BRIGHTON LABOUR
BRIEFING
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HEFFER, MEACHER.

As the results flowed on the night of June 9th, the only consolation for Labours right wing and soft left must have been Bristol East where Tony Jon athan Sayeed beat Tony Benn.

With Benn out of the way the power brokers of the Labour Party could begin to wield their block votes with minimal interference from the rank & file. Clive Jenkins was fast off the mark casting the ASTMS block vote before Foot had publicly announced his resignation.

When all the candidates had thrown their hats into the ring (all men except right winger Gwyneth Dunwoody), John Golding, the arch-witchunter announced his support for the Nightmare ticket. A 'respectable left winger' Kinnock and a 'moderate' Hattersley.

What had 'left winger' Kinnock done to earn the respect of John Golding? His most memorable achivement was his role in defeating Tony Benn for Deputy Campaign. On policy he threatened to resign as frontbench spokesperson on education if Labour had a firm committment to reversing Tory school meal increases. There is Kinnocks record on the NEC on four crucial votes as compiled by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

To keep the commitment to nationalise the clearing banks. AGAINST

Total opposition to incomes policy and support for minimum wage. AGAINST

Replace Benn by Golding as chair of the Home Policy Committee ABSTAINED

Expulsion of the Militant Editorial Board. FOR

As Labour Party members we should know that Ramsay MacDonald had the reputation of a left winger as did Harold Wilson before they led a Labour government.

For socialists little needs to be said about Roy Hattersley. He is an open right winger. An advocate of the virtues of nuclear weapons, an incomes policy and the witchunt.

What of the serious left? Jo Richardson should have been a candidate. A strident fighter for womens rights and a consistent left winger she could have brought some life and vision to the leadership of the Party.



Joan Maynard would also have made a good candidate with an excellent record on Ireland and anti-imperialist issues. Why they didn't stand is not clear but questions need to be asked. Did they receive the support they deserved from male left wingers?

Of the existing candidates, Heffer for leader and Meacher for Deputy are the best. Even if they are not the candidates of our choice they are still on our side. On the NEC votes cited earlier, Heffer voted with the left whilst Kinnock voted against or abstained. In the event of Heffer being eliminated, support must be transferred to Kinnock as a last resort.

For the conduct of the campaign, the participation of the rank and file of the Labour Movement is essential. I believe branch voting should take place in the Trade Unions at workplace meetings. The wielding of block votes with no participation is not democracy. In the constituencies the decision should not be made by General Committee delegates alone. There should be full discussion in branch meetings with mandation of delegates.

Secret postal balloting should be opposed for the same reasons as when it is proposed by Norman Tebbit or Shirley Williams for the Unions. A postal ballot allows the media and the dominant ideas in a capitalist society to win the day. If as socialists we are to challenge capitalism, we need to feel our power as a Labour Movement by making our decisions collectively after full discussions, not alone atomised at home after watching the TV news and reading our only 'Labour' paper, the Daily Mirror.

Bryn Griffiths
Sussex University Labour Club

BRIGHTON ANTI-IMPERIALIST FORUM

Speakers From:
Anti-Apartheid Movement
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Central America Solidarity
& Moshe Machover
Israeli Anti-Zionist

WEDNESDAY 7th SEPTEMBER
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FRIENDS CENTRE, SHIP ST.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Published by Brighton Labour Briefing

POST-ELECTION BRIEFING



The Labour Party suffered a historic catastrophe at the General Election on June 9. Unless we recognise the dimensions of our defeat, we will be unable to draw appropriate lessons for the future.

Yet although the national picture is bleak, in Brighton there is a glimmer of light: we did well to hold at bay, to the extent that we did, the forces that across the nation created a Tory landslide and a massive Alliance upsurge. It was not for nothing that Brighton Pavilion received official Labour Party recognition as a marginal in the course of the campaign. The swing to the Tories in Brighton Pavilion, at 2%, was only half that of the average in the country. While Labour candidates elsewhere in Sussex piled up lost deposits, we retained a sizeable Labour vote of close to 10 000 in Pavilion and 23.9% of the votes cast; closer to t the national average Labour vote than ever before! Although the SDP candidate inched ahead, the Tory majority over myself in third place- at 11,444 was in fact less than the Tory majority in Crawley- thought to be Labours best hope in Sussex.

The resilience of the Labour vote in Brighton Pavilion can at least partly be explained by our record as a campaigning party: the Brighton Welfare Rights Campaign, the Stop the Rot Campaign, the Brighton Pavilion Petition Against Unemployment, are instances of this! In the course of the General Election, we in Brighton Pavilion never ceased to campaign for example we honoured International Womens Day for Disarmament with our own public meeting, addressed by women from the Brighton Peace Camp. And we demonstrated our solidarity with the Peoples March for Jobs by marching through London to the final rally on the Sunday before polling day; yet the local media took no notice and nationally the Party leadership took no special initiative in relation to either of these events!

Robin Cook, reviewing the ele ction, has stated:"Put bluntly, our striking success in building support for Left policies within the Labour Movement has been paralleled by a crashing failure to mobilise support for these policies in the electorate." The failure of the Labour Party nationally to capturethe imagination of the electorate reflects the absence of a central focus for campaigning and a striking dearth of political will in the Party leadership.

The Brighton Party cannot be totally e xempt from criticism on this count. A campaigning Party we may be, but we have not campaigned enough! The task before us in clear- not to retreat from our policies for transforming society, but to take these policies direct to the doorstep, to the neighbourhood, to the tenants' associations, to all progressive groupings. We must continue to build the Party locally, to go all out for an increased membership, and to encourage a much greater proportion of our members to be active: for the future of the Labour Party lies indeed with the socialist dedication of its activists. Only through such dedication can we shift the mood of the people and return a Labour Government at the next election committee to building a society based on truly human values.

Harry Spillman
Previous Parliamentary Candidate
Brighton Pavilion

Kingscliffe report

The results of the Brighton Borough Council elections on May 5th, with their obvious pleasures and disappointments, gives us very clear signs for the next 12 months.

On the balance of things, the results are very good for Labour: the Tories have lost control of Brighton for the first time in living memory, Labour is on the offensive, and the Alliance have less than half their previous numbers.

More specifically, the routing of the SDP in St. Peter's, the victory in Queen's Park (especially, to my mind, the election of Richard Stanton), and the returning of a number of new , young, and imaginative councillors will mean that Labour can and must move forward to seizing power in '84.

The disappointments are obvious: we narrowly failed to win Marine and Kingscliff, and won only 2 of the 3 seats in Hanover.

It was noticable that in the areas where the Party has seriously taken up campaining politics, for example the Stop the Rot campaign, our results were very pleasing - Queen's Park, St. Peter's, Tenantry and Hollingbury among others. But in the other areas where this was ignored (for example Marine and Kingscliff), the results were disappointing. It is a shame that in a ward like Marine, with the potential of so much working class support, and with three candidates committed to campaigning community politics, the local party seems so reticent to take campaigns seriously.

My personal expeience as one of the unsuccessful candidates in Kingscliff Ward has taught me a few important lessons. We did not take the Stop the Rot campaign seriously, and botched our one attempt to hold an advice desk. Secondly, the Party locally had, before the introduction of the "Kingscliff Voice" in February little or no local profile. Hence the accusation I received on more than one occassion that are only seen when we want votes.



From February onwards the campaign in Kingscliff was, apart from the Stop the Rot failure, without fault. Perhaps there could have been more support from Branch members, some of whom, even though they were absent from this campaign, will no doubt expect to take a leading role in Rod Fitch's election campaign.

