

A **Socialist** ACTION

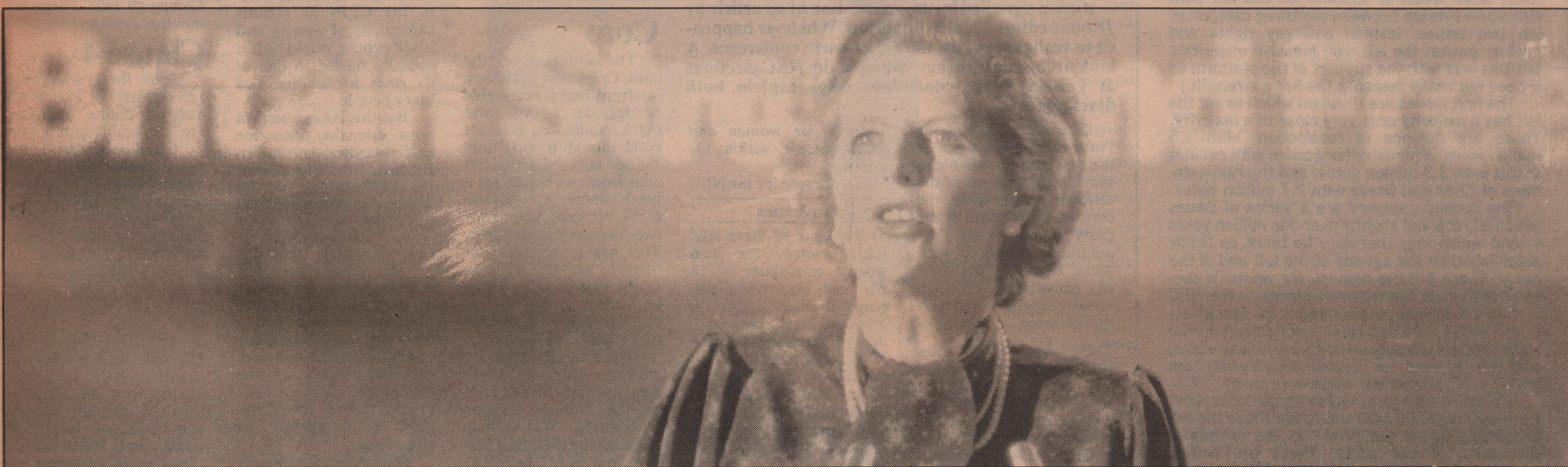
BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

INSIDE



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ONLY THE LEFT CAN DEFEAT THATCHERISM



THIS WEEK'S Tory party conference shows only too clearly the price being paid for last week's Labour conference and the surrenders of the last three years. Kinnock moved Labour sharply to the right. His supporters have progressively broken up the struggles against Thatcher. This has enabled Thatcher to move the Tory party three paces further to the right this week.

The platform which is being unveiled at the Tory party conference has almost to be seen to be believed. The *Evening Standard* summarised it in its headline 'Better deal pledged to landlords'. Compulsory privatisation, abolition of controls on private landlords, more support for the racist police, overriding democratic local authorities on education, the possibility of further laws against the unions, that is the platform that was unveiled.

The opportunity for that still further rightward shift was given by the policies Kinnock pushed through at Labour Party conference at Blackpool and the defeats those who support him have imposed on the labour movement in the last three years. Hugo Young, writing in Tuesday's *Guardian*, summed up the situation very clearly. He pointed out that on every crucial issue, except defence and nuclear power, Kinnock had capitulated to the results of the first seven years of Thatcherism. His summary was exact:

'The Hattersley macro-economic package which, with its constant protestations about now borrowing too much, feels obliged to pay heavy

respect to the monetarist analysis ...

'The sale of council houses, a central tenet of early Thatcherism and opposed by Labour every step of the way, is now a central feature of Kinnock-Rooker socialism ...

'The sale of public assets to private shareholders is challenged only by the back door ...

'The palpable discrepancy between Labour's spending promises and tax pledges suggests how much terror Tory populism has planted in the soul of modern socialists ...

'When the external pressure is clear, it is socialism not Thatcherism that has buckled.'

Of course Young is totally wrong to believe that the policies pursued at last week's Labour Party conference had anything to do with socialism. But Young's is a perfectly accurate assessment of the politics of Kinnock. The 'modernising' of Labour under his leadership has simply meant moving party policy to accept almost the entire economic and social outcome of the first seven years of Thatcherism.

And what is the consequence? That Thatcher breaks up Kinnock's famous 'consensus' by moving still further to the right! As Tory Treasury minister Norman Lamont put it on the first day of the Tory party conference: 'What this government has brought into being is not just a set of policies, it is a revolution, and like all revolutions it cannot stop halfway.'

The 'revolution' which Lamont promised to extend was the new announcements that the government intended to privatise Rolls Royce,

the British Airports Authority, and pass compulsory measures to force councils to privatise refuse collection, street cleaning, catering, vehicle maintenance. Meanwhile no measures whatever to deal with unemployment are announced. And the 'hang them, bash the blacks' brigade is in full cry.

The result of the failure to support the miners, of the failure to give the support that was needed at Wapping, of the adoption of right wing policies is now only too clear. It has simply encouraged Thatcher to be bolder and more ruthless in her policies. As Mick McGahey, for once, rightly said in the miners strike: 'if you run away they'll just keep chasing you.'

The brutal truth has to be spelt out. The course down which Labour has been taken for the last three years, the results of Labour's conference last week, are a disaster for the movement. They have given the opportunity for the Tories to put forward policies that get more right wing by the week and they have disarmed the movement faced with them.

There can be no confidence in Kinnock's ability to fight Thatcher. The only time Thatcher has been seriously rattled in this parliament was with the miners strike and its aftermath. It is the left which led that struggle. It is only the left that can effectively fight Thatcher.

That is the truth which has to be spelt out coming out of the Labour Party conference — and as we see the bitter fruits of Neil Kinnock's policies in this week's Tory jamboree in Bournemouth.

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BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Women, black people, and the left



The left after conference

IT DOES not need Socialist Action to tell anyone that Neil Kinnock, and the right wing policies he fought for, won a decisive victory at Labour Party conference.

Whatever they thought on the individual issues, and on some there was grave disquiet, the trade union delegations cast their block votes solidly and continuously to back Kinnock. Those union block votes are going to remain solidly locked in behind Kinnock until at least the general election.

But beneath the victory of the right some very significant developments were taking place on the left — and help explain the significant defeat of Heffer in the NEC elections. What in fact was happening was that for the first time for many years the left was beginning to thrash out a common agenda.

Taking first the votes on policies these show three clear levels of support for the left with almost no overlap between the three categories (on two issues, lesbian and gay rights and nuclear power, the left won massive majorities but this was with the support of the platform so it does not really measure the left's strength.)

The first issues are those on which as yet the left has a majority or is very close to a majority. These are defence of reselection, with 3.5 million votes; a ministry for women with cabinet status with 3.3 million votes; and the reinstatement of Khan and Scally with 2.7 million votes.

The second category are a series of issues which all received slightly over one million votes — and which may therefore be taken as firmly established on the agenda of the left and of the party. These are the demand for women's conference to elect the women's places on the NEC — with 1.2 million votes; support for Black Section — with 1.2 million votes; the demand for the removal of all US bases — with 1.1 million votes; and the demand for British withdrawal from NATO — with 1 million votes.

The third category, which range in support from 400,000-600,000 votes, are those the left is fighting to get put firmly on the agenda of discussion in the party. These are British withdrawal from Ireland with 402,000 votes; rejection of the frame up offence of 'conduct prejudicial to the party' with 436,000 votes; and dissolving the Black and Asian Advisory Committee with 620,000 votes. Opposition to Labour's trade union proposals would have got about the same if TASS had not remitted its motion. In addition the issues of South Africa and Central America are not yet consolidated enough as part of the agenda of the left — and Kinnock is making the running.

The left must respond to many struggles as they come up, like Wapping, but as regards policy issues at present confronted, the tactics which flow from the situation are clear:

- The left must consolidate the issues where it has, or is close, to a majority. This means as an immediate goal securing the reinstatement of Khan and Scally.
- The left must begin to push upwards towards majority status the issues which it has firmly established on the agenda — securing the right of women's conference to elect the women's NEC places, securing the constitutional demands of Black Sections, fighting on the issues of US bases and withdrawal from NATO.
- The third task is to secure firmly on the agenda of the party the issues which as yet are still fighting to be established as an indispensable item for the left. The most urgent and important of these is clearly British withdrawal from Ireland — to move support for this to up over the one million range. Fighting to get opposition to the trade union proposals back on the agenda is another task here.

The tactics for securing these goals are also clear. The 'Campaign Group left' has to consolidate, clarify and organise its forces through Labour Left Liaison and Campaign Forum. These forces have to take the united front initiatives that will take up definite struggles as they arise and both push forward the key issues on the left's agenda.

Despite a week which saw Labour's policies at rock bottom there is no need for depression. What was vital at this conference was a real political and organisational consolidation of the left. That was what was begun to be achieved. It is what is vital for the future.

The next issue of Socialist Action will be dated 24 October.



TWO OF the most striking political developments going into Labour party conference were the increasing link up between the campaigns for the demands of women and black people in the party with the 'hard left', and the eruption of a major crisis in the Labour Coordinating Committee/Tribune current — a crisis signalled by the publication of an article by Tribune editor Nigel Williamson 'Whatever happened to realignment' on the eve of party conference. A look at the constituency voting in the NEC elections at Labour Party conference helps explain both developments.

The voting at Labour Party conference is one of the best guides available to the relative strength of the different currents in the constituency section of the party. It shows clearly the polarised situation with more than 80 per cent of constituencies which voted doing so for clearly recognisable positions.

There were 241,000 votes for the 'hard left' position — meaning voting for Benn, Heffer and Skinner; 29,000 for what might be termed a 'Blunkett/Campaign' slate — which consisted of the Campaign Group slate but substituting Blunkett for Heffer; 156,000 for the right wing; and a generous maximum of 101,000 for what is very roughly an LCC position — although this latter figure is inflated as it contains a significant amount of seriously crossed voting.

Hard

Particularly striking are the figures on the votes for women and black people in regard to these currents. They show conclusively that it is the hard left which is the bastion of



Russell Profitt

support for women and black people within the party.

In the vote for the NEC

By John James

53 per cent of 'hard left' CLPs voted for two women candidates — 58 per cent if the 'Campaign/Blunkett' slate is counted. This compared to only 27 per cent of the LCC constituencies and 0 per cent for the right wing.

In short the LCC, for all the fuss it makes about supporting women, in fact delivers only half the proportion of its votes for two women candidates than does the Campaign group. No matter whether the LCC nominally put Jo Richardson and Audrey Wise on their slate they do not deliver their vote for women candidates.

When the bastions of male chauvinism, those CLPs that did not vote for single woman candidate, are considered than the situation is equally clear. Only 11 per cent of the hard left constituencies did not vote for at least one woman candidate. For the right wing 75 per cent of CLPs did not vote for a single woman candidate.

And 33 per cent of constituencies voting for the LCC did not vote for a single woman.

On black candidates the situation is not acceptable for anyone. Only 18 per cent of hard left constituencies voted for a black candidate. However that enormously exceeds the 2 per cent of right wing, and 2 per cent of LCC, constituencies that voted for a black candidate. Once again the LCC may put Russell Profitt on their slate but they just don't deliver any votes for him.

The right wing delivered 2 constituencies for Profitt, the LCC 2, and the hard left 43. These figures speak for themselves.

Core

The situation on the hard/Campaign left is very far from being acceptable as regards women and black candidates. It is not good enough to have only 18 per cent of hard left constituencies voting for a black candidate — nor only 53 per cent voting for two women candidates. This has to change. But there is not the slightest doubt that it is the hard left which is the core of support for women and black candidates.

These figures, together with the votes on Black Sections and the demands of the Women's Action Committee (WAC), help explain why the Black Section and WAC have collaborated with the 'hard/Campaign' left.

Naturally, campaigns such as the Black Section and WAC cannot be aligned exclusively with any one political view in the party. Nor are they — both pursue a policy of working with whatever political currents support their demands. But if the hard left consistently delivers its votes for women and black people, and the LCC remains at the level of tokenism and does not match what the hard left delivers, then it is scarcely surprising that WAC and the Black Section find themselves working more with the hard left.

The only way the LCC would gain a greater influence, and equilibrate the weight of the hard left in the CLPs as regards campaigns of women and black people, would be if it actually started to deliver its votes for women and black people.

But this latter question links into the crisis the LCC is beginning to suffer. Because, for all its claims, the LCC is by far the weakest major current in the CLPs.

The LCC, in short, has not the slightest possibility of dominating the situation. It can only form a bloc with one of two basic currents. The first is with the right wing against the Campaign group. The other is with the Campaign group against the right wing.

But this has tremendous implications. An alliance with the right

wing against the Campaign group in not only a simple political choice but an alliance with the most racist and sexist forces in the party against women and black people. Only an alliance with the Campaign group represents not only a political choice but an alliance with women and black people. Such an alliance however means a break with the orientation the LCC has pursued in the last period.

But the choice the LCC faces is absolutely inevitable. Either it must ally with the right or with the Campaign left. There are no other options.

Clause 4

Some forces within the LCC, such as the witch hunting Clause 4 group, are irrevocably committed to the alliance with the right against the Campaign Group. But others, such as Ken Livingstone, have made their reputations on the basis of linking with the fight of women, black people, the fight of the Irish people for their independence and so on.

The forces within the LCC will not be able to avoid the basic choice of allying with the right or the Campaign left. Women and black people in particular have big stakes in the outcome of that internal fight in the LCC over alliances.

How the three currents voted for women and black candidates

	% of CLPs voting for each current voting for black and women candidates		
	Right	LCC	Hard Left
Voting for a black candidate	2	2	18
Voting for 2 women candidates	0	27	53
Voting for no women candidates	75	33	11

The three main currents in the party

	CLPs	Votes	%
The white male right			
Total	155	156,000	-
Voting for a black candidate	2	2,000	2
Voting for 2 women candidates	0	0	0
Voting for no women candidates	113	113,000	74
The tokenistic LCC			
Total	93	101,000	-
Voting for a black candidate	2	2,000	2
Voting for 2 women candidates	25	26,000	27
Voting for no women candidates	31	37,000	33
The hard left			
Total	226	241,000	-
Voting for a black candidate	42	44,000	18
Voting for 2 women candidates	119	125,000	53
Voting for no women candidates	25	25,000	11

Criteria for groupings

1. The right wing is relatively easy to distinguish. 137 CLPs voted for McCluskie for Treasurer, and 138 for Dunwoody for the women's section. This may be taken as the base vote for the right. 158 CLPs voted for both Ashley and Kaufman — the rights leading runners. However three of these voted also for Benn, Heffer and Skinner. This arrives at the 155 above. The right's vote is relatively sharply defined at 137-155.
2. The 'hard left/Campaign Group' is also clearly defined. 229 CLPs, with 244,000 votes voted for Benn, Heffer, and Skinner — the distinctive candidates of the hard left. Three however voted also for Ashley and Kaufman and have therefore been subtracted. There are however 27 CLPs which also voted the straight Campaign Group slate but substituted Blunkett for Heffer. Campaign Group/hard left support is therefore also relatively clearly defined.
3. The hardest current to identify is the LCC. Only 53 constituencies, with 57,000 votes, might be defined as voting a relatively straight LCC position — which may be defined as voting for Cook, Blunkett and Meacher and not more than one of Benn, Heffer, and Skinner. Cook, who is the most distinctively LCC candidate, received 207,000 votes. Of these however, 73,000 came from constituencies voting for both Ashley and Kaufman, ie right wing constituencies, and 227,000 from constituencies voting for Benn, Heffer and Skinner, ie basically hard left constituencies. 57,000 may therefore be taken as the base line of the LCC and 107,000 as its top limits. We would guess its real strength is 80-90,000.

