

# A **Socialist** ACTION

**BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM**

## Wapping: step up the action



## STOP THE WITCH HUNT

## FIGHT THE TORIES



## NOT THE LEFT

AS WE GO to press, Labour's NEC looks set to disband the Liverpool Labour Party and to prepare to expel 10 or more of its leading members. This will be a treacherous blow to the unity of the labour movement. Now we have the revolting spectacle of the Tories and Alliance gloating whilst Labour's leadership disbands the very party which has stood longest and firmest in defence of the jobs and services of its city against Thatcher's government.

Liverpool is not being disciplined because it broke the rules, but because, like the NUM it stood up to Thatcher and in doing so it exposed the failure of the Kinnock-Hattersley

leadership to take the labour movement into battle against the Tories. In fact the most gross violations of the Labour Party rules are occurring, with the support of the NEC, in precisely those parties where the right wing are in control.

Kinnock and Hattersley are attacking the left because they are abandoning Labour Party policies — for full employment, against the Tory anti-union laws, and in support of those fighting the Tories. They are taking the party so far to the right, in fact, that the *Sunday Observer* feels able to extol the virtues of Hattersley's 'Reaganomics'.

The Labour leadership increasingly tries to woo the City and big business by convincing them that they will stand for Thatcherism without Thatcher. That is why Kinnock, Hattersley, et al have to attack those sections of the labour movement that *do* stand and fight the Tories.

The NEC's McCarthyite witch-hunt is a disastrous blow to the fight against the Tories. Every individual and every organisation of the labour movement should make themselves part of the campaign to reverse this course — and to turn the Labour Party outwards to fight the Tories not the left.

● See page 3 for details of the witch-hunt.

DURING THE six weeks of the official dispute between the print unions and Rupert Murdoch's News International publishing operation, solidarity with striking print workers has grown by the day all over the country. Demonstrations twice weekly are now a feature of the Wapping picket line. And supporting actions up and down the country are beginning to get off the ground.

Most of all, this solidarity from other trade unionists and labour movement activists has been led by miners. The experience of their own year-long strike still sharp, they more than most understand clearly the stakes in the printing dispute.

Women Against Pit Closures led the way, participating in the first women's demonstration at Wapping. Kent miners quickly followed, reorganising their own London rally to centrally include representatives from the print unions. On Saturday contingents from across the country, down for the Justice for the Miners march, rally, and concert the following day, will swell the ranks of picketers.

Other trade unionists are following suit. Activists have used the experience of the miners strike to begin setting up support groups for the print workers. Lambeth and Tower Hamlets are two examples.

The response of the rank and file of the movement has given heart to the 5000-odd News International printers whose jobs stand to go. But the police-patrolled barbed-wire fortress in London's docklands is a symbol to the whole labour movement of the future of the print industry if Rupert Murdoch gets his way.

All of the newspaper bosses are moving in behind Murdoch to impose redundancies, speed-ups and union-busting on their workforces. Robert Maxwell, who claims to abhor Murdoch's union busting approach has just followed Murdoch's tactics by locking out the workforce producing his *Scottish Daily Record*. Whatever short-term gains in sales they may try to make at Murdoch's expense, all of the press barons are lined up to break the power of the print unions.

These are the stakes. The government and courts have already shown where they stand. And it is these stakes in the fight with News International which makes it so urgent to respond to the sackings, the sequestration of SOGAT 82's funds and to the mounting attacks by other employers with all-out strike action to close down Fleet Street.

This would massively swell the ranks of the Wapping pickets. It would present a powerful argument to the TUC and affiliates to deliver solidarity action as opposed to purely moral support. And it would bring the labour movement into the battle to the level made necessary by the scale of the attack.

Murdoch's papers undoubtedly should be boycotted, but the key to victory in this struggle is escalating the action in a major way within the print industry itself, and in solidarity.

The scale of Rupert Murdoch's attacks show the seriousness with which he is treating his project; the response of the ranks of the movement so far shows the potential that exists to combat it. The print union executives must rise to the challenge — and step up the action against the job-wrecking, union-busting onslaught from News International.

● See page 4 for War at Wapping: Week 5

### INSIDE



Bill Etherington on the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign p6 ● War at Wapping: Week 5 p4 ●

Tambo welcomes COSATU p9 ● Heffer on

the witch-hunt p3 ● Sellafields leaks p2



# A Socialist ACTION

## Kinnock's New Model Labour Party

LABOUR HAS been winning plaudits from Fleet Street almost as fast as the Alliance has been catching up with it in the polls.

The most glowing testimonial so far was an article by Adam Raphael in this week's *Observer*. He explains that the alternative economic strategy has been replaced by 'a modified brand of Reaganomics'. Roy Hattersley, he says: 'now talks in terms not dissimilar to those of Dr Owen, of the need to expand at a pace which will not set off a new round of inflation.'

John Prescott, Labour employment spokesperson, is quoted approvingly as saying that the unions mustn't expect a future Labour government to get rid of the Tory's anti-union legislation. 'The commitment to withdraw from the Common Market similarly has been replaced by merely "an option to withdraw"', Raphael goes on. Unilateral disarmament too, he says, is also about to be spirited away.

'What is remarkable,' Raphael explains, 'is how little resistance there has been to Labour's march towards the centre.' But his conclusion is at odds with *Guardian* writer Hugo Young, who also notes approvingly that Labour's policies are now in tune with the Thatcher government's but says the hard left — by which he means *anyone* to Kinnock's left — are still deeply entrenched.

However far the bourgeois press estimate the Labour leadership has been able to get to date, they concur on the importance of the witch-hunt. Neil Kinnock, they all agree, *must* get this one right.

The evidence for the *Observer's* view is that a whole wing of the erstwhile Labour left has collapsed before Kinnock. And if one member-one vote is pushed through the next conference, virtually all of the left's gains since 1980 will be under the chopper.

The problem is that the leadership, on its present course, cannot create a majority for Labour because it refuses to fight the Tory government. That means that Kinnock cannot do the job for which, the LCC claims, he was made leader. He cannot lead the party to electoral victory. That is why Raphael hasn't got the whole picture right, and why Hugo Young's assessment is nearer the mark.

Although one section of the left has collapsed, an alternative is being forged in the very battles against Thatcher which Kinnock refuses to prosecute: around the Scargill leadership of the NUM and Women Against Pit Closures, around the Campaign group of Labour MPs, and around Labour Party black section, and others. This left doesn't yet share a common perspective. But under the hammer blows of the class struggle it is increasingly converging. It is the most advanced, and most proletarian, left that the Labour Party has seen since the 1920s.

It will take a long time to accomplish, but its policies — of class solidarity, militant struggle, and alliances between working people, the oppressed and the national liberation struggles — can build a majority for Labour and for socialism.

Contrary to the claims of *Marxism Today*, this left is most closely identified with the fight for the labour movement to become open to and representative of black people, women, youth and the international class struggle. In this way it has begun to hammer out an alternative perspective for rebuilding political support for Labour: in and through the anti-Thatcher struggles which Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock has abandoned.

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# SELLAFIELD:

## Why the leaks won't stop

LEAKS FROM the Sellafield nuclear plant are, by all appearances, about to become yet another Thatcher 'bananaskin'. Hard on the heels of a European Parliament call for the plant to be closed, the cabinet has suspended all plans to privatise nuclear power stations and is preparing to ditch Sellafield's 'outmoded' management.

By Alan Freeman

But, just like the Westlands crisis, the problems at Sellafield are not the result of minor errors of judgement. They flow from the whole way the British economy and state have been built since the war.

Sellafield is not an ordinary nuclear plant. It is at the centre of the intricate web which binds together Britain's nuclear weapons, its power industry, and its trading relations with the rest of the world.

Its main purpose is to give Britain a guaranteed source of plutonium to ensure it can produce nuclear weapons and dictate terms, through its control of plutonium, to other nuclear powers.

In the 1980 'Square Leg' civil defence exercise, it was obliterated by an imaginary atom bomb. There is only one major facility on the site with no definitely identifiable military function, and that was shut down in 1981.



That is why, leak or no leak, Thatcher will strain every nerve to keep it running. Sellafield — or Windscale, as it was called until it was renamed in 1981 out of sheer embarrassment, is not a power station. It is above all a nuclear reprocessing facility.

It does three things. It stores nuclear waste, either to 'cool it off' or simply to wait until something better can be found to do with it. It subjects waste to various

treatments either to make it more suitable for storage, or to separate out the more highly radioactive components. Third, and most important, it extracts unused fuel uranium, and plutonium which has been produced from uranium in nuclear reactors, to be recycled for further use of either in weapons or in reactors.

### Plutonium

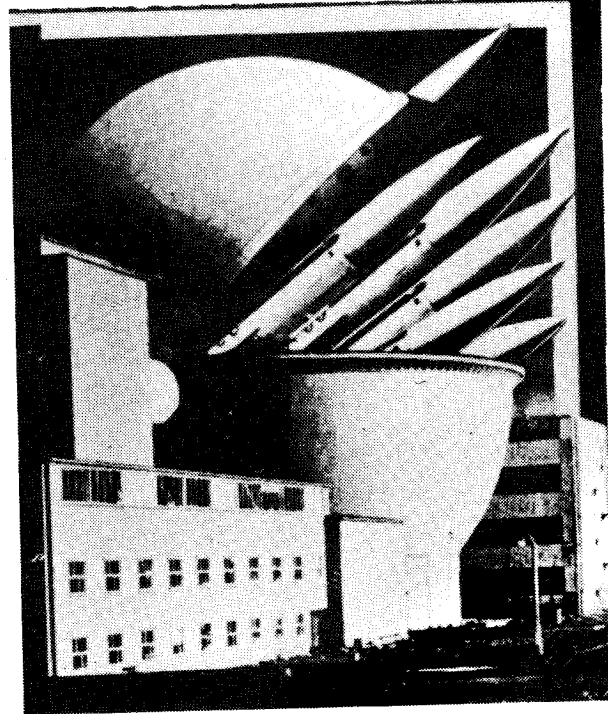
Its third function — reclaiming plutonium — gives it a key strategic role in the weapons industry. It extracts plutonium from the nearby Calder Hall nuclear station, which it then refines for the Ministry of Defence to make warheads. It has high priority for the Trident project. All the plutonium for Britain's warheads has, at one stage or another, passed through Sellafield.

Among other things, this is why the government has refused to let any international team inspect the factory, despite insistent European demands.

Leaving aside the fact that the inhabitants of both Cumbria and the East Irish coast can be poisoned without even having the right to find out why, this sheds interesting light on claims that the main obstacle to nuclear disarmament is the Russian refusal to permit nuclear inspections.

As late as the 1977 Windscale enquiry, the government and the UK Atomic Energy Authority refused even to admit its military purpose. So Windscale's biggest investment was sanctioned without its real purpose ever being revealed.

But the plant's role goes further. It is the custodian of Britain's entire national stockpile of plutonium. 'Control plutonium', said one British Nuclear Fuels of-



According to which Britain will take responsibility, not just for its own waste, but for the nuclear waste of most of the rest of the world!

Its only current rival is the very large, and much more modern French plant at La Hague, on the Normandy Coast.

It is being built through a deal with Japanese and European companies who are financing it in return for British agreement to take their waste 'off' them and reprocess it when the new facility is ready.

### Export

Implicit in this arrangement is that a large part of the world's plutonium will be extracted in Sellafield and re-exported. When it was pointed out at the Windscale enquiry that this contravened President Carter's non-proliferation initiatives, the judge accepted evidence from BNFL to the effect that only 'civil' plutonium would be exported.

By taking everyone else's waste off them, Thatcher gets to control world plutonium supplies. So keen is the nuclear industry that in the early '80s officials were even proposing to pay for the privilege of receiving other people's effluent.

Indeed, BNFL hasn't even waited for the THORPS facility to be finished. By 1981 one two-tonne flask of waste was arriving 'every few days', according to Peter Bunyard, editor of *The Ecologist*. This compares with a total British nuclear industry output of 300 tonnes per year.

The important thing to understand is that there is, as yet, *nowhere for this to go!* The world's radioactive wastes are happily piling up in leaky tanks near the Cumbrian coast, in storage facilities whose lifetime is *known* to be limited, with no method of 'ultimate disposal' to hand.

That is why, just like Thatcher's cabinet crises, the Sellafield leaks are not going to stop.

**'It will involve additional exposure to local inhabitants but the risks appear to be so small that this fact cannot outweigh the advantages' — Judge Parker at the 1977 Windscale (Sellafield) enquiry.**

official 'and you control the world.'

As a stockpile and reprocessor of nuclear waste, the plant plays an equally key role in Britain's nuclear power industry. The close connection between refining out plutonium, and storing nuclear waste, means that the two facilities have had to be developed in tandem.

