

A SOCIALIST ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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BRITAIN OUT OF THE GULF!



THE BIGGEST naval buildup since World War II is assembling in the Persian Gulf. It has only one purpose. That has nothing to do with ensuring 'freedom of navigation', or 'securing the peace'. It is aimed at a military attack against Iran.

It is one of the most squalid and cynical operations ever undertaken even by imperialism. For seven years the United States and Britain have been letting the war in the gulf drag on. Britain, in particular, has allowed London to be used as the centre for arms buying by the Iranians. The Israelis, and, as now known, the US

have been secretly supplying arms to Iran. The United States, openly, the USSR, and France have been supplying arms to Iraq. The aim has been to allow the two regimes to bleed themselves to death.

The aim, as has been quite openly explained by both imperialism and the Israelis, is that neither side should decisively win the war. For Iran the war started as a just defence against Iraqi attack. But Khomeini's regime has long since defeated the Iraqi attack and has prolonged the war for its own internal purposes — above all to justify repression against the Iranian working class and political opposition

inside Iran itself. From the point of view of the working class there would be nothing progressive whatever in the victory of Iran over Iraq. Both are brutally anti-working class regimes.

But from the point of view of imperialism the entire bloody game has now got out of hand. Britain has done its work rather too well in allowing Iran to be armed. It has been clear since the spring that Iran has the possibility of decisively defeating Iraq. And that is unacceptable to imperialism.

Socialists, and the labour movement, have to be crystal clear on this. There is *nothing* progressive whatever

in Britain's operations in the gulf. It is an attempt to stage a war in which the British working class has not a single interest. Any regime installed by Britain and the United States, who for so long supported the Shah of Iran, would not be more progressive but more reactionary than that of Khomeini. The dictator the British navy is being sent to protect, butcher Hussein of Iraq, is as bloody a murderer of the working class as Khomeini.

It is also the height of cynicism that the British government, which has allowed Iran to purchase arms through London, suddenly discovers

that these should be cut off just at the moment when the US fleet approaches Iranian shores. No support should be given to the demand those shipments end. On the contrary while Iran's war against Iraq, when Iraq has been forced to make it clear it wants it halted, is reactionary, Iran has every right to defend itself against the United States, Britain and their allies. And socialists should support it in that struggle.

The entire labour movement must demand:

- British and US warships out of the gulf!
- Hands off Iran!

Socialist ACTION

Some strategic thinking on the left

THE STATEMENT 'Labour, the Liberals and the unity of Labour's left', which we print on page four, and which has achieved some discussion inside the labour movement, is the best sign since the election of strategic thinking going on in Labour's left. Let us, therefore, look at it. The statement could, undoubtedly, be considerably improved on. But its essential points are entirely correct.

What the bourgeoisie is attempting to do in Britain today is twofold. First it is seeking, by every means possible, to keep the Thatcher government in office for as long as possible. Second it is attempting to ensure that whatever government eventually succeeds it does not overturn the essential changes brought about by Thatcher. That means housebreaking the Labour Party to ensure it does not overturn Thatcherism.

This means moving Labour as far as possible to the right and then finally ensuring that Labour, almost certainly, only gets back into office on the basis of a pact with the Liberals. The two goals are not contradictory.

The parallel operation to that inside the trade unions is strengthening the 'new realist', no strike, strategy of the EETPU and AEU right wing. The two strands, political and 'trade union', will come together at the Labour Party conference when the EETPU and AEU will support demands for the introduction of proportional representation — which, in practice today, would mean a deal with the Liberals.

This reality has major internal consequences for the Labour Party and trade unions. It means their right wing, above all the trade union right wing, has a quite clear political project which, in every field, cuts across the interests of the great majority of Labour Party and trade union members.

Yet the 'soft left' inside the party, that part which looks to Kinnock, is incapable of fighting that project because it is in a bloc with the right wing — symbolised by Labour's leadership.

What is more it is the right wing which calls the shots not on presentation, but in terms of a whole series of crucial policies. Robin Cook might have rather arrogantly claimed in last week's *Tribune* that 'the democratic (ie 'soft') left is in the driving seat and can decide for itself in which direction it wants to take the party.' But the truth is that it can't. If it could where was the campaign against nuclear power, for the national minimum wage, and for other key issues in the last election? And if the soft left is now able to lead the party by itself where will be the drastic reforms on the position of women within the party, or of black sections, at this year's Labour Party conference?

The truth is the soft left is not powerful enough to run the party and it, therefore, has to run it in a bloc with either the right or the hard left.

In this, sections of the hard left have pursued, let us be blunt, some rather foolish tactics of the 'social fascist' type. This consists of acting as though those nearest to it in the soft left were the 'main enemy'.

Instead the hard left must have different tactics. True, where it is necessary, it must be prepared to stand and fight alone, and, where necessary accept being isolated. It is necessary to oppose laws against the unions, or action against Iran, or breaking the accountability of MPs to their General Committees, whether or not it is popular to do so. But there is no virtue in unpopularity for its own sake, or being isolated for its own sake. That is childish politics. The truth is that on a series of questions the positions of the hard left are not simply principled but popular. And it can find common ground with other forces on issues which take the labour movement forward — which, after all, is the point of the whole exercise.

The statement 'Labour, the Liberals, and the unity of Labour's left' realises all that. And for that reason it is a step forward.

Why the Alliance is splitting

THE SPLIT of the SDP, so clear at its Portsmouth conference, has nothing to do with constitutional arrangements for a merged party, the inadequacy of two leaders in a general election campaign or trivia of that type. It has everything to do with the proposed party's relations with Labour.

Serious commentators are open about it. The *Economist*, surveying the row over the merger, didn't even bother to discuss the formal issues. It simply headed its editorial 'The urge to merge' with the words: 'David Steel would take Britain's Alliance party into a pact with Labour. David Owen would not. Hence the ructions.' (*The Economist* 4 July)

Given that Steel is presently engaged in merger negotiations, in which he wants to pull in the largest possible section of the SDP, he is forced to formally deny this goal of agreement with Labour. But he makes hints to be sure everyone understands the message.

In a *Sunday Times* article written at the same time as his letter proposing merger to the SDP, Steel noted: 'Labour with only 31.5 per cent support, after such a markedly improved campaign over its 1983 debacle, must think again about whether it is prepared to inflict endless Tory governments on this country while it nurtures dreams of going it alone into government.'

Steel called for opening up relations with Labour on individual questions — taking Scotland as an example. 'On some issues there should surely be an effort to make common cause across the party barriers ... The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, which has doggedly tried to keep Scottish self-government as an all-party issue, should not delay in re-attempting to convene discussion of representations from all the political parties.' (*Sunday Times* 14 June)

Interviewed in the *New Statesman* on 10 July Steel carefully stated on relations with Labour that: 'even though the solutions are not identical, the concern for inner-city areas, mass unemployment, the North/South divide ... all could be massaged into areas of agreement.'

If Steel must be circumspect others, however, can be quite open. For example David Marquand, one of the leading ideologues in the pro-merger wing of the SDP, writing in the *Guardian* immediately following the election noted that the Alliance drive to totally eliminate Labour had failed. Therefore: 'it is an illusion to imagine that Labour can drive the Alliance out of Liberal Britain, it is a fantasy to believe that the Alliance can capture Labour Britain from the Labour Party ... The Alliance and the Labour Party are both here to stay, if not for ever then certainly for the foreseeable future. Since neither can destroy the other they will have to come together.' (*Guardian* 22 June)

David Alton, Liberal chief whip, argued in the *Independent* for the formation of a 'Progressive Coalition' He stated: 'To forge this Progressive Coalition, both the Liberal/SDP Alliance and the Labour

Party must be willing to shed their political prejudices.'

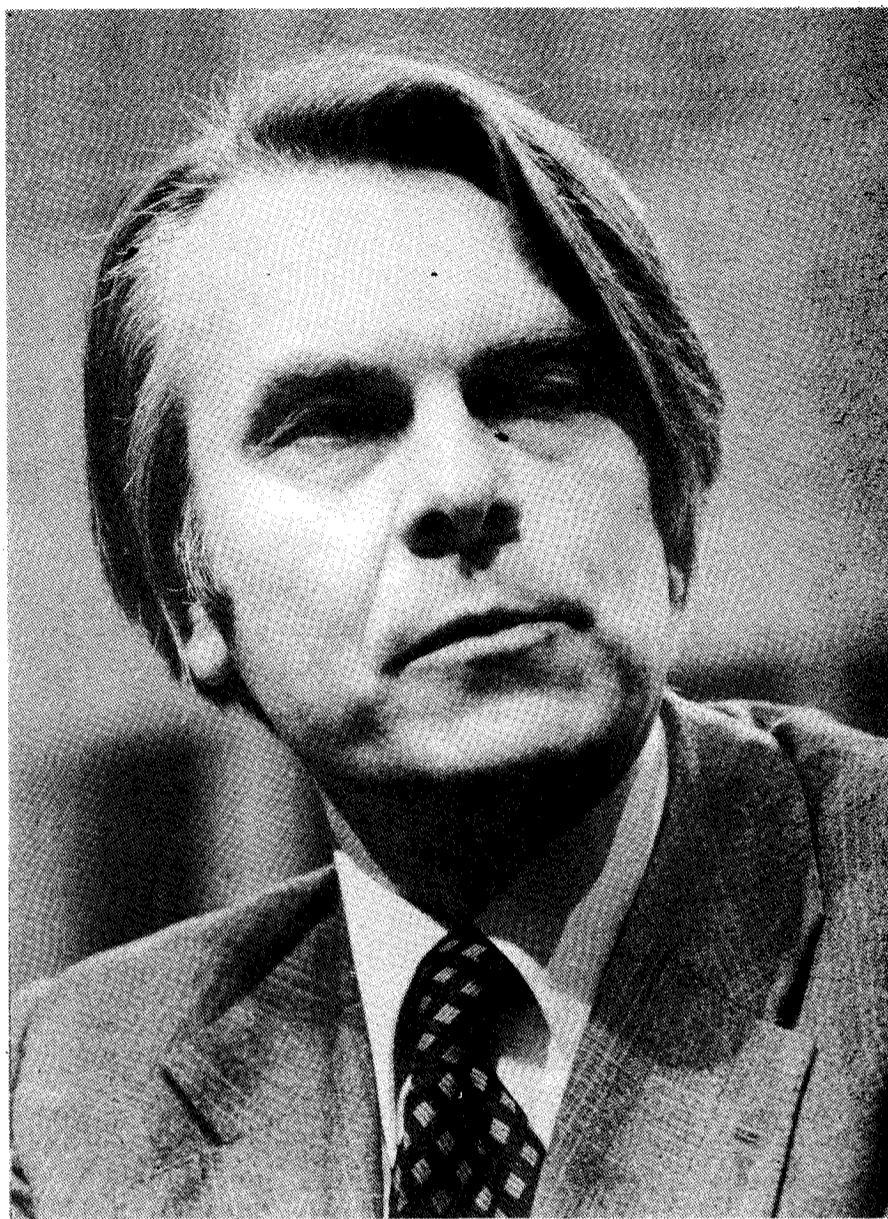
By John Ross

Alton clearly outlined what Labour would have to accept for such a deal. First: 'Renationalisation is not acceptable'. Second Labour must accept proportional representation — which would aim to make Labour a permanent minority in parliament and leave the Liberals free to form a future government with the Tories. Third the whole process must be part of a process of weakening Labour's links with the unions: 'Labour ... must first put its house in order by removing its organisational shackles and union block votes ... it must take firm strides towards a centre-left coalition' (*The Independent* 12 August)

Steel is explicit that any Lib-Lab pact must safeguard the essentials of Thatcherism. He argues that the task of future politics is: 'to define and then give the political lead for the post-Thatcherite agenda. That implies moving on from Thatcherism rather than reversing everything on doctrinaire grounds.' (*Guardian* 21 August)

This task is made easier because Steel knows that the entry of the SDP pro-mergerites into the Liberals will greatly strengthen the most right wing forces within it. The leadership of the Liberals is therefore relishing the prospect. As put in this week's *Sunday Times*: 'Senior officials of the Liberal Parliamentary Association have told MacLennan that there is common ground between a "substantial group" of Liberals and the SDP ... on the key policy areas that threaten to jeopardise the merger talks'. Specifically: 'The defence policy of a merged party should be based on "full support for NATO and an independent British nuclear deterrent", and that should include consideration of all available weapons systems, including Trident. MacLennan ... has been "most encouraged" by the warmth of the association's overtures according to close associates.'