What is needed over the next twelve months, is a high profile local party, taking up local issues, and winning local respect. Then, and only then, will we win the likes of Kingscliff and Marine, and ultimately Council.

Brighton Labour Briefing has a major role to play in this. Briefing could be, and in my opinion should be, a means of providingactivists with the information, advice, and sharing of common experience that we all require. At present Briefing is regarded by most of the Party as an irrelevant fringe publication.

A final word concerning the new Labour Group. In the early days of London Labour Briefing, that paper provided the information on what was happening inside various Council Groups - which Labour Councillors supported or rejected party policy, and those who did not put class interest first. Thus they were held accountable

Brighton Briefing could take a similar role in helping to democratise the Labour Group, but should only do it if the paper approaches the subject in a responsible way, and not in the manner of one or two articles that have appeared in recent Briefings.

Although it will be an important contribution, it will not be a popular one, especially among those who are being held accountable,, and their supporters. It is essential that we begin now to build for 1984 - for a Labour Council made up of Labour councillors on whom we can rely to carry out Socialist policies, and who will be accountable to the rank and file of the Party.

Andy Winter
Defeated Candidate, Kingscliff Ward.

The Child / Dependant Care Directory

Months and months ago the Womens Section agreed that a practical action it could take to try to ensure that more women got to Labour Party meetings would be to set up some sort of 'babysitting system'. The original idea was to attempt to pair adjacent wards, so that individuals who needed a babysitter to allow them to get to their branch meeting would be able to contact someone relatively nearby who'd do it for them. In some wards these contacts were actually made, but success in getting these arrangements off the ground was patchy, and we began to think that some rather more systematic effort was necessary. Inevitably I suppose we started out with ambitious plans to get all Party members to fill in a long questionnaire on their needs/willingness to offer help...but then we began to think about what we'd do with all the information when we'd collected it, and we came to the conclusion that the simpler the system the better. What we decided to do was simply to produce a list of members willing to occasionally offer free sitting (with children or other dependants- its not only the need to be with children which can prevent people getting to meetings), to allow other Party members to get to Party meetings of all kinds. We could have tried to provide detailed information, for example on which nights (or days) each sitter could be available,but information like that is soon out of date, and we decided it would probably be more of a hindrance than a help. We decided to simply list all those offering help by ward, with their address and phone number if they had one, and an indication of whether they have transport available, and then encourage those who need a sitter to ring (or go) round until they find someone free at the time they're needed. Collecting even this information was a long and thankless job. We wrote to all ward secretaries encolsing a list to be passed round and filled in at ward meetings, and a paragraph about the Care Directory to go out in all ward minutes,



Despite this,and quite a few follow up phone calls, we had no response from some wards. Nevertheless the list has been produced (copies are available from all ward secretaries or Womens Section ward contacts), and is beginning to be used. One obvious problem is that most of those who've put their names down are activists who are out at meetings a lot themselves; another is that its already out of date (a surprising number of people have moved even in the short time since the list was compliled, and the problem's going to get worse with time); and a third problem is distribution- we're relying on wards to make sure that the list reaches those who need it most, ie those who don't usually come to meetings because they're responsible for children or old or sick relatives. The best hope of dealing with the first and third problems is to give the existence of the list as much publicity as possible, so that those who need it can ask for it, and those whose names aren't on it because they didn't hear about it come forward for the next edition; and constant updating is of course the answer to the second problem. The ideal would obviously be to put the list on someone's home computer and issue regular updates, and we're looking into the possibility of doing just that. In the meantime we'd like to urge everyone to advertise the existence of this list as widely as possible, especially to new members,and to encourage people to use it. And if you're one of those people who didn't put your name on the list because you'don't know one end of a baby from another' watch out for the political education session on how to look after children which Richard Stanton is planning to organise in the Autumn. After that there'll be no excuses!

Mary Farmer
Seven Dials Ward



A Question of degree.

On 19th July Sussex University conferred an honorary Doctrate of Law upon Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia The irony of this award is quite astounding. Firstly Hitam's regime, as documented by Amnesty International imprisoned without trial some 500 people in just one month last year under the Internal Security Act;

hundreds have been physically and psychologically tortured including student activists; and 39 people were executed over the last 3 years. Secondly the University of Sussex management decided to associate itself with attempts by the Thatcher Government, so determined to discriminate against overseas students, to rebuild links with the Malaysian Government.

Many Sussex students including Labour Students, saw this as a blatant act of support of a murderous regime by their university, and organised a picket of the ceremony. But their efforts were repeatedly blocked by the majority on the Student Union Executive, who were elected as "an independent socialists" yet who have operated against socialist elements of the student body throughout their student careers, and who are keen on cooperation and compromise with the University management.

The picket went ahead regardless, and some 35 people handed out leaflets to the Faculty,students and their families at the Brighton Centre. The action received national press publicity and it is hoped to bring disruptive actions of the Union Executive to task when the membership returns in October.

Janice Turner-Chairperson External Affairs
Sussex University Union

THE ODD VOLUME
Mon-Sat: 9.30-5.30
53 UPPER GLOUCESTER RD
BRIGHTON (27845)

Zionism & the Womens Movement

The August 1982 issue of Spare Rib (SR121) published a series of articles under the heading "Women Speak Out Against Zionism". These articles presented a clear political analysis of Zionism, exposing its inherent racism and its complimentary relationship with anti-Semitism. The authors one Palestinian, one Lebanese and one Israeli, pointed out that solidarity with all women throughout the world necessarily entailed actively opposing all forms of racism and imperialist domination, and they concluded that "If a woman calls herself a feminist she should consciously call herself anti-Zionist." A couple of issues later a series of "reply" articles were printed under the title "About anti-Semitism" in whcih the authors simply dismissed the earlier articles with the comment that "this focus on Zionism is in itself anti-Semitic". They themselves took great pains never to focus on Zionism, and have subsequently tried their utmost to fudge the issue every time it has been raised, consistently dismissing voices raised against Zionism as just another form of anti-Semitism.

Throughout the past year Zionists within the Women's Movement have, sensibly enough, refused to discuss the issue of Zionism, and have not attempted to argue the untenable position that anti-Zionism is inherently anti-Semitic. Instead they claim that, in practice they have experienced anti-Zionism in the Womens Movement as anti-Semitism. These allegations made against anti-Zionists in the WM have not been backed up by any attempt to refer to specific anti-Zionist statements and "expose" their "anti-Semitic" nature. Instead they have denied anyone, Jews and non-Jews alike, the right to question what they experience as anti-Semitic.

It is true that those of us who do not suffer racial discrimination are not the ones to define for others what is, and what is not, racist. However, to suggest that racial oppression is a purely subjective phenomenon with no objective existence capable of being exposed and comprehended by the oppressor, would be to dangerously distort the political nature of racism. While this may seem a very obvious point to make, the importance that the Womens Movement has, quite rightly, given to incorporating the experience of all women has perhaps lent greater



credibility to the Zionist argument than would have been the case outside of the Womens Movement.

However, this said, it is important not to remove the issue of Zionism within the Womens Movement, from its overall political context. The Womens Movement in Britain has always been dominated by the white middle class, and consequently the majority of its members have never considered the task of the movement to be in any way related to fighting against the imperialist oppression which dominates the lives of so many women around the world. On the contrary, a large section of the Womens Movement perceives its aim as directly contrary to the aims of socialism, and dismisses imperialist oppression as "male politics" which women had no responsibility in creating, and no responsibility to fight.

