

A Socialist ACTION

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BREAK ALL LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA



MARCH FOR FREEDOM IN NAMIBIA & SOUTH AFRICA! SATURDAY JUNE 28

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Fitting the left together

DESPITE THE witch hunt by Neil Kinnock, and despite much clarification which remains to be achieved, it is evident that the different currents in the labour movement are sorting out and organising themselves.

What is involved is not an organisational division but a political differentiation across the labour movement. In every section of the movement — the CLPs, the unions, the women's sections, the Black Section, the LPYS, NOLS — the same basic forces are present. They simply come together in different, specific, ways. The entire development is towards political organisation across all the different sections of the labour movement. In that process three distinctive currents have emerged — each with a different political line and social base.

The first current is the *Mainstream* right. The core of this is the EETPU/AUEW alliance — newly joined by the John Golding dominated NCU executive and a gamut of smaller unions. This current, based in the most right wing section of the trade union bureaucracy, is also extremely powerful within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

This current has a definite organisation, *Mainstream*, in the unions. It has no particular need of a publication as it is supported by the entire weight of the bourgeois press — although it actually does have the rather pathetic journal *Solidarity*. The *Sun*, *Mirror*, *Times*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Economist*, and the rest of the bourgeois press, together with the BBC and ITV, support this current on all key questions. It has an increasingly weak base in the CLPs.

This *Mainstream* right has a definite political perspective — a coalition government between Labour and the Alliance. For the TUC it proposes the adoption of business unionism — the policies of 'new realism' and the EETPU. If this cannot be won then this right wing is perfectly prepared to consider splitting the TUC altogether.

The second current are the Kinnockites. Their key base is the TGWU, the NUR, NUPE and in a more right wing sense the GMBATU — the key general unions of the labour movement. They vie with the *Mainstream* right as the largest single group in the PLP. They are a significant, although minority, current in the CLPs. They control NOLS. They are a small minority in the LPYS. Their main organisation in the CLPs is the LCC. Their main newspaper is *Tribune*.

This current contains a number of contradictory positions on individual questions — including some at its base that, on particular positions, take positive positions. But the current as a whole is dominated by the politics of Neil Kinnock. And Kinnock's line is to take Labour further and further to the right to occupy much of the space now taken by the Alliance.

The third current is best described as the 'Campaign group left' — although it extends far wider than the Campaign group of MPs. The political project of this current is that of 'creating a popular majority for socialism'.

The base of this current is the Scargill wing of the NUM, Women Against Pit Closures the Campaign group of MPs, today the majority in the CLPs, and, potentially, the key campaigns in the Labour Party — the Black Section, the Women's Action Committee, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, Labour CND. It has support, although only rarely majority support, in a whole number of trade unions.

The reason the Campaign group, and the NUM, is able to link up with these forces is that, unlike *Tribune* and the Kinnockites, it supports their demands.

The NUM votes in favour of the demands of the Black Section and WAC. The Campaign group of MPs is the only section of the PLP which supports Black Sections, whose leading members voted against the Anglo-Irish Accord for example.

In turn these key campaigns in the Labour Party are based on the most militant and most oppressed sections of society — the miners and mining communities, the black community, women, the big cities, the people of Ireland, those suffering oppression because of their sexual orientation, those fighting unemployment and the destruction of the welfare state. All these forces reflect themselves both through the trade unions and through the party. The key task on the left today is bringing these forces together — which involves setting a clear political agenda for the left.

But behind the differentiating political current in the labour movement today lie profound social bases. These social shifts are increasingly shaking the labour movement.

DENNIS SKINNER: 'The witch hunt bridgehead is widening'

THE WHOLE atmosphere in the party is one of trying to pick on the weakest links and to extend the witch hunt. Then, having created an atmosphere of McCarthyism, to change the policies with which many of those being expelled have been indentified. That, in my view, has been the plan from the very beginning.

I am a member of the appeals and mediation committee and, invariably, I move that appeals against expulsion be upheld. That is what happened on Monday 9 June, in the Amir Khan, Kevin Scally and Mohammed Rafique from Birmingham-Sparkbrook constituency. I didn't get a seconder. Khan had been involved in setting up a Black Section in his constituency and, when his expulsion was moved, put his case in the media. Scally had appeared on a television programme concerning recruitment irregularities in the constituency.

Another member of the national executive committee, Eddie Haigh, moved that the three be suspended for nine months. Although I believe they should have been cleared of all the charges, I seconded that as an option which might succeed. The vote was 2:2. Those against were Cyril Ambler and Ken Cure.

Cure, along with the senior national officer, David Hughes, had prepared the report to the committee in the first place. I argued that he

should not take part in the voting.

In the last few weeks we have had a judge's ruling in respect to *Militant* that said no NEC member should act as judge and jury. However, Cure not only voted in order to provide a 2:2 draw, but in his capacity as chair then proceeded to say that the proposition to suspend them was not carried. He voted twice.

It is really stretching things a bit when somebody in a key position uses two votes allied with only one other in order to stop these people having a different form of discipline meted out to them.

Another recommendation, that the appeals be rejected, was then moved and seconded by Cyril Ambler and Roy Hattersley. Hattersley had the right to be present at the appeals and mediation committee as an officer of the party. But, as member of parliament for Sparkbrook he is at the centre of this controversy. I believe he ought not to have turned up to that meeting.

His vote was vital. It resulted in the recommen-

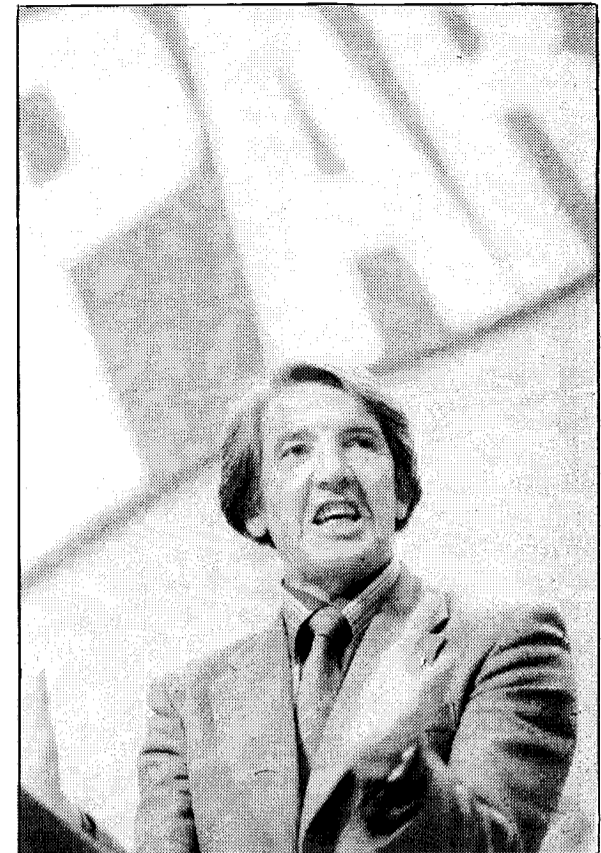
dation that the appeals be rejected being carried 3:2.

During the six month dispute on the NEC about St Helens North constituency, John Evans, the MP there, has meticulously refused to take part in the proceedings. He has insisted his name be recorded as not voting. Hattersley didn't follow his fellow right winger in this regard.

At the national executive committee following the appeals and mediation committee, Hattersley used his very vital vote — along with Cure, part of the enquiry team — to carry the day by 13 votes to 12.

What happened at the 9 June NEC means that the bridgehead of the witch hunt has been widened. Party members should understand that it is not just a matter of attacks on *Militant*. The witch hunt has now broadened out to those who, like the three Birmingham members, have the temerity to appear on a television programme.

If the party leadership is going to gag members who appear on TV, there won't be many people left in the shadow cabinet. How many times do we hear leading members of the Labour Party saying things on television programmes that members outside parliament would



Dennis Skinner

rather they never said?

That is what these three Sparkbrook members did: they got involved in controversies in Birmingham and put their views to the media. Expelling them is almost like saying that media controversy is the prerogative only of those party members fortunate enough to get inside the Palace of Westminster.

And that suggests there can be two forms of membership in the party. Those who are MPs or in the House of Lords, with the freedom to take part in media controversy. But woe betide any rank and

Analysis

file members who manage to express their point of view on a television programme!

For all these reasons, it is imperative that the whole Labour Party understands what is happening. The bridgehead is widening — and the policies pursued and carried at party conference will be placed in jeopardy if this witch hunt hysteria continues.

That is what the expulsions of Amir Khan, Kevin Scally and Mohammed Rafique represent: a further broadening of the base which is now under attack.

NEC goes full steam ahead on Liverpool expulsions

DESPITE a High Court ruling that Liverpool District Labour Party president Tony Mulhearn could take action against the NEC decision to expel him, the Labour leadership is relentlessly pressing ahead with the expulsions of Liverpool party members. Mulhearn was booted out of the party in the first round of expulsions which took place at a special national executive committee meeting on 21-22 May. Ian Lowes and Tony Aitman were also expelled during the same session.

Last Thursday and Friday, 12-13 June, the NEC continued its Liverpool purge. Derek Hatton was

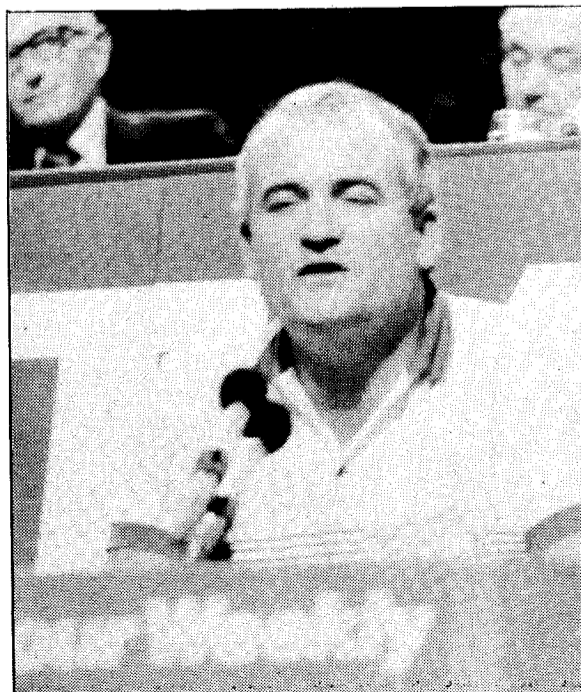
By Carol Turner

expelled in round two of the NEC special meeting, despite his absence on Liverpool city council business. It is likely that Hatton will follow Mulhearn into the courts to contest this decision.

The protests of David Blunkett reported in the press last week that right wingers such as Ken Cure and Charles Turnock should be 'replaced' are completely hollow. Blunkett and others have not shown themselves in the slightest degree opposed to the witch hunt — they would simply prefer to see it carried out with a lighter touch.

Also expelled during the Thursday session were Richard Venton and Roger Bainnister. They were

joined by Liverpool



Tony Mulhearn

District Labour Party vice president Terry Harrison on Friday who became the seventh Liverpool member to be kicked out of the party by the Labour leadership.

The procedures adopted by the special NEC are clearly unfair. For example, with the exception of Felicity Dowling and Terry Harrison

(who are likely to lose their jobs as a result of their expulsions) all those charged have been denied legal representation at the NEC hearings. At the same time though, the NEC voted to have its own legal advisor on hand throughout the proceedings.

It has been made plain to NEC members that to vote that any of those charged are members of the *Militant* tendency is to automatically endorse their expulsion. With the exception of the seven who have consistently opposed witch hunts — that is, Tony Benn, Eric Clarke, Frances Curran, Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson and Dennis Skinner — every single member of the NEC who has taken part in these proceedings is a witch hunter. That includes the so-called soft left, such as David Blunkett, Michael Meacher, Sam McCluskie and Tom Sawyer.

'The scandalous treatment of the Birmingham comrades emphasises once again that the Labour leaders have transformed the NEC into a kangaroo court,' said Tony Mulhearn, referring to the expulsions last week of Amir Khan, Kevin Scally and Mohammed Rafique.

'That is the reason that I have been to the High Court: to stop the NEC decision to expel me, on the grounds that they didn't allow me a witness on the day, that they wouldn't allow me legal representations, and because the leader of the party actually introduced evidence against me, after I had left, which has been declared inadmissible because it is based on gossip in an LCC document which is now recognised as lies.'

He added: 'They are ruthlessly abusing their authority to clear out good socialists from the party.'

The current round of purges have not yet been completed. A further session of the NEC is necessary to finish off the Liverpool 11. But the expulsions last week of the Birmingham comrades show that it is not only so-called *Militant* supporters in Liverpool who are under attack.

The witch hunt offensive has been broadened out by the Labour leadership. In the run up to conference in the autumn the party must be flooded with resolutions that demand reinstatement of those expelled and a halt to this purge.

Campaign Group, Black Section, CLPD say: Reinstate Khan and Scally!

AT A PRESS conference called last Wednesday, 11 June the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Labour Party Black Section, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) and *Witch Hunt News* demanded the reinstatement of the three Birmingham-Sparkbrook party members expelled two days earlier by the Labour Party national executive committee. Reporting on the decision of the appeals and mediation committee, and the NEC which met later that day to uphold its recommendation, Dennis Skinner said this was clear proof that the base of the witch hunt was being broadened. He called on all party members to resist the purge of socialists in the party.

The expulsions were attacked by Paul Sharma speaking on behalf of the Black Section. He condemned violations of natural justice and pointed out that the expulsion of Khan would be clearly seen as racist by the black community. Sharma appealed for support for the fight for reinstatement of Amir Khan, Kevin Scally, and Mohammed Rafique.

On these pages we reprint the statements by Dennis Skinner and Kevin Scally made to the press conference, together with interview with Amir Khan. The events of last week represent a deepening of the witch hunt within the party. The determination of the Labour leadership to press ahead with expulsions shows the need for a broadly-based defence campaign to fight these attacks.