Right wins the votes, a new left begins to take shape



THE LABOUR Party conference was successfully stage managed to produce the effects of a pre-election rally for Neil Kinnock. Policies supported by Kinnock were passed on all issues except reselection and a ministry with cabinet status for women — although on nuclear power Kinnock avoided a two thirds majority on Scargill's motion only by the skin of his teeth. But behind the right wing victories what began to emerge was a new left in the party which is beginning to hammer out a common agenda and give it organisational shape through Campaign Forum and Labour Left Liaison. REDMOND O'NEILL looks at the key policy votes and events at party conference.

The conference strengthened Kinnock's control over both the National Executive Committee and the party. The new NEC is significantly to the right of last year's. Left-wingers Eric Heffer and Margaret Beckett were removed — Heffer as a result of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee's block with the right-wing in the constituency section and Margaret Beckett as a result of NUPE and the NUR voting for right-wing Diane Jeuda in the women's division.

Militant

The expulsions by the NEC of members of the Liverpool District Labour Party, associated with *Militant*, were overwhelmingly endorsed. A new internal party court called the 'National Constitutional Committee' was set up and a new all-encompassing disciplinary offence created — 'conduct prejudicial to the party'.

Kinnock's speech and the economic and industrial relations policies adopted by the conference commit the party to the most right-wing positions it has ever held on these issues whilst not in office. TASS remitted the resolution which defended trade union independence.

These policies indicate a Kinnock Labour government on the economic and industrial front would be the most right wing Labour government ever. These were a victory for Kinnock's goal of reducing the expectations of what a Labour government will do for those it represents.

Kinnock's right wing line was the basic framework established by conference. But within that framework individual advances were registered.

Review

The conference did not endorse a generalised political witch hunt in the party. The proposal to reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally was only narrowly lost — and that was only because the NEC assured the conference that their cases would be reviewed.

The NUM's resolution committing a Labour government to phase out all nuclear power stations came within a whisker of achieving the two thirds majority necessary for it to be considered for inclusion in Labour's election manifesto. Lesbian and gay

rights did achieve the necessary two thirds majority.

Women achieved a major victory with the decision that constituencies must include at least one woman on every shortlist for parliamentary selection. This, together with the decision to review the structure of the party's women's organisation — including the method of election of the women's section of the NEC — will open an enormous debate on women's rights and representation within the party. The conference also voted, against the NEC's advice, to support the establishment of a women's ministry with full cabinet status in the next Labour government. These decisions will place the debate on women's organisation in the party right at the top of its agenda in the next year.

Argument

The Black Section continued its progress at conference. It did not win the vote but it decisively won the argument — and threw the right into a debacle in the debate. Alan Sapper became the first trade union general secretary to take the floor at party conference in support of Black Sections.

In a cynical move the NEC agreed to *Militant* supporter Frances Curran's request that she summarise against the Black Section for the NEC. This decision showed both the incoherence of the right-wing on race, and the fact that on the left *Militant* and the *Morning Star* are now virtually alone in opposing Black Sections. The only other speaker against Black Sections in the debate was TASS delegate Muff Sourani.

The Black Section debate was definitely the most inspiring of conference and the Black Section successfully demonstrated that the Black and Asian Advisory Committee has failed. The vote for Black Sections increased slightly.

NATO

A major victory was achieved on the last day of the conference with the vote by 3.5 million to 2.6 million to defend the accountability of MPs to their General Committees — and to instruct the NEC not to bring any proposals to change this until after the general election.



The party's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament was reaffirmed, including the promise to close all US nuclear bases within a year of taking office.

The position for the removal of all US bases, and for withdrawal from NATO, for the first time established themselves this year as coherent minority political positions in the party. Support for removal of US bases and withdrawal from NATO is no longer 'fringe politics' and will increase — particularly because a Kinnock government will not get rid of nuclear weapons and nuclear bases whatever the party wants.

Ireland

The demand for British withdrawal from Ireland, and Irish unity, is also established as a minority, but coherent, position in the party. This was reflected less in the vote on the issue than in the Labour Committee on Ireland's spectacularly successful fringe meeting — and the fact that the debate on Ireland will be stepped up in the party. Replying to the debate the NEC promised a policy document in the new year — and that this document would contain commit-

ment to abolish plastic bullets, 'replace' strip searching and end the supergrass trials.

On South Africa, a resolution calling for a Labour government to implement an emergency program of sanctions against South Africa, to aid the ANC and SWAPO, and provide aid to the front line states was passed. Unfortunately the resolution tied British sanctions to international actions — a loophole Labour's right-wing will exploit. The resolution did commit the party to work with the Anti-Apartheid Movement and urged party members to join the AAM.

On Central America Labour's support for the right of the peoples of Central America was reaffirmed. The NEC was instructed to put pressure on the United States to withdraw support for the 'contras', for the British government to reinstate all trade links with Nicaragua, and to launch a campaign for aid to Nicaragua.

Key

The key issues were put onto the conference agenda and fought through conference by definite organisations — the National Union of Mine-workers, the Campaign Group, the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Labour CND, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and the Central America Labour Group — to name only the most important.

Forum

Most of these came together to form in June this year, Labour Left Liaison (LLL) which unites the main campaigns in the party and a number of socialist newspapers, and then, the week before the conference, Campaign Forum — which establishes a tripartite structure linking the LLL, the Campaign Group and leading trade unionists.

The votes at conference revealed precisely the relation of forces on the main issues around which the left fought in particular those voted for against the line of the platform. On the maintenance of the accountability of MPs to

CLP General Committees, the most important of the reforms won in 1981, and opposition to the unjust expulsion of Khan and Scally, the left has essentially maintained or won a majority (and only the NEC's promised review stopped conference voting to reinstate Khan and Scally).

Women

Support for the demands of the women's conference fought for by WAC, support for the demands of the Black Section, British withdrawal from NATO and the removal of all American bases, are issues which have won the overwhelming support of the Constituency Labour Parties and are starting to gain ground within the unions — each notching up over a million votes. These issues are firmly on the agenda for debate in the party.

The demand for British withdrawal and a united Ireland, for the disbandment of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee, against the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee and opposition to the *new* offence of 'conduct prejudicial to the party' are as yet issues on which the LLL and the majority in the CLPs stands virtually alone. The task here is to get these issues firmly onto the agenda for serious debate in the party — something not yet fully secured.

Roll back

Taken very roughly the issues which the LLL takes up can muster 400-500,000 votes, those with roughly a million votes are where progress is being made to cut into forces to the fight of the LLL, and on a few the individual issues the majority is already won, or almost won, and the leadership is trying to roll it back.

These issues taken

together, alongside support for those fighting for freedom and socialism internationally — and in particular today in South Africa and Central America — constitute a common agenda for the left which is put forward by Labour Left Liaison's campaigns and by Campaign Forum. It is one that is beginning to get a hearing.

The left which is emerging is the most coherent and strategic one to have been created in the party since the twenties. Internationalism, support for the demands of the Black Section and women's conference, and defence of party democracy are at its core. At this year's conference it demonstrated the potential significant ability to reconstitute the left-wing of the party as a whole — despite the fact it is very obviously a minority at present.

Soft Left

Tribune's editor Nigel Williamson wrote in that paper's conference edition that 'the soft left has become probably the least coherent grouping in the party'. He acknowledged that 'social democratic' policies are being adopted and 'the realigned left feels almost powerless to do anything about situation'. A major crisis in fact broke out in the Labour Co-ordinating Committee left at party conference. The Campaign Group/LLL left in contrast, despite its minority position, was clearly putting together its agenda for the party. This agenda has already made substantial headway in the constituencies and the key task is to deepen its roots in the unions.

A clear victory for the right. The emergence of a much clearer and better organised minority left. The beginning of a crisis in the LCC/*Tribune* left. That is the balance sheet of party conference.

Key card votes at party conference

	Thousand votes	
	For	Against
For a ministry for women with cabinet status.	3,335	2,905
For at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist.	5,491	822
For women's conference to elect the women's section of the NEC.	1,232	4,471
For a review of the party's women's organisation and of the method of electing the women's section of the NEC.	5,489	373
To endorse the NEC's expulsions of Liverpool District Labour Party members.	6,146	325
For setting up the National Constitutional Committee and creating the new disciplinary offence of 'conduct prejudicial to the party'.	6,014	436
For reinstatement of Khan and Scally	2,715	3,443
Against expulsions of socialists.	496	5,870
For the constitutional recognition of Black Sections	1,222	5,191
To reconsider the setting up of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee and support Black Sections.	620	5,191
For Lesbian and Gay Rights.	4,792	1,262
To phase out all nuclear power plants.	4,213	2,143
NEC statement on nuclear power	4,509	1,846
For an energy policy which includes nuclear power	2,104	4,121
For the removal of all US bases.	1,159	5,209
For withdrawal from NATO.	1,033	5,411
For membership of NATO — and a so called 'new treaty' governing US bases which includes a British veto over action.	5,417	1,023
For British withdrawal from Ireland and a united Ireland.	402	4,408
For the principle that the constituency General Committee is the best vehicle for maintaining the accountability of MPs and against changes being brought forward until after the general election.	3,500	2,600

Youth in action

Youth Section savaged

LAST WEEK'S Labour Party conference voted to destroy the independent role of the LPYS. The resolutions put by Hillhead and Edinburgh South CLPs and supported by the National Organisation of Labour Students were a crude grab for control of the youth section by the NEC. They were made all the more possible by the disastrous results of the politics of Militant in the leadership of the LPYS. This was no where more clear than at conference — on Monday the Labour Party confirmed Militant's expulsion, on Wednesday the YS representative summed up for the right-wing on black sections, on Thursday the LPYS is effectively closed.

Lengthy articles in *Tribune*, *Chartist* and a whole Fabian Society pamphlet by John Mann (ex-NOLS chair) and Phil Woolas (ex-NUS president), published a week before conference helped prepare the conference debate for the NEC. These pointed to the need to win the 6.2 million voters who would be under 25 in 1987 to Labour, by 'popularising' politics and 'democratising' the LPYS and so 'tap the energy and talent' of youth

By Anne Kane

for Labour. The NEC spokesperson Tom Sawyer has said the LPYS should concentrate on 'youth culture'.

The blunt truth is these decisions ensure control of youth work directly from the new, more right-wing NEC. Regional 'youth campaign committees' composed of CLP, NOLS, trade union youth and YS delegates, CLP youth officers, rather than LPYS branches, will 'coordinate' youth work and replace the LPYS. From 1987 conference a national 'youth campaign committee' will control the party's youth work and elect the youth representative onto the NEC. Combined with the reduction of the age limit to 21 this ensures a youth section subordinate to the will of the NEC and will stunt the political development of its members.

When Tom Sawyer summed up in the debate by saying that these proposals would build an 'open, democratic, campaigning youth organisation' he was speaking for the same NEC which cut £7000 off the LPYS funds in the last year and expelled several of its members. Promises of such democracy also rings hollow when it is to be ushered in by NOLS, which regularly bars its doors to at least a third of its conference delegates, and by the powerless shells of trade union youth sections.

Sawyer's reference to how the NEC would 'consult' youth in future when deciding their campaigns for them touched the heart of the matter. The NEC is removing exactly what a 'vibrant' youth section needs — control, not consultation.

The problem with the LPYS is its politics not its structure. These politics have isolated the LPYS from every progressive struggle in recent years — the ANL, CND, the women's movement, the struggles of black youth, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and from the political lessons of the miners strike. The most grotesque recent example was the spectacle of the LPYS representative, Frances Curran, lining up with the right wing by summing up for the NEC in the Black Sections debate. Such indefensible politics explain the exceptionally low vote against the Hillhead and Edinburgh South resolutions.

There are two alternatives to these politics. One was the cynical use of their unpopularity to foist NEC control over the YS. The other took shape in the course of the conference around Campaign Forum, and which is represented in the LPYS by forces like the Black Sections and their campaign this year for NEC representative.

The politics of Campaign Forum would build a mass LPYS, by building on its independence to make alliances with black youth, women, lesbians and gay men, and international alliances and involving the LPYS in all progressive campaigns and struggles. By supporting and promoting such rights as that of black people and women to speak for themselves, Irish people to govern Ireland and black people in South Africa to be able to vote and decide where to work will make the YS relevant to thousands more young people.

Despite the NEC rhetoric, the introduction of a committee that will 'consult' young people, as decided by Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, will do the exact opposite of this.

Black Section advance continues

ALTHOUGH they lost the vote supporters of Black Sections devastated the platform in the debate on the floor of Labour Party conference. The vote itself, those in favour of Black Sections up slightly to 1,222,000, was a victory after a year in which the Black Section has been under heavy attack from the party leadership and facing the attempt to substitute the undemocratic Black and Asian Advisory Committee (BAAC) for democratic Black Sections. They were also faced with the expulsions of Black Section supporters Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

In the debate speaker after speaker pointed out that Black Sections had succeeded in greatly increasing black membership and black involvement in the Labour Party. They have done this by highlighting the issue of racism which the party must address in order to build links with the black communities. The selection of six Black Section members for safe parliamentary seats — they will be the first black members of the British parliament since the twenties — is the direct product of the work of the Black Section.

Linda Bellos vice-chair of the Black Section and leader of Lambeth Council, contrasted this constructive work with the failure of the discredited Black and Asian Advisory Committee. She pointed out that the BAAC's very name tried to introduce divisions between black people.

Delegates announced the death of the BAAC — with 11 members either resigning, refusing to attend or refusing to seek reappointment to the committee. Most recently the London region, which covers almost 50 per cent of Britain's Black population, has withdrawn from the BAAC.

Alan Sapper, General Secretary of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians became the first trade union general secretary to take the floor of Labour Party conference in support of Black Sections when he seconded the resolution.

The basic message from Black delegates was that in the end they will win because they represent the wishes of the Black membership of the party. This point was hammered home in a speech by the Southwark delegate which visibly shook the platform. She explained that black party members were

simply asking for the right to choose how to organise themselves within the party, in the same way as the black people of South Africa are fighting for the right to choose how their country is governed.

By Redmond O'Neill

The only floor speaker against Black Sections was Muff Sourani, a Tass delegate. He repeated the argument that Black Sections are divisive — ignoring the truth that it is racism which divides and that black self-organisation is necessary to highlight and combat racism, and thereby create a principled anti-racist basis for unity.



Martha Osamor appealed at the Black Section fringe meeting for support for the black youth at Broadwater Farm.

