

A Socialist ACTION



No. 124 6 December 1985 30p

THE ENQUIRY into Liverpool District Labour Party is a disaster for the Labour Party. The Labour Party should be concentrating public attention on the viciously anti-working class policies of this Tory government. Instead the headlines are now going to be dominated for months by this enquiry. It will run and run. Don't have any illusions.



By Joan Maynard MP

We should be concentrating on the wonderful things that have been done by Liverpool council. We should talk about the houses it has built, the recreation centres it has built, the jobs it has created. All this is going to be lost in an attack on *Militant* — who were anyway always a minority on the council. The council has been carrying out the decisions of Labour Party conference.

This enquiry is supposed to better Labour's election chances. But that is a totally wrong. The election results in Liverpool, both locally and in Parliamentary elections, have been excellent. It is this enquiry that might make them worse.

Some people are saying that we can have the enquiry but not a witch-hunt. But that is like the position on the Falkland's war that said you could be in favour of sending the fleet but against its use. That just aided Thatcher. It is a fatal error to believe Labour can win an election by being respectable for the press.

The enquiry, in fact, is just being used to start a witch-hunt. Neil Kinnock already said before it was set up whom he wanted on the enquiry. There was an attempt to exclude any representative from the CLPs.

This witch-hunt, if it is successful, will extend to other socialists in the party. We are already seeing press smears being extended to Graham Stringer and the Manchester party — people who have nothing to do with *Militant*.

The entire party has to support the position of Eric Heffer, and other Liverpool MPs, who have come out against this enquiry. Don't imagine that the issue is going to go away. Because we are going to support our comrades.

DEFEND LIVERPOOL

NO

WITCH

-HUNT!

Inside:

No witch-hunt in Liverpool

No expulsions in Birmingham

Bhopal: a chemical Hiroshima

Ireland: Why Labour must oppose the accord

New trade union federation in South Africa

Socialist ACTION

The left begins to get its act together

AFTER A period of flailing and floundering around after the end of the miners' strike, it is clear that the left wing of the Labour Party, and the labour movement, is beginning to get its act together. The occasion for this is, on the one side, the sensible tactics being pursued by the leadership of the Campaign group of MPs, the black section, Scargill, and others, and on the other side a shift to the right by Kinnock that is now so extreme it is beginning to peel off certain sections of his support.

The immediate situation after the end of the miners' strike was dominated, in the left wing of the labour movement, by sections previously identified with the left shifting to the right under the guise of 'loyalty to the leader', 'influencing Kinnock' etc.

Meacher, Blunkett, and Livingstone did finish up sharply to the right of their previous positions. But it was not so much that they changed but that what it required to be 'left', that is to defend the interests of the working class, itself radically changed.

Ken Livingstone for example, has always openly explained, against *Marxism Today* for instance, that the GLC, the high point in popular terms of the previous wave of the left, was a genuinely reformist struggle carried out in an extremely favourable situation.

The material base for the policies of the GLC was its huge rates income. It was a totally different situation to the literal destruction of their communities and futures which confronted the miners, or the savagery that had been inflicted on Liverpool by the combination of the policies of Thatcher and those of the previous Liberal administration of the city. It was not possible to defend the miners, or Liverpool, 'by the methods of the GLC.'

It was not fundamentally that Meacher, Blunkett, Sawyer or Livingstone went to the right when confronted with events like the miners' strike or Liverpool. It is that the previous methods were totally inadequate to such struggles.

The most important development which took place was that of Scargill, Benn, Skinner, the black section and others moving far to the left of their previous positions — as has now been seen on the miners, NATO, economic policy, black sections, amnesty, the demands of women, Liverpool, the witch-hunt, and Ireland.

But the emergence for the first time since the 1920s of a real class struggle left, a left which definitely chose 'which side it was on' as Tony Benn put it, had one immediate, dangerous effect. This was that this left was initially isolated against the combined onslaught of Thatcher and Kinnock.

This was why it was so important for the left to reject the ultra-left proposal made to it from some sections of the labour movement that the way forward was to run a candidate against Kinnock for leader of the party. Instead the left had to drive a series of wedges into Kinnock's base on specific issues which corresponded to the interests of the class struggle.

That is what Scargill did at the TUC and Labour Party conferences on the issue of amnesty. The black section did it well in the defence of the black communities. The Campaign group of MPs now has an opening to achieve it on opposition to the Anglo-Irish accord.

There are other openings coming up. The alliance which figures like Bea Campbell were calling for between women and Kinnock inside the Labour Party is falling down against the reality of Kinnock's real policies on women — as the criticisms Ann Pettifor has been forced to make of Kinnock show. On the issue of Ireland another section of Kinnock's base is almost certainly going to differentiate from him — and Ken Livingstone has made his reappearance supporting a definitely progressive cause by coming out openly against the Anglo-Irish accord. On the witch-hunt, while the Kinnockite left has completely gone along with the enquiry on Liverpool, we will see what happens when Kinnock starts moving for the expulsion of Hatton, Mulhearn and others.

Kinnock is taking the party further to the right but some openings are developing.

The two are connected. Because what is really happening is that the nature of Neil Kinnock's leadership of the Labour Party is becoming clearer and clearer.

Labour's internationalist 13

THATCHER'S OFFENSIVE against the labour movement, and against the left in particular, continues to gather momentum. But despite the onslaught there continue to be major developments on the left — particularly on international policies.

A huge step forward was made with the 2 November Anti-Apartheid demonstration. Another important development was the vote of 13 Campaign group MPs — including Tony Benn, Bob Clay, Jeremy Corbyn, Joan Maynard and Dennis Skinner — against the Anglo-Irish accord. JOHN ROSS studies the implications.

One of the hardest lessons which the left in Britain is having to learn is the true relation of forces inside this country. It is not just that Thatcher has the offensive at present, but in a struggle for socialism waged between the British capitalist class, with its huge imperialist resources and the British working class on its own, the British capitalist class would inevitably win.

Fortunately, however, the struggle in an imperialist country, including Britain, is not just a struggle between the working class of that country and the ruling class of that country. As Lenin put it 'the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their own bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism.' In order to fight against an imperialist ruling class the working class must have an international strategy.

Nowhere is this being more clearly revealed than in Britain at present. In Britain tremendous blows have been struck against the labour movement by the Thatcher government since 1979 — including in the last year, with the defeat of the miners' strike.

It is true that important class struggle forces have come forward out of these struggles — the Scargill wing of the NUM, Women Against Pit Closures, the black section of the Labour Party, the line taken by the Benn-

Skinner wing of the Campaign group for example. Nevertheless these forces are still a very small minority in the labour movement. By themselves these minorities cannot turn round the class struggle against the Thatcher government.

The entire labour movement in Britain, and in particular its class struggle left, is today under

Defensive

tremendous attack from the Thatcher government — and very much on the defensive in terms of international British politics.

But when it comes to international developments the situation is significantly different. Here the tremendous upsurge of struggle in South Africa is turning the previous situation around. It is creating an issue where the left not merely must, but can go on the offensive.

The 2 November demonstration called by the Anti-Apartheid movement was the largest and most militant called in solidarity with an international class struggle since the peak of the anti-Vietnam war movement in the late 1960s. And it is still only the beginning of the movement that is developing.

Not only does the struggle in South Africa demand the greatest level of international solidarity but it is capable of creating

South Africa

a sharp and growing crisis for international imperialism — including in particular US and British imperialism. The Anti-Apartheid Movement is

mushrooming locally and Socialist Action believes that every single one of its readers should take as their highest priority today the building of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, its local groups, and solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

Not only does this correspond to the needs of the struggle in South Africa, and of the international working class, but it corresponds to the needs of the struggle in Britain — as does any advance of the international class struggle. On this issue the labour movement and the left can openly take the initiative against the Thatcher government.

However, if South Africa is the most open and massive area in which the British left can go on the offensive against the Thatcher government, a second key opening has been created by the vote of 13 of the Campaign group of MPs against the Anglo-Irish accord in parliament last Wednesday.

When Thatcher negotiated her agreement with FitzGerald there is no doubt that she expected to get Labour Party backing. Ever since 1981 Labour has been formally committed to working for the reunification of Ireland. But Thatcher knew that Neil Kinnock has just as much intention of paying

Kinnock

attention to that policy as any other progressive decision adopted by Labour Party conferences. That is he has no intention of paying any regard to it whatever!

In fact on the question of the right of nations to self-determination Kinnock has a particularly appalling record. By far the most vigorous campaign Kinnock put up under the 1974-79 Labour government was that to deprive Wales of the right to an elected assembly — something, incidentally, that would have been a real point of support for the miners in their strike in South Wales.

Right in line with Thatcher's calculation, Kinnock duly led the massed Parliamentary Labour Party through the lobby last Wednesday in support of Thatcher's accord. Far from being a step to the reunification of Ireland the accord contains the first renunciation ever by the 26 county government of the claim for unity of the whole of Ireland.

Ireland

Undoubtedly some on the Labour left were confused by the fact that to oppose the accord meant marching through the voting lobbies, in this individual case, together with Paisley and his Unionist thugs — something which it takes a definite level of political consciousness in order to do.

But when the 13 Campaign group MPs did cast that vote they opened up a new phase, and a totally new range of possibilities, for the labour movement on Ireland. For now what is involved is not purely formal and abstract commitment to the reunification of Ireland, but a practical policy, and a principled stand, with which the labour movement can identify.

The first fruits of this situation is the public meeting organised in London on 11 December between

the Campaign group of MPs and the Labour Committee on Ireland to oppose the accord. A definite campaigning goal must now be set by the labour movement — not of course one that will be realised in the short term, but one that can be fought for. This is for the Labour Party to throw out the accord.

The vote of the members of the Campaign group of MPs has precisely opened up the way for such a campaign in the labour movement. These 13 MPs should be invited by every Labour Party in the country to speak. Public meetings and rallies should be mounted to oppose the accord.

If this is done substantial opposition to the accord, and support for a reunified Ireland as the only solution, can be built up. Strengthening the Labour Committee on Ireland will be a decisive part of that struggle. On this issue once more, the left can take the offensive to strengthen real support for the reunification of Ireland.

The two huge issues of South Africa and Ireland are not merely vital in themselves. They are also issues on which the British labour movement, by carrying out its internationalist duty, can take the offensive against Thatcher.

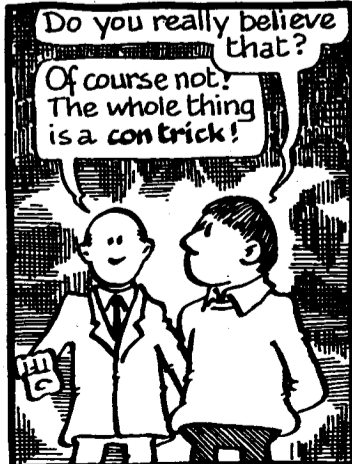
Statement of the Labour Left Co-ordination

SUPPORT FOR the Anglo-Irish accord between the Tory government in Britain and the coalition government in the Irish republic is inconsistent with the Labour Party's declared policies.

By taking a bi-partisan attitude to this accord the Labour Party leadership has ignored recent conference decisions condemning the use of strip-

searching, the Diplock courts, and plastic bullets and the continuing use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The Labour Party leadership should be condemning these abuses of civil and political rights and pointing to the Party policy which acknowledges the underlying cause of instability in the 32 counties — the need for a united Ireland.



Central America Labour Group Founding Conference
Saturday
14 December,
10-5pm
County Hall,
London SE1

CALG is supported by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and the Guatemala Working Group. The conference is open to representatives of all Labour Party bodies and individual party members.

Enquiries and registration: c/o Jan Royal, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1A 9AA (phone: 01-222 1719).

From An Phoblacht/Republican News



Liverpool City Council demonstration, 29 March 1984

Labours monumental own goal

Model resolution against the witch-hunt

ERIC HEFFER, MP, one of the five members of Labour's National Executive, has come out strongly against the witch-hunt of Liverpool District Labour Party.

Speaking at the Oxford University Labour club on Friday 29 November he said:

'On Tuesday and Wednesday in the House of Commons, the Anglo-Irish agreement was discussed. It was a very important debate and issue, yet on Thursday most of the newspapers especially the so-called pops, had huge front page articles about the so-called militants of Liverpool Labour Party, with the decision to suspend the District Labour Party emblazoned over their pages.

It was an own goal of monumental proportions. I have to say I feel outraged and ashamed at the decision of the NEC and the attacks being made on



good labour people who believe in socialist policies.

The papers were also full of serious charges made by leading Labour Party figures of 'political corruption', 'literal corruption in employment', 'intimidation', and so on. Charges that have been made by gutter journalists

against labour people at various times over the years.

