

THE BLACK AGENDA



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Dedicated to the 500 Black pioneers who sailed to England aboard the Empire Windrush 40 years ago. They launched the final conquest of racism and colonialism in Britain. The Black Agenda belongs to them.

About Black Sections

You have probably heard many confusing things about Black Sections in the Labour Party. We would like to put the record straight so that you can make up your own mind.

From what the media have been saying the impression given is that all we talk about in Black Sections is whether or not the Labour Party should recognise us. In fact, we've spent the last year discussing issues such as housing, unemployment, education, immigration and policing – which are all especially important to the Black community.

In seeking constitutional recognition, Black Sections are demanding the same rights within the structure of the Labour Party that Women, Youth, the Trade Unions, Fabians and others already have. Women's Sections were finally recognised in 1908, after many years of debate. Since then other groups have been formally set up and recognised, these include the Co-op Party and Jewish Labour Party (Poale Zion). We are asking for Black members within the Party to be given the right to have our delegates involved at the decision-making levels too. This would range from a guaranteed role in choosing School Governors to selecting MPs.

Many have said that Black Sections are a form of apartheid because it means people organising on the basis of race. We do not believe this is an argument that stands up to serious scrutiny. If Black members of the Party were compelled to be in Black Sections and could not be involved in any other way our critics might have a point. But we have always argued the Black Sections are for Black party members who wish to join them. Similarly, Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and the Women's Sections operate this way, i.e. not all women in the Labour Party join the Women's Section, but a considerable number find them a very good way of getting involved, and putting over their views as women. Black Sections are challenging the system already operating in the Party where the overwhelming majority of MPs and senior members of the decision-making processes of the Party are White.

The main reason we want to see Black Sections recognised is because we believe the only way that appropriate strategies for overcoming racism will be devised, is when we as Black

people come together and decide on effective anti-racist policies which, we can take to a wider political audience. As victims of racism, we have a right to be in the forefront of the anti-racist struggle.

Why should Black people join the Labour Party?

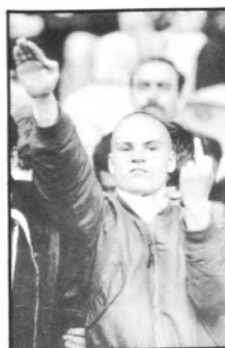
Traditionally the overwhelming majority of us within the Black community in this country have loyally voted Labour. We have felt disappointed and sometimes betrayed when promises made to us have not been carried out. Hence, the formation of the Black Section. Within Black Sections we too have shared that frustration, especially when our members have been disciplined for speaking out. In spite of this, we know, that Labour is still the best Party for Black people when it comes to national and local government. That is why we stay in the Party and argue for you to vote Labour and join us to ensure that our voices as Black people are clearly heard. Our votes cannot be taken for granted if we are politically organised within the Labour Party.

We recognise the differences within our communities, but choose to utilise our common experiences as a strength towards anti-racism. Some people choose to exploit the differences, sadly this includes some people from within our own communities. But there has been a strong and proud tradition of Afro-Asian unity going back to the early 1900s when Shapurji Saklatvala was supported by John Archer to become the MP for Battersea in 1922. Black Sections unites, within the Labour Party, people of African and Asian descent who have a shared experience of racism in this country.

However much the policies and objectives of the Black Section may have been distorted by the media, no one can take away from us the achievements of putting the demands and aspirations of Black people firmly onto the national political agenda. Following our establishment five years ago, there has been a three fold increase in Black Councilors. Four of our supporters became Black Council leaders and four others were elected MPs. There is now a parliamentary Black Caucus. We do not believe this is enough, that is why we have policies written and endorsed by Black Sections National Conference which comprise the "Black Agenda".

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1 INTRODUCTION

Black Sections have convincingly made the case for an unfettered voice for Black people within the Labour Party. No other national Black political organisation exists which can match our success in getting Black Labour supporters selected and elected. We therefore have a major responsibility to take up the cudgels on behalf of the Black communities.

Some would say the role of Black Sections is to fill the vacuum which exists because "single issue" protests politics over immigration laws (a predominantly Asian issue) and police harassment (a predominantly Afro-Caribbean issue) has peaked. The old political leadership like the ghetto god-fathers are being eclipsed by young militants who, increasingly, are looking to main party politics.

Yet Labour and the trade unions have failed to come to grips with the restructuring of the working class. Women and Black people have a growing importance, especially in the service sector and among low-paid and part-time workers.

The trade unions do not know how to handle this beyond attempting to buy-off militancy with cosmetic concessions. The Transport Workers launched a "Link-Up" campaign aimed at recruiting temporary and part-time workers. Under pressure from Black Section supporters, they have accepted that Black "advisory" committees must be added to the Women's advisory committees which already exist and recently the TUC has set up an Equal Rights Unit.

Prominent figures in the Labour and trade union movement are involved in trying to stall the march of independent Black self-organisation with the offer of a Black and White "socialist society" like the ill-fated Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD).

It is no less relevant today than before to ask our representatives: "What do you stand for?" Since the

Black Section was first established five years ago, we have attempted to answer that question in a way that speaks to the experience, not just of the all too few Black members of the Labour Party, but also the wider communities. Under the Conservative government, conditions for Black people have worsened dramatically. The major features have been:

- Record levels of unemployment for Black people, especially the young;
- More Black people are homeless or live in over-crowded housing;
- Black people have faced savage attacks on their civil liberties and harsh sentences handed out by the courts;
- Racist immigration laws have split Black families;
- Refugees have had the door slammed in their face;
- Anti-racist education has been rubbished;
- The racist South African regime has received huge political support.

Before Black Sections the Labour-dominated Standing Conference of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Councillors (SCACAC) came to the conclusion that, to overcome tokenism, a programmatic approach was necessary. They issued a "Black Manifesto" for the 1979 General Election campaign. But sadly Labour bosses saw fit to ignore the demands of the councillors and hardly a line about anti-racism appeared in the official manifesto.

Leadership hysteria

Eight years later, when the Labour leadership's hysteria about Black party members organising for power in their midst was at its highest, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution threatening to discipline anyone involved in taking "separatist action with regard to selective support for candidates or statements or manifestos".

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Black Sections have asserted themselves, destroying the cosy belief that Black people could be kept as passive voting fodder.

The truth was that in the whole of Labour's history few candidates had ever issued statements or manifestos which were unashamedly anti-racist – in fact there were notable examples of quite the reverse. Yet Labour leaders continued to claim that the party was Socialist and as such spoke for all working people Black and White. Furthermore, at least 50 Labour MPs owe their seats to the Black vote as do hundreds of councillors who run town halls throughout the country.

Black Sections have asserted themselves destroying the cosy belief of some that Black people could be kept as passive voting fodder.

Black Sections are engaged in deepening their roots in community struggles and the trade unions, through the organising of Black workers, as well as strengthening our alliances on the left via links with the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour Left Liaison, Chesterfield, local Campaign Groups and workers in struggle.

The Poll Tax, which will have a more devastating effect on Black people than anyone else, the Inner Cities and Education are the areas where our biggest battles will be fought. We can lead the whole of the Left on these issues and on the crucial anti-imperialist struggle in racist South Africa. There is also valuable work to be done on the inter-linked questions of Palestine and Ireland. Our objective must be to build a mass-based movement capable of making Black elected representatives responsive and accountable along with the White politicians who depend on

Black votes and must therefore seek a dialogue with the Black communities.

The important debate about the connection between the advancement of individual Black politicians inside the electoral process and the need to maximise Black power within the system has also been raised. Black Sections have battled against the individualistic notion of politics dubbed "careerism", much like the rest of the left who are concerned about winning greater democracy in the party. We are emphatically about collective action.

Socialists who get into public office must ask themselves how their personal successes are linked to the resolution of long-term structural problems of poverty in the inner cities, the mis-education of Black children and neo-colonialism and imperialism. That is why the Black Section has begun to map out a policy framework which deals with the central issues of concern to our communities like jobs, policing, immigration, Azania (South Africa), education and the inner cities.

It is an ambitious project never fully attempted before. What has emerged from a process of discussion and the expression of support or opposition at local and national Black Section conferences we have called "*The Black Agenda*". It is not a comprehensive policy document written in stone. But we hope it will form the basis for debate among anti-racists inside and outside the Labour Party, paving the way for a firm set of policies decided by Black people to be finally put into practice by British local and national government. ●

*South African
President P.W. Botha
receives a warm
welcome from Britain's
Prime Minister
Margaret Thatcher*



2 STATE RACISM

Amidst all the concern about the dangers of a third term of Conservative government under Thatcher and all the talk of the radical (if thoroughly reactionary) social agenda set by the 'new right', it is frequently forgotten that one of the cornerstones of Conservative ideology is racism. It is forgotten that in 1978 the Conservatives made a conscious bid for the racist vote with Thatcher's infamous 1978 remarks about 'swamping' and the high profile given in the subsequent election campaign plans to end immigration.

Racism, if it is addressed at all, is seen as a matter of the prejudiced attitudes of White people, of discrimination, of a lack of opportunities. State racism, the systematic discrimination against people on the basis of their skin colour, institutionalised in law and state policy, is ignored. A radical left, however, cannot continue to ignore this question which has been central to the drift towards authoritarianism in this country at least since the 1960s. In particular it must address some of the key areas of such racism – immigration control, racial violence, policing and social policy. However, it must first ask why it has failed over three decades to address such issues and what have been the consequences of such a failing.

The Left and racism

The British labour and trade union movement has been variously indiffe-

rent, patronising and hostile to the struggles of Black workers. Labour governments have differed in no fundamental respect from Conservatives on the question of Black immigration while on several occasions, trade unions broke the strikes of Black workers. (The recent evolution of race relations and equal opportunity policies within trade unions is only the result of persistent campaigning and independent self-organisation by Black workers).

For its part, the political left has never acknowledged the tradition of Black resistance to racism. This tradition which drew initially on anti-colonial struggles, included industrial struggles around non-economic issues, against racial discrimination and hence struggles about the quality of life, and community struggles in resistance to various forms of racism not least racist and para-military policing. The failure of the left to acknowledge this tradition, meant that it was unable to learn from it and unable to link it to the struggles of the labour movement as a whole.

One result has been that when the left has promoted 'anti-racism' without reference to the Black tradition it has either elevated part of the Black struggle (eg against immigration laws or fascism) to be the whole, or it has adopted liberal, psychologistic policies such as those of racism awareness training. Even when practical lessons appear to have been learned, for exam-

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ple when the left began to take policing seriously, the speed with which the issue was abandoned showed just how shallow the left's understanding was.

Immigration controls

Immigration control must be a primary issue for a radical left agenda, not just because of the injustices done to thousands of Black families each year but, more important, because immigration policy continues to be an important way in which state racism – institutional racism – is expressed.

Ever since the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, British government immigration policy has defined Black people as a problem whose numbers needed to be controlled. At first, the Government claimed such controls were necessary for good community relations. It was the presence of Black people themselves and not the hostile responses of the White 'host community' to that presence (as evinced in the anti-Black riots of 1958) which was defined as the problem. In the late 1970s, the rationale became increasingly that immigration controls were "necessary" to protect the 'British way of life' from people who were 'different' and 'alien'.

Either way, the definition of Black people as a problem has continued to the present day. Every government

since 1962, Labour or Conservative, has found ways of restricting even further the rights of Black people and their families to enter, settle in Britain and live free from internal surveillance.

This has meant a progressive withdrawal of rights from Black Commonwealth citizens. First, this meant an end to 'primary' immigration, of men and women coming to work and settle here. Then, it meant preventing (either in law or in practice) the entry of spouses and children of those settled here and theoretically entitled to have their families join them. Then it meant a witch-hunt against those alleged to be in the country illegally and the extension of the categories of people subject to summary removal and deportation. Most recently it has meant severe restrictions on the ability of people to seek refuge and asylum from political or religious persecution and even curbs on the rights of Black people to make short-term visits here.

This definition of Black people as a problem has permeated virtually every level of the state, locally and nationally. In the eyes of the State if Black people are an immigration problem, they are a crime problem to the police, an education problem in schools, a housing problem to local authorities, a 'scrounger' problem for the welfare

*Journalist Som Raj –
an anti-deportation
success story*



state, and so on. Equally important, immigration controls aimed at Black people have reaffirmed to the White majority the notion that Black people are not welcome here.

Racial violence

This message has not been lost on the White British public. Just as successive British governments have tried to keep Black people out of the country, so individual White racists have tried, through intimidation and harassment, to keep Black people out of 'their' areas, 'their' streets, 'their' housing estates and 'their' schools and three decades of police inactivity on the question of racial violence has acted as a further endorsement to White racists.

Such intimidation and violence are as old as the modern Black presence in this country but they have flourished in a climate in which the state has made racism respectable, receiving renewed impetus with every immigration panic and every new restriction on immigration. And if such activities have not been sanctioned by government they have gone unchallenged by it.

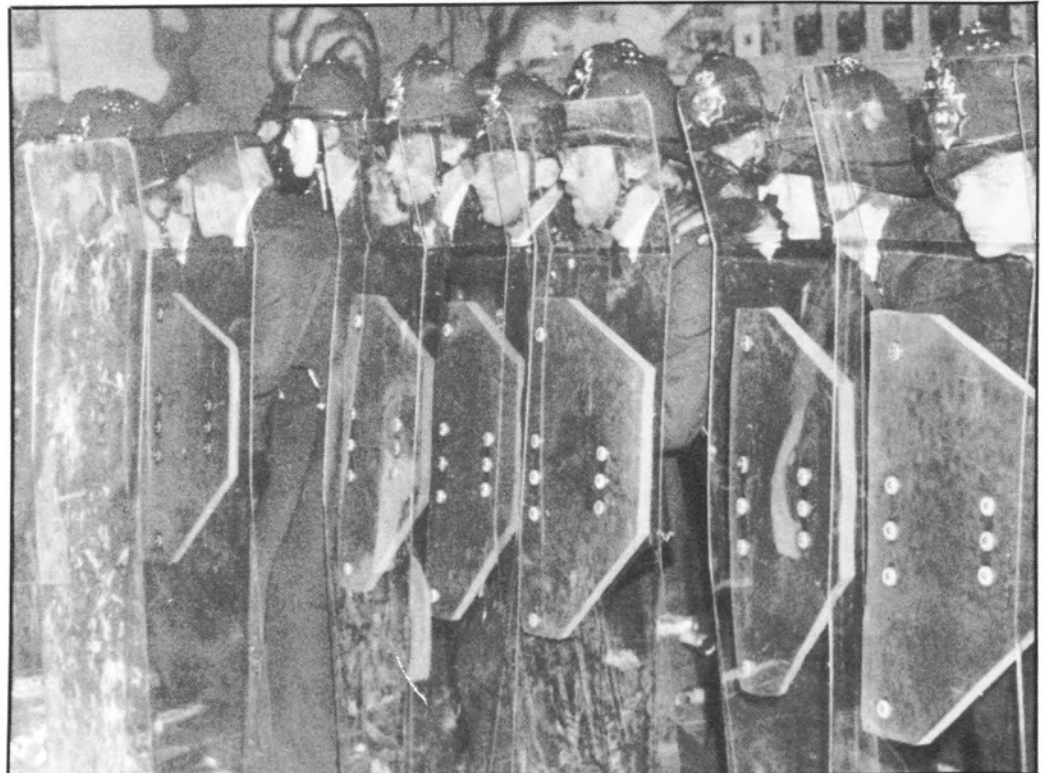
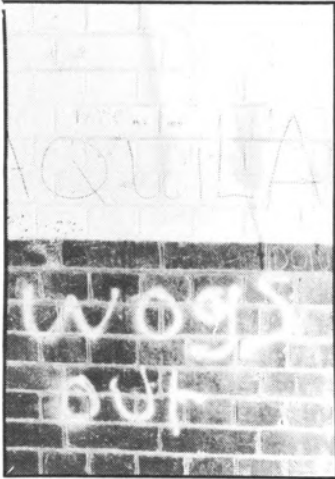
Since the start of the decade some 29 people are thought to have died as a result of racial attacks, while thousands more are the object each year of arson attacks, assault, vandalism, verbal abuse and systematic harassment. Such action as there has been on the part of the Home Office and the police on racial attacks has been a result, not of concern to the

plight of Black people, but a response to defuse the protests and resistance of the Black community, while those who attempt to defend themselves against attack have been prosecuted in the courts and those who criticise the police for their failings are vilified by the police and politicians alike.

