BIRMINGHAM LABOUR

BRIEFING

JULY '88 + No.1 + 50p

TIME TO STAND AND FIGHT

NO CUTS IN JOBS AND SERVICES

The refusal by the 20 councilors to support the closure of Martineau House was very welcome. They must be supported against victimisation by the Knowles leadership. Knowles' draconian reprisals - purging the 20 from posts on joint-boards - demonstrate that any reliance on one-off protest votes as a means of putting pressure on Knowles to share power with these councillors is doomed to failure.

Their opposition to the Martineau House cut opens up the possibility of a different strategy: *a planned campaign to defend council jobs and services against the succession of cuts now in the pipeline.* Their stance on Martineaue House won widespread popular support. *So too will opposition to all other cuts.*

Mobilising the support shown from the council workers and the public is the only effective strategy in the long run against the right; to do so entails left councillors openly linking up with the rank-and-file Party members on whom they rely for support.

It also means taking the campaign of opposition to all cuts to working-class people in Birmingham outside the Labour Party - those most affected by cuts - rank and file trade unionists whose jobs, and pay and conditions are under threat, and to tenants and other community groups who will suffer from cuts in council services.

There are many areas in which damaging cuts loom. In particular Social Services area offices (already chronically understaffed) were told on Wednesday 6th July that unless they interviewed for any vacancies by Friday 8th July they could not fill vacancies until next April ! Also in order to 'prepare' for competitive tendering the jobs, pay and conditions of low paid council workers in general will be under threat. Education is another area facing cuts. 2,200 extra children are to be taken into Birmingham primary schools next term, with no extra teachers. Class sizes will rise - the most in need will suffer. The 20 councillors should oppose *these* cuts **now!**

NO PAY CUTS FOR THE ALREADY LOW PAID!
NO TO BIGGER CLASSES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS!

If Martineau is settled the fight moves on to opposition to all cuts. This issue was never really just about Martineau anyway, it was about opposition to cuts and attacks on the working-class in Birmingham, and about democracy in the Labour Group.

LABOUR TAKE THE POWER!

COUNCILLORS HOLIDAYS OR CHILDRENS HOMES???

Councillor Lyn Jones revealed the following interesting facts about members of our wonderful ruling Labour Group at the last Council meeting

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Evening Mail, July 6th; "In 1986-7 these trips had included a visist by Coun Saeed Abdi (Handsworth Ward), Coun Reg Hudson (Cons,Sutton New Hall), and former Lab councillor Mr Albert Jackson to a meeting with the International Olympic Committe which cost **£100,000.**

....also a trip to **Lausanne,Switzerland** by **Coun Hudson, Coun Bryan Bird** (Stockland Green),**Coun Ken Barton, Coun Bill Turner** (Sparkbrook) **and Coun Bill Gray** (Nechells).....that cost £34,500 in travel and a further £250,000.
....(there's more!! - Ed) A 2-day trip to ....Brussels by **Coun Knowles,Coun Eric Brown**.....that cost nearly £4000."

Briefing would like to give you one more fact. The Martineau Childrens Home costs £99.000 per year to run! Briefing feels that someones priorities are wrong somewhere!!

Stop The Clause

-Public Meeting-
Josiah Mason Hall
July 22nd, 7.0pm

SUNDAY
17 JULY 1988

ASSEMBLE
11-12 NOON
FINSBURY PARK
To join the
Nelson Mandela
Freedom March
RALLY 3.30 PM
HYDE PARK

Organised by the **Anti-Apartheid Movement**
13 Mandela St London NW1 01-387 7966

Fight for Benn and Heffer



MASS RALLY!
FRIDAY SEPT 2ND
7.30PM

WITH BENN + HEFFER

Josiah Mason Hall

STOP THE CLAUSE

In spite of massive demonstrations and plenty of campaigning, we did not manage to Stop the Clause - and of course we were realistic enough to think that the Tory government was not very likely to listen to us.

The campaign gave us strength to fight. It helped lots of gay men and lesbians to come out and stay out and it gave the experince of solidarity to plenty of people who and never felt that before.

The fight is far from over and *Birmingham Stop the Clause* has decided to keep going and to keep its name because that is how we are known.The focus now, of course,needs to be different. Members of Stop the Clause will still be ready to talk to groups who want to know more about our campaign, but we will be asking them to join in a campaign to get Labour Councils to *defy the clause*. This needs to become Labour Party policy, so CLP's should be supporting resolutions at Labour Party conference calling for this.

Union member and especially those in the NUT and NALGO, need to work to ensure that lesbian and gay members of their unions are involved in the campaign to Defy the Clause.

