

A Socialist ACTION

THE CASE of the Birmingham Six — Dick McIlkenny, Hugh Callaghan, Paddy Hill, Bill Power, Gerry Hunter and John Walker — is one of the greatest frame ups in British history. Six men who were totally innocent were tortured by the police to extract confessions that they had committed the Birmingham pub bombings with which they had no involvement and then framed up on forensic evidence which was proved to be totally false.

Lord Denning, one of the most hardened reactionaries in the British legal system, explained in the court of appeal in November 1977 why the case of the Birmingham six could not be retried. He said if their accusations were true then the police had been guilty of violence, the confessions had been obtained by torture, that they were not admissible in evidence, the convictions were false, and the home secretary would have to recommend that they be pardoned or order a retrial. Denning said: 'This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: "It cannot be right that these actions should go any further." They should be struck out.'

Six years later torture, false conviction and perjury are exactly what the police stand accused of — with the addition that Denning is shown up in his true light.

But the Birmingham six is not the only such case. Two other outstanding examples of frame-ups remain.

Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong, Gerard Conlon and Carole Richardson — the Guildford four were all sentenced to life imprisonment for bombing a Guildford pub and the King's Arms pub in Woolwich. An active service unit of the IRA, arrested in the Balcombe Street siege, admitted that they carried out the Guildford bombings as part of a series of almost twenty others. Before the Guildford trial the senior forensic officer of the Woolwich arsenal responsible for investigating explosives linked the explosions at Guildford to a series of others. He was told to 'take out of your statement all forensic links that show Guildford is linked with all these other offences and just limit it to Guildford.' He said: 'I was told to take it out of my statement.' Yet despite this the Guildford four remain in jail.

Equally horrific was the case of those convicted in the Maguire's trial - Annie Maguire is the aunt of Gerald Conlon framed up for the Guildford bombings. No explosives were ever found by the police. Swabs were taken on the hands of those in their house when police raided it and these were the sole evidence in the case. The tests were the same ones that have been shown to be meaningless in the case of the Birmingham six.

None of the family were Republicans. Some were members of the Paddington Conservative club. Sean Smyth was a family friend who was arrested simply because he was in the house at the time of the raid. Giuseppe Conlon has since died in prison. Yet the victims of this grotesque frame-up are still in prison 11 years after the police raid.

There will of course now, rightly, be outrage over these false convictions. All sorts of liberal sentiments will be expressed about 'tragic miscarriages of justice' — as though that were any comfort to those whose lives have been ruined. A few 'rotten apples' may well be brought out.

But all this is to miss the point. The Birmingham six — and the Guildford four, and the Maguires, were framed up because the British state had to have victims. To carry through its repressive measures — from the Prevention of Terrorism Act to the daily violence it carried out in the north of Ireland — the British state has to create an atmosphere of intimidation and fear. It will find victims to fill that need.

For the British state in the North of Ireland founded on violence and repression can only be maintained by violence and repression. There will be no end to that violence, or to the horrific frame ups such as the Birmingham six, the Guildford four, and the Maguires until Britain gets out of Ireland.

Get those wrongly convicted out of jail. Get Britain out of Ireland. That must be the lesson drawn from this horrific frame up.

THE BIRMINGHAM 6

ANTI IRISH FRAME UP COLLAPSES



From the Irish Post, 15 September 1984
WE ARE INNOCENT: HELP US
I would like to thank the Irish Post for the publicity it has given us over the years. I write on behalf of the six innocent Irishmen who were tortured and framed for the Birmingham pub bombings. Since 1974, we have been protesting our innocence. One of the biggest obstacles we have had to contend with is the simple fact that we are Irish.
For a number of years now I have been maintaining a letter-writing campaign with MPs, members of the House of Lords, journalists and other relevant persons or organisations. Due to my persistence and the persistence of a small number of relatives and friends, we have finally got people to take an interest in our wrongful conviction and wrongful imprisonment. A number of organisations have started to campaign for the reopening of our case. I appeal to all Irish organisations in Britain, as well as to individuals, to do what they can to seek justice for us.
I repeat, we are six innocent men who have been wrongfully convicted. Please help us.
PADDY HILL
No. 506496
HM Prison Gartree,
Market Harborough,
Leicester LE16 7BP

Socialist ACTION

The right prepares its excuses

THE REALITY of Labour's standing in the polls, that on present showing it is on course to lose the election, is getting through to all sections of the party. The result is that the right wing, which has dominated the party since 1983, is already preparing its excuses — and the course it will advocate if Labour loses.

The lead has already been taken by the *New Statesman* which in a series of key editorials has spelt out the right wing's message — that Labour will lose the election because Labour is too left wing. In particular the *New Statesman* has called for dropping unilateral nuclear disarmament and come out for still stronger front bench attacks on Labour councils with leaders such as Bernie Grant, Merle Amory and Linda Bellos. This in line with the editorials being carried in the *Guardian*, *Daily Mirror* and other papers.

There is no doubt what is being prepared by the right wing. The right, having led the party to a new defeat, are then preparing to blame it on the left.

Indeed Labour losing the election would be seen as a great opportunity by sections of the right. It would be the opportunity to 'knock sense' into the party. Getting it to abandon unilateralism, opposition to incomes policy, reselection of MPs and every policy gain made by the left in the last seven years.

This situation makes it vital that the left in the party gets its act together not simply on tactics but on strategy. Despite the fact it will have been the right who threaten to lead the party to defeat in the general election politics does not work on the basis of an automatic reward for the virtuous. If the right wing lose Labour the election this will have a tremendously demoralising effect on whole sections of the working class. On the basis of that demoralisation the right would try to strengthen itself and get its version of events accepted.

This dictates that the campaign left of the party must achieve two things. First it must come forward before the election with a clear explanation that it is the right that is losing support in every field — and that adoption of the left's policies is the best course both for the present struggles and to win the election. Stating that truth is also the best way to ensure that Labour has the maximum chance of winning. Second Labour's campaign left must spell out an alternative strategy for the party.

The period since Thatcher came to office has brought to a head tremendous changes that were already accumulating throughout the post-war period. These include deep changes in the working class itself. The number of white male workers in work has fallen by two million in the last seven years. The entire increase in the labour force over the next five years is going to come from women. Huge problems still exist for Labour to tie together the white working class of the north and the new mass black working class in the south and Midlands.

The alliances which must be built as the core of an alternative strategy for labour are, of course, not first and foremost electoral alliances. They are alliances in struggle. Electoral success for Labour can only flow out of real social alliances built around events such as the miners strike, the defence of local government, the fight against unemployment, and the fight to defend the welfare state, defending the black communities, championing the demands of women. Around these has to be cemented the international alliances Labour must make. Labour's strategy for winning must start long before an election is called and be the logical outcome of the policy it has pursued outside elections.

The challenge facing Labour on this is clear. When Labour won the general election in 1945 white men in employment outnumbered everyone else in work by more than two to one. Today the working class is divided 50:50 between white men on one side and women and black people on the other. There cannot be any class policy today which does not make the demands of women and black people absolutely central in its strategy.

That failure to have a policy even remotely reflecting the structure of the working class, together with its international policies, have been among the most greatest strategic failures of the labour movement.

The right is preparing its excuses. The left has got to prepare its strategy.

NOLS council avoids real issues

ON 11 JANUARY the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) held an advisory council to select its candidates for the National Union of Students (NUS) executive elections in March. The meeting is 'advisory' because the slate which is chosen has to be endorsed by the officers of NOLS before it is official. This procedure ensures that the 'Democratic Left' leadership of NOLS has the power to remove any candidate it does not approve from the official NOLS platform.

Voting at NOLS council is open to delegates from Labour Clubs and to any student union officer who is a member of NOLS. Since these posts are overwhelmingly held by supporters of the 'Democratic Left', who join in order to further their own careers, this leads to the total domination of NOLS by the DL.

The structure and status of NOLS council are completely undemocratic. Election of NOLS candidates for the NUS executive should take place at NOLS conference itself on the basis of delegates from Labour Clubs only, and the date of NOLS conference should be moved accordingly. Only then will NOLS candidates truly reflect the policies of the NOLS membership.

At present the decisions of NOLS council can be disregarded by NOLS officers, besides which the voting is rigged so as to ensure a DL slate is chosen every time. Under 'Dem Left' policy, NOLS, in the name of 'pluralism', does not stand a full slate for NUS executive. At present NUS conferences this has ensured the election of Liberal and Tory candidates to the leadership of NUS.

More recently widespread dissatisfaction with the DL record of in-

action in the leadership of the NUS has led to the election of 'Socialist Students in NOLS' (SSiN) candidates. This is because the opposition to NOLS in the leadership of the NUS is to its left, and SSiN is the self-proclaimed 'left opposition' to the so-called Democratic Left.

By Polly Vittorini,
NUS London Executive

Far from being a left wing, SSiN's politics are in fact at odds with the growing radicalisation among students. Led as it is by *Socialist Organiser*, SSiN has clashed head-on with black and women's self-organisation. And SSiN stands against the national liberation movements in Palestine, Ireland and South Africa — while appearing very militant on the question of cuts in student grants.

The link between these positions is that SSiN's politics, under the dominance of *Socialist Organiser*, capitulates to imperialism — both directly in the sense of Ireland and support for Zionism, and by adapting to the more privileged sections of the working class against women and black people. If a union is to defend all of its members, it must take up more than purely economic demands.

It is this type of politics



which explain the alliance in NOLS between SSiN and *Militant*, which acted as a voting bloc and called for votes for each other's candidates. Clearly the victory of such an alliance at the level of the NUS leadership could roll back many of the political advances made over recent years — such as the policy of British withdrawal from Ireland adopted last year and the election of NUS women's officer by NUS women's conference.

In the LPYS, both *Socialist Organiser* and *Militant* have opposed Black Section candidates, and clashes between Black Section and Socialist

Organiser have now spilled over into the student field. The Labour Women's Action Committee (LWAC) has also now refused to share platforms with SSiN.

NOLS should come clean and give the NUS the chance to elect a Labour candidate for every post if the membership so wishes. This was nearly the case last year, with three SSiN candidates taking posts left open by official NOLS slate.

The result of selection at NOLS council this year, predictably, was a NOLS slate entirely composed of 'Democratic Left' supporters. The radicalisation

among students combined with Kinnock's turn to the right has produced among the Dem Left the most extreme example of the crisis of direction of the whole of the soft left in the Labour Party. The Dem Left is currently torn between the supporters of Kinnock in its leadership and the majorities for the politics of the campaigning Labour Party left which exist, unorganised, at its base.

NOLS council has produced no resolution to the crisis in the NUS. NOLS has produced no campaigning leadership as yet. The 'Democratic Left' still has to decide which side it's on.

Fight racism! Defend Labour councils!

FIGHTING RACISM and defending Labour councils will be the theme of the Campaign Forum, on 16 February, to be held in Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, on 16 February. It will be addressed by Bernie Grant, Linda Bellos, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Dennis Skinner, Gul Zarina Khan for the Labour Party Black Section, a member of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, and a speaker from the Labour Women's Action Committee. It promises to be the most important meeting organised by the Campaign Group of MPs since the end of the miners strike.

The core of Tory strategy is to widen every differential and division within the working class. This means, in particular, concentrating its fire on the black community. Labour's leadership has been going along with this in its attacks on local councils with black leaders — Haringey, Brent and Lambeth.

This rally, in contrast, brings together leaders of the black community with the most advanced forces in the white working class — the leaders of the miners and the Campaign Group of MPs. Its basis is principled — the black communities stood shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the miners throughout the strike, now the NUM leadership and the Campaign Group are standing up to be counted in defence of the black community against the Tory government's racist campaigns.

Black council leaders

Bernie Grant, Linda Bellos and Merle Amory have been pilloried by the government and press for elementary steps to champion the interests of black people — as well as women, the low paid, those of Irish descent, lesbians, gay men, and others who, together with the black community, make up the majority of the population in their inner London boroughs. The Lambeth rally is a head on reply to this attack.

There is a second crucial feature however. A key goal of the Tories has been to slander and discredit the anti-racist work of these Labour councils. The centrality of this fight is not understood enough even among militant sections of the working class in areas like the north of England, Scotland and Wales — regions where the working class has suffered massively in terms of unemployment and cuts but where there is not a large black

population.

The Lambeth rally brings together the left wing MPs in the Campaign Group and the leadership of the NUM, who come overwhelmingly from left wing northern, Scottish and mining constituencies, with the leadership of the black working class in London. This is a vital link in building up working class unity, fighting racism, and creating a principled basis for the left of the labour movement.

The Lambeth rally contains the seeds of an alternative course for the labour movement to Kinnock's disastrous policies. It sets out to create a majority for Labour, and for socialist policies, starting from the core of Labour's historic support in the mining communities, linking this to the traditional working class bastions in the North and Scotland, joining with the black communities concentrated in London and a number of big cities, grasping that only a labour movement which represents and champions women can ever remotely approach majority support, and linking these alliances with struggle against the Thatcher government.

Marc Wadsworth, chair of Labour Party Black Section, told Socialist Action: 'This meeting should prove a milestone in the history of

the left supporting black struggles in Britain. Socialist MPs in parliament have been brought together with campaigning

black socialists on key Labour councils and community struggles like the Broadwater Farm issue. It is long overdue.'

Campaign Forum
PUBLIC MEETING

Fighting racism
Defending Labour Councils
Campaigning for Socialism

MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY
LAMBETH TOWN HALL

(Brixton tube) 7.30pm

Chair Linda Bellos, Leader Lambeth Council
Vice Chair Labour Party Black Section

Speakers

Bernie Grant, Leader Haringey Council
Arthur Scargill, President
National Union of Mineworkers
Tony Benn MP
Eric Heffer MP
Gul Zarina Khan, Labour Party Black
Section
Dennis Skinner MP
Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign
Labour Women's Action Committee

• Admission £1 (50p unwaged) •

p&p Campaign Group News, c/o Bob Clay MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

The great frame-up

SIX IRISH men have languished in British jails for 12 years now, found guilty and given 21 life sentences each for bombings which they did not commit. In the light of irrefutable evidence to prove that, and growing public pressure, home secretary Douglas Hurd was recently forced to announce to parliament that the cases of Dick McKelney, Hugh Callaghan, Paddy Hill, Bill Power, Gerry Hunter and John Walker — the Birmingham Six — will be referred to the Court of Appeal. He also undertook that allegations that the confessions which clinched the verdict were extracted under torture will also be investigated.

