

Socialist Action

Break all links

with apartheid



THE British and United States governments have openly emerged once more as the main international supporters of the murderous apartheid regime in South Africa. Their decision even to veto a United Nations resolution calling for 'voluntary' sanctions against South Africa, and to abstain on the very mild French resolution calling for a halt to new investment, shows clearly that they intend to continue to prop up the Botha regime.

The reasons for this policy are not hard to find. Britain is the largest investor in the South African economy — with the US the



second largest. Britain's direct investments are worth an estimated £5 billion, with a further £6 billion in loans and shareholdings. Over half of the 2000 foreign-owned companies in the apartheid state are controlled from the UK.

With this economic weight the British govern-

ment has a major influence over the situation in South Africa. But for British imperialism, considerations of profit far outweigh any concern about the bloody repression that has been unleashed on the blacks in South Africa.

Between September last year, when the recent strug-

gles began, and the declaration of a state of emergency on 20 July, more than 500 blacks were murdered by the security forces, over 2,000 injured, and 3,000 arrested. Since 20 July there have been more than 20 more deaths on official figures alone and over 1,200 arrests. The stand taken by Britain and the US gives the green light to yet more fearsome repression. Botha's threat to deport the 1.5 million black workers from neighbouring states is only made possible by British and American complicity with apartheid.

Faced with Thatcher's policy, and South Africa's repression, Neil Kinnock's call for an end to new investment is totally inadequate. The recession has in any case reduced levels of new investment. As might be ex-

pected Kinnock proposes only painless sacrifices for imperialism. Firms such as ICI, Plessey, Barclays and Standard Chartered Bank will be free to draw their profits and give loans and capital to the regime.

Power

The labour movement should instead build a campaign to break all links with apartheid — a campaign which will have to include winning the labour movement to action against both the British government and the companies that profit from the South African regime. It means the labour movement also directly supporting the black struggle in South Africa itself.

Against those who argue that action against the

regime would hurt the black population, the South African Congress of Trade Unions gave the answer as long ago as 1963: 'It is sometimes argued even by well-meaning people abroad that if the world boycotts South Africa we, the working people, will suffer most. Even if this were true — and we do not believe it — let us assure our well-wishers abroad that we do not shrink from any hardship in the cause of freedom.'

Socialists in Britain have a special responsibility to build a mass campaign against Britain's complicity in apartheid. The labour movement should organise immediately to send delegations to meet with the leaders of the black masses in South Africa. It should link this move to demands for the ending of all

diplomatic links, for a boycott of trade with the regime and of all South African goods — and for a boycott of firms which sustain the South African regime.

● Southampton dockers gave a magnificent lead on Tuesday in the struggle to break all links with apartheid when they refused to load machine tools bound for the South Africa from Atlas Aircraft Corporation which contravened the arms embargo on sales to South Africa.

NUS general secretary Jim Slater rightly said, 'If government is not going to stop arms equipment going to South Africa, it's up to trade unions to take action.'

The action is also clearly in defiance of the 1982 anti-union laws which ban secondary boycotts.

Hammond and Scargill

THE PRESS has been largely pre-occupied during the last week with the possibility of a split in the TUC. At one level of course it is wishful thinking by Fleet Street. It is extremely unlikely that the TUC will split this time round — much as Thatcher, Steel, and Owen would like it.

But over the long term there is no doubt that there is little likelihood of the TUC remaining united — and it should be remembered that Britain is already one of only a very few countries which has a united trade union movement. The split dynamic is however created not by the left but by the right wing within the TUC.

The basis of the old unity of the TUC was the ability of British imperialism to give concessions to fairly wide layers of the working class. On that basis gains could be fought for by all sections of the unions without explosive conflicts. But Thatcher has broken sharply with any 'one nation' policy. She has consciously pursued a policy of concentrating concessions on relatively highly paid and skilled sections of the working class — a policy clearly spelt out in the famous 'Ridley Report' which provided the build up the confrontation with the miners.

Given the way geography and social divisions coincide in Britain the reflection on the electoral field of that policy has been seen in the widening 'north/south' divide — with the Tories electoral popularity holding up far better in the more prosperous south and south east and falling dramatically outside these regions.

Within the trade union movement the same division is seen in the widening gulf between unions such as the EEUPTU and the AUEW on one side and other sections of the movement, symbolised by the miners and their allies on the other hand. Within the NUM it is seen in the division between the relatively secure Notts coalfield and the 'peripheral' regions of the union.

Under the impact of Thatcher's policies some of the most basic structural divides within the trade union movement are coming out. It is precisely the unions with their original base among higher paid skilled craft workers — the AUEW and EEUPTU — which are the bulwark of the right wing — and have organised around themselves the small managerial unions. It is unions such as the NUM, and on an issue such as black sections NUPE, which are the core of the left.

The reason for the deepening division is simple. Increasingly there are going to be only two ways forward in the trade unions. The first is towards forms of class collaboration far more direct and open even than Britain has seen this century — the road being pioneered by Hammond. It means a direct alliance with the ruling class against the mass of the working class and the abandonment of the most elementary principles of trade unionism — as well as an increasing political distancing from Labour.

The second road is that of class struggle and alliance with the mass of the working class — including its most oppressed layers — on a level higher than anything seen for decades. That is the path the NUM started the working class on during the strike.

Hammond and Scargill, these are the two figures that sum up today the logical development of these two paths. It is the right wing, unlike the left, which would finally split away rather than submit to even the elementary interests of the working class as a whole.

The TUC is most unlikely to split this year. But over the next decade the internal strains are likely to become intolerable.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN

Published weekly except two weeks in August and the last week of December.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent Socialist Action's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Send all correspondence regarding subscriptions, sales and receipts to Socialist Action Distribution, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Send all material for publication (including advertising) to Socialist Action Editorial at the same address. We regret that due to the high cost of postage we cannot return or acknowledge unsolicited copy or photographs unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Fighting



NUM campaign launched

'UNITY IS strength! One industry, one union! Keep Notts national! No return to Spencerism!'

With these four slogans Henry Richardson officially launched the campaign against the breakaway union last Sunday morning in Bolsover. The meeting of 200 miners was dismayed to hear the news that Arthur Scargill was involved in a car accident on his way to speak. But Peter Heathfield made a rousing speech to rally NUM supporters for a hard-hitting campaign.

Demolishing each of the splitters' arguments in turn, Heathfield emphasised the real issues at stake in the campaign for national unity. He pointed out that despite the vicious anti-Scargill campaign being waged by the splitters, the issue was not one of personalities.

'Scargill has never personalised one issue throughout the whole strike. He has always campaigned on policies — not his policies, not my policies, but the policies of NUM conference decided by delegates elected from the pits to represent their mates.'

Lynk denies he is involved in recreating a Spencer-type union. But Heathfield pointed out that, 'Spencer emerged in 1926 because of his relationship with the old coal owners and promises made to him about local agreements which would be far superior to those negotiable in other parts of the country.'

'Today MacGregor wants, on a pit-by-pit basis, to reward the "loyalty" of Notts. I'm sure that these offers will be honoured in the short term. But the aim is to prevent unity in the NUM, to prevent us fighting this mafia-type management.'

'And I'll predict — and I'll put my neck on the block — that if the Tories are re-elected, Notts pits will be owned by the

multinationals in five years' time.

'This will be the direct consequence of the fragmentation of our organisation. The only ones who will be happy are those who want to see the destruction of the NUM — because it'll be safe for them to get their own way if working people are falling out with each other.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Chadburn received a standing ovation when he introduced himself as the president of Notts area NUM. He went on to echo the points made by Heathfield — emphasising in particular the collaboration of the NCB in the split.

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

'It would be a blow not just to the miners, but to the whole trade union movement in Britain.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Chadburn reported that workers at Bevercotes colliery have been issued with forms from the time office to join the breakaway. He closed by appealing to Notts miners to 'defend this great union of ours, and preserve our nationalised industry.'

Open letter to Notts miners

DEAR COMRADES,

As more and more sections of the Labour Party and labour movement demand that no recognition is given to any break-away organisation of miners in Notts, it is important to address some of the issues which seem to be being overlooked in the debate.

With the NCB being so enthusiastic in their response to a break-away group, Notts miners ought to be put on their guard by questions of what lies behind MacGregor's 'generosity'. The answer can be seen quite easily from the figures of projected job losses in Notts.

At the moment there are some 30,000 mining jobs in the county. The timetable of pit closures is well known and is going to take at least 1/3 of these jobs. What has been less clear is the projection of job losses due to improvements in mining technology. When these projections are built in it shows that, within the next 5 years, 20,000 of these 30,000 jobs will disappear.

The question facing Notts miners is — if you break away from the na-

tional union, who will have you when you are faced with redundancy or a move elsewhere. Breaking away from the NUM will only be cutting your own throats financially, politically and economically.

However attractive today's terms from MacGregor, once you are isolated his favours will cease. In the Moorgreen pit which is now closing down in Nottingham miners seeking early retirement are being turned down and those seeking moves elsewhere are often faced with offers unrelated to any of their stated preferences. This will get worse.

The future of the mining industry in this country — which should be the centre of UK energy policies for the next 50 years at least — depends upon miners standing together within a national union which can take up the foolish, wasteful and destructive arguments of the Coal Board and their Tory paymasters.

In the interests of yourselves, your families and your communities ... stay with the NUM. Yours in comradeship, Alan Simpson Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (Nottingham South CLP)

Meetings announced in the NUM campaign in Notts so far are:

● Sunday 4 August 10 am, Cresswell Social Centre. Speakers Peter Heathfield and Ray Chadburn.

● Sunday 11 August 10 am, Blidworth miners' welfare. Speakers Arthur Scargill and Henry Richardson.

● Sunday 11 August, lunchtime, Newark. Speaker Ray Chadburn.

● Sunday 11 August, Devonshire suite, Idlewells Centre, Sutton. Speakers Arthur Scargill and Ray Chadburn.

● Saturday 24 August, Hucknall Leisure Centre. Speakers Arthur Scargill and Ray Chadburn.

'With the sun on our backs'

THE STORY of the 1984/5 miners' strike is built out of thousands of individual tales of heroism, sacrifice and humour as they unfolded day by day. Many of these will never be known beyond small handfuls of people. One of the most dramatic centres on the tiny group of striking miners and their families — the 'Dirty 30' — who fight on still against the apathy and self-interest of the 2,500 scab-led Leicestershire miners who worked throughout the strike.

A Leicestershire playwright and four actors in the Utility Theatre Company have brought their story to life in a really entertaining, exciting and enjoyable play which is being seen from pit villages to the Edinburgh Festival, and was recently put on in East London. It's full of comedy and songs, and politically spot on — free from high-faluting rhetoric.

The action revolves around four main characters, Johnny, a striking miner, Cath — his wife, her younger sister

Julie and their father Bill. Through this device all the personal implications of the strike emerge as well as the wider political implications.

By Toni Gorton

Very little is fictional, although the characters are representative rather than actual. This makes the play absorbing. The incidents are real. For example, one of the striking miners was arrested at home along with his 18 month-old son who was

put in a cell alone. The screaming child could be heard continuously while police grilled the father about such things as his sex life with his wife.

The two sisters portray the motivations and development of women. Their responses as wives and daughters show how they bring their own battles as women into the struggle — into conflict sometimes with their husbands and fathers — making their contribution on their own terms.

The timing, acting and singing are terrific. The songs highlight various stages of the strike and political aspects such as: 'There ain't nothing like a scab' to the poignant 'The loneliness of the long-distance runner' as the strike drags on. The abusive one about Neil Kinnock to the tune of the 'Red Flag' — got a big

response from the audience drawn from the local miners' support committee and the finale 'The Song of Coal' brought people forward to a fighting political perspective.

The title refers to a saying — with the sun on our backs a miner will never go down pit again. But the Dirty 30 are down pit again and making a good fight to keep Leicestershire miners with the national union. One of their leaders, Mick Richmond, drew the evening to a close with his comrade Roy Butlin from the Coalville railworkers who shared the hard times together.

The play is on tour now. Terms are negotiable with Winston Nicholl on Leicester (0533) 559711 or c/o The Utility Theatre Co., Magazine Work-space, 11 Newarke St, Leicestershire.

the breakaway

Campaigning in Notts

THIS WEEK has seen the campaign against the breakaway union in Notts continue to build up steam.

Miners across the county believe that there is still a large middle ground made up of miners who might have worked during the dispute but who are not convinced by Lynk's plan to split the NUM.

The 10,000 abstentions in the recent ballot for area agent gives some indication of the size of this middle ground. The campaign against the breakaway must be directed towards convincing these people to stay in the national union.

Despite the holiday shutdown of many pits, miners loyal to the NUM, and their supporters, have organised to distribute many thousands of copies of *The Miner* together with the nationally produced campaign leaflets.

