

# A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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# REAGAN PREPARES FOR WAR



THE UNITED STATES is currently making its greatest preparations for war since Vietnam. Just look at the record of the last two weeks.

First Reagan continued to push through the US Congress his demand for \$100 million dollars of aid for the Nicaraguan 'contras'.

Second United States warships deliberately provoked a military conflict with Libya.

Third The US has provocatively tested a nuclear weapon despite Gorbachev's unilateral moratorium and his appeal for a joint US-USSR halt to nuclear testing.

Of course there must not be alarmism. The United States is not about to launch World War III. But it is preparing for direct military attacks on third world countries which displease it. In fact such attacks have already started.

The reasons for the war preparations are simple. The US today is facing revolt after revolt. The dictatorship of 'Baby Doc' Duvalier was overthrown in Haiti. Marcos was overthrown in the Philippines. There is instability in a large part of South East Asia. There is a rising tide of black revolt in South Africa. Far from the government of the

FSLN in Nicaragua being overthrown, on the contrary, it is defeating the contras.

Two years ago, with the invasion of Grenada, Reagan appeared to be at the peak of his power. Today, for all the talk of United States 'successes', whole sections of the third world are threatening to explode under the weight of international debt and falling oil and raw material prices. Desperate US moves — such as replacing Duvalier in Haiti, or the last minute switch of support to Corrie Aquino in the Philippines — are going to make the situation worse, not better.

So the Reagan government is turning to the one thing it knows best: brute force. With the full backing of Thatcher, the United States is preparing for its biggest military actions in the world since the 1970s. If that was not clear before Nicaragua and Libya it should be now.

In Britain the labour movement has two key tasks. First to carry out solidarity with those under attack from the United States and its supporters — whether it be in Central America, Libya, or any other country of the world. Second to expose and attack the complicity and direct role

of our own government in the wars Reagan is preparing — a British role which extends across everything from the huge British investments in South Africa to Thatcher's direct support for Reagan's funding of the contras and his attack on Libya.

It also means fighting for the removal of all US bases from Britain and for British withdrawal from NATO.

As Reagan prepares for war, the British labour movement must step up its solidarity with those who are picked out to be its victims. It should start by total opposition to Reagan's war drive against Nicaragua.

## 'Eurosocialism' on the rise

THREE IMPORTANT recent election results, and a major turn in policy, indicate important political trends in Europe. They are the victory of Mario Soares in the presidential election in Portugal, the victory of Gonzalez in the Spanish referendum on NATO membership, the 'unexpectedly' strong showing of the French Socialist Party in the elections, and the beginning of a tactical shift by the Italian Socialist Party towards the Italian Communist Party.

Soares victory was a clear triumph over the parties of the Portuguese right and the Communist Party. The latter backed supporters of ex-president General Eanes against the Socialist Party. In Spain, Gonzalez too defeated the main capitalist party — who had called for a boycott of the referendum — and the Communist Party — which had called for a 'no' vote. In France, Mitterrand both crushed the Communist Party — reducing its share of the vote to under 10 per cent — and maintained the Socialists as the largest electoral party against the challenge of the Gaullists. In Italy, after several years of brutal attacks on the Communist Party, the Socialists, under Craxi, are once more taking a somewhat more conciliatory attitude to the Italian Communist Party.

Taken together these events represent a clear political trend in Europe. They represent the consolidation and growth of social democracy in a number of key West European countries.

The reason for this growth is not hard to find. The social democratic parties today represent the key parties politically expressing the interests of big capital in a number of West European countries. They represent an instrument for overcoming both the fractiousness and obscurantism of local sections of the capitalist class, and the development of the communist parties.

Portugal and Spain are the most extreme examples. It was the government under Soares' prime ministership which negotiated Portuguese entry into the EEC — and the government fell immediately after that entry was secured. President Soares will be a guarantee of the same orientation.

Gonzalez in Spain followed essentially the same policy. His international orientation rested on two key goals: to take Spain into the EEC and to keep it in NATO. Accompanying these, from the outset he pursued a policy of rigorous austerity and attacks on the working class.

The success of Mitterrand is equally striking. In 1969 the French Socialist Party was a shell, winning only five per cent of the vote in the presidential elections of that year. But in a decade and a half, first by a tactical alliance with the Communists and then by an open war on them, Mitterrand has built the Socialists into the strongest electoral party in France. Support for the EEC, for a European military build-up, and in reality (as opposed to rhetoric) for NATO is absolute.

Craxi, head of the Italian Socialists, simply wants to repeat Mitterrand's pattern. Craxi first manoeuvred himself to becoming the first Socialist Party prime minister in Italian history — itself an indication on the increased significance of the Italian social democracy for the ruling class there. From this position he proceeded to attack the Communist Party, doing an important job for the Italian capitalist class of helping block the growth of the communists. Communist Party support has not been undermined enough by this head on assault, so Craxi now aims to weaken it further by more flexible tactics.

What are the implications of all this for Britain? Simple. The core of the 'Eurosocialist' parties policy is their support for the instruments of West European capitalism. When sections of West European capital demand subordination to the United States, the Eurosocialist parties wag their tails for Reagan. When they demand opposition, the Eurosocialists snarl.

In Britain who most clearly represents the rising capitalisms of Western Europe, but David Owen, David Steel and Edward Heath. All those in fact that the Labour Party leadership has been lining up with, and tagging behind, over Westland and British Leyland.

While the drive to coalition politics is rooted in British conditions, its international dimension, must never be forgotten. Look across the channel — and observe some of the developing trends of British politics.

# Eric Heffer: Why we walked out



THE SEVEN members of the Labour Party national executive committee who walked out of the meeting on Wednesday 26 March did so because it was absolutely clear to us that the hearing wasn't going to be fair. As we pointed out in a written statement at the time, a clear statement of the revised charges was not given in writing to the 12 called before the NEC to answer those charges.

Neither were NEC members given a full transcript of the judge's ruling and comments of the previous day before the NEC 'trial' began. So, after about two hours, we left the meeting at the point when the first of the Liverpool 12, Felicity Dowling, had asked for time to consider the charges, because it became evident to us that natural justice was being denied.

It has been said that we claimed the 12 had not been given written charges. We made no such claim.

But it must be pointed out that those original charges were pretty unclear. Great confusion arose because the charges the 12 had received were changed, verbally, at the NEC meeting. That was because the legal ruling the previous day had indicated that charges based on confidential evidence went against natural justice.

On appearing before the NEC, Felicity Dowling was told by Larry Whitty to cross out this and that charge, that she would be charged instead with this paragraph and that paragraph from a large dossier. There was total confusion, as was clear from the comrade's response.

The way the comrade was treated sparked off the walk-out. The first up was Eric Clarke of the NUM. The rest of us followed.

But I assure all comrades that this was not just an emotional response to the way Felicity Dowling was treated. Before the hearing began two resolu-



Eric Heffer

tions were put to the national executive, and defeated 9:20. The first, from myself, was that before the NEC considered the charges the full judgement and comments of the judge should be made available to members. The second, from Tony Benn, was that hearing the charges should be deferred and reconsidered.

We walked out only after two hours spent attempting to ensure that the procedures adopted by the national executive were fair.

Our action has been attacked as 'infantilism' and such like. This is not the language which the party leadership should be using, publicly, against other comrades within the party. There are honest differences of political view. To resort to such personal attacks reveals the political weakness of our opponents case.

Now it appears that the standing orders of the national executive will be changed in an attempt to press ahead with these unfair disciplines. Every year, following annual conference, the new ex-

ecutive discusses standing orders for the coming year. I have never known the quorum or any other standing order to be changed in the middle of the year.

This is an example of what some of Labour's leadership will do when they find that the rules and constitution of our party do not operate in their favour — and it is a very dangerous practice. It indicates the growing trend towards centralisation, whereby everything is determined by a small group within the party rather than by the party as a whole.

The day following the NEC, Thursday 27 March, saw the first meeting of the coordinating committee set up by the national executive pending the reconstitution of the suspended Liverpool District Labour Party. Chaired by full-timer Joyce Gould, the meeting was attended by delegates from all the Liverpool constituencies, from socialist societies, and from some trade unions who had been asked to send delegates appointed directly by their general secretaries. By a vote of 19:8, that meeting elected Tony Mulhearn as its chair.

By electing one of the 12 to chair this committee, Liverpool members have shown what they think of the so-called charges made against local party members and have proved that they are overwhelmingly in favour of the district leadership they had until the national executive shut down the party.

It shows too that those in the Labour Party who are pushing for expulsions are out of tune with the membership.

• See page 5 for more on the witch-hunt.

## STATEMENT BY THE SEVEN

Statement by Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Frances Curran, Jo Richardson, Eric Clarke and Joan Maynard, 26 March 1986

THE seven members of the Labour Party NEC who left the NEC meeting this morning, left because it became obvious that those who were invited to answer charges were not clear as to what the charges were.

It was very clear that the first member invited in, Felicity Dowling, did not understand what the charges were, and asked to go away and study them. A clear statement of the revised charges were not given to her in writing. It was at this stage that we left the meeting because it was evident to us all that natural justice was being denied.

Earlier, Eric Heffer had moved, seconded by Dennis Skinner: 'That the NEC take no action in respect of the charges against members of the party from Liverpool, until all members of the NEC have received a written transcript of the court ruling and the statements made by the judge in the case heard yesterday.' That was defeated on a recorded vote by 20 to 9.

Tony Benn then moved, seconded by Joan Maynard: 'That the charges laid against the Liverpool members, and the evidence on which they are based, be withdrawn, for reconsideration in the light of the court ruling.' That was also defeated 20 to 9.

We therefore wish to dissociate ourselves completely from the decisions taken today by the NEC. First because the NEC was not given the full transcript of the court ruling, and the comments by the judge, before proceeding to try the cases before them. Secondly, because it is our view that the procedures adopted were in clear breach of the rules of natural justice, which those members of the party facing serious charges were entitled to expect would be applied, and thirdly because the actions of the NEC in our view have inflicted grave, and wholly unnecessary, damage upon the party.

# Women Against Pit Closures ~ in conference

**ON THE WEEKEND of 12-13 April, Women Against Pit Closures is holding its second national conference, one which will consolidate the gains registered at its first conference last autumn. Resolutions, on policy and structure, have already been received from most groups and circulated for discussion and amendment. Taking up the concern of last conference, April's will be a voting affair and delegation is on the basis of one delegate per pit. Who that is has been decided within the area groups. Notts women, still at the sharp end of the struggle, have submitted four resolutions to conference. PAM OLDFIELD, Notts delegate to the WAPC national committee, told Socialist Action what was facing women from the mining communities in the year ahead.**

**Last year's Women Against Pit Closures conference showed that the movement was still organised and fighting despite the end of the strike. What must this conference set out to achieve?**

Although there were some problems at last year's conference, it showed that women still had strong feelings, strong emotions and a will to do things. This conference must direct that same energy along the right paths. We need to use that energy to attack our enemy — those who have been trying to crush the NUM, Women Against Pit Closures, and our communities.

Our main job is to continue to support the NUM in its fight. And so I think the way forward is first to direct that energy and then to fight to persuade the trade union and labour movement that our fight is right and that unless they back it, our downfall is their downfall.

At this conference we have to answer some constitutional questions as well, in order to go forward. But we mustn't be bogged down by them. We must see a clear way forward through the constitutional issues.

**How can WAPC link up with other trade unions and the Labour Party?**

The whole working class fight must be taken up in the Labour Party. We need a Labour government — the right type of Labour government, a socialist Labour government.

Unless we become involved in the Labour Party we haven't got any control on what sort of Labour Party it is. So the fight has got to be carried into the Labour Party. The next Labour government has to reverse the attacks the Tories have made on us. That will mean changing the Labour Party.

At the moment in Mansfield, the Labour Party leaders are saying that no UDM members will be put out of the Labour Party. Yet these are the very people who con-

tributed to the defeat of the strike. So we have to associate trade union struggles with the Labour Party and associate the two together.

**The issue of the affiliation of WAPC to the Labour Party has been raised in the movement. How do you view this?**

We should have affiliation to the Labour Party. It is very important. We make up a big part of the working class, and the political voice of the working class is via the Labour Party. Consequently we have a right to sit in Labour Party conference, and to vote for what we think is right. We should fight strongly for affiliation to the Labour Party.

**How does the issue of the sacked and imprisoned miners fit into this?**

The sacked and imprisoned miners have been victimised for fighting for the industry they're now sacked from. They are not criminals — despite the government's attempt to criminalise them.

The Justice for Mineworkers campaign has been set up to campaign for these men. We wouldn't be Women Against Pit Closures if we weren't involved in this campaign. It's the same fight. So it's a top priority for us, and it is something we have to fight to make the Labour Party and the next Labour government stick to.

**What role should WAPC play in relation to other disputes, for example at Wapping?**

The issues learnt by women in the miners strike are very important to other workers in struggle. It took us three or four months to find out what we needed to do and to get organised. If we can pass on that knowledge to other workers in struggle, such as the printers, we can give them the confidence to do it. They won't need to wait three or four months.

Obviously there's a particular problem in Notts with the UDM and the victimisation the Coal Board is launching against the NUM. How should WAPC be responding?

Other areas have to realise how dangerous the UDM is. The very fact that the UDM operates strangles the NUM. But it is also an attack on the NUM nationally and on the TUC. It has to be fought and smashed.

We have got to get out and alert the movement to what is happening. We have to point out that the UDM is still dominant in the Labour Party in this area. Just this week Roy Hattersley came to Mansfield for a meeting with Roy Lynk. That shows the attitude of some Labour Party leaders and we must fight it.

