



LABOUR PARTY

Black Sections

NEWSLETTER

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Conference issue

Handsworth Explodes

THE RECENT events at Handsworth in Birmingham have provided stark evidence that much-vaunted 'improvements' in the living conditions of Black people in Britain's inner cities since the uprisings of 1980, 1981 and 1982 have been no more than cosmetic.

The Labour Party Black Sections are horrified at the deaths that occurred at Handsworth and we offer our condolences to the bereaved families.

The Tory Government stands indicted of criminal neglect of Britain's Black communities. So do Labour politicians who collaborate with oppression by calling for heavier policing to solve the problem. Labour-run Birmingham is a 'partnership' authority which receives a few extra crumbs from the Government. The petty cash which has come to the area in this way has made no impact on urban decay, bad housing and a local economy which makes it an exception to be employed if you are young and Black. Seventy-one per cent of Black youth aged between 16 and 20 are out of work because of the Tories' vicious and divisive economic policies. The right-wingers who control Birmingham City council with the aid of community godfathers have allowed themselves to be manipulated by Thatcher. Proportionately more money is lavished on leafy suburbs like Edgbaston than the inner city ghettos of Handsworth and Sparkbrook.

Yet we have heard hardly a word about these inequalities from Labour Deputy leader Roy Hattersley, MP for Sparkbrook, and Shadow housing spokesman Jeff Rooker, MP for Perry Barr, which covers part of Handsworth. It was Rooker who called instead for more police.

We oppose the politics of 'containment' which mean more slush funds for 'community projects' run by the godfather mafia and heavier policing. Black Sections stands for the policies of power-sharing. We demand that Black people, alienated from participation in mainstream politics because of past sell-outs like the passing of racist immigration laws, must be given a real stake in the political structures of this country.

What is needed are not bigger and badder police riot squads but policing by consent and under democratic control. We do not need more police on drug squads. We *do* need special police units set up to combat the evils of race attacks made on Black people by fascist thugs. And we need a determination by local authorities, spearheaded by Labour, to evict racist tenants, not move the victims to even worse housing.

Splitting Black people

Great play has been made in the media of the supposed antagonism between Afro-Caribbean and Asian people, pointing to burnt out Asian-owned shops and ignoring burnt shops owned by Afro-Caribbeans and white people.

The aim of this is to split Black people and to divert attention away from the real causes of the riots — urban decay, unemployment and heavy-handed, racist policing. It is hogwash to claim that Handsworth is a tinderbox because it is a multiracial area. It is a



Photo: ANDREW POTHECARY

We do not need more of this kind of policing

tinderbox because of racism and mass unemployment.

Representatives of the National Committee visited the area at the invitation of Birmingham City councillor Amir Khan. One of them, vice chair Marc Wadsworth, said afterwards: 'Those that cast the troubles as inter-racial have no conception of the unity which exists between Asian and Afro-Caribbean working people in Handsworth'.

The Indian Workers Association stated firmly: 'West Indians are not to blame for the riots. It was caused by social deprivation and police harassment'.

Community Policing

Some have suggested that what is required in Handsworth is more community policing. We urge caution. Community policing can be a sham and a mask to provide a 'human face' to heavy-handed policing focussing on targetting and intelligence gathering which, far from improving relationships between the police and the public, make it worse and take us one more step towards a police state.

The Fire Next Time

Time is running out for the bankrupt politicians who oppose Black rights in Britain. We must and will be allowed to speak for ourselves about how best our needs and aspirations are to be fulfilled. Handsworth is a warning of the Fire Next Time in Brixton, Toxteth, Bradford, Southall, Leicester, Moss Side, St Pauls, and every other inner city area unless Black Britons receive our fair slice of the economic, political and social cake.

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Black Prospective Parliamentary Candidates Speak Out

IN THE past few months we have seen a handful of Black PPC's selected in winnable or safe Labour seats. This is a big step forward from the last general election but of course nowhere near the numbers which would reflect the proportion of Black people in this country — that would require around 30 MPs.

Black Sections have played a big role in ensuring the selection of Black PPC's. Unfortunately in the selection procedure, as with Russell Profitt in Lewisham East, our 'great white leaders' have in their wisdom refused to endorse the candidacy.

In other CLPs Black Sections have played a role by discussing with GC delegates and other Party members the importance of selecting a Black candidate. Black Sections have kept up the political pressure on the Party. Without them these first small steps would not have been taken. It is now up to the Party to ensure that the lead taken by Lewisham East, Brent South and North, Tottenham and Leicester East is followed.

Below we print a statement by Russell Profitt on Handsworth and statements by other PPC's on Black Sections and their candidacies.



Russell Profitt

'More Handsworth's on the way unless power sharing begins now' says Russell Profitt.

The uncanny similarities between what has happened in Handsworth, Birmingham, and the uprisings of Summer 1981 ought not to be lost to the community, despite the disgraceful and unhelpful comments of prominent Party spokespersons.

Handsworth again highlighted the fact that current political approaches to tackling racism and dealing with the needs of Black people are not only futile but hopelessly outdated. The time for change is now long overdue.

In my view, it is not only counter-productive, but trite and facile, to see Handsworth as 'racial rivalry' between Afro-Caribbean and Asian, or even between Black and white. In truth, it is a demand for action in favour of the disadvantaged.

Warnings against the continuation of present day approaches have been loudly, clearly and repeatedly given by the Black community, particularly those of us involved in the struggle for direct political participation. Sadly, these have been ignored or, worse, derided, by those who are closely associated with past failures.

Such individuals, including Labour Party leaders who have benefitted from the old Community Relations and the 'Godfather' style of operation, seem disinterested in finding proper solutions, and, increasingly, are being seen as irrelevant.

Let there be no mistake, unless the demands for power sharing and equality advanced recently by the growing Black Sections movement, are taken seriously and real changes made, further uprisings are bound to follow.

The discriminated against and the disadvantaged, burdened by racial and economic oppression, will no longer be appeased by pious and empty talk of consultations. Only through a recognition

of the need for changed approaches to create equality and full implementation through power sharing will any progress be made.

This is what we in Black Sections must and will continue to fight for.

RUSSELL PROFITT

Labour Prospective Candidate, Lewisham East.



Keith Vaz

Black Sections and my candidacy by Keith Vaz

The Leicester East Constituency Labour Party has not as yet established a Black Section, there are a number of black comrades in the party and the Black and Asian population of the constituency is now 30% of the total.

I consider that the Black Sections movement has had a positive effect on the selection of all the Black Prospective Parliamentary Candidates. The movement has raised the issue of race and racism in a positive and constructive way. But what is needed now is for the new black PPCs and the other activists in the Party to begin to formulate the policies which will hopefully be included in the next Election Manifesto. That work must begin now. If it does not we will become just a footnote in the history of the Party and the history of Black people in Britain.

KEITH VAZ

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Leicester East.

BERNIE GRANT

Tottenham's Labour prospective candidate, Bernie Grant, told supporters immediately after his historic victory over sitting MP Norman Atkinson; 'I have Black Sections to thank for raising the temperature and making this possible'. He went on to explain that Black Sections had been established to make sure the Black community was represented in all of society's

Statement by Paul Boateng

We have committed ourselves in Brent South to work, not only for the early return of the Labour Government, but to build a strong campaigning organisation necessary to sustain Socialist policies after the next election.

