

# TEACHERS' SPECIAL SOCIALIST ORGANISER

April '90. 10 pence if sold separately.

## Teachers fight against the poll tax

By Ivan Wels, South  
Notts NUT

If the leaders of the Labour Party and the TUC had supported the anti-poll tax demonstration on 31 March, said Tony Benn, then instead of being 200,000 strong the march would have been one million strong.

Such is the strength of feeling against this totally unfair and undemocratic tax. He could have added with hindsight after the later events that had Kinnock and Willis supported the march it would have been unlikely that the police would have attacked it in the way that they did, causing the riots through the West End.

It is quite clear that only a small minority of people support the Poll Tax and certainly the whole of the labour movement opposes it. The problems arise with how we go about funneling that opposition into something meaningful.

From the Tories' point of view it is a clever trick to put local authorities into a cleft-stick — either people have low poll tax and cuts in local services or a high poll tax in order to defend them. Either way the Tories win. All this, of course, under the guise of "local accountability", in spite of the fact that control over local expenditure is more centralised than it ever has been with an 80:20 weighting for government grant under poll tax instead of 60:40 under the old rating system.

If the Tories succeed in forcing local authorities to have a low poll tax with cuts we all know where the cuts on such a massive scale are likely to fall — the most expensive parts of local authority spending: education and social services. This will mean more pressure to privatise services and encouraging institutions to 'opt out' of local authority care.

We can already see the beginning of this in Thatcher's two favourite local authorities, Wandsworth and Bradford, where cost-cutting on a massive scale has been introduced. In teaching, non-contact time and classes of under 30 are likely to be things of the past as we return to those "Victorian values" so beloved of Tories.

How are we to defeat such an iniquitous tax?

Kinnock and Willis tell us to wait for a Labour government as if the Labour Party was **guaranteed** to win the next election. In the meantime, we should pay and implement the poll tax. Even if this scenario were to come about, looking at the logistics does not encourage optimism.

Two years to the next possible Labour government and two years at the minimum to implement a fairer tax based on ability to pay... that is at least four years of misery for those people unable to pay and those people who have lost their jobs.

The only way in which we can stop this tax is through a massive campaign of civil disobedience to make it unworkable. One and a half million people in Scotland have not been paying for the past year and there are likely to be millions more in England and Wales.

Workers in some areas are refusing to implement the tax. Civil disobedience in this country has an honourable history. Without it trade unions would not exist and women would not have the vote. To claim, as Waddington, the Home Secretary, does, that there is no line between ordinary criminal acts and civil disobedience is ridiculous. This is a civil law and as a civil law it must be broken.



# Wanted!

## United action against the IAC report

By Liam Conway,  
Secretary, Central  
Notts NUT

The IAC Report represents a major attack on teachers pay. For the first time governing bodies or LEAs will be able to make one-off payments to individual teachers for whatever reason they deem appropriate.

These payments, which can be paid in secret and withdrawn again at the end of the year, start at £250 at the bottom of the new National Standard Scale and go up, in £250 lumps, to a maximum of £1,000. And this is just the beginning.

The IAC (in reality the government's poodle but recently described as "independent" in an NUT

publication) intends this system of local discretion in future years. Already there is the prospect of the maximum figure being extended to £2,000.

But who will get these payments? The sort of people who get these payments are those that are prepared to grovel to management, and sympathise with the educational aims of the Tories. Take a school in Notts. A teacher there recently negotiated a £30,000 sponsorship from local industry. How much of that £30,000 is that teacher worth and what educational strings are tied to the money?

I wonder how many local industries would sponsor my Irish History course, which includes a detailed analysis of the "Shoot to Kill" policy in Northern Ireland? I suspect that those teachers defending secular education, trade union principles and state funding will be

much more likely to get the chop than a groveller's incentive payment.

But is it possible to make these payments at a time of declining budgets?