In a cynical move the NEC agreed to the request by Frances Curran, LPYS representative on the NEC and a Militant supporter to reply to the debate on behalf of the NEC's position opposing Black Sections. This created the spectacle of Curran acting as the tool of the right-

wing against black party members just days after that same right-wing had driven through conference the expulsions of her own fellow Militant supporters. Delegates were disgusted and slow-hand-clapped Curran's speech.

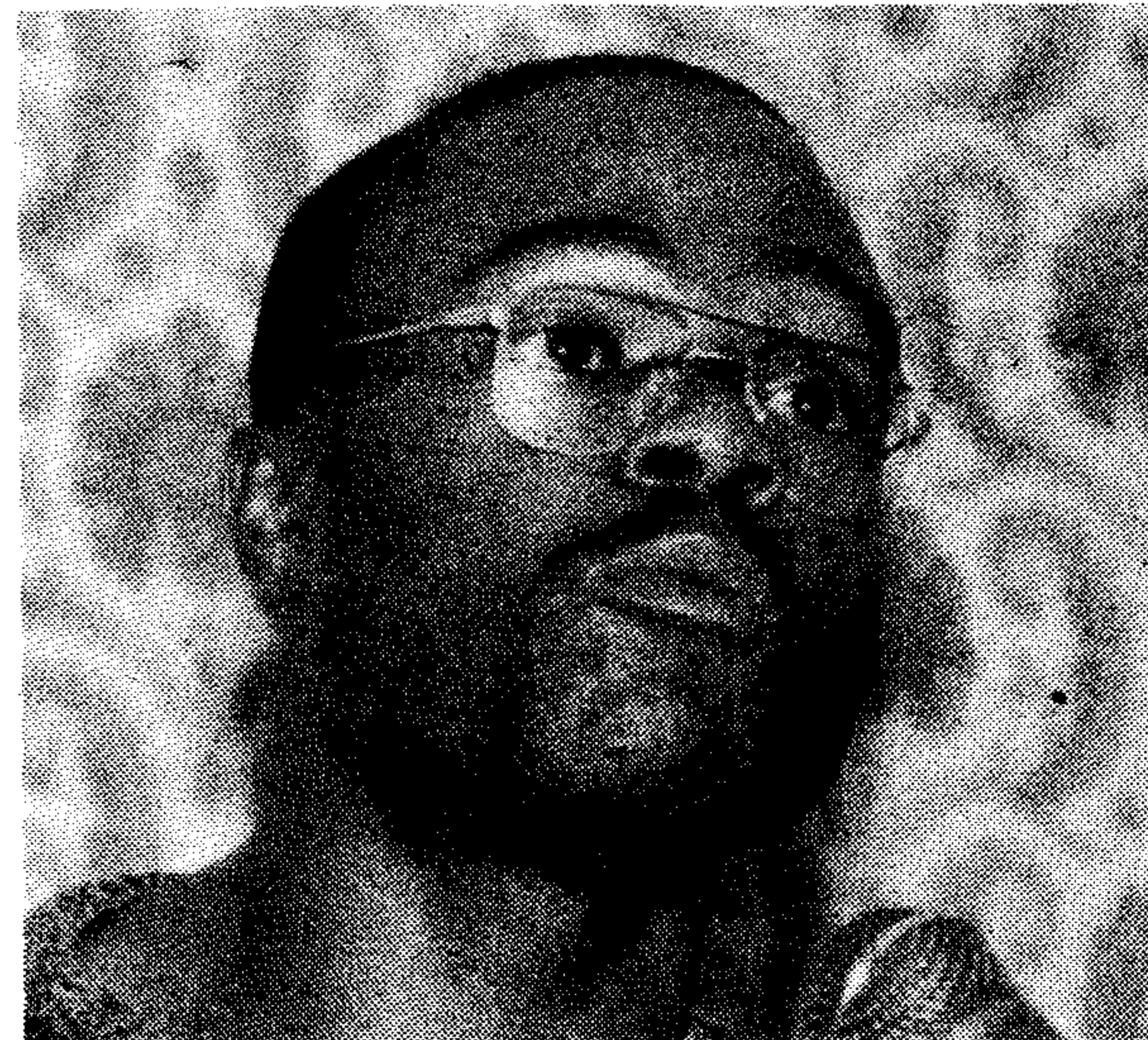
Overall this conference was an important step for-

ward for the Labour Party Black Section. They played a central role in the campaign to reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally in which they won 2,700,000 votes. They increased support for Black Sections, and exposed the failure of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. They organised a successful fringe meeting which gave a platform to the defence of the Black Communities.

Over the last year support for Black Sections has established itself as a point of definition of what the left is, as opposed to the backwardness represented by Militant and the *Morning Star* — which used to be able to successfully counterfeit for socialism in the British labour movement.

In an outstanding year of achievement for the Black Sections it has achieved its most vital task of deepening its roots in the black community, and established that support for Black Sections is a prerequisite for any genuine left.

St Paul's 'still tense'



Jagun Akinshegun

ATTEMPTS BY Bristol West CLP to get an emergency resolution on the police riot on the black community of St. Paul's in Bristol on the agenda of the Labour Party conference were thwarted. Despite the support of over 200 delegates and

about 30 MPs the conference arrangements committee refused to make conference time available.

JAGUN AKINSHEGUN, the coordinator of the local Community Association reports on the

latest developments in St. Paul's.

The situation is very volatile. There is still a heavy police presence within and on the outskirts of St. Paul's. This makes the area very tense and liable to erupt any minute.

At the same time there's a lot of activity by the community. People are organising themselves to provide defence for those who have been arrested and those who are yet to be arrested. We know there will be more arrests. There are police snatch squads operating daily.

One hundred and six people have now been arrested in connection with 'Operation Delivery'. At least that was the situation up till a week ago. People are being arrested every day, more than 20 since the events in mid-September.

This shows that the police action was not about solving 'crime' but rather about criminalising the community. And that they're continuing with this policy.

Only two people have been arrested for drug offences — the supposed reason for the original police raid on St. Paul's. The vast majority have been arrested as the results of the police attack itself. If there'd been no police operation, there'd have been no arrests. The police were out to show who rules. And that's what they're continuing to do. They came in heavily armed for the purpose. This was in contrast to 1980 when St. Paul's was also the scene of a police operation. This time they had a whole arsenal of riot weapons at their disposal.

But the community is also better prepared today than it was in 1980. There is a greater political awareness and understanding. The establishment of the broad-based defence committee, involving those arrested and community organisations has been an illustration of this.

● The defence committee can be contacted c/o St. Paul's Community Association, Community Centre, 82 Ashley Road, St. Paul's, Bristol.

Khan and Scally campaign goes on

AMIR KHAN and Kevin Scally will continue to campaign for their reinstatement despite the rejection by Labour Party conference of the composite, calling on the NEC to reinstate them now, by 3,400,000 to 2,700,000 votes. Responding to the news Kevin Scally said 'The vote today against our immediate reinstatement is not regarded by Amir and myself as a defeat.'

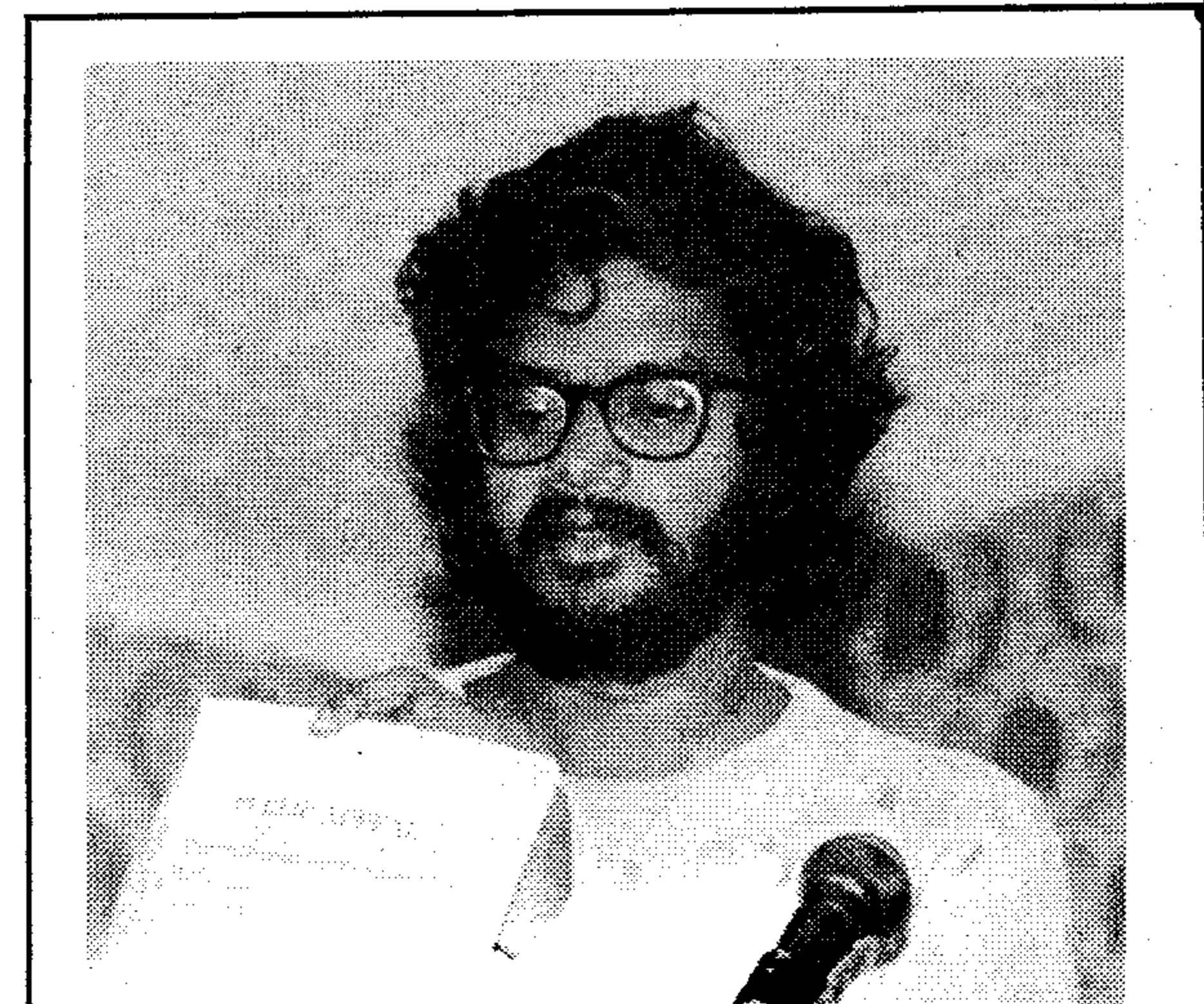
'On the contrary we regard it as a victory in view of the circumstances

at this particular Labour Party Conference where there's very much of a mood of not rocking the boat and where people don't wish to challenge the leadership on any particular issue. This particular issue was a sensitive one in that it concerned the Deputy Leader of the Party. It followed the expulsions of the supporters of Militant which created an "expulsion" mood at conference.

'Many delegates, I think, were insufficiently aware of the issues relating to our expulsions and our immediate intention now is to go on lobbying inside the trade union movement for our reinstatement, to

continue this campaign and to ask for CLPs to bring reinstatement resolutions to conference again next year.'

Of course Amir Khan and Kevin Scally do not have to wait this long. The NEC has agreed to review their cases. Some will inevitably use yesterday's vote to try and ensure that this doesn't end with their reinstatement. But it is clear that some delegations opposed the composite precisely because they knew a review was underway. This in no way implied support for the expulsions and it is these individuals and organisations the campaign will have to reach.



Viraj Mendis appeals for support to prevent his deportation by the Tory government. Mendis is a Tamil and his life is in danger if he is deported to Sri Lanka. The Black Section has given Viraj their full support and split the collection from their fringe meeting at Labour Party conference with his defence campaign.

A victory for women but ...

The fight has just begun

IN 1979 Islington South and Finsbury sent a resolution to the Labour women's conference in Malvern, calling for at least one woman to be included on every parliamentary shortlist. The delegate was howled down and the proposition ruled out of order by the Conference Arrangements Committee. Last week Labour Party conference finally adopted that proposal, after seven years of campaigning and struggle by the Labour Women's Action Committee. And it went through with a massive majority.

The implications of this victory are immense. Firstly, the composite says there must be at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist. Renee Short, summarising the debate for the NEC, indicated that a woman should be included 'where nominated', but this is not in the composite adopted by conference. No conditions for the inclusion of women are attached. This is the first of the demands of LWAC ever to be passed by Labour Party conference.

This decision will impact massively on all those regions with safe Labour seats. Regional organisers will be obliged to enforce the ruling and bring parties into line.

Early on in the selection process parties will have to search for women candidates in order to ensure that there is one on the shortlist. The resistance to this will undoubtedly be intense, despite the conference decision. This will be especially true in regions like Wales, Scotland and the North West. But this resistance will be broken — unfortunately too late to get 150 women into the

next parliament, but in time for the one after that.

Women don't often get the chance to congratulate themselves, but this victory gives us one of those rare opportunities.

By Jude Woodward,
LWAC assistant
secretary (personal
capacity)

Secondly, however, conference adopted a composite calling for the NEC and the National Labour Women's Committee to 'develop proposals' for a system of voting which reflects the number of women trade unionists affiliated to the women's conference. This is the most important resolution on women's position in the party adopted for over sixty years.

The resolution calls for a thorough going review of the women's section of the NEC. This first recognition by conference that all is not well with the system of men electing women's representatives was another great victory for LWAC at the conference. The composite linked together the two fun-



The vote, against the NEC's recommendation, that the women's ministry should have cabinet status was another victory for women, and for Jo Richardson personally.



Liz Short, MOC Times Clerical, appealed to conference fringe meetings for support for the Wapping strikers, a large proportion of them women.

damental questions of the structure of women's conference and the election of the women's section of the NEC. At present women's conference has no status and no authority. One reason for this is that it is not fully representative of women in the labour movement as it is constituted at present. Representativity and power must be linked together.

The first step is to give women's conference real authority by ensuring that women in the affiliated organisations are properly represented at conference. The present system whereby all unions have 20 delegates is clearly undemocratic as it in no way reflects the number of women in each trade union. It puts an equals sign between a union like NUPE with approaching half a million women members, and a union like the NUR with around 10,000.

Unions

A review of women's conference that introduced a weighted vote for the unions based on their women members, alongside the election of the women's section of the NEC by women's conference, now has to be the campaigning goal of LWAC, the women's organisation, and indeed the whole party. At National Labour Women's Conference next year we have to seek to achieve the highest possible unity among women, in the women's sections and the union delegations, on such a precise proposal. This must be backed up by a massive campaign in the party as a whole.

The opening up of such a discussion, with the full

backing of party conference, is the most tremendous opportunity to take the debate on women's self organisation into the trades unions and every corner of the labour movement. Every bastion of male power has to be assaulted by this debate in the coming year, so that only the die-hards stand against it.

