

Socialist ACTION

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DEFEND

THE BLACK

COMMUNITIES

“ On platform after platform I have referred to the problems endured by the ethnic minorities. But it wasn't until our strike when I witnessed at first hand the full fury of an organised state machine that I truly identified with the problem of black people in the heart of our major cities in Britain... ” Arthur Scargill

THE OUTRAGEOUS shooting of an innocent woman in the back, and Brixton's revolt against it, refutes everyone who claimed that Handsworth was a product of 'criminality' and the answer was 'law and order'. Handsworth and Brixton are the result of Thatcher's Britain: the result of

racism, social deprivation, and repressive and racist policing.

There is only one course to guarantee Labour's victory: to align itself with all those who have the courage to stand up to Thatcher: black people, miners, councils facing surcharge,

Greenham women.

And the first step is to *defend* them — not, like Hattersley and Kinnock, to lead the pack in hounding them. Defend the 400 arrested in Handsworth, the 250 in Brixton, the miners jailed and sacked for fighting back.

That is why, despite the undoubted gains Hattersley and Kinnock have made, the Labour Party conference has registered three steps forward on which its future must be built.

First, the prospect as we go to press of a vote to back the NUM's demands to conference. Secondly, the similar prospect of support for surcharged councillors. And, as significant as both of these, the advances made by the black section. The black section nearly trebled its vote. It brought to its support the NUM, NUPE, the NUR — against Knapp's opposition — and other unions. This is the kind of alliance on which

Labour's real future will rest. As Marc Wadsworth, vice-chair of the national black sections told us after the debate:

WE IN THE black sections warned that Handsworth was a signal of the fire next time — in Southall, Bradford, Toxteth, St Pauls, Brixton, and all of Britain's inner cities. It is a tragedy we have been proved right. You cannot solve the criminal neglect of black people in the inner cities by police repression, brutality, and containment. Black youth are involved in a class struggle and must be defended by the whole labour movement.

In the black section debate we almost trebled our vote. We made significant headway in CLPs where we got almost a half, compared to less than a third last year. The NUM stayed with us, and we gained support from NUPE after they consulted their black

members — who said a resounding 'yes' to black sections. The NUR and ACTT, who supported us once more, also voted for black sections. All these unions should act as an example to the rest of the labour movement.

They are not telling us how to win our struggle, they are supporting us because black people are making the demand for the right to self-organise. We've seen, in Brixton and Handsworth, what happens when black youth fail to be given a real voice in British politics.

Hattersley has sent waverers on the left a clear message. He has replaced John Goulding on the national executive as their chief witch-hunter of progressive issues in the movement. The left must now make a clear choice: support Hattersley, or support black sections and the struggle for socialism.

2 November March against apartheid

FREE MANDELA!

Socialist ACTION

The answer to Kinnock

THE BEGINNING of this year's Labour Party conference summarised perfectly the situation in the labour movement.

Overall the conference was a clear shift to the right. But there was significant minority opposition on three key questions — on the miners, on the black struggle, and on the fight of the inner cities.

Neil Kinnock's slashing attack on those who cling to 'old dogmas' is all the more disgusting because those he attacks are those who are leading the fight against Thatcher, and hence those the Labour Party should most enthusiastically endorse. But Kinnock's speech also testifies that there is a fightback, though a minority one, and that those involved in it are a force to be reckoned with in the labour movement.

On the miners the path was clear. Scargill's leadership of the NUM has reaffirmed itself as the only leadership oriented to solving the problems of the working class by class struggle means which exists in the labour movement. It is only necessary to contrast Scargill's fight for the amnesty resolution with Knapp's capitulation on the question of the ballot to see the difference between Scargill and a traditional Broad Left leadership of a trade union.

The second crucial step forward was on the question of the black struggle. The step forward taken by the black sections at this year's conference was qualitative.

Last year the question of black sections could still be portrayed as a 'fringe issue'. Only one major union, the NUM, and a number of constituency parties voted in favour of black sections.

But this year three major unions — the NUM, NUPE, and the NUR — voted in favour, black sections moved to being a powerful, and significant, minority force. Given what is taking place in Handsworth, Brixton and the other black communities nothing could be more timely.

Third was the fight of the inner cities. While the majority of councils capitulated Lambeth and Liverpool have so far stood firm. They deserve the support of the entire labour movement — and got substantial support. Lambeth and Liverpool are part of the most deprived areas of the entire country.

What is taking place in British politics is clear. The right wing is considerably strengthening itself. Not only has Thatcher moved the 'consensus' to the right but the SDP/Liberal Alliance has strengthened itself in its role of attempting to prevent the formation of a majority Labour government. Within the labour movement the hard right around the AUEW and EET-PU has grown bolder and more organised. But this shift to the right is not universal and not homogeneous because Thatcher cannot absorb and integrate those who suffer the cutting edge of her attacks. The miners fought one of the most heroic struggles in labour movement history. They have stood firm since then despite their defeat and refused to compromise the principles on which they fought.

Faced with the intolerable situation in Britain's inner cities, and bearing the brunt of it, black people on the streets and in the labour movement have shown that they too will not be crushed by Thatcher.

The situation is that relatively small, but influential minorities are fighting back and, indeed, are radicalising dramatically through the experience of their struggle.

This shows how labour's left can build an alliance which can both propel labour to office and defeat its misleaders; an alliance of the working class, the oppressed, and all those fighting Thatcher which is forged in struggle.

We apologise to readers for an eight-page edition of the paper this week. This was due to circumstances beyond our control.

Tony Benn

"We must refound the Labour Party"

