

A Socialist ACTION

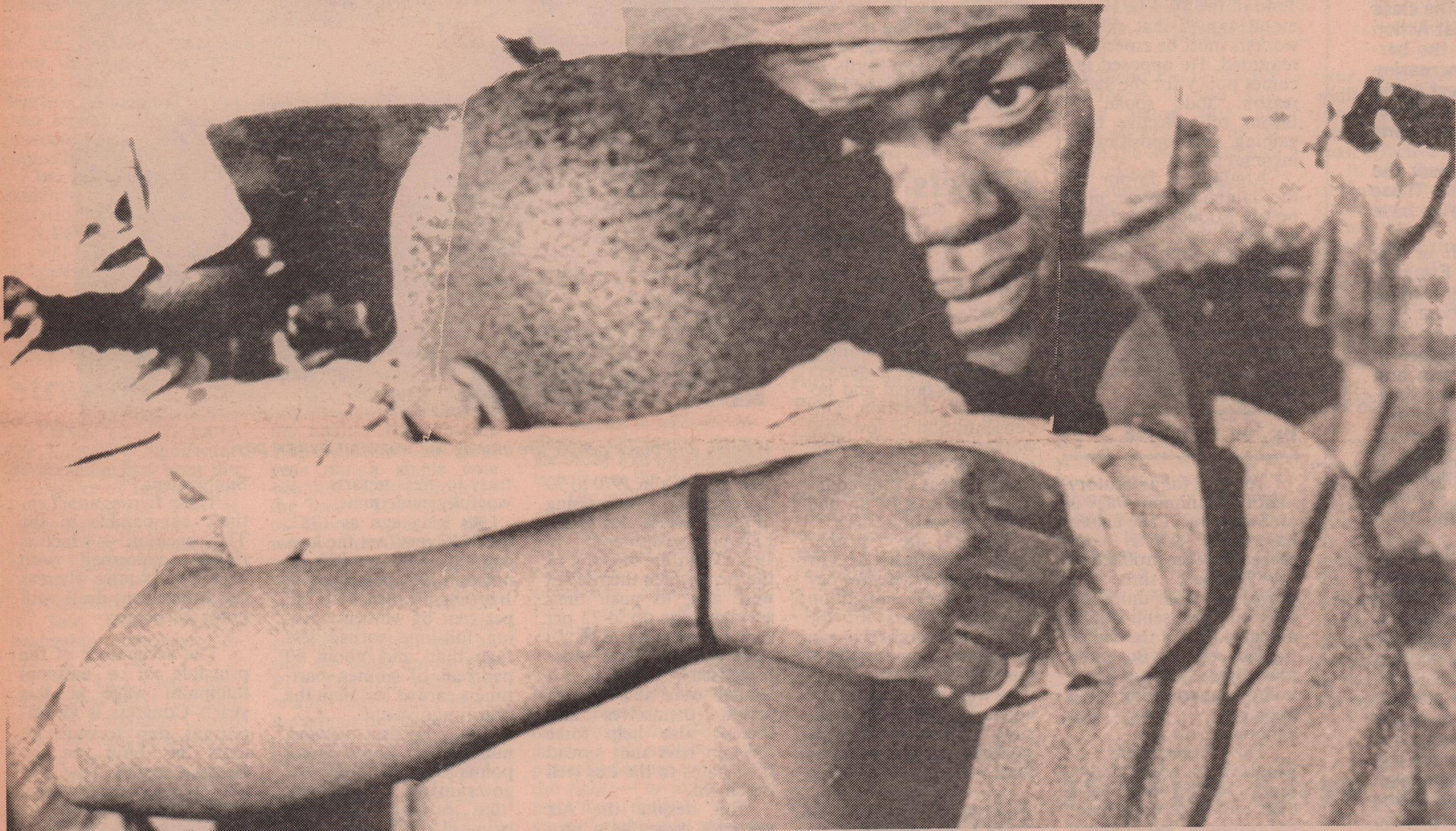
BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Sanctions NOW!

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ISOLATE

ON MONDAY 8 September Britain's representatives at the United Nations Security Council joined those of the United States in blocking a final appeal for clemency to the South African government in the cases of three ANC freedom fighters sentenced to death by the apartheid state's racist courts. The next day Sibusisi Zondo, aged 21, Clarence Payi, aged 20 and Siphon Xulu, aged 26, walked to their executions singing freedom songs.



Margaret Thatcher's government's representatives at the UN claimed it would have been 'inappropriate' to intervene in the case!

Few actions can have so starkly exposed Thatcher's hypocrisy when she claims to oppose apartheid. The truth is that her government and, British capitalism, are literally dripping with the blood of the thousands of freedom fighters who have been murdered in the past eighteen months for demanding the most elementary human rights.

The truth is that action by the USA and Britain could bring apartheid to its knees in weeks rather than years. But that action is not being taken because British and American multinationals are the main beneficiaries of the apartheid system. Every extra drop of blood that has to be spilt until the inevitable downfall of apartheid will be as much the responsibility of the British and American governments as the blood of those three martyrs executed on 9 September.

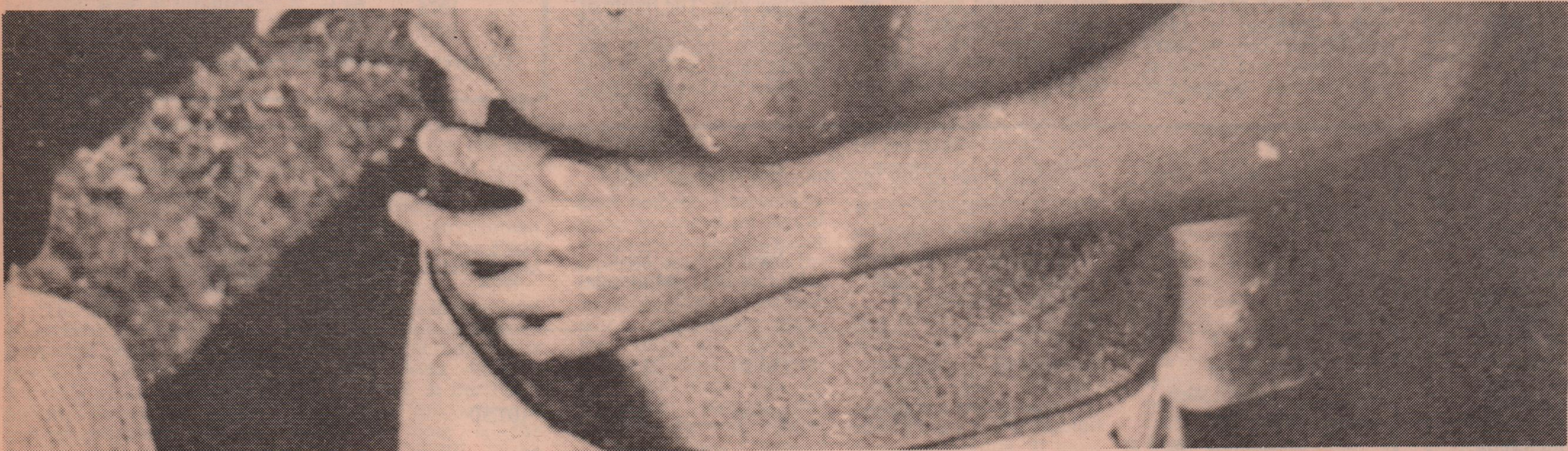
Yet in spite of the support they receive from the most powerful states on earth the apartheid rulers are failing to defeat the mass opposition they confront. Mass arrests have not destroyed the new trade union federation COSATU. On the contrary it is winning more and more international recognition and support — most recently from the British Trades Union Congress.

In the black townships the response to the murder of at least 24 people protesting against rent evictions in Soweto on Tuesday 2 September was a mass funeral attended by 10,000 people in defiance of a government ban on mass funerals and despite a massive police presence.

Neither has Botha's attempts to prevent the truth about his government's methods of murder and torture reaching the world succeeded. On the contrary the demand for comprehensive sanctions against the apartheid state is growing stronger every day. Naturally people like Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, will not be allies in that fight. After his visit to South Africa Runcie loudly denounced apartheid — and his first statement on his return was to oppose comprehensive sanctions.

What is necessary now is for the Labour Party Conference to be made the occasion for a call to the entire trade union and labour movement to take immediate action to isolate the apartheid regime. Full government sanctions, and trade union action backed up by the TUC Congress decisions. This is now the key way to isolate the apartheid regime.

APARTHEID



Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

A new role for Socialist Action

SINCE THE miners strike Socialist Action has been ceaselessly campaigning to bring together the forces which came out of that strike and which stood with the miners in their struggle. It did so for a very clear reason. Because it believed that out of the miners strike something not seen in Britain for sixty years had emerged — a class struggle left.

That was not just a question of words. It was above all a judgement about where those who had stood with the miners would stand in the key new events of the class struggle. That those who had stood foursquare with the miners would equally fight on the key new issues of the class struggle as they came up. That Socialist Action would find itself on the same side of the barricades with these forces on an increasing number of issues — and the ultimate test in the class struggle is not ideology, not ideas in someone's head, but where they stand when one class fights another.

That is exactly what has occurred over the period since the end of the miners strike. Those who stood with the miners in their strike have deepened their course to the left.

The immediate political aftermath of the miners strike was when Tony Benn and Eric Hefner presented a paper to the NEC demanding British withdrawal from NATO. The Labour Party Black Section began rapidly developing its policy in defence of the black communities in Handsworth, Brixton and Broadwater Farm, and campaigning against the US attacks on Libya. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Women's Action Committee played a central role in helping establish Labour Left Liaison. It was 13 members of the Campaign Group who voted against the Anglo-Irish Accord. A whole gamut of forces have helped fight the witch hunt.

Gradually far larger forces than Socialist Action have come around to the need to organise and politically develop these forces. For a long time the degree to which not only the capitalist press but even forces on the left suppressed the views coming out of forces leading and supporting the miners strike was incredible. It is an astonishing fact, but true, that the only place in which you can find Arthur Scargill's major speeches in the miners strike is in the pages of Socialist Action. Socialist Action carried the biggest interviews and speeches of the Campaign Group on the miners strike. Equally, along among the weekly press, Socialist Action printed the major statements of the Labour Party Black Section.

Fortunately now, however, much bigger forces than us are taking up this task of getting out the truth in a systematic way. The most important steps have been the establishment of Campaign Group News and the development of Labour Left Liaison — and the links it is forging with the Campaign Group. Both are enormously to be welcomed.

Socialist Action does not have delusions of grandeur. It believes it has a political role to play in what is developing in the labour movement. But other forces are much stronger than we are in terms of support. A class struggle left must be democratic. It must respect the real relation of forces that exists among currents.

Socialist Action fights against attempts to exclude it, and fights for its views to be heard, but it does not seek, and never has sought, to dominate the left organisationally. It aims to convince people it is right politically, not organisationally manipulate the left.

This however means a changing role for Socialist Action itself. It is important that much more powerful voices than us are now providing a platform for printing the views of, and organising, the forces which we think are vital for the development of socialism in Britain. This means that we will be taking up many more of the strategic issues that face the left. Our 'Building An Alliance For Socialism' weekend on 22-23 November will be an important step in that. The pages of Socialist Action will themselves change to take up these more strategic issues of politics. We will be continuing to support all the campaigns we have always supported — including Campaign Group News, and Labour Left Liaison.

We hope our readers will like what they see in the coming issues.

The national minimum wage

THE DEBATE at last week's TUC in Brighton on low pay resulted in a 745,000 majority in favour of a document produced by the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee. The centre point of this was the question of a national minimum wage. A composite resolution was also adopted on a show of hands. Concern for the plight of the low paid by the TUC is more than welcome. During the debate, Doug Hoyle MP stated that 8 million workers, out of a total of 21.5 million were affected by low pay. But how adequate is the new TUC document?

Those opposing the document and resolution which called for a statutory minimum wage at the TUC were Eric Hammond of the EETPU and Ron Todd of the TGWU. Hammond argued that skilled workers must be especially rewarded. He opposed incomes policy for the same reason. Todd spoke in favour of collective bargaining, and opposition to incomes policy.

Arguing in favour of the minimum wage proposals, Rodney Bickerstafe argued that collective bargaining on its own can never eradicate low pay. 'I need nobody to talk to me about being patient a little longer and about trying to find another excuse for doing nothing for the eight million low-paid'.

By Jon Silberman

The case for a statutory national minimum wage is overwhelming. Trade unions have been directly concerned with the problem of the low-paid since the growth of mass unionisation of the semi-skilled and unskilled at the end of the last century. But more than eighty years of trade union organisation and bargaining have not eliminated low pay.

The Department of Employment noted in a recent study that the distribution of male manual earnings: 'has changed little, particularly at the lower end, over the period from 1886 to the present day'.

Poverty

Chris Pond and Steve Winyard in a Low Pay Unit pamphlet *The Case For A National Minimum Wage* reproduce Department of Employment figures. These reveal that the wages of the lowest 10 per cent of manual male workers were 68.6 per cent of median weekly earnings in 1886 and 68.3 per cent 96 years later! Pond and Winyard point out that: 'the poorest

workers are now worse off, relative to the rest of the population, than they were at the end of the 1970s'.

Pond and Winyard add that in 1979 'one male manual worker in ten was low paid; by 1982 the proportion had increased to one in six. Two-thirds of manual women earned low wages in 1979, compared with three-quarters in 1982'.

Effects

The figures also show clearly, as would be expected, that low pay is not evenly spread across the country. Low-pay is concentrated among women workers, black workers and youth, and is subject to sharp regional and occupational variation. This concentration of low paid workers among specific groups of workers, and in specific areas of the country serves to split up and divide the working class.

There are further knock on effects of low pay as well. Where low pay predominates competition between workers for the additional crumbs that can be gained from employers intensifies. Massive overtime working becomes the norm. Holidays and week-ends become luxuries as workers try to maximise their wage packets.

Equal pay

Under such conditions the case for a national minimum wage is incontestable. To argue against it would be equivalent to opposing equal pay legislation for women. The issue is whether this particular TUC document is adequate.

The analogy with the Equal Pay Act is instructive. That Act was put on the statute book as the result of a wave of struggles for equal pay by the best organised sections of women in the late 1960s and early '70s. These struggles increased women's pay from 62 per



Women and black people are among the worst hit by low pay

cent of men's in 1970 to 70 per cent before the passing of the Equal Pay Act by the Labour government in 1975. With the backing of the Act women themselves were able to push their average wage up to 75 per cent of men's by 1976. In other words the best organised sections of women were able to take action themselves and thereby also help force through laws that spread their gains to the less well organised.

But despite the Act women's wages as a proportion of men's remained basically at that level during the mid 1970s and then began to decline.

Campaign

While winning the principle of a national minimum wage at the TUC congress was a huge step forward there were basic problems with the document and resolution. No proposals were adopted for a campaign of trade union action against low pay now. The figure of £80 for the national minimum mooted in the document — no figure was adopted by Congress, con-

trary to press reports — is woefully inadequate.

As long ago as 1982, the TUC itself set the low-pay threshold at £90. It noted in 1983 pamphlet *Working Women* that: '50 per cent of women working full-time earned less than that' and 'about 80 per cent of women part-timers earned less than the hourly equivalent'.

In *Low Pay Review*, number 24, Robin Small points out that even the government considers: 'that earnings that fall below £110 per week are insufficient for a parent with two children and need to be topped up with means-tested Family Income

Supplement'.

