BRIGHTON LABOUR 30p

BRIEFING

No24 SEPTEMBER 1984

Leadership Needed

As we go to press, the miners have been out for 22 weeks. We can now say that the support shown by the rank and file of the Labour Movement has not been reflected in the Union leaderships. There is no sign of the miners cracking - no sign of a drift-back to work and certainly no sign of betrayal by their leaders. And yet the Government's position has weakened considerably.

NATIONAL DOCK STRIKE

Ground was made and a major breakthrough could have come in the second week in July when, in one day, the NUM flouted the high court, Liverpool City Council appeared to force a Government back-down, the dockers began a national strike and Thatcher's 'home-buying Tory supporter' was faced with the biggest mortgage rise in post-war history. If the TGWU Executive had had the courage to link the dock strike with the miners and extended the strike to other sections, then the miners would have won by now.

WIDESPREAD ACTIVITY

We say that the miners can win - but how can we ensure victory for the Labour Movement? Yet again there is the will to fight. Within this issue of BRIEFING are reports of Brighton Labour Party's widespread activity in the collection of money and food for Kent NUM. This activity has been present in thousands of Labour Party and Trade Union branches throughout the country. Only one section of the Labour Movement has been saving the Tories : Kinnock and the TUC leaders.

HONEST BROKER

To date the TUC has done nothing to support the miners. At best it has attempted to act as honest broker rather than support our class against the ruling class. It believes that all problems can be solved within capitalism rather than by changing the system that produces for profit instead of need; a system that forces people to fight for the right to work.

LABOUR BRIEFING NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

TUC Fringe Meeting

FOR A FIGHTING LABOUR MOVEMENT!

SPEAKERS :

Alan Thornett
Joan Maynard, MP.
Claire Short, MP.
WAC Speaker.
National NUM Speaker.

Wednesday, 5th Sept
7.30pm.

ROYAL ALBION HOTEL.

LEADERS' DISMAL RECORD

Murray, Chapple and Duffy have done their best to undermine support for the NUM. The total national donation from the AUEW, the 2nd largest union, is £3,000 - less than that collected in Brighton. Murray attempted, without success, to prevent regional TUC strikes and demonstrations in support of the miners. Our strength today is that the Labour Movement has learnt the lessons of the 1926 General Strike. Then, (and remember it was the 'Left' of the TUC who sold out), the politics of class collaboration allowed the miners to be starved back to work.

THE FIRST MONETARISTS

A similar record was and is held by the Labour Party Leadership. What was the experience of the 1974-79 Labour Government? Having got into office on our backs, it then turned on its own supporters, Healey became the first monetarist, and the way was paved for the most reactionary Tory regime for 50 years. This cycle must not be repeated.

FIGHT OR MAKE WAY!

We say to our 'leaders': "Fight for those you are supposed to represent - or make way for those who will!" Full support for all strikes and demonstrations against the Tory Government and its Courts is a minimum. The fight to change the Labour Party, and to ensure that a future Labour Government defends its class, is the role for the left.

The miners are turning the tide. We must make sure this is turned into a great victory for the entire Labour Movement.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Review- WARPLAN BRIGHTON

Brighton CND has just produced an excellent pamphlet on civil defence which should be essential reading - particularly as it links the 'civil defence' question to local issues and illustrates the role of local government in preparing for nuclear war. Here ANDY PORTER, active in CND and Hanover Labour Party, reviews the pamphlet.

