

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Inside:

Tony Benn on the witch-hunt
Broadwater Farm this Xmas
Bernadette McAliskey on
the Anglo-Irish accords

Peter Heathfield on
defending the union



IN THE middle of last year the South African government announced elections to its stooge, powerless 'Tri-cameral' parliament. It was a catastrophic failure. Within months the Transvaal stayaway had erupted. Apartheid's death agony had begun.

The battle has been costly. Nearly 1000 black people have died. The townships are under military seige. Unarmed people daily defy jail, torture and death.

But one fact emerges which gives the whole world a beacon: *they are winning*. Like the Cuban, Vietnamese and Nicaraguan people before them, they are serving notice to the mightiest powers of our planet that all the wealth, all the guns, and all the science of the second half of this century will not, and cannot, defeat a united people.

That is why, in South Africa today, our destiny is being forged. And that is why Thatcher and Reagan tremble, and bluster, and boast that the solidarity movement's advances are 'tiny'. Because apartheid is their creature. *Their gold, their power, their might is being sweated from South Africa's soil.*

They will lose it when the black people of South Africa reassert their right claim to it.

That is why we rejoice that the people of South Africa are going to win. This very same wealth and power confronts us, whether on the walkways of Broadwater Farm, at the gates of Orgreave or on the barbed wire of Greenham Common

And we propose a New Year resolution: let 1986 be the year of solidarity with South Africa and Namibia. Let 1986 be the year we help set Mandela and the prisoners free. Let 1986 be the year we cut off the trade in oppression that binds Thatcher to Botha.

Life under Thatcher is hard and every day gets harder. But the heroic struggle of South Africa's black people, facing the most barbaric regime in the world, have brought hope. It proves to us, and to working people of all the world as we go into 1986 that, no matter what the odds, *we are going to win.*



FREE MANDELA!

BOYCOTT APARTHEID!

TUC goes Mainstream

THE TUC has caved in to Hammond and Laird and is to abandon its democratically-decided policy of opposing state cash for ballots. That capitulation makes the role of the right wing, Mainstream, unions dead clear.

In the same way that the SDP is a dagger pointed at the heart of the Labour Party, so new realism is the dagger poised to drain the blood of the trade union movement. The new realists' job, with a little help from Neil Kinnock, is to drag the union behind the policies of Thatcher.

On Monday they got some plaudits. Employment minister Kenneth Clarke took time out from a meeting in the Hague to congratulate them. 'The unions,' he said, 'are obviously impaled on the hook of a ridiculous policy.' It is ridiculous to imagine one can deal with a government out to wreck the unions in the way the TUC has tried to do: by issuing paper declarations, then standing back from every real struggle in the faint hope that Labour will be elected — and the even fainter hope that it will reverse Tory policies if it gets in.

The right wing unions have to ensure that by the time Thatcher's policies have made her so unpopular she leaves office, she has damaged the union movement beyond repair. After all, why should a future Labour government — much less a coalition — rescind state shackles on the unions when these same unions, at Kinnock's own prompting, have already put the shackles on themselves?

It is precisely for this reason that leaderships such as Scargill's, which are prepared to stand and fight the government, represent such a threat. Thatcher knows she has not seen the last of Arthur Scargill and his like, because her policies, which are driving ever-growing sections of society to the wall, will inevitably produce a fightback. She therefore has to ensure that the resistance that results has no focus, no leadership around which it can regroup.

This is the second function of the right wing unions. By dragging the labour movement over to Thatcher's positions, they aim to isolate any emerging class struggle forces and ensure they cannot count on any serious solidarity. The Coal Board's strategy of promoting the UDM to crush the NUM exactly corresponds to this. But it goes farther than the miners' union. In exactly the same way, Keith Joseph is promoting a line-up between the scab non-TUC Professional Association of Teachers and the National Association of Schoolmasters to try and isolate the National Union of Teachers and take the wind out of the teachers strike.

These tactics are destined to become part of the employers manual. But what should the labour movement be doing?

It is not just a question of paper policies. The 'struggle' in the TUC against Hammond was a non-event precisely because the main issue, whether the TUC would actually do anything, was already settled. So, as well as taking an intransigent stand against the anti-trade union laws and the Tory restructuring of industry — and in the Labour Party against accepting as 'reasonable' and 'unavoidable' policies of mass unemployment and privatisation — the crucial question across the labour movement is real support for real struggles against Thatcher.

Defence of the NUM and non-recognition of the UDM, intransigent defence of the black communities, solidarity with the teachers and all public sector workers fighting cuts, backing for councils who stand up to the Tories, and rejection of any witch-hunt: these will be the hallmarks, in 1986, of those who defend the true interests of labour.

Xmas break:

This is the last issue of Socialist Action in 1985. The next issue will be on the streets on 10 January 1986. Seasons greetings to all our readers — and a Reagan, Botha, and Thatcher-free new year!

The left faces 1986

Bloody but unbowed

MARGARET THATCHER succinctly summarised one of her chief political objectives in a recent interview given to the *Financial Times*. 'I have always regarded part of my job as ... killing socialism in Britain,' she said. Paradoxically, she has not only failed to kill socialism, but has presided over its rebirth in the British labour movement. This 'rebirth' is the most historically significant development in the politics of the British labour movement in 1985.

Thatcher's assault on the labour movement has secured some definite successes. Using oil revenue money, she has pursued a successful policy of making substantial economic concessions to considerable sections of the employed working class, while concentrating increasingly severe attacks on other sections: the unemployed, black people, youth, women, and parts of the industrial working class.

Almost every economic and social differential within the working class and the oppressed sections of society has been widened. At the same time increasing repression has been directed against those rising in revolt against this situation — a government policy of 'tax cuts and truncheons'.

But despite the undoubted victories, mass popular opposition to, and periodic struggles against, Thatcher's policies continue to develop, in particular among those most severely hit by them.

Neither repression nor Dublin's collaboration have succeeded in breaking the mass resistance to British rule in the north of Ireland. Tory support continues to decline sharply in Scotland, the north of England and the major cities. There has been prolonged industrial action by teachers, and local industrial disputes have continued. The 1985 uprisings against police harassment in the black communities were more intense than anything which happened in 1981. The campaign against nuclear weapons continues to enjoy mass support. The solidarity

movement in support of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa has made a qualitative breakthrough in recent months.

In short, despite specific and important victories by Thatcher, which have placed the working class on the defensive and have created a sharp swing

Government

to the right, sections of the working class and oppressed people continue to fight back against the government.

Each struggle today is finding points of support in the Labour Party. This development is decisive.

Despite the seriousness of the attacks it has mounted, and despite its victories, the government has not been able to rebuild the Tory Party's support. Faced with a Tory government unable to win direct mass support, the bourgeoisie took the initiative to split the Labour Party and create the SDP.

The resulting SDP-Liberal Alliance is aimed at preventing the return of a majority Labour government and so guaranteeing the continuation of the essential Thatcher policies. The SDP, and the Alliance, plays no progressive role in the class struggle whatsoever. It constitutes part of the offensive of the ruling class.

The Alliance works in parallel, and often in direct collaboration, with the extreme right of the labour bureaucracy. This right wing has been substantially strengthened by the overall policies of the Thatcher government and by the defeat of the miners strike. It has a clear

political project: a Labour-Alliance coalition government and bringing the entire trade union movement within the framework of Tory anti-union legislation.

After 1983, the Kinnockite leadership of the Labour Party, supported by the most powerful sections of the trade union bureaucracy, aimed to rebuild Labour as a majority party of government by taking the party to the right, while at the same time avoiding coalition. Against the sustained offensives of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of the miners strike their initial project has been progressively weakened.

The TUC has moved to the acceptance of the new framework of trade union law without waiting for the amelioration promised by Kinnock. The Labour leadership has jettisoned almost all policies that would challenge Thatcherism and has increasingly ceased 'balancing' and moved to openly centre all its energies on an onslaught on the left. The witch-hunt is a powerful expression of this.

While the Kinnockites still differ from the Mainstream right on the question of coalition, and on various matters of policy and tactics, the

Converge

practical positions of the two currents increasingly converge. The effect of this is to strengthen the right.

The ferocity of the bourgeois assault, climaxing in the tremendous class confrontation represented by the miners strike not merely polarised society, but openly divided the left wing of the labour movement which then existed.

The first and largest component — led by *Tribune* and the LCC and symbolised by figures such as Meacher and Sawyer, and Knapp in the unions — has gone over to the practical positions of Kinnock. The specific role of

this 'left' is to attempt to isolate, disorganise, and break up the class struggle forces which emerged out of the miners strike and subsequent developments.

The second force which emerged out of the miners strike was a *class struggle left* — the first class struggle forces, and class struggle current, to emerge in British politics since 1926. This is a qualitative development in British politics.

During the miners strike, Scargill became the first mass trade union leader in Britain since AJ Cook (on a higher level than Cook) to attempt to win a great class struggle, the greatest for 60 years, by class struggle means. The forces which Scargill led, expressed, and based himself on, engaged in a systematic mobilisation of the working class to win the strike.

This culminated in the longest mass strike in the history of any imperialist

First

country. Scargill's was one of the greatest examples of mass working class leadership in Britain's history. It was the emergence, for the first time since 1926, of a class struggle leadership in the working class.

The incredible force of the miners strike in turn polarised every other force in society, including the left wing of the working class movement — sending some to the right and qualitatively deepening the position of others.

Women Against Pit Closures developed directly out of the strike. The Benn-Skinner wing of the Campaign group of MPs stood solidly with the miners, and with Scargill, throughout the strike and emerged qualitatively strengthened.

The Labour Party black section, born in the period leading to the miners strike, stood solidly with the strike. A whole series of other individuals and organisations too stood firm with the

miners.

The fact that these forces constituted a qualitative break in British politics has been confirmed by developments since. At the end of the strike Tony Benn demanded British withdrawal from NATO. The Campaign group of MPs drew up the Miners Amnesty Bill. The black section, Campaign group, and Scargill defended the black uprisings and supported Liverpool council. Thirteen members of the Campaign group, voted against the Anglo-Irish accord. These same of forces came out against the witch-hunt. They strongly support the revolutions in Central America and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

In short, we are seeing a developing class struggle current in the labour movement whose components are objectively tending to converge. As they do so, they are increasingly beginning to take the class struggle directly through the labour movement.

Today they are under ferocious attack from the bourgeoisie and its agents — who are attempting to destroy them.

But the entire dynamic of this current is to go further and further through the labour movement — a dynamic created by their urgent necessity to try to transform the organisations of the working class into instruments of class struggle through which they can fight back against the attacks launched on them.

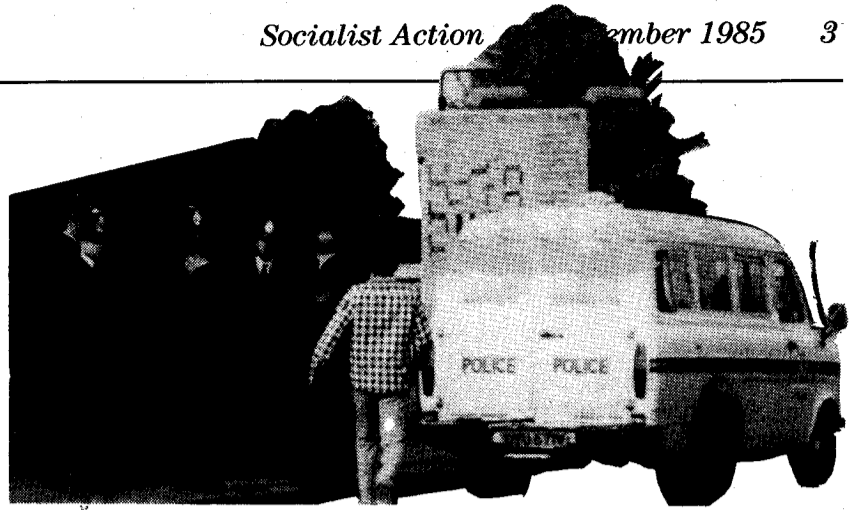
The emergence of this current, the social base propelling it, and its increasing dynamic to go through the labour movement, is the most important development in British working class politics for 60 years. Viewed from an historical perspective, the end of 1985 gives greater cause for optimism about the future of the socialism in Britain than at any time in the last half century.



A PIECE of the ACTION



Broadwater Farm Estate



The siege goes on

TWO MONTHS after the events of 5 October, the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham is under police occupation. Conditions on the estate are a chilling foretaste of the future Thatcher has in store for Britain. The treatment they are getting has until now been reserved for the North of Ireland. The estate is not being 'policed' — it is being punished. By attempting to protect Broadwater Farm residents from this continued intimidation, Bernie Grant and Haringey council have again hit the headlines. **ALAN FREEMAN** reports from the Farm.