These figures aren't entirely comparable to the TUC position — which is rightly concerned with basic hourly rates whereas the government deals with gross earnings.

The acceptance of the principle of a national minimum wage at this year's Congress is an important step forward. It must be built on by fighting against low pay now, by rejecting any wage limits accompanying the introduction of a national minimum wage, and by fighting for an adequate figure to set such a wage at.

Table 1
Women's earnings relative to men's earnings
Average gross hourly earnings, excluding overtime, of full-time employees, aged 18 and over whose pay was not affected by absence:

Women as a percentage of men:			
1970	62.1	1978	73.9
1974	67.4	1979	73.0
1975	72.1	1980	73.5
1976	75.1	1981	74.8
1977	75.5	1982	73.9

(Source: Department of Employment.)

Table 2: Gross earnings of full-time male employees by region

	England and Wales	Yorks/Humber-side	West Midlands	East Midlands	South West	South East (excl. London)	London
White men	128.90	116.20	130.20	135.40	129.20	126.90	129.90
Asian and West Indian men	110.20	103.70	105.90	96.00	107.50	115.20	118.70
Black male wages as % of white	85.5	89.2	81.3	70.9	83.2	90.8	91.4

(Source: Policy Studies Institute.)

The tactics of the left

THE LAST few weeks have seen important developments on the Labour left. By far the most important events in the Labour movement, of course, were those at the TUC Congress. There the supporters of Neil Kinnock outlined their strategy for the Labour party.

The reformist sugar was a 'pledge' to create a million jobs in the first two years of a Labour government, and a proposal, not fully pinned down, to introduce a national minimum wage of £80 a week. In addition there was considerable talk, and signs of some small action, to grant some minimal rights to women within the party and unions — John Edmunds statement that the GMBATU is to introduce reserved places for women in its executive being one step of this type.

But the real bitter pill was the proposed new union laws. These would create a new system of industrial law modelled on those of the countries of western Europe. It would cement in place many of the changes brought about by the Thatcher government. It would leave the unions subject to a higher degree of legal interference than anything the labour movement has ever accepted before.

In effect the TUC leadership is now staking everything on the election of a Labour government. It will subordinate the struggle against Thatcher now to what it, falsely, sees as the best way to secure a Labour government.

Struggle

On the left of the party the most significant development has been the emergence of Labour Left Liaison (LLL). This is potentially the most important left coordination in the Labour party since the Rank and File Mobilising Committee at the time of Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign in 1981.

The LLL has also established good relations with the Campaign Group of MPs through Campaign Group News.

Despite protests that this entire left is irrelevant the Labour Party leadership takes LLL sufficiently seriously that Roy Hattersley felt compelled to answer the LLL's secretary Vladimir Derer in the pages of the *New Statesman*.

Support

These developments however bring critically to the fore questions of strategy and tactics for the Labour left. Despite the unity which was achieved on most issues at the TUC to prepare for an election, and the unity that will be imposed by the trade union leadership around Neil Kinnock at the Labour party conference, the cracks which exist in the facade of that unity are still evident — as well as the problems which face the movement. Only a calm and sober analysis of the situation can show the way forward for the left.

The first point which must be grasped is the full scope of what is taking place — because the currents which exist in the labour movement today are not ephemeral or short term in their nature. What we are witnessing today is a gigantic historical pro-

cess of the *break up of labourism*. The election of the Thatcher government in 1979, and the huge economic recession from 1979-81, provided the catalyst to blow apart the unity of the British labour movement as it had existed in the previous eighty years.

Break

The dramatic first symptom of that crisis was the split from the Labour Party to create the Social Democratic Party (SDP). This created a party outside the workers movement altogether. But it would be quite wrong to believe that the SDP did not have a huge impact *inside* the labour movement.

The first impact was to impose a massive defeat on the Labour Party in the 1983 election. In that year not a single vote was lost from Labour to the Tories. The *entire* loss of Labour votes in 1983 went to the Alliance.

But equally significantly the creation of the SDP gave a political orientation to the crystallising right wing inside the trade unions and PLP. The SDP today still retains direct links inside the labour movement — in particular with sections of the trade union leadership. John Grant, the EETPU's press officer, is the head of the SDP's trade union organisation — and it is clear the SDP's positions on the unions are drawn up in collaboration with sections of the EETPU leadership. John Lyons, of the Engineers and Manager's Association, is the first SDP member of the general council of the TUC. The 'Mainstream' organisation in the trade unions, organised around the AEU and EETPU — and named after John Golding's organisation in the POEU/NCU — directly includes forces linked to the SDP.

Expect

This 'new realist' /Mainstream' current in the TUC is today not just about trade union questions. It has a definite political strategy — that of a coalition government between the Labour Party and the SDP/Liberal Alliance.

The single largest, and most powerful, section of the movement however is the Kinnockites — with ties to Willis in the TUC. The base of this current is clear. Its core is the TGWU, NUPE, the GMBATU since the election of Edmunds, the



UCW, and the NUR. The policies of this current are to try, somehow, to recreate the old unity of labourism and the Labour Party. It seeks to move the TUC and the Labour Party to the right, to occupy the political space of the SDP/Liberal Alliance, but avoiding an actual coalition with it.

This Kinnockite current today subordinates everything else to what it sees as the way to secure a Labour government at the next general election — the means it believes including sabotaging struggle today and moving party policy to the right.

The political correlate of this current within the Labour Party is the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC). Its organising paper within the Labour Party is *Tribune*.

The *Marxism Today* wing of the Communist Party also plays a specific, and especially pernicious role within the Kinnock current. Its project is to push this current further to the right — to unite with the 'new realist' /Mainstream' right in a project of a coalition government with the SDP/Liberal Alliance.

Core

It is in the base of this Kinnock current that the most crucial battles for political allegiance are going to be fought out. The key battle grounds are union such as the TGWU, NUPE, and the NUR — and, to a lesser degree, the CLPs. The ability to win a majority on specific issues within the labour movement depends on the ability of the class struggle left to cut into the base of the Kinnockites.

Miners

Both the Hammonds and the Kinnockites reject an assault on capital — the sole basis which can unite the working class. Instead both argue about redistributing income within the working class. But they are *different* forms of class collaboration and there can be significant tactical differences between them.

The third current within the labour movement, by far the weakest

but by far the most important from the point of view of socialism, are the developing class struggle forces. These have been fed from a number of sources in the wake of the social crisis in Britain. Their developing base is in the NUM, in the black community, in organisations such as Women Against Pit Closures, in forces emerging out of trade union struggles such as Wapping, in the Labour Party in the big cities, among sections of those engaged in solidarity with Ireland, in a certain section of the gay and lesbian movement and in some key international solidarity campaigns. The most advanced section was the Scargill wing of the NUM. The NUM was also the only union class struggle forces led.

New

It is a number of the organisations created or radicalised by these currents — the Labour Party Black Section, the Women's Action Committee, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights — that have come together in Labour Left Liaison. Their natural allies, one that a working relationship is being built with, are the Campaign group of MPs, and forces such as Scargill in the trade unions — as well as many individual militants who identify with figures such as Scargill, Skinner or Benn.

Prevent

But for this left to be developed two decisive tasks have to be accomplished. First it has to be politically clarified and organised itself. Elements of an agreed programme are beginning to be thrashed out but there is still far to go on this.

The effective organisation of this current is also only just beginning.

Equally importantly however this current, which is a small minority, must have a correct united front orientation. It must of course stand for united action of the entire labour

movement. But in practice the forces it will gain united action with are those at the base of, or within the left of, the Kinnock camp. It is only by these means that the class struggle left can take up what is needed for the class struggle, gain a majority on individual issues, and progressively increase its weight in the labour movement.

Expand

Excellent examples of this were given at the TUC last year and this. Last year Scargill was able to lead a campaign gaining a large section of Kinnock supporters to vote for support for the miners amnesty campaign. This year the impact of the Wapping struggle united the class struggle left and the Kinnockites.

On nuclear power the NUM led the offensive which divided the Kinnock supporters on a key

issue. On South Africa while the whole TUC was formally united it is the left that will fight for the most effective action.

In the Labour Party similar tactics apply. The Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally was initiated by forces in Labour Left Liaison. But the campaign was not initiated in a narrow way but sought to draw in supporters of Kinnock.

Majority

This formula — organise the class struggle forces independently, fight for united action with the Kinnockite base on issues which are in the interests of the class struggle — applies in every sphere.

This means having a correct orientation in the campaigns in the party and in the left formations in the unions.

It is usually necessary

for supporters of the Campaign group, for example, to be in the Broad Lefts with the left supporters of Kinnock. The campaigns in the party — for example the Black Section, WAC, the LCLGR and others — naturally must not confine themselves simply to supporters of the Campaign group but must include all those who stand for the goals of the campaign — which in practice will be overwhelmingly a combination of Campaign group and 'LCC/Kinnock' supporters.

The aim of organising the class struggle left is not to lock it off in isolation from the rest of the movement — it is to organise a firm nucleus which will respond to the needs of the class struggle. And from that to take broader united front initiatives into the labour movement.

These are the tactics which the left must pursue for success today.

Defend Khan and Scally!

THE CAMPAIGN against the expulsions of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally took a new turn this week when the appeals and mediated sub-committee of the Labour Party NEC decided to recommend that the national executive reexamines the cases. This followed closely after the publication of the final agenda for Labour Party conference. A total of 36 constituencies — six from Birmingham, including Sparkbrook — have called for the reinstatement of Khan and Scally.

This about-turn by the NEC sub-committee comes in the face of the mounting pressure generated by the national campaign for Khan and Scally's reinstatement.

Stand

The wave of opposition within the party which these expulsions have created is giving the Labour leadership pause for thought.

recently been granted legal aid to appeal his expulsion in the courts. It is the opinion of his own as well as the Labour Party's lawyers, that such a case would have a high probability of success. The fact that deputy leader Roy Hattersley had a direct involvement in the expulsion of Khan and

Scally didn't stop him from playing a full part in the proceedings at the NEC. Add to that the fact that Ken Cure too acted as judge and jury, by participating in the regional enquiry which upheld the constituency decision then continuing to participate in the proceedings at national executive level, and there seems a good chance that a claim that natural justice was breached would be upheld in a law court.

Speaking at a public meeting on Monday night in Birmingham, following the appeals and mediation sub-committee decision, Kevin Scally said:

'But as far as Amir and myself are concerned, we are not interested in any review which goes on for

months and months and months and ends up either banning us from office in the party or reducing our expulsions to suspension from membership. We're not interested in that. We did nothing wrong. We are not going to put up with any penalty.'

This latest NEC move to reconsider these two expulsions should not be taken as a sign to lift the pressure. Far from it.

Needed

This must not happen. A decision by the national conference to reinstate Khan and Scally will make clear that the rank and file of the party is not prepared to accept a 're-trial' — followed by a 're-conviction' — of the two Sparkbrook members. Carrying a resolution which clearly overturns the expulsions of Khan and Scally is not only the best way to secure their reinstatement, but also the best way to ensure that a blow is dealt against the entire witch hunt of socialists in the party being pursued by the present leadership.

Youth in action

LCI grows among youth

By Gerry Kirk,
Dumbarton LPYS/LCI youth officer

FOLLOWING the success of the Glasgow youth dayschool on Ireland, which was attended by over 150 people, the LCI are planning a national youth and student dayschool, to be held in Birmingham university on 8 November. Speakers invited so far include Ken Livingstone, Christine Crawley MEP, representatives of Sinn Fein, the Union of Students of Ireland, NUS, the LPYS, and the NUR.

The NUS conference decisions on Ireland are an excellent basis for an upsurge in solidarity work amongst students in the coming year. The LCI hopes to play a part in these activities — helping to organise speaking tours, educational and other events. While the situation in the LPYS is not quite so encouraging, the gains which have been made in the student movement and the current reorganisation of the LCI's youth work should ensure that the anti-imperialist minority in the LPYS will make their presence felt much more keenly in the run-up to regional LPYS conferences.

LPYS branches and college Labour clubs can sponsor the dayschool in November. To do this or find out more about the event contact Gerry Kirk or Conor Foley, c/o LCI BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

Sparkbrook solidarity with South Africa

By Marc France, Sparkbrook LPYS

SPARKBROOK LPYS has made solidarity with the South African revolution its number one priority. The LPYS has built successful boycott action in the area, including all day pickets of Tescos and Shell petrol stations. The highlight of the campaigning so far was a public meeting of 18 August which over 80 youth attended.

They heard Gina Khan (Black Section), Jayne Fisher (LPYS), Andy Schaffer (AAM) and John Naute (SWAPO). The most inspiring speech of the evening was from George Johannes, a representative of the African National Congress.

He graphically explained the connection between the struggle inside South Africa and the tasks of solidarity and the AAM in Britain: 'We are going to chop off the arms and legs of imperialism in our country. Your task in Britain is to chop off its head'.

Following the success of the public meeting members of Sparkbrook LPYS and supporters of the youth newspaper *Youth Action* in Birmingham have worked closely with Birmingham AAM in building the AA picket lobby of the TUC and are planning a mass boycott campaign aiming at ending the sale of South African goods by shops in Birmingham.

AAM targets colleges

By Polly Vittorini, SOAS Anti Apartheid

THE Anti Apartheid Movement in London is beginning a drive to increase its support amongst London's 75,000 students. Students last year organised many anti apartheid activities, as well as being the largest contingent on the AAM demo last November.

Mostly the spur for this activity, however, has come from the colleges themselves, rather than being coordinated by the Anti Apartheid Movement. So in the colleges there is a great potential support for the AAM which is still untapped.

To try and draw on this support the AAM London committee is inviting all student AAM groups to send representatives, and is coordinating with NUS London organising AA stalls at this year's freshers fairs in all London colleges. The aim is to link up student groups with local groups. This will allow the AAM to effectively mobilise students for forthcoming pickets of South African Airways and to organise gigs in colleges to raise money for the AAM, the ANC and SWAPO.

The next meeting of the London AAM committee, which students should try to attend, is on 13 October, Camden Town Hall, 7pm. Future AAM activity in London includes: Namibia week of action, 27 October-3 November. Picket Shell Centre, 4pm, South Bank.

Black section attacks new Tory racist visas

TORY RACISM reached a new peak in the last week with two decisions. The first was the threat to deport two year old Khurun Azad to Pakistan and the racist decision to impose visa requirements for visitors from India, Bangla Desh and other countries. The Labour Party Black Section has issued a statement, we are printing in full below, condemning the new Tory racist visa laws. Paul Sharma, London organiser of the Labour Party Black Section, called the threat to deport Khurma Azad 'an obscene act of racism,' and called for action by the entire labour movement against both this threat and the new visas. The Black Sections statement is the following:

THE CABINET'S announcement that visas are to be imposed on the nationals of five Black countries is considered by the Labour Party Black Section to be the most blatant act of racism yet seen from this Tory government.

Barbaric

Rather than tackling the barbaric conditions at ports like Heathrow airport by shortening dole queues with the creation of more jobs, Thatcher and her yes-men have conspired to export the 'problem'. They have singled out the Black nations of Bangla Desh, India, Pakistan, Ghana and Nigeria for racist treatment. This is a clear example of them piling on more oppression following the condemnation of thousands of Black people

to third-class citizenship under the 1981 Nationality Act.

