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INSIDE: FIRST NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT articles by David Blunkett, Valerie Wise, Ken Livingstone, Joy Hurcombe, Jeremy Corbyn, Eric Heffer, Sarah Roelofs.

DEFEND LONDON!

by **VALERIE VENESS**, Deputy Leader, Islington Council

THE ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES – set up by councils who really want to fight the Tory attacks on local government – has launched the DEFEND LONDON Charter, a ten-point petition of popular demands for London.

The Charter is going to be circulated over the next few months, with the aim of getting hundreds of thousands of signatures. Local parties, Union Branches, anti-cuts and single-issue campaigns will be getting big bundles of them, with explanatory leaflets to hand out to the public.

It is the first part of the ALA's DEFEND LONDON campaign, which will build up to a DEFEND LONDON week in the New Year.

These are the Charter's points:

** THE PROVISION of all the local services required for a decent standard of life;*
** THAT DECISIONS on the levels of these services be made by locally-elected representatives on Borough Councils and the Greater London Council;*
** AN END to all Government interference in local democracy and penalties on local spending;*
** A FAIR SHARE of national resources so that rates can be kept down;*
** A GOOD HOME and a job for everyone;*
** GOOD HEALTH CARE and an end to cuts in the National Health Service,*
** A POLICE FORCE accountable to the community it serves;*
** AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT system, under full democratic control through the GLC, with the lowest fares possible;*
** A GOOD EDUCATION service provided by the Inner London Education Auth-*



Islington Campaign Press Publicity Unit

ISLINGTON LEADER MARGARET HODGE

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

WHY I WON'T PAY

JAN WALLCRAFT

I have been asked to write about Can't Pay, Won't Pay, and why I am still refusing to pay my fine, even if it leades to a jail sentence. My first thought was that I should attempt to give a political analysis and a strategic justification of the campaign, answering the charges that have been made of our being an adventurist, middle-class consumer group, that we weakened and divided the Labour movement resistance, discussing individual protest versus trade union collectivism, and assessing whether or not the trade unions have been slow to recognise the changing nature of the class struggle, etc.

Fortunately, I dispensed with that line of approach, I am not qualified to write that kind of article. If that is what Briefing wants, it can invite Chris Knight or Tony Greenstein to attempt it. All I can honestly say is why I took part, and why I have carried my protest to what form me is its logical conclusion.

I am a working-class housewife, married to a park-keeper and living in a tiled cottage owned by the City of London. After years of cynicism and confusion about politics, a condition worsened by reading the Daily Mirror, I was attracted to the Labour Party in 1981 by the clear, progressive, sensible policies of the GLC, and the way that they were put over in everyday language by Ken Livingstone.



It didn't sound like the lies and claptrap I was used to hearing from politicians. So that when the GLC came under attack, I felt that there was something there worth defending, and that I would do whatever was necessary to fight for a cause that was clear, simple and just, as the fares issue then was. I helped to set up a Fare Fight group, and put all my energy and resources into the struggle. We made many attempts to work with local transport workers, probably ineffective partly because of our lack of understanding of trade unoin structure, but we always tried to keep them informed of our plans, especially when the Can't Pay, Won't Pay tactic was under discussion.

Unfortunately, the issue did not remain so simple. By the time the GLC had voted through the Budget approving the fare rises, it was hard to see clearly any more who or what we were fighting. On the one hand, Ken, Dave, Valerie and the rest were campaigning vigorously and wholeheartedly for resistance to the fare rises, and on the other hand, they were allowing themselves to be made responsible for implementing the Law Lords' ruling. They were, in effect, co-operating with the enemy. This may be an over-simplification, but in the end, that is what it has amounted to. The trade union resistance, which passengers were asked to lay aside their protest for, crumbled miserably.

Now, at a time when unemployment in London is a major problem, and the GLC is working to combat it with the Enterprise Board, and the booklet 'Jobs for a Change', they are simultaneously in the position of having laid off hundreds of bus conductors, with the almost inevitable prospect of presiding over far more serious layoffs in the future, if an effective fightback cannot be mounted. Packing the LT board is a good move, but ultimately, such strategic game playing cannot be successful when the Government has to power to overturn the whole chessboard. Transport workers no longer feel certain who is to blame, and their morale has been weakened by the fact that the GLC have authorised cutbacks and redundancies.

CYNICAL BETRAYAL

I was trying to show, in my own way, that to co-operate with injustice, however tactically advisable it may seem at the time, must be self-defeating in the end, because it obscures the issue, and confuses potential supporters. It shows a lack of faith by the elected councillors in the labour movement, and can be seen as a cynical betrayal of the powerless and the disspossessed.

I have had plenty of time to examine my motives, and I would admit they are not all as worthy as they might be. There is an attraction in the idea of political martyrdom. It is nice ot have your name in the paper, and to get an unaccustomed chance to air your views and be listened to. Also there is an element of childish obstinacy, having refused this long I wouldn't give in if it killed me, etc. But I do believe, more and more firmly, that to co-operate with Thatcherism is to sign away all our futures. Since the election I have been thoroughly sickened by the attitudes of many in the Labour Party, left and right, who seem to believe that all that is needed is to compete for power on Thatcher's own terms — that is to find a mass market for a set of policies, and then to set about a newer, brighter, advertising campaign designed to win power in five years. While middle-class lefties make their plans in comfortable meeting-rooms, poverty, fear, violence and deprivation are the norms for the dispossessed. My own family in Leeds are suffering the constant stress of unemployment, inability to pay bills, lack of opportunity, poor amenities, and the threat of further cutbacks to their already poor living standards.

It seems to me that if a lead in non-violent resistance is not given by those who have a constructive, hopeful vision for the future, then they will be betraying the people they claim to be fighting for, and the result will be the wrong kind of social upheaval — mindless, fascistic street violence, which will give the Thatcher government the excuse it needs to abandon its pretence of concern for individual freedom, and to crack down with all the force at its disposal.

The threat, and the everyday reality of Thatcherism is now too serious to allow for further academic discussion and power-manoeuvrings. A bit of honesty, courage and commitment would go further than any amount of glossy advertising of re-vamped policies which no-one truly believes in.

Defend London!

(Continued)

ority and the Outer London Boroughs, with no cuts in spending; and
** EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY for all Londoners, regardless of sex, race, colour, belief or handicap.*

The main aim is to preserve local democracy and councils' rights to maintain their level of services in the face of government cuts in grants.

The biggest threat looming over the horizon, alongside the plans to abolish the GLC and ILEA, is the so-called "rate-capping" proposal. This will give Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin the power to control absolutely the level of spending and rates for any council he chooses — and there's no doubt that the London authorities who've refused to make cuts will be on his hit list.

The plan came out in a White Paper in August — typically, while Parliament was in recess — and will be brought out in a Bill in January. The ALA campaign will culminate at the crucial time in its Parliamentary progress.

The campaign is specifically aimed, through the Charter and the rallies, meetings and lobbies of Parliament that are planned, at involving the people of London, raising their understanding of the issues involved — while Fleet St persists in presenting them as a matter of "high rates" and "overspending".

The GLC is a member of the ALA and is supporting the campaign. It is vitally important for local democracy that we fight the threat to the Boroughs alongside the fight to save the GLC.

DON'T LET THE TORIES RUIN LONDON TRANSPORT

Thatcher's Government is determined to privatise as much of London Transport as possible. Their recent 1983 Transport Act not only tried to make the GLC increase fares and cut services but also gave extra powers to the London Transport Executive in preparing plans for LT's future and directed them to consider privatisation of all aspects of the business.

At least one Motor Trade magazine has suggested that our success in reducing fares in May was probably the decisive factor that cost David Howell his job as Transport Minister.

The success of our Fares Fair policies are now well documented. Car commuting to Central London in the morning fell by 6% and when fares were doubled car commuting increased by 14% and personal injuries from road accidents went up by more than 3,700.

Our next objective was to meet the needs of travellers by increasing services. During Fares Fair, bus and rail services were expanded with increased recruitment for operating staff. After the Law Lords, the legal advice to the GLC was that in order to make LT break even not only should fares be doubled but that they should continue to be increased until they reached the point of diminishing returns. The effect on services would have been a catastrophe as dearer fares led to fewer passengers and therefore huge cuts in services. Many stations would have been closed and most services reduced to peak periods only.

Opposition to Service Cuts

The Balanced Plan enabled us to cut fares and introduce the GLC Travelcard but we had no illusions about its undesirable aspects. Although services were not predicted to be virtually destroyed as in the Law Lords approach, LT produced proposals that services should be cut with the predicted falling decline of passengers. Our legal advice was to accept their figures. After the successful ruling in the High Court in January the GLC published a consultation document on the Balanced Plan and it was the opposition to service cuts in the public response that was a major factor in allowing the GLC to reject LT's latest 3 year plan and to adopt increases in services from 156m bus miles (LT Plan) to 170m in our new GLC Plan, with tube train miles increasing from 28m to 30m over the 3 years. We have also successfully opposed station closures and compulsory redundancies.

The Government have announced that before trying to abolish the GLC they intend to set up a London Regional Transport (LRT) as a quango to take over control of public transport in London. This policy is wrong for two reasons. First it splits control of public transport away from roads policy and land use planning. These policies should be operated by one authority on a balanced basis. The second flaw is more damaging to the people of London – the LRT will be a Government appointed quango and there will be no democratic elections for Londoners to decide future transport policies.

The Tories argue that LRT is needed in order to co-ordinate the policies of BR and LT. The Labour GLC wanted to include BR's London fares in our Fares Fair policy and it was only the Tory Government that prevented us from proceeding. BR and LT are now working closer together than ever before. The GLC is helping to finance the building and repair of BR stations, electrifying BR's line from Dalston to North Woolwich, paying for service improvements on the Enfield/Liverpool Street Line through Hackney and from October 11th all London's Pensioners will be able to enjoy half fares on BR services within the GLC area.

Fares Integration

Our next step of fares integration will be to extend the GLC Travelcards to BR season tickets so that BR and LT Travelcard holders will be able to enjoy complete freedom of London's bus and rails system. If the Government gave the GLC powers over trunk roads and the traffic warden force we could then offer Londoners a truly integrated transport system.

A Tory LRT will increase fares, cut services, close railway stations and privatise as much of LT as possible. There will be no guarantee that our Pensioners will continue to enjoy free travel on LT services. Our task is to mobilise the whole of the Labour Movement and the people of London to defend sensible transport planning policies and our democratic freedom to pursue them.

Dave Wetzel
Member of the Greater London Council for Hammersmith, North.
Transport Committee Chair

November 12th - Biorex Day of Reckoning

In the heart of London, just north of the Angel, Islington, is a very sinister building indeed. This is the 'laboratory' of Biorex Ltd., where animal experiments are conducted for the Ministry of Defence. What these experiments are for, no one locally knows because access to the Laboratory is strictly controlled.

Many of us question the whole business of using animals for experiments. The results are unscientific, often very different for human beings (thalidomide was animal tested!) and due to business secrecy are duplicated many times over. A mass movement of protest against this sort of barbarism has arisen in the last couple of years – headed by organisations like B.U.A.V. (British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection) and direct action groups like the Animal Liberation Front and the Northern Animal Liberation League. Successive opinion polls have shown 80% of the public are opposed to animal experiments for cosmetics, tobacco and armaments and an astonishing 35% support attacks on property to free laboratory animals.

Biorex Ltd. is one of the worst examples of this sort of outfit. They at first denied they were doing armament experiments, but then started sending out letters headed 'Contractors to the Ministry of Defence'!

A number of small, local demos have been held outside the building – and it has been the target for graffitti and protests for quite a while. However, many local people have now decided to mount a major protest against this place and an 'ad-hoc' committee has been set up, consisting of local organisations and individuals, to plan and organise a demonstration and meeting for November 12th.

The committee is already supported by the Islington Animal Rights Group, the B.U.A.V, the Islington Co-op Party and the local Labour Party Wards in Quadrant and Mildmay. The two Islington MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Chris Smith, are supporting the march and are amongst the speakers at the rally afterwards. Other speakers include local councillors and animal rights activists. It is therefore vital that there is a good turnout on this march by the local labour movement. A march of 4,000 or so is looking likely, so we need a good number of labour movement banners on it.

The march starts at Whittington Park, Holloway Road, N19 (nearest tube: Archway) and will form up at 1.30pm, to move off at 2.30pm. It will be followed by a rally and social at Islington Town Hall. Further details from: 'Stop Biorex Committee, c/o 23B, Mildmay Rd., London N1 4PU.

by Cllr. Keith Veness
(Secretary, "Stop Biorex Committee")

Important meeting for all conference delegates:

"LABOUR AND STRUGGLE FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS"

Speakers: Ken Livingstone (leader of GLC), Jim Layzell (CRS Political Committee), Angela Waldor (BUAV), Valerie Veness (deputy leader, Islington Council).
Chair: Jeremy Corbyn MP.

Thursday 6th October 1983, 5.30pm, at Metropole Hotel (Norfolk Room), Kings Road, Brighton. (A few doors from the Conference Centre).

Sponsored by: British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, Socialist Campaign for Animal Rights, CRS London Political Committee.

ILEA: Bother In Bermondsey

By a teacher at Scott Lidgett School

On Monday 12th September, 18 teachers at Scott Lidgett School in Bermondsey returned to work after being on unofficial strike for a week. The dispute was caused by the forcible movement, by the ILEA of two veteran teachers from the school. It was an unusual dispute in so far as it was the longest strike by teachers in the ILEA for nearly 10 years. As a symptom of the malaise of management politics that blights this would-be socialist authority, however, the Scott Lidgett case is sadly typical.

The school is sandwiched between the Peak Freans' Biscuit factory near Southward Park Road and Jamaica Road, the heart of Mellish and O'Grady land. The local population is predominantly white and the local shops betray little cultural variety.

Scott Lidgett's population of school boys, assessed by Verbal Reasoning tests, N.F.E.R. Mathematics tests and reading age on arrival, shows a pronounced bias towards the lower ability ranges.



G.L.C. PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT

SCOTT LIDGETT SCHOOL, S.E.16.

Specialist Teaching

In response to this, the school has placed a great value on providing specialist teaching in small groups or individually for its remdial children. It has also offered a wide range of relatively unusual subjects to its pupils to successfully stimulate interest in pupils who demur from the traditional university subjects. Photography, electronics, printing and pottery have all been very popular. This year, these subjects and a great deal of remedial teaching are among the cuts.

Like many schools in Inner London, Scott Lidgett has suffered, in recent years, from falling rolls and the ILEA's knee-jerk response of compulsory transfer of teaching staff. This year, however, the new intake exceeded the 1982 intake by twenty and there were hopes that the decline might be arrested. Nevertheless, all the Authority's calculators determined that six staff should be moved.

In January 1983, the school's senior staff compiled a lengthy and carefully argued document showing why the 'superfluous' six staff were needed and the damage that would be done to the school's curriculum if they were lost. The appeal was 'examined' by Ruth Gee, Deputy Leader of the ILEA. The letter of rejection sent to the school was one sentence long and without explanation.

Senior staff remained concerned at the damage that these staff cuts would do to the school's curriculum. Many further representations involving parents and staff were made throughout the year. All were rejected. Teachers attended many lobbies at County Hall and took part in half day strikes. The children even staged an overnight sit-in at the school in protest at the loss of their teachers.

COMPLAINED TOO MUCH

Throughout, ILEA members listened stonily. George Nicholson, Southward's GLC member told teachers that he thought their job was easy and that they complained too much. John Fowler, Southward Council's appointee to the ILEA remarked that he would only agree to saving staff at a school if the officers recommended it. He felt he was bound to take their advice in case he got surcharged! (Most of the officers and inspectors employed by the ILEA have never taught in inner city comprehensives. If they have teaching experience, it is mainly in grammar schools outside of London.) When teachers lobbied a Schools Sub-Committee meeting. Labour members, including 'radicals' like Andy Harris refused even to speak to them.

By the end of the '83 summer term, three of the six teachers named for transfer had left the school, one had been saved by an internal promotion. The two remaining, and Art teacher of 9½ years standing and a Social Studies/English specialist, who had been at the school five years, had been unable to find themselves suitable posts. The ILEA insisted that they both take demotions. After years of carrying out jobs of responsibility, they have both been kicked down to the bottom of the teaching scales.

At the beginning of the 1983-84 year, the two remaining transferees refused to move and returned to their school. 18 members of staff struck in their support. On Thursday, 8th September, representatives of the Scott Lidgett staff met Barrie Stead, Chair of the Schools Sub-Committee, his deputy, John Fowler and a clutch of Chief Officers. Again a detailed case was presented by the staff showing the damage the final loss of staff would do to the curriculum.

Barrie Stead's reply to Scott Lidgett, received on the following day staggered the staff. Many of the points made by the school had been accepted since the letter promised 'exceptio nal help'. The appeal against transfer, however, was rejected.

The crucial sentences in the letter were: 'We are satisfied that the curriculum can be protected *in all essential aspects* by decisions made within the school. If any changes in the alloca tion were made, we would be upsetting the fair and careful distribution of resources between all our schools.'

The ILEA's desire to protect 'essential aspects' of the curriculum is a grim warning to teachers of inessential curriculum (— anything that is not maths, English or science?).

WRIGGLE ON THE HOOK

As the Labour members wriggle on the hook of compulsory transfer, they begin to offer the kind of arguments that would seem more in keeping with British Leyland's management. 'If we do not redeploy our resources (i.e. teachers) we will not be able to afford to pay the manual workers.' 'The teachers' objections to compulsory transfer are just being stirred by the S.W.P.' And so on.

The fact is that compulsory transfer of teaching staff is doing immense damage in schools. The morale of teaching staff is being undermined and the curriculum is being pared back to the traditional grammar school subjects or less. In a year when the Tories are certain to attack the ILEA, the Labour members need to fight alongside teachers and not against them.

Resolutions for the London Labour Party Conference have to be in by November. If you care about education in London, see that your party's resolution demands an end to compulsory transfer. See that your ILEA members are mandated to vote against compulsory transfer. Only one member (Paul Moore) of the present ILEA voted against it this year. It is high time the ILEA thought of its teachers as people and not simply resources or property.

STOP PRESS

Although the staff have returned to work, the dispute at Scott Lidgett continues and 'voluntary duties' are not being carried out. At the time of writing, the N.U.T. has been negotiating with County Hall on the school's behalf.

Newham Reviews Secondary Education

As part of the Labour manifesto for the 1981 Council Election there was a commitment to have a review of secondary education within the Borough. After a year of long and sometimes violent debate, in which the Left and Right ranks were broken, the review has been completed and a decision finally made. The main purpose of the review was to tackle the "problem" of falling school rolls and the recently introduced parental choice together with an attempt to reverse Newham's poor academic achievement record and post-16 staying on rates, even though Newham's educational budget is high compared to other boroughs.

Newham has thirteen comprehensive secondary schools and three church schools. Because of falling school rolls and parental choice, several of the less popular schools are being bled to death and Newham is creeping back to a grammar school style education system with express streaming, etc., existing in some schools. Certain schools are finding it difficult to maintain sixth forms. The consortium system had twice been tried and on each occassion it failed. To confuse the situation further, the Borough has two large technical colleges.

FATAL ERRORS

However, during the review two fatal errors were made. Firstly, throughout the debate the local Labour Parties failed to consider the question seriously and the L.G.C. did not take a decision on the matter. As a result the Labour Group decided to have a free vote on the review. Secondly, the manifesto committed the Council to hold full public consultation. Unfortunately, the Education Committee failed to take control of the consultation and left it in the hands of the officers to organise. The officers, who were not really interested in consultation, published two inadequate consultation documents and failed to make any real attempt to get parents involved. Primary school children were not involved and only those with an interest in maintaining the status quo, because they already benefited from the system, took an active part.

As a result and despite the attempt of several Councillors to widen the debate to include community schooling, curriculum, express streaming and the lack of adequate remedial teaching, the review turned into a battle over which system of secondary education should be used.

A strong pressure group of parents in favour of retaining sixth forms was organised and the local teachers added their support to the campaign, threatening to go on strike if tertiary collegs were chosen. Many Councillors who supported the idea of tertiary colleges were not prepared to vote in favour of them.

COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN

The decision was finally taken by the Education Committee on 5th July in favour of retaining sixth forms within secondary schools. No attempt was made to tackle the problem of falling school rolls, parental choice or low achievements. The original reason for the review had been completely forgotten. Fortunately, some Councillors and Party members were able to put pressure on at the last minute so that certain other important points were included, such as a commitment to improve pupil-teacher ratio, introduce neighbourhood schooling, for a further review of remedial teaching within the borough and to introduce an across-borough Tertiary Board to direct sixth form curriculum.

The problems still remain. Undoubtedly, there will now be an attempt to push for school closure. Hopefully the Left will now be able to unite, and together the teaching union and the parents will fight the closures. However, the only real solution is to tackle partental choice, fighting the DES if necessary. It is essential that we involve the community in schools, proving that each school is equal and showing the benefits of neighbourhood schools. We must also improve teacher-pupil ratio. More important, we need to find out why children give up at school in the early years of secondary education. The need clearly exists for the expansion of remedial teaching in both the primary and early secondary stages of education.

The Party must learn from its errors. On major issues the Party must discuss the matter fully and come to a decision which it can unite around and then take to the community. A half-hearted attempt at public consultation is doomed to failure at the outset and will totally destroy the credibility of the Party.

Peter Pendle (Newham Council)

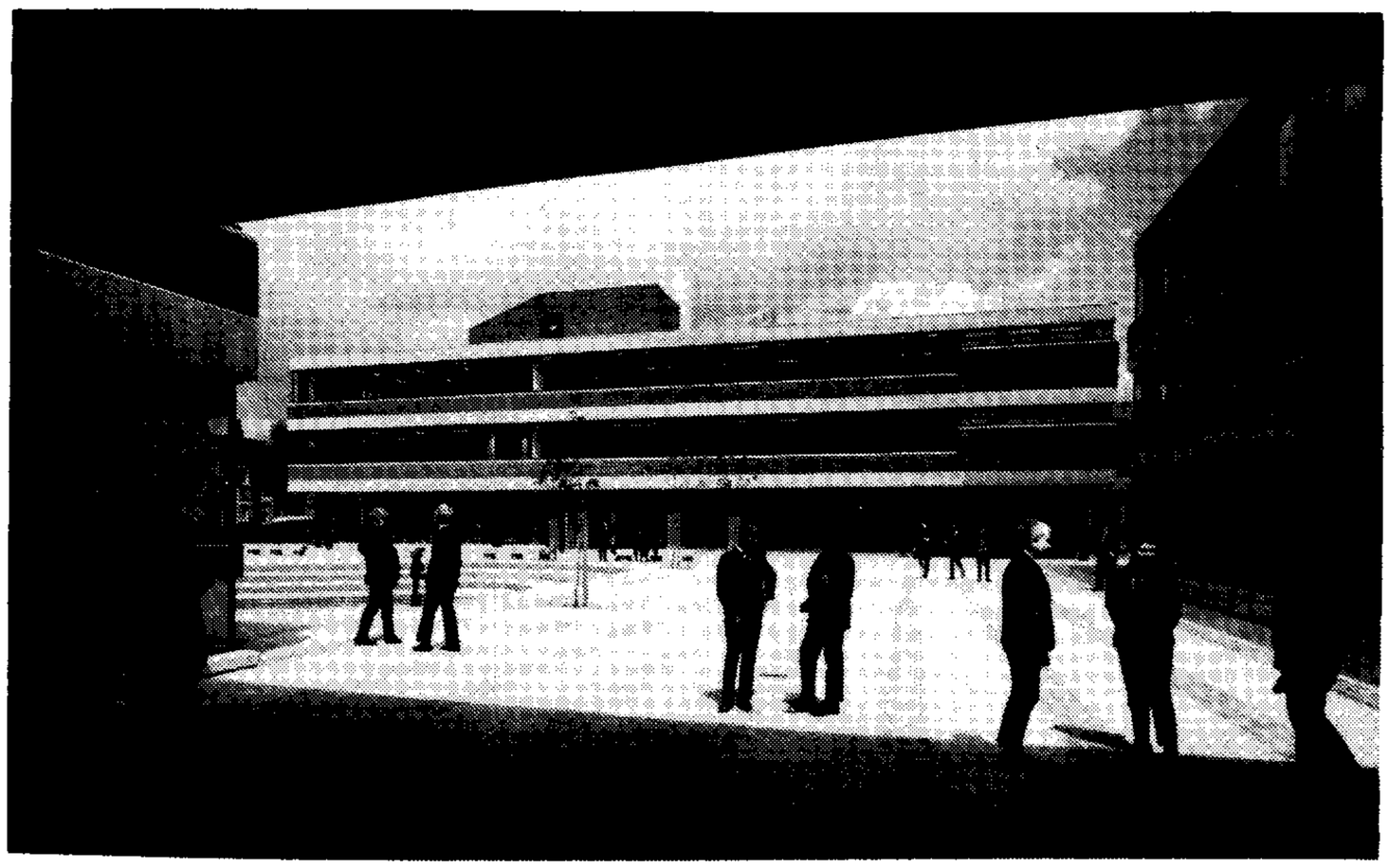


PHOTO: CATH TATE.

