

Socialist **ACTION**

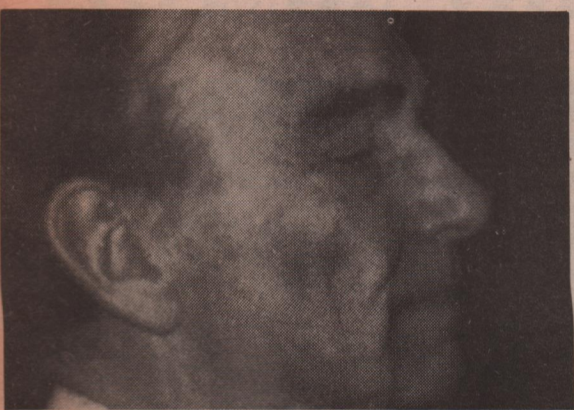
BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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No. 130 7 February 1986 30p

Defend the Unions



STOP

MURDOCH



STOP

HAMMOND

ONE OF the world's most ruthless employers, allied with Britain's most right wing trade union boss, and given the full backing of Thatcher, has declared war on the entire trade union movement. The actions of Rupert Murdoch and Thatcher are no surprise. But the actions of Hammond at Wapping have now taken away the breath even of much of the 'middle ground' of the labour movement.

Just how carefully planned was Murdoch's assault on the print unions, and how totally involved in it are Hammond and the EETPU leadership, came out even more clearly this week.

On Tuesday the *Morning Star*, in an excellent scoop, reprinted in full the text of a confidential letter from Murdoch's solicitors Farrar and co. It was dated 20 December 1985, and it refers to pre-planning 'some months ago'. It stated that the most effective, cheapest, way 'to dispense with the present workforce' would be 'to dismiss the employees while participating in a strike.'

Because it's instant. Because they are not entitled to redundancy pay. Because they have no claim to unfair dismissal. And because Murdoch wouldn't have to bother providing a reason for the sackings.

The letter goes on: 'Given that we are now much nearer the date of a possible explosion ... I thought it would be sensible ... if I reiterated the advice already given.'

It is with this pre-prepared battle strategy, and clear legal advice, that Murdoch prepared the writs which are now flying like confetti and which threaten every union.

But Murdoch can only get away with his action because of one thing: because of the total and complete collaboration given by Hammond and the EETPU. That EETPU leadership is directly linked to the UDM, the SDP and the other union busters. Hammond has gone far too far to back off from anything he has done.

This week the EETPU leadership indicated they must think the trade union movement are idiots. What does Hammond say to the accusation that scab electricians are keeping the Wapping presses rolling? Simply: he didn't know! But in reality it is *only* because of the help that Murdoch is getting from Hammond that the presses can keep rolling at Wapping. It is because of Hammond that union funds will start to come under attack this week.

This week the TUC is almost certain to start disciplinary action against the EETPU. That is correct. But Murdoch and Hammond won't be stopped by this. That will take three things

- Total trade union solidarity action against Wapping — a total boycott of News International and solidarity industrial action.

- Complete TUC backing for any union under attack by the courts. No leaving unions to fight alone as with the miners.

- A public campaign by the TUC against Hammond and his supporters in the EETPU — backing up the militants in that union who are prepared to fight the Hammond machine.

Solidarity with Wapping, the fight against Murdoch and Hammond, is the most urgent task facing the entire labour movement.

Socialist ACTION

Marxism Today goes all the way

AFTER FIVE years of half guarded hints, trying to avoid admitting too openly what everyone knew to be the case, *Marxism Today* has finally come out in the open. Its February 1986 issue carries a 5000 word article by Michael Rustin arguing unambiguously for coalition government between Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance.

Just so there is no misunderstanding Rustin dots the 'i's' and crosses the 't's'. Preparations for this coalition must start as soon as possible because such a government 'could hardly be brought off unless Labour had prepared the ground for it beforehand.'

Rustin discusses the tactics in detail stating: 'Groups on the left, who would no doubt be the most vocal guardians of party commitments, would need to establish minimum terms by which to judge whether a coalition deserved support.'

Rustin's political naivety, not to mention stupidity, is quite unbelievable. He argues: 'It is important not to compromise, for example, on full employment.' Apparently David Owen is now to become a convert to full employment policies — which is rather like asking a tiger to give up meat and become a vegetarian.

However, to complete the issue of *Marxism Today*, Sam Aaronovitch, CPGB economist, has got news for Rustin on the next page of the journal. In an article entitled 'Goodbye to all that' Aaronovitch argues explicitly that it is necessary to bury even the reformist Alternative Economic Strategy (AES). Aaronovitch argues that the commitment to full employment must now be abandoned and that 'opinion is growing that full employment in the 50s sense is not attainable.'

Aaronovitch argues that this new Labour economic policy, which will accept mass unemployment, must be based fundamentally on an alliance with the EEC. He states: 'I want ... to confront one particular controversial issue: Britain's membership of the EEC. I suggest that those who have argued for withdrawal should have second thoughts.'

Aaronovitch argues 'the significance of "European" cooperation has clearly grown so as to match the competitive strength of the USA and Japan.' Therefore the decision must be 'to accept fully the need for involvement in the EEC and to work with all forces available to change its policies.'

Cut out the cackle, because Aaronovitch's policy has about as much chance of controlling the EEC powers as Gerry Adams has of being elected head of the Orange Order, and you do get a real basis on which coalition with the SDP-Liberal Alliance could be negotiated.

Labour should accept mass unemployment. It should be integrated into a capitalist Europe which is both engaged in increasing economic competition with the United States and Japan and arming itself against the USSR. On this policy Labour would become a pure adjunct of capitalist Europe.

Of course on that basis undoubtedly a coalition agreement could be negotiated with the Alliance. They, after all, are precisely the Euro-Tories of British politics. *Marxism Today's* programme is virtually indistinguishable on these basics not only from Owen or Steel but from Hammond, Hattersley, Laird, and the extreme right wing fringe of the Labour Party.

But this is a real fight over the future of the labour movement. There are only two coherent political lines for Labour today. Only two possibilities to gain a majority.

The first line is that of coalition with the Alliance, of the savage attacks on the labour movement this necessitates. A policy that lines up the theoretical journal of a Communist Party with the Eric Hammonds and David Owens.

The second line is one which appears on the masthead of this newspaper and is advanced by others in the labour movement: 'Building an alliance for socialism'. For Labour to turn out to build a majority not for coalition with the Alliance but for socialism. To ally not with capital against the working class and oppressed but with the working class and oppressed against capital. All other orientations are simply eclectic and will be ground away as the years go on.

At long last fundamental strategic questions in British politics are being openly joined and fought out. The left must wake up to the challenge which is now before it.

Labour and the Westland crisis

THE WESTLAND crisis has had a huge impact. But it has also produced questions about the adequacy of Labour's response and what type of strategy should be pursued. Socialist Action asked TONY BENN for his views.

The Westland crisis has obviously had an enormous impact in British politics. How do you see its origins and effects?

Westland was really a crisis of very deep roots, the nature of which has hardly been reported in the press.

The first part was the repudiation of another part of our manufacturing industry by the government.

This company at Yeovil was a clear example of that. Here was a helicopter company that was to be thrown to anybody who wanted to pick it up. I know it was exclusively making weapons of war but that wasn't the main point.

When it went on the market Westland exposed a very powerful conflict between the United States and western Europe. The Americans wanted Westland to be a bridgehead to sell their arms in Europe. The European industrialists made this the occasion for resisting US industrial domination. The fight over the helicopter company brought into play really deep aspects of the crisis in the capitalist world.

The government did not dare do anything because Mrs Thatcher is under orders from Reagan — Star Wars, indebtedness for his help in the Falklands war, and over cruise missiles. She couldn't let Europe beat Reagan yet couldn't denounce the European bid because she is suspected, quite correctly, of not being a passionate federal European. On this contradiction two of her key Cabinet ministers went.

In the process something else happened. We had exposed for all to see the nature of British government — which is really prime ministerial government. This fact, which has never been properly discussed, came to the surface and cabinet responsibility broke down.

Two cabinet ministers left — I was delighted. Heseltine had attacked Molesworth and Brittan attacked the miners. But to have such centrifugal

forces that these people left the cabinet — one having been undermined by the prime minister and the other having been thrown to the wolves by the prime minister to protect herself — was a very important change. Thatcher's own position is deeply damaged.

One thing which came out over Westland, and is being pushed in the movement very much at the moment, is the so called 'European strategy.' I don't know if you saw the arguments in the *Guardian* and *New Socialist* pushing the idea that we've got to line up with European capital against the United States — or more precisely line up with the EEC. What is your attitude to that?

I think there are a lot of myths going around based on a failure of analysis. One myth is the North-South gap — where it is all about the need for the rich countries to help the poor countries, whereas actually the poor countries are being bled white by the rich ones.

I think there is new continental industrial competition and hostility — Japan, western Europe, and the United States as three superpowers. They are suspicious of each other because of their really harsh industrial competition. This is to be dealt with by consolidating and fighting each other.

Heseltine is the arch example of this. A few weeks ago he was apparently seeking Star Wars contracts but he then emerged as the leader of this competition from the EEC.

I don't think the Labour Party should have anything whatever to do with that approach. Our interests should be with the sacked workers in Yeovil under Thatcher, workers in America under Reagan, and workers in west Germany under the right wing policies of Chancellor Kohl. We want a labour internationalism. We don't want to throw our weight behind continental nationalisms.



Please sit tight.

Your Board will shortly be in touch with you to give its considered advice on the Consortium's tender. If you accept the tender, you may frustrate the Board's plan to rescue Westland. The tender has to remain open until February 8th. You can afford to wait.

WESTLAND

I think this reveals a serious gap in our analysis. Of course we want much closer links with Europe — but not just with Europe of the west, not just the industrialists of Europe. We want links with the trade unions in Europe, we want closer trading links with eastern Europe, we want a demilitarisation policy for Europe.

Our policy should be to bring Westland into public ownership. Convert it from a war helicopter company to a company which adapts its helicopters to be third world relief vehicles, and use them to ferry food into every famine area in the world. A sort of British state Bob Geldof programme. That would make sense. It would win wide support.

To say 'let's join with Aerospaziale or Augusta in Italy to fight Sikorski' would merely be to become an adjunct of the type of infighting that characterises capitalist crises.

There is a lot of work to be done on socialist internationalism at the moment.

Finally one of the aspects of the Westland affair that was widely commented on was the lack of any offensive by the Labour party front bench. It seems extraordinary that the government could go through such a crisis without the Labour party proposing a vote of no confidence. It seems feeble even compared to Wilson's offensive against MacMillan during the Profumo crisis. What do you think lies behind it?

It's been true of other things as well. The Belgrano battle was fought by Tam Dalyell. The City scandal was fought by Brian Sedgemore and Dennis Skinner. The Westland crisis was handled as 'let's sit back and enjoy it while they fight it out.' The real issues were not brought out.

It is not a matter of personalities, but the 'let's keep our heads down' school of thought, and 'we'll sit it out', affects parliamentary performance and policy making.

The only sign of activity it permits is in clobber-



Tony Benn

ing the left, because that is part of keeping your head down — keep your head down and see that nobody else puts their head above the parapet. I think it was very disappointing.

But I wouldn't focus on that because the Campaign group is there, and active, and things do emerge from it. But the press doesn't want to report it. We put down a motion on the public ownership of Westland for example, which was not reported.

The argument on the vote of confidence — we have argued it in the past on the miners — is that it just consolidates the Tories and we don't want to be defeated.

But if you don't start things that might lead to a parliamentary defeat then

you might as well not be there at all. Because by definition, once an election has occurred, for the next five years oppositions are going to be defeated by the government because they've got the votes.

What is involved is a question of strategy of how parliament should be used. I think parliament should be a platform and a pulpit which you use to expose what is happening in society and the role of ministers in it and to present your alternatives.

That is different to using it solely to exploit little mini-embarrassments without getting to the bottom of things.


I think the party, however, noticed what you said. That there was not much of a parliamentary fight.



Leon Brittan

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Arguments for



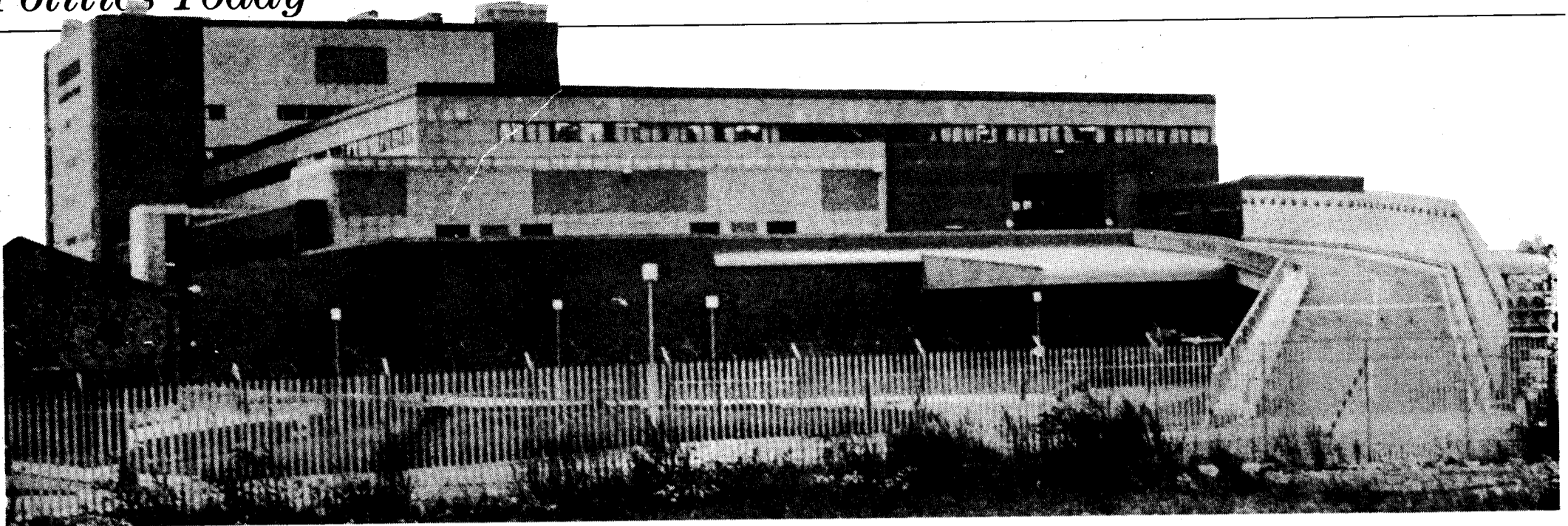
The facts behind the Tory crisis

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War at Wapping: Week 2

INJUNCTIONS WERE common as confetti last week as Rupert Murdoch tried to put the squeeze on print workers now going into the third week of their strike against News International. But they didn't deflect official opposition from the unions. 'I am not saying please, I'm instructing,' said TGWU general secretary Ron Todd, calling on transport workers to respect the picket lines. He pledged to take all the legal consequences which might come.