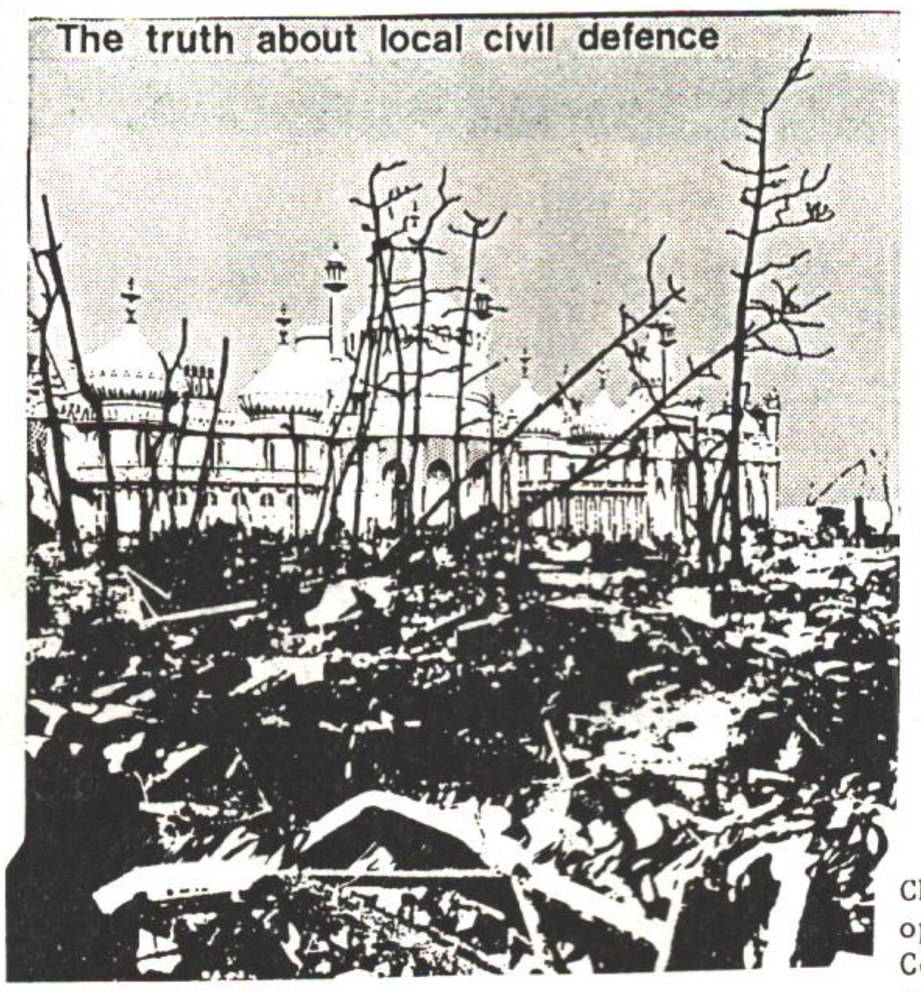
East Sussex County Council drew up its War Plan in 1982 - long before the government leglislation to make such planning obligatory. In 1984-85 £144,700 has been allocated for civil defense spending in the county (between £36,000 and £48,000 in Brighton and Hove). Hove is to receive a full-time Civil Defence Officer at £14,000 pa. to promote Civil Defence in the Borough.
CND describe the War Plan as a 'bureaucrats dream' which 'sets out hierarchies to show who would be in control of every aspect of life after a nuclear attack.'

SOCIAL CONTROL

Although described as 'civil defence', national and local plans place their emphasis on maintaining social control particularly in response to internal threats should a nuclear situation arise. If Brighton avoided a direct hit then the authorities would emerge from their bunkers after a 7 to 21 day period to 'impose a regime of martial law on what was left of the country...the army would be in command assisted by armed police.'

WARTIME CONTROLLER

Democratic institutions would disappear - in East Sussex the 'wartime controller' would be the County Chief Executive Mr R. Beechey, who is an official and not an elected officer. Under him would be the Borough Chief Executives - Mr R. Morgan in Brighton and Mr R. Hinton in Hove. All of these gentlemen can be reached by letter or telephone should anyone feel moved to do so. A few weeks ago the Brighton Non-violent Direct Action (NVDA) network occupied Mr Hinton's office. Other such actions are likely to follow.



HOAX

The CND pamphlet concludes : 'The plans are at best a delusion, at worst a cruel hoax. They are not designed to save lives but rather to make use of nuclear weapons more acceptable.' It is this point above all that we need to emphasise. Nuclear weapons have been with us for a long time - why this sudden government enthusiasm for Civil Defence? It can only be seen as the British aspect of the USA's new hawkish approach to nuclear war : first strike weapons, the idea that a nuclear war can be won, and 'home' defence are all part of the same horrifically deceiptful package.

INADEQUATE RESOURCES

In the event of a direct hit by a one megaton nuclear bomb on Brighton and Hove, it is estimated that approximately 64,000 could be killed and 165,000 injured (ie. almost everyone - these statistics from the Joint Committee on Medical Effects of Nuclear Weapons). The local government plans purport to provide for these survivors but in reality they would be grossly inadequate even if many more resources were made available. For example, there are not enough specialised burns units in the whole of the UK to deal with the casualties from even one nuclear bomb dropped on one city (BMA report).

CAMPAIGNING

CND's new pamphlet draws on the opinions of local Trade Unionists and Councillors as well as its own local campaigners and experts to provide a campaigning tool that we should all make use of.

Andy Porter.

'Warplan Brighton' is available from your local CND group or from the Peace Shop.