Compulsory Redeployment Doesn't Work

The ILEA are little by little undermining themselves. The policy of compulsory redeployment of teachers (called, laughably, voluntary transfer!) is gradually weakening confidence among secondary teachers and parents.

What is happening is that teachers are being shuffled from school to school, often in the most callous or ludicrous fashion and their union leadership is putting up no fight. The children, of course, suffer through lack of continuity, the teachers affected are humiliated and the parents bewildered. Teachers who transfered soon find themselves moved again to another school — where yet again they don't know the names, backgrounds or courses taught to the children. The result? An increasingly unstable and insecure teaching force who are not given the chance to settle down and become more effective.

To take a few examples from my school:

1. May: 22 teachers told they have to go. Interviewed: 'You have no choice, you will move'.

2. June: Teachers who for good reasons refuse a post in another school told 'think again, there's nothing else on offer'.

3. September: Some 6th form courses dropped. Cuts in help for the less able. A teacher moved in from school A (his second move in 2 terms!) and another forced out to go and teach the vacated classes from A!

4. Teachers of 3, 5, 8, 10 and 16 years standing forced out against their wills.

5. A teacher told to come back but under constant threat of being moved in the middle of the year.

Many of these teachers ran clubs and knew hundreds of the children in the school. As the news travels back to parents they ask 'but why can't they stay and improve the quality of education in the school?'

And next year? When the ILEA is fighting for its life against government cuts, possibly disbandment? Will those people fight to save the ILEA!

LES TATE, STREATHAM CLP

Newman And The Police Bill

by Louise Christian

ALTHOUGH he has been in office as Metropolitan Police Commissioner for only a short period of time, Sir Kenneth Newman is already implementing important changes in the policing of London. The new strategies are likely to be adopted elsewhere and can be connected with the new powers it is proposed to give the police. These powers were contained in the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, which fell when a general election was called, but which is shortly to be reintroduced by the government.

The new vogue words in Met police jargon are "targeting and surveillance". The police techniques they denote were used by Newman in West Belfast as Chief Constable of the RUC from 1976 to 1979. Targeting itself is a strategy that is used in relation to traditional crime detection, e.g. looking for a man with red hair driving a blue car because the victim saw a man answering this description drive away from the scene of the crime. But the new targeting is not based on known facts about specific crimes, instead it relies on and reinforces police stereotypes rather than using specific crime detection to challenge them. Newman purports to be applying a 'sociological' theory of policing, claiming that it is possible to analyse patterns of crime, predict where crimes are going to be committed and by whom; identify potential criminals from local intelligence and make arrests after surveillance.

Brixton

The first of the new intelligence and surveillance units to be set up under Newman's plans is operating out of East Dulwich Police Station and covers South London, particularly Brixton. Officers from tough Scotland Yard squads have been imported to staff the Centre. They are reported to be using the technique practised by the Flying Squad on tracking down professional criminals in combatting street crime and burglaries. Chief Superintendent Tony Speed of Brixton Division described their work thus:–

"We identify known muggers and burglars and then use surveillance techniques to find out what they are up to". (Observer, 21.8.83.)

Although Newman has presented the new strategies to the public as englightened 'soft' policing this is not borne out by his detailed plans. His report to the Home Secretary makes it clear that covert surveillance is to be combined with a more active role for the SPG and the Instant Response Units (now re-named euphemistically 'District Support Units') in carrying out roadblocks and stop and searches and going on 'anti-burglary' and 'rowdyism' patrols.

The redefining of the police role away from specific crime detection demands a re-orientation of police power. Requirements that powers should be directed at specific crimes were discarded by the Police Bill. Thus under the Bill the police would be able to obtain a search warrant to search someone's home for 'evidence', *irrespective* of whether that person is suspected of any offence; roadblocks could be set up by reference to the 'pattern of crime' in an area and new powers of arrest (and detention for 24 hours) were created for *any* offence however trivial (e.g. parking on a yellow line, dropping litter in the street). The connection between the investigation of a specific crime and the exercise of a police power would be substantially weakened and in some cases completely dissolved by the proposals in the Bill.

The problem with Newman's approach to policing is that there is in reality no 'underworld' of petty thieves which can be infiltrated – only the lives of ordinary people. The new tactics will inevitably criminalise working class people out on the streets, particularly black, young and gay people who are stereotyped by the police as potential criminals. Heavy policing of the kind proposed by the Police Bill actually *creates* crime – resulting in arrests for obstruction, threatening behaviour or assault on a police officer.

Planned Propaganda Drive

The notion that black people commit crime disproportionately has been actively promoted by the police in order to validate the stereotyping that takes place. In March 1982, as a direct counter-offensive to the Scarman Report, the Met issued criminal statistics of supposed 'mugging offences' broken down according to race and purporting to show that black

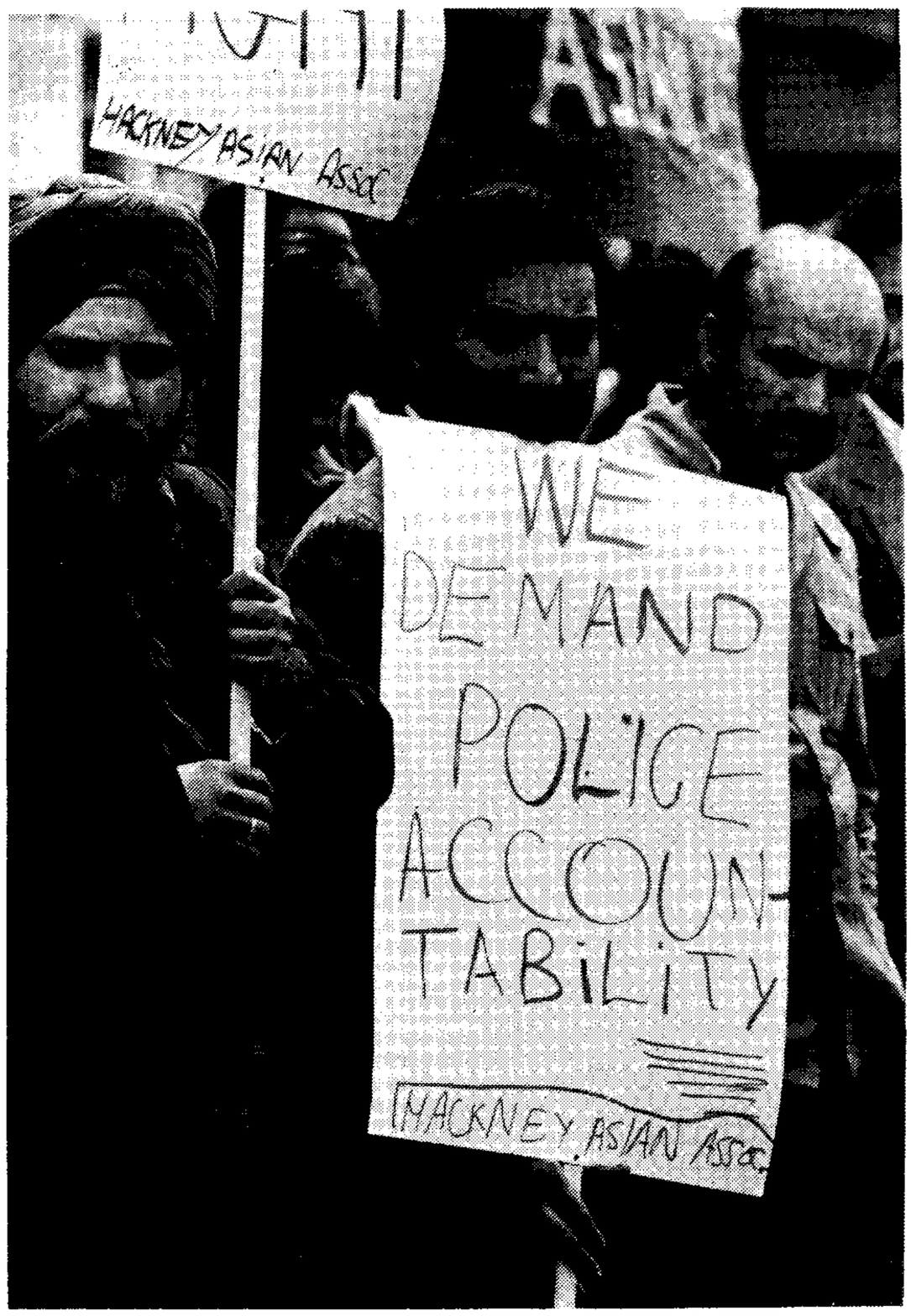


Photo: John Sturrock/Network

3rd July, 1982, Hackney. Asians protest against police behaviour.

people were disproportionately involved in them. The selective leaking of these statistics to papers, such as the *Daily Mail*, before they were officially released demonstrated the extent to which they were part of a planned propaganda drive.

The way in which the statistics were presented gave a totally misleading impression. 'Mugging' is not a category made in law or by statistics and the 'robbery and other violent theft' category into which it falls also includes, for example, burglaries from off-licences. Pronouncements from Scotland Yard revealed a tendency to use the terms 'robbery' and 'theft' almost interchangeably in an unscientific manner. By releasing only the so-called 'mugging' (robbery and other violent theft) statistics broken down by race the police had deliberately focused attention on a minute fraction of recorded crime. The exercise was repeated earlier this year after a Parliamentary question by Harvey Proctor, M.P.

Multi-agency policing

Meanwhile Newman sees the police's job as a kind of social control – clearing the streets of persons targeted as potential offenders – and disclaims responsibility for the low crime clear-up rates. (In London this was only 16% in 1982, less than half that in many other urban areas).

In his first annual Report as Commissioner, Newman said:

"Crime control is just one aspect of social control. In that wider context, crime statistics are as much a reflection of the performance of other social agencies as they are of police performance. Critics

Fight Racist Attacks

Racist violence in the East End has increased dramatically in recent weeks. On Saturday, 3rd September, Asian medical student Dipak Amin was attacked by a gang of skinheads in Bethnal Green. He was slashed from head to foot, suffered a fractured vertebrae, leaving him temporarily paralysed, and had the initials 'NF' carved in his wrists. The police claimed that this wasn't necessarily a racist attack — Dipak could have carved the initials himself. Dipak is not the only victim:

***Ashof Ali and his family have lived under siege in their flat in East India Dock. Several weeks ago a gas cylinder full of highly inflammable paint remover smashed through the bedroom window and exploded above the children's bed.**

*** Amie Jeng, Shegun Faponele and their 14-month-old daughter narrowly escaped death when a petrol-soaked towel was set alight and shoved through their letter-box in the early hours of the morning.**

East London Workers Against Racism is organising defence for these and other victims of racist attacks. Contact us urgently and get involved in the work. Contact Joan Phillips on 01-274 3951.

who ignore this more rounded approach to crime control are working against the public interest by obscuring the role that other agencies must play if we are to secure an improvement in the overall situation".

But the police do not just see themselves as one of many agencies working towards the same aims. "Multi agency policing" (a phrase coined by John Alderson, ex-Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall) means cooperation directed and controlled *by* the police. The power of the police is also being reassured by a much wider definition of 'crime prevention' involving the government's whole approach to the welfare state and desire to return to 'Victorian values'. Thus a draft Home Office circular on Crime Prevention issued in July talks about strategies which "aim to reduce the motivation of people to engage in crime", increasing the role of Education Welfare Officers to deal with truancy from schools, and the involvement of schools in "the development of responsible behaviour and self discipline in children". The circular suggests regular 'core' meetings of the police, magistrates, social and probation services and local government officers in each area.

Increased police control over inter-agency liaison is likely to result in an expansion of other agencies' policing role and worse, in serious threats to civil liberties. Liaison with schools and youth clubs is one of the police's chief 'targets', and NUT branches in Lambeth and Hackney have already opposed the police's attempts to enter schools there.

Schools

Recently in Waltham Forest teachers provided to the police descriptions of children at their schools, without the parents' knowledge. This resulted in the police arresting outside the school (in full view of his friends) an eleven year old black kid, who subsequently turned out to be wholly innocent. Before this was discovered, the police had held him at the station without telling his parents.

A new initiative in multi agency policing is the creation of neighbourhood watch schemes, now being heavily promoted by the Met in London. These involve the police in actually **creating** agencies to supply them with information as well as encouraging existing bodies to give it to them. They will inevitably attract the reactionary (and racist)



people in an area who will be openly invited to supply the police with details of 'suspicious types' spotted in their streets. The police publicity for the schemes has a picture with a white youth climbing through a window in the foreground and a black youth with his arm around an old white woman's neck.

The most dramatic example of multi agency policing so far was Operation Major in Oxford in September 1982, when the police carried out a mass and indiscriminate arrest of 283 people purely on the basis of their social status (their homelessness). The elaborate planning for this operation involved extensive co-operation between the police, the DHSS and the magistrates (who set up a special court) but the multi agency co-operation did not extend to warning defence lawyers, probation or social workers who wished to help defendants. 104 people were released without charge after being held for many hours, the others were charged with social security frauds, at least some of which may have been honest mistakes rather than deceptions. Although nothing on the scale of Operation Major has happened since, joint police/DHSS operations on a smaller scale are common, as are joint police/immigration service raids.

Multi-agency policing encourages the creation of criminal stereotypes based on take up of welfare provision. The word 'scrounger' has acquired a mythology of its own which is as powerful as that associated with 'mugging'. The government were forced to drop proposals in the old Police Bill to turn the agencies of the welfare state into open sources of police information (clause 10 allowing police access to confidential files kept by social workers, probation officers, advice agencies, doctors, etc.). But the police intend to persuade the agencies to provide the information voluntarily wherever possible. Speaking to a fringe meeting of the Monday Club at the 1982 Tory Party Conference, Inspector Basil Griffiths said,

"In every urban area there is a large minority of people who are not fit for salvage. The only way in which the police can protect society is quite frankly by harassing these people."



Photo: Mike Abrahams/Network

The Police Bill would reinforce the primacy of the police by legitimising special coercive powers to be given to them. It allowed the police to use 'reasonable force' in carrying out many of the new powers and to take from suspects detained in the police station without their consent fingerprints and body samples, to carry out strip searches and even worse 'intimate searches' (of vaginas and anuses). This has been said to be tantamount to a licence to assault suspects and will be accompanied by provisions allowing detention without charge for as much as four days to extract confessions.

But the Bill would not change the constitutional independence of the police (equivalent only to that of judges) and may actually set back the cause of democratic accountability of the police. The Bill allows the Met Commissioner to decide how best to consult people in each borough, by reference to 'guidelines' issued by the Secretary of State. Newman has said that the police will only become involved in liaison with the public as 'free and equal partners' (on a level with the public) and has refused to co-operate with Labour boroughs attempting to establish liaison under the aegis of elected representatives in a Council Sub-Committee. In Newman's own words, the consultative committees will be 'used as a vehicle' by the police.

The power of the police and the special position in which they are being place is an extremely dangerous one. Labour party members should act by alerting people in their area and organisations to the drastic new powers proposed in the Police Bill. A London Campaign Against the Police Bill has been set up and can provide speakers for meetings and further information.

(Contact. London Campaign Against the Police Bill, c/o 50, Rectory Road, London N16. Tel. [01]-249 8334).

(Louise Christian is a lawyer working for the GLC Police Committee Support Unit, but the views expressed here are entirely personal and not necessarily those of the GLC.)

A Fighting Leadership for

The London Boroughs Association is in its death throes, and it is not a pretty sight. For years it maintained its 'bipartisan' role, striving to represent the views of the elected boroughs in discussions with other authorities such as central Government, the water boards and so on. At times it was useful, at times it was successful. Now the Tories have made it useless to anyone by using it as the platform from which they launched their campaign to smash the GLC.

Over the last few months 7 Labour boroughs – (Brent, Hackney, Greenwich, Lewisham, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark) have resolved to resign from the LBA, and all the Labour boroughs except Tower Hamlets, have joined together, along with the GLC and the ILEA, to form a new body, the Association of London Authorities. The ALA is designated from the outset to be a campaigning body, working from a basis of fighting to defend local democracy, and public services. This is a serious change from the way the old guard Labour leaders used to conduct themselves in the LBA (whether in majority or minority) as well as on other bodies such as the AMA.

After the 1982 local elections, the hard left took over a number of Councils, but largely ignored making delegations to the LBA and AMA. The old right wingers held on to most of the Labour seats.

As a result, when the Tory group on the LBA began their anti-GLC campaign, the response from the Labour opposition was not as strong as it should have been. (We did manage a walkout from the LBA at one point). Regional Conference took a much stronger line, and demanded that Labour councils pull out of the LBA completely.

From the Tory side there had been similar changes to those that had been happening in the Labour Party. A strong new hawkish Thatcherite faction had developed that made it hard for the Tory leadership on the LBA to make any conciliatory moves towards the Labour right.



Lewisham Leisure Centre. Under 5's gymnasium class.

Pam Isherwood

Post War Consensus Breaking Down

The old pattern of post war political consensus was rapidly breaking down, and the established leaderships were not equipped to deal with these changes.

This abstract formula can most clearly be understood in relation to a concrete example. The LBA makes a certain number of grants to voluntary organisations whose activities cross borough boundaries, so that some joint funding machinery is obvously sensible. In 1983/4 they have budgetted to give out £750,000 (about the same amount as the GLC is giving just to sports this year). They lose this power if they cannot show that they represent ALL the boroughs. Because seven boroughs have already pulled out of the LBA no grants can be made next year unless other arrangements are made.

This obscure bit of law was unexpected, and created a focus for the debate about the future usefulness of the LBA.

The Tory wets and the Labour right wanted to use this factor to blame the left boroughs for the hardship caused to the voluntary organisations and their clients. They began making contact with the voluntary organisations concerned and seeking to persuade them to bring pressure on the councils that had pulled out.

The ALA, however, was not dull enough to be caught in this trap. ALA leader, Margaret Hodge, wrote to Tory LBA leader Bowness, suggesting joint discussions to arrive at a voluntary joint agreement for grants to be paid. Bowness rejected this out of hand; his hands were tied by the Tory hawks line that the LBA was the ONLY body of London local authorities.

The LBA has never used its grant making powers to the full, and Roy Shaw, former Leader of Camden and new Leader of the LBA Labour Group, was not even willing to argue that it should do so (even though the Group had agreed that this was the line). Paul Beesley, leader of Tower Hamlets, went so far as to agree with the LBA GP Chairman that it was helpful to have a restricted grants budget, because it makes it easier to turn away unwanted applications.

GLC Grants

When the GLC began to pump out grants money in a serious way, the response of the LBA Tories was to review their own grants with the intention of making compensating cuts if there was any GLC money going to any of 'their' organisations. At least one Tory borough now regularly turns away all grant applicants, telling them to go to the GLC first.

As a result, the Tories attempts to throw responsibility for the voluntary organsations' crisis fell about their ears.

The Labour authorities continued their efforts to bring about some new agreement on a basis for joint funding. Brent Council wrote to all the boroughs offering to co-ordinate a voluntary joint funding scheme, but the Tories would not take part. Recently the Tories on Hammer-

Local Government

John Plant (Newham Council)

(based on an earlier article for East of London Briefing)

smith Council have treid to do the same thing, but this has resulted in a hardening of the line taken by the 'hawks'; Bexley said they would only take part in a joint scheme if the voluntary groups so funded refused to work in ALA boroughs!

It seems most likely at this stage that the LBA's grant making activity will collapse completely, leaving a gap which the GLC has indicated that it would probably be able to fill next year. Many Labour activists are involved with voluntary organsations all over London, and it is important that the Tories' arguments are rebutted at every opportunity, and that the Tories should be shown up as the party who have disrupted the work of the voluntary organisations and used them as political pawns.

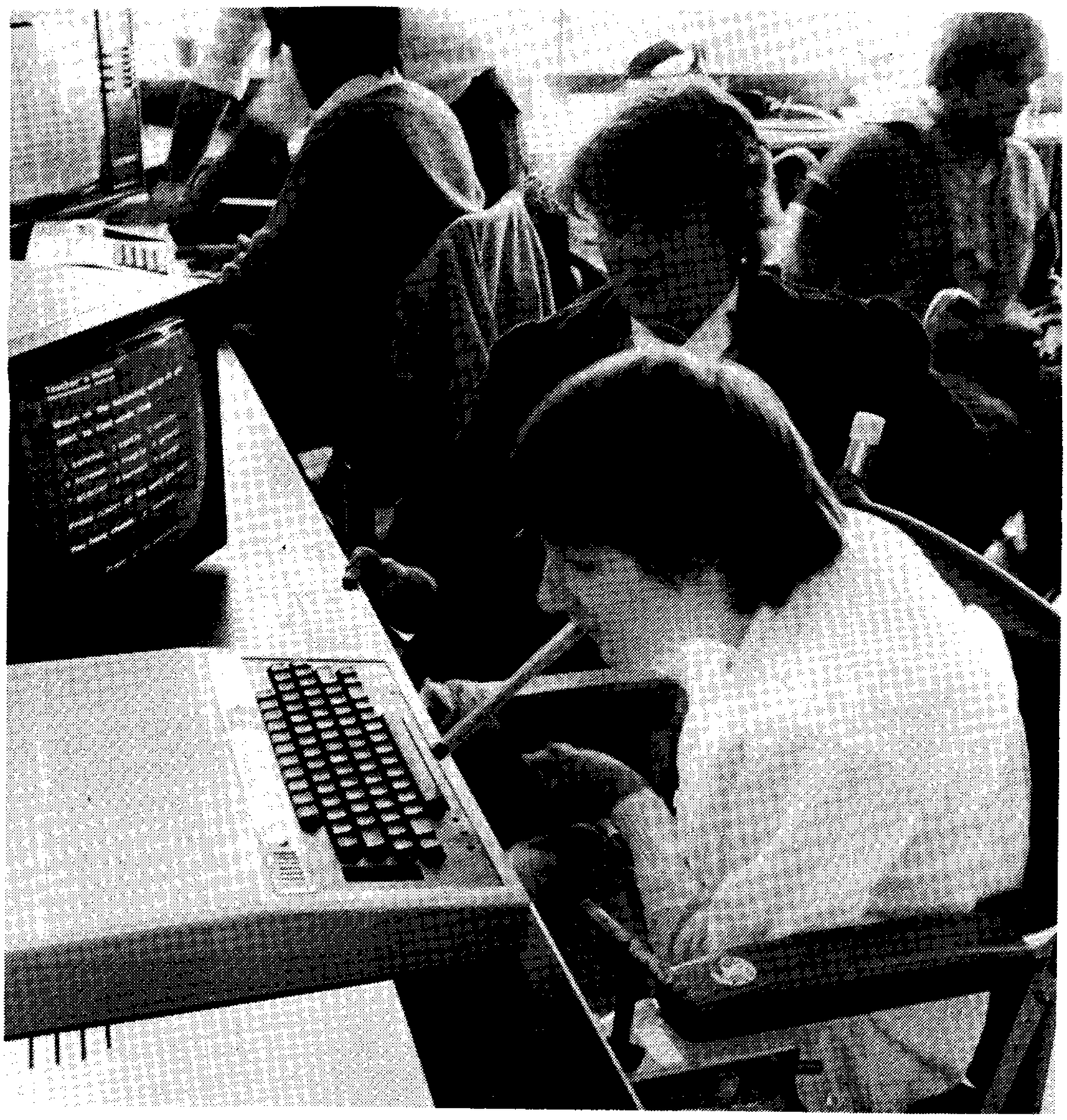
Meanwhile the Labour Right has not sat idly by to watch their chances of collaboration with the Tories evaporate.

Roy Shaw and Jack Smart from the AMA continually pressed the NEC to overturn the Regional Conference decision, on the basis of no mandate other than their private enthusiasm for wheeling and dealing with the Tories. Eventually they gained a tactical advantage. By sheer persistence, they got NEC endorsement for their line. It must be asserted in every discussion on this subject that there is no democratic mandate whatsoever for this interference with policy formulated by Regional Conference. It represents nothing more than the activities of a handful of dedicated right wingers.