AMIR KHAN: 'I will fight for however long it takes'



KEVIN SCALLY: 'I am calling again for irregularities to be investigated'

FOR 15 YEARS I have been a loyal member of the Labour Party. In December 1983 I was the ward secretary of Sparkhill ward in the Birmingham-Sparkbrook constituency. I performed the functions of the membership secretary in relation to checking membership applications.

tions had been found to be irregular applied to join, or the reasons. Complaints about the



Kevin Scally

During that month 160 applications to join the party were received. On checking the applications three of the addresses given were found not to exist. Of the 82 other applications, which I had to check, 57 were found to be in some way irregular.

The reasons varied. Some applications had been signed on behalf of persons who did not wish to join the party; 32 of the applicants had their dues paid by one person. I have no reason to believe that the other applications were either more or less likely to have been irregular.

I raised the matter within the party at the general committee in February 1984 and it was agreed that an enquiry would be carried out. In late 1984 an enquiry was held, with the involvement of Freda Westwood, the regional officer.

This only considered speeding the applications through the ward by doing away with the procedure for checking. There was no enquiry into the circumstances in which the persons whose applica-

nature of the enquiry did not result in any further investigation. In May 1985 I was approached by Channel 4 programme, *The Bandung File*, and I spoke to them about the irregularities. The programme was broadcast in September 1985.

In November 1985 I was expelled at a GC meeting attended by Mr Roy Hattersley. At the GC meeting prior to my expulsion Mr Hattersley spoke and called for the 'boil to be lanced'.

My appeal against expulsion was heard by Mr Ken Cure of the Labour Party NEC and he recommended that my appeal should be rejected. Both Mr Hattersley and Mr Cure attended the NEC on 9 June and voted to accept

that recommendation

The recommendation was accepted by 13 votes to 12. I am advised that the NEC decision was made in breach of the rules of natural justice.

The decision was reported in both the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph* as being based on a finding that I had committed irregularities in recruiting large numbers of members. This is untrue and, I am advised, libellous. I understand that the articles were based on a Labour Party press briefing although this has been denied by the party.

I am now calling again for the irregularities to be investigated. If a proper investigation is carried out I have no doubt that I will be reinstated in the party.

Meanwhile I am asking the Labour Party to explain the basis for the press reports, and confirm that the decision of the NEC will be included in the NEC report to party conference in accordance with the Labour Party rules. I have seen correspondence with David Hughes, the party's national organiser, claiming that such actions by the NEC will not be reported to conference.

I would like to stress that in carrying out my duties in the ward I was seeking to uphold the constitution and principles of the party. There has never been any element of a personal attack on Mr Hattersley.

• Further information from Kevin Scally, on 021-777 8588 (evenings) or Bernie Wilde on 021-236 8323 (day time).

I AM disappointed that the NEC did not have the sense to overturn my expulsion. From the start I have not been satisfied with the proceedings. Ken Cure who chairs the appeals and mediation committee conducted the enquiry into the Sparkbrook fiasco in the first place. And the fact that Roy Hattersley sat on this committee is also prejudicial. His attendance could well have influenced how people voted.

My solicitor feels that the way in which my expulsion has been handled represents a breach of natural justice. I will now be consulting him about further action.

I will also be lobbying my union for support. I have been a member of the TGWU for 15 years, and a shop steward for three of them. I was heartened that Eddie Haigh on the appeals and mediation committee did not vote for my expulsion. But union support has to go further than this.

Birmingham-Sparkbrook expelled me for setting up a Labour Party Black Section. But for me it is a matter of principle that black people should be able to organise ourselves. White comrades should not tell us how to do that.

I was expelled because Roy Hattersley feels threatened and embarrassed by Black Sections. This is an issue of politics, not a personality conflict.

The only reason I have been formally given for my expulsion was that I spoke to the press and criticised my local MP. As a black councillor, I should have the right and the freedom to speak to the press. This is a political expulsion — because the Sparkbrook establishment doesn't want a Black Section.

Don't forget though, Sparkbrook is one of the most deprived areas in the country. The fact is that black people in Birmingham are living in ap-

palling conditions: black unemployment is 60 per cent; housing conditions are really bad.

Black people are looking for progressive policies to begin to solve these problems. They're not getting them from the local Labour Party and that's why they are keen to set up a Black Section.

Black Section meets unofficially in Sparkbrook, and we discuss problems such as these. Soon we are going to launch a Birmingham-wide Black Section, from a conference which will take place in a couple of months time.

One Black Section across Birmingham will put us in a much stronger position and create a broader base for the politics we want to discuss. I think that will be a big step towards helping create Black Sections across the whole country.

There is already a black caucus on Birmingham city council, the Summerfield caucus, which has had its first success. We were responsible for getting the first black chair of the urban renewal committee. That comrade is now on the executive of the council Labour group.

This is the first time we have threatened the right wing control of Birmingham council. This will grow and we will see some more changes on the council as a result.

Black party members in Birmingham are determined to carry on with Black Sections despite my

expulsion. If it takes 10 or 20 more expulsions, so be it. They are saying to themselves 'if people are so frightened of Black Sections, there must be something to them'.

The only way out of the crisis black people face in Birmingham is for us to organise together in one organisation to force the party to take up these issues. In the past we've had the Pakistani Workers Association, the Indian Workers Association, the Bangladeshi Workers Association.

Black Section has brought all black people together under one umbrella. I feel very proud to be part of that organisation.

tion. I am already getting massive support against my expulsion. Since the Sparkbrook party expelled Kevin Scally and me we have been up and down the country speaking at meetings. Letters of support have flooded in.

That will continue despite the NEC decision last week. In two days after that meeting £300 had been raised in Birmingham for a support campaign. That is very encouraging.

People are furious at the Birmingham expulsions. I will carry on fighting until I get back into the party — however long that takes.

Campaign Group

THE Campaign Group will continue to fight against the witch hunt, and will continue to support comrades who have temporarily had their membership refused. We will continue that battle not only up until the annual conference, but if it is not won there we will continue the battle after the annual conference for their reinstatement into the party.

Black Section

AMIR Khan organised a Black Section in the Sparkbrook constituency of the party's deputy leader Roy Hattersley. This followed a boast from Hattersley that 'my Asians' don't want an organised voice of their own in the CLP. Kevin Scally exposed the corruption of right wing party workers who abused and manipulated Asian voters to maintain the white 'rotten borough' of Sparkbrook. Both were summarily expelled for 'bringing the party into disrepute'.

We have demanded an inquiry into the corrupt practices being used in Sparkbrook but our call has gone unheeded, despite a prima facie case comprehensively being made by a black television programme which investigated allegations. Instead, the party's national leadership — hell-bent on internal division rather than defeating the Tories — have embarked headlong on a programme of witch hunts.

Campaign Group News goes to eight pages

FOR FOUR months the Campaign group of MPs have been publishing *Campaign Group News*. This month it produces its first eight page issue. CAROL TURNER looks at the significance and possibilities of *Campaign Group News*.

Campaign Group News is edited by the Campaign group — its editors being Bob Clay, Joan Maynard and Alan Meale. The Campaign group, together with the NUM, clearly has majority support among the class struggle left in the Labour Party.

What makes *Campaign Group News* unique and important already is its genuine openness to campaigns in the party. This is in line with the original statement of the Campaign group of its 'dissatisfaction amongst some Labour members regarding the seemingly inactive and isolationist role of the PLP in relation to the rest of the Labour and trade union movement.' Members of many different campaigns and organisations have contributed to the initial numbers of *Campaign Group News*.

Those writing in the first few issues have included members of the Black Section national committee — chairperson Marc Wadsworth, secretary Narendra Makenji, and Paul Sharma; leaders of the Women's Action Committee — Diane Abbott, Mandy Moore, and Ann Pettifor; articles by the chair of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, Bill Etherington; Women Against Pit Closures National Committee member Ann Suddick; the secretary of CLPD Vladimir Derer; the Treasurer of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights Peter Purton. *Campaign Group News* produced a special all women's issue for women's conference.

Campaign Group News extends itself internationally in this latest issue with an interview with ANC national executive member Aziz Pahad. Together with *Witch Hunt News*, *Campaign Group News* has carried uniquely detailed information on the witch hunt. These are in addition to regular articles by Campaign group MPs and reports of the NEC, the activity of the PLP, of Labour MEPs in the European parliament, and other parts of the labour movement.

Campaign Group News is not a publication like *Tribune* in which, all too often, you find journalists writing about the struggles of other people. *Campaign Group News*, particularly through the space it gives to the campaigns in the party, directly reflects what is going on and the words of those who are leading on the key issues.

There is of course a political basis to this. *Tribune*, the *Guardian* and other papers of the Kinnockite left engage in what might be called the 'politics of style without substance.' They, for example, make gestures, write long articles, glossy advertisements etc about women and black people. But they refuse to actually support the demands that the Women's Action Committee or the Black Section put forward. *Campaign Group News* is able to link up with the key struggles, campaigns inside and outside the party because it supports their demands. That is why its pages are open to these campaigns.

Many people have obviously collaborated to get *Campaign Group News* off the ground. Its growth will be a tremendous aid to every campaign in the party.



● *Campaign Group News* can be ordered from the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, c/o Alan Meale (secretary), House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. 30p for one issue or £5 for a year's subscription.

Labour Left Liaison formed

LEFT WING organisation in the Labour Party took a major step forward on Monday 9 June with the formation of the Labour Left Liaison (LLL). This was established on the basis of proposals of the CLPD executive and has the potential to be the most influential left wing organisation in the party since the end of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

Vladimir Derer, secretary of CLPD, is secretary of the new organisation. Chairpersons from the Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC) and from the Labour Party Black Section were agreed — subject to ratification by these organisations. Ann Pettifor, of WAC, chaired the initial meeting.

The organisations, campaigns, and newspapers participating in the founding meeting of LLL included CLPD, WAC, the Black Section, Labour Women for Ireland, observers from Labour CND, *Labour Briefing*, *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser*, and *International*. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) sent apologies. The Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI) has also been invited to participate.

The new organisation began by discussing resolutions for party conference. Total opposition to nuclear power was voiced by all present. It was noted, however, that the Labour Coordination Committee (LCC), and supporters of the party leadership, were utilising resolutions on nuclear power to keep other key items off the agenda. It was recognised that nuclear power would be an item on the Labour Party conference agenda and did not therefore require a further campaign by the LLL.

Support

Labour Left Liaison therefore adopted six model resolutions to support. These were the Labour CND resolution opposing US bases; the Labour Party Black Section resolution supporting Black Sections and opposing the Black and Asian

Advisory Committee; the WAC resolution on the election of the women's places on the NEC by the women's conference; CLPD's resolution against one member one vote and for defence of accountability; the LCI resolution opposing the Anglo-Irish Accord and calling for British withdrawal from Ireland; and the CLPD resolution against witch hunts and on establishing an appeals tribunal. Most of these have been printed in *Socialist Action*. They are all available from the Secretary of LLL.

Expulsions

It was agreed that the LLL and CLPD would publish *Witch Hunt News*. This opposes the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party. After the meeting had started the LLL was informed that the NEC had voted to expell Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. A seventh model resolution, to be drafted by the officers, demanding the reinstatement of Khan and Scally in the party was therefore adopted.

LCLGR sent apologies but it was clear a resolution proposed by them would have been adopted and will be in due course.

The LLL decided to hold a fringe meeting at Labour Party conference, to seek collaboration in issuing a bulletin at conference, and to seek rela-

tions with the Campaign Group of MPs.

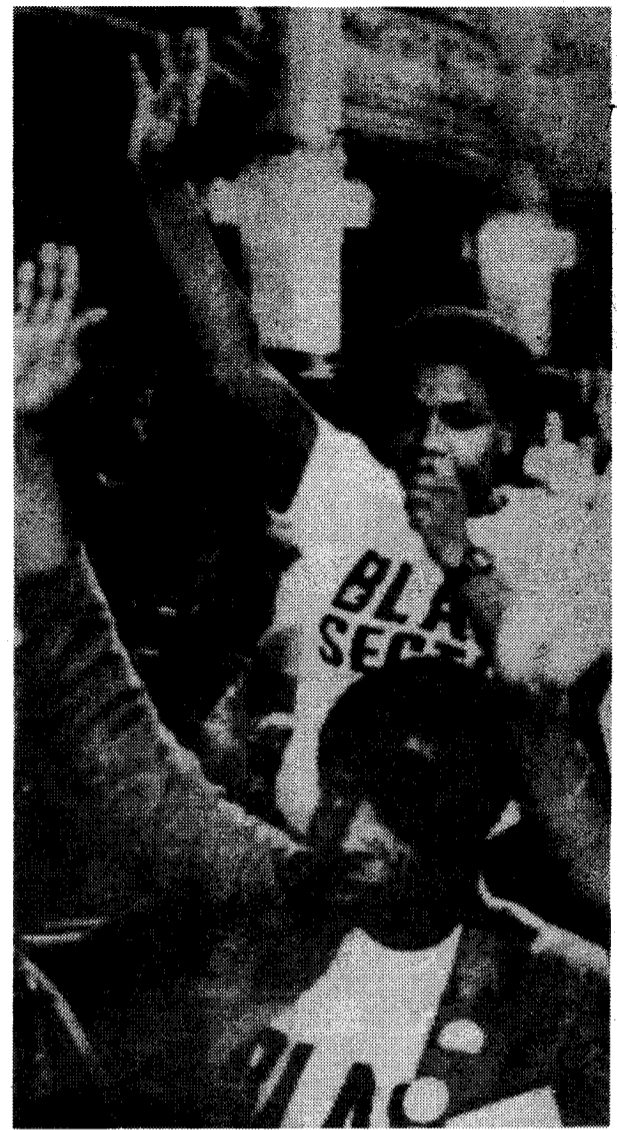
The LLL decided to support the campaign initiated by Labour CND, the Campaign group of MPs and Labour Action for Peace for the removal of all US bases and to send a delegate to the next meeting of this campaign.

A number of issues — the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, South Africa, and Central America — have to be tackled at subsequent meetings. But it appears unlikely that any differences impeding common action on these will exist.