Women from Notts Women Against Pit Closures have taken a lead in this work. On Tuesday women from Calverton distributed large amounts of campaign material to miners at Hucknall pit. They report that apart from with the hard core of right wingers *The Miner* was well received with some miners taking two or three extra copies to give their mates.

On Monday Notts Women Against Pit Closures organised a picket of the area council meeting at the Berry Hill offices in Mansfield. Despite being organised at very short notice some fifty women turned out. They were able to make their points forcefully to area council members and to Labour MPs Frank Haynes and Don Concannon who were present at the breakaway meeting.

The feeling of support for the national union coming from many miners in Notts is clearly having an effect on Lynk and co. After four hours of discussion, the area council finally agreed to call a ballot on the breakaway proposal. The voting will be in September. This is a

reversal of Lynk's earlier position that no new vote was necessary since Notts miners had already voted to reject the NUM's rule changes.

The fact that the council also took the soft option and decided to propose amalgamation with the breakaway outfit in Durham — which means that only a simple majority vote is required for the breakaway — also reveals some uncertainty of Lynk about his support.

There is a widespread feeling that Lynk could not achieve the two thirds majority required to change area rules.

Ballot

Whilst it would be more democratic to take votes on the breakaway proposals at branch meetings, where the arguments could be openly presented to the workforce, the ballot will nevertheless provide a real focus for the campaign. The campaign must now move into top gear.

A number of major rallies, addressed by members of the area leadership loyal to the NUM, and by Arthur Scargill or Peter Heathfield, are planned to take place in the mining centres around the country.

These meetings will culminate in a major na-



tional rally to take place in Hucknall on 24 August which will include delegations from other mining areas. Plans are also being made for a major event to take place in the Mansfield area in the final run up to the ballot.

Pressure from other labour movement bodies, and individuals, aimed at isolating the splitters is also building up in Notts. This week a leaflet explaining the TUC's position has been prepared. It points out that the 24 July meeting of the General Council re-affirmed its previous position that breakaway bodies from national unions will not be eligible for TUC affiliation. It goes on to urge miners to 'stand by the National Union of Mineworkers.'

Alan Simpson, prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for Nottingham South, has added his voice to the anti-Lynk campaign. In a hard hitting statement he explained to Notts miners that 'breaking from the NUM will only be cutting your own throats finan-

cially, politically, and economically.'

However although the anti-split campaign is now getting off the ground many rank and file activists in the NUM feel that there is still much more that could be done. They see this is a campaign that the national union can win — but only if an all out effort is made to win over the middle ground in the union. All different strands of the campaign need to be drawn together on an area basis, and information needs to pass rapidly down to activists on the ground.

The Forum

As yet however, the Notts Miners' Forum, the old left organisation in the union, remains too narrowly based to do this effectively. Its meetings should now be thrown open to all those activists within the union who are ready and willing to pitch into the campaign.

Positive steps need to be taken to encourage young militants to attend

and get involved. Only in this way can the full potential and dynamism of the miners who were the backbone of the strike in Notts be harnessed to the full.

Moreover whatever the outcome of the struggle against the split the Forum will form the centre of the new area leadership. What is needed is a leadership on the lines of the national leadership of the NUM — one which bases itself on the activism of the membership, not one which tends to do business away and apart from the rank and file. Positive steps towards building such a leadership can and must be taken now.

All told it is going to be a long hard summer in Notts. But as the campaign against the split drives forward, the possibility of defeating Lynk and his cronies will increase. If the full potential of the campaign is developed, there is every chance that the outcome of the ballot in September will begin to give the NUM a Notts area of which it can be proud.



Notts LPYS day school

South Nottingham LPYS has responded to the breakaway from the NUM by organising an LPYS day school on 10 August to discuss how to defend the national union in Nottingham. The school is also being supported by Nottingham East, Gedling and Broxtowe LPYS's and the East Midlands LPYS regional committee.

The day school will be the first regional LPYS event in our area and will give us the opportunity of working with other YS branches in a common campaign. We want the LPYS to be the centre of the campaign against the breakaway — and that means also winning young miners to the LPYS and using it to organise against the right wing in the Labour Party and the unions.

The spirit and determination of the young miners in the strike must be harnessed in the fight to keep Notts national. The LPYS is one means

for politically organising them.

In the final days before the school we will be touring the villages in an attempt to mobilise young miners. We don't just want the LPYS to have a good discussion. We want it to be part of the fight.

The speakers at the school are from Notts area NUM, Notts Women Against Pit Closures, the LPYS national committee, and Graham Naylor on Spencerism. There will also be a video on women in the strike.

The day school will discuss not only how to fight the breakaway but what a fighting union really is.

The LPYS school will be at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

Registration starts at 12.00 pm. The school starts at 12.30 pm Saturday 10 August. All welcome.

By Bernie Kavanagh and Anne Donnelly (Secretary Nottingham South LPYS, personal capacity)

Agecroft fights breakaway

BOTH THE *Financial Times* and *The Guardian* have been predicting support for the Notts breakaway in the Agecroft pit in Lancashire. Branch officials have been quoted in support of the split. Steve Howells, coordinator of the minority of strikers at Agecroft, describes the current situation:

'At our branch meeting on Sunday the branch voted that when Notts finally decides on a breakaway it will organise a ballot to find the feelings of the membership on whether to have a ballot to decide on a breakaway. In other words, a ballot for a ballot.'

'The vote was 130 for the motion, 52 against, and 118 abstentions. Four hundred and fifty members didn't even attend despite the four free pints of beer given to each person.'

'So the splitters don't even have a majority — people abstained because they don't want to split, but didn't want to be seen to go with us.'

'In no way can they get a majority vote to break away and they know it.'

'We will campaign as strikers and loyal members of our union to keep our branch and all its members in the national union. We will do this through leaflets, the *Lancashire Miner* newspaper, and rallies.'

'We are inviting Arthur Scargill to speak at a *Lancashire Miner* rally near the pit. We demand that the labour movement in the North West must make it clear — any breakaway will get no recognition.'

'It is doubtful that they will get a majority for a breakaway, but they might even break away with a



minority. A branch committee member has already stated that if they lose 60:40 they will still go —

great upholders of 'democracy'!!'

Mines not missiles '85

3 Day Free Festival, 24-26 August

24 August: Rally at Snowdown pit, music and theatre

25 August: Games, children's sports, videos, exhibitions

26 August: Fun run, speakers and bands

All 3 days: camping, stalls, boot fair

Aylesham Welfare Grounds, Aylesham, Kent

Details ring 0304-206661



Notts remember

'DON'T WORRY — we've not forgotten about our friends in Nicaragua.' That is how one Linby miner greeted us at a strikers' meeting last week.

In spite of the hectic activity of the campaign against Lynk's attack on the NUM, Notts miners and women activists can still find time to discuss the Nicaraguan Aid Project organised by the Nottingham Central America Solidarity Campaign (CASC).

Members of CASC recently returned from Nicaragua have been touring the Notts area, speaking to miners and women's groups. In particular, they have been reporting on their discussions with the miners of the La Libertad gold mine.

The Nicaraguan miners are staunch defenders of the revolution, and have told their government that they are prepared to forgo basic clothing and safety equipment to free resources for fighting the US-backed contras.

CASC is asking Notts miners and women to collect items or contribute funds for the 183 miners at La Libertad, so that boots, overalls, safety gloves and helmets can be sent in the container leaving for Nicaragua at the end of the year.

So far, Hucknall Labour Party and Bulwell Labour Party, both run by ex-strikers, have donated £30 and £20. Hucknall Labour Party is proposing to organise a public meeting on Nicaragua in September.

Several individuals have already donated items to CASC, and the Campaign has also been asked to send speakers to Sutton miners and women, Cotgrave and Gedling Labour Parties, and women activists in Blidworth and Warsop. Their international solidarity at a time like this is a real tribute to the class conscious men and women of Notts NUM and WAPC.

● Sixty-five people attended a social on 19 July organised by Nottingham Socialist Action supporters to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution. £50 was raised for Socialist Action funds.

Police riot manual revealed

The recent Orgreave 'riot' trial in Sheffield, in which the prosecution withdrew all charges before it had completed the presentation of its own case, revealed details of a secret manual for the training of the police in paramilitary operations. Sections of this manual were publicised by Tony Benn in the House of Commons last week.

The sections of the manual so far revealed show that police operations during the miners' strike against so-called rioters, were carried out under instructions which in Benn's words lead them 'to act illegally and violently against persons engaged in protests and demonstrations who have never been arrested or charged with any offence'.

The manual was drawn up by the Association of Chief Police Officers (AC-PO). This body has no official status, and is a voluntary association of Britain's top cops. The manual was drawn up after the Brixton, Bristol and Toxteth riots in 1981 — and it is probable that it also drew on the experience of the RUC in Northern Ireland.

The tactics outlined in the manual concern the use of long-shield and short-shield police. The long shield used in riots is unsuitable for the rapid deployment of police, and the strategy is for the long-shield police to provide the main muscle in the situation, while short-shield police act as snatch squads and dispersal units.

The instructions include details of how police

are to deal with demonstrators. The manual states, under 'Manoeuvre 7' that: 'On the command, the short-shield officers will run forward either through and/or round the long shields into the crowd for not more than 30 yards. They disperse the crowd and incapacitate missile-throwers and ringleaders by striking in a controlled manner with batons about the arms and legs or torso.'

The instructions to 'disperse and/or incapacitate' are repeated in the manual. That these instructions were carried out with enthusiasm during the strike by the police is in no doubt. Whether blows were confined to 'arms and legs or torso' may be left to the imagination.

The Orgreave trial showed, however, that the police actions were not aimed at missile-throwing rioters. A key part of the media campaign around Orgreave was a BBC video of the 'riot' which showed the police apparently responding to stoning.

Tony Benn pointed out in his statement prepared for the House of Commons that 'after the events at Orgreave last year, ministers, police chiefs and the media spoke about the "riot" that occurred. Indeed, the BBC showed TV film in which missiles were seen as being thrown before the police advanced.'

'The Crown then decided to prosecute for riot and the case was heard recently in Sheffield Crown Court ...

'Yet when the case began and the police videos were shown to the jury it became clear that what had happened was very different, and that the police horses had advanced upon peaceful crowds, some of whom had also been viciously attacked by truncheons wielded by the police.'

'This confirmed the information given to me at the time by staff at BBC news that the BBC news editor had deliberately transposed the film he had received to give the im-



pression that the police charges followed the throwing of stones, when the exact opposite had occurred.'

The manual, much of which is still secret, has clearly been adopted by the Home Office and will be in regular use. The instructions in the manual are in clear breach of of-

ficially declared police regulations — the deliberate attempt to incapacitate 'ringleaders' is intended to injure and intimidate demonstrators.

The doctored BBC film was a basis for the massive propaganda about the 'riot' at Orgreave and the campaign about miners' 'violence'. But

these revelations show that it was the state and the police which caused the riot. They also show that methods of policing developed in Northern Ireland have come to Britain to stay.

The Labour movement must demand the publication of this police manual in full.

Reinstate the Phurnacite 5!

In March five workers from the Phurnacite plant at Abercwmboi in the Cynon Valley received notice of their suspension. The following day they received instant dismissal. Their names had been given to the National Smokeless Fuels (NSF) management by Paul Watson — the nationally publicised strikebreaker who worked throughout the strike. Watson alleges the five men spat at him and called him a scab.

Bobby Roberts, Viv Wais, John Cotter, Graham James, and Kelvin Bevan now await the hearing at an industrial tribunal for which no date has yet been set. SUE REID talked to Annette Roberts, Merrilyn Davies, and Audrey Winterburn from the Abercwmboi Sacked Miners' Support Group.

The Abercwmboi support group was set up to give moral support to those victimised and to raise as much publicity as possible. It was obvious the sackings were just to make an example. Joy and Paul Watson received press publicity and support throughout the strike. It was no coincidence that the five were suspended

the day after there was national television news coverage of an incident with Joy Watson on the picket line. The *Sun* headline read 'Thugs and bully boys'.

Annette Roberts explained the events leading up to the dismissals. 'After the return to work Watson was normally accompanied to the baths of the plant by the shift manager. But on this day he refused it. He walked into the plant across the line of thirty men and then back out again.'

'He then approached the manager to make a complaint. Watson alleged he had been spat at and called a scab.'

'Watson was checked for spittle but was clean and did not seem in distress. He then gave the names of the five men. All of them were very strong supporters of the strike and had been on the picket lines.'

The men from the Phurnacite came out immediately they knew the men had been sacked — along with other pits in the area. But the NSF said they would not negotiate at all if the men stayed out. So at a meeting the union advised the men to go back.

The Phurnacite lodge is supporting the men's claim for reinstatement and, at least until the

tribunal, the union is supporting the families of the sacked men.

