LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING 40p

No 40 JUNE 1984

LABOUR'S WEEKLY MINERS' LEVY: GET THAT 50p!

by Arthur Latham (Chair, London Labour Party)

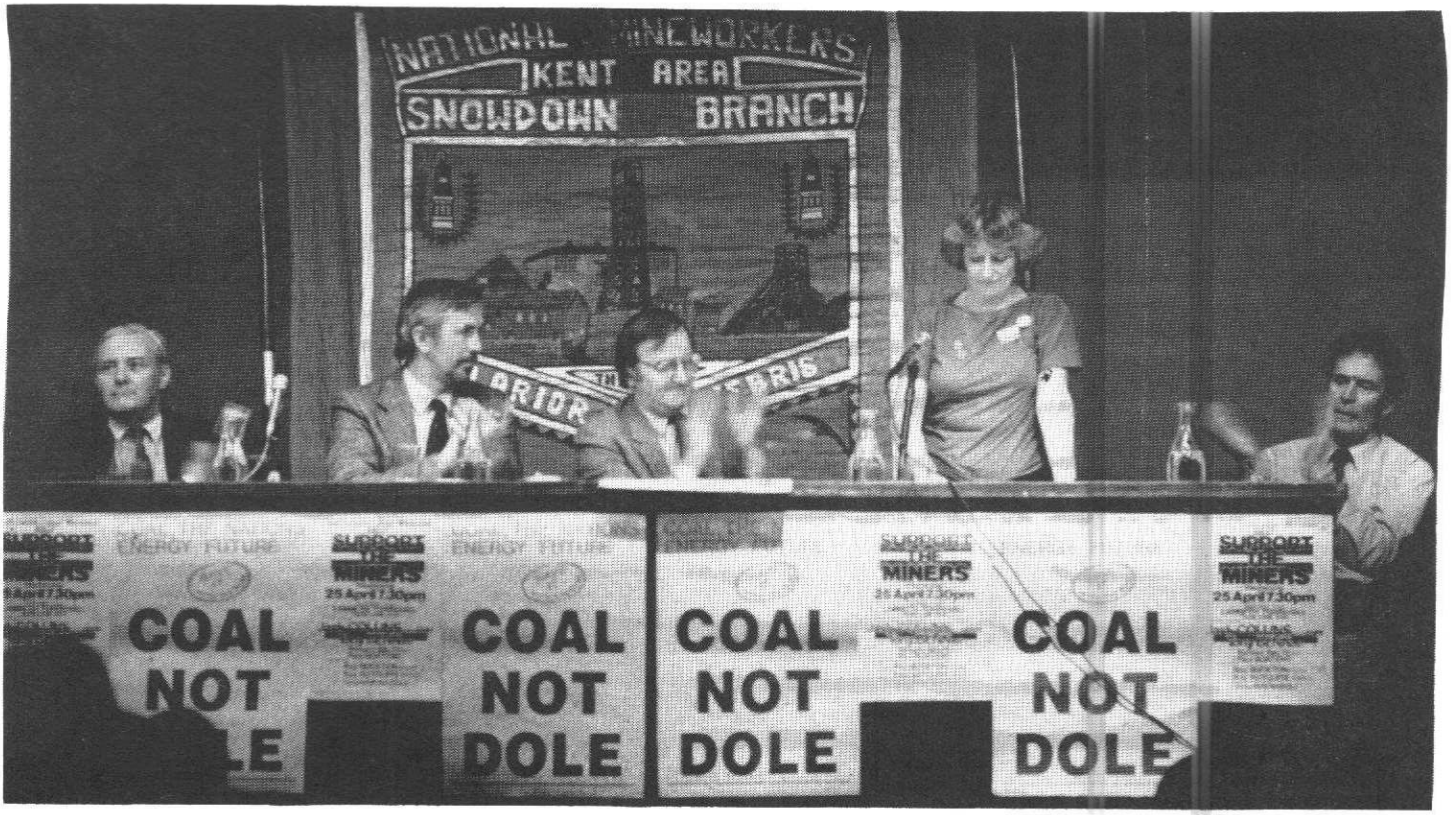
The London Labour Party fully supports the miners in their struggle against pit closures and the monetarist policies of the Thatcher government. Scargill is absolutely right in his view that no miner has the right to sell his son's future job, however "generous" redundancy offers might appear to be now.

Our task as a London Labour party is threefold:

1. To show solidarity with our comrades on strike — and in practical terms;
2. To add to the pressure on thosewho are presently failing to show the unity that is vital to our futures;
3. To campaign publicly to relate what is happening to the wider political situation.

We have sponsored, backed and given financial help in rallies and are now making our own appeal following the national decision to ask every member to contribute 50p per week to the NUM strike fund.

THIS IS A FIGHT *WE* MUST WIN!



Paul Gibbs

South London supports the miners. Lambeth Town Hall

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

LONDON SUPPORTS



Kevin Flack



Kevin Flack

South London

Support for the miners has become stronger in South London as the dispute has gone on; and people are dipping deeper into their pockets as awareness of the need to ensure the miners aren't starved back to work has become more widespread.

A South London Co-ordinating Committee has been set up which meets weekly and at which CLPs, particularly Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth but also from other boroughs, several trade union branches and miners staying in South London to organise speakers' tours are represented. It is in contact with CLPs in Lewisham and Greenwich where miners on picket duty are staying. The Co-ordinating Committee's first task was to organise a Rally in Lambeth Town Hall on 25th April, which was sponsored by 30 labour movement bodies and attended by over 500 people, with others being turned away because the hall was full. Over £2,000 was collected at the Rally, where speakers included Tony Benn, Jack Collins and Kay Sutcliffe from the Kent Miners' Wives Support Group, who received a well-deserved standing ovation. The Rally was on the same day as the NEC agreed to levy Party members; and to link up with the occasion Lambeth Council's Urgency Committee agreed to twin with the two mining villages of Aylesham and Eythorne, much to the horror of local Tories.

The other task the Co-ordinating Committee has been concentrating on from the start is trying to ensure that every Labour Party and Trade Union branch in the area has a speaker from the Kent NUM. Most LP branches have now been covered, and the trade unions are responding. We also want to ensure that women speakers go to women's sections and groups.

Like co-ordinating committees in other areas, we are trying to ensure that the basics — getting speakers, collecting food and money — are covered in every area. Activities like that of Lambeth Trades Council, which is collecting every Saturday on the steps of the Town Hall, and of Norwood CLP, which held a street meeting in Brixton with miners speaking, are good examples of what should be being done throughout South London.

One of the strengths of our co-ordinating committee is that it has brought together Party Secretaries and Trade Union Liaison Officers who usually work in isolation. The committee has acted as a forum for discussing how we deal with problems such as effectively organising the NEC's call for a levy of Party members.

The levy will be a major test for the Party's organisation. At the grass roots we are aware that some ward organisation will be strained and a useful spin off of the levy will be that this should get tightened up — and allow those members who find attending meetings a problem to play a part. Our CLP has set itself a target of collecting £500 per week through the levy and street collections.

In Lambeth particularly links with the Kent NUM are becoming very close. Norwood CLP's May Day social was attended by a number of miners and their families and a coach trip is being organised for 2nd June. SOGAT 82's London Machine branch has sponsored one coach and the trip will include a cricket match, the miners' choir and a steel band.

The South London Labour Movement Co-ordinating Committee in support of the miners meet every Friday at 6pm at County Hall and can be contacted c/o Vauxhall Labour Party, 1 Alverstone House, SE11 5TS. It is open to delegates and individuals from CLPs, trade unions and trade councils in South London.

Greg Tucker and Joan Twelves (Trade Union Liaison Officer and Secretary, Vauxhall Labour Party)



Kevin Flack

THE MINERS!

Greenwich

Public support for the miners' struggle in defence of their jobs is gathering momentum in the London Borough of Greenwich. Leafletting, meetings and canvassing support for the cause has dominated the political work of the party activists. It is quite obvious that the message is getting through to the public, despite utter distortion by the gutter press.

On Saturday April 28th, a march was organised by the Greenwich, Woolwich & Eltham Labour Parties from Cutty Sark Gardens in Greenwich. More than a thousand people participated, including the Asian Women's Group. The speakers at the rally included Kay Sutcliffe, John Austin Walker, leader of the Greenwich Borough Council, Deidre Wood, GLC member and Guy Barnett, the MP. An appeal for funds for the miners was launched which brought in several pounds on the spot with promises for much more later on.

The rally was followed by a miners' benefit at the Town Hall where live music cabaret and a disco and bar pulled in a lot more cash for the miners.

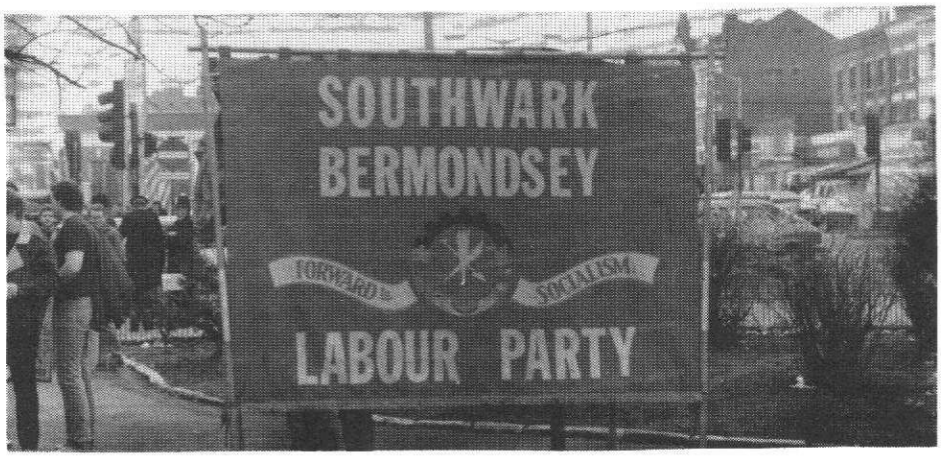
The miners are fighting on behalf of every worker, trade unionists and the unemployed — for their right to a job. Their fight is our fight and we must support miners all the way.

Kanta Patel

(Woolwich & Eltham CLP)

Redbridge

Both Ilford South and Ilford North Labour Parties have received members of Kent NUM and collections were taken. The executive of Ilford North Labour Party resolved to actively take up the Labour Party levy and branches are being urged to collect regularly from all members. Although financial support is essential, other forms of support were considered and it is hoped that a party of members will visit a picket line in the near future.



Kevin Flack

Newham

Support for the miners in Newham over the last few weeks has increased considerably. Speakers have been invited to many meetings and collections have resulted in hundreds of pounds.

Newham N.W. Labour Party has convened a Newham Miners Solidarity Committee for the duration of the strike. The Committee will build solidarity with the miners throughout the Newham area and four main tasks were agreed:-

1. Ensuring that Kent Miners were invited to speak at every possible meeting in the borough.
2. Regular and thorough collection money for the Kent NUM in Newham strike fund.
3. The provision of all other assistance required by the NUM, i.e. collection of food, accomodation for pickets, etc.
4. Careful monitoring of all movement of coal, oil, etc. through the area.

On Wednesday 25th April, over two hundred people attended a meeting called by East London rally against the Police Bill on policing and the miners strike. On Monday 30th April to Friday 4th June, Miners were invited to speak at public meetings called by the Newham NALGO Branch against rate capping and the abolition of the GLC. These meetings gave overwhelming support to the Miners and collections were held. Subsequently, Newham NALGO agreed to donate £500 to the miners strike fund. For further details of the Campaign to Support the Miners in Newham contact:

Bill Hamilton,
Newham N.W. CLP
Trade Union Liaison Officer,
c/o 306 High Street,
Stratford E15

Peter Pendle
Newham N.W. CLP

Lewisham

The Labour Party has thrown itself fully behind the miners' strike. Enthusiasm is running high, particularly amongst ordinary Party members and local trade unions. *Deptford* **Labour Party set an excellent example, donating £1000 to the strike fund, and calling on its branches to raise £1 per member to cover the donation. Public meetings have been held by** *Deptford & West Lewisham Young Socialists*, **and the** *Lewisham & Deptford Trades Council*. ***East Lewisham* has printed and flyposted 'Victory to the Miners Strike' posters, made a £200 donation (plus £65 collection) and set up a Support Group.** *East Lewisham's* **major event has been a social and public meeting — folksinger singing miners' songs; Kent NUM, Miners Wives, Nurses Action Group and Gordon Skinner (Nottingham Councillor) speaking; band and disco; and a raffle. £500 was raised by the 120 people who came along — a second social is planned for June 2nd. Kent NUM pickets have been welcomed at** *Lewisham Labour Club*, **which they have used as a base for picketing and first-hand contact has increased knowledge and commitment of local party members. Horror stories of police actions have been backed up by the experience of a party member stopped while driving alone through the Dartford Tunnel. No coal has moved out of local rail depots. A trip to the Kent coalfield, fundraising and the levy on party members are to be organised. Above all, the Lewisham Labour Parties have shown that it doesn't matter what the party leadership does — the constituency parties are fully behind the strike.**



Kevin Flack

Kevin Flack, East Lewisham CLP

LONDON SUPPORTS

CAMDEN

The Labour Parties in Camden have slowly but surely thrown their weight behind the miners' fight for jobs. Miners from Kent have spoken at all the branches and the GMCs, explaining their case, and appealing for money and accommodation in London. A rally was subsequently organised just before Easter, where Bob Morrison, former Kent NUM chair, and Kay Sutcliffe from the Kent Miners Wives Support Committee spoke alongside the MPs Frank Dobson and Jeremy Corbyn. 300 people came and more than £500 was raised. The Women's sections of the LP also organised a tour of the miners wives in Camden in the Council's Women's Committee bus. Markets and workplaces were visited and over the two days, more than a £1,000 was raised.

The local branches of the LP are now taking up the appeal by the NEC for a levy of members. Collections are also being made on Saturday street stalls and on Sunday lunchtime in the pubs. The average collection always raises more than £50.

A support committee meeting weekly has been established between the local LP and Trades Council in order to co-ordinate activities. It is hoped that this committee will draw delegates from local unions, and that mass leafleting, tours of workplaces, and a major fundraising event will be organised. In addition a delegation from the local LP will go to the West Drayton coal depot to join the mass picket to prevent the movement of coal.

Locally, most union branches have also been visited by miners, but as the dispute continues, it becomes more important to reach the trade-union members who are not active. Therefore tours of workplaces, with miners speaking at the gates or in the canteen should be organised to spearhead support for the miners. LP members should participate in this huge campaign of solidarity over this crucial dispute to show what a LP, really committed to socialism and defending workers and the oppressed, could be like.

Fred Leplat (Holborn & St Pancras LP)

Tower Hamlets

Collection sheets have been prepared for the levy and door-to-door collections of money and food made. Tower Hamlets is covered with posters supporting the miners.

East London Delegation to the Kent coalfield: Ten coaches in all went, taking almost 500 people down to spend an evening with the miners in Kent and take money down with them.

EALING

KENT miners based at the West London trade union club in Acton have continued with their series of speaking engagements at Labour Party and trade union branches and at various meetings and events.

The Kent NUM banner led the march in commemoration of Blair Peach on the fifth anniversary of his murder in Southall.

A Southall Miners' Support Group has been set up, drawing together support from the Labour Party, trade unions, community groups and other activists, and on May 11 a meeting was held to broaden the support structure by establishing an Ealing Miners' Support Group and a public meeting was arranged for Ealing Town Hall with Dennis Skinner and men and women speakers from Kent mining communities.

Plans are underway to link Southall with one specific Kent mining village.

Great emphasis has been placed on financial support to ensure that the miners are not starved back to work. As well as collections at all CLPs and branch meetings, appeal sheets have been circulated and in Southall we are trying to get every workplace to hold regular collections.

Plans are underway for street collections of food and money, as well as the usual fund-raising socials.

Further information: Bob Wood, 997 7440 or Oliver New, 571 5019.



Kevin Flack

Miners march through London.

Haringey

The Labour Group on Haringey Council agreed unanimously to contribute the attendance allowance for the Council meeting on April 30th to the NEC appeal for the NUM. The Party branches running Saturday street stalls have also been collecting cash and food contributions from the shoppers and passers-by. Haringey Trades Council organised a benefit social and all meetings have had special collections. Tottenham Labour Party has recommended a minimum levy of one per cent of gross earnings as the contribution.

Collection sheets have been prepared for road-stewards and collectors with the option of collecting money monthly, twice-monthly or by standing orders. Already contributions have been pouring in and it is the intention to 'twin' with a mining community in Kent with delegations visiting them and inviting return visits from the miners and their communities.

Hackney

Over £4,000 has been collected from the Hackney Labour Movement for the miners in Kent. You can't go to a meeting in Hackney without the miners being there or a collection taken for them. Money has been collected on the streets and door-to-door on estates. The Trade Union Liaison Committee of the two Parties meets every Monday to co-ordinate activity. Several successful public meetings have been held, one with Jack Collins speaking. A bus-load of women came from the Kent Miners Women's Support Committee for a showing of the American miners' film 'Harlam County' at the Rio Cinema and a meeting addressed only by women speakers. Food collections are being organised outside supermarkets, and in some wards collection sheets have been prepared to collect the 50p levy on Party members.

Islington

Levy cards have been produced so that collectors can go round each member of the Party to collect 50ps. Street collections have been made and food collected outside supermarkets. Islington NUPE have filled a minibus full of food to take down to Kent.

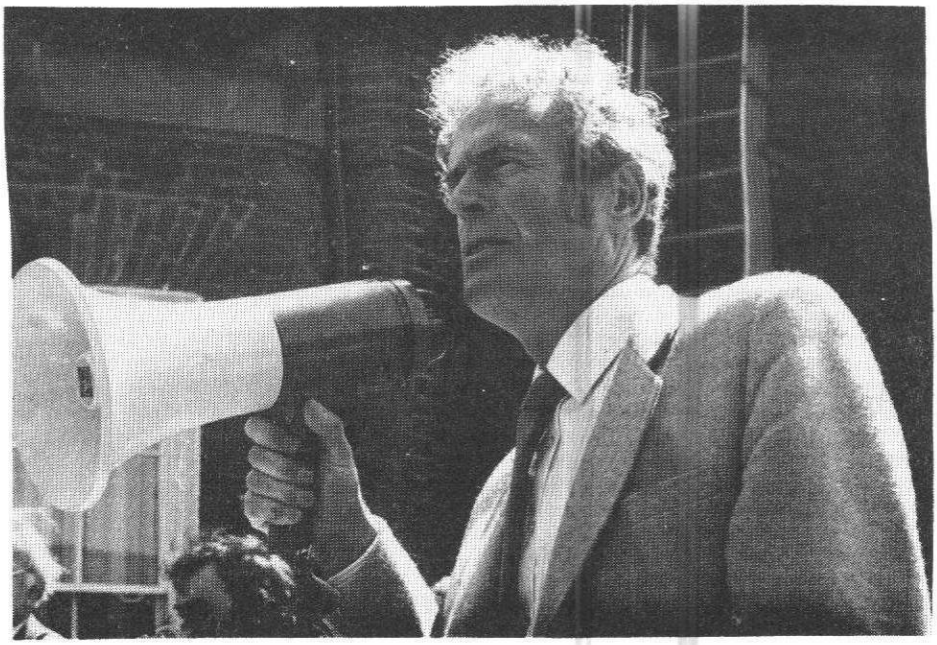
THE MINERS (continued)

CROYDON

KENT MINERS continue to address trade union and Labour Party meetings in the Croydon area calling for increased political, financial and practical support. Already over £4,000 has been collected by the local labour movement and arrangements are now being made to back up one-off donations with regular collections and all-important levies.

At its last meeting Croydon TUC made a donation to Kent NUM of £500 with a further £300 collected from the floor. The local TUC has set up an action committee to organise support for the NUM in the area and is calling on its 60 affiliated branches to levy their membership £1+ a week. A coach was sent from Croydon to the national demonstration in Mansfield called by the NUM on Monday 14 May and Croydon TUC supported the mass picket of West Drayton coal depot where scab coal is being moved on the Tuesday.

Three of the four Croydon CLPs have now imposed the 50p per week levy and Croydon North East are producing a 'Support the Miners' bulletin every two weeks. Ward parties are collecting food for the wives and families of the Kent NUM outside all local supermarkets each weekend. Some activists have been surprised by the level of support there is for the NUM in the local community. Already hundreds of pounds worth of food have been collected.



Jack Collins, General Secretary Kent NUM, addresses Croydon May Day March, April 28th

The local Labour Parties have switched up a gear – the level of activity has only previously been seen at election times. It is not just the same few comrades doing everything, ward parties are taking initiatives and previously inactive members are getting involved.

It would be misleading to say that the local movement is doing everything it can – things can definitely be improved. In particular the arguments and action need to be taken inside the local workplaces for there are constraints on what we can achieve from the outside. Nevertheless there is a genuine consensus in the Croydon Labour Parties that the success of the NUM (albeit extra-parliamentary!) is absolutely vital for our future at every level.

David Evans
Secretary Croydon North East CLP

Brent

The Brent Miners Support Campaign is sponsored by Brent Trades Council, Brent Labour Parties and Kent NUM. Its aim 'is to mobilise the greatest possible support for the miners' fight for jobs from amongst people in the area ... this will be a long fight and the government would like to starve the miners into submission — as happened in 1926. A co-ordinated local campaign is therefore vital if we are to hope to build the kind of support which is necessary for an NUM victory.'