Where does this leave feminist-socialists? So long as "mainstream" socialist politics remains male dominated in its organisation and sexist in its political analysis, it is important that socialist women are able to work within the Womens Movement, to organise autonomously and to challenge the present sexism in socialist politics. At the moment however, anti-imperialist groups working inside the Womens Movement are facing a great deal of hostility from within the movement, and women from third world countries are feeling increasingly alienated in a movement that dismisses their oppression under imperialism as irrelevant.

Having come under heavy criticism for its narrow, white, middle-class orientation, the Spare Rib collective have made an important effort over the last year to include greater cover age of third world women, and the issues that concern them. The collective of 8 now includes 5 women of colour. Over the past year they have adopted a clear anti-racist, anti-imperialist policy, and are now refusing to allow the pages of Spare Rib to be used for publishing Zionist propaganda. These changes were not easily achieved. Opposition to them has been loud, and the collective members have been constantly slandered and threatened. It is important that the Spare Rib collective gets vocal support from socialist women now so that it does not feel itself alone in combatting imperialism and racism in the Womens Movement. If this does not happen, white middle class liberal politics will continue to dominate the Womens Movement by default.

ANNA WAGSTAFFE
Member of Women for Palestine &
Oxford East CLP

Since this article was written Women for Palestine have decided to withdraw from the London Womens Newsletter, owing to censorship of their material, which has nonetheless carried overtly Zionist and racist material.

The above article was submitted to the national Briefing but rejected on the initiative of socialist action/street life feminists.
Tony Greenstein

Towards a socialist perspective of the Jews

Fighting fascism in the 1930's and the Jewish People's Council was the subject of a meeting organised by the Jewish Socialist Society. This article is a response to Tony Greenstein's report in last month's Briefing about that meeting.

There are three areas of criticism to be made of Tony's report : first, he barely reports the content of David Rosenberg's talk or the discussion which followed at all - instead, he manages to distort the very little amount to which he seems to have actually bothered listening; second, he entirely misses the main point of the meeting theme and thus is unable to understand why it has relevance today; third, having failed to deal with what actually did happen at the meeting, he then has the patronising arrogance to prescribe what should have happened.

And there is a link between these areas of criticism - Tony's own overwhelming Zionism. He is incapable of providing a socialist perspective on the Jewish question which does not centre on the Israel-Palestine conflict; he quickly gets bored with discussing the subject of the meeting and so switches to the subject of Zionism which he would much rather discuss!

Tony accuses us of "ignoring Zionism". Actually, in our understanding of the nature of the Jewish community, we take seriously the development of Zionism since the 1930's, whereas Tony ignores the significant historical changes. For example, he says that "no links were drawn between the policy today..." but fails to point out that the major difference is that the Board in the 30's was not dominated by Zionists, however it still attempted to stop socialism encroaching into the Jewish community.

The relevance of discussing the fight against fascism in the 1930's is to show the relationship between the socialist movement and the Jewish community. In the 1930's, socialists were prepared to respond to the needs and aspirations of Jews as Jews (of which the battle of Cable Street is the finest example) ; however, socialists today either dismiss the Jewish community as essentially bourgeois and reationary or restrict their interest to the question of Zionism and reduce all forms of Jewish experience to Zionist experience. Tony's article is a clear example of this tendency. Unfortunately, his attitude is not an isolated case but is symptomatic of the Left's structural difficulty in dealing with the needs and aspirations of oppressed groups in general.

Craig Sheldon,
Jewish Socialist Soc.
member.

Palestine Report

The Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine (LMCfP) is only firmly anti-Zionist organisation in the Labour Movement. It was established during last year's Israeli invasion of Lebanon. LMCfP was instrumental in getting policy supporting the establishment of a secular democratic state in Palestine passed at the 1982 Labour Party Conference. Its first annual conference was held in County Hall, London on June 26th.

LMCfP opposes Zionism for 3 reasons. First, Zionists agree with anti-Semites that anti-Semitism is part of a fixed human nature and therefore can never be combatted. This belief has led Zionists to accept and often collaborate with anti-Semites. Second, Zionism is a colonial settler movement. Zionist colonisation has and still is displacing and expropriating Palestinians from their land. Third, Zionism has always acted as a 'watchdog' for imperialism in the region. The Israeli state has always moved against any progressive forces in the region, like the Lebanese National Movement.

A special emphasis of the LMCfP campaigning will be to expose Labour Zionism. Organisations such as the Labour Friends of Israel and Poale Zion have until now been very successful in painting an acceptable 'socialist' face of Zionism. In reality, Labour Zionism is thoroughly reactionary and racist. It was the Labour Zionists who were primarily responsible for the establishment of the state of Israel and its expansion to its present borders. Until 1959 the Histadrut 'Labour Federation' did not have any Palestinian members. The Histadrut organised violent pickets against anyone wishing to buy Palestinian goods or hire Palestinian labour. Now the Histadrut has an 'Arab Department' which is only open to those Palestinians living in the pre '67 borders of Israel. The Histadrut is also a massive business conglomerate owning 25% of the Israeli economy. Histadrut industries are heavily involved in the military production and have close links with South Africa.



Several important decisions were made at the Conference:

1) A campaign platform was drawn up setting out the basis for LMCfP support for the Palestinians and opposition to Zionism. Unlike the Labour Middle East Council, the LMCfP does NOT support the Arab regimes.

2) Proposals for the organisation of the campiagn were adopted. It is hoped that an active branch structure will bedeveloped.

3) Elections were held for a steering committee to coordinate activity. Posts include a Women's Organiser and a Trade Union organiser.

For further information contact:
LMCfP c/o Labour Students, Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.

7-Dials Ward Delegate.

Postscript

Since the conference, Poale Zion has affiliated to Brighton Labour Party. LMCfP activists in 7 Dials ward successfully proposed the following motion which will be discussed at the next General Committee meeting.

Brighton Labour Party regrets affiliation of Poale Zion ("workers of Zion") to Brighton Labour Party.

Poale Zion is the overseas wing of the Israeli Labour Party. Labour Zionism is as thoroughly racist as its Likud partners. The Histadrut, the Israeli 'Trade Union Movement' until 1959 excluded all Palestinian workers. Since then, the Histadrut has had an 'Arab Section' which is only open to Palestinians living within Israel's borders (pre '67). The Histadrut is also a major employer owning 25% of the Israeli economy.

Brighton Labour Party noted that Labour policy adopted at the 1982 Conference supporting the establishment of a secular democratic state in Palestine is inconsistent with continuing support for Labour Zionist organisations such as Poale Zion.

Brighton Labour Party therefore resolves to :

1) Circulate wards, Trade Union branches and affiliated organisations with information about Labour Zionism prepared by the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine (to which we are affiliated).
2) Support any moves by pro-Palestinian organisations to remove Poale Zion's special status as a Socialist Society.