### Early

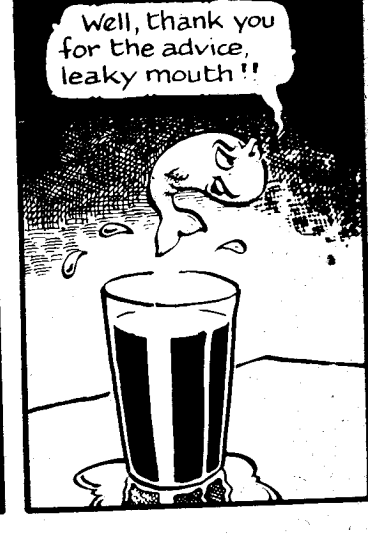
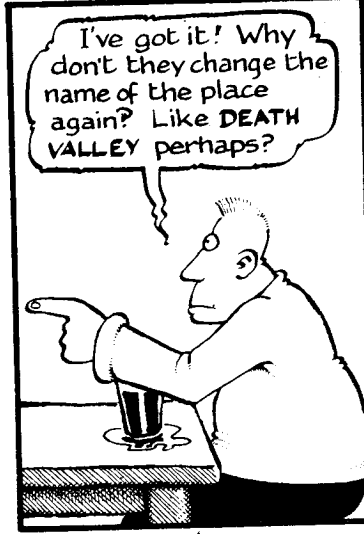
It stores used fuel under water from both the early Magnox nuclear stations and from the second generation advanced gas-cooled (AGR) reactors. Between them, these two types of power station account for nearly one-fifth of Britain's electricity. By

1990 the figure will be one quarter. It also stores the spent fuel from the Navy's nuclear submarines.

Nuclear waste is the dirty rear end of nuclear power. No safe way to dispose of it has yet been discovered. But British governments have ignored the problems because of the urgent need to build up a weapons capability, and because of the Tories' mania for getting shot of any reliance of coal for power.

The most criminal insanity of all, however, is the Thermal reprocessing (THORPS) plant now being built at a cost of £1.2bn. This was the subject of the famous 1977 Windscale Enquiry. It is part of a grand design ac-

## A PiECE of the ACTION



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# Labour's witch hunt

## 'Stop the witch hunt' call to NEC

**THIS WEDNESDAY the Labour Party national executive committee will have placed before it a resolution from Liverpool MP Eric Heffer.**

Supported by fellow NEC members Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard, Tony Benn, and Jo Richardson, the resolution demands the party call a halt to the escalating witch-hunt. It calls on the NEC to 'get rid of the witch-hunting atmosphere beginning to develop in the party and to concentrate on defeating Thatcher and her government at the next election'. Labour must not indulge, it says, in tactics of 'witch-hunts, thought-control or guilt-by-association'.

The resolution points out that there are many different views within the party, some of which are influenced by socialist journals and newspapers. This is 'not a new phenomenon in the party' but has 'existed since its

formation'. The party must not return to the days of 'proscribed lists and intolerance', but should accept diversification of 'groups, trends, and strands of opinion' within the party. 'Journals and newspapers of one kind or another, with widely differing views, are bound to exist,' it says. 'This diversification is to be welcomed, showing that the party is a healthy, dynamic, socialist force able to mobilise support from wide sections of the people.' It concludes that the main task of Labour's national leadership today is: 'to work for the election of a Labour government at the next general election. To do that we are convinced that internal attacks on each other, leading to disciplinary action, can only help the political enemies who are backed by an anti-Labour press which is geared to do all in its power to stop Labour getting back into government.'



# Defend Liverpool Labour Party

**AS WE GO to press the Labour Party NEC seems certain to inflict further blows on the Labour Party by endorsing the recommendations of the NEC enquiry into the Liverpool District Labour Party. This would mean disbanding the district party until next June, expelling at least 10 leading members of the district party and appoint full-time organisers to run the party in the meantime. PAT MURPHY reports.**

The majority report of the enquiry into the Liverpool party recommended that: 'the NEC takes a decision on disciplinary action if appropriate as rapidly as possible.' A minority report by Audrey Wise and Margaret Beckett opposed expulsions.

This decision of the NEC will delight the Tory Party and the SDP-Liberal Alliance who will be the main beneficiaries of the new round of witch-hunting. It will also delight rightwing mafias in the Labour Parties around the country who are using the national witch-hunt to settle accounts with opponents of their often corrupt and generally undemocratic actions. *Witch Hunt News* has

chronicled dozens of such cases of expulsions and rigged delegations in right wing CLPs, including the expulsions of Amir Kahn and Kevin Scally, from Hattersley's Sparkbrook CLP for giving substantial evidence of corrupt vote-rigging and intimidation. That evidence was a lot more substantial than any of the charges against the Liverpool Labour Party.

In Dudley East, the West Midlands regional organiser has just endorsed over 30 new delegates from the GMBATU, the EETPU and the TGWU to the GC, which include a fashion designer and the president of an NUT association: and other teachers — all claiming to be bona fide GMBATU GC delegates.

The nine officers of the CLP had written to David Hughes for help and have now resigned in protest at the rigging of their GC. In Middlesborough, CLPD supporter Andy Wilson remains expelled for complaining of irregularities in the GMBATU delegation to his GC.

There are dozens of similar cases coming to light. If the left complains of corruption and vote-rigging, it is silenced including by expulsions.

The attempt by the NEC to smash up the Liverpool Labour Party would not be possible without the active support of the so-called soft left of the party led by *Tribune* and the LCC. *Tribune* has literally campaigned for expulsions as a result of the Liverpool enquiry.

In an article in last week's *Tribune* the case is explained: 'The soft left however, will almost certainly support the expul-

sions as it was being emphasised this week that the case against individuals is based on evidence of malpractice and no one would be proceeded against on account of their political beliefs.'

What hypocrisy from a paper which understands perfectly that the reason for expulsions in Liverpool and the disbanding of the DLP is that the left has led the party in a fight against the Tories, whereas the pleas to the NEC for help in defending democracy in Sparkbrook, Dudley East, and Middlesborough have been rejected by the NEC precisely because here we have cases of the right wing attacking the left to hang on to control. *Tribune* has run no campaign for enquiries into Hattersley's Sparkbrook, or Gilbert's Dudley East, or the refusal of the Wales regional executive to allow elected members to attend its meetings.

*Tribune's* support for expulsions is not based on

constitutional argument. It is based on political hostility to the best actions of the Liverpool party, standing virtually alone in defence of its city against Margaret Thatcher's government.

While Thatcher's government limps through its worst crises since 1979, the Labour Party NEC — backed by *Tribune* and the LCC — is directing its fire at its own left wing not Thatcher and the Alliance.

The task of the left is quite clear: to campaign against witch-hunts and for united action against the Tories. To this end it is necessary to campaign for the Labour Party conference to reverse the disastrous decisions of the NEC on Liverpool and to uphold the rights of dozens of socialists disciplined by local parties.

Every single CLP and affiliated organisation should adopt resolutions to this end. In addition they should rush resolutions to the NEC demanding no expulsions.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th February, 1986

Dear Larry,

I am very disturbed by press reports in today's Guardian, and echoed in other papers, that the Liverpool District Labour Party could be disbanded following the N.E.C. meeting next week.

I note that a statement from Party Headquarters says that no N.E.C. members of the Enquiry Committee have spoken to the press. If that is so, and I have no reason to doubt that statement, how is it that informed comment continues to be made by the press as to what is likely to be in the report of the Committee of Enquiry? I shall read that report very carefully when I receive it, and take note of any similarities there might be between the contents of the Report and the press reports in the Guardian and elsewhere.

I am also perturbed at the Guardian report which suggests that there are right-wing Labour MPs who wish to follow up any possible expulsions in Liverpool by withdrawing the whip from Dave Bellist and Terry Fields, two Labour MPs whose re-selections have been endorsed by the N.E.C., and who are hardworking, conscientious MPs on behalf of their constituents.

What further disturbs me is the witch-hunting atmosphere that is beginning to pervade the Party throughout the country, an atmosphere sparked off by the, in my view, wrong decision to establish a Committee of Enquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party, and to suspend that Party.

I would draw your attention as General Secretary to the views expressed by the previous General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, who, speaking on behalf of the N.E.C., at the 1983 Party Conference, emphasised that the N.E.C. was not in favour of a witch-hunt throughout the Party.

What also concerns me is the serious effect all this is having on the future electoral fortunes of the Party. A witch-hunt against Liverpool Party members and some MPs will not satisfy the right-wing press. Today's Daily Telegraph leader makes that absolutely clear. What can happen in civil war within the Party, and if that occurs we shall be handing electoral success to the S.D.P./Liberal Alliance, not to Labour.

We need a Labour Government. All our efforts should be geared to that, and that must mean abandoning the present drift towards a full-scale witch-hunt. I therefore appeal to you as General Secretary to do all you can to steer the Party away from this self-destructive course.

Yours sincerely,  
Eric S. Heffer,  
K.P. for Walton.

Mr. Larry Whitty,  
General Secretary,  
The Labour Party,  
150, Marlborough Road,  
London, S.W.17.

## Eric Heffer told Socialist Action:

'Clearly we are moving back to the situation that we used to have in the 1950s, where people were excluded from the party by the right wing because they were advocating socialist policies. When the left got a slender majority on the executive we reversed that. We abolished the proscribed list and encouraged all socialists to join the party. At the same time we never conducted any witch-hunt against the right of the party. The only right wingers to be expelled were those who placed themselves outside the party by standing candidates against Labour. Their expulsion was moved by John Golding. I hope to see both reports on Liverpool District Labour Party published after the NEC meeting. The minority report puts the record straight. Personally I will fight any expulsions in Liverpool or elsewhere every inch of the way. That doesn't mean I support *Militant* or anybody else. But it does mean I am completely opposed to witch-hunts.'





# War at Wapping Week 5

## Support for picket grows

'WE ARE NOT going to win in the courts. This battle will be won at Wapping — and Wapping can be blocked,' explained Dennis Skinner at a rally in support of the print workers in the Conway Hall, London, recently. Events of the last week have made this clear. Murdoch has increased his use of the courts against both the NGA and SOGAT, but the mass pickets at Fortress Wapping plant have grown. PETE EVANS reports.

The government has mobilised all its forces to try and break the resistance of print workers to the attacks on their unions. The courts have been used, resulting in the sequestration of SOGAT's assets, with a similar

threat against the NGA. And the police are being openly used as strike-breakers.

Just like the miners strike, last week the police viciously attacked pickets using horses and full riot gear. Anyone in their way was batonned. The next

day they claimed 'outside agitators' caused the trouble. These tactics are an attempt to break the morale of the pickets. It hasn't worked. Support is growing.

Last Saturday's 6000-strong picket forced the police to hold back lorries for two hours. Yet again, papers were distributed late.

The print unions are actively building solidarity for their struggle. Rallies are planned throughout the country to increase the support they have already received.

Most nights, a delegation from the Fleet Street papers joins the picket. More and more reinforcements are coming from outside London. Miners from Kent, miners wives from Yorkshire, electricians from Southampton have all joined the Wapping picket in the last weeks. Further delegations are promised including from railworkers, themselves now threatened with the sack for refusing to handle scab papers.

Usually different delegations march on the Wapping plant, a tremendous boost to the pickets already there. With banners flying, they sing songs and chant slogans adapted from the miners strike. Only the accents are different.

### Action

As the evening draws on, the scab TNT lorries come into view inside the plant perimeter. The police begin to move into action, clearing a way through the picket line. The pickets wait, anger rising, until the lorries carrying their scab cargoes speed through. A bigger picket and perhaps...

Last week one of the TNT drivers refused to cross the picket line. He was later beaten up by the scab drivers, then sacked.



The police who make arrests of pickets each night aren't interested in finding his assailants!

Last Saturday, the demonstration was organised by the AUEW chapels involved in the dispute. One hundred and ninety two engineers are among those sacked by Murdoch. Marching from Fleet Street, the engineers were joined by other AUEW members from both the North and South London district committees, as well as firefighters, teachers, civil servants, bus workers and other print workers. Delegations from distribution workers, SOGAT members, were there too.

At the end of January, five AUEW engineers, employed by Rockwell Graphics Systems to work on Wapping machinery,

walked out. Refusing to cross picket lines, they returned to their company's Preston headquarters. Murdoch was rumoured to be 'irate'.

A rally was organised at Wapping by the AUEW last Saturday. All speakers called for a bigger picket. Jock McPherson-Quinn, president of London South AUEW district committee, explained that he was also a surcharged councillor from Lambeth. The two struggles were against the same enemy, he said. 'Let's have larger numbers here in the future.'

George Anthony from the London North district committee told the rally: 'We must double, treble and quadruple the picket. We must get our fellow trade unionists here in order that this street can be

## Action in the Midlands

THE Birmingham Trades Council is to hold a major meeting in support of the print unions this Thursday, 27 February.

By Bob Smith, Birmingham

Speakers invited include Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbin, general secretaries of SOGAT and the NGA, and Jack Whyman, AUEW executive member.

Meanwhile, a local support group for the print unions has been set up and meets weekly. So far it has helped picket TNT distribution depots in the Midlands and wholesale distributors in Birmingham city centre.

A delegation of Fleet Street printers travelled to the Littleworth area of Cannock on Saturday 15 February to join a 120-strong picket of the TNT depot there. This was

the largest picket held in the Midlands to date, and was organised by South Staffs miners who received print union support during their own strike.

Print workers in Birmingham face jobs losses if Murdoch succeeds at Wapping. The Birmingham Post and Evening Mail plan to shed 250 jobs when they introduce new technology.

For details of picketing or speakers for labour movement meeting phone Birmingham NGA on 021 236 2963 or SOGAT on 021-236 8860.

Birmingham Trades Council public meeting, Thursday 27 February, 7.30pm, AUEW Hall, Holloway Circus.

The print workers support groups meets at the NGA-SOGAT offices in William Street North, Hockley, at 6.30pm every Monday.

