LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING 30p

No 29 MAY 1983

CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT: TONY BENN says

'WITH THIS PROGRAMME WE CAN WIN!'

Tony Benn gave an interview to BRIEFING on the day after Labour's Home Policy Sub-committee gave its full approval to the campaign document, "The New Hope for Britain." The interviewer was Chris Knight.

Briefing: The Labour Party has been in some difficulties recently. Do you really think we can use the new campaign document, "The New Hope for Britain", and the unity gained around that to win the coming election?

Tony Benn: Well, you have asked two questions. I think, to make sense, you have to go back to 1979. Had we been talking in April 1979, we'd have had a Labour Party just about to go into an election with a monetarist policy imposed by the IMF and partly accepted by the Cabinet, a pro-Common Market policy, not mere support for nuclear weapons but the secret production of Chevaline, and the House of Lords – I know it's in a sense symbolic but it's not without importance – given a fresh lease of life by Callaghan saying that if we tried to abolish it he'd resign from the leadership. And at that time, Members of Parliament were assuming that they would hold their seats forever unless they were removed for gross misconduct, while we had a Parliamentary leadership which was only answerable to the PLP. Now if you look back over the four years, all those four policies have been changed, not, strangely, by a so-called "hard left" but by ninety per cent of trade union members expressed in the TUC at conference. The four policies have been changed and modest democratic reforms of reselection and the electoral college have been introduced. Now that is a tremendous thing to have done in four years. Now, of course there have been setbacks, the setbacks being that the backlash this produced led to a very highly-organised reversal of the balance on the National Executive so we now have a hard right National Executive and a hard right Shadow Cabinet. But at the same time although there are words of caution and limitations set in the campaign document you mention, the main commitments are there. And it has gone through the National Executive Committee and Shadow Cabinet together in what was in effect a Clause Five meeting. So I suppose you could argue that that process of internal debate – which went on much longer than I thought it would! – has led to a really very radical change.



Now we come to the next question: can the Labour Party win the next election? And the answer is: it has a moral duty to try. The theory that it would be better to lose and then come back more strongly later is not one, I think, that is held by anybody on the left because of the damage inflicted and the dangers that would follow the re-election of a Tory government. And I think that the prospects of an election victory are quite good. I think you're going to find that the Party has gained by having its debates in public – alright, we're a coalition but so are the Tories and the SDP-Liberals, but our coalition is an open one. People know now what the commitments are. I think a lot of Liberals, like the ones in Tottenham, are going to vote Labour if not actually join the Labour Party because they realize that Roy Jenkins has split the Liberal Party down the middle. I think a lot of Conservative voters who are

(CONTINUED OVER)

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

INTERVIEW WITH TONY BENN (continued)

"wet" by instinct, to use Thatcher's phrase, are going to vote SDP. So if you get a Labour vote, buttressed by young voters and Liberal voters, with the SDP drawing mainly from the Tories, I think the prospect of election victory is there.

When you challenged him at a meeting of the Home Policy Sub-committee last night, even John Golding declared his commitment to the campaign document. What happened there?

Well, I didn't want to make a thing about it but I raised it at that meeting because there have been leakings given by people to the effect that of course that document was just a background document – that when we come to the manifesto



Labour Party Photograph Library

John Golding

we will change it again. That was reported in The Times and I felt it was necessary to get clear at that meeting that this is an agreed statement, although it may possibly, some say, have to be shortened. I personally don't see why it should even be shortened, but if, say, some event occurs in the next twelve months and the election were not until May next year then there might be new points you wanted to introduce. But I wanted to be absolutely clear that this document was seen as the manifesto, and I was supported by everyone who contributed, including the Chairman, and I think that view will be strongly represented at the National Executive Committee. Any throwing of doubt upon that would be very damaging because it would re-open it all round. It wouldn't only be their side that re-opened it – there would be people like myself and many others who would say: Well, look, a lot of concessions were made in order to bring this to fruition and if it's all going to be put back in the melting-pot, then what have we really achieved at Conference? So I was quite pleased by the response, but I think it's something that we should press and make absolutely clear, particularly as from the point of view of the left it is a modest document compared to the enormity of what would have to be undertaken if we take power, as I hope we do, within a matter of months.

Isn't there some question as to how much it can really mean if it's a document to which the right of the Party can so easily agree?

Well, I think you have to face the fact that there has been a sea-change in the Labour Party. And looking back over the years, you will see for what a very long time the Labour Party was the fan club of its Parliamentary leadership. And that ended with the Wilson years. I think the last attempt to assert it completely was in March 1975, when the Cabinet decided to accept the re-negotiated terms after the Common Market talks, before they'd even waited for Labour MPs to meet and discuss. And the Labour MPs were against these terms. And what built up in that period – I suppose over the last decade, really – was a self-confident Labour Party attracting a great deal of grass roots trade union support which simply insisted that it had the right as a party to lay down the objectives upon which the party was to rest. And remember this, that there is a different trade union tradition from the Labour Party one. Union General Secretaries do regard it as their obligation to put forward the policy of their union – look what happened to Sid Weighell when he broke that understanding! And so I think you'll find that there is quite a lot of commitment there. Whatever people felt individually they did not feel strong enough or confident enough to – nor could they have – set aside the policies and said "Look, we're in charge and this is what we want!"

We should look at the manifesto in terms of an interim demand, rather than a pledge which allows us to sit back once we've won the election and expect it to happen. If you see it as an interim demand which is going to be continued and maintained throughout the period of a Labour government, then you are in quite a different ball-game. You're in the ball-game of a movement that simply expects to be listened to and expects to have the right to shape policy whether Labour's in power or in opposition. Now, I don't want to sound over-confident because I think it would be foolish, but I think we are in a very different position from four years ago or ten years ago.

Doesn't the section on a "National Economic Assessment" open the door to an incomes policy?

No, I don't think it does. There are people who would like to see a pay policy return. But I think here that the trade union movement is absolutely clear in its own mind that it will not accept it, and that if it did accept it, it would not be implemented. And therefore I don't think it will happen. But like everything else, it depends what does happen. Certainly I found from 1975 until 1978 one of the greatest problems that we had when we were arguing about this in the Cabinet was that it was claimed that the trade union movement was in favour of the policy, whereas of course in the event the thing broke down. But I think the trade unions have no intention whatever of handing themselves over to have wages settled by a Labour Cabinet. On the other hand, an Annual Assessment with the trade union movement, based on a partnership between a Labour Government and the forces of labour, comparable to the normal working arrangements between a Tory Government and the forces of capital, is right. After all, what is the Tory budget but a National Economic Assessment looked at from the point of view of the big companies and the banks and City of London, to give them what they think to be their due having financed Thatcher's victory? But like everything else, it will work out according to whether or not the movement is prepared to stand up for what it wants and it's said clearly at Conference that it was not prepared to accept Government-imposed wage-restraint. And that's in the campaign document too.

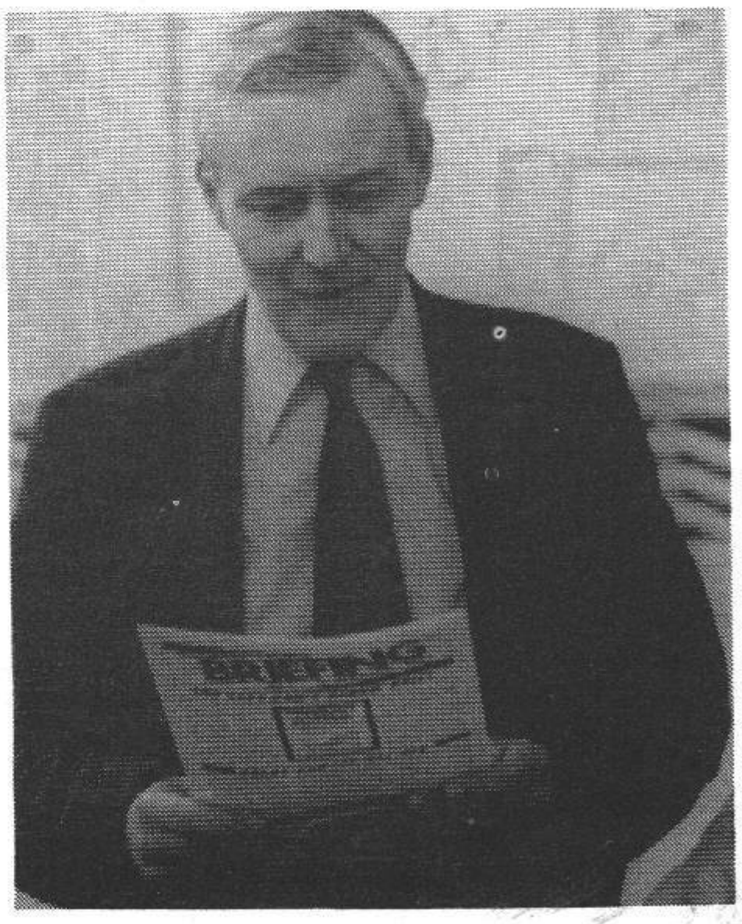
Turning to the NEC's expulsion campaign against Militant. Clearly you have gone on record as opposing this, but do you specifically support those parties in London who have said that they will refuse to carry out such expulsions, even up to the point of risking disbandment?

Yes, I do. I don't think this is a matter than can or should be handled centrally.

If local parties say "We find no fault in these people, and we're not prepared to expel them", then that is a problem that will have to be faced by the NEC which carried through the expulsions. It's not my problem – I didn't favour them being expelled in the first place.

Another London issue. Brent East and Brent South have been prevented from proceeding with their own parliamentary selections. Could you let Briefing readers know exactly what happened at the Organisation Sub-committee meeting on this issue, and how you think the Brent parties should now proceed?

Yesterday there was a motion which Dennis Skinner moved and I seconded to the effect that they should proceed to a selection conference. It was defeated on the grounds that the National Executive had taken legal advice. Now when that proposal came to the National Executive at its last meeting I opposed legal advice because I said it was not a legal matter but a political matter. There was supervision of the Brent parties by Joyce Gould, which has culminated with her making a report saying they're operating within the constitution, and my clear view is that they should now proceed to their normal reselection conferences.



To some of us, the recent offensives by the right on such issues seem connected with a certain softening of the cutting edge of your own statements since we lost the Deputy Leadership contest by that crucial half a per cent vote. Hasn't there been a slipping back since then? There was certainly some disquiet when you said recently that we now needed unity in the Labour Party on the model of the way in which left and right had collaborated in maintaining previous Labour Governments.

Well, if you look back to 1979, I had a very clear idea of what should be done then.

Namely, that that pent-up dissatisfaction and discontent that had been held in check by loyalty to the Labour Governemnt – and after all I practised it to keep the Thatcher government out, which I'm sure was right, although I had great anxieties at the time – that that pent-up discontent should be released as soon as the situation had changed with Thatcher's election. Then the right thing to do was to bring the policy of the Party into line with what the Conference wanted, to bring forward the constitutional changes that had been aired by various people such as the CLPD (I had raised party democracy as the number one item when I was Chairman of the Party in 1972), and I visualised that that would all be over within an eighteen month period (by the 1980 Conference) and that if Jim Callaghan went, which was likely, then you would have a leader elected on the new Electoral College (which didn't happen) and we'd have the Deputy Leadership contest (which was marginally lost). Then at the Bishop Stortford meeting I said we should rally round the existing policy, the existing leadership and the existing membership. And that's been the position I've occupied ever since.

Now clearly with the breakaway of the SDP and the unpopularity of the Government, if the work had begun in January 1982, which was two months after the Deputy Leadership contest, on that basis, we'd have been in a much stronger position now than we are. A number of things happened. There was a very strong right-wing backlash. The Falklands War, which undoubtedly helped Mrs Thatcher, would have left her reputation in tatters if only the Labour Party had come out properly in opposition, since that was a disreputable episode which has not achieved even what she wanted. But that did not happen. But "existing policy" would have then been the campaign document, the "existing leadership" would have been as it is, and the "existing membership" would have precluded the expulsion of the five members of the Editorial Board. Now, we did lose out on the composition of the NEC, partly as a result of the activities of people like Sid Weighell, although whether his vote was decisive is arguable. But at any rate we have got the recorded vote this year at Conference, which I think is going to have a profound effect on the election of the NEC. There has been the set-back of expulsions. But I think it's highly significant that the widespread oppsotion throughout the movement to these expulsions has now finished that, and those who had plans to expel candidates associated with that newspaper or sellers of the paper – they've had to abandon it, because it's been a total failure. I think the movement is now so strong that there are very, very great limitations on what the right can do. Indeed, I'd go further. I think if we hadn't had an electoral college, it's quite possible that after last year's Conference, there would have been a Parliamentary election and Michael Foot might have been removed. He couldn't be removed because of the electoral college.

I think it would be a mistake to suppose that from the date of the declaration of the Deputy Leadership result, things have gone wrong in every sense. There have been set-backs and I think it's true that the people who came together for the purposes of the Deputy Leadership election have to some extent gone back to their own activities, and therefore there isn't that same broad alliance of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, and the trade union movement has not been focussed on any single thing. But there is the treasurership with Michael Meacher's election this year which is very important, there is the broad left development in the trade union movement, and when I look round I can see, despite the setbacks, that that tide is there and is still very strong, and too strong for the gains of the last few years to be reversed. And in any case it's wrong to think of politics in terms of having a candidate for an office. It's about the development of ideas and the extent to which those ideas are winning support. And on peace, on jobs, with the People's March this year, which the NEC has now agreed to support, and with feelings towards the Common Market becoming clearer because of the barrier that would be to our industrial policy, I feel that all that work has been well put in.

Politics is about the acceptance of ideas. But it's very much about the confidence which we can generate that we have the will to power and the power to actually implement those ideas, and that's what you gave us. In that period of polarisation there was a clear demarcation of lines and in that sense a "split" within the labour movement much sharper than in previous years, but that was actually generating a far broader unity. We saw flooding into the Labour Party sections of society which had previously felt very little allegiance to us. And it was on the basis of that real unity, certainly, that we developed London Labour Briefing and the present leadership of the GLC. And to return to the point I made earlier, weren't you coming dangerously close to endorsing the record of the previous Labour Governments when you said . . .

No, no. What I was saying was –which you have to say – if you're aiming to get rid of the Thatcher Government you must make it clear that the Labour Party, with the policy we've supported, is a real, viable, workable alternative. You have to say that. And it's true. You can't really argue that continued polarisation of the Party would lead to any hope of removing the Thatcher Government. And I think I was to some extent responding to what people were saying, namely, that you've had this big post-mortem, you've had this big change of policy, big change in the constitution, and now we really have got to be confident that what we've gained is going to be put forward in an election campaign. And having said throughout the whole of that Deputy Leadership debate that it was about policies and not personalities, I think it's a mistake to suggest that it was only because there was a personality who was as you put it "polarising" (I would not see it as a polarisation, but mobilising) that that was a permanent element that must always be there every year to keep the pot on the boil. That is not the way that change occurs. Change occurs when people are stirred and are excited and are drawn in, and then when they come in, they have a job of work to do to see the policies right, then they have to campaign to get rid of the Conservatives, then when we're in power – which I hope and believe we will be – then the campaign takes off to see that the thing is carried through. And I think it's a mistake, therefore, to focus too strongly on that six-month period, though I accept that it did have the effect of clarifying the issues and although we didn't get the Deputy Leader that I would have liked, still . . .

But even in those months there was so much "good" advice, including from people on the left, that you were "going too far" or that it was "sensible advice" that you shouldn't push things. And yet you did stand out, and it was necessary that you did. And similar sorts of "advice" no doubt have been given to Ken Livingstone very recently in connection with his Irish initiatives. And the refusal to accept that kind of advice, and the insistence on standing firm, has raised the potential of the labour movement in London, with the Irish community now solidly behind us, and with the issues opened. Isn't it that kind of intransigence that we do need to sustain?

Yes, I agree with that. I think what Ken did – and I said this in Parliament – in going to Ireland was absolutely right, and that the reason that the Establishment fears him is that they know that there is enormous public support for what he was doing. But then, that was a campaign on an issue, wasn't it? It wasn't saying that the advance of the GLC depends entirely on everybody challenging everybody else for position every year.

NOTE: Part two of this interview will be published in the next issue of BRIEFING.

OPEN EDITORIAL MEETINGS

WE AIM to ensure that Briefing editorial meetings reflect as accurately as possible the views of our supporters in the constituencies. For this reason they are completely open; we urge our supporters to attend in person or to ensure that their labour movement organisation or Labour Left group sends a representative.

We want to develop a system where local 'Labour Left' groups begin to take full responsibility for our pages which deal with their areas. We have already made a start with Hackney and want other Labour Left groups to attend our Editorials and assume similar responsibilities.

Our next Editorial Board meetings are:
Tuesday 26th April at 7 p.m.
Tuesday 24th May at 7 p.m.
Both at County Hall

Deadline for articles for next issue: Saturday 7th May.

Camden Council : No Help to Private Tenants

Camden's outwardly more radical Council since the May '82 election has failed to make any impact on the service for tenants of private landlords. Under its chair, Councillor Robert Latham, Camden's Private Rented Secotor Sub-committee has tinkered about with minor reforms to Council policy but failed to produce an overall strategy for dealing with the worst housing in the borough.

Disrepair is on the increase, despite an election pledge to serve over 1,000 repair notices a year on landlords, harassment and **Rent Act evasions are widespread, yet Camden brings very few landlords to court,** and registered rents are the 2nd highest in the country and rising at the rate of 50% every 2 years, and Camden didn't think to intervene in the Rent Officer service until forced to by a critical report from the Camden Federation of Private Tenants.

REPAIRS

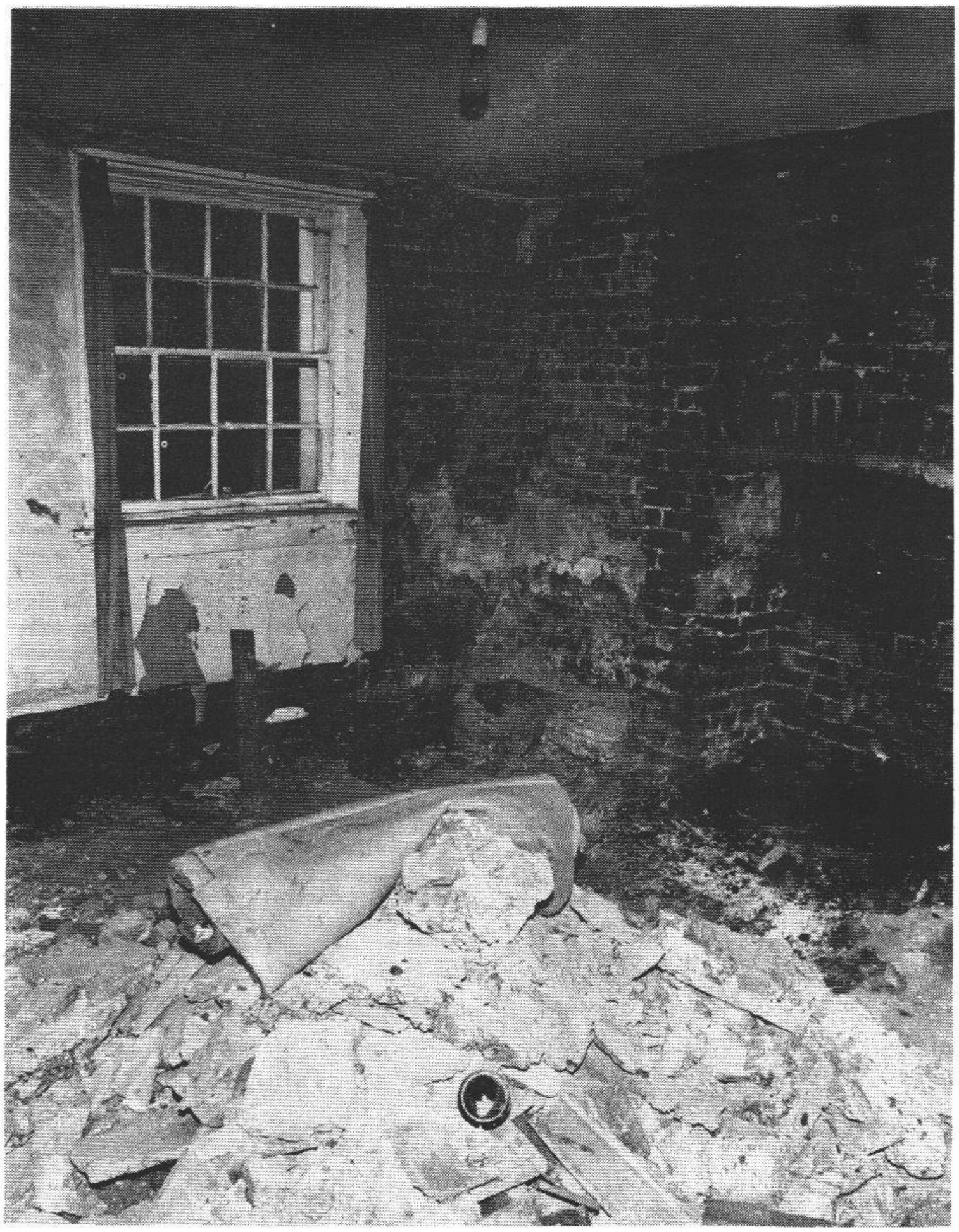
Disrepair is a huge problem. Over 6,000 privately rented dwellings are unfit for human habitation, and it is here where Councils have the greatest power to intervene by serving repair notices, Mangement and Control orders on landlords and by compulsorily purchasing the worst property. Despite serving 1,000 notices a year, nothing has been done to solve the proble of enforcing such notices.

One tenant first called in Environmental Health in 1975. The roof was leaking, the stairs collapsing and the house in a general state of disrepair. A notice was served in 1980, against which the landlord appealed. **Camden's Legal Division did nothing to process the appeal, and 2½ years later the** roof still leaks badly. Part of the roof has recently collapsed into one of the rooms.

Another tenant called in Environmental Health in 1978 who served a notice on the landlord ordering extensive works. The landlord repaired the roof, started digging up the floor of the tenants kitchen, and then **stopped** work. The builders left the house, work part complete, buiding materials everywhere, and have not been seen since. Four years later, the tenant still has not use of his kitchen, and only an external toilet and water supply. The Environmental Health Department have 'threatened' to do work in default.

These are not isolated caes. There are over 500 outstanding notices like the ones mentioned above. There are over 80 outstanding appeals by landlords waiting to go through the courts, and only one officer dealing with them part time. There are almost 100 Compulsory Purchase orders awaiting submission to the Department of the Environment and a further 40 awaiting resolution by the Council. Yet still Councillors listen to officers excuses for delays and not tenants pleas for action. Where the Council does have power to hire builders to do the work in default, it is reluctant to do so except under pressure from tenants.

Compulsory Purchase Orders should be an active part of the Council's strategy, despite government opposition. They should be seen as part of a political campaign against private landlordism and for public ownership. Councils should not be afraid to lose cases where its political objectives clash with those of the government.



Tenant's kitchen. No action for 4 years.

LANDLORD HARASSMENT

It is well known that the laws on harassment are inadequate and ineffective. A Camden landlord known to police and Council for his harassment was finally brought to Court recently. The judge found him guilty, but because of his age, he was given a conditional discharge. This same landlord is often abusive to tenants, has physically assaulted one, removes locks from tenants doors, and visits at all hours unannounced, sometimes accompanied by dogs. When a Tenants Association was set up, he watched outside every meeting to see who went in, then victimised and intimidated each tenant into not going again. Yet only on the one occasion has Camden prosecuted, when there was a clear cut case with an articulate tenant who was not afraid of the landlord. Another Camden landlord who is notorious for terri-

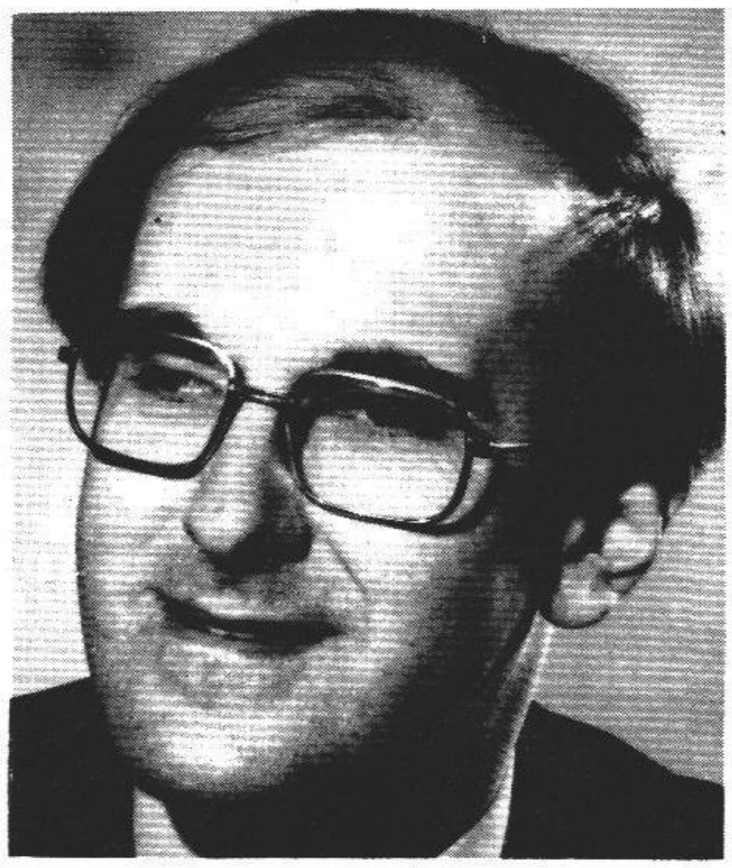
News from Havering

Dear Editor,
You asked if I could give a report on the political scene in Hornchurch, well here it is! I hope it's OK. It will be nice to see something in "Briefing" from one of the backwaters of London,
fraternal greetings from
John Davis,
Election Agent, HORNCHURCH CLP

REPORT FROM HAVERING

The rise and subsequent success of the left in London, if gauged by the coverage in various Labour Party publications, would seem to have passed us by in this far flung corner of the capital. But not so! True, we do not have the plethora of interest groups that exsists in the centre of town, nor do we have sizeable minority groupings (the smallest black community in any London borough, for example). Nevertheless, the left has made considerable advances, especially when you recall the nature of local parties only a few years ago.

Two events in particular helped bring this about. The first was the General Election defeat of 1979. A 7,000 Labour majority in Hornchurch became a Tory one of 600. The process accelerated after the election of the Labour GLC. Until 1979 Hornchurch CLP was controlled by the hard right. Our MP, Alan Lee Williams, was PPS to Roy Mason. Williams often ignored his own GMC and gradually lost touch completely. The setting up of a YS group was regarded as a possible coup d'etat by young "subversives". When Williams joined the SDP the previously frustrated left saw that it was time to act, the "do-nothing" attitude had to go. The composition of the GMC gradually changed and the Livingstone administration provided the necessary shot in the arm to get on with the job of building a larger, more aware CLP. The equally-balanced GMC of 1982 selected GLC member Alan R. Williams (no relation) as its PPC, a step in the right direction all things considered. The 1983 GMC has now for the first time in years a left majority and the party is more active than ever, producing regular newsletters, discussing subjects which were previously taboo. Tony Benn **received our support in 1981, resolutions** have been passed in favour of gay rights, unilateral disarmament, and withdrawal from the EEC. And our youth membership if growing apace. These changes may appear very basic to many comrades but they represent real progress after years of hard-right rule.