The SDP pro-mergerites have made clear that they demand, as with Steel, that the merged party must defend the essentials of Thatcherism. Bill Rodgers, writing in the *Independent* in July, characterised any attempt to overturn the fundamentals of Thatcherism as unacceptable 'counter-revolution': 'how and by whom Mrs Thatcher or her successors are replaced will depend on the manner in which these permanent aspects of her revolution are accepted. They will stay salient issues as long as counter-revolution is on offer'. He boasted: 'the Alliance ... had pioneered trade union reform and accepted that a mixed



economy would be more free-enterprise than public sector.' (*The Independent* 23 July)

The aim of the Liberals and pro-mergerites in the SDP is to bludgeon Labour into accepting a Lib-Lab pact — safeguarding the essentials of Thatcherism.

But if the actions of Steel and the pro-merger camp are clear, what is Owen up to? On the face of it he looks to be heading for political extinction with a tiny rump of support.

In reality Owen's politics are perfectly coherent. His entire political line since 1981 has been based on the idea that Labour must be destroyed.

Therefore, as Brian Walden, once a Labour MP and now a fanatical Thatcherite put it in supporting Owen: 'The only reason for the existence of the Alliance that makes any sense is that it should replace the Labour Party as the principal opposition to Thatcherism ... It follows logically that if the aim is to supersede Labour, this objective must be given priority. There is no place for pacts, deals or coalition governments until Labour has been supplanted.' (*Sunday Times* 5 July 1987)

In addition the bourgeoisie, at present, does not favour of a Lib-Lab pact defeating the Tories. Owen's rump SDP is seen as a potential trump card in maintaining Thatcher in office. A Lib-Lab pact were to come into existence, Owen must form an independent party so that, in the event of a Lib-Lab

pact, the Owenites can run against it, split the old Alliance vote, and thereby maintain Thatcher in power. Even the threat of this would slow down or block a Lib-Lab pact.

As Stephen Haseler, a pro-mergerite, put it in the *Independent* on 3 September: 'What lurks behind the merger — and what presents such a rare opportunity to the independent SDP — is nothing less than a Liberal opening to the left. Should a Lib-Lab pact be engineered, the Owenite SDP — without losing its independence — will also be free to construct alternative, and more natural, alliances.'

While Haseler doesn't say whom such 'more natural alliances' are, it is easy to work out. As the Liberals would be in a pact with Labour the only candidate for the 'more natural' alliance for the SDP would be the Tories.

This policy gets strong backing from the bourgeoisie. Every major paper, with the exception of the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, support Owen in the fight inside the SDP. The chief financial backer of the SDP, David Sainsbury, supports Owen. Owen will have a well funded and well backed party.

The reason that Owen wants an 'amicable divorce' from the SDP, as he puts it, is that he must maintain a bridgehead in parlia-

ment.

Owen's tactic is to secure a one third vote in the 'Council for Social Democracy' — the SDP's governing body. This is sufficient to constitutionally block the merger. He can then impose terms on the pro-mergerites. These would aim to keep him in political business.

Owen has said he wants a pact with the merged party in which his new 'SDP Mark II' would not face a Liberal-Jenkinsite challenge in 50-60 constituencies. Over the longer term he might hope the Conservatives will not challenge him.

Owen hopes to get such a deal because the SDP and Liberals are committed to destroying Labour not the Tories or pro-Tory Owenites.

Roy Jenkins demanded at the SDP conference that the merged party not run candidates against Owen, Barnes and Cartwright — the Owenite MPs. Des Wilson, president of the Liberals, wrote in the *Times* last Saturday: 'Obviously we are all sympathetic to the view that we should not oppose the three.'

The aim of both wings of the disintegrating Alliance is clear. They both intend to maintain the essentials of Thatcherism. One intends to do so by forming a pact with Labour and the other by forming a pact with the Tories. p4.

Which alliances in the unions?

This week's TUC Congress shows clearly how wrong are the alliances which have been constructed in the trade union movement. The most immediate key issues facing this year's TUC were the fight against no strike deals and how to organise five million part time and temporary workers. Behind that lay fundamental issues of political strategy — which we will look at later. On each of these issues 'hard left' led unions such as the NUM, and in a different way the CPSA, found themselves formally in alliance with the 'broad left' led unions such as the TGWU and NUPE. Even, in a different way, on the issue of organising part time and temporary workers, there was some agreement with 'centre right' unions such as the GMB.

For example on the issue of no strike deals the only member of the general council to vote with Arthur Scargill against putting off a decision for a year was Joyce Winsett of NUPE. The EETPU and AEU have a direct opposite strategy to the TGWU, GMB, and NUPE who are trying to bring hundreds of thousands of new women and black temporary and part time workers into the unions.

But when it came to the crucial votes the TGWU and NUPE lined up with the EETPU and AEU round the fraud of putting off voting on no strike deals for a year. It was the same earlier over the issue of Labour's proposed trade union laws before the election. These were originally opposed by NUPE and the TGWU who then, under the pressure of Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis, backed down and voted for them.

Behind that is an even more fundamental issue. The EETPU, at least, is playing around with the idea of splitting the TUC. It is also prepared to collaborate with forces outside the Labour Party — employing as an officer, for example, the head of the SDP's trade union organisation John Grant. The AEU right wing, while not so openly disloyal to the Labour Party and TUC, is

prepared to aid and abet the EETPU and, itself, threatened to split the TUC two years ago.

This raises the clearest issues for members of NUPE and the TGWU. Why are their unions being allowed to line up, in practice, with the right wing instead of with the hard left unions. Why, furthermore, is that policy being pursued not only in the TUC but in the Labour Party?

By Brian James

The reason for that lies in the alliances put together by Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis inside the Labour Party and trade unions. Kinnock and Willis have concentrated their energy on smashing down the left movement while compromising with the right. Indeed, the labour movement today is led by a 'soft left'/right wing bloc symbolised by Kinnock/Hattersley in the Labour Party and the bloc with the AEU/EETPU inside the TUC.

This policy is disastrous not simply for the Labour Party but for the unions. At the election it meant Labour playing down even policies such as opposition to nuclear power, policies on women, or for a national minimum wage which would have been electorally popular.



In the trade unions it has given Hammond another year to prepare for a possible split from the TUC. Meanwhile neither the EETPU, nor its right wing allies, will cease making the no strike deals which threaten trade unionism among whole sections of workers.

What, instead, members of broad left led unions should be considering is a platform for uniting not with the right but with the 'hard left' inside the trade unions. Because the reality is that it is here that a way forward for the trade union movement exists — above all on the question of recruiting members which, rightly, was a central issue at this year's TUC.

Here the movement

faces clear choices. Among the 'core' workers the number of skilled manual workers, the base of the EETPU and AEU, is declining sharply. That is one of the reasons why these right wing unions are trying to break out of this sector and start recruiting among white collar workers on one side and organising the unskilled, via sweetheart deals with management, on the other. These unions need to be hit from two sides.

First via the amalgamation of ASTMS and TASS. This will create the largest white collar trade union in the world. It is not a hard left but a broad left led union. But it is a clear alternative to the no-strike business

unionism of the EETPU/AEU.

Second is among the unskilled, temporary and part time, workers. Here the EETPU model is negotiating a sweetheart deal with the employer to deliver a captive union membership. For the employer this shuts out a more militant union. For the EETPU it delivers subscriptions. The deals with Rupert Murdoch at Wapping, and earlier with Shah at Today, are the tip of that iceberg. Here the entire left has got to give full support to the drive by the TGWU, GMB, NUPE, and other unions to organise temporary and part time workers. This is the alternative, in this sector, to the sweetheart deals of the EETPU.

Where does this leave the hard left? Simple. The hard left has got its own battles to fight where, at present, it is isolated — above all on the need to reverse the TUC's attitude to the law, to the Labour Party's trade union proposals, and to delivering practical solidarity to workers in struggle. But, secondly, the broad left led unions are today forced by the needs of the situation to proclaim progressive goals which they cannot fight for by their means. In particular, they cannot be fought for in alliance with the right. The hard left has to make clear it supports and takes up these goals — in particular the recruitment drive by the unions, the struggle against no strike deals, and

the fight for closer links with the Labour Party.

It is the unions the hard left leads, above all the NUM, and the left wing in other unions, that have the most progressive policy issues as the organisation of women in the labour movement, the fight against business unionism, and which are most clearly tied to Labour. The hard left must put forward a strategy for the entire labour movement — and not just the parts it directly leads.

In this way the hard left will pursue not narrow sectarian interests but forge the alliances that will take the entire labour movement forward. And it is, rightly, only by doing this that the hard left can expand its own influence.

TUC sell out on no strike deals

No strike deals are a dagger aimed at the heart of the trade union movement. They are about far more even than the 30 no strike deals signed by the EETPU — threatening as these are themselves. They are about government plans to remove the right to effective trade unionism from entire sections of the workforce. That is why Monday's TUC decision to put off considering the deals for a year was completely wrong. The CPSA and TASS were dead right to vote against it — and Arthur Scargill to speak against it.

No strike deals started to be signed by the EETPU in the early 1980s with Japanese employers Hitachi, Toshiba, Sanyo and the electrical firm Inmos. Since then they have begun to spread rapidly.

The EETPU has taken the initiative to spread them into traditional industries as part of its drive to break into them at the expense of other unions. For example in January this year it signed a no strike deal with the Western Mail and South Wales Echo as part of its drive to break into the printing industry which was started in the deals with Eddie Shah's Today and at Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant.

Other unions, notably the AEU, have also begun to use them. In January

By John Ross

1986, for example, the AEU signed a no strike, three year, deal with Eaton — the US vehicle components manufacturer. This specified that: 'There will be no stoppage of work of either a partial or general character such as a strike, lockout, go slow, work to rule, restriction of movement of material and its working, an overtime ban, or restriction of any kind by either party.'

Stopping short of a formal no strike deal, but coming extremely close to it,

was the deal signed by the AEU with Nissan at its new plant in the North East. This has led to a catastrophic situation for trade unionism in the factory described recently by John Berry of the GMB and secretary of South Shields Trades Council.

'There is an atmosphere in there that is not correct. The Amalgamated Engineering Union has a sole recognition agreement with the company, but claims only 25 per cent membership among the 550 strong workforce. Many other people say it is closer to 15 per cent.'

'Mr Joe Cellini, the AEU divisional organiser, has to go in and out of the factory because there are no conveners or a real union structure there. People are frightened to take on the shop steward's role because of the implications. Trade unionism in there is a complete fiasco.'

Employers are also learning to follow up defeats imposed on groups of workers by introducing no strike deals. For example

Silentnight, which dismissed its workforce during a long bitter strike, imposed a two year no strike deal on the scabs it recruited.

But the government has also taken the first step to extending these into far wider sectors. Thatcher announced in July that she would be bringing forward recommendations for a no strike deal for teachers. She announced that Kenneth Baker's, the education secretary's green paper 'will include the possibility of a no strike agreement ... I believe the majority of teachers quite welcome a no strike agreement'. This was rejected by the TUC affiliated National Union of Teachers and National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers. It was welcomed by the scab 'Professional Association of Teachers'.

This is part of a long term policy adopted by the government laid out clearly in a 1984 report by the Conservative Party think tank the Centre for Policy Studies. This recommend-

ed, according to the Financial Times, that: 'the present steady pace of industrial relations reform should continue while the unions remain relatively powerless to oppose it — on the grounds that an upturn in employment will see a reassertion of some former union strength.'

'Sir Leonard Neal, the industrial relations expert and former Board member of British Rail and Pilkington, and chairman of the Heath government's Commission on Industrial Relations, has recommended to Mrs Thatcher ... the two major proposals form the next pieces of industrial relations legislation ...'

'The main proposal, for a strike ban, takes head on the difficulties of defining which services are essential. Sir Leonard believes it will be commonly accepted that the "energy" services (gas and electricity), water and sewerage and health services would operate such a ban, and that workers not directly employed in these services are vital to the operation of the economy.'

damage them would also be covered by the ban ...