CAMPAIGNING AGAINST FASCISM

It may surprise some people that the Anti Fascist Committee still exists. Since Bill North took over as Convener from Red Fitch, meetings have become rarer and activity has reached an all time low. Having retained control last year through blatant gerrymandering, Militant have proved what their politics mean in action- gain a majority on a committee and use that majority to block any initiatives. At least when Red Fitch was Convener, the AFC gained respect through its complete leafletting of Brighton, regular meetings and a proven ability to counter mobilise and leaflet whenever the NF stood a candidate. It held regular meetings and when the NF held a march in 1980, the AFC mobilised a 1000 people- even if they did mobilise on the Level 2 miles away from the NF! Since then everything has been downhill starting with Bill North's decision to repeat that mistake when the NF tried a follow up march in November 81. This time the ANL mobilised 600 at Norfolk Square who harried the NF through town, whereas the AFC mustered 30 at the Level. Since then virtually nothing. But just before the May Council elections, a meeting of the AFC was called- the first for 7 months. It might be supposed that the fact that 4 Nazis were standing in Marine might have been the reason.-The ANL intended a counter leaflet attacking the NF to go out and the AFC met in order to STOP such a leaflet being distributed, on the flimsy grounds that we might provoke the NF into further activity. It was considered that a 2 page reply (on the inside of a Labour leaflet) from Red Fitch attacking the NF-and also the IRA! (to prove that he was just as anti-republican as the NF)- was sufficient. Needless to say the Queens Park/ANL delegate at the meeting was in a minority of one (no proper notices had been sent out) and was subject to the rantings of a racist Zionist- David Spector. In Marine ward itself, opposition to the leafletting by some members inc. Council candidates switched to support as the NF increased their activity anyway. But at no time did any member of the AFC participate in the ANL leafletting of Marine ward. It



is a pity that the AFC did nothing around the General Election and could only call a meeting in order to prevent the activity of others. Needless to say the AGM of this committee is 7 months overdue and its future must now be in doubt.

Tony Greenstein

After the Election...

The lowest Labour vote since 1918 and the fewest seats since 1931 has left many people demoralised. Some will blame it on the divisions within the Party - divisions they say caused by the Left. Yet Labours support has declined steadily since 1951 reaching a new low in 1979. A decline caused by Labour Governments inability to secure even a marginal redistribution of wealth let alone a socialist transformation of society. It is this which created widespread scepticism that whatever we said out of office we would behave differently when in power. When Labour leaders attacked Thatcher over unemployment, she could retort quite correctly, that no Labour Govt. had reduced unemployment. Labours policy consisted of revamped Keynsian economics that had led to balance of payments deficits, runs on the pound, inflation and trips to the IMF in much more favourable circumstances. They did nothing to challenge the power of the City, the multinationals and capital. And yet if in 1979 we were told that Labour was no different from the Tories, today we were 'too extreme'.

The Lefts primary fault was to fail to complete what it started. Having nearly secured the Deputy Leadership and all 3 constitutional changes, a large section backed off in favour of the Peace of Bishops Stortford, existing policies, leaders and membership- except that the Right was seen to challenge the last and then the first. That meant fighting an election with leaders who didn't believe in the policies- hence the Manifesto's attempt to reconcile unilateralism and multilateralism. Not that much of the policy isn't frankly contradictory eg. getting rid of US bases whilst staying in NATO. Michael Foot symbolised this balancing act right to the end with his equivocation on Polaris. Not once as leader had he stood up to the Right. But it is wrong as some will doubtless argue, to blame Callaghan and Healey for the defeat, they merely accelarated the process. The campaign was lost, not on June9 but on that fateful Saturday prior to the fleet sailing for the Falklands/ Malvinas. Determined opposition then would have enabled Healey and Kinnocks attack in the election to carry some weight, instead both were forced to retreat. The Falklands Factor symbolised Thatchers determination. Instead with the exception of a few like Tam Dalyell, Labours Right tried to run with the foxes and hunt with the hounds.

On unilateralism, the major issue according to some, CND's moral postures and apolitical Peace Canvass withered in the face of the Tory offensive. In what they termed the Nuclear Election, instead of advocating a vote for the only unilateralist party, Labour, CND asked people to vote for their children- the only problem being that very few children st and as candidates! Cruise and Trident were not the issues, instead Heseltine successfully turned the tables on CND. Only a campaign with an IN TERNATIONALIST and ANTI-IMPERIALIST approach could deal with the "What if the Russians invade" approach, by pointing out that it was the US that was the aggressor in world politics- be it in El Salvador, Vietnam, Palestine or Europe. Instead priority was given to uniting bishops and liberals as opposed to political coherence, with even the far left Socialist Action arguing against CND supporting Labour.

The inability of the working class to fight back, with militancy paying fewer dividends and unemployment taking its toll, sealed Labours hopes. Thatchers success was in getting us to blame ourselves and others-(blacks, foreign competitors, women, scroungers) for the failures of capitalism. No set of policies, no matter how attractive, could alter this, and when combined with a leadership whose main enemy had been the Left, notably over Tatchell and the Militant bogey, the result was disaster. Especially given the determination of the TUC to run for cover over ASLEF, the Steel strike and the Health workers with Chappell even calling for support for the SDP in Islington N (where Briefing supporter Jeremy Corbyn won) and Grantham likewise.

WHERE TO NOW?

We should adopt Churchill's maxim of fighting them on the beaches, the hills etc. Confining any fight to Parliament is to render ourselves impotent. Thatcher will be defeated outside Parliament or not at all. The Labour Party has to become a campaigning Party. It means in Brighton advocating defiance of the Tory Council over rent increases, closures of amenities and cuts. Nationally it means full support for industrial action and abandoning useless tripartite talks between the TUC, CBI and the Tories. Confrontation not collaboration. It means critical support for Heffer and Meacher in the leadership elections, and none at all to the candidates of the Right. Nothing is more dangerous than to build illusions in Kinnock as a leftie given his past record. If there is any resumption of the witchunt, we have to fight it tooth and nail and go onto the counter offensive against the Right. We have to fight for a SOCIALIST Economic policy, not the nationalism of the AES or the economism of Militants top 200 nationalisations. Withdrawal from the EEC should be scrapped. The unemployed have to organise and the YS has to be built- at the moment its just an echo chamber for Militant. We have to tap the enthusiasm and energy of youth, because if we ignore them the fascists won't. It says a lot for the YS that 36% of new voters abstained. It is a matter of time before another anti-abortion bill appears- we have to say to the Womens Movement and women generally that if you don't want to be forced back into the home and see the Right to Choose disappear, Join with us

Above all the Left must get organised we need a National Left Wing Movement

Tony Greenstein



Not Cricket.

Tuesday 28th July saw a picket of Sussex County Cricket Ground by a number of opponents of the apartheid regime in South Africa. "Albatross", a South African youth team were playing a Sussex youth team as part of a tour shrouded in secrecy by the authorities concerned. Yet despite only finding out about the match on the previous day, a number of anti-apartheid activists, complete with placards, displayed a show of opposition to the establishment of sports links with South Africa.

The case for the sports boycott of South Africa has been well documented. It is seen as a particularly effective part of the campaign towards the total isolation of South Africa : economically, militarily and culturally. Remember the events in New Zealand 2 years ago when tens of thousands of people were mobilized against the tour of the Springbok rugby team.

Yet the Evening Argus, in its own inimitable way, attempted to discredit the demonstration in its editorial, claiming that such actions were simply turning the majority of people against the Anti-Apartheid Movement who would normally be sympathetic.

The hypocrisy of this position was suitably exposed that very evening when an excellent TV. analysis of the situation was undertaken by Ron' Pickering who came firmly to the conclusion that the sports boycott should continue.

We look forward to seeing this happen.

MArk Holmes.

Joan Maynard *is interviewed by Labour Briefing*

INTERVIEW WITH JOAN MAYNARD
Interviewd by Kate Askew & Tony Greenstein
Joan Maynard is the daughter of a small farmer, was raised in rural Yorshire. She joined the Labour Party in 1946 and the then National Union of Agricultural Workers in September 1947. Appointed a magistrate at 29,she was then the youngest magistrate in north Yorkshire. She became national Vice President of her union in 1966 ,was elected to the NEC of the Labour Party in 1972 before she was an MP elected MP for Sheffield Brigh tside in October 74,the previous MP having been deselected.

