

A Socialist ACTION

Called by the Coordinating Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, and sponsored by Labour Committee on Ireland and the Campaign group of MPs. Sponsorship/funds to: CCFBWI, c/o Peace through democracy, PO Box 551, London SE5 8JJ.

Withdrawal Demonstration 2 February

There is no other solution

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND!

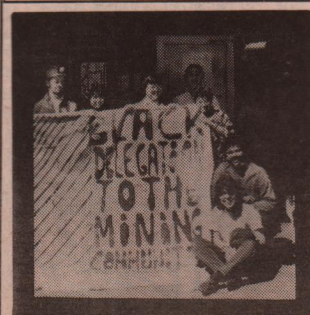


Building an alliance for socialism



'The liberation of all people is dependent upon women and the working class working together.'

What Alliances for Women? pages 6 & 7



Inside

'Black youth would have given their last pound to the NUM. We've got to understand why.'

Marc Wadsworth page 5

'We have the power to impose sanctions on South Africa'

Mike Terry, Anti Apartheid Movement



Socialist ACTION

Withdrawal: the option they cannot consider

WHEN THE BRITISH establishment wishes to change its system of alliances, it does so only reluctantly and only in the light of clear political evaluation. Even when the need for change is long overdue, it waits and chooses its moment carefully.

The inability of Ulster loyalists to adapt to the pressure of the civil rights movement forced the British government to send in troops and rule the Six Counties directly from Westminster. When pure repression was a proven failure, all manner of 'internal settlements' were tried by Labour and Conservative administrations. But having created and armed the Unionist monster, having approved its racist, supremacist ideology and guaranteed it a permanent majority through electoral gerrymander, they could not then wish it away.

As long as middle class Catholics could be relied upon to limit the aspirations of Northern nationalists in exchange for minor offices, the British could afford to scratch their heads in bewilderment and try to maintain an 'acceptable level of violence'. The hunger strike changed all that.

In the North, the SDLP was forced to give ground to radical nationalists and was even endangered by electoral challenge from Sinn Fein. In the South, the British embassy burned and hunger strikers topped the poll in a number of areas. Free State premier Charles Haughey and Margaret Thatcher began a discussion which would begin to shape policy.

The British were offering the Free State premier the opportunity to claim he was acting in the national interest. The Free State were offering the British help in maintaining partition by repression of republicans in the 26 Counties. The present accord is the result of a protracted bargaining session in which by economic and political pressure the Free State has been forced to drop all pretence of its constitutional claim to sovereignty over the 32 Counties of Ireland. In return for a 'consultative role' and the promise of cosmetic reform in the North, Dublin is to allow partition and the legitimacy of the sectarian Six County state, to be registered in an international agreement.

Unlike the pseudo-nationalists who pontificate about 'unity by consent', Margaret Thatcher at least is honest. She is a Unionist and a loyalist to the core but no longer believes that an alliance with the Unionists alone will stem the nationalist tide. The Dublin government is to have no executive role. Sovereignty of the United Kingdom remains undiminished. Any attempt to compromise that stance will be greeted like the Forum Report in singularly brutal fashion — Out! Out! Out!

The Dublin government can bask for a while in the glow of international acclaim, praise has come from Chancellor Kohl to President Mitterrand. In Britain Labour, Liberal and SDP fall over themselves to congratulate Thatcher. But when the initial praise fades the accord will not lead to a solution.

Regardless of the mobilisation of loyalists by Unionist leaders which may or may not cast a shadow over the deal in the eyes of the world, it will not work because Garret FitzGerald and Mrs Thatcher do not represent the majority of Irish people. No bludgeoning of loyalists will break up the reactionary monolith which secures British interests. No amount of US dollars will succeed in creating jobs in an economy wrecked by partition. No wording of legal documents will conceal the fact that at the end of the day the sectarianism of the Northern state cannot be reformed away.

Northern nationalists have not struggled against British imperialism for 16 years to settle for cosmetic measures which improve Britain's image at the UN. Only a struggle for a united Ireland which breaks the British link can find a democratic solution. Republicans do not pander to reactionary loyalism by claiming to respect its 'Unionist ethos' — instead they hold out a hope that the protestants of the North might expect more in the future than the drum-beating terror of 12 July or rallies outside the Belfast City Hall. The instability of the 26 County state will not be ended the day that the Dublin government gives advice to Westminster on how to run the North.

We have no brief and it would not be welcomed to draw up plans or blue prints for a new Ireland. Our contribution (and it is the biggest we can make) is to fight unconditionally to remove the British military and political presence as soon as possible.



Black self-organisation ...

A LOCAL PETITION against the expulsion of two supporters of black sections in the Labour Party has brought wide support from party activists in the Sparkbrook constituency of Birmingham.

The executive committee of that constituency are trying to get rid of two longstanding members, Councillor Amir Khan and Kevin Scally for 'bringing the party into disrepute'.

Khan is a city councillor for the Spark Hill ward and Scally is a former branch secretary and election agent for the same ward. Khan's 'crime' is that he set up a black section in this constituency whose MP is Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour Party and a virulent opponent of black sections, especially where his personal interests are concerned.

At the inaugural meeting of the Sparkbrook black section, attended by over 150 members, Cllr Khan said that black peo-

tersley, who is a strong supporter of all Labour's racist anti-immigration laws said 'I am totally and irrevocably opposed to the creation of black sections. They divide the party. I have spent 21 years in this constituency arguing that we are one people and we should not be divided.'

At a later meeting he said that in Labour's ranks there were those who were intent on losing the general election and that they needed to be confronted. He called for the 'boil to be lanced'. And the EC of the constituency responded by the move to expel the two leading supporters of the black section movement.

Hattersley supporters in Khan's ward tried to undermine the support for black sections by moving a resolution opposing them. They were defeated.

Scally's 'crime' is that he took part in a Channel Four programme called *The Bandung File* which alleged that an attempt had been made to enroll a large number of voters as bogus party members. *The Times* described the programme as a 'sound expose of political corruption'.

It showed that towards the end of 1983 the local Labour Party received a large block of membership



... scares racists

applications. Upon investigation half of these proved to be completed on behalf of people who didn't understand what they meant, who hadn't paid their subscriptions or who lived at non-existent addresses.

The programme made a strong case that Asian voters in Birmingham Sparkbrook are being exploited as right wing Labour voting fodder. The programme produced interviews with a number of local Asians, some unable to speak English, who claimed to have been signed up more or less without their knowledge.

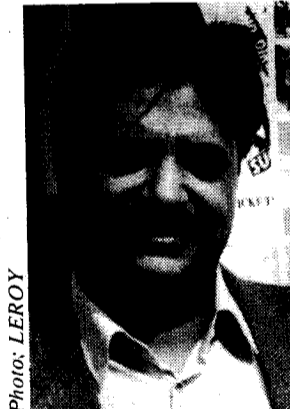
Scally was branch secretary at the time and

LABOUR PARTY Black Sections exist, all that is being demanded now is that they get official recognition. But one of the main reasons why they are not getting official recognition is because they break up the paternalistic relationship between a large number of right-wing, white, Labour MPs, and the black communities which have consistently voted them into parliament.

Birmingham Sparkbrook constituency, which returns Roy Hattersley as MP, is a striking case in point. The large Asian population votes Labour in its majority, and means Sparkbrook is a very safe seat for the party's deputy leader. But when a local black councillor, Amir Khan, moved to establish a black section in the constituency the result has been attempted expulsion.

What is Hattersley so worried about? Perhaps he thinks that if Asian people were really organised politically in the Labour Party they might not choose someone with his politics as MP.

The article on this page looks at some of the background to the Sparkbrook expulsions.

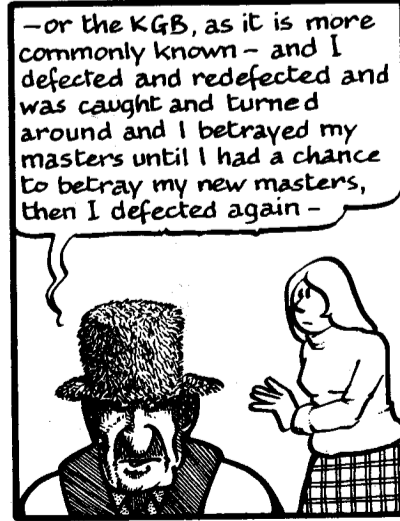


Amir Khan

ple had failed to get a real stake in the decision making processes of the party and that this should change.

Within a few days Hat-

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



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• Copies of any motions passed should be sent to the Black Section National Committee, and to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, 10 Park Drive, London NW1.

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Photo: GM COOKSON

The onslaught on the NUM

THE NUM IS being attacked on all fronts explains general secretary PETER HEATHFIELD. The aim is to pave the way for the privatisation of Britain's coalfields — and at the heart of that is promoting Lynk's breakaway outfit. Defending the unity of the NUM is not only essential to protecting the job of every miner in Britain but to the future of the trade union movement as a whole.



Photo: GM COPIA VIA

'Splitting the workforce is at the heart of the current struggle'

WHAT IS taking place now is virtually unparalleled in labour history. For daring to take a stand against the evil tide of unemployment, the National Union of Mineworkers is being attacked on all fronts.

Every effort has been made to get our funds released, yet the courts still turn the knife. At our pay talks the Board will not even tell us the figure they have in mind. The Plan for Coal is ripped up by a new Coal Board document which spells out that two-thirds of pits are at risk if they can't produce coal at around £39 a tonne.

Overall, the theme is exactly in line with our repeated warnings. Favourable treatment, temporarily, awaits a handful of pits deemed to be potential big profit earners while the rest of the industry is run down.

Privatisation (assuming another Tory government) would then take place. Or, as Lord Stockton would perhaps prefer to describe it, the last bit of the nation's family silver would be sold off.

The key element to achieving all this is the splitting of the workforce and that, essentially, is the heart of the current struggle.

Where splits ultimately lead is all too evident across the Channel. In Belgium and France the splitting of the miners paved

the way for wholesale decimation of the coal industries of those two countries. The aim is to repeat that exercise here.

At present our biggest enemy in the fight against splitting the union is the poison that is being repeated ad nauseum. Inside this paper (*The Miner*) we provide the antidote to some of that poison. But that alone is not enough. We need to start getting some positive messages across.

Crucially the splitters are not in a strong position. Outside Nottinghamshire they have just two per cent of the mineworkers in their ranks. Equally important, as the Lynk letter (below) demonstrates, they are anything but secure in Notts itself, resorting to the crudest tactics in trying

The Miner special issue

● This page was compiled from the November issue of *The Miner*, the first in two months due to the cut-backs forced on the NUM as a result of sequestration and receivership. Copies are available from: The Editor, *The Miner*, NUM, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.

to stifle debate.

They fear greatly the NUM oxygen of publicity and ideas, and that is precisely that area in which they must be tackled. At the moment the media is straining every muscle to manufacture the idea that a bandwagon is in train. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The TUC and Labour Party have made it absolutely clear that a split would be a disaster, ultimately causing massive hardship to all miners. The job in our union is to educate every miner to the lessons of history and show that progress — on jobs, pay, hours, allowances, etc — is only forged in unity.

We need to seize the initiative and go on the offensive, explaining in the breakaway pockets that splits have never helped working people, but merely paved the way for those whose ultimate intention is to hammer into the ground the people who do the labour. With clear-sighted and vigorous arguments we can rebuild the unity which is essential to defend every worker.

Under Direct Management



THE CLOCKS GO BACK IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

© Francis Boyle

Behind the Coal Board pay strategy

NO DETAILS of any pay offer until the NUM signs a surrender document accepting MacGregor's market mentality. That, in a nutshell, was the Coal Board's position in five hours of fruitless and insulting talks.

When the NUM's negotiating team reported the position to the national executive committee, the unanimous and angry response of the NEC was that every effort should be made to expose the Coal Board tactics to the membership as a whole. NEC anger was further fuelled by the knowledge that the talks with the Board were held on the firm understanding that an offer on national grade rates would be made.

The position had been spelled out in a letter to the NUM from the Board's head of industrial relations Kevan Hunt. After rejecting wholesale the union's claims on working hours, rate protection, shift allowance, holiday pay and entitlement, consolidation of incentive payments into grade rates, and payment of wages on a salary basis, he wrote:

'However, the Board are minded to make an offer to increase national grade rates and to raise the payment for standard performance under the incentive scheme.' But at the meeting on 1 November, the Board went back on its

word and point-blank refused to offer any increase on national grade rates.