Letters

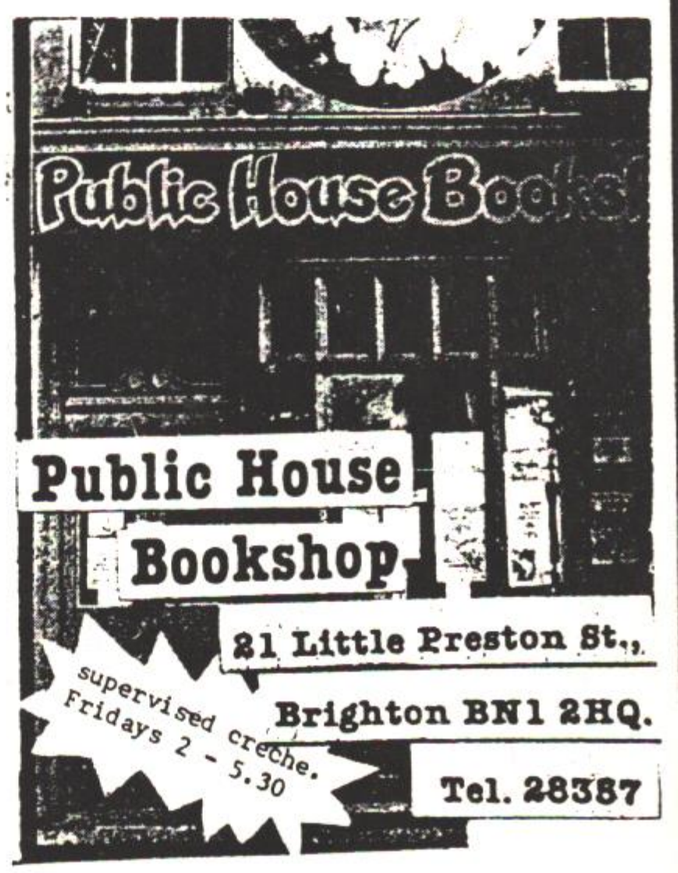
Dear Comrades,

Your front page call in your July issue for Councillors to make a public declaration of support for the NUM and to move a motion of support in Council came a little late in the day.

I reported to the GC on 25th June that Labour Councillors had such a motion on the Council Agenda for 28th June. Built into the Motion is a call for liaison between the Council and the Trades Council NUM Support Group and for the use of Council Offices as collecting points for food and cash etc.

In the event, because the Tories and the Alliance voted against Labour's proposal to complete all business on the June Agenda, the Motion was not reached at that meeting, but will now be on the Agenda for August 9th.

Yours fraternally,
Dave Lepper.



MINERS SUPPORT GROUP

Labour on the move

The view of Brighton Labour Briefing is that solidarity work with the miners is the number one priority for socialists. The Labour Party Miners Support Group has been successful in initiating collections in the wards and outside supermarkets. Below the coordinator, BRYN GRIFFITHS, reports on the work done to date, and suggests ways in which you can help.

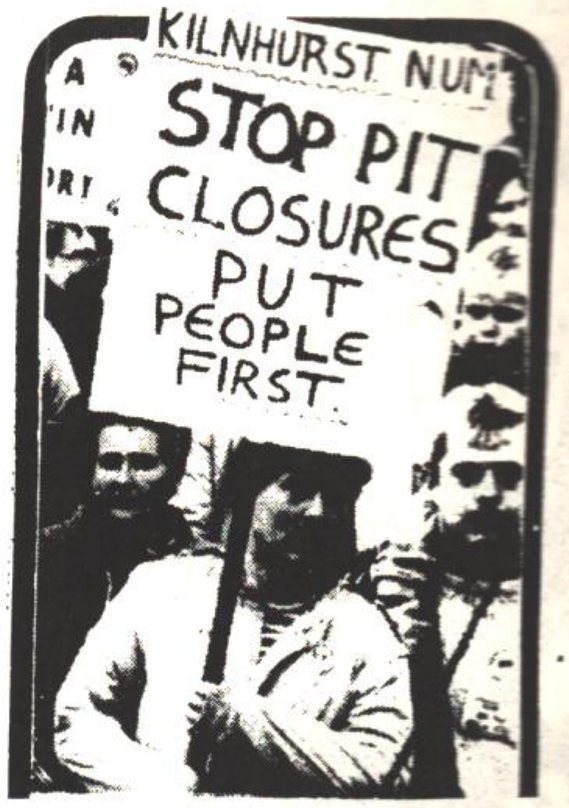
Since Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) called for members to make a 50p donation per week, a great deal of activity has been organised in Brighton and elsewhere. In contrast to our great "leader's" vascillations, the response of Labour's rank and file has been one of support. However, all is not rosy in the garden. Over 20 weeks into the strike, te response of some wards has not been good.

'RESOLUTIONARY ROAD'

The hardship endured by the miners and their families is immense. It needs to be stated quite clearly that badge wearing, ward voting, the occasional donation and in depth analysis in the pub is not enough. Comrades, there is no "resolutionary" road to socialism. This strike must be won by mobilising our friends, communities, workplaces and political organisations in full support of the miners.