Twenty one were left dead and 162 injured when bombs exploded in two Birmingham pubs, The Mulberry Bush and The Tavern in the Town, in November 1974. These events saw a hysterical wave of anti-Irish sentiments whipped up. The Birmingham bombings paved the way for the then

told me to sit on the edge of the seat and to keep my legs wide apart. He rammed a truncheon up into my testicles and started whipping me with the leather thong on the truncheon around the testicles... M took out his gun and hit me on the head with it. He put it into my mouth and pulled the trigger.'

By Carol Turner

Labour government to introduce for the first time the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which remains law to this day and which is regularly used to harass and intimidate the Irish community.

The Birmingham Six, long-time residents in the area, were working people with families and no connection with organised Irish politics. They were victims of anti-Irish chauvinism. As the Information on Ireland leaflet published at the end of last year points out: 'They were convicted because they were Irish and in the wrong place at the wrong time.'

The basis of their conviction was the 'confessions' signed by four of the six (which they pointed out in court were extracted by police beatings) and the evidence of an 'expert' forensic witness. Both these aspects of the trial have now been thoroughly exposed.

A home office forensic scientist took swab samples from the hands of those arrested and concluded that Paddy Hill and Bill Power had been in contact with nitroglycerine. Another home office explosive expert testified in their trial that such results could be produced if the men had been in contact with a wide range of substances, including nitrocellulose, a common component of paint. Both Hill and Power worked as painters and decorators. The same positive test result can come from handling playing cards.

But from the moment the first test results were available, as far as the police were concerned, all six were guilty. They set about proving it by systematic beatings and by other forms of torture, such as deprivation of food and sleep.

Paddy Hill, for example, testified that he was systematically beaten from Friday morning to Saturday night. He reported: 'B

The four confessions extracted by such methods were totally contradictory both with the facts of the bombings and in relation to one another. For example, all four referred to the bombs being in plastic bags. Forensic reports from the scene of the bombings showed that they had been encased in holdalls or suitcases.

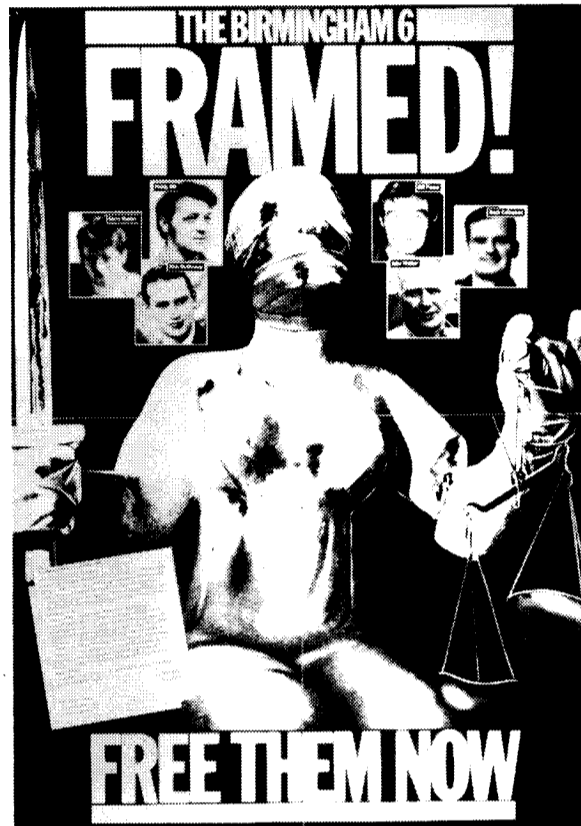
Power's 'confession' claimed that he had bombed The Mulberry Bush alone. Callaghan claimed that he and Hunter bombed that pub. McKelney said he bombed The Tavern in the Town with Hill. Walker also said he bombed The Tavern in the Town, but that he did so with Hunter. Hence Hunter was in two places at the same time!

The trial judge refused to accept that the six had been beaten by the police. Had he done so he would have had to throw out the statements. The evidence would have been conclusive had the men been medically examined before leaving police custody. Unfortunately they were not. And they were beaten again, afterwards, by prison warders.

In 1976, 14 warders were tried for assaulting the Birmingham Six and — acquitted. In private statements they have later described how they carried out these beatings. They also testify to the injuries the men received before they arrived on remand.

In November 1977, three years after the bombings, the Birmingham Six attempted to sue the police for assault. The ruling by Lord Denning on behalf of the Court of Appeal is an eloquent testimony to the real meaning of 'British justice'.

Denning said: If the six men win it will mean that the police were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence, and that the convictions were erroneous. That would mean that the



home secretary would have either to recommend that they be pardoned or he would have to remit the case to the Court of Appeal.

'This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: "It cannot be right that these actions should go any further." They should be struck out.'

Lord Justice Denning stopped legal action by the Birmingham Six — explicitly — because they might win their case and prove their innocence. It is only now — 12 years later, 12 years during which the lives of six innocent men and their families have been torn to shreds — that the case of the Birmingham Six is being referred to the Court of Appeal.

The *World in Action* TV programme, together with the publication of Chris Mullin's book *Error of Judgement*, has helped to force into public view the consequences of anti-Irish racism. The trial of the Birmingham Six is not an isolated case of a 'miscarriage of justice'. There are many other such examples, as the Irish, black and mining communities can testify well.

Another notorious case is that of the Guildford bombing, which took place a month before Birmingham. Five army recruits and one civilian were killed when a bomb exploded in a Guildford pub.

The Guildford Four — Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong, Gerard Conlon and Carole Richardson — were all sentenced to life imprisonment, found guilty of both the Guildford bombing and of bombing the King's Arms pub in

Woolwich. They too were convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated 'confessions' which they later retracted.

The Balcolme Street Active Service Unit of the IRA admitted responsibility for both bombings at their trial in 1977. But the Guildford Four were refused leave to appeal. They remain in jail today. Annie Maguire, aunt of Conlon, was charged with explosives handling offences related to the Guildford and Woolwich bombings and acquitted. But the whole Maguire family, her husband, two sons and a brother, together with two family friends, were tried in 1976 for possession of explosives. It was claimed that the family ran a 'bomb-making factory'.

A police raid on the Maguire home in December 1975 found no explosives. Swabs which were taken from the hands of those in the house at the time formed the sole basis of the evidence against them.

What is clear is that the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, and the Maguires are among the biggest frame-ups in British history. The Birmingham case is likely to be reopened. That of the Guildford Four and the Maguires must follow.

The Birmingham Six are demanding a retrial, not a pardon. They want the crooked evidence which convicted them exposed.

Such a retrial will not be of the six men in jail, but of the entire British legal system. It must expose the anti-Irish racism that has allowed such frame-ups to be carried out with impunity.

Cherry Groce Cover-up

'YOU CANNOT write down the shooting of an innocent woman as an "accident". What the people of Brixton are feeling is that there is an open door for that situation. That's why people in Brixton are angry.' That was the response of the then-leader of Lambeth council, Ted Knight, to the two days of uprising that followed the shooting of Cherry Groce in September 1985.

At the conclusion of the week-long trial of Inspector Douglas Lovelock, whose gun shot left Mrs Groce paralysed, probably for life, Brixton's black community is just as angry. Because 'accident' was precisely the conclusion of court proceedings against Lovelock.

On Thursday 15 January he was acquitted of charges of unlawfully and maliciously wounding Cherry Groce. Furthermore, he will return to work as if nothing had ever happened.

Lovelock's case isn't the only one where a police officer responsible for maiming or killing an innocent victim has got off scott free. In August 1985, one month before Mrs Groce was shot, a West Midlands police officer shot dead five year old John Stonehouse who was asleep in bed.

The officer said he mistook the child for a pile of blankets.

Earlier that same year two Metropolitan police officers had seriously wounded Stephen Waldorf, in a case of 'mistaken identity'. Nine months later they were acquitted of attempted murder and wounding. Their case was raised under the police complaints procedure but no action resulted.

But it is police violence against the black community that is most extreme. During the Lovelock trial, many disturbing facts were brought to light.

The police decided on an armed raid on Mrs Groce's Brixton home in search of her son Michael, rather than surveillance, for fear of attracting attention in a neighbourhood known to be 'hostile to the police'. For the same reason, they entered the house without checking its lay-out because they believed to contact the council with such a request would lead to information on their raid being leaked. The entire armed raid was prepared with the police acting as a law unto themselves.

Many doubts were also cast on Lovelock's suitability to lead such a raid. He had twice been formally cautioned about the use of firearms — a statutory warning which pointed out that guns were only to be used in absolute necessity. Lovelock had actually lost his qualification as a police marksman three months before the raid on Cherry Groce's home, when he failed a course.

Additionally Lovelock was above the age that many police forces in Britain consider the upper limit for 'authorised shots'. He had said the day before the raid that he felt 'absolutely exhausted' and 'had never had a day like it'. Part of Lovelock's trial defence was that he was 'on tenter hooks', he had fired 'nervously'.

Despite all this, there will be no further action by the police themselves. Lovelock will be back on duty, although not necessarily in Brixton.

The police cover up over Cherry Groce, can not hide the racism that exist in the Metropolitan police, and especially in places like Brixton. Black people can be attacked

with impunity — or their houses broken into as in the case of Broadwater Farm with and the death of Cynthia Jarrett. It makes a farce of the claim of the police to have launched a new 'anti-racist campaign'.

Is it any wonder that when Lovelock shot Cherry Groce it sparked off two days reaction by the black community? Or that Brixton's black community remains just as angry 18 months later when the same police officer walks free.

A home office working party report which reviews the police use of firearms is just about to be presented to home secretary Douglas Hurd. Its publication has reputedly been delayed until after the outcome of the Lovelock trial. Its findings will offer cold comfort to Britain's black communities — or to Irish, mining, or any of the other communities which have suffered state harrassment at the hands of the police.

The report will increase pressure for the establishment of paramilitary units, elite squads of police marksmen attached to every police force, like the DII of the Metropolitan police. Far from reducing the sort of 'accidents' which Mrs Groce suffered, it will increase them.

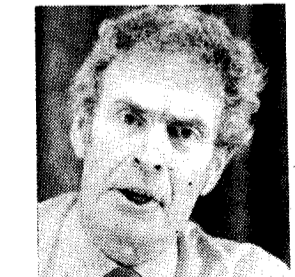


Jack Collins

JACK COLLINS, secretary of Kent area of the NUM died on Wednesday 7 January after a long illness.

Tributes to Jack Collins came from all corners of the movement. Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield, extending their deepest sympathy to Jack's wife Pat, to all the Collins family, and to Kent miners, said Jack Collins's death was 'a terrible blow to the trade unions and labour movement'

Lawrence Knight, president of Kent area of the NUM, paid tribute to Jack's 30 years as an official of the union. He highlighted Jack Collins' 'contribution in the '72 and '74 strikes and his uncompromising fight against pit closures in later years... He has always



been a staunch supporter of socialist internationalism and the socialist countries.'

Phil Sutcliffe, is chair of Jack Collins's NUM branch at Snowdown colliery and stated: 'Jack transferred to Snowdown in 1969.

'Within two years he had been elected our area's NEC delegate. I got to know him really well in the '72 and '74 strikes and in many ways it was to Jack that I owe my socialist and trade union beliefs. Jack was always a firm believer in the importance of educating younger miners and put a great stress on the international class struggle.

Socialist Action pays its own tribute on the death of Jack Collins. He was a totally committed fighter for the interests of the working class and an example to the entire labour movement in class solidarity. We send our condolences to his family, friends, and comrades in the NUM and throughout the labour movement.

Anderton goes too far

THE activities of Greater Manchester police chief James Anderton became too much even for the home office.

Following Anderton's declaration that he might be a chosen instrument of god he was called to the home office. What action, if any, home secretary Douglas Hurd intends to take is not clear.

But the grotesque utterances of Anderton should not be allowed to distract attention from his real crimes. Hurd and the press are only objecting because Anderton is now making a fool of himself and of the police force. But he has been backed consistently in his ultra-right wing policies throughout.

Anderton has built up a formidable record of harassment of the black community, Irish people, and lesbians and gays. The Manchester police equalled in brutality all others in the country during the miners strike. It was Anderton's force that was directly involved in the Stalker cover up.

The result has been a running war between Anderton and the Manchester city police monitoring committee which has tried to highlight the repressive actions of the Manchester police.

It is possible that the Home Office may now have to dismiss Anderton — who has repeatedly said he will not resign. But if he is dismissed it will be for the wrong reasons. If Anderton hadn't acted like an idiot he would have been left to attack the black community and strikers for as long as he wanted.

That, after all, is what the police are there for.

Black Section debates immigration

IMMIGRATION was among the issues discussed at the recent executive committee of Labour Party Black Section.

A paper by Sanjiv Vedri, brought up to date to take account of the imposition of the visa controls, was widely supported and referred to the national committee for broader discussion. Commissioned to explain Black Section's opposition to racist immigration laws, it will eventually be brought for discussion at the annual meeting of Black Section, which takes place in Nottingham on 14 March.

Education will be a major issue at the 1987 Black Section conference. Delegates will also be presented with a national committee paper on policing as well as one

In Brief

reviewing Black Section's parliamentary work.

Conference will consider constitutional changes to the structure of Black Section, including provision for a Parliamentary Black Section.

Further debate will also take place on how best Black Section can influence the Labour Party, both in terms of winning recognition for black members' right to self-organise and of policy for inclusion in Labour's manifesto.

Greenwich to select candidate

GREENWICH Labour Party will choose a new candidate to fight the by-election occasioned by the death of sitting MP Guy Barnett by the end of this month.

As the general election draws nearer, campaigning for this seat will be keenly watched. Already Fleet Street has moved into action.

A recent report in the *Sunday Express* warned of the 'petticoat revolution' taking place in Labour's ranks. A sexist article described 'three of the most influential ladies in British politics' who would have a 'decisive say' in who was selected. It referred to Claer Lloyd-Jones, former Greenwich councillor, and Pat Slattery and Eve Oldham, party chair and secretary respectively.

According to the *Sunday Express* the 'mighty dread which has gripped party strategists is that they might plump for a strident harridan who would terrify the voters and blight Labour's 1211 majority.' The article referred to Deidre Wood, local ILEA councillor who, together with her running mate, polled 50 per cent of the vote in the London education authority election.