Betrayed

We have to try to build the kind of unity around the proposals to next year's conference that means when the EETPU or APEX gets up to oppose, the reaction from the left will be the same as when they speak in favour of nuclear power, or American nuclear weapons. And most importantly, so that LWAC's demands are won, it means every section of the party throwing its entire weight behind this campaign in the coming year.

The opportunity to build such a campaign genuinely exists. It is therefore ironic and tragic that it is at this moment that forces around *Labour Briefing* choose to proclaim that LWAC has betrayed — when it has just secured the biggest debate in the party on women in its entire history!

Hand over

The basis for *Labour Briefing's* claim is that the resolution at conference handed over decision making power from the women's conference to the NEC. This is a ludicrous argument — it is impossible to 'hand over' something that you haven't got!

If the women's conference had had the right to decide on such matters, and LWAC had voted to transfer this decision making power to the NEC, there might be some grounds for concern. But as women's conference did not have the right to decide, either before or after the passing of this resolution, it cannot be judged on the basis of this criteria. The issue is, does it take the struggle of women in the party forward or backwards? The answer is self-evident, conference has voted for a review of all the issues that LWAC has been raising for seven years, it is up to us to fight to get the demands of LWAC out of this review.

Unity

Obviously there are no promises as to what will be the result. We know the right wing will fight to the death against women's conference electing the women's places on the NEC. But the unity between women in the trade unions and in the women's sections that began to be expressed in that debate, and the support given by the left of the party as a whole, is the first step in a successful struggle.

The tasks confronting us in the next year are both desperately serious and full of potential. Now we have to be both firm on our principles and level headed in our approach to achieve the best result.

These principles are clear, that women's conference should elect the women's division of the NEC, and the weight of the delegations at women's conference should reflect the number of women they represent.

Ireland Unfree

Miners call for Troops Out!

AT LABOUR Conference in Blackpool the National Union of Mineworkers became the first British trade union since the '20s to back calls for British withdrawal from Ireland. The Irish composite which received 402,000 votes argued that the Anglo-Irish Accord led to more British troops being sent to maintain partition and greater violence.

Degrading strip searching of Irish women prisoners continues, as do no jury Diplock courts, plastic bullets deaths, harassment of Irish people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and sectarian discrimination — all contrary to Labour Party's declared aims. The resolution argued that Labour's commitment to a united Ireland does not entail disenfranchisement of any section of the Irish people and unlike the Accord, could create the opportunity for all Irish people to participate in determining their country's future, free from outside interference.

By Martin Collins

'The Accord', said the resolution 'is another attempt to impose an internal settlement in the Six Counties ... the fundamental problem in Ireland is injustice, institutionalised through partition. It called upon the next Labour government to 'terminate British sovereignty and withdraw militarily as an urgent priority'.

Despite the Labour leadership's support for freedom fighters of the ANC fighting the apartheid regime in South Africa and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua resisting 'Contra' terrorists, Neil Kinnock's support for democracy does not extend to Ireland. The leaders' key-note speech did not refer, even in passing, to what Labour intends to do about one of the greatest moral and political issues in British politics.

Neil Kinnock had already angered Irish campaigners by publicly attacking the Labour Committee on Ireland's decision to invite Sinn Fein councillor and ex-IRA prisoner of war, Tommy Carroll to participate in a debate chaired by Ken Livingstone about the meaning of the Anglo Irish Accord with Labour's junior Northern Ireland spokesperson, Stuart Bell, Bernadette McAliskey, Clare Short MP and SDLP deputy, Seamus Mallon.

Despite front page articles in the major daily newspapers and editorials urging a ban on the LCI's meeting, it was one of the most successful of conference attracting both major television coverage and between 350 and 400 delegates, eager to hear what Sinn Fein had to say. Stuart Bell's attempt to turn the meeting into an attack upon terrorism failed miserably.

Since Labour Conference is now clearly a focus for the whole labour movement's discussion on Ireland, it is pleasing to note that despite vigorous organisation by the Workers' Party, and unionists (who want to see the British Labour Party organise in the North), it is the Labour Committee on Ireland who are forcing the issue onto the agenda of the entire left wing of the party. The three events associated with the LCI were easily the best attended on the fringe.

The understanding that Britain must get out of Ireland is slow in coming to the labour movement in this country. The withdrawal movement is still an extremely small minority. Support for Labour complacency, the Accord and 'unity by consent' which tries to ignore the unionist veto often seems overwhelming with six million trade union votes against. But the withdrawal movement is an important and growing minority.

1986 is the first time ever that conference policies on opposition to the PTA, plastic bullets, strip searches and Diplock courts have been affirmed from the platform as an intention of the next government. It is the first time that a major national union has so thoroughly broken from bipartisan policies and endorsed a call for troops out.

The response to the October Tour of Sinn Fein councillors who are being received as official guests by some of England's largest urban councils and growing interest in Ireland expressed by trade unionists suggest that this organised minority is becoming increasingly influential.

Resolution on women's organisation in the Labour Party

The resolution on women's organisation passed by party conference read as follows: 'This conference calls on the National Executive Committee in conjunction with the National Labour Women's Committee to develop proposals to provide for

- a system of voting at the National Conference of Labour Women after 1987 which reflects the number of women represented by the respective delegates;
- a Conference Standing Orders Committee which is representative of all affiliated groups participating in the Conference;
- measures to restrict delegates to women;
- reforms to ensure that the decisions of the National Conference of Labour Women are integrated into the annual Party conference and the National Executive Committee;
- a review of the allocation of seats on the National Labour Women's Committee to ensure a balanced representation of all affiliated groups;
- a review of the system for electing the five reserved women's seats on the National Executive Committee.

Conference believes these proposals should form the basis of a widespread consultation process with Constituency Labour Parties, affiliated organisations and the National Conference of Labour Women, with resulting recommendations from the National Executive Committee to be reported back to next year's annual party conference with appropriate recommendations.'

Developing crisis in the LCC

ONE OF the chief features of the run up to the Labour Party conference, and during the conference itself, was the developing crisis in the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) and *Tribune*. This was signalled on the eve of conference itself by a front page article by *Tribune* editor Nigel Williamson entitled 'Whatever happened to realignment'. This admitted 'The Soft Left has become probably the least coherent grouping in the party.'

Williamson argued that 'social democratic' policies were being adopted by the Labour Party but that: 'the realigned left feels almost powerless to do anything about the situation.' He quoted approvingly Peter Hain of the LCC that 'drift and even inertia' had set in. Williamson said realignment had been a 'spectacular failure' within the party.

At the party conference itself these divisions sharpened further. At the *Tribune* rally on the Wednesday night David Blunkett for the first openly, if guardedly, attacked Kinnock by name saying: 'I believe, and I've never said this before on a public platform, I believe Neil Kinnock is now relying more on the centre and the right than those who were previously his colleagues, friends, and comrades on the left.'

Blunkett attacked in particular, and in very strong terms, Kinnock's decision to run against Dennis Skinner for vice chair of the party — thereby breaking with all party precedent.

The most spectacular intervention at the *Tribune* rally came from Ken Livingstone. *Tribune* editor Nigel Williamson had attempted to turn the meeting into an anti-Campaign Group rally — starting the supposedly socialist *Tribune* rally with remarks attacking the Campaign Group for 'meeting two miles outside Blackpool!'

Livingstone however directly rebuffed that, called for unity between the *Tribune* and Campaign groups, and outlined a proposed basis for this in support for the demand for US bases out of Britain, winning the demands of Black Sections, and support for WAC.

Most significantly however Livingstone launched an open and brutal attack on the witch hunt. He stated:

'Those who have read what I have written in *Tribune* must know quite clearly I do not support the *Militant* tendency. I've been subject to much abuse from *Militant* tendency. But I never wanted them expelled from the party. I organised in the London labour movement until we won our positions on women, black people and the need for a free and united Ireland. That is how we go forward.'

'There can be no support for the witch hunt. Those who warned at the beginning that the witch hunt would actually widen have been proved right.'

'We had no doubt whatsoever that *Militant* would be expelled at this conference. The votes for it were there. People hoped that they would be able to draw the line at that and prevent the expulsion of Khan and Scally. We failed on that. Does anyone doubt that having failed there that we still face the danger of a continuing wave of expulsions in that minority of right wing controlled constituency Labour parties?'

'There can be no support for left unity, there can be no step forward to create agreement about the sort of policies we want, unless we agree first of all that we resolve our differences internally and we oppose every expulsion that comes before the NEC. We have to campaign up and down the length and breadth of the party on that.'

David Blunkett however justified the Liverpool expulsions from the platform of the *Tribune* rally.

Livingstone's speech was, among other reasons, almost certainly a result of pressure building up on the LCC from Labour Left Liaison (LLL) — Livingstone had called earlier in the week for unity between the LCC and LLL. At a press conference the LLL's chair Ann Pettifor, and Tony Benn from the Campaign Group of MPs, had explained that the LLL was totally for party democracy and against the witch hunt, despite its complete disagreement

with the politics of *Militant*, and that rejection of the attacks on party democracy represented by the witch hunt was a precondition for even discussing any participation of the LCC in the LLL.

As Livingstone was in any case opposed to the expulsions, he directly referred to the LLL's position in his speech, and almost certainly LLL pressure on this provoked the developments in the LCC.

By James Black

A parallel fight broke out in *Labour Activist* — the daily bulletin produced by the LCC at party conference. This started off on Monday with a front page justifying the witch hunt, calling for expulsions, and saying '*Militant* asked for what they have got.' Inside however was an article by Livingstone entitled 'Beyond the next election' which declared: 'there is a greater common ground between LCC and LLL than could have been imagined six months ago ... We must not allow sectarianism to prevent us seizing the potential which is opening before us.'

By Friday of conference however 'sectarianism' was in full swing again with *Labour Activist* declaring that the chief task of the next year was to consolidate and continue the shift in the composition of the NEC started by the removal of Eric Heffer.

These are in fact completely incompatible orientations for the LCC and reflect the basic strategic choice facing it. It is the weakest major current in the CLPs and has no chance whatever to dominate the situation itself. It has to ally either with the Campaign Group left against the right — which is in effect what Livingstone is proposing, or with the right wing against the Campaign Group — which is what Clause 4 and the right wing of the LCC who dominate *Labour Activist* want. Blunkett looks like he is wanting to begin to unite with the Campaign Group against the right wing but is not prepared to accept the policies which are the only basis on which that can be achieved.

This entire pot was then stirred further by an article by Martin Linton in the *Guardian* on Saturday after conference which accurately spelt out the choices facing the LCC and called for the LCC to reject Livingstone's line.

What is happening is clear. The fact that the Campaign Group did not bring out into the open sharply enough that while it defended party democracy against witch hunts it did not agree with the politics of *Militant* allowed it to be smeared by the press and party leadership. Simultaneously the lunatic ultra-left line of currents such as *Labour Briefing* made a laughing stock of the left. This meant that the LCC was able to avoid all the key contradictions it faced.

But in the run in to part conference that began to change sharply. Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner's politics began to dominate much more clearly in the Campaign Group — welding defence of the miners, opposition to Labour's trade union proposals, and fighting the witch hunt, with strong support for Black Sections, the demands of women's conference, British withdrawal from Ireland, and opposition to US bases and NATO. Simultaneously the creation of the LLL marginalised the ultra-leftism of *Labour Briefing*. The result is a closing down of the room for manoeuvre of the LCC. It also means that those who strayed into LCC's camp because of the economism and workerism of *Militant* and the *Morning Star*, are rapidly finding the situation clarified — because a Skinner/Benn dominated Campaign group, linked with the LLL, involves a much stronger defence of women and black people than anything the LCC is coming up with.

At present with the LCC the witch hunters of Clause 4 remain firmly committed to their bloc with the right wing against the Campaign group and LLL. Livingstone is clearly trying to reorientate the LCC to a bloc with the Campaign Group and LLL against the right wing. Who will win remains to be seen. But the lack of political coherence of the 'soft left' is now fully coming out into the open.



'I believe in socialism not consensus'

THIS year's Labour Party conference was dominated by Neil Kinnock and his policies. But the important step forward for the left was that, for the first time for many years a common agenda began to be hammered out. No one summarised it better than Arthur Scargill at the *Labour Herald* rally on Monday night of conference. We print his speech in full.

WITHIN OUR movement there is a tendency to believe we can go and win the next general election, and the support of working people, through a softly-softly approach. That through a Saatchi and Saatchi soft sell, we can win people that would not normally be won to the policies of our party and our movement.

Well I happen to be one of those — as a disenchanted Yorkshireman — who believes that the Red Flag is dyed with the blood of people who sacrificed everything for this movement.

Our principles, it is said, are a little out of date. We've got to go for the middle road. Well, the only thing that you get in the middle of the road is ... knocked over!

Ever since I was 14 years of age I understood we're not about winning elections. Some people may be. But I know that this is a class war and our fight is to take political power — and there's a difference. Millions of people unemployed, deprivation in our inner cities, black communities not only deprived but blatantly discriminated against. Well, at least there's the beginning of an understanding, amongst working men and women, of what our brothers and sisters in the black communities have had to endure, and still have to endure. I think there was one thing the miner's strike did it was to help miners understand the issues at stake. And one of the results is that miners will be voting at this conference in support of Black Sections as one of the steps towards securing the rights of black people in this society.

Inner city difficulties and problems that we've seen are not the result of some mindless hooligans. The only hooligans that have been involved are the para-military police force. In relation to the chairman's opening remarks (the



power. Well, I'm the mover of the composite and I'm not aware of it! What's really happened is that the Labour leadership on the NEC found out that they were going to lose and that's why there has been a decision to support, with reservations, composite 63 on this.

Let me make it absolutely clear: as far as the mover, the seconder, and the 252 organisations supporting that composite are concerned there are no reservations in our support for it.

It's been suggested that we're arguing for destroying jobs. This is absurd. We want people in the nuclear industry to be given the opportunity to work for people's real needs instead of for death and destruction.

If you close down nuclear power stations you create — with the establishment of coal-fired stations — 25 per cent more jobs. We also by that put thousands of people to work building new coal-fired stations and developing alternative power sources such as wind, wave, tide, geothermal and solar energy.

Why can't we begin to say positively to the British people: 'the Labour Party will put an end to nuclear power'? If this Party does what it should after Wednesday's debate. If it goes out and says 'we're pledged to stop nuclear power, we are for the policy of alternative energy resources, we're for coal-fired generation, above all else we're for an end to a programme that threatens the lives of youngsters in this country and of generations yet unborn,' if we do that then we'll win a massive victory at the next general election. But equivocation will not only lose us votes, it'll lose us the election as well.

There are people who say 'look how many accidents you've got in coal mining, look how few we've got in the nuclear industry'. I answer 'I don't know how many accidents you've got in nuclear power. I don't know because they don't tell you. And if they did give the official figures I wouldn't believe them! But I do know about the hundreds and hundreds of people who have died and are dying today in uranium mines in Namibia. And I do know about the 300,000 who will die as the result of Chernobyl.'



Kevin Scally — witch hunted

If we look at international questions there has been a mining disaster in South Africa. Many hundreds of people have been affected. Nearly two hundred have been killed. This rotten corrupt system, not content with slaughtering black people on the streets and in the villages and in the townships,



Bernadette McAliskey and Sinn Fein councillor Tommy Carroll

refused to allow the National Union of Mineworkers of Britain to send our mining engineer to help the NUM in South Africa. That's the kind of regime that you're dealing with! That's the kind of system that Thatcher and her government are wanting to prop up.

