

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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LIARS CAUGHT OUT!



THE LAST week has lifted just a corner of the veil of secrecy that surrounds the activity of the Reagan and Thatcher governments. If what has come out appears as an almost incredible morass of lying, duplicity, and double dealing that is simply because the full picture of what goes on in never seen by us.

Look at the facts. First the Reagan government has spent the last six years on a hysterical campaign against 'terrorism'. It has bombed Libya in so called reprisals against terrorism. In particular it has whipped up a campaign against Libya, Iran and Nicaragua as 'terrorist regimes'. It has called for economic sanctions

against them. And then it is revealed it has been supplying arms to Iran to attempt to gain friends there and bring the country back into the orbit of the United States.

And what was the money made from the arms sales used for? To finance the terrorist contras against Nicaragua! And this was carried out completely illegally — behind the back of the US Congress which had formally banned funds for the contras. This is from the president who preaches 'law and order'.

The argument that this was done by a colonel North in the National Security Council is simply absurd — and no one whatever believes it. No one gets permission to supply arms to Iran without authorisation from the

very highest circles. And that means in principle, if not in every detail, from Reagan.

And what has our prime minister been revealed as involved in? The government has been frantically attempting in an Australian court to stop the publication of 'security material' in a book by a former MI5 agent. All sorts of solemn declarations on 'national security' are invoked. It then turns out that the government permitted the leaking of the same material in a book by Chapman Pincher — a journalist who can be relied upon to be sympathetic both to the Thatcher government and to the British security services. Pincher's book, furthermore, was read in a manuscript which had been stolen in

order to clear it in advance. Once more 'law and order' rules supreme.

Sir Robert Armstrong, the person who fronted the cover up of the Westland scandal, was forced to admit that he had given 'misleading' evidence to the court — which is a polite way of saying he had scarcely told the 'truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth'.

What has now come out on this government is that it is riddled with lies and deceit — and far worse crimes than that. First it was the Belgrano, then Westland, then the beginning of the story of how it planned and provoked the miners strike, now the revelations on its duplicity on the MI5 revelations.

But don't be fooled and don't be

appalled. Because what you are seeing is nothing compared to the real truth that lies at the heart of this government — or of Reagan's. If its plans on nuclear weapons, on how it deals with unemployment, or its aid for countless real right wing terrorist regimes throughout the world — starting with South Africa — were known it would never survive.

But that veil of secrecy has been pierced just for a moment. See what is taking place on the Iran arms deal, or the MI5 revelations, and apply that to the whole of Reagan and Thatcher's policies. Then you will get a very accurate idea of what their governments are.

And *that* is something very useful indeed.

Socialist Action

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Crucial choices for the left

IT IS quite clear that the situation which has existed for the last eighteen months in the Labour Party since the end of the miners strike is beginning to break up. This is revealed most sharply in the political differentiations beginning to appear in Labour's 'soft left'.

These differences were dramatically signalled immediately prior to Labour Party conference by the article 'Whatever happened to realignment' in *Tribune* by its editor Nigel Williamson. This was followed by open differences in the ranks of the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) at Labour Party conference. These then passed over into clearly counterposed and contradictory motions put to the LCC AGM for and against work with Labour Left Liaison (LLL). The most open development has come with Ken Livingstone's attack on the sectarian decision of the LCC AGM against working with the LLL — and the evident quandary facing the 'realigned left' on reselection of MPs.

This situation has significant implications for the left in the party. For eighteen months the left has been subject to a combination of hysterical vilification, alternating with studied silence on its activities, by both the media and the party leadership. The positive developments that took place on the left were so to speak 'internal'.

The first step forward was of political clarification — gaining support throughout the left for the demands of the Black Section and WAC, the publication by the Campaign Group of the *A Million Jobs a Year* pamphlet, and adopting the policy for withdrawal from NATO. This was accompanied by organisational steps — the launching of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, the creation of the Labour Left Liaison, the launching of *Campaign Group News*, the formation of Campaign Forum.

This got the left into a better political and organisational shape. It increased its coherence. But it still left it relatively isolated.

What has now begun to break down is the isolation the media and party leadership tried to put round the left. The Khan/Scally campaign was a first break in that. This was a campaign launched by activists on the hard left which consciously went out of its way to draw in the widest possible sections of the party. The campaign, because it was based on a good case and correct tactics, was spectacularly successful.

Now the left is faced with an absolutely critical choice. A wrong line is that promoted by supporters of a journal such as *Labour Briefing*. These analysed developments at Labour Party conference as for example: 'Attempts were made by the realigned left which supports Kinnock to make inroads into what remains of the "hard" left. Ken Livingstone, in particular, made a number of proposals to try to draw in a further section of the left behind the Kinnock leadership and marginalise what Livingstone called the "ultra left" such as *Labour Briefing*'.

This is to stand reality completely on its head. What happens if a section of the soft left, it does not matter who, decides that they wish to defend reselection, or oppose expulsions, or support Black Sections? What has to be judged is the political content of what is proposed. Is it in the interests of the working class or not? If so it should be pursued.

We think that the response made by Labour Left Liaison is entirely correct. There does not exist the conditions today to unify the different organisations — the Campaign Group and Tribune Group, LLL and LCC. But what does exist is the possibility of joint work between groups or individuals on the left on issues such as reselection, the witch hunt, defending the NUM, British withdrawal from Ireland, the demands of Black Sections and the Women's Action Committee. It is the LCC which in a fit of hyper-sectarianism has rejected this. The left should not follow suit. Maintaining the political coherence and organisation it has begun to build up in the last period is in no way contradictory to taking initiatives to work with wider sections of the party on issues that serve the interests of the labour movement.

Defend reselection

THE MOST important democratic gains in the Labour Party in the years 1979-81 were the election of party leader by the electoral college and the mandatory reselection of MPs. It is a sign of how far Kinnock is prepared to go in his attacks on the party membership that at its 26 November meeting the national executive committee decided to reopen the issue of reselection of MPs. This was in direct defiance of the decision of this year's Labour Party conference. PETE WILLSMAN, assistant secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD), explains just how serious this issue is.

The struggle for mandatory reselection of MPs was fuelled by the demoralisation and disillusion which accompanied the Wilson and Callaghan governments. This gave party members a series of bitter object lessons which made them realise that they, and indeed the party itself, had little real influence on Labour MPs and a Labour government. 'Never again!' was the lesson drawn by the majority of party members. No more governments like that of Wilson and Callaghan.

The central fight was over the accountability of MPs. The victory was to secure mandatory reselection — carried out by the general committee (GC) of the constituency parties.

The various schemes which are being promoted by the party leadership, the EETPU and by the Labour Coordinating Committee and others, to replace the present system of reselection of MPs are presented as more democratic — and chiefly as variants of 'One member one vote' (OMOV). Like every piece of 'democracy', however, its real content has to be examined not abstractly but in the real concrete situation in which it will operate.

The real issue is that the variants of OMOV, and other systems proposed would mean that a sitting MP would effectively have a job for life. It would mean that the Parliamentary Labour Party would be even more unaccountable to the Labour Party and, as has been found out in the past,

policies that have nothing to do with the interests of the working class or socialism would be even easier to pursue.

It was for these reasons that OMOV was advocated in the late 1970s by Labour MPs who then went on to form the SDP. There can be no doubt that it is for the same reasons that so many existing MPs are enthusiastic about it.

In the real world the general committee (GC) of a constituency party, by virtue of its elected composition, its frequent meetings and its close contact with the MP, is the only body at present able properly to monitor and assess the MP's performance.

It is presented by opponents of accountability of MPs that supporters of the rights of the GCs are claiming that general committee delegates are in some way superior to, or different from, ordinary party members. This is pure demagoguery. It is simply by virtue of their position, they are elected members of the only party body which can exercise accountability and check on the activity of the MP. These GC members in turn are accountable to, and elected by, party members.

In theory it might be desirable to delegate the function of monitoring to the branches, but this would not be possible in practice. It is just not feasible for an MP regularly to attend all branch meetings so that he/she would also be properly accountable to party branch members and those of affiliated organisations.



George Howarth

Taking the power of reselection away from the GC would in reality vastly increase the autonomy of MPs from their constituencies.

The supporters of OMOV proposals claim that they are more democratic. But any form of ballot which is heavily loaded in favour of the sitting MP is scarcely more democratic! The existing system of selection by the GC has been developed over many years so that it is fair to all candidates. What would take place in reality with the alternative systems is clear.

Intense media pressure would be built up around protecting right wing MPs — and for unseating left

wing ones. MPs will use the local, or national, media against the party for all they are worth. On some of the types of schemes likely to be proposed, if the 'Evans proposals' of 1984 are anything to go by, we will see both sides concentrating on 'bussing' people to ward meetings. The local party would cease to be a campaigning body for a year or more. The entire party would be opened up to intense outside interference by the media.

It is also not clear what will be the role of the trade unions. The Evans proposals of 1984, the last direct attempt to reverse accountability of MPs, bypassed the GCs — the body which represents all

sections of the party. They therefore cut out the role of the trade unions.

The right wing of the party fully understands the role of reselection. Every year since mandatory reselection was adopted in 1979 the right has attempted to reverse it. Thinking, perhaps, that it was safe the left of the party has not given it anything like the attention the right has. This neglect means that the most important democratic gain in the Labour Party is now under serious threat. The left must relearn how vital this issue is, and fight to defend the biggest democratic gain it made out of the bitter experience of the Wilson and Callaghan governments.

NEC votes to overturn conference policy

This year's Labour Party conference decided that the National Executive Committee (NEC) should not re-open the issues of reselection of MPs. This followed a sharp fight at party conference in which the right wing, led by the EETPU, tried to prevent conference voting on the issue. The resolution instructing the NEC not to reopen the issue of reselection, and supporting the present system, was passed by 3.5 million voted to 2.6 million.

At its first post-conference meeting, on 25 November, the NEC immediately voted to overturn conference policy and re-open the issue of reselection — using the pretext it was starting a 'consultation exercise'. The vote was 16-12. In addition to the normal right wingers, including Kinnock and Hattersley, three union members on the NEC — Eddie Haigh of the TGWU, Tom Sawyer of NUPE, and Charlie Turlock of the NUR — all voted contrary to their union conference and Labour Party delegation, policies to decide to re-open the issue. Without their

votes the resolution would have been lost.

Those voting to uphold conference policy included all seven constituency section NEC members and Eric Clarke, Linda Douglas, Diana Jeuda and Sid Tierney — the last two voting in line with USDAW conference policy.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has prepared model resolutions for regional party conferences opposing this flagrant breaking of conference policy by the NEC. Copies of these model resolutions are available from CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

THE Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) is the pressure group which organised the victories for party democracy in 1979-81. It is the chief organisation campaigning to defend them today.

Membership of CLPD is open to all Labour Party members. Individual membership £6, couples £7, Labour Party branches £5 and affiliated organisations £7. Send application to Vladimir Derer, Secretary CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.



Vladimir Derer

MORE EVIDENCE of the forces reshaping the situation in the Labour Party came last week.

The first was a public attack by Ken Livingstone, in his column in *Tribune*, on the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) for refusing to work with Labour Left Liaison — the left umbrella organisation including the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Labour Party Black Section and other Labour Party campaigns.

Vladimir Derer, Secretary of Labour Left Liaison (LLL), has replied to the Livingstone column, in a letter sent to *Tribune*, pointing out that the conditions do not exist today for the unification of the 'hard' and 'soft' left — a proposal made by Livingstone — but welcoming joint work.

JOHN ROSS looks at the issues involved.

IN A letter to be published in *Tribune* this week Vladimir Derer, the secretary of Labour Left Liaison (LLL) replies to the column by Ken Livingstone in *Tribune* which we print on this page. Derer states that the conditions do not exist today for a united organisation 'of the left'. But what should be sought is the opportunity for joint work where there are principled agreed objectives. Socialist Action entirely agrees with this approach and it is worth spelling out the reasons for it.

Firstly a left has as its first principle to support those in struggle. This, of course, applied first and foremost to the miners in their strike, but it also applies to others — including Liverpool City Council in their fight with the Tories. No matter what fight has to be waged against *Militant* over their shameful, to be blunt racist, attitude to Liverpool's black community, and other issues, in the actual fight between Liverpool council and the Thatcher government the left has to be entirely on the side of Liverpool council.

That principle of supporting struggle means also support for the workers at Wapping, at Silentsnight and local councils such as Haringey, Lambeth and Brent that are now coming under attack not simply from the Tories but from the Labour leadership. If that means having a clash with Kinnock then too bad.

Second a left has to be based on defending party democracy. That has two crucial aspects at present.

First, the most important democratic gain that the left has made in the last ten years, mandatory reselection of MPs by the sole body, the general committees, that can in any sense make them accountable, is under direct attack. It has to be defended by the entire left.

Second, the entire left was always united in its opposition to expulsions as a method of resolving questions in the party. It is, in fact, support for expulsions that marks out groups such as Clause 4 in the LCC as not really of the left at all — but as right wing entryists in the left.

The reason may be seen simply. It is absurd to claim, as did LCC member Fiona McDaggart in the debate between the LLL and LCC at Socialist Action's 'Building an Alliance for Socialism' weekend, that the LCC supported expulsions in Liverpool because it had

discovered 'undemocratic practices'. What about Roy Hattersley? Wasn't he guilty of the most incredible undemocratic practices in Sparkbrook? Are the LCC now campaigning for his expulsion? And if not why not?

No unity on the left is going to exist as long as there is support for political expulsions — and that is in reality what they are — being used in the party. The corrosive aspect of these expulsions can be seen only too clearly in Sparkbrook, Knowsley North, St Helen's and other constituencies.

Third, the left has a record, and one to be proud of, in fighting for some of the most oppressed and exploited in our society. It is only the left which has really taken up the fight for the unemployed, or those threatened with redundancy, or the attacks on the inner cities. But that level of real support has to be given to others who are just as much, or even more, oppressed and exploited both in Britain and internationally — the black community, women, the people of the North of Ireland, those fighting imperialism in South Africa, Central America and other countries.

Agreement on these, and other, political questions is what is necessary for the left — there cannot be any magic organisational formulas to bring it together.

Without agreement on these, and other, principles it is not possible to create united organisation on the left in the Labour Party. To try to do so would not take forward the left but take it backwards.

But what is entirely possible, and necessary, is joint work on agreed objectives. This was undertaken around the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. There are a series of other areas where it can be undertaken — for example in defending reselection, fighting attacks on Knowsley North party, fighting expulsions, fighting for the demands of women's conference, gaining the right to Black Sections, fighting for British withdrawal from Ireland, supporting struggles such as Wapping and other issues. It is here that attention must be concentrated.

On this Labour Left Liaison has made its position clear. It favours joint work to secure these demands. It is the LCC that rejects it. While we do not agree with Ken Livingstone's view that the Campaign Group and Tribune Group should be fused, or LLL and LCC should be, what we do support is the idea of joint work on agreed objectives.

LLL-LCC

What kind of left?

