taken up by everybody who believes that discussion, debate and argument are an integral part of the democratic process.

After the attack on the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors, the expulsion of *Militant*, the attempt to get rid of Khan and Scally, the criticism of the miners and printworkers in their picketing, the denunciation of the so-called



Black Sections 'have the Black communities behind us'

The Black community rightly see that the Labour Party Black Section is witch hunted as an attempt to deny Black people their right to organise within the party and to demand action against racism.

The fact that the Labour leadership has singled us for special attention,' Black Section press officer Madav Patel told Socialist Action, 'will not go unnoticed by the Black communities.'

'We do not have a separate manifesto or a separate organisation. All our members are members of the Labour Party.'

'What Black Section is doing is proposing policies for incorporation into Labour's manifesto which will mean justice for Black people. The leadership should accept Black Sections just as women's sections are accepted, and allow us to organise ourselves within the framework of the party.'

'Black organisations throughout the country are coming forward to give us their support, and to let the Labour Party leadership know that the party is not their personal property.' If Black Sections supporters

are harassed or expelled it will certainly alienate Black voters.

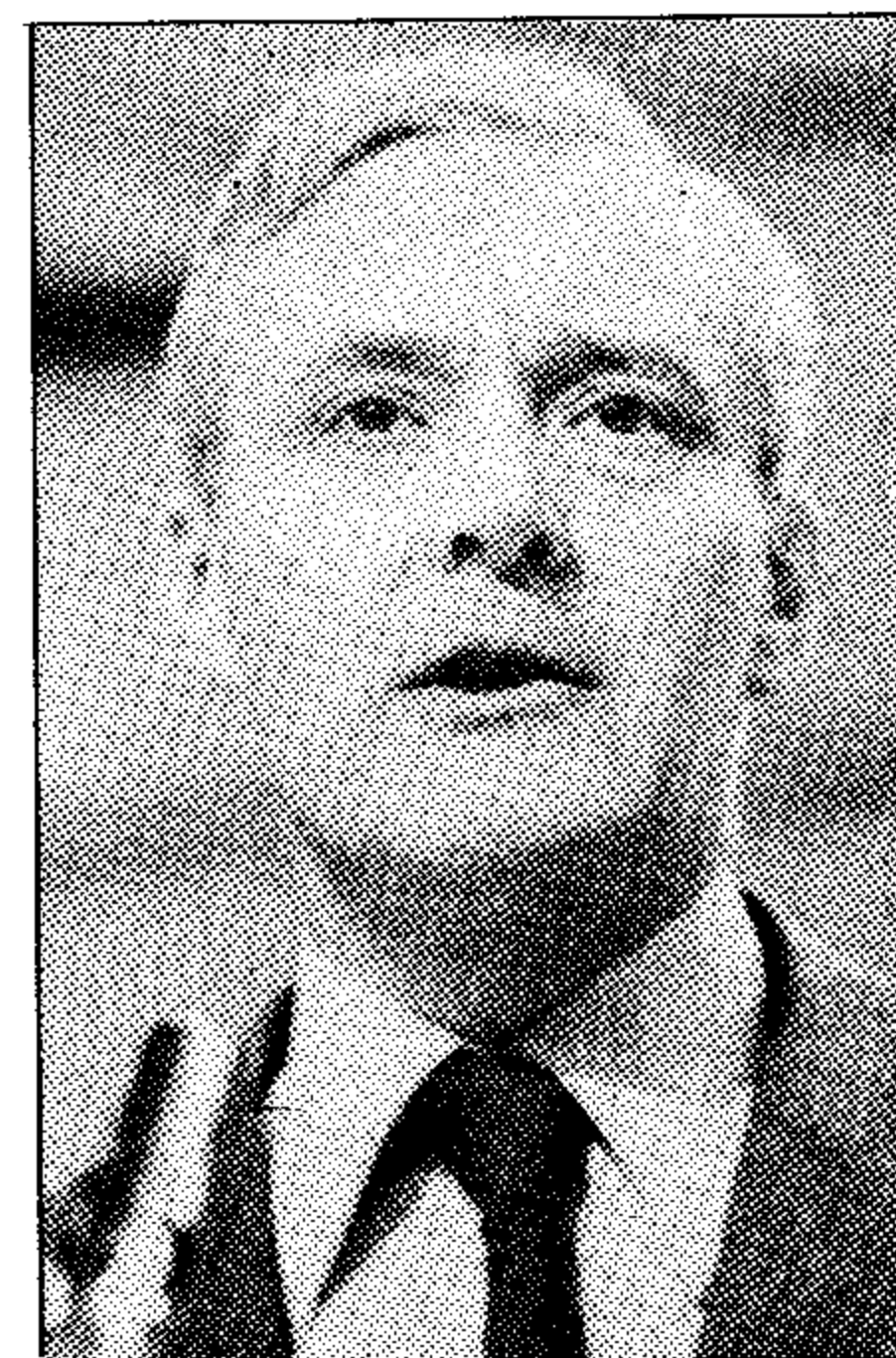
'The NEC must also remember that it is not as easy as it was with *Militant*. They were on their own. But we have the Black communities behind us.'

'For 50 years Black people have supported Labour. At present nearly 90 per cent of Black people vote for the Labour Party. Many hundreds of our activists have sacrificed their energies to achieve Labour victories. In dozens of constituencies, Labour depends on Black votes.'

Strength

'I sincerely hope that the NEC will not try to test the strength of Black anger in this country. We have been the main target for many injustices year after year. Now the Labour Party is seen to be turning on Black people within its own ranks.'

The campaign against the Labour Party Black Section is the most disgraceful of all witch hunts launched by the party leadership. It is not merely deeply damaging to the Labour Party, it is racist to the core.



Tony Benn

THE decision taken by the national executive committee which threatens disciplinary action — and possible expulsion — for those who advocate Black Sections is the latest in a long line of attacks upon free speech and free debate within the Labour Party. Opinions differ, even

among the Black community, as to whether Black Sections are the right way of organising within the party, and it is easy to understand the arguments on both sides. But it is quite another thing to threaten those who do support them with expulsion, even if they are aiming to secure a reversal of present conference policy which does not support Black Sections.

Therefore the issue confronting the party goes well beyond the Black community and should be taken up by everybody who believes that discussion, debate and argument are an integral part of the democratic process.

After the attack on the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors, the expulsion of *Militant*, the attempt to get rid of Khan and Scally, the criticism of the miners and printworkers in their picketing, the denunciation of the so-called

'looney left' councils, and the disgraceful attack upon the advocates of party policy to end discrimination against lesbians and gay men, this latest NEC decision should be a warning to everyone that the NEC wants total obedience to its dictates.

Party members will also notice that this authoritarianism is not applied to those who favour the abandonment of our conference policies on defence and disarmament, or to others who are seeking to reverse our position on reselection.

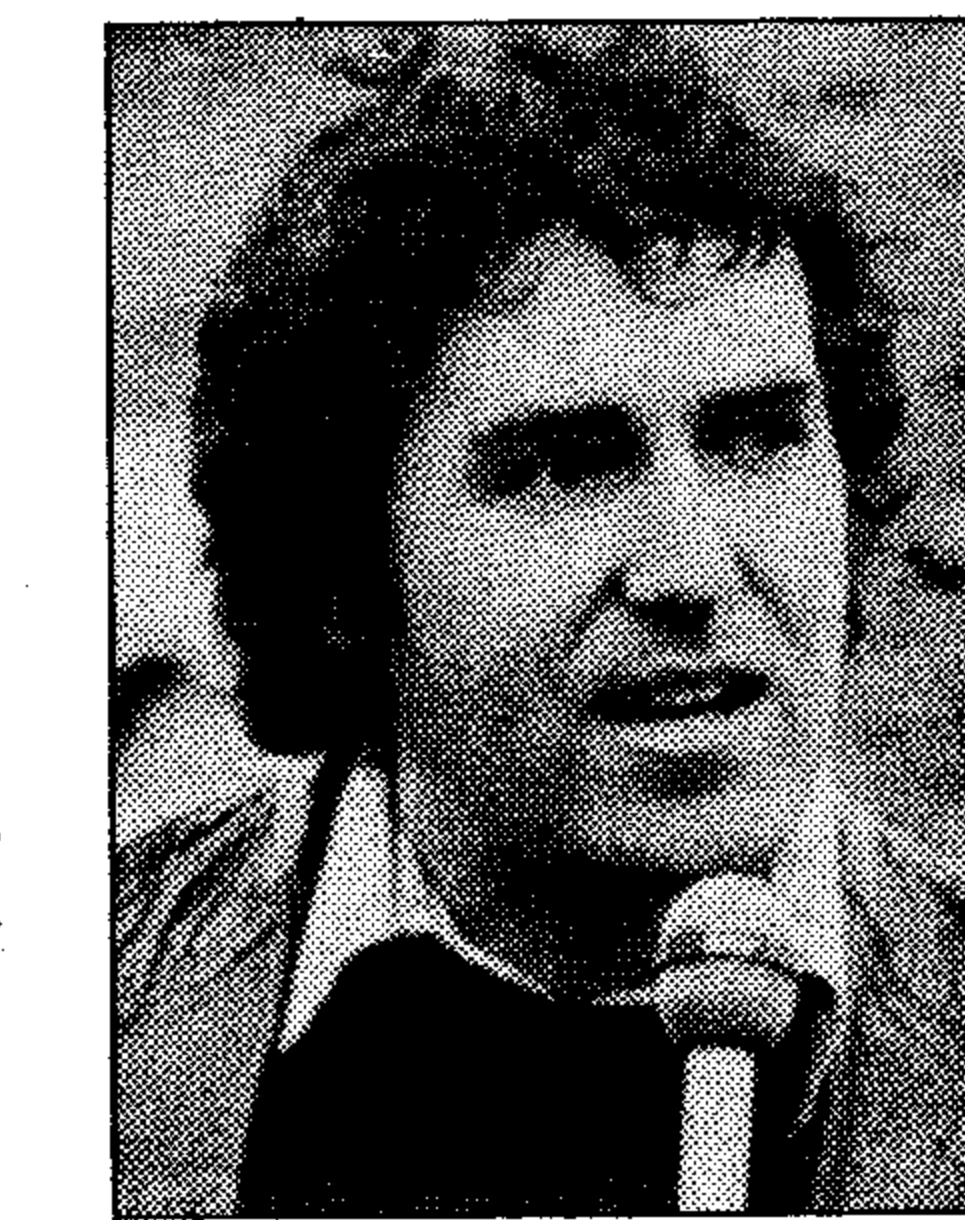
Peter Hain

IN THIS pre-election period there should be self-discipline shown by all sections of the party, starting with the national leadership and the NEC.

While I don't think that some of the reported statements from the Black

Section conference were tactically wise, that is no excuse to attack Black representatives within the party. The way in which the NEC apparently acted on media reports alone is particularly disturbing.

We ought to be campaigning on an anti-racist programme and ensuring that Thatcher's assaults on civil liberties are put at the top of the agenda, not attacks on Black members of the party.



Ann Pettifor

THE Labour leadership and the NEC have systematically disowned Labour's various constituencies — the miners, Black Council leaders in London, the printworkers, and now Black people within the Labour Party.

In addition the NEC has done nothing to pro-

PARTY BLACK SECTION

THE NATIONAL executive's decision to threaten the Labour Party Black Section with disciplinary action for speaking out on behalf of the Black communities in Britain is absolutely unacceptable. We have the same right as every other member of the party to organise and agitate to change Labour's policies. And we will continue to exercise that right regardless of any threats against us.

When Botha issues banning orders on the Black people of South Africa, denying their right to hold meetings and to speak out against injustice, this is greeted with widespread condemnation by the same Labour leaders who have slapped a gagging order on the Labour Party Black Section.

The Labour Party Black Section supports the manifesto of the party, but we do not believe it goes far enough. We want to see anti-racist socialist policies incorporated into Labour's programme.

Black Section fights for a political voice for the Black communities in Britain. We have successfully promoted the self-organisation of Black party members and argued for our representation at all levels of the party. It is because of that success that our supporters and prospective parliamentary candidates are now facing attack by the NEC.

Black Section is the organisation within the party through which Black members hammer out the proposals we want to see Labour adopt. We argue that the Labour Party should be putting forward an anti-imperialist programme and building

solidarity with liberation struggles internationally.

In Britain, Labour should be promoting policies aimed at eradicating racial discrimination in every field: in jobs, in housing, in education, and in the delivery of all local government services. The Labour Party should pledge itself to combatting the systematic harassment of Black communities by the police, and should clearly undertake to scrap the racist immigration laws.

By Marc Wadsworth, Chair, Labour Party Black Section

The Labour Party contains a profusion of groups with formal structures, like the right wing Solidarity group and the Kinnockite Tribune group. All of these act as lobbyists for particular points of view. They do so free from threats of a witch hunt.

Labour MPs participate in a wide variety of caucuses, including with Tory Party MPs and SDP-Liberal Alliance MPs. They do so with the blessing of the party leadership and the full support of the Parliamentary Labour Party.



But Black Section supporters and Black Section prospective parliamentary candidates have been singled out for special treatment. If the NEC is allowed to continue to threaten Black Section with disciplinary action, that will be saying that Black Labour MPs are not going to be accorded the same rights of association that every other MP enjoys.

The NEC resolution adds to the heavy burden that Black prospective Labour candidates already bear. It feeds the racist attacks which have been mounted by the Tory Party and carried out by their cronies in the gutter press.

Protest

This latest witch hunt threat against Black Sections comes in the eve of the general election, when it is absolutely vital that the party marshal all the resources in its power to prevent the return of a Thatcher government. The Black communities in Britain bear the brunt of the



How the Black press views Kinnock's witch hunt against the Labour Party Black Section

severe Tory attacks on the working class. But the Labour Party leadership, as the NEC resolution against Black Section shows, regards oppressed groups as an obstacle to winning the election.

This is a totally wrong strategy for defeating the Tories and the alternative Tory Party, the SDP-Liberal Alliance. It is one which can only lead to eventual defeat.

The Black com-

munities in Britain are among the most loyal of Labour's supporters. They understand that they have nothing to gain from the Tories or the Alliance. But they are not going to sit passively by while the white Labour barons wave big sticks.

The way forward for the Labour Party lies in championing policies which will benefit the working class and the oppressed in this society. That means fighting on the side of the Black communities, not against them.

Socialists in the labour movement must help the Labour Party Black Section resist this NEC's attack on our basic right to organise and express our views. They must do so as vigorously as possible.

That is why we are asking you to let the Labour Party national executive committee know that you are not prepared to allow this attack on Black Section take place. We call on all comrades to support the model resolution in our defence.

Indian Workers Association, Southall

THE Indian Workers Association regrets the Labour Party national executive committee's decision to threaten disciplinary action against the Black Section movement leaders.

As the largest ethnic organisation in Britain (18,000 membership) we have loyally supported and campaigned for the Labour Party in the past 30 years despite the fact that the Labour Party has had no black MPs and no practical and real policies to advance racial equality in our society. Throughout this period we have urged the Labour Party to select Black candidates in safe Labour seats.

Many such seats have been secured for the Labour Party by the massive Black vote, such as in Ealing-Southall constituency. Indeed well over one million Black people voted Labour as the last general election.

Our pleas for Black parliamentary representation help have fallen on deaf ears. The movement has been instrumental in highlighting this problem. The Black Section in its short four-year existence has been able to rejuvenate the hopes and

aspirations of the Black community in Britain.

There are now at least six Black Section members who will become MPs at the next general election. We look forward to working with them and with the wider Black Section movement in spite of our certain differences.

Our bitter experiences in fighting for racial justice has convinced us that only through an organised Black socialist voice working within the labour movement can we achieve equality.

We urge upon the Labour leadership not to plan a programme of expulsions of Black Section members. We are of the opinion that such an approach would have an adverse electoral effect on the Labour Party.

It is clear to the Black community that the Black Section movement within the Labour Party is playing a crucial and significant role in the struggle of the Black community for justice and a fair deal. We urge the Labour leaders not to alienate its most loyal supporters.

Piara Singh Khabra, President, Indian Workers Association, Southall.



Model resolution on Black Sections

This ... is appalled at the resolution passed by the Labour Party NEC on 25 March attacking the Labour Party Black Section and threatening to mount a witch hunt against Black people struggling to establish a political voice. Not only was the resolution based on false information gleaned from the gutter press, but also Labour leaders failed to ask Black party members under attack for their version of events.

Such acts of undermining by the party leadership are viewed as racist by our Black supporters and can only lead to greater

disaffection in inner-city constituencies where the party is dependent on Black votes to win elections. They will also have a negative effect on Labour's vote in every other constituency.

We call on the NEC to revoke its threatened disciplinary action against Black Section supporters. Instead of caving in to racism, the party leadership should mount an assault against this social evil. Black politicians fighting to further socialist policies must be supported and not threatened with expulsions.

mote party policies on lesbians and gays and has deliberately delayed a review of the women's organisation.