The women are meeting weekly and are raising funds so that the five, or themselves, can afford to visit other areas to speak at meetings and build the campaign. All the money raised is for publicising, travelling, and building up the campaign. The women agree there is no point in giving the money to the families as that would only be a short term solution — the five should have their jobs back.

The support group have made badges 'Reinstate the Phurnacite Five', run the jumble sales, stalls and bingo as well as produced a poetry book written by Merrilyn. It is called *Poems for the Working Class*.

The women have made links with the union in South Wales, but this has its problems. Merrilyn explained 'They support us in what we are doing, but we want to make as much publicity as possible. This is not the way the union wants to do things. But we feel if we lose the tribunal it will be too late then, the time is gone.'

The group has had support from Anne Clwyd, the MP for the Cynon Valley, who advised them to try to keep the campaign in the public eye and not let people forget about it. She recommended a lobby of Parliament. The women would like to do that, but say it has to be more than just a few of them.

The women have also attended the South Wales area women's support group — who are also con-

sidering a lobby of Parliament-around amnesty.

Merrilyn explained how they saw action as urgent: 'If we don't act soon there will be no pits left. It's no good just talking — we should be doing something.'

'Penrhiweiber and Bedwas are being closed. I feel strongly about how the valleys are being run into the ground. Things are being taken and not replaced. Soon there will be no men left to argue for action in the lodges.'

All the women felt that associate membership of the NUM for the women's support groups would be a good thing — but were rather sceptical of the role women would be allowed to play in the area. 'When it comes to something important they tell us to shut up. The only time they take notice is when they want something done.'

Whatever the outcome of the appeal the women's organisation agrees that it is here to stay. The launching of the national amnesty campaign by Scargill, they feel, will give them more scope and perhaps stir people up.

Merrilyn summed up their view again: 'There is plenty to fight for. Arthur Scargill was right when he said seventy pits would close. South Wales has always been so militant I think they just want to get rid of us.'

'People say we're going to damage the cause by making a fuss. What are we doing to damage? There will be nothing left soon. How can we do more damage than they are?'

● To contact the campaign phone 0443 472179



Wrexham rally

A 'JOBS not jail' meeting in Wrexham on 17 July — organised by Wrexham and Chester miners support groups — was addressed by TGWU leader Ron Todd, a sacked miner from Staffordshire, and local speakers.

While defending the trade union movement breaking the law Ron Todd disappointed many

of the audience by a call for 'judicial review' of sentencing as an alternative to general amnesty.

This opinion was not shared by Eric Lippert, a sacked miner from Staffordshire. 'I'll never believe them two South Wales lads are murderers,' Lippert said to massive applause.

North Wales Bersham striking miner Keith Hett defended both the new rule changes and the lack of a

national ballot — illustrating the latter point by pointing to the Notts breakaway.

Joan Maret, from point of Ayr women's support group insisted that many trade unionists had been reminded what the word 'trade union' meant during the strike.

Despite disappointment over Todd's stance the rally was a useful beginning to the campaign in the area.

The SDP and the TUC

THE BREAKAWAY in Notts, the no-strike deal between the EETPU and Eddie Shah, and the row in the TUC over the AUEW's acceptance of government funds for postal ballots, have been the right-wing moves in the trade unions which have captured the press headlines in the last weeks.

But the TUC's right wing is not just putting forward a policy for the unions. It aims to change the entire relationship of the trade union movement to the Labour Party and to open up the way for political collaboration between the unions and the SDP-Liberal Alliance.

JOHN ROSS looks at the political strategy of the Alliance and its links to the development of the right wing inside the TUC.

An interesting feature of the EETPU-Eddie Shah no-strike deal last week was the direct role played in setting it up by two members of the SDP.

Lord Harris of Greenwich, a director of Shah's Messenger group and an SDP member, arranged the meeting between the union and Shah through John Grant — ex-Labour MP, the EETPU's press officer, and a fellow SDP member.

The SDP also moved in rapidly to exploit the breakaway from the NUM in Notts. It won two local government by-elections from Labour, in Mansfield and Ashfield, following Lynk's announcement of the breakaway. The SDP's policy was clear support for Lynk and the breakaway.

Finally the Alliance also jumped immediately into the fight in the TUC over postal ballots. On Tuesday last week, following up the story of that morning which appeared in the *Financial Times*, David Steel openly called for a split of the TUC between 'an open minded progressive group ready to talk to the Alliance and the government as well as Labour and an old fashioned, socialist group which revolves around Labour politics.'

Steel stated the Alliance was ready to talk to either the old TUC or a new progressive union group or both. He announced he had proposed a meeting with the TUC to Norman Willis but would also be happy to meet with the AUEW, EETPU, or the Notts breakaway.

Liberals

Steel announced that he would be speaking at a fringe meeting of Liberal trade unionists to be held at this year's TUC congress.

But these recent and open initiatives are just the continuation of a long term orientation towards the right wing of the TUC by the Alliance. The policies of 'new realism' and the activities of 'Mainstream' are not just confined to the economic field. They are inseparable from a new relationship in politics to the Labour party and to the Alliance.

Right from its beginning the SDP sought to take up the policies pioneered by the EETPU leadership — as well as those of the Conservative Trade Unionists (the two being almost identical on the question of anti-union laws). In February 1982 the SDP launched a three

point programme calling for industrial participation, an attack on the political levy and the introduction of compulsory secret ballots.

In September the same year the SDP issued a 'Green Paper' calling in addition for compulsory secret postal ballots for all internal union elections and compulsory ballots before strikes.

In addition to backing these measures long utilised by the EETPU and AUEW right wing, the SDP also clearly prioritised a long term strategy of making links with certain union leaderships. The SDP recruited as trade union officer Tony Halmos — a member of the policy staff of the TUC. John Grant MP — the same Grant who later set up the deal with Shah — became chair of the Association of Social Democratic Trade Unionists. Grant was a long term personal friend of Frank Chapple.

White Paper

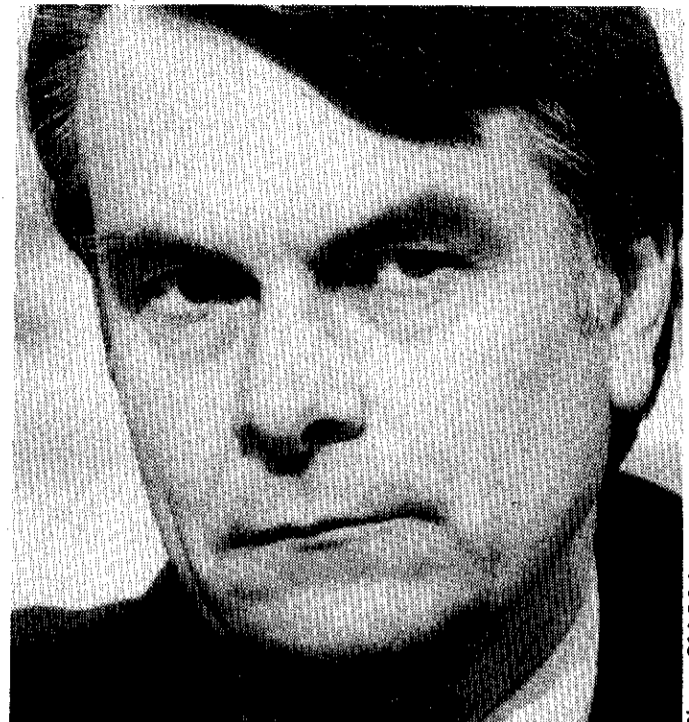
The SDP also rapidly began to tailor its policies to appeal to specific targetted unions. The December 1982 SDP 'White Paper' on anti-union laws contained one significant difference compared to the September Green Paper of the same year — namely that it allowed unions to continue to appoint general secretaries. John Torode in *The Guardian* explained the shift as being due to the fact that 'the SDP has set its sights on NALGO and NALGO is wedded to the appointments system.'

By September 1983 Shirley Williams could claim at the SDP conference that 15 trade unions, covering two million workers, had responded in one form or other to the proposals put forward by the SDP for trade union 'reform'. The unions were reported by the *Financial Times* to include the AUEW, CPSA, NALGO, NUT, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, the Bakers Union, United Road and Transport Union, Communication Managers Association, Amalgamated Textile Workers Union, and the First Division Association.

It was the June 1983 election however which saw the Alliance for the first time getting open political support from sections of the right wing of the trade union bureaucracy. Publicity was given to the call of the *New Statesman* for votes



Duffy and Hammond



David Owen

Business Summary

Electricity prices 'to fall steadily'

Two big craft unions prepared to set up body to rival TUC

By JOHN LLOYD, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Electricity prices should fall by 1 per cent a year in real terms between 1988 and 1992, according to the industry's 10-year development plan, mainly because of an

leaving on a holiday in from the TUC. This would

How last week's *Financial Times* saw the divisions in the TUC

What is 'Mainstream'?

ONE OF the organisations within the TUC which has been greater prominence by the Notts breakaway from the NUM is 'Mainstream'. Because Mainstream has as its vice chair Prendergast — the co-leader with Lynk of the Notts split.

The chairperson of Mainstream is Terry Duffy — who is at the centre of the key fight in the TUC over the AUEW's decision to take funds for postal ballots. The AUEW and EETPU are the chief backers of Mainstream — although only the EETPU and the Notts breakaway are affiliated as a whole. Mainstream claims members from the leadership of 10 national unions.

Mainstream made no statement last week that Prendergast would be removed from his position in the event of a break with the NUM and the TUC. On the contrary Prendergast expressed confidence to the press that even if the breakaway were placed outside the TUC it would remain within Mainstream.

The chief forces within Mainstream have also been consolidating their links on policy with the smaller managers and ultra-skilled white collar trade unions in the TUC. Last week the British Association of Colliery Management (BACM) followed the AUEW and EETPU in defying TUC policy and applying for government money to fund postal ballots.

Other unions reported by the *Financial*

Times last Saturday as likely to apply for Tory funds for ballots are the Engineers' and Managers Association, the British Airline Pilots' Association, the merchant shipping officers association NUMAST, and the top civil servants union the First Division Association. These latter organisations have a combined membership with the BACM, of 101,000.

Finally the EETPU is now prepared to make contact with other purely union busting organisations — as well as Prendergast and Lynk. The 'Professional Association of Teachers', the 34,000 strong anti-strike organisation in education, announced on Friday that it would be having talks with the EETPU over how to ap-

ply no-strike deals and 'pendulum arbitration' to teachers.

Peter Dawson, the general secretary of the 'association' explicitly motivated the talks with the EETPU as a response to the no strike deal which had been signed with Shah.

The role of Mainstream is therefore clear. It links together not only the right wing unions inside the TUC but is also prepared to cooperate fully with purely scab organisations outside it. It contains the unions that are prepared to do deals with the Alliance and to question the TUC's links with Labour.

'Mainstream' gives the measure of just how far Hammond, Duffy and Co are prepared to go.

for the Liberals and SNP in certain constituencies and for the call of *The Guardian* for an Alliance or Labour vote. But far more significant Frank Chapple called for a vote for SDP candidate John Grant in Islington, and Roy Grantham, general secretary of APEX, issued a call for a vote for a series of Liberal candidates as well as Labour. Following Grant's defeat at the general election Chapple appointed him press officer of the EETPU — the first SDP appointment in a major union.

In September 1983 the SDP achieved its first success in gaining a formal meeting with a union when the leadership of the National Association of Schoomasters and Union of Women Teachers agreed to meet Owen. In the same month the NALGO executive voted by a narrow majority to meet the SDP leader.

In addition to these specific formal contacts with union leaderships, Owen helped maintain his relations with individual union leaders after the 1983 election through his

continuing membership of the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding. Other members of this committee included Frank Chapple, Terry Duffy, Bill Sirs of the ISTC, Kate Losinska of the CPSA and Gerry Eastwood of the Association of Patternmakers and Allied Craftsmen.

'Fair Votes'

The committee, which also included former Labour foreign secretary Lord Stewart and former

Labour leader of the House of Lords Lord Peart, had been originally set up through Joe Godson, the former labour attaché at the US embassy in London.

More significantly the SDP gained influential backing for its 'campaign for fair votes' launched after the June election. This was initially launched with Roy Jenkins as its chairperson and with the support of Frank Chapple. In October 1983 Gavin Laird, general secretary of the AUEW, announced

that he was accepting the post of vice-chair of the campaign. Earlier, in April 1982, the AUEW had considered altering its rules so that it could give financial backing to non-Labour Party MPs.

The most open call of all for the unions to weaken their links with Labour, however, came in a centre-page article written for *The Times* by Frank Chapple in June 1983 — with Chapple, as usual, being prepared to blaze the way for others.

Chapple argued that 'the introduction of proportional representation would probably mean that a socialist government could never be elected' and that: 'I am convinced that it will not be long before some rank-and-file members start suggesting that instead of giving our money to a no-hop Labour party, we should donate it to the cause of proportional representation.'