Yes it is! Take Notts again. A librarian recently left a school to take up another post. She was replaced not by a librarian but a teacher on an 'A' allowance. The saving to the school was over £10,000. You can make a lot of one-off payments with £10,000. But even more drastic cuts/savings could be made by increasing class sizes and sacking a few teachers. And while they're at it, governing bodies, with their greatly enhanced powers under LMS, could get rid of other workers in the school, like cleaners or office staff.

The IAC Report dovetails into LMS. It undermines the whole process of national negotiations over pay and conditions. What price a national union if pay and conditions are "negotiated" at school level?

And what has the union's response been?

Amazingly, they have bent over backwards to heap praise on the IAC. In their view the only problem with the award is the government's intention to phase it in.

Even worse, they have attempted to hide the truth about the report from the members. And, most

recently, they have virtually condemned the NAS/UWT strike against the settlement. Meanwhile, the majority faction on the executive dazzle the public with confused and ineffective adverts in the largely hostile press and try to con us into believing that we are winning the propaganda war. Clearly, we are at crisis point in the union.

At such a time we must organise a

### Turn to inside

Socialist Organiser meeting  
Monday 16 April, 12.45pm,  
Wessex Hotel

### Poll Tax, Teachers and the Fight Against Privatising Schools

Speakers: Andy Dixon,  
executive member,  
Greater Manchester;  
Liam Conway, Central Notts  
Association secretary.  
Both in personal capacity

All articles written in  
a personal capacity

## An LMS comprehension test

By Andy Parsons,  
Assistant Secretary,  
Central Notts NUT

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions below

Last Easter, at Blackpool, I spoke for the first time at NUT conference, seconding motion 44 opposing LMS.

The Executive majority argued against this on the grounds that we had to accept what was enshrined in law and make the best of it. But we won the argument and the motion was carried. The most significant part of motion 44 was the paragraph setting out in detail the necessary action required to defend our members from job losses and worsened conditions of service, the inevitable consequences of LMS.

After the conference I took over as acting Association Secretary for a term and picked up one piece of casework concerning a teacher working in a voluntary aided school, who was sacked by the school governors for making a minor administrative error.

Under LMS all governing bodies will have these potentially draconian powers. After much pressure from our Association the NUT's response was to sanction a one-day strike of the school's 7 members, in an attempt to prevent the appointment of another teacher in place of our member. And that was that.

From then on matters were handled by the regional office who, surprise, surprise, took the case to an industrial tribunal. Needless to say we lost. A promised delegation from the national action committee to our LEA never materialised, even after we had visited Hamilton House to plead for some sort of union response to the sacking.

A year later I sit in a staff meeting as our head, an NAS member who

went on strike two weeks ago, announced the curriculum areas for compulsory redundancies. Because of LMS and the LEA's revised budget figures we look set to lose 4 teachers. But it could have been worse — the neighbouring school looks set to lose 9! I wonder what forms of action the executive's 'Broad Left' faction has planned in order to defend our members against job losses and worsened conditions? Their track record so far leaves a lot to be desired.

But what would you do as a school rep or union activist? Give reasons for your answers:

1. Follow the lead of some union members, division officers (who really should know better) and try to get the best possible compulsory redundancy deal in order to serve the "best interests" of members?

2. Ask our members, threatened with redundancy, how they feel we, as a national union, could best serve their interests, ie. negotiating a compulsory redundancy deal or fighting to preserve their jobs?

3. Wait for the NUT executive to organise a campaign of nationwide strikes as soon as one of our members is identified for redundancy? (For this question please try to remember that the union never even told us what was in the IAC Report)

4. Go out on unofficial strike on a school basis in any school where one of our members is fingered for the chop?

5. Plan for immediate action at division/association level, through committees of union reps at effected schools (including non-teaching unions) in order to fight off sackings?

6. Call regional office as soon as a member is identified for the sack and have the issue handled as casework?

7. Pass motion 44 (LMS) and amendment 44.3 at conference?

Your comprehension skills are excellent if you have chosen answers 2, 5 and 7. But what answers will the majority executive faction give? Why not put the questions to them yourself and demand an answer?



