

A Socialist ACTION

Inside:
TUC congress
1985—pages 2-5
South Africa—pages 6-7

Labour must defend black youth

THE SPECTRE of inner-city revolts returned to Britain's streets this week. Four years after 'rioting' swept areas like Brixton and Toxteth, the youth of Handsworth, Birmingham, let the world know that Thatcher's Britain still offered them no future.

In a night of revolts in the Lozells Road area of the city they fought in street battles with the police, erected barricades, sacked shops and banks, and burned commercial premises to the ground. The catalyst for this, according to 'official sources', was 'minor'. A row between a policeman and a motorist over a ticket issued for illegal parking and no displayed tax disc.

But every other party cites police brutality. Eyewitnesses state that when a black woman criticised police handling of the affair, she was knocked to the ground and kicked by one of the police involved.

This was just one provocation too many. Within two hours hundreds of youth had gathered at the scene. A disused bingo hall was set on fire.

Firefighters trying to extinguish the blaze were met with stones, and police reinforcements were called in. Forced down Lozells Road, youth turned their anger on the commercial buildings lining it and overturned cars to restrict police pursuit.

By the morning the area was reminiscent of Belfast. Thick smoke columns rose from gutted buildings, glass and bricks covered the streets, and there was millions of pounds worth of damage.

In the aftermath of these events press and politicians alike have rushed to offer explanations for what occurred, and to reassure property-owners of effective protection. Afro-Caribbean youth are already being targeted with references to drug

pushers, 'barbarous criminality', and claims of growing animosity between them and the Asian community.

References to the 'volatile racial mix' of the area begin to suggest that inter-racial conflict is inevitable. In reality all sections of the community admit that Afro-Caribbean, Asian, and whites were involved in many incidents. Far from being divided, they are united by mounting unemployment and growing deprivation in the city's inner area.

An eyewitness report from Mick Archer

Lozells Road divides the Birmingham wards of Handsworth and Aston, which in January of this year had 30.4 per cent and 40.3 per cent unemployment respectively. Amongst youth, the figures are far worse, with many black youngsters never having had a job. That, more than any 'minor' incident, lies at the root of these events.

But this indefinite unemployment is aggravated by the deepening poverty of many of these areas. According to the city council itself 49 per cent of its 'core areas', populated by 270,000 people, is in the most deprived two and a half per cent of England and Wales.

It is these problems that Labour politicians have to provide answers to. Instead however the first response of local Labour MP Jeff Rooker rocked many black voters.

He went on breakfast TV to describe the events

of Monday as 'a barbarous act of criminality', and to defend the heavy policing of the area and ask for more of it. This type of response is a disgrace to the labour movement.

Black people require not more racist policing, but a labour movement which attacks institutional racism and the police harassment of black youth. But in a direct

sense, Rooker's a response is also against the most immediate interests of the defence of the labour movement as a whole.

The enormous scale of the deployment of riot police and techniques pioneered against the communities of Brixton and Handsworth during the year of the miners' strike showed one thing clearly: the labour movement ig-

nores the repression of black people at its own peril.

Instead of joining in the hysteria of the press and the Tories, the labour movement must come to the defence of the youth of Handsworth against the vilification and repression they are now confronted with. Only when the labour movement has the courage to stand up

against such campaigns, and show that it stands with the black communities against racism, will it be able not only to build an alliance with the black communities of Britain but also to defend itself.

As Clare Short, Labour MP for neighbouring Ladywood, told Socialist Action: 'This time police pressure seems

to have been the spark, but the tinder is unemployment, poverty, racism, and a future without hope. Unless we tackle those issues then we will see this again and further tragic loss of life.'

It is the 'barbarous criminality' of this government's policies that needs to be tackled, and all labour politicians should remember that.



Socialist ACTION

Duffy, Thatcher and Owen

LAST WEEK'S TUC revealed a fundamental part of the forces which are reshaping British politics. It was a congress in which the headlines were dominated by the two extremes of the labour movement — the AUEW threatening a split of the TUC and the victory of Scargill in the vote on the miners.

Of course these two wings were in a totally different relation of forces. The AUEW's course in reality commands large support in the TUC — perhaps one third when the final crunch comes. Outside the NUM, Scargill's course is supported by a small minority. The centre ground of the TUC, although squeezed, still commands the majority — although this centre is progressively shifting towards acceptance of the anti-union laws.

But while the TUC is most unlikely to split in the short term the disintegrative and polarising tendencies within the labour movement are speeding up. They reflect the same tendencies which exist in British politics as a whole. And the decline in Thatcher's popularity is accelerating, not slowing down, these trends.

The reason is simple. Thatcher's politics, and policies, are not an optional extra for the bourgeoisie. All the most powerful sections of the British bourgeoisie are completely committed to the continuation of the qualitative elements pioneered by the Thatcher government. If Thatcher declines in popularity then the question becomes how to maintain 'Thatcherism without Thatcher'.

At the level of politics one part of the answer to that question is meeting in conference this week — the SDP. The SDP-Liberal Alliance, with its goal of preventing Labour forming a government by itself, is the attempted guarantor that Thatcher's policies of privatisation, of military build-up, of attacks on democratic rights, of mass unemployment, of expanding the room for the international operations of British capital, are not challenged. They are aimed at preventing any challenge from Labour on the political front.

But within the trade union bureaucracy an equal guarantor is required. The entire new framework of Tory legislation on ballots, against picketing, against solidarity action, and so on must be maintained in place. Any struggles against them must be sabotaged. The names of the guarantors in that field are Duffy, Hammond, and Co.

There should be no doubt. The AUEW and EETPU are not against the essential features of the anti-trade union legislation. That legislation is, after all, modelled on the policies and measures the AUEW and EETPU right wing carried out for years. This is why, despite the fact that the general council is moving to accept the Tory framework of law, there is a real clash with the AUEW-EETPU. The majority of the TUC would like the framework of the Tory laws removed — not by struggle but by a future Labour government. The AUEW-EETPU would not.

The problem for the general council is that their course is incoherent and without chance of success. There will not be a Labour government that will qualitatively reverse Thatcher's anti-union legislation. Kinock has already made that clear. And, with the strength of the Alliance, even Kinock's ability to introduce his much mooted 'Bill of Rights' on the unions is in considerable doubt.

The only logical and coherent courses being pursued are those of the AUEW-EETPU, to accept the essential framework of the laws, and the NUM's, which is to fight them now through struggle. While the 'centre' is the majority, it has no firm base on which it rests — although of course its support will only be slowly eroded. That is why, with their very different strengths, the extremes dominated the Blackpool headlines and why they will continue to do so.

Ronald Reagan's much-quoted quip that 'you ain't seen nothing yet' for once provides a key — to both the left and the much stronger right wing of the trade union movement. The polarisations that will shake the British trade union and labour movement are still only just beginning to gather their full strength.

TUC Congress 1985 ... TUC Congress

THIS YEAR'S TUC congress was one dominated by its extremes. It was clearer than ever proof that Thatcher is increasing excluding any 'middle way' in the fight against her government's attacks on the Labour movement.

On the one hand, Gavin Laird and Eric Hammond threatened to split the trade union movement from top to bottom with their decision to break the Wembley special conference policy of non-compliance with Thatcher's anti-union laws. And Wednesday saw the capitulation of the general council in the face of such threats.

On the other hand, the NUM resolution, carried against the wishes of the TUC leadership, reflected the pressure of support for a real fight against the Tories that still exists within sections of the trade union movement.

Arthur Scargill's speech to a *Labour Herald* fringe meeting outlined the bankruptcy of a 'wait for a Labour government and see' approach. He spelled out in detail the way in which all the arms of the state had been used against the miners during their strike — and therefore the full implications for the unions of capitulation to the Tories laws.

The general council's surrender to the AUEW decision to ballot its members on whether to accept government money for ballots revealed the hopelessness of the TUC's so-called centre's position — opening the door to further climb-downs by the general council.

The national leadership of the NUM is today the only leadership of a major union supporting determined and uncompromising resistance to the attacks from the ruling class.

CAROL TURNER reports from Blackpool.

Unexpected support for the miners

DECORATED IN a tasteful two-tone grey with a discreet burnt orange stripe, the TUC platform in Blackpool's Winter Gardens on Monday bore the legend 'you do not stand alone'. Put there in support of GCHQ workers, the subject of congress's first debate, the slogan had been replaced by Tuesday. As far as the general council was concerned, it certainly didn't apply to the miners.

Moving NUM composite 19, Arthur Scargill stressed the support pledged by last year's congress and the need to continue it while the attacks on the miners went unabated. It wasn't just the Coal Board who were opposing the miners, said Scargill, but the whole state machine — and its intention was to destroy the entire structure of the trade union movement.

Recalling the 1984 congress decision, and recognising the importance of the miners' strike, the resolution called on: 'the TUC to immediately campaign for and the next Labour government to legislate to provide

- 'a complete review of all cases of miners jailed as a result of the dispute.
- 'reinstatement of miners sacked for activities arising out of the dispute.
- 'reimbursement the National Union of Mineworkers and all other unions with all monies confiscated as a result of fines, sequestration and receivership, and
- 'the ending of all pit closures other than by exhaustion, saving jobs and communities and safeguarding the publicly owned coal

industry as the basis of meeting Britain's energy needs.'

To those claiming that the four principles contained in the resolution were a liability to Labour's electoral prospects, he replied: 'If this resolution is not passed, then it will represent a liability to the whole trade union movement, because the miners will feel deserted by the TUC and its affiliates.'

Backfire

Opposing the composite on behalf of the general council, Norman Willis achieved his most incompetent performance of the week. 'There are some things that congress will want to do, there are some things they must do,' he began. 'First to honour the miners and their families engaged in that massive dispute, that great human effort that lasted for that long year ...' drone, drone.

Ten minutes later he reached the point: 'Composite 19 goes so much further, too far. And I regret the unsupportable demands that have been posed to us.' The key point, he stressed,

was that dealing with reimbursement of money lost through fines and sequestration.

A jeer went up when one of his 'appeals' backfired: 'What about fines on individuals?' he asked. 'Are we to say that individuals who have lost their all, whatever it was, are to be left in the cold financially whilst unions are to get repaid?'

Unions couldn't claim 'special status' without damaging Labour's chances, he tried to explain. 'Get off your knees,' heckled a striking miner in the balcony.

'Shouting doesn't remove a challenge,' intoned Willis. 'And all your concern doesn't get my job back,' came the quick reply. The exchange encapsulated the debate.

When the composite was won on a hand vote miners and their supporters in the galleries rushed forward. Few imagined the card vote would win too. But, by a slim majority of 64,000, it did.

Afterwards delegates and visitors discussed the result. The banking and finance union (BIFU) had abstained; so had the teachers. But the last-minute decision of ASTMS to support the composite had swung the result.

Despite the decided shift to the right of congress as a whole, the debate showed that substantial support for the miners' and their leadership still exists across the unions.

'The fight to save the NUM is your fight'

SPEAKING AT a *Labour Herald* fringe meeting at the end of Tuesday's congress session, ARTHUR SCARGILL explained the full extent to which Tory anti-union laws had been used against the mineworkers' union. He said:

PEOPLE TODAY were talking about the decision of congress. What was it, they said, that made delegates change their minds? Because the predictions of the media had been that we would lose when it came to the vote at the end of the debate.

I believe that the delegates at the congress today took into account that our people have suffered in an unparalleled way at the hands of the state.

They recall that there were 60 of our members still in prison. They recognise that nearly 700 of our people are still sacked as a result of the crime that they have been fighting for the right to retain their job. They couldn't, in my view, in conscience do more than give support to policies which we had taken up on behalf of the entire labour and trade

union movement.

There were some who suggested that to ask for a review of cases of those still in prison would either embarrass the Labour Party and cause an electoral problem, or certainly create difficulties because we were challenging the judicial system.

People who suggest these things must be joking. Anyone who went to the Orgreave trials has seen a demonstration of corruption the like of which we haven't seen in British courts for half a century.

We had police officers who took the witness box who were accused of forging documents. We had police film produced which showed that the film you saw on BBC had been changed round to convey a different picture. And we had officer after officer coming to ad-



Arthur Scargill being arrested at Orgreave

mit that he wasn't telling the truth.

Our lads were on trial, charged with riot and facing a life sentence. They were facing a court that had already heard Leon Brittan the then-Home Secretary,

say that offences of this kind carry up to life imprisonment. It was no joke for members of my union to stand in that court room and have to listen to fabricated evidence. The police lied in that court room.

When people talk to me

about enquiries, there should be a public enquiry about what happened at Orgreave, about police violence on miners who were fighting for their jobs. My union has been the subject of an attack the like of which has never been seen

1985 ... TUC Congress 1985 ... TUC Congress

Stitch up at Blackpool

THE MEDIA presentation of the TUC congress was dominated by the 'drama' of the threat of a split with the AUEW that was being played out at Blackpool. But the reality of the congress itself was very different.

During the half day of debate — with dozens of resolutions and amendments — devoted to Thatcher's anti-trade union legislation there was no serious discussion, not even a direct mention in fact, of the possibility of a break with the AUEW and EEUPTU. There was no crisis atmosphere whatever.

From the outset it was clear a deal between the general council and the electricians and engineers was being stitched up. CAROL TURNER looks at the events at Blackpool and contrasts the drama reported in the media to the real situation at the congress — and at the nature of the final deal between the general council and the AUEW executive.