While the TGWU instruction has had no effect as yet on TNT workers who deliver the scab papers across the country, the transport workers' message could still disrupt the supply of materials such as paper, ink, and petrol, said to be running low at Wapping. At the beginning of this week Murdoch claimed that over four and a half million copies of the *Sun* were spewing out from Wapping and Glasgow, 90,000 higher than the previous record. Last Sunday almost 500,000 copies of Monday's *Times* had been turned out at Wapping, only 35,000 short of requirements. The same day, copies of the education and literary supplements appeared, late, after being boycotted by NGA workers in Northampton.

One victory was the refusal of Manchester print workers to produce scab copies of the *News of the World*. One of the

By Carol Turner

Murdoch injunctions bans the union from this action next week; and a further legal suit is being prepared claiming damages from SOGAT for loss of production. But the lead given by the print unions, and the NUJ so far is simply not enough. Nor is it clear how far the unions are prepared to go in confronting the law or how much backing other unions will give them. So long as scab electricians and journalists continue to work at Wapping, however, business as usual organisation and 'respect pickets' calls from union leaderships fall far

short of what's required.

TUC disciplinary action against the electricians must be taken, and the NUJ should expel all scab reporters working on the four Murdoch titles.

But neither is a bureaucratic fight enough by itself. Hammond is increasingly isolated within the trade union movement as a result of his actions at Wapping. That advantage will be driven home only by action from the trade union leaders, backed by the Labour Party leadership. That means concrete steps to make any disciplinary threat against the EETPU by the TUC this Wednesday bite.

Suspension by itself is not enough. Putting hundreds of thousands of electricians outside the movement would have to be accompanied by moves from the TUC to regroup them into an alternative organisation within the ambit of the trades union movement.

Last Tuesday the *Morning Star* reported that Hammond's 'evidence' to Wednesday's TUC enquiry will try to shift the blame to other print unions. The EETPU document claims that the TUC move is to put the electricians outside the congress 'for political reasons'. 'We cannot instruct those presently employed there

★TRADE UNIONISTS BEWARE!★

RUPERT'S REWARD
RUPERT MURDOCH'S NEWSPAPER WORKERS HAVE MADE HIM MILLIONS IN PROFIT THEIR REWARD -



THE SACK!

to stop work without putting the union's funds in jeopardy,' it claims.

The general council's case against the EETPU leadership is in fact based on the most elementary principles of trade union solidarity. Action by the TUC against the electricians, however, will only hold if it is predicated on an explanation of why the EETPU's road means an attack on the unity and strength of the whole

movement.

Wapping has brought that out into the open. The TUC must keep it there by driving home the full meaning of Hammond's actions.

It is up to the whole trade union movement, led by the TUC, to organise the massive industrial solidarity needed for News International strikers to win against Murdoch and his anti-union friends in the Tory Party.

Into action

ALMOST 500 pickets assembled last Saturday evening in the biggest turn out yet at the Wapping plant. At one point in the early evening demonstrators managed to block the road, only to be repelled by police. Several arrests took place.

Police relations, friendly till then, broke down the same evening. Cheers went up when one inspector was knocked down by a scab lorry turning.

The Wapping picket received delegations from other print workers during the evening, and much support from passing motorists. But the mood of determination was expressed best by one striker who said: 'The Greenam women have been there for three years, so come on lads, we've a record to beat!'

With the strike into its second week, understanding of the need for mass picketing is beginning to grow. A liaison committee of striking rank and file

print workers met for the first time on Tuesday last week to discuss how to increase the action against Rupert Murdoch's operation.

'We think that mass pickets are the answer in this dispute,' Larry Hyett of the SOGAT London machine branch told Socialist Action. 'Brenda Dean has expressed herself as being in favour of "traditional tactics" in this strike. As far as we're concerned that is what winning the strike is about.'

'We have set up the liaison committee to argue for that course of action at chapel and branch meetings. And we are trying to build support for the strike through the miners

support committee network. Already the Lambeth support group is springing into action. We have some public meetings in the pipeline.'

SOGAT London machine branch is currently discussing printing an alternative *London Post* to put the union and the strikers' case. The name is a nice irony: the same as Murdoch's own new title, planned to come out this March. Labour movement organisations are invited to make donations and send messages of support.

● A joint union coordination office has been established to coordinate the strike. Information, donations, messages of support, and requests for speakers, contact them on: 01-2534 0261.

● The SOGAT London machine branch can be contacted at 84 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 (phone: 01-928 5144).

Solidarity in the north west

A RECENT meeting of the north west regional council of the TUC overwhelmingly gave full backing to the print workers strike. Only three EETPU delegates at the meeting voted against.

The resolution, put forward to the meeting by the TUC regional council officers, noted that the 'dismissal of 5000 members engaged in an official dispute is industrial dictatorship' and 'a matter of grave concern' to all unions.

Among other actions, the regional called on affiliates to 'offer all

physical, moral and financial' support to unions involved in the dispute, and agreed to organise regular liaison meetings with the unions concerned 'to coordinate any necessary action'.

The north west region TUC is calling on all trade unionists in the area to boycott News International titles and not to cross picket lines.

John Tocher, an AUEW divisional organiser for the north west and presidential candidate in the union's forthcoming elections, has recently written to Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins offering 'any assistance whatever' from engineers.

TNT boycott

A MASS meeting of AUEW members at the engineering firm of Colman Fasteners voted unanimously to boycott the TNT transport firm last week, in solidarity with the striking print workers at News International.

TNT, used to transport

Jobs slaughter

FLEET Street composing room workers face job slaughter as the latest range of computerised type-setting

By Bob Smith, Birmingham NGA

equipment arrives — that is, if production is not already moved to places like Rupert Murdoch's Fortress Wapping.

Apart from setting and correcting articles by computer, advertisements can be displayed and whole pages assembled, complete with illustrations and photographs, direct input from advertising and editorial departments. The completed page is developed photographically and a metal plate made for the press room.

The hot metal and its first replacement, the film and paper systems, is now outdated. The skills of past generations are fast becoming obsolete. As Wapping shows, a small group of scabs can now produce what it previously took hundreds of highly skilled crafts people to produce.

The National Graphi-

cal Association, which organises apprentice-trained skilled workers in this area has attempted to ensure that its members take up new opportunities elsewhere. But those very areas face wholesale slaughter if the EETPU leaders encourage their own members to scab on the NGA. The wages, hours, and conditions — fought for over generations — will be lost overnight if tame company union deals like the one Eric Hammond seems to sanction at the new News International plant are introduced.

The same is true for SOGAT whose traditional area, the publishing department, needs only a few supervisors and dispatchers when up-to-the-minute bundling and loading equipment is installed. SOGAT members are equally under threat from Wapping type deals.

But it's not just the print industry which will be decimated. Such agreements will have an impact elsewhere. Every single print worker, and every other trade unionist too, has an interest in supporting the fight that is now on at Wapping.



Yorkshire LPYS conference

AT THE YORKSHIRE LPYS conference which took place last weekend, delegates from 32 branches debated 23 resolutions. The conference was smaller than the previous year, despite the fact of mass uprisings of youth in the inner-cities and youth mobilisations in the Anti Apartheid Movement as well as student struggles against grant and education cuts.

By Mike Hooson, Delegate, Horsforth LPYS

None of these campaigns were reflected in the size, composition or mood of the conference, which remained business as usual, with mundane debates and abstract calls for socialism. In fact resolutions calling on the YS to express basic solidarity with South Africa by affiliating locally and nationally to the AAM were opposed, as were resolutions on solidarity work with Latin America and Ireland. Also rejected was a resolution defending the elementary right of black people to self-organisation in the Labour Party.

This indicates the LPYS leadership's refusal to take the opportunities to turn outward towards the forces which could develop the YS into a powerful mass current. Such an approach was posed by the black section candidate for the youth position on the Labour Party national executive, Kingsley Abrams, at a *Youth Action* fringe meeting. He explained the need to 'support all forces in struggle nationally and internationally' and that 'this needed a radical change in the leadership of the LPYS'. Only in this manner can the LPYS defend itself from attacks by the party leadership. These attacks were outlined by Dennis Skinner: a further cut of £3000 in the YS budget, attacks on the position of youth officer and stopping the subsidy to *Socialist Youth*.

The course of action posed by *Youth Action* supporters — in resolutions calling for solidarity with South Africa, Latin America and Ireland, as well as those defending black youth in Britain against police harassment and the right of black people to organise within black sections — shows the way forward for the YS. The speakers at the *Youth Action* fringe meeting, attended by over 40 people, included strikers from Silentnight and a representative of the Cherry Grove Support Committee. These are the very forces the YS needs to orientate towards. *Youth Action* supporters will fight on this basis to build and defend the YS from attacks from the party leadership.

Student benefits cuts

STUDENTS in higher education are faced with another round of government attacks. The Fowler Review contains proposals for two phases of cuts, the first of which is due to start in September this year, when all students will be disallowed from claiming supplementary and housing benefit in the eight weeks of holiday at Xmas and Easter.

This represents a loss of £216 to students in London. But those in halls of residence will lose all rights to claim benefits throughout the academic year, amounting to a potential £340.

Cuts phase two is planned for after the next general election. All students in higher education will lose all rights to claim supplementary and housing benefit all year long. London students stand to be £1105 a year worse off as a result. Students will be pushed into low-paid, low-security jobs, or back into the home and dependency on their parents.

These cuts will further restrict access to higher education, making it available only to the shrinking elite who can afford to pay. And these proposals go hand in hand with plans to privatise the universities.

But the student fightback has already begun all over the country. Last Friday, 2500 came out in London to protest. The National Union of Students is organising a high-profile national campaign. Resistance is massive, reaching even into the ranks of Tory students.

A mass lobby of parliament and a rally and march on the DHSS and the Department of Education and Science is planned for 26 February. Support the march! Fight the cuts!

LABOUR WOMEN'S ACTION COMMITTEE:

Executive plans for action

LAST Saturday the Labour Women's Action Committee held its first executive meeting since its January AGM. The meeting was attended by regional organisers from Yorkshire, the North West, the West Midlands and the South West. Discussion at the meeting centred on 'shadow' elections to be held at this year's Labour women's conference.

Clearly the vital issue is to ensure that the 'shadow' elections, and the issues behind them, get the maximum publicity in the labour movement as a whole.

Discussions have already begun with a number of unions that have supported LWAC's demands in the past to per-

By Jude Woodward, WAC Executive (personal capacity)

sue them to participate. This work will go on, with the aim of building up links with women in the unions in particular. A LWAC fringe meeting will be held at the Women's TUC in March.

Alongside this, the issue will be raised at all the coming regional Labour Party conferences. LWAC is providing speakers for many of the fringe meetings being organised jointly by the Campaign group, CLPD

and the Labour Left Coordination.

LWAC will be seeking the broadest possible support for the campaign around the 'shadow' elections, by seeking statements in support from individuals and women's campaigns, and by campaigning for the unions to participate. It is proposed to hold a press conference to launch the campaign in the last month before women's conference itself.

A discussion was begun about the activities that LWAC will organise at the Labour women's conference. Among the proposals is that the LWAC revue will be updated and each of the regions will be asked to write and put on their own sketch for the show.



Benn welcomes shadow elections

THE PROPOSAL of the Women's Action Committee (WAC), adopted by last year's Labour women's conference, to run shadow elections at the women's conference for the women's places on the national executive must be strongly supported on every ground.

First the way the women's members of the national executive have been chosen by bargaining between the trade union leaders is a disgrace.

Secondly the proposals are a very good example of doing it yourself. Don't wait, just do it.

I think there is no doubt that the shadow slate that will be elected at the women's conference by this process will become

the left's slate. The left is bound to support those who have been elected by the women's conference on principle.

In a sense this is a decentralisation of what otherwise has been a slate worked out by the left through negotiation at the top. I think also it is a model of something else. I have put forward informally, and strongly supported, the idea that the whole left slate should be established by shadow elections.

I think we should consult constituency parties instead of having a slate negotiated for the shadow cabinet or even for the national executive. Instead of negotiating with the *Tribune* group, or working it all out in the privacy of our own private discussions, we should put it to constituency parties.

I think women have

given a lead to the whole movement. It will have a very profound effect. Don't wait. Produce something with a democratic legitimacy.

When you look back over the last few years, the lead that has been taken by the Greenham women, by Women Against Pit Closures, has fundamentally changed a whole range of ideas. But this hasn't been fully reflected yet in the selection of women candidates.