Policing

Just as immigration policy has defined Black people as a problem whose entry needed to be controlled, so policing policy and practice has defined Black people as a problem of 'law and order'. Since the mid-1970s at least, Black people have been portrayed by the police (with the assistance of much of the mass media) as a criminal population. The notion of 'mugging' took on explicitly racial connotations and street crime became firmly established in the public mind as the activity of Black (Afro-Caribbeans) against Whites.

For their part, Asians were seen as criminals through their portrayal as suspected illegal immigrants. Areas with significant Black populations have been targeted for special policing tactics and strategies. Raids on Black meeting places, mass stop and search operations, heavy handed responses to incidents said to involve Black people, the use of specialist police squads, numerous allegations of racist abuse and brutality. Such have been the components of the policing of Black communities in Britain's inner city areas.



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A radical anti-racist strategy has to recognise the historical roots of British racism, in slavery and imperialism.

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Far from imposing any kind of controls on the police or bringing individual police officers to account for their actions, the present government (and indeed previous ones) have fiercely resisted demands to make the police in any way accountable to elected representatives. Instead it has, through the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Public Order Act 1986, considerably increased police powers and extended police discretion, at the same time as effectively sanctioning what the police had previously been doing. It has stood, in other words, firmly beside and behind the police in their maltreatment and containment of inner city Black communities.

But just as it was oppressive and para-military policing that was introduced into society by means of the policing of the Black communities, so it was in the Black communities that resistance to such policing began and from which sprang current concerns and campaigns around accountability and police styles and strategies which put it on the agenda.

Social policy

Racism is also a feature of government social policy – on economics, education and so on. Despite the existence of a handful of well-publicised Black millionaires, Black people generally are twice as likely as White people to be out of work and to have been out of work for longer. Those in work continue to be concentrated in the lower paid and least attractive sectors of the economy.

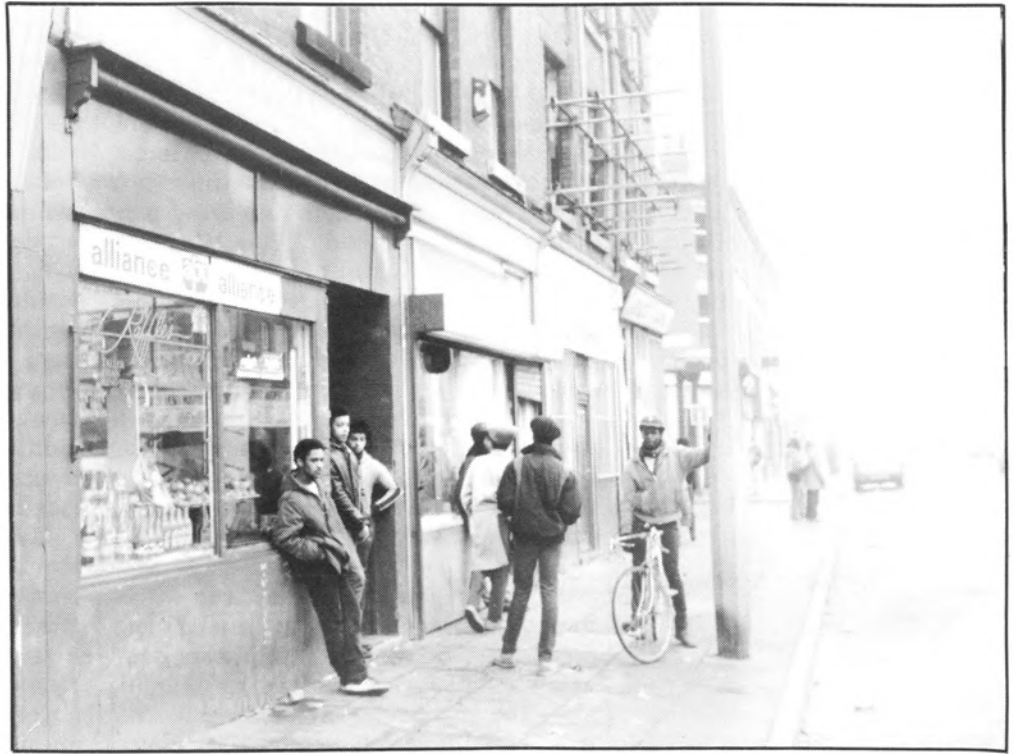
Discrimination is extensive and largely unaffected by a weak Race Relations Act, while attempts by local authorities to promote 'equal opportunities' in the workplace have been undermined by central government attacks and restrictions on for instance, contracts compliance as well as by the confusion of local authorities themselves and a lack of determination. Overall, there has been little real improvement in the socio-economic

position of Black people since the main wave of Black immigrants arrived in the 1950s and 1960s beginning with the SS Empire Windrush.

In schools, Black pupils have for decades been denied the opportunity to achieve their potential, assigned to less academic classes and streams, discouraged from taking examinations which would lead them to further education and while frequently regarded as posing problems of discipline and learning for the school. Belated attempts by local education authorities and individual schools to develop anti-racist or multicultural education have been derided by politicians and press alike.

Meanwhile Black people continue to live in sub-standard housing, generally worse than that occupied by their White counterparts, while areas with large Black communities have been particularly badly hit by the current government assault on local authority spending and will be significantly worse off under the new poll tax system.

A radical anti-racist strategy must address these issues but, above all, it must do so in a way that recognises, as Stuart Hall warned us a decade ago, that racism is a matter of politics, not policies. This means that a radical anti-racist strategy has to recognise the historical roots of British racism – in slavery and imperialism – and its development with labour migration from the former colonies to Britain into a key political and economic feature of post-war Britain. In practical terms this means understanding the reasons for labour migration and the structural situation of Black labour in a declining economy. It means understanding, for instance, that immigration control or racial discrimination are not just questions of civil liberties and human rights and that racism is not something to be found in people's heads and to be dealt with by greater 'awareness' or pleas for understanding. They are, rather, political issues requiring political answers. The rest of this document attempts to begin a process to uncover some of these political answers. ●



3 INNER CITIES

Discrimination at work has sometimes been perpetrated by employer and union officials alike.

For the overwhelming majority of Black people the "inner city" is our home. Sixty eight per cent of Black people compared to 31 per cent of White people in Britain live in the metropolitan counties. People of African and Asian descent were brought here to do the dirty, low-paid jobs. They were cramped into squalid housing in the ghetto conditions of the inner cities. When jobs became less plentiful, Black people were harassed by hostile officials and the police as Conservative and Labour governments pandered to racists by turning the screw of immigration laws. An analysis of Department of Employment figures shows that 32 per cent of 16 to 24-year-old Black men are out of work compared to 18 per cent of White men in the same age group.

The education system has failed Black children. In the past it consigned "West Indian" pupils to the dustbin of schools for the educationally sub-normal. Bengali children are now being disadvantaged to become the new "under-achievers". Racist attacks have gone unpunished while, in contrast, Black people have been scape-goated for crime and pursued by special police squads. Discrimination at work has been sometimes perpetrated by em-

ployer and union officials alike.

It is against this background that Black people have organised themselves to fight-back and survive. This resistance has taken the form of protest groups, self-defence campaigns and self-help voluntary organisations. Youth, totally alienated by the racism they face in the system, have rebelled through uprisings. Electoral action has so often seemed a fruitless exercise when the main political parties' unwritten consensus on race has led many Black people to feel they must choose between different evils at the polls.

"Special attention"

Now Margaret Thatcher wants to clinch top honours by putting the boot in more ruthlessly than any previous government. She posted her intent in 1987, after the Tory party's third consecutive General Election win, by saying she planned to pay "special attention" to the inner cities. Her proposals do not include the huge injection of cash for regeneration which is necessary to arrest the massive decay and despondency brought about by her government's destruction of manufactur-

ing industries. That is clear from the glossy but totally empty "Action for Cities" package launched by the government.

All Thatcher proposes is a screen of cosmetic initiatives behind which big business and law enforcement agencies will get to work on the real project of bringing the inner cities to heel. That means more attacks on local democracy because Labour authorities in these areas have progressive policies. And more strong-arm tactics against Black people – the Tories cast in the role of bullies sending in coercive police instead of launching a crusade against racism.

Much more significant than Action for Cities is the package of divisive new laws including the one bringing in the Community Charge or Poll Tax. A recent study says ninety two per cent of Black households in inner London will be worse off, with an average loss to them of £759 a year when this deeply unpopular measure is introduced.

Rate-capping has had a disastrous effect on the ability of progressive councils in the inner cities to provide a safety-net through the funding of Black voluntary groups. Vital services to the Black elderly, unemployed and youth have been axed. Now even the "creative accounting", which allowed some of the councils to lessen the impact of rate-capping, has been banned.

A Runnymede Trust report notes that much of the "positive action" taken by local councils – denounced as "loony left" – were included in a green paper 10 years ago which was considered a modest and constructive document. It concerned a bill to expand local government's powers to offer grants for a wide-range of projects. This was never passed because of Thatcher's election victory in 1979.

The core of any positive action programme lies in training. But this government is left sorely wanting. Yet the national shortage of many skills should make the appropriate training of Black people doubly beneficial. Race monitoring is also essential because it provides vital data which identifies precise areas of disadvantage and a means of accurately checking progress.

We have warned that the government must take the responsibility when the powder keg created by them explodes. The Tory tactic of control, through the development of a small Black elite, and containment, through oppressive law-enforcement, will blow up in their face.

There is still time for the government to turn back from the current

disasterous course. They could drop their objection to contracts compliance and begin compelling employers in the inner cities to hire Black workers in proportion to our numbers in the population. Research has shown that American companies subject to contracts compliance increased their Black workforce by 20 per cent compared to 12 per cent in other companies. We are not talking about "quotas" – they are illegal – but the "equality targets" without which there will be only negligible results.

The Government must restore the ability of local authorities to raise the necessary cash – from central government and the rates – to combat racial disadvantage. They must tackle racism in the police and defend Black communities from the thugs bent on destroying our lives. They must cease their divisive policy of allowing White-dominated funding organisations to hold the power of life or death over Black voluntary groups. Black people must be granted responsibility for the running of our own affairs.

To rub salt in the wound, what we are seeing through initiatives like the Docklands and Merseyside developments is tiny pockets of yuppie privilege in the midst of our inner city islands of disadvantage. What could be more divisive?

The Poll Tax

Up to 1987, the main weapon used by government was the system of taxation and the distribution of government revenue. The emphasis has shifted from direct to indirect taxation, followed by reductions in public spending, rate capping and the current proposals for the poll tax – all have broken the relationship with the ability to pay. To give just one example, local authorities in inner cities have lost over £2 billion in rate support grant, with some such as the abolished GLC and the to-be-abolished ILEA receiving no money from the taxes. The poll tax proposals come as a logical follow-up to the increasing pressures of Value-Added Tax.

The poll tax will have a devastating effect on Black households. For instance about 90 - 94% of Black people live in inner city areas, and most of these areas end up with the very highest poll tax bills. Unemployment is highest amongst Black people and as such, they are in the lower income bracket. Above all, Black people, in most cases because of their lower income and difficulty in finding accommodation, tend to live in larger households. The

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Poll Tax is a tax on people not property. The more adults in the house-hold the more tax to pay.

Twenty-two per cent of the Asian community and 17% of the Afro-Caribbean live in a household with more than 3 adults. Only 6% of white people do. All households with more than 2 adults will lose unless they live in an area where properties have a high rateable value. The Government's own figures show that the average poll tax will be higher in inner cities where the majority of Black people live. Thirty-eight per cent of the Afro-Caribbean community live in inner London compared to 4% of white people. There is no means of knowing or explaining how the rebate system may help low income families.

Policing and surveillance

The local authority will keep a check on who lives where and with whom in order to compile the poll tax register.

The Government expect the local authority to use the following sources of information to track down people:

- Electoral register.
- Housing waiting lists.
- Housing Benefits records.
- Social Services records.
- Applications for bus passes.
- Library tickets.
- Council payroll.
- Health and education records.

Husband and wives will receive individual poll tax bills. If one does not pay, the other is liable. Council officials will have to gather information on couples in order to determine whether they are living together as husband and wife.

The poll-tax, which the Government calls Personal Community Charge (PCC), is set by the local authority at the beginning of each financial year. The main people exempted from paying will be:

- 1 The 18-year-olds still at school for whom child benefit is paid.
- 2 Convicted and remand prisoners.
- 3 People with severe mental disabilities.
- 4 Homeless people sleeping rough.
- 5 Residential community service volunteers.

Unemployed people receiving housing benefit and students will be liable to pay 20% of the poll tax. The second method of collecting the poll tax will be the Collective Community Charge (CCC). This applies to some houses with multiple occupation and shared flats, for example, where there are many adults living together in house-

holds. In this case, the landlord will be given the responsibility of collecting or recouping charge contributions. The individual contribution will be calculated on a daily basis and charged with any rent that is paid.

A third charge will be the standard community charge which is levied on second homes, holiday lets etc, at a rate higher than the PPC. In every case, the poll tax is not related to ability to pay. If arrears build up, a 30% or £50 surcharge as interest will be imposed after 3 months.

Each local authority area will have a poll tax register. This will contain the names of the people whose "sole or main residence" is in the area. The register will be a "rolling register" which means it will be constantly updated - unlike the electoral register which is produced yearly. Every resident over 18 living in the area will have to register. A certain "responsible person" will be nominated in each household to ensure that everyone in the house is included in the register. Failure to provide information properly is punishable by a fine of £50, rising to £200 for any further offences. Every source, apart from social services and police records will be used to compile information with which to produce the poll tax registration. The registration will be the responsibility of the registration officer (RO). Any evasion of more than 20% will force inner city residents who register for the poll tax to pay more (less in affluent areas) to enable a local authority to collect the same amount of revenue. In time the widespread non-registration will lead to the issuing of passes - apartheid-style.

Effects on Councils

The charge to the poll tax system will force local authorities to cut spending to meet the central government's demand for minimum spending level, thus a further ratecapping on local authorities. This will put the restraint on the council to force cuts in services and lower standards to the detriment of those in need. Since, any expenditure would have to be financed through the PCC, any increase cannot be raised through the National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) as before.

It is difficult to gauge how the system would affect different wards but there is plenty of evidence that the number of losers will far out number those that will gain by it. For instance, only 17% will pay more in some affluent areas while over 96% of households in inner cities will be worse off. In

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effect, the poll tax systems will mean bigger bills for the poorest, mainly Black families who are already bearing the brunt of inner city deprivations and smaller bills for the rich.

The long term impact of the poll tax will be the migration of labour from areas with a high taxation to those areas with the lower tax, thus emptying many inner-city areas and breaking-up families and communities. Those unable to move, will live in areas of decline, creating a "dockland type" situation which the Tory government can exploit by turning such places into a playground of the rich.

How to fight-back

Grounds for resisting the adoption and implementation of the poll tax are a) that it will shift resources from the poor to the rich on a massive scale, b) that poll tax registration officers will be involved in serious infringements of civil liberties in their attempts to discover all those liable to pay the tax, c) that it will give the final powers to central government to smash local government and d) that it will encourage widespread disenfranchisement and is therefore an attack on democracy itself.

We believe that the defeat of the poll tax requires the building of a broad protest movement prepared, in the final instance, to use civil disobedience to make this 'Tory tax' unworkable.

Such a movement will need community based campaign groups linked with the Labour and trade union movement and open to individuals, the churches

and tenants' organisations. The purpose of such a movement will be to organise leafletting, lobbying, petitioning, benefit gigs, demonstrations, post-card campaigns and pressurising local authorities. Equivalent national action will be needed to galvanise this movement and to pressurise the government. We support the People's Petition against the Poll Tax.