Chapple concluded that 'both wings of the movement will have to be more independent of each other', and that: 'If we had not been so completely tied to the party's coattails, we could have urged our members to vote SDP or Liberal if they had a better chance of winning. Over and over again our loyalty to Labour let the Tories in on 9 June.'

US unions

The miners' strike provided a further key opportunity for the SDP to push forward its orientation to the right wing of the bureaucracy. Already in April 1984, with the strike only one month old, Bill Rodgers reissued the call for unions to reconsider their relationship with the Labour Party — claiming that: 'American trad unions, now under the shrewd leadership of Lan Kirkland, have no constitutional relationship with the Democratic Party and choose where to place their support. The time has come to seriously examine a similar role for the trade unions here.'

The SDP conference in September 1984 organised a conference floor collection for the 'National Working Miners' Committee.' The SDP also organised a conference fringe meeting for the scab organisation — the 'committee' being publically praised at the conference by Williams and Rodgers. The current support of the SDP for Lynk flows directly from these developments.

There should be no misunderstanding. What is involved with new realism and Mainstream is not just a trade union policy. It is an entire political strategy closely linked with the development of the SDP-Liberal Alliance. Its final goal is structural change in the relation of the trade unions and the Labour Party and a coalition government between the Labour Party and the Alliance.

Imperialism and South Africa

THE POLICY of the Reagan administration has been a miserable smokescreen to hide total complicity with Pretoria. Moreover, the most 'realistic' declarations by government representatives have never covered up the fact that the essential thing for them was safeguarding the imperialist interests in the country by maintaining the stability of the present regime. Chester Crocker, US under-secretary of state for African affairs, outlined the Reagan administration's policy as follows:

'In South Africa, the dominant country in this region, it is not up to us to choose between Blacks and whites. In this rich state, inhabited by such a diverse and talented population, important Western interests are at stake in the economic and strategic spheres, as well as the moral or political. We must take care not to undertake any action that would aggravate the terrible difficulties afflicting South Africans, regardless of their race.'

This policy no longer has the confidence of a section of the American ruling class. But what are the real reasons for this evolution?

The fact is that the US Congress decisions come after an unprecedented surge of anti-apartheid mobilisations in the United States. Since 21 November 1984, a continual sit-in has been maintained in front of the South African embassy in Washington. At the same time, agitation against the Pretoria regime has been assuming a broad scope on several university campuses, and eleven municipal governments have decided to break off their financial relations with US companies established in South Africa.

There is no doubt that the Congress took account of these mobilisations, as well as of the pressures brought to bear by some church lobbies.

Elections

The official aims of Reagan's policy were to encourage some reforms in South Africa and solutions aimed at pacification in southern Africa. In both regards, the results have been lamentable. The elections for the 'coloured' and 'Indian' chambers were met with massive boycotts in both communities. Every day the repression of the mobilisations and strikes of the oppressed population has grown more severe. The Botha regime has gone back to its 'internal solution' in Namibia, which the Western countries reject because they no longer believe in this road.

The Nkomati agreement with Mozambique was a swindle whose main consequence for the moment is a reinforcement of the pro-South African intrigues of the MNR. In Angola, the authorities recently captured a member of a South African commando team who was preparing to sabotage Geif Oil's installations in the province of Cabinda.

All this indicates what sort of margin for manoeuvre the racist regime has. Washington's policy is to establish a kind of peaceful coexistence in southern Africa in order to open the way for a new wave of US investment in Angola and Mozambique and to enable the Pretoria regime to resolve its internal problems and choke off subversion.

None of these objectives has been achieved because of the extent of the contradictions at work, the upsurge of the mass movement in South Africa, the economic crisis now afflicting the country, and the crisis of political leadership that is starting to take form in the white racist camp.

It is such factors, rather than the problem of human rights, that underlie the congressional debates. The concerns of the representatives of the US ruling class are obviously of a more pragmatic sort.

The imperialist governments have realised that South Africa may now be plunged into a situation of large-scale social confrontations accompanied by a strong radicalisation of the Black population. The sort of threats Fabius made are only another muddled move that indicates that the imperialists are looking for a solution but have not found one.

The debates in the US Congress and the positions taken by the French authorities are at least indicative of the concerns felt in some imperialist circles. Moreover, on 7-8 March 1985, a meeting of major British, US and South African companies took place in Leeds Castle in Britain. On this occasion, all these charming people had to discuss the reforms that had to be instituted in South Africa.

According to the *Financial Times*, the companies involved were the following: US — Caltex, Mobil, General Motors, Control Data, and Merks; British — Shell, BP, GEC, Barclays, Rio Tinto Zinc; South African — Barlow Rand, Anglo Vaal, and South Africa's Urban Foundation. This meeting was reportedly presided over by former Prime Minister Edward Heath and attended by American preacher Leon Sullivan.

The debate is a constant one within the South African bourgeoisie itself. There are, first of all, differences among the Liberals and nationalists, which partially reflect the division between big finance capital of Anglo-Saxon origin and the Afrikaaner bourgeoisie. Then, on top of this, there is the split between the "verligte" ("enlightened") and the "verkrampde" ("hard line") wings of the nationalist camp, between those who want to propose some face-lifting changes and those who reject this.

However, what can be seen now is that the two traditional alignments in the white bourgeoisie are evolving. The Botha regime has been obliged to adjust on the political and social level to major changes in the South African industrial structure and economy over the past twenty years.

Reforms

While the Botha regime has accepted 'liberal' measures such as granting new rights to unions, it has had to build up its repressive machinery in order to contain a growing mass movement. It is, thus, the objective situation that is forcing the regime to try to feel its way, seeking to combine some major reforms with the traditional system.

Adjusting to the objective developments in the country, however, is not a simple task when the reforms are coming too late and the mass movement is advancing steadily. All this is little by little upsetting the traditional panorama of the South African bourgeois currents. For the moment there is a regroupment "at the centre" around Botha. At the same time, a substantial extreme right is consolidating, as well as a liberal layer more and more inclined to flirt with a wing of the Black movement. But this process is far from concluded.

This situation remains all the more fluid since we are now seeing a sort of internationalisation of this debate. In the imperialist camp itself, there is now an "enlightened" wing and a "hard line" one.

None of these arguments is sufficient to explain the sudden eruption of the present debates. At the centre of these discussions is a political dispute over what means to use to avoid a revolutionary explosion in South Africa.

What is aimed at is not simply to put pressure on Pretoria to calm the situation down. It is to coopt a part of the Black movement and divert it. It is to divide the movement and hitch a sec-



tion of it to a long-term perspective of a compromise solution.

The US Democrats have already begun this work of division. Edward Kennedy's trip to South Africa early in 1985 was a test. A UDF leader, the Reverend Allan Boesak, was one of the organisers of this junket. In the Cape, where Boesak lives, the UDF organised a public meeting with Kennedy. Winnie Mandela, the wife of the imprisoned ANC leader, was also one of the supporters of this tour, and she accepted a bust of John F. Kennedy from the US senator.

Debate

While the UDF did not officially support the Kennedy operation, it did not support the protests against it either. Tutu explained, for his part, that the demonstrations against Kennedy gave de facto aid and comfort to the apartheid regime. The main union federation, the CUSA, agreed to take part in a meeting with Kennedy.

However forces such as the Black Consciousness group AZAPO, a rival grouping to the UDF, the National Forum Committee, and some unions regarded the senator as an imperialist agent and did not support this operation. Oscar Mpetha, the chair of the UDF, refused to share a platform with the American politician.

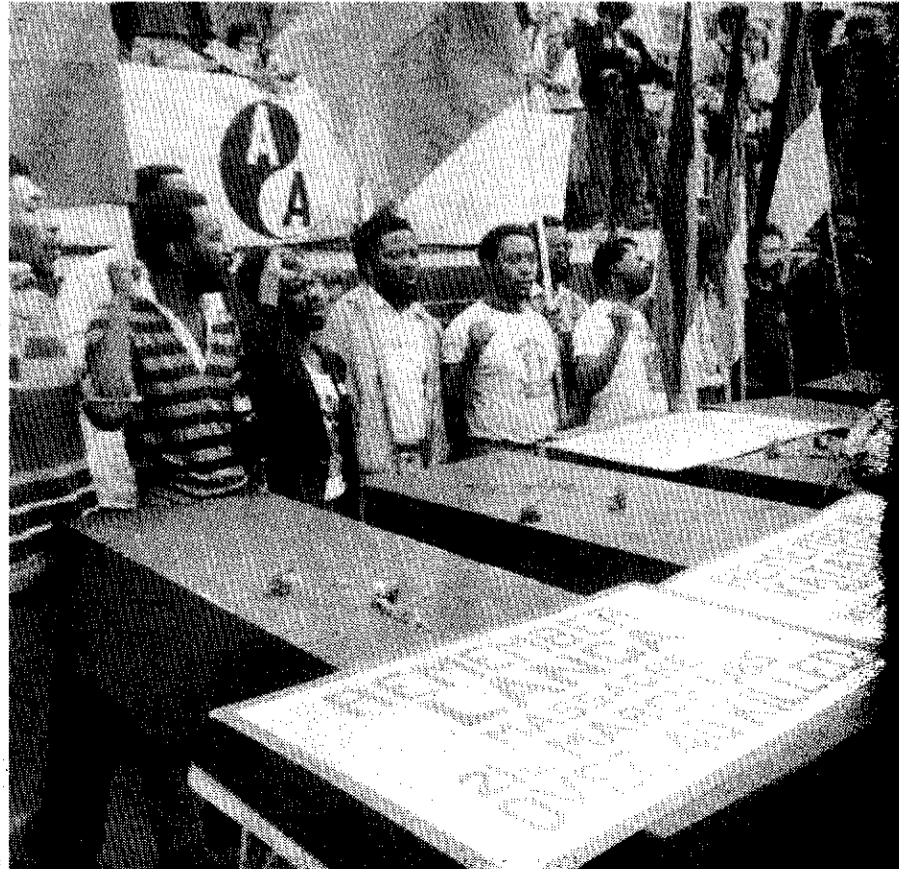
When political debate is raging among the various currents, among the unions, between the unions and the UDF, etc., an operation such as the Kennedy trip was well timed to exacerbate the conflicts.

From Paris to Washington, what the imperialists are interested in now is dividing the mass movement and consolidating a moderate current around the churches and a section of the UDF. All the speechifying about economic sanctions against South Africa is a necessary phase in this strategy.

Ever since the question of boycott was raised, the racist regime has responded by explaining that what was involved was an unrelenting Communist plot against South Africa. Moreover, the main victims of a boycott would be the Black workers themselves.

The US administration was also

AAM demonstration, 6/6/85



South Africa in the last four years than in the thirty before.'

To justify its position, the US government financed a study by Professor Laurence Schlemmer of the Institute of Social Research at the University of Natal in South Africa on the attitude of the Blacks in the country about the withdrawal of foreign investment.

Not unexpectedly, this study came to the conclusion that three fourths of Blacks are opposed to disinvestment. This finding, however, has been disputed to a large extent by another academic, Herman Giliomee, of the University of the Cape and by a series of articles in the independent press.

The imperialists and their retainers wring their hands about the jobs created by the multinationals. They pretend not to know that these companies invest in the country of apartheid for reasons that have to do with the rate of profit. The rate of profit has begun to drop sharply, and it is not the boycott campaign but simply the laws of capitalism that are the reason why foreign companies are withdrawing their capital. None of these companies is worried about the unemployment this is producing.

The economic crisis now gripping South Africa is sharply reducing the possibilities of a number of companies to rake in superprofits. Ford and Coca Cola have announced that they are going to trim their interests in South African companies and become minority stock holders. A North Carolina clothing manufacturer, Blue Bell, and a high-technology firm, Perkin Elmer, have sold off all their holdings. Several British companies, such as Associated British Foods and ICL, have done the same.

Disinvestment

According to *The Economist*, more than thirty American companies have withdrawn from South Africa since 1980. All this is mainly due to the recession, and nobody in the capitalist world has had anything to say about its consequences for the jobs of Blacks.

Another argument that is generally used to justify and defend investment in South Africa is that the foreign companies bring a positive pressure to bear on working conditions and the laws. 'Codes of Conduct' were in fact initiated to favour such a policy. One example is the Sullivan Code for American companies. But it has been known for a long time that these rules have seldom been followed, if at all.

A recent report on the 107 British companies working in South Africa points up the number of violations of the EEC code. Seven firms reportedly pay less than the subsistence wage to 1,700 of their employees. Thirty-nine pay less than the EEC recommended wage to about 9,000 of their workers. Among twenty out of 107 companies recognise the independent unions. Moreover, a report to the British minister of commerce and industry notes that the number of workers paid less than the subsistence wage is now growing.

All these facts do not do much to confirm any "positive" effects for the Black workers of the operations of foreign companies in South Africa.