BROADENING SUPPORT

In an attempt to broaden Brighton's support for the miners, the General Committee (the governing body) initiated the Miners Support Group. Working alongside the Trades Council, the group includes not only Labour and Trade Union activists, but a number of anti-nuclear campaigners. CND activists in a number of areas have been most prominent in organising food and money collections. Other groups represented have included the University Students Union, Youth CND, Women for Peace, a Housing Coop, the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party.



The group has had a degree of success in broadening support for the miners. To all reading this article, the question needs to be asked: Are you doing enough to ensure a victory for the miners? Below is an outline of the kind of things you can do.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

* Miners Support Group, every Wednesday, 6.00-7.30 at 179 Lewes Road.

* Join collections in your area. Get in touch with your local ward officers or ring 607944.

* Make sure NUM speakers are invited to meetings. Speakers and the NUM video can be booked by ringing 602592.



John Sturrock/Network

* Accomodation is needed for NUM pickets. Ring 602592 with offers of beds.

* Benefits - Come and see DANCE FACTOR 7 with Disco and Late Bar - Richmond Pub, Tuesday 28 Aug, 8.00pm.

* Visit the picket line during the day at SHoreham Power Station.

* Lobby the TUC with the Broad Left Organising Committee on Monday 3rd September, Brighton Centre.

To contact the Miners Support Group, ring 607944 if cannot attend meetings.

COLLECTING IN ST. PETERS

One of the wards well under way with collections is St. Peters. After the ward elected a coordinator for miners support work, the ward seemed to quickly forget about the issue. Poor Charlie Jordan received volunteers he could count on the fingers of one hand (excluding thumb!). This has changed since a meeting of the Miners Support Group targetted St. Peters for a mass canvass. £40 was collected in one evening, and the following week 9 collectors gathered £105. Progress will continue with an effort to get to all Party members and sympathetic Labour voters in the coming weeks.

Anyone who wants to get involved in St. Peters should ring Charlie Jordan on Brighton 609076.

Martin Huseyin.

* Miners Support Group, every Wednesday, 6.00-7.30 at 179 Lewes Road.

LABOUR AGAINST THE CUTS

Labour's notice of motion at the East Sussex County Council meeting of 17 July 1984 was in opposition to the Conservative proposal to make another series of 1% budget cuts for the 1985-6 budget. These cuts total a further 4.6m. The following report has been sent to Briefing by DAVE HILL, leader of the Labour Group on East Sussex County Council.

At the Council meeting the Labour Group moved that the County Council's budget strategy should be based on a policy of

No reductions of services or staffing.

Restoration of some of the previous years' service cutbacks.

Meeting new commitments of £2.8m.

Mounting a public campaign to demand higher national and local Rate Support Grant from Central Government to defend education, social and other local services and standards.



Such a campaign to include delegations to Westminster, demostrations, giving County Council staff time off work to take part, co-operation with other councils in these activities. Such a campagn should also publicise the case for local government against present government policy of robbing County Councils, District Councils and the Welfare State in general in order to pay for tax cuts bonanzas for the wealthy and an ever-increasing spiral of increased defence expenditure.

Under the Thatcher Government and its supporters who rule East Sussex, unemployment has more than doubled in East Sussex; the number of supplementary benefit claims has virtually doubled and education and social services are reeling under repeated cutbacks.

The Tory version of 'one nation' or 'one people' in East Sussex means that a typical Brighton semi-skiled worker, even if still employed, is worse off than in 1979, while those on £50,000 a year (£1000 per week) gained £150 a week. Tory tax policy has benefitted only those earning above £20,000 a year.

BOOKS NOT BOMBS!

In 1978/79 12% of public spending went on education and 11% on defence. Now the figure (1984/85) is 10% and 14% respectively. The only aspect of education the Tories are spending more on is the Assisted Places scheme, in private schools. There are about 50 such schools in Sussex. Remember only one out of 53 Tory Councillors currently has a child at a state school.

Pupils who cannot afford school meals are told to bring sandwiches. Some pupils lose the only balanced meal of the day when the County Council debars hundreds from free school meals. Fifty lost their free meals at one Middle School in Brighton alone. At the same time the canteen and cleaning staff are old to take a cut in wages.

Hundreds of young, able people are now refused grants for further education courses because at 19 or 22, they ae considered too old. Hundreds more young, able people are denied entry to higher education, and are told that higher education is no longer a right but a privilege.

PROTEST

The time is coming when Labour Councillors at County and District level, Trade Unions, Parents' groups and pressure and community associations must and will protest even more forcibly than the 3,000 strong lobby organised by the Labour Group at this year's budget meeting in February. Which services will be under threat of shutdown or abandonment in this headlong flight from a civilised society? Meetings and discussions are being planned with the groups mentioned above to formalise possible plans, actions, stoppages and lobbies. Enough is enough. The cuts must be stopped.