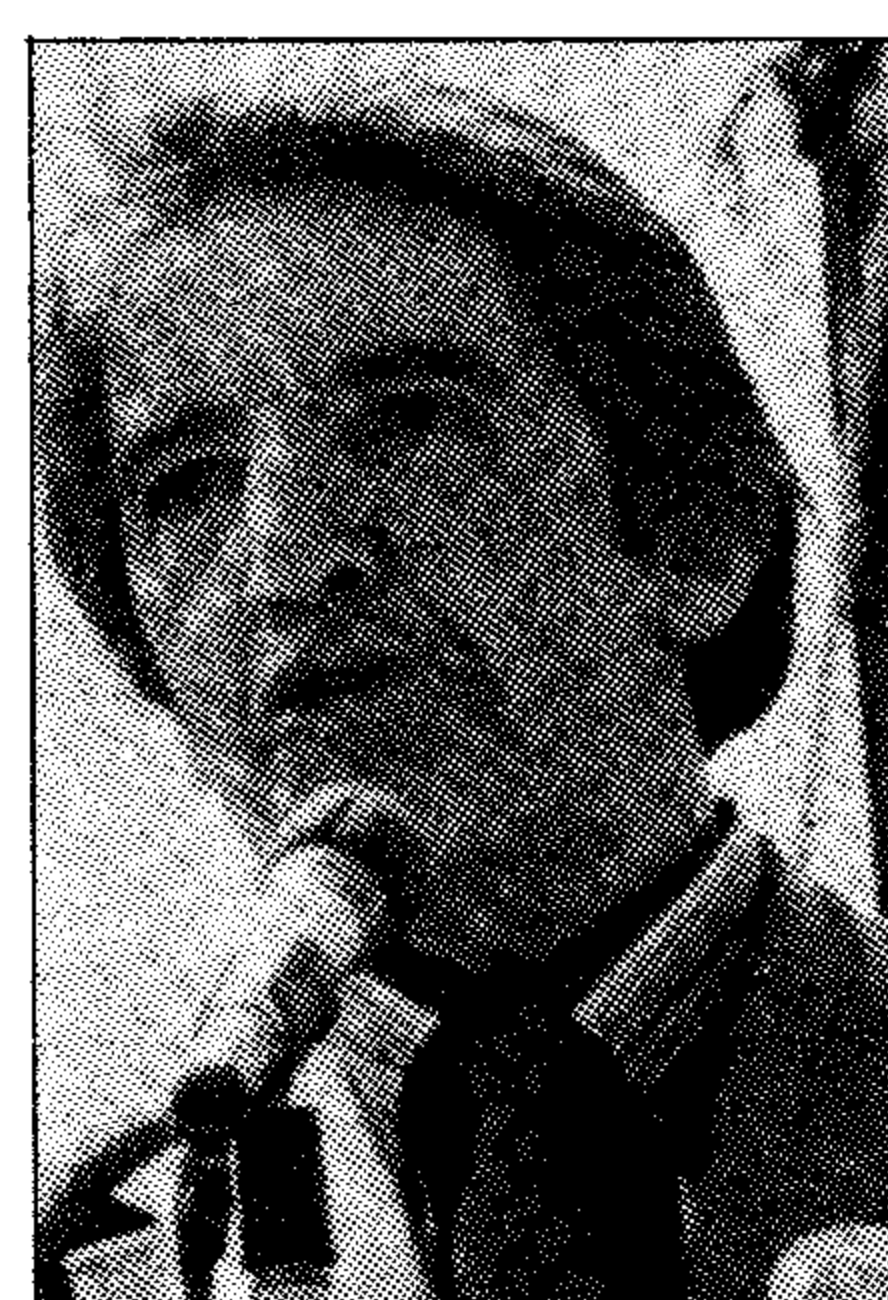
All these show that Labour's real crisis is a crisis of representation. Only when the Labour Party and its leadership becomes representative can we expect to win.

Dennis Skinner

THE NEC's frontal attack on the Labour Party Black Section is a qualitative extension of the witch hunt. It must be resisted.

Black Section has the overwhelming support of Black party members. The NEC has embarked on a very dangerous and damaging course, which will hurt the standing of the party in the Black communities and generally.

Black Sections are not



monolithic. Like women's sections, they cover a wide spectrum of people with different political views, who are combining together because they are black. The NEC's position could easily be extended to women, meeting together as women, or to Irish people if they got together in the party.

Not only is the NEC's attack on the Labour Party

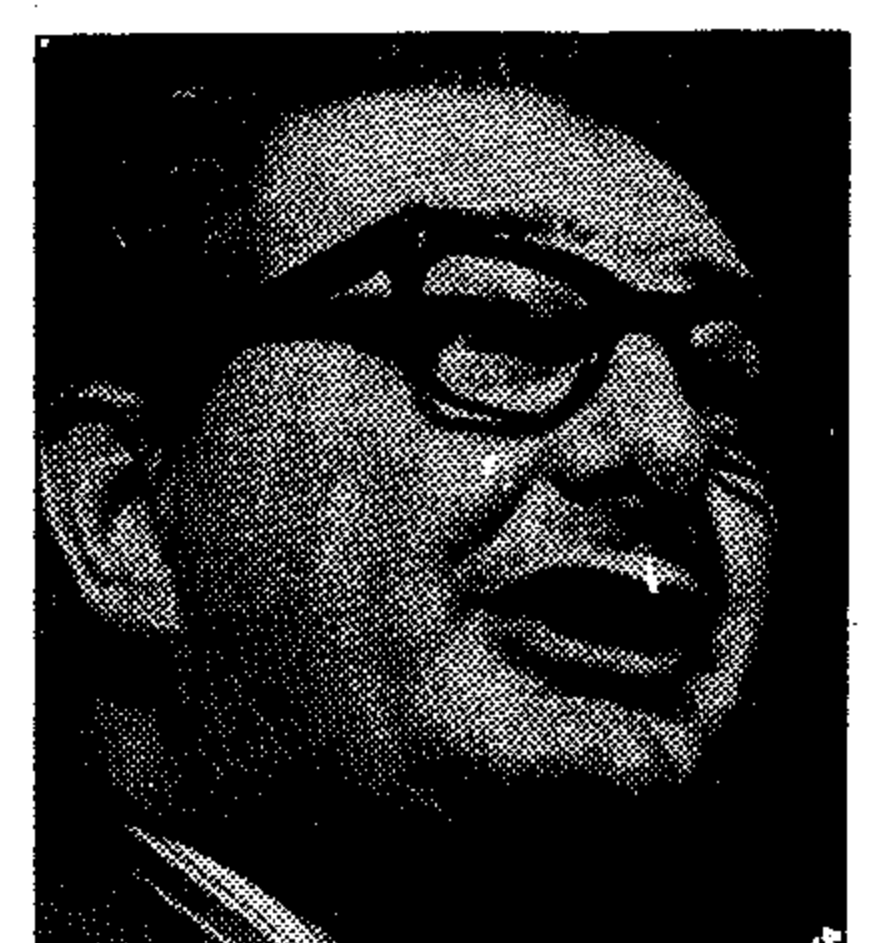
Black Section wrong in principle, it will also adversely affect Labour's chances in the general election. The Liberals and the SDP will be laughing all the way to the polling booths.

The resolution is a license to vet the election addresses of every one of Labour's Black prospective parliamentary candidates. It would mean the Labour leadership going through them with a fine-tooth comb — and that would give the media a green light to do the same, creating more opportunities for their poisonous attacks on Labour.

The NEC has no mandate for this divisive and damaging new witch hunt. Every party member must condemn it and demand it is reversed.

Eric Heffer

LABOUR must stop turning in on itself and must go out and propagate socialist



policies. Leading figures in the party should stop apologising for our policies and stop attacking our own members. Damage has been done to the party's prospects over the last few weeks in particular, but also over a longer period of time beginning with the attack on Liverpool in 1985.

To fail to support the right of groups like lesbians and gay men is a gift to our political enemies. For Pat Hewitt's letter to refer to some of our councillors and local authorities as 'loonie left', as the capitalist press does, is a gift to our

political enemies.

To expel councillors and members for supporting *Militant* or any other left wing newspaper in the party is a gift to our political enemies. And to threaten comrades with disciplinary action, as the NEC did last week, because they are members or supporters of Black Sections is a gift to our political enemies.

It is very wrong for people in the Labour Party to distance themselves from workers that are involved in class struggle and who require solidarity from all sections of the movement. In particular I think it is absolutely wrong for the NEC to have taken the decision to threaten the Labour Party Black Section with disciplinary action.

Obviously, this is going to infuriate Black comrades in the movement whether or not they are supporters of Black Section. It is going to lose Labour considerable support, as well as being

unacceptable. The party should let the leadership know that they are not in favour of this kind of thought control.



Ken Livingstone

THE parliamentary Labour Party is riddled with caucuses. MPs organise themselves on a regional basis, an interest group basis and a political faction basis. The idea that

this only becomes unacceptable when Black MPs meet to discuss how to defend the interests of Black people in Britain is revealing about the deep institutional racism still to be found in the Labour Party.

Even more horrifying is the knowledge that Gwyneth Dunwoody's original proposal was to invalidate the candidature of Black candidates who attended Black Sections conference. One wonders on what basis a person like Gwyneth Dunwoody can still consider she has any role to play in a party committed to socialism and anti-racism, as she appears to be totally opposed to both.

Black Sections remain the best way of involving working class Black people in the Labour Party. Those who seek to block the progress of Black Sections are merely defending their white elitist power base and must be defeated.

In Brief

NSC 'Blood Money' rally

WITH standing room only, 600 packed into Central Hall Westminster to greet the general secretary of the Nicaraguan foreign ministry with chants of 'the contras — no pasarán'.

Alejandro Bendana was speaking at a rally organised by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign to launch a 'Blood Money' campaign against the US funding of the contra terrorists.

The appeal for solidarity was taken up by other speakers. Labour frontbench spokesperson, George Foulkes announced that the party is organising a container of agricultural supplies to Nicaragua. He claimed a future Labour government would campaign against the blocking of aid by the World Bank and that a programme of aid had already been discussed with the Nicaraguan government.

From CND, Joan Ruddock said that the cold war: 'is an obstacle to people seeing what's really going on in Nicaragua'.

NSC is appealing for all-out support for the petition campaign against US contra-



funding and for supporters to organise events and meetings around the country as part of the 'Blood Money' campaign.

● Petitions and leaflets available from NSC, 23 Bevis Street, London N1.

Labour Women for Ireland

THE British presence in Ireland has always affected women in very particular ways, writes KATIE FOLEY.

Traditionally women have led many of the struggles against British domination.

I agree with your reporter's view of the Labour Women for Ireland AGM. Particularly with this record of struggle and the solidarity which exists in the women's labour movement in Britain, it was disappointing that only 24 members attended to vote.

For many on the left of British politics the issue of Ireland appears to be just one more way of adding to their 'left' credentials. The issue is frequently presented as an abstract academic debate about which it is necessary only to establish the absolutely

'correct line'.

Such debate by accident or design seems to have the effect of largely excluding women. It is necessary for this not to be repeated in Labour Women for Ireland.

I believe that Labour Women for Ireland should have the ability to overcome these barriers. Through working to broaden its base and involve more women it can add significantly to the campaign for British withdrawal by building on the very considerable potential amongst women in the British labour movement.

I hope that this is the direction that the newly-elected LWI steering group will be moving in. I would hope also that women throughout the campaign will become active in local LWI branches and that next year's AGM will see a significant increase in the number of participants.

Rail against apartheid

A PETITION demanding the release of detained South African railway trade unionists has been launched by a Labour Party workplace branch of BR Southern Region.

It will be presented to the South African embassy on 6 May. General secretaries of the NUR, ASLEF and TSSA have been asked to

hand it in, and there will be a demonstration outside at the same time.

The petition reads 'We the undersigned condemn the arrest and detentions of the general secretary of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union, Ntai Sello, and other representatives of that union. We demand that they are released and that SARHWU is allowed full trade union rights.'

LPYS in conference

THIS YEAR'S national LPYS conference in Blackpool on 17-20 April, takes place in the run up to a general election. The key task facing the Young Socialists is to decide a strategy capable of mobilising the maximum number of the 6.2 million voters between 18 and 25 to turn out for Labour. Instead everything is on course to re-enact the familiar ritual of voting through the narrow, economic and chauvinistic policies which have separated the LPYS from those thousands of young people brought into struggle over the last four years of Tory rule.

This course has reduced the LPYS to an irrelevance. Its main claim to fame is the rotten attacks its members indulge in from time to time against the left, like Frances Curran's summing up against Black Sections at last year's Labour Party conference.

By Anne Kane

Once again a majority of the 152 resolutions submitted to 1987 conference are full of platitudes and calls to the faithful. They contain no commitment to campaigning action.

Of 11 resolutions on South Africa, only two — from Newark and Horsforth LPYSs — advocate action. Particularly important is the call for the LPYS to support and build the anti-apartheid movement's youth sections and national network.

Carefully separating the resolutions on racism from those on Black Sections has ensured yet another debate on racism devoid of any discussion on a strategy for fighting it which involves black self-organisation. The LPYS's total failure to fight racism has been a focus of attention this year due to its role in attacking the Black Sections and their demand for constitutional recognition.

While Black Sections have spent this year giving a labour movement platform to the struggles of Black people, the LPYS representative on Labour's national executive, Linda Douglas, has involved herself in the unelected and unaccountable Black and Asian Advisory Committee. Not surprisingly conference sees calls for her resignation from this body.

Nonetheless, it is likely that yet again LPYS con-

ference will see Black Sections denounced and, as at the recent London LPYS conference, racism prettified as simply a 'tool of the bosses' rather than something with a material basis in the working class and which pervades the whole structure of the British labour movement.

At the end of an historic year which has seen NUS, the NUM, and the consultative conference of the LCC all adopting policies in support of British withdrawal from Ireland, only three resolutions out of seven unconditionally support British withdrawal or action to stop such abuses as strip-searching.

National LPYS conference is likely to be a

slightly bigger repeat of the recent round of tiny and dispirited regional YS conferences. Nowhere was this clearer than in London. After a year of undaunted and often isolated campaigning by the Black community, which makes up 16 per cent of London's population, London YS conference refused to even discuss resolutions on Black Sections.

This course, advocated as 'bold socialist policies' is not only deeply anti-socialist, it is also hopeless from the point of view of winning young people to vote Labour. It puts the LPYS against, or at best apathetic to, some of the policies most demanded by young people, such as support for the struggles of Black people, for unilateral nuclear disarmament, for women's self-organisation, for campaigning action against apartheid, and for British withdrawal from Ireland.

As a result the LPYS represents no positive alternative to the electoral damage the right is doing by attacking and undermining

left policies.

Two alternatives to this will be clear at LPYS conference. The first is to adopt the course of widening Labour's and the LPYS's popular base through the campaigning policies and alliances fought for by Labour Left Liaison and the Campaign Group.

Labour Left Liaison will be following up last year's campaign by the Black Section on the election of the LPYS place on the NEC by supporting this year's Black Section candidate, Steve Jomoa.

LL's fringe meeting on Saturday evening will bring together speakers from the Black Sections, the Women's Action Committee, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Labour Committee on Ireland. It marks a big step forward in left unity to build the youth section.

It is marred by Youth Fightback's (Socialist Organiser) sectarian decision to run a candidate for the NEC place on the grounds that Steve Jomoa did not pass their positive

vetting. This is another example of how Youth Fightback is increasingly indistinguishable from Militant. Youth Action will take this up with the argument for 'why socialists should support self-determination' at their Sunday fringe meeting.

The other alternative, facing the LPYS is represented by the Sawyer proposals. These are an attempt to destroy the independence of Labour's youth section and strike a blow against the whole left.

While the left must vigorously oppose them — and mandate Labour Party conference delegates to vote against them — any opposition which implies support for the record of the LPYS would be doomed to failure. The model resolution set out below not only argues for opposition to Sawyer, more thoroughly than the LPYS itself, but also for the positive proposals necessary to make the LPYS more representative, such as reserved national committee places for Black youth and young women.

Model resolution on the Sawyer proposals

THIS model submission by CLPs has been endorsed by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Party Black Section, the Labour Women's Action Committee, Socialist Organiser and Socialist Action. All submissions from CLPs must be received by Walworth Road by 22 May.

This (insert name of organisation) notes with alarm the NEC consultation on proposed changes to the party's youth organisation. In particular, this (name of organisation) believes that the consultation period is too short, especially as it coincides with local elections in many constituencies, and possibly a general election. The consultation should be deferred until after the next general election, to give organisations a real opportunity to discuss the proposals.

Regarding the NEC's specific proposals, this (name of organisation) believes that: (a) youth campaign committees would have a valuable role in coordinating campaigning, but their composition and remit must ensure that all members are below 26 and are accountable to their organisations, and that youth campaign committees do not become a substitute for a strong and independent LPYS, nor the LPYS national committee.

(b) (i) trade union youth sections should be encouraged to send delegates to LPYS conference and take a full part in decision making; (ii) it is inappropriate for the National Organisation of Labour Students to have an input into the election of the LPYS representative on the NEC. (c) an 'annual youth conference' could be useful in bringing youth issues to the attention of the wider movement, but it is crucial that the independent policy-making powers of the LPYS Conference be preserved. (d) reducing the age limit to 21 would have a disastrous effect on LPYS activity.

This (name of organisation) further believes that: (i) LPYS Conference, as well as continuing to elect the NEC representative, should elect the LPYS National Committee, which should include reserved places for young black and women members, and (ii) the lower age limit for LPYS membership should be removed.

In conclusion, while Party interest in youth is long overdue, this (name of organisation) believes that the NEC's proposals could remove from the youth section its right to a political voice. Labour should be increasing the influence of young people in the Party, not reducing it.

Black successes in the NUS

EASTER 1987 National Union of Students (NUS) conference saw 100 per cent success for the NUS black caucus — which is open to all black students. All three black caucus candidates were elected onto the NUS executive.

The victory of Pat Younge was particularly significant. He introduced himself as a black caucus candidate supported by the Labour Party Black Section and as an active Labour Party member. He stood on a platform of black self-organisation, increased black representation, and for campaigning action against the Baker Bill. Pat's campaign was a pole of attraction for the left at conference.

The Democratic Left have failed to respond to the upsurge of protest and campaigning by students in response to Tory attacks, international struggle and racist police harassment of black people.

By Polly Vittorini, London NUS executive (personal capacity)

At NUS conference this upsurge expressed itself in decisions to adopt total support for the FSLN in

Nicaragua, to reaffirm the support for the right of women students to elect their own representative on to the national executive, to recognise the black caucus as the legitimate voice of black students, and to commit the NUS to fighting all immigration laws and deportations.

The Democratic Left's line of subordinating campaigning action to Kinnoch's view of how to secure a Labour victory in a general election is at odds with the needs, demands and activities of the

membership of NUS. This is why the Democratic Left lost two elections at conference.

However, the incoming executive offers no changes in the present course. The election results were because, aside from the black caucuses campaign for Pat Younge, no attractive and serious alternative to the Democratic Left was presented.