Popular

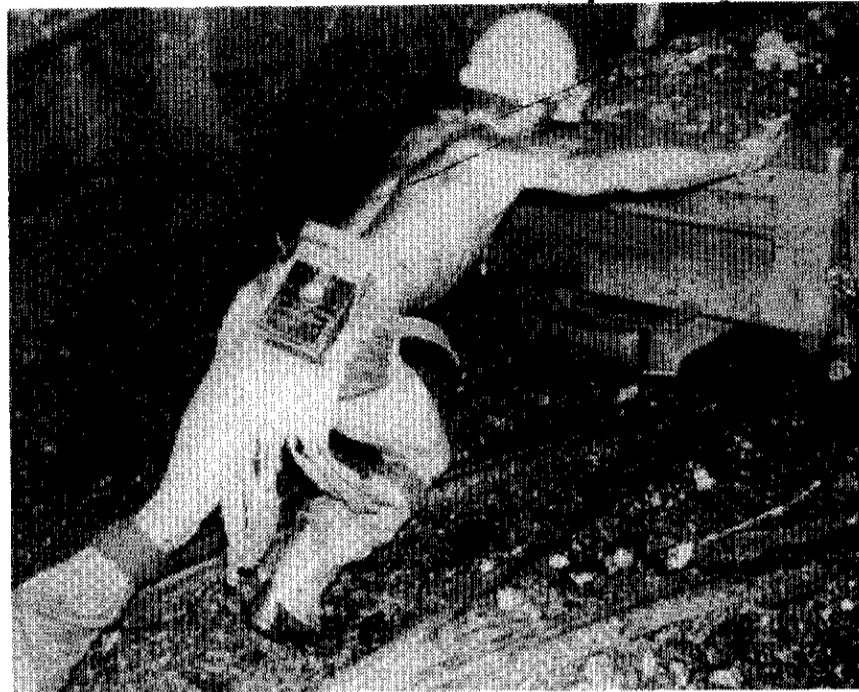
Most Black organisations and personalities have come out in favour of the boycott of South Africa. They have generally argued that despite the negative consequences it might have for the workers, it would be a 'short-term pain for the sake of a long-term gain'.

Bishop Tutu himself has supported the idea of disinvestment if certain conditions are not met in the next 18 to 24 months. The ANC has also long lined up behind the boycott position. Finally, a number of the independent nonracial unions that today organise hundreds of thousands of workers are in favour of this policy. The biggest federation, the CUSA, has, however, declared through its chair that it is in favour of "selective disengagement".

The second largest federation, the FOSATU, has given a thoroughgoing explanation of its support for the boycott. In a resolution adopted in



Photo: GIM COOKSON



April 1984, it declared "FOSATU as a trade union organisation which is concerned with jobs and the livelihood of its members has to give careful consideration to the question of disinvestment. However, it is FOSATU's considered view that the pressure for disinvestment has had a positive effect and should therefore not be lessened. FOSATU is definitely opposed to foreign investment that accepts the conditions of oppression maintained by this regime. FOSATU is, however, also clear that its own focus of attention must be the building of a strong workers' movement in South Africa that can set the terms of foreign investment and ultimately ensure that the factories, machines and buildings presently in South Africa will be retained in South Africa to the ultimate benefit of all."

The other aspect of the problem up for discussion in the trade union and

political movement is the argument that attributes to the boycott a positive function for the development of South African capitalism in the narrow sense. The example generally given is the 'Rhodesia' of Ian Smith's time. After the British took a certain number of measures designed to force their rebel colony to yield, we saw the development of a whole series of substitution industries and the development of a Rhodesian industrial bourgeoisie.

Peace

In the imperialist camp itself comments have been made that the embargo on shipments of oil and arms to South Africa has already enabled the country to develop two major import substituting industries. The Sasol chemical complex makes it possible for Pretoria to convert coal into petroleum



products, and the country is now an arms exporter.

The argument that the boycott aids the local bourgeoisie, however, is a feeble one. In fact, it has been possible for South Africa to compensate in this way only because the boycott has not halted the inflows of foreign capital and technological inputs into South Africa.

The movement in solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa does not have to get involved in economists' arguments. No one could think, moreover, that we are going to see a real total boycott of the South African economy by the imperialist countries. What is more, it has to be realised that a real boycott would have as bad effects for the world imperialist economy as South Africa alone. The latter is, in fact, the Western world's major supplier of rare metals such as platinum and palladium and strategic ones such as manganese.

Furthermore, a strangling of the racist regime could in the very short term open up a revolutionary situation in the country. So, the imperialist governments and the multinationals have no interest in a real boycott.

It is, not therefore, very useful to have a debate on the effects that such a boycott could have, if, by some miracle, the western countries ever came to deplore apartheid to that extent.

The question of the boycott has to be looked at from a political point of view. Any such campaign is a way to show the complicity of the imperialists with the racist state and the fact that apartheid is fundamentally an instrument of capitalist superexploitation.

Solidarity

The first objective of boycott campaigns is, therefore, to denounce the investments of the multinationals in South Africa and to show that only the pressure of the mass movement — and not any human-rights ethics of such companies — can force them to retreat.

In some cases, boycott campaigns can be very easily linked to the needs of the workers' movement itself. This is true, for example, as regards South African shipments of coal to countries such as Great Britain and France, where the authorities are closing pits while keeping up their imports of South African fuel.

The banks can also be easily exposed by showing that the South African branches of British, American, or French banks are financing military projects or being used as channels through which industrialists can place investments in South Africa for a while and exploit all the advantages of apartheid. These are the sort of aims that should be set for the boycott campaigns, and not that of strangling the local economic system. The latter objective, in any case, is utopian.

It is necessary above all to link such concrete support campaigns to the workers' and people's organisations that are fighting in South Africa. Both things can be done at once because the problem is not to convince the racists that they should "democratise" the society. It is to help the oppressed overthrow this system.

In this way, boycott campaigns can be kept clear of the demagogy of bourgeois democrats and Social Democratic governments. A boycott serves no purpose unless it is a means for the workers' and anti-imperialist movement to offer concrete solidarity to the South African mass movement.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 7pm
ISLINGTON TOWN HALL
UPPER STREET LONDON N1

with speakers from SWAPO, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the ANC

We invite you to share in our singing and visual displays to listen to our speakers and our dramatic presentation and learn about the struggle against apartheid.

Demonstrate your solidarity and support the women of South Africa.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA

August 9 South Africa Women's Day, marks the day in 1986 when 20,000 women marched on Pretoria in protest against the apartheid regime's notorious Pass Laws. Every year since, it is the day when the world re-affirms solidarity with the women of South Africa in their struggle against the apartheid oppressors.

WOMEN UNITE FOR PEOPLE'S POWER!



dy to pick up this argument. George
 naltz, speaking on April 16 to the
 tional Press Club in Washington, ex-
 ined that sanctions 'would lead us to
 ffective actions that would
 lengthen the resistance to change
 ore than the forces of reform.' He
 ded: 'There has been more change in



Photo: GIM COOKSON

CERTAIN professional ultraleft phrasemongers are attempting at all cost to 'correct' the theses of the secretariat of the Fourth International on war in accordance with their own ossified prejudices.

The theses state: 'The proletariat of a capitalist country that finds itself in an alliance with the USSR must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable hostility to the imperialist government of its own country. In this sense its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the USSR. But in the nature of the practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation.'

The ultraleftists consider this postulate, the correctness of which has been confirmed by the entire course of development, as the starting point of... social patriotism. Since the attitude toward imperialist governments should be 'the same' in all countries, these strategists ban any distinctions beyond the boundaries of their own imperialist country.

Let us assume that rebellion breaks out tomorrow in the French colony of Algeria under the banner of national independence and that the Italian government, motivated by its own imperialist interests, prepares to send weapons to the rebels. What should the attitude of the Italian workers be in this case? I have purposely taken an example of rebellion against a *democratic* imperialism with intervention on the side of the rebels from a *fascist* imperialism.

Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians? Let any ultraleftists dare answer this question in the affirmative. Every revolutionist, together with the Italian workers and the rebellious Algerians, would spurn such an answer with indignation.

Even if a general maritime strike broke out in fascist Italy at the same time, even in this event the strikers should make an exception in favour of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists — not proletarian revolutionists.

At the same time, the French maritime workers, even though not faced with any strike whatsoever, would be compelled to exert every effort to block the shipment of ammunition intended for use against the rebels. Only such a policy on the part of the Italian and French workers constitutes the policy of revolutionary internationalism.

Does this not signify, however, that the Italian workers moderate their struggle in this event against the fascist regime? Not in the slightest.

Rules

Fascism renders 'aid' to the Algerians only in order to weaken its enemy, France, and to lay its rapacious hand on her colonies. The revolutionary Italian workers do not forget this for a single moment. They call upon the Algerians not to trust their treacherous 'ally' and at the same time continue their own irreconcilable struggle against fascism, 'the main enemy in their own country'. Only in this way can they gain the confidence of the rebels, help the rebellion, and strengthen their own revolutionary position.

If the above is correct in peacetime, why does it become false in wartime?

Does the proletariat in peacetime reject and sabotage *all* the acts and measures of the bourgeois government? Even during a strike which embraces an entire city, the workers take measures to insure the delivery of food to their own districts, make sure that they have water, that the hospitals do not suffer, etc. Such measures are dictated not by opportunism in relation to the bourgeoisie but by concern for the interests of the strike itself, by concern for the sympathy of the submerged city masses, etc. These elementary rules of proletarian strategy in peacetime retain full force in time of war as well.

ONE OF the major problems faced by the Marxist left in Britain is its sectarian 'oppositionist' stance and way of approaching political problems.

This characteristic has its base in the long isolation of Marxism as a current in Britain from any ability to influence the mass working class struggle. Marxism in Britain has so long been forced to be an opposition it thinks like one. It is a method of thought which leads Marxists not to starting with what they stand *for* but what they are *against*.

In periods of stagnation of the class struggle this made little difference. In the overwhelming bulk of cases the working class movement is opposed to the actions taken by the bourgeoisie. In virtually every major struggle in the last sixty years in Britain the working class was sold out by

its leadership. In that situation starting off by opposition did not actually lead to vast errors.

But where such a way of thinking becomes disastrous is when there are *positive* developments in the class struggle — that is precisely in the most important situations. Then, starting off by 'opposition' leads to disastrous sectarian errors.

We have seen this recently with tremendously sectarian responses to the development of the FSLN in Nicaragua. It was seen, in a different way, in profoundly sectarian responses to the Scargill wing's leadership of the NUM during the Scargill wing of the NUM to the miners' strike.

If Marxism is to emerge as a serious force in the workers' movement the left has to learn to think *for itself* and what it positively stands for — for without that it cannot hope to

lead the working class.

In Trotsky's words, in the article below, 'The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign.' Marxists 'must each time orient (themselves) independently in the internal as well as in the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat.'

This article, entitled *Learn to Think* was written by Trotsky in 1938. But its words are profoundly relevant to the Marxist left in Britain: a left that finally must emerge as a hegemonic *leading* force in society, and not just as a corporate 'opposition' to a reformism that is destined to lead the labour movement for ever.

The article was written on the eve of World War II and that determines its subject matter.

The left must learn to think



An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat in *all* cases enters into a struggle against its own 'national' army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternise with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of natural calamities.

Idiots

If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a coup d'état and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside these troops.

Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.

In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in

which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. *The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign* (this would make every sectarian a master strategist). *No, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself independently in the internal as well as in the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat.* This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace.

Let us imagine that in the next European war the Belgian proletariat conquers power sooner than the proletariat of France. Undoubtedly Hitler will try to crush proletarian Belgium. In order to cover up its own flank, the French bourgeois government might find itself compelled to help the Belgian workers' government with arms.

The Belgian soviets of course reach for these weapons with both hands. But, actuated by the principle of defeatism, perhaps the French workers ought to block their bourgeoisie from shipping arms to proletarian Belgium? Only direct traitors or out-and-out idiots can reason thus.

The French bourgeoisie could send arms to proletarian Belgium only

out of fear of the greatest military danger and only in expectation of later crushing the proletarian revolution with their own weapons. To the French workers, on the contrary, proletarian Belgium is the greatest support in the struggle against their own bourgeoisie.

Correct

The outcome of the struggle would be decided, in the final analysis, by the relationship of forces, into which correct policies enter as a very important factor. The revolutionary party's first task is to utilise the contradiction between two imperialist countries, France and Germany, in order to save proletarian Belgium.

Ultraleft scholastics think not in concrete terms but in empty abstractions. They have transformed the idea of defeatism into such a vacuum. They can see vividly neither the process of war nor the process of revolution. They seek a hermetically sealed formula which excludes fresh air. But a formula of this kind can offer no orientation for the proletarian vanguard.

To carry the class struggle to its highest form — civil war — this is the task of defeatism. But this task can be

solved only through the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, that is, by widening, deepening, and sharpening those revolutionary methods which constitute the content of class struggle in 'peacetime'.