Blacks and women have a critical role to play in this if, as a Party, we are to deliver on the issues of jobs, health and the threat to world peace presented by the arms race, racism and the North/South development crisis. Brent South Constituency Labour Party, in selecting me as its prospective parliamentary candidate, has underwritten its belief that an all-white, overwhelmingly male Parliament can never be an effective vehicle for Socialism. We are not concerned with tokenism. I have been selected to represent all the people of Brent South, black and white, and to contribute to the growth of a strong, broadly based Party, capable of winning community support



Paul Boateng

and involvement in the implementation of the Party's policies locally and nationally.

Gains have been made, both in terms of representation and policy in recent years, particularly at a local level. The movement for Black Sections has played a significant part in this. A speedy and comradely resolution of the current debate within the Party as to how best to accommodate the needs and aspirations of the Black community within the Party's Constitution is now required if we are to translate these gains into success at the polls and an important advance in the struggle to create a Socialist Britain.

power structures, particularly in the inner city areas where the Labour Party depends heavily on the Black vote to win elections. And he added that Black Sections would ensure that our representatives remained fully accountable to the Black community as well as the wider electorate.

Bernie Grant is chair of Tottenham Black Section and leader of Haringey council in London.

Black Sections and LP Conference '85

By MARC WADSWORTH

LABOUR PARTY Conference in Bournemouth is set to become a battleground. At stake — the soul of the party. Centre-stage is the struggle over whether or not the will of the rank and file on the question of an amnesty for sacked miners can prevail over the self-interest of a handful of Labour leaders hungry for high office. Feverish actions aimed at nobbling the leaders of big unions whose members backed the demand at the TUC must not succeed.

Sadly, the dirty work on Black Sections has already been done. Black T&G deputy general secretary designate and soon to be member of Labour's NEC, Bill Morris, has been wheeled out by Kinnock's union to torpedo the issue. And the Labour leader himself has signalled to the big block votes by condemning the Black Sections campaign as 'repellent' and its leaders as 'bankrupt'. He told a select group of all-white and predominantly-male Westminster lobby correspondents the demand came from just 15 or 20 people. He also crowed that 'Asian people will never accept' Black Sections.

At Conference the Labour leadership face the reality: 20 motions on the issue from constituency parties representing thousands of Socialists. The Standing Conference of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Councillors back the demand. And the Asian and Afro-Caribbean party members of Sparkbrook CLP in Birmingham and Southall CLP in West London are fighting for the right to represent themselves through properly recognised Black Sections. Asian members have been subjected to an unprecedented attack by Labour's national leadership in both CLPs. In Southall this has meant an investigation into trumped up charges of 'membership irregularities'. In Sparkbrook this has meant the propping up of right-wing godfathers by Labour leaders in rotten boroughs.

Roy Hattersley is MP for Sparkbrook and, a year ago, he wrote that a Black Section in his constituency would be a 'retrograde' step and 'his' Asian members didn't want it. Kinnock and Hattersley are being forced to eat their words. Hattersley and his Black stooges set up to speak against us claimed the demand for Black Sections was just from London. The facts tell a different story — nine motions from outside the capital, 11 from London. Our tally could have been higher had we not agreed in a number of CLPs to support Lesbian and Gay comrades struggling for an important first-time debate at Conference.

The Marxist journal *Race Today* say: 'Kinnock's opposition to Black Sections amounts to nothing less than Euro-centric bigotry. It is not the leadership of the Black Sections that is 'bankrupt' or 'repellent' but the leadership

of the Labour Party itself.' Even Bill Morris has been forced to hit out at the White party leaders who characterise Black Sections as a form of 'apartheid'. He says he finds this argument 'repugnant'.

The message of Black Sections is clear: Black people must get a real stake in the decision-making processes of this society, beginning with the Labour Party. Without Black participation there can be no real solutions to racist immigration laws which divide Black families, to racial harassment, to the ruthless economic exploitation of Black labour, to racist education, to bad housing and to Black youth unemployment. Right-wing Labour MPs collaborating with oppression by calling for more police in Black areas like strife-torn Handsworth must be stopped.

Support Diane Abbott for the NEC



Diane Abbott

There must be no more sell-outs. Nothing less than total support from white comrades for our struggle is good enough. No more mealy-mouthed platitudes about freedom in Azania (South Africa) or Black rights in Britain. Black Azanian trade unionist Qraish Patel asks: 'When the Labour Party was in power what did it do to support Black

workers? When it is out of power then the hand of friendship is extended from the Labour Party.'

The Black Sections National Committee, has backed the demands of Azanians like Qraish for complete and inviolable economic and diplomatic sanctions against the fascist Pretoria regime. Labour Party and trade union leaders must raise money for the freedom fighters, block South African imports and exports and step-up the campaign for these minimal measures. Here in Britain Black Labour Party members want a cast-iron guarantee enshrined in the constitution the same as for Women and Youth, of our right to self-organise. Failure by the party to give us recognition will be seen as a major snub by Black people, our most loyal supporters. Black communities will perceive the rejection as further evidence that entrenched racist attitudes still persist among Labour Leaders who want Black votes but not an organised Black voice.

Black Sections in 35 CLPs, from Manchester to Birmingham and Nottingham and London, speaks volumes of the demand. Proof that we have won the argument for Black Sections each time we have been given a fair hearing at rank and file level has come from the findings of the NEC's own working party. They said 'Yes'. So do a majority of CLPs, the NUM, NUPE, Black councillors and the Labour Women's Conference.

We have won the argument among the rank and file. This despite the undemocratic ways of unions like the T&G with their vested interest in toe-ing the Kinnock-line because they sponsor him. Our message to unions with large Black memberships like the T&G is the same as the one we have given to CLPs with large Black memberships — ask those member what they want and stop patronising them by acting as if you speak on their behalf. NUPE asked their Black members about Black Sections and they said 'Yes'. The NEC's working party asked all parts of the labour movement and the response was 'Yes'. We must end the double standard by which the 1984 TUC passed a composite agreeing to 'encourage the establishment of 'Black Members' Groups' in the unions yet weeks later the big unions voted against Black Sections. TUC also agree with ethnic monitoring (same as the working party), the Labour Party does not. And, in Blackpool this year, backed the NUM's claim for reinstatement of sacked miners and the reimbursement of fines. The Labour leadership do not. Help the struggles of the NUM, Women, Lesbian and Gay people and Black Sections transform Labour into a socialist party run by its members. The choice is simple — either we do this and make the party relevant to huge unrepresented sections of our support or we'll perish.

Black Sections lead

By Narendra Makanji

BLACK Labour Party members, fighting to secure the recognition of Black Sections within its ranks, have had a major effect in forcing all major political organisations in the country to examine their structures, practices and policies regarding race equality.