SINCE 5 October there have been 153 arrests. Ninety-three of those arrested have been charged; 14 of those released without charge have since

been rearrested and charged.

What does it mean if you are arrested on Broadwater Farm? It starts with a dawn or night raid on your home by a gang of police with guns and sledgehammers. The attacks are brutal and arbitrary. Until recently they concentrated on male youth, but have now switched to women.

The D11 squad — Scotland Yard's armed unit — is on the estate all the time. In one case a single mother was phoned late at night by police and told: 'There are five armed officers outside. Come out quietly.' When she tried to inform the defence campaign, her phone wouldn't work. Like several others, she was taken away leaving the kids behind. Three hours later the defence campaign had an anonymous police phone call telling them to see to the unattended children.

The police invariably break in. In another case they broke into the wrong flat — a common event — and ransacked a pensioner's home. He collapsed two hours after coming home to the wreckage and died two days later.

But the story only starts with the arrest. If you are arrested, the police hold you for up to 72 hours, claiming they can do it under the Criminal Evidence Act. Though St Anne's and Bruce Grove police stations are just around the corner, you'll be shipped off to a distant station where your friends and relatives can't find you. If they do find you, they aren't allowed to see you.

Nor will the campaign solicitor be allowed to see you. You are alone, without help, under continuous interrogation and pressure to sign a confession. Then the police tell you that the campaign has let you down and no one has come to help you.

Finally, in comes the police 'defence' solicitor. Two of them are already supposed to be handling 20 cases. Yet the campaign's own solicitor has been told — by the police — that he could not handle a Broadwater Farm case because he already had one on his books.

This has nothing to do with law and not much to do with order. But as

Bernie Grant



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

The 'accidental death' of Cynthia Jarrett

SEVEN DAYS after police shot and paralysed Cherry Groce in Brixton, Cynthia Jarrett died of heart-failure when Tottenham police raided her home and knocked her to the ground during their illegal search. The response of Bernie Grant and other Haringey black councillors brought the full wrath of the establishment down on their heads. But the police lies, exposed by the recent inquest verdict on Mrs Jarrett's death, have generated no such righteous indignation.

PATRICK JARRETT, one of Cynthia's sons, told **CAROL TURNER** why the Jarrett Family Defence Campaign will continue to press its demand for a public enquiry.

My mum's death hit most people as if it could have been their own mother. There are a lot of guys out there getting into trouble and the police are coming to their houses and searching. It could have been their mother — and it was an insult and an injustice.

A week before the cops had shot down Cherry Groce in Brixton. Then they came and did my mum. When the riot broke out on Broadwater Farm people didn't go out there to loot or anything. They went out against the police. People can't take that much lying down.

Now they've got plastic bullets and CS gas. That's a lot different isn't it? People don't want to get shot by a plastic bullet; they don't want to get killed. Everybody who's had their house searched since the riots has seen a gun: in their face, in their presence, in their house.

The result of the inquest into my mother's death was the best we could expect: accidental death. We were saying all along that one of the cops pushed my mother. They were claiming they didn't. The one who pushed my mother was saying he was

somewhere else in the house.

No one put themselves in that room at the time. They were denying that they were there. By finding accidental death the inquest was saying that one of the cops, unnamed, did push my mother but it was an accident.

We couldn't really expect a result of accidental killing in a place like that. That wouldn't be on. Nothing like that really happens in Britain, does it?

I don't think anything will happen to the cops as a result of that verdict. I doubt if they will lose their job or anything like that. They might be reprimanded — but in their own way, by their own law and their own people.

People from Broadwater Farm are taking the verdict in their own way. Those who know a bit about the law know that it is a good result. Others were expecting a copper to be charged with murder. But feelings are the same I suppose: they think that one of them should have been charged with my mother's death in court. Full stop.

The police presence is

still there on the Farm. They've got what we call supergrass vans. They cropped up after the riot. They just sit there waiting for information. Douglas Hurd and Kenneth Newman are bringing their tactics from Ireland over here to the mainland now.

On the Sunday after my mother's death I went with other relatives and some local councillors and people from the Farm to a meeting at the police station. But after an hour or so nothing was coming out of it. We wanted a public enquiry; they were saying there was going to be a police enquiry.

You can't have police investigating police, can you? They are all one big family and you don't throw out part of your family. Such an enquiry was bound to come out on the side of the police.

Bernie Grant and the Haringey council promised an enquiry, but I don't think anything is happening yet. Bernie Grant will keep his promise now. He was saying there would be an enquiry after the inquest. Now the verdict's gone in our favour things should move.

Bernie got into trouble for speaking out. But you can only be honest, can't you? If you say honest things, then you hurt people. That's why he got a ton of bricks down on top of him. They didn't want to hear that from a council leader.

In a general sense I agreed with what he said. He was talking the truth. A lot of black people can recognise that. They know we've been under pressure for a long time now.



Cherry Groce



Cynthia Jarrett

WHO NEXT?

● *The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign and the Police Research Committee need help. They need money for legal costs and to help people whose belongings have been stolen by the police. They need resolutions of support. And they need people to help them with the work. The meetings are on Monday nights — anyone willing to do serious work for the campaign is welcome. For information contact them at 79 Tangmere, Willan Road, Tottenham or phone 885 3752.*

South Wales NUM presidential ballot: A vote to defend the union

DES DUTFIELD, secretary of Abercynon NUM in the Cynon Valley has been elected president of South Wales NUM, with a 20 per cent victory over Terry Thomas. There was a 70 per cent turnout in the ballot at the start of December.

Ian Isaacs, secretary of St John's branch and a *Militant* supporter polled 2000 votes on the first ballot. The election campaign was portrayed in the press as a contest between the Scargillite Dutfield and Kinnockite Thomas.

Ann Jones of South Wales Women Against Pit Closures welcomed the results. 'Des Dutfield's election is good news,' she said. 'I hope that the South Wales executive will take the right direction now and show the rest of the country that they aren't prepared to accept pit closures. I hope too that Des will work more closely with the women's support groups than the previous president did.'

'The vote shows that there's no support either for the position of Kim Howells who wants to have talks with the UDM. Arthur Scargill was supposed to speak at a meeting at Maesteg before the election. It was stopped by the area executive who argued that it would be taken as support for the candidature of Ian Isaacs who is secretary of the local pit. St John's. They followed that up by voting to close that pit.'

'The following night on telly we were treated to Neil Kinnock welcoming Terry Thomas as a "personal friend". If that wasn't canvassing, what was?'

Dutfield is a former vice president of the union, who lost the post following the failure of the campaign against the closure of Ty-Mawr-Lewis-Merthyr pit at the end of 1983. He led a stay-down protest against the closure and succeeded in winning the support of the South Wales coalfield, but a subsequent national strike ballot failed to back

the campaign.

Throughout the 1984-5 miners' strike Des Dutfield was one of the minority of South Wales executive members who opposed the

By Graham Atwell

area executive's policy and their subsequent endorsement of the return to work.

Tyrone O'Sullivan, secretary of Tower Lodge NUM, had this to say: 'The best man for the job was elected. Des Dutfield has experience and a strength that has been proved over the past 10 years. The ballot result represented an anti-establishment vote. The feelings against the Pontypridd area office played a major part in Des's election.'

'Since the end of the strike, rank and file South Wales miners have felt dirty. On demonstrations our banners have been booed because South Wales led the return to work. People wanted somebody they felt they could trust, so they voted for Des Dutfield.'

At the end of the strike, the Coal Board has moved rapidly to close down South Wales pits, with little organised opposition. Dutfield's election is seen as a rebuff for the policies of the South Wales leadership and a call for an active campaign against the Coal Board's policies.

Dutfield has also opposed the executive's support for Neil Kinnock, and their public criticism of Scargill's leadership of the national union. He now faces a formidable task — without the support of the majority of the executive — to rebuild the union's confidence to fight the Coal Board's closure policy.

Slip of the tongue or serpent's hiss?

KIM HOWELLS, research officer for the South Wales NUM and well-known advocate of the return to work, appeared on *Newsnight* recently along with a representative of the UDM. Asked about support for the breakaway in South Wales, Howells invited them to come to the coalfield and 'put their case'. Speaking at a Yorkshire rally the following day, Arthur Scargill had this to say in reply:

'The advent of breakaway non-unionism means that every pit in their area is more vulnerable than would have been the case with one single National Union of Mineworkers. I hope that was a slip of the tongue last night.'

'I want to say to my colleague from South Wales who made a suggestion that representatives of the breakaway could go into South Wales to argue their case: they should tell those people to keep out of the National Union of Mineworkers — keep out of our areas! We should treat them with the contempt that they've tried to treat this union with, in barring NUM officials from colliery welfare in Nottinghamshire and South Derbyshire.'

'It is time that this union once again went on the offensive. We can win all the membership back into the national union. We can save the pits that are being threatened. We can improve the wages and conditions of those we represent.'



South Wales miners on the march

The way forward in Notts

WARSOP MAIN colliery is a prime target for the UDM. Although the pit is managed by the Derbyshire NCB and organised by North Derbyshire NUM, geographically it lies in Notts. Miners there live in the same villages as those working in the Notts coalfield. Many have friends and relatives working in the North Notts 'superpits'.

During the strike Warsop Main was the target of a well-organised 'back to work' campaign. It turned a large majority on strike into a minority in less than a month.

Hardly surprising then, Warsop Main miners are acutely aware of the threat posed by the breakaway.

Dave Crowther, NUM branch secretary, explains that Roy Lynk has already made direct approaches to pit management, for permission to hold a UDM meeting in the canteen. This request was turned down, but that by no means implies any pro-UDM attitude on management's part.

They would be more than happy to cultivate the seeds of the UDM. Their problem, Dave says: 'they can't see any seeds at the moment, and they don't want to be caught planting any.'

The lack of UDM organisers inside pits like Warsop Main is certainly a major factor restricting their growth. Indeed, their only real foothold in the whole Derbyshire area is amongst ancillary workers, such as the plant drivers at Central Workshops. The problem is how to ensure this remains the case?

For Dave Crowther the

answer lies in fighting for a comprehensive series of measures designed to rebuild the NUM at branch level. This begins from showing the NUM

By Andy Buchanan

can still fight back effectively against the numerous day-to-day attacks by management.

In the course of these fights, the branch leadership is attempting to 'build bridges' with men who returned before the strike ended. Unlike Notts where many men worked throughout the dispute, a large majority at Warsop Main stayed loyal through to November, explains Dave. Many now want to redeem themselves in the eyes of the union.

Alongside these measures, an education programme is needed, aimed at involving men in the decision-making process of the union and explaining the broader issues. Many miners, including die-hard NUM loyalists, have little real understanding of the way the union works. So they don't see themselves playing an active role in its affairs.

As the collapse of the strike at pits like Warsop Main shows, it is no longer enough simply to rely on

the gut loyalty of the membership. To help remedy this, the union is working hard to get basic information into the hands of the membership, making full use of notice boards and short pamphlets.

Only time, however will bring results. And with the UDM's sights set on Warsop Main and nearby Shirebrook, that is in short supply.

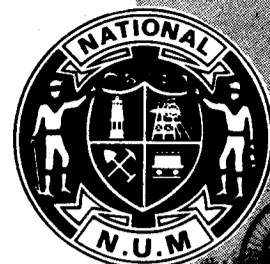
Dave believes that the NUM national executive decision to agree to the Board's imposition of a new production incentive scheme will help to buy that time. It will allow the NUM to take away the UDM's one real weapon: their ability to secure a pay increase, however minimal, at a time when the NUM's pay talks were deadlocked.

In the short term, the acceptance of incentives may create a better situation in which to consolidate the NUM and resist the pressure of the breakaway. However, as Dave Crowther points out, the longer term effects could be disastrous! The anti-Scargill forces inside the NUM will be strengthened, and the unity of the union at every level will be threatened.

At Warsop Main, the opening of a big new unit will dramatically increase differentials between face workers and others. Across the coalfields, pit will be set against pit, area against area.

The real threat posed by the UDM, does not lie simply in its attempts to 'poach' NUM members. The UDM's very existence disrupts the NUM and through the breakaway's direct links with the NCB, it appears to be able to deliver the goods in the short term.

The whole labour movement has a vital role to play in ensuring that the NUM is rebuilt in places like Warsop Main: by fighting inside the unions and the Labour Party to totally isolate the UDM.



Sacked miners still fighting

By Mick Boyle
Secretary, South Yorks Sacked Miners Association

TWENTY months after the beginning of the strike, 55 miners in South Yorkshire are still not back at work. Victimised by the Coal Board and the government, they are still fighting for their jobs.