The proletarian party does not resort to artificial methods, such as burning warehouses, setting off bombs, wrecking trains, etc. in order to bring about the defeat of its own government. Even if it were successful on this road, the military defeat would not at all lead to revolutionary success, a success which can be assured only by the independent movement of the proletariat.

Revolutionary defeatism signifies only that in its class struggle the proletarian party does not stop at any 'patriotic' considerations, since defeat of its own imperialist government, brought about or hastened by the revolutionary movement of the masses, is an incomparably *lesser evil* than victory gained at the price of national unity, that is, the political prostration of the proletariat. Therein lies the complete meaning of defeatism and this meaning is entirely sufficient.

Arms

The methods of struggle change, of course, when the struggle enters the openly revolutionary phase. Civil war is a war, and in this aspect has its particular laws. In civil war, bombing warehouses, wrecking trains, and all other forms of military 'sabotage' are inevitable. Their appropriateness is decided by purely military considerations — civil war continues revolutionary politics but by other — precisely military — means.

However, during the imperialist war there may be cases where a revolutionary party will be forced to resort to military-technical means, though they do not as yet follow directly from the revolutionary movement in their *own* country. Thus, if it is a question of sending arms or troops against a workers' government or a rebellious colony, not only such methods as boycott and strike, but direct military sabotage may become entirely practical and obligatory. Resorting or not resorting to such measures will be a matter of practical possibilities.

If the Belgian workers, conquering power in wartime, have their own military agents on German soil, it would be the duty of these agents not to hesitate at any technical means in order to stop Hitler's troops. It is absolutely clear that the revolutionary German workers are also duty bound (if they are able) to perform this task in the interests of the Belgian revolution, irrespective of the general course of the revolutionary movement in Germany itself.

Peace

Defeatist policy, that is, the policy of irreconcilable class struggle in wartime, cannot consequently be 'the same' in all countries, just as the policy of the proletariat cannot be the same in peacetime. Only the Comintern of the epigones has established a regime in which the parties of all countries break into march simultaneously with the left foot.

In struggle against this bureaucratic cretinism we have attempted more than once to prove that the general principles and tasks must be realised in each country in accordance with its internal and external conditions. This principle retains its complete force for wartime as well.

Those ultraleftists who do not want to think as Marxists — that is, concretely — will be caught unawares by war. Their policy in time of war will be a fatal consummation of their policy in peacetime. The first artillery shots will either blow the ultraleftists into political nonexistence, or else drive them into the camp of social patriotism, exactly like the Spanish anarchists, those absolute 'deniers' of the state, who found themselves for the same reasons bourgeois ministers when war came.

In order to carry on a correct policy in wartime one must learn to think correctly in time of peace.



SOCIALISTS in Britain tend to assume that Nicaragua is a unified country with a Spanish speaking people who all participated in the revolutionary struggle which led to the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979.

The reality however is more complex. The history of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua deserves more attention because of what it teaches us about the complex problems faced by the FSLN and the rights of ethnic minorities in a revolution.

The Atlantic coast was a British protectorate throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and was only incorporated into Nicaragua in 1984. The population of the Atlantic coast speaks English rather than Spanish, and includes Miskitu, Sumu and other Indian peoples.

The Atlantic coast was systematically isolated by the Somoza dictatorship from the rest of Nicaragua. It is one of the chief areas of activity of the US-backed 'contra' forces. The FSLN has had to learn drastically new methods of organisation and work on the Atlantic coast to deal with the problems it confronts.

MARY BUSHEY, a Miskitu Indian, spent two weeks in Manchester recently to develop the friendship agreement signed between Manchester Council and her own town, Puerto Cabezas, on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua in the province of Zelaya Norte. A very modest woman, Mary rarely talked about herself. 'I did not participate in the revolution, she said, I only made a few bombs'.

Mary Bushey is one of the 7 Miskitus who compose the directive board of MISATAN, a newly created Miskitu organisation in support of the revolution.

She was the main speaker at a successful rally on 19 July in Manchester Town Hall, with Betty Heathfield, Graham Stringer, leader of Manchester Council, and Maria Alves from the Brazilian Workers Party.

SOCIALIST ACTION interviewed Mary Bushey on the current situation in Nicaragua and the situation of the Atlantic Coast in particular.

YOU come from Zelaya Norte on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Can you first explain what is the present situation in Nicaragua?

The present situation is very tense, very difficult. The trade embargo is affecting us economically. Even to provide the daily food for the population is becoming difficult. I understand that the government has decided to stop a lot of social work and cultural activities because all efforts are dedicated to subsistence agriculture to feed the population and the defence of the country.

The US government has launched the trade embargo and given more aid to the contras based in Honduras and Costa Rica, which has made them more powerful with renewed equipment and arms.

The contras have launched major attacks on the communities and villages which are on the borders with Costa Rica and Honduras. This includes villages on the Atlantic Coast.

But the people of Nicaragua have stepped up defence, both the regular army and the militias, and they have been fighting back the contras — destroying some of their camps.

You are also a Miskitu Indian, involved in the struggle of the Miskitu people. Can you describe your situation? We, the Miskitu people, have suffered historical discrimination and separation from the rest of the country. This



Militia women from

Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast

started in colonial days and was increased during the Somoza dictatorship. Obviously the revolution inherited a very poor country, but the Atlantic Coast was even worse than the Pacific Coast.

Although we have a lot of natural resources which could enable us to get out of our underdevelopment, the government has not had the economic capacity to develop the region.

The United States government chose the Miskitu people and other Indians to launch a war against us.

It is difficult for the Miskitu people to produce their own food because the land which is good for agriculture on the river banks is infested by contras and the peasants have no access to these lands. A lot of the food supplies depend on the government's subsidies and distribution, but transportation is a great problem and food allocated to the Atlantic Coast cannot reach it.

Fishing is almost stopped because the fishermen get kidnapped if they go out fishing and the timber and mining activities have been virtually stopped because of the aggression.

Even the health workers, the education and community development workers, the agronomists who work with the little they have as human beings, are afraid to die, to be raped or kidnapped by the contras. The contras have selected Miskitu FSLN members working in health and education campaigns as targets, to intimidate the people against being revolutionaries.

MISATAN, the Miskitu organisation, was formed a year ago. What have you achieved so far?

As a member of MISATAN, the organisation of the Miskitu people, my main interest is to give testimony for the Miskitu people on the Atlantic Coast. To tell about their sufferings throughout long years and about the consequences of the divisions that Miskitu families are suffering because of the war.

MISATAN was created on the 22nd July 1984 after a long period of organisation. We started first with the structures of the communities — which were developed until we reached the point when we could organise an assembly and choose the name of the organisation and elect a leadership. We aim to carry out the work that the Miskitu people want the organisation to do — which proves that MISATAN is opposed to other indigenous organisations in the history of the Miskitu people which have all been created top down.

MISATAN is an organisation which started from the base, from the community, and went up until it developed into a mass organisation which defends the lives of the Miskitu people.

In its programme, MISATAN's priority goes to the repatriation of the Miskitu people who went to other places, to other countries, and who wish to return to their homelands and to be reunited with their brothers, mothers, fathers and families. Those are the Miskitus who live in Honduras, Costa Rica and other places, who suffer from the pressure of those Miskitu people who have become traitors, and who are the instruments of US imperialism and who are running the counterrevolutionary war.

The Miskitu people are maintained there against their will, they don't have human rights, their homelands, and they have often been taken under pressure of anti-Sandinista propaganda or forced to go.

When we talk about MISATAN, we talk about the Indian groups. Nicaragua is a country with a double history. The Pacific Coast of Nicaragua had been colonised by Spain and the original Indians were assimilated into Spanish culture and thus the population speaks Spanish. The Atlantic Coast has been colonised by England and thus there is a large population that speaks English, especially the Black people taken as slaves by British colonialism.

There are also Mestizos (mixed-blood) and different Indians. Amongst the Indians, the Sumu and the Miskitu are the most important groups — the Miskitu because of their number and traditions.

It is important to state that when we talk about Miskitu Indians, we do not talk about a pure race because as blood and race we are not pure any longer. But we have certain parameters to identify a Miskitu person.

A Miskitu Indian person is someone who speaks Miskitu as her or his first language, who identifies as a Miskitu, who practises the culture, traditions and customs of the Miskitu people, who lives amongst the Miskitu people and feels that the problems and needs of the Miskitu people are her/his personal problems and needs. Someone who shares them and strives to improve the living conditions of the Miskitu people.

We believe that those people who are of Miskitu descent, who hate Miskitu people, who leave the Miskitu people, are not true children of the Miskitus. We can say they are traitors to the Miskitu Indians' cause.

We, the Miskitu people, are opposed to war. We know how to live collectively. Our land is not personally owned, our land as a tradition is community land. We learn to share the land, the sufferings and happiness together, how to share the fishes, how to help a brother build his house, how to comfort a sister when she has lost a loved one, and with the creation of MISATAN, we have tried to rescue all these values.

How are the Miskitu Indians participating in the life of Nicaragua?

In every community, there is a committee of MISATAN, of five to seven members, elected by the community. All these committees together form the assembly of MISATAN which elects the directive board — the highest authority of MISATAN.

The assembly discusses important matters such as land ownership, representatives at government level, and so forth.

In every committee, the government, since last year, has appointed community development workers — representatives of the government — in each committee. These are paid workers and unfortunately, most of the time they are chosen by the government rather than elected by the community.

This representative goes to the regional government to report periodically and MISATAN is also consulted. If something is wrong in the community, the MISATAN committee talks to the government. If this is not solved, it is referred to the MISATAN directive board which communicates directly with the regional government. If the regional government cannot solve the problem, then it is taken to the national government.

MISATAN is autonomous, but the government's representatives are not. This system of communication and participation has led us to solve many problems. At times, we don't think that the government's projects are adequate. For example, certain products are prioritised in the Pacific Coast which the government can subsidise. But they are based on the needs of the peasants of the Pacific Coast.

Certain needs are specific to the Atlantic Coast, like fishing lines, hooks, flash lights and batteries to hunt, machetes and files to sharpen them, which they don't need so much on the Pacific coast. We also need certain medicines.

Because communities are remote, people travel once a month. The

ministry used to distribute food every fortnight, forcing people to travel every two weeks. We wanted them distributed once a month. These are small things.

We also deal with bigger problems such as land ownership. On the Pacific Coast the agrarian reform gave titles to cooperatives. This does not apply to the Atlantic Coast, because our land is community land and it is against Miskitu traditions to give land to individuals. We discussed it and the government agreed to give community land titles. The title only states that the government recognises the historic lands of the Indian people.

So we have now a commission working on more specific demarcations, including arable lands and forests. We have some virgin lands and any exploitation would destroy the ecology which we want to preserve.

What are the relationships with the other ethnic minorities?

When we were in the process of forming MISATAN we invited the Sumu people — because we are all Indians. The Sumu people are very few in number, about 6,000. Their language is one of the oldest on the continent and they have maintained a lot of their traditions and their blood is pure. They are very important.

The Creoles got organised before us in an organisation named 'Creole Cultural and Sports Group'. Although they are separate we have communications and friendship.

The Sumu people came to the assembly but said they wanted their own organisation. So they organised in SUKAWELE. But things like autonomous government or land ownership we discuss together.

Are Miskitu Indians represented in national bodies?

There is a Miskitu woman in parliament, representative of the FSLN for North Zelaya. In North Zelaya, the government minister for the region is also a Miskitu woman. But all government structures are headed by men — such as the education or health ministries — and most of the time they are from the Pacific Coast. The government has tried to promote local people.

The mass organisations are all headed by local people (for example, the leader of ANDEN, the teachers' union, is a woman, the leader of FET-SALUD, the health union, is a Miskitu woman, the leader of the Creole group is a woman too.)

The government has been appointing the representatives at regional level and in the communities, but we discussed it because we don't want other people to make decisions for us. We are in the republic of Nicaragua, we are a nation. But under the principles of the revolution we have the right to our own decisions and that is the reason for the creation of three commissions last year: one for North Zelaya, one for South Zelaya and one national to study the structure of the autonomous regional government.

All ethnic groups were represented on these commissions. The idea of the autonomous regional government is that it brings together all the different ethnic groups.

The Atlantic Coast is made of 6 different ethnic groups and they should all have participation and representation. This is basic. This local government will then make all decisions concerning the region except in certain areas such as defence of the country and over the sovereignty of Nicaragua — which need to be decided at a central level because of the unity of Nicaragua. This is what the majority of the people from the Atlantic Coast want.

People in the counterrevolution like Brooklyn Rivera say they want to separate the Atlantic Coast completely from the Pacific Coast. Brooklyn Rivera claimed that he should be the government representative, that all the soldiers and police should go and his men should be the army. That is a threat to the autonomy and sovereignty of Nicaragua as a whole, because they are already linked to the US and they are not going to change this.