Community based groups will need to mobilise people to prevent the compiling of poll tax registers through 'send it back' campaigns, mass appeals against registrar's assessments and the occupation of poll tax registrar's departments. People will be encouraged to take collective action in refusing to register and, ultimately, to refuse to pay, by being provided with proper legal and political backing for this stand.

The Campaign Group of Labour MPs have stated their intention to take a lead in such campaigns – declaring their intention not to register and not to pay their poll tax as a symbolic action.

Labour councils are asked to refuse to co-operate with the poll tax; refusing to hire extra staff, computers and accommodation needed for poll tax purposes. We especially ask councils to declare that they will not contenance warrant sales and the use of bailiffs.

We must recognise that, with the poll tax and all the other local government legislation, the independence and power of local government will be so undermined that there is no way in which socialists can collaborate with it. The options then open for Labour councils

The long term impact of the Poll Tax will be the migration of labour from areas of high taxation to those areas with lower tax, this emptying many inner city areas and breaking up families and communities.



are 1) open defiance, 2) moving into majority opposition 3) disengagement from councils entirely.

Voluntary sector

The voluntary sector, local groups that have already obtained charitable status or are seeking such status, play a very important role in society. The Tory government and Labour local authorities have supported such organisations with opposing ideologies.

The voluntary sector often acts as a mediator between the people and the ruling class establishment. Under-resourced and strained voluntary organisations are filling the gaps in the social and welfare services.

The constant revision of the criteria for grant applications has also made it very difficult for the voluntary sector to develop whilst the demands that are being made by the general public increase and the need for voluntary groups to participate more closely with local authorities so that the government can keep an eye on them has become more intense.

Amongst the various different pressures facing the voluntary sector a new threat has recently raised its head to threaten the autonomy and accountability of all voluntary groups and especially Black groups. There are hundreds of such cases – one is described in detail below.

In November 1987, the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd and his underling John Patten began a cynical and co-ordinated campaign to sack Kuomba Balogun, a young Black activist who was working for a recently formed development agency in St Pauls, Bristol, scene of the very first disturbances in the 1980s and subjected to a police

raid called Operation Delivery in 1986.

Kuomba Balogun had been employed by the St Pauls Local Development Agency (LDA) in March 1987 with the comprehensive task of co-ordinating the response of Black voluntary organisations to the various schemes and other proposed actions of the government.

His crime in the government's eyes was that he had a criminal record and opposed use of a community centre built three years after the 1980 disturbances because of its lack of facilities. There was also his outspokenness on issues of racism and police brutality and a host of other matters which were affecting Black people.

Douglas Hurd and John Patten with other Tory MPs called for his dismissal claiming Kuomba was unfit to head the agency and publicly requested that BS 1000, the sponsoring body should dismiss him or jeopardise 70 LDAs up and down the country.

This was resisted vigorously by the national fund that paid the grant to Bristol for as long as it possibly could. The government pressured Bristol 1000, St Paul's LDA's parent body, long and hard and when that was not successful enough, John Patten introduced a new rule that was to come into immediate effect so as to dismiss Kuomba from his post. This set a very serious precedent for every other voluntary organisation nationally.

Employment

The government has sought to create a smoke screen in order to counter some of the criticisms that it has faced. The "enterprise culture" which was implemented in the United States in



Kuomba Balogun



A Black Section picket outside the Inner London Crown Court in support of Kuomba Balogun

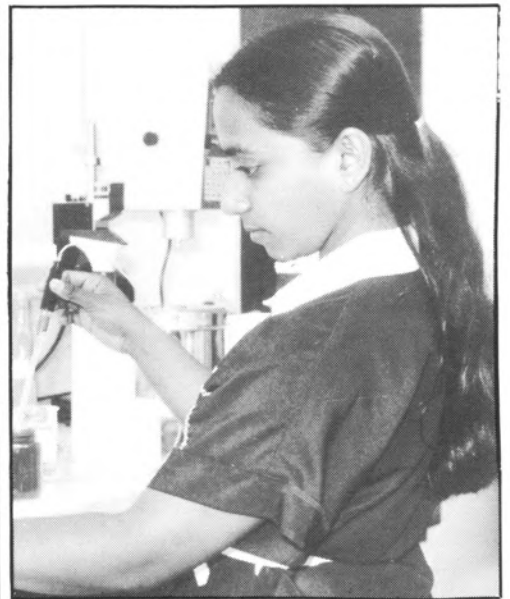
the sixties has been adopted here. One of the mainstays of this enterprise culture is the establishment of schemes by liberal-minded businesses – usually under the glare of television spotlights – for the unemployed to work for benefits. Black youth in Britain have rejected this and are opting out daily. They are forced to suffer incredible hardship or to hustle. Far from improving conditions, these measures are exacerbating the problems.

Task forces are the most notable manifestation of Special Employment Measures (SEMs). They have been put into 16 areas up and down the country and seek to work directly with the community. In fact they have generally ignored the needs of Black people and created a lot of tensions within communities. The most sinister aspect of task forces is that they link up a number of agencies that relate to crime prevention and information gathering. The National Black Caucus have organised a series of meetings on the issue and are soon to publish their findings. The Black community must develop an organised response to these measures and the Black Caucus are facilitating this

It is crucial for us to begin to develop strategies that allow us to monitor the situation. We believe there is a fundamental flaw in the overall strategy in promoting enterprise culture as a major means of employment generation and we are certain that the measures that have been adopted are harmful to the welfare of the Black communities. For example, the Enterprise Allowance scheme has meant Black people attempting to start businesses in a depressed economy with a lack of development capital and a dearth of support services to help with marketing, accounting and management. In short they are bound to fail. Yet job centres and employment agencies are steering unemployed Black people in droves to start these businesses. It is notable that the £40 a week allowance on the scheme is a lot less than most people are eligible for under social security.

Training for employment

A major block of government employment strategy, the YTS, is largely unsuccessful. The Adult Training Programme is worse still. The government is now using forced recruitment tactics for the scheme by linking benefits with willingness to attend these schemes or a Job Club. The unemployed have very little choice.



If the Black community is to be successful in regenerating the areas where we live we have to devise means of controlling resources, people, money and land. By controlling these vital resources we can begin the task of deciding the priorities and financing them to the level required. The economic development group of the Black Caucus is currently working on these issues with Black Sections and other organisation.

Health and Social Services

Mainstream health care for Black people in inner city areas must be examined by looking at the arrival of Black people from the Caribbean and Asian in the 50s and early 60s and how they were used to prop up the ailing state system.

Predominantly Black female labour was used as the 'Blackbone' of the work force although it was never officially recognised as such. Later, doctors from the Indian sub-continent, Africa and the Far East joined the NHS in areas which White doctors had shunned.

The NHS has never been directed to develop health care for Black people – numerous conditions caused either through hereditary or through changes in life-style have not been addressed by government agencies, for example, the efforts to counter the effects of sickle-cell anaemia and thalassaemia have been led by Black people themselves. The occurrence of rickets and heart-disease have not been adequately researched and specific strategies have not been developed. The Black staff of the NHS have been exploited mercilessly by the system; the Black Section would advocate the intellectual liberation of the widespread skills and knowledge of the Black staff of the NHS in

Doctors from the Indian sub-continent, Africa and the Far East joined the NHS in areas of speciality which White doctors had shunned.

order to address the health needs of Black people.

Strategies for Black workers

Black nurses and auxiliary staff need to be affiliated to local constituency Black Sections. This would cover mainstream health care, nursing colleges, mental care, nursery nurses and Black management with a programme for organising their own agenda with local constituency Black Sections acting as the catalyst.

National Black Section should have a health and social services sub-committee to provide an overview and see to the implementation of a national plan outlining strategies in inner city areas, and for the Black community as a whole.

We must have access to local health authorities, for instance places must be set aside for our members who are nominated to represent their constituency. It must not be overlooked that any Black group which has its own independent means of self-organising must equally gain representation on the above body.

Interim and annual reports should be submitted by local Black Sections and the national organisation with a view to gaining a local and national overview.

Appointment and recruitment (A/R) policies should be adopted for all health authorities via local and national Black Sections, with a particular view to parity through affirmative action for Black staff.

Trade unions representing the health service should equally be approached to adopt positive A/R policies and provide information and updates on all aspects of their work, to Black Sections and Black health groups.

The monitoring of the effectiveness of any strategy adopted by Black Sections for health care, should place emphasis on areas which see an overrepresentation, or disproportionate number of Black people being treated, for instance, mental health should be highlighted.

Housing

1 The principal aims of current government policy are to:

- a) End local authority housebuilding
- b) Fuller promotion of Council house sales
- c) Deregulation of private rented sector
- d) Dispose of Council housing to property developers, Housing Associa-

tions or private owners.

2 Housing Associations

Black Housing Associations stand to be disadvantaged due to proposed reductions in Housing Association Grant, from the Housing Corporation. The shortfall is to be filled by private finance, but Black Housing Associations will find it difficult to raise private funds due to lack of security. Rents will rise to repay private sector finance. Government should provide 100% grants to new and small Black Housing Associations.

3 Deregulation

The rent act will end new lettings. Landlords will let properties on an assured or shorthold tenancy basis.

Assured tenancy means any property can be let in any condition at market rate. A previous condition that the landlord must be reputable and the property in reasonable condition no longer applies. Shorthold tenancies are short-term (6 months to 1 year). After the tenancy ends the landlord can re-let on a new basis.

The government's proposals make no specific reference to racial harassment, which opens up the prospect of landlords harassing tenants to force them out in order to re-let the property on higher "market level" rents.

4 Disposal of estates

Pick-a-landlord proposals will give tenants the right to opt for a private landlord. Rents are likely to increase as a result. Black tenants, who are generally poorer, may want to stay with the Council but could be "outvoted" by other tenants.

Conclusion

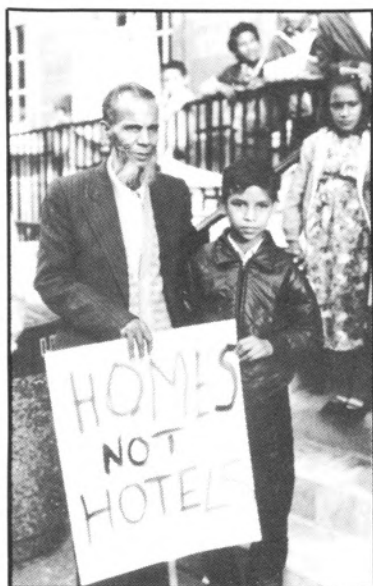
1 There is a disproportionate number of Black people in housing associations and around 75% of housing association tenants are on housing benefit. Increased rents will not be matched by higher Housing Benefit.

2 There is no specific reference to racial harassment. Private landlords may harass Black tenants to force them out and re-let the property on a higher rent.

3 Access to new tenancies for Black people will become more difficult due to discrimination by racist landlords.

4 As housing association become less dependent on local authorities due to private financing, it will be more difficult for councils to nominate Black people to housing associations where the rents may be too high.

5 The Housing Act makes no reference to homelessness, a category in which Black people are over-represented.



*Black Section supporters
marching in protest
at the killing of
Clinton McCurbin
in Wolverhampton*



4 Policing

The police are the coercive arm of the state, charged with upholding the law by force. In Britain's unequal society, no section of the community suffers from the oppressive nature of the police more than Black people. The force has become increasingly militarised with fire arms, plastic bullets, tear gas and water cannon now standard issue.

None of this is needed for the prevention of crime. It has been made available by the Tory government in order that legitimate resistance by those who suffer the brunt of their savage economic policies and have no proper political voice can be crushed. This is the true reality of policing in Britain. "Soft" policing means snoop-on-your-neighbour style information gathering as a means of improving the appalling "clear-up rate" of forces like the Met. "Hard" policing means the ruthless suppression of groups in society like Black people. Police use pick axes as their calling card and the bullet as a lasting reminder our people have been marked out for "special treatment".

Meanwhile, murderous race attacks on our community go on with impunity. We are told they are not a criminal offence. Members of our family are killed and maimed by bully-boys – sometimes openly flaunting their fascist politics, at other times shielded by

the state behind uniforms. Police atrocities against us go unpunished despite ample evidence of their lies and corruption before the courts. The state's response is to criminalise us. Police frame-ups of Black people occur with sickening regularity. The tame judiciary respond by dishing out racist sentences based on concocted evidence.

Police custody

Political interventions by the police have greatly eroded the right to trial by jury. In many cases, magistrates are seen as no more than police puppets. Black people are beaten up and murdered in police custody and ritual "white-washes" follow sham official inquiries. Twenty-five per cent of people serving life sentences in Britain are Black. Forty per cent of the occupants of detention centres are Black. Twenty-three per cent of all prisoners are Black. Yet we are less than five per cent of the population.

Standard human rights are violated when our people are held without access to legal help pending summary expulsion from the country at ports. These organised attacks on the Black community are being legitimised by new laws which curb our democratic right to demonstrate and protest. Police powers to detain without charge have been shamelessly extended. "Sus"

*Political interventions by
the police have greatly
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by jury.*

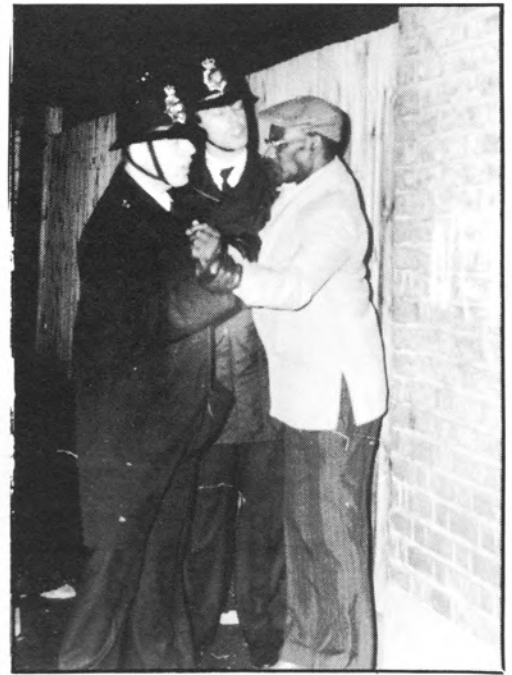
has been replaced by the back door so that Black youth – already hammered by unemployment – can be ritually harassed by “stop and search” tactics.

The police should be transformed from being a coercive force into being a peace-keeping one subject to rigorous scrutiny and control by all the people. They must see their function as to intervene in society only when called to do so by the public except in the most extreme of circumstances. Crime must be investigated without racial or class bias. This means an end to the oppressive presence of police as a force of intimidation on council housing estates. An end to their dubious presence in schools. The police must first be made by government to put their own house in order before they can expect greater co-operation from Black people. Given the deeply rooted racism, we do not believe the police force is a job fit for Black people.

The Black Section does not believe in co-operation with police consultative committees. They are undemocratic and no substitute for real accountability. We reaffirm our view that self-defence is no offence when the state is either unable or unwilling to act to defend us against racists. The Labour Party must give its full support to self-defence campaigns set up to protect the victims of race attacks and police harassment.

We demand that the next Labour Government must:

- 1) Repeal the 1984 Police Act, the Public Order Act, and the Prevention of Terrorism Act;
- 2) Place the police under the control



of democratically elected authorities in all parts of the country, including London – these authorities to have statutory powers over the policy, day-to-day operations, training and recruitment practices of their local force;

3) Dismiss racists and fascists from the police;

4) Ban the manufacture, stock-piling and use of firearms, CS gas and other life endangering equipment. Existing stocks should be dispensed with;

5) Enshrine in law the duty of the police to prosecute perpetrators of race attacks;

6) Disband district support/instant response units which have replaced the racist Special Patrol Group;

7) Set up a fully independent complaints body. ●

We do not believe the police force is a job fit for Black people.



The ugly face of facism

5 Racism & Fascism

Fighting fascism is not a popular issue. One of the reasons is that in the eighties the fascists are not such a visible threat. In the 1970s fascists were standing in local and general elections, attempting to gain media attention and presenting themselves as a respectable force.