Coaches went down to London to the Lesbian Strength and the gay pride demos and the group is planning a Dayschool/festival with workshops and great entertainment to be held in September or October. Wait for further announcements.

In the meantime there will be a public meeting at Josiah Mason Hall on July 22nd, with Clare Short MP, an NUT member and a member of the "Birmingham 20".

Debbbie Epstein, Selly Oak CLP Womens Section.

BRIEFING
LABOUR LISTENS!

*Each issue **BIRMINGHAM LABOUR BRIEFING** will strive to expose corruption and hypocrisy within the Birmingham Labour Movement. We will pull no punches. We will name names. Contributions welcome !*

* DICK IS READY FOR THE POLL TAX *

It is not widely known (but **LABOUR BRIEFING** will tell you!) that Labour controlled Brum is the 2nd most prepared city *in the country* for implementation of the Poll Tax. A member of the Brum City Council (Treasury Dept) has been spending 2 days a week in London being trained on how to implement the Poll Tax. Now we know what the Right wing mean by making Birmingham one of the leading cities in the country and taking it into the 21st century!! (Or should it be *back to the 14th?!*)

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* BLOODSUCKERS AT THE BLOODBANK OF THE WORKING-CLASS ! *

++ Venue:Selly Oak Hospital ++
Event: Edwina Currie's visit

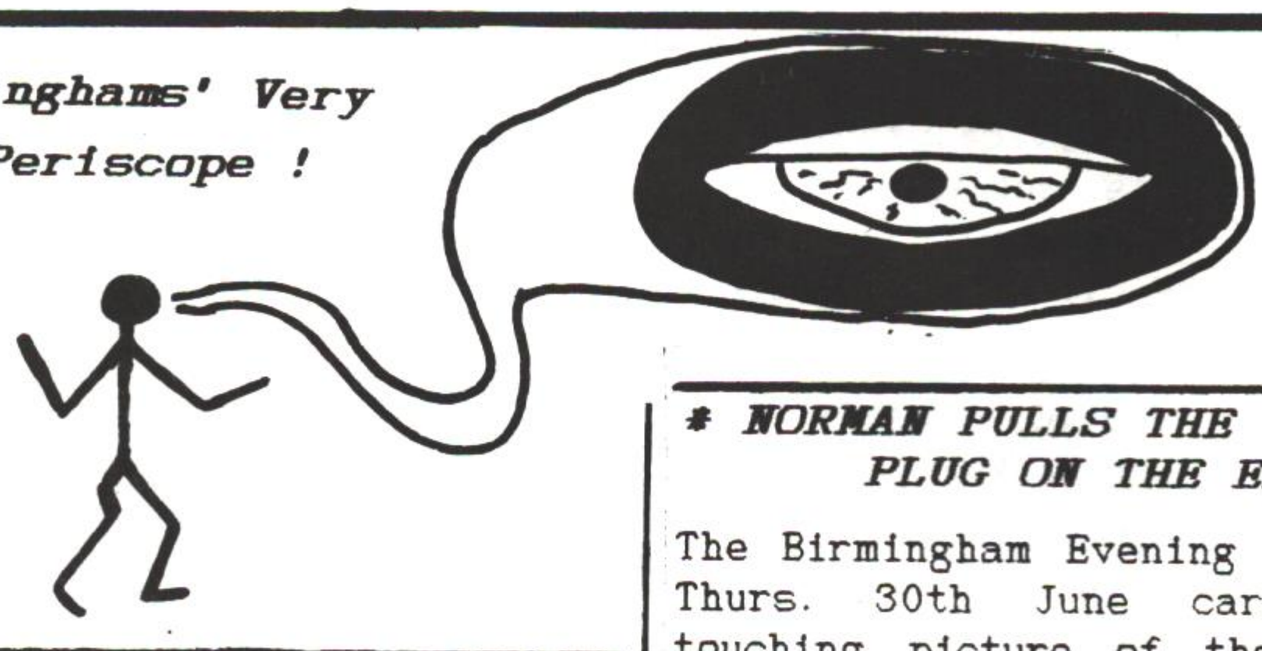
Standing at the gates to the Nurses home we spotted that well-known socialist ***John 'Giz a Job' Charlton*** approaching. Had he come to stand on the picket line and show solidarity? No!! Sorry to dissapoint you, he sailed straight through without even a word or backward glance at the nurses and comrades standing there.

That evening I watched in utter amazement as ***Coun. Charlton*** came onto TV, giving a grovelling apology to Edwina 'Give up your second holiday' Currie, saying it was neither the time nor the place for a demo!! It appears that for 'New Realism' there is never a time or a place to protest!

Or maybe its something to do with the fact that Mrs Currie is Coun. Charltons paymaster (£12.000 per year) as a member of the regional health authority???