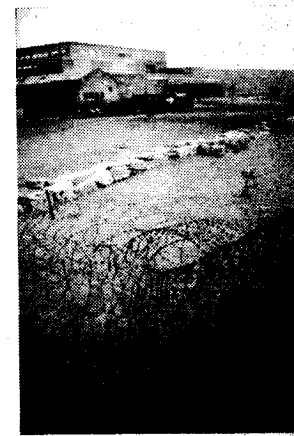
blocked.

But it was one of the sacked engineers, Jim Bradshaw, AUEW FOC at The Times, who best pointed the way forward. 'The TUC and Labour Party,' he said, 'should organise a mass demonstration to join the picket.' Afterwards he explained to Socialist Action: 'Instead of expelling people in Liverpool, the Labour Party should put their strength behind this struggle.'

Such a nationally organised demonstration would undoubtedly put stopping Wapping on the agenda. The picket has to be built throughout the labour movement. As Jack Collins, secretary of the Kent NUM said at the Conway Hall rally: 'If you fight you can win, if you do not fight you will not win. Let's get down to

Wapping.'

Send messages of support and donations to striking AUEW members, contact: Duncan Boyd, Secretary, Fleet Street AUEW, 92, St Pauls Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent.



Appeal from 6,000 sacked print workers

### DON'T BUY MURDOCH PAPERS

Four trade unions this week launched a national boycott of Rupert Murdoch's four papers - The Sun, Times, News of the World and Sunday Times.

You're getting your papers out, Mr M?

**PULL THE OTHER ONE!**

Support Murdoch's claim that he is getting his papers out recently was exposed last week. Other Union officials examined the situation.

The first issue of Wapping News, jointly published by SOGAT, NGA, AUEW and NUJ, is available now. Copies are available, for a donation, from: LMS, 8 Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN. This issue carries messages from all three general secretaries of the NGA, SOGAT and the NUJ, and from an executive council member of the AUEW, Jack Whyman — as well as lots of tith its on life at the Fortress. Ideal for raising support at your trade union and Labour Party meetings.

These who sopped... they can't wait! They are not going to get their papers out. They are not going to get their papers out. They are not going to get their papers out.

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- AUEW's struggle - page 7
- Murdoch's paper - page 8
- What the unions say - page 9

# SOLIDARITY ROUND UP

**From Scotland:** SALES of the Sun have taken a nose dive in Scotland since the News International strike began.

Reports from SOGAT Edinburgh area branches also indicate that no copies of the Sunday Times and News of the World were available at the beginning of this month. Their distribution around the rest of Scotland is still uneven.

With only one exception, wholesale distribution centres from Falkirk to Dumfries have refused to handle Murdoch's titles. In addition Glasgow and East Kilbride have withdrawn the four titles from public libraries.

At Glasgow's Wapping equivalent, Kinning Park, there is now a 24-hour picket in operation. So far successes include British Telecom engineers refusing to cross, as well as local authority workers from the cleansing department. As the uncollected rubbish

builds up, the working environment is getting even grimmer.

**From Wales:**

IN WALES and the West Country no copies of the Sunday Times are being distributed. And only half the usual supply of News of the Worlds are getting through.

A recent SOGAT branch survey of 60 towns and cities in England and Wales showed that distribution of the Murdoch titles was much worse than News International claim. Of the 60 centres, 71 per cent received no News of the World, 16 per cent received no Sunday Times, and a further 16 per cent received it too late to deliver to homes.

A 16-year old South Wales paper boy, Roger Davies, has been sacked for refusing to deliver the Sun. His dad is a miner who was on strike throughout the NUM

dispute. Roger told SOGAT: 'I don't want to be a scab.' The SOGAT Wales and West branch have promised to find him alternative work.

**From electricians:**

THE EETPU's largest Scottish branch, Glasgow, recently passed a resolution against the conspiracy between their union leadership and News International.

The resolution of the 4000-strong branch reminds headquarters not to take the loyalty of their rank and file members for granted. Other Scottish EETPU branches have expressed support for News International strikers and invited speakers to put the case.

Over 30 EETPU branches have now passed resolutions rejecting the actions of their national leaders.

**From journalists:**

A NEW Broad Left grouping within the journalists union was formed at the beginning of this month and called for tougher action against its Wapping scabs.

The Broad Left has called on the NUJ executive to instruct all News International journalists to strike immediately. They have also made attempts to mount NUJ pickets at the Wapping plant.

An anonymous Times journalist recently wrote for the NGA Broad Left journal, Link-up, that: 'Journalists were put under pressure from the first day, being asked to work in departments other than those in which they were contracted to work.'

**From Australia:**

THE Australian print unions have asked their British colleagues for a report on the situation

with News International.

They particularly want the names of any Australian scabs. In a telegram to Brenda Dean, Chris Harvey, national secretary of the Australian Printing and Kindred Industrial Union promised that a full report of the British strike would be taken at a meeting of chapel representatives from across the continent.

Much of the information in the Solidarity column was compiled from SOGAT Strike Bulletin No 1, published by union headquarters and available from: SOGAT, 274-288 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE (phone: 0702 553131). The latest Wapping special issue of Link-up, the NGA Broad Left journal, is available from: Link-up, 21 St Louis Road, London SE27. Any requests for a copy of either newsletter should be accompanied by a donation.

Joint M'cr Trades Council - M'cr City Labour Party

## SUPPORT THE PRINT UNIONS

### DEFEND TRADE UNIONISM

MASS RALLY, **GT. HALL, Manchester Town Hall**

**TUESDAY MARCH 4th 7.30 pm**

### SPEAKERS

**TONY DUBBINS**  
Gen Sec N.G.A. 82

**BRENDA DEAN**  
Gen Sec SOGAT 82

**TONY BENN M.P.**  
**JOHN AITKEN**  
EETPU Fleet Street Electricians Leader

**JOHN TOCHER**  
AUEW

### BOYCOTT

**the Sun, the News of the World, the Times and the Sunday Times**



News

# Notts NCB launches new victimisation offensive: Defend the NUM

**SUPPORT FOR the breakaway UDM is beginning to weaken in its Notts heartland, and Lynk's outfit has failed to make the headway it anticipated in Leicestershire and North Derbyshire. But that doesn't mean plain sailing for Notts loyalists. In the last few weeks the area Coal Board have stepped in to give the UDM a hand. An NUM member has been sacked at Annersley, two have been suspended at Welbeck, and there are threats of disciplinary action against NUM officials at Ollerton. The National Union of Mineworkers cannot tolerate miners victimised for supporting their national union. Every sacked and threatened miner must be defended. HELEN ARTHUR and ANDY BUCHANAN report from Notts.**

THE sacking of Paul Whetton, NUM branch secretary at Bevercotes colliery in North Notts, marks a new escalation in the NCB's offensive against the NUM. Paul was accused of 'undermining the authority' of the pit management. His crime was to pin up an NUM branch agenda at the pit.

## No gains

This, combined with further suspensions and threats of disciplinary action, is designed to create a reign of terror in the Notts pits. The NCB is setting out to victimise individual militants and to trample basic trade union rights underfoot in the process.

Their objective is simple. It is to bolster the flagging fortunes of the UDM and to undercut the rebuilding of the NUM in Notts.

It is clear that the UDM is heading into deep trouble. The initial momentum of the breakaway has been lost as the UDM has failed to break out of Notts. The overwhelming vote in favour of the NUM in Leicestershire coalfield rocked Lynk.

## Suspensions

On top of this, the UDM has dramatically failed to make any real gains in North Derbyshire. There is not a single UDM member at the Warsop Main — a pit right at the top of UDM's hitlist.

Miners at Agecroft and Parsonage collieries in the Lincs coalfield have decided to return to the national union after a brief flirtation with the UDM. The national membership of the breakaway is now

estimated (on the basis of official figures by the receiver) to be in the region of 20,000 — a far cry from the 40,000 claimed by Roy Link.

These set-backs have given rise to signs of strain within the UDM heartlands, Notts itself. UDM branches have voiced criticism of Lynk's use of funds. He recently spent £21,000 on building himself a new garage — at a time when the UDM is widely known to be in serious financial straits. Sijverhill UDM branch minutes contain an appeal to 'put democracy back into the UDM'!

## Attacks

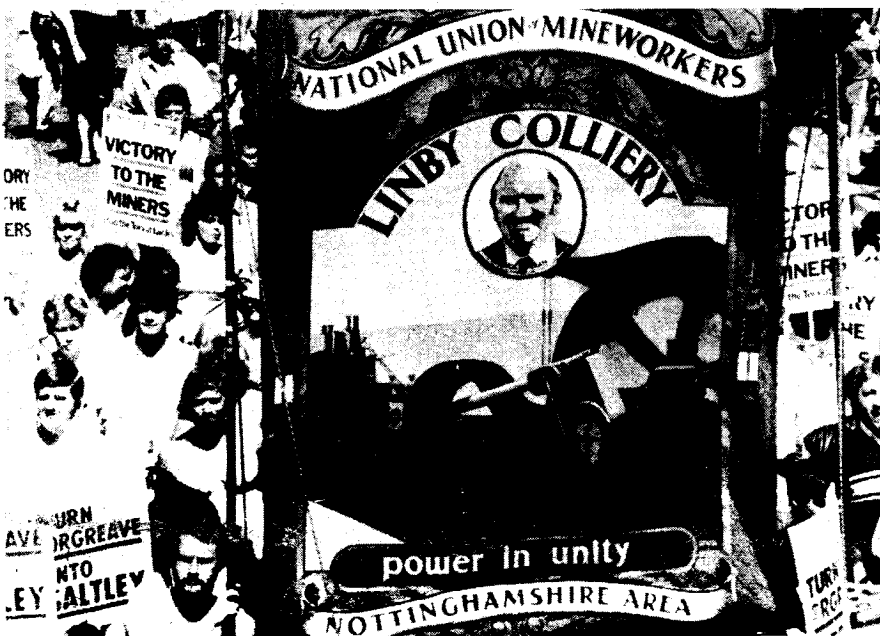
At pit level, UDM officials have turned a blind-eye while management break procedures and try to push down bonus payments by fiddling the figures. It has fallen to the NUM to challenge such attacks.

This has prompted a growing number of men to come back over to the NUM. At Ollerton last week, for example, 30 men were recruited to the union on the afternoon shift alone.


Faced with these problems, the NCB, yet again, has begun to intervene directly to support the UDM and to prevent the NUM from gaining new ground. A fresh campaign of harassment, intimidation and victimisation is being directed at the NUM.

## Sackings

At Annersley colliery, an NUM member has been sacked after a fight in the miners welfare. But two UDM members caught



**STOP PRESS:**



**WHEN Paul Whetton was sacked at Bevercotes last Friday, the NUM branch called a Sunday meeting to discuss action. MARK HUNTER, one of the two suspended NUM members from Welbeck, reports.**

**PAUL's sacking was the last straw for Notts miners. Bevercotes NUM meeting had to be made into an open one when miners from other pits and even some UDM members turned up to discuss action. A canteen meeting was called for Monday morning. But the Coal Board went into action, removing men from the canteen and banning some from NCB premises. The response was a walk-out. Contrary to local press reports, a good majority of Bevercotes miners were out on Monday. By the night shift, action has escalated. Only seven men went into work. The Notts NUM can no longer tolerate the increasing attacks from local management. The situation could well escalate across the coalfield.**

fighting underground have not been disciplined.

At Ollerton, the vice-president of the Notts NUM, Mick McGinty, has been threatened with dismissal. The manager has instructed him that he may not carry any NUM literature on his person or discuss the NUM with any of his fellow workers on Coal Board premises.

## Demo

Even more seriously, two leading NUM members at Welbeck, including the branch delegate Tony Geddes, have been suspended for handing out leaflets calling for support for a demonstration against NCB chairperson Ian McGregor's visit to the pit. The call for the demonstration had been made by the NUM branch at Welbeck and endorsed by the organisation of the sacked miners, the Notts 24 Club.

## Activists

These attacks are far more than a management attempt to remove dedicated NUM activists. They are attacks on the basic right of a trade union to organise. The NCB's message is simple and clear: supporting the NUM is a disciplinary offence.

The Board fear that the rapid development of NUM organisation that has taken place in many of the older South Notts pits will now take hold in the

North Notts superpits. These are the jewel in the NCB crown, prime cuts when it comes to privatisation. It is to prevent such a development that this attack on trades unionism is being launched.

## Problems

'It's obvious that the problem is that at these pits the NUM has been doing so well,' Mick McGinty told us. 'We know that the area industrial relations officer has put out letters to managers to get all canvassing by the NUM stopped. And I know that Ollerton management at least were called to NCB area headquarters last week. It all seemed to stem from that'.

We asked Mick how the NUM had to deal with the present attacks. 'We have to support anyone victimised in whatever ways we can,' he said, 'and before it comes to sackings. We must do everything in our power to get support.'

## Rights

'The law is supposed to give us the right to belong to any trades union we wish. But the Coal Board management are telling us that there can be only one recognised union — UDM. As soon as the NUM starts recruiting, the attacks come from management. It just goes to prove what sort of an outfit the UDM is.'

Mick emphasised the

severity of management's crackdown. 'We feel that all our basic civil liberties are being taken away. I go to work wondering if I'm going to be stopped and strip-searched on the way to check that I'm not carrying NUM recruitment forms.'