This anti-woman, anti-left campaign was scotched a week later. An opinion poll reported in the *Observer* estimated that Labour would take 60 per cent of the vote and win with a 10,000 majority.

The local *Mercury* reported fellow ILEA councillor Dot Bigwood as saying of Deidre Wood: 'She has perfect credentials to fight as Labour's candidate. She is a working class woman with kids of her own. I think of myself as an ordinary person, and I got on with Deidre straight away.'

Since the opinion poll, the gutter press has had nothing further to say on the question of selecting a left wing woman. Clearly such a candidate would greatly aid Labour's election campaign.

AAM prepares for 1987

SIX HUNDRED delegates attended the Annual General Meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London on 10/11 January. They adopted a series of decisions to broaden the alliances of the Anti-Apartheid Movement — giving a high priority to work in the labour movement, calling a national youth conference, and for the first time adopted a major orientation to work against apartheid in and with the black communities in Britain.

The central objective of the movement was set as the campaign for 'comprehensive mandatory sanctions imposed and enforced through the United Nations Security Council'. It was agreed to call a mass demonstration and festival in 1987 and to approach the TUC and Labour Party to jointly promote it. The AGM continued the priority given to 'people's sanctions' and a number of resolutions calling for legally enforceable comprehensive sanctions by a British government were adopted. The AGM launched a major campaign against Shell along the lines of the successful campaign against Barclay's Bank.

The conference opened with greetings from the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and from the African National Congress (ANC). Aziz Pahad, representing the national executive of the ANC, explained that the ANC's slogan for 1987 is 'Advance to People's Power'. He reminded the AGM that 70 political trials are today taking place in South Africa and 16 freedom fighters are awaiting execution at the hands of the apartheid state.

By a two to one majority the AGM adopted proposals to rationalise the structure of the AAM in line with its growth over the past eighteen months. The proposals adopted included a delegate structure for the AGM to replace the present system whereby any member can attend and vote. This decision will greatly increase the democracy and also the effectiveness of the AAM. It will mean that the 'City of London Anti-Apartheid Group' (which is not part of the AAM) and the Revolutionary Communist Group will no longer be able to pack AGMs and waste enormous amounts of the movement's time and resources by systematically disrupting its proceedings — a large amount of this AGM's time was wasted by City AA's tactics of shouting down speakers, standing on chairs, chanting and so on.

This will be the last AGM where what is a tiny minority is able to dominate proceedings.

Unfortunately, a proposal to make the AGM the policy making body of the movement was ruled out of order by the standing orders committee on the grounds that 'they propose constitutional amendments which can only be done by the National Committee'. This peculiar situation where the AGM is not the sovereign body of the AAM will have to be corrected.

The AGM welcomed the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It called for material support to COSATU from the British trade union movement and for respect for its decision 'not to affiliate to any international trade union centre'. This was against the campaign of the TUC international department to force South African trade unions to af-

filiate to the British and American backed International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The AGM decided to support 'the call to the whole labour movement, in concert with the AAM and international trade union movement, to strengthen the boycott against South African and Namibian goods and to help to achieve a complete embargo upon all trade, commercial, financial, cultural and sporting activities, and to support by every means possible trade

By Redmond O'Neill

unionists who may be victimised for complying with this policy.' This resolution is particularly appropriate as the Dunne's anti-apartheid strikers in Ireland have just again been victimised by their employers.

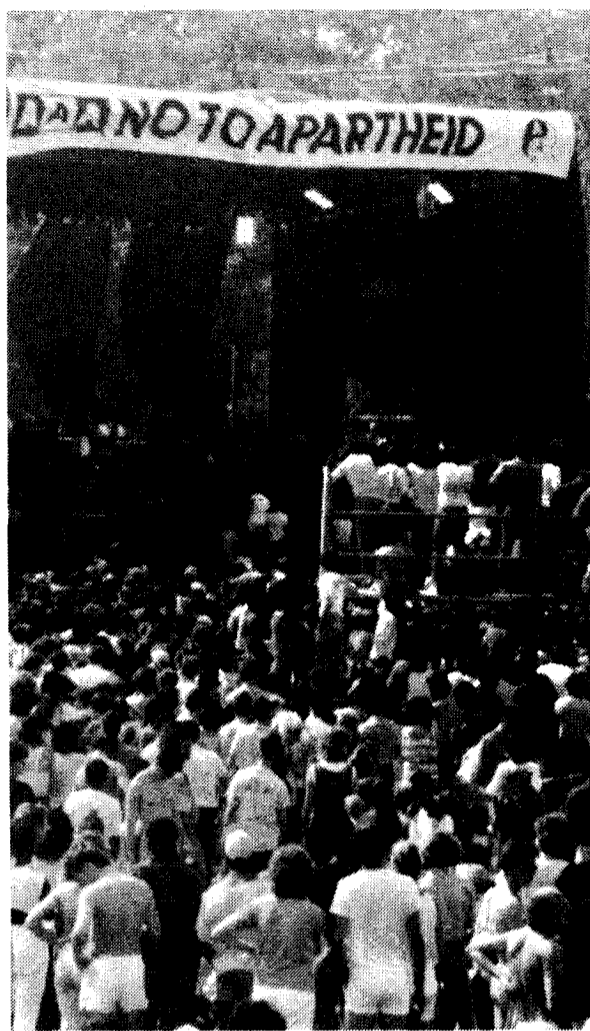
An amendment to 'support all union organisations campaigning against apartheid' was carried by the AGM.

Local anti-apartheid groups were urged to step up their links with the trade unions, including by setting up local trade union committees. A politically correct but badly worded resolution calling for closer work with the Labour Party was defeated on the National Committee's recommendation allegedly on the grounds that 'it would be wrong to align exclusively with the Labour Party.'

The adoption of a resolution prioritising work with the black communities was a major step forward for the AAM. The position adopted commits the AAM to support 'autonomous black organisations in their struggle against racism in Britain' and to 'adopt an anti-racist perspective to its work'. In moving the resolution, black NC member Dan Thea said 'We must be seen to stand on the side of those in this country fighting racism. The two and a half million black people in Britain

have a right to know that we support their struggles, that we don't turn a blind eye to racism here. At the same time we say that it is not enough for black people to fight their own battles here — they also have to fight the apartheid system of South Africa.'

This decision is vital. It lays the basis for the AAM to link up with the force in British society which has



the potential to be the vanguard of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The resolution on youth encouraged the formation of local youth and student structures, called a national youth conference, and decided that the next AGM would consider if the establishment of a youth section was appropriate.

A resolution applauding the leading role of women in the struggle, and urging local groups to appoint a women's organiser was agreed.

The AGM correctly condemned the letter in *The Scotsman* of July 1986 which appealed to 'all those nations contemplating withdrawing from the Commonwealth games to reconsider their position'. This letter had been signed by Bob Hughes MP, chair of the AAM and Brian Filing, Secretary of the Scottish AAM. The resolution pointed out that this letter 'gave support to those who seek to maintain links with South Africa' and it committed the AAM to 'sup-

Manchester Labour Party calls 'Mendis must stay' rally

ON 20 DECEMBER Viraj Mendis went into sanctuary in a Manchester church to avoid deportation to Sri Lanka. Despite this, David Waddington, the deportations minister, is pressing ahead. Viraj himself is being well-looked after by the church and his supporters, and now needs solidarity more than ever before.

In Sri Lanka, the government forces are systematically suppressing a whole population, the Tamils. Viraj Mendis, quite rightly, supports the Tamils and this has propelled the Tories to take the position they have.

However, the most important factor is that Viraj is one of 50 black people who are deported every week. He is being deported because he is black.

It is racism that is the key issue. When did you last hear of 50 white Americans being deported?

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has made the issues of deportation very clear. These have been expressed through all the national newspapers. The *Guardian* has carried at least five articles. It is now a national campaign against

the immigration laws which are racist.

The campaign has gained enormous support from all sections of the

By Gary Croft and Andy Smith

community in Manchester and, in particular, the black community. The labour movement has also responded well.

The last meeting of Manchester District Labour Party raised money for the campaign and, more importantly, agreed to call a public rally in support of Viraj. The Labour-controlled city council has consistently supported all anti-deportation campaigns including Viraj's. This decision by the district party has put 'meat' on that support at a crucial time.

port any future action taken by the Front Line States or Commonwealth countries in support of sanctions and against the attitude of the British governments.'

The main document outlining the campaigning plans for the movement in 1987, 'A New Offensive for Sanctions', was introduced by the National Committee, but only 10 minutes were allocated to introduce and discuss it. Furthermore it was not put to the vote and could not be amended by delegates.

This was a manoeuvre by the platform as this document is ambiguous on the strategy the movement should adopt — drawing a critical balance-sheet of the AAM's concentration of its resources on mass demonstrations over the past eighteen months.

It combines good action proposals with a central campaign around a 'Manifesto for Sanctions', which was not available to the AGM. This is oriented to candidates of all parties, including Liberals, SDP and Tories, in the general election with a view to gaining a 'parliamentary majority' for sanctions.

This orientation to 'progressive' members of the Alliance and Tories is undoubtedly in contradiction with the strategy the AAM needs to adopt. Such ambiguities will have to be thrashed out in the movement over the coming months.

Overall the AGM has adopted decisions which can extend the movement's social alliances, includes a series of major mass actions, and by making the movement more democratic and thereby defeating the City AA, will allow the real strategic choices, political decisions and differences in the movement to be thrashed out in action and debate in 1987.

Furthermore, speaking at that District Labour Party meeting Graham Stringer, leader of the council, called for the resubmission of a previous resolution to the NEC of the Labour Party, calling for the national executive to publicly support the Mendis campaign. This will push forward even more the national aspect of this deportation campaign.

Some 40 Labour MPs, local MP Bob Litherland, the Labour Party Black Section and many wards, constituencies and trade unions support the campaign. The Bishop of Manchester supports it and, more recently, so do Amnesty International.

From the point of view of Manchester, the position is very very clear: Viraj must stay, deportation no way!

● The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign can be contacted c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AJ, or by phoning 061-234 3168.

Attempt to block review of Labour women's organisation

WOMEN AND the labour movement suffered a severe setback last week when supporters of the right wing, *Militant*, and *Briefing* combined forces at the National Labour Women's Committee to sabotage the consultation and review of Labour's women's organisation agreed by last year's party conference. The mechanism involved was the National Labour Women's Committee (NLWC) proposing to make no recommendations to this year's Labour women's conference.

The background to this development was the vote by the 1986 Labour Party conference to hold a review of the women's organisation in the party. Given the historical weakness of Labour support among women, and after six years of campaigning by the women's conference, a review and radical change of the position of the Labour women's organisation was right at the top of the issues facing the labour movement.

Following the conference decision to establish the review, the AGM of the Labour Women's Action Committee discussed a complete set of proposals for restructuring the women's organisation based on principles adopted by successive Labour women's conferences. They constituted the first set of detailed proposals for reorganising the labour women's organisation — and so far the only comprehensive and detailed set of proposals in the party.

These proposals would have greatly strengthened the Labour women's organisation. They proposed introducing a weighted vote for the unions, based on their female membership, instead of the present across the board 20 delegates per union system.

This weighted vote would operate on the basis of parity with the women's sections and councils, ie a system of 50 per cent of the votes going to the unions and 50 per cent to the women's sections. This system of parity would be carried through in the elections to all the important committees of the women's organisation.

Most importantly WAC proposes that the elections to the women's division of the NEC should take place at the women's conference — with three places elected by the women's sections and three by the unions. This would mean increasing the number of women's places on the NEC from five to six.

These proposals of WAC give a concrete form to the demand that women, through the women's conference, elect the women's places on the NEC. They would build a powerful Labour women's organisation.

The position of women's conference, for the National Labour Women's Committee to be elected at national Labour women's conference rather than regionally, was reaffirmed by WAC together with the proposal that a system of election to it should be introduced that allows the representa-

tion of the trade unions.

Rather than discuss this comprehensive set of proposals for strengthening the women's organisation, the National Labour Women's Committee, on the proposal of Mandy Moore, decided that it should make no recommendations at this stage. This was despite the fact that Mandy Moore herself voted for these proposals at the LWAC AGM. These proposals were however opposed in their paper by *Labour Briefing*, who have been giving space to Mandy Moore's positions.

It was then reported to a specially convened meeting of the NEC women's committee, and representatives of a number of trade unions, that the National Labour Women's Committee had no recommendations to make at this point and they could all go home. This was to the delight and surprise of the right wing and Larry Whitty who had been anticipating a sharp fight with the women's organisation.

The proposal to put off the whole consultation had the explicit agreement and support of Margaret Crear and other *Militant* supporters on the NLWC. The quid pro quo was that Mandy Moore supported *Militant's* long held position against the election of the National Labour Women's Committee by the National Labour Women's Conference.

**By Jude Woodward,
Asst Secretary LWAC**

Militant strongly support the present method of election by regional conference. Due to the fact that these conferences are much less representative than national conference, are assured *Militant* two or three places on the committee in spite of *Militant's* opposition to nearly all the policies of the Labour women's organisation.

It is no surprise to find that *Militant* and the right wing combining to block the review of Labour's women's organisation. This bloc has existed at every women's conference for the last six years on all questions relating to strengthening the women's organisation. The position of *Militant* historically was to be opposed to the existence of the women's organisation, let alone for strengthening it. The opposition to the women's organisation itself was formally dropped only when *Militant* found that they could sometimes use it as a platform for their particular branch of backward politics.

Militant have never



WAC proposes three women's NEC places be elected by Labour women and three by trade unions — this will mean a campaign in the unions to ensure that women members, not predominantly male trade union executives, decide

changed their political positions — that women's self-organisation is 'divisive' of the working class. They are therefore against all forms of 'positive action' for women in any field. As with Black Sections, Ireland and many other questions, *Militant* have frequently acted as the stalking horse for the right wing at women's conference. It is not surprising that the Labour Women's Action Committee, alongside the Black Section, now refuse to consider *Militant* as part of the political left wing of the labour movement at all.

While opposing witch hunts as a method of dealing with their backward anti-women, and anti-black politics, they should not be graced with the political support of any section of the real left. The left has to choose between support for the black community and women on one side or support for *Militant* on the other. The two are incompatible.