After the fascists did so badly in the 1970 general election when their racist supporters were openly wooed and won over by the Tories, the Anti Nazi League (ANL) was wound down and many anti fascists genuinely thought they had won the fight against fascism.

The fact that fascists were less visible to white society was allowed to obscure the fact that they were becoming more openly violent towards Black communities and other traditional enemies. To take up this fight against fascist terror was not so popular as to take up the fight against fascists as an electoral force.

One major criticism of the Anti Nazi League was that it did not sufficiently examine the links between racism and fascism. When Anti Fascist Action (AFA) was formed in July 1985, by Black militants involved in self-defence campaigns, the link between racism and fascism was centre stage. AFA was not going to be an organisation like the ANL with one specific goal.

The new fascist tactics mean that it is more important than ever before to return to certain basic tasks. For instance monitoring groups need to be set up in each area. Racist graffiti needs to be erased, and racist letters in local papers challenged.

Racist violence must be responded to quickly and effectively. These groups constantly need to warn others of the dangers of fascist infiltration into tenants associations, community groups, unemployed centres and trades unions. We need to build effective intelligence gathering systems on individual fascists in our areas.

Most importantly, the monitoring groups should leaflet estates and areas that have been singled out for attention by fascists. The task of going out to White working class communities, themselves deprived and lacking power and winning the arguments against racism, is by far the most essential for those committed to the struggle against fascism. And yet it is an area of work neglected by the Left as a whole.

Race attacks

Many council estates, particularly in urban areas, are battle grounds. The victims are largely Asian, many old, single parents and children. Racist graffiti has become 'acceptable' on

To take up this fight against fascist terror was not so popular as to take up the fight against fascists as an electoral force.

walls, houses, buses and most public property. The streets of our cities are no longer safe to walk – in many cases in the middle of the afternoon people are subject to abuse and attack.

Home Office figures show that Asians are 50 times more likely to suffer some form of insult and attack than any other group in Britain. One thousand three hundred attacks were notified to the authorities in 1987. This is a gross under-estimation of the real figure, since most victims have little or no confidence in the authorities to act against the perpetrators and therefore do not report incidents.

This type of scandalous behaviour has been allowed to grow precisely because, with the exception of the former GLC, no regional or national government has bothered to investi-

gate or take seriously the horrors that many people face daily. Supporters of Black Sections have put together dossiers on the subject and, in some cases, have been on the receiving end of harassment and attack.

The media have, for the most part, ignored incidents – not so when they think a 'mugging' has taken place in Brixton or Birmingham – neither are the police slow to act, especially if they think a Black person may be involved. Race attacks have and do result in serious injury and murder. Black people are living in a constant state of fear, condemned to an isolated siege-like existence.

Black tenants

The worsening conditions faced by Black people are frankly appalling, and getting worse. Housing authorities, in the main, ignore the pleas of Black tenants who are living in dreadful conditions and facing daily harassment and injury to person and property. Even when the attackers are known, many authorities refuse to use their powers of eviction. Instead they seek to transfer Black families to even worse estates with the worst access to shops, play areas and transport.

In schools, many children are terrified to play outside for fear of attacks and insults. The teachers are reluctant to take action against those guilty of such behaviour.

If Black youth defend themselves and their communities, like the Newham 8 and Newham 7, they are the ones subjected to state brutality. We pay tribute to the Asian and Afro-Caribbean people who have come together to fight against thugs. We repeat their slogan: "Self-defence is no offence." Black Sections calls for a bold political solution to the evil of race attacks and racial harassment. We make these immediate demands:

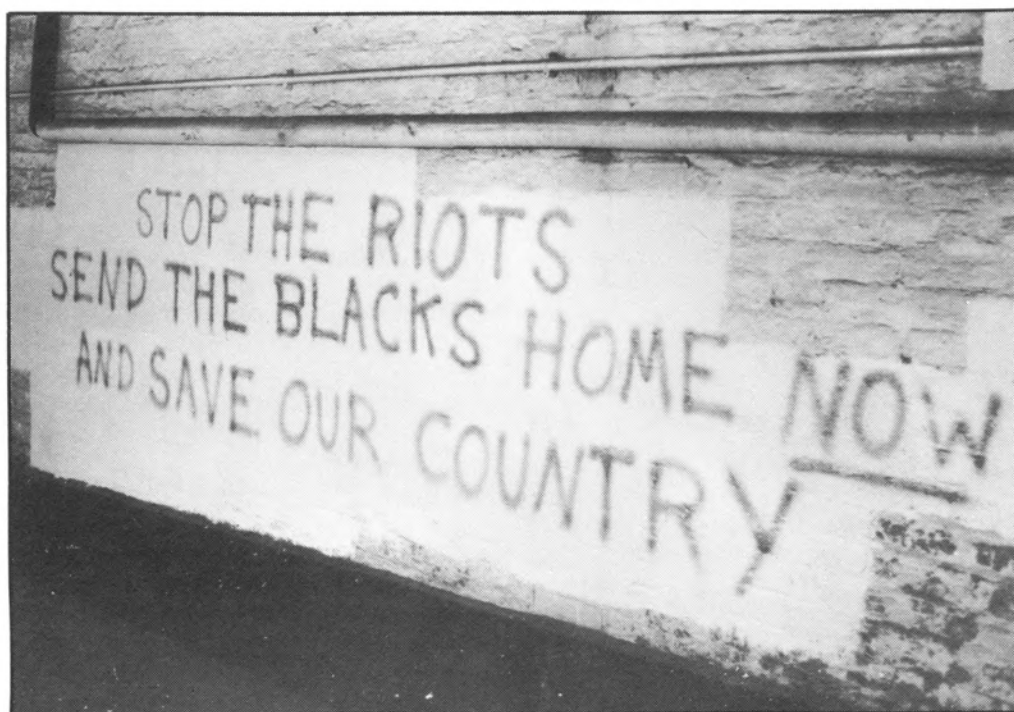
- 1) Local authorities in the inner cities, spearheaded by Labour administrations, to set up special units to take complaints from the Black community and collect data on race attacks. These authorities to fund Black community groups working to defeat race attacks and racial harassment on the streets and on housing estates.

- 2) Well-known perpetrators of racist attacks live in council accommodation, they are the ones who must be evicted. Local authorities must end the practice of moving the victims, often to even worse accommodation.

- 3) Police must respond immediately, once notified of incidents, and on the apprehension of the culprits, must

The French National Front on the march





We applaud these who have fought back against the biggest menace currently facing Black communities.

press criminal charges against them. No effort must be spared to bring the perpetrators to justice.

4) Special police units, like the drugs squad and serious crime squad, whose sole purpose is to combat race attacks, must be set up in the inner cities.

5) The Labour Party must mount a national campaign to give high priority commitment in its manifesto to implement all these demands. The Black Section condemns all those authorities who have sat idly by while Black people are maimed and murdered under their noses. We applaud the bravery of all those who have fought back against the

biggest menace currently facing Black communities in Britain.

Harry Cohen, Labour MP for Leyton, took the initiative through the promotion of a private members bill on racial harassment. Needless to say, it was not given the parliamentary time required and got nowhere.

Labour Party members should be prepared to work alongside others in broad-based campaigns to counter race attacks. In the thirties, the Labour movement played a major role in repelling attacks by fascists on Jewish people. Its up to us to repeat this in the eighties.

*Tamil refugees
on the Harwich
prison ship*



6 Immigration

*The origins of migration
are based on economic,
social and political
conditions.*

Immigration laws have been used by successive governments, Labour and Tory, to bolster their popularity within the white working class communities. Every immigration law passed in the last forty years has been aimed at restricting the numbers of Black people in this country, whether as visitors or as residents.

Governments have argued that the UK is a small island which cannot cope with any more people for economic and social reasons. Ministers get up at the dispatch box and appear on television programmes to say in a coded way:..."We cannot afford any more foreigners... We have enough social problems...Immigrants are responsible for inner city decay...they are responsible for riots, murders, rapes, muggings etc...we would be swamped". Ministers unleashing legislation have given the green light for its harsh implementation.

The Black communities bear the brunt of these racist laws. Black people have had their rights reduced, suffered degrading treatment dished out by racist immigration officers, subjected to virginity tests and strip-searches, experienced police raids at home and at work, been kept waiting in their countries of origin for years on end. In short, Black people are labelled a problem.

Labour MPs spend many hours doing casework concerning immigration laws

on behalf of Black constituents some diligently but most grudgingly. If MPs spent half the time in campaigning against immigration laws, exposing the lies and the inconsistencies, the Labour Party would be able to appeal successfully for mass support from the Black population of this country. The origins of migration are based on economic, social and political conditions. This fact needs to be driven firmly into the political debate on immigration.

The economic system of capitalism is based on the labour of people, which can be exploited by and for the class that controls the means of production. As such immigration laws are a means to control the labour market, just as the Tory government's policy of high unemployment is a means of controlling the cost of labour by damping down the wage demands. The state apparatus developed to enforce these laws is dominated by the experience of imperialism and racism.

The sustained attack on Black people is illustrated by the legislation enacted during this century:

1905 - "Aliens Act" - aimed at Jewish and Ukrainian immigrants, as well as the Irish. This act initiated the concept of racist immigration laws controlling immigrant workers and their rights. It also introduced quotas.

1914 - "Alien Restriction Act"

1919 - "Alien Restriction Amend-

ment Act" – allowed refusal of entry and deportation of those considered to be undesirable aliens. Permission to remain in the UK was not granted to those who could not support themselves and their families.

1925 – "Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seaman) Order".

1948 – "British Nationality Act" – established a common citizenship called Citizen of UK and Colonies. Each person had the freedom to enter and settle.

1962 – "Commonwealth Immigration Act" – eliminated the right of Commonwealth citizens to come to the UK. Those coming could only do so by means of a work voucher. Eliminated the right of persons in dependent territories to settle in the UK.

1964 – "Nationality Act" – Preserved the right to resume citizenship for white settlers in Africa who were under pressure to assume citizenship of newly independent countries.

1968 – "Commonwealth Immigrants Act" – included the citizens of UK and colonies to immigration controls by introducing the concept of direct connection. Enacted as a panic measure in a matter of days.

1971 – "Immigration Act" – Established a complete system of immigration controls to all patrials; also introduced immigration rules by which the Home Secretary can lay down rules of effect and interpretation of the act.

1981 – "British Nationality Act" – created a 3-tier nationality. Abolished the principle of *Ius Soli* – the right of persons born in the UK to acquire British nationality.

1986 – "Visas" – Black people from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Pakistan, and Nigeria have to obtain visas before travelling to the UK. White Commonwealth countries and South Africa excluded from these requirements.

1988 – "Immigration Act" – husbands and fathers settled in this country would have to show the means of support before any members of the family can join them.

Black communities have consistently opposed each piece of legislation and its implementation. The newly elected Black MPs have put the issue of immigration high up on their agenda. Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington made her first speech in the House of Commons on the 1988 Immigration Bill and attacked the Bill as being "squalid and racist".

Over the last few years many individual cases have been fought against the immigration laws using a variety of tactics and methods. The ones that have been fought publicly, such as the cases of Afia Begum and Anwar Ditta, have been successful generating widespread public support.

Sanctuary

The latest and the most desperate tactic developed to fight these oppressive laws has been the seeking of sanctuary in churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship.

In 1985 two Cypriot refugees spent 20 weeks in a church at Euston; in the same period, a woman from the Philippines together with her son, took sanctuary in another church nearby. More

The most desperate tactic to be developed has been the seeking of sanctuary in churches, temples and mosques.



*Solidarity
with
Viraj Mendis*

recently there have been positive results for Renukaben Lakhani and her child in Leicester, for Salema Begum in Manchester and for Rajwinder Singh in Bradford. The most celebrated sanctuary case, Viraj Mendis in the Church of Ascension in Manchester, is currently receiving considerable support from the Black communities – but is being strongly resisted by the Home Secretary.

On the issue of immigration laws, the churches have played an increasingly active role, holding numerous conferences and meetings and participating in various campaigns. In 1988, the British Council of Churches' Community and Race Relations Unit (CRRU) issued a "Statement on Sanctuary" which concluded that "if unjust law is not law, and if immigration law in practice has become unjust, and if human rights are being diminished, it may be a *requirement* of the Christian discipleship to grant sanctuary when it is sought." The Church also condemned the UK government for not attaining the minimum standards set down by the European Convention regarding refugees and for having one of the worst records on this issue in the countries of Western Europe.

The Labour Party, on the other hand, has paid token attention to the issue that appears so high up on the agenda of Black politics. It is insufficient to argue that immigration laws are a mess and/or illogical and/or technical and complicated. It is quite pathetic to argue for "non-racist immigration laws" – as every immigration law passed this century has a racist basis. Moreover immigration control is, by definition, based on national chauvinism; the idea that nations regard national borders as more important than the rights of people to live where they want to.

The Labour Party needs to break from the bipartisan approach to immigration by announcing that immigration laws and their enforcement are a major plank of state racism; and that race equality cannot be achieved whilst ferocious immigration laws exist on the statute books.

In the short term, Black Section demands the following:

1) The abolition of the "primary purpose" test.

2) The re-introduction of the right of all Commonwealth citizens to enter the UK to find work or to settle.



3) The Labour and Trade Union movement to prioritise the issue of immigration and to prepare the legislation to eliminate all immigration laws.

4) The reintroduction of the principle of "Ius Soli" – the right of children born in UK to acquire citizenship automatically.

5) An independent inquiry into the operations of the Home Office and its deliberate practice of creating queues and blockages.

6) Visitors to the UK be given right of entry immediately and that no person should be detained ever again.

7) An amnesty for all "illegal immigrants".

8) All immigration legislation to be decriminalised and the police be divested of all responsibility for immigration matters.

9) That racist activity by immigration officers be made a dismissible offence.

10) Internal controls enforced by a variety of government departments such as DHSS, NHS and housing be ended immediately.

The Labour Party needs to break from the bipartisan approach to immigration.



Children are the future

7 EDUCATION

The maxim "information is power" is particularly resonant among Black people. Education can liberate us from the shackles imposed by racism on our advancement. It is for this reason that countless struggles have been fought by Black parents in Britain to secure justice for their children in the classroom.

Most recently, the fight has extended to Black teachers and governors organising effective pressure for change. Black Section supporters have played a leading role in the Black Governors Collective movement which demands the greater involvement of Black people, including parents, students, teachers and governors, in the running of schools.

The ultimate goals include Black teachers at all levels and curricula with a Black perspective – both accurately reflecting the racial make-up of catchment areas – and of course Black student success. That is not to say "Black Studies" and other opportunities for Black staff and pupils should be restricted of areas of Black settlement. Our chances of achieving these modest objectives have been greatly impaired by the most serious attack in post-war history on the limited gains of Black people and the working class as a whole being undertaken by this Tory government.

Their "Great" Education Reform Bill (Gerbill) involves a massive increase in inequality, with resources for education being even more polarised than

before. This will result in Black and other working class children being further trapped in under-resourced "sink" schools.

The Gerbill amounts to an ideological assault on the concept of comprehensive education. The government is attempting to trick people with the illusion of "choice". In reality, only the rich will have greater options than before.

Furthermore, the government claim that they want to give parents more of a democratic say has been exposed as a sham. When it came to plans for the ILEA, the views of parents were ignored. This is because Kenneth Baker knew from opinion polls that the overwhelming majority of them said "No". Likewise, the education secretary will rely on a simple majority of only those parents voting to decide whether or not a school "opts out".

We must resist the swingeing financial cut-backs in state education being implemented by the Tories (central government spending has gone down by a fifth in real terms since Thatcher first came into power).

We must also defeat the ideological onslaught of the new Right whose high priests in education include Anthony Flew, Roger Scruton, Ray Honeyford and Baroness Caroline Cox.