Alternative

Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) in particular deepened its increasing right wing course. SSiN was the only Labour Party organisation to run a candidate against Pat Younge. SSiN's reaction to a decision by the Socialist Worker Student Societies (SWSS) not to vote for SSiN supporter Simon Pottinger because of his position in support of a Zionist state in Israel was denounced by SSiN as 'anti-semitic'.

Clearly a campaigning alternative is necessary

which, unlike the Democratic Left, does not drop action at the behest of the Labour leadership, which, unlike SWSS, is able to link up with the left in the labour movement around the Campaign Group of MPs, campaigning unions like the NUM, and Labour Left Liaison, and which, unlike SSiN, consistently supports the struggles of national liberation movements, of black people and women, and of the oppressed world wide.

Campaign Student

the only current at conference which, with the black caucus, consistently supported Pat Younge's election, the only current prepared to give a platform to a Palestinian student from Bir-Zeit university along with the General Union of Palestinian Students, is the only political view that can provide this type of alternative. To this end Campaign Student will be standing its own candidates in NOLS and NUS elections next year.



International Marxist Review Vol 2 No 2 (Spring 1987) is out now. Price £2.50, material includes 'Women and work in Western Europe', the Italian workers movement, the crisis in the PLO, anti-apartheid struggles, and more. IMR is available from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Hold the line on lesbian and gay rights!

THE FIGHTBACK has begun to stop the Labour leadership ditching its conference commitment to lesbian and gay rights. It is being recognised that preventing a betrayal of lesbians and gay men, as they confront massive social and state repression, is not merely a question of the interests of one section of the community. It is also the front line for all those who have fought for the Labour Party to represent the interests of the oppressed.

The current disciplinary threat to the Black Sections from the national executive committee of the Labour Party is clear enough evidence of the intentions of Kinnock. A united response is crucial.

Blame

In the days following the Hewitt letter blaming the Greenwich by-election defeat on the party's lesbian and gay rights policy, a mass panic swept through the Labour establishment. All over the party, anything remotely connected with the rights of lesbians and gay men was being quietly erased from the records: meetings were cancelled, existing policies denied. There was the beginning of a hysterical backlash even at grass roots level in some constituency parties.

But the resistance was also organised rapidly. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights mobilised its supporters to remind the party of the facts and to stem the tide of panic. These facts were: that lesbian and gay rights were the policy of the party, over-

whelmingly carried at conference and endorsed by the whole national executive, including Neil Kinnock! That everywhere the party has campaigned honestly, it has done well, and that to retreat will not prevent the opposition parties using the issue to attack Labour. On the contrary, it will only encourage them, and then Labour will be routed.

**By Peter Purton,
LCLGR (personal
capacity)**

Crucially, though, it is the clear understanding built up through the alliances made between lesbians and gay men, the Black Section, women's rights campaigners and other socialists that we have a common interest, and that an attack on one section will only be the taster for an assault on the others, that has enabled us to organise a powerful response.

Through Labour Left Liaison, emergency resolutions are being organised for the annual general meeting of the London Labour Party and lesbian

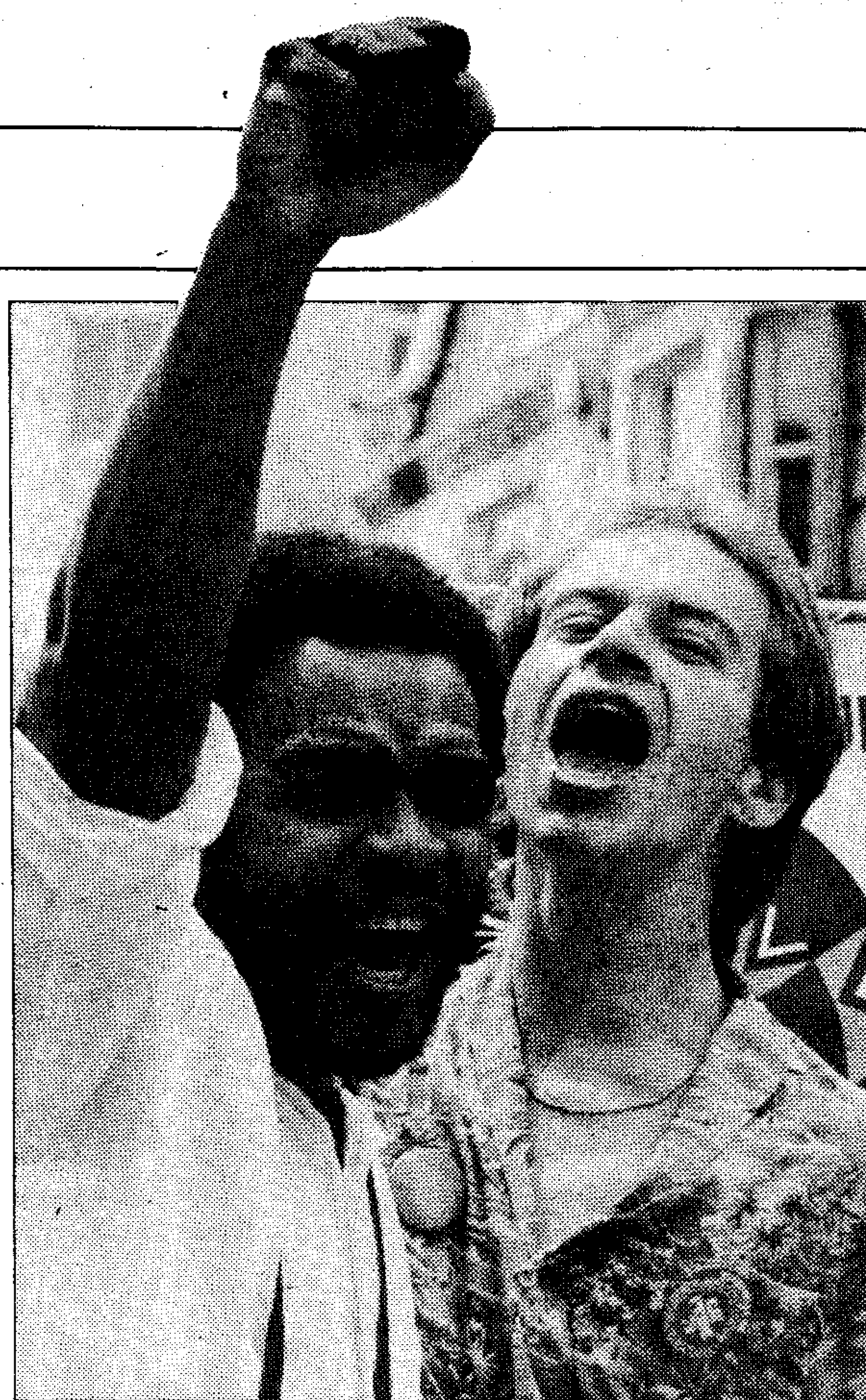
and gay activists are mobilising in large numbers in order to make a big impact on the conference. But precisely in order to challenge the accusation that the issue is a 'London problem', a national response is required.

Resolutions have already been despatched from Birmingham and Bristol to Walworth Rd and the left everywhere must ensure it does the same. Press statements and statements signed by MPs and parliamentary candidates must be issued in order to break the growing attempt to keep lesbian and gay rights out of the public eye, and to reassure our communities that the actions of the leader do not reflect the views of the party as a whole.

Above all, the labour movement must turn out public support of lesbian and gay struggles with its banners and contingents: the 'Stop the Backlash' demonstration in Haringey on 2 May is the next opportunity.

Alliance

LCLGR has campaigned for many years to place lesbian and gay rights on the agenda of the labour movement. With the firm support of the left, and the alliances built with the Black Section and Womens Action Committee, we have no intention of allowing anyone to knock us off again.



Support Pride '87

IN VIEW of the mounting hostility towards lesbians and gay men, the Pride '87 steering committee is appealing for support from predominantly heterosexual organisations. The slogan for this year's Lesbian and Gay Pride march on 27 June is 'Equal rights for all — defend lesbian and gay rights'. Please pass the following resolution at your trade union branches and Labour Parties. More information is available from Mary Harper, 11 Rushton House, Albion Avenue, London SW8 2SR (01-720 7139).

This ... rejects the attempts of the gutter press, bigots and right-wing politicians to make use of the fear of Aids to whip up hostility against gay men. We are deeply concerned that the denial of rights to lesbians and gay men, and the increasingly common calls for greater repression are now being justified as legitimate 'public health' measures. In view of the mounting violence, discrimination and hatred being directed against lesbians and gays we believe that it is imperative for this ... to stand up and be counted. We support the initiative of the Lesbian and Gay Pride Weeks Committee in working for the most widespread attendance of working people's organisations at the Pride Carnival parade. We support the organisers' standpoint of Equality for All — Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights and we resolve to send our banner and as many of our members as possible to march in solidarity behind the lesbian and gay organisations in London on 27 June, 1987.

NEC threatens Birmingham council black caucus

THE NATIONAL executive committee of the Labour Party is threatening left wing councillors and party members in Birmingham with expulsion. The threat comes after the March NEC meeting which voted against the Birmingham Summerfield Group joining the register of non-affiliated organisations, which was established by the 1982 party conference. Of the 58 organisations on the list several are local left wing groupings, including Tribune, Campaign Group and Labour Briefing supporters.

According to the *Birmingham Post* of 26 March a spokesperson for the NEC said: 'By declaring the Summerfield Group ineligible for affiliation, anyone who continues to belong to the group is ineligible for membership of the Labour Party.'

The Summerfield Group was formed in the run-up to the Birmingham city council Labour group AGM in May 1986 by black councillors and prospective councillors in Birmingham, Black Section and a number of their white colleagues. Its aim was to fight for the implementation of existing district party policy and for greater democracy in the Labour group.

The response of the right wing leadership was a campaign of intimidation

using the local press and the threat of disciplinary measures. Much of this campaign was explicitly racist, portraying the Summerfield Group as part of Labour's 'loonie left'. The campaign of vilification against black councillor Phil Murphy is no different to that against Bernie Grant.

By Mick Archer

Unfortunately the response of many of the soft left was to beat a retreat in face of this offensive. Confronted with the prospect of losing their positions as chairs and vice chairs of committees, they made a series of shabby compromises which just encouraged further attacks.

The NEC's decision is



After the successful reinstatement campaign for Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, the right wing continue to attack Black party members in Birmingham.

the inevitable result of these. But the decision also shows just what steps the Kinnock leadership is prepared to take to defend right wing leadership at a local level.

For the second year running the Birmingham District Labour Party is now faced with the prospect of a local election campaign based on a manifesto imposed over its head. In Sel-

ly Oak the constituency is in a protracted struggle with the NEC over its right to recruit Bob Whitehead.

In Small Heath the NEC has endorsed local election candidates although the DLP has decided that short-list and selection meetings should be rerun. They now look set to do the same in the Handsworth ward of Perry Barr.

Meanwhile in Sparkbrook the right has taken new measures to shore up its position after the Khan and Scally victory. As Gina Khan, now national vice-chair of the Black Section, explains: 'It's a witch hunt against the left as a whole, including Black people.'

'In Sparkbrook where the leadership feels threatened after the events of last year, the right is on the offensive. While the left has held onto the Sparkhill ward, the right is making sure it has overall control of the GMC.'

'It has packed the annual meeting of the women's section and it has increased the number of right wing trade union delegates on the GMC.'

'There are now seven EETPU delegates from one family. Whilst they oppose the formation of Black Sections because they say they are divisive, they are promoting every ethnic division in the community in order to maintain power.'

The Summerfield Group will next meet on 25 April when a response to the NEC decision will be discussed.

Broadwater Farm a racist frame-up

THE LIFE sentences dished out to Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite in the Broadwater Farm trials were a travesty of justice. They were the state's revenge against a Black community which defended itself against police harassment. Their outcome was a racist frame-up.

The only 'evidence' against the three were their own 'confessions' — in the case of Winston Silcott's, an *unsigned* one. Irregularities dominated the trials. Justice Hodgson, the trial judge, not only acquitted three other juvenile defendants but also strongly rebuked the police for unlawful behaviour in extracting their 'confessions'.

The only police witness admitted to the court that his evidence had been 'dotted with lies'. He had received inducements — including money and jobs — from the police. A black judge from the United States who observed the trial said that in her opinion the verdict was a miscarriage of justice, which 'cannot be said to be supported by evidence presented during the trials'.

The trial was the occasion for a carnival of racism. One police officer was quoted by the *Guardian* of 20 March as admitting openly to being anti-Black. Another, described as a 'lower-ranking officer', threatened that in a similar situation to the Broadwater Farm events in the future 'you might find some of these coloured youths (sic) happen to jump off balconies'. A third complained 'these coloured make notoriously bad witnesses'.

Campaign

But the police bark was nothing compared to their bite. It was revealed during the trial that the police had planned their riot at Broadwater Farm for over a year. Commander Polkinghorne who was in charge of the control room at Wood Green police station admitted under oath that five riot vans might have arrived on the estate before the 'trouble' began at 7.05 pm on that night of October 1985 when Cynthia Jarrett had died. The police have made no charges in relation to her death, but over the next two days 9000 police were turned on the community.

The full fury of the police continued to be vented on the community in the weeks following as 343 people were arrested. The family of one of the juveniles acquitted of affray described the behaviour of the investigating police as being 'like German Nazis'. They told how the police 'came in our house 30-strong waving crowbars'.

The gutter press played the 'race card' for all it was worth. The *Sun* captioned a photo of Winston Silcott 'Face of Monster'. In a headline, it described PC Blacklock as the 'Victim of Savages'. The *Daily Star* headline proclaimed 'Hooded Animals out for blood'. Its report read: 'The series of chilling pictures on the right show the Beasts of Broadwater Farm moving in for the kill. They are led by an animal called Winston Silcott.'

Fast on the heels of the verdicts, the Tories announced a review of the Bail Act and of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. A debate in the House of Commons on the reintroduction of corporal and capital punishment saw over 30 more Tory 'hangers and floggers' emerge since the last debate of this kind in 1983.

Process

Strengthening and streamlining the powers of the state is a central part of the Tory anti-working class offensive. They have used the opportunity of the Broadwater Farm trials first to whip up a climate of racism and then to float the idea of even more draconian powers for the police.

Throughout the state attacks on Broadwater Farm which followed the death of Cynthia Jarrett, the Labour leadership has remained silent. Far from protesting the trial verdicts, Labour leaders called for an investigation of the judge who had released Winston Silcott on bail prior to the events on Broadwater Farm. And the Labour Party leadership have not only gone along with the Tory racist backlash against Black council leaders, but have even introduced a witch hunt against Labour Party Black Section.

There are still 43 more people to be tried as a result of the uprisings on Broadwater Farm: 7 for alleged riot and 36 for alleged affray. Of the 27 cases heard before the murder trials, 11 people have been convicted, 7 acquitted and 2 sent for retrial. It is expected that the remaining trials will take six months.

What has happened to residents of Broadwater Farm at the hands of the police and the courts is an extension of the treatment meted out to Britain's Black communities everyday by the state. The whole labour movement must stand up against this racist onslaught and defend Broadwater Farm — starting with support for a public enquiry into the police riot there and for the appeal against the vengeance sentences given to Silcott, Raghip and Braithwaite.

LCC explodes!

LABOUR
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THE CRISIS which had been developing publicly for some months in the 'soft left' exploded last week. The first signs of this had come in a polemic which had been developing in the pages of *Tribune* since the last party conference.

By John Ross

On one side Ken Livingstone had been arguing that the task was to unite the left to fight against the right wing. Policies advocated as necessitating such unity included opposition to all the expulsions taking place in the party — including both in the Liverpool party and that of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally; defence of the present mandatory system of reselection of MPs; defence of the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament; support for the constitutional demands of the Women's Action Committee and Labour Party Black Section; support for a pledge to British withdrawal from Ireland during the lifetime of a Labour government.

Livingstone's statement

The following statement was released on 8 April. Copies are available from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

THE most urgent task confronting Labour Party members is the election of a Labour government. Such a goal requires the presentation of clear left wing policies.

For some time now I have made it a priority to campaign for unity on the left. The split between the Campaign and Tribune groups in Parliament and between the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and Labour Left Liaison in the constituencies has only benefitted the right. There has been no effective pressure in the constituencies to stop the drift to the right on economic policy and the constant watering down of policy on nuclear disarmament. As in the Falklands war so in the zircon scandal we have sometimes seemed to be trying to surpass the Tories in jingoism. As the press moved to attack Labour Councils, homosexuals and black organisations some in the Labour leadership have chosen to run with the hounds rather than defend the Socialist hares. Such an approach is electorally deeply damaging.

Unity on the left and in the party can only be achieved through defence of party democracy and principled policies.

Irrespective of the outcome of the next election the right are aiming for a further shift away from socialist policies and the concept of building a popular

campaigning party. They have indicated an intention to undermine the modest accountability provided by the present system of mandatory reselection — a democratic gain which gives party members for the first time some say in policy determination and whose defence is crucial to oppose a drift to the right. Party unity, so essential if we are to defeat the Tories, is threatened by the ongoing purge which has seen the suspension of the Liverpool party, the expulsion of Liverpool Labour councillors, and last month's attack on the Black Section. An objective of the right is to obliterate, through attacks on the London Labour Party, the memory of the GLC, the popularity it enjoyed, and the coalition of forces it mobilised to strengthen the traditional Labour movement. Such moves are deeply divisive and electorally damaging to the party.

Campaign

In such circumstances the left needs to work for principled unity and maximise its support on the NEC. I believe that I have a good chance of being elected to the constituency section and believe my presence on this body would be a reinforcement of the left. In seeking election it would be on the basis on the policies of Brent East Labour Party.