NURSERIES

Working women who protest about the lack of nursery education and classes are told or advised that a woman's place is at home. Little comfort to the 50 or so young children and parents who cannot get a place they have applied for at Carden First School Nursery Class for example, or for the many hundreds in a similar position in Bexhill, Hastings, Eastbourne, Peacehaven and throughout East Sussex.

EDUCATION

Parents who complain about the shortage of essential school books are told to buy the books themselves. Currently, hundreds of Brighton Secondary School children are being advised to buy GCE or CSE text books

ELECTORAL PROSPECTS

Next May the Tories will probably lose their County Council majority. In the 1981 County Elections, Labour returned 14 councillors, Liberals 15. Next May, Labour gains are expected in Regency, Marine and Kingscliffe (from the Tories), Hanover (from the SDP) and possibly Seven Dials (the only Liberal victory in 1983). Labour should retain Stanmer, Moulsecoomb, Tenantry, Queens Park, St. Peters and Holingbury.

But for Labour to have any prospect of control at County Hall, Labour needs seats from towns throughout Sussex - Hastings, Hove and Portslade, Bexhill, Lewes, Newhaven, Eastbourne and Peacehaven. Building on Labour's increased vigour, membership, and socialist policies in towns such as Brighton and Hastings, we are fighting to become the largest of the 3 parties, to reverse the cuts of the last 5 years and to implement socialist policies in East Sussex.

Dave Hill.

MAIDSTONE NF MARCH

On Saturday July 14th the National Front held a march in Maidstone, Kent. The lack of importance attached to this by many people on the Left was very depressing. There were less than 200 anti-fascists present, when 400 had been promised by the organiser. There was only on coachload of miners instead of two. The Brighton contingent was one of the largest there; and from furthest away! The anti-fascist mobilisation was feeble, but fortunately the NF could only turn out less than 100 for a national demonstration.

The counter-demo (if it can be called that) was organised by the Youth Officer of Maidstone Labour Party and the local Labour Party Young Socialists. In addition to the poor mobilisation, they were badly informed: they seemed to have only a vague idea where and when the Front were marching. Rumours circulated that the local Labour Group knew but refused to release details.

It must be noted that the counter-demo was organised by Militant supporters. The Tendency has a history of organising token counter-demonstrations, for example on the other side of the town in Brighton a few years ago.



DISTURBING

More surprising and disturbing was the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). They largely agreed with Militant, when in the past they have been some of the more resolute anti-facsists. Both groups were content with a march hours before the Fascist demo, followed by quiet dispersal - exactly what the police planned. There was a ood of great frustration amongst a number of anti-fascists as we marched around the suburbs of Maidstone.

FRUSTRATION

The mood of frustration came to a head at the end of the demo, outside the town away from the Fascists, when the stewards 'decided' that we should all quietly go home. Militant and the SWP sold out the anti-facsists in classic style - somewhat ironic in view of their emphasis on leadership sellouts. To give them credit, members of Brighton SWP wanted to confront the NF directly, but they were actually threatened with expulsion by leading cadres if they joined in. Central Committee had decreed that the miners' strike and dockers' strike should take paper-selling priority; anti-fascism was downgraded.

PHYSICAL COUNTER PRESENCE

Most of the Brighton contingent wanted to go back into the town and confront the NF. We thought it important to



have at least some kind of physical counter presence. Eventually about 50 anti-fascists went back into the town where the NF demo was due to start at 2pm.

In view of the response of Militant and the SWP, the objectives of the most determined anti-fascists need to be made clear. Our intention was to mobilise enough people to confront the Fascists and if possible prevent them from marching. We believe that their violent and brutal racist policies and practice must be smashed on the streets.

LOCAL YOUTH

After our 'revolutionary' comrades had gone home, we prepared for the second-best tactic of harrying the Nazis. Up to 200 local working class youth, hostile to the Fascists, joined



us. The word had been passed around local Youth clubs that the Nazis were marching in Maidstone and this was their reaction.

THE COUNTER DEMO

The police remained by far the best organised group as we went for a second tour round the suburbs of Maidstone heckling the NF. It was quite frightening at times with fascists mingling with anti-fascists and police snatch-squads in operation directed by plainclothes Special Branch Officers. But it was also amusing: Ian Brady, a former Brighton fascist, was heard to squeal "You can't arrest me - I'm white!", as he was carried off to a police van. At certain strategic points on the march



the police split off anti-fascists from the Nazi marchers, often violently, and a number of anti-fascists were arrested whilst resisting these police tactics. At one point anti-fascists tried to block the route of the march but a police van was driven at the people trying to assemble in the road.

In the end, the National Front were able to hold their rally under police escort, but there was at least a distinct anti-fascist presence.