They would not give the barest details about any figure in mind. Only a reference to a 30p increase per shift on the incentive scheme's standard rate was made.

NUM negotiators persistently reminded the Board of the Hunt letter which clearly stated that the Board was 'mindful' of making an offer. The Board twisted and turned to get out of its commitment, coming up with absurd interpretations of the word 'mindful'.

It swiftly became apparent that the whole Board strategy had been to lure the NUM to the meeting on false pretences, ensure that negotiations quickly broke down and then give the public the impression that the NUM had been responsible. The aim was transparently obvious in the light of the offer made to the splitters' organisation: to persuade miners nationally that the NUM was unwilling to negotiate thus acting as a

recruiting sergeant for the breakaway organisation.

But NUM negotiators immediately cut through the Board's strategy and insisted on getting in writing the Board's 'surrender first, talk later' position. This information is now being widely circulated among miners at every level so that the Board's tactics get the maximum exposure.

Meanwhile a breakdown of the offer accepted by the splitters reveals some notable facts. The overall package is worth 5.9 per cent, but the average faceworker comes off worst with 4.9 per cent.

In cash terms it breaks down as follows: £5.50 on basic rates and 50p a shift on standard performance payments under the incentive scheme. For faceworkers on the U1 grade (the top underground grade), the £5.50 is a 3.8 increase in basic rates — the lowest since the Ted Heath days of 1973. The 4.9 per cent is only achieved when the 50p payments are taken into account.

Interestingly over 30 per cent of the breakaway membership — around 6500 — voted against acceptance. Assuming that the vast majority of Notts miners remaining in the NUM (around 7000) would also have voted

against the offer, a majority for rejection would probably have been achieved. In that case a minority has decided the level of pay increase the majority should get.

The predictable emphasis in the Board's thinking was the proposal to introduce new and additional schemes at pits and installations, making them dependent on yet higher productivity, profitability and better attendance. As the Coal Board can raise its productivity demands any time it wishes, the thinking here is clear: a boost in incentive payments for a short period, providing propaganda ammunition for the splitters trying to poach NUM members.

Similar tactics were used in the formation of the Spencer union. Then, when the workforce was suitably divided, harsher and harsher productivity demands would be introduced using as a stick the threat of cheap coal imports from places like South Africa and Colombia.

Maximum profitability at certain pits would be achieved, setting the scene for privatisation if a Conservative government were re-elected for a third term.

Splitters demand loyalty pledge

WITCH-hunts are gathering pace in the Notts coalfield with miners being threatened for daring to attend NUM meetings. Letters like the one here are being sent out pressuring men to sign loyalty pledges to the splitters. Newstead mineworker Harry Walton, who received the letter published here, said he was 'absolutely disgusted' with the situation. In true McCarthy style, paid officials of the splitters park their cars outside NUM meetings in Notts and then report those who attend to their Mansfield boss Roy Lynk.

UNION OF MINeworkERS NOTTINGHAM AREA

MINERS' OFFICES BERRY HILL LANE, MANSFIELD, NOTTS NG18 4JU Telephone Mansfield 26094/5/6

Our Ref: RL:VR

7th November, 1985

Mr. H. Walton
32 Alfreton Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Notts.

Dear Mr. Walton,

A letter from the Newstead Branch, together with a poster, stating that you attended a N.U.M. Meeting held on Sunday, 27th October, 1985, was placed before the Area Executive Committee at their meeting held on 4th November, 1985.

The Committee agreed that I write to you requesting a written pledge of your loyalty to the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, as following the result of the ballot held on 17th/18th October, 1985, the Area Council confirmed the ballot result as Area Policy at their meeting held on 28th October, 1985.

The Committee also agreed that if a written pledge was not received from you the matter would again be discussed at their meeting to be held on Wednesday, 20th November, 1985.

Yours sincerely

R. Lynk
General Secretary

Defending the NUM

THE NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers continues to face the concerted onslaught of the Tory government, the National Coal Board and the media hawks. That attack is coming from all sides, as the material on page three of this paper shows. But the campaign to defend the national union goes on. We reprint below a selection of what's happening now.

... in Derby, Staffs & Notts

THE WOMEN Against Pit Closures movement has a vital part to play in the fight to defend the unity of the NUM. At the 'Alliance for Socialism' weekend on 16-17 November, women from different groups across the coalfields discussed the problems faced by the union and how they were tackling them.

Betty Heathfield:

WOMEN in our area have been campaigning alongside the Bolsover NUM to sign up the Bolsover men to the NUM. In the last fortnight our women have been outside the pit, taking the leaflets to them and getting the bottom bit signed, to remind them that they're still in the NUM. We're raising money for several things, not just for sacked and jailed miners but also to organise ourselves.

We don't get anything for nothing now, we have to pay our way. We try to raise money for those branches that aren't recognised by the Coal Board and have no money.

Even though there was a majority vote for the NUM in Bolsover, the Coal Board doesn't recognise them. So they need money to work as a branch of the NUM.

Our purposes are very clear. This week national Women Against Pit Closures has issued a leaflet on where we stand. Our fight is to keep up the strength of the WAPC, and to raise money particularly in Derbyshire where there is a tremendous amount of hardship.

It's heartbreaking when you know that there are women who want to come to meetings and be active but who can't. They simply don't have the bus fare.

Brenda Procter, Staffs WAPC:

OURS is a very right wing Labour council in Staffordshire, with seven Tory councillors who rule the roost. I've been a member of the Labour Party for a number of years. At the moment we're putting a resolution through our women's section against the breakaway which the women from Notts sent to us.

Our problem is that we meet at the Labour Party rooms in Stoke, every Wednesday. Last week they chucked us out. They said it was because we aren't affiliated to the Labour Party and the Young Socialists wanted to meet on Wednesday nights. But we think we're sorting it out.

Pam Oldfield, Notts WAPC:

I'M in Don Concannon's ward. Need I say more?

We took the Notts resolution to our women's section and said we wanted to put it to the meeting. The secretary replied: 'We don't deal with things like

this. You'll have to take it to your ward. Don't bring politics into this women's group.'

Of course we were never organised into the women's section. While most of us were Labour Party members, we were delegated to the GC from our trade unions. The women's section was never recognised but that is something that has grown out of the miners' strike. The women have become more organised in the women's section.

The ward meetings now are like a wedding: the men on one side, the women on the other. We showed the resolution into the next meeting. We got defeated. But the point is that we are making inroads. They're going to get sick of us sooner than we're going to get sick of them.

They've got two options: they're going to have to change and adopt our ideas, or more probably go off somewhere else.

The GC in Mansfield is usually split between the constituencies and the unions. Even the so-called right wing unions are quite progressive within the GC.

At almost every GC now the UDM recognition battle comes up. According to the constitution they cannot recognise UDM members. I think what will happen is that they will be ignored, but Concannon is very instrumental in this. He is shown to be with the UDM.

If we can't get that resolution through our area, there are others that can. We're only one small section of the Labour Party there are loads of us that can get it through.

Betty Heathfield:

NATIONALLY the women's section of the Labour Party has approached the national Women Against Pit Closures to come and have talks with us, to find out what they can do to help us and where we could fit in with their plans.

That will come up at the next national meeting. It would have come up at the last one but we had to concentrate on the Notts leaflet.

We hope that all the women's groups are going to contact every constituency party, every trades council and trade union that supported us during the strike with the national leaflet and the Notts leaflet.

We want to see action in the next few weeks. The

Labour Party and the TUC must not be allowed to recognise the UDM. This will happen if we don't build this sort of campaign at the local level in every area.

It's also a matter of working with all kinds of people. If you're looking at parliamentary prospects locally and nationally I think you're looking in the main at the Labour Party because its the most feasible alternative to the Tories.

But that's not to exclude all those other people who want to be involved in this campaign. Don't forget Women Against Pit Closures is not a political party, it's not a trade union: it's a women's organisation.

It's a campaigning body that represents labour oriented politics. You can't be against the Thatcher government and fighting those politics without having those sorts of ideals. But we must keep our identity and broad appeal.

... in Lancs

ON 14 NOVEMBER ballots of the NACODS and NUM membership voted to accept the closure of Bold colliery. During the strike Bold was the most militant pit in Lancashire. With its closure the entire coalfield is now under threat.

The vote of the Bold NUM members, to accept the closure by 277:148, was a tremendous blow to

By Dick Withecombe

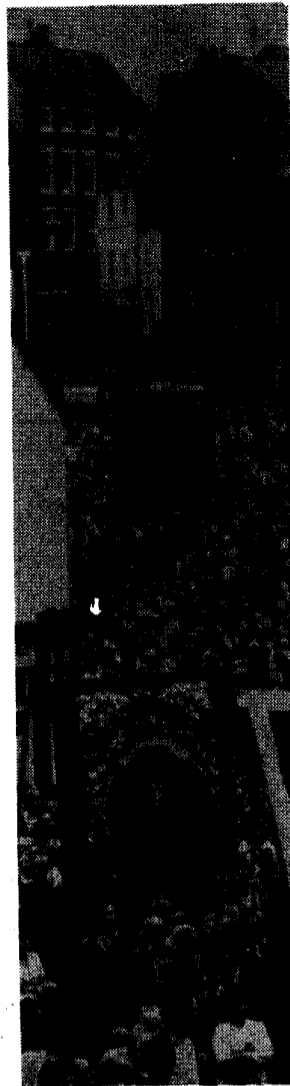
the militants in Lancashire. It comes after a concerted campaign by the Coal Board, the media, and the UDM breakaway to close the pit.

The NCB offered large financial inducements and followed up with planned sabotage of production at the pit. The scabs at Bold, some of whom had already joined the UDM, organised a petition, an unofficial ballot and strike action by 100 miners in favour of the pit closing. They were aided and abetted by the NCB.

The NUM branch committee responded through leaflets and won a majority at a branch meeting for Arthur Scargill to address their next branch meeting due on 24 November. Unfortunately, the majority of the committee buckled under the pressure. They gave up the fight and organised a ballot before that branch meeting where all the arguments could have been had out openly.

The ballot result was then a foregone conclusion. The minority at Bold who argued against this ballot and for a continuation of the fight are now campaigning for the largest number of militants to take transfers to other pits and to remain within the industry. They have also joined the campaign across the coalfields against the breakaway.

Only six pits now remain in the Lancashire



... in Warwick

DAW MILL pit is the only one in Warwickshire to have broken from the national union. BARRY HOBSON, branch committee member of Keresley NUM, and CAROL HOBSON, national delegate to WAPC from Keresley Miners' Wives group, told BERNIE KAVANAGH what it's like in the Warwick coalfield.

Daw Mill has recently voted to breakaway from the NUM. Why do you think that was, and what does it mean for the rest of Warwickshire?

Barry: The Daw Mill leadership are hypocrites. At the end of the strike a resolution was passed unanimously at a Warwickshire district delegates' meeting that no unit of the NUM would have anything to do with any breakaway. Believe it or not, this resolution was proposed by Daw Mill. Today they are the only people in Warwickshire to have broken that decision!

Carol: The Daw Mill vote was expected. Out of about 1400 men, they only had 3-400 on strike. The Daw Mill men are only interested in one thing: the bonus.

Barry: This could be seen clearly when superscab Dick Emery (leader of the breakaway at Daw Mill) announced that industrial action would never be taken without a ballot. The issue was democracy he said.

A few weeks after this statement Daw Mill was on strike. Not to defend jobs

or reinstate the sacked men, but because the belt was moving too slow and their bonus was low! There was no call for a ballot when their beloved bonus was affected.

Dick Emery has built an anti-Scargill campaign with the help of the local media for one purpose: to make himself general secretary of a breakaway union in Warwickshire.

What steps are you taking to fight the split?

Carol: The wives' group still meets. In fact there are three because we are split up geographically. But things are more difficult now because the men are back at work and some of us have jobs as well.

We have been campaigning for the sacked men and have organised a social at the end of November. Notts WAPC have sent us some model resolutions which we are circulating throughout the local labour movement.

Barry: Daw Mill think they are going to take over Warwickshire. But we've got news for them: no way! Keresley is, and will remain a part of the NUM. We had nearly 100 per cent out at the beginning

of the strike, but as the months went on and the NCB threats increased men started to go back. Most of these returned NCB threats increased, men started to go back. Most of these returned about Xmas, when they were getting desperate. After the strike we had only one scab elected to the branch committee.