Black Section candidate for Labour's National Executive Committee, Narendra Makanji said: 'It is obvious this decision is based on the Tories' complete contempt for Black people. It is ironic that White Commonwealth countries and racist South Africa, which has a million people eligible for first-class British citizenship, are being excluded from the visa scheme.'

Infamous

Thatcher set the tone before she became prime minister when she made her infamous speech about Britain being swamped by an alien culture. This, like the latest announcement,

gave the go-ahead to racist hysteria being whipped up by the gutter press. It is no co-incidence that fellow Tory MP Terry Dicks made a racist statement about 'West Indians', whom he claims are workshy and lazy, in the same week as the announcement about the visas. Dicks speaks what Tory government ministers think but dare not say themselves.

Only foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe, a dissenting voice in the cabinet over Thatcher's refusal to impose sanctions against racist South Africa, has raised his voice in the government against this latest discriminatory act.

Autocratic

The visa scheme has put Britain in the political sewer and it is not by chance Thatcher chose to autocratically impose the regulations while parliament is in recess. MPs should be recalled to Westminster to debate this issue before they themselves decide the matter under the full glare of the electorate. The Black Section reaffirms our opposition to racist immigration laws. We demand:

**Stop the racist visas.
End racist immigration controls.
Root out the racists.**



Two-year old Khurun Azad with his parents

Black Sections in Cardiff

A REBELLION hit the Cardiff Butetown district on Thursday 28 August. Black and white youths, fed up with over 70 per cent unemployment in the district, aggravated by police harassment, drove police and fire-fighters out of the centre of Butetown for several hours.

The following day the first ever Cardiff public meeting on the Labour Party Black Section took place. Present were youth leaders from Butetown and black people from throughout the city. Gaynor Legall, a local black city councillor, and

Marc Wadsworth, national chair of the Labour Party Black Section, spoke about the real gains black people could make through self-organisation in the Labour Party and trade unions. Almost twenty black people attended the meeting. A lively debate followed amongst the 60 or so supporters and critics of Black Sections present.

The immediate outcome of the discussion was that a number of black people decided to join the Labour Party and the first steps were taken towards setting up a Black Section. The meeting was built with the help of left wingers in the UCW and supporters of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

New crisis hits Black and Asian Advisory Committee

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that Jo Richardson is not to stand after party conference for membership of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee (BAAC) has provoked a new crisis of that body. The BAAC has already been hit by several resignations by black members — including Trudie De Haney, Keith Vaz, Valerie Vaz, Lincoln Crawford and Gaynor Legall. Ernie Taylor, an NUR member, has refused to attend. Jo Richardson's well-earned reputation as a fighter for women's rights, and as a left winger, acted to give credibility to the committee. Her refusal to stand deprives this divisive and non-elected committee of a large part of its remaining credibility.



Jo Richardson: resigning from BAAC

Another severe blow to the BAAC is likely on 22 September when the London Labour Party regional executive is likely to vote to take all its represen-

tatives off the committee, and to boycott its activities.

One result of the new crisis of the BAAC is that the right wing is now threatening to lash out against Linda Douglas — who has been elected as the first black member of Labour's NEC. Douglas is a Militant supporter who has been elected as NEC member from the LPYS. With Jo Richardson refusing to stand, and a black member on the NEC, it now is evidently a huge problem for the Labour Party leadership to nominate a white member to head the committee — only a left winger with a long record of opposition to racism, such as Jo Richardson, could be put

forward with any credibility.

Kinnock had originally intended that Bill Morris, deputy general secretary of the TGWU, would be the first black member of the NEC and could then have been nominated to head the BAAC. However the racism of the right wing of the TGWU executive blocked Morris's nomination to the NEC.

Richardson's refusal to stand is therefore creating a huge problem for the right wing on the NEC — which is using the BAAC, as a last attempt to head off the demand for proper, democratically elected, Black Sections in the party. It is therefore important that the left asserts, in a totally united fashion, its opposition to this non-elected and diverse committee in the run up to party conferences.

The Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) has already condemned the committee. It is to be hoped it will demand that none of the members of the NEC stand for the committee — as should the Campaign Group of MPs.

BROADWATER FARM DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

MASS LUNCHTIME PICKET OF OLD BAILEY 12-2.00PM.

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER MARKS THE START OF THE MAJOR TRIALS OF THOSE ARRESTED AFTER THE UPRISINGS ON BROADWATER FARM ON OCTOBER 6 1985. THE TRIALS WHICH WILL GO ON FOR A YEAR ARE AMONGST THE MOST SERIOUS IN RECENT HISTORY.

NEAREST TUBE ST. PAUL'S

BRING BANNERS & PLACARDS TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE DEFENDANTS.

Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign Youth Association
Black People's Campaign For Justice
Handsworth Defence Campaign
Jeremy Corbyn
P.A.C.
N.U.M. (Orgreave)

BROADWATER FARM DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

Key debate on women's organisation at Party conference

ONE OF the most important debates at this year's party conference is going to be on the question of women's organisation. The demand of the Women's Action Committee (WAC) that the five women's places on the NEC should be elected by the national Labour women's conference has been building up steady support in the party and in the unions. Already at the time of the 1985 party conference this demand was supported by the national Labour women's conference, by the majority of the constituency parties and by the NUM, NUPE and COHSE. This year a further two unions, the NUR and UCATT, were won to this demand. At the NCU conference the demand was only lost by 5,000 votes.

After years of trying to ignore women's organisation in the party the union leaderships were forced this year to move decisively. NUPE put down a resolution at the women's conference which was presented as a 'compromise', but which gave no definite rights to the women's conference on the election of the NEC places or other key issues.

Power

WAC voted against a proposal which would not have increased the power of the women's conference — and most importantly not resulted in the women's places on the NEC being elected by women's conference, but welcomed the increased union interest in the question. It put forward a proposal for an electoral college at the women's conference to elect the women's places on the NEC. WAC's demands, and the specific proposal for an electoral college, have received 19 resolutions and amendments in support for this year's party conference.

The trade union leaderships have also continued to move on the issue — both APEX and the UCW putting resolutions and amendments to party conference on women's organisation.

APEX's resolution would simply introduce a weighted union vote, based on the number of women in each union, into the Labour women's conference. It however promises no increased powers

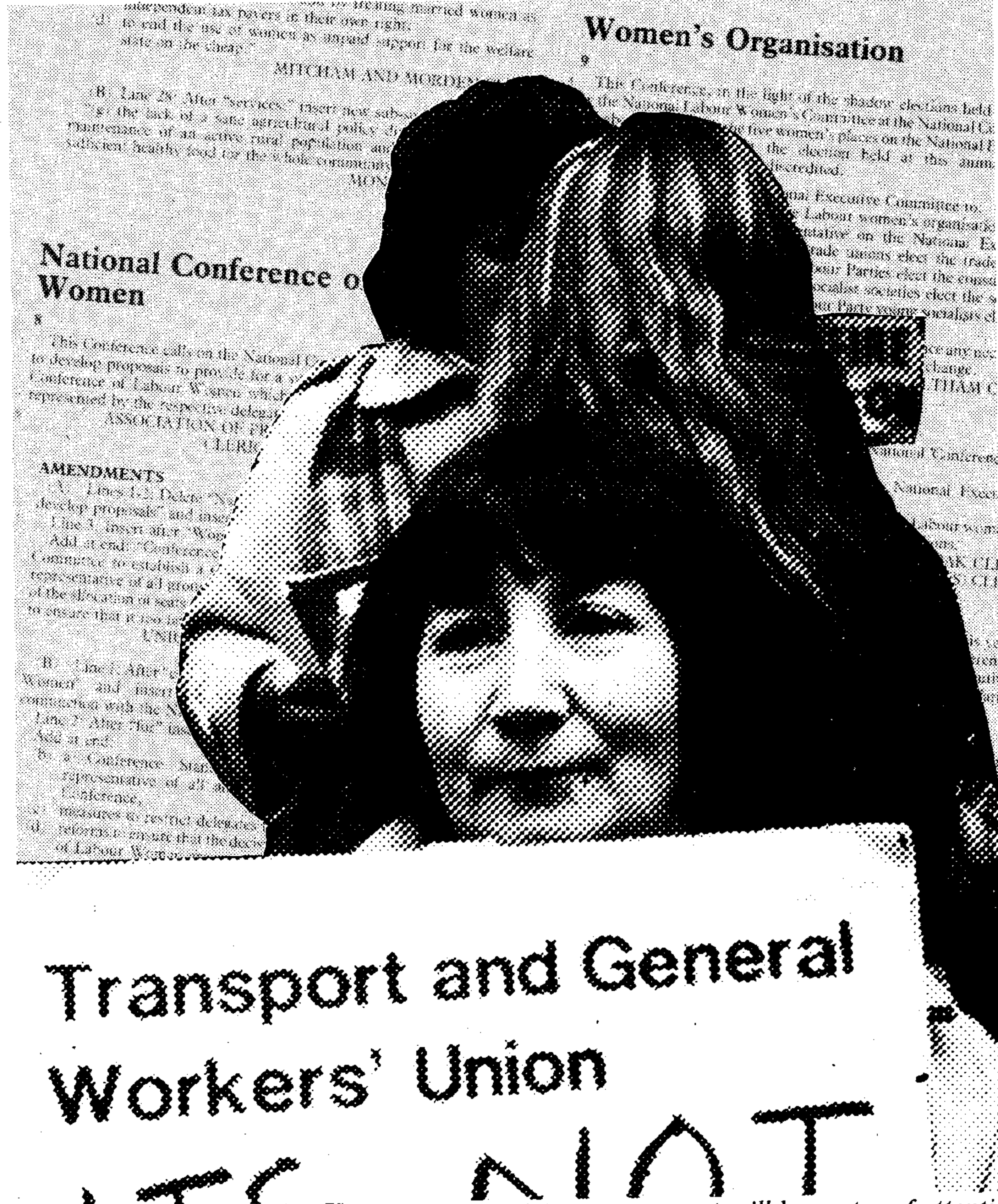
for the women's conference at all. There would still be no election of the women's places on the NEC by the women in the Labour Party or the right of women's conference to move resolutions to party conference.

Rule change

The UCW has put forward an amendment to APEX which calls on the NEC to draw up proposals for changing the women's conference rules to: 'establish a Conference Standing Orders Committee, representative of all groups at the Conference, and calls for a review of the allocation of seats on the National Labour Women's Committee to ensure that it fairly represents all women in the Party.' This in practice means increasing the weight of the unions, but without giving further rights to the women's conference.

Reforms

Amendments from Glasgow Hillhead and Putney CLP call for: 'a review of the system for electing the five reserved women's seats on the National Executive Committee.' It similarly calls for: 'reforms to ensure that the decisions of the National Conference of Labour Women are integrated into a Party structure with a clear line of communication into the annual Party conference and the National Executive Committee.' These resolutions do



The question of women's organisation in the labour movement will be centre of attention

not ensure the right of the women's conference to secure its goals but, taken together with WAC's electoral college proposals, they do begin to indicate lines on which it might be possible to go forward. The agreement that would be acceptable is obvious. That the women's conference is granted full powers — including the right to elect the women's places on the NEC and the right to submit resolutions to party conference. Simultaneously a weighted vote, based on the number of women members of trade unions, would be introduced. This would of course in

the early period lead to extremely big problems. At present women do not control the way the votes cast 'on their behalf' are used by the unions at women's conference. The effect of setting up an authoritative women's conference would be to produce a tremendous fight in the unions for women to gain control over the way their votes were cast at women's conference.

It may be, of course, that the union leaderships will simply embark on a policy of confrontation with women in the party. That they will introduce a block vote, controlled by

men in the unions, into women's conference while retaining male control over electing the women's places on the NEC. This would be deeply damaging for the party and unions — but it would not stop the build up of the fight for women to control their own organisations in the party and unions.

Organisation

One thing is certain. The question of women's organisation will now be right at the centre of attention within the party and the unions. And that is in the interests of women and of the entire party.

TUC 'no nukes' policy just fails

ONE TUC DEBATE last week which attracted maximum media coverage was the issue of nuclear power. Composite 19 (moved by the Fire Brigades Union, seconded by the NUM, and supported by the National Union of Seamen) was lost by only a small margin at congress: 60,000 votes. At the same time, the pro-nuclear resolution of John Lyons' Engineers and Managers Association, which was overwhelmingly defeated on a hand vote, claimed less press highlights.

Composite 19 congratulated the Labour Party leadership on their commitments so far but called for 'an immediate halt to the nuclear power programme and the phasing out of all existing plants'. It also demanded 'an integrated energy policy based on coal' and 'urgent discussions' between the general council and the party to draw up an employment strategy related to this policy.

The EMA resolution, on the other hand, ex-

pressed concern that 'closure of Britain's own civil nuclear power stations' and that 'an end to any further nuclear programme' would be a 'radical break' with long-established TUC policy. The aim of the motion, in

By Carol Turner

line with the call of the general council, was to stop any moves towards a non-nuclear policy by setting up a review and a report back to a future

congress.

One union, ASTMS, which had submitted an anti-nuclear power resolution withdrew from the compositing to ensure that an amendment from GMBATU would automatically fall. This wrecking amendment was designed to overturn ASTMS's demand for a 'halt' to the nuclear power programme by replacing it with a 'freeze' pending consideration of the 'employment effects' of any change in energy policy.

Alternative

The special report of the general council on nuclear power was proposed by the platform as an alternative to the clear policies contained in the composite. The platform general council called for all resolutions to be

withdrawn on the basis of this report. That is, no decisions would be taken by congress this year pending further 'investigation'.

Chernobyl

If votes were won on the quality of the arguments presented, there is no doubt that composite 19 would have sailed through congress. In the wake of Chernobyl even the electricians were forced to tone down their traditional pro-nuclear position.

Debate instead concentrated on the phoney claims of Lyons and his supporters that adopting a non-nuclear energy policy would wreck jobs. This argument surfaced at its crudest level at a Tuesday evening fringe meeting held by SERA (Socialist Environment and Resour-

ces Association). A group of Sellafield workers were bussed in for the occasion.

Despite the fact that every platform speaker emphasised that the policy adopted would not be at the net expense of jobs, the Sellafield group insisted that a non-nuclear energy policy was an attack on their jobs — and followed this up with claims that Sellafield and plants like it were, in the words of one heckler, 'perfectly safe'!

The majority against composite 19 is one of the smallest ever at a TUC congress. Despite the overwhelming mood of unity at the expense of policy, which dominated congress in what is seen to be the run-up to a general election, a non-nuclear energy policy is one area where the trade union leadership will find it harder to hold the line.

Ireland Unfree

Mounting crisis of the Anglo-Irish Accord

THE LOYALIST campaign of terror following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Accord took a new twist at the beginning of this week. Alan Wright of the Ulster Clubs announced that the homes of 'collaborators' will be picketed. Orange Order grand master Alan Smyth, who is also Official Unionist MP for South Belfast, described the latest loyalist threat as 'a normal method of the democratic process'. That it certainly is not! Whichever way you look at it, waking up each day to the visage of the Reverend Ian Paisley or one of his thugs learing over your cornflakes bowl cannot be described as normal.

The 12 July period of Orange marches was seen this year as a test of the Hillsborough Accord. Despite public statements to the contrary, the RUC climbed down in the face of these loyalist marches — and that is becoming more and more widely recognised. In Portadown loyalists achieved their objective of intimidating the nationalist population, when 20 homes were attacked. The same pattern was repeated throughout the North. In all, there were 1700 other provocative Orange marches.