'But people are taking it very seriously. Many men in the UDM know that what's happening is wrong, and that something must be done. It may be Mick McGinty today, but who's it going to be tomorrow?'

## 1930s

'The days of the 30s are returning to Ollerton. We need to put pressure on the NCB to stop these attacks. We need help from other NUM areas, and from other trades unions.'

The NUM must stand up as one to throw back these attacks. They are the thin end of a wedge which, if it gets driven home, will destroy the possibility of rebuilding the NUM as an effective fighting force.

## Defence

Notts Women Against Pit Closures immediately expressed their readiness to throw themselves into the fight in defence of the men now under attack. NUM branches at Thoresby and Sutton have done likewise.

The area leadership of the NUM must now take up the cudgel — and outline a plan of campaign in support of the victimised militants and in defence of basic trade union rights.

# IRELAND UNFREE

## Irish self-determination and the miners strike

TWO WOMEN with direct experience of police and army brutality in the north of Ireland toured the Midlands speaking out against the use of plastic bullets. Emma Groves was blinded by the British army in 1971. Brenda Downes' husband was killed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in August 1984. They spoke in Nottingham at the end of January with Pam Oldfield, a member of the national committee of Women Against Pit Closures. GRAHAM BARNETSON reports.

'LET our heartbreak and misery put a stop to plastic bullets now before you have to suffer them too.' That's how Brenda Downes summed up the reason for the tour she and Emma were on.

Emma Groves was shot in the face with a rubber bullet in 1971 by a British paratrooper. On 4 November 1971 the paratroopers were putting the whole district in which she lives under house arrest. That meant one 'para' standing in the lobby of every house.

To lift the morale of herself and her 11 children in the house she had one of them put on a record. As the music started one of the 'paras' in the street fired into their living room, hitting Emma Groves directly in the face. She has been blind ever since. The soldier responsible was never publicly identified or charged by the army or courts.

'Plastic bullets are being stockpiled by 15 police forces in Britain,' Emma Groves warned. 'It's a weapon of suppression. Whenever you go into the streets protesting against unemployment or against anything, this weapon will be used against you.'

Brenda Downes was the wife of John Downes who was murdered by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) while at a Republican rally in August 1984. The RUC, in an attempt to intimidate the nationalist community and disperse the demonstration, had been firing plastic bullets at the crowd earlier in the day. Though many people had been injured the rally went on. As John Downes had been separated from Brenda and her daughter during the rally it was not until half an hour after returning home that she heard he had been 'injured'.

'I went to the Royal Victoria hospital. They didn't know if John had been injured or not. I later found out the truth.' The RUC officer who shot John Downes at point blank range was charged and bailed on manslaughter. 'There was no inquest and the RUC claimed he was killed by a ricochet — even although it was filmed and shown on TV.'

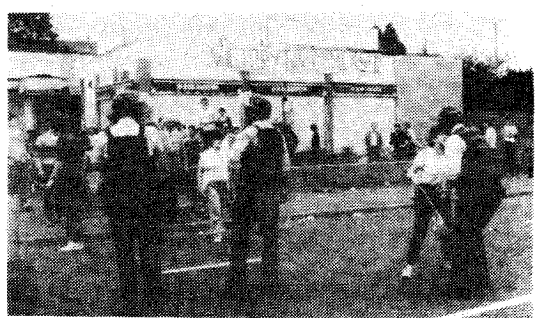
From the miners' strike you've seen some of the brutality we put up with everyday. We want you to demonstrate and protest with us against plastic bullets,' Brenda said.

'I feel honoured to have been asked to speak,' said Pam Oldfield. 'Criminalisation and harassment are two words that spring to mind when discussing the policing of the miners strike. They are two words that are facts of life for Irish republicans. For many years the repression has seemed remote to most working people in Britain.'

'The policing methods used in handling trade union disputes today are reflections of the war in Ireland. The police were organised like an army. They made full use of dogs, batons, shields, snatch squads and, towards the end of the strike, the threat of plastic bullets. All are direct imports from the RUC.'

'In an issue of *The Miner* one headline read "Belfast comes to Blidworth." That was when police first took up occupation in our villages. The article linked the miners battle against the police forces of the British state to those of Irish people against repression, and the daily harassment suffered by black people from both the police and racists.'

'Remember the tactics used by the state against the miners. It demonstrates clearly that the British ruling class will not confine to the North of Ireland the lessons it has learnt there.'





# JUSTICE FOR MINERS

'THE CAMPAIGN might go on through this year, it might have to do the same next year and the year after. As long as it takes, we will continue to remind the movement of its responsibilities.' That was how BILL ETHERINGTON, chair of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, described its objectives to CAROL TURNER when she visited him at his Durham Mechanics office recently. The campaign will be launched with a splash this weekend. Bill graphically described the conditions which make it necessary.

IT IS 12 months since the miners returned to work and there are still about 550 men sacked. Many of the offences are non-existent, never mind trivial — the vast majority involving incidents or alleged incidents with scabs.

At the time of the NUM special conference last November, there were 21 in prison and 962 dismissed. Only eight are now in jail: two each from South Wales, Kent, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire. The vindictive attitude taken towards strikers is illustrated by the fact that when the Court of Appeal reduced the sentences of Hancock and Shankland from life imprisonment to eight years, the police appealed the decision to the House of Lords. For the prosecution to make such an appeal is almost unheard of.

The case of the concrete block was a

tragedy. We had days of hearings about that. But there wasn't much said about the third lad found not guilty. The Coal Board still won't give him his job back, but we don't hear that reported day after day.

The 550 sacked men who, two or three years ago, would probably have been reinstated by a phone call from the union rather than all the meetings and arguments that are now going on. The situation is different from area to area. But by and large, those areas that appear to have a future have had more success getting sacked miners back than ones such as Scotland, Durham and Kent — although that is not strictly the case.

The Midlands, for example, which expected to be a long-life area, has had little success getting sacked men back. None have been taken back in Notts. But South Wales has had quite a lot of

men taken back.

Coal Board practice has varied. In Scotland everyone was sacked no matter how minor their offence. But here in Durham everyone who was involved in theft, that is stealing coal during the strike, was sacked but subsequently re-engaged. The ones who are left are cases where there was a suggestion — I'd put it no higher than that — of violence.

The Coal Board is unwilling to take notice of anyone other than scabs. Any time a scab makes an allegation, the NUM has to get 10 witnesses to disprove it before the Board are prepared to say that there looks as if there's some doubt. That is still happening.

Not many weeks ago a Durham miner's job was threatened for an incident that took place in a public house. We had the preponderance of witnesses and yet all management said was that they were 'letting him off' this time. They weren't prepared to accept there was no case to answer.

But I know of no cases of a scab being sacked for bothering a striking miner. And there have been many instances where there have been complaints. One of our Durham branch secretaries was knocked to the ground by a scab who was subsequently found guilty of assault. But the Coal Board didn't sack him. That is true up and down the country.

The NCB have replaced respected managers, ones who had a little bit of understanding of the industry and the men in it, with a set of business sharks: experts on the balance book mentality, who know about exploiting men. That is why they were appointed. But it has been a total failure in terms of miners' morale.

Rather than take it lying down, there have been go-slows, one day strikes, refusals to work overtime. The new ball game has created a bitter atmosphere, but it hasn't curtailed our activity.

Many miners were loyal to the Coal Board. That is why we had such a hell of a job getting the strike underway. They didn't realise the nature of the animal. But now they do. Now you never hear talk about the union trying to bring the government down, or the political motivation of Arthur Scargill — even from the least radical of miners.

Everybody knows the score. They are more alert, more concerned about their rights, as a result of the way the Coal Board treated them during the strike. To that degree, if the Board did but know it, they might have done us a favor. But that is no consolation to the sacked lads.

The NUM, nationally and in the areas, has tried valiantly to get sacked miners reinstated. But so far we have failed.

We put our case to the parliamentary select committee on employment. Even though there was a majority of Conservatives on it, that committee came out on our side. They believed that the Coal Board had not acted as a reasonable employer and recognised there had been discrimination against striking miners.

That was the situation faced by our special conference last year. We recognised that we had to broaden our campaign, that we couldn't get our sacked men reinstated on our own.

Supporting victimised miners and publicising their case is what the



Photos: THE MINER



Posters for the Heroes concert tickets at

## Justice for Mineworkers Bill

### A BILL TO:

Provide for a review of all cases of miners jailed as a result of the 1984-85 dispute in the mining industry; for the reinstatement of miners sacked for activities arising out of the dispute; for the reimbursement of monies confiscated as a result of fines, sequestration and receivership; and for purposes connected therewith.

Whereas during the heroic struggle of all who have been associated with the Miners Strike 1984-85, the National Union of Mineworkers and its membership have been the subject of a concerted and vicious attack by the whole power of the State, including the unprecedented and combined power of the police and the organised use of the judiciary by whom an order of sequestration was imposed and the elected trustees of the union were removed and replaced by a receiver appointed to run the affairs of an independent trade union; and

Whereas a great injustice was inflicted upon the National Union of Mineworkers and its members and the members of other unions who assisted in the campaign to defend pits, jobs and mining communities; and

Whereas it is right and proper for these injustices to be rectified and remedied by the State through the enactment of legislation for that purpose:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons, in the present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

- 1) Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department shall immediately review the cases of all miners jailed as a result of the 1984-85 mining dispute, and of all those who took part in the dispute and were punished for acts done in good faith for the purpose of safeguarding jobs, living standards, services or civil liberties, and following such review the Secretary of State shall grant free pardons wherever appropriate.
- 2) All persons to whom this Act applies shall be required to be offered reinstatement by the National Coal Board or other employer at their place of work, or at an alternative and suitable place of work without any loss of service or benefit.
- 3) Those who on grounds of retirement, health or other reasons are not able or willing to accept re-instatement shall be fully compensated for the financial losses that they have suffered as a result of their dismissal.
- 4) The National Union of Mineworkers and all other unions which were associated with them in the said dispute shall be re-imbursed by the Treasury for all those sums confiscated from them as a result of fines or otherwise expended whether by the union or in their name as a result of their sequestration and arising out of the appointment of a Receiver.
- 5) Any expenses of a Minister of the Crown incurred in consequence of the provisions of this Act, including any increase attributable to those provisions in sums payable under any other Act shall be defrayed out of money provided by Parliament.
- 6) This Act shall come into force upon the date which the Royal Assent is given.
- 7) This Act may be cited as the Justice for Mineworkers Act 1986.

Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is all about. It came out of a fringe meeting called by Trade Union Briefing at last year's Labour Party conference. More than 200 people attended that meeting in their lunch break — quite a surprise to me, and very encouraging.

We began by calling it the Miners Amnesty Campaign. At that time there was an Amnesty Bill going before parliament from the Campaign Group of MPs. The aim of the Bill, and of the campaign, was to highlight the problems of the national union in getting sacked miners reinstated. The Campaign group were the motivating force.

Certain people within the NUM are wary of using the term amnesty. There are connotations in asking for an amnesty which accept someone has done something wrong that they've got to be forgiven for. But we're not talking about that for miners — we're talking about justice. We eventually changed the name to fit that criterion. Our purpose is to fund-raise and to publicise the case for sacked miners.

Last year two good motions got through TUC and Labour Party conferences, which committed these bodies to do all they could for the victims of the strike. We've got to keep the pressure on, to make sure that the TUC and Labour Party are made to carry out conference resolutions.

There's no chance whatsoever of these men being sacrificed. The cam-

paign might go on through this year, it might have to do the same next year and the year after. As long as it takes, we will continue to remind the movement of its responsibilities.

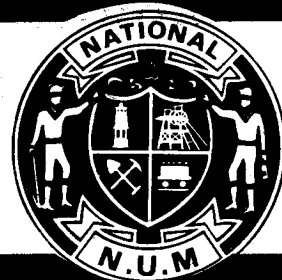
Both the TUC and Labour Party passed resolutions supporting the miners strike. If people fall by the wayside because of that strike — and even Neil Kinnock admits there is a lot of injustice involved — the movement has got to do something about that. Those men were fighting on behalf of the TUC and Labour Party, fighting for the cause. When the bills come in, those who were doing the encouraging have got to pay up. For one thing, I would like to see the Labour Party say it is going to instruct the Coal Board that these men have got to be taken back when it gets into power. I'd like to see the party too do something about the people responsible for the decision that these men be sacked. If we believe in socialism, we can't allow such people to continue in office.

In the meantime, the Labour Party and the TUC must do a bit more about raising funds to keep the sacked miners going. Because of sequestration and receivership, the NUM is not in a very sound financial position. Soon these men will run out of unemployment pay, we are going to have to pay everything because every pound we give them will be deducted from their supplementary benefit which is means-tested.