What is more, the Labour right are not stupid. Realising that they have lost a lot of ground, they are now looking for opportunities to counter attack, and we can expect organised right caucuses at various levels to begin to operate. In the LBA Labour Group, Barking's Deputy Leader, George Brooker, made an unexpected appearance to voice his proposal that the 'Eastern Bloc' of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham should form the basis of just such a caucus within the ALA.

Real Fighting Leadership

But the important question is how quickly the ALA can become a real fightin leadership, actually mobilising large numbers of working people in defence of their services. The leaders of the ALA have always said that they are a viable alternative to the old guard, that they can offer real leadership. Over the next few months they will be put to the make or break test. If they can find a way of really building resistance to the destruction of public services it will mark the turning point in the present political retreat of the Labour movement. If they fail the consequences will be incalculably awful for the working class of London.



David Hoffman.

Helping the handicapped to learn in Brent.

Briefing Slate

BRIEFING calls for a vote for Eric Heffer for leader of the Labour Party in the first round, and for Michael Meacher as Deputy. It calls for a vote for Neil Kinnock in the second round of the leadership election.

In our view the events leading up to this year's conference show that the procedure for 'choosing' the left slate must be radically changed. When, after the near-victory of Tony Benn's Deputy Leadership campaign, the 'truce' of Bishops Stortford was imposed, it initiated a dramatic, self-inflicted change of fortune on the left. The vast majority of those who backed Tony Benn were not consulted. When Jo Richardson was 'dissuaded' from standing for the leadership this year, there was even less consultation. The 'left slate' is traditionally worked out in secretive discussions between self-selected individuals.

The National Briefing Supplement has been created to try and overcome this state of affairs and to help bring into existence a democratic, organised and accountable left.

We hope that next year we will not have to carry an editorial of this character.

Leader Eric Heffer
Deputy Leader Michael Meacher
National Executive Committee
Constituency Section
Tony Benn
David Blunkett
Eric Heffer
Michael Meacher
Jo Richardson
Denis Skinner
Audrey Wise
Reserve nomination: Norman Atkinson
Women's Section
Margaret Beckett
Joan Maynard

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East of London Briefing has now produced its second issue. It costs 25p and can be obtained from 245 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex.

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Editor of Streetlife Supplement: Jane Stockton.
Production Editor: Chris Knight
Treasurer: John Pickering

Next issue will be out on October 20th.
Deadline for articles: Monday October 10th.

London Labour Briefing Forum

'Beyond the AES'

24 October, County Hall
7.30pm

BOOK REVIEW

The Democratic Alternative - a socialist response to Britain's Crisis (Penguin £2.50) by Peter Hain

Reviewed by Nigel Williamson

Peter Hain is an able and personable politician. What he has to say, whether one agrees with it or not, is nearly always challenging and always perceptive.

He has displayed an ability to put his finger on the pulse of issues the significance of which the Labour Party itself has been appalingly slow to realise. His espousal of community politics has made him something of an ideological figure-head of the so called 'soft left' centred around the Labour Coordinating Committee and the student politics of the Clause Four group. On his departure from the Liberal Party some six years ago, he brought with him the very best of a not entirely dishonourable tradition and attempted to wed it quite excitingly to the collectivism of the Labour Party.

Why then, is this book so unremitingly tedious? The answer lies partly in the timing of the general election. The Democratic Alternative was written before the election and reads like it. A short prologue acknowledging the scale of Labour's defeat can do little to alleviate the problem.

Dates of general elections and publishers' schedules are clearly beyond Hain's control and it is unfair to criticise on that basis. There are other grounds, however.

In an article with Harriet Harman in Tribune (July 29, 1983), Hain complained that the party's election programme 'read like a gigantic composite resolution, expressing a kind of shopping list approach to politics: here's a policy for blacks, there's a policy for pensioners'.

Unfortunately, Hain's own book, or sections of it, fall into precisely the same trap. Huge sections read like a slightly more literate rewrite of Labour's Programme 1982. Even the jargon - the 'concerted strategies' and 'comprehensive programmes' - is the same.

If there is a little more substance than one would normally find on a shopping list, it is still at best the political equivalent of painting by numbers with each colour carefully and painstakingly filled in but little conception of what the overall picture will look like when it is finished.

Hain, however, believes he has found the special magic ingredient which will wash



any old policy whiter, transforming unpopular, grey Labour shibboleths such as public ownership into sparkling, clean, fresh and popular causes. Community politics is the name of the game.

Only, I fear, it is not quite that simple. Community politics, whatever it means, is not a panacea for all Labour's ills. Take, for example, housing. As someone who had experience of bringing up two young children for five years on a run-down council estate, living in a damp and inadequate flat up endless flights of stairs, I never met anyone who wanted the right to carry out their own repairs. I never met anyone who wanted a council housing officer based on the estate, still less any tenant who wanted to assume personal responsibility for running the damned estate.

When I attempted to set up a tenants organisation, its only potential appeal to my neighbours was whether it could be used as a vehicle to get the hell off the estate and as far away as possible. And who could blame them? What does the Labour Party tell a family of six in a two-bedroomed flat on a crumbling housing estate - you're stuck here so you might as well make the most of it and join a tenants organisation to improve the environment?

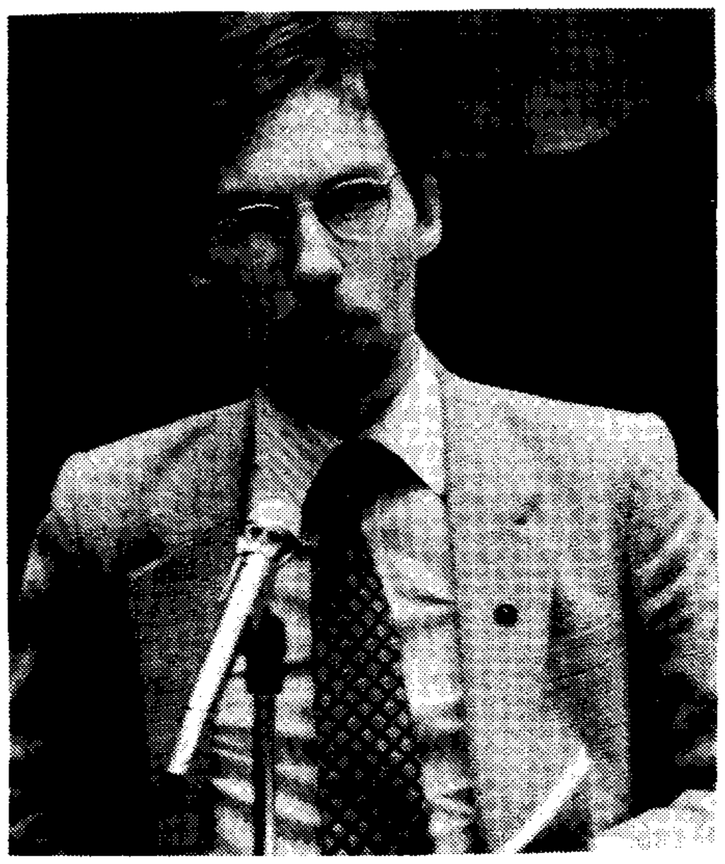
The only answer to what is a national housing problem is central planning, matching resources to needs. Too often Peter Hain dismisses essential and necessary planning as 'statism'. Too often he offers the glib slogans of the 'mass campaigning party', 'community politics' and even semi-metaphysical appeals to 'raising consciousness'. Too often I wonder if he or anyone else really knows quite what such fine-sounding phrases mean.

All of which is a pity in many ways, because Hain's book is not without its good points. The analysis of the extent of the economic crisis and social divisions of modern Britain in the early part of the book is superbly presented and cogently argued.

His comments on the continuing relevance of class should give the lie to any Briefing reader who believes Hain to be the ultimate revisionist, although many will find greater fault with his critique, which I believe to be a correct one, of modern trade unionism and some of the romatic notions still cherished on the subject by many on the left.

The book's final section on what Labour should do in office to resist the de-stabilising forces of capital and link up with extra-parliamentary struggles is interesting but, tragically, only of academic interest now.

I'm not sure if I'm even criticising Hain's book from the right or from the left. What I do know is that the general election defeat



NIGEL WILLIAMSON

must cause us to question some of our basic political assumptions of recent years while recognising those broad socialist principles which will always remain unchanged.

That debate which must take place over the next 12 to 18 months will be a crucial one and Peter Hain, no doubt, will have an important contribution to make. Much of this book, however, is old hat - and pretty woolly at that.

TAKE OUT A SUBSCRIPTION

SUBSCRIPTIONS

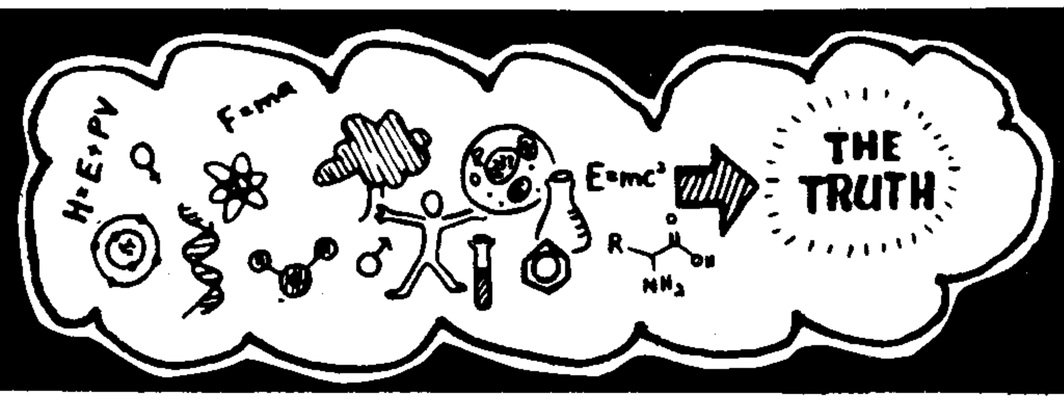
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Send to Graham Bash, 23 Leghorn Road, London NW10.

science briefing



A Socialist Science Policy?

There is a serious weakness with the left at present - its blind spot on science! Apart from (fashionable) single issues such as lead in petrol or Sizewell, the left has virtually *nothing* to say about the *direction* of science and technology (S&T) and *no* contribution when it comes to working out Labour's S&T policy. This situation must change.

Scientific issues featured quite prominently in Labour's manifesto but not as much was said during the campaign, though Foot made a half-hearted play for the 'Green' vote. At the moment a row is brewing between opponents and supporters of nuclear energy in the Labour Party.

The trouble with the labour movement's present approach is that it sees S&T as fundamentally progressive - all we need is *more* of it, possibly under new management. This view dominates the Labour Party Science and Technology Study Group (STSG), which sees little wrong in pushing the microelectronics 'revolution' and sees the problem with S&T being merely a lack of investment!

CAPITALIST SCIENCE

Unfortunately, it will take more than a change of management before capitalist S&T ceases to injure, poison, squander, pollute and unemploy. The left needs to establish the *framework* of a *socialist* science policy. Through articles in Briefing, Science for People and Socialist Organiser, a preliminary discussion is being organised (see below).

FRAMEWORK

Some points comrades might consider:

1. What is a *socialist* energy policy? After scrapping the *present* nuclear energy programme, do we go all out for coal (despite acid rain)? What about energy from sun, wind, tide, etc.?
2. What is a *socialist* health policy? Do we fight to keep the NHS *as it is*, based on drugs, machines and surgery? Or should we look at alternative approaches that treat the human as a *whole* individual and as a *social* being? And what is a socialist policy on fags and booze?
3. What is a *socialist* food policy? Should we waste food by turning it into milkand meat amid third world hunger and animal suffering?
4. What sort of *research* should we encourage? Is there a place for space science? How can we make a science for the people?

SCIENCE SHOPS

One policy for bringing science to the people is the Dutch 'science shops'. These provide a clearing-house for groups of workers, tenants, women, etc who need access to scientific information and research to help their struggles against the effects of capitalism on their lives.

My party branch passed this resolution recently:

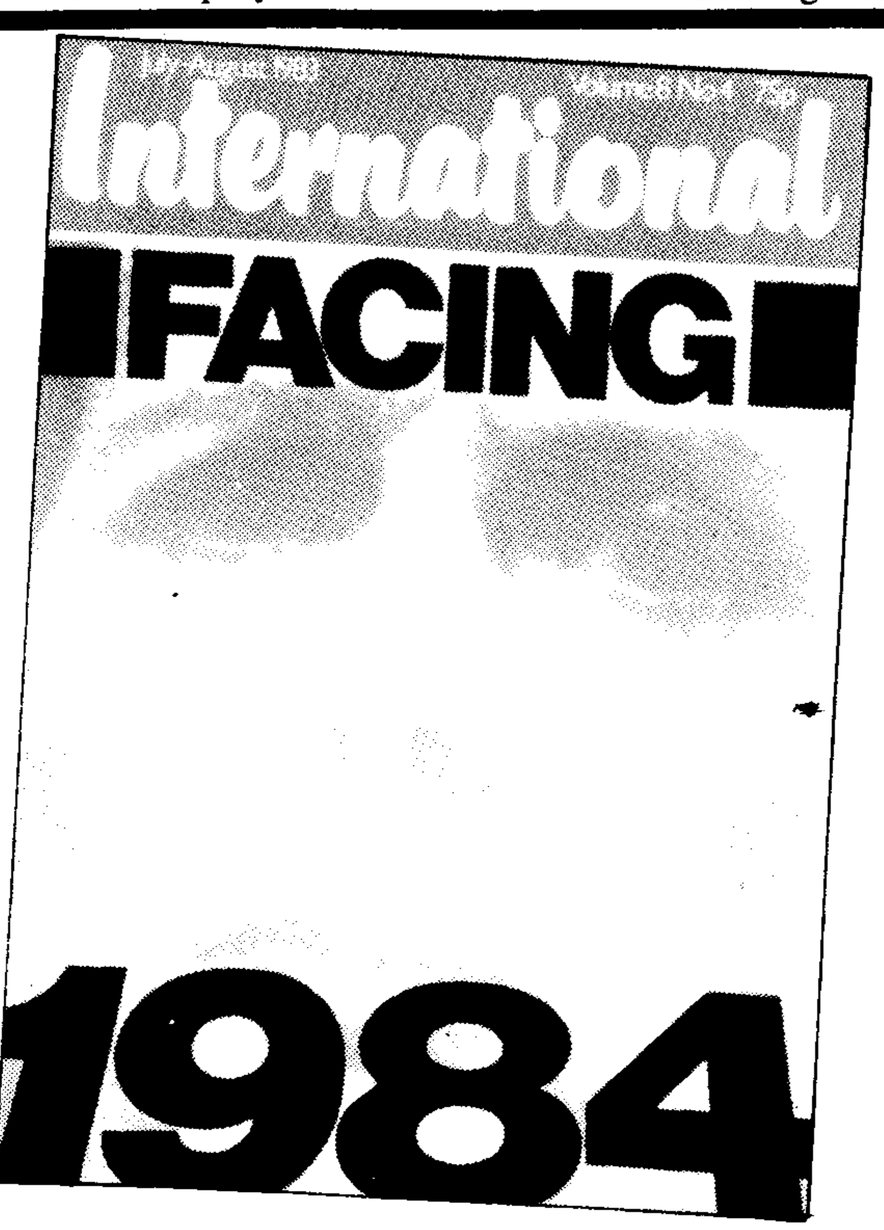
'This...(organisation)...believes that science must be made more accessible and useful to ordinary people. We therefore request that the LP, at local and national level, look into the possibility of providing access to scientific information and research for ordinary people along the lines of the Dutch 'science shops''.

Send successful resolutions to local and GLC Labour Groups and STSG at Walworth Road (copies to Briefing).

by Les Hearn
(Norwood CLP)

Towards a socialist science policy

Discussion
Sunday 25th September 2.00pm
55 Innis House, East Street, SE17
(tube: Elephant)
Inquiries? Please phone:
670 9897 (Les Hearn) or
701 5691 (Piers Corbyn)



FACING 1984

A weekend of socialist debate and discussion on political and economic aspects of the British crisis.

■ **Stuart Holland MP** and **Ernest Mandel** debating "Economic Strategy for European Labour";

■ **Andrew Gamble, John Ross** and **Doreen Massey** on "British Politics facing 1984";

■ **Ken Livingstone** and others on "Rebuilding the Labour Party";

■ **Unmesh Desai** and **Jenny Bourne** on the Black Rights struggle;

■ **Michele Barrett** and **Judith Arkwright** on "Women and Family Policy" and many other debates.

October 29/30 at Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth St, off Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

Registration costs £5 for the weekend (but only £4 if you book in advance), £2.50 for one day. Send cheque payable to *International* at PO Box 50, London N1.

PROFITS BEFORE PROGRAMMES

London has had commercial local radio for ten years, but Londoners have had no say in its development. In the last two years the GLC has tried to alter this situation by developing a policy on radio. John McDonnell convened London's first Radio Forum in October 1982 to try and develop a strategy which would give Londoners more control over their airwaves. The Forum brought together a wide range of groups and hopes to produce a strategy document this autumn.

The Council has also backed a report written by local Radio Workshop: *Capital: Local Radio & Private Profit*, to coincide with the readvertisement of Capital Radio's contract by the IBA under the terms of the 1981 Broadcasting Act.

BUSINESS INTERESTS

The report outlines the history of the pressure from business interests and the Tories for more 'freedom of choice' in radio, and details the appalling record of Capital over the last decade. It also makes proposals for change at the London station and argues for major reforms of the IBA. Capital's record calls into question whether any form of radio financed by advertising can provide a genuinely local service.

Capital's programming is designed to maximise advertising revenue: MOR pop, DJ chat, weather checks and advertisements are the basis of its format. Non-pop programming goes out at off peak times. Local programming has been redefined by Capital and other ILR stations as 'social action broadcasting'. Telephone referral services (Helpline), appeals for charity (Help a London Child) and volunteers (Jobmate) make up 'social action broadcasting' on Capital. The station makes much of this kind of activity, but in fact most of it is not programming — it takes place off air. 'Social action broadcasting' with its emphasis on volunteering and self help has received praise from the Tory minister Patrick Jenkin. Meanwhile the lives and concerns of millions of Londoners are ignored by the station.

FREE ENTERPRISE RADIO

Capital has failed to provide local radio because, as free enterprise radio, it puts profits before programmes. Capital has made over £12m in profit out of its control over a public resource and has offered very little in return.

LRW, with the GLC's support have made proposals to the IBA about the type of conditions which should be inserted in the new London contract to come into effect in October 1984. The conditions would make the new contractor broadcast material made by Londoners at peak times and provide resources for a full non-sexist non-racist coverage of London's cultural life.

To suggest, as some 'pirates' do, that local control over radio can be gained by promoting more radio stations in London is unrealistic. In the present political climate, and when the economics are taken into account, more radio stations in London means more *commercial* radio. Arguing for more independent community based programme facilities, for more not less public control over broadcasting and for a local radio system free from the stranglehold of advertising and private ownership is central to any strategy for more democratic, popular radio in London. LRW would like other Labour Groups to take up the issues and is willing to speak at ward and GC's.

Capital: Local Radio & Private Profit, £2.70 inc p&p from LRW, 12 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY (402-7651)

TOM O'MALLEY

Capital's profits

Year (ending September 30)	*Turnover* (£'000)	*Profit** (£'000) ( ) = defecit	*Dividends* (£'000)
(20 months ending) 1974	1,964	(502)	-
1975	2,243	(283)	-
1976	4,001	672	-
1977	5,883	1,122	275
1978	8,319	1,865	500
1979	12,238	3,001	750
1980	15,052	2,701	850
1981	14,436	2,167	750
1982**	15.740**	1.300*	(?)**

* pre-tax

** the figures quoted in this table are based on Capital's published accounts, except for the 1982 figures which were reported in *Radio* magazine, May 1983, p.6.

Shareholders in Capital Radio Ltd 1983

	ordinary shares		*ordinary non-voting shares*	
	£	%	£	%
Standard Broadcasting Corp (UK) Ltd	252,525	28.26	11,914	5.78
Dominfast Investments Ltd	194,709	21.79	60,448	29.30
Rediffusion Radio Holdings Ltd	150,998	16.90	31,496	15.27
Local News of London Ltd	102,893	11.51	54,304	26.32
Express Newspapers Ltd	44,892	5.02	25,290	12.26
Sable Knight Ltd	44,528	5.02	18,504	8.97
Lord Romsey	25,414	2.82	1,180	.57
Sir Richard Attenborough	22,813	2.48	1,984	.96
Lord Willis of Chislehurst	11,981	1.34		
holders of less than 1% (62)	42,959	4.81	1,168	.57
	893,712	100	206,288	100

Mary Archer

It may be said of Mary Archer, who died on July 28, that nothing became her life like the living of it.

Many of us have had political disagreements with Mary, but we cannot help admiring her lifelong commitment to socialism.

As a psychiatric social worker, she was aware of the horrors of inequality and poverty which so deform the human spirit in class society. Early in life she decided that the only solution was socialism, and, having so decided, devoted her life to its achievement.

During the war, from 1941 to 1944, she was secretary of the British Section of the Fourth International. With her husband John, she was active in the anti-fascist movement of the 1930's and in the anti-H Bomb movement of the late fifties and early sixties, two issues which still dominate political life today.

More recently, through she was already desperately ill, she worked hard in the General Election, rushing in a postal vote with five minutes to spare to the deadline. She even completed her collector's round before going into hospital.

Both Mary and John are associated with a newspaper in the Labour Party called "Unite and Fight". Mary's last political act was to organise a conference in connection with it, for the purpose of mobilising support in the unions and the Labour Party for appeals to the leadership of the Public Service Unions to combine in common defence of any one body of Public Service workers attacked by the Government.

Her last words were, "Flaming Greetings to Everyone!".

Joe Hill, the American trade union organiser whom the copper-mine bosses murdered in Utah, told those who survived him: "Don't mourn: Organise!" a sentiment which Mary would recognise.

The best way to hail her memory is to struggle for nuclear disarmament, to defend the public services and to oppose any restrictions on political and civil liberties. But, above all, to help to put back socialism on the agenda of British politics.

A.L.

Letters

Dangerous, Sexist, Revisionist Nonsense

I should like to comment upon an article written by Sarah Roelofs in the August edition of London Labour Briefing, in which she concluded *"The only socialism worth the name is a feminist socialism and struggle for it must never be abandoned to men and non-feminist women for whom soggy socialism comes first."*

I flatly reject this statement as dangerous, sexist, revisionist nonsense. Socialism — and the Labour Party — was founded upon the principle of egalitarianism, and to suggest that this sexist deviational form is more important is to be guilty of opposing the fundamental goals of democratic socialism.

Sexual discrimination has no role to play in the activities of the Labour Party. One hundred years after the death of Karl Marx we are no nearer the establisment of even a vestige of a socialist society anywhere in the world. Despite this appalling and utterly saddening fact, women such as Sarah Roelofs are actively aiding international capitalism by helping to divide the combined socialist energies of men and women in the labour movement.

The Labour Party is not — and never will be — a feminist socialist organisation. All those women who share the views of Sarah Roelofs should — if they possess a single shred of honesty or integrity — leave the Labour Party and set-up their own independent political organisation.

Yours for Socialism,
JOHN CLAYTON

Kinnock, Our Best Hope

Dear London Labour Briefing,
Here are a few thoughts on your issue entitled "No Confidence in Kinnock".

It all sounded a bit like "now we have got the embarrassing irrelevance of the general election out of the way, let's get back to what we really enjoy — internecine conflict".

In your analysis of our election defeat, there is no hint of doubt or self-criticism, no attempt to understand the deep rooted unpopularity of socialism, as it is presented to people, amongst the majority of the electorate.

You imply that "if only" Tony Benn had won the deputy leadership election everything would have been different. There is, though, no evidence at all that there is a great untapped pool of latent socialist voters just waiting for the call of uncompromising socialism to come from Walworth Road for the voters to flock into the Labour camp.

Also you say that the election result proves that "conviction politics" works and that if we had been as forthright and uncompromising as Thatcher, we could have won. A closer look at the election results tells a different story. The Conservative vote held up in 1983 more or less what it had been in 1979. The real change in 1983 from 1979 was that about two million voters switched from Labour to Alliance. If anything this was a vote against "conviction politics" and perceived "extremism".