On 13 April we've got a rally in Kirkby in Ashfield, organised by Notts WAPC and the Justice for Mineworkers campaign. It's been organised to protest against the recent Coal Board sackings in Notts and as part of the campaign against the UDM.

We can't march into the Coal Board offices and demand that these men are

reinstated but we can put out a call to the trade union and labour movement and demand public support for these brothers who have been sacked for doing what trade unions have fought for generations for.

**One of the features of the last conference was a speech by a black woman from the South African Congress of Trade Unions. How do you see the importance of the international issues for Women Against Pit Closures?**

We have to have a recognition that the enemy of the black people in South Africa is exactly the same enemy that the miners were fighting — and that's capitalism. Unless we recognise this enemy together, the forces that oppress them will also oppress us.

We have to go into battle under an international banner. That can only make us stronger. Lots of women recognise that, and WAPC should affiliate to campaigns like Anti-Apartheid, and it should campaign on issues such as the use of plastic bullets.

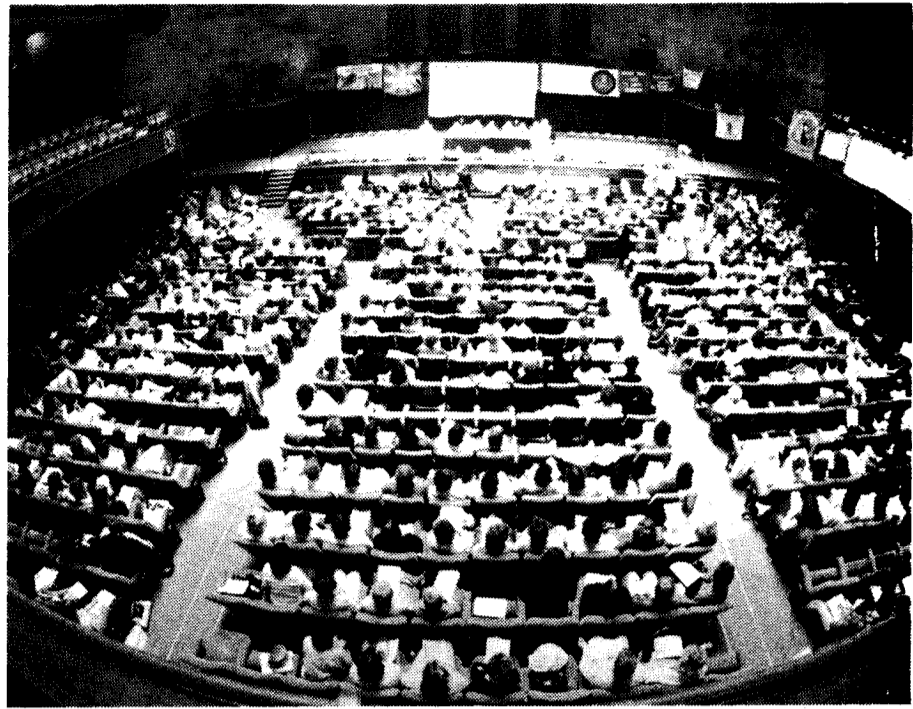


Photo: GM COOKSON

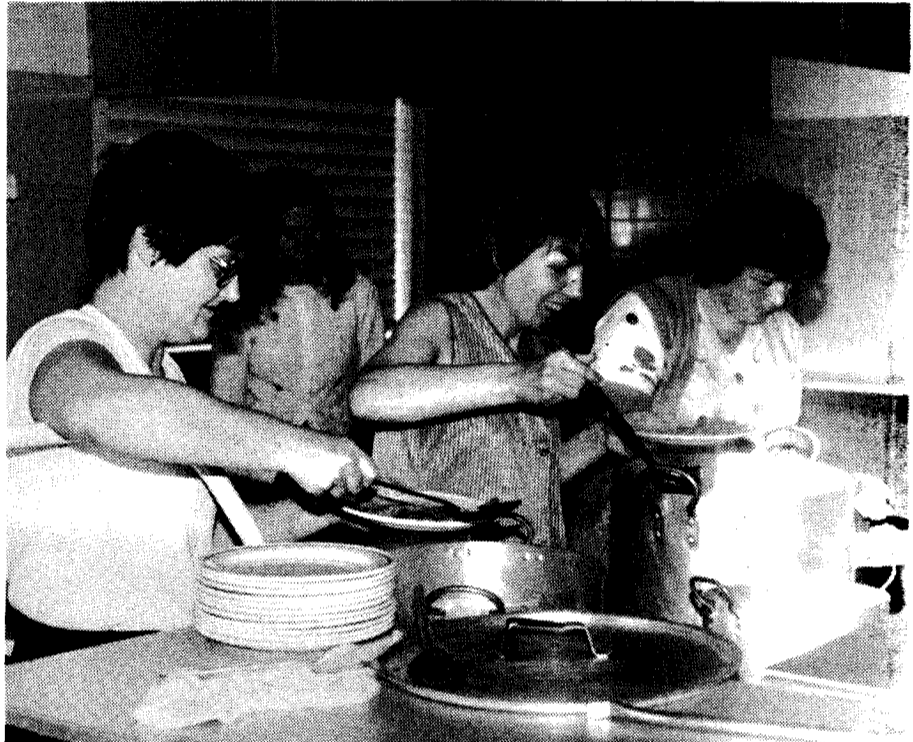


Photo: MARK SAILMON

Women Against Pit Closures: it started with fund-raising and soup kitchens and resulted in the upsurge of a massive new movement of women

## Justice for Mineworkers



Women are still at the forefront of defending miners victimised by the Coal Board.

**AFTER the successful public launch of the campaign at the beginning of March, Justice for Mineworkers is gearing up for its next meeting, and for greater efforts on behalf of all victimised miners in the coming months.**

The open meeting will be held in Nottingham on Sunday 13 April. All those attending are asked to join the Notts rally which begins at 7 pm on the same evening (see this page for further details).

'We are looking to get as many affiliations to the campaign as possible,' Ann Suddick told Socialist Action. 'Those affiliations give us the money to continue campaigning.'

'But we are also asking supporters to step up their own fund-raising activities for the jailed and sacked miners. It is of vital importance that as much effort as possible goes into raising money for the NUM's national solidarity fund,' she said.

● For further details about the 13 April meeting, contact: Ann Suddick, Durham Mechanics Offices, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED (phone: 0385 61375/6).

### Defend the NUM Rally

**Organised by the Notts Justice for Mineworkers Campaign and Notts Women Against Pit Closures**

7.30pm, Sunday 13 April  
Festival Hall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,  
Nottinghamshire

speakers include:

Arthur Scargill, Michael Brittan (Deputy Gen Sec SOGAT), Paul Whetton (Secretary Bevercotes NUM), Gwen McLeod (Notts WAPC), chaired by Henry Richardson (Gen Sec Notts NUM)

### What you can do

**Affiliate to the Justice for Mineworkers campaign:** national organisations, £50 per annum; regional, £25; local £5. Cheques should be made payable to 'National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign', and sent to: The Treasurer, Durham Mechanics Office, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED. Further information about the campaign can be obtained from the same address.

**Take out a standing order to the NUM's national solidarity fund,** by completing a form from your bank. The details of the fund are as follows: Sheffield Coop Bank, Account No 30000009, Sorting Code 08-90-75. Cheques and postal orders, made payable to 'Miners Solidarity Fund', should be sent to: NUM, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.

## What tasks do lesbians and gays face in 1986?

LESBIAN AND gay socialists are gathering at the annual general meeting of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights to review 12 months which saw the greatest break-through achieved in our recent history, and to plan building on these gains in 1986.

By Peter Purton, LCLGR National Treasurer (personal capacity)

During 1985 LCLGR cashed in on the hard work of lesbian and gay activists inside the labour movement over several years, and the tremendous openings provided by the miners strike, to move off the fringe of politics to the centre-stage. Early successes at the 1985 LPYS conference were followed by the first-ever debate at the TUC and the historic victory at Labour conference. The coming year must see a campaign to consolidate these advances in policy and see them transformed into action. LCLGR intend to go back to the floor of Labour's conference this year with the clear intention of winning a two-thirds majority needed to secure a place in the manifesto for lesbian and gay rights, and to ward off the likelihood of the leadership quietly dropping off the agenda. As with last year, the chief battle to win this will be among the trade unions. Activists are beginning to recognise that trying to win over the trade union movement to both policy and action on lesbian and gay rights is central to securing real advances.



A major component of this strategy must be to win the labour movement to taking a clear stand against AIDS hysteria. While the Labour front bench meekly followed the Tories in blaming AIDS on its sufferers, the popular hysteria unleashed by the gutter press in the last year has threatened to sweep away the tenuous gains made by the lesbian and gay movement. That hysteria has transformed the position of lesbians and gay men in the workplace and in the community to one, often, of ostracism and terror. It has raised the stakes involved in 'coming out' — without which there can be no lesbian and gay struggle — to heights not seen in 15 years.

Already, in sharp contrast to the Labour Party front bench, many trade unions have organised their own campaign on AIDS. NALGO and NUPE have led the way, with proper educational material for their membership and with encouragement for their lesbian and gay members. LCLGR must take up and develop work in the trade unions at a much more serious level in order to deepen this process and to campaign for the implementation of the TUC resolution which remains a purely paper policy as far as most unions and their members are concerned.

Local government equal opportunities policy is another area for LCLGR concern. In the wake of the GLC and other metropolitan authorities, many Labour councils will have begun to develop equal opportunities policies. LCLGR will be aiming to produce a campaign pack to pull together the lessons of these experiences and to equip to take on the struggle in the many areas where, despite Labour Party policy, councils attitudes remain indistinguishable from those of the Tories.

Important to securing these advances will be the consolidation of the alliances constructed in the last year: with the black section, with the Women's Action Committee, with the organised left such as LLC, Briefing, and the LCC — and, crucially, extending those alliances into the trade unions. But, confident in the successes already won, LCLGR members face the coming year with determination. Despite the AIDS crisis and the sabotage of the Labour leadership, we retain a firm optimism that 1986 can represent an advance on the victories of 1985.

● LCLGR annual meeting, 12-13 April, at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, 67-69 Cowcross Street, London EC1. Registration and agenda details from Toby 01-226 1097.

## LPYS takes wrong choice..again!

ARTHUR SCARGILL'S speech to the opening rally of the Labour Party Young Socialists conference, held in Bournemouth during Easter weekend, spelt out the way forward to a labour movement and a Young Socialists which champions the interests of all the working class and oppressed. Scargill argued for a movement which defended the interests of black people. 'During the course of the strike one thing above all else was apparent to us,' he said. 'We saw the extent of suffering of black sections of our society.'

By Anne Kane

Arguing for an internationalist labour movement, he listed the guest speakers to the NUM's forthcoming conference: 'the striking print workers, the secretary general of the International Miners Federation, oppressed workers from Latin America and the honorary president of the NUM of South Africa — Nelson Mandela.'

'This is what real trade unionism is about,' he told the rally. He called too for the labour movement to organise against Reagan's attempt to 'overthrow socialism being born in Nicaragua.'

Despite thunderous applause for Scargill's speech conference proceeded to vote down this whole course of struggle during its three-day session.

The radical alternative for the LPYS crystallised inside conference around the campaign of the black section candidate, Kingsley Abrams, for the youth seat on Labour's national executive. This was the central political battle



Scargill tells it like it is

at the 1986 LPYS conference, representing as it did the possibility of seriously opening up the YS to the class struggle forces within the labour

movement.

The fact that *Militant* pit themselves against the most progressive developments in Britain and internationally explains the whole character of this year's conference.

The 1000 delegates and visitors present, and the 244 votes cast in the NEC election, show that there has been a steady decline in the size of conference in the last three years. In 1984 299 votes were cast in the same election, and 253 in 1985.

The almost total lack of guest speakers from important struggles contrasted sharply with Scargill's explanation of the NUM conference platform. Of the two platform guests representing such struggles the South African trade union movement and striking print workers, even the printers were at conference only through the invitation of *Youth Action* newspaper.

The key decisions of this conference confirmed the decline of the LPYS. They represent no way for the LPYS to become involved in leading youth in the main political struggles taking place.

Debate was routine and uninspired. Resolutions were passed which had no commitments whatever to campaigning. On South Africa for example, although *Militant* supporters chose not to promote SALEP — the *Militant* front, the platform opposed — and conference duly defeated — all concrete proposals on building mass solidarity with the struggle against apartheid. On Ireland, conference voted down the most minimal proposals to campaign against repression, including plastic bullets, strip-searching, and the paramilitary forces.

In contrast to Scargill's speech in full support of the alliances with women



*Militant: incapable of building the mass youth movement Labour needs*

conference voted down a resolution supporting WAC's demands for the right of women to elect their own NEC representatives from the national women's conference.

But the views of *Militant* supporters, expressed during the debate on racism were most shocking of all. Conference was treated to loud applause for the mention of 'black careerists' (but none for the mention of white), and comments like 'the little shits of the black section'.

Despite adopting pious statements of opposition to discrimination against lesbians and gay men conference rejected proposals for action, explaining that the YS did not have the resources to produce a national leaflet on lesbian and gay rights.

Perhaps the most startling contrast between the opening speech of the miners president and the progress of the LPYS conference was on the question of solidarity with Nicaragua. While conference sat, US president Reagan was pushing up the stakes in the struggle of the Sandinistas to protect their revolution from imperialist attack. What was the LPYS's response? Conference couldn't find the time to discuss Central America, and took instead a debate on music and the arts.

The alternative to the alliance argued for by Arthur Scargill came together around the intervention of the Labour Party black section. Although the votes on black sections and Kingsley Abrams' candidature for the NEC were lost, the arguments were clearly won. Over 140 attended the black section's Saturday fringe meeting, and 37 YS branches voted for Kingsley. *Militant* sup-

porters were on the run.