There are no figures of the total number of Catholics attacked and driven from their homes. But over the summer period these sectarian killings have risen sharply. At the end of August Paddy McAlister, a taxi driver from the Falls Road, became the eighth murder victim of the loyalist thugs this year.

At Shorts aircraft factory, a notorious sectarian employer, Catholics have been publicly threatened and intimidated. Loyalist paramilitary slogans and badges proliferated on the shopfloor. Shorts management back down in the face of a Loyalist walk-out. Housing officers on the Shankill Road have received threats demanding that Catholics working there be removed. Lisburn social security workers have had UVF death threats.

But alongside this step-up in Loyalist sectarian attacks there has also been a renewed offensive by the IRA, aimed at isolating the RUC. Devastating attacks on RUC barracks have meant that, despite wages reputed to be as high as £500 a week, loyalist contractors have refused to be helicoptered onto the sites to improve physical security there, and work has stopped as a result of the IRA campaign.

RUC morale is low and Paisley has taken the opportunity to call on them to resign rather than support the Accord and enforce 'Barry's law'.

All this has left the sole supporters of the Accord in the North, the SDLP, still more isolated. John Hume, SDLP leader, is desperately trying to assure nationalists in the North that reforms will come this autumn as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. But the growing instability of the situation since the Accord was signed means that nothing but cosmetic measures by the British government will be taken. Promises to scrap the UDF and abandon supergrass trials, Diploc courts, and strip-searching have virtually disappeared. 'Goodwill' is visibly evaporating. As far as the Thatcher government is concerned the 'reform' aspect of the Accord is definitely in trouble.

With growing displays of militarism by loyalists, and the figleaf stripped from John Hume, the search for a 'middle road' is being exposed as more nebulous than ever. As the autumn goes on, hopefully those in the British labour movement who believed the Accord could bring any sort of solution will see the disastrous error they made.

TUC's industrial relations policy: 'A mistake that will haunt our movement'

THE BRITISH trade union movement suffered a severe defeat at its 1986 congress last week, when delegates voted overwhelmingly to adopt the joint Labour Party-TUC policy statement on industrial relations, together with composite 1, moved by GMBATU, seconded by the UCW, and supported by 16 other compositing unions. The position carried is a green light for stepping up state interference in the affairs of trade unions. At the same time that congress carried composite 1, it made clear the key intention of the composite by rejecting a resolution from TASS which would have reaffirmed the right of unions to democratically manage their own affairs.

The biggest shock was the vote for the composite by the National Union of Mineworkers, whose congress delegation voted to withdraw its amendment already submitted in the name of the union and to support the composite as it stood. General secretary of the Durham Mechanics, BILL ETHERINGTON, part of the delegation, was one of the minority who spoke out against the decision, taking the same line as union president Arthur Scargill and general secretary Peter Heathfield. He explained why to CAROL TURNER.



ON THE first day of the 1986 congress of the TUC a mistake was made that will return to haunt our movement. Congress adopted composite motion 1 on new industrial relations legislation under a Labour government. I am very much afraid that the trade union movement and the Labour Party have fallen into a populist trap. These proposals are populism run amok.

Much of the argument about them has revolved around secret ballots. But what is actually entailed is the beginning of the breakdown of trade union autonomy.

It's ballots now, but next it might be finances: legislation to decide what trade unions can and cannot spend their money on. The NUM already has experience of this, that experience could become the norm.

Accord

The NUM's delegation to congress voted to support the composite and to withdraw an amendment submitted to it, which would have deleted the clause on secret ballots. It was argued within the delegation that because so many unions were behind this composite, for us to put an amendment would be seen as if the National Union of Mineworkers didn't want an accord between the TUC and Labour Party, which of course is not true. My understanding is that the amendment was precisely in line with the policies of our unions, decided by NUM conference, for many years.

But nobody in the delegation was in a position to argue that unions should have secret ballots imposed on them by law, which is why we also supported motion 3 from TASS, which congress defeated. The first paragraph of this reaffirmed 'that trade unions are voluntary self-governing democratic organisations', and rejected 'any interference in unions internal

democratic procedures by outside bodies', and 'intervention by the state and the courts'.

Sadly, this is precisely what composite 1 proposes. The composite is a bad composite, a botched-up job made to appear vague in order to win support. But the composite is not vague.

While paragraph 2 'calls for the complete abolition of the anti-trade union laws enacted by this government', and stresses its confidence that 'a Labour government will ... permit union members to control the rules and electoral procedures of their union', this is flatly contradicted by paragraph 4(iv). This clause is the sting in the composite's tail, which could mean that the trade union movement loses the most fundamental and important right of all — that of victimised workers to take instant action. Clause 4(iv) of composite 1 clearly calls for 'a right to strike and to have a secret ballot in such situations'.

Even Stanley Baldwin in 1927, after the defeat of the general strike, couldn't insist on such legislation when he was reversing the contracting out and in procedures for political funds and making it illegal for civil servants and others to be unionised. Even he didn't legislate for that level of state interference in the unions. But in 1986 here is a Trades Union Congress asking a Labour government to write that into the law.

From 1871, at the time of the first trade union legislation as we understand it today, until a 100 years later in 1970, there was no provision in law for trade unions to have individual ballots of their members before taking industrial action. Various commissions have looked into industrial relations legislation, but none has recommended that.

The first time it was raised was by a Labour government in the proposals contained in *In Place of Strife*. They made provision for the secretary of state, in some circumstances, to require a 'cooling-off period' and individual balloting in particular in state service industries where there was said to be 'an over-riding public interest'. But they were withdrawn.

When the Conservatives came to power in 1971, they stole the emperor's clothes so to speak, by incorporating this into their legislation. But the trade union movement then, supported by the Labour Party, was vehemently opposed to it. Those laws were made unworkable.

The TUC and Labour Party have likewise opposed the Tory legislation of 1980, 1982 and 1984. But, less than two years after their latest Act, the trade union movement is asking a Labour government to do exactly the same thing we opposed the Conservatives doing.

Ballots

I really must stress that this isn't simply an argument about ballots. If union memberships — and mine is one of them — want to hold ballots before strike action, that is what they have written into their rules. There are many unions that have such requirements: for postal ballots, for individual ballots at the workplace, and for other methods.

They also use different methods to elect their officials. The election of Ron Todd by the transport workers, for example, brought to light the fact that the TGWU uses different methods of balloting in different regions of the country. But this must be based on what the members, over the years, have found suited their needs.

I only wish those who are eager to tell trade unions how to run their business were as keen to put their own house in order.

Since the time of the repeal of the Combination Acts trade unions have had the freedom to withdraw their labour. If the sort of legislation proposals passed by the 1986 TUC are carried out then we are well on the way to finding ourselves in a situation where that is unlawful. That position is clear enough. There is no ambiguity about where the joint TUC-Labour Party proposals would take us.

RON TODD, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, summed up the main line of this year's Trades Union Congress in Brighton, when, speaking in favour of the resolution which commits the TUC for the first time to support state interference in trade union rule books, he said: 'a vote for the composite is a vote of confidence in the document, in Neil Kinnock, in our own democracy and members.'

By Redmond O'Neill

The week of the TUC was orchestrated around this theme of subordinating all other considerations to uniting behind Kinnock with the aim of winning the next general election. This approach put Kinnock in a powerful position to dictate terms to the Congress.

Kinnock's first demand was to put the maximum distance between the TUC and the 1985/86 miners' strike — even though that gigantic battle did more damage to the Thatcher government, including at the polls, than any other event in its entire seven year period in office. Other struggles which 'disrupted' the Labour leadership's line for the election should not be supported. Consistent with this the General Council fought, unsuccessfully, for the resolutions supporting workers fighting at Wapping, and also at Silentnight, to be remitted. These were both carried by very large majorities.

The second of Kinnock's terms was that the trade union movement accept key planks of the Tory anti-trade union laws — and specifically the right of the state to dictate the content of trade union rule books in relation to ballots over strike action. This was carried in the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee document and in Composite One — adopted on the first day of the Congress by a large majority on a show of hands.

The third element of strategy adopted was an economic policy organised around a 'National Economic Assessment', which is just another way of saying a social contract in the same mould as the one which proved so disastrous under the last Labour government. Its core is a set of priorities, which it is claimed would first reduce unemployment by one million in two years, second attack low pay and third, only afterwards, set about raising the living standards of the rest of the working class. In other words it proposes to finance Labour's programme at the expense of sections of the working class instead of the capitalist class.

It was this type of catastrophically disastrous incomes policy which allowed Margaret Thatcher to get elected in the first place. More to the point this economic policy will not work at all. will not work at all.

Support

Unfortunately progressive measures, above all the TUC's historic support for a statutory national minimum wage, are situated within this overall framework. So a policy of a minimum wage, which has enormous potential to unite the working class and draw significant numbers of unorganised workers into the labour movement if fought for decisively, is situated firmly within an economic strategy which counter-posed it to the living standards of other sections of the working class. As the *Financial Times* accurately commented on the strategy: 'They (the TUC) acknowledged that this was in effect a coded message on wage restraint.' And wage controls are a sure fire way to divide the working class.

Describing Kinnock's speech on the second day of the TUC, which was billed as the high point of the week, the Kinnockite *New Statesman* eulogised in an editorial under the title 'A Prime Minister in Waiting'. It declared: 'The TUC speech underscored what has emerged as the central Kinnock theme: that organised labour's place would be separate from, and subordinate to, his own as a future prime minister.'

The Kinnockite leadership of the



KINNOCK — TU

trade union movement, from Willis through Todd to the NUPE leadership, established the dominance of its political strategy for the first time at this year's TUC. The fight for a Kinnock Labour government is presented as the answer to the problems facing the trade unions.

Membership of TUC affiliated unions has declined to 9.5 million. More significantly the proportion of the workforce in TUC affiliated unions had declined from over 50 per cent in 1979 to only just over 40 per cent today. The Kinnockite majority in the TUC's approach to dealing with this is purely electoralist — and was best explained by John Edmonds, general secretary of GMBATU.

The proposal is that a Labour government should legislate rights to join a trade union, 'protection' against unfair dismissals and against low pay — all measures that naturally must be supported. The unions will then recruit on the basis that their role will be to make sure employers carry out these laws. What was not addressed was the situation in the meantime of those such as strikers at Wapping, those at Silentnight, the miners, or those like the striking Asian workers at Kenure who are fighting for union recognition and decent wages. Nor was the question addressed of what is done if Labour is not elected, or is elected but does not carry out its promises, or is elected but bends to employers like the last one did over Grunwicks. Furthermore the demobilisation of the labour movement involved in this strategy will not aid Kinnock but Thatcher.

Alliances

While the Kinnockite leadership of the TUC attempted to present an acceptable face to the press two decisive issues, from the standpoint of strengthening the unions for the alliances Labour needs, and for the unity of the working class, were not addressed at all at this year's TUC. There was no discussion of the self-organisation and representation of

women and black people in the trade unions — in order to make them more effective instruments of fighting for women workers and against racism. These issues simply did not figure in the TUC agenda. This is despite the fact that the number of women in the unions continues to increase, and the growing pressure from women workers for forms of organisation and representation that can allow their voices to be heard and influence policy.

Parallels

Unions like the GMBATU are now discussing the establishment of reserved places for women on their NEC. The demand of the Labour Women's conference for women to elect the women's section of the Labour Party NEC is paralleled in similar struggles in the unions. At present the women's conferences, including the TUC women's conference, have little or no power. The women's section of the TUC General Council is not elected by women workers at the TUC women's conference but by the TUC itself. The movement of women into the unions has explosive potential to shake up the present bureaucratic structures of the labour movement. But, despite brave words, the steps being taken to meet the needs of women are completely inadequate. This is a decisive strategic weakness of the trade union movement.

Similarly there was no discussion of black organisation in the unions. The TUC General Council remains entirely white. Bill Morris, the new black deputy general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, is the first deputy general secretary of the TGWU for 24 years not to be nominated by the union's executive for either the TUC's General Council or the Labour Party NEC. Yet the combined impact of Labour Party Black Sections, and movements of black workers to fight racist employers, and organise within the unions, will inevitably put this question of black self-organisation on the trade union



KNOCKS TACTICS

movement's agenda.

The issue of racism however did serve as an introduction to the first major current standing outside the Kinnockite consensus at the Congress. This was an oblique reference to the rebellions in Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham black communities made by Eric Hammond of the EETPU when he spoke against a resolution opposing the introduction of plastic bullets into British cities. Hammond argued for 'events' such as Handsworth and Broadwater Farm to be put down 'with all necessary force' and tried to provoke the Congress by claiming he could only address it because of police protection.

This debate, as well as that on Wapping — where the EETPU was condemned as the organisation which had made Murdoch's union-busting operation possible — showed the 'new realist'/Mainstream right around Eric Hammond and John Lyons to be in a clear minority. The 'new realist'/Mainstream right however continues to be a distinct and clear political current within the TUC. Their economic strategy centres on improving the living standards of the best paid workers through alliances with the employers and the capitalist class against the poorest sections of the working class. They are resolutely opposed to unilateral nuclear disarmament and strongly pro-EEC.

Recognition

The EETPU's approach to unionisation centres on deals with the employers with the union selling the workers' rights to strike in exchange for single union recognition. It maintains relations with the breakaway UDM.

Politically this current orients to the SDP/Liberal Alliance. Lyons is the first member of the TUC General Council who is a member of the SDP. Hammond's EETPU enjoys close relations with the SDP leadership.

On issue after issue it was clear that whilst the Kinnockites held a real majority in the TUC, and have become

more politically coherent, nevertheless Hammond, Lyons and on most issues the AEU leadership, form a clear and coherent minority. Whilst the TUC General Council's knuckles were rapped over its failure to deal with the EETPU's scabbing at Wapping, it was also clear that the General Council have no intention of taking on a fight against the trade union practices and political line of the EETPU — because they themselves accept parts of it and certainly do not have an effective alternative. On the contrary their line of subordinating everything to a Labour government, and paying for reforms at the expense of different sections of the working class, provides important openings for Hammond and the 'new realist'/Mainstream right to pose themselves as the defenders of the skilled workers, in favour of maintaining differentials and so on.

Collaboration

Both the Kinnockites and the 'new realist'/Mainstream right are varieties of class collaboration. Both reject an assault on capital — the only way of uniting the working class. But they are today practicing *different* forms of class collaboration. Hammond's policy of defence of skilled workers, direct 'no strike' deals with employers, and coalition with the Alliance can directly clash with the policies of returning a majority Labour government and trying to win over the low paid being pursued by the Kinnockites. While Eric Hammond and Ron Todd are both class collaborationists they are *different* types of class collaborationists.

This political difference is important for the third current seen at this year's Congress — and by far the smallest. This was the class struggle current represented by the Scargill/Heathfield leadership of the NUM and minority forces who look to them in other unions and their allies in the Campaign Group. On certain issues they were in alliance with the FBU, the ACTT, and the *Morning Star* led TASS.

Writing in the TUC edition of *Campaign Group News*, Peter Heathfield warned about the TUC: 'The danger is that trade union leaders will respond by saying "we'll hold tight until the election." Such a strategy, however, plays into the Tories' hands. If you wait and wait — on the assumption that Labour will win the election — that could result in Margaret Thatcher bouncing back.'