MIDDLE EAST

Q: How did you come to form the opinions you have on Palestine?

JM: I went to a Workers Educational Association summer school,many yeras ago on the Middle East, where I learnt of the double promises the British made to the Arabs and the Jews (McMahon-Hussein correspondence).

Q: How do you see Zionism?

JM: Zionism is racist. What Israel has done in the Lebanon and allowed others to do, also what it has done and is doing on the West Bank is both appalling and wrong. I do not in anyway see Zionism as a liberating force,it is a colonising force especially on the West Bank.

Q: How do you see it affecting the Jewish people?

JM: Zionism can make people anti Jewish/Semitic because of what Israel is doing. I have always been opposed to anti-Semitism, but that situation may occur again. The attitude of Histadrut, the Zionist Trade Union sounds much like northern Ireland where the Trade Union movement is mainly if not wholly controlled by Protestants and Catholics don't get jobs.Originally Israel was seen as a progressive force in the Middle East,but I see it now as a thrusting aggressive force, an adjunct of US Imperialism.If the US really wanted Is rael to settle with the Palestinians,I believe so great is their power they could force the issue and get them to withdraw from Lebanon and the W Bank.The Zionists have to realise that the Palestinians must have a state of their own.

Originally

WOMENS LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Q: What are your views on the Womens Movement?

JM: Its too middle class,it needs to win over working class women. But I'm glad it has a higher profile than formerly, because that encourages others to take decisions they wouldn't otherwise have taken. However before children go to school one or other parent should be there,children need a lot of attention and time spending with them by their parents. They need to be loved,secure and wanted. At a recent meeting I spoke at in Hull,a working class mum made a very good point."Most middle class people have more money than working class people so bringing up children for them is that much easier.Also if we had a 35 hour week, we would all be able to spend more time with our children."

Q: What is your attitude to Positive Discrimination?

JM: I'm not opposed to it,it will encourage those who only pay lip service to equality to do something about it. But women have a real struggle on their hands. Mens priveleges are deeply rooted in society. N oone with a privelege gives it up without a fight. Positive Discrimination is a small step in the fight for equality. It will make the struggle that much more intense and so men will be forced to come out in the open with their arguments and their prejudices.

Q: How can sexism be combatted?

JM: I'm the last person to ask-I'm single. In public life opposition to me has been because of my politics not because I'm a woman.

Q: What about the description of you as Stalin's Grandmother?

JM: Its more political than sexist.It has never entered my head in a meeting to think anyone would discriminate against me because I am a woman. They have often discriminated against me because of my politics.The discrimination is more obvious in marriage.

Q: What about being a Woman MP?

JM:Its easier if you're single but if married unless you have got a husband who not only believes in equality but practises it. Its even more difficult if you have children. Ann Taylor in the last parliament and Harriet Harman in this one both had to have a place to live in London and someone to look after the child. Being an MP is still thought of as a mans job. Then there are the ridiculous hours of the House of Commons.10 am to 10 pm is a normal day,sometimes its longer. We should have an 8 hour working day with an hour for meal breaks and finish at 6pm or 7pm. The men also lose out by not seeing their children at all during the week unless they have a London flat.

Q:What can Women bring to Politics?

JM:Humanity,warmth,commonsense,drive, organising ability.If a woman gets to the House she is usually very committed. An exaple of womens commitment is the Greenham Women. Women although good talkers like men, are also good doers. Once committed to a cause they are really committed. More difficult to win for an idea but once won there is no stopping them.

PEACE

Q: How do you see the issue of nuclear weapons?

JM: The most important issue in our society and closely linked with jobs. If we weren't spending all this money on nuclear weapons we could be using that money to create jobs,useful jobs. Its a very important moral issue. Nuclear weapons are not just bigger and better bombs,they are different in quality. Those not killed outright will continue to die,for years to come. They will also poison the earth for generations to come. We hold the earth in trust for future generations.

We must get accross that even if you accept that Russia is the enemy which I don't,Russia lost 20 million dead in the last world war. They held 200 German divisions on the Eastern Front whilst Britain was going up and down the Libyan coast holding 22 divisions and delaying the second front, in the hope that Germany would destroy the USSR. It was not the USSR who dropped the first 2 nuclear bombs it was America.It was the US who sabotaged the SALT 2 talks. But even if you accept that Russia is the enemy,there is no way in which we in a war with Russia could save ourselves with nuclear weapons.Even if our side won,we would not be there to celebrate that victory. We have more nuclear bombs and bases on our island than there is anywhere else in the world. We are a floating base for the Americans and as long as we keep nuclear weapons and bases we are a sitting duck in a war.

The Americans don't intend to fight the next war on their territory anymore than they fought the last two there. They intend to fight the next one where the last two were fought-in Europe. These are I believe some of the crucial arguments against us having nuclear weapons.

BRIGHTON LABOUR BRIEFING

Although most Briefing supporters identify with the left of the party we welcone contributions from all feminists and socialists in Brighton. The magazine is produced by an Editorial and Production collective which as open to all our supporters and everyone has a vote.

We would welcome contributions about any campaigns that you are involved with, ward or branch reports or your personal experiences.

Briefing operates an automatic right of reply, so if you disagree then please write in. It is helpful if articles are typed with a carbon ribbon in 3 inch columns.

Should you wish to get more involved or make a donation to our meagre funds then please get in touch. Likewise if you require CHILDCARE for Briefing meetings.

Deadline for next issue : 9/9/83
Next production meeting : 10/9/83
10.30am. in the Communications Office.

Contact : 24B Charles Street, Brighton.

or phone 684917

Proportional Representation

It has always been considered an important priority for those on the left of the Party to democratise the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. Substantial, though not by any means fully adequate, gains have been made within the Labour Party on issues such as reselection of M.P.s, and the election of the Party leadership. And some trade union leaderships under constant pressure from, in particular Broad Lefts, have made concessions over accountability to their membership and the democratization of the Block Vote at Labour Party Conference.

Of course, the fight for the full democratization of the Labour Party and Trade Unions, and the creation of a movement capable of bringing about socialism, has a long way to go; and sush a fight is especially important in the light of the outcome of the General Election. But what is being done about the broader battle for the democratization of society as a whole - and specifically the 'intermediary' demand for a democratic parliamentary system?

I am not in the Labour Party because I hold some notion that society can be radically changed by the election of the Labour Party to office. But until such time as the majority of people are won over to the ideas of socialism and a revolutionary socialist party really has a credible basis in the working class, existing 'representative' structures cannot simply be ignored. And this, in part, means electoral reform.

Electoral reform brings about stable government. And stable government means a stable society. Or so the SDP argument goes. Yet a 'stable' government will only occur in a 'stable' society. And a stable society will only exis' as long as society accepts that 'stability'- ie: the existing system.

So what have socialists got to be afraid of when making the reformist demand for a more democratic and representative Parliament?



If we are to rely on a left-wing Labour Government being backed up by mass 'extra-parliamentary' action - and it must surely be agreed that such action is essential if reforms implemented by such a government are not simply to be stamped on by the forces with the real power in capitalist society - then the fact that the Party has this back up will be reflected in the election of a Labour majority under an electoral system that truly represents the electorate.

And in the meantime such a system would ensure that a result similair to the outcome of last month's General Election would never be repeated. This government was elected by a majority in parts of the South, by minorities in the Midlands, and by only a tiny proportion of those in the North, wales and Scotland.