The labour movement cannot defeat these attacks without embracing anti-racism, as events in Bradford, Dewsbury and Manchester (Burnage) demonstrate. But it is not enough simply

The ultimate goals include Black teachers at all levels and curricula with a Black perspective.

to promote anti-racism, especially the superficial type characterised by the mistaken belief it is possible to base a whole campaign on exorcising perceived individual racism as was the case in Brent.

Black students suffer an extra oppression but have common cause with the rest of the working class. Baker has outlined plans for a centralised "national curriculum" and the "opting out" of schools from control by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). There is also the issue of pupil assessments.

These changes have been greeted with alarm by the Black communities, particularly given Baker's admission in parliament that they are based on the discredited "colour-blind" approach.

Furthermore, the failure of Labour's national leadership to mount forthright opposition to racism by not fully backing the good policies of education authorities in places like Brent and Kirklees has betrayed Black supporters of the party. In future they must not wait for the next controversy or crisis but be pro-active in mounting a campaign to win popular support for anti-racist education policies such as those pursued by the ILEA.

Anti-racist education is as relevant in areas where there are few Black people as in the inner cities.

We believe that the basis of a good education should start at a very early stage in life. The concept of universal education for all is one we support. In order to achieve that objective we demand that nursery education should be universal. This would enable our children to gain access to an early start to socialisation and education, without excluding those whose social and economic position deny them access at present. Proper day-care provision must be made available to meet the needs of working parents.

This objective requires a future Labour Government to introduce the necessary legislation. The other important component of good practice is a transcultural mode of education. To this end we believe that the Black perspective must be reflected in all teaching and education.

Why the ILEA

One of the most radical aspects of the education reform legislation is opt out proposals which will allow individual schools to leave their local education authority. In London this will allow schools to opt out of boroughs if a majority of parents involved in a poll so wish. In some schools where Black

parents are not a large minority, the simple majority vote to opt out could result in their views being totally ignored.

The case for a unitary education authority in London was supported by consecutive Tory governments in the past. What has changed now?

We believe the ILEA's continual progress in the promotion of equality of the sole reason behind abolition. Those of us familiar with the ILEA know its work and initiatives have been universally acknowledged. Its approach to special education, its relationship with voluntary schools, provision of specialist services like the centrally-run language facilities, learning materials, career services and adult education are excellent examples of its contribution to London people.

The initiatives such as Improving Primary Schools, Education for All, the London Record of Achievement are but some of the ones which set the ILEA above the rest. Their efforts to recruit more Black teachers, though treated with scepticism by some Black people, should also be mentioned.

A lot has been said about the high cost of the authority. Those of us who are familiar with the level and scale of social and environmental deprivation, homelessness, other factors such as language etc, with which people living in the inner cities are confronted, particularly in inner London, must ask is there any wonder that it cost more to educate a child in the capital? And is that cost not relative when all the factors and indices are taken into account?

Black parents, like all parents, remain concerned about the under-achievement of our children in ILEA schools as well as the attitude of some teachers. We continue to argue our case for improvements. But we also recognise the valuable work being done and therefore, do not support abolition.

We do not believe that the alternative to the ILEA of inner London boroughs taking over its responsibilities provides us with a better standard and quality of education. The alternatives being proposed have no regard for Black people and are seemingly motivated by a political ideology based on spite and contempt for the ILEA's anti-racist policy and commitment to equality of opportunity.

It would be wrong for us to suggest that improvement in quality and efficiency in the ILEA cannot be achieved. As stated earlier Black parents and employees continue to demand improvements. We look forward to a more

We believe the ILEA's continual progress in the promotion of equality of opportunity and anti-racist policies is the main reason behind abolition.

efficient ILEA, with even clearer perspectives on meeting our educational needs and improving the career and employment prospects of Black people.

Pupil records

The Gerbill will give parents increased access to school records, including ones relating to their children's behaviour. This provision could be especially important for parents of Black students. It should also apply to records of academic ability and reports on incidents in schools, where two or more pupils are involved.

In an investigation carried out into suspension from schools in Birmingham three years ago, it was found that Black children were four times more likely to be suspended than white and for fewer and less serious offences. Parents were often unclear about the reasons for their child's suspension and teachers' records, not disclosed to the parents, were used in disciplinary proceedings.

We believe that as a whole the new legislation is ill thought-out. The Government must give all parents and rate payers a much greater opportunity to comment before changes are made.

Commitment to change

We are committed to a broad concept in the British education system. The anti-racist and transcultural model must become an integral part. This will only be achieved if Black people themselves organise together to formulate policies. Teachers unions must recognise the right of their Black members to form caucuses and student bodies to do the same.

We will work towards anti-racist education as a major plank of our policy commitment. This can be achieved by a positive recognition of the cultural diversity of Britain. The roots of racism in British imperialism and colonialism must be covered in the curriculum as well as the history and positive achievements of Black people throughout the world. It will be necessary to examine teaching methods and materials for explicit and hidden racism. This must be comprehensively removed.

We believe that the Black perspective will only be reflected throughout the school curriculum, and educational establishments when there is an increase in Black teachers, inspectors, educationalists and governors. Equality target must be used to achieve this at all levels.

We must campaign for the recruit-



ment of more Black educationalists through positive action measures like access courses and special training programmes and the elimination of racism in the recruitment process.

We must campaign for the introduction of Black studies at all levels in schools. And there must be financial remuneration for parent governors in order to ensure that Black parents take advantage of the new arrangement for school governing bodies.

Black-run schools

In one sense, "Black Schools" already exist in many inner city areas – schools with a majority of Black pupils which are grossly under-resourced, with predominantly white staff who have low expectations of the pupils and over which Black parents have little control, if any. This type of school will become even more common when the new law comes into force and, in practice, most Black parents will only have the choice of sending their children to these schools.

The Labour Party Black Section believes that these schools, must be run by the Black community with more Black governors, more Black staff, anti-racist training for the staff, a Black prospective throughout the curriculum and far greater resourcing. The battle for the control and resourcing of these schools is the major struggle in the area of education facing the Black community.

The demand for Black control of the *de facto* Black schools in the state sector is different from the demand for independent Black schools which has arisen in some parts of our communi-

The roots of racism in British imperialism and colonialisation must be covered in the curriculum as well as the history and positive achievements of Black people throughout the world.

ties because of the racist failings of the state school system. Are independent Black schools an answer to the racism of the school system? Are they a solution which will give Black children a chance to achieve where such a chance is currently denied? Certainly, the success of John Loughborough School in Tottenham, with much better exam pass rates than the London average, requires serious consideration.

To answer these questions, we need to look at what independent Black schools will mean in practice. First, they mean Afro-Caribbean, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh schools and not Black in the political sense. The idea is therefore divisive to the Black community. In practice, they will either be privately financed or opted-out schools, and usually religious schools. They will therefore only cater for an elite (and the lucky few working class children who can get scholarships). Indeed, the shortage of Black teachers will prevent the creation of enough "John Loughboroughs" to cater for all the Black children in Britain. In addition, religious schools often have a narrow curriculum which stunts the development of children. (However, within the context of current legislation which allows grant-aided religious schools, Black religious schools should have the same rights as Church of England, Catholic, Jewish and other denominational schools.)

Independent Black schools as a strategy must therefore be rejected as being divisive along "ethnic" and class lines and as an inadequate solution to the short-falls of the state education system. They will not solve the problems faced by Black working class parents and children, who are a majority of our community. It is because of their divisive nature, that the New Right and the Tories are willing to accept a version of opted-out Black schools – controlled, of course, by the National Curriculum. (See, for example, Ray Honeyford in the *Daily Mail* of 4th September, 1987.) The Tories are not prepared to do anything to tackle racism in education, but they are keen to buy-out a small section of our community with private education.

The Tories are happy to allow independent Black schools which provide hope for only a few but they will fight tooth and nail against the legitimate demands of Black people for proper resourcing and control of the de facto Black school in the state sector.

Section 11

Considerable controversy surrounds the implementation of Section 11 of the

1966 Local Government Act. It was under this legal provision that the specially-recruited teachers dubbed "race spies" by the gutter press were employed in Brent. The Home Office agreed to pay 75 per cent of the cost of the posts because of the identified "special" needs of Black people in the borough. Most holders of Section 11 posts are white.

Some people in the Black communities say Section 11 should be abolished: a) because of its identification of Black people needing special help is inherently racist and; b) because few Black people get Section 11 posts.

One of the arguments is that use of Section 11 funding should be more accurately targeted, following full consultation with the Black communities.

Another argument is that we should reject any involvement with it and campaign for improved main-stream funding using the provisions of the current education laws.

Community involvement

We are committed to a broad concept of community education involving the widest section of Black people.

We must campaign for the recruitment and training of more Black teachers. And support a modular based Nursery Nurses Education Board training programme for nursery nurses on the same basis as that agreed by the ILEA and BTEC, which would afford such staff access to career progress to teaching or social work. As socialists our long-term objective must be a new public examination for all carers involved with under-fives to replace the present independent and private examination board.

We must work with transient, refugee and homeless families to draw up a charter of education geared to their special needs. And we demand the dismissal of staff and expulsion of pupils found guilty of racial harassment and inciting racial hatred.

We must campaign for community involvement in schools to improve the Black self-image of pupils and to foster a greater sense that the Black communities are also a respected and integral part of the school community. This means an open door policy for parents and effective democratic structures which facilitate consultation and participation in the decision-making of Black parents, teachers, governors and students.

There are considerable mis-givings about police treatment of Black people. Until the well-documented institutional racism of the force is put right we oppose police in schools, except in the



execution of their legally-defined duties.

Black languages (mother tongue) must be a central part of the curriculum where the demand exists.

We are committed to working with Black governors' collectives, Black educationalists and grass-roots community educational interest groups to promote the development and implementation of the Black Agenda in education. We support and encourage campaigns for more Black governors.

Adult, Further and Higher Education

Black youth turn in greater proportions to Adult and Further Education because of the failures of the school system. The ILEA has pioneered access work in this area, running 45 such courses which have been vital in giving Black students entry into institutions from which they have traditionally been excluded. Such provision will be weakened by the break-up of the ILEA. The education reform legislation may also lead to Further Education Colleges ignoring local authority equal opportunities policies and to the closing of many polytechnics and universities, limiting further the already slim chances Black people have of success in these areas. Colleges in the inner cities is an example of the Tory government and big business carving up education for their own ends. They will divert resources away from already hard-pressed schools and Black people will be crammed into the worst institutions.

We believe that access courses must be supported and increased. Furthermore mandatory grants must be made available to Black people. Further and higher education institutions must have explicit equal opportunities and anti-racist policies, examining enrolment policy, teaching methods and course content. There is an urgent need for more Black staff and governors.

Most Youth Training Schemes offer inadequate training. Racism ensures that the few schemes that offer decent training and reasonable job prospects exclude Black people. We believe these schemes must be replaced by proper and voluntary training schemes and that the racism which exists in so many of them be eradicated (see chapter on Youth).

We must campaign for the introduction of a non-means-tested education and training allowance for all students in further and higher education. We

reject the introduction of any system of student loans. Evidence from the United States indicates that these discriminate against Black access to education.

We recognise that as colleges of further and high education are distanced from the control of local authorities their governing bodies will have increased power. It is therefore vital that we campaign for Black representation in all sections of the governing bodies in further and higher education.

The New Education Law

The 1988 education law does not take into account the needs of the Black communities and their children. Our major concerns are as follows:

1 Grant-maintained schools might, once they are established, introduce discriminatory admissions criteria. This would lead to the racism experienced in Dewsbury receiving official blessing.

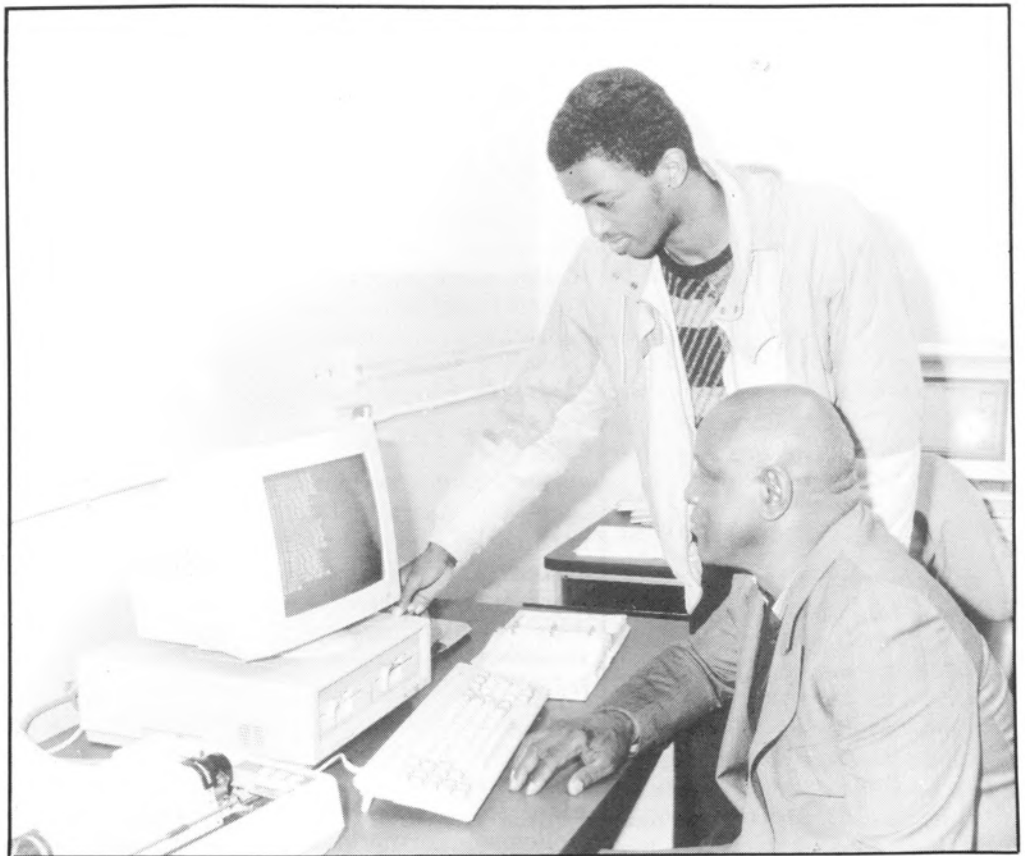
2 Delegating powers to decide financial priorities to schools could result in the neglect of the particular needs of Black pupils. This might include the teaching of English as a second language.

3 The Local Education Authority (LEA) equal opportunities policies won after decades of struggle by Black people would no longer apply to schools that "opt out" or polytechnics and colleges that transfer from LEA control. Grant-maintained schools will no longer be covered by section 71 of the Race Relations Act. This places a duty on LEAs to operate so as to eliminate discrimination and to promote good race relations. At present at least 50 LEAs have equal opportunities policies.

4 The "national curriculum", which will control 90 per cent of the school timetable, takes no account of the recommendations from the Rampton and Swann committees. It could just as well be called a "White Curriculum" because of the absence of any provision for community languages, particularly "mother-tongue" for the Asian communities.

5 The introduction of standardised testing and assessment are likely to be culturally biased against Black pupils and disadvantage those for whom English is a second language. The tests at seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen are more likely to "label" such children as in need of remedial help rather than improve standards. ●

The introduction of City Technology Colleges in the inner cities is an example of the Tory government and big business carving up education for their own ends.



8 Employment

In the run-up to the 1987 general election, the Black Section prepared a discussion document on the employment issues facing the Black community. This document, which is currently being updated is available from the Black Section. Produced below is a summary of the main points.

Achieving full employment must be the main priority of a future Labour government. With the number of jobless above three million, yet in reality much higher, we need a Socialist administration to immediately begin reviving the economy and expanding employment opportunities. This priority is doubly important for Black people who suffer unemployment rates twice as high as those for White people. In some areas, like the cash-starved inner cities, the situation is even bleaker particularly for Black youth. Black women face great hardship in oppressive low-pay jobs. They often endure sweat-shop conditions or the indignity of being grossly undervalued in public sector jobs like the

health service. Labour is committed to the introduction of a national minimum wage as a means of ending the exploitation of the low-paid. But this must be pegged at a decent level – the National Union of Public Employees say it should be two thirds of national average earnings.