When you look at the women's contribution to the left, to the alliance for socialism, it's been absolutely fundamental.

The Campaign group supports the demands of WAC. I've no doubt that the Campaign group will support the shadow elections being organised by WAC at the women's conference.

LABOUR PARTY BLACK SECTION:

The issues in the year ahead

THE THIRD national conference of Labour Party Black Section takes place on 8 March at Lambeth Town Hall. This year marks a time of decision of many issues inside the black section movement.

Firstly, the gains made at last year's Labour Party

By Mike Wongsam

annual conference, where NUPE and NUR delegations voted for black section resolutions, will this year be put to the test. Those delegations voted for black sections according to decisions of their executives.

In 1986, the issue will go before the unions' national conferences. It is by no means certain that last year's executive decisions will be translated into this year's conference ones. In-

deed, the general move to the right inside the trade unions, combined with the manoeuvres of the Labour Party leadership such as the formation of the 'black and Asian advisory committee', means that a major thrust around campaigning within the unions is the only way to consolidate last year's voting figures.

Also featuring strongly at black section conference will be policy debates: around South Africa and the black section attitude towards the Anti Apartheid Movement in Britain, and policing and the inner-cities. What's at stake at this year's conference is the immediate political orientation of the black sections movement — probably more so than at any previous national conference.

Support grows in the regions

AT least three regional conferences will be taking resolutions in favour of Labour Party black sections this year. Supportive demands

have gone forward to the East and West Midlands Labour Party regional conferences, and to London.

There will be increased representation for black

By Carol Turner

people too on the London executive this year. Linda Bellos from Vauxhall is standing unopposed for the women's section of the regional executive, and Madhar Patil from Southall is standing unopposed for the West London place.

A third black member, Bob Lees who is a supporter of the *Militant* newspaper and hence no friend of Labour Party Black Section, is also stan-

Boycott Labour's advisory committee!

A RESOLUTION from Vauxhall to the recent national committee meeting of black sections applauded the work of the campaign which 'in just two years has increased the representation of Afro-Caribbean and Asian people in the party and forced the national party to set up an NEC black and Asian advisory committee'.

I went on to call for non-cooperation with the advisory committee,

however, 'unless and until black members of the party have the sole say in the

By Annie Brady

committee's terms of reference and representation'. Black section believes that this can only be achieved by full consultation with constituency parties, the resolution went on.

An amendment from Birmingham Ladywood black section strengthened the Vauxhall resolution. Pointing out that the very

title was abhorrent 'because it divided the Afro-Caribbean and Asian party members' when the basis of the black section campaign was to 'unite them on the basis of their own self-definition of black', the Ladywood amendment called for an 'active boycott'.

Now black sections will be mounting a campaign to kill off the Labour leadership's token concession to the demands of black party members. Black section national committee is circulating CLPs and contacting all supporters around the country asking them to withdraw their nominations to the advisory committee and support the boycott.

AT ITS recent national committee meeting, Labour Party Black Section agreed to circulate throughout the party a petition in support of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, recently expelled from Birmingham-Sparkbrook Labour Party:

Petition:

We the undersigned are appalled by the decision of Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party to expel from membership councillor Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, both long-standing and respected members of the Labour Party. Cllr Amir Khan is a founder-member of the Sparkbrook Labour Party black section and Kevin Scally is a leading member of the Labour Committee on Ireland. We believe these expulsions will cause considerable damage to the Labour Party at a time when the need is for a united campaign around socialist policies to defeat the Tories and the Alliance in the forthcoming local elections and the next general election. We therefore call upon Sparkbrook CLP to reverse the decision.

● Copies of the petition should be circulated around local Labour Parties, at regional conferences, and among affiliated organisations, and returned to: Labour Party Black Section, 10a Palmerston Road, Wood Green, London N22.

Correction

In a recent issue we gave an incorrect address to contact the Broadwater Farm Estate Defence Committee. The correct address is: Defence Committee, c/o Broadwater Farm Estate Youth Association, 12-16 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm Estate, London N17 (phone 01-885 3752). We apologise for any inconvenience.



News

Liverpool:

'Labour left' drops its mask



Mass demonstration in favour of Liverpool council — and Tribune's witch-hunt of it

THE LIVERPOOL Labour Co-ordinating Committee has submitted its evidence to the Committee of Enquiry into Liverpool Labour Party.

This long-awaited 'evidence' is a disgrace to the labour movement. It is the purest and most hypocritical witch-hunting attack. There are plenty of political issues to take up with the *Militant* leadership of Liverpool council. In some cases, such as the appointment of Sam Bond against the wishes of the black community, the politics of this leadership have disastrously divided the Liverpool working class.

But the enquiry into Liverpool, just like the

LCC's evidence, is not about these political mistakes. It has been laun-

By John Nolan

ched because the Labour council has built more houses in two years than the rest put together; because it has created two thousand more jobs and because it has held down Liverpool rents and rates, in accord with Labour Party conference decisions.

The LCC's hypocrisy has to be clearly grasped. It is the main component

of 'Liverpool Labour Left'. It shrouds its attack on *Militant* in its left credentials on such issues as black sections and women's rights. But its platform is based on total support for Neil Kinnock, right or wrong. And Neil Kinnock has been implacably opposed to black sections and the bulk of women's demands.

What are the LCC's charges? First, it says the District Labour Party constitution allows much larger numbers of trade union than constituency delegates and that *Militant* newspaper sympathisers comprise most of these delegates; two, that people have been intimidated at DLP meetings; three, that non-*Militant* supporters have been excluded from local government panels. Finally, it alleges what it calls 'corruption' — that *Militant* has used its position for private gain.

Let us take these one by one. First trade union affiliations. Since there are six million trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party and only a few hundred thousand constituency members, it is hardly surprising that DLP and constituency constituencies right across the country allow for large union delegations.

Indeed the critics of Liverpool DLP are strangely silent when the right wing benefits from this.

Take, for example, Coventry DLP. Here, the left have a majority of

constituency delegates but the right have an overall majority through the unions, who send twice as many delegates as the constituencies. Many of the Coventry DLP delegates are from old factory branches where the workplace has closed down but the branches are kept alive by local full time union officials!

The left in Coventry fights for its views by striving to win trade unionists to them. Why not the LCC?

The LCC's second charge is that people have been 'intimidated'. They reduce this to three examples, only one of which has resulted in court action. This latter did not take place at a DLP meeting and the 'evidence' for the other cases gets flimsier as it progresses.

Socialists who might be excused for lack of familiarity with Liverpool have to understand that the council has very widespread support in the Liverpool working class, among Liverpool Labour Party rank-and-file members and in particular among council manual workers. Whether or not you agree with *Militant*'s politics, this is simply a fact.

The LCC's largely professional supporters prefer more genteel academic debate to the hard, noisy process of argument and discussion that goes on in a DLP among workers who support a council which is prepared to do battle with the Tories on their behalf,

and who say so in 'ungentlemanly' terms.

Cases of physical or sexual harassment must be taken up and dealt with case by case in the labour movement. But what is extraordinary, given the heat with which the debate is conducted, is that the massed guns of the LCC can only come up with three cases of 'intimidation' of which two are unsupported.

The third allegation, that non-*Militant* supporters were excluded from council panels, looks even flimsier if you realise that out of 49 councillors facing surcharge, no less than 37 are not supporters of *Militant*! Once again, we have to ask why the Labour Party and the LCC have only looked at Liverpool. In Coventry the right recently excluded thirteen left wingers from the local government panel, on dubious excuses such as their 'inexperience'. One of them, George Linfield, nominated three years running, is actually a sitting councillor.

The real issue is this: do DLPs, Local Government Committees and local parties have the right to ensure that they have councillors who will carry out party policy? The LCC's charge comes very close indeed to attacking the party for exercising its democratic right to select, deselect and reselect to ensure it has an accountable council.

The fourth charge, corruption, is potentially the most serious. But the LCC's submission shows they don't even understand what corruption is. Perhaps this is why they don't recognise it anywhere else in the country.

They claim the *Militant* promotes its own supporters in the council workforce to increase its influence. Now, of course, if any group or current of opinion tries to monopolise positions of authority or responsibility, excluding all others in a sectarian manner, then it should be fought using the normal democratic methods of the labour movement.

But, excuse us, this is not corruption. Corruption is not promoting your views but lining your pockets, which *Militant* supporters conspicuously do not do, unlike many of their opponents. Indeed, you can't help feeling that the LCC is peeved because the *Militant* are doing exactly what the LCC would like to do in their place.

The *Militant* is sectarian; true. But sectarianism is not corruption. Moreover, Kinnock and the LCC are a million miles more sectarian. They don't just want to exclude their opponents from the council, nor even from minor positions of influence. They want to kick them out of the Labour Party!

The LCC has now come full circle. Three years ago it said it would support the leader but oppose expulsions. Faced with a choice between these two irreconcilable demands, it has now drawn its conclusions.

IRELAND UNFREE

FOOT-COLD we tramp. Hyde Park to Kilburn Square. Oxford Trades Council banner ripped apart — captured by fascists. Bottles hurled into the women's contingent. The annual Bloody Sunday demo, this year in London — the fourteenth anniversary. Each year it seems a new far left group to add to the paper sellers.

One year I remember, we shivered and imagined all the different permutations for the names of newspapers. There was *Socialist-workers-action-challenge-fight-power-vanguard-press*. We never thought of *Workers Hammer*. Not a very fitting commemoration of fourteen demonstrators shot down in cold blood by the British army.

By Martin Collins

In Derry, it is said, each person can remember where they were on the day of the fatal demonstration. Where they were when the news came out. How they felt when the newspaper editors thought army press and informal briefings more reliable than several thousand eye witnesses. More reliable in some cases than their journalists on the spot. No room here for the intrepid reporter. Even the whitewash Widgery report, which tried to clear the army of responsibility, was packaged for public consumption and cynically used to reinforce the war effort.

And fourteen years later, with the 'banana skin factor' in operation, and the watchful eye of the press poised to reveal lying in high places, drivers of motor cars might still be riddled with bullets and the news confined to a couple of paragraphs in the 'quality' papers.

This year, the demonstration was bigger than last. Two thousand people marched. The Revolutionary Communist Party out to 'change the face of British politics' declares 'we have the programme to build a real alternative working class party. But we need two more things: We need more supporters ... We need money.'

By far the biggest section of the march, dynamic, young, intransigently anti-imperialist and fully nationally mobilised. They chanted 'We hate Kin-nock, we hate Kin-nock, we are the Kin-nock ... haters'. 'We hate Pais-ley, we hate Pais-ley, we are the Paisley ... hate-ers'. Any bisyllabic monicker could be added to the programme.

We march two months after the Anglo Irish Accord. For the RCP, it is easy to understand: another in a long list of ... etc etc. But for the Labour left, noticeable by its absence on this cold and windy Sunday, it is not so simple. David Blunkett who banned last year's Bloody Sunday march in Sheffield sponsored this year's in London. He is undecided on the Accord. Whilst Jimmy Knapp of the NUR and Labour's Northern Ireland spokesperson Peter Archer are making their support for the Accord contingent upon a 'real improvement' of the situation for northern nationalists, Neil Kinnock visits Derry and tells the RUC he backs the use of 'every force' against the nationalist struggle.

Scuttling back to the dung pile of bipartisanship, Labour's leaders carry the stench of the killers. Yet violent words will not end the violence.

Marching through Maida Vale the slogans of the revolutionary vanguard denouncing the 'savagery of British imperialism' raising only the giggles of a bemused proletariat pausing from 'Big Match Live' to see the spectacle on the streets below.

If a majority of British people annually inform Gallop pollsters they wish to see Britain out of Ireland — why then is the movement getting wet through, greeted only by the writing on the wall sprayed freshly for the occasion by Red Action?

The RCP used to have a slogan 'Bring the Irish War to Britain'. Others now tell us we need an 'Irish war inside the Labour Party.' For the RCP, the Labour leaders always betray. But apart from more supporters, more money and presumably more Bloody Sunday demos there are no remedies.

Only mass action in Britain can help get the troops out of Ireland. That will not be built unless the means are found to break up the blanket complacency and inaction of the labour and trade union leaderships. It is no good seeking refuge in a 'constructive' opposition and ignoring the issue of the Accords — they represent an attack on the Irish democratic cause and reverse the direction of Labour policy. Abstention shows either ignorance or dishonesty.

But equally fighting to oppose the Accords and turn policy gains in defence of democratic rights into action does not mean a retreat to the futility of the left ghetto and empty gestures. Organisations like the Labour Committee on Ireland which have made ground in the last period, will be under increasing pressure from the right to reach a compromise with the Accord. It is not an occasion to contemplate retreat.

Kingsley Abrams slams witch-hunt

AS THE black section candidate for the LPYS seat on Labour's national executive committee I would like to distance myself from the Merseyside LCC contribution to the enquiry into the Liverpool district party. I completely oppose this enquiry, which is simply a front for more expulsions of socialists in the party because of their political beliefs.

The black section youth committee has issued a statement which outlines the basis of my campaign for the NEC seat. Any support which I receive is on the basis of the statement issued by the black section youth committee.

The opposition of the black section to all witch-hunts in the Labour Party has been made clear. The enemies of the working class are the Tories — and our time and energy should be spent on smashing this Tory government, not indulging ourselves in internal battles.

That means building a united movement of our class in socialist struggles. It means addressing ourselves to actual struggles: whether it's the miners, print workers, black youth in rebellion or the struggle of the rate-capped councils such as Lambeth and Liverpool.