Monies have been collected from local workplaces, trade union branches, the Labour Party. Delegations have visited Guiness, who have promised £1000, United Biscuits, Heinz and many other local factories. Follow-up visits will take round the South East Region TUC levy cards asking for £1 a week or less from individual workers. Collections are made every Saturday at the main shopping areas in Brent where food is also collected. This has been very successful and the Support Committee will be sending representatives down to Kent with the first major convoy of food in the near future. SERTUC are co-ordinating this on a London-wide basis to ensure that suitable food and toiletries are collected.

WOMEN'S SECTIONS

There was good support from Brent when the miners' wives visited Kilburn as part of a tour organised in the Camden area. Discussion are under way, with the backing of Brent South and Brent East Women's Sections, to organise a similar tour in Brent and to hold a benefit in the near future.

At the time of writing one of the most important events will be mobilising for the mass picket at the West Drayton Coal depot. This will start on Tuesday 15 May and it is planned to continue picketing thereafter. The Charringtons Coal depot at Neasden is permanently picketed by Kent NUM with support from local trade unionsts and Labour Party members.

28 May is Carnival day in Brent. This year the multi-racial carnival will be joined by a demonstration in support of the miners. It is hoped to have a speaker on the Police Bill at the mass rally to stress the links between what is happening to the miners on the picket lines and the attacks on the black community by the police.

Appeals were made at the last support committee (which meets weekly and has well over 50 people in attendance including LP TU Liaison Officers) to sponsor coaches for the miners to come up from Kent on 9 June for the CND demonstration against cruise at the time of Reagan's visit. Brent South are holding a meeting in support of the Greenham Common women with speakers from the peace camp and it is hoped to use that meeting to build support for the Labour Women's delegation to Greenham Common, led by Kent miners wives on Sunday 20 May.

The support committee in Brent has shown the importance of the Labour Party linking up with the trade unions and trades council in the area and hopefully something more permanent will emerge after the miners' strike is over.

Richard Kramer
Brent South CLP Trade Union Liaison Officer

'CONFRONTATION INEVITABLE'

says Lewisham's new leader

Major changes have occurred in the leadership of Lewisham Council. Early last month (May 2nd) the Council Labour Group held the first part of its Annual General Meeting. Unlike on previous occasions, the grass roots of the Party — via the Borough Local Government Committee — had a say in votes electing the Leader, the three deputy leaders and all committee chairs and vice-chairs. The electoral college consisted of the BLGC meeting jointly with the Group; 33 BLGC members and 37 of the 41 councillors were present. In addition, for the first time, all votes were recorded.

BRIEFING supporter Ron Stockbridge was elected Leader, beating Steve Bullock by 51 votes to 17. Russell Profitt was elected "Deputy Leader (Outside Bodies)" — our "Foreign Secretary" as someone described the post — with Paulette Goudge as "Deputy Leader (Policy)", both also associated with BRIEFING. In addition, Jim Dowd was elected "Deputy Leader (Party Liaison)", beating the left candidate Madeleine Long who has only recently been elected to the Council.

Prior to the meeting, all 41 councillors had been sent a form asking them to declare any connection with the "Royal Institute of Freemasons". This followed a group decision made in April that "Membership of the Freemasons is incompatible with membership of the Labour group." Former Deputy Mayor Ernie Rowing, previously Chair of the Labour Group, voted against the resolution and refused to sign, as did others. None of these got anywhere in the elections, and Ernie Rowing, who had been agreed upon internally by the Group as prospective Mayor was suddenly dropped when it became clear that he would otherwise be defeated in a vote in a full Council. He was replaced by Les Eytles, described in the local press as "Lewisham's first black mayor", who had been elected "in an internal coup within the ruling Labour Party."

Within four days of Ron Stockbridge's election to the leadership, two of the three Lewisham CLP's had passed an identical resolution calling for a Liverpool-style confrontation between Lewisham Council and the Tory Government. It read as follows:

"This CLP believes that the Council should not be responsible for implementing the anti-working class policies of central government. Consequently the Labour Group on Lewisham Council should take an active stand against the Government's legislation attacking local authorities and populace, at the least implementing no cuts, no increases in rents, rates or charges for services.

In order to assess the support of the people of Lewisham we call on the Council to:
i. Make this position clear and give a lead to Party and people
ii Mount a sustained campaign against Government legislation
iii. Resign and seek a mandate for this position in the early Autumn of 1984"

It was passed by Deptford General Council without dissent (though with little discussion); Lewisham East GC held an extensive discussion and passed the resolution 30 to nil after all watering-down amendments had been overwhelmingly rejected. Since then, the BLGC has listened to legal opinion regarding the options — legal and illegal — open to Lewisham in the coming period. BRIEFING interviewed **Ron Stockbridge** shortly after these events. The interviewer was **Chris Knight** (Lewisham East CLP).



CK: *How do you feel on being elected to the leadership of Lewisham Council? Do you feel you've been elected more by the Party than by the Group?*

RS: Oh yes. There's no question about that. In fact, as I said in my acceptance speech, it proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Electoral College works. My election was based on the fact that I have made statements in the past, and on my political history. I had consistently said that in the present circumstances, confrontation with the Government was inevitable. And I'm becoming more and more convinced that if our Council doesn't make a stand on the rate-capping legislation then there will be many other Authorities sitting on the fence.

CK: *Very soon, the Lewisham Borough Local Government Committee and the Labour Group will meet together. That meeting, it seems, may decide that Lewisham should follow the "Liverpool option". We would resign and seek a mandate for outright confrontation with the Government in the autumn. If that is decided, will you fight for that position within the Labour Group?*

RS: I think that confrontation is absolutely inevitable, but I'm not completely swayed with the option of resignation. I'd like to look at the other options of disruption and majority opposition to see what they could offer. If the meeting decided that resignation and the seeking of a new mandate was correct I'd go along with that. But I would be asking from that meeting that we don't make an early decision, because obviously if we do make an early decision, we could be hung by it should the political climate change.

CK: *But if you say you don't want to commit yourself now, how would we prepare the ground for the kind of confrontation which you have said is inevitable before long anyway? If you leave things undecided, isn't there a danger of disarming the working class of Lewisham?*

RS: I'm not sure that by making an early decision, you would in effect creat the situation we're hoping for.

CK: *Yet Liverpool's success in mobilising the working class, surely, has stemmed from their having made clear months and even years in advance exactly what it was that they proposed to do. In that way, the ground has been prepared and class-consciousness has been raised.*

RS: Liverpool were faced with a budget which they have inherited, and to implement their manifesto, they would have had to overspend. And given the result of the recent local elections, they've got no alternative but to go for that illegal budget. What really concerns me is the lack of solidarity within the London local authorities. I'd like to seek out that situation before committing Lewisham.

CK: *It's just as well Liverpool didn't look around to see what support they'd get from other local authority leaders before they took a decisive stand. Why can't Lewisham provide a lead for the other boroughs of London? There have been important developments recently within London. There's been Hilda Kean's election in Hackney. And your election in Lewisham would be seen by the left in London as part of a victory for us. Why not make Lewisham a beacon. Why not...*

RS: Light that beacon. Yes. I guess that my over-cautiousness in saying that I'd like to look at other options is based on the fact that we'll be having two or three meetings in the week you mention, where information will be exchanged. And as I say, if the party and the group decided on a "Liverpool" stand, then I would certainly be pushing hard.

CK: *Supposing, though, the Party decided on this but the Group were undecided. What influence would you exert to bring the Group round to the Party's position?*

RS: I would use the influence of the leadership to bring the Group into the same position as the Party. But my cautiousness, Chris, is not based on the

fact that I think we can avoid a fight. My cautiousness stems from the fact that I don't want to see the movement destroyed. And I personally think that there is still a chance of other Authorities within London making a common stand against the Government.

CK: *But you would agree, surely, that there'll be more chance if you make a stand to start with than if you don't?*

RS: But you see, I've just been told about a meeting with Ted Knight, John Walker from Greenwich and some others in Ted's office. The objective of that meeting is to find some common ground. I personally will be pushing very hard for solidarity. Because if this Tory Government was faced with four or five Authorities plus Liverpool saying that they're not prepared to raise rates or cut services, then I'm confident the Government would be put in a position which would expose them as the oppressor. My only argument would be on timing, on strategy, not whether or not confrontation is inevitable.

CK: *It seems a good moment to show that you're starting out the way you mean to go on.*

RS: As I say, my reservation would be that if you commit yourself down a road where there's no getting off, and then the political climate changes, then you're in trouble. I'm not suggesting you look around and see who's following. But certainly as far as I'm concerned, we have not yet tested the other Authorities. I hope, by the time of the meeting you mentioned, that I'd have information as to what strategy other London Authorities will be adopting.

CK: *What "other options" are there? Most of us see no other option now, except Liverpool's.*

RS: Basically, there's no panacea option. There's the delaying option, and a disrupting one. Disruption might mean going into majority opposition. You'd leave the Tories to run the Council. And then you'd vote down all their proposals. That really hasn't been investigated.

CK: *But what's the point of that? Why not stay in office like the Liverpool comrades and use all the advantages that gives?*

RS: Well, the whole point of majority opposition is actually staying in office and using your position as a platform.

CK: *You wouldn't be in office, you'd be in opposition.*

RS: You'd resign office but you'd still retain your positions.

CK: *And the "delaying option"*

RS: The delaying option is the bureaucratic one where in fact you just refuse to do certain things.

CK: *It doesn't sound very convincing.*

RS: It's an option which hasn't really been thought all the way through.

RS: *Ron, it looks as if the Lewisham parties — certainly as far as Deptford and Lewisham East are concerned — have had enough of such "other options". It looks as if we're solidly for the Liverpool stand. There wasn't one vote against the resolution at this evening's Lewisham East G.M.C. We added the resignation bit not to go into opposition but to force elections in which we could get a specific mandate, and so that we could replace those councillors who aren't prepared to go all the way with others of us prepared to face surcharge and go the whole way. There's a feeling building up against any further dithering. Can you assure us that you'll keep in touch with those of us who secured your election to the leadership?*

RS: I'm not dithering, Chris. I'm convinced that the situation is such that there's no way you could remain in office given the legislation. What we haven't done is to evaluate what you can do and what you can't do. We've picked an option, which is resignation and then going for another mandate. Assuming you don't get that mandate, you're left with a Tory Council. Fine. It's no worse than staying in office and implementing the Tory legislation. And quite frankly, I personally will not be a puppet for the Tory Government. But there are risks in that course. We may not achieve our aim of a confrontation with the Government. It would be a one-issue election, and if you lost that election, you'd have no confrontation whatsoever.

CK: *But on the other hand, the results of the recent local elections show overwhelmingly that for us this kind of issue can be made a winner. The Tories are* not *popular in trying to destroy local government. Why base your thinking on the worst possible outcome when the most recent electoral evidence just doesn't warrant such pessimism? A clear stand against rate rises as well as against rent rises and cuts could well gain us massive support.*

RS: Yes, I accept that as far as the recent results are concerned, they were tremendous. And certainly in Liverpool, it proved what could be achieved. I'm just looking at other possibilities but I will probably come down for the Liverpool stand since my feeling is we have to confront the Government and the way to do it is to build up a campaign starting now.

CK: *Would you personally be prepared to face surcharge?*

RS: Oh yes. Oh, yes. If you go down this road, there is no getting off. It would be an absurd situation to put yourself up for election as leader of an urban council in a year when legislation of this kind is being proposed and not be prepared for that. But the Government has learned since 1972 and one of the things they don't want to create is Labour martyrs. I wouldn't want to disappear into obscurity. I would want those of us who do oppose the Government to stay visible.

CK: *One of the strengths of Liverpool's position is the evident Tory fear that if they tried to run the City directly themselves; they might invite riots to put the previous Toxteth explosions in the shade. The Militant comrades have effectively utilised that threat. It would be a reflection on us if we were unable to do the same. Shouldn't we be challenging central Government: "Take over, run Lewisham — run the whole of London — if you dare?"*

RS: Oh indeed. I agree entirely. In this interview I've been more or less acting as a Devil's advocate to myself. That's because I can't see how you can enter a fight without looking at all the possibilities open. If you don't look, you can bang your head against a wall.

EALING: A SMASHING VICTORY

by Kevin Veness

FOR THE second successive by-election in Ealing, the Tories have been humiliated and the SDP smashed out of sight. On 26th April Frank Curtis was elected Councillor for Hobbayne Ward (Hanwell) with a 772 majority, in a ward which split (2 Labour, 1 Tory) in 1982. Following on from the previous by-election, where we slashed one thousand votes from the Tory majority in one of their safest seats (and destroyed the SDP in a Ward where they expected great things), this success firmly re-establishes us as favourites to take over control of Ealing Council in 1986 and with a large Labour majority.

The reasons for this success are obvious to local activists but are important to restate. We fielded a candidate who had the support of the active members of the local Party; we had the political judgement to highlight the right issues at the right time; and we had the organisation (and support from comrades on the day) to maximise our vote.

Early in the campaign we took the initiative and established the battleground on which the by-election was fought: Tory cuts and privatisation. We convinced the local press that these were the issues and, by the end of the campaign, even the Tories felt obliged to answer the indictment levelled against the Tory Council, leading to the headline in the local paper in the last edition before Polling Day: "Tory Candidate Supports Cuts". Obviously the people of Hobbayne do not!

Allied to this, we are now producing some of the best material used by the Labour Party locally for many years, bringing many reports from local groups and individuals about our success in relating our politics to local people.

A 9.6% swing (enough even to win our local Euro-seat!!) means a great boost to the morale of all local activists and a repudiation of the Tories selling off of jobs and services to their friends in theprivate sector. (Among our most active election workers we numbered the leading organisers of the Ealing Campaign in Defence of Public Services). The verdict. "No More Tory Cuts!"

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING

Reporting London's news — *and making it!*

Annual subscription £6.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

NAME . . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . . .

Please send to Central Books Ltd., 14 Leathermarket, S.E.1. Cheques payable to: "Central Books Ltd."

Advertising rates for London Briefing:

Whole Page	**£110**
Half Page	**£60**
Third Page	**£45**
Quarter Page	**£35**

Hilda Kean speaks to Briefing

LEFT TURN FOR HACKNEY

At the end of April, the Hackney Labour Parties Borough Conference decided to correct some of the mistakes made by the Council leadership over the past two years (see last month's *Briefing*).

Mistakes that culminated in a budget which imposed a 17% rate rise on the people of Hackney (Britain's poorest Borough – the Council's own publicity slogan) along with an attack on the occupation at St John's Area Base where DLO workers and Council tenants had decided to take matters into their own hands, as the Council had shown it was incapable of providing a half-way decent repairs service.

CHANGING DIRECTION

The Borough Conference decided to change the political direction of the Council away from pleading with the Government by way of petitions and law courts for more money, to supporting and galvanising the fight of tenants, Council workers, trade unionists, women, youth and black people (many in Hackney are all six!) for a decent job and standard of living.

We did this by arguing for and carrying resolutions condemning the rate rise and hidden cuts (in the DLO and understaffing) and saying that we regarded these actions on the part of the Council leadership as a breach of accountability of the Labour Group to the elected bodies of the local CLPs whose positions are for the 3 Noes – no cuts, no rent increases and no rate rises.

The Conference realised that this meant confrontation with the Government in the coming year. That means the Council needs the support of its workforce, as Liverpool has. To date, council workers have had little cause to support the Council leadership, and no-one imagines old wounds can be healed overnight. However, the Borough Conference insisted that the DLO be given work and that the Housing Investment Programme 1984/85 be implemented, so there is a planned flow of work for the DLO – that there be no cuts in services or jobs and the Building Division is maintained. Councillors and officers working against the DLO should resign *now*. It was also demanded that all Freemasons who are Councillors or officers declare an interest. Single status must be implemented before the summer recess. This proposal that manual workers are employed on the same conditions of service as officers, was in the Party's election manifesto two years ago.

NEW LEADERSHIP

On the basis of these resolutions a new leadership was elected. Hilda Kean as Leader, Andrew Puddephat as Deputy Leader, Mary Cannon as Chief Whip (narrowly beating Maureen Colquhoun), Ken Hanson as Mayor and Betty Shanks as Deputy Mayor. Only two of these, Hilda Kean and Ken Hanson, were on the left slate, but the elections were taken *after* the resolutions mentioned previously had been carried. So there should be no confusion as to the political direction the Hackney Labour Parties want the Council to adopt and the Council leadership to fight for.

The Press discovered that an 'extremist, left-wing, marxist, fanatic-determined-to-bankrupt-Hackney woman' had been elected leader of Hackney Borough Council the following Wednesday and proceeded accordingly. In interviews on the BBC and London Weekend, Hilda Kean was introduced with the appropriately belligerent tones normally reserved for the likes of Derek Hatton, Peter Tatchell and Ken Livingstone. Viewers, however, saw and heard a perfectly ordinary woman explain, quite reasonably, that she along with the rest of a team had been elected democratically to make sure that Hackney Council carried out the decisions made by the Labour Party in Hackney.



Melanie Friend (Report)

Jo Thwaites
Hackney North GC delegate
from the Women's Section

Hilda Kean spoke to *Briefing*:

'One of the first things we did, Andrew Puddephat and myself, as the new leadership of the Council, was to call all the directors of the Departments of the Council together and instruct them to prepare papers on implementing the policy issues decided by the Borough Conference. Our priorities are the defence of the DLO, single status for all Council workers, decentralisation, improvement of service delivery on housing, and continuing the steps the Council has taken in the field of equal opportunities for black and ethnic minorities and women. There has to be a visible improvement by September.

While clearly there are differences on the Council amongst Councillors on the policy of the three Noes as decided by the Conference, these will be overtaken by events to an extent because of rate-capping. Next year, raising the rates won't be an option. I was against raising them this year anyway, but we are all agreed on fighting the rate-capping legislation.

One of the resolutions carried at the Conference said that the Labour Group should refuse access by Government to Council information that could be used as part of the rate-capping procedures, and that we must defy rate-capping legislation. This also means that we must not apply for derogation. This is a procedure whereby a Council can appeal against the figures set by the Government. It can mean that the Government lower the figure or increase it with conditions on how Government money is spent by the Council. We should have no co-operation with the Government in implementing their rate-capping at all – and that includes not using their appeals system.

There need to be much closer and stronger links between the local Parties and the Labour Group. In the past there has been bad communication, with the Labour Group going one way and the Parties another. We hope that when the Chairs of the various Committees are elected by the Labour Group (this is not

Housing in Tory Wandsworth

If Labour takes control in Wandsworth in 1986, the borough will have been governed by the Tories for eight years. Wandsworth is well known for its privatisation mania and this has reached the national headlines but little is said publicly in London forums about a whole range of housing policies, the results of which will present an incoming Labour Administration with a near-impossible situation.

It goes without saying that the council house building programme is negligible – for two out of the last six years no new council houses at all were built. Added to this, council house sales fever is endemic in the borough.

ASTRONOMICAL RENTS

The tactics of the council are to raise rent levels to astronomical heights – an 11% increase this year so that they are either the highest or second highest in London and would achieve a similar position as regards the whole country. Outgoings of rent and rates in the region of £50–£60 per week for a modest council home are common place. Having done this the council organises maximum discounts for those who can afford to buy their council homes or an empty council house. Its propaganda is of the 'Don't keep throwing rent money down the drain – buy your house' variety, followed by the personalised 'Readers Digest' style letters to all tenants – regardless of circumstances.

The council is 'encouraging' some elderly people to move out of their homes if they are of the more desirable i.e. 'saleable' variety – the beautiful cottage estates with lawns and gardens built by the inter-war LCC.

'SALES ONLY' ESTATES

Large areas of Wandsworth are now 'sales only' estates and blocks. A pilot of five or six sales only estates were designated last year and this has been extended to scores of other estates and blocks.

Of course these are the best estates and blocks. And it means as soon as a home becomes vacant it is sold to someone on the list who can afford to buy or anyone else. And if a sales only block is not up to 'desirability' scratch the council is using its housing capital allocation to push work on these blocks to the top of the queue so that they become good enough for sales.

There is no doubt the policy is highly successful. Squeezed between high rents, and high discounts, many better off council tenants are keen to buy and the less well off realise they may actually be financially wiser to buy than be at the mercy of Wandsworth's rent levels.

Wandsworth is really gripped with a situation where if you are trapped in a high rise block – as the homes with gardens are sold and as improvement money is spent elsewhere on improving homes to sell – the housing transfer system is one in name only.

Wandsworth interprets the Homeless Persons Act as severely as they possibly can. One false move or statement and they'll class you 'intentionally' homeless. They've even gone back to a Poor Law system of trying to force genuinely homeless people under the Act to accept travel warrants to different parts of the country so that they become the responsibility of another authority as this discharges Wandsworth's obligation and leaves the individuals with no rights with the new authority.

A recent example of this was a victim of domestic violence with four young children who had a travel warrant foisted on her to return to live in her elderly mother's one-bedroom flat on the South Coast!

Tenant *consultation* is a farce. Tenant association representatives on the area panels don't even get *told* what new policies are about to be put into practice – everyone finds out when a council decision report is issued.

Those who work in the finance offices collecting rents are also expected to be agents for the Abbey National Building Society for payments and withdrawals.

The caretaking service in Roehampton is to be privatised in September – as a pilot scheme. There will be a private mobile cleaning force and a council run mobile uniformed security force – a recipe for cuts in staff, wages and a poor service. Thirty to forty GLC caretakers stand to lose their jobs.