First and foremost we can point to the suggestions from the Labour Party leadership that a national advisory committee on ethnic minority questions be set up within the Labour Party, together with an officer responsible for the affairs of Black people and the ethnic monitoring of the Party's activities. It may be that we're a little cynical in the Black Sections, but we tend to suspect that even these small moves would not have occurred without the pressure for Black Sections. However we need to remind the Labour leadership that these moves will be nothing but patronising tokenism unless recognition is given to the right of Black people themselves to organise and tell the Party what moves are needed to combat racism.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) adopted a resolution at its meeting in September 1984 which noted that little progress had been made in combatting discrimination in employment and in the workplace. The TUC resolved to implement an 8-point plan which included the encouragement of 'affiliated unions to set up appropriate structures to co-ordinate the unions' work on racism'. In pursuing this policy, the General Secretary of the TUC, Norman Willis, said in July 1985: 'If our society is to make progress in this area — and it is vital that we do — there must be an active commitment to equal opportunity by all those people and organisations who can use their influence and authority to achieve it. I want the trade union movement to ensure that it shoulder its responsibilities for this fully and effectively'.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the largest single-issue pressure group, has recently established an Anti-

Racist Working Group, a 24 member body to "challenge and defeat policies and practices which are overtly racist or racist by implication or omission". The draft constitution of the group proposed that no more than one third of its members shall be white, and at least half the total membership shall be women. This group will encourage local CND groups to work closely with local anti-racist groups.

All the three right-wing political parties are also seeking to gain the vote of the Black electorate. The Liberal Party has been conducted a debate in the column of the Party's newspaper "Liberal News" — in which most of the contributors are white!! Chris Berry calls for a new approach from scratch and seeks a way "to assure black people that the Liberal Party offers them a direct path to greater political development". According to Berry, the Liberals have not made enough progress and each attempt to develop a black voters' campaign has failed.

SDP, which appears to have a scattering of Black members and has reserved places for Black members on its ruling body, has recently published a policy package entitled "Racial Justice" which was discussed at its annual conference in Torquay. Questioned by the Black weekly "The Voice", an SDP leader said "if there was a disproportion, then we would seriously consider black (sic) sections".

The ultra right Tory Party exhibits utter confusion in its approach. The former Party chair, John Gummer, rejected black sections just a few days before the annual meeting of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Association (AACA). The Tories are targeting the Asian vote in the key marginals of the East and West Midlands (Leicester, Nottingham and Birmingham) and appear to have given up on London. This attempt is likely to backfire as the handful of cultivated Asian businessmen were displaced by the militarists led by Major Narinder Saroop at the AACA's annual meeting. An inquiry has been ordered by the white Tory bosses.



Photo: TRIBUNE

Conference '84 — Black sections demand recognition

NEC Working Party says 'Yes'

A report in support of Black Sections was produced by a working party under the chairpersonship of Ms Jo Richardson MP. Eleven members, including Jo, were strongly in favour; the remaining three were against.

The majority rejected a compromise solution — that instead of forming sections, Black people should organise as a socialist society on the longer established model of the Poale Zion organisation.

They did so on three grounds.

- Class, gender and race are the three main dividing lines in our society: the structure to offset racial discrimination should therefore be similar to those the Party has already adopted to represent trade unions and women on its national executive.
- There are already 10 societies affiliated, with only one representative between them on the NEC.
- A separate or exceptional black of Afro-Caribbean socialist society with one representative on the executive would still understate the proportion of the Black electorate that supports Labour.

The report says: 'It is in part because we need to avoid a 'bantustan' or minority representation of Black people in the Party that we reject Poale Zion's recommendation.'

The majority group made these proposals:

- Black sections should operate where practicable on the same lines as women's sections.
- Black sections should be open to black Afro-Caribbean and Asian members of the Labour Party and those who by parentage or colour are black, who consider themselves to be black, or are subject to discrimination on the basis of their colour.
- Each section should cover a whole constituency.
- Black Sections should be represented on general and executive committees in the constituencies. Where at least five Black Sections are set up in a region there should be a right to representation on the regional executive.
- The ruling body of the Black Sections should be called the 'National Afro-Caribbean and Asian Labour Committee'.

They also recommended that a number of places should be established on the national executive for Black people elected by an annual conference of Black Sections. But the working party opposes the concept of mandatory inclusion of at least one black contender in short lists for parliamentary selection.

Public order and black people

by KEITH VAZ

THE new White Paper on 'Public Order' introduced by former Home Secretary Leon Brittan is an attempt to increase police powers over the long established right of citizens to take part in public demonstrations.

Two events stand out in recent history as being of importance to the new legislation. The first inevitably relates to the events during the miners' strike when we witnessed on our evening television screens the most profound misuse of police authority since the force was created. The second is the legacy of the two abortive demonstrations in support of the Newham 7. Both demonstrations were brought to violent conclusions by police officers acting



Is this community policing?

Photo: ANDREW POTHECARY

outside the law.

The new proposals clearly infringe the European Convention on Human Rights which permits demonstrations for any lawful purpose. Organisers will be criminalised for activities which occur on the demonstrations. The police will be allowed to impose strict conditions on numbers and types of activities. Pickets such as the ones outside the South African "Embassy" will be subjected to police approval and they will be able to direct where people stand and how many can be involved.

Black people are still shut out of the mainstream of the political process, are

more likely to be affected by the new proposals. They have to be resisted at all costs. Once on the statute book it will be almost impossible to repeal. The last Public Order Act passed in 1936 has survived intact for half a century. By that reckoning the new Act will take us to the year 2036.

Keith Vaz works for a law centre and is Labour prospective parliamentary candidate for Leicester East.

More information can be obtained from CROWD (Campaign for the Right of Assembly and Dissent) 38, Mount Pleasant, London WC1V 0AP

The Labour Party's federal structure — a place for everyone except Black members

THE Labour Party was founded not only to advance the interests of working people but also to forward the interests of a specific group which lacked adequate representation in British society — the trade unions.

From early on the Party recognised that exploitation concerned not only class, and working class men, but also the role of women in society. It was for this reason — responding both to the suffragette movement and to progressive thinking and pressure from women themselves — that a special women's section was established on the National Executive of the Party.

In 1937 a separate section for socialist, co-operative and other organisations on the NEC, voted for by those organisations, was introduced, along with separate voting for trade union and constituency sections. As Norwood Black Section note in their evidence to the NEC working party: 'We believe, had the makers of the constitution been given the same task today in the light of the number of black people within the United Kingdom and their massive contribution to the Party's electoral success, there would be no resistance from them to the creation of Black Sections ...'

The New Zealand Labour Party have the equivalent of a Maori section and the American Democratic Party have Black

'caucuses'. Representatives of the Black caucuses have reserved places on the Democratic Party National Committee.

Labour also has recognised the special needs to represent young people on the Executive of the Party. It is time for the Party now to ensure that black people have adequate representation in the structure of the Party itself, at local, regional and national level.

If the Labour Party were founded only on individual membership (as is the Socialist Party in France) the case against black sections would be a little stronger. But it is not. Its structure specifically recognises the case for representation of individual groups.

Local reports from

● LEWISHAM EAST

On 10th May history was made when Lewisham East took a positive step forward to eradicate racism in the Labour Party by allowing its two Black Section delegates with full voting rights to sit on the GC for its selection of the PPC.

We have come a long way and learned a lot of things since then. We have discovered that although we have strong grass roots support for our cause, the middle class leadership of the Labour Party seem to have just as much hate for us. But we are determined that as far as Lewisham East is concerned this is where we make our stand.