It's time that working people in this society began to realise that sanctions are not going to take place under this government. But why isn't there a ready understanding that for sanctions to be applied you don't need to have a government decision? You have it in your power to take sanctions, to impose them yourselves. It can be done. At least I tried to do it.

As trustees of the miners pension scheme Peter Heathfield, Mick McGahey, and I were removed because we refused to allow money from British miners' pension scheme to be invested in South Africa. I'm pleased that they removed me, if that's the price I had to pay.

We're up for trial next February. I got sacked in July 1984 for refusing to invest monies from the mineworkers pension scheme abroad. And in February next year, McGahey, Heathfield and Scargill are being sued for a million pounds for taking the NUM's money abroad.

It's been suggested that we did it so that some people like the sequestrator couldn't get hold of it. Never!

Those friends of ours in the press went to our door and said to Ann (Scargill) 'Did you know that they're suing McGahey, Peter Heathfield and Arthur for a million pounds? She said 'how much?' They said 'a million'. She said 'what, a million a piece?' They said 'no, just one million altogether.' 'Oh' she said 'I was getting worried!'

Comrades, this week's conference has got to look at the issues. Not only the question of unemployment; not only the question of rebuilding a savaged and embattled Britain; not only the question of beginning to rebuild basic industry in Britain, and all the associated policies. It's got to go much wider than that. It's got to have a political perspective — and one that's, in my view, totally different from what we've seen for a long time.

There are those in our party, there are those in our movement who want to see consensus. Well, I believe in socialism, not consensus. And I think it's time that people in our party asserted exactly where they stand on the question of consensus politics.

If working people in Nicaragua had waited for consensus they'd have never achieved a victory. If people in Vietnam had waited for consensus it wouldn't have worked. They put forward revolutionary politics in order to win the advancement for their class.

It's time that our movement understood this basic lesson, the basic principle that it's socialist policies that are going to win in Britain.

You know, chairman, in our movement we seem to be a little bit down-hearted when we get setbacks. What on earth for? Don't we understand — even if the academics don't — the nature of the struggle, the nature of the system?

I'm not down-hearted. I know we're on a winning trail. I know that in my party and my movement, a socialist policy will emerge from what we're seeing at the present time. Every single time that I feel at all in doubt, all I have to do is to look at the history of our movement and look at what hap-



Dianne Abbott — Black Section got NUM support

pened in real terms to the Chartists, to the Tolpuddle martyrs and, yes in recent times, to members of the National Union of Mineworkers. And when you look at it in those terms, our problems, or our difficulties, or our set-backs, appear infinitesimally small by comparison.

We're talking about a better society. We shouldn't hide the vision of a better Britain. We should talk about a vision splendid. We should talk about a society where the means of production, distribution and exchange are taken into the hands of working people. We should say without question, without equivocation, that all the firms that have been denationalised will be renationalised on the election of a Labour government.

Above all else will be a policy for peace. It will be a policy that says 'an end to US bases', 'an end to nuclear weapons', 'unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO'. There can be no question of equivocation on that central objective.

We owe it to ourselves to look in terms of a better vision. We owe it to ourselves to put forward to the British people an alternative policy, a policy that means something, that's different and radical compared to the Tories, the SDP and the Liberals. We don't want something similar. We want a socialist approach, of defiance to this government and what was envisaged by the creators of our movement.

Let every single member of this party tonight reaffirm that we don't want witch-hunts in this party. Expulsions and witch-hunts may be for the colleagues at the back today (Khan and Scally) — but it'll be for you tomorrow. It's not all that long ago that they expelled the Communist Party of Great Britain from the Labour Party. I think that was wrong.

If there's one lesson that our party and the working class have got to learn, it's that we need unity, not disunity or splits and divisions. And you don't get unity by expelling people who are sincerely fighting for a socialist policy.

I ask that this party and, yes this rally, go from this rally tonight and begin to campaign as hard as the right-wing movement in our Party. Begin to campaign to win policies inside the trade union movement. Begin to campaign to win a bigger say for the CLPs in the conference.

Above all else, if you seriously mean what you say, then translate into action the policy decisions of

this party. Let no spokesman, let no spokeswoman, 'interpret' what we mean. This party conference must decide the policy as we go to the next election.

We need to go to the electorate on a policy of full employment, a policy of reintroducing into this country vision and hope, to regenerate Britain's battered industry.

We want an end to anti-trade union legislation. We want it wiping off the statute book. We want no fudge, no reintroduction of legislation in another form like 1969 with In Place of Strife.

If we do all this I'm confident that we shall not only win the next general election, we shall win it not on the basis of consensus but on the basis of socialism.

photographers would seeking pictures of Scargill together with Sinn Fein councillor Tommy Carroll) I'll tell you why the para-military police force is able to walk apparently unheeded and unhindered anywhere it wants in Britain. It is because we stood by and allowed it to happen in the north of Ireland.

The National Union of Mineworkers learnt a lot of lessons. I've been reading lots of books that have been published about the miners' strike — about what we did wrong. We've seen academics pontificating by the score about why the miners did this or didn't do that. And I was told by a colleague of mine — she's a parliamentary candidate — that she attended a dinner not far from Hampstead and there were people like Eric Hobsbawm pontificating about the miners' strike. And he was saying that, you know, the problem with the miners' strike was that they should never have done it at the time they did.

Why is it that people with first-class honours degrees, who can see the struggle of the Chartists and the Tolpuddle martyrs with clarity, fail to see the struggle of the miners right before their eyes with any clarity at all?

The destabilisation of this government was not in spite of but because of the miners' strike. £12,000 million it cost them, as they sought to destroy the NUM.

Many people are, of course, looking forward to Wednesday's debate on nuclear power. You'll have seen people like Gavin Laird going on television and say 'if you think we're going to stand by while workers in our industry are attacked, then you've got another think coming'. I wish he'd said the same thing during the miners strike.

It's been suggested in the *Guardian* that there's been some kind of deal on the question of nuclear



Marc Wadsworth speaking at the 1985 Alliance for Socialism conference

Developing a programme for Britain

AS SOCIALIST Action explained in an editorial before the Labour Party conference its role is going to change over the next months. From the end of the miners strike onwards Socialist Action was, for a considerable time, the only paper which got out the views of the forces that had emerged and radicalised in that strike and its aftermath. Socialist Action is still the only place where you can find a record of Arthur Scargill's major speeches during the miners strike, the record of Women Against Pit Closures as it developed, the major statements of the Black Section, major interviews by Tony Benn and others summing up the strike, a blow by blow record of the Labour Women's Action Committee's (WAC) fight for the right of women to control their own organisations inside the party. This is in addition to Socialist Action's role in getting out the material of Sinn Fein, the FSLN in Nicaragua, the ANC and other international organisations.

Other newspapers would not print this material because they did not want these currents to exist or flourish. Breaking the wall of silence, by even simply printing what people had to say, was vital. At the same time Socialist Action fought to bring together these forces inside the Labour Party and trade unions. Socialist Action had to combine its own distinctive voice with being a platform for these currents. This was a necessary and right thing to do.

Larger

Fortunately much larger forces than us are now beginning to take up that job now. Labour Left Liaison has developed as the largest and potentially most authoritative, left wing organisation within the Labour Party. Campaign Group News is reaching a significantly wider audience than Socialist Action with the views of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the leaders of the NUM, the Labour Party Black Section, WAC, the Labour Committee on Ireland, and the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

All this means that Socialist Action is beginning to have a different role to play. Not, of course, that it is going to turn its back on those it has been working with in the last period — they will still be appearing in its

pages. But Socialist Action now has a more strategic and programmatic role to play. It has to, so to speak, look ahead of where we are today and look at the line of march of the new forces that are developing in the labour movement. A central theme around which it intends to do this is through 'developing a programme for Britain'. It means tying the line of development of the working class and oppressed together around that programme — around the slogan which appears on our masthead of 'building an alliance for socialism'.

Marxism

It is necessary to be clear about what is meant by this. Developing a programme for Britain does not mean sitting down and writing out a shopping list of demands and proposals which have to be fought for — a shopping list is not a programme. Developing a programme means situating and understanding the real weight which specific demands and proposals have both in the long term and at definite points in the class struggle — the specific way they are posed in Britain. To understand what that means it is worth looking at how both that, and any serious, programme must be developed.

The starting point of a programme must be the basic features of society recognised by Marxism. Marx's theory of the economy and society, Lenin's analysis of imperialism and the state, Trotsky's analysis of fascism and the degeneration of the USSR, and many other contributions are the key starting points that must be taken. They are the universal elements of Marxism that apply in any country.

But in order to develop a programme for Britain something else must be grasped. That is the completely unique and specific character of every country and every situation. What, then, is the relation between the universal international forces which Marxism analyses and the situation in a specific country, Britain?

Trotsky explained this relation in his *Third International after Lenin*: 'In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, ie of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single ... party can establish its programme by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country ... An international ... programme is in no case the sum total of national programmes or an amalgam of their common features. The international pro-

gramme must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts.

'In the present epoch, to a much greater extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between ... internationalism and all varieties of national socialism.'

Or, as Trotsky put it as regards the economy, in his introduction to *Permanent Revolution*: 'Marxism takes its point of departure from world economy, not as a sum of national parts but as a mighty and independent reality which has been created by the international division of labour and the world market, and which in our epoch imperiously dominates the national markets.'

Viewpoint

It is for this reason, for example, that Socialist Action distributes material of international socialist organisations — including *International Viewpoint*, which is a completely unique international Marxist publication, as well as that of national organisations. Without starting off with an international programme no progress can be made in developing a programme for Britain.

If, however, a programme remains at a purely international level then it is hopeless — it is far too abstract and therefore not a programme, a guide for specific action, in the real sense at all. Furthermore each country does not show simply 'general' feature of capitalism which are the same for every country combined with 'specific' features which are added on to a common 'model' — which is the type of analysis presented by the Communist Party. Each country, and each situation, is completely and absolutely specific and unique. A part of the essence of politics is to understand that uniqueness and act on that basis.

Stalin

Trotsky put it in the introduction to *Permanent Revolution*, in polemicising with Stalin, as follows: 'It is false that the world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are "merely supplementary to the general features",

like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years ...

'It is absolutely wrong to base the activity of the Communist parties on some "general features", that is, on an abstract type of national capitalism. It is utterly false to contend that "this is what the internationalism of the Communist parties rests upon". In reality, it rests on the insolvency of the national state, which has long ago outlived itself and which has turned into a brake upon the development of the productive forces. National capitalism cannot be even understood, let alone reconstructed, except as a part of world economy.'

Unique

'The economic peculiarities of different countries are in no way of a subordinate character. It is enough to compare England and India, the United States and Brazil. But the specific features of national economy ... enter as component parts and in increasing measure into the higher reality which is called world economy and on which alone, in the last analysis, the internationalism of the Communist parties rests ...

'National peculiarity is nothing else but the most general product of the unevenness of historical development, its summary result, so to speak ... the internationalism of the British and Indian proletariats does not at all rest on an identity of conditions, tasks and methods, but on their indivisible interdependence

Strategic

This is the relation between the class struggle in Britain and the international class struggle. That situation in Britain is completely unique and specific — 'the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process ... This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years' as Trotsky put it. If anyone ever finds themselves doing the same overall as someone in South Africa, or France, or Germany, or Nicaragua, or the United States, or Poland, then they can be absolutely sure they are going wrong. The overall features of the situation in each country are absolutely and specific — and must be decided in that country. But it is a unique combination of elements of an in-

ternational reality. And while what must be done by socialists in each country is unique, it is totally interdependent with what is being done in every other country. Britain, as with every other country, represents a unique combination of the international elements of class struggle.

To see this take merely some of the unique features of the British state. It is an example of an imperialist state — one of twenty or thirty in the world. But is is, in a very real sense, the most parasitically imperialist major state in the entire world — with foreign assets which are still five times larger in relation to its internal economy than those of the United States. That uniquely imperialist character of the British state helps determine its entire nature.

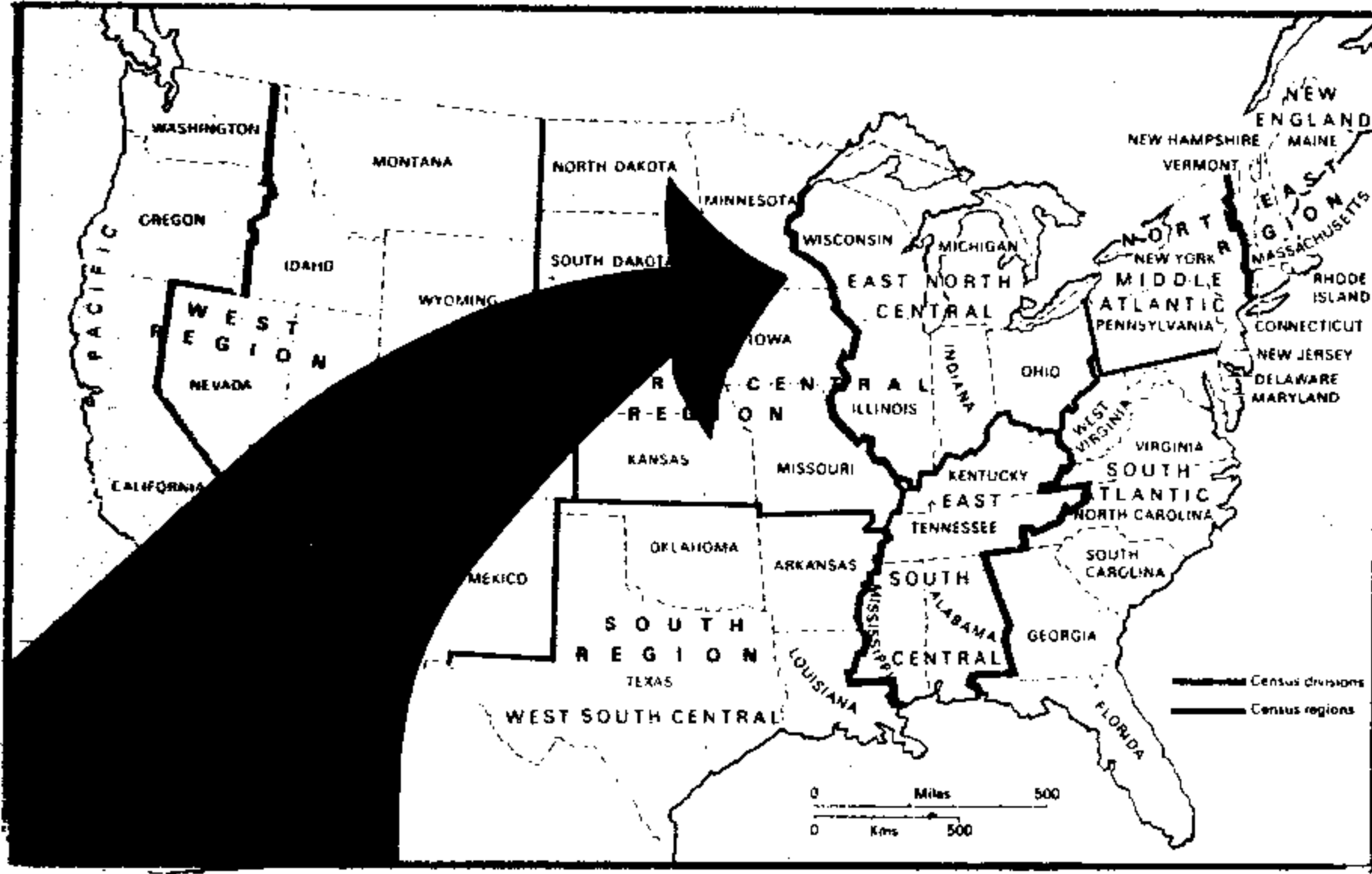
Within that state, however, exists a unified labour movement. It possesses a single mass working class party based on a single unified trade union movement — something extremely rare in the world. Britain has one of the highest participations of women in the work force in the world. It has a new black community created since World War II. It has a level of unemployment exceeding that even of its imperialist rivals. It has the lowest proportion of manufacturing in its economy of any major country in Europe. It is sandwiched between the US and the EEC — with its imperialist interests central in a country such as South Africa. Britain has an internal colony in the six counties of the North of Ireland. It still has national questions in Scotland and Wales. It is undergoing its greatest reorganisation of bourgeois politics in over sixty years with the emergence of the SDP. It has a profound crisis of its Communist Party.