FIGHTBACK

It *is* depressing.

But there is a fight back. Tenants Associations in Putney and Roehampton have never been stronger or more active. The Labour Party has given advice and help to tenants setting them up where this was asked for, and many tenant activists are now Labour Party members. Wandsworth's Labour councillors are working closely with tenants associations in their resistance and opposition and the Tories are genuinely scared of tenant strength. The GLC has supported resource centres and legal advice centres to arm the fight back and are looking at other ways which we can help – but which we can't let the Wandsworth Tories know about yet.

Those Labour councillors who take control of Wandsworth in May 1986 will need the support and understanding of the Labour movement in Wandsworth and London. It will be no good having an idea that by throwing the policies in reverse things will improve quickly. They won't. Wandsworth has lost years and years worth of its best housing stock and what you can sell and allow to decay over eight years will need far longer to ever replace and repair.

Andy Harris, GLC/ILEA
Member for Putney

yet done by the Borough Conference, though next year it will be), that consideration is taken of the wish of the Parties as expressed at the Conference. If Chairs are elected who disagreed with the Conference decisions and who are not prepared to carry them out, it's going to make our job difficult. The Committee Chairs and the Policy Committee should represent the Conference decisions and be able to implement them – Conference was very clear on the issue of accountability.

The team elected to lead the Council has no easy job – we can't expect things to suddenly change overnight, but the fairly limited objectives set us **can** *be achieved. This can help unite the Hackney labour movement and prepare for the battles to come.'*

SATURDAY
MAY 26th

London's day of action against health cuts.
Local activities in the morning.
3.00 St Georges Hospital, Hyde Park Corner –demonstration and rally.
Your hospital could be next to close!
Mock operations ★ speakers ★ music ★ balloons ★ motorcade.
Organised by London Health Emergency, 335 Grays Inn Road, WC1. Tel: 833 3020.

NATIONAL SHORT-LIFE CONFERENCE

30th June 1984
10am — 4pm
Thomas Coram Foundation
40 Brunswick Square, WC1
Chair: Chris Wadhams
£4 Unwaged £1.50
Lunch provided at these events
Burseries available for small groups.

Further details from Mary Evans, HEO, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1. Telephone 01 633 9377

BARKING WOMEN FIGHT ON

As many Briefing readers will be aware a courageous battle to prevent the slaughter of one section of the NHS is being waged at Barking Hospital.

On March 19th 92 women cleaners employed by Crothalls, a subsidiary of the giant Pritchard Group, decided to take strike action in the face of new proposals from their employer which would have resulted in:

- *Earnings slashed by 40-60 per cent.*
- *Holidays cut from 4 to 3 weeks.*
- *Sick pay reduced to the statutory minimum.*
- *Cleaning hours cut from 2189 hours to 1330 hours a week. The result of which would be less cleaning, dirty wards and patients put at risk from infection and disease.*

Since the decision was taken to go on strike the fight to maintain standards of cleanliness and to force Crothalls out of Barking Hospital has been spread to the cleaning company's head office in the City of London. At an early morning picket on April 6th over 100 people turned out to protest outside Pritchard's head office.

REMAINED SOLID

The strike at the hospital has remained solid over the past two months and a 24-hour, seven days a week picket has been maintained. Numbers have been boosted by contingents of Kent miners and by supporters from all over London.

The solidarity amongst the women has brought a vicious response from Crothalls' management. Scab workers have been bussed in from miles away, Crothalls' own rented thugs have attacked women on the picket line.

Crothalls have been working very closely with the local police in their attempts to break the strike. Scabs have been told to assemble at Barking police station and have then been driven through the picket lines with a police escort.

The tactics adopted by the police and the courts are very similar to those being used in the miners' strike. Nearly twenty people have now been arrested in connection with the dispute but the police have been very selective about who they've actually nicked.

EXPERIENCED ORGANISERS

Most of us have been experienced organisers who the police have picked out and as soon as there's been any action they've moved in and arrested their targets.

The condition of bail granted by the Barking Magistrates Court is that we don't go back to the picket lines. This helps the police and Crothalls to isolate the Barking strikers and makes it even more important that other activists in the London area make every effort to get to Barking.



Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

Striking cleaners at Barking hospital

With the government's determination to privatise all ancillary services in the NHS it is now clear that the only effective response is solid strike action. It is also absolutely vital that groups of workers, such as the Barking women, are not left to fight in isolation.

NOT FRIGHTENED

The Barking dispute has proved once again that people are prepared to fight and are certainly not frightened to confront the authorities and the contractors. Briefing readers can help by joining with and building local Health Emergencies. For contacts right London Health Emergency on 01-833 3020.

Messages of suport and donations for the Barking women to: Strike Office, AUEW House, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex RM10 7RA. Cheques payable to "Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency". Strike Office telephones: 01-592 5038 or 01-595 4252. Tube station: Upney (District Line).

Geoff Martin, Organiser, London Health Emergency.

Islington Council
On the side of the working class?

One hundred and fifty NALGO and NUPE workers in Islington have been on strike since April 16th over a claim for improved pay and conditions. The claim was submitted to the council in October 1983, but they managed to drag out negotiations until after the 84/85 budget-making.

This was despite the fact that the manifesto made very specific commitments to the workers and users – 'The Council should review pay and work to introduce a new scale in consultation with the unions. Staff ratios should be based on 1:4 + 2 to allow for holidays and sickness'. It also flew in the face of a decision made by a joint meeting of the Local Government Committee and Labour Group on February 23rd which called for 'immediate serious negotiations to take place with the relevant trade unions', by failing to meet the workers until six weeks after this date and then making a paltry offer.

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

Since the strike started the support has been overwhelming, not only from the workers concerned but also from parents, who occupied the town hall for more than 48 hours, and from a large number of Labour Party wards. The Council leadership has criticised the strike committee for asking the local party for support: setting themselves up as the ones who know what is best for the borough and showing themselves as little different from their SDP predecessors. They have also attempted to divide council workers from workers in voluntary nurseries and childminders by arguing that as these services are cheaper, the borough should be investing its scarce resources here.

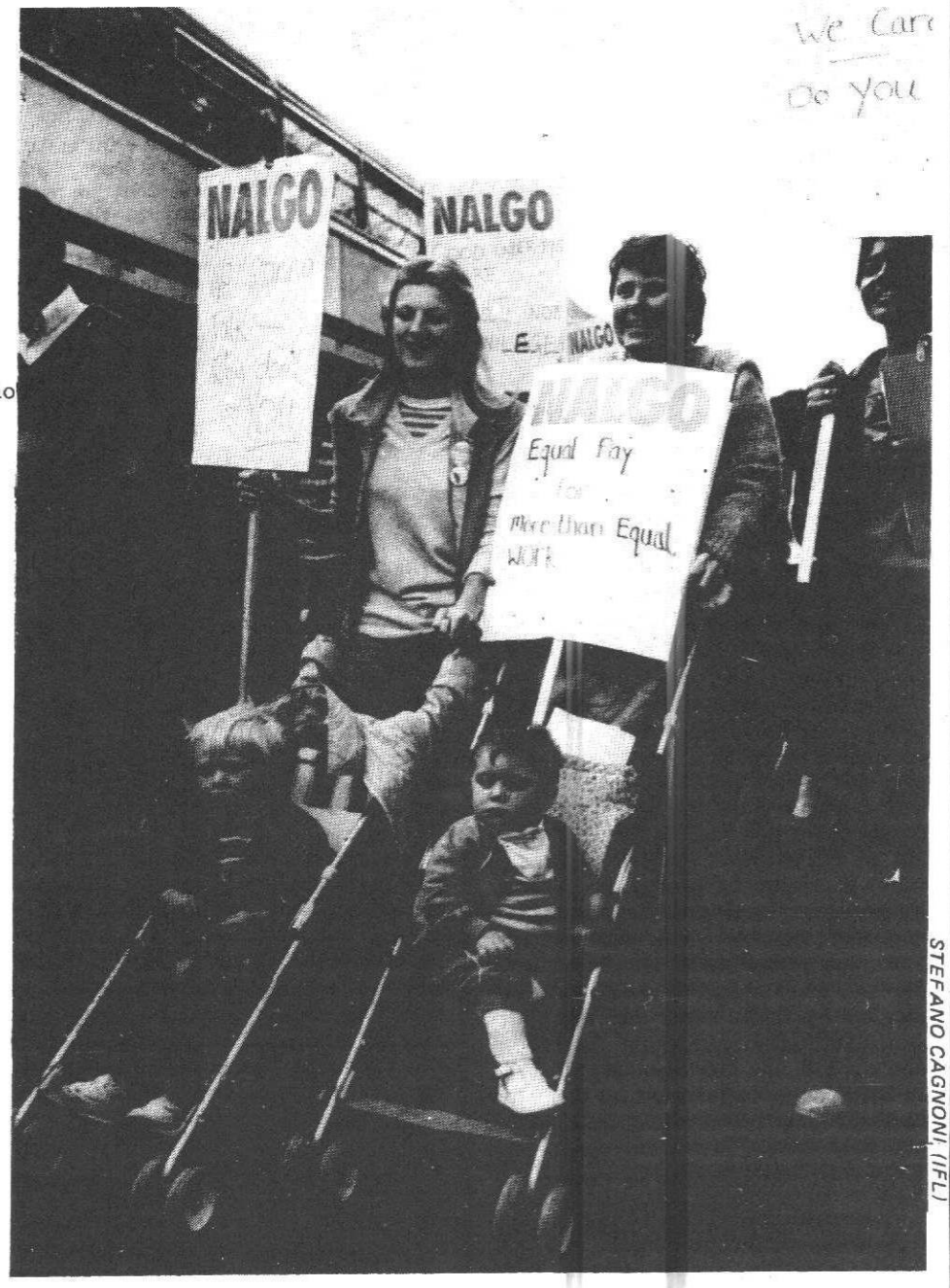
Is Islington treading the slippery road to privatisation we may ask, where cost not quality becomes the main criteria? We are also well aware that workers in the voluntary sector are receiving even lower wages than we do; indeed we have collaborated with ACTSS the voluntary sector union on their pay claim, which is based to a large measure on our own.

DIVIDE AND RULE TACTICS

These divide and rule tactics are clearly based on the notion that the mandate of this council is solely to administer the local state rather than to build a mass campaign against rate capping. How long will it be before we hear voices raised in Islington's council chamber that Labour cuts are more humane than Tory ones. Certainly Islington, like Lambeth and Southwark before it, seems to have more energy for fighting its workforce than the Tories. It is sad that the Council leadership has not learnt the lesson of Liverpool who gained 7 seats in the elections on the basis of its fightback whereas in Islington we lost two out of three last time we went to the electorate.

Islington NALGO understands that this dispute is not just an issue for a small group of workers but for the whole of the Council trade unions. We are in the process of discussing a whole series of solidarity actions which will come into force if negotiations are not successful. But whatever happens Islington Council has sorely blotted its copybook as a Council supposedly on the side of the working class in the borough.

Terry Conway (member of Strike Committee, in personal capacity)



STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL)

Nursery workers on march to Islington Council.

EDUCATION briefing

HANDS OFF

IT'S EASY to write spurious polemics of dubious accuracy as Keith Lichman so ably demonstrates in almost every recent issue of Briefing. Statements which accuse the ILEA of "paying lip service to the fight to save local government", of "endorsing cuts in London's Education" (May 84) and "of setting the manual workers against the teachers" (April 84) are not only rhetorical nonsense. They are also dangerously divisive.

There are areas where the Authority is failing, and I will come to these shortly, but they are emphatically not in the provision of teaching staff.

Statistics

To begin with the statistics. There are many sources for information on teacher numbers. Form 7 is an annual DES return based on teachers present in schools on a single day in January, they exclude teachers absent on courses, those absent through sickness and non-school based teaching staff. Form 618G is another DES return which is a payroll analysis of all teachers working for the Authority. Information can also be obtained from the ILEA budget and from the joint "manpower" watch. Keith Lichman chooses DES form 7 which is the least complicated and the lowest of these.

Without drawing a graph with a scale that would make the Utah Salt Flats look like the Andes the figures are as follows:

Year	*DES Form 7*	*DES Form 618G*	*Pupils*	*Overall ratio*	*Secondary pupils*
1978/79	*23179*	*24670*	.....	.....	.....
1979/80	*22876*	*24609*	*351697*	*14.30:1*	*169366*
1980/81	*22276*	*24465*	*335817*	*13.73:1*	*163288*
1981/82	*21608*	*23516*	*322771*	*13.73:1*	*156238*
1982/83	*21008*	*23192*	*310294*	*13.34:1*	*149442*
1983/84	*Not available*	*23010*	**301330*	*13.10:1*	*142085*

** Numbers of pupils in special schools are estimated.*
NB Teacher numbers are in full time equivalents.

Since the election of the new ILEA in 1981, the overall staffing ratio has improved each year and this year teacher numbers will rise in absolute terms. I agree with him that pupil teacher ratios, particularly those taken across the whole service, are not the most effective measure of what is really happening in schools. Nevertheless teaching staffing ratios have improved by over 8% in the past five years despite incessant pressure from the Treasury and the DES, the Cities of London and Westminster and the Tory Education Authorities for whom Inner London's continuing high spending has been an irritating embarrassment. Is this what Keith Lichman calls "real cutbacks in the education service"?

Inaccurate, Misleading or Dishonest

Statements like "ILEA's budget in fact is savaging school resources... the real teacher shortage in classrooms is being aggravated by fewer books, less paper and a shortage of resources in general" are wilfully inaccurate, deliberately misleading or wholly dishonest, as these figures show:

Net Revenue Expenditure:

	£
1980/81	*595m*
1981/82	*694m (+16.6%)*
1982/83	*774m (+11.5%)*
1983/84	*858m (+10.8%)*
1984/85	*923m (+7.6%)*

This level of expenditure has kept the Authority's budget ahead of inflation and provided growth in real terms.

The 1984/5 budget provides for 22506 staff. Unfortunately the counting system in the budget is not the same as for Form 7 or for Form 618G since neither AUR teaching staff (locally determined staff budgeted for by schools) or so called "supernumerary" staff are included.

By comparison the budget figure for 1982/83 was 22323 teachers and for 1983/84 the figure was 22063. On this basis teacher employment in ILEA is rising this year, not falling as previous articles in Briefing have suggested.

This year's budget also includes additional supply staff and additional staff for schools which are being reorganised. I could explain at length about the new permanent contracts for part time teachers, the increased terms for voluntary redundancy (how else are scale 1 teachers going to get substantial pay rises with the Burnham Committee unlikely to change and the higher scale posts occupied by staff who may be there for twenty years as pupil numbers continue to decline?) or the ring fence around the ILEA protecting all jobs below scale 3 for existing employees.

Keith Lichman on staffing numbers writes oppositionist claptrap.

Compulsory Redeployment

Compulsory redeployment goes back to the late seventies when the then ILTA leadership did a no redundancy deal with the ILEA leadership. Redeployment is divisive, unpopular and has been badly mishandled on many occasions. The essential problem remains, what is the solution to the dilemma where schools like mine are staffed to the Authority's standard ratio while other schools just down the road had until recently, pupils rattling around the building like peas in a drum with staffing ratios very much better than ours? Adding a few pence to the rates, as he suggests in his April article seems to be an unlikely sort of answer to come out of the Lichman stable!

What is particularly depressing is that there are other real problems which are being obscured by an obsessive desire to prove that ILEA is somehow anti-teacher. Sixth form policy, staff morale and the effects of an apparently unsympathetic bureaucracy combine to create apathy and cynicism in some of our schools.

There are serious difficulties with sixth form courses, which are generally not stimulating and demanding at all, either to teacher ot to students, contrary to Keith Lichman's protestations. Sixth formers are voting with their feet and getting out into FE to take up courses which they find more attractive than the bland blend of retakes and "relevance" which are on offer in too many of our schools.

At their best our sixth forms are progressive and innovative centres of education. Joint sixth forms operated by a group of schools with confidence and commitment are successful. The sixth form centre in Islington is attracting students out of the private sector, but very few traditional free standing sixth forms can offer the essential range of practical, academic and vocational courses to students of widely differing needs.

The demand of teachers are not synonymous with the needs of young people and the real challenge for the Left in London is to create a genuine comprehensive system of education for all 16 to 19 year olds with real equality of opportunity. And we're a long way from achieving that.

Decline in Morale

There is a decline in morale in the education service, although it isn't true for all schools. Part of this is due to fear of contraction and of the pervasive apprehension caused by Keith Joseph's continuing threats to the Authority and its budget. A decade of decline in real earnings has contributed enormously to the problem. Staff absence is high and someone at

I.L.E.A.!

EDUCATION briefing



Andrew Wiard (Report)

Demonstration against cuts in ILEA

County Hall or Divisional Office had better start thinking very creatively, if the additional 300 supply teachers in this year's budget are to be in post before the Autumn. Some Divisions can't recruit any at the moment, never mind looking for more.

The new initiatives on racism, sexism and classism are generally welcomed and supported in schools. But the ILEA leadership is widely perceived as not being aware of the practical problems of developing, let alone implementing or monitoring, any kind of policy while wrestling with the social disasters created by Thatcherism and municipal domestic architecture, and while covering for large numbers of absent staff.

One problem which members of ILEA seem not to have even considered is in the Divisional Offices, in the Inspectorate, in the offices at County Hall and in the layer of bureaucracy between the schools and themselves. A lot of these people are on our side. They believe in the Authority's policies and share its aspirations. But there are too many of them who appear unsympathetic, both to schools and to Members, who are unsupportive and who choose to operate in a Victorian coercive manner with little thought of cooperation or to working together to solve the fundamental problems which face all ordinary people working or living in Inner London.

Two weeks ago a school meals supervisor came to my school, a South London Comprehensive, and informed the kitchen staff that they were each going to have to take a two hour reduction in their working week, and so they did, with a concomitant loss of pay. Another supervisor made enormous difficulties when NUT members tried to ensure that the meals staff lost no money as a result of our present dispute.

Grossly Mishandled

Teachers don't get pay cuts, but some Divisional Officers do treat the teaching staff with the same unacceptably cavalier (they are all men) attitude. Transfers have been grossly mishandled, and some appointments are ineptly and insensitively dealt with. ILEA members have failed to get an effective grip on the bureaucracy which acts in their name, and it's about time they did.

While they're about it, the Constituency Labour Parties might do something to provide some more effective Labour Governors who attend meetings regularly, who participate actively and who know what they are doing. The vacancy and attendance rate is indefensible.

Sandwiched between Keith Lichman and Keith Joseph, I wish that they would both push off to some desert island where they could make each other's lives a misery and leave the rest of us to campaign to preserve London's education, to fight Thatcher and to build an effective challenge to the Tories in time for the next election.

The ILEA has its faults but the present leadership is on our side. It was in the forefront of a massive and successful campaign against abolition and it's about time that Keith Lichman recognised this and stopped shooting our own campaigners in the back.

Chris King

Advertising rates for London Briefing:

Whole Page	**£110**
Half Page	**£60**
Third Page	**£45**
Quarter Page	**£35**

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING
Political Editor: Graham Bash

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

EDUCATION briefing

South Brent – Tories plan school-free zone

BRENT'S TORY-Liberal coalition has launched a major attack on secondary education in the borough. If successful their proposals would mean the closure of up to five secondary schools in the southern, working-class part of the borough, and larger class sizes. In effect Kilburn would become a 'school-free zone'.

Education in Brent accounts for 60% of all current expenditure (excluding interest charges) and teachers' salaries represent over half of this sum. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the Tories have chosen this sector for a major cuts exercise. In order to close schools and sack teachers by September 1985 the Tories have to adhere to the Department of Education's statutory consultation procedure. They are hoping to rush this through now – between May and July 1984 – in preparation for cuts and rate-capping next year. Moreover, the process would be complete before May 1986 when Labour is likely to regain control.

Major consultation exercise

Under Labour, Brent had been one of the very few education authorities *not* to have closed schools in response to falling rolls – unlike Haringey or the ILEA for instance. In 1983 there was a major consultation exercise involving thousands of parents, teachers students and school governors, about the future of secondary education in Brent. After much deliberation and a massive campaign in which the right wing of the Labour Group pushed for two closures, it was finally agreed that all schools would remain open. Falling rolls would be used to improve class size and secondary schools with a low intake would be designated as "community schools" and thrown open to the whole community. South Kilburn High School, for example, became such a community school – without any advertising whatsoever, over 70 adults, mainly unemployed women, enrolled in classes and a nursery was established to cater for the massive demand for under 5 provision in the area.

Over-crowded secondary schools

The Tories are now planning to throw this all down the drain by reverting to large over-crowded secondary schools with the wider community being excluded. Many of the schools in the south have a large intake of black and Asian students and they are likely to suffer a fall in educational standards due to larger classes.

The Brent Tories' philosophy on this matter has more to do with money and property speculation than education. Some of the threatened schools are on prime development sites and the Tories would dearly love to sell them off for private house-building – in fact, they've already instructed the Brent valuers to price them. An added bonus is that some of the schools are in marginal Labour wards where some extra private occupiers wouldn't go amiss in future elections.

The Liberals aren't quite this cynical and blatantly exploitative in their approach to education. As yet, and as usual, they haven't made their minds up. If previous experience is anything to go by they'll meet the Tories three quarters of the way and close 3 schools instead of 5. Deep down they are terrified of rate-capping and believe that the best way to avoid the dracula of Central Government cutbacks is to give blood now.