However what was surprising was to find Mandy Moore, an erstwhile supporter of the Labour Women's Action Committee, also involving herself in this bloc. The argument that she used to justify putting off this long-awaited review of the women's organisation, was that it had to be a long-drawn out process in order to ensure that rank and file trade union women were consulted, and because the Labour Women's Committee would need at least three full meetings to consider its recommendations.

These arguments are a dangerous fraud. Firstly, time is no guarantee that rank and file trade union women are consulted. The first step to get this in train is for the Labour Women's Organisation to circulate its recommendations. Then it will be down to union and Labour Party activists to fight for a full discussion. It is impossible to fight for a discussion about nothing! The deci-

sion of the National Labour Women's Committee ensured WAC's proposals would not be circulated in official form.

Secondly it is disgraceful to imply that the National Labour Women's Committee will need months to consider its recommendations. The national Labour women's conference has policy on all the major issues being dealt with in the review — from the election of the National Labour Women's Committee, through to the election of the NEC women's division. These have been women's conference policy for six years.

Women's conference has also had policy for three years in favour of the introduction of a weighted vote for the unions — something that Mandy Moore has always been hostile to, but which until now *Labour Briefing* has supported.

The only assumption that can be made is that Mandy Moore needs several months to develop up her arguments as to why the recommendations of women's conference should be ignored. She has already proposed ignoring women's conference on the election of the national labour women's committee. This position aided the right wing.

The other sisters on the NLWC who were convinced by Mandy's arguments at the January meeting should think again before the February meeting.

The failure of the NLWC to make recommendations immediately leaves the way open for two equally disastrous eventualities. One is that the NEC and party officers take the opportunity to shelve the whole issue. Undoubtedly the proposals for a review of the women's organisation only went through party conference to avoid a damaging row with women — more than half Labour's potential voters — right on the eve of a general election.

The NLWC has hand-

ed them the perfect opportunity to get off the hook. Women's conference itself may be cancelled due to the election, and then women will have lost all mechanisms for bringing pressure to bear on the party leadership.

Alternatively the delaying of the NLWC could give APEX and the rest of the right the ideal opportunity to bring in their proposal for a weighted vote for the unions, without any of the other changes that women have been demanding. Then we could find that we have not only lost the best opportunity that women have had to win some real positive change, but that we are in a worse position than before in order to fight for it.

Militant and the right wing are united against this review process precisely because they are *against* introducing changes to strengthen the women's organisation. Mandy Moore has no serious proposals to put forward. But she found herself in a bloc with the right wing and *Militant*.

The Labour Women's Action Committee, on the basis of the new principles adopted by successive women's conferences, has now put forward a set of detailed proposals for restructuring and strengthening the women's organisation. The National Labour Women's Committee should get these proposals out to the women in the party and encourage a discussion, debate and campaign around them, not play the game of the right by trying to block this off.

Mandy Moore, *Militant* and the right wing set back the position of the women in the labour movement at the last meeting of the National Labour Women's Committee. Women in the party will now have to campaign to call them to order and get on with the review of the women's organisation — fighting for the proposals WAC has put forward.

Ireland Unfree

Crisis in the 26 Counties

THE COALITION government led by Garret FitzGerald broke up this week after the minority Labour Party refused to support the budget proposals of the chief government party, Fine Gael. An election is most likely for 19 February. The election will solve nothing of the country's deep-seated problems which are the product of its domination by British and US imperialism.

More than 30 per cent of the 3.54 million who live in the 26 Counties are under 25 and school-leavers job prospects are bleak. The unemployment rate stands at nearly a quarter of a million, or about 18 per cent.

By Jon Silberman

Such statistics explain why emigration is so high. According to official figures, 31,000 people emigrated in the year up to April 1986 — though this figure is widely regarded as being an underestimate.

All the indicators point to a crisis-ridden economy which suffers the same problems as other semi-colonial countries dominated by imperialism — in particular a huge foreign debt.

In absolute terms, the 26 Counties numbers 27 in the league table of debtor countries, with a debt of more than \$10 billion. Set against the country's small population, the 26 Counties has a per capita debt of nearly \$3 million. Only three countries have a higher per capita debt.

The cost of servicing the debt is enormous. In 1985, £1.7 billion was charged to taxation for the purposes of debt servicing, amounting to over 30 per cent of total tax and to 12.8 per cent of gross national product. Not surprisingly, the budget deficit is huge and getting worse every year — £1.5 billion last year.

The FitzGerald government had promised to solve the deficit but has presided over a continued deterioration in absolute terms. On the other hand, criticism by opposition leader, Charles Haughey of Fianna Fail is entirely opportunist. In percentage terms, the crisis is equivalent to when he was last prime minister in 1982.

Two conditions are indispensable for tackling the economic crisis. First, a common front with other debtor countries to abrogate their debts — a policy advocated for all semi-colonial countries by Cuba's Fidel Castro.

Second, the ending of partition and the establishment of real national independence. Without real national independence the conquest of Ireland's resources and economy by the Irish people is impossible. And the establishment of a genuinely independent Irish republic means the complete withdrawal of Britain from the north.

Neither of the two major parties in Dublin's parliament, Leinster House, favour such a policy. It was the FitzGerald government that signed the so-called Anglo-Irish 'Hillsborough accord' and Fianna Fail has announced in advance that it does not intend to make Hillsborough an election issue.

Moreover, both parties surrendered Irish neutrality during the Leinster House debate last month on the European Single Act. The passing of this act removes the right of veto from member countries of the EEC, tying the Dublin government even closer to the imperialist powers and to their military alliance, NATO. Gerry Adams described the Act as the 'final death blow to the limited political and economic sovereignty of the 26 Counties'.

Indeed the only party which defends a genuinely anti-imperialist policy is Sinn Fein. This will be the first election in which Sinn Fein will be contesting Leinster House seats after having ended their abstentionist policy as regards taking seats in the Dublin parliament.

When Sinn Fein adopted the new policy at their last national conference, their president Gerry Adams said that it would be the election after next that the new policy would be really put to the test, and that electoral gains were unlikely this time round.

But major parties in Leinster House are taking no chances. Haughey called for unity against Sinn Fein. He tried in vain to stop Sinn Fein registering as a political party in time for the election.

Despite this the government intends to prevent Sinn Fein access to radio and TV under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. But the pressure to grant Sinn Fein this elementary democratic right is mounting and Fianna Fail has been forced to agree to Sinn Fein having broadcasting access.

Class, race and

THE RELATION between the demands of women, black people and the labour movement is at the centre of socialist debate in Britain today. Most campaigns in the Labour Party are today fighting defensive battles. But the Labour Party Black Section and Labour Women's Action Committee continue to be on the offensive and increasing their support and weight. In parallel with this development in the Labour Party women's and black organisation in the unions is continuing to grow.

However there is still an ambiguity in the way that sections of the left continues to discuss the fight against racism and sexism and support for the demands of women and black people. 'Class', 'race' and 'gender' are often discussed as though they were *parallel* and not inextricably inter-related. This allows a false debate to be set up where 'class issues' and 'issues of race and gender' are counterposed — with the soft left and 'Eurocommunists' then attempting to use this counterposition to claim to support demands of women and black people while not taking up 'classical' class questions such as unemployment or wages, and the right wing, and the *Militant* and *Morning Star*, using a phoney 'class' rhetoric to attempt to justify not taking up the specific demands of women and the black community.

The aim of this article is, therefore, not to analyse the specific oppression of women and black people, which naturally can only be done by women and black people themselves, but to look at certain ways in which the positions of women and black people are intertwined with class in its most strict sense — and to show that this intertwining has become increasingly close. As we will see the particular acuteness of the struggle of women and black people in the last decade and a half, and the weight of these issues within the labour movement at the present time, has not arisen because of developments *external* to class but on the contrary is totally integrated with class shifts in society.

IN ORDER to consider the relation of class, race and gender let us consider how their intertwining has shifted since World War II — which in turn means considering the way in which capital, as it has expanded, has shaped the class relations of society.

If we go back to the nineteenth century then statistics for the number of employees, the nearest approximation we can get to the working class, do not exist. However the social and class processes taking place as capitalism expanded are still easy to trace. Figures for the total working population, that is including the self-employed and employers as well as workers, do exist. As, prior to the Thatcher period, there was a steady tendency for the number of self-employed and employers to decrease as a proportion of the labour force, then using figures for the total working population shows the process of development of the working class — simply understating the degree of proletarianisation of society.

Table 1 shows the development of the total employed population from the middle of the nineteenth century to date. The process it shows is clear. From the middle of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II every period of capitalist expansion showed the same pattern. As capital expanded it created an enlarged labour force. In the entire century from 1851 to 1951 this demand for an increased labour force was met overwhelmingly by white men. Of the 13.3 million increase in the workforce between 1851 and 1951 over 9 million, that is 68 per cent, represented an increase in the number of white men in the workforce.

This structure of new white male labour entering the workforce exactly paralleled the existing division within the working class. Over the entire century from 1851 to 1951 the structure of the workforce stayed almost constant at 69 per cent white males and 31 per cent white women. Prior to World War II there was no substantial black section of the working class in Britain. Capital reproduced this existing sexual and racial composition of the working class. It remained a working class in which white men outnumbered others by more than two to one.

From the point of view of socialism, or even elementary human justice, a labour movement mainly oriented to taking up the demands of white male workers was of course an abomination. But at least from a crude organisational point of view it could sustain itself — that is it would produce increasing

numbers of trade unionists and an increasing number of votes for Labour. It was a policy that had nothing to do with socialism, but at least it did orient itself in a crude sense to some 70 per cent of the working class — although not to the wider working class community.

As may be seen, capitalist expansion after World War II and the slump which followed in the 1970s and 1980s, was totally different from anything that preceded it. The period after World War II forms a radical watershed in the history of the working class under capitalism.

The sexual structuring within the working class, in short, is clear. Not all white male workers are in the best paid and most privileged sections of the working class. Nevertheless virtually the entire best paid and most privileged section of the working class is made up of white males. Virtually *no* women workers are part of these best paid and most privileged groups. Indeed more than 60 per cent of all women workers are in clerical jobs, catering and cleaning, or non electrical or metal manufacturing.

Turning to the black community and employment the chief features are clear. The oppression of the black community in the workforce is different to that of women in a number of important respects — although the sexual structure of employment is replicated within the black community itself. The relation of these structures of oppression is that black men are more oppressed than white men and black women more than white women. The entire black community is pushed 'below' the white community by the institutionalised racism of society.

The first feature of the black community is its geographical concentration. The proportion of women in employment is spread almost evenly across all regions of the country — the highest proportion of women employees, 45 per cent, is in North West England and the lowest, 43 per cent, is in East Anglia. In contrast to the relatively even spread of women in work the proportion of the workforce which is black ranges from under 1 per cent in Scotland and the North of England, and only marginally over 1 per cent in Wales, to 6 per cent in the West Midlands and 14 per cent in London. Over 46 per cent of the entire black workforce is in London, and more than 80 per cent is in London, the South East and the Midlands.

This differentiation — with an almost totally white working class in the North and North East, Scotland and Wales, and a major black workforce in the North West, Midlands and, above all,



London — is undoubtedly a major problem in establishing communication between different sections of militants in the labour movement. It points to the urgent necessity of the white working class in the north creating links with the black working class community in London — and the black community in London establishing principled links with the white working class in the north. The pivotal role that can be played in this by a link up between the Black Section, the NUM and Campaign Group is obvious.

The second feature of the black community, and a grotesque sign of the institutionalised racism of British society, is unemployment. The black community suffers a level of unemployment which is not even remotely suffered by any section of the white population. Taking the average of the last three years the average level of unemployment among whites was 11 per cent and among the black community it was 20 per cent. In the North West, the area of highest joblessness, unemployment among whites was 13 per cent, for West Indians 24 per cent and for Asians 32 per cent.

For those in work, the black community is exceptionally concentrated in manufacturing industry. Both black men and black women are significantly higher

proportions of those in manufacturing industry than their white equivalents — this particularly affects black women who are almost twice as likely to be in manufacturing jobs as white women. The black population is also significantly more concentrated in hotels and catering, in education, and in catering and cleaning than the white population. It is almost totally excluded from energy and water supply and agriculture.

The black population, in short, is concentrated in manufacturing, in the least highly paid and privileged service sectors, and has a level of unemployment not matched by any sector of the white working class. Institutionalised racism oppresses the black working class at every level.

To complete the picture we may turn to trade apprenticeships as an indication of the division between skilled and unskilled workers. The pattern is clear. Of white male workers 1,510,000, that is 21 per cent, have served an apprenticeship. Of black male workers only 9 per cent (40,000) have served an apprenticeship. Of white women 4 per cent, (298,000) have served an apprenticeship. Of black women only 1 per cent, that is 4,000, have done so. In short 82 per cent of workers who have served apprenticeships are

white males — showing the white male domination of the skilled working class.

The structural pattern is therefore clear. Men, in particular white men, are heavily concentrated in management, administration, and the best paid manufacturing sector — as well as in sectors such as energy and water supply, telecommunications, and construction. White male workers are in management and in large sectors of the best paid and most privileged sections of the working class — the bastions of the hard right of the labour movement. The women and black workers who have been sucked into the working class since World War II have been brought into the worst paid and least privileged jobs.

During the period of post war boom from 1951-1873 the number of white men in the labour force did not increase, as in previous periods of capitalist expansion, but actually declined marginally. It then fell rapidly when recession set in after 1973 and mass unemployment began to rise. For the first time in history instead of the expansion of capital being accompanied by an increase in the number of white men in the labour force the entire expansion of the workforce after 1951 was accounted for by bringing women and black people into work. For the first

gender

to 31 per cent. The trade unions became essentially dependent on women and black people for maintaining or expanding their membership. Between 1948 and 1981 the number of white male workers in trade unions increased by only 500,000. But the number of women and black male workers in trade unions increased by 2,400,000. Under the Thatcher recession the proportion of trade union members who are white males has declined further.

The pattern of transformation becomes still clearer if the internal structure of the working class is considered. Table 3 shows the employment structure by type of occupation. Table 4 shows the same structure by industry. The differences revealed are clear and show the underlying social base of many of the current divisions in the labour movement.