Are there any moves to breakaway at Keresley?

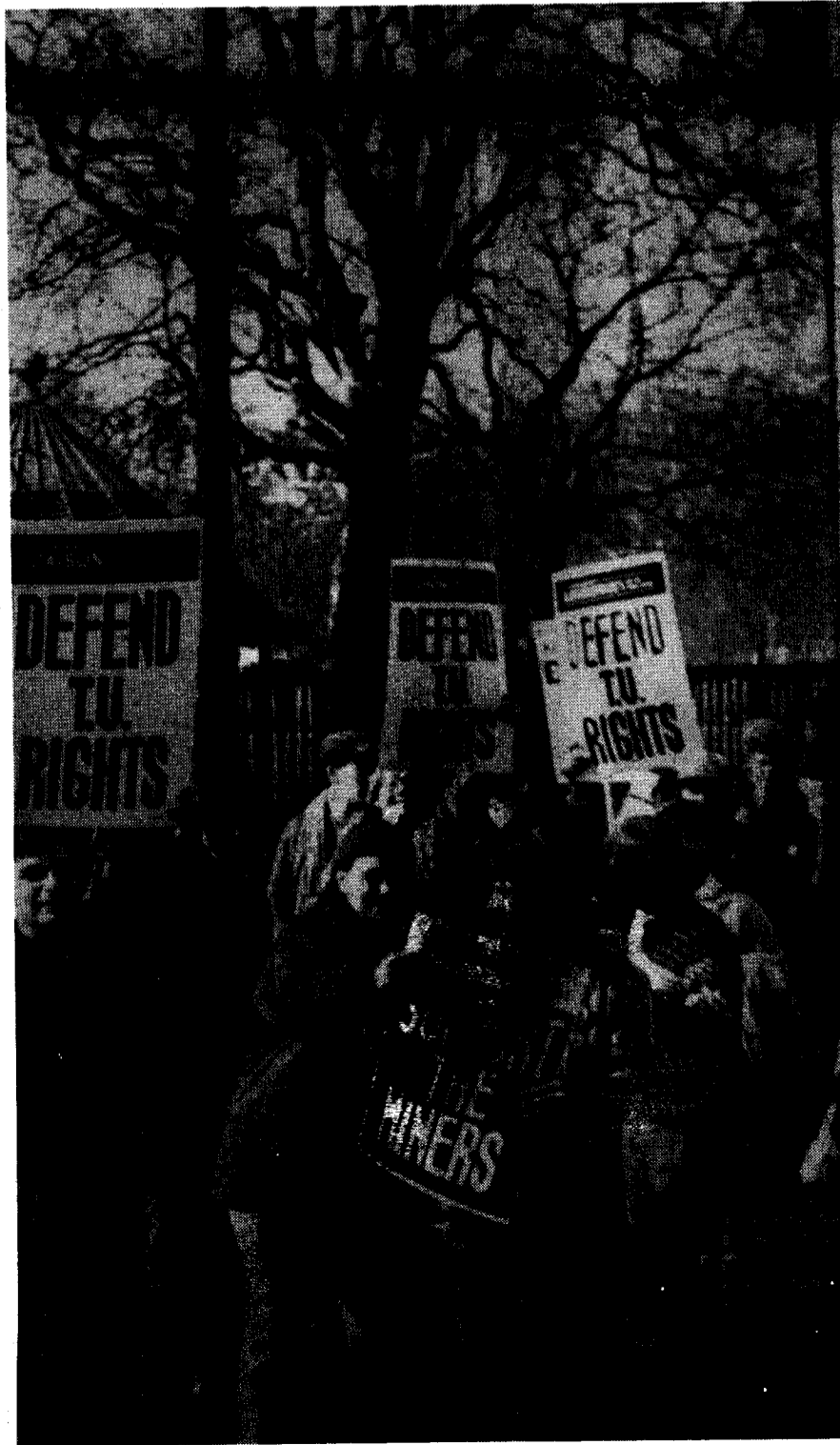
Barry: We know there are a few individuals who have been paid for shifts while they've been meeting with breakaway leaders in Notts and South Derby. And there are the same rumours here about earning £34,000 a year.

We have pit meetings every week, where we explain the need for one national union, the NUM. There is a lot of discussion.

Those who support the breakaway are operating underground. They are afraid to come out into the open because their arguments don't stand up.

The campaign against the split is underway. Arthur Scargill has been here twice in the last month. Leaflets are being produced and distributed.

The latest move by the NCB to settle the pay claim for Notts and refuse to do so for the NUM is seen as blackmail. It has made the men of Keresley more determined than ever to fight company unionism.



ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

ON 16-17 NOVEMBER Socialist Action hosted a weekend of debate and discussion under the rubric of 'An Alliance for Socialism'. The conference was attended by over 500 people who came to plenary sessions and participated in workshops.

Last week, in a special issue, we published the key speeches on the general strategic issues raised at the conference, in particular the contributions of Tony Benn, Diane Abbott, Betty Heathfield, and the African National Congress. In the pages that follow we are publishing some more of the speeches and discussion that took place at the event. We are devoting this space to the ideas expressed at the conference because most of the issues broached are of keen importance to the whole labour movement. A new phase of development of the left has been opened up in the aftermath of the miners' strike which demands new strategic debates. The discussions at the Alliance for Socialism weekend are reproduced as a contribution to that process.

"Black people are prepared to organise on a huge scale in support of the working class"

AN ALLIANCE of the oppressed and the working class has been forged out of the miners' strike and the uprisings of black youth said MARC WADSWORTH, of the Labour Party Black Section National Committee. We can learn from the miners and black people in struggle how to stand up and fight as socialists...and win.

WHEN we look at the alliances that have been built up, between black people, women, lesbian and gay people, in other words sections of the oppressed that Kinnock and his friends want to dump overboard in pursuit of their electoralist road to Number Ten, we realise that they have been forged by the fantastic struggle of the National Union of Mineworkers, and by the struggle of black youth throughout Britain. I think it's very important that the left should examine and try to understand what is happening.

When we look at the emergence of struggle in the inner cities and how black youth have stood up and fought, we know something important about the way that the political system in this country has alienated a section of the population. We can see how that section has moved onto the streets and fought against state oppression manifested through the constant harassment from the police and the dole queue.

During the miners' strike, a black youth in Hackney told me that he would willingly give his last pound to the National Union of Mineworkers, although he said there was no way he would spend it trying to get into the Labour Party. We have to understand why. We have to consider the party's record on race.

Every time the Labour Party has been in government recently it's sold out black people. When we were in power in 1968 a racist immigration law was passed. The Tories passed another in '71 but the following Labour government did not repeal it, despite making a manifesto pledge to do so. We also know that the Labour Party drafted much of what is in the new Nationality Act. The record is appalling.

We need to demonstrate to black youth that this movement is relevant to their concerns, their aspirations and their demands. I hope that we're learning that particular lesson and also that we're learning how the constitution of the Labour Party is used against us.

We have heard the general secretary of the party and Kinnock's other cohorts say that Nottingham constituencies should relax the constitution so that no one is expelled because they are members of that scab grouping, the UDM. I won't call it a union because it's not. We know that constitutionally you can't be a member of the party without being a member of a TUC-affiliated union.

Yet we have a situation in Lewisham East where Russell Profitit stood firm on the principle of black

representation coming before any individual's parliamentary career and where two black section delegates were involved in his selection. There we discovered something very different. The bootboys from Walworth Road came in and decided that the selection meeting was not official and could not be recognised. There is no relaxing of the constitution there.

There is one law for black sections and another for black legs. And we must oppose that.

In understanding the opposition which is raised against us, we must also understand the range of facilities available to our opponents. I want to talk about the media for a moment, about the way that the news media covered the uprisings and the miners' struggle. We all know about the coverage of Orgreave — cameras were behind police lines. We all know about the way the struggle of youth in Handsworth was branded inter-racial strife.

The black section leadership went to Handsworth during that struggle and made quite clear that we stand united as Afro-Caribbean and Asian in this movement. What happened in

black sections is very important. We've seen the galvanising of two parts of the oppressed black peoples in this country, the coming together of the Afro-Caribbean and Asian.

Hattersley has said that what's going on in his constituency of Sparkbrook is extremist infiltration of the Labour Party. Work that one out if you can! He also says that you can't define 'black'. The immigration services have no problem defining black. The social security snoopers looking for so-called scroungers have no problem defining black. The racist 'boys in blue' have no problem defining black. So turn again Roy, turn again.

Our opponents on the right have attempted to shift attention away from black youth by focussing the political debate on law and order. Will Bernie Grant condemn youth violence? But not will Margaret Thatcher condemn state violence against the working class? This is what the Tories stand for.

It is absolutely vital that we don't buckle under the sort of pressures that will be mounted against us as we begin to unify. What is happening in the black communities, not just in Britain but also in Azania, is truly and hugely significant for the whole of the working class world-wide. That's why in the black sections we are concerned to build the international links to bring together the black family.

We've got to support the demands



of people in struggle. We've got to support the demands of the oppressed. To those in the Labour Party who say we can't have black sections, well I've got something to tell them: black people in the party have voted with their feet — 35 black sections in two years. We've got black sections. What we're actually asking for is recognition. You're not going to give us black sections because we've already got them. And we're not coming to beg or crawl for the right to self-organise, because that is absolute and non-negotiable.

'We need to learn from the executive of the NUM. They said to us: we'll support you. You didn't try to tell us how to run our strike and we won't tell you how to wage your struggle for black sections in the Labour Party.'

I want to look at the role played by unions to date. The black community is watching and watching very carefully. They're watching our actions in the party and our actions in the trade unions. They see the way that the demand for black sections has been crushed for two years running at Labour Party conference by the bloc vote wheeled out against us. Where were the organised contingents of white trade unionists on the Black People's March for Justice? Where were trade unionists on the recent Anti-Apartheid march?

We have to understand that the labour movement is not going to be taken seriously until we're prepared to go out and prove that we are part of the wider struggle. That's what an 'Alliance for Socialism' means for me.

We need to learn from the executive of the NUM. They said to us: 'We'll support you. You didn't try to tell us how to run our strike and we won't tell you how to wage your struggle for black sections in the Labour Party'. I wish a few more unions would learn from that principled position.

It is a position forged out of an

'What is happening in the black communities, not just in Britain but also in Azania, is truly and hugely significant for the whole of the working class world-wide.'

understanding, a deep understanding, of exactly what we're engaged in and how we should relate to the demands of oppressed sections of our movement. It is an understanding of precisely where we should be moving when we talk about an alliance that is true and right.

I'd like to say that the miners have taught us something. They have taught us a lot about how black people are prepared to organise and raise money on a huge scale in support of working class struggle. It showed us that the potential for black people being the sharpest point of resistance in this country is huge.

We really need to build on that comrades. United and fighting together we can win. We must learn from the miners and black people in struggle to stand up and fight as socialists.



Photo: GM COOKSON

What alliances for women?



Ann Pettifor

IN MY contribution I want to take on the whole argument of class versus gender, because it is a central argument in the Labour Party. And I think it is a central argument both between women, and between men and women, on the left. In my view this has to be taken on or women are not going to be able to sort out where we go from here.

I am particularly moved to do so because, just before the Labour Party conference this year, I went to address the Campaign group of MPs. And it turned out to be quite an unpleasant experience. I had gone there to ask them to support WAC's demand that, between now and the end of the selec-

'Women have to come up front far more with our demands because we've been pushed onto the defensive, into the background, by our own refusal to say that our demands are truly revolutionary and truly socialist.'

tion process, CLPs should draw up women-only shortlists. We asked for this because the number of women being selected for parliamentary seats is so pathetically low that there is a very strong possibility that we may end up with fewer women in the next parliament than we have in this one.

When I said this I came up against a wall of resistance and hostility, which was led by the *Militant* MPs and the *Militant* representative of the YS, who accused WAC, and me in particular, of not being socialists, of not having 'socialist' objectives as our key demands. At one stage one very prominent member of the Campaign group very woundingly said to me: 'The trouble with you is that you are just a radical feminist!' And of course I said: 'no, I'm a socialist as well.'

I went away worrying terribly about why I had felt the need to say that. This argument is now not only occurring between *Militant* and other sections of the left, but in other groups, like the SWP, who seem to see women's demands as diversionary and indeed reactionary.