Alan Williams

The selection of former "Briefing" candidate for regional EC, Jack Hoepelman, as PPC for Romford confirms the progressive trend in the borough. The left in Havering must prepare in order to help ensure 4 more years of Labour control at County Hall and to take control in Havering for the first time since 1972. The ruling and increasingly reactionary Tories sit in the chamber, smug in the false belief that they cannot lose control. They are wrong! Labour can take the power if it is well organised and informed. The left cannot afford to ignore areas like Havering, we do need support. The speakers circuit seems to avoid coming out to such "hopeless" areas as Havering, an attitude which must end. Our fight is real and not lost! The struggle for socialist policies will continue in a part of London which desperately needs the Labour Party after years of Tory misrule.

John Davis
Constituency Agent, Hornchurch CLP

Camden Council continued

fying his tenants has never been brought to Court, even though police have had to be called on a number of occasions. He also calls round at all hours, changes locks to prevent tenants from getting into their flats, as well as charging extremely high rents for holiday lets on flats which are in a poor condition and badly managed.

Camden's Legal Division only brought about a dozen cases of landlord/tenant disputes to court in 1982. Whilst they have been successful in most cases, the small number indicates that they are only prepared to take landlords to court when they have a very strong case. The Council should prosecute in all instances where it has a reasonable case, and, being biased in favour of tenants, should err on the side of dragging a few landlords through the court and losing, rather than failing to do everything possible to protect tenants' rights.

AREA IMPROVEMENT

Declaring Housing Action Areas (HAA) is one tool for dealing with areas of bad housing. Given the size of the problem, with some 6,000 unfit privately rented dwellings, the Council needs a much larger rolling programme of declaring areas for intensive Environmental Health activity. It also needs a much more radical approach to HAAs, given that most of the Areas declared to date have been failures. This is graphically described in a recent publication "The Myth of Area Improvement" about the history of a HAA in Camden written by two local residents. A devastating report on the failure of another HAA in Camden was presented to a recent meeting of the Private Sector Sub-Committee. It gave as reasons for the failure "lack of political will, failure to commit and utilise resources of staffing and finance, poor systems of co-ordination and control, remoteness of all decision making from the area ... combined with other factors to make this a housing 'inaction' area."

OFFICERS DICTATE

Councillors are not prepared to tackle officers about the causes of delays and inaction, and seem to be particularly tolerant of the Chief Officers' leniency towards recalcitrant landlords. The job of Councillors should be to direct the work of the officers, instead of letting officers dictate the work of the officers, instead of letting officers dictate the pace. Councillors should listen to tenants and propose reforms themselves. For the past year they have done nothing until issues are raised by the Camden Federation of Private Tenants, and then they have implemented less than half of what the tenants have demanded.

It is even more important that the officers should not be allowed to dictate the pace in decentralisation. Camden's Environmental Health Department is reluctant to split up into more than 5 areas. Islington's on the other hand, whilst acknowledging difficulties, agreed that they could sub-divide the whole service into 20 areas.

USING POWER

Socialists in Camden must look again at how they can use their power over Council policies and Council machinery to serve the interests and protect the position of the occupants of the private rented sector. It is, of course, a holding operation, trying to use limited resources under a reactionary government with inadequate legislation until housing is no longer run for profit. Camden, and other Councils, should join campaigns aimed at opposing the propaganda of the landlords' lobbies, should give evidence to Select Committees, and should ensure that Labour Party policy reflects the needs of private tenants. A fifth of the population of Greater London still rent their homes from private landlords. Socialist Councillors cannot sit back and wait for the day of mass municipalisation whilst thousands still live in slums.

Kevin McDonnell and
Carrie Harrison
Holborn and St Pancras CLP

This is a personal view, but many of the points are shared by the Camden Federation of Private Tenants.

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STREATHAM CALLS FOR RESELECTION

THE new Streatham constituency was set up promptly last month. At the first meeting of the GMC delegates from left, centre and right unanimously called for an immediate reselection process. The Parliamentary candidates, John Tilley and Mike Petrou, who represented the wards that have been brought together, wrote letters resigning their 'territorial rights'. This should mean, to any rational observer, that the new party is free to consider anyone for selection as candidate, instead of being bound th choose from a shortlist of John Tilley and Mike Petrou.

But we reckoned without the tortuous logic of the NEC. According to their model rules for new constituencies, John Tilley and Mike Petrou can't take part in a reselection if they resign their 'territorial rights'. Even more amazingly, since John Tilley has said that he is not interested at all in Streatham, Mike Petrou, who has called for a full reselection process several times, is automatically appointed the candidate! Against his will, against the unanimous wishes of his own party, and disenfranchising the ward that John Tilley used to represent. This last point is all the more serious because the new ward joining Streatham contains over a third of the Party membership and a large slice of the Labour vote.

In fact the NEC are now saying to Mike Petrou, either you accept this appointment or you resign altogether and cannot take part in a selection.

The NEC are interested in upsetting everyone in Streatham because they fear a precedent. If we have a reselection other areas with more entrenched figures will get a chance to vote for a candidate who really represents their interests. We hope other parties will join us in resisting this rubber stamp manoeuvre by the NEC. We want the right to select our candidate. Our candidate agrees. He, like us, wants a candidate who commands the full democratic support of the whole constituency party so we can get everyone out working with a will for the General Election. Can it be that the NEC don't care?

STOP PRESS

It is almost certain, after a round of ward meetings, that Streatham GMC will vote overwhelmingly to defy the NEC. Mike Petrov will resign as a ploy to start a selection process, and we will go through a full selection with Mike's name on the shortlist. For other Parties in the same position or individuals who want more information, contact the Secretary, Neil Turner, 162 Downton Road, SW2. We need all the support we can get.



Photo: Wandsworth Photography Co-operative

On Wednesday 23 March, during the Council meeting, 500 people surrounded Wandsworth Town Hall in protest against the Tory Council's support for the government's nuclear 'defence' policy. This was one of the largest local demonstrations against nuclear weapons yet seen in this country. As dusk fell, the demonstrators, carrying candles and torches, linked hands right around the building.

Inside the Council chamber Tory councillors answered a barrage of questions on civil defence. In response to the inadequacy of the replies, the Labour group walked out of the meeting and joined the demonstrators. Battersea South MP Alf Dubs was also there to lend his support.

'We're here because we want to show people that the government's civil defence plans are a complete farce,' said Jonathan Lawrence, member of Wandsworth Direct Action CND. Their main aim is to delude people into thinking they could survive a nuclear war. We also wanted to show our support for the women of Greenham Common and for other peace camps throughout the country.'

Contact: Caroline Hartnell 673 2918

Save Spring Park School

LAST SUMMER the Spring Park Upper School in the West Wickham North Ward of Bromley Ravensbourne was closed. The reason for this, declared Bromley Council, was that the School was surplus to educational requirements because of the falling school rolls in the Borough.

Reasonable people might have thought Bromley would use the opportunity of falling rolls to reduce the pupil teacher ratio. However, Bromley's attitude to public education provision is not too dissimilar to its attitude to public transport. It doesn't like either very much.

The School Site has now been empty for about nine months. I have even heard of a local school being refused permission to use the gymnasium. Apparently Bromley Council prefer to see the School rot rather than be used.

Responsibility for the school has now been transferred to the Council's Land Resources Department. The fear now is that the School may be demolished, a fate that befell a closed school in the neighbouring constituency of Chislehurst.

My Branch has been campaigning for some time on this issue. We argue that the School has many valuable facilities which could be used to provide provision for a day nursery, old people's day centre, adult education classes, youth training workshop, or the like. This would have the advantage that the site could be transferred back to educational use when the school rolls rise again.

We have been involved in a leafletting campaign and have so far collected 550 signatures on a petition demanding that the Site be used to meet local needs. There is widespread concern about this issue among local people.

So far the Council have remained silent on the future of the School. I wrote to the Director of Education on the matter but not surprisingly did not receive a reply.

My Branch would be interested to know if any comrades know of a similar situation in other Boroughs. Their experiences might prove helpful to us.

Hugh Atkinson
Secretary
West Wickham North Ward
Bromley Ravensbourne CLP

Hackney: No Support for Police Plans

Brynley Heaven
Chair, Hackney Council
Police Committee

The Metropolitan police is embarked upon an ambitious programme to rebuild its effectiveness in the fight against crime. The confidential minutes of an address by Sir Kenneth Newman to the Chief Executives of London Boroughs show that a reasonably clear and phased battle plan has been laid down. Highest priority is attached to an effort to build up the range of street and neighbourhood contacts and to feed the data into a sophisticated computer-based information crunching process capable of churning out the material on which district Chief Superintendents can plan. In general terms they will work up consensus-building proposals designed for presentation to Scarman-model Police-Community Consultative committees. The purpose will be to legitimate the policing strategy, to co-opt community leaders into taking responsibility for police tactics and crime prevention strategies and, as far as possible, to take the steam out of politically-based demands for greater police accountability.

The minutes of the meeting state: *'It was intended that a district Commander would go to a consultative committee with a tentative plan for achievement of consensus regarding borough policing arrangements . . . in response to a question as to what extent the police would be prepared to discuss operational policy, Sir Kenneth indicated that operational questions were not excluded from discussions at the meetings of the consultative committees but they would have to be confidential.'*

SOCIAL ENGINEERING

The plan, which may be effective in some areas, presupposed that potential members of police-community liaison committees and the various statutory agencies (such as local government departments) are anxious to be co-opted into a process of social engineering and manipulation. In the crime-ridden inner London Borough of Hackney, local councillors and key community organisations, including the crucial organisations which have real roots in the black commmunity, are saying that they want to work with the police on a different basis and – failing that – not at all.

Hackney Council Police Committee's point of departure from Sir Kenneth's plan is the appreciation that in order to have any credibility and standing within the borough's public at large, prospective members of any liaison or watch committee must be satisfied that they are not being ensnared into a high tech police plan which will weaken their ability to articulate the community's policing priorities independent from plans the police have already drawn up. Hackney Council, while anxious to get something off the ground (its own proposals will be withdrawn on July 11th if no positive response is received from the Home Office), is therefore insisting that liaison takes place under the auspices of the local authority committee structure, subject to scrutiny by the public. Since the Home Office seems unlikely on recent form to agree to this – falsely asserting that it would imply police accountability which it certainly does not – the stage is set for confrontation post July 11th.

Our Radio

On Wednesday 23rd March at 9.30pm the Home Office and police raided a flat at 143 Eddystone Towers (22nd floor) in Deptford and seized a transmitter and other equipment. After four failed attempts the Home Office had finally caught up with **Our Radio**. The 5-week hunt involved at least 4 carloads of men and a van every Wednesday night, use of high technology tracking equipment, radio, night sight binoculars, phone tapping, and heavy backing from police forces across London, including on one occasion a police helicopter. In all we reckon it has cost the taxpayer at least £30,000 to seize £150 worth of equipment.

Never has a London pirate suffered such pressure. But then Our Radio is an 'open access' pirate, and in fact represents the only opportunity for minority or community groups to broadcast their own radio shows.

The tape playing when the police burst in was 'Gaywaves', the only radio programme made by and for London's Gay community. Other Our Radio groups produce 'Women on the Waves', by and for women, Radio Solidarnosc, half in Polish, a magazine programme called 'The Message', which includes the only news for London's 40,000 squatters.

The Black People's Action Centre (whose Croydon premises were destroyed recently by a fascist bomb) and the London Workers Group, as well as a Greenham support group and many music programmes were due to begin broadcasting their shows from April.

All are now at least temporarily off the air, due to the raids, and deprived of 'Freedom of Speech' on an officially declared 'unused' radio channel (Channel 55, 103 to 104 FM). Our Radio has campaigned openly for democratically controlled local Community Radio, on some of the over 20 free slots on the FM band. On Monday 21st March we held a well attended public meeting in Camden, on the issue of Community Radio and the survival of Our Radio, representatives of the SDP and Labour spoke in support.

APPEAL: Our Radio is being brutally suppressed, we appeal to all sympathisers to send us a little cash so we can continue. We appeal to other 'Free' media to show solidarity by printing this Press Release. The address is Our Radio, BM Box 103FM, London WC1N 3XX.

Tottenham Bye-Election

A by-election is being held in Tottenham caused by Andrew Mackintosh moving into the House of Lords. I have been selected as the candidate, and I contested the last GLC Elections for Ealing Acton, where we considerably reduced the Tory majority.

I believe that this by-election is important because the Tories have never disguised the fact that they like to see the GLC abolished and its functions off-loaded onto the cash-starved Boroughs or onto non-elected Boards. They will be watching the **result of this by-election carefully to assess the support of working class people for the GLCs policies. It is therefore vital that we keep this seat.**

The role of the Labour Party is to act both as a defender of working class interests and as an instrument for the socialist transformation of society. I support the policies that the GLC is pursuing because they identify with these criteria.

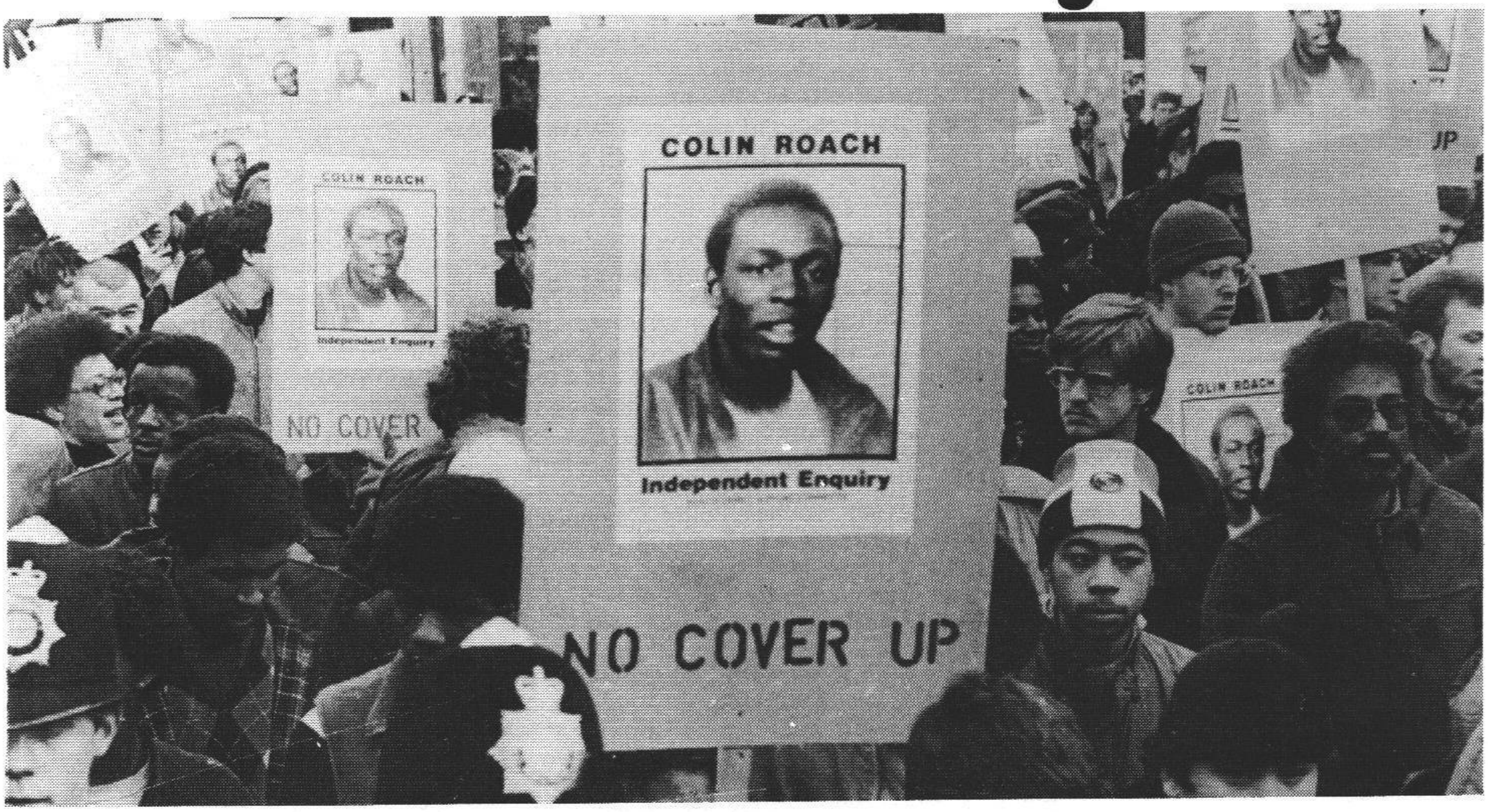
Tottenham is a multi-racial community suffering massive unemployment (an increase of 252% since 1979) and excessively heavy-handed policing. It has been badly affected by the mass employers of labour, such as the furniture trade. It also has a high proportion of homeworkers, engaged in the garment trade. The GLC Industry and Employment Committee are working in partnership with Haringey Council to bring new employment into the area, and have already developed Morrison's Yard a unit of small workshops. Traffic congestion is also a problem, and the planned North/South route which the Labour GLC revived after it had been scrapped by the previous Tory administration should relieve some of the heavy traffic especially in the Tottenham Hale area.

Tottenham faces many of the problems associated with inner city areas, declining employment, acute traffic problems and pollution, decaying housing. I believe that the GLC working with Haringey Council can help to overcome some of these problems and can show positive proof of municipal socialism in action.

Help for this by-election is urgently needed *especially* on polling day. Anyone able to assist should contact Olive Rainbird (808 6840) or Arnie Large (808 0178).

Jenni Fletcher

Colin Roach : Mobilise for May 14!



Colin Roach was shot dead in Stoke Newington police station on the night of Wednesday January 12th. Since that time, there has been a widespread popular campaign for an INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY into all the circumstances surrounding his death.

The callous treatment of the Roach family by Stoke Newington police, the fact that they questioned Colin's father James Roach for three hours and only told him that his son was dead after he refused to answer any more questions, the fact that while questioning Mr. Roach, the police put out a press statement saying his son had shot himself with a sawn-off shot gun because he had a history of mental illness, all these factors led to a widespread feeling that the police were not telling the truth and that they were involved in a cover-up.

CAMPAIGN TO FIND THE TRUTH

Local black youths immediately started a campaign to find the truth. They immediately took to the streets holding two militant protests within four days. The Roach Family Support Committee took the campaign forward with three mass demonstrations in Hackney within three months.

Police response was predictable. Mass arrests, intimidation and violence is the weapon they chose to try to smash the campaign. A total of 84 people have been arrested over the five protests. Further arrests have taken place when pickets were organised outside Old Street Magistrates Court.

The principal leaders of the campaign – Mr. Roach, Tower Hamlets Labour Councillor Dennis Twomey, Lester Lewis and Barnor Hesse of Hackney Black Peoples Association have all been arrested on one charge or another. Then, the police staged a military style operation in an attempt to smash the campaign publicly in a busy shopping area. They failed miserably.

The Support Committee has been advised that it has a case for bringing an action against local police Commander William Taylor for conspiracy to assault, conspiracy to arrest and conspiracy to use violence against participants in the various protests. RFSC intends to co-ordinate this action and join battle with the police in the courts since our rights to protest is being constantly violated by the police.

A picket was organised outside St. Pancras Coroners Court in Camley Street, Kings Cross NW1. This began at 9am on Monday 18th April and continued throughout the duration of the inquest.

RFSC plans to send a petition to the European Parliament, and that institution is being asked to receive a delegation from the Support Committee. Thus, this is the first stage in the internationalisation of the campaign for an INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY.

ALL LONDON DEMONSTRATION

An ALL LONDON DEMONSTRATION has been called for Saturday 14th May. This will start from Bethnal Green Gardens near Bethnal Green Tube Station and make its way to Stoke Newington police station and then to a Rally at Stoke Newington Common. A National Demonstration is planned for July.

All organisations in London are called upon to support the campaign. This means full mobilisation especially for the May 14th demonstration. Leaflets and posters are available from RFSC. Financial support is also needed to take the campaign forward.

Stoke Newington police have a history of racism and violence second to none. It was Mr. Justice Mars Jones who found Stoke Newington police to be guilty of monstrous, wicked and shameful conduct, of beating up a black family in Stoke Newington and then bringing charges against them to escape the consequences of their own wrongful acts. The police have even attempted to legalise racism and impose political and racist conditions on who should take part in RFSC marches. After they had arrested Councillor Dennis Twomey and tried to impose political bail conditions for his liberty, they then said that as a white man he should not take part in protests organised by black people. Such a clear case of racism is unheard of. That is one reason why there must be full mobilisation for May 14th.

Further details and financial contributions, write or phone: RFSC, 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7PP. Tel: 01 254 7480.

Lester Lewis

Lester Lewis is a member of the General Committee of North Hackney and Stoke Newington Constituency Labour Party.

Review article:

POPLARISM

'Cramped together under crowded conditions in dark mean streets and alleys; overworked at miserable wages; never enough to eat; seldom able to buy a new dress or suit of clothes; content to purchase cast-offs in the pawn shop or on the stall in the street market; subject to disease from conditions of work and conditions of living. What chance have they or their children? They have been cast into the abyss of ignorance and our society passes them by and abuses them for their dirt and their ignorance which our social system thrusts upon them.' **This was the life of the East London working class in the post-war slump of the 1920's. After the war to end all wars, with the flower of European youth slaughtered on the battlefields, the grim reality of capitalist recession had to be faced.**

The people of Poplar voted their opposition to poverty by electing a Labour Council. Not educated men with letters after their names and fancy houses, but dockers, postmen, railway men, workers and housewives. The Mayor chosen for 1919 was George Lansbury, then editor of the *Daily Herald*. The Council was composed of ordinary men and women who were baptised in working class struggles and knew their responsibilities to their class. One of its first actions in 1919 was to award council employees a minimum wage of £4 a week, including to the seven women employees.

WITHHOLD PRECEPT

As a job creation project the council wanted to build a road and sewerage works and applied to the Government for £31,000. The Government refused on the grounds that they only gave money to schemes for ex-servicemen, while the council wanted to discriminate in favour of men with the largest families. Men who had not been conscripted during the war. To raise extra revenue for this scheme would put an intolerable burden on the rates of the Poplar poor and so at a special meeting on Tuesday 22nd March 1921, Poplar Council voted to withhold the precepts from the London County Council, the Metropolitan Police, the Metropolitan Water Board and the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

Poplar had already taken legal advice and knew that the LCC had no powers to seize their funds. Instead, the LCC applied for a writ of mandamus and the Council was ordered to levy the correct rate. But as they still refused, a writ for the arrest of thirty of the Councillors was issued. The men were sent to Brixton, the women to Holloway.

GROWING SUPPORT

Support was growing all the time. Bethnal Green, with a Communist mayor, passed a similar resolution. Clem Atlee, then a Stepney alderman, chaired a special conference called by the London Regional Executive and also proposed a motion at Stepney Borough Council asking how much longer the poor were to go on keeping the poor. Local trade union branches were right behind the Council and the Annual Conference of the TUC – while not going as far as offering concrete support – noted that the Poplar Councillors had 'rendered a real national service'. Herbert Morrison, Mayor of Hackney, however, was determined to prove that not all Labour Councillors were Bolsheviks and that they could act quite sensibly if pushed. Against the expressed wishes of the Poplar councillors he went to Lloyd-George, the Prime Minister, to ask him to release the prisoners and wring concessions for the poorer boroughs and the unemployed. With no joy from Lloyd-George. Morrison then took himself to Sir Alfred Mond, Liberal Minister of Health. At first Mond said he had no powers to intervene but after a few weeks he realised that he had to find a face-saving way of releasing the Councillors. They could be freed if they apologized for their contempt of court. The Councillors did not exactly apologise: they merely told the court that they wished to be present at any negotiations. They were freed. Thousands greeted them on their return home. A monster demonstration was held in Victoria Park.

'COMPROMISE'

At a conference convened to seek out ways of equalising the rates, it looked impossible that an agreement would ever be reached, until the Westminster Town Clerk, John Hunt, suggested a 'compromise'. He said that the cost of outdoor relief for the able-bodied unemployed should (on a scale approved by the Ministry of Health) be pooled through the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. This was readily accepted and hailed as a victory for direct action.

Since then, the laws governing local authorities have changed. Legislation introduced by Neville Chamberlain in 1927 gave the Government powers to bring rebellious authorities to heel, and these were re-enacted in the Local Government Act (1972). Councillors who 'wilfully misconduct' themselves can be surcharged and disqualified from public office for five years, as well as local government being taken over by the District Auditor. Clay Cross is a recent example, when the Urban District Council refused to raise rents in line with the Housing Finance Act.

Read the full story in: *Poplarism 1919-1955*, by Noreen Branson; published by Lawrence and Wishart.

Adelaide Leslie

Popular Planning for Social Need

POPULAR PLANNING FOR SOCIAL NEED

How can we ensure that rank and file activists are involved in industrial and economic policy-making and implementation? Last year a group of trades councils and shop stewards combine committees published a Declaration 'Popular Planning for Social Need' as a contribution to the preparation of an AES . The Declaration argues that "a lot of work must be done — not only to overthrow Thatcherism and defeat anti-unions policies, but also to make sure that the 'partners' in rebuilding Britain will include the membership — not just the top echelons of the unions."

The Declaration has been debated in labour movement meetings across the country, and a Conference organised by CAITS on 21 May at County Hall continues the discussion. Shop stewards from Metal Box and Lucas Aerospace will examine how collective bargaining can be protected and extended, and Audrey Wise will lead the discussion on the new approaches needed if the economy is to be transformed to meet social need. Hilary Wainwright, of the GLC's Popular Planning Unit, will chair.

MAKING JOBS

Trade unionists and unwaged workers will be able to design and develop new products in workshops opening later this year in Islington, and will get help in assessing the market, finding funds, and organising production. The workshops are a major part of a North London Centre formed by the LBI, Islington Trades Council, Poly of North London and CAITS, and funded by the GLEB as the first of a number of centres planned to make up a 'Product and Employment Development Network' in north and east London.

The aim is to create jobs by developing products which have a social use, and with the full participation of the workforce in the organisation of production. The other 'arm' of the Centre is employment maintenance — assisting trade unionists threatened with redundancies to work out alternative strategies.

At a conference at the PNL on 15 May Mike Cooley (formerly of the Lucas Aerospace Combine and now Technical Director of the GLEB) will explain the North London Centre and the Network, and speakers from comparable initiatives in Holland will contribute their experiences, so that detailed planning can progress. The North London Centre is not intended for Islington only, and groups from other boroughs, as well as Islington groups not yet involved are welcome to the conference to give their ideas, and to take part in the centre.

Details of the Conferences, the Declaration material and the North London Centre from: CAITS (Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems) PNL, Holloway Road, N7. 607-7079.

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT!

Labour's campaign document *The New Hope For Britain* is far better than any of us dared imagine. Fears that a fudge of unacceptable proportions was being prepared over its contents have proved to be unfounded, largely, it must be said, due to pressure from the rank and file, particularly over disarmament. This pressure almost certainly produced a stronger document than might otherwise have been the case.

Certainly it is true that the decision to keep some members of the National Executive Committee in the dark during the early stages of the document's preparation was a mistake and led to suspicion and mistrust. But the fact that the document has been produced with the full involvement of the Shadow Cabinet means that the next Labour government, most of whose prospective members were involved in its preparation, can have no excuse for failing to carry it out.