The NUM leadership did play an important role in the TUC on a number of issues. The July NUM conference had made headlines all over the world by welcoming Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the South African NUM, to Britain at the height of Botha's crackdown on the trade unions. The NUM also made the running in the debate on nuclear power — where their composite with the Fire Brigades Union and the National Union of Seamen was only very narrowly defeated in favour of the General Council's call for a review of nuclear power.

Defeat

But on the central issue of the Tories' trade union laws and the policy of the TUC, the NUM amendment opposing state interference in the unions was withdrawn by the 28 strong NUM delegation. Scargill and Heathfield were heavily defeated in the delegation — in a vote which united the right and the Communist Party. As a result the NUM delegation voted in favour of Composite One endorsing state interference, in favour of a separate TASS resolution calling on the TUC itself to draw up guidelines on trade union democracy, and did not vote on the TUC/Labour Party Liaison document.

This was a severe defeat for the leadership of the union which has suffered most as a result of the court interference in the trade unions. It produced eulogies to Mick McGahey in the

Fleet Street press and signalled an intensification of the campaign against Scargill within the NUM — a campaign which unites the CP and the right wing in the union.

Notwithstanding important victories over Wapping, on South Africa, and a very narrow defeat on opposition to nuclear power, the TUC registered the dominance of the 'sit tight till the general election' line of Kinnock. It also registered the maintenance of the Hammond/Lyons/and on most issues AEU leadership 'new realist'/Mainstream grouping in the general council. Overall the General Council moved slightly to the right with the removal of Ray Buckton. The Congress registered the fact that the class struggle forces around Scargill, the NUM are a small minority and under ferocious attack. The attack launched on Scargill, and his defeat in the NUM delegation, increased the prominence in the Congress of the *Morning Star* leadership of TASS — whose politics represent no way forward.

The problem the class struggle forces such as Scargill, Heathfield, and those in other unions face is precisely to cut into the bloc Kinnock has constructed within the labour movement. Precisely because the class struggle forces are a small minority they have to have correct united front tactics to cut into the Kinnockites on the objectively key questions.

New realist

This was seen clearly over Wapping — where the impact of the struggle there, together with support by other unions, isolated the 'new realist' right. The same was done on nuclear power and South Africa — and last year on Justice for Mineworkers. The same must be done on the demands of women and black people within the

labour movement. While it is more difficult to do, the same must be pursued in starting to introduce the issue of Ireland into the TUC — where it has been a forbidden topic for many years. It can also be done on issues of international solidarity such as Central America.

On these and other issues the aim must be to force united action by the class struggle forces with those supporting the Kinnock line in the unions — and particularly their base. It means participation in organisations like the Broad Lefts, linking militants in the NUM with the left wing in the public sector unions like the NUT, and promoting movements of women and black people — which are often more advanced in the public sector. It means linking militants in the major public sector and white collar unions with those in the industrial unions. It means having specific tactics towards the *Morning Star* wing of the Communist Party — which will inevitably be in a number of these developments but whose politics must not be allowed to dominate.

Links

The Labour Party conference will see the same political lines drawn as the TUC but in a different relation of forces — somewhat more favourable to the left. It will be an opportunity to link the class struggle forces in the unions with their allies in the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Constituency Labour Parties, in the campaigns in the Labour Party, and to organise more coherently this class struggle current — and advance on certain individual issues.

This year's TUC was a setback in the class struggle. It subordinated the interests of those who are fighting Thatcher to a (false) calculation of what is in Labour's electoral interests. It accepted a framework of anti-union laws, and put forward no policies which would solve the problems of mass unemployment and other key issues facing the labour movement.

Despite the unity achieved around Kinnock's project the Congress did not disguise the existence of three basic currents in the labour movement today. First is the 'new realist'/Mainstream right around Hammond, Lyons, and the AEU leadership on overall issues — a current politically oriented towards coalition government with the Alliance and with trade union and social policies in line with that. The second current, the largest, is the Kinnockites with their key base in the TGWU, GMBATU, NUPE, NUR and other unions. Their orientation today is towards a Kinnockite Labour government and they spelt out at this Congress just how right wing its policies would be. The third current, by far the smallest, is that of the class struggle left whose strongest component is in the NUM but which has a minority of class struggle forces in other unions.

Tactics

The tactics which flow from this are clear. *All* those prepared to engage in struggle must of course be united. But in practice this requires politically clarifying and organising the class struggle forces and giving them a correct united front orientation. To take up the key issues of the class struggle today — Wapping, opposition to state interference in the unions, nuclear power, South Africa, the demands of women and black people in the labour movement — to cut into Kinnock's base. It is only by a combination of politically clarifying and organising themselves, seeking united action, and in particular taking united front initiatives into Kinnock's base, that the class struggle forces can break out of their extreme minority position and pursue the interests of the class struggle.

Clarifying and organising the class struggle minority, giving it a correct united front orientation into the labour movement, utilising in the interests of the working class the contradictions which exist between the 'new realist' and Kinnockite class collaborationists. These are the key tasks of the hour.

'Unity TUC' undermines fight against Thatcher

THERE WAS a disagreement in the Socialist Action editorial board over the assessment of the TUC. BRIAN GROGAN presents an alternative view of the TUC to the editorial line of the paper.

SUMMING UP last week's TUC Congress on BBC's Radion 4, General Council members John Edmonds and Rodney Bickerstaffe described it as the 'Unity Congress'. They were dead right. Compared to recent Congresses the absence of major divisions was glaring. But workers looking for a lead to reverse the attacks of the Thatcher government and the employers will find little to cheer from this Brighton 'unity'. Congress decided to:

- Maintain the essential elements of the Tories anti-union laws
- Open the door to an incomes policy under a future Labour government.

The message of the Congress wasn't any particular motion, but the repeated call not to struggle now, to put all hope in a future Labour government — and especially to bury the militant lessons of the miners strike.

This was the heart of Kinnock's speech to the Congress. 'There are some who despise consensus,' Kinnock said — speaking directly at Arthur Scargill. 'To them, it is collaboration, supping with the devil, corrupting even' Such people, Kinnock intoned, are mere 'saloon bar revolutionaries'

This was a calculated kick in the teeth to every sacked printer, every victimised miner and every other worker involved in struggle to defend their rights and their living standards. Printers have not been on the picket line for eight months because of some romantic ideal. They were put there by Rupert Murdoch and his Tory backers.

And they have been kept there because the likes of Neil Kinnock have refused to mobilise the rest

of the movement in their defence. As in the miners strike, Kinnock's attempts at 'consensus' mean only one thing: capitulating to the employers and the Tories. Yes, we do think that such an approach is 'collaboration, supping with the devil'.

The large majority of the TUC bought this line of reasoning. The bitter fruits of the miners defeat are finally coming home to roost.

The TUC tops are now intent on kicking over the traces of the militant lessons of that strike. Instead of a call to stand and fight we are offered the utopian panacea of the 'jam' of a future Labour government. Instead of reaching out to women and the black communities, the concern is not to tread on SDP supporters or alienate the scab 'Union of Democratic Mine workers'. Instead of laying a basis for, in Arthur Scargill's words, 'a government as loyal to our class as Thatcher is to hers', Kinnock is busily preparing one that not on-

ly promises to administer the capitalist state but one, moreover, which will maintain all the gains of Thatcher against the working class.

Acceptance of this framework allowed the basic elements of the Tory anti-union laws to be enshrined in new proposed legislation for a future Labour government. This was a major blow to the working class. These new proposals accept the chief argument of the Tories during the miners strike and since: that state intervention into the unions is justified in denying the democracy of the mass meeting, the mass picket and the wish of entire communities. That 'democracy' means giving the scabs in Nottingham and elsewhere the right to decide over the future of communities and jobs in all parts of the country through the legal right to enforce a ballot.

A year ago, it was only people like Eric Hammond of the electricians or Gavin Laird of the engineers who were openly advocating that the TUC adopt such a policy. The fact that such an overwhelming majority could be won to this view this year is a product of the accumulated defeats which we have suffered since the miners strike was lost. This is why Kinnock's electoral argument sounded so strong.

The same approach was taken on the issue of low pay. Of course the Congress decision to push for a statutory national minimum wage is to be welcomed. But as is argued elsewhere in this issue the Congress resolution and document on the low pay question failed to map out a campaign of mass action to fight against low pay.

Everything was put in the basket of legislation by a possible future Labour government. Meanwhile no clear minimum figure was adopted and the £80 that was mooted is sufficiently low to cause neither the wrath of the employers nor to encourage a mass of struggles by the low-paid in the here and now.

Miners

But contrary to the wishful thinking of Kinnock and Willis, the militant wing of the miners and their supporters have not disappeared. They were still able to assert themselves even at this TUC Congress — even though it was, like all others, a highly bureaucratic affair.

The mood of the thousands of miners at the



Notts rally showed how far removed from the ranks were even the positions of the NUM delegation at Brighton. Nonetheless, given half a chance, those forces committed to class struggle were able to move out behind some key motions.

The first of these was Congress's rejection by nearly six million to three million of the General Council's stand on the Wapping dispute. Delegates backed an NGA resolution which called for an instruction to be issued to the EETPU to stop its members from scabbing and commits the TUC to organising an extension of the boycott campaign against the *Sun*, *The Times*, *News of the World* and *Sunday Times*. Although the motion was far from what's required to win the dispute, the vote was welcomed by the thousand printworkers lobbying outside the Congress hall, and can be sure to give a boost to their struggle.

Congress also took a firm stand on South

Africa. For the first time in memory, an international question was absolutely central to Congress proceedings. Speaking to the resolution Jimmy Knapp of the NUR received massive applause for his call for complete mandatory sanctions. The Congress decision opens up big opportunities for deepening active solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle in the heart of the labour movement.

Advance

On the question of nuclear power too the TUC position registered a big advance. The last time the question was debated by the TUC, only one other union backed the NUM. This year the NUM's resolution was defeated by the narrowest margin of 60,000 votes. This reflects the massive change in awareness on the nuclear power question, especially since Chernobyl, and points to a clear anti-nuclear position being adopted by the Labour Party conference in Blackpool at the end of

the month.

Such advances show that where real determined struggle is taking place — whether here at Wapping or in South Africa against apartheid — the Kinnock 'consensus' line is at its weakest.

The lesson is therefore clear: to fight for struggle now. And where this occurs to build the broadest possible united action around such struggles. Such an approach is the best contribution to turning back the Tories' and bosses' offensive. It's also the way in which Kinnock's and Willis' whole class collaborationist approach can be undermined. And it will place workers and their allies in the best position to struggle in the future, including advancing socialist measures under any future Labour government.

Friends

Class fighters must also know their friends and who our enemies in the movement are. Fighters in the black com-

munities and for women's rights got little or no voice in the Congress. Their pressure was felt in some of the lamenting about the 'new servant class'. But they are a major component of the class struggle fighters as was strikingly shown in the miners strike and as has even made its presence felt at Wapping. Defending their struggles and right to organise is a vital part of forging the fightback.

Enemies

As regards our enemies, our fire always has to be trained on the Tories and the bosses. Only within that framework do we take up forces within our movement. So calls for action must always include those unions on the right wing of the Congress, the electricians and the engineers. To focus on the bureaucracies of these unions as 'the main danger' misses the real target: the TUC and Labour Party leadership as a whole. Over Wapping, the real question is what the TUC as a whole is going to do to mobilise behind the printworkers. To focus on the electricians is to let the Willis off the hook. Of course, part of what the TUC has to do is to call the electricians to order, but it is a mistake to reduce the focus to that. This should mark our approach on all issues from the fight for sanctions against South Africa, to calls to end nuclear power.

Equally, we should beware false friends. The Communist Party — both wings — are part of the problem, not the solution. The *Morning Star* welcomed the TUC as having 'hammered out a positive plan of action to reverse Tory destruction'. In the Wapping dispute, it is the *Morning Star* supporters who are lending weight to the demands to tone down the picketing, to prevent the convening of mass meetings where the pressure of the ranks could be brought to bear, and who have set themselves against the formation of a democratically elected strike committee. Supporters of both wings including prominent CP member Mick McGahey ganged up against Scargill in the NUM delegation to the TUC riding on Kinnock's 'consensus' call.

In the period ahead their strategy will increasingly be shown to be a dead-end. Breaking out of the electoral straitjacket, reaching out to our genuine allies in the course of forging independent political action is the task for class fighters.

Black Section TUC fringe meeting

LABOUR Party Black Section held a Monday lunch-time fringe meeting at the TUC congress in Brighton last week on the theme of black self-organisation in the labour movement.

The meeting was chaired by Black Section chair Marc Wadsworth. Delegates and visitors heard Narendra Makanji, secretary of Black Section, Azim Hajee, from the national steering committee of the NALGO Black Workers Group, and Vinayak Patel representing striking workers from Kenure Plastics.

Both Wadsworth and Makanji drew attention to the common problems faced by black activists in the Labour Party and the trade unions. Makanji highlighted the fact that unionisation among black workers is greater than other groups.

Twenty per cent of TGWU members, 28 per cent of NUPE members and 12-15 per cent of GMAATU members were black he said. He pointed to the fact that despite a congress policy passed in 1984 on black self-organisation in the unions, little action has been taken to combat racism and discrimination.

Contrasted to that was the experience of the NALGO Black Workers Group, which held its first national conference earlier this summer.

When black workers in the Camden NALGO called their first meeting 90 people attended. At that point only one Camden NALGO shop steward was black.

Now the group is recognised by the council and consulted on matters affecting black workers. Camden Black Workers Group is afforded the same facilities as shop stewards.

Nationally, the Black Workers Group, said Hajee, has successfully concentrated on campaigns against racist deportations, as well as demands for better representation for black NALGO members.

The Black Section meeting closed with a call for support for 42 sacked black workers from the moulding department of Kenure Plastics in Feltham, West London. Patel explained that their contracts had not been renewed after the workers called an overtime ban last May, following a refusal by management to agree to a pay increase. He called for a boycott on raw materials to the firm and of the products they produced.

Kenure Plastics workers stand firm

DESPITE management's declared intention to close the factory the workers at Kenure Plastics are standing firm.

AEU shop steward, Vinayak Patel, told Socialist Action that the workers were determined to carry on. Patel was amongst a delegation from Kenure Plastics at the Notts miners rally. They raised £163 through a bucket collection.

Forty-two black workers have been locked out since 14 May. They were in the process of negotiating an improvement in their poor pay and conditions — from £2.35 to £3.00 per hour.

Official

A big boost for the dispute, reported Vinayak Patel, has been the recent decision by the AEU to give official backing.

The closure threat

which Kenure Plastics boss, Peter Davis, announced to the AEU official is serious, Patel said, but is not immediate. The workers who have been scabbing have been given six weeks' notice. In the meantime, the policy of the company has been to draw out the prospect of negotiations. The union have appealed to an industrial tribunal but the company has rejected three alternative dates for the hearing.

Sacked

A new twist to the dispute was given last Friday with the sacking of one of those still working. Jimmy Smith, an Afro-Caribbean who's been

working at the Factory for four years was approached by the management to testify on their behalf at the tribunal. They wanted him to say that the Asian workers did not have a bad deal. When he refused he was given the boot!

Funds and messages of support should be sent to: Kenure Plastics Workers Support Committee, c/o 50-52 King Street, Southall, Middx (phone 01-843 2333).