The Black Section in East Lewisham has begun to make an impact in that we are beginning to see new faces which were never or hardly ever seen before at branch meetings coming to Section meetings. Black Party members who have been in the Labour Party for 15-20 years have begun to come to Section meetings and take an active part in local politics. Members have gone back from our meetings to their branches to highlight issues of race and racism in our society and within the Labour Party saying, 'here is the reality, now what do you intend to do about it?'

We have encouraged Black members to stand for positions whether they be in the branch, GC, EC or school governors, and we have had some positive results. We have now begun our campaign to get more Black members to stand at the next local election. We shall now find out how serious the Party is about fighting racism when we put our members forward and see how many get selected.

So, comrades, the message from Lewisham East is 'UNITED WE WIN, DIVIDED THE RACISTS WIN'.

● NORWOOD

Norwood Black Section seeks to promote not only black representation within and on behalf of the Party but to take up policy issues. This way we try to ensure that the Party is seen to be addressing the needs and concerns of the whole community.

We are determined to strengthen our own and the Party's links with the local Black community. Special interest meetings, such as the successful talk by a Black psychiatrist on 'mental health and the Black community', are therefore open to Black members and non-members alike. This in turn has led to work in support of local Black workers in the mental health sector, both in voluntary organisations and in the NHS. Average at-

tendance at ordinary meetings varies from 12 to 20 and we have a regular information mailing of over 200.

We do not see Black Sections as a substitute for, but complimentary to, ward and other Party activity. Our Black Section has often provided a half-way house into full participation for Black members, sometimes long standing, who don't find the procedure or content of ward meetings attractive.

We have held meetings on the role of JP's, prison visitors etc. to support and advise Black members already fulfilling those roles and to encourage others to take them up. We have a system of house-to-house visits by Black Section members to recruit new members into the Party.

Our second Black Section social, which we also see as a way of reaching out to the wider community, will be raising money for Ethiopia and the Lambeth Fighting Fund. Current priorities are apartheid and the ratecapping campaign where Black community mobilisation is essential to success.

Norwood Black Section is now a permanent fixture in the political life of Lambeth. Like the Black community, 'Come what may, we're here to stay.'

● VAUXHALL

The past year has seen the Vauxhall Labour Party Black Section increase its involvement in all areas of local Party activities with full representation on the GC and EC levels. It has also taken an active part in local campaigns at the forefront of which has been the Lambeth fight against ratecapping.

It soon became clear that if the Council was forced to make a rate, not only would funding to local Black community programmes be jeopardised, but Afro-Caribbean and Asian people would be hit hardest with redundancies being made on a 'last in, first out' basis, completely cancelling out Lambeth's policy over recent years of increasing the number of staff recruited from the local Black community. In response to this, we produced a leaflet on the effects of ratecapping on the Black community, fully supporting the Council's no-rate strategy and drawing attention to the disastrous effects ratecapping would have on the local Black population.

In other areas we have increased the number of Black school governors by more than 100%, have provided representatives for all manifesto writing groups for the 1986 borough council elections, and have fought for Lambeth to take over funding of the Black Young Families Housing Action Association from the MSC. In addition, the number of Black representatives on Lambeth council has been more than doubled to 7, the second highest in London.

We have also been fully involved in the local elections for the GLC and the Council.

Although Labour lost the GLC by-election which white liberals in the Party try to blame on the Black Section, it was all too apparent that the Black voter was now far more critical and demanding of the Labour Party. They were not necessarily going to vote Labour while Neil Kinnock was describing Black activists as 'repellent' and 'bankrupt'. It was these pronouncements by the Party leader that led Black people to write letters to the local press urging people to vote for the Alliance as a protest against Kinnock's policies.

Locally, Vauxhall has been active in establishing a borough wide Black voice in the form of Lambeth Black Section council to co-ordinate the strategies of the 3 CLP Black Sections (includes Norwood and Streatham). We will be fully involved in the Parliamentary reselection procedure after Conference despite threats from the NEC.

● BIRMINGHAM, SPARKBROOK

Moves are afoot to set up a Black Section in the heart of Roy Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency although Roy assures us that 'his' Asians would not want a Black Section. Things started when a resolution against Black Sections was put in Sparkhill ward of Sparkbrook. Black people in the Party succeeded in defeating the motion.

Councillor Amir Khan told the Newsletter, 'Over the last few years Asian people have been used by white right-wingers just for votes — a colonial system. Black Sections can play an important role in uniting the community and in organising campaigns around deportations, mother tongue teaching and so on. We will be officially launching the Sparkbrook Black Section on 22nd September. We are also discussing setting one up in Perry Barr. If things go well we will think of organising a Birmingham District Black Section.'

● NOTTINGHAM EAST

Nottingham East CLP unanimously decided to set up a Black Section at its AGM in February 1985, and have managed to hold ground despite threats from the NEC and pressure from old establishment figures. However a section of the 'soft left' and constituency officers have started to waver on the issue of 'unconstitutional' selections,

Black Sections

forgetting that, technically, every single meeting of the Constituency since February 1985 has been unconstitutional. After the officers refused to cooperate with the selection, a vote was passed at the GMC calling for their resignation, which they refused to do.

Since the formation of the Black Section a large number of new Black members have joined the Party. It is not only the leadership of the Labour Party who are worried by the Black Section — the old guard in the Black community are even more worried. A per-

sonal smear campaign has been launched against Black Section activists in an attempt to discredit them.

But to the Black Section this is a sign that we have won the political argument. These smear campaigns are part of a general realignment and rightward shift in the Party, reflected in a capitulation on the issue of ratecapping and on the miners' strike.

Those who are hoping that the Black Section issue will dwindle away after the Labour Party Conference are living in cloud cuckoo land. Political struggle for Black

rights inside and outside the Labour Party has only just begun and will intensify. Efforts are being made to set up a Black Section in Nottingham South as well.

The five reports above provide a taste of what is going on in all the CLP's which have Black Sections. Space prevents us from including more reports.





Isolate South Africa — Freedom for Azania

SOUTH Africa's racist, neo-fascist apartheid regime must be starved of the oxygen of economic, social and diplomatic contact. The Labour Party Black Section's national committee fully supports the call for complete and inviolable economic sanctions and disinvestment aimed at bringing the racists in Pretoria to their knees.

But we believe that freedom for the enslaved Black majority in Azania will not be brought about solely by sanctions. Those fighting to break the chains of bondage through the Black trade unions and armed liberation struggle must be

supplied with financial and material aid.

We call upon Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party leaders 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 local authorities.
- 2) A national Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters and Black trade unions.
- 3) A concerted programme of pressure in Parliament aimed at securing sanctions and stopping the British Government from vetoing such measures on the United Nations

Security Council and in the EEC.

- 4) A national publicity campaign spearheaded by the trades unions and Labour Party aimed at securing support and cash.
- 5) An immediate end to the sale of South African goods by Co-op stores or use by Labour-controlled authorities.
- 6) An officially-backed refusal by trade unionists to handle South African goods of goods destined for South Africa.
- 7) Unconditional release of political prisoners.

Black sections intend to stand and fight for Black liberation inside and outside Britain.

Forward march of the Black unions



THE GROWTH of the black trade union movement in South Africa has given increased confidence to the developing struggle against the apartheid regime. South Africa today has the fastest growing trade union movement in the world.