Our experience of past job expansion programmes has been that the new employment created has not automatically benefited the Black population. Numerous authoritative reports have shown that racism has led to Black workers being the last to get new jobs. And the few lucky enough to secure employment have found themselves in the worst-paid posts, with bad conditions and the least prospects. Therefore, if a job creation package is to be meaningful to Black people it needs to be based on the concept of “positive action”. It must include:

EQUALITY TARGETS: Central government departments, local authorities and nationalised industries must set a percentage target for the number of Black workers they should employ. This will be proportionate to the per-

The few lucky enough to secure employment have found themselves in the worst paid posts with bad conditions and the least prospects.

centage of Black people in the population surrounding the factories and offices. These "equality targets" need to be set at all occupations and grades of the workforce to avoid the crowding of Black people at the bottom of the pile. Recruitment, training and promotion procedures must be reviewed in order that the targets are met.

CONTRACTS COMPLIANCE: Changes in the employment practices of the public sector alone will not be enough. Government must use its muscle to ensure that private industry also treats Black people fairly. One powerful tool for achieving this is through "contracts compliance" – the use of legally binding clauses in government contracts with private companies which guarantee equal opportunities for all workers. Labour authorities like the former Greater London Council and Inner London Education Authority have shown how this can work. And now both the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party accept the idea. Adequate resources must be provided to enable proper monitoring of the process. This will need to be done in co-operation with trade unions and Black organisations.

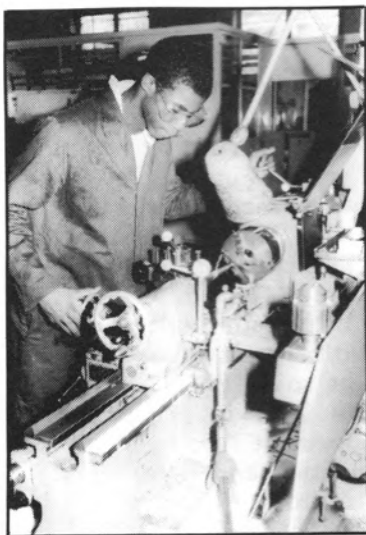
CHANGING THE LAW: The 1976 Race Relations Act needs to be given teeth so that employers, including those in the public sector currently exempted, are required to meet equal opportunities obligations laid down by government. A legal framework in which "equality targets" and "contracts compliance" provisions are included needs to be established. An urgent review of "Section 11", of the 1966 Local Government Act, with regard to its benefit to Black workers, should be undertaken.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES: The British system of education and training is widely held to have failed many Black people. Tory youth training schemes have been at best no more than cheap labour initiatives with no real job at the end of them and at worst a

cynical means of disguising the true number of unemployed. School leavers have been thrown on the scrap heap instead of being treated as a valuable national resource. Special training programmes geared to redressing the balance need to be established. These will enable Black people to compete for skilled jobs on an equal footing with White people.

BLACK CO-OPS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ENTERPRISE: Black people striving to set up co-operatives, business enterprises or voluntary organisations face institutional racism when they attempt to raise the cash either from banks or grant-giving bodies. Therefore, government funds need to be ear-marked to counter this. Emphasis should be placed on self-help initiatives particularly those linked to identified community needs.

FULL EMPLOYMENT: All the changes we have listed could help to give Black workers in Britain a real chance. But by themselves they will prove insufficient. It will take a good deal of time and effort for past discrimination to be comprehensively combated unless full employment and strong, representative trade union organisation are the ultimate objectives. The reason for this is that "positive action" initiatives meet most resistance when the government's target is to only take some people off the dole. Yet the goal of full employment has been described as unrealistic because City bankers and private industry in the current Thatcherite climate will not wear it. What is clear to Socialists is that these obstacles must be removed. This can be achieved by placing the banks and major private companies into public ownership. Such a solution will be unpopular with those who put private profit before public need. But we believe that, properly explained, it is a policy for which a huge majority can be won among all sections of the working population. ●





9 Black Workers & Trade Unions

Uprisings in Britain's inner cities have been a result of Black political alienation. Independent studies show that Britain's Black communities are over-represented in every category of social and economic disadvantage. As part of the solution, the labour movement must lead the way in encouraging much greater involvement of Black people in decision-making.

But this cannot be done just by declarations of "We're colour-blind, we're not racist," or "everyone's the same." Years of indifference to our struggles and the neglect of our concerns have forced Black workers to ask: "Whose side are you on? Why should we get involved in a political party which, despite its words around election time, suggests by its public acts and image that Black people play no part in it?"

Black Sections are slowly helping to reverse this crisis of confidence. Since our campaign began, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Black councillors, as well as the election of four Black MPs.

Many of Britain's six million workers trapped in temporary and part-time work, such as cleaners and textile workers who count among the most exploited part of the labour force, are Black people, other national minorities and women. Together they form a significant number of the whole work-

ing population, as new initiatives to recruit them by general unions now recognise. Perhaps most vulnerable are the Black workers in low-paid, unskilled and manual sectors of the economy.

Bill Morris, Deputy General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, has described these issues as of "profound importance". In an important speech on anti-racism in Sheffield, he said: "Black people could ...take the lead in revitalising a Labour movement that in many cases has grown stale and tired. Great reserves of militancy and commitment exist in the Black communities, they positively hum with political and social activity. They could be a priceless resource for our unions, if the union can only learn to open up to them. That needs structural changes in the trade union movement."

Black self-organisation will unite Black and white workers at a time when the Thatcher government is determined to destroy socialism and the trade union movement. Unions can no longer ignore the issue of self-organisation and the demands for representation of their Black card holders than they can ignore the issue of Black Sections on the same principles.

We believe that, as with women and their struggles against sexism, Black members of the Labour Party must be supported when we demand constitutionally-recognised groups.

Unions can no longer ignore the issue of self-organisation and the demands for representation of their Black card holders.

We are not asking for special treatment – simply parity with every other section of the Party.

Black Sections exist up and down the country and have ensured that full discussion of issues which effect Black people take place and proper programmes of action are devised. It is no good arguing that this will divide the working class. Racism and imperialism have already done that. Black self-organisation through trade union caucuses and Labour Party Black Sections are a political means of healing the divide because they enable us to forge unity and speak on our own behalf. We are not asking for special treatment – simply parity with every other section of the party.

Well over half of all Black workers are members of trade unions – 10% more than white workers. Black people form a significant proportion of the membership of trade unions, and are just as active, but only 4% of Black workers have risen to elected trade union posts, compared to 11% of white workers. Institutionalised racism within the labour movement can be effectively countered by constitutionally recognised Black Sections in the Labour Party, and Black members' groups in the trade unions.

The dispute at Grunwick showed the beginnings of the support and solidarity of the movement with Black struggles. Consistent support has, however, failed to materialise. Yet now as never before that support is vitally needed to, among other things, halt the Tory 'divide and rule' tactics. Today all workers in Britain should step up the vital fight-back against a vicious Tory government.

We must not forget that 3,000 Black mining workers played their part in the NUM's heroic struggle, nor the massive support given by the wider Black communities to the miners and more recently the printers at Wapping and Ford workers at Dagenham. The miners and printers, during their struggles, suffered police brutality as did Black comrades in the summer uprisings of 1980 in St Paul's and of 1981 at Handsworth, Brixton, and then

Tottenham in 1985.

The NUM, NUPE, and the NUR have so far been the only major unions to show solidarity with the Black community in struggle, and support for the Labour Party Black Sections. Just as we have strongly supported trade unions in the past, there is an urgent need for sisters and brothers in the trade unions to stand and fight with us against racism and for Black political equality.

Union members should:

- 1) Pass the model resolution in support of the Labour Party Black Sections/your trade union Black members' groups through your branch;
- 2) Mandate your delegates to vote for Black Sections at union and Labour Party conferences;
- 3) Hear our arguments by inviting speakers to branch meetings. Don't be guilty of not even listening to our views;
- 4) Donate money to our campaign. Cheques payable to "The Labour Party Black Section". ●

Model resolution:

"This.../branch, in noting the serious under-representation of Black members as lay or full-time officials within this union, welcomes the decision of the 1984 Trades Union Congress which called upon all affiliates to set up appropriate structures so that Black members are adequately represented.

The success of the Labour Party Black Sections campaign in such a short time includes their historic role in getting four Black MPs elected. This shows that self-organisation by Black workers can be a very effective way of combating racism and creating racial equality. This.../branch calls upon the district committee/national executive council to support the setting up of Black members' groups within this union and Black Sections within the Labour Party. ●



10 Black women workers

For any Black person who is politically active in this country there can only be one starting point – Britain is racist. The culture is racist, the state is racist. It's not just the National Front or prejudice and bigotry from the ignorant that we face, we are also fighting a system that is racist.

As an ideology racism was created first to justify the slave trade and then to justify the looting and exploitation of the colonial countries. Racism and capitalism grew and matured together and you cannot remove one without the other.

In the post-war boom period British capital wanted our labour. We did the dirty, and the low paid work which White labour did not want and since the opportunities for such work was chiefly in the inner cities or older industrial areas, Black people came to occupy some of the worst housing in the country. Everyone made money out of the Black immigrant from big capitalists to the slum landlord. We cost nothing in terms of social expenditure, the cost of education, health etc – and that saving has been estimated at over £40,000 per worker in present money. Only when we were no longer needed did we become a 'problem'.

Double oppression

As women, of course, we face double oppression, expected to carry out the role of 'wives and mothers', restricting most of us to part-time work or home-working, jobs that fit in with school

hours and are usually low paid. Our 'careers' have to be interrupted if we have children. We cannot attend union meetings in the evenings and we are prevented from taking on wider or fuller political or trade union responsibilities. Women both as workers and users are the first to be hit by the run-down of public services, and by the stresses of poor housing and inadequate public transport.

Being consigned to the wife/mother role we get accused of taking men's work or are restricted to low paid jobs with little prospect of promotion. Many male trade unionists still see us as working for 'pin money' yet the image of the male breadwinner with a wife and kids at home is complete rubbish. This stereotype accounts for only 13% of households and 90% of single parent families. In fact 830,000 families are run by the mother.

The reality is that as Black people we are oppressed and as women we are oppressed. So what can be done about it? First of all, we cannot rely on the White male-dominated trade unions or Labour Party. Fifty-six per cent of Black workers are unionised compared to 49% of White workers, while 41% of all workers are women. Yet how many lay representatives or full-time officers are either Black or female? The TGWU, for example, has almost one in four of all unionised Black workers but only four full-time officials out of 500 in 1988. They make great play of the fact their Deputy General Secretary, Bill Morris, is Black but when he first tried he was

Everyone made money out of the Black immigrant, from the big capitalist to the slum landlord.

*Women workers
demonstrate
at Grunwick
1976*



unable to get on the TUC General Council from the union. As one of the only two Black delegates to the last Rules Revision Conference said, 'now tell us the system works'.

Grunwick

A report done for the West Midlands TUC concluded 'Black members see unions as White organisations which are either indifferent or hostile to the concerns of Black people'. There is a lack of confidence in the ways in which unions represent their Black members. Grievances are not taken seriously, officials will not challenge management on issues of race. It's not difficult to see why the late 1960s and 70s are littered with bitter disputes where unions refused to back, or even connived

to defeat Black workers in struggles – Red Scar Mills, Woolf Rubber, Perivale Guiterman, Mansfield Hosiery Mills, Stanmore Engineering, Imperial Type-writers to name just a few. Where action has been taken such as at Grunwick it was over the issue of trade union recognition not the exploitation of Black labour or racist employment practices that support was forthcoming.

When Grunwick strikers (a great number of whom were women) started a hunger strike outside the TUC to protest at lack of official support they were suspended from their union and had strike pay withdrawn while the TUC told them to go and starve themselves outside the factory and not outside their office. That is the sort of solidarity we have come to expect from the labour movement. Recently, of course, we have seen the farce in the Labour Party when Sharon Atkin was suspended for calling the party 'racist' – only an idiot could disagree with this comment given the history of immigration legislation enacted by the party.

Hypocritical

The record of the trade unions and Labour Party in fighting for Black women members is hypocritical at best. Ron Todd of the TGWU said in a debate on South Africa 'We should be saying we'll give you what you need not what we think is best for you', yet when Black workers in Britain demand self-organisation they are turned down flat despite the passing of 1984 TUC conference resolution moved by NALGO which supported Race Equality Committees and Black Members groups.

Our struggle as Black Women is to change the situation and as Socialists

*The TUC told women to
go and starve themselves
outside the factory and not
outside their office.*



*Women workers
support the
NHS, 1988*

We shouldn't get sidetracked into ethnicity, pluralism, multiculturalism or any other trendy sociological dead-end

we have to work with and inside the mass organisations of the working class. Things are undoubtedly changing as far as women and trade unions are concerned, as the realisation dawns that future membership levels will greatly depend on part-time women workers due to the changing nature of the economy.

As Black people, however, our challenge is to link class and race. We should not get sidetracked into ethnicity, pluralism, multiculturalism or any of the other trendy sociological dead-ends of the race relations industry. Racism is not about people's attitudes, important though they may be. It is not an individual White person's problem but a problem of an exploitative White power structure. The power of racists is derived from racist laws, a racist education system, racist employment practices, racist housing policies – all approved by the state. In a capitalist state that power is associated with the power of the capitalist class – and racial oppression cannot be dissociated from class exploitation.

Defence of our communities

The fight against racism is therefore a fight against the state which sanctions and authorises it – even if by default – in the institutions and structures of society. Similarly class strug-

gle without race struggle, without the struggle of women, of gay men and lesbians, without the Irish, remains economistic. In many parts of the country Black people are moving to a posture of confrontation in defence of their communities. While some Black people are slowly gaining acceptance within the lower levels of society, the majority remain excluded from power. As the great American leader Malcolm X once said, 'The only thing power respects is power.'

We cannot wait for White liberals or even White socialists to hand us power because they won't. We have to demand and take power and we do that through organising in our communities and through standing up to police harassment, deportations and all the other shit we get. Only through organising as Black people and as militants will we get change and that is why the Labour Party Black Section is important – not as an avenue for careerists who want to get into Parliament, not as a platform for opportunists to use for their own ends but as a force capable of linking and mobilising Black struggle, a force willing to go out onto the streets in Brixton, Broadwater Farm, or Southall, a force capable of politicising the anger we all feel. Women in Black Section will play a major part in this process. ●



11 Youth

We need to *organise*. As Black Section youth we have the best structure on which to do this. We must set ourselves tasks on which to mobilize the Black Youth of Britain.

We have to create a movement based on self-reliance. Our task will not be an easy one as there has been no national Black youth organisation in this country able to speak for the growing militancy of Black youth. One of the difficulties we may face is that most major youth organisations in existence were launched through single-issue campaigns.

Gurdip Singh Chaggar was stabbed to death by a White youth in Southall. Black Youth marched to the Police station demanding redress and refused to move. The next day Southall Youth Movement was born.

The Black Youth Movement (BYM) was again a single issue community defence campaign and started when schoolboy Cliff McDaniel was arrested outside his school in 1973. Elsewhere, Black action groups took up the case of the police killing of Clinton McCurbin in Wolverhampton, the beating up of Trevor Monerville at Hackney and the death in custody of Tunay Hassan. The struggle around the Broadwater Farm "frame-ups" has also seen Black youth

in the forefront of a national campaign.

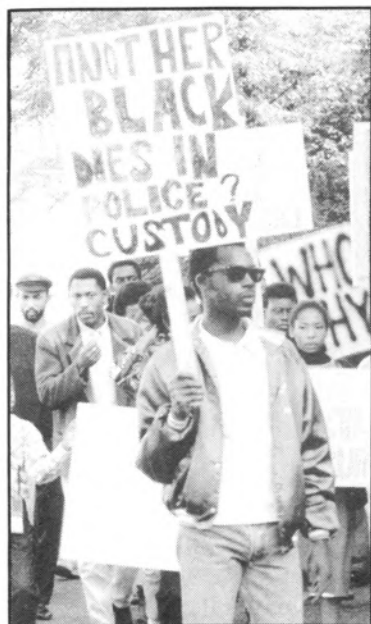
On a positive note we have developed a political strategy. *Black Self-Organisation*. This is as relevant to the townships of racist South Africa as Britain's inner cities.