Whatever doubts we may have about the sincerity of the conversion of the Healeys and Hattersleys on the road to Greenham Common, the fact remains that they have publicly endorsed the policies in the campaign document and must be held to them.

FUNDAMENTAL AND IRREVERSIBLE

For there is no doubt that if the policies of *The New Hope For Britain* are implemented, they *will* represent a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people – by no means as great a shift as we would desire, it is true, but a significant movement nonetheless.

The document gives us firm commitments on Cruise and Trident, the Common Market and unemployment. It gives workers new statutory rights to draw up plans for their own industries and backs up planning agreements with new statutory rights. The commitments on racist immigration legislation, positive action for women and ethnic minorities, creating elected police authorities and abolishing the Special Patrol Groups are positive and encouraging. Proposals on the abolition of the House of Lords, freedom of information, reform of the press, animal protection and Scottish devolution are to be welcomed.

FINAL MANIFESTO

All these are positive and radical aspects of the document and the task of all socialists must now be to ensure that the party does campaign upon these policies, that they do appear in the final election manifesto and, most importantly of all, that they are carried out when we are elected to office.

There will still be justified criticisms, of course. It should have been made clearer that the removal of the American bases is not negotiable but a firm commitment. The Greek socialist Papandreou was elected to close down the American bases in Greece. He negotiated with the American and the bases ended up staying.

It should have been made clearer that Polaris will be scrapped regardless of any multilateral negotiations. During both 1974 elections Labour fought on a manifesto commitment to 'participate in the multilateral disarmament negotiations and as a first step seek the removal of American Polaris bases from Great Britain'. The Holy Loch base remained undisturbed and Labour ministers secretly took a billion pound decision to update Polaris with the Chevaline warhead.

The 'equal rights' section of the document could have been more specific on gay rights. The public ownership proposal should have been spelt out more clearly – what do we mean by taking a 'significant public stake' in pharmaceuticals, for instance? – and the 1982 conference resolution calling for the nationalisation of 20-25 of the largest companies should certainly have been included.

Considerable alarm surrounds the national economic assessment. *Socialist Action*, for instance, declared upon the publication of *The New Hope For Britain* that 'Both the TUC and the Labour Party are now committed to try and hold back wages'. Such statements, although obviously based on real fears, are less than helpful. The document specifically rules out 'the old policy of government-imposed wage restraint' and it is surely the task of socialists now to highlight and campaign upon the positive aspects of the document.

But whatever the merits of the detailed wording of particular sections, we now have the document, we have broad agreement within all sections of the party over its contents, and we must now fight the general election upon it. The Darlington by-election provided a clear indication of the extent to which the policies which the Left has been advocating over the past decade have now been embraced by the whole party. Ossie O'Brien declared himself in favour of unilaterial nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the Common Market and the alternative economic strategy. Yet the press was still able to describe him as a Right-winger!

What Darlington also showed is that Labour can still win the next election. The campaign document, which should enjoy the support of every single member of the party, shows us the way to do it.

Nigel Williamson

Step Up the Campaign for Disarmament

THE Campaign Statement contains an unequivocal pledge to refuse to deploy Cruise missiles and to cancel Trident. In addition it is also committed to complete the removal of nuclear bases within the lifetime of a Labour Government. The time has come for Labour Parties up and down the country to step up their public campaigning on Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament so that the Labour Party is identified in the public mind with unilateral nuclear disarmament. This is an issue that will appeal to many people who have not consistently voted Labour in the past, as well as to new voters. In this context it is worth emphasising that no other major party is committed to this policy. Labour CND is sending an appeal to all Constituency Parties to do just that.

Nevertheless there are two major issues on which the Campaign Statement does not unequivocally reflect Labour's policy adopted by the 1982 Party Conference. The statement says:

"We will propose that Britain's Polaris force be included in the nuclear disarmament negotiations, in which Britain must take part. We will, after consultation, carry through in the lifetime of the next Parliament our non-nuclear defence policy."

But Labour is committed to the unconditional abandonment of Polaris and all nuclear bases and weapons.

The greatest assistance which Labour can give to the disarmament negotiations – irrespective of whether it is allowed to be present or not – is to state immediately when coming to office that it is abandoning Polaris and insisting on the closure of all nuclear bases, British and American, on British soil or in British waters. It is this stance which will give maximum encouragement to the opposition to nuclear weapons in Europe and will increase their pressure for disarmament. And it is from this stance that we are in the best position to launch compromise proposals for disarmament designed to bring the super-powers together.

Secondly the campaign statement contains a commitment to:

"begin discussions for the removal of nuclear bases from Britain, which is to be completed within the lifetime of the Labour Government."

It is important that we make it clear from the outset that we – in line with Labour's policy – insist on the closure of the bases irrespective of American views on the matter.

A clear statement on these points now would be welcome, and alongside their public campaigning CLPs and trade unions should ask for just that.

The success of the Easter Demonstrations demonstrates the great public support for our policies. And President Reagan's latest statements emphasise just how necessary it is to act for disarmament. Labour's anti-nuclear weapons policy is both a necessity and an election winner. Our campaigning must be stepped up now.

WALTER WOLFGANG

Prove we mean it

by Alan Freeman

AN APT phrase of Connolly's applies well today. 'If you must sheathe your weapons', he said, 'keep your powder dry'.

In short, beware the victory that invites surrender. Welcome it, build on it — but don't lose sight of our ultimate aims or in the next battle we'll lose everything.

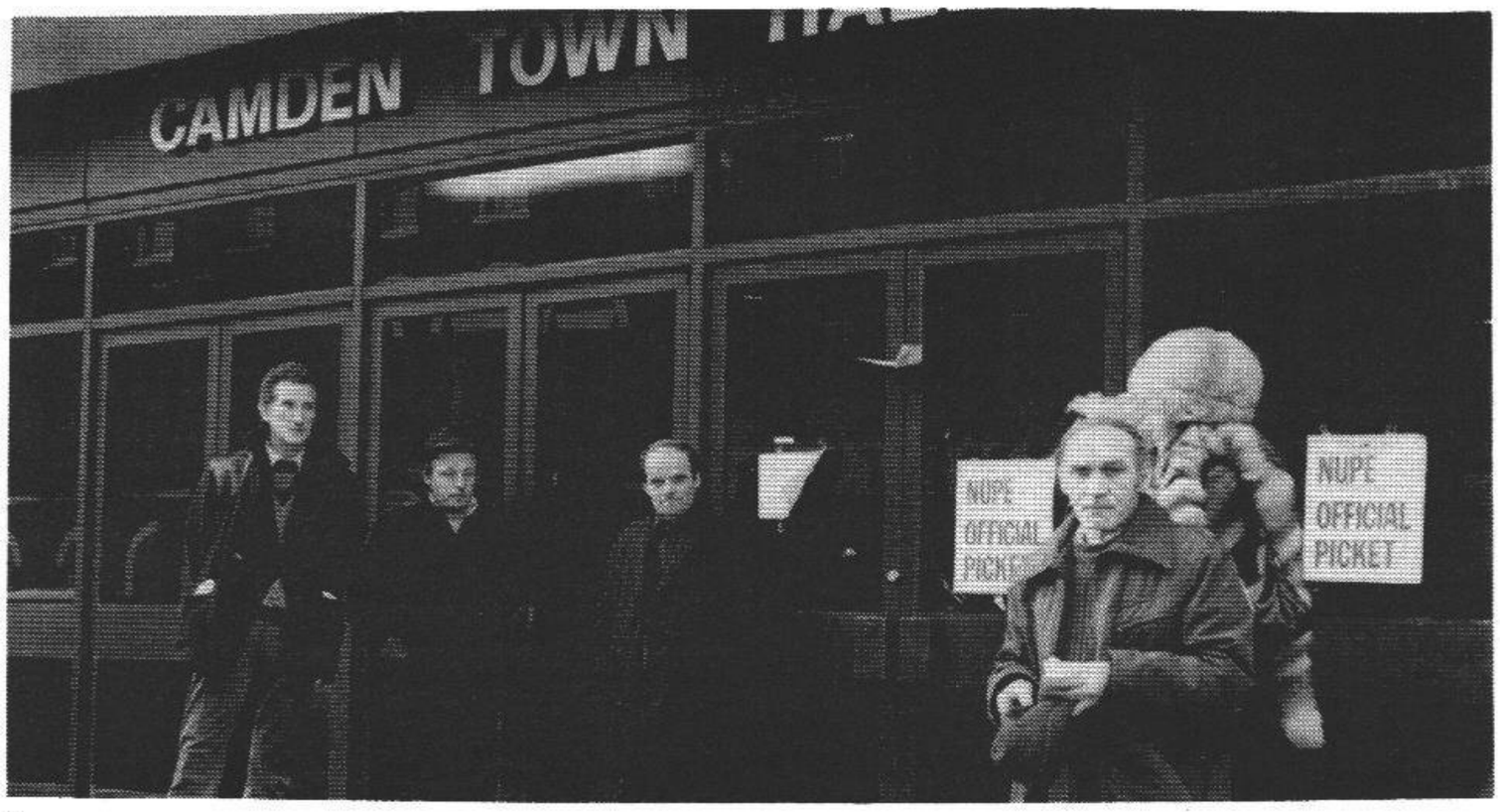
Labour's new campaigns document is such a victory. It is a testimony to the strength of vital and imaginative movements like the Greenham Common women and to their support in the Labour Party. But can we say to such movements 'If you now vote Labour, these promises will be carried out'? Clearly not. We must also spell out what *else* is needed to win the next battle — after the election.

Many argue it is defeatist to discuss the problems Labour will meet after the election, and divisive to organise to meet them. But in fact Labour can *only* win if it can prove its policies will be carried out.

Wishful thinking is useless. Voters remember the Social Contract and Healey's capitulation to the IMF. They can see that his supporters are in the driving seat. They know that the PLP and NEC majority have led a vicious, witch-hunting campaign against the very policies they have put in the new document. They know they would love to get back together with their SDP friends. A *real* guarantee against a post-election betrayal is thus vital.

First, therefore, we need a rank and file movement to reject coalition and ensure Labour governs alone on its full programme. Second, we must ensure the gains so far made are not dropped in the manifesto stage.

But third, we need a fighting link with extraparliamentary forces. After a Labour victory the protest actions must not stop, as in 1975, for fear of unseating a precarious Labour cabinet.



1979: Labour divided by wage restraint. 1984...?

They must redouble in intensity, and the left must build a movement within the Labour Party which will ensure that they can tell the next Labour government what to do instead of vice versa.

But we cannot link up with such forces unless we fight, clearly and unequivocally, around *their* demands — nearly all conference policy — and not around fudges designed to provide the next Labour Cabinet with an escape hatch. And by this criterion there is a glaring weakness in the new document: wage restraint. Page ten explains:

'The (National Economic) assessment *will also take account of the impact of cost increases* on the future rate of inflation.'

For 'cost increases' read 'wage increases'. Remember how, in 1974, a tiny phrase in the Social Contract became the excuse to drop all commitments for a rigid wage policy? This is just such a little phrase. It is the difference between real social advance against the power of capital, and Labour committed to impose the dictates of capital, on its supporters.

Trade union conferences are discussing the issue throughout the summer. The STUC is certain to oppose it, and the T&GWU may well do so. If the Party campaigns around wage restraint it will alienate its most active and militant supporters. If it imposes it in office it will run into headlong conflict with them, as it did in 1979 — paving the way for Thatcher. And if the left now endorses this policy it will be unable to prevent such an act of betrayal.

This weakness casts the other weaknesses in a different light: the fudge on disarmament and the EEC; the failure to include Labour's full commitment to abortion rights.

These could be minor defects, soon to be overcome — if we could be sure that in the face of the first challenge to these policies, Labour would possess the unity and will to resist. But such unity depends on an alliance with extraparliamentary movements and championing their demands. Wage restraint means breaking the alliance with the biggest extraparliamentary movement of all — rank and file trade unionism. It means Labour divided against itself. *It means surrender*.

So, by all means let us welcome the advances in this document, defend them, campaign around them. But we need more. We need a categorical rejection of wage restraint, and end to fudging, and above all a movement in the Party to unite it with the Greenham Commen women and the Jobs marchers — not with the SDP and their Treasury buddies.

ANECDOTES & RHETORIC AT YOUNG SOCIALISTS CONFERENCE

YOU might have thought YS conference would be a lively affair, with lots of definite plans for organising working class youth against the Tories coming out of it. But you'd be wrong. Once again, thanks to the stranglehold of Militant supporters, delegates were forced to listen to anecdotes and rhetoric. Motions proposing that the YS should get involved in building YCND, spreading support for the Greenham women and taking part in CND's national activities were defeated. The YS chose instead to 'intervene' – which actually means standing on the sidelines and giving out leaflets calling on YCND supporters to join the YS for the fight for resolutions calling on a Labour government to nationalise the arms industry.

It was a similar story about the Youth Training Scheme. A motion from a Class Fighter YS in Wallasey which called for trade union blacking of the schemes until they gave trade union rights and rates of pay, was defeated on the NC recommendation. No-one actually understands why the NC recommended opposition. The reason given was rather flimsy – they said the plans for the schemes were too developed to be opposed. General opinion seems to feel that it was opposed simply because Wallasey is not a Militant YS.

An excellent women's motion which called for a young women's conference and support for CLPD WAC positions was also defeated. Under pressure from the women's movement and the left in the Party, Militant have been forced to adjust their position. The demands which everyone seems to agree with, creches at meetings, 24 hour state nurseries and so on are dressed up and called 'positive action', using a fancy name to bolster their spurious claim to understand women's oppression.

Of course positive action is counterposed to positive discrimination but then again, as we were told, the ideas of middle class feminists have had no influence on working class women.

For all the talk of unity between LAW and LSCAW there wasn't much in evidence at this conference. The Militants voted against a motion calling for joint work and urging CLPs to refuse to expel. Instead the YS now supports CLPs which won't expel. Unfortunately there was no debate about Militant's use of the courts because Revolution YSs refused to accept a Class Fighter amendment in their composite, leaving it to fall automatically. The LAW/LSCAW fringe meeting was poorly attended with only about 50 people going.

As usual most of the serious political debate took place in the fringe meetings. In fact this had to be the case with the gay rights discussion because for the eighth year running conference decided not to debate it. Gay LPYS – a new group – came to conference in force. 200 people went to their fringe meeting to hear Peter Tatchell speak. Even Militant comrades there apologised for the YS leadership's reactionary attitudes.

The SLV – dismissed as a front for the 'sects' by Kevin Ramage, also had Tatchell speaking. Again over 150 people heard about the campaign and discussed the possibility of producing SLV material particularly aimed at winning the youth vote. The Class Fighter and Revolution meetings drew about 120 and 60 people respectively and the combined left opposition to the Militant was about 20% of the delegates.

All Party members under 26 should join their YS and help build the opposition to Militant's stronghold.

JANE ASHWORTH
Delegate from Islington North YS

Labour Students Conference Report

THE Labour Students Conference had three main tendencies, Clause IV who support the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, Militant and Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN). SSIN is made up of Labour Briefing supporters, Socialist Organiser, Socialist Action, Unite and Fight and many far left independents. The first three sessions were marred by what many delegates saw as a witch-hunt. The student organiser who supported a position similar to Clause IV when he was a student had challenged the credentials of delegates from fifteen Labour Clubs. In the elections the combined vote of the Left opposition to Clauve IV obtained 41% of the vote. I will leave Briefing readers to judge what was behind the student organiser's motives for bureaucratically overruling so many clubs' delegates.

A long constitutional debate took place in which the main issue at stake was the role of student union officers. Clause IV argued that they represented all the students and not just Labour activists. This argument is basically the one used by MPs who say they represent all their constituents and not just Labour Party activists. Conference was not even allowed to question Neil Stewart, Labour Student leader of NUS as he was accountable to all the students not Labour students!

A motion calling for support for Solidarnosc and Labour Students to break links with all Warsaw Pact state trade and student unions was defeated. The position passed, the Clause IV and national committee position, did call for support but it also agreed to maintain a programme of dialogue and detente with Eastern Europe – the same bureaucrats who imprison Polish students. This position fails to support the demands of NZS, Student Solidarnosc. SSIN commit themselves to continue campaigning for NOLS to support the students and workers of Poland.

NOLS rejected Militant's crude economism which was typified by their candidate for Women's Officer statement. She said "Women will only be liberated when we nationalise the top 200 monopolies" If only it was so easy.

Unfortunately the position conference adopted was fairly uncritical support of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) including chauvinistic calls for import controls to support the national economy. The left in Labour Students as elsewhere desperately needs to develop a constructive critique of the AES which includes a strategy for mobilisation now.

Without doubt the most encouraging debate was the one on Ireland. NOLS rejected Labour's bipartisan record on Ireland. We rejected the intervention of the United Nations troops in Ireland. NOLS took up the Republican call for the next Labour government to withdraw the troops and end partition within its term of office.

NOLS now has excellent policy on Ireland. Its only weakness being that it does not adopt an uncompromising call for Troops Out Now. We should go back to our Labour Clubs and take the campaign for Irish self-determination into our local Labour Parties and Students Unions.

In the elections to NOLS national committee, Socialist Students in NOLS received on average 14% of the vote. As many of our delegations were ruled out of order by John Dennis, we consider this vote as a success.

Our task is to build a broad current in Labour Students which is prepared to orientate itself towards students in the colleges involved in defending their education. To those sections of the labour movement who are beginning to challenge Labour's reformist and indeed imperialist record.

In doing this we can learn a lot from our experience in building the Briefing network. SSIN can be contacted through Jane Ashworth, 13 Buxton Road, N19.

BRYN GRIFFITHS
University of Sussex Delegate &
Brighton Labour Briefing

'THE CAMPAIGN FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THE GENERAL ELECTION'

Speakers

KEN LIVINGSTONE
(Leader of GLC)

KIM STALLWOOD
(Campaigns Organiser, B.U.A.V.)

VAL VENESS
(Deputy Leader, Islington Council and PPC Hornsey)

Chair: JEREMY CORBYN
(Haringey Councillor and PPC Islington North)

FRIDAY 29th APRIL 1983
ROOM 180, COUNTY HALL, SE1
7.30 p.m.

WORLD ECONOMY IN CRISIS
Rethinking International Perspectives

Sheffield July 9-11 1983

With the choosing of the title 'World Economy in Crisis' for its 1983 Conference, the Conference of Socialist Economists aim to encourage the rediscovery and rethinking of international perspectives on the crisis and responses to it. The Conference will concentrate on the following themes:
★'The New International Divisions of Labour ★International Finance ★Arms and Disarmament ★The Nation State ★Energy and Raw Materials ★Living Standards and Conditions ★Socialist Responses ★Unemployment.

Socialist internationalism has to confront the divisions of race, gender and nationality, and these issues will therefore be a central concern of the Conference. The sessions will be organised so that participants can follow these issues across the range of topics.

Details: CSE Conference Organising Committee, 25 Horsell Rd, London N1.

CSE conference '83

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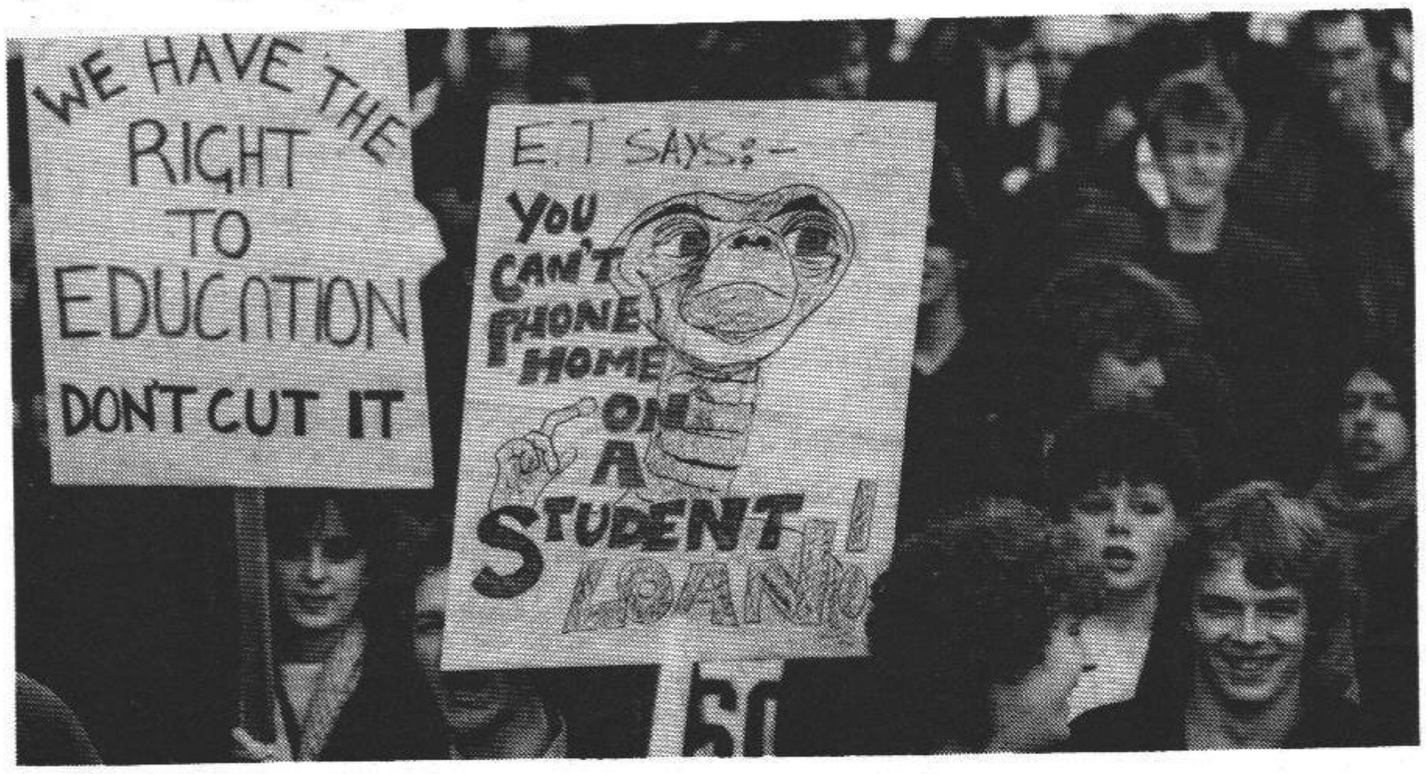
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Reject Tories' Students Loan Scheme

Sarah Veale
Vice President (WELFARE)
National Union of Students

To describe the Tory government as having an education policy would be generous; what they now have instead is a monetarist policy crudely applied to education. Educational criteria for cuts are humped on almost as an afterthought, so that you end up with a situation in which the Department of Education and Science issue an instruction on, say, cuts in the public sector higher education colleges, then instruct the National Advisory Body to come up with justifications.

The much-floated idea of introducing a student loans scheme to replace part or all of the current grants system fits into the same description. Keith Joseph wants to spend far less on student maintenance, and tells the civil servants to come up with a scheme and a set of attractive arguments. Unfortunately for him, it is impossible to devise a loans scheme to fit into the British education system which would not result in drastically curtailing access to higher education for people from poor backgrounds, for women, and for mature students. This would be the final death blow to the 1962 Robbins principle, which, enshrined in the Education Act of that year, guaranteed access to degree courses to anybody with the academic ability, and ensured that they would get financial support. Hardly selling points, even for the Tories!!



Andrew Wiard (Report)

9th March 1983. London Educational Alliance demonstration

MISLEADING

It would be misleading to pretend that the current grants system is perfect. It has led to a higher participation rate from working class students, at 20% of the total number, but that clearly is not high enough , and is to a considerable extent due to the rigidity of the current system, whereby certain courses, in higher education, are designated, which means that they attract a mandatory award, and others, nearly all in further education, only carry discretionary awards, which are easy prey for cuts by local education authorities. If you also accept the premise that children from working class backgrounds are far less often encouraged to see higher education as an option while they are at school, obviously they will need access to further education, before they can apply to take higher education courses. Access includes financial support, and it is quite absurd that the Government now pays £25 a week to young people on the Youth Training Schemes, and nothing to those on other courses in further education. The Labour Party has now included the NUS demand fo £25 a week for *all* students in its education policy statement.

The other great problem with the current grants system is its insistence upon categorising students as being dependent upon their parents. It seems ironic that at eighteen, people can vote, marry, die for their country and be deemed adult in every way except that if they are students, their grant will be settled upon the basis of their parents' income. In 70% of cases students' parents do not pay part or all of their contribution, which means that students are surviving on less than the breadline-level full grant. If parents refuse to fill in the forms, the student will only get the minimum grant of £410 a year. This is often a particular problem for Asian women, whose parents may not agree with their daughters going into higher education. NUS has always argued for individual means testing (we would not wish to see a situation whereby individually rich students, like Prince Edward, received grants!!), and a minimum of £25 a week for all students, as well as an index linked increase in the main rate.

Socialists should reject loans completely. Full loans would not be a problem for students whose parents could afford to support them through college (unless they refused to do so). A loans system would not save the Government any money (the main object of the exercise, from their point of view) unless interest rates were high, repayment guaranteed in the vast majority of cases, and collateral of some kind offered by the borrower or her/his parents. Bear in mind the high level of unemployment, the fact that graduates who do get jobs pay taxes anyway and the unease felt by many working class people about playing around with substantial sums of borrowed money, and the discriminatory effects of loans proposals become clear. In giving loans, would the Government give as readily to women, the majority of whom still do the types of courses that Keith Joseph thinks little of, and who are still largely regarded as baby producers who will waste the qualification? What incentive would a loan offer to an unemployed person, or someone wishing to leave work and go to college?

There are people on the left who argue that a loans element to replace the parental contribution would eliminate the hardship caused to many students whose parents cannot or will not pay up. Apart from the danger of accepting the loans principle, even partially, as it would doubtless open the way for more and more loan and less and less grant, how would becoming indebted to the state be any better than being indebted to your parents? Students who do not receive a parental contribution usually borrow from their bank by running up an overdraft, but recent surveys have indicated that even these students, by and large, are extremely hostile to the idea of a state loan.

The demand for £25 a week for all students, and the enourmous hostility towards a loans scheme, have helped NUS to mobilise far larger numbers of students, especially in the further education sector, than in past years. The majority of people on the 30,000 strong educational opportunities demonstration on March 9th were students, and thousands of students up and down the country have been involved in local activities in protest at Government policy. We have linked our Grants and Cuts campaigns, as the two issues are inseparable, and we are working closely with the labour movement, especially the trade unions involved in education.

We know that the Tories want to make higher education the preserve of the wealthy once more, and would prefer to spend taxpayers money on bombs and unemployment than on education, health and jobs, and we now have to raise the consciousness of people as the general election nears, and not allow this Government and its insane priorities to take power again.

GLC Women's Committee

Like Sarah Roelofs (April Briefing) I enthused at the setting up of the GLC Women's Committee. At last a chance for women to have their say – and be listened to – an opportunity to raise consciousness and to bring material benefit to the hard-pressed. Like Sarah I delighted in the new democratic structures and wallowed in the sisterliness of open and co-ordinating group meetings. Working groups proliferated, the consultation process began, the grants began to trickle through. With courage and imagination the comfortable male props of jargonese and formal committee structures were by-passed, and women from many different backgrounds were drawn in and involved in the decision-making. At first things went well; instinctively women understood and respected the new feminist way of doing things.