## Pay: don't be tricked into six months' delay

By Andy Dixon (NUT executive, personal capacity)

The union executive's priority motion on salaries to the NUT's Easter conference contains three elements. There's a condemnation of the

1990 salary changes; a "major consultative exercise"; and a special salaries conference in October.

The motion has been drawn up by the "Broad Left" faction in a spirit of panic and desperation.

## Wanted! United action against the IAC Report

From front page

fightback. And such a fightback must be based on the maximum possible left unity. The STA and the CDFU must work together, as they have done in many cases during the executive elections, to organise the forces on the ground against the implementation of the IAC report and the effects of LMS.

With the government in severe economic trouble over the Poll Tax, mortgage rates, etc., the time is right for such an organised resistance. It is also becoming increasingly clear that other public sector workers will be in dispute in the coming months. This can only add weight to the pressure for action inside the union.

And the greater the unity on the left in pursuit of a policy of action to defend jobs, pay and conditions then the more difficult it will be for this do-nothing executive faction to resist that pressure. And if unity cannot be achieved by the spokespeople of the STA and CDFU (and CDFU leaders have often blocked effective unity in the past) then appeals must go out to forge the unity that for the bulk of teachers is a necessity.

Finally, this united action campaign must reach out to other workers in schools, workers who

have traditionally been ignored by their union bureaucracies. With the success of last year's NALGO action the myth that these workers can't or won't fight has been well and truly exploded.

We should therefore link up with the left in other unions such as NALGO to ensure that the fightback is as broad based as possible. There will be no need to give up our long-held and cherished beliefs or to stop arguing for their acceptance by the wider movement but the time is long overdue for the maximum unity in action.

### Footnote

In the last few days the union leadership has done a u-turn on the IAC Report. From a body "concerned" about teachers it has become one to be "condemned". Why? Well, despite attempts to hide the truth, members did find out about the creeps charter contained in the report — and they didn't like it!

However, the dirty tricks department is not finished yet. They now intend to stop any discussion of salaries at this conference by using an urgency motion which calls for a special salaries conference in October. After months rejecting calls for such a conference, they now call one when the actual conference is about to commence. Why? Simple — they're scared that conference will reject their whole do-nothing salaries strategy — and it will! Throw out the urgency motion. Unite behind motions calling for flat-rate, action, and a rejection of creeps pay.

## Teachers and the charter trade union rights

By Pete Radcliff

With the Tories' electoral credibility at an all time low, Labour's policies on trade unions will become of increasing concern to the movement.

The last ten years have seen a tightening legal straitjacket being imposed by the Tory government on trade unions. Its purpose is understood by every trade union activist — to make effective industrial action as difficult as possible.

The response of the NUT executive along with the TUC and Labour Party leadership, has been to accept much of the anti-union legislation, arguing that such measures have proved popular with the electorate.

The danger is that unless a serious campaign is developed within the movement over legal rights of trade unions, the election of a Labour government will see slow and minimal benefits for trade unionists.

There is much evasion in Labour's recent Policy Review over

the changes they would actually introduce.

There are indications that there would be some relaxation of the law barring secondary action, although when interviewed by the *Independent* last October Labour spokesperson Michael Meacher made clear that action such as boycotting the handling of South African goods or sympathy action with the nurses would remain illegal.

Similarly, there are indications that the legal requirement on pre-strike ballots may be relaxed in some circumstances and that the sequestration of union funds will no longer be allowed if strikes are called which fall foul of the law.

But at the same time scabs would still be able to use the courts against their union and judges will retain the power to impose injunctions to stop strikes. The punitive powers they would leave, other than sequestration, if injunctions were ignored are not spelt out.

LMS is designed by the employers to break up the solidarity of teachers. The fight against such issues as redundancies will need more than a school-by-school response.

