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BIRMINGHAM LABOUR

BRIEFING

INCORPORATING NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

No. 24 August 1986

REINSTATE AMIR KHAN AND KEVIN SCALLY



The campaign for the reinstatement of two expelled Labour Party members has got off to a good start. Two constituency parties in Birmingham have submitted conference resolutions calling on the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) to readmit Amir Khan and Kevin Scally to membership. This means that there is now a good possibility that the issue can be debated at party conference this autumn.

Amir Khan, a Birmingham City Councillor and Kevin Scally, former secretary of Sparkhill ward of Sparkbrook constituency Labour Party, were expelled last November for 'bringing the party into disrepute'.

The charge against Khan arose because he organised a meeting in Sparkbrook constituency to discuss the possibility of setting up a Black Section.

Scally was expelled because he appeared on a television programme, 'The Bandung File', after he discovered that 57 of the 140 new membership applications received by Sparkhill Ward in December 1983 were irregular but was unable to persuade the constituency party to hold an investigation.

Appeals to the National Executive Committee by both comrades were rejected, with Sparkbrook's MP, Roy Hattersley, voting to uphold the expulsions. Since the expulsions were instigated by the constituency party and simply confirmed by the NEC, Khan and Scally do not have an automatic right to a hearing at conference.

The Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally (CRAKKS) has issued an appeal which has been signed by prominent members of the Tribune Group and Campaign Group of Labour MPs. Other sponsors include Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone and Nigel Williamson, the editor of 'Tribune'. The appeal is being circulated by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Black Sections.

The campaign organisers stress that a conference debate can only take place if sufficient amendments to the Ladywood and Selly Oak resolutions are submitted. A suitable amendment might be to point out that neither Khan nor Scally have broken any constitutional rule of the party. Conference amendments have to be in by 15 August.

Meanwhile, back in Sparkbrook, Scally and Khan's former adversaries have fallen out with each other over who should replace Khan now he is ineligible for reselection as a councillor in the Autumn. So far six men are in the running, but that number increases monthly. But on one thing they are all united - they all backed the constituency party when it decided in June to reject a demand for an enquiry into the fiddled membership.

Inside.....
Black Section for Birmingham...Immigration laws... Handsworth...Plastic Bullets...South Africa...Is Dick Knowles a leninist... Sparkbrook...Sinn Fein... Labour Committee on Ireland.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF AMIR KHAN AND KEVIN SCALLY

Joint Hon Chairs
Clare Short MP
Gul Zarina Khan

Joint Hon Secretaries
Vladimir Derer (CLPD)
Paul Sharma (Labour Party Black Section)
10 Park Drive London NW11 7SH 01-458 1501

Hon Treasurer
Bob Clay MP

Appeal

To Secretaries of All Labour Party Organisations

We are appealing on behalf of Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally for the support of your organisation in winning their reinstatement as Labour Party members.

Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were expelled by Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP in November 1985. Their appeals were rejected by the NEC on Monday 9 June 1986 by 13 votes to 12. Both Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were said to have 'brought the Labour Party into disrepute'.

As the NEC merely confirmed these expulsions but did not initiate them, they will not be referred to in its conference report. Therefore they can only be brought to the attention of this year's conference through a resolution.

Amir Khan has been an active member of the Transport & General Workers Union for 15 years, having been a shop steward for 3 years. In the Labour Party he has been branch vice-chair and a sub-agent to Roy Hattersley in the 1983 general election. Amir Khan organised a meeting in Sparkbrook CLP to discuss forming a black section. For this he was accused by the constituency executive of 'bringing the Labour Party into disrepute'. Subsequently the General Committee endorsed this charge and then went on to expel him from party membership.

Kevin Scally has been a party member for 17 years, during which time he has held several positions of responsibility in his ward and constituency. He was expelled for being involved in the Bandung File TV programme on Asian involvement in Sparkbrook CLP. In it he drew attention to membership irregularities in the Sparkhill Ward, where as secretary, in December 1983, he received a sudden influx of 140 new applications. On investigation many of these turned out to have not been signed by the applicants. Some came from non-existent addresses. Scally's request for an enquiry was answered by an instruction from the Regional Organiser that he should 'accept all future applications in good faith'. In exasperation he was persuaded to talk to the Bandung File. Other members of Sparkbrook CLP appeared on this programme but no disciplinary measures have been taken against them.

Whatever our personal views about discussing internal party matters in public, many national figures within the party habitually air their own views in the media. Indeed, if the dubious rule of 'bringing the party into disrepute' by speaking to the press were applied evenly to the Parliamentary Labour Party, most of its members would have been expelled from party membership long ago.

The actions of Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally do not substantially differ from those of other party members. Nor do they break any of the party's constitutional rules or warrant expulsions. This view is endorsed by the widespread opposition to these expulsions that has already been expressed. We therefore appeal to you to support this campaign and ask that your organisation takes whatever action seems appropriate to achieve their reinstatement at the earliest possible date.