'He recommends that the union be held liable for all strikes in essential services, even if they are unofficial — unless it could show unambiguously that it had made every effort to end the disruption.' (Financial Times 20 February 1984)

This is why it was the sheerest hypocrisy for Bill Jordan, president of the AEU, to have claimed in Monday's TUC debate that the reason he was in favour of no strike deals was because the real threat facing the trade union movement was non-unionism. The deal signed by the AEU at Nissan, with less than a quarter of the workforce in the union, shows the real consequence of such agreements. The spreading of no strike agreements into the public sector, which is the government's aim, would lead to literally hundreds of thousands of workers leaving the unions. There was no necessary warning for the TUC in

attitude to these deals. They sell out the fundamentals of trade unionism. All the year's delay will do is allow Hammond to prepare better the EETPU's threat to leave the TUC.

On this there should be no equivocation. Only a fool would welcome the splitting of the TUC. But no strike deals go to the heart of trade unionism — and of the elementary right of every person to withdraw their labour. If Hammond threatens to leave the TUC over a ban on no strike deals then it is better to take that risk than for the TUC to back down.

Of course finally even a no strike deal will not stop workers defending their rights. Hitachi in South Wales, where the EETPU signed one of the first no strike deals, suffered a brief factory sit in July over a wage claim. But with no strike deals selling out elementary trade union principles and threatening effective organisation of workers, the TUC must

Scotland: Labour must fight poll tax

SINCE THE overwhelming anti-Thatcher vote in Scotland in June, there has been some criticism of the caution of the Scottish Labour Party executive and particularly of the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party.

A demonstration in Glasgow on 12 September originally planned as a Labour day, has now turned into a 'festival for Scottish democracy' with the emphasis on entertainment and searching for all-party sponsorship — unobtainable as the SNP pulled out two weeks ago in fear of Labour domination of the event.

By Ann Henderson

A national Labour Party demonstration against unemployment, to be held in Glasgow, was planned for October. But this has been postponed and will take place in April 1988.

These individual initiatives are clearly inadequate, and there are many discussions going on in the labour movement here about how to proceed. At a Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) Scottish conference last weekend in Edinburgh, over 200 activists met to discuss how to campaign for a Scottish assembly. Different suggestions were put forward, including the organisation of a petition in Scotland to show support for an assembly. This would seem to be an unnecessary exercise as we know from the general election result, and numerous opinion polls, that over 80 per cent of people in Scotland support an assembly.

George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow, Hillhead, and member of the LCC national executive, issued a call for a Scottish convention to highlight the views and concerns of the Scottish people. Much press coverage has also been given to Robin Cook's

suggestion that Scottish MPs should meet in Scotland one day a week to give Scottish people more access to parliamentary discussions. Cook is Labour MP for Livingston.

Whichever of these initiatives is taken, Labour should take the leadership of the movement for an assembly. There should be no concessions to an 'all-party' framework. An additional indication of Labour's commitment will be highlighted with the publication of an 'Assembly Bill' in the autumn.

However the immediate concern of the Scottish labour movement had to be opposition to the poll tax, which comes onto the statute books for Scotland on 14 September. There is wide public opposition to this tax, which will hit hardest those on low incomes.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) meeting on Friday, 4 September, unfortunately decided to move into consultation with the Scottish Office in preparing for implementation of the poll tax — whilst remaining formally opposed to it.

This retreat was not unanimously supported, now pressure must be brought to bear through district and regional Labour Parties.

Councils in Scotland — the majority of which are Labour-controlled — must be called upon to refuse to prepare the register and to refuse to prepare for the tax collection.

Labour must mount an effective opposition to the poll tax if its other policies are to continue to have popular support.

New moves in the Labour left

AT THE end of August seven members of Labour Left Liaison (LLL) and of the executive of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) — Vladimir Derer, Ann Pettifor, Marc Wadsworth, Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone, and Joan Ruddock — issued a statement entitled 'Labour, the Liberals and the unity of Labour's left'. It aroused a storm of discussion provoking a lengthy reply by the editor of the *New Statesman*, John Lloyd, in the *Sunday Times*, making the front page of the *Morning Star*, and dominating the correspondence columns of *Tribune*.

It is clear that the statement had a considerable impact in deciding actions by the leadership of the Labour Party. A central part of the thrust of the statement was against the campaign waged by the right wing of the party since the election, and supported from the trade unions by Hammond and Laird, in favour of a pact with the Liberals and, to make this possible, the introduction of proportional representation. This

week's *Observer* and *Sunday Times* reported that Kinnock had instructed Bryan Gould to wage an inner party campaign making clear there would be no pact with the Liberals and opposing proposals for proportional representation/electoral reform.

Kinnock did this for his own reasons — and Ron Todd and John Edmonds had spoken out at the same time as the statement making clear their



Ann Pettifor

opposition to any deal with the Liberals. What the statement of the seven made clear was that if Kinnock did not act decisively against talk of a pact and PR he would rapidly find himself with a united left — which he dreaded. The statement, in short, was an extremely effective 'shot across the bows' — far

more effective in influencing the course of the party leadership, because it stood up to it for once, than any amount of 'behind the scenes pressure', and public capitulation, which sections of the soft left advocate for influencing the course of the party.

More important, and

to the point, by making the party leadership come out sharply against any talk of coalitions and pacts it stops thinking along these lines in the party and isolates the right. It also, therefore, poses the issue of how Labour builds its own support.

Reaction to the statement has been interesting. It has been endorsed by Campaign Group MPs Tony Banks, Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Clare Short and Gavin Strang. It has also been endorsed by the Labour Party Black Section, by Labour CND, and, the indications are, it will be endorsed by the executive of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. It has been repudiated by the executive of the LCC.

The authors have made clear that they see this as only the first step in a process.

Labour, the Liberals and the unity of Labour's left

FOR six years Labour's left has been divided. Developments since June 1987 show this division is a luxury which cannot be afforded.

The necessity to overcome it does not flow from narrow party considerations but from the outcome of the election, the crisis in the Alliance, and the opportunities for Labour. Two developments in particular mean Labour's left must take clear choices. First the attempt by certain sections of Labour's right to shift party policy to a pact with the Liberals. Second the decision of the Tribune Group to reject a joint slate with the Campaign Group of MPs for the Shadow Cabinet.

Since the election the *New Statesman*, *Marxism Today* and leading Fabians have openly argued for a Labour-Liberal pact. This could become a hidden agenda for the party as others, while rejecting such a pact, are caught up in internal developments with the same dynamic.

The decision by the Tribune Group to reject a joint slate with the Campaign Group symbolised this process, and encourages serious rethinking on the left.

The proposed joint slate gave Tribune virtually blank cheque terms. It included eight members of the Tribune group, four Campaign Group members and three Tribune incumbents — that is eleven Tribune and four Campaign. Yet it was rejected by the majority of the Tribune group who, in practice, preferred to align with centre-right MPs.

The political dynamic of this is clear. Although generally loyal to the party, the right has an agenda with potentially much common ground with the Alliance. While modernising Labour's class appeal and policy renewal is necessary, this must not be used as an excuse for jettisoning socialist principles — as was proposed by some after the 1959 defeat.

The practical meaning of an alliance with the Alliance is evident. Liberal/Alliance terms for agreement with Labour would include continuation of the existing Tory framework of trade union law, maintenance of privatisation, rejection of social or public ownership, and a defence policy based on nuclear weapons — by 1991, in practice, Trident.

This is a programme for maintaining, not overturning, the essential changes brought about by Thatcherism. A Labour-Liberal pact might appear to be an 'anti-Thatcher coalition' but in practice it would be a coalition for perpetuating Thatcherism.

The alternative is orienting to a Labour victory through pushing back the Alliance — which requires re-establishing unity on Labour's left to pose a serious alternative to a slippage by default into coalitionism — and also winning over those potential Labour supporters who in the last elections have voted for Thatcher.

Such unity on the left is a principal goal that must be worked towards.

Disagreements between various trends on the left cannot be resolved immediately. However a joint campaign around the following issues would help the party to adopt a programme capable of winning majority support for Labour and would go some way to overcome these differences:

- ★ Building the Labour Party and rejecting any pact or coalition with the Liberals or Alliance.
- ★ Commitment to max-

imising left unity in the party both outside parliament and working for a joint left slate in the next Shadow Cabinet elections.

- ★ Developing a socialist economic policy including the extension of common ownership into the financial and manufacturing sectors, and the radical extension of democratic control of industry.

- ★ Re-establishing the legal right to effective trade unionism.

- ★ Strengthening links between the unions and Labour and rejecting 'business unionism'.
- ★ Strengthening links with socialists in unions not affiliated to the Labour Party.

- ★ Support for the campaign to organise part time and temporary workers launched by the TGWU, GMB, NUPE and other unions.

- ★ Radical democratisation as a key policy to be pursued in politics, the economy, and society.

- ★ For a Scottish Assembly and an Act establishing a Scottish Assembly to be passed in the first year of a Labour government.

- ★ Commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament, a nuclear free Europe, and elimination of nuclear weapons world wide.

- ★ Labour in government to pursue an independent socialist foreign policy.

- ★ Adopting radical measures for the defence of the environment including ending nuclear power.

- ★ Promoting the policy of a Women's Ministry with Cabinet rank, women's

self-governing organisation in the party, and the right of women to elect the women's places on Labour's National Executive.

- ★ Support for the 1984 TUC Congress resolution on black self-organisation in the unions and establishment of constitutionally recognised Black Sections in the Labour Party.

- ★ Introduction of radical measures to break up press monopolies, establish journalistic freedom, and introduce a Freedom of Information Act.

Whatever our different views of the actions in Liverpool, we do not believe a new wave of disciplinary actions can perform any positive role in rebuilding Labour and we will not support it.

We further believe that socialism in Britain can only be built by a combination of parliamentary initiatives and extra-parliamentary activity and that the parliamentary left must strengthen its links with progressive movements and the left outside parliament.

Unity on the left cannot consist simply of organisational steps. Organisation

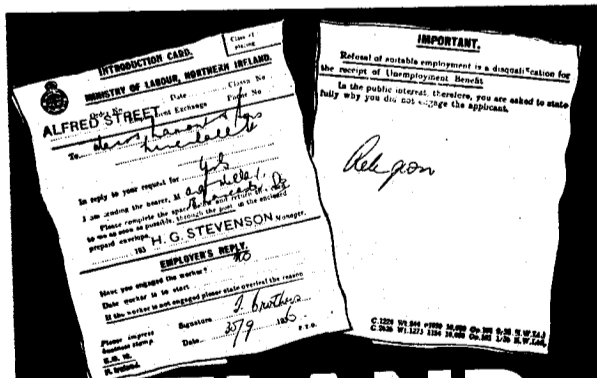
must flow from a developed political agenda. But we pledge to work within our existing organisations to maximise support for the above principles. We will raise regularly to decide the next steps in this process.

A meeting will be held at the party conference to discuss these issues. A copy of this document has been circulated to Labour Party pressure groups and members of the Tribune and Campaign Groups. We invite them to append their names and to attend the meeting at party conference.

Vladimir Derer, Secretary, Labour Left Liaison
Ann Pettifor, Co-chair, Labour Left Liaison
Marc Wadsworth, Co-chair, Labour Left Liaison

George Galloway MP, Executive, Labour Co-ordinating Committee
Peter Hain, Executive, Labour Co-ordinating Committee
Ken Livingstone MP, Executive, Labour Co-ordinating Committee
Joan Ruddock MP, Executive, Labour Co-ordinating Committee

All in a personal capacity



IRELAND: CAUSE OF LABOUR?

A trade union conference on employment discrimination and its context in Northern Ireland.

Sponsors include: Peter Heathfield (NUM), Alan Sapper (ACTT), Ken Gill (TASS), all executive committee members NUR, Jacob Ecclestone (NUJ)

28 November 1987, Camden Centre, Bidborough St, London

Delegates credentials, leaflets and further information from BM Box 5335, London WC1N 3XX.

London LCI annual meeting

Sunday 13 September, 10.30-5 pm
Teatro Technis, Crowndale Road, London NW1 (Kings Cross tube).

In the morning there will be a panel discussion with Ken Livingstone MP, Siobhan Crozier, Jacqui Kelly and Andrew Puddyphatt, chaired by Nadine Finch. The afternoon will take reports, resolutions and elections.

Socialist Action Xmas draw

WITH this issue of Socialist Action, we launch our 1987 Xmas raffle. Last year, we raised £1000 which helped us maintain our fortnightly publication schedule. So we have decided to repeat the successful formula of 1986.

There is one major prize — an Amstrad word processor. But the winner can choose the £399 cash equivalent. Tickets sell at 50p each or 3 for £1.