I want to say here that I am going to come out today and admit to being a radical feminist. And I'm going to go further and say that I don't describe myself as a socialist feminist or a revolutionary feminist, because I believe that by doing so I imply that

'I am going to come out today and admit to being a radical feminist. And I'm going to go further and say that I don't describe myself as a socialist feminist or a revolutionary feminist because I believe that by doing so I imply that there is something that is not socialist or revolutionary about radical feminism.'

there is something that is not socialist or revolutionary about radical feminism. I believe radical feminism is both. And I think that it is about time that women said so. It's about time that we confronted men in the movement with that truth.

If we look at the divisions in society we can see why we are facing this problem as feminists. For most men on the left, and some women, the most important division is the horizontal one, the class division. But what we are confronting as women is a division which is actually vertical, which runs through classes.

This vertical division on which oppression by gender is based is similar to another division, that is the division of oppression suffered by black people. This is the main thing that unites the struggle of women and blacks: that their oppression is a vertical question and not simply based on class. It curves through the classes.

The first women's liberation movement was triggered into life by the campaign against slavery. The one single event which set moving the first women's liberation movement, which led to the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, the first one of the women's movement, took place in London in 1840. This was the World Anti-Slavery convention. Two American women attended the conference, Cady Stanton and Susan Anthony, who had been fighting slavery in America and receiving much abuse and contempt for doing so because they were women.

When they arrived at the London convention they were barred from entering by English Liberal men. I'll just quote from their own history of what happened: 'The Rev J Burnett made a most touching appeal to the American ladies to conform to English prejudices and customs so far as to withdraw their credentials, as it never did occur to the British Foreign Anti-Slavery Society that they were inviting ladies. It is better, said he, that this convention should be dissolved at this moment than that this motion to invite women should be adopted.' The women refused, but were nonetheless excluded and forced to sit in the gallery where they were fenced off behind a bar and a curtain.

Their supporters, the men on the conference floor who had moved they should be included, said that the 'ladies had graciously accepted' being placed behind this curtain. So they were as angry with their 'supporters' as they were with anyone else. The very Liberals who were recognising the oppression of black slaves were refusing to recognise the oppression and exclusion of women.

It is this recognition of these vertical divisions that can bring both blacks and women into conflict with those whose sole concern is the horizontal divisions into class.

The reason I address all this is not because I think that the horizontal divisions in our society along lines of class are not important. I think they are absolutely fundamental, and it is impossible for the women's liberation movement to work from anywhere except within the framework of class as well. But ways have to be found in which that vertical division and

horizontal division can be brought alongside each other to fight against the oppression of all.

It seems to me that the only way they can be brought into line is for the class struggle to be led by women, and by black women, because then we will have jelled together those forces and we will have a truly revolutionary force. But until we do that women aren't going to be able to move forward.

I'm saying all this because of the argument inside the Labour Party, because of the defensiveness that women feel about being feminist and

RADICAL FEMINISM is both socialist and revolutionary argued ANN PETTIFOR, Labour Women's Action Committee national organiser, at a workshop debate on what alliances for women. JUDE WOODWARD, also a member of the WAC executive, countered that socialists don't deserve the name unless

about being radical feminist. We are embarrassed by supporting women as women. We are constantly thrown back by the men onto the issue of class.

I am very, very active in the Labour Party, so active that I rarely see anything beyond it. And right now the Labour Party has a big marketing

'So much of male revolutionary theory makes it seem as though we are only around for some great climax in the future which I won't necessarily be around to be part of.'

effort on. Like many other sections of the left they are suddenly becoming aware of the question of style, of how to project themselves in a more popular way. We were all circulated with a glossy leaflet in our wards and women's sections recently advertising Labour Party products. Included amongst them were bread-boards and tea-trays all of which had nostalgic pictures of Labour women in 1914 — pictures of women making bread, making tea, women in the home.

There is nothing at all surprising about this. This is what the Labour Party understands about the role of women. This is as much as political

'We were all circulated with a glossy leaflet in our wards and women's sections recently advertising Labour Party products. Included amongst them were bread-boards and tea-trays all of which had nostalgic pictures of Labour women in 1914 — pictures of women making bread, making tea, women in the home. There is nothing surprising about this. This is what the Labour Party understands about the role of women.'

statement about the Labour Party's understanding of the role of women as any academic tome could tell you about the Labour Party's view of women at the moment. For me it is a great sadness. It shows how little we women have gained and achieved as feminists in the party. By 1985 we have to say we have failed dismally to transform and alter that political view in the Labour Party, more than 150 years after the Seneca Falls convention.

Women have to come up front far more with our demands, because we've been pushed onto the defensive, into the background, by our own refusal to say that our demands are truly revolutionary and truly socialist. In order to unite the working class it is going to be necessary for women to lead the struggle of the working class. Only then will the vertical and horizontal divisions be overcome to make the struggle against any of them effective.

We must also assert what it is that women are saying about political change, about revolutionary change. I want to say that I am a radical feminist for one other reason, because radical feminism is truly revolutionary in its practice. It is a revolution that is taking place now. I'm in the business of changing myself, my life and the lives of other women. Radical feminism enables me to see the possibility of doing that in the here and now, in a way that a lot of other revolutionary theory can't do.

So much of male revolutionary theory makes it seem as though we are only around for some great climax in the future which I won't necessarily

be around to be part of. It is a cataclysmic event sometime in the future, which will be the result of the tremendous inspiration of our heroes. But it is not something that I can be part of on an everyday basis. Radical feminism is far more optimistic than that, far more hopeful. It says that it is possible to change things in the here and now, and that women are doing that right now.

That is an approach that I can relate to as a person in a way that I can't to other revolutionary theory. I think that the optimism and hopefulness of radical feminism is needed if we are to energise the working class to struggle effectively.

Women have to come out much more assertively and forcefully about who they are and what they are doing, and not be intimidated by male theories that place us way behind in the struggle and make us marginal. We are not marginal. We are central. And they need us. It's about time that we asserted that and stopped being defensive.

I am fighting for the complete economic independence of women. I am not a woman who thinks our problems can be solved by a bit of legislation changing work patterns in the home, by persuasion, or through argument. For me the only changes that ever happen that are really worthwhile for women are those which arise from increasing their

economic independence and ending their dependence on men as such. What worries me is that the Labour Party and the left don't really see that as an objective, as a demand of central importance. I think that is incredibly revolutionary. We are asking for both things simultaneously.

I call this radical feminism. I see no reason to be apologetic about it. It is not separate from what socialists are about, it is absolutely the most revolutionary demand that can be raised. We have to use many of the categories and theories that have been previously developed by socialists, but we have to go beyond them to define new objectives, new strategies because women have been ignored for so long.

I reject the idea that this has got anything to do with liberal feminism. That is always the charge that is made by men in the movement to make women feel guilty. That is what the TUC and the Labour Party said in 1901 when they rejected the demand for women's suffrage, saying it was a

'The way I see it, the liberation of all people is dependent upon those two forces — women and the working class — working together and not against each other.'

middle class demand. It made those women feel bad as well, because there was no doubt that middle class women were going to be enfranchised

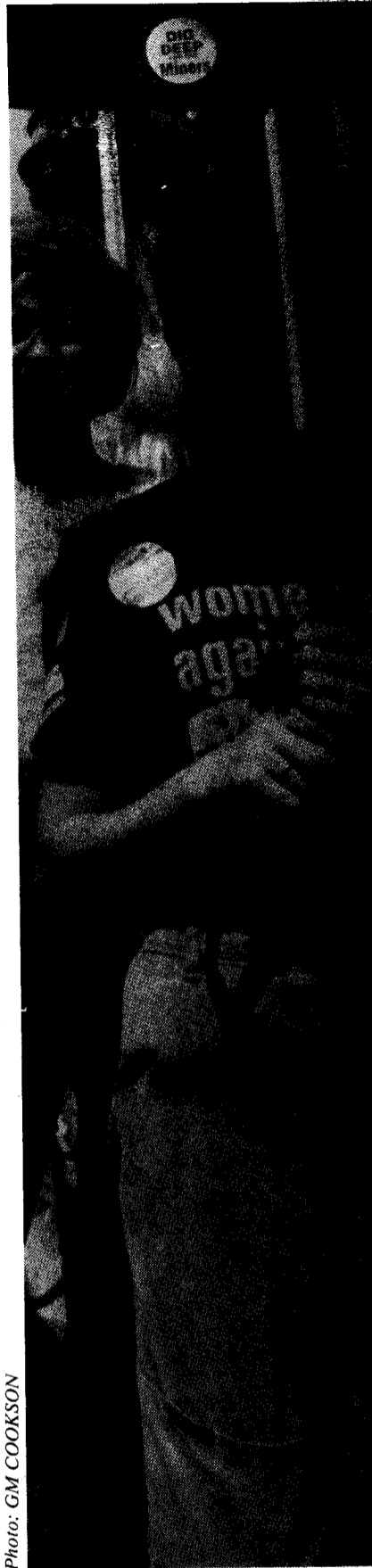


Photo: GM COOKSON

if the demand for votes for women was met.

But we are not going to fall back. Actress Joan Collins might well benefit from our campaign. Yes, what we are doing about asserting women's rights, and about fighting for women, is benefitting people like Joan Collins who get big parts on our television screens every week as strong, assertive women who own oil companies. But that doesn't stop me from saying that our prime demand is to get economic independence for women, that this is a very revolutionary demand and men have got to understand this.

The only way we are going to overcome the prejudice that exists against women is by getting together — women standing together, experiencing collective action together, talking about it, organising together. That's the only power we have. It's the only power the working class ever had.

The way I see it, the liberation of all people is dependent upon those two forces — women and the working class — working together and not against each other. I suppose that what I am saying is that so much of what the labour movement does for the working class is done on the backs of half the working class. And we are not going to move forward until they get off our backs.

they wage a serious fight for women's liberation. There was clear agreement on some fundamentals. Women's liberation has to be central to the concerns of the labour movement, and if women don't wage that fight then nobody else will do it for them. Women have come a long way — but they have even further to go.



Jude Woodward

I AM not going to start by responding to what Ann has said, because there is much of it that I agree with.

I want to try to get across something of the enormity of what we are dealing with when we say we take on the whole question of how to fight women's oppression, and in what circumstances it can be abolished. At the plenary session, one of the speakers made an important point. He asked 'what is socialism?' and went on to explain that it is not the nationalisation of the monopolies, or just the extension of political democracy, or greater equality. These are a means to an end. The end, the goal, is the liberation of the whole of humanity.

It is impossible to talk about socialism coming into existence as long as one woman is oppressed because of her sex, one person discriminated against because of their race or colour, one nation is oppressed by another. If we are talking about creating a society where not one woman is oppressed because of her gender — and I am not interested in setting a goal of anything less — then you have to grasp the enormity of the struggle we are engaged in.

Moreover, women's oppression has been around for a very, very long time. A lot of people who describe themselves as Marxists think that the 'Marxist' view is that women's oppression is something to do with capitalism as such. All you have to do is get rid of capitalism and women's oppression will somehow 'naturally' disappear as a result. This is not what Marx or Engels thought. In his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* — a book that is much maligned from virtually all points of view — Engels described the oppression of women as the first step out of 'primitive communism' into class society. He described the creation of a society in which women were oppressed as the result of the first class struggle. Or to put it another way, the first step out of primitive communism into 'civilisation' was achieved on the backs of women, by

'It is not just a problem of capitalism. Women were oppressed long before capitalism came into existence. The struggle we are engaged in is nowhere near its conclusion, and it will not be ended by the overthrow of capitalism. In many respects we will only then start getting down to the real job.'

what Engels described as 'the world historic defeat of the female sex'.

In other words, the oppression of women was the first real oppression to come into existence in the world. And unfortunately I have every confidence in saying that it will be the last to disappear.

It will disappear long after nation has ceased to oppress nation. And while the particular brutality of the oppression of black people is horrifying, and also involves a historic struggle to eliminate, I think sexism will even outlast that. The oppression of women is so built into the detail of our personal lives, so fundamentally based within the family structure as such, that it will require, literally, generations to have been brought up in a different way to wipe it out.

I'll just throw in another point that Engels makes which many of our so-called Marxists seem to overlook because it touches a raw nerve. He says that within the family the analogy is that the man stands in the position of the bourgeois and the woman the proletariat. It is not just

the ruling class that oppresses us, but within the confines of the family it is truly men who are the problem! And that's Marxist orthodoxy!