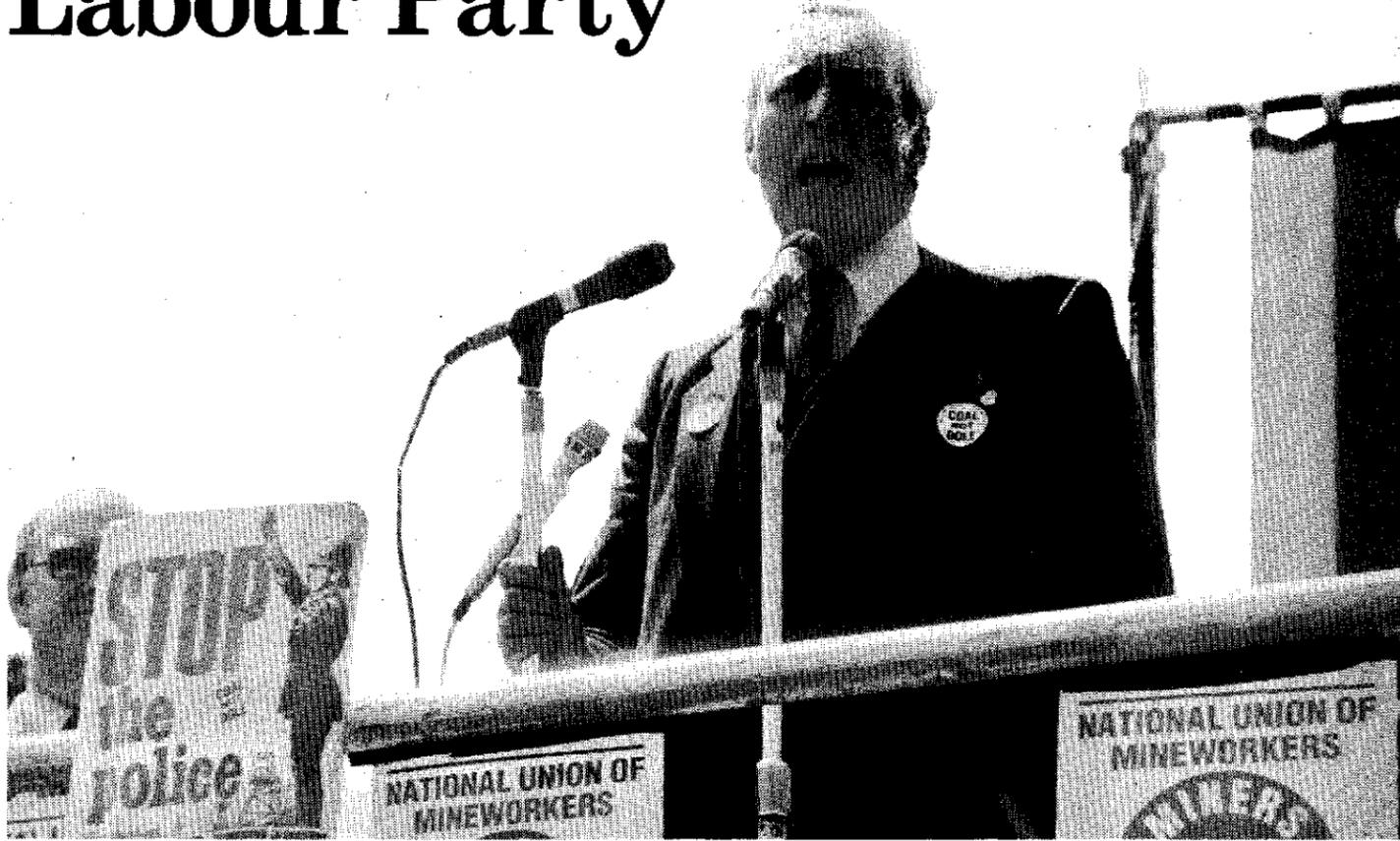


Photo: G.M. COOKSON

WE REPRINT extracts from TONY BENN'S speech to the packed Campaign Group meeting on Saturday evening before the Labour Party conference opened.

The dominant issue at this conference is not how we look in the leading articles of the newspapers on the following day, but whether we measure up in our decisions to the magnitude of the situation that confronts us. That is how we will be judged, and that's how the miners' issue must be faced. The miners fought for all of us. If the Labour Party deserts the miners now it would be a historic blunder that will never be forgiven or forgotten as long as the party remains a political party. That's the first thing to be said.

Policy

If we let the miners down, no policy would be safe. Not a single policy on any issue would stand up if the pollsters told you it wasn't immediately popular. If anyone honestly believes that, whatever the outcome of the vote this week, that the overwhelming majority of the trade union and Labour movement will give up the fight, they are absolutely wrong. Nothing will divert us until every miner is out of jail, till justice has been done and until the fines have been reimbursed in full.

Miners

We shall hear a lot about miners in South Africa this week. I wonder if anyone on the platform will talk about violence in South Africa? I wonder if anyone will say that the South African miners should have had a ballot before they took action against apartheid? The truth is this is a plain, simple, straightforward ques-

tion on which Joan Maynard has taught us for years — 'Whose side are you on?'

Strength

It arises around Liverpool and Lambeth as well, because they are defending the other half of our strength. One half of our strength is the trade union card and the other half is the right to a ballot paper. The abolition of the GLC, the rate-capping of councils, the disqualification and bankruptcy of councillors is an attack on the central principle of democratic power. Then we hear tonight of what has happened in Brixton. And no wonder. No wonder the Handsworth riots occurred the day they announced that Ted Knight, John Hamilton and the others in Liverpool and Lambeth would be surcharged.

Future

We should be talking now much more about the future. The future is a future that the miners, the Greenham Common women, the councillors told us is in our power to shape. As you know I have the great honour to represent a mining area and what I saw there during the strike — the women's action groups, the women against pit closures, and the mining communities — was a whole mass of people discovering that they were a hundred times as capable as society had ever allowed them to believe. People realise now that we don't need to be governed in the traditional way. We can govern ourselves.

I am 60 and I intend in the remainder of my active life to see us out of Ireland, to see us out of the Falklands, to see us out of Gibraltar, to see us out of Hong Kong and to see the American forces, all of them, out of Britain. This is not about nationalism. It's about self-government and democracy. We want the right to govern Britain. Not just the vote once every five years, but the right to control the economic power which is the wealth created by those who work. And that is why we must look beyond the idea that we are only permitted to put a few workers on the board which is all that Labour ministers are.

Transform

Our task is to transform and it wouldn't be anything like as difficult as we are told it would be. If we are to rise to that task that history

has placed on our shoulders, comrades, we've got to change the Labour Party too.

We must have a re-founding conference of the Labour Party. It's not for me as a man to talk about the demands of women although they are made insistently. But we are not a representative party. If we had a founding conference now as in 1918, the balance between men and women would be wholly different. It must be different. The black sections, to take an example, is only a tiny incursion into the way the party structures work. We must refound the Labour Party on the broadest possible basis — open, democratic, accountable, internationalist, and socialist too.

Lesson

Just to finish. If there's one lesson to be learned, it's that hope is our

greatest ally. Fear paralyses us. When you say to people there will be a nuclear war, there will be radiation, there will be a nuclear winter, you frighten people into inactivity.

Our strength lies in awakening the hopes that were awakened in 1945, of putting to bed the fears that led to the growth of fascism and the return of Thatcherism. It's a hope, a future vision and an absolute determination to stick by our own people, men and women, Irish, black, gay, miners, railwaymen, teachers — that is the way our movement will recover its sense of direction.

Then you won't have a hung parliament. You'll have a parliament with a majority because the people who put it there know what they want done. And we'll show we are serious about trying to do it.

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'The police kicked in the door of my mother's bedroom and she turned to run back to the bed in front of all the children. They shot her twice in the back.'

- Juliet Groce, Cherry Groce's daughter

Brixton: what they said

It wasn't the anger of criminals but the anger of those who feel there is no hope, that the government is the cause and the police are their agents.

ON SATURDAY night Brixton exploded after police shot Cherry Groce in the back in her Brixton home. This is what she and other means in Thatcher's Britain mean. This is the Britain experienced by the black communities of Brixton, Handsworth, Tynes, Bradford, St Pauls and Brixton - where the police are their agents.

Socialist Action prints a selection of comments on what happened.

Any campaign that arises to defend those arrested must be supported to ensure that no-one is sent down - and that demands a clear lead from the Labour Party.

Through the connection between the Pryce campaign and the Newham seven we have

been able to counter the myth of Afro-Caribbean/Asian disunity that has been built up around Handsworth: and the community has come out as a cohesive force. This must be built up as our defence. We shall be offering all the support we can.

Ted Knight
On Saturday Brixton exploded. It exploded through anger - not just at unemployment, not just at economic deprivation, not just at social deprivation, but against state oppression and state harassment, particularly against black people and against youth. This time it wasn't



just youth but also the older population. They have had enough of the oppression that continues to show itself in the actions of the police. You cannot write down the shooting of an innocent woman as an 'accident'. You can't just apologise because it was an 'accident'. What the people of Brixton are feeling is that there is an open door for that situation. That's why people in Brixton are angry.

You can't say that in Lambeth it was the criminal elements who

started the riots of the weekend. It wasn't the anger of criminals but the anger of those who feel there is no hope, that the government is the cause and the police are their agents. This is a situation which cannot be tolerated. What we saw in the streets of Brixton was part and parcel of what we saw in the miners' strike - the full use of the government apparatus. That is why Lambeth councillors have said very firmly that Lambeth is not going to stand by and let that happen.

'I just saw the door burst open. I saw my mum drop to the floor. I think that was after she had been hit by the first shot. All I could do was to shout at the men. My mum was lying on the floor and one of the men held a gun to her neck. They were asking her questions. I couldn't understand what was happening. I tried to run after them. I wanted to kick them - to hurt them - but Leo said I shouldn't do anything.'

- Lee Groce, 11 years old



Councillor Sharon Atkin, chair, national black section

After the Scarman report, we have had riots again. And we will have more. Local councils are unable to give people the resources they need. The Tories do not understand the kind of squalor our people live in.

UNMESH DESAI
Newham police monitoring committee
What's happening in Brixton is happening everywhere. It is a result of this policy of heavy-handed, racist reactionary policing.

We are facing the same problem in Newham as in people in Handsworth. More stringent policing is no answer.

Labour councillors have behind the scenes of fighting criminals. The community have not a general uprising.