*Militant's* response to this force was to elect onto the NEC Linda Douglas, a black woman whose views include opposition to black sections. The context of this is a decline in *Militant's* vote from 230 in 1984 to 194 last weekend.

*Socialist Organiser's* argument for a 'revolutionary' alternative to *Militant* led them to stand an alternative to Kingsley. That too was revealed for what it was: their candidate won only 10 votes.

*Youth Briefing*, a bulletin supported by members of *Labour Briefing*, had about seven delegates to conference.

It was a class struggle alternative to *Militant* represented by the black sections candidate which *Youth Action*, an open paper supported by many YS branches, backed at conference. With 16 delegates, over 50 people at its caucuses, and the only alternative youth newspaper to *Socialist Youth*, *Youth Action* stood for a class struggle alliance for socialism. *Youth Action's* fringe meeting on Saturday evening attracted 110 people — and assembled the kind of platform LPYS conference should have had. Speakers were George Johannes from the ANC, Kingsley Abrams from the black sections;

Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, the Women's Action Committee, a young sacked miner, and sacked SOGAT members.

The Labour left was also represented at conference at the Labour Left Coordination's fringe meeting on Sunday. Eighty people attended to hear WAC, CLPD, the Justice for Miners campaign, Kingsley Abrams and LCLGR.

Conference made the choices facing the LPYS clear. If it follows the road of *Militant* it will continue its decline, be outside of and opposed to today's crucial political struggles, and fail in its task of leading all youth into battle.

The alternative course is best represented by the black sections intervention. As Kingsley Abrams explained at the black sections meeting, black sections have opened the way for WAC, CLPD, LCLGR and many other struggles to become involved in the LPYS.

The unity of the left around this campaign was crucial in beginning to open up and to build the LPYS. What was clearly posed at conference was to begin to organise this force in the LPYS in the way Labour Left Coordination organises in the Labour Party.

## On black sections

THE DEBATE on racism at the Labour Party Young Socialist national conference 1986 was mainly orientated around black sections. It was interesting to see that *Militant* supporters did not propose a set programme for black youth, but instead attacked black sections.

By Geraldine Kaiyn, Black Section Youth Committee member and Delegate from Lewes LPYS

However, having a black section candidate — Kingsley Abrams — for the youth place on the Labour Party national executive committee forced *Militant* to nominate Linda Douglas, a black woman, for the NEC.

The question of black sections has pushed *Militant* into taking up racism — a lot more seriously. For example, the LPYS banner had the words 'Smash Apartheid and Capitalism: Build Direct Links'.

The fringe meeting on

'*Militant's* programme for black youth' was just a further attack on black sections. In the meeting Linda Douglas and other speakers attacked black sections — but without proposing a black youth programme. When contributions were taken from the floor, the chair called four or five *Militant* supporters and a *Workers Power* supporter, who defended black sections.

The platform did not accept any questions. This fringe meeting showed that the *Militant-*

dominated LPYS is frightened about raising its own alternative to black sections.

The way in which the conference itself was conducted also showed the same sectarianism. For example, *Militant* supporters asked for a card vote on whether Nicaragua should be debated. But when we asked for a card vote on black sections, we were told by the chair that it would 'waste conference time'.

Nevertheless, the terms of the debate on black sections at this year's YS conference represented a victory for black section's three short years of campaigning for black self-organisation within the Labour Party.

Black section debate had *Militant* on the run

# Reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally



AT 11AM ON Saturday, 5 April, the appeals of Councillor Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, expelled by the Birmingham-Sparkbrook Labour Party, will be heard by regional office. Mohammed Rafique, also expelled, will have his appeal heard on the same day.

So far Khan and Scally have received no charges in writing. They go into those proceedings blind. This is yet another example of the kangaroo court methods employed by Labour's right wing to rid themselves of party members they consider a threat.

It is rumoured in Birmingham that Khan will be suspended rather than expelled. Prominent members of the constituency are already boasting that he won't be a councillor after next year's May elections. If Khan is suspended then he will be ineligible for inclusion on the panel of would-be Labour candidates in the local government elections.

'It was difficult getting a date for the appeal,' Khan told Socialist Action, 'because they wanted to prevent me standing again as a councillor. If the appeal was delayed that would mean I wouldn't be able to go on the panel for selection by the wards.'

It was only after Khan's solicitor wrote to the party, giving 14 days notice of his client's intention to take out an injunction, that the regional office set the date. On the last day of the two week period, Khan received notification of the hearing at the beginning of April.

'But the only charges I've received,' Khan explained, 'were those I read in the newspapers, that of supposedly bringing the party into disrepute. But as everybody knows, it is because I set up a local black section in Roy Hattersley's constituency.'

'Since black section launched the campaign in my defence, the Labour Party has been flooded with letters of support for Amir Khan and Kevin

Scally. Walworth Road is knee-deep in mail.'

Zarina, Khan's wife is still an active member of the constituency. She has also come under pressure. As the membership secretary for the Sparkhill ward in which the Khans live, she has had direct experience of some of the malpractices exposed by Kevin Scally.

At the end of last year she wrote an open letter on the Birmingham witch-hunt, appealing for 'the support of every Labour Party member in ending the divisive witch-hunt taking place in the Birmingham-Sparkbrook constituency' and for Khan and Scally's reinstatement. It is partly as a result of that letter that the flood of mail Amir describes has reached party headquarters.

'The existing right in Sparkhill are worried about me,' explained Zarina. 'Now that they think they have got rid of Amir, they are concerned that there is still someone in the ward to carry on the fight.'

'I used to have sleepless nights after all the unpleasant arguments at the Labour Party meetings I attended, but the expulsions have given me the courage to stand up and

say what's right. I do not agree at all with the claims that black people are integrated into the party. Those who are, are integrated on the basis that they are the right wing Labour Party's poodles selling out the interests of their communities.'

Both the Khans were heartened by the stand of the seven NEC members who protested at the conduct of the hearings against the Liverpool 12. 'They were absolutely right to walk out,' said Amir. 'There should have been more members of the NEC joining them.'

'We in black sections oppose all witch-hunts, even though it is well known that there are many Militant policies we strongly disagree with. But they aren't prepared to support us. Despite our open letter to them on the witch-hunt, we have had no reply.'

'They could have made much of my expulsion by comparing the Labour leadership's inquiry into the so-called malpractices in Liverpool with the fact that they ignore the corruption and racism which exists in Birmingham.'

● Messages of support and copies of letters and resolutions against these expulsions should be sent to: 56 Phipson Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11 4JH.

## Black Section Newsletter

Black Sections



Spring 1986 issue out now, price 50p plus 13p p&p. Order your copy from: Black Section Newsletter, c/o 122a Ferndale Road, Brixton, London SW4 7SA.

## Black section victory in ILEA selections

SEVERAL Labour candidates in the forthcoming Inner London Education Authority elections have been chosen with the full participation of their constituency black sections — despite instructions to the contrary from the Labour Party's regional office.

Vauxhall, Lewisham East, Norwood, Islington North and Deptford all registered a victory though, when their candidates were confirmed by party headquarters.

London regional party office convened a meeting of officers from the constituencies concerned to persuade them to think again. They refused.

The candidates involved include two of the surcharged Lambeth borough councillors, Irma Critchlow and John O'Malley.

When this was reported to Walworth Road, headquarters 'imposed' candidates on the constituencies. In all cases they were the same candidates selected by the CLPs in the first place, with black section participation.

'This is a victory,' said black section chair Marc Wadsworth. 'It means we have created an important precedent. The national party has been forced to give black section involvement the recognition we have been fighting for.'

'But they are still holding out on the vital question of Russell Proffitt's selection as parliamentary candidate — which is spiteful and narrow minded. They have no reason for this, the selection clearly had support from the local party.'

## Labour's fake advisory committee meets

THE first meeting of the black and Asian advisory committee — a tame body set up by the national party as a counter-weight to black section demands for recognition — took place recently.

Despite the total opposition of black section, it contains some of their supporters. But correspondence between black sections and the national party on the subject has registered another small victory.

In reply to a letter from the black section national committee, director of organisation Joyce Gould addressed her reply to: 'Mr N Mankanji, Secretary Labour Party Black Section.' She pointed out that the committee was planning a 'full programme of work', and regretted the decision of black sections not to participate.

'Coupled with the ILEA selection success,' said one black section supporter, 'this means we're pushing the door open. The institutions of the national party are being forced

ed to recognise we exist.'

A motion to a black section national committee from Vauxhall, amended by Birmingham-Ladywood, was passed overwhelmingly. Noting that the black section campaign has increased Afro-Caribbean and Asian representation within the party during its three years of existence, it called for a policy of non-cooperation with the party's new committee, 'unless and until black members of the party have the sole say in its terms of reference and composition'.

The advisory committee, comprising black and white party members, includes such figures as Roy 'My Asians Don't Want Black Sections' Hattersley, who has played no small part in encouraging his Birmingham-Sparkbrook constituency to expel Amir Khan for his timidity in setting up a black section on Hattersley's own doorstep. The fake committee is composed of party members appointed, not elected, by the national executive, regions and trade unions.

## Labour Party black and Asian advisory committee

The national party's toothless alternative to black sections had its first meeting recently, 27 February, in the House of Commons. Its composition is:

From the NEC: Roy Hattersley, Jo Richardson\*, Charles Turnock, Tom Sawyer\*, Gwynneth Dunwoody

From the trade unions: Sardul Marwa (EETPU), Ollie Jackson (TGWU), D Graham (AUEW), P Sagoo (Bakers Union), Norman Jolly (APEX)

From the regions: London — Ben Bousquet, Vidya Anand\*, Jahantia, Lincoln Crawford, Valerie Vaz\*; S East — Vacancy; Wales — Vacancy; North — Vacancy; East Midlands — Keith Vaz\*, one vacancy (due to Trudi De Hainey's withdrawal); West Midlands — Narjma Hafiz, Ron Lisk Carew, Chris Sharma; North West — Ernie Taylor\*, Rafique Malik; Scotland — Robert Thompson

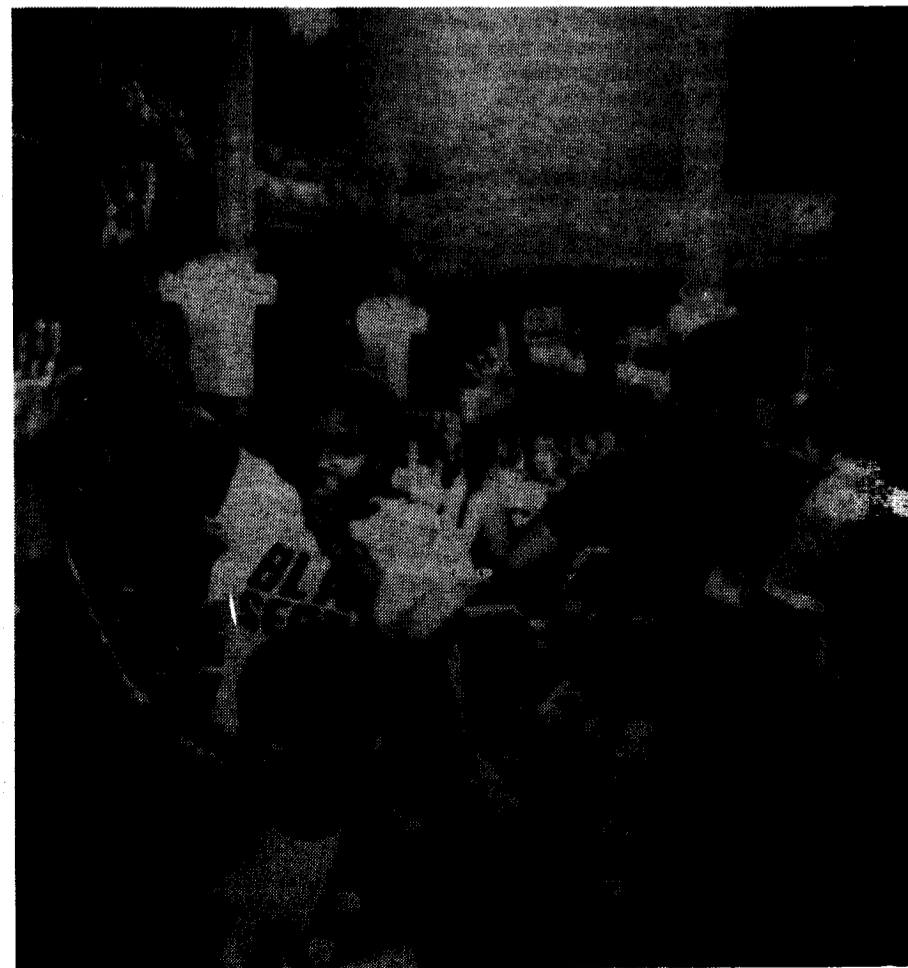
Secretary: Joyce Gould

Ethnic minority officer (full time worker): Virendra Sharma

\* denotes black sections supporter.

## No expulsions in Birmingham demo

Black section is organising a demonstration in Birmingham on the date of the regional appeal: Saturday 5 April, 11am. The appeal takes place at the AUEW offices, Holloway Circus, in the Birmingham City Centre (next to the Albany Hotel). Comrades should arrive there by 10am — and bring their banners!



Black section supporters at annual conference 1984

**JUST HOW** great are the transformations in the position of women and black people — as well as the rise of white collar militancy — inside the labour movement in the last years?

**JOHN ROSS** argues that what we are seeing is the third great historical wave of development of the British labour movement. One

as great in its scale and implications as the creation of the craft unions in the 1850s or the unskilled male manual unions — and the Labour Party — at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. It is a development whose implications are still only beginning to work themselves out.