TUC WEEK, 2-6 September 1985, Blackpool. The contrast between the cliff-hanger presentation by the media and the reality of the sessions in the north west's most famous holiday resort couldn't have been starker. While *Newsnight's* Vincent Hanna agonised in the foyer of the Imperial Hotel and breakfast TV crew lurked in congress corridors, TUC delegates dozed unconcerned in their red-plush

seats or sipped undrinkable tea in Winter Gardens cafes. General secretaries glimpsed in fervent huddles outside the auditorium were more likely to be discussing how to hide their sell-out of the Wembley conference decisions than what stage the AUEW negotiations were at. The bust-up with the new realists was stage-managed by the general council from the start to finish — in part to cloak the clear step away



from the 1982 special conference decision to oppose the Tory anti-union laws that this congress was taking.

The first debate of congress set the scene for the events to come. The rest of the week proceeded according to plan — the only hiccup an unwanted vote of support for the miners.

A written supplement to the annual report brought delegates up to date with developments concerning the AUEW at the beginning of congress. The TUC finance and general purposes (FGP) committee had met the AUEW on 7 August and concluded that the engineers' actions were 'contrary to the declared policy of congress'. The general council subsequently adopted the FGP report and, after a further meeting with the AUEW on 29

August, directed them to 'discontinue such activities forthwith and undertake not to engage therein in the future'.

While congress awaited Gavin Laird's reply, Ron Todd moved composite 2. This formally reaffirmed the Wembley conference's 'total opposition' to the Tory anti-union laws, and called on all affiliates not to cooperate with, and a future Labour government to repeal, the 1980 and '82 Employment Acts and the 1984 Trade Union Act.

'This composite motion concerns the most important issue we have faced in many years,' said Todd. 'At its heart is a question of the fundamental credibility of the British trade union movement — with the public, with the employers, and above all with this bitter and hostile government...'

'What we were saying at Wembley, in our non-cooperation stand, was that we should not and would not seek to do the Tory government's job by putting the legal frighteners on our members as we pursued the everyday process of collective bargaining.' It was from this 'essential principle' that the decision came 'not to sacrifice our basic economic independence for the equivalent of a penny on members' subs'.

But when it came to seconding the composite, Alistair Graham of the CPSA declared himself in favour of a 'slightly different emphasis'. It would be foolhardy for Labour to enter the next election pledged to rescind all the anti-trade union legislation, he said. Some parts were already popular with trade union members. The issue

was that ballots had to take place in a 'more neutral' atmosphere.

Thus the supposed unity around the Wembley decisions, and against the actions of the AUEW, choked at its first breath. Far from the differences with the new realist right being a question of 'essential principle', they were shown to be a matter of tactical degree and speed of development.

When Eric Hammond of the electricians' union took the rostrum to oppose the composite, he simply carried such arguments to their logical conclusion. The Trade Union Act was 'nudging' unions into changing their practices, he declared. The 'flexible attitude' of the EEUPTU was serving its members better than the Wembley package. The 'Wembley days' had passed with the failure to elect a Labour government in 1983. Why penalise the engineers or the electricians for being the first to recognise that? After all the general council itself was going down the same path.

Ken Cameron's speech on the right to strike spelled out the real meaning of Tory laws. Mines, railways, communications: the list of essential services precluded from striking was potentially endless, he pointed out. 'And that's what Eric Hammond is asking us to accept.'

But if any delegate in the hall was unclear on the position of the general council, Norman Willis put them right. Echoing his 'we can't do without the electricians or the engineers' Monday speech, he said:

'We're not departing from Wembley. That would be giving a signal that we are packing up our policy of opposition. But nor are we being daft and embarking on a collision course of defiance which would result in desperate losses.' In short the TUC was not going to fight the anti-union legislation now, when it counts.

By Wednesday night the general council had accepted that the AUEW would ballot its members before taking more government money. Media pundits and general secretaries alike hailed the decision as a crisis averted at the eleventh hour. But the debate had shown the opposite.

No essential points of principle separated the general council from the AUEW executive. It is *this* which is creating the real problems for the trade union movement. The stakes that led the special conference of the TUC at Wembley to decide a policy of non-cooperation with Thatcher's anti-union legislation are just as high in 1985. That has already been shown by the NGA dispute, by GCHQ, and finally and conclusively by the full weight of legal attacks on the NUM during the strike.

There is no possibility that the paper-tiger unity of this year's TUC will frighten a determined Tory government into backing down.

The... represents a further step towards the openly collaborationist policies of the new realists — whose American-style unionism Thatcher would have others emulate. The outcome of this year's TUC will encourage, not dissuade, the courts from further attacks on the unions.

By refusing to support the miners during their 1984-85 strike, the general council has already shown its unwillingness to fight the Tories. By acquiescing in presenting the AUEW's proposed ballot as a 'compromise' it is demonstrating how much further it is prepared to shed the fig-leaf of the Wembley decisions. In reality the general council at its own pace, is preparing its own path for acceptance of the anti-union laws.

The problem for the trade union movement, and the general council, is that the issue cannot be one of verbal opposition to the anti-union laws. The Tories themselves have shifted the arena to a real-life fight.

The only way to combat the Tory attempts to pull the teeth of the trade union movement is to stand and fight now in the struggles that will continue to take place long before the general election.

That means fighting every attack as it takes place, fighting to win the Labour Party to support that struggle, and demanding an in-coming Labour government throws out the whole parcel of Tory anti-trade union legislation. A strategy for fighting the anti-union laws is precisely a strategy for fighting Thatcher.

In their speeches and in their action, that is exactly what most trade union leaders showed at the congress they do not possess. No amount of fiery rhetoric, no amount of media drama, can hide the fact that the 1985 TUC congress marked a further turn towards the right — towards the final acceptance of the anti-union legislation. The NUM was the only major union putting forward a consistent policy for struggle against Thatcher.

The bureaucratic way in which the trade union leadership handled the threatened split with the AUEW however is a classic case of how not to do things. No serious mass campaign has been waged by the TUC aimed at the ranks of the engineers against acceptance of government cash. Instead the union is threatened with expulsion if the executive takes the money.

This stands the issue on its head. It is a positive campaign for the fighting unity of the whole trade union movement against Tory attacks which constitutes the decisive question. What is needed is a fully TUC-backed campaign for a 'no' vote in the AUEW ballot, which explains these issues. One of the reasons it will not be forthcoming is because the general council is preparing its own climb-down in the face of the anti-union laws.

It is by the method of mass campaigning, not that of congress last week, that a serious struggle against the Tory attacks will start.



in Britain's trade union history. We've had our funds sequestrated. We've had the appointment of a receiver, the first time in the history of any trade union in Britain that a receiver has been appointed. The history to this is almost incredible.

We had been on strike for six months when two miners decided to take the Yorkshire area to court and argue that the ballot vote which they'd held some two years previously, and had recorded 86.5 per cent in an individual ballot for strike action, was out of date.

The judge not only listened to the application saying that the ballot of two years was out of date, but he also linked the national union with the Yorkshire areas and said that the union had no right to describe the strike as being official. And we'd been on strike for six months in accordance with rules in the constitution which had operated for nearly 50 years.

That wasn't a final judgement, he hadn't heard the case for and against: it was an interim judgement designed to destroy the national union's case and to undermine the strike itself.

When the union by a democratic decision refused to describe the strike as unofficial, because it was then contrary to our own rule and constitution, it was declared that the union was in contempt, and the funds of the union were sequestrated.

They came in, the sequestrators, and they seized our bank account — all £2.60p of it! And they said to the bank manager: 'Where's it gone?' He said: 'I don't know.'

They found it (the union funds) after about two months. Not because they were brilliant detectives, but because the international banking system volunteered information as to where our money was.

I'm willing to bet a pound to a penny that if we'd have been a gangster in New York we could have deposited money anywhere and nobody would have found it. But the national union's money they revealed instantly.

We applied to get our money: from Luxembourg, Dublin, the Isle of Man, Zurich. They (the sequestrators) lost in every instance. We haven't won a court case here, and we haven't lost one there.

So a new tactic had to be found. We suddenly found that there was an application to sack Heathfield, McGahey and Scargill as trustees of the miners' union, because we'd acted irresponsibly in taking the members' money away and investing it abroad. They said we had put the money at risk.

Well, I'll tell you what we'd done. We'd put it so much at risk that we got 22 per cent interest rate in-

stead of nine. I ought to be on the honours list!

They took us into court. Our barrister said: 'Just say that you'll not move the money if they'll not act to appoint a receiver.' Well that seemed fair to me — if we'd have moved it they'd have seized it. So we agreed, and the other side agreed.

We went back into court for a two-minute hearing to get the judge to declare that he'd accept what the two parties had said. At the back of the

June 1984 I was a trustee of the miners' union and I was also a trustee of the mineworkers' pension scheme. In the mineworkers' pension scheme we've got a bit of money: £6 thousand million.

Everything had gone on fine for years — till I got there. I said: 'Where do we have our investments?' They said: 'Well, they're invested properly.' I said: 'I want to know where.' And I stopped the investment

'The Orgreave trial was a demonstration of corruption the like of which we haven't seen for half a century'

courtroom a bloke in a wig and a gown jumped up and said: 'I'm here from the sequestrators.' And the judge said: 'Well I'm not supposed to hear you but I will.'

He listened to this fella for about an hour and a half, then he said: 'I agree with you.' And he sacked McGahey, and he sacked Heathfield, and he sacked me.

The judge appointed a Tory Party member as the receiver, who resigned some four weeks later. Then they appointed another receiver called Michael Arnold, who has since that time said he's the NUM.

There's an ironic twist to this story, because in

policy of the mineworkers' pension scheme.

Along with Pete Heathfield and Mick McGahey, we challenged it. And for challenging that I was to eventually be sacked as a trustee of the pension scheme.

Do you know what that charge was? I said that money that had been earned by Britain's miners should not be used for investment purposes in the apartheid state of South Africa. And I'd do it again tomorrow.

We've still got the receiver. We've had no money in the NUM since September 1984. We've got huge debts with our printers, and if it wasn't for the generosity of some

colleagues and friends we couldn't bring out newspapers or leaflets, we couldn't pay staff, we couldn't pay our rent or do anything.

Our union is facing a fight. We're fighting to sustain ourselves, and the labour and trade union movement's got to understand what's at stake. Our union's been hijacked, it's been taken over by the state.

Don't start talking to me about what happens in Poland, or Chile, or Bolivia — you've only got to look here in Britain where the union officials have been removed as trustees for carrying out the wishes of their members. We were elected by 100 per cent of our members as trustees of the union, and we've been kicked out by one unelected judge.

We're facing desperate problems, in terms of our financial future. We'll survive somehow even if it comes to the stage where no staff wages can be paid — and by the way me and Heathfield still aren't getting paid. But the most important thing to remember is that there's got to be a response from this movement.

The fight to save and sustain the NUM is *your* fight. Because to the extent that we're successful in fighting the policies of the Board and the government, to that extent your causes are also successful.

Photo: G.M. COOKSON



Bernard Reagan

This conference and last

CONGRESS '85 had none of the atmosphere of Brighton 1984. Last year's congress took place in the midst of the miners' strike. The hall was packed, from day one, with young miners and women from the support groups.

The air was electric all week. Everyone who addressed congress knew that they were being measured against the fighting determination of the NUM rank and file and its leadership.

In contrast, this year there were few occasions when the conference actually came alive. There were standing ovations for the GCHQ workers and the teachers fighting for their pay claim. But in the main speakers were long

on rhetoric, and there was no sense of the trade union leaderships actually gearing up to organise for struggle.

As Sylvia Burton, chair of Addenbrookes Hospital strike committee said at the Labour Herald fringe meeting: 'If the working class can't turn to the TUC for help, then where can they go?'

Like numerous other strikers lobbying congress — Silent Night workers, Norwood Junction NUR

guards, Barking Hospital workers — they hardly got a mention. But one group of workers who did receive a warm welcome were the Dunne's strikers from Dublin, who have been on strike for 11 months after their refusal to handle South African goods.

Whilst it was true that the dead hand of the bureaucracy, still overwhelmingly white, middle aged males, was much in evidence it was also clear that the inspiration of the miners' strike is very much alive. The vote by show of hands on the NUM motion revealed a massive majority in support.

It was only when the

card vote was taken, following the demands of right wing CPSA president Kate Losinska, that the margin became so narrow. At least one delegation, with over half a million

By Bernard Reagan, NUT delegate (personal capacity)

votes, cast their card vote against the NUM without a delegation meeting.

In our NUT delegation we did discuss it. A number of delegates, Socialist Teachers Alliance supporters and others,

moved backing for the motion. This was defeated because of opposition from the Broad Alliance, a grouping that includes members of the Communist Party.

However, since the NUT does have a clear policy calling on the TUC to campaign for amnesty, the delegation was obliged to reject the advice of general secretary Fred Jarvis to oppose the motion. Instead there was an overwhelming vote to abstain.

The miners vote reflects the impact of the strike amongst teachers, and the radicalisation that is going on inside the union in the course of our

current pay fight.

What typified the character of the congress was the fact that the whole question of the AUEW acceptance of government money for balloting was never debated by delegates. Instead, it was the trade union bureaucrats who stitched up the deal, behind the closed doors of the Imperial Hotel.

Whilst Blackpool 85 was undoubtedly a step backwards, the vote on the NUM motion reflects the fact that there remains a fighting determination inside the working class. We will have to look elsewhere than the TUC for any leadership however.

An old economic partnership

'WE MUST be honest about what we can and cannot do. We must promise what we can deliver. We must not promise more than we can deliver, and we must deliver what we promise.' So said Norman Willis introducing the joint TUC-Labour Party economic policy statement to this year's TUC congress.