The autonomous organisation of Black people is absolutely necessary in the fight for liberation and the Labour Party Black Section, the most politically advanced form of Black self-organisation, is spearheading that fight. Autonomous Black organisation is vital in the struggle against racism, because as Black people we are coming from a direct experience of racism, and we know best how to challenge it.

Black self-organisation is very much needed to overcome the divisions in the working class, and autonomous organisation seeks to heal the divisions and build a principled unity.

There are very many parallels outside the Labour Party and in our constitution we support the right of Black people to organise outside the party. We must therefore recognise the long and rich history of Black self-organisation in campaigns and self-help groups.

One of the most optimistic developments has been the growth of activity of Black students. They have been organising on their own terms for



years. The National Black Students Alliance (NBSA) and the Black Caucus have worked assiduously in achieving for the first time ever, three Black representatives on the NUS National Executive including Pat Young (Vice-President, Education) with Black Section support. Black Section youth have to develop strong links with the Black Student movement.

The Black Section has drawn up a programme of activity aimed at broadening our appeal among Black Youth involved in Community Defence Campaigns. One grouping which has a number of politically active Black Youth in London is the Black Unity and Freedom Party.

As there exist some political differences the first step will be to link on a simple practical level. In line with this, the Black/Irish solidarity delegation was a starting point for a fundamental work programme which may lead to a Black Section National tour to link up with grass roots campaigns.

There is an urgent need to move away from simply giving support to other Black organisations and instead to play a leading and decision-making role. This means that we need a core of committed cadres who can be relied upon to actively do the work. The type of cadre that we need can be summarised as follows in the words of the late **President Samora Machel:**

There is an urgent need to move away from simply giving support to other Black organisations and instead to play a leading and decision-making role.

The youthful creator of the new society must be dynamic, desirous of change, of transformation and endowed with a sense of initiative and creativity; they must be disciplined not through outward signs, but principally because they know and internalize the structure in their political sense and they are ready to respect them; they must be organized, with a clear plan of action for every week, every day, every month; they must have a great thirst for learning; they must be aware that the more knowledge they acquire the better equipped they will be to serve the Black struggle.

They must be Black youth with a profound love of the working class cause constantly concerned to link every step in their education to the practice of productive campaigning work concerned to link all their thinking and activity to the struggle of the working class against exploitation.

They must be concerned with enlightening other Black youth and so winning over and uniting a growing number of youth to proletarian ideals. They must be able to absorb in a critical spirit the experiences of progressive Youth in the Black world.

The following resolution was passed by our 1988 conference

YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

This Conference notes that the Youth Training Scheme, has now in effect been made compulsory and that YTS schemes offer inferior training and that YTS trainees are often abused as a source of cheap labour. Conference also notes that the YTS reproduces the racism Black youth face in society. Many of the better schemes, like those involving large companies, do not take on Black trainees.

Conference resolves to campaign against the racism in YTS, compulsion to take part and the use of trainees as cheap labour on many of the schemes. Conference instructs the National Executive and National Committee to link up with campaigns like CREMP in Birmingham and RIETS in Coventry and to support their activities.

Conference also notes the proposal to replace the Community Programme

and a wide range of the adult training programmes with a new adult "training" programme similar to the "workfare" programmes in the United States (i.e. work in return for state benefits).

Conference commits itself to opposing any such schemes unless they meet the following six criteria:

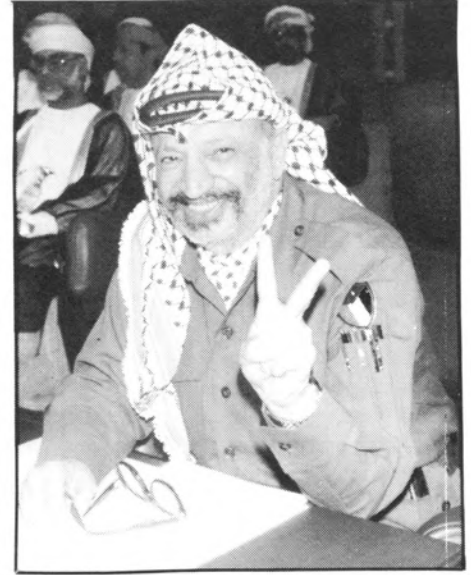
- i) The scheme is voluntary;
- ii) The training is good quality and certificated;
- iii) There is employed status for participants;
- iv) Pay is the rate for the job;
- v) Trade union involvement
- vi) There is an explicit anti-racist and anti-sexist policy.



Gerry Adams (left)



Winnie Mandela



Yasser Arafat

12 International

Azania

Those fighting to break the chains of bondage through the Black trade unions and armed liberation struggle in Azania (South Africa) must be supplied with financial and material aid. In 1985 we called on the Labour Party to urgently convene a meeting of labour movement leaders – Black and White – to formulate a campaign aimed at:

- 1) Immediate disinvestment by unions and Labour authorities;
- 2) A national Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters;
- 3) A concerted programme of pressure in parliament aimed at securing sanctions and stopping the British Government from vetoing such measures at the United Nations Security Council;
- 4) A national publicity campaign spear-headed by the trade union and Labour Party press aimed at securing support and cash;
- 5) An immediate end to the sale of South African goods by Co-op stores or their use by Labour-controlled local authorities;
- 6) An officially-backed refusal by trade unionists at ports to handle South African goods or goods destined for South Africa;
- 7) The unconditional release of political prisoners.

The National Union of Seamen went on to announce international action against South African-bound oil. And the Co-op, plus other major stores,

banned the stocking of South African goods. African National Congress (ANC) president Oliver Tambo was a guest speaker at the Labour Party's annual conference in 1986. The Black Section National Committee decided Azania was one of two issues we should focus major campaigns on.

Azania occupies a key place in international politics at the moment because of the heroic struggle for liberation of its Black majority. The Black Section position on this vital question is bound to be different from that of other solidarity groups in Britain like the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) because, as part of the Black diaspora, we identify directly with the Azanian struggle.

We see our struggle in Britain as being similar in content to that of African and Asian people worldwide. There is a clearly defined link between our struggle against racism and the battle against imperialism in the Third World. Our struggle for Black self-organisation is intertwined with the fight for genuine self-determination and national independence in the Black world. The struggle of Black youth in the South African townships has inspired Black youth in Britain from St Pauls, Handsworth and Leicester to Brixton, Tottenham and Southall.

We are ever conscious of the fact that British imperialism is the major Western capitalist exploiter in South Africa. How can we as Black people active in

There is a clearly defined link between our struggle against racism and the battle against imperialism in the Third World.

the Labour Party help to put an end to colonialist domination of the Black majority by the privileged White minority in South Africa? Furthermore, there is an undoubtedly large 'anti-apartheid' movement in Britain. How are we to relate to it?

How to proceed

As Black people we have suffered from economic subjugation by White imperialists over many centuries starting with slavery. Not only have we been subjected to the plundering of our natural resources, we have also experienced the systematic smashing and suppression of our culture and history. We must therefore wage an international struggle as the Black diaspora to regain our land, history, culture and inalienable right to run our own affairs. This is called the **National Question**.

Our politics must closely relate to this struggle of Black people to overthrow colonial and national oppression as a means of us regaining our true identity. Those Black activists steeped in the politics of White colonising Leftism must recognise that the national question cannot be negotiated away or subsumed to a simplistic interpretation of **The Class Question**.

The two have equal importance to us as Black Socialists, for instance, the current tactic of imperialism is to attempt to con us into believing that by getting rid of racialism and apartheid the Black masses in Azania will be freed. The reality is that capitalism would remain with a 'multi-racial' face instead of an exclusively White one. Imperialism, capitalism, colonialism and White racism are the inter-linked enemies of the Azanian people and must always remain the strategic targets of the Azanian revolution.

Those who make much play of "non-racialism" over look the fact the Whites are an oppressing nation. The White working class is thoroughly imbued with colonialist and racist attitudes. They have enjoyed enormous privileges on the backs of the Black working class. It is the social revolution of the Azanian majority which will make the qualitative difference in the lives of the oppressed masses. It will restore their national rights and culture and create an Azania free from class, racial and caste inequalities. The democratic tasks are to win civil and human rights and equality in the fields of employment, education, press freedom, freedom of movement, culture and language. The principal national task is to regain the country for its rightful indigenous owners – the African people.

There cannot be equality between dispossessors and dispossessed, colonisers and the colonised, exploiters and the exploited. While the African people are the pivot of the new nation their main allies are the so-called 'Coloured' and Indian peoples. They form the Black political bloc with the African peoples, taking the 'Africanist' aspirations as their own. The Indian people have always fought side by side with the African peoples. Indeed, Indian workers have played a key role in the formation of Black liberation organisations and trade unions.

Role of Whites

A number of 'liberal' White people have undeniably stoutly opposed the apartheid state and stood up for the democratic rights of Black people. As members of the Black diaspora, we can learn from the words of Malcolm X on this. In his book, *Afro-American History* (pub. 1967) he pointed out how White liberals who oppose the armed struggle for Black liberation are no allies at all.

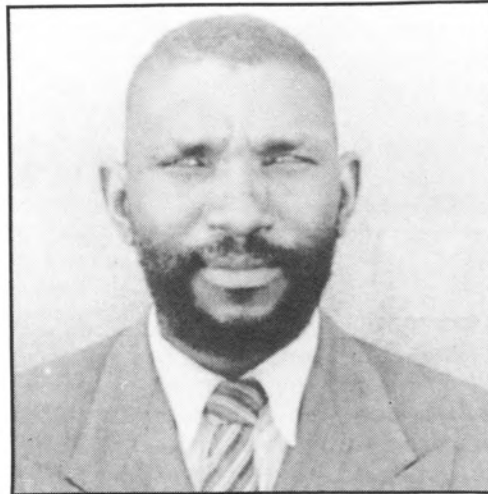
Many White people, despite their progressiveness, have not been able to fully shed their colonial and racial attitudes towards the struggle, and in particular to have a correct attitude towards the national question. While supporting the democratic struggles of Black people they still peddle ideas about 'integration', 'non-racial democracy', 'multi-racialism' – all of them disguised forms of neo-colonialism. There is a body of White liberals who, because of their own vested interests, attempt to derail the Black struggle from its goals outlined above. We as Black people are determined to assert our own leadership of the struggle. That we as Black people speak on our own behalf is a central tenet of the Black Section struggle. This is why we talk about Black people's struggle for self-determination and self-organisation.

Steve Biko in *"I Write What I Like"* (pub. 1978) said: "We are concerned with that curious bunch of non-conformists who explain their participation (in the Black struggle) in negative terms. That bunch of do-gooders who go under all sorts of names – liberals, leftist etc. These are the people who argue that they are not responsible for White racism and the country's inhumanity to Black people. These are the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the Blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the Black struggle for a place under the sun. In short, these are the people who say

Indian workers have played a key role in the formation of Black liberation organisations and trade unions.



Nelson Mandela (ANC)



Zephania Mothopeng (PAC)

that they have Black souls wrapped up in White skins."

Why the name Azania

We should use this word because it is the choice of key groups and individuals in the country whose involvement in the Black liberation struggle is from an Africanist perspective. They include Black political parties like the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), Azanian Peoples Organisation (Azapo), Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCM) and Black Trade Unions as well as the new NACTU federation. Additionally, it is an accepted name used in the top-selling Black newspaper, *The Sowetan*. The newly-elected governments of Black nations like Zambia, Ghana and Zimbabwe have changed the name of former colonial countries as the first symbolic sign of the overthrow of imperialist rule.

Who do we support

This is a thorny question with a simple answer. We shall give support to all of Azania's Black liberation movements. This practice has been followed by Black Section national officers who have met with representatives of the African National Congress, PAC, Azapo and BCM. We will continue this policy in the solidarity group Black Action for Liberation of Southern Africa (Balsa). One of the chief problems is that Black people in Britain have been led to believe that there is just one Black liberation group fighting to emancipate Azania.

The AAM's line has also, in a neo-colonialist way, suppressed the historical role played by the PAC and other groups in the Black Consciousness Movement which Steve Biko helped to form. For instance, the PAC led the fight against the notorious 'Pass Laws'. This came to a head with the massacre of Black youth at Sharpeville in 1960.

The first political prisoners on Robben Island were members of the PAC. Nonetheless, it must be stated that the ANC is the oldest Black liberation movement in Azania. It was founded in 1912. The PAC split from the ANC in 1959 over the national question. Unlike the ANC, the leadership of the PAC is solely Black. As well as supporting all Black liberation movements we must support the release of all political prisoners. For instance, when we call for the release of the ANC's Nelson Mandela we should also demand that Zephania Mothopeng, of the PAC, be set free. Mothopeng has been behind bars for more than a decade. Ultimately, it will be for the people of Azania to decide which movement is to be their legitimate representative in government. We must not be bullied hectoring or cajoled into supporting just one group at this juncture. We will strive to support all of them equally, providing a platform, funds and publicity for their struggle inside and outside the British labour movement.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement

There is much controversy over the AAM among Black activists. Problems arise because it seen as a White, middle-class, liberal's organisation. The more aware activists are concerned about its exclusive support for the ANC – though the AAM deny this is true. More disturbing is the AAM's image as a White-dominated movement that refuses to take up issues of racism in Britain and thereby make itself relevant to domestic Black struggle. Because of these flaws, a break-away group called the City of London AAM has been formed. Key supporters are members of the Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism tendency embraced by the Revolutionary Communist Group.

The AAM's leadership has responded

More disturbing is the AAM's image as a White-dominated movement that refuses to take up issues of racism in Britain and therefore makes itself irrelevant to domestic Black struggle.

by changing the rules of their conference to secure their own positions and formed a "Black and Ethnic Minorities" working party as a sop. Our role should be to regain Black leadership of an issue which belongs to us and has been hijacked. We can do this by opening up a debate which has become stagnant and sectarian. The priorities and agenda are currently decided by influential White race 'spokesmen' like the AAM chair, Bob Hughes MP. White liberals have a strangle-hold on the issue. This is particularly apparent when White speakers are fielded to talk on behalf of the ANC and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

On a warning note, our support for the armed struggle will pose problems with White liberal allies as more White people are killed in Azania. We will be under pressure to condemn violence (viz Tottenham) or the killing of 'innocent' victims of 'terrorism'. Similar

pressure has been put on Irish activists supporting the struggle for the liberation of their country. The link between the struggle of the Black diaspora and the struggle in Central America, Palestine and Ireland must not be lost on us as oppressed people who will draw winning strength from unity.

Trade Unions

One of the most positive developments in Azania over the past few years has been the growth of the Black and non-racial independent trade unions. We warmly welcomed the birth of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in November 1986 and CUSA-AZACTU (now NACTU) a year later. Unfortunately, these unions have not been given adequate support by British trade unions or the AAM. We are determined to change this by giving them publicity and support.

Palestine

At the Annual Conference of the Black Section in March 1988, there was a major discussion of the issues of Palestine. A resolution condemning the repression of the Palestinians in the Gaza, the West Bank and within the pre-1967 borders of "Israel" was passed unanimously. The conference expressed its solidarity with the Palestinians fighting the repression and the occupation. The Black Section is committed to supporting the solidarity groups in Britain and especially the joint interim committee on Palestine.

Since 9th December 1987 the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza strip have been conducting a courageous and historic uprising against the occupying Israelis. This *intifadah* (uprising in Arabic) has been remarkable in a number of respects. First, it has continued for more than 6 months despite the brutal repression of the Israeli authorities.

Secondly, it has mobilised virtually the entire population regardless of class background, age or gender. Women are playing a central role, not only through physical resistance but also by organising visits to prisoners and an alternative economy to the Israeli one. In addition, the *intifadah* has catalysed sympathetic action by Palestinians living within Israel's pre-1967 borders.