I would like to clarify a further matter. The executive of the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) on 5 April

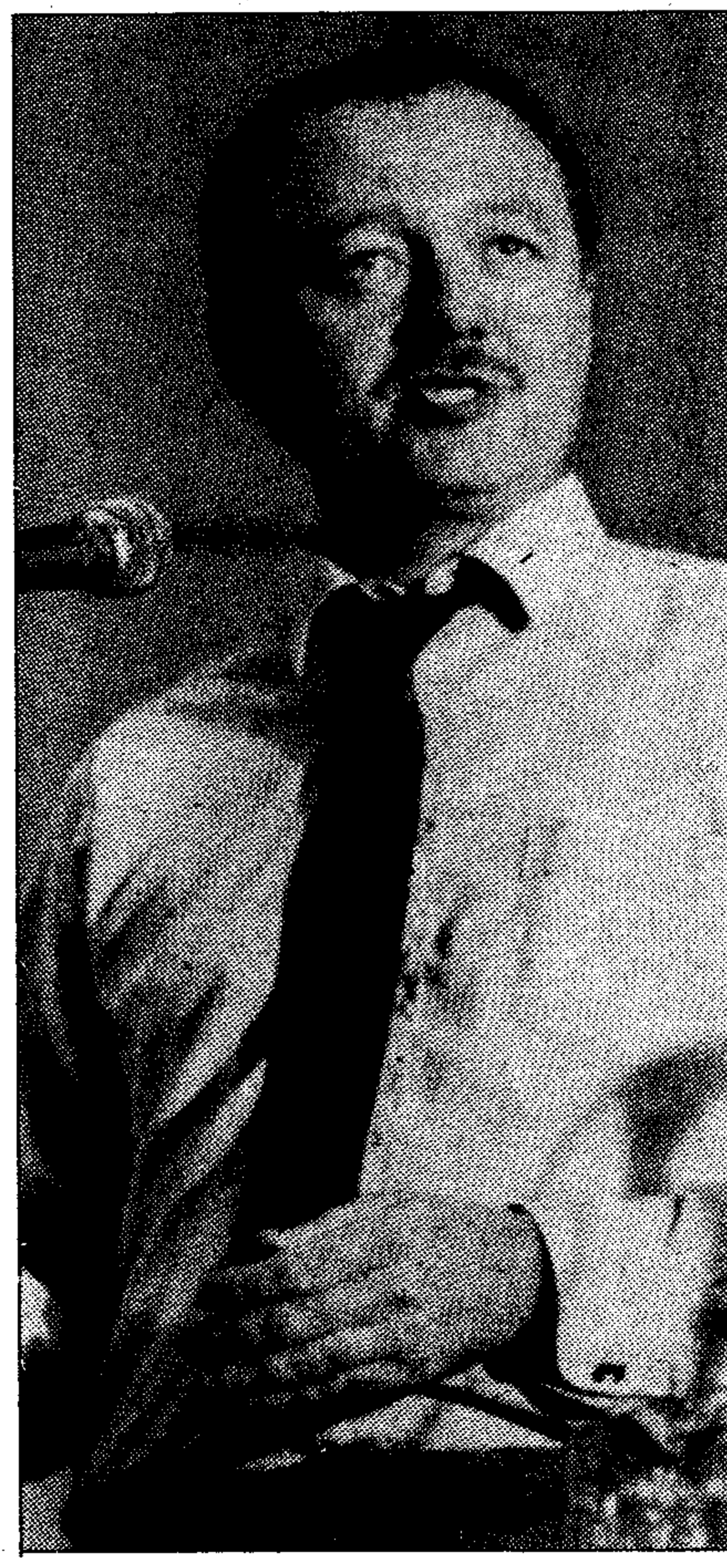
discussed candidates for the NEC. It was made clear at the meeting that an aim of some members of the LCC was to promote candidates intended to undermine existing left wing members of the NEC — notably Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner whom the LCC refused to endorse.

Under these circumstances to agree to be on the slate for the NEC presented by the LCC would be to participate in divisive and sectarian attacks on the left in the party. I made clear my opposition to this procedure last year in rejecting approaches to run for the CLP section of the NEC against Eric Heffer. In these circumstances I decline the suggestion to be included on the LCC slate for the national Executive Committee.

I shall be urging Brent East GC at its meeting on 23 April to support for re-election to the NEC Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner as well as Jo Richardson and Audrey Wise. I shall also be supporting the nominee of the Black Section, Diane Abbott. I shall be consulting Brent East party and others on the left regarding the remaining candidate to be endorsed.

I believe it is possible to win power in Britain with a radical Socialist Labour Party. Too much time in the last four years has been wasted in introspection and purges. I would seek to use the NEC position to turn the party outwards and build the sort of mass support we glimpsed with the GLC.

Ken Livingstone

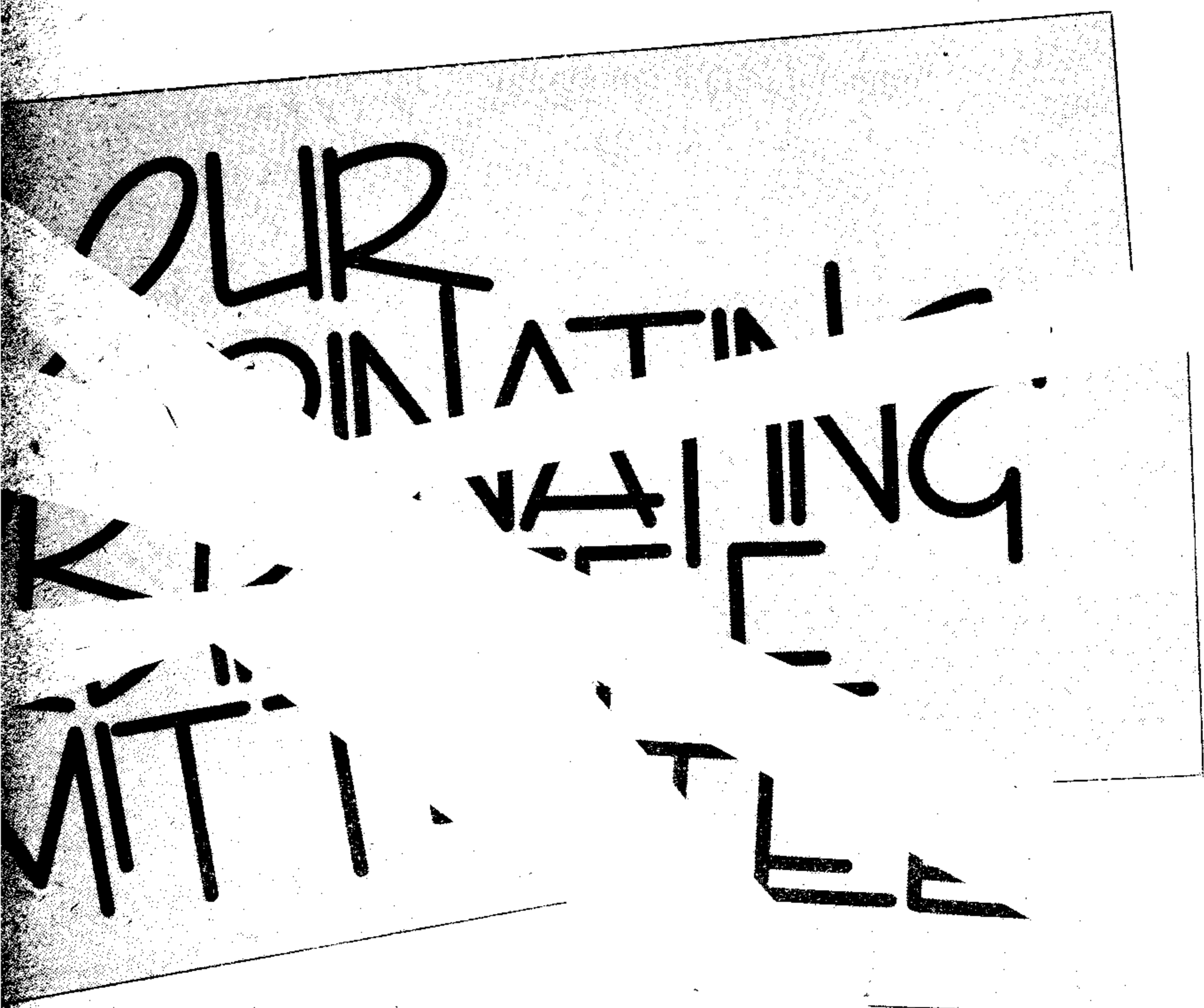


Left

The logical organisational consequences were drawn from this in Livingstone advocating joint work between Labour Left Liaison (LLL) and the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) and between the Campaign Group of MPs and the *Tribune* group of MPs. This included Livingstone attacking the *Tribune* group for not allowing an open ballot in elections for the Shadow Cabinet — a condition demanded by the Campaign group for a joint slate with *Tribune* following the failure of *Tribune* rightwingers to vote for Tony Benn and other commonly agreed candidates.

This perspective was violently opposed by the right wing of the LCC grouped around the 'Clause 4' organisation. They in practice advocated, increasingly openly so in recent weeks, a bloc with the right wing against the left of the party. This started as opposition at the LCC AGM to any joint work with Labour Left Liaison and culminated in increasingly right wing positions around support for Labour's defence document and a new found enthusiasm for Roy Hattersley.

Nigel Williamson, the editor of *Tribune*, had been increasingly openly supporting the extreme right wing of the LCC through the pages of that paper during his last weeks as editor. Williamson published a centre spread by Stanley attacking Livingstone, and also enlisted as a *Tribune* columnist, Seamus Mallon, the deputy leader of the North of Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party. *Tribune* has also printed a long attack on



Livingstone by Jim Murphy, an LCC member attached to the European parliament. Williamson himself wrote a glowing review of Roy Hattersley's new book *Choose Freedom*.

Inside the Birmingham Labour Party the right wing in the LCC reached a new height with LCC member Roger Murray advocating, in alliance with Roy Hattersley, the expulsion from the Labour Party of fellow LCC supporter Kevin Scally as well as Amir Khan of the Labour Party Black Section. In *Tribune* on 3 April Murray declared: 'Pressure had to be put on the hard left to start behaving themselves and if not, they will be replaced'. Murray, defending his support for the expulsion of Scally, absurdly declared himself to be 'very much on the left'!

Inside the LCC itself differences were sharpened by the fight over the reselection of MPs. Livingstone advocated the present system of reselection by General Committees of the constituency parties — which is the only one which in reality allows monitoring and accountability of MPs. The LCC right wing advocated the replacement of this by the system of 'one member, one vote' — the proposal originally made for the party by David Owen, Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams and others who broke away to form the SDP.

It was grandiloquently announced in the *Guardian* that the LCC, allegedly 'the largest left wing pressure group in the Labour Party' had voted by two to one in favour of One Member One Vote. However the March issue of the *LCC Mailing* stated that only 126 people in total had participated in this ballot, of whom 68 voted for the preferred system of One Member One Vote — in short, support for OMOV was pathetic. Livingstone announced in *Tribune*, and informed others on the left, that he intended to campaign against OMOV and for the present system of reselection. Michael Meacher and David Blunkett also voted in the Labour Party NEC against reopening the issue of reselection.

Voting

The issue which has clearly brought to a head the situation in the soft left is the making of slates for the elections to the National Executive Committee (NEC). In line with the logic of his call for work between the LLL and LCC Livingstone circulated to the General Committee of the Brent East party before the LCC executive on 3 April a document indicating the platform on which he intended to run for the NEC and which specifically called for support for existing Campaign Group members Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Audrey Wise and Jo Richardson. Livingstone had earlier publicly attacked the LCC at a meeting in London for seeking to remove Joan Maynard from the NEC.

The demand for the LCC to support the Campaign Group members of the NEC, together with the policy issues raised, clearly provided a practical touchstone for whether the LCC intend-

ed to ally with the left wing against the right in the party, or whether it intended to ally with the right wing against the left. The LCC had previously intended to use Livingstone as a candidate to undermine the position of Campaign Group members on the NEC.

At the 5 April meeting of the LCC executive Livingstone proposed that the LCC executive endorse for election to the NEC Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner — the LCC had supported Jo Richardson and Audrey Wise. When this was rejected Livingstone stated he would not stand for the NEC supported by the LCC, that the slate proposed by the LCC was aimed solely at undermining the left in the party, and that he would call for votes for Benn, Richardson, Skinner and Wise against the position of the LCC. A public statement to that effect was issued the next day.

Base

While this explosion appears to be around individuals it is in reality around the entire future course of the party. The aim of the right wing is to eliminate support for left wing policies by removal of left wing members of the NEC. That is why the shameful campaign was carried on against Eric Heffer over the last two years.

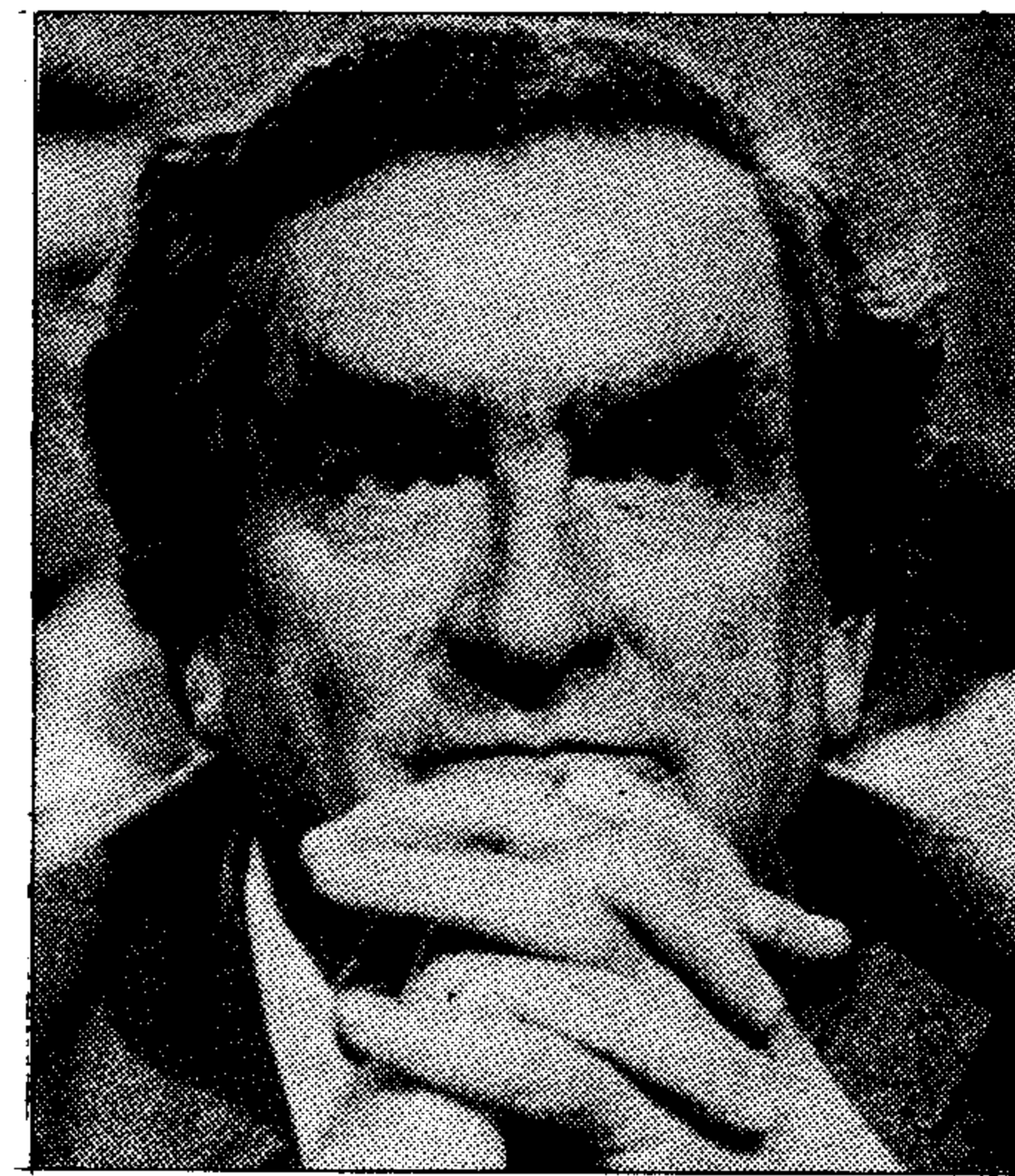
Any attempt to unite the left in the party required not just definite policies, although this is totally necessary, but also complete clarity on opposing the vicious backdoor campaign of the LCC, to undermine support for left wing candidates. Equally the right wing of the LCC, those defending a bloc with the right wing of the party, could make tactical compromises on policy issues but they could not let up in their drive to remove left wing candidates from the NEC and other party bodies.

The split over the NEC slate therefore in fact was a clash over the entire future direction of the party — whether the perspective was to unite the left in a fight for specific policies and to fight the right wing opposition to this, or whether the aim was to unite with the right wing against the left.

What is clear is that this choice is now outlined perfectly openly in front of the entire party. The right wing of the LCC, around Clause 4, have nothing whatever to do with the left in the party. They aim in practice at a bloc with the right against the left and are nothing more than a fifth column of the right inside the left. That is now clear, open, and in front of the party.

The explosion in the soft left opens the way to a political clarification of the entire situation in the party. In this new situation: what must be put in the forefront is clear politics. Because what the left does next will be done in front of millions of people and affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of labour movement activists. What the left does now is not about petty manoeuvrings but about the lives of millions of people. It must raise its historical perspective to that level.

More attacks on unilateralism



WHILST ONE radical policy after another has been junked by the Labour Party leadership in a desperate attempt to sanitise Labour's programme for the forthcoming general election, party activists have comforted themselves that the nuclear disarmament pledge of successive party conferences, by and large, has remained intact. But in the past few weeks a deliberate ambiguity has been introduced into what was once believed to be a straight-forward commitment that all nuclear weapons and nuclear bases would go in the lifetime of the next Labour government. CAROL TURNER unravels the latest sleight of hand.

IN preparation for what turned out to be a disastrous trip to the United States, Neil Kinnock announced that Labour would delay the removal of cruise pending the outcome of talks on eliminating medium-range nuclear forces from Europe. By implying that getting rid of nuclear weapons is in any way conditional on the outcome of such negotiations, Kinnock has rendered ambiguous a conference policy that has gone publicly unchallenged by the leadership since 1983.