In supporting a statement that managed to promise nothing at all, Mr Willis was onto a winning bet at last. For the misnamed *A New Partnership, A New Britain* is a masterpiece of empty rhetoric.

That is not to say, however, that the document is devoid of content. On the contrary, a more fitting title would be 'An Old Partnership, An Old Britain', for its intention rather openly is to lay the groundwork for an incomes policy and the return to a Labour government of the Wilson-Callaghan type. The entire structure is there.

The partnership document promises a 'national economic summit', between government, employers and the unions: an 'integral part of our policy for extending industrial democracy and planning' in the task of getting 'our people back to work'. The Willis TUC speech em-

phasised the '£50 billion spent abroad since 1979 — twice as much as manufacturing investment in this country, in the same period'. It was all shades of George Brown's 'National Plan' of 1964.

Wilson

Despite congress speeches deploring any hint of incomes policy, what is clear is that the 'partnership' is not one of the working class against capital, but a tripartite deal with employers. Labour fingers will remain crossed that the old trigger of 'increased demand' will create an expansion of

jobs and services.

Neither the leadership of the TUC nor the Labour Party have learned anything from the lessons of the Wilson years. Nor do they appreciate the changed situation in the 1980s.

The motive force of Thatcher's attacks on the trade union movement is precisely because employers are no longer prepared to maintain anything like full employment — a fact tacitly admitted in the partnership document.

'This statement shows how the next Labour government will reduce unemployment and get to grips with Britain's long-term industrial weakness. And it reaffirms our commitment to full employment.'

But it proposes precisely no measures to achieve it. Even previous pledges are largely absent.

As with the debate on the anti-union laws, so too the economic policies adopted by this year's congress represent a sharp shift rightward.

Photo: G.M. COOKSON



24 hour action for GCHQ



Photo: G.M. COOKSON

DESPITE SOME ring-ing rhetoric, no clear strategy emerged to combat the Tory attack on trade union rights at GCHQ, during the first debate of the 1985 TUC congress in Blackpool.

Rather it was a stage-managed affair, a display of amour propre between the general council and the new realist splitters acted out between Norman Willis and Eric Hammond.

Civil servants from Cheltenham were given pride of place in the visitors' gallery, their banners festooning the balcony during the debate, as one general secretary after another took the

rostrum to pledge their

Moving resolution 20, John Sheldon of the Civil Service Union pointed out that disciplinary action against GCHQ union members was imminent. 'I am therefore calling upon the movement,' he said, 'to act on its previous pledges: that if our members are dismissed they will take action in their support.'

Pledge

The pledge remains that of last year's congress, to call a day of action coordinated through the Council of Civil Service Unions.

'Support those people,

support the resolution,' demanded NUPE's Rodney Bickerstaff. 'And if Thatcher dares to move against one of them, let's make sure that the day of action is massive industrial action the like of which this government has never seen before.'

But with no plan beyond a 24 hour stoppage, Bickerstaff's speech is likely to stay only at the level of fine words.

It was the exchange between TUC general secretary Norman Willis and the electricians' leader Eric Hammond that provided a clue to the real purpose of this opening debate. Promising a ballot to call out the power workers for a one-day action in support of GCHQ,

Hammond began: 'I'm proud to be responsible for this contribution, it'll probably be my last one.' Welcoming the promise of support from the electricians, Willis said in his closing remarks: 'If this battle is to be won, Eric, we need the electricians and the engineers in this congress.'

The beginning of congress was a set-piece show of unity. Unity of course, is necessary in the face of a threatened split of the trade union movement. But media dramatics aside, there should be no doubt that the terms were those dictated by the AUEW and the EEPTU.

Eric Hammond called the tune, and Norman Willis dutifully piped.

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Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

AUEW forces TUC climb down

THERE WAS no compromise reached at Blackpool last week. There should be no doubt about this. Gavin Laird delivered a diplomatic speech in which he claimed there were no victors. But the settlement reached between the AUEW executive and the TUC general council over the acceptance of government cash for union ballots was entirely on the terms laid down by the engineering union leaders.

This is made perfectly clear in the letter sent by the AUEW general secretary to Norman Willis on 4 September — that is, the third day of congress — which formed the basis of the 'deal'. It says: 'the executive council of the AUEW ... are bound by the decisions of their national committee.'

Contrary to the impression given by the media, it was the union's national committee which had decided back in May that the AUEW should reballoon on this question, not the TUC general council. Had the TUC suspend-

ed or expelled the AUEW then this ballot and the current ballot for the presidential election would have been about affiliation to the TUC.

**By Jon Silberman,
AUEW convenor,
Colman Fasteners**

The AUEW membership, by our massive vote in favour of the retention of the political fund and Labour Party affiliation, have shown where we stand on being part of the

broader labour movement. But the TUC general council recoiled from taking this firm stand. Instead the AUEW will ballot in November.

The executive have given a commitment to the TUC, as spelt out in Laird's letter to Willis, simply that: 'the ballot forms ... will contain a statement that "The AUEW (EFC) as an affiliate of the TUC acknowledges the authority of congress and accepts that under the direction of the general council the consequential effect of a 'yes' vote will mean suspension from the TUC".'

The executive also committed themselves to ensure the ballot form 'meets the joint spirit of our discussion'.

The result of the ballot will not be known until

January. Engineers leaders have stated that they will not apply for further state funding until it is known.

But given the effective one-two they have got going with Hammond and the EETPU leaders, this is not much of a commitment. *The EETPU have already applied for government cash and the cheque is in the post.*

Moreover, the TUC leadership did not challenge the AUEW on the political terrain of accepting state cash for ballots. Instead they concentrated exclusively on the question of the authority of the general council and congress itself. But if AUEW and EETPU members are to be won to a 'no' vote in the coming ballots, they will have to be convinced that accepting state funding for the unions *compromises the union's independence.*

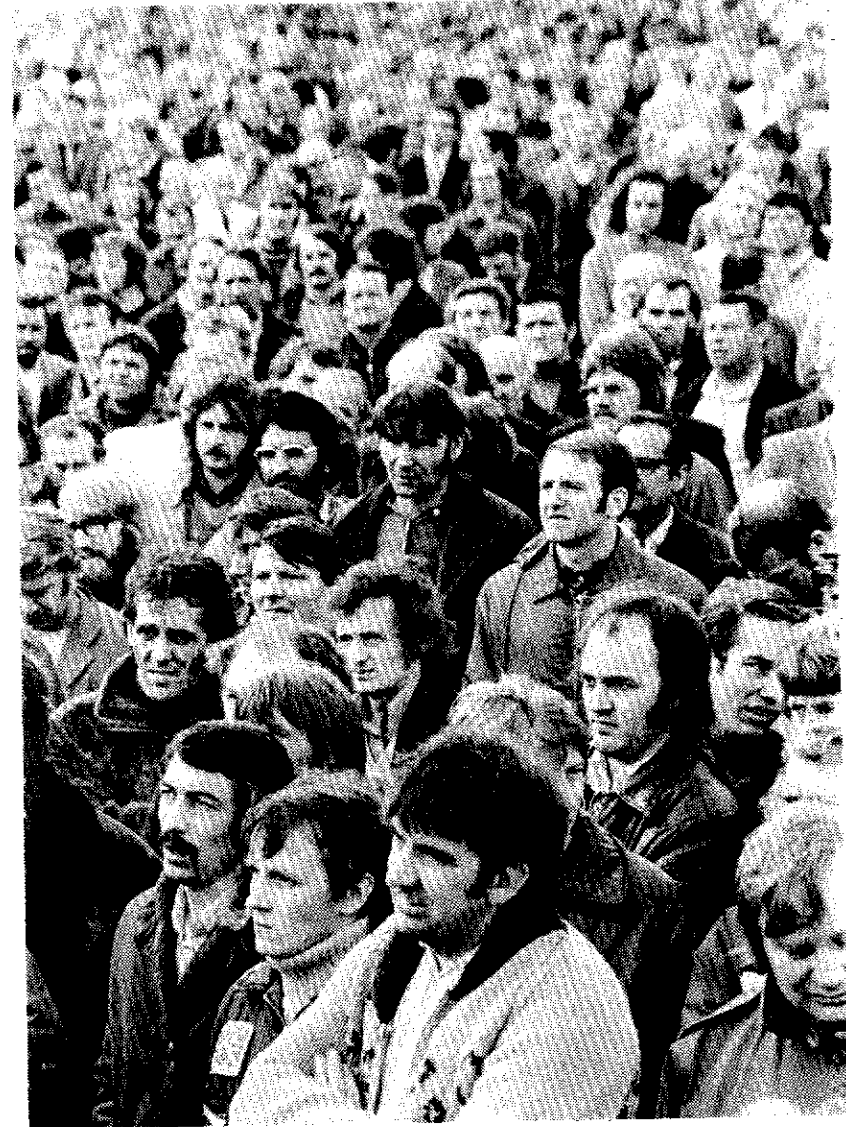
The question of the independence from the state of the AUEW, indeed of the entire trade union movement, is the key one. But the TUC general council has already compromised itself on this issue of principle. Union leadership after union leadership have complied with the Tory government's 1984 Trade Union Act, for instance by stipulating that their members hold ballots before taking industrial action.

With the notable exception of the NUM, this also goes for the left leaderships.

But there is deep opposition in the ranks to state intervention. In the AUEW itself a wave of protest greeted an executive council circular on the need for ballots before industrial action, such that Gavin Laird was forced to make a public retraction in the August issue of the union's journal.

It is to this deep-felt sentiment that the campaign for a 'no' vote must appeal. Laird and Hammond have threatened to split the movement if they can win their members to a 'yes' vote.

The splitters can be defeated. The alternative would be a wholesale climbdown by the TUC on its opposition to the cash-ballot-laws.



Tocher says 'no cash for ballots'

AT AN AUEW presidential eve-of-poll rally in Birmingham Broad Left candidate John Tocher came out strongly for a 'no' vote in the coming ballot on acceptance of government cash. 'Once an independent union starts accepting state funding,' he declared, 'it's the thin end of the wedge to state control.'

Tocher challenged his audience not to think this is impossible. 'Our history shows it is true. He who pays the piper calls the tune.'

Voting in this, the first round of the battle for president, goes on until 29 December. Tocher spelt out what he now considers to be the chief issue of the campaign.

We are at the crossroads. Some people have shown that they want to take us beyond the Rubicon. Leading members of the AUEW are already consorting with the scab union of Nottinghamshire miners. They're opposed to any struggle with the government or the employers.'

Tocher condemned what he described as the 'ultra right' leadership of the AUEW. 'They are prepared to see a split. With Hammond, they have been blatantly flouting TUC decisions, daring the general council to take them on.'

He contrasted the hard line taken by the engineers' leadership in the face of TUC decisions with their stance towards the bosses. 'That's the

thing with these people. They get very tough with their members. They get very tough with other trade unions. But if they meet an angry employer you can't see them for dust!'

But Tocher backed the Willis-Laird agreement. 'I

think the general council did the right thing. Now we must campaign for a "no" vote. If there's another "yes" vote, the trade union movement will either have to be prepared for a split or dilute its policies to accommodate the AUEW.'

Socialist Action fighting fund

OUR paper is needed. Our paper is appreciated. Our paper is unique. This was the verdict of Socialist Action supporters in the engineering and rail industries who met over last weekend.

Engineering comrades pledged £240 there and then to the paper's fighting fund. Railworkers donated £125.

Peter Heathfield, general secretary of the NUM told our sellers at the Women against Pit Closures conference that he took Socialist Action because 'It had not opportunistically dropped the miners case like so many other left papers'. Our coverage in defence of the NUM has been second to none.

Nowhere else is it possible to get the arguments and information on the struggle in

rail. Our informed coverage allowed us to organise successful Socialist Action forums in Manchester, North West London and Glasgow which were well attended by railworkers and other class fighters in the wake of the guards ballot defeat.

This record is what our engineering comrades expect Socialist Action to emulate in relation to the momentous events now facing engineering workers because of the course pursued by the engineering unions right wing leadership. They have requested a special four-page supplement in the paper, aimed at clarifying the 'money for ballots' issue and the question of state intervention into the unions. Thirteen papers were sold among those who attended the national AUEW Broad Left rally in Birmingham last weekend.

Most important of all has been our coverage of South Africa and Central America. Successful sales have been held in places not previously tried.

Last weekend, over 100 papers were sold in East London markets, over 20 in the centre of Manchester, and good sales in other centres — mainly to black people.

Yet weekly publication of our paper is not secure. Particularly during the summer, regular financial contributions to the paper have been disrupted. This was the basis for the appeal to our engineering and rail workers.

We ask every supporter to rush donations to the editorial offices. We are not crying wolf. Our weekly schedule is threatened if we do not get a major increase in donations rapidly.

Every little helps. Please send your donation to Socialist Action, PO Box 50, N1 2XP.

Railworkers at TUC

THE TUC congress was notably silent on the issue of a rail strike and the plight of sacked guards. But during the GCHQ debate, Scottish railworker PAT DEVITT took the opportunity to highlight the driver only dispute. He said:

I STARTED with the railways in 1938, more than 27 years ago. In July of this year rail workers in this area were issued with copies of their service history. In my particular case this showed an almost 100 per cent clear discipline and attendance record. But within three weeks I was sacked.

Why? Because I am a Glasgow Central guard. Like guards in other parts of Britain we were issued with an ultimatum by management: we were instructed to run experimental driver only operated trains and told to forget about past procedures of consultation and negotiation. We were being asked to abandon any loyalty to our union and its position on driver only operation.

We were being given a large sample of a new jack-boot industrial relations policy of BR. When we refused, we were sent home. When we continued to stand by our union, we were sacked.