The demand that has to be put to Labour spokespeople, especially those who claim to know so much about race, crime and policing, is that we need a pledge of solidarity with all the black people of Brixton regardless of the charges against them.

The people of Brixton will need our solidarity: fundraising, motions of support.

We think the debate is best carried out without either side in the argument questioning the motives of their opponents.

- Roy Hattersley, summing up in the black sections debate



Sparkbrook Labour Party will not be divided against itself - particularly by the most vicious of all combinations, extremist infiltrators damaging the real Labour Party with the enthusiastic co-operation of the Tory Press.

- Roy Hattersley, Sparkbrook public meeting

Black sections debate

Important advances were scored by the black sections in Monday's debate. They trebled their support compared with last year, with 1,182,000 votes in support of black sections. Most significant was the support of several major unions. The Militant resolution against black sections received only 5,000 votes.

We reprint below extracts from the contributions to the debate, and what delegates had to say afterwards.

Russell Profitt, PPC, Lewisham East, introducing

Our youth cannot wait until tomorrow. Our patience has been well and truly tried. To the supporters of the great white hope, the black rights campaign - or is it the anti-racist committee - or whatever the NEC may choose to call it - we say 'who are you trying to fool?' Remember 1962 and the Immigration Control Act? Labour got worried about the 'race issue' and it set up a sub-committee under Harold Wilson. It too talked of 'positive measures for integration.' Nobody has ever heard of it. It never did anything.

And then in 1964, with the General Election in the air, another committee was set up, chaired by



Lorna Boland, Norwood CLP, chair, Norwood women's section.

Committees don't work, and black sections do. Thirty-five have been set up in two years, because they are not patronising talking shops. They're not about solving the consciences of middle-class white do-gooders. They are about grass-roots socialism.

Kingsley Adams, Chair, Wimbledon YS, seconding

The recent disturbances in Handsworth and Brixton have shown the anger and frustration of black youth. 95 per cent of us are unemployed in Handsworth, 90 per cent in Brixton. Yet there are those - some black - who say the system works and that black people do not need to organise themselves.

I would like to challenge those people to come to the rostrum and tell the people of Handsworth and Brixton and

Toxteth and Bradford that the system works. Tell the Asian families under siege, racially attacked by racist thugs. You tell them that the system works. We as black youth are no longer prepared to sit idly by waiting for Labour Party promises to turn into action.

You are saying 'no' to our demand for parity with women and youth. I ask myself why, and I say you are part of the problem. Support black sections. Help mobilise youth in struggle. Black sections are here to fight and we are here to stay!

Sharon Atkin, Streatham CLP, Lambeth councillor facing surcharge

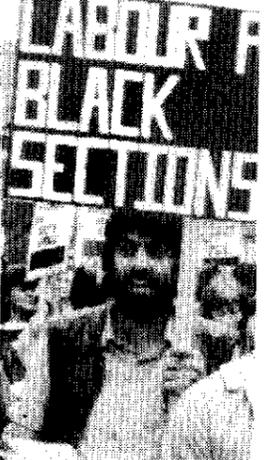
Even before Russell Profitt's selection the NEC has put the boot in. The time is ripe for him to be returned to parliament as an endorsed candidate, backed by the NEC - remember the disaster at Bermondsey, and don't repeat it.

We are fighting for black people to have the same rights as women, youth, the Socialist Medical Association and

Lorna Boland, Norwood CLP, chair, Norwood women's section.

I'm not going to do the usual thing. I'm going to tell you about Norwood Black section, which if fully integrated into Norwood CLP. We have a programme of fully integrating black people and recruiting them. We organise regular Sunday morning recruitment drives, and special training for black people who have never been to a ward because they find it alienating.

We are celebrating an anniversary, the first anniversary of our black section. And I want to tell you that it was a long time before I breathed the courage to speak at a ward meeting, let alone going on the doorsteps and speaking to a racist community.



the Drinking Men's clubs. We want a legitimate voice in our GC and at every level.

There are many seats where the Labour Party relies on black votes. In Sparkbrook, one such seat, Roy Hattersley speaks about 'My Asians'. But we don't accept this patronisation. We've thrown off the weight of colonialism. We're fighting shoulder to shoulder with the miners, with the rate-capped councillors, to build a better Labour Party.

Some people say 'how

to you define "black"?' But the National Front know the definition of black. The police know the definition of black. The DHSS know the definition of black. They have no trouble sorting us out! So why is it so hard for the leadership of our party? We know who we are, and we are committed to forming a Labour government.

I tell Mr Hattersley, if you come to the platform to rubbish black people, then black people will not deliver up their votes time and time again.

RUSSELL PROFITT spoke to Carol Turner after the debate

BLACK YOUTH are demanding direct investment - that's why we are growing and our growth won't be quelled by the leadership's refusal to recognise the strength of our argument. When Alf Dubs spoke in the debate, he couldn't have been talking about any of the black people I have talked to. In any event are we to assume that because people don't vote Labour, the party should pack up and stop fighting for socialism? His is quite a ridiculous argument.

I was staggered by Hattersley's speech. He conceded the strength of what we have been saying for the last god knows how many years. And once again we have been promised action from the NEC. There is no evidence whatsoever of their commitment to what we are seeking - a socialist egalitarian society.

Hattersley's was just an attempt to ensure that we do not establish ourselves sufficiently to take him on in his own constituency. Despite what he had to say we will continue to take the issues to move an build on the tremendous support from constituencies and pro-

gressive unions this year.

This certainly isn't the end of the road. Thatcherite policies are beginning to demonstrate on a monthly basis that they are not working. The police are now being used to control what is becoming a real crisis within our community. They will not be able to do so for much longer.

What we see happening in our inner city areas is the attempt of the disenfranchised and dispossessed to send a clear message to the labour movement: that their demands must form a central plank of Labour's programme. I hope the party will not ignore their demands. Black sections will work to ensure that is does not.

Apology

We apologise to the Labour Party black section for a typographical error in our 20 September issue which reported its response to the Handsworth events. We quoted it as saying 'we do not need more police drug squads. We do not need special police units ...' The paragraph should have read 'We do not need more police drug squads. We do need special police units set up to combat the evils of race attacks made on black people by fascist thugs.'

South Africa: trade unions and politics

THE APARTHEID regime in South Africa bans the most important black political organisations. This includes the black consciousness organisations of the 1970s and, most importantly, the African National Congress (ANC).

Mass legal political opposition to the policies of the apartheid regime has therefore been expressed primarily through two united front organisations — the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum. Of the two the overwhelmingly

more important is the UDF. This claims 600 affiliated organisations with two million members.

A key question for the black, non-racial, trade unions in South Africa is therefore what attitude to take to these united fronts. The largest black trade union federation FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) has affiliated to neither the UDF or the National Forum.

The second largest black union federation CUSA (Council of South African Unions), has accepted both the UDF and the National Forum. CUSA includes among

its affiliates the National Union of Mineworkers.

The non-affiliated South African Allied Workers Union, the Municipal and General Workers Union, and the General Allied Workers Union, have joined just the UDF.

In our next issue we will be printing the position of FOSATU. Here we are printing the positions of CUSA and the Municipal and General Workers Union.

Both are excerpted from *Power: Black Workers, their unions, and the struggle for freedom in South Africa*, by Denis MacShane, Martin Plaut, and David Ward.

The MGWU on the United Democratic Front

THE MUNICIPAL and General Workers' Union of South Africa's response to this issue must begin by outlining how we see the present political situation. This is because our decision to join the UDF was made as part of our response to certain political events. These events directly affected us both as a trade union, and as people who identify ourselves with the struggle for a free and just South Africa.

There are four main political issues that effect workers today. These four are:

- The increasing push towards bantustan independence for all the homelands — and therefore the forcing of bantustan citizenship on all black people.
- The attempt to push through new pass laws that will tighten up the control of all workers.
- The Community Council elections that will be held later on this month.
- The 'new deal' being pushed by the government in the forthcoming constitution.

All four of these issues are linked.