With a clear programme of action, with authoritative officers, and with a clear structure established by the CLPD executive — on the basis of which the meeting was called — the LLL has the potential to become the most authoritative left organisation in the party since the early 1980s. It is the evident alternative to the LCC in the party and has the support of the major campaigns in the party.

The establishment of the LLL is a major step forward for the left.

Labour Left Liaison may be contacted via Vladimir Derer, Secretary, 10 Park Avenue London NW 11 7SH..



Conference against the witch hunt

THE Labour Party national executive committee's decision to uphold the expulsion of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan is a warning to all party members that the witch hunt extends well beyond Liverpool.

It is Blunkett and Meacher's support for expulsions of Liverpool party members that has legitimised the witch hunt whose latest victims are Khan and Scally.

By Toni Gorton

As *Witch Hunt News* has argued, far from 'just' weeding out *Militant* supporters the NEC's judgement is a far-reaching attack on the right of dissent throughout the party as a whole. The latest developments will be a central focus of the conference against the witch hunt taking place this Saturday 21 June.

Last Sunday the Sparkbrook Labour Democracy Campaign was launched in Birmingham. Its aim is to get Scally and Khan reinstated.

David Blunkett's protest about the Birmingham expulsions is shutting the stable door after the horse

has bolted. Those expelled by their CLP have no automatic right to appeal to conference. Furthermore the NEC is unlikely to account for its action in its report to conference.

Therefore it is vital that constituency parties and other affiliated organisations get resolutions and amendments to national conference demanding reinstatement. The witch hunt conference this weekend can be a good step forward in coordinating a united national response.

Already Labour Left Liaison (the new body which comprises the major campaigning groups in the Labour Party), in conjunction with the Campaign for Labour Party Demo-

cracy, is publishing another issue of *Witch Hunt News*. They are also organising a fringe meeting at Labour Party conference and drawing up model resolutions about Khan and Scally. The Labour Committee on Ireland and Black Section are also urgently discussing how best to defend their members.

Khan and Scally are featured speakers at the witch hunt conference. Also speaking are Audrey Wise (coauthor of the NEC minority report on Liverpool), Tony Mulhearn, Linda Bellos (leader of Lambeth Council and vice chair Black Sections), and Val Price (chair of CLPD).

The conference has been sponsored by a broad cross section of campaigns, individuals, and affiliated organisations including two executive members of the Durham Mechanics branch of the National Union of Mineworkers, one of who will be speaking.

Campaign Group supports Black Section

ON Wednesday 11 June, the Campaign Group became the first group of Labour MPs to commit itself to supporting Black Sections. 'We had a general discussion, secretary Alan Meale told *Socialist Action*, 'and the group recognised the principle of black people's right to have Black Sections.'

CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIALISM

Sponsored by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and published by the Chesterfield Labour Party with a foreword by Tony Benn, Campaigning for Socialism: the Chesterfield experience charts the course of the party over the last two years, especially drawing out the effects of the miners strike on the alliances which the Chesterfield party have been building. Price 70p, plus 18p p&p, the pamphlet is available from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (cheques payable to Other Books).

Which way for the left?

Campaign Group of Labour MPs Public Meeting
8pm, Tuesday 22 July Hampstead Town Hall Haverstock Hill (Belsize tube)
Speakers include
Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Eric Heffer, Margaret Beckett, Labour Party Black Section, Labour Women's Action Committee, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

CONFERENCE AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT
Saturday 21 June, 10-5pm
Regents College, Inner Circle,
Regents Park, London
Speakers include:
Audrey Wise, Linda Bellos, Tony Mulhearn, Amir Khan, Kevin Scally, Pat Wall, CLPD, Elsie Horstead (surcharged cnlr)
2 delegates from Labour Party affiliated organisations — £3; Observers welcome.

WAC proposes electoral college at women's conference

THE LABOUR Women's Action Committee (WAC) executive met last Saturday, 14 June. It proposed the establishment of an electoral college by the Labour women's conference for the election of the five women's places on the Labour Party NEC. The proposal is for 50 per cent of the vote for the women's sections and women's councils and 50 per cent for the affiliated organisations — essentially the trade unions. The trade union vote would be divided in proportion to the number of women members of each union.

The proposal by WAC is along the general lines of an article by Ann Pettifor in the latest issue of *Campaign Group News*. It follows from a debate initiated at last month's women's conference by a resolution from NUPE.

Ann Pettifor argued in *Campaign Group News* that: 'This (NUPE) resolution called for general support to be given to the demands agreed at each of the last six national (Labour women's) conferences — demands which would give greater power to the women's conference.'

Fudge

'However, one clause of the NUPE resolution fudged the issue of the election of the women's section of the NEC. For six years the women's conference has agreed that all five of the women's representatives of the EC should be elected by women at the national (women's) conference. NUPE instead suggested

that women's conference "should play a key role" in the election.'

By a staff reporter

WAC argued that this NUPE resolution was unacceptable as it did not defend the principle that the women's conferences should elect all the women's places on the NEC.

Ann Pettifor points out however that: 'it is the considered view of the Women's Action Committee that trade union women are inadequately represented within the Labour Party and trade unions as a whole.'

Her article explained that: 'The absence of a weighted vote at the national women's conference which properly recognises the interests of millions of trade union women, means that trade union women are not given an effective voice in the affairs of the women's organisation.'

Ann Pettifor points out that the fundamental

principle which is involved in the election of the NEC, and which creates the basis for unity of women in the Labour Party and women in the unions is 'that women should be allowed to elect the women's section of the NEC.'

This is important as WAC has been attacked in letters to the press by Margaret Prosser (TGWU), Pat Turner (GMBATU), and Mel Read (ASTMS) claiming that 'middle class delegates' to women's conference showed little understanding of trade union women. Ann Pettifor however points out that: 'the arguments in favour of giving trade union women more political power are indisputable.' Ann Pettifor points out that the real issues are not those raised by Prosser, Turner, and Read. They are, firstly, that on the demands of the women's conference, various unions, for example ASTMS and TGWU, have been casting their votes contrary to the decisions of their own conferences.

Secondly, not raised by Ann Pettifor in her articles is that women in the unions must control their vote at women's conference.

The proposals advanced by WAC executive are of course a compromise. At present the votes of the unions at women's conference are not decided by

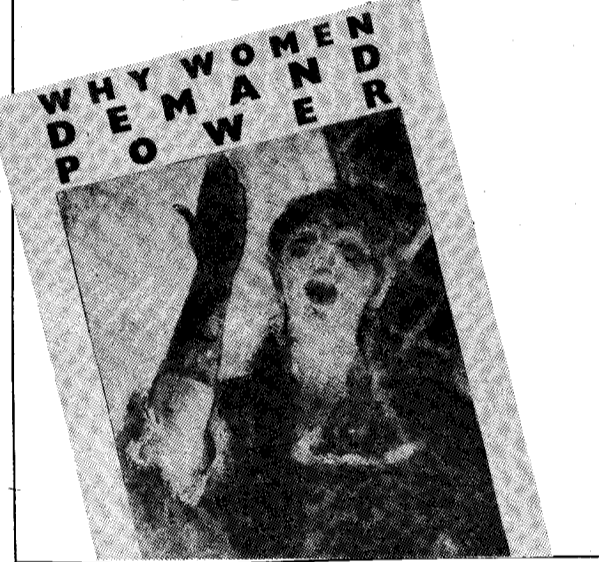
the women members of these unions. In the present state of affairs, where most unions do not yet have adequate women's organisations, full control by women over the way votes were cast in the election of the women's places on the NEC would not be achieved. The only way to achieve this would be to have a fully effective structure of women's conferences and women's organisations in every union.

However the WAC proposals represent a major step forward from the

present situation. Given the present structure of the Labour Party it is evident that some form of trade union vote in the women's conference has to be accepted in order to achieve its right to elect the women's places on the NEC. The WAC proposals assert this right of women's conference — and link up with the battle to create effective women's organisations in the trade unions themselves.

WAC's proposals are a major step forward and should be strongly supported.

Labour Women's Action Committee pamphlet, price £1, plus 18p p&p, from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (cheques payable to Other Books).



Support grows for 'bases out' demand

FOLLOWING THE bombing of Libya from bases in this country, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer submitted a paper to the NEC, calling on Labour to commit itself to the removal of all US bases. The same sentiments are widespread among constituencies. In the two weeks following that attack Walworth Road received 43 resolutions on the subjects, 23 of which specifically called for all US bases out of Britain. Last week the international committee of the NEC discussed the Benn-Heffer paper — and rejected it. ERIC HEFFER told CAROL TURNER how that discussion went.

THE paper calling for the removal of all US bases from Britain, which Tony Benn and I presented to the Labour Party national executive, was discussed by the NEC's international committee on Tuesday 10 June. It should now go before the NEC at its 25 June meeting.

During the discussion, Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley, Denis Healey and others spoke against our paper. We were accused of wilfully splitting the party by putting forward a new position. But we pointed out that the bombing of Libya had created a new situation.

It was argued that Labour's defence policy was a compromise position which the party must stick to. But I pointed out that, at the last election, leading figures in the party has publicly spoken against Labour's nuclear disarmament policy. That was the sort of action which split the party.

Tony and I were arguing for an extension of policy in the light of the attack on Libya by the United States from bases in this country.

Another argument used against adopting a bases out policy was that it would be 'elitist', trying to foist policy onto the party. This argument was demolished by Tony in his summary. He pointed out that of the 43 resolutions on Libya the national executive received in a period of two weeks following the bombing, 35 were along the lines of the statement which he and I have submitted.

The vote on the international committee was lost 4:9, with only Tony Benn, Frances Curran, Jo Richardson, and myself voting for. But those resolutions show that when the debate comes up at conference there will be a great deal of support among constituency delegates for adopting a policy of all US bases out.

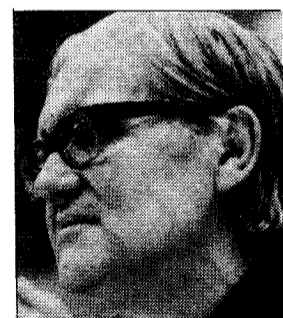
THE CAMPAIGN for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) at its meeting last Friday, 13 June, adopted a position opposing the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. It urged members of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee to resign from that body. This is in line with CLPD's defence of Labour Party democracy and support for black and women's democratic self-organisation in the party.

The resolution adopted by CLPD executive included the following:

1. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) at its meeting last Friday, 13 June, adopted a position opposing the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. It urged members of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee to resign from that body. This is in line with CLPD's defence of Labour Party democracy and support for black and women's democratic self-organisation in the party.
- FOLLOWING a press conference organised by the Labour Party's fake Black and Asian Advisory Committee, the *Guardian* wrongly reported that Black Section had used the occasion to attack the chair, Jo Richardson, as a racist.**

After protests from Black Section chair Marc

CLPD opposes Black and Asian Advisory Committee



Vladimir Derer

Labour Party Democracy takes a position against the Black and Asian Advisory Committee.

2. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy will write to members of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee, in particular to Jo Richardson its

chair, asking them to resign.

3. Virendra Sharma, the newly appointed ethnic minorities officer, has written to CLPs, affiliated trade unions, and Socialist Societies, requesting invitations to explain the role of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. We advise that an invitation to both the Black and Asian Advisory Committee and the Black Section should be made simultaneously so that the issue can be fully debated.

CLPD also voted to make its mailing facilities available to the Black Section to circulate model amendments to resolutions on Black Sections for the 1986 conference.

Guardian apologises to Black Section

Wadsworth, the following letter was received from the *Guardian* journalist under whose name the article appeared:

'Dear Marc, I am sorry about Saturday's piece about Black Sections and Jo Richardson. It was unforgivably inaccurate.'

'Unfortunately I wasn't at the press conference and picked it up from second-hand reports in other papers, always a

dangerous exercise which in future I shall refuse to do. I hope that you can recover the lost ground which the article may have brought about.'

'Feel free to mention or show this letter to people if it helps you to establish that the report was wrong. I don't like making mistakes like this, and I hope we can continue to work together. Yours apologetically, David Rose.'

IRELAND UNFREE

Brighton bombing trial highlights strip-search torture

IRISH REPUBLICANS condemned fake British justice at the end of the Brighton bombings trial last week. An editorial in *Republican News* commented: 'The British have had their pound of flesh with the conviction of Patrick Magee for the Brighton bombing ... What occurred at the Old Bailey in London in recent weeks was not a trial in the accepted sense of the word because Magee and those on trial with him had been convicted long before they stood in the dock.'

In the dock with Magee were Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson, held in Brixton jail during the proceedings. Throughout their detention, these women have been strip-searched up to three times a day. This inhuman and degrading treatment meted out to Irish women in British and northern Ireland jails has been the subject of regular anti-strip-search picketing outside the Old Bailey. Each week, the whole of the demonstration has been arrested, including on one occasion Lambeth council leader and Black Section vice chair Linda Bellos.

We reprint below an article on the strip-search pickets from *Republican News*.

SIXTEEN people, including Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn, were arrested on Monday 9 June, outside the Old Bailey in London during the closing days of the show-trial of Ella O'Dwyer, Martina Anderson, Patrick Magee, Gerard McDonnell and Peter Sherry. Those arrested had been demonstrating their opposition to the continual strip-searching of Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson. A picket had been mounted throughout the trial and protests have condemned the use of strip-searching to intimidate and degrade women prisoners. From July 1985 to March 1986, Ella and Martina were strip-searched over 500 times and body-searched two or three times in one day.

Jeremy Corbyn, vice chair of the London Labour Party and who was officially representing the regional party at Monday's anti-strip-search demonstration, said: 'We demonstrated outside the Old Bailey this morning because we are appalled at the continued use of strip-searching of women prisoners; it has nothing to do with security but is intended to humiliate the women concerned. The use of strip-searching has been condemned in Northern Ireland and in British prisons by many people, and the action of the City of London police this morning in trying to prevent voices being raised against this degrading process is yet another example of the attempts to silence those voices which call for the rights of all prisoners to be treated decently and humanely.'