Buying a raffle ticket, or better, helping sell some, is an easy way to show your political support for our newspaper. The extra money that we hope to raise in this way is indispensable to our regular publication. Sales alone cannot meet our cost. It is only the generosity of our readers and the commitment of our supporters that keeps a paper like ours afloat.

So ask your Socialist Action seller for some raffle tickets. And if you can help sell some, please write to us at Box 50, London N1 2XP.

The Dewsbury affair Racist shape of Baker's future

EDUCATION minister Kenneth Baker has refused to intervene to force Kirklees education authority to submit to placing 26 children at Overthorpe Middle School in Dewsbury. He has stated that the present legal set-up does not allow him to do so. He made no denunciation of the racist campaign carried out by parents refusing to send their children to Headfield Middle School in Dewsbury because it has a majority of Asian pupils.

As soon as his new Education Bill becomes law in 1989, however, the parents concerned will have the unfettered 'freedom of choice' which they are now demanding. The Dewsbury affair has shown the way in which under such 'freedom of choice' demands lie unadulterated racism.

'This case, and the way the press have handled it,' Labour MP Diane Abbott told Socialist Action, 'is part of a racist backlash in education that started with Ray Honeyford and continued with the Maureen McGoldrick saga. It is even more hypocritical and racist because what are involved are British children of Asian descent. The great majority of the children were born here, so the sheer racism is blatant.'

Abbott said that she didn't particularly like raising the point 'but the so-called educational argument is also rubbish. Studies show that Asian children in a number of cases actually have higher "educational" achievements than white British-born children.'

'The real question is that the parents' objections to sending the children to the school are racist. All the stuff about "culture" being taken "seriously" by the media is simply being used to obscure the fact that the objective is a racist one.'

Diane Abbott is right. Every arch reactionary has rallied behind the Dewsbury parents. The right-wing Parental Association for Choice in Education, whose chair is Baroness Cox and vice-chair Norris McWhirter, has offered to mobilise support, including taking the case to the European Court.

'The parents do not want a multi-cultural cur-

riculum which is infringing on the British tradition by diluting it,' said its secretary, Fred Naylor.

By Nick Adams

The so-called *Independent* (it isn't ... are you?) responded to such racist bigotry by ... reinforcing it. A leader article in its 7 September issue concluded that: 'overemphasis on foreign language teaching and ill digested "multi-cultural studies" will perpetuate the handicaps faced by ethnic minorities and breed resentment

among white parents.' Labour education spokesperson Jack Straw also refused to characterise the campaign in Dewsbury for what it was — racism.

The *Independent* would have done better to read their own education correspondent's report. Writing in the 8 September issue, Ngaio Marsh says that the school involved, Headfield Middle School is a Church of England school described even by the local vicar as 'magnificent'.

The curriculum 'is the same as you would find anywhere else'. Yesterday's school lunch was the evidently Asian cultural speciality of fish fingers, cheese and egg flan, cheese and tomato sandwiches, chips, salad, steamed pudding and custard and fruit and jelly! Indeed one might ask why Asian children's needs were not more specifically catered

for. By attacking 'multi-cultural education' and Muslim schools, the press is turning the victim into the criminal. Racism is not created by black people — they are its target.

Cultural and language education and community-controlled schools, are not a problem. They are the entirely legitimate demands of people torn from their homelands by British imperialism which simultaneously sought to destroy their cultural heritage. Doing so was key in making them a source of cheap labour.

The mounting problems in education are the result not of children of Asian descent but of government policy. Last July, the school inspectors reported that run-down and unsuitable classrooms were now adversely affecting 20 per cent of schools. They catalogued

an entire litany of problems with education provision. Preliminary findings from a joint National Union of Teachers/British Educational Equipment Association survey described matters as being even worse.

The situation will deteriorate with the huge cuts in educational spending which are planned. The media, and government, are diverting attention from that real crisis by stoking up racist hysteria — and Labour is now paying the price for failures such as refusal to support Brent council over the McGoldrick affair.

Baker's proposed 'core' (read white, English and Conservative) curriculum, 'freedom of parental choice', and right of schools to opt out of local authority control will make this situation worse. The Dewsbury affair is part of the racist shape of things to come.



Pupils at Headfield Middle School, Dewsbury, where a group of parents are refusing to send their children because it is preponderantly black

Viraj Mendis: the fight goes on

INTERNATIONAL attention was focused on British immigration laws when more than 50 Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka had to undress in a London airport to avoid deportation recently. Only court intervention prevented the government deporting them while their cases were reviewed.

Since then the Tamils have been imprisoned aboard the ferry *Weymouth*. They have gone on hunger strike in protest against the terrible conditions on the prison ship and to force the government to consider their plea for asylum.

The government recently decided to deport five other Tamils. But the court hearing declared four of them should have the right to stay while their case is being reviewed.

The British government has always argued that it is safe for all Tamils and Sinhalese to return to Sri Lanka if they are not wanted for any criminal offence. The argument is that the Sri Lankan government is a democratic government and it has given such guarantees to the British government.

Particularly since the so-called peace accord in Sri Lanka the British government has said that no refugees from Sri Lanka need to be admitted to Britain. The peace accord is also used to justify the deportation of Viraj Mendis, a Sinhalese revolutionary who has been living in Britain for 14 years.

The home office is determined to deport Mendis. His case has become a national symbol of the fight against the immigration laws.

The media have been forced to report his case thanks to a nationwide campaign for his right to stay in Britain. This includes 4000 people demonstrating in Manchester in support of Mendis on 11 July.

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) has been able to mobilise strong support, and has made it difficult for

the home office to arrest and deport him.

The police can now be sent into the church at any time. But the home office knows that such a move will create political problems. That is why it has been trying to break the alliance between the church and Mendis.

By Finn Jensen

Two others with deportation orders against them have taken sanctuary in Bradford and Leicester. The home office fears the example might spread.

A police magazine claimed that Mendis 'exchanges letters with convicted IRA terrorists in the Maze prison'. This was followed up by a story in the *Manchester Evening News* — all part of a psychological preparation for the police to go into the church to arrest him.

The *Manchester Evening News* article was followed by a new attack on the church. At six o'clock in the morning bricks and bottles were thrown through the windows. Mendis believes this was done by police officers.

Meanwhile the VMDC continues to build support for Viraj Mendis right to stay. Every Friday at 5.30 pm it holds a demonstration from Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester.

● The VMDC campaign is encouraging well-known people to publicly support Viraj, including from abroad. Copies of such letters should be sent to the Bishop of Manchester, Bishop Court, Bury New Road, Manchester M7 0LE and to VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15.

No bans on the Notting Hill Carnival!

THERE HAVE been renewed calls for the Notting Hill carnival to be banned after this year's two-day event, which attracted more than one million participants, ended in police violence. Tory MP Terry Dicks and others have called on home secretary Douglas Hurd to take this decision 'as a matter of urgency'. Similar calls have been made against the carnival in previous years.

Assistant metropolitan police commissioner Paul Condon was among the first to demand a ban after Monday 31 August. 'The truth is we are talking about a small area of London where over the past two days we have had a murder, 500 serious crimes and 150 people have had their possessions ripped from them,' said Condon.

'That hardly creates an aura of fun does it? He described this as part of the more sinister side of the carnival.'

Such calls for a ban can only be described as racist.

No other mass events — all of which attract the same petty crime as does the Notting Hill carnival — have been greeted with persistent demands for closure.

By Carol Turner

Year after year this call is made against the carnival. The main feature of Notting Hill, the largest carnival of its kind in Europe, is the Notting Hill Carnival.

Around 9pm on the second and final day of the 1987 Notting Hill carnival,

many carnival-goers suddenly found themselves in streets sealed off by police in riot gear. One of them was Hackney MP Diane Abbott. She told Socialist Action:

'I was part of the Mangrove carnival troupe. We were just finishing our circuit when suddenly we found our way blocked by rows of police with riot shields.'

'It was very frightening for a lot of ordinary people who were caught up in it. Policemen were tearing down the streets with their truncheons drawn.'

The carnival was preceded by several weeks of aggressive police operations in the area.

Operation Trident — a similar operation to the 'Swamp' exercise that was carried out in Brixton shortly before the uprising there in 1985 — had been underway in Notting Hill in the weeks before this year's carnival. Carnival organisers and others had already warned the police of the trouble that could be provoked by such an exercise.

'While everybody deplores pickpocketing,' said Diane Abbott, 'it is important to remember that what happened in Notting Hill on Monday evening was partly the result of


the carnival organisers having made clear that they will continue to oppose all attempts to ban the Notting Hill carnival. They must have every support.

had experienced weeks and weeks of over-policing.


'Predictions about violence tend to become a self-fulfilling prophecy because of the very large number of police that are used and that are visible. I can't think of any other cultural event of this nature which is policed in this way.'

Speaking after the police attack of Monday 31 August, Carnival Arts Committee chair Alex Pascal pointed out that the police had used the same tactics in the Notting Hill area in previous years.

The carnival organisers have made clear that they will continue to oppose all attempts to ban the Notting Hill carnival. They must have every support.



MARCH FROM BROADWATER FARM TO 10 DOWNING STREET



Saturday October 3rd 1987

Called by: The Movement for Civil Rights and Justice
Organised by: Broadwater Farm Youth Association, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, Broadwater Farm Residents' Association

- WE DEMAND:**
- ★ A Public Enquiry into the uprising on 6th October 1985!
 - ★ The immediate release of the innocent youths framed and convicted after the uprising!
 - ★ Fight State Racism and Oppression!

all times approximate

Rally in Hyde Park 3.00pm

THERE WILL BE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS

LESSONS OF THE MINERS STRIKE

SOU

THE NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers in South Africa made labour movement history in its heroic three-week strike in pursuit of a living wage. Never before has the liberation struggle in South Africa experienced a strike of such proportions for such a length of time. The strike achieved, in the words of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), 'the best unity and organisation the country has ever seen'.

By Doreen Wepler

Although the miners were unable to win their 30 per cent wage increase, the union successfully organised a necessary retreat. This will allow it to continue the struggle — organisationally intact and with 80,000 new members won through the battle. As Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM(SA) put it, the strike should be seen as 'a dress rehearsal for further action'. With the death of 50 miners at the Helena gold mine just hours after the return to work, further action is on the cards.

This historic trial of strength registered the balance of forces in South Africa. It demonstrated that the apartheid regime can't simply crush the trade union movement — the capacity of which belied the Chamber of Mines' predictions that it would crumble within two days. In saluting the black workers, SACTU explained that the mining bosses: 'failed to bleed the NUM to its death.' But the strike also showed that the struggle for power by the oppressed peoples of South Africa will be a prolonged one. The South African ruling class is a junior partner in the world system of imperialism. Apartheid rule, which brings the imperialists superprofits from black labour, will not be overthrown easily.

The NUM(SA) was re-launched four years ago. At the start of the

strike, it organised 40 per cent of miners. With over 340,000 members it is the backbone of the 710,000 member, non-racial Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

The claim submitted by the NUM(SA) in this year's wage round included a 30 per cent wage increase (reduced to 27 per cent in the final week of negotiations); an increase in holidays from 18 to 30 days; an increase in holiday pay; an extension in death benefits to miners families five years. The union also demanded paid holidays on dates black workers wished to mark. These include May Day, 16 June (the anniversary of the Soweto uprising) and 25 March (the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre). An end to the migrant labour system was called for.

The very length of the dispute, in an industry organised on the inhumane migrant labour system, was a feat in itself. Black miners in South Africa are forced to live in single-sex compounds, leaving their families behind in the bantustans (land reservations for blacks), or in neighbouring countries which provide large amounts of labour for the mining houses in South Africa. Each miner's wage, on average, must support 12-15 family members he has left behind. Yet without strike pay, the miners held out for three weeks. The longest national dispute previously sustained by the NUM(SA) lasted 48 hours.

The strike affected 44 of the 46 gold and coal mines targeted by the NUM. In comparison, the historic 1946 miners strike, a landmark in the South African liberation struggle, involved 70,000 to 100,000 miners in 21 mines for five days from 12-17 August. At the end of the 1946 strike which was defeated, 12 miners were dead and 1200 injured.

The initial response of the Chamber of Mines this time was a desperate bid to buy off the strike. On 1 July, a wage increase ranging from 15 to 23.4 per cent was imposed. This didn't deter the union. The strike began.