Following the return to work, South Yorkshire Sacked Miners Association was formed to link all sacked miners and help the union fight for amnesty. As well as raising money for sacked miners families, we seek support for reinstatement throughout the whole labour and trade union movement.

The existence of the SYSMA has allowed miners to express solidarity with other working people engaged in struggle. We fund-raised at the Notting Hill Carnival with the support of the black community. A sacked miners social in Rotham took a collec-

tion for the victimised youth of Handsworth. And we have accepted an invitation from the Youth Association to visit Broadwater Farm.

Locally, we have visited the picket line at Sheffield Forgemasters, where steel workers have been on strike for eight weeks.

With Xmas coming, the plight of sacked miners and their families is most evident. To give these families a Xmas to remember, an appeal has been launched with the support of the union. Together with Silverwood branch of the NUM, Xmas parties have been arranged for the children. A special pantomime was held on 14 December. Called 'Margarella', the moles and the money tree, it is based on the miners' strike of 1984-5 and starred Scartha the red squirrel.

Despite the hardship, we've still got a job to do — and we will continue to do it until every sacked and jailed miner is reinstated and the battle against the Coal Board and the government is won.

Victory at Darfield Main

By Clive Turnbull

On Friday 6 December the National Coal Board announced that Darfield Main colliery near Barnsley would remain open.

Six hundred jobs have been under threat but the NCB have now said there is 20 years more life in the pit. The victory against closure has been due to a determined local campaign which won widespread support.

The day after the news, over 300 miners and supporters, including a delegation of Silent Night strikers, marched from the pit to a rally in Wombwell where Arthur Scargill explained the lessons of the Darfield victory. He said: 'Darfield Main has

fought a fantastic campaign. Miners at Darfield were determined they were not prepared to stand by and see their pit sacrificed on the altar of MacGregorism.'

'From the bottom of my heart, I only wish that other pits that have succumbed to the blackmail and intimidation tactics of the Board in recent weeks and months, would have conducted the same campaign.'

'I understand the pressures. I understand the problems. But I appeal to every single miner, his wife and family, as indeed I appealed at the time to Cortonwood: do the same as Darfield Main have done. You've sacrificed too much in 12 months to throw away at one single branch vote the future of your pit.'

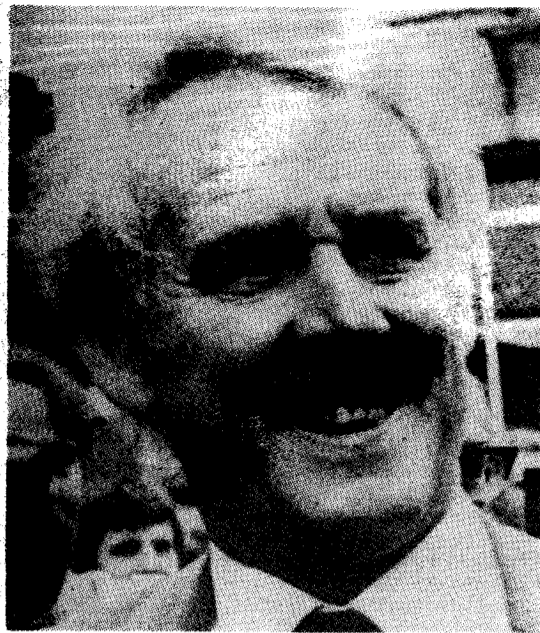
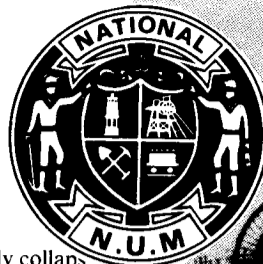
Miners Solidarity Fund

Money for sacked and jailed miners is still urgently needed. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'Miners Solidarity Fund', and sent to St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield. Or what about a standing order? The fund's bank account is with the Sheffield Coop Bank, Account No 30000009, bank sorting code 08-90-75.



Peter Heathfield: NUM general secretary:

Our fight goes on



AUTUMN 1985 HAS seen escalating attacks on the National Union of Mineworkers, general secretary PETER HEATHFIELD told CAROL TURNER. Reinstatement for victimised members remains an unresolved injustice. The Board is using the UDM to put the squeeze on wage negotiations. And purging contempt hasn't yet brought control of the purse-strings back where it belongs. But it isn't all doom and gloom. Going into 1986, the NUM leadership remains as determined as ever to protect its members from the Tory attacks.

IT HAS been a particularly difficult autumn for the NUM. Our inability to achieve reinstatement for the dismissed miners remains an injustice that we can't accept.

We are hoping to give a lift to that campaign early in the New Year, with a lobby of parliament and the introduction of an Amnesty Bill promoted by the Campaign group of MPs. It is a matter of drawing the public's attention once more to the inhuman way in which the National Coal Board have dealt with people dismissed. The overwhelming ma-

majority have committed no offence whatsoever: they are victims of MacGregor's attitude to organised labour.

The Coal Board, acting as recruiting agents for the UDM, are being particularly difficult on wages. They are dragging out negotiations as part of their strategy of persuading miners to move over to the UDM. Significantly, they are having little success.

There is a recognition that the promise of big pay packets is unlikely to be fulfilled, a recognition that the money lan-

MacGregor projected as being available can only be achieved from big productivity concessions. But the very fact that the UDM has accepted a wage settlement that is the lowest in the mining industry for 12 years places some constraints on us, which will be dealt with through normal negotiations.

Lynk and Prendergast talk about 40,000 members now, but a more accurate figure would be about 29,000. They aimed to have 60,000 members before the end of the year, so they've fallen far short of that particular objective.

In the post-1926 situation, there were Spencerite organisations in South Wales, Yorkshire, and other coalfields. It is the same now with the UDM. Sadly, I think that is inevitable in a post-strike situation. But the important thing to grasp is that the UDM is facing serious

problems.

It has virtually collapsed in Lancashire. While Agecroft voted by majority to breakaway, they have been prevented from doing so by the Lancashire rule book. There is some indication that a substantial number have rejoined the NUM. In Daw Mill colliery, Warwickshire, too, in recent weeks, there has been a move back to the NUM.

In South Derbyshire, two of the three pits have voted to remain loyal to the NUM. That is very encouraging. We have a substantial minority deeply involved in maintaining the National Union of Mineworkers in that area. We are still receiving forms from people who didn't vote for us in the South Derby ballot but are coming back to the NUM.

So, it's not all doom and gloom. They have certainly created problems for us, but I am convinced that during the course of the next six to eight months the UDM will find it can't maintain the sort of structure it planned. The fact that they have got a certificate of registration will not materially alter their situation.

They will remain unacceptable to the TUC and to the Labour Party. Their application for membership of the Miners International Federation has been turned down because they are not a bona fide trade union. They are still isolated and I don't see them making any inroads that will alter their status in the broader labour and trade union movement.

The Labour Party shouldn't forget that, in the year 1984, 5000 Nottinghamshire miners contracted out of the political levy. That indicates the kind of problem the labour and trade union movement had in the Nottinghamshire coalfield. I would hope that the Labour Party rigidly applies its constitution, which clearly indicates that an organisation claiming to be a trade union but not affiliated to the TUC is not entitled to affiliate to the party.

The breakaway has created more problems in the Notts coalfield by interfering with our ability to conduct the political levy ballot. UDM representatives have torn down notices, and harassed and intimidated loyalists who were conducting the ballot. It would be disastrous for the Labour Party to be seen to be making overtures to the leadership of this organisation.

We are in the throes of our political ballot at the moment. The signs are encouraging. There's been a high ballot at many collieries.

The attitude of some Labour Party leaders has been ambiguous. There can be no justification for comparisons with individual members of the party who have no opportunity to join an affiliated union, for example the Royal College of Nurses. I don't accept that sort of comparison.

The Labour Party

shouldn't be looking for let-outs. It shouldn't be looking to erode the authority of an organisation affiliated to the TUC and the Labour Party.

Our financial problems too remain considerable, despite the fact that the sequestration order has been removed now from the union. The purging of contempt doesn't assure the return of our funds. It is just one step in a whole process of seeking to reestablish control over our funds.

We still have to contend with the receiver, who is responsible in law for managing the financial affairs of the NUM. He is currently investigating our accounts with the cooperation of our finance officer, and remains unwilling to release monies for our normal expenditure. He has said he expects to be with us for weeks rather than months, but in my view that doesn't mean a great deal.

He has already instituted proceedings against the national officials, the former trustees, and is contemplating action to make us personally responsible for the cost incurred. That could inevitably lead to the three being made bankrupt — and the repercussions of that are pretty well known!

We are hoping to make an application to the courts, supported by the receiver, to obtain his removal, which would enable us to try to start running the NUM normally again, but the acute financial problems remain with us. For example, he is now paying the national staff, but is unwilling to pay expenses for staff or national officials who have to visit London for negotiations or discussions with trade unions or the TUC. Similarly, many NUM areas are not getting their full entitlement to cash.

It is taking a long, long time to unravel. In the circumstances we have done exceptionally well to maintain the service.

Throughout 1985 there has been a complete unwillingness within the broader trade union movement to take on board the kinds of problems we have to live with. Certainly there were sections of the movement which were very aware and helped us in many ways. But the broader movement seems oblivious to problems that sequestration and receivership imposed on us.

So we have had a lot of problems, a lot of difficulties. But the principal goal that motivated us 18 months ago is still highly relevant. We will continue our struggle.

Fighting back in Notts

EDUCATION, INFORMATION, and most of all creating political awareness. Those were the prime ingredients for rebuilding the national union in the Nottinghamshire coalfield according to the new Notts NUM vice president MICK MCGINTY. And the sooner other area leaderships get the same message across to their members, the better for all, he told HELEN ARTHUR.

IN NOTTS, the breakaway was like a cancer that was going to spread. But the NUM area leaderships — in South Wales, Yorkshire, Derby, and other places — didn't realise that.

Now they do, because it's happening in their own areas. And the sooner they get out to the pitheads and let their members know what's going on, the better.

The National Working Miners Committee is still strong. Supported by the NCB, it has its paid agents in every area of the Coal Board trying to recruit for the UDM.

That's why the NCB is prepared to hold back on national wage negotiations — asking Scargill to sign forms and make pledges. They hope that miners will join the UDM, which already has its wage rise. The NCB is doing this to break up the national union.

The NUM in Notts has to be a campaigning, political movement. At the same time, it's all about education and information. We have to make

sure that everything the national and area leadership does is sent out to branches.

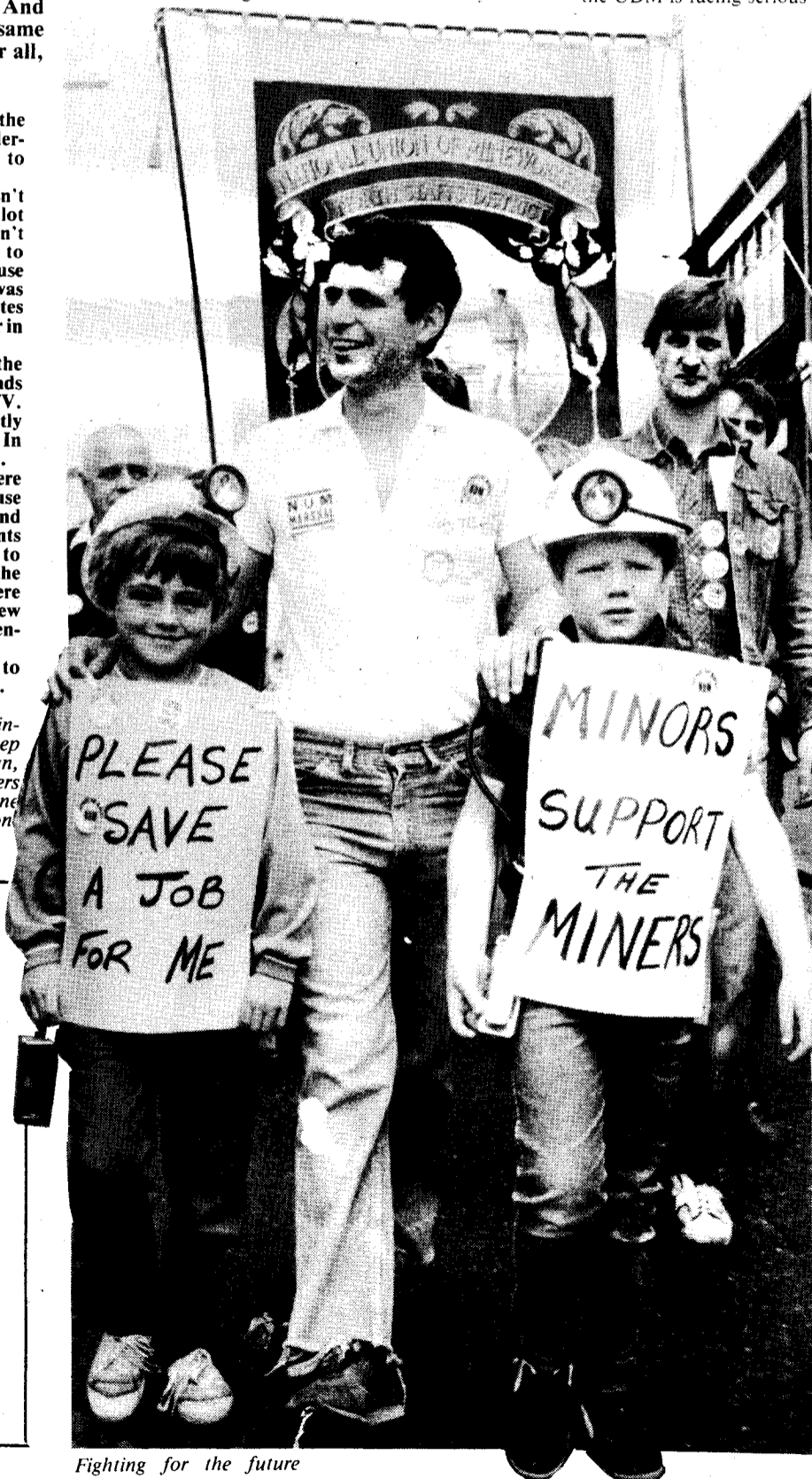
Before, that wasn't happening. There was a lot of apathy. People weren't interested in going to branch meetings, because all those meetings did was go through the minutes and talk about hot water in the pit showers.