The campaign to get me elected onto the NEC is

now into its second week of regional YS conferences. At the London regional conference black section resolutions and

By Kingsley Abrams

amendments were defeated. Support was also denied to the defence campaigns in our inner-cities, and *Militant* supporters condemned the 'riots'. *Militant* also refused to work with the left to fight the witch-hunt.

At the Yorkshire regional conference the resolution in favour of black sections was defeated by four votes.

These decisions will further weaken the LPYS. A strong Young Socialists able to defend itself against the present witch-hunt in the form of budget cuts and a threat to the youth organiser's jobs will only be a YS which supports and unites with all youth in struggle. That means exactly supporting the defence campaigns and the self-organisation of black people.



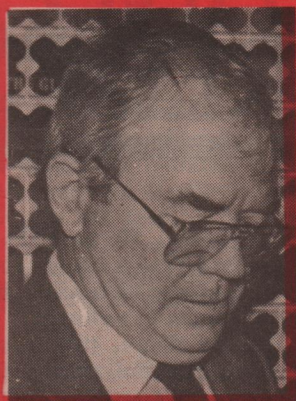


Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

Eric Hammond

THE HAMMOND CONNECTION

The dispute at Wapping has brought the union busting activity of the EETPU leadership right to the centre of the labour movement. But what is still not widely appreciated is the directly political dimension of the offensive of Hammond and his supporters. The EETPU leadership, and David Owen's SDP, stand in the centre of a web of connections extending both to the right wing of the trade unions and to purely scab organisations such as the UDM. The aim of these organisations is to totally transform the political and trade union character of the British labour movement. It is an integrated strategy. JOHN ROSS investigates the Hammond-Owen connection and the background it provides to the battle at Wapping.

WHEN the EETPU signed its first union-busting deal in the printing industry — with Eddie Shah's projected paper *Today* — this agreement was directly set up between two members of the SDP.

Lord Harris of Greenwich, a director of Shah's Messenger group, established a meeting between the EETPU and Shah through John Grant, the EETPU's press officer. Both Harris and Grant are SDP members — Grant having been appointed under the regime of his long time friend, and former EETPU general secretary, Frank Chapple.

Grant was also selected by the EETPU to present its case on Wapping on BBC television on Sunday. Grant is the chair of the Association of Social Democratic Trade Unionists.

If it seems extraordinary that a major union should have as its press officer a member of the SDP, it is in reality only a part of a long term strategy towards the trade unions that the SDP has pursued. Key parts of the SDP leadership already had long term relations with right wing trade union executives before they split to form a new party.

SDP leader Bill Rodgers was sponsored by the General and Municipal Workers Union when in the Labour Party. He was for many years the Labour right's chief organiser of votes at party conference. Shirley Williams was sponsored by APEX. She was herself consistently elected to the women's section of the NEC through union votes.

Ian Wrigglesworth, another SDP founder, told the *Sunday Telegraph* when the party was founded that he expected, 'a degree of sympathy — and eventual financial support — from the Post Office Engineers Union, from



All these SOGAT jobs have gone to scabs at the Wapping plant

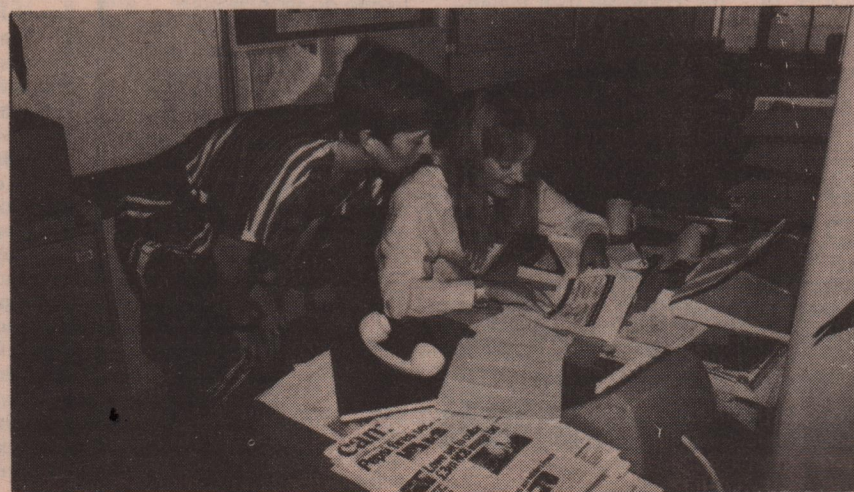
ASTMS (much to the annoyance of Clive Jenkins), from the National Union of Railwaymen, from APEX, and from the AUEW.'

While these short term hopes of the SDP were dashed there is no doubt that one of the key reasons — probably the key reason — that David Owen was so emphatic that the SDP should not merge with the Liberals following the 1983 election was because of his aim to pick up trade union support and links.

An openly capitalist, and long established, party such as the Liberals could not easily establish relations with the trade unions in the way that the SDP could — despite the fact that it was revealed in September 1985 that David Steel had held discussions with Len Murray.

The most spectacular success for Owen's policy of building links to the right wing of the unions, came this January when the SDP gained its first member on the TUC general council — John Lyons of the Engineers and Managers Association. Lyons, together with Hammond, had of course led the assault on the miners at the 1984 TUC congress.

This SDP offensive towards the unions was spearheaded by its trade union officer Tony Halmos — who was recruited to the post from the policy staff of the TUC. Halmos claimed, after Lyons joined the SDP, that other officials of similar standing in the unions were strong supporters of the SDP. While Halmos is probably exaggerating, and certainly has cause to, what is clear is that the SDP and their Liberal partners have a very conscious policy of seeking to split the TUC as well as certain individual unions within it. They are systematically working on



that policy.

The most open manifestations of this came following the UDM split from the NUM. The SDP jumped into the local government by-election campaigns in Mansfield and Ashfield in Notts with clear declarations of support for the new organisation.

The SDP had set out to create links with what became the UDM right from the beginning of the miners strike. Already in April 1984, with the strike only one month old, Bill Rodgers called for the unions to reconsider their relationship with the Labour Party claiming that: 'American trade unions, now under the shrewd leadership of Lane Kirkland, have no constitutional relationship with the Democratic Party and choose where to place their support. The time has come to seriously examine a similar role for the trade unions here.'

At the September 1984 SDP conference a floor collection was held for the 'National Working Miners Committee'. The SDP also organised a conference fringe meeting for the scab organisation — the 'committee' being publicly praised at the conference by Williams and Rodgers.

The relation with the UDM also gave the SDP another connection with the right wing of the unions. Prendergast, co-leader with Roy Lynk of the UDM organisation, was vice chair of Mainstream — the right wing grouping in the unions whose founding chairperson was Terry Duffy and which took its name from the organisation of the same name established by chief witch-hunter John Golding in the POEU/NCU.

Prendergast maintained his position in Mainstream despite the UDM's

break from the NUM. The EETPU in January this year organised an 'energy conference' with the UDM.

The EETPU was also sought out for talks by another scab organisation, the Professional Association of Teachers. In August 1985 this announced that it was seeking talks with the EETPU over how no-strike deals like the one the union had signed with Eddie Shah could be applied to teachers.

Jimmy Knapp of the NUR and Ray Buckton of ASLEF have also written to Norman Willis for enquiries into reports that Hammond has met the scab Federation of Professional Railway Servants — although Hammond has denied this.

In addition to the link with the UDM the Alliance also directly set out to exploit the struggle in the TUC over postal ballots. Here, once more, the EETPU, together with the AUEW right wing, played the central role in pulling together an extreme right wing grouping in the TUC. In addition to the AUEW and EETPU themselves various other right wing unions — John Lloyd's Engineers and Managers Association, the British Airline Pilots Association, the merchant shipping officers association NUMAST, and the First Division Association of the civil service all let it be known that they intended to apply for state cash for ballots.

At the end of July 1985, commenting on the clash, David Steel openly called for a split of the TUC between: 'an open minded progressive group ready to talk to the Alliance and the government as well as Labour and an old fashioned, socialist group which revolves around Labour politics.'

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

The campaign to hold talks with the unions has been one of the Alliance's cutting edges. It is one that has got a response from Alistair Graham, general secretary of the CPSA. In September last year Graham called for the unions to hold talks with parties other than Labour because of the future role that the Alliance might play in parliament.

These remarks were immediately welcomed publicly by Ian Wrigglesworth of the SDP leadership. At its conference last year several SDP leaders stated that they would welcome talks with unions who were 'more democratic and modern' such as the EETPU, AUEW, and CPSA.

This initiative in 1985 was in fact the second round of the offensive of the SDP to get talks with trade unions. The party had launched its first campaign for such talks immediately after its foundation.

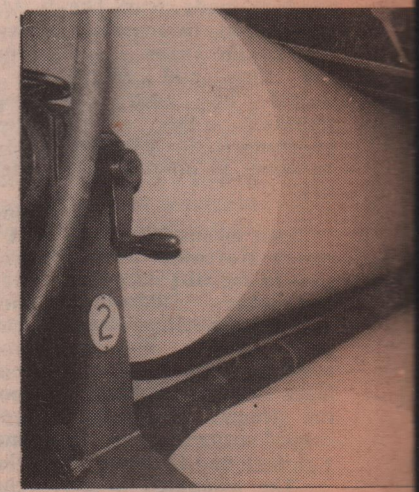
By September 1983 Shirley Williams could claim at the SDP conference that 15 trade unions, covering two million workers, had responded in one form or other to the proposals put forward by the SDP for trade union 'reform'. The unions were reported by the *Financial Times* to include the AUEW, CPSA, NALGO, NUT, NAS/UWT, the Bakers Union, the United Road Transport Union, the



Communication Managers Association, the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union, and the First Division Association of the civil service.

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

In addition to these official approaches to union leaderships Owen helped maintain his personal links through his continued membership, after the 1983 election, of the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding. Other members of this committee included Frank Chapple of the EETPU, Terry Duffy of the AUEW, Bill Sirs of the ISTC, Kate Losinska of the CPSA, and Gerry Eastwood of the Association of Pat-



D-OWEN ON

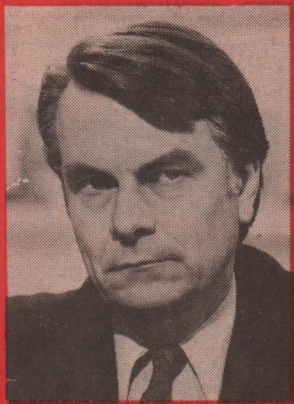


Photo: GIM COOKSON

David Owen

ternmakers and Allied Craftsmen.

This committee, which also included former Labour foreign secretary Lord Stewart, and former Labour leader of the House of Lords, Lord Peart, had been originally set up through Joe Godson, the former labour attaché at the US embassy in London.

Another key link between the SDP and the right wing in the unions has been through the various organisations campaigning for proportional representation — and for coalition government. The SDP 'campaign for fair votes' was launched after the June 1983 election. It was chaired by Roy Jenkins and had the support of Frank Chapple. In October 1983 Gavin Laird, general secretary of the AUEW, announced that he was accepting the post of vice-chair of the campaign.

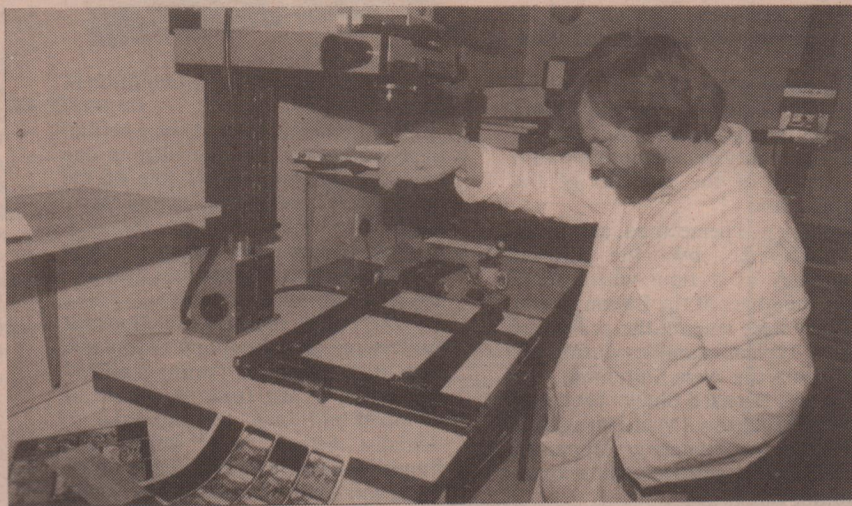
Earlier, in April 1982, the AUEW had considered altering its rules so that it could give financial backing to non-Labour Party MPs.

In addition to these open links between the SDP and the right wing inside the unions there is also no doubt that Owen and his advisors have been tailoring their trade union policies in line with their strategic goals of politically splitting the labour movement.

The SDP has sought, even more systematically than the Tories, to break the links between the Labour Party and the unions. At the time of the passing of the 1984 Trade Union Act through parliament the SDP sought to persuade the Tories to adopt the principle of 'contracting in' for payment of the political levy. When the Act became law, and the voting on the political funds started, the SDP attempted to launch a systematic campaign for a 'no' vote.

This policy of open attacks on the unions — the SDP also called earlier than the Tories for the use of the law against the miners — was developed right from the launching, in February 1982, of the SDP 'three point programme' calling for compulsory secret postal ballots for all internal union elections, compulsory strike ballots, and opposition to the political levy.

In addition to the legal stick however, the SDP also attempted to produce carrots for specific unions it sought links with. Its entire trade union package, of course, was based on the practice of the EETPU and AUEW right wing. The SDP's December 1982 white paper also contained one significant difference compared to the September 1982 document. This was that it allow-



ed unions to continue to appoint their general secretaries. John Torode of the *Guardian* explained this shift as being due to the fact that 'the SDP has set its sights on NALGO and NALGO is wedded to the appointments system'.