The hard truth is that a majority of the population envisage "socialism" as being British Rail and the Central Electricity Generating Board writ large. In other words what drives people to the polling booths to vote Conservative, Liberal or SDP is this image of a society dominated by vast unaccountable, insensitive, monolithic bureaucracies such as nationalised industries.

It amused me the way that you listed opposition to nationalisation of the banks amongst Neil Kinnock's ideological "crimes". I am very glad to say that last year's Labour Party Conference threw out the resolution calling for nationalisation of the banks, so on this at least Comrade Kinnock is fully in line with Party policy.

Can you imagine what it would be like if all credit and finance were in the hands of a single National Bank? It wouldn't matter a damn whether Leigh Pemberton of Ken Livingstone was the Governor. It would still represent an appallingly dangerous concentration of power.

It is about time that nationalisation was recognised as the Stalinist concept that it is. It has nothing at all to do with the "common ownership of the means of production distribution and exchange". "Common ownership" surely implies something which is sufficiently small scale for people to identify with and have some control over, which is manifestly not the case, where nationalised industries are concerned.

As for the ludicrous purge of the Militant tendency, all I can say is that in all probability the N.E.C. will swing to the left this year and the whole sorry episode will be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Despite my disagreements with Neil Kinnock on the Militant, on devolution and other questions, I still reckon that he is presently our best hope as leader to reverse Labour's disast rous decline.

It sometimes seems to me as if London Labour Briefing has a death wish for the Labour Party, seeking to turn it into a slightly larger version of the Socialist Workers' Party, but equally irrelevant. Let's hope that I am wrong.

One last thought, the way forward for the Labour Party in my view must be to become more libertarian, more decentralist and more ecological in other words to learn from "die Grünen" in West Germany. Any other path spells continuing decline.

Yours in critical comradeship,

John Bradbrook
(Islington South Constituency Labour Party)

NB I would argue that a Kinnock — Meacher ticket would provide the sort of political balance which is now required, as well as being a difficult leadership to shift or discredit. Neil Kinnock wears his poitics with a light touch and has a good iconoclastic sense of humour. As for Michael Meacher, he is the archetypal headmaster figure and the Conservative press would have their work cut out trying to portray him as a threat to civilization as we know it!

Livingstone Not Accused

Dear Editor,
I am writing as a member of the Troops Out Movement to correct an impression that might have been given in the article entitled "A Programme of Unconditional British Withdrawal from Ireland?". In this article, which was published in an earlier edition of London Labour Briefing, it was stated that some supporters of Troops Out Now have accused Livingstone of "selling out" because he has called for a phased withdrawal.

Now, while the Troops Out Movement does have a policy of immediate withdrawal, this movement has not accused Mr Livingstone of "selling out" either at our conference or in our paper, just because of this difference.

I should point out that there are other groups working on Ireland who also have Troops Out Now as a demand and it may be that they have made such comments in their papers.

The Troops Out Movement always welcomes the opportunity to debate its demands: the call for immediate withdrawal is based on political, moral and pragmatic reasons. Apart from the disagreement over the speed of withdrawal from Ireland, we agree with the points of the programme put forward in that issue of your paper and in fact have been putting forward many of these points in articles and speeches for some years. There is a great need to point out now just what the policy of "Ulsterisation" entails and its dangers. By concentrating arms into the hands of sectarian legal organisations and illegal Unionist organisations, it greatly increases the possibility of a bloodbath in the event of withdrawal taking place.

We were greatly delighted to see the article about our delegation to the Six Counties appearing in the paper. This has now taken place and we are delighted to report that it appears to have been a success. We will be compiling a report on the delegation which will be available at a later date.

Yours, faithfully,
Robert Jones

London Muralists For Peace

Dear persons,
I would like to inform you that the five 'Peace murals' commissioned by the GLC as part of their sponsorship of 'Peace' year activities in London at the following venues are either underway or finally about to commence.
The locations are:

1. Sanfords Street/Coldblow Lane, Deptford -- Brian Barnes (WARP).
2. Creek Road, Greenwich -- Greenwich Mural Workshop.
3. Vining Street, Rushcroft Road -- Brixton.
4. Uxbridge Road/Cunningham Road, Shepherds Bush -- Paul Butler.
5. Dalston Lane, Dalston Junction, Hackney -- Ray Walker.

An exhibition of the working designs and photographs of the murals in progress will be shown in the entrance chamber of County Hall from October 3rd to 31st.
The artists will be working on the street murals during the autumn and winter and they should be complete in the early spring of next year. We hope that they will be a success and a credit to the peace movement.
Trusting you will spread the news in your publication.

Ray Walker

MEMORIAL MEETING FOR JONATHAN HAMMOND

Friends and comrades of Jonathan have organised a memorial meeting on:

WEDNESDAY 28th SEPTEMBER at 8.00pm AT BISHOP CREIGHTON HOUSE, LILLIE ROAD, SW6

Among the organisations supporting are Solidarnosc Support Group, TOM, NUJ, Fulham Labour Party and CND, Socialist Organiser.

If you are unable to attend but would like to send a message contact: James Ryan, 49 Hawksley Road, N16. Tel: 254-1221.

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

PORNOGRAPHY

KEEPING WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE

'Women are finally getting their own heads straight about pornography - and taking direct action against it'

So said Barbara Rodgers in Tribune a year ago (June 4, 1982). But only months later in New Socialist (Nov/Dec issue) Jean Seaton warned that the consequences of such action would be to '*inaugurate a puritan counter-revolution with serious consequences for the role of women*'.

The fact is that the issue of pornography has deeply divided feminists, and there is no 'accepted feminist position'. All too often the debate has become polarised between those who want to see a total ban on pornography, and those who see any restrictions on pornography as an attack on the liberty of sexual expression. I would argue that neither of these positions is ultimately advantageous to women.

STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT'S MORAL CRUSADE

Calls by feminists for a state ban on 'pornography' can only result in the strengthening of the right's moral crusade to repress female sexuality and tighten up legislation on abortion and contraception. Such calls immediately raise the question - what is pornography and where do we draw the line? A definition given by the Williams Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship says that pornography generally refers to material deliberately designed to sexually arouse and usually having this effect. Feminists object to pornography because of its degradation and objectification of women and its links with violence against women. But it will not be feminists who will decide what is or is not permissable if censorship is imposed. The distinction between *sexual* and *sexist* content will not be made.

PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXUAL FREEDOM

The view that censorship can never be supported by feminists or socialists, and that only a totally liberal climate can allow for the expression of female sexuality, is surely not correct either. Pornography is essentially aimed at producing a 'male' sexual response, and women's sexuality is only depicted as defined by men. The dominance of this male defined female stereotype renders it virtually impossible for women to develop a separate sexual identity. Within our present 'permissive society' there isn't freedom to watch, read or do whatever one wants. Despite the undoubted gains made by women in the last 20 years, the objectified, passive sexual image of women has if anything become even more visible.

A FEMINIST ALTERNATIVE

Some feminists have begun to try and develop an alternative approach, which sees sexual behaviour as cultural and socially shaped, rather than something natural and instinctive, and which puts pornography in its context as only part of a society which views women as sexually passive and objectified (see for example, Elizabeth Wilson in 'What is to be done about violence against women' and Ros Coward in 'Feminist Review 11'). They argue that a strategy towards pornography must be developed with regard to its sexist content in a way which does not pre-empt explorations of sexuality, sexual desire and identity.

The debate is still continuing and there are many questions to be answered. How do we define pornography, and what is acceptable or unacceptable in literature and the arts? How do we feel about literature etc. which is intended to be sexually arousing? What about 'male sexuality'? Is the subordination and objectification of women an integral part of heterosexual male potency? How can we, as women, begin to understand our own sexuality free from our conditioning and stereotyping as sex objects? How can we feel positive about our bodies and express our sexuality without being exploited by men? what about women who work in the pornography industry?

This issue of the Streetlife Supplement contains some views on pornography which raise some of the points I have mentioned, as well as others of relevance to feminists and socialists. The views expressed are all personal views and are not necessarily shared by the Briefing Streetlife Collective. We hope however that they will spark off a more thorough debate in Briefing on this very important issue.

Jane Stockton

Nasty Video Nasties

BY JOSETTE MORGAN

I rent a video recorder from Granada, along with a colour television, so not unnaturally I joined their video club (no membership fee charged) and began to rent videos from them. I presumed that although not all of their videos would be 'family viewing' there wouldn't be anything too unpleasant.

A fairly large proportion of the videos on the shelves seemed to come generally under the heading of 'horror'. 'Zombies rise from the dead' sort of thing. Having exhausted their supply of comedy films (usually pretty safe) my boyfriend and I rented a couple of 'horrors'. It was really very clever. If you are watching a scene where a 'person' is shot, blown up, has their head hacked off or something similar and you are aware that the person is supposed to be a zombie (i.e. already dead) so therefore s/he doesn't scream or show any sign of pain it doesn't affect you so much as if the person was truly alive. You don't empathise much with the living dead!! This first zombie film I saw didn't exactly fill me with joy but I could stand it. The second was quite different.

HIDEOUS SADISM

Please skip the next bit if you are squeamish. This film contained scenes of people being burned alive, involving much writhing and screaming, scorched flesh etc., then having a hypodermic syringe plunged into an eyeball and left hanging there while the victim was totally bound up, bar the eyes, the next victim was then slashed and cut around the face, finally having his throat cut from ear to ear complete with pleas and screams, then the next victim was tied down and had acid poured into his nostrils so that his face disintegrated from the inside. All of this was incredibly realistically done and amounted in my view to the most extreme sadism. At this point I couldn't handle any more. (Incidentally, this was all before the people were zombified so they were very much alive, so it was normal to empathise with them – at least, I did!) My boyfriend sat and watched the rest of the film while I retired to the kitchen. When it was finished he explained the rest of the plot to me. Quite honestly it was a load of crap and the hideous sadism was in no way integral to what little plot there was.

-Continued-

Nasty Video Nasties

The following is (word for word, so it is a little rambling) what I wrote, my thoughts, immediately after walking out on the video.

* * *

"What is a video nasty? Sadism? Hypo in eyeball? Burned alive? Head blown out with acid up nostrils? Throat cut, face slashed? Gratuitous violence. Empathy. Am I the only person who empathises with rape victims, torture victims etc? Why does it make me feel sick? It ***should.*** *This obsession in such films, blood, screaming, pain, fear, is it intended to dull our senses? What do we feel when we see such scenes? They are incredibly real! Clever special effects. I know it isn't real, but thinking about such things makes me feel . . . ? Horrible.*

Now I'm told the end of the video was good. I feel the graphic nature of the violence detracts from the plot. The horrible bits take over. I can't just watch, forget, and carry on watching the next bit, they linger. I remember my mother couldn't watch the 'rat on the plate' bit in ***Whatever Happened to Baby Jane,*** *which was exceedingly mild by comparison. People covered their eyes at the shower scene in* ***Psycho.*** *I couldn't bear to look until it had been on TV 3 times, but it was a good film. Maybe I should cover my eyes when watching (or not watching) videos.*

What is happening? People want to see this stuff and worse. How much worse? Do things seem tame after a while and cease to shock so you move on to 'harder' stuff?"

* * *

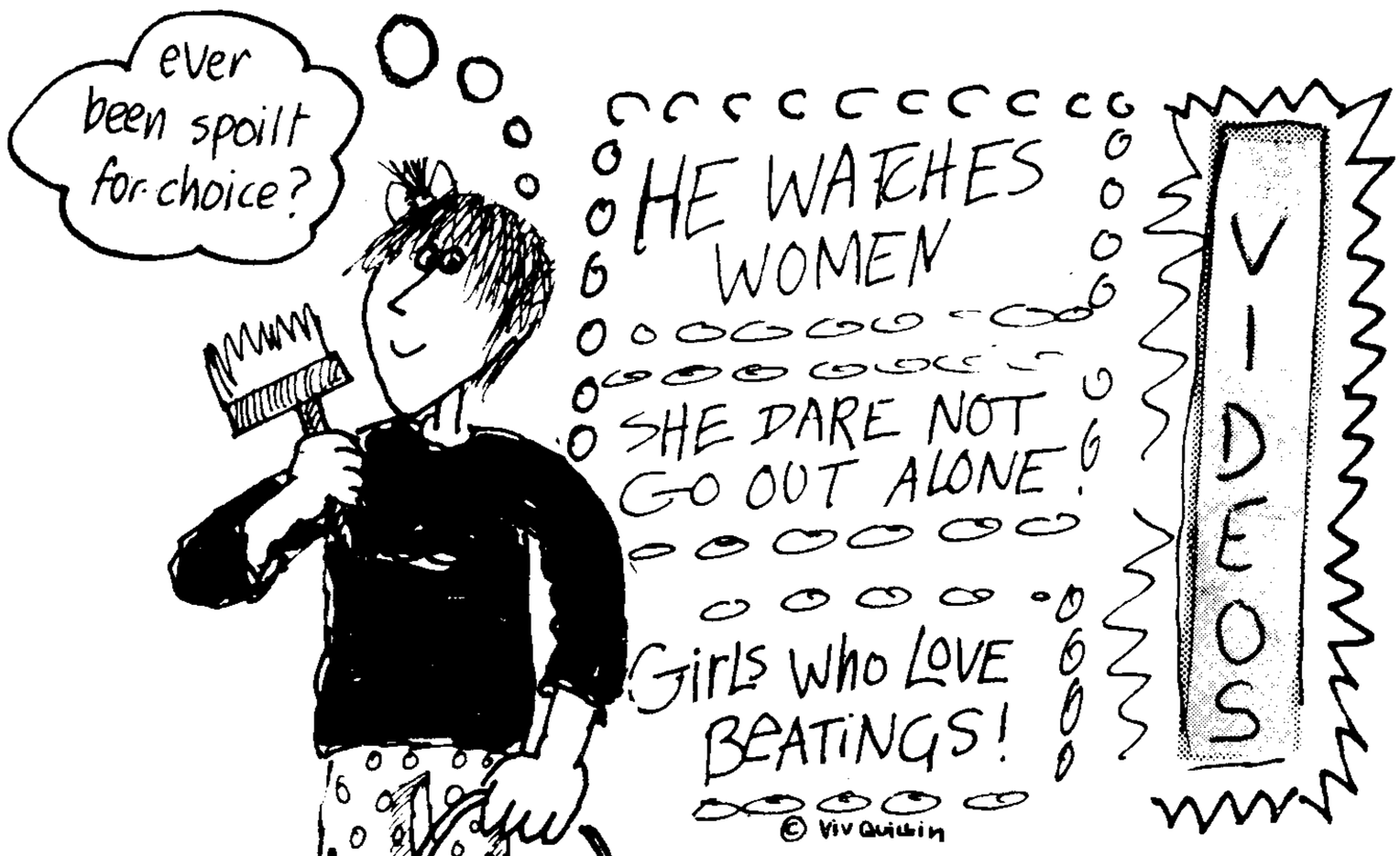
There are many people in the labour movement who seem to disagree with censorship. They feel that it works against the 'left'. At the moment there are literally hundreds of extremely violent sadistic videos on the market. The video 'I Spit On Your Grave' contains a fourteen-minute gang rape scene. Show me the 'left wing' or feminist film currently being circulated, the existence of which justifies the laxity which allows such films to be seen by men, women and children of any age.

VIDEOS AND CHILDREN

A recent Broadside programme on Channel 4 looked at children and videos. They interviewed and talked to families where all sorts of videos including rape and sadism where available to very small children. At one point a man explained that he felt it was 'normal' for his son to enjoy watching this type of video. What sort of world do these children think they are growing up in? Girls, however, showed the attitude that they didn't like the videos at first but got used to them. Many videos show scenes of rape where the 'victim' not only gives in but appears to enjoy the experience!!! What attitudes will the small boys who can watch these videos form and how will this affect their views on women?

Recently, a man (said to be of low intellect!) argued in court that when he committed rape it was because he really believed that the women would enjoy the experience because he spent most of his time watching videos where this happened. There was also a case where a young man murdered his best friend after they had been watching 'nasty' videos together. The media described the aggressor as a sexual psychopath. I shouldn't imagine that watching the videos had caused the problem, but there is a likelihood that it triggered off the behaviour which led to the young man's death. Police involved in the 'Glasgow rape case' said that the hideous razor wounds inflicted on the victim were very similar to those shown in pornography circulating in the area at the time. I don't think there is any doubt that people do get ideas from watching videos. I certainly do. I recently saw a cover on a video which depicted a man screaming while a skewer (complete with kebab) was being driven through his mouth and (presumably) out of the back of his neck! This was only the cover! However, it did give me an idea: a skewer could be carried for self-defence in much the same way our grandmothers used to carry a hatpin. It could be concealed easily in (for example) the seam of a pair of trousers.

continued.



CLOSING OUR MINDS TO SUFFERING

Another interesting point raised in the Broadside programme was that the children who watched 'nasty' videos said that at the beginning, when they first started watching them, they had nightmares. They then went on to say that they no longer had nightmares. Why is this? Is this because the children are 'closing their minds' to the videos and not really watching them and taking it in? Surely the ability to close one's mind to the suffering and pain of others (real or simulated) is not a desirable attitude! I know that my children (aged eight and three) find it very difficult to differentiate between fact and fiction. When they go to the cinema, by and large, most children know that what they are watching is not real, but some of what they see on television *is* real, i.e. news programmes and documentaries. Can children tell the difference between videos and television programmes? Then, of course, some 'nasty' videos are based on fact, i.e. *SS Experiment Camp* and videos about crimes such as the 'Manson' murders (Sharon Tate's murder etc.). I am sure it is only a matter of time before someone produces a video about the Moors Murders and the 'Yorkshire Ripper'.

VIDEOS MUST BE CENSORED

Personally I have no well thought out answer to the problems of censoring videos. I only know that I believe that they must be censored by some means. Until a more satisfactory way to censor is found, present criteria relating to films could apply with certificates. Parents would know that 'society' did not approve, and if children got to see videos which were deemed unsuitable, the parents would be breaking the law as only adults would be able to hire or buy 'adult' videos. Shops who rented videos to minors which were suitable for adults only would have to be prosecuted.

I think it is sad that, although it is expected that it will get all-party support, the Private Member's Bill relating to videos and their censorship is a Private Member's Bill put forward by a Tory. Censorship has long been a dirty word among socialists but I feel it must be discussed seriously by men as well as women in the Labour movement. At present the censorship which exists in the world of video is the censorship of profit. If it doesn't make money they don't make the video, and what makes money is rape and mutilation. I want censorship on my terms, not on the terms of the exploiters.

Excerpts from a debate in Merseyside Briefing on CENSORSHIP

So what's wrong with pornography? People tend to think that objections to it must derive from a Mary Whitehouse/prudish stance. In any case, shouldn't people (men) have the freedom to read and view what they want? They're not hurting anybody – it's a bit of innocent fun! Censorship itself is seen as a dirty word, not pornography. But which is more oppressive? Which curtails more freedoms?

Pornography portrays women as objects for sex – to be fucked, humiliated, mutilated, and sometimes even killed. Women are shown as disposable consumer items, to be used, abused, and then thrown away. Okay, try reading this paragraph again, and substitute the word 'blacks' for 'women' our society finds the degradation of women far more palatable than racism.

BAN PORN

There has been an enormous increase in the availability of pornographic literature and videos, which reinforce an extremely dangerous misogynist attitude. We believe that this increase has direct links with rape and violence towards women. In Merseyside alone, the 1982 figures for reported rapes have soared. WE ARE ANGRY. WE ARE MORE THAN ANGRY. WE ARE BLOODY FURIOUS. WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO STATE THAT WE FEEL THAT ALL FORMS OF PORNOGRAPHY SHOULD BE BANNED. . . .

LABOUR MEN

We believe that the issue of pornography is crucial in the struggle for social injustice. We also believe that it is not within men's interests to take this issue seriously. When the issue is raised, it is greeted by jokes, yawns or patronising smiles. Men, including those within the Labour Party, do not appear to give a shit about women's oppression – not while it conflicts with what they seem to want – profits, a cheap thrill, and maintaining the sexual status quo. Men are the perpetrators. Men are the users, and it's long past time that they got up off their arses, and joined in our struggle.

Pam Blain and Sheila Hughes

VIEW FROM A MALE

With so many pressing issues all around us, one hesitates to use precious space refuting the ideas of Pam Blain and Shiela Hughes on the matter of pornography. Nevertheless, as some of their views are tendentious to the point almost of being sinister, it is perhaps a worthwhile exercise.

WHO IS TO DECIDE

First, there is the issue of censorship. To any libertarian socialist, the very word engenders suspicion. The case in favour of censorship must surely be very strong before socialists can accept it. Blain and Hughes do not make such a case. Central, they call for the banning of all pornography, without bothering to define what pornography is. Is page 3 of the *Sun* pornographic? Is *Mayfair* magazines pornographic? Is *Gay News* pornographic? Is *Spare Rib* pornographic? Is *Lady Chatterley's Lover* pornographic? All all these to be banned, or none of them? Who is to decide? Blain and Hughes? The Police? Magistrates? Mrs Thatcher? Me? How are they to decide? What criteria are to be used? How is the law (if there is one) to be enforced? Can we expect extra police powers to raid shops and homes because there is a possibility that (ill-defined) pornography is to be found there? Surely one does not have to have much knowledge of history to know where that sort of thing can lead.

Secondly, Blain and Hughes seem hopelessly ignorant of what is available in sex-shops and the like. Perhaps they will allow me to enlighten them? a) 'Girlie' magazines such as *Fiesta* and *Playboy*. These show almost entirely women with no clothes on. Harmless enough, or does the banning start here? b) Male Gay pornography. How does this fit in to Blain and Hughes' scheme of things? As a man, presumably I should feel humiliated by it. Sorry, but I don't. c) Magazines portraying people have sex – intercourse, oral sex etc. Given that these do not show acts of violence, and they do not, why should people take exception to them? Why should a photograph of a man and a woman having sexual intercourse be humilating to women and not to men? I don't follow. d) Violent pornography. And here we come to the heart of Blain and Hughes' argument. At first glance it seems a strong one. Violence is distasteful, many people would say, and censorship justified. Yet even here, on close examination, the issue is far from clear cut. First, the violence is obviously simulated, and the end result, frankly, utterly ludicrous. Second, and I can't emphasise this enough, the violence displayed is just as likely to be by women on men as the other way round. Again, as a man presumably I should feel humiliated and degraded by this. Well, I'm sorry, but I don't. I can't take it seriously enough. . .

. . . Aneurin Bevan once said - 'Why look at the crystal ball, when you can read the book?' There are in fact plenty of societies around which have just such laws as Blain and Hughes apparently favour. One such is on the other side of the Irish Sea, where a woman's naked breasts can never be revealed in published material. Another, until recently was Spain. Are these the sort of societies where Blain and Hughes want to live in? The fact is that heavy censorship of alleged pornography almost always goes hand in hand with other forms of sexual repression, to the great detriment of all women.

D.A. Rainbird

A REPLY

It was with sadness that I read the contribution from D.A. Rainbird.

Mr. Rainbird regurgitates the same old censorship story I have heard so often, usually in the context of racism – the type of blanket condemnation leads to the abhorment of what organisations like the NF say, alongside vociferous defence of their 'right' to say it. As feminists and socialists, we do not sweep aside the issue of censorship, but it seems to me that to condemn any sort of desire to control the publication and distribution of material that portrays and seeks to engender hatred, be it on the grounds of class, race or sex, harks back to the type of 19th century laissez-faire society that earlier socialist men and women fought long and hard to destroy.

Mr. Rainbird's trivialising description of what is actually on sale in sex establishments, leads me to conclude that he has never visited one. I say only that one of the most appalling, and personally devastating, examples of pornography I have ever read – the slow death of a woman submerged in a pool of leeches – I read in one of the 'harmless' 'girlie' magazines, that can be bought in W. H. Smiths' any day in the week. Other material on sale in these places defies description and I urge anyone in any doubt to go and see for themselves.

Mr. Rainbird speaks of tragedies, I think it a tragedy that such an apparently well-intentioned article, should have generated such an testerical attack – Mr. Rainbird must feel himself very threatened.

Sarah Lewis

OBJECTIVE VIEW

'To objectify a person is a crime against that person' – a statement with such all libertarian socialists must surely agree – or so I would have thought. An object is by definition passive; if it acts in any way it does so only as directed. An object is a piece of property to be used by the owner as he chooses. No socialist could ever accept the treatment of human beings as objects – or so I would have always assumed.