On the first day of the strike the government tried a similar ploy. It enacted laws to abolish the 'job reservation' system in the mines. These laws

have barred black miners from better paid jobs in the pits for more than 75 years. A massive misinformation campaign of fake leafletting also failed to disrupt the strike.

These tactics were coupled with brute force from day one. The miners were subject to unrelenting attacks by the mining bosses and their notorious private security forces, backed up where necessary, by the apartheid state forces. Miners who remained at the compounds were forced down mining shafts at gunpoint. The appeal by the NUM for miners to leave their living quarters was a clear signal that the responsibility for violence was at the door of the bosses and the state. In the event, most miners remained at the compounds.

During the three weeks, over 400 arrests were made; over 500 miners suffered injuries and 11 miners were murdered. Thirty six thousand miners were sacked from their jobs. Thousands of other jobs were put at risk when the mine owners threatened to close a number of mining shafts.

At the end of the day, the union won improved conditions, but no further wage increase. A ten per cent increase in holiday pay was agreed. Death benefits are to be paid up to three years after the death. Agreement has been reached that moves will be made to end the hostel system.

However, this battle was not just another wage round. The strike took place against the back cloth of an increasingly polarised South African society. The apartheid regime has employed violence on all fronts in an attempt to contain the continuing resistance to its rule. But it has been unable to regain the strategic initiative.

The townships where black urban workers live remain occupied by the army. Yet the regime can't get the apartheid councils functioning. If the troops were withdrawn everyone agrees that the underground street committees, people's courts, and local defence units would soon reappear.

The mass organisations have also been targeted for repression by the regime. The United Democratic Front

(UDF) the largest anti-apartheid coalition in South Africa, has a majority of its leaders in prison. Nevertheless, new mass organisations continue to be set up. For example, in May 1987, the UDF Women's League was launched. Preparations are underway for the rebirth of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) which will draw in both UDF and non-UDF women. FEDSAW was relaunched in the Johannesburg area in June 1987.

Perhaps the most spectacular achievement in recent months was the launch of a quarter of a million strong youth organisation, the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) which is totally underground.

But the most decisive feature this year has been the central role of the trade unions as focus for the resistance to the apartheid regime. The unions have been able to score important victories — at great cost in terms of human lives and suffering.

Two major battles on a national scale have been won. First, over 10,000 workers, mainly women, employed by the large chain stores of OK Bazaars won a strike against low pay. In June the South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union scored a resounding victory after a three-month struggle. This had threatened to spark off a more generalised upsurge as the eleventh anniversary of the Soweto uprising approached.

With these successes under its belt, the trade union movement was engaged in strike actions involving half a million workers as the miners strike got underway. Chemical workers, car workers, agricultural labourers and food processing workers were in local and regional disputes. The postal workers action was the broadest — involving 20,000 members at a national level. This action followed from the victory of the Soweto-centred postal strike in May. It was part of a strike wave by members of the Post Office and Telecommunication Workers Union (POTWA) which began in May. A return to work took place two days after the NUM(SA) settlement. An improvement in conditions resulted —



although demands for wages parity with white workers was not achieved. Today, 100,000 members of the second largest South African union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), are preparing for local strike actions throughout the country. A threatened national strike has been declared illegal by the courts.

During the miners strike in South Africa, 4000 sacked copper miners in Namibia were also resisting an onslaught of harassment and intimidation. These workers, employed by the Tsumeb Corporation Ltd. (TCL), which is owned by the British multinational Consolidated Gold Fields, had been on strike since 26 July for a 120 per cent increase in the pitiful wages paid. It also demanded improved conditions — as well as broader political demands such as an end to the contract labour system and the implementation

BUILD FOR OCTOBER 24th

THE APPEAL put out by the South African miners and the African National Congress for support from miners world-wide was immediately acted upon by the British NUM. The International Miners Organisation (IMO) also moved into action, calling on its affiliates world-wide to aid the miners. A preliminary list of 68 unions which gave money included miners unions from the US, France, East and West Germany and Cuba. The Australian miners union sent £2500 just as it started its own industrial action. Transport workers from Canada contributed, as did steel workers and car workers unions from the US. A range of community organisations in South Africa and the Front Line States responded to the appeal.

The magnificent international response was matched by efforts in Britain itself. The British NUM, and Women Against Pit Closures, found an overwhelming response in the labour movement. In three weeks over £75,000 was raised for the South African NUM — including significant sums from other national unions in Britain. TASS topped the donations with £5000, but unions such as the Fire Brigades Union gave £1500. Thousands of pounds poured in

from NUM lodges and area organisations.

Miners support committees set up to aid the British NUM in its strike also acted. Town centre collections by NUM members and other labour movement and anti-apartheid activists were extremely successful.

Although there has been a return to work, solidarity is still urgently needed. The Namibian miners have returned to work under extremely difficult conditions and require aid at all levels. Here a firm stand was taken by Liverpool dockers in August when they refused to unload uranium hexafluoride which they suspected came from Namibia. These dockers are now working to extend their stand to other docks. They have organised a regional demonstration in Liverpool on 3 October which deserves widespread support.

South African miners equally need support. Not only have they members detained and injured, as well as responsibilities to the families of those who gave their lives in the struggle, but three NUM members are on death row awaiting execution. The very day of the return to work two of the 34 black prisoners on death row were murdered by the regime.

SAYCO has launched an international campaign to 'Save the 32' which has been backed by COSATU and the UDF. This campaign should have a powerful response in Britain. A target of



Godfrey Mokate of SACTU appealing for solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle at the Notts miners' gala

32,000 signatures has been set. The Anti Apartheid Movement will be focussing in the coming weeks on fresher weeks at colleges and winning students to support for initiatives being organised by South Africa the Imprisoned Society (SATIS), which organises activity on this aspect of solidarity work in Britain.

An immediate focus for continuing the mobilisation will be the 'Sanctions

Against South African Coal Conference' on 19 September in Sheffield. The response to the conference has been tremendous. Pete Kennedy, the NUM's international officer, states that delegations have come from over 50 pit branches, six or seven Women Against Pit Closure groups, and a wide variety of other unions. The Liverpool dockers will be there as well.

The NUM is showing the way forward for the anti-apartheid movement as a whole in Britain. If this lead is taken will provide the most powerful build up possible to the national demonstration called by the AAM on 24 October and forging a movement to force the government to impose total sanctions against the apartheid regime.

TH AFRICAN



of UN Security Council Resolution 435 which calls for withdrawal of the occupation forces of South Africa from Namibia.

This strike was concluded shortly after the NUM(SA) settlement. The courts had earlier ruled the strike illegal. The union's appeal came just as the NUM(SA) dispute was being concluded — and its appeal was rejected. The situation of these workers is very serious today. It is estimated that up to 40 per cent of Namibian miners — those approaching retirement, those the company deems are 'trouble-makers', and so on — will not be taken back. Furthermore, in the most serious attack since 1979, six top leaders of Namibia's liberation movement, the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), were arrested last week. Ben Uulenga, the general secretary of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN), was also arrested on his return to Namibia from Britain — where he had been mobilising solidarity for the copper miners.

The political developments accompanying the South African miners strike has seen a major consolidation of those forces who see the Freedom Charter as a symbol of the programme necessary for liberation in South Africa. This document was drawn up in 1955, but is just as relevant today and is the central programme supported by the ANC.

Today the Charter is deepening its roots among the masses. The decision by COSATU at its July congress to adopt the Freedom Charter, and the withdrawal by the metal workers union of its motion to draw up a counterposed socialist workers charter, was the culmination of a long process of consideration by union members based on experiences of struggle they've been through in recent months.

The non-racial trade unions in South Africa have come to understand that it is not possible to limit their concerns to bread and butter issues. Every aspect of the conditions facing them is rooted in apartheid itself. Furthermore, it is increasingly evident that the working class, is taking the lead in the fight against apartheid rule.

The identification of SAYCO with the Freedom Charter indicates that a new generation of fighters is being won to, educated by and organised by the politics of the Freedom Charter in South Africa. This political clarification is indispensable to the deepening struggle for a free South Africa.

The NUM(SA) strike has to be seen in that political context. Any decision

taken to prolong the NUM strike, when the union recognised the state forces were moving to intervene in a massive way, and the outcome was not at all certain, would have cut this vital political process short. Indeed, a wrong decision on the need for a tactical retreat would have proved catastrophic not only for the labour movement, but for the broader liberation struggle as a whole. It would have threatened the structure of the union itself.

The strike also helped to clarify other political developments. The character of the so-called liberal bourgeoisie was clear for all to see. Anglo-American, the mining company most heavily affected by the strike, presented itself before it began as the most enlightened management in South Africa. When the strike began, it moved against the strikers just as ruthlessly as any of the mining bosses.

The role of the bosses was sharply attacked by the ANC in its statement

on the strike. 'The mining houses, united under the rubric of the Chamber of Mines, have for more than a century reaped lucrative profits at the expense of the health and lives of thousands of black miners from inside and outside of South Africa ... Today these selfsame mining houses have the timidity to plead they can ill-afford wage demands.'

The ANC called for stepping up and deepening the dispute amongst all miners, in mine-related industries, in other COSATU affiliates and amongst all 'democratic and patriotic forces'. A rallying call was also made to miners world-wide to assist the NUM(SA).

This strike is a landmark battle in the history of the South African liberation struggle. Because the retreat was carried out in a unified way, it means that although the wage demands were not won, the apartheid rulers are not at all looking forward to the continuation of the war.

Behind the coup attempt in the Philippines



THE ATTEMPTED coup against Corazon Aquino's government in the Philippines at the end of August revealed the deepening crisis her regime is facing. But more, it also showed Aquino's incapacity to solve any of the urgent problems confronting the country since she came to power 18 months ago. As a result, the Aquino government is squeezed on all sides. CAROL TURNER looks at developments behind the coup attempt.

THE fifth attempted coup against the Philippines government of Corazon Aquino, which took place on Friday 28 August, was by far the bloodiest and most serious yet of her 18-month rule. At least 40 were killed and 300 injured during the abortive attempt by a significant section of the military to seize power.

The coup attempt lasted 24 hours. It was led by Colonel Gregorio 'Gringo' Honasan, a former aide of sacked defence minister Juan Ponce Enrile who is now the main bourgeois opposition figure.

Honasan originally helped install the Aquino government. But, since another attempted coup against Aquino last November, Honasan has effectively been banished to a remote town north of the Manila capital.

It was from there that this latest coup was organised. Enrile is also rumoured to have been involved in the 28 August coup.

A total of about 1500 troops were reported to have taken part, some 800 of them mounting attacks on military installations in Manila. Camp Aguinaldo, the Philippines military headquarters, was assailed and Villamor, the Philippine airforce's main base, was also held for several hours.

City Hall, the seat of the provincial government, was also held. The attack there was led by the commander of the constabulary for the region.

Rebel troops failed to take a government TV channel they aimed for. However they did capture a private station and broadcast appeals throughout the day.

Aquino's presidential palace was also attacked. But the main targets of the attempted coup were military. Honasan claimed his action was aimed against the 'leadership vacuum' in the armed forces.

The coup was confined to the main island of Luzon where the Manila capital is situated. But it extended beyond the city to outlying provinces.

However, by nightfall on Friday 28 August, defence minister General Fidel Ramos reported that the coup was put down. But Honasan has escaped.

The military rebels are now said to be planning a further campaign which includes the possible assassination of Aquino herself. Meanwhile Ramos has called for unity against the Communist Party-led New People's Army (NPA)

which has intensified its activities since the coup.

The Communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) described the August coup as 'another characteristic manifestation of the continuing Philippine crisis'. The NDF warned: 'There is also growing repression of people's organisations and continuing violations of human rights.'

'Cory Aquino has failed to bring to justice previous coup plotters as well as military who have violated human rights. This has emboldened the more fascist sections within the military to plan and make their moves.'

'Whatever the outcome of the crisis the likely result could be the declaration of a state of emergency directed at progressive and revolutionary forces.'

The Aquino government is undoubtedly facing pressure on all sides. Honasan and his supporters are concerned that the 'liberalisation' measures undertaken by the Aquino government will lead to the downfall of the Philippines bourgeoisie, and want to see a return to the more open repression of the Marcos days in order to control the situation.

The Philippines ruling class correctly recognises — and fears — the increased confidence and combativity which the overthrow of the 20-year long Marcos dictatorship has brought to the islands' workers and peasants.

The New People's Army has stepped up its activity since the failed coup. A week later at least 87 had died as a result of NPA actions.