Pressures

That ambiguity hits at the very heart of the nuclear disarmament policy that generations of campaigners have fought to secure. It is a clear break with the policy of successive conferences: that all nuclear weapons and all nuclear bases would be unconditionally removed in the lifetime of the next Labour government. The 1983 composite, which won a two-thirds card vote majority, specified that: 'the need to discuss the implementation of this programme with our allies ... will not weaken our commitment to, or our time table in, securing a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain within the lifetime of the next Labour government.'

In response to the enquiries that flooded in after Kinnock's statement, Walworth Road was at pains to stress that delaying the removal of cruise was not incompatible with removing them in the lifetime of a Labour administration. Denzil Davies, defence spokesperson extraordinaire, attempted to render this pronouncement more profound when he explained to a London radio audience on the weekend following the Kinnock-Healey visit to the White House that Mr Reagan was the only government leader in the Western world to give voice to his conviction that nuclear weapons were 'immoral'. This put Reagan on an altogether higher plane than Margaret Thatcher in Denzil Davies' opinion, and justified the Labour leadership's belief that such talks would be brief and with a successful outcome.

Failure

Few party members listening that Sunday would have felt reassured. But perhaps it could be put down to one of many gaffs by the Labour defence spokesperson.

Denis Healey, however, is someone less likely to make a stupid slip. He too has been busy elaborating Labour's

nuclear disarmament policies. Returning from the USA visit, he told the *Independent* that the White House press statement 'that Neil Kinnock put forward a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament was completely untrue'.

This was followed up with an article in the *New Statesman*, where he expounded his view that in a 'changing situation' the terms unilateral and multilateral were 'worn-out' slogans'. He argued for a 'nuclear freeze buttressed by a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests'.

Opinion

He has continued to expound this 'reinterpretation' of party policy. The *Guardian* of Saturday 4 April reports an article written by Healey for the *US Foreign Affairs* journal in which he takes up this theme.

The *Guardian* comments: 'Mr Healey's article gives probably the clearest exposition so far of the rationale and timetable of Labour policy. It is consistent with Mr Kinnock's ambition to remove US nuclear weapons in the lifetime of a parliament, although it leaves open the unstated possibility that a Labour government could be persuaded away from this course if its NATO allies insisted.'

'Mr Healey concludes: "In seeking the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Britain we shall not act unilaterally, as De Gaulle did when he

expelled the NATO forces from France in 1966, or as prime minister Pierre Trudeau did when he expelled America's nuclear weapons from Canada in the 1970s. In our discussions with our allies we shall weigh all the considerations they put to us with a full sense of the responsibility we know we carry for the unity and strength of the organisation in which is the foundation of our security."

In another *Guardian* quote from the article, Healey says that the withdrawal of all American nuclear weapons from Britain 'would have no time limit, though we would expect to conclude them well within our first term'.

In the last few weeks we have seen the first clear signs that the Labour leadership as a whole — in contrast to a few right wing rogues like Jim Callaghan — is preparing to abandon nuclear disarmament policy.

Since 1983, the clear-cut, explicit conference have been through a series of dilutions. Nuclear bases have been narrowly redefined and no mention has been made about the status of nuclear ships in entering British ports, to give just two examples. But the core of that policy — unconditional unilateral disarmament — has remained intact. That is what is now under threat, and what must be defended by every nuclear disarmer in the party.

MARCH FOR A
NUCLEAR FREE BRITAIN

NO MORE CHERNOBYLS

APRIL 25th

NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

ASSEMBLE: 11am VICTORIA EMBANKMENT LONDON WC2
RALLY: 2pm HYDE PARK
BE THERE

ISRAEL IS putting on trial Mordechai Vanunu — a nuclear technician who last year leaked to the *Sunday Times* details of Israel's capacity to manufacture atomic weapons and who was kidnapped by Israeli intelligence in London. Vanunu's revelations publicised what was already known in political and military circles — that Israel had been constructing nuclear weapons for almost two decades. What is not so widely known however is that one of its chief partners in this is South Africa. In this article, shortened from the *CND journal Sanity*, JANE HUNTER outlines the deadly nuclear relation between Israel and the apartheid state.

IN 1979 Israel and South Africa tested a nuclear weapon. It is not known whether or not the test was successful.

The issue did not go away. In 1985, South Africa hinted that it had the ability to build two nuclear bombs a year. It has recently been ascertained that it has enjoyed continued access to Israeli nuclear weapons technology. As South Africa's mentor, Israel has had the bomb since at least 1973 and, according to information divulged last year by Mordechai Vanunu, the technician who had worked for ten years at Israel's secret nuclear weapons factory at Dimona in the Negev desert, can build at least ten bombs a year.

After examining photographs and verifying the details of manufacturing processes at Dimona provided by Vanunu, presently being tried for espionage and treason in Israel, leading British and American nuclear physicists concluded that Israel possessed from 100 to 200 nuclear weapons. It had been known that it decided 'to go nuclear' during its first decade in existence; previous estimates, however, had put the number of Israeli bombs at 10 to 20. On the basis of the new information the scientists ranked Israel the world's sixth nuclear power.

Built

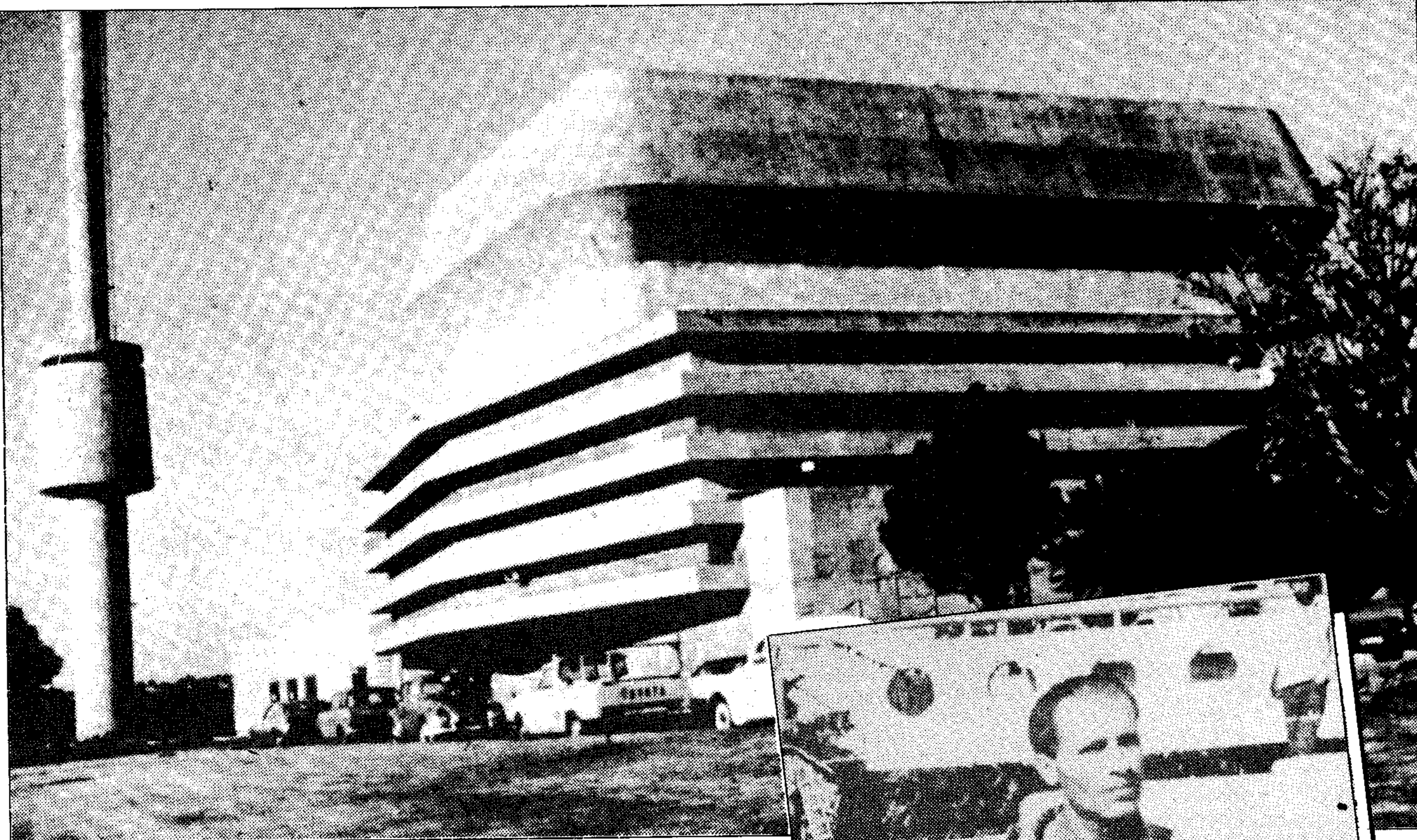
It was France that built the Dimona reactor and plutonium production plant, gave Israel weapons technology, and left room for Israel to build a plant to produce tritium. This the Israelis began in 1980. From Vanunu's information the scientists concluded that Israel can now build sophisticated thermonuclear devices.

Mordechai Vanunu told *Sunday Times* reporters that South Africans regularly came on exchange programmes to Dimona, and that South African scientists, metallurgists and engineers had frequently worked there. This disclosure lent credence to previous reports of the testing of an Israeli Jericho II missile (capable of delivering nuclear warheads) in South Africa, and the hiring in 1981 of Israeli 'safety' consultants for South Africa's nuclear reactors — a decision that struck some as strange, since the plants were built by the French.

Until quite recently, South Africa's major focus had been on enriching its abundant uranium for export and for domestic power generation. In the 1970s Pretoria had West German help in developing a gas nozzle enrichment process aimed at producing weapons-grade uranium. However, according to Leonard Spector, a nuclear proliferation expert at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, it was not until 1980 that the white minority government had the capacity to build a nuclear weapon.

One year earlier, a fleet of South African naval craft was spotted in the South Atlantic in the very spot where a US Vela satellite registered the characteristic double flash of a nuclear explosion — which, according to the CIA, was a 2-3 megaton 'joint South African-Israeli test'.

The 1979 explosion came three



Israel, South Africa and the bomb

and a half years after the two countries had signed a sweeping set of accords covering military, technological and economic co-operation. The agreements were signed in Israel after a widely-publicised state visit by the then South African premier Vorster (who was jailed during World War II by the British for pro-Nazi activities).

It was agreed to combine the endowments and complement the deficiencies of each nation, in order that they could resist international pressure to alter their policies. South Africa would receive weapons and sophisticated technologies from Israel and in return would put up the funds for the development of Israeli weapons systems. South Africa would also provide Israel with raw materials, such as rare metals and uranium.

Israel was especially attracted by the large expanses in South Africa suitable for weapons testing. In 1977, a Soviet satellite detected preparations for a nuclear test underway in the Kalahari desert. Pressure applied jointly by the US, the USSR, France, Britain and West Germany forced a halt to the proceedings which US officials were convinced was to be an Israeli bomb test.

Agreed

During the decade following the signing of the accords, Israel has sold the South Africans missile-armed patrol boats, anti-tank weapons, radar installations, and a range of anti-insurgency equipment from remotely piloted planes to electronic

border fencing. Its state-owned aircraft company has helped the South Africans update their aging Mirage aircraft with the Cheetah combat plane.

Ultimately, Israel licensed South Africa to build much of this equipment and provided plans, technology, and advice to help Pretoria establish a military electronics industry. South Africa now boasts that it defeated the UN mandatory arms embargo of 1977 — it is indeed an exporter of weapons.

Likely

The Israelis have encouraged the South Africans to bring their wares to Israel for finishing and re-export under a 'made in Israel' label. This allows South Africa to avoid consumer rejection and to enjoy Israel's duty-free agreements with the US and EEC (for industrial goods) and has made South Africa the second largest foreign investor in Israel after the US. And while Israeli investment in South Africa's high technology sector and in the Bantustans (the so-called 'tribal reserves') does not rank with British, West German, or US investment, it is nevertheless growing fast while Western interests have been hastily departing the scene.

As military and economic links increased, so did political and cultural relations between Tel Aviv and Pretoria. Since the imposition of the current state of emergency Israel has allowed the visit of several South African deputy ministers and sent a trade delegation, its chamber or-

chestra, and its top tennis stars to South Africa. In return Israel permitted two choirs to participate in a festival.

Many wonder what makes Israel cleave so determinedly to South Africa when the relationship is so detrimental to its links with the nonaligned nations (especially African members) and with important sectors of the US public, in particular Black leaders and anti-apartheid activists. Possible explanations range from South African blackmail of Israel — perhaps over yet undivulged details of their nuclear collaboration — to the economic benefits Israel reaps and the fact that both countries, as international pariahs, have so very much in common. The truth probably lies in a combination of all these factors. At any rate, most Israeli officials are embarrassed about the South African connection; few are enthusiastic collaborators.

Delighted

Pretoria, on the other hand, is delighted with the relationship and has sought to emulate Israel in a number of areas. Several hundred Israeli military advisers are always present in South Africa giving tactical and counter-insurgency training. And some of South Africa's attacks on its neighbours have been modelled on Israeli strikes on Lebanon.

On nuclear weapons, however, feelings are mutual, just stopping short of an open declaration of

possession — thereby letting their refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty speak for itself. Israel always says that it will not be the first to 'introduce' nuclear weapons to the Middle East. But neighbours who might contemplate rallying opposition to the apartheid regime, or the Israeli occupation of Arab territory, are left with a distinct impression that their population centres would be at risk — especially as both countries presently dominate their regions by conventional, military, and political means.

It is also likely that both Israel and South Africa have settled on small, 'tactical' nuclear weapons. According to one analyst, the 1979 test was deliberately ambiguous. It released only a small amount of radiation into the atmosphere, signifying either a low-yield weapon or a 'dud'. Small weapons that would not destroy Israeli cities would be preferred by a country existing so close to its potential targets.

Tested

For its part, South Africa might snarl and slash at its neighbours. But it must be well aware that the ultimate challenge to apartheid will come from a long-suffering domestic population. Most ominously, maps in the possession of the African National Congress appear to show that the white government has contemplated using low-yield nuclear weapons on Black population centres — while avoiding damage to white areas.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has voiced fears that the Pretoria government is crazy enough to obliterate what they can no longer control. And Israel's raids on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, and on Tunisia in 1985, attest to a lack of restraint. Whatever their plans for future use of nuclear weapons, the past and present nuclear collaboration of Israel and South Africa indicates a defiant, absolute intransigence: for Israel, there is no end to territorial occupation, to subjugation of the Palestinians, to regional hostility — and for the white minority regime, there is simply no possibility of a multiracial successor government.

About South Africa, very little except wait for the white government to fall and hope that its multiracial democratic successor will have no need for nuclear weapons and will scrap them. In the meantime, Israel must be prevented from helping South Africa increase the sophistication of its weapons. And, of course its own nuclear arsenal has to be dismantled.

Study

In 1979 the Carter administration knew without being told that it was best to pretend a nuclear test had not occurred. In the face of the 1980 elections, a White House investigation was quietly scuttled and, despite the grumbling of several participants, it was announced that there was no conclusive evidence that a nuclear device had been detonated.

The Congress avoided its statutory responsibility as Israel's aid giver to investigate the detonation, and a subsequent study released in 1985 by Michigan Congressman John Conyers included new government evidence that the test had occurred — but also failed to evoke any reaction. In line with the 1986 anti-apartheid legislation, Congress will have another chance this year to examine the implications of Israeli-South African nuclear weapons collaboration, at the end of the 180-day term specified for the president to report which 'industrialised democracies' have a military relationship with South Africa. Authored by a retiring senator, this amendment to the anti-apartheid bill says that Congress should then consider cutting off military aid to recipients that have such a relationship with South Africa.

Few expect Congress to act — or even talk about this relationship. Meanwhile continued silence as Israeli and South African scientists prepare the next generation of nuclear bombs can only convey the impression that the world is cowering.

Crisis in French Communist Party

THE FRENCH Communist Party (PCF) has been plunged into internal crisis by the emergence of an opposition to its leadership grouped around a manifesto entitled *La Revolution, camarades!* ('The revolution, comrades!') The best known leader of this opposition is Pierre Juquin. Entitled the 'renovateurs' (renewers) the opposition has support not only among the PCF's individual members but in the trade unions, its local council members, and in its Central Committee. The *renovateurs* have taken the unprecedented step, for the PCF, of organising both national and local coordination of its supporters. ALAIN KRIVINE reports.

THE background of the emergence of this opposition is the crisis that the PCF has been suffering for over two years. There are four chief reasons why this crisis has now emerged openly:

Firstly the disappointment of PCF activists with the 'Union of the Left' alliance with the Socialist Party in the early 1970s, followed by the right wing policies of the Socialist led Mitterand government. This was accompanied by zig-zags of the PCF between accommodation to the Socialist Party and sectarianism.

Second the disastrous electoral performance of the Party, whose strength is today half (10 per cent) of what it was in 1979.

Thirdly, the PCF leadership's unconditional support for the Soviet bureaucracy on questions such as siding with Jaruzelski's regime in Poland.

Finally, the calling into question by significant sections of the PCF of the bureaucratic nature of their organisation.

Alternative

La revolution, camarades! is a political document that could represent a total alternative to the line of the leadership. Moreover, it is the first time in the history of the PCF that an internal opposition has dared to write a complete alternative document.

In the manifesto the *renovateurs* emphasise they are fighting for revolution, socialism and the class struggle and that they support all the main struggles going on today in the country.

The opposition declare for internationalism. They give total support to the struggles of the Nicaraguan and South African peoples, and, very significantly, to what they describe as all the fights for democracy in the so-called socialist countries.

Finally the manifesto ends by stressing the need to build a real revolutionary current in France.