To formulate a suitable electoral system reflecting more accurately the democratic electoral wishes of the population, whilst retaining a local basis in the constituencies whether with one or two Chambers, or whatever, is primarily a technimatter. What is important is to recognize that no, socialism can not be brought about through parliamentary means; but yes, in the meantime electoral reform is an important issue for socialists.

As the Tories have been seen to be the ones to advocate (though obviously for the wrong reasons) some of the democratic reforms in the Trade Union bureaucracy, for which the Labour Party should have been fighting, so too with the SDP and PR.

There is genuine support for electoral reform in the country- not least amongst Labour voters who in the North are not represented by central Government and who in the South are not represented at all. Socialists in the Labour Party must take up the call for democrat isation of the Labour Party and TU bureaucracy, we must argue for electoral reform . Not as an end in itself but as a reformist demand applicable to the current reformist political climate.

Mark Holmes

Hack's Diary

Monday

GC night. Told Dave, the branch treasurer, that its a shame that the church where we hold it it so narrow, but he didn't seem to appreciate this remark. He's been sulking since the Furious Tendency voted half the branch's funds to send a delegate to the National Conference of White Male Manual Workers with Tattooed Arms against John Golding. This yea its being held in Cheltenham Spart.

Tuesday

I saw Ros in the "Duck and Chiropodist". She says she's left Workers for the Implmentation of Marxist Policies (I always thought that an unfortunate acronym). She told me she's reading Dale Spender to raise her consciousness. I said I was reading "Socialist Worker" to raise my blood pressure. She didn't appreciate this. I wonder if she knows Dave?

Wednesday

Well I never! I met Ros and Dave buying a stripped pine toilet seat in Rabidtat. I was only in there getting change of a fiver, of course. We had a union meeting at lunchtime, and Betty presented a resolution demanding common access to the management washroom Suddenly a lot of Furs turned up and got an amendment through. We have postponed our demands vis a vis the management washroom until we have nationalised the top two hundred monopolies.

Thursday

There were so many people in the "Duck and Chiropodist" tonight (there was a talk on defence cuts upstairs by Steve Foster) that I went to the 'Icepick' where all the Furs go. I met Del, Kev, Trev, and Sebastian. They were in a right old state. They had mud all over their donkey jackets and their shirts looked as though they'd been printed by the Cambridge Heath Press. They'd been set upon by paramilitary fascists, said Del. Last time they sell their papers outside Scout Huts.

Friday

Heard a good joke today. What do the SDP stand for? Liberal seats! Ha! Ged dit?

Saturday

Went to London for an all day conference- Witches Againsst the Witchunt. But I never reached Stoke Newington Poly, where it was held, because I met Barbara, an old college friend. She used to be psychopathic arsonist, but now she's holding down a steady job in the Ministry of Defence. She t tells me she's left Winston, whos gone to do a Ph.D. in the semiology of Kenny Dalglish's goals. We may meet again.. ..

Sunday

Stayed in bed most of the day. Decided that Brian Walden is my hero. He was interviewing Pat Wall. It's a shame about that congenital hand tic I'm sure I've seen it somewhere before...

Anon

THIS ISSUE OF BRIEFING WAS PRODUCED BY MARK HOLMES, PETE LAMBERT, DAVE LEWNEY, BRYN GRIFFITHS AND TONY GREENSTEIN

Meanwhile Back On Planet Earth..

Tony Benn has recently argued that the Labour party's achievement at the general election was remarkable since 8½ million voters were persuaded to support a party advocating, for the first time, 'openly socialist' policies. Such an analysis defies comment. The election was a crushing defeat for Labour and the population of Britain is now confronted by the most vicious right-wing government since the 1920s. The elimination of the Labour party, the trades unions and (possibly) the metropolitan authorities as sources of effective opposition to a radical Conservative government is a disaster.

It is to be hoped that the Labour party will not leave the business of serious effective opposition to this government to the wets within the Tory party and to the civil servants charged with implementing policies which could lead to the complete destruction of the mixed economy/ welfare state. The Labour party must now seriously consider what it wants to be during the next ten years. A number of facts are inescapable. The traditional electoral base of the Labour party is withering away, a process which dates from the 1950s and is irreversible. The SDP-Liberal Alliance succeeded in capturing much support from those sections of the electorate Labour would need to win over were it to stand any chance of forming the next government alone; and the 25% vote for the Alliance will not disappear during the next five years. Several of the policies on which Labour fought the election - most notably, unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC - were demonstrably unpopular with the electorate. Such policies are unlikely to become more popular during the next five years. A divided opposition, one wing of which is committed to policies which the electorate (rightly) finds simply incredible, has ensured that a radicalised Tory party is now the natural party of government.

Labour must decide what it wants to be during the next ten years. The choice is a fairly stark one. Either the Labour party listens to the message sent to it by the electorate on June 9th, accepts the fact both that the Alliance is here to stay and that it is politically more progressive than Labour has hitherto been willing to admit, and acts on this; or, Labour continues to maintain ill-considered vote-losing policies foisted on it by a politically irresponsible Conference and the union block vote, and maintains its irrational vendetta with the Alliance. If Labour accepts the first course of action, it might be able to construct a workable effective opposition which will seriously threaten the Conservatives in 1987/88; if it adopts the second, it will set its course for the political wilderness for the forseeable future. Politics is about power. If the Labour party wishes to be more than a cultural mausoleum, if it has aspirations to change society, or even - more realistically - to ensure that long-term economic decline is managed in the most humane manner possible, it must realise that the maintenance of pristine virtue is not the way to set about this. The job of Labour at the moment is not to urge a socialist transformation of Britain but rather to take the lead in creating a viable social-democratic alternative to Thatcherism. Labour must lend its support to the call for proportional representation and must seek some kind of electoral pact with the Alliance; it must, in other words, conclude its own historic compromise.

In terms of specific policies, Labour must first of all abandon its ridiculous commitment to withdrawal from the EEC. This is not to say that a future government including the Labour party should not press hard for structural reforms within the EEC - in particular, the introduction of an element of accountability into the working of the Council of Ministers, reform of the CAP and a reassessment of regional aid policies - but merely to point out that in 1988 Britain will have been a member of the EEC for fifteen years and that by that date the economic integration of Britain into an enlarged EEC will have proceeded so far as to be impossible to reverse. Continued membership of the EEC could also form the basis for the development of a common (and immensely powerful) foreign policy, a foreign policy which might make a substantial contribution to the development of more progressive policies towards Latin America, the Middle East and South East Asia on the part of the United States; and might lead to the emergence of a European defence policy less reliant on American-controlled nuclear weapons.

Continued membership of the EEC would, moreover, offer brighter prospects of success for a mildly reflationary expenditure policy directed towards infrastructural capital investment. The experience of the Mitterand government has demonstrated the impossibility of a reflationary expenditure programme succeeding, if such a programme is undertaken in isolation. A reflationary expenditure programme would have to be coupled to an effective incomes (not wages) policy, a policy which, in its turn, would only be politically acceptable if a substantial reform of the taxation system were to be undertaken simultaneously. A thorough-going overhaul of the taxation system (including a more effective corporate taxation policy) would also enable a future coalition government not only to lighten the tax burden on the poorest sections of the community but also to take steps to increase the financial independence of women (a reform of the child benefits scheme is long overdue).

Renationalisation of shares in BNOC so as to give government a dominant voice in the management of North Sea oil, a revived and more powerful NEB with the power to direct investment into crucial sectors of the economy, and the restoration of capital export controls, would provide a future government with the instruments it would need to steer a badly-battered manufacturing sector in the direction of recovery.