The capitalist objectifies the people, who becomes the 'labour force' to be used to his own financial advantage. Similarly men objectify women as sex objects to be used to provide pleasure/profit for men: As an object a woman should be pleasing to the eye, the sense of smell, the sense of touch. Her clothes must at all times meet with male approval by emphasising the sexual aspect of her body. Her face should be made up to signal her availability and, of course, the natural smell of her own body must be well camouflaged with liberal doses of perfume. Her skin should be soft – her legs and armpits shaven. In men's eyes, only as properly packaged sex objects can we consider ourselves to be 'real' women.

The process however does not end here. Women's bodies – as objects available for sex – are used to sell many products from motor cars to daily newspapers (yes, page 3 of the *Sun* is pornographic by the literal definition of the word). In pornographic magazines, films, and videos, women become things: things to be degraded, disfigured, mutilated, raped, murdered. Pornography is a vicious manifestation of the process by which men objectify women. It is feedback from pornography that supports, maintains and further fuels the process itself.

In whatever context, for whatever reason, to define a person as a 'thing' is to deny that person's humanity. No socialist could ever condone such a denial – or so I would have believed. However, an article in a recent copy of Merseyside Labour Briefing suggests that this is not necessarily so. The writer, a man, in his arguments in support of pornography, failed to realize that there can never be any grounds to justify the dehumanizing of any individual be it for profit or pleasure. It would seem that, all too often, male socialists forget ideals of human dignity/human rights when the humans concerned happen to be female.

Lynn Pharaoh

'Thatcher's Girls' reply to occupation of Soho

The following article is made up of extracts taken from an open letter to all women written in reply to the action of Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) and Pornography is Violence Against Women (PIVAW) in organising 2 weeks of action against pornography, including burning pornographic books and magazines and an 'occupation' of Soho (on May 28th).

In calling for the closing down of sex shops and massage parlours, and a clamp down on all pornography, and by attacking the sex industry in general, WAVAW and PIVAW have never made a distinction between the sex industry and the women who work in it, whose livelihood they are threatening.

POLICE THANK FEMINISTS FOR CLEANING UP THE STREET

We have already pointed out that in Canada the Chief of Police thanked anti-pornography crusaders from the women's movement for helping to clean up the streets. In Sweden, too, the authorities have publicly thanked 'Vigilantes' in the women's movement for helping to close down sex shops and nightclubs, forcing women back into the dole queue. One stripper's appraisal of the 'Vigilantes' attacks was "I imagine I shall be back in the dole queue before long".

In Kings Cross, Labour M.P. Frank Dobson and some of the right wing residents have called for a police crackdown against prostitute women, as though this could increase the safety of any woman in the area. The police have already told women that they are 'too busy' (arresting prostitute women) to spend time on protection – e.g. in response to the Kings Cross Women's Centre's reporting an arson attack on its building.

BLACK WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINE

Many of the women working in the sex industry are Black women. Because Black women have least access to money, those of us who are Black are most often forced into areas of the sex industry which are the most visible and open to police harassment – beginning



with soliciting on the street. This, combined with the fact of police racial and sexual harassment of Black women generally, means that we are on the front line against the police, and in the greatest danger when the police feel that prostitute women are isolated and they can move against us.

SEX AND MONEY

We have pointed to the government, whose economic crisis is forcing more women into prostitution at every level, as the biggest pimp. Lack of alternative jobs for women means more women are being forced onto the streets as the only way women can make enough money to live independently of families or individual men, to the point where newcomers coming down to London from the North, with its skyhigh unemployment levels, are known as 'Thatcher's Girls'. The connection between economic vulnerability and sexual vulnerability is evident for all to see.

The Police Bill now under discussion proposes to give the police wider powers to stop and search, invade people's homes looking for 'evidence', and hold people on any charge for up to 72 hours.

In this context, to be burning books and magazines – and calling by implication for censorship – is to line up with the right wing and the repressive forces in this society.

BASIC QUESTIONS

In attacking the sexual exploitation of women by the sex industry the questions are:

a) is the women's movement going to fight for more power for women, *including women in the sex industry*, (for example by the abolition of the prostitution laws) or more power for the police?

b) will the starting point be more sexual choices for all women or the imposition of sexual 'standards'?

c) are demands going to be made which bring women more choices, or are women in the sex industry to be blamed for violence against women, and hounded out of making a living?

d) will the actions women propose bring women together or drive them apart? In other words, are they going to build a movement or build a backlash?

Anne Neale
(for the English Collective of Prostitutes)

Copies of the complete letter are available from the Kings Cross Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St., WC1. (please enclose 20p in stamps)

Left must fight for gays

Campaign for Homosexual Equality and Labour Campaign for Gay Rights carried out a survey during the election of all Labour Party candidates, and the replies received reveal some very interesting things that people might wish to note, particularly during re-selection.

The main fudge seemed to be over the age of consent, with the following, who had bothered to reply, supporting a discriminatory age of consent of 18:

Palmer (Chelsea), Smith (Chipping Barnet), Brookes (Croydon South), Honeyball (Enfield Southgate), Graham (Edmonton), Kerr (Feltham), Powell (Fulham), Roberts (Hackney North), Cox (Tooting), Mikardo (Bow), Shepherd (Chingford), Nicholas (Mitcham and Morden), Dixon (Sutton) plus others such as Robin Cook, Neil Kinnock, Ron Brown and Joan Lestor.

There was also disquiet on Armed Forces and employment protection legislation.

With fudge and inequality becoming more acceptable the Left must ensure that next year's Party Conference commits the party to a full and positive position.

Defend the Kiltdale 7

It's nothing new to get the sack simply for being gay. Many will remember the case of Susan Shell, sacked by Barking Labour Council for being a lesbian in charge of children, and, of course, this is only the tip of the iceberg, but mass sackings of gays is something new. A Cheltenham computor games form, Kiltdale, drew up a 'hit-list' of its gay staff — on the orders of its straight (?) owner. They claim it was due to falling production but this was completely the opposite, and the same day as the sackings they applied to the Job Centre for four more staff. Other gay staff have been threatened and they have been told that joining the union (General and Municipal) means the sack.

A defence campaign is being organised by CHE and Gay Rights at Work with the full support of the GMWU branch who is taking Kiltdale to a tribunal. You can help by passing this motion: 'this branch/etc. condemns Kiltdale for sacking gay trade unionists and demands their unconditional reinstatement.'

★ Getting copies of petitions and Pink Postcards from Gay Rights at Work, 7 Pickwick Court, SE9 4SA.

★ Writing to trade papers and Atari/Commodore who use their games.

Kiltdales are at, Unit B, Liddington Estate, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos. (0242-517480).

Paul Canning
Norwood YS and Gay YS

Porn for sale—Porn for male .... some thoughts

by Alan F. Rippington
Hampstead and Highgate CLP

Many views have been aired over recent years concerning the exploitation and morality involved in the commercial marketing of sexually stimulating products -- whether these be people, illustrations of people, cosmetics, clothes and all sorts of paraphernalia concerned with eliciting sexual responsivity from oneself or ones present/potential bed-mate. Of course, it is not just sexual attractiveness or satisfaction that is being marketed but the promise of 'happiness' or inter-personal fulfilment in which sexual attraction/performance is over-emphasised as the vital quality of one's life and relationships. (One inflatable doll package has a heart shaped cut out.) Such an emphasis on sexuality is understandable in the context of young people discovering their maturing biological capabilities and pleasures -- but even in this there is a strong undercurrent of satisfying social relationships. Pornography abstracts the sexual and places it in a void that is divorced from the human life cycle.

Much of recent comment has been from the woman's point of view on women's place in the orgasmic marketplace. I'm attempting here to explore some ideas on sexually arousing material — pornography — as it relates to its major consumers —heterosexual men — though I believe the principles involved apply to all men of whatever sexual preference. In the main I limit my discussion to 'soft' porn 'cheesecake' — the major product.

My two major themes are: (l) that the consuming of the soft-porn by men inhibits the creation of mature personal relationships — and that this is explicable in a culture that operates a taboo on tenderness given to and received from men by women, and that suppresses intimate male sensuality in the cause of promoting purely genital pleasure/satisfaction, and (2) that public/popular porn, eg as in the *Sun*, performs a social function in reinforcing male identity as men — a social reassurance indicative of how relatively fragile male sexual identity can be in a time when a major definer of 'masculinity' ie the contrast of 'femininity' of women, is undergoing considerable change, and, additionally, homosexuality is gaining acceptance and more social prominence — increasing anxiety for the less than cast-iron men.



NOT PRISONERS OF BIOLOGICAL FORCES

My first point is that one of the reasons pornography exists has to do with the widely held notion that men possess an 'instinct' or 'urge' for sexual satisfaction that is biologically programmed and must therefore require release - by masturbation -if a woman is not available. In this situation pornography provides some learnt visual clues for sexual arousal. I maintain that this 'hydraulic' reservoir model - deriving from Freud - is completely erroneous. Men, and women, have a physiological potentiality that is shaped by the ideas and personal experiences of our biography as it is created within out culture. However, men, like women, are not prisoners of biological forces or cultural history. But to choose to reject such self-fulfilling prophesies requires that new ideals of sexual behaviour are necessary. This requires personal experimentation - with associated vulnerability to possible unwarranted embarrasment, anxiety, or ridicule - eg being called 'effeminate', 'passive' or being wrongly identified as gay.

In this respect pornography is reactionary in that it portrays fantasies of sexual relationships (models) that are devoid of sensitivity and sensuality and has no place for the erotic - eg the scents, sounds, secretions, tastes, sensations and sights of one's own and partner's bodies. 'Man' is portrayed as gaining pleasure/relief from 'Woman' - but this is not a relationship between people - it is rather the interaction of two mechanisms. Such an interaction is highly transient, lasting only the duration of the sexual performance. There is no place for joy, affection, fondness, or the more enduring qualities of trust, appreciation, concern, caring, reciprocity, the sharing of lives, or any qualities or behaviours that may be subsumed under the term 'loving'. Fathering does not exist and it is very rare to see a man, or woman, in a porn-mag actually smiling, and never laughing.

'SELF SUFFICIENCY'

Pornography, used as an aid to masturbation, encourages narcissism and notions of personal and sexual 'self-sufficiency' in men - the creating of sexual sociopathy. Though sexual self-pleasure is a valid activity, the mode of this and the situation in which this takes place are important in shaping expectations of what heterosexual activity is all about. Much masturbation takes place as an antidote to loneliness, depression and anxiety - but also operates to reinforce one's sexual identity as a sexually capable male when in isolation from women. However pornography is not very comprehensive in educating males as to their sexual role as men - bare breasts, open legs, grimaces and contorted postures are unrealistic and simplistic as cues for male sexual arousal, as are the associated paraphernalia of black undies, stocking tops and high heels. If a man masturbates with such items pictorially represented then chances are that he will in future find such items and female body parts stimulating - leading possibly to fetishism and partialism. (This is not that dissimilar from having an attraction to long or short haired women, bearded or shaven men.) Pornography, probably more so in the written form, can be seen as an inadequate form of sexual education about what is sexually exciting and how to do it. I maintain that sexual theatre - be it corsets and silk stockings, tattoos or chains, hairstyles or shaving are all valid for the people who enjoy them - provided one is alert to the fact that it is just a sort of theatre. All people are both sexual objects and sexual subjects but they should not be merely sexual commodities and sexual consumers.

All human behaviour is learnt in the social-cultural milieu of commodity Capitalism. Capitalism preys on our sexuality, like all other aspects of our lives, transforms it into commodities and sells it back to us - and in the process alienates and creates fear between men and women.

There is societal pressure on men to succeed in Capitalist economy in order to earn the reward of women's sexuality. There is pressure on men to be good sexual performers, and for women too. For the 'unsuccessful' porn is cheaper than a Porsche ... Or is it?



THREE LETTERS FROM MEN!

Sexist Advertising

Dear Comrade,

According to the August edition of *London Labour Briefing*, the theme of your next issue of the Street Life Supplement will concern pornography.

Over the last year or so, I have become accustomed to using public transport. It may be the novelty of the experience that is responsible for my registering the shock of such blatantly sexist forms of advertising as are manifested on the Underground. I know that I am not alone, for on one occasion the words 'Sexist Shit' had been written over a somewhat more blatant variation.

Might I therefore suggest that a campaign be set up by socialist women in order to examine and remedy the content of advertising displayed throughout the London Transport area. As you know, LT is under the direct control of the GLC and, whilst they may be experiencing some difficulties in gaining adequate advertising revenues due to the current Great Depression, I am sure that you and other socialist women should be able to make representations to them concerning the content of permissible advertising through LT establishments.

This could be achieved in possibly one or two ways:

(i) Organised groups of women (and men?) could conduct 'spot checks' of LT advertising content and notify the GLC of any considered unacceptable. The GLC would then undertake to order the removal of such advertising from LT establishments whilst simultaneously notifying the advertising agency AND CLIENT that the advertising has been withdrawn as indecent and offensive to public morality.

(ii) A regular Vetting Committee to be set up by the GLC for the purpose of granting prior approval for the content of advertising proposed for location within LT establishments. The Women's Committee to nominate representatives to the Vetting Committee.

If these proposals are implemented, then sexually offensive advertising will be highlighted and both advertising agencies and their clients will become more responsive to standards of advertising decency and fairness.

These proposals may not be exactly what you had in mind when contemplating the theme of pornography. It is my belief that the increasing public use of 'soft' pornography is very dangerous because it trivialises women, frustrates men, and opens up the way for more and more extreme versions of hard pornography. We are all adversely affected by any form of pornography, so let's remove this offensive and unnecessary form of exploitation from our lives.

Yours for Socialism,
John Clayton

Points on Supplement

Dear Briefing,

Having meant to write to you for some time can I take this opportunity to cover a couple of points at once.

In the last edition you had someone write about alcoholism. While not quite agreeing that 'drink is one of the main and pressing problems of this society', I do feel it is a growing problem that is normally ignored, or treated almost as a music hall joke. These problems are the ever-increasing number of young people that are displaying signs and symptoms of alcohol dependence; the number of isolated women who are turning towards drink; the changing drinking consumption patterns where more spirits are now being consumed; the prison revolving door where homeless alcoholics are placed in prison as opposed to decent accommodation or treatment. In short, there is a lack of concern with the problem, and in consequence a lack of not only effective treatment, but even places where treatment can be carried out.

In many ways I am pointing towards alcohol as a drug, which in many cases and people is exactly the situation. But this is really a problem for the left, who have traditionally been tolerant towards drugs. In the 1960s we even saw drugs mistakenly as some form of revolution in their taking. We forget that a docile, dependent, unconscious (in the sense of drugged) population is a good ingredient for capitalism to operate. Especially when that drug is a repeatable consumer item, where its tolerance level is low and increased amounts have to be taken, such as alcohol. We also forget that alcohol is a great capitalist enterprise. Five companies almost completely control its production, distribution and selling in the UK. Besides the profits for these companies the Treasury got in 1980 £3,000 million. How many war weapons did this buy, because it was definitely not spent on any form of alcoholic rehabilitation. While not completely condemning alcohol I do feel we should rethink our positions on drugs in general, and in particular on alcohol.

In the July edition you had an article by Bernard Misrahi on alternative lifestyles, or sex and the single man. In his view women should be responsible for, and responsive to, the demands of men in their sexuality and time. So this is an alternative? I thought this was what feminists have been fighting against for years.

Sincerely,
Michael Knight

Putting it Straight

Dear Comrade,

What is meant by the catch-phrase, 'Extra-Parliamentary Activities.' This is a phrase that is now being used to denigrate almost every action taken by groups outside Parliament. The Tories used it to good effect during the General Election campaign and, unfortunately, some of our own members followed suit.

Any Rally (even if its objects are opposed by Members of Parliament) is, by its very nature an 'Extra-Parliamentary Activity', inasmuch as its activity is out-side the Palace of Westminster.

Many of the things which today we take for granted were as a result of action taken outside Parliament. Trade Union organisation (although Tebbit is trying to re-write history), the Reform Bill and Votes for Women are but a few of the freedoms that, in the first instance, were won from outside Parliament.

As a result of the General Election, the fight against 'Tebbits' Law', the fight against increasing unemployment and the fight against the deployment of Nuclear Missiles will have to be undertaken by activities which may be considered 'Extra-Parliamentary'.

Another fight, which requires the active support of the general public, is the 'Save the GLC Campaign' – as well as the Government's general attack on the Metropolitan Authorities and local democracy. It will only be through agitation and demonstration can we harness support and, hopefully, persuade MPs as a result.

Of course, if we lived in a perfect world demonstrations and the like would be unnecessary, but we live in a most unfair and imperfect world and thus we act accordingly.

Yours fraternally,
Harry Kay.



From 'Give us a Smile' a 13 minute cartoon film about violence against women made by Leeds Animation Workshop and available as a postcard, distributed by Leeds Postcards (P O. Box 84, Leeds 3). 'Wish you were here', the first ever alternative/radical postcard, poster and badge fair will be held in London on Friday October 7th and Saturday October 8th 10-5 at the Africa Centre, 38 King Street WC2. It will be an ideal opportunity for Labour Party members who are producing leaflets and newspapers to get hold of good and effective visual material.

THE BRIGHTON CASE

One of the sickest aspects of the hysteria that has surrounded, and is still continuing, from the case of the gang-raped Brighton boy is the abuse of the boy himself by the media.

Many people were sickened by the treatment of the Ripper case, but this is amazing and sums up the pure profit workshop of Fleet Street. The press is part of the society responsible for the double standard towards sexuality that creates these very attacks.

On the same pages as 'You Scum' we saw photos of Karen or Jane when they were children and what they've grown up to be - women to be draped across papers for titilation and humiliation.

The same day as the Brighton case, a very similar case occurred to a Crawley girl - do we hear about that? The case of the Edinburgh woman who was brutally raped and murdered has received nothing like the same publicity. It seems clear that boys are of more value than girls!

GAYS LIVING IN FEAR

Brighton's gay population is now living in fear. It is not possible to walk down the prom without fear of assault. This was a very 'liberal' town, one of the 'gayest' in Britain, but this just shows how near the surface people's real attitudes are and that to be against discrimination is not enough. The press has spent years linking gays to 'child molesters' with the result that gays working with children, especially teachers, are liable to lose their jobs. We are all now 'outlaws'. That most attacks are by heterosexual men, and horror of horrors, in the home, is not reported - its not good copy.

Socialists have a duty to condemn *all* sexual attacks, and *defend* those sections of society under attack from capitalism. That means not getting caught up in the moral panic, and fighting back!

Paul Canning
Norwood YS and Gay YS

Who looks after the children?

The next issue of the Streetlife Supplement will be on the theme of childcare. We would welcome contributions from women and men on how they have dealt in their own lives with the caring of children -- as single parents, lesbians, heterosexual couples, in communal households etc.

And in the future -- should we be demanding state nurseries and childcare facilities? How can childcare be made compatible with equal employment opportunities for women and men? What about children's rights?

Contributions on these and any other issues should be sent to: Jane Stockton, 110 Agar Grove, NW1 by 10th October.

Streetlife Supplement Readers Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 20th October, 7.30 at County Hall.

Please come along and share your views if you have any comments, criticisms on this or any other issue of the Streetlife Supplement, or if you have any ideas on where we should be going from here! If you need help with childcare arrangements please contact Jane Stockton (110 Agar Grove, NW1) as far in advance as possible.

Next editorial board meetings:
Monday 26th September at 6.30pm
Monday 24th October at 6.30pm
Both at County Hall.

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LABOUR BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
No.1 October 1983

THERE IS A LEFT ALTERNATIVE!

KEN LIVINGSTONE

The rush to replace Michael Foot and Dennis Healey by the 'Haddock' team of Kinnock and Hattersley has confused the issues in the Labour Party, and it is vital at the Labour Conference and beyond for the left to state a clear alternative road for the Labour Party.

Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher have consistently fought the expulsions of 'Militant' and have argued against any retreat on the three main constitutional changes which the left has supported. They have fought strongly for unilatera ism, for Labour's Economic Policy and for withdrawal from the Common Market.

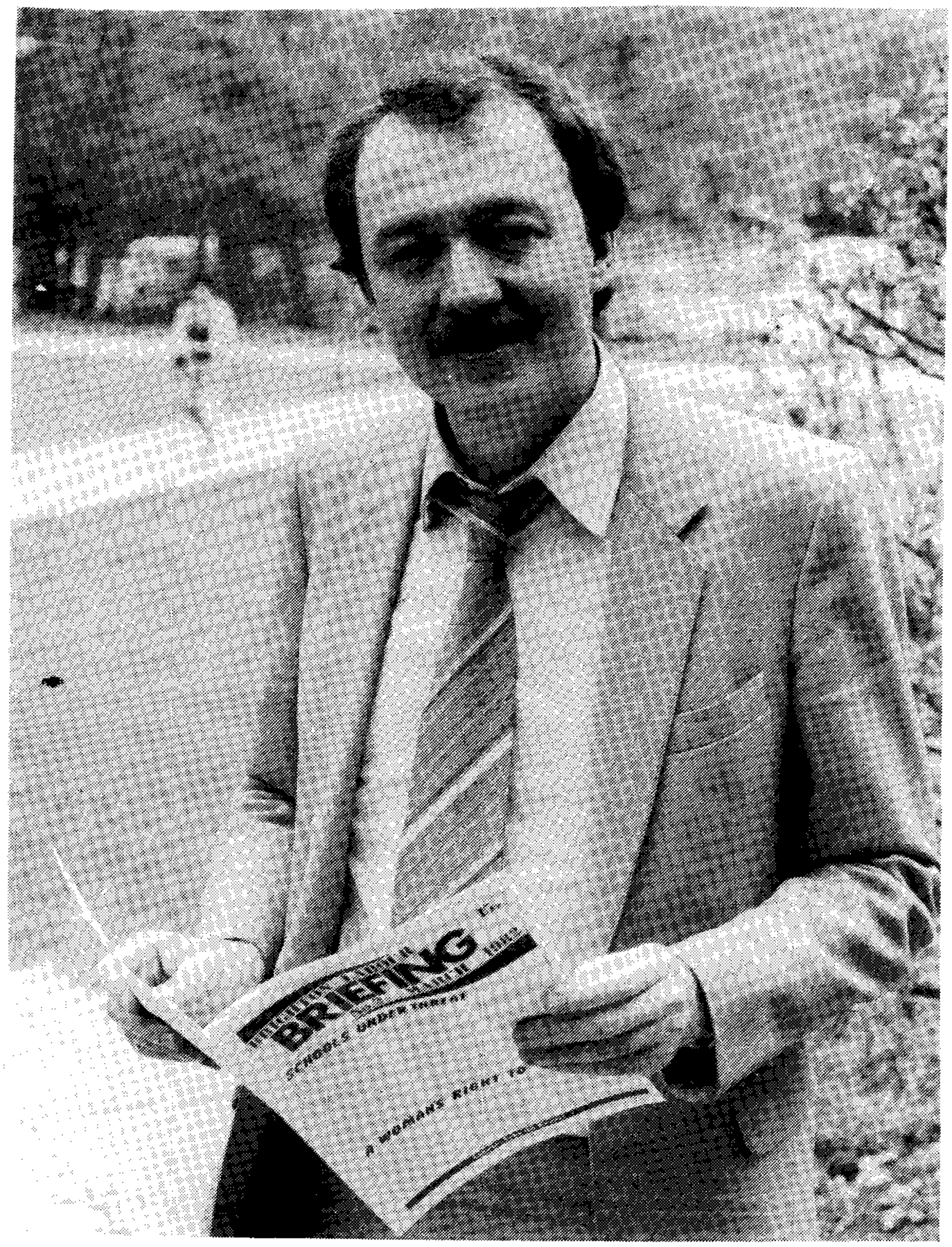
Kinnock and Hattersley both supported the expulsion of 'Militant'. Both refused to give support to those Labour councils prepared to resist the Tory laws against local authorities. Hattersley is clearly against Labour policy on the Common Market and Kinnock has shifted his position to indicate he no longer believes withdrawal is possible. A shift to the right on unilateralism is on the cards with Kinnock as leader unless a strong campaign in its defence is mounted.

Given these clear signs of confusion and an offensive to drive the Labour Party to the right — towards the policies of the Social Democratic Party — the left can and should develop its alternative.

First, we need to understand that in times of a recession as deep as this one, souped up social-democratic policies are not convincing or coherent. Potential Labour voters have a much sharper understanding of the economy than many activists realise. They could see that the weak and watered down policies which Shore presented were not going to work. People know that unless Labour tackles the existing concentration of wealth, funding our policies will involve tax increases and incomes restraint. Therefore, we have to clearly state that we will control the flow of capital, extend public ownership into the profitable sectors of the economy, and also base the state sector based on workers control and workers self management, getting away from the dreadful existing examples, unresponsive to consumers and responsible for the hostility to public enterprise that clearly exists.