At the moment, out of the national solidarity fund of the NUM, a married



# NEW WORKERS



VE BLAN  
ELLIOTT  
ICKETS  
KERSHAW,  
ANNE OWEN BAND, JOHN PEEL  
TOM PICKARD, ED PICKFORD  
BOCK FURDON, PRELUDE  
THE HANK WANGFORD BAND  
WILDON BROTHERS, WORKEYTICKET  
PLUS: BILLY BRAGG  
PAUL WELLER, & others to be confirmed  
TONY BENN, PETER HEATHFIELD  
TONY BANKS (Chair, GLC), MIKE WARD (GLC)  
DENNIS SKINNER, DAVID NELLIST

ROYAL ALBERT  
HALL  
KENSINGTON  
LONDON  
SUNDAY  
2nd MARCH  
DOORS OPEN 5.45p  
SHOW STARTS 6.30

Details available from:  
Sacked Miners Office  
Greenwich Labour  
Rooms  
32 Woolwich Road  
Greenwich  
01-858 7055

Produced by GLC

## Organising the Campaign

**TO BE SUCCESSFUL**, any campaign against the injustices suffered by mineworkers and their union must have the NUM firmly in the driving seat. That is why Durham Mechanics general secretary Bill Etherington is chair of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. It is why Arthur Oxley, a sacked miner from Vane Tempest colliery in Durham is its treasurer. And it is why Arthur Scargill is honorary president, and Peter Heathfield and Mick McGahey its honorary vice presidents.

in defence of the NUM and the victimised miners. Any funds we raise are directed solely into the NUM's national solidarity fund.

At its recent national executive on 14 February, the NUM 'agreed to support the establishment of a national justice for mineworkers campaign'. Bill Etherington, himself a national executive member, has already raised the question of official support for the Justice Campaign. 'After the NUM special conference last November we agreed to broaden our horizons,' Bill told us. 'Obviously this fitted very well with the Justice Campaign, giving some credibility to what we wanted to do.'

Set up at 1985 Labour Party conference, the campaign will be launched with a splash this weekend. Marking the anniversary of the historic miners strike of 1984-85, it will coincide with the introduction in parliament this Thursday of the Justice for Mineworkers Bill (reprinted on these pages), and with a weekend of events which culminate in the Heroes concert at the Albert Hall on Sunday.

'I think that some sections of the union have been a little bit suspicious about someone doing what they regarded as the union's job. But the NUM alone will not get all its sacked miners reinstated. We need the support of the broader movement. At no time has the Justice Campaign gone ahead with anything that the NUM doesn't support. I certainly wouldn't have anything to do with a campaign that did.'

The campaign is already well set on the road to success. Since its inception, the steering committee which has so far guided its work has grown in numbers. Its last meeting in Sheffield found around 250 people in attendance.

'All NUM areas will have the chance if they so desire for their officers to be part of honorary council. That ensures that the NUM takes its rightful place — at the head of any campaign against victimisation of its members.'

Already the campaign council seats representatives from Women Against Pit Closures, from regional miners support groups, from the Campaign group of MPs and, of course, from the National Union of Mineworkers. Its original sponsors — people such as Ron Todd, Jimmy Knapp, Ray Buckton, Jim Slater, Ken Cameron, Ben Rubner (of FTAT), Alan Sapper and Ken Gill — will be invited to become honorary councillors.

The Justice for Mineworkers Campaign welcomes support and affiliation from all organisations who support its objectives. Future plans to build that support include fringe meetings at each of the forthcoming regional Labour Party conferences, jointly held with the Campaign group of MPs. The publication of the Campaign group pamphlet, *Justice* — out for the first time at the weekend — is a further effort to build that support and ensure the funds needed to support for the victims of NCB and government policy keep rolling in.

The campaign aims are simple. Ann Suddick, coordinator of the Heroes concert and Durham delegate to WAPC, described them succinctly. 'There are two primary areas of our campaign,' she told us. 'to win support for the NUM resolutions passed by TUC and Labour Party conferences, and to fight for their implementation.'

● *Affiliation to the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is: £50 per annum for national bodies, £25 for regional bodies, and £5 for local ones. Donations and applications for affiliation should be addressed to the Campaign Treasurer and sent to: Durham Mechanics Office, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED. Further information on the campaign and its activities can be obtained by writing to the same address.*

'The Justice for Mineworkers Campaign aims to highlight the plight of victimised miners and their families, and the situation of the union itself. We are here to offer help and to raise funds

been going up across London in the last few weeks. A few available at £3.50 from the phone number on the poster.

man gets £45 a week and a single man £35. That brings them up to a reasonable standing of living — and it is the least we can do. In March the unemployment benefit runs out and we are talking about £100 a week each for 550 sacked miners.

## Building the Campaign

What we have done up to now is remarkable, but that is a colossal task. From these figures I've worked out that we are talking about paying out in the region of £2¼ million a year. That means we need £30-odd million on a return of capital basis.

**TO BUILD** for the Justice for Miners rally and concert, sacked miners from Kent, Durham, Lancashire, and Nottingham have had a permanent office in the Greenwich Labour Party rooms. DENNIS PENNINGTON, a sacked miner from Bold, reports on a week in the campaign's life.

continuing belief in the case for coal. Last Saturday I went to Tilmanstone to listen to Arthur Scargill address a meeting which was originally meant to be held in protest over the NCB's intention to close Tilmanstone colliery. However last week the Board gave the pit a reprieve (and no doubt they only intend it to be temporary) and the meeting ended up a celebration of the Kent miners' victory.

The TUC and Labour Party must be asked to redouble their efforts to collect money for sacked miners.

**BY THE** end of last week requests for tickets for the Albert Hall concert on 2 March were arriving continuously at our Greenwich office, and at times we were hard pushed to cover all the evening meetings in London to which we have been invited to speak.

Quite naturally the national president was in an ebullient mood and, despite the arctic weather conditions, the hall was full to capacity. He urged the Kent men and women not to rest on their laurels and to be ever vigilant against the Coal Board's tactics. He also pointed out that the UDM was proving to be a failure; that according to figures from the Official Receiver in Sheffield, 86 per cent of British miners remain in the NUM, and applications for re-entry into the NUM are now flooding into the national headquarters.

The Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is organising a rally on 2 March — but the glory for the Heroes concert goes to Women Against Pit Closures who organised that. It was felt that the Justice for Mineworkers Bill being introduced in parliament on 27 February was a good time to keep the pot boiling. At the same time the Campaign group is publishing a *Justice for Mineworkers* pamphlet, which brings together all aspects of the strike and is a synopsis of the problems which still exist. We will use this to get our message over.

Last week we had a change over in our 'staff' and amongst our new faces arriving in Greenwich were two good old lads (one aged 59, the other 56) who had been dismissed from their privately owned pit for refusing to cross picket lines. When employed, these men won the coal at their pit by hand in the old style, the coal still being conveyed there by means of pony power!

Myself and the Kent lads returned to London in high spirits, ready to campaign even harder for the fulfillment of our demands for reinstatement and to ensure that the rally and concert on 2 March will be a huge success.

But our campaign is about constant campaigning. If people get sick of the sight of us — that's just the way it should be! No one should doubt it, our anti-victimisation campaign against the injustices that striking miners have suffered will go on until every single one is reinstated.

These people certainly won the admiration of the younger lads because of their dedication to their union and their

## Diary of events

### Thursday 27 February

11.45am: Petition delivered to Downing Street by Campaign Group of MPs. NUM representatives present.

12.30pm: Presentation of the Justice for Mineworkers Bill, plus presentation of the Group's pamphlet *JUSTICE* to the press. Simultaneously with this press conference, another will be held in Brussels by the Campaign Group's MEP members. Trade union and political deputations will also visit British Consuls in Italy, Spain, France and Holland urging an end to victimisation of NUM members.

3.00pm: Tony Benn presents the Bill to the Speaker.

10.00pm: Tony Benn appears on *Question Time*.

### Saturday 1 March

11.00am till 5.00pm: Durham Mechanics Band is playing in Covent Garden.

7.00pm: Greenwich social for the Justice Campaign with Campaign Group MPs and NUM members. Phone 01-858 7055 for details.

11.00pm: Miners visit to Wapping.

### Sunday 2 March

1.30pm: Rally in Jubilee Garden. Speakers.

2.30pm: March to Hyde Park.

4.15pm: Rally in Hyde Park.

6.00-11.00pm: Albert Hall Heroes concert.



# Politics and trade unions in South Africa

**THE BIRTH** of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) at the end of last year was a source of inspiration to many workers in this country. The launch of this non-racial union federation — the strongest organisation amongst workers ever seen in South African history — was an enormous advance in the liberation struggle. Half a million workers with membership in over 30 different unions, united into a single federation, in itself is an important achievement.

By Dodie Wepler

But the establishment of COSATU is even more significant on another count. After four years of often difficult negotiations and debate — as well as common experience in struggle — COSATU was founded on the basis of agreement on an important political principle: that as a trade union organisation, COSATU can defend its members only if it organises in their defence both as workers, and as disenfranchised citizens of South Africa. That is, COSATU recognises that the unions themselves must take a leading role in the struggle to overthrow the apartheid state; that the fight to achieve their most immediate economic objectives is inseparable from the fight for their political rights.

Incredibly, Dick Carter, commenting on the formation of COSATU in Socialist Action ('COSATU and the ANC', 10 January), fails to highlight this signal advance for trade unionism in South Africa. Instead, this article, relying for its facts on a single, one-sided book *Power!* by Dennis McShane et al, chooses to affirm the record and founding principles of FOSATU. The affiliated unions of this federation had the largest number of adherents of all the components that went into the formation of COSATU. Yet the basis of the initial foundation of FOSATU was a rejection of union involvement in politics.

It ill befits Socialist Action to be raking up all the old differences amongst the trade union activists in South Africa at this time. But having done so, it is important that Socialist Action readers are apprised of the true record as the same principles remain indispensable in the face of new challenges that will confront COSATU.

Carter's article looks at the past positions of two major trends involved in the unity: unions that looked to the ANC for a lead, such as SACTU; and the black independent trade unions affiliated to FOSATU. The article correctly points to the importance of their common position on 'the issue of non-racialism', or colour. This approach was the hallmark of SACTU when it was founded in 1955, and when FOSATU appeared in the late 1970s, it also identified with non-racialism.

This issue became the sticking point for any broader unity, but SACTU argues that 'non-racialism' should not continue to keep the unions remaining outside COSATU, CUSA and Azactu, from joining the new federation.

But then the problems with Carter's article begin. Firstly, it fails to consider FOSATU's past views on the political involvement of the unions themselves — as opposed to seeing strictly economic organisations which workers can use as an organisational base to act from, in the broader movement.

Secondly, Carter insists repeatedly that on all the 'tactical' and 'political' issues which separated FOSATU and SACTU, 'FOSATU was proved correct', 'FOSATU was thoroughly vindicated', 'FOSATU won out completely', and so on. The message of the article is unambiguous: SACTU/ANC was wrong. Indeed, Carter's judgment of FOSATU's tac-



South African workers take the country's gold to private stores

tics is that 'If they had been theorised they might have been described as Leninist'.

This judgement is a grave misunderstanding of Lenin's views on the unions, and points to where Carter goes wrong. Indeed, the record shows that it is SACTU's views (and therefore those of the ANC) which have been vindicated — although SACTU's own views have, of course, themselves undergone an evolution in the light of recent experience.

This idea that it is *indispensable* in the fight to overthrow apartheid rule for the unions to become *more* political is a cornerstone of SACTU, the union federation founded in 1955 which joined the Congress Alliance in its founding year. SACTU's official history *Organise... or Starve!* puts it this way: 'By clearly recognising the link between the struggle for economic gains and the general political struggle, the founders of SACTU were calling upon the workers of South Africa to fulfil their historic role — to become the spearhead in the struggle for national liberation.'

## Political rights

'Rejecting the slogan of "no politics in the trade union movement"', SACTU leaders refused to divorce the struggle for political rights and power from the day-to-day struggle for higher wages and improved working conditions.'

This was the same message that Lenin and the Bolsheviks repeatedly stressed, while writing about unions and the socialist revolution. But on this point — on politics and the

unions — the message is still relevant. It's what is meant by their call to develop the unions and factory committees 'into powerful revolutionary weapons'.

The Communist International, when it was led by Lenin, explained that from 'time immemorial the theory of neutrality has been based on the assertion that the trade unions must concern themselves only with economic questions and in no circumstances interfere in politics. The bourgeoisie has always endeavoured to separate politics and economics, for it is well aware that no serious danger will threaten its rule while it manages to keep the working class within the narrow confines of pure trade unionism.'

Engels took this question up in a series of articles in the *Labour Standard* in 1881. After considering the functions of the unions as a means of regulating the rate of wages in resistance against capital he notes that this function 'does not exhaust our subject.' A struggle between 'two great classes of society necessarily becomes a political struggle', Engels argues, 'because the end goal is 'to abolish the wages system altogether.' In South Africa, today the goal is the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system of rule.

Agreement on this fundamental principle of the need for unions to be fully involved in politics was a crucial factor which made possible the unity of the trade unions in South Africa. Of course there were other important issues — in particular, the agreement registered on the non-racial character of the new federation. In addition, a number of organisational matters

were resolved. But above all, it is the understanding of the role of the unions to wage resistance not only against the bosses, but also against apartheid rule which registers such a remarkable advance with the birth of COSATU.

Unfortunately, Carter gets into more hot water with his other judgements. For him, 'At the level of tactics and organisation, FOSATU won out completely. The organisational principles of COSATU — organisation by industrial unionism, representation on the basis of dues paying membership, non-racialism — are unmistakably those of FOSATU.'

## Decisive points

Leaving aside the futile benefits of this entire exercise, Carter's assessment is just wrong. For a start, these were *not* the decisive points of contention between FOSATU and the ANC during the fusion talks. 'Non-racialism' can hardly be seen as FOSATU's imprint alone! And how can anyone see COSATU's commitment to industrial unionism as 'proof' of the stamp of FOSATU 'as opposed to SACTU', when the founding slogans of SACTU were for 'One Union, One Industry, One Country, One Federation'?