Bantustan independence

All black workers are faced with the fact that they and their children are being forced to become citizens of one or other homeland. As these homelands become independent — the situation of the workers from that homeland deteriorates. They are no longer seen as citizens of South Africa but as foreigners coming into South Africa to get a job.

The new pass laws

The pass laws have always been the way in which the government of South Africa has made it easy for the bosses to exploit black workers. These are the laws which make it possible for the government to get rid of any workers who are not needed in the urban areas.

The Community Council Elections

The community councils are another attempt to confuse people about who the enemy is. This is done by putting stooges into power in the community

councils and then oppressing the people through these stooges.

The new constitution — no more apartheid?

Botha's 'new deal' is being spoken about as a move away from apartheid. The idea is that now Indian and Coloured people are 'included', and that this is a step in the right direction. But if we look at this from the position of the black workers, we can see that this 'new deal' is just the same old apartheid — the same old oppression.

If there are no black South Africans (only Transkeians, Vendas, etc) then suddenly the whites are in a majority. Suddenly it becomes possible to include Coloureds and Indians in the government.

Who else is affected?

These laws are also part of the apartheid system that oppresses many people from other classes and other communities. All black people — and Indian and Coloured people — are oppressed by these laws. The black workers are the largest and most oppressed group. This is why black workers will usually be the most dedicated and hard-working people in the struggle.

But black workers are not the only oppressed people. We must stand together with all people willing to fight for a free and just South Africa.

We must recognise that within this broad unity of people — there will be differences of approach — different levels of understanding — different ideas about the kind of society we are fighting for.

We believe this cannot be done without a total change in the type of society that has been created by the apartheid capitalist system in South Africa.

Trade Unions and the struggle

Our stand on these issues is not clear — but how can we oppose them effectively? Trade unions are not political parties.

Our strength lies in our ability to unite in the workplace with the possibility of stopping production. This happens mainly around some of the immediate problems facing workers in the workplace.

Because union structures bring workers together to discuss problems — it becomes possible for political issues to be discussed. However, it is very difficult for a trade union to launch and control political campaigns — as well as function effectively as the first line of defence of the workers.

Alliances

In South Africa, the main political organisations are banned. We are thus faced with finding ways of responding — together with other groupings of oppressed — to the main political struggles occurring inside our country. Many other organisations — like student groupings or community organisations — have a similar problem.

The present political situation demands a far greater and more united response than we have managed for a very long time. By ourselves — whether we are unions, community organisations, students or whatever — we will achieve very little.

The problem then becomes how to bring all these different types of organisations together. Herein lies the strength of an organisation like the UDF.

In the real sense of the word — the UDF is not an organisation at all. It's a rallying point. It's the focus of a range of different types of energies. It represents the pooling of resources; the co-operation of a range of very different, autonomous organisations.

It is in all these ways that the UDF is a United Front of a broad range of organisations and not a



CUSA on Political Organisations

The General Secretary of The Council of Unions of South Africa sent this resolution to the SALB (South African Labour Bulletin) in response to a request for a statement on its position in relation to political organisations.

DURING MARCH and August this year the CUSA office had received a request from the National Forum Committee (NFC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and one other agency for its views and commitment on the Constitutional Proposals.

The three requests were put to the National Executive Committee during April. It was agreed that the matter be discussed at the Joint Executive Council (JEC) of CUSA on 30 April 1983.

The request together with a draft resolution was prepared for the JEC

meeting. A lengthy debate took place on various aspects. Amongst other issues discussed were the following:

- the nature and philosophy of the organisations requesting the commitment;
- the content of the CUSA response in the resolution;
- the commitment CUSA was able to provide;
- the nature and content of the Constitutional Proposals.

Having examined the proposals of the regime on the

constitution;

Having further examined the basis of the call by various organisations regarding the constitutional proposals;

Noting that the Nationalist Party is presently in disarray and that these proposals may therefore be changed to impose white rule under different guise even through a referendum;

Knowing that the white opposition forces and parties are themselves divided and without any effect.

The Council of Unions of South Africa now therefore:

- wishes to place on record its complete and total rejection to the proposal;
- pledges itself to participate in every forum to work

towards the achievement of a just and democratic society;

- calls upon its members to lend their individual support to all efforts of community organisations to end this foolish plan;

- pledges itself to all forces and all efforts to work towards a common citizenship in an undivided democratic and just society.

Following the response of various unions and the nature of press reports together with intransigent positions adopted by some sections of the community CUSA is involved currently in an ongoing examination of its attitude and role in the UDF and the NFC.



unitary (or even federal) structure.

As far as the operation of the UDF is concerned this means that the programmes of the UDF must be carried out primarily through the organisations that identify themselves with the UDF.

Some would argue that unions are working class bodies and in the interests of working class autonomy we must 'go it alone'. The unions should be part of an independent initiative against the 'new deal'. This independent opposition group should consist only of unions.

Even if we felt this to be a good idea (which we don't) we would oppose it on the grounds that we spoke of above: a union is not a political organisation and for as long as it continues to function as a union — it cannot effectively fulfill the role of a political organisation.

The other alternative would be for the unions to support/encourage the setting up of a 'Worker's Party' that will lead the workers in the struggle against the 'new deal'. This type of political grouping — it is argued — would ensure that the political goals of the working class are promoted. We disagree with this position for the following reasons:

- No 'working class party' is ever composed only of workers. Anyone who is prepared to fight for the kind of fundamental changes that would enable workers to be free would be welcome in any working class party.

It is true that a progressive political direction can most naturally take root amongst the working class — it is not true that a political

leadership composed of workers is automatically progressive.

- We mentioned — in the first part of our discussion — the fact that it is the black workers of South Africa who have suffered most under the various parts of the apartheid capitalist system. This is because this system functions in such a way as to enable the bosses to make the highest possible profits — at the expense of the workers. Many other people have also suffered terribly at the hands of the system — the rural poor for example.

Some who will unite with us will not be prepared to go as far as we will on the road to freedom — but because it is the same road — we can unite and work together. Some believe that we will be betrayed by those who

would get rid of racial discrimination but are not too keen to shake things up any further. Our reply to this is quite simple.

We believe that it is impossible to separate off apartheid from the capitalist system it has fed. A truly committed opposition to apartheid (and its consequences) will lay the foundation for a fundamental change in the entire system in South Africa.

Our present struggle does not have to be based on some abstract 'ideal society' of the future. A struggle which aims to get rid of apartheid — to get rid of the homelands — to get rid of the inequality bred by apartheid, inequalities of wealth, land, education, etc. This kind of struggle — if it is taken to its logical conclusion — will undermine the foundations of apartheid capitalism. The rest is up to us.

South African solidarity grows

BIG BUSINESS in South Africa and those who backed it worldwide are in a panic. The State of Emergency introduced on 21 July in 36 of South Africa's 300 districts has not been able to quieten down the situation as Premier Botha hoped. For a year now there have been continuous revolts in the black ghettos despite 1,000 deaths and 2,500 arrests.

Western capital is anxious to get Botha to make limited concessions to save South African capitalism. Even Reagan and Thatcher have been forced to make token concessions to the growing campaign for a boycott.

While not yet on the brink of revolution the South African volcano is beginning to rumble. The black masses have the power to overthrow apartheid but they yet lack the means and the political organisation necessary to lead that overthrow. That day will come and the white western capitalists are beginning to panic. Below we report on what the labour movement is doing internationally to hasten the downfall of apartheid.

THIRTY THOUSAND people marched from Mandela corner through Manhattan to the US Mission to the United Nations and South African Consulate in New York on 13 August chanting 'Death to apartheid' and 'Free Nelson Mandela'.

The majority of marchers were either union members or members of black organisations, according to the *Militant* newspaper on 30 August.

Harry Belafonte told the huge crowd 'We're here to tell Reagan we're going to bury apartheid and racism'. In Atlanta on 11 August 2,000 members of Alpha Phi Alpha — the oldest black fraternity in the USA — held a march and rally against apartheid.