In Depth

All these features are just some of the unique features of the British state. But they are specific unique features composed of a combination of elements of an international situation. The task of developing a programme for Britain is to start with that world situation, and the international programme of Marxism, and analyse the specific situation of Britain in terms of it. That is what, over the coming months, Socialist Action will be devoting space to.

It will provide a strategic programmatic background to the work we are doing every day in the labour movement. It will help provide a realisation of the slogan on our masthead of 'Building an Alliance for Socialism'.

Cram your Spam!



YOU PROBABLY HAVEN'T heard of Hormel, but Spam is a name we know well. And now 'cram your Spam' badges are circulating in the labour movement as striking meatpackers from the United States tour Britain.

The meat-packers have been in dispute with the Hormel company which produces Spam for 13 months and representatives from three plants — in Austin, Minnesota, Ottumwa, Iowa and Fremont, Nebraska — were at the Labour Party conference where they certainly made a splash.

Participants at many fringe meetings were able to hear the tale of their struggle. It began in August of last year, when workers at Hormel's flagship plant in Austin were forced out on strike after the company tried to impose the seventeenth consecutive concessionary wages and conditions deal in a row.

Strike leader Jim Guyette told us that the mood of the workers was that 'enough was enough'. It was easy to see why: speed-up, wage-cuts and a 'safety' record of 202 accidents per 100 workers (yes, 202) meant that conditions needed substantial improvement not further erosion.

In the course of their year long struggle the

strikers have had to stand up to the courts, the local police and the US National Guard. Guard

By Jon Silberman

troops were used to reopen the Austin plant in January.

Refusing to be cowed, the strikers took the struggle to other Hormel plants. Pickets won backing from fellow meatpackers at Ottumwa, Iowa and Fremont, Nebraska. The workers at these plants who honoured the picket line were promptly sacked — as the strikers at Austin have been.

The strikers did not receive full backing from their national union, the United Food and Commercial Workers. Ever

since December of last year when the UFCW officials recommended acceptance of a mediator's contract which had been agreed to by the company, the union tops actually starting attacking the workers who had voted down the contract on two occasions.

In January, UFCW President Wynn first publicly demanded a return to work. Ten days later the union officially produced a so-called 'fact book' which defended the company and slandered the strikers' branch, P-9.

Despite the campaign of the official union leadership, the strike escalated. In addition to successfully picketing the other Hormel plants, P-9 organised a 3,000-strong rally in Austin in February. Following the strike being declared unofficial in March, 5,000 P-9 supporters marched in Austin. Finally most of the strikers were forced out of the union.

Jim Guyette told us that the nation-wide solidarity 'has been magnificent. We sent people on the road throughout the country. They were given the simple brief of going out and telling the truth. The response to the truth had been overwhelming.'

Solidarity has come both in the form of finance and a nationwide boycott of Hormel products. Guyette says that the boycott has 'hurt the company tremendously. That's why the company is trying so hard to get the boycott called off.'

Local and national



Jim Guyette

unions, civic groups and religious organisations have responded to the campaign. Now the strikers are in Britain seeking to extend the boycott internationally. One of the members of the tour party is Barbara Collette who's on the steering committee of the United Support Group in Austin.

Barbara told us of the huge response that had greeted their presence at Labour Party conference. Barbara was deeply impressed by the solidarity they'd received from members of Women

Against Pit Closures 'in particular because their story is my story' she said.

Tony Benn was prominent in drumming up support for the strikers' cause. He spoke at many fringe meetings together. Benn explained that such solidarity with US strikers was the basic to the internationalism so necessary in the Labour Party.

• Donations and messages of support should be sent to: *Hormel Fightback Fund, PO Box 903, Austin, Minnesota 55912, USA.*

World in action

THERE IS a clear contradiction between Labour's policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament and its support for NATO membership. At this year's party conference the call for the removal of all US bases received 1,159,000 votes, and the call for withdrawal from NATO altogether 1,033,000 votes. These policies are already established as substantial minority views in the labour movement.

We print here major extracts from the introduction by Tony Benn and Jeremy Corbyn, to the pamphlet *Peace through non-alignment — the case for British withdrawal from NATO*, which is sponsored by the Campaign Group and was launched at Labour Party conference.

Successive Labour Party conferences, and election manifestoes, have committed Labour governments to retain British membership of NATO. When the general election comes, all of us who are parliamentary candidates will be explaining to our electors that this is the official policy of the party.

Nevertheless, there are many people, both inside and outside the Party, who most certainly do want to see the issue raised, as became apparent at the 1985 Labour Conference when nearly 2½ million votes were actually cast for a resolution asking the NEC to re-examine Britain's NATO membership.

This is partly because there is a clear potential contradiction between Labour's commitment to NATO, and its equally clear commitment to the removal of all nuclear weapons and US nuclear bases from Britain. For if the American government refuses to accede to that demand and threatens to end our NATO membership if we persist, a stark choice may have to be made. In New Zealand a Labour government, backed up by a solid majority of electoral support, has also had to face outright opposition from the Americans, who are effectively squeezing New Zealand out of the ANZUS treaty.

Furthermore, President Reagan's decision to bomb Libya from US bases in Britain shows that the country is now seen in Washington as an unsinkable aircraft carrier — a thought that cannot be very reassuring to British people who are at risk whenever it is used for that purpose.

It was after the war, at about the time that NATO was formed, that Mr Attlee agreed that some US aircraft should come to Britain on 'training missions'. From then on, the US presence has grown substantially and become permanent, until today it totals about 130 bases or installations and about 30,000 service personnel. The agreement under which they operate here has never been published, and it is not even clear whether any treaty regulations exist.

According to the oath of office which confers upon every American President duties as Commander-in-Chief of all US Forces worldwide, the US Constitution would not permit him to subordinate his military powers and responsibilities to the wishes of any foreign power, however friendly.

Thus it would appear that the theory of a British veto is an illusion — the United States has the right, as well as the power, to use its bases in Britain as it wishes, either for NATO purposes, or in pursuit of its own world-wide interests.

Despite the oft-repeated argument that the United States is solely concerned to protect freedom, human rights and democracy, it has actually built up a vast World Empire, far more powerful even than the old British Empire, with 3000 bases scattered across the globe to defend US economic and political interests including her investments, raw material supplies, especially oil, and the markets for her goods. In defence of those interests America has fought a long war in Vietnam, attacked Cuba, occupied Grenada, destabilised Chile and organised terrorist attacks against Nicaragua, as well as propping up some of the most corrupt and dictatorial regimes of the twentieth century.

Given these indisputable facts it cannot be right, or safe, for Britain to continue to allow the United States to use military bases in our country to pursue those policies.

We hope that every constituency party and affiliated trade union will arrange conferences and seminars to discuss this pamphlet, and that all those organisations that are working in any way for detente, disarmament and development will read it too and have the question of NATO put down on their agenda.

'Peace through non-alignment — the case for British withdrawal from NATO' by Ben Lowe. Published by Verso, 1986. Price £1.50.

Hot autumn in El Salvador

THE DUARTE GOVERNMENT in El Salvador is in trouble. He has succeeded in angering broad sections of the population including the Catholic church hierarchy through his sabotage of the third round of peace talks with the FMLN-FDR, which were scheduled for 19 September, writes JOHN SMITH.

Duarte has been forced to shift from his stance that the only purpose of talks with the liberation movement was to negotiate their surrender. His reluctant agreement to meet with top FMLN commanders was itself a huge victory.

With the FMLN guerrilla army retaining the military initiative, the increasingly powerful trade union movement and the

other mass organisations have united around the demand for serious negotiation to find a solution, based on justice and na-

tional independence, to the six-year-old war which has claimed 60,000 lives and turned one third of the population into refugees.

Duarte conceded the talks whilst simultaneously accepting a vast escalation of US military hardware to more effectively prosecute the war.

He then scuppered the talks by refusing to remove the army from the eastern town Sesori, where the talks were to be held. Under such conditions the safety of the liberation movement's representatives could not be

guaranteed, and talks were rendered impossible.

The regime tried to make propaganda capital out of the affair. Duarte turned up at Sesori with the US ambassador to address a crowd of peasants who had been specially bussed in. But his cynical manoeuvre backfired as the peasants heckled throughout his rambling tirade, while FMLN fighters launched a powerful offensive from nearby hills forcing Duarte to beat a hasty retreat.

In the ensuing 24 hours the FMLN offensive had left hundreds of soldiers killed or wounded, another 200 casualties being left wounded at Guazapa and Morazan.

The regime has taken a knocking in the towns as well. With an unemployment rate of 43 per cent, a further 35 per cent 'underemployed' and a massive increase in death squad assassinations of union activists, there has been a big response by the workers movement.

In the first six months of this year there were over 600 strikes involving 425,000 workers. In February, the National Unity of Salvadorean Workers (UNTS) was formed, uniting over 100 trade union, peasant, student and teacher organisations. They have called a series of huge demonstrations — the most recent being held on Saturday 4 October, demanding a resolution to ten bitter

strikes and that Duarte returns to the peace talks.

One of the most remarkable features of the struggle is massive and militant response to state repression. The forces in UNTS now respond to kidnappings and assassinations with a reflex of immediate demonstrations and strikes across the nation. This is how they forced the release of textile workers leader, Isabel Seve Velasquez, in July and of captured water workers leader, Prieto, in August.

At the beginning of October a leader of ANDES, the teachers union, was assassinated. In response, ANDES shut down over 90 per cent of schools and colleges in a two-day national strike on 7 and 8 October.

The difficulties confronting the Duarte regime could lead El Salvador's rulers to once again turn to an even more viciously repressive regime. With the Reagan administration's increased financing of the contra war in Nicaragua an escalation of military conflict on a regional scale needs the maximum response by the labour movement internationally.

• Labour Movement Conference on Central America, 28 February 1987, Congress House, London. Leaflets available from ELSSOC, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1 (tel 01-928 3412).



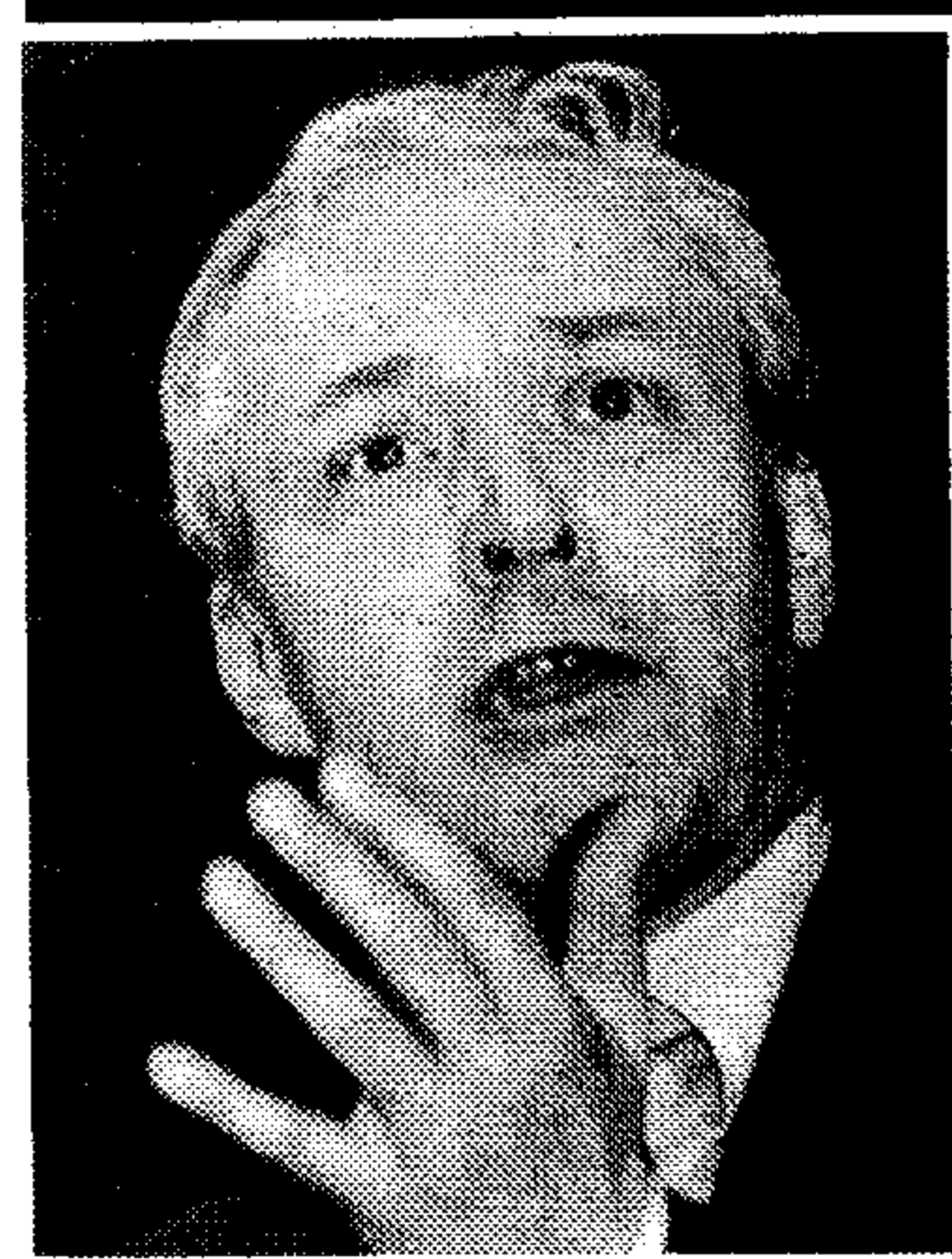
John Smith translates for FENASTRAS representative Alfredo Represa.