US government escalates war against Nicaragua

LAST WEEK the United States government stepped up its sanctions against Nicaragua — banning even charity aid from the US. JON SILBERMAN reports on the stepping up of the US war against Nicaragua.

The US government calls it 'low intensity operations', or 'covert operations'. But this hides the real scale of the war it is waging. In the last five years, some 15,000 Nicaraguans have lost their lives defending their country.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega catalogued just some of the destruction and loss of life inflicted as the result of the US-backed war in his speech on 19 July celebrating seven years of the Sandinista revolution. Of the victims of the contras 879 were children under twelve years old. Two thousand houses have been destroyed, 31 health care centres and stations, 291 vehicles, 11 day-care centres, 58 schools, and over 500 other buildings.

The facts give the lie to the claims of Ronald Reagan that what's at stake in US involvement in Nicaragua is stopping so-called 'Soviet expansionism' — or his obscene comparison between the contras and the Founding Fathers of the United States or the 'brave men and women of the French Resistance'.

Earlier this year Sister Sandra Price, a US nun working in Nicaragua, wrote of an example of what Reagan's 'freedom fighters' get up to. 'On 25 March a group of contras took one of our Catholic catechists, Donato Mendoza, from his home' she reported. 'Two kilometres further on they castrated him, gouged his eyes, pulled out his fingernails, cut the flesh from his legs, broke every bone in his body, and shot him...'

A Special Report issued by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign quotes an affidavit to the World Court by Edgar Chamorro, former leader of the Nicaragua contra organisation, the 'Nicaraguan Democratic Force' (FDN). Chamorro stated that the atrocities he had heard about were not isolated incidents: 'but reflected a consistent pattern of

behaviour by our troops. There were unit commanders who openly bragged about their murders, mutilations, etc. When I questioned them about the propriety or wisdom of doing these things they told me it was the only way to win this war, that the best way to win the loyalty of the civilian population was to intimidate it and make it fearful of us.'

In the first six months of this year 750 people have been kidnapped, whilst 300 have been assassinated. Contra land mines killed 35 civilians in northern Nicaragua during this Spring alone.

A particularly revealing episode in the terror campaign took place on 3 July when US-backed mercenaries blew up a truck filled with peasants. Twelve children, twelve women, and eight men were murdered. All were civilians. Eighteen of the victims were from a single family.

The Sandinista paper *Barricada* reports such terrorist activities are on the increase because the military effectiveness of the contras is declining. During the first five months of this year the Sandinista army dealt significant blows to the contra forces, killing or wounding more than 2,500 in 850 clashes.

But the contra war is taking a heavy toll on the Nicaraguan revolution. Recently Victor Tirado, a member of the FSLN National Directorate, reported that all the Sandinista efforts 'are directed, basically, at defeating the foreign aggression, which 'has diverted our forces, our material and human resources, and is exhausting us in human and economic terms'.



US-backed contras are stepping up their attacks

It's against this background that Reagan won the US Congress to provide a further \$100 million aid to the contras. Lest there be any mistake about his intentions Reagan clarified in a recent interview given to the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* that he supported the overthrow of the Sandinista government. He said that if the Sandinistas did not move toward what he called 'democratisation' in Nicaragua, 'then the only alternative is for the freedom fighters to have their way and take over'.

The Sandinistas have declared that the US aggression has entered a new and more dangerous stage with the approval of the \$100 million aid. Their view has been confirmed in a recent *New York Times* report that amongst other things the contra aid will be used to finance the training of the contra terrorists by US soldiers from

Special Forces, known as Green Berets. A second priority in allocating funds, the paper went on, will be the setting up of a supply system so mercenary troops can mount long-range operations inside Nicaragua.

Anticipating these developments the Nicaraguan government responded to the contra aid vote by stating they would have to change some policies in order to defend the country. Amongst the measures taken was the suspension of the publication of the pro-US government daily paper, *La Prensa*, which the government declared had promoted the mercenary war and supported financial aid for the terrorists.

Large demonstrations have taken place in Nicaragua in response to the Congress vote. Writing from Nicaragua Cindy Jaquith reports, in the American socialist weekly,

The Militant, that 65,000 rallied in Managua in support of the revolution. In addition 10,000 demonstrated in the town of Jinotepe and 20,000 in the city of León.

Such support continues to exist despite all the hardships precisely because the Sandinista government continues to defend the interests of the workers and peasants. In June the government took over temporary control of six companies in response to demands by workers who had faced a three year union-busting drive. The government declared that the company was carrying out an 'employers' strike' that affected the national economy and was damaging to the interests of the workers.

Land distribution has been accelerated because of 'pressure brought to bear by movements of landless peasants' according to *Barricada*. In Region V, a major agricultural area in south-central Nicaragua, 31,000 acres were distributed to 400 landless peasants in June and July alone. By the end of the year 150,000 acres will have been distributed in this area, where previously land reform had been limited.

In what has been a major recent initiative the government has embarked on the 'autonomy process' in regard to the Atlantic coast region. This is an attempt to overcome the discrimination, economic backwardness, and political isolation to this region of the country — where a majority of the population are Indians and black people, each with their own history, language, culture and traditions. The autonomy project has resulted in a major increase in support for the revolutionary government from the area.

Contrary to Reagan's claims nothing could be more 'democratic' than the Sandinista government's defence of the interests of the vast majority of the population.

World in action

Chile

Chile's 90 day state seige and spate of mass arrests following last Sunday's commando attack on Pinochet is the culmination of a long period in which mass opposition has been growing. In May a two-day general strike saw large scale power cuts, transport stoppages, and barricades in the poorer areas.



Terror is the government's only answer. Over 15,000 people were arrested in Santiago suburbs alone in the week after the strike. An Amnesty International report released on the 3 September says Pinochet's terror has reached levels not seen since 1973.

South Pacific

French prime minister Jacques Chirac's recent promise of a 'war against terrorism' casts an interesting light on comments made during his recent tour of France's South Pacific territories. Interviewed in *Papeete* about two secret service agents, Major Mafart and Captain Prieur, recently transferred to the French Atoll of Hao after New Zealand jailed them for blowing up the *Rainbow Warrior* he said: 'I have no special message except to pass on consideration and friendship and above all confirm my joy to know they are today free on the territory of the Republic.'

He later explained that the two French state terrorists were on Hao for a 'regular military posting'. He went on to denounce Australia's prime minister Bob Hawke as 'very stupid' for voting to refer France's South Pacific colonial possessions to the United Nations.

Philippines

On Friday 5 September representatives of the Aquino government were due to meet Nur Misuari of the MNLF (the Morro Nation Liberation Front) following the national congress of his party. The issues under discussion will be the demands of the Muslim population on the southern island of Mindanao for autonomy. A truce with the Muslims would be a big feather in the cap of Corry Aquino, who is under pressure from the Reagan administration to stop talking and start shooting.

The White House last Sunday strongly criticised what they see as Aquino's dithering in negotiations. The purpose of the negotiations, they made quite clear, was simply to isolate the communists. Schultz compared Aquino to Salvador's Napoleon Duarte: 'We are ready for dialogue, but not about power sharing.' A Philippine government spokesperson said: 'We have no illusions the talks will end the rebellion. We think the offer is necessary to try and prove we want to avoid bloodshed.'

Four members of the Philippines constitutional commission have recently resigned in protest because, they say, the constitution is being prepared so as to capitulate in advance to United States economic interests.

USA

Protectionist frenzy is again mounting following figures showing that last month's commercial debt at \$18 billion. The manufactured goods deficit was particularly bad. It rose 20 per cent to \$16.1 billion. Japan, which was surpassed by Europe in June, has returned to its top of the league status as the country with whom the USA has the largest trade deficit, despite growing evidence of a major recession in the Japanese economy.

New US threats against Libya

THE UNITED States is attempting to create another wave of international hysteria against 'terrorism' following the massacre of more than 20 Jewish worshippers in a synagogue in Istanbul, and the hijacking of a Boeing 747 at Karachi airport. In this case however even the United States has been unable to put the blame on the Libyan government — which is the chief target of the US campaign.

The attack on Istanbul was a completely reactionary act which is to be condemned whoever carried it out. What lay behind the hijacking in Karachi is still not clear. But the Libyan government has condemned both attacks.

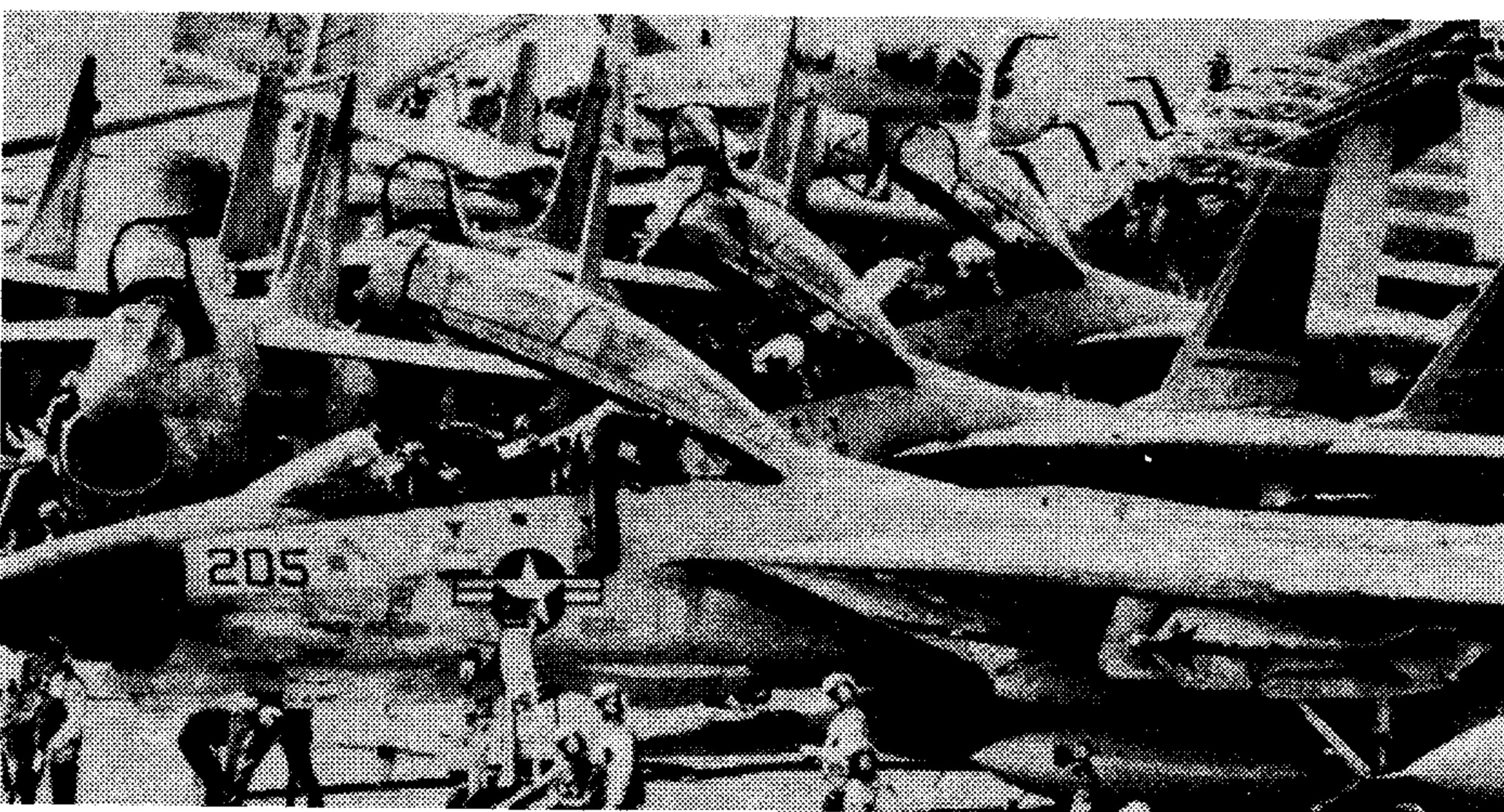
This has not stopped the US preparing for new military attacks on Libya however. During the first week on September A-6 and A-7 bombers from the carrier *USS Forrestal* carried out practice attacks from the Mediterranean against North African targets at Wadi Natrun in Egypt.

The *Forrestal* also cancelled a planned trip to Israel and carried on exer-

cises with Egyptian warships in the sea off Libya. A further 18 F 1-11 bombers have arrived in Britain from the United States.

White House spokesperson Larry Speakes declared at the beginning of September: 'We certainly have reason to believe that the Libyan state ... has not forsaken its desire to create terrorist activities worldwide, and the capability is still there to do so.' He also stated: 'We will employ all appropriate measures to cause Libya to cease its terrorist policies.'

These were of course exactly the same justifications that were given by the US for its bombing



Aircraft on the carrier *USS Forrestal*, recently out for 'practice' attacks against North Africa

raid on Libya on 15 April this year.

The US has also sent envoys to western Europe, starting with Belgium and Britain, to whip up support for its campaign against Libya.

The US denunciations of terrorism of course look still sicker as the United

States is supplying \$100 million in military aid to the Nicaraguan 'contras'.

Faced with the new escalation of the US campaign against Libya the forces in the British labour movement that opposed the bombings in April have to be prepared to respond again — both by pro-

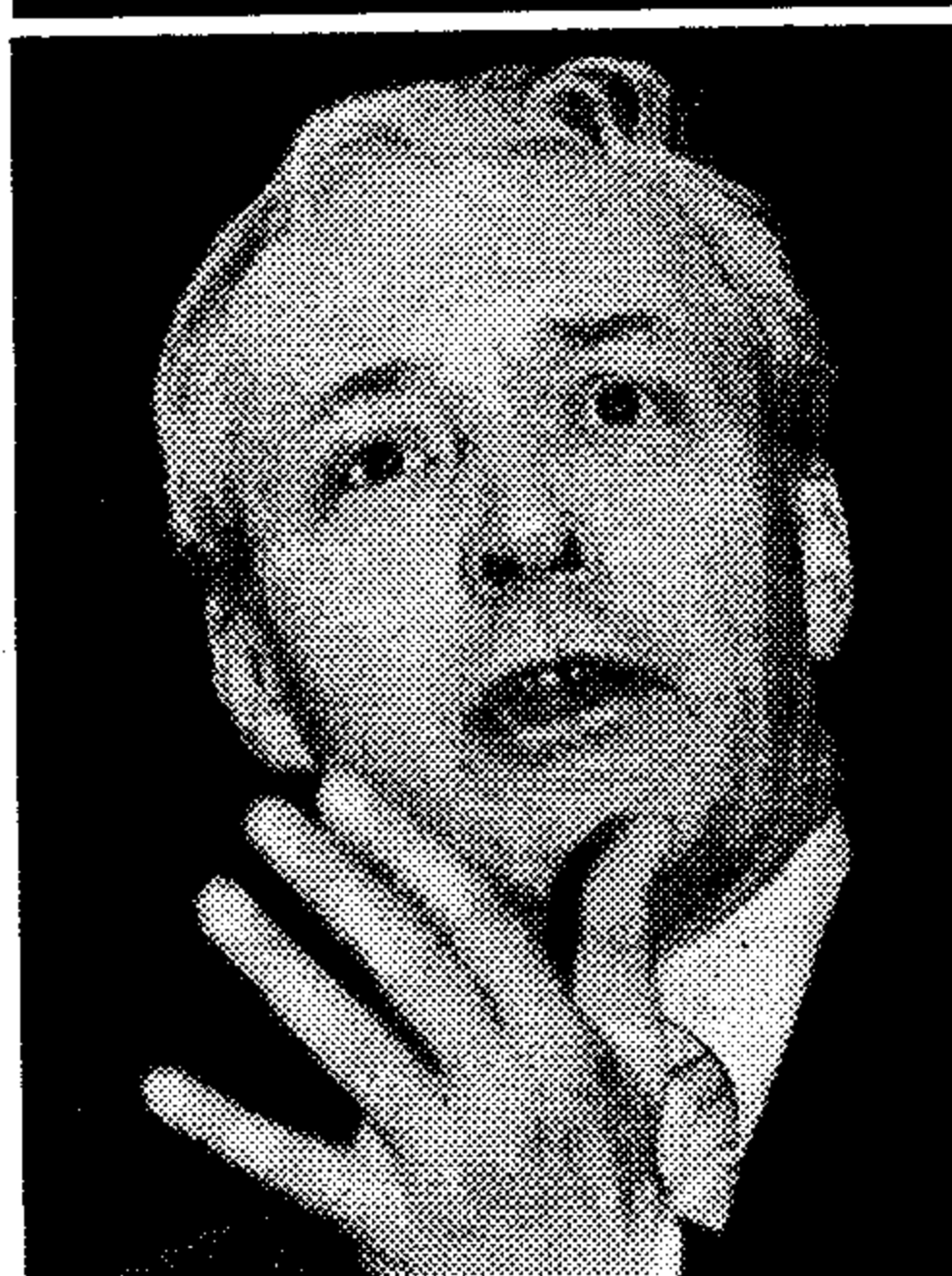
testing against US plans now and preparing to act immediately if there are new United States attacks. The debate which will take place at Labour Party conference on the demand for the withdrawal of all US bases from Britain is another opportunity to develop that campaign.