In Washington DC on 12 August 5,000 people marched chanting 'Freedom yes, apartheid No' as part of a 'national day of mourning for the black people of South Africa'.

The demonstrations reflect the growing strength of the Coalition for a Free South Africa in the US. Randall Robinson, leader of this new movement, pin-pointed why it was growing so fast: 'We march... so that no longer will 22 million of our people be landless, voteless and oppressed with American support.'

Black people in America — in trade unions, on campuses and in their own organisations — are playing a vanguard role in this new upsurge in the anti-apartheid movement.

So is the organised labour movement. Among those banners on the Washington 12 August demonstration were the American Federation of Government Employees, the American Federation

of State Employees, United Food and Commercial Workers, and the Service Employees International Union of Electronic Workers.

By Valerie Coultas

American students were also quick off the mark with protest action this time around. In the Spring of 1985 at the University of California in Berkeley 156 students were arrested for demanding that the university end its \$1.6 billion investments in South Africa. Five hundred longshoremen joined the protest to express solidarity with the student blockaders. They too were taking action against apartheid by refusing to load or unload South African cargo.

Similarly at Columbia University students demanded that the administration stick to its pledge to divest the campus of 42 million dollars worth of South African stock. They won the support of clerical workers and a lot of community support came from black trade unionists.

A teamsters' union local, who had divested their own pension funds, gave an initial cheque of \$1,000 and pledged \$100 a day for the 22-day blockade. A government workers' union donated a large plastic sheet to protect the area where the blockaders' vigil took



place and other unions donated their musical talents, blankets, food and legal assistance.

Students have brought to the fore the contrast between US help to the racist Botha regime and attempts to overthrow the democratically elected socialist Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Labour

The powerful coalition of organised labour, student, blacks and women has forced the issue of apartheid to the centre of the political arena in the United States. Even Reagan, pledged for years against any sanctions on South Africa, has been forced to change tack.

An executive order, operative from 11 October, now bans the import of the Krugerrand South African gold coin. But the import and sale of South Africa gold bullion will continue. Reagan said he was banning loans to the South African government but he accepted those 'which improve educational, housing and health facilities that are open to blacks.'

Billions

In reality these measures don't touch the billions of dollars that US banks and corporations have invested in apartheid. Bishop Desmond Tutu denounced the sanctions as 'not even a flea bite' against apartheid.

But even this token gesture and those of the EEC countries, are a blow to the political position of the Botha regime. They show the potential power an international solidarity movement has to isolate the South African govern-

ment — in particular if the labour movement leads the action.

Actions

The US is not alone in spawning a new wave of anti-apartheid actions — although as with Vietnam, the strongest movement has emerged in the United States first. In West Germany on 21 September 10,000 people demonstrated in Bonn and 5,000 in West Berlin. Open clashes are taking place in government circles in Bonn about whether or not to implement sanctions.

Debate

The coalition that built the 21 September demonstration includes protestant youth organisations, the Socialist Party (SPD) Youth, the SPD itself, the Greens, the Communist Party and anti-apartheid groups. A debate took place over what representation should be given to different forces fighting in South Africa. The CP was opposed to representatives of the independent trade unions speaking from the platform. As many West German trade unions have no boycott policy, direct links with trade unionists in South Africa are very important.

Swedish Metalworkers will also be campaigning at the upcoming engineering union conference to force that union to adopt a resolution supporting practical economic measures. The Dutch Labour Federation, the FNV has produced a pamphlet arguing for a complete boycott of the apartheid regime. It has also focussed attention on the activities of the giant

Dutch oil corporation Shell in South Africa.

In Britain the Anti-Apartheid Movement has now set a date for a national demonstration on Saturday 2 November. Because of the historical links between London and Pretoria and the huge financial relations that still exist British labour movement activists have a special responsibility to express their opposition to the Botha regime. Thatcher's reluctance to break off even diplomatic links and abide by EEC guidelines shows exactly where she stands — four square behind the reactionary, repressive white racists.

Success

The Coalition for a Free South Africa established in the United States provides a model for how anti-apartheid groups must act here in Britain to make the 2 November demonstration a big success. The labour movement must be involved in building the demonstration, the black community must be involved, the student movement must be involved, if Anti-Apartheid is to build a truly mass movement in Britain.

Vital

The ruling class in Britain has no doubt about how vital defending capitalism in South Africa is to their long term interests. The labour movement in Britain has to be just as astute in defending its interests — which lie with all those in South Africa today who dare to fight and dare to die so that one day the black majority and not the white minority will rule.

Activists diary

Saturday 12 October

State of Emergency day of action nationwide focus on detainees, political prisoners and repression to collect signatures for the AAM's sanctions petitions and to build for November march.

March and Rally, Birmingham. Assemble Lancaster Circus, 11am, rally at Aston University students union. Tel: 021-784 4156.

Saturday 19 October national student picket of South African Embassy organised by NUS in protest at banning of COSAS. Tel 01-272 8900.

London Action Against Apartheid conference 10.30-5.30pm at Camden Town Hall, Judd St, WC1. Speakers from ANC, SWAPO, GLC. Tel London AA: 01-607 6460.

Saturday 2 November March Against Apartheid, London. For further details tel: 01-387 7966.

Solidarity in brief

• 100 people picketed the start of the Round the World Yacht Race in Gosport. TGWU member Jim Lowe had been sacked for refusing to service the yacht 'Portatan', entered by a South African crew.

Portsmouth AAM, who organised the picket, are contacting the New Zealand government to have the yacht blockaded there. If that doesn't work they'll be there to 'greet' it when it gets back in March.

• Sixty people came to hear Betty Heathfield, sacked miner Dennis Pennington, North Wales miner Keith Hett and Nkosazana Dlamini, a woman doctor representing the ANC, at a public meeting in Connahs Quay, Chester. 'Being among you is like being among my fellow South Africans', said Nkosazana.

• Huddersfield trades council held a meeting of 70 and a picket of Barclays

Bank with the Colne Valley Young Socialists. After the picket a square in the town centre was renamed Nelson Mandela corner. The meeting was part of a week of activities celebrating the trades council's centenary. Other meetings included a meeting with Betty Heathfield on the lessons of the miners' strike and a black workers' evening which heard Marc Wadsworth speak on black sections.

Sinn Fein condemns apartheid

THE FOLLOWING front page appeared in *An Phoblacht*, the paper supported by Sinn Fein in Ireland, in response to the imposition of the state of emergency in South Africa...

LAST weekend, as Irish Republicans were commemorating the introduction of internment without trial, well over 1,000 black South Africans had been interned by the apartheid regime there.

Just as the funeral of IRA Volunteer Charles English was followed by heavily-armed RUC personnel and British army helicopters through the streets of Derry, racist police in South Africa have launched savage attacks on the funerals of black victims of apartheid terror.

In Belfast last Sunday, Sinn Fein's director of publicity Danny Morrison emphasised the similarities between the apartheid state in South Africa and the Orange state in the occupied six counties of Ireland.

Both states are based on injustice and both have institutionalised that injustice. In the six counties, loyalist supremacy over nationalists has been guaranteed politically, through partition and gerrymandering, economically, through discrimination in employment, and socially, through the virtual criminalisation of things 'national'.

The white minority in South Africa have perpetuated their unjust supremacy over the majority black population through a plethora of discriminatory laws which we know as the apartheid system.

In denying justice to the nationalist community in the six counties and in denying justice to the black population in South Africa, both the loyalist regime and the apartheid regime have demonstrated the same perverse superiority which the Nazis used to justify genocide in the concentration camps.

Britain props up loyalist domination in the six counties and it is Britain which uses censorship and brutal repression to try to quell nationalist resistance. In South Africa continued investment by British business interests and continued support from the Thatcher government have been major factors in stifling effective international opposition to the apartheid regime.

In South Africa as in the six counties, unwelcome visitors who might expose the truth are simply barred. The Dunnes Stores strikers brought international attention to bear on the need for economic sanctions against South Africa while Martin Galvin has focused US attention on British repression in Ireland.