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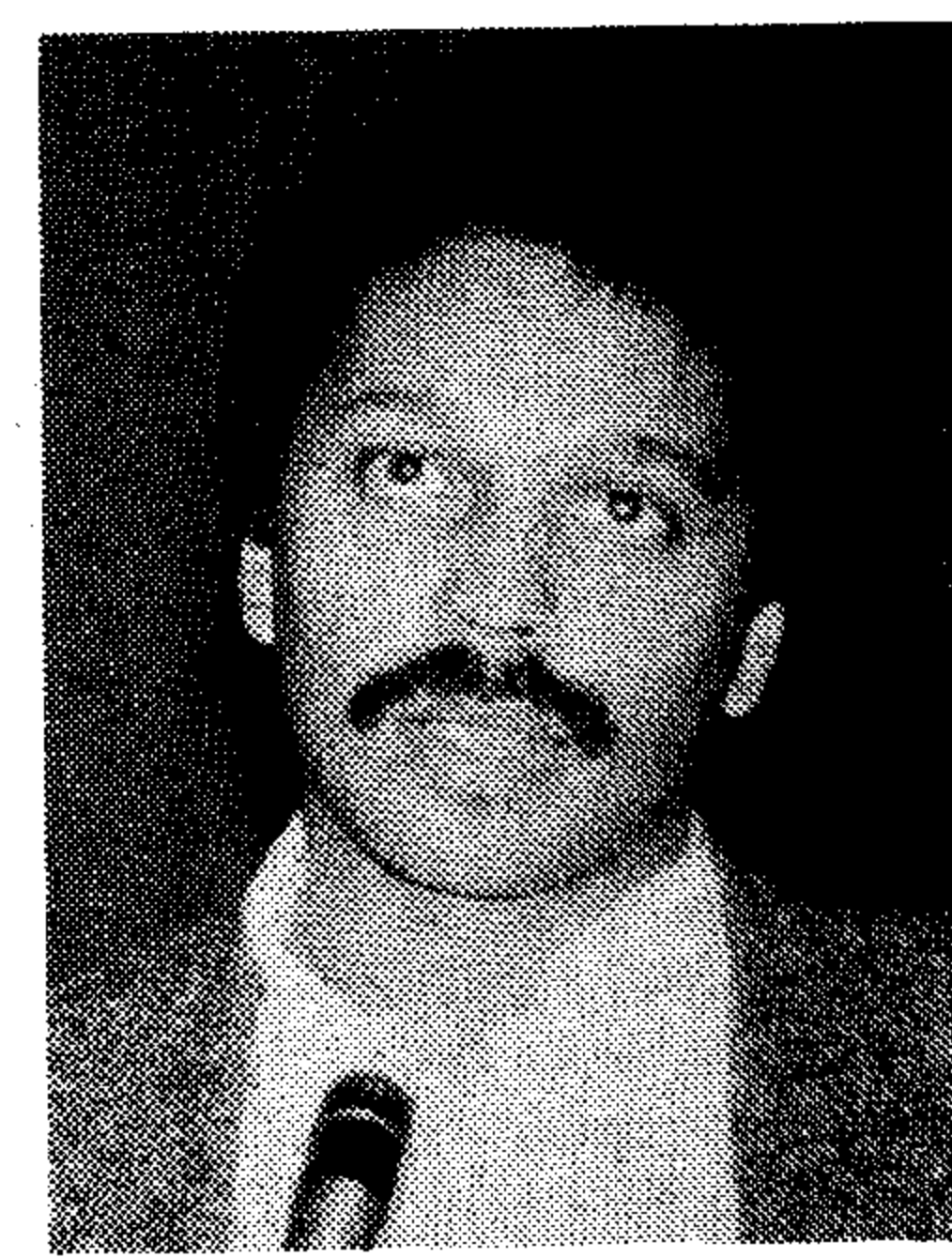
Tony Benn



Linda Bellos



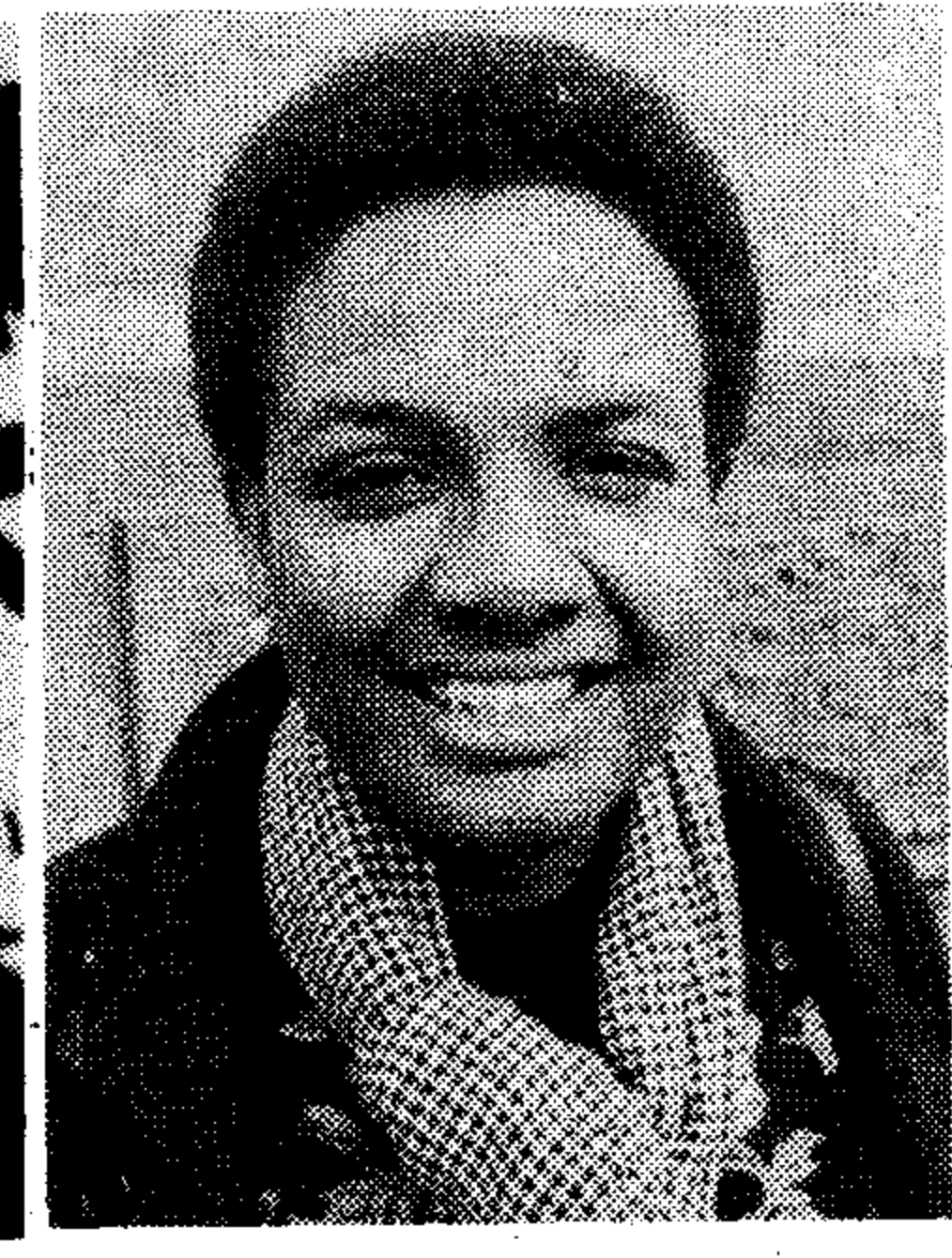
Peter Heathfield



Marc Wadsworth



Betty Heathfield



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Paradise at the Crossroads

Ruth Blackett reviews John Mortimer's *Paradise Postponed* on ITV. IT WAS a good idea — a TV drama about the high expectations people had in 1945 for the brave new welfare state world that we were going to get, but didn't, after the war. Clearly a series that socialists would be interested in watching. We might not agree with the analysis but I looked forward to seeing how they would deal with it.

Well, what a disappointment! As the *TV Times* said, *Paradise Postponed* (may) sound like some head-clutching political parable. It isn't. Excellently put. Far from disagreeing (or not) with his analysis of the postponement of classless, full employment paradise, I can't actually see much connection between what Mortimer says he set out to do, and the final product.

'A picture of society from top to bottom', he says. Only it is rather top heavy for the 'story about England since the war' which he was asked to write. The working class is represented solely by Leslie Titmus (snivelling urchin turned Tory minister), and his parents — rural proletarians of almost forelock tugging variety. Indeed the whole thing has an anachronistic air about it. I am sure that villages and people such as those in *Paradise Postponed* did still exist in 1948, but they hardly represent England at that time.

As well as the odious Titmus and his unattractive parents, most of the other characters are also rather unsympathetic. The so-called socialist vicar owns a brewery and sends his sons to public school. Indeed we have no evidence that he is a socialist beyond being told that he is. His wife is a prig and his sons are creeps. The local gentry are all clearly mad in one way or another.

The only likeable character is the doctor — who Mortimer describes as his own favourite. And what does the doctor represent? The good solid values of the liberal 'middle class' — people like Mortimer himself.

Mortimer doesn't like the upper class (among other things he thinks that is where the left now resides, while the Tories have become more working class). And he doesn't like the working class. In short, he doesn't like class and he wishes we could all be middle class. Which is how he manages to write 'a story about England since the war', jam packed with references to class, and completely free of class analysis.

So what do we discover about the developments of the 50s and 60s? That people marched against the bomb. That abortion was illegal, although possible if you had a hundred quid. (And safer if you were really rich and mummy could send you to Geneva). That fast food was on its way. And — the single example of the supposed paradise that was to come — working class kids like Leslie Titmus could get to grammar school.

Maybe that is Mortimer's intended message: human nature is human nature, and if you give the working class a chance all that happens is that its most talented members become capitalists in place of the old fading aristocratic upper class. Nothing else changes.

I could forgive him this reactionary rubbish if *Paradise Postponed* was as entertaining as Mortimer's previous work, *Rumpole of the Bailey*. But the fact is that it isn't really all that good. It has perked up slightly since the beginning, but it resembles an upper class *Crossroads* more than anything.

● *Paradise Postponed* is on ITV on Monday evenings at 9pm.

Other Books

The Other Book's mail order service offers a wide selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature.

The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power (Documents, 1918-19) (Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Radek, et al) Pathfinder £8.95

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Wapping - 9 months of struggle

AS WE GO to press, the result of the ballot on Murdoch's latest 'final offer' isn't known. The offer is little different than the one already rejected. But after over nine months of struggle and with the national leadership of SOGAT recommending acceptance, militants are facing an uphill task to secure a 'No' vote. **BRIAN GROGAN** looks at nine months of struggle.

The printworkers have had to face the most vicious employer tactics. The 5,500 printers were summarily sacked in January after Murdoch had secretly transferred his operations from Fleet Street. In cahoots with the leadership of the electricians union, he set up shop with a brand new workforce. Murdoch fortified his premises with razor wire, high fences and electronic surveillance. To by-pass solidarity from railworkers, he bought up a road transport fleet to distribute his papers.

The courts weighed in on the side of Murdoch sequestering SOGAT's funds, then re-instating them on terms designed to defend Murdoch from effective action.

Saturation policing was the rule — on average 1,000 were permanently deployed, or one to every six strikers. In the miners strike, the average was one to every 22 strikers. In the first seven months of the dispute 1,139 were arrested, one per six strikers. This compares with the 10,337 arrested in the miners strike — an average of one per 100.

Won

The strike quickly won solidarity from the rest of the labour movement. Women Against Pit Closures, miners and others swelled the mass pickets. But as the stakes of the dispute rose the national leadership of SOGAT backed off. The TUC, rather than deepening the support that existed, worked behind the scene with the SOGAT leadership and Murdoch to concoct a sell-out deal.

Other Fleet Street employers moved in wake of Murdoch's offensive to impose their own swinging attacks on printworkers. In the first weeks of the dispute, *Daily Mirror* group workers, particularly in Scotland, came out against Robert Maxwell's major redundancy package. Forging a united fightback was a real possibility. But the print union leaders have signed one sell-out deal after another.

At the time of Murdoch's current final offer, the *Daily Telegraph* came forward with the most devastating package so far. It demanded staff cuts of 60 per cent, a no-strike deal, and agreement to lay off without pay if in-

dustrial action leads to loss of any papers.

Far from using the *Telegraph's* attack to mobilise the two workforces in a joint fight, SOGAT'82 not only signed the deal, but welcomed it as a 'landmark agreement' and SOGAT's Bill Miles who has responsibility for the Wapping dispute castigated Murdoch for 'not having the patience' to get a similar deal without the present strife.

Blocked

The SOGAT leaders also blocked off support from the wider movement. Hiding behind the conditions laid down by the courts in lifting the sequestration order they snubbed offers of support from the miners, 'not wanting to be associated' with Scargill's tactics — the only ones with a chance of winning.

Brenda Dean and other SOGAT leaders counterposed the campaign to persuade consumers to boycott News International titles. Concentrating on consumers is to chose the weakest ground. The only pressure Murdoch will listen to is at the point of production and on the picket line.

The sacked printers have shown what's needed by consistently mobilising in large numbers for the Wednesday and Saturday



Tony Dubbins addresses Tribune rally at Labour Party conference. NGA has also failed to give lead over Wapping.

night mass pickets. They have organised mass meetings to discuss through their tactics and weigh their collective strength. A leadership 'liaison committee' has been established composed of the London district committee of SOGAT and the Fathers and Mothers of the Chapels. But this liaison committee, under the leadership of *Morning Star* supporters has refused to break from the overall framework of the national leadership.

Prestige

The London leadership built up its prestige over many years of establishing decent wages and condi-

tions. But at no time in this dispute has it attempted to prevent the sell-out deals in the rest of Fleet Street or to link the Wapping dispute with other print struggles. They have blocked the formation of a democratically elected strike committee which could have fostered such tactics. They have made the boycott campaign the central focus.

At the June SOGAT conference the national leadership was on the defensive in the wake of the decisive vote against Murdoch's first 'final offer'. Against Dean's advice conference voted for reinstatement and union recognition as the goals of the dispute, and agreed a package of measures to

step up the picketing and to appeal for the first time for support to the rest of the trade union movement.

But the *Morning Star* current squandered the fruits of the 'No vote'. The concessions they made to the Dean leadership to win the conference votes would have been more than justified on one condition — that the conference decision to escalate the struggle were acted upon with vigour. But the London leadership accepted Dean's strictures that the dispute remain within the framework of the Tory anti-union laws and under the control of the national leadership. The conference resolutions became just pieces of paper.

At its conference, the TUC admitted their own inactivity. Norman Willis blamed 'the limits of trade union solidarity in the present circumstances'. The Wapping dispute provided the TUC with a major op-

portunity to decisively widen such 'limits'. But its refusal to confront the electricians has narrowed the limits even further.

Similarly the Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party has failed to lift a finger. They have in no way used Murdoch's vicious tactics to challenge the monopoly control of the press. Instead they chose at the Labour Party conference to attack 'foreign' owners. It appears OK to attack Fleet Street printers so long as it's British proprietors doing the dirty business!