At the start of the strike, you saw young lads from Yorkshire on TV. They could tell you exactly what was going on. In Notts it wasn't like that.

Young miners here were on strike because they were loyal and because their grandparents had taught them never to cross a picket line. But the miners in Yorkshire were politically aware and knew exactly what was happening.

That is what we have to build now here in Notts.

• Donations to and information about the Keep Notts National Campaign, contact: The Notts Miners Forum, c/o 1 Pine Avenue, New Ollerton, Nottinghamshire.



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KINNOCK'S WITCH

A THREAT TO EVERY SOCIALIST

AT THE BEGINNING of 1986, on 13 January and only four days after a council by-election in Old Swan, the Liverpool city councillors appear in court. They are faced with the prospect of surcharge, bankruptcy, suspension from office, and even jail. They are in this position because, for two years, they have stood firm against the attacks of the Thatcher government. Neil Kinnock's latest contribution to the campaign in support of Liverpool council has been to close down the District Labour Party and call an enquiry into its affairs. In the trial-by-press that has already taken place every attempt has been made — openly supported by the Labour Party leader — to establish that the party is involved in corrupt and anti-democratic practices. Kinnock has even made clear, in advance of the enquiry findings, that he wants expulsions. He says this escalation of the witch-hunt represents a necessary part of the strategy to win a Labour victory at the next general election. *Militant* is the most vulnerable target today. But every socialist in the party is under direct threat.



THE ENQUIRY into the affairs of the Liverpool District Labour Party represents a qualitative stepping up of the witch-hunt inside the Labour Party. But as far as Neil Kinnock's concerned, it is simply a further move in his strategy for Labour victory — one for which he has carefully planned.

During his period as leader Kinnock has made it clear that a Labour government led by him will not reverse the policies of the Thatcher government. Instead it will take up where Thatcher

leaves off. This has been the context of each major statement by the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership: on economic policy, trade union law, and the EEC.

By Carol Turner and Redmond O'Neill

In order to prepare the way for such a Labour government, and even the possible option of an agreement with the SDP-Liberal Alliance, it is necessary to try to silence the class struggle left. It means keeping the maximum distance between the party and any section of the working class or the

oppressed of this society who rise in struggle against the Thatcher government.

Whilst Kinnock has progressively managed either to drop or to side-step the most radical parts of Labour's programme, during his two years as leader he has failed to bring the left sufficiently under his control to guarantee the ability of a future Labour government to carry through the essentials of Tory policy dressed in Labour clothes. He remains unable to appeal to the ruling class as a safe, capitalist alternative to an electorally vulnerable Tory government. Meanwhile, the ferocity of Thatcher's attacks on the working class and its allies still fail to inflict decisive defeat or to rebuild popular support for the Tory Party.

The witch-hunt is directed precisely against those who fight to defend the working class against the Thatcher

government. Liverpool city council target not because of its mistakes, because it stood and fought when other councils ran away. The black section target because it stood by the communities of Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham against police repression. Arthur Scargill is a target because he led the greatest mass strike in British history. The Campaign group of MPs a target because it has used parliament as a platform to defined those who have fought. All of these are under attack because they provide an alternative and exposure of Kinnock's abysmal failure to fight the Tories.

The present enquiry and threatened expulsions are directed against *Militant* solely because they provide the most exposed target at this point. If they are not stopped, others will follow — as the dirty dealings in the Birmingham Sparkbrook constituency show.



Mr Larry Whitty,
General Secretary,
Labour Party,
150 Walworth Road,
London SE17.
2nd December, 1895

Dear Larry,

I see from the weekend press that it is alleged that the enquiry into the Liverpool District Labour Party has features which were not discussed at the NEC. I also see, according to some newspaper reports today, that you are alleged to have said that there must now be a blackout on news regarding the enquiry (possibly because the press reports were exaggerated). It is also suggested that hearings could be held in 'safe houses', that people giving evidence will be 'guaranteed anonymity', and that evidence could be 'forwarded to the police'. Also, we are informed that a 'watchdog' will be appointed to over look the future activities in the Liverpool Party. There are also suggestions that the party could be disbanded, that named people will be expelled and that the Constituency Labour Parties could also be disbanded. It is also alleged that the information gained by the press has come from people in the press office and senior officials of the party. (I have all the press reports and can supply them if required). It would seem to me that already the Labour Party members in Liverpool are being tried, found guilty and sentenced, even before the investigation has taken place. I am most concerned about these press reports, and would like to know since when has the Labour Party acted as police investigators? I have heard it said that some in the Party are being urged to become 'coppers narks'. The suggestion in itself is really worrying, and I would like a clear assurance from you that these stories are all untrue. I noted that whilst you said that there should be a blackout on news, there was no denial of the press reports. I hope they will be denied.

I would also like an assurance that the investigation will be conducted in the usual way in which party investigations are carried out. You will, I am sure, have been made aware, that when I was chairman of the organisation committee, I headed party enquiries and investigations in many parts of the country, and you will be aware of the fair and impartial way in which they were carried out. The idea of anonymous individuals giving evidence, or dossiers being drawn up which those referred to did not see, or have the opportunity to comment upon, was unthinkable when I was chairman. Can I be further assured that the investigation will be open and that evidence will be taken from anyone who is a party member in Liverpool, who wished to give it? That the EC of the Liverpool party will know precisely what they are supposed to have done wrong? What allegations are being made against them and individuals, so that they can prepare their replies to any 'charges' made? Also, that all delegates to the DLP be allowed to give evidence if they so desire.

I would also like to have terms of reference which, according to the newspapers, would seem to go far beyond what the NEC agreed. I would particularly like to draw your attention to the suggestions that council workers and others, not Labour Party members, could give evidence. Surely, you must realise that if that were allowed, anyone, including enemies of the Labour Party, could come forward and cause mischief, which could not possibly be allowed. It seems to me that the whole question of the investigation has now prejudged the future of the Labour Party in Liverpool and is already doing untold harm, both locally and nationally. We in the Liverpool Labour Party have long known that the government, for political reasons, has virtually written Liverpool off, but we did not expect such views to permeate the thinking of some people in the Labour Party. Again, I wish to say that I believe the whole thing is doing untold harm to the party and hope that if it cannot now be called off, then at least the investigation must be conducted in a way that is free from the hysterical remarks and suggestions that have been given to newspaper correspondents. I would be grateful for an early reply.

Yours fraternally,
Eric S. Heffer,
MP for Walton

PS: In view of the press reports over the weekend I have given a copy of this letter to the press.

In South Wales ...

RIGHT wingers in South Wales too are conducting a systematic witch-hunt against socialists in the Labour Party. Meetings of the Wales Labour Party executive have been suspended after TGWU boss George Wright proposed a motion refusing to sit down with elected supporters of the *Militant* tendency.

The move to force the pace of the witch-hunt appears to have succeeded so far. An NEC enquiry into the membership of Wales executive committee members Chris Peace and Tony Wedlake is underway. Meanwhile, in Callaghan's consti-

tuency of Cardiff South the local executive is recommending the expulsion of two more *Militant* supporters: Andrew Price, and Diane Mitchell who is the treasurer of Wales Labour students. There are expulsion moves in a number of other constituencies, including Ogwr and Taff Ely.

Threats of legal action against the Labour Party have been made. But these are not the way to stop the witch-hunt. A campaign has been set up, but no action has been organised yet. If the witch-hunt is to be halted an open, active campaign is urgently needed.



No square deal for the inner cities

WITCH-HUNT

Kinnock claims all this is necessary to win the next election. The opposite is true. He has spent the nine months since the end of the miners strike frittering away the enormous damage inflicted on the Tory Party by the 12 month struggle of the mining communities. Evidently the new witch-hunt will weaken the fight to remove the Thatcher government and replace it by a Labour government.

It will give a green light to the right wing mafias in control of many parties and councils to silence political opposition to their corrupt practices by expulsions. That is what is happening in Hattersley's Birmingham constituency. It was the way the party operated in the 1950s and '60s. That is what Kinnock's new witch-hunt will legitimise. witch-hunt will legitimise.

Any Labour Party member who gives the slightest support to the witch-hunt against *Militant* is condoning the use of bureaucratic repression against political differences in the party. The attack on Liverpool is an attack on the democratic rights of every member of the labour movement. It should be treated as such.

TONY BENN

NO CITY and no people have suffered so much under capitalism as Liverpool have suffered. And never have I known such leadership in Liverpool as we have now. I'm proud to come here in support of the councillors in their struggle to protect the people of the city against the Tories, and now alas against the attempts to suspend the District Labour Party.

From this platform I would like to appeal to the whole labour movement to support the Liverpool councillors who are defending the people of this city from market forces and government cuts, and who — following conference policies — have prevented the massive rate rises and redundancies which the government hope to impose. Those councillors are threatened with surcharge, with bankruptcy, and with disqualification. Now we are told they are possibly threatened with expulsion as well. I very much hope that constituency parties and trade unions throughout the country will support the Liverpool councillors and the Liverpool party, support them with money and financial backing as they approach their appearance in court on 13 January.

I haven't come here to tell Liverpool how it should run its affairs. Over the last few years I've heard all our front-bench spokespeople saying in parliament 'don't interfere with local democracy'. But when it comes to the internal affairs of the party, I find the national executive taking a totally contrary view. There may have been mistakes made in Liverpool, I don't know. If so, I have made many myself. But any mistakes that are made in the labour movement are to be dealt with by discussion *within* the labour movement, in the area where the decisions are taken. They should not be used as an excuse for suspending the democracy of the party.

Spread

We have a duty to analyse why it is that the government should be attacking this city. And the answer is that there is a deep crisis in the capitalist system in Britain. What's happened in Liverpool is now beginning to spread to Sheffield. We can see the first signs of it in Chesterfield. It has long been a feature of the inner areas of London.

The boom days are over, the days when Macmillan could say 'you've never had it so good'. Unemployment is a tool of government policy: to lower wages, to break the unions, to justify the cuts in local government, and of course to justify the attacks upon civil liberties.

We know too the role of the media in the attack. Every BBC figure is

The Labour Coordinating Committee and *Tribune* have covered up for Kinnock's witch-hunt by supporting the enquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party. To support the enquiry but oppose expulsions is not a viable position.

After Kinnock's speech to Labour Party conference, the LCC told us that the 'blunt choice' was between Kinnock or *Militant*. 'Those who decide to fight Kinnock,' we were told, 'are saying they don't care about winning the next election; they are opting for self-indulgence — the kind of self-indulgence which would be a real betrayal of the working class people we have the privilege and the duty to represent; they will also be quite cynically seeking to recruit for their own sectarian purposes rather than build the party'. Mr Kinnock couldn't have put it better himself.

When he turned his words against Liverpool into action it was hardly surprising that the Meachers, Sawyers, and Blunketts were there to support him. Indeed, at the national executive meeting it was Tom Sawyer who moved the addendum suspending Liverpool

District Labour Party and calling for an enquiry, and Kinnock who seconded it.