## Organising working class men

**THE FIRST** wave of the modern workers movement, that is the first with an organisational continuity with the present day, was the creation of the 'new model', 'Amalgamated', unions from the early 1850s onwards. Its prototype was the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) — formed in December 1851 and the direct ancestor of today's AUEW.

The ASE had 5,000 members when it was formed — rising rapidly to 11,000 before being savagely counterattacked by the employers. By 1866 the ASE had 33,000 members — and by 1874 43,000. In 1891 the ASE's membership had reached 71,000.

The basis of the success of the ASE in organisational terms was clear. It was a truly national union — unlike the earlier local union organisations. It had a high dues level — a shilling a week. It was centralised and efficient.

The other Amalgamated new model unions showed the same features — notably the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. This was formed soon after the ASE and set about organising the skilled building trades.

Older unions of ironfounders and boilermakers were reorganised during the 1850s and 1860s on the 'new model' lines. The ETU was formed later in 1889, but consciously took the older ASE as its model.

The new model unions had a clear character. They were *craft* unions. They organised exclusively among skilled workers on a craft basis.

Their political nature was also clear. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners declared that its members aspired to 'become respectful and respected.' The new model unions were part of the core support of the Liberal Party.

Peak membership of the TUC, founded under this regime in 1868, was in the early 1870s with 1,200,000 members, before the new model unions came under severe attack with the onset on the 'Great Depression' in the 1870s.

The craft unions were not merely based on skilled workers but in many cases their aims were directly oriented against unskilled male workers and, it goes without saying, against women.

The boilermakers union, for example, directly opposed payment of piecework to platters' labourers as it increased their pay. The Boilermakers Society decided in the 1880s to refuse to work with platters' helpers who insisted on piecework. The result was that the employers sacked hundreds of labourers — the Boilermakers Society directly helping the employers to hire new unskilled workers.

If the craft unions of skilled workers, formed from the 1850s onwards, were the first wave of the labour movement, then the second great wave

began in 1889 with what is generally referred to as the unionisation of the unskilled — but which in reality is better characterised as the unionisation of *unskilled male workers*.

The classical form of this wave of unionism was the general union. The TGWU and GMBATU are the lineal descendants of the new unions of 1889 — the TGWU from the dockers strike of that year and the GMBATU from the gas workers.

The character of this wave as one of male unskilled workers is evident from the figures. The wave of unionisation *did* touch women at its outset. The harbinger of the creation of the 'new unions' was the strike of women workers at Bryant and May's match factory. Eleanor Marx, the daughter of Karl Marx, played a leading role in establishing the Gasworkers and General Labourers Union — the predecessor of the GMBATU.

But by 1896 there were still only 142,000 women in trade unions compared to 1,466,000 men — women comprising only 9 per cent of all trade unionists. Only 3 per cent of women workers were in unions compared to 14 per cent of men. The proportion of women in unions actually fell during the last decade of the nineteenth century — reaching a low point of 7.5 per cent of trade union members in 1901. (See Table 1)

Female membership of trade unions did begin to expand in the period leading to World War I but even then it only reached a peak of 11 per cent in 1912. Scarcely more than 1 in 10 trade unionists was a woman on the eve of World War I. In 1911 only 7 per cent of women workers were in unions compared to a quarter of male workers.

Neither was there any great wave of unionisation of women during the inter-war period. There was, it is true, a temporary peak of 19 per cent of trade unionists being women in 1918 at the peak of war time employment — with large numbers of men in the army and with women having moved into industry — but this rapidly declined. By 1924 only 15 per cent of trade unionists were women. By 1933 only 12 per cent of women workers were in unions compared to 28 per cent of male workers. On the eve of World War II, in 1939, still only 16 per cent of trade unionists were women.

On the political field the situation was parallel. The wave of unionisation in 1889 was followed by the creation of the Labour Party in 1900 — the impact of the process which had created the new general unions shifted the political axis of trade unionism to create the Labour Party as opposed to the support for the Liberals which had been shown by the new model craft unions. But the Labour Party failed to take the lead in the struggle of women for the vote. The suffragettes, to the eternal disgrace of the Labour Party, had to fight without

# The third wave of the labour movement

decisive Labour support for the right of women to vote.

On the internal Labour Party front there was even a step backwards for the rights of women. In 1906 Labour women won the right to elect their own representatives to the NEC of the Labour Party. In the 1918 reorganisation of the party this right was taken away however and replaced by election of the women's places on the NEC by the male dominated party conference — more precisely by election of the women's 'representatives' by the trade union bureaucracy.

## Manual

The third feature of the wave of development of the labour movement starting in 1889 — although not as pronounced as its exclusion of women — was that it was a development among *manual* workers. By 1911 only 13 per cent of trade unionists were white collar workers. (See Table 1). Only 12 per cent of white collar workers were unionised compared to 21 per cent of manual workers. By 1920 still only 14 per cent of union members, that is less than 1 in 6, were white collar workers.

Interestingly however white collar

union membership proved much more stable in the inter-war period than did manual worker membership. Between 1920 and 1931 manual trade unions lost 3.6 million members, but white collar union membership fell by only 0.1 million.

At the depth of the depression in 1931 there was almost the same percentage of white collar workers in trade unions as the percentage of unionised manual workers — 25 per cent of manual workers being unionised and 22 per cent of white collar workers.

White collar unionism did not expand as rapidly as manual trade unionism during World War II however. By 1948, 33 per cent of white collar workers were in unions compared to 50 per cent of manual workers.

If these facts are taken together then it can be seen that while the question of unionisation of women workers made essentially no progress whatever during the inter-war period some substantial gains in terms of union stability were made among white collar workers.

The specific character of the first two waves of the labour movement in Britain is therefore completely clear. The first wave, lasting from 1851 until it petered out in the early 1870s, was the unionisation of *male skilled workers* — the organisational form being craft unions. Politically the craft unions were tied to the Liberal Party.

The second wave, whose key points were the creation of the general unions in 1889 and the creation of the Labour Party in 1900, was based on the unionisation and organisation of *unskilled male workers*. Its political accompaniment was the reformist social democratic Labour Party — in a word 'labourism'. This second wave of development and organisation may be said to extend to 1945, although its first real peak was reached with World War I. It began to touch white collar, primarily male, workers in the inter-war period.

The characteristics of the third great wave of the labour movement, the one we are living through today, can only be understood when the tremendous transformations in the character of the working class which followed World War II are grasped.

## Remaking the movement

**ONCE THE** nature of the labour movement which emerged from World War II is understood the nature of the transformations which have taken place since is also clearly seen. They are summarised in Table 1.

The labour movement as it emerged from World War II still showed the same basic features as it had possessed since the wave of unionisation following 1889, and as that had progressed to World War I. It was massively male and massively manual working class composition. It was also, although it does not show in these figures, overwhelmingly white.

In 1948 white collar workers were only 23 per cent of trade unionists, women only 18 per cent. In the 1951 election only 45 per cent of women voted Labour compared to 54 per cent of men — nine percent more men than women voting Labour. It was structurally the labour movement arising from the unionisation of male skilled workers after 1889.

By 1979 the transformation is obvious. The percentage of women in trade unions had increased to 30 per cent. The percentage of white collar workers in the unions had increased to 40 per cent. The male manual white trade union movement of 1948 had become by 1979 one with almost a third of its members women and fewer per cent of its members white collar workers.

These shifts, as may be seen from the figures for earlier years, represent the greatest change in the composition of the labour movement since the wave of unionisation from 1889 to the aftermath of World War I. On the political field by the 1979 election the differential in voting Labour between men and women decreased to 4 per cent — and fell to 2 per cent in 1983.

If these facts are taken then the development is clear. The first wave of the labour movement from 1850

Table 1:

### Composition of trade union membership in Britain

	1896	1911	1920	1933 <sup>1</sup>	1948	1979	1981 <sup>2</sup>	1948-79
			(millions)					
Number of men in TUs	1.4	2.8	6.9	3.6	7.5	8.8	8.4	+1.3
Number of women in TUs	0.1	0.3	1.3	0.7	1.7	3.8	3.7	+2.1
Number of manual workers in TUs	-	2.7	7.1	3.5	7.1	7.4	-	+0.3
Number of white collar workers in TUs	-	0.4	1.1	1.0	2.1	5.1	-	+3.0
			(% )					
White collar workers as % of TU members	-	13	14	22	23	40	-	+17
Women as % of TU members	8	11	16	16	18	30	31	+12

<sup>1</sup> For white collar manual workers 1931

<sup>2</sup> U.K.

Source: 1896-1979 calculated from Hyman 'Class Struggle and the Trade Union Movement' in *A Socialist Anatomy of Britain* ed Coates, Johnston, and Bush, Polity Press 1985. 1981 calculated from *The Fact About Women Is*, EOC 1985

Key symbols of the three great waves of the British workers movement: Henry Broadhurst, secretary of the TUC in 1875 and Liberal Party member; an 1889 demonstration during the dockers strike of that year; black women workers on strike at Grunwick in 1976.



The causes of this development are also clear — and are exactly parallel to the earlier destruction of the rural population during the industrial revolution. What took place following 1951 was a process of the proletarianisation of society on a massive scale. A woman doing domestic labour in the home is part of the working class community. But she is not part of the proletariat — in the sense of someone selling their labour power on the market. The process of drawing married women into the workforce was a vast process of proletarianisation of the position of women in society.

### Shift

The reasons for this social revolution, for that is what it is, are also clear. In its previous waves of expansion capitalism created a labour force by driving the population, including self-employed farmers and peasants, off the land.

But in Britain the proportion of the population in agriculture — and even more the proportion of self-employed farmers — was already extremely small after World War II. Capitalism, therefore, had to expand commodity relations, to create a proletariat selling its labour power, by different means. It did so by commodity relations, the sale of labour power, eating into the family structure. Where capitalism had previously proletarianised the agricultural population it now proceeded to proletarianise the position of women.

The second great transformation of the labour force in the postwar period has been produced by exactly the same process of capital accumulation which drew married women into work. Capitalism did not have the ability to increase the numbers of white male workers in the labour force following World War II — due to natural limits in population growth, the increased numbers of men in education and training for skilled labour etc. Capital therefore turned to importing black labour.

Between 1951 and 1982 the number of black people in Britain increased from 75,000 to over 2 million — a nearly thirty fold increase. A new black proletariat was created alongside, and overlapping with the new female proletariat.

Finally these immense shifts in the position of women and black people within the working class also accompanied the other great change — the increase in the proportion of white collar, and to a lesser degree public sector, workers. This was both a process of change within the working class — manual workers shifting into white collar jobs — and part of the process of proletarianisation — those not previously in the workforce entering white collar jobs.

### Social

Between 1948 and 1979 the number of manual workers declined from 14 million to 12 million — a decrease of 14 per cent. But the number of white collar worker almost doubled — moving from 6.2 million to 11.7 million. The proportion of white collars workers increased from 31 per cent to 49 per cent. The number of white collar workers today exceeds the number of manual workers.

The shift into the public sector in the period of the post war boom was significant — but not as massive as the increase in the number of women workers, black workers, or white collar workers. The number of workers in the public sector increased from 4.6 million in 1948 to 6.3 million in 1979 — the proportion of workers in the public sector increasing from 25 per cent to 32 per cent.

The really big expansion of the number of workers in the public sector however came during World War II and the immediate post-war period — not during the post war boom. The number of workers in the public sector since 1979, has of course somewhat decreased with the process of privatisation.

Taken overall the nature of this process is quite clear. The post-war period saw not a shrinking of the working class but its massive extension — an extension through a massive entry of women, above all married women, and black people into the workforce. It constitutes a social revolution in the composition of the working class equivalent in its scope to that of the industrial revolution or the period of the creation

of the unskilled male unions. This is the basis of the third wave of the labour movement — a transformation equally as great in its effects as the first wave of the craft unions unions from the 1850s, or the creation of the unskilled male unions from the late 1880s.

The logic of this process is also clear. Each of the three waves of the labour movement organised, and developed, in a less privileged layer of the working class than the one before.

The first wave organised the most privileged section of the working class — male skilled workers. The second organised unskilled male workers — with some organisation of white collar workers between the wars but with women being almost entirely bypassed. The third development, after World War II, organised white collar workers and decisively, for the first time began to organise women and black workers on a large scale.

There is also a clear political logic in the development. Each of the waves of the labour movement, based on the organisation of a qualitatively wider layer of the working class, was accompanied by a profound political shift, and advance, within the labour movement. The first wave, of craft unions, was accompanied by Liberalism. The second, the organisation of male unskilled workers, was accompanied by reformist social democracy — labourism.

It would be nice to state that the third wave of the labour movement, the organisation of women, black, and white collar workers, will be accompanied by a truly socialist development. As the impact of the organisation of women and black workers pushes itself through the working class movement it will undoubtedly create a politics far to the left of anything seen before. But it would be too glib to say that socialism will be the inevitable outcome of this third wave of the development of the labour movement.

Because it must never be forgotten that no matter how great the internal differentiation within the working class in British society itself, it is still as nothing compared to the difference between Britain and any semi-colonial country — to any country dominated by the imperialist system.

### Imperialist

It is only when the struggle is joined by the working class against British imperialism that a true mass socialist current will emerge in the British working class. The creation of such a current however will be enormously reinforced by the massive proletarianisation of women and black people and their huge entry into the labour movement — both the fact that these are the least privileged sections of the working class and, in the case of black people, because of their direct links with those struggling against imperialism in the semi-colonial countries.

There is a perfect logic in the entire process. Marx made the point in the *Communist Manifesto* that socialists 'have no interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole.' Class consciousness constitutes the defence of the interests of the working class as a whole — not of some particular layer or group within it no matter how large or militant.