But then the problems came. The very success of the Committee generated mountains of work. Apparent inefficiency by hard-pressed Support Unit staff was sometimes viewed unsympathetically. Sometimes there were regrettable breakdowns in communication, and Sarah touched on perhaps the most serious misunderstanding to date. The liberal use of terms like 'democracy' and 'consultation' had led working group members to believe they had real power to control the policies of the Women's Committee. (They are in fact represented by six elected co-optees, but in practice their role is almost totally advisory). Not surprisingly there was considerable indignation when on one occasion Councillors followed their own instincts and not those of the open meeting/co-ordinating group.

Sarah, perhaps betraying her roots deep in the women's movement, appears to share their indignation. But she must realise, and the co-ordinating group must realise, that Women's Committee Councillors, selected by their CLP's, were elected on to the GLC by their constituents and on to the Women's Committee by the Labour Group; they are therefore accountable to those bodies. In good faith they have consulted and acted upon the demands of the working groups, and some degree of trust has developed between them. But in the final analysis, when the women and the Councillors (or the bodies that elected them) disagree, it is quite rightly the Councillors who have the votes and the power. Anything else would lead to anarchy, not to greater democracy. Sarah might object to women Councillors working within male-established, male-dominated structures, but the structures exist and the Councillors are bound by them.

I'd also like to take issue with Sarah's assertion that the Women's Committee has wilfully neglected campaigning work in the community. True, campaigning has been limited and more would have been desirable. But the grossly understaffed Support Unit struggled for many months to maintain the mailing list, to service the working groups, co-ordinating group and the Committee itself. These tasks may on occasion have been excessively bureaucratised, but they were necessary. Women needed to be kept in touch, and to retain the sympathy of many uncommitted Labour Councillors, a certain amount of policy-making Committee work had to go on. There simply wasn't the woman-power to prioritise campaigning work above essential County-Hall based activities.

The Women's Committee has reached a crossroads. It now has a reasonable establishment of staff and, with a year's experience behind it, recognises its limitations. The borough consultations on the 'Programme for Women in London' are almost complete and a comprehensive policy document will soon be drawn up. As Sarah points out, there are serious weaknesses in the present structures. But those of us who care about the future are presented with a tremendous opportunity, to take stock, to heed the criticism, and to mould the Committee into a really effective force to reach women in all parts of our City. We have the bare bones, now we must build on them: a little grafting here, a little amputation there.

To my mind the open meetings should continue, as they draw in less committed or organised women. Whilst retaining their flexibility and responsiveness, they must have popular appeal, and the idea of basing each meeting on an agreed issue or topic is a good one.

Recognising the structural problems, the co-ordinating group met on April 17th to try to iron them out. The co-ordinating group is itself in difficulty at the moment. Attendance from the working groups has dropped off and a number of women whose very special problems are receiving attention elsewhere have recently joined it. This has made the proceedings unrepresentative, unsisterly and at times unworkable. If the group were to become a delegate body, as has been suggested, it could serve as a useful forum for exchanges between working group members and monitor Committee papers in a more balanced and constructive way.

There *is* a need for more campaigning work in the community, and perhaps the working groups could play a part here. Unlike Sarah, I'd argue that some groups have suffered from a lack of sustained assistance from the Support Unit. All now have a regular, sympathetic Support Unit worker assigned to help (not monitor or direct) them. With increased resources and experience the working groups should now proceed in a more positive and meaningful way. Improved liaison between groups will help to reduce the duplication of work.

The borough public meetings were a bold attempt to reach ordinary women in their localities. Vast quantities of eye-catching purple and green publicity material were distributed, but again Support Unit time was limited and prepa-

Pointless Anarchy, Not

Dear ed,

I am all for critical analysis of left initiatives — how else would we progress or learn from our mistakes? But there was something about the tone of Comrade Roelofs' article on the GLC Women's Committee (Briefing 26) which I found depressing, rather than having my critical faculties sharpened and my "enthusiasm for the struggle" renewed. Not having had first hand experience of the events being analysed I couldn't put my finger on why it was having this effect on me, until it came to a bit that I did know something about — committee procedure.

The author talks about there having been 3 staff members at a working party meeting and about one of those groups being "instructed" to take minutes. She says it is "for the women themselves to decide on these matters". On the first point, if specialist staff are being employed, isn't it right that they should attend as many meetings as they can, both to give the groups the benefit of their expertise and to keep in touch with the thinking of the groups. If, as Sarah seems to be suggesting, the groups should have *more* power, then isn't it right that to those extents at least they should be seen as the "employers" of the specialist staff. I am sure they would be the first to complain if the staff did not come to the meetings — it would be a waste of the group members' time if simple (and sometimes complex) questions could not be answered on the spot, and would surely indicate contempt of the groups by the staff.

POINTLESS ANARCHY

The point about ability to give expertise and advice brings me to the other point — about minutes. It seems to me that to leave it to the meeting to decide, in an vacuum, about every procedural point, is a recipe for pointless anarchy, not successful feminism. How heartbreaking it would surely be for a hard-working group to suddenly realise that they had not been making provision for minute taking so that they could neither show to others what had been agreed nor provide evidence that they as a group wanted certain things to happen — how could such a group lay any claim to the power and responsibility being demanded? As an experience committee administrator myself, I would consider it my duty to advise a working group that they should take minutes — there's no way I could "instruct" them to even if I wanted, and perhaps the person

at the Crossroads

Ruth Clarke
(Acton Women's Section)

ration and follow-up work suffered. The great pity is that Labour Party and other local women didn't take the initiative and do some of the back-up themselves.

Here in Tory-controlled Ealing the three Labour Party Women's Sections (and some male colleagues) leafletted broadways and Tube stations, and contacted local women's organisations and pressure groups. This exercise alone served to make women feel less isolated and helped those of us in the Labour Party to appreciate as never before the scale of the Borough's problems. The meeting, on March 4th, was well attended and vocal. Many problems were aired for the first time, and some indication came through of women's most pressing needs. Some were relieved to share their experiences, others felt encouraged to continue their struggles, but at the end of the meeting many went away frustrated and deflated. Their hopes had been raised, their minds concentrated, they wanted to do 'something' but didn't know where to turn next. What a waste of women's energy and anger!

This is where the Women's Sections come in again. We hope there will be resources for women in Ealing, whether from the GLC or, after 1986, from the Borough. But limited they will be, and because women's opinions have never been sought before we feel a need for further consultation to ensure those scant resources are put to the best possible use. Armed with lists of contacts compiled before and during the public meeting, local Party activists have drafted a questionnaire which we plan to send to women's organisations and trade unions and take to women in their homes, laundrettes, shopping centres and temples, assisted, we hope, by Women's Section members and other women activists. We hope to reach women with difficulties over transport, childcare and disablement, who couldn't attend the public meeting, and at the same time involve and strengthen women activists Borough-wide.

The GLC and Borough Women's Committees present us with a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the women's movement and the Labour movement, to convince women in the community that the Party is mindful and concerned about their problems and determined to implement radical policies to remedy them. Women activists will continue their struggles, and, as Sarah says, 'There must be political activity within and without of the State for women's rights to be adequately defended.'

But it is vital that the two movements respect and support one another. At grassroots level Party members could involve themselves more in the campaigns and struggles of other local women. (Again the GLC has taken the initiative by producing leafllets on specific women's issues for broadway distribution). At County Hall there has been guarded goodwill from most women involved with the Women's Committee, and provided the criticisms are heeded, this should continue. But it has to be said there has been precious little Labour Party and trade union involvement in the working parties and little visible support from women Councillors on the co-ordinating group. Some other Labour Group members have been downright distrustful and unsupportive, and the Committee Chair has necessarily been at great pains to justify the new Committee structures and the budget to her so-called socialist colleagues.

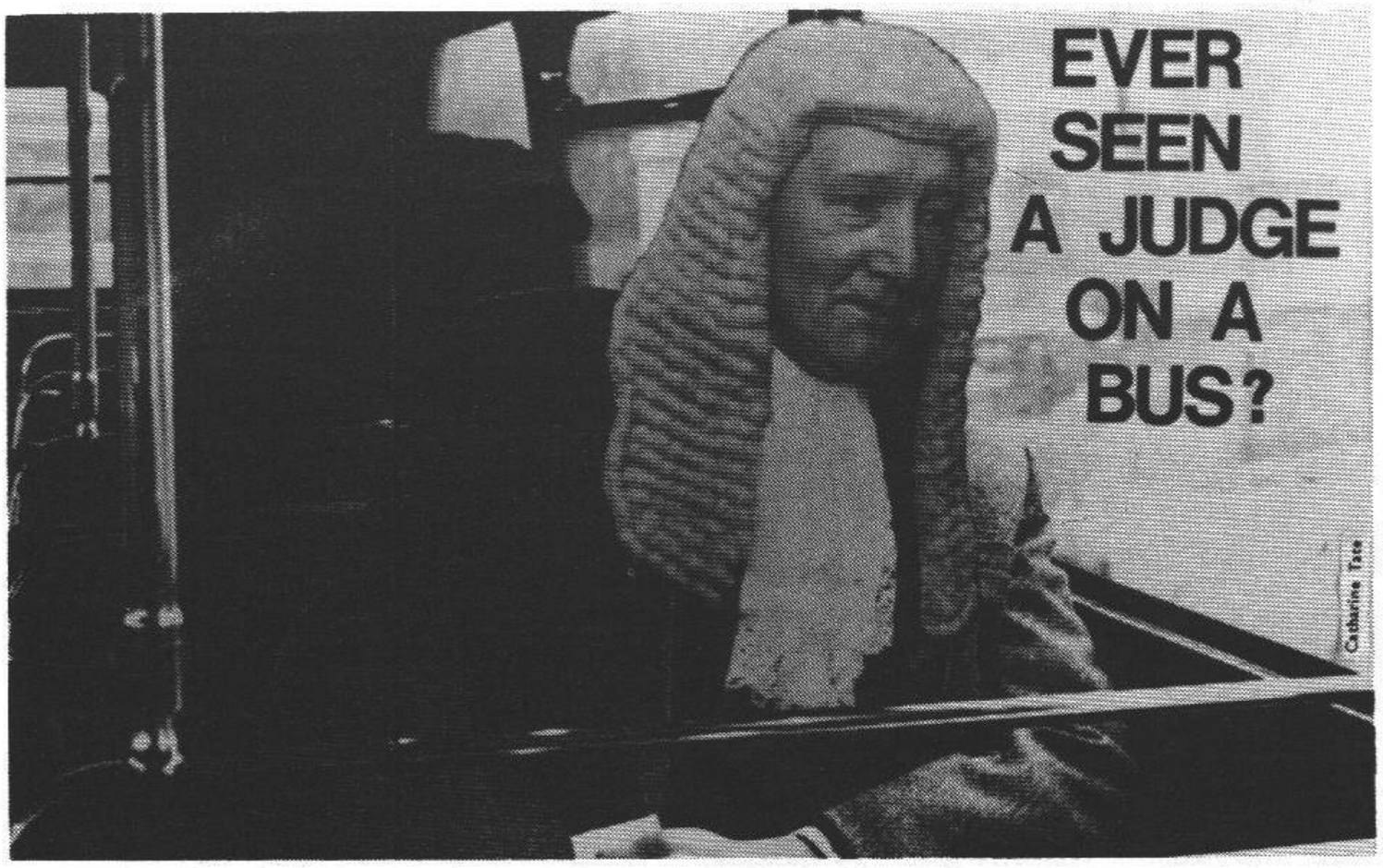
A crossroads for the Women's Committee, yes. My guess is they'll find the right path, tortuous and rugged though it might be. My great feat is they'll be travelling with a sad lack of commitment and involvement from the Labour movement.

Feminism

referred to had been less tactful.

But wouldn't any committee or group of busy lay-people, giving up their time voluntarily, prefer to be able to make use of the knowledge of the professional — for whom the organisation is, after all, paying — rather than having to learn all the boring bits themselves, such as what Rule so and so or Standing Order such and such says, and why. Okay a lot of that sort of stuff is pointless bureaucracy, and we hope that the left will be able to create better alternatives. But a lot of it is there for a reason which, if there is someone present who can explain, will often be accepted by the group as a good one. If they don't accept it, well — all well and good, but at least they had the facts on which to base their decision. Minutes may seem a trivial example, but it seems to me that if the GLC working groups are going to be asked to consider every single issue from scratch, including such "trivia", as Sarah seems to be suggesting in her article, then it's going to take even longer than we thought for the revolution to happen.

Yours in comradeship
Rosy Leigh
(member of Ealing Acton CLP)



Buy and sell these superb cards to raise money for the defence fund. 20p each, reductions for bulk. Phone 701-5691/672 9696. Send cash to Fare Fight (CPWP fund), 28 Wandle Road, SW17.

FARE FIGHT PROTESTERS DEFY LAW LORDS — If 'Biggs Type' legal ploy fails mother declares: 'I'm ready for prison

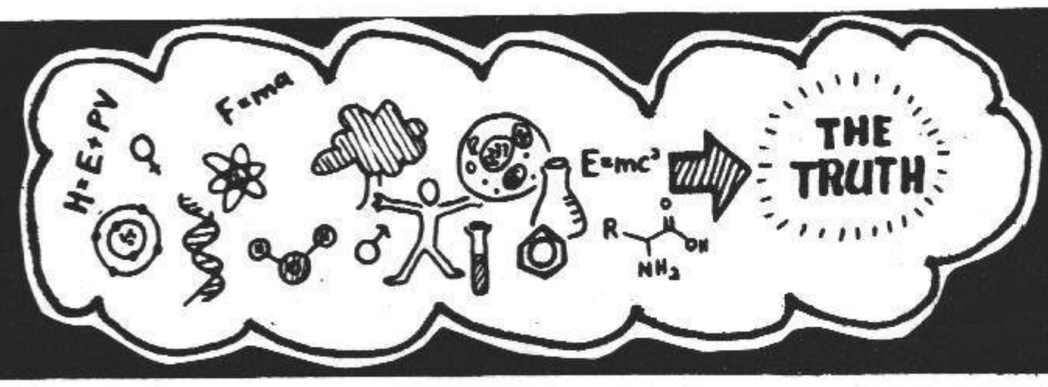
As we go to Press the long-awaited trial of the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay 18' Fare Fight protesters takes place at Lambeth Magistrates Court (normally reserved for terrorists), with demonstrations as always.

On the first day the Fare Fighters' lawyer Mike Fisher applied to get all the cases dismissed using what is known in legal circles as the 'Ronald Biggs technicality'.

One defendant, a member of Hornsey Labour Party, Jan Wallcraft, married with two children, refusing to recognise the Court and will go to prison rather than pay a penny in fines for the Law Lords undemocratic ruling against fare cuts last spring.

A spokesperson for the defendants stated 'The Courts recently accepted that fares can be substantially subsidised. This contradicts the Law Lords ruling last spring which doubled fares against the democratic wishes of one million London voters. The position of the thousands of people who joined in our protest by refusing to pay the Law Lords surcharge and giving their names and addresses instead is totally vindicated. It is not us but the Law Lords who should be on trial. We will carry on the fight to make LT into a decent socially conscious system with a subsidy on a par with all other European Capitals'.

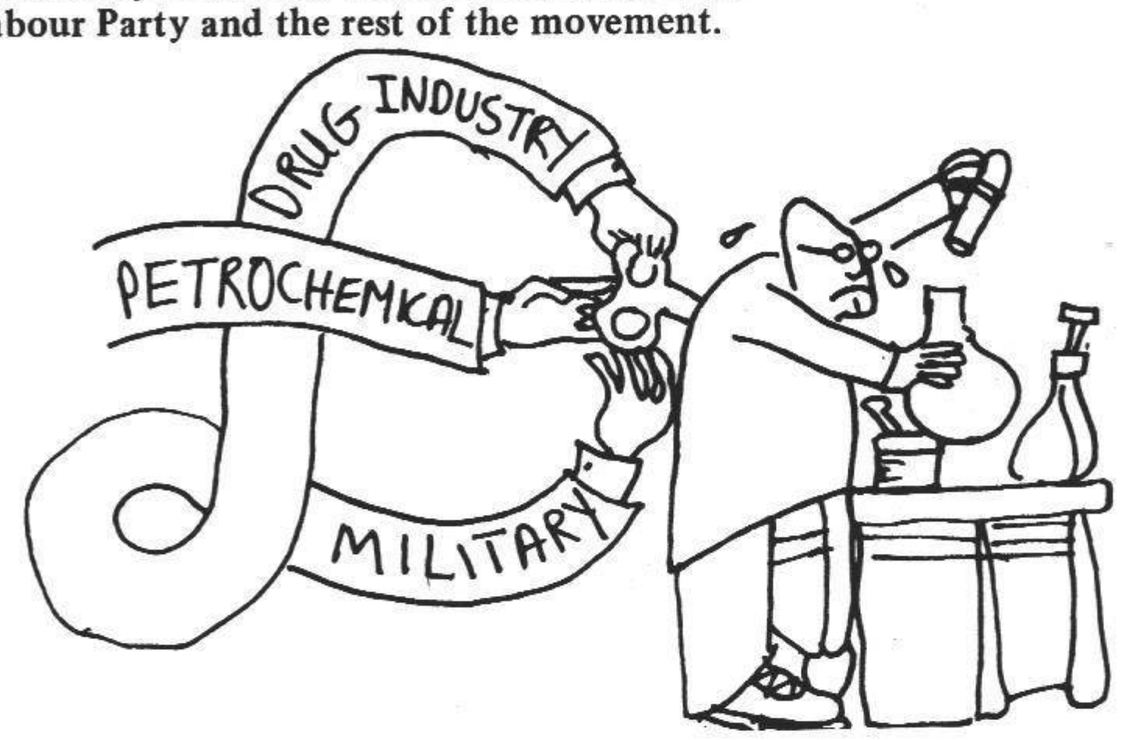
science briefing



Welcome to *Briefing*'s first Science Page! This has started in recognition of the ever-increasing role of science and technology in the development of productive forces, warfare and political mystification.

We aim to include information and contributions from the many radical scientists groups and individuals on a wide range of issues. The purpose is the demystify scientific 'expertise' which normally covers for profit motive; exploration of scientific developments and concepts; and discuss how to use this knowledge in the Labour Party and the rest of the movement.

Suggestions for subjects, and contributions and enquiries about meetings:
Science Page convenor: Piers Corbyn,
55 Innis House, East St, SE17.
Tel: 701-5691.



Euroshima: No Thanks!

The Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA) in County Hall on March 26 and 27 attracted 150 scientists/technologists (mostly men!) into lively debate on nuclear weapons and how to fight for disarmament.

There was disagreement on the extent to which detailed investigation of the mechanism of nuclear weapons and strategies actually helped the campaign for disarmament. However one thing was clear. Examination of the present generation of nuclear weaponry shows clearly how they fit into NATO's deadly plan for an offensive nuclear war in Europe.

The conference agreed to produce a leaflet on Cruise Missiles which chillingly demonstrates this point. It was distributed five days later at Burghfield/Greenham and included the following points:

Cruise missiles are small, low-flying, pilotless, jet-propelled planes, which can carry either a 200 kt nuclear warhead (equivalent to 16 Hiroshimas) or a 1000 pound high explosive conventional bomb.

Because they are small and low-flying they are very difficult to detect on radar.

Flying at 550mph, Cruise missiles would take two to three hours to reach their targets.

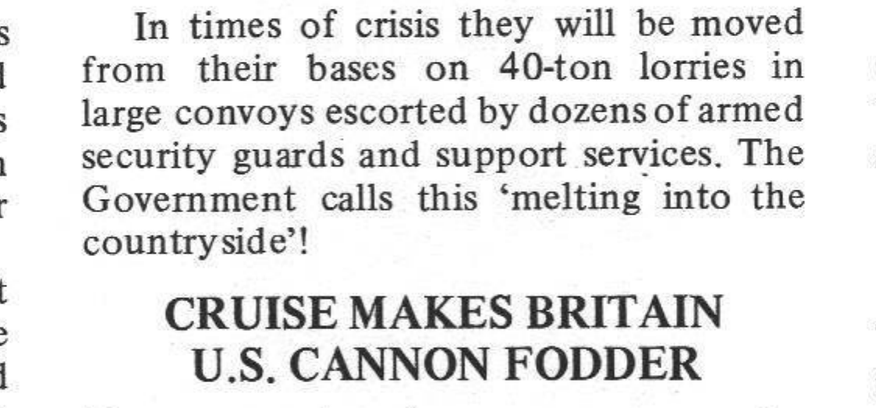
Using maps stored in a miniature computer on board, they achieve very high accuracy, and can arrive within 50 yards of a target after a 1500 mile flight.

There are several kinds of Cruise missile in production – Air-launched, Sea-launched and Ground-launched (GLCM). It is the GLCMs that are due to be based at Greenham Common.

In times of crisis they will be moved from their bases on 40-ton lorries in large convoys escorted by dozens of armed security guards and support services. The Government calls this 'melting into the countryside'!

CRUISE MAKES BRITAIN U.S. CANNON FODDER

They are American weapons under American control and could be fired without the British Government's consent. If the Americans are involved in nuclear war, we will be drawn in too. What is more, the very visible act of moving them from their bases in time of crisis will increase tension further and could trigger a massive attack on Britain to knock them out – estimated by a Government spokesman to be over one thousand megatons (equal to 80,000 Hiroshimas).



Because of their great accuracy, Cruise missiles are capable of destroying Soviet missiles in their silos. Because it is difficult to track and intercept them, and impossible to predict their targets, a Cruise missile attack may easily provoke the launching of Soviet missiles on the 'use 'em or lose 'em' principle. Their deployment will greatly increase the danger of an all-out nuclear war.

Even a senior RAF officer admits that CMs are not a response to Soviet SS20s, which are in fact technologically one generation behind.

NUCLEAR 'DETERRENT' = NUCLEAR LIABILITY

The present nuclear arsenal of the West is sufficient to destroy the Soviet Union several times over. Britain's Polaris force alone is capable of wiping out 64 Soviet cities. The US nuclear arsenal is about a hundred times bigger. Adding to the deadly total make us *less* safe, not more.

The idea that the Cruise missile is a 'defensive' or 'deterrent' weapon is absurd.

EUROPE TO FRY

NATO strategy involves the *first use* of nuclear weapons if a conventional war breaks out. Cruise missiles are to be used as part of a graduated escalation of nuclear war in Europe. Many military experts do not believe that this so-called 'limited' nuclear war strategy is workable, and think that any use of nuclear weapons would rapidly lead to all out nuclear war.

Cruise missiles will make strategic arms limitation or reduction agreements impossible because it is impossible to tell by satellite surveillance whether a Cruise missile is armed with a nuclear warhead or a conventional one. So there would be no way of checking on the numbers of nuclear missiles and, without that, such agreements are not practicable.

More information: SANA, 112 Newport Rd, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, MK13 0AA.

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT

Bulletin Number Four 5p (bulk orders 3p)

Officers: National Chairperson Ernie Roberts MP.
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Trade unionists must oppose expulsions

By Tom Sawyer (NEC, NUPE, in a personal capacity)

The door is now wide open to expel anyone the NEC thinks has been involved in Militant. It will be for them to decide whether financial, organisational or political support has been given.

Trade unions, the majority of whom voted at their conferences against witch-hunts, are seeing the first steps in what maybe a wholesale purge. Do they realise?

We cannot stand back and watch a purge; it has to be stopped. The first step is to support those constituency parties who are fighting back against the expulsions and see that they, too, do not become the object of attack. The second step is to ensure that motions like the Greenwich amendment to the Labour Party constitution are carried by the unions and taken to the Labour Party conferece, to guarantee the right of all groups in the party who support its aims and do not stand candidates against it.

And the third step is to bring all possible pressure to bear on the national executive of the Labour Party, in an election year, to halt the expulsions, reinstate the editors of Militant, and turn the party outwards for victory against our real enemies — the Tories and the Alliance.

Brent: Let us reselect

COLIN ADAMS (Chair, Brent East CLP)

Brent East CLP and Brent South CLP remain the only CLPs with sitting MPs who have not been allowed to go through the Parliamentary reselection procedure. This should have been resolved at the NEC Organisation Sub-Committee

Both parties have just completed a 6 month period of supervision by Joyce Gould, the Assistant National Agent. Her report went to the April 11th meeting — it said that Brent East had proved to be of a satisfactory standard regarding its membership, standing orders and the way it is being run.

Instead of approving the report and recommending to the NEC that reselection proceeds with due speed, some members of the sub-committee latched on to red herrings.

'CAUCUS' MEETING

Firstly, mention was made in the report of a 'caucus' meeting held by Brent East Labour Left in September. The GMC has already resolved that it defends the rights of members to meet and discuss their views. This had nothing whatsoever to do with Brent East's right as a CLP to go through the democratic procedure of reselection. Secondly the NEC had received a letter from **Reg Freeson, Brent East's MP asking whether the reselection procedure applied in Brent East as more than 36 months had passed since the General Election. We have been ready to select since last May but have** been held up by the NEC Inquiry and the period of supervision. We believe it is incumbent upon the NEC to give an immediate go-ahead. We have been supported on this in a legal opinion from Lord Gifford.

Brent East GMC has decided to ask other CLPs and TU branches to support us **in our demand for reselection. We have asked for resolutions to be sent to the NEC. We are prepared to go ahead immediately the NEC has met.**

We had already scheduled an EC and GMC for April 28th and are hoping to draw up a timetable then in co-operation with the NEC and regional officials.

We have to tell the NEC clearly — no more delays. Don't destroy our democratic rights — let us reselect now.



Reg Freeson — Brent East's sitting MP

WHO WE ARE

This is the fourth newsletter from Labour Against the Witchhunt, which was formed at a conference on 30 October 1982 by over 300 CLP, YS and trade union delegates representing over 100 CLPs.

We have a single aim: to stop expulsions. We have a democratic national structure in which affiliates are directly represented by delegates to our National Council.

You can support us, and so defend Labour's Unity and its chances of victory, by:

- **Affiliating to LAW**
- **Taking copies of this newsletter for distribution**
- **Helping us build a campaign with strong local roots**

Why not place an order for the news letter? Available in bulk (over 10 copies) at 3p per copy, 20p postage. £1.50 will get you 50 copies and £1 profit — a worthwhile investment for the party's future!

Membership open to CLPs, trade unions, Labour Party affiliates and individuals.

Name of Organisation: .....

CLP/Union/LPYS/Ward/Women's Section/society/ other (specify) .....

Address for correspondence .....

.....

Fee enclosed .....

(CLPs and unions £10, wards £5, individuals and other organisations £3)

Send to: Secretary, L.A.W., 11 Wilderton Road London N16.

Reinstate Militant editors

by John Bulaitis, convenor, London Labour Steering Committee against Witch-hunts

THE EXPULSION of the Militant editorial board by the rigged right wing majority on the NEC is an attack on the rights of every Labour Party member. It is a divisive act that flies in the face of the overwhelming mood within the movement for a united fight to defeat the Tories and the SDP at the coming election.

The overwhelming majority of rank and file trade union and Labour Party activists have signalled their opposition to the witch-hunt. Huge meetings addressed by the expelled members have been organized by 'Militant' up and down the country.

Every section of the movement must condemn this decision, demand an end to witch-hunts and expulsions of any other socialists in the party and campaign for the reinstatement of the expelled five. Hammersmith North and Islington South CLPs must be applauded for taking their stand by refusing to carry out the expulsions.

Resolutions along these lines need to be submitted to this year's annual conference. We must also demand the right of the expelled members to directly appeal for reinstatement to conference.