Sabotaged

The Labour movement in Brent will be fighting these attacks both in the Council chamber – where delaying tactics are being prepared – and in the wider community. Unfortunately our defence of education has already been partly sabotaged by the antics of the leadership of Brent Teachers Association (NUT).

The Brent NUT is one of the (potentially) strongest teachers' associations in Britain. However, it suffers from the blight of the 'Max Morris legacy' – its leadership being dominated by a mixture of Euro-communists, liberals and right-wing Labourites. On paper the BTA is opposed to closures but its leadership is actually spearheading the closure campaign. They have put forward an 'alternative plan' which defends class size but concedes the closure of 3-4 schools! Indeed their plan is the one which is likely to be adopted since it provides the Liberals with a convenient "educational" cover for cuts while quashing the more "extreme" plans of the Tories.

In fact the BTA executive is a good example of the 'Anti-Thatcher Alliance' in practice – the Tories are to be given 95% of what they want on a plate! Whether or not rank-and-file teachers in Brent will put up with this blatant treachery will be the deciding factor in the coming struggle.

Cllr Frank Hansen
(Chair of Governors, South Kilburn High School)

No School Closures in Newham

Despite the decision taken by Newham full Council on the 9th December not to close schools, a campaign among certain Labour Councillors to have the decision reversed was set up. Despite the decision taken by Council, members of the Schools Sub-Committee did everything they could to ensure that the decision was not implemented and that school closures and amalgamations were effected. A motion was passed at the Schools Sub-Committee agreeing to this policy and when it was referred to the Education Committee, and Education Labour Group, it was approved.

However, the campaign that previously stopped school closures was not prepared to be beaten at this late stage in the debate. Parents mobilised together with teachers and pupils lobbying Councillors not to abandon the decision not to close schools. Councillors were reminded that both Newham N.W. and Newham N.E. CLPs had voted not to close schools. As a result, at the Labour Group meeting held before the special Council meeting that was supposed to approve the Education Committee's decision to close and amalgamate schools, it was agreed not to pursue this policy. Yet again, the combination of parents, teachers, pupils and Labour activists had stopped the attempt to close schools.

Fortunately, it now appears that those comrades that were so keen to close schools despite the overwhelming wishes of the local people and despite the 1982 manifesto commitment, have now accepted that they have lost the battle. There now seems genuine hope that the Labour Group will come together to discuss the real issues and problems of education in Newham without worrying about implementing Tory policies based on market force laws. Over the next two years, the Labour Group must consult the local parties to develop a true socialist plan of education for Newham.

Peter Pendle



Send a card to Norman Fowler!

Available from HHE HTUC Support Unit, 34 Dalston Lane, E.8.

Teachers fight on pay

EDUCATION briefing

One day no cover action, where NUT members refuse to take classes for teachers absent more than one day, is beginning to have an impact, as is the withdrawal from lunch-time supervision particularly in rural areas. These activities coupled with the one day strike on 9th May must form just the beginning of a campaign to win a pay award which begins to restore the living standards of teachers. No teacher or for that matter any trade unionist should be under the illusion that victories will be won from the Thatcher government with short term attacks. The government has shown through its anti-union legislation proposals, GCHQ manoeuvres and its conduct in the miners' dispute that it is prepared to commit itself to a war against the trade union movement and we must be equal to that fight.

UNKNOWN TERRITORY

For many teachers this will mean going into unknown terrirtory. The tactics used in the past are unlikely to have an impact in the climate of today. Therefore only by the use of extended strike action will a satisfactory pay offer be achieved. Socialist teachers in schools must attack Joseph's utterances that teachers taking action are 'unprofessional and irresponsible'. These sort of accusations should be treated with derision, especially from a government that has damaged morale throughout education through a series of cuts over a number of years and now seems hellbent on destroying state education. Equally we have to explain that talk of more next year is simply not good enough. All too often teachers and other public sector workers have been promised some cash bonanza in the future, only to find themselves tricked and cheated when it is time to pay up. Restructuring is no substitute for money now.

Since 1975 teachers have declined by 31% compared to similar occupational groups and thier living standards have fallen by 26% on the basis of a cost of living index. In fact although the leaders of the teachers unions are reluctant to say, the claim this year is for 12½%, and in order to win the claim in full, an extended campaign of industrial action will be needed.

The present offer of 4½% is derisory. Compared to the rate of inflation it represents a pay cut in real terms. Moreover for many classroom teachers this represents less than £4 a week in take home pay.

Given the wage differentials involved in teaching percentage pay claims only serve to widen the gap between the highest and the lowest paid. Although it will not be implemented this year it is vitally important that teachers continue the campaign, supported by NUT Conference this year, to ensure that next years pay claim is for a flat rate award. This will benefit over 70% of teachers and will unify the membership in pursuit of the claim.

ARBITRATION

Unfortunately the leadership of the teachers unions seem determined to resolve this years claim through the channel of arbitration. This so-called solution has also been proposed by Labour Party spokesperson Giles Radice. Arbitration is not the panacea that these people might suggest. It in no way guarantees a better pay rise, and takes the campaign away from the membership. To call for arbitration while teachers are on the offensive seems tactically naive.

The mood amongst most NUT and NAS/UWT members is to carry on the fight. With promotion virtually non-existent, the pay campaign offers the only hope of restoring declining living standards. Yet given Joseph's statement that pay levels reflect market forces; ie because there is no shortage there is no need to pay a decent wage, the way ahead must be to develop links with other groups of workers engaged in struggles. At the present time this will mean that teachers will have to drop their traditional isolationist role within the trade union movement and stand alongside the miners and other groups of public sector workers such as civil servants who have pay claims pending. The teachers pay award may ultimately be determined by the miners' fight for jobs. For should the miners not succeed, the government in a strengthened position would be unlikely to capitulate to the teachers over pay.

May 9th must be just a beginning. Teachers must say to the Union leadership: No to 4½%, No to Arbitration — Fight on for the full claim.

Paul Jeater, Havering NUT and member of Socialist Teachers' Alliance

LETTER

Dear *Briefing*,

In his letter to *Briefing* (May), Stuart Madewell inadvertently vindicated everything I said about ILEA playing off manual workers against teachers to the detriment of both groups and also to the detriment of the children (April *Briefing*).

His claim that NUPE voted for what was 'best for education in London and . . . *our* (NUPE's) members' indicates his misunderstanding of both interests.

That NUPE workers in the ILEA have a legitimate case against their low pay is indisputable. That teachers have a strong case against compulsory transfers and redundancies (or job selling or 'voluntary severance' as the powers that be like to call it) is also indisputable. The trap which Madewell falls into is to accept, as ILEA would have it, that the needs of the two groups are mutually exclusive. They are not. If the ILEA Group were serious about defending education, they would not have deliberately divided their workforce. Madewell, in his letter, seems content to see the two groups scrapping like dogs over a bone while ILEA is absolved of all responsibility.

As for crossing NUPE picket lines, Madewell is presumably referring to the advice given some years ago by the late NUPE leader, Alan Fisher, during a dispute. The NUT was told that it could cross NUPE picket lines, provided NUPE's work was not done by teachers. I agree that this situation is unsatisfactory but the responsibility belongs with both union leaderships. Madewell's attitude, however, appears to be vindictive. (For my part, I have never crossed a NUPE picket line, nor would I.)

If we leave aside the straight abuse towards the end of Madewell's letter, then the last point to answer is the 'ILEA leadership's argument' about the variations in class size and pupil teacher ratios. Firstly, I have argued that, by and large, most ILEA classes are too big to give London children a reasonable education (May *Briefing*). The present 'O' level and CSE examination system is 'aimed' at about 60% of the entire school population. While I do not by any means believe that good examination results are the only objective of education, the results of the exam aged population in a LEA are a good indicator of educational need. ILEA's dismal 13.7% of 1983 school leavers with 5 or more higher grade passes at 'O' level or CSE shows that ILEA's needs are enormous. They can only be met by *more* teachers – not by shuffling around the existing overworked, underpaid and demoralised teaching force and not by selling off jobs.

Yours fraternally,

Keith Lichman

Without Comment

From Labour Co-Ordinating Committees Mailing, April 1984

COUNTERING BRIEFING

The AGM passed several policy motions, most concerning the Greater London Labour Party. The support shown by delegates to the GLLP Annual Meeting for the LCC's Campaigning Motion demonstrated both how influential the LCC is in London and how much work still needs to be done.

Although the LCC Campaigning composite fell by 3 delegates' votes, it was agreed that much more work needed to be done. A working party will be set up to formulate proposals for reforming the structure and practices of the London Party. It was also suggested that "London Labour Activist" could be developed towards becoming an alternative to "London Labour Briefing".

Raid on Gay's the Word
OPERATION TIGER!

Sarah Roelofs, Islington South CLP

On the morning of April 10, two officers from HM Customs and Excise knocked on the door of Glen McKee's flat. Glen is on the board of directors of Gay's The Word Bookshop. The officers proceeded to go through his flat, inspecting everything they could lay their hands on. They were rude and off-hand. They took material relating to the shop, and also personal items and private papers.

At 1pm, officers walked into Gay's The Word and told Paud Hegarty, one of the two workers at the shop, to close it. Ten customers were asked to leave. The Customs officers then spent the rest of the afternoon examining the shop's stock and business materials. Amanda Russell, the shop's manager arrived and was taken to C&E HQ. Amanda and Paud were questioned at length about GTW's business dealings: they were both denied access to legal advice and not allowed to use the phone. 800 volumes, nearly a third of the shop's stock, were taken off the premises that afternoon. Officially they have been 'detained' but the raid does not stop there.

Amanda Russell was escorted from C&E HQ to her house, which was searched. Books were taken from her address and videos (mostly 'Coronation Street' but also 'Crufts Dog Show' . . . these were later returned).

In the course of the day, the GTW workers and directors in conversation with the officers discovered evidence that:

1. They had a code-name for the raid: Operation Tiger.
2. The day-to-day workings of GTW seemed to have been under surveillance for almost 18 months.
3. Outgoing and incoming mail from the shop may have been opened over this period.

Defend



Gay's The Word Campaign

WHAT IT MEANS

Gay's The Word bookshop is a focal point for the London lesbian and gay male community. It also acts as a vital contact point for isolated lesbians and gay men around the country. For Customs Officers to raid GTW is for them to come into our houses and search through our lives. GTW is a part of us: Operation Tiger was a violation of who we are. After years of hard work making lesbian and gay male literature visible and available we remain vulnerable to those who would have us destroyed. This raid is only the latest in a constant series of attacks on lesbians and gay men by the state. Other bookshops have been raided, gay discos have also been raided, and individual lesbians and gay men have been harassed and arrested. Lesbian mothers live under the continual threat of losing their children. The media has attempted to use lesbianism to undermine support for the Greenham women.

Customs have even wider powers than the police. They can enter and search any premises at any time without a warrant and take away anything they choose, such as address books, diaries, and even jewellery. They use themuch vaguer legal term 'indecent' to classify anything they take exception to. Their decisions cannot be effectively challenged in open court: no jury is given a chance to hear the reasons why literature of this kind should be available, and there is no consistency amongst magistrates in their judgements.

THE LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY REACTS

For most people in the lesbian and gay community, news of the raid was deeply shocking and disturbing. A meeting was immediately called for Sunday April 15 at County Hall. There were nearly 200 people at the meeting, of whom a third were lesbians. The shop's workers and the raided directors gave statements about what had happened. Then the meeting was opened to general discussion. This covered the far-reaching political implications of the raid, including its wider context in the current attempts to widen the scope of both 'indecency' and 'obscenity' laws; and also the political arguments within the lesbian and gay community, for example whether or not the lesbians present could be expected to support all the titles detained or could reserve the right to object to some whilst still supporting the bookshop. In order to try and clarify the latter the lesbians held a women's meeting where it was decided that a major women's meeting would be called as soon as possible to discuss both the mixed Campaign and a possible linked but parallel women's campaign.

It was agreed that three areas could be initially singled out for organisation: media, demonstrations and a broadsheet. These groups are now organising various events.

Women's Right to Read and Write is the women's campaign which is working alongside the mixed defence campaign. We are defending Gay's the Word as lesbians, feminists and as women, because we recognise what GTW has done for lesbians and its importance for them. And we know that a women's bookshop, a feminist centre or individual lesbians could be next in line for state harassment. It is not for the patriarchal state to censor our reading and writing especially when every newstand is freely selling racist, sexist and pornographic material. But we are deeply critical of some gay men's mysogyny, sexism and anti-feminist ideas and practice. We are organising as women to defend lesbians and lesbianism. Contact us via A Woman's Place, 01-836 6081 (women only).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. *Write to your MP, local councillor, etc: asking him/her to condemn the raid; asking him/her to lend support to or sponsor the Defend GTW Campaign; asking him/her to write directly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who is responsible for Customs). Please send a copy of replies to us.*
2. *Motions through your union branch or local party.*
3. *Support demonstrations, benefits etc.*
4. *Send donations.*
5. *Visit the bookshop (66 Marchmont St, London WC1, tel: 01-278 7654).*

Information compiled by Sarah Roelofs, from Labour Movement Lesbians (tel. 01-930 0715).

Motion passed by Camden Council:

This Council strongly condemns the action of the Customs and Excise in raiding Gays The Word on 10 April 1984. Gays The Word is one of London's most important community bookshops and meeting places for gay men and lesbians. Its right to continue to exist and serve the community in Camden and nationwide must be defended without qualification.

This raid is an example of the ways powers intended to be used against pornography are repressively and selectively turned against the lesbian and gay communities. This Council also deplores the searching and detention of GTW staff, the confiscation of their private papers and calls for an investigation into remarks made by Customs Officers during the raid that suggested phones may have been tapped and mail intercepted. Such actions are yet more examples of this government's future intentions as laid out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.

Black section in Vauxhall

Vauxhall Black Section was born last October at the Transport and General Workers' divisional headquarters in Stockwell. The turn-out of seven Black Labour Party members — almost half of them women — would have been remarkable had the occasion been an "official" branch meeting somewhere in inner London. The prime movers behind the fledgling caucus — Leo Dickson and Marc Wadsworth from the predominantly Black Ferndale ward in Brixton — had predicted that perhaps five people would come. They had experienced a mixed reaction from ward secretaries when they asked for the names and addresses of Black members. It was imperative, they felt, that Black activists should approach Black members about the setting up of a Black section in a constituency that was almost 30 per cent Black. Well-meaning White activists either wanted to do this for them, thus perpetuating the apathy-inducing paternalism which mars Black/White relations, or they said mysterious Black members they had approached opposed the 'concept'.

Anyway, the germ of an idea, which had evolved from a year of suggestions and very little action, had begun to sprout. From the start, Militant displayed exemplary organisation. Three supporters turned up complete with draft rules and a 'slate' of officers! A non-Militant chair, Bernard Ampaw, was elected and Militant took the posts of vice-chair and secretary. Their draft rules were incorporated into a similar set which had been developed by Holborn and St Pancras Black Section.

Wrangles over the officer posts, hinging on whether or not officers put the Labour Party and the Black Section or Militant first, resulted in new non-Militant officers filling all the posts at the April annual meeting. Discussion at the Black Section still tends to centre on these internal wrangles and on resolutions aimed at establishing our existence and on refining our procedures. But we've also discussed local issues like Lambeth Council services (or lack of them) to Black people, unemployment and campaigning generally and, more specifically, in regard to a by-election in Ferndale. Members of the Black Section successfully lobbied for a Black woman candidate to be chosen and have since been very involved in her campaign.

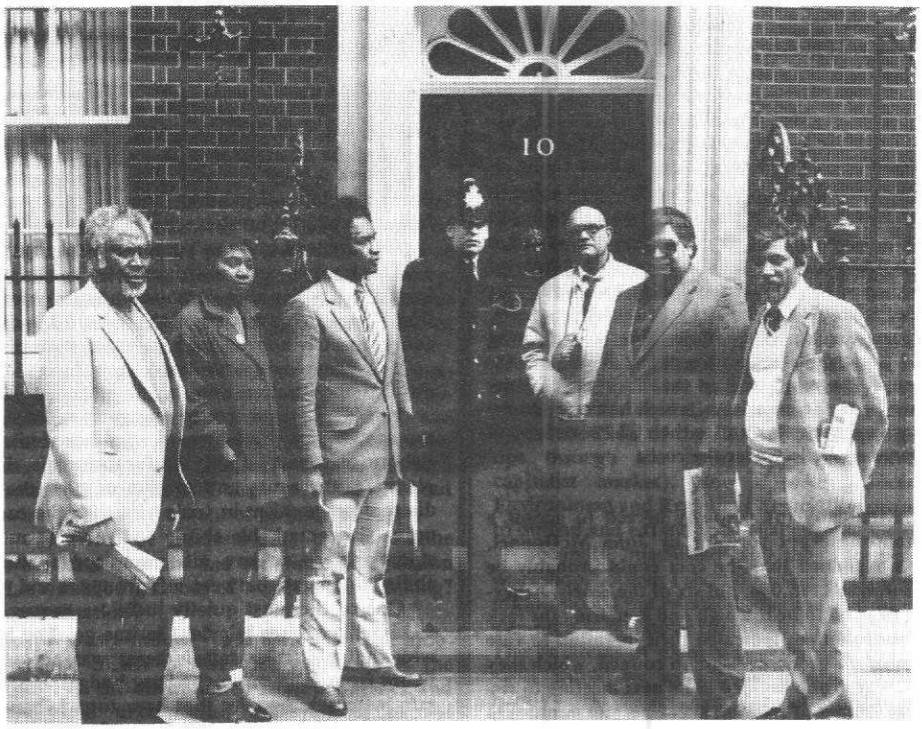
Black members also contributed to a couple of street meetings in Brixton, which collected the signatures of hundreds of people opposed to the aboliton of the GLC. Added to this, a hard-core of five Black Section activists has been busy providing speakers to ward meetings in neighbouring constituencies — spreading the 'concept' of Black Sections.

Kinnock has been challenged to come to Brixton and meet some of his Black comrades to discuss the issue. Vauxhall CLP had previously passed a resolution which challenged the party nationally to show its hand on Black Sections. Two delegates from the Section have been given full voting rights on the GMC ahead of any constitutional rule change which would make such a move 'legal'. Vauxhall was the first CLP in the country to do this.

We're now looking forward to switching into over-drive, with the by-election and Euro-elections behind us. Yes, we'll continue to fight for more Black representation at all levels of the party. But we'll also be pressing the party on policy so that Labour's silent minority finally gets heard. And, more locally, our hope is that the internecine and debilitating wrangles with Militant will cease so that we can get down to the real business of recruiting more Black socialists and defeating the Tories.

Ruffo Bravette, Vauxhall Black Section liaison officer

BOTHA: NO ENTRY



Deputation delivers protest to 10 Downing Street over Botha's visit to Britain

The following resolution will go to the next meeting of the Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party.

"The Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party condemns the decision of the British Government to invite the Prime Minister of the racist regime of South Africa to Britain. This tactless and insensitive move will be seen by the Black communities in this country as an expression of British solidarity with one of the most odious regimes in the world.

It is also an attempt to re-introduce South Africa into the community of nations from which it was virtually excluded for its human rights violations.

We call on all those people opposed to Apartheid and racism to demand that the invitation to Botha be withdrawn.

We also call upon a future Labour government to commit itself to material, diplomatic and political support for the African National Congress in its efforts to replace Apartheid and racist tyranny with a democracy in which the majority will rule while safeguarding the legitimate rights of the minorities.

We call on the Executive Committee to give full support to all demonstrations, marches and vigils aimed at isolating the perpetrators of this unwanted visit".

Vidya Anand
Richard Balfe MEP
Russell Proffitt
Michael Ward
Narendra Makanji
Jeremy Corbyn MP

Royalty or class loyalty?



John Chapman

On 8th May the Thames Barrier was officially opened by the Queen. She was there at the invitation of the GLC Labour Group. Why?

In the beginning, the idea was to have a simple, inexpensive ceremony, with the actual opening performed by either one of the workers who had built the barrier or the chair of the GLC. Under Mrs Thatcher's threat to abolish the GLC, plans changed and it was decided to invite the Queen to perform the ceremony, apparently in the hope that this would imply royal support and produce royal pressure to save the GLC. The idea was ludicrous. Elizabeth Windsor is a shrewd, grasping woman, determined to preserve the privileged position of herself and her family. She is hardly likely to jeopardise this by intervening in what, to her, is a matter of no importance.

Once royalty was involved, cost became a problem. The group declared itself in favour of a "simple ceremony". This turned out to mean expenditure of £340,000, of which £240,000 was to come from the GLC and the remainder from the private contractor. Eight of the group, Andy Harris, Deirdre Wood, Bryn Davies, Jenni Fletcher, Leslie Hammond, Steve Bundred, Charlie Rossi and Ashley Bramall, put down a resolution for debate in full council, rejecting the proposed expenditure as too great. This caused a furious row at the group meeting on 5th March, when Ken Livingstone, having failed to persuade the rebels to withdraw their motion, launched a vituperative attack on them, accusing them of disloyalty, "hyprocrisy" and "left-wing careerism". He claimed that he had frequently suported measures which he knew to be wrong and against the manifesto out of loyalty to the group. The rebels replied that their first loyalty must be to the manifesto, which had rejected expensive ceremonies, and to their CLPs, which had expressed anxiety over the costs.