In a subsequent editorial, 'Liverpool: finding a way through the mess', *Tribune* defended this decision while counselling the leadership that expulsions: 'would be inappropriate at this stage, not to mention counter-productive in terms of rallying support to people whose actions have shown that they do not deserve it.' And it was local LCC member Roger Murray who spearheaded the move to expel Khan and Scally in Birmingham Sparkbrook.

The nub of the matter came out in a statement drawn up by the LCC executive for their recent annual meeting. They wrote: 'We share Neil Kinnock's desire to isolate the ultra-left and to broaden Labour's appeal but we remain critical of the leadership's attitude to wider struggles and sceptical of the radical content of party policy.' For Kinnock, the issue of broadening Labour's appeal is first of all one of abandoning support for struggles like the miners and Liverpool council. The witch-hunt is one step towards that goal.

The enquiry is a fraud. Kinnock's

statements to the press have subjected the Liverpool council to trial by Fleet Street. The Labour Party leader promised expulsions in advance.

The LCC and *Tribune*'s line of support for the enquiry but opposition to expulsions is of the same value as their 'support Kinnock and the miners' line at the last party conference. When it comes to the crunch and Kinnock forces them to choose, the LCC and *Tribune* are on the wrong side.

It is a mistake for those who have good cause to reject *Militant*'s politics — like the failure of Liverpool council to fight racism — to give evidence to the enquiry. Such an enquiry is not directed at *Militant*'s adaptations to racism or its pro-imperialist politics. It is directed against Liverpool city council's defiance of the Tory government. A successful attack on Liverpool by Kinnock would help him and Hattersley prosecute their attacks on black sections and on the fight for women's representation in the Labour Party.

These are the reasons why this, and every other witch-hunt, must be implacably opposed by every single socialist.

'THE FUTURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY IS AT STAKE

vetted by MI5. The object of the media today is to excommunicate socialism so that it is no longer a legitimate stream of thought in our society. But if the press came here to dance on our grave, we've got news for them: there hasn't been a funeral.

I have tried briefly to summarise what is the policy of the government and why. Now let me turn to what is the strategy of the present national executive committee of the Labour Party — that has to be said too. It is a determined attempt to move to the centre, a shift of power to the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The executive is being used not to produce the policy like we had in Labour Programmes 1973, '76 and '82, but as a disciplinary force and to set conference decisions aside. Were those policies to be implemented we should have been sending a note of congratulation to the Liverpool council. At the Bournemouth conference, despite the media hype, a resolution was passed committing the party to compensate councillors who might be fined as a result of what they do.

What is at stake now is not the future of the Liverpool District Labour Party, but the future of the Labour Party itself, its historic role. To read the papers you'd think that Leon Trotsky (who I've read about, being a student of socialist history) when he was approaching the Winter Palace with a bayonet leading the Red Army, was not

Death

really worried about the czar — he was planning the strategy of the Liverpool council some 40 years after this death.

If you knock at a pensioner's house and say: 'We're from the Labour Party. Are you keen on a better pension? Would you like a telephone? Would you like free fuel? Would you like a free bus service? Do you think perhaps we could hasten the hip operation you're waiting for?' They would say: 'Yes, of course.' But if you say you're Trotskyite, they shut the door and have a cup of Ovaltine to recover from the shock of what has been said to them.

The strategy which we have observed over the last two years has been designed to distance the executive from those who have fought to distance them from the miners, from Liverpool, from the black community — distance them from the left. The terrible danger is that by doing this, they confirm by public attacks the analysis of Teebor and Thatcher. To turn on the radio and hear Norman Tebbit praising the national executive of the Labour Party should tell us all we need to know about what is happening.

How should we respond? Not by



sectarianism, because this is not a sectarian movement; not by leaving the party, because it belongs to us; not by splitting the party, because unity is strength; not by personalising it, because our whole objection is that when they want to attack us they pick a personality and try to destroy that personality. Derek Hatton gave some examples of how they are doing this to him. They think if they can destroy Derek Hatton they can destroy Liverpool. They thought if they could destroy Arthur they could destroy the miners.

Our answer is to reestablish within the labour movement the traditions of socialism that brought it into being and gave it the greatest gains it had. Our business is to restate the demands that working people make: the right to work, the right to good education throughout life, the right to proper health care free at the point of need, the right to a good home, the right to digni-

ty in retirement, the right to peace. That is our job: to restate those demands, and go on making them until they're met.

Our job is to rediscover solidarity, to rediscover internationalism. The struggle we are waging in Liverpool is exactly the same struggle as the miners, exactly the same struggle as the people of South Africa, exactly the same struggle as the people of Nicaragua and Turkey. The internationalism of capital, which would deny Liverpool the resources to earn a living, has got to be replaced by the internationalism of labour.

We are going through very hard times at the moment. But having said all this, I believe the labour and socialist movement in Britain today is far stronger than at any time in my life. Stronger because of people like the Liverpool councillors, the miners, and the black communities who stood up for their rights.

If we are a little bunch of loonie lefts or whatever they call us, why does the media spend seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, trying to destroy us? Why is the government giving the police CS gas and riot weapons? It is because they know what we sometimes forget: that the ideas we advocate are stronger and more directly appealing to the British people than any which come from the City of London, the present cabinet, the SDP, or any other bunch of Tories.

What we are proving here in this city, and what I am proud to come to say to you, is that if we stick by one another, if our objectives are honest and straight-forward (as they are), if the courage and commitment is there, if our unity can be sustained — no power on earth can stop us from succeeding.

● This is an edited version of a speech made by Tony Benn to the Liverpool Labour Parties in that city on Friday 6 December.



In Birmingham ...

RIGHT wingers in Roy Hattersley's Birmingham Sparkbrook constituency took a further step towards stamping out all opposition recently. A special meeting of the general management committee on Tuesday 10 December voted 25:12 to expel county councillor Mohammed Rafique.

Ostensibly his crime was publicly to claim that a selection meeting for the May 1986 district council elections had been gerrymandered. He says that Labour Party members who intended to vote for him were physically excluded from the room.

This is not a simple extension of the expulsions of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. Until recently, Rafique was part of the network of 'godfathers' committed to maintaining Roy Hattersley's position as Sparkbrook's MP.

An opponent of black sections, Rafique boasted of recruiting Pakistanis to the party to shore up the right wing votes. Rewarded with a seat on the county council, which is faced with abolition next year, he decided to stand against another Hattersley supporter, Councillor John O'Keefe.

After his defeat at the selection meeting, Rafique began making loud noises about black representation and the need to review his position on black sections. These comments eventually sealed his fate. But Rafique did not go quietly.

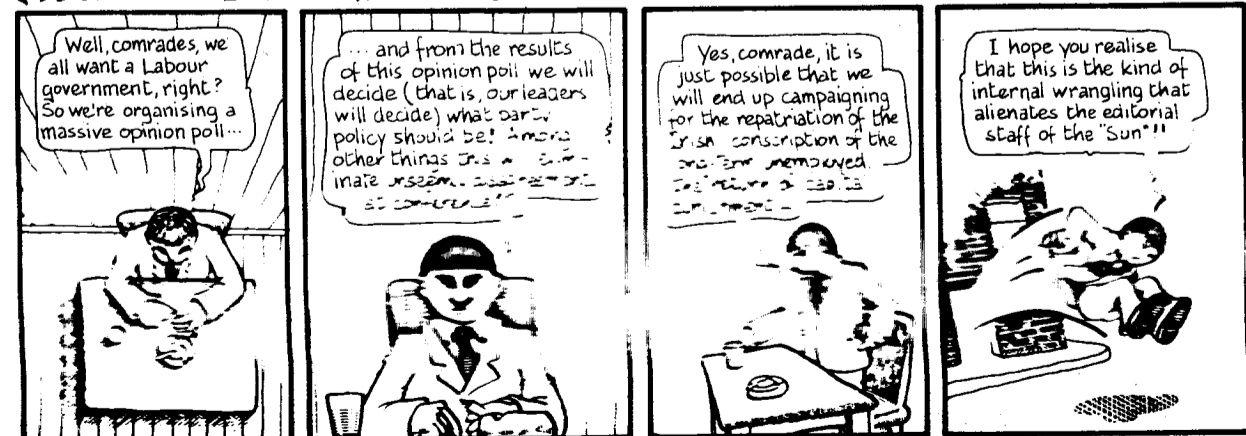
Up to a 100 party members from Sparkbrook and other Birmingham constituencies demonstrated outside the special meeting which expelled him. Chants of 'witch-hunt out' and 'racists out' greeted delegates as they arrived. Placards demanding the reinstatement of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan expelled two weeks previously were also in evidence.

Nor will the matter rest there. There is growing support for a broad-based campaign for the reinstatement of Khan and Scally. A successful meeting to discuss their expulsions was held at the beginning of December, and further activity is planned in the new year.

Commenting on Khan and Scally's expulsions, Anne Pettifor of the Labour Party Women's Action Committee said: 'It should not be surprising that the right wing of the party are using the current talk of expulsions coming from the leadership as a bandwagon for attacking and expelling comrades with whom they disagree politically. That is why expulsions and witch-hunts are so dangerous.'

Tribune has carried an article opposing the expulsion of Khan and Scally from the Sparkbrook party, and a resolution will be considered at the January meeting of the LCC executive, calling on Sparkbrook to rescind the expulsions and Labour's national executive to confirm this action. But will it pass? The unsavoury fact is that the LCC and *Tribune* have made no small contribution to creating the condition in the party whereby socialists face expulsion.

A PIECE of the ACTION



IRELAND UNFREE



MacBride slams Dublin deal

VETERAN PEACE campaigner, Sean MacBride, in attacking the Hillsborough Castle accord provided an auspicious start to the Labour Committee on Ireland's national campaign against the deal at GLC County Hall on 11 December. Speaking for the first time alongside the Campaign group, MacBride accused the Dublin coalition government of departing from the Irish constitution in order to ingratiate themselves with aggressive foreign policies of the United States and Britain.

The accord would not lead to peace he said, far from it. The result of the deal will be a prolongation of the current crisis and more attacks on civil liberties. Speaking as the president of Irish CND, MacBride drew attention to the involvement of the United States in undermining Irish neutrality and warned of the dangers of the registration of partition at the United Nations.

The London *Evening Standard*, renowned for its anti-Irish racism, described 82 year old MacBride as an 'old ghoul' who had 'spent a lifetime stirring up trouble around the world'. As Sean is the only person ever to have been awarded both the Lenin and Nobel prizes for his work as United Nations commissioner for Namibia, the *Standard* continued: 'Not content with fermenting trouble in the dark continent (sic), MacBride flew in from his Dublin home as the guest of GLC leader Ken Livingstone and the Labour Committee on Ireland to denounce last month's Anglo Irish accords'.

Campaign group MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Joan Maynard, who chaired the meeting, described the accords as an attempt to undermine the electoral support of the republican movement and shared Sinn Fein Councillor Mitchell McLoughlin's view that the policies of the Labour Party were not being represented by the majority of the PLP who supported the deal. The sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment will remain intact. Nothing will be done to stop the army's shoot-to-kill policies, deaths from plastic bullets, or strip-searching of Irish women prisoners which is now being carried out in Brixton prison as well as Armagh.

Miriam James and Sheffield Councillor Sheena Clarke who spoke for the LCI, outlined plans for the national campaign to be launched and proposed meetings on the accord to be organised in the new year all over the country.

LCI launches campaign against the accord

THE *DAILY MIRROR* exposed the accord as 'empty promises'. No other section of the national press has even tried to explain the reality of the accord or Labour's policies. In launching a national campaign against the deal, the Labour Committee on Ireland is appealing for your help. Here's what you can do:

- ★ Send a resolution from your Labour Party, trade union or YS branch, black section or women's section to the national executive committee working party on Ireland asking them to implement Labour's policy by opposing the accord.

- ★ Lobby your own MP and ask them to add their name to the list of MPs opposing the accord.

- ★ Organise a meeting in your area explaining what the accord is about. LCI can supply speakers.

- ★ Affiliate your organisation to the Labour Committee on Ireland/Labour Women for Ireland and join the campaign against the deal.

- ★ Help to publicise and promote the 2 February national demonstration for withdrawal from Ireland and Irish unity which is backed by the LCI/LWI and the Campaign group of MPs.

- Write for further information to: Labour and Ireland, c/o LCE BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

"A lesson in imperialism"

THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD is an agreement to do what the British decide, said BERNADETTE McALISKEY to a packed meeting of the Midlands Labour Committee on Ireland on Wednesday 5 December. We print extracts from her rousing speech.