The issue of Militant will not go away because of these expulsions. In fact it will continue to haunt the right wing until the five are reinstated and the witch-hunt stopped.

NEC expels 27 Manchester councillors

By Graham Stringer, Chair, Manchester City Labour Party & John Nicholson, Chair, Manchester Gorton CLP

The NEC has expelled 27 members from the Manchester council Labour group. With this act they are staking everything on the only rule remaining in the Labour Party book: that is, the NEC shall make up the rules.

Since last May 29 councillors have voted in line with constantly repeated party policy — against rent increases and cuts in jobs and services, especially housing and direct works. But the majority of 40 has ignored election policy and passed the cuts on to the people of Manchester.

The ruling gang of 40 do not have an overall majority. The NEC's action has deprived Manchester of a Labour majority in the council of 99. They have prevented us meeting on the Town Hall, and refuse us equal places on committees and outside bodies. They have produced a timescale for our expulsion from their 'official' group — until 'at least' January.

The expulsions — carried out by the NEC's enquiry — totally ignored procedures for disciplinary action. There were no interviews. There was no constitution, and the enquiry never informed the 'defendents' of the charges against them. Because the NEC has expelled us, we have no right of appeal. Expelled councillors could be debarred as council candidates, so that voting to implement party policy ultimately risks expulsion from the party itself.

The parliamentary pantomime of the Town Hall obscures the real changes at local level. **Branches have increased membership and campaigning in support of anti-Tory** policies — so the NEC has had to invent a **locally-directed onslaught of manoeuvres to bypass the reselection process as well.** 12-month membership rules, rearranged panel procedures, NEC enquiries and now new rules to impose councillors on branch shortlists — all have been wheeled out.

In Woodhouse ward in Wythenshawe, selection was suspended, membership was frozen back 18 months to exclude newer left-wingers, and yet the eventual shortlist was three left-wingers, one of whom was endorsed as candidate in May. Not beaten, the National Agent promptly ordered a rerun of the selection meeting on the basis of unsubstantiated individual allegations and without consulting officers of the branch, constituency or district party. This unconstitutional meeting, however, failed to get down to its business.

The struggle in Manchester is therefore simply one demonstration of the real effects of the witch-hunt. Attacks on properly selected and elected representatives of the left for the 'crime' of implementing their party's policies: a divided party depriving Manchester voters of a Labour majority in council: the left must fight *all* these attacks if it is ever to win mass support for socialist policies in power.

We ask for your support: please
* Send resolutions to the NEC condemning the expulsions from Manchester Labour Group and calling for immediate reinstatement within the group
* Send resolutions condemning the NEC's attempts to thwart a properly selected Labour candidate in Woodhouse Park and thereby lose the seat for Labour.

Greenwich: Scr

PROPOSED
TO TI
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CLAUSE

Clause II, Sections (3) and (4) read as follows:

(3) *Political organisations not affiliated t*
on 1 January, 1946, having their own Prog
propaganda, or possessing Branches in
Parliamentary or Local Government Candi
situated abroad, shall be ineligible for affilia

(4) *Individual Members shall be British sul*
Britain for more than one year, who
(a) are not less than 15 years of age, and
(b) who subscribe to the conditions of m
organisations ancillary or subsidiary thereto
(hereinafter referred to as "the Party") or by
Conference decisions to be ineligible for affilia

AM

Delete Section (3) and paragraph (b) of S
"(3) A political group of Labour Party me
agreement with the Party on 1 January, 1946 sh
(a) it conforms to the constitution of the Labo
Clause IV of the Party's constitution, and (b) it
local government candidatures in opposition to

Any political group which in the opinion of
above conditions shall have the right of appeal t
any decision by the National Executive Committ
pressure group within the Labour Party. Individ
the Annual Conference of the Labour Party aga
membership of an unaffiliated Labour Party grou

(4) (b) subscribe to the conditions of membe
whose membership is declared by Annual Con
Executive Committee in pursuance of the Confere
of the Labour Party."

With consequential amendments.

by Tom Waveham, secretary, Greenwich CLP

Greenwich Constituency Labour Party is to launch a campaign around its amendment to the party constitution which will end the register and substitute a constitutional right of all groups within the party to operate provided only that they agree with the party's aims and do not stand candidates against it in elections.

Greenwich submitted this to the 1982 party conference. It also guarantees a right of appeal to conference. It would thus go a long way to defend party members from arbitrary attacks by the NEC. Furthermore it must, under rule, be put to the vote at the 1983 Labour Party conference.

If you wish to co-operate in this with other members of your union, please contact Greenwich Labour Party c/o Jon Lansman, 16 Tyler St, London SE10, telephone 01–853 0056 (home) or 01-278 0911(work).

rap the register

13

D AMENDMENTS
THE PARTY
ITUTION AND
ING ORDERS

E III — MEMBERSHIP

s:

l to or associated under a National Agreement with the Party
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didatures, or owing allegiance to any political organisation
liation to the Party.
ubjects or citizens of Eire, or other persons resident in Great

membership and are not members of Political Parties or
o declared by the Annual Conference of the Labour Party
by the National Executive Committee in pursuance of the
liation to the Party.

MENDMENT

f Section (4) and insert:
members not affiliated to or associated under a national
shall be free to campaign within the Party provided that:
our Party and accepts the Party's objects as defined by
it does not engage in the promotion of parliamentary or
o Labour Party candidates.
f the National Executive Committee is in breach of the
to the Annual Conference of the Labour Party against
ittee under Clause IX (2) (c) affecting their status as a
idual party members shall have the right of appeal to
gainst any action taken against them because of their
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onference of the Labour Party or by the National
erence decisions to be incompatible with membership

GREENWICH CLP

YOUR UNION AND GREENWICH

Several union conference agendas include motions supporting Greenwich. To get these debated and carried will require all possible pressure.

Even if your union does not debate the amendment at its conference, it is certainly not too early to start working upon your Labour conference delegation. A resolution along the following lines has already been suggested in certain unions:

This....urges Labour's leaders to concentrate on advancing our interests instead of expelling party members. We defend the traditional right of party members to belong to pressure groups within the party, provided that they accept Labour's objectives and do not oppose Labour candidates in elections. We therefore support the Amendment to this effect submitted to Labour Party conference and call upon our delegation to vote accordingly.

Register chaos

Remember all the fuss about registration? Well, the Organisation Committee's latest report reveals some interesting failures in the register. Only thirty out of over sixty potential groups registered. Unregistered groups include LAW and Labour CND — but some more surprising bodies beside. For example, the Labour Committee for Atlantic Understanding — funded by NATO to keep Labour on the straight and narrow, and a clear case of outside interference in the Party's business.

But the Atlantic Committee is only one of a string of right wing bodies which have consistently failed to register — if they were ever asked.

One such is a scurrilous little magazine edited by one David Warburton, of the GMWU, called 'Forward Labour' and claiming to have reached issue 14. A copy anonymously mailed to Alan Breeze of Hammmersmith North CLP accuses him of conspiring to unseat Hammersmith North MP Clive Soley — news to him, as well as the rest of Hammersmith North. The journal, full of scandalous and backbiting attacks on individuals in the Labour Party, is sponsored by some highly respectable figures including Peter Shore, Eric Varley, Roy Hattersley, John Golding, Terry Duffy, Gwynneth Dunwoody and Betty Boothroyd.

Readers wishing to discover why these prominent defenders of the constitution associate themselves with an unregistered scandal sheet might care to write to David, enclosing a self-addressed postcard. A small prize for the first correct answer received.

Labour Against the Witch Hunt Plans plans way ahead

LAW'S NATIONAL COUNCIL, meeting on 12 April, recorded a growth in affiliations to 55 CLPs including a majority outside the South East, and mapped out a series of vital next steps in fighting the witch-hunt.

First, it recorded important successes for its policy of refusing to carry out expulsions. Both Hammersmith North and Islington Central CLP have taken a stand and have become a focus of resistance for the party as a whole. LAW will campaign jointly with the Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts to defend these two CLPs, and to re-instate the expelled five.

Co-operation with the LSCAW has increased. Both committees are now jointly sponsoring the 'Tribune' advertisement against expulsions, and held joint fringe meetings at three regional Labour Party conferences and at the LPYS conference in Bridlington, which was also addressed from the platform by Ivor Donaghue of Hammersmith North.

To defeat the witch-hunt finally, attention now turns to the coming Labour Party conference and to the union conferences preceding it. USDAW, ASTMS, NUPE, the NUR, T&G, COHSE and several other unions all have anti-witch-hunt motions tabled. We shall be working with the left in these conferences to ensure maximum backing for these motions. Two key focusses were identified: a campaign around the Greenwich amendment and against the register; and a campaign for the right of appeal of the expelled five editors of Militant and their re-instatement. Both of these offer the prospect of a high degree of unity, and every effort should be made to get them taken up and passed at coming union conferences.

LAW also heard of a series of developments at local level that indicate the witch-hunters on the NEC, though they may have drawn in their horns for a while, have given the green light to local witch-hunts and vendettas, as in Tower Hamlets where Peter Shore's supporters are engaging in a vicious and destructive campaign against the new left majority on the GC.

Most significant is the fact that the NEC is supporting and encouraging this kind of action to try and maintain its own supporters in parliament and in local councils. LAW agreed actively to support any constituency that decided to go ahead with reselection in accord with its rights under the decisions of the 1981 conference; and to give full backing to the 27 councillors expelled from Manchester Labour Group for the crime of standing by their City party's policies and refusing to vote cuts through the council.

Finally, recognising that our purpose in fighting the witch-hunt is to unite the party around its socialist policies to defeat the Tories and the SDP, National Council agreed to support a new campaign 'Socialists for a Labour Victory,' which has been established to ensure that Labour campaigns around the socialist policies which have been passed by successive Party conferences.

We find ourselves considerably more optimistic than when we were founded in October, with the register in total disarray and the witch-hunters in temporary retreat. But there is no reason for complacency. The NEC have been taught two hard lessons: that the rank and file will not tolerate a witch-hunt, and that it is impossible to win an election while a witch-hunt is in progress. But they have not given up their objective of reversing the gains made over the last three years, and will return to the attack at the first available opportunity.

LABOUR PARTIES REFUSE TO EXPEL

Hammersmith

by Alan Breeze, secretary, Hammersmith North CLP

NINETY per cent of Hammersmith North's General Committee voted on 2nd March to refuse to implement the expulsion of Keith Dickinson and to continue to treat him as a bona fide party member. This followed a series of resolutions passed over the previous nine months, culminating in November when the GC decided that the party would not carry out any NEC expulsions.

At a general member's meeting just before Easter, including dozens of members who were not GC delegates, the overwhelming opinion was in line with the local party decision.

Members also agreed to continue their campaign throughout the movement involving Trade union branches and conferences, resolutions of support from other CLPs and socialist societies, and to work with Labour Against the Witch-hunt and the Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts to ensure that the annual conference overturns the 'Golding diktats'.

Scores of members in the constituency are writing to the General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, to register their total opposition to the witch-hunt.

The NEC must realize that the expulsions do not have the support of rank and file party members.

The Tariq Ali saga part three

By Diana Minns, secretary, Hornsey Labour Party

AT LAST, Hornsey Labour Party and Tariq Ali have heard from the NEC, after the threats of disaffiliation and the dramatic **'kick him out or else' deadline on 31st December, Hornsey has been allowed to get** on with its normal business and actually disappeared into a new constituency. Now, however, there is to be a hearing.

The wording of the letter inviting Hornsey to the hearing is significant. Tariq is no longer an individual who has not been admitted. He is now an individual who needs to be *expelled*.

The NEC says 'it resolves to consider whether it deems it necessary in order to enforce the constitution, standing orders and rules of the party to expel Tariq Ali ...' The grounds re-iterate the past arguments — that despite signing and accepting the constitution, programme, principles and policy of the Labour Party, Tariq really didn't mean it ... etc.

The team will be Russel Tuck, Eric Heffer, John Golding, Jo Richardson and Denis Howell.

Hornsey and Tariq will re-iterate their grounds for Tariq's *continued* membership — as for the past 18 months. Watch this space for details of our victory!

Islington

by Jane Andrews, ex-chair, Islington Central CLP.

LIKE Hammersmith North and Norwood, the Secretary of Islington Central CLP received Jim Mortimer's letter informing us of the NEC's decision to expel members of the Militant editorial board the day after the Bermondsey by-election.

The officers of the Party met over the following weekend and agreed to write back immediately since we had clear policy on proposed expulsions. On the 25th February we wrote to Jim Mortimer: 'in accordance also with the advertisement we have sponsored in Tribune ... we do not recognise the expulsion of Peter Taaffe and Ted Grant from the Labour Party... and we will continue to regard them as full members of this CLP.'

In reply back to us, Jim Mortimer noted the contents of our letter and asked us to write again after the GC had discussed the issue. Well, the GC has met twice since then, and on both occasions has *unanimously* endorsed our letter, completely confirming the Party's policy of non recognition of the expulsions.

The position of Islington Central is firm, as is that of the new Islington South Party. We are adopting a consistent principled stand against the NEC's unprecedented interference with the rights of CLPs to decide who shall and shall not be party members. It is essential that the campaign to support this position is taken into every CLP and affiliated trade union, so that the NEC will have to back down and end the Witch Hunt.

Support the Tribune advertisement

SUPPORT LABOUR'S POLICIES, NOT THE WITCH HUNT

We are committed to a Labour victory at the next General Election on the basis of the policies agreed by Annual Conference. Any witch hunt would endanger the Party Unity required to achieve such a victory. We therefore call on the right-wing majority of the National Executive Committee to halt all disciplinary measures against Party members, groups of members or Constituency Labour Parties.

Should the N.E.C. persist with disciplinary measures or disaffiliations, we give notice that we will not recognise any such actions. We will not expel, nor recognise the expulsion of any Labour Party member or group of members arising from political disagreement with the N.E.C.

BASINGSTOKE
BIRMINGHAM
PERRY BARR
BRADFORD SOUTH
BRENT EAST
BRENTFORD & ISLEWORTH
BRIGHTON
BRISTOL SOUTH-EAST
CHELMSFORD
CHERTSEY
CROSBY
EALING SOUTHALL
EAST LEWISHAM
EDINBURGH WEST
FELTHAM & HESTON
GREENWICH
HACKNEY NORTH
& STOKE NEWINGTON
HAMMERSMITH NORTH
HAMPSTEAD
HORNSEY
HULL CENTRAL
ISLINGTON CENTRAL
ISLINGTON NORTH
ISLINGTON SOUTH
& FINSBURY
KETTERING
LEWES
LEWISHAM WEST
LIVERPOOL TOXTETH
MALDON
NEWHAM NORTH-WEST
NORTH FYLDE
NORTH WEST SURREY
PADDINGTON
REIGATE
RICHMOND
SHEFFIELD BRIGHTSIDE
SOUTHWARK PECKHAM
SUNDERLAND SOUTH
THIRSK & MALTON
TONBRIDGE & MALLING
WALLASEY
WALSALL NORTH
WARWICK & LEAMINGTON
WEST STIRLINGSHIRE
WIRRAL

Constituency Labour Parties

Supported by the undersigned Labour Party and Trade Union Branches and Individuals:

Joint campaign against expulsions

Labour Against the Witch-hunt and the Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt have joined forces to support the second instalment of the Tribune advertisement, signed by forty-two CLPs, which commit these CLPs not to expel Militant supporters.

The first instalment, which appeared in March, included Hammersmith North and Islington Central CLP whose members include Peter Taaffe, Ted Grant and Keith Dickinson, and who are defying the NEC by refusing to expel these Militant editors. The editors, and these parties, need your support.

The next instalment will appear on 13 May.
*Get your CLP to support the ad.
***Support it as an individual and get your trade union to back it.**

Each name costs £3; the money helps boost the funds of Tribune, presently being witch-hunted by Silkin and friends, and the remainder will be split between the two anti witch-hunt committees.

Thanks to Briefing

THIS NEWSLETTER is being printed as a special supplement by London Labour Briefing, and will be available also as an insert to other labour movement publications at reduced rates. Contact the secretary to place orders.

National Council — a date for your diary.

OUR NEXT National Council is on Saturday 28 May in County Hall. All affiliated CLPs are entitled to a delegate to this bi-monthly body, which democratically decides our policies. All other affiliated bodies, and individuals, are entitled to attend and speak. Resolutions received in advance are circulated, with agendas, to all affiliates.

See you there.

£ £ £ !

SINCE being founded in October we have spent over £1200 campaigning against the witch-hunt. Our work is beginning to bear fruit — but the battle is not over, as the reports in this newsletter show. On the contrary, the NEC's obsession with the Militant has given the green light to witch-hunters, grudge-bearers and place-seekers in every corner of the party, diverting us still further from uniting to secure a Labour victory.

You can help us by becoming an individual affiliate. For £3 you will receive our mailings, free newsletters, and information on all our activities. Fill out the form in this newsletter and send it off now.

Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd., (T.U.). 4 Forster Road, N.17.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights Makes Sexual Politics an Election Priority

The lack of any serious commitment to gay rights in the Labour Party's Campaign Document was heavily criticised at the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights' National Conference and Annual General Meeting. The event, staged in Bristol on Saturday April 9, was attended by over 70 members who met to discuss the key themes for the group's activities in the following year, which will include a general election. The Conference, whose theme was "The fight in the labour movement for lesbian and gay male rights", was sponsored by local MP Tony Benn and Pam Tatlow, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Bristol West.

Opening the Conference, Brian Underwood, Secretary of Bristol Trades Union Council and a member of the Regional Council of the TUC, set the tone of the meeting by affirming that: "Gay rights is a political and not merely a personal issue." He supported the aims of the campaign and informed the Conference of the positive policies on gay rights that the local Trades Union Council had adopted.

Lack of Commitment

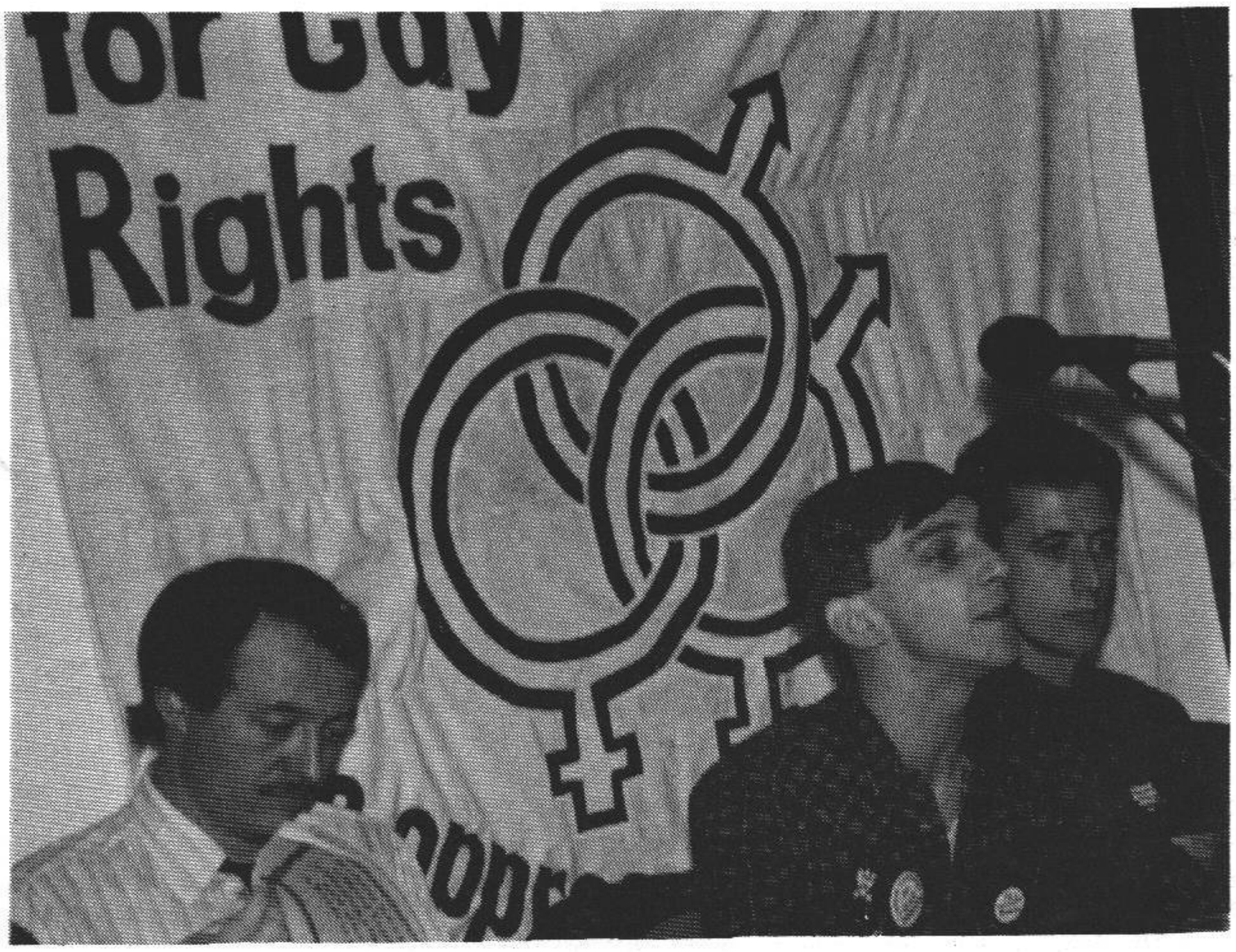
Pam Tatlow said it was important that people in the Labour Party who were not gay knew where we stood so that their support could be more effective. She also expressed disappointment at Campaign '83's lack of a detailed commitment to gay rights.

The day's activities included workshops at which a range of topical issues were discussed, such as: developing the campaign in the trade union movement; putting more effective pressure on Labour Councils to support gay rights; the threat posed to lesbians and gay men by the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, the oppression of black lesbians and gay men and how we can begin to work with the black movement, and the linking of our campaign with the politics of our personal lives.

The rest of the day was devoted to developing policy priorities, one of the most important of which is the intention of LCGR to link up with feminists in the Labour Party more directly. It is hoped a meeting will be arranged with Women's Fightback to discuss how the issues that affect lesbians can be fully taken up in the labour movement. LCGR will also work closely with gay groups in the trade unions and our allies in the trade union movement to draw up a strategy for getting the movement as a whole to treat gay rights as a serious issue.

Campaign Document

The Conference reacted with total dissatisfaction at the lack of any serious commitment to gay rights in the Labour Party's recently-issued campaign document. We determined to work with our supporters to campaign all the more vigorously for a clear commitment by the Party to absolute equality with heterosexuals for lesbians and gay men.



The Confernece was also disappointed at the failure of the recently-formed Socialists for a Labour Victory (SLV) campaign to place gay rights on its election agenda, or to invite LCGR to its foundation meeting. We intend to urge SLV to reconsider its position and to campaign with us for a Manifesto commitment to full equality.

Heterosexual socialists had no difficulty in opposing the Labour Party Conference decision on the Register – saying that no Conference should have the authority to deny the rights of minority groups within the Party. Why, then, was there a reluctance to say that the Conference has no right to pass policies which fail to remove discrimination against one of the country's largest minorities? At the very least, SLV should state its commitment to campaigning for equality in law.

Gay Young Socialists

This was a landmark conference for the Gay Young Socialists, as it was the first at which they had been present as an organised, autonomous entity. They arrived fresh from their organisational victories at the recent Labour Party Young Socialists Conference at Bridlington. This annual event has been, in recent years, dominated by supporters of Militant, whose official policy refuses to recognise any significance in sexual politics.

Undeterred, GYS members stickered delegates with gay liberation badges and distributed leaflets throughout the three day event. Significantly, their highly visible presence encouraged Class Fighter and Revolution Youth supporters to raise the issue of gay rights at the Conference.

GYS member Brian West summed up the progress they had made, saying: "In past years we had been kicked and spat upon by delegates. This year we only had to suffer verbal abuse and threats of violence."

LCGR is planning major campaigns both at this year's Labour Party Conference in Brighton and at the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool. In the current political climate it is even more important for our allies to actively support us and not to allow sexual politics to be once again swept under the carpet.

Taking Britain out of

As a result of his discussions with Sinn Fein, Ken Livingstone returned from Belfast with specific proposals concerning British withdrawal. Sarah Roelofs, on behalf of Briefing, discussed these proposals with reference to the Labour Party with him three weeks after his return. This is her report.

"I think we can get the Labour Party committed to withdrawal and Britain out of Ireland within this decade."

This is Livingstone's view in the aftermath of his Belfast visit. As evidence he cites what he calls the "despair factor" within the PLP arguing that there is a dawning "realisation that five more Mason years would be devastating", that the political machine is exhausted and that withdrawal, in some form at least is beginning to be seen as the only alternative left. In addition the word "early" was inserted into the new Labour Party Campaign Document's section on Northern Ireland to describe discussions to be held between the British and Irish governments, labour movements in Northern and Southern Ireland and "political representatives of the people of Northern Ireland". (Albeit that these discussions are on "how best to proceed with our policy of unification by consent". Consent by whom is indicated by the document's support for the "right of the Northern Ireland people to remain within the UK" though this is bemusingly coupled with the assertion that "this does not mean that Unionist leaders can have a veto on political developments".)

Livingstone also points to the majority support in this country for troop withdrawal, though he recognises that a large part of this support is based on a reactionary 'bring our boys back home' sentiment. It is for withdrawal nevertheless. If we feel we must wait for majority support on a principled anti-imperialist basis we – and consequently the Irish people – will be waiting till the revolution cometh.

Trade Unions

However, within the trade unions the 'bring our boys back home' feeling is far outweighed by their Unionist and Protestant membership in Northern Ireland. It is a fact of Irish life, born of the sectarianism inherent in the Northern Ireland state itself, that, in the main, Catholics join Southern trade unions while Protestants join British unions that organise in the North. In Livingstone's opinion this fact means that the unions "are the least productive area to work in" for British withdrawal. Livingstone therefore argues that the PLP will move first and will have to "drag the unions behind it". Thus the PLP should now become the key focus for withdrawal campaigning.

There is further evidence of creaks and squeaks within the PLP contained in an interview with Clive Soley, Labour Deputy Spokesperson on Northern Ireland, in a recent issue of Socialist Organiser (No. 124, 17/3/83). Here, in response to the interviewer arguing that the Labour Party should tackle the Irish situation head on "by, for example, a decision to get out, a declaration of intent to get out, an energetic attempt to reach agreement with the Republic about restructuring, and British payment of all sorts of indemnities or whatever . . .", Soley replies ". . . The picture you describe is not different from what I've been saying . . ." Soley goes on to state, "Yes, we are giving a strong commitment to get out." He qualifies this by adding "We are not setting a date." His admirable intentions also flounder on the question of the Unionist veto, where in true Labour tradition he on the one hand reiterates that infamous word "consent", and on the other hand argues that the Unionists cannot be allowed to "veto the political progress."

Soley's strategy for extricating himself and the Labour Party out of this rather bizarre contradiction (in sum, well nigh the historical contradiction of Labour and Ireland) is to politically travel to Belfast via Dublin – "what we'll do is first have talks with the Dublin government . . . to set up new economic and social institutions, and we will not allow [the Unionists] to veto that." One can just see Soley, armed with the glad tidings of his new institutions, marching north to the border to



Ken Livingstone on his visit to Belfast

confront Paisley et al doing their Carson "taking matters into our own hands" act. Obviously Soley will only get as far as a dead end street in Dublin, but his initial commitment to withdrawal is enough for withdrawal campaigners to argue with him for a Labour Party change of direction.