Eventually the majority agreed to accept a compromise put forward by John McDonnel, who explained that the cost could probably be reduced to £175,000, but six of the rebels, believing this still to be too high and deploring the lack of consultation, indicated their intention to vote against the group decision in council, which they did. The group decided at its next meeting to circulate copies of relevant decisions and minutes to all London CLPs.

The rebels thus secured some reduction in expenditure and a gesture, albeit somewhat belated, to democratic accountability. Otherwise this sad little story illustrates much of what has gone wrong in Labour controlled councils and cabinets. Ken Livingstone's assertion that group loyalty superceded all others, even when the group is acting against the manifesto and without proper consultation, is wrong. The first loyalty of a socialist should be to socialist principles.

The opening of the Thames Barrier should have been used to help mobilise working class support against Thatcherism and the capitalist state. The sight of "the people's Ken" bowing to the living embodiment of a class society based on hereditary wealth and privilege will not help to raise consciousness or build workers' solidarity.

Paula Watson, Westminster South CLP observer to GLC

REVIEW: *CITIZEN KEN* by JOHN CARVELL

This book is a bit like one of those biographies of Hollywood stars. You know the sort I mean – the humble childhood, exhibits from the family album, the inspirational mentor, heady wine of overnight fame, the painful brushes with co-stars and those only making guest appearances!

Only instead of Lana Turner or Joan Crawford, Ken Livingstone is the latter-day star.

The book is compulsive and easy reading and provides a sympathetic portrait of the GLC leader from a journalist who obviously admires him. This is both a strength and weakness – a strength in that Ken and the Labour GLC deserve a written record that is supportive, but this book in its easy-going narrative approach ducks incisive criticism and is a bit baclava-like.

The accuracy of the book rests in its identifying the major strengths of Ken apart from the obvious ones that are seen by the press and public. It is worth dwelling on these.

Firstly, Ken's ability to engage in serious, long-term planning to achieve objectives comes out – the sustained encouragement of other similar-minded comrades to challenge right-wingers for safe Labour seats and get selected for marginals, the careful study of past psephology as a tool of socialist planning, the acute anticipation of how the party or his group will react to various situations, a discreet pragmatism in trade-offs with the centre and the right to maintain cohesion and a working unity, the remarkable ability to size up an audience whether in a hall or on television and fashion his statements to achieve maximum appeal without contradicting his underlying principles, and the ability to operate between left groups as and when but never be anyone's tool.

One of the most quietly judicious moves Ken ever advised was the decision to raise and pay off £125 million fares fair debt in one go. The hard left knew, understood, and by and large accepted, why that particular rate increase was necessarily massive. But it meant that bolstered up by this figure from then on in the base budget, we were never faced subsequently with the agony of large rate increases. Agonies that have torn Labour Groups apart in other London boroughs. John Carvell rightly highlights this particularly clever thinking.

All these qualities and more are shown time and time again in the catalogue of events – the toppling of Andrew McIntosh, the fares fair episode, the highly successful fringe meeting at the party conferences and 'Save the GLC Campaign', and many more achievements.

The book is not hard enough on the failures. Someone who knew the rule book and the reactionary nature of the NEC as well as Ken did should never have got involved in a caucus selection in Brent East knowing that this was all the party establishment would need to scupper the Left's chances of ditching Reg Freeson. Above all the depressing episode of the ILEA Leadership battle in March 1983, when he clumsily challenged Frances Morrell for the ILEA Leadership as if he were the incumbent opponent, shows up a weakness to want to overstretch himself and exert instant power in an arena where he had maintained little influence.

The book doesn't pretend any deep historical analysis. Yes, the 1973-77 GLC Labour administration is described, and the democratisation battles within the party are alluded to, but the book doesn't really see that Ken and this Labour GLC are part of an inevitable progression that emerged from the conflict of ideas in the party.

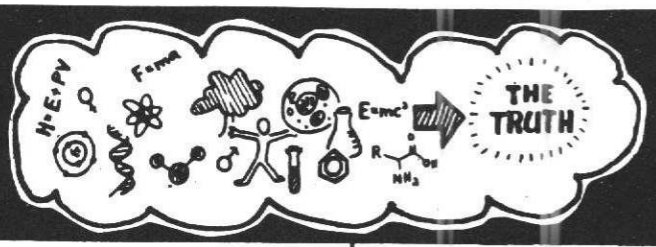
The book does tend to present Ken as an exceptional enigma. He is exceptional but is very much a product of larger movements and ideas. Ken would have rested in a better contextual balance if the actual results of policies put into practice had been more fully developed. The success of the transport policies and arts policies, for instance, could have done with some views of users and workers on how the improvements affected their lives. Credit should have gone to Committee chairs and party members who formulated and pursued these policies.

Superstars are a bad thing for the Labour Party. The party has suffered at the hands of male superstars of both the left and right – for stardom becomes more important than the party or the policy. John Carvell's book is an unfortunate reinforcement of this syndrome.

This is an over-affectionate portrait which will no doubt find itself lying on many a beach towel this summer along with the ambre solaire and sunglasses.

Andy Harris, GLC/ILEA for Putney

science briefing



Voluntary poisons

One third of fruit and vegetables sold in Britain last year contained pesticide residues. DDT was found in 10% of items for which its use is banned under Britain's VOLUNTARY pesticide code. The Association of Public Analysts who made the survey say the code is not working.

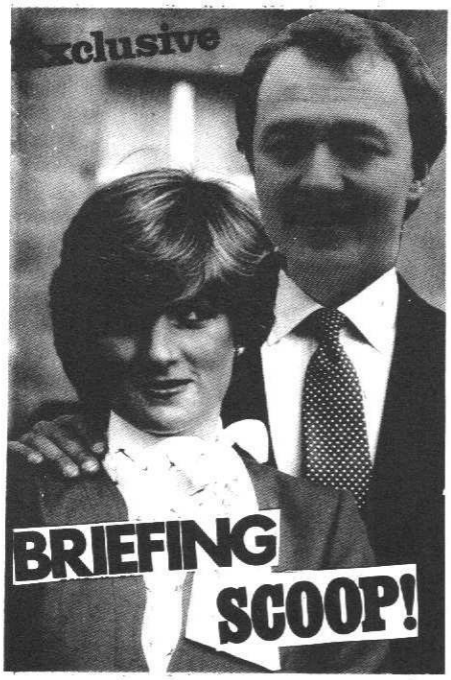
In 1979 and 1980 half of samples of British strawberries contained more than the UN's limit of 10 parts per million of the hazardous fungicide dichlofluanid. In the Netherlands, where there are statutory limits on residues, less than 1% of samples exceeded the limit.

Other 'banned' pesticides which 'voluntarily' find their way into your fruit and veg are dithiocarbamates, dimethoate and dieldrin. The lessons of this body masochism by the population of Britain appears to be that it is as reasonable to expect manufacturers to voluntarily stop putting pesticides into you as it is to expect capitalism to voluntarily abdicate.

I suggest:-

1. Ask your greengrocer what is in the fruit and veg. Can he guarantee there are no 'banned' chemicals in them?
2. Grow your own strawberries. Buy chemical free fruit and veg.
3. Raise resolutions calling on the Labour Party to implement a statutory code. And that goes for lead in petrol too.
4. If you live in a country area or near a market garden than take a look at what goes on and campaign about it.

Piers Corbyn



Cath Tate

Letter...

Dear Science Briefing,

Though any publicity is usually better than no publicity, there was so much inaccuracy and distortion in Les Hearn's piece 'Reds and Greens Unite' to make a reply necessary.

The conference held last November was organised jointly by Green CND (the official 'ecological' section of CND) and SERA. It was basically for people who already saw themselves as being both 'red' and 'green' though their primary organisation/political loyalty might be either to the labour movement or to the 'green movement' which is a looser and perhaps broader concept.

Les' statement that 'the rejection of capitalist life-styles did not extend to the rejection of machismo, as sexism prevailed' is outrageous, especially when coming from an admitted supporter of a Trotskyist organisation.

The main organisers of the conference were all women. At both the beginning and end of the conference there was several minutes silence while we all linked arms as a gesture of solidarity. 'Platforms', big name speakers and long plenaries were all avoided in favour of small, autonomous, 'ill-organised', workshops.

Les also describes SERA's support for popular planning, decentralisation and workers' co-operatives rather patronisingly as 'milk and water solutions' (just a hint of machismo creeping in here?) No doubt Les belongs to the 'let's smash capitalism and then we'll think about what to do next' school of political thought.

It would be interesting to try to imagine what kind of social and economic organisation Les would be in favour of – unpopular planning? centralisation?

Seriously though' [our emphasis] the problem for SERA is that such questions as the threat to the environment from pollutants, and the rapid uncontrolled depletion of natural resources, whether oil, coal, gas and mineral deposits (or living 'resources' such as animal and plant species) are regarded on the left as worthwhile causes but not really fundamental.

The ecological crisis will require a society that is more egalitarian, less 'consuming' and more carefully planned. A bureaucratic centralist planned economy simply increases the scale of mistakes made, such as the huge nuclear power stations without proper safety precautions in the USSR and the forests in Poland that were torn up to make way for steel mills that are not needed.

As ecology has tended to have a 'cranky' and eccentric image, SERA has tended to concentrate on practical issues such as transport, energy policy, public health/ pollution control and encouraging job creation that saves rather than wastes resources. There is though a need for a wider economic and political debate. What happens to the British economy when the revenues from North Sea oil start running out? A Keynesian type AES will start to look very sick then. Could we produce more of our own food using less destructive methods so making us less dependant on exporting goods and thus having to keep up with the high technology rat race?

The problems we face are deep rooted, and simply repeating the old slogans will not be enough. If you are interested in these issues – get in touch with SERA.

John Bradbrook
SERA Council,
Islington South and Finsbury C.L.P.
(This letter has been slightly shortened)

...a reply

John's attack is unjust. His criticisms are based on only three sentences of my article. Firstly the 'patronising' description of 'popular planning, decentralisation and workers co-ops' as 'milk-and-water solutions'. I apologise for using this term, but it seems to me that these *are* a thinly-diluted type of socialism *if* they are not placed in the context of a revolutionary critique of capitalism. Yes, they challenge capitalism in a confused and contradictory way, a challenge that capitalism responds to in various ways (abolition of the GLC or bankrupting co-ops through the normal operation of the capitalist market). How does the *Socialist* Environment and Resources Association propose to defend and extend such challenges?

Secondly 'machismo' and the 'ill-organised workshops'. Again I should apologise. Of course machismo did not prevail throughout but enough was present to impair the quality of workshops. The problems of plenary sessions are not necessarily solved by workshops; indeed articulate hobby-horse riders can dominate them too. Workshops must have a co-ordinator who is capable of sensitively squashing the over-vocal and steering discussion along agreed lines. Where a workshop is 'led' the introducer or 'leader' must turn up on time. At the conference my experience was that self-discipline and sensitivity were not observed in workshops.

However John appears to regard these points as less than serious. I find I totally agree with his latter – 'serious' points, and have often made them myself. These articles are aimed at the non-green left whom surely must co-operate with the 'green' . . . Something I strongly urged in my article! I also recommended readers to join SERA!

Les Hearn

The address of SERA is 9 Poland St, W1 V3DG. Tel 439 3749.

SCIENCE BRIEFING missed you for the last two issues, due to lack of space, sorry! Ideas, articles, letters (SHORT PLEASE) to Science Briefing, c/o Piers Corbyn, 55 Innis House, East St, SE17 2JN. Tel 701 5691.

Heartening gains for Labour in London

The widespread gains made by Labour in local government elections on May 3rd are confirmed in recent London by-elections. Since the beginning of the year, Labour share of the vote in all parts of London has gone up by about 14% – mainly at the expense of the Tories and the SDP. The Liberal Party continues to challenge the safe – but neglected – Labour areas such as Southwark and Tower Hamlets and is making considerable ground where Labour's opposition to the Tories is relatively weak (e.g. Kingston, Bromley, Redbridge etc).

The forthcoming European elections on June 14th will provide a good indicator to changes in London and voting patterns. Effective Labour Party organisation should ensure that seats such as London Central, London North and London East are won for Labour. The Labour campaign will be launched on May 14th and the Labour Manifesto will be published on May 21st. A series of rallies, meetings and concerts have been organised for the campaign to show the positive policies and candidates to the London electorate; the Euro-elections will be fought not only against the Tory government but also against the spoiling effect of the Alliance – which is internally split on Party lines and is unable to agree on important policy areas such as nuclear disarmament, relations with trades unions and the decentralisation of power.

An interesting feature of the by-election results is that Labour has won seats from the opposition where the Party has worked and campaigned CONTINUOUSLY *to put forward our policies. Seats have been won in areas in Barnet and Haringey that have never been Labour and greatly increased majorities have been recorded in Ealing, Merton, Camden and Lambeth.*

FORTHCOMING BY-ELECTIONS:

June 14th Newham, Little Ilford Ward.
Haringey, Highgate Ward.
Early July Southwark, Lyndhurst Ward.

DATE	BOROUGH	CON	LAB	LIB/SDP	
13.10.83	Wandsworth	-7.7	-2.4	+7.5	Lab loss to Lib
20.10.83	Haringey	+9.7	-2.3	-1.5	Lab hold
27.10.83	Islington	-10.9	-15.9	+26.7	Lab loss to SDP
	Islington	-17.3	-8.1	+23.7	Lab loss to SDP
	Islington	-11.0	-8.8	+22.4	Lab hold
	Barnet	-11.8	+15.9	-6.0	Con loss to Lab
10.11.83	Havering	-8.4	-3.6	+10.6	Con hold
	Havering	-5.0	+10.3	-7.2	Con hold
	Havering	-0.5	+2.8	-7.6	Con hold
	Havering	-12.7	+11.1	-1.2	Con hold
	Richmond	-17.0	-4.7	+25.5	Con loss to Lib
	Richmond	-6.8	-3.8	+10.8	Lib hold
17.11.83	Ealing	-5.3	+16.7	-11.4	Con hold
24.11.83	Hounslow	-8.0	+1.8	+5.6	Con hold
	Enfield	-6.5	+10.0	-3.5	Lab hold
1.12.83	Lewisham	-1.5	+0.3	-3.0	Lab hold
	Lewisham	-5.2	+3.1	+2.1	Con hold
8.12.83	Hammersmith	-8.2	+8.5	-2.0	Lab hold
15.12.83	Ken. & Chelsea	-8.8	-11.5	+27.1	Lab hold
26.1.84	Brent	+5.2	-6.7	+1.5	Lab loss to Con
16.2.84	Lewisham	+1.4	+7.6	-4.9	Lab hold
	Redbridge	-33.6	-3.1	+36.7	Con loss to Lib
	Redbridge	-13.4	+15.1	-1.6	Con hold
23.2.84	Camden	-5.1	+7.2	-2.1	Lab hold
	Southwark	-26.7	-17.8	+32.7	Lab loss to Lib
	Southwark	-3.4	+8.7	-7.8	Con hold
	Brent	-0.7	+3.2	-2.4	Con hold
1.3.84	Tower Hamlets		-0.6	+9.1	Lab loss to Lib
15.3.84	Merton	-12.5	+8.5	-0.1	Con loss to Res. Ass.
	Merton	-7.1	+17.6	-10.5	Lab hold
22.3.84	Kingston	-26.1	-3.4	+28.8	Con loss to Lib/SDP
	Lambeth	-12.4	+14.8	-2.5	Lib/SDP loss to Lab
12.4.84	Haringey	-6.4	+11.7	-7.3	Con loss to Lab
	Haringey	-11.7	+17.0	-5.4	Con loss to Lab
	Haringey	-11.2	+11.2	-0.8	Con loss to Lab
	Bromley	+5.5	+3.5	+1.7	Con hold
26.4.84	Ealing	-7.2	+12.1	-5.0	Lab hold

TO ALL BRIEFING CONTRIBUTORS

Our typesetters have complained about the standard of presentation of copy submitted. In future we would like contributors to make every effort to keep to the following standards. We feel this is important because we don't regard the people who typeset our magazine as mere cogs in the production process. We are concerned that they might suffer from eyestrain and increased stress purely because of our lack of forethought.

1. Please make every possible effort to type your contribution. The typesetters agree that a very small amount of handwritten copy might be acceptable – but this concession should be reserved for small 'stop press' items only. In such extreme cases, handwritten copy should be presented on lined paper, using alternative lines only.

2. Type on one side only of A4 sheets. Use strong white paper. Leave two-inch wide margins at the left AND the right, and leave space at the head and foot of each page. Before you start, check to see whether your typewriter ribbon needs replacing.

3. A double line space (4 clicks of the roller knob) gives the typesetters well-spaced lines – much easier to read! – and also leaves space for subheadings, substitution marks and minor amendments to be inserted.

4. To indicate a new paragraph, indent three spaces. Never break words at the end of the line.

5. Finally, remember to number the pages of your manuscript in the right hand corner.

The next issue of the Streetlife Supplement will be on racism. Articles and letters should be sent to Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16 by Monday June 11th. *Please note the change of address!*

The next Streetlife Supplement meeting will take place on Thursday 21st June at 8pm at County Hall, London SE1.

LONDON BRIEFING FORUM
'Fighting to Establish Black Sections'
Speakers:
Diane Abbott, Mark Wadsworth
Monday June 4th at 7.30pm
At County Hall

Next London Editorial Board will be on Tuesday June 26th at 6.30pm at County Hall.

Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd [TU], Forster Road, London N17.
Typeset by Bread 'n Roses [TU], 30 Camden Road, NW1, and by Folrose Ltd [TU], 98 Gifford Street, London N1 and by Lithoprint, 329 Upper Street, London N1.

Published by London Labour Briefing, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16

LABOUR 20p
BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
No. 8 June 1984

FIGHTING FOR US ALL!



Labour Party Photo Library

Tony Benn addresses NUM rally in Chesterfield, 14th April

by Tony Benn (speaking at Penrhiwceibr)

"What is different about the miners' strike? What is different is that now we know it's for real. There's been many speeches made when people didn't realise their relevance – now we're fighting for our lives, on the same cause all over the country. We know the miners are fighting for all of us. Everyone else who is fighting for survival is shielding behind the miners – the NHS workers fighting cuts and privatisation, the women of Greenham Common, the trade unionists at GCHQ – they're all on the same side. Sarah Tisdall's on the same side, and the Metropolitan Counties that are being destroyed because the government is determined to obliterate every bastion of Labour support. We won't let them do it. We are defending ourselves and in the process we are educating ourselves. All our learning has come from struggle. This time women have taken the initiative. When women came from Maerdy and from Kent to demonstrate in Nottinghamshire they were arguing the case for the cause in their own right – not just staying at home and trying to manage when their old man is on strike.

We're defending but we're trying to build something new. The strength of our movement is that it has a vision of something better. Nothing is ever won without a struggle. What we are learning is that if we ever stop struggling they take it all away.

Now we have a recognition that it is our struggle – a belief that the time has come when we take control of society and administer it for the use of all".

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

Miner's strike: Briefing groups mobilise

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Briefing supporters have been active all over the country helping organise solidarity action with the miners.

BIRMINGHAM

The Trades Council has set up a support committee. Collections and benefit concerts are being held all over the city. The support committee is considering adopting a particular pit. Soho Ward in Ladywood CLP has organised miners to speak in Sikh temples and are collecting food from Asian shops.

EXETER

Briefing supporters moved a resolution unanimously passed by Pennsylvania St Davids Branch, and later adopted by the GMC to adopt Maerdy pit in South Wales, and collect food and money. Van loads of food are being taken to Maerdy. Labour Party members have joined miners staying locally to picket docks at Teignmouth.

NORTH STAFFS

Massive financial support has been flooding in. A social evening at Biddulph, a small town in North Staffs., raised over £100. N.Staffs NUPE nurses' branch donated £150 out of branch funds of £177. Miners from the three pits in his constituency forced John Golding to speak in support of the strike at a rally of 2000 in Hanley Town Hall. Longton Town Hall has been used for accommodation for pickets. 10 food distribution centres have been set up for families of miners in the city.

MANCHESTER

In Manchester the Miners' Support Committee has collected over £700 in four weeks. Tours have been organised to factories all over the city. The local Confed has called an emergency shop stewards' meeting in works time to discuss support for the miners. Arthur Scargill has been invited to speak. At the meeting it will be argued that all the Manchester engineering factories should twin with striking Lancashire pits and raise regular levies and collections. The Bakers' Union is providing bread for the miners.

SOUTHAMPTON

South Wales miners are permanently based at Southampton with an office provided by NUPE district council. A continual tour of workplace meetings is being organised and donations have been received from dockers, hospital workers, power workers, railworkers and post office engineers.

CARDIFF

Briefing supporters, with the help of NUM Rhondda Joint Lodges, have succeeded in getting the local Labour Party to set up a Miners' Support Committee. This is despite the opposition of the right who said that all support should be organised through "official channels". The committee, which has an office at the Wales TUC, is organising continuous workplace tours and collections. Cardiff West women's sections and Cardiff Central YS have arranged collections outside supermarkets. A collection outside the Welsh Rugby Union Cup final netted over £600. Cardiff Central Labour Party is collecting the 50p Labour Party levy weekly, while moves are afoot to organise street collections in several wards. The City Party is holding a public rally. Briefing supporters raised £16 busking in the city centre.