Equally on the issue of dues-paying membership. The method of signing up union members, sometimes without payment, at community-based meetings was rejected in the fusion, but it's wrong to give such weight to the practice of one particular union and then to identify

it with the policies of either the ANC or SACTU! And then to insist 'FOSATU was right as opposed to the ANC'.

There were differences between SACTU and FOSATU — including over the registration of unions and their participation in Industrial Councils. Right from the time it was formed, SACTU led the resistance to *any* registration of unions, arguing that it undermined the unity of the workers movement and it would lead to a loss of independence.

When in 1979 the Wiehan Commission report stipulated that the new independent non-racial unions could register, FOSATU affiliates decided to register. For Carter, this decision was a mark of FOSATU's superior approach. Indeed, it leads to his judgment that FOSATU is 'Leninist'. But by putting FOSATU's growth and development down to its 'intelligent use of legal openings', Carter turns things on their head.

As FOSATU itself would explain, its growth occurred because — *despite registering* — the union refused to give up its independent actions. SACTU no doubt remained influenced by its earlier debates over registration. But this time round there is an important difference. Today, the mass movement and workers struggles are not going into a decline similar to the post-war years. Indeed, registration today is combined with a massive upsurge both of workers struggles and of community-based resistance.

## Future battles

This fact leads on to an extremely important point involved in SACTU's general approach. It would be quite wrong to assume that the open activities of the independent unions are now a permanent fact of apartheid life. South Africa today is not simply some especially repressive form of bourgeois democracy. It is therefore indispensable to maintain underground structures.

As SACTU puts it: 'As long as... above ground trade unionists face detention without trial, torture, and murder at the hands of the police, the occupation of their townships and the brutal strike-breaking tactics of the regime and the bosses, there will always be a need for SACTU.' But this is seen by SACTU as *complementary* to open organisation, not counter-posed as the article implies!

To make a principle — or a criterion for Leninism — out of the tactic of registration is wrong. And it also disarms the South African masses as they prepare for future battles. At any rate, at the end of the day it wasn't a theoretical argument that was won by either side, that led to COSATU's birth. Rather it was the common *experience of the struggle* which gave rise to its formation. In this, the successful Transvaal stay-away strikes in November 1984 marked a turning point.

In sum, Dick Carter is correct that COSATU's birth was based on the convergence of two previously counterposed views. But it occurred around a specific axis. Carter's article is misleading because he ignores the main question — and the main lesson of the experience of the recent months: the need for the unions to get *more* involved in the political struggle.

Carter gets the basis of convergence wrong so he can't explain how, although the ANC-inspired unions were so organisationally weak in comparison to FOSATU or the NUM, many of the leaders of the new union federation — including Elijah Barayi — were members of the ANC until it was banned.

Finally dwelling on previous differences between the forces that are today united is not the kind of contribution that we, as socialists in Britain, can best make today to the South African revolution. However, Carter raised the issue. To allow his one-sided assessment to go by unchallenged may have proved to be an even graver error.



South Africa's new union

# COSATU takes on Apartheid

WHEN COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, was formed last year, it brought together unions whose membership totalled over half a million. It adopted resolutions on all the decisive political issues facing the black people of South Africa: on the kind of South African state it wanted, on the State of Emergency, on the homelands policy, on the pass laws, on women, and many other questions of civil rights, as well as on the basic trade union issues of the right to strike, the formation of the industrial unions, and inter-union co-operation in Southern Africa as a whole.

We reprint some of the resolutions agreed by COSATU, together with extracts from a recent speech by Oliver Tambo on the new union federation. Tambo's speech was broadcast over the ANC's *Radio Freedom* and was delivered on 8 January. The text is taken from a pamphlet issued by the ANC's Lusaka office.

### Preamble to constitution

We the trade union representatives here present firmly commit ourselves to a united, democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation.

We believe that this can only be achieved under the leadership of a united working class. Our history has taught us that to achieve this goal we will have to carry out the following tasks:

- To organise the unorganised workers and build effective trade unions based on the democratic organisation of workers in the factories, mines, shops, farms, and other workplaces.
- Organise national industrial unions, financed and controlled by their worker members through democratically elected committees.
- Unify these industrial unions, into a national, worker-controlled federation.
- Combat the divisions amongst the workers of South Africa and unite them into a strong and confident working class.
- Encourage democratic worker organisations and leadership in all spheres of our society together with other progressive sectors of the community.
- Reinforce and encourage progressive international worker contact and solidarity so as to assist one another in our struggles.

We call on all those who identify with this commitment to join us and the workers whom we represent as comrades in the struggle ahead. We call on all trade unions to strive and unite their members in their ranks without discrimination and prejudice, and therefore resolve that this federation shall determinedly seek to further and protect the interests of all workers and that its guiding motto shall be the universal slogan of working class solidarity: 'An injury to one is an injury to all.'

### Federalism

This congress noting that:

1. South Africa's bitter history of industrialisation and exploitation has forged one nation.
2. The attempts by the apartheid regime to create and reconstruct separate states and nations.
3. That the intention of the proposed federal system is to maintain power and control in the hands of the present minority and perpetuate an oppressive and exploitative system.
4. That the demand of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa is for a unitary state based on one person, one vote.

Resolves to:

1. Reject as a total fraud the new proposed federal solution.
2. Reaffirm our belief in a unitary state based on one person, one vote.
3. Work towards the destruction of all barriers and divisions so that we are united irrespective of language, race, or creed.

And further believes that only with the total unification of all people into South Africa will we be able to rebuild our rich land and make a real contribution to breaking the chains of poverty and economic exploitation

that bind Africa.

(Proposed by the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union)

### State of Emergency

This inaugural conference believing:

1. That the declaration of a State of Emergency has been used to wage a war of repression against all sections of the oppressed communities and to try to crush democratic organisations.
2. That the cause of all violence in South Africa is the existence of the apartheid system, and that there can be no peace while it exists.

Calls for:

1. For the immediate lifting of the State of Emergency.
2. For the withdrawal of the SADF (South African Defence Force) and all apartheid security forces from the townships.
3. For the unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees, the unbanning of banned individuals and organisation, as a prelude to the creation of a democratic South Africa, where all shall live in peace and prosperity.

(Proposed by the General and Allied Workers Union)

### Bantustans

The congress noting:

1. That the bantustan system was imposed on the African people, against their will, with a view to thwarting the just struggle for One Person, One Vote in a unitary South Africa.
2. That various bantustan administrations have practised extreme forms of oppression against the oppressed people — including trade unions.

Noting in particular the banning of SAAWU (South African Allied Workers Union) in the Ciskei, the banning of all unions in the Bophuthatswana bantustan, and the killing of trade unionists and other democrats by tribally based organisations.

Hereby resolves that:

1. The bantustan system be totally rejected and that the federation struggle — together with other democratic forces — for the creation of a democratic and unitary South Africa.
2. We shall not hesitate to exercise our right to organise in plants based within the bantustans and that we are fully prepared to defend ourselves against repression by whatever effective means at our disposal.
3. That we are completely and absolutely opposed to the super-exploitation occurring in these areas and declare our commitment to reject the idea and practice of workers receiving less wages and worse conditions of work.
4. That we express our solidarity with those communities around Durban and elsewhere who are struggling against being incorporated into the bantustans.

(Composite resolution)

### Right to strike

This federation noting:

1. That the strike is a legitimate right and necessary weapon of the working class in their struggle against bad working condition and low wages.
2. That the strike is internationally accepted as an essential element of



Police anti-riot tanks hover over demonstrators at the funeral of a black shop steward who died recently in police custody

collective bargaining.

3. That freedom of association, assembly, and picketing for strike action are also fundamental rights, internationally, in an industrial struggle.
4. That the infringement or curbing of these rights is detrimental to the social and economic interests of the workers.
5. That the right to strike is severely curtailed in South Africa.
6. That a strike involves a democratic form of struggle.
7. That picketing is an integral part of a strike and of morally persuading fellow workers not to break a strike.
8. That essential service workers are not allowed to take industrial action in pursuing their demands.

Therefore resolves:

1. To continue a relentless campaign which will allow workers full freedom of association, assembly, and

picketing for strike action. This requires that all forms of security legislation that denies these rights be removed.

2. To ensure that where workers have followed mutually agreed dispute procedures with employers, there will be full job security during such strikes. This requires that eviction from accommodation and other such measures to be outlawed.
3. To campaign and respond vigorously against police and state intervention in strikes or industrial disputes.
4. To fight for the right of trade unions to establish strike funds.
5. To ensure that strikers are free to establish and control strike committees.
6. To fight for the removal of the designation of essential services and that all workers be allowed to share equal rights.

(Composite resolution)

### Disinvestment

This congress:

1. Believes that all forms of international pressure on the South African government — including disinvestment — is an essential and effective form of pressure on the South African regime and we support it.
2. Further believes that if this government remains intransigent in its racist, antidemocratic, and antiworker practices, then this pressure will have to increase as an act of solidarity with our struggle for liberation from exploitation and oppression.
3. Commits ourselves to ensure that the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all and further commits ourselves to the principle of international working class solidarity action with our struggle.

(Proposed by CCAWUSA)

## TAMBO welcomes COSATU

WE seize this occasion especially to welcome most warmly the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). We extend to its leaders, its affiliated unions, and to the membership of those unions the revolutionary greetings of the ANC leadership, inside and outside our country, as well as those of our entire membership.

The struggle to form one democratic trade union centre has been hard and protracted. Many comrades have spent countless hours working to achieve the result that was consummated with the formation of COSATU. We all acted in this manner convinced of the need for the unity of the working class of our country, of the imperative to defend and advance the interests of this class, and of the necessity for the organised, united, and conscious workers to remain in the front ranks and as an integral part of the mass army of revolution that is today shaking the apartheid system to its very foundations.

The formation of COSATU has therefore added enormously to the strength of the democratic movement as a whole and is a victory which this movement must defend at all costs.

We appeal to those democratic

trade unions which still remain outside the fold of COSATU to reconsider their positions. We are convinced of the maturity and honesty of both their leaders and members. Accordingly we are certain that at this critical moment in the history of an entire people and region they will find a way to overcome all obstacles that bar their way to join COSATU.

Many problems remain to be solved to fashion the new trade union congress into the instrument of working-class and national liberation that the delegates visualised at the founding conference in Durban. These include the transformation of the general unions into industrial unions and the organisation of the unorganised and the unemployed. These are important tasks whose accomplishment rests on the shoulders both of COSATU and the democratic movement as a whole.

Fellow workers, during the year 1986, we shall mark two historic anniversaries. These are the fortieth anniversary of the great mineworkers' strike of 1946 and the hundredth anniversary of May Day — international workers' solidarity day.

In connection with the fortieth anniversary of the great miners' strike, we call upon the entire democratic forces, and especially the trade union movement, to draw on the revolutionary traditions of the



ANC president Oliver Tambo

African mineworkers in order to enhance the contribution of the workers to the cause of national and social emancipation.

It is totally unacceptable that up to its hundredth anniversary, May Day in South Africa has remained an ordinary working day. We therefore fully support the workers' demand that from 1986 onwards May Day should become a fully paid public holiday. Our entire democratic movement must support the organised trade union movement in the struggle to realise this demand.



# Reselection under threat — again!

THE LABOUR leadership is attacking Constituency Labour Parties' right to reselect MPs for the second time in two years. The organisational subcommittee of 10 February is proposing a working party to re-examine 'widening the franchise' for the reselection of MPs. The motion goes to the next 'normal' NEC. On 26 February the NEC is only discussing Liverpool.

By Alan Freeman

This is Kinnockese for OMOV — one member, one vote. It removes the right of reselection from CLP delegates and replaces it with a ballot of individual members. Far from widening the franchise, it deprives all the affiliated members (including over five million trade unionists) of any say in reselection at all.

## Choice

The intent is also to move towards postal ballots, not just to wider involvement of individual party members.

One of the main witch-hunting complaints against Liverpool District Labour Party is that votes are taken among individual members attending District Party members. It can be assumed the NEC is not quite so naive as to recommend to conference a procedure which has been the basis

for disbanding a party and expelling half its councillors.

By replacing delegate votes with individual ballots, above all postal ballots, OMOV replaces the real democracy of ward, section and CLP meetings — where candidates can be interviewed and all arguments heard and debated — with large-scale lobbying and vote-buying. It would be a gigantic step away from an activist, campaigning party towards an SDP-style, Access-card party.

## Message

Two years ago conference roundly defeated such a proposal from the NEC because it did not get enough union backing. The EETPU supported the NEC proposal but refused to support any other, while the TGWU said it would support the principle, but not the NEC proposal.



Labour Party members lobby for democratic reforms to make the party more accountable, at the heyday of the democracy campaign in the early '80s. Today, and only three years after their election, the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership want to put those gains under the axe.

Turnock, speaking for the NEC at the end of the debate, said the NEC undertook not to raise the issue again because it had better things to do.

Clearly it now has nothing better to do. Five minutes before the end of the organisation subcommittee Jon Adams, who is also the socialist societies'

and Coops delegate to the national executive committee, moved a motion to go to the NEC calling for a working party to be set up on the issue.