THE international debt crisis has begun to hit financial headlines again with the slowdown in the US economy and the call of Fidel Castro for the Latin American states to repudiate their foreign debts. Mexico which held elections on 7 July, has been right at the centre of the international debt crisis.

Most press headlines in Britain on the Mexican elections were occupied with the massive voting fraud carried out by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the high level of support in the north of the country for the openly right wing National

Action Party (PAN).

But the Mexican elections also saw a significant development among Mexico's hitherto weak independent working class parties. The Mexican Communist (PSUM) and the Mexican Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) between them gained 5.1 per cent of the vote. The workers parties had only been allowed legality in the last few years.

Within the Mexican left the PRT gained support and the PSUM lost — the PRT slate gaining six members of parliament for the first time and the PSUM declining from 17 to 12 members of parliament. The PRT gained 300,000 votes (1.7 per cent) and the PSUM 600,000 (3.4 per cent).

Both these figures are certainly artificially reduced by the rampant electoral fraud.

We are printing here an article produced for the election campaign by the PRT which deals with — as the PRT's newspaper put it — 'the anti-imperialist struggle and the defence of the nation.' The article outlines clearly the PRT's call for the repudiation of Mexico's foreign debt and the perspective that Mexico will only be freed when 'the proletariat, acting as leader of the oppressed nation, acts socially and places itself at the head of all the exploited and oppressed sectors.'

Translation is from the Spanish.

Imperialism and Mexico

HISTORICALLY, Yankee imperialism has plundered our country. Since the 19th century, it has stolen more than half of Mexico's territory, and it has invaded our territory several times. It has taken advantage of the existence of a cheap labour market to super-exploit Mexican workers. It has used our agricultural production and the best of our livestock. It has made incredible profits from small investments of capital. It has dollarised our economy. It has carried out offensives to change our national identity.

For its part, not only has the Mexican government been incapable of resisting, but it has been imperialism's main ally.

But in the past three years this has reached truly alarming proportions. The Mexican government has mortgaged national sovereignty to imperialism. And today there is no possibility, within the framework of the present relationship and the present system, to turn back

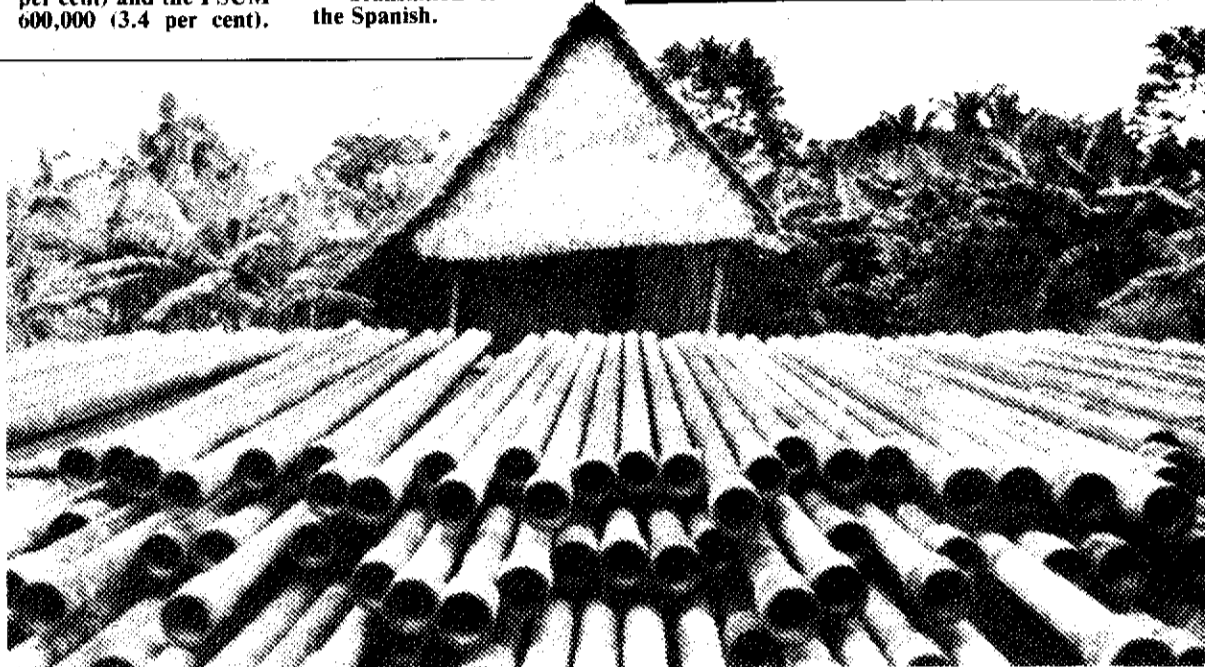


Photo: INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

Despite its oil, Mexico has been hit by the crisis and choose another road.

The exploited and oppressed cannot have confidence in anything but their own forces to defeat this policy of surrender to imperialism. It is necessary to create an alternative for the Mexican nation, as a nation oppressed by imperialism. But this alternative cannot be built by searching for 'progressive' sectors of the government or 'progressive' sectors among the small and

medium-sized industrialists.

This alternative will be built only when the proletariat, acting as leader of the oppressed nation, acts socially and places itself at the head of all the exploited and oppressed sectors. But this does not mean returning to the old, shopworn nationalist speeches, which always put off the struggle against the government to some undetermined point in the future.

Today anti-imperialism means at one and the same time struggling against the presence of the Yankees in our affairs and in those of other peoples, and struggling against their partners in our country, meaning the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) government and the right-wing National Action Party (PAN).

The government of President Miguel de la Madrid has presented the current renegotiation of a

substantial portion of this foreign debt as a great victory. Through this act, the PRI government has mortgaged Mexico for the next 14 years. Not only because in the end almost the same amount of money has to be paid out — less at the beginning, but more at the end — but also because now, as stressed in the agreement that was signed, the imperialist banks as well as the IMF have the right to 'monitor the economic plans' of our country.

This raises three problems:

1. How is the total debt and interest to be paid? The PRI government gives a clear answer. All the money that will not be invested in schools, health care, transportation, jobs, food, and general services will instead be channelled into payments to imperialism.

This means that it is not some abstract 'Mexico' that will pay the foreign debt. Rather the workers, the peasants, the wage earners, the housewives are going to pay it.

2. Who was consulted about signing this agreement? If Miguel de la Madrid and Finance Minister Jesús Silva Herzog were the ones who were going to pay, it would be well and good that they made the decisions.

But if we the exploited and oppressed of this country are the ones who will have to pay it, why do they make the decision for us? Especially since we know that the PRI party faithful were the main ones sending dollars out of the country.

Not even the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, which are a farce as now

constituted, were consulted. This is the type of democracy that the PRI government implements.

3. The PRI gerontocracy shifts the burden of the crisis to the youth and the children, the children of peasants and workers. They are the ones who will face the heaviest burden of the debt. Although they had nothing to do with the debt, they are the ones who will have to work like crazy to keep imperialism satisfied. And this in the middle of the Year of the Youth.

Foreign debt

The foreign debt, which was entered into and utilised by the PRI government, has risen to more than \$95 billion. It is an open secret that Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, and other countries will never be able to pay off their whole debt. Imperialism knows this, but it seeks to keep a noose around the necks of all the debtor countries.

The PRT is the only party that has put forward the idea that the foreign debt should not be paid. And now more than ever we say that the Mexican people should not pay for something from which they got no benefit. And in fact there is an alternative, which is to call upon our Latin American brothers and sisters to do the same, to form a club of debtors who will not pay the debt.

The establishment of the Ford factory in the state of Sonora, the plans of IBM, the massive presence of the sub-assembly plants along our country's northern border etc, have taken place as a result of a series of concessions provided by the Mexican government, allowing the transnational companies to keep 100 per cent of the stock in their hands, allowing them to take 100 per cent of the profits, providing them with extremely low tax rates, or allowing them to dismantle their companies and take away all their machinery whenever it suits them.

And they do all this while exploiting a major segment of the Mexican work force. The hourly wage of the Mexican worker is seven or eight times lower than in the United States, meaning the exploitation of labour is seven or eight times higher.

Recent events concerning the production and export of drugs in Mexico have revealed something

we already knew: the corruption and venality of the Mexican police. But it has also exposed the existence of hundreds of Yankee agents in our country acting in a totally illegal manner. These CIA agents are not just concerned with the drug question, but also, and fundamentally, with the question of politics, as has been shown by the murder of journalist Manuel Buendia. They have no business in our country. If the Mexican government does not have the moral authority to send them packing, we say 'Yankee agents out of Mexico!'

When a Yankee police official gets killed, the Reagan government raises a huge clamour. Almost every day an undocumented Mexican or a Chicano dies in the United States and the Mexican government does nothing. The undocumented workers go without papers to do honest work, while the gringo police come with documents to work illegally. Every time a worker is killed in the United States by the racist gringo police, that is an offence against our homeland and we must show that we reject the genocidal policies of the world's public enemy number one, Ronald Reagan.

Defence

Defence of Mexico as a nation does not end at our borders. If we really want to defend Mexico, we must defend the revolutionary processes that are already taking place and those yet to come. We are defending our own right to make a revolution, without any imperial government stopping us.

Yankee imperialism has put pressure on the Mexican government to stop it from raising the possibility of a negotiated settlement for Central America which the Mexican government has put forward in response to pressure from the exploited and oppressed in this country.

Today, for Reagan, even a policy as timid as the one put forward by the Contadora group goes against his strategy for confronting the problem of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador and, in passing, the case of Cuba.

We must state that an attack against these three countries will be viewed as an attack against Mexico.

Kassam murder

POLICE REFUSAL to treat the murders of Mrs Shamira Kassam and her three children as racist attacks has led to growing anger in the Asian community in East London. The *Asian Times* commented this week that 'Racist attacks afflict our community every day of the week and every week of the year. Rarely do they make the headlines in the Fleet Street press.'

'When they do it is a momentary affair and the incident swiftly disappears from the pages... It is now four years since Mrs Khan and her young children were killed in a racist attack in Walthamstow. There have never been any arrests in this case and the police have now closed their investigation. This means that, barring a veritable miracle, the racist filth who destroyed a family will remain at liberty — possibly to murder again.'

In Ilford, community leaders have demanded that 'The authorities should treat this matter as if it were a racial attack, until and unless proved otherwise'. The Metropolitan Police, however, are still refusing to deal with the case in this way. As is now established police practice in all cases of racist attacks, they de-

mand clear proof that the motive is 'racial' before they treat attacks as racist.

The Newham Monitoring Project has consistently pointed out that this approach effectively hamstring investigations from the start. Activists have sharply contrasted the level of police surveillance directed towards black groups in East London and police attention to the numerous racist gangs in the area.

At a meeting in Con-way Hall on 28 July anti-racist and community groups met to coordinate resistance to the attacks.

The conference, in its statement of aims, affirmed the need 'to oppose racism and fascism physically on the streets, and ideologically', and to 'support the right of ethnic minority groups and groups under threat to organise for their physical



After the attack: Mrs Kassam's burnt-out house

self-defence'. The meeting called on the anti-racist movement to organise in support of those who exer-

cised that right. ● For further details contact P.O. Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7.

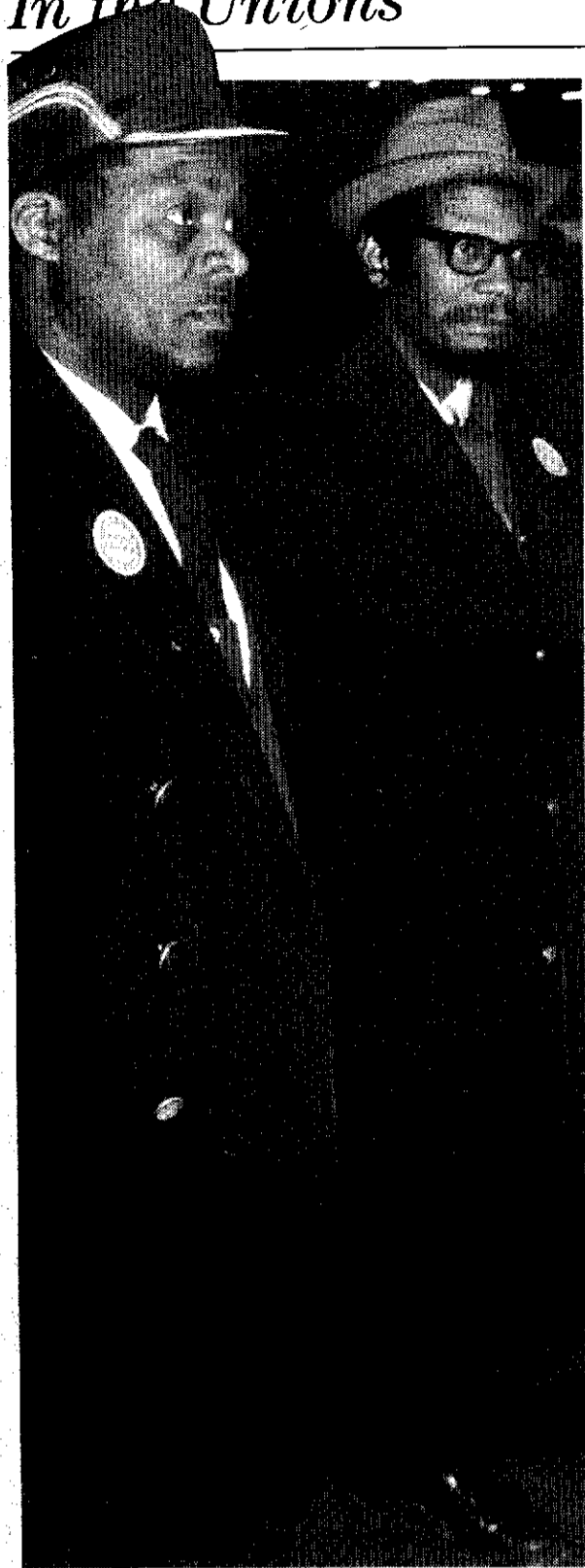
THE NEWHAM 7 Defence Campaign is appealing for witnesses to the arrests of 50 supporters on demonstrations in the borough.