Along with greater military activity by the NPA, industrial militancy has increased and the struggle for social and civil rights has blossomed during the past 18 months. The recent coup was immediately preceded by a call from the May First Movement (Kilusang Mayo Uno, the KMU) for a general strike in protest against increased oil prices imposed by Aquino earlier in August.

In response to the KMU's strike call, Aquino announced a significant oil tax cut on the eve of the proposed stoppage. Despite this, the action went ahead. Manila was at a standstill and most other major centres were affected.

More than 200 were arrested during the strike in the first mass arrests of the Aquino government. For

union leaders and about 50 supporters were also arrested. One KMU leader has been charged with sedition.

Corazon Aquino came to power at the beginning of 1986 pledged to dissolve the institutions of the Marcos years and to speed up political reforms. Her new regime's economic programme however remained vague. It is Aquino's incapacity to lift the Philippines out of the economic crisis into which Marcos had plunged the country on the advice of the World Bank that is at the root of her failure to unite the different factions within the ruling class or to curb the growing militancy of the masses.

By the end of March 1986, Aquino had abolished the old national assembly and got rid of the Marcos constitution. But although she adopted a provisional constitution giving herself very wide powers indeed, including governing by decree, Aquino also promised a new constitution and an elected assembly.

These radical promises were expected but deeply divided the ruling class. Aquino has failed to deliver serious political rights for the country's masses and her most significant economic reform, the promised land liberalisation earlier this year, is being exposed as a sham.

About one month after Aquino took over, the NDF declared its readiness to enter into dialogue with the government on the subject of a ceasefire between the NPA and the Philippine armed forces. It pointed out the objective was the establishment of 'genuine democracy' but that present conditions did not permit the NPA to surrender arms — a position that has clearly been proved correct.

By the end of May 1986 Aquino had stepped up her support for the army, rejecting any perspective of a broad purge. 'Before, when we were in the opposition the military was our enemy,' she said, 'But it is different now. They are really trying their best to protect the people.'

The United States gave full political support to Aquino during the recent coup attempt — realising that a return to a pro-Aquino dictatorship would strengthen the NPA still further. But Aquino is unable to purge the army effectively because she relies on it for the fight against the Communists. This therefore, is unlikely to be the last coup attempt.

Aquino's government is rapidly losing support to its left — because it cannot grant no serious concessions to the masses — and to its right — because it is incapable of crushing the Communists. The programme in the Philippines is one of increasing class

Japan's Eric Hammonds

JAPAN provided the first example of the economic restructuring that has become known as the 'dual economy'. Based on this development, over the last decade, the entire traditional, left reformist, structure of the Japanese labour movement has been dismantled — to be replaced by domination of 'company unionism' on the trade union field and coalitionism with bourgeois parties on the political field. To understand how the politics of an Eric Hammond came to dominate an entire labour movement, REDMOND O'NEILL interviewed YOHICHI SAKAI, a Japanese socialist activist.

THE Japanese workers' movement started in a meaningful way only after the first world war — and under the direct impact of the Russian revolution. Then between 1935 and 1937 the entire workers' movement was suppressed. During the war there was no organised workers movement at all.

After 1945, when Japanese imperialism was defeated and occupied by the US, there was a massive mobilisation of the Japanese working class and the rapid expansion of a new trade union federation led by the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). This, at its peak, organised two million workers.

The victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949 was followed by the Korean war and the intensification of US imperialism's attacks on the revolutionary struggles in the region. Within Japan, the US occupying power and the Japanese bourgeoisie launched a frontal assault on the trade union federation led by the JCP. As a result the union was smashed and most of the CP members sacked.

The Korean war itself created a boom situation for the Japanese economy and accelerated its recovery. A new Socialist Party (SP)-led reformist trade union federation was set up in 1950/51 called Sohyo. By 1953/4 the Japanese economy recovered its pre-war peak of production. On this basis of economic recovery workers' militancy began to revive.

The political orientation of the Japanese Socialist Party which was the dominant majority current in Sohyo was left reformist: against US imperialism, against the US/Japanese security pact, against the rebuilding of Japanese military forces, in defence of democratic rights, and with third worldist international positions. There was a solid bloc between the SP, the reformist trade union movement and the JCP.

There was also a very straight, right-wing pro-American, social democratic minority in the SP which split to form the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) in 1959.

Between 1957 and 1960 the bourgeoisie launched an offensive which was successful on the trade union level but not on the political level.

The key fight was in the coal industry. The miners union was led by a current similar to the Scargill current in Britain. It waged a frontal confrontation with the employers — with a ten month strike and occupations of the mines. But the miners were defeated.

Expansion

This defeat of the militant trade union current coincided with a new wave of Japanese economic expansion which continued, with annual growth rates of 6-8 per cent, until the 1973 oil crisis.

Whereas in Western Europe there was a massive introduction of immigrant workers during the post war economic expansion, in Japan there was a huge migration of the population from the rural to the urban areas.

Between 1955 and 1973, the agricultural workforce decreased from 17 million to 9 million. In the same period the number of wage earners increased from 20 million to 36 million. The rural population was reduced from 30 to 15 per cent of the total. Women were also brought into the workforce in

large numbers.

Against this background, in the early sixties, a new right wing company trade union current began to develop amongst the workers in the big factories in the private sector. It inserted itself into a fundamental division in the workforce.

Core

In Japan, in the big factories, there are two categories of employees — lifelong employees and casual, contract workers. Women are not part of the core — the majority of women working in the private sector are part-time.

In the sixties this 'dual economy' system was generalised and systematised. Only lifelong employed workers were unionised and casual contract workers were excluded from the company union.

The unions of the different companies of a particular sector such as automobiles then united into an industrial federation; the same happened in steel, in chemicals, in ship building and so on.

In each case the industrial federation is based on these company unions. These industrial federations then come together into a number of confederations.

This finally became the union system in almost all big manufacturing factories — right wing company trade unions based on the 'core' workers and excluding the low paid, part-time, temporary and women workers. It had already become a dominant trade union current in the private sector by the end of the 1970s. These unions give their first loyalty to the company. Politically they support the Democratic Socialist Party or the right wing of the SP and are openly pro-imperialist.

In the public sector, the situation is different. Here all workers were, nor-

mally, lifelong employees and there are no contract or casual employees. The public sector was the main base of the left reformist traditional trade unions. In the private sector the traditional reformist trade unions were mainly restricted, by the 1970s, to the smaller factories.

The domination of the 'core' workers in the big factories of the private sector secured by the bourgeoisie in the 60s and early 70s was the first stage in dismantling the traditional reformist labour movement in Japan. But on the political level the right-wing still remained weak and a minority. There was a structural united front between the SP, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Sohyo throughout this period. From the mid-sixties to the early seventies SP/JCP control of local councils expanded to almost all big cities in Japan. They were supported by the reformist trade union movement.

Rationalisation

The second stage in the process came after the 'oil shock' of 1973. For Japan the 1973 oil crisis marked the end of prolonged economic expansion. In 1975-6 the Japanese economy contracted for the first time since 1949. Japan went through the worst economic contraction of any imperialist economy at that time. In response, from 1975 to 1977, the Japanese bourgeoisie carried out an intensive rationalisation of the economy.

First, the government tightened its financial control over local government. This deprived the SP/JCP controlled municipalities of the ability to grant reforms. The bourgeoisie and the right wing then began a campaign to break up the CP/SP united front. This was accompanied by a witch hunt

against the current within the SP most committed to the SP/JCP united front.

By the early 1980s JCP/SP control over local government was broken. The SP began to move to the right and adopted a line of coalition with the DSP, the Buddhist party, and even the government Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at municipal level.

Secondly, in the private sector, from 1975 to 1978, the Japanese bourgeoisie carried out the biggest industrial rationalisation of any imperialist country. This was the springboard for its economic success at the beginning of the 1980s.

The company unions actively cooperated with the bosses in the rationalisation. In the process the pockets of support for the traditional reformist trade union in the private sector were eliminated. Right wing company union domination of the private sector became complete.

In the public sector the peak of traditional trade union militancy in the 1970s was the general strike of 1975 demanding the right to strike for public sector workers. But when the government refused to give way the trade union leadership just called off the strike. This was the end of the offensive position of the reformist trade union movement.

Public

From 1975 to 1979 the Japanese bourgeoisie built up their stronghold in the private sector. Then, over the next five years they launched a frontal attack on the trade union movement in the public sector. This was accomplished by a wave of denationalisations.

In 1984 telecommunications was privatised. Then the state monopoly tobacco and cigarette company was privatised. Privatisation and the

core/periphery system was introduced into local government with the contracting out of various services.

The rail union which was the backbone of Sohyo throughout the 1970s, was completely defeated. Its membership was reduced from a peak of 150,000 to 30,000. The railway system was privatised and broken up into six private regional railway companies. The whole structure of the reformist trade union movement which had existed since the 1950s came to an end.

Unity

On this basis, in 1984/85, the right wing trade union federation in the private sector took the offensive to call for a process of nationwide unification of the trade union movement under the leadership of the right wing. The right wing trade union forces, to secure this, have united into a preparatory confederation in the private sector. This is a transitory step. In the final stage there will be a new right wing trade union confederation which will totally dominate the private sector.

The right wing unions have also launched a campaign for a single union confederation including the public and private sectors — which will mean the complete hegemony of right wing company unionism in the Japanese labour movement. The leadership of Sohyo has made a sharp right turn over the past seven years and supports unity.

In summary, if in Western Europe the task is defence of labour movements which are weakened but remain intact as national class movements, in Japan the traditional labour movement has been dismantled. What is on the agenda is a new effort to rebuild a national working class movement.



Peace treaty victory for Nicaragua

THE 'GUATEMALA' peace accord signed last month by Central America's five presidents is a political victory for Nicaragua and a sharp blow to the US war against the Sandinista revolution. The governments of Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador have accepted the legitimacy of Nicaragua's government and put their name to a document demanding the dissolution of the contras.

Press reports have spoken of 'peace fever', of a 'wave of euphoria' sweeping through the twenty million or so Central American people.

By John Smith

The signing of the Guatemala Accord is a reflection of the growing unity of Central America against the contras; against the US military presence and corruption, prostitution and drug-trafficking which inevitably accompanies it; against the unthinkable threat of direct US military intervention. The demand for peace has been shown to involve a political struggle against US intervention.

The Guatemala Accord is a sign that a new, crucial stage of the struggle in Central America has been reached, full of promise and fraught with dangers; one in which the international solidarity movement has a vital role to play.

The Guatemala peace accord reflects a shift in the balance of forces in Central America. This is what the Sandinistas term the 'strategic defeat' of the contras.

The nature of this defeat was explained in the Nicaraguan magazine *En-vio* in February of this year: 'The (contra) project was based fundamentally

on a class alliance dominated by the pro-US sector of the bourgeoisie that had "survived the shipwreck", to use Vice President Sergio Ramirez's phrase.

'It proposed to bring together — for an interim period — diverse popular sectors, mainly from among the peasantry, by manipulating their religious sentiments for that purpose. The plan was to orchestrate these sectors into a political-military structure around a strong nucleus made up of ex-Guard officers and sons of confiscated Somocista landowners.

'The real orchestra leader, the United States, seriously thought it could provoke an internal collapse of the Sandinista revolutionary process, which it considered still immature and incapable of sustaining a systematic and concentric offensive on all fronts.

'It believed it could provoke another internal uprising, such as the one that had just overthrown the US ally, Anastasio Somoza. Nonetheless, its achievements were never more than partial and temporary, and today it can be affirmed that this strategy, as a whole, has already failed.'

This 'strategic defeat' only leaves direct military intervention by the US as a serious option for overthrowing the Sandinista government.

This was explained by



Alejandro Bendana, secretary general of the Nicaraguan foreign ministry, in his speech to the 24 March '87 launch of don:

'We denounce ... the actual preparations for direct military intervention in Nicaragua. This is not paranoid, this is not an exaggeration ... If the Reagan administration does not change its objective and if the contras have failed in achieving that objective, then there is only one road left, and that is the road of direct intervention ...'

This is the meaning, for example, of the 'Solid Shield' manoeuvres involving 50,000 US troops, the supply of sophisticated heavy weapons to the contras, the regional preparations for full-scale intervention, the efforts to win public acquiescence to, or support for over ag-

gression against Nicaragua.

But direct intervention was never an easy road for the US. Its signing of the peace treaty has raised the political stakes of such an option still further.