Prior to 1978, black trade unions had no formal recognition. But in that year the Wiehahn commission's report laid the basis for black union recognition. Between 1980 and 1983 the number of registered black unions rose from under 60 to nearly 470 — and unregistered black unions increased from 170 to more than 270. The number of workers organised in black unions went up by 200 per cent — from 220,000 to 670,000 by 1983.

The ruling National Party hoped that by bringing black unions within the framework of industrial law they would be able to exercise a tight control over them. But they have been unsuccessful, in curbing the militancy of the unions. This is illustrated by the table.

Strikes by Black workers 1973-1983

Year	No of Disputes	Black workers on strike
1973	370	98,029
1974	384	58,975
1975	276	23,295
1976	248	26,931
1977	90	15,091
1978	106	14,088
1979	101	17,323
1980	207	56,286
1981	342	84,705
1982	394	141,517
1983	336	64,469

This shows that after a temporary dip, which reached its low point in 1977, the combativity of the black workers began to soar again. These figures do not include the massive strikes in the goldfields last year, nor the important strike in the state-owned Sasol plant, which produces oil from coal, in

November 1984. This strike, the first mass action in a state-owned enterprise, mobilised about a million workers and constitutes the most important political strike in the history of the country.

The black unions are mainly organised in two federations: The Federation of South African Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). The three most important unions outside the Federations are the General Workers' Union (GWU), the Food and Canning Workers Strike (FCWU), and the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) — three of whose leaders are among those facing treason charges.

Britain's involvement in apartheid

IT IS not surprising that the Thatcher Government is refusing to impose sanctions on South Africa when one realises the extent of British economic involvement in the country.

There are around 1,200 UK companies with direct investment in South Africa totalling about £5,000 million at current market values. Added to this are around £6,000 million in indirect investment — shares in South African companies held by British citizens, companies, pension funds, etc.

UK owned companies and their associates together employ more than 350,000 people, which is around 7% of the total numbers employed in South Africa.

This means two things. First, we have a special responsibility in Britain to help those fighting the murderous apartheid system. Secondly, the meek pressure put on the apartheid regime by business interests and the even weaker calls for sanctions which sometimes emanate from similar quarters should be seen in the light of the above statistics. They are calls on the South

It is significant that Soweto was chosen as the place where the unions met in June in an attempt to forge unity. They discussed a draft constitution for a wider confederation of black trade unions. Unions already committed in principle to unification, and whose representatives have helped to draft the constitution are FOSATU, CUSA, GWU and FCWU. The two other unions invited to the talks, SAAWU and GAWU, will have to refer back to their constituent bodies so no early solution is expected. But the Soweto talks set the scene for greater unity.

The black trade unions are now playing a bigger part in the political campaigns against the regime. In the first years of their existence the black unions saw their first task as the building of support by concentrating on improving wages and working conditions.

FOSATU and CUSA joined with the UDF and AZAPO in calling the hugely successful two-day stay-at-home strike last November. The death of Andries Raditsela, a prominent FOSATU leader, shortly after his release from police detention, increased the bonds between the unions and the political movements. The unions also played their full part in the anti-election campaign last August.

October of this year has been set as the target date for the unification of the trade unions into a single federation. This will undoubtedly give a great fillip to the process of drawing more workers into their ranks and increasing the role of the organised black working class in the struggle against the apartheid system.



Black section members join picket of Sainsburys which stocks South African goods

African government to concede a little to head-off the risk of all those lovely profits being lost. The only type of solidarity and pressure that black people can rely on is that from the labour movement and black people. It is time to start showing that solidarity in a big way.

Questions and Answers on Black Sections

Q

OVER THE past 2 years there has been a heated debate in the Labour Party over Black Sections. This article explains why the demand for the establishment of Black Sections has been raised by Black activists in the Party and answers the arguments pitted against them.

Q: Why do you want Black Sections in the Labour Party?

A: Black people have been loyal supporters of the Labour Party for years. In the 1983 General Election a Commission for Racial Equality survey suggested that more than 80% of Black voters who went to the polls voted Labour. Yet the Labour Party does not reflect this loyalty in its structure or in its policies.

At the level of representation, there are no Black MPs, no Black people on the NEC, far fewer Black Councillors than the proportion of Black people in the electorate, few Black people on regional or district executives, or on CLP General Committees. Few wards involve Black people in their activities.

At the level of policies, Labour governments and councils have generally done little to counter racism (the GLC is a notable exception). Past Labour governments have pursued policies which have not only allow-

ed racist practices to continue, but have made matters worse — for example, the tightening of immigration laws and the Nationality Green Paper which laid the basis for the current Nationality Act. Remember, the police riot in Southall in 1979 which left Blair Peach dead occurred under a Labour Government.

The Labour Party Black Section believes all this must change and that it will only change if Black people in the Party organise to demand their right to representation and changes in policy. We believe Black Sections can help draw Black people into Labour Party activity, allowing them to organise to play a bigger role in their wards, unions, general committees and so on. Indeed this is what has tended to happen where Black Sections have been set up.

We have learnt from the histories of anti-colonial struggles, from black struggles in Britain and the rest of the world, from the struggles of women and gays and lesbians and from the struggles of the British labour



A

movement, that the only way to fight against an oppression is for those who are the victims of that oppression to organise themselves to fight it. Black people have to organise as Black people to fight racism. It cannot be removed by well-meaning white liberals acting on behalf of Black people, although those people must give their support to Black people fighting racism.

Q: Aren't Black Sections a form of apartheid in reverse?

A: What an insult to compare what we are doing to a violent and oppressive South African system which, as we can see on TV and in the papers, murders Black people every day. This argument is doubly insulting as many Black Section activists are in the forefront of the solidarity movement with the Azanian freedom struggle.

'Apartheid' means separate development. Black Sections aim to breakdown the separation which now exists whereby the overwhelming majority of Black voters vote Labour but the National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Labour Party are all-white preserves.

Black Sections aim to involve more Black people in the Party at all levels, to encourage them to go to their wards and union meetings and to be elected to GCs, councillors and as PPCs/MPs. We propose a divisions for Black people on the NEC the same as for women, youth, unions etc so that whatever the outcome of elections to other NEC places, there will always be Black involvement and representation, and not separation, at this high level of the Party.

Q: Won't Black Sections split the Party?

A: The Party is split already with Black people excluded from positions of power. The real question is how do we build unity between black and white people and on what basis? The white leadership of the Party believes we can build unity if Black people keep quiet and if we ignore racism, par-

ticularly white working class racism. They fear antagonising racist Labour voters if they allow Black Sections to exist. Such a fear is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The cancer of racism threatens the unity of workers and is a barrier to the achievement of socialism. Racism won't go away if we pretend it doesn't exist.

The Labour Party must stop making excuses and tackle racism head-on including that which exists in its own ranks. Unity can only be built by fighting racism and it can only be built on the basis of equality between black and white people. This equality is not achieved by just saying it exists. It can only be achieved by recognising that Black people are currently in an unequal position and that special measures need to be taken to redress the balance. These special measures include the right of Black people to organise to place demands on the Party and the creation of places on GCs, ECs, all the way to the NEC for Black Section representatives.