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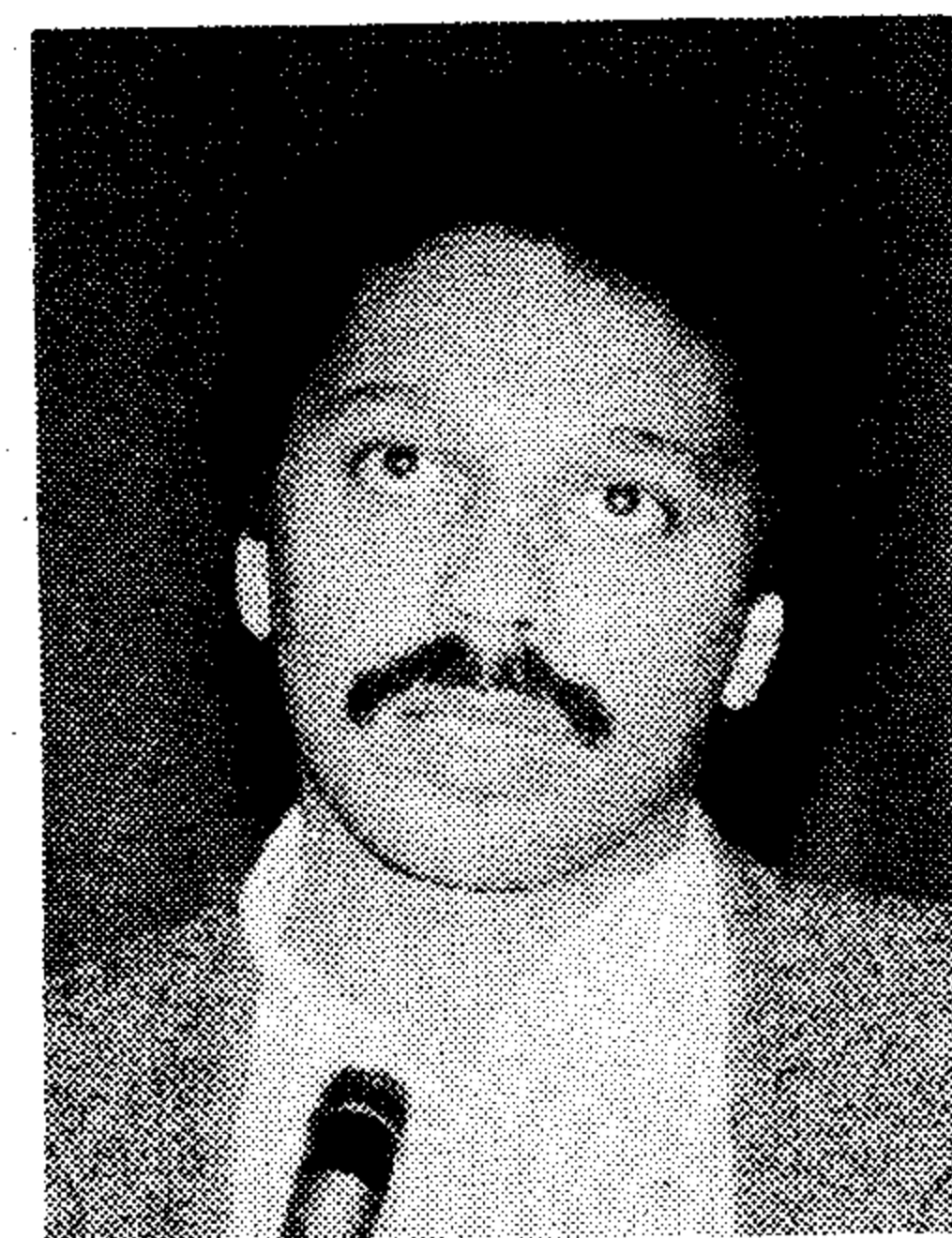
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Linda Bellos



Peter Heathfield



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Inside the unions

TUC supports Silentnight strike

DELEGATES TO TUC congress last week paid tribute to the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union workers at Silentnight Bedding, who have been on strike now for over a year. The resolution, moved by FTAT and overwhelmingly carried, expressed 'grave concern' that the Cooperative Wholesale Society continues to stock and sell scab beds.

Speaking at a TUC fringe meeting organised in support of the strikers, general secretary Ben Rubner pointed out: 'An emergency resolution was carried unanimously at last year's TUC. It is regrettable that not all organisations have acted within the spirit of that policy.'

Rubner highlighted in particular the Coop, which is 'making excuses as far as we're concerned,' he said. 'The Coop has not cooperated with that strategy, which we would have expected it to do, by not selling Silentnight beds.'

Janet Seymour from Barnoldswick, and Steve Newton from Stutton-in-Craven, the two factories involved in the strike, were also on the platform. 'We've been out for 15 months,' said Steve Newton, 'And the hardship we are suffering is really bad.'

He described the support that the strikers had been receiving, financial and on the picket line, and the scheme whereby Labour Parties and trade union branches are asked to adopt a striker's family. 'We will win,' Newton told the audience, 'But you must support us 100 per cent.'

Miners and the print workers are among those who have supported the Silentnight strikers. Charlie Gee, an ex-Silentnight convenor, and other FTAT strikers were at the Notts Justice for Mineworkers rally last weekend.

'We've had a lot of help from the miners,' Gee told *Socialist Action*. 'We're here to show our solidarity with them.'

'The TUC passed a good resolution about the Coop. But I'd have preferred it if it was put a bit stronger. We could have done with people from the platform stating that no one should buy anything from shops stocking Silentnight beds.'

'It is good that people are not buying their beds, but you don't buy a bed for ten years. Boycott that shop. That's what's necessary.'

● Requests for information and speakers should be made to: Terry Bennett, 22 Garrick Street, Colne, Lancs (phone: 0282 603055). Donations to the strike fund should be sent to: Ann King, 10 Rainhill Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs (phone: 0282 813662).

Teachers sell-out

THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers executive met on Friday 5 September to ratify the deal on conditions that they had worked so hard to stitch up. Combined with the existing proposals on pay (the Coventry

By Ray Sirotkin, Lambeth NUT

agreement), the executive has managed to complete an horrendous package which destroys all the gains teachers have made over the past 18 months.

Top of the list is the notion of return to cover for absent staff. This part of the agreement will allow local authorities deliberately to underspend, knowing that they can force teachers to 'contractually' cover — even if it means primary classes of 60.

They can rely on it, as the NUT executive is going to help 'monitor' the agreement. It will police its own members. The school day will be more under the control of head teachers, while the working year will be increased by one week.

The pay deal, while placing all teachers (except heads and senior teachers) on a single scale, offers very little to most teachers. The 'big increases' at the bottom affect very few teachers. Also, the £750 being talked about is a one-off payment, subject to deductions.

Thus, the talk of 15 per cent is about rubbish. The actual basic salary increase is about half of that, and we have had 5 per cent through the interim award earlier this year. Most teachers have little to expect — some a pay cut!

However, the package has not been ratified by a special conference. And the executive will not call that until the deal is watertight.

In the meantime, particularly in relation to cover, the Socialist Teachers Alliance will be fighting to halt the retreat. The feeling in schools, at present, is if they can't make us cover, we haven't lost despite the executive's betrayal.

In the Unions

Build the Notts NUM



On the march: Notts miners last Saturday

'WHAT A WONDERFUL way to say the fight goes on!' With these words, and to rapturous applause, Dennis Skinner summed up Saturday's Justice for Mineworkers rally in Notts more than three thousand miners and their supporters wound their way through the streets of Mansfield to a rally where they heard speeches from representatives of the NUM, victimised miners, Women Against Pit Closures, striking printers at Wapping, and FENASTRAS, the trade union organisation in El Salvador.

Notts NUM vice president, Mick McGinty, told *Socialist Action* how delighted he was with the turn-out. 'What's more I'm highly delighted with the people that stood and watched as we came through Mansfield and clapped. It was like the old days.

'In fact,' he added, 'there were more people on the march than in the old days when we had a

united national union and we used to march through Mansfield... It shows that

By Jon Silberman

the NUM is here to stay in the Notts area and that it's getting stronger everyday'.

The strength of the NUM and confidence in defeating the breakaway was a constant theme of the rally. The NUM vice-president, Mick McGahey,

spoke of the UDM as standing for the 'union of diminishing members'.

Unity

Notts area president, Ray Chadburn, spoke out in his speech against those 'who favour a compromise with the UDM as the way to establish unity in the Notts coalfield. Loud applause greeted his clear-cut statement: 'I'll tell you this: I'm not seeking a compromise. Nor is the Notts NUM!'

With the debates and proceedings of the TUC barely over, the question of what sort of leadership and what sort of policies were needed was a constant theme of the speeches. Paul Whetton warned

those who were campaigning against Scargill that he had enormous support in the union's rank and file.

Striking printer, Jim Mason praised Scargill as 'a leader who led you and understood where he was going and wanted you to win'. Turning to the leaders of the print unions, he went on: 'All we ask of our leaders is to support us the way they said they were going to on 18 January when we came out in support of our trade union's right for recognition in that plant'.

New

And Notts area secretary, Henry Richardson carried on the point as regards the Labour Party: 'Despite the fact that the

UDM are flirting with the SDP... despite the fact that in the last political ballot 99 per cent of our Notts NUM members to support the Labour Party, there are no Nottinghamshire Labour MPs on this platform, apart from Dennis Skinner. I hope you'll notice', he emphasised to loud applause.

Cheap

Internationalism was a constant theme throughout the rally. Jorge Hernandez of FENASTRAS received a standing ovation as he spoke on the situation in El Salvador and paid his union's tribute to the struggle of the miners and of Women Against Pit Closures.

The struggle in South Africa was especially highlighted in the platform speeches. An emergency resolution was unanimously adopted to protest the imminent executions of ANC members Siphon Xulu and Clarence Payi.

The fight against the UDM in Notts is going to be a hard one — demanding support from the whole labour movement. But the Justice for Mineworkers rally was an important step forward in that fight.

CLPs

In addition to the direct fight against the UDM in the area now, the labour movement has to demand that a future Labour government withdraws all recognition from the breakaway organisation, and recognises the NUM in Notts.

As victimised miner Paul Whetton told *Socialist Action*: 'once we've got a united mineworkers union in the area, I'm sure we're going to take the fight forward. The time for retreating has long since gone.'



phased in appealing for NUM recognition for Women Against Pit Closures.

Then Liz French turned to her husband's case. 'He's been away 22 months and he's still got another year to do. Last weekend he had home leave, from the Friday to the Monday. I got us booked in a little hotel in Bognor Regis. But I wasn't allowed to go because we had to go to the Wapping picket line and show them what it's like!

'He even went to the TUC and embarrassed a lot of people down there. He wanted to show that being in prison doesn't mean that you give up. You can still be a fighter in there. You can still have your principles.

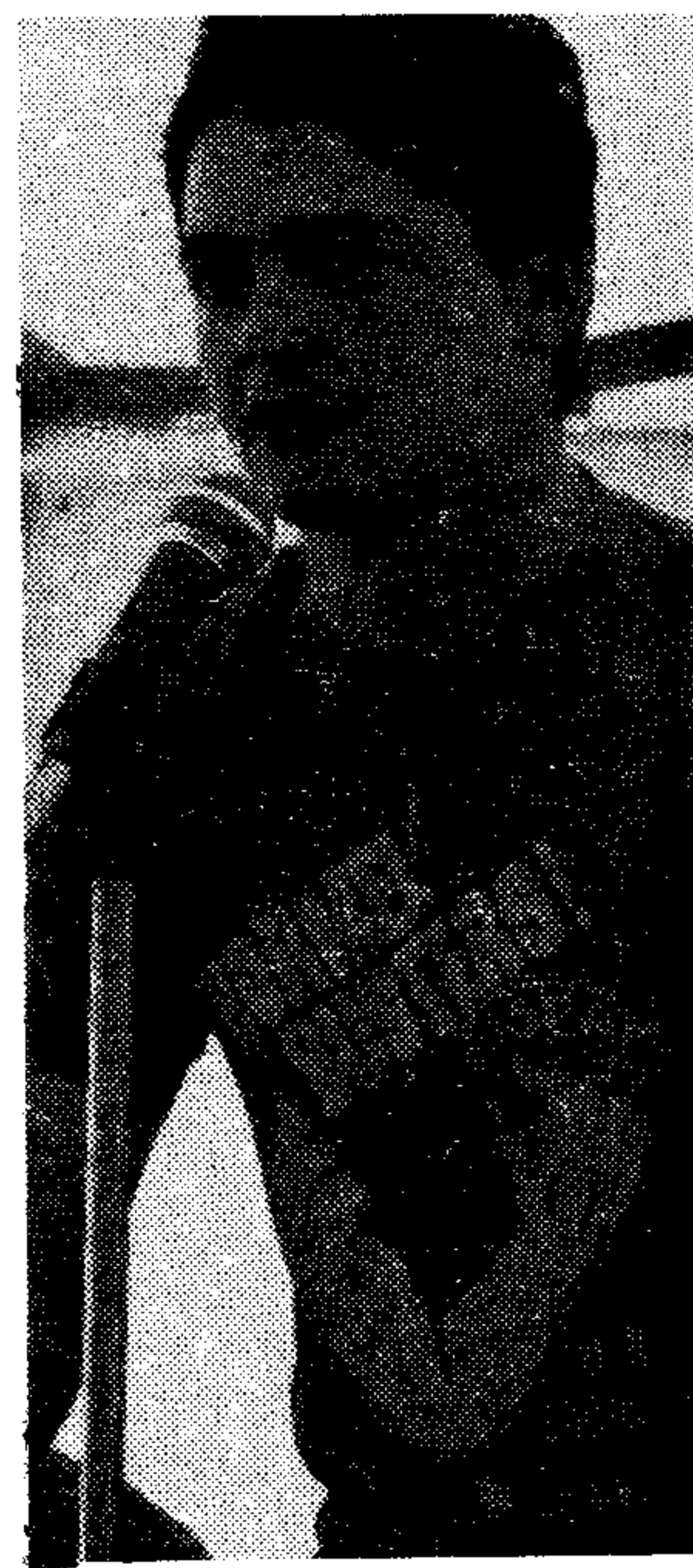
'Down in Kent, we've just had a vote for an overtime ban. Though we're being kicked down there, we're still getting ourselves together. Top of the list of the Area's grievances is Terry's parole. Because he's lost it. No reason was given. We just have to assume it's because he's political.