(Bob Murphy.)

Birminghams' Very Own Periscope !



* THE "AIN'T GOT NO LABOUR BRIEFINGS" BLUES ! *

At the second "Chesterfield" I went with ***Stuart Richardson*** to Chesterfield Labour Club. It is said that Stuart in his time has sold more papers than Rupert Murdoch. At Ten o'clock he had sold all his ***BRIEFINGS*** and had a bad attack of withdrawal symptoms. He immediately had to rush back to his digs for some more. Still it is not Stuart's fault if ***BRIEFING*** is so much in demand !

(Len Mason)

* DEFINITION OF WORKING-CLASS ? *

In his recent libel action against the Observer newspaper ***Michael Meacher's*** attitude seemed to be - of couse I'm working class - and I'm going to spend £250,000 to prove it! Nice one Michael!

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* ANYONE FOR TEA ? *

Wasn't it good of ***Albert Bore*** to spend most of the meeting called by the Labour Group to remove the whip from the "Birmingham 20", acting as a tea boy for Dick Knowles and Fraser Kemp. Poor old Albert was running in and out all night with cups of something hot for his wonderful Leader. Still we all have to start somewhere comrades!

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* NORMAN PULLS THE PLUG ON THE EEPTU *

The Birmingham Evening Mail of Thurs. 30th June carried a touching picture of those two "stalwarts of the Labour Movement" and "defenders of the working class", ***Norman Willis and Dick ('I will be in the House of Lords before you Norman') Knowles***.

Underneath the picture was a report on Willis and Knowles opening the new *Birmingham Trade Union Studies Centre* in Digbeth. Solidarity in action, how touching!

The report stated that in his speech Willis "accused the leaders of the electricians' union of 'grotesque propaganda'". Referring to the EETPU Willis was reported as saying "It is particularly sad for me to see that one of our number is not prepared to accept collective rules and responsibilities".

In referring to "one of our number", ***BRIEFING*** wonders if Willis was aiming a bit closer home than Eric Hammond. After all standing next to Willis in the picture was one Richard Knowles, rumoured to be a member of that very union and a delegate to Northfield GC *from* that very Union. ***BRIEFING*** wonders if Dick will vote "yes" to the EETPU leaving the TUC in the unions present ballot ? What does happen to Labour Party members who are in a union which is eligible to affiliate to the TUC but chooses not to ? Poor old Dick, his problems just seem to be mounting up!!

"PISC" OFF!



From Monday June 27th all posts in the City Council have been frozen. From that date no post can be filled without the direct permission of the Chair or Vice Chair of ***PISC*** (the Policy Implementation Sub Committee). This decision will quickly lead to a crisis in service provision, especially in those areas which were subject to freezes earlier in the year (Social Services, Education, Libraries). Two major facts are clarified by this decison;

1. Birmingham City Council will be cutting jobs and services this year.
2. The Council is now (in)effectively run by *PISC.*

The vehicle for announcing these decisions is a letter from the Chair of PISC, Councillor Turner, to all committee chairs. The letter begins *"I am writing to set out the proceedures to implement the decision* we have taken to have a **selective filling***of posts throughout 1988/89"*. This proceedure is then explained. It is that for any post in the Council which falls vacant a form must be submitted by the Chair of the Service Committee and the Chief Officer indicating whether:-

a) they want permission to fill it
b) explaining the consequences of not filling it.

This form will then be submitted to the Management Effectiveness Unit (MEU) who will process it and consult with the Chair or Vice Chair of PISC for final authorisation one way or another.

Nowhere in the letter is there any reference to the traditional Committees which might have dealt with these matters (Personnel or Finance and Management). The centre of control of the Council is PISC and its officer team the MEU. *Any illusions about the normal (democratic???) workings of the Council can now be dropped!*

Two further aspects of this should be noted:-

A. The letter also talks about deleting posts from establishments. This means that not only would posts be frozen but <u>permanently deleted</u> with a subsequent loss of jobs and services.
B.There has of course been no consultation with anyone on this.

These developments demand that all those opposed to cuts in jobs and services stand up now. A full and open campaign involving unions, users of services and Labour Party activists is needed now.There is no longer any room for fence sitting and full support must be given to those Council workers who will be involved in front line resistance to cuts and defence of jobs and services.

NICK HAY, Birmingham NALGO. (Personal Capacity)

BIRMINGHAM LABOUR BRIEFING

The BRIEFING GROUP meets on the last Tuesday of every month. All BRIEFING supporters welcome!

Details of Meetings Phone John; 422 1366

Articles, Letters, and contributions to; 27a Westminster Rd, Lozells, B21.