Next Labour Government

Livingstone argues that this situation within the PLP necessitates working out what demands should be placed on the PLP for implementation by the next Labour government. In Livingstone's view the aim of the withdrawal campaign should be to commit the next Labour government to the proposals that resulted from his discussions with Sinn Fein (or variant thereon that might arise from future discussions). "The government must refuse to be bound by the Unionist veto, announce a planned withdrawal within two years and convene a conference of all northern and southern Irish parties to agree the constitutional guarantees that the northern Protestants will require." (How Sinn Fein can break the nationalist mould, by Ken Livingstone, Guardian 7/3/83).

Some (mostly outside the Labour Party) have heckled and accused Livingstone of reneging on 'out now' in favour of the soft option of two years. This is to adopt a purist approach to the withdrawal process. Depending on exactly what is envisaged by the two formulae – 'withdrawal now' or 'within two years' – they are not necessarily counterposed. If 'withdrawal now' is taken to mean troops, infrastructure, lock, stock, barrel and all removed immediately and overnight then it is, quite simply, unrealistic. Alternatively if a British government is allowed to interpret 'within two years' as giving the Unionists the opportunity to impose conditions, to militarily arm themselves (not that this isn't happening already), and/or for the British to cook up some deal with the Unionists allowing for a form of partial withdrawal, and/or some other fudging, soft shoe shuffles or half way measures, than such is, quite simply, not withdrawal.

Moreover, 'now' has always been coupled with 'troops' – i.e. 'troops out now'. Certainly the troops, Britain's military presence, must be withdrawn completely and immediately. But there is more to the British presence than just troops and anyway there has already been a significant troop reduction coupled with "a spectacular build up of local and overwhel-

Ireland

FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH KEN LIVINGSTONE
BY SARAH ROELOFS

mingly Protestant security forces in a process termed 'Ulsterisation' . . ." (From Labour to the Tories: The ideology of containment in Northern Ireland, by Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, in Capital and Class No. 18, Winter 1982, p.76. See also Troublesome Business by Geoff Bell, Pluto Press, 1982, p.128). There is an infrastructure that will have to be dismantled and a United Ireland assembled including for example, as Livingstone points out, the extension of a health service for all of Ireland.

Which is why a constitutional conference, or some such, also needs to be immediately convened. Such a conference would discuss and decide on such things as the health service, indemnities, restructuring etc., as well as guarantees for the Protestants. Again some have criticised the Livingstone/Sinn Fein proposals for allowing of such guarantees. Such criticism misses the point. While Sinn Fein have dropped their proposal for a federal Ireland as an undue capitulation to Unionism, they are prepared to legislate for civil rights. For everyone including the Protestants. Are those who raise such criticisms against civil rights for the Protestants?

Two Year Withdrawal Plan

Sinn Fein are prepared to give this total withdrawal process two years. Immediate unconditional military withdrawal should be a demand, not of Ken Livingstone, but of the Government (certainly the next Labour government). This should be seen as the essential first step of a two year withdrawal plan.

There has been very little discussion on the British left about such a withdrawal process. However, in the March/April 1983 issue of New Socialist Loretta Loach concludes a review of Geoffrey Bell's book Troublesome Business with the following: "I would argue that the problem . . . demands [a programme of] unconditional British withdrawal. The principle of self-determination will only win over the British working class if it is made concrete. This programme will have to answer legitimate worries about the threat of a Protestant backlash and it will have to concentrate on the process of British withdrawal." One such draft programme is included with this article in the hope that it will initiate a long overdue discussion.

With the aim of committing the next Labour Government to the Livingstone/Sinn Fein proposals (or to those that may come out of future discussions) the withdrawal campaign must continue to plug away at propaganda and activities which highlight and bring the issue of withdrawal to an ever wider audience, both within and outside of the Labour Party. One aspect of this will be the labour movement delegations to Northern Ireland being organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland. Prospective parliamentary candidates, union officials, MPs, local councillors, women's movement, ethnic community representatives, and representatives from across the labour movement should all be encouraged and/or mandated (whichever is more appropriate) to attend these delegations. Report-back conferences should be organised. Public meetings and debates should be set up to discuss how to achieve Labour Party policy for a United Ireland inviting PLP and Labour Committee on Ireland (who are campaigning for uncondtional withdrawal) speakers.

Sinn Fein

In addition support for those in the Labour Party prepared to put their socialist principles into practice and have discussions with Sinn Fein (as well as others) needs to be built up including requests that Labour Northern Ireland spokespersons make direct trips to Belfast. Sinn Fein are by far and away the leading Republican group campaigning against the British occupation. Livingstone argues that the new Belfast leadership "would probably be on the Labour GLC if they had been born and brought up in London." Certainly under Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison, and since the political impact of Bobby Sands election victory in 1981, Sinn Fein have broken out of narrow nationalism and rapidly gained political strength. Recent issues of their paper Republican News testify to this new political approach with a strong emphasis on campaigning on social issues, particularly housing for example. Articles explain that Sinn Fein wishes to encourage people to act on their own behalf, to organise themselves, not for Sinn Fein to act on the people's behalf. Their recent landslide victory in the Carrickmore by-election with the victor being prepared to take his seat in Omagh Council signified a radical break with Republican tradition. It is in this light that the PLP's outraged refusal to discuss openly with Sinn Fein becomes even more stupid. After all Harold Wilson (and others) had secret talks with the IRA back in 1972 recognising thereby that if the IRA were part of the war they should also be part of the peace.

There are some who will consider Livingstone's 'Britain will be out within the decade' perspective outrageously optimistic. Others will be shouting 'sell-out' and 'capitulationist' from the side lines. Such views are irrelevant. What is important is that the opportunities presented by those who insist on a public dialogue with Sinn Fein and by the increased anxiety within the PLP for a way out are taken full advantage of. All those who support unconditional withdrawal must unite to force the Labour Party to adopt a truly socialist position on Ireland for the first time in its history.

PUBLIC MEETING: LABOUR AND IRELAND
SPEAKERS: KEN LIVINGSTONE AND CLIVE SOLEY
TUESDAY JUNE 7, 7.30
ISLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY
HOLLOWAY ROAD
CALLED BY ISLINGTON SOUTH LABOUR PARTY

Nine CLPs or branches turned up at Jubilee (Peace?) Gardens on Sunday March 27 to listen to Jazira and Benjamin Zephaniah before marching on the Campaign Against Racist Laws demo to Trafalgar Square, by way of Downing Street and the Immigration Appeals Tribunal.

This modest turnout was rather better than Labour's contribution to previous CARL demos, and would have been higher had some comrades not been deterred by the persistent rain, woken up late after putting their clocks an hour forward, or had actually found their party banner. Nineteen trade union banners was also many more than last time.

Publicity for this march went much further into the Labour Movement than before. Interest in fighting the racist immigration and nationality laws is slowly picking up. However, we still have to show that we do mean to keep our promise to repeal these laws if Labour is elected. Pity that these promises don't get headline treatment in Labour's Campaign Document.

Oppose Repression in Zimbabwe

When Robert Mugabe's ZAPU (PF) swept into power with an overwhelming majority in 1980, he was faced with several problems. The first was the hostility of the apartheid regime in Pretoria which had staked their hopes and a great deal of money on Bishop Muzorewa, Smith's Uncle Tom black Prime Minister. A further problem was created by the fact that his huge majority came almost exclusively from the Shona-speaking area. Matabeleland voted almost solidly for Nkomo's ZANU party. This served to perpetuate the ethnic divisions which had been so assidiously cultivated by the former colonialist regime.

But perhaps Mugabe's biggest handicap was the Lancaster House Agreement whose purpose was to safeguard imperialist interests in Southern Africa.

ELECTIONS

Both Mugabe and Nkomo fought the elections on progressive social policies. Electoral victory would bring land to the peasants, improved social services and health care, better education for their children.

In the first year after independence (with the lifting of international sanctions which had been imposed on the Smith regime) the economy grew by 14%. The second year saw a growth of 10%. This enabled the government to introduce some reforms such as free primary education; health care for anyone earning less than £100 per month; raising the minimum wage by 66 per cent. These same years also saw the working class moving into action. But the biggest strike wave in the country's history, involving miners, factory workers, textile and transport workers, nurses etc was ruthlessly suppressed.

By 1982, the effects of the world recession made itself felt. The growth rate went down to 3%. The Standard Bank predicted a nil growth rate for 1983. Pledged to preserve capitalism – '*We recognise that the economic structure is based on capitalism and that whatever ideas we have must be built on that . . .*' (Robert Mugabe in interview with *New York Times*, 5 March 1980), the government was unable to fulfil many of its election promises, especially the redivision of land. Today, 4,600 white farmers still own 38 per cent of the country and produce 90% of the country's agricultural goods. 700,000 black families are still cramped in the old Tribal Trust lands, trying to scrape a living from the poorest soil in the country. Section 16 of the Lancaster House Agreement specifically prohibits the seizure of land, which must be sold on a 'willing buyer, willing seller' basis. If Mugabe violates this clause, there is the threat of the withdrawal of British financial aid. In commerce and industry, 70% of the assets are owned by multinational companies.

PRESENT UNREST

The cause of the present unrest, with the threat of civil war is therefore threefold . . . the undoubted South African intervention; the land-hunger and poverty of the people who see the fruits of victory falling from their grasp and the ethnic divisions in the country.

Undoubtedly the Pretoria regime and its agents in Zimbabwe are exploiting the situation and will do all they can to prevent the establishment of a socialist society which would give the people what they fought for. Socialists must give unconditional support to the Mugabe regime in combatting these elements. But they will not support repressive measures against those who are opposed to the government because it has failed to live up to the high expectations, aroused during the election campaign, of a new society and an equitable re-distribution of land and wealth. Nor will they acquiesce in genocide in Matabeleland.



Photo: Labour Party Photograph Library

Robert Mugabe (second from right seated) seen during his first Press Conference as the new leader of Zimbawbe

ROAD FORWARD

The road forward for Zimbabwe is not through a repetition of the repressive measures which hall-marked the Smith regime, or a one-party state which would prevent the emergence of political parties based on the urban and rural working class.

As MOTO, the pro-ZANU Catholic journal published in Harare put it: (March '83) '*There are no ready anwers in the search for a socialist alternative. But without . . . critical discussion and open debate on the part of all progressive Zimbabweans, we will never even be in a position to even pose the question*'.

If tiny Grenada, under the leadership of Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement can mobilise its people against imperialist attacks, so can Zimbabwe, with its sophisticated economic structure and the support of the international labour movement.

Charlie van Gelderen

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE

NATIONAL RECALL CONFERENCE MAY 21, 1983. COUNTY HALL

AGENDA

10.30 – 11.00	**Registration.**
11.00 – 11.30	**Political Report.**
11.30 – 12.00	**Secretary and Treasurer's Report.**
12.00 – 12.30	**Political Debate and Resolution.**
1.00 – 1.30	**Organisational Debate and Resolution.**
	BREAK
2.30 – 3.45	**Workshops.**
3.45 – 4.30	**Plenary.**
4.30 – 5.00	**Elections.**

(Anyone who is a registered member of the LMCP by May 19, 1983 will be entitled to vote and submit resolutions etc.)

£5 Membership – £1 Unwaged.
£2 Observers – £1 Unwaged.

Deputy Mayor of Nazareth Speaks

Walid Fahoum, deputy-mayor of Nazareth, Israel, was in Britain recently to speak at a series of meetings organised by Palestine Solidarity Campaign in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners. He was interviewed by Chris Khamis and Alf Filer for *London Labour Briefing*.

LLB: Can you describe the conditions of the Palestinian prisoners in the camps inside southern Lebanon and Israel?

WF: Al Ansar camp is in fact a group of about 20 camps in southern Lebanon, covering about 15 acres and containing around 6,000 prisoners. It is difficult to find out about the conditions as the Israelis censor the letters that the prisoners send to their families and they carefully select the people who are interviewed by the press. The Red Cross was only allowed into the camp 41 days after the initial arrests. Independent lawyers have been denied access. I and two other lawyers tried to take out a court injunction to visit six prisoners at the request of their relatives. The Israelis told us that if they let us in then all the other prisoners would want to see their lawyers and they did not have the facilities for so many lawyers! However we know from reports by people who have been released from the camps that the conditions are very poor. Saddoun Hussein, a Lebanese journalist wrote a book '100 days in the Al Ansar camps' about his detention. He described how there were twenty-five people in each tent and each tent was given one bar of soap, one tube of toothpaste and one razor per week. Each prisoner was given two blankets, hardly enough to protect them from the cold Lebanese winter and snow (last winter was an exceptionally cold one in Lebanon). Each prisoner is given one shirt, one pair of trousers and two underpants. The toilets are open holes dug in the ground. Originally they were inside the tents but now they are outside.

An Israeli journalist, Yisrael Zamir, has reported that there are 300 people suffering severe illnesses in these camps. These people have been arrested arbitrarily but the Israeli government refuses to recognise them as Prisoners of War and accord them the rights available under the Geneva Convention. Because of the large numbers arrested, some have been taken into Israel where they have been interrogated and tortured. A Bangla Deshi doctor, Chafique Islam, who was himself arrested, has described how the Israeli soldiers fractured the lower jaw of a Palestinian colleague of his, Nabih Shoeb. He also describes how Mohammed Anwar, a Palestinian doctor had eleven ribs broken and how another Bangla Deshi doctor, Rafik Tapan, was given electric shocks. The Palestinian women also suffer. We discovered that some of them were being kept in Nivi-Tirtza, a special prison for women near Tel Aviv, but when we applied for permission to see them, they were returned to a new prison in south Lebanon so that legal visits were not possible.

Some women have been arrested a number of times. Ablal Harron a forty-eight year old school teacher from Sidon was arrested three times. The first time she was detained for eighteen days before they questioned her, and what they wanted to know was the whereabouts of her hsuband. There is another story about a woman who was raped by the Phalangists and then handed over to the Israelis when it was discovered that she was carrying a letter from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

LLB: In Britain, Israel is often described as a democracy. How are the Palestinians inside the 1967 borders of Israel treated?

WF: We are treated as second class citizens, and after the 1967 war we saw the introduction of third class citizens. We can see this in the expropriation of land and the conditions of work. Already workers are imported from southern Lebanon as cheap labour. There is discrimination in education and Municipality budgets.

While Palestinians are about 17% of the Israeli population their proportion amongst students and academics is less than a quarter of this. There is a Jewish settlement around Nazareth called Upper Nazareth. This was built in the late 1950's on land confiscated from Nazareth. Yet this settlement of around 20,000 people is given a budget triple the size of that given to Nazareth proper, a town of around 45,000 people. In such a situation you invent methods of struggle and we set up the voluntary camps. Every August since 1975 volunteers have come from the villages around Nazareth and some Jewish people from Tel Aviv, to help us pave roads, build walls and steps, construct sewers – all the things we find difficult because of the Israeli discrimination over the budget.

We also organise lectures, musical programmes and theatre for the volunteers. We teach people through these camps. Over the last three years we have tried to make these camps international. Last year we had eleven delegates from all over the world and we hope to make these camps more international in the future.

LLB: Supporters of Israel in the Labour Party, who have been horrified by the antics of Begin and Sharon, have pinned their hopes on a return to power of the Israeli Labour Party. Do you think this Party would treat the Palestinians any better than the Begin government and would they help bring about a peaceful solution?

WF: The Israeli Labour Party would treat the Palestinians less bad not better, and there is a difference. Maybe the Israeli Labour Party will make a first step to peace, but I do not know how many years it will be before they make a second step.

But it must be remembered that the Israeli Labour Party was the party of Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel. And the discrimination and confiscation of land begins from the days of Ben Gurion, from the beginning of the Israeli State. It was the Labour Party government which attacked Egypt in 1956 along with Britain and France. Again it was a Labour Party government which started the 6-day war in 1967 and then began to build settlements on the occupied territories after that war. All this began with the Labour Party and was taken over by Begin's Likud party. They are both Zionists, wanting Israel for the Jews alone, and we as Palestinians do not see a big difference between the two. They are both expansionist and want us not to be. But we as Palestinians are a reality, we are there, we won't leave our homes, our villages and cities.

LLB: Finally, what can we do in Britain to help the Palestinian struggle?

WF: It's a good question as I have noticed that there are many groups supporting the Palestinians in Britain but each group works alone. We need your support and it is very important for you to be united in your support.

Maybe you are not as obliged as us to be united. We search for common things, a 'programma minima' and put aside our differences. We did this in 1975 in Nazareth when we formed the Democratic Front, a coalition of the Communist Party, the committee of academics, the committee of merchants and shopkeepers and the Nazareth Students Organisation. In the 1975 election we got 70% of the vote while in the previous election the Communist Party got only 45%. In this way unity strengthens the struggle. You must find a common basis of unity in supporting us.

Grenada: Socialism in the Caribbean



1982 – Celebrating The Third Anniversary Of The Revolution

March 13th was the 4th anniversary of the revolution that established a workers and farmers government for the first time in a black English-speaking country. The anniversary celebrations were little publicised in the English press in spite of the sizeable Grenadan community in Britain.

The New Jewel Movement took power in a coup that saw the overthrow of the pro-imperialist Eric Gairy. Gairy was in the USA at the time giving evidence to the United Nations on U.F.O's, a topic that preocupied him more than Grenada's development. On hearing news of the overthrow the Grenadan people came out onto the streets to demonstrate their support for the new People's Revolutionary Government (PRG).

IMMENSE TASKS

The tasks for the PRG on taking power were immense. Under Gairy the economy was on the verge of collapse. The PRG under the leadership of Maurice Bishop realised that recovery could only be achieved with the mass involvement of the people at all stages of decision making. However before any economic progress could be made, a number of fundamental changes were needed. The right to strike was established, it became compulsory for employers to recognise unions, and laws were introduced establishing equal pay, maternity leave and outlawing exploitation on the basis of sex.

As a result over 80 per cent of the workforce is now unionised, and industrial and agricultural co-operatives have been formed. Workers are encouraged to participate in the decisions affecting the future of Grenada through organisations such as National Womans Movement, National Youth Movement, Peoples Militia, and at local level parish councils allow people to discuss their own communities' future development.

The priorities for the PRG were:

- to develop preventative medicine campaigns, and a free health service
- to establish a more efficient system of agriculture
- to establish a power grid for all islands
- to rebuild and resurface the roads
- to establish a properly integrated education service

This last item was seen as particularly important in order to overcome the lack of education caused by centuries of colonialism and neo-colonialism. This meant not only tackling the problem of adult illiteracy but also giving the people a level of economic understanding so that they can fully participate in the future development of Grenada, and understand the lies and **distortions** that the opponents of socialism have spread.

The tasks facing the PRG would have been a daunting list for any government, but it must be remembered that since 1979 Grenada has been subjected to intense pressure from both the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. In 1981 the CIA developed plans to cause economic difficulty for Grenada in the hope of undermining the political control of the PRG. In 1980 Hurricane Allen badly hit the Windward Islands and affected the vital banana crop. The British government excluded Grenada from the assistance given to the island. A Tory M.P. and Foreign Office Minister stated: *'Grenada is in the process of establishing a kind of society of which the British government disapproves, irrespective of whether the people of Grenada want it of not!'*

REFUSED COMPROMISES

The leadership of the PRG have never hidden the fact that they are striving to establish a socialist state. They have refused to make compromises with those both within and outside Grenada who would want to hold back economic and social justice. Grenada as Maurice Bishop said is "in no ones back yard". It wishes to pursue its own course of development, as a non-aligned state.

The development of socialism within Grenada has important lessons, not least of all the role played by the USA and Britain in attempting to destabilise a government who choose a path of development that does not fit into the neo-colonial role that suits the interests of the multi-nationals and the government in the west.

The Grenadan revolution must be defended. Although only a small island (population 110,000) it can act as an example to other oppressed peoples throughout the world. It was the only member state of the British Commonwealth that openly spoke out against the Falklands War.

The achievements of the PRG are impressive. These have not been gained by cutting the island off from the outside, but by international solidarity with Cuba, Nicaragua, and those people fighting for freedom in El Salvador.

However Grenada needs our support and help: WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Britain — Grenada Friendship Society is an organisation which promotes understanding and comradeship between Britain/Grenada. Speakers with slide/video are willing to talk at Labour Party or T.U. branches. The Co-op movement in Grenada is often desperately short of basic supplies, including paper and pens for schools. Our CLP took a collection last month which is going to help buy woodcutting equipment to aid the developing furniture industry. Women in Support of Grenada are involved in publicising the NWO, fundraising and disseminating information on the progress of women in Grenada's revolution. (Information on all these activities can be obtained from BGFS, **68 Grays Inn Buildings, Roseberry Avenue, London EC1R 4PL)**

London Boroughs of Islington and Haringey have held discussions and have or are about to twin with parishes in Grenada, trade union branches and some ILEA schools have also established links. These schemes provide a way of exchanging information as well as providing material assistance to the people of Grenada, for if the Tory government refuses to give aid unconditionally, then we can give financial support and solidarity to show our commitment to international socialism.

PAUL JEATER
Ilford North CLP

US War Threat to Nicaragua

By Phil Hearse (Hampstead CLP)

AS THE FIGHTING escalates in neighbouring El Salvador, the United States and its allies are preparing to strike a major blow against their left wing opponents in Central America – by attempting to bring down the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. About two thousand right wing insurgents infiltrated into Nicaragua at the beginning of March. There is little doubt that their attack has been co-ordinated by the United States. On 7th April a document from the powerful US National Security Council – chaired by Reagan – was leaked to the press. It showed that the United States has organised and financed a major destabilisation against Nicaragua, Cuba and the tiny revolutionary island of Grenada.

The mini-invasion of Nicaragua is just the latest of a series of cross-border raids by supporters of the former dictator Somoza, who are armed and trained by US advisors in Honduras. According to the Nicaraguan interior minister Tomas Borge, the raid could be designed to divert the Nicaraguan army while a more substantial invasion is prepared. The United States ambassador in Honduras, John Negroponte, has openly boasted that he is masterminding the plan to overthrow the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. In January the United States sent 1600 marines to participate in joint manoeuvres with the Honduran army just seven miles from the Nicaraguan border. Much of their equipment was left behind for use by the right wing insurgents.

The reason for the hostility of the United States to the Nicaraguan government is not hard to discover. For decades the United States has dominated Central America economically and politically. Its chosen agents have been a series of right wing military dictatorships, including the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. But in July 1979 the Sandinistas (who take their name from Augusto Cesar Sandino, the revolutionary leader killed in 1934) overthrew Somoza, after an insurrectionary general strike in which Somoza's air force destroyed many of the working class areas of the capital Managua. Tens of thousands of Nicaraguan workers were killed.

The Sandinista revolution put the workers and peasants in power. Starting with a massive literacy campaign, the Sandinistas have started the very difficult work of reconstructing a society plunged into desperate poverty by years of exploitation and neglect. Many estates and businesses have been nationalised; local administration has been put in the hands of the Sandinista Defence Committees, democratically controlled by assemblies of the local people. The Sandinista leaders have made no secret of their socialist convictions and friendship with Cuba, but insist that their revolution is not modelled on any other. Despite US claims of political repression, the Sandinistas have not executed or imprisoned their middle class opponents. The right wing daily paper *La Prensa* continues to campaign vigorously for the overthrow of the government, with little or no interference.

Danger to U.S. Domination

The danger that Nicaragua represents to US domination of the region is easy to see. In Guatemala and El Salvador the dictatorships are increasingly harassed by left wing guerillas. The popular support for these movements continues unabated, despite the massacres perpetrated by the government-sponsored death squads and the viciously repressive armed forces. The left wing throughout Central America looks to Nicaragua for inspiration in what they see increasingly as a regional war against United States imperialism and its allies.

The Sandinista government has established friendly relations with Socialist parties all over Europe. The Socialist government in France is one of the few governments anywhere which has been prepared to sell them arms. There is little doubt where socialist sympathies should lie in this conflict. In Central America there is little chance of peaceful social change. A dialogue with the death squads is not a feasible option. As the danger of an all-out war against Nicaragua grows, increased international solidarity with the Sandinistas and the left wing forces in El Salvador is vital.

**The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign is holding a labour movement conference at County Hall on 14th May, with Alex Kitson and Judith Hart among the speakers. Constituency parties and branches can send two delegates each. Details from ESC, 29 Islington Park St., London N1.*



In Defence of Manchester Withington

Dear Comrade,

Mandy Moore's article 'CLPD Manoeuvres' in the April *Briefing* clearly demonstrates the paucity of comradeship on the left in London. Ms. Moore states '*I said in the last issue of* Briefing *that attempts to resurrect the Manchester Withington Amendment would be made, and that fudging over AGM decisions would go on. I was wrong. Poor old Manchester Withington wasn't even given a decent burial before resuscitation began. And the fudging I predicted turned out to be a full blown disregard for the AGM's decisions.*'

In an attempt to score points and imply that the new CLPD EC is flouting AGM decision, Ms. Moore uses that old favourite of the bourgeois press: slander and innuendo. Key phrases such as 'poor old Withington' and in her previous article 'The appalling Manchester Withington amendment' or 'pro register proposals like Manchester Withington'.

The impression given is that Manchester Withington figures largely in the fantasy life of John Golding as his model constituency. When in fact the reverse is the case. Withington was one of the first constituencies in the country to send resolutions to the NEC condemning the witch-hunt and has categorically refused to expel comrades as a result of the register. Withington fully supported Hackney North Conference on October 30th and was one of the few CLP's in the North West to send a delegate.

I'm sure Mandy would agree that it would be unfortunate that Withington should be associated with witch-hunts and expulsions simply in order to put the boot into CLPD. Sadly however this is not the case and what should have been a serious debate on the left over how to defeat the register and prevent expulsions has been prevented by a smokescreen of allegations hurled at CLPD's Executive Committee and one of the most active constituencies in the North West.

The result has been that the left is now committed to supporting the Greenwich amendment despite the fact that it still leaves quite arbitrary powers with the NEC. *The fact is under the provisions of the Greenwich Amendment Militant could still have been expelled.* However had the Withington proposal been adopted by Conference no expulsions would now be taking place.

There is also the question of tactics. It was obvious (at least to those of us who talked to the trade union delegates) that there was a clear feeling in favour of some form of regulation of pressure group activity at last year's Conference.

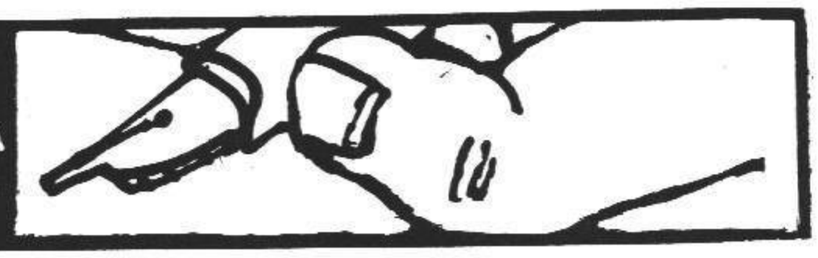
It is therefore most unlikely that trade unionists will reverse their decision of last year by adopting the Greenwich Amendment.

Why then are we supporting an amendment which is unlikely to be passed and even if it is, still leaves the NEC with the arbitrary power of expulsion? Having boycotted the register to no effect *Briefing* is now calling for a further empty gesture.