The first arrests were on the 27 April demonstration which was stopped outside

Forest Gate police station. The others were on 11 May, and took place in and around Plashett Park.

Many of the cases come up in court in the near future, and it is important to build up a good case for the defence. Please phone 01-555-8151.

Photo: ASIAN TIMES



Railworkers fight back

BRITISH Rail's attempt to scrap the guards' jobs on trains is meeting stiff resistance which is growing daily. Traincrews at Margam freight depot in South Wales are now in the third week of strike action. A Kings Cross ban on overtime and a policy of non-cooperation with management is now in its second week with a big majority of the 192 guards participating, despite the impact on low wages.

The reliance of the industry on overtime is dramatically revealed as TV screens show huge lists of train cancellations in the area.

But misleadership at national level in the NUR is creating big problems for the campaign. The biggest danger rests with the NEC decision to ballot the guards and the workshops in the next three weeks on the kind of action that should be taken to defend these jobs.

No-one is clear how the ballot will be worded, but we fear that it will demand a mandate for all-out indefinite strike action simply from the grade concerned.

Guards nationally have been subjected to an intensive management campaign over the past few years claiming that our jobs are protected and that there won't be compulsory redundancies. It's a load of codswallop!

Without a campaign explaining that thousands of jobs would go, that no depot or grade is exempt, and that an organised campaign of industry-wide industrial resistance is necessary, a call for all-out strike by one or two grades

alone is unlikely to succeed.

By Dave Russell, NUR, Kings Cross

The NUR branch at Kings Cross has tried to cut across the sabotaging role of the leadership, who would see a 'no' vote as a mandate to negotiate away our jobs. The branch again called for the NEC to build on the successful action taken by Kings Cross, Hitchin and Cambridge guards by instructing the national membership not to co-operate with management and not to do overtime.

We elaborated the sort of campaign that is vital to the defence of jobs as a pre-condition to any strike action. If management refused to back off, it would then be necessary to organise a national 24-hour strike in defence of all railway jobs, bearing in mind that such strikes may lead to indefinite all-out industrial action.

In our branch's view, management is trying to force a confrontation before the ranks are prepared and organised.



Photos: PETE GRANT

Finally, we asked that the NEC appeal to the rail, steel and mine unions to stop the attempt to break the action of freight guards and drivers by moving steel, coal and iron ore by road transport. We need solidarity and concerted action around the blacking of such traffic.

Militants around the country are starting to respond to the emergency. A 50-strong meeting in South London set up a representative steering committee to organise industrial action. The executive of the

guards' grade met in Sheffield to plan a campaign of propaganda and action. District councils are setting up special membership meetings. And — very important — a mass picket is being organised by the railworkers at Port Talbot diesel depot for 2 August.

If the NEC goes ahead with the ballot projected for 20 August, activists will have to use every means at their disposal to win the understanding in the ranks that there are no other jobs to go to.

If we had Arthur Scargill to tell it how it is, we'd be in with a chance. But the Knapp leadership is letting guards think they'll be put on commercial duties, go on the footplate, or the like — a false hope.

The Kings Cross branch has put out a newsletter which is available on request from the branch secretary, Jim Stevenson, Tara House, 60 Lower Road, Hullbridge, Hockley, Essex. Petitions against DOO are also available.

Council strikes in Wales

Three thousand holiday makers at Europe's largest caravan site at Treco Bay, Porthcawl in South Wales have faced a total walkout by all council workers during the South Wales fortnight holiday. Rubbish has not been collected and entertainment and leisure facilities have been closed. Four hundred manual workers in Ogwr, belonging to GMBATU and NUPE, walked out on strike three weeks ago.

The workers are fighting the decision of the overwhelmingly Labour-dominated Ogwr Council to sack 45 workers employed in the direct labour organisation. The council has claimed that it has to sack them in order to avoid incurring government rate penalties. Ironically, Ogwr council is led by a NUR official.

This strike is part of a growing wave of struggles against redundancies and cutbacks by Labour councils in South Wales. Four weeks ago South Glamorgan County Council, which recorded the highest swing to Labour in the country in the May elections, announced its intention to break a national agreement with NATFHE by becoming the first authority in the country to save cash by sacking further education lecturers.

Following a two-day walkout and lobby by lecturers at South Glamorgan Institute of Education, the South Glamorgan county

Labour Party passed a motion condemning the cuts and the Labour group was forced into a humiliating climb-down.

By Graham Atwell

Yet another strike has broken out in the Rhonda Valley against Labour-imposed cutbacks and redundancies in the council direct labour organisation.

Similarly strikes and demonstrations in the last two weeks by hospital workers have forced Labour-controlled authorities in South and Mid-Glamorgan to refuse to put hospital services out to tender — a move which appears to bring closer a head-on confrontation with the Tory Secretary for Wales Nicholas Edwards.

The roots of this growing rebellion by public sector workers lie in the Labour employers' successive surrender to the Tory Government's cutbacks in public spending.

Mid-Glamorgan and Gwent are amongst the largest and poorest counties in Britain. In the Cynon Valley unemployment has reached over 30 per cent whilst a recent survey shows the standard of housing to be the worst in the country. In Taff Ely, residents of the Glyn Coch housing estate are campaigning for the council to demolish their 1960s council estate after a freeze on maintenance work following reductions in the council maintenance department.

Cutbacks

Rising unemployment, and the breakdown in services, is obviously leading to an explosive situation in many parts of South Wales. Yet the response of the Labour Party to reduced government spending targets has been, in the words of research officer John Vaughan Jones, 'creative accounting' and 'dipping into capital reserves'.

Now the contingency reserves are running out and there is no more scope for 'creativity'. To keep within spending limits, the councils are embarking on an escalating series of cut-

backs and job reductions. As the limits of 'natural wastage' have been reached there are moves towards direct redundancies.

The response of the council workers has been direct and effective.

Whilst protests against cutbacks by natural wastage have been muted the trade unions have not been prepared to accept sackings.

But, to be fully effective, the council workers will also have to take their

fight into the Labour Party. On the 60-seat Mid-Glamorgan Council, the Tories hold only 3 seats.

Clearly, the Ogwr workers have given a big boost to socialists in the Ogmore constituency who are fighting the witch-hunt

launched by a right wing which controls both the constituency and the county group.

This right wing will have to be thrown out as part of the fight to safeguard jobs and services in South Wales.

Welsh Labour witch hunt

CHRIS PEACE, who topped the poll in the election to the Labour Party Wales Executive, has been expelled from the committee's first meeting. Peace was elected to the executive from the constituency section and stood as a supporter of the *Militant* tendency.

At last Monday's executive meeting the MP for Ogmore, Ray Powell, demanded that any *Militant* supporter present either give an undertaking to repudiate their attachment to a 'proscribed organisation' or leave.

Anita Gale, secretary of the Wales party, pointed out that the executive committee has no

constitutional right to either question Chris Peace or to exclude him from their meetings. She was strongly supported by Terry Thomas, vice president of the South Wales NUM.

George Wright, Welsh regional secretary of the TGWU, produced a dossier of information on Peace and claimed that it indicated he was a member of the *Militant* tendency. Following the vote Chris Peace was expelled from the meeting.

This new move signifies a drive by the right wing to witch hunt socialists in the Labour Party in Wales. By their automatic decision the right wing are stating they have the authority to decide who may serve

on elected bodies of the party.

Ray Powell's constituency has put a motion to Labour Party conference calling for the expulsion of all supporters of the *Militant* newspaper. If it fails they will, they say, conduct their own purge of party members.

Chris Peace said, 'a campaign against what amounts to my expulsion from the executive committee will be taken to the rank and file who are already expressing great hostility to the decision.'

'Witch hunts can only split the party, play in to the hands of the Tories, and make it very difficult for the Labour Party to win the next general election. The



Chris Peace

right wing are laying the ground for civil war inside the party in Wales and they will be to blame for the consequences.'

Messages of protest can be sent to Anita Gale, Secretary Wales Labour Party, Transport House, Cathedral Road, Cardiff.

A Socialist ACTION

Women Against Pit Closures: first national conference

THE FIRST national conference of Women Against Pit Closures will be held in Sheffield on 17 August. With over 1000 women expected to attend, it promises to be a huge event which will consolidate the organisation of women from the mining communities into a permanent body fighting alongside the mineworkers' union in defence of jobs and communities.

Two main issues are on the agenda: future action, and organisation. Guest speakers Arthur Scargill, Mick Heathfield, and Peter McGahey will present the case for the continued fight against pit closures and for the unity of the national union.

The discussion on the organisation of WAPC aims to give women from the mining communities a democratic and permanent structure, with a national committee composed of delegates from each area. Conference will have the opportunity to change or amend the draft proposals.

Consideration of future actions will be over-

whelmingly dominated by the two main issues facing the union: the threat of a breakaway and the fight for amnesty for all sacked and imprisoned miners.

By Cath Potter

This conference will give women their first opportunity to develop national campaigning priorities among all women in the coalfields. Lobbies of the forthcoming TUC and Labour Party conferences will be immediate priorities in their continued fight.

Despite the loss of the resolution to the NUM national conference on 'associate member' status,

women are still determined to play a major part in the fight against the Thatcher government.

WAPC will be joined at their conference by observers from other women's and political organisations, and by international support groups. In addition, the invitation to send observers has been extended to every area of the NUM — including those who didn't support the rule change on women.

The conference represents the chance to consolidate a national organisation of women whose success throughout the strike is universally recognised. It is an opportunity as well for those women to take forward the new women's movement built during the strike — based on working class women from the mining communities who have fought for their class and for women.



Women Against Pit Closures organised the Chesterfield Rally for this year's International Women's Day

Photo: DAVE DRONFIELD

Ireland: Tories fear the truth

THE DECISION by the BBC Board of Governors to prevent the showing of the documentary *At The Edge of the Union*, which includes interviews with Martin

McGuinness elected Sinn Fein representative for the Northern Ireland Assembly marks a further step in state control of media coverage on Ireland.

Although the programme also depicts the views of Gregory Campbell, a Paisley supporter and advocate of the 'shoot-to-kill' policy, this attempt at 'balance' was not sufficient for the BBC's Tory paymasters.

The BBC board of management had earlier decided to show the film. The Board of Governors, which includes Lady Faulkner, widow of the

late and unlamented Brian, and Lord Harewood a cousin of the Queen, overturned this decision.

The move came after pressure from Home Secretary Leon Brittan — who had not seen the film — and by Thatcher. The decision is unprecedented. BBC chairperson Stuart Young later said that 'We have not yielded to any pressure from any

quarter whatsoever.' It is clear, however, that the decision makes a mockery of the BBC's oft-repeated claim to independence. It also exposes Thatcher's statement earlier in the week that 'We do not censor. We are a free society.'

Naturally there was no outcry about the screening of Gregory Campbell's position on the use of murder against the IRA.

The British government has for long been urging the IRA to 'submit themselves to the test of the ballot box'. The recent successes of Sinn Fein in elections both in the North and South has clearly demonstrated their support among the people of Ireland. This uncomfortable fact, combined with the increasingly clear use of the loyalist veto over the



McGuinness confronts the RUC

Irish Forum talks, has made a fresh turn of the screw on an already spineless media necessary. That is what lies behind the ban.

Photo: REPUBLICAN NEWS

SUBSCRIBE

Special free book offer!

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

Over Our Dead Bodies — Women Against the Bomb

Introductory offer for new readers: **Eight issues for just £2!**

London N1 2XP