All of these suggestions provide the possibility of cooperation between a Labour party committed to proportional representation and the Alliance. Labour must seek to establish the common ground on which such cooperation can take place - which is not to say that Labour must shift to the middle ground on every issue.

I'm not very optimistic at the moment about the possibility of forming an electoral pact with the Alliance. Many Alliance and more Labour activists would oppose it; and the personal ambition of David Owen now seems, paradoxically, to be one of the main obstacles to the realignment of left-of-centre politics he so ardently claims to wish. The election of Kinnock as leader could signal Labour's return to the ghetto, although there are encouraging signs that his personal ambition is leading him to shift in the right direction. There's certainly no chance of an anti-Thatcher coaltion being initiated by the Alliance at the moment. One can only hope that the Labour party has the collective political imagination and courage to come out of the ghetto and confront the historic task which it must assume.

Stephen Salter, Kingscliff.

Cuts at the Poly

For some years now, men and women in public employment have had their jobs sacrificed to the dogma of 'lets cut jobs and save money'. Recently a more cynical attitude has manifested itself, 'lets cream off the best profit bearing employment areas, and leave the guilty, low profit jobs to what is left of the public employees'.

I have worked for nearly 11 years at Brighton Polytechnic and watched with anger and despair as various ploys have been used to 'save' money by attacking the 'lower levels' of the Poly's workforce. Those higher up shrugged and said "yes its a great pity, but what can we do! We will just have to accept lower standards and back up services and facilities".

But, they forget what they had said, and got ever so annoyed, when the people they had allowed to be sacked were not there to empty their waste baskets or make and serve their coffee!

When again the direct workforce was whittled down, managers just said "oh well some jobs have to be done, so we'll just get in the contractors. So much easier for us! And we will be safe because someones got to be here to do that haven't they!" Well, now some of those managers have managed themselves out of a job! Eight from two departments go, having presided over the loss of some 40 other jobs in 2 years.



So what lessons can those of us that are left draw from all this?

Once a job in public service offered better job security than many 'private' areas of employment. In return you gave diligent labour, loyalty and generally took a slightly lower wage. But now, even after 20 or 30 years loyal service, you can go. Not because the job has gone, not because you're not good enough anymore, but because someone, somewhere has said "I know, lets sack somebody and save some public money".
From now on I shall ask what loyalty is owed to me? And laugh without humour when people say: "But your safe, you're in local government". So's the bloody dole queue!

Robin Lockwood
UCATT



There has been some debate in Labour Weekly and Brighton Voice about the behaviour of Militant Tendency members in the General Election in Brighton.

It would be facile to claim that 'Militant' was a significant factor in Labour's defeat nationally. But it is important that we, and especially comrades in constituencies with a small Militant presence, know how they can and do operate in other situations.

In Brighton Kemp Town they ran a triumphalist Militant (not Labour Party) campaign. Their candidate Rod Fitch was billed as a 'Workers MP' - a euphemism for a Militant candidate.

They imported full time Militant organisers into Kemp Town - often from marginal constituencies like Harlow and Dulwich which Labour lost.

In several wards these organisers replaced the local ward organisation and completely undermined party democracy. They also brought in hundreds of Militant members who had no knowledge of or connection with the contituency. Local Labour activists were deliberately alienated from the campaign and discouraged from canvassing.

When local activists criticised campaign tactics (like sending out loudspeaker vans at 8.00a.m. on Sunday mornings) they were told they didn't know how to canvass. The fact is that they wouldn't sell Militant on the doorstep.

The main point of the campaign was to sell their paper and recruit to Militant. We feel it is absolutely wrong in principle to promote non Labour Party publications in electoral campaigns - be it Militant, Labour Leader or whatever.

The Militant's behaviour at the count was equally reprehensible. Instead of showing dignity in defeat they shouted down the non Labour candidates and sang praises to the Militant. They were so happy at having two 'Marxist' MP's that they seemed oblivious to Labour's catastrophic defeat.

Outside elections Militant's behaviour in Brighton is equally appalling. To defend their paper-thin domination of the constituency party they have resorted to intimidation and abuse of political opponents. This lack of political debate and a fortress mentality is to prevent outside influences weakening their control over 'softer' members of the Militant.

Militant controlled ward parties are usually the weakest and smallest and so easier to dominate. Hence they defend to the death the power of the General Committee to make key decisions and select the committees running party activities.

In one ward the Militant secretary has been no confidenced for refusing to hand over membership records, as requested by his ward angered by the way they were treated in the General election and other matters. At the time of writing he has still refused to resign and hand over the books. This is utterly disgraceful and even for the Militant very counter-productive. Brighton Kemp Town is after all one of the few constituencies they control and one full time Militant organiser is a member.

This should be a source of embarrassment for the tendency and we believe that the Militant is losing its grip in Brighton. Their behaviour has been so unprincipled that comrades have finally seen through their veneer as 'revolutionaries' and 'marxists'.

We agree with the ILP (Independent Labour Publications) in opposing purges and expulsions, except when the party rules and constitution have been breached and we insist on the need to politically defeat the group. This is the importance of organised left groups and not just anti-Militant factions. Why do we always have to define our politics with reference to the Trotskyists. We have our own principles, policies and perspectives and such alternative left groups represent a graver threat to the doddering old man of British Trotskyism than quick caucus for short term tactical battles.

We hope that this letter is informative and makes comrades even more aware of the need to politically demolish the arguments of the Militant tendency in particular and Trotskyism generally.

COLIN AVEY)
PAT AVEY) Brighton Kemp Town CLP
GARY KENT - Brighton Pavilion CLP
BRIAN AVEY - Hove CLP

Brighton Labour Briefing prints articles from all sections of the Labour Movement and its allies. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial collective.

Please send any articles to Brighton Labour Briefing, c/o 2LB Charles Street, Brighton.

One Member, One Vote?

How many times have you heard comrades at meetings say - not enough of our members are involved in party work and campaigns of the 'mass party of the working class'?

If we are to become a 'mass campaigning party' we certainly need more activists if we are to fight elections more effectively and put forward a socialist message in the trades unions and other organisations.

Over the last four years the left has placed much faith in the process of democratisation - the electoral college and mandatory re-selection. But is this sufficient? Have we only attempted to bind our leaders and is the party allowing full participation by all its members?

In fact our party structure is too centralised - even Leninist. It seems to be all power to the General Committee. The GC (it used to be a Management Committee) elects the executive and finally makes all key policy decisions as well as selecting the parliamentary candidates and conference delegates. You have to be on the GC to be elected to Party Conference, to run the party's sub committees or go to the anti-fascist Committee or the Council of Labour.

It's not really surprising that these hyperactivists are not always able to fulfill their duties.

It will be argued that the GC is the only body able to hold delegates accountable. The fact is that ward parties cannot even mandate their delegates in the selection of parliamentary candidate and conference resolutions. Ward parties have to rely on a nod and a wink to their delegates to follow the line.

A one member one vote system should be supported on major issues like the selection of parliamentary candidates and electing the leadership. One member one vote - not postal votes - would help to get more involvement as comrades would feel that their vote actually counted for something. We have to break down elitism in the Labour Party and give non-activists a stake in the party to help make them active and 'make socialists'

A one member one vote system would be fairly easy to operate. We would suggest that votes at wards - the obvious local level of organisation - could be aggregated to the constituency level.

It is vital that decisions are taken at meetings to ensure an informed debate. We recognise that the principle of allowing each member to cast a vote will not necessarily result in greater democracy or involvement. To secure genuine involvement of party members this democratic reform must be subject to the following provisions. Those eligible must have been in the party for at least a year and have attended at least one third of the normal Labour Party branch meetings. We want to reduce the possibility of wheeling and dealing and packing meetings.