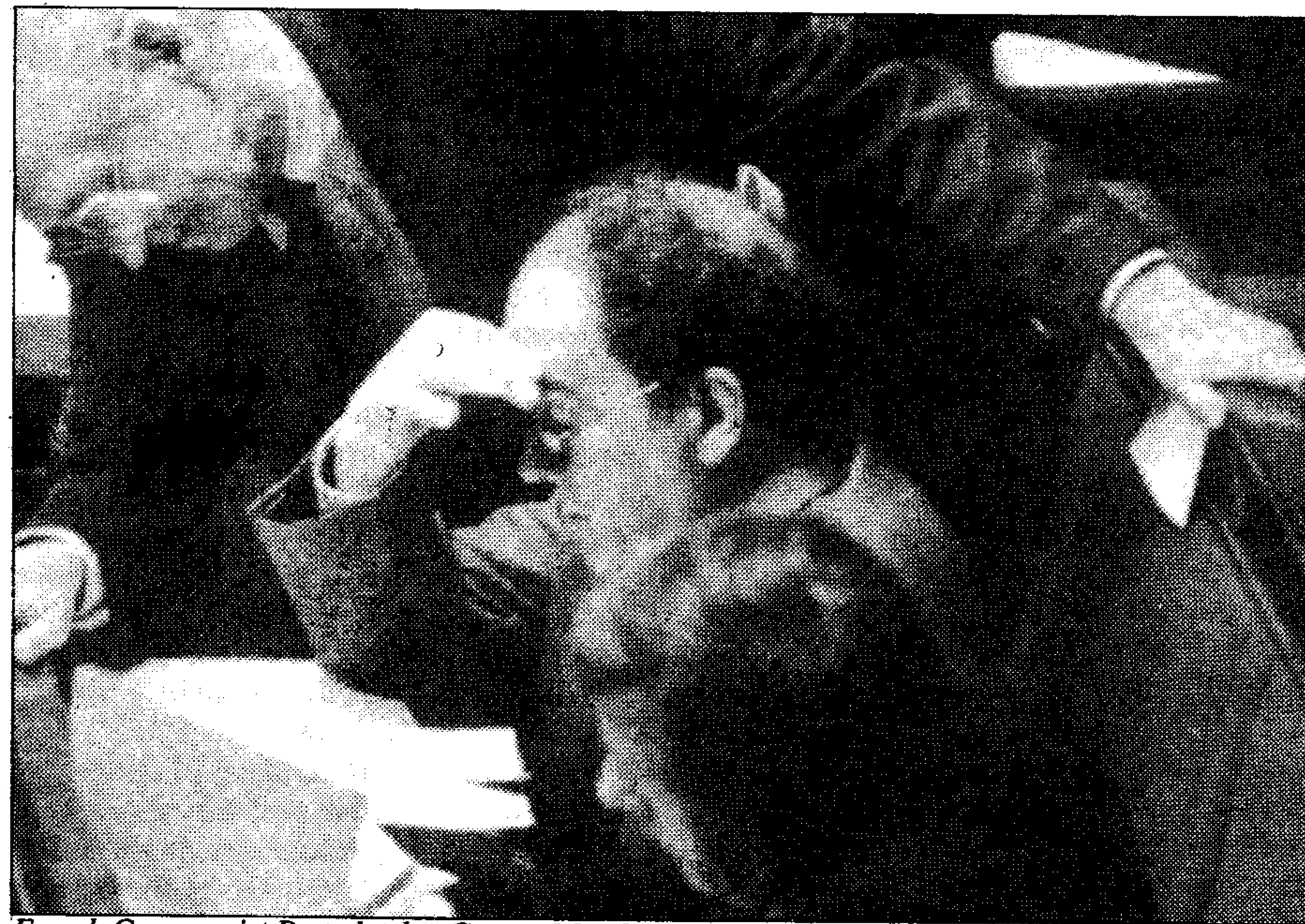
However, there are several areas of unclarity in the manifesto. For example, they are unclear about what the bourgeois state is and the connection of revolution and reform to it. In this regard there is a sense of 'gradualism' in the document which is something fairly normal for people coming from a Communist Party.

There is also ambiguity in the manifesto on the question of Eastern Europe. It refuses to give open support to Solidarnosc. While it explains that it supports all struggles for more democracy in these countries, in a certain sense it puts Gorbachev and Solidarnosc on the same level.

The manifesto lacks a precise outline of what the next political steps should be. Maybe this is both because of tactical reasons, and the debate that must be taking place among the *renovateurs* about whether the party can be reformed from within or not.

The most significant aspect of the *renovateurs* is the fact that they have decided to organise. They have made public that they have set up a national coordination of communist *renovateurs*, with representatives from 30 French departments (counties). They hold regular meetings of the national coordination, are establishing regional coordinations, and are operating increasingly like an organisation within an organisation.

The manifesto is the subject of intense discussion inside the PCF and also outside it. The *renovateurs* say they want to discuss with revolutionaries outside the CP. The coordinations will organise public debates and meetings in all the main towns of France, as well as internal discussions



French Communist Party leader, George Marchais

open only to PCF members.

Despite their lack of political homogeneity this is a current going in a left direction. They reject the Socialist Party as an alternative. Moreover, they have declared openly in total support for the recent strike waves of students, railworkers, electricity workers and others in France.

Impact

There are whole towns in France, Perpignan for example, and a big town in the north, Lille, where all the local PCF leadership are affiliated to the coordination. Some other examples of the impact of the *renovateurs* are: the affiliation of workers' cells such as that of the Peugeot factory in the east of France: of seven cells in the shipyards at Brest; of post office workers' cells in the same area of Brittany and of communist workers on the railways; and of the workers' cell at Clermont-Ferrand in the centre of the country — one of the biggest factories in France.

These layers represent the various components that make up the Communist Party — elected officials, trade unionists, workers, bureaucrats and intellectuals. For the first time the crisis of the PCF really touched everybody.

A cursory look at the disparate political tendencies inside the opposition show the following make up: bureaucrats at various levels of the Party — 3 to 4 members of the Central Committee; a series of

regional leaders; trade unionists — including even some leading members of the French Communist trade union the CGT; intellectuals; and a new development in various structures of the CP joining the coordination, including some workers' cells.

The opposition has taken initiatives which indicate that they see themselves as an alternative party leadership. For example the official PCF leadership refused to sign an appeal for an anti-racist demonstration on 15 March against the new nationality laws until a few days before the march. The PCF turnaround only happened because of pressure from the *renovateurs*, who had declared their support for the demonstration two weeks earlier.

Two other initiatives taken by the opposition threaten to speed up political developments. Alain Amicable has been put forward openly as a member of the opposition, with the support of cells and PCF members locally, as a candidate in a by-election in the steelworking area of north-east France. Amicable was previously first secretary of the departmental federation of the PCF, and is a worker who is well-known and respected for his leading role in the fight against redundancies and closures in the steel industry in 1979 and 1984. The official leadership does not recognise him as the PCF candidate but has decided not to present

their own candidate against him, which is a clear indication of the existing relation of forces in the area.

In Brittany around 300 members of the party, most of them workers and including two thirds of the elected officials, have not yet received their PCF membership cards. They have now split, and organised a more or less separate Communist Party in Brittany, with their own newspaper, dues, and so forth. They have decided to construct their organisation locally on the basis of the *renovateurs* manifesto. Moreover they are officially members of the national coordination, which means the opposition is also organising people who do not want to stay, or cannot stay, in the PCF.

Undoubtedly these developments accelerate political processes when the coordination is not yet well structured and politically unclear about key questions. Nevertheless its importance is clear. The crisis within the PCF will be a central feature of the decomposition and re-composition of the French workers' movement. The emergence of the opposition has created a new hope for thousands of people on the left — who have become disenchanted with the party — and offers the possibility for building a really credible mass revolutionary alternative. There is a real climate of *attente*, (waiting), in France today. ● Edited from *International Viewpoint*.

Strike wave in Spain

A WAVE of strikes involving workers and students has spread throughout the Spanish state. On 12 March, 400,000 workers demonstrated in Madrid and 30 other Spanish towns. Since then, the workers taking industrial action have included miners, steel workers, rail workers, health workers and doctors, and airline groundstaff. NICK ADAMS reports.

THESE workers actions follow a wave of protests by students. In January and February, secondary school students filled Spanish streets in a wave of demonstrations against changes in university entrance rules. University students all over the country have also been on strike against planned changes in their study programmes.

Some of the workers struggles have been extremely militant. In the

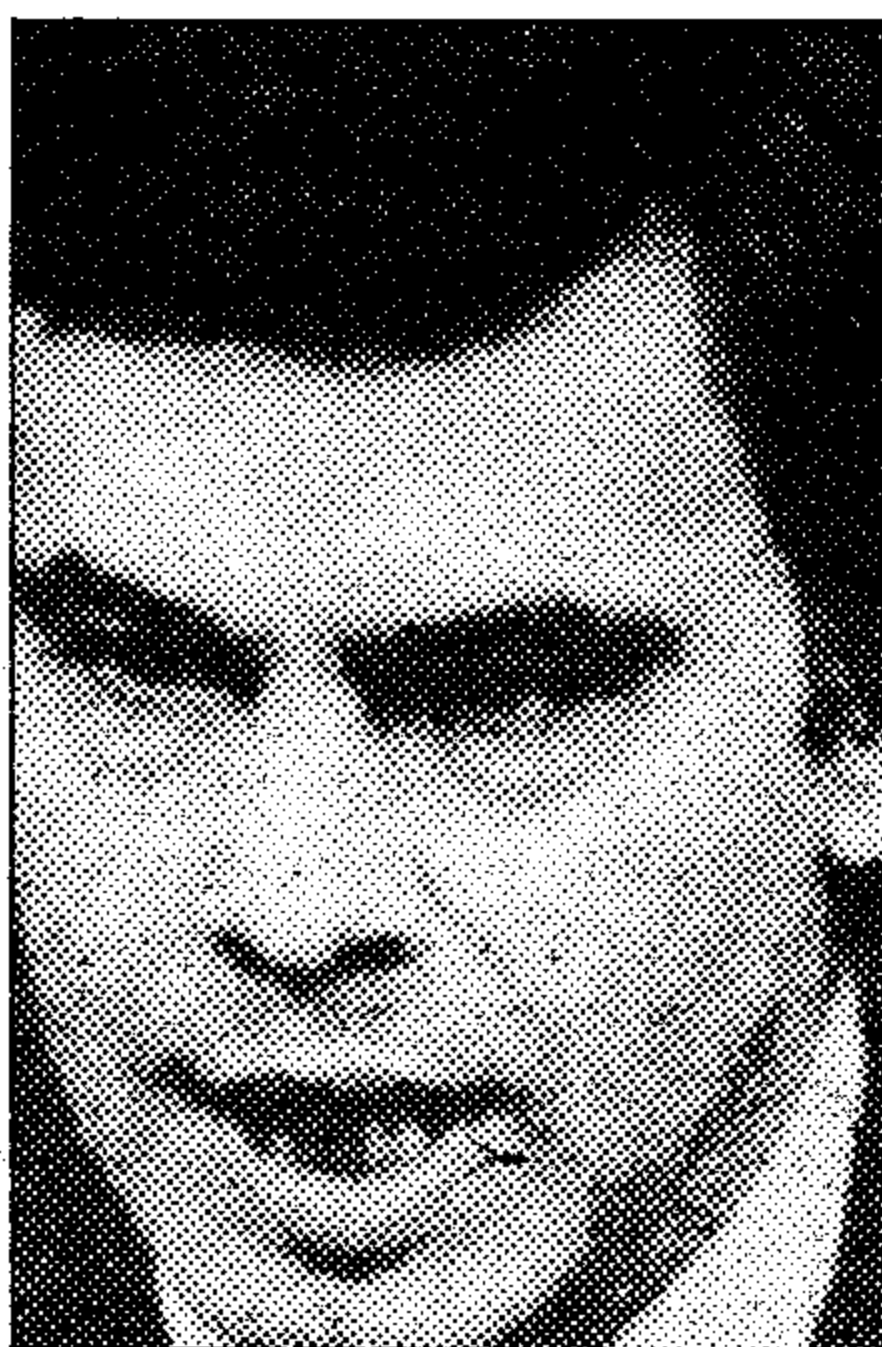
northern industrial town of Reinosa workers who occupied their steel mill against a proposed one-third cut in the 1700-strong workforce were joined inside the plant by 3000 local towns people in a successful defence of the occupation against police attacks.

Each of the struggles has particular demands, but they are linked by their opposition to the five per cent ceiling on pay rises

imposed by the Socialist Party government of Felipe Gonzalez.

The renewal of working class struggles presents a major challenge to the Socialist Party government which has engaged in a public 'rationalisation' programme since its election and is now proposing further anti-working class measures to accompany the five per cent pay ceiling.

In 1984 the government introduced fixed term contracts — legalising the right of firms to employ workers for just six months per year. It has presided over job cuts and a decline in living standards. The government is



Gonzalez

now proposing to abolish the statutory minimum wage for workers aged between 18 and 24, reduce redundancy payments, extend short-term contracts and give encouragement to firms employing part-time labour.

World in action

Philippines

President Aquino suggested that members of the military, loyal to deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos, could be behind the planting of a bomb in the military academy which killed four people two weeks ago. She denounced Marcos supporters as being bent on destabilising the government and also rejected a US defence secretary's claims that her government is not seriously fighting the Communist guerrillas. Eighteen government soldiers were reported to have been killed in new clashes with the Communist guerrillas in the Misamis province, 750 kilometres south of Manila.

Meanwhile, the Philippines has reached an agreement with international banks to reschedule a \$13.2 billion debt package. This means sterner austerity policies and closer cooperation with the IMF.

Middle East

Israeli air force launched another air raid against Palestinian positions in Lebanon on 20 March. This air raid was the fifth against Lebanon and the third against Palestinian positions this year. The target was positions held by Fateh fighters, the majority group in the PLO.

The attack takes place against the background of an increasing deterioration of the internal situation in the country, the presence of Syrian military forces to help the shi'ite Ammal militia fighting the PLO, the support given by the EEC members to an international peace conference, and a worsening of the situation in the Palestinian refugee camps, especially Chatila and Bourj-Barajneh.

South Africa

Frenchman Pierre-André Albertini has been sentenced to four years imprisonment by the authorities of bantustan Ciskei. The sentence came as a result of Albertini's refusal to be the prosecution witness against five blacks accused of terrorist activities and membership of the ANC. He is accused of having brought money and arms to the ANC. Albertini was offered a deal: charges would be dropped if he testified against the five blacks. 'It's morally impossible', was Albertini's reply. The sentence has provoked a demonstration outside the South African embassy in Paris which was virtually under siege by youth who chanted 'Botha, murderer, Chirac, Mitterand, accomplices'.

By contrast, a white South African policeman accused of murdering two black students and attempted murder of a third has been acquitted by a Johannesburg court on the ground of legitimate defence against the black students.

Meanwhile the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union has successfully called its 14,000 members on strike against the Parastatal South African Transport company. The strike was triggered off by the dismissal of a black worker accused of 'cash irregularities'. The union now demands only reinstatement of the sacked worker but has added full pay for the duration of the strike and a statement of intent by the company to end discrimination.

Chile

Chilean political prisoners have gone on hunger strike to demand recognition as political prisoners and protest about prison conditions. The political prisoners have decided to take the action in solidarity with 12 political prisoners who are members of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), the guerrilla organisation that claims responsibility for the assassination attempt on Pinochet last year. The strike involves more than 400 prisoners and has spread to the 30 prisons in Chile. The lawyers of the FPMR members in prison said that the prisoners have been tortured, placed in solidarity confinement, and that their families have been harassed by the security forces. The torture involves electric shocks, simulated shootings, being half-drowned in containers of excrement, beatings, rats being put into the prisoners' clothing and mouths, and so on.

During his visit Pope John Paul called for 'national reconciliation'. As he even-handedly condemned 'violence' by pro-government and popular organisations alike police ran riot against demonstrators calling for civil liberties.

Paul Simon, Graceland and Apartheid

In 1984, rock musician Paul Simon fell in love with South African township music. In itself this is not remarkable. It is a wonderfully vibrant music, and speaks volumes about the ability of the black South Africans to create a cultural identity in the face of apartheid oppression, writes PHIL WATERHOUSE.

He was also not alone, reflecting the growing awareness and appreciation of different aspects of African creativity, music in particular, in the West.

Paul Simon then decided to make a record, 'Graceland', based on this new love of his. Again, this is not remarkable. In the past he has borrowed freely from various black and Third World musical styles, as have many other musicians. Whatever attitude is taken towards such projects — one of cultural imperialism, or an attempt at genuine fusion of different musical styles — it is the way the record was made that is vital.

— that Paul Simon knows better than those who lead the fight in South Africa what is good for the black oppressed! The ANC, the UDF or COSATU need not be consulted, and even when they offer their opinion (in opposition to the record) it can be discounted out of hand.

As for broadening the audience for South African music, that is certainly true, although it begs the question. The music was gaining a wide audience anyway, and you can just as easily regard Paul Simon as merely jumping on the bandwagon to bolster a fading career.

The ANC/AAM position on the cultural boycott is clear. They call for a boycott of *apartheid*, not of South Africa as such. The apartheid regime must be boycotted and completely isolated. However, maximum support has to be given to that section of South Africa which fights apartheid. Anything which contributes to that end, and towards a non-racial democracy has to be supported. There has to be a boycott of anything which does not contribute to the destruction of apartheid.

'Graceland' should be judged by that political standpoint, not some abstract cultural norm. It fails dismally. The white

South African broadcasting system regularly plays the record. It has a general policy of not promoting any music portraying the reality of urban African existence, any music with social or political content. Rather their musical fare is more aimed at 'entertainment' to make township life more bearable. Exactly like Radio 1 over here! Obviously they do not consider 'Graceland' a problem.

Opposition

Moreover, many artists today are fighting to stop their product being exported to South Africa. Paul Simon's record label, WEA, has a clause enabling artists to withdraw from that market. Paul Simon appears not to care about such niceties. After all his album is a statement against apartheid, which he of course abhors.

Despite what some may wish to believe, culture cannot change the world, much less demolish apartheid. Only politics allied to the mass movement can achieve this. As the ANC has said in another context, the double bass is not mightier than the sword. Paul Simon's little vinyl disk, despite the millions it may sell, is certainly no sword.