If there were such corruption, and people making such charges should be prepared to back this with facts, such corruption should be dealt with by police action against the individuals concerned, not with the suspension by the NEC of the District Labour Party, made up as it is of good honest people, whose only crime is to want to fight the Labour Party's political enemies and get a Labour government elected.

Unfortunately, in the past, there has been individual corruption in City Councils, as for example in the North East. Yet none at the time suggested that the City Labour Party there should be suspended.

Liverpool's people are being damaged, not by the

Labour Party in Liverpool, whose members have consistently fought for them, to improve their lives and conditions with the intention of lifting them out of their despair brought about the government policies, but by those in the Labour Party who spend their time attacking the Liverpool Labour Party and playing into the hands of Labour's political enemies. It is no accident that Tory papers in editorials today are calling for all the so-called 'hard left' to be thrown out of the party.

The language, such as 'maggots', used against good Labour people is unforgivable. No wonder Labour's political enemies such as Norman Tebbit and Sir Trevor Jones wish the party leadership well. They, of course, hope to gain by its action.

The suspension of the District Labour Party does

great harm. At the moment in Liverpool a council by-election is taking place, due to the untimely death of councillor Peter Lloyd. The party is also raising cash to defend the councillors in their court case against the District Auditor.

The councillors are threatened with surcharges and suspension from office, because they carried out Labour Party policy as laid down at the 1984 party conference. Yet they are being treated as criminals, instead of being supported because of their courageous stand.

It would seem to me that too many in the party at top level have conveniently forgotten what party policy is. There are a number of versions being put forward as to what the enquiry into Liverpool is about. Neil Kinnock is quoted as saying: 'I am antagonistic to the Militant

tendency. I want them out of the Labour Party.' Another is by Roy Hattersley, who is quoted as saying: 'This investigation is about how the people of Liverpool have been treated in the Labour Party's name.'

I am opposed to witch-hunts of anybody who observes labour's constitution. That does not mean I agree with all they say. I accept democratic socialism, not so-called democratic centralism, which in practice is all centralism and no real democracy. I am afraid we are getting too much of the latter in the Labour Party at the moment, and members should not allow it to happen.

An investigation into real complaints is one thing. To suspend a party such as the Liverpool party is wrong and members all over the country should protest.'

THE LABOUR Left Coordination has circulated a model resolution against expulsions and in defence of Liverpool District Labour Party, as well as expelled Birmingham activists Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

All readers are urged to take this resolution up in all labour movement organisations.

The resolution reads:

1. This ... believes that if the forthcoming local elections as well as the next general election are to be won, the party must remain united. We therefore deplore the party national leadership's divisive campaign against local councils and District Labour Parties which fight Tory cuts, and against pressure groups within the party.

2. In no case should internal political differences be used as a pretext for the expulsion of individuals and the suspension of pressure groups holding views which do not find favour with the present party leadership. We therefore deplore the recent expulsions of members of the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Labour Party black sections, supporters of Militant and other socialists within the party.

3. We are also concerned with the enquiry into the Liverpool DLP, which appears to be being conducted through the media, so as to ensure the District Party is found guilty in advance.

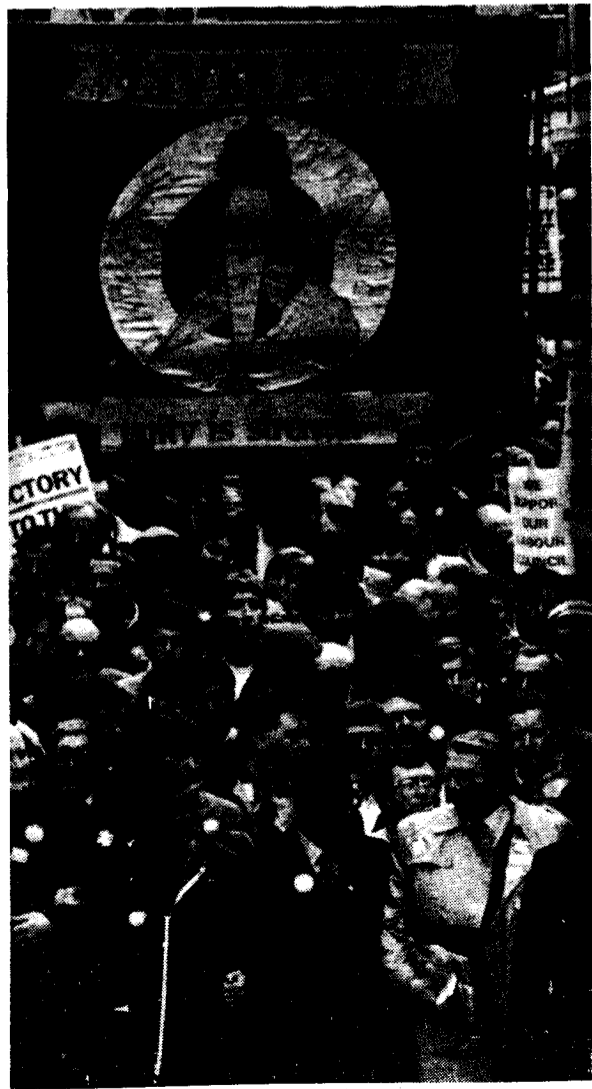
4. We call on the National Executive Committee to end the expulsion of socialists from the party.

Liverpool NALGO members oppose witch-hunt

LIVERPOOL NALGO Rank and File, which was formed soon after the 'cuddly left' began its drive to impose a compromise solution on Liverpool City Council, has issued the following statement against the witch-hunt:

'Liverpool NALGO rank and file are opposed to the current enquiry by Labour Party NEC, into the Liverpool District Labour Party on the basis that it is a thinly-disguised first step towards a witch-hunt of Militant Tendency supporters and other 'unacceptable' activists.

'Whilst we condemn many of the tactics used by Liverpool City council in their budget battle against the Tories, we fully support their original stand for more resources.'



Stop witch-hunting Militant, say black sections

THE LABOUR Party black section national committee, meeting this weekend, vigorously opposed the party leadership's witch-hunt against Militant supporters in Liverpool.

It is circulating a model resolution which reads as follows:

This ... condemns recent attacks on party members by labour's national leadership. We oppose all moves aimed at renewing witch-hunts and purges.

We view with particular concern action taken against comrades who support the Militant newspaper and comrades who support black sections. Neil Kinnock claims he desires party unity, yet he has been the source of unprecedented attacks on individual socialists. This has been avidly latched upon by our opponents and their friends in the



capitalist news media.

'The enemies of socialism have been handed a gift by the divisive tactics used by Labour's national leadership against those in the party with whom they disagree.

'We demand:

1) that action aimed at undermining the proper functioning of the Liverpool District Labour Party is halted;

2) that Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP im-

mediately reinstate into full membership black section supporters Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

'Only by responding positively to these demands can Labour fully convince our supporters that the party is committed to the democratic right of every group and individual in our ranks to argue for socialist policies unhindered by party leaders.'

Photo: TIM RIGBY

Black sections fight Sparkbrook expulsions

THE BLACK section national committee has adopted a six point plan of action to reverse Sparkbrook constituency Labour Party's expulsion of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. It involves:

- 1) a mass campaign of resolutions in the labour movement aimed at reversing the expulsions;
- 2) supporting a public meeting in the Sparkbrook constituency in defence of the two expelled comrades;
- 3) a lobby of NEC members, taking two forms — contacting individuals, and a lobby of the meeting when the appeal, which has already been lodged, is heard;
- 4) taking the fight to the Sparkbrook rank and file, trade union branches, socialist societies and ward sections;
- 5) investigating the possibility of legal action;
- 6) a campaign of letters and articles in the left and black press.

Five resolutions opposing the expulsions have already been passed in Birmingham. In London seven bodies have done

likewise, including Vauxhall, Streatham, and Southall CLPs.

Councillor Amir Khan, who has been added to the black section national committee, explained that the overwhelming majority of black people, including many who had not initially supported black sections, were vociferously opposed to the expulsions and demanding their reversal.

The neighbouring Small Heath constituency was split down the middle by the Sparkbrook party action, with the right wing on one side and on the other, black people and the rest of the left.

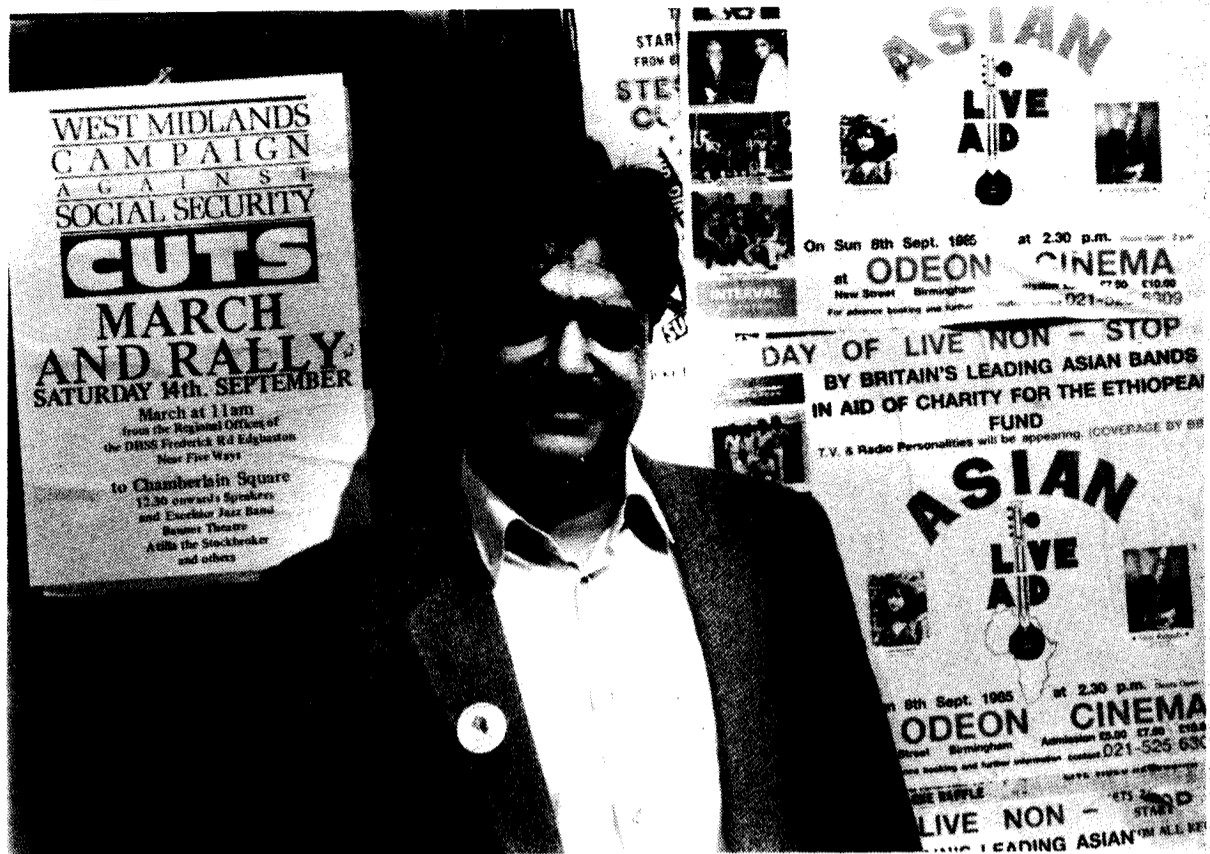
Another Asian Councillor and member of Sparkbrook constituency, Mohammed Rafique also faces expulsion this month. He is a former opponent of black sections. Thus the crime of 'bringing the party into

disrepute' on which Amir and Kevin were expelled, is clearly being extended to a general weapon of retribution against opponents of Hattersley's lieutenants.

'Hattersley's hand is clearly visible pulling the strings', said black section vice-chair Marc Wadsworth, 'and he has a lot to fear from the rank and file. He is the baron of a rotten borough. His days are numbered, both in terms of his ability to manipulate the CLP and key godfathers, and in terms of his occupation of the post of MP for Sparkbrook.'

'Because of these bullying tactics, a lot of people who would previously not have supported black self organisation are now supporting us. It's a sadness that black martyrs have had to be made along the way.'

'This is a multifaceted struggle with vast implications. The left has to line up and defend black people, or they will be posed as part of the problem along with the right wing.'



Councillor Amir Khan has been expelled for the 'crime' of organising a black section in Hattersley's constituency



William Silcott's room after Tottenham police raid

Tottenham under heavy manners

TWO MONTHS after the events of Sunday 6 October the community in Tottenham is still under siege.

An appeal from the Broadwater Farm Defence Committee explains that raids on homes followed by arrests are a daily occurrence, and are carried out in a manner which flagrantly disregards civil and human rights.

To date there have been 100 reported arrests, mainly young. But only 40 per cent have been charged. Children have been arrested, detained and questioned. Twelve year olds have been held for long periods without access to their parents or solicitors.