As long as the labour movement in Britain itself rested only on specific sections of the working class, great obstacles existed to the development of mass class consciousness. That the narrow privileged craft unions of the mid-

nineteenth century could not be a satisfactory basis for a mass socialist consciousness and development has long been recognised. But it should be equally clear that the organisation of male, unskilled, white workers from 1889 onwards could not be such a basis either. The massive organisation of white collar workers, women, and black workers since 1951 opens up far greater socialist perspectives.

Whether the mass organisation and development of struggle of black and women workers will become linked to the international struggle against imperialism and capitalism, and therefore to a real struggle for socialism, or whether that will have to wait for another process of historical development, remains to be seen. It is however what socialists are fighting for — and doing so, in historical terms, in a more favourable situation than for a century and a half. The outcome depends also on the conscious activity of socialists.

### Society

What is clear even in the most immediate terms, however is that anyone who considers the demands of self-organisation of women and black people within the labour movement or of white collar trade unionism as 'secondary' questions completely fails to understand not only the nature of socialism but the present nature and dynamic of the working class movement itself.

Women Against Pit Closures, the black section, women's and black self-organisation within the labour movement, the Women's Action Committee, are not 'secondary' issues. They are strategically the areas of the greatest development of the entire workers movements in this period. Their accompaniment is actions such as the year long teacher strike — itself based primarily among women.

It is no accident that in a situation of substantial setbacks and defeats for the labour movement the brightest spots continue to be in the growth and radicalisation of the women's TUC, the women's Labour Party conference, the massive participation of women in every struggle, the creation of the black section in the Labour Party, black self organisation in the labour movement, and the victories in the political fund ballots — including the expansion into new, mainly white collar with a high female membership, unions. These are the struggles based on the most dynamic and growing forces in the labour movement.

Each of these movements is an autonomous struggle totally deserving of support by socialists in its own right. But together they add up to something more: the third great historical wave of the workers movement in Britain.

It is the NUM, in the year of the miners strike, that had the historical honour of fusing together on the highest level seen so far all these different components of the labour movement — another index of the epoch making character of the strike. It is this strike of the miners in all its impact, that shows above all how the different historical components of the workers movement can be welded together.

The consequences of that process, and the gigantic social forces which fed it, will still be working themselves out when Thatcher, and the immediate setbacks which have been suffered by the labour movement, are merely history.

### Labour

of the organisation of male skilled workers. The second from 1889 is that of the organisation of male unskilled workers. The third is the organisation of white collar and, in particular, women and black workers — the latter being a process we will consider later.

This tremendous shift in the composition of the labour movement is however in no sense illogical or inexplicable. It reflects the massive recomposition of the working class itself which has taken place since World War II. That recomposition in turn is dominated by one simple fact: the enormous increase in the size of the labour force, and of the working class, in the post war period is accounted for by the entry of married women and black workers into the labour force. This shift constitutes the greatest revolution in the structure of British society in the twentieth century.

The development of this may be seen in Table 2. Taking first all women in work, then the proportion of women in work showed no change whatever in the entire period from 1881 — when available comparable statistics became available — until 1951. In 1881 26 per cent of women were in work — in 1951 27 per cent were.

Among women aged 15-64, those most likely to be in work, the increase was only from 39 per cent to 40 per cent in this entire 70 year period.

However, following 70 years of complete stagnation, after 1951 a violent structural transformation set in in the position of women in the labour force. Having remained completely static the percentage of women in work suddenly began to rise dramatically. The percentage of all women in work rose from 27 per cent in 1951 to 36 per cent by 1982. The percentage of women aged 15-64 in paid work increased from 40 per cent in 1951 to 57 per cent in 1982. By the early 1960s, for the first time in history, the majority of women of working age were in paid employment.

This shift is even more dramatic when its impact on married women is considered. Prior to World War II the proportion of married women in paid work was both extremely low and static. By 1911 only 10 per cent of all married women — and the same proportion of married women aged 15-64 — were in paid work. By 1931, the last census date before World War II, still only 10 per cent of all married women, and only 11 per cent of married women aged 15-64, were in work. (See Table 2)

By 1951 there had been a significant increase in women in paid work — with 24 per cent of married women aged 15-64, in the labour force (although a considerable part of this change was due to the sharp increase in the proportion of women who were married which took place between 1931 and 1951).

From 1951 onwards, however, the rise in the proportion of married women in work constituted a veritable social revolution. By 1973 the percentage of married women in paid work had doubled — from 22 per cent to 44 per cent. By 1983 49 per cent of married women were in the labour force. The proportion of married women aged between 15 and 64 in paid work also doubled in the same period — increasing from 24 per cent to 48 per cent by 1973.

If women between 15 and 59 alone are considered (ie taking into account the lower retirement age for women) then by 1983 56 per cent of all women of working age, and 56 per cent of married women of working age, were in paid work.

### Married

Even if the higher proportion of women working part time than men is taken into account — and the effect of this must not be exaggerated as by 1984 69 per cent of women workers were working at least 36 hour a week — then there is no doubt what this shift represents. The movement of married women into the paid workforce during the period from 1951 onwards constitutes the greatest single change in the structure of British society in the twentieth century.

Table 2:

Women in work in Great Britain

Year	% of all women in labour force	% of all women aged 15-64 in labour force	% of all married women in labour force	% of all married women aged 15-64 in labour force
1881	26	39	-	-
1911	26	37	10	10
1921	26	38	9	9
1931	27	37	10	11
1951	27	40	22	24
1973	33	45	43	48
1979 <sup>1</sup>	36	52	-	-
1983 <sup>1</sup>	36	57	59	-

1. UK

Source: 1881-1973 calculated from Matthews, Feinstein, and Odling-Smee *British Economic Growth 1856-1973*, OUP 1982. 1979-1983 *Historical Statistics 1960-82*, OECD 1984, and *The Fact About Women Is*, EOC 1985.

# Black Section position on Azania



**THE LABOUR Party Black Section AGM on 8 March adopted a resolution on South Africa. This was considerably different to the position Socialist Action has advanced on this question. The resolution however touched on every key question of the South African revolution.**

**We are printing the Black Section resolution in full below. We will be printing a comment on it in the next issue of Socialist Action. We hope this will help stimulate a wider discussion on the key questions of revolution in South Africa which are raised in the Black Section resolution and which it calls for.**

THE NATIONAL committee of 30 November 1985 asked for a paper on the South African/Azania question. This followed the statement 'Isolate South Africa — Freedom for Azania' issued by the executive on 7 August which attracted widespread publicity. In this we gave our full support for complete and inviolable economic sanctions and disinvestment aimed at bringing the racist Pretoria regime to their knees.

We qualified this by saying: 'We believe that freedom for the enslaved black majority in Azania will not be brought about solely by (outside) sanctions. Those fighting to break the chains of bondage through the black trade unions and armed liberation struggle must be supplied with financial and material aid.' We called on Neil Kinnock to urgently convene a meeting of Labour movement leaders — black and white — to formulate a campaign aimed at:

1. Immediate disinvestment by unions and Labour authorities;
2. A national Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters;
3. A concerted programme of pressure inside and outside parliament aimed at securing sanctions and stopping the British government from vetoing such measures at the United Security Council;
4. A national publicity campaign spear-headed by the trade union and Labour Party press aimed at securing support and cash;
5. An immediate end to the sale of South African goods by Co-op stores or their use by Labour-controlled local authorities;
6. An officially backed refusal by trade unionists at ports to handle South African goods or goods destined for South Africa;
7. The unconditional release of political prisoners.

The National Union of Seamen have since announced international action against South African-bound oil.

And the Co-op, plus other major stores, have banned the stocking of South African goods. African National Congress (ANC) president Oliver Tambo was a guest speaker at the Labour Party's annual conference.

The black sections national committee decided Azania was one of two central issues upon which we should focus major campaigns. The other issue is the black community and black youth struggle.

Azania occupies a key place in international politics at the moment because of the heroic struggle for liberation of its black majority. Black section's position on this vital question is bound to be different from that of other solidarity groups in Britain like the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) because, as part of the black diaspora, we identify directly with the Azanian struggle. We see our struggle in Britain as being similar in content to that of African and Asian people world-wide. There is a clearly defined link between our struggle against racism and the battle against imperialism in the third world.

Our struggle for black self-organization is intertwined with the fight for genuine self-determination and national independence in the black world and the struggle of black youth — the uprisings from Handsworth and Leicester to Brixton, Tottenham and Southall. We are ever-conscious of the fact that British imperialism is the major western capitalist exploiter in South Africa.

How can we as black people active in the Labour Party help to put an end to colonialist domination of the black majority by the privileged white minority in South Africa?

The white working class is thoroughly imbued with colonialist and racist attitudes. They enjoy enormous privileges on the backs of the black working class. It is the social revolution of the Azanian majority which will make the qualitative difference in the lives of the oppressed masses. It will restore their national rights and culture and create an Azania free from class, racial and caste inequalities.

The democratic tasks are to win civil and human rights and equality in the fields of employment, education, press freedom, freedom of movement, culture and language. The principal national task is to regain the country for its rightful indigenous owners — the African people. There cannot be equality between dispossessors and dispossessed, colonisers and the colonised, exploiter and the exploited.

While the African people are the pivot of the new nation their main allies are the so-called 'Coloured' and Indian peoples. They form the black political bloc with the African

peoples, taking the 'Africanist' aspirations as their own. The Indian people have always fought side by side with the African peoples. Indeed, Indian workers have played a key role in the formation of black liberation organisations and trade unions.

## Role of whites

A number of 'liberal' whites have undeniably stoutly opposed the apartheid state and stood up for the democratic rights of black people. As members of the black diaspora, we can learn from the words of Malcolm X (*Afro-American History*, 1967) on this. He pointed out how white liberals who oppose the armed struggle for black liberation are no allies at all. Furthermore, there is an undoubtedly large 'anti-apartheid' movement in Britain. How are we to relate to it?

## How to proceed

As black people we have suffered from economic subjugation by white imperialists over many centuries starting with slavery. Not only have we been subjected to the rape and plundering of our natural resources, we have also experienced the systematic smashing and suppression of our culture and history. We must therefore wage an international struggle as the black diaspora to regain our land, history, culture and inalienable right to run our own affairs. This is called the national question.

Our politics must closely relate to this struggle of black people to overthrow colonial and national oppression as a means of us regaining our true identity. Those black activists steeped in the politics of white colonising leftism must recognise that the national question cannot be negotiated away or subsumed to simplistic interpretations of the class question. The two have equal importance to us as black socialists.

For instance, the current tactic of imperialists is to attempt to con us into believing that by getting rid of racialism and apartheid the black masses in Azania will be freed. The reality is that capitalism would remain with a 'multi-racial' face rather than an exclusively white one. Imperialism, capitalism, colonialism and white racism are the inter-linked enemies of the Azanian people and must always remain the strategic targets of the Azanian revolution. Those who make much play of 'non-racialism' overlook the fact that the whites are an oppressing nation.

(John Brown) was a white man who went to war against white people to help free slaves. He wasn't non-violent. White people call John Brown a nut... So when you want to know good white folks in history,

where black people are concerned, go read the history of John Brown. That was what I call a white liberal.' (Malcolm X)

Many white people, despite their progressiveness, have not been able to fully shed their colonial and racial attitudes towards the struggle, and in particular to take up a correct attitude towards the national question. While supporting the democratic struggles of the black people they still peddle ideas about 'integration', 'non-racial democracy', 'multi-racialism' — all of them disguised forms of neo-colonialism. There is a body of white liberals who, because of their own vested interests, attempt to derail the black struggle from its goals outlined above. We as black people are determined to assert our own leadership of the struggle. This is why we talk about our struggle for self-determination and self-organisation.

Steve Biko (*I Write What I Like*, 1978) says: 'We are concerned with that curious bunch of non-conformists who explain their participation (in the black struggle) in negative terms. That bunch of dogooders who go under all sorts of names — liberals, leftists etc. These are the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's inhumanity to black people. These are the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black struggle for a place under the sun. In short, these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in a white skin.'

## Conclusions

### Why 'Azania'?

We should use this word because it is the choice of a variety of individuals and groups involved in the black liberation struggles, ie Desmond Tutu, black trade unions, the top-selling black weekly paper, *The Sowetan*, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (AZAPO), and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). Black nations like Zambia, Ghana and Zimbabwe have changed the name of former colonial countries as the first symbolic sign of the overthrow of imperialism.

### Who do we support?

This is a thorny question with a simple answer. In their dealings with members of the Azanian liberation struggle, national committee officers have met with representatives of the ANC and PAC. We shall continue our support for all of Azania's black liberation movements.

One of the problems with the AAM has been its sole promotion of the ANC despite a constitutional commitment to the same 'non-sectarian' position as us. This has led to confusion — many black people in Britain believing there is just one group fighting to emancipate Azania. It has also suppressed, in a neo-colonialist way, the historical role played by the PAC and other groups in the Black Consciousness Movement (of which Steve Biko was the leading member).

For instance, the PAC headed the fight against the notorious 'Pass Laws'. This came to a head with the massacre of black youth at Sharpeville in 1960. The first political prisoners on Robben Island were members of the PAC.

Nonetheless, it must be stated that the ANC is the oldest black liberation movement — founded in 1912. The PAC split from the ANC in 1959 over the national question. Unlike the ANC, membership of the PAC is open solely to black people.

As well as supporting all black liberation movements, we must support the release of all political prisoners. For instance, when we call for the release of Nelson Mandela, of the ANC, we must remember there are hundreds of other black people in prison who belong to many other political organisations. The PAC's Zephania Mothupeng has been behind bars for more than a decade.