'In Kent there are 48 lads still sacked. Not one has got his job back yet.'

LIZ FRENCH spoke on behalf of Kent NUM, Women Against Pit Closures and her imprisoned husband, victimised miner Terry French. 'The women are still here' she reminded the rally. 'We're still strong. And we're still standing by our men. After two-and-a-half years. And we're stopping here because the fight has not yet been won' she em-

JIM MASON, a striking printer in the Wapping dispute, appealed for support. Then Jim went on to comment on the TUC.

'I heard Neil Kinnock's speech at the TUC. I don't personally feel that we need a Labour government for some of the things he's saying. I feel we need a Labour government because we need revenge. We need revenge for the people on low pay, revenge for the unemployed. Revenge for the anti-trade union laws. Revenge for the sacked miners, and the villages that took the battering. Revenge for the 6000 print workers who are on strike today. Most of all, revenge for the thousands of murders going on in South Africa by an apartheid regime supported by this government.'



'WHO is going to tell us that the spirit of the Nottinghamshire miners is so low after this marvellous turn-out today?' asked

DENNIS SKINNER. Skinner reviewed the miners strike and said it was the most honourable strike in his lifetime. 'They used every weapon in the establishment's book' to try and defeat the strike he said. But the strike had been lost 'because some of those in the TUC and in the labour movement failed to respond in our hour of need'.

the miners. The government denied it. Well last September they went to the international currency market and borrowed \$2½ billion, the highest individual loan taken out by any government since the second world war. Three days ago they went one bigger and borrowed \$4 billion. And I'm waiting for Roy Hattersley to speak up about it.'

Skinner gave a damning indictment of 'Thatcher's Britain'. In a reference to the TUC discussions he targeted those who believe 'you can get rid of all that by consensus... Some leading spokesmen will tell you forever that it's a case of "jam tomorrow". "Be quiet" they say, "keep your nose clean, listen to the management, don't get into any conflict... and all these wonderful things will come your way". But the miners strike should have destroyed a lot of these notions. Such collaboration paved the way for Thatcher's and MacGregor's attacks. So we don't want any cosy consensus.



The fight against the miners had put the skids under the Tories, Skinner went on. He pointed out that the Tories had just gone cap in hand to the international bankers. 'Arthur Scargill and others told you throughout the strike that it would cost between £6 and £8 billion to finance the fight against

'I give way to no one in my desire to beat this Thatcher government. I'm so prepared to defeat this government that I'm not prepared to spend my time and energy inside the Labour Party organising a witch-hunt to drive socialists out' he said to loud applause.

Women at Wapping

ONE OF the features of the struggle at Wapping has been the prominent role played by women strikers in all the activities of the fight. *Socialist Action* spoke to LIZ SHORT, acting deputy Mother of the Chapel, Times Clerical Chapel of SOGAT, about the role of women in this dispute.

THERE are about 500 women on strike, all bar one of them are in the clerical branch or are women cleaners. There are no women in the production rooms or in the NGA. In the Times clerical chapel there are about twice as many men as women. Before the dispute the union had taken up a couple of campaigns that particularly affected women, such as a campaign over cervical cancer screening. At the moment there are four MOCs to two FOCs (Mother/Father of the Chapel) on the joint chapels committee.

When the dispute started the women reacted in the same way as the men, which surprised some of the men in the production chapels. A lot of the 'lions' in Fleet Street have been shown to have no teeth, and a lot of the men have been surprised by the grit and determination of their female col-

leagues. I don't think it was appropriate for the women in the strike to organise separately, but it was a mistake not to get the families involved. There should have been a meeting for husbands and wives to organise them.

A lot of the wives of the production workers have been at Wapping regularly, but an incident I witnessed shows some of the problems they face. There was an NGA meeting to which a lot of the men came with their wives because it was the day of one of the women's marches to which they were going. A point came in the meeting when an announcement for NGA members had to be made about the court order.

The wives were politely thanked for their support, and were then asked to leave and go into an adjoining room, and a metal shutter was clanged down

between the two rooms. It was as if the men were not going to tell their wives what was going on anyway!

The Labour Party women's conference was an eye-opener for me — partly because I had never been to a big labour movement conference before. I could not believe there was no motion on Wapping. When a woman from Camden, who had been hit on the head by a police truncheon at Wapping, tried to get an emergency motion, they said police violence happens all the time so it wasn't an emergency!

To me, everything on the agenda such as health and child care, depends on having a strong trade union organisation. Although I was angry our issue was not discussed, from what I heard of the debates I was very impressed with their militancy.

Brenda Dean has given women trade unionists a bad name because she will not fight for the right to organise, and women will be the main losers in the unorganised, temporary, low paid work that will



'A lot of men have been surprised by the grit and determination of their female colleagues'

result if Murdoch and his kind win out. I voted for Dean as president, but after seeing the way she operates I didn't vote for her as general secretary. What we have in SOGAT is a woman leader who is more concerned with her TV image than she is the

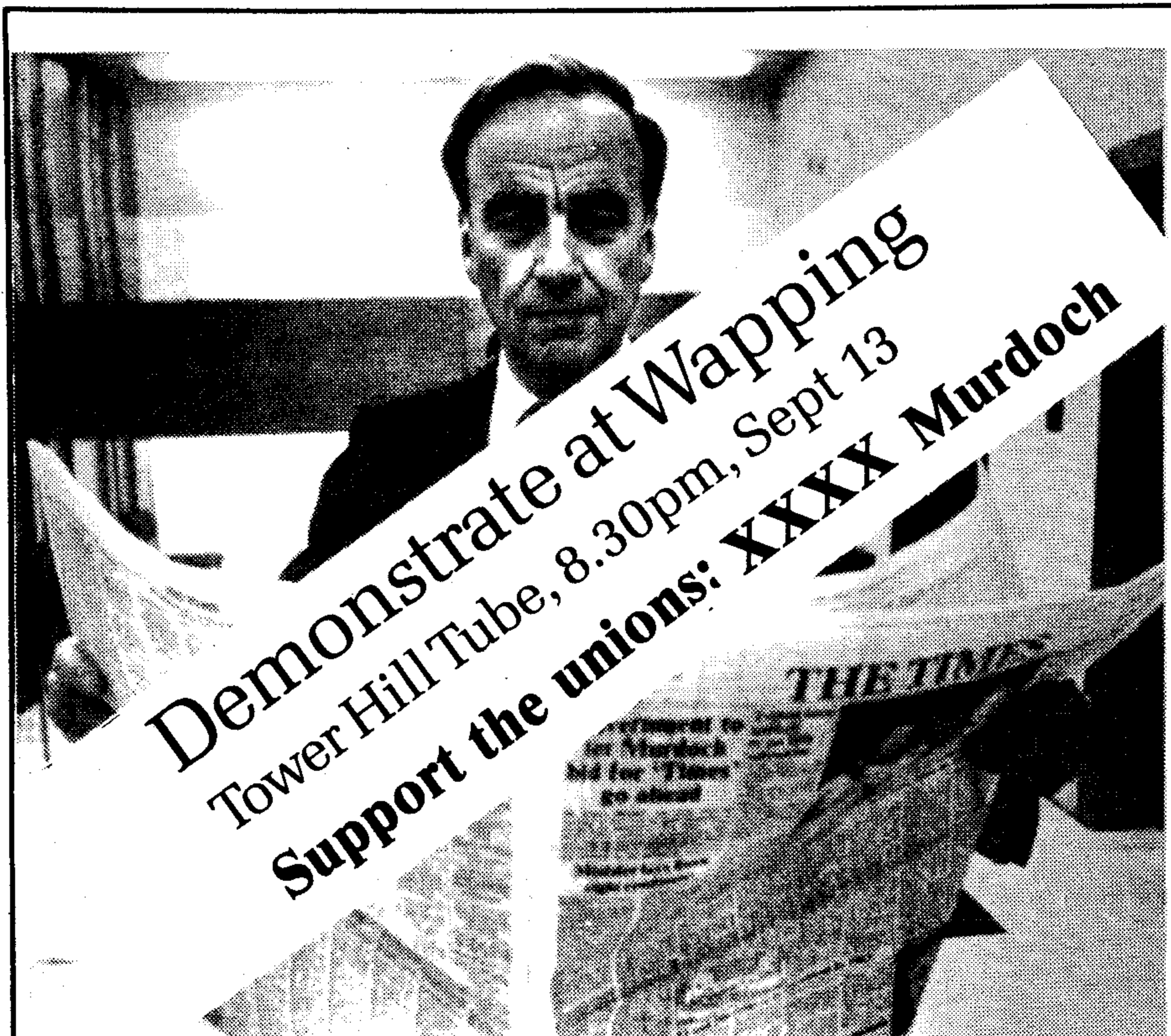
issues at stake in the dispute.

The women strikers understand the issues and they are prepared to carry on the fight for their rights because they understand how important it is to win this strike.

Photo: WAPPING POST

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FIGHT BACK AT WAPPING

AS THE News International dispute moves into week 34, GEORGE HALL, SOGAT News Group clerical FOC draws the lessons of the last few months and argues how the fight can be won.

The magnificent no-vote early in June against the so-called 'Dean-Murdoch' final offer should have signalled the start of the new campaign to build the strike. This wasn't to be. At the SOGAT Biennial Conference General Secretary Brenda Dean attempted to strangle this new found confidence by launching a tirade against the London delegates.

The London leadership led by the Communist Campaign Group caved in under the onslaught and agreed to support the 7-point resolution which put the strike firmly back into the hands of the national leadership. The resolution made it plain that any action which jeopardised the union's funds would not be countenanced and that the TUC would continue to look for an 'acceptable negotiated settlement' with the Company. Jobs and union recognition were completely absent let alone proposals for escalating the dispute. The London officers were firmly put in their place. No more challenges to the

NEC by 'unconstitutional' mass meetings calling for action were to be allowed. All meetings had to be controlled by the officers. Despite this people in the CCG and others claimed a victory at Scarborough.

Murdoch did not suffer the same delusions. As soon as the resolution was passed he was back to the courts, taking out writs curtailing the picketing outside NI plants in the knowledge that the SOGAT leaders would under no circumstances take on the Tory laws.

Within hours of the court case being won by Murdoch the terror-struck union hierarchy had delivered directives to all London branches instruc-

ting them to obey to the letter Judge Stuart's verdict. Incredibly, certain leading members of the CCG called the court judgement a victory for the printers, and further claimed that Kinnock and Willis were fully behind the strike!

As for the NGA, after the rejection of the Murdoch 'final offer' Dubbins cleverly headed off any militant moves in his own union. Dubbins proposed no tangible steps to escalate the dispute not wanting to place the NGA in contempt of court but he made left-sounding speeches and won the union to support a motion aimed at the TUC Congress attacking the role of Hammond and the EET-PU leadership.

His policy was to put pressure on Murdoch via Hammond (!) to reopen negotiations, saying that if talks don't take place the motion would be amended to call for the suspension of the electricians union. Last week it was passed overwhelmingly without amendment.

Despite the policy of the leadership at the national level the struggle can still be won. An elected strike committee is needed to give much-needed new direction to the strike: taking the strike into the other houses in Fleet Street; fighting in the first place for a 24-hour stoppage leading to extended action; stopping scab copy being transferred across the wire to Wapping; stoppational colour preprints being used in any printing house in Fleet Street; extending the boycott into all printing factories up and down the country to ensure that all Murdoch's products are boycotted.

The danger is that the national leadership will come up with another 'final offer' with an increase in compensation out of the present round of negotiations, and attempt to use their control to push it through. Standing firm against any deal that does not include traditional trade union organisation is absolutely vital if we're to chart a course for victory.

TUC calls for campaign on South Africa

'LETS GO forward with the fervour of the old Clydesiders. Let's get out and win the political arguments. Let's get out on the streets and demonstrate to our brothers and sisters in South Africa that we can help them, and show them that with our support, they can win.' That was the appeal Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, made to the TUC Congress when it unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the British government for opposing comprehensive sanctions against South Africa and calling for a stronger boycott of South African goods.

The debate on South Africa was a highlight of Congress. It focussed on a key issue in politics today: the growing isolation of the Thatcher government in the framework of the struggle of the South African people against apartheid and the growing demand for full and comprehensive sanctions against the apartheid regime.

Ron Todd introduced the General Council report. He also outlined the new venture of the TUC — a 60 second film against apartheid rule to be shown in cinemas throughout the country. A glossy TUC magazine appeared at Congress called 'Beating Apartheid — the current crisis in South Africa — and the TUC's programme of action'.

Todd spoke of the recent visit by himself and Norman Willis to South Africa, organised by the International Congress of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and appealed for more trade unionists to

abhor the stance of this Conservative government and the Prime Minister.'

Alan Tuffin, seconding the resolution on behalf of the UCW exposed the hypocrisy of the Tory government on sanctions. Thatcher's treatment of the unemployed in Britain, and the black people of this country, proves she doesn't care at all about 'unemployment' produced in South Africa by sanctions. Her real motivation in resisting sanctions is to protect the economic ties between British business and South Africa. Tory funds also depend on these profits — to the tune of £1.2 million of donations to the Conservative party over the past year from 73 firms with direct South African connections.

A warm welcome was given to Maxwell Xulu, a leader of COSATU, the 600,000 non-racial union federation established last year. Edward Mugane from CUSA, the South African federation which, like the TUC, is affiliated to the ICFTU also spoke,

To date CUSA has turned a deaf ear to unity appeals by COSATU. At a time of growing unity in the liberation struggle the efforts by some sections of union officialdom at Congress House to promote CUSA at the expense of COSATU can only weaken the solidarity ef-

forts of British trade unionists. Instead, the TUC and its International Department should be urging all trade unions in South Africa to join with COSATU.

The debate on South Africa at this year's TUC opens huge opportunities for the Anti-Apartheid Movement and activists in the trade unions. The AAM hosted a reception for South African trade unionists and ANC leaders to speak to delegates on the eve of the debate. It was clear there, and at the Congress itself, that many delegates were considering for the first time what they could do to further the fight for sanctions.

For these delegates, Jimmy Knapp's closing remarks should be a call for action, not just fine words.

'I am making a passionate plea from my heart. Don't buy South African goods,' he demanded to loud applause. 'And I say to all decent trade unionists, don't handle South African goods.'

'If anyone is victimised because they are moved to take this type of action, then Congress should unite in their total defence. All of us have a duty to do all we can to eradicate this evil and I have faith and confidence in our great movement that we will not fail.'