BRIGHTON

The Trades Council/Labour Party Support Committee are working from the local Labour Party offices. Delegations are being sent to picket Shoreham power station. Kent miners' wives have spoken at public meetings locally. Brighton Labour Party donated £200 at the beginning of the strike and are collecting a 50p per member levy. Labour students at the University called an emergency general meeting attended by over 400 students, and regular collections have so far raised £200. In Hove Labour Party, Briefing supporters successfully moved a £50 donation despite opposition from the right.

SWANSEA

Lliw Valley Trades Council has set up a support committee which is organising collections and workplace tours. Briefing supporters are fighting for local trade unions to strike on the Wales TUC Day of Action.

CAERPHILLY

Briefing supporters have helped set up the Rhymney Valley Miners' Support Group. The group includes representatives from Bedwas and Nantgarw pits and coke ovens, as well as Penallta pit and Bedwas tar plant. The Trades Council, Labour Party, Plaid Cymru and NUPE were also represented at the initial meeting. The committee has cooperated with the Gwent Food Fund run by the NUM which divides the area on a zoning system. Each pit is allocated an area to collect donations and is responsible for food distribution. Food parcels worth £4 are distributed to miners' families each Thursday.

PRESTON

Following two successful local rallies local Labour Party and Trade Union members have helped picket a spring tide port at Glassom Dock. Labour Briefing supporters have organised accommodation for miners in Preston. Preston and Lancashire Trades Councils have arranged speaking tours and collections of food and money.

YORKSHIRE — A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

Every town in Yorkshire is organising some kind of continuing support operation to raise money for the strike fund and to collect food for the miners' families. Labour local authorities from Doncaster to Leeds have pledged themselves not to evict miners and to provide free school meals for their children.

Absolutely Solid

The strike is absolutely solid. Only a trickle of coal is getting into the power stations and in fact most of this coal has been out of the ground for over two years and is probably unburnable. The fact that the Central Electricity Generating Board is willing to use small non-union firms to shift these tiny amounts of 'bad' coal shows what a desperate state they are now in.

To achieve victory quickly, however, new forces are needed. Arthur Scargill speaking at the May Day rally in Chesterfield alongside Tony Benn, called for the NUR and ASLEF to bring forward their pay claim and to fight alongside the miners. If the rail workers, the civil servants and the nurses, all of whom are faced with pay claims, organised industrial action alongside the miners then all would have a chance of victory. Such victories would destroy the Thatcher government.

Fight to the Finish

Sammy Thompson, vice-president of the Yorkshire NUM emphasised in his speeches to the May Day marches in both Hull and Leeds that this was a fight to the finish. In Leeds he attacked all those who called for a ballot as traitors to the working class who were selling out everyone's jobs. He called for the expulsion of the Nottinghamshire scabs from the union. Yorkshire, he said, would continue to strike over pit closures even if the other areas went back.

His speeches have reflected the militancy of the younger Yorkshire miners who forced the area leadership into calling the strike in the first place. Practically the whole of South Yorkshire was already on strike before the Yorkshire NUM called the official strike. It is now important for the Yorkshire NUM branches to emphasise that this is now a national strike over pit closures. It is not simply about stopping the closure of Cortonwood, but is about stopping the closure of any pit other than on grounds of coal exhaustion. The National Coal Board, when its back is against the wall, is quite capable of offering something like a five year deal on Cortonwood and some elements of the Yorkshire leadership are quite likely to bite.

Fencesitting Kinnock

Bob Hague, an NUM member from Ferry Fryston pit in Castleford emphasised the militancy of the miners from this traditionally moderate area. They had far more volunteers for picketing than they could carry in their buses and cars. Over 400 miners are attending the regular branch meetings at the pit. Bob emphasised that many of these, including himself, were disgusted at the fence-sitting attitude of Kinnock.

Alan Wassell, an NUM member from Wheldale said that the Nottinghamshire NCB were keeping pits open on Mondays and paying the scabs a full wage despite the fact that because of the overtime ban only maintenance was being done at the pit, i.e. the NCB were paying men for doing nothing in order to reinforce the scabbing.

Garth Frankland
Leeds City Councillor



Alan Wassell

Miners outside special delegate conference in Sheffield



Alan Wassell

The miners' strike – what you can do

Graham Attwell (Cardiff South CLP and Cardiff Labour Briefing)

THE LAST month has seen an explosion of activity in support of the miners. Demonstrations and rallies have taken place all over the country – in many places on a scale not seen since the General Strike. This is a list of ideas for activity which Briefing supporters can act on – to build support for the miners in every locality.

Firstly, *every city and town should set up a Miners' Support Committee. Wherever possible committees should be based on official Trade Union and Labour Party bodies. Don't wait, though, for the 'official' movement to act. Many committees have been set up by Briefing supporters in individual Trade Union or Labour Party branches approaching the NUM, holding a public meeting, and going on from there. The NUM is extremely keen to get the support committees going. Link your local Support Committee to an NUM lodge or Area. Some towns have 'adopted' a pit or strike committee.*

The support committees have two main jobs. The first is to get the miners' own message out. 'The Miner', the NUM free newspaper, is appearing fortnightly during the strike, and is being written for public distribution.

Material Support

Secondly, *as the strike goes on the NUM and miners' families desperately need material support. The best way is to organise workplace tours, with speakers from the NUM, from miners' wives, especially in predominantly women workplaces, and from support committees. Get speakers to union branch meetings and to Labour Party meetings. Whilst all collections are welcome regular financial assistance will be most appreciated. ASLEF is already operating a national levy, and many trade union branches are following suit. Some workplaces are holding weekly factory gate collections.*

The NEC decision to authorise collection of a weekly 50p levy from Labour Party members should be implemented in every constituency and branch. Not only will i provide a large regular income for the miners, but it offers the opportunity to turn the Labour Party around a political dispute in a way not seen for many years.

Organise Public Meetings

Thirdly, *Labour Party branches should be organising public meetings and rallies throughout the country. Make sure your branch banner is seen on local demonstrations and picket lines. Organise delegations from workplaces and Labour Party branches to local picket lines. Every power station in the country is being picketed. In some places help is needed with mass pickets to prevent the movement of coal.*

** Accommodation will be needed for pickets and NUM members touring towns to raise support.*

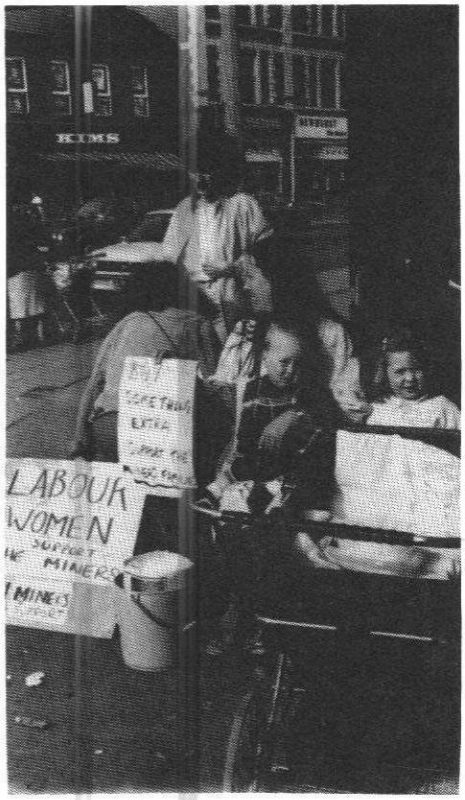
** Food collections are another way of winning support. Set up collections outside supermarkets or door to door on housing estates. Establish local collection points in houses for food and money.*

** Women are playing a key role in the dispute. In the coalmining areas miners' wives have set up their own strike committees. Briefing supporters should fight to make sure at least one women is invited to speak on every platform during the dispute. Too often we have seen groaning platforms packed with male speakers, who pass a token message of praise for the women.*

Labour Party Leadership

** Whilst Labour Party branches all over the country have been prominent in backing the miners the Labour Party leadership have been less forthcoming. Briefing supporters should send motions to the NEC demanding the Shadow Cabinet and Leader of the Party throw their full weight behind the strike, speaking on platforms with Arthur Scargill.*

** Finally if the strike is to be won, we are going to need industrial action in support of the miners. The Scottish and Welsh Days of Action are a step towards this. Briefing supporters should push for local industrial action now, however limited, to start the ball rolling.*



Cardiff West women organise food collection

Llanwern steelworkers give support

The Llanwern Joint Trade Union Committee has collected over £2,000 for the miners' strike relief fund at the works entrance. We congratulate and thank those trade unionists who stood at the entrance for two days with buckets arguing the case for solidarity with the miners. A special thank you to the AUEW branch at the works who have agreed a 50p levy from their pay packets for the duration of the dispute.

In making this collection, the Llanwern Joint Trade Union Committee now understands that the miners' strike is not simply about pit closures. They understand that it is only the miners that stand between us and a second class system of education for our children, a means tested health service for our sick, a further erosion of our hard won liberties and yet more attacks on the hard pressed industrial base including our own steel plants.

Let us then make it abundantly clear the miners will win a great victory. They will do it because of the thousands of pounds being collected by rank and file workers throughout Britain and the massive build up of solidarity made possible through collections.

The Llanwern Trade Union Committee's one-off collection of £2,000 is just one cautious step in the right direction. We need to build on that important step by:

1) Pressing our trade union committees to make regular collections and levies at the workplace.

2) Build for similar collections at all other steel plants, throughout South Wales.

3) Calling for full steel union backing for support committees throughout Wales.

4) By calling on Bill Sirs and Neil Kinnock to get off the fence and give their whole-hearted support to the miners' struggle – our struggle.

Ray Davies
(ISTC – in personal capacity)

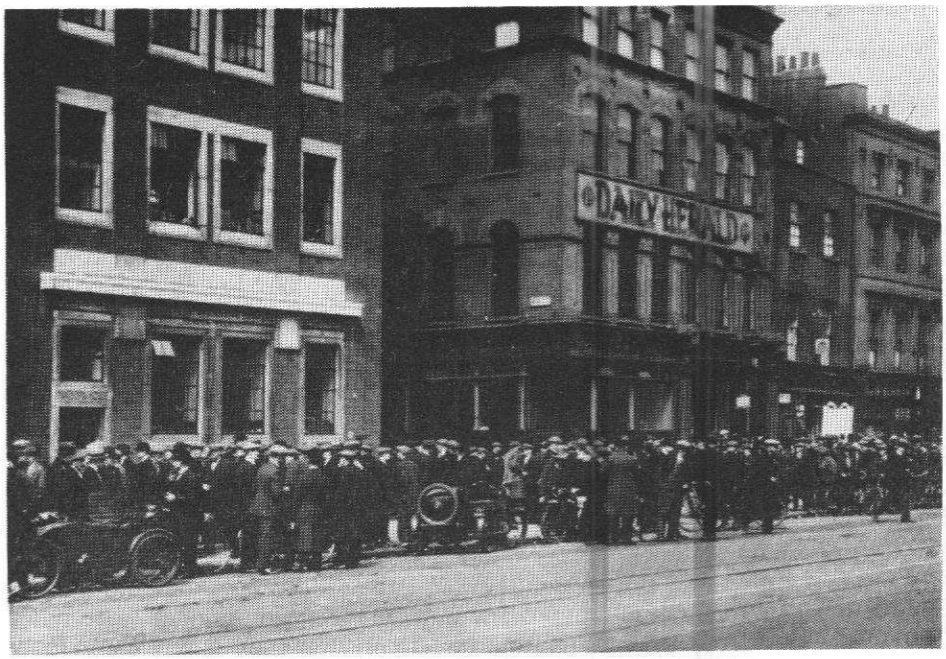
DO YOU REMEMBER 1926?

. . . Do you remember 1926? The great dream and swift disaster.
The bravery of the faithful, simple folk?
'Ay, Ay, we remember 1926'. said Dai and Shinkin,
As they stood on the kerb in Charing Cross Road, 'And we shall remember 1926 until our blood is dry'.

Idris Davies.

1926 lies like a weight around the neck of the British labour movement. Nearly sixty years on, there seems to be an awful inevitability about those nine days in May. Nine months previously, Stanley Baldwin, the shrewd Tory Prime Minister, had set up the Samuel Commission. The coal owners were too eager to inflict heavy wage-cuts, a longer working day and the end of the national minimum rate, and the delay gave the Cabinet time to prepare for the all-out conflict between owners and miners which they knew was coming.

Coal mining played a much bigger part in the economy then, and the million-strong Miners' Federation was by far the largest and most powerful of the unions. The government had to break its strength if they were to force down wages across the rest of industry. So they used the time to stock-pile coal; set up a scabs' army; divide the country among ten Commissioners with governmental powers; and run the Communist Party leadership into Wandsworth Prison.



Labour Party Photo Library

Strikers outside Natsopa offices, Blackfriars Rd, London, 1926

The TUC?

The TUC? Apart from passing left-sounding resolutions, nothing was done to prepare the movement; they squatted and waited for the storm. This would have surprised many militants because the General Council had such a left wing reputation. By 1924 the trade union movement had overcome the defeats of 1921-22, the militant Minority Movement, led by the small Communist Party organised nearly one million trade unionists. The groundswell had thrown left-wing leaders like A.J. Cook for the miners, Swales of the AEU and TUC General Secretary Fred Bramley, into office. From the spring of 1925 the TUC collaborated with 'Red Russia' through the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

Until this point the CP had been critical of these left officials, but the price of their friendship towards the USSR was the dropping of criticism and the Minority Movement became cheerleaders for them, using the slogan "All Power to the TUC". On the eve of the General Strike, the only movement that could have provided an effective revolutionary leadership was paralysed. During the Strike itself, the Councils of Action, set up to coordinate rank and file activity, became mere ginger-groups. There were, of course, exceptions, notably in South Wales and Durham, where, led by local CP members, the Council of Action began to take on the form of local workers' governments – controlling communications, distributing food, and setting up their own police force.

The response of the working class to the strike call was solid and enthusiastic, with more out on the last day than on the first, but the reaction of the TUC has become all too familiar in our own time. Frightened by this massive support behind them, and afraid of the hard-faced Cabinet in front of them, they collapsed and, with the connivance of the right-wingers in the TUC like Ernest Bevin and Jimmy Thomas, the Strike was called off on May 12.

The lessons are stark and obvious; in the absence of leaders who were prepared to take on the ruling class, the labour movement was defeated by the eagerness of the TUC to throw in the towel. Far from being inevitable, all the demoralisation and hardship that followed stemmed from that central fact.

Martin Barclay,
Cardiff Briefing

Miners Campaign Tape Project

13 Tankerton House
Tankerton Street
London WC1H 8HW
Tel: 278 8394

Northern contact:
Trade Films
Tel: 0632 775532

Endorsed by the following areas of the National Union of Mineworkers:
Kent Area NUM
South Wales Area NUM
Derbyshire Area NUM
Northumberland Area NUM
Yorkshire Area NUM

COMING SOON! THE MINERS' VIDEO TAPES

Definitely not the Nine O'Clock News and definitely not the News at Ten either. Instead, independent video and film makers throughout the country have got together to produce a series of videos putting the case for the miners as it is never seen on BBC or ITV.

The project is an ambitious one — to make up to a dozen, short, seven minute videos on different aspects of the strike, and to produce a longer, forty minute tape covering all aspects of the strike.

The tapes will be available free to all labour movement organisations. They are being produced as a way of raising funds for the strikers, and those working on the videos have donated their labour free. But making videos is an expensive business. Which is why the Miners Campaign Tape Project is making an urgent appeal for cash to enable them to complete the tapes. Up to £5,000 is needed, and the sooner it is raised, the sooner the tapes will be available for distribution. So please rush money to the Miners Campaign Tape Project at the above London address. Checks should be payable to the Miners Campaign Tape Project. For donations directly to the account the number is: 31056204 and the bank address is: Midland Bank, 31 Euston Road, London NW1. All individuals and groups will be credited at the end of the tapes unless we are instructed otherwise.

For booking details contact either above address or phone number.

The miners' strike and nuclear weapons

The mining industry is being deliberately smashed by this government to make way for an increase in dependence on nuclear power. A secret Cabinet meeting in 1979 spelt out that a nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity production from the dangers of disruption by industrial action by coal or transport workers.

The government are totally ignoring the economic and social consequences of their policies. They couldn't care less about the miners and their families or the communities they are destroying. They repeat their tired cliches. Behind the lies is a clear policy. Nuclear power is to replace coal as the main source of electricity.

Plutonium can therefore be guaranteed both to sell to America and for the use here of the production of nuclear weapons.'

If the government's claim that we are over producing coal at a time of less demand for electricity were true, then there would be no need to pursue a nuclear energy policy. Clearly the farce of the Sizewell inquiry could end now. It is the demand for plutonium by the nuclear state that will require the inquiry to approve of the plans. Parts for the PWR station have already been ordered.

The State has already adopted the police methods relevant to a nuclear state where nuclear police are armed with sub-machine guns as a matter of course. In the heavy policing of the miners' strike, precedents are being set to control all future mass protests. Civil liberties are being abused and surveillance of private citizens is now the norm.

It is clear that the miners' struggle has to be won, not only to save the miners' right to work but to stop this government's nuclear policies. If we fail to support this strike, effective industrial action may be a thing of the past. The peace movement and the Labour Party have not, as yet, clearly made the links between the run-down of the coal industry and the nuclear war-fighting policies of this government. We should unite to support the miners in what looks to be a protracted and bitter struggle. We should link it up with a demand for an end to the entire nuclear power and nuclear weapons industries.

Joy Hurcombe, Vice Chair CND, Chair Labour CND, writing in a personal capacity

Cuts and rent & rate rises in Stoke

At its March meeting Stoke City Council voted to impose cuts, and a 13½% rate increase on the workers of North Staffordshire. This comes on top of an increase in Council house rents agreed last December despite massive profits on the Housing Revenue Account. As a socialist there was no way I could vote for any of these policies, but faced with a refusal by the soft left dominated District Party I was left with no option but to resign as a Councillor.

The leaders of the Labour Group (which controls Stoke City Council 57 - 3) made their proposals for cuts at the end of February. Labour Group meetings take place on a Monday night. On the preceding Friday the agenda for the meeting is sent out. Along with the February agenda was the proposal for cuts in the budgets of the various committees. No actual details of what cuts were going to be made were given, just a global figure of reduction for each committee. This together with the fact that it was circulated only two days before the Group meeting meant that there was no possibility of real discussion in the party.

At the Group meeting therefore I asked for the decision to be deferred until the Party had discussed the proposals. There was not a single word of support given to my proposal. The so **called soft left representatives of the District Party sat silently while the right wing on the Labour Group stuck two fingers up at the District Party's right to have a say on policy.**

Things got worse at the following District Party meeting. When the part of the agenda for the Labour Group report arrrived it was said that there was no Report! Only when this was challenged by someone asking about the decision to make cuts was an actual report given, and then it was by the Leader of the Group who, of course, gave whitewash to the whole thing. Yet soft left District Party Secretary Andrew Dobraszczyc, who is also Secretary of North Staffs Labour Briefing, was at the Labour Group meeting, and knew what had happened. Just as at the Labour Group meeting he sat silent, and let the right wing get away with it.

There are important lessons for Briefing in this. If people are using Briefing's name we should ensure that the politics they have are not going to reflect badly on Briefing. It's no use arguing against the LCC if we have people running local Briefings who share the LCC's soft left reformist politics. Secondly, we should begin to realise that it's not what label people attach to themselves which should determine our attitude to them, but what politics they actually put into practice.

Arthur Bough (former Stoke City Councillor)

Railworkers and the miners

The British Rail Board has been reluctant to give information on the effect of the instructions emanating from the National Union of Railwaymen and the train drivers' union ASLEF, 'to refuse to deal with the movement of coal or coke unless a specific request is made by the NUM'. No doubt this is because, with very few exceptions, train crews are refusing to move coal. The fact that NUM pickets are now having to confront scab lorries at places like Ravenscraig steel works indicates that coal is not moving by rail. British Rail is not unaware of this situation: it complains in the latest issue of its journal, Rail News, that the £8m surplus made in 1983 will disappear if the miners' dispute continues. Railworkers are not deceived by the pathetic bleatings of management who try to argue that the miners strike will lead to loss of jobs on the railways, especially when they know the Board want to shed 20,000 jobs over the next two years. As Jimmy Knapp, General Secretary of the NUR wrote in NUR News: 'It is crucial that the mineworkers win their fight against wholesale pit closures. They must save miners' jobs and ensure the future of the coal industry. Their fight is *our* fight because pit closures on the scale planned by the NCB will mean thousands of lost jobs on the railways. The overwhelming majority of NUR members affected have shown loyalty to the union and solidarity with the miners so that the movement of coal is almost halted.'

What the Federation of NUR and ASLEF should do now is to go for all out industrial action in support of their own joint pay claim. That would be the best possible solidarity with the miners and in the best interests of its own members.

Tessa van Gelderen NUR
Brent South CLP

Saturday June 9

NATIONAL CND MASS RALLY AND DEMONSTRATION

Meet 12 noon Hyde Park, to march to Trafalgar Square

(Affinity groups will also be staging non-violent direct action – for details contact 01-263 0977)

LIVERPOOL GAINS

MANDATE FOR CONFRONTATION

THE LIVERPOOL Labour Party has achieved its greatest local election victory in more than ten years. 93,492 Labour votes! A 47% share of the votes cast! A seven seat gain and no losses! A majority on the council increased from two to seventeen! All this despite the barrage of mass media propaganda against our 'extremist' council, the dirty trick electioneering of the 'populist' Liberals, and the back-stabbing exercises of some members of the Shadow Cabinet.