THE KEN LIVINGSTONE COLUMN



Left must look to the future

the issue of reselection of MPs and will shortly "reforms" which, under the... to make it even more... senile MP

AT ITS recent annual meeting, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee decided by 68 votes to 48 not to work with the newly formed Labour Left Liaison. As with any decision which is more influenced by sectarianism than policies, it was a wrong decision. Fortunately the closeness of the vote means that it is likely to be reversed at next year's meeting. Indeed, with the National Union of Public Employees, LCC's strongest region (Scotland) and Peter Hain all voting in the minority, the decision may become academic as the Left in its broadest sense is brought together at all levels within the party in order to support the demands of women and black sections as well as to defend the gains made by the Left over the last decade.

The first instance of this will come with the decision of the Right-wing caucus on the National Executive Committee which has already decided to ignore the decision of the party conference not to

● Reproduced from *Tribune*, 28 November 1986, vol 50, number 48.

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The first instance of this will come with the decision of the right wing caucus on the national executive committee which has already decided to ignore the decision of the recent party conference not to reopen the issue of reselection of MPs and will shortly propose so-called reforms which, under

the guise of widening the selectorate, will seek to make it even more difficult for parties to remove reactionary or senile MPs. There is also the very real danger that the Tories improved position in the opinion polls will be used to try to panic the party into diluting its policy on unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The LCC's decision is particularly sad given the much more positive signs that have recently been coming from the Campaign Group of MPs with its decisions to support the demands of the Women's Action Committee and Black Sections. The decision to make the Campaign Group open to any MP who wished to join by dropping the 'invitation only' rule, which caused such resentment when it was used to



exclude some comrades in September 1985, is helpful but most important has been the decision of the Campaign Group MPs on the NEC to support Tom Sawyer and Eddie Haigh against the right for the chairs of the vital home policy and finance sub-committees of the NEC.

Among left wing parliamentary candidates there is strong pressure to end the divisions on the left within the PLP so that we can maximise support for the next Labour government to stand firm against the pressures which will undoubtedly come from Washington, the Common Market, the International

With a general election likely in the next 10 months, the various groupings which comprise the Labour Party left need to stand back from the sectarianism and splits of the last two years and consider who benefits from these decisions. It is certainly not the Tribune Group of MPs or the LCC.

The failure of the Tribune Group to agree an open ballot for the shadow cabinet elections led to a breakdown of the previous year's joint slate. This caused the defeat of two left wingers, including Robin Cook, and a dramatic decline in the votes of the other left candidates.

But an analysis of the votes cast shows precisely why the Tribune Group did not want an open ballot. More than 20 of them did

not vote for Jo Richardson even though she was on the Tribune slate.

Given all the struggles in the party to win support for a ministry for women with full cabinet status and Jo's lifelong work for the Tribune Group, we can only assume that a substantial minority of Tribune Group MPs are members of that organisation in order to gain left credentials with their local activists while stabbing their colleagues in the back in the privacy of the voting booth.

Monetary Fund and the civil service as those groups seek to block socialist policies.

If the split between the Tribune and Campaign Groups continues, the next PLP will see the broad left majority that will exist at the beginning of the next parliament whittled away from the soggy end of the Tribune Group until the centre-right absorbs enough of that to take control again.

The problem with the LCC decision is that continuing divisions on the left outside parliament will lead to continuing divisions within the PLP left. Unfortunately too many comrades are still allowing their bitter experiences with *Militant* and its undemocratic tactics in the Labour Party Young Socialists, the National Organisation of Labour Students and on some local councils to affect their attitude to Labour Left Liaison. Indeed, many

of those left wingers who have become active in the party only since 1979 have spent much of their time in alliances fighting *Militant* and have no experience of the broad left coalitions which were mobilised to fight the dire policies of the 1964 and 1974 Labour governments.

Militant is no longer an issue which should divide the left. The accumulation of their 'tactical' errors — the redundancy notices, the refusal to appear before conference, and now their decision to take the chair of the discredited Black and Asian Advisory Committee (correctly described by Dennis Skinner as 'scabbing') — will leave them more isolated and discredited than any policy of expulsions could.

Those of us who learned the value of left unity in the struggles against the Wilson/Callaghan governments need to remind those in the party who have any doubts that the enemy of radical socialism in Britain is capital and its political wing, the Tory Party, rather than parts of the left with whom we might have tactical disagreements.

The only way to build Labour support is constant campaigning for radical policies and Labour Left Liaison has a major role to play in that struggle precisely because it is based on those groups in society who have been the subject of Margaret Thatcher's most ferocious attacks.

Vladimir Derer replies for LLL

IN LAST week's *Tribune* Ken Livingstone criticised the sectarian stance of the LCC to Labour Left Liaison. He called for unification of the left. The issues involved in this must be clarified.

Separate organisation cannot be supported for the sake of it. Separate organisation becomes inevitable if fundamental political questions are involved. These include:

(i) The issue of expulsions is not *Militant* but party democracy. Expulsion of *Militant* supporters spreads to damage the whole party's democracy.

Khan and Scally, Knowsley North, and other cases make this clear.

There cannot be unity on the left while witch hunts threatening party democracy are supported.

(ii) The most important gain party democracy has made is the right of GCs to accountability of MPs through reselection. Without this no possibility exists of holding Labour governments to commitments. Party conference instructed the NEC not to reopen the matter. The November NEC flouted this.

The Tribune Group has not called for upholding party policy. The

LCC has actively campaigned for flouting it. The need to uphold accountability necessitates separate organisation from those not defending party policy.

(iii) Campaigns associated with the LLL no longer accept as good coin purely verbal support for the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Labour Party Black Section, Labour CND, the Labour Committee on Ireland or other pressure groups. Party conference showed that the LCC did not deliver support either of resolutions in support of the demands of CLPD, WAC, the Black Section,

and others, nor votes for the NEC for women and black candidates. Tribune Group members failing to vote for Jo Richardson for the Shadow Cabinet, mentioned by Ken Livingstone, mirrors the failure of LCC supporters to deliver practical support for campaigns in the party.

We cannot speak for the Campaign Group. But as regards the LLL any unification of the left outside the PLP has to flow from an agreed political basis which does not presently exist — as the LCC fails to support issues which are not sectarian but at the core of any strategy for socialism.

What we welcome is

common work on agreed goals. The campaign for Khan and Scally provides a model.

Unfortunately joint work was rejected by the LCC — which, as Ken Livingstone said, is purely sectarian. Regardless of this decision the LLL welcomes work with individuals or groups who wish to pursue goals such as defending reselection, opposing expulsions, and securing the demands of CLPD, WAC, Labour Party Black Section and other Party campaigns, and we hope this will develop.

Vladimir Derer, Secretary, Labour Left Liaison.

In Brief

Left Slate for the NCC

THE Campaign Group of MPs and Labour Left Liaison are putting forward a joint slate for the elections to the National Constitutional Commission (NCC). The work in drawing up this slate, and securing a joint statement of the candidates for the CLPs and Women's Division, was undertaken by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy — which has also endorsed the slate. The candidates endorsed are:

CLP division: John Burrows, Mandy Moore, Ken Slater.

Women's division: Vera Derer, Margaret Vallins

Trade union division: Owen Briscoe, John Jones, Tom O'Neill, Alan Quinn, Irene Rowe.

Socialist society division: Jim Layzell.

Securing this joint left slate is an important example of practical cooperation. Socialist Action urges all its readers to ensure that their CLP votes in these elections and that they vote for the appropriate candidates above in the CLP and Women's Sections.

Narrow support?

FURTHER information has come to light regarding the politics of Lindsay Thomas of Clause 4 — the person who moved the successful amendment at the Labour Coordinating Committee AGM opposing joint work between the LCC and Labour Left Liaison.

Thomas is a member of the London Labour Party Regional Committee — which voted recently to support the position of the Black Section and boycott the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. Thomas cast his vote against the Black Section position and for participating in the Committee.

The motivation of Thomas's resolution to the LCC AGM was how Black Sections must be supported and how Labour Left Liaison hampered this by 'narrowing' it down. Instead the LCC could be relied on more.

As they say the sincerity of words is best judged by actions!

Fight Racism

Defend Local Government

PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday 18 December, 7.30pm

Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road, London N7

Speakers: Bernie Grant

Leader Haringey Council

Telal Karim

Islington North Black Section

Marc Wadsworth

Chair, Labour Party Black Section

Organised by Islington Campaign Group, Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG

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Students and the left

THIS TERM'S NUS conference comes at an explosive time in the student movement. In the Labour Party the 'soft left' is pulled between allying with Kinnock or with the campaigning left in the Labour Left Liaison. A more spectacular form of the same contradiction faces the 'Democratic Left' leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students, which controls the NUS.

Students are at the forefront of many progressive struggles in Britain: we were the largest single contingent on the November 1985 Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration during term time; student opposition to the US bombing of Libya was widespread; the recent visit by Sinn Fein councillors to Britain saw more meetings in colleges than with local councils.

The NUS holds many radical policies on paper. Last NUS conference adopted a position of British withdrawal from Ireland, self-determination for the Irish people and removal of the border. Free abortion on demand and support for the autonomous organisation of women are well-established NUS policies — particularly with the support given to Greenham women and Women Against Pit Closures.

On paper the NUS gives wholehearted support to the ANC, SWAPO, and the objectives of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in

Britain, especially for comprehensive mandatory sanctions. However concrete action on this has come from individual colleges rather than from the NUS nationally.

By Polly Vittorini,
NUS London executive

On paper NUS supports self-defence by the black communities against racist police harassment and calls for the scrapping of immigration controls.

Most of these policies have been fought for inside the NUS by NOLS. But to look at the campaigns that have been waged by the NUS under NOLS's leadership you wouldn't think it.

Instead of taking these policies to their logical conclusion, and waging a consistent campaign for them in the labour movement and in society as a whole, the leadership of NOLS and therefore of the NUS has put its support behind Kinnock. But Kinnock stands against all of these

struggles.

It has become especially clear since the last Labour Party conference — with the dropping of nationalisation as Labour Party policy, the call for more 'law and order' instead of defence of the black communities against the racism of the police and the courts, and the wholesale retreat by the Labour leadership in the face of Tory cuts and attacks — that a leadership which defends the reactionary politics fought for by Kinnock at Labour Party conference is incapable of being a leadership of the NUS.

Unity

The present NOLS leadership is utterly unable to implement NUS policies as long as its hands are tied by its support for Kinnock, and as long as it refuses to enter into a fight for its policies in the Labour Party.

This year 35,000 students marched against the proposed cuts in student grants. Kinnock refuses to give a commitment that a future Labour government will restore student grants to their 1979 real value. The Democratic Left proposes to lead the NUS on the basis of prioritising the

election of the next Labour government to the exclusion of all other struggles.

Despite the majority in the NUS for support for so many of the struggles of the working class and the oppressed both in Britain and internationally, the NUS does not implement this support. The pressure to implement it, furthermore, has not been organised.

The problem in organising this support has been the total lack of platform in the NUS for the campaigning left in the Labour Party — ie the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and Labour Left Liaison. This gaping hole has meant that the opposition to the strategy of the NOLS leadership has been organised by a current which has pretences to being on the left but in fact bends to imperialism on, precisely the issues on which the greatest victories have been won in the NUS.

Ireland

'Socialist Students in NOLS' (SSiN) has positions in favour of a federal united Ireland before British withdrawal, and for the formation of a workers' party in South Africa against building solidarity with the African National Congress. This opposition is no alternative to the pre-

sent NOLS leadership. These positions are in fact to the right of present NUS policy.

The adoption by the NUS of SSiN's formula of a two-state solution in Palestine against the call of the Palestine Liberation Organisation for a democratic, secular state in Palestine would have disastrous consequences for Palestinians and be a great step backwards for NUS.

Campaign

What is needed to take the NUS forward is a leadership which defends all of the interests and struggles of the working class and the oppressed in Britain and internationally. One which will wage a consistent campaign in their support. In order to win their demands students must ally with the campaigning left in the Labour Party which is fighting for these politics. This is the type of leadership that Campaign Student stands for in the NUS.

It should be supported by all those who stand for real socialist campaigning policies in the NUS. Campaign Student stands for the campaigning unity on the left of the Labour Party.

The reality of Zionism

ONE OF the most crucial issues which faces the National Union of Students (NUS) today is Zionism. A false position of 'No Platform for Zionists' adopted by a few colleges has been used to divert attention away from the real issue, the continuing oppression by the state of Israel over the Palestinians. Socialist Action asked RIMA MILHIM, secretary of the General Union of Palestinian Students, to explain the reality of the Israeli state's oppression of the Palestinians and the role of the PLO.

THE PLO rather than just being a political party in the European sense is an organisation of an entire people. At the most basic and all embracing level the fight of the PLO is for all Palestinian people and refugees to be able to return to Palestine, to be able to live as equal citizens, determining their own future within their own state. Within the PLO there is not merely the armed organisations but also trade unions, women's organisations, the Palestine Red Crescent society which organises medical aid, workers cooperatives, the student movement and then all the organised political factions.

Zionism, the political ideology which forms the backbone of those who have denied the Palestinians their homeland and their human social rights is a particular expression of imperialism tailored to take advantage of the exploitation and oppression of Jews in Europe and to offer them an apparent way out of this persecution by removing themselves from the problem and imposing themselves in an imperialist fashion on the Middle East.

Under the political guidance of Zionism Jewish immigrants into Palestine began to deprive Palestinians of their homeland.

The Kibbutzim movement refused to accept Palestinian members. Kibbutz land became exclusively Jewish owned and Jewish worked. The so-called Israeli labour movement, the Histadrut, was set up under the slogan of 'Jewish labour only' and concentrated all its early efforts on excluding Palestinians from work — carrying out such acts as pickets of Jewish employers who agreed to hire Palestinian workers.

A systematic policy of excluding Palestinians from their homeland continued throughout the 1948-67 period within Israel's 1948 borders. It was carried out again with the invasion of the West Bank and Gaza strip which resulted in a further 200,000 Palestinians being forced to leave their homeland. Today any Palestinian activists who attempt to resist this encroachment are deported.

Palestinian's today can roughly be divided into three categories. Those living within the Israeli state's 1948 borders, those living within the 1967 borders, and those living outside of Palestine. Those living in the 1948 territories were subject to military law for approximately twenty years after the state of Israel was created. They exist in circumstances such that it is il-



legal for them to be sold or rented land. They fill the most low paid and low status jobs within Israeli agriculture. They are deprived of the vast majority of social benefits through the technique of only giving such benefits to Palestinians who have served in the Israeli army.

The vast majority of areas where the Palestinian's live lack drains, adequate schools, or other normal social facilities. Palestinians are banned from taking certain technical subjects at university.

In the post-1967 territories Palestinian's live under military rule. Palestinian's are liable for up to two years imprisonment for displaying the colours of the Palestinian flag.

Every form of censorship imaginable exists. All

forms of political organisation are banned. Children regularly get 18 months detention for throwing stones at military vehicles. There are over 120 Israeli settlements on expropriated Palestinian land.

There are currently somewhere between 120,000 and 200,000 Palestinians from the occupied territories who come into the 1948 territories to work. They are treated in exactly the same way as South African migrant workers; they are not allowed to stay overnight. They are not paid unemployment benefits or pensions or any other form of social benefit. They are paid roughly a third as much as the average salary of an Israeli worker. They are without doubt used as dispensible, ill paid, effec-

tively unprotected labour. There are numerous examples of Israeli workers physically attacking Arab workers when they attempt to take some form of industrial action.