This is the industrial tyranny railworkers now face, brought about by a combination of the anti-union laws introduced by the present government, alongside the threat of the dole queues if we refuse to click our heels when management snap their fingers.

Tyrants must be met with resistance. Long live the trade union movement!

The road to Soweto

THE SOUTH African state is unique. It does not merely 'discriminate' against the majority of its population, it excludes three quarters of them even from formal citizenship.

Nor is the apartheid state some backward relic. It is the most advanced industrial state in Africa. South Africa refutes any view that capitalism and 'free enterprise' automatically produce democracy or even political advance. On the contrary, it is because of capitalism that the South African state historically became more reactionary at every turn. It is because it is so politically backward that South African capitalism has been so successful.

How did such uniquely reactionary and racist state come into being? In a nutshell, it was born of colonisation, slavery, and gold.

Wave

The South African whites were colonists — and to this day call themselves Europeans. The first mass wave of settlers were Dutch farmers. Then in 1794 came the English — to claim the strategically located Cape colony for their Empire.

But these whites were also slavers. And a slave by definition, is not human. They work but have no rights.

When in 1834 the British finally 'freed' the Boers' slaves, the state and labour relations that emerged were already branded with extreme oppression. The 1841 Master and Servants' Act made it illegal to break a labour contract; the Kaffir Employment Act forced black people to sign contracts and carry passes.

In the three Boer states black people had no vote and the Transvaal constitution bluntly stated 'the people want no equality of white and black inhabitants either in church or state'.

In North America those who colonised the interior of the continent, and who farmed the land with their own labour, had already won independence when they forged the final form of the United States constitution. These small farmers in alliance with the radical bourgeoisie, and workers, defeated the slave states and had to proclaim freedom for all on their banner in the US civil war.

Diamonds

In South Africa the interior was instead colonised by slavers fleeing from the British. They drove the inhabitants off the land and set them to work — as wage labourers without political rights. When there was a struggle for independence from Britain at the beginning of the 20th century it was waged by the most backward, cramped and reactionary section of South African society — the Boers. This struggle for independence had white supremacy openly inscribed on its banner.

Nevertheless it was just conceivable that the unstable Boer farm system could have produced a different development — an alliance of poor and proletarianised whites with dispossessed Africans against landlords and imperialists. This was a type of pattern which was seen in South America. But one discovery determined a completely different course: gold.

Diamonds had already been found in 1870. In 1886 the largest gold fields in the world were discovered. The profits were stupendous, standing even today at up to a hundred per cent higher than the average industrial average. This development allowed an agreement of the British and the Boers.

A deputation of Boers visited Britain within a month of their defeat in the Boer war of 1899-1902. They sought assurance from the British government that 'the recent dispute between the white races would change nothing in the status of the black'.

They need not have worried. The British imperialist Cecil Rhodes, who by 1900 controlled the mining industry, had already introduced the 'Glen Grey' Act in 1894 — calling it his 'Native Bill

for South Africa.' Its purpose was to drive blacks off their land and into his mines.

'Every black man cannot have three acres and a cow'. Rhodes declared 'It must be brought home to them that in future nine-tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour.'

In short the British imperialists transplanted the Boer system of labour relations from the land to the mines — welcoming the system the Boers had developed with open arms.

Struggle

Africans were to be confined by force to a tiny portion of the land, denied the right to settle in the towns, and herded into the mines and factories by sjamboks and starvation.

Africans movements were rigorously controlled by Pass Laws and forced segregation. They were to become an institutionalised migrant labour force deprived of the most basic right of all: the right to form a community by living where they chose.

The profits of South Africa were imperialist. They derived from the combination of mineral monopoly and super-exploited labour were opened up by foreign capital.

But despite losing the war the Boers managed one unique feat. They maintained control of their own capital and siphoned off a portion of the superprofits of the British. They used this to create a white bloc uniting all from the richest mineowner to the poorest landless Boer. With it they forged a new state.

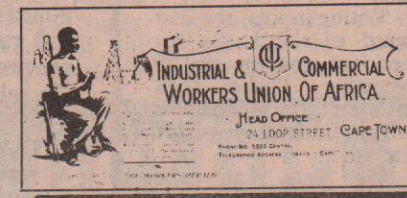
Instead of uniting with the black people to throw out the imperialists the Boer settlers united with the imperialists to suppress the blacks. They secured the blacks, by virtue of a common goal with the British, to a white supremacist state — a unique fusion of settler and imperialist capital, a state which was not a nation state but a purely settler state of the white people.

Black

The chosen instrument for this process was the Boer National Party formed in 1902. It was this party which 'invented' Apartheid. The National Party in turn was linked to a network of institutions of Afrikaner capital such as its first banking house, Volkskas (founded 1934), its first investment trust, Federale Volksbeleggings (founded 1940) and the infamous secret society, the Broederbond.

The National Party finally won its electoral victory in 1948 and it has governed ever since. But this simply culminated a forty-year process during which Afrikaner capital achieved through political alliance with British imperialism what it had lost in the war against it.

The rise of the apartheid state was inexorable. In 1913 the Land



Act, known to Africans as the 'Law of Dispossession', confined black people to 7 per cent of the land. The 1923 Urban Areas Act prevented blacks settling in the towns and introduced a uniform pass system. A succession of segregationist measures between the wars drove black, coloured and Indian people off the voters' roll.

In Labour relations the principles of the original Masters' and Servants Act were re-enforced again and again and were coupled to the pass system. It was virtually illegal to strike — and black strikes were broken with mass dismissals, mass arrests, and often mass shootings. The risk of any alliance between black workers and poor whites was prevented by white wage rates 8-10 times higher than those of blacks and by depriving black people of skilled



IT WAS the Soweto rebellion of 1976 that focused world attention on the new rise of black revolt in South Africa. It is the starting point of most people's knowledge of South Africa and the direct background of current events.

Soweto was the political backdrop to the rapid rise of the black trade unions. It showed that the long year's

of apartheid's strengthening were coming to an end.

But South Africa had a long history of struggle before that great revolt of 1976 — a history without which the present struggle cannot be understood.

ALAN FREEMAN looks at the rise of the apartheid state — and at the history of black resistance which led to the explosion of 1976.

jobs and education.

Apologists for Britain's support for the South African regime often try to claim that apartheid was some peculiar 'Boer' invention — an aberration which will eventually disappear when 'English good sense' prevails. But when the National Party government of 1948 began to implement apartheid formally it was only making systematic what had been developed with full British support in the entire hundred years that had gone before.

Apartheid, however, was not merely a 'logical' development of what went before. It was the *only possible* way to defend it. This is why every hope of 'reform' apartheid has so far been dashed and every mass movement for civil rights has finally been drowned in blood.

Why? Because once mining capital began to expand, as it had to, into industry proper, then it was inevitable that the urban black population would start to grow. Eight million black coloured and Indian people today work in industry — making it ever more impossible to maintain the pure fiction that the 'black' nation belonged in its rural homelands. It became more and more necessary to *politically* exclude blacks from any rights in the South African state.

Segregation

The legislative keystone of apartheid was therefore the Group Areas act of 1950 — which created segregated residential areas for whites, coloured, Africans and Indians. By 1979 550,000 people had been evicted from their homes under this act and shipped off either to makeshift townships, driven back into permanent migrant status (by being officially resident in the Bantu

homelands but obliged to work in the towns) or by forcing blacks into the twilight existence of the illegal shanty towns.

Women were particular victims of a system designed to prevent stable urban communities emerging. Under the Natal Code black women are perpetual legal minors with no right to own or inherit property, act as guardians of their children or represent themselves in court.

A staggering total of 6 million Africans have been uprooted and forcibly resettled under this policy inevitably, because of the ever-growing threat to white rule created by black resistance, this policy has gone hand in hand with growing repression, and growing political exclusion.

The 'theory' of apartheid provides for 'independent' black administrations in the bantu areas. But the practical effect is that the hated collaborator bodies in the bantustans simply serve as part of a repressive apparatus which is among of the most sophisticated and well-equipped in the world.

The real intention of the entire system is simple: it is to deprive blacks of any right to be present, or even to vote, in the real bodies of power in the country: in those of the white state.

Such a state as that of South Africa cannot be 'reformed'. It cannot 'accommodate' the black people whose whole purpose it is to subjugate. It is not even a national state of South Africa. It is a purely white state.

That apartheid state can only be *overthrown*. And that task falls to the black population of South Africa who, for four hundred and thirty years, have been its victims. The struggle against apartheid is one to smash the entire existing state structure in South Africa and everything that sustains it.

South African history

Origins of the apartheid state

THE BLACK people of South Africa have been writing the history of resistance since the first Portuguese settlers were driven out in 1488. By 1879 the Zulu forces which headed resistance to the Boers, had 50,000 troops in arms and inflicted a stunning defeat on the British army.

The modern history of black resistance in South Africa however starts with same process which created apartheid in its modern form — with the rise of the black working class.

Apartheid finally is creating its own gravedigger. The racist South African state is founded on an army of black labour which grows in proportion to white South African capitalism's development. Not surprisingly, therefore, the history of resistance to apartheid, and of resistance to South African capitalism, have been intertwined at every step.

Successive leaderships have explored 'peaceful' reform only to find this road barred by the South African state. Eighty years of bitter struggle have progressively shown black people that they cannot just *defy* the apartheid state. They must overthrow it. The successive waves of struggle have shifted the movement progressively leftwards in its orientation.

The very first modern movement of revolt — Ghandi's 1906 campaign against passes for Indians — illustrated this dynamic clearly. Ghandi, the



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founder of non-violent resistance, openly opposed the strike movement which it produced. But his movement was already merging into a much wider one against the proposed 'whites only' government of the new Union of South Africa in 1909.

1909 in turn saw the first country-wide movement of Africans and in 1912 the African Native National Congress — renamed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923 — heard Pixley Seme, a young black lawyer, explain that: 'The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa — a union in which we have no voice in the making of laws and no part in their administration. We have called you therefore to this conference so that we can together devise ways and means of forming our national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges.'

World War I however exposed the weaknesses of the ANC's largely middle class founding leadership. Believing a British victory could bring reform, the ANC leadership attempted to damp down struggle and even recruited black people to fight for British colonial ambitions against the Germans in Namibia.

This stand aborted the mass movement which in 1913 had developed into the first anti-pass campaign organised by African women in the Orange Free State, and the first sustained strike

point on the issue of 'boycotting' these, and indeed all, white institutions became a fundamental line of divide in the resistance.

In 1941, under the impact of war-time inflation, municipal, rail, dock, milk distribution, and mine workers walked out in the Rand and Natal. This was under conditions where legislation bluntly prohibited 'all strikes by Africans under all circumstances.' In one strike alone sixteen were shot dead.

But despite this repression there were over 60 illegal strikes between 1942 and 1944. In 1942 the Council of Non-European Trade Unions was formed. This at one point had 119 affiliated unions and by 1945 represented 40 per cent of Africans in manufacture and commerce.

Two political developments accompanied this process. In 1943 the Non-European Unity movement was formed under strong Trotskyist influence. The South African Trotskyists dissolved into it, and the Unity Movement adopted a ten-point programme of democratic demands. Unfortunately it made a propaganda fetish of the boycott tactic — which it substituted for mass mobilisations and actions.

Simultaneously in the ANC a radical wing, the ANC Youth League, developed under the future ANC leaders Mandela, Tambo and Sisulu.

The ANC Youth League stated unambiguously that South Africa belonged to the indigenous people by right. Its *Programme of Action*, adopted by the ANC as a whole in 1949, called for 'the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non co-operation and such other means as may be being about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations.'

Nationalism

The ANC Youth League was distinguished not just by its militancy but by its African nationalism. It specifically *did not* consider itself Communist. That position, in turn, has to be put in the context of the role of white working class organisations and of the Communist Party of South Africa itself.

In 1922 striking white miners had utilised the slogan 'workers of the world fight and unite for a white South Africa.' The largely white CPSA adapted to white pressure. It made a decisive turn to black workers only under the pressure of the Communist International.

The ultra-left third period line of Stalinism launched in the late 1920s then purged the CPSA of successive leaders and cut it off from the nationalists. This reduced the CPSA to a rump and created the space for an influential Trotskyist movement.

During World War II the CPSA followed every twist of Stalin's line and subordinated everything to support for the Allies' war effort. In 1947, back in the ANC, the CPSA supported the old ANC leaders in standing candidates for the NRC again — allegedly on a boycott ticket.

It is not surprising therefore that in the 1940s and 1950s black radicals were not keen on the CPSA — and why the ANC Youth League initially developed independently of it.

by blacks in the South African mines.

The mass struggle resumed after the war with a wave of union battles. In 1920 71,000 black miners struck. The Chamber of Mines had to admit the struggle had 'practically paralysed the country'. Eleven miners were shot, but the power of black working people was now plain for all to see.

Out of the post World War I strike wave the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) was formed under Clements Kadalie. Kadalie had led the 1919 Port Elizabeth dock strike. By 1923 10,000 of the ICU's 30,000 members were women.

The 'constitutionality' issue however broke the ICU's back. Kadalie reacted to increasing government repression by rejecting strikes as 'un-constitutional'. In 1926 he contrived to have the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) expelled from the union.

A spontaneous strike wave in 1927-28 pushed the ICU membership up to 200,000 but the leadership renounced the strikes. The ICU broke up soon afterwards.

The 'constitutionality' issue soon directly surfaced again in the political movement. The All Africa Convention (AAC) of 1935 brought together African, Coloured and Indian peoples for the first time to oppose a segregation bill introduced by Prime Minister Hertzog. This bill effectively removed all non-Europeans from the voting rolls and set up stodge 'Native Representation Councils' (NRCs) instead.