But whatever the individual moves it has been the relation with the EETPU that has been the core of the SDP's policy — a link directly organised through John Grant. Going beyond the obvious virtual identity on trade union law, the EETPU's leadership was the one union that was prepared to say openly exactly what the SDP wanted to hear on politics. The key here was a June 1983 centre page article by Frank Chapple in *The Times* which spelt out how the EETPU leadership proposed to proceed.

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

Chapple concluded that 'both wings of the movement will have to be more independent of each other' and that 'if we had not been so completely tied to the party's coat tails, we could have urged our members to vote SDP or Liberal if they had a better chance of winning. Over and over again our loyalty to Labour let the Tories in on 9 June (1983).'

The Alliance had received backing from the Labour right wing in the June 1983 election itself. The *Guardian* called for a vote for either the Alliance or Labour. The *New Statesmen* called for votes for the SDP or Liberals in certain constituencies. More significantly Roy Grantham, general secretary of APEX, called for a vote for a series of Liberal candidates against Labour. But it was Frank Chapple — who had naturally called for a vote for John Grant in his election — who was prepared to spell out all the consequences. The EETPU leadership, both in the trade union and political field, has been pursuing a course which is entirely consistent with Chapple's publicly expressed views ever since.

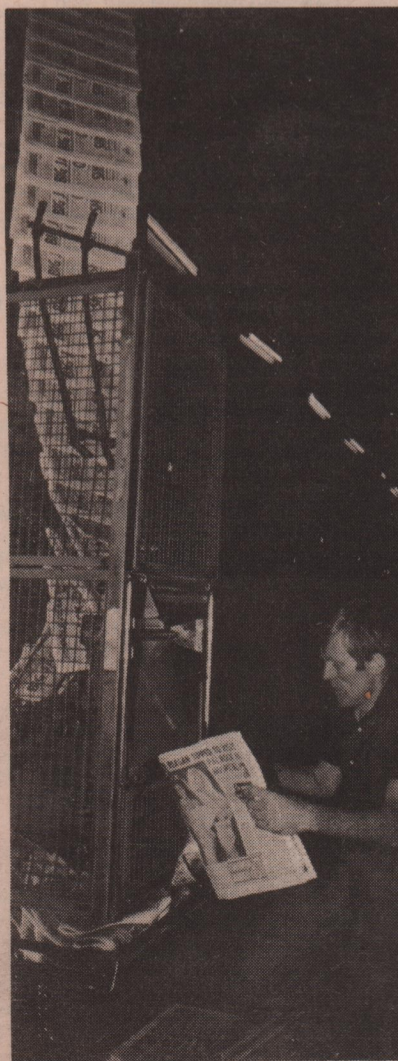
It is absolutely vital that the labour movement understands clearly what is the project both of the EETPU leadership and of the SDP. Eric Hammond is not just aiming to totally transform British trade unionism — and smash those parts of it which get in his way. Together with the SDP, the EETPU

leadership is pursuing an integrated, trade union and political path to change the entire nature of the British labour movement.

With big business financing of the SDP, with direct collaboration between the EETPU and the most ruthless bosses of British industry such as Shah and Murdoch, this is a political assault on the labour movement of a type which has not been seen this century. Any underestimation of it whatever would be fatal for Labour.

Both the TUC and Labour Party leadership should recognise the EETPU and SDP for what they are: daggers pointed at the heart of the British labour movement. Without a systematic campaign against both these enemies, and their links, there can be no way forward either for Labour or for the trade union movement.

The pussy footing on both the EETPU and the Alliance must stop.



What the EETPU is up to

FLEET Street electricians voted at their branch meeting last week that Eric Hammond and the rest of the EETPU executive should resign as a result of their activities over New International's Wapping site. JOHNNY AITKIN is a member of the branch and was the broad left's candidate in the general secretary elections which brought Hammond to power as Frank Chapple's replacement. He told CAROL TURNER what's at stake.

RUPERT Murdoch's Wapping plant has been under construction since 1982. Then it wasn't clear what the intentions of the proprietor were, although there was talk of bringing out a new newspaper from Wapping.

New technology was already evident in the regions at the beginning of the 1980s. Only the Fleet Street unions and some of the Manchester and Glasgow print workers were holding out against its introduction. As early as 1982 physical moves, like building the new Wapping plant, were seen as a means to shed the old practices of the print industry and get rid of some of the print workers.

During the construction of Wapping negotiations with the unions had reached agreement in quite a number of chapels. But Murdoch broke them off, claiming they had broken down. At the same time, the systems installed at the new plant were already being updated.

At the beginning of 1985 no negotiations with the unions were going on. By then, SDP member John Grant, who is also the EETPU communications officer, had been instrumental in setting up a meeting between Murdoch and the electricians union. The end result was that the Southampton electricians started to recruit people to work at Wapping. They weren't necessarily recruiting EETPU members, but those interviewed for a Wapping job were asked if they were prepared to join the EETPU and if they were prepared to cross picket lines.

For the last six months, this group of recruits has been working at the Wapping plant, going there in enclosed coaches from Southampton. No one knows what they were doing there, perhaps familiarising themselves with the new equipment. I understand they were trained at Cudham Hall, an EETPU training centre which is also used by management. I believe that EETPU was actually doing the training of the Wapping workers.

One hundred and twenty Southampton people work at the Wapping plant. But there are 600 there in total. Most of the others have been recruited from London. For example, the deputy electrical manager of *The Times* is working there, and so are ex-members of the NGA and SOGAT. News International have recruited electricians who haven't previously worked at Fleet Street and permanently taken on some of the contract labour. These people have been recruited through their contract with EETPU officials of the London area — in other words, Chapple's old guard.

Negotiations between Murdoch and the unions began again in the autumn of last year. By this year they had broken down with the other four unions involved — over management's 'right to manage' (which they don't have in Fleet Street where the unions are involved in hiring and firing), the pre-entry closed shop, no-strike clauses, and the demand for a legally binding contract. But the EETPU has remained in negotiation with Murdoch. Up till recently those negotiations have been conducted by

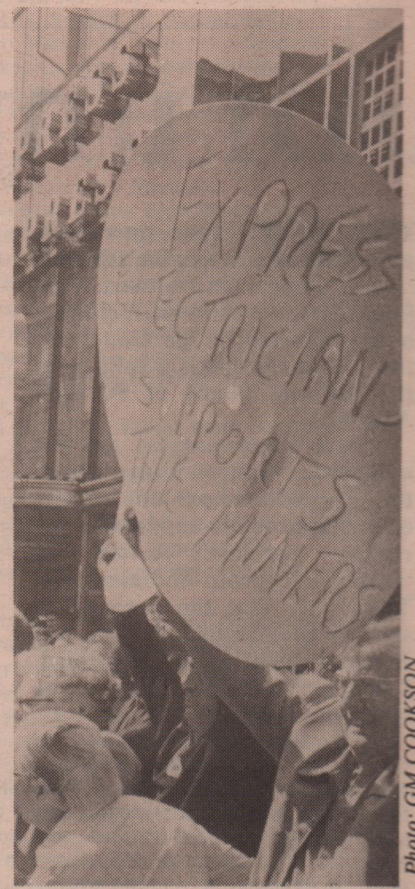


Photo: GIM COOKSON

Express electricians stand to lose 90 jobs because of the Murdoch deal

the London press branch of the electricians union. Now they have been taken over by full-timer Tom Rice.

Many EETPU members are beginning to get cold feet about what their national leadership is doing, including even some local officials. There has been a lot of reaction against Hammond's stance on Wapping from up and down the country.

Other groups of electricians are beginning to see that such deals aren't in their interests. For example, near home, *Daily Express* electricians have just been told that 90 of their jobs have to go. That's over half the electrician workforce on that newspaper — and Wapping has been used as the argument for it.

For 12 months or more some of us have argued that Murdoch shouldn't be allowed to bring his plant on-stream without first getting an agreement with the unions. Once the plant is operational, winning any dispute becomes that much harder. But if the EETPU withdrew from negotiations then this dispute could definitely be won.

What is needed at Wapping is mass action, including a general mobilisation of the whole trade union movement called through the TUC. The TUC can't afford to back away from this dispute because it has wide repercussions for the whole movement — ones that could bring about the eventual destruction of the trade union movement.

The isolation of the EETPU within the trade union movement is complete on this issue. They have implemented a strategy of organising with the employer to gain a single union no-strike agreement which has a legal binding clause. As a consequence hundreds of EETPU members' jobs could go.

By its actions — recruiting scab labour, training them, and colluding with management to place them in work — the EETPU has isolated itself within the TUC. It would not be unreasonable for the TUC to act in a way to prevent that, because it threatens the whole fabric of the trade union movement.

It is in the best interests of the movement that every trade unionist and every Labour Party member should do their utmost to support the print workers strike — and stop Rupert Murdoch in his tracks.

International

An unjustified split

TWO ISSUES have now been published of a magazine *International*. While not advertised in the journal it is well known, including being reported in the *Guardian*, that this magazine is a split from the editorial board of *Socialist Action*.

More important for present matters the comrades involved in the journal have put out a series of public circulars and leaflets accusing *Socialist Action* of 'Stalinism', 'proto-Stalinism' etc. They state that the decision to split from *Socialist Action* was therefore justified and principled. **JAMES FRANCIS** looks at the issues involved.

The material put out by the comrades of *International*, justifying their decision to form a new journal, is unfortunately a throw back to the bad traditions of British Marxist sectarianism. The comrades make false political charges. A damaging division is then justified not on the basis of any position in the actual class struggle but on the basis of *ideas*, and worse still supposed ideas, held by someone. The real motives of the split are however differences over the present class struggle in Britain as will be shown.

Leader

In this case they were differences over *Labour Briefing*, the course followed by Arthur Scargill during the miners strike, whether a candidate should have been run against Neil Kinnock for leader of the Labour Party following the miners strike and whether we were building an 'anti-Kinnock' left. None of these differences justify a division among Marxists.

The wild accusations regarding 'Stalinism', 'proto-Stalinism' and the like are then introduced to justify a split over current political views. Such methods have unfortunately created literally dozens of sects on the British left.

As the accusation made by the comrades is specifically 'Stalinism' or 'proto-Stalinism' we will deal with this here.

Stalinism is the historical force created by the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. Its base was the Soviet bureaucracy. Its central political idea, reflecting that base, was that of 'socialism in one country' — the idea that a socialist society could be built in the USSR without the overthrow of capitalism in the other key countries of the world.

Unfold

Each position of Stalinism unfolded from that base. Because socialism could be built in the USSR without socialist revolution in other countries the role of the international working class became reduced from a class fighting for socialism to a class safeguarding the borders of the Soviet Union; for this purpose the Soviet bureaucracy believed it could enlist 'progressive' sections of the bourgeoisie: the popular front — an alliance between the working class organisations and capitalist parties — developed from this alliance with sections of the ruling class.

From the abandonment of working class independence derived other positions which marked the end of the internationalist line — the 'progressive' sections of the bourgeoisie, the popular front —

reformed, the advocacy of 'detente' as the central feature of Soviet foreign policy, the idea of 'advanced democracy' as an alternative to socialism for the next stage for the western Communist Parties. The Stalinist parties concluded that the bourgeoisie still had a progressive role to play and at least sections of it could be a strategic ally of the working class.

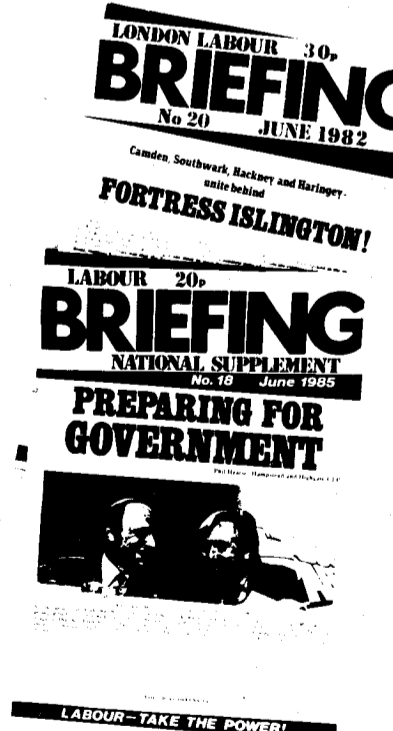
Within the USSR, and after World War II in Eastern Europe, the Stalinist bureaucracy developed systematic repression of the working class.

Trotsky correctly characterised Stalinism as the 'second wave of Menshevism' — the Mensheviks being that section of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party who had believed in the progressive role of the bourgeoisie.

But something still more profound is involved. In 1933, with Hitler's coming to power in Germany, Trotsky concluded that this Stalinist bureaucracy could not be reformed. That the Communist International, which Stalin led, had become an instrument of international counter-revolution.

This decision of Trotsky was not based on any *ideas* Stalinism had — for the ideas of Stalinism in 1933 were essentially not different to those in 1924 or 1927. Trotsky declared the Communist International was irreformable because of its real material betrayal in the class struggle in the fight against fascism in Germany. The Communist International played a decisive role not in ideas but in concretely aiding Hitler to come to power.

Trotsky's method was exactly the same, and he explained it as such, as



Lenin's split from the Second International in 1914. Lenin did not split when forces in the Second International advanced false theories. He advocated in August 1914 the major parties of the Second International concretely, in the real material class struggle, had sided with the bourgeoisie against the working class in World War I.

The social democratic parties had thereby defined their class character. They had become 'bourgeois' parties — parties defending the interests of the

bourgeoisie within the working class. Trotsky likewise split with the Communist International because of its concrete real betrayal in the class struggle.

Naturally after 1933 the decisive ideas of Stalinism, flowing from socialism in one country, did acquire a material reality as incompatible with the defence of the interests of the working class.