Kingsley Abrams	Cllr Pam Dean	Michael Meacher MP	Dennis Skinner MP
Hassan Ahmed	Martin Flannery MP	Bill Michie MP	Cllr Theresa Stewart
Margarett Beckett MP	Eddie Haigh	Ian Mikardo MP	Gavin Strang MP
Linda Bellos	Peter Hain	Cllr Phillip Murphy	Keith Vaz
Cllr Roy Benjamin	Eric Heffer MP	Ann Pettifor	Marc Wadsworth
Tony Benn MP	Ken Livingstone	Niall Power	Michael Welsh MP
David Blunkett	Cllr Trudy Livingstone	Cllr Mick Rice	Nigel Williamson
Paul Boateng	Eddie Loyden MP	Jo Richardson MP	David Winnick MP
Cllr Albert Bore	Narendra Makanji	Saba Sabaratnam	Audrey Wise
Richard Caborne MP	Cllr Gurdev Manku	Tom Sawyer	Valerie Wise
Bob Clay MP	Anni Marioram	Brian Sedgemore MP	
Martin Collins	Joan Maynard MP	Clare Short MP	

Financial Appeal

We appeal to all Labour Party organisations and individual members to support the 'Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally' and to contribute to the cost of its work.

The campaign's objective is to win sufficient support to ensure that Amir Khan and Kevin Scally's case is discussed at this year's annual conference, and that a resolution is passed instructing the NEC to reinstate them into party membership.

To succeed in this it is vital that the campaign takes its case to all sections of the party, whether they be constituencies, party or trade union branches or other affiliated organisations.

To pay for this work we depend entirely on financial contributions from party organisations and individual members.

Any contribution, however small, would be appreciated. But please give generously. This will help to ensure that Amir Khan and Kevin Scally's case does not fail through lack of funds and that we achieve the outcome we believe is in the best interests of the party.

Please send contributions to
Bob Clay MP
House of Commons
London WC1A 0AA
Cheques should be made payable to 'Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally' or 'CRAKKS'.

Sponsor the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally

I/We wish to add our names to the list of sponsors for the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

Individual Sponsor .....

Address .....

.....

Sponsoring Organisation .....
Name and address of officer to whom future correspondence concerning this campaign should be sent .....

.....

.....

I/We enclose a contribution of £ ..... towards the expenditure of the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

Please send to: Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Support the Ladywood resolution

Since Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were expelled by their constituency, and this action was merely endorsed by the NEC, their case will not appear in the NEC Report. This means that the only way of bringing the issue to the attention of conference is through a resolution. Such a resolution has been submitted to conference by Birmingham Ladywood. This is reprinted below.

To be timetabled, however, this resolution must be supported by at least 12 CLPs or affiliated organisations. We are, therefore, also printing an amendment and asking as many CLPs as possible to submit this. This is vital if the issue is to be discussed.

RESOLUTION

'Conference believes that the party must remain a broad coalition of various shades of opinion and that tolerance should be extended to those who hold minority views.

'Conference welcomes this tradition of tolerance, which extends back to the election of Harold Wilson as leader in 1963.

'Conference notes:
(1.) That while the majority of the party disapproved of James Callaghan's televised denunciation of the party's nuclear defence policies prior to the 1983 general election, he was not subject to disciplinary action.
(2.) That a large number of Labour Party MPs have criticised one or other aspect of party policy, without being subject to disciplinary action.

'Conference doesn't necessarily approve of such public dissension but also notes:
(1.) The rejection of the appeal against expulsion from Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP of Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. Cllr Khan was expelled for calling a meeting to discuss the formation of a Black Section. Kevin Scally was expelled for appearing on a television programme and criticising the constituency party.
(2.) That both Khan and Scally are long standing party members who have given years of service to the party.

Conference believes that these comrades have not been treated fairly or consistently and calls on the NEC to readmit them to membership.

AMENDMENT

In the last sentence delete 'calls on' and insert 'instructs'.

This change is essential if we are to ensure that the NEC carries out the wishes of the conference. On past experience, as the resolution stands, this may not happen.

BRIEFING

The next issue of Birmingham Labour Briefing will be a special conference edition, out on 16 September, a little later than usual. Deadline for articles for this issue will be Friday 5 September.

Send all articles to 48 Thornhill Road, Handsworth, B21 9BS, telephone 021-551 9174.



Handsworth - the Council's response

After the Dear Report, the Silverman Report and the scathing West Midlands County Council report, 'A Different Reality', Birmingham City Council has responded with its action proposals for the area in the aftermath of what it terms 'the Handsworth Riots'.

Not surprisingly, it was unemployment which generated the greatest response to the council's consultation procedure. The main concern within this was the employment of local labour in schemes within the area.

In response, amongst other things, the action plan proposes that at least 30% of those employed on city council projects in the inner city will be local people and that 'a register and other measures' will be set up to encourage the employment of local labour on inner city building work. Presumably some form of contract compliance is envisaged. Exactly what, however, is not spelled out.

Also, the city council is to set a date by which time its workforce will reflect the composition of the city's population by ethnic origin. The consultation procedure noted that few people 'from the ethnic minorities' are in senior management posts. No apparent notice is taken of this point however.

Also worth noting, as 'A Different Reality' suggested, is that only just over half of Handsworth jobs are taken by local people and about one third of the population works outside the area, economic and employment linkages with firms outside the inner city are almost as important as the future of local business. This seems to have been overlooked, as indeed is the fact that the few growth areas in the inner city tend to be in firms employing low-paid, non-unionised casual or part-time labour, usually women - as the AEKTA research, reviewed in 'Briefing' last month revealed.