There are currently sixty per cent of the Palestinian people — between two and two and a half million — who live in diaspora, in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, in very difficult conditions.

Living conditions in the refugee camps, especially in Lebanon, have become extremely difficult because of the continuous Israeli air attacks. There have been 14 Israeli air raids this year on the camps. In South Lebanon all camps are now suffering their third month of food and medical blockade.

This is the reality of Israel today.

Building an alliance for socialism

THE SECOND annual 'Building an Alliance for Socialism' conference organised by Socialist Action in London 22/23 November was attended by 624 people. As Tony Benn and other speakers commented, this event has now established itself as the opportunity for the left in the party to come together to discuss strategy and tactics following the TUC and Labour Party conference. The political theme of the weekend, 'Building an Alliance for Socialism', was given flesh and blood by the wide range of speakers and big increase in attendance. It was a major political success.

That theme was set by the first session at which Marc Wadsworth of the Labour Party Black Section, Tony Benn, Ann Pettifor of the Labour Women's Action Committee, John Ross for Socialist Action, John Lang from the News International strike, joined speakers from the ANC and FMLN/FDR of El Salvador representing some of the international alliances the Labour left must forge.

Tony Benn captured the mood of the weekend when he said that what people were interested in discussing was not rhetoric but the systematic hard work that the left was doing. The wall of silence which the press and some in the party had tried to build up around the left in the last 18 months was breaking down. Right wing policies simply were not working.

Benn explained that the left now taking shape in the Campaign Group, Campaign Forum and Labour Left Liaison was based on people working together constructively, in support of these engaged in struggle and for agreed policies. No single school of thought could, or should, control it, and support was welcomed from any quarter. What was vital for the left was not unity of ideas but practical action.

That message was hammered home by other speakers: Black Section, WAC, Wapping strikers, ANC, FMLN/FDR, Socialist Action. In their own way every speaker said that they did not judge people by what they said but by what they did.

In line with that, the sessions which filled the rest of the weekend took up virtually all the key alliances the labour movement had to make.

Saturday afternoon saw Linda Bellos, leader of

Lambeth council and vice chair of the Black Section, Betty Heathfield of Women Against Pit Closures, and Ann Pettifor of WAC discussing the way forward for women in the Labour movement. Simultaneously workshops were being held on justice for mineworkers, the fight for sanctions against South Africa, and the fight for British withdrawal from Ireland.

These were followed by sessions on the strategy of the ANC, Thatcherism and the SDP, why Britain must withdraw from NATO, Labour's youth movements, the lessons of the teachers strike, and Chile since the coup.

Sunday morning saw workshops on the politics of Sinn Fein led by Sinn Fein speaker Padraig O Maolchraoibhe, on fighting the witch hunt, on lesbian and gay rights and on nuclear energy.

The highlight of Sunday afternoon was undoubtedly a well-attended session on the fight against racism led by Kingsley Abrams, assistant secretary of the Black Section, Rose Alaso who is threatened with deportation, Jagun Akinshogun from St Paul's, Bristol, Stafford Scott from the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, and Bernie Grant, leader of Haringey council. (We have reproduced Grant's speech on page 6 of this issue.)

Other discussions were on Central America, the Labour Party and the state, the pamphlet *A Million Jobs A Year*, and what is class politics?, a debate between Labour Left Liaison and the Labour Coordinating Committee, Freedom for Palestine — with a speaker from the PLO, and socialism and the environment.

The event was an enormous success, not only for Socialist Action but, we think, for everyone who at-



Above Jamie Lopez of the FMLN-FDR addresses conference; below some of the audience



tended it. Fifty two weeks of the year Socialist Action tries to support those in struggle. We think we have now established one weekend a year when socialists can come together, discuss what unites them, and thrash out

what divides them, in lively discussion.

The Saturday evening social saw the same theme continued in a different vein. Fergus O Hare and Padraig O Maolchraoibhe, led songs of the Irish freedom struggle. They

were joined by miners and others singing socialist songs from across the globe, and by Mick Foley's *There'll Be Missiles Over The White Cliffs Of Dover* and other none-too-respectful versions of old favourites. See you there next year.

Ireland Unfree

First SDLP conference since Hillsborough

THE FIRST Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) conference since the signing of the Hillsborough Agreement was as low key as the Agreement's elusive 'achievements'. Many SDLP members are worried that, one year on, the Agreement has delivered next to nothing of the reforms hinted at by their leadership and Dublin officials last year. And if the SDLP delegates who assembled in Newcastle were hoping to revive the enthusiasm which carried their party through the January by-elections, they must have been disappointed.

By Hilda MacThomas

Hume and Mallon in their addresses summed up the thrust of the SDLP leadership at present: to renew their party's flagging support for the Agreement and to call on the help of Dublin to try and maintain their vote increase of last January by an electoral drive against Sinn Fein.

In his speech, Hume blamed all of Ireland's ills on the IRA: all the dead, the wounded, 39,000 jobs lost, unemployment, Diplock courts, strip-searches. Even the presence of British troops are all 'direct consequences of their own campaign', he boldly claimed, going further than British or unionist propagandists ever dared.

He also attacked Fianna Fail, who this year, for the first time, did not send any prominent observer or even a message from party leader Charles Haughey. The 'begrudgers', said Hume, do nothing but criticise and 'talk tough about the need to stand up to the British'. Beyond this obvious reference to Fianna Fail, Hume was also getting at those SDLP members who are getting fidgety about the Agreement's failure to deliver.

Hume's 'stages theory' was trotted out again. Since, according to Hume, the British 'have declared themselves neutral' in the conflict, it is up to nationalists to convince unionists to go into a united Ireland. Hume's three stages — 'equality of treatment, building prosperity, stability and peace' in the Six Counties and Irish unity — are as ludicrous as the premise on which they are based. The British are planning to hold on to the Six Counties; all they are interested in is stabilising the place.

The Agreement was described repeatedly as the only way forward, the only thing nationalists have achieved since 1920. The unionists no longer have a veto, Hume also claimed, amidst perfunctory calls on unionist leaders to 'talk'. Hume called for a 'common approach' from 'all constitutional parties' to make the Agreement progress, another obvious reference to Fianna Fail, whose critical attitude to the Agreement is particularly worrying for the SDLP given that Fianna Fail will probably form the next Dublin Government.

To try and fight off the Sinn Fein challenge, the SDLP concentrates on two tactics: repeated verbal attacks and attempts to don the mantle of champions of the oppressed nationalists. Mallon led the way in the latter by focussing on the Stalker affair and asking for Hermon's resignation.

Policy documents were passed on the Diplock courts, 'lififers' and SOSPs. There were calls to disband the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) to ban the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) to strengthen the Fair Employment Agency, which the British government proposed instead to amalgamate with other bodies and calls to end strip-searches and to ban plastic bullets.

You would have thought the SDLP had been actively campaigning for all these demands. The SDLP does not campaign, it does not call on people to organise, and campaign, it does not even want people to campaign; it merely hopes Dublin will convince London that such reforms would increase the SDLP vote at the expense of Sinn Fein.

● Reprinted from An Phoblacht/Republican News, 27 November 1986.

White man to chair Black and Asian Committee!

THE BLACK and Asian Advisory Committee (BAAC) descended further into the mire last week. The party leadership had aimed to rehabilitate the BAAC after conference by deleting the word 'Advisory' from the title. This does not prevent the existence of an all white 'advisory' committee to Labour's race relations spokesperson Alf Dubbs meeting in secret.

Recreating the Black and Asian Committee this year however posed unusual problems. An understanding of the fact that the sole role of this committee is to try to head off democratically constituted Black Sections has grown in the party over the last year. Last year's BAAC chairperson, Jo Richardson, therefore announced that she refused to serve on the committee.

With the Campaign Group of MPs voting to support a boycott of the Committee, and the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) also condemning it, no member of the left on the NEC was prepared to serve on, or to chair, the committee. All candidates from the NEC who might have given the committee credibility in the black community therefore refused to be on it.

The committee therefore has now reached a new level of farce with the decision that a white man, Cyril Amble of COHSE, is to chair the committee. The other NEC members on the committee are Charlie Turlock and Roy 'my Asians' Hattersely — hot foot from his attempt to expell Amir Khan from the party for his attempt to form a Black Section.

It is now almost incredible that any black member should agree to serve on this committee — which is not elected, is boycotted by the London region of the party which contains almost half Britain's black population, and which is now headed by three right wing white men.

The Labour Party Black Section has renewed its appeal for a boycott of the committee. It has also made it clear that as there is now no confusion whatever either regarding the Black Section's attitude to this committee, or of the attitude of the left to it, the Black Section will refuse to support any candidate for election who serves on this committee and calls for the rest of the left to do likewise.

Labour Left Liaison, meeting on 15 November, reaffirmed its total opposition to this non-elected committee and demanded the right of black members of the party to form democratic, constitutionally

recognised, Black Sections electing their own national representatives.

The Black Section has already written to the Campaign Group of MPs expressing its surprise that the Campaign Group should accept that Linda Douglas, one of its members, should serve on this committee which is clearly designed to destroy Black Sections.

Labour Left Liaison decided to support the Black Section in this and to communicate to the Campaign Group the fact that membership of the Black and Asian Committee is clearly directed against support for Black Sections — which the Campaign Group supports.

TORY RACISM AND THE ON LOCAL G

LABOUR'S FRONT bench must defend Labour councils from racist attacks of the Tory Party explained Haringey leader BERNIE GRANT at the Socialist Action Alliance for Socialism weekend on 22-23 November. He was joined on the platform by Kingsley Abrams, assistant secretary of Labour Party Black Section, by Jagun Akinshogun from the St Pauls Community Association in Bristol, by Stafford Scott of the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, and by Rose Alaso of Leeds Labour Party who is under threat of deportation. Defending the black communities, said Grant, means

understanding the context of Tory attacks and defending oppressed people everywhere. It is the positive action programmes of councils like Haringey, Lambeth and Brent against which a tide of Tory racism has been unleashed in recent months — a tide which the Parliamentary Labour Party has failed to take up. And if 'Black Sections weren't there, the Labour leadership wouldn't have to answer to some of the charges that the black communities are levelling against them,' he explained.

We reprint below an edited version of Bernie Grant's speech.

WHO ARE we defending the black communities against? We are talking about the defence of the black communities against racism. We are talking about that in the context of what is happening in Britain today, in the context of a Tory government that is attacking all sections of this society.

We are talking about a Tory government that has attacked the miners, we are talking about a Tory government that is attacking women, we are talking about a Tory government that is attacking young people, we are talking about a Tory government that is attacking the teachers, we are talking about a Tory government that is attacking employed and unemployed people — and we are talking about a government that is attacking black people. We must look at black people in the context of all those attacks on all those other sections. We have to be clear what we are saying, and we have got to be even clearer about what we're going to do about it.

The attacks on black people, on the left wing, and on the working class are part of a general attack that is going on throughout the world. At last Reagan has been spotted as the liar he is. This man, together with Thatcher, has attacked black people internationally — in South Africa, in Central America and in tiny Grenada.

When we talk about attacks on black people and about defending the black community, as far as black people are concerned we're talking about the international black community. Unless South Africa is free then black people in this country are not going to be free. Let's be clear about that. But I am going to limit my contribution today to some of the things that have been happening in Britain.

First we need to look at some of the things that have happened in the past,

"Everything we're doing in Haringey is within the Labour manifesto we published last May — on which we had an increased majority and on which we routed the Tories. We gave the Tories a bloody good licking at the last election."

at why black people are here in Britain. I'm not going through that in any detail, but I ask you to look at your own history, the history of the Europeans, to find out why we are in this situation.

For example in the '50s and '60s the race relations board of that time became concerned at the numbers of black people that were coming here. 'We have to be careful, we have to digest them one mouthful at a time,' they said. If you examine that statement you understand how white people feel about black people within this country. They don't want us here in any numbers. They have to make sure that the few that are here are denied our rights. In a debate on immigration Callaghan said we have to have coloured workers to pay for our people when they get old. Black people know that as far as the British white establishment is concerned we are here to be the donkeys of this country. We are here to be the beasts of burden, as a Labour prime minister put it.

What black people are saying, of course, is that we are not prepared to take this situation. That is what the speakers on the platform are saying when they talk about their particular experience — like Rose in Leeds being

deported by this disgraceful government, like Jagun from Bristol explaining the pressure that youth are under, like Stafford from the Farm talking about the way in which the people's lives are being totally destroyed by the fact that they are unable to get a job.

No one is saying that the Labour Party is the same as the government, but it seems to black people that the two work hand in hand. Kingsley from Black Sections talked about the fact that it was the Labour government which laid the ground-work for the 1981 Nationality Act and about all the other racist legislation they enacted. So when we talk about Tories and Labour being hand in hand, we know that whilst Labour is not saying exactly the same thing as the right wing it is not following very far behind.

But before we examine the Labour Party's role, let us look at the general climate.

We have just seen the disgraceful introduction of a visas system against five black countries. Incidentally the only other people who require visas to come to Britain are from Libya and from the Eastern bloc countries, and Sri Lanka for different reasons. Not only did the Tories introduce these restrictions but the media deliberately whipped up hysteria around the shameful episode at London airport when hundreds of people were just left hanging around merely for the benefit of a few racist immigration officials. And let us be clear that the new unions the Tory government has sponsored within the immigration service are directly responsible for these immigration restrictions.