In at least six cases police have sledgehammered their way into houses. They have carried shotguns and rifles and in one case six armed policemen from the D11 unit held up a house. The Public Order Act gives the police carte blanche powers to apprehend tenants and residents in the area, and detain them as long as they like.

But the really special treatment has been reserved for the Silcott family.

Winston Silcott and his brother George were arrested on 12 November and whisked away, naked, for interrogation in police stations outside the Tottenham area. George was held and questioned for two days and released without charge. Winston was first held for a 'crime' on a charge now dropped, and then charged, along with two juveniles aged 14 and 15, with the murder of PC Blakelock.

Winston has solid evidence that he was nowhere in the vicinity during the events. The police are mounting a ferocious campaign to pressurise Tottenham youth to sign statements saying Winston was present.

During their operation the police mounted a quasi-military assault on Winston's parents' home. 50 of them, armed with guns and sledge hammers, advanced on the house. William Silcott, Winston's father, pleaded with them to use his door key but was told to get out of the way or 'have his face smashed in with a gun butt', says the Winston Silcott defence committee. They

then sledgehammered down the door and ransacked the house, removing personal property in vast amounts. They refused William Silcott's request for a note of the items removed. Even such items as picture frames were removed.

'When the police raided my home there was an armed officer present at the time,' says William in a sworn testimony. 'They intimidated that they believed that Winston's friends were in the house waiting for them. This is utter nonsense as I am aware who is my house and I cannot understand where the police got this idea from.'

'Neither I nor my sons are guilty of any of the crimes committed in the "Tottenham Riots" and I do not consider the police handling of this matter in relation to my own case to be one of benefit to the community or themselves.'

● For further information, financial support, speakers, resolutions of support, contact the Broadwater Farm Defence Committee, 12-16 Tangmere, Willan Road, London N17 (Telephone 01-808 1667/801 7327).

Hattersley's rotten borough

ON TUESDAY 26 November the GMC of Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP expelled its only black councillor, Amir Khan, and Kevin Scally, secretary of Birmingham Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI).

The expulsions, carried by 28 votes to 18 and 28 to 21 respectively, came as no real surprise. Amir Khan had fought to establish a black section to give Sparkbrook's mainly Pakistani members an independent democratic voice in party affairs. Kevin Scally supports British withdrawal from Ireland, opposes the PTA, and is active in defending its victim Maire O'Shea.

Both challenged corruption and patronage in Sparkbrook CLP. In doing so they had also challenged Roy Hattersley, deputy Labour leader, and Sparkbrook's MP.

Hattersley

The ostensible reason for their expulsions were that they had 'brought the party into disrepute' — Amir through public attacks on Hattersley's attitude to, and achievements for Sparkbrook's black community; Kevin, through his involvement in a TV documentary alleging improper recruitment of Asian members to the constituency's Spark Hill ward.

In reality, however, both Amir and Kevin Scally represented the sort of party and policies Hattersley can neither accept nor hope to represent — a democratic party whose Asian members determine their own needs.

For Kevin Scally things came to a head two years ago. In the Autumn of 1983, just prior to the beginning of the reselection process the Spark Hill ward received 140 membership applications in one week.

One form was from one of Kevin's neighbours.

When Kevin next met him he mentioned the application only to discover he had never filled it in. A partial investigation sanctioned by the ward EC revealed that at least 60 of the forms were similar fakes. In some cases the addresses didn't even exist.

There was an obvious explanation. Spark Hill was the one ward unlikely to support the reselection of Roy Hattersley, unless its GMC delegates were changed at its forthcoming AGM.

By Mick Archer

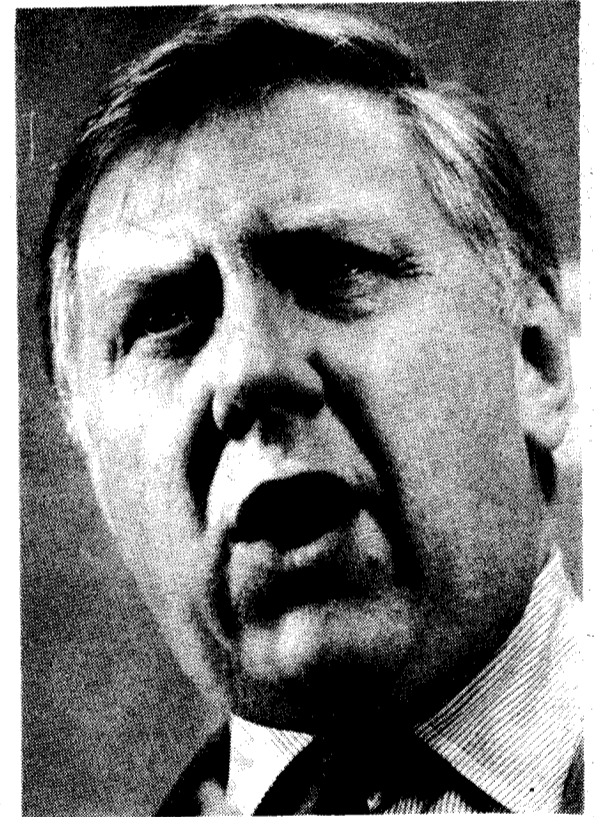
Given the dispute over membership the Spark Hill AGM was postponed until March 1984. When it eventually took place many of its existing officers were returned with sizeable majorities. Kevin Scally was reelected as secretary by 95 votes to 35.

Unperturbed, Roy Hattersley himself questioned the meeting's validity at the following GMC. He reported he had been approached by several members complaining that people from outside the area had attended and voted at the Spark Hill AGM.

Bandung

The AGM was declared invalid and a further one convened. It took place in September 1984. By now Kevin Scally and others in the ward understood that a 'valid' AGM was one that went at least some way to electing a slate of officers that the GMC endorsed. They compromised and gave over a number of positions to Hattersley supporters.

When approached earlier this year by the Bandung File, who were investigating the abuse of the Asian vote in inner city constituencies like Sparkbrook, Kevin decided to appear and furnish them with some of the bogus applications.



Roy Hattersley: 'clearly visible pulling the strings.'

Among the charges made at Tuesday's GMC was that 'the programme showed you in possession of Labour Party applications which had come to you through your position as branch secretary, these should have been forwarded to your successor, not retained by you. They were the property of the party and should not have been handed over for the use of the media unless permission had been sought and granted.'

Ireland

Kevin Scally has been a member of the Labour Party for 10 years. A GMC delegate, he has also been branch secretary and election agent as well as representing the constituency at regional Labour Party conference. He is also secretary of the Birmingham LCI and a member of its national council.

As a statement issued by the LCI this week notes: 'The LCI is con-

vinced that Kevin's activity for British withdrawal from Ireland has contributed to the demands for his expulsion. Ever since he joined the Northern Ireland Labour Party in 1969, Kevin has been a consistent advocate of British withdrawal.

'We regard the expulsion of Kevin as a very direct threat to the organisations campaigning legitimately in the labour movement on Ireland. The LCI calls for an investigation into Kevin's allegations, since if they are true, they are very serious.'

In Birmingham a meeting will take place this week of Labour Party members determined to oppose both Amir and Kevin's expulsions.

● Copies of resolutions passed in defence of Amir and Kevin should be sent to the black sections national secretary, Narendra Makanji, 10a Palmerston Road, London N22.

Photo: CARIBBEAN TIMES

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

3 DECEMBER marks the anniversary of the world's worst industrial disaster ever. Between 5000 and 15000 people died when a cloud of deadly gas escaped from Union Carbide's pesticide factory in Bhopal, India.

A London conference on 3 November saw the beginnings of an international fight-back against the chemical multinationals whose policies produced Bhopal.

LEWIS EMERY asks: why did Bhopal happen?

Union Carbide is a typical multinational chemical firm. It has 100,000 employees world-wide, working in 500 separate plants in 36 countries.

It boasts a commitment to safety. But its past and present activity has created death and industrial disease on a large scale, including silicosis, bladder paralysis, radiation poisoning, liver and skin cancer and cadmium poisoning.

Its Bhopal factory was an accident waiting to happen. An international cost-cutting policy, typical of many chemical firms in the '80s, led to inadequate maintenance, undermanning, and incompetent management.

The Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) used to manufacture the pesticide Carbaryl was originally to have been produced in a plant with a staff of 24. The was commissioned with a staff of twelve, reduced in 1981 to eight. The total workforce had been reduced from 1000 to 632. Most of those sacked had been disciplined, many for refusing jobs which could have broken the company's own safety manual.

Accident

The safety record was already poor. In 1981 a worker died after being splashed with Phosgene. In 1982 an MIC pipeline burst, and in 1984 five workers were hospitalised after a similar leak.

Accidents were so common that the internal alarm system was disconnected from the public warning system.

After years of struggle against job losses, contract labour, and safety hazards, workers staged a hunger strike to draw attention to the dangers. The factory inspector who then reported attributed union fears to 'imagination'.

The events of 3 December were thus far from an unforeseeable act of god. They were the consequence of a conscious policy to boost Union Carbide profits in defiance of its workers, and pursued by Union Carbide — as by its rivals — throughout the world.

But Union Carbide's role by no means ends here — any more than does the saga of official complicity in its activities which now turned the industrial accident into a medical disaster.

Disconnected

By 2am on 3 December, local people who had been caught sleeping were flooding into the Hamida hospital. The warning siren, after a short initial blast, had been disconnected and was not turned on again until 3am. There was in any case no local evacuation plan or emergency procedure.

No advance knowledge of the effects of MIC had been distributed to local doctors. When contacted the company medical officer would only say that it caused 'minor irritation to the eyes and some respiratory problems.' He advised treatment with water.

People, especially children, were now dying at one per minute. The dead soon littered the streets. Everywhere the living were wracked with violent coughing and vomiting, their eyes blinded and streaming, their bodies in agony. Mass cremation began within hours.

Why was so little knowledge on MIC's toxic effects available to those trying to cope with this catastrophe? It is now established that MIC can permanently damage the eyes, lungs, heart, liver, central nervous system, utera and bloodstream. The company's own manual warns that

Bhopal

A chemical Hiroshima one year on

'limited exposure can be fatal'.

One of the main long term toxic effects comes about as MIC breaks down into cyanide within the body. Had local doctors had this information, and had the cyanide antidote sodium thiosulphate been widely used, many lives could undoubtedly have been saved.

Cyanide

There is strong evidence that Union Carbide knew this. It was clearly stated in a technical handbook published in 1976. Neither in India nor in other countries where MIC was handled did it seem keen to release this information.

For months after the disaster, doctors fought to save lives and end suffering on the basis of virtually total ignorance of the poison involved. Official government spokesperson Sudweep Banerjee complained 'we have reason to believe Union Carbide has carried out research on animals and we have specifically asked them for the result of this research. They won't give it to us. They give weak replies, saying "not much is available".' It has trickled back to us from the USA that they do have this information, but they are sitting on it.

Some local doctors did identify the possibility that cyanide could be the main problem within a week of the incident. Together with Dr Dainderer, a clinical toxicologist who arrived with 50,000 cases of sodium thiosulphate, they pressed their case. But neither the state government of Madhya Pradesh, nor local medical opinion were willing to accept their evidence in the absence of support from Union Carbide. The antidote was not used until months later.

Stone Wall

Nor was it only workers and victims of Bhopal who met a stone wall. Speaking at the 3 November conference French CGT member Jean-Michel Valeaux, from the Union Carbide plant at Beziers, explained their long history of struggle over the safety of MIC.

Manufacturing procedures at the French plant were originally the same as those in Bhopal. In 1977 the union organised a strike, which produced some changes. The company then

brought in scientific experts who reassured workers that beyond 'immediate' effects. MIC would not result in serious long term problems.

But the campaign continued and in 1978 the management finally admitted that cyanide could be one of the by-products of exposure to MIC. In 1979 further evidence from the French coal industry proved that under high temperature and pressure MIC could break down to produce cyanide.

Nevertheless at that time the workers were unable fully to break through the web of secrecy. From that time on they have been demanding full information from management about advance warning, the dangers of MIC, safety systems, alternative manufacturing procedures, and the truth about the long term consequence of exposure.

Victims

They have been travelling to India, to the USA, to Britain, forging links between gas victims, environmentalists and other workers.

In Bhopal itself, victims and workers have realised that the company which brought the disaster can only be confronted by collective action. On 17-18 February a broad organisation, the ZGKS marcha, organised an all-India convention in Bhopal to press for a safe environment and the right to information. They have taken up the campaign for de-toxification with Sodium Thiosulphate; for provision for abortion for women who inhaled the gas; for a mass campaign on the dangers of conception before detoxification.

One tactic has been to secure a Supreme Court ruling compelling the government to administer the distribution of Sodium Thiosulphate. The need for such a ruling indicates the extreme and continued reluctance of the state government to take this step and the way in which chemical multinationals co-opt and implicate local officialdom.