Protests were raised that new business could not suddenly placed on the agenda without due warning. In the past the left has always been prevented

from raising issues it wanted discussed, on these grounds. This time the chair overruled the objection and the motion passed Neil Kinnock seconding.

## Islington rally against apartheid

LAST Thursday 140 people crammed into Islington's Red Rose Club to rally against apartheid.

Organised by Islington North and South Labour Parties and the Anti Apartheid Movement, the rally assembled local MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Chris Smith, SWAPO, the AAM, Essop Pahad from the ANC, and Tony Benn

MP. It took place on the same day that international bankers gave the South African government a year's financial breathing space and Ronald Reagan made his visit to Grenada.

Essop Pahad stressed that the fight against apartheid is a fight against imperialism. The South African regime had declared war on the country's black population, he

said. The South African arms budget is greater than the GNPs of most black African countries.

The ANC, he argued, is the only organisation with an army fighting apartheid, and the only organisation with a programme that can smash it. He said there was a mass spontaneous response from the youth of South Africa: identifying with the ANC, marching under

ANC colours, (an offence for which you can get five years' jail), and carrying cardboard AK47s at funerals.

Groups of youth stoning the police often consider themselves irregular units of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC army. This spontaneous response gave the ANC great responsibility to lead and structure a combination of armed struggles and mass

political action.

'The South African working class,' he said concluding, 'cannot be held back. The mass actions cannot be halted.'

Tony Benn called for full support for the struggle, including the military struggle. He stressed the need for internationalism in the class struggle in Britain. A collection raised over £200 for the ANC and SWAPO.

## Black section statement on Sparkbrook

IN A statement of June 1984 the Labour Party black section warned the Labour leadership of a mass exodus of black people from the party unless the party began to practise racial equality. Our warnings were not heeded. It gives us no pleasure to witness our prediction come true with the formation of the Democratic Party, which now has 300 members, in Sparkbrook Birmingham.

Mr Hattersley, replying on the behalf of some members of the national executive committee to the debate on black sections at conference '85, boasted that in his constituency there was a black councillor in each of the three wards. Nearly 50 per cent

of Sparkbrook's electorate are black: 500 of the 700 party members are black.

It's true that of the nine councillors representing the constituency three are black. But we would have admitted this shameful failing of representation with great

regret. Now two of the three councillors Mr Hattersley used to bolster the credentials of his constituency have been expelled from the party.

It was the expulsion of councillor Amir Khan for forming a constituency black section that finally activated the exodus.

Councillor Amir Khan has been an outstanding representative of the community with a remarkable record. The founder of the Democratic Party and others finally decided the Labour Party was beyond

reform.

At the last general election Labour received one million votes from the black community (one in eight of Labour's votes). Over 40 Labour MPs owe their seats in the House of Commons to the black electorate. We fear that unless Labour grants its black members the legitimate right to organise in black sections, the Democratic Party will grow beyond its 300 members and beyond Birmingham. The Labour Party must stop the rot

and must do it now.

We must make it absolutely clear that the Labour Party black section or any of its members has had nothing whatsoever to do with the formation of the Democratic Party. However we sympathise with the reasons for its formation. The black section cannot support independent candidates or candidates of other parties in opposition to officially endorsed Labour Party candidates.

## Winning with socialist policies

# THE LABOUR PARTY

**REGIONAL Labour Party conference fringe meetings organised jointly by the Campaign Group, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and the Labour Left Co-ordination:**

**Yorkshire:**  
Saturday 1 March, 12.30. Southcliffe Hotel, South Marine Drive. Chair: Joan Maynard. Speakers: Bob Cryer, Jeremy Cuss (CLPD), Black Section, Women Against Pit Closures.

**London:**  
Saturday 1 March, 12.30, Room 2, St Matthews Place, opp. Lambeth Town Hall. Chair: Joan Twelves. Speakers: Tony Benn, Alan Barclay (CLPD), Diane Abbott, Bernie Grant, IRBG/LCI.

**Scotland:**  
Saturday 8 March, 6.30, Station Hotel, Perth. Chair: Eric Clarke. Speakers: Tony Benn, Gavin Strang (CLPD), Ann Henderson (WAC).

**North West:**  
Saturday 15 March, 5-7, Opera House Circle Lounge Bar, Blackpool. Chair: Les Huckfield. Speakers: Eric Heffer, Michael Hindley (CLPD), WAC, Bill Etherington.

**West Midlands:**  
Saturday 15 March, 5.30. Chair: Marje Bridle. Speakers: Tam Dalyell, Amir Khan, CLPD.

**East Midlands:**  
Saturday 15 March, 12-2, Parade Hotel, Grand Parade, Skegness. Chair: John Witby. Speakers: Diane Abbott, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner.

**South West:**  
Saturday 15 March, 12.30, St George's Hall, White Lion Hotel, Mary Arches Street, Cottage Bar, Exeter. Chair: Dawn Primarola. Speakers: Campaign Group MP, Ray Davison (CLPD), Notts Women Against Pit Closures, Exeter expellee.

**Southern:**  
Chair: Bryn Griffiths. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn, Liz French, Val Price (CLPD).

## Other Books:

The Other Books book service has a wide selection of labour movement and other radical literature, available by post. We have a fine choice of books on South Africa, which include:

**Part of My Soul**  
Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 159pp, £2.95 plus 25p postage.

**To honour women's day: profiles of leading women in the South African and Namibian liberation struggles.**  
IDAF, 56pp, £1.00 plus 22p postage.

**Nelson Mandela: The struggle is my life.**  
IDAF, 208pp, £1.85 plus 46p postage.

Make cheques or postal orders payable to IMRS. Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## Vauxhall backs Kingsley

THE CAMPAIGN to get black sections candidate Kingsley Abrams elected for the LPYS place on Labour's national executive was dramatically strengthened last week.

Vauxhall black section passed a motion supporting Kingsley Abrams and calling on Linda Douglas to stand down and support the black sections national campaign and candidate.

Linda Douglas is the Militant candidate for the place and a member of Vauxhall party. She attended the Vauxhall black section meeting to seek support for her candidature. The motion she moved, calling for Vauxhall black section to seek support for her candidature, received no seconder. The meeting also donated £25 to the black sections national campaign in support of Kingsley.

Meanwhile at the Youth Fightback editorial board a motion calling for support for Kingsley fell by nine votes to twelve.

The motion read: 'As most comrades will know Kingsley Abrams from the black sections youth committee is standing for the LPYS place on the Labour Party NEC. His platform is in general agreement with that of Youth Fightback — against all witch hunts, for the self-organisation of the oppressed, for a mass campaigning LPYS. A number of Youth Fightback's affiliated YS branches have already nominated Kingsley. This EB should agree to support his campaign and participate in the campaign committee which is being set up.'





## Regional Young Socialist conferences

### Scotland

By Gerry Kirk, delegate, Dumbarton LPYS

WITH 250 people including delegates from over 40 LPYS branches, the Scottish LPYS conference in Glasgow on 22-23 February was the largest in the country this year.

Guest speakers included George Johannes of the ANC, Andy Bevan, Scottish Labour Party chair Johnnie Walker and SOGAT's Bob Gillespie, who called for labour movement solidarity just as Robert Maxwell was locking out 1050 workers from his Glasgow *Daily Record* plant.

But conference did not endorse the campaigning priorities to grasp this potential. Though 10 of the 67 resolutions took up apartheid and George Johannes called for 'no buts' in backing the South African liberation struggle, resolutions from Edinburgh Central and Dumbarton YS which called for an ANC tour, publicity for the AAM and priority to anti-apartheid, were voted down.

Also defeated was a resolution from Dumbarton in support of black sections.

Johnnie Walker made a strong attack on expulsions and purges and all anti-witch-hunt resolutions were passed, though LCC youth tried to apologise for Kinnoch's action by claiming Liverpool's tactics justified it.

On Saturday fifty people came to a Youth Action fringe meeting to hear Joe McQuillan and Kingsley Abrams explain what kind of support black and Irish people needed from the labour movement.

A Labour Committee on Ireland fringe meeting next day took the discussion further, with a speaker from Sinn Fein and Alan Smart, president of NUS Scotland. 60 came.

### North West

By Martin Marriott, AUEW, Gorton LPYS delegate

THIRTY THREE delegates came to the North West LPYS conference on 15-16 January. The issues were clear from the first discussion around a resolution calling for support for the black sections and a campaign in defence of the youth of Broadwater Farm.

After a strong debate it was defeated, setting the tone for the rest of the conference including the final debate on South Africa, in which conference rejected a resolution supporting the African National Congress and backing the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

25 people came to a Youth Action fringe meeting to hear Les Huckfield, Euro-MP, a speaker from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Kingsley Abrams.

### East Midlands

NOTTINGHAM, 22-23 February, saw an uninspired event with little to offer youth wanting to fight Tory attacks.

Discussions on Nicaragua and South Africa were dropped due to lack of time. The highlight of the conference was when it was addressed by Dennis Skinner MP. Other than that the conference was largely a rehash of rhetoric with no proposals for action. The exception was Leicester West, who proposed recognition of the UDM, the expulsion of the *Militant* and support for the EETPU.

### South West

By Sandy Burke, Bristol West LPYS Delegate  
SOUTH WEST region LPYS conference on 15 February was much smaller than previous years. Only 21 delegates came, representing 12 YS branches. Three were unable to attend as they had been suspended by the right wing.

For the longest debate, on South Africa, the motion called for links with the Anti-Apartheid movement and the ANC. It was passed, but the bulk of the contributions dealt with support for COSATU, which speakers tried to counterpose to backing the ANC. Summing up, the regional committee attacked the 'individual terror' tactics of the ANC and counterposed it to the non-racial trade unions. However it recommended support for the motion, which commits the region to support the AAM and the boycott campaign and hold meetings with ANC speakers.

# AUEW: support for Tocher grows

ABOUT 250 AUEW members rallied in Wolverhampton on Sunday 16 February to support the campaign of Broad Left candidate John Tocher for the union's presidency. Tocher, who trailed right winger Bill Jordan by 22,000 votes in the first ballot, faces a hard fight when ballot papers go out for the second round of the election in early March.

In his keynote speech, Tocher outlined the situation facing engineering workers: redundancy, low wages and privatisation. He highlighted the particular threat to young engineers and women workers posed by the YTS temporary contracts and part time contracts — which undermine the ability of the union to organise.

But the heart of Tocher's speech concerned Murdoch's war against the print unions. He explained:

'Murdoch's action is a blueprint for the whole employing class. We'll never win this fight in a court of law. We've got to stop the paper, stop the machines, stop the water. That's how we halt in its tracks the threat to us all.'

'Murdoch would never have done what he did without the comfort of the EETPU. Never, if I am elected, will I truck and trade with people.'

The rally was also addressed by Duncan Boyd,

AUEW branch secretary for Fleet Street. Boyd requested the boycott of all Murdoch's papers and

By Bill Alder

called for support for the mass demonstrations to the Wapping site every Saturday evening. This latter proposal was adopted as policy by the rally and must be fought for in every AUEW shop stewards committee and branch in the country.

The rally was not without sharp debate on the way forward for the AUEW Broad Left. Jimmy Airlie, executive council member and leading Eurocommunist, gave evidence of the increasing rightward trend of that organisation.

Rebuking another platform speaker, Ken Brett, Airlie argued that: 'John Tocher is not the candidate of the Broad Left, but the candidate of all democrats. *Engineering Gazette* is not the paper of the Broad Left, but the

paper of all progressive minded people.'

Rather than outlining a course of action — in support of trade unionists, including AUEW members, in Fleet Street, against the privatisation of Leyland Vehicles and Land Rover-Range Rover — the only perspective Airlie outlined was to 'vote for John Tocher.'

This approach was criticised by Socialist Action supporters from the floor who pointed out that it is action by the members to defend jobs and support the print workers which is the key to electoral victory for Tocher.

The union's right wing leaders and their presidential candidate, Jordan, will be turned over only by an active membership organised to fight the bosses. Airlie's electoralism — reducing the members' role to putting a cross on a ballot paper — leads to the passivity and demoralisation upon which Laird and Co thrive.

AUEW militants face a battle on three fronts — against the bosses and Tories, for the election of John Tocher and to defeat the false ideas of Jimmy Airlie and his like.



## North Wales slate workers plan rally

STRIKERS on Britain's highest picket line have altered the sign at the Gloddfa Ganol slates works. Instead of 'the world's largest slate mine', it now bears the legend 'the world's largest slave mine'.

Forty-two men and women from three slate

By Carol O'Byrne

quarries have been on strike since August 1985. The dispute started when the Ffestiniog Slate Company manager changed the bonus scheme. Under his new scheme quarry workers found themselves producing 200 more slates each day but losing £28.50 from their weekly pay packet.

After a work-to-rule the company director sent them home. Two of the quarries walked out in sympathy. Management have refused to negotiate.

Working with slate is a highly specialised skill and slate workers are not easily found. If the 42 are not taken back certainly no one in Blaenau Ffestiniog will take their place. It is a closely knit, 85 per cent Welsh speaking community, and has been behind the strike from the start.

Four strikers who did

go back have a miserable life. Meirig Thomas told us: 'The scabs can't go to the pub. They can't get served in shops. They can't even walk along the street. In a small community like this there's no life for a scab.'

The strikers and the women's support group have worked hard for support. Links made during the miners strike have been put to good use. And speaking tours have given trade unionists, Labour Party members and Plaid Cymru the chance to learn about the strike at first hand and organise in their support.