And how do repressive regimes deal with dissent? With plastic bullets, mass arrests, show-trials and shoot-to-kill. Taking all these things into account, we should not be surprised at the mutual admiration and support which has characterised loyalist/white South African relations over the years. In April 1963, for instance, the South African Minister for Justice, Jon Vorster, when introducing a new Coercion Bill to parliament, said that he would exchange all such legislation for just one clause of 'Northern Ireland's Special Powers Act'.

Laws will occasionally be rewritten to appear less offensive and cosmetic reforms will be introduced, but in the six counties as in South Africa the basic injustice will not be removed until the loyalist state itself and the apartheid system are destroyed.

Just as the regime in South Africa has been allowed to survive because of the refusal of major world powers to do anything more than utter the occasional verbal criticism, so too the Orange state has survived largely because successive Dublin governments have refused to confront British rule.

In the absence of any pressure on their behalf and in the absence of any democracy, the black people of South Africa and the nationalist people of the six counties must rely on their own resources and especially on the spirit of resistance which unites the African National Congress with the Irish Republican Movement.

LONDON ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID CONFERENCE

Saturday 19 October, 10.30-5.30
Camden Town Hall

Details from Anti-Apartheid:
01-387 7966, 13 Mandela St., London NW1
or London AA, 01-607 6460

Why we set up a black section in Sparkbrook



Amir Khan

ROY HATTERSLEY and his Sparkbrook cohorts are threatening a witch-hunt against members of the constituency who set up a black section two weeks ago. An emergency GMC called two days after it was formed decided to look into disciplinary action against those who took part, and also those involved in Thursday night's *Bandung* file programme on Channel 4, which exposed Hattersley's methods in maintaining his grip on the constituency.

The day before, Hattersley addressed a public meeting in the constituency at which he announced that 'Sparkbrook Labour Party will not be divided against itself — particularly by that most vicious of all combinations, extremist infiltrators damaging the real Labour Party with the enthusiastic cooperation of the Tory Press.'

Hattersley's threats are the vicious sharp edge of Kinnock's attack on black sections. They hang ominously over a conference in which the black sections already claim a million votes in their support — including the NUR, whose executive voted last Wednesday by 11-4 to support black sections, against Jimmy Knapp's express opposition.

Socialist Action spoke to **AMIR KHAN**, the Sparkhill councillor leading the move to form a Sparkbrook black section.

WHY, despite all the hostility to black sections from your MP Roy Hattersley, did you decide to form one?

I think it is very important that black people discuss the issue of black sections, that they discuss their own problems and the question

of self-organisation. That's why I think we have to resist all attempts to prevent this. We have to stand up and be counted. It's very important at this stage that black people try to explain to our white comrades that we suffer a lot of problems and it's us

that have to decide how best to raise these within the party. Black people have to get together to do this. And that means black sections within the Labour Party. The Labour Party has always been the mass organisation of the working class, and black people have always supported it. We therefore have a basic right in the Labour Party to organise black sections.

Roy Hattersley has said that a black section in Sparkbrook is unnecessary, since black people are well represented in the different bodies of the party. How would you answer this?

I don't think Roy Hattersley is right. Firstly, we only got this representation when I and others, last year, started to argue that the black representation on the management committee wasn't good enough. But now the basic issue is different. Some of the people on that GMC don't represent our black community; a lot of them are business people. Some of them don't even live here. We want people who live in our area, who will speak on behalf of the community, people who are grassroots people.

Are you suggesting that Roy Hattersley is wrong when he says that councillors in the constituency were selected and elected on their merits?

No, I don't think it is right. When I stood there was a lot of hostility towards me. I stood as a black candidate and I won. Roy didn't want me and he worked against me. But I got selected. People voted for me because of my political beliefs, not because I am Amir Khan, or whatever, and part of my political beliefs is support for the black sections

within the party. If that was on merit, then why did Roy try to stop me?

Why do you feel the existing party structures don't allow you to air the problems affecting black people?

Well, let's be honest. How can you use the ordinary channels of the party when one or two white comrades are visiting all the Asian people at home, not to discuss with them who they want on the GMC, but just to give them a list saying which people should go on. They even choose which black people they think best represent black people. We don't even have the right to choose our own representatives.

People have to understand that at the moment the Labour Party is in control of the city, but black people still live in appalling conditions. It's worse than third world countries. If you look at Sparkbrook and Small Heath, there are many people without bathrooms, living in overcrowded conditions. The Labour Party have failed to deliver the goods. So now it is black people who are organising themselves in the party, trying to use their powers to improve the conditions of their own people, because we have been ignored, taken for granted. Their attitude is: it is an inner city ward, black people live there. Whatever we say, they will vote for us. Among a lot of young people, even a lot of elderly people, the feeling against Labour Party leaders is running very high. I think they must learn the lessons.

Roy Hattersley has said that to say all black people are the same is ignorant and indeed racist.

I don't agree. There are specific problems that affect all black people, whether Afro-Caribbean or Asian: unemployment, appalling living conditions, police harassment and racist attacks. He can't compare our problems with those of white people.

He also said that to divide the party between pure whites and the rest is no better than apartheid. What do you feel about that?

Apartheid is part and parcel of the oppression of black people by white people. You can't compare that with black sections.

We aren't oppressors. We are the oppressed. We have to organise to defend ourselves. We have to organise to get our rights like women's groups. It's an insult to us to compare black self-organisation within the labour party with apartheid.

What has happened since the launch of the black section?

I think the support for the black sections is increasing every day. When you walk on the roads, everybody wants to discuss the issue. At least the debate is taking place. In the Sparkhill ward meeting on Thursday we had a very good discus-

sion. People were saying 'Look, it is black people's right to organise in whichever way we want. It's our basic right.' They want to organise. The threat of disciplinary measures is, of course, serious. But it is a matter of conscience. People believe what they believe, and I don't think anyone is going to intimidate them. This intimidation doesn't work, and at the end of the day it will be our beliefs that will win through. Support is growing. People from Small Heath are even beginning to say 'Look, when are you going to come and help us organise our own black section?'

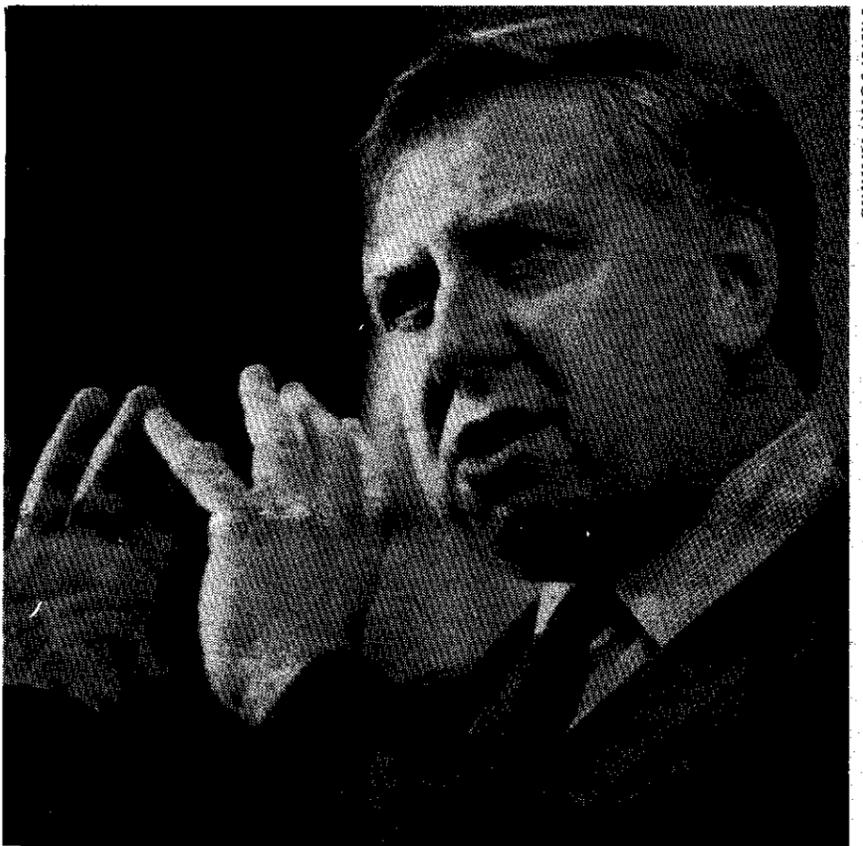


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Handsworth arrest toll reaches 400

By MICK ARCHER

THIS WEEK the number of arrests in connection with the Handsworth 'riot' reached 400 — nearly half the number arrested during the entire miners' strike, and a clear indication that the police are out to inflict punitive vengeance on the black community.