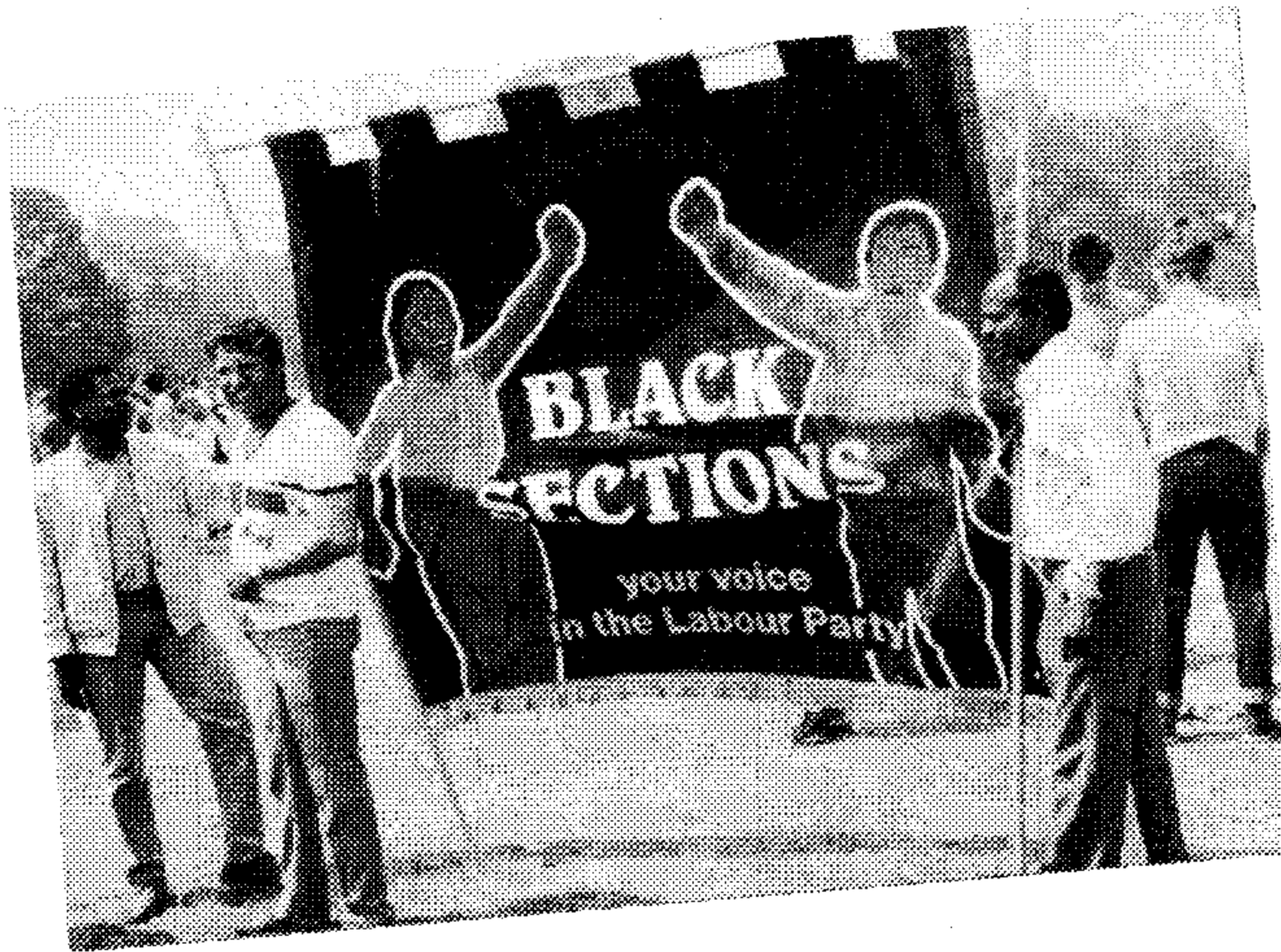
The introduction of visa restrictions has been accompanied by attacks on local authorities — from the media, from the government, and from the Labour front bench. As leader of Har-

ingey council I have become accustomed to media attacks.

Since 6 October last year Haringey has been under constant attack. The government and the media single out Haringey. The media are rendering a service to a whole number of people. They are helping the government by clouding the issue, trying to make us believe it is one of violence by black youth against the police when the youth are merely reacting to the situation they are in because of the policies of this government.

I read in the paper recently that Bernie Grant should 'burn in hell'. I've got news for the government: black people in Tottenham are living in hell, Tottenham is hell to a lot of black people. London is hell, Britain is hell for a lot of black people — and the Tory government is the one that is making our lives hell. Hell is nothing new for us. We are in it now, and unless something drastic happens, we are going to remain there in the future.

Haringey has decided to have a massive campaign on inequality, not only on the basis of race but on the basis of gender, on the basis of age, on the basis of disability, on the basis of



"I support Labour Party Black Sections. If they weren't there the Labour leadership would be let off the hook because they wouldn't have to answer the charges that the black communities are levelling at them."

sexual orientation. And we are going to fight for rights of lesbians and gay men in Haringey, and against all those inequalities.

We are doing this within the ambit of the Labour Party's policy. That is very important. Nowadays there is a lot of talk about zealots, and you'd think we weren't carrying out party policy. Let me say that everything we're doing in Haringey is within the Labour manifesto we published last May — on which we had an increased majority

"When we talk about defending the black communities we are talking first of all about allowing the black people the space, the right, and the resources to defend themselves."

and on which we routed the Tories. We gave the Tories a bloody good licking at the last election. We increased our majority from 13 to 25 council seats.

The government has decided that the only way they are going to win seats is by frightening people. I don't even think they believe they are going to win them in the inner cities. But they are going to use racism to frighten those people who live outside the inner-cities, in marginal constituencies. Those are the people who are frightened by Bernie Grant, Diane Abbott, Linda Bellos and Merle Amory. Those who live in our boroughs aren't frightened.

The object of the exercise is to bring up these bogie people to scare floating voters — the same people the Labour Party is trying to catch with all the razzmatazz of Neil Kinnock walking down the road arm in arm with Glenys. The party is into positive images of Kinnock and Glenys, but the positive images Haringey puts forward are of lesbians and gay men. That is the kind of scenario we're into.

But the government and the media are trying to make out that proper policies which have been democratically arrived at are loonie. They are trying to turn our policies against inequality into a laughing stock, so they come up with lies and distortion.

For instance, a couple of weeks ago the *Daily Mail* carried a headline that Haringey council had decided to abandon the nursery rhyme *Bah Bah Black Sheep* and substitute the words *Bah Bah Green Sheep*. (It's funny, but I'll

tell you something, I got a number of calls from Irish people who objected.) That story is not true. We wrote a letter saying so and asked for an apology. The *Daily Mail* categorically refused. So we are taking them to the capitalist courts.

Although there was no foundation for their story now they are going to every single voluntary group in the borough to find out if any council officer has ever threatened to withdraw their grants or if they have ever heard any mention of green sheep. The whole

borough is full of *Daily Mail* reporters harassing people to try and find some substance for their story.

The *Mirror* is a bit more clever. It attacked our policy of equality for lesbians and gay men. The *Mirror* said that Haringey banned any mention of the words family life in schools. Once we pointed out that that was not the case they published an apology.

But when Ridley attacks councils in the House of Commons then we have to take note. We have to deal with that in a different way. The Tories talk about the 'stench of socialism' coming from the town halls. They use such heavy language in dealing with serious and sensitive issues — like the case of lesbians and gays being beaten up and brutalised within our borough and within London.

When the Tories in parliament start to make a mockery of serious issues and attack Labour councils we have a right to expect our front bench spokespersons to defend us and defend the policies we are carrying out are in line with party policy. We don't expect a mealey-mouthed response, the sort of rubbish we hear from Cunningham.

The front bench must clearly say the Tory Party is racist. It is racist, for example, because it wants to deport people like Rose while white South Africans can come here any day of the week. It is racist because it attacks young black people who have little or no hope in this society, and who can see no other way forward than to take on the forces that oppress them. It is racist when it picks out for attack, from



amongst all Labour council leaders in London, Haringey council which has a black leader, Lambeth council which has a black leader, Brent council which has a black leader, and when it goes to attack by name two black parliamentary candidates, myself and Dianne Abbott. The Thatcher government is racist when it does that — and I want Labour Party front bench spokespersons to come out and take the Tories up.

I had a meeting with Neil Kinnock last Friday when he came to lay a wreath in memory of Mrs Jarrett. He told me that the front bench was going to tackle, head on, the question of racism, to take on Margaret Thatcher specifically on the question of racism. If that happens I will be pleased but I want all of you here today to move resolutions in your GCs demanding the front bench take on Thatcher particularly on the issue of racism at local authorities. That is Thatcher's Achilles heel, the area where we've got the most ammunition against the Tories and where we've got to attack them.

There are many other examples of Tory racism. For instance in Ealing Tory spokespersons have singled out for attack only black councillors, like Valerie Vaz, in a clearly racist way.

"When the Tories make an attack Labour councils we defend us and defend out in line with"

When we talk about defending black communities we are talking first of all about allowing the black people the space, the right, and the resources to defend themselves. Black people are carrying out the most desperate, life and death struggle. You need only talk to some of the young people in the inner London boroughs to find out how desperate that struggle is.

The Tories attack in parliament our black council leaders is nothing compared to the racism that some of our own youth have to put up with. When they stand at the bus stop people walk away from them as if they were going to be attacked. They come up against a load of racists in the DHSS. They walk down the road and get harassed by the police. They get racism every minute of the day.

THE ATTACKS GOVERNMENT



That is what we are talking about. That is why we need to give people the resources to defend themselves.

To defend the black communities we also have to defend other communities under attack. For example we have to make sure that when a Labour government comes to power all those miners who have been incarcerated in jail are released. We've got to ensure that the needs of lesbians and gays, women, disabled people — ordinary people who are an integral part of the struggle — are catered for.

If disadvantaged and oppressed people are to get a fair deal, that means white men are going to have to be in the background for a period of time. That's what positive action means, if you are at the bottom of the damn pile. That is what the left is going to have to support.

We've got to ensure that pressure on the government continues, by making sure that the black communities work hand in glove with the oppressed communities. In Haringey recently we were proud to invite Sinn Fein councillors to our council meeting. We have promised Sinn Fein that we will send a delegation over there. In our borough, the Irish are counted as part of the black and minority ethnic community. We have specific policies relating to Irish groups and it was as a response to requests from those groups that we invited Sinn Fein to Haringey.

To defend black and other oppressed communities we have to ensure that the Labour front bench isn't let off the hook. That is why I particularly appreciate and why I support Labour Party Black Section. Kingsley spoke earlier of the Black Section policy with regards to the police, racist immigration laws, and defence of the black communities. Black Section keeps the Labour Party on its toes. If Black Sections weren't there, the Labour leadership would be let off the hook because they wouldn't have to answer to some of the charges

mockery of serious issues and have a right to expect our front and the policies we are carrying in party policy."

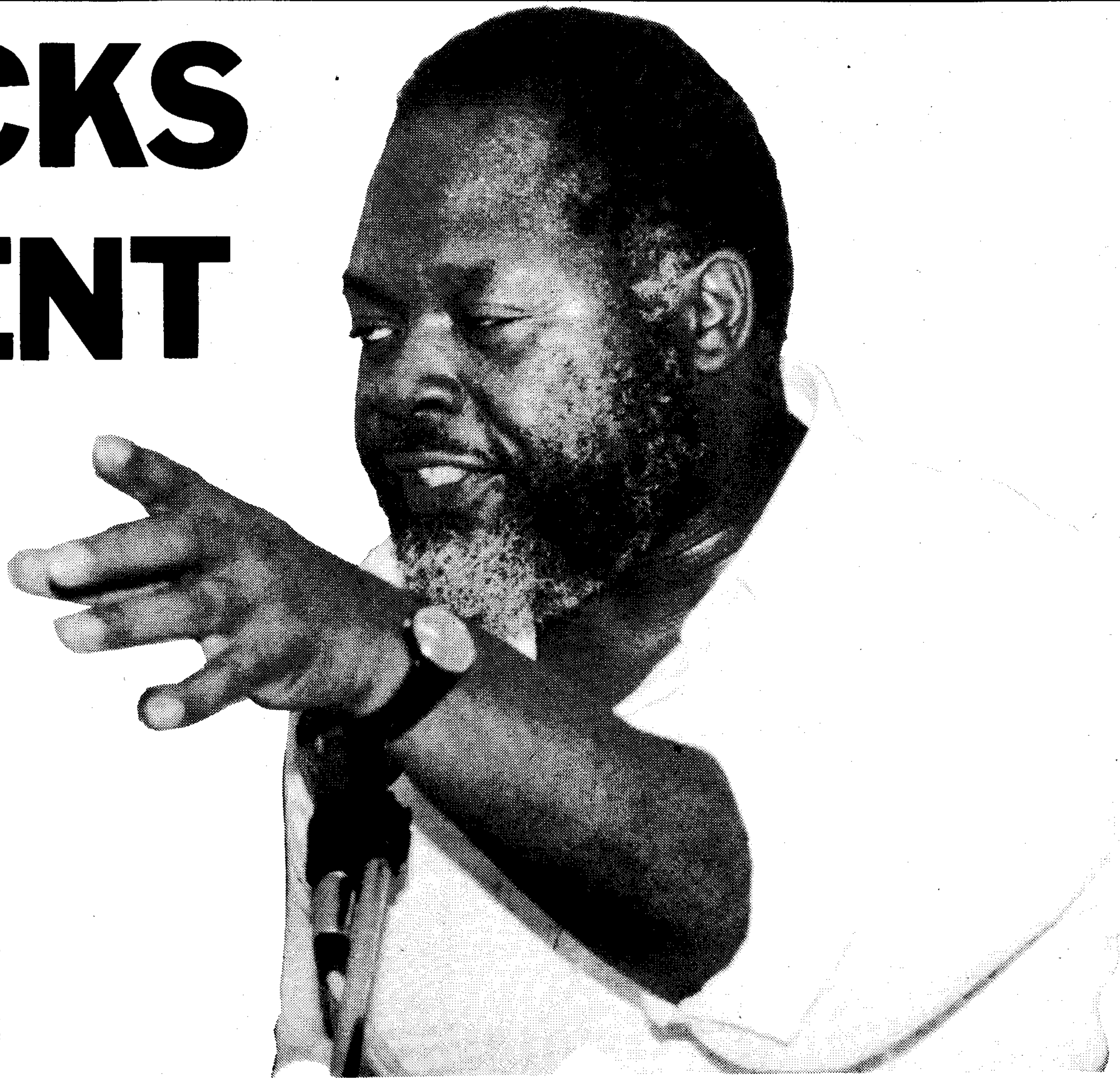
that the black communities are levelling at them.

Finally I want to say a word about the unions. When it comes to racism a lot of trade unions have been found wanting. For example why will the National Union of Teachers be attempting to discipline a black head teacher in Brent? Because he gave evidence to Brent council that Ms McGoldrick told him personally that she didn't want black teachers in her school. I want the NUT to explain how come they could end up victimising a black head teacher.

I don't want to be accused of being anti-union because that is not the case. I support the trade unions, but I also was involved in an organisation called the Black Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement. We set up that organisation because we recognised that the trade

unions were discriminating against black people by their very policies.

When we talk about defence of the black communities we also need to look at the labour and trade union movement. We need to look at the whole history of racism. I think it was Malcolm X who said that unless we know where we come from we don't know where we're going. And unless we understand where racism comes from we are not going to be able to tackle it.



KHAN AND SCALLY VICTORY

LAST WEEK Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were reinstated by Sparkbrook Labour Party. Their reinstatement was ratified by the national executive committee. It was a 100 per cent victory for the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally (CRAKKS) — and the most significant victory so far in the fight against the spreading witch hunt. MICK ARCHER reports.

WHEN Roy Hattersley stood up to propose the reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally at Sparkbrook GC last week, defeat was written all over his face. In his first ever direct appeal to the GC in 22 years he asked his supporters to back a resolution for Amir and Kevin's readmission.

It was, he said, moved 'in a spirit of party unity' and on condition that they conform to the standing orders and constitution of the party, and work for an early Labour government. It was passed unanimously although, true to form, the chair ruled that no discussion or amendments would be accepted.

Delegates who had supported Amir and Kevin throughout their year-long struggle were stunned. No notice of the resolution had been included on the GC agenda.

In August, the GC had supported an amendment for forwarding to Labour Party national conference along similar lines, and a subsequent GC had moved it out of order on the grounds that any proposal to rescind existing policy required two weeks' notice.

This time, however, Roy Hattersley was in something of a hurry. He had been told in no uncertain terms that the NEC of 26 November would reinstate Amir and Kevin. The alternative was a court appearance on 4 December where lawyers representing Amir Khan were to argue that the expulsions breached natural justice on nine counts.