To my mind the Anglo-Irish Accord is the most frightening agreement that has come before us to date.

I don't think you can look at it without the parties who made it. You know Maggie Thatcher as well as I do. But people in this country do not know Garret FitzGerald, or Fine Gael.

Apart from the Irish question in the North, Garret FitzGerald and his government represent an attitude to the working class which exactly mirrors that of the British Conservative Party.

Rules

He rules by coalition with Ireland's small Labour Party. When you try to figure that one out, you face the reality of how the North distorts all of Irish life.

It goes back to the last time there was a party in which the working class in Ireland had coherent representation, led by Sean MacBride. It went into coalition with Fine Gael because, said MacBride, he would sit in coalition with the devil to get rid of De Valera. From that time on the hypocrisy of one section of the national bourgeoisie in the South was used to distort Southern Labour's position on the rights of the working class people of the North.

Garret FitzGerald's party, for all its pink rhetoric on divorce and contraception — which it hasn't the guts to put before the public — and for all its loose talk about liberalism — which it never nailed to the floor in one concrete liberal action — is a party which we in Ireland know as a party of the Blueshirts. Under the blessing of the catholic hierarchy in Ireland in 1930, it assembled its party members, and through its party branches recruited and organised to fight for Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

Party

That is the party of Garret FitzGerald.

Let's deal with the treaty now. A lot of good people in the Labour Party still suffer from the inability to start with the Irish question at the beginning. They still want to come in at page 999 and say the rest of it has no bearing on the situation.

Our entire lives are distorted and destroyed, living with the last effects, in the last part of the twentieth century, of British imperialist policy from the last century until today. Sooner or later the British Labour Party is going to have to take a hard lesson in British imperialism, the better to understand the problems of Ireland, the problems of racism and the inability of British working class people to deal with that question.

We can't get it into the minds of the British people that there's no religious

conflict in Northern Ireland. We can't get it into the minds of the British people that up until they introduced this agreement there was no question of civil war in the North of Ireland. We can't get it into the minds of the British people that there are people dying with plastic bullets.

The people of this country are so ignorant about plastic bullets they don't even know how to stop them being introduced in their own country. At the moment there are only two countries in the world that are using plastic bullets — Northern Ireland and South Africa.

Now we can begin to look at what this agreement actually is. It came out of the Forum. The Forum included the political parties from the South of Ireland and the Social Democratic and Labour Party of the North.

Sinn Fein was specifically excluded because it would not make a statement publicly renouncing violence. The Northern loyalists were invited without any prerequisites that they publicly renounce violence. They refused to go.

Prime

The four parties met and they looked at an option which was their prime option: how best the British could begin to discuss withdrawal from Ireland and the creation of independence and unity. Mrs Thatcher said: 'No, no, no.' And Garret FitzGerald said: 'Yes, ma'am. Any way you like it.'

Bit by bit they went through it, until the only option left was how the Irish government could better assist the British government in securing stability in the North. And we got, in terms of political realities, nothing more than a table and two chairs in the heart of Belfast.

None of those chairs are for the people who live there. There is one for the British Conservatives. There is one for the Southern conservatives. And so long as they both agree, then they will do what they agree to do. And if they don't agree, they'll do what the British want done.

I have an agreement like that with my children. It still works on my six-year old. But I'm afraid my ten-year-old and fourteen-year-old have long since outgrown it.

We don't know how it will work out. The loyalists may well be faced down. However, though I know Tom King is stupid, but he's not that stupid. Everybody gets to shove shit, unless you're the prime minister. And poor old Tom got to shove like the rest of them. He was the stooge that had to stand up and say something that he was also going to stand up and retract, just to make them



Women protest outside Armagh prison

feel a wee bit better in Belfast.

That treaty is all about police. All about improving intelligence. All about improving cooperation. All about whatever happens, it will be the British way at the end.

Yet the question nobody's asked is why, between here and heaven, are the American government paying \$1 billion for something that's none of their business?

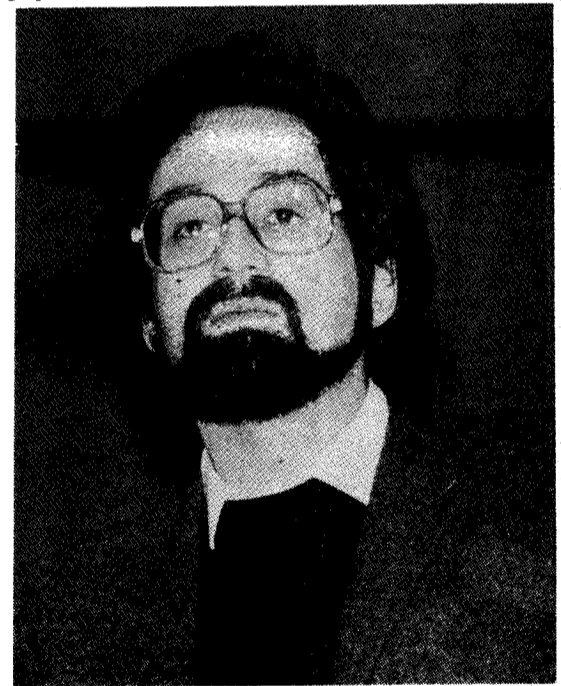
I can think of a number of reasons. I think that, one, Northern Ireland is the best training ground any government has ever seen for how to control the people when the people get out of hand.

But it goes deeper than that. The only reason that makes sense to me that the American government — which couldn't defend the right of people on the plastic bullets question, the supergrass question, extradition, anything, because it was an internal British affair — are giving them \$1 billion — is because Ireland is a neutral country.

Past

Back to Garret FitzGerald. For the past three years, he has tried unsuccessfully to raise the question of NATO membership and has been shot down as soon as he opened his mouth. It's a damn sight easier talking about NATO and nuclear bases in Southern Ireland with a billion dollars behind you.

That actually is what frightens me most about the Anglo-Irish agreement, because repression we can live with, and repression we've lived with before. But before we even establish our right to freedom, Ireland has already been sold to America, and NATO, and a nuclear arms race we want no part of.



Harry Cohen, MP for Leyton

Why I voted no

THE Anglo-Irish agreement does nothing to tackle the real problems of Ireland.

It is more about bolstering Thatcher's and FitzGerald's sagging prestige, and is an expression of their fear of the large

By Harry Cohen MP

and solid electoral strength for Sinn Fein in the catholic community.

The military oppression will without doubt continue and intensify during the period of the agreement and after its inevitable failure. The agreement is not going to reduce, and certainly will not end, the violence.

That must be a principal aim of any political settlement; together with

the unification of Ireland and withdrawal of the British troops. Indeed, in the long-term the cessation of the violence cannot be achieved without the other two.

Mrs Thatcher has made clear that the agreement is a reinforcement of partition. I believe her. She stated in the Commons:

'The agreement does not affect the status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. It does not set us on some imagined slippery slope to Irish unity, and it is nonsense to claim that it might.'

The agreement therefore institutionalises the border and the army's presence — and, through this, repression and more violence.

Cosatu throws down the gauntlet



Cartoon: DRAWING THE LINE, AAM

THE Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was formed this month from a merger of unions representing half a million workers.

It reached agreement on five working principles: non-racialism, worker control, merger into industrial unions, national cooperation and representation on the basis of paid-up membership.

It has affiliated to the United Democratic Front and announced at its founding meeting that it would start a pass-banning campaign backed by strike action unless the Pass Laws were abolished within six months. Its formation is obviously one of the most decisive steps forward taken by South African workers since the earliest days of the trade union movement.

Not only is it the largest union federation ever formed in the country, but in affiliating to the UDF, COSATU has made a clear statement that from now on the trade unions intend to lead a political, and not just an economic struggle. This makes it possible in turn for South Africa's working class, as an organised force, to place itself in the leadership of the liberation struggle.

Goldminer Elijah Barayi, its president and a former ANC activist, announced at its founding rally that: 'When COSATU begins to govern South Africa, its first action will be to nationalise the mines.'

Two federations have remained outside COSATU: the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and the Azanian Congress of Trade Unions (AZACTU). But they have also issued calls threatening strike action unless the state of emergency is lifted.

At a press conference where the call was issued, AZACTU's general secretary Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, said: 'We are not joining COSATU. We are prepared to fight against the oppression of the majority and we need to galvanise ourselves on a broader political philosophy of self-reliance and self-determination.'

'Our belief is that a federation should unite the majority of organised blacks in our country, expressing the true aspirations of black workers and not accommodating the aspirations of a minority.'



and democratic South Africa.

The immediate concern of the founding conference of COSATU is to:

- find ways and means of putting an end to the State of Emergency;
- compel the regime to lift the censorship on reporting;
- force the withdrawal of racist police and army troops from the townships;
- undertake the task of ensuring the destruction of the apartheid regime without delay.

Our oppressed people, men and women are conducting a brave and determined struggle against white supremacy, racial tyranny, discrimination, capitalist exploitation and national oppression. The Federation in unison with the national liberation movement and its allies is called upon to perform a historic task by calling on its members and the organised workers to participate fully in the struggle for liberation, social justice and equality.

All power to the South African revolution! Long live the Congress of South African Trade Unions! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Comrade Steven Dlamini, President, South African Congress of Trade Unions

28th November 1985

SACTU welcomes new Union

SACTU welcomes the formation of a new South African trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). No better time could be found to cement the ties of working class unity achieved through struggle against apartheid and the class enemy. The tide of revolt is rising. The racists are divided and confused. South Africa's future lies in the hands of its workers. Only they, together with progressive people of all races, can liberate us from racial hatred, inequality, class exploitation and national oppression.

Our revolution requires a united and strong trade union movement, determined to satisfy demands for higher wages, good working conditions, removal of colour bars, equal opportunities to work and the achievement of complete emancipation. The new federation, COSATU, can and will fulfil these aims. It must become a truly democratic centre of organised activity for all workers who are determined to liberate our country from its existing oppressive and exploitative social system.

All democratic unions, including those that have rejected TUCSA's policy of collaboration, should take part in the creation of the COSATU with the following aims:

- To organise workers in all areas and occupations into industrial unions, one for each industry and division of labour.
- Lead a campaign for improved wages, conditions of work, health and safety.
- Support the struggle against victimisation, detention, torture and murder of trade union activists and militant fighters for freedom.
- Plan and carry out a struggle against pass laws and other forms of discrimination.
- Demand equal work opportunities, the removal of discriminatory labour laws and all apartheid measures.
- Demand the right to vote in a united, undivided

Opinion: The black consciousness movement in South Africa

WHAT IS happening in the black communities, not just in Britain but in Azania, is truly significant for the whole of the working class world-wide. That is why we in black sections are concerned to build the international links to bring together the black family.

Black sections, like the black consciousness movement, know no holy cows. Yes we support the struggle of the ANC, but we will not be bullied, hectorated or cajoled into backing just one sole liberation organisation in Azania.



By Marc Wadsworth
Vice Chair, Black Section National Committee (personal capacity)

Those people in the Anti Apartheid Movement involved in their organisation must also learn to talk with all black freedom fighters. They must join in the struggle against racism here in Britain and not have a vision of things happening thousands of miles away without having due regard for black struggle here in our midst.

Sections of their movement are already doing that. They deserve to be supported. But they're being attacked by reactionary big white chiefs as we in the black section have been.

It is interesting to note that attacks on the black consciousness movement, like those sometimes made on the black sections, are inspired by white people because they are excluded. Often they focus on claims that our leadership is in the hands of the black petty bourgeoisie.

The question I would put to those people is this: do we invalidate the struggle of black people in India or Ghana because Gandhi and Nkrumah were lawyers? Of course we don't. What matters is whose class interests they were fighting for.

The same goes for us: whose class interests are we fighting for and how accountable are we going to be to the rest of the labour movement? These people who talk about careerism never address the question of accountability.

SOLIDARITY

In South Africa

Twelve leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) were cleared on 10 December after trumped-up charges against them collapsed. But the state is still pursuing charges against four other union leaders arrested with them in May. Thozamile Gaheta, Sisa Njikelane, Sam Kikene and Isaac Ngcobo are all leaders of the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) which is affiliated to the UDF and has joined in the recently established 'super-union' COSATU. They come up for trial in February. The South African Congress of Trade Unions has denounced this intimidation of the trade union movement and calls for protests to be sent to the South African government, and messages of support to: SAAWU: Room 1B, 3rd Floor, Tudor mansions, 78 Troy Street, Johannesburg, South Africa 2001.