On nuclear policy, our position on Polaris fell to bits because we had not worked out the concrete mechanism of how it was

(CONTINUED OVER)



WHO WE ARE

This is the first issue of the National Briefing Supplement. It is YOUR supplement. Its strengths will be your strengths, its weaknesses yours. Please accept this responsibility and treat these pages as a forum within which you or your local left or Briefing group can publish and exchange nationally significant information as your right. Above all, please help ensure that this is a real "Briefing" – i.e. a source of genuine INFORMATION through which we can all share one another's strengths and combine our forces on a national scale.

This supplement is edited by and accountable to a National Briefing Committee, elected by members of Briefing groups in London, East of London, Brighton, Merseyside, West Midlands, Hull, Stoke and Oxford, with Strathclyde, Manchester and other groups involved in discussions about whether to join in the network. In addition, we have support from a number of MPs, GLC and other councillors, trade union 'broad left' groups and many sections of the peace and women's movements. On the basis of present orders it looks as if the print-run for this issue will be 7,000 – considerably beyond our expectations. All this means that we are uniquely positioned to act as a leading co-ordinator for the activities of the left in the Labour Party as a whole.

We are making this step forward as part of our answer to the defeats which we on the left have suffered in the recent past. The shift to the right which Thatcher has imposed on British politics – the seal having been set by the TUC's disastrous right turn – has exposed some real inadequacies on the part of all of us in terms of our ability to "get the message across". Some are concluding that the answer is to backpeddle on socialism itself, and this is undoubtedly part of the explanation for Kinnock's rise. Our view is that the very worst thing possible for the Labour Party would be to compound the errors of the election campaign by making even more concessions to the politics of the gutter press editorial writers and the SDP. Labour would only end up where the TUC's right wing clearly want it to be — back in the arms of the Gang of Four. But while intransigence on our politics is essential, so too is flexibility in relation to the tactics we use. There is now an unprecedented recognition on the "hard left" that while ideological pluralism and debate are essential, we can simply no longer afford to allow our differences to obstruct the maximum possible unity in action on all those issues on which we are agreed. Above all, we have to unite around the task of turning the Labour Party left outward, taking it back into the unions and the mass movement, uniting with them in common struggle in order to turn our socialist ideals into a practical reality and give them meaning in the eyes of millions of people who have been repelled from the Labour Party by the vascillations and duplicity of successive right wing leaderships.

Briefing will help build a left which is both pluralist AND capable of united action. Its editorial board will be entrusted with far more than the responsiblity of producing a monthly supplement. Our task, in the months ahead, will be to bring together all those who seek to defend the gains of the last ten years in the Labour Party, and to help bring together all those who are serious in their determination to overturn the unaccountable powers that now dominate our society. A network of local Briefing groups, trade union broad lefts, campaigning bodies, feminist organisations, ethnic minority groups, revolutionary socialists and other tendencies, co-ordinated within the framework of Briefing on a national scale, will allow us all to retain our own autonomies and identities, while drawing on each other's strengths in the battles which lie ahead.

There IS a left alternative (CONTINUED)

to be done. The obvious weakness is getting rid of nuclear weapons while remaining in NATO, and we should take a leaf out of the book of the Swedish and Astrian social democracy on this.

We must deal with the deep current of blimpery and jingoism that feeds the Tory vote in the white working class. The Labour Party's failure to oppose the Falklands War was a crucial error, and we have paid the price; it stands in sharp contrast even to Gaitskell's opposition to the Suez war. Opposition would not have ensured victory, but could have countered the prevailing mood and maintained ideological bridgeheads which would have been invaluable later.

Ireland is a time bomb for Labour unless we change course: we have to go into an election pledged to withdrawal within two years.

Labour cannot transform society unless it builds a coalition which includes the skilled and unskilled, women, black people and the oppressed minorities. We cannot just co-opt the women's and other movements cynically to get votes out of them: we must listen to what they are saying and change our policies and our organisation accordingly.

Can Labour win on clear socialist policies? In fact it can only win on them. Labour's attempts at 'compromise' politics drove many Labour voters even to vote Tory where they saw 'firm leadership'. But one person, one ideal 'leader' can't do it on their own. We need the bulk of the leadership, a large chunk of the PLP, the unions and the activists moving together to go out, build extraparliamentary action and win a popular majority for our policies instead of accepting public opinion as it is conditioned by the media. The whole of the party leadership needs to be out of parliament, stomping up and down the country talking to ordinary people and trying to convince them. This is their real job. We cannot hope to win the ideological battle for these policies just in the space of an election campaign.

The left has too often been disunited, more concerned with attacking itself, and must now unite to turn the party outwards towards the unions, towards active involvement in the struggles of women, black people, the unemployed, as well as the sexually oppressed minorities.

This is a clear alternative to the road to adaptation to the SDP and the media; the time to begin fighting for it is now.

BRIEFING CONFERENCE MEETING

Organising the fightback
Conference fringe meeting
Queens Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton
Sunday 2nd October
Whenever conference session finishes
Speakers:
Ken Livingstone, GLC Leader
Merle Amory, Deputy Leader Brent Council
Colin Talbot, POEU Broad Left Steering Committee
Jane Stockton, Editor, London Briefing Streetlife Supplement
Ann Pettifor, Womens Action Committee
Chair: Jeremy Corbyn MP

No to ALL nukes

By Joy Hurcombe, Labour CND

WITH just weeks before Cruise arrives, disarmament will be one of the most vital issues facing the Labour Party at conference and in the months to come. Conference will be the party's first chance to reaffirm support for the total rejection of nuclear weapons and bases, whether British or American, from British soil or waters.

That's what we voted for last year when Composite 51 gained a massive 71 per cent vote. At last the grass roots — so we thought — had a victory which had to be recognised. A clear policy for unilateral nuclear disarmament would go into the election manifesto. The voters could choose the party pledged to refuse Cruise, cancel Trident, scrap all existing nukes and bases, and adopt a non-nuclear defence policy.

This policy was never put to the voters. The Campaign Document shredded the spirit of Composite 51 to pieces. The NEC wrote in sufficient contradictions to guarantee confusion at the General Election. In particular, the section on Polaris as a negotiating tool totally contradicted the meaning of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The election manifesto was only marginally better, but was still open to interpretation. Would we get rid of the weapons in a five year period of government, or begin discussions on their removal? Who would we discuss with? For how long?

During the election the wrecking continued. The Tories exploited the weakness of our campaign, and Callaghan came in on cue with the spectre of Britain about to be made defenceless if Labour scrapped Polaris.

This intervention, unchallenged by Foot, not only destroyed the fudge's credibility but prevented further serious discussion on the real issue of preparation for nuclear war.

The right wing, and some who call themselves leftwing, are questioning Labour's nuclear policy because they say it lost the election. But this ignores two crucial facts. First, the Tories did not win the nuclear argument; they got only 42 per cent of the vote. Second, the Labour Party not only failed to present its polices, but relied on the traditional techniques of persuasion instead of adopting extraparliamentary campaigning to *change* voters' minds against the pressure of the media. CND and the Greenham Common women have shown that public opinion *can* be changed — a majority of the population now oppose Cruise — by vigorous extraparliamentary campaigning. The Labour Party has to stick by its policies, put them across clearly, and change its methods of activity.

That is why Labour CND urges all delegates to support the resolution that clarify the position on Polaris and the bases, and once again state the need to abandon all nuclear weapons. The party has gained nothing from compromises, and must turn itself outward to the people. That is why our resolution calls for an anti-nuclear weapons campaign up and down the country.

Nothing but the full programme of nuclear disarmament will do this time. We need to attack the Thatcher government for their part in escalating the nuclear arms race. We have to organise the blacking of work on Trident. We must support the peace camps and attack the lies in the press. We have to block the operation of the new civil defence regulations. We have to convince people of the obscenity of the abuse of resources. We have to explain why socialists oppose the capitalist promotion of war technology. We can stop Cruise if the state feels threatened by public protest; it is not too late to begin.



CND "HUMAN CHAIN" RALLY AT PADWORTH COMMON

Photo: G.M.Cookson

Fringe Events

We have an opportunity to fight back at the start of the Labour Party conference in Brighton. Join the Labour CND demonstration on Sunday October 2nd. Assemble at the Level, Brighton, at 1.30pm. March to the sea front via the Brighton centre. Join the rally at 2.30pm Listen to Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Bob Cryer, Helen John, Annajoy David, Ken Cameron, Richard Balfe. Join the demand to fight for the party policy to scrap all nuclear weapons. We need massive support — it has to be the biggest peace demonstration that the Labour Party has even seen.

Labour Against the Witch-hunt
Labour Party Conference Fringe Meeting
Eric Heffer
Audrey Wise
Ken Livingstone
Reg Race
Jeremy Corbyn
Chair: Ernie Roberts

Saturday, October 1st, 6.30pm
Sallis Benney Hall, Brighton Polytechnic
(Grand Parade Site)
Opposite Royal Pavillion

Socialist Organiser
Labour Party Conference Fringe Meeting

Building Workplace Branches

Speakers include:
Alan Fraser (Chair of Basingstoke Postal Workers Labour Party Workplace Branch)
Rob Dawber (NUR. Sheffield Hallam CLP)

(Plenty of time for discussion of the practical experiences of setting up workplace branches.)
5.30pm Tuesday October 4th
King's Hotel, Brighton

Defend Labour's Links With The Unions

Eric Heffer

Labour's 1983 election defeat has provoked demands by some politically-motivated people for an end to the association between trade unions and the Labour Party. The political basis of this view is that because the Party now obtains fewer votes from the manual working class, and because the effect of affluence' has been to slowly destroy old class-based political loyalties, the Labour Party should ditch policies which are not 'liked' by the electorate – and that the trade unions should distance themselves further and further from the political wing of the movement.

This view is based on a disastrous misconception of working class politics. The projection of these views, by media pundits and right-wing trade union general secretaries alike, amount to an attempt to impose a second great wave of revisionism in the Party. The first wave of revisionism followed Labour's election defeat in 1959 and, although the formal attempt by Gaitskell to remove Clause 4 from the Party Constitution failed, the Labour Governments of the 1960s and 1970s followed staunchly revisionist, Croslandite policies which culminated in a Labour Government embracing monetarism as an act of policy.

The next attempt at revisionism will be based on two propos itions: first, ditch the policies on which we fought the 1983 election; and second, change the institutional link between the unions and the Party. Both propositions need to be resisted vigorously.

We need to resist the revisionist push on policy because what is needed is a better and clearer explanation of our socialist policies to the voters, and not the ditching of socialist commitments. Our aim must be to *make socialism popular* – and not to trim our views so that they can be approved by the leader writers of the *Sun* and *Daily Mail*.

We need to reaffirm our links with the trade unions because they are, in essence, the institutional link which binds the party of committed socialist activists to the organisations of the working class. These links also represent, for us, the close unity between political and industrial action: and who can doubt if trade unions disaffiliated from the Party, or ceased to play a significant part in its affairs, that it would be much harder to persuade working people that only political action could solve the problems of hospital closures, mass unemployment, and legislative attacks on trade union rights.

This issue is important, because some TUC leaders wish to distance themselves from the Party and depoliticise the trade unions, making them as much like American business unions as possible. These proposals, if they were ever implemented, would shore-up the Thatcher consensus and throw away for good the political bargaining power of the whole working class.

ESTABLISH WORKPLACE BRANCHES

We need a different, and very positive strategy. A strategy to establish workplace Labour Party branches everywhere, to strengthen the links between the Party and the trade unions at a time when the proposed Tebbit legislation may weaken these links. Second, we need mass campaigning action to win support for socialist ideas. Third, we must democratise the trade unions so that the members of unions feel that *they* can control their own organisations *and* influence the political process. Advance, not retreat, should be our political motto.

FOR HEFFER — AGAINST WITCH-HUNTS

Active participatory democracy is fundamentally crucial for feminism and socialism. Without the big D all else can become so many dandelion seeds in the wind. You can have the most perfect socialist politics (ie include troops out of Ireland now and lesbian liberation in your revolutionary programme) but if we do not organise democratically we won't get very far. Get democracy right and you are at least on the right -or rather left - road. Get democracy wrong and the only road you're on is a Stalinist one leading away from socialism.

NO ABSTAINING

There can be no abstaining on democracy. If you are not for it then you are against it - by definition. You can of course have a different interpretation of democracy - maybe one that argues that those with different ideas of socialism should not be in the same movement as you. Thus you will seek to exclude from the socialist movement those with whom you disagree. You will not try to convince them of your socialist ideas by means of debate, discussion and argument. No, you will simply say 'out' or 'off with their heads' or 'expel them!'. Even as you do so you abandon democracy. Picking people out for special treatment with regard to membership of a broad movement for socialism constitutes one thing and one thing only - victimisation on the basis of political beliefs. Such victimisation leads to witch-hunts and McCarthyism.

Witch-hunts are anti-feminist and anti-socialist. Every socialist worth the name should condemn such travesties of democracy.

The ONLY candidate in the Labour Party leadership elections who does unequivocably condemn witch-hunts and defend socialist democracy is Eric Heffer. ONLY Eric Heffer defends and fights for the basic democratic right of every socialist to be a member of the Labour Party. A vote for Heffer is a vote FOR democracy and AGAINST witch-hunts. The larger the Heffer vote the more democracy is strengthened.

Heffer not only defends internal party democracy, he also wishes to see it extended by reforms to democratise both the CLPs and the trade unions. In a recent article in New Left Review, Heffer writes: 'The members of the party must themselves discuss and decide the issues at stake...The key to ensuring that the Party becomes a vigorous force for socialist and working class politics is to encourage both individual constituency members and Labour supporters in the trade unions to play a full part in the life and campaigns of the Party'. (Socialists and the Labour Party, NLR 140, July-August 1983.)

It is well nigh a truism to say that the more democracy is extended the more it is strengthened and the better the terrain becomes for feminists and socialists to win their demands. And consequently the more democracy is strengthened the more the left is strengthened and the more the Labour Party becomes a mass campaigning party capable of truly representing the interests and needs of the working class and all oppressed groups in society.

But while we must support Heffer we can not do so uncritically. For while Heffer gets the basic principle of democracy right and on many policy issues he supports what the radical left stands for, on some other crucial policy areas he is quite frankly dismal. A recent article in Labour Herald put it quite succinctly: 'Heffer represents...a philosophy based on a narrow trade union view and focussed on the fate of the male manual worker in manufacturing industry...Therefore he has had...a blind spot where the rights of women and gays are concerned'. (Heffer is best for the left, by Matthew Warburton, Labour Herald 26/8/83.)



Feminism and socialism should be inseparable. Unfortunately many socialists advocate a socialism that is not inclusive of feminism, Heffer included. While he stated in his original campaign manifesto a commitment to women's rights, while the NLR article argues for a 'sympathetic consideration of the recent demand for women to elect their own representatives to the NEC' and for ensuring that the Labour Party is in touch with the women's movement, even this minimal and skimpy support for women's rights is such a recent (ie with leadership election campaign) development that only the

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE CANCELLED

Lesley Lee
East Lewisham CLP

1983 hasn't been a very good year for women in the Labour Party. The most "important" events of the year seem once again to be political battles totally dominated by men and played by their rules. Despite all the talk about positive discrimination we have, after the General Election, only 10 women Labour MPs. And despite a Manifesto which, while nowhere near perfect, had the best set of campaigning policies relevant to women that the Party has produced, many women activists in many Constituency Labour Parties felt totally cut off from the Election campaign. These policies were just not taken up and campaigned on by many local parties.

ALIENATION

Even more disturbing, I think, is the increasing alienation many women are feeling from the Left in the Party. Can you blame us, with a leadership Election where the only woman candidate is a right-winger opposed to positive discrimination, and where the Left's candidate for the leadership has an appalling record on women, particularly on abortion. Personally, I will be reluctantly supporting Heffer because of his opposition to the witch-hunt, which I see as potentially very threatening to women in the Party. But I do feel angry and betrayed (though not very surprised) that the men who seem to have naturally assumed "leadership" positions on the Left should foist on women a candidate who does not support a "woman's right to choose". I can't be the only woman who sees free abortion on demand as one of the most fundamental concerns, central to women's liberation. Women ought to give the Left fair warning. We've had enough of little elites and kitchen cabinets drawing up slates which time and time again do not represent women in the Party, yet whom we are blindly expected to support in the interests of unity.

But one of the biggest blows women in the Party have suffered this year is the cancellation of Women's Conference. It should have been held in Cardiff in June and would have been 3 hard days of political discussion and policy making. However, due to the General Election we are now being allotted one day of discussion and workshops in London ... but with no resolutions there will no real policy making. There were 203 resolutions originally submitted for the conference covering a tremendous range of subjects of concern to women, and illustrating the fact that as far as we are concerned "every issue is a women's issue". Subjects covered included public services, the NHS and related issues, taxation, education, sexual harassment, pornography, child care, housing, gay rights, and women's organisation.

DISASTER

I believe that the cancellation of this important conference is a disaster. Because, as has been shown time and time again, only the women in the Party can be trusted to raise the issues of most direct concern to women. If the Labour Party attached the importance it deserves to its women's sections, then however great the difficulties, we would have had a proper, policy making Women's Conference. Similarly, if the Party gave our Conference the status it deserved, then the policy passed there would be seriously considered and studied by all levels of the Party (Eric Heffer could learn a thing or two, for a start).

Reading the resolutions submitted for the Conference constantly reveals that women in the Party do have different insights and approaches to many issues, and that these do reflect the needs and concerns of working class women. Policy making at National Conference is still totally dominated by men, very few of whom have the sensitivity and imagination to realise that policies drawn up by white, middle class, middle aged, heterosexual men (even if they are socialists) will inevitably reflect the experience and interests of that group. Until women, blacks, gays, the disabled and other oppressed groups can play a full and active part in policy-making, their needs will too often be ignored. Which is why the Labour Party needs an effective Women's Conference.



FEMINISTS GAINING STRENGTH

Women's Conference have seen feminists within the Party gaining strength and making important gains on issues of policy and organisation. The cancellation of one Conference won't stop that inevitable advance, but it is a blow in a year that's already been pretty depressing. I am totally in favour of conferences and day-schools using the workshop format, which through informality and lack of bureaucracy can encourage more participation, and exchange of ideas, and be a basis for the real political education which is so lacking in the Labour movement.

However, in this instance, I feel that the day of workshops, (which is after all a form of organisation favoured by feminists) is being used to block our right to a 3 day policy making Conference. Obviously we must use the day in London as constructively as possible to meet, discuss and organise. But most importantly, we should use it to build links between women in the Party, when we'll have to try again to get for women their rightful share of power in the Party.

Continued:

most naive would not believe it was just a little opportunistic. We of course welcome Heffer's suddenly seeing at least some of the light, but I think we may be forgiven some cynicism. Thus while voting for Heffer we must still raise our criticisms, still push for his support for the right of women themselves to decide on abortion, still campaign for his full support for all the demands of the Women's Action Committee that will give women full democratic rights inside the party.

DIDN'T VOTE

Not very long ago, in a certain other leadership election, a Mr Kinnock argued for abstaining, because he couldn't wholeheartedly vote for any of the candidates. So he simply didn't vote. And he 'simply' let the right wing in and weakened the left terribly. Such may in fact have been his object. It cannot and must not become ours, by virtue of our lack of wholehearted support for Heffer. If we abstain we weaken the left and strengthen the right. To abstain is merely to vote for the witch-hunt inside the Labour Party.

Michael Meacher recently said that it is not a 'touchstone' of socialism not to be in favour of the reinstatement of the expelled Militant supporters. He did not elaborate and one is left to draw one's own conclusions about the implications for Meacher's own political positions of this statement. But one thing is crystal clear - Meacher is crucially wrong about the touchstone. Democracy is a touchstone for socialism. On the other hand Meacher, up until this ambiguous remark at least has opposed the Militant witch-hunt. And he has supported women's rights including all of WAC's demands. Again the same criteria that applied to Heffer must apply to Meacher. Not our ideal candidate, but the larger the Meacher vote the more the left is strengthened vis a vis the right. And Meacher has some chance of even winning.

But whoever wins the leadership elections we must not let up on campaigning to increase party democracy and in our complete opposition to any witch-hunts. Democracy must be our touchstone.

Sarah Roelofs
Islington South CLP

LOCAL DEMOCRACY: STOP TORY SLAUGHTER!

DAVID BLUNKETT
Leader of Sheffield City Council

THE CONSERVATIVE Government have become irritated not simply with those Labour authorities who have tried to protect their communities against the onslaught of economic policies which would have resulted in the wholesale destruction of major services, but with Socialist councils trying to offer an alternative way forward. Mrs. Thatcher and her Ministers are obesssed with removing even the least glimmer of opposition from councils up and down the country.

Many people have heard of the proposals to abolish the Metropolitan Counties and the Greater London Council whose services are generally described as 'strategic' rather than 'personal', transport, highways, the fire brigade and — so far as anyone controls them — the police outside London. The threat is to hand them over to Government Departments or specially created quangos, which has already happened to the Water Authorities throught the country.

Not so many people have heard about the immediate threat which is to the very basis of local democracy itself. The Government propose in the new session of Parliament to remove the power of selected local authorities to determine their own expenditure, quality of services and the local rate they can raise to cover their spending. The immediate task is to stop the legislation going through and to prevent the centralised state which Thatcher seeks to create.

The Government's proposals were spelt out in a consultative paper in August, when they made it clear that they would determine the rules and force 15 to 20 of the largest and most vocal Labour authorities in the country to comply. Government would have the power to order councils to slash their expenditure by tens of millions of pounds affecting the whole community. Whatever people voted for in the local election they would get Conservative Party policy. Freedom and democracy in between the spasms of General Elections would be removed. The Tories are concerned that examples of popular democratic socialist alternatives to the so-called 'monetarist' policies of relying on the market place to determine how our resources are used, should not stand in the way of the new order.

Government already has the power to take away grants from councils they don't like, and as well as removing a staggering 9 billion pounds from grants and subsidies, the Government have chosen to 'fine' local communities who did not go along with Tory Party policy, by taking millions of pounds from councils who were then forced to raise rates beyond what they would have needed to cope with inflation and vital expansion. The Government force up rates and then blame the councils for raising them. It is a brilliant piece of political sabotage against their opponents, which provides them with a scapegoat along with trade unions to blame for the impact of their own distastrous policies.

Action can and must be taken both to stop the legislation and to carefully inform and prepare those working in the public and private sectors and those living-in and receiving services from the community for the struggle ahead.



Local services under threat — children's library, Hackney.

CREDIT: David Hoffman

This year's Conference must give more attention to this critical issue than has previously been accorded to matters surrounding what many people see as the fringe ativities of Local Government. Thatcher knows better than many senior politicians in the Labour Party just how important a Socialist Local Government can be in rebuilding a Labour Party which originated not from Parliament but from the community itself. An understanding of how economic and industrial policies at local level as well as the provision of services can merge into a socialist alternative to Thatcherism is crucial to the future of the Labour Party and to a popular socialist revival.

If a genuine vision of the future which catches the imagination of the mass of the population is to be rooted in the real world where people work out their every day lives, then local, along with central, party policies have a crucial part to play. Contemplating our own navels or retreating into resolutions as a substitute for action can no longer be tolerated.

Wythenshawe

The Manchester Wythenshawe Labour Party has been closed by the NEC since April of this year. On September 9th the constituency officers reconvened the constituency management committee which voted unanimously to re-open their Labour Party to normal business and defy the NEC ban.

LP National Agent, David Hughes, has written to the constituency calling this meeting invalid and unconstitutional. After the meeting, councillor Alf Home, constituency chair, replied 'as far as we are concerned the Wythenshawe Party is now fully re-established'. He said it had sought expert legal advice before holding the meeting and been advised that it was quite in order, as the NEC appeared to have acted unconstitutionally in the first place. 'The NEC are there to uphold the constitution, not to change it at will', he said.

The drastic move by the NEC to close the constituency during a period that has included both the local elections and the General Election reflects its determination to continue its interference in the affairs of the Manchester City Labour Parties. In a long running row in Manchester City Council, right wing councillors and the NEC have combined in an attempt to maintain the slender control of the right on the Council. Councillors who have attempted to represent party policy of no cuts and rent rises (now increased to 33 following the May elections) have been expelled from the Labour Group by the NEC. Attempts by local parties and the District party to select councillors who represent the party manifesto, continually receive the attention and op-

Problems with Left Slates

Mandy Moore

It now looks likely that the left will be able to make significant gains in the NEC elections this year. This success (if it happens!) will be partly due to the fact that the left's votes will have been concentrated on narrow slates of candidates; a move specifically designed to help us win back control of the NEC. And of course we will all be delighted if this strategy is a success and the right are removed.