Ultimately, it will be for the people of Azania to decide which movement is to be their legitimate represen-

tative in government. We must not be bullied, hectorated or cajoled into supporting just one group at this juncture. We will strive to support all of them equally, providing platforms, funds and publicity for their struggle inside and outside the British labour movement.

## The Anti-Apartheid Movement

There is much controversy over the AAM among black activists. Problems arise because it is seen as a white, middle-class, liberals' organisation. The more aware activists are concerned about its exclusive support for the ANC — though the AAM denies this is true. More disturbing is the AAM's image as a white-dominated movement that refuses to take up issues of racism in Britain and thereby make itself relevant to domestic black struggle.

Because of these flaws, a breakaway group called the City of London AAM has been formed. They are part of the *Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism* tendency embraced by the Revolutionary Communist Group. Our role should be to regain black leadership of an issue which belongs to us and has been hijacked. We can do this by opening up a debate which has become stagnant and sectarian.

The priorities and agenda are currently decided by influential white race 'spokesmen' like AAM chair, Bob Hughes MP. White liberals have a strangle-hold on the issue. This is particularly apparent when white speakers are fielded to talk on behalf of the ANC and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

On a warning note, our support for the armed struggle will pose problems with white liberal allies as more white people are killed in Azania. We will be under pressure to condemn violence (cf Tottenham) or the killing of 'innocent' victims of 'terrorism'. Similar pressure has been put on Irish activists supporting the struggle for the liberation of their country. The link between the struggle of the black diaspora and the struggles in Central America, Palestine and Ireland must never again be lost on us as oppressed people who will draw winning strength from unity.

## Trade Unions

One of the most positive developments over the past few years is the growth of the black and non-racial independent trade unions in Azania. In particular, we warmly welcome the birth of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on 30 November, 1985. Unfortunately, these unions have not been given adequate support by British trade unions or the AAM. We are determined to change this state of affairs by giving publicity and support to these unions.

## Labour Party Black Section (LPBS)

- a. The LPBS will build support and organise a contingent on:
  - the lobby of parliament on Wednesday, 19 March, 1986
  - the local demonstrations on Saturday, 22 March 1986
  - the national demonstration on Saturday, 28 June 1986
- b. The LPBS will fight for all local councils to adopt declarations like Lewisham's 'Declaration Against Apartheid' and ensure that such declarations are implemented.
- c. The LPBS will organise (or help organise) a tour of LPs, TUs and black organisations of a COSATU speaker, and other organisations such as PAC, BCM etc.
- d. The LPBS will launch a fund-drive to raise the finances for a speaker from AZAPO or another Black Consciousness organisation to tour Britain.
- e. The LPBS will initiate a united organisation in the LP which builds solidarity within the LP for Azania (along the lines of the Labour Committee on Ireland).
- f. Found a Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters.



## Why US terrorists attacked Libya

IF ANYONE had any doubt about who is the greatest terrorist in the world they should have lost it last week with Reagan's attack on Libya. The United States government is the number one terrorist regime on the planet.

What happened in the Gulf of Sirte on Monday and Tuesday 24 and 25 March had nothing whatever to do with a 'spontaneous' clash between US forces and Libya, or 'self-defence' by the United States navy. The whole thing was a perfectly planned provocation by the United States whose goal was a military attack on Libyan territory.

By Dick Carter

The planning for the assault was meticulous. On 17 March this year US Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger was in London. He met here US vice-admiral Frank Kelso — the commander of the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

On 19 March the USS America, the latest aircraft carrier to join the Sixth Fleet, arrived in the Mediterranean. It brought the size of the US carrier fleet in the area to three and gave to Kelso a force of 30 modern warships and 240 advanced aircraft — the most powerful naval task force in the Mediterranean since World War II. Weinberger meanwhile had briefed Thatcher, and Minister of Defence George Younger, on the US plan.

On Monday 24 March the US fleet entered the Gulf of Sirte — an area of sea surrounded on three sides by Libya. As the United States knew they would, Libya defended itself with semi-antiquated SAM 5 anti-aircraft missiles — which given the size and technological superiority of the US fleet was rather like attacking an elephant with a peashooter. The US easily backed this pinprick and then launched a missile strike on both Libyan ships and radar installations.

To understand what

this means in the real world, for once *The Observer* almost got it right on Sunday. It wrote 'If the Soviet Navy were to pick a fight with one of the less salubrious representatives of the capitalist world, sinking ships and downing aircraft, the House of Commons and the editorial columns would shiver with righteous indignation for days.'

That is to put it excessively mildly. Supposing, for example, the Soviet navy sailed up to the coast of Chile, picked a fight with Pinochet, and began bombarding the Chilean coast with missiles and aircraft. There would not be 'indignation' in the west, but we would be on the brink of World War III.

The reason the US needed the confrontation in the Mediterranean is clear however — and is not to do with Libyan terrorism'. The Middle East is moving towards the risk of another major crisis — one that has been brewing since the failure of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Israelis were forced out of Lebanon by the resistance of the Lebanese population backed by Syria. The United States, French, Italian, and British forces were forced out as well when they went in in 1983, as a 'peacekeeping force', to assist the Israelis.

In the Iran-Iraq war



North American terrorists: (from left to right): Weinberger, a US troop on combat training, Reagan

the Iraqi regime is also clearly getting the worst of the recent fighting — which does not represent an advance for either the Iranian or Iraqi working classes but poses serious problems for US imperialism. The talks between Jordan and the PLO for joint negotiations with Israel have broken down because Israel has nothing to offer the Palestinian people and the PLO would not accept the total capitulation the US demanded.

Most serious of all the collapse in the world price of oil threatens a serious crisis for the key reactionary Arab regimes in the area. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are directly dependent on oil. Egypt is directly dependent on US aid and that from the oil states. Egypt, the only Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, is already faced with serious internal instability — as last month's rioting by the internal

security police showed. The US desperately needed a show of military force in the Mediterranean as a warning to those who might threaten its client regimes.

Libya was picked out as a target for two reasons. Firstly because it is not a Chile of the Middle East but, among the Arab states, one of the more progressive. Secondly because the US did not dare strike militarily, at present, against several regimes it would really like to hit — in particular against Syria.

The US, naturally, does not oppose Libya for the reactionary aspects of its regime, above all its suppression of any independent working class movement. The US opposes the Libyan regime for what is progressive about it — its support for those fighting against French imperialism in Chad, its practical support for Nicaragua, its opposition to Israel, and its

alliance with the Soviet Union.

The timing of the US operation was almost certainly directly decided for other international considerations of US policy — precisely the United States' international terrorist operations. Reagan is deeply involved today in his task of getting the US Congress to vote military aid to the reactionary 'contras' fighting against the Nicaraguan government. A display of military force against Libya was seen as a way of whipping up war hysteria in the US and helping the aid bill for the contras go through the Congress. It was an utterly cynical and murderous manoeuvre.

The British press has feared that the US attack will increase support for Libya among the Arab states. It deserves to. The entire labour movement must oppose the US assault on Libya — and bring out into the open the reasons for it.



Gadaffi speaks

## El Salvador: Duarte's regime in crisis

**MEDIA ATTENTION** on Central America is rightly focussed today on Reagan's attempt to pass the bill through the US Congress granting \$100 million in military aid to the Nicaraguan contras. But in El Salvador the regime of Napoleon Duarte faces a deepening crisis both because of its own loss of support and because of the resistance of the FMLN-FDR. JOSE LOPEZ, the El Salvadorean representative of the FDR-FMLN in Britain recently returned from a month in Central America. Socialist Action asked him to outline the situation in El Salvador.

THE Salvadorean government is experiencing its deepest crisis since Duarte was elected president in 1984. It is a crisis of military, economic, and political direction. The government's room for manoeuvre is becoming limited as it has almost totally lost popular support within El Salvador.

The Salvadorean army's strategy to take the initiative in the war against the FMLN has failed. Major counterinsurgency operations in Guazapa and in Marazan, have not been able to dislodge the FMLN. The FMLN today is attacking military and economic targets in more areas of the country.

The recent FMLN operation, 'Death to the Duarte package! Long live the workers struggle!', involved a number of FMLN units attacking coffee production plants and electricity supplies to a num-

ber of provincial towns. These counter-offensives divert the Salvadorean army's resources away from its own strategic operations.

In order to maintain the fighting, Duarte has been forced to place the financing of the war at the centre of his economic policies. The 'economy for war' package, which he announced in January, follows the prescription of the United States Agency for International Development (US AID) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The package involves wages being restricted, prices being raised etc, in order to fund the war.

Duarte has consequently lost any mass support that he had. The Christian Democrat trade unions, which supported his presidential election campaign, are joining the protests against his



Mothers of the disappeared protest

policies. The recent formation of UNTS (National Unity of Salvadorean Workers) on 8 February — which represents 300,000 workers — called a demonstration on 21 February which attracted 80,000 people to protest against the austerity measures and against Duarte's refusal to engage in a serious dialogue with the FMLN-FDR.

Duarte is following US policy on dialogue with the FMLN. He is calling for a dialogue which is conditional on the FSLN in Nicaragua negotiating with the contras. The FMLN has rejected these conditions and continues to

call for a dialogue without preconditions.

The FMLN will continue to struggle to concretise a dialogue which seeks a negotiated political solution to our conflict. We oppose any dialogue which continues to be used by Duarte and Reagan as a political manoeuvre against the Salvadorean people, or as blackmail against the Nicaraguan people.

The United States is contemplating a government without Duarte. US efforts to support FUSADES (the Salvadorean development foundation), and to promote the PCN

(National Conciliation Party) as a 'centre right' force can be seen as part of the US attempts to develop alternatives to Duarte.

As Duarte's crisis deepens the FMLN-FDR is strengthening its political-military apparatus by unifying its work. The different organisational components of the FMLN are now taking part in joint military initiatives. The FMLN-FDR is also developing its political work in the areas its units work in. The aim is to build more support at a time when Duarte's image is more clearly becoming identified with failure and broken election promises.

# WORLD IN ACTION

## South Africa

Delegates meeting at the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in Durban have called for a three day general strike in South Africa starting on 16 June — the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising.

The conference decided not to reimpose the call for a schools boycott in South Africa — which had been temporarily halted last December. It instead called for a rent strike and boycott of white shops.

The conference was violently attacked by members of Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha organisation. Two people were killed, and twenty injured, in the assault.

Violence is continuing to escalate rapidly in South Africa following president Botha's announcement at the weekend that the army and police would adopt a new still harder line. Twenty one people were killed in two incidents alone last week. The regime seems to have adopted a policy of 'mini-Sharpevilles' to try to crush resistance.

## Nicaragua

REAGAN continues to push hard for the US Congress to adopt his demand for \$100 million of military aid to the Nicaraguan 'contras'. After failing narrowly to gain a majority in the House of Representatives Reagan won a narrow majority in the Senate.

In reality the differences in the Congress are almost certain to be overcome. The US ruling class is uniting itself behind a policy of open military aid for the contras fighting the Nicaraguan government.

Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega made it clear that the FSLN will not negotiate with the contras but only with the 'chief contra' — Reagan. This is a reply to the camouflage that Reagan's supporters in the House of Representatives are putting up — arguing that the Congress should vote the military aid with merely a small delay for 'negotiations' to take place.

Meanwhile the United States, government has moved closer than ever before to direct use of its main military forces against Nicaragua with the use of US helicopters to supply Honduran and contra forces fighting against Nicaraguan strikes on the contra bases. The pictures of the US helicopters in action directly recall the days of Vietnam.

## South Korea

The regime of South Korean military dictator Chun Doo Hwan faces rising opposition after mass demonstrations against the government in the city of Kwangju on 30 March. An estimated 50-100,000 demonstrators marched to demand the removal of Chun — comparing his regime to that of Marcos in the Philippines.

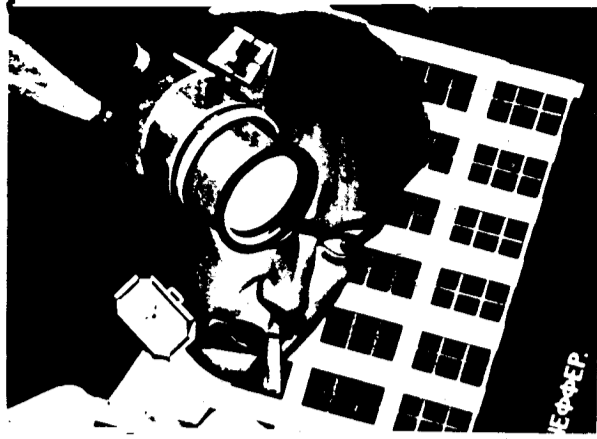
The demonstration was the biggest in South Korea since the uprising in Kwangju in 1980 — which was suppressed by the army. This followed the assassination of the previous dictator Park Chung Hee in 1979.

Riot police attacked with tear gas a second student demonstration held on 30 March — the two demonstrations being part of a campaign to demand direct presidential elections next year and the replacement of the rigged electoral college system used at present.

The demonstrations are particularly serious not only for the South Korean regime but also for the United States because of the general worsening economic and political situation in South East Asia. The US economy is slowing down, and the Japanese economy is entering its most serious recession for ten years. The 'miracle economies' of South East Asia, which depend on the US and Japan, are therefore now all facing severe problems. The fall of Marcos in the Philippines, and the demonstrations in South Korea, have been accompanied by a major economic crisis and scandals in Singapore and cabinet resignations and rioting in Malaysia.

Socialists should be looking very carefully at developments in the whole of South East Asia, and now at South Korea in particular, for the knock on effects of the crisis in the Philippines.