Finally Mandy takes Vladimir Derer to task for writing to the Vice Presidents elected at the CLPD AGM and asking them if they wish to take up their office. Mandy was obviously unaware that prior to the AGM some of the sponsors had proclaimed loudly that under no circumstances would they be registered socialists. As the AGM voted to register it was hardly provocative, as Mandy has stated, for the Secretary to enquire whether or not their statements should be taken at face value. It is however interesting to note that they have all now accepted office.

Yours comradely,
John Chapman
Former Secretary
Manchester Withington CLP

Letters



Coalition calculations

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest Chris Knight's interview with Ken Livingstone in the April issue of *London Labour Briefing* and, although I agree with much of what Comrade Livingstone had to say, there is one point, which, I think, needs clarification. When questioned about the future, Livingstone made it clear that in his view the Labour Party should refuse, under any circumstances, to enter a coalition after the next election. He argued that in the event of Labour finding itself the largest part in the House of Commons, but without an overall majority, Mr. Foot should form a government, present a programme based on the party's manifesto and if that programme was defeated, a general election should be called to obtain a fresh mandate. Unfortunately Comrade Livingstone **seems a little confused over the exact constitutional position. The power to dissolve Parliament belongs, not to the Prime Minister, but to the** Queen, as part of her perogative. Normally, in a two party system she would accede to the request for a dissolution from the leader of the majority party because no-one else could form a government. In the situation envisaged above, however, she would not be obliged to grant Mr. Foot's request, if there was a possibility that the other parties could form a government with an overall majority. Therefore, the alternative to a minority Labour Government might not be a second general election, but an SDP/Tory coalition. The temptation for Labour's leaders, under these circumstances, to enter some form of coalition government would thus be very great. To prevent this we need a firm pledge from our MPs that, should the Labour leadership try to form a coalition, as the only alternative to a further four or five years of right wing government, they, the MPs, would be prepared to bring down such a coalition by voting against its programme in the House of Commons.

The reason why I stress what might appear to be a somewhat academic point, is that during the **period of the Lib.-Lab. pact in the last parliament, no Labour MP was prepared to end this shameful arrangement by going into the lobby** against the government in a vote of confidence. We have to know that next time our MPs will not by so pusillanimous.

Yours etc. **Paula Watson**
Westminster South CLP

Zionism & Spare Rib

Dear LLB,

Briefing's Street Life Collective objects to publication of *Zionism, Women & Israel*. At the Editorial Meeting, two of its members SUPPORTED its publication, one even suggesting it be published in the Street Life Supplement! It did not 'lecture to feminists on how to understand the different forms women's oppression takes' because it was aimed at both women and men. It described how the COLONIALIST nature of Israel leads women into performing specific roles, contrary to Israeli propaganda. *Spare Rib* doesn't even recognise Israel as a settler state, hence its blindness regarding Zionism's structural sexism. SR's pro-Zionist/racist coverage accepts Zionism's myths whilst forgetting that racism doesn't stop at men. Maybe Palestinian women are invisible, just as the Armagh Women are 'not a Women's issue.' SR succumbed to intense Zionist pressure precisely because there has been no equivalent pressure from the Left. SR refuse to print letters from pro-Palestinian women. The SL Collective were angered at the attack on SR's COVERAGE, but say nothing about SR's support for the Zionist 'Feminists' – itself an attack on the most oppressed women. It says a lot for the politics of Street Life.

Regarding the 'activists' letter from the Labour Middle East Council. The last LMEC Executive contained 'activists' such as MPs David Watkinson, Andrew Faulds and Don Concannon – the ghoul who visited Bobby Sands. It's a pro-Arabist not pro-Palestinian /anti-Zionist group. Officers such as Ernie Ross MP preferred to work with Monday Club MP Tony Marlow rather than ourselves in his Committee Against Lebanon's Invasion. The Jordanian ambassador was even guest of honour at their Annual Meeting!

Fraternally, Tony Greenstein Chairperson – Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine

Omitted from the article last month was mention of Nira Y Davies/Dina Hechts article *Women in Israel: Ideology Without Revolution* (Khamsin 6) from which I quoted and many of whose concepts I used.

Accountable Art

Dear Briefing,

Although it was good to see an item on the arts in April's Briefing (GOING SLOWLY ON THE ARTS?), it was a pity that Paula Watson only sees the struggle for cultural and artistic democracy in terms of bringing arts to the people, **and fails to recognise the need for the creation of new cultural values. It is not only a question of** national versus local, but of work geared to spectators and the presentation of conventional art forms versus (if such a polarity is made necessry by limited resources) work which is under the control of local people and challenges established forms.

One of the main reasons that the arts are still low on every political agenda is that they are constantly seen only in one dimension. Even most socialists are still unaware of their power to effect social change by giving people a wider means of expression, of their ability to help people change their so-called leisure time to bring their own lives a little more directly under their control. Such progress, however, does not come from the recreation of establishment arts, but is achieved by artists who are prepared to put their own skills at the service of a wider group. It is not achieved by "fine" artists explaining and demonstrating their work, as Paula Watson suggests, but by a real shift in control of artistic language and practice.

In this respect, Tony Banks has not gone slowly. He has demonstrated, by vastly increasing the money available to community arts, the road that all socialist councils should take if they are truly concerned with the redistribution of the cultural wealth around us.

Perhaps a Streetlife Supplement on community arts at some point would help to stimulate and clarify the debate? Yours in comradeship

Felicity Harvest Hackney South CLP

Racism

Comrades,

When the National Front published a document which proclaimed that all 'Pakis' (Asians) were rapists, there was quite rightly an outcry in our movement.

I was, therefore, astounded to read an article by Ruth Clarke (April *Briefing*) which insidiously followed the same racist line.

To state that '(within Southall's Asian Communities), rape and incest go unreported as victims may face disgrace and rejection by their families', demonstrates that the writer has very little, real, understanding of the Asian family unit, or indeed of Asian culture, in general.

In the event of rape, or incest, the perpetuator of such a horrible crime would suffer swift and sure punishment, meted out, most usually, by the menfolk of the family concerned.

Further, behaviour, which most of society would regard as acceptable (holding hands – kissing – cuddling – stroking hair) would cause shock and horror in the Asian Communities if carried out in public, or company or by unwed persons.

The moral and ethical codes of the Asian community are extremely strict and precise – and more important – are strongly enforced and observed.

It is even arguable that most Asians in this country enforce these codes even more strictly than they would in their country of origin, as they regard the behaviour of the indigenous population as lewd and licentious.

It is therefore an insult of the highest order to imply that there is a vast, hidden incidence of sexual crime within Asian communities.

It's the type of 'pigswill' that the racists feed on. The 'repression' and 'virtual imprisonment' that Ruth Clarke perceives in Southall Asian communities is common to all Asian communities all over the country. And, both Asian men and women suffer from them. Each is the product of the 'barriers' set up by the ethnic majority of this country.

'Barriers' which begin in immigration offices in lands far across the sea, and extend to and exist in every facet of daily life in this country.

The sooner that Ruth Clarke and all the other people who profess to be concerned with the ethnic minorities, turn their attention to tearing down those 'barriers' and try to understand and learn from different cultures, rather than trying to impose their own prejudices, and predilections created by their own culture the better it will be for all of us.

S.P. Banerji
(Tottenham CLP)

Labour Museum

The National Museum of Labour History was set up in 1975 by Henry Fry, Walter Southgate and Terry McCarthy at Limehouse in the Municipal Offices of the former Metropolitan Borough of Stepney. It houses a unique collection of books and pamphlets (some fifty thousand), twenty-five thousand photographs and a display of banners, covering the history of the Movement. The Museum has rendered an invaluable service to all sections of the movement.

It is, however, a great pity that this remarkable museum has been starved of funds and support ever since its doors opened.

The present funding arrangements are as follows: 1) £20,000 from individual supporters, wards, T.U. branches etc. 2) £15,000 from the G.L.C. 3) £10,000 from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. 4) £300 from the Inner London Education Authority (!). These uneven contributions to the running of the Museum compare unfavourably with like museums operating in London on this scale. The Governing body of Hackney College has been trying to promote a scheme for incorporating the Museum on a federal basis with its Poplar Centre for over a year now. Suggestions for involving the Polytechnic of North London have also been explored. Unfortunately, despite continual pressure to evoke a response to these proposals, none has been forthcoming. How long must we wait for effective action from the I.L.E.A. and the G.L.C.?

Ellis Hillman
Hornsey & Wood Green C.L.P.

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

BRIEFING ON PERSONAL POLITICS

This issue of the Supplement is on the theme of peace, and in particular the role that women have played in the struggle for unilateral nuclear disarmament. The struggle by women has exposed the relationship between the 'bomb' and the patriarchal, capitalist society we live in, and has highlighted the need to transform the whole of society if we are ever to achieve peace. It has also gone outside the confines of traditional political organisation and developed new forms of action and struggle which have captured the imagination of thousands of women who had not previously considered themselves 'political'.

Women fighting the illusion of protection

KEEPING THE PEACE

'We can best help you to prevent war not by respecting your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods. We can best help you to prevent war not by joining your society but by remaining outside your society but in co-operation with its aim.'

Three Guineas, Virginia Woolf, 1938

I have this nightmare. It begins with stopping Cruise and that's where it ends, because with that success all the strength and energy of the peace movement withers away.

Then the next year they bring in another Cruise or something equally horrendous and the next and the next so that we live the rest of our probably quite short lives permanently within a hairs-breadth of disaster always in crisis and tension, always on the defensive. Never solving the problem because we never get to the root of it.

THE PROBLEM IS THE SOCIETY WE LIVE IN

As far as I am concerned Cruise is just a symptom. The real problem is the society we live in. A society which protects human rights with weaons built from uranium mined at the cost of people's land, health and livelihood; which espouses justice while building missiles instead of the schools, hospitals and jobs that make for social justice. We live in a society whose organising principles are violence and competition – *a patriarchy* – and before two-thirds of the readers drop the page in horror let me explain what I mean.

(continued on next page)



PHOTO NADINE FINCH

WOMEN—TAKE THE POWER!

KEEPING THE PEACE

(Continued from previous page)

A patriarchal society is one which assigns certain *human* characteristics according to biological gender. So boys are expected to show so-called masculine characteristics – assertiveness, courage, objectivity, competitiveness, achievement orientation. Girls are expected to show the 'feminine' characteristics of nurturance, gentleness, emotionality, co-operativeness, etc. These are not biologically determined.

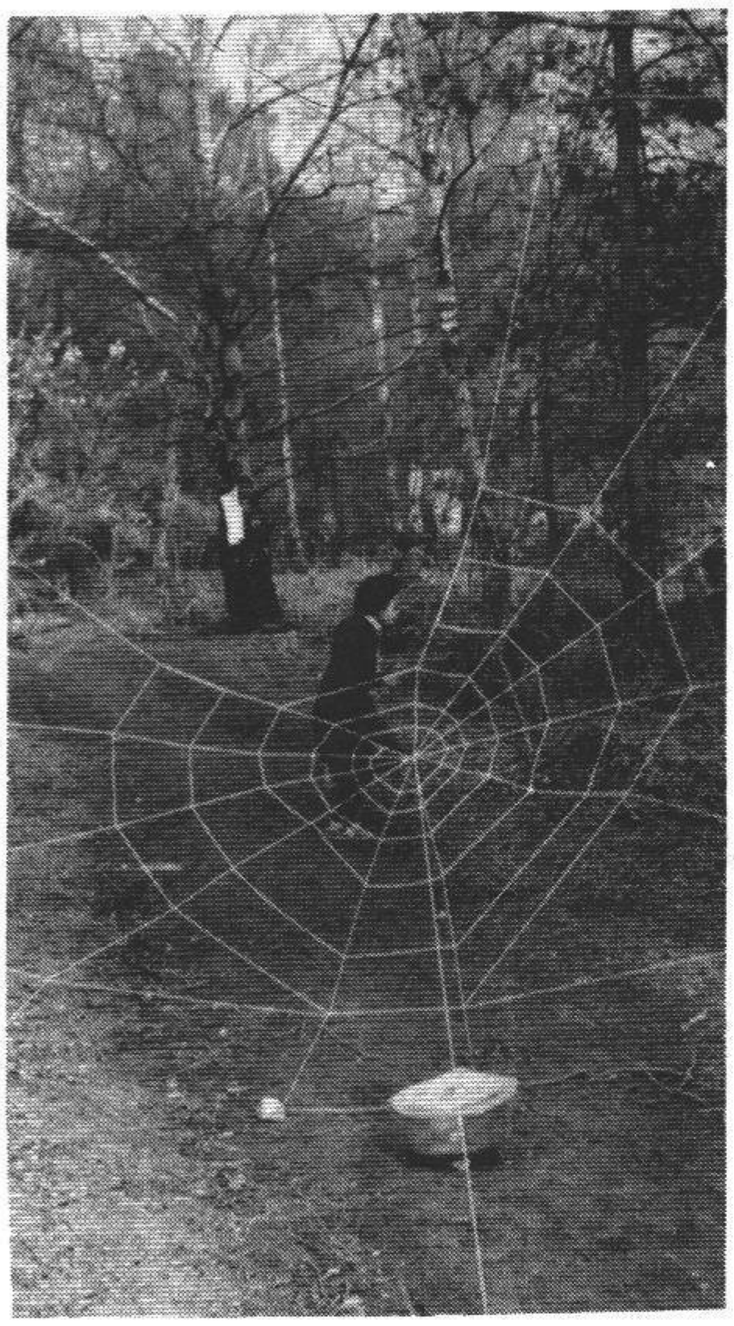


PHOTO NADINE FINCH

I would suggest that we all have the potential to develop all these attributes, and that to be complete human beings we *need* to do so. Instead, we are stereotyped according to sex, and what are the consequences? A man who shows a feminine characteristic such as gentleness is accused of weakness, so he represses and denies that part of himself and those human characteristics that he is allowed, become warped: assertiveness becomes aggression, competitiveness the desire to dominate, strength the ability to use force, virility becomes violence. And women, repressing any temptation to assert themselves – gentleness becomes passivity, nurturance of others means devaluing ourselves.

THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF PATRIARCHY IS THE MILITARY STATE

Is it surprising that men move into the dominant position in society, that society publicly adopts masculine characteristics while devaluing feminine ones? So that men are rewarded for being ruthless, while women are not valued at all for being nurturers. The ultimate expression of Patriarchy is the Military State; where domination is formalised into a rigid, authoritarian hierarchy; where aggression is organised into preparations for war.

The connections are obvious – Is there really so much difference between a boy who fights on the playground for fear of being called a sissy and Casper Weinberger insisting on the production of the neutron bomb because not to do so would be a sign of weakness? Is there that much difference between the twisted logic that calls rape an expression of sexuality and the logic that says mutually assured destruction is a form of protection?

So when women talk of Liberation, it's not from men, but from a Patriarchal value system that exploits us both and threatens to kill us both by denying us *all* half our humanity. And when we talk of a feminist vision, it is not one from which men are excluded but one where the traditionally 'feminine' values come into their own. A society where the organising principle is nurturance and co-operation not violence and competition. A non-hierarchical, egalitarian society where *feelings* are acknowledged as a guide to action not denied as confusing the issue. In such a society one could no longer be objective and detached about the victims of Hiroshima. One could stand up and say – I'm going to be subjective and emotional because *I'm* affected and I have feelings. A society where human relationships have a greater value than material goods so that no-one could espouse the neutron bomb as a useful weapon.

NOT VISIONARY NONSENSE

And this is not visionary nonsense – a system of defence is inseparable from the type of society it is defending. An alternative defence needs an alternative society. I am saying that nuclear weapons are the product of a patriarchal society and incompatible with a feminist one, and that is why the struggle for disarmament cannot be separated from the struggle to change the way all of us live.

How's it done? It takes courage and it needs space. Space for men to come home, change the nappies, clean up the shit and be directly and personally involved with what goes on there, so that they learn to value the things we value, make the connections we make, acknowledge their feelings, admit they can be gentle and nurturing too and see that the personal is political.

Space for women to acquire courage, strength and confidence in themselves – not the false courage that comes from holding a weapon or the 'statutory equality' gained by joining the army but the courage gained from believing in oneself.

Greenham provides that space. Working separately allows our strength as women to emerge. For reasons I don't fully understand, it simply doesn't happen in mixed groups. The structure is too rigid, the agenda too tight, time too pressing. What would December 12 have been like if organised by a mixed group. Would some of our crazier suggestions have survived a rigid and critical analysis? Working separately allows creativity, joy and talent to emerge that far from dividing the movement only adds to its strength – pulling in thousands of women who never thought *they* could do it. It doesn't stop at Greenham. We take it home, and I am one of those who thinks that home is where the missiles will be stopped – not by lying down on bases but by taking action in ordinary lives. There are a thousand ways to do this.

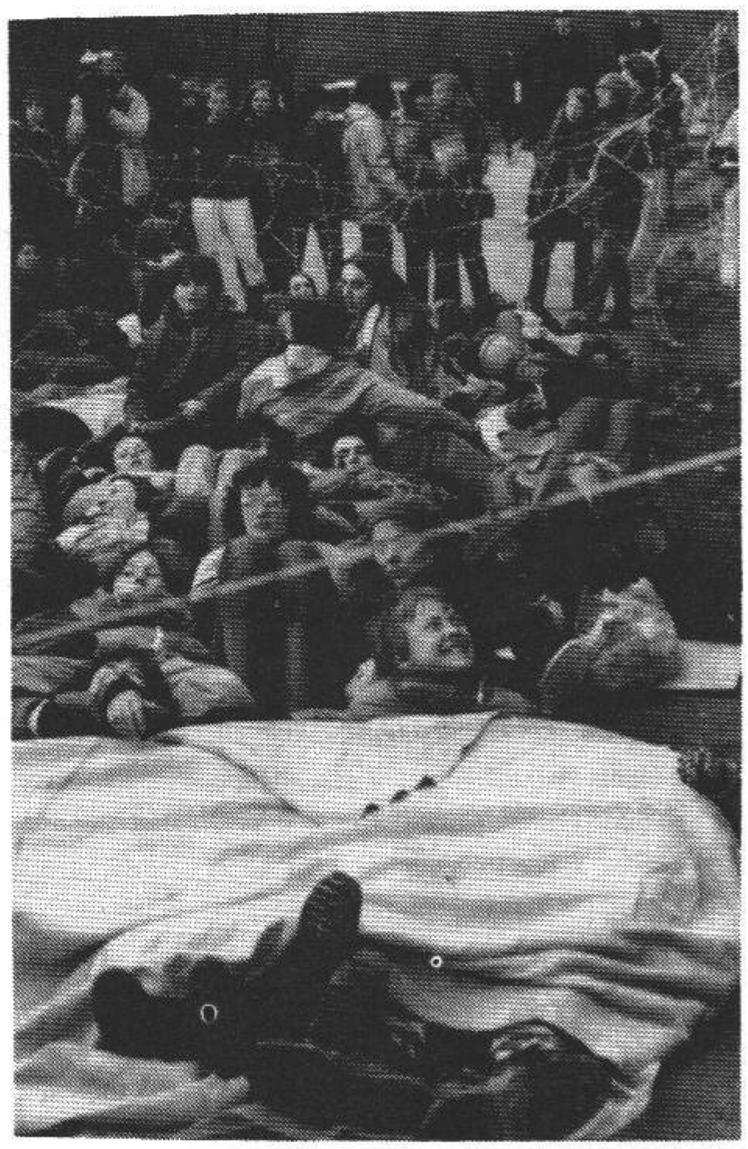


PHOTO NADINE FINCH

Why are we so frightened of diversity? Surely it's the military who in their desire for control through uniformity, are most threatened by it. We don't resent it when medics, grannies, babies or architects get together to organise [*babies? – typesetter*] recognising that they have something particular to offer and far from being exclusive they pull more of their own kind in. So why not women? Diversity is our greatest strength – let's build on it.

Lynne Jones (editor), *Keeping the Peace*. A woman's peace handbook 1. Published by The Women's Press, £3.60.

London Labour Briefing, page thirty one.

May 24th INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FOR DISARMAMENT

At this moment, groups of women from all over the country are getting together to organise activities and events for May 24th – International Women's Day for Disarmament.

It is hoped that thousands of women will stop work on this day, and that it will be the most effective day of women's action yet. The day was established last year when women from at least ten European countries including Britain took part in local activities and demonstrations.

In London, this year, there will be local activities taking place in most areas during the day, with an event in Central London in the evening for everyone to come together. The details are still in preparation but actions are planned at local construction companies engaged in work on nuclear installations, the North London Line which carries nuclear waste through London, Imperial War Museum and many military offices and installations, as well as in shopping centres etc.

If this day is going to be really effective it is vital to involve trade unions so that working women know they have the support of their unions in stopping work on that day. Many women have already taken it up in their union Branches and some union executive committees are discussing it, but all women should be ensuring that their union supports May 24th.

It is also important to get the support of women not involved in waged work, and so those of us that know about it should be talking to as many women as possible and perhaps organising leafletting at shopping centres, Job centres, libraries, community centres etc.

There is bound to be an organising group in your area. The GLC Women's Committee Support Unit, and many Borough Women's Committees will have details of local action/contacts.

The national coordinators can be contacted at 16 Arundel Road, Brighton, East Sussex, and the S.E. regional contact is Jan Pryer, The Mount, London Road, Brighton, East Sussex.



A week of events on the theme Jobs not Bombs, organised by the local Labour Movement in co-op- eration with Ealing peace and community groups.

APRIL/MAY	**CHILDREN'S PAINTING AND POETRY COMPETITION. Entries on the theme of PEACE welcome from children, age under 5, 5–8 years, 8–11 years, 11+. Judging and prize-giving at the Children's Peace Party, May 14th (details below). Entries (with name, address and age) to Ruth Clarke, 13 Grange Park, W5. (840**
Friday 13th May, eve.	**PEACE GIG. Acton CND. The George and Dragon Pub, Acton High St, W3. Contact: Martin Roiser (993 2531).**
Saturday 14th May, am.	**STREET THEATRE. Acton Shopping Precinct, W3.**
Saturday 14th May, pm.	**NON-VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION SEMINARS. Ealing Women's Group. Contact: Sandra Skinner (567 6285).**
Saturday 14th May, 2.30–5pm.	**CHILDREN'S PEACE PARTY. Games, displays, bookstall, celebrities, peace tea. Judging of Children's Painting and Poetry Competition at 5 pm. Tickets 50p from Ruth Clarke (840 2099).**
(date to be announced)	**SOUTHALL PUBLIC MEETING: 'INTERNATIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR PEACE'. Speakers from a variety of countries talking about their peace movements. Contact: Eve Turner (574 2895).**
Wednesday 18th May, 7.30pm.	**MEETING: 'THE LUCAS PLAN'. Ealing North Labour Hall, 462A Greenford Road, Greenford, Middx. Labour Party members and guests welcome. Contact: Tony Peterson (997 4035).**
Thursday 19th May, 7.30pm	**PUBLIC MEETING: 'NUCLEAR-FREE LONDON, NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD'. Mary Kaldor END, Norman Atkinson PLP, Ken Livingstone GLC, Gareth Daniel, Acton LP PPC, Greenham Peace Camper, Jobs Marcher. Acton Town Hall, Uxbridge Road, W3. (junction with Winchester Street). Contact: Ruth Clarke (840 2099).**
Saturday 21st May.	**SOUTHALL BUNKER ACTION. Women's activities around the bunker. Details to be arranged. Contact Maureen Colledge (992 0287).**
Saturday 21st May, pm.	**CHILDREN'S PEACE PARTY (2). Labour Hall, Dorset Road, W5. Details from Helen Stroebel (567 0803).**
THROUGHOUT THE WEEK	**Workplace showings of 'THE PROPHECY' organised by Ealing Trades Council. For details contact Jan Stallworthy (574 4016).**

Offers of help, requests for further information , and donations towards Ealing Peace Week to: Ealing Peace Week, Ruskin Hall, 16 Church Road, W3.

OTHER EVENTS

GREENHAM EVENTS

Sunday Ist May

Come to a party at Greenham Common on Mayday! Greenham women are calling all women and children to come together in a musical celebration.

July 4th – 8th

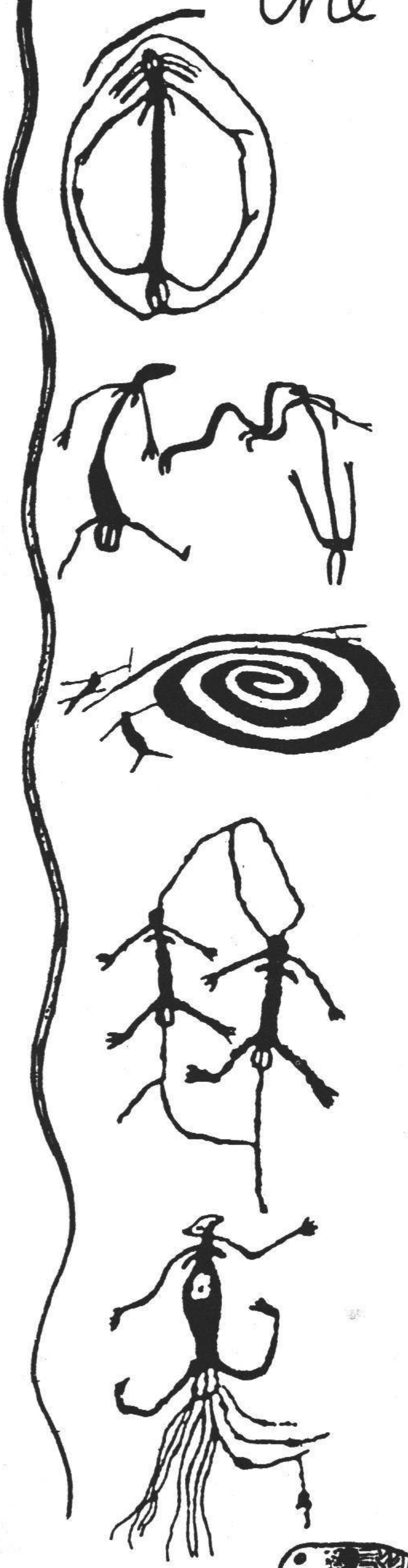
International blockade at Greenham to stop cruise! It is hoped that women from different regions of the country will organise to blockade the base for 24 hours. The suggested day for London is Thursday 7th July.

Details of both events can be obtained by sending an S.A.E. to : Greenham Office, 5 Leonard St., London E.C.2.

GLC MAY DAY FESTIVAL FOR PEACE
Victoria Park 11a.m.

WALK FOR PEACE
Saturday 28th May
From R.A.F. & N.A.T.O. War H.Q., Walters Ash via U.S. War H.Q. and Student Peace Camp, Daws Hill, High Wycombe.
Assemble 11 a.m.
Details from: Cedric Hetherington 16 Squirrel Rise, Marlow, Bucks.

the Rainbow Serpent's



'When the earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear. When that happens, the Warriors of the Rainbow will come to save them . . .'

This North American Indian prophecy – now adopted by the environmentalist movement Greenpeace and the ship, 'Rainbow Warrior' – relates to the myth known in various forms virtually throughout the traditional world. It is a myth of the 'Rainbow Serpent', according to which the rainbow is an immense serpent which acts as the guardian of all human and animal blood, punishing those who abuse life by sending down lightening, floods and storms. One form of this myth is the story of Noah's Ark. In this version, however, the link between Rainbow and Serpent has had to be obscured in order to preserve consistency with a relatively recent patriarchal cosmology which treats the snake as the embodiment of all evil. In Aboriginal Australia, by contrast, the Rainbow Serpent is the most universially-respected divinity and is thought of as an eternal flow or stream of life-forces or blood arching across the sky and through the underworld.