There are problems with slates however, which the left need to discuss before any further attempts are made in the future to continue this practice.

Firstly, who draws them up? At the beginning of 1982 the ill-fated Labour Liaison '82 attempted to draw up slates for the NEC in consultation with a wide range of left organisations. Whilst this consultation process wasn't perfect, it at least attempted to seek the widest possible consensus of opinion as to who should run; a number of left-wing contenders who had previously stood agreed not to stand so as not to split the vote; and we were told that although there were problems (particularly in the women's section) this was a one-off strategy and things would be different next year.

NO ATTEMPT AT CONSULTATION

Things <u>are</u> different this year. Slates have still been drawn up – but this time no attempt at consultation has taken place. There are a number of problems with this. If slates are to be drawn up then it must be with the widest possible consultation. This year a self-appointed elite, virtually all men, have decided who the left should vote for: names have been added to the list of existing left incumbents on the NEC to fill the vacancies left by the likely result in the leadership elections and the retirement of Frank Allaun. But, however worthy those comrades are whose names have been added, they have been put there without discussion on the left – and of course none of them are women.

In the past, a number of left-wingers have stood in the constituency section without a chance of winning – then they have steadily built up their votes over the years and have been in a position to fill any vacancies that have occurred. This is the way that Jo Richardson won her place on the NEC. However, if the present situation continues, no new comrades will have the chance to build their support among the rank and file in the constituencies and any new additions to the NEC will be at the behest of a small self appointed elite.



WOMEN'S SECTION

The problems with the women's section are worse. The women's organisation in the Party believes that the women's section should be elected by Women's Conference. At present the women's section is, in all but name, elected by the Trade Union block vote. Because of this, men on the left have, this year, indulged in 'fixing sessions' where women are traded and a slate drawn up which is acceptable to the men in the Trade Unions, but which bears no relation to the sort of slate women activists would want to see. Consequently women on the left feel forced into an impossible position either supporting a slate they do not believe in or boycotting it and being accused of threatening the left's chances of regaining the NEC.

It is obvious that we need to do all we can to ensure the election of a left-wing NEC. However this must not be at the expense of our principles. If we really do believe in democracy, accountability, positive action for women, then all these factors MUST be a part of any strategy we follow. Otherwise we will find in the future that left slates will **lack** credibility and therefore no chance of success.

heo

Empty Property Unit
Lunch-time (12.30)
Tuesday 4th October
Metropole Hotel, Brighton
THE WAY FORWARD FOR LABOUR — HOUSING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR
Valerie Karn
Chris Smith
Clive Betts
Allan Roberts (Chair)
Gerald Kaufman

Housing Emergency Office

party defies NEC closure

position of the NEC.

The Wythenshawe officers were sacked and the constituency closed by the NEC on April 27th, for refusing to restage its AGM. Since then the administration of the constituency has been placed in the hands of David Hughes and his representative Joe Payne. Previously Payne had been employed by the Wythenshawe constituency as their agent but was suspended - with pay - when he tried to go over the heads of the elected officers.

The alleged irregularities over the AGM originate from USDAW delegate Pat Jones, a noted right winger. At the AGM, Agent Payne, no less, checked the records and found that Jones' papers confirming he was a delegate had not come through and ruled he was not eligible to vote. A similar ruling was made on AUEW delegate Barday Patois, who has never challenged this ruling and has no complaints. Nevertheless, the NEC have upheld the allegations of one person, Pat Jones.

Meanwhile, in the Woodhouse Park Ward, the local Party had selected Frank Booth over a sitting right winger to stand as councillor in the May elections. Disgruntled the right contacted Hughes alleging the now familiar 'irregularities'. Hughes contacted Payne at the beginning of April and instructed him, against the wishes of the Ward and CLP Executive to organise a new selection meeting. When Payne attempted to go ahead he was suspended on full pay by the CLP. The NEC on April 27th which closed the constituency, reinstated Payne and has since taken over responsibility for his pay.

The ludicrous situation now is that the suspended Joe Payne, who was responsible for the administration of the AGM, is now solely responsible for the whole of the constituency under David Hughes' instructions, while the rest of the constituency has been closed down.

For Alf Home, 'the fight for Wythenshawe is vital if the witchhunt in the party as a whole is to be stopped'. The reconvened GMC has unanimously agreed to lobby the LP conference at Brighton. They will be asking conference to overturn the NEC decision. Councillor Home will also be addressing a fringe meeting organised by Labour Against the Witchhunt. The Manchester City Party has called for the sacking of David Hughes for his part in the whole affair.

DEFEND THE GLC

By Valerie Wise,
Chair GLC Women's Committee

Exactly two years ago I wrote an article for London Labour Briefing with the same title: 'Defend the GLC', I wrote then that the GLC was under attack from both the press and the Tory Government. What's new?

The attack on the GLC has intensified. The Conservative Government has a manifesto commitment to abolish the GLC and the Metropolitan County Councils.

It is no accident that the Tories want to get rid of the GLC, as it has been one of the main areas of opposition to the Tory Government since May 1981. Let's not forget that the Tories set it up in the first place in 1963 because they wanted to get rid of the London County Council which was always held by Labour. The Tories thought the GLC would have a permanent Tory majority. This hasn't been the case and the GLC has swung back and forth between Labour and Conservative.

VITAL WORK

Since the present administration led by Ken Livingstone was elected we have seen for the first time how the GLC should be used. The GLC has a good record and carries out important, indeed vital, work.

- ***Transport*** *– the GLC has successfully cut fares on London Transport again in spite of its first fares defeat by the Law Lords. Even that defeat was important in showing people how the law could be used to prevent an elected Council from carrying out an important promise to help the majority of people through lower fares and better services. Now the GLC is continuing to use its powers to influence transport policy for the benefit of Londoners.*
- ***Leisure, Culture and Sport*** *– the GLC in making these more accessible to Londoners.*
- ***Housing*** *– the GLC runs the largest housing development and modernisation programme in the country.*
- ***Safety*** *– the GLC has built the Thames Barrier to protect London from flood devastation. It has one of the finest fire services in the world, and it is responsible for London's pollution control. Its Police Committee campaigns for the police to be accountable to the local community. A wish for genuine law and order is felt by many people and is perfectly sensible. The Tories distort it to pave the way for 'law and order' which is repressive instead of protective. The GLC Police Committee shows the way to a genuine constructive police policy.*
- ***Employment*** *– the GLC has established the Greater London Enterprise Board to provide finance to new and existing enterprises. It has also set up the Greater London Training Board.*
- ***Discrimination*** *– the GLC was the first local authority in the country to set up a Women's Committee to promote the interests of women in London. It also has an Ethnic Minorities Committee which is actively promoting equal opportunities and good relations by combatting racism in London.*
- ***Planning*** *– the GLC is the overall planning authority in London, and tries to put the needs of people first.*
- ***Voluntary Sector*** *– the Tories talk about 'volunteers' as part of their retreat to Victorian ways, either charitable crumbs or exploiting good hearted people instead of providing proper community services. The GLC, in contrast, genuinely helps many groups of people engaged in self-help, mutual help, and community service and builds a bridge between local government and socially-responsible citizens.*

London will be the only capital in the western world not to have an elected Council. Many Londoners no doubt think that they will save an enormous amount of money if the GLC is abolished. This is a myth.



Many of the services the GLC provides will still have to be provided on a London-wide basis. You can't run a public transport system borough by borough, or a fire service. Sometimes things done in one area (like the Thames Barrier) benefit in a very wide area. And so on. There is no administrative logic to the Government proposals.

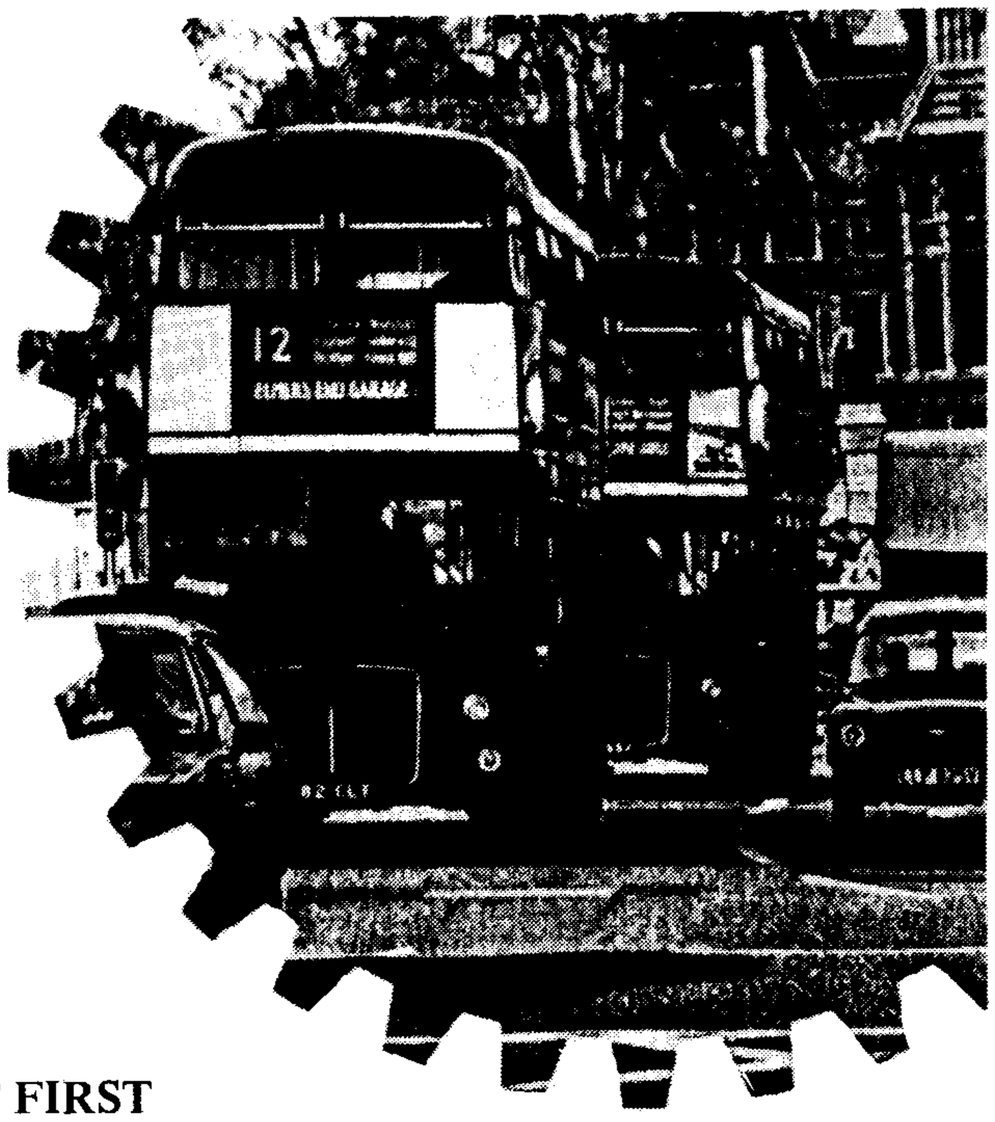
The logic is entirely political. They will set up undemocratic and unaccountable quangos. Londoners will still have to pay out – but they will be paying for poorer services over which they have ceased to have influence or control through the ballot box.

RE-DISTRIBUTING WEALTH

Although Labour did not set up the GLC in the first place, we now have an excellent mechanism for re-distributing wealth. The great part of our rate income is from commercial properties especially in the City and Westminster. We are using those rates for the benefit of people in London who need them. The City, the banks, the multi-nationals, the big hotels and the huge shopping complexes object to paying rates which are then spent on public services to which they are opposed. And in many cases rates are the only non-avoidable and non-evadable taxes, in fact the only taxes they pay! Let's not forget that these people are the bankers for the Tory Party.

The needs of Greater London have to a large extent been created by the City itself, which needs a skilled, educated workforce that can get to work. This need can be most *sensibly* met by a good public transport system, good schools and decent housing. But the City and the Tories reckon that it can be most *profitably* met by forcing each individual to make private provision through the private sector.

A third of the GLC rate borne expenditure goes on its historical debt. Presumably this will still have to be paid – unless the Tory Government adopts GLC Labour Group policy to nationalise the banks and annul the housing debt! Otherwise the money will still need to be paid by Londoners.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT FIRST

Perhaps surprisingly the Government has chosen to have its first battle on our strongest ground -- London Transport. A White Paper has been produced which proposes to remove London Transport from the GLC by the summer of 1984. The Government proposes to set up a new quango, the London (Regional) Transport, which will be totally unaccountable to the people of London. It is extremely likely that fares will rise, services will deteriorate and free fares for the elderly disappear.

Ironically, if the Government goes ahead with this intention to remove London Transport from the GLC next summer and pass responsibility for providing free fares for the elderly to the Boroughs, it will be the Tory Borough of Bromley (of Law Lords fame) which will face the biggest financial burden, as so many elderly people live in their area. Of course, like other Tory areas they may decide not to give this help to elderly people!

The Tories have good political reasons for their axe. A government which is sweeping away all guaranteed standards, both in terms of levels of services and the pay and conditions of the people working in them, cannot afford to have important centres of elected power like the GLC standing out against them.

London has equally good political reasons for defending the GLC. The difference is that these coincide with the interests of ordinary Londoners – whereas the Tories want to clear the way for a demolition job on public services.

There are many pressures and problems faced by elected Councils, especially facing a Tory Government for whom no holds are barred, a hostile and distorting press, and a collapsing economy. The GLC is certainly not perfect (and Councillors are very aware of this!) but it is a fighting authority, trying to protect old ground and break new ground, trying to provide services and mobilise people, trying to keep faith with its voters in the face of unprecedented attacks.

The ferocity of the Tory attack must be out-done by the passion and determination of the Labour defence. What will you do to help?

ACTION

The GLC is running its own campaign. It has produced fact sheets, a leaflet and a booklet on what the GLC does; Fringe meetings are taking place at all the Party Conferences; each committee is also doing things.

However this is not sufficient. The Labour Movement must be fully involved in campaigning.

- *Local Labour Parties and trade union branches should organise meetings, leaflets, petitions etc. in local areas.*
- *Gain support for resolutions at Labour Party Conference.*
- *Demand that the NEC and the Parliamentary Leadership give a lead and show their full support for the retention of the GLC.*
- *Write to your MP (of whatever Party – even some Tories are worried by Government intentions).*
- *Talk to your friends, workmates, neighbours.*
- *Write to your local newspapers defending the GLC.*

Everyone can do something to help the campaign.

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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

GUATEMALA
The August Coup

The recent coup has brought Guatemala out of media obscurity. In the last two years, what sparse comment there has been has concentrated on the eccentricities of the now deposed President, General Rios Montt and his espousal of the weird Fundamentalist Californian sect, El Verbo (The Word). His major claim to eccentricity must be his propensity for pious moralistic, 'Christian' statements, whilst presiding over the systematic and brutal massacre of some 10,000 Indian peasants and the displacement of some million more; making it the bloodiest and least reported 18 months in an already bloody history.

This history is long. When speaking of the struggle for freedom going on in Central America, we would do well to remember the last 20 years of guerilla activity in Guatemala, and the present massive involvement of the Indian peasants in this struggle. When speaking of US intervention in Central America, we would do well to remember that since the CIA backed coup that displaced the democratic reformist government in 1954, the Guatemalan army has received the most sustained and concentrated military aid and training from the US, of any army in the region.

MASSACRES OF ENTIRE INDIAN COMMUNITIES

Many counter-insurgency methods now common in the rest of Latin America, first appeared in Guatemala in the sixties. Death-squads and disappearances have taken their toll of more than one generation, and napalm was used in a massive and temporarily successful campaign against guerillas between 1966 and 1968. The massacres of entire Indian communities and the creation of 'model' villages/internment camps, now put these methods in the shade.

It is unlikely that the poor and oppressed can expect anything different from General Mejia, the new President, who has said that the counter-insurgency campaign will continue, and is quoted as saying, that he'd like to see the word 'Indian' eliminated from the Guatemalen dictionary. However what is significant about the coup, is that Guatemala has now entered explicitly into the arena of US policies in the region. Before making any comments on his policies for his own people, General Mejia launched into an attack of the Nicaraguan government, criticised the Contadora Group (Venezuala, Colombia, Mexico and Panama) who are trying to promote negotiations; and gave his full support to US intervention in the Region. In the light of the known expertise and experience of the Guatemalan army (the largest and most efficient in Central America) his offer to train El Salvadorian troops in counter-insurgency techniques, could provide a serious alternative to the direct increase in US military involvement in El Salvador, which is so unpopular with the American Electorate.

US INVOLVEMENT

The circumstances of the coup further confirm its significance to US policy and their direct involvement in it. One week before, Mejia went to Honduras and met with the Honduran and El Salvadorian Chief of Staff on the US aircraft carrier, The Ranger which now lies off the Honduran coast. At the scene of the coup the US Military Attache was seen complete with walkie talkie dodging out of the sight of the TV cameras.

These details tell us nothing new about US intention in the area, but the further consolidation of links between repressive regimes who would previously be counted on to squabble, can only bode ill for the freedom struggles of their people.

Frieda Schicker

Anybody interested in solidarity work on Guatemala, or any information please contact

The Guatemala Working Group
c/o LAB
1 Amwell St
London WC1

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL

Labour Party Conference – after the leadership elections

Debate on international issues, and recognition of the importance of international solidarity with fellow socialists, is deplorably limited at Labour Party Conference.

Last year in an attempt to redress this situation the London Region Co-op Political Committee joined with eighteen solidarity campaigns and human rights groups in presenting an international rally and highly successful social evening.

This year the Campaigns are providing delegates and visitors an opportunity to relax after the leadership elections on Sunday night. Live entertainment from Chile, Southern Africa, Middle East and the Phillipines will be backed up by a Carribean disco and a late bar until 1am.

Admission is £1 at the door, and the social will be underway as soon as conference ends at the Sussex Room, Bedford Hotel (3 minutes along the front, past the Metropole).

Jerry Hughes



Relatives and friends of prisoners on trial for their lives wait outside the court building

TURKISH TRIALS • Eyewitness • Report

JEREMY CORBYN, MP for Islington North, visited Turkey earlier this month. His constituency includes nearly ten thousand Turkish people, and his visit was fulfilling an election pledge. His overriding emotion immediately after the visit was shock, despite having some knowledge of the conditions in Turkey before going. Next month Jeremy's full report of the delegation will be printed.

Whilst there the delegation witnessed the trials of Dev Yol in Ankara after circumventing various bureaucratic and practical obstacles laid down by the Turkish regime. Jeremy reports:

"It takes place in a military camp in Ankara, with extensive guarding and registering. When were arrived we were then accompanied to a former sports hall that had been converted for the trial.

Outside, in a dusty courtyard, were soldiers, all armed and all continually directing the few relatives who were present; they all tried hard to stop our delegation talking to them. Inside the building the sight was incredible: two hundred and five men, all young, sitting on benches in civilian clothes but shaved heads, surrounded by soldiers. Sitting on the front row were thirteen young women prisoners, also wearing civilian clothes. All the accused were surrounded by a steel fence. At the back, in a sort of grandstand, were no more than a hundred families, who were also closely guarded.

Apart from us the press benches were empty, and the lawyers' benches, totally separate from the prisoners, contained just two people.

On a huge dais at the front sat seven military officers, all wearing uniform and a high collared cloak. One of them was apparently the prosecutor, but it was difficult to distinguish his presence from that of the judges.

The guard was changed every twenty minutes, with a very intimidating means of marching soldiers in and then standing double guard until positions had been doubled, and then marching the previous guard out. Any defendant wishing to go to the toilet has to be accompanied by a soldier.

All of the defendants had been in prison for about three years, and some of them were only aged eighteen, which means that at the time of arrest they were aged fifteen. As the prosecutor read out his charges in laborious detail the defendant concerned was then ordered to the dock to give his response. (The women were not called whilst we were there). In all cases they denied the charges, and mostly stated that they had been tortured. All said that the statements were obtained under duress and in some cases that they had signed them whilst blindfolded.

It is quite clear that none of the defendants ever had free access to lawyers, that they were not allowed private visits, and that they had been subject to torture. We met people who told us the most horrifying accounts of being dragged from their homes at night in mid-winter without proper clothes on; torture was a wide variety of vile methods but included cold water, keeping awake under questioning, electric shock and hitting with sand bags. The ever-present threat of harming relatives was also frequently used."

Elections on November 6 are being presented as a return to democracy in Turkey. The repression and total lack of any form of justice in the country preclude any free elections and only the sham of democracy can result from these. The elections must be exposed as another manoeuvre to prop up the unacceptable regime of that country.

NICARAGUA NEEDS OUR HELP

By JEREMY CORBYN, M.P.

Nicaragua is facing the classic strangulation of its liberation that all third world countries face when they try to unshackle themselves from western domination. As a strategically important state in Central America it has always suffered from American incursions more than most. For the first thirty years of this century US marines were seldom out of the country. In 1933 the United States, tired of fighting an endless guerilla war, installed the Samoza family in power as dictators and gave them unremitting support for the next forty-six years.

The heroism of the followers of Sandino in taking to the hills and fighting for the liberation of Nicaragua during this time lives in the folklore, lives and culture of every Nicaraguan. The dream of Sandino of Nicaragua free from the domination of American money was not to be realised for another forty-six years when the latter-day followers of Sandino led the triumphant Sandinista forces into Managua and the disgraced Somoza family, having adopted a scorched earth policy against their own people, decamped to the welcoming arms of the Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner – with all the country's money and a sixty-five million dollar loan that the US had thoughtfully provided through the World Bank.



Sandinista rally in Managua

Incredible Changes

Since 1979 the changes in life in Nicaragua are quite incredible. With tears in their eyes very poor people told me that they had been to see a doctor and that their children visited the Health Centre regularly to be checked. Until 1979 the very idea of ever being able to visit a Doctor was hardly a pipe dream for most people.

To be guaranteed food every month, for every family is the greatest liberation of all. The threat of hunger is no longer a pall draped over the poor masses of the people and the literacy and education programmes mean real liberation. Four years ago fifty-five per cent of the people were illiterate; the current figure of twelve per cent is the second lowest (to Cuba) in the whole of Latin America. Yet, all these achievements, and many many more are under threat at the present from the very forces that were so soundly rejected by the people in 1979.

Daily Threatened With Invasion

This small country of less than three million people, who have generously honoured all Samoza's debts to the IMF and World Bank, and are trying to give a good standard of living to all, are daily threatened with invasion. American ships are steaming along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Nicaragua, 6,500 US ground forces are on 'exercises' in nearby Honduras, and American-equipped ex-Samoza guards make nightly raids into Nicaragua from the comfort of their bases in Honduras and Costa Rica. The ever present military threat means that the whole country has to be on a war footing, and the 'CONTRA' forces managed an abortive bombing raid over the airport in Managua, at a time when it was packed with people.

To follow up their military threats the United States Government are mounting and directing an economic blockade of the country. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, who quite happily poured good money after bad in Samoza's day, are now refusing loans on the insistence of the U.S.A., with the willing support of the British representatives. This is then backed up by a refusal of credits from private banks and large trading companies.

Shortages exist in Nicaragua. Everybody is eating and for most of the people they have never known such living standards or security, yet the blockade means that medicines are difficult to obtain, and petrol is rationed. Lack of spare parts for vehicles mean that hundreds of buses are laid up. Paper is a valuable commodity and precious foreign exchange is needed to help finance many of the development projects.

Genuine Liberation

The real reason why the USA are trying to strangle Nicaragua is because the White House cannot allow the example of genuine liberation to become the inspiration and example that it is to millions in Latin America. They are obsessed with the Monroe Doctrine which, they believe, entitles them to enslave everybody south of the Rio Grande; yet they know that any serious attempt at invasion will be met with opposition that will make the Vietnam parallel a frightening reality. The people of Nicaragua are everywhere painting slogans on the walls and on their houses, 'Todos las Armas Al Pueblo', they are defending their revolution and their liberation, and they are also building a society free to organise and the Council of State, (a fifty-one member body of popular organisations), have just approved a law on political parties and are preparing the details for future elected assemblies. Something the people of Nicaragua have never known before.