How not to create unity has recently been illustrated in Liverpool. By ignoring the advice of Black community workers and appointing Sam Bond as Race Relations Advisor, the Council succeeded in antagonising the Black community at a time when maximum unity against the Tory cuts was required. The Liverpool Black Caucus also opposes these cuts, particularly as they will hit Black people hardest, but it cannot unite with the Council on the basis of subservience.

Q: Is not the best way to create equality to just treat people equally regardless of colour?

A: The following parable illustrates the fallacy of this argument. Two people start a marathon race, but one starts with a heavy sack of potatoes on his/her back. After one hour the race supervisor says, 'You can take the potatoes off your back' and proclaims 'Now you are equal!' Great, except that the other runner is miles ahead as she/he has been running for an hour with no sack of potatoes. Equality could only exist if a special measure was taken to bring the runners level.

Similarly, Black people have a legacy of centuries of oppression, of discrimination in education, training, housing, promotion and so on, which means that they would still be at a disadvantage if all discrimination was removed overnight. Special measures are needed to compensate for this disadvantage. Not only is the Labour Party refusing to take any special measures, it is not even doing anything serious to remove the burden of racism from our backs.

In addition, much discrimination takes place unconsciously. Saying one is treating people equally does not mean that one is in fact doing so. It is very easy to discriminate unconsciously by using procedures which indirectly discriminate on the basis of colour. Policies and practices need to be constantly reviewed and monitored to avoid such unconscious discrimination. Within the Labour Party, the Black Sections are an excellent instrument for monitoring and ex-



Black section bookstall at Notting Hill Carnival

amining the policies and practices of the Party in and out of power.

Q: Isn't it impossible to define who is black and therefore impossible to say who can and who can't join the Black Section?

A: The Home Office has no problem with definitions when it deports hundreds of our brothers and sisters or when it divides families. Police officers have no problems with definition when they harass Black youth. So why should we have problems? If you are oppressed by racism and identify yourself as Black, then you are welcome in the Labour Party Black Section.

Who is Black?

When British colonialists debated Indian independence 30 years ago they used the argument 'How do you define an Indian? Is he a Muslim, a Hindu, a Sikh?' in an effort to thwart Black self-determination.

For us Black is a political colour. We are not Black because we eat different food, speak different languages or enjoy different kinds of music. We are Black because we suffer from a common oppression — racism — and we will fight against all attempts to divide us into different ethnic groups.

Q: Won't Black Sections just help Black careerists and do little in the fight against racism?

A: When we hear this point from white people we treat it with scorn. We would give the argument more weight if Black people in the Labour Party were allowed to develop their careers, but unfortunately the racism within the party hinders this. Why is it we rarely hear described as such the hundreds of white careerists in Parliament, but whenever black

politicians put themselves forward they are immediately denounced as careerists?

We treat this argument with more respect when it comes from Black activists who are worried about Black careerists selling out their struggles just as Labour Party activists have worried about MPs reneging on Party policy. We would simply answer that all movements contain careerists. The question is how do we control our representatives and make sure they are accountable? We believe that there is more chance of controlling Black 'leaders' with Black Sections than with the present system where so-called representatives of the Black community rely on white patronage for their token positions of power.

Q: Isn't it policy that really matters? The Labour Party will only involve more Black people if it adopts policies which are attractive, not by internal constitutional change.

A: Of course it is policies that matter and whether and how these policies are implemented. The Labour Party has to shed its history of complicity with racism and imperialism and become a party which champions the fight against racism and unequivocally supports liberation movements the world over. Black Sections exist and are being set up in growing numbers of constituencies precisely to ensure that the Party does this.

It is trite to counterpose the need to change Labour's policies to the need for Black people to organise in the Party. Unless Black people are represented at all levels in the Party there is not much hope that it will adopt policies that reflect the needs of Black people. Even with better Black representation, unless Black people organise to make their voice heard, the Party's policies will not change. The improvements in Labour's position on the Immigration and Nationality Acts have come about as a result of Black people organising in campaigns against deportations and against these Acts.

One can go further. Improved policies are no guarantee that a Labour Government will repeal racist legislation. Past Labour Governments have reneged on policies. We believe that Black people in the Party have to organise to stop this from happening and to make sure that the Party campaigns against racism now.

Q: The Labour Party has had Women's Sections for years and yet sexism is still rife in the Party. How then can you hope Black Sections will eradicate racism?

A: We do not claim that if Black Sections were given the official stamp of approval tomorrow, then racism in the party would miraculously disappear. No, Black Sections are only part of the solution, albeit an essential part. Policies and practices have to change as well and Black people will need to be more involved at all levels of the Party. Black Sections are a tool to achieve this and as with all tools, their effectiveness will depend on how they are used.

Womens Sections and the Labour Womens Conference have become more effective in recent years as more feminists and radical activists have come to the fore. They will be more effective still if the Party Conference votes for the changes in the constitution proposed by the Women's Action Committee, including the right of the Annual Women's Conference to send resolutions to Labour Party conference and to elect the places reserved for women on the NEC.

One thing is clear. If the Labour Party does vote to allow Black Sections it will be a big step forward politically as it will mean that the Party has recognised the depth of racism in British society and in the Party, and the importance of Black people organising themselves in the fight against racism.

Q: How can you say that allowing Black Sections in the Party will attract more Black votes when a poll by 'Black on Black' showed a majority of Black people not in favour of Black Sections in political Parties?



A: First, we cannot help being a little cynical about the way in which opponents of Black Sections leap on a poll which they think backs up their arguments but otherwise are usually very hesitant to accept the results of other polls.

To the extent that this poll may reflect the truth — and there are many questions to ask about the coverage of the poll, the questions asked, etc — it does not make us hesitate for one moment in our campaign for Black Sections. There is a widespread belief amongst many Black People that one must not rock the boat too much for fear of a white backlash.

This belief has been challenged by Black youth who campaigned against deportations and police harassment in the 1970s and

are still doing so today. We too are challenging this belief.

We believe it absolutely necessary for Black people to organise in the Labour Party to make it reflect their needs. As we begin to get changes in policy, get more black councillors and MPs, then more Black people will join and play an active part in the Party and recognise the value of Black sections. Lots of workers choose not to join Trade Unions but we don't close them down as a result.

Q: What is the Black Sections programme?

A: This question has been asked insistently by the journal 'Race Today' and we welcome it. Reading through this newsletter some elements of the programme we are developing are clear. But we are a new organisation, fighting for our right to survive. In these circumstances it is difficult to discuss thoroughly all matters on which policy is needed. Nevertheless we have begun such discussions and will continue to do so, taking positions both locally and at our annual national conference.

But sometimes we think 'Race Today' are barking up the wrong tree. We ask to be judged not just by what we say, but by what we do. And if we succeed in winning the Labour Party and the trade union movement to actually do something about racism then we believe the judgement will be favourable.

Q: Why don't you set up a Black socialist organisation and apply for affiliation to the Labour Party?

A: Such an arrangement *would* be close to a 'bantustan' arrangement. We want the Labour Party to recognise the centrality of the fight against racism and to recognise our right to organise *within* the Party and be represented at all levels. We want this representation to be on the basis of being Black and not having our rights to be represented lost in a melée of socialist organisations. Like the mens drinking clubs (the National Union of Labour and Socialist Clubs).