On 1 March strikers plan a rally in Blaenau Ffestiniog of support from all over Wales, and hopefully some from England and Scotland too.

● The 1 March rally begins at 1 pm in Diffwys Square, Blaenau Ffestiniog. Speakers include Tyrone O'Sullivan, South Wales NUM, TGWU, Plaid Cymru and others. Messages of support and further information on the strike, from Ffestiniog Quarrymen Dispute Fund, TGWU Offices, 17 Segontium Terrace, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 2PW.

## London elections show growing support for Socialist Teachers Alliance

FROM THE outside, life in the schools would appear to be dominated by the pay dispute. This being true, it is nevertheless the case that one factor that has enabled the National Union of Teachers to maintain its fight has been the growing strength of the left in the union, particularly the Socialist Teachers' Alliance (STA).

This has been borne out by the recent election for the officers of the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) the London division of the NUT.

Inside the NUT, there exists three definable currents. The Broad Alliance — by far the largest in terms of existing support; the STA; and what could best be described as an ultra-left group called Rank and File '83 — a grouping with pockets of support in a few branches, but which has never seriously challenged the STA on the left and has a sectarian attitude to it.

The ILTA election was particularly important because it came just after a witch-hunting attack on the STA by the *Times*

Educational Supplement.

The Broad Alliance didn't stand candidates for the second year in succes-

By Ray Sirotkin

sion. This is no doubt due to the fact that they are in disarray in London, having very few active members left. Therefore the election was only contested between the STA and R&F '83.

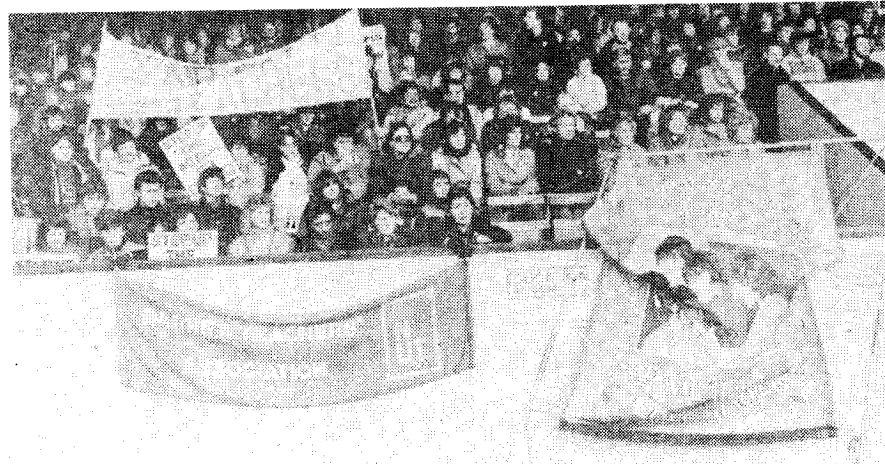
R&F '83 reduced their campaign to a barrage of attacks on the incumbent STA leadership, posturing as the true defenders of teachers' interests. Indeed, they even suggested that the STA was no different from the Inner London Education Authority, then suggest that the ILEA was no different from the

government.

The membership on the other hand recognised that a serious approach to real problems was needed. Simply trying to outflank the national leadership in terms of action based solely on a few educational establishments would not advance one bit the struggle of teachers as a whole.

Therefore, although the vote was not massive — only about 30 per cent of ILTA teachers voted — the vote of R&F '83 collapsed (at a time of increased militancy!).

However, at a time when education is under attack by the Tories, and given the inconsistent defence of education in the past by the NUT, it is important to appreciate the character of the leadership of ILTA. It is the of leadership which is needed nationally within the NUT — which understands the need to fight but breaks from the past sectarianism of much of the left in the union.



Militancy on the up: Inner London teachers giant rally on 23 January

## Abercwmboi women launch 'no scabs' petition

ALREADY more than 500 people in the Cynon Valley village of Abercwmboi have signed a protest petition against the return of superscab Paul Watson.

Spearheading the campaign are the Aberc-

By Sue Reid

wmboi women's support group, set up after five men were dismissed from the Phurnacite coking plant at the end of the miners strike. Paul Watson, the only scab in the valley, was responsible for getting them the sack after he accused them of spitting at him.

Watson transferred to Notts last year because management were finding it too much trouble to keep him in Abercwmboi,

where feelings against him ran high. Now he wants to come back, he says because he is home sick! It is rumoured that the reason is the opposition from workers he is finding in his new job.

But the mining communities, which earn themselves the nickname Scargill Valley during the strike, don't want him back. The women's support group warn that if it returns the reaction would be dramatic.

Annette Roberts, group chair told us: 'The response to the petition has been first class.' It is circulating throughout the Cynon Valley and will be sent to the Notts headquarters of National Fuels, owners of Abercwmboi plant where Watson worked until last September.



# A Socialist ACTION

## Marcos gets the push



**PRESIDENT FERDINAND Marcos, for 22 years dictator of the Philippines, is being driven from power at the very moment we go to press. Last week's disastrous election finally convinced a reluctant US administration that risks attendant on holding him there outweighed the risks of ousting him. But the real credit for his fall lies with the Philippines guerrillas, trade unions and mass anti-imperialist movement.**

The US decision has nothing to do with a new-found love for democracy. Indeed, the speed at which the anti-Marcos operation has been put together, and the size of the forces arrayed against him, demonstrates just how easy it would be for the US to depose dictators throughout the world who cling to it for support and receive its backing in the name of the war against communism. If the United States pulled the plug on South Africa's racist rulers, they would drown within months.

The US administration realised after the election that Marcos could no longer hold the line against the guerrillas of the New People's Army and the growing mass, militant opposition assembled in such organisations as the KMU (the leading Philip-

ppines trade union) and the National Democratic Front (the Communist Party of the Philippine's mass anti-imperialist front).

Washington has been pushing West Point-trained General Ramos, the spearhead of the anti-Marcos coup, against Marcos' crony General Ver for the last few years. During the election campaign the fractious Philippines middle and business classes united around the figurehead of Corazon Aquino.

Breaking Marcos' power carries many dangers for US imperialism. He has presided over a low-wage economy of mass misery and grinding poverty to the benefit of US multinationals. Now, only mass repression can hold back the growing revolutionary movement headed by the CPP. The

danger is that the expectations raised by dumping Marcos will be uncontainable.

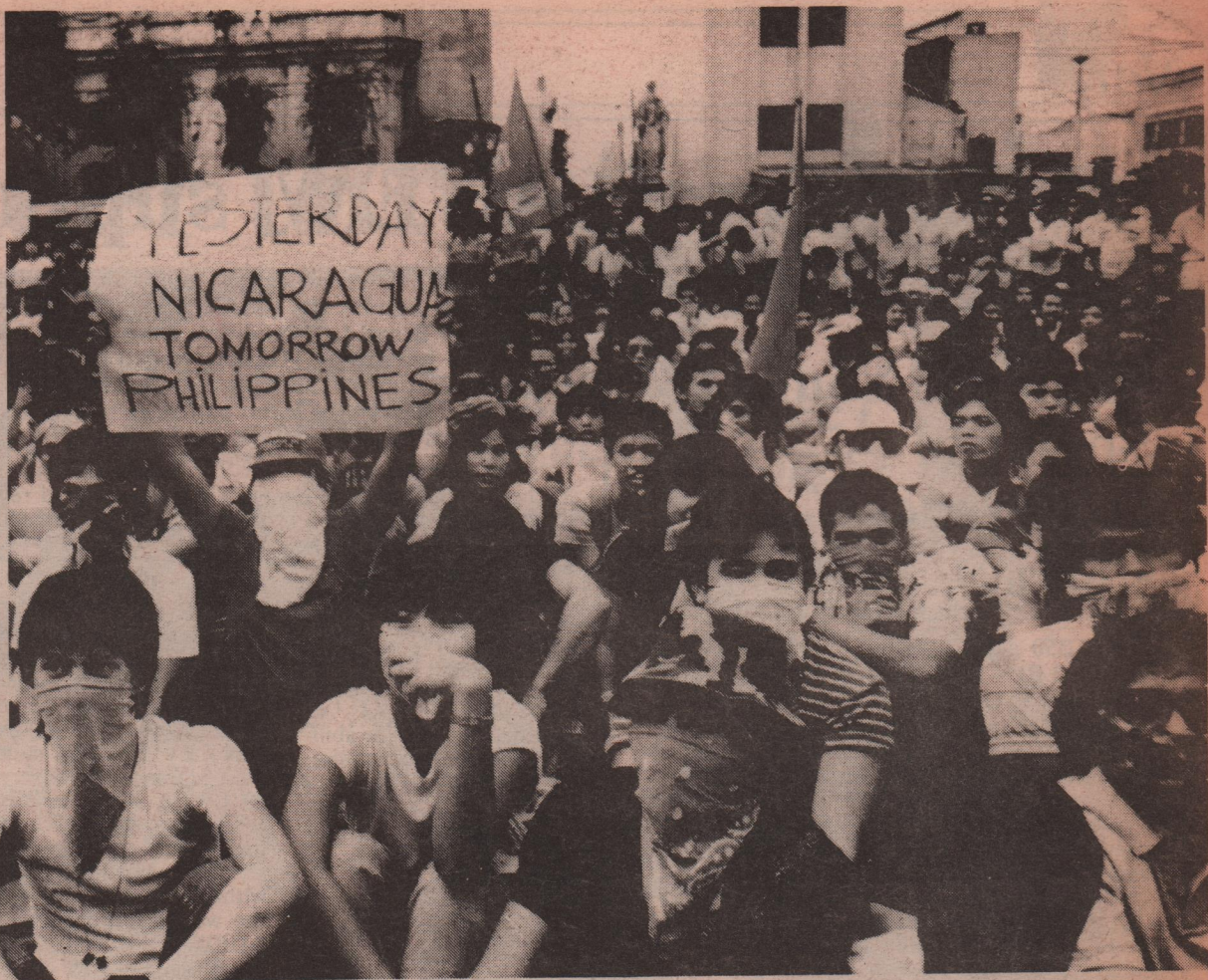
That is why, until the last minute, Reagan was still urging 'compromise' between Marcos and Aquino while Reagan's hawks, like Jean Kirkpatrick, wanted to hold out against dumping Marcos.

The unparalleled scenes surrounding his attempts to cling to power demonstrate the dangers.

Aquino, who comes from one of the wealthiest families in the Philippines, has already given the USA all the guarantees it has been seeking for its continued economic and military dominance. The bases will stay.

The radical rhetoric about redistribution of wealth has been carefully tempered with guarantees for foreign investors. Most significant of all, she has retracted earlier calls for the repeal of the notorious Amendment Six, a Marcos constitutional device which gives the president sweeping powers to make up laws and detain opponents.

One thing, however, seems next to certain: Marcos, once the US's most trusted puppet, is finally, after 22 years of misery for the people of the Philippines, getting the push. The sooner, the better.



## Justice for the miners!



**THE MINERS concert at the Royal Albert Hall is already a sellout. From the start this has been an ambitious project, but the mining communities and their supporters have filled this bastion of the establishment to put over a simple message — the victimised miners have not been forgotten.**

Thousands of other miners and supporters, unable to take Monday morning off work, are still coming to London on Sunday for the demonstration and rally. Four coaches are booked by the Yorkshire area executive.

Each coalfield in the country has been mobilised. Day by day new coaches are booked as NUM branches respond to the national union's mailing encouraging all branches and areas to support the Justice for the Mineworkers Campaign.

In the London organising office, with the team of sacked miners from around the country, for the last two weeks it has been clear that 2 March was a last-ditch effort. Twelve months after the end of the strike, all the victimised miners have started to look to the future: 'When will our money run out? Will I ever get my job back? Are we forgotten?'

The movement has responded with tremendous success. It is hoped to

raise up to £20,000 from the concert's fund-raising. New standing orders to the NUM solidarity fund for

By Dick Withecombe

the victimised miners will be circulated, but above all the Justice for the Mineworkers Campaign will be launched nationally with a simple message — we will not forget them!

The NUM executive has decided to positively participate in, encourage and guide the campaign. A directive has been mailed out to all branches for them to affiliate.

Over the next month each NUM and Women Against Pit Closures area will be electing their delegate onto the campaign's national council. The NUM will be participating with the miners' support groups and supporters to launch Justice for Mineworkers Campaigns in each Labour Party region.

With the NUM's money for the victimised miners perilously close to

running dry, the first major task of the campaign will be massively increasing its fund-raising.

The Albert Hall concert's success has bought important time. It is now planned to have repeat concerts around the country, starting in Scotland. An open air concert is being organised at Orgreave on 14 June, two years after the events there during the strike.

The bedrock of the campaign, however, will be regular and systematic fund-raising in the labour movement: a campaign for standing orders, the systematic raising of levies through the unions, and continuous tours for sack-

ed miners.

The focus for this campaigning will be the resolutions the NUM fought for and won at the Labour Party and TUC conferences. This will be built through the Justice Bill, launched in parliament on 27 February, and the Justice pamphlet produced by the Campaign group of Labour MPs.

Having won these positions in the labour movement despite leadership opposition, they will now be campaigned for throughout the movement.

● See page 5 for the NUM in Notts, and pages 6-7 for an interview with Bill Etherington.

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