Police

The case has been taken up by the Indian Council of Medical Research, who confirmed the cyanide connection after trials. Only in April did the state government announce that stocks were ready and on 3 June, voluntary organisations were finally able to start a programme of detoxification.

But on 24 June police swooped and seized all the equipment and research, accusing the doctors of 'negligence'. Hence the court action.

There is, however, considerable doubt about the value of individual litigation. Perhaps the most signifi-

DANGER

Countdown to disaster

UNION CARBIDE's favoured production method — the cheapest — led them to build a plant designed to incorporate large-scale storage of Methyl Isocyanate (MIC), the substance which caused the catastrophe.

Extreme pressure in storage tank 610 led to the disaster. We still don't know what started it. But once it began, the awful consequences developed unchecked.

- The initial rise in pressure from 2 p.s.i. to 10 p.s.i., noticed at 11pm by the new shift, was not seen as a cause for alarm. A maintenance engineer was sent for because 'the instruments often didn't work. They got corroded. Crystals would form in them.'

- Because of cuts in manning levels, it was left to one worker to check the 70 panels in the control room every two hours, instead of two workers hourly.

- The storage tank refrigeration system, which should have maintained the MIC at 0°C, and which could have slowed down the pressure buildup, had not been working for five months.

- The caustic soda gas scrubber system, designed to neutralise escaping gas, was undergoing maintenance and did not function.

- The flare tower that was supposed to burn off escaping gas was not working. The pilot flame was out, and pipework to it had been disconnected.

- Instead, the escaped gas was routed to a vent line that emptied into the open air at a height of 33 metres. Water-spray systems designed to surround the factory with a water-curtain in the event of a gas leak were only designed to spray to a height of 15 metres.

- There were no gas sensors capable of detecting the leaking MIC. Nor was there a high-pressure warning alarm.

- Cheap carbon-steel valves had been used instead of stainless steel. Iron contamination is one of the possible causes of the runaway reaction in tank 610.

- Storage tank 619 was meant to be available as a spare reservoir in the event of emergency — but it was not empty that night.

First indications of the leak were either not detected, or their significance not understood, until far too late. From 12.40pm, people began to die.

The following description of what occurred appeared in 'The state of India's Environment 1984-85', CSE, New Delhi.

'Sunan Day, a worker at the plant, noticed that the temperature gauge on tank 610 had reached 25°C, the top of the scale, and pressure was rapidly moving to 40 p.s.i., the point at which the emergency relief valve opens.

'He rushed to the storage tanks to investigate and was horrified. As he stood on a concrete slab above the storage tanks, the slab suddenly began to shake. "There was a tremendous sound, a messy boiling sound underneath the slab, like a cauldron."

'He ran, only to hear a loud noise behind him. The slab, made of 60 feet of concrete at least 6 inches thick, was cracking. The heat was like a blast furnace. He couldn't get within 6 feet of it.

'He then heard a loud hissing sound and saw gas shoot out of a tall stack connected to the tank, and form a white cloud drifting over the plant and towards the sleeping neighbourhood.

'In the plant he found that the pressure indicator had gone above 55 p.s.i., the top of the scale, and the safety valve had opened, releasing MIC from the storage tank.'

Even had all safety systems functioned, the design was such that only 40 per cent of the escaping gas could have been neutralised.



Photo: AMIN LADHA



I voted against

BOB CLAY, one of the thirteen Labour MPs who voted against the Anglo-Irish accord in parliament, explained to us why he had been prepared to take the steps of walking through the division lobby with the likes of Enoch Powell to oppose Thatcher's new Irish carve-up.

THE AGREEMENT quite clearly involves, for the first time, the legal recognition of partition by the Southern government.

I see the accord as a clear move away from the unification of Ireland, a view which is reinforced by the fact that both Margaret Thatcher and Tom King regard this agreement as strengthening Ulster.

It gives the Southern government responsibility but without any real power in the six counties. That responsibility will sooner or later become a responsibility for increased repression against the nationalist community.

Having outraged the unionists by negotiating this agreement in such a deceitful and clandestine manner, I suspect that the unionist backlash that this produces will become the excuse for banning Sinn Fein.

I also believe that there is some truth in Enoch Powell's assertion that Mrs Thatcher only took this small and contradictory step because she was pressured to do so by President Reagan, who's administration is anxious to achieve a united Ireland within NATO, with American bases.

Finally I listened carefully to those in the Labour Party who argued that this agreement is a step towards the party's policy of reunification, and that the loyalist fury proves this.

But my view is that the agreement in this sense achieves the worst of two worlds. It mobilises the loyalists but does not end partition.

The argument is similar to that used in justifying sending in the troops in 1969. The measure was defended as a means of assisting the nationalist community. But it quickly became clear to be the opposite.

A Labour government ought to tell the unionists firmly and unequivocally that they intend to withdraw militarily and politically from the six counties.

IRELAND: Labour must oppose the accord

THE TEN to one vote in the House of Commons for the Anglo-Irish accord will go down as Thatcher's greatest parliamentary victory since the vote to send the British Fleet against Argentina in 1982.

And, as on that occasion, it is a victory delivered to her by a Labour leadership which is politically indistinguishable from the Tories when it comes to any issue touching the vital interests of British imperialism.

No-one should be in any doubt that the Irish question is indeed such an

By Redmond O'Neill

issue. Every great turning point in British politics has been accompanied and catalysed by a crisis over the Irish question. Today the occupation of part of Ireland by Britain remains the most acutely unstable contradiction built into the structure of the British state.

It has resulted in sixteen years of unrelenting mass struggle, armed struggle and political mobilisation by the nationalist community within the North of Ireland statelet and has created, in Sinn Fein, the most advanced mass political force in Western Europe.

Sovereignty

The fundamental aim of Thatcher's policy is to resolve that contradiction by breaking the political mobilisation of the nationalist community and smashing Sinn Fein. That is the objective of the Anglo-Irish agreement and by endorsing it Kinnock renounces all pretence of any independence of the Parliamentary Labour Party from the Tories on the Irish question.

A labour movement incapable of distinguishing itself from the Tories on the most longstanding colonial question in British history will not be capable of achieving anything fundamental for the British working class.

That is the meaning of the House of Commons vote, and that is why the 13 Campaign Group Labour MPs were so correct to vote against. Their vote signals that their solution to the Irish question lies through uniting the British



labour movement with the 800-year-old struggle of the Irish people for national self-determination.

The essence of the Anglo-Irish accord was accurately summarised by the *Financial Times*: 'It commits Dr Fitzgerald's Dublin government to supporting actively the northern state as presently constituted.' The Dublin government for the first time is signatory to an international agreement which recognises British sovereignty over the six North Eastern counties of Ireland. Dublin explicitly allows the artificially created loyalist majority in the six counties to veto the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination.

Security

A key function of the accord is to involve Dublin more directly in the military defence of the Northern statelet. Its first fruit has been the scheduling of an early meeting between Lawrence Wren, commissioner of the Garda and Sir John Herman, chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, to step up cross-border security operations.

In exchange for all this an inter-

governmental conference between Dublin and London with a permanent secretariat based in Belfast is established. This will discuss policy on the North but, as the *Financial Times* explains: 'Dublin would not, however, be able to intervene directly in the government of the province, or to force British ministers into particular decisions.'

Orange

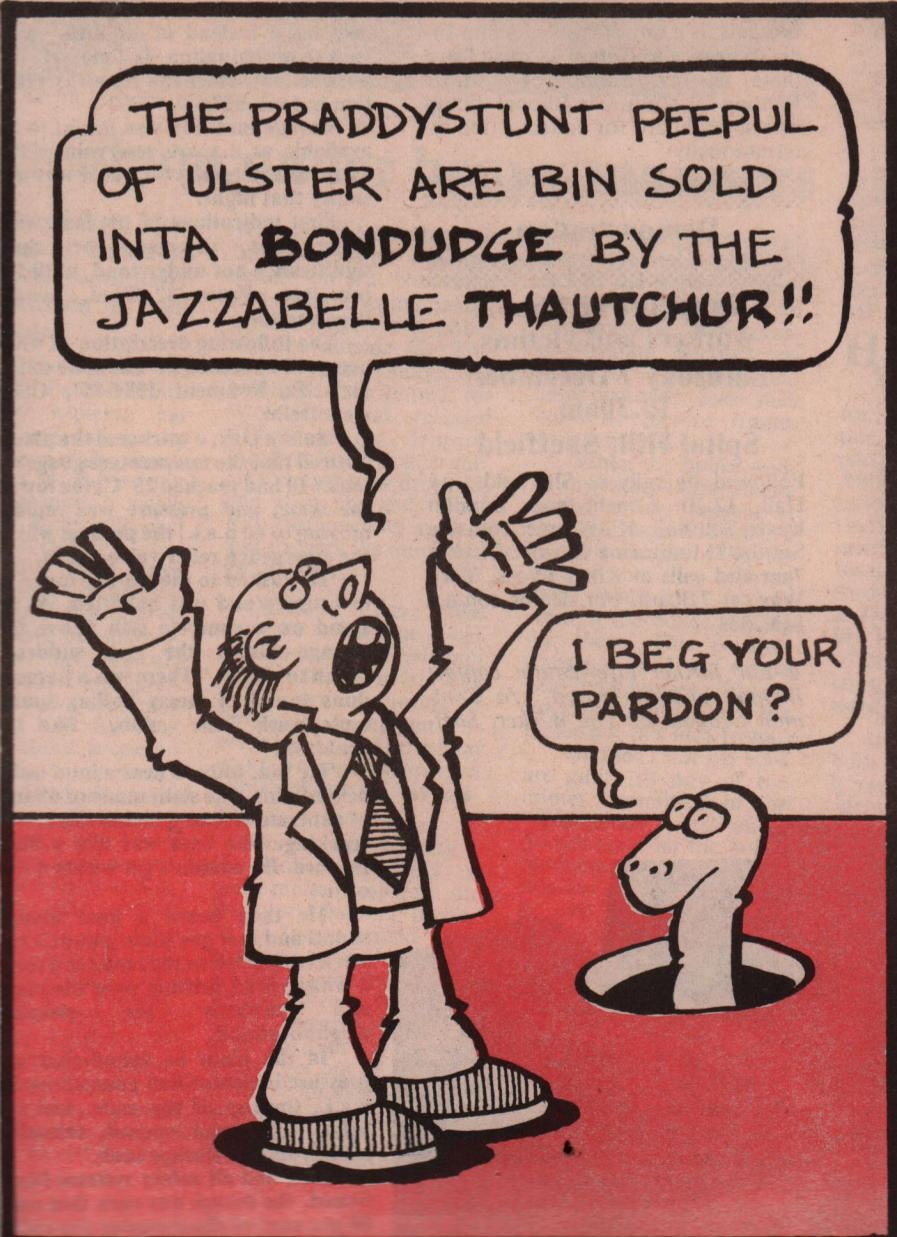
Even the most blatant mechanisms of orange supremacy remain intact — Diplock courts, strip searching in Armagh. The Ulster Defence Regiment, which is nothing more than a sectarian loyalist militia, with a membership overlapping with loyalist paramilitary organisations, will remain in place. There are no provisions to end sectarian discrimination in jobs and housing.

Thus the claim by *Tribune* and *New Statesman* that this accord has something to do with progress towards a united Ireland is demonstrably false. It is an agreement by the Dublin government to help the British state pacify the six counties.

In that sense it does reflect Britain's

LABOUR & IRELAND
THE ALTERNATIVE ACCORD

Wednesday 11 December 7.30pm
Council Chamber, County Hall, London SE1
Chair: Joan Maynard MP
Speakers:
Sean MacBride SC (Nobel and Lenin Peace Prize winner)
Mitchel McLoughlin, Sinn Fein Derry City Councillor
Ken Livingstone Leader GLC
Admission £3 (11.50 concessions, disabled access)
Organised by Campaign Group of MPs with the Labour Committee on Ireland



A PIECE of the ACTION



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Protestantism, Catholicism and Politics

WE REPRODUCE here an article written in 1913 by the great Irish marxist James Connolly. In it he explains that the divisions in the Irish working class originate not in religion but in British domination of Ireland.

He shows that the key to uniting the Irish labour movement is to free Ireland from Britain.

FROM TIME to time I propose to give some attention to the elucidation of the problems peculiar to Ireland and particularly to this part of it. For the present, it is sufficient to emphasise the fact that religious affiliations of the population of Ulster determine their political leanings to greater extent than is the case in any part of Europe outside the Balkans.

But the manner in which this has developed is also unique. I believe that it is true to say that, politically speaking, the Protestantism of the North of Ireland has no parallel outside this country, and the Catholicism of the Irish Catholics is, likewise, peculiar in its political trend.