Teachers could well find themselves in breach of even Labour's formula of justifiable secondary action "where workers have a genuine interest in the outcome of a dispute"! Especially if the person interpreting that formula is a rabid anti-union judge.

Whenever teachers or any other workers feel that sympathy action is justified in the interests of themselves, the service they provide to the communities, they should have the right to take it.

It is undoubtedly true that strikes after the 1985-86 campaign were unpopular with many teachers. The strike strategy adopted then was never intended to defeat the employers but to aggravate them.

Not surprisingly, and possibly intentionally, in the end it created greater frustration and aggravation amongst parents and teachers.

The NUT executive are now trying to use that mood to justify a no-strike policy.

But the lesson of that campaign is that you can't have strike campaigns led by an executive that doesn't believe in them.

As the success of the recent NAS/UWT action shows, at the end of

## Lessons of a left victory in middle England

By Marion Shirley,  
newly elected  
executive member for  
Berks, Bucks and  
Oxfordshire

**T**his campaign began at conference 1988. It was supported throughout Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. It was a straight fight with the Broad Left.

My election address concentrated on the need to get more women and minorities on the executive and the central issues of action, democracy, equal opportunities, education and, of course, pay and conditions.

Over the past year I have produced election leaflets as well as speaking at Trades Councils, Anti-Poll Tax meetings, NQ functions, etc. to get the message of the left across. We also used the press whenever possible.

At the nominations stage I gained support from 4 associations, 2 of

which were achieved through ballots of the membership. I discovered that low attendance at meetings was more to do with overwork and lack of union response than apathy.

The hustings meetings showed a genuine interest and commitment to union matters. Flat-rate salaries and equal opportunities came across as particularly important vote winners. People commented that this was the first time that they had heard somebody say what they themselves had been thinking for a long time.

Voting took place amid considerable radicalisation in, despite areas of deprivation, a traditional Tory heartland. Many, even ex-Tories, were beginning to see the links between the Poll Tax and cuts in services like education. The ambulance dispute showed many the dangers of thinking that winning public support is enough to get real concessions from the government. Some were even beginning to think that unofficial action might be necessary. However, it should be noted that some of my strongest supporters were members who appreciated genuine help with

casework and this demonstrates the importance of winning members over to active trade unionism from their starting points.

Having contacts and active supporters on the ground was a vital part of the campaign and this was obtained through STA members and other co-thinkers amongst English teachers. Many associations were also able to give me vital information about the best ways to contact individual members.

That is what happened! I'm terribly disappointed that others, who worked as hard as I did, did not get elected. Possibly, the reasons lie in the sort of campaigns that were conducted against them. There was not a bureaucratic "machine" working against me. In an area made up of small associations contact is more personal.

By voting for me many teachers have shown their commitment to various forms of action from public burning of national curriculum documents to strike action over pay and conditions. We must now reach out to wider layers of teachers, especially in our would-be urban strongholds, to ensure that this commitment is spread nationwide.