If, despite all the odds, the sacked printers vote 'No', a complete break with the SOGAT national leadership's tactics needs to be made. A plan of action would centre on:

Campaign

● A campaign for solidarity from the rest of Fleet Street. This would include a rejection of all deals in contradiction to

the strike aims of the Wapping printers for no job loss and full union recognition and independence.

● Full mobilisation of the sacked printworkers independent of Tory anti-union laws. Urgent appeals for solidarity action from the rest of the labour movement. The formation of a democratically-elected strike committee.

● A militant campaign towards the TUC to implement its conference decision, to back the printers and instruct the EPTU to withdraw.

● To campaign for the Labour Party to adopt a plan for the press which challenges the press barons in their monopoly control; and to give active solidarity to the printers.

Such a perspective is not only necessary but possible. During the strike a new layer of leaders has emerged — leaders who can begin to give a much-needed new direction.

Raw deal for Teachers

THE RECENT settlements for teachers — both on pay and conditions — are a sell-out pure and simple. After 18 months of struggle through one form or another, the NUT executive has caved in. It has agreed to a new pay structure which is deliberately constructed to appear 'fair' but in fact denies a large proportion of teachers any significant pay increases — only the worst paid of teachers and of course the top headteachers will gain. The executive, also voted 26-7 for the interim agreement on conditions, which among other things has accepted that teachers will again cover for their absent colleagues — in practice this could mean indefinitely.

The NUT leaders who have agreed the deal have argued that it is necessary to reach agreement with Labour-led authorities, rather than have a deal imposed by the Tories. This all to be reviewed in 1990. They propose putting off the struggle to defend education today to the possible return of a Kinnock-led government tomorrow.

This conception of political strategy is nonsense if only because there is no guarantee that there will be a Labour government in 1990. Moreover it was the pay dispute which brought educational policy to the fore and teachers in struggle were beginning to build some of the important alliances, particularly with parents to defend state education from Tory attacks.

Even if there is a Labour government after the next election, Neil Kinnock has declared at the TUC that 'there will be no blank cheques for any set of workers' — that is no promises to honour any manifesto commitments.

The Coventry agreement's proposed 1990 review means that all aspects of working conditions and pay will be under the microscope. But more still is at stake, with the intervention of industry into education, Tories baying for 'teacher appraisal', and currently the Secretary of State Kenneth Baker attacking the ILEA for daring to have material in schools promoting a

positive image of gays. By agreeing the deal, the NUT executive, provided they

By Ray Sirotkin

can make the deal stick, are setting up a framework which will make all these questions the more difficult.

Throughout the teachers dispute the influence of the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) grew. The STA has existed for 10 years as a current inside the NUT. It remains at this stage as the leadership of those forces inside the union who wish to reject the deal. But opposition is wider than the STA. The Broad Alliance which dominates the executive is under real pressure. Some Alliance members voted against. The right of the union's members to vote on the deal through a

special conference is thus vital.

Hand in hand with campaigning for a special conference must be the fight to hold the line on cover. In practice this means 'absolute' no-cover in a large number of secondary schools and 'first-day' cover in primary and special schools.

The opposition is becoming clearer. Already Divisions and Associations representing 70,000 teachers have voted to reject the deal — the potential is greater. The LAPAC conference of 27 September was well attended and has the capability to organise opposition to the sell-out.

Whereas there is every hope of rejecting a package that nobody admits to wanting, it is notable that Kenneth Baker has come up with a cash offer in return for stringing control of teachers via appraisal etc.

This may well in some cases mean more money, but will mean far worse working conditions (compulsory parents' evenings, cover etc.). A great danger may well be the NUT leadership calling for action to defend their agreement against the government's attempt to impose their own. Neither are in the interests of teachers or education in general.



Sacked printers lobby Labour Party conference.

NALGO pay vote

ALTHOUGH local government 'white collar' staff have voted not to take industrial action over their 1986 pay claim, the vote of 45 per cent for action, 55 per cent against has startled negotiators on both sides. The employers were hoping for a

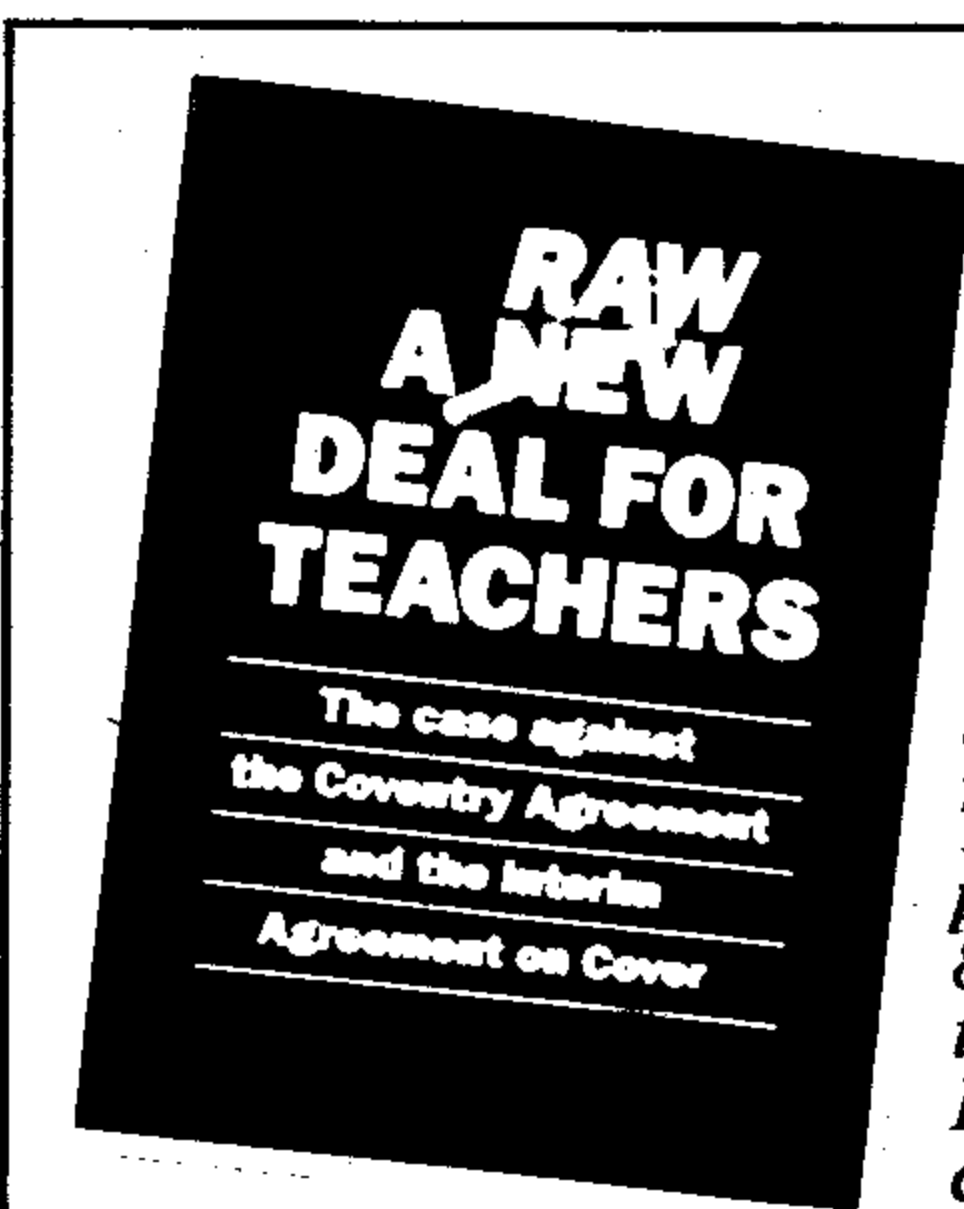
derisory vote for action, and the union negotiators are suspected of expecting one.

In fact 45 per cent was extremely encouraging given that NALGO had decided to hold the 'biggest ballot ever held on pay' over the six week summer holiday period.

This is the worst possible time of year for organising meetings in support of the claim. The ballot ended two months after the rise should have been paid, and we had already been offered six per cent — a figure pitched by the employers to head off a vote for action.

So the 45 per cent vote does represent a growing

resentment at progressive loss of earning power and at low pay in local government. The claim was 12 per cent or £900, whichever is the greater, which, if met, would return all members pay to 1980 levels and help the low paid. The 'flat rate' element is especially important in a union with over 25 per cent in the 'low pay' bracket.



The Inner London Teachers Association has produced this attractive 8-page bulletin which gives the case against the deal. Packed with information, copies can be obtained from ILTA Office, Monson Primary School, Hunsden Road, London SE14 (Tel 01-732 2514).

Socialist ACTION

Reagan defeated on sanctions

THE US Congress decision to stand firm behind their Sanctions Bill and over-ride the Presidential veto is a big boost for the international campaign to isolate the apartheid Pretoria regime. It strengthens the campaign for effective sanctions by Britain, and gives more space to the liberation movement in South Africa itself, writes PHIL WATERHOUSE.

The Senate Bill includes a ban on certain imports (uranium, coal, textiles, Krugerrands, steel, iron, food, military equipment and agricultural products); a ban on imports from companies in either the public or private sector; a ban on exports of nuclear and computer technology to Pretoria or its agencies; the US government is barred from purchasing goods and services from South Africa, and from promoting trade and tourism; and landing rights for South African aircraft are terminated. These provisions apply also to Namibia.

The sanctions are far from 'complete and mandatory' as demanded by the anti-apartheid movement internationally. But they will weaken the Pretoria government, even

though Botha's hysterical response is more a response to their political impact rather than the £300 million Pretoria stands to lose if they're fully implemented.

The Bill was the result of the tremendous pressure internationally, of which the boycott by 31 nations of the Commonwealth Games, and the declaration by 100 nations of the Non-Aligned Movement demanding immediate comprehensive and mandatory sanctions are the latest examples.

In the USA too a mass campaign is on the rise rooted in the unions, in the Black and Chicano communities and amongst youth and students. The New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Committee — composed of 200 union and community groups —

mobilised this support on 14 June when 100,000 took to the streets in the biggest anti-apartheid march ever seen in the US.

A massive divestment campaign across America, involving student actions not seen since the heady days of the sixties, pressuring authorities to withdraw accounts from banks which give loans to South Africa, has forced some US commercial banks to publicly withdraw lines of credit to Pretoria.

The South African government will seek to turn the effects of these sanctions upon its black neighbours through both economic and military retaliation. No-strings aid to the Front Line states is a vital back-up to sanctions. But the US ruling class will not only balk from this, it will try to avoid where it can the provisions of this Bill, just as happened in this country with sanctions-busting over the then Rhodesia twenty years ago. There is nothing further from the minds of the US rulers than the emergence of a non-racial democratic South Africa under the leadership of the ANC.

The anti-apartheid movement will be campaigning to ensure measures are fully monitored and implemented and simultaneously extended into complete and mandatory sanctions by all western governments. The slow, incremental approach, reluctantly conceded under pressure, of Thatcher, Reagan and friends serve only to enable South Africa time to avoid their full punitive effects. With imperialist aid they have been constructing a war-seige economy for years now. Only complete sanctions can fully breach its defences.

Broadwater Farm youth gets 7 years



Demonstrators at the Old Bailey hold a picture of Cynthia Jarrett.

MONDAY 6 October was the first anniversary of the death of Cynthia Jarrett following a police invasion of her home on Broadwater Farm, Tottenham. One hundred and fifty people picketed the Old Bailey on the day. They were protesting against the show trials being conducted on youth arrested since the rebellions of October 1985 sparked by Cynthia Jarrett's death.

A year later nothing has changed. Last week the police won the first conviction, writes ANNE KANE.

In what the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign has called 'a gross miscarriage of justice' Simon McMinn on 2 October became the first youth of the 63 to be tried at the Old Bailey to be sentenced. His sentence of 7 years imprisonment for 'causing affray and burglary' — the 'burglary' of 2 bottles of lemonade added one year — was decided on the sole evidence of a confession, extracted at the hands of an interviewing officer previously found guilty of 'brutality and falsifying evidence'.

Detective Constable Rex Sergeant's previous victim was awarded £3500 damages by courts. In shocking contrast one year later no charge or action against any police officer has followed Mrs Jarrett's death.

The courts are clearly being used as a warning against all black people who defend their rights. Summing up on Simon McMinn's case, the judge explained that he had to mete out heavy sentences to deter such violence happening again. This same judge will preside over all cases to be heard at the Old Bailey.

The decision to take each of the Old Bailey cases separately has been

denounced by the defence campaign as an attempt to underplay the significance of events on the farm. Defendants will be isolated from each other; their response to Mrs Jarrett's death will be presented by the prosecution as acts of individual criminal violence.

The cases rely heavily on 'confessions' extracted from youths held without external contact for five days. Many were arrested after being named in so-called confessions. The most infamous case was that of Howard Kerr, signatory to a 50 page 'confession' implicating himself and twenty others, whose case was dismissed in court when it was proved that he was in Windsor at the time of the rebellion!

The trials at the Old Bailey are likely to last for the next year. The youth on trial for defending their community need your presence at the pickets, funds to help the defence campaign to survive and lobbying inside the labour movement for these cases to be dismissed.

For more information contact: Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, c/o 12-16 Tangmere, BWF Estate, Tottenham, London N17 (telephone 01 808 1667).

Grand Xmas raffle

DURING THE PAST week all Socialist Action sellers have been sent tickets for our grand Xmas raffle. From our next issue, we will be carrying a table showing tickets sold. Our aim is to raise £1500 by the end of the year.

Early reports indicate that the tickets are easy to sell — with a first prize of the new Amstrad personal computer. Many people readily respond to this method of donating monies to financially stabilise Socialist Action.

If you think you could sell some raffle tickets please write to us at Socialist Action, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Tickets sell at 50p or 3 for £1.

As regular readers know, we need money rapidly as most of our reserves had been liquidated due to the suspension for two months of our commercial activity following the split in our editorial board. Creditors are now knocking on the door. Success in this raffle will speed the return to our weekly schedule, which has to be suspended while we meet those debts.

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AEU President, Bill Jordan shakes hands with Chris Brown the AEU convenor at the British Nuclear Fuels Springfields plant. Hundreds of BNFL workers were given the day off to lobby the Labour Party conference. Jordan spoke in favour of nuclear power on conference floor continuing the pro-nuclear policy of the AEU leadership. During the miners' strike this policy resulted in the union's journal being turned over to senior nuclear industry spokespeople, while the AEU leadership failed to deliver effective solidarity to the miners. This gives the lie to the claim by Jordan and co that they're motivated by saving jobs.

A number of delegates protested on conference floor at the attempt to use Tory government-created mass unemployment to justify a pro-nuclear policy. Paul Johnson, a rank and file AEU member and a delegate to conference from Clacton CLP brought the house down as he answered Jordan's stance. Explaining that he works with his hands not with his brain ('which is just as well, otherwise I'd be broke') Johnson said that for the sake of the lives of 230,000 children in Essex where a new nuclear power station is planned 'you can have my bloody job'.

Moving the successful composite 63, Arthur Scargill said that his record on defence of jobs was clear and that a non-nuclear policy would create 25 per cent more jobs in the energy industry. (See page three for the voting).