In the field of housing, further urban renewal housing refurbishment schemes are planned to start in the Handsworth/Soho/Lozells area in the next two years at a cost of over £10 million.

In the field of community facilities and social services, a commitment is made to 'identify more closely and with understanding the needs of people from the ethnic minorities'. No mechanism for doing this is outlined however.

In other areas, proposals are largely superficial or impossibly vague. Additional car parks in Villa Road and Lozells Road will do nothing about racism - a word which is singularly lacking from the proposals. Yet 'A Different Reality' identified Birmingham as 'the capital of racial discrimination in Britain' with statistics and evidence to back up the assertion.

Again, what kind of real commitment to tackle the problems of the area is contained in glib proposals like: 'Additional (education) staff are to be sought to work in inner city areas'?

This does not necessarily mean that the steps proposed are themselves to be opposed. The problem lies with their narrowness, their apparent failure to understand the nature of racism and the fact that no real shift in power is envisaged. As 'A Different Reality' noted: 'The City Council's Race Relations Unit was regarded as "a joke". It had actually created more conflict by its incompetence, divided the Black community by its partisan approach, was invisible to the Black Community by its non-action and non-relationship, and was being backed by a racist bureaucracy and political administration that did not give two hoots for the concerns of Black people. The whole apparatus of power remains firmly in the hands of White people in the City and they have ensured that the resources and investments, apart from the petty cash, have remained in White control and pockets.'

And it certainly is only 'petty cash that is at stake here. A recent Association of Metropolitan Authorities review of Urban Policy revealed that the Urban programme comprises only 0,0002% of total planned government expenditure in 1985/6. That is the extent of the crumbs for which Black organisations compete with each other and with White groups and with multi-racial groups. Meanwhile, the main spending programmes remain free of Black scrutiny or reallocation.

In essence, these proposals change nothing. And nothing will change with the present leadership of the party in Birmingham which refuses to take up the District Party's Equal Opportunites and Race Relations policies - something which the anodyne section on Race Relations and Equal Opportunites in Dick Knowle's personal manifesto for the May city council elections singularly failed to do.

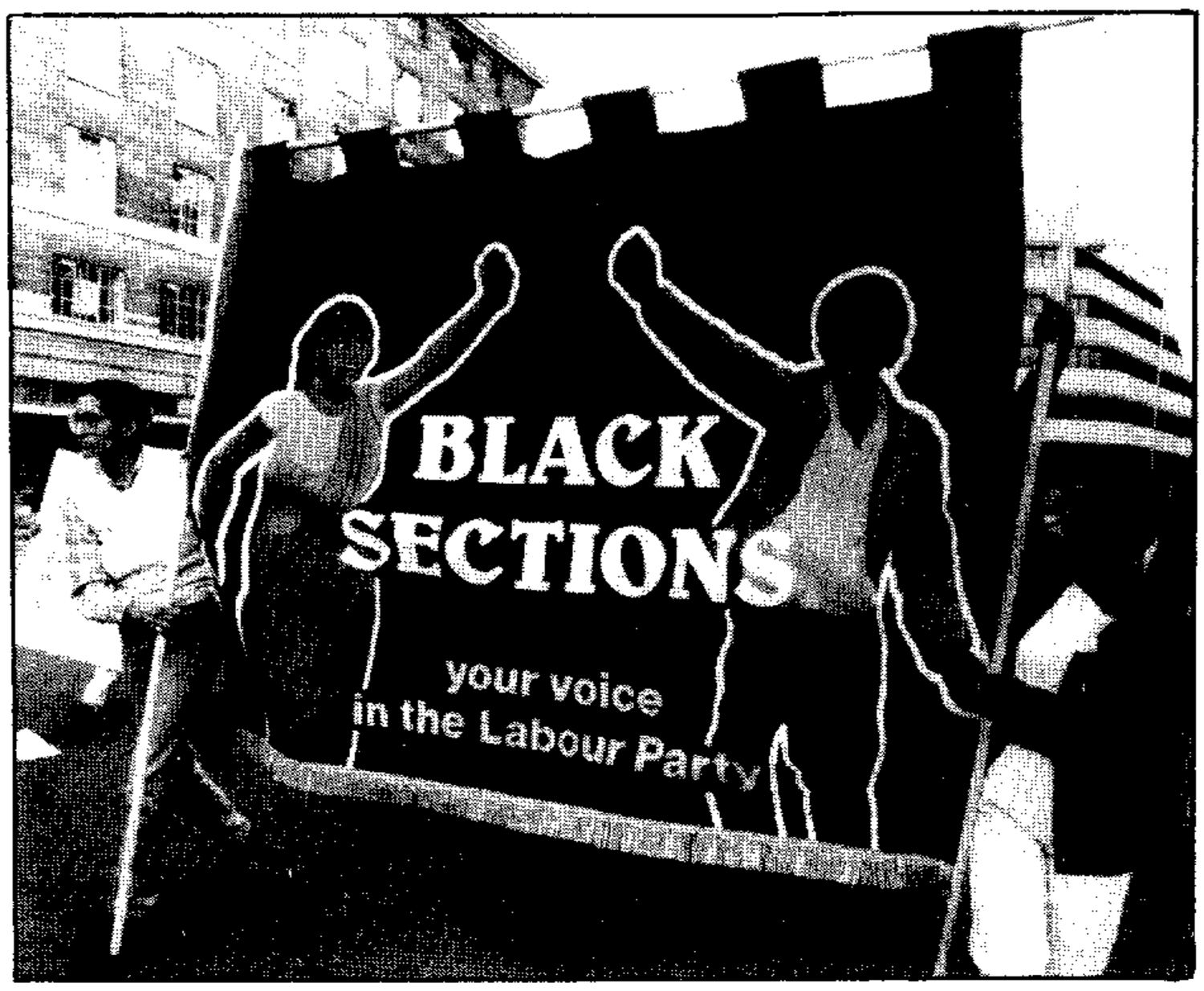


A Black Section for Birmingham?