Q: Will you stop your campaign for Black Sections if the vote goes against you at the 1985 Labour Party Conference?

A: No. We will not go away because racism will not miraculously go away as a result of a vote at Labour Party conference. We *will* continue to organise, to build Black Sections and push for their recognition by CLPs, to push for regional recognition of regional Black Sections, and to push the Labour Party to take and campaign on anti-racist policies. We *will* work to make the Party more responsive to the needs of the Black communities, for more Black people to register, vote for and join the Party, and in so doing we will build a stronger and more united Party. The ball will be in the court of the NEC and Party officials: they can choose to attack us, discipline us and create disunity and public embarrassment for the Party, or they can choose to support us in our battle against racism.



The Newham 7 Defence Campaign ... an interview with Unmesh Desai

THE NEWHAM 7 were seven Asian youth charged with affray as a result of a fight outside the Duke of Edinburgh pub in Newham. The fight broke out after a group of Asian youth approached the pub when it became apparent that a series of vicious racist attacks had been orchestrated by white racists who drunk there. Three of the Newham 7 were acquitted and four found guilty. The three white racists on trial at the same time were only found guilty of common assault and were fined. The four convicted Asians were sentenced to 100 hours of community service and the judge, who had at first expressed his 'understanding' of the whites' actions, admitted that the Asians had acted under provocation and that you 'only had to read the newspapers' to see the situation facing Asians in Newham.

A major defence campaign put the trial in the context of self-defence against racist attacks rather than the prosecutions image of gang warfare. The Black Section interviewed Unmesh Desai, Secretary of the Newham 7 Defence Campaign and one of the workers at the Newham Monitoring Project.

BS: Would you describe the outcome of the Newham 7 trial as a victory despite the conviction of 4 of them?

UD: It was a tremendous victory. Firstly, when you're talking of affray, you're talking of a custodial sentence and yet they were only given 100 hours of community service. And let us not forget that they're going to appeal against the convictions.

Secondly, we do not see such struggles in terms of guilty or not guilty. We see such struggles in the Black community in terms of how far it advances the struggles of Black people.

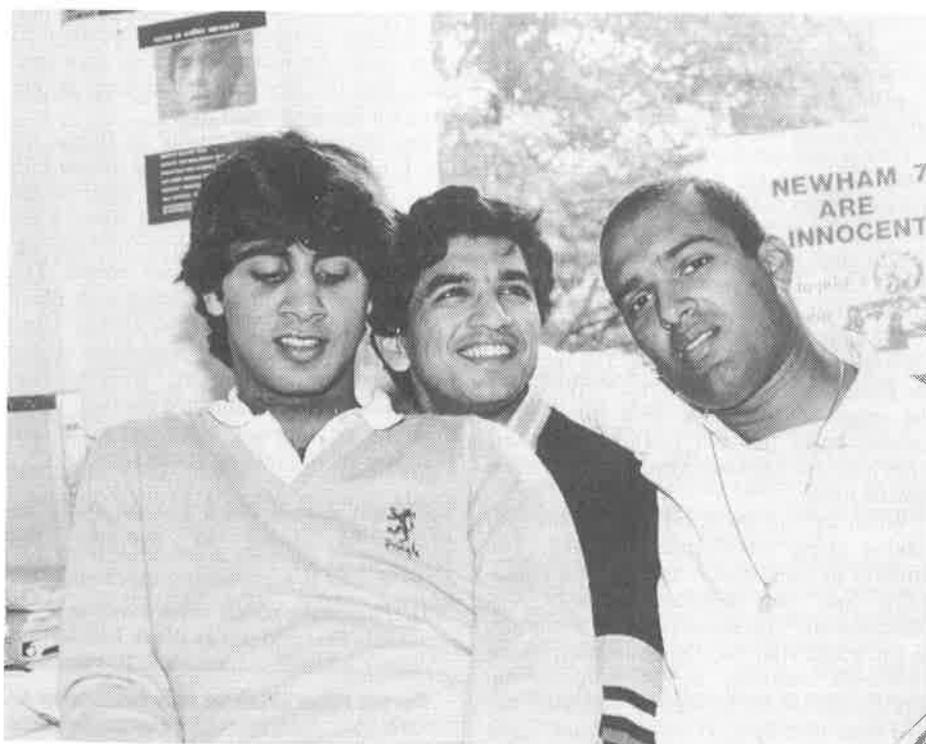
Look at the real gains of the campaign. In 12 months of hard and persistent work we firstly, smashed the police line, a unique line which hasn't been used in similar cases before, that the case was really about gang warfare between black and white youth and had nothing to do with self-defence against racist attacks. The police attempted this by putting 3 white racists in the dock with the Newham 7. The police and one or two newspapers tried to call the defendants the Newham 10 but the whole press, the whole media, the jury and even the prosecution were forced to call them the Newham 7.

Secondly, the case highlighted very clearly a lot of pertinent issues. It threw up the time-old questions of racist attacks, of self-defence. More importantly, it threw up the question of local authority responses, of what local councils are doing, of the positions of Black people in society today in spite of the GLC interest this year and in spite of race relations funding. We succeeded in turning this case into an issue.

Thirdly, the campaign greatly strengthened the anti-racist and anti-fascist movements in the country. A whole new layer of youth radicalised with the Newham 7 campaign. NUM branches and Trades Councils around the country affiliated to the campaign. For the first time we're getting sections of the white working class coming to us on the basis of their experiences and on our terms. By appealing not just to the black community but to a wider section, we learnt that we could gain a lot more support than would otherwise have been possible.

BS: What sort of Black unity was there in the campaign?

UD: Many people inside and outside the Labour Party have a romantic concept that Black unity is something which occurs automatically. No. Black unity is built by political struggle. It is unity in action.



Unmesh Desai with two of the Newham 7

We proved this in the Newham 7 and Justice for the Pryces campaign (see following article). The Newham 7 marches were a success because we linked these two issues. More than 3,000 people turned out and the police, who had only been expecting 500 students, were surprised to see it was overwhelmingly Asian and West Indian kids marching side by side.

The New Cross march was historic but that was predominantly an Afro-Caribbean issue. The Newham 8 march was good — not as big as the New Cross march, but still good — but predominantly Asian.

The Newham 7/Pryces march from the beginning showed a fantastic unity between Afro-Caribbean kids despite police tactics of saying that trouble was created by the Afro-Caribbean kids and that there were two separate marches. Tension does exist between Afro-Caribbean and Asian people — let's not deny it — in Newham and elsewhere. But what we proved in this campaign was that through identifying the common enemy, through coming onto the streets together we can overcome these petty differences.

The bond that has grown between local kids has been very impressive because they are fighting a common enemy. It's a simple political message. Racism is expressed in different forms but because white society defines you as non-white it is a question of non-whites uniting and not fighting each other over grants, patronage in Parliament or whatever.

BS: How did the police react to the campaign?

UD: Between 27th April and the end of June we had 95 arrests. There was not one single arrest in the previous Newham 8 campaign. Prior to the miners' strike the police were a bit sensitive to community feelings. After the strike they have a new mood of confidence. They know they can get away with murder. That's what's so frightening. That's why Parviz Khan could be beaten up so openly in the cells below the courts because he refused to eat a pork pie because of his religion.