Even more alarming is the way the police are preparing their evidence. Reliable reports tell of shopkeepers who have been asked to sign lengthy statements drawn up by police with the suggestion that if they don't, their claims for compensation could be compromised. Youth have pleaded guilty to charges like criminal damage when told that otherwise they could be accused of arson or even involvement in the Post Office deaths.

In the circumstances the first task facing the labour movement is the defence of these youths. A debate which identifies the social, economic and political causes of what took place, but avoids the fact that hundreds of predominantly black unemployed youth are being sacrificed to the law and order lobby will do nothing to convince the black community that the labour movement is prepared to defend their rights.

The Handsworth defence campaign, which is organising the defence of all those arrested, needs labour movement support. It is organising a public meeting this Friday, 4 October, at the Muhammed Ali centre in Hockley, Birmingham. Messages of support, donations, and requests for speakers should be sent to: Handsworth legal defence campaign, 104 Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham. The defence campaign can be contacted by ringing 021 554 0026/2747.



Photo: ANNETTE SANDY/HELEN CARR (TURC)

Unite to defend Liverpool - unite to defend jobs

NO-ONE who sees deputy leader Derek Hatton dealing with the national media can doubt that Liverpool Labour council has been leading a splendid fightback against Tory spending cuts. After years of Liberal neglect, Liverpool workers elected a Labour council pledged to improve services without massive rate increases. Their refusal to back down in the face of Thatcher's attacks places them in the front line of the battle to defend local authorities, jobs, and services. The whole labour movement has a duty to defend them.

The council's latest moves, however, have opened up a dangerous divide in the labour movement.

One of Labour's central policy commitments was to increase the number of jobs in the city council. Last week Labour voted, however, in full council, to make all 30,000 of its workers redundant on 31 December.

Over the past two years the council have valiantly resisted pressure to make cuts and big rate increases in response to Tory government rate-capping. Already Liverpool's 49 Labour councillors have been surcharged for over £2000 each, and face being barred from office,

because they have set a rate that leaves the city £80m short on its budget. Labour are demanding this amount back from the Tory government as part of the £350m taken away

By JOHN NOLAN

from the city since 1979.

The immediate crisis is caused by a shortfall of £25m needed to pay the workforce up to 1 April next year, when a new budget is set. The City Solicitor and Treasurer have stopped making payments to contractors and employees. Anyone making these payments would face criminal charges for fraud. This would apply to the councillors: hence the redundancy notices.

The council have promised that following the December sackings the entire workforce will be re-engaged on 1 April. But there can be no guarantee of this, given the threat to bar the councillors and bring in government commissioners armed with new legislation to privatise services from April 1986.

So the city council's joint shop stewards' committee — who have backed the council all the way so far — rejected the redundancy plan two weeks ago. Instead they decided to call for an all-out strike against the Tory government in support of the council from last week. The largest union, the GMBATU, together with UCATT and the TGWU, backed the strike call; but NUPE, NUT and NAS/UWT refused even to let members vote on the issue. NALGO — the second largest union — plus EPTU and NATFHE members voted not to strike.

With the collapse of the strike, the *Militant*

leadership of the GMBATU put a motion to last Thursday's joint shop stewards' meeting to accept the redundancies. Some delegates objected on the grounds that the joint stewards' constitution has a specific aim to defend council workers against redundancies.

When the chair, Ian Lowes of GMBATU, ignored the objection, NATFHE and NALGO delegates walked out. A NALGO mass meeting had already voted, by a majority of over 5000, with just 27 against, to oppose all redundancies. The remaining shop stewards went on to call for redundancies, but also to call for strike action before the 90-day notices expire.

At the Liverpool district Labour Party on Thursday evening, NALGO secretary Pete Cresswell was called a 'traitor' by *Militant* councillor Tony Mulhearn and Derek Hatton. It should be remembered that Liverpool NALGO fought long and successful battles to

defend jobs against the previous Liberal council.

Despite the employment of anti-NALGO personnel to senior council jobs and the imposition of *Militant* supporter Samson Bond on Liverpool's black community, Pete Cresswell and Liverpool's NALGO leadership have consistently supported the Labour council's stand. NALGO wants the council to dip into its £27m housing budget. This is not a solution. But to label NALGO 'traitors' and sack council workers in direct contradiction of council pledges in an unacceptable and divisive response.

NALGO will not support the sacking of council workers in the face of Tory threats. It has refused to send out the redundancy notices, so Liverpool's leaders are directing non-union management to give out the notices. Pressure is growing within Liverpool NALGO for another strike ballot — unfortunately, against Liverpool's Labour council.



Teachers' action escalates

TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER saw the biggest ever London teachers' demonstration when a staggering 25,000 members of the NUT came onto the streets. This represents 70 per cent of the London membership.

In the last ten years teachers' living conditions in real terms have worsened by over 30 per cent. Opportunities for women have declined despite measures by authorities like ILEA who claim to be equal opportunity employers.

The new term has seen an escalation in actions in pursuit of the teachers' long-standing claim. Over-

whelming majorities have been recorded for half day strike action and for a strict work to rule — teaching and marking in

By RAY SIROTKIN,
Lambeth NUT

school time only. Quite clearly, any Tory hopes that the teachers would cave in and accept what was on offer have been dashed.

The Tories, via the Department of Education and Science, have attempted through various offers to attach strings to any settlement. Teachers' actions at present make it clear that any attempt to link

pay to changes in working conditions will be unacceptable.

The problem facing NUT members now is how to escalate further. New ballots are being held calling on teachers to support half day strike action each month up to September. This should be supported, but does not represent a new initiative.

First, the direction of the dispute is mainly in the hands of the executive, who have been prevented from negotiating any deal largely because of NUT members' persistence. However, there is no guarantee against such a

deal, and therefore a recall national conference is needed to map out the further strategy required.

Within such a conference it would be possible to gauge the mood of the membership and consider forms of extended strike action. This could be indefinite in certain areas, or extended in others. Such a conference could also consider a one-day national strike of all teachers — preferably linked to the action by the Educational Institute of Scotland and NATFHE from further education.

One obstacle to escalation is that until now teachers have received 100

per cent strike pay for the limited actions they have engaged in. The NUT's funds are unlikely to stretch to full pay for extended actions.

However it is becoming evident that teachers are more and more prepared to strike on a lower level of strike pay. This being so, in order to prepare for more extensive action, the NUT must approach the TUC to demand that funds are set up to help the struggle — a struggle which, teachers are more and more aware, is not just about pay, but about the whole future of state education under Thatcher's axe.

Notts breakaway in trouble

OVER 350 Notts miners and miners' wives packed into a Wellbeck school on Wednesday 25 September to hear Arthur Scargill speak at a 'keep Notts national' campaign rally. Both the meetings size and enthusiasm reflect the belief of many people in Notts that the tide has turned against Roy Lynk and his breakaway movement.

Scargill pointed out that only two months ago David Prendergast, the leader of the breakaway 'federation' claimed it would have some 60,000 members. Now that boast rings very hollow. Of the five groupings Lynk hopes to join up with, only one — South Derby — remains a serious possibility. Of the others, the Lancashire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire unions have

decided to remain within the NUM, while the breakaway grouping in Durham is visibly crumbling through voluntary redundancies.

Even in South Derbyshire, polls report a

By ANDY
BUCHANAN

significant majority for the NUM — a development which was boosted when ex-area president Ken Richards added his voice to the national campaign.