The AAC leadership however threw itself into the NRC elections — claiming that they had to use whatever constitutional mechanisms were around to push the AAC's case.

In reality the NRCs were not merely powerless but instruments of the developing apartheid state. From this

When, in 1948, the National Party was elected to office and began to introduce apartheid the ANC Youth League shot to leadership of the struggle. On 1 May 1950 a one day stoppage of work was met by savage repression. Eighteen people were murdered by the authorities and a general strike was called for 16 June in mourning and protest. This in turn was greeted by the Suppression of Communism Act and many ANC leaders were driven underground.

In 1952 the 'Defence Campaign' was launched which turned the ANC into the broadest mass resistance body. The ANC's membership rose from 7000 to 100,000 at a time when black union membership falling to 38,000.

The Defiance Campaign, organised jointly with Coloured and Indian mass organisations, was to protest against six specific measures — including the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act, and the Bantu Authorities system. It was however led on Ghandian lines with 5000 selected 'defiers', and could not defeat the all out repression launched against the movement. By 1953 ANC membership had fallen to 28,000 with its key leaders jailed or prevented from being able to function.

Principles

The ANC response under CP prompting, was to convene the 'Congress of the People' in 1956. This adopted the *Freedom Charter* (published in Socialist Action No. 111) which is now considered by the ANC as part of its founding principles.

A militant wing of the ANC rejected this development. Robert Sobukwe, who emerged as spokesperson of the opposition, denounced the phrase in the *Freedom Charter* reading 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white', Sobukwe proclaimed that 'African Nationalism is the sole ideological basis for the salvation of our people'.

Against a background of militant bus boycotts, a popular campaign for a £1 per day minimum wage, and generalised uprisings in the townships, the polarisation within the ANC grew. Faced with exclusion the dissidents in 1959 launched the Pan African Congress (PAC) with Robert Sobukwe as president.

'We aim, politically, at government of the Africans, for the Africans', Sobukwe stated, 'with everybody who owes his loyalty only to Africa and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as African.'

Opposing all collaboration with either the government or with white parties, the PAC declared 'there can be no cooperation between oppressor and oppressed, dominating and dominated.'

Although PAC influence afterwards drastically declined, some measure of its support of the time can be seen from the fact that the government 'survey' in 1963 found that 57 per cent of all Africans supported the PAC as against the ANC.

In December 1959 the PAC called for civil disobedience against the pass laws, and the ANC then called for a mass day of action against the same laws in March. This was the political background to the date that is engraved

in the memory of everyone living at that time: 21 March 1960 — Sharpsville.

On that day police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators, killing 67 and injuring more than 180. Nearly all were shot in the back.

The pass laws were temporarily suspended but the mass mobilisations went on. The Justice Minister told parliament 'Their aim is to bring to its knees any white government in South Africa which stands for white supremacy ... they do not want peace and order; what they want is not £1 a day for all the Bantu; what they want is our country.'

Repression, then as now, was the only answer for the regime. Neither the PAC nor the ANC were prepared for the scale on which it was launched. On 8 April a wave of government terror was launched. Both the ANC and PAC were outlawed. 18,000 were arrested — including 1,700 activists.

This was the decisive turning point in South Africa because it marked the end of all projects for gradual reform or legal action. Both ANC and PAC responded by setting up armed wings.

The problem however was that this armed resistance became for a whole period counterposed to systematic mass action. Both organisations at the time isolated themselves from the next wave of mass actions in the 1970s.

The next decisive developments in the black population were those produced by the capitalist nature of apartheid itself. The black urban working class grew inexorably despite all attempts to segregate it, deport it, deprive it of rights of settlement, and break it up. Sprawling semi-legal townships shot up on the fringes of the industrial centres.

The movement which finally gave expression to the burning frustration of the youth of these townships is symbolised for the world in the person of Steve Biko.

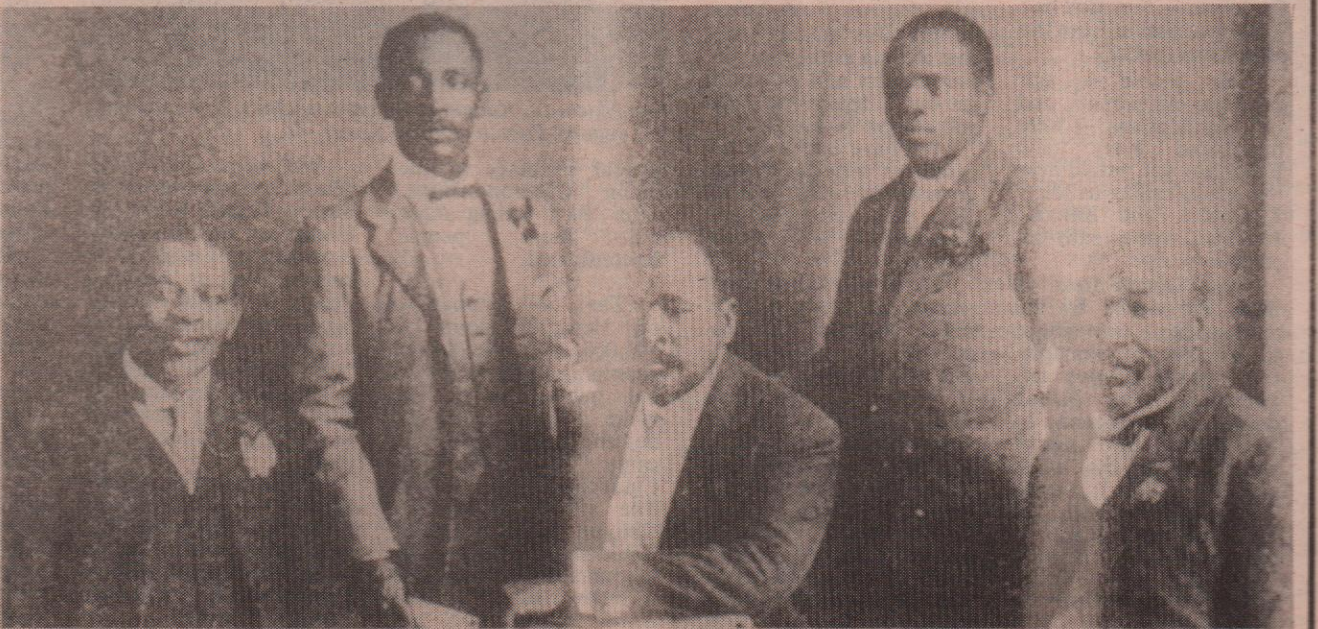
Biko

Biko had led an all-black split from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1968, forming the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) in 1969. SASO became the nucleus of the Black Consciousness movement: the proclamation that Africans, Indians and 'coloured' constituted a single black nation in South Africa. As well as hearkening back to the Africanism of the ANC Youth League and the PAC, the black consciousness movement was strongly influenced by black American radicals and revolutionaries such as Malcolm X. The movement was propelled by the defeat of the Portuguese colonialists on South Africa's northern borders.

It was under this movement's influence that, on May 17, 1976, school students in Soweto organised a boycott of Orlando West Junior Secondary school in protest against the new policy of making Afrikaans the main teaching language in the Transvaal.

The name 'Soweto' joined that of Sharpsville in the world's memory as a symbol of anti-Apartheid struggle: but with a difference. For if Sharpsville was the symbol of white repression, Soweto was the symbol of black revolt.

Since then the struggle in its different forms has never stopped.



1914 ANC delegation

THE REAL character of the Socialist Party government of Mitterrand in France is nowhere more starkly revealed than in its policy in the French colony of New Caledonia.

On coming to power Mitterrand promised the Kanak people of these islands 'peace and independence'. Instead they have met torture, a rapidly escalating French police and military presence, imprisonment, and repression. Kanak resistance to France has been mounting rapidly and dominating the life of the country.

SUSANNA OUNEI a long-time activist in the Kanak national liberation struggle, here explains what has been happening in New Caledonia and the history of her people's struggle against the French rule.

THE Struggle in New Caledonia has not just begun now. The struggle began in 1853 when the French arrived and colonised our people. When they arrived they came with the bible.

In their bible it said, never steal and never kill because God will be unhappy. While we believed in God, they massacred our people and stole our land.

While they were saying never kill and never steal because God will be unhappy, we were reduced from 200,000 to only 26,000 Kanak people by the massacres.

In 1878, a chief called Atai, who did not want to follow what the French said, organised the people and we had the first insurrection against the French rule in New Caledonia.

In 1917, when they fought the Germans in World War I, the French wanted to bring our people to France to protect their land against the Germans. Our chief Noel said, 'why are we going to France to defend the land of the French against the Germans, when they are stealing our land and killing our people?' And so he organised the people to refuse to go to France.

And what happened to him? They cut his head off and sent it to the museum in Paris. To the present day, the head of our chief is in Paris. The head of our chief is kept by the same people who conquered us and who said at that time that we were the savages!

Kanak Party

After that, right up until 1953, our people — our grandfathers and our grandmothers — were too scared to revolt. The repression was really strong. Up until 1946, the Kanak people did not even have the right to go into the towns — they first had to get permission from the gendarmes (police).

Our people — our mothers, our parents, and our grandparents — were humiliated every day. Every day you would hear the whites calling us 'dirty Kanaks' — and 'Kanak', for them, was a really pejorative word.

The Kanak dress (a frock introduced by the missionaries throughout the Pacific), for example, is a symbol of our colonisation. The Kanak dress was designed to distinguish the Kanak women from the white women. The Kanak women did not have the right to wear jeans or white women's clothes. They had to wear a Kanak dress, so that when the tourists came they could see these dresses and admire the 'beautiful folklore' of our country.

In 1953 our parents formed the first Kanak political party, the Union Calédonienne (UC) and they began to ask for an improvement in our living conditions.

In 1969 a Kanak chief called Nidoish Naisseline came back from France, where he had been studying. Nidoish Naisseline had been involved in the 1968 workers' and students' upsurge in France. When he arrived back in New Caledonia the word 'Kanak' was really pejorative, but he fought to make it valuable again.

Then we created the Red Scarves. The Red Scarves was the beginning of our movement of today. At that time lots of Kanaks were arrested, including Naisseline. They sent Naisseline to France, but in 1972 we called him back again because the struggle began to get strong.

Then the right wing began to organise. They said if New Caledonia became independent, we would not be able to get rice and sugar. They said we would be like people in Africa, who die because they are hungry.

Economy

So we went around the countryside and explained to the people that our imports did not all come from France but from other countries, and we explained the importance of independence.

New Caledonia has a rich economy. We are the second-largest producers of nickel in the world. As well, we produce manganese, chrome, gold, iron, cobalt, zinc and coffee. And of course, we have tourists.

We said to our people that we must have our freedom, because the French use our land and say they are staying in New Caledonia to protect us and stop us from being hungry. But our reply was that as long as they stay in our country and we don't get our independence, we will always be hungry.

We have had a lot of problems with the French government since then. In 1975 they killed Richard Kamouda, a young Kanak.

In 1979 Theodore Daye was shot by a racist French police inspector. The inspector was never tried, but was simply sent back to France. In 1980 they killed Emile Kutu. He was shot when he and some of his friends visited an employer to pick up some wages that were owing. The employer refused to pay and instead opened fire. He was given only a light jail sentence and has since been freed. In 1981 they killed Jean-Pierre Declercq, who was a white from France. He was



3000-strong FLNKS demonstration in Noumea on 11 March

Photo: ROUGE

Kanaks fight for freedom



Eloi Machoro, Kanak leader assassinated on 12 January this year by French colonial forces

Photo: INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

general secretary of the Union Calédonienne. After each killing more and more people demonstrated.

The total population of New Caledonia is 140,000. But the Kanak people are only 60,000 in our own country. The white French, who are descended from those who came in 1853 (the Caldoches) are 30,500. The other 49,500 are Chinese, Wallis Islanders, Tahitians, and other immigrants. This figure also includes an estimated 20,000 French civil servants and their families, who are temporarily resident in New Caledonia.

We wrote the word 'Kanak' on our scarves. It was our slogan. When the French saw we were really proud to say 'Kanak', they began to call us 'Melanesians'. We began explaining to our people why we wanted to make the term 'Kanak' valuable. And we talked about the land, the need to demand the return of our land without conditions.

Noumea is the capital, and a white town. Kanaks cannot live there because they have no work. Out of 60,000 Kanaks only 7000 work, so the Kanak people live in their tribes.

The new immigrants we got were all the traitors, supporters of French im-

perialism from Algeria, all the traitors from Vanuatu, all the traitors from Vietnam. We get that sort of refugee!

The Mitterrand government has said that we will get independence through a referendum, and that all the people living in New Caledonia will be able to vote. We refuse that. We say that only people who have one parent born in New Caledonia should be able to vote. We made this concession because we recognise that the people who have been in our country for generations, the Caldoches, did not choose to come here. We recognise them as 'victims of history'. But they refuse to recognise our rights as the indigenous people of the land.

Sovereignty

The French 'socialist' government of Mitterrand sent a special envoy to negotiate for them. Edgard Pisani said he came to bring all sides together, to meet all the 'communities'.

Communities? They can call other people ethnic communities because they are from overseas, but not us. We are not a community, we Kanaks are the true people of the land.

On the question of negotiations, we say we do not want a plan for independence drawn up in France for us to just sign. We do not want neo-colonial independence where France can keep its military bases and keep control of our economy. We want true economic, political and cultural independence and then we can negotiate our own agreements as a sovereign nation with other sovereign nations. Kanak sovereignty is our basic right in New Caledonia. It is not negotiable.