Since it was founded three years ago, the Black Section movement has grown explosively. More than thirty constituency Black Sections have been set up, responding to the lack of Black representation in the party and to the lack of anti-racist policies. Indeed, it would not be inaccurate to say that many of Labour's policies are racist in effect. There have been two fierce debates at Labour Party Conference. The issue has once again appeared in motions for this year's conference.

The Black Section movement has already begun to reap results. Not only was there a large increase in the number of Black councillors after the May local elections (in Birmingham and elsewhere) but at the next General Election there will be at least three Black MPs and in all probability six. The Black Sections have now begun to formulate policy on a number of issues, including Azania (South Africa), policing and immigration laws and are now tackling the task of fighting for the Labour Party to adopt these policies.

But does Birmingham need a Black Section? A strong case can be made just on the grounds of strengthening the national movement. However, the state of Birmingham District Labour Party and Birmingham politics in general really makes the case.



The expulsions of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally from Sparkbrook CLP is another indication of the attitude towards Black people of the leadership of the party in Birmingham. This attitude is reflected in the weakness of the party in tackling racism locally.

Whether you are convinced or not, come along to a meeting to discuss whether a Black Section should be formed in Birmingham and, if the decision is yes, how we should organise it and what issues we should take up. The meeting is on Sunday 7 September at 3 pm in Committee Room 3, the Council House, Colmore Row, Birmingham.

THE LABOUR PARTY
Black Section

One fifth of the population in the city is Black. This is not represented in the Labour Party's structures - on General Management Committees and on the District Party for example. Only fourteen of the city's 117 councillors are Black. While the proportion is slightly healthier in the Labour Group itself, it still does not reflect the level of support for the Labour Party among the Black population. Despite having fourteen to choose from, the Labour Group could not bring itself to appoint more than two to its nine-strong delegation to the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee. A white man was appointed to chair the committee.

TIME PASSES - BUT SOME THINGS DON'T CHANGE

Some things don't change. The following is an extract from 'The Municipal Journal' for 21 November 1958:

Early in 1951 Birmingham education committee opened Clifton Institute, a centre for coloured people living in Balsall Heath, one of the suburbs where coloured people have congregated. This offers an educational and recreational service to students and the programme is specially planned to meet the needs of coloured people.

Birmingham Corporation set a valuable lead when it approved the following minute in April 1955: "that this council accepts the principle that applicants for any position within the corporation should be appointed on the basis only of their 'suitability for the post and without any discrimination as to race, creed or colour, and that committees be informed accordingly."

Thirty years on and the council is still struggling with the same issues. Still there is no effective race relations and equal opportunities policy, as the council's employment proposalsfor the inner city, outlined on page 3 of this month's 'Briefing' indicate. Maybe someday there will be an effective policy - but not until the issues are taken seriously in practice, not in the small print of adverts.

BRIEFING

IMMIGRATION LAWS -

NEW RULES ATTACK WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The introduction of new immigration rules after the European Court ruling on the Immigration Widows cases represents a further attack on the rights of women. The situation is far from improved.

The Home Office claimed the rule changes were necessary 'to avoid future sex discrimination cases'. But 'equality' is achieved by reducing the position of wives and fiancees to that of their male counterparts. Entry clearance now has to be obtained before female partners are allowed into the country (with the exception of wives of Commonwealth citizens settled before 1973 and EEC citizens).

The postive result of the court's decision is that women who are settled here, but not British citizens, will have the right, in theory, to be joined by their husbands. In practice, there are still likely to be obstacles. One such obstacle is likely to be the 'primary purpose' rule now being applied to women seeking entry as well as men. No provision is made in the rules for relationships other than heterosexual marriages. Nor is any hope of reunion given to those women here under less permanent categories like work permits or student visas.

Entry clearance now depends on satisfying each of five conditions: the couple must have met; they must intend to live together permanently as man and wife; the primary purpose of the marriage must not be immigration; the couple must have adequate living accomodation; they must be able to maintain themselves 'without recourse to public funds'.