The scope of the victory won by Nicaragua was indicated by vice-president Sergio Ramirez, speaking to the *New York Times* on 14 August. 'If we assume' he said 'that the United States stops supporting the counter-revolution, that the counterrevolution accepts the ceasefire, that the counterrevolution begins the process of giving up arms, that the Government of Honduras closes the contra bases ... then, parallel with that, the state of emergency will end. Full constitutional freedoms will be restored ... I hope it happens.'

The Sandinistas have

had to make no strategic concessions: they are not obliged to negotiate with the contras; not to reduce or vary their military, political or economic relations with Cuba and the USSR; nor abrogate their constitution.

Even the tactical concessions made are extremely limited.

Prior to the Accord, Nicaragua had always categorically refused to make its internal affairs a subject of any international agreement.

In signing the Accord, Nicaragua has committed itself to lift the State of Emergency, initiate a dialogue with internal opponents, and institute an amnesty for contra leaders who lay down their arms.

None of these commitments are new, however. It's long been Nicaragua's position that, once the contra aggression

ceases, the State of Emergency would be lifted.

As Sandinista leader Tomas Borge so aptly put it: for Nicaragua to sign the Accord 'is not to negotiate our domestic policies, but to describe them.'

This is not to say that imperialism or the internal pro-imperialist forces in Nicaragua will just sit back. They will seek to put

to their advantage the fact that Nicaragua's internal policies have been made the subject of an international agreement. Already the White House has argued for further contra-funding to ensure the Accord is implemented!

The labour movement in this country should take its cue from this to redouble its solidarity efforts. Next issue — what the treaty means for El Salvador.

The treaty

The main provisions of the 'Accord' are:

- **National reconciliation:** a) 60 days of General Amnesty for political crimes in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua; b) dialogue with all unarmed groups of the internal opposition ... commissions to be established within each country, composed of governments, Church, opposition parties etc to oversee implementation ...
- **Ceasefire:** to take effect as the dialogue begins ...
- **Democratisation:** complete press and broadcasting freedom, plus removal of all impediments to political pluralism, to be instituted within 60 days ...
- **Elections:** a) elections for Central American Parliament, under OAS supervision, to be held during first half of 1988; b) under same supervision, municipal, parliamentary etc elections to be held as constitutionally established in each country ...
- **Suspension of military aid:** all governments 'should ask' nonregional governments to suspend aid to 'irregular' forces ...
- **Prohibition of the use of CA territory** to attack, or permit an attack against, other Central American states ...
- **Arms reduction:** 60 days after signing, negotiations concerning arms control and reduction to begin ...
- **Supervision:** a supervisory committee to be established, composed of General Secretaries of the UN, OAS, and foreign ministers of Contadora and support group ...
- **Evaluation:** a summit of the five Presidents to be held, six months after signing, to review progress ...
- **Final consideration:** each point above is part of an indivisible whole.

FMLN hails 'victory'

'THE agreement ... constitutes a political victory for the popular Sandinista revolution ... (it) means a recognition of the right of self-determination of the Nicaraguan people and more concretely of their right to carry out a popular and democratic revolution ...'

'For eight years, Reagan and his Central American puppets have unsuccessfully tried to overthrow the popular Nicaraguan revolution. They have imposed huge sacrifices, destruction and death on the heroic Nicaraguan people.'

'Although by itself, the agreement in Guatemala does not have the capacity to stop the mercenary aggression, it is an undeniable defeat for the interventionist and domineering policy of the present US administration.'

— Statement of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) General Command, 11 August 1987

Wave of strikes in South Korea

ON FRIDAY, 4 September, the South Korean government unleashed a wave of repression in an attempt to stem the tide of strikes that have swept the country for the past two and a half months. Police arrested 350 strikers as the regime tried to use agreement with the capitalist opposition over a constitution and an election timetable to prevent the feared 'hot September' and save the sinking dictatorship.

Police rioted against strikers at the largest manufacturing company in the country which has become the target of strike action for the second time in a month.

Militant strike action by 40,000 workers at Hyundai Heavy Industries in August forced the government to intervene, declaring that they would ensure the company recognise the newly formed trade unions.

Last week, 20,000 Hyundai workers resumed strike action and occupied the company's shipyard in the southern city of Ulsan. They are now pressing for a 25 per cent wage increase.

A massive demonstration of strikers and supporters wound its way through the streets of Ulsan on 3 September. Led by scores of forklift

trucks, cranes and other heavy vehicles, the demonstrators destroyed windows, typewriters, photocopying machines and furniture in the company's main office, according to AP and Reuters. Two cars and a bus were set on fire as the workers chanted 'raise our pay!'

The explosive situation at Hyundai is just one of the literally thousands of strike struggles that have swept South Korea over the past two and a half months. Mining, engineering, fishing, transport, catering, textiles are other sectors that have been involved.

Official figures released by the Labour ministry last week showed that strikes were taking place at 797 work sites. New struggles had erupted at 112 workplaces whilst disputes had ended at 56 companies on Thursday 3 September, the ministry reported.

One of the disputes that ended was a strike by 15,000 unionised taxi drivers in the capital city of Seoul, who won a 10 per cent wage increase.

Many of the strikes are over wages but in addition the workers are fighting for the establishment of effectively functioning independent trade unions.

South Korean workers face some of the worst work conditions anywhere in the world. Average wages are just £1.10 per hour. The average length of the working week is 57 hours.

According to union officials, more than 23,000 workers were killed or crippled in industrial accidents last year alone. In some cases, workers are confined to barracks-like dormitories or crowded shanties known as 'chicken coops'.

In the face of these conditions, effective and independent trade unionism is illegal. Labour laws allow the government to order a union to change its leadership, to confiscate union documents, and even to dissolve a union.

Workers planning to strike must give 60 days'

notice, and after the 60 days are up they must immediately submit to a 30 day 'cooling-off' period.

Combined with this, workers have had to face heavy police repression and company thugs. Last week, for instance, police arrested 105 miners who had been locked out at Jungam in the east of the country. Two strikers have been killed in the last ten days.

It is these sorts of conditions which have been at the root of South Korea's much talked about 'economic miracle' — a growth rate of 10 per cent and yearly exports of over £20 billion, some 36 per cent of GNP. South Korea is the twelfth largest trading company in the world.

The country has been dominated — both economically and politically — by US imperialism ever since it was created when Washington unilaterally divided the country along the 38th parallel in 1945. Forty per cent of the country's exports are to the US which continues to maintain 40,000 troops there.

But the political stability enjoyed by the country's rulers was burst asunder in June when tens

of thousands of students, workers and professionals took to the streets to demand an end to the dictatorship.

The mobilisations forced the government to promise free elections by the end of the year, to release political prisoners and state its commitment to 'democracy'.

The government and the main capitalist opposition party, the Democratic Reunification Party led by Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, last week agreed to a new proposed constitution and to a December election date.

The terms of the draft constitutions fall short of what many organisations in the 15-member National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution have campaigned for. The presidential power remains intact, if restricted, and 506 political prisoners remain in the country's jails.

But the democratic opening forced by the June upsurge has allowed hundreds of thousands of South Korean workers, students and peasants to push forward their demands and deepen their struggles.

'Greatest removal of workers rights'

THE deal concluded between the executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) and the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) has been described by TASS as the 'greatest removal of workers rights in the history of engineering'.

In return for a one-and-a-half hour reduction in the working week over three years, the employers have insisted on an agreement which imposes total job flexibility, maximum utilisation of plant and machinery, and other clauses which dramatically increase

management's right to manage.

These will inevitably lead to further job cuts in an industry which has seen hundreds of thousands of jobs axed over the last eight years.

The deal will be strongly resisted by engineering workers who are planning a series of protests. The key policy-making body of the main engineering union, the AEU, meets on 24 September in Eastbourne. The next meeting of the CSEU executive is in London on 5 November.

Both meetings will be lobbied by union activists opposed to selling hard-won rights.

CPSA Labour Party ballot

THE largest civil service union will ballot early in 1988 on Labour Party affiliation. The move follows a CPSA conference decision in May and a ballot vote to establish a political fund earlier in the year.

The Treasury has intimated that it would refuse to deduct the political levy at source if the union voted in

favour of Labour Party affiliation. Even though check-off operates for union dues, the Treasury has yet to agree to deduct the non-party levy.

The main TUC-affiliated teachers union in Scotland, the EIS, has decided to ballot over establishing a political fund.

Part-timers up, accidents up

RECENT government reports have confirmed a substantial rise in the number of part-time workers.

Over a fifth of all workers in the UK are now part-time, of whom 83.2 per cent are women according to the Department of Employment.

In a report to the TUC, NUPE — 40 per cent of whose 650,000 members are part-time — has outlined a 10-point charter. It includes the demand for a statutory minimum wage and says that part-

timers should be entitled to state benefits.

Another government department, the Health and Safety Commission reports a substantial rise in the number of industrial accidents. There were 329 fatalities and 12,068 'major' injuries for the year 1985. The figures exclude agriculture, forestry and fishing, and mining and quarrying.

They are respectively 13.4 per cent and 17.9 per cent higher than the previous year.

Senior Colman workers strong

MANAGEMENT at the engineering firm of Senior Colman in Sale, near Manchester, have contacted AEU-sponsored MPs concerning the long-running dispute. Their soundings are being interpreted as a sign of the strikers' strength.

For eight-and-a-half months, the strikers have maintained a round-the-clock picket. They have sent delegations to visit unions and workplaces and explain their case.

They came out on strike when four of their number were summarily dismissed for refusing a management diktat in

line with union policy. Since then all the strikers have been sacked.

Their determined struggle over union rights has been supported by a number of Manchester factories through £1 per week levies and regular collections. Unions at Massey Ferguson, Thorn-EMI, Tighman's, Budenburg's and Flexibox have been especially supportive as have the Durham miners.

• Donations etc to Senior Colman Strike Committee, AEU House, 43 The Crescent, Salford M5 4PE

Miners to go into

THE NATIONAL executive of the NUM decided on an overtime ban at its pre-TUC meeting in Blackpool, 6 September. By 28 votes to four, the executive decided to take action from 21 September if the coal board refuses to move from its hard line stance. The entire labour movement must now rally to the NUM's support, writes JON SILBERMAN.

THE executive decision follows the 77.5 per cent majority in the recent national ballot. Every area in the union voted in favour of action.

Opposition to the code has forged a new unity in the union. Many areas have already been affected by its provisions.

More than 3500 Welsh miners who were sent written warnings following a dispute over concessionary coal in July now have to treat of instant dismissal hanging over them.

An NUM member in Notts involved in a fracas in a miners welfare club was forced to pay a £150

fine; the alternative would have been the sack.

A branch official in Durham was disciplined for handing out leaflets against flexible working.

Disciplinary action against the NUM at Frickley colliery in South Yorks led in July to thousands of miners taking strike action.

So strong was the feeling against the code in the Yorkshire coalfield that the union's area council voted not only to push for national action at the national executive but that it would take action at area level regardless of the decision at national level.

Some members of the national executive argued for postponing the decision on action until after further talks with the board.

One of them, Eric Clarke from Scotland, said on BBC radio during the lunchtime recess in the executive meeting that he felt that the board had made concessions which suggested that further talks could avoid the need for action.

But as Arthur Scargill explained, British Coal's 'concessions' were largely cosmetic. They had failed to move on any of the six principled objections of the union.

Scargill said that what the union was after wasn't an overtime ban but withdrawal of the code.

The code would replace a disciplinary procedure which has operated in the industry for 40 years. The

board's claim that the establishment of the UDM makes the current procedure out of date is true only because the scab outfit has declared its support for the new code.

The other reason the UDM is relevant is because management want the right to pick union representatives. British Coal has objected to miners being represented by victimised colleagues, especially in collieries where the UDM has strength.

The real reason for the new code is to prepare the way for imposing 'flexible working'. The current disciplinary procedure was established at just the same time as the miners won the guaranteed five-day week, which is now under threat by Margam and other proposed 'flexible' sites.

And the newly forged unity of the union against

the disciplinary code will be a powerful weapon against flexibility itself.

The board, the government and their media friends know how important this struggle will be. Already they have taken steps to try to divide miners wives — who were such a powerful ally during the strike — from the union. They have sought to encourage divisions within the union, and they have aimed at isolating the NUM from the labour movement.

The entire labour movement must respond in kind. Old links forged during the strike should be renewed. Leaders should be pressed to declare their support for the NUM. Miners should be invited onto platforms and to labour movement bodies to explain their case.