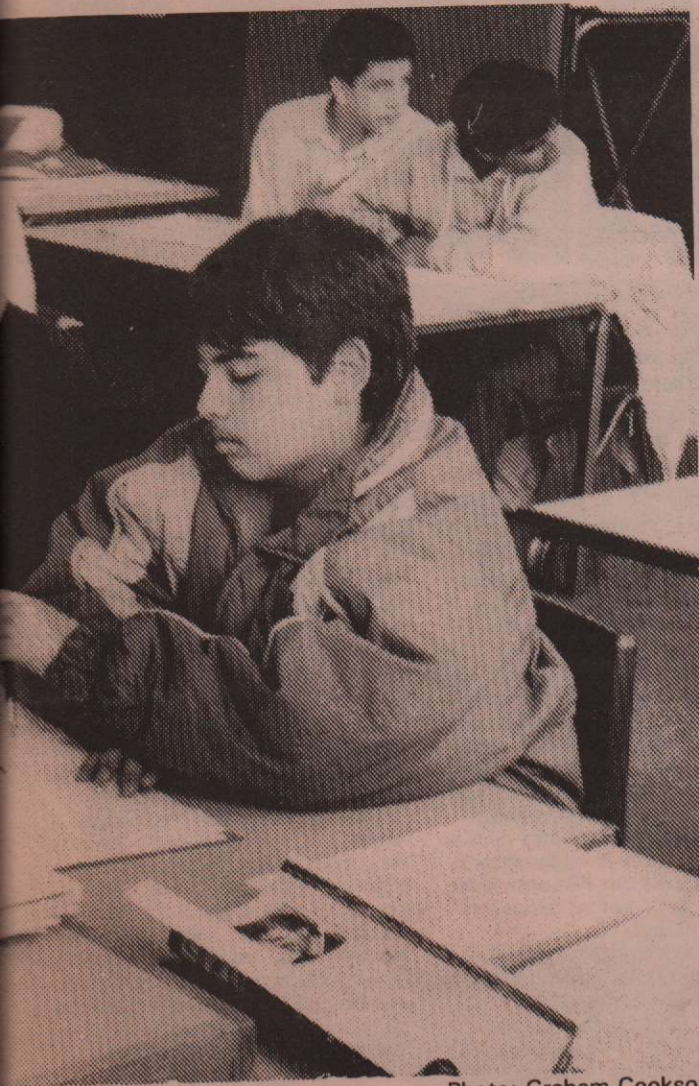


Photo: Graham Cookson

are frightened that conference condemn the lack of a campaign on salaries in 1989-90 and demand an effective campaign for 1990-91.

The motion was agreed at a specially convened executive meeting last week, 5 April.

The executive salaries motion submitted in the normal way for conference (Motion 41) contains no reference to a special conference, nor do the executive amendments on salaries which were written after the IAC report and agreed by the executive only two weeks before the priority motion was named up.

The acceptance by conference of its priority motion would have two effects: to prevent discussion of the

salaries motions and amendments submitted by associations and divisions and supported for debate by the membership in the priority voting; and to postpone the launch of the 1990-91 salaries policy and campaign for six months.

In the interests of democracy and of the successful pursuit of the interests of teachers, conference should not fall for this manoeuvre. The priority motion should not be debated, but if it is then amendments must be supported which allow this annual conference to make decisions on salaries policy and on action to support that policy.

We cannot afford to wait six months. A special conference could be useful to help mobilise and enthuse the campaign, but we should not postpone decisions on salaries policy and strategy until the autumn, leaving the field free for the other teachers' organisations to push their priorities at the expense of ours.

## Why we need a political fund

By John Illingworth,  
Joint Notts Division  
Treasurer

**T**he last few years have seen a dramatic change for the worse in education.

Those who remember the Blackpool conference of 1986 will recall that the main issue of debate was whether to move to a position of total 'no-cover'. Teachers pay was still negotiated with LEA employers, and teachers had won improved conditions of service through a long campaign of action.

Since then one government initiative after another have worsened teachers' pay and conditions, and have undermined the whole state education system. There has never been a period in history where any government has sought to push

through such fundamental changes over such a short period. The list of initiatives is well known.

- Imposition of pay without negotiation rights
- The National Curriculum and associated assessment
- Opting out
- LMS
- City Technology Colleges
- Poll Tax

It is important to recognise that these have all been political initiatives taken, without educational consensus, by a government determined to impose its ideology upon education. The impact of these initiatives upon schools and teachers could hardly be worse.

The current threat to jobs caused by LMS and Poll Tax capping is just one more stage in an ever-descending spiral of decline.

The 1984 Trade Union Act helped prepare the way for other legislation seeking to reduce the ef-

fectiveness of any trade union actively campaigning against the government's political initiatives which were to follow. This is why we need a political fund.

Having a political fund does not tie the union to affiliation with any political party, but does allow the union to use resources to promote policies which might be shared by a political party, without the risk of illegality.