Anyone who does not place the question of fighting women's oppression centrally does not deserve the name socialist. The old slogan 'no socialism without women's liberation' is true in a very basic way.

It is not just a problem of capitalism. Women were oppressed

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long before capitalism came into existence. The struggle we are engaged in is nowhere near its conclusion, and it will not be ended by the overthrow of capitalism. In many respects we will only then start getting down to the real job.

However, all that said, getting rid of capitalism will do women a great deal of good. We have an absolute interest in it.

This is clear even from those societies that have taken the first steps out of capitalism into a new kind of society. Let me take one example: China. The most dramatic blow that has ever been struck against women's oppression in that country was achieved in one fell-swoop when Mao's government, after 1949, prohibited the binding of women's feet. A barbaric practice which more than anything symbolised the position of women in society, the aim of foot-binding was to prevent women from even being able to walk.

A similar statement could be made about Russia. While women in the USSR today are still grotesquely oppressed, and very little has been achieved on the road to women's liberation, certain things which we are still fighting for in the 'democratic' west were won at a stroke in 1917: abortion rights, complete freedom of

divorce, and so on. Indeed, the first woman in the world to hold governmental office (apart from a small number of queens) was Alexandra Kollontai in the Soviet Union after October 1917.

There is one little fact which, as a member and enthusiastic supporter of WAC, I rather take note of. In Cuba, China, the USSR, all the Eastern European countries, North Korea, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, — every country that has had an anti-capitalist revolution — even in the worst of them there are more women in the central legislative bodies than in any country in the world. And I mean in any other country. The Soviet Union is the best, with nearly 40 per cent women. The 3.5 per cent or so of women in Parliament here makes rather sad reading compared to this. It's not that these are our models, but it is important to note the facts.

The truth is that the greatest contributions that have been made to really changing the position of women in society, have been made in the course of movements, struggles and

revolutions which described themselves as socialist, Marxist, or working class. As socialists we shouldn't feel ashamed of saying that.

There has always been more than one tradition among the people who call themselves Marxists. And it is absolutely true that not only has the record of the British labour movement as a whole on the question of women been absolutely diabolical, but the record of many of the people who describe themselves as Marxists if anything has been worse.

The Social Democratic Federation claimed to be the first Marxist organisation in Britain — although Engels would have nothing to do with it, and before he died Marx had broken off all relations with Hyndman, its founder. The SDF was instrumental in persuading the early Labour Party and the TUC to oppose votes for women. Not only did the SDF take horrendous positions on women, but also on many other issues like Ireland. It even argued for British imperialism to build more and bigger battleships, to better fight wars and maintain its colonies.

There's a tradition of that type of economist, reductionist 'Marxism' in Britain, a tradition which I think is

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better described as 'imperialist economism'. It goes up to the present day. We have the modern equivalent of the SDF in the *Militant* and similar currents. They don't deserve the name Marxism, however stridently they may claim it, because they've got nothing to do with Marxism.

But there was always a different trend too. And it's rather interesting that women have always played an important role in this tradition. For example, Marx's own daughter, Eleanor, wrote some of the first explicitly socialist pamphlets in Britain on women's oppression. She also played a very important role in the labour movement, and was involved in building an alternative organisation to the SDF.

Or there is Sylvia Pankhurst, who emerged through the suffragette movement, and who broke with her mother and sister because of her work among the working class women of the East End of London and because she took a stand on the question of Ireland. She went on to fight against British chauvinism in World War I and took part in the steps towards founding the British Communist Par-

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ty — which was very different in its early years to what it is today.

It is to that kind of tradition that we have to look to in rebuilding a socialist tradition in the labour movement and in the Labour Party today. It was a socialist tradition which understood that while the working class is the only force in society

capable of leading the struggle for the liberation of humanity, of which the first condition is to get rid of capitalism, that cannot possibly be achieved by the working class on its own. The working class has to unite with itself in this struggle women, black people, Irish people, all those engaged in struggles for liberation and against exploitation internationally — indeed everyone who has an interest, from whatever point of view, in getting rid of this rotting system that we live under.

If the organised labour movement, wants to unite with women in such a struggle, it can only be done on the basis of supporting the demands of women, and genuinely fighting for the interests of women.

The fact that this is so little understood in the labour movement — even to the extent that it appears impossible to persuade CLPs to select women as parliamentary candidates — simply tells us that the British labour movement is an extremely long way away from seriously taking on not just the struggle for women's liberation, but the struggle against its own exploitation as a class as well. Until women no longer get the kind of treatment in the labour movement

that Ann has described so graphically, then unfortunately the labour movement hasn't even begun to grasp what it is up against, and what alliances it is going to have to construct, especially with women, in order to begin such a struggle.

I agree with Ann. I am not interested in that version of self-proclaimed Marxist theory which puts everything off until some cataclysmic event in the future — which isn't on the immediate agenda anyway — and claims nothing can be achieved between now and then. 'Impossibilism' wasn't invented by Neil Kinnock, he just takes it a step further. The NUM is accused of it, and so is Liverpool council because they struggle for jobs and services. But women have been told for ages that the only thing that can be fought for now is jobs and higher wages. Anything else we demand is 'impossible' until after that cataclysmic event in the future. The argument always takes the same form: wait until we've nationalised the top monopolies, until this or until that.

That argument doesn't stand up because many things *have* already been achieved: the vote, some abortion rights, more women are in paid work than ever before, and so on.

If we have to wait for socialism until we can get even a few more women in positions of real leadership in the labour movement, then understanding how we got the vote is a mystery. But, that is why I am not pessimistic. People's ideas do change, particularly in the course of struggle.

We've had a rather graphic example of that recently during the miners' strike. A few years ago Arthur Scargill was defending a page three picture in the *Workers' Weekly*, and said the women's liberation movement was a tool of middle class women who don't understand what working class women wanted. Now he says, after the miners' strike and



the role that women played, he considers the demand for women MPs to be quite justified, and indeed nobody 'is more fitted' to lead the labour movement than women. And he keeps very quiet about pin-ups, I'm sure he's changed his mind on that too.

'If the organised labour movement wants to unite with women it can only be done on the basis of supporting the demands of women. That means in the here and now, and not just in some distant future.'

But he didn't change his mind all by himself. Women forced him to. And many other people's minds were changed too, not just in the mining communities. The Greenham women made an enormous impact as well. I think we are making progress. It is slow, and we have a long way to go. But we can't afford to give up, precisely because we are socialists and feminists. Putting our demands as women up front is vital from both points of view.

I also agree with Ann that as an off-shoot of our struggle, as a sort of fringe benefit, women like Joan Collins or indeed Margaret Thatcher may gain. I don't believe Margaret Thatcher got there on her own, as she likes to claim. She got to be prime minister on the backs of all the predominantly working class women who have waged a struggle for their rights, their independence, their freedom in the past. Without the suffragettes, without the struggles for equal pay, without the women's liberation movement of the last two decades, there would be no Mrs Thatcher at Number Ten.

'In the end we have to rely on the women who have most to gain and least to lose — working class women. For them the interests of their class and their interests as women coincide.'

But that won't make us stop fighting. We are not fighting for women like that — who make gains from our struggles, but use those gains to push the majority of women down. What we are fighting for is the real economic independence of all women, not a privileged few — and to achieve that, in the end Joan Collins will have to give up her oil company.

So, to end on Ann's points about radical feminism — and this is where the crunch comes, although I don't think for a minute Ann would disagree. When it comes to it, which will be more important to a Joan Collins: the fact that she is a woman, or the fact that she owns an oil company? Which is more important to Margaret Thatcher?

In the end we have to rely on the women who have most to gain and least to lose — working class women. For them the interests of their class and their interests as women coincide. Women like Margaret Thatcher, or our hypothetical female owner of an oil company, will put the interests of their class before the interests of their sex. If Ann's radical feminism encompasses that fact then I don't think we finally disagree.

ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

"Stand by the people of South Africa"

THE FORCE OF the liberation struggle in South Africa, backed up by the solidarity movement abroad, has compelled even the Thatcher government to take measures against the apartheid regime argued MIKE TERRY of the Anti Apartheid Movement. We have the power, through direct action, to isolate Botha. The trade unions and the Labour Party have a special responsibility.

THERE is an unprecedented depth to the crisis of the apartheid regime in South Africa and its allies, seen most significantly in the South African decision to maintain their moratorium on the repayment of overseas debts. The South African regime is in debt to the tune of \$24bn of outstanding loans, \$10bn of which were due for repayment this year. The regime can't see its way out of the crisis, and its traditional friends in the financial community are very reluctant to bail it out.

That crisis is behind the initiatives which have been taken from within the white population and behind the divisions which are emerging. The Botha regime itself is in a state of confusion, internally and externally.

Twenty months ago the regime was talking peace and signing accords, yet it escalates its war of attrition and destabilisation against neighbouring states. One minute it takes measures to make it easier for its allies to support it; the next it does things which pose problems even for its closest backer, the United States.

The most important thing to recognise is that this has come about primarily because of the struggles of the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia. Too much analysis in the media sees change in terms of the white community and white politics. These perceptions which are essential-

ly racist, have to be challenged constantly if we are to develop the kind of solidarity that can stand by the people of South Africa.

The depth of the crisis is reflected in the level of struggle which sometimes even sympathetic people underestimate. The mere fact that there are 100,000 South African soldiers now occupying Namibia means one soldier for every five adults.

There is this other factor at work and that's the desire by the ruling circles of western countries to try to offset public opinion by seeming to distance themselves from the regime. But there are others who believe their interests are best served by giving

implemented. They include: the ban on computer sales to the military police; a ban on the import of Krugers to this country; a ban on trade promotion to South Africa; and an effective oil embargo.

Thatcher described these as a 'tiny-weeny shift in policy'. Krugers alone earn South Africa \$140bn. That may be a little bit for Mrs Thatcher but it's a lot of money to the South African regime.

We've seen the Thatcher government, the most pro-South Africa government, being forced to implement measures which a Labour government has consistently refused to take. This is an indication that the solidarity movement internationally is a much more powerful force today than it was ever before.

We have to create a situation in which this government can no longer assume itself to act as the number one protector of South Africa. This challenge has been most meaningfully expressed in the words of Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, given to the Labour Party conference and the 2 November demonstration organised

'When we campaign for sanctions for the isolation of South Africa we understand that we are complementing the liberation struggle there, not substituting for it.'

more explicit backing to that system. That's what Thatcher has chosen to do. Wherever there's a prospect of taking the meekest measures to isolate South Africa, Britain's role has been to block them, as at the UN recently.

However, at the conference of Commonwealth nations, Britain was obliged to take measures, measures which to the shame of Labour administrations were never

by the Anti Apartheid Movement: 'people sanctions'. People have the power and the capacity to isolate South Africa if the Tory government isn't prepared to do so.

This means that when the workers at the BTR factory in South Africa are on strike, and scab labour is brought in, that the trade union movement in this country should take action at BTR and at Dunlop its sub-

sidary, to make it more difficult for that company to pursue its policies in South Africa.

Whether you're involved in the student movement, in the black community, or in the trade union movement, wherever you look you can see struggles in South Africa which can be reinforced by action here.

Take the current trial of UDF leaders. There's scarcely a section of our community which can't be touched in some way to express its solidarity with those intrepid leaders on trial for high treason. There is a doctor on trial, lawyers, trade union leaders, leaders of the Indian and Asian community on trial.

When we campaign for sanctions, for the isolation of South Africa, we understand that we are complementing the liberation struggle there, not somehow substituting for that struggle. It's clear that some of the elements who are currently talking about the need for sanctions are trying to protect western interests in order to control change. We have to be wary when they talk about the need for limited sanctions or selective sanctions. Ultimately we must have total universal sanctions so that all forms of collaboration between this country and the international community are denied to the regime.

We welcome the action taken at Southampton docks when dockers along with other unions tracked down military equipment which was being exported to South Africa, blocked it on the quayside and stopped it being loaded. We welcome the action by Swansea dockers who stopped coal from South Africa being unloaded. The labour movement has a particular

'Ultimately we must have total universal sanctions so that all forms of collaboration between this country or the international community and this regime are denied.'

role to play.

Those who talk about municipal socialism have a special responsibility. There has to be a campaign to disinvest from those companies who operate investments and services in South Africa. The same is true of the boycott campaign. We saw the first real breakthrough this year, when after 25 years the Coop suddenly got its act together and stopped purchasing South African goods. Within a

few days Sainsbury's announced that it had instructed its buyers to look for alternative sources.