The single largest group of male workers is in manufacturing. However within manufacturing there is a sharp distinction between metal and electrical manufacturing — which is virtually all male and above all white male — and other sectors of manufacturing. Men make up 96 per cent of the workforce in electrical and metal manufacturing — white men make up 92 per cent of the workforce in these industries. The white male predominance in unions such as the AEU and ISTC, which dominate this sector, is evident. However in other sectors of manufacturing white male workers make up only 63 per cent of the workforce. This distinction within manufacturing must be borne in mind when considering the structure of the working class.

After manufacturing by far the largest concentration of white male workers is in management and administration. Management and administration account for 1 in 5 men in the labour force — compared to less than 1 in 10 women. The other major concentrations of white male workers are in construction, where 92 per cent of the workforce are white males, and transport and communication — where white males account for 94 per cent of the workforce.

In the service sector the highest proportion of white male workers are in the relatively prestigious scientific, artistic, and related sector — where white males constitute 83 per cent of the workforce. Turning to the industry classification the other major feature is the complete domination of white men in energy and water supply — with 85 per cent of workers in these industries being white males.

The pattern of white male employment is therefore clear. White men are completely dominant in management and administration, science and arts, metal and electrical engineering, mining and construction, transport, and energy and water supply — with none of these industries having less than 70 per cent white male workers.

The implications in the labour movement of these facts are evident. These sectors are precisely those of unions such as the AEU, EETPU, ISTC, NCU. The 'hard right' of the labour movement has its base in the white male dominated sectors. The skilled manual worker sector, concentrated in these industries also showed the largest pro-Tory swing of any social group in the 1979 and 1983 elections. These sectors also undoubtedly include, as a small minority, unions such as the NUM, and the NUR, but the overwhelming bulk of the hard right of the labour movement is based in industries dominated by white male workers.

If we turn to women the situation is completely different. As can be seen in Table 3 women are overwhelmingly concentrated in catering and cleaning, clerical jobs, education, retailing, and in manufacturing outside the metal and electrical industries. Women are concentrated in the worst paid service jobs and in the least well paid sectors of

manufacturing.

These facts show the dialectic between class, race and gender — and just how ridiculous it is to separate class issues from 'race' and 'gender' instead of showing how they are intertwined. They also show the dynamic taking place in the working class today — the relation between class, race and gender.

As noted, the bastions of the hard right are in the white male sections of the working class — large areas of which are dominated by the AEU, EETPU, ISTC, EMA, NCU and similar unions. The enormous concentration of women workers and in some cases black workers, in unions such as the CPSA, NALGO, NUT and NUPE helps to explain the continuing radicalisation in them. It is in these types of unions that the great mass of the oppressed female and black workforce created since World War II is concentrated.

There figures also make clear how decisive was the role played by the NUM and its leadership in the strike of 1984-85. It was not simply the tremendous struggle waged by the NUM itself, but that this was a 'classical', largely white male dominated, industrial union which oriented towards not simply the working class as a whole but in particular towards women — and a union which began to take up the demands of the black community. In short the NUM began to forge precisely the social alliances which are necessary to create the unity of the entire working class. It was exactly the reverse dynamic to that, of the AEU, EETPU and similar unions which orient away from the demands of the most oppressed sections of the working class, that is women and the black community, and towards the narrow concerns of the relatively privileged white male sections of the working class.

Finally this relationship helps explain some of the developments taking place in unions such as the GMBATU and USDAW. These were unions which were traditional bastions of the hard right but which have begun to move towards the centre of the Labour Party — and have, in particular, begun to form alliances with NUPE. Unions such as the GMBATU and USDAW are today totally dependent for maintaining their membership on women and black workers — with a consequent effect in shifting their policies. The fact that the TGWU has also launched a campaign to recruit part time workers who are overwhelmingly women, may also have very interesting consequences for that union.

The conclusions are clear. First, as stated, it is ridiculous to separate, and not examine the interconnection, of 'class', 'race' and 'gender'. The reason for the dynamism of the demands of women and black people within the labour movement, and the fact that campaigns such as WAC and the Black Section are on the offensive, is evident. It is not a 'non-class' development but one precisely moulded by the massive entry of women and black people into the working class since World War II. Women and black people today are the most forward moving force in the working class and the labour movement.

Finally, and this is the most fundamental, there can be no class policy today, let alone one which makes the other alliances necessary for the working class, which does not have as an integral and central feature the demands of women and black people. The demands of women and black people are a product of a class system of domination which goes far beyond the workplace — and in the case of women predated even capitalism itself. But the demands of women and the black community are also precisely the demands of the most oppressed sections of the working class itself.

Those who refuse to take up the demands of women and black people are not pursuing a class policy but one based on the privileged sections of the working class — a policy of the labour aristocracy.

THE WORKING CLASS ... in figures

Table 1

Gender and racial composition of the employed working population 1851-1984

	1851	1871	1891	1911	1951	1973	1984
				(millions)			
White Men	6.5	8.2	10.1	12.9	15.6	15.4	13.2
Black Men	0	0	0	0	0	.4	.5
Women	2.8	3.6	4.5	5.4	7.0	9.2	9.4
				(%)			
White Men	69	69	69	70	69	62	57
Black Men	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Women	31	31	31	30	31	37	41

Table 2

Changes in the employed working population 1851-1984

	1851-1871	1871-1891	1891-1911	1911-1951	1951-1973	1951-1984	Total 1851-1951	Total 1951-1984
White men	2.7	1.9	2.8	2.7	-0.2	-2.4	9.1	-2.4
Black men	0	0	0	0	.4	.5	0	.5
Total black	0	0	0	0	.6	.8	0	.8
Women	.8	.9	.9	1.6	2.2	2.4	4.2	2.4
	% of change in workforce accounted for by different groups (%)							
White men	77	68	76	63	-8	-83	68	-83
Black men	0	0	0	0	17	17	0	17
Total black	0	0	0	0	25	28	0	28
Women	23	32	24	37	92	83	32	83

Table 3

Sexual and racial structure of jobs in Britain (1984)

	(thousands)			(% of total)		
	White men	Black men	Women	% white men	% black men	% women
Management & Admin	2,548	102	808	74	3	23
Metal & Electrical manuf	2,180	93	97	92	4	4
Other manufacturing	1,520	78	835	63	5	34
Transport	1,205	36	68	92	3	5
Science & Arts	1,062	27	194	83	2	15
Clerical	851	33	2,820	23	1	76
Construction & Mining	818	14	5	98	2	1
Education	659	34	1,136	33	1	66
Selling & Retailing	587	19	945	38	1	61
Catering & Cleaning	485	41	2,227	18	2	81
Total ¹	13,009	502	9,517	56	2	42
Employees ¹	11,111	394	8,565	55	2	43

1. Includes miscellaneous

Table 4

Sexual and racial structure of employment in industry in Britain (1984)

	(thousands)			(% of total)		
	White men	Black men	Women	% white men	% black men	% women
Other services	2,354	73	3,758	38	1	61
Distrib., Hotels, Catering	1,997	132	2,427	43	3	54
Engineering & Metal	1,902	84	529	76	3	21
Construction	1,570	31	146	90	2	8
Other manufacturing	1,350	62	907	58	3	39
Transport & comm.	1,088	51	275	77	4	19
Finance	1,002	27	910	52	1	47
Mining & Ores	602	16	184	75	2	23
Energy & Water Supply	582	6	103	84	1	15
Total ¹	13,009	502	9,517	56	2	42
Employees ¹	11,111	394	8,565	55	2	43

Table 5

Distribution of the black working class

	% of the total black working population	% of the total working population which is black
North/North East England	1	1
Scotland	2	1
Wales	2	1
East Anglia	2	1
South West	2	1
South East outside London	12	2
Yorkshire	6	3
North West	8	3
East Midlands	7	4
West Midlands	15	6
London	46	14
Britain	-	4

Source: Calculated from *British Labour Statistics, Historical Abstract 1886-1968*, HMSO, 1971 p195; Matthews, Feinstein and Odling-Smee, *British Economic Growth 1856-1973*, p563; *Employment Gazette, Historical Supplement no. 1*, *Employment Gazette* April 1985; Barber, 'Ethnic Origin and Economic Status' in *Employment Gazette*, December 1985.

IN THE last month a dramatic political crisis has broken out in China. For 10 years the Chinese Communist Party leadership pursued a policy of opening up the Chinese economy to market forces. In December 1986 tens of thousands of students demonstrated in China demanding that the political processes accompanying these changes go further. This week, following a clamp down on the demonstrations, the Communist Party general secretary Hu Yaobang was dismissed. In a parallel process in the USSR a series of economic and political reforms have been introduced under Gorbachev. These again involve greater weight for market mechanisms and a degree of political 'liberalisation' which was well publicised in the release of Andrei Sakharov from internal exile. JAMES BAILEY looks at the background to the unfolding events in the USSR and China.

The best theoretical guide to understanding the events unfolding in China and the USSR still remains Leon Trotsky. Trotsky's writings in the 1920s and 1930s analysing the development of the Soviet Union have never been equalled. The basic theoretical framework he outlined at that time applies equally well to China — although the Chinese revolution which triumphed in 1949 was victorious in a country at a far lower level of economic development than Russia in 1917.

Trotsky pointed out that the USSR took the road of socialist revolution not because it was the most developed country in Europe, on the contrary it was the most backward, but because that was the only way the country could be saved from ruin. As he wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed*: 'Russia took the road of proletarian revolution, not because her economy was the first to become ripe for socialist change, but because she could not develop further on a capitalist basis. Socialisation of the means of production had become a necessary condition for bringing the country out of barbarism.'

It was the fact that only the overthrow of capitalism had saved Russia from ruin which was both one of the reasons it was vital to defend the USSR and also created tremendous pressures against the restoration of capitalism even under a regime as barbaric as Stalin's: 'The fall of the present bureaucratic dictatorship, if it were not replaced by a new socialist power, would ... mean a return to capitalist relations with a catastrophic decline of industry and culture.' When catastrophe and an attempt to restore capitalism did arrive, in the form of the Nazi armies, it was crushed by the Soviet working class in the the greatest war in history.

But despite the objective pressures which defended the planned Soviet economy from capitalist restoration, tremendous pressures from the international capitalist economy continuously operate on it. As Trotsky put it in *The Third International After Lenin*: 'The seizure of power by the proletariat has not at all excluded the Soviet republic from the system of the international division of labour created by capitalism.' Lenin in his report to the eleventh congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1921 equally spoke of: 'the international market to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected, and from which we cannot isolate ourselves.'

The economy of the Soviet Union, or any country which has overthrown capitalism is constantly subject of the remorseless economic pressure of the imperialist states. As Trotsky wrote in *The Third International After Lenin* in 1928: 'it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest menace to the Soviet economy. And a Ford tractor is just as dangerous as a Creusot gun, with the sole difference that while the gun can function only from time to time, the tractor brings its pressure to bear upon us constantly. Besides the tractor knows that a gun stands behind it as a last resort.' The tremendous

The crisis of socialism in one country



Gorbachev



Deng

pressure on the Soviet economy to reform under Gorbachev, to meet the US lead in electronics, high technology, and military advances shows just how constantly the weight of the capitalist world economy bears down on the USSR.

In order to understand the link between this external economic pressure and the internal situation in the USSR or China it is necessary to grasp the nature of these economies after they had overthrown capitalism. Both China and Russia were economically backward countries — China qualitatively more underdeveloped even than Russia in 1917. A relatively small capitalist industrial sector coexisted with a mass of the population in an agriculture where pre-capitalist relations of production still existed.

In fact the revolution had a dual economic character. The working class took state power and in industry expropriated capitalism. But in agriculture the working class power opened up the way to unfettered commodity relations of production for the first time by destroying remnants of serfdom, landlordism, the system of money lending, and all remnants of pre-capitalist systems of production. If the revolution in industry was a socialist revolution then, from an economic point of view, the revolution in the countryside was a thorough going capitalist revolution.

Lenin pointed out that the proletarian state which came to power in Russia in November 1917 carried out the most thoroughgoing capitalist revolution in history on the land. The proletarian state power created socialised post-capitalist relations in industry and relations of petty-commodity production on the land — the revolutions in both Russia and China saw a tremendous 'levelling' process among the peasantry with landless peasants gaining land and small capitalists losing land.

But these two systems of production have completely different dynamics. The increasingly planned economic system operating in industry leads to greater and greater socialisation of production. But the commodity relations existing in agriculture would, if left to themselves, produce capitalism — with the process of social differentiation, employment of labour by others, individualisation of produc-

tion, unemployment, and all the other features which accompany capitalism. Allowing the development of market forces necessarily creates on the one side a poor peasantry and on the other a rich, small capitalist, peasantry. The development of market forces in any other sector, for example in trading, has exactly the same types of effects.

The dilemmas that face the working class in such a situation are evident. It is impossible to 'jump over' the stage of the development of commodity relations in agriculture. Forced collectivisation, the peasant 'communes' in China, and all similar attempts to jump over the development of petty-commodity production in agriculture inevitably end in disaster — as indeed they also do in capitalist countries which have attempted it such as Mozambique. Soviet agriculture has still not recovered 50 years later from Stalin's forced collectivisation of the peasants in 1928-33. The peasant communes introduced in China by Mao-Tse Tung led to a 20 year near stagnation in Chinese agriculture. In contrast the restoration of market mechanisms in China after 1976, introduced by Deng Xiaoping, led to more than a 50 per cent increase in agricultural production in five years.

However, if the working class does not attempt to check the development of commodity market production then the consequences are inevitable. Social differentiation and unemployment inevitably follow. Furthermore these inevitably spread out of agriculture as the system of industry cannot be separated from that of the countryside — as each provides the inputs and outputs for the other. Either, the planned economy of industry is widened into successive sections of agriculture, or the market system of agriculture spreads into industry — and as the market spreads into industry it produces unemployment, social differentiation, and the atomisation of the working class.

Furthermore the internal economic system of the country cannot be completely separated from the international economy — although a monopoly of foreign trade gives a powerful mechanism to reduce the interaction to a minimum. The market sector in the USSR or China inevitably attempts to link up with the international market of capitalism.

Purely internally, in one country, there is no way to fully overcome these

contradictions — although a series of policies can be adopted to lessen them. It is only on the international terrain, through the increase in the number of countries, and in particular economically advanced countries, in which capitalism has been overthrown that these economic contradictions can be overcome. As Trotsky put it: 'The way out of those contradictions which will befall the proletarian dictatorship ... will be found on the arena of world revolution.'