GREENHAM SNAKES

The left in general, and the Labour left in particular, has never shown much interest in traditional cosmologies or myths. The signs are, however, that we had better start learning soon. Traditional myths convey messages through a language which is more truly internationalist than any other language known on this planet, and it is no accident that the women of Greenham Common have begun to speak in this language more than in any other in recent months. Newspaper reporters from the Tory Press have been amused, scornful and/or indignant at the discover that the Greenham women not only dance, sing and hold hands in circles (like the witches of European folklore) but also seemingly worship snakes. My sister Liz (secretary of Enfield CND) recently sent me a copy of the Women's Peace Camp journal to show me the extent to which snake-symbolism has caught hold among these women. Not only the cover, but also almost every page of the journal is covered with lovely spiralling, undulating and circling snakes. The centre pages (February issue) are entitle 'A Snaky Story' and describes how the women formed into three long snakes (rather like the long dragons with papier mache heads and numberless legs used in Chinese festivals) in order to invade the main runway at USAF Greenham Common on February 7th. Two of these snakes were 'ripped apart in a disgraceful show of sheer exasperation and panic by several men who called themselves POLICE', but the third – called Sybil ('the slow snake') got through. An *Observer* reporter later interviewed a group of women awaiting trial and was given a lesson in mythology, in which it was explained to him that the serpent is a symbol of goddess-power and life – a symbol which has only been treated as 'evil' since patriarchal religions took over and turned everything upside down.

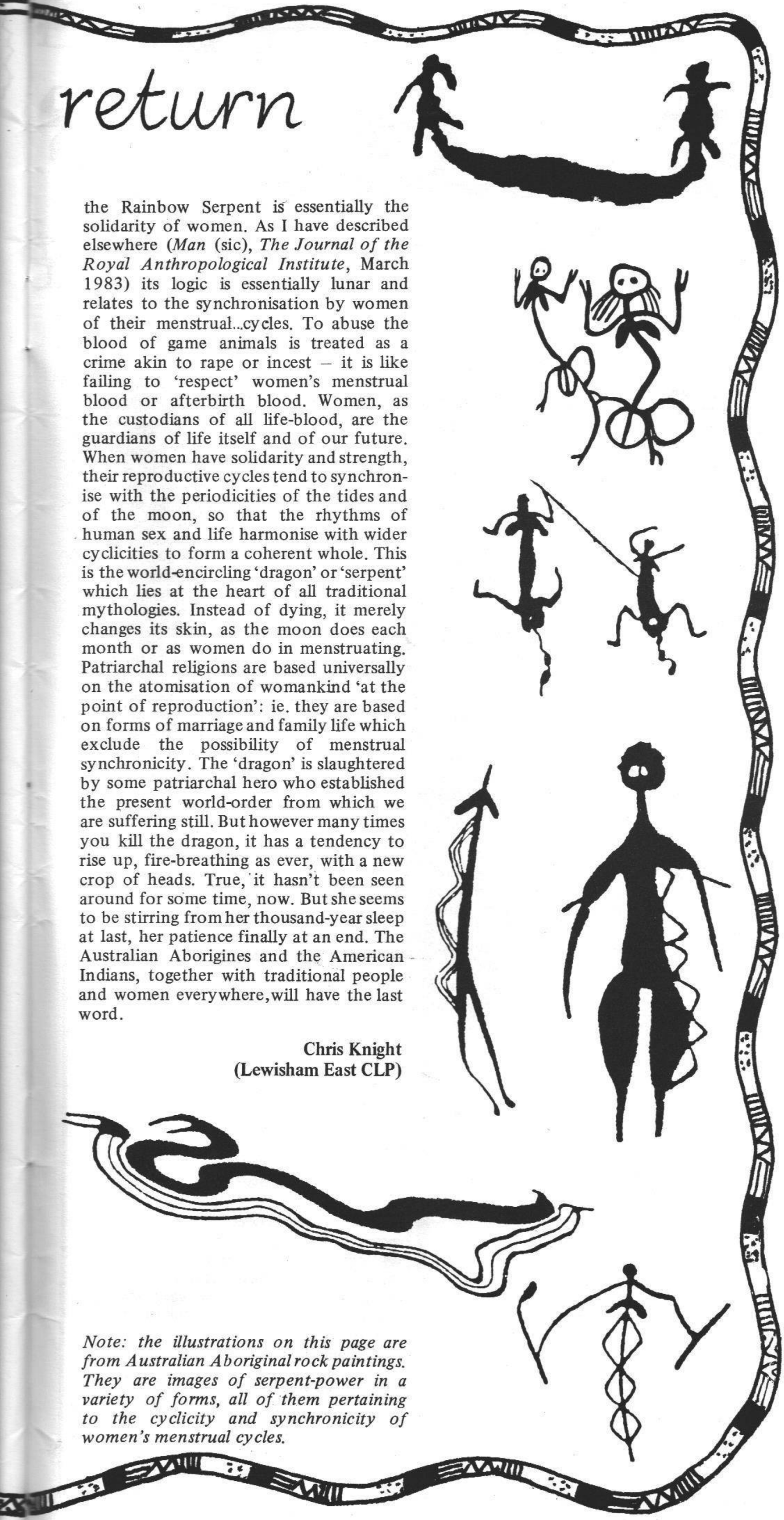
ABORIGINAL HOLOCAUST

The 15th of October, 1953, was the birth day of Britain's 'independent deterrent': the UK's first droppable atomic bomb. As I mentioned earlier, the Aborigines of Australia believe in a guardian-spirit of the game animals and of all life, and call her the Rainbow Serpent. She avenges those who abuse or destroy her sacred blood. Well, the place chosen to drop 'our' first bomb was right in the middle of the home of a number of Aborigines in Central Australia. 'I looked up south and saw this black smoke rolling through the mulga', says Yami Lester about what happened to him then. 'It just came at us through the trees like a big, black mist. The old people started shouting "It's a mamu" (an evil spirit) . . . they dug holes in the sand-dune and said "Get in here, you kids". We got in and it rolled over and around us and went away. Everyone was vomitting and had diarrhoea, and people were laid out everywhere. Next day, people had very sore eyes, red with tears, and I could not open my eyes . . . Five days after the black cloud came, the old people started dying . . . ' (*Observer*, 3.4.83, page 9). Yami Lester lost his sight and has been blind ever since this catastrophe happened to him and his tribal relatives when he was a child. A number of families actually camped unsuspectingly in the intensely radio-active bomb craters left after the test-programme was completed and died shortly afterwards of radiation-sickness. This is not to mention the destruction of wildlife over an immense area.

THE SERPENT REDISCOVERED

It is uncannily fitting that the Greenham feminists should have rediscovered the Aborigines' own Rainbow Serpent (an image shared by the North and South American Indians) as the symbol of feminine resistance to the patriarchal war-machine. For in Aboriginal Australia, too,

return



the Rainbow Serpent is essentially the solidarity of women. As I have described elsewhere (*Man* (sic), *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, March 1983) its logic is essentially lunar and relates to the synchronisation by women of their menstrual..cycles. To abuse the blood of game animals is treated as a crime akin to rape or incest – it is like failing to 'respect' women's menstrual blood or afterbirth blood. Women, as the custodians of all life-blood, are the guardians of life itself and of our future. When women have solidarity and strength, their reproductive cycles tend to synchronise with the periodicities of the tides and of the moon, so that the rhythms of human sex and life harmonise with wider cyclicities to form a coherent whole. This is the world-encircling 'dragon' or 'serpent' which lies at the heart of all traditional mythologies. Instead of dying, it merely changes its skin, as the moon does each month or as women do in menstruating. Patriarchal religions are based universally on the atomisation of womankind 'at the point of reproduction': ie. they are based on forms of marriage and family life which exclude the possibility of menstrual synchronicity. The 'dragon' is slaughtered by some patriarchal hero who established the present world-order from which we are suffering still. But however many times you kill the dragon, it has a tendency to rise up, fire-breathing as ever, with a new crop of heads. True, it hasn't been seen around for some time, now. But she seems to be stirring from her thousand-year sleep at last, her patience finally at an end. The Australian Aborigines and the American Indians, together with traditional people and women everywhere, will have the last word.

Chris Knight
(Lewisham East CLP)

Note: the illustrations on this page are from Australian Aboriginal rock paintings. They are images of serpent-power in a variety of forms, all of them pertaining to the cyclicity and synchronicity of women's menstrual cycles.

SUPPLEMENT MEETING

The first meeting of the Streetlife Supplement was held on 30th March at County Hall. Although the attendance was disappointing, we had a very lively and useful discussion.

We began by discussing the reasons why some individuals had written in the Supplement about their own personal lives, and why they had taken the risk of being 'exposed' by the gutter press, and often harder to do, of coming out to their parents and families. Although a variety of reasons were given, the overall impression was of a need to challenge the acceptance of the conventional, heterosexual nuclear family structure, and all its consequences, as the model for social relationships, not through theoretical tracts but through our own personal experiences.

Arising out of this we discussed how we could use these experiences to begin to politicise the issues within the Labour Party, and to break down the division which exists between traditional Labour Party politics and the politics of the Supplement, both in terms of style and content. We all recognise that this was an uphill task given that even within *Briefing* there is very much a division between the Supplement and the remainder of *Briefing* (again both in style and content), and that many *Briefing* supporters and contributors are against the inclusion of the Supplement at all in *Briefing* (although few openly admit it!).

The overwhelming view was that Supplement meetings should be held on a regular basis – one every two months. So look out for details of the next meeting in the next issue of the Supplement!

Jane Stockton

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Streetlife Supplement will contain a feature on 'Images of the Left'. Recently there has been a revival, particularly within the women's and peace movements of the use of visual images such as postcards, posters, badges and graffiti to convey political messages. We hope to examine the effectiveness of existing examples of this alternative form of communication, and its usefulness to the Labour Party particularly bearing in mind the imminence of a General Election.

All articles or letters should be sent to Jane Stockton, 110 Agar Grove, NW1 by *May 7th.*



STREETLIF

Editorial policy: *It is our policy to print all letters from socialists for/about the Streetlife Supplement (space and libel laws permitting of course!), including those whose content we may strongly disagree with. We feel that this is the best way to ensure that contentious issues are discussed, and that sexist and racist behaviour is exposed. If you feel that a letter is sexist or racist, or just plain wrong, please write a reply to it!*

Supplement Editorial Collective

CONCRETENESS AND RELEVANCE

Dear Editor,

As a working-class female reader of *Briefing*, I would like to comment on the debate between Chris Knight and Tony Greenstein on feminism. My main objection to Knight's article, apart from the unconstructive man-hatred it promotes, is the abstract and inflated language he uses. There is nothing wrong with ideological debate in *Briefing*, and the subject of the different approaches to feminism is interesting, but what in my opinion has set *Briefing* apart from the usual jargon-ridden revolutionary claptrap has been its concreteness and relevance.

If all writers on philosophy, politics and economics were compelled to illustrate each paragraph with a simple, concrete example or a reference to a verifiable fact, it would clarify their ideas wonderfully to the general public, and also when necessary show it up for the meaningless nonsense it is. Apart from any other consideration, to write in such a way that only the initiated can make any sense of it shows an elitist contempt for the working classes, and more desire to display intellectual prowess than to communicate ideas. Neither Chris Knight, nor the writer he reviewed, (at least in the quoted examples) put forward one concrete proposal about how women should achieve their revolution, other than by withholding sexual favours from their menfolk. There was no discussion of how working-class women are to be won over to the use of this double-edged sword, or of how these 'weak, isolated women' without an idea in their heads by 'perfect romance', 'an ideal husband' etc. are going to be radicalised into a revolutionary fighting force. Or are we to sit back and wait for a vanguard of radical feminists to win the war for us and hand over the power afterwards? That kind of revolution we've seen already, thank you.

Tony Greenstein's letter in reply was a little better from the point of view of concreteness and reality, also in his analysis of Knight's arguments as having ignored 200 years of women's history, and as attempting to knock down straw targets. Also I agree with his defence of socialist feminism. But I hope he is wrong in asserting that Knight's views provide us with much of the unspoken theoretical underpinning of *Briefing*'s personal politics. Street Life articles such as that by Ann Bliss in March's *Briefing*, which discuss with painful honesty the reality of women's daily lives, are an essential part of any movement for real change, offering communication between the oppressed, and a realisation and understanding of their oppression and of the common causes, as well as the differences in individual experience. From this practical basis, prevailing socialist ideologies can be examined, tested, revised and adapted to suit the facts, rather than following the usual example of male socialists, and quoting carefully selected facts to fit a chosen ideological position.

Jan Wallcraft
Hornsey CLP

IRRESPONSIBLE CHRIS KNIGHT

Dear Briefing,

I reply to the irresponsible Chris Knight article on law and order. Amongst the many running sores of a state controlled society is the grossly stupid and pointless effort to make people conform. Greed, selfishness, force and fear are the very basis of our society.

Each individual is taught to want more, whether they need it or not. Everyone is brain-washed to believe that it is perfectly normal to compete with others. The only consequence is the satisfaction of those in control.

When the Union Jack is held high the majority of the population will quite willingly sanction the murder of those they take to be their enemies. After the Falklands folly how can anyone be charged with murder again. Is it surprising that women are raped when they are portrayed as sex objects? Remember all property is theft. The real trouble is that those who own the property also make the rules. How many homeless people are shivering in stinking alleys while others are deciding which mansion to stay in for the week.

There is an alternative. We must seek to abolish the causes of crime. To base society on freedom, sharing, co-operation and love. In a world where children are taught to love not hate, to co-operate not compete, to share not to have, and to respect the freedom of others, crime would simply not exist. Why would people steal something that someone else had, if they knew that all they had to do was ask, and the object would be given or shared with them? People could have whatever they needed to live, anything else would be shared, exchanged or given away.

It is possible that you would still get the anti-social types. But still this person should be tolerated and helped not punished. They should be given sympathy and not locked up. Such action would simply escalate the problem. Crime is the symptom of a sick society. Society causes its own crime. The more crime, the sicker the society.

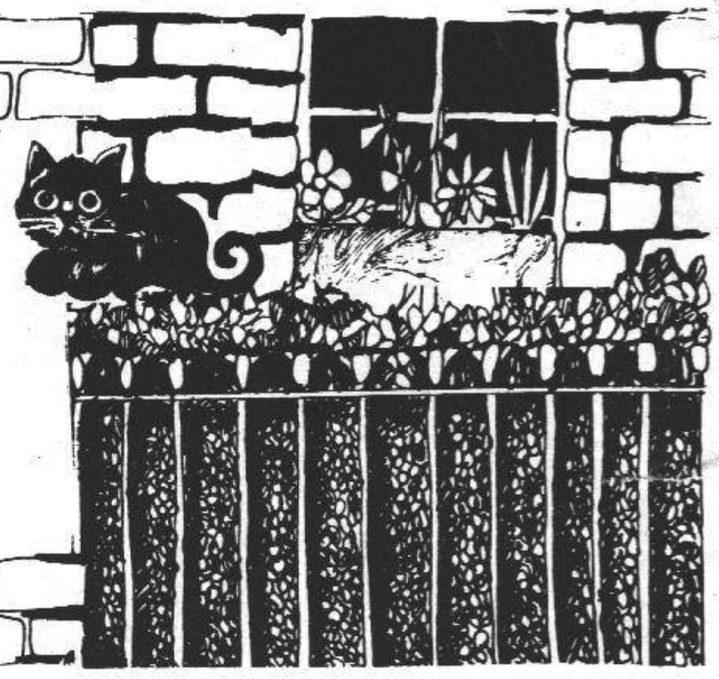
Yours sincerely,
Kelvin Heron,
Surrey.

WOMEN····PREFER MACHO DOMINANT MALES

Dear Briefing,

I have been through a lot of hell in personal politics over the past two and a half years since coming to London. This has been intimately connected with being recurrently homeless and the decline in my physical and mental health, partly through homelessness and partly from the emotional exhaustion of very stressful political struggles. Partly due to having had no emotional or material solidarity after helping to co-ordinate an ultra-heavy campaign and finding myself broken and on the streets, I have left the Labour Party. As a result of this and other things, I have been able to put very little energy into opposing this government, for quite

E LETTERS



a while.

However, given that I have some friends who are strong feminists, I'd like to make some points about feminism, based on some very intense experiences over the past few years (I am male).

(1). I have noticed that many, possibly most, women in this society, prefer more macho, dominant males as being more attractive and sexually exciting, preferably those who pay a lot of lip service to feminism. If you look, you will see that such males are often surrounded by admirers. I also have friends (I can think of one person who lives in the North who is a vegan, Buddhist and into playing classical music on a violin) who are the gentlest, shyest and most sensitive people and who are completely sexually isolated and desperate, not for want of trying. I have observed that the more a male treats a woman as object, not subject, the easier (in general, not always) it is to pick someone up. This is because he closes off his sensitivity. This can lead (I've seen this in operation) to hierarchical competition and hierarchical politics especially in a large group. The perception of relationships in a conditioned, 'spectacular' way means that alternative perceptions are seen as more superficial, and exploitative relationships as being 'the ultimate fuck' by both partners, whereas the alternative may be much deeper and more intense. All this reinforces, nay is the reason for male sexism.

(2) Violence from women. All I have to do is sit and think of those women that you see in Central London sitting, dressed in high fashion in the backs of Rolls Royces, taxis etc. with their cold superior stares who don't give a shit about scum like me and the millions like me, and use male violence to maintain the status quo. Are they, are indeed the majority of women in this country more oppressed than we men and women in Brixton? In a way, I suppose female violence is worse than male violence, because it's men that do that dirty work of preserving the status quo.

In writing this I have no intention of offending or hurting the countless women who have been raped, murdered, assaulted, beaten up, enslaved by men, but merely to say that we are both part of this same problem and that separating and moralising about the goodness of women and the evil of men only dehumanises us further, and doesn't help the problem.

'love and struggle'
Anonymous

THE CND PICTURE SHOW

Produced to coincide with CND's twenty-fifth anniversary, *The CND Picture Show* is a thirty panel exhibition devised by Ed Barber (photographs), Peter Kennard (photomontages) and Peter Higgins (text).

The posters include historical photographs, quotes and poems. The show begins with the growth of the peace movement in the late 1950's, examines some of the key issues, events and responses, and ends with non-violent direct action in the 1980's. It is both a history of protest and a celebration of people's resistance, designed to provoke thought and discussion, and to inspire readers to take action.

The exhibition can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art, Pembroke Street, Oxford until 15 May.

Boxed sets of posters are available from the CND Shop, 227 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DA, price £10.00 plus £1.00 postage and packing (£7.50 + £1 p&p for CND groups and schools).

For further information contact Su Small, CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ. Tel: 01-263 0977.

Go nuclear the cowboy told us
And who am I to disagree
'Cos when the madman flicks the switch
The nuclear will go for me.

Fun Boy Three



THE PARLIAMENTARY FEMALE.

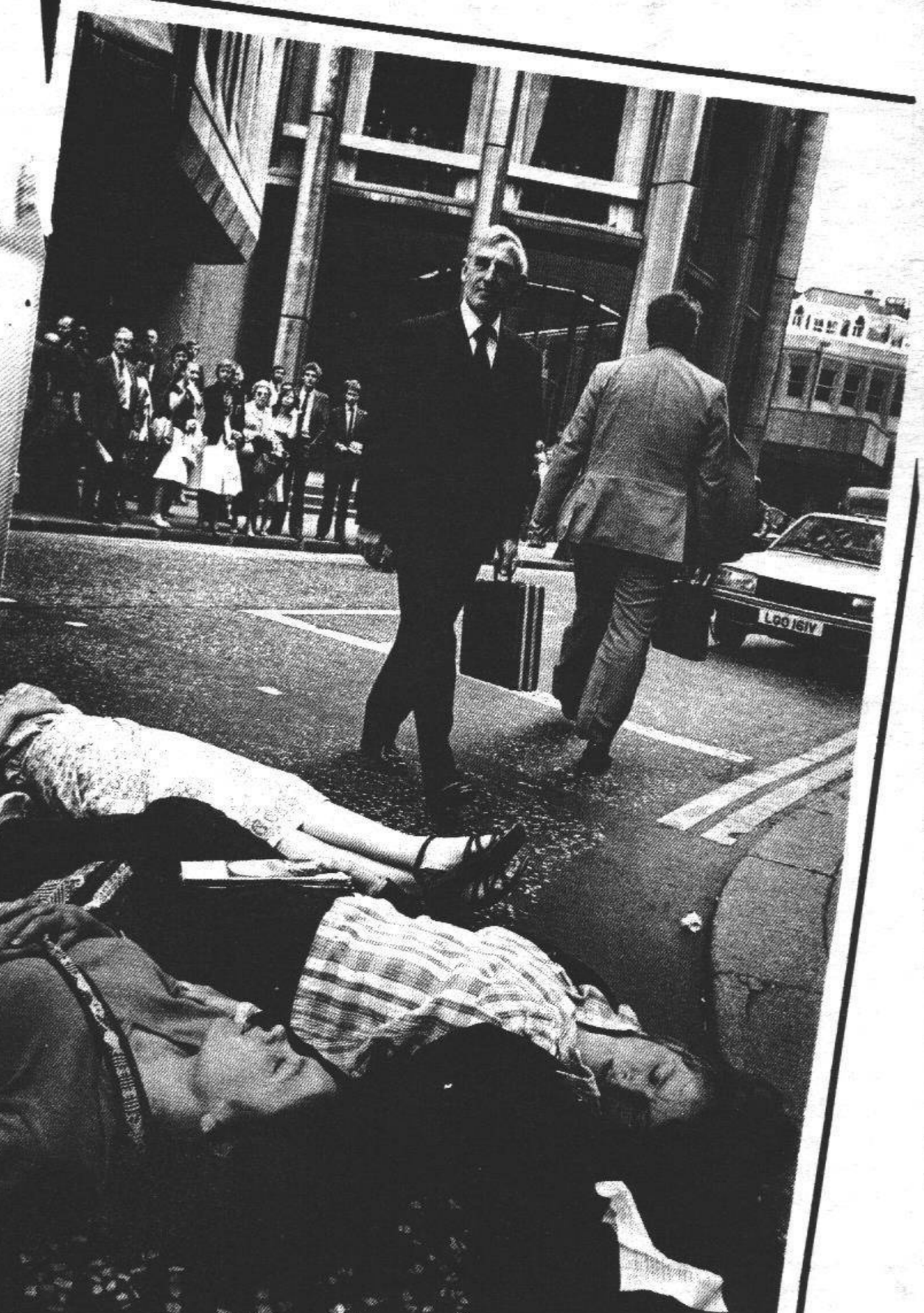
Father of the Family. 'COME DEAR; WE SO SELDOM GO OUT TOGETHER NOW – CAN'T YOU TAKE US ALL TO THE PLAY TONIGHT?'

Mistress of the House, and M.P. 'HOW YOU TALK, CHARLES! DON'T YOU SEE THAT I AM TOO BUSY. I HAVE A COMMITTEE TOMORROW MORNING, AND I HAVE MY SPEECH ON THE GREAT CROCHET QUESTION TO PREPARE FOR THE EVENING.'

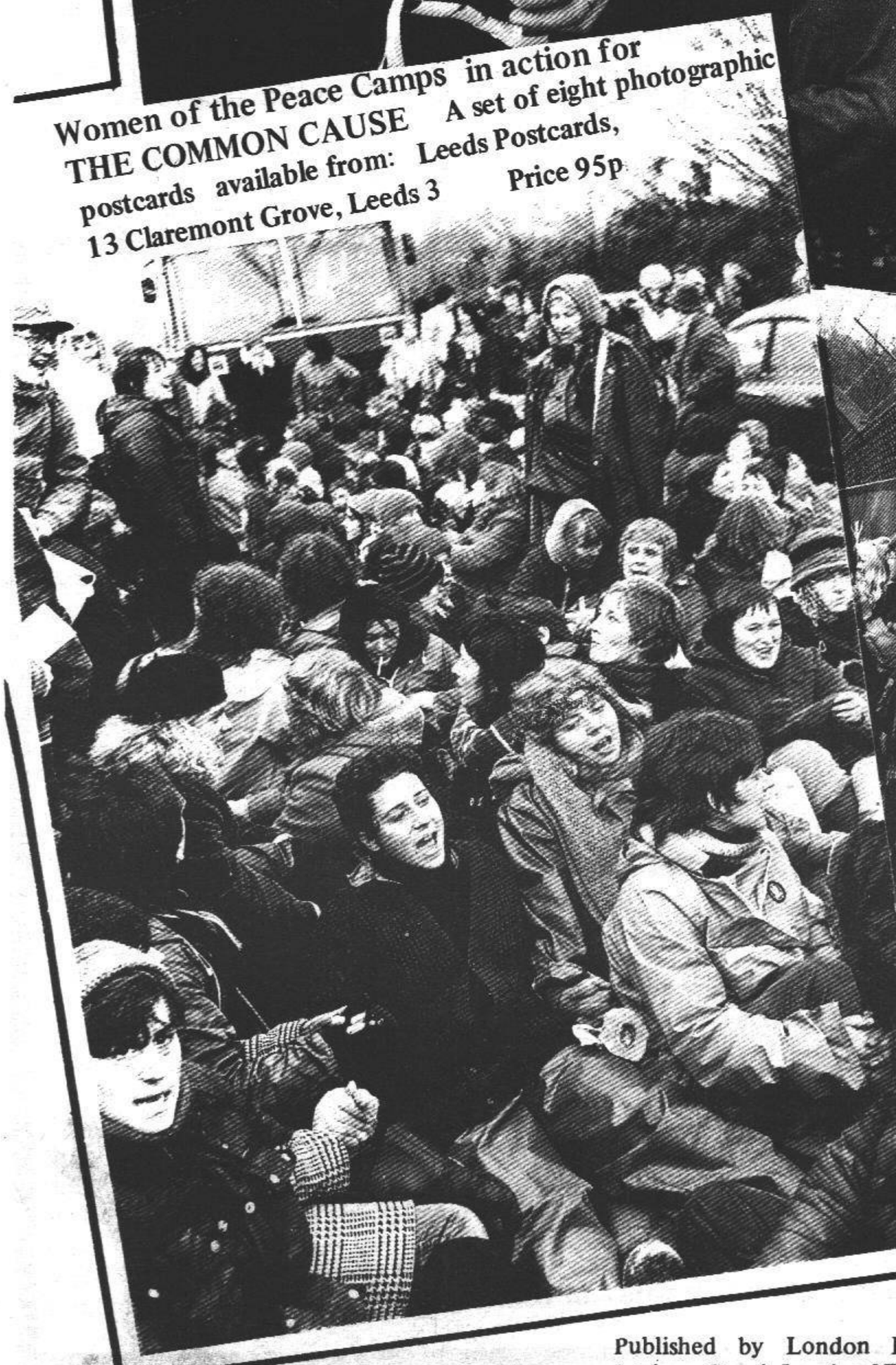
Cartoon from *Punch Almanack*, which in 1853 was devoted to role reversal jokes.



Women of the Peace Camps in action for THE COMMON CAUSE



A set of eight photographic postcards available from: Leeds Postcards, 13 Claremont Grove, Leeds 3 Price 95p





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