Kanak women have played an enormous role in our struggle for freedom. In 1853 our grandmothers fought against the bloody colonisation. They hid their children in the bush to prevent the army from killing them. If there are 60,000 Kanak people today it is because of the great courage of our grandmothers.

During the period of colonisation, in the coffee plantations they worked hard even when they were pregnant and after they had given birth. Since then, the life of our women hasn't changed.

The colonisers treated the women like they would treat a dog. They used the women just to clean up after them. Sometimes they were raped by the army.

Before the French arrived in our country we had our own customs and we had our dignity. A lot of respect existed between the men and the women. When religion arrived in our country it said that the women must stay at home and never go anywhere. They must just stay with their husband, and if they don't then the husband has the right to beat them.

Lots of young Kanak women who were only 14 or 15 years old got pregnant. The church said that we must not talk about contraception, because God would be unhappy. They said that it was a crime to talk about contraception. In 1982, we created a group for Kanak women and other women exploited in the struggle, the GFKEL. We said: 'Contraception is not a crime, but it is a crime for society to make a 14 or 15-year-old have a baby and care for it for the rest of her life.'

Before colonisation, our grandmothers had contraception — Kanak contraception. Since the

arrival of colonisation and the bible, we have not had the right to use Kanak contraception, because it is a 'crime'. So, when the 14 and 15-year-old Kanak women had their babies, they sometimes left them in the bush. We did not protest against the young women, but against society — the hypocritical society — because it left these young women to get pregnant by withholding contraception.

Our women's group analysed the problem of colonialism and of our future. We told our people that they could not get true independence from capitalism or imperialism if they couldn't see the problem of the grassroots. And for us the grassroots are the women, because in New Caledonia the women do every job.

So we talked with our people and explained that it was really dangerous if the men continued to oppress the women, because they could not talk about the true revolutionary movement for the future if they didn't see what was happening in their own house. And they must see the problem in their own house, and the situation of their exploited sisters, our Kanak sisters.

In our own women's group we felt that we must not only talk, but also move to help our brothers. We did not want to stay along; we wanted to go together with them. And we think that we can change our Kanak brothers, because both Kanak women and men are exploited. So we must fight side by side with them, occupy the land together, fight on the barricades with them. Our group is represented in the FLNKS. After each action, we pose before them the problem of the future and the problem of imperialism.

Freedom

Today in New Caledonia there is the Kanaks and a few white allies on one side and the whites and other immigrants on the other. For me, the women who are on the other side and who oppose the liberation struggle of my people are not my sisters. If they have some problems with their men they can sort that out themselves.

In 1983 they came to see me because they said they were feminists and they wanted to talk about the problems we faced as women. They wanted me to denounce the Kanak men. But Kanak men are not my enemy, they are my brothers. If we sometimes have a problem with them, we will deal with that problem on the ground in the struggle. My enemy is the racist colonial system which exploits my people, and anyone who supports that system — women as well as men.

In the struggle today, none of us is secure. We never know who will be the next to be killed by the French government or by the fascist settlers. But the only way we can hope to become secure is to get our freedom. And we will get our freedom. If they wanted to stop us they should have killed all of us. Now it is too late for them because all of us are determined to go to the end. And nothing is stronger than the power of a peoples movement.

THE STRUGGLE in South Africa sharply poses one of the most central questions of socialist theory: the relation between the struggle of the working class and the revolutionary fight for democratic demands.

JOHN ROSS looks at the historical development of the way Marxists have posed the relation between democratic and socialist revolutions.

THE question of the relation of democratic revolution and socialism was posed right from the beginning of Marxism. The first revolution in which Marx participated — the German revolution of 1848 — saw a complete intertwining of democratic revolution and the socialist movement of the working class. The development which arose from it was termed by Marx *permanent revolution*.

The core of the process Marx analysed was simple. The key demands of the 1848 revolution in Germany were bourgeois democratic. Above all they were for the unification of the German nation into a single democratic state — thereby overcoming the fragmentation of Germany into a series of reactionary monarchic statelets dominated by the remnants of feudalism.

In line with these bourgeois democratic tasks of the revolution Marx, in March 1848, published a fundamental document the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*. The crucial first demand of the declaration was that: 'The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic! This programme then went on to outline the demands for a universal right to vote, the arming of the people, the complete destruction of feudal relations in land, and a series of other revolutionary bourgeois democratic measures.

But while the immediate tasks of the 1848 revolution were bourgeois democratic it rapidly became evident that the bourgeoisie itself had no intention whatever of seriously fighting for them. By July 1848, in his *The Bill Proposing the Abolition of Feudal Obligations*, Marx could compare Germany to the great French bourgeois revolution of the eighteenth century and write that: 'the German revolution of 1848 is merely a parody of the French revolution of 1789.'

The German revolution was a 'parody', in particular, because the German bourgeoisie, unlike the French, refused to ally with the peasantry to smash its decisive enemy — the feudal landowners and monarchy. As Marx wrote: 'The German bourgeoisie of 1848 unhesitatingly betrays the peasants, who are its natural allies ... and without whom it cannot stand up to the aristocracy.'

By refusing to mobilise the peasantry, who provided the potential mass base of the revolution, and the direct enemy of the feudal landowners, the capitalist class aborted the bourgeois revolution itself.

The reason for the refusal of the bourgeoisie to carry through any decisive struggle against the feudal monarchy was clear to Marx. *By 1848, the capitalist class in Germany was more scared of the working class than it was of the feudalists. For that reason it refused to unleash any thorough going revolutionary struggle at all.*

Marx summarised the situation in December 1848 in his *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*: 'The German bourgeoisie developed so sluggishly, timidly and slowly that at the moment when it menacingly confronted feudalism and absolutism, it saw menacingly pitted against itself the proletariat ... From the first it (the bourgeoisie) was inclined to betray the people and to compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society.'

The conclusion of this situation was simple. Marx had already outlined it in November 1848 in his *Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna*: 'The bourgeoisie in Germany meekly joins the retinue of the absolute monarchy and of feudalism before securing even the first conditions of



Democratic and socialist revolutions

existence necessary for its own civic freedom and its rule.' In short the bourgeoisie *refused* and was *unable* to carry through the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Such a refusal of the bourgeoisie to carry through the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution however had very definite conclusions, which formed the core of Marx's theory of permanent revolution. These conclusions were spelt out by Engels in his *Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution*.

Engels wrote: 'Ever since the defeat of June 1848 the question for the civilised part of the European continent has stood thus: either the rule of the revolutionary proletariat or the rule of the classes which ruled before February.'

'A middle road is no longer possible. In Germany in particular the bourgeoisie has proved itself incapable of ruling; it could only maintain its rule over the people by surrendering it once more to the aristocracy and the bureaucracy ... *the revolution can longer be brought to a conclusion in Germany except with the complete rule of the proletariat.*' (our emphasis)

This was the core of the idea of permanent revolution. The refusal, and inability, of the bourgeoisie to engage in any thorough going revolution meant that the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution could only be thoroughly carried out through the establishment of the state power of the working class.

Marx and Engels spelt out the implications in full in the famous *Address of the Central Committee of the Communist League of March 1850*: 'While the democratic petty bourgeoisie want to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible ... it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power.'

Power

In the event the revolutions of 1848 *did not* transfer political power into the hands of the working class in Germany. But precisely for that reason the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution *were not* carried through.

Naturally history could not be halted entirely. Twenty years later, in January 1871, Germany was united by Bismarck. But far from being a bourgeois democratic unification of

the state it was an extreme reactionary one.

The large landed estates, above all those of Prussian Junkers, were left intact. The monarchy was retained. No democratic constitution was established. Germany was united by the most reactionary state within it — Prussia. What was produced by 1871 was a grotesque caricature of the goals of 1848.

It was an understanding of what had occurred in Germany that became a basis of Lenin's analysis of the development of the Russian revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. Lenin understood perfectly well that by the beginning of this century it was impossible to maintain the semi-feudal relations in land which continued to dominate Russia. Nor could the Tsarist autocracy, which rested on these landed relations, survive. The establishment of capitalist relations in land in Russia *had* to be achieved. But this could be done in one of two ways.

The first was the type of agriculture seen in the United States, and aimed for in 1848 in Germany: the establishment of a free landholding peasantry and the abolition of the large landed estates. The second possibility was the reactionary 'Prussian' path which had occurred in Germany — that is a development which maintained the large landowners and everything tied to them.

Lenin spelt out these alternatives clearly in *The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution*: 'Capitalist development in Russia has made such strides during the last half-century that the preservation of serfdom in agriculture has become *absolutely* impossible, and its abolition has assumed the forms of a violent crisis, of a nation wide revolution. But the abolition of serfdom in a bourgeois country is possible in two ways.'

'Serfdom may be abolished by the feudal-landlord economies slowly evolving into Junker-bourgeois economies ... the other path of development we have called the American path of development, in contrast to the former, the Prussian path. It, too, involves the forcible break-up of the old system of landownership ... But this essential and inevitable break up may be carried out in the interests of the peasant masses and not of the landlord gang.'

The task of the working class in Russia, in Lenin's view, was to propel the agrarian revolution in an 'American' direction — that is to the revolutionary division of the great landed estates which had been aimed

at in 1848.

As regards the *political* outcome of the struggle in Russia, Lenin outlined an algebraic formula — that the degree to which the bourgeois revolution would grow over into a proletarian revolution would be determined by the degree of preparedness of the working class. This perspective was outlined by Lenin in his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* in June 1905 for example.

What Lenin left open by this formula was the relation between the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. In some of his writings they are seen as close in time and part of an interconnected process. In others, the majority, they are clearly seen as significantly separated in time and in their political mechanics.

Trotsky

It was Trotsky who explicitly took up Marx and Engels' formula of 1848 — that of the permanent revolution. Trotsky put forward the analysis that the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia would be carried out not prior to but *following* and *via*, the establishment of the political power of the working class: the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

More precisely in Russia the democratic tasks would be solved, in Trotsky's formula in *Permanent Revolution*, through: 'The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution.'

More generally: 'the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself on the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution.'

Precisely because of the *decisive* significance of democratic tasks, the *social* content of the initial period of the dictatorship of the proletariat could be one that was as yet bourgeois democratic. Trotsky wrote, replying to his critic Preobrazhensky, that history had shown through the Russian revolution that: 'the only road for solving the peasant question lies through the dictatorship of the proletariat! The result was that "The social content" under the dictatorship of the proletariat (based on an alliance with the peasantry) can remain during a certain period of time not socialist as yet.'

Trotsky noted for China, for example, in his article *Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolu-*

tion that: 'the social content of the bourgeois democratic revolution will fill the initial period of the coming dictatorship of the Chinese proletariat and the peasant poor.'

This perspective has developed in real life and not simply in Russia — where the land question was solved after the October revolution, ie after political power had passed into the hands of the working class. In Nicaragua for example political power passed into the hands of the working class in July 1979, the dictatorship of the proletariat was established, but as yet the 'social content' of that dictatorship remains one of a bourgeois democratic revolution.

Naturally the theory of permanent revolution *did not* mean that *no* bourgeois democratic tasks can be fulfilled anywhere without first establishing the state power of the working class.

As with Germany after 1848 history will not stand still. If certain tasks cannot be fulfilled by revolutionary democratic means then they will be fulfilled by other bourgeois — one might say Prussian — means.

But an alternative other than the political power of the working class means that these democratic tasks will be carried out in a *partial*, and not a thorough going, way — a process seen from Ireland at the end of World War I, through the independence of India, up to the liberation of Zimbabwe. In all of these cases, precisely because the state power of the working class was not established, the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution were only carried out in a partial, incomplete, and aborted way.

The same applies to South Africa. It is extremely unlikely, and excluded in today's conditions, that apartheid could be smashed in South Africa without revolution and the establishment of the political power of the working class. Nevertheless purely theoretically — in a different international context for example — it cannot be entirely excluded that at least major aspects of apartheid could be ended without the overthrow of capitalist rule. That depends on the concrete development of the situation, the degree of preparedness of the black South African workers, the international situation and so on.

But if the political power of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is not established, then even the democratic tasks of the revolution will not be carried through in a thorough-going way. A thorough-going agrarian reform transferring land to the black farmers will not take place, a single South African nationality will not be welded together, every vestige of racism will not be extirpated from the state. Without the political power of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat, being established not only will socialism not be achieved but even thorough-going democracy will not be created.

The political conclusion is clear. The black working class of South Africa must throw itself completely into the democratic revolution against apartheid. It must carry it through completely to its conclusion — to the violent overthrow of the apartheid state. It must seek through these means to establish the political power of the working class in South Africa. The working class must clearly understand that to the degree that the political power of working class is not established in South Africa so also the democratic revolution will be aborted.

Will the South African working class, through the struggle to overthrow apartheid, succeed in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat? Or will even the democratic revolution be largely aborted? It is impossible to decide in advance. Only struggle, not speculation, decides these issues.

But in his formula for Russia Trotsky outlined the strategic line of march of the black South African working class: 'The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution.'

The establishment of the political state, power of the working class as the leader of the democratic revolution. That is the axis of the South African revolution.



Black sections fight back

DEPTFORD LABOUR Party's black section is asking for an all-black short list when the party selects a candidate to replace sitting MP John Silkin. But the local black section had agreed to withdraw from the selection procedure, under pressure from part of the local 'left', after agent Kath Butler threatened the party that it would not be allowed to proceed with selection otherwise.