The author of this article has asked to remain anonymous for security reasons. Any correspondence can be made through Briefing. (Ed)

CLASS—SPEAK

Class war was officially declared on Thursday 19th July, 1984, when Mrs Thatcher's speech to the 1922 Committee led an orchestrated campaign against the NUM. JON DODDS and TONY MILLER investigate the language now being used by the Government in the NUM dispute. Due to lack of space the article will be continued next month.

On that same evening, Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson, Peter Walker and John Gummer also threw off the pretence of olympian detachment to take up the torch of liberty against the enemy in our midst.

REFLEX ACTION?

Some sections of the liberal press chose to see nothing significant in this "deluded bunker stuff"; puttin git down to high spirits at the end of term. It was an understandable "reflex action", recalling Falklands triumphs in the face of present difficulties. But reflex actions don't happen in five places at once, then all over the Tory press 12 hours later: this was the carefully staged-managed launch of a government propaganda campaign. Far from being a careless slip, Thatcher's speech, and those of her cabinet colleagues and supporters, marks a distinct shift. The drift back to work has not materialised and an ideological wedge is to be driven between what the Tories see as the "militants" and the "moderates" in the NUM and between striking miners and a potentially sympathetic public.

CALCULATED

In this light, Thatcher's remarks constitute a calculated mobilisation of popular memory for ideological purposes. The miners become "the enemy within", with the immediate reference to that other great struggle for democracy, against the "enemy without" in the Falklands War. But the resonances stretch back to the Fifth Column hysteria of 1940, to what Churchill descibed as "this malignancy in our midst." It also resonates with a more recent slur, when the Sun attempted to depict Scargill as Hitler, only weeks before.

OFFENSIVE

The fact that no such Fifth Column existed is of no more relevance than, say, the fact that CNDis not funded from Moscow. Significantly, the government's last propaganda campaign - Heseltine's offensive against CND - also used the history of World War Two, describing nuclear disarmers as "appeasers." Critics of the Falklands War were similarly identified with the "guilty men" of Munich.

In the current offensive, a three-fold historical leap is accomplished; from the miners' struggle to the Second World War, via the Falklands. The nation is assiailed by Hitler, Galtieri, Scargill; a Churchillian Thatcher confronts an enemy curiously unchanged by historical circumstances.

COINCIDENCE?

Peter Walker writing, by coincidence of course, in the Times the morning



following his colleagues' speeches, headlines his piece, "Scargill's CHallenge to Us All" and calls for the resurgence of "a national spirit, cutting across party boundaries, to see that parliamentary democracy prevails. This is not a mining dispute. It is a challenge to British democracy and hence to the British people." If Times readers are "the British people", then who on earth are the miners, their friends and families, communities and supporters? It's hard to tell, since they are variously Argentinians, German spies, prohibition mafiosi (at one point they are described as "organised mobsters"); probably they're all Russians (the "Red Guards").

"MOB RULE"

An extremist image, a totalitarian rag - almost any one will do - is attached to any opposition. All extra-parliamentary activity is "mob rule". This is not merely to throw as much dirt as possible and hope that some of it will stick; all opposition is thereby defined as extremist and all extremists are deliberately presented as indistinguishable and equivalent. They are what must be isolated and exluded to establish a mythical Britishness.

"UN-BRITISH

This techniqe is an old one, admirably documented by Geoffrey Pearson in 'Hooligan; A History of Respectable Fears'. Under threat is the "British Way of Life". In the construction of an England (rarely Britain, in fact) of cricket matches and village greens, the violence and disorder of towns, pits and factories can be disowned as "un-British". To think thatthis is England", bemoaned the Sun in the riots of 1981. "Are we changing into something else?" wailed the Daily Express. And back in that troubled Tory year of 1974, Keith Joseph reminded us that "Rome itself fell, destroyed from the inside. Are we to be destroyed from the inside too, a country which successfully repelled Phillip of Spain, Napoleon, the Kaiser, Hitler?" We might add General Galtieri.

THE ODD VOLUME



53 UPPER GLOUCESTER ROAD
BRIGHTON (27845)

NEWS IN BRIEF

HOUSING COMMITTEE VICTORIES

Labour Cllrs have persuaded Brighton Council to adopt a 'Tenants Charter' for private tenants and look at ways of improving services for Home Owners and people wanting to buy homes. The Tenants Charter was an important element in Labour's local manifesto campaign to improve the list of Brighton's private tenants who occupy some of the town's worst housing. Over 70% (twice the national average) of Brighton's households live in generally substandard private rented accomodation.

Improvements to services for Home Owners are also long overdue, particularly for those who try and make use of the home improvements and repairs grants system. With Tory attacks on services to home owners through VAT, reduced grants and increased mortgage rates, it is vital that Labour campaigns for housing investment for <u>all</u> tenures.

DEMO RIGHTS UPHELD !