But even if we strengthened mandation and scrapped some archaic rules it would not change the distortion of votes implicit in the delegatory democracy model. Ward discussions on, for instance, the leadership election can be desultory because comrades know that the final decision will be made elsewhere, that there is no guarantee of a 'mandate' being followed and that even if it were a substantial minority opinion could be ignored. This is ridiculous and hardly makes for involvement of party members.

We believe that one member one vote is a fair, reasonable and democratic reform. It is a matter of principle and this reform is not designed to secure temporary or factional advantage. We also believe that it will help defeat the right's call for postal ballots. Comrades should recognise that a stubborn defence of the status quo is untenable and will assist the the right in pushing the depoliticising postal votes system.

Of course no constitutional reform in itself will make the party more active or more socialist. This is why we need regular political, cultural and historical education and why we are members of the ILP(Independent Labour Publications).

Comrades who have joined the Labour Party have made a conscious step towards socialism. Through their active participation - helped by one member one vote - we can build support for socialist ideas in the party and in the trades unions, womens and peace movements and the communities

in which we live and work. Lets face it - we are not going to capture the electors imagination if we cannot capture our own members' imagination. An end to elitism through adopting the one member one vote system can only assist this aim.

An ILP model resolution supporting one member one vote has been passed by Hollingbury Ward to the Brighton General Committee and the idea seemed to have fairly strong support at a Brighton Labour Party Political Education Meeting on Labour, the elections and the future.

GERRY KIELTY(Chairperson)Brighton & Hove ILP.

GARY KENT

WHAT'S ON

AUGUST

Delegation to Ireland organised by Troops Out Movement. Ring: Gail 01-250-1293

Saturday 6 11.00am Peace Statue, Remember Hiroshima organised by Brighton CND.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 7th Brighton Anti Imperialist (International Peace) Forum, Friends Centre, speakers Moshe Machover, El Salvador Solidarity, Anti Apartheid, Palestine Solidarity.

Saturday 10th Brighton Briefing Production meeting 10.30 am at Sussex University, Communications Office.

Sunday 11th National demonstration- no more Chiles. Hands of Central America-London

Saturday 6th

Picket El Al, Israeli airlines in protest at massacres in Hebron and West Bank. 11am outside El Al offices in Regent Street, London (nearest tube Oxford Street).

Saturday 17th.
National Palestine Solidarity demonstration in London. Rally 1.00 in London- for transport contact Tony 602025

Saturday 17

How to fight the Tories Conference organised by Socialist Organiser write to SO, 28 Middle Lane, London n8

OCTOBER

1st to 2nd National Abortion Campaign Conference- phone 01 278 0153 for further info.

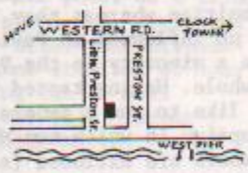
2nd National Briefing fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference, Queens Hotel after Conference session. Speakers inc. Benn, Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn, Jane Stockton, Verde Amory

Monday 3rd Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine-Speakers inc. Jeremy Corbyn mp, Joan Maynard MP, Harry Cohen MP Moshe Machover, Palesinian & Lebanese speakers, Women for Palestine.

2nd to 7th Labour Party Conference Brighton Centre



Public House Bookshop



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BRIGHTON LABOUR BRIEFING 20p

DON'T SPLIT THE PARTY

At its July General Management Committee meeting, Brighton Labour Party voted to establish a position of General Election coordinator, to ensure a smoother and more positive cooperation between Kemptown and Pavilion campaigns. Briefing welcomed this move toward the strengthening of the unity of Brighton CLP.

It seems ironic to us that, at the very time at which the local party is cementing its organisation and planning for the future in so positive a manner, a section of the Party in Kemptown appears to be roaring off in the opposite direction.

At its October meeting, Kemptown OC will be obliged to discuss a motion from the T&GWU calling for the splitting of the party on the basis of its component parliamentary constituencies. A slavish adherence to the forms of bourgeois electoralism has long seemed to us to be a debilitating facet of the Labour Party's tradition. Too often we have tugged a forelock and acceded to the whims of boundary commissioners, anchoring organisation to the artificialities of their creations without a second thought, irrespective of their creations without a second thought,irrespective of the collective strength ,campaigns and roots in the community an 'old' ward might have built up. And now it is suggested,from within our very Party, that a line be drawn down the middle of the Lewes Road, and that we organise ourselves as if that line were a gulf separating two different communities.

Seen in this light,the suggestion is of course, absurd. It is this which leads us to search for motives that may underpin it. Nor do we have to look far. Militant Tendency currently dominates Kemptown Organisation Committee,whereas they have next to no influence in Pavilion and are a minority in the Party as a whole. Having tasted what it is like to run a general election campaign in which non-Militant members are excluded (see Queens Park and Marine ward motions and the decision of Coventry SW to anticipate that,by separating Kemptown from its neighbour, they would be able to tighten their organisational control and,unhampered by the prospect of losing any major votes, use Kemptown as a platform for Militant policies all year round rather than, as has until now been the case,solely at Conference and General Elections.

In an extraordinary plea from the Chair of Kemptown OC, Ray Apps asked that, though he was "sure that the Militant Caucus(!) will make a decision" on the matter, discussion of it should be non-sectarian. The request and implied censure- seemed to be levelled at Briefing supporters present,so we'll now reply. Ray,we're simply not that naive. The motion originated from a Union branch Militant control; it is supported almost exclusively by Militant members and sympathisers.



Militant's concerns are not our concerns. We are interested in holding lively and varied debates throughout the Brighton Labour Party (and where we hold a collective view,winning those debates!).Militant seek merely to impose their line- whcih they can hope to do in a small enough forum. We prioritise the fight for a Labour controlled Borough Council,to the success of which a united Party is so vital. Militant would sacrifice that unity because they regard Council politics as a very secondary consideration, never letting their more able members dirty their hands with standing for council seats.

Another reason given for dividing the Brighton Party is some of the wards in Pavilion have run up large debts during the election campaigns. So what is the answer? To leave these small wards in the lurch or to act as one party, and give all possible assistance. If these debts are not met doubts will be raised as to the feasibility of standing candidates in such wards- and with it the possibility of a Brighton Labour Council.

We should remember that in 1975 when the two parties came toge ther to form Brighton Labour Party, both were very weak. In the intervening period both have grown stronger and it is this that Militant- with their wrecking amendment- would reverse. Pavilion would slowly wither and Kemptown under Militants iron grip would also fare little better.

Large wards in Kemptown seem set to reject. But since the debate is currently confined to Kemptown, we must mount a vigorous campaign throughout that CLP, ensuring that large turnouts of Party members meeting in their wards and union branches sling this wrecking motion out.

We can defeat this motion even in Militants Kemptown bastion if we ORGANISE. Briefing is sponsoring a caucus for all those opposed to Militants wrecking motion at the Eagle Wednesday September 28 at 7.30. Contact Dave 684917 for babysitters.

BRIGHTON BRIEFING EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

a BIGGER briefing

Future issues of Brighton Labour Briefing will include a 16 page 'National Briefing' supplement. Following the defeat of Labour at the General election it is now essential that radical sections of the Labour Movement become organised in a co-ordinated campaign to defeat the Right.
We are sorry to anounce that this will inevitably mean a small rise in price, to 30pence, but we hope that the addition of the supplement will help in such a campaign.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!