Silkin himself announced in July that he would not be standing again, after a three-year battle to remove him. Local black members are convinced that he was driven into this decision when he realised he would face massive opposition from the black community.

'His announcement came directly after he was closely questioned on black sections at Drake ward in July,' explained Man Mohan from the black section. Mohan said the Deptford black section does not want to let the local party off the hook.

'We are challenging the local party, just as East

Lewisham is challenging the NEC,' he said. 'Do they mean what they say, or are they also racials? We withdrew from the selection but now we want to see what they have to offer black people.'

'Fine words are not enough. Our local government committee circularised all branches regarding nomination for the panel for the 1986 elections. It said "the LCG requests branches to encourage blacks, ethnic minorities, and women". So far we have seen none. We are testing to see how much our white comrades mean what they say.'

So far only four constituencies have selected

black candidates without a challenge from Walworth Road. At least five more are under NEC threat because their black sections are involved in the selection procedure.

During the 1982 witch-hunt, it was only because local parties stood up to NEC threats of disbandment that the witch-hunters were forced into a temporary retreat. Growing pressure from sections of the 'left' to capitulate to NEC pressure not only weakens local party democracy but leads them to turn their fire on the party's black members.

'We'll never get the transformation to a socialist party,' said national black sections vice chair Mark Wadsworth, 'if so-called left-wing supporters collude with the agents in overriding black sections' rights for the sake of bureaucratic neatness and good housekeeping.'

Justice for the Pryces

ON 8 OCTOBER 1985 the trial of Gerald Pryce and four other black youths is due to start at the Old Bailey. Gerald is the brother of Eustace Pryce, a sixteen year old Afro-Caribbean who was murdered by white racists in Newham last November. He is charged with affray — for fighting back against the racists who killed his brother.

Below we publish the appeal circulated by the Justice for the Pryces Committee, which is fighting for the charges to be dropped, and to publicise the outrageous way Gerald and his entire family have been treated by the police and the British courts.

ON NOVEMBER 29th 1984, 16 year old Eustace Pryce was murdered by racists on the streets of Newham. The murder happened after racists provoked a fight, and black youths responded. Eustace was not even involved in the fight, but was stabbed in the back of the neck and died almost immediately.

Three plain clothes police officers actually witnessed the incident from a bus. Their response was predictable. They did not arrest the murderer, but instead arrested Eustace's brother on the grounds that he was in a distraught state and looked as though he was about to do something dangerous.

He was then denied the right to go with his dying brother to the hospital, and taken to Plaistow police station. When an aunt tried to visit Gerald at the station, she was not allowed to see him, and he was only released hours later to find that his brother was dead.

The police brutality continued in the weeks that followed, and Gerald was re-arrested on December 18th, and charged with affray. He was continuously denied bail and only released on January 7th, under restrictive bail conditions.

The white murderer, on the other hand, was only arrested after considerable community pressure, and was given bail almost immediately, on the grounds that it would be wrong to keep him in prison over Christmas.

The bail conditions imposed on Gerald since

brother walks free.

The Pryce family are not alone in their suffering, and the catalogue of violence goes on and on. Michael Ferreira was killed by racists in Hackney. When his friends carried him to the police station they were treated as though they were criminals by police officers who left Michael bleeding unattended in the station. He later died in hospital. In the courts, the callousness continued, and Michael's mother, shocked by the light sentences given to his murderer was forcibly removed and thrown into a prison cell.

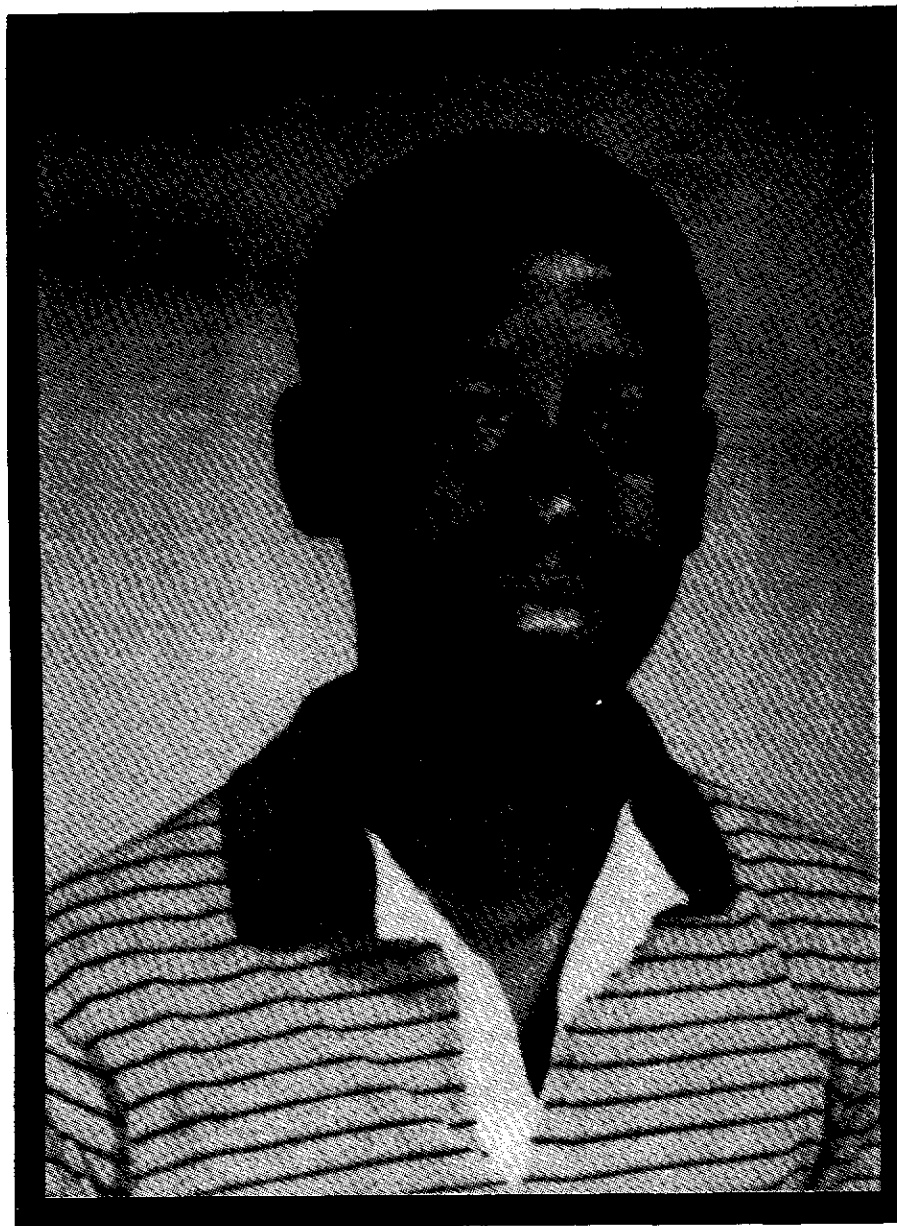
The message from the police and courts is clear.

There is no justice for black people, when members of our community are murdered, their families are treated as criminals.

Gerald goes on trial on October 8th, alongside two Asian and two Afro-Caribbean youths, also charged with affray. Community pressure resulted in Gerald's bail conditions being partially relaxed, and only community pressure will finally bring about justice for the Pryce family.

Remember Eustace ... Defend Gerald.

For details contact: Justice for the Pryces Support Committee, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. Tel: 555 8151



Labour must fight racist attacks

THE FOLLOWING letter outlining steps that can be taken by local Labour parties in the fight against racist attacks is being circulated by the Labour Left Co-ordination.

Dear friends,

The last few weeks have seen an upsurge of fatal racist attacks on black people in all parts of the country. The media have concentrated on the more serious arson incidents, but for each of these there are many more attacks which go unreported. We write to draw the attention

of local Labour Parties and trade unions to these attacks, and to demand that they take them seriously, using all the political and organisational facilities available to them.

In an effort to go beyond the passing of a routine resolution — important though that may be — party and union branches should consider calling open (public) meetings to for example:

- show the strength of anti-racists in the area.
- compile a list of those who are willing to carry out various

tasks, eg meetings with Black organisations, lobbying local

authorities, developing a public profile, etc.

- set up a telephone tree of contacts and advertise the fact through leaflets, posters and the local paper.
- be available at short notice to provide practical and physical support to victims of racist attacks.

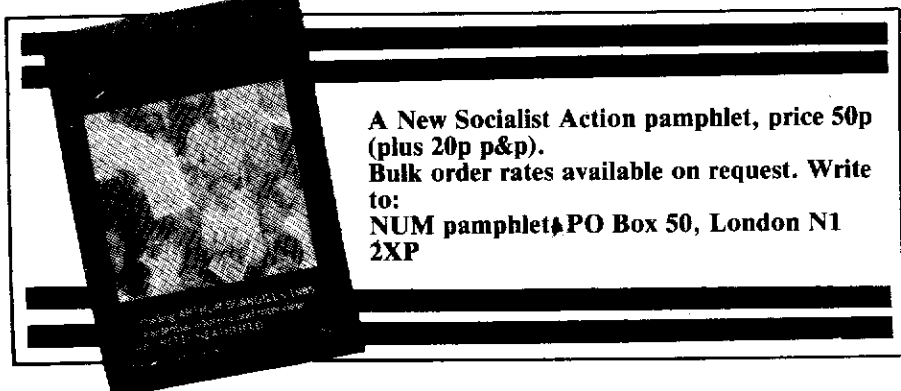
Harry Cohen, Labour MP for Leyton, has taken the initiative through the promotion of a Private Member's Bill, entitled the 'Racial Harassment

Bill', which deserves discussion and support.

Labour Party members should be prepared to work alongside others in broad-based campaigns to counter these attacks. In the '30s the labour movement played a major role in repelling attacks by fascists on Jewish people. It is up to us to repeat this exercise in the '80s.

Comradely greetings,

Narendra Makanji, secretary Labour Party Black Sections
Davy Jones, secretary Labour Left Coordination



A New Socialist Action pamphlet, price 50p (plus 20p p&p). Bulk order rates available on request. Write to: NUM pamphlet & PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Women's Action Committee at Party conference

THE LABOUR WOMEN'S Action Committee as usual will be campaigning around conference resolutions and elections aimed at improving the representation of socialist women in parliament and public life, in order to promote the needs of oppressed women — black, working class, lesbian, low-paid and others — everywhere.

WAC sponsored resolutions, with one exception, are under 'Women's Organisation' on the agenda pad. Resolution 15 and 24 underline the need to remedy the powerlessness of women's conference and the national Labour women's committee, whose demands for positive action for party women have been ignored year after year.

Motions 16-24 reiterate WAC's constantly tabled demands for the women's conference to elect the women's section of the national executive and be allowed to table five resolutions at party conference, and for the inclusion of at least one woman on every parliamentary

shortlist.

Only 12 women have so far been selected for safe Labour seats. Calls from the '85 women's conference for this situation to be urgently remedied

**By Josie Edwards,
WAC Press Officer**

before the next general election have been ignored by the party institutions.

This line is underwritten in the one resolution not on the women's section of the agenda. This is 31, which demands immediate action to get women into parliamentary shortlists. Isolated in the 'party franchise' section of the pad, this could fail to blend into a composite and risks not being debated.

One can but wonder aloud at the standing orders committee's motivation in this odd agenda placement!

In the NEC elections, WAC will be supporting four rather than the full five women needed for the women's section. These are Joan Maynard MP, Margaret Beckett MP, Clare Short MP, and Diane Abbott, Westminster city councillor and black sections activist. The missing name is Francis Morrell, leader of ILEA who cannot be nominated since she is not, this year, a conference delegate.

This highlights the way the party machine works against women. Existing NEC members and MPs are eligible ex-officio, but new contenders not in parliament have to be delegates.

For very good reasons different party members will want the experience of attending conferences, but the condition that new

NEC hopefuls must always be delegates is a meaningless shibboleth designed to keep new faces with new ideas at bay.

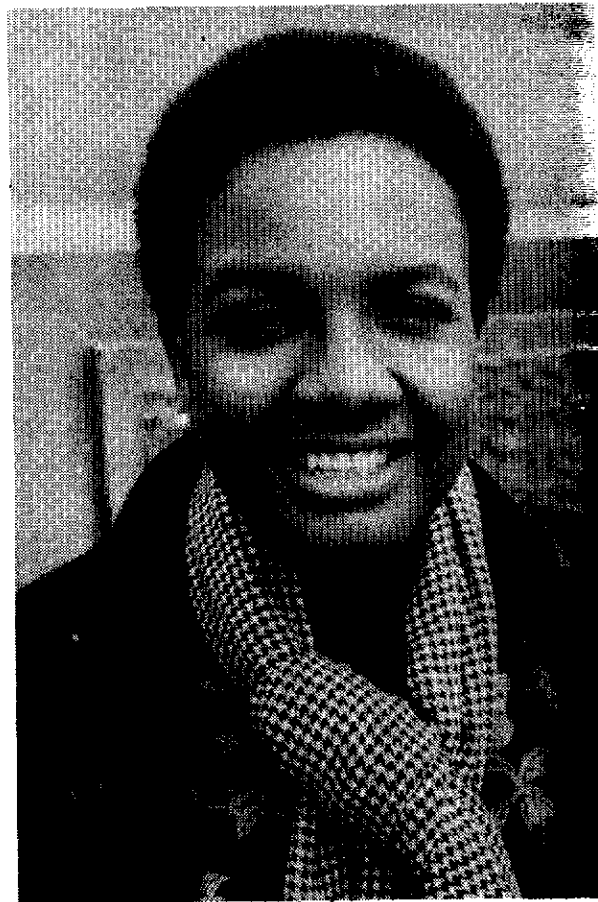
Among these, of course, are women committed to reform in parliament and society at large — reform which will favour the oppressed half of the population: women. The arguments to defend this condition are similar to those that denied Women Against Pit Closures associate membership of the NUM — that it encourages 'undesirable elements'. This is nonsense since the nominations for the NEC by CLPs ensures that NEC contenders are thoroughly known within the party.