When he appears in concert at the Albert Hall on 7 April at 7pm, the London AA committee will be there to demonstrate their opposition, supported by Artists Against Apartheid.

Mismatch

Simon flew to Johannesburg to make Graceland. In so doing he quite blatantly broke the 1980 United Nations cultural boycott of South Africa, a boycott supported by all anti-apartheid organisations in and outside of the country.

Following the subsequent furore over the record, Paul Simon and his defenders from different quarters, have attempted to justify his action.

He did not break the boycott, they claim, he merely recorded in South Africa but did not perform. As the Anti-Apartheid Movement has pointed out this is as daft as claiming that it is fine to coach a sport in South Africa as long as you do not play, or for an academic to research but not to teach! All his other arguments to bolster this point, such as paying triple union scale to the musicians are irrelevant.

He also claims that you cannot judge what he did by political criteria, but only from a cultural standpoint. Thus his record, which contains not one reference in opposition to apartheid, should be seen as an attempt to bring the black culture of South Africa to a world audience, that it is a valid statement against apartheid in its own right.

The arrogance of such a claim is really astounding

'Defend unilateralism' says Labour CND

NEIL Kinnock's White House jaunt is proving an unmitigated disaster. And not just for the party leader's image.

In preparation for his meeting with Ronald Reagan, Kinnock announced that the removal of cruise missiles would be delayed by a Labour government pending talks on eliminating medium-range missiles from Europe. This statement renders conference policy ambiguous and strikes at the very heart of what nuclear disarmers have fought so hard for.

This constituency Labour Party rejects any

shift away from Labour's policy of nuclear disarmament in the lifetime of the next Labour government and reaffirms its determination to campaign during the general election on Labour Party policy of unconditionally removing nuclear weapons from British soil and waters.

• Copies of Labour CND's appeal, which contains a copy of composite resolution 40 passed at 1983 annual conference and the LCND statement are available from: LCND Secretary, Carol Turner, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH.



LCI annual meeting sets new agenda

THE LABOUR Committee on Ireland AGM, held in Manchester over the weekend of 4-5 April, took major steps to establish British withdrawal from Ireland as an indispensable plank of the policies of the left wing of the British labour movement. It decided to build up a series of alliances within the labour movement, including working with the key umbrella groups in the party Labour Left Liaison and the Labour Coordinating Committee.

Two composited resolutions to the AGM spelt out this strategy. The first was moved by Richard Chessum, press officer of the LCI. It said:

This conference recognises that the most urgent task which confronts the LCI is to build a broadly based campaign for unconditional British withdrawal from Ireland on the basis of ending the Loyalist veto on Irish unity:

- Whilst maintaining the distinctive political standpoint of the LCI on the need to campaign for unconditional British withdrawal from Ireland, it welcomes opportunities for joint work with all organisations and individuals prepared to cooperate in non-sectarian initiatives to bring about such unity;

- Specifically it believes that approaches should be made by the LCI to those who seek a settlement involving a constitution for a united Ireland and phrased British withdrawal within the lifetime of a parliament, with a view to organising either a national labour movement conference or a dayschool to discuss strategies for ending the British presence in Ireland;

- Welcomes the policy adopted at the January 1987 special conference of the LCC and instructs the NE to approach the LCC EC immediately to negotiate a motion to the 1987 conference of the Labour Party. The EC of the LCI shall circulate the motion agreed to all LCI members and as widely as

possible within the Labour Party;

By Donald Bright

To consult with other Labour Party organisations and pressure groups and seek the widest possible support for a model resolution to the next Labour Party conference along the following lines: "This conference calls upon the next Labour government to repeal the Government of Ireland Act and effect complete withdrawal of the British military, political and administrative presence in Ireland within the lifetime of the next parliament."

- To seek broad labour movement sponsorship for a national demonstration calling for British withdrawal from Ireland to take place on the 20th anniversary of British troops being sent to the North of Ireland in 1969.

The second resolution was moved by Islington LCI. It was composited to incorporate an amendment on the LCC moved by Kevin Scally and Anita Richards of Birmingham LCI. It said:

In pursuit of its aims the LCI will continue to seek the widest possible united action with sections of the labour movement, including around limited or partial demands. Within this framework, the LCI will work with and, where appropriate, participate in, those Labour Party organisations, whether parliamentary, constituency or trade union based, which support the aims of the

LCI.

This specifically includes Labour Left Liaison, by sending observers, and the LCC. This joint work refers to areas of agreement on Irish policy and not to be taken as endorsement of other policy.

Niall Power, outgoing secretary of the LCI, took up the same theme of building the alliances for British withdrawal in his national council report to the AGM. "Today support for withdrawal is a majority or a commanding view of the CLPs, the national Labour Women's conference, the Black Sections, the National Union of Students and the National Organisation of Labour Students, as well as the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and two left organisations within the party — the Labour Coordinating Committee and Labour Left Liaison. Clearly our future lies in building upon these gains a significant force among the trade unions."

The first task is to apply the political alliances of the LCI to work in the trade union. The NUM was the only major union to vote for British withdrawal at last year's Labour Party conference. This vote now has to be consolidated as official NUM policy.

Success

In other trade unions the fight is just beginning with positive developments in a number of unions led by the soft left such as ASTMS, NUR and NALGO which is not affiliated to Labour.

The focus of the LCI's trade union work will be the LCI's conference against employment discrimination in the North of Ireland in November 1987.

In the parliamentary field the LCI will be involved in the planned Campaign Group of Labour MPs delegation to Ireland after the general election.

Whilst supporting individual demands the Campaign Group has not yet adopted policy on Ireland.

In the student field the National Organisation of Labour Students is affiliated to the LCI and the National Union of Students is committed to campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland. Student work will be a major priority next year with the establishment of a national Students Against Repression Network.

Strategy

Youth work will also be a major focus.

Labour Women for Ireland will be participating in the trade union conference as well as maintaining the high priority given in the past to campaigning against the strip searching of women prisoners in British and North of Ireland prisons.

It was agreed to investigate organising a national local authority councillors' conference in early 1988 to discuss civil liberties and the implications of the recognition of the Irish as an ethnic minority and to set up another tour by Sinn Fein councillors in Britain.

On the general election it was agreed to organise a rally in London, to circulate all Labour candidates with a questionnaire on policy towards Ireland and to place an advert in the *Irish Post* along the lines 'Why we say vote Labour'.

Overall the AGM adopted a strategy which aims to make British withdrawal from Ireland a part of the agenda of the left-wing of the labour movement in the same way such key questions as the demands of the Black Section and the National Conference of Labour Women have become in recent years. This is the first step towards the goal of a majority of Irish self-determination in the British labour movement.

SUPPORT CATERPILLAR WORKERS

THE CAMPAIGN continues to save 1200 jobs at the Caterpillar plant in Uddingston, Lanarkshire. Despite considerable pressure from management culminating in a court order to evict the plant against the workforce on Wednesday 25 March, the occupation continues. ANN HENDERSON reports.

At a mass meeting on Monday 30 March, workers voted by a narrow majority to stay in the plant. The decision was welcomed by many trade union delegations who had come to the plant that morning to show support.

It remains to be seen what action the Caterpillar management will now take. They are insistent that no talks will take place until the plant is vacated. They have been

shaken by the focus provided by the occupation and want it ended so that they can strip the plant down of valuable stock and machinery.

Solidarity with the

workforce is crucial. Thousands of trade unionists turned out for an STUC-sponsored demonstration in Glasgow on Saturday 28 March and street collections around Scotland continue to bring in thousands of pounds for the workforce.

March

The demonstration marched to Glasgow's George Square where the 'pink panther' tractor, built during the occupation and donated to the people of Nicaragua, stands, courtesy of Glasgow district council. The occupying workers, who built the tractor to expose the absurd logic of closing the Uddingston plant when its products are needed by millions of hungry people all over the world, have launched a campaign with War on Want to free the tractor, impounded by the company's court action.

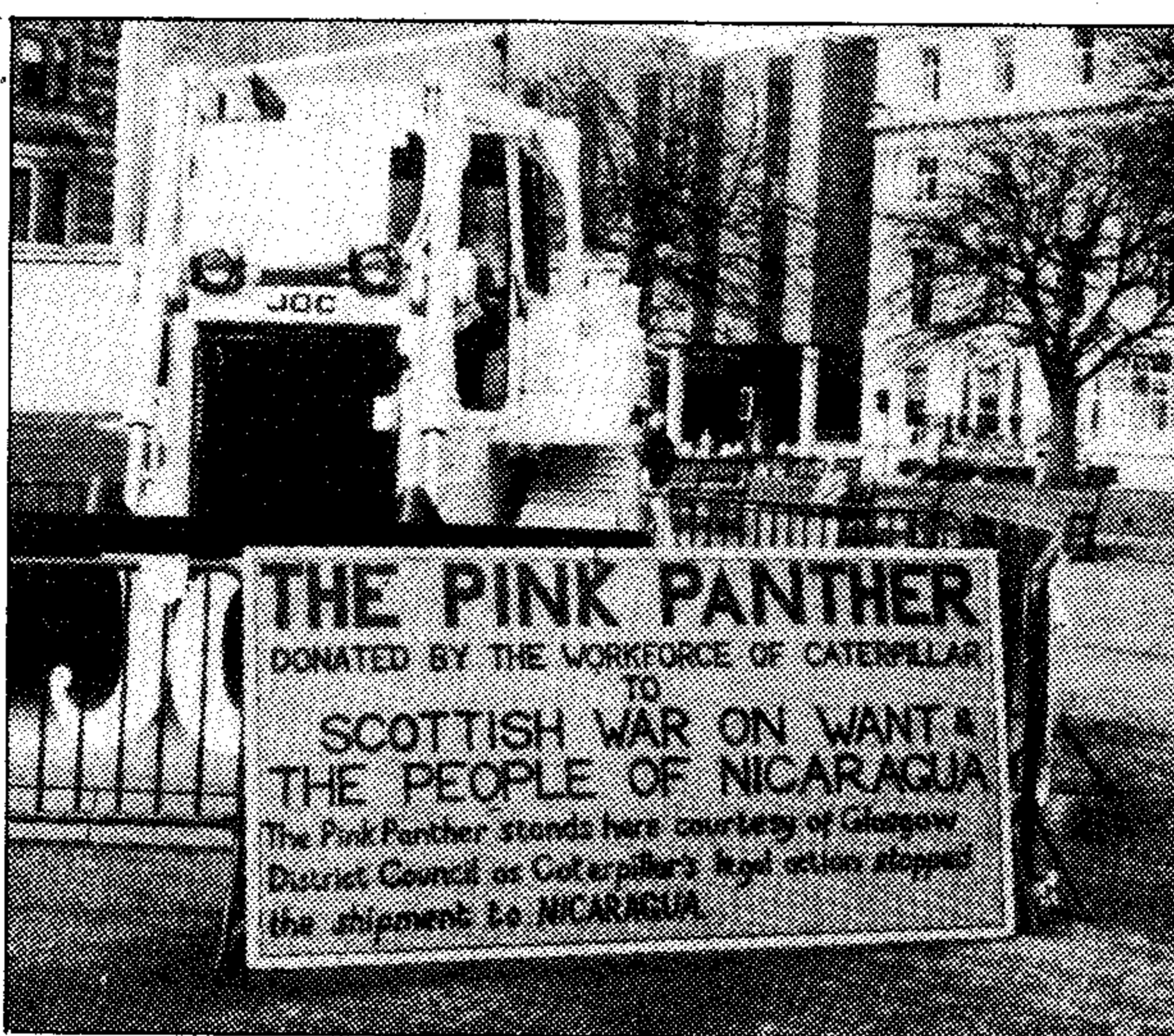
Speaking at the rally in Glasgow, Campbell Christie of the STUC pledged the continued support of the general council. Mick McGahey of the Scottish Area NUM said 'Caterpillar does not belong to the American bosses — it belongs to the Scottish people'.

Focus

This fight for jobs has become the focus of the fight for all jobs in Scotland, and its success would be a huge step forward for all of us.

Despite a major concession made by the AEU leadership in agreeing that the terms of any talks with the Caterpillar management will be set by an agreement that production would cease at the Uddingston plant, the company still refuses to negotiate.

Management were clearly of the opinion that the court interdict would do the job of ending the occupation. They also



received a boost when the EETPU leadership disassociated itself from the EETPU members who remain in the occupation.

Fray

Now the AEU leadership has pitched into the fray — calling a meeting of the shop stewards where executive committee member, Jimmy Airlie, told them that the union refuses to support an 'illegal occupation'.

But the stewards have made clear that the campaign will continue whatever action management or the courts take to end the occupation, and this week's AEU National Committee may well have different ideas to the ex-

ecutive on whether or not to put its full support behind the fight to retain the 1200 jobs.

Tony Benn MP has visited the occupation and was very warmly received. At a meeting with the stewards, they told him of their request that the Labour leadership pledge that a future Labour government would take over the plant and secure the jobs.

Campaign

After touring the plant Benn addressed a mass meeting of the workforce and promised support in every way possible. He condemned the actions of the Caterpillar management and called for a government committed to changing the laws to prevent multi-nationals treating workers in this way.

The Labour Party NEC has now expressed its full support for the Caterpillar workers — and the stewards are rightly demanding that this fight for Scottish jobs becomes a national priority.

● Messages of support, financial donations, etc to T. Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeddie, Baillieston, Glasgow (tel 0698-812921).



Ealing NALGO wins strike

EALING COUNCIL NALGO members have won their strike for London weighting. Following a three-to-one vote to continue their strike at a mass meeting on Monday 30 April, and an occupation by 80 strikers of the council Technical Services Building on Tuesday, the council acceded to the 2500 strikers' modified demand of parity London weighting to that of the council manual workers. Lower grades will receive an immediate rise of £282 and higher grades will get the same increase over two years. Discussions over holiday and pension benefits and a no victimisation clause are continuing as part of the return to work conditions. OLIVER NEW reports.

The strike had developed into a major test of strength between the union and the council. Ironically the Ealing Labour council, which only took office last May, is one of those branded 'looney left' by the gutter press and Tory politicians, who delight in asking local resident Neil Kinnock his attitude to Ealing's no discrimination against lesbians and gays policy.

Ealing NALGO has spent the last few years wrestling with a Tory administration. Although it was relatively successful in maintaining staff levels, Ealing had become one of the lowest paying authorities in London, but with one of the highest living expenses. Here lay the basis for NALGO's claim for inner London weighting, which was already paid to staff in neighbouring Brent and to teachers in Ealing.

The first indication of the new council's patronising and negative attitude to workers was the imposition of a 65 per cent rate rise. Socialists within the Labour Party who pointed out the effects of this on living standards were denounced as putting forward Tory arguments.

Even so-called members of the 'hard left' supported this rate rise, being unwilling to go down the road of a deficit budget and to put the blame at the door of the Tory government.

This balance-the-books approach is based on a pessimism about the chances of mobilising workers. Instead their philosophy is that a Labour council must do things for the workers. NALGO's claim was looked at in this light.

The Labour group believed that only they had the right to decide priorities and deeply resented the 'cheek' of their workforce in placing any demands on them.

Next year the council will be rate-capped, and it was no doubt quietly

preparing to retreat and shed a few jobs. This would of course require a docile workforce. It is interesting to note that NALGO has been targeted by several Labour councils, who have adopted very similar tactics in confronting their workforces to similar ends.

This attack by local councils on their own workforces is even more suicidal given that everyone knows that if Thatcher wins a third term, local authorities will face a huge cash crisis. They should be seeking unity with their workforces to resist these attacks — not do the Tories' dirty work for them by assaulting the unions.

When Ealing NALGO took selective action, the council responded by sending home workers without pay. This led to a spontaneous walk-out by hundreds of workers. Subsequent mass meetings and a secret ballot produced an overwhelming majority for all-out indefinite strike action.

Just like any reactionary employer the Labour council saw this as a challenge by upstarts to their right to manage. They gritted their teeth to defy this challenge and to put the union in its place.

Simultaneously they developed a sudden socialist concern for the low paid. While refusing to negotiate at all over the claim for London weighting, they made small offers which would cover some of the lowest paid staff only.

In this way they pretended to stand in a left-wing position while at the same time trying to break up the unity of the union.

The strike victory has blocked this. It has boosted the confidence of the NALGO members, significantly strengthened union organisation, and taught the council a powerful lesson for the future.

NUT witch hunt

THE APPEALS committee of the NUT, a body composed exclusively of national executive members has decided to uphold the right of the National Officers of the Union to appeal against what they consider to be too lenient penalties handed down by the National Disciplinary Committee (NDC) on the 50 officers and council members of the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA).

The ILTA members were suspended from the union for organising 'unofficial' action on 13 January against the infamous Baker Bill, which has since become the Teachers' Pay and Conditions law.

The NDC decided that although the members were technically guilty of breaking Rule 8, the rule governing the calling of official action, they should suffer no further penalty than the suspension from the union that had taken place between 7 January and 7 February, with the ILTA officers being

reprimanded for their part in the action.

Dissatisfied by this decision the national officers put in an appeal to try to get ILTA officers suspended from the union for around a year and banned from holding office withing the NUT for perhaps another year. In addition they are seeking the expulsion from the union of Dick North and John Esterson, victimised in 1980 for supporting solidarity action with the Lambeth council workers strike.

The decision by the Appeals Committee to allow the prosecution the right to appeal breaks all codes of natural justice and all past precedents within the union itself. Legal advice confirms that it would stand no chance in any court of law. If it goes unchallenged it will become a permanent threat to every NUT militant who faces disciplinary action.

Witch-hunting the leadership of the most militant section of the union is also a devastating blow to the

struggle in defence of teachers' right to negotiate their wages and conditions.

The Appeals Committee is set to reconvene on 9 April, the last day of term and just one week prior to the union's annual conference.

The teachers have received messages of support from the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Durham Area NUM, Durham Mechanics and many others.

● Messages should be sent to ILTA Defence Campaign, 25 John Campbell Road, London N16.