This is not the lunatic, and ultra-left, view that nothing can be done in a single country until capitalism is overthrown internationally, but it provides the framework in which economic policy must be approached. Above all internal economic policy must be directed at improving and strengthening the position of the working class. As the *Platform of the Left Opposition* written by Trotsky put it in 1927: 'The decisive factor in appraising the movement of our country forward along the road of socialist construction, must be the growth of our productive forces and the dominance of the socialist elements over the capitalist — together with the improvement of all the conditions of existence of the working class. This improvement ought to be evident in the material sphere (numbers of workers employed in industry, level of real wages, character of the workers' budget, housing conditions, medical aid etc) in the political sphere (party, trade unions, soviets, communist youth organisations), and finally in the political sphere (schools, books, newspapers, theatres).'

Strengthening the position of the working class internally, placing this in the framework of extending the revolutionary development internationally, is the basis of policy when the working class has come to power.

Since 1924, however, a diametrically opposite policy has been applied by first the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party under Stalin and then by the Chinese Communist Party. This is the policy of 'socialism in one country' — the utopian and reactionary theory that socialism can be constructed within the boundaries of a single state, whether it be the USSR or China.

The consequence of that policy is to precisely break the only way out whereby the internal economic contradictions of a country such as the

USSR or China can be solved. Stalin sought to block socialist revolution in Western Europe before and after World War II. Then the Chinese Communist Party, in particular during the latter part of Mao Tse-Tung's life and under Deng Xiaoping, turned to coexistence both with the United States and the surrounding Asian capitalist states.

The inevitable consequence of this is a bureaucratic oscillation of the Soviet and Chinese leaderships between two courses. The first policy is to attempt to maintain their bureaucratic grip by a voluntaristic hyper-centralisation of the economy. This both atomises the working class and suppresses the peasantry. It was the policy developed by Stalin from 1928 onwards and pursued by Mao, under both the 'Great Leap Forward' of 1958 and from the mid-1960s to the end of the 'Great Cultural Revolution'. The result is stagnation in agriculture, where free commodity production is suppressed, and low quality of production in the voluntaristically expanded industry.

The other course is precisely to adapt to the market commodity mechanisms in agriculture — the policy theoretically advocated in the 1920s in Russia by Bukharin and applied practically in China since 1976 by Deng Xiaoping. This, logically and necessarily, is accompanied by moving closer to the market, capitalist, system internationally — which also means to greater coexistence with international capital. A more 'Bukharinite' shift towards market mechanisms internally, and closer 'coexistence' with capital internationally, is the rationale behind the policies pursued by both Deng and Gorbachev.

The contradictions of this course are also clear. In the USSR, which is now a country dominated by large scale industry, the effect of market mechanisms will be to introduce increasing wage differentials, social differentiation, and the beginnings of unemployment. However given the absolute dominance of the Soviet economy by the tremendous weight of the working class these shifts are likely to be limited in their effects. In China however, with a far smaller working class surrounded by a vastly larger peasantry, the consequences can be economic chaos. These policies also tend to atomise and break up the working class.

In fact the consequences of Deng's policies already began to be felt at the end of last year. Planned price increases of consumer goods for the working class had to be postponed due to widespread protests. Attempts to introduce laws allowing bankruptcy of firms, and therefore sacking of workers, have been resisted. Extension of the plans to spread the changes carried out in agriculture into industry have been shelved in a number of cases.

But in reality both these policies — that of hyper centralisation and that of adapting to the market mechanisms — are a blind alley. Both reduce the political weight and homogeneity of the working class — the first through sheer repression and the second through the atomisation produced by market pressures.

The only way out is the one that Trotsky outlined 60 years ago — to find the solution to these contradictions in the international expansion of the revolution and, internally, directing economic policy to increasing the weight and cohesion of the working class in society. That policy was denounced at the time as 'unrealistic'. History is now judging whether it was Trotsky or Stalin and Mao's policy of 'socialism in one country' which was realistic.

As Trotsky noted the theory of socialism in one country was the only view which to its foundations was opposed at every point to his own theory of permanent revolution. As he wrote: 'The question of the programme is in turn inseparable from the question of two mutually exclusive theories: the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of socialism in one country.' All theories apart from these two are simply forms of eclecticism. That was true 60 years ago when Trotsky wrote those words. It remains so today.

Those who fail to understand why should look at what is unfolding in China and the USSR.

South Africa's NUM

THIS IS the second part of an interview with South African NUM regional organiser, **MANNE DIPICO**. In the first part published in our last issue, Manne Dipico detailed the appalling conditions in South Africa's mines. In this extract, he explains how the NUM has grown and fought back.

The NUM was formed in 1982 following the massive growth of unions in the '70s. There has been an earlier attempt to establish a mineworkers' union — at the time if the growth of SACTU in the 1950s — led by JB Marks and others. But it was crushed.

In the '70s the union federation FOSATU tried to organise the mineworkers but failed.

In 1980 the CUSA (Congress of Unions of South Africa) congress passed a resolution to the effect that when the miners are not organised it weakens the entire working class movement. At that time Cyril Ramaphosa was working in the legal unit of CUSA so they elected him to look into the building of a miners union.

The first NUM congress was in 1982 by which time there were already 10,000 workers involved. From that time it moved very fast indeed. We decided to specialise on the issue of health and safety, on the issue of education, on the question of living standards and working conditions.

We started a health and safety department of the union and worked with other organisations — trying to get into the mines to inspect them, investigate accidents (both those reported and ones not reported). We wrote the pamphlet *A Thousand Ways to Die*. It was the workers themselves who revealed the information in the pamphlet, it wasn't the product of some 'expert'. The very week the pamphlet was launched the Kinross disaster happened (in which 177 miners were killed). This tragic coincidence was such clear proof what we are saying.

Organising our union is very difficult, especially in the gold and coal mines. The miners are locked in the compounds. The only effective strategy is one that is based on the miners organising themselves. When the mineworkers at a particular mine indicate that they want to join the union the organiser is sent to carry through the recruitment.

We don't let it out that we're coming, to prevent management intimidation of the workers. If they catch you at this early stage, they can arrest you for trespass, turn you over to the police who will give you a good hiding and tell you not to come to that area again.

Once inside we have the meeting with the most enlightened workers. We inform them how to go about recruiting — from room to room, from area to area where people work. It's for them to recruit, not us. Workers have got more faith in their workmates rather than us as strangers.

Once a majority have signed up then we can approach management, seeking a date for access so that we can have meetings with all the workers. This meeting then elects an organising committee who will be made known to the management. In our union, the organiser cannot negotiate with management

alone. The workers must be there.

In South Africa there are miners who come from Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana. They've not been involved in the history of labour or political struggles in South Africa and their position is insecure. The bosses try to divide them off. They threaten them with expulsion from the country if they get involved with the NUM.

They also try to exploit divisions between ethnic groups and encourage faction fights. In a compound of say 10,000 workers you could have 12 different languages spoken. The mining bosses appeal to them 'you are Sotho-speaking people working for your families', 'you are Xhosa-speaking people, if you lose your jobs they'll be taken by Sotho-speaking people'.

An organiser has to be able to speak many languages if they are to win the hearts and minds of all these ethnic groups, to unite them and show them who the real enemy is.

Now we've got a membership of more than 300,000. Our members have been politicised by their struggle. They have learnt that it's not enough to fight the mining bosses, they've got to fight the racist regime itself.

The members are organised in 13 regions which meet monthly. Every two months the central executive committee meets



Manne Dipico

where the regional leaderships come together and report on the battles they have been involved in and that we need to take up.

There are still 400,000 miners outside our union. The union remains weak in terms of organisers. Some regions don't have organisers at all. The Free State region with 70,000 members is served by only two organisers. Sometimes we have to take one of them, rush him to another region of perhaps 40,000 mineworkers. We need financial help to pay for more organisers.

The NUM is also the backbone of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), the united trade union federation. Our vice-president is COSATU's president.

COSATU was born in 1985. It was a very tough battle to come up with that kind of unity, it took four years to achieve. We're very proud that our dream of a united federation has actually come true with the launching of COSATU.

The same principle is in-

involved with SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) — it's the same thing, if you don't support SACTU, you don't support COSATU. If you don't support the ANC, you don't support the people of South Africa. The working class in South Africa gives its support, 100 per cent, to the ANC and the liberation struggle.

In COSATU we take a militant stand. The bosses refused to negotiate with us about May Day so we decided we're going to take May Day off come what may. And we took it. Everything came to a standstill. During the Kinross commemoration we repeated that unity, when close to 325,000 mineworkers responded positively to our call and more than 300,000 responded from other industries.

The government is now preparing to crush our movement. They have attacked the people's political organisations — at the community level, at the student level and with the attacks on the United Democratic Front.

Now they are preparing to crack down on the NUM and COSATU. Just like they did with the UDF (United Democratic Front), they are first spreading lies about us, claiming that our leaders are unrepresentative, that they don't have the right to demand sanctions against South Africa.

We explain that only the union — not the corporations — have the right to speak on behalf of the workers. The need for sanctions was endorsed by the founding conference of COSATU and by the NUM conference earlier this year.

One reason for being at the International Miners Organisation conference this weekend is to explain this. Our relations with unions in other countries is very important. This is particularly true of our relationship with the British NUM.

We followed the NUM's strike very closely. It was so inspiring — especially at that time because we were still not properly on our feet. We are, of course, NUM-South Africa and it's the NUM-Britain. That was no coincidence. We are aspiring to be united and militant like the mineworkers of Britain.

Their strike was an eye-opener for us. It showed that when you go for a strike you really go. Because of that strike, we have used the strike weapon more effectively.

Our relationship with the British NUM started to build up early this year when we got an invitation to come here at the time of the state of emergency. Our president and general secretary came and we started to establish a real bond of friendship. We are fighting the very same capitalists and imperialists, so we've got to forge links, share information and see our battle as one.

British NUM boosts Central American solidarity

PETER HEATHFIELD, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers has confirmed that he will speak at the labour movement conference on peace, self determination and reconstruction in Central America. The conference is sponsored by the Labour Party and national unions and will take place at TUC Congress House on 28 February. Heathfield told the organisers, 'I wish to express my own and my union's commitment to solidarity with those struggling for their liberation in Central America'. Such solidarity is vital, writes **CELIA PUGH**.

With pre-election pressure building up on Reagan, to deliver his Rambo promise to rid Central America of 'the Commies', the Nicaraguan government fears that the US will fabricate a border incident with Honduras as a pretext for the use of US ground troops. The Nicaraguans believe that both Republicans and Democrats will defend this policy. The information bulletin *Agencia Nueva Nicaragua* is cautious about Democrat protests over the Iran-Contra scandal. They say: 'What the Congress members apparently cannot or do not want to understand is that by limiting the scope of their investigation to improper methods and "errors", while leaving intact the ideological foundations of Reagan's foreign policy, they are opening the door for desperate, reckless acts aimed at generating a "patriotic consensus" around an emergency situation, such as that achieved in the October 1983 invasion of Grenada and the April 1986 bombing of Libya.'

The Nicaraguans argue that their best hope of preventing US invasion is a movement of opposition in the United States and around the world. Nationwide demonstrations are planned for the United States for 25 April as part of a campaign to make the price of intervention just too high for the US administration to consider. The labour movement conference in London on 28 February can strengthen our solidarity efforts in Britain.

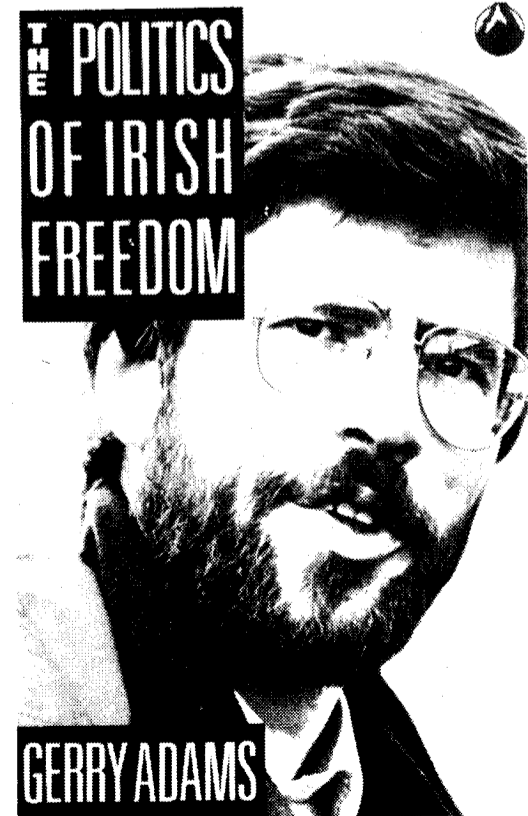
Speakers from Nicaragua will be joined by representatives of the broad unity organisation of El Salvador, the UNTS, and the liberation front, the FMLN-FDR.

The labour movement conference provides a chance to consider how the British labour movement can answer the calls for solidarity coming from the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador.

● Labour movement conference, 28 February, TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1. Delegates £6, Observers £4. Registration forms from ELSSOC, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1.



South African mineworkers: these cramped conditions are typical of the compounds in which they are forced to live



The politics of Irish freedom, by Gerry Adams, Brandon, 176 pages. Available at £3.95 + 30p p&p from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to 'The Other Bookshop'.

Wapping - a year of

THOUSANDS OF printers and their supporters will converge on Fortress Wapping on 24 January to mark the first anniversary of the fight against Rupert Murdoch. Few people anticipated a year ago what sort of fight was in store, writes JON SILBERMAN.

It is a mark of the difficulties that face working people in the aftermath of the miners' strike that to defend their jobs and union organisation print workers would face such a tremendous onslaught.

Murdoch planned and provoked the strike in order to smash the union. He sacked the 5500 News International employees under legislation that had been on the statute book for years — that if you go on strike you break your contract of employment.

At the same time, he made use of anti-union laws introduced by the Tory government to prevent effective picketing and 'secondary action'. He sought to minimise the effects of wider solidarity action displayed by the railworkers during the

miners' strike by buying TNT and organising a radically new distribution system.

He used the present mass unemployment to ensure an effective scab labour operation recruited in Southampton through deals with the leadership of the EETPU.