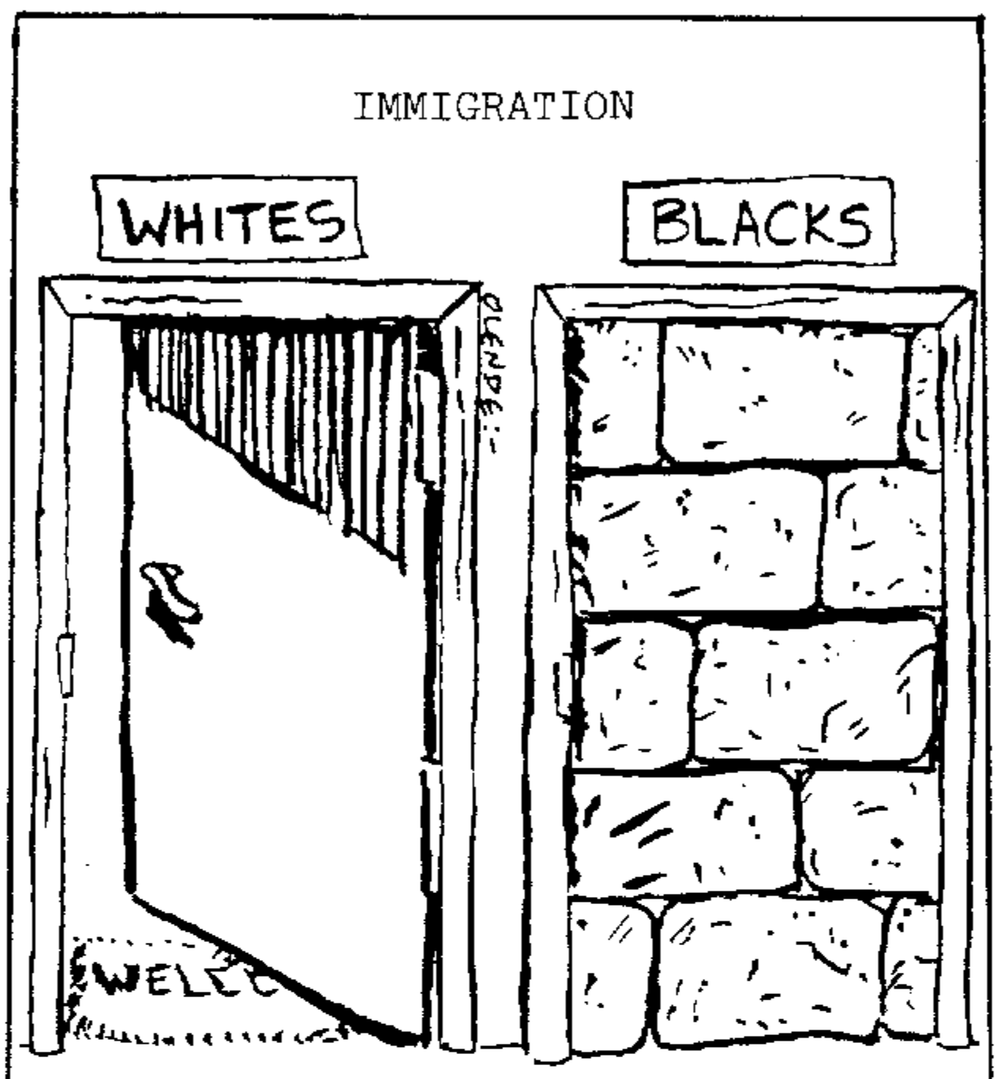
With the extension to women of the primary purpose rule, and the imposition of the stated imntention of living together permanently, subject incoming wives and fiancees to the impossible task of proving future intention. The requirements for maintenance and accomodation are an excuse for further surveillance by imigration officers and others.

Now, for the first time, 'public funds' referred to in previous immigration rules, have been defined for the first time. They consist of supplementary benefit, housing benefit, family income supplement and housing under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. Clearly, the hardest hit will be those who are lowest paid and live in the worst housing. Among these, Black women already figure disproportionately. Access to these benefits will now be based not on need, nor even on contributions made, but on immigration status. 'Recourse to public funds' is also forbidden to other people coming to this country, like other relatives coming for settlement or getting leave to enter 'with a view to settlement.