Correction

IN THE last issue of Socialist Action, we wrongly stated that the meeting addressed by Arthur Scargill and Sammy Thompson in South Wales had been organised by Tower lodge. The meeting was, in fact, called by the Phurnacite lodge of the Cokemen's Area NUM, which had nominated Sammy Thompson for vice-president.

Inside the unions

The politics of the South Wales NUM

OVER the last two weeks, the dispute over the planned future pit at Margam in South Wales has assumed national importance. Not only has Arthur Scargill's leadership of the national union been challenged but the very future and existence of the national union for all mineworkers is in question.

Since the early 1970s successive governments have promised to sink a new pit into the rich anthracite reserves which lie next to Margam steelworks near job-starved Port Talbot.

The coal board and the government want to return to area-by-area and pit-by-pit negotiation. They see this as a vital first step towards privatisation of the pits. The destruction of the NUM is a key political aim of the Tory government. Now cabinet ministers are openly talking of the end of national pay bargaining as part of their election platform.

Choosing South Wales the coal board has carefully picked their battle ground. South Wales NUM has a long history of federalism and during the year-long miners' strike the South Wales leadership were openly critical of Scargill's tactics around mass picketing.

Whilst their leadership has led to disastrous job losses they are now trying to portray the nation union as blocking new jobs in Wales. In this they are aided by an entrenched and fiercely right-wing trade union and Labour Party leadership. For example there is not even a single Campaign Group MP in Wales, one of Labour's key heartlands.

Kinnock and the trade union bureaucracy have quickly rallied to back South Wales NUM. The Wales TUC almost unanimously backed Des Duffield and South Wales NUM secretary George Rees in their stand. South Wales TGWU boss George Wright has threatened that his union would take up Margam if the NUM were to oppose six-day working — a move which provoked a swift rebuke from Ron Todd

and the TGWU's national leadership.

The Labour Party is in the ridiculous position of entering an election period proudly campaigning for a longer working week. For them no price is too high to break the power of Scargill and the NUM.

The issue of Margam within the NUM is about far more than working practices. South Wales led the opposition to the increase in union subscriptions at the recent national delegate conference — an increase vital to sustaining the national union.

The South Wales leadership have been critical of Scargill's attitude towards Nottinghamshire saying that instead of fighting for miners to rejoin the national union there should instead be negotiations with Lynk and Prendergast to bring back the UDM as a whole into a federally-based union.

South Wales dragged its feet on the Justice for Mineworkers campaign, preferring to negotiate secretly with the coal board and get men into private pits. They believe that a policy of a review for sacked mineworkers could compromise Kinnock and that the union should keep quiet until after an election.

South Wales NUM have attempted to link up with other sections of the union to oppose Scargill's leadership. In the election for vice-president they backed Eric Clarke against Sammy Thompson. The daily newspaper, *The Western Mail*, talks of secretary George Rees as an alternative candidate for president of the national union.

How much support South Wales leadership have is open to question. The massive programme of pit closures has severely dented their credibility and the delegate conference vote for Margam was extremely confused. Tower colliery has launched an open campaign against six-day working. If this campaign can link up not only with other areas and pits but with supporters in the Labour Party and trade unions, the six-day week can be defeated and South Wales can play its part in a strong and democratic union for all mineworkers.

Civil servants strike

THE first wave of civil service strikes started this week.

Unemployment benefit offices, DHSS offices and inland clearance depots for customs have been hit.

The action is the first in an initial six-week campaign of industrial action launched jointly by the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and the Society

of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS).

They are demanding a wage rise of £20 or 15 per cent (whichever is higher) and a shorter working week. Secret ballots by the two unions recorded votes of 69 and 59 per cent to reject the government's 'final' offer of £5.75 or 4.25 per cent and take strike action.

A Socialist ACTION

What's behind ILEA's Redeployment scheme?

LONDON TEACHERS, mainly NUT members, have been involved in walkouts, stoppages, pickets, and lobbies during the past three weeks due to the Labour led Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) adopting a policy of compulsory transfer of teachers between schools — and identifying teachers for transfer in secondary education. This violates the agreement between ILEA and the Inner London Teachers Association signed two years ago which provides for voluntary transfer of teachers only. Such has been the ferocity of opposition to the ILEA's proposals — in which parents and, significantly, very large numbers of school students have been mobilised — that the ILEA are carrying out disciplinary action against teachers whom they claim have incited school students — as if 16 year olds need teachers to tell them that their educational provision is being threatened!

The most co-ordinated action to be called are strikes called for Thursday 2 April to lobby the ILEA. This action may even be supported by the NUT national leadership — which would boost the campaign. ILEA claim that they wish to narrow a budget deficit by £20 million by transferring teachers. This involves reducing the numbers of teachers drastically in some schools — which ILEA attempt to justify by falling numbers of pupils. The authority argues that it is necessary to move teachers from schools which are 'overstaffed' to schools with vacancies.

Policy

This policy is stupid on many counts — none more so than the fact that it were desirable. History teachers cannot be usefully moved to schools which are short of physicists, or be expected to fill a primary school vacancy. For such changes in skills re-training is necessary. But the provision being offered for this by the ILEA is pitiful. The reason for the vacancies in primary schools is that primary teachers have been treated

particularly badly over the past period and teachers have not wished to stay in that sector. Also there has been a growth in the school population in primary schools, while there has been a temporary decline in school rolls in secondary schools. This will obviously be reversed when the present primary school population moves on to secondary education.

By Ray Sirotkin

An important development in this campaign has been the determination of those involved not just to take strike action but to take the political questions involved into the London Labour Party. Teachers have been demanding that GCs support the teachers against the ILEA members, and they have called on Labour Party members to defend state education.

This dispute is serious enough in itself. But it has to be seen in a wider context. At present it represents an assault and a challenge to the Inner London Teachers' Association — the most advanced section politically of the NUT. It is no coincidence that ILEA's plans were drawn up while

ILTA's officers were suspended by the NUT leadership. Nor is it a coincidence that the national officers of the union are appealing to the NUT against the ILTA executive not being punished severely by the NUT's disciplinary procedures for taking strike action against Kenneth Baker's removal of negotiating rights for teachers. Furthermore all this is being carried out at a time when the education secretary Kenneth Baker has abolished and is preparing to impose working conditions on all teachers.

Leaders

Both the leaders of the NUT, and Labour authorities such as the ILEA, are attempting to control their members and workforce. Both have failed to embark on a strategy that can defeat Baker.

The NUT leadership has so far failed to build on the tremendous mobilisations in opposition to Baker. Instead it has channelled protests towards a few marginal constituencies held by Tory MPs.

ILEA, who need to defend budget requirements, could and should have mobilised teachers, support staff, parents and, yes, students against the government. They would, without question have been able to campaign in the whole labour movement.

Meanwhile Kenneth Baker is sitting back laughing. If the NUT leadership paralyses ILTA, or if the ILEA succeed in their attack on state secondary education in London, then the Tories will step in and take advantage of the situation to break up ILEA. They will be strengthened in that attack by the full knowledge that support for the Labour led ILEA is being reduced by its actions.

Sammy Thompson wins - NOW REJECT SIX DAY WORKING

CLAIMS THAT South Wales miners are prepared to work a six-day coaling week in order to see the new Margam pit opened up are totally false. The decision of the South Wales area delegate conference to accept the 'concept of Margam' was not representative of the feelings of the rank and file. The issue had not been discussed in the lodges. Most delegates arrived with no mandate. They didn't know in advance what vote would be taken.

After the delegate conference lodge members were angry that they had not been party to that decision. Since then the lodges have discussed the proposals. If a vote was taken now, after full membership participation, the result would be considerably different.

The Coal Board are saying that Margam will not be opened unless six-day working is accepted. The South Wales NUM area leadership have capitulated to this demand without a fight. That is what their recommendation to the delegate conference represented.

The Board claims that six-day working on a continental shift basis will give miners more days off a year. That might be true but it would increase the risk of injuries and ill-health. Miners would be working underground for longer periods — that is neither acceptable nor safe.

The Board also claims that opening Margam will create jobs. But no new jobs would be created. It would lead to the closure of other coking plants such as Marine and Six Bells.

Men would be transferred and made redundant. These pits would become 'uneconomic'.

The new jobs argument is a red herring. The real issue is introducing six-day working proposals by the backdoor. The issue isn't just Margam. The Board are trying to break the procedure of nationally negotiated agreements. South Wales is being used to clear the path.

The five-day week agreement was drawn up nationally in 1947 and is part of the NUM rule book. If this is to be changed it must be done by a national decision. If South Wales negotiated on six-day working, it would break a rule of 40 years standing — a rule which miners have fought for many years to win.

Yorkshire was offered six-day working in Selby. Durham was offered a new mine with six-day working strings. Both these areas turned the offers down.

By Tyrone O'Sullivan, Secretary, Tower Lodge NUM

Tower Lodge NUM has decided to launch a public campaign against the decision of the South Wales conference. This is not a step we take lightly, but the Margam issue is an attempt by the Coal Board to break the NUM.

If national agreements can be broken, the NUM will be far weaker. The Board will have succeeded in destroying what is perhaps the best organised and most politically aware section of the organised working class. That would be a step backwards for all workers and all working class organisations.

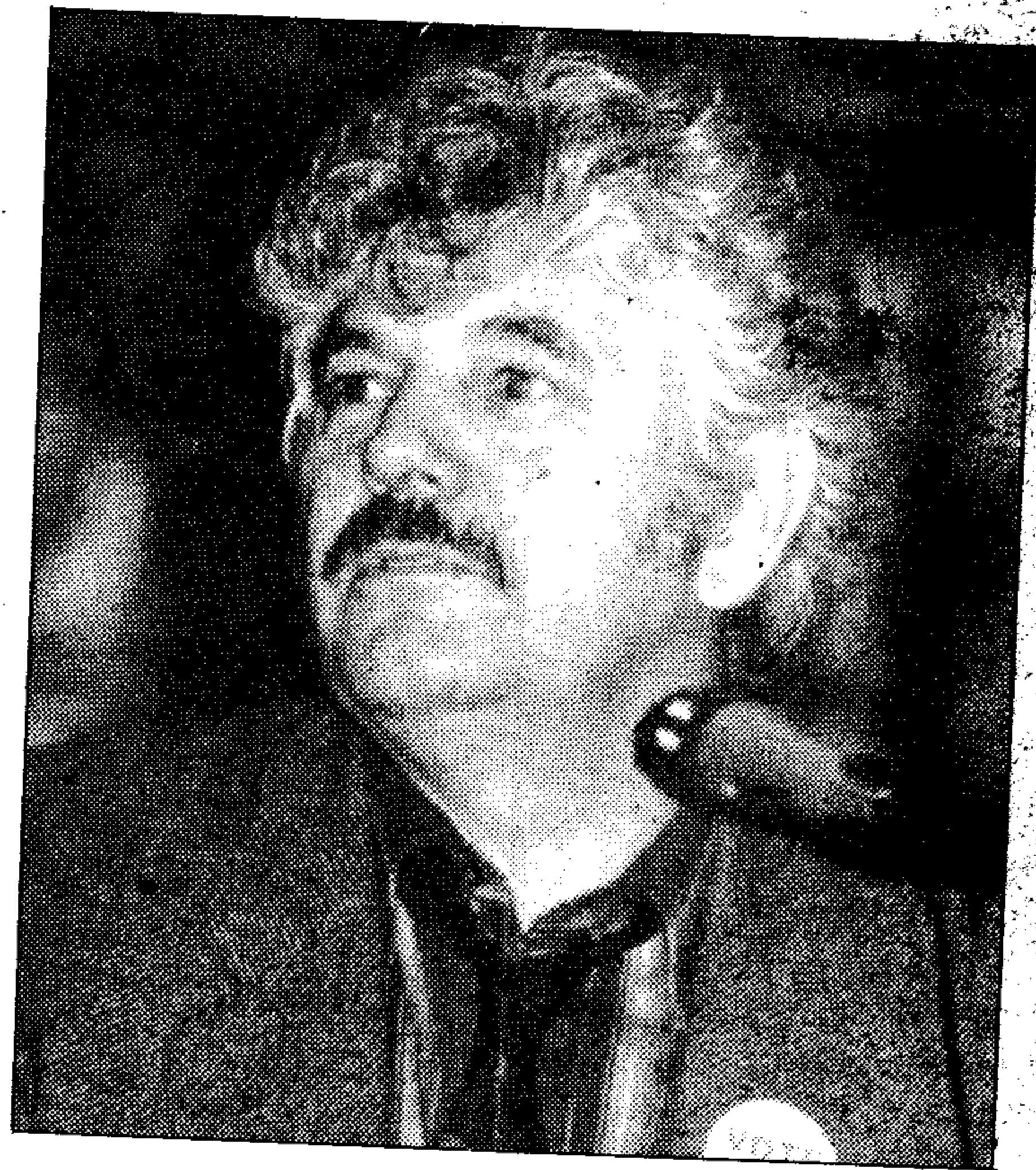
Tower has the full backing of its members. I know that 99.9 per cent of miners in the lodge support the line of our campaign.

The rank and file of the South Wales NUM has got to sort out the South Wales-national divide once and for all. To do this the executive must be made accountable and put under the control of its members.

The issue of six-day working should be put to a national ballot. I believe there will be one soon and that it will register an overwhelming proportion of NUM members opposed to six-day coaling.

Des Duffield claims that South Wales miners can wait four years to decide. But every day the divisions get deeper. I believe they will destroy our union if we don't resolve them.

There are many who would welcome this, which is why the media has played up the South Wales decision on Margam. And



there are some in our own movement that are going along with these attacks on the NUM and its national leadership.

Neil Kinnock has interfered in the affairs of our union, over the heads of the national leadership, to call for support for Margam and six-day working. Likewise TGWU right winger George Wright has said that if the NUM won't organise at Margam, then the transport workers will, although this statement has now been repudiated by the TGWU nationally. Comments like this are as much designed to attack Arthur Scargill as they are to support Margam.

Conference

A recent special delegate conference of the NUM nationally approved increased subscriptions on the recommendation of the NUM national executive in order to maintain the national union. This was necessary after the court actions taken against us during the strike.

This is the first stage in refunding and rebuilding our national organisation. Also the election of Sammy Thompson as national vice-president is another stepping stone in that direction.

Six-day working is a major issue for the National Union of Mineworkers. I believe we are

Sammy Thompson election success

SAMMY THOMPSON has been elected NUM vice-president by 34,802 votes to Eric Clarke's 25,956.

Interviewed on the radio following the announcement of his poll success, Thompson said that his election confirmed strong national support in the union for the leadership of Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield.

Thompson emphasised that he considered opposition to six-day working to be a crunch issue. We should be fighting for a shorter working week, he said. There was a 65 per cent turnout of the NUM membership in the pithead ballot. Thompson's 57.27 per cent was his total following transfers from two other candidates eliminated in the count though it is understood that he had a majority on first preferences too.

going to win our fight to maintain five-day working and uphold nationally negotiated agreements — and win it convincingly.

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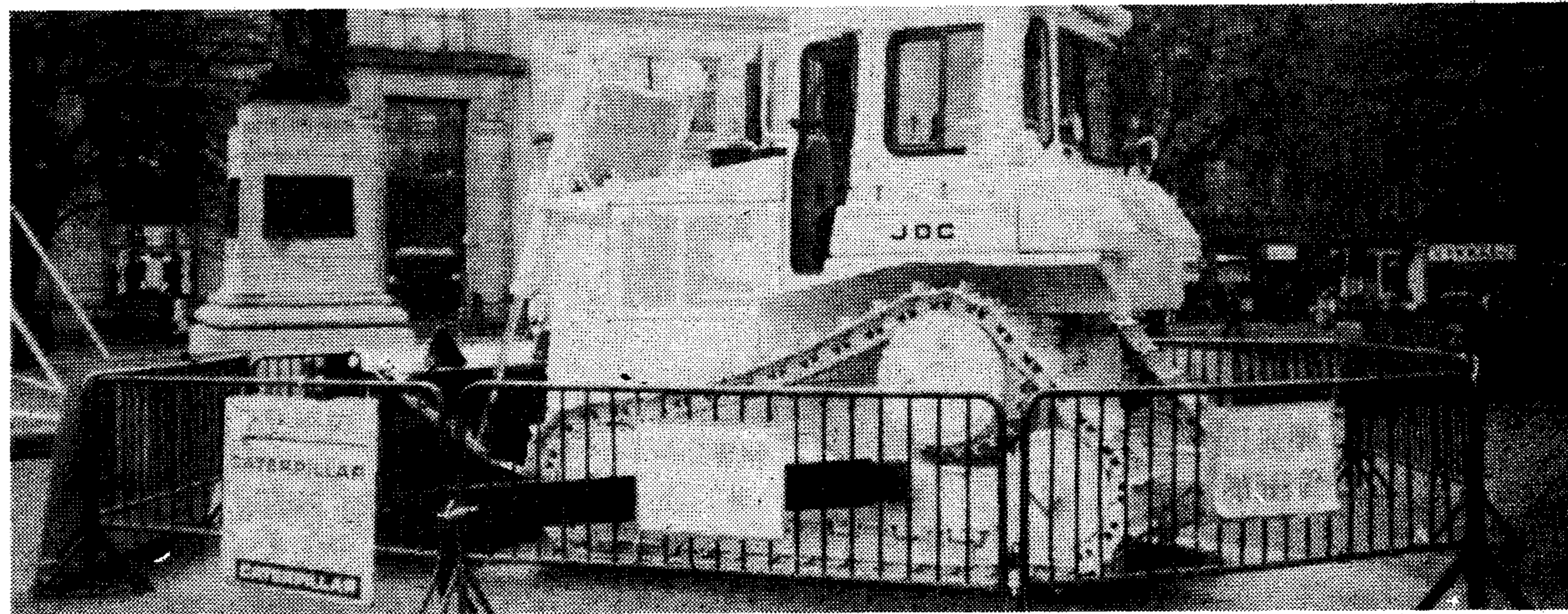
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Caterpillar workers fight on



The 'pink panther' tractor built by occupying Caterpillar workers for the people of Nicaragua stands idle in Glasgow's George Square impounded by the company's court action. Full report, page 11.