Trotsky was persecuted, and finally murdered, by the Soviet bureaucracy at a time when many leading members of the Labour Party in Britain were singing the praises of Stalin — typical examples during the 1930s being the *New Statesman*, the Webbs and Bernard Shaw. Trotsky's attempt to keep alive Marxism against the Soviet bureaucracy appeared merely a heroic gesture against overwhelming force.

But in reality Trotsky was proved right. No party which followed the line of the Soviet bureaucracy has ever overturned capitalism — any more than any party which supports Social Democracy which capitulated to World War I in 1914 has ever overturned capitalism.

As Trotsky foresaw, any political force which oriented to a struggle with capitalism necessarily had to break with the Soviet bureaucracy to do so — even although this path turned out to be much longer and more complex than Trotsky had foreseen.

Refusal

This process started in 1935 when Mao Tse-tung regained the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from the appointees of Stalin. The Chinese Communist Party embarked on a path which finally led, in 1949, to the overthrow of capitalism in China and the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic. The same process continued during World War II when Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) refused to follow the path outlined by Stalin and proceeded to overthrow capitalism in Yugoslavia.

The Vietnamese Communist Party, after disastrously following Stalin's line in the 1930s and in 1945, broke with the Soviet bureaucracy and embarked on a line of struggle against first French, and then American, imperialism which culminated in the victory of 1975.

While the CCP, YCP, and VCP broke with the Soviet bureaucracy they however remained bureaucratized parties — as their subsequent policies show.

A new development started with the Cuban revolution of 1959. Not only did the Cuban leadership not originate inside the Communist Party but it was *not* a bureaucratized party which it was necessary to call for a political revolution to overthrow. In Nicaragua, with the FSLN, a similar non-bureaucratized leadership developed.

It is entirely legitimate to discuss how far these forces have developed in the direction of defence of the interests of the working class. The Cuban leadership, for example, has a totally wrong position on Poland — openly supporting Jaruzelski. Whether such a leadership should be characterised as revolutionary, socialist, centrist, revisionist, Marxist etc is a question it is entirely open to argue out. But the question of the Cuban leadership, or the FSLN's leadership, or that people



should call for a political revolution in Cuba, is false.

Furthermore none of the essential ideas of Stalinism — socialism in one country, the progressive role of the bourgeoisie, 'advanced democracy', support for popular fronts etc — is supported by anyone associated with *Socialist Action*. Claims that they are, are just without foundation.

The entire rhetoric that *Socialist Action*, or any viewpoint associated with it, is Stalinist, 'proto-Stalinist' and so on is just false. It should be dropped not only for the sake of *Socialist Action*, or of serious and honest debate, but because maintaining it will distort in a deadly corrosive and sectarian way the politics of the comrades who have established *International* themselves.

Socialist Action takes no similar view of the comrades who have



established *International*. It considers them Marxists.

But the reality is that the comrades of *International* did not split on great principled issues as they claim. They split on *tactics*. This can be seen clearly in the two big issues that the comrades have raised in the issues of their journal.

On South Africa the *Socialist Action* editorial board has always voted by a decisive majority that only a socialist revolution, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, can solve the tasks of the national democratic revolution in South Africa. There was no difference with the comrades of *International* on this. There was a real difference with the comrades of *International* over questions of line in South Africa *today* however.

The majority of the editorial board of *Socialist Action* considers that the correct line for socialists in South Africa today is to fight to form a united front of the working class and oppressed on the basis of the democratic demands of the struggle against apartheid.

This means supporting the demands of the ANC Freedom Charter and fighting for them; supporting the UDF as the best approximation to such a united front of struggle against apartheid; seeking to promote collaboration between the non-racial unions in South Africa and the UDF. It means to fight for a united front of the ANC, the trade unions, and the UDF in the struggle against apartheid. The comrades who established *International* however, place on the same level, and take the same attitude to, the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the National Forum as to the positions of the ANC and the UDF.

But this is obviously politically im-

possible. The ANC and UDF are attempting to form a united front on the basis of the democratic demands of struggle against apartheid. AZAPO and the National Forum have attempted to form a united front on the basis of a confused combination of simultaneously democratic and socialist demands.

The ANC and UDF have supported the process of trade union unification which led to the formation of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). AZAPO and the National Forum have refused to participate in this.

AZAPO also boycotted the November 1984 Transvaal general strike the ANC and UDF supported.

It is impossible to have a position between these two lines. Either the ANC is right to build the UDF on the basis of democratic demands of the struggle against apartheid, or AZAPO is correct to build the National Forum on a confused platform of democratic and socialist demands. Either the ANC and UDF are correct to participate in the process of trade union unification or AZAPO and other organisations it has links with are right to refuse to participate in it. It is impossible to take no view on these questions, or say everyone is the same. Because these are *decisive* questions for the struggle in South Africa — not at all small tactical issues on which only those on the spot can have an opinion.

However while these are obviously very important questions with big implications for the situation in South Africa they were decided by majority vote. To argue that anyone who believes that the course of the ANC and UDF on these questions is more

correct than that of AZAPO and the National Forum is not for socialist revolution in South Africa is not a serious political discussion. These issues should be discussed out on their merits and not split over.

Similarly on Britain the comrades of *International* give strong support to *Labour Briefing*. We do not.

We think *Labour Briefing's* political line would have been disastrous for the running of the miners strike and that Scargill's line in the strike was far superior to that of *Briefing*. We think that *Briefing's* ultra-leftism ruined a very promising initiative with the Mineworkers Defence Committee during the strike. We think its proposal that someone should have run against Kinnock for party leader after the miners strike would have seriously weakened the left. We note that the comrades of *International* have abandoned some of these positions.

Arise

But these differences do not justify a split. They are the types of issue which periodically arise among Marxists and should be discussed out. They do not justify division and splits.

Our view is simple. We reject the characterisations of *Socialist Action* by *International*. We make no such characterisations ourselves. We believe *International* should fuse with *Socialist Action*.

We will propose joint activity to overcome this. The comrades of *International* should drop the nonsensical charges of 'proto-Stalinism' which obstructs this and instead debate out the real issues while maintaining a common publication — *Socialist Action*.

International

Philippine elections: Reagan gets the jitters

AS THE 7 February elections in the Philippines approach, a mood resembling panic is gripping US ruling circles. *Business Week*, the US financial journal, explained their dilemma in an article entitled 'The multinationals start turning away from Marcos'.

'The incumbent president is favoured to win,' it says, 'and that victory, along with a sour economy, could exacerbate agitation against US multinationals ... Most observers agree that the worst-case outcome would be a rigged Marcos victory. This could drive workers and students to violent protest, paralysing business.'

But a rigged Marcos victory is exactly what the US was aiming for when it pushed the dictator into holding the snap elections. A leaked senate intelligence report released on 3 November, three days before the poll was announced, says: 'Marcos remains the one man that has the power to ensure a democratic transition to a successor government ... the strongest base for a non-communist future is the continued widespread devotion in the Philippines to democratic norms and processes.'

The operative point is not the commitment to Marcos, who has been the faithful guarantor of US interests for 20 years. His name is a byword for fraudulent and corrupt abuse of power.

He has presided over six electoral exercises since being installed in 1965. In 1969 he was re-elected for a second term. In 1973 he won a referendum to ratify his introduction of martial law — under which 100,000 of his opponents have been jailed and 65,000 killed. In 1978 he won a victory in national assembly elections against the immensely popular Benigno Aquino. The scale of his victory was so implausible that even *Newsweek* said it was a fix.

In April 1981 a plebiscite gave him the power to abolish the na-

tional assembly, invalidate any laws it might pass, or make his own laws. In June 1981 he was elected for a further six years, no doubt for his services to democracy.

By Alan Freeman

On 21 August 1983 he had Aquino killed and six months later won his most recent and bloodiest victory in the national assembly elections of 1984. His henchmen killed 109 people on election day alone.

The problem facing US capital is that Marcos' economic policies have created explosive social discontent, while he disposes of an apparatus of terror, corruption and patronage under his personal control, which is likely to blow apart if he dies (he is very ill) or is replaced. There is a move to build up bourgeois opposition candidate Corazon Aquino, but if she implements any serious measures which favour the poor and attack Marcos' machine the result will probably be a coup.

Indeed, Marcos has reserved the power to cancel the election if he thinks he might lose! Aquino herself has indulged in popular rhetoric which is building up a business following, but has carefully refrained from any reform commitments.

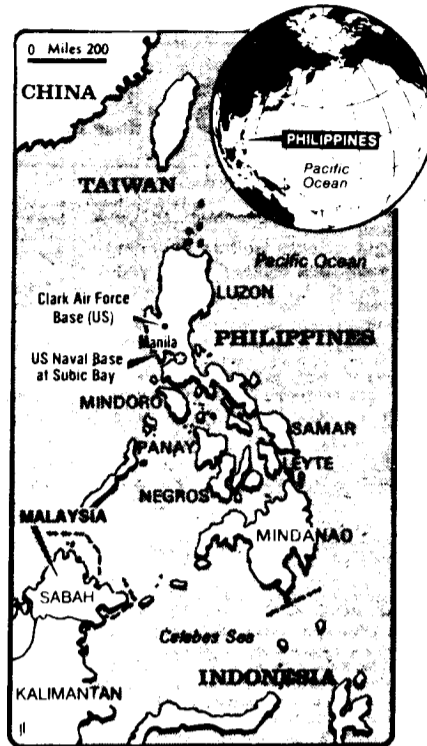
Marcos opened the Philippines to US investment. As a result it is in catastrophic decline. Last year, and the year before, investment actually shrank by five per cent.

Foreign debt is now \$26 billion. Average income is \$600 — 15 per cent less than it was four years ago. The minimum wage is just \$2 a day.

THE U.S. CORPORATE STAKE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Philippine subsidiaries in 1984		
	Assets	Revenues
	Millions of dollars	
Citibank	\$1,595	\$226
Bank of America	507	79
Caltex Petroleum	353	963
Chase Manhattan	334	36
Chemical Bank	315	40
Del Monte	78	82
Texas Instruments	46	99
Colgate-Palmolive	44	99
Procter & Gamble	41	91
Castle & Cooke	38	72
Advanced Micro Devices	32	152
Union Carbide	29	39
National Semiconductor	24	48
Goodyear Tire & Rubber*	19	33
Fairchild Semiconductor	16	30

*31% owned by Philippine National Oil Co
DATA BUSINESS DAY



Militant and revolutionary opposition to Marcos and to US capital is now a very serious threat. Marcos himself, not prone to exaggerate his opponents' strength, says the New People's Army (NPA) control 5000 villages. They claim twice that figure. The strike level in 1985 was 30 per cent higher than

in 1984, which itself was a record year. The National Democratic Front, which like the NPA is promoted by the former Maoist Philippines Communist Party, is calling an election boycott with very wide support. Perhaps the frankest comment on the election comes from a Filipino

businessman who supports Aquino, quoted in *Business Week*: 'I'm a bit scared she may be influenced by nationalistic types. She's idealistic. She would like to spread the county's wealth to all the people! And that's one thing which, US business and Filipino business alike agree, would never do.'

Baby Doc dictatorship crumbles

PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE 'Baby Doc' Duvalier's hated dictatorship in Haiti is clinging to power by a thread. As we go to press his political police — the Tonton Macoutes — seem to have suppressed a pre-emptive military coup. But escalating waves of mass protest, reaching near insurrectionary proportions, have put his future in severe doubt.

The latest crisis began on Wednesday 29 January when around 40,000 people took to the streets in Cap-Haitien, the second largest town in the country. Observers say the demonstration took on a carnival atmosphere with improvised musical instruments, songs, denunciations of the government for stealing public funds and endless slogans demanding Baby Doc's departure.

The army stayed clear of the demonstration, protecting only the barracks and two private radio stations. By Friday 31

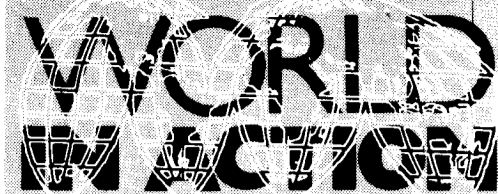
January the demonstrations had spread to the capital Port-au-Prince and most other towns. Barricades went up and Duvalier pronounced a state of siege. The border with the Dominican Republic was closed.

The same night the US embassy announced: 'The government of Haiti has collapsed and the leadership, including Duvalier, has fled the country.' The US, fearing insurrection, had been publicising that it no longer backed Duvalier. But Baby Doc went on the government radio to say he was still in power and 'firm as a monkey's

tail.' He added that: 'because of the wild rumours circulated by good-for-nothings I'm obliged to take to the streets.' Duvalier was seen riding in a bullet proof limousine, in Port-au-Prince. He then went on television again to say he was starting new projects, 'to let the people out of their misery.'

A few hours later Duvalier announced that the police had arrested the leaders of a military coup.

Haiti has suffered under the US backed Duvalier dictatorship since 1957 when Baby Doc's father 'Papa Doc' came to power. Seventy seven per cent of the country's six million people have incomes below \$150 a year. Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas.



Uganda's new rulers

Guerillas from the National Resistance Army (NRA), headed by former defence minister Yoweri Museveni, have taken control of the capital, Kampala, and deposed the military council, led by General Tito Okello. But many Ugandans fear this is just another chapter in a 20-year history of violence between warring factions in Uganda's ruling military caste, backed by rival imperialist interests.

Okello, who took power from Milton Obote last July, is said to have fled to Jinja, Uganda's second city, with somewhere between 3000 and 4000 troops. The military council, which he heads, is a loose coalition of forces, most regionally or tribally based, and whose most powerful component is his own Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA). It is strongest in the north.