Murdoch won the support of the entire capitalist class for his union busting antics. Fleet Street employers knew that if he succeeded, their fight to impose similar deals on their workforces would be many times easier. They

put their common class interests with Murdoch above any tactical advantage they could get by selling more papers and trying to put News International out of business. As *The Guardian's* managing director Harry Roche put it 'Murdoch created the benchmark'.

Other employers and the government rallied round to ensure the success of the government's anti-union policies and the defeat of militant trade union action.

Thousands upon thousands of police have been deployed against the pickets — to date the equivalent of 100,000 police work-days. Up-to-date figures aren't available but as long ago as six months twelve hundred people had been arrested. Many sacked printers have been arrested two or three times. The courts have meted

out draconian sentences culminating in the imprisonment of Mike Hicks, closely associated with the strike and elected to the SOGAT executive last August because of that association. Even in jail the maltreatment continues. Hicks has been moved three times — and is now in the Isle of Wight — as the authorities try to prevent expressions of solidarity.

Despite such attacks the printers continue to fight. Regularly, twice weekly they have massed with their supporters to demonstrate their determination to win.

Three 'final offers' have been rejected despite lucrative hand-outs. The October ballot against Murdoch's £56 million 'final, final offer' was rejected by an even bigger majority than the first. Less than one-third were

enticed into taking the money. Following the ballot, the ranks of the demonstrations have been consistently over 2000-strong, quite a remarkable achievement after a year of struggle.

The printers have established their own newspaper, *Wapping Post*, through which they and their supporters can be kept in touch with the latest developments.

Wives, daughters and friends have formed WAM — Women Against Murdoch — as a strike support group. WAM has organised pickets, their own marches and raised thousands of pounds. They have taken the printers message to other workers in struggle such as Hanger's, to residents in the Wapping area — distributing 5000 Christmas cards — and to the mining communities. The printers have

deepened their organisation during the dispute. Engineers have organised a national tour to promote solidarity. The 24 January march was called by a special inter-union meeting of activists on 11 December.

It has been the determination and resilience of the printworkers themselves which has ensured the solidarity from the rest of the labour movement. They continue to receive huge financial support, regular delegations to the marches and picket and the boycott of Murdoch titles is widespread. Print support groups exist in a number of areas and members of the Campaign group of Labour MPs have given consistent support.

But all this has not been enough to win the dispute. A massive increase in that solidarity will be needed to win that

much-needed victory against difficult odds.

Already, in Fleet Street deals have been concluded with other newspaper bosses which have resulted in huge erosion of conditions, wages and jobs. At the *Telegraph* management imposed a no-strike deal on wages, jobs and conditions almost identical to that sought by Murdoch. It was agreed by the union leaderships because they maintain their membership.

Today, with 10,000 jobs chopped in Fleet Street in the last year, it is more difficult to extend Wapping to the heart of the national press.

At the same time Fleet Street workers are the key to winning the dispute and have the power to do so, if mobilised. Successive new attacks on workers in other national newspapers give the possibility of forging a united fightback.

MURDOCH IS BAD NEWS
DON'T BUY
 THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
 THE TIMES
 SUNDAY TIMES
 SOGAT • NGA • AUEW • NUJ

**1985-7
 the run
 down**

- September** Murdoch recruits scab labour in Southampton and concludes scabbing deal with EETPU leaders. Prepares to provoke strike in order to sack News International workers
- 21 December** Draft agreement proposed by News International for work, allegedly, on Murdoch's new London paper. It includes no negotiating rights for union chapels or branches.
- 29 December** Murdoch announces that Wapping is in fact to be used to print existing titles.
- 1986**
- 20 January** Section of the *Sunday Times* printed at Wapping.
- 24 January** Strike begins; made official by SOGAT, NGA, NUJ and AEU. Soon followed by sacking of 5,500 NI workers.
- 9 February** First mass demonstration on a Saturday night.
- 11 February** Court seizes SOGAT funds.
- 7 March** Women's demo at Wapping to celebrate International Women's Day.
- March** Redundancies announced at the *Daily Express* and the *Manchester Evening News*. Maxwell declares he is going to follow Murdoch's example.
- 6 April** 30,000 attend national demonstration in support of printworkers.
- April** During negotiations, Murdoch offers Grays Inn Road site as premises for a labour movement paper, as part of a settlement. SOGAT leadership say they are considering it.
- 3 May** 10,000 strong demonstration, led by SOGAT members who have marched from Glasgow, viciously attacked by police. Over 100 demonstrators injured.
- 18 May** First issue of the strikers' newspaper, *The Wapping Post*.
- 19 May** 3000 strong mass meeting overwhelmingly rejects Murdoch's offer. Dean announces a secret ballot.
- 12 June** Ballot result announced. Strikers vote to reject offer.

'Fortress of lies' - Tony Benn

THE STRIKE by print workers against News International has now lasted as long as the miners strike and, in a special way, is equally significant. In the case of the miners the argument for closures was that the pits were uneconomic and the police were used brutally on the excuse that those wanting to go to work must be allowed to do so. At Wapping the business owned by Rupert Murdoch has been highly profitable and the riot police there have been used to prevent people going to work.

Therefore the government's attitude to the print workers dispute is a complete contradiction of all the arguments they used against the miners. The reason for this is not hard to find.

It is essential if the Thatcher government is to survive that the mass media should be allowed to go on with the policy of disinformation, and Mur-

doch's newspapers are the most powerful weapon at the disposal of the prime minister in her attempts to get reelected. Mrs Thatcher therefore needs Rupert Murdoch and Rupert Murdoch needs Mrs Thatcher to provide a police garrison protecting his fortress of lies.

That is why the whole Labour movement should be rallying round the print

workers now in the same way as they rallied round the miners with support groups up and down the country.

From both the miners strike and the print workers strike millions of people have learned how the power of the state harnessed to the interests of capital can be used to crush the rights of trade unions and destroy the livelihood of those who create the nation's wealth. We have also learned how the media, including the BBC and the IBA as well as the other proprietors, have exercised the power of censorship in an attempt to deny to the nation at large the truth of what is going on.

We all know that if there is a student demonstration in Shanghai or a march by Solidarity in Poland there will be mass coverage on radio, TV and in the papers. But in the heart of London, only a mile or two along the Thames from Westminster, we have seen police attack demonstrators and even camera units from TV companies with barely a mention on the news bulletins.

It has been the same with the Greenham Common women. They were such a threat to the establishment that not only are they being imprisoned but their names are being taken out of the media to prevent others from

gaining encouragement to do likewise.

Thus the printers strike whose anniversary we are celebrating on 24 January has become central to the whole political future of Britain — and that no doubt is why one of its greatest leaders, Mike Hicks, was imprisoned in the hope that his removal will dampen the enthusiasm of those who have been outside the gates of Wapping for a year.

I hope that on 24 January there will be a truly massive demonstration to give heart to those who have been picketing and to alert the community even more clearly to what is at stake.

- June** SOGAT conference votes to back demands of the strikers. Executive take control of the dispute.
- 28 June** Mass meeting of strikers votes to step up the struggle, demands a national levy.
- August** *Observer* announces transfer of production to sites outside London. Mike Hicks and Bill Freeman elected onto the SOGAT executive.
- 1 September** TUC conference votes to overturn General Council decision not to take action against the EETPU.
- September** New 'final offer' from Murdoch. Murdoch-style offer at *Telegraph* — including binding arbitration, job cuts, wage reductions and no-strike arrangement.
- 25 September** Mass meeting rejects new offer. *Telegraph* offer agreed by print union leaders.
- 8 October** Ballot result announced. Strikers reject new offer by a larger majority than previous ballot.
- 22 October** TUC General Council fails to take action against EETPU.
- 27 November** TUC General Council votes by 23 votes to 21 not to reopen file on the EETPU.
- 5 December** Mike Hicks jailed for 12 months (eight suspended).
- 11 December** Inter-union meeting calls national demonstration for 24 January, and calls for the recall of the TUC.
- 13 December** Biggest Saturday night turn-out since early summer as three marches converge on Fortress Wapping.



struggle

Only last Friday it was announced that the *Daily Mail's* Manchester journalistic and compositing operations are to be closed, with the loss of 300 jobs. Linking up with the workers at the *Mail* and other papers as they come under the hammer, gives the key to reversing the whole attack on the unions in the national press.

It is the example of the struggle at Wapping which so worries the Tories. As other workers like the British Telecom engineers and the teachers come into struggle, Wapping can become a beacon, showing that relying on your own struggle is the only way to win.

This is also the problem for the Labour leadership who have, since the last TUC and Labour Party conferences, argued for calling off struggles in the interests of Labour's electoral chances. But a united fightback of Wapping dimensions is not only the best way of fighting the Tories and the employers today, it's also the only way of securing victories under any possible Labour government tomorrow.

The printers have received another setback with the result of the SOGAT ballot for the 58p levy. All the areas which have already imposed a

levy voted in favour. The clerical branch voted 2500 to 900 in favour.

But the union as a whole voted against by 51,187 to 44,265. Brenda Dean who had argued that the ballot was not about Wapping but about union finances was quick to comment that the outcome showed that the dispute did not have the support of the majority of the union's 200,000-strong membership.

The Dean leadership has dragged its feet throughout the dispute. In fact it wasn't until the union conference in the summer that the union officially backed the printers' demands — for jobs and recognition. Dean effectively recommended acceptance of the offers from Murdoch.

The Dean leadership has been especially concerned to maintain the law. On 21 January, the SOGAT executive will be considering discipline against its members who recently occupied the gate at Fortress Wapping.

Their alleged identity was made known to union officialdom through a video sent by Murdoch's management, who won a legal injunction against such action.

Dean will be a speaker at the 24 January rally along with Roy Hattersley and Ron Todd. Printers

and their supporters will be looking to such leaders to spell out a strategy to win — not by taking disciplinary action against sacked printers but by basing itself on their action in order to deepen the solidarity.

From Ron Todd, how the 21 members of the TUC general council — whose unions represent a majority of TUC affiliated members but who were in a 2-vote minority when the general council failed to implement Congress policy on Wapping — intend to organise action in support of the sacked printers.

From Roy Hattersley, how the Labour Party leadership intends to give active solidarity to the sacked printers, regularly attending the picket and initiating its own levy of party members and adopting a plan for the press which challenges the press barons in their monopoly control.

From Brenda Dean, how the 44,000 members who voted for the levy are to be organised in practical solidarity with the printers and how the national union is to be mobilised, irrespective of legal constraints.

As John Lang, SOGAT clerical FOC put it — 'We don't want to be another cause for the labour movement. We want to be a victory'.

WAM visits coalfields — 'Our folk heroes are just like us'

IN RESPONSE to an invitation from Betty Heathfield, WAM supporters went to Chesterfield in November as guests of the Derbyshire Women's Action Group. Last month, a coach load of WAM supporters visited Aylesham in Kent, where the Women Against Pit Closures put on a special spread.

WAM's assistant secretary, Pauline Good said that the Women Against Pit Closures had been 'a great inspiration. But I never had any real contact. They were kind of folk heroes seen on TV. I wanted to meet people in the same situation as I am in now'. She saw the contact 'as part of the working class sticking together'.

Kay Sutcliffe is chair of the Aylesham women's group. The group continues to meet fortnightly. 'We still think about what we went through although not so much is going on

now', she said. 'It's important to link up. It's one way of keeping our women together and of showing we're still around and fighting on. The visit was a big boost. We're still talking about it'.

By Denny Fitzpatrick

Commenting on the visit, Pauline said that 'trips like this do you a power of good. It was good to find that your folk heroes are just like you'.

Pauline and Kay talked about the differences between the two movements. 'As a local group, we can't

repeat what they've achieved' Pauline said and Kay emphasised that Women Against Pit Closures is a national movement with a strong support from the NUM leadership, although this differs from area to area.

But all the women involved in the visit stressed what they had in common and what united them. 'WAM has seen how we built our movement' Kay said 'and see it can be done'.

In the new year, WAM will be taking its message throughout the labour movement. A special leaflet outlining its aims is being produced and speakers arranged. Their activity has already ensured a big presence from Kent, Notts and Derbyshire mining community women on 24 January.

NCU strike escalates

continued from back page

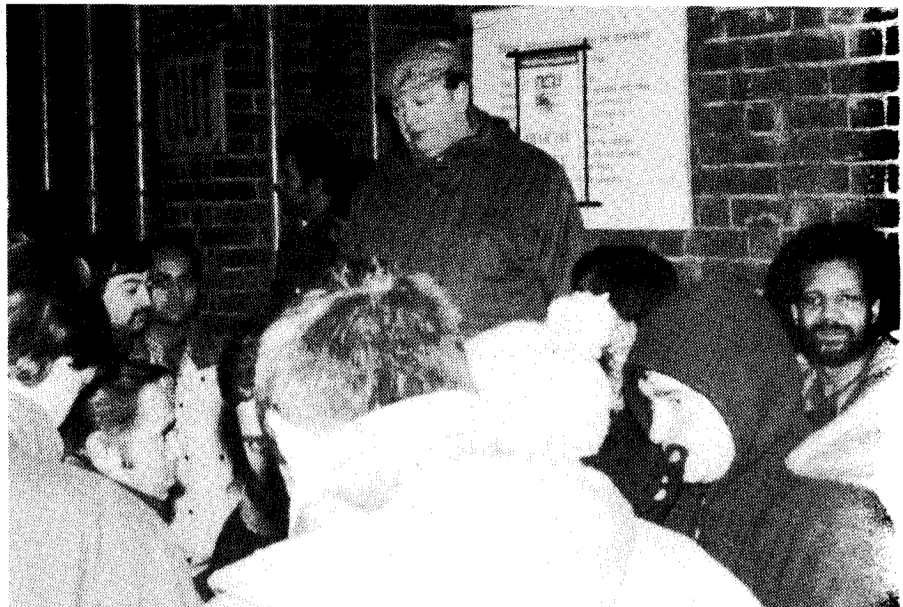
massive assault on wages and conditions.

Ultimately at stake is the 37½-hour week, won by the union through a campaign of national industrial action in 1978, and the associated 9-day fortnight and 14-day three weeks worked by many engineers.

But also as with Murdoch, BT's actions have an important political significance. If they can inflict a defeat on this traditionally well-organised workforce, they will be making their contribution to the anti-union offensive of the government and all employers, weakening the entire labour movement.