The past few years should have taught us that it is naive to believe that we can resist political initiatives without being free to engage in political activity. Even the Executive now appear to recognise this — it's a pity it's taken so long.

What is important is that we move as quickly as possible to the establishment of such a fund. The Executive amendment seeks to add further delay and possible further conditions upon its use. We must not allow ourselves to be restricted to only being able to use a political fund in the run-up to elections.

Support Motion 15 — vote against the Exec amendment 15.1; then support a move to the main question.

for

Today teachers recognise it as a necessary weapon to defend wages and services.

Teachers' rights to strike have to be defended — especially after Baker's ominous and unequivocal statement last week that "teachers should not go on strike". It does us no good to have union leaders like McAvoxy concurring with such sentiments.

We should fight to get the NUT to adopt strike strategies that can unite teachers and convince them that we can win. And we should demand that the Labour Party legally recognise the right to strike without threats of dismissal or punitive action against the unions' financial assets or representatives.

A resolution at the 1989 Labour Party conference calling for a comprehensive Workers Charter got 2 1/4 million votes, including the votes of the TGWU and the NUM. That debate has to be taken into the very centre of the NUT and the TUC.

Trade unions are not popular if they don't achieve benefits and improvements for their members. We need the legal rights and the trade union leadership that can make these gains.

### WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under

workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggle of

workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class-based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

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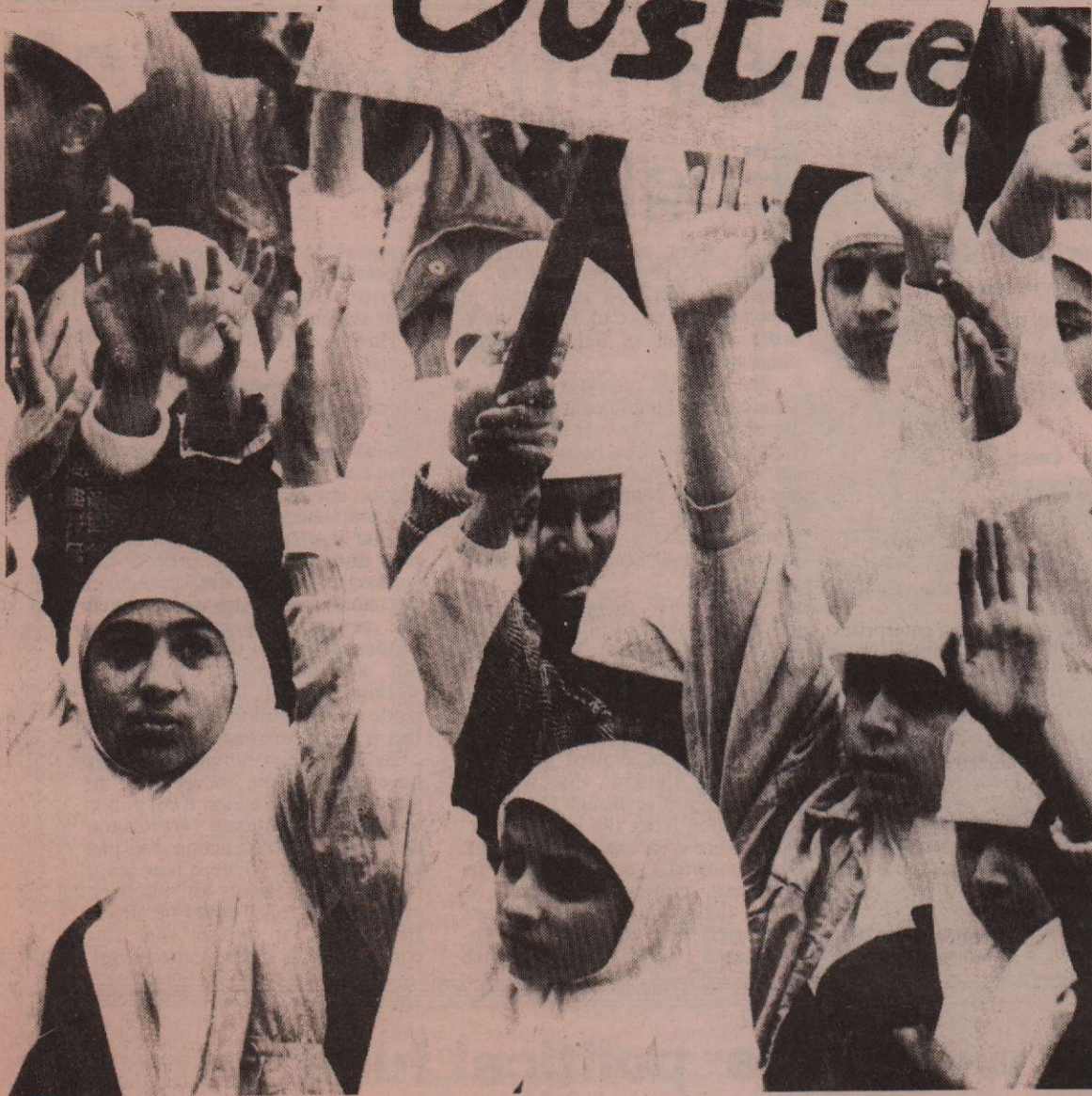
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## Socialist Organiser Teachers