Speculation is growing that Pretoria is thinking of releasing Nelson Mandela. They may use his illness as grounds. 'If Mandela were to die in prison, his death would unleash a degree of violent protest that would make the past year's townships mayhem look tame by comparison,' said the South African daily *Financial Mail* two weeks ago. But the government may try to deport him, confine him to his 'homeland', or place him under house arrest. 'The government will be asking for trouble if it tries to dump him there against his will,' said Winnie Mandela.

In the USA

Two thousand nine hundred people have been arrested in the USA in the last year during the daily protests outside the South African embassy. A third US county authority, Prince George's County, has voted unanimously to sever links with all businesses and banks dealing with South Africa. It rejected the Sullivan Code, which is supposed to govern US companies operating in South Africa, as 'archaic'.

In France

The French government has banned coal imports from South Africa and will not renew a three million ton contract coming up at the end of this year. Renault is ceasing its car assembly operations at the end of this year too. The cars are built in British Leyland's Cape Town plant which will leave BL stuck with an unused plant. Renault is the third major car manufacturer to pull out.

In Scandinavia

The Danish trade union federation is now in the third week of an 11-week boycott of all imports from and exports to South Africa. The action involves more than 5000 transport, clerical and office workers as well as metal, airport, hotel and restaurant staff. Norwegian telecommunications workers are currently discussing cutting telephone links with the country and are to appeal for a world-wide communications boycott.

Other Books

The following selection of books on South Africa is available by post from Other Books:

Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, Jack and Ray Simons, International Defence and Aid Fund, 702pp, £5.00 plus £1.33 postage.

Part of My Soul Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 159pp, £2.95 plus 25p postage.

To honour women's day: profiles of leading women in the South African and Namibian liberation struggles, IDAF, 56pp, £1.00 plus 22p postage.

Nelson Mandela: I am prepared to die, IDAF, 48pp, 50p plus 18p postage.

Nelson Mandela: The struggle is my life, IDAF, 208pp, £1.85 plus 46p postage.

Make cheques or postal orders payable to IMRS. Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Open letter from the Labour Party black section to the Militant

DEAR COMRADES,

We have placed on record our total opposition to the witch-hunts and purges launched by Labour's national leadership against socialists who support the *Militant* newspaper and are members of Liverpool District Labour Party. It is our view you will wish to join us in also opposing the recent expulsions from the party of two black section supporters, Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. We have consistently stood up against similar tactics used by right wingers to witch-hunt *Militant* supporters.

The attack on members of both our groups is the thin edge of the wedge — reactionary forces in the party, sheltering behind the banner of realignment, are growing ever bolder. They must be routed in the interests of the working class whom they are seeking to betray.

All socialists must realise, at this crucial time, that we will only win the battle through unity. We, in the black sections, accept your right to organise autonomously as supporters of *Militant* — you must now cease siding with the right wing on the question of black self-organisation within the Labour Party. Apart from anything else, your opposition to black sections is totally inconsistent as you have your own black/Asian caucus.

At a time when we as socialists need maximum solidarity from all sections of the community, *Militant's* long term interests in Liverpool would be best served by repairing the damage done to the black community by your white worker-favouring 'class reductionist' policies. Your most divisive stand to date has been the appointment of Sampson Bond — a man totally opposed to positive discrimination — to the post of principal race relations officer at city hall.

This decision was a slap in the face to a community which had stood four square behind the ruling Liverpool Labour Party's defence of jobs and services in the face of vicious attacks by the Tory government. Community groups like the black caucus, fully recognised by the Labour administration until they opposed the appointment, were ruthlessly denounced and purged from positions where they could influence council policy. This left the black community, who are eight per cent of the city's population and the most deprived, without a strong voice in local government. After all, despite the fact that black people have been settled in Liverpool for more than 200 years, there is not a single black city councillor.

Furthermore, despite the boasts of your administration, the lot of black people in Liverpool is no better now than it was under the Liberals. For instance, less than one per cent of the council workforce is black. Of almost 3,000 poor people receiving meals on wheels only nine are black. Liverpool Labour Party's bitter opposition to positive discrimination led to you forcing the abandonment of the River Avon Street sheltered housing plan — mainly for the black elderly — despite an offer by the government to fund 75 per cent of the scheme.

A report this year by the Commission for Racial Equality found that Liverpool's council housing provision was pitted with examples of racial inequality. Among the observations was that black people in the south of the city were virtually excluded from getting council homes outside the ghetto.

The CRE recommended the immediate implementation of 'ethnic record-keeping' as a means of identifying areas of black need and monitoring progress. But *Militant* supporters have consistently opposed this despite the acceptance of ethnic monitoring by the Trades Union Congress, civil service and most Labour local authorities, as a vital component of any real equal opportunities policy.

Many black people, inside and outside Liverpool, can see that *Militant* has an appalling record on race. It is rivalled only by that of the Labour Party when in government. If your tendency cares about winning the sympathy of an important section of socialists then you will use your influence positively in future to convince your critics your aim is not to remove autonomy among black people and other oppressed groups.

There is a view you wish to replace our absolute and non-negotiable right to self-determination and self-organisation with subjugation to the perspectives of solely your tendency in the Labour Party. We trust you will respect a demand which is central to the continued existence in the Labour Party of both our groups: unity through autonomy.

Labour Party Black Sections National Committee, 39 Chippenham Road, London W9

Coventry's new Asian Labour Alliance formed

A NEW organisation, the Coventry Asian Labour Alliance (CALA), held its first public meeting at the end of November. RAY MALHOTRA, who helped set it up, told BERNIE KAVANAGH why it was formed.

IN Coventry the Asian community needed to be politically organised and motivated. Right wingers in the community work hand-in-hand with right wingers in the Labour Party. The right in the party were always able to claim the support of Asian people, and in return a few Asians were 'looked after'.

We wanted to break that monopoly. We wanted to make the Labour Party take up the real issues affecting Asian people — discrimination in jobs, housing and education.

As Asian people we recognise that our fight is a part of the fight of all workers in Britain, that we have the same interests at heart. We want to fight shoulder to shoulder with British workers. So our job is to take Asian people into the Labour Party to fight for our rights and against racism.

Black activists in the party are raising the question of self-organisation and demanding that Labour support the demands of black people in Britain. The black section movement is leading that struggle today.

CALA is a broad organisation and not a political party. It holds within it many different views from our community. We see it as a platform for raising the issues of racism and the problems of our community, and a place to discuss these and bring them to the attention of the labour movement.

We are a progressive organisation that wants to politically educate and organise our community. We have many religious,

cultural, and youth organisations in the Asian community. We want to unite all these forces under one banner, to fight the common enemy.

Obviously the main issues we will be taking up are racism and inequality in jobs, housing and education. In Coventry, under a Labour council, Asians are only two per cent of the council workforce but 14 per cent of the population. This has existed under Labour since 1981 and we have to change it.

Unemployment among Asians is up to 50 per cent, most of them youth. The facilities for Asian youth in Coventry are terrible: no jobs, no community centres, no recreation facilities. Individuals who were involved in the Foleshill Asian Youth movement are now involved in CALA.

We have already upset the right wing Asians in the Labour Party. They feel threatened and are

afraid of any challenge. They are doing anything they can to undermine our support.

We do not have a policy on black sections. I think it is unlikely that CALA will become a black section, but it is up to our membership. If they want to join and organise a black section they will.

CALA is already in struggle against racism both inside and outside the party. We do not have to become a black section to do this.

We will support the black section fight against racism and we have many things in common where we can organise together. But I remain to be convinced of organising black sections as a strategy for fighting for the rights of black people.

We are not in a numbers game, where we want one, two, three more black MPs. Of course if we had these it would be good. But I would want our MPs to oppose racism and support our demands. I would rather have a white MP who did than a black MP who didn't.

However CALA is



Black section secretary Narendra Makanji speaks out for black self-organisation.

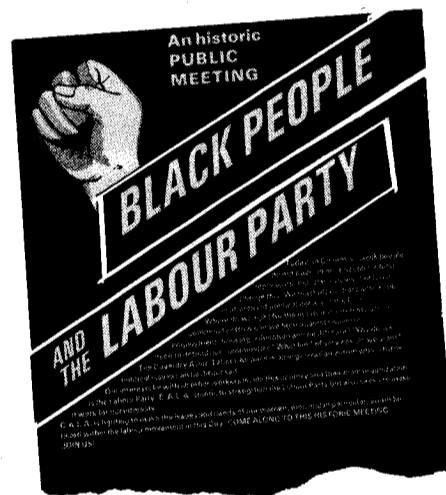
against witch-hunts. People should not be expelled for their views in the Labour Party. The party has always had many different factions within it, and we think it would be wrong to expel people for the politics they support.

Amir Khan in Birmingham was trying to expose corrupt dealings in the party in that area. He was trying to purify it, make it open to people, to make it a real party of the communities and working class. It is not him who should be threatened with expulsion, while the corruption he was attacking

goes unchallenged.

In Liverpool too this witch-hunt will damage and weaken the party, not strengthen it. What happened in Liverpool — where they explained people were suffering because of the Tory government — should have happened everywhere, in all local authorities.

I have reservations about the council attacking its own people with redundancies and the like, but these problems come out of the isolation of Liverpool, and witch-hunts will do nobody any good, least of all the party.



Support Kingsley Abrams

THE PRESENT witch-hunt in the Labour Party will have profound consequences for the Labour Party Young Socialists. An attempt is being made to shackle Labour's youth section. The LPYS's future is in jeopardy, argues MICK BURKE.

ARTHUR Scargill, Bernie Grant and Liverpool city council have all been at the sharp end of attacks within the Labour Party. Others, like the Campaign group of MPs and the black section, have also been hounded for supporting these struggles and trying to make the party responsive to working class needs.

The LPYS faces a different type of attack: an attempt to subordinate the LPYS to the politics of the Labour leadership. So far this has meant a cut of £5000 in the YS budget and a plan to merge Labour's student and youth officers, effectively abolishing the latter.

The 'Labour Listens to Youth' is designed to cement relations between Kinnoch and his supporters amongst the LCC youth and the National Organisation of Labour Students.

In the past year the

Militant leadership of the YS has shown itself incapable of linking up with the forces that could successfully repel this assault. The miners' strike ended with *Militant's* editor, Ted Grant, criticising Arthur Scargill for not having called a ballot. This was followed by a condemnation of 'rioters' during the inner-city rebellions.

Yet the youth from the mining and black communities are the very people among whom a mass LPYS can be built. If the LPYS were to throw itself into the anti-apartheid struggle it could help build a mass solidarity movement in this country and would undoubtedly win hundreds of militants to its ranks.

A thorough-going defence of the black communities and the youth involved in the rebellions

would identify the LPYS as an organisation with no interests separate from those of black people as a whole. Abandoning hostility to the Labour Party black section would place the LPYS firmly in the camp of those fighting for democratic rights and against racism in the labour movement.

But all this involves a radical reorientation for the YS and the replacement of its leadership. Now a qualitative step forward has been taken in this direction. Kingsley Abrams, a supporter of the black sections and a member of its youth committee, is to stand in the election for the LPYS representative to the party's NEC.

Kingsley's candidature deserves the fullest support. His election campaign sums up the present stage of the struggle to win over the LPYS as a whole to the concept of developing a socialist alliance in British politics based on the organised labour movement and the oppressed of this society.



HARINGEY council leader Bernie Grant is the most popular politician in the black community, according to a poll conducted by Caribbean Times.

In a survey of three London boroughs — Islington, Lambeth and Brent — the newspaper asked black people who was their favourite black politician and community leader. Eighty per cent backed Bernie.

Fleet Street has singled Bernie out for vitriolic attack because he stood by the youth of Broadwater Farm estate against the police. They have now returned to the attack because Haringey council has had the audacity to demand an end to the police occupation of the Farm.

Black people obviously feel differently than Fleet Street hacks. The *Caribbean Times* adds that Bernie got a standing ovation when he presented the awards at the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee presentation two weeks ago.

Justice for mineworkers

THE MINERS' Amnesty Campaign launched at this year's Labour Party conference held its second meeting on 14 December. The campaign has been renamed The National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, and has planned a series of activities for 1986.

The Campaign group of MPs has been the driving force in building this campaign and, after discussions with the NUM leadership, has submitted proposals for the campaign's structure and objectives.

The aim is to win support for the TUC and Labour Party conference resolutions backing the NUM, to raise money for the national solidarity fund and to publicise the Campaign group's Justice for Mineworkers Bill.

This Bill is to be presented in parliament on Wednesday 26 February to

coincide with the NUM's national lobby by sacked miners and their supporters. At the same time the Justice for Mineworkers campaign will be launching a pamphlet entitled *Justice*, prepared by the Campaign group in collaboration with the NUM leadership.