Their entire arsenal will be brought to bear against the NCU, as they have done with the miners and printworkers. The anti-union laws will be used to prevent us from using the full force of our industrial muscle.

The union will need every ounce to win the claim for 10 per cent with no strings. Every member will need to be mobilised to impose our collective strength — through mass meetings and pickets, through strike committees and delegations.



Engineers picket telephone depot in Harlsden, North West London

The lesson of the miners' and printworkers strikes is that our fight will be immeasurably strengthened if the families are fully involved.

Every single trade unionist has a stake in this struggle. A defeat would be a blow for the entire movement. But a victory can be the signal for a united fightback.

That's why we engineers must stand alongside other workers in struggle, like the printers at Wapping on 24 January.

And that's why NCU members will appeal to the entire labour movement to mobilise in our support — financial, moral, on our picket lines.

A massive boost to our

struggle would be for the Labour Party leadership to declare its solidarity by announcing that BT will be renationalised, and its new competitor Mercury nationalised, without compensation should the Party win the election. And that they will then honour our claim in full. In a word, the NCU must win!

In Brief

London NUR

WIND, ICE and snow have not been the only problems affecting London's public transport system. Drivers at Waterloo station staged a 24-hour strike on Tuesday while their colleagues at King's Cross withdrew goodwill from Monday.

The drivers are fighting against the implementation of new rosters as a consequence of British Rail's imposition of more driver-only trains.

On the underground, at 24-hour strike of NUR members planned for last Wednesday was called off at the eleventh hour by the

union's national executive, following management's agreement to negotiate.

Up til then, management had been intent on unilaterally imposing their policy of privatisation, cuts in working conditions and reduction of staff. They adopted this policy following the Tory government's removal of control of London Transport from the GLC.

What the negotiations will bring remains to be seen. Industrial action is still possible following an 82 per cent vote in favour by the NUR's 12,000 members on London Transport.

London buses

FIGHTING back alongside underground workers is the best way to defend jobs on London buses.

Confidential documents prepared by London Buses Ltd (LBL) have

revealed the company's plans to sack 1569 conductors and 1490 drivers over the next 15 months.

One of the documents states that the judicious 'selection of routes (for tendering) in areas associated with vulnerable garages gives LBL management leverage with the unions to improve its competitive position and, if it loses routes, the best opportunity to cross over cost reduction thresholds in the area in question.'

Despite the jargon the message is plain — a conspiracy by LRT and LBL management against bus-workers.

Caterpillar

WORKERS at the Caterpillar factory in Uddington, near Glasgow, occupied the plant following the American company's decision to close

the works with the loss of 1221 jobs.

Only four months ago, the company which makes earth moving equipment had announced plans for a £62.5 million investment programme. The Scottish workers now find themselves in the same position as Caterpillar's US workforce. The company is closing two plants in the US.

Engineering workers at two factories in Greater Manchester walked out on Monday. Eight hundred workers at Simon Engineering in Stockport downed tools following the decision by one of their number to leave the union.

At Colman Senior in Sale, the strike was provoked by management's sacking of four workers, as part of a drive for increased productivity.

Messages of support, donations, etc for Caterpillar occupation to Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargedie, Baillieston, Glasgow.

A day's wages for Socialist Action

IN NOVEMBER last year, we launched a £10,000 publication fund. This quarter we have to raise some £6000 above our regular income to maintain our current publication schedule.

So we still need to raise the full £10,000 fund. This means raising the outstanding £8500. Such a project needs special measures from all our supporters. Real resources allocated to achieving our goal.

Every area where we have supporters needs to consider organising some collective fund raising initiative. The sort of thing that readers up and down the country are considering includes dinner dances, socials, raffles, jumble sales, and special issue badges. We need to hear urgently from every single area what they plan to organise.

But we are making an additional request. We are asking supporters to donate a day's wages to our fund. We hope our supporters value our newspaper's regular publication and will make the financial sacrifices that are involved in donating a day's wages and ensuring we meet our fund in full. That will mean Socialist Action keeps coming out.

The breakdown of sales of our raffle tickets was:

	Target	sale	percentage
Aberdeen	120	15	12.5
Bristol	360	214	59.4
Birmingham	640	285	44.5
Cardiff	480	276	57.5
Coventry	160	25	15.6
Dundee	30	10	33.3
Fareham	40	39	97.5
Glasgow	360	126	35.0
Huddersfield	400	42	10.5
Leeds	520	325	62.5
Leicester	240	111	46.3
Leamington	30	30	100.0
Liverpool	200	51	25.5
Manchester	510	38	7.5
Newport	480	304	63.3
Nottingham	440	121	27.5
S Yorks	640	159	24.8
E London	1240	703	56.7
NW London	520	562	108.0
SE London	440	301	68.4
N London	520	123	23.6
OW London	760	181	23.8
SW London	360	0	0



Socialist ACTION

FIGHT BAKER'S BILL

SINCE 1979 the Thatcher government has embarked on a policy of increasingly dealing with trade unionism head on and through legislation. The majority of trade unionists are familiar with this development through the Prior and Tebbit laws — which started the process. But Kenneth Baker's Education Bill, which goes to the House of Lords on 27 January, is a further drastic step towards direct state control of labour relations. If it becomes law it will shape future legislation to prevent trade unionists defending their interests.

The Baker Act would allow the secretary of state to dictate teachers' pay and working conditions, removing teachers' right to negotiate. It means that the secretary of state can bypass the powers of local authorities with respect to working conditions.

The NUT leadership's strategy for fighting this is based on winning amendments in the House of Lords through a propaganda campaign against the Bill. But this campaign is not a workable strategy at all. The House of Lords is not going to defend the working conditions of teachers or any other group of workers. Ken Livingstone's campaign to defend the GLC based on public opinion swaying the House of Lords failed. Only action can seriously challenge Baker's legislation.

In this respect the day strike led by the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) on 13 January was exemplary. During a blizzard ILTA mobilised 3000 teachers on the march to Westminster. The employers, the Inner London Education

Authority (ILEA), admitted that 6000 teachers were on strike.

The rally at Central Hall heard from exactly the sort of alliance necessary to carry through the fight against the Baker proposals. Speakers included representatives from ILEA, from GCHQ, from the CPSA, and from the Campaign Group of MPs, as well as from the NAS/UWT executive and from Bernard Regan — a member of the NUT national executive and a suspended officer of ILTA. This alliance is in stark contrast to the wishful thinking of the NUT executive and their reliance on the goodwill of the House of Lords.

There is no doubt that if the House of Lords passes this legislation unamended the NUT executive will be under great pressure to act. But by then the union, and teachers, will be in a worse position as they will be facing not simply proposals but a law.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA), the leading force on the left in

the NUT, has prepared for that fight. Its call for teachers to vote against the deal worked out at Nottingham between the NUT and the local authorities was supported in a ballot by over 40 per cent of NUT members — and the majority of teachers who have been balloted voted against it. That deal is useless and divisive when considering the present attack. The NUT must return to its platform agreed at the 1986 national conference: no linking of pay and conditions.

The Central Hall rally on 13 January approved a call for more strike action on 19 February. If the NUT executive is serious in fighting Baker it will put its weight behind this action on a national basis — or better still call for action itself. Local authorities must be urged by the trade unions and Labour Party not to implement Baker's 19 contractual proposals, including obligatory cover for absent colleagues.

The 13 January action showed the way forward. It showed that teachers are prepared to fight. The NUT national executive must now return to action and help mobilise the forces who can defeat Baker: the NUT on a national scale, the NAS/UWT, and the labour movement as a whole. Support is also needed from parents and educational organisations — including the local education authorities themselves.

NCU must win

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS UNION



THE ENTIRE labour movement must come to the aid of 117,000 telephone engineers who work for BT. Their union, the NCU, is under ferocious attack from the recently privatised company. NCU members, MARCELLA FITZGERALD and ANN FIANDER report.

Tens of thousands of engineers have been locked out for the 'crime' of taking 24-hour strike action in support of colleagues suspended for banning overtime and working to rule.

BT's managing director Michael Bett, stated bluntly that the company 'are not going to tolerate these 24-hour stoppages'. The company issued forms for workers to sign stating that they are prepared to work normally. Refusal to sign has meant a lock-out for 65,000 workers at the time of going to press.

Within the next two days BT's entire operation will be at a standstill. In various parts of the country, engineers have already taken the initiative at a local level. Sheffield, Lincoln, north and west Midlands and Manchester

areas all voted to strike indefinitely until suspended colleagues were reinstated.

A mass meeting of London's City branch on Tuesday responded to an appeal from delegates in attendance from the Midlands by voting for indefinite strike action until all suspensions throughout the country were lifted. 'One out, all out' was the overwhelming sentiment as workers called for the union nationally to take similar indefinite strike action.

On the same day the NCU national executive decided to call out all of

London on Wednesday 21 January, and Scotland and the north of Ireland on Thursday.

An NCU spokesperson explained the executive decision as the union going on the offensive. 'BT had been dictating the pace until today. Now we're calling London out. That's a step that BT won't relish'.

London is the key area for telecommunications. It covers the Stock Exchange, the City, the Post Office tower. The action could well involve Heathrow airport too.

The subject of the dispute is BT's response to a 10 per cent wage claim submitted last year. They offered 5 per cent with more strings attached than a puppet theatre. The offer had nothing to do with the company's ability to pay.

In the three years since privatisation profits have risen by 85 per cent to £1828 million. This is cer-

tain to be topped in 1986 where the first six months recorded a profit of £1040 million!

BT felt confident enough to award its Chair a 55 per cent increase, bringing his salary to £172,206. Seven BT directors have had their salaries boosted to over £80,000. The number of BT managers earning over £30,000 has risen from 183 to over 500.

For the workforce as a whole it's been a different story. Fifteen thousand jobs have been chopped. Accidents have risen so steeply that for the first time BT's annual report had been forced to take notice.

But the company is not satisfied with a situation in which profit per employee has doubled in the space of two years. As with media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, massive profits are not

(continued on page 11)

Reinstate London NUT council

THE OFFICERS and delegates of the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA), the London branch of the NUT, have been suspended. Over 80 members of ILTA council have received letters following their vote to call for strike action on 13 January against Kenneth Baker's Education Bill.

The basis for these suspensions is supposedly because the strike was unofficial and broke union rules. In fact, the NUT leadership, fearful of the growth of the left in the union, has panicked.

By Ray Sirotkin, NUT

The executive has been unable to force teachers to do voluntary duties in Inner London, and unable to force teachers to cover for absent colleagues. The effect of the ILTA strike call can be noted in the tremendous effort made by Inner London Teachers on 13 January, showing that as far as they are concerned ILTA still leads.

On the surface, this response by the national officers of the NUT is remarkable for its shortsightedness. They aren't prepared to lead action against Baker's Bill, so they have attempted to paralyse those who do wish to fight.

Why have they acted in this way? Part of the answer can be understood by looking at the advances made for teachers during the long salaries campaign. Coventry highlighted, and the Nottingham agreement confirmed, that the NUT leadership were preparing to sacrifice this struggle now for the future possible return of a Labour government.

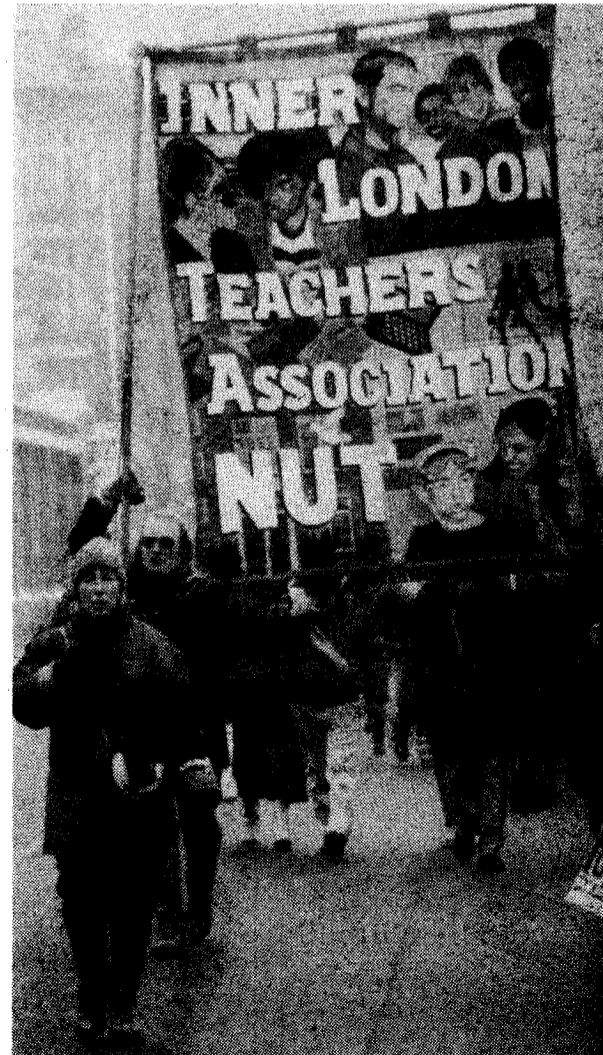
However, there is another underlying trend. The salaries dispute and the fight around conditions developed a stronger left wing in the NUT, led in particular by the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA). With the onslaught of Baker, only the left were able to give a political lead because the NUT bureaucracy were not prepared to fight.

The NUT national executive has argued against strike action, saying they want parental support and to be able to win over members of the House of Lords. But a precondition for a serious, united campaign against Baker must be the reinstatement of ILTA council.

Of course teachers want parental support. We won that in the salaries dispute. But in order to gain an alliance with their noble lords, the NUT leadership has attempted to break up any alliances teachers can make through action, by gaining support elsewhere in the working class.

To defeat Baker, ILTA must be reinstated and a serious commitment to action must be worked out. The immediate task for the NUT membership, supported by the labour movement, is to make these suspensions back fire.

What you can do:



● Pass a resolution in any Labour movement body calling for re-instatement of ILTA.

● Lobby the hearing of the national disciplinary panel on 24 January, 9.30 am, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place WC1.

● Write to the national officers of the NUT (Hamilton House) demanding reinstatement of ILTA.

● Send messages of support to the ILTA Defence Campaign, 73 Deveney Road, London E15 4AZ.

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