To date, 71 demonstrators have been arrested but only one, Jo Tulley, has been formally charged. Her court appearance is scheduled for 26 July and is being viewed as a test case by the demonstration organisers, the Irish Prisoners' Appeal group.

Maghaberry women's prison was picketed by over 70 anti-strip-search protesters from Belfast, Dublin, Fermanagh and Tyrone on Sunday 8 June. Former prisoner Anne Marie Quinn, called for an immediate step-up in street activities, coupled with intensified lobbying of groups, individuals and governments, in Ireland and abroad, to force the abandonment of this practice which has gone on for three and a half years.

She pointed out that, while the number of strip-searches in May had decreased, this was because the number of women prisoners had gone down, not because of any relaxation in the strip-search policy by the British government. Fermanagh priest Fr Joseph McVeigh, an outspoken anti-strip-search campaigner, condemned the practice as evil. Marie Gavaghan, another former prisoner who is now living in Dublin, outlined the ongoing work in the South and pledged the Dublin Stop the Strip-Searches Committee's continued support for the women prisoners.

In Athlone, on Saturday, 7 June, there was an anti-strip-search protest in the centre of the town with picketers highlighting the continuation of the practice in Maghaberry. Former prisoners will be helping to set up action groups in Mullingar, County Westmeath, and Charlestown, County Córd, in the next few weeks and pickets and lobbying activities are planned in several areas.

THE MOST important political alliance for the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa is that between the organisations of the black South African working class and the revolutionary nationalist African National Congress (ANC). Today by far the most powerful organisation of the South African working class is the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), established last December.

It was the call of COSATU to support the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising with a general strike that has produced panic in the apartheid regime this week. The call for a national strike issued by COSATU for 1 May this year led to the largest strike in South African history.

COSATU has been taking major steps to increase its cooperation with the ANC — including a joint meeting and declaration issued in Zimbabwe on 5-6 March this

year. The COSATU delegation to that meeting was headed by JAY NAIDOO — general secretary of COSATU.

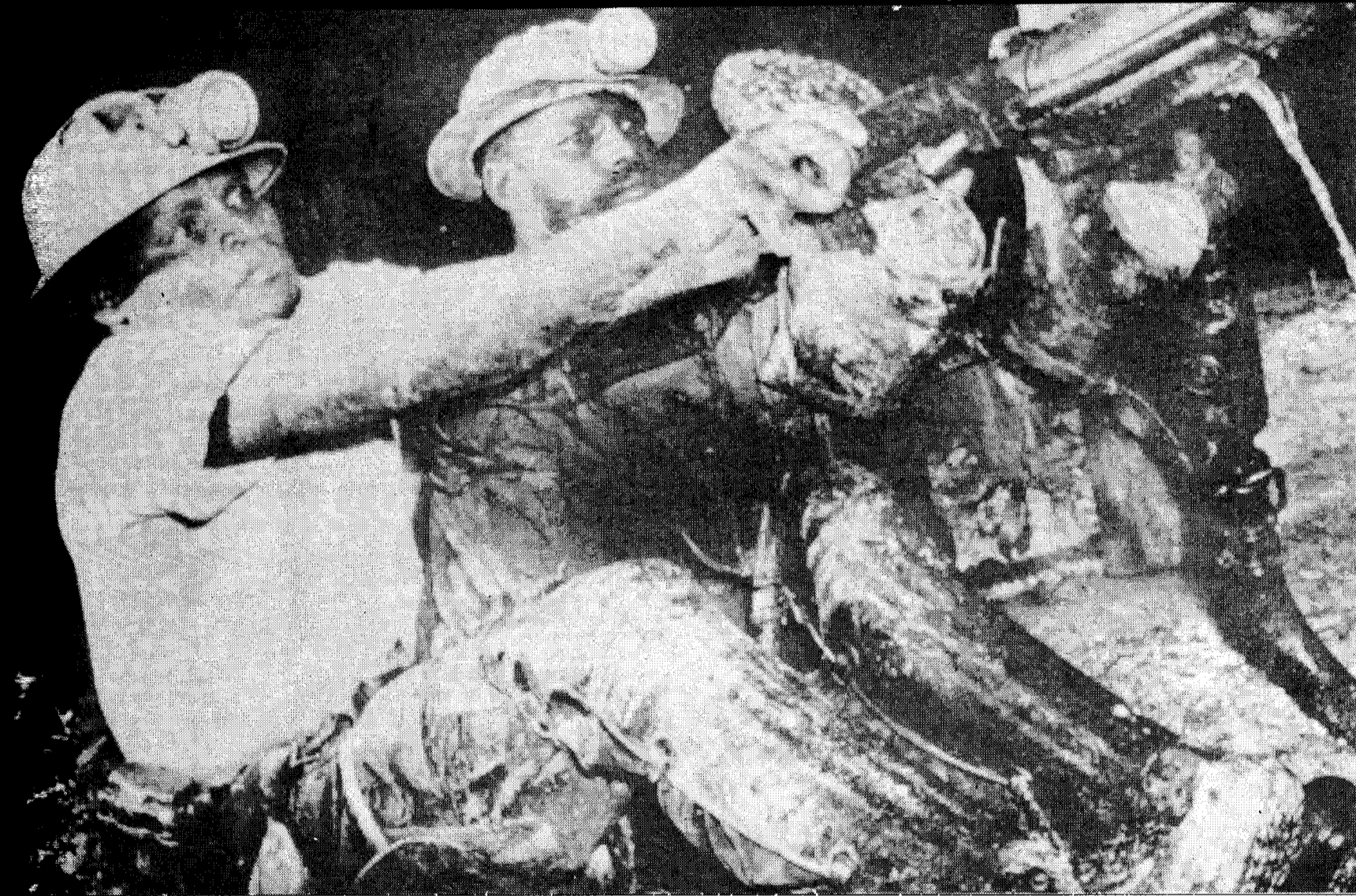
In this speech, given at the university of Natal on 18 March, Naidoo explained the political views of the COSATU leadership. He stressed the necessity for the independent organisation of the working class and at the same time the necessity of these organisations entering into united action with the ANC. He called for unity in action of all those prepared to fight against apartheid. He explained that the freedom of the South African working class could only be achieved through the destruction of capitalism in that country.

The speech is reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*.

As we go to press Jay Naidoo is being sought by the South African government under the State of Emergency.

Wh in S

Speech by COSATU



WHAT I would like to set out here today are the broad circumstances in which we as the independent trade unions, and COSATU in particular, operate. I will attempt to locate COSATU in the present political environment and explain the pressures under which a relatively new union movement exists.

In understanding the significance of COSATU it is worth recalling that 10 years ago in 1976 the total paid-up membership in the newly formed independent unions was probably 20,000 at the most. By 1979 it was probably around 40,000. Today in COSATU alone there are now 600,000 fully paid-up members located in every industrial concentration in South Africa.

But for all the strength that we have at present, for all the experience of our worker leadership and more broadly the working class, COSATU still is a relatively new organisation, this notwithstanding the fact that COSATU carries with it all the traditions of militancy and resistance of worker organisations that have come before it.

The tasks that face us are enormous. Millions of workers have to be organised. Many workers disorganised by years of bureaucratic unionism are still joining us. The power of our organisation is still being more effectively rooted and consolidated at local, regional, and national levels.

So although we believe that we have something to say, we also know that we are learning. We are learning from militant sectors of our people — such as the students; we are learning from those communities which are building disciplined grassroots structures; and we are learning from the unity in action with other progressive forces.

The Soweto uprising

THE SOWETO uprising of 16 June 1976 signalled the beginning of the greatest rebellion in South Africa prior to the present struggles that began in 1984. On the morning of 16 June students from all over Soweto gathered at the Orlando West Junior Secondary school to protest against compulsory education in the Afrikaans language. More than 10,000 had assembled by 7am.

South African police first attacked the demonstration with tear gas and then opened fire on it. Col Johannes Kleingeld, the white officer in charge, first shot Hector Peterson dead with his revolver and then opened fire with a machine gun. He explained the decision to resort to gun fire by the fact that 'it has a more demoralising effect than a pistol shot.'

As news of the massacre spread through Soweto buildings were seized, barricades erected, and battles with the police began. By mid-afternoon 30,000 people had joined the main demonstration. Fighting continued into the night with Soweto completely sealed off from the outside world.

That day shook South Africa to its

foundations. Discontent had been rising for months among the black population as victories were achieved in the African states to their north. Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique collapsed and then Angolan and Cuban troops defeated the South African invasion of Angola.

At Orlando high school itself students painted on the walls 'Victory is certain — Orlando MPLA.' — the MPLA was the name of the organisation that had liberated Angola from the Portuguese.

Rather than crushing the discontent, as the South African government had planned, the massacre of 16 June, and the resistance to it, set off months of rising struggle throughout South Africa. On 17 June strikes began. Parts of Soweto became turned into 'no-go areas' for the police and army. The police began random killings of black people in order to try to crush the uprising. The government later admitted that 'only' 250,000 people had participated in the uprising of Soweto.

On 17 June also students at the University of Zululand demonstrated and burnt the administration building. A solidarity march by 4000 white students from the university of Wit-

watersrand took place in Johannesburg. By 19 June almost 700 were dead in police attacks on the black community.

A second wave of protests began in the Pretoria area on 21 June. Black schools were sprayed with the slogan 'Don't pray, fight', and 'Support Soweto.' By 23 June more than twenty townships had seen risings of differing degrees.

On 6 July the government retreated on the original issue — the compulsory teaching of Afrikaans. But by then this was totally bypassed. On 20 July another round of uprisings began in the area around Johannesburg.

By the beginning of August mass democratic organisation began to grow among the students in Soweto. On 2 August each school sent two representatives to a meeting at which the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) was established. Similar councils were rapidly established in the black townships of Katlehong, Randfontein, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville/Saulsville, Sibasa, Seshego, Port Elizabeth, in the Vaal triangle and elsewhere.

On 4 August the SSRC called mass demonstrations and strikes to demand

the release of those imprisoned by the regime. Up to 60 per cent of black workers in parts of Johannesburg failed to turn up to work. On 23 August the SSRC issued a second call for a strike. Between 150,000 to 200,000 black workers participated in it in the Johannesburg area.

On 13 September, in a renewed strike call, half a million workers in the Johannesburg region stayed away from their jobs. On 15 September a further strike took place in Cape Town — with about a quarter of a million workers taking part. The strikes in Johannesburg and Cape Town were the biggest in the country's history.

But on 1 November the call for a further strike by the SSRC was not answered outside Soweto itself — The movement had begun to turn downwards.

But while mass strike action began to recede rising self-organisation continued to grow for some time. There were widespread strikes on 16 June 1977 to commemorate the original uprising. At the end of June ten prominent Soweto residents formed the Soweto Local Authority Interim Committee — known as the Committee of Ten — it was seen as a step towards a popularly elected council. But although the Committee of Ten continued to exist, and wield political influence, its members did not make a real effort to circumvent the obstacles set up by the regime.



The uprising of 1976-77, showed the same features that were to develop on a vastly greater scale in the enormous struggles of 1984-86. The movement started with mass demonstrations — and attempts to crush them by the police. It developed through mass strikes. Democratically elected organisation began to appear in the struggle — the Soweto Students

Rich alliances South Africa?

General Secretary

Nevertheless we do believe we have something to say, and with this in mind I would like to share some thoughts with you.

COSATU is first and foremost a trade union federation. It is an organisation that unites organised workers. Its roots are on the factory floor, its starting point is its organisational strength at the point of production — its members are the producers of the wealth of our country.

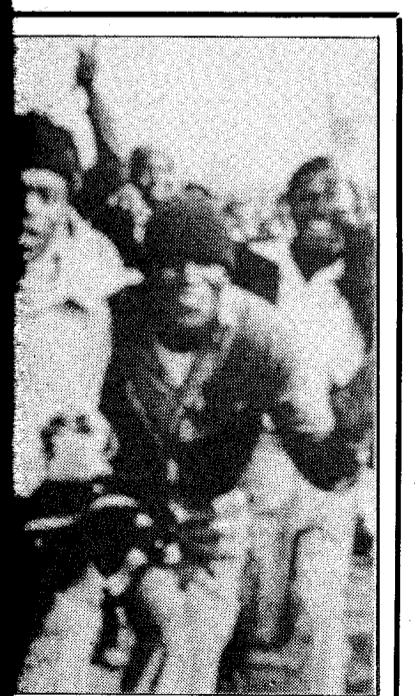
But experience has taught us that it is not enough to simply concern ourselves with factory issues. Nonpolitical unionism is not only undesirable, it is impossible. And this basic truth has become increasingly clear to the organised worker movement.

'We see ourselves as full participants in the fight for democracy, justice, and peace in South Africa.'

1985 was probably the most turbulent year in the history of our country. It saw the emergence of levels of resistance to the apartheid state which have never been seen before. It saw a ruling class floundering, a government directionless, and an economy ravaged by inflation and soaring unemployment.

It was against this background that COSATU adopted an explicitly political direction. We do not see COSATU as a political party, but we do believe that COSATU has a responsibility to voice the political interests and aspirations of the organised workers and also more broadly of the working class.

We therefore see COSATU as an active participant in the liberation struggle. We see ourselves as a political force at local, regional, and national



representative Council was the first body of the street committees. Soweto in 1976 was not only an immense struggle in itself. It was the dress rehearsal for what is taking place today. No wonder that black people of South Africa, and every progressive throughout the world, so celebrates 16 June. No wonder the racists of South Africa so fear it.

levels. And we therefore are forced to confront the following questions.

What sort of politics?
What sort of liberation are we seeking?

Who are our friends and allies in the struggle?

What are we fighting for?
What are we fighting against?

The political policy adopted recently by our Central Executive Committee states:

'workers experience repression, hardship, and suffering not only at their workplaces but in every other aspect of their lives and within the communities where they live. It is therefore imperative that the Federation should play a major role in the struggle for a nonracial and democratic society and that the Federation will not hesitate to take political action to protect and advance the interests of its members and the wider working class.'