This will be followed by a conference and rally on Sunday 2 March, and an evening concert in the Royal Albert Hall with Elvis Costello, Style Council and others.

The Campaign group will also be organising joint fringe meetings with

the campaign at each regional Labour Party conference in the spring, and each national trade union conference up to the TUC and Labour Party conferences in the autumn.

By Dick Withecombe

The campaign appeal, *What You Can Do*, asks organisations to join up and organise local meetings. It calls for resolutions of support to be sent to appropriate trade unions, trades councils, the TUC, the Labour Party, the home secretary, and individual MPs.

All MPs should be contacted and asked to visit jailed miners. Visits to the families of jailed miners are suggested, to offer support, and letters should

be sent to prison governors about individual prisoners.

The appeal asks supporters to: 'Campaign in your trade union, trades council and Labour Party for the next Labour government to grant a general review of all cases, reinstatement and compensation to all miners sacked because of their activities in the dispute.'

• *The campaign can be contacted c/o Durham Mechanics Offices, Group No 1 Area, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED. Cheques should be made payable to the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. Membership of the campaign is £50 for national organisations, £25 for districts, and £5 for local organisations.*

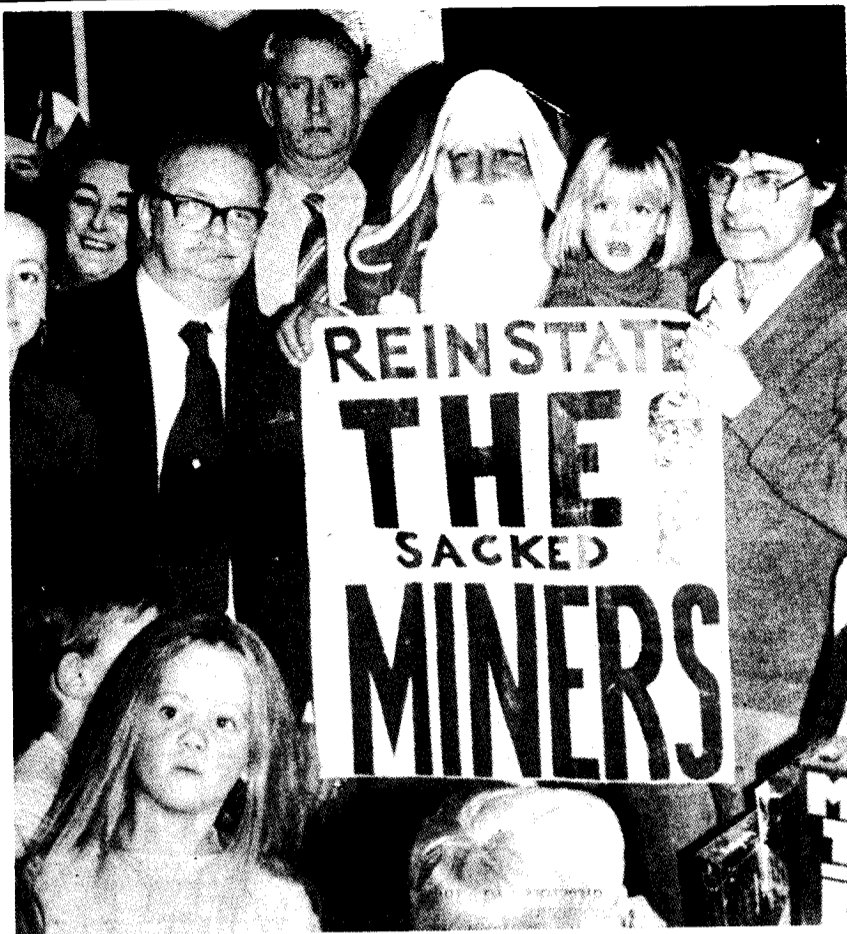


Photo: MORNING STAR

Driver only chaos on British Rail

DRIVER ONLY OPERATION has started on Coalville trains. Three weeks ago, five of 30 of our guards jobs were suspended or altered to allow for the 16-week trial period called for in the agreement signed by the National Union of Railwaymen in the wake of the defeat of the guards' ballot over industrial action to save jobs.

British Rail claims that there will be enormous savings with this particular 'productivity exercise'. But if our first few weeks of DOO are anything to go by, BR could well have significantly higher costs than they bargained for.

One of the first trains to go out guardless from our depot was a coal train scheduled to depart from Bagworth colliery at 5.45 am. The guards' job to prepare the train so it is roadworthy was done by another railworker.

However, the usual delays at the colliery meant that the train never left Bagworth until 9am! In this case, the train hadn't been loaded the night before.

By the time the train was ready, the driver was unable to complete the job in the booked time. That's when the complications set in. This driver is demanding his extra £7.32 — the price BR is paying the driver to do the guard's job when such a turn is actually worked. He says, rightly, that it wasn't his fault the train was not ready.

Guardless

Another driver was asked to work this particular train. But he wasn't booked to work a guardless train, so his duty is to be paid at the normal rate. So the second driver who worked without a guard is equally angry.

The whole affair — and the time lost and chaos in trying to find a second driver to cover such turns shows BR thought about one thing only: the need to get rid of the guards, who are a highly organised section of railworkers, and in the process buy off the drivers. All this will reinforce the craft divisions in the industry which were

being undercut, especially during the miners strike in our case.

By Roy Butlin, Chair, Coalville guards

Will the savings for BR be so enormous? I don't think so. Coal trains are regularly cancelled because BR hasn't enough wagons to replace cripples, thanks to their previous decision to do away with yard shunt locomotives, and all the jobs that went with it.

Workshops

If the wagons were available, and the workshops are crying out for such work, extra revenue would easily cover even the £27m each year BR claims it will save if 85 per cent on non-passenger guards' jobs go. Every wagon of power station coal is worth approximately £60 revenue to the BR Board. If a train runs two wagons short, the daily £120 lost is well beyond an entire week's wages for one guard! So where's the saving?

Today guards face a difficult situation. The least we should do is closely monitor the trial periods and make the most of every instance of accidents, chaos and disruption in services that arise from DOO. But a recall of the guards and shunters grades conference would also be a great help. We need to know what management is getting up to in enforcing this massive change in working conditions.

Finally, there is a need for guards on the back of every train. Safety and efficiency on the network aren't added extras. The Federation has every interest in joining in the fight



Roy Butlin, leader of Coalville guards.

to return guards to every train, but it's also something our delegates to the Labour Party can take up in a big way. It will need a carefully planned out

campaign if we are going to reverse this attack on jobs and safety, but it's not at all ruled out that we can make some advances despite the ballot results.

Labour Women's Action Committee Annual General Meeting
11 January, 10am till 6pm
Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square,

Accommodation:

WAC supporters arriving on Friday night should meet at the Kengington pub, upstairs room, Newton Street (near Picadilly)

Registration in advance write to Judy Sadler, 56 Milton Road, London SE24 0NP

Teachers: union unity the vital question

IT IS OVER a year since the National Union of Teachers submitted a teachers' pay claim due for settlement by 1 April 1985. Although the employers have made no less than six final offers, the overwhelming majority of teachers remain determined to carry on the fight.

On 18 January 1986 the NUT and other TUC-affiliated organisations, the National Association of Schoolmasters-Union of Women Teachers (NAS-UWT) will both be holding special conferences to draw up the 1986 pay claim. Final details will have to be agreed inside the teachers' panel of the Burnham negotiation committee.

By Bernard Regan, NUT Executive (personal capacity)

While the action looks set to run on until both claims are settled, there are major threats to the campaign's momentum posed in particular by manoeuvres of the NAS-UWT leadership.

Under the Teachers Remuneration Act, the secretary of state for education, Sir Keith Joseph, can decide the composition of the teachers side of the negotiating body. This year, in the middle of negotiations, he insisted on a count of members and — seeing that the NUT's membership had dropped below an overall majority — he gave control of the panel to the other organisations. In the wake of this move the NAS-UWT leadership have lined up with scab organisations like the Professional Association of Teachers — the teachers' UDM — and the Head Teachers Association.

They are calling for an 'interim' settlement, arguing that the real fight to restore the 34 per cent decline in teachers pay over the last 10 years will take place next year and the year after. The fact is that many teachers, especially those on lower

scales, are not at all well paid.

Over 20 per cent earn less than the average manual wage. A young teacher will start with a take-home pay of £84.26. Many have to claim supplementary benefits and rebates for rent and rates.

teachers to toe the line. While the NAS-UWT leadership is prepared to trade pay and conditions the NUT has remained firm. The latter's claim for a £1200 flat-rate increase for all teachers has been a key uniting factor.

However the executive motion to the NUT special conference is routinist and offers no new perspectives. The Socialist Teachers Alliance will be arguing for initiatives



September 27: 75% of London teachers marched

The decline in birth rate has reduced promotion opportunities and most teachers are trapped without any prospect of increasing their earnings except by fighting for a pay rise for all teachers.

At the same time the government wants to bring in a stricter contract, forcing teachers to cover for absence, attend after-work meetings and a host of other responsibilities. The Tories are threatening to legislate to bring in assessment procedures designed to give increased powers to head teachers and local authorities to force

escalate selective strike action, for steps to link up with Scottish teachers, and for moves to create an alliance of all public sector unions on the pay front.

Only by breaking up of the teachers ghetto within the NUT be able to back the government offensive. The possibilities have been clearly demonstrated by the Inner London Teachers Association, whose refusal to allow teachers to be employed in a scheme for extra dinner supervisors, has led to the creation of around 1600 new jobs in the ILEA.



Diane Abbott selected: **VICTORY** for black section

Step up the action!

THOUSANDS OF women converged on Greenham Common last weekend to 'enclose the base' and 'embrace the world'. The weekend protest included meetings at different gates against imperialism and apartheid and in solidarity with anti-missiles campaigners around the globe.

Despite a heavy police presence the fence was cut in many places. And about 70 women were arrested, including five for criminal damage. The demonstration was a clear sign that the women's peace camp continues to enjoy wide support and that the ef-

forts of the Ministry of Defence and the police have failed to crush the protest.

Just before the weekend demonstration, a timely opinion poll was published, showing that a majority of British people favour leaving the NATO alliance if it does not aban-

don nuclear weapons. Commenting on the results of the poll commissioned by CND, new chair Paul Johns said it provided 'further proof' that the consensus on NATO 'is shattered'.

The rest of the leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament must now take note. The support for Greenham and the sentiments against the North Atlantic nuclear alliance make 1986 a year in which the campaign against the missiles can be massively stepped up.



HACKNEY NORTH Labour Party has chosen Diane Abbott to be the party's first ever black woman candidate. She was selected by 42 votes to 35. Diane is a member of the Labour Party black section national committee and a member of the Labour Women's Action Committee. 'My selection is a victory for the campaign which the black sections have been waging in the party,' she said afterwards.

Before the selection process the party had already agreed that the shortlist should contain at least one black person and at least one woman. Former Hackney council leader Hilda Keane was also on the shortlist. She was eliminated in the first vote.

Diane's vigorous selection speech undoubtedly won uncommitted delegates. The struggle of black people for representation, she explained, was a class struggle: the demand of the disenfranchised for justice.

She told how her uncle, when he got a job in

America, found that the white workers were handed their wages in the office while the black workers

**By Frank Gorton,
Hackney North
Labour Party**

had to queue to get their wage packets through a grille. He wouldn't accept it.

He went into the office and refused to leave until the black workers got their pay in the same line as the whites. 'He realised the talking had to stop and the time had come for action,' said Diane. That was the

situation facing the Labour Party.

Her selection was not a judgement on Ernie Roberts, whose record as a class fighter and a fighter for black people's rights has been outstanding.

Her victory has much wider implications than who will be the next MP for Hackney North. It will be a symbol, for all black people and all women who have been fighting for the labour movement to recognise their just demands, that they have allies in the party who reject the racist and sexist traditions which have led Neil Kinnock to oppose black sections and oppose the WAC demands. These traditions are being demonstrated today in disgusting fashion in the attempts by Roy Hattersley and his cohorts to expel black section supporters from Sparkbrook Labour Party.

Diane's selection is

proof that the struggles and collective strength of black people and women can no longer be ignored and trampled on by the labour movement. It is proof that a genuine class alliance between the working class and the oppressed can be forged — an alliance which can roll back Thatcher's attacks and lead Labour to victory.

It is a rebuff to the vicious Tory and media attacks on Bernie Grant. It shows that the disposed of the inner cities and their fight for justice can and will have a voice in the labour movement.

'The result in Hackney is a clear message to Roy Hattersley and his kind, who are barons of rotten boroughs,' said Marc Wadsworth of the black section national committee. 'They should recognise that their days are numbered.'

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