# Reviews



## Anne Devlin

A VISUALLY stunning film, *Anne Devlin* is set in Ireland at the turn of the nineteenth century. It is a moving portrait of a neglected figure in Irish history. Set against the background of the revolt against British rule led by Robert Emmet and its aftermath the film convinces without using bludgeoning tactics. Where Emmet is as revered and acknowledged as Tone and Connolly, Devlin has been portrayed in 'popular' history as a mere appendage, either motivated solely by her love/lust for Emmet or his loyal housekeeper.

Reviewed by  
Terry Luke

Through a series of beautiful scenes the film tells a different story — a story of an individual conviction, of a principled rebel. To avoid suspicion falling on the place Devlin is taken on as a servant at Emmet's rebel household — the conspiratorial centre. While the men argue and plan amongst themselves some take Anne's 'servant' status literally.

## CINEMA



But after the failed rising it's clear that Devlin is no mere fetcher for the male rebels. Brutalisation

and pressure from the authorities, as well as efforts to extract information, prove fruitless. However it's not obstinacy and unthinking loyalty to her 'Man/Men' that motivates her but conviction and loyalty to the cause.

The film, although critical of the men involved, does not ridicule the motives for the rising and they are not the caricatures so beloved by anti-Republicanism. Director Pat Murphy's previous film *Maeve* which tackled feminism and republicanism in contemporary Ireland was less successful than *Anne Devlin* is.

By failing to answer many of the relevant questions it posed *Maeve* became cloudy and many saw it as being too hostile to republican ideals. *Anne Devlin* however is less ambitious in many ways but politically clearer by at least attempting to show that republicanism and feminism are not at war — or at least shouldn't be — as the director himself said.

The two films together would make an interesting double bill.

*Anne Devlin* is showing at the Everyman Cinema, Holly Bush Vale (Hamstead Tube) London.

## Cosmetics, fashions and the exploitation of women

A BOOK about cosmetics and sexual oppression might have seemed old hat a few years ago. The explosion of the women's movement had decisively debunked the myth that all women needed for true happiness was an uplift bra, Playtex girdle, Cream Puff and home perm.

Reviewed by  
Jude Woodward

But the last five years has seen a concerted attempt to reverse all this, with an offensive that has taken two basic tacks. On the one hand there is Princess Di, and I'm sure 'Fergie' will be hard on her heels in the fashion stakes. On the other the Bodyshop and the mud and wheat-germ approach.

It doesn't matter whether your style is Dynasty or just healthy, there is a product range aimed at you. The most depressing thing is that we all fall for it, buy it and usually feel better for it.

This book concerns a debate about why this which took place in the US Socialist Workers Party in the 1950s — before the women's liberation movement had opened our eyes, if not stopped the rot.

The discussion is lively and wide-ranging. Do women use cosmetics out of economic necessity — to get a job, catch a husband? Or because they aspire to beauty, while their bodies and faces are destroyed by physically tiring and destructive work? Or simply because they are coned by the cosmetic companies?

The debate eventually opens out into a fully-fledged discussion about the origins of women's oppression itself, taking in a debate between anthropologists on whether matriarchies pre-existed the patriarchal organisation of society.

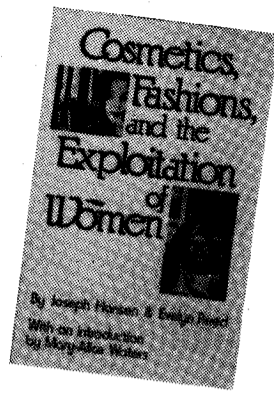
The book raises a number of interesting and sometimes challenging ideas around its central themes. Perhaps the most striking thing about the book is that the debate was taking place in the 1950s — I know of no British socialist organisation that was discussing issues of women's liberation with such seriousness at that time.

However, the book is flawed in two respects. Firstly the very fact that the material presented is so wide in its scope means that the various sections of

the book perhaps sit rather uneasily together, with none of them fully developed. However this is only a weakness if the book is approached expecting it to provide a very thorough examination of cosmetics and fashion, rather than simply raising some ideas.

Secondly, and this is a serious weakness from the point of view of its British audience, the material is presented from the standpoint of an inner-party debate in the US SWP, rather than from the point of view of its more general interest.

A rather obscure deb-



*Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*, by Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed, Pathfinder Press, available from Other Books, £3.95 plus 28 p&p.

ate in a North American socialist organisation has somewhat limited appeal as a way of presenting things. The issues this book touches on are however of very broad interest indeed.

## Other Books

A NEW paperback, *Malcolm X Speaks* has recently been published for the first time in this country. Price £3.75 plus 22p p&p, it is available from Other Books. The Other Books mail order service offers a wide selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature, including the following by and about Malcolm X and the struggle for black liberation:

**Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas**  
George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, 60p + 12p p&p

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Pathfinder Press, 60p + 12p p&p

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George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 28p p&p

**Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self Determination**  
Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 22p p&p

**By Any Means Necessary: some last speeches by Malcolm X**  
Pathfinder Press, £3.25 + 34p p&p

**The Last Year of Malcolm X: the evolution of a revolutionary**  
George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, £3.95 + 34p p&p

**Malcolm X on Afro-American History**  
Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 22p p&p

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## Boycott Hormel products

A MAJOR fight between American workers and bosses is now in its seventh month. Starting on 17 August 1985 United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local (branch) P-9 has been on strike against the Hormel company. In 1984 Hormel, which manufactures pork products including the well-known Spam brand, drove through a 23 per cent wage cut. In 1985 they proposed to freeze wages for a further three years.

By Frank Gorton

The company also proposes the destruction of the seniority system (first in, last out), the right to summary dismissal, the reduction of medical and holiday benefits, the loss of employment rights if a worker is injured, and the introduction of a two tier wage system discriminating between existing and newly hired workers. With these types of policies no wonder profits for Hormel increased by 84 per cent during the previous year.

The 1500 Hormel workers and their families from Austin, Minnesota have been without wages and have no health insurance and no unemployment benefits.

Many families have scrimped on food and left rent and bills unpaid — the company has organised an alliance with financial backers and the rest of the industry's owners to starve the workers back. In response the P-9 members and their families have demonstrated a willingness and energy unique in recent US labour history to fight back. They have distributed literature from door to door to over 450,000 homes in cities across the mid-West United States. Teams of between 50-350 have travelled through six states sleeping on the ground or in union offices. They have talked with thousands of union members at plant gates, visited union leaders, addressed union meetings, and demonstrated against Reagan's arbitration system and the banks connected to Hormel.

Four thousand trade unionists, farmers, their families, and students from many states demonstrated their solidarity with the Hormel strikers by gathering in Austin on 15 February to protest against attempts to break Local P-9

At the rally a large banner calling for the 'Guard out of Austin' demanded the removal of the National Guard from the city. The National Guard, roughly the US equivalent of the British Territorial Army, escorted scabs into the Hormel plant from 21 January to 21 February — at a cost to the US taxpayer of \$1.4 million.

Acting alongside the National Guard have been the courts. On 14 February the courts imposed a maximum of six on the number of pickets at Hormel. Union officials were ordered to sign their agreement to this order or go to jail.

Jim Guyette, striking president of Local P-9, has become a well-known figure for his strong and militant leadership of the strike. Guyette told the 14 February demonstration: 'There are no cowards here. We have people who are fighting against oppression, standing up so that farmers can be heard, so that labour can be heard.' Despite the obstacles, Guyette told the demonstration: 'we intend to push ever forward, to get our contract and turn this situation around.'

When, on 14 February, the national union withdrew official support from the strike, and ordered a negotiated return to work, Guyette declared he was not in any position to 'negotiate away' the jobs of strikers as part of a settlement with Hormel.

In addition to Hormel workers themselves, women supporters have also organised in defence of the strike. Following the first wage cut in October 1984, a United Support Group was formed. This called a solidarity rally in March 1985 attended by 1000 people. The support group has been involved in the flying pickets sent out from the plant.

On the same day, 21 February, as the National Guard was withdrawn from Austin, 350 school students struck. They were protesting against attacks on their democratic rights to organise support for P-9 while at school. The students had formed an organisation called 'P-9, the Future Generation'.

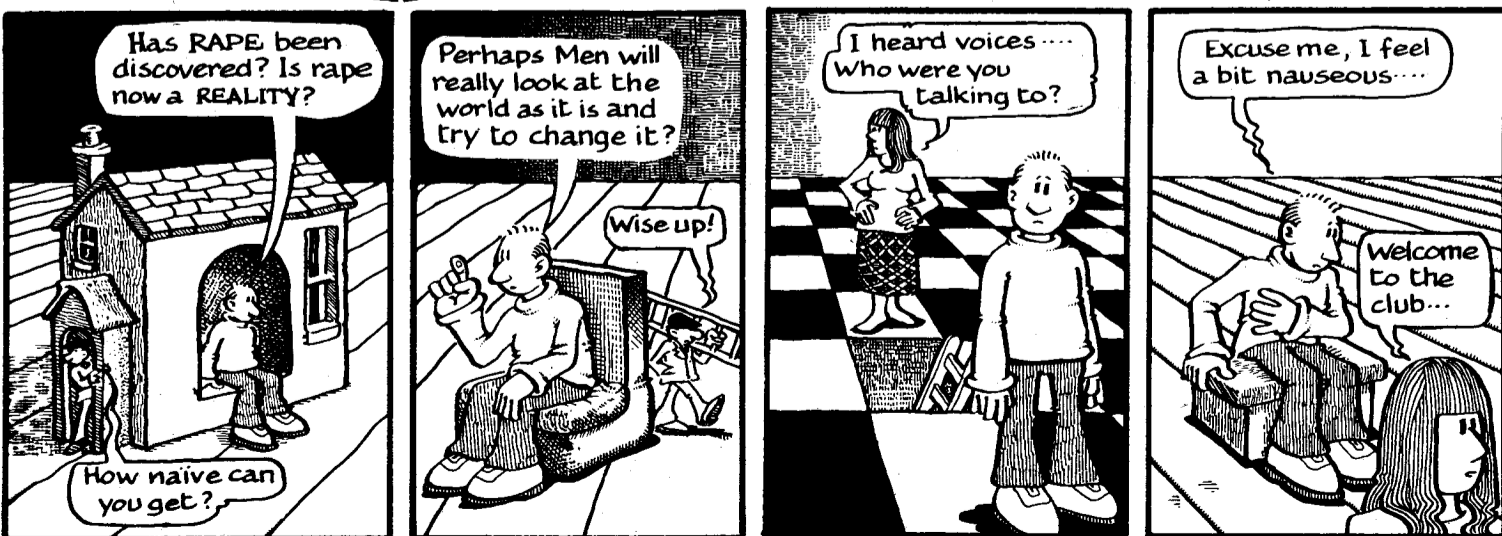
Solidarity action has also reached out to Hormel's plant at Ottumwa, Iowa and Fremont, Nebraska. At Ottumwa 500 workers were fired for refusing to cross a P-9 flying picket line. At Fremont 56 workers were sacked for the same action.

Hormel has become a national campaign in the United States — and the most militant strike action for several decades. It deserves total support and wide publicity in Britain. With so much solidarity, food and money being raised for the NUM abroad during its long strike it is important to answer this appeal.

Hormel's products are on sale in this country. The best known is Spam. You never liked Spam anyway, OK?

★ Messages of support are urgently required and should be sent to UFCW Local P-9, Corporate Campaign, 316 N.E. 4th Avenue, AUSTIN MN 55912, USA

## A PIECE of the ACTION



News

# Wapping- all out 6 April

**THE STRIKE** against Rupert Murdoch's transfer of the *Sun*, *Times*, *News of the World* and *Sunday Times* to Wapping is now in its tenth week. Support for the print workers is increasing rapidly. After successful pickets for the last three weekends, the national demonstration called to Wapping for 6 April will be the largest and most important action so far. Socialist Action asked JOHN LANG, deputy FOC SOGAT Clerical Workers at *The Times*, and Strike Committee Support Coordinator, for his assessment of how the strike is developing and the need for support.

We came out at first for our jobs and to fight against the conditions Murdoch was trying to impose on us. But now it's a much wider issue — we're at the forefront of fighting union-bashing.

There's no point in us accepting or considering redundancy money. Murdoch might pay us, but the jobs would go and there would be no union. If the unions are taken out of print not only would standards and conditions at work go down, but the views of a small minority — the Murdochs and Maxwells — will dominate the media unchecked. Remember it was the print unions who stopped the photo 'frame up' on Scargill — implying he was making a fascist salute.

For defending our jobs and union SOGAT '82 has been sequestered. Through a change in the law one employer in dispute with a part of a union can bring a whole national union to its knees. That's the real secondary action which is

taking place.

This sequestration is incredible. It has to be stopped by the whole movement.

I feel with the attacks from Fleet Street management — not only Murdoch but also Maxwell and now the *Express* — we need to say 'enough is enough'. Instead of trying to negotiate the unnegotiable we have to take the bull by the horns and fight the whole lot.

We've made a three pronged attack on Murdoch — pickets at Wapping and Glasgow, flying pickets to hit distribution, and the boycott campaign.

The picket at Wapping is a lot stronger now. Not only the big Saturday night picket, but in the weekdays too. This is hitting distribution. Every hour's delay at Wapping costs Murdoch. After 3-4 hours delay these lorries can only be bringing out waste paper. No one wants a late paper. The fact that Murdoch has to go to a non-union printers in Worthing to print on Sun-

day is a sign that we're having an effect.

On top of that we're sending flying pickets out round the country — where we can, picketing out TNT distribution depots.

Finally the boycott campaign is having an effect — particularly in the North.

At the start of the strike we were unorganised. One day we were printers, clerical workers etc. Next day we were faced with a major dispute. Our organisation is a lot better now than then.