To explain — I mean that, whereas, Protestantism has in general made for political freedom and political radicalism, it has been opposed to slavish worship of kings and aristocrats. Here, in Ireland, the word Protestant is almost a convertible term with Toryism, lickspittle loyalty, servile worship of aristocracy and hatred of all that savours of genuine political independence on the part of the 'lower classes.'

And in the same manner, Catholicism which in most parts of Europe is synonymous with Toryism, lickspittle loyalty, servile worship of aristocracy and hatred of all that savours of genuine political independence on the part of the lower classes, in Ireland is almost synonymous with rebellious tendencies, zeal for democracy, and intense feelings of solidarity with all strivings upward of those who toil.

Such a curious phenomenon is easily understood by those who know the history of Ireland. Unfortunately for their spiritual welfare — and I am using the word 'spiritual', not in its theological but in its better significance as controlling mental and moral development upward — the Protestant elements of Ireland were, in the main, plantation of strangers upon the soil from which the owners had been dispossessed by force.

The economic dispossession was, perforce, accompanied by a political and social outlawry. Hence every attempt of the dispossessed to attain citizenship, to emerge from their state of outlawry, was easily represented as a tentative step towards reversing the plantation and towards replanting the Catholic and dispossessing the Protestant.

Imagine this state of matter persisting for over 200 years and one realises at once that the planted population — the Protestants — were bound to acquire insensibly a hatred of political reform and to look upon every effort of the Catholic to achieve political recognition as a insidious move towards the expulsion of Protestants. Then the Protestant always saw that the kings and aristocrats of England and Ireland were opposed by the people whom he most feared and from recognising that it was but an easy step to regard his cause as identical with theirs. They had a common enemy, and he began to teach his children that they had a common cause, and common ideals.

This is the reason — their unfortunate isolation as strangers holding a conquered country in fee for rulers



alien to its people — that the so-called Scotch of Ulster have fallen away from and developed antagonism to political reform and mental freedom as rapidly as the Scots of Scotland have advanced in adherence to these ideals.

The Catholics, for their part, and be it understood I am talking only of the Catholic workers, have been as fortunately placed for their political education as they were unfortunately placed for their political and social condition. Just as the socialist knows that the working class, being the lowest in the social system, cannot emancipate itself without as a result emancipating all other classes, so the Irish Catholic has realised instinctively that he, being the most oppressed and disfranchised, could not win any modicum of political freedom or social recognition for himself without winning it for all others in Ireland.

Every upward step of the Catholic has emancipated some one of the smaller Protestant sects; every successful revolt of the Catholic peasant has given some added security even to those Protestant farmers who were most zealously defending the landlord. And out of this struggle the Catholic has, perforce, learned toleration. He has learned that his struggle is, and has been, the struggle of all the lowly and dispossessed, and he has grown broadminded with the broadmindedness of the slave in revolt against slavery.

But with the advent of Home Rule, nay even with the promise of Home Rule and the entrance of Ireland upon the normal level of civilised self-governing nations, the old relation of Protestant and Catholic begins to melt and dissolve, and with their dissolution will come a new change in the relation of either faith to politics. The loss of its privileged position will mean for Protestantism the possibilities of an immense spiritual uplifting; and emergence into a knowledge of its kinship with its brothers and sisters of different creeds.

Whether the entrance of Catholicity into a position of mere numerical voting power will lead, in its turn, to a withering up of those kindly feelings born of its past sufferings is another matter. I do not believe that it will, at least amongst the toilers.

Our apprenticeship to misery has been too long, our journeyings in the desert of slavery have surely implanted in our breasts a sense of the criminality of any attempt to impose fetters upon others such as we ourselves have worn. And out of that belief the writer looks forward with confidence to the future believing that the tale these Notes from Ireland will have to tell will be a hopeful one, even if the hope is nurtured amid storm and stress.

James Connolly
Forward, 3 May, 1913.

failure to defeat the mass nationalist movement in the North. It also reflects the immense discredit that has become attached to the Orange state internationally over the same period. The accord is an attempt to give new legitimacy to the Northern state and British repression by making Dublin complicit in both.

Of course Paisley, Molyneux and the other Orange bigots in the Official Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party cannot tolerate the involvement of Dublin in the Orange state at any level — even that of collaborating with them in repression against the republican movement. In their own twisted sectarian logic they correctly grasp that if London has to lean on Dublin for support this is a new demonstration of the non-viability of the Northern statelet.

FitzGerald

Why should Garret FitzGerald's government bail out British rule in Ireland in this way?

This question was answered by a Sunday Times article before the accord was even published: 'Saving the SDLP (Social Democratic Labour Party) is largely what the talks are about as far as

Dublin is concerned. In four years the SDLP share of the local election vote has remained constant at around 17.5 per cent, while Sinn Fein's vote has shot up from zero to 11.8 per cent.

'If Sinn Fein were able to win five seats in the Dublin parliament at the next general election, which is not impossible under the republic's system of proportional representation, it could hold the balance of power in the South whilst dominating nationalist politics for the first time in the North. It is a nightmare that haunts both Garret FitzGerald in the South and John Hume, the SDLP leader in the North.

'The second reason he (FitzGerald) wants a deal to bolster the SDLP is because he fears that if Sinn Fein gains the upper hand among Catholics in the North it could wreck the South as well. If the IRA became the legitimate champions of the nationalist minority in the six counties, the risk of Ulster's civil war spilling over the whole island could not be ignored.' (10 November).

The threat FitzGerald is worried about was shown to be real enough at the height of the hunger strike campaign for political status by the republican prisoners in the H-blocks and Armagh women's prison in 1981.

Bobby Sands got ten thousand more votes than Margaret Thatcher when he was elected Westminster MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone on 9 April 1981, with 30,492 votes. Paddy Agnew and Kieran Doherty, both republican prisoners, were elected to the Southern parliament — the Dail — on 11 June 1981.

H-Blocks

These votes were based on the greatest 32 County mass campaign since the 1918-21 war of national liberation against Britain. They were votes against the spectacle of the constitutional nationalist parties — the SDLP and Fianna Fail — standing idly by and allowing 10 young men to die horribly of starvation rather than recognise that people jailed by courts with no juries for fighting for a united Ireland are not 'normal criminals'.

They were accompanied by an enormous mobilisation of Irish people in solidarity with the prisoners — 100,000 at the funeral of Bobby Sands for example.

The Hunger strike campaign was a watershed in Irish politics because it conclusively showed that the fight against British rule is a 32 county struggle.

It showed the role of the main political forces in that struggle: that the main props of British rule in the North are not only the unionists north of the border but also the capitalist parties

Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour Party south of the border. It demonstrated that the SDLP is incapable of waging a struggle for even the most elementary human rights in the North.

Sinn Fein

But the most important impact of the H-blocks campaign was within the republican movement itself. The lessons of the campaign were applied to the entire activity of Sinn Fein with the goal of transforming it into a mass campaigning socialist party. The leadership of Sinn Fein passed to the current led by Gerry Adams.

Sinn Fein was able to show that the votes it received North of the border were not a temporary emotional response to the plight of the hunger strikes, by going on to stand candidates and win 59 seats in the local government elections last year.

Unlike all of the constitutional nationalist parties Sinn Fein now stands for the liberation of women from the restrictions imposed on them by both the Catholic church and Orange bigotry. It is for a women's right to choose and legalisation of contraception and divorce North and South of the border. It is developing a programme which really can unite the majority of the Irish nation, men and women against British domination.

And it is becoming stronger in the South. At this year's annual conference the proposal from the leadership that Sinn Fein should end its policy of abstention from the Southern parliament was only very narrowly defeated.

It is this whole development of Sinn Fein which is the threat that has brought the Dublin government and Margaret Thatcher together — and not some belated conversion of Thatcher to the cause of Irish unity.

The accord therefore faces the British labour movement with a basic choice. Notwithstanding fine phrases about Irish unity, support for the accord is support for Thatcher's efforts to destroy the one mass political party in Ireland that has fought relentlessly for British withdrawal, Irish unity and social progress for the last sixteen years.

Dialogue

The alternative — at present supported by just 13 Labour MPs — is to gain a powerful ally in its own struggle against British capital by uniting with the Irish people to fight for Irish unity and British withdrawal.

That requires rejecting the accord and opening up a dialogue with British labour's natural allies in Ireland — Sinn Fein.

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South Africa's trade unions

Build direct labour movement links

AT A MASS rally in Durban last weekend South Africa's largest independent trade union federation was launched. The new federation — which brings together all the chief independent unions and federations — has over half a million, mainly black, members. This in and of itself is a tremendous achievement within South Africa.

Even more significant was the use of the launch of the federation by its leaders to throw down the gauntlet to Botha on the Pass Laws. He has six months to abolish them or the new federation will lead a campaign of mass civil disobedience against them.

This decision, announced by the federation's president Elijah Barayi, vice president of the miners' union, marked the decision that the unions will play an active and leading role in the struggle against apartheid as such, and not confine itself to the so-called 'bread and butter' issues of wages, hours and conditions.

The new federation, named the Congress of South African Trade Unions, will need massive support and solidarity from the British labour movement. On this page we are reproducing the Labour Party's position on links with the independent trade unions. This should be acted on now.



THE 1970s saw a major change in the South African political economy. The decade witnessed the development of a rapidly expanding, well organised non-racial (but predominantly African) trade union movement. The movement, although viewed with considerable suspicion and on occasions viciously attacked, now appears to have established itself as a permanent feature of the South African scene.

At the 1981 Labour Party Conference a resolution was unanimously adopted calling '... for the Labour Party, working with our trade union colleagues, to provide assistance and training to the independent, non-racial trade union movement in South Africa'.

We must work towards finding the most appropriate way of implementing this resolution.

The first task is to distinguish those trade unions that can genuinely be considered to be 'independent and non-racial' from those that are not. The unions affiliated to the South African Confederation of Labour, organising white workers in openly racist unions, clearly fails to meet these criteria.

Unions affiliated to the Trade Union Council of South Africa, although organising some 170,000 Asian and Coloured workers as well as over 20,000 African workers, also cannot be accepted. Since its foundation in 1954 TUCSA has vacillated over the organisation of African workers. TUCSA first excluded African workers, then admitted them (1963), then finally expelled them (1969). In 1974, with the growth of African trade unions, TUCSA allowed Africans to affiliate, but generally organised them in exclusively African trade unions, in parallel to existing TUCSA unions. TUCSA's changing stance should be seen as the result of the growth and militancy of the independent non-racial trade unions, which threatened TUCSA's credibility as a major trade union federation.

TUCSA's African unions are highly bureaucratic, relying organisationally on their parent unions for finance and administration. Many general secretaries of the parallel

unions are also the general secretaries of the registered parent trade unions. For these reasons, TUCSA unions cannot be considered to be 'independent'. In addition it must be noted that they are frequently brought into a firm with the co-operation of management to head off a recruitment drive by one of the independent non-racial trade unions. The attitude of the parent unions to the unionisation of African workers is one of paternalism and their commitment to workers' education and shop-floor democracy is non-existent.

The remaining unions can generally be described as non-racial, since they organise all workers in an industry. To date this has generally meant that they unionise African, Coloured and Asian workers, but their constitutions are non-racial, and once white workers are willing to join the unions they will be welcomed into membership. One union affiliated to the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) recently made something of a breakthrough in recruiting some white workers into membership at a car plant, but clearly there is a long way to go before this becomes a significant trend.

The non-racial unions are also characterised by a commitment to participatory democracy so that the membership have a direct say in the policies and practices of their union. In addition, most have built considerable links with other community-based organisations, co-operating on issues such as rents and bus fares, while in return receiving support for their industrial action from the community.

Perhaps most importantly, these unions are increasingly taking united action. During the protests that followed the death in detention of the trade unionist Neil Aggett, the unions co-operated to bring out 100,000 workers in a protest stoppage. In August 1981 and April 1982 the unions met at a 'summit' to thrash out a common policy for the non-racial union movement — a process which is continuing.

There are a rapidly growing number of trade unions, but the best known and most representative are

those groups around FOSATU, CUSA (the Council of Unions of South Africa) and unaffiliated unions such as the General Workers Union, the South African Allied Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Union.

If there is any doubt over the status of a union there should be consultations with the ICFTU, or the appropriate International Trade Secretariat. These bodies are in constant contact with the non-racial unions and well able to advise on the policies and problems of the unions.

If these are the unions that we can support (and the list is not exhaustive) and the criteria by which we judge them (non-racial, independent), what kind of solidarity can we have with them?

Forms of Solidarity

1. Solidarity Action in Britain

THE British labour movement has a long history of campaigning against the repression and racism that characterises apartheid. The labour movement supports United Nations sanctions against South Africa and unilateral steps to reduce the economic links between Britain and South Africa, as well as the development of a strong non-racial trade union movement in South Africa.