The Labour Party's own legal advice was that the party would lose, the two would be reinstated and the procedure for expelling them would have

to start all over again. With 2.7 million votes at Labour Party conference and a campaign that enjoyed a broad band of support in the party, the result of a further inquiry was by no means guaranteed.

Roy Hattersley, therefore, had to move quickly if the damage to himself and Labour's right wing was to be minimised. Better to take the lead in reinstating the two rather than suffer open defeat on the NEC.

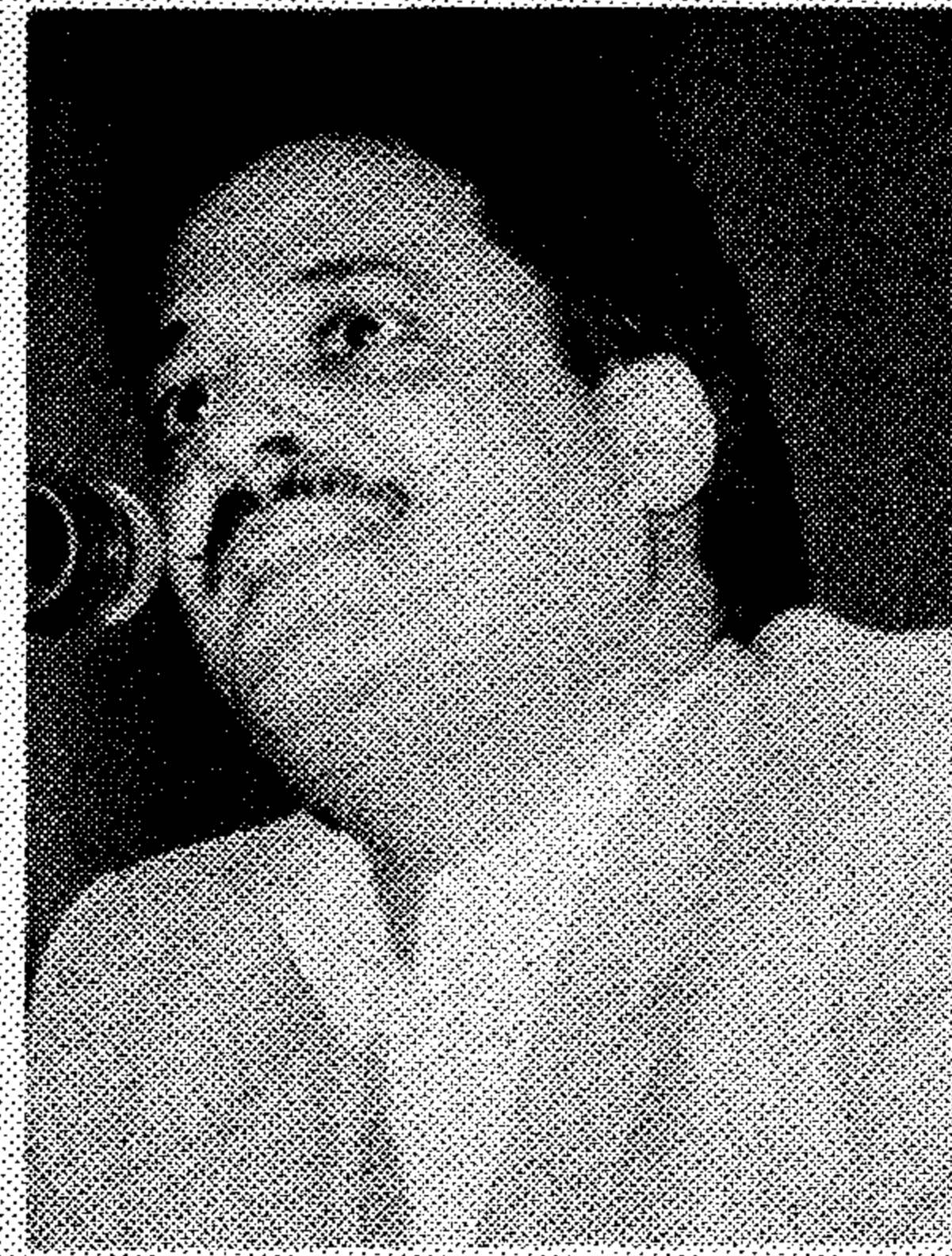
Apparently Hattersley's own meeting with his supporters, prior to the GC, had not gone at all smoothly. Understandably some of those who'd championed the campaign against Amir and Kevin in Sparkbrook's Asian community were concerned about the long-term damage done to their own standing caused by such an about-turn. Some of those who had loyally voted with Hattersley for the previous 12 months failed to turn up at the GC.

The victory has already had an impact on Sparkbrook's Asian community. As Amir Khan explained, from the start a lot of black people said he was foolish to take on an MP: 'But I said there was a principle involved and people had to support it. Our reinstatement shows you can win even where the deputy leader of the Labour Party is involved.'

Amir is also hopeful that it will encourage more people to join Labour Party Black Sections, challenging the patronage of white MPs to represent a largely black community.

But Khan doesn't believe things will stop there. Sparkbrook, he says, is like a prison whose walls have been breached by the campaign — giving encouragement to others like the LPYS and women's section who have also been under attack.

Kevin Scally pointed to the impact of the campaign nationally which he hopes will give the NEC's right wing some reason to pause and think. 'I think they will remember for a long time the bruising that they got from this campaign and hopefully they will think twice before doing anything similar in future.'



Amir Khan

The success of the campaign also holds valuable lessons for the Labour left. The campaign was initiated by activist forces on the hard left — through a press conference organised by the Campaign Group, Black Section and Campaign for Labour Party Democracy for Amir Khan, and then with Paul Sharma of the Black Section and Vladimir Derer of the CLPD as joint secretaries of CRAKKS. But while the hard left got the campaign going and provides most of its activists, it pulled in the widest possible forces in the party — including the LCC, and many individuals in the Labour Party and trade unions.

It was criticised for this in a left sectarian way but as Amir explains: 'the victory itself tells who was right and wrong. I think it is important when we're on the floor and when we want to get up and fight that we ask those forces who are not hostile to us — who we have some sort of common issue with — to work with us to fight for victory. This victory has strengthened the whole labour movement.' Scoring a victory in one case has helped the fight against the witch hunt everywhere.

Kevin Scally believes that it was his broad appeal which was decisive to the

campaign's final outcome. 'I think that in these sorts of campaigns the organisers have to be very clear about their intentions. Our intention from the beginning was to gain the reinstatement of Amir and myself. We didn't lumber ourselves with other objectives because, had we done so, we would have found that one or other group would have found reason not to support us.'

'The lessons to be learnt are that there are a whole number of issues on the left on which the whole left are agreed, and it is important that if we are serious about success we draw the whole left into these campaigns — otherwise we can't win. That's the main lesson from this campaign — to break down the sectarianism, which we can do on a whole number of issues, not all issues, but on a whole number of issues.'

Despite their elation, Amir and Kevin are under no illusion that their victory will check the witch-hunt against constituencies like Knowsley North. While the outcome of their campaign offers some hope to those party members who challenge corrupt practices in right wing constituencies, they believe the momentum started with the Liverpool witch-hunt will require much greater forces and much greater victories to halt. Both admit to having been surprised at the amount of support their own campaign attracted but they think this is testimony to the sense of outrage of many party activists it produced.

Gina Khan, joint chair of the national campaign and one of its most active supporters over the last months, summed it all up. 'My advice to those who find themselves in a similar position to Amir and Kevin, or anyone who is running a campaign for people like Amir and Kevin, is don't ever give up, you know that you are right. Don't let them get away with denying you your rights.'

The lessons of the Khan-Scally campaign now have to be applied to Knowsley, to the expulsion of Militant supporters, and to every other witch-hunt which is proceeding in the party.

Socialism is a multi party system

NEIL KINNOCK'S claim is that he stands for 'democratic socialism'. The real nature of this commitment to 'democracy' is shown, in internal party terms in such actions as support for the expulsion of members of the Liverpool District Labour Party, support for the expulsion of Khan and Scally, the refusal to allow Knowsley North constituency party chose its own candidate for the by-election, and the decision of the NEC to re-open the issue of reselection following a clear decision of party conference to instruct it not to do so.

But more seriously, Kinnock's and the Labour right's entire conception of 'democracy' is a travesty. The very nature of a capitalist society is that it is not democratic... On the contrary it is anti-democratic in its entire nature. Even formal democracy at the central level is confined to the election of a small number of members of parliament. All other real centres of power — the civil service, the judges, the chiefs of the police and armed forces, those who run the great centres of economic power, are not elected. The purely parliamentary system is a democratic fig leaf over an entire system of non-elected and autocratic power. This is why one of the most classic demands of Marxism is for the extension of the elective principle throughout society — a view shown clearly in Marx's writings on the state.

Furthermore, even this limited parliamentary democracy exists only in a handful of imperialist countries. In the vast majority of capitalist countries in the world, above all those dominated by imperialism, even the fig leaf of parliamentary democracy does not exist. The limited parliamentary democracy of Britain is sustained by its imperialist plunder of large parts of the world — as is that of the US, Sweden, and all the other classic democracies. Remove that im-

perialist system and the facts show even the classic limited parliamentary democracy of capitalism would not exist. Socialism means a vast extension of democracy. It means going beyond the election simply of a few members of a national assembly, backed by relatively powerless local councils, to the extension of the elective principle into all spheres of society — elections in the civil service, of self management in industry, election of the heads of any police forces necessary in a socialist society, election of magistrates and judges.

The discussion of forms of socialist democracy is as yet greatly underdeveloped in the socialist movement. One of the few places where it has been taken up systematically is in a resolution passed by the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1985 on 'Socialist Democracy'. This clearly drew, among other sources, on the *Open Letter to the Polish Communist Party* written in the late 1960s by Polish Communist Party members Kuron and Modzelwski. It has also drawn on the practical experience of the 'socialist countries'. It is a debate which needs to be developed.

The section of this resolution we print below, deals with the crucial issue of a multi-party system. History shows, not simply in socialist but bourgeois, revolutions that in the actual struggle to bring a new society into existence classes have concentrated their energies in a single party — the Jacobins in France or Cromwell in England for example. The actual desperate struggle of the revolution, or fighting off foreign intervention, does not leave the luxury of many parties. But as the society 'relaxes', as the new society is stabilised and guaranteed, inevitably new parties arise. The idea that classes are represented by single parties has neither theoretical nor practical foundation. The societies in transition to socialism will be multi-party societies. That point, and principle, must be stoutly and explicitly defended by socialists. The following document is a clear explanation of why.

WITHOUT full freedom to organise political groups, tendencies, and parties, no full flowering of democratic rights and freedoms for the toiling masses is possible under the dictatorship of the proletariat. By their free vote, the workers and poor peasants indicate themselves what parties they want to be part of the soviet system.

In that sense, the freedom of organisation of different groups, tendencies, and parties is a precondition for the exercise of political power by the working class. 'The democratisation of the soviets is impossible without legalisation of soviet parties.'¹ Without such freedom, unrestrained by ideological restrictions, there can be no genuine, democratically elected workers' councils, nor the exercise of real power by such workers' councils.

Restrictions of that freedom would not be restrictions of the political rights of the class enemy but restrictions of the political rights of the proletariat. That freedom is likewise a precondition for the working class collectively as a class arriving at a common or at least a majority viewpoint on the innumerable problems of tactics, strategy, and even theory (programme) that are involved in the titanic task of building a classless society under the leadership of the traditionally oppressed, exploited, and downtrodden masses. Unless there is freedom to organise political groups, tendencies and parties, there can be no real socialist democracy.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the substitutionist, paternalistic, elites, and bureaucratic deviation from Marxism that sees the socialist revolution, the conquest of state power, and the wielding of state power under the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a task of

the revolutionary party acting 'in the name' of the class or, in the best of cases, 'with the support of' the class.

If the dictatorship of the proletariat is to mean what the very words say, and what the theoretical tradition of both Marx and Lenin explicitly contain, ie, *the rule of the working class as a class* (of the 'associated producers'); if the emancipation of the proletariat can be achieved only through the activity of the proletariat itself and not through a passive proletariat being 'educated' for emancipation by benevolent and enlightened revolutionary administrators, then it is obvious that the leading role of the revolutionary party both in the conquest of power and in the building of a classless society can only consist of leading the mass activity of the class politically, of winning political hegemony in a class that is increasingly engaged in independent activity, of struggling within the class for majority support for its proposals, through political and not administrative or repressive means.

Under the dictatorship of the proletariat in its complete form, state power is exercised by democratically elected workers' councils. The revolutionary party fights for a correct political line and for political leadership within these workers' councils, not to substitute itself for them. Party and state remain entirely separate and distinct entities.

But genuinely representative, democratically elected workers' councils can exist only if the masses have the right to elect whoever they want without distinction, and without restrictive preconditions as to the ideological or political convictions of the elected delegates. (This does not apply, of course, to parties engaged in armed struggle against the workers state, ie, to conditions of civil war, or to



Solidarnosc congress in Poland: pointing the way to socialist democracy

conditions of the revolutionary crisis and armed insurrection itself, to which this resolution refers in a later point). Likewise, workers' councils can function democratically only if all the elected delegates enjoy the right to form groups, tendencies, and parties, to have access to the mass media, to present their different platforms before the masses, and to have them debated and tested by experience. Any restriction of party affiliation restricts the freedom of the proletariat to exercise political power, ie, restricts workers' democracy, which would be contrary to the historical interests of the working class, to the need to consolidate workers' power, to the interests of world revolution and building socialism. Obviously such rights will not be recognised for parties, groups or individuals involved in a civil war or armed actions against the workers state.

In no way does the Marxist theory of the state entail the concept that a one-party system is a necessary precondition or feature of workers' power, a workers state, or the dictatorship of the proletariat. In no theoretical document of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky, and in no programmatic document of the Third International under Lenin, did such a proposal of a one-party system ever appear. The theories developed later on, such as the crude Stalinist theory that throughout history social classes have always been represented by a single party, are historically wrong and serve only as apologies for the monopoly of political power usurped by the Soviet bureaucracy and its ideological heirs in other bureaucratised workers states, a monopoly based upon the political expropriation of the working class.

History — including the convul-

fight against reformist illusions and ideas is through the combination of ideological struggle and the creation of the material conditions for the disappearance of these illusions. Such a struggle would lose much of its efficacy under conditions of administrative repression and lack of free debate and exchange of ideas.

If the revolutionary party agitates for the suppression of social democracy or other reformist formations, it will be a thousand times more difficult to maintain freedom of tendencies and toleration of factions within its own ranks. The political heterogeneity of the working class would then inevitably tend to reflect itself within the single party.

Thus, the real alternative is not either freedom for those with a genuine socialist programme (who ideologically and programmatically support the soviet system) or freedom for all political parties. The real choice is: either genuine workers' democracy with the right of the toiling masses to elect whoever they want to the soviets and freedom of political organisation of all those who abide by the soviet constitution in practice (including those who do not ideologically support the soviet system), or a decisive restriction of the political rights of the working class itself, with all the consequences flowing therefrom. Systematic restriction of political parties leads to systematic restriction of freedom within the revolutionary vanguard party itself.