The message should go out loud and clear — the miners must win.

Notts miners gala — united against the code

MINERS AND their supporters from all over Britain rallied in Mansfield last Saturday, 5 September, at the Notts miners gala. This was the second gala held by the NUM following the establishment of the scab breakaway UDM, and everyone agreed that it was better than last year's excellent start. JON SILBERMAN reports.

THERE was a deep air of expectation as the contingents that had come from almost every coal field in the country wound their way through the town. People lined the march and applauded as banner after banner from individual pits, NUM areas, Women Against Pit Closures and other labour movement banners passed by.

The day after the gala, the NUM executive would be voting on what action to take in the light of the overwhelming three-to-one ballot result in favour of industrial action against British Coal's new disciplinary code.

The union's national vice-president and Yorkshire area secretary, Sammy Thompson, was on the platform of the end-of-march rally to explain the issues as he and his area saw it.

Thompson started off his speech by addressing the issue of victimised miners. He reminded the packed marquee of the victimisation of Derek Robinson and connected the victimisation of miners to the failure of the movement to back Robinson up.

Sammy Thompson said that the proposed new disciplinary code was part of the same package of coal board and government measures — all designed to break the back of the NUM.

'The Yorkshire Area' he said 'has put a resolution to the national executive that we thank the British miners in the way they've balloted over the disciplinary action, and that now we go out on some sort of action — and I'm saying it's going to be an overtime ban — and in that action we want the reinstatement of victimised Notts officials Mick McGinty, Paul Whetton, and Ted Scott from Still-

ingfleet in Yorkshire'.

Loud applause greeted Sammy Thompson's action proposals.

Sammy Thompson went on to explain what he called the 'pure victimisation' of Ted Scott, sacked for carrying out normal trade union duties. The coal board have not even stated what he'd been sacked for, despite repeated NUM requests for a clear-cut explanation. But they have insisted that Ted Scott will never work in the Selby coalfield again, no matter what even an industrial tribunal decided.

'That is the meaning of the new disciplinary procedure' he said and warned the miners present that under the new code they could be sacked for something they did at the gala if the board didn't like it.

Sammy Thompson said that the ballot result had shown the unity of the British miners throughout the coalfield.

'There's only one way to deal with this employer — or any employer in this country' Thompson went on to rousing applause 'and that's to fight back and not to cow down'.

That's why, despite threats of court action, the Yorkshire Area had decided that they would be taking action whatever the decision of the national executive, he said.

Sammy Thompson said that the immediate goal of the disciplinary code was to get miners ready for flexible working and privatisation of the industry. 'Flexible working' such as that proposed a Margam wasn't a local issue, Thompson said.

'Whether it's nine-hour days or six-day weeks, it affects every man and woman in this industry. It's a national issue' Thompson

said, 'and should be negotiated about nationally'. This was the policy of the Yorkshire Area in response to proposed six-day working as Thorne in the Selby coalfield, he went on, predicting massive opposition to the proposal.

Thompson paid tribute to Women Against Pit Closures, especially to the work they'd done over the victimised miners.

He ended by explaining another issue facing the NUM executive — whether or not to sit down and negotiate alongside UDM officials. To shouts of 'never' Thompson expressed his opposition to dealing with 'UDM' scabs like Link and Prendergast, and said that he thought the decision should be in the hands of the membership in a ballot.

The issue of the disciplinary code was taken up in another well-received speech — by Tony Benn. Benn said that the code sums up 'in a strange way what the whole Thatcher era is about.'

'It's not only about jobs, not only about wages and conditions — it is about whether she is going to be able, and whether we are going to allow her to be able, to throw conditions in this country back to what they were in the Victorian era.'

Tony Benn went on to explain what he said was the 'way ahead'. He said 'we've got to link this campaign with every other campaign'.

Referring to the banners that adorned the walls of the marquee, Benn said that they showed the issues involved: 'Irish freedom', Nicaragua, Bangla Desh, South Africa, and went on to refer to 'the struggle of the printers, even the air traffic controllers in Spain'.

Tony Benn's appeal that 'we've got to learn to link arms together' as being at the centre of 'building up the trade union, labour and socialist movement all over again' was a key theme of the gala.



Striking Sarncol workers — who have been in struggle against BTR in South Africa for two-and-a-half years were on the demonstration to express their support for Notts NUM. International solidarity was a key

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action against code



South Kirkby miners honour the Frickley strikers' picket during the dispute in July.

The code — what the NUM wants ...

- The right to union representation with the choice of the official in the hands of the individual concerned
- Disciplinary procedures 'as simple, effective and speedy as possible' to be completed within 14 days
- Maintenance of the 'umpire system' — independent binding arbitration in disciplinary appeals
- A joint working party to iron out problems
- Reinstatement of those victimised under the new code
- Special disciplinary procedure for union officials

... and how they voted for action

Area	% in favour	
North Wales	83.5	North Wales ... 83.5
Nottinghamshire	92.7	Nottinghamshire ... 92.7
Scotland	87.4	Scotland ... 87.4
North Derbyshire	76.2	South Derbyshire ... 86.2
Durham	76.2	South Wales ... 87.2
Kent	85.3	Yorkshire ... 79.8
North West	73.9	Group Two (Scottish
Leicester	72.8	Craftsmen) ... 84.0
Midlands	66.1	COSA ... 52.3
Northumberland	78.9	Power ... 68.7

Media attempt to turn wives against NUM

SOMEBODY passed me an article from the *Daily Express* last week. Already they're at it, trying to get miners' wives organised against the union.

They've had a letter, it seems — no names given — from five angry miners' wives who don't want the union to take any action about the disciplinary code.

If their husbands join in it, they're going to leave them or they're going to create an awful lot of tension about it, because this disciplinary code is necessary.

The *Daily Express* wants to 'come to the rescue' of any miners' wives who feel like they do. And it's offering all of you, all you miners' wives here today and your supporters, help if you want to carry on a fight against this struggle and a possible overtime ban.

By Betty Heathfield

It says 'the *Daily Express* is asking any worried and frightened miners' wives who fear that the current dispute could escalate into another bitter pit strike' to write into them. The letters will be dealt with 'in the strictest confidence and no information would be used in any story that would endanger the wives of those pitmen'.

I want to say to all the women here today, and I want to say to all the men: do not underestimate the strength of women in struggle.

I'm asking all you women to put your names down and we'll send a petition to the *Daily Express* with the names of those hundreds of women who are ready now to stand and fight alongside the miners in whatever action they should decide to take against that vicious code.

As women in the action groups and the Women Against Pit Closures movement, we know the difficulties of women organising. We know the struggle you have to make to join the struggle. But if we are going

to get anywhere, we have got to take a much more active part in that struggle.

We did so during the strike. Many of us saw that struggle as just one stepping stone outwards to a lot of other struggles. And that 'lot of other struggles' has a name: it's called the class struggle.

Don't anybody tell me the class struggle's irrelevant or that it's disappeared ...

The only answer to people like Mrs Thatcher, and to people like the coal board, is to get back into that struggle with every ounce of energy that you can muster ...

Our slogan during the strike is still relevant — we still have to struggle. That's why it was so pleasing to see so many women at Rennyshaw last week when there was a meeting in support of their community campaign to keep their pit open.

The struggle isn't just narrowly our struggle. Many of us during our strike found out that it's an international struggle. We were very instrumental in linking our struggle with women's movements all over the world.

We have kept those links up. Since the strike ended, members and delegates from Women Against Pit Closures have been to many countries, invited on the strength of what they did during that strike.

Our women were in Chile last year when the Chilean women's demonstration on international women's day was teargassed. Women have been to Russia, to America: we have links with women in Germany.

I had a photograph sent me last week — from one of



Betty Heathfield reads from the *Daily Express* article on miners' wives. Her reply: 'Don't underestimate the power of women in struggle'.

the German metalworkers who sent a lot of money to our strike — of miners' wives and steelworkers' wives standing outside the gates of a factory that is due to lose 20,000 jobs. And he said 'our women are now organising in the same way as Women Against Pit Closures organised'.

There's no excuse for saying that nothing can be done, that they're too powerful, because Thatcher got back in.

When I think about the women in South Africa,

But we should also keep those links in every country in the world. Because that's our strength. They are more of an inspiration to us than ever they will know.

So I'd like to ask all the women here today to join in the fight. The overtime ban does have to be put into action ...

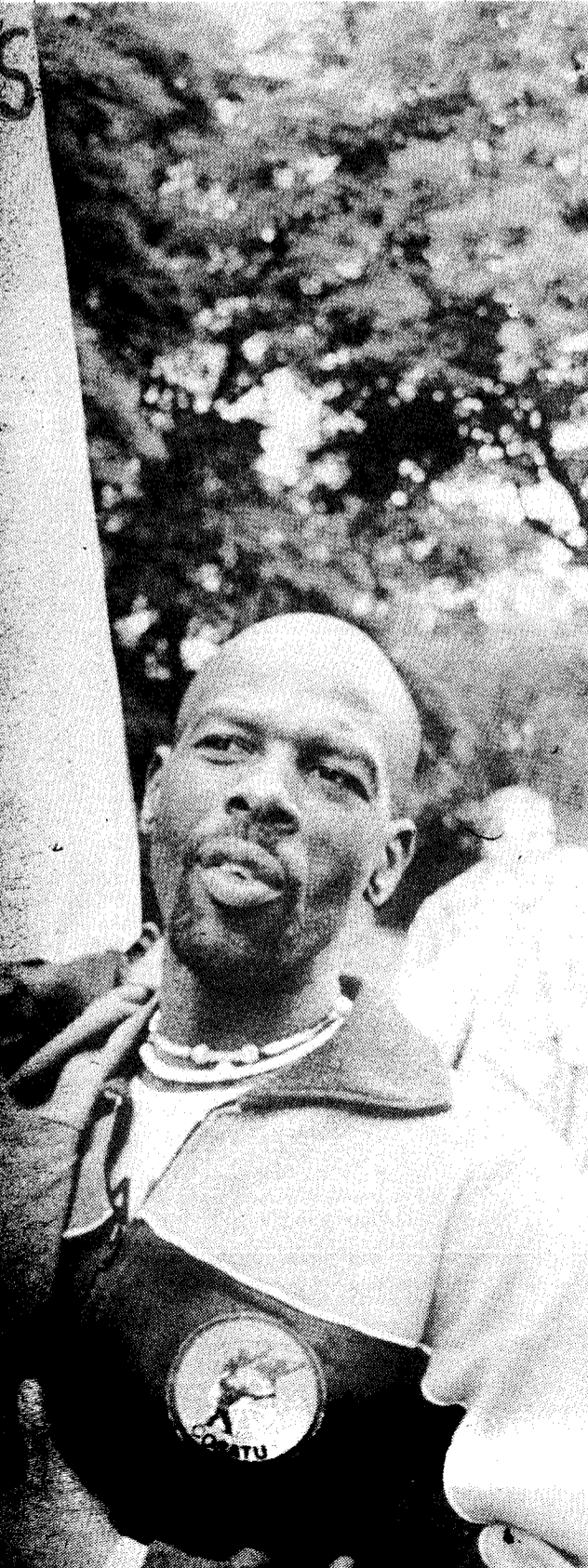
I hope you're going to come into action again, and I hope that all the men are going to be helpful to all the women who want to join in this struggle in defence of anything that their union stands for. Helpful in the sense that you can understand that we can have an equal part in this class struggle, we can have an equal part and an equal interest in any of the struggles that save trade unions, that bring more power to working class people, that will, I hope, bring this Tory government to an end and put in power a real socialist government.

There are many events going off in the next few weeks, and I hope to see many of you at them. In Chesterfield there's going to be a socialist conference. I want to know how all people who believe in a socialist society can get together and make strong links, and make their voices heard.

The NUM and the Anti-Apartheid Movement are organising a conference in Sheffield on 18 September against apartheid and I hope many of you will support that.

Once you know which class you belong to, you know every time when you go to bed and what is the way forward.

I wish the NUM and the men and women in Nottinghamshire a total success in their struggle. As long as they understand that it's part and parcel of the working class struggle everywhere then they can be an optimistic and successful one day we'll all



gala theme. Godfrey Mokate of SACTU, Panduleni Itula of SWAPO, and FSLN member Raquel Dixon, from Nicaragua's Atlantic coast spoke at the rally. (Photo: Graeme Cookson).

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