Clearly we see ourselves as part and parcel of the broad struggle against apartheid and racism. We see ourselves as full participants in the fight for democracy, justice, and peace in South

'Apartheid racism has gone hand in hand with our exploitation and suffering at the hands of the bosses. Free enterprise has not been something separate and hostile to racism.'

Africa.

And yet our experience as workers has taught us more. Justice for us is not simply a beautiful phrase. It also means social justice, economic justice, and political justice. It means freedom from hunger and poverty, the right to work, the right to proper housing, decent medical facilities, and a meaningful education system that would develop the human potential of our people.

It is our experience that apartheid racism has gone hand in hand with our exploitation and suffering at the hands of the bosses. Free enterprise has not been something separate and hostile to racism. Despite the desperate attempts by organised business to distance themselves from the present discredited regime, we have learnt one important lesson, that the root and fruit of the apartheid tree is the exploitation of workers in South Africa.

Our most recent experiences at Gencor, Rand Mines, Haggie Rand all confirm this. It takes very little to unmask these monopolies and reveal their ruthless pursuit of super-profits.

The last 10 days have come as a shocking reminder that nothing has changed. Many lives of our members have been sacrificed on the mines through the brutality of the mine bosses and repressive organs of the apartheid state: the SAP (South African Police) and army. To us the alliance between big business and the apartheid state is soaked in the blood of the workers.

It is therefore clear that we see ourselves expressing the interests of workers in the struggle for our freedom. We see it as our duty to make sure that freedom does not merely change the skin colour of our oppressors.

We are not fighting for freedom which sees the bulk of workers continuing to suffer as they do today. We therefore see it as our duty to promote working-class politics. A politics where workers' interests are paramount in the struggle.

At the same time we recognise that no struggle has ever involved one social force acting alone. We therefore have to look carefully at our society to see who are our allies.

This brings me to the other important aspect of our political policy: 'the independent political interests of the working class shall be waged through ... taking up political struggles through our membership and structures at local, regional, and national levels as well as through disciplined alliances with progressive community organisations whose interests are compatible with the interests of the workers and whose organisational practices further the interests of the working class.'

Therefore our experience has taught us, firstly, to avoid isolating ourselves as workers and defining our friends and allies too narrowly, i.e., the danger of workerism; and secondly, to avoid subsuming ourselves in an incoherent mass mood or populist desire for an ill-defined 'freedom', i.e., the danger of populism; and thirdly, to choose our allies on the basis of what we know, what has been our experience as

workers, and not on the basis of abstracted principles of what is or is not a 'correct' approach, i.e., the danger of impractical but nice-sounding theories.

Thus when we look at our society we can broadly say that our allies fall into two groups. Firstly there are those we regard as close allies of the workers. These are the unemployed (there are more than three million); the rural poor (the landless, peasants, and farmworkers); and the militant black youth. These are our closest allies.

We believe that they share with us the desire for real freedom, for meaningful change. It is our experience that they are largely the brothers, sisters, children, and parents of our very own members. Their future and that of the

'We therefore see it as our duty to promote working-class politics. A politics where workers' struggles are paramount in the struggle.'

workers are inseparably linked. Like us they want a meaningful transformation of our society.

The second group of allies consists of all those who share with us a hatred of the present system. It consists of all those who share with us a hatred of the present system. It consists of all those people oppressed by racism, i.e. the entire black people; as well as the democratic forces amongst the white population.

Of course we may have differences with our allies. But we believe that the widest possible unity is necessary to rid ourselves of the evils of apartheid. We may differ in the type of society we would like to see emerging in this country, but we believe we have enough in common to fight together.

On this platform I would like to address a few words to the intellectuals amongst us. We extend our hand to you. We ask you to put your learning skills and education at the service of the workers' movement. Look at unem-

ployment, look at the housing crisis, the transport problems workers face. Help expose the poverty wages paid and the pervasive influence of the big monopolies. If you are a doctor, serve the people, look at the problems of the working class: malnutrition, kwashiorkor, and health hazards at work.

But we believe that the direction of the workers' movement will develop organically out of the struggle of workers on the factory floor and in the townships where they live. Accordingly the role of intellectuals will be purely a supportive one of assisting the greater generation of working-class leadership.

As COSATU we believe that we have generated a working-class leader-

'Our experience has taught us, firstly, to avoid isolating ourselves as workers and defining our friends and allies too narrowly, i.e. the danger of workerism; and secondly to avoid subsuming ourselves in an incoherent mass mood or populist desire for ill-defined "freedom"'

ship that is competent enough to debate its position and to direct the movement itself.

What I have said up to now is fairly general, but in the real world we live in we have to come to terms with organisations that exist.

COSATU is forging closer ties with democratic community-based organisations. In particular we have a high regard for those communities which are building strong grassroots structures in the form of street committees. We see this as a major step forward and an important principle that is integral to working class organisation on the factory floor.

We encourage this development and see it as COSATU's policy for members and local structures to play an active role in building such structures. In many areas COSATU locals are becoming a driving force in the growth of solidly based community organisation.

At the third level of our political policy we have chosen, as COSATU, 'not to affiliate to any political organisation,' but to retain our in-

dependence. Nevertheless, our commitment to ending apartheid, the state of emergency, the release of comrade Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, the unbanning of the banned organisations, the end to the pass laws has given us much in common with a wide range of organisations.

Undoubtedly the most important of these is the ANC (African National Congress), a movement whose stature

'It is clear that in the specific conditions of our country it is inconceivable that political emancipation can be separated from economic emancipation.'

and influence is growing daily in South Africa. In the light of this, COSATU recently met with a high-level ANC-SACTU delegation in Lusaka.

The talks were open and conducted in a friendly spirit. It was recognised that COSATU, as a representative of the working class, is seized with the task of engaging the general democratic

struggle, both as an independent organisation and as an essential component of the democratic forces of our country. Further, it is clear that in the specific conditions of our country it is inconceivable that political emancipation can be separated from economic emancipation.

Therefore, while united in opposition to the entire apartheid system, there is a common understanding that victory must embrace more than formal

'We believe that the widest possible unity is necessary to rid ourselves of the evils of apartheid.'

political democracy, and must involve a struggle for a society free from the chains of poverty, racism, and exploitation which would require a restructuring of the present economic system.

Obviously there is much more to say on this point. However the democratic nature of COSATU ensures that we first report back fully to our membership before going into detail on platforms such as this.

It was in 1960 that Macmillan spoke of the winds of change blowing across Africa. In 1986 those winds have become a hurricane. Even the corridors of parliament have felt them. When opposition leader Dr Slabbert resigned from parliament, saying he saw no purpose in parliamentary debate, he was merely signifying the decay and political wilderness that even the isolated white political establishment finds itself in.

As COSATU we believe that change is coming. Therefore as workers we have resolved to:

- take the lead in organising and mobilising not only in our factories but

- our townships,
- bring the lessons of solid organising to our people as a whole and especially to our close allies,

- raise the issues of social, political, and economic transformation now and not leave it to some future unspecified date,

- build workers to gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to lead our struggle,

- understand the dual needs of workers' autonomy and to form disciplined alliances with all progressive forces,

- organise the unorganised and build powerful national industrial unions,
- through our activity and education programmes to develop an increasingly coherent political perspective and programme for our federation.

- In carrying out these many tasks we will at all times be guided by the following principles:

Firstly, our political and economic strength lies in building powerful, militant, and democratic organisation in the workplace. This strength will guarantee that worker aspirations will not be suppressed. Such organisation is also the basis for the real democratisation of production.

Secondly, organised workers are not representative of the working class as a whole, but they constitute its most powerful weapon. The better the organisation the more powerful their weapon becomes and the greater will be their contribution to the struggle of the working class and the oppressed people in South Africa.

Thirdly, we must draw all people into a programme of restructuring the economy and society as a whole in such a way that the wealth of our society is democratically controlled

and shared by all its people.

Politics for workers is not only the matter of changing governments. For workers it must go much further to break the chains of poverty and exploitation that bind our people at present. It is the struggle to liberate our people so that they can realise their fullest potential as human beings.

IF someone were to ask you which country had the biggest debts in the world, you would probably think of Brazil or Mexico.

You would be wrong. With net debts of over \$100 billion, rising at \$100 billion per year, and an annual trade deficit of \$120 billion, the USA — the world's biggest capitalist state — last year became the world's biggest debtor. This fact illustrates one of the central features of the period since the long postwar boom ended in the early 1970s.

The history of capitalism since World War I was dominated by the ascendancy of US imperialism, the most advanced in the world. After World War II, this ascendancy made the USA the leader of the capitalist world.

Accompanying this was 40 years of unparalleled prosperity, growth and political stability for the main Western countries. The political record also testifies to the effect of that stability: in only one imperialist country has a government fallen amid a revolutionary working class upsurge since 1947. That country, Portugal, has since been stabilised.

But in 1971, when the USA was forced to abandon the convertibility of the dollar into gold, on which postwar financial stability had rested, a new period of instability opened up. On one hand, the long postwar boom was coming to an end and mass unemployment returned. But the dollar's problems in the early 1970s signalled something else. The last 15 years have been dominated by some of the effects of the *relative decline* of US imperialism in comparison with its European and Japanese competitors — the effect of a decline which the United States is now trying to overcome.

Decline

This decline, however, takes place in a context of the lack of any alternative to the USA as leader, and principal pillar of stability, of the imperialist system. No other capitalist state is remotely capable of challenging the USA as the guardian of collective imperialist interests. Other countries, above all those of the EEC, bear the consequences of the decline of the US, but each fears to challenge it for risk of destabilising the capitalist system — including finally themselves. The economic fate, and therefore politics, of every imperialist country, is riven to a greater or lesser degree by this contradiction.

To give just some of the facts on this decline. In 1950 the USA had 22.5 per cent of all world exports of manufactures. Even more significant, in 1945 56.7 per cent of value added in manufacturing worldwide was added in the USA.¹

Monopoly

These figures illustrate one of the chief reasons the USA dominated the world: because of its immense *technical superiority* — to be precise, its monopoly of advanced production techniques. In 1950 each American factory worker produced three and a half times as much as her or his German counterpart. Each miner, four times as much.²

The political strategy of the USA corresponded to this economic lead. It pursued the policy of 'free trade imperialism'; it tried to break down all possible barriers to its trade. It aided the break up of the old colonial empires of the French, Dutch, Germans and Italians. It flooded Western Europe with capital, reconstructing their postwar society to make it safe for this investment.

But there was an inevitable consequence: the spread of the advanced techniques which made the USA the world's leader. The very countries whose access to foreign investment had been destroyed in the war concentrated their resources on domestic investment and began first to catch up with the USA and then to outstrip it.

Between 1955 and 1970 capital stock, the sum of fixed investment, grew by 38 per cent in the USA, but by 87 per cent in Europe, and by 203 per cent in Japan. Productivity in Japan



Why the US is lashing out

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS is increasingly marked by open acts of aggression by the United States. The bombing of Libya, following the invasion of Grenada in 1983, are just the latest examples.

The United States is funding the Nicaraguan contras and backing South African supported forces in Angola and Mozambique. The US is clearly attempting to return to the role it followed in the 1950s and 1960s when it sent its troops into Jordan, the Dominican Republic, and Vietnam.

The first reason for this increase in US military action is directly political. The United States is faced with a major upsurge of struggle against itself and its supporters in a number of important semi-colonial countries. Haiti and the Philippines, following on from the struggles in Central America, are just the latest examples of that.

The United States is preparing for major wars and military action against colonial rebellions. The so-called Reagan doctrine, proclaimed in the United States, envisages the increasingly direct

use of US military forces throughout the world.

But a second reason for greater US military action is that increasingly it is the only weapon available to the United States. In the 1950s and 1960s the US was able to stem the flow of rebellion in some parts of the world by massive economic aid. The Marshall Plan in Western Europe, the huge aid poured into Japan after the Chinese revolution and during the Vietnam war, the aid given to Latin America under the 'Alliance for Progress' following the Cuban revolution, were only the biggest examples of this.

Today the United States is giving major aid to Egypt to back up the Camp David Accord with Israel. But the United States' capacity to give massive economic aid to the governments it favours is greatly reduced by the economic problems of US imperialism itself. The United States, therefore, has to rely much more directly on military force, and military threats, to sustain its policy. ALAN FREEMAN looks at the economic decline of US imperialism and its consequences.

rose 6-7 per cent faster than in the USA each year, and in Europe 4-5 per cent faster.

This investment could not but show up in manufacturing capacity. By 1980 the USA's share of value added in manufacturing had shrunk to 21.1 per cent, less than half its immediate post war level, and its share of world manufacturing exports to 11 per cent — again only half the post war level. The United States is far stronger in the export of farm productions, and in supplying its own raw materials than in manufacturing, but the relative decline was still clear.

What have the effects of this economic decline of the US domestic economy been? First it has meant that the USA's balance of trade — the difference between its exports and imports — has shifted dramatically from

surplus to deficit. The USA now runs a trade deficit with every single major region of the world except the Middle East. Its annual deficit even with Britain is \$8 billion. With West Germany it is \$11 billion, and with Japan \$55 billion.³

This is the unstable, and in fact *destabilising*, feature of the boom which Reagan inaugurated in 1982. This boom was floated by a very large injection of cash, borrowed from the rest of the world, into the US economy. For the last three years the rapid growth of the US economy — far outstripping Europe and rivalling Japan — has been hailed by Reagan sycophants as a new economic miracle. But it is now clear this is far from true. Because US manufacturers have lost their lead in productivity, the money which was injected into the US economy tended to generate more imports than domestic growth. Last

year no less than *half* the USA's spending on new capital equipment was imported.⁴ This in turn reflects the way in which the United States technological lead has been narrowed.