Both it and the NRA, whose main base is in the south west, fought to overthrow Obote. But the NRA was kept out of Okello's government and went on fighting. On 17 December after negotiations headed by Kenyan president Arap Moi and attended by a large number of American 'observers', a peace agreement was signed.

Other resistance forces such as the Uganda National Liberation Front (Anti-Dictatorship) say that the agreement merely divided the country into fiefs under military warlords. The civilian population has been the victim of widespread atrocities, looting, rape and general harassment by troops from rival factions.

Both sides launched mass recruitment campaigns and began touring the world in search of imperialist backing. NRA leader Museveni appears to have won the British company Lonrho and, his opponents say, has been visiting Europe's capitals in Lonrho's executive jet.

Spain: referendum date set

Spain's socialist prime minister Felipe Gonzalez has finally set 12 March as the date for a referendum on leaving NATO. The socialist party was elected on a promise of leaving NATO and Gonzalez, who supports NATO, has been trying to wriggle out ever since.

Spain's large and broad-based anti-NATO movement was joined last week by the socialist trade union, the UGT. Right wing parties say they will boycott the referendum because they consider it unconstitutional. Opinion polls suggest the government would lose a straight ballot on NATO membership by as much as two to one.

The Spanish government has delayed setting a date for over a year while it tries to manoeuvre its way around this little problem. Its strategy has two prongs. It has fixed the questions to give itself the best chance of winning. And it has built an escape hatch by saying that if the majority against NATO is not very big, it will either stay in NATO anyway, or call an election on the issue.

Announcing the referendum, deputy prime minister Alfonso Guerra grandiloquently promised that the government will treat the result as politically and morally binding. Sceptical observers point out this means it will not be legally binding.

Surprise visits

Britain hosts two unwelcome visitors on 17 February. The first is from Star Wars chief salesperson General Abrahamson, who addresses a conference called by the Tory backbench Bow Group on arrival and will then spend some days in the country lobbying British business interests.

The second visit is from Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal who comes as the guest of Margaret Thatcher. Turkey, whose human rights record is on a par with Latin America's worst dictatorships, regards Britain 'as its closest friend in the European Community'. Ozal wants the British government to help remove obstacles to joining the Common Market. A minor difficulty is that there are still 20,000 political prisoners in his jails. Around 500 trade unionists remain under sentence of death.

Turkey, a NATO member, recently bought 40 Tornado combat planes worth over \$1 billion from the Anglo-German-Italian consortium Panavia.
● Picket the Turkish embassy, Belgrave Square, London SW1, Tuesday 18 February, 1 to 2pm. Called by the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey.



SOLIDARITY

Health workers:

PORTSMOUTH HEALTH workers are taking a stand against apartheid rule in South Africa. Last week workers from the kitchens in three different hospitals decided they also would no longer handle tinned fruit from South Africa. Their decision has increased the number of Portsmouth health workers already protesting against apartheid rule to 100.

The Portsmouth protest started on 13 January after the health authority refused the demands of NUPE to find alternative supplies. Then 12 workers in the stores department said they would have nothing to do with apartheid produced tinned goods. They stood firm, although management cut their take-home pay by £20. Seventeen drivers who joined the protest almost immediately faced the same fate. Their bonuses have been taken away and they have been sent home early.

The whole affair escalated when management brought in a private company to make deliveries of all the provisions, not just the South African tins. But when these scab vans arrived at the hospital, the kitchen staff didn't budge. Management therefore unloaded the van.

Support has been tremendous so far. NUPE's south west division has called on the membership to stand by the Portsmouth workers. The Anti Apartheid Movement has called on all its branches to campaign for financial and moral support.

Asians against apartheid:

A NEW organisation, mainly based in Scotland but with support in Sheffield, Bradford and London, is trying to organise opposition to apartheid in the Asian communities. South Africa Concerns You (SACY) was founded in October 1985 and on 9 January held a successful benefit in Glasgow featuring local Asian musicians and dancers. It raised £400 for medical assistance to the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

Chairperson Shafiur Rahman explained that SACY had been trying to take the issue into the streets, encouraging people to join anti-apartheid actions and spread the boycott. It has had considerable success persuading shopkeepers to sign agreements not to sell South African goods.

Bodies supporting SACY include the Scottish Asia Action Committee, the Edinburgh Indian Association, the Bangladesh Association in Glasgow and the Glasgow Asian Youth Movement.

● For information contact SACY at 4 Camstraden Drive East, Glasgow G61 4AH (phone 041-942 6647 or 031-667 5656).

AAM diary:

Regional Activists Meetings: A series of all-day meetings is being organised during the first few weeks of this year to mobilise activists in support of the AAM's Agenda for Action. Dates and venues confirmed so far include:

1 February: Durham for AA groups on Teesside and Tyneside.

15 February: Cambridge for groups in the Midlands.

22 February: Nottingham for groups in the Midlands.

Please phone Liz Holles, AAM local groups organiser, on 01-387 7966 for further details.

Saturday 8 February: Huddersfield demonstration. Assemble Beck Rd 11am.

Wednesday 26 February: No loan rescheduling for apartheid, day of action. Coordinated protest against Barclays and other banks involved in renegotiating South Africa's foreign debts. Details from ELTSA, 26 High Street, London NW 10 4NE, tel 01-965 0524.

Saturday 1 March: AAM Trade Union Conference, London delegate conference to mobilise for people's sanctions, Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon Street, WC1. Workshops on trade, disinvestment, the media, local authority action, Namibia, front line states. Details from Simon Sapper, AAM trade union officer, 01-387 7966.

Wednesday 19 March: National Parliamentary lobby to demand sanctions legislation against South Africa. Details from AAM, 01-387 7966.

Saturday 22 March: Remember Langa, remember Sharpeville. Local marches and demonstrations throughout Britain to mark the first anniversary of the Langa massacre and to demand sanctions.

Monday 14 — Sunday 20 April: Week of trade union action against apartheid. Details from Simon Sapper, AAM trade union officer, tel 01-387 7966.

Monday 16 June: Tenth Anniversary of the Soweto Uprising.

Reviews

Shifting Horizons

'WE LEARNT so much in this, our struggle, and we know now that it is the same struggle as many others, against racism, for minority groups, against nuclear weapons and against the racist regime in South Africa; but the list is endless. They are all just examples of working class people struggling for an equal chance out of life.'

Reviewed by
Mary Donnelly

These are some of the political conclusions which Doreen and Pauline came to as a result of 12 months deep involvement in the miners' strike. Echoed, I am sure, by thousands of women in the mining communities.

Shifting Horizons tells of the way in which two women from the Notts pit village of Blidworth changed during that momentous year. The story unfolds in their own words.

It begins with memories of their childhood and growing up years in mining communities. Continuing through the early years of marriage and family problems, the story takes us to the events leading to the strike. The day to day account of the year of the miners' strike shows the development of their own increasing, and finally deep and full-time, commitment to the cause.

There are touching and painful moments, moments of raucous humour. Above all, however, the evidence of courage and endurance comes through, and of a tremendous widening of horizons and a growing search for more

knowledge and understanding.

The changing roles in the family develop the

BOOKS



consciousness of both women and of the men in the village. Two men argue about who is to have the use of the communal Hoover first. Men at the soup kitchen worry about whether it will rain while their washing is on the line!

Meanwhile the women organise, travel, speak at many meetings, and endlessly raise funds to feed the strikers and their families. Everybody pickets.

It must be remembered that all this went on in a



village where two thirds of the miners worked during the strike. So there was little help or sympathy in the local community.

The activities of the police and the law are highlighted in all their chilling brutality. An account is given of the 'siege' in Blidworth, and of the arrest of Ken Petney and his subsequent sacking.

Lynn Beaton, who wrote the book, is Australian, and came to

Britain during the miners' strike. She spent many months in Blidworth sharing the community's experiences and preparing this book.

She, Doreen and Pauline spent endless hours recording these experiences. Lynn has succeeded brilliantly in producing a memorable story, in which the personalities of Doreen and Pauline come through very clearly. *Shifting Horizons* il-

lustrates how quickly women developed politically and in consciousness of their abilities and strength during the year of struggle. Above all it is an exciting testament to the women of the mining communities which everyone should read.

Shifting Horizons, Lynn Beaton, Canary Press, £5.65.

My beautiful laundrette

'WHY DOES nobody like laundrettes? Because they're like toilets,' says Omar, the young Pakistani on whom this film is centred. And anyone who's ever spent one and a half hours watching their socks go round will know what he means.

Reviewed by
Rachael Gomme

Omar takes over his uncle's bagwash and sets out to create his 'ritz of laundrettes'. With the help

of the ruthless heroin smuggling gangster holds the real power.

The family sees Omar's association with Johnny, who he hires to work in the laundrette, as 'typically British'. It is the relationship between these two which is the film's strongest point.

Johnny's involvement with a gang of fascists has caused a break between them, angered and hurt Omar and his father. But when they meet up they become close again. The relationship is handled with wit and sensitivity, suggesting the strength of feeling between them but never over-emphasising it or smoothing over their differences.

The film is all too rare in its refreshing, honest and positive portrayal of a gay relationship. This is set against the ever-present backdrop of racism, mainly represented by Johnny's gang of young thugs

Here Nasser and Salin's attitudes come into conflict with their experience: for all their money and power within the community, they are

not proof against the gang's racist attacks. Once again this issue is not glossed over in Omar and Johnny's relationship. Johnny's attitude to his white friends is ambivalent to the end.

The women in the film remain in the background for much of the time, yet they are among the strongest characters. Their relationships to a certain extent parallel those between Omar and his family, as similar conflicts are played out.

My Beautiful Laundrette isn't a film which looks for solutions. But it does observe people, situations and relationships with outstanding clarity and humour. It is witty, perceptive, subtle, and ironic; it pulls no punches and idealises nobody. It is serious, but great entertainment.

It's good to see a mainstream film with such a positive image of gays. (unlike so many around at the moment). See it if only for a vision of what your local laundrette *should* be like.

My Beautiful Laundrette, directed by Stephen Frears, stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Gordon Warnecker, Shirley Ann Field, and Rita Wolf. It is currently on release throughout Britain.

Other Books

The Other Book's mail order service offers a wide selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature. The following selection on and by women is available by post:

Shifting Horizons: a testament to women in the miners' strike
Lynn Beaton, Canary Press, 265pp, £5.65 + 40p p&p

Women Under Apartheid
International Defence and Aid Fund, 120pp black and white photographs plus text, £3.50 + 46p p&p

For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears: Women In Apartheid South Africa
Hilda Bernstein, 136pp, IDAF, £3.50 + 34p p&p

Part of My Soul
Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 164pp, £2.95 + 28p p&p

South Africa: The Struggle For A Birthright
Mary Benson, IDAF, 314pp, £4 + 59p p&p

Women and the Cuban Revolution
Edited by Elizabeth Stone, Pathfinder Press, 156pp, £3.95 + 28p p&p

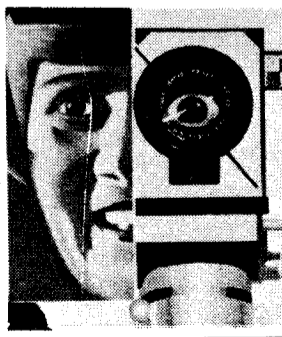
Women and the Family
Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, 78pp, £2.25 + 18p p&p

The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State
Frederick Engels, introduction by Evelyn Reed, Pathfinder Press, 190pp, £2.95 + 34p p&p

Make cheques or postal orders payable to IMRS. Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. If the total value of books ordered is over £10, then simply add 15 per cent for postage and packing.

These and other books, together with a wide selection of magazines, posters and postcards are also available from Birmingham's Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth (just off the main shopping centre) (phone 021-643 5904)

CINEMA



of his white lover Johnny. But this is only part of the story in a film which touches on many issues around the life of a well-off middle class Pakistani family in racist Britain and their responses to it.

Omar's father, once a leading socialist journalist in Pakistan, now spends his days in bed with a bottle of vodka. Uncle Nasser is a wealthy business man and the apparent head of the family, although Salin

News

Forgemasters victorious

FOURTEEN HUNDRED striking steel workers voted last Friday to end the longest dispute in the steel industry since the 1980 national strike. The main issue in the 16-week strike was the right to centralised union representation for 700 workers on the Forgemaster's Atlas site.

Management had 'reorganised' the site into five separate companies and announced that the joint shop stewards committee was 'unnecessary'. They declared the full time convenor's post abolished and moved to break up existing agreements and negotiating structures including the joint health and safety committee.

Management's own centralised structures were to be maintained. The five 'separate' companies would still have one personnel officer.

Workers saw management's offensive as an attempt to destroy the union as an effective force in Forgemasters.

The strike escalated dramatically in the new year when dismissal notices were issued to all strikers. In response 700 workers at the neighbouring River Don works, formally part of the British

By Martin Hill

Steel Corporation but now privatised to form part of Forgemasters, voted to join the strike.

Under the settlement accepted on Friday there will continue to be a joint shop stewards committee, meeting in working hours and now extended to cover both plants. Instead of a convenor, the committee's chairperson and secretary

will have facilities and time off work to perform their union duties. And of course the dismissal notices have been withdrawn.

This agreement represents a victory on the central issue at stake — effective union recognition. Forgemasters workers are now well placed to fight off future attacks.

Two factors were crucial in the victory. One was the determination and organisation of the strikers themselves: 92 per cent of strikers were actively involved either in picket duties or fund-raising. Negotiations were kept under the control of elected shop stewards, themselves accountable to mass meetings.

This high level of involvement was put to the test when ISTC officials ordered their 200 members back to work — but were forced to back down when



their members stayed solid.