When we say that we are in favour of a legalisation of all soviet parties, ie, of those that abide by the soviet constitution in practice, this does not imply that we in any case underestimate the political confusion, errors, and even partial defeats which the propagation of wrong programmes and alien class influences upon the toiling masses by such parties could and will provoke under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even more obviously do we not call upon the workers to build parties upon the basis of what we consider wrong programmes, platforms, or policies, nor do we advocate the creation of such parties. We only state that the artificial administrative suppression of such parties — artificial inasmuch as they continue to reflect currents among the masses even if they are legally suppressed — far from reducing these dangers, increases them.

The political, ideological, and cultural homogenisation of the working class, bringing the great majority of its members up to the point where they are capable of substituting a free community of self-administered citizens to the survival of a state machine (ie, able to achieve the building of socialism and the withering away of the state) is a gigantic historical task. It is not only linked to obvious material preconditions. It involves also a specific political training: 'The existence of critically-minded people, opponents, dissidents, discontented and reactionary elements, gives the revolution life and strength. The confrontation of differences and polemics develops "the ideological and political muscles" of the people. It is a permanent form of exercising; an antidote to paralysis and to passivity.'²

Likewise, Fidel Castro had polemicalised against Escalante, saying: *the revolution must be a school of unfettered thought*. Even if practice does not always match these statements, they represent the programmatic continuity of Marxism on the subject and must be defended tooth and nail against all who would deny them.

Historical experience confirms that outside of conditions of genuine workers' democracy, this process of training the masses for self-administration, can only be retarded or even reversed, as it obviously has been in the USSR. Historical experience has also confirmed that no genuine workers' democracy is possible without political pluralism.

1. Trotsky — *The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International*.
2. Trotsky — *The Revolution Betrayed*.
3. Tomas Borge.

Reagan's Watergate?

IF ANYONE was in any doubt, the revelations concerning the Iranian arms deal have confirmed that beneath US 'secret diplomacy' lies a hornets nest of lies, illegal activity, and imperialist aggression. The exposures have already claimed the heads of Lt Col Oliver North and Admiral John Poindexter whilst at least half a dozen of Reagan's closest 'advisors', not to say the president himself, look increasingly insecure.

When 'Doctor Death' David Owen wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* last week that the 'rapid restoration of Mr Reagan's authority in all of our interests' he wasn't just speaking on behalf of the SDP. There is deep fear within world imperialist circles that the arms deal affair may become Ronald Reagan's 'Watergate'.

Over the coming weeks there'll be a rallying round to try to keep the lid on any further exposures. But the truth will out. And the truth is:

- that the administration has lied about its actions and policy with regard to Iran and to Nicaragua.

- that the administration was shipping arms to Iran whilst arms dealer Herbert Smith gets sentences to 10 years imprisonment by a New York court for attempting to sell military helicopters to Tehran.

- that money from the Iranian arms deal was shipped to the Nicaraguan contras; and that because, at the time, the US Congress had ruled that such 'contra aid' was illegal, the money was first 'laundered' via the gnomes of Zurich.

- that the same people who processed the contra aid, the staff of the US National Security Council — known as 'White House Cowboys' — are the same people implicated in the testimony of Eugene Hasenfus, the US pilot recently shot down over Nicaragua and now serving a 30-year jail sentence there.

The intricate web of lies and falsehood woven by the US rulers cannot hide these basic truths — which anyway confirm the suspicions of any thinking person. What is less clear is why the Reagan administration should want

By James Black

to have dealings with Iran. Didn't Reagan, after all, come to office on the back of his attacks on president Carter's failure to confront 'Iranian terrorists' as Washington hypocritically calls the people who came to power with the revolutionary overthrow of the shah?

The reality is that Reagan has not turned soft. As he himself continually insists the arms deal had nothing to do with concern for the 'hostages' — though Reagan is concerned that the hostage question doesn't become for him what he helped make it for Carter.

Former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane who as head of the 'White House Cowboys' was involved in the affair from the start and whose resignation last year went unexplained, hinted what was involved in a recent speech he made in Atlanta, Georgia.

'The United States' he said 'has vital security interests in the Middle East that are entirely compatible with the security interests in Iran.' Oil and a common fight against the Soviet Union was clearly

what he had in mind.

This has always been the US's attitude toward the region. Until 1979, the US rulers had it entirely their own way. The Iranian monarchy had been installed in 1953 through a coup sponsored by the CIA and the British secret service. From then on the shah ruled in close concert with the US and British governments.

Close economic and military cooperation was the order of the day. So much so that the Iranian army had more British tanks than the British army! But this 'order' was torn asunder by the massive, popular revolution which destroyed the monarchy, drove out the imperialists' military machine — including some 45,000 US 'military advisors' and resulted in big blows to the US's and Britain's economic interests in the region. The gains won by the oppressed and exploited inspired people throughout the region.

The government of Khomeini which came to power on the backs of the people adopted a foreign and domestic policy hostile to the US but designed to defend capitalist interests in Iran.

It has though made serious attacks on democratic rights and living standards and has adopted a hostile stance towards the USSR. The contradictions produced by the revolution itself, the war, the serious economic problems facing Iran have provoked factional strife within the ruling party. And it is towards this factional warfare that the present US policy is geared, in an attempt to find some allies through which US interests can be reasserted.

The ability of the US to succeed in its objectives would have ramifications



Reagan — behind his secret diplomacy lies a hornet's nest of lies, illegal activity and imperialist aggression.

throughout the whole region, not least of all in the Lebanon where the PLO is reestablishing itself (and where it has a united front with a pro-Iranian group).

Events in Iran suggest that Washington is indeed on to something. Last month saw the arrest of Mahdi Hashemi, son-in-law and close aide of the man designated to succeed Khomeini, the Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri. The Montazeri faction is understood to be opposed to any dealing with the US.

On the other side is the Iranian parliamentary speaker, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Rafsanjani has been prepared to negotiate with France and the US over arms and debt repayments.

But while Reagan is seeking to take advantage of such improved relations to gain a foothold (including looking to the inevitable post-Khomeini struggle), the opposition to the deal launched by the US Democratic Party is

aimed at achieving exactly the same objectives.

Imperialism is in fact playing a totally hypocritical role in the area. First incited and financed Iraq to attack Iran in 1980 in an attempt to overturn the revolution there. Imperialism has continued to arm Iraq. Now it is clear that the US, as well as the Israelis, have been supplying arms to Iran. The Iran-Iraq war itself has become a totally reactionary war on both sides.

The Labour Party NEC unfortunately allowed itself to be stampeded into denouncing arms sales to Iran — while applying no such criteria to Iraq. The real issue in the area is the continued domination by the United States, and its allies such as Britain, of the entire gulf area. Reagan has simply got caught out in one of the manoeuvres to maintain this. But the impact in the United States, precisely because it reveals the lying and hypocrisy of the whole of US policy, is going to be very great.

Philippines — mass mobilisations force imperialist manoeuvres

PHILIPPINES president Corazon Aquino dismissed her 'defence minister' Juan Ponce Enrile last Monday, 23 November. On 27 November she concluded a ceasefire with the New People's Army guerrilla fighters.

Enrile's removal had been demanded following the murder last month of Rolando Olalia, chairperson of the 600,000-strong militant trade union federation, the May First Movement (or KMU). The day after his murder, 14 November, 10,000 people demonstrated outside Enrile's headquarters charging him with responsibility.

Huge protest mobilisations took place the following week. Thirty thousand went on strike in Manila on 18 November and a reported 75,000 took strike action in a nationwide stoppage the following day. A massive 200,000 people turned out at Olalia's funeral. At each mobilisation an accusing finger was pointed at Enrile and his 'RAM-boys', named after the so-called Reform Armed Forces Movement.

Aquino's decision to get rid of Enrile can only be understood in this context. This also goes for her government's conclusion

of a ceasefire agreement with the NPA. The NPA had been campaigning for a ceasefire for months. But Enrile had been opposed and under his direc-

By Nick Adams

tion the RAM-boys had engaged in a number of provocative strikes.

Aquino claimed that Enrile's dismissal was her response to a coup attempt which he headed up over the weekend of 22-23 November. Certainly Enrile had been associated with four previous actions aimed at purging the government of its 'radical' members since Marcos was



Enrile: dismissed

overthrown and Aquino came to power. And there was a meeting of 180 pro-Marcos people in a luxury Manila suburb on the Saturday.

But Aquino's move was by no means a simple concession to the mass movement and a defensive crackdown on the hardliners. Above all her actions were designed to get the government into better shape. Enrile's methods were just not adequate to deal with the country's



Ilo: his replacement

deep-going economic crisis and the 'political instability' continually addressed by US, Western European and Japanese imperialism to whom Aquino has looked for aid.

An immediate response from Washington welcomed Aquino's measures. 'We are pleased that this reported coup attempt failed' a State Department spokesperson said 'and we reiterate our strong and unequivocal support for

the Aquino government'.

Enrile's replacement, Rafael Ilo is hardly a radical. He is a graduate of the Philippine military academy and West Point and a former vice chief of staff of the armed forces, and responsible for defeating a communist insurgency in the 1950s.

Moreover Aquino has also moved against other, more radical members of the cabinet while the figure to emerge with the most increased authority out of the whole affair is the armed forces chief of staff himself, General Fidel Ramos.

Ramos is a cousin of Marcos and was chief of the armed forces when Marcos was still dictator. Ramos is the individual most associated with Washington, and has made it plain that he does not intend to 'allow the communists to take over' as he puts it.

KMU secretary-general Bob Ortaliz, has put out a call for international solidarity with the popular movement in the country at this most important time.

Support for Hormel strikers

SPEAKING IN Sheffield last month, Tony Benn told a parable about a young lad who'd fallen down a well. Three people came with ropes in successive rescue attempts. But each time the ropes were too short. 'Tie the ropes together' the boy shouted from the dark and damp distance. The labour movement has to tie the ropes together in the same way, Benn argued.

He got the story from Jim Guyette, leader of the strikers at the Spam-producing Hormel company in the US. Guyette had led a strike support tour to Britain at the time of the Labour Party conference and Tony Benn was prominent in drumming up support. Benn was also amongst a group of Labour MPs who wrote to the strikers expressing backing for their 'historic campaign for justice'.

The strikers are certainly in need of such 'rope-tying' solidarity. They've been out for nearly 16 months now against an employer hell-bent on union busting. Over that 16 months they've had to face the wrath of the national guard, the courts and the media who have all pitched in against them.

Their two week British tour is certainly yielding results. They were able to speak to literally thousands of people. Their message has been printed in a number of labour movement papers.

The latest is the mass circulation *T&G Record*, monthly paper of the Transport and General Workers Union. 'Spurn spam from USA' urges its November issue. The article follows a meeting between Jim Guyette and a TGWU national officer. The TGWU organises workers in a Hormel subsidiary in Liverpool.

Another paper to recently publicise the strikers' case is *Tribune*. In its 24 October issue, Carol Rees tells the Hormel story in a major article.

Rees details the company attacks, the appalling 'safety' record and the workers fightback. She explains how the struggle has been sabotaged by the strikers' union, the United Food and Commercial Workers. The UFCW instructed the strikers to return to work and placed their branch under trusteeship.



Barbara Collette (right) with Wapping and Silentnight strikers at Labour Party conference

Rees quotes Jim Guyette's explanation that the strikers refused to be cowed, despite all the odds. 'We're being starved into submission but we don't intend this company to let us be dust to the wind' he says, as Rees reports the strikers' fight for their new union, the North American Meatpackers Union.

As the strikers put it: 'if not this fight, which fight?'

The tour party was overwhelmed by the solidarity showed to them in Britain. 'I have a heart full of gratitude for being one of the people who went to England' said tour member, Barbara Collette, in a speech reporting the tour on returning to the USA.

Collette warmly reported the contact she'd had with Women Against Pit Closures and the 'rope-tying' lessons she'd learnt: 'We were welcomed everywhere. They shared everything with us. They kept nothing back.'

'They did the same thing for me that hundreds of us have done here. They opened their homes, they opened their hearts, they were totally honest.'

'We should know that we must not allow ourselves to be separated from the farmers, from the blacks. We cannot separate ourselves from Nicaragua. We cannot separate ourselves from any struggle that's going on because all the struggles are somehow related.'

'We have to know and understand that unless we all stick together — unless there is solidarity between England, American, wherever it is — all of us will lose.'

Photo: MORNING STAR

Aids and the 'moral majority'

THE GOVERNMENT at last decided to do something about the issue of AIDS last week. Any action against AIDS had been held up for five years because the government and press attempted to present it as a 'gay killer', a 'judgement of god', and let several hundred people die as they tried to bolster their reactionary and idiotic system of morality. Now the campaign is still not remotely effective enough because an attempt is being made to fit it into a right wing system of morality which will not work.

Instead the response must be a full-scale public health campaign based on clear and forthright factual information, free of any attempt to impose so-called 'moral' solutions.

AIDS is both a medical scourge and an excuse for a reactionary offensive aimed primarily at gays and women on the ground that the only 'safe' sex is heterosexual and monogamous.

The necessary response to AIDS is medical, not moral. What is needed is a huge scale public health campaign aimed chiefly at giving the clearest possible information on the means by which it is transmitted, simple preventative steps, and where help is available.

This information should be particularly made available to young people in schools, where a whole generation is reaching adolescence in an atmosphere of fear and ignorance about AIDS. Alongside material in schools there should be a huge public advertising campaign on the television, radio, public transport and bill boards.

Government funding should provide free clean needles to drug users, and free contraceptive sheaths should be available at easily accessible outlets like chemists shops. Screening should be freely and voluntarily available, not just at clinics for sexually trans-

mitted diseases, but at all clinics, and through your doctor.

Above all the encouragement of openness about sexuality, and the accompanying freedom of information is the biggest step that can be taken to prevent the mushrooming spread of the illness.

Instead, the long overdue action by the Tories will be based on spending the minimum of money, and couching its entire campaign in the framework of the old message of Moral Rearmament, the only 'safe' sex is no sex.

This reactionary 'moral' position has prevented the necessary steps being taken at every stage of the development of the AIDS epidemic.

In the first phases of the epidemic, both in the USA and here, it was largely gay men and habitual drug-users who became infected, and this guided the self-styled 'moral majority's' response. According to these moral rearmers, society had no responsibility as sufferers had 'brought it on themselves'. It was God's punishment on the wicked.

A vicious homophobic campaign was whipped up on the basis that gays were plague carriers — a campaign that had a real impact. Concrete information about how the disease is spread was withheld to back this up. This campaign never reached the peak in

Britain that it did in the US, because by the time the epidemic was beginning here its real dimensions were already dramatically clear in the States. But in the USA homophobia has begun to infect even the liberal left — in New York this summer I was warned to steer clear of Christopher Street unless 'you want to get AIDS' by someone who should have known better.

Such ignorance and prejudice is unforgivable with 10 per cent of New Yorkers infected, but even with this evidence the American media still presents the illness as a gay-killer rather than the generalised killer it really is. And the US government still like to present gays as the cause of the epidemic, rather than its own inaction.