These problems may come to a head soon. The insulting way in which the women's section of the NEC, through being the only one elected by full conference rather than a separate interest, becomes a political football for party men.

At '85 women's conference a resolution calling for the national Labour women's committee to hold shadow elections for the women's section of the NEC at the ensuing women's conference (in 1986) was overwhelmingly carried. The women that women want should not be constrained by artificial party rules or the fact that their faces don't fit with the party establishment.

● For those ready once more for the fight, WAC is organising at conference as follows: **Fringe Meeting, 30 September, 6.15-8pm, Bournemouth Pier Leisure Centre. Speakers will include Jo Richardson. Review 2 October, 9-12pm, venue at above.**

The WAC hotel for sisters wanting advice or a chat is The Cliffside Hotel, Durley Gardens, West Cliff Bournemouth. Phone Jane Slowey on 0202 27833.



Diane Abbott, Westminster City councillor, is on WAC's slate for the Labour Party NEC

Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay rights

FOURTEEN constituency Labour Parties have submitted resolutions and amendments to this year's party conference making the first ever conference debate on lesbian and gay rights almost certain.

Fifty four CLPs and 45 MPs and MEPs have so far signed the LCLGR's campaign statement calling for such a debate to go ahead.

'This debate will be seen by our members and the lesbian and gay communities as the outcome of many years hard slog to get the movement to prioritise the issue,' said Paul Canning of the LCLGR.

Pointing out that this was a product of the campaign waged by the lesbian and gay community in support of the miners and against the discriminatory practises of Rugby council Paul added 'that this issue had come up at the TUC for the first time with a resolution submitted by the probation officers and supported by NALGO'.

Salisbury CLP has also submitted an amendment to the Health debate at Party conference on AIDS and there will be at least nine 'out' lesbian and gay

delegates attending party conference this year. Get your CLP/MP/Trade Union branch to support this statement:

Lesbians and gay men suffer systematic discrimination in society at large and also within the labour movement. One aspect of this discrimination is highlighted by the fact that annual party conference has never discussed the issue. Another is the fact that the party has a policy which is discriminatory (ie different ages of consent for heterosexuals and gay men).

This cannot go on any longer if we are to show to lesbians and gay men that the party has anything to offer them. We urge support for the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights campaign to have the issue debated at this year's annual conference.

● For more information phone 01-326-1471



Helen Bradley's drawing of suffragette Annie Kenney in Miss Carter Came With Us. Labour women are still fighting for votes for women to elect their own section of the NEC

PHOTO: SPARE RIB

A Savage Suspension

LAST MONDAY the Hight Court refused an injunction which would have reinstated Wendy Savage, the consultant obstetrician at Mile End Hospital suspended for alleged malpractice.

Only weeks ago she was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists — the highest honour her profession can bestow.

She faces a two-year inquiry and a ruined career because she disregards her male colleagues' views on the politics of childbirth.

Three of five complaints against her involve breech births. Gordon Bourne, regional adviser on maternal mortality, was called into study them. He and Wendy's other male opponents concluded she carried out caesarian sections during childbirth 'too late'.

He delivers breech births by caesarian as a matter of course. But Wendy

believes women prefer not to have major surgical operation during childbirth, and lets them have

By Valerie Coultas

vaginal births if possible. She only intervenes if she has to.

Doctors, with their attention focused on rising up the profession with ex-

pensive techniques, may find it quicker, easier and more controllable to resort to a surgical operation. But maternal death is three times more likely as a result and no woman wants to suffer the trauma of an operation during birth or the effects of that operation when the child is born.

Wendy's suspension has deprived Tower Hamlets of a woman obstetrician, though the Bengali community's religion dictates female doctors for female patients, and 80 per cent of Britain's women prefer female attention during maternity and childbirth.

Wendy is a staunch defender of the National

Health Service and opposes those who use its resources to line their pockets. She spoke up against a proposed £100,000 test tube baby clinic to serve private patients — the last thing needed, she said, in a low-income, large-family area. She was opposed to the closure of Mile End hospital and favoured community based, decentralised health centres.

Her clinics are to be taken over by John Hartgill, a senior obstetrician at the London Hospital, and an enthusiastic private health practitioner. For £400 he provides ante-natal care, through his Harley Street practice using the private wing at the London

hospital. For a year he did not hold a single NHS ante-natal clinic, and he delivers half the number of babies on the NHS that his colleagues do.

This is not just a medical dispute. Wendy has touched a raw nerve in the male-dominated medical establishment. She has been politically victimised. The labour movement should join the protest against this vicious suspension.

Picket District Health Authority, Thursday 12 September 4pm, London Hospital, Whitechapel.

For more information, contact Wendy Savage Support Campaign, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XF.

National Abortion Campaign 10th National Conference

**Saturday and Sunday
26/27 October 1985
County Hall (GLC) South Bank London
(Waterloo tube)**

Saturday Panel on Warnock	Sunday Abortion Internationally
Speakers include: Dr Anne McLaren (member of Warnock Inquiry Committee)	With speakers on: Nairobi Decade of Women Conference; Ireland; S Africa; Latin America International attacks
Jo Richardson MP Creche, Good disabled access	

Details from: NAC, Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AX

Break the Apartheid connection

BRITAIN NOW stands alone with West Germany in rejecting any sanctions at all against South Africa. The job of the labour movement must be to fight to break all diplomatic, military and economic links with the country until its racist regime falls.

Reagan's pathetic 'sanctions' package has fooled no-one. Even the *Daily Telegraph* on 10 September explained: 'Government, business and anti-apartheid groups were united in their view that Reagan's sanctions would have no practical impact.'

But such cosmetic measures are too much for Geoffrey Howe. The Tories give three fake arguments against sanctions.

They say sanctions will hurt black people.

The fact is that all South African black anti-apartheid organisations demand sanctions.

They say they can have a 'dialogue' with the regime to introduce 'reforms'. Some dialogue? Some reforms!

The fact is that they do not want to kill the goose that lays their golden eggs. They do not want the only just solution: black majority rule.

They say sanctions will not affect the regime.

The fact is that any doubts on this score should have been removed by the crisis which hit the

Rand on 31 July.

Business investment does not push South Africa towards 'democracy': *it is the only reason the apartheid regime still exists.* South Africa's economy, built on gold, is completely dependent on foreign investment whose profits come from black sweat and blood.

Gold brings 40 per cent of South Africa's earnings — \$7 billion, supplying sixty per cent of world gold.

One measure alone would bring the government to its knees: a blanket ban on bank loans. According to *International Business Week* for 9 September, South Africa has \$12 billion in short-term loans and can afford to repay only \$140 million per month.

The truth is that investors are making a fortune out of apartheid.

Tory refusal of sanctions is particularly hypocritical. British banks supply \$5.5 billion of South Africa's \$12 billion in loans; nearly half South

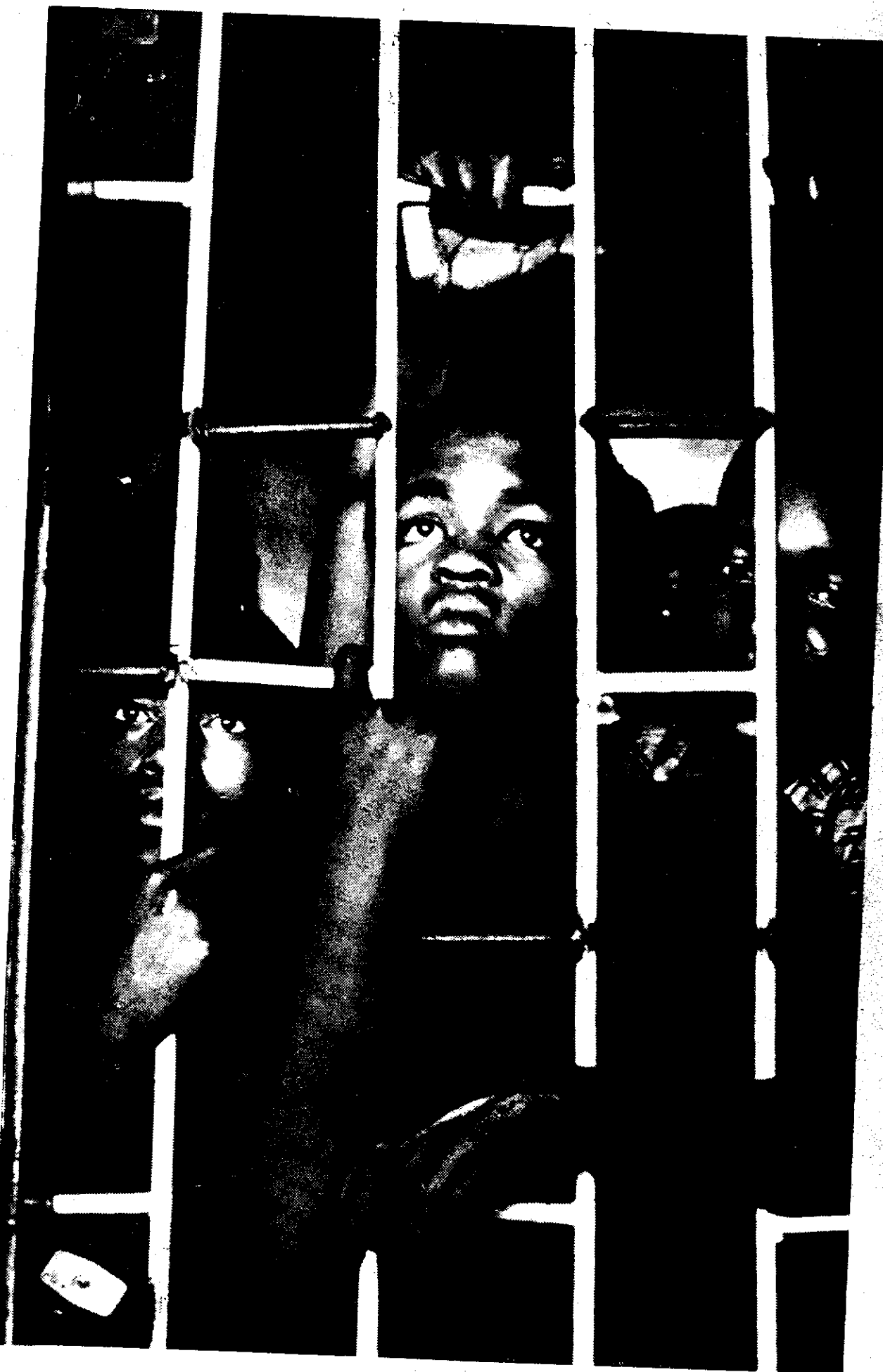
Africa's \$11 billion in direct foreign investment comes from the 400 UK companies operating there.

The UK exports \$1.7 billion in goods to South Africa every year.

Collaboration with apartheid is direct. International Computers Limited supply one quarter of the computer technology that has helped the regime put over 2,800 black leaders in jail. Marconi's have recently been revealed to be supplying sanctions-busting military equipment. Shell and BP are up to their necks, not just in bypassing oil sanctions, but in developing the nuclear technology which, horrifyingly, the military is considering using against the black population.

That is why the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of the labour movement to isolate the racist regime and, together with the massive wave of black resistance which has shown its power to the world in the last year, bring down the apartheid government.

The TUC and the Labour Party must demand an end to *all* links with South Africa. Bring down the apartheid regime!



Greenham lives

FOR THOSE who thought the Greenham Women's Peace Camp was dying last weekend's 'Replace the Base' action proved them mistaken. Hundreds of women turned up at the 10 different gates to cover the fence with blankets sent from many different countries.

The message from Greenham on its fourth birthday was clear. Greenham is still alive, protesting about the deployment of cruise missiles in Britain.

This 'Phoenix Weekend' coincided with the Tory government's Ministry of Defence's three million 'Brave Defender' exercise designed to focus public attention away from the nuclear threat towards the supposed 'Russian' threat.

Women were not so easily fooled and by Saturday clusters of women were at every gate at Greenham. At 11am on Sunday coach loads of

women started to arrive. By midday each of the 10 gates had embroidered

By Valerie Coultas

blankets and banners arrayed around them showing that women are ever vigilant about the nuclear threat inside the base.

Paula Yates, from Yellow Gate, had been strip-searched by three WPCs in Newbury police

station on 30 August. With two policemen watching they pinned her to the floor and searched her internally. A protest was mounted on Sunday morning which was joined by Anne Scargill and Women Against Pit Closures supporters.

Since the cruise missiles have been installed press attention to Greenham has waned. Yet women's opposition to the arms race has continued despite a decline in numbers at the camp and a long, hard, wet summer. The new Ministry of Defence by-law making trespass on the base a civil offence has increased women's determination to invade the camp — 600 women had been arrested before the by-law was

arranged in April, 1,000 since.

Only 75 per cent of the US government's planned exercises have been executed because of disruption by cruisewatch. The women's peace movement has broadened its aims by taking up the plight of Pacific women islanders protesting at nuclear waste dumping and Central American women by planning a march against US aggression in that area.

On 5 October a camp meeting will discuss plans for a December action. Make sure your Labour Party or trade union banner is there for that event.

• For more information telephone London Greenham Support Group office: 01-608 0244.

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