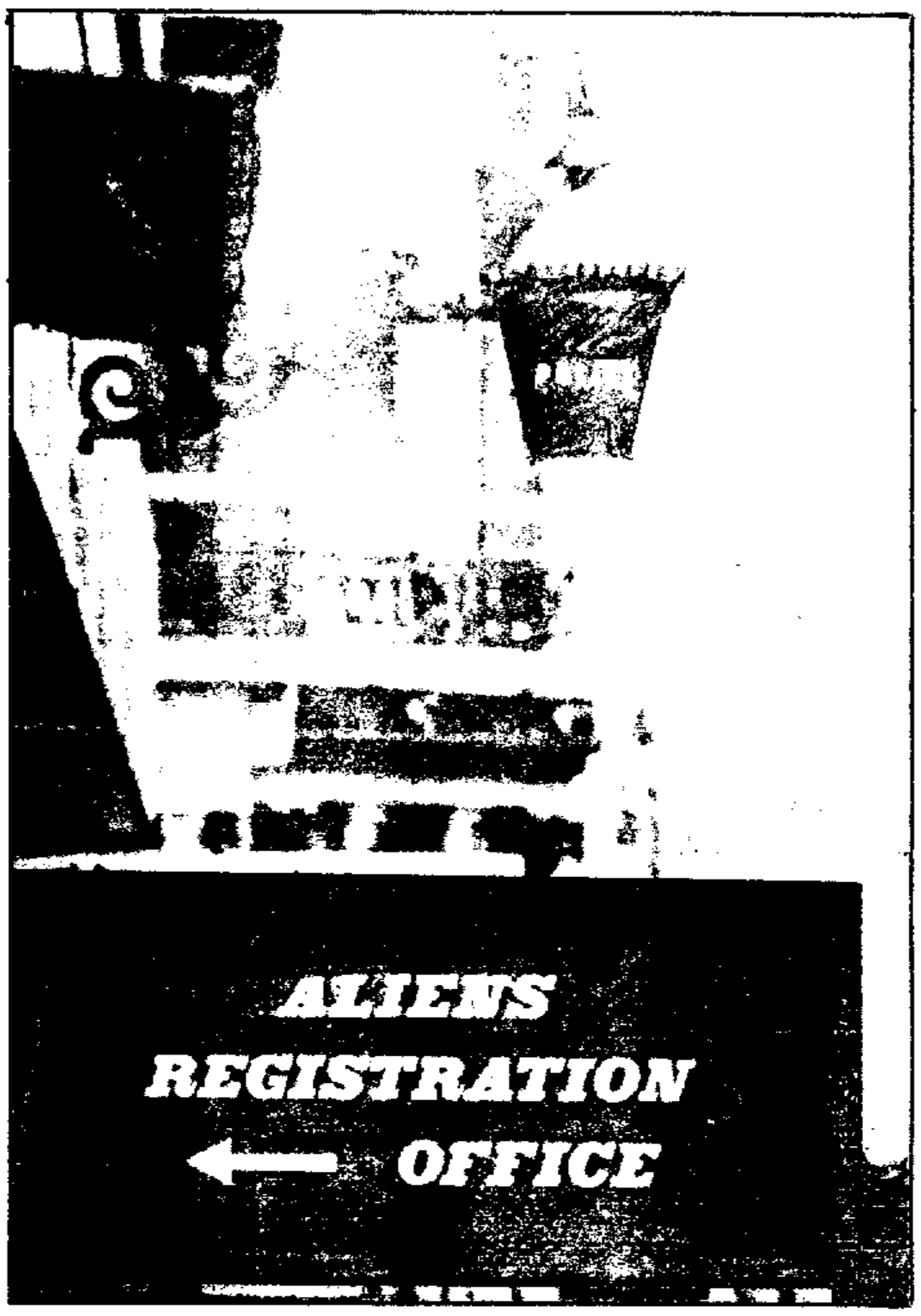
Implementing these new rules will mean disclosure of information between police, immigration officers, local authority housing workers and Department of Health and Social Security staff. It is likely that the resulting family separation will lead to more induced repatriation.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants is monitoring the new rules. You can contact them in London at 115 Old Street, London EC1, tel: 01-251 8706.

Local information and advice can be obtained from the West Midlands Divided Families Campaign, 2 Alum Rock Road, Saltley, Birmingham B8 1JB, telephone: 021 327 4659.



Attempts have been made to make the system as simple as possible.



SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIALIST IN BIRMINGHAM

A South African from the New Unity Movement visited Birmingham on 9 and 10 July. Members of the Socialist Teachers Alliance hosted meetings at Josiah Mason and Joseph Chamberlain Sixth form colleges. At Josiah Mason, fifteen staff attended a lively meeting. At Joseph Chamberlain twenty five staff and students took part in a heated discussion of various aspects of the liberation struggle.

A Socialist Teachers Alliance public meeting heard in some detail the racism and sexism that dominates the South African education system. The school system is rigidly divided into white coloured, Indian and African sectors, with Black teachers allowed to teach only in their respective schools. Married women cannot be appointed principals of schools or colleges.

Teachers in South Africa, however, have a very long history of progressive trade union and political organisation. The New Unity Movement's forerunners were able to maintain a semi-legal, public existence even in the dark years of the 1960s and post-Sharpeville repression, by publishing a journal called 'Educational Review'. This long term political work has assisted the creation of two non-racial militant teachers unions in late 1985 in response to the crisis in the schools.

The visiting comrade was able to appeal on behalf of one of these unions, the Western Cape Teachers Union, to the Birmingham District Labour Party meeting on 9 July. The collection of £45 will assist legal defence for arrested officials of the union, many of whom have been detainhed in the recent clampdown.

He also spoke at a forum organised by supporters of the magazine 'International' and at a public meeting of the Troops Out Movement. The latter was alongside a Sinn Fein councillor, Lily Fitzsimmons. His condemnation of Britain's role in South Africa and British imperialism in general was well appreciated.

At the 'International' meeting, the comrade explained his organisation's socialist perspective. They agree with the main organisations of the liberation movement, the ANC and the UDF, that the aim of the struggle is:
'To build a single, undivided, independent non-racial and democratic South Africa.'
But they also argue that this is possible only with the leadership of the working class. Thus they add:
'in which the interests of the workers and the rural poor shall be paramount.'

Finally, for 'Briefing' supporters, it is worth noting that the comrade addressed the first public meeting of the newly formed 'Coventry Labour Briefing' on 8 July.

(Stuart Richardson)



PLASTIC BULLETS

The thirteenth death by a plastic bullet has done little to dampen the enthusiasm of British police to possess the weapon.

The latest victim was hit by one of the 148 plastic bullets fired by the Royal Ulster Constabulary during a riot in Portadown in April. Keith White, the victim, was the first loyalist to be added to the list of deaths by plastic bullets in the north of Ireland.

It was just two days after this that the West Midlands Police Authority gave permission to their force to buy plastic bullets and launchers. Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear said at the time: 'I cannot guarantee that we can overcome a riot unless we have this new equipment as a last resort' (Daily Mail, 17.4.86).