But why these sudden Labour gains now? In terms of local politics Liverpool has been a peculiar city. Sociologically speaking, it should have been returning Labour councillors in the same quantities as all the other major northern industrial towns. Yet religion, nationality and economics have made Liverpool something of a political oddity. In 1922 the largest party on the council was the Conservatives and the second largest was the Irish Nationalist Party. Labour did not become the largest party on the council until the 1950s when Orange influence in the working class had declined.

The Braddock Era

The 1950s were noted as the era of Bob and Bessie Braddock, whose right wing boss politics, especially in the field of housing, paved the way for the growth of the Liberals in the early 1970s. The Labour Party's present left political line is partly a reaction to the disastrous political price Labour had to pay at the end of the Braddock era.

When examining the election results in some of the wards the outcome appears to be staggering. How could these wards not have been Labour in the first place? Abercromby ward was won from the Liberals with the following vote.

Labour	2,739
Liberals	350
Tory	252
CP	92

One reason for the Labour success was the very high turnout of over half the electorate. This beat the previous 41% turnout in 1983 when Labour clocked up two net gains. National politics were a factor and the desire to get Thatcher out understandably played a part. But nobody on the doorstep said they were going to vote Labour because of Neil Kinnock or his new leadership team. Expressions of Labour support were couched in terms of 'at last the council is doing something to fight the government'.

If the media barrage against Labour were absent, then clearly the Labour vote would have been higher still. A lot of people were uncertain about the consequences of the 'illegal budget' and some traditional Labour voters abstained. The Liberal vote in many wards was up and the total Liberal vote was 67,639. Yet the Liberals cannot sustain that level of voting in the long or medium term. Their 'pavement' politics approach has faded, both because of the community orientation Labour has adopted over the past five years, and also because the Liberals are viewed as a party which will carry out the Tories' dirty work, by making cuts and sacking workers.

Desperate Liberals

The Liberals this time were desperate and this was reflected in their hysterical election propaganda. Apart from the usual 'red-baiting' slurs, they even played the racist card by putting out a leaflet attacking a local school which had a large black intake. Yet although the Liberals are in decline, they still have a large working class vote. Part of the reason for this is the failure as yet for Labour to develop a more relevant housing policy, which recognises the fact that the majority of workers in the city are not council tenants.

For the Tories the May 3rd result was nothing short of a disaster. They lost a further five seats and are now down to thirteen. The Tory vote totalled 37,418. Tory voters seem to be transferring their allegiance to the Liberals.

What is the present composition of the council and what will be the outcome of the 'illegal' budget strategy? Firstly, the 'sensible' six or seven – mainly an old Braddockite rump in both the literal and figurative sense – has lost one member who stood down his seat. Paul Orr, the right wing leader, did stand, and won Vauxhall ward with a 2,823 majority. He was given a clear run by the Liberals and this was the only seat in the city in which they chose not to stand. A book could be taken giving odds on him joining them in the near future.

Clear Majority

Labour now has a clear majority of at least two for the 'illegal' budget. This budget is not some kind of revolutionary proposal to widen the frontiers of local authority spending. It is merely the amount needed for the council to maintain existing level of local authority services.

But the Tories fear the consequences of imposing Westminster rule on Liverpool especially in the middle of a miners' strike. Patriotism is a powerful political force. So too is scouse patriotism. The local elections are a clear mandate for what the Labour Party is doing. In the face of this, Jenkin is most likely to adopt a compromise approach – face-saving for both side, but one which will be clearly tilted in Labour's favour.

Liverpool Labour Party is back, alive again and fighting. It is a force that can breath life back into the proud body of radical Merseyside and protect and advance the interests of the people of the city.

Bas Hardy
Merseyside Labour Briefing

LIVERPOOL LEADS THE WAY

THE MAY 3rd local election results were a victory for Labour. There can be no other interpretation of gaining control of Birmingham, Edinburgh and Southampton and, particularly the increased majority in Liverpool.

But the results are by no means consistent. In the West Midlands for example the six seats gained in Birmingham were offset by the loss of seats in neighbouring Walsall and Sandwell. Indeed, what distinguishes the elections is less a Labour upsurge – although the electoral decline has clearly been halted – than a massive anti-Tory vote. Hence in many places it is the Alliance which has fared best, gaining from Labour as well as the Tories to end up with 115 more seats.

For the left the increased majority in Liverpool – now 17 – is clearly the most crucial point of the elections. It is clearly a vote of confidence in Liverpool Labour Council illegal budget and all. There can be no other interpretation of the result, whatever the press might try to convince us. The message to Neil Kinnock and the party leadership that they too should now give unequivocal support is clear – though many right wingers will be privately disappointed by the gains in Liverpool.

Important, too, is the strengthening of the left in Manchester where it now appears to have a 41 38 majority over the right wing – not far short of an overall council majority.

Birmingham however, represents a victory of a different kind, a victory for a party that has no strategy for fighting the Tories. Indeed, Councillor Dick Knowles, now returned unopposed as leader of the Labour group, explicitly rejects a confrontation with the government and pledges to stay within Tory laws. They will even go as far as to make cuts to stay within the budget, but in areas which didn't vote Labour. No chance now of building the party in Sutton Coldfield, for example!

But if the party as a whole is to benefit from the gains of May 3rd, from the tentative reversal of electoral decline and from the fall in support for the Tories it has to develop strategies for fighting the Tories. The party as a whole must support areas like Liverpool which now lead the way.

Chris Palmer
(Birmingham Ladywood CLP)

AROUND THE

1984 Labour CND AGM

Walter Wolfgang (Vice-Chair)

A well-attended, well-informed and determined AGM set out firm guidelines to the new Labour CND Committee "to ensure the visible strengthening of the Labour Party's unilateralist commitment. That will best be achieved through getting all levels of the Party fully associated with the ongoing campaigns of the Peace Movement." At the same time the AGM instructed the new committee to campaign within the Labour Party for withdrawal from NATO. As a first step Labour CND is to set up a study group on NATO and produce background papers and campaigning material and organise a day school on the subject. It demanded that opposition to Trident, Cruise and Pershing and advocacy of a European nuclear-free zone be put at the centre of the party's Euro-election campaign.

At a later stage Labour CND will organise a major conference and subsequent publicity on: a) taking the fight for unilteral nuclear disarmament throughout the labour movement. b) Non-nuclear defence alternatives that demonstrate security can be achieved outside cold war strategies and alliances. c) Alternative employment. And a main concern will be to get a clear affirmation from the 1984 Labour Party conference of unilateral nuclear disarmament to be carried out during the lifetime of the next Labour Government.

The following were elected: Chair Joy Hurcombe, Vice-chair Walter Wolfgang, Treasurer John Moreland, Secretary Kate Edwards; elected Executive members Joan Maynard MP, Jane Oberman, Carol Turner, Dick Withecombe. Additional members will be appointed by CND regions.

In an introductory speech CND Treasurer Mick Elliot linked CND's struggle with that of the miners and called for a collection for the strike fund which was taken in the afternoon. An emergency motion calling for a woman solidarity delegation for Greenham Common including miners' wives was passed by an overwhelming majority. Labour's defence spokesman Denzil Davies addressed the meeting in the afternoon and his contribution was much appreciated. But at the same time the questions made it clear that it resented his suggestion querying Labour's commitment to cut conventional defence expenditure.

There was a strong emphasis on the necessity of public campaigning by Constituency Parties on unilateral nuclear disarmament. Labour CND will organise for massive country-wide party support for the June 9th mobilisation against Reagan's visit. Labour CND EC has been instructed to produce a bulletin at least quarterly.

NUS Conference

As usual NUS conference was a disappointing and frustrating experience for student union activists. Conference became the sad tale of the Clause IV dominated National Executive getting its own way and pushing out any proposals calling for a more confrontational approach than the tired old methods of lobbying MPs and letter writing.

The major issue which has long dogged the student movement is the 'ultra vires' laws. The Attorney General's letter aiming to control autonomous students' unions' so-called ultra vires donations to outside bodies, chiefly aimed at the peace movement, threatened colleges with massive fines if they failed to comply. Many colleges were hoping for a strong NUS initiative on this issue and were inevitably disappointed. NUS rejected a call for a campaign around the first college to be penalised for making a payment. Instead they advised unions to "avoid payments which deliberately provoke legal action". So any college making an 'illegal' payment will receive no large sclae support from NUS and will be open to heavy financial victimisation.

Near-fascist Infiltration

As happened in 1983 Easter Conference, when extreme right wing students wore 'Hang Nelson Mandela' badges, NUS left itself open to near-fascist infiltration. After storming the platform during a speech by an NUM member, a dozen ultra-right wing members of the Federation of Conservative Students, wearing Monday Club insignia packed an election hustings, using it as a platform for their views. It was therefore rather ironic that the debate on racism was the next item for discussion, centring around the issue of no platform for racists. The major contention surrounded who should define who/what is racist; the National Executive proposed a highly ambiguous definition that only 'declared' racists should be banned.

Yet the problem remained, for the National Front denies racism, saying it merely loves its own race passionately. This "definition" was forced through regardless. This timidity is typical of Clause IV. Earlier at conference Neil Stewart, outgoing NUS President spoke passionately in favour of immigration control, his argument being he was only against racist immigration controls and some restriction should be made on "hoardes of reactionary white South Africans". Stewart was booed and jeered by black delegates and NUS's left face revealed an unpleasant interior.

'New Deal'

The 'New Deal' is NUS's central campaign for 1984/5 and appears basically to be the old grants and cuts campaigns bundled together with a shiny new label stuck on. Like Len Murray, NUS is suffering from a dose of the "new realism". In the light of vicious attacks on Higher Education, further proposed cuts through the University Grants Committee and Sir Keith's new student travel grant system, which will mean thousands of students will have reduced grants, NUS is not willing to confront eh government.

The weary tactics of letters to ministers, information packs and working parties were wheeled out. Yet typically NUS would not support any college which entered into local direct action against the cuts and rejected (despite its socialist pretentions) a call to link up with the labour and trade union movement in order to forward the rights of students.

Janice Turner
Sussex University delegate
(personal capacity)
Socialist Students in NOLS



CONFERENCES

NOLS Conference

Bryn Griffiths Chair, Sussex University Labour Club (personal capacity)

What kind of group declares in a two paragraph summary of its beliefs: 'We also recognise the need for limited organisation against the dogmatic and centralist politics of the Trotskyist left'? The answer is not Peter Shore's latest caball, it is the student movement's Democratic (sic) Left (clause IV and Labour Coordinating Committee supporters).

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) conference is an annual farce which takes place during the Easter vacation. It should be a forum to plan strategy to defend our education services and discuss wider questions. It is not.

ANNUAL FARCE

The Student Organiser makes a large contribution to this annual farce. Last year Mr Dennis disenfranchised enough left delegates to ensure a Democratic Left majority and suspended the conference when we got annoyed. This year Mr Dennis, our Student dis-Organiser, suspended one session of conference and amidst accusations of ballot-rigging closed the conference during the following session.

The conference did manage a small amount of serious debate. Liverpool City Council received full support and other councils were called upon to show their support by adopting the 'three noes' policy (no cuts, no rate rises, no rent rises). We censured the National Committee (NC) for its Kinnock-style 'condemnation of violence on all sides' approach to the Warrington NGA dispute. The NC was also censured for failing to argue the National Union of Students should call for a Labour vote – this we were told would split the movement.

Having passed some good policy motions we felt in a strong position to end the 'farce' and along with Militant make big changes in the direction of NOLS. Socialist Student in NOLS (SSiN) did maintain its political criticism of Militant. During the sexual politics debate we vigorously opposed the Militant motion which said the women's movement could not help women.

The elections, unfortunately, did not go to plan. Independent students opposed the Democratic Left but would not vote for Militant. The result, on the whole, was that when SSiN stood the left was elected, but when Militant stood the Democratic Left was elected.

BALLOT RESULT

The ballot result was questionable. The highest recorded vote at conference was 239, yet 250 took ballot papers. One Militant supporter was issued with an extra set of ballot papers. When the ballot result was announced Militant waved their extra ballot papers around asking 'how many other delegates have extra papers?' Amidst deplorable behaviour by Militant, who were jeering and foot-stamping, John Dennis reinforced suspicion of ballot-rigging by suspending the conference. He should have answered accusations. The following morning, in what appeared to be stage-managed provocation, which involved expelling a Militant supporter from the conference floor, pandemonium broke out. At this point John Dennis declared the conference closed and invalid.

What remains unclear is whether the ballot was rigged or not. However, it is crystal clear that John Dennis was unsuitable as Student Organiser. If further 'farce' is to be avoided and students' confidence in its conference procedure restored, he must have all his student responsibilities removed.

YS Conference

Mark Sapsford

THIS YEAR'S YS conference passed motions to support the miners and Liverpool City Council. The collection for the miners' strike fund raised over £1000.

Once again, however, conference was treated to Militant speech after Militant speech, with very few opposition delegates of any variety being called. And, as is to be expected, Militant positions on every issue were passed.

So the YS refused once more to do any constructive joint work with YCND, and refused to support feminist demand or organise a women-only young women's conference. Instead there will be a mixed school, and conference could not even discuss its agenda.

Over the years Militant have been known to change, or rather slide, their positions. They have changed their minds about Labour Party women's sections, for instance away from rank hostility to working in them. And this year saw a change in attitude towards the events in Nicaragua. While Militant criticise (and quite rightly criticise, in my opinion) the Sandinistas, the YS has used this criticism as an excuse for doing nothing about Central America. But this year a speaker from Nicaragua was on the platform. Unfortunately it would be naive to assume that this means that Militant and therefore the YS will now start to participate in Central America solidarity work.

Disgracefully, the US voted down a motion from Orpington YS which supported Labour Party black sections. Conference was told from the platform in the National Committee reply to the debate that, unlike for women and youth, the labour movement has no history of black autonomy, and therefore introducing it would be a backward step. When the black sections take off and the pressure is on, no doubt Militant and therefore the YS will change position.

Once again the fringe meetings were the most serious forum for debate. Over 85 people attended the Class Fighter open caucus to discuss democracy in the YS, and six people were elected to finalise details and organise motions to ensure that YS minorities get a fair say in the conference. As last year, the intervention by Lesbian and Gay YS was a major focus of attention. The emergency motion from Hornsey YS which condemned the police raid on Gays The Word bookshop was ruled out of order. The ruling was challenged and only upheld on a recount after Militant delegates were herded back into the conference from the coffee bar. The lesbian and gay liberation debate, finally secured after seven years of agitation, was opened by Clive Bradley from Manchester Gorton YS, who argued that the YS should campaign for, for example, wiping out the legal discrimination against gays and lesbians. Unfortunately the motion was defeated and a Militant motion which condemned discrimination and proposed to do nothing about it was passed. The Lesbian and Gay YS fringe meeting attracted over 100 people.

The Briefing meeting, although well advertised, was not able to attract a significant number of independents, showing that there is not the same layer of uncommitted activists in the YS that there is the Party who could be attracted to a Briefing-type political perspective.

In the election for YS representative on the Labour Party NEC, Judith Bonner, who stood as a Class Fighter supporter, polled 39 votes. Bernie Wilde from Revo got 30 votes.

The message from YS conference was clear. We need to democratise the conference, but most of all we need to build the YS branches on the basis of fighting policies, and take political and organisation control out of the hands of Militant. We must turn the YS into a youth movement made up of critical thinking socialists who take up the struggles of all youth.

WHO TO CONTACT

London. Graham Bash, 31 Cranwich Road London N16 (01-980 7893).

Brighton: Dave Lowney, 35 Quebec Street, Brighton, E. Sussex (0273 607944).

Merseyside: Stuart Marshall-Clarke, 8 Ashford Road, Meols, Wirral (051-632 3840).

North Staffs: Andrew Dobraszczyc, 4 Robert St, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent (0782 822574).

South Wales: Graham Atwell, 53 Clive Street, Grangetown, Cardiff (0222 35916), or Stevi Jackson (0222 496792).

Exeter: Peter Bowing, 42 Powderham Crescent, Exeter, Devon EX4 6BZ.

Strathclyde: Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Ave, Glasgow G41.

Preston: Karen Bradley, 128 Tulketh Brow, Preston (0772 727720).

Leeds: Paul Hodgkinson, 31 Hillcrest View, Leeds 7.

Manchester. Dick Withecombe, 93 Ewan St, Gorton, Manchester 18 (061 223 4470).

AFIA BEGUM'S STORY

Afia Begum and her baby daughter, Asma, are victims of Tory Britain's racism. Afia had the right to come to this country when she married an East End resident. However, he died when a fire gutted the Brick Lane slum where he lived, and the Home Office immediately seized upon this tragedy to make up a new immigration rule and to penalise Afia. When she arrived with a valid entry clearance she was told 'your circumstances have changed – you will have to go'. No account was taken of her actual circumstances: her father and relatives having already settled here and her mother having applied to join them, in due course, as she has the right to do, Afia being a widow with a young baby facing a solitary future in Bangladesh, thousands of miles away from the rest of her family.



The famous Tory 'choice' for Afia was to take away her right to settle in the country of her choice. The party of the family was permanently splitting this one.

Countless representations by Members of Parliament and others to the Home Office fell on deaf ears, and Afia and her baby were forced into hiding for more than a year. They were supported by a courageous group of young Asian women known as the Sari Squad, who actively campaigned on her behalf.

On Thursday 3rd May at 6am, police arrived at the home where Afia and Asma were staying; bundled them into a van and took them to Harmondsworth Detention Centre near Heathrow Airport. That evening Jeremy Corbyn, Islington North's excellent MP and myself, after raising the matter in the Commons, demanded an urgent meeting with Waddington, the Home Office Minister.

NO COMPASSION

At the meeting, Waddington, his private assistant, and a senior civil servant, sat there unimpressed by Afia's case. At one point, when reminded that Afia's mother would have the right to come to this country, Waddington implied a veiled threat that her application could be delayed almost indefinitely by Home Office enquiries and manipulation of the rules. He showed no compassion at all towards Afia's circumstances – he actually admitted that Afia's case was rare and that he had not dealt with a similar one – or, indeed, to the circumstances of her father, who is an increasingly frail old man. (He was in the Brick Lane home which burned down and he had to jump from the second floor.)

Waddington promised to reconsider the case, but said that he 'held out little hope'. The only success of the meeting was the agreement to the demand by Jeremy and myself that Afia be allowed visits at Harmondsworth from her father and others, which had earlier been denied.

During the afternoon of the next day (Friday), Waddington's assistant phoned to say that the Minister had decided to deport Afia and Asma. She was to go the next day. The reason for this haste was to pre-empt any discussion of the matter in Parliament and to take action before the European Court of Human Rights considered the case later in the month. The 'law and order' Tories were in a rush to pervert the course of justice.

Despite the fact that the Home Office had not properly considered other MPs representations – a letter from the constituency MP concerned, Peter Shore, was effectively ignored – it was put to Waddington's office that at least Afia and Asma should be allowed to stay in Holland. A Dutch member of the European Parliament and a Dutch MP were prepared to raise the matter of temporary entry permission with their Government. It being late on Friday, though, such representations could only be effectively made on the following Monday. A telex was sent to the Home Office by the Euro-MP to this effect.

It was even pointed out to the Home Office that a councillor on Amsterdam City Council was prepared to let Afia and Asma stay in her own home, prior to the European hearing. Waddington's office, though, was not interested; Waddington himself was 'not available'; and my demand for an urgent meeting to discuss these representations was ignored.

BUNDLED ON A PLANE

Afia Begum and Asma were bundled on to a plane at Heathrow at 10am the following morning (Saturday). Apparently, even the Dirty Tricks Department was brought into play at the airport to announce the delay of the plane's departure until 11am to try to confuse protestors.

At Heathrow, as Afia and Asma were escorted on to the plane, a sit-down protest by about eighty people resulted in the arrest of twenty-one of them under a private by-law making illegal any demonstrations at airports.

When the plane arrived in Holland, Afia was not allowed off.

The Home Office's savage treatment of Afia and many other ethnic minority citizens has to be compared to the preferential treatment of Zola Budd, the white South African athlete; to Mrs Thatchar s lunch invitation to apartheid's premier representative, Pik Botha; and to her appeasement of the racist right-wing of the Conservative Party. The Tories are currently in the process of trying to popularise racism. Afia Begum and Asma are victims of this.

Harry Cohen, MP

Afia Begum was born in Bangladesh in 1963 and since 1982 has lived an insecure and frightening life, with her child Asma born in 1981.

Afia came to Britain in June 1982, after the death of her husband Abdul, just 3 months earlier in Brick Lane. Afia and Asma had been given leave to join Abdul permanently in Britain, prior to his death. But when Afia tried to enter Britain on what she believed to be a valid entry visa, she was refused entry, despite the fact that many members of her family were here, including her father who was also injured in the fire that killed her husband. Afia was eventually allowed to enter in order to clear up any of her husband's business affairs, but was told she would not be allowed to stay.

In September 1982 Afia received a deportation order, which was followed by raids on two Indian restaurants.

Afia had been in hiding since then, successfully evading numerous attempts by the police and immigration officials to find her, refusing to comply with laws which are racist and deny women as individuals any control over their lives.

AFIA BEGUM CAMPAIGN

The Afia Begum Campaign Against Deportations is holding meetings and activities to fight for Afia. If you would like to help or get more information you can contact them on 01-274 7848, or c/o Box 22, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8.