Any developing country has terrible problems. To change the domination of five generations of American Bankers in a few years would be a remarkable achievement in itself, but to do this in the face of blockade and military invasion is to be saluted.

The country's economic development is under threat from the blockade. The Sandanista Government has succeeded in opening a thermal power station to reduce the reliance on imported oil, they are developing a new railway system, and trying to execute the hundred year old dream of a coast to coast railway. In Britain we have railway engineering workers being made redundant from making the very equipment that the Nicaraguans need – yet for Mrs. Thatcher the slavish following of the USA is more important than assisting development in one of the poorest parts of Central America.

Nicaragua needs our help, not our charity, and the poorest people we spoke to said "tell your friends what we are doing, tell the USA to leave us alone and let us liberate ourselves from their domination".

Ireland — "to the centre of political debate"

Sarah Roelofs, Islington South CLP

'The time has come when British withdrawal from Northern Ireland must be moved to the centre of the political debate . For too long those who have so courageously advocated it have been denounced as if they supported terrorism.

Yet it must be obvious to everybody that the present policy of military repression has failed, is failing, has no prospect of success and in so far as it is intended to enforce partition, does not deserve to succeed.' Tony Benn writing in the *Guardian*, July 1983.

Benn went on to argue for a date to be set for British withdrawal — *'not more than two or three years ahead'* — and for a UN peace keeping force to replace British troops and *'sustain law and order until such time as the new government could assume that responsibility.'*

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE

That the public debate on Ireland has ever come as far as a leading British politician calling for British troop withdrawal in a major 'serious' Fleet Street daily, is in itself a significant political advance. But a quick and prompt withdrawal is vitally important — every *day* it is delayed is a day's more preparation for Loyalist shock troops. Two to three *years* for troop withdrawal would be two to three years too long. And proposing UN troop intervention shows a blind spot about the real role that such 'peacekeeping' forces play. After all the British troops themselves were originally sent in to 'keep the peace' and the current international peacekeeping force in the Lebanon aren't making such a successful job of it!

In a letter to the *Guardian* on the 29th on July, Niall Power, Secretary of the Labour Committee on Ireland, asked the pertinent question — 'why hand over to a Northern Ireland government? Sectarianism is intrinsically part of the "Ulster" statelet, its borders being drawn on the pure basis of religious head count. Was it not Tony Benn who called partition a 'crime against the Irish people"?'.

But together with Livingstone's trail blazing efforts, Benn's article was another major breakthrough in the wall of silence on Ireland. In Northern Ireland itself there have also been major political advances with Sinn Fein's electoral successes and involvement in community politics. The powers that be, the British state led by Thatcher & Co., deeply appreciate these advances and have redirected their considerable energies from Prior's pathetic Assembly to something altogether more fruitful. An old strategy — criminalisation — has spawned a new tactic — supergrasses. Once the British sought to criminalise the political prisoners, now they seek to do the same to Sinn Fein.

MOVE QUICKLY

British socialists need to move quickly to defend the gains that have been made on both sides of the Irish sea. This means organising to defend *civil liberties* without placing conditions on those who will agree to support us in defence of these basic freedoms:

1. Free speech on Ireland — building support for the right of Sinn Fein members to come to Britain to speak directly to British people.

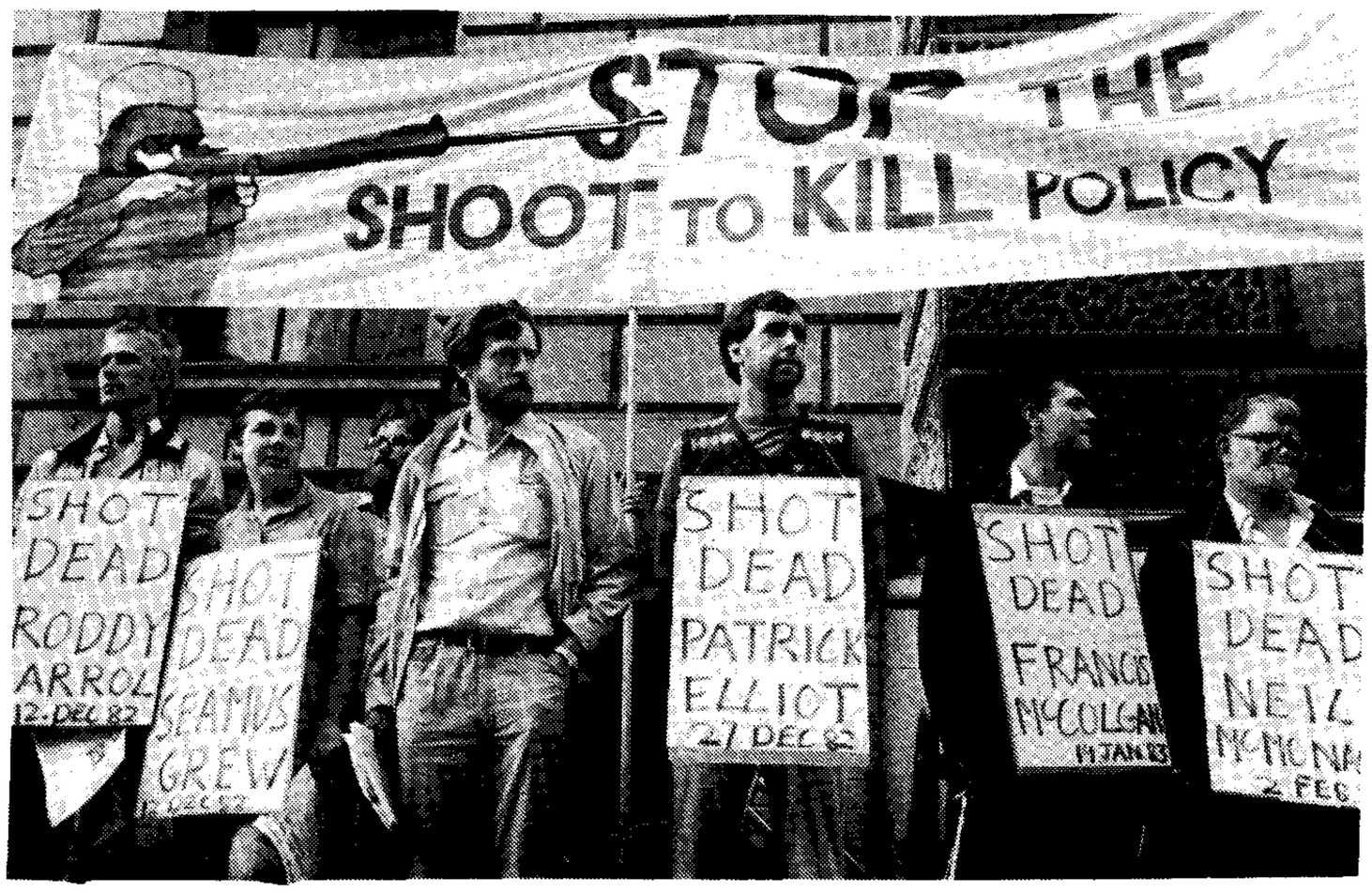
2. Repeal the PTA — this act, which no less a person than Roy Jenkins once described as 'draconian', is frequently used to prevent Irish people coming in to Britain to address meetings here.

3. Stop the strip searches — the sexual harassment of women prisoners in Armagh by means of petty strip searching.

4. End the supergrass trials — they are unlawful and are even further discrediting a judicial' system that is already in considerable disrepute.

In the Labour Party we particularly need to increase campaigning activity against the sectarian notion of 'majority' contained in the gerry mandered 6 County state and end the Labour Party's (fuzzy though it may sometimes be) support for the Unionist veto.

All this activity will serve to bring Ireland into the political limelight where it belongs and take us nearer our fundamental aim of unconditional British withdrawal.



photograph: Nick Oakes (Photon)

Above: Jeremy Corbyn MP with others on the picket on 31st August.

Jeremy Corbyn M.P. condemned the shoot-to-kill policy of crown forces in northern Ireland when speaking on a picket of Jim Prior's office in Westminster. The picket was called by the Troops Out Movement to publicise the shoot-to-kill policy and to call for charges to be brought against those responsible for the killings of 12 unarmed Civilians since November 1982.

Speaking 'with the mandate of my Islington North Constituency whose large Irish population elected me with a clear Troops Out Ticket', Jeremy Corbyn contrasted the widespread condemnation that followed the murder of Martin Malone on 30 July with the inactivity of the R.U.C. — 'One month later no-one has been charged with Malone's Death, despite the presence of several eyewitnesses'.

Also supporting the picket were Harry Cohen (Leyton MP), Ernie Roberts (Hackney North MP), Tony Banks (Newham North-West MP), Alf Lomas (London North-East MEP), Ken Livingstone (GLC Leader). Islington borough council, in line with its policy on Ireland, supported the picket in a letter from the chief whip.

ABORTION REFERENDUM IN IRISH REPUBLIC — The 2:1 majority in support of an amendment to the Southern Irish Constitution to completely and utterly and forever outlaw abortion is an awful defeat for women's rights. Many more Irish women will now be forced to travel to Britain for abortions or recourse to the backstreets. There are some glimmers of light in this gloom contained in the voting figures. The turnout was extremely low with only just *over half of the electorate bothering to vote at all. And only 35.7% of the electorate voted in support of the amendment. The problem was that only 17.6% voted against it. However, the Anti-Amendment Campaign is fighting on and has pledged itself to defend contraceptive facilities and family planning clinics should the victors in this unrepresentative result decide to turn their mysoginist attention to such services.*



INDUSTRIAL LABOUR BRIEFING

Women In Telecom

It is nine years since British Telecom declared its policy of Equal Opportunity. It came with the passing of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts in the early 70s. But, as the trade union movement has recognised, there has been little improvement in the **position of women in the workforce. That's why since 1980 the TUC has called for Positive Action.**

Women in Telecom was established in 1981 and has fought for women's issues to be a key part of the union's concerns. With the backing of a grant from the Equal Opportunites Commission they have prepared 3 issues of Women in Telecom Magazine to investigate equality of opportunity in the industry.

The first issue looked at the policy and statistics of women in BT. There are currently 77,093 women employed by BT – 30% of the workforce. They are concentrated in the lowest paid areas – factories, catering and cleaning – and in the 'women's jobs' – operators and secretaries. Only one BT engineer in 500 is a woman and in motor transport the figure is one in 5,000. Yet they make up more than three quarters of telephonists, secretaries and canteen staff.

Job Segregation

This job-segregation is a typical picture for women workers and as the TUC argue is the main impediment to equal pay. The second issue of the magazine looked at women's experience in working for BT, their concerns and opportunities. It carried interviews of women across the industry. In the 3rd and final issue currently available the women have produced a programme of positive action which seeks to give women a better deal. The programme sets targets for the proportion of women who could be working in certain key grades in 5 years time if the management and unions put the plan into action. They argue that these targets are a minimum and are realistic if action in a number of areas is undertaken. They set out ways of helping women in recruitment, training, promotion and in the working environment.



This form of Positive Action is only partially encouraged by the law. Positive action in the USA is guaranteed in law, all employers are obliged to review their workforces to establish women's and ethnic minority under-representation and to produce goals and targets to redress that discrimination.

The union action advocated by *Women in Telecom* would be boosted by such a change in the law in Britain. The Labour Party has to date not adopted such a policy although the TUC in its 1982 report advocates it.

Men's Fears for their Jobs

Positive Action has become more necessary as a result of economic policies of the Tories. Job segregation makes redundancies all the easier for management who play on men's fears for their own jobs. The Tories' attempts to privatise BT make women's jobs vulnerable. BT will be slimmed down in the name of competition and the so-called non-essential areas (i.e., non profitable) have a high proportion of women workers. *Women in Telecom* have combined their fight for positive action to the fight for jobs, as their recent editorial concludes.

"If we don't hold the line against women being made redundant, where do we hold the line? When do we start taking action? Whose job is worth fighting for?"

Denny Fitzpatrick
West End POEU
Hampstead and Highgate CLP

NUT Facing Crisis of Perspectives

Ken Jones, National Executive, N.U.T. -Outer London. (personal capacity)

Socialist tendencies in trade unions can now, less than ever, limit themselves to urging the defence of jobs and pay by militant means. Essential though that task is, it is just one part of a broader perspective. This article tries to show, with reference to the NUT, that what teachers face is a crisis of trade union perspectives of an historic dimension. Particularly in the public sector, unions confront not only attacks on jobs and pay, but also important changes in state policy. Changes which alter educational objectives, transform the ideologies traditionally associated with it, and undermine the positions of influence painstakingly gained by the unions. Moreover, the Tories have been able, in a classic display of the martial arts to use their opponents' own weight against them; the influence gained by public sector unions is presented as a major part of the problems of the sector. Non-accountable, sectorally-minded unions are held responsible for the crisis of the service.

Nowhere is this more the case than in state education. For 30 years after the 1944 Education Act, education policy was broadly a matter of consensus between the classes. 'Equal opportunity' was accepted as a policy goal which would simultaneously achieve economic efficiency and social justice. On the basis of this consensus (of which it was a supporter) the NUT made several gains. The setting up of the Schools Council and the CSE Exam strengthened the influence of teachers' organisations on the curriculum. Teachers gained some control of their work situation, free from regular inspection, assessment and prescription. Their jobs were secure. In fits and inadequate starts, education spending was increased.

In this context, political alignment and the winning of active popular support did not seem to be a necessity of union policy. The union didn't even join the TUC until 1969/70. Consolidation of teachers' influence was seen to depend on the exclusion of all 'outside interference'. Dialogue with parents and, of course, school-students about education objectives was ruled out. As long as access to education was expanding policy relating to its content was unnecessary.

HISTORIC PROGRAMME DEMOLISHED

This historic 'programme' is now being demolished. New goals dominate state policy — represented in the YTS and its school spin-off, the TVEI. The School Council has been abolished, and teacher control of exam syllabuses is weakening. Temporary contracts, compulsory redeployment and redundancy threats undermine the security of their tenure. Employers make new proposals for pay scales, which link promotion to forms of assessment. Almost unrestricted 'parental choice' between secondary schools places pressure on schools to conform, and encourages in parents an interest in the future of *their* child, alone.

In short, 1944 educational resettlement, and the position of teachers which rested upon it, are being radically revised. These changes have thrown the NUT into turmoil. On the one hand, there has been a move to the left: backing for militant action in some areas (such as the six-week strike in Barking in 1982); and edging closer to the mainstream of the labour movement, embodied in support for 'an' alternative economic strategy and for the healthworkers' action in September 1982. At the same time, women in the union have had success in changing some areas of union policy, and in getting it to convene a conference on equal opportunities — an event which must become annual.

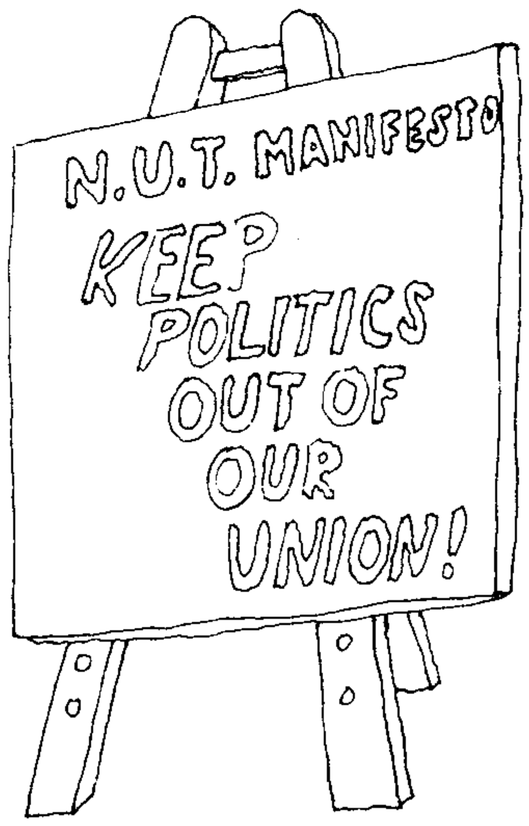
On the other hand, the NUT leadership is trying hopelessly to revive the spirit of 1944. Its Education Memorandum to 1983 Conference evoked a tradition of Conservative benevolence towards state education, stretching from 1870 to Edward Heath. Its 'manifesto' for the General Election was written in anodyne terms, to gather all party support. (Labour and Alliance endorsed it.) This all-party strategy, and the corresponding claim that education is a non-party-political issue, are coupled with the leadership's offensive against the politicisation of the union. It argues that the non-political status of the NUT comprises its very identity. To introduce politics will weaken and split the union. It points to the membership figures and to the threat posed by 'non-political' teachers' organisations (the NUT has barely half the teachers in England and Wales in membership) and to pre-election opinion polls to reinforce at argument.

All the while these issues are contested at national level, the daily pressure on schools continues. Job loss, compulsory redeployment, and 'cover' for absent teachers are permanent issues. The combination of struggle on these issues with a sense of the crisis in the overall policy of the union helps to explain the growing influence of the left. About half of the NUT associations in the Greater London area now have left leaderships. The left's positions get a consistent 40% of the vote at Annual Conference — though in ballots for the National Executive it does less well.

SOCIALIST TEACHERS ALLIANCE

The major organisation of the left— especially since the SWP wound up 'Rank and File Teacher' earlier this year — is the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA). In a union where the 'Broad Left' has traditionally been a secretive caucus grouped around a section of the CP whose views and methods are unequivocally Stalinist, it is the STA which serves as an organising centre for the left. It has been able to take advantage of the gap between the union's policies and those of the mainstream of the trade union movement to present itself as the force in the union which presses for the full integration of the NUT into the labour movement.

Unlike its Rank and File predecessor, the STA does not see itself as *the* left in the union, but as an initiator of unity in action on major issues. Thus it has been able to work with some CP and 'old' Broad left activists in unilateralist campaign. Thus also in many localities STA members rather than forming separate groups, work with others



in 'left caucuses'. A modest achievement perhaps, but at least one that is firmly based in non-sectarianism.

The obstacles that the STA faces in making the politics of the left hegemonic are formidable. Not only sixty years of professional aspiration on the part of the union, but also the renewed impetus that Thatcher's election victory has given the right in the union. Now the right is able to argue that Labour is in decline; that the union would be foolish to involve itself in campaigns or policies associated with Labour; and that the union should follow its own course of seeking something from all parties. After all, Labour was not the only party which endorsed the NUT manifesto, and there may be a coalition government before long. And, on top of all that, there are 'membership implications' in any political alignment.

In reply, the left must show that such arguments do nothing to resolve the crisis in the union's perspectives — only to stave off change it will have to show concretely that the defence of jobs, control over work and resistance to the reshaping of education depend upon a new 'strategy that involves effective industrial action', close links with other unions and an attempt to develop genuinely popular conceptions of educational purpose. In addition, the left has to prove itself capable of assisting and working with a movement of women teachers, without which the union will not be able to mobilise a large section of its membership.

It is in this context that the left in the union can link a strategy for the defence of education to the issue of the union's support for Labour. It is a matter of arguing for the entire re-alignment of the union, so as to respond to the range of its current problems. The STA will be discussing these questions at its AGM in London on Saturday October 8th. Contact the STA Convenor, Tony Gard, 72 Belmont Park London SE13 for more details.

Jobs not YTS

By a Careers Advisor & LP member

At TUC conference the trade union leaders won the debate to continue to give support to the Tory government's Youth Training Scheme. Bill Keys , one of the TUC representatives on the MSC, and chairman of the Employment Policy and Organization Committee argued volu bly against withdrawing trade union support from YTS: *"We cannot walk away from the young of this nation. Where do all the young people go to if we as a British trade union movement walk away from them?"* I wish to reply to this and argue instead that this is precisely what the TUC has done in giving such uncritical support to this scheme.

Bill Keys holds the view that only if trade unions are involved in the scheme can young people gain any experience of trade unionism at work. I very much doubt if YTS will convince young people of the value of trade unionism. The TUC have after all put their weight behind:—

**1st year apprentice rates falling from £45 plus a week to an allowance of £25 a week.*

**trainees are given non-employed status and therefore have no job security.*

**as non-employed trainees they stand outside the protection of the Sex and Race Discrimination Acts. They also have no protection from the Health and Safety Acts: there have been 2 deaths and 300 accidents under YOP.*

**a scheme that is compulsory; young people who refuse to take part in the training scheme will have their benefit reduced by 40% for 6 weeks, leaving them with just £9.50 a week. Originally the TUC refused to back the scheme simply because it was compulsory. It is therefore even more astonishing that they are now urging support.*

As well as ignoring these unpleasant facts, the TUC leaders also seem to be prepared to ignore such minor problems as 460,000 work experience places perhaps replacing 460,000 jobs. Unlike the Youth Opportunities Programme, there is no clause that states that trainees should be supernumerary to existing employment needs, no clauses about refusing training places if there have been recent redundancies within a company. Obviously the opportunities for exploitation and job substitution are much larger than they were under YOP.



These facts were not ignored by many of the speakers who opposed Bill Keys in the debate. Brenda Philbin of the NGA quite rightly said: *"We are betraying those who have fought and made great sacrifices to create decent conditions of employment."* In my view we are not only sacrificing them, but 460,000 school-leavers each year. Effectively the trade union leaders have bargained collectively with the MSC to remove all conditions of employment for young people. Once again the trade union leaders are adrift from their members.

The gains that have been won by the unions within YTS are those such as the NALGO agreement, whereby trainees receive a basic minimum wage, e.g. Hackney Council has agreed a £52 a week wage for its trainees. The TUC are now encouraging its affiliated unions similarly to consider topping up allowances. But topping up is necessary to make the allowances more acceptable, and thereby make YTS more popular with youngsters. It is illogical not only because it seems to make acceptable what in trade union terms is unacceptable, but also because what should be fought for is a decent training allowance.

What could be achieved through YTS is not topped up allowances, but employee places, i.e. normal employment secured with a normal contract of employment, offering full training and subsidised by MSC with the YTS allowance of £25 a week. It seems pointless to train where jobs do not exist, and it is more positive in my view to argue for a validated quality training where employment normally exists.

Employee YTS places could become a useful example of what can be achieved in training in a socialist planned economy. What we, and young people need is for the trade union and Labour Party leaders to campaign against the exploitation of youth, to campaign for real employment, and real training for real jobs. To do this the trade union leaders need to give a clear lead by pulling out of the MSC now, and by pulling out of talks with Tebbit.

Politicising The Student Movement

There will be a new socialist newspaper for students around the colleges as the new term begins. *Socialist Student* will be published twice termly. It is the paper of Socialist Students in the National Organisation of Labour Students (SSIN).

At present the threat of unemployment, and the way in which the cuts in further and higher education are hitting women, mature and working-class students hardest, is deeply damaging student radicalism. Many student 'politicians', especially those around the communist-inspired Left Alliance are prepared to passively adjust to the rightward drift of student consiousness, rather than attempting to change it and offer a socialist leadership. The apolitical approach of the Left Alliance allowed Sue Slipman to follow an almost natural progression from Communist students to the S.D.P.

About three years ago Labour Students split from the Left Alliance

If students are going to be effective in their campaigning they must get away from the idea of operating like a specialist youth pressure group. Many Labour students feel that NUS should work more closely with trade unions, seeing itself as a collective organisation similar to a Trade Union. At a local level Labour Students should initiate and participate in Trade Union Liaison Committees in their colleges. They should also ensure that their student union takes up observer status on the local trades council and fullv participate in its affiars.

Socialist Student is ideally placed to help the more active Labour Clubs in this kind of work. Many of its supporters come from the disbanded National Fightback organisation which attempted to unite campus workers and students against higher education cuts. The Socialist Students Alliance, an organisation of students on the far left opposed to the Left Alliance's bureaucratic approach, have also agreed to participate.

The new academic year is an ideal time to get involved with a new organisation building new Labour Clubs and attempting to remove the Clause Four hacks from the leadership of Labour Students. To be of any effect we must try to unite students unions around their campaigning societies such as CND, Palestine Solidarity, Anti-Apartheid and women's groups, gay groups and overseas students groups. Attempts to politicise the students go hand in hand with the task of making full-time student union officers accountable to the membership. Labour sabbaticals should act like shop stewards, acting on the wishes of students as expressed at Union General Meetings and Labour Students branches.

Times are not easy in NUS, but we must not react with a headlong run to right and apolitical student unionism. We should try to organise the militant minority of students who undoubtedly continue to exist.

Socialist Student can be contacted through Andy Bennet, D.S.U., Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham. (copies 10p each).

Alick Bridger
Sussex University Labour Club
Bryn Griffiths
Socialist Student Editorial Board.

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