The uprising has exposed the sham of Israel's democracy. At the time of

writing more than 200 unarmed Palestinians had been killed by the Israeli army, many of them children. Hundreds of Palestinians have been beaten under the Israeli government's 'broken-bones' policy. The restrictions on reporting by the press bear a close resemblance to those imposed in South Africa.

Those who believed Israel was 'an island of democracy in a sea of reaction' will have been surprised by the scale and brutality of Israel's repression. But those who have followed the history of Israel will not have been surprised because this shows Israel is a racist state.

Israel is a product of the Zionist movement. Zionism argues that the only solution to the problem of anti-semitism is to create a Jewish State. But if you create a state based exclusively on one 'race' or religion you are bound to have problems, particularly when the state is created on land inhabited by another people.

This was the case with Israel. Created in 1948, winning support throughout the world because of the genocide practised by Nazism, the Israelis refused to allow the return of native Palestinians who had fled during the fighting which led to Israel's birth. These Palestinians had fled for fear of their lives because of well-publicised massacres of Palestinians by Zionists, in particular the massacre of 254 women, children and elderly people at Deir Yassin. However, any Jewish per-

Women are playing a central role, not only through physical resistance but also by organising visits to prisoners and an alternative economy to the Israeli one.

Israel is an outpost for American imperialism in the Middle East and could not survive without massive injections of American cash.

son who sets foot in Israel automatically receives Israeli citizenship.

Israel discriminates against Arabs in all walks of life. After the 1967 War when the West Bank and the Gaza strip were occupied, the Israeli government annexed East Jerusalem and proceeded to found settlements in the occupied territories. These Israeli settlers constitute 3% of the population of Gaza and the West Bank but they have already confiscated 52% of the West Bank and 30% of Gaza. Israel draws 40% of its water supplies from the Occupied Territories.

The political nature of Israel reflects that of its allies. It has very close links with South Africa, supplying arms in return for raw diamonds. It is also reputed to have close nuclear links.

Indeed the revelations by Mordechai Vannunu, an Israeli technician who worked at Israel's secret military installations, suggest that Israel is the 6th nuclear power in the world. Israel's other great friend is the USA which has poured more money into Israel than any other country. Israel is an outpost for American imperialism in the Middle East and could not survive without the massive injections of American cash.

Anti-Zionism, anti-semitism

It is important to make a clear distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-semitism. Anti-Zionism means opposition to the creation of an exclusive Jewish State. Anti-semitism is racism against Jews. The Labour Party Black Section is committed to fighting all forms of racism including anti-semitism. But it is also anti-Zionist because it does not believe that discriminating against and oppressing the Palestinians is a way to solve the racism against Jewish people.

It is also important to realise that the hope that many British Labour Party members have in the Israeli Labour Party is misplaced. They were the party of power during the first 25-30 years of Israel's existence. The Israeli Labour Party created the structures which discriminate against Palestinian Arabs. They also started the settlements in the Occupied Territories. And Rabin, the current Israeli Defence Minister who is in charge of the repression in the West Bank and Gaza, is a leading member of the Israeli Labour Party.

The party should be expelled from the Socialist International unless it agrees to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), with-



draws from the Occupied Territories and begins to dismantle the structures of racism inside Israel.

The PLO is the umbrella organisation of the Palestinians fighting against Zionist repression. It has called for a democratic, secular state in Palestine where all residents will have equal rights whatever their origins or religious beliefs. This is in marked contrast to the racist nature of the Israeli state in which Jews have more rights than Arabs. More recently, the PLO has stated it will accept a two-state solution. This means the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, side by side with an Israeli State in its pre-67 borders.

The PLO have been condemned as terrorist by the Western media. Yet this is pure hypocrisy because the deaths caused by the PLO are insignificant in comparison with the deaths caused by the terrorist Israeli State during the current uprising, during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and by the numerous bombing raids on Palestinian refugee camps.

The Labour Party Black Section expresses its solidarity with the Palestinians. We call for the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and for an international peace conference at which the PLO will be represented. We demand the immediate end to the repression in the West Bank and Gaza and the withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Territories. We support the creation of a democratic, secular state. The Black Section is committed to supporting the solidarity groups in Britain and especially the Joint Interim Committee on Palestine. Immediate support can be given by boycotting Israeli goods, raising money for the Palestinian uprising and for charities such as Medical Aid for Palestine.

Ireland

At a public meeting in March 1987, the then Black Section national secretary in an appeal to the Black community said: "The problem is not one of Ireland but of colonialism which the Irish people are fighting against. This is what the Irish people are fighting against and Black people should be a part of that fight... If they are not, they should at least understand." It is this kind of understanding (on both sides) that the Black Section is trying to foster.

The similarities of Black struggle and the Irish struggle are there for everyone to see. There is a daily experience of harassment by Black and Irish people. The tactics that the police use in the inner cities, and those used during the miners strike and the print-workers dispute were practised in Ireland against the struggle for liberation.

The Labour Party Black Section is at a crucial stage of the smash racism class struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle. We have to understand what is happening nationally and internationally. There is a gigantic movement taking place today of 'Third World' people liberating themselves throughout the world. It is a daily occurrence in El Salvador, Palestine, Namibia, Azania and Ireland. For wherever "Third World" people are found they are subjected to the most horrendous forms of exploitation, oppression and repression.

But let us first understand our historical oppression. That is the key to our liberation. When we look at world history of the past 500 years and more,

there is one startling fact about it: a handful of European nations have expropriated the land from its original inhabitants, and subjected them to genocide, to the crudest forms of extermination. It is a process that continues up to the present day. For what is the struggle in Ireland about but the most stark and naked form of colonial and imperialist oppression which takes place under our very noses.

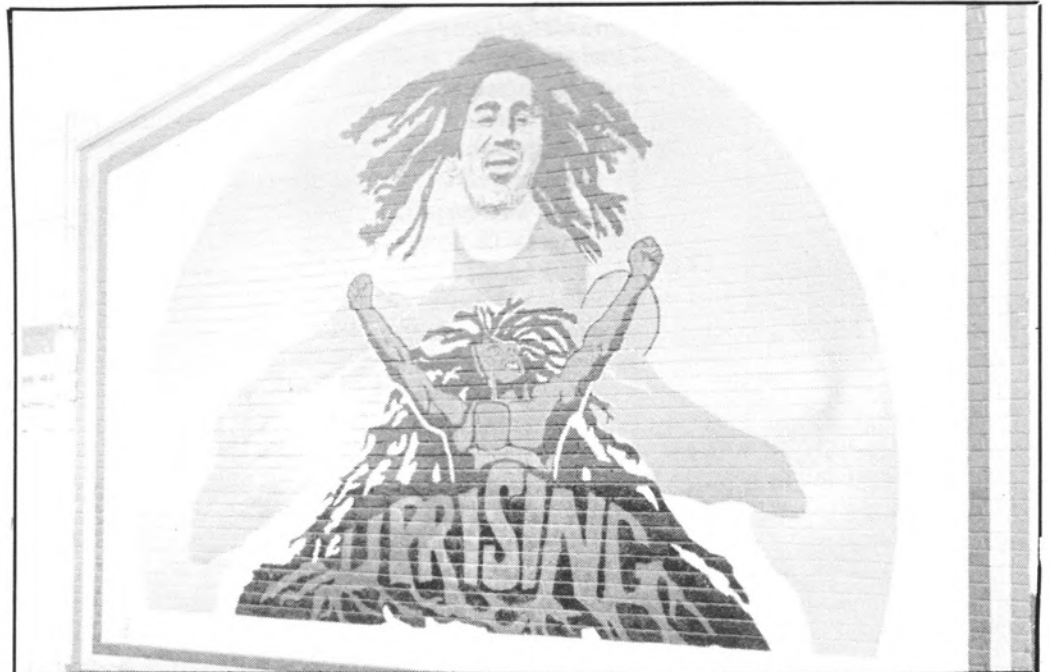
The "Western Civilisation" is a civilisation based from the very beginning upon the exploitation of the "Third World". Indeed the Western World could not have existed without this exploitation. The development of the West and the exploitation and oppression of the "Third World" go hand in hand. This is still true today.

It is this kind of commonality of experience of Black and Irish people that must be learnt and explained to our community. Irish people must also be made aware of the reality of racism and its systems of internal controls, immigration laws and racial harassment.

The role of women in the liberation struggle and their oppression must also be seriously addressed. And here the Black Section should stress the centrality of the struggle against women's oppression to the revolutionary process as a whole.

The Black Section has consistently supported the British withdrawal of troops from Ireland and the right of self-determination of the Irish people. We have also worked with the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI). In the

The struggle in Ireland is about a stark and naked form of colonial and imperialist oppression which takes place under our very noses.



A mural in West Belfast painted by republicans

The Parliamentary Party's support for the Accord correlates directly with the way it has treated the Black community in Britain by ignoring conference policy on most immigration laws.

early editions of our newsletter we explained our opposition to the Anglo-Irish Accord. We argued that the Accord will in no way lessen the repression against the Nationalist community epitomised by the use of strip searches and plastic bullets. Its aims contravene the Labour Party Policy on these issues. The Parliamentary Party's support for the Accord co-relates directly with the way it has treated the Black community in Britain by ignoring Conference policy on racist immigration laws. The Chair of the Black Section National Committee in 1986 visited Mary Manning, a Dunnes Stores worker who was part of a celebrated strike which forced the Irish Government to ban the importation of South African fruit.

In 1987 National Black Section officers met with Gerry Adams (President of Sinn Fein and MP for West Belfast). Among the topics discussed were: Black and Irish peoples shared experi-

ence of British imperialism and colonialism. As a result of these discussions a trip to Ireland was organised. This hugely successful trip was furiously attacked by opponents of the Black Section and the Tory media. Members of the delegation have been harassed and persecuted since culminating in the sacking of Kuumba Balogun from his job after the personal intervention of the Home Secretary. The important lessons of the Irish struggle can contribute considerably to our struggle for liberation ●

The words "Third World" are used in the paper because it has become widely accepted as a shorthand for the peoples and countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But its use in this paper has no connection with the reactionary "Three Worlds" theory.

13 The way forward

Affiliation

Bill Morris has proposed the setting up of a Black Socialist Society. This would be:

1) National and affiliated to the Labour Party at constituency level, like the Fabians, with rights to nomination and representation.

2) Based on an open membership with all elected officer and delegates required to be members of the Labour Party. Non-Labour members would at least have to be eligible to join the party.

3) Have positions on Labour's National Executive through an expansion of its socialist societies section by one or two places.

Bill says: "The case for some form of independent Black representation within the party has surely been made." And: "...Black self-organisation, formally recognised or not, will play a central part" in the anti-racist struggle.

His proposal differs from Eric Heffer's (defeated on the NEC 16-8 on June 13, 1985) in that Bill wants a "unitary Black Socialist Society". Eric had suggested "Afro-Caribbean, Asian and African peoples domiciled in Britain and eligible for membership of the Labour Party, should form appropriate groups, parties or organisations and affiliate to the Labour Party at all levels, similar to Poale Zion."

Furthermore, Eric argued for a completely new NEC "division" rather than expansion of the one for Socialist Societies.

OUR POSITION: The Black Section held informal talks with Eric Heffer in 1985. We agreed not to block his initiative with the proviso that there could be no formal position one way or the other until it got NEC support. When

the proposal was defeated that was the end of the matter.

More recently, we set out our position on "affiliation" in a *Tribune* article of October 23, 1987. Noting progressive developments in the GMB and transport union, Narendra Makanji said: "If powerful groups like these were to support any similar new proposals for Black Socialists capable of winning support on the NEC and at Labour Party Conference we would be open to persuasion."

Following the launch of Bill's proposal, Narendra said in a news release: "If this initiative is acceptable to the NEC it will pave the way for a detailed debate and discussion which can take place in an atmosphere of unity and a genuine commitment to the long overdue implementation of anti-racist policies."

This was quoted in the *Guardian* on January 9, 1988. In a letter to the same paper published on January 16, Black Section national secretary Kingsley Abrams reiterated that we welcomed Bill Morris' initiative as a positive contribution to an important debate we started five years ago. Kingsley went on to amplify our position: "Let me restate: the Black Section is still fully committed to Black self-organisation within the labour movement. We continue to seek a change in Labour's constitution which will guarantee Black representation at all levels of the party."

Now the Right-Wing National Executive Committee member Tony Clarke has come up with a "Black rights" committee for "anti-racists" (*Tribune*, April 8, 1988) to further cloud the "affiliation" debate!

Why Black Sections

Delegates of 30 Black Sections – from Bristol, Birmingham, Nottingham, Coventry, Manchester and London – gathered for our 5th annual Conference. Tributes were paid to successes like the election of four Black Labour MPs.

It was decided greater emphasis in future must be placed on deepening our

roots in Black community struggles and trade union work. For the past five years, constitutional trench warfare has forced the campaign to concentrate overwhelmingly on internal party matters. The expulsion and disciplining by the party's national leadership of supporters like Amir Khan, Kevin Scally, Phil Murphy and Sharon Atkin has

caused great bitterness throughout the labour movement.

Since then, first Eric Heffer then Bill Morris have sought a compromise of a Black Socialist Society associated with the party through "affiliation". When Eric tested this on the National Executive he was defeated, with both Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley voting against.

Bill floated his idea in *Tribune* but hasn't yet put it to the executive of the Transport and General Workers Union or Labour's National Executive. In the absence of an indication from powerful quarters like these that Bill's new proposal will get serious support from the party leadership, the Black Section AGM in March 1988 decided to take the initiative. Bernie Grant, MP for Tottenham and a member of the Black Section national executive by virtue of him being secretary of the newly-formed parliamentary Black Section, was given a mandate to seek discussion which would elicit firm proposals on guaranteeing Black representation at all levels of the party. So far he has had a meeting with Larry Whitty, the Party's General Secretary.

Black Section conference was not able to say whether it did or didn't support affiliation because no concrete proposal was before us. But the Black Section is committed to re-calling our annual Conference if a firm proposal which satisfies our aims and objectives* gets the backing of the party's national leadership.

Some of our staunchest supporters may now be feeling the effects of struggle fatigue, but it is vitally important that the maximum number of Black Section resolutions are submitted to party conferences to concentrate the minds of the powerful on the need to urgently resolve this matter so we can get on with fighting the Tories.

There is a suspicion among Black people that anti-racism is now viewed as an unpopular policy which, in the current climate of revisionism, must be dumped. That is why Labour experienced a worrying decline in Black support at the last General Election. Labour can only stop losing its most loyal supporters by acting positively on race. *The current "Policy Review" offers that opportunity.*

**i.e. All-Black based on a Labour Party member's own definition.*

How to use the Black Agenda

A vibrant Black politics has emerged from the struggles of our people. Nonetheless, the crisis in leadership on the Left has been reflected here as well. The dynamic campaigns conducted by the Black communities over the last decade have still to find full expression on the national political scene. But the potential is there. Black Sections can educate and inform White politics, particularly on the Left. They are a big part of the process of Socialist renewal in opposition to the "Thatcherism" echoed in the Labour Party by revisionists in the leadership.

But we must recognise the importance of other new voices based on a minimum set of anti-racist principles emerging from groups like the National Black Caucus, Black Nalگو and Black Action for the Liberation of Southern Africa. The Black Agenda is based on the power of Black unity. To be effective, it has to be used in a way which recognises the richness and diversity of the many strands of struggle in our communities but is free of sectarianism. The Black Agenda will

be of most value if it sets in train discussion and joint action in the communities. We recommend that you:

- ☆ Adopt the Black Agenda.
- ☆ Raise it in your organisation.
- ☆ Invite speakers from the Black Section and Black community groups.
- ☆ Discuss practical ways of getting the policies implemented.
- ☆ Let us know about your criticisms and comments.

CONTACTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Black Caucus
Centre for Local Economic Strategies
Standing Conference of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Councillors
Black Action for the Liberation of Southern Africa
Campaign Group of Labour MPs
Institute of Race Relations

£3.00