At the end of October, students took Barclay's advertising at its word and visited their Barclay's manager. They made 350 Barclay's branches across the country inoperative for

'We are now at the point where the Anti Apartheid Movement can agree a programme to take the whole movement onto a new level. We've seen unprecedented levels of action in the past 12 months.'

much of one day. The Barclay's campaign should be stepped up.

We're now at the point where the Anti Apartheid Movement can agree a programme to take the whole movement onto a new level. We've seen unprecedented levels of action in the past 12 months. That momentum must be maintained.

This means many more activists working in our local groups, building our work in the trade union and labour movement, ensuring that the Labour Party and other political parties take seriously their policies on South Africa. In particular we are planning a trade union conference to put a resolution to the TUC that it's now up to the trade union movement itself to isolate South Africa, and to follow that conference with a week of

trade union action.

At the heart of what we're doing is the need to send the message of solidarity to those struggling in South Africa. When we can get that message through it gives those people that extra renewed confidence to make their very courageous sacrifices to bring about the end of apartheid. In so doing they will have struck a very big blow to the racists in this country and abroad.



Other Books

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

South Africa: white rule, black revolt
Ernest Harsch, Monad, 352pp, £6.25 plus 69p postage

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

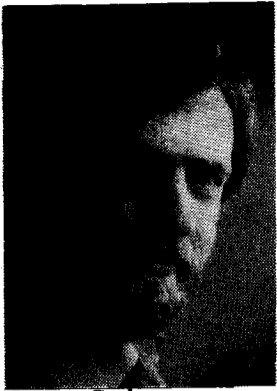
Part of My Soul
Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 159pp, £2.95 plus 25p postage

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

Nelson Mandela: I am prepared to die
IDAF, 48pp, £0.50 plus 22p postage

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

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



Jeremy Corbyn

"The London-Dublin talks aim to marginalise the nationalist community of the North"

THE LONDON-DUBLIN talks are a sham, argues Campaign Group of MPs member JEREMY CORBYN. The British labour movement must reject them and continue pressing the case for withdrawal of British troops. The consequences for the nationalists in the North are too terrible to do otherwise.



FitzGerald and Thatcher cook the books against Irish independence

THE BRITISH labour movement is very good at talking about liberation in South Africa, Central and Latin America and it's right that it should be. But the nearer to home you get the greater is the confusion. Comrades who are good on international issues in general suddenly have a total block about Northern Ireland.

Yet if you talk about international matters with French, Italian, African or any other socialists they ask why can't the Labour Party come out clearly in support of withdrawal from Northern Ireland? Why are you letting it become your Algeria?

The record of the Labour Party on Ireland over the past 30 years has been quite appalling. Labour opposed partition in the '20s. Official Labour Party policy in the '20s and '30s was unconditional Irish reunification. There then came a long period of silence. In 1969 Labour sent British

troops into the north. Most shameful of all, there was the period of the bipartisan policy when the most appalling things happened.

Just think about some of the terrible consequences for the people of Northern Ireland of the presence of British troops: Diplock courts, no-jury trials, single judges appointed by the Lord Chancellor trying people on the evidence of paid witnesses. If you want to understand it, just go for a day to the Crumlin Road prison.

It is bizarre to see a filthy old court house surrounded by armed guards, high barbed wire, floodlights, and goodness knows what else. A group of young men in the dock are herded together and chatting amongst themselves, opposite an empty jury box and in front of them a judge mumbling to himself. Way way back, in a really dim and dark area, the public are allowed in. There is such a thick,

high partition between them and the court it's impossible to see or hear what's going on.

Tony Benn and I visited this monument to British justice recently. There were no seats left in the public gallery so they put us in the jury box. The young men in the dock said they'd be quite happy on this occasion to elect for trial by jury. Even if you think you understand the position in Ireland, it is important to see that, the other side of things: the prison system in the North, strip searching and the treatment of women prisoners.

Remember about a year ago there was an enormous fuss because the *Mail on Sunday* thought they'd got an exclusive on me bringing Irish nationalists round parliament? They even drew a map of parliament to show the route I'd taken with these

in Northern Ireland. Riot shields were first used in Northern Ireland. Water cannon are available in Northern Ireland. Tele-surveillance systems in helicopters were first in operation in Northern Ireland. Continuous filming of street areas is in operation in Northern Ireland. Much high-technology surveillance is going on throughout West Belfast, Derry and many other parts of Northern Ireland.

Exactly those same methods are now in use in Liverpool, in Birmingham, in Brixton, in Tottenham and other areas. Indeed Sir Kenneth Newman has a long record of work in Northern Ireland. His methods are now being used in London. Look at the experience of Broadwater Farm. Look at the experience of the miners' strike.

"If you talk about international matters with French, Italian, African or any other socialists they ask why can't the Labour Party come out clearly in support of withdrawal from Northern Ireland? Why are you letting it become your Algeria?"

people. They later had to admit that they'd come to the House of Commons as normal visitors.

What none of the papers were prepared to report was that Linda Quigley had come to parliament for a half hour meeting to give me some first-hand information about strip-searches in Armagh prison. None of them were prepared to report the consequences of the British presence in Northern Ireland. It suited them to ignore that.

The British presence in Northern Ireland is obviously very expensive to the British government. But police justify it as a training ground for police methods in this country. Just look back over the past 15 years at what has happened in Northern Ireland. Three or four years later the same police methods are being used in England, Wales and Scotland.

CS gas was first used in Northern Ireland. Plastic bullets were first used

As far as the current 'accords' go, the essential points are first that the government of the Irish Republic has now recognised, for the first time ever, the existence of the Six Counties. They have recognised the border and have got themselves involved in what is called 'the security situation'. It will be the Garda that will be used against people in the North, or at least on the border.

The London-Dublin talks are essentially a campaign to marginalise, remove, destroy, the nationalist community in the North. It is an attempt by the British government to create a debate between themselves and what they call the 'responsible representatives' of the nationalist population through the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP). The purpose of the British government is to get the Irish government to recognise the border, to get their participation in the governing of the North.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

I've often turned over in my mind the reasons why the British government actually wants to remain in Northern Ireland. It costs a great deal of money. There's no political mileage for them, no parliamentary seats that could be gained to assist a Tory government in a tight political situation in Britain.

You have to fall back on three things. One is the stubbornness of the British establishment in wanting to remain the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Second are the possibilities of using Northern Ireland as a police and army training ground in an urban environment. Third is the international role of Ireland.

I'll repeat what Tony Benn said about American involvement in the accords. American involvement in the discussions about the British presence in Northern Ireland is key. I believe one of the reasons is that the possibility of NATO bases or US bases in Northern Ireland is a strong consideration.

I would like to know exactly what the American involvement was in the discussions which went on between Thatcher and FitzGerald. Is there now some tacit agreement that US ships, troops, planes can use facilities in the Republic of Ireland? I believe that the Americans want that very strongly. The last thing they want is a united, independent, non-aligned Ireland on the borders of Western Europe.

The British labour movement must reject this 'settlement' entirely. It doesn't bring Irish reunification any nearer. In fact it canonises the border more strongly. It has to be opposed for that reason alone.

We have to return to the fundamental case for the withdrawal of British troops and the reunification of Ireland. We have gained a lot of support for that position in the Labour Party and the labour movement in general over the last three years. That must be improved on.



Campaign group opposes Accord

'If my main interest were preserving Sinn Fein' said left winger Clare Short, 'I would be against the Accord. As it is however, my main interest is in getting the reunification of Ireland and this is the first step.' But Clare and many other leading Labour figures who are trying to be 'constructive' toward the Anglo Irish process are wrong. It is not simply that the real intent of the Accord is a stepped up offensive against Sinn Fein, that offensive would be against the nationalist people as a whole.

It is not simply that when the British rulers concede a voice to constitutional nationalists in the running of the Six Counties they mean to exclude Sinn Fein; they mean to disenfranchise those nationalists in the North who have suffered most from the British occupation and have been

most effective at organising against it. By excluding Sinn Fein elected representatives, the British rulers in collaboration with the Dublin government aim to take away the only effective voice that the nationalist community of the North has ever had.

Tribune, New Statesman and Labour Weekly have all welcomed the Accord. Labour's spokesperson Peter Archer in one move throws aside all the supposed gains of the discussion in the Labour Party forced by the hunger strike campaign and reverted to slavish support for the Tories and bipartisanism. Alone in opposition stands the campaign group of MPs.

Their joint rally with the Labour Committee on Ireland to oppose the Accord marks a refusal to be carried along with the idea that the Unionist opposition to the Accord must mean that somehow it is working

in the direction of a united Ireland.

It is right that Sinn Fein be given a Labour platform to present the nationalist case against the Accord. But it must not stop there. We must begin to campaign to break Labour's support for the deal.

The voice of Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean MacBride has been heard on many occasions internationally — supporting the Dunnes anti-apartheid strikers; arguing in defence of Ireland's neutrality and for nuclear disarmament; campaigning for the US Senate to reject the proposed extradition treaty with Britain. That he should be welcomed by British Labour and given the opportunity to explain his opposition to the Accord gives added weight and prestige to the campaign start made by the LCI. As on so many other occasions they will have to begin by swimming against the tide.

**LABOUR & IRELAND
THE
ALTERNATIVE
ACCORD**

Wednesday 11 December 7.30pm
Council Chamber, County Hall, London SE1

Chair: **Joan Maynard MP**

Speakers:
Sean MacBride SC
A leading spokesperson for **Sinn Fein**
Labour MEP
(Invited) Representative of **Fianna Fail**
disabled access

Organised by Campaign Group of MPs with the
Labour Committee on Ireland

Come to Greenham 14-15 December

THE MOOD at the recent CND conference was that the grass roots membership want to get more involved in direct action. They want to campaign around getting out of NATO, because they are beginning to understand that you can't possibly get rid of the weapons and get rid of the bases, and remain in that alliance. For example, the way that that conference responded to Paul Johns (the new chairperson) when he held a piece of barbed wire in his hand and said that he was in police custody the previous Sunday, having cut the fence at Molesworth. There was a moment there of surprise and then everyone was on their feet. Every single person responded favourably to that.

Time and time again throughout the weekend people were looking for ways to bring the campaign out, to make it more active. But the impression from CND conference was that they'd not voted to that effect. The way that the business was done made it harder for votes to reflect the feeling of the conference.

I think that for a hell of a long while at the head of the campaign there has been a lack of direction and a lack of real commitment to get involved in direct action. On 14 December at Greenham

there are going to be a lot of people who take direct action again, challenging the authorities and being prepared to face arrest. But the leadership of CND are not prepared to lead this. They would rather put it off, put it off, and put it off.

By taking this tack, they are taking a lifeline away from the movement. Saying that they support people when they don't because they are not prepared to stand with them — that is the position the leadership is in. It's divorced from the campaign.

Another demonstration has been called at Greenham to show that the long-awaited apathy hasn't set in. It comes as a call from the women's peace conference that was held in Manchester where over 700 women attended. We want to have a very large gathering to restate our position: to give women the ability to come and demonstrate in large numbers, to have the security of working with other women and taking their first steps that will probably get them active. That feeling is very strong.

On Sunday, a whole range of topics will be discussed at the various gates. At the yellow gate is violence against women; and battered wives, and women in prison and women in third world countries being tortured and being raped. At the green gate they are going to be dealing with issues of the South Pacific, British testing and dumping and exploitation that causes the suffering the Pacific people have to deal with. The blue gate will deal

By Helen John

with the issue of the food mountains and how it's linked into the arms issue.

A lot of women coming down there will be prepared to break the new trespass laws. They were designed to put people off — but they've had exactly the opposite effect.

About 600 people have been arrested so far. Since the law has been changed there have been hundreds of people who have got themselves arrested because they don't intend to allow these laws to remain unchallenged.

There aren't any specific action calls for that weekend. A lot of women have moved in very different directions, since the first blockade.

There are large groups of women who have never done anything of that nature before, I think. They will gain a hell of a lot of encouragement by the fact that there will be so many women there who are confident and not frightened. You can learn very quickly in that situation.

On that first blockade

WIDENING THE WEB
GREENHAM COMMON
SATURDAY DEC. 14th 1985

ENCLOSE THE BASE ♀ EMBRACE THE WORLD

What started as a leaflet for the women's peace conference has developed into a multicoloured web against all forms of oppression, exploitation and war preparations.