Then, in Many the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd announce new arrangements to by-pass those police authorities who have refused to allow their forces to buy these weapons:
'Where such authorisation is withheld, and the chief officer's assessment of need is endorsed by HM Inspector of Constabulary, I regard it as essential that the equipment should be provided...In such circumstances equipment will be provided from the central store of equipment at Home Office expense' (Hansard 19.5.86).

Hurd announced at the same time that training in the use of these weapons would also be provided centrally where a local police authority was not prepared to pay for it. He added:
'It is clearly right that chief officers should have baton rounds (the euphemism for plastic bullets - ed.) and CS equipment available following the unprecedented ferocity of the disorders last autumn.'

In a further circular to chief constables, the Home Office added a further loophole to the democratic process:
'Emergency Supplies
6. Any police force requiring equipment for a particular operational emergency (and having officers trained in its use) should contact the Home Office direct. If the request is agreed, appropriate stocks of equipment will be made available immediately from the central store' (Home Office circular 19.5.86).



LETTER

Sparkbrook stinks

Dear Comrades,

In a recent copy of 'Tribune' I read a letter from Roger Murray which attempted to smear both Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. Mr Murray's allegations made Amir and Kevin out to be a pair of liars who aim to fool the Labour Party. I know them both and spoke in their defence at the GMC when they were expelled. I totally reject as slanderous Murray's claims and feel moved to speak in public for the first time on the politics of Sparkbrook CLP.

I was a member of the Sparkbrook Ward and a delegate to the GMC from ASTMS. I say 'was' because I have moved constituency since the expulsion. My stay in Sparkbrook was always painful, both at a political and a personal level, and I am glad to be free of it. It took me a great deal of effort to join the Sparkbrrok Ward because the secretary ignored my application for months. It took a personal visit to a meeting before he agreed to process my membership. We never had a notice for meetings or a circulated agenda. You had to turn up and hope there was a meeting that particular Sunday morning.

No sooner had I gained my membership card than I experienced my first taste of comradeship: 'I'll have you out! I know your game!' I was subjected to verbal abuse and intimidation each time I attended meetings or social events. These attacks were made because I had been in far left groups during the 1970s but also included personal jibes due to my disability.

My 'trot' background was something MR Murray often spoke of during meetings by bad-mouthing me as the 'IMG speaker' and hoping, no doubt, the rabid right would seize upon it and expel me. Yes, Roger Murray, ex-Communist Party member, sought to prove his Labour Party loyalty by threatening those who appeared to his left or might expose his careerist plans.

Being set up as the 'IMG' in Sparkbrook wasn't my only problem either. I was almost suspended from the party for writing an article in 'Birmingham Labour Briefing' which was critical of Labour councillors. We were told that only party officials could write articles and speak to the press. Besides, 'Briefing' was anti-Labour and my actions were anti-Labour too!
a rotten borough and its MP is the deputy leader of the Labour Party. What hope has truth, honesty and socialism against these odd?

While the odds look against us at present I am sure the truth will come out. You can't fool the people all the time. In the meantime, I hope Mr Hattersley sleeps well, but he should keep his eyes open because there's another man in his company who looks a little like Judas!

Yours for socialism and peace,
Bob Findlay

What's funny about this little episode is the fact that Murray's Labour Co-ordinating Committee bulletin published the same time carried glowing support for Italy's euro-communists which never upset anyone. Double standards are common in this constituency.

The background information I have given here is to show that Mr Murray is not an innocent party in the expulsions of Amir and Kevin. He is an opportunist who fights dirty on every occasion and saw both men as a threat to his plans. Roy Benjamin was also a target after appearing on the 'Bandung File' programme on Sparkbrook, but thankfully the GMC accepted that he acted in good faith. Nevertheless, Roy's escape upset certain people who wanted to use his 'expulsion' to deselect him as the local councillor. I have been informed by local Asians that Roy was put down by a certain GMC member because he was blind.

Underhand action is also common in Sparkbrook. You may like to know that Murray's 'Tribune' allegations mirror those that appeared in a secret unsigned document that was circulating in Birmingham. The only major difference between them is the length and the fact that the document contained both racist and sexist comments ...will we ever know the author?

The situation inSparkbrook stinks. Amir and Kevin are pawns ina game. There are many reasons why they had to be expelled. I believe their expulsions were supported by certain people beyond the local party.

The 'Bandung File' programme and the creation of a Black SEction put Sparkbrook in the public gaze. I believe the CLP's leadership feared further probes and sought to warn anyone else off by expelling the three members. What else is clear is that the Sparkbrook action was taken after careful consideration and talks with a leading Trade Union Labour Party member. The green light was a call for 'kill and Cure'!

I will not remain silent anymore. Sparkbrook is rotten through and through. What was said about Liverpool is true of Sparkbrook on a smaller scale. Politics are an excuse to maintain individual power structures. The Labour Party rarely talks about policies and is racist in its treatment of the local people. Black people are merely used to keep the existing status quo. The true needs of the white and Black working class are never adequately discussed. Participation is discouraged.

Amir Khan and Kevin Scally are bad party members because they put the interests of people before their own and stand squarely on the side of socialism. In Sparkbrook this is a crime. In Sparkbrook the aim of politics is to get to the top by using any method available and the aims of the party are a means to an end. Sparkbrook is

The NEC vote on the appeals of Khan and Scally.