British unions can and do play a valuable role in assisting the non-racial unions in their struggles with South African management and the state.

i. South African trade unionists not infrequently fall foul of the regime's repressive laws. There are a wide range of measures — including pickets, publicity, messages of support etc — that can be taken in order to bring pressure to bear on the South African authorities to secure the unionists' release.

ii. The hand of workers in disputes in South African subsidiaries of British companies can be substantially strengthened if British unions take action on their behalf. In the last few years, several examples of such action have taken place. For instance, in 1981, at the request of the ICFTU and

after shop-floor meetings at the British Leyland plant at Cowley, Alex Kitson and Terry Duffy of TGWU and AUEW respectively met senior BL management in order to put pressure on the company during a strike at the BL plant in Cape Town. The intervention was successful, and subsequently many of the Cape Town workers were re-employed at the plant.

2. Material Assistance

FINANCIAL and material assistance have been supplied to the non-racial trade unions by the ICFTU, the TUC and a number of International Trade Secretariats for a number of years. The form that such assistance should take can best be determined in consultation with the independent and non-racial unions, but the following forms of assistance may be appropriate:

- a financial assistance for trade union education in South Africa;
- b. scholarships for South African trade unionists;
- c. collections for workers on strike and for the families of jailed or victimised workers;
- d. subsidies for salaries of organisers and for office and transport equipment.

The ban on FOSATU receiving such funds has caused some difficulties but these have not generally proved to be insuperable, with the international labour movement supporting a wide range of educational and organisational projects in South Africa.

3. Visits to Britain

AN increasing number of non-racial union representatives are visiting Britain to attend meetings with their trade union colleagues in this country. While contacts with racist trade unionists must of course be discouraged, contacts with representatives of the non-racial trade union movement assist in the establishment of a real rapport between unions.

These contacts have proved invaluable during disputes when solidarity must be based on an in-depth knowledge of the organisations and personalities involved.

4. Visits to South Africa

AS THE independent and non-racial unions have grown in strength they have come increasingly to value their links with the international labour movement. Many union representatives now travel overseas and a number of British unions have received invitations from their South African counterparts. In particular, non-racial unions in disputes have at times felt that a visit by members of the international labour movement would assist their case.

At the same time it must be recognised that the South African government would, on occasion, welcome such visits, since they could be portrayed as breaking the policy of boycotting South Africa. Certainly the regime will be at pains to extract any propaganda value that it can from such visits.

It is therefore essential that any visit should only take place after consultations with the appropriate non-racial trade union, the TUC and the appropriate International Trade Secretariat.

Some guidance has been provided by those FOSATU unions affiliated to the International Metalworkers Federation. They suggested the following:

'We strongly favour fraternal contact between workers in South Africa and workers in other countries, at all levels, provided this is guided by the interests and requirements of workers. Visits to South Africa and visits overseas should be based on the concrete needs of workers. Visits

should involve not only top officials, but also plant-based worker representatives.

'The aim of these visits should be to strengthen fraternal ties between organised workers in different countries and to carry forward the struggle for workers in South Africa to win the same rights as have been won by workers in other countries.

'Several visits to and from our unions have already taken place with shop stewards and union officials from Europe visiting unions and factories in South Africa and shop stewards and officials from our unions travelling to the USA and Europe. This contact has been valuable and will be encouraged in the future, provided it takes place in accordance with the above principle and guidelines' (Press Release, 22 October 1981).

These guidelines can be elaborated upon by suggesting that:

- i. visits should only take place at the request of and according to a schedule drawn up in co-operation between British unions and the independent and non-racial trade unions in South Africa;
- ii. emphasis should be given to company-based contacts, i.e. the exchange of visits by trade union representatives working for the same parent company in Britain and South Africa;
- iii. British unions should specifically refrain from going on visits to South Africa organised by the South African government (or its front line organisations) or by companies with interests in South Africa;
- v. Great care should be taken in making any statement to the media concerning the visit.

If these guidelines are followed, visits to South Africa can be undertaken and the solidarity so vital to the international labour movement can be strengthened.

Note: In drawing up this document consultations were held with the following organisations:

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Trades Union Congress
International Metalworkers Federation
International Transport Workers Federation
International Union of Food and Allied Workers Associations
South African Congress of Trade Unions
African National Congress
Anti-Apartheid Movement
Council of Unions of South Africa
Federation of South African Trade Unions

**SUPPORT DISMISSED
ROWNTREE WORKERS**

**WE
WON'T EAT
WILSON ROWNTREE SWEETS!**

Spit out that fruit gum chum!
Many international firms based in Britain, Western Europe and the United States have established subsidiaries in South Africa, where labour is cheap. One such firm, sweet-makers Wilson-Rowntree, sacked a number of workers after a strike at their East London factory in 1980. In protest at this action the local community called for a boycott of all the company's products.

Anti-apartheid conference Agenda for action

Over 1000 activists representing local groups, students and labour movement organisations met at the Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM last Sunday.

The broad agreement registered on a major series of campaigning proposals reflected the confidence of a movement that has just built the biggest anti-apartheid demonstration ever in Britain.

A 50 per cent growth in membership was reported, and plans were discussed for doubling this growth over the coming months.

The AGM was opened with speeches from representatives of the ANC and SWAPO. Greetings were read from the UDF, and a telegram of support was sent to COSATU, the new trade union federation formed at the weekend.

An 'Agenda for Action', with extensive proposals for activities in the next six months was introduced by AAM national secretary Mike Terry.

The report explained that the black people in South Africa, and the solidarity movement in Britain, had been able to strike major blows against the apartheid regime and its international backers over the past year.

Even the British government had been forced to make small policy shifts. The Movement now had to expose the Apartheid regime's counter-offensive, including US backing for UNITA's military action in Angola.

The first priority is the campaign for sanctions against South Africa. A full plan of action, was outlined (see box).

ANC: 'We're counting on you'

From the statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, read to the Anti-Apartheid Movement conference.

THE AFRICAN National Congress, on behalf of the fighting people of South Africa, greets the annual general meeting of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. We wish it success. The AGM takes place immediately after more than 100,000 British people took to the streets of London demanding 'sanctions now!' and support for the ANC.

Today, South Africa is in flames. The fire of liberation is engulfing the whole country. The apartheid system is in a political and economic crisis. The structures of apartheid are crumbling. The ANC calls on our people to help make the country ungovernable. This is exactly what the people are doing.

They're destroying the structures of apartheid in the black ghettos. The ANC calls on the people to take the struggle to the white areas. They're doing just that. The racists are in a frenzy. Even the businessmen are in a frenzy. They are asking for advice from the ANC!

A resolution confirming the AAM's commitment to campaigning for severing all diplomatic links between Britain and South Africa was agreed.

Two policy resolutions caused considerable controversy. These contain

By Anne Kane, Hackney and Tower Hamlets AAM

proposals that the AAM should broaden its platform to take on campaigning on general anti-racist issues — proposed by Bradford AAM — and in opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act — proposed by Edinburgh branch of the ultra-left Revolutionary Communist Group.

Both were adopted after amendment to clarify that this involved the AAM extending support to other struggles rather than changing its own platform. The PTA was opposed in its use against South African and other anti-apartheid activists.

These differences revealed two entirely different directions for the movement.

Either the AAM can be built as the broadest possible movement against apartheid, uniting all those who are disgusted by the South African regime on this sole basis. Or there is the proposal of the RCG

that the movement should effectively be confined to those who also oppose the PTA, and any other question that might be thrown in.

Such an approach — in restricting and confining the forces we are prepared to mobilise against apartheid to those who agree on a full programme of other questions — would be a grave disservice to the people of South Africa.

While the AAM can, and should, lend its sup-

port to other struggles, its first responsibility has to be the people of South Africa. This means the simplest possible platform of opposition to apartheid, for sanctions now, and the broadest possible mobilisations.

This difference underlay the question of the status of City of London AAM which was disaffiliated as a group by the national committee in February 1985, though individuals retain their national membership.

The facts presented to the NC indicated that the City AAM was attempting to build itself as an alternative national movement by recruiting members nationally, with-holding funds from national AA, and calling its own 'national' actions in London.

The two-thirds vote against reinstatement was influenced by the disruptive tactics of the City group and the RCG, in-

their lives.

Support for the liberation struggle in South Africa is the duty of all progressive, democratic and freedom-loving people. We recognise that this must come from the widest spectrum of British society — churches, women, workers, youth, black organisations, political parties, trade unions, local authorities and councils. Our struggle is your struggle. Our battles are your battles.

We need and expect more solidarity from the British people. The ANC is asking the people of British to do increased solidarity with us.

This means putting more pressure on the British government to impose sanctions against apartheid, demanding the withdrawal of the racist South African troops from Namibia, demanding the withdrawal of racist South African troops from parts of Angola, demanding the unbanning of the ANC and its allies, demanding the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, demanding the end of the state of emergency.

Let us hasten the downfall of the apartheid regime. The people of South Africa are counting on you. Do not disappoint them. Do not fail them.

cluding constant heckling with terms like 'Botha', 'Judas' and 'scab'.

Aside from the political differences, there is an underlying problem of the structure of the Movement. No one should be witch-hunted for their political views, but City group's dominance at the AGM is only possible while there is no weighted delegate structure for conference.

Individuals, local groups and labour movement delegates all have the same status. Those in London, who mobilised for the conference, can easily dominate by sending every possible supporter.

The campaigning priorities agreed allow every possibility for such a mass solidarity movement with the South African people to continue to grow in Britain, the heartland of international support for Botha.

The way to deal with this is through a representative voting structure, which would result in accountable leadership bodies.

Action guide

- **January** Date to be set for a coordinated day of action against Barclays
- **1 March** Trade union conference
- **17-23 March** Week of local trade union action around sanctions
- **19 March** Mass lobby of Parliament
- **22 March** Day of local demonstrations for first anniversary of Langa massacre and demanding for a coordinated day of action against Barclays
- **1 June** Target date for completion of certain South African goods boycotts
- **28 June** National 'Freedom March' in London
- **A campaign against Richard Shops**, which has taken over the Next South African clothing contract to be prioritised

WRP: the crisis deepens

FOLLOWING the expulsion of Healy and the split in the Workers' Revolutionary Party both wings have been holding major public meetings to attempt to explain the issues in the split.

Both groups claim to be the real WRP, both produce newspapers called the *Newsline*, and youth papers called *Young Socialist*.

The meeting organised by the Banda/Slaughter wing in London attracted an audience of over 400, many of whom were not supporters of either wing of the WRP.

The meeting was an occasion for much soul-searching by Cliff Slaughter and other WRP speakers. Slaughter himself explained: 'We are at the beginning of an objective analysis, and all who wish to really learn the lessons can certainly participate.'

Such an objective analysis is certainly needed by the WRP itself, for it is going to be very hard to explain how leaders of the organisation, who worked closely with Healy for 20 years, were unaware of his degenerate sexual practices until a few weeks ago.