MAKE A 9 MILE 0 0 0 INFORMATION BOARD AT GREENHAM — attach messages, decorate the board with your own ideas and support, make links with women's struggles at home and abroad. The board will be on display with caudex, spindles, etc. at 2pm.

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

SUNDAY 15th IF YOU CAN STAY — arrive at various gates — 10am — 12pm — 1pm — 2pm — 3pm — 4pm — 5pm — 6pm — 7pm — 8pm — 9pm — 10pm — 11pm — 12pm

The rest is to be decided, leaflet into the caudex and spindles.

If you can stay overnight or for a few days, contact with ACT and other groups. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMONS — BE SURE!

BUT EVEN IF YOU CAN'T STAY THIS TIME, COME TO GREENHAM TO CELEBRATE WITH US.

WIDEN THE WEB AND CARRY GREENHAM HOME
EMPOWERED AND STRONG

DECEMBER 12th
6th anniversary of NATO decision on Cruise Missiles
Local Actions all over the country.

CONTACT:
DEC. 14th ACTION
WOMEN'S PEACE
CAMP GREENHAM
COMMON NEWBURY
BERKS
09 CND 01 250 4010

HELP
WITH COMMUNICATING THIS ACTION
COPY AND SEND OUT THIS LEAFLET

REACHING OUT IS WIDENING THE WEB

— this is the second one that is on 12-13 December — there were 2500 women who took part. The majority of those women had never taken any form of action like that in their lives before. They were confronted, and very brutally confronted, by

the Thames Valley police. It didn't put those women off at all.

I can remember seeing women picked up and thrown head-first into bushes. Instead of rushing away from the scene, they got up, went back and sat down and blockaded the

base. The anniversary itself is a Thursday. The 12 December is the date of the announcement that cruise would be sited at Greenham. There will be a whole range of independent actions up and down the country.

Getting back to CND, I think their role has got to be to use such actions to educate people that the weapons are here and they are increasing them all the time.

This opportunity should be taken around Greenham in December, and again around the February actions at Molesworth. Flack Jacket Day, 6 February, is the anniversary of Heseltine's announcement that the troops would clear peace campers from the site.

The site has been cleared many times since, and many times they have returned. We need people too at Molesworth who are prepared to come and go the whole hog.

We are approaching 1986, which is International Peace Year. We've seen the nuclear missiles in Belgium, the decision in Holland: everything is accelerating. We've got to have a campaign in Britain with a bit more get-up-and-go than it's had in the last few years.

New tactics in El Salvador

DESPITE TREMENDOUS repression, the economic situation in El Salvador is pushing the urban masses onto the streets. That is how MANUEL, representative in Europe of the FDR, explained the situation today when he spoke at the Central American workshop of the 'Alliance for Socialism' weekend conference hosted by Socialist Action recently. Now is the time, he said, to step up support for the struggle throughout Central America.

THE Americans are using the massive military infrastructure that they have built up in Honduras to attack both Nicaragua and the people of El Salvador. They've built a radar station which can monitor the whole of Central America. They've got a permanent naval patrol with boats and aircraft carriers in the coastal areas between Nicaragua and El Salvador.

More than this they are elaborating a multi-faceted strategy which includes economic, political, military and psychological features. They pour in \$2m a day to keep the El Salvador economy going.

We have had to respond to their stepped-up intervention by making certain tactical readjustments. We have abandoned big concentrations of forces. Instead, we organise small highly mobile groups of five or six fighters. So you won't see spectacular operations of the FMLN with government losses of 4-500 men at a time. You'll see more extensive operations of smaller units which lead to as many losses inflicted on the enemy as before but not just in one or two places. The government is losing 25 soldiers to one of ours.

On another level the developing mass movements have exposed the Duarte government as nothing more than a puppet regime. The economic situation has pushed the urban masses onto the streets and through their actions they have exposed the government's economic dependence on the US. A political perspective which combines a military

response with involvement in the mass mobilisation is what will develop the FMLN from just being a front into becoming a real united party. In that way we can respond better to the intervention of US imperialism.

The key task for solidarity activists is not just around El Salvador but around the intervention of American imperialism in Central America as a whole. The situation is becoming more complicated. The Americans have stepped up support for the contras in Nicaragua but up to now have not been able to win a strategic victory over the Sandinista government there. It's important for the solidarity movement to study in more detail the US military strategy.

The US government learned to a certain extent the lessons of Vietnam: that it's not just what happens on the ground but public opinion in the USA and Western Europe. At the moment Reagan has been able to bring about a consensus among all the forces and institutions of Congress around his policy in Central America. We know they're prioritising a military strategy because

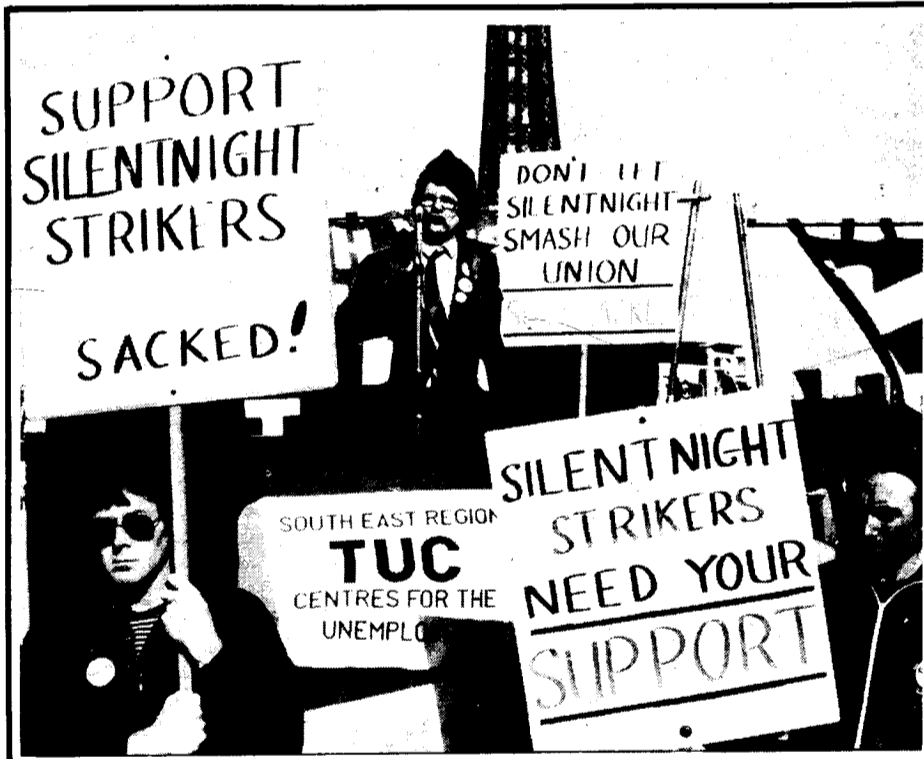
they're boycotting initiatives which can bring about political solutions.

Another important task for the solidarity movement is to unmask the false view that Duarte is extremely democratic because he was elected, while Daniel Ortega (who was elected more democratically) is undemocratic. This definition of democracy boils down to whether you agree with the Americans or not.

The continuing violation of human rights in El Salvador must be denounced. Just recently the children of the secretary of the communications union in San Salvador were kidnapped and tortured. There was a tremendous response by the workers to this repression by the regime.

The US government wants to win backing for its policies in El Salvador by cleaning up its reputation. It is putting it to the UN to have El Salvador taken out of the category of nations who violate human rights.

The people of America and Europe have contributed money to our struggle and we need that to continue. We need money to support our radio stations and for medical aid. We've had internationalists come into our liberated zones to contribute their medical skills, to look after our wounded — that's important. But everyone can contribute money to sustain all our needs.



For five months, 500 workers from the Silentnight bed factory in Lancashire have been on strike. Their dispute, which has official backing from the furniture union FTAT, began on 10 June when management announced 52 redundancies. The strikers, who have all been sacked, are campaigning for funds and for transport and shop workers to boycott Silentnight products. With Christmas approaching an appeal has been made for food and toys for strikers families. On 30 November there will be a solidarity march and rally at 10.30am in Victory Park, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire. Donations should be sent to FTAT, Cravendale 92 branch strike fund, 10 Rainhill Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire.

Trade unionists defend Nicaragua

'IN NICARAGUA, the sole experience of trade union freedom has been since the revolution in 1979', explained Irene Zuniga, of the Nicaraguan white collar union UNE at last Saturday's 200-strong Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) trade union conference in Sheffield.

Irene Zuniga addressed the conference delegates explaining the Sandinista government's trade union policy. Before the revolution, under the Somoza dictatorship, only seven per cent of workers were organised by trade unions; troops were used against strikes and workers leaders were imprisoned, she explained.

The Sandinista trade union federation, the CST, was legally established the day after Somoza's overthrow. Today, it organises the majority of Nicaraguan trade unionists.

Luciano Torres, speak-

ing at conference on behalf of the CST, explained that the contras main target is to destroy production, to hit the Nicaraguan economy and impoverish its people. The aim of the working class had to be to defend and develop that production.

The conference linked itself to that struggle by taking on organising for the 'Nicaragua must survive' appeal in the trade union movement here.

One of the effects of the recently declared state of emergency has been to encourage more workers to join the defence and Red Cross squads which guard the factories and communities against contra attack. The state of emergency has been welcomed by all the Nicaraguan trade unions, except the CUS.

The CUS is the Nicaraguan affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which also includes the US AFL-CIO and the British TUC. It

has just 3000 members. It is affiliated to the Nicaraguan Democratic Co-ordination (CDN), the main right-wing opposition to the Sandinistas, which also includes the main employers federation, COSEP.

The TUC International Committee currently considers this scab rump to be the genuine voice of Nicaraguan trade unionism. One of the tasks of the solidarity movement in the next year must be to correct this. As Luciano Torres put it, the CST has good links with individual unions, like the NUM, NALGO, NUPE, 'the problem is at the top'.

At the CST's fourth congress, held in September, there was a session on the British miners' strike and a photo exhibition of that struggle.

It is vital for all trade unions to develop direct bilateral links with the CST, to send delegations to Nicaragua, so they can report the truth about the state of the movement

there. TUC policy, passed at the '85 congress, was to send a fact finding delegation within six months. Three months have now gone by and there is not a whisper of this taking place.

Representatives at the conference from NALGO and ACTT expressed their frustration with this and determination to fight to ensure that this delegation takes place. Trade unionists in the NSC will be making this a priority in the coming months.

The conference marked a significant step forward in building serious solidarity with Nicaragua in the British trade union movement. Many unions were represented, among them telecom engineers, local authority and civil service unions, railworkers and a sprinkling from many other industries.

Further details on NSC trade union work from: Lilian Grewar, NSC, 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1.

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

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

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

Teachers in the frontline

SIR KEITH JOSEPH, Secretary of State for Education will have completed his moves to reshape the unions' side of the Burnham Committee which negotiates teachers' pay on 2 December. That will be the day on which he removes the representation of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) from the committee altogether.

Joseph has this power under the Teachers' Remuneration Act which governs the terms for negotiating teachers' pay. No previous Secretary of State has ever changed the composition of the union side in the middle of a pay dispute but Joseph is eager to do so in the hope that the removal of the National Union of Teachers overall majority will result in a speedy settlement. His hopes aren't entirely unfounded.

The leadership of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers has been prepared to side with anti-trade union, no-strike organisations like the Professional Association of Teachers to reduce the NUT's influence.

The rank and file of both the NUT and the

**By Bernard Regan,
NUT NEC in personal capacity**

NAS/UWT however, are making increasing demands upon the leaderships of both the two TUC affiliated unions to cut their verbal skirmishing and get down to building united action.

The leadership of the NAS/AUT has declared its intention to reach an 'interim settlement' providing the employers up their offer of 6.9 per cent to the equivalent of 8 per cent over the whole year. They say they will put this offer to a ballot of their members. On its approval they will immediately sub-

mit a claim for 35 per cent for next year's claim which is due for settlement on 1 April 1986.

This would be viewed by the overwhelming majority of teachers as a sell-out since it would call a halt in what has become the largest pay dispute ever. It would derail the campaign and inevitably lead to a deal next year in which the Tory government would be successful in imposing a dramatic change in teachers' working practices.

The NAS/UWT leaders however, have said that they are prepared to sell conditions for a deal on pay. Meanwhile the government's attacks on education continue. Chancellor Nigel Lawson declared his intention to cut education spending by five per cent in real terms next year and the Queen's Speech included a proposal to bring in legislation to impose tighter management control of teachers by 'assessment'.