THE APPEALS of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were rejected by the NEC on a narrow margin of 13:12. Those voting to uphold the appeals of Khan and Scally were: Benn, Clarke, Curran, Blunkett, Heffer, Maynard, Haigh, Meacher, Skinner, Richardson, Wise and Sawyer. *Beckett, O'Brien and Hough were not* present at the meeting.

DICK KNOWLES - A LENINIST ?

On 31 July, Dick Knowles and Derek Robinson spoke at an Erdington Constituency Labour Party Education meeting. When he was asked why he issued the Labour Party manifesto for Birmingham in his own name, without proper consultation with the District Labour Party and with scant regard for its policies, Dick replied , extolling the virtues of Lenin's form of leadership. Firm leadership, he declared, was necessary in politics, as he brushed aside the District Party's condemnation of his actions. He also contrasted the virtues of Lenin's politics with the 'perversion' of socialist politics represented by Leon Trotsky.



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Sinn Féin councillor speaks to 'Briefing'

Sinn Fein Councillor, Lily Fitz-simmons was recently in Birmingham as part of a speaking tour to outline the policies of Sinn Fein and generate support for the annual Troops Out delegation to Ireland. 'Briefing' spoke to her about some of the pressing issues in Ireland:

ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD:

'Despite claims by the British establishment and the SDLP, the accord has had little impact on the nationalist communities. Although it's supposed to be a device to undermine support for Sinn Fein, it's had very little success. People see it for what it is and although Sinn Fein's standing may have dipped slightly since the deal it's unlikely to cause any long term damage to support for Sinn Fein.'

BELFAST COUNCIL:

'It's ruled by a coalition of loyalists. They use a number of tactics to undermine the presence of a handful of Sinn Fein councillors: they try to bar them from speaking, place them on unimportant committees (like the one in charge of the upkeep of graveyards) and try to vest all the powers of the council in one, all-loyalist, committee. This is currently being challenged in the courts.'

THE LABOUR PARTY:

'Support for withdrawing the troops seems to be growing amongst rank and file members, but the present Labour leadership seems little different from previous ones. There seems to be no serious desire on the part of the leadership to consider taking out the troops and removing the loyalist veto. It's just as likely that withdrawal could be achieved under a Tory government as a Labour one.'

SINN FEIN'S ROLE:

'Sinn Fein is concentrating on tackling the welfare and social problems affecting nationalist comm-unities. This involves running advice centres and community centres. It's a way of building support for Sinn Fein and also of providing nationalist communities with services they are otherwise deprived of.'

ELECTIONS:

'The greatest tension within Sinn Fein is over the question of elections and whether Sinn Fein should participate in them. The majority feeling is that while it would be wrong to accept seats in a British parliament it would be wrong to leave nationalist communities who vote for Sinn Fein unrepresented locally. But there are some in Sinn Fein who say abstentionism is a principle. They think Sinn Fein should abstain from all elections under British rule.'

ABORTION:

'The recent Ard Fheis was dominated by this issue. It's indicative, I think, of the growing politicisation of Sinn Fein and also of the growing importance of women in Sinn Fein.'

News from the L.C.I.

SINN FEIN COUNCILLORS TO TOUR

The Labour Committee on Ireland is organising a tour of Sinn Fein councillors later in the year. The councillors will meet local trade unionists and councillors and will be available to speak at labour movement and other meetings. The tour is likely to be around 20 - 25 October. If you are interested in the councillors speaking at a meeting contact Anita Richards on: 021-523 3608.

NEC BACKTRACKS ON STRIP SEARCH DEMONSTRATION

Despite the overwhelming decision of National Labour Women's Conference to call on the NEC to organise a national demonstration against strip searching, we now hear that the NEC has declined to do so. Instead, they have decided to issue a statement on the issue. Once again we witness the failure of the NEC both to campaign on its policies and to concede to the democratic decisions of the Labour Party membership.



NO WORKING PARTY REPORT TO CONFERENCE?

It now looks as is the NEC working party on Ireland will not be making its long-awaited report to this year's national Labour Party Conference. Emergency resolutions may well now be forthcoming if this is the case. Look out for further details next month.

RUN FOR SOCIALISM !

Roger Kline and Mick Barr, two supporters of the Labour Committee on Ireland are going to give you a run for your money. On Saturday 14 September they'll be going on a 20 km run. Your sponsorship is needed. Money raised will go to the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Campaign to Reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. Get sponsorship forms and more information from: Bernie Wilde or Anita Richards, c/o 7 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HE, telephone (021) 236 8323.

Trades Council - South Africa lobby

Birmingham Trades Council is taking its struggle to get trade unions involved in the campaign against Apartheid to this autumn's Trade Union Congress.

A resolution to the July Trades Council meeting reaffirmed its commit-ment to fighting for trade union action against Apartheid, including a union boycott of all goods to and from South Africa. The same resolution then resolved to organise a lobby of the TUC on the day of the debate on South Africa.

No date has yet been set for the debate so the date of the lobby is as yet uncertain. Nevertheless, planning is underway to organise the lobby.

The first meeting is on:

Saturday 23 August
12 noon

Trade Union Resource Centre
7 Frederick Street, Hockley.