Slaughter seemed genuinely concerned to clear himself and what remains of the WRP from the past

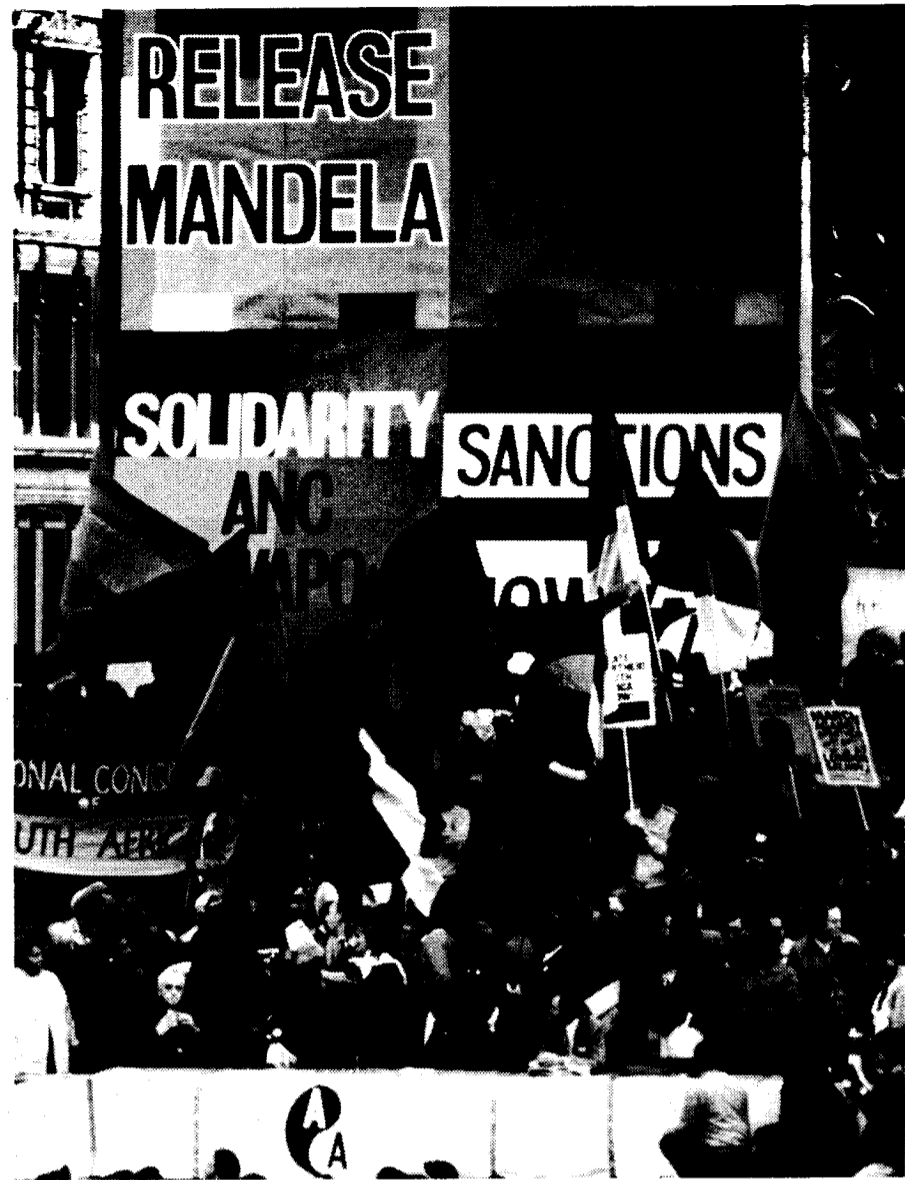


Photo: GM COOKSON

South Africa Heroes' Day

(Founding day of Umkhonto we Sizwe)

16 December

Public Meeting
7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London WC1

Speakers include:
Aziz Pahad, ANC national executive
SWAPO representative
Called by: ANC

tion' to a 'return to work will lead to fascism'.

● turned WRP branches into apolitical, super-activist debt-collection agencies in order to finance the daily *Newsline*.
● gave uncritical support to bourgeois nationalist figures like Libyan leader Ghaddafi.

Alongside these changes in political position, Banda and Slaughter are also claiming to be relooking at Healy's methods of bureaucratic expulsions and physical intimidation within the WRP, and are rejecting the method of accusing political opponents of being CIA or FBI agents.

Connie Harris, who was expelled in 1960 from the WRP's predecessor — the Socialist Labour League — speaking at the London meeting made the point that it was all very well to reject all these positions, but it was not clear what was replacing them.

She pointed out that the rot did not start in the WRP in the '70s, but was already there in the SLL, in the '60s. Connie explained that the WRP

would have to totally break from the method of frame-ups and slanders against its political opponents. This method had the effect of immunising the WRP against objective political discussion and walling it off from participation in united front type actions with other forces.

Clearly the WRP is at a turning point. The expelled members, along with Healy himself, have kept a total silence on the charges against him, thereby covering up for his despicable actions.

At the same time the Banda/Slaughter wing of the WRP seems to be thrashing about and failing to find the explanation for the disaster that has hit their organisation. While they seem prepared to have a reasonably open discussion about this, at present they are nowhere near the solution.

Moreover it is questionable, however far they go in rejecting the old Healy formulas, whether there is space on the British left for another SWP-type group, however 'healthy' it becomes.



Photo: DENNY FITZPATRICK

'We are women, we are strong' — closing song at Women Against Pit Closures conference, Sheffield, August 1985

Labour women: organising to win

WOMEN IN the Labour Party are throwing down the gauntlet to all those in the leadership of the Labour Party — starting with Neil Kinnock — who pay lipservice to supporting women, but vote down every one of Labour women's demands.

Having campaigned for several years for the women's section of Labour's NEC to be directly elected by Labour women's conference, this year the Labour Women's Action Committee will have to take the bull by the horns.

By Jude Woodward, Labour Women's Action Committee executive, personal capacity

'Shadow' elections will be held for the NEC places reserved for women in at the 1986 women's conference. We will then be able to compare the legitimacy of the NEC democratically elected by Labour's official women's conference, and the NEC women's places appointed by the trade union bloc votes.

AGM

Organising this campaign will be the subject of the major discussion at the WAC AGM in January. It is a campaign that will once again put the fight in the Labour women's organisation back at the top of the agenda.

Labour women are being forced to confront male chauvinism in Labour's leadership because the last year has

starkly revealed the depth of the opposition to women's demands in the party. While WAC's demands were overwhelmingly adopted by the women's conference, it is clear from party conference itself that no equivalent progress has been made in the party as a whole.

Quite the reverse. There were fewer resolutions on party conference agenda than in recent years, and even the one WAC resolution supported by the NEC, calling

Facts

for women to be included on every shortlist, was voted down on conference floor.

Alongside this there has been the disgrace of

reselection where only 11 out of the first 200 prospective candidates selected for parliamentary seats were women.

These facts have had a sobering effect on many women in the party, including among those who were sceptical about the importance of WAC's demands for the most elementary democracy for women. But overwhelmingly this is turning into anger.

This year's AGM has to reflect that anger. Our number one goal must be to translate justified outrage into a national confrontation with male chauvinism and those who prop it up in the Labour Party.

The 'shadow' election by women's conference of the women's section of the NEC will demonstrate that women are not asking for any favours — we intend to take our equal place in the labour movement. This will resolve some of the problems of WAC's perspective in the last year, which was marked by the absence of any such initiative aimed at the party as a whole.

Individual campaigns around reselection by their very nature take place in individual constituencies, creating a series of isolated local battles. Unfortunately WAC did not take up the limited opportunities that did present themselves to organise a national, public campaign.

Scargill

The emergence of Women Against Pit Closures gave the perfect opportunity for such a campaign. Here, as Scargill put it, women demonstrated to millions of trade unionists, in a bitter class struggle, that not only are they capable of playing an equal role in the labour movement, they are capable of leading it.

This has continued with the role of dozens of WAPC groups campaigning to defend the NUM in areas like Notts, in fighting for an amnesty for victimised miners and in arguing for WAPC itself to be recognised as a constituent part of the NUM.

This was the most unprecedented relation between women and an industrial trade union com-

posed mainly of men in the entire history of the British labour movement. It was women leading both men and women in the defence of their communities.

It is this type of struggle, and the fact that women are in the lead, that is the strongest possible argument for WAC's own demands in the labour movement as a whole. It is through WAC identifying with such struggles that the next phase of the struggle can be won.

If WAC had been closely identified with fighting alongside these women, and centrally involved them in the reselection battle — especially in the mining seats — the whole campaign would have had a greater national political impact. It would have decisively demonstrated that WAC's demands are not about the interests of a few 'careerist' women — as its opponents claim — but about the right of women, the majority of women, to their proper role in the labour movement.

Alliances

Building such alliances with women like those in the mining communities means WAC has to turn outwards and adopt a more public campaigning approach. Everywhere that women are demonstrating in practice that they can not only struggle, but lead the working class in real battles — in the mining communities, at Greenham, in the black communities, in the North of Ireland, in South Africa — WAC has to be there championing them.

Women in the Labour Party are saying that enough is enough, and the strategy demanded is one of confrontation, going public, campaigning and directly linking up with all women actually in struggle. The NEC 'shadow' elections provide the core of such an approach — but this cannot be solely posed in terms of the formalities, procedures and voting at women's conference.

We need a campaign around it that begins now, with meetings in every area of the country which take the struggle out of the confines of the women's sections, wards and GCs and

into the broader labour movement. Together with women from the mining communities, black women, ANC women, women from Ireland, WAC has to explain that until women have a real say in the labour movement it will never meet our needs.

Choice

We must not underestimate the scale of the battle we are taking on, nor the fact that our gains will not be made rapidly. But it is not failing to win that breeds demoralisation, it is failing to really take up the fight. The feeling that we are not really even mobilising the support we have got, and the support we can potentially win, in an effective way.

The Labour Women's Action Committee faces a choice at its AGM. Not the choice of whether it continues to campaign for its demands or for some other programme. Nor is it about whether the women on the WAC executive are 'socialist feminists' or not, as proposed in the current issue of *Labour Briefing*, or what its 'image' is. The choice WAC faces is about how WAC campaigns for its demands, what strategy it has.

A campaign has to be built for WAC's demands based on the actual struggles of women, in alliance with all those who are prepared to support us. And this is the second element of the choice WAC has to make — whether it is prepared to mobilise its potential allies.

Kinnock

WAC has to be prepared to make the judgement that what matters is where you stand when it comes to the vote on women's demands. That means Arthur Scargill, the NUM, much of the Campaign Group, some other unions are with us, and should be on our platforms, issuing statements in our support, campaigning alongside us.

Neil Kinnock on the other hand, for all his lipservice to women, is one of the chief props of the male chauvinism of the labour movement, for when it comes to the vote, he votes No.

Silentnight: 'a battle about class'

BARNOLDSWICK, a small town in North Lancashire, was packed to its seams last Saturday when 2,000 people marched in support of the Silentnight strike.

The strike at Silentnight has now lasted for six months, with the entire 500-strong workforce having been sacked. The con-

echoed these remarks:



Dennis Skinner

By Dick Withecombe

tinuation of the strike has been aided by the support given at this year's TUC.

The strike is to be the subject of a three-hour debate in parliament on 3 December, when local MP Peter Pike will be speaking for the Labour front bench.

Already the strike has received nearly £100,000, through national and international solidarity. Support has come from as far away as Sri Lanka.

The solidarity network built over the 12 months of the miners' strike has been available to the Silentnight strikers from day one of the dispute.

Dennis Skinner MP, speaking at the rally, described it as the same battle as the miners' strike: 'This battle has got the support of those members of the National Executive Committee who voted to sustain the rights of those Liverpool councillors last Wednesday.'

Euro MP Bob Cryer

'There has been unity and determination shown by this strike, and that is the message we've got to give to the Labour leadership — you win when you are united and determined, you don't win when you attack a section of the labour movement, whether it's in Liverpool or anywhere else.'

Contingents of miners from South Wales, North Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire, along with many Women Against Pit Closure groups were prominent on the march.

Peggy, from the Orange gate at Greenham Common, also gave a message of support: 'You are now approaching your first Christmas, we at Greenham are celebrating our sixth Christmas. As with the miners you will be welcome there any time. Our struggles are linked in unity against this government.'

Money and support to: FTAT, Cravendale 92 branch strike fund, 10 Rainhill Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire.

Forgemasters' strike: seven weeks

THE SEVEN week old strike by 700 steel workers at Sheffield Forgemasters Atlas site is now stronger than ever following a stormy mass meeting last Friday which forced ISTC officials to withdraw a return to work instruction.

The all-out strike began on 16 October in response to a far-reaching management offensive —

By Martin Hill

MacGregor style, as one worker put it.

For five years wages at Forgemasters have fallen well behind inflation. In two of those years there has been no increase at all. The plant suffered massive job losses. Forgemaster argued that this was necessary to restore profitability.

Workers were intimidated by the situation in Sheffield's steel industry, which has seen over 20,000 jobs go since 1980. Now the Atlas site is making profits — but management's attitude hasn't changed.

This year, they offered a paltry £4 a week across the board, then even that was withdrawn. Instead they 're-organised' the site into five separate companies, and refused to negotiate at site level anymore.

The central shop steward's committee was

declared 'unnecessary', the union office was closed and the full-time convenor's post abolished. Existing agreements have been torn up. The joint works health and safety committee has been abolished. And now management say they will rule on which shop stewards are acceptable to them!

At the neighbouring River Don plant, Forgemasters have tried to ban a shop stewards meeting to discuss the Atlas situation. A similar management offensive is under way there, with demands for a no-strike deal on a recent £3.4 million order, and a threat to existing agreements.

Forgemasters is the biggest private employer in Sheffield. A victory there would be a huge boost to other workers in the steel and engineering industry, many of whom face similar threats.

Support for the strike is spreading especially in the engineering and mining industries. The strikers have produced leaflets and stickers and organised regular city centre collections. As Christmas approaches they'll be needing all the support they can get.

• Donations, requests for information and speakers to: Ron Ward, secretary, shop stewards' committee, Dispute Centre, AUEW House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield.

WIDENING THE WEB

GREENHAM COMMON

SATURDAY DEC. 14th 1985

ENCLOSE THE BASE ♀ EMBRACE THE WORLD

What started out as a simple theoretical statement has become a complex web against all oppression and a powerful political force. It is a force that is growing and spreading.

MAKE A 9 MILE ♀♀♀ INFORMATION BOARD AT GREENHAM — attach messages, describe the facts of the situation, the struggle, the demands, the actions, the women's struggles all over the world. (Greenham Common, 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world.)