I feel this dispute is only just starting. The miners have taught us a lot about how to organise. One offshoot of their strike into ours, for example, is the important role women are playing.

But we can't win alone or just by our picketing. We need the active support of the rest of Fleet Street and the labour movement.

It's the miners and miners wives who have helped turn the situation around and give a lead. On the 6 April demonstration at Wapping there will be

eight coachloads from Yorkshire. Miners at Frickley colliery are on a £1 a week levy for the Wapping dispute. Miners wives have moved to leaflet newsagents and picket distribution outlets. Many miners support groups have become print support groups.

Support from other areas is also encouraging — especially from those facing their own problems such as teachers.

We have had a lot of support from the Labour Party grassroots — my own party for example, Newham South, sent a delegation of councillors to join the picket. But nationally we feel there's a problem.

Although Kinnoch has spoken in favour of us, it's ironic that Maxwell is still in the party, that the prospective candidate for Stevenage is a scab on the *Sun*, and News International are let into Fulham by-election press conferences.

The miners have taught us that only when we stop running away will the bosses stop chasing us.

major victory for the left.

The official international meeting was held on Monday night and was attended by 500 people. It was addressed by speakers from South Africa, a woman speaker from Nicaragua, and Katherine Reilly from the Dunne's strikers in Ireland.

On Sunday evening the STA held a fringe meeting addressed by Billy Etherington of the Durham NUM and Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, Graham Norwood — the deputy leader of Lambeth Council, print workers from News International, and a Silentnight striker. The meeting was attended by 150 people and raised £800 to be divided between the Lambeth and Silentnight support funds.

The STA fringe meeting on Monday, on women in struggle, heard Betty Heathfield of Women Against Pit Closures, a woman teacher from El Salvador, and Katherine Reilly from the Dunnes strikers. It was attended by 200 people.

## Executive manoeuvres at NUT conference

**THIS YEAR'S** NUT conference showed the continuing militancy of teachers. But it also showed moves by the NUT executive to head off and defuse the anger which exists.

The key vote was on Sunday on salaries. The conference voted for the NUT to participate in the ACAS talks on teachers salaries. The left in the union, led by the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA), opposed this but were defeated in the vote.

The vote by the conference was a major mistake. The argument was that the NUT must not be left outside the negotiations otherwise the other teaching unions and organisations would sell out. But the real effect will be to break up the momentum over the 1986 pay claim.

Another setback, which was argued for by the executive, was to put in for an £800 interim pay rise but this was an error as it will inevitably be taken as the goal the union is aiming at. It represents a climb down from the £1700 set for the target for 1 April 1986. The executive used the credibility it had from last year's actions to get through this policy. There is now a serious

threat to the 1986 claim. Other forms of action will be continuing but strike action is being ruled out for the next period.

By Bernard Regan

The conference however refused to give a blank cheque to the executive on salaries. The executive asked for a resolution giving it the ability to fix the 1987 salary policy. This was defeated by 120,000 to 90,000 votes. This almost certainly means the NUT will have to call a special conference this autumn to decide on salaries policy for the 1987 claim.

There is a major debate at this conference over cover for teachers absent through sickness — a debate still going on as we go to press. There was a

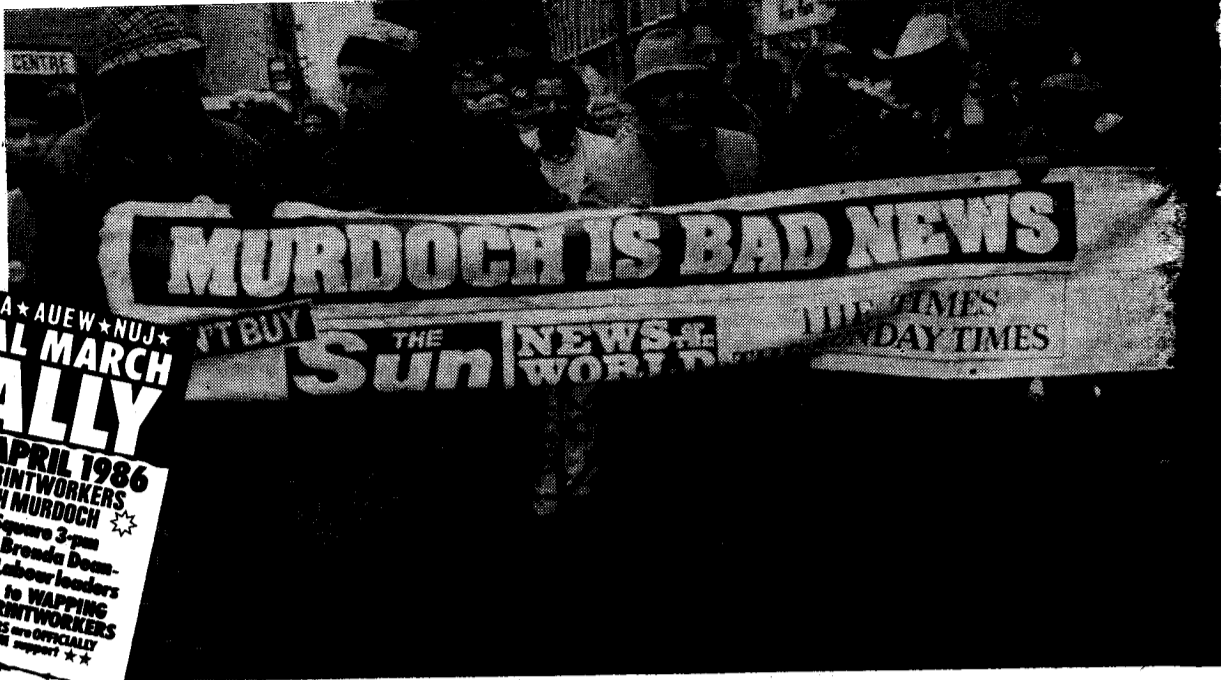
strong feeling that teachers should not cover again — ever. But the executive was manoeuvring to head off the strongest resolution, that from the Inner London Teachers Association, and instead adopt a policy of at least limited cover.

In the debate on racism the executive was forced to move significantly, incorporating many demands that have been fought for by the STA. Local union branches are now authorised to affiliate to local anti-racist organisations.

The demand for black self-organisation in the union was defeated, but with 42 per cent voting in favour. The vote was lost by 125,000 to 90,000. There was also a strong minority in favour of refusing to talk to the Police Federation, and for a policy of getting the police out of the schools.

An emergency resolution to debate Wapping needed a two thirds majority to suspend standing orders. It fell but gained 57 per cent of the vote — a

The STA fringe meeting on Monday, on women in struggle, heard Betty Heathfield of Women Against Pit Closures, a woman teacher from El Salvador, and Katherine Reilly from the Dunnes strikers. It was attended by 200 people.



## Victimisation at Fords

**THE FORD** Dagenham TWGU branch, the largest in the union is alleging racist, sexist and anti-union bias in the company's recent recruitment of 340 workers. The issue has been brought to a head by the sacking of two new women workers.

In the first case, the company refused to explain its reason. When her shop steward tried to establish what had happened, the company at first maintained that she had resigned! Finally they admitted sacking her.

Then another woman was sacked, allegedly for failing to reveal on her application form that she had a degree. Ford is claiming that it does not employ graduates on line production work.

In fact many line workers have such qualifications. The TWGU district official who will be representing this woman at her appeal is himself a graduate who worked on the line at Dagenham for eight years.

Both sackings have been challenged by shop stewards in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant and by the 4000 strong TWGU 1/1107 branch of which the women are members. They believe the women are the victims of anti-union blacklisting. Both had been shop stewards in their previous jobs, where they had worked for several years.

The sackings have led the union to challenge the whole basis of Ford's re-

cent recruitment. Seven thousand people applied for 340 jobs, and were initially screened by a top West End personnel agency. Applicants who got past this hurdle then had to go through a further two interviews and aptitude tests.

During these interviews some applicants were quizzed about their previous trade union activity and even their political views. There was a clear attempt to weed out pro-union people.

The TWGU branch believes that further checks are now in progress on successful applicants. The flimsiest of pretexts will be used to sack union activists.

It is feared that this could be extended to the existing workforce. Assembly plant stewards have long memories of the sacking of 17 leading activists at Dagenham in 1962.

The TWGU branch is also alleging racial and sexual bias in Ford's recruitment. On the production lines the present workforce is roughly equally divided between black, Asian and white workers. The company claims one in eight of the

new intake is from an ethnic minority.

The union disputes this but points out that, even if it were true, it bears no relation to the present composition of the workforce or to that of the 7000 applicants for jobs.

The case against Ford in relation to women is even clearer. No women were among the new starters in the Body plant, and precisely 11 out of 230 in the Assembly plant were women.

'Women have not been taken on on an equal basis', says a union statement distributed to members throughout the plant. 'They have been earmarked for jobs in the paint shop sealer deck area which, in the warped minds of management, need more delicate and careful hands which only women are meant to possess. Women have therefore been excluded from the vast majority of jobs available on a clear sexist basis.'

If the sacked woman's appeal fails there will be renewed calls for industrial action in the sealer deck area. Ford is also likely to come under pressure to adopt a fair employment policy which guarantees a decent proportion of any new jobs to women and ethnic minorities, and to allow trade union observers a future job interviews.

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# A Socialist ACTION

THE REST of Fleet St bosses are now moving behind the swathe cut into the trade unions by Murdoch at Wapping. In the last week alone 2500 jobs have been lost at the *Express* and draconian changes in working practices been forced through. The *Guardian* owned *Manchester Evening News* has demanded a 20 per cent cut in jobs and a 20 per cent cut in pay through a return to the five day week. It will unilaterally write this into a new contract starting 1 June.

By Brian Grogan

In Scotland *Mirror* boss Robert Maxwell is copying Murdoch's tactics down to the last detail. He is to liquidate the existing companies that produce the *Daily Record* and the *Scottish Mail* and achieve his draconian demands by creating new companies to print his papers. He intends to implement a Murdoch-style single union agreement. To cap it all, in preparation for any union resistance, Maxwell has ringed his plant with the same razor wire as at Wapping.

This rampage by the Fleet St moguls against the printworkers shows — to all those who are not blind to see — the true nature of the Wapping dispute. Murdoch is simply a stalking horse for the rest of the Fleet St bosses and their Tory backers. Maxwell's earlier denunciation of Murdoch's 'concentration camp' methods is now revealed for the hypocrisy it always was. The fight is not against one newspaper, or one boss, but against them all.

The decision by the *Daily Record* journalists not to meet Maxwell's demand that they apply individually to be employed by the new company, and its new anti-union set-up, is the sort of response that is needed. Such an approach is the opposite of that of SOGAT general secretary Brenda Dean. She has rushed to capitulate to every demand of the *Express* and Maxwell. But instead of this the only hope of victory at Wapping is to unite the resistance of all printworkers. Only on such a basis can the power of the whole trade union move-

ment be mobilised — which is what will be required to reverse this assault.

The problem that the union leadership faces in such places as the *Express* is the generous redundancy payments promised to the older workers at least. To convince such workers to fight needs the commitment of support from the rest of the working class which only the TUC can guarantee.

The 'tea and sympathy' approach of Norman Willis and the TUC are not only a betrayal of printworkers but a threat to the whole of the working class. The single union shops and other anti union measures will no more be confined to the print industry than Murdoch's antics have stopped at the barbed wire at Wapping. The printworkers are fighting a battle for us all. They demand and need the full support of the TUC.

Willis' complicity with the print bosses, and Maxwell's new offensive, is the signal to step up action in support of the printworkers — and above all the Wapping dispute.

Support committees need to be built in every town. The Wapping pickets — and pickets of other distribution centres — need to be built to the point where they can stop the distribution of the *News International* titles. Such actions are vital to show that the attacks on the printing unions can be halted and reversed — and inspire other workers to give their support.

This is also the way to build pressure on the TUC for action.

## Murdoch Maxwell Express

# Printers must not stand alone!

## Loyalist thugs on the rampage

THE TRUE face of Ulster Unionism showed itself again on Monday night. Loyalist mobs went on the rampage in Portadown and Lisburn in the North of Ireland. As always with Loyalist protestant demonstrations, the marches and actions turned into a sectarian orgy.

In Lisburn County Antrim, four Catholic homes were attacked and burnt out. The mobile classrooms at a Catholic school were destroyed. A bar was petrol bombed and shops looted.

The Loyalist violence in Portadown erupted after the north of Ireland Secretary, Tom King, was forced to ban a sectarian

Loyalist Apprentice Boys demonstration in the town. Loyalist mobs prepared for an assault on the Catholic area.

The fascist British National Front had also gone to Portadown — sticking up placards 'Victory to Ulster', 'Organise for Victory' and giving the National Front headquarters address in Britain to con-

tact for support.

The Loyalists attempted to storm the Catholic area of Portadown across the river Bann.

The army, while brought by the government into Portadown, openly expressed its political support for the Loyalists. One army major was quoted in the *Guardian* on Monday as publicly declaring to the Loyalist thugs 'its no use shouting at me — I'm sympathetic towards you.'

The aim of the Loyalist rampage was to put pressure on the British

government to renounce the Anglo-Irish treaty and allow unfettered protestant sectarian rule in the North of Ireland. But its real effect was to show the bloody, sectarian, face of Ulster Loyalism to the world.

Only one conclusion can be drawn from these new events. Britain in the North of Ireland is continuing to prop up one of the most sectarian states in the world. Only the ending of that state will bring peace to Ireland.

Britain must get out of Ireland. Now!

## Britain out of Ireland

Commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Easter Rising

Speakers:

**KEN LIVINGSTONE**  
(ex leader of the GLC)

**DIANE ABBOTT**  
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Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd (Nr. Euston tube station)  
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