Superprofits

The second development which lies behind the shifting political relations between the USA and Europe, is a steady but very thorough change in the source of the superprofits of the US economy. As a writer in the authoritative French paper *Le Monde* put it: 'American debt has brought about a change in the nature of American power which, from being commercial before 1971, has become financial.'⁵

US capital, just like the British last century, has begun to turn foreign in-

vestment into the principal refuge for its profits. Between 1975 and 1981 alone the US exported \$87.4 billion in long-term capital. In these years the income from foreign investment of \$161.5 billion completely covered its trade losses.

Instability

The problem for US capital, and one of the major sources of instability in the world economy today, is that this does not constitute a solution, but on the contrary accelerates all the problems of the US domestic economy. Precisely because surplus value/capital is invested abroad, the productivity of US domestic is harder to improve. Also what investments there are tend to concentrate overwhelmingly on the so-called service sector of the economy rather than in basic industry. That in turn means that US capital ceases to export capital generated within the US itself and instead becomes more and more parasitic. It begins to use its special financial position to monopolise and recycle the capital generated in other countries.

The turning point now reached for US capital is that income from profits abroad is no longer covers its losses from trade. The US is plunging deeper and deeper into international debt.

Does this mean, therefore, as the forces behind the 'realignment' in the Labour Party seem to believe, that there is an alternative road for British capitalism in linking up with Europe to create a European capital independent of, or rivalling, the United States. Not at all — and that is indeed a number one problem of Western Europe.

Reserves

First, the immense historical reserves of US capital, and the fact that the USA is by far the largest capitalist state in the world, rule out the possibility of any alternative world capitalist leader to the US arising. Moreover even were such a leader to arise, as Britain's fall from world leadership shows, the process would be extremely long and could not be accomplished without the most tremendous political upheavals. Secondly, the context for the USA's decline is one of a general crisis of world capitalism which no capitalist power has been able to escape. Indeed since 1914 no European capitalist state has been able to arrive at any fundamental economic equilibrium without the economic aid of the US — and the only one that tried was Hitler's Germany. No European capitalist power can break with the United States.

Crisis

What US capital's crisis is provoking is a much sharper phase of inter-imperialist competition and rivalry in which both US and European capital are making ever-greater resort to the use of state and military machinery to gain advantages over each other.

It is also spreading economic disorder throughout the world as the US tries to respond to the economic gains which were made in the post-war period by its imperialist rivals. It is forced to mount increasing attacks on its own working class, and against third world countries through developments such as the collapse in the price of raw materials and the debt crisis.

With its economic reserves undermined the US is increasingly pushed to resort to military force, and economic offensives, to deal with problems that in the 1950s and 1960s it could have tried to deal with by economic aid.

The stick, not the carrot, more and more dominates US foreign policy.

1. *The Times* 26 September 1984
2. Harrison and Glyn, *Capitalism since World War II*, Fontana 1984
3. *International Business Week* 12 August 1985
4. *International Business Week* 22 April 1985
5. *Le Monde* 7 May 1985

International

Hormel strike shakes US labour

MOST PEOPLE have probably never heard of the Hormel company — although they certainly know its most famous product *Spam*. But Hormel is a giant company — one of the 500 largest firms in the United States. Last August 1,500 meatpackers employed by Hormel, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local (branch) P-9, were forced on strike at the company's plant in Austin, Minnesota.

The origin of the 'P-9 strike' was the Austin workers refusal to grant the contract concessions demanded by the company. This is itself important in a country where the labour movement's last few years have been dominated by concession after concession granted by unions to the management. The policy of concessions, has been supported by the leadership of the AFL-CIO — the US equivalent of the TUC.

Still more important than the individual fight against concessions, the Hormel strike has reintroduced many methods of struggle into the United States that have not been seen since the 1930s. These methods, such as flying pickets, support committees, a revival of active union democracy, and turning to the most oppressed for support, are the same, on a far smaller scale, as those seen in the miners strike in Britain.

As a result the P-9 strike has become a battle with not only the company but with the leaderships of both the UFCW and the AFL-CIO.

Since the end of World War II the power of the US trade unions has been deeply eroded by the policies of the AFL-CIO leadership. Union membership has fallen to under 20 per cent of the workforce. Collaboration with the employers has been followed all down the line.

Local P-9's members have set out on another course. They are using union democracy and other class struggle methods to organise their strike.

Local (branch) P-9 was first organised in a militant sit-down strike in 1933. A contract guaranteeing a guaranteed annual wage based on a 36 hour week was negotiated by the union in 1940.

Since 1960 the Hormel management has been

demanding substantial concessions from the union. Hormel has succeeded in forcing through concessions in 16 of the last 22 years. The offensive against the union escalated in 1978 when the company threatened to close the Austin plant.

Union members were forced to accept a contract that put their incentive payments into an account which provided Hormel with \$20 million to build a new plant.

When the new plant opened in 1982 the workforce was reduced from 4,000 to 1,500. Working conditions deteriorated in the new plant.

In 1984 Hormel arbitrarily slashed the workers wages. When the old contract expired in 1985 the company offered to bring wages back up to \$10 an hour — the average wage paid in the chain of Hormel plants. However, the company demanded major new concessions which included slashing the job security system, establishing the

right to punish injured workers, and the initiation of a new wage scale system whereby newly hired workers would be paid substantially less than those already employed.

Other company demands included the elimination of maternity leave, and cuts in health care benefits.

In preparing for the strike the union local began by involving all workers at the plant, and their families, in activity that educated everyone on the issues involved in the dispute.

This democratic form of organisation has continued throughout the strike. P-9's president Jim Guyette has stated on numerous occasions that 'only members of P-9 started this strike, and only they will end it.'

The strike at first received official recognition. This was given by William Wynn, president of the UFCW, and by the union's executive committee. In January 1986 P-9 membership voted to request the union to sanction flying pickets at the Hormel plants in Fremont, Nebraska and Ottuma, Iowa. Wynn reneged on his earlier agreement to sanction the pickets and launched a public attack on P-9's leadership that was carried by newspapers and television across the US.

Wynn's statements denouncing the strike helped set the stage for the governor of Minnesota to call the National Guard into Austin to protect scabs entering the plant.

In spite of these attacks 500 workers at the Ottuma plant, and 56 at the Fremont plant, honoured the P-9 picket line. These workers were immediately sacked by Hormel.

The UFCW leadership have taken a number of steps to try to force the members of P-9 to toe the line and accept a deal with the company. These include ending official recognition of the dispute, and cutting off strike pay. Most seriously the national union leadership has moved to call in a receiver to seize local P-9's funds.

The UFCW leadership is now trying to negotiate a settlement with the company that includes taking on the 500 scabs working in the plant. These moves against P-9 have been supported by the US courts.

P-9 members have continued the strike in spite of the forces sent against them. They have spoken at hundreds of union branches across the country. Many union branches have 'adopted' P-9 families to support for the duration of the strike.

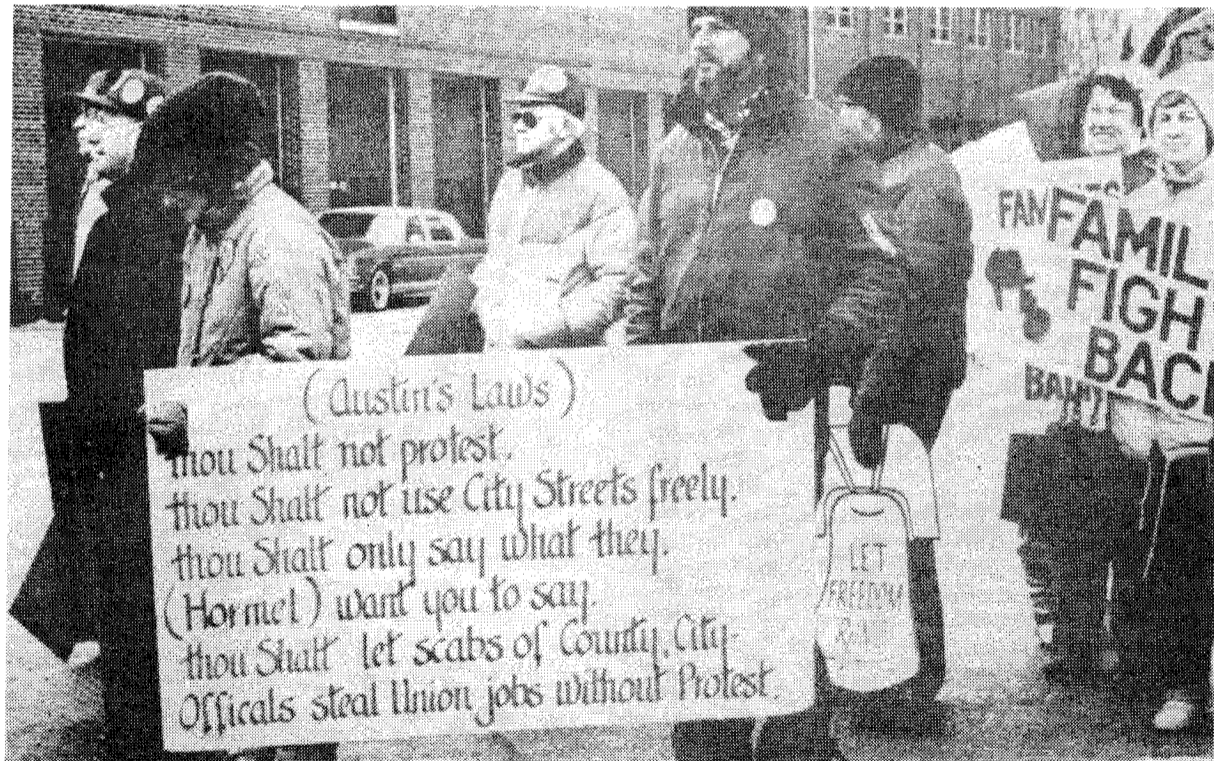
In addition to this support from trade union

branches the National Organisation of Women, the most important women's organisation in the United States has supported the strike. So has the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists — the most important black trade union organisation in the US.

Demonstrations of support for the strike have been held in Austin. On 12 April, after the police tear-gassed and beat up peaceful pickets outside the plant, 6,000 trade unionists, and other supporters, demonstrated in Austin in support of the strike.

The Hormel workers have called a week of protests in Austin from 22 June to 28 June. The week of actions, called Solidarity City, will include peaceful demonstrations and picket lines at the Hormel plant and building a tent city. The strikers are calling on 'labour, unions, farm groups, civil rights groups, students and other organisations to mobilise and bring cars, buses, and tractors for a week of protest in Solidarity City.'

● *International solidarity for the Hormel strike is important. Messages of support, and financial donations, can be sent to the National Hormel Strike Committee, PO Box 655, Austin, Minnesota 55912, USA.*



New moves in Central America

IN RECENT weeks important developments have taken place in Central America. The United States has worked to sabotage the 'Contadora' peace plan for the region. The Duarte regime in El Salvador has been forced to concede new negotiations with the FMLN/FDR. CELIA PUGH reports.

Three and a half years ago Columbia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela began the 'Contadora' peace initiative in Central America. The 'Contadora' group's first proposals were accepted by the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Since then the United States has worked to undermine anything resembling the original Contadora plan.

The latest demand by the US backed regime in Central America — El Salvador, Guatemala,

Honduras, and Costa Rica — is that the Nicaraguan government disarm its popular militias. Honduras has demanded that the Nicaraguans allow foreign, that is US troops to engage in military manoeuvres in the region. All these are dressed up in a demand that Nicaragua accept a limit on its forces 'according to geography, population and gross national product' while the right wing regimes in the region continue to receive US aid.

Nicaraguan president

Ortega has put forward a counterproposal that: 'all foreign military presence should end and the region should become a neutral zone ... no foreign bases or advisors ... no manoeuvres with extra regional forces.'

The United States made its intentions clear by starting, on 5 June, two weeks of new military exercises in Honduras. These took place only eight miles from the Nicaragua border. The US has also agreed a further \$61 million in economic aid to Honduras and \$121 million in military aid. This follows \$20 million in so called 'emergency' aid sent in March on the pretext of a non-existent invasion of Honduras by Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan

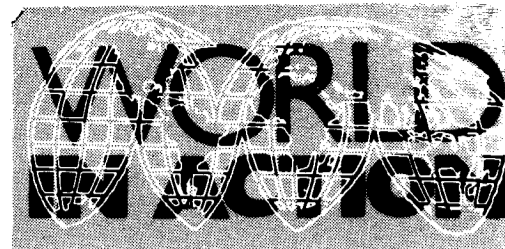
Solidarity Campaign (NSC) in Britain has appealed for increased solidarity for Nicaragua under the slogan 'Nicaragua will survive'. It has called for increased financial aid for Nicaragua. The NSC has launched a petition demanding an end to US intervention and support for peace in Central America.

In El Salvador the last few months have seen a deterioration in the situation of the Duarte government. Mass demonstrations against the government's austerity policies, were supported by Duarte's traditional allies in the Christian Democratic unions. The isolation facing the regime has forced Duarte to propose a

third round of peace talks with the leaders of the liberation forces — the FMLN-FDR.

This round of talks, scheduled for August, has been welcomed by the FMLN-FDR. While agreeing to participate they have declared: 'The FMLN-FDR calls upon all national sectors to continue struggling as resolutely as before ... to transform the handling of the dialogue with Duarte into a real process towards achieving peace with justice and dignity which is the most cherished aspiration of our people.'

● *Copies of the petition against US intervention in Central America can be obtained from NSC, 20 Compton Terrace, Upper St, London N1.*



Haiti

Organisers of general strikes which paralysed Port-au-Prince on Tuesday 10 and Friday 13 June say they will escalate action if they don't get a civilian government. The strikes were called by over 28 political, community and labour organisations.

Opposition to the military junta created by former Duvalier chief of staff general Henri Namphy has been growing since Duvalier was driven out. Initially demands focussed on the punishment and removal of former Duvalierists particularly from the Tontons Macoutes — his private secret police — at local and intermediate levels. But as Namphy deploys his troops to defend the former torturers and attack the people, the movement has begun to demand his removal.