The collapse of the projected federation leaves the Notts splitters in a position where they will have to 'go it alone'. Their own forces, moreover, are deeply divided whatever the outcome of the ballot on breakaway. Scargill pledged that the NUM would continue to organise the many thousands of Notts



Roy Lynk miners who have already signed up to remain in the national union.

Many miners signed forms to remain in the NUM at the end of the Wellbeck meeting, including a number who worked right through the strike.

On top of all this, the government's own certification officer, who has to be convinced that the breakaway is a bona fide trade union, is having a hard time of it. That's not surprising given that the breakaway is bound hand and foot to the Coal Board, but the upshot is yet more delays for Lynk. The ballot on the

breakaway, recently set for 4 October, has now been put back yet again.

There is a powerful sentiment that the delay in driving through the breakaway is allowing more and more men to think things through and draw pro-NUM conclusions. A victory for the NUM at Labour Party conference would reinforce this.

Scargill spelt this reality out. He explained that it was a loophole in Labour government legislation that allowed the courts to appoint a receiver to sequester the NUM's assets.

He also went on to outline the attempted frame-up of miners at the Orgreave and Mansfield 55 riot trials, explaining that for this reason, 'if for no others', Labour had a duty to back the NUM. The statement received thunderous applause, showing that the miners there stood right behind the NUM leadership's fight to make its case central to the discussion of the whole labour movement.

Coal Board dismissed miner unfairly, says tribunal

On 19 February DENNIS PENNINGTON, a miner at Bold colliery in the Lancashire coalfield, was sentenced to three months in prison at Bolton Crown Court for alleged criminal damage to a strikebreaker's car, which crossed picket lines at Golborne colliery the previous July. The next morning he was sacked, the board later claiming as its reason that he had been found guilty in a 'British court of justice'. An industrial tribunal has now found in his favour. Dennis reports the board's history of duplicity.

THE MORNING after I was imprisoned, 20 February, a letter of dismissal was sent to my home. I got it in prison eight days later. When I was released, I approached the general colliery manager in the hope of being granted an interview to plead my case. My request was not entertained.

The area director for Western Area NCB, Mr John Northard, after being asked by Lancashire general secretary Sid Vincent to consider reinstating me in a letter sent in March of this year, flatly refused. But in June, much to the surprise of the NUM, I was granted an interview with the area production manager. However, my dismissal was upheld as a result of the interview.

In August I appealed to an industrial tribunal in Liverpool, saying that my dismissal was unfair. The

Coal Board called for an adjournment of the hearing in the afternoon of the third day, to let them gather further evidence.

One of their main objections to reinstatement was that as I had been found guilty by a 'British Court of Justice' I was unacceptable to the men at pit. This argument casually omits the fact that many others found guilty in the court, but who had chosen to return to work before the end of the dispute, still remained 'acceptable' to their peers.

After six weeks the tribunal reached a unanimous decision that I had been unfairly dismissed. Their full report was an indictment of the NCB's reasons for dismissing me. It said that they had broken accepted agreements in summarily dismissing me because of my imprisonment, news of which was only reaching the management 'on the grapevine'. The general manager wrongly believed that I had been sent down for six months.

The tribunal is to meet the board on 15 October where it will order my reinstatement.

The response from the board so far is a deafening silence. Despite MacGregor's statement in a recent *Coal News* article, saying that those who thought they had been unfairly dismissed could follow accepted legal procedures and make an application to an industrial tribunal, many men who have won their appeals still remain on the wrong side of the pit gates. Whether the coal board's adulation of British courts' justice now?

Socialist ACTION



“Orgreave, Handsworth, Brixton and you next”

OVER 1000 people packed into the Rally called by *Labour Herald* at the Labour Party Conference last Monday evening. Speakers included MPs Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard; the chair of Women Against Pit Closures, Ann Lillburn; and black section leaders Sharon Atkin and Paul Boateng.

Below we reprint excerpts from Arthur Scargill's speech.

I FIND it sad that tonight we've got the attention of the media focussed on one single issue at this conference. I feel sad because it should have been dealing with the major issues confronting Britain's people.

I happen to have a particular interest in the problems that have erupted over the last couple of weeks in Handsworth and over the last weekend in Brixton. A more definite interest than at any time previously in my life.

I confess that on platform after platform over years I have referred to the difficulties by our black community, and by the ethnic minorities. But it wasn't until our strike when I witnessed first hand the full fury of an organised state machine that I truly identified with the problem of black people in the heart of our major cities in Britain.

I remember the conference well in 1984. I heard the glowing speeches from all sections of our movement who appreciated at that time miners had been on strike for almost eleven months. I also recall vividly speaker after speaker in leadership positions condemning my members for what was termed 'violence'.

If there's one thing that emerged in the fiasco that was the trial at Orgreave — where our lads were not only cleared but the police were shown to be guilty of conspiracy, fabricated evidence, forging documents — it's that our lads were guilty of only one crime. And that's fighting to retain their jobs. There should be a public apology from all those who condemned our lads during the 12 months' miners industrial dispute.

I've had a bit of experience of this matter. A thug in blue hit me with one of those riot shields that's becoming common place on the streets of Britain. What happened at

Orgreave, what happened at Handsworth, what's happening in Brixton — everyday now apparently, with our police quite openly becoming a paramilitary force — is going to happen to you next. Because it's been allowed to happen to miners and workers in black communities throughout the length and breadth of our nation.

We are asking this conference and we are asking our party to recognise that the struggle goes on. Since the end of the strike in March, there's not been one single week free from industrial disputes in the National Union of Mineworkers. and, under McGregor's stewardship, the Coal Board have lost since the end of March 1985, £1½m per week due to industrial disputes. The man ought to be dispatched back to the States as quickly as possible, because he is a liability on the British economy.

In July 1984 we'd all been removed as trustees from the miners' pension scheme because we refused to agree or accept the investment policy of the NCB, who sought to invest mineworkers' money in the rotten corrupt system of apartheid in South Africa. I believe we were right to stand firm on that issue. I'll tell you something else. It's time that other trade union leaders, who are trustees of pension funds, took the same determined stand as the NUM took as far as that barren system is concerned.

I've got a major conflict at this conference. It's a conflict with the Thatcher government, a conflict with capitalism, and a



conflict as far as my class is concerned to see socialism established in Britain as soon as possible.

I believe, chairman, that when you listen to some of our leaders in the trade union and Labour movement they talk about our demands being too militant. And they talk about it being an electoral liability. It makes me cast my mind back.

Many years ago it was written by James Connolly on this very question, and it could equally apply today when he said: 'Some men, fainthearted ere seek our programme to retouch/And will insist, when ere they speak, we demand too much/Tis passing strange that I declare such statements give me mirth/For our demands most moderate are/We only want the ear-

th.' Surely, in 1985, the spirit that embodies the constitution of our party, the ideas on which our movement was built, should be determining and influencing our policies! Is it not remembered that our party and our trade union movement were built with pain and suffering and in struggle? They were built by men and women who saw the only alternative to a capitalist system that oppressed was to change this system, was to bring about a better quality of human life. You don't get a better quality of human life by trying to operate capitalism better than the Tories. You change capitalism and you build a socialist system. Let that be our rallying call. I hope conference will support the miners' resolution, comrades.

An Alliance for Socialism

Socialist Action is co-sponsoring a weekend of discussion, debate, and agitation on the theme of 'Building an alliance for socialism' on the weekend of 16-17 November.

Speakers include:

Diane Abbott, Tony Benn, Jack Collins, Jeremy Corbyn, Vladimir Derer, Betty Heathfield, Peter Heathfield, Stuart Holland, Ann Pettifor, Russell Profitt, John Ross, Marc Wadsworth, Jude Woodward, Doreen Weppler.

plus speakers from Black Sections National Committee, the FDR of El Salvador, and many many more.

Venue: Sir William Collins school, Charrington St, London NW1 (near Kings Cross Station)

£5 for weekend, £3 each day

Tickets from Socialist Action. PO Box 50, London N1 2XP