After a period of attempting to justify inactivity, while hundreds of gays were allowed to die, the exponential spread of the epidemic forced some government and health authority action in the US. In Britain for the first two or three years of the epidemic the only serious work in relation to the disease has been carried by charities chiefly sustained by the gay community itself, like the Terence Higgins trust. This has played a magnificent role in disseminating information about prevention to the gay community, supporting sufferers, and campaigning for greater government action.

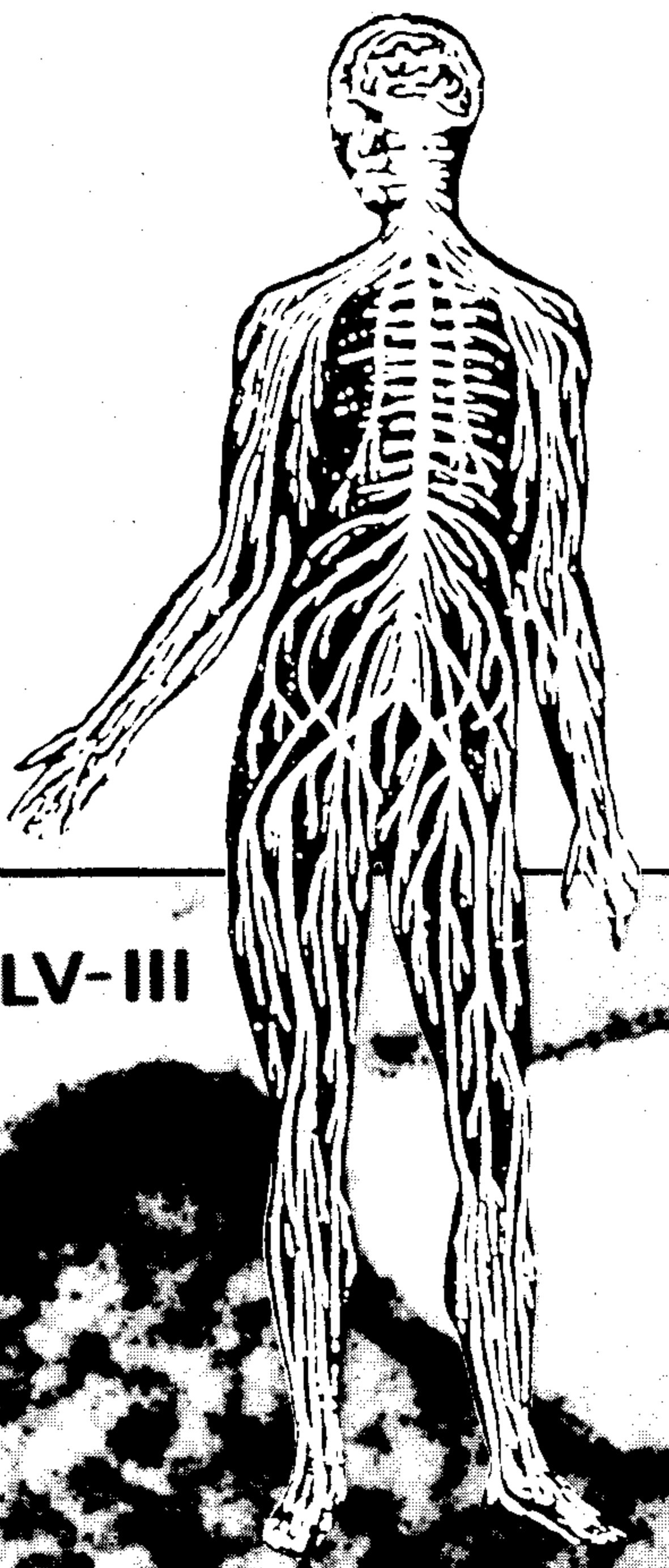
Even when the government health department had been forced to admit that action was necessary, the decisive steps were again inhibited, and prevented, by the anti-gay, anti-sex lobby. This time the 'problem' the 'moral majority' faced was how to circulate explicit information in schools, and in advertising, without

The AIDS virus



undermining its own natural constituency among the Mary Whitehouse/Victoria Gillick brigade, without undermining its own anti-gay campaigns, and without directly contradicting its attack on Labour educational authorities for stepping up the

The Tories new answer is to ensure that the entire scope of sex education in schools, message it spreads will be couched in the 'safe sex = no sex' framework, and the lauding of heterosexual, monogamous relations as not only moral, but healthy too. There will be the minimum of explicit infor-



mation about precisely which sexual activities increase the danger of cross-infection — because that would mean explaining that such activities actually exist outside of smutty jokes and fevered imaginations.

So the Tories' answer will be quite simple, it is avoiding offending the 'moral' right, by failing to undertake the full-scale information campaign that is desperately needed — and in particular failing to take this information into schools where young people engaged in their first sexual experimentation are both at risk in reality and are most susceptible to rumour and

half-truth about how the illness is spread.

Alongside this failure the government is continuing to step up its anti-gay campaign, and introduce a sharp and particularly nasty racist element by blaming black people from the African continent who are currently suffering the most widespread epidemic of the illness anywhere in the world. The most recent part of this has been the threat to introduce visa and special immigration controls on visitors from West Africa.

The Tories' belated, and completely wrong type of, action to prevent the spread of AIDS is totally insufficient to have any real impact. The campaign must continue for effective government action and campaigns including the necessary funding for research into a cure. There must be a public health campaign aimed at all sections of society that it totally free from so-called moral restrictions — both from the point of view of the extent of the information that is given, and the advice on what action to take.

Above all the notion that it is the victims of the disease who are the villains in society has to be determinedly fought. This will mean rejecting the notion that AIDS should be a notifiable disease, defending the right to work of AIDS sufferers, and opposing the introduction of repressive measures against both gays and West Africans. There must be full medical and social support for the victims.

The evidence from the USA is now overwhelming that a decisive and factually clear campaign by the government could prevent the explosive development of the disease in this country. The Tories have made it

clear that they have no intention of taking this step, chiefly because of their reactionary so-called morality. In fact the only immorality is in allowing thousands of people to die for the sake of appearances about sex.

Reactionary governments seem singularly incapable of learning from history. When gonorrhoea developed as a 19th century plague, the first to suffer were the prostitutes, so nothing was done. Then the troops began to suffer so they inspected the prostitutes to see if they were 'clean' and only the 'clean' could operate. When babies began to die the clinics were established, a cure was sought, and information was posted in public conveniences, and the scourge was stopped. Why do we always have to wait for babies to die?

By Jude Woodward

The issue is the same as with abortion for young people. Those who oppose abortion did not stop women having them — but they did ensure thousands of women died from illegal abortions. Those, like Victoria Gillick, who tried to prevent contraception being available without parental consent would not have stopped sex between young people, but they would have produced thousands of unwanted pregnancies and ruined lives — and the figures produced this week show a dramatic increase in pregnancies among the under 16s after Gillick won her court case. Those who attempt to impose their reactionary anti-gay, right wing sexual morality, on AIDS will literally kill tens of thousands of people — and already have done.

Letters ANC appeal

ON 8 January 1987 we shall be observing the 75th anniversary of our movement, the African National Congress. This historic anniversary occurs at a critical moment in the struggle for the liberation of our country.

The continuing struggle inside our country combined with the inspiring actions taken by the international community against racist South Africa, have driven the apartheid system into a deep and worsening crisis. Inside our country, the balance of strength between the forces of democracy on the one hand and those of racism on the other has shifted to such an extent that our victory over the apartheid regime is now in sight.

That confidence in the certainty of victory continues to inspire our people to carry out great feats of heroism in the struggle to liberate South Africa and bring peace to our region. The heightened offensive for democracy that has gripped our country for more than two years now is

both unstoppable and irreversible.

In the face of these developments, the apartheid regime finds itself with no alternative but to admit the utter bankruptcy of its policy and resort to extreme measures or repression that are doomed to failure. All its actions are those of regime that is fighting for its very survival.

Indeed, 75 years of our existence have been characterised by resistance and survival against heavy odds. We have survived martial law and states of emergency. We have been hounded, abducted, raided and massacred in various countries only to emerge, each time, stronger and more resolute to rid our country and the work of the scourge of apartheid.

It is therefore most appropriate that as we observe the 75th anniversary of our movement, we should focus our attention on the central question of the destruction of the oppressive and evil system of white minority colonial domina-

tion and its replacement by a new democratic and non-racial political and social order.

We appeal to the world community to join us in this effort. Let the nations across the face of the globe impose comprehensive sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Let the people of the world not only isolate the racists but also reject their criminal regime as illegitimate.

Let us see the entire peace-loving humanity rally behind the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement of our country. Let us see not only greatly increased moral and material support to the forces of liberty and peace in South Africa but also their recognition as the genuine representatives of the people of our country.

Let the peoples of the world further increase their support for SWAPO and the people of Namibia in their struggle to liberate their country from apartheid colonialism and military occupation. Let all rally to

the support of the Frontline States and other states of Southern Africa to help them withstand Pretoria's campaign of aggression and destabilisation.

We are certain that if together we take these measures, we will make a decisive movement forward towards the birth of a free South Africa, an independent Namibia and a peaceful, secure and stable region of Southern Africa. The masses of our people have no doubt whatsoever at this time of great hope and confidence in the future that the international community will march side by side with us to transform the retreat of the enemy into a rout.

Forward to the 75th anniversary of the African National Congress!

Democracy will triumph!

Victory is certain!

Oliver Tambo
President ANC

Gay rights

A CAMPAIGN to combat legal discrimination against lesbians and gay men has been launched. The campaign was launched at a meeting called by the Labour Campaign for

Lesbian and Gay Rights, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality and the National Council for Civil Liberties and which was attended by representatives from a number of lesbian and gay organisations. Over 50 people attended a launch meeting of the campaign in London.

The campaign will highlight the many different ways in which the civil and criminal law, and the way in which they are implemented, discriminate against lesbians and gay men.

Lesbian and gay sexuality is against the public policy of the law, resulting in flagrant discrimination in such areas as custody of children and employment. Public expressions of lesbian and gay sexuality are often criminal, and the law is used to harass and restrict lesbian and gay publications and organisations. Lesbians and gay men are subject to systematic harassment by the police.

Working groups are being set up to organise discussion and involvement by lesbians and young, black, disabled and older lesbians and gay men. The point of view of these groups on the law has usually been ignored in the past. The campaign will seek support for changes in the law from organisations outside the lesbian and gay movement. The campaign will use the general

election to push for the next parliament to enact legislation for lesbian and gay rights.

The next two national planning meetings of the campaign are on Saturday 6 December in London and Saturday 10 January in Manchester. Speakers from the campaign can be arranged from Room 221, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AT.

Jan Parker and Jamie Gough
Legislation for Lesbian and Gay Rights Campaign.

Borderway 'cuts and runs'

ON 12 November over 200 Birmingham trade unionists demonstrated with banners and placards outside the Borderway factory in Catherine Street, Aston.

They were there in solidarity with 20 workers sacked by the company in August for joining a union. Some of the workers are on just £1.45 an hour. They had joined TASS in an attempt to improve their appalling wages and conditions.

The demonstration was a big boost to the picketing which has been organised daily since the

dispute started. At the rally Derek Robinson, who was himself sacked when convenor of the Longbridge BL plant appealed for support.

'What we need to do here' he said 'is go out to the factories which deal with Borderway and ask workers not to handle its products. What we need in the trade union movement is solidarity — simple but very important.'

Borderway owner, Mr Nemashangi had closed the factory for the day of the mass picket. Then, later in the week, he ditched his 18 scab employees and put the company into liquidation.

The only logic behind this move is Nemashangi's hostility to the labour movement and his total contempt for a highly productive workforce. He is looking to cut and run to some other part of the slum-pit city and then set up shop again. The company is a highly profitable brass stamping concern. He has already taken steps to remove some equipment from the premises but the bulk of it is still there.

Much-needed donations and messages of support to TASS Craft (metal mechanics sector), 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham B3 1JG.

Bob Smith

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
1912-1987
75th Anniversary Celebration Rally
8 January, 1987, 7.30pm
Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London NW1

Wapping 'Recall TUC' urged

DESPITE 11 months of picket-line hardship, 75 per cent of the original five and a half thousand sacked News International printers are still going strong. This was the official verdict as ACAS announced that only 1580 had been tempted to take the money in Murdoch's rejected 'final' offer, writes BRIAN GROGAN.

The determination of the sacked printers has spurred new support. Last week alone three London support groups held public meetings of solidarity in Tower Hamlets, Lewisham and central London, and a fourth — Camden — held a support social.

The deepening support was also shown by the success of a tour by SOGAT RIRMA branch member Jim Mason and WAM supporter, Jean Lockwood. In the first week of a two-week tour of South Yorks and North Notts, they were welcomed at Trades Council, Labour Party, miners and Women Against Pit Closures meetings in Sheffield, Huddersfield and Barnsley.

The Scottish TUC congress at Perth added its support to the sacked printers. And now it looks as if, after last, the transport union is set to discipline those of its members who are driving TNT lorries through the picket lines against union instructions. TNT is the company taken over by Murdoch to distribute his papers and by-pass solidarity action from railworkers. After delaying nearly 12 months British Rail is now taking legal action against Murdoch for breach of contract.

People have been appalled by the new evidence confirming the EETPU leadership's involvement in the plot to break the unions and steal the jobs

of the sacked printers.

Minutes of a meeting published in *The Guardian* confirm that Eric Hammond was cooperating with Murdoch a long time before the printers were dismissed. And in a book, *The End of the Street*, written by ex-Sunday Times journalist, Linda Melvern, further documentary proof is provided of meetings between EETPU officials and News International management a full nine months before the start of the dispute.

Despite the evidence, last week's TUC general council took no measures to extend solidarity for the sacked printers. The decision at October's general council meeting for a lobby of Parliament and demonstration in early December has not been acted upon. It will now be the new year before any national action call is made.

The general council rejected by the narrowest of margins — 23 votes to 21, with chair Fred Jarvis using his vote against — a proposal to reopen the file on the EETPU. Moved by

postal workers general secretary, Alan Tuffin, the motion won the support of representatives of a majority of the TUC's affiliated membership. Leif Mills, leader of the banking union — whose delegation backed the printers at

TUC Congress — voted against the motion.

At the lobby outside Congress House, printers leader Mike Hicks won loud applause in urging the recall of TUC Congress because the general council 'leadership has

gone against the congress decision'.

Though disappointed by the actual decision, printers at the Saturday march said were uplifted by the support they did achieve.

Women march against Murdoch



Betty Heathfield at Wapping with WAM's Pauline Good

THREE marches will converge on the Wapping fortress on Saturday 13 December. Two will be led respectively by printers and support groups. The third — a special women's march — will move off from Butcher's Row led by the recently formed 'Women against Murdoch' organisation. WAM have written to Brenda Dean and Glenys Kinnock asking them to participate.

A good turn out has already been promised from branches of the Women Against Pit Closures movement. Betty Heathfield has pledged continuing support from Chesterfield and a coachload of WAM members are travelling there for a WAPC social on 6 December.

At the third WAM membership meeting last week, the women decided to boost their regular

presence and stall at the Saturday night pickets with a special women's picket on 1 December. A WAM supporter has also gone on tour to boost support.