They would not have tried that two years back. They can try it in 1985, Thatcherite Britain. When the police broke up the first Newham 7 march outside Forest Gate police station they went for the women and the young kids. The idea was to frighten them from coming to future marches.

Black people, Stonehenge, Irish people, the miners . . . the link is there. The name of the game now is that when you come out on the street you are seen as a threat. The Labour Party has not learnt about that. They have not learnt that the police are not a neutral force.

When we talk about policing we are also talking about intelligence gathering. The amount of intelligence they had on defendants and the defence campaign was phenomenal. The most startling disclosure in the whole trial was the confession of the ex-Wimpy waitress, Maria Ison. Several months before the Newham 7 incidents, she had been told by CID officers from Forest



Some of the Newham 7

Gate to keep a watch on 'the Asian boys talking about racist attacks'.

As the economic crisis gets worse, the scenario you are talking about is a level of state repression not seen before in this country. This is what the Labour Movement has to face up to.

BS: What did Newham Council (a Labour council) do in the campaign?

UD: The Council gave the Newham 7 formal support but this was not enough. We needed practical support which meant mobilising the resources of the Council and the Labour Party behind the Newham 7. They could, for instance, have set up an enquiry into the Newham 7 incidents, an enquiry on Black people's terms.

Too often councils try to do things for Black people instead of giving support to what Black people themselves want to do. Newham is a powder keg and when it explodes the Council will turn around and say let's give more grants to Black people. The answer is not grants; it is siding with Black popular struggles. That is the answer. Until and unless Councils are responsive to the needs of the community, whether that responsiveness is established through Black Sections or through other organisations, then you are not talking about socialism.

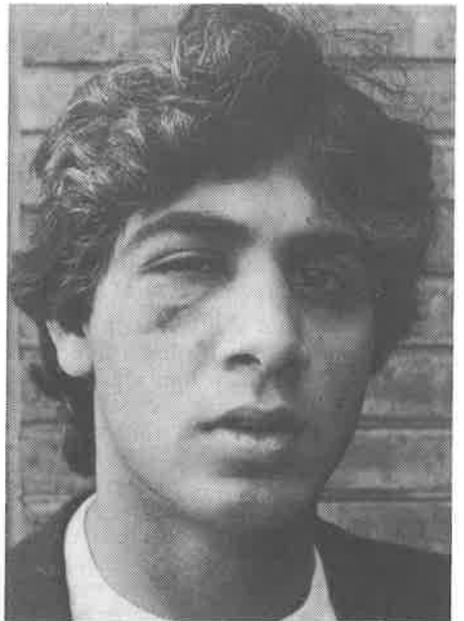
BS: What should Black Labour Party activists be doing to promote this responsiveness?

UD: They have to see themselves as Black socialists first and not as Black Labour Par-

ty members first. They have got to see their struggle as part of a wider struggle. They have to see their tasks as far more than electing Black councillors or MPs.

They must make sure they are accountable to the Black community and that means siding with popular struggles and getting Labour Party support for these struggles outside the Party, and not just using the struggles to build their names.

They have to infuse the race issue with the class issue. There are going to be lots more powder kegs around the country. Unless Black Labour Party members can find a way of harnessing the Labour Movement to the activities of the Black community on their terms then the two will always remain on different paths.



Parviz Khan after he was beaten up in the court cells

Justice for the Pryces

Labour Party Black Section

Statement on race attacks

THE WAR being waged against the Black community in the form of race attacks is an indication of how racist Britain is today.

Many council estates, particularly in urban areas, are the battle grounds.

The victims are largely Asian, many old, single parents and children.

Racist graffiti has become 'acceptable' on walls, houses, buses and most public property.

The streets of our cities are no longer safe to walk on: 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.

1,300 attacks were notified to the authorities this year. 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.

This type of scandalous behaviour has been allowed to grow precisely because, with the exception of the G.L.C., no regional or national government has bothered to investigate or take seriously the horrors that many people face daily.

Supporters of the 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. They are condemned to an isolated, siege-like existence.

The worsening conditions of Black people are frankly appalling and are worsening. Housing authorities, in the main, ignore the pleas of Black tenants who are living in dreadful circumstances 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 ter-



Photo: ANDREW POTHECARY

Justice for the Pryces/Newham 7 march

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

Three plain clothes police officers actually witnessed the incident from a bus. Their response was predictable. They did not arrest the murderer, but instead arrested Eustace's brother Gerald. Gerald was arrested on the grounds that he was in a distraught state and looked as though he about to do something dangerous. He was then denied the right to go with his dying brother to the hospital, and taken to Plaistow police station. When an aunt tried to visit Gerald at the station, she was not allowed to see him, and he was only released hours later to find that his brother was dead.

Racist Police, Racist Courts

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

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

The bail conditions imposed on Gerald since January (which were only reduced on July 31st) meant that he could not even come

into Newham to see his family, friends or pregnant girlfriend. Gerald has been denied the basic human right to mourn with his family while the murderer of his brother walks free.

Justice for the Pryces

The Pryce family are not alone in their suffering, and the catalogue of violence goes on and on. In 1979, Michael Ferreira was killed by racists in Hackney. When his friends carried him to the police station they were treated as though they were criminals by police officers who left Michael bleeding unattended in the station. He later died in hospital. In the courts, the callousness continued, and Michael's mother, shocked by the light sentences given to his murderer was forcibly removed and thrown into a prison cell.

The message from the police and courts is clear. There is no justice for black people, when members of our community are murdered, their families are treated as criminals.

Gerald goes on trial on October 8th, alongside two Asian and two Afro-Caribbean youths, also charged with affray. Community pressure resulted in Gerald's bail conditions being partially relaxed, and only community pressure will finally bring about JUSTICE FOR THE PRYCE FAMILY!

Remember Eustace ... Defend Gerald

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

rified 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 in solidarity to fight against fascist 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 street and on housing estates.

2. When known perpetrators live in Council accommodation, they are the ones who are 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 apprehension of the culprits, must press criminal damages 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 and give a high-

priority commitment in the manifesto to implement all these demands.

The Black Sections campaign condemns all those authorities who have sat idly by as 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, has taken the initiative through the promotion of a Private Members Bill entitled the "Racial Harassment Bill", which deserves discussion and support.

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

MONEY**MONEY**MONEY**MONEY



This newsletter and the Black Section intervention at Conference cost a great deal of money. Obviously we will not get much finance from Labour Party HQ to help our future campaign and activities. We will need an office and full-time worker. To do this we will have to rely on individual contributions, and contributions from CLPs and trade unions. Please fill in the form below and send us some money. Better still send us a standing order which will guarantee us regular income.

Credit LABOUR PARTY BLACK SECTION account no. 50427206 Co-operative Bank PLC, 08-90-33, 1 Islington High Street, London N1 9TR.

To the Treasurer
Labour Party Black Section
39 Chippenham Road
London W9

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £ being a donation for Labour Party Black Section. I require/do not require a receipt.

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**LABOUR PARTY
BLACK SECTION
CONFERENCE
FRINGE MEETING
THURSDAY, 3rd OCTOBER
AT THE
WESSEX HOTEL, WEST CLIFF ROAD**