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# Justice



## The case for secular education

By Pat Murphy, Leeds NUT

**T**here is a real temptation to see recent demands for separate religious schools by sections of the black community in Britain as simply a desperate cry from the oppressed in need of a positive and sympathetic response.

The temptation is great because there is an element of truth in this picture. Racism in education has intensified, Christian assemblies are compulsory in schools under the ERA, RE is part of the National Curriculum, resources for second-language teaching have been reduced and small pockets of white parents, eg. in Dewsbury, have objected to the placement of their children in mainly Asian schools.

The small element of anti-racism in the curriculum is under attack. To these attacks our response must be positive and, not so much sympathetic, but defiant.

There is more to the demand for separate schools than this, however. First the Asian community, which moved to Britain chiefly in the 1960s and 1970s, is now settled and the first generations of Asian youth are facing exposure to two competing pressures, white racism and secularism.

Religious leaders in the Asian community are determined to maintain their grip on future generations, presently exposed daily to secular culture.

Secondly, and linked, the Islamic regime in Iran has created a fundamentalist revival to maintain their power. Central to the success of this project is the drive to enthuse the community abroad. Repelled by the racism of 'white' society and attracted by the energy and 'militancy' of the fundamentalist response many young Asians have participated in revivalist events, eg. the Rushdie demos.

The demand for separate schools, expressed so far by a small minority of Asian parents, is thoroughly reactionary. It is not a way to fight

racism but a way to strengthen the religious zealots. Religious schools would bitterly oppress and restrict Asian women. They would represent a victory not for the Asian or Muslim community, but for one part of that community over another part — the fundamentalist over the secularist. We should not be neutral in such conflicts, we are solidly with the secularists.

Socialists should also consider the implications for education in general. We are for a curriculum that reflects the language, culture and experience of the whole community. Such a curriculum does not exist in contemporary schools but the logic of the separatists' argument is that such integration is either not possible or not desirable. The idea that each must look after their own, whether driven by feelings of alienation or supremacy, is one that must be fought fiercely.

But don't religious groups have a 'right' to separate schools even if we would not advocate such measures? Of course no-one can prevent wealthy groups establishing schools, but no!; religious groups cannot have a 'right' to collectively provided schools to be run outside of any democratically decided policies. Religion should be treated like any other system of beliefs or lifestyle — free from obstruction or censorship but not privileged or fostered by the state.

There are gross injustices which strengthen the 'separate schools' case. Socialists have been too quiet before about these:

- no religious schools should be state aided;
- compulsory Christian assemblies should be ended;
- RE should not be in the National Curriculum.