This fight is about pay, but it's also about the

whole future of education. As the Socialist Teachers Alliance, the biggest left current in the NUT has been arguing, the crucial task is to create a fighting unity between the NAS/UWT and the NUT at every level. At the moment that means directing the respective leaderships away from a membership battle and into concentrating on the pay fight.

The real way forward has been shown by teachers in Inner London and Glasgow who are trying to spread this further to encompass the fight of the teachers in the Educational Institute of Scotland. On 5 December I will be sharing a platform with Labour MP Denis Canavan and EIS General

Secretary John Pollock at the mass rally in Glasgow on the day of the all-Scotland strike.

Meanwhile inside the NUT evidence of the growing influence of the STA was shown when Carole Regan came third out of five candidates for the union's presidency. She lost by only 1,000 votes to a Communist Party supported Broad Alliance candidate and about 3,000 votes behind the victorious right winger. Although the NUT is not the NUM the lessons of the miners' strike still have an impact. It's commonplace to hear so-called moderate teachers saying that things will never be the same again.



The lessons of the miners' strike are having an impact amongst teachers where things will never be the same again

London teachers strike against racism

ON FRIDAY, 22 November, 2000 teachers from all over London took a half-day unofficial strike to express their solidarity with nine teachers and two other trade unionists, who were arrested on a picket protesting against the ineffectiveness of the ILEA in dealing with a growing number of vicious racist attacks at Daneford School in Tower Hamlets.

The call for strike action came from the East London Teachers Association and was subsequently supported by the Inner London Teachers Association.

The strike was significant in that it is the first time that teachers have taken this kind of action against racism in schools. And this was despite the fact that the national union had issued a veiled warning against taking action on that day. Over 60 schools were involved in the strike and about one in

seven union members.

While racism is nothing new in Tower Hamlets' schools, the number of attacks on Bangladeshi pupils has increased since the summer. These attacks have been taking place both inside and outside schools, particularly when pupils are on their way home.

The policies of the ILEA are quite inadequate to deal with the problems black pupils are having to face. Teachers have to be clearly identified with supporting the self-organisation of black school students in our schools. They should enter into discussions with the black community on the demands they wish to place on the ILEA for an education service which reflects the needs of black pupils.

By Carole Regan

The striking teachers echoed many of these demands in the rally held on Friday morning in the Holloway Odeon, when they were addressed by speakers such as Kumar Murshid, of Bangladeshi Educational Needs in

Tower Hamlets; Michael Vance, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign; Daneford pupils and teacher; and Monica Brady, Secretary East London NUT.

What all the speakers emphasised was that this should be seen as the first step in the massive campaign that needs to be launched in our schools against all forms of racism.

Gains for WAC at Wales women's conference

THE WALES Labour Women's Conference, which took place earlier this month, saw a breadth of discussion that we have not experienced before. But women are going to have to work hard to ensure that the resolutions passed by conference are really carried out.

The Tory attacks, and their impact on women, were reflected in a number of resolutions at this year's conference. The defense and development of cervical screening, childcare provision, social security and the health service were overwhelmingly endorsed. Though it was left to NUPE women to urge campaigning now rather than waiting for a Labour government.

The Women's Action Committee saw an increase in support with a resolution calling for a woman on every shortlist carried for the first time. A resolution on national elections to the Labour Women's Committee was defeated, but by a small margin. As this was the first time conference had debated this complex issue

we can afford to be optimistic about next year.

Although still in a minority WAC increased its support on the Wales women's committee, and for the first time a WAC

**By Maggie Simpson,
Pleisnewydd women's section**

supporter was elected to the National Labour Women's Committee.

WAC supporters were to the fore in moving many campaigning resolutions to conference, particularly around involving Labour women in actively building support for the struggle of women in the mining communities.

An emergency resolution was adopted calling on the Wales women's organisation to collaborate with Women Against Pit Closures in organising a tour of women from Notts and Leics to campaign against the UDM.

Carrying out such resolutions is vital if we are to secure women from the mining communities to the Wales Labour Party. For despite the emergence of WAPC in Wales few of its activists were to be seen at this women's conference. Anti-imperialism was

also on the agenda, with a resolution calling for compulsory sanctions against South Africa and in support for the ANC passing unanimously.

The Armagh strip searches were taken up, including the organisation of a delegation. However the movers — and many women agreed with them — accepted an amendment raising the question of 'civil liberties in Great Britain (especially Northern Ireland)' and posing the issue of Armagh searches in the context of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.

This weakened the motion, but hopefully women will go on the delegation and find out that the problems of women in Ireland is not the passing of a new law in Britain, but years of colonial rule leading to an army of occupation and a negation of civil, political and legal rights.

WAC supporters in the Wales women's organisations are still a minority, although gaining in significance. Carrying out these resolutions, and by doing so continuing to build up the women's sections, will lay the basis for a campaigning women's organisation in the Wales Labour Party.

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A Socialist ACTION



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Liverpool KINNOCK SCABS AGAIN!

Geneva summit US 1 : Gorbachev 0

THE ISSUE at Geneva was the United States Star Wars project. Reagan wanted the USSR's okay for it to go ahead, Gorbachev wanted it stopped. The outcome is that it goes ahead.

Star Wars, if it could be a nuclear defence system that is truly effective, would have the impact of making the whole Soviet nuclear armaments build-up redundant — although its technical efficacy is in big doubt. Far more than Cruise or the MX missiles, Star Wars allows the US to attempt to achieve the aim set in the notorious Presidential Directive 49 of Jimmy Carter's administration.

This was the decision to change US nuclear policy from the old MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) policy to one of attempting to achieve a weapons superiority that would allow for a 'winnable' nuclear war. If the bulk of Soviet weapons could be destroyed in space before getting to the States, then the United States could unleash nuclear destruction with no come-back.

Despite all the pro-

paganda about Star Wars being a defensive system, its only military purpose is to create the circumstances where US missiles can be used. But Star Wars also has a powerful non-military purpose — one that would be effective even if the military defensive nature of the system was flawed.

That goal is forcing the Soviet Union to keep stepping up armaments expenditure to keep up with the Americans and counter Star Wars. This places grinding pressure on the Soviet economy. And this is the vice that Gorbachev has got himself caught in.

But this vice is largely created by the policies pursued by the Soviet bureaucracy itself. The policy of detente and 'arms control' was forced on the United States in the '70s through the victory of the Vietnamese people over American im-

perialism. Today the only way such pressure could be maintained on Reagan is through the struggles of the people of South Africa, the Philippines and Central America.

But all the advantage of the Vietnamese victory was thrown away through the pursuit of a dead-end policy on the part of Gorbachev and his predecessor Brezhnev. Support for the class struggle internationally was simply used as a bargaining counter to buy time for the Soviet Union to 'catch up' with the United States both militarily and economically.

But with the Soviet economy less than half the size of the United States, this is pure adventurism with no prospect of being successful.

The pursuit of this policy at Geneva simply forced Gorbachev to do all the paying, by accepting Star Wars but at a slower pace. For the Western European disarmament movements this will be a

deeply-felt blow, giving credence to the argument that Star Wars is a 'peaceful' step, and allowing Reagan to hide his nuclear warrior stance behind a cloak of international rapprochement.

And this is all Reagan really aimed to gain out of the Geneva talks. They were a propaganda exercise pure and simple, though with some very serious consequences.

By getting Gorbachev to give his tacit consent to Star Wars, Reagan is able to head-off opposition from social democratic governments in Europe, and from liberal politicians at home. After all, why should they worry about Star Wars on behalf of the Soviet Union and world peace, when the Soviet Union has said okay?

As the *Economist* put it: 'Mr Reagan can tell his anxious allies in Western Europe that Star Wars may, after all, be compatible with talking to Russia.' And for the Soviet bureaucracy it means that the one per cent increase in growth rate projected for the coming year can probably be achieved.

But it will not solve any of the more fundamental problems of the Soviet Union's economy. And it has not helped 'world peace' one bit.

LAST TUESDAY Liverpool city council approved a three-page resolution on the council's budget situation, amid the glare of much publicity claiming that *Militant*-supporter and deputy council leader Derek Hatton was being forced to back down on the council's promise to protect jobs and services. 'How Hatton's nerve cracked' was the *Sunday Times* headline. Other papers followed suit, highlighting Liverpool's deal with the Zurich gnomes.

At Tuesday's council meeting, Hatton himself explained that the new budget was 'a setback'. What is being proposed, and won't be finalised until a council meeting this coming Friday, is that the council maintains its promise not to increase rents or rates this year and, instead, adopt some of the Stone-Frost options on capitalisation.

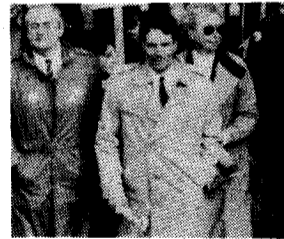
This means moving money from one council account to another, from the account which is used to pay for capital building programmes to the current revenue account. The deal that the council is negotiating with Swiss financiers will ensure that house building programmes aren't affected this year or next.

The sting in the tail appears to be, in return, a promise by the council not to step outside the law. And, with Liverpool on the list of rate-capped authorities next year, that could be a very significant promise indeed. According to current reports the council budget in the next financial year will be slashed by £20 million, from its current £256 to £245 million.

There should be no doubt about the reason why Liverpool's Labour council has found itself in

this position. It has increasingly faced the situation where other Labour councils have dropped like flies in the face of Tory government attacks, so that it now stands alone in its commitment to defend the interests of working people within the city.

The Labour council's own major tactical error in proposing to send redundancy notice letters to all its employees was an ill-considered way of confronting the Tory government's refusal to provide the city with the resources it urgently needs. At Labour Party conference Neil Kinnock seized the opportunity of Liverpool's isolation and the confusion caused by its own tactic to launch a full-scale attack on the council.



His intention was to further isolate Liverpool and to brand as illegitimate any section of the movement prepared to fight now against the Tory attacks. It is for that reason

that his attacks on the Liverpool council and now, openly, on supporters of *Militant* in Liverpool haven't let up.

This weekend he appeared in print again to denounce the council for its deal with the Swiss bankers. 'Liverpool city councillors,' he said, 'have accepted conditions from the banks which were completely unnecessary. It is an act of political perversity.'

The only perversity is Kinnock's own — deliberately judged, at that. First Kinnock helped to force the council into a position where concessions are wrung from them, then he attacked them for pursuing the very course which the Labour leadership themselves have thrust upon them.

There can be no doubt that such a budget as that which the council is about to make is a setback for the people of Liverpool, one of the most deprived urban areas in the whole of Europe. By scabbing on the Liverpool city council's fight, Kinnock has played straight into the hands of the Tories and their friends.

The blame for Liverpool's setback should be placed squarely where it belongs: first with the Tory government who are cutting back local authority cash in order to force the cost of Britain's economic crisis onto the shoulders of the working class; second with the Labour leadership who have used the opportunity of Liverpool's isolation to launch an attack on the council.

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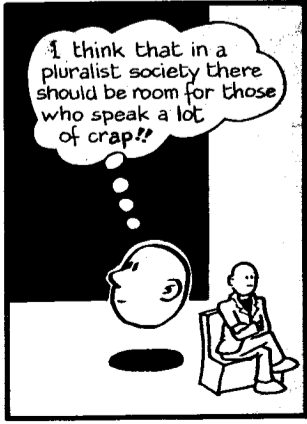
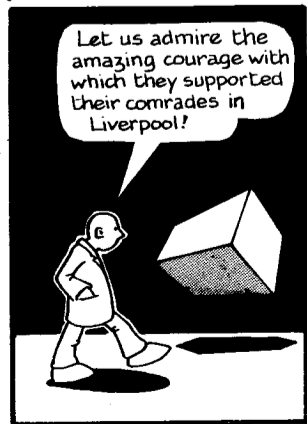
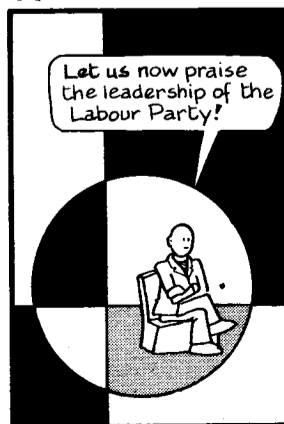
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