The organisation's Christmas plans received a boost last week when a member, Jackie Weedon, reported that the Norwegian print unions had donated a solidarity Christmas tree. But in a petty move, the forestry

commission have put the blockers on — it appears that it's okay for Trafalgar Square but not for Wapping's Wellclose Square. So the strikers will make do with a home-grown tree instead.

So far WAM have collected £2000 in the Christmas appeal for strikers' children.

● *'United WAM Stand' is the message of a Christmas card produced as part of their Christmas appeal by Women Against Murdoch. The cards cost £1 for 5 and can be obtained from WAM secretary, Eileen Beer, c/o Kingsway London Women's Centre, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC1.*

Fund drive

Support our £10,000 publication fund

The 'Building an Alliance for Socialism' weekend, in addition to being a resounding political success, also raised over £1,400 for Socialist Action. But we now have to start on our £10,000 publication fund.

Supporters from North London have donated £112.41, from SE London £167, from NW London £90 and £225 from East London supporters. The total to date is £671.81.

We have to raise £1000 per week if we are to make our goal by the end of January. We are hoping supporters in every part of the country will take advantage of the Xmas period to collectively raise funds

through organising jumble sales, bazaars, parties and banquets. We appeal to all our supporters to make a donation or a pledge which can be fulfilled between now and the end of January.

Meanwhile, we have little more than three weeks to complete the drive on our Xmas raffle. The prizes of the new Amstrad computer or the latest Sharp video are well worth having.

Supporters	Target	Raised
Aberdeen	120	
Bristol	360	
Birmingham	640	
Cardiff	480	
Pontypridd	240	
Coventry	160	
Glasgow	360	
Huddersfield	400	
Leeds	520	
Leicester	240	
Liverpool	200	
Manchester	920	
Newport	480	
Nottingham	440	
S Yorks	640	
E London	1240	£225
NW London	600	£90
SE London	440	£167
N London	520	£112.41
OW London	760	
SW London	360	
Individuals		£77.40
TOTAL		£671.81

Huge success for mineworkers' international

Delegates from 31 countries, representing some 5 million workers assembled in London on the weekend of 22/23 November. They were attending a conference called by the International Miners Organisation on the struggle to promote employment in the mining and energy industries.

IMO president, Arthur Scargill, described the success of the conference as being 'beyond our wildest dreams'.

The IMO was launched in September 1985. It has formal affiliation from miners organisations in 33 countries, representing 3.8 million mineworkers.

The weekend's conference was open to affiliates and non-affiliates alike, and included a very weighty presence from the African continent. Egypt which has recently massively expanded its coal mining under the Sinai desert was represented.

Representatives from the Philippines First of May trade union movement were coming until the murder of the movement's leader, Roland Olalia.

Vietnam was present and there were representatives of unions from Eastern Europe. A group of women miners from the United States participated as observers. They had been invited by WAPC who were also in attendance.

Pride of place amongst the delegates went to the South African NUM delegation, headed up by the NUM's president, James Motlatsi. The union's general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, had not been allowed out of the country and so was unfortunately unable to attend.

There are over 700,000

miners in South Africa of whom nearly half a million are in the gold mines, where the NUM is based. But as James Motlatsi told the conference the 325,000 NUM members are also in coal, platinum, diamond and other mines.

By Jon Silberman

The NUM leaders confidently predict that they will unionise the rest of South Africa's miners over the next few years.

Conditions in the industry are appalling. Low wages, the infamous 'compound system' whereby miners are separated from their families for a 12-month contract and housed in compounds — with between 20 and 40 to a room — and a 'safety' record of 600 deaths a year were highlighted by the tragic Kinross accident earlier this year. Three hundred thousand miners were joined by a similar number of other workers on 1 October in a Day of Mourning strike.

The struggle of the South African miners inspired the conference delegates and an emergency resolution (see box) was adopted unanimously, aiming at a complete boycott of South African coal.

The conference also adopted a report from general secretary, Alan Simon, a member of the French union confederation, the CGT. The report aimed 'at the protection and extension of jobs' and argued that unemployment was not a natural phenomenon but arose out of definite decisions based on maximising profits.

Peter Heathfield reminded delegates that in Western Europe, North America and Japan, over 31 million people are officially unemployed, the real figure being much greater.

Arthur Scargill said that to deliberately consign millions of people to the dole represented criminal action and spelt out the need for international solidarity action to support workers in struggle.

'It's no good passing resolutions and making passionate speeches' he emphasised 'unless these are translated into effective action'. In addition to practical action on South Africa, Scargill urged solidarity with workers in Chile and Bolivia, El Salvador 'and above all Nicaragua'.

We must renew our support, he said, for miners in the Philippines, South-East Asia and the Indian sub-continent; and he called on the socialist countries not only to provide financial assistance to workers in dispute but to stop trading or dealing with their companies.

The success of the conference can be expected to be reflected in increased affiliations to the IMO.



Motlatsi



Scargill

Resolution on South African coal

Conference notes that 18 countries imported 40.9 million tons of South African coal in 1985, with EEC countries importing 25.5 million tons or 62% of the total.

Conference further notes the decision by the Danish, French and US governments to ban South African coal imports from the end of 1986 (affecting 10.6 million tons). It also notes the decision by the EEC Foreign Ministers on 16th September 1986, not to include coal in the economic sanctions against the apartheid regime.

In view of the requests for support from the South African NUM, Conference agrees to:

1. Write to the Prime Ministers of the 12 EEC countries and to the EEC Council of Ministers, demanding that full sanctions are imposed against South African coal imports, and that this issue be considered at the Council's next meeting;
2. Write to the Prime Ministers of the other countries world-wide importing South African coal and demand similar action;
3. Support the call by the African National Congress, South African trade union movement, anti-apartheid organisations and the United Nations Assembly for comprehensive maximum economic sanctions to be imposed upon South Africa;
4. Call upon all national and international trade union centres to bring about united and comprehensive trade union action to maximise pressure on all those governments or economic concerns who continue to import South African coal, thereby expanding the life of apartheid;
5. Call upon all national and international trade unions to refuse to handle South African coal, and to urge all trade unions to join in the campaign for a complete boycott of it.

Hanger strike

THREE hundred workers at the artificial limb company of J.E. Hanger are in their eleventh week of dispute. Sacked by the firm in Roehampton, south-west London on 16 September the workers are stepping up the campaign for support.

They have forged links with the Wapping printers and their women's support organisation has had help and assistance from the Yorkshire miners' women's support group and Women against Murdoch. On Monday 1 December, Tony Benn spoke at a successful public meeting on behalf of the sacked workers.

The dispute started when four members of the Works Committee were sacked on trumped charges. This was the latest action in an anti-union campaign by the Murdoch-style management who broke agreements reached with national officers of the workers' unions, TASS and FTAT, and implemented impossible times on jobs.

The immediate action in support of the four representatives was endorsed by a ballot vote, with just 17 voting against.

● *Donations and messages of support to Hanger Strike Appeal, c/o TASS, Wessex House, 520 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4YQ. Tel: 01-646 0260.*

I wish to make the following donation/pledge to the publication fund of Socialist Action £.....

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Standing Order Mandate

Please fill in this form and send to your own bank. We will be notified by your bank.

Please send £.....(.....pounds) on the ...th day of each month starting in the month of, to the account of Socialist Action, a/c No 70372315 at the Cooperative Bank, Islington, sort code 08-90-33, until further notice.

Socialist ACTION

Defend Knowsley North CLP against disbandment

THE LATEST Labour Party national executive committee witnessed the first significant victory in the campaign against the political expulsions that are being carried out across the party: Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were accepted back into party membership following Sparkbrook constituency's unanimous decision the night before to reinstate them. But the wave of witch hunts in the Labour Party is still continuing.

The same meeting decided to continue 'disciplinary action' against the Liverpool city council Labour group, against the officers of the two St Helens parties, and against Redcar CLP.

By Carol Turner

The November NEC also set up an enquiry, to be conducted by national party officers into whether or not Knowsley North Constituency Labour Party should be 'disbanded and thereafter reconstituted'. After months of waiting, the prediction of the Knowsley party has proved well-founded. The three person hit squad will report back to the December NEC.

Writing in *Campaign Group News* last month, Knowsley North press officer Dave Kerr explained: 'The media has widely reported the threats of Neil Kinnoch to "deal with" Knowsley when the by-election is over. I believe suspension and disbandment of our party is a very real possibility.'

The local party attempted to resist the imposition of a candidate by the NEC, by appealing to the High Court. But their case was never heard.

Nonetheless, even general secretary Larry Whitty is reported to have told the NEC that he believed its unprecedented decision to install a candidate over the head of the local party was exceeding the constitutional powers of the national executive committee.

The question of witch hunts in the Labour Party, at root, is one of internal democracy. The Knowsley North decision represents an attempt to further erode the rights of local parties. As the appeal leaflet produced by Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North says: 'every CLP has the democratic right to choose their own candidate.'

It is that right which is under attack from the NEC's decision to impose George Howarth. The decision to hold an enquiry is simply an attempt to justify the leadership's action by creating yet another smear-and-scare campaign against a local party.

The NEC is claiming that the Knowsley North general committee delegation is not properly constituted, that some branches have been prevented from sending representatives. If this were the NEC's real concern then the amendment moved by Audrey Wise at the November executive — that the party supervise the annual meetings of Knowsley North branches and of the constituency party — should have been sufficient to satisfy the executive that party business was being properly conducted.

Clearly that wasn't what concerned the NEC. The resolution was massively defeated.

The left in the party has already lined up in support of the democratic right of Knowsley North to select their own candidate. Labour Left Liaison has circulated the financial ap-

peal from Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North. The Campaign Group of Labour MPs is supporting the local party against this latest witch hunt.

Resolutions of support from other parties are already beginning to find their way to Walworth Road. And last weekend, the executive committee of the LCC passed a resolution opposing any disciplinary action against the constituency.

If ever there was a clear-cut case for supporting a constituency party against unwarranted attacks by the Labour leadership, Knowsley North is it.

The massive success of the Campaign to Reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally (CRAKKS) show that a united campaign can be mounted across the party to defend victims of this latest purge. CRAKKS points a way towards the sort of defence of Knowsley North CLP that is urgently needed.

TRADE UNIONISTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN KNOWSLEY NORTH
AN APPEAL TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Donations are urgently needed towards the £14,000 legal costs Knowsley North have incurred fighting for their right to select their parliamentary candidate. Cheques and postal orders should be made out to 'Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North', and sent to: Mrs I Rowe, Treasurer, 12 Linslade Crescent, Northwood Kirkby, Liverpool.

Vote 'no' to teachers offer

it's a LONDON TEACHER PAY SPECIAL

REJECT ACAS REJECT BAKER
CAMPAIGN FOR UNION SOLIDARITY WITH E

The deal signed at ACAS should be opposed — neither the pay nor the conditions of service elements are satisfactory. If accepted it will make it harder to achieve our targets rather than easier. We are convinced that this package should be rejected outright. It is a reversal of fundamental union policies. It:

- abandons Houghton as a benchmark on pay
- accepts pay and conditions being tied together;
- trades off conditions for spurious pay rises;
- worsens our conditions of service.

Inside we analyse in detail the nature of the package and what it would mean for individual teachers.

In November 1984 the Union declared complete opposition: to Sir Keith Joseph's list of 16 duties and responsibilities; to proposals to lengthen the working year and the working day; "No Sell-Out" was the headline of NUT News of the time. After 2 years of effort the Executive majority are now telling us to accept precisely that. It is no better coming from Labour employers than it was from the Tories. It threatens to change the whole job of

fought unitedly.
Alternative
The EIS and NATF demonstrating that an alternative deal is possible. Both Baker and ACAS exist. ACAS does NOT mention Baker. But neither Baker nor ACAS imply acceptance. They are both unacceptable.
Utopia
Undoubtedly those

DESPITE A massive campaign by the right wing leadership of the National Union of Teachers in favour of the deal that they agreed with the Labour-led local education employers, the Special Conference of the union held in Blackpool on Saturday 29 November endorsed their position by the small majority of 21,584. The delegates voted 122,557 in favour and 100,973 against.

Left activists inside the union had hoped for strong opposition but were themselves surprised at the size of the vote against the deal. There will now be an individual ballot on the conference recommendation.

The deal is a pay and conditions of service package which will radically alter the job of teaching and if pushed through by a major setback to teachers and to everyone in the public sector.

A big factor in the present situation is the decision of the Education Institute of Scotland, the TUC-affiliated teacher union in Scotland, to reject moves by Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, to impose a deal. A one-day strike will be taking place on 4 December in Edinburgh and militants north of the border, led by the Glasgow-based Campaign For a Fighting Union (CAFU), will be calling for

further action to extend the campaign. Doug McAvoey, deputy general secretary of the NUT, argued that a rejection of the deal agreed with the Authorities would guarantee an intervention by Kenneth Baker, Tory Secretary of State for

By Bernard Regan

Education. Baker has threatened to impose his own pay package and he is also intending to bring in legislation to scrap the pay negotiating committee and set up an 'advisory body'.

The leaders of the NUT would not have been successful at the conference without the backing of members of the Communist Party, *Morning Star* supporters, Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), New Communist Party and others.

ACAS AGREEMENT UNDERCUTS UNION IN

education do not come from lack of resources but from poor management of them (including troublesome teachers). Not being wholly stupid the Enquiry did offer some money but even this was distributed in an uneven and random way.

SOCIALIST TEACHER VOTE

SOCIALIST TEACHERS' ALLIANCE

Do you support the ratification of the provision agreement re...

- ▶ DESPITE Mr. Baker's settlement
- ▶ DESPITE 7 months
- ▶ DESPITE the hard s...

45% of the delegates a... Blackpool special... deal. These delegates represented over 100,000 N.U.T. members.

Now, in the ballot of the whole membership, there is an opportunity to increase that vote and reject the ACAS deal decisively.



The fight against this betrayal is far from over. At the same time that NUT members are being balloted, members of the other TUC-affiliated union, the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT) will be voting their intention to fight Baker's proposals but explained that he was prepared to accept most of the deal anyway. He welcomes the fact that the right-wing union leaders are prepared to accept a contract that increases the working year of most teachers by 5 days and adds an average of 4 hours onto the working week. Press reports present the agreement as a 16.4 per cent increase for teachers. But it is in fact worth less than 8 per cent. The increases are spread over 2 years and teachers were awarded 5.5 per cent of this year's increase back in May! The increases on offer in the second year of the deal will only be paid for 7 months of the year. The new pay scale promises teachers a higher maximum wage but it will take a teacher starting work next September at least 15 years to get there.

Opponents of the negotiated deal made clear on the deal and are being urged by their leaders to reject it. Despite inter-bureaucratic wrangles, the rank and file of both unions recognise that a joint fight by the two unions could turn the tables on the employers and be a powerful force which could link up with Scottish teachers against the government.

Officers of the Inner London NUT, influenced by the Socialist Teachers Alliance, have already distributed 40,000 copies of a broadsheet which exposes the nature of the agreement. In the coming weeks they plan to link up with areas, like Bradford and Coventry, to build a massive opposition to the deal with the objective of winning the union round to a militant defence of teachers pay and conditions. Such an achievement would not only be important for teachers, it would be of great significance to the whole campaign to defend State Education, and to support the fight of others like the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) which is submitting a wage claim in the near future.

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