We must fight for an accessible, relevant, anti-racist and secular education in unitary comprehensive schools. The drive for separate schools is a partly understandable reaction to current education policy but in every respect it would be a huge step backwards.

**Socialist Teachers Alliance**  
**"Women in Struggle" meeting**  
**Monday 16 April,**  
**8pm, Marsham Court Hotel.**  
**Speakers from NAC, Women for Socialism, and STA**

**Socialist Teachers Alliance**  
**"Time To Go" meeting**  
**Sunday 15 April,**  
**8pm, Marsham Court Hotel**

**Recall Local Association Salaries Conference.**  
**6pm, Saturday, 14 April, Wessex Hotel.**

## A woman's place is in her union

By Lesley Smallwood, Bradford NUT

**B**elonging to a union where 70% of the members are women, yet 80% of the executive are men, I was pleased to discover that a working party on increasing the number of women on the executive had been set up on the instruction of 1989 conference.

It seemed that some real action was going to be taken to increase women's involvement and to supply answers as to why women have traditionally been so badly represented.

If action was what I was looking for the report of the committee made very disappointing reading. To begin with it had met only once during the year (in October) and whilst it recognised some of the barriers women face against active involvement for example, childcare responsibilities, the recommendation it produced did nothing to remedy these.

The report simply called upon local associations to 'encourage'

women to stand for office or take conference places, etc., and for the executive to 'encourage' local associations to nominate women for executive positions.

Besides the obvious lack of action to increase the number of women on the executive there are two glaring problems here. Firstly, whilst it is fairly easy to set up a new post, like equal opportunities, and elect a woman to it, it is a completely different prospect to expect the men running local associations not only to give up their official posts, or places at conference, but also to 'encourage' women to take them.

Secondly, where are all the women we are to 'encourage' to come from? In my experience the lack of involvement of women does not only exist at executive level but now through all levels of the union.

For me the central question must be how do we ensure that women become involved in the union at all levels. One answer often put forward by sections of the women's movement is to introduce a set of quotas for places on the executive — like, for instance, the Labour Party Women's Sections' call for 40% women on the NEC.

This has the benefit of ensuring good representation of women in the top positions and encourages more women to get involved at branch level as they no longer see

the union as a male-dominated organisation. In a union where three quarters of the members are women, asking for half the places on the executive seems reasonable and if the recent election of Mary Hufford is anything to go by, women candidates are certainly popular.

In principle, we should support such quotas, but my experience in the Labour Party makes me very suspicious of the uses to which they can be put. Certainly the call for 40% women on the NEC of the Labour Party has not been used as a means to draw women into grass roots activity. Rather it has served to give positions to those women already well established in the party, at the expense of a truly democratic women's conference and an active women's section.

As socialists we must be wary of this 'top down' approach to women's involvement in the union. A massive barrier to women gaining executive places is the shortage of women willing to stand for these positions. We should, therefore, look for ways in which we can draw more women into our branches and give them the confidence to stand against men in union elections.

There are material reasons why women do not attend meetings — these must be rectified if we are to alter male dominance. The time

that meetings take place should be convenient for all members, particularly those with family commitments; childcare facilities should be available at meetings, or money available to cover the cost of baby sitters, etc.

Meetings should be less formal and have an inviting atmosphere — for all new members, not just women; there should be much more discussion and far less reporting from officers; issues which affect women should be discussed — we are often the lowest paid and have the worst conditions as part-time workers — this should be important to the union as a whole, not just women, issues like the Alton Bill attracted large meetings — we should encourage the discussion of such issues.

There should be a positive drive to recruit women into the union — particularly at a time when membership is in decline, and the work of the equal opportunities committee and officers should be taken seriously and a real campaign begun.

These changes don't just affect women: they will make the union a better place for all its members — and it will certainly do more to 'encourage' women to stand for the executive than a circular passed to, mostly male, secretaries from Hamilton House.

## NEW PROBLEMS NEW STRUGGLES



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