A second factor was solidarity. Street and fac-

tory collections were organised on a scale second only to that which took place during the

miners strike. Labour Party branches organised collections in shopping centres and outside football

grounds. The tremendous support received was vital in helping the strikers hold out to victory.

Scargill speaks at Agecroft

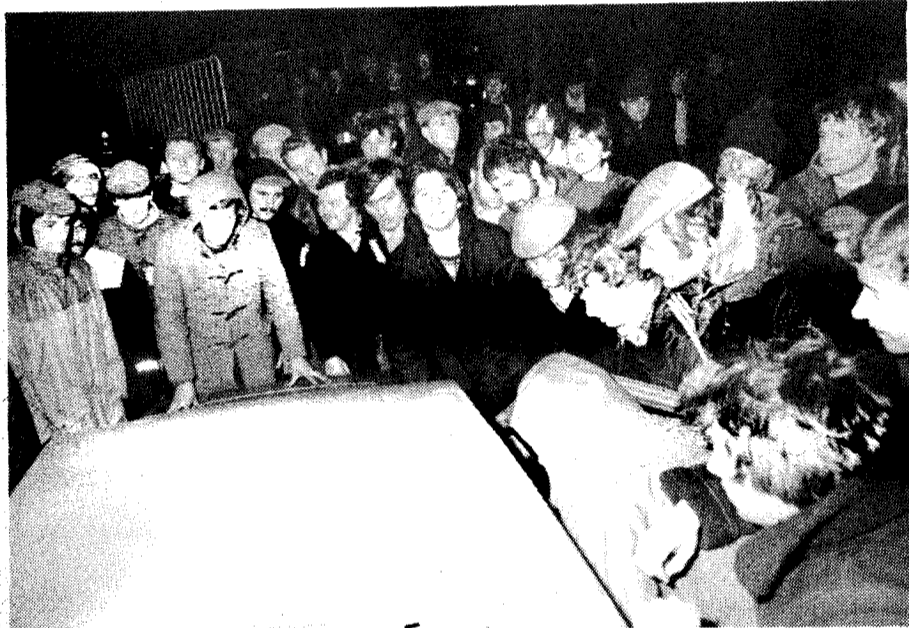


Photo: JOHN SMITH (IFL)

March 1984: picket of Agecroft pit

THE Mail on Sunday on 2 February revealed that government ministers and Coal Board officials were predicting 'the breakaway UDM could be dead by the end of next month.' After the decision of Leicestershire miners to remain in the NUM the *Mail on Sunday* predicted that UDM members 'will be lured back into the NUM be new moves to welcome their return on a 'no hard feelings' basis

On the same day the *Mail on Sunday* carried this report Arthur Scargill addressed a rally of more than 200 Lancashire miners organised by NUM members from the Agecroft branch. Scargill

listed a number of the NUM's recent successes: 'The vote last week in Leicestershire was 64 per cent to stay in the NUM. The week before in North Wales it was 90 per cent in favour of the NUM.

'We are now in a position where we can tell you that we've got about 5000 back from the Nottingham breakaway into the NUM. 'When you take into consideration the power group and COSA 60 per cent of all the workforce in South Derbyshire is in the NUM.'

Scargill added, 'If the breakaway organisation is dying my plea is that the sooner they come back as members of this union the better for them, and the better for the union itself to be able to fight against the Board's policies and the government's policies. 'If we've got dif-

ferences lets argue them in the NUM.'

At Agecroft while the majority of miners have voted to leave the NUM they have fallen short of the 80 per cent vote necessary to dissolve the NUM branch.

Those loyal to the NUM issued a writ preventing scabs, headed by Jim Lord, joining the UDM and defending the £60,000 in the NUM branch account. The fight to keep loyal to the NUM is still going on.

● **Sob story of the week.** Super scab Roy Link was quoted in the *Mail on Sunday* as saying 'I am bloody disgusted senior coal board managers and ministers who urged us on for months on end have now conspired to finish us off.'

Our heart bleeds

Diary of a sacked miner

THE JUSTICE for the Miners campaign is now gathering momentum as it builds up to the 2 March rally, concert and demonstration. DENNIS PENNINGTON, a sacked miner from Bold in Lancashire, will be keeping us up to date with a diary of the week's campaigning.

The campaign is now gathering steam. In the past will sacked miners from the Kent, Surham and Lancashire coalfields have been billeted in Greenwich at the Labour Party rooms, doing the groundwork for the rally.

We have put out thousands of leaflets with information on the campaign, and mailed them to labour organisations and support groups throughout the country. Orders for the tickets are now flooding in.

Meanwhile the sacked miners are making themselves available to speak at meetings to put their case and emphasise the campaign's importance for the whole labour movement.

We have already been to see the Fleet Street unions as well as students' unions, Labour Party meetings and Borough Councils.

This week's group of sacked miners will mostly be replaced by new forces next week when, hopefully, a series of factory and shop floor meetings will take place.



Among this week's detachment is sacked Durham miner Stuart Stevenson, who was jailed for four months during the Great Strike.

While he was in jail he was ordered to spade coal in the boiler house. He refused because he was still a striking miner even though in prison, and to move coal would be tantamount to scabbing. For this refusal he was punished with an extra 21 days.

Stuart and others like him are still showing this same strength of mind and spirit in campaigning for justice for the 550 sacked and jailed miners of Great Britain.

Such people deserve all the support they can get from socialists throughout the land.

Teachers fight on

THE DIRECTION of the teachers pay dispute remains undecided despite the impending sell out spearheaded by the leadership of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT).

The NUT executive has managed to scale down action so that only that on voluntary duties (lunchtime supervision, not covering for absent staff etc) being implemented.

Initially Fred Jarvis, NUT general secretary, announced that the planned one day national strike by the NUT would still take place despite the NAS/UWT leadership. Since then it seems that the strike, originally opposed by the executive but overwhelmingly supported by the special union conference last month, will not in fact happen.

Despite this things are not that bleak, NUT activists should not be despondent. The NAS/UWT leadership are not going to have an easy time in preparing the sell out.

Hostility

An example of this was seen at a Brent NAS/UWT meeting. Smithies of the NAS/UWT leadership, facing hostility from his own members in relation to the sell out, was reduced to shouting at them 'Why don't you join the NUT.'

The sell out will mean that over 150,000 teachers will be worse off with this settlement as offered by ACAS, compared to the offer made back in Oc-

tober. Further over 250,000 teachers will be worse off if the deal is no flat rated but offered as

By Ray Sirotkin

percentage on existing salaries.



Fred Jarvis

Teachers will be quick to realise the nature of the sell out. And the NAS/UWT leadership faced with a rebellion in their own ranks, will have difficulty proceeding with their agreement on conditions of service being tied to pay — especially if action for the 1986 claim begins soon.

Therefore, if the NUT can escalate action back to a level which includes strike action, and draw support from the base of the NAS/UWT, then the unholy alliance formed between the NAS/UWT and anti-union organisations — such as the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, the Professional Association of Teachers etc — will be under extreme strain.

At this point of time is difficult to assess which direction things will go. Much depends on the determination of the NUT members and their ability to act with NAS/UWT members in the localities combined with forcing renewed action on the respective executives.

Kent miners march on London

KENT NUM is planning a 'Save Tilmansstone' march to London as part of its fight to keep the pit open.

The five-day trek will begin by a send-off meeting at the Elvington Welfare Club, addressed by Arthur Scargill, on Saturday 8 February.

The march will end with a rally at Conway

Hall on 13 February. MPs Dennis Skinner, Bob Clay

By Les Hartop, Gillingham Labour Party

and Martin Redmond, together with Kent NUM leaders Jack Collins (secretary) and Malcolm Pitt (president), will address the meeting.

● *Messages of support and more information from: Kent NUM, Miners Offices, Waterside House, Cherry Tree Avenue, Dover, Kent CT16 1RW (phone: 0304-206661 or 206271).*



Fund drive

OUR SUPPORTERS in Telecoms have responded magnificently to the renewed urgency of our fighting fund appeal. Last week, cheques for £200.00 arrived at our offices. A magnificent effort also from our South West London supporters who weighed in with £100.00.

Thanks, too, to an Edinburgh supporter for a £4.00 donation, and two anonymous donors who chipped in

with £17.00.

This puts last week's total close to the sort of amount we have to average weekly if we are to reach our £15,000 goal by Easter.

We are confident that our supporters up and down the country will meet the challenge.

After all we've had a reminder in the last week that maintaining minority capitalist rule is not so straightforward. Lying and skulduggery are the least, and most common, of capitalist crimes — as Irish people, black people, miners, or any other victim

A Socialist ACTION



Nelson Mandela

Botha's speech

NO IFS.. NO BUTS..

FREE

MANDDELA

IN A widely-publicised television address South Africa's president Botha has yet again promised to 'reform' the country's racist system.

An advertising campaign in the South African press has tried to spread the same message. Like the promises made in November — to which nothing new has been added — the speech is the purest fakery.

It comes a week after the government engineered a coup against the government of the independent republic of Lesotho and forced the country to throw out everyone Botha disagreed with.

It also comes seventeen days before the South African finance minister meets Dr Leutwiler's team of international bankers to try and renegotiate South

Africa's - \$26 billion foreign debt.

Banking reaction was justifiably sceptical. Bankers' decisions don't depend on morals. They want to know if their investments are safe. And Botha hasn't reassured them because they know only too well that Botha has offered the black people of the country precious little apart from repression and yet more repression. And they judge — correctly — that black people aren't prepared to take it any more.

A careful study of Botha's promises shows he has offered very little other than words and cosmetic

changes.

Promise number one: black people will have a say in running the country. **The reality:** they will not have power. They will not have one person, one vote, their most basic demand. Botha's proposed national statutory council, as he himself puts it 'under my chairmanship', will leave all effective power in white hands.

Promise number two: black people will have citizenship rights.

The reality: Botha studiously avoided offering any rights to residents of the artificial 'homelands', to which fifty per cent of the black people have been forcibly deported. As the *Financial Times* cynically commented, his

carefully chosen phrase 'rights for all who permanently reside in South Africa' carefully excludes the people living in the homelands.

Moreover, 'citizenship' is a completely empty right when the entire armoury of South Africa's racist laws discriminate systematically between white citizens and black citizens. Unless all citizens are equal before the law, the 'concession' is meaningless. The meanest denizen of a forced labour camp is still technically a 'citizen'!

Promise number three: The Pass Laws will be

abolished on 1 July.

The reality: they will simply be replaced with other means of controlling the movement of black people. Everyone will have a 'common identity document' — the so-called 'book of life' which will record every detail of your movements since birth and, if anything, can be used for more ruthless and more sinister repression of black people than before.

Promise number four: black people will be granted property rights and allowed to settle. **The reality:** they will have no more right to live where they choose than before. The two key points are that the Group Areas Act

will remain in force, and 'influx control' will be replaced by 'orderly urbanisation'.

This means that black people will *not* have the right to live in the areas reserved for whites at all, and will only be allowed to move into desperately poor townships, on the fringes of the big towns, as and when the white government decides to let them.

The most farcical promise of all, which even the *Financial Times* had to label 'bizarre', was the proposal to exchange Nelson Mandela for Russian political prisoners.

It is, of course, a big victory for the resistance that Botha has dropped his

previous precondition, namely that Mandela renounce violent struggle against apartheid. But if this is no longer a precondition, then why is Mandela being held? Indeed, why was he ever arrested? What is his crime?

At one stroke Botha has removed the last pretence that South African resistance fighters are being held for criminal offences, and spelt out in the most cynical way that they are *political* prisoners. And if the government now admits they are political prisoners then, if Botha had the slightest intention of reforming anything, why didn't he simply free them *there and then*?

AAM union conference

THE TRADE UNION conference called by the Anti Apartheid Movement (AAM) on 1 March will be a success. That's the verdict of conference organiser, Simon Sapper. 'The response to date has been good,' says Sapper, 'and the AAM is optimistic that there will be a healthy attendance.'

Already three national unions have agreed to sponsor the conference: the National Union of Public Employees, the National Association of Local Government Officers, and the National Union of Seamen. As the list gets bigger, it'll make it easier to get in more union delegations. Already some unions, like the National Union of Railwaymen, have circulated registration forms to all their branches — in the NUR's case, only in the London region, however.

The AAM sees the conference as very much a working conference, not a

rally. So star speakers and resolution-passing will not be features of the day. Instead, the AAM aims to give practical aid to trade unionists who want to get involved in solidarity campaign. 'It will be designed to fill in any gaps in knowledge, to build up expertise in the labour movement, and to generate ideas for activity,' says Sapper.

'Many trade unionists will want to do something, but they don't have facts and figures at their finger tips. We hope that after the conference they'll be better informed, and ready to get active.' And action

is the second goal the AAM hopes will be achieved by the conference.

'We want a hard-working conference,' explains Sapper, 'but we see it as a spring-board towards 14-20 April, which the AAM annual general meeting designated as Trade Union Week.' A successful week in April in turn will ensure that on the March for Freedom, on 28 June, the trade unions will be out in full force.

The conference is organised around two sets of workshops. The morning ones are on the role of sanctions in the struggle for freedom in South Africa — looking at Namibia, and the front-line states as well. In the afternoon, delegates can choose from a number of workshops: on particular areas of the economy — from trade and retail

groups to industrial groups like the miners; on investment in South Africa, including pension funds; on South African propaganda and dirty tricks; and on general solidarity work of trade unions.

This conference is a timely event. It will be a big boost to those already active in the labour movement, and it will help win other workers to the struggle. But time is running out for union delegation. So if your union branch hasn't received any information contact the AAM today!

● *Anti-Apartheid trade union conference, Saturday 1 March, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, WC1. Further details from: Simon Sapper, 13 Mandala Street, London NW1 0DW (phone: 01-357 7966).*

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