The groups who organised the general strike want to get rid of two government officials immediately: Colonel Williams Regala and finance minister Leslie De La Tour. Significantly, the demand for De La Tour's removal is coupled to a demand for economic measures in support of the poor, whose living standard is among the lowest in the world.

West Germany

Following the outcome of the local elections in Lower Saxony, West Germany's ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDU) has launched an hysterical campaign against the Green ('environmentalist') Party. The Christian Democrats lost their overall majority in the local election. The Greens gained 7.1 per cent of the vote. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) received 42.1 per cent.

The CDU finance minister Staltenberg likened the Greens to the Basque armed liberation organisation ETA. He claimed the Greens had an electoral wing and a 'violent wing' pledged to demonstrations 'more brutal than any seen since the war'.

Other vicious attacks included those on the Greens support for abortion rights.

The aim of the CDU's onslaught is to prevent cooperation between the SPD and the Greens leading to next January's West German parliamentary elections. These promise to be the closest for many years. The CDU obviously aims to reinforce the SPD's right wing which rejects any cooperation with the Greens.

Spanish state

The Spanish state goes to the polls on 22 June with widespread predictions of a victory for the governing party (PSOE), and scant possibility for the 40 per cent of voters who rejected NATO in the recent referendum to see their views represented. The existing parliamentary parties, with the exception of the dwindling and divided Communist Party, are all pro-NATO.

In the socialist party itself, which is almost entirely composed of state functionaries, opposition to Gonzales' abrupt about face has collapsed. His anti-working class policies have lost support — he is currently facing a long and intractable dockers strike against his attempts to privatise the ports.

But the right wing parties are in no shape to profit from his loss. They suffered a heavy practical defeat in the referendum when many of them called for a boycott. Gonzales made a direct appeal to the bourgeoisie over their heads. Though the peace movement is very strong, it has not given birth to an electoral opposition. However, the CP this time will form part of a broader coalition, 'left unity', which may offer some means of registering the anti-NATO feelings in the country.

USA

Pro-abortionists scored an important Supreme Court victory when judges refused to reinstate an Illinois anti-abortion law which had been declared unconstitutional by a lower appeals court. The decision was a snub to the Reagan administration.

The justice department had filed a brief asking the judges to overturn an historic ruling, made in 1973, which made the right to choose a constitutional right. Reagan has publicly pledged he will overturn this ruling and has been stacking the supreme court with judges favourable to his objectives. But even his appointees unanimously upheld the lower court's decision.

Break all links with apartheid!

Build the Freedom March!

28 JUNE

OUTRAGE AT the latest act of the white minority regime in South Africa added extra impetus to activities already organised across the country last weekend in honour of the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising. The imposition of a state of emergency by Botha and his racist thugs brought people onto the streets — in Britain and elsewhere.

The banning of news coverage shows how afraid the South African racist state is of the pressure that could be brought to bear internationally to isolate apartheid. But, despite the blatant atrocities which take place daily in South Africa, the British Tory government is unwilling to lift a finger against the white minority.

Thatcher's only interest is upholding the profit that British capital makes from exploiting South Africa's black masses. Any 'economic measures' she might be forced to concede will be purely cosmetic. But window dressing and half measures are of no value to the super exploited and oppressed black majority in South Africa. Thatcher's government and others like it must be forced to break all links with the apartheid state.

That is why the number one task for anti apartheid activists, and the labour movement, is to build the biggest possible movement in solidarity with the people of South Africa and their struggle to overthrow the racist state. It is by building such a movement that real pressure can be brought to bear on governments whose main concern is to preserve the profits which the ruling classes make from exploiting the African continent. That is why the first task of everyone in this country who is in solidarity with South Africa's black majority is to build the biggest possible Freedom March in London on 28 June.

Break all links with apartheid!
Release Nelson Mandela!
Build the Freedom March on 28 June!

FUND DRIVE

Weekly paper fighting fund

OUR fighting fund is beginning to take off. Krys and Goran Ungar have sent us £25 with the message: 'You're the most intelligent paper on the left — keep those issues coming.'

We need to raise £250 a week over and above sales income to maintain our weekly schedule. Every little helps.

So thanks to a group of Huddersfield bus workers who sent us £25. We encourage all our readers to bear the paper in mind.

Socialist Action is an indispensable weekly

publication for all class struggle fighters. We are the only paper that is fighting to unite all the class struggle forces from the miners to the black sections, through the Women Against Pit Closures and the Labour Women's Action Committee.

For us internationalism is the central part of any socialist perspective. We will not overthrow our rotten ruling class without the help of our brothers and sisters in South Africa, in Ireland, and elsewhere.

So please help us to maintain our weekly schedule.

Solidarity round-up

South Wales

A SPONSORED march to commemorate Soweto is an annual event for anti apartheid activists in Wales.

This year the 10-mile round trip along the Mid-Glamorgan coastline attracted 170 sponsored marchers. 'We must have raised a small fortune,' said Graham Atwell, one of the walkers. 'I'll be collecting £40 in sponsor

money alone.'

The event was organised by WAAM (Wales anti apartheid).

Meanwhile, Pontypridd Labour Party met at the end of last week and passed a resolution condemning the state of emergency imposed by Botha's apartheid regime and demanding full sanctions by Britain.

The constituency has

agreed to support the Wales AAM march in Cardiff, called to coincide with the Freedom March in London on 28 June, and to send its banner. Wards are being encouraged to mobilise for AAM events.

The local party has sent a donation to AAM and has agreed to invite a speaker to its next meeting to discuss further activities.

Newham

LAST Saturday Newham AAM organised a day of solidarity with South Africa, to mark the Soweto uprising and to help build the national Freedom March on 28 June.

An exhibition centre was set up in Stratford, which included videos, book stalls, and the International Defence Aid Fund exhibition.

At a public meeting which closed the day-long event, a SACTU speaker told the audience that Jay Naidoo was on the run from apartheid

authorities, and that in Transvaal 20 COSATU officials had already been arrested. She explained that the headquarters of several major unions, including the NUM, were surrounded by security forces.

The African National Congress speaker replied to Thatchers accusation that sanctions wouldn't work. His own presence was the living proof of the efficacy of sanctions, he said. As an ANC activist he had been condemned to death by Rhodesia and thrown in a Rhodesian jail awaiting execution. Sanctions against Zimbabwe had meant the sentence

had been commuted to life imprisonment.

Among the 150-plus people who visited the exhibition during Saturday were Euro-MP Alf Lomas and Newham's lord mayor. Newham is one of many councils taking part in 10 days of action on South Africa.

On Monday 23 June, at 6.30pm at East Ham Town Hall, there will be a public meeting with ANC, SWAPO, and AAM speakers. The council has also opened 20 public donation points to collect material aid for South Africa (contact 01-472 1430 ext 23472 for details).

Huddersfield

A 24-HOUR vigil was organised by Huddersfield AAM on Friday 13 June.

One hundred and fifty people, mostly youth, took part. Hundreds more signed a petition calling for sanctions against the apartheid regime and a boycott of all South African goods.

Meetings were also held in Huddersfield last

Monday in solidarity with Soweto day. One public meeting, mostly made up of black students heard the ANC and others speak of the heroic fight of black South Africans to overturn the hated Botha regime.

Fifty school students attended another meeting, at Colne Valley High School, where the *Hammer and the Anvil* video was shown.

After a picket at

Barclays Bank in the town centre, Peter Pillonye of the ANC took the opportunity of a public meeting that evening in the town hall to thank anti apartheid activists in Huddersfield for their solidarity work.

All in all the activities over last weekend have provided an excellent focus to organise support for the AAM Freedom March on 28 June.

Birmingham

AT 24 hours notice, a protest against the declaration of a state of emergency by the South African minority regime was held in Birmingham city centre.

Over 70 people turned up to show solidarity with the struggle of black people in South Africa. They took the opportunity to build support for the national Anti Apartheid Movement demonstration in London at the end of this month.

On Monday, 200 peo-

ple encircled the cathedral in the city centre for almost two hours to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising. Among those taking part were three black Namibian students, in Britain on an educational tour. They were joined by Labour Party members, trade unionists and other students to mark Soweto day.

The Birmingham AAM group organises a regular stall in the city centre to build support for the anti apartheid campaign. Several coaches are already

organised to take Birmingham activists to the Freedom March on 28 June.

In the autumn, the West Midlands regional TUC is planning a conference on South Africa.

● *Details of Birmingham AAM activities and coaches for the London demo are available from Andy Chaffer on 021-471 4321 or Pat Tough on 021-706 4732. Coaches can also be booked via Birmingham's Other Bookshop, 021-643 5904*

Brixton demo marks Soweto anniversary

MEMBERS of the Anti Apartheid Movement organised a sponsored demonstration through Brixton on 14 June to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising.

The event combined a sponsored walk to raise funds for the African National Congress and SWAPO with publicity for the national AAM demonstration on 28 June.

The march faced some harassment from the police. Emboldened by their new Police and Criminal Evidence Bill powers, they imposed a number of restrictions in an attempt to limit the demonstration's success.

The police insisted that we leave Brockwell Park 20 minutes before the advertised time. They denied the

By Ray Davies

organisers the right to use megaphones or make collections on the march. They made an attempt to prohibit banners from the march, and also diverted us from the previously agreed route.

Despite these tactics the demonstration went ahead successfully. Over 300 anti apartheid supporters marched through the busiest parts of Brixton midday last Saturday. Along the way local people, particularly black people, came out to take

leaflets and express their support for the struggle in South Africa.

At the end of the march a rally was held in Angel Park. Richard Balfé MEP, John Fraser MP for Norwood, and Jacob Hani of SWAPO spoke. Socialist Action supporters, who helped to build the event through Lambeth Anti Apartheid group, had two bookstalls one at either end of the route.

Local anti apartheid activists are pleased with the results. It has done a great deal to make the anti apartheid issue more public in Brixton, and helped us build the AAM's national Freedom March on 28 June.

THE UNIONS

Black Section and the TGWU

BRITAIN'S LARGEST trade union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) is currently opposed to Labour Party Black Sections. But this position has been reached as a result of sentiments expressed on the subject by the general executive committee without any debate at rank and file level. In a long article published in the union journal, the *Record*, the new deputy general

By Ashley Patel, TGWU Coordinator for Labour Party Black Section

secretary Bill Morris spelt out the executive's opinion on Black Sections by attacking the movement as being 'narrow', 'divisive' and 'sterile'.

But the TGWU's present views on the subjects has some inherent contradictions. For instance, despite being a supporter of the campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, which has championed the 'Right of Reply', the TGWU have refused to print Black Section's response to the Bill Morris salvo. Furthermore, at the TUC in 1984 all the large unions, including the TGWU, backed a NALGO motion in support of black caucuses, which encouraged all affiliates to set up appropriate structures (like black members groups) to adequately represent black workers. In the same year, the TGWU delegation to the London Labour Party regional conference also voted in favour of Black Sections. And subsequently, at the national party conference the Agricultural Workers and Dyers and Bleachers trade groups supported us. The TGWU executive has since imposed its will on the huge block vote wielded by delegates.

A resolution in favour of Black Sections was on the agenda of last year's TGWU biennial delegate conference (BDC). Yet the leadership did not see fit to get it debated. This decision could not even be defended by Bill Morris who admitted that the union's position on Black Sections lacked 'moral legitimacy' until it had gone before a BDC.

The Black Sections campaign, on 17 June, took the fight for self-organisation to the unions special rules revision conference in Aberdeen. This was backed by a motion from a Birmingham branch of the TGWU supporting our demand. This gave the union an opportunity to come clean. The emergency resolution supported the setting up of black caucuses in the TGWU and Black Sections in the Labour Party.

We argue that the establishment of black caucuses within the TGWU's constitution is a logical extension of the union's support at the TUC for 'black members groups'. Black self-organisation allows a group of the oppressed to come together and formulate demands on how the general principles and organisation of the struggle for socialism within the union shall be applied in the black community. At present women and youth are allowed specific representation within the unions, the Labour Party, the national executive committee and the annual conference. Blacks are not.

The concept of black self-organisation is not new. It has long been accepted in political parties abroad. The New Zealand Labour Party has a Maori section and the US Democratic Party has a black caucus.

The NALGO black workers conference in Leeds last month proves that large unions are finally waking up to the need to help their members defeat racism. Indeed, TUC general secretary Norman Willis told a special black workers conference that unions should not see 'unofficial black members groups' as a threat to their constitution. He warned that if black workers felt unions did not care about their problems they would turn to other organisations.

Bill Morris's recent reverse when he failed to get on the TUC's general council, despite the backing of TGWU general secretary Ron Todd, proves that if you are black you cannot build a base without black workers who are the lowest paid and least represented and you must fight for a mechanism called black self-organisation which gives them a voice and a means of articulating their grievances.

If the TUC is committed to the development of positive policies to promote equal opportunity in employment regardless of workers' sex, marital status, creed, colour, race or ethnic origins and if, as the TGWU leadership has suggested, a commitment to racial equality is part and parcel of good trade unionism, then the labour movement should be at the forefront of the fight for our modest demand. It should be giving a full and fair hearing to the Black Sections movement instead of trying to muzzle the debate. Our experience is that when Black workers are allowed to decide for themselves as in NUPE, they support Black Sections.

Wapping — turning the tide against Murdoch

SUN BOSS Rupert Murdoch has responded rapidly to printworker militants success in winning their union conference to support stepped up action at Wapping. But in his court action aimed at re-sequestering the print union funds he admitted for the first time the impact that the mass picketing at Wapping is having in his ability to get out his papers.

The court affidavits made by Murdoch lift a corner of the curtain on the massively increased costs required to keep fortress Wapping producing and distributing News International titles. It throws light on the scabs complaints of 'mental anguish' at the daily prospect of crossing picket lines.

In this framework other decisions of the conference can help further take the offensive against Murdoch. The conference projected special 'days of boycott' as well as aiming the Saturday mass picketing at different groups of the labour movement in turn. Until now, no direct appeals to support of the labour movement have been made by the SOGAT leadership.