AT 2pm LINK HANDS ALL ROUND THE BASE, TURN OUR BACKS ON THE MILITARY MADNESS AND LOOK OUTWARDS TO THE WORLD.

SUNDAY 15th IF YOU CAN STAY — A full day of action at our gates. (10am-6pm) — 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world. (Greenham Common, 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world.)

The rest is to be decided by the women themselves.

If you can stay overnight or for a few days, please bring your own warm waterproof clothes, tent, food, etc. (Greenham Common, 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world.)

BUT EVEN IF YOU CAN'T STAY THIS TIME, VISIT US AT GREENHAM ON DECEMBER 14th, THEN

WIDEN THE WEB AND CARRY GREENHAM HOME — EMPOWERED AND STRONG

DECEMBER 12th

10th anniversary of the NUM strike in 1975. (Greenham Common, 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world.)

CONTACT:

DEC. 14th ACTION WOMEN'S PLACE CAMP GREENHAM COMMON NEWBURY BERKS

HELP

WITH COPYING AND CONTACTING US BY AIR AND PHONE. (Greenham Common, 1000 women, 1000 demands, 1000 actions, 1000 women's struggles all over the world.)

Contact your local Greenham/NUM Group

REACHING OUT IS WIDENING THE WEB

UDM exposed in Leicester

'LEICESTERSHIRE NUM leader Jack Jones in a stunning expose of conspiracy and corruption has revealed to the Union's National Executive Committee the extent of the Coal Board's involvement in the breakaway organisation based in Nottinghamshire.

'A hushed NEC, meeting on the morning of Friday, 15th November, listened intently as Mr Jones described how NCB chiefs:

'PLEADED WITH HIM to bring Leicestershire into the breakaway

'OFFERED HIM financial rewards if his Area left the NUM

'ADMITTED that the purpose of the breakaway is to 'get rid of' Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield

'THREATENED to withhold any wages offer until the NUM accepts all the Board's terms on incentive payments.

Among the points which stunned the NEC was the revelation that Jack Jones had himself been offered the presidency of the breakaway by Roy Lynk last July.'

So a special issue of the *Miner* reported the latest development in the NCB's campaign to smash the NUM.

Mick Richmond, one of the 'Dirty Thirty', explains how the fight to defend the union is taking place in Leicestershire.

Jack Jones' decision to come out in support of the NUM follows months of press releases and radio broadcasts by us in support of the union. The campaign in South Derbyshire also had an effect, where Arthur Scargill addressed meetings.

A breakthrough came at South Leicester colliery when Terry Tracey and Tony Cooper to their credit started campaigning there against the UDM. At a branch meeting on 5 October, attended by 50 of the 300 miners at the pit, the vote to remain in the NUM was unanimous.

The next colliery to hold a meeting was Ellistown, the pit where area president, Terry Hughes is based. They voted for a ballot to be held on the breakaway.

A meeting organised by Arthur Scargill was held in Sheffield with Jack Jones and representatives

of the 'Dirty Thirty' to resolve the outstanding question of our membership of the Leicester Area.

A compromise was reached whereby our union dues for the duration of the strike would be paid, a guarantee given of no disciplinary action, and Jack Jones would come out in open support of the NUM. Jones said that he needed us, the striking miners, as the union was facing a difficult time.

When it came to the Bagworth branch meeting, Jack Jones gave a brilliant speech for one hour twenty minutes, slamming the UDM and the activities of the Leicester area president in campaigning against the NUM.

However there was a lot of hostility from the 350 members present to the 12 of us who had supported the national strike. The eventual vote was fifty-fifty on the call for the Area Council to organise a ballot on the breakaway.

Jones is now frequently in the press and on the radio explaining the case for the NUM. Also local leaders of the Power group are doing likewise, for the first time.

It's a pity that both sides didn't do this eighteen months ago.



Cartoon from *The Miner*

Nottingham: the fight goes on

ONLY ONE month after the NCB intervened into the Nottinghamshire NUM ballot on the breakaway with the 'carrot' of their pay offer, the empty promises are already ringing hollow.

Disaffection is showing amongst those miners who were duped into believing that membership of the UDM would guarantee them a wage packet of £400 per week.

Not only has the wage increase worked out to a paltry £1.90 per week extra for some, but also the NCB has begun driving through productivity measures without any negotiation.

They are threatening to cut out all washing and travelling payments, which would considerably extend working time underground.

Already management are using any excuse to

dock time. At Ollerton, for example, a miner was docked 20 minutes for carrying an injured colleague out of the pit on a stretcher.

In many cases it is only the new NUM branch leadership who are prepared to fight these attacks. Despite the fact that the Reference Tribunal decision calling on the NCB to recognise the NUM in Notts has still not been carried out, the NUM has been able to knock back some of these attacks.

This situation means that as the NCB attacks the wages and conditions of all miners in Notts, more and more men will begin to see that it is the NUM, fighting as part of a strong national union, that can defend them.

There are indications that membership of the NUM in Notts is picking up after a lull immediately following the split. One NUM loyalist at Blid-

worth, is now recruiting an average of 10 members a week.

However, despite the opportunities that are opening up for rebuilding the NUM in Notts it would be wrong to underestimate the major problems that still exist. Peter Heathfield, NUM General Secretary, speaking at a social for the victimised miners in Rainworth last Friday made this point forcefully.

He emphasised that we face a long and bitter struggle and he called for the utmost discipline in that fight. In particular, he explained the need for militants to avoid taking action which could lead to their victimisation.

However while the NUM does indeed face a very serious situation, there are still gains being won. The Rainworth social also celebrated the reinstatement of Ken Petney, who had been sacked from Blidworth colliery.

'Racists out!' at Ford

A UNIQUE agreement to sack 'employees found to be distributing racist literature or engaging in any other act likely to cause racial disharmony' has been won by trade union action in Ford Dagenham Assembly Plant (PTA). The agreement will cover the whole of Dagenham operations.

Two foremen have already been suspended and will be removed from the plant. A third, Tony Lecomber — the British National Party thug who blew himself up trying to plant a bomb outside the Clapham offices of the Workers Revolutionary Party — has been sacked.

The incident which sparked the action took place on the nightshift of 7 November. Two foremen started circulating a racist 'joke' employment questionnaire to selected white workers. This contained comments such as 'Name of father (if known) — West Indians should list all possibilities on a separate sheet', and 'Main source of income: Mugging, Drugs, Prostitution (tick as applicable)'.

Particularly aimed at Asians were 'Please tick your staple diet: curry, pet

food, potatoes', and 'What method did you use to illegally enter the country'.

The response was immediate. As the filth circulated workers began walking off the job. There were no less than 17 different stoppages and by mid-shift hundreds of trim and final assembly workers had gathered in the main canteen demanding the sacking of the foremen responsible. *

The action was easily spread as — in the wake of the Lecomber bombing

the previous weekend — militant shop stewards had won unanimous support for a policy of refusing to work with racist or fascist supervision.

In fact, at exactly the same time as the two foremen were circulating their racist filth, a leaflet from the left-wing Ford Workers Group was going around the plant calling on all Ford stewards committees and union branches to 'follow the lead of the Dagenham PTA stewards in telling the company: "We will refuse to work with these evil bastards". One of history's happier accidents!

The cudgels were taken up next morning by black convenor Joe Gordon and other senior stewards. They threatened to stop the whole plant if the two were not removed. By early afternoon Bill Hayden, vice-president manufac-

turing of Ford Europe, was virtually on his knees in the convenor's office promising to do anything to keep the peace.

The result was the suspension of the two foremen from the plant, the promise of instant dismissal for racist activities, and a revamped company equal opportunities and awareness training programme.

In a letter, circulated by post to all employees, the company stated: 'We believe that, apart from being morally right, an Equal Opportunities Policy makes good business sense'. No doubt they were counting the cost of 17 stoppages and considering future possibilities in a workforce which is two thirds black or Asian in production areas! Already stewards in the Body Plant have said

that they will refuse to take the racist foremen there.

This is a very real victory against racism by militant rank and file trade union action. As one delighted shop steward said: 'It was just like the old days in the mid-seventies: the blokes just started walking off the job'. That's a situation Ford has not had to contend with for several years and explains management's panic.

After all, in this year's pay offer they are trying to force through a two year agreement and a radical productivity deal sweeping away job demarcations amongst lineworkers and between trades. The last thing they want is a workforce with renewed confidence in its ability to fight and win at local level.

Anti-racists everywhere should use and build on our victory.

Students set to fight apartheid

THIS YEAR'S NUS conference, to be held on 6 to 8 December, looks set to be the biggest this decade, with an estimated 2000 delegates expected to turn out.

This reflects the increased activities of NUS and students all over the country over recent months, especially in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

Student anti-apartheid groups have been sprouting everywhere this year, with one result being 64 student banners on the anti-apartheid demonstration of 2 November, all with large numbers of students behind them.

Accordingly, South Africa, along with education cuts, will be the priority subject for debate at NUS conference. The

NUS executive's positions calls for total sanctions against apartheid; a full boycott of Barclays, and of all South African goods; a major tour of ANC and SWAPO speakers around the colleges; and supports all the actions and initiatives of the AAM.

This is an excellent situation as the huge vote of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) will ensure the motion is adopted — but students will have to maintain pressure and see that the NOLS leadership of the NUS carries these proposals out to the full.

For the coming year, the AAM is planning to organise a campaign among students to get their colleges to disinvest from South Africa and to drop contracts with firms which have South African links.

Xmas greetings to the miners



THE National Miners' Amnesty Campaign have produced 10,000 Christmas cards, each individually addressed to one of the sacked and jailed miners — victims of the revenge of the NCB and the Tories for the strike.

Each card costs £1 which will be sent to the NUM National Solidarity Fund. Bulk orders on a sale or return basis. Send your order to: Christmas Cards, 4 The Grove, Lancaster LA1 3AL.

Socialist ACTION

'One federation - one country' South African unions unite



THE LAUNCH of the new Congress of South African Trade Unions last weekend is a milestone for the liberation struggle. The new federation brings together 34 of the country's independent unions with a combined membership of nearly half a million.

It will represent workers throughout basic industry — in the mines, engineering, automobile, textile and transport sectors — as well as in retail trade and food.

COSATU, as the federation is called, is the product of unity talks which have spanned four years, and brings together the now-to-be-disbanded FOSATU, the NUM and the unions affiliated to the United Democratic Front.

The Congress's President is Elijah Barayi, the 60-year-old vice president of the National Union of Mineworkers and a former activist in the African National Congress before it was banned.

Speaking at the 10,000-strong launch rally in Durban on Sunday, under the banner of 'One federation — one country', Barayi called for abolition of the pass laws, nationalisation of the mines, and for disinvestment by foreign companies.

He answered the arguments of those like Thatcher that sanctions on South Africa would be more harmful to black workers than to the regime. 'Blacks have starved since 1952', he said, referring to the date when whites started to settle in South Africa. 'COSATU is therefore in favour of sanctions', he declared, despite it being illegal to call for sanctions under South Africa's apartheid laws.

In an interview after

of this country'.

The political direction of the Congress was further underlined by the presence of United Democratic Front members Billy Nair and Kenneth Nkomo who were welcomed by the 900 Congress delegates as observers. The congress also called for troops to get out of the townships and for the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

By Jon Silberman

COSATU's general secretary is Jay Naidoo, of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union. An Indian, Naidoo's election is an indication of the growing unity between different sections of the black workers and an affirmation of COSATU's non-racial commitment to a unitary state: one federation — one country!

Not affiliated to the new federation are CUSA, the Council of Unions of South Africa, with 180,000 members and the smaller Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions — both of which are associated with 'black consciousness' political organisations. The official state-regulated federation, TUCSA (which has undergone dramatic



the rally, Barayi further explained the role of the new federation. COSATU's main function, he said, would be to 'organise and educate the black masses, not just on wage and bread-and-butter issues but on broader political issues too'.

Another speaker at the rally was Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM. Ramaphosa also took up the political role of the new federation. 'COSATU must contribute to the liberation struggle', he declared, adding that such political involvement should not be at the expense of building support on the shop floor.

Ramaphosa went on to explain that 'the fact that there is no clear political direction among the working class is a limitation. This is why we want COSATU to point a direction for the working class

decline with the rise of the new independent unions), is excluded.

The importance of the new federation in welding together a united force of the black working class cannot be overstated.

Elijah Barayi showed in his speech what the movement represents when he delivered an ultimatum to the regime over the pass laws, which require blacks to permanently carry documents proving that they have 'permission' to work or live in or near 'white' areas.

'COSATU gives Botha six months to get rid of passes', he declared to thunderous applause. 'If that does not take place we will burn the passes of the black man... I want to give PW Botha a last warning to get rid of the pass laws and to withdraw the troops from the townships before the country burns.'

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