The right to picket Embassy buildings was upheld by Bow Street Magistrates in a key test case completed on August 1st. The case involved South African House anti-apartheid demonstrator Richard Roques, who was arrested with 150 protesters over a period of nearly 2 months. Labour MP's Stuart Holland, Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Banks with Camden Labour Cllrs featured among those arrested.

The court victory followed a campaign sparked off by the Metropolitan Police' refusal to allow pickets on the pavement outside the embassy. Police insisted that to do so would violate the articles of the 1961 Vienna Convention and impair the dignity of the Embassy, despite the 20 years of demonstrations outside the South African embassy.

Charges of obstruction against all 150 demonstrators have now been dropped by the police who could now face claims for damages in a string of Civil Action for compensation following the false imprisonment, and malicious prosecution of anti-apartheid demonstrators.

Steve Bassam, who monitored the picket line policing by Met. police officers commented:

"It was clear from the start that police were wrong and that if the courts upheld the arrest other embassy pickets would be jeapardised. Even our class-ridden judiciary could see the implications of this further erosion of our civil liberties. My fear is that the Home Office will attempt to change the rules of protest when the Public Order White Paper is published in the Autumn. My prediction is that this will be nasty, brutish and repressive".

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Brighton Labour Group is to call for a Women's Committee following a recent General Committee resolution passed making it a political priority. Support for the move was almost unanimous (with Militant abstaining).



The Women's Committee would seek to prioritise women's issues on the Council, promote equal opportunities for women in council employment and end institutionalised discrimination against women in council services. It might also take up the important question of womens safety following the concern, expressed by many women, of street attacks and poor police responses to assaults, rape and harassment.

BRIGHTON LABOUR BRIEFING

Again apologies to our supporters with standing orders. The funds have now all been transferred to the National Girobank and the other accouts closed. Here is the form to continue the standing order.

If this is the first time you have come across Brighton Labour Briefing, and would like more information, write to us at 35 Quebec Street, Brighton. Also tell us if you would like to be on our mailing list (we would appreciate 50p per month to cover costs, but don't worry if you're broke!).

The next Brighton Labour Briefing meeting will be at 7.00pm, Sunday 9th September, at 35 Quebec Street. Please be prompt!

standing order- cough up!

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BRIGHTON LABOUR
BRIEFING

Council under fire

Patrick Jenkin, the incompetent incumbent Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment (DoE), has blundered into another local government mess. Thatcherite Treasury officials have decreed that more local government expenditure must be cut. Thus Brighton Council received a request for a 'voluntary moratorium' on Capital Expenditure - the day after a ministerial announcement saying it was no such thing. STEVE BASSAM, Deputy Leader of the Brighton Labour Group, examines the proposed cuts and options for the Labour Movement to fight them.

Council officials and Councillors were given just 13 days to come up with voluntary capital expenditure proposals. The government called this a consultation exercise. At the July 25th Policy and Resources Cttee, the Borough Treasurer presented a report outlining the option and stressing the likely effect of obeying the Tories requests.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Borough Treasurer said the Government's request would :-

> "...create anomolies and makes nonsense of any attempt at sensible planning. There are a number of schemes which are not yet committed and which will create severe operational problems if they are stopped."

He said that to comply with the moratorium could affect 6m of new capital projects. He said it would jeapardise the major development of new council offices, car park and hotel on the prime Kings Road site. He also listed the Housing, Environmental Health, Highways, Parks, Recreation and Tourist projects at risk!