Such an approach can also help make clear, and put pressure on, TUC general secretary Norman Willis' sell-out approach. Willis had been a major force in putting together Murdoch's jobs-for-money 'final offer'.

At the SOGAT conference Willis groaned and moaned about the so-called 'limits of trade union solidarity in the present circumstances'. The reality is that the TUC could finish Murdoch off with a flick of its tail if it put as much work into informing and mobilising the ranks as it has in trying to force a sell-out deal on the sacked printers.

It took the militant printworkers 18 weeks to win the national union to clear strike aims. A good

response by the rest of the Labour movement to the clear appeals now coming from the SOGAT conference can help build support for bringing out the whole of Fleet Street. Murdoch's success to date has been used as a stick to dramatically worsen conditions of all Fleet Street printers.

By Brian Grogan

The discomfiture of the journalists at Wapping are straws in the wind in this regard. As is the clear instruction by the NUJ leadership to other journalists not to handle scab copy from Wapping. Despite Dean and Willis's offensive the union ranks have been able to hit back.

The Tories, the courts and the police obviously understand this new reality. All the evidence points to stepped up police attacks — particularly to break the Wapping and Kinning Park mass pickets. The naming of individuals formally responsible for organising the picketing in Murdoch's affidavits — Bill Freeman, Chris Robbins, Mike Hicks and Mick Britton — is a warning in this regard. Mobilisation by the



Women print workers cheer the result of the SOGAT ballot to stay out

labour movement at large for the mass pickets at Wapping and days of boycott of News International papers are number one priorities.

The decisions of the biennial conference of the main print union, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT '82) registered a major success for printworker militants who had spearheaded the successful campaign to reject Murdoch's £50 million 'final offer'. They won the national union for the first time to endorse the aims of reinstatement and union recognition. Previously, general secretary Brenda

Dean and the majority of the national executive had considered such goals to be 'unrealistic'.

On this basis Dean was even forced to formally back comprehensive proposals for intensifying the struggle — including stepped up mass picketing at the two scab sites at Wapping and Kinning Park in Glasgow. As a price for her acquiescence in this, Dean insisted on a motion effectively restricting such escalation within Tory laws.

Agreement to this contradictory demand from Dean was a necessary compromise to make. It will now be decided which of

the contradictory decisions of union conference will predominate. Murdoch's court initiative is an attempt to exploit the contradiction. Dean will of course try to limit the pickets and action.

The recent events are on the side of the militant strike leadership. The ballot was only won through a sharp turn to involve the ranks in the running of the dispute — the organisation of the series of mass meetings and the formation of the London liaison committee to coordinate stepped up action. It is indispensable that these continue.

NUM's stolen funds returned

THE 18-MONTH long theft of the National Union of Mineworkers assets ended on Wednesday morning, 11 June — but only briefly. Justice Mervyn Davies, who appointed receiver Michael Arnold in the first place, ruled in the High Court that the mineworkers should get their money back.

But the implementation of this decision was immediately put off. Arnold will remain in situ in order to pursue his 'breach of trust' case against the union leadership.

NUM lawyers have appealed on the grounds that

By Carol Turner

the two conditions demanded by the courts have been met. NUM funds are returned from abroad and new trustees have been appointed.

'It is nonsensical that the receiver should continue to exercise control over our funds,' Peter Heathfield told Socialist Action. 'We have complied with the details of the court order that the trustees be replaced. Judge Mervyn Davies acknowledges that the new trustees are "honourable people".'

'We all feel that it is time to return to normality rather than continue with



Peter Heathfield

the costly exercise which Arnold is undertaking. Our lawyers were confident that the receivership would be lifted.

NUM marks Joe Green's death

ON 15 JUNE 1984, just two years ago, NUM picket Joe Green was killed, crushed by a scab lorry outside Ferrybridge power station.

By Martin Hill

Last Saturday 700 people, mostly miners and their families, marked the anniversary, marching past the site of his death to a rally in the nearby village of Kellingley.

Addressing the rally Arthur Scargill, paid tribute 'to the memory of a man who paid the ultimate price for his union. Day by day Joe Green went to picket at Ferrybridge power station to demonstrate his commit-

ment to saving his union and his industry.'

Scargill ridiculed the knighthood just awarded to Ian McGregor. But, he added, he'd have been disappointed if the government had not rewarded McGregor. The Tories were loyal to those who defended their own class. 'There's a lesson there for Neil Kinnock.'

What Joe Green and Davy Jones achieved had held back the pit closure programme. Many pits still open would have closed without the miners struggle. Scargill ended with a call to step up the efforts to reinstate the 500 miners still sacked for their role in the strike. 'It's time to say to the Board we've had enough harassment, enough intimidation'.



Thousands marched two years ago at Joe Green's funeral

Guards and shunters conference

TWO HUNDRED and fifty railworkers voted to go from the NUR's guards and shunters conference to meet a march by victimised miners as it arrived in Dundee on Friday 6 June.

By Doreen Wepler

The conference unanimously adopted a resolution in solidarity with the threatened railway workshops. It called on the national executive of the NUR to instruct members 'not to move or make up any trains (or locos), which are being moved to be maintained away from one of the maintenance depots or workshops where redundancies are threatened.'

Although its agenda is limited to questions specially affecting the grades it represents, the guards and shunters conference is the largest and most militant conference of the NUR each year. The union's AGM has only 77 delegates.

The conference recognised that the British Rail Board (BRB) has imposed driver only operation (DOO) for the moment. But delegates predicted that 'a backlash will come' and looked for different ways to fight back.

Any resolutions that could have led to the union recording agreement with DOO were rejected.

One resolution called on the NEC to 'obtain a commitment from the next

Labour government to bring back guards on trains'.

The conference was keen to maintain its links with the NUM. Eric Clarke, secretary of the Scottish NUM, was given a standing ovation before and after he addressed the conference. He reminded delegates 'I was the one Sidney Weighell forgot to vote for' in the Labour Party NEC elections.

Particularly warm applause was given when he said about the NCB: 'What mandate do these people have to run our industry? Who elected them? When the next Labour government comes in we will replace them.'

Again representatives were invited from Notts. A collection raised £312 for Notts Women Against Pit Closures.

The conference called for a union 'investigation into discrimination against ethnic people and women in our grades'. The resolutions pointed out: 'This will mean looking at BRB's job advertising and recruitment policies, training schemes, and conditions.'

The secretary of Rail Against Apartheid, Doreen Wepler, was given time to speak, by decision of the conference's executive committee. After talking about the conditions of black railworkers in South Africa, she said that the RAA banner will be on Anti-Apartheid's March for Freedom on 28 June this year, and all branches are invited to bring their banners.

Golding takes over as NCU boss

THIS WEEK John Golding takes over as general secretary of the National Communications Union (NCU). He won an individual members ballot by more than two to one against broad left candidate Phil Holt. Golding supporters also swept the board in the recent conference ballot for the NCU's national executive, ousting the broad left which had controlled the executive since 1983.

NCU conference in the first week of June marked a new stage in Golding's political battle with the union's left wing, which still dominated local branch organisation. The 1000 delegates from the union's engineering and clerical sections showed he will not get things all his own way.

By Ian Grant

Elections by the conference to the NCU delegations to the TUC and Labour Party conferences were won decisively by broad left nominees. Phil Holt won the union's nomination for the Labour Party NEC, which was withdrawn from Golding in 1983.

In highly charged debates conference instructed the new general secretary to immediately resign his seat (a step he has shown reluctance to take) and condemned press statements he made since his election expressing his intention to negotiate a voluntary redundancy agreement.

However Golding clearly demonstrated his ability to exploit the political weaknesses on the left in the debate on rena-

tionalisation of British Telecom. Confronting the increasingly ambiguous position of the broad left, Golding announced his intention to reverse the NCU's 'no compensation' policy. He defeated a proposition calling for the union to campaign on this policy in the Labour Party and in the TUC.

The witch hunt against *Militant*, which played a major role in the right-wing election campaign, also opened up divisions in the broad left. Under this pressure a section of the left has posed the perspective of a split.

This is in order to link up with more 'moderate' forces they think are capable of winning the union's 'middle ground' in next year's executive ballot. But as attacks by BT management escalate the political 'middle ground' is shrinking rapidly.

Golding's first priority as general secretary will be to isolate the sections of the union wanting to take action to defend jobs. Those in the NCU who wish to win an alternative to Golding's collaboration with British Telecom must make sure he does not succeed.

Socialist ACTION

Millions commemorate Soweto uprising

IN ONE of the most powerful and moving demonstrations of power in South African history millions of black people in that country, with support from around the world, commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising on Monday 16 June.

The censorship imposed by the South African regime, following on the newly reimposed State of Emergency, was the tightest in its history. All reports of the activities of the South African police or army, or of 'unrest', were declared illegal. All press material sent out of South Africa had to be pre-recorded and subject to censorship. The *Johannesburg Star*, and other papers, appeared with large white spaces where the censors had been at work.

But despite the almost total censorship the scale

of the strike still came out. Ninety per cent of black workers in the Witwatersrand area struck. Between 60 and 80 per cent of black workers in Durban, and 90 per cent of those in Pietermaritzburg, stayed away from work. In the Eastern Cape, stronghold of the African National Congress (ANC), the strike was 100 per cent solid.

Soweto was blocked off from the outside world by the greatest security operation in South African history. But the trains that normally take

black workers from Soweto, and which were allowed through, were totally empty.

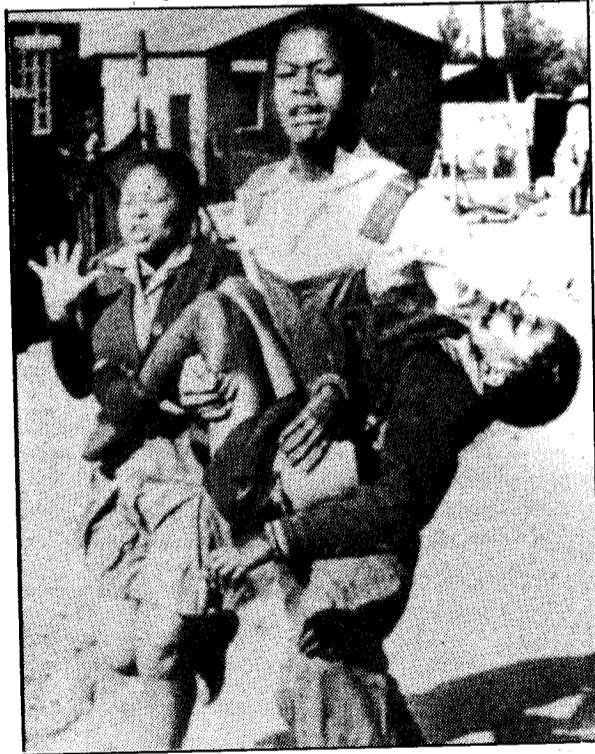
In Soweto itself the strikers adopted the sensible tactics of remaining indoors. It was clear that the South African army were looking for the slightest pretext to launch a blood bath — one which at present the black working class could not resist. The order of the strike reinforced its power. Gunfire in parts of Soweto reflected operations by the police. But still 11 people were killed by the police and army.

The only area where the strikers did not reach the dimensions of that on 1 May, according to press reports, was in the mines.

The State of Emergency itself is the tightest ever seen in South Africa. Hundreds of trade unionists and three hundred church leaders have been arrested. Winnie Mandela has been resubjected to temporary house arrest. Jay Naidoo, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), is being sought by the police.

But despite the repression last Monday's strike make it clear that the movement in South Africa is continuing to grow. The combination of the black population organised in the townships first through the United Democratic Front (UDF), then increasingly through street committees, together with the organisation of the black working class through COSATU, is producing the most powerful movement seen in South African history.

The apartheid regime is being shaken to its foundations.



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End British complicity in apartheid

THE reimposition of the State of Emergency by the South African regime has exposed Thatcher's lid that apartheid is reforming itself. There is no possibility of apartheid eliminating itself. It has to be destroyed.

But it exposes something else as well. That the apartheid regime could not exist for a day without the support given it by the British and US ruling classes.

- Britain has £12 billion invested in South Africa. This is almost 40 per cent of all foreign investment.
- British banks have floated £6 billion out of the £23 billion foreign debt of South Africa. Over half of this debt falls due for repayment before the end of this year.
- Britain is one of South Africa's largest trading partners.

Without this support South Africa's economy would collapse. This is why Thatcher will not accept anything but the most cosmetic

sanctions against South Africa. For such sanctions will not only hit the Botha government, which Thatcher and Reagan support, but also the 1200 British firms with direct investment there. As the UK South African Trade Association bluntly declared: 'British investment in South Africa is more profitable than most other areas of British overseas investment'. In straight monetary terms apartheid boosts the profits of British firms there by £5000 for every black worker they super exploit. Little wonder that the Tories moved an amendment to Labour's parliamentary motion to impose economic measures — deleting 'economic'. British firms naturally consider their

profits more important than black South African lives.

British complicity stretches right down the line. It is criminal that the British press and media is sticking to the last detail. The absurdly draconian reporting restrictions imposed under the terms of the State of Emergency. The only justifiable reason for not reporting the protests on the tenth anniversary of the Soweto massacres is that the broadcasters and journalists had been expelled. The fact that none of them have, speaks volumes for our 'free press'.

The EEC foreign minister meeting on Monday showed exactly the same pattern. No effective measures taken, or even proposed, against South Africa.

The Labour Party leadership was correct to move motions demanding

economic sanctions in Parliament on Tuesday. But their proposals do not go nearly far enough. The labour movement cannot be content with Neil Kinnock's and Denis Healey's approach based on appealing to the Botha regime and promising only limited measures. All links with South Africa must be broken. The forces that must be aided in South Africa are not 'liberals' within the Botha regime but those led by the African National Congress, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the United Democratic Front, who aim at overthrowing apartheid.

The demand of the labour movement has to be breaking all links, economic, financial, commercial and political with the apartheid state. This is the demand of the South African masses. It must be our demand also.

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