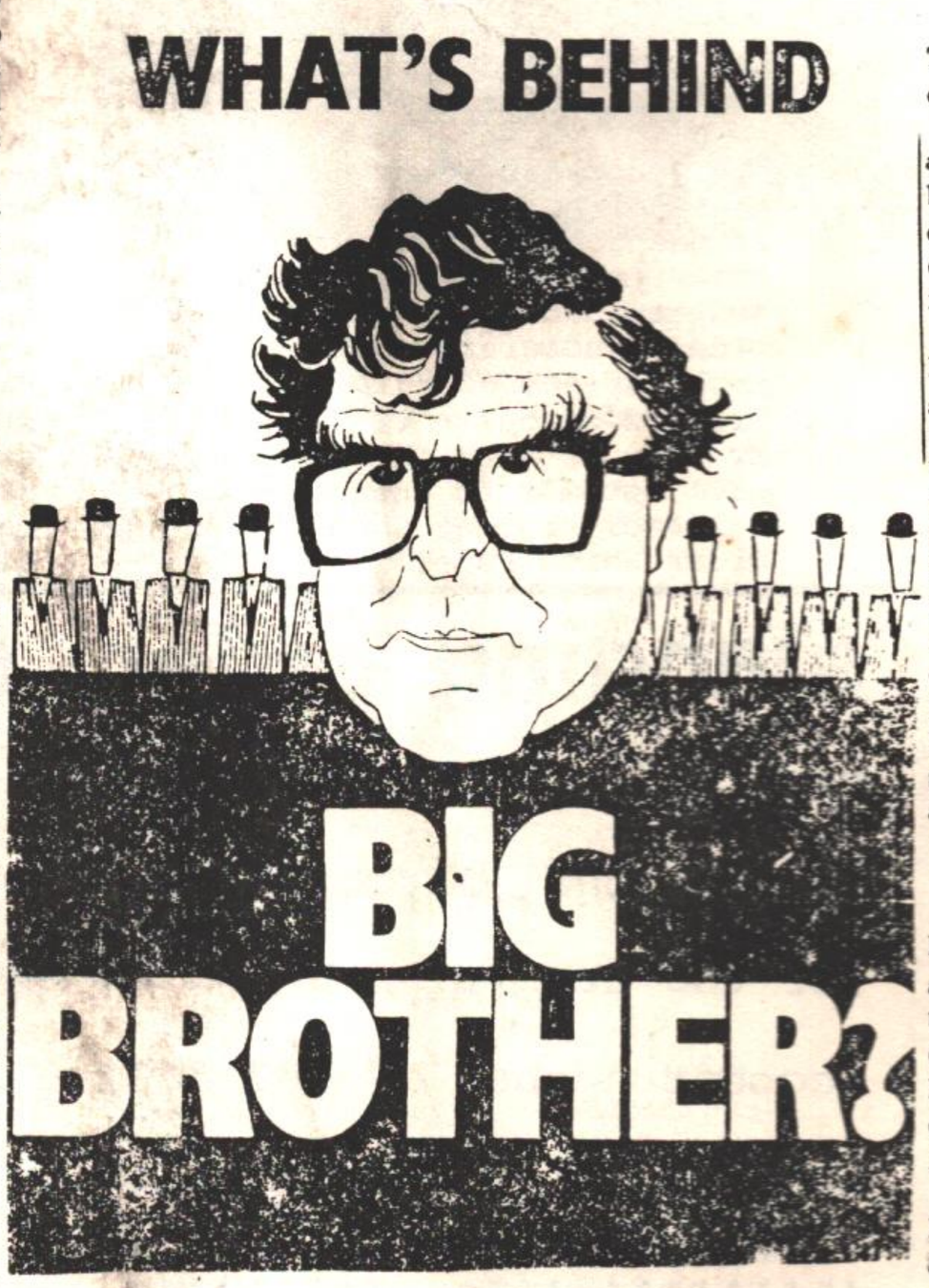
HOUSING CLOBBERED - AS USUAL!

Of these projects, Housing is most affected with £3.75m of work stopped. The Council would lose the Heron's Court, London Road site for Sheltered Accomodation for the elderly (0.3m). Construction work at Whitehawk, North Moulsecoomb, Pankhurst Avenue (bungalow for the disabled), Homeless and Disturbance Payments and Sheltered Housing at the Crestway, Hollingbury would stop. Repairs work in Elm Grove, Queens Park, plus essential safety repairs to wiring, roofing and windows in badly defective and ageing properties would all go. Total £2.2m.

Homeless single people would lose out too, with the stops put on the YMCA Housing Association joint venture in Tichborne Street. Total cut £0.5m.

Home Owners, particularly first time buyers and those on low incomes will lose nearly £0.5m worth of Home Purchase and Improvement loans if the moratorium is imposed.

New public toilets, a replacement car park, new information technology, seafront and park playgrounds, street improvements and pedestianisation would stop. Total cut £2.3m.



LABOUR'S RESPONSE

The Borough Treasurer outlined 3 options for the Council :

a) Compliance
b) Continued expenditure and defiance,
c) A 'weeding' operation (delaying items)

Labour members led by Dave Lepper said that a policy of non-compliance was essential and argued that all vital capital expenditure projects should be speeded up and brought forward to frustrate the moratorium. This was rejected by the Tories, but the Policy Cttee voted to continue spending and set up a panel to examine uncommitted capital schemes. Labour members Brian Fitch and Dave Lepper will go onto this with a mandate to oppose the moratorium, and all job and service cuts.

POLITICAL OFFENSIVE VITAL

Labour must confront the government and local Tories with a policy of non-compliance. If capital expenditure cuts are forced in Brighton and East Sussex their effects will bring about massive job losses and cuts in services.

Labour must make its position clear and expose and oppose the implications of this latest attack on local democracy. Opposition must be built into our County Council manifesto and our alternative budget strategies. Ward newsletters and our campaigns must feature the importance of fighting off this latest assault on pulic service provision. In this we must mobilise not only the Labour Party, but the Trade Unions, womens' organisations, voluntary organisations and community groups. We all have a vested interest in defending and advancing the cause of local government and democratically accountable services.

Unity of purpose is essential and Labour must lead the way.

Steve Bassam.

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