Laura Glasgow

Fighting for Black Sections

A FEW weeks ago, Neil Kinnock attempted produce Labour's time honoured prescription for buying Black votes. This occurred at a meeting with over forty journalists from the ethnic press at the House of Commons. He said that Labour, when elected, would repeal the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 Nationality Act.

Both these pieces of racist legislation are repugnant to most people, Black or white. As the legislation is directed at Black people our community not only suffers most, but has been at the forefront of the campaign to get it repealed.

It is high time, however, that Neil Kinnock realised that matters of immigration and nationality are not the only concerns, or even the prime concerns, of the Black community. Many Black people have been born in Britain and most others have been in the country so long that, on paper at least, they are full British citizens.

Our prime concern is the racism that exists throughout British society. In almost every category of social and economic disadvantage Black people are over-represented. This situation has not come about because Black people do not try to succeed or that there are so few of the required calibre. This immoral state of affairs has arisen because the cancer of racism is resident in the minds of so many white people whose fair mindedness is a prerequisite for the success of Black people.

Many of the institutions of our society, though perhaps not intentionally or overtly racist, are racist in effect.

The Labour Party itself is structured in such a way as to be over-responsive to vociferous WHITE MEN. The channels of influence in the party are not open to all equally. The party is not sympathetic to groups in society, or even within its membership, in proportion to their needs, disadvantages or even numbers. The terms of the constitution do not prevent the expression of Black interests within the Party. However, the inherently white bias in positions of power means that Blacks rely on a paternalistic understanding by whites of these problems. Whereas Blacks should have a legitimate right to be heard and action should result from a duty to act.

With Neil Kinnock at the press conference was Dennis Howell, shadow spokespersona on Race Relations and Immigration. His constituency, Small Heath, has a Black population of 36% yet the GMC has only a handful of Black members. The GMC is not representative of the constituency and therefore it is open to question as to how well it represents the constituences. Dennis Howell is also a member of a NEC working party looking into the question of a Black Section within the Labour Party. Mr Howell can obviously draw evidence from his own backyard.

On an unofficial basis, there are 10 or 11 Constituency Black Sections in London, with more being formed all the time. Moves are afoot in Bristol and Liverpool for Black Sections. There is a steering committee that is assisting Black socialists with the formation of Black Sections. This constitution will be discussed and amendments taken at a national meeting on June 9 at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. The meeting is open to all card-carrying members of the party who are Black or of Afro-Caribbean or Asian descent and who have registered in advance. Please contact us at the address below for further details. I urge all members to support Black Sections and to put our suggested resolution as your resolution for Conference.

"Conference recognises that whereas over 80% of Black voters support the Labour Party, Black people still remain the least politically represented group within the Labour Party and in the country generally. Conference therefore considers that positive action must be taken by the Labour Party to remedy this situation and recommends the creation of Black Sections in the Party as a base on which Black people can devise and propose strategies for change so that equal representation and racial equality can be created through the development of a socialist society".

(Please alter the wording slightly so that resolutions are printed separately in the book of resolutions).

LP Black Section, 39 Chippenham Road, London W9. Tel 01-286 9692 or 01-221 7050.

Paul Sharma
(Ladywood CLP, Treasurer LP Black Section)

Conference resolutions

NB: In order to get maximum support, the wordings of the constitutional amendments should be *identical*, but the wordings of the enabling resolution should be *varied*. The proposed rule change cannot take effect till 1985, but it's important to put the resolutions down now.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RULES FOR CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTIES

Clause VII Organisation of Individual Members
add new (4):
Individual Afro-Caribbean and Asian members of this Party shall, if they so desire, be organied in Black sections acting in accordance with regulations sanctioned by the National Executive Committee.
Clause IX Management
add new (f): Black Sections.

ENABLING RESOLUTIONS

(more alternatives)

1. *This Conference welcomes the initiatives taken by some Constituency Labour Parties to tackle racism and to encourage members of ethnic minorities to join the Labour Party. In particular, it welcomes the establishment of Sections of individual Afro-Caribbean and Asian members and acknowledges that it is the wish of these members that such Sections be formed and called Black Sections.*
It instructs the National Executive Committee:

1. *to submit to the 1985 Conference amendments to the Rules for Constituency Labour Parties which will allow Black Sections to be formed, where members so desire, with the right to send delegates to General and Executive Committees in the same way as Women's Sections and Young Socialist Branches;*
2. *following consultation throughout the party, to submit to the 1985 Conference draft regulations on the organisation of Black Sections;*
3. *to allow existing Black Sections to continue, recognising that they have a valuable contribution to make in the formulation of the Party's policy in relation to anti-racism and the wishes of Black people.*

2. **Conference notes that a recent report by the Commission for Racial Equality showed that nearly eighty per cent of the Black/Ethnic Minority electorate voted Labour in the 1983 General Elections.**

Conference regrets the delays in setting up the NEC Working Party promised to the 1983 Conference and rejects the view – expressed by some members of the NEC before the working party had ever met – that the establishment of Black/Ethnic Minority sections would be divisive.

Conference believes that the establishment of Black sections within the Labour Party would bring about a positive change to the way this Party appreciates and responds to the presence, needs and aspirations of Britain's Black communities.

Conference calls on the NEC to bring forward forthwith the essential constitutional changes so that Black sections can be established at every level of the Party.

The GLC and Gay Rights: The Politics of Hope

By BRIAN KENNEDY

Lesbian and Gay Rights have never been high on any political agenda, the stuff of 'fringe meetings', Private Members Bills and 'votes of individual conscience' — until now, that is. The decision of the GLC to franchise and involve London's lesbian and gay population in the politics of our cosmopolitan capital (composed largely of minority groups of one sort or another), has provoked howls of outrage from the Conservative Party and its press supporters (whom, George Tremlett says, see it as 'buggery on the rates', so unsophisticated are their perceptions), and embarassed silence from commentators who think of themselves as independent freethinkers, and nervous irritation from elements within the Labour Party, who perhaps wish some sleeping dogs would just go into terminal coma!

'It's not a bread-and-butter issue' asserts Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington Council, while lesbians and gay men continue to lose their bread-and-butter jobs because of their sexuality. Militant members shout 'Seig Heil' at gay delegates to Labour Party Young Socialists Conference and try to censor our debates. (though the spitting was less than last year!)

GLC HAS LISTENED

In contrast, with mixed success, the GLC has listened to lesbians and gay men at the Gay Working Party and other committees, has acted on some of our recommendations, and has put a little of the resources we all contribute back into the gay community.

I say little. One of the groups notoriously "exhibited" during the Conservative Party Political Broadcast, The Gay Bereavement Project, received a grand total of £375! Either poor homework, or it isn't really the money after all, it's the group itself which is under attack. GLC chair of Grants Committee, Andy Harris, has said 'our policies have been shown to work, and politicians and press are running out of things to attack us for.' One can only feel contempt for a political party which attacks a cultural minority to try and discredit and then destroy a political opponent.

A minority, moreover, which is denied the right of reply. During all the press attacks on the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, not once did any of that press contact the Centre office for comment or explanation. Generally, there is no attempt to find out what these grants are used for, why they are necessary, no acceptable critique, no political debate. Only a hasty and disreputable summoning up of knee-jerk reaction, a playing upon uncivilised prejudice and bigotry. You don't have to be gay, I hope, to despise this sort of attack. It needs to be met with firmness and intelligence.

REAL CONCERNS

Lest it be unclear, the moves by the GLC are to deal with real concerns of the lesbian and gay community. Any gay man can face arrest outside a London gay pub at present, for trying to meet another gay man. A lesbian can be sacked for being 'out' at work.



London June 25 — marching with lesbians at the start of Gay Pride Week 1983

Gay couples have to put up with inferior accommodation or live seperately, because they are not 'nice families'. Our bookshops are raided.

The GLC strategy includes, not excludes, these concerns. It is more encompassing that previous administrations. We aren't left out in the cold or consigned to 'votes for (heterosexual) conscience'.

The potential for justice for lesbians and gay men is not presently held out by the courts or a government which prefers Police Bills to Gay Rights legislation. It is held out, in some small measure, by the policies of the GLC, which is why, as Bob Cant wrote in the New Statesman, 'the GLC is popular in Heaven.'

Hope for the future, like the GLC, is worth hanging on to.

Brian Kennedy was co-worker on the London Lesbian and Gay Centre project, is a member of Gays and Lesbians Against Abolition and writes the 'Out In The City' lesbian and gay page for City Limits magazine.

Labour Movement Lesbians:
Next meeting — Sun 3rd June 2pm
County Hall, London SE1.
Fully accessible.
We will be talking about:

- **the politics and practice of being lesbian feminists in the labour movement.**
- **racism and lesbian/gay discos.**
- **Gays The Word defence campaign.**

All lesbian-feminists in the labour movement welcome.

Greenham Briefing

Greenham Womens Peace Camp has not gone away and will not go away. Only when Britain gets rid of Cruise will Women leave Greenham. The media have tried to make people think that Greenham Women have gone — no chance! There are camps at all the gates. Women are getting stronger every day.

The state has attempted to remove us by changing laws and using bailiffs. During the week there are evictions every day. Women have to pack everything up. Some stuff, including personal possessions, gets eaten by the muncher. But when the bailiffs have gone everything's set up again. It's very draining and more women are needed to support us.

We still need donations of vans to make evictions less hassle. Hot food is warmly welcomed. Often you can't cook because of harassment from bailiffs and police. So when local people, peace groups and trade unions roll up with food and drink it's wonderful.

At night the police do their best to wear women down. They come round to all the gates putting out our fires. Yellow (ex-main) gate has had it particularly heavy — often unable to make even a cuppa on a cold night because police extinguish a fire every time it's lit.

At the moment these tactics seem to be an attempt to divert women away from the real political struggle. Yet the struggle to survive and just remain at Greenham as women with an alternative way of living to that of Patriarchy, Capitalism and Miltarism is of international significance.

ALL OVER THE WORLD

Women from all over the world live at the camp. Greenham is not just a peace camp but is part of a movement. Naturally the British authorities and media will continue to do all it can to undermine this movement. One example of this is the way in which the Daily Express is operating. One of their reporters — Sarah Bond — posed as a Greenham supporter and stayed at the camp in order to print lies to distort everything that we stand for. Some of the lies were designed to divide women — such as saying that women were not welcome for the day. This is rubbish! We have never been more desperate for women to come to Greenham.

Night watches are really important at the moment. Night is when Cruise comes out of the base and when vigilantes try all kinds of tricks. Women who come for night watches have been outraged by police tactics, such as the way they continually put out fires. In such circumstances the connections between the struggles at Greenham and that of the Miners becomes increasingly clear. Police actions are not just a matter of 'law enforcement', they are political actions designed to smash Greenham, the Trade Unions and every other body that opposes the Tory state.

The Labour Movement needs to articulate these connections. Everyone should be raising Greenham in their Trade Unions, Labour Party branches and campaign groups. If money is raised it could be used to sponsor women from these groups to go down to Greenham.

There is so much that groups and individuals both male and female can do to support Greenham. An example of practical support is that UCATT have been supplying wood for our fires. An example of political solidarity of a different kind is that the Bakers Union will probably cease to supply the base itself with bread.

As an individual you can raise these things in your branches. People in the POEU for example could try and get the POEU to boycott the base — at the moment British Telecoms Vans go in and out the whole time — so do Unigate Milk, and loads of other firms.

Every little bit is a big help. If you can't get down to Greenham you can join in the demonstrations and actions all over the country when Cruise Convoy comes out.

More than money we need real support — and this can take many forms. Each person has something to give. For example everyone reading this can spread the word about Common Womens Day.

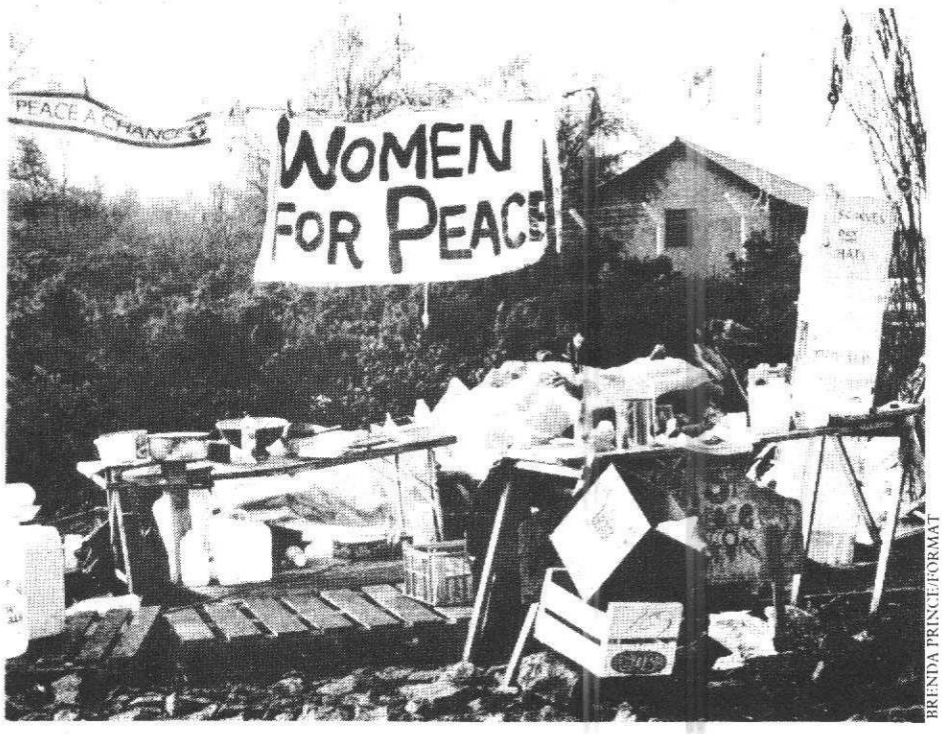
COMMON WOMENS DAY

Common Womens Day is on the first Saturday of every month. On these weekends women will come from all over the world to protest against Cruise at Greenham. If you can't come (or if you are a man) you could help raise money to sponsor a woman who wants to go but can't afford it. Find out about what your local Greenham support group is organising — there will probably be coaches going down each Common Womens Day.

If you want to get involved in supporting Greenham Women in other ways you should contact your local Greenham Support Group. Ring Caledonian Rd 01-833-2831 for details. If you don't have a support group in your area you could always start one!!

The needs of Women at Greenham change all the time as the political situation develops. One of the best things to do is for someone from your Trade Union, Labour Party Branch, Womens Group or other organisation to come down to Greenham in order to find out how your group or branch can support Greenham Women in our struggle to get rid of nuclear weapons.

by Southwark Greenham Women



BRENDA PRINCE/FORMAT

Pornography: A harmless bit of fun?

PORNO = Whore
GRAPHUS = writing/picture
Over 100 women attended a conference to discuss pornography on April 14, in Cwmbran. The following is a personal contribution by two women who were there.

"Why do men hate us so much?" This is a question many of us asked after watching 'Not a Love Story', a Candian film which gave a brutal insight into the reality of pornography. Its graphic detail of all kinds of porn, ranging from strip shows to snuff movies (which actually kill women for male pleasure), left us feeling devastated. For many women it was an introduction to something they'd previously thought of as a harmless bit of fun. We all felt degraded, hurt and angry by the ways in which women are portrayed and used by the porn industry, the central theme of all porn is the objectification, violation and degradation of women – all women.

We also discovered that the use of pornography is not restricted to a minority of perverted men. In America, the industry's profits exceed that of the music and film industries combined. There must be a hell of a lot of perverts around!

Images of Women

After the film we talked about our analysis of and response to what we'd learnt, and what we can do about it.

A major discussion focussed on images of women – how we are portrayed and how we see ourselves. We exposed the links between advertising and pornography, both of which present images of a contrived ideal, which bears no resemblance to how we feel or what we want. From an early age we are taught to internalise and achieve these ideals, which encompass the roles of perfect wife/mother and the glamorous, passive object used to sell cars and after shave. These fragmented and distorted images which confront us daily, perpetuate an ideology of male supremacy and domination. Pornography is merely the conclusion of such an ideology, which imposes, often through extreme violence, the sexual identity of women and the regulation of sexual relationships.

Ultimately, all these images portray women as having no choice or control over their identity and sexuality. As such, we see pornography as a dangerous form of propaganda which deliberately incites men to carry out acts of violence against women, ranging from economic discrimination, confinement to the home, sexual harassment to the final humiliation and degradation of rape. Sexual violence has increased with the availability of pornography.



It is constantly argued that issues such as pornography are not central to the struggles of the labour movement. We argue that women's oppression is integral to the maintenance of the capitalist system and class society. By its treatment and presentation of women, children and black people as subordinate to sexual domination and abuse by men, pornography perpetuates and reinforces oppression and exploitation. Its widespread consumption by men of all races and classes serves to divide the working class.

As a result of the conference, discussions have begun about our response to and action against pornography. We will organise ourselves and support each other to fight this violence and opression. We expect the labour movement to support women in this fight. Moreover, we expect men to initiate discussions and actions. We don't need the support of men to give our actions credibility – we look to them to earn their own credibility in fighting the porn industry and women's oppression. Pornography is a subject fit for discussion and action by the whole workers' movement; for the miner, steelworker, social worker and civil servant. Failure of the labour movement to respond results in the weakening of the working class, and leaves anti-women prejudices not merely unchallenged, but reinforced.

ACT NOW! HARMLESS FUN COSTS WOMEN'S LIVES!

Mo Roy
Petra Hughes

South Wales Labour Briefing

LETTER

Dear Friend,
I am writing after reading Peter Tatchell's article in Labour Briefing "Greening our Socialism" where he argues the value of green points of view to socialists. He announces "the convergence between reds and greens is one of the most important tasks facing the radical left in the years ahead". I would like to think he is right, (if you'll excuse the expression), and that his view is shared by a substantial number of the labour movement. There are many problems though.

Peter Tatchell deals with the value of a green view for the Third World and even tackles economic growth. Throw away lines call for a change from "curative care in NHS to preventative". It shows how much many socialists have to learn, the green view is often as different from conventional socialism as it is from the right of politics. The Labour Party appears, both left and right, to be locked in 19th century economics and the statist structure that they imply.

Not, of course, to say that socialism isn't important to the ecological movement, nor that we don't need to recognise our share of learning, especially about 'power' in politics. As a member of the Ecology Party I see myself as a socialist, many though would not. It is not however surprising given the present ignorance that pervades socialists over ecological issues. They are quite important really, concerning as they do, survival on this planet!

Even where the Labour Party takes up green issues, they appear to be vote winning devices, rather than policies developed as a result of conviction. If we wish to make a force to be reckoned with of reds and greens, (a dull brown perhaps), many attitudes as well as policies will have to change. Until then, as a socialist and an ecologist my home is in the Ecology Party.
Yours, in peace,

Tim Brenan — member Exeter Ecology Party

New Ireland Forum

Saving us from Prior's Cuba

Revealed to an agog (or so we are to believe) world press on May 2nd, the New Ireland Forum report was long awaited and somewhat overdue. It has cost the Irish rate-payers £400,000 together with another £18,000 spent on promoting its 'Forum Saves!' (you from Sin and the SDLP from oblivion) message – 'we-wish-to-see-a-unitary-state-by-unionist-consent-but-we-examine-other-structural-arrangements-too–and-we-are-open-to-discussing-other-views-too'.

Thousands of copies have been airfreighted all over the place. The first print run sold out – the bulk to Irish embassies round the world with only the Peking embassy not receiving theirs on time. The London embassy received an initial 2,500 copies followed up by another 3,000 just in case anyone had missed it. Washington DC was similarly deluged. Some lucky embassy folk even received their copies by telex and photofax. Irish diplomats are now briefing lots of important people – Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Barry, has been very busy briefing US politicians. Senator Edward Kennedy has said President Reagan should raise the Forum report with the British government when he visits London next month. Mr Barry is very pleased.

EXTENSIVE COVERAGE

Two days after the report's publication the *Irish Times* noted – 'The New Ireland Forum report received extensive coverage in the serious British newspapers and some of the 'pop' papers, attracting a surprising amount of favourable comment. . . . one of the most notable features was the sheer volume of space devoted to the report . . .' Too damn true, on both sides of the Irish sea – Irish papers were awash in reports of the Forum report and its reception. A lot of space was given to its reception by Mrs Thatcher and co. – cool, in a word. But then as the *Irish Post* pointed out – 'the lady is a unionist at heart'. And a lot of space was given to its reception by various Unionists – including the Reverend Ian Paisley's midnight fly posting escapade. Needless to say Unionists are vehemently opposed, believing, as many seem to, that Mrs Thatcher is ever ready to sell them out to Sinn Fein. But the determinedly optimistic *Irish Times* commented the following Tuesday, May 8th – 'the position adopted in other Unionist quarters has been at least a little encouraging'.

LABOUR PARTY RESPONSE

Not a lot of space was given to the response of the British Labour Party – so little in fact that one had to search through the *Irish* papers to find anything. One little paragraph in the *Irish Independent* noted the report's enthusiastic reception from the British Labour Party with Peter Archer describing it as a 'unique initiative' which showed that Irish unity is a realistic aspiration. Clive Soley was described as being very favourable in the *Irish Times*, saying that 'it deserved very serious consideration'. Given the report's predilection for what is in fact official Labour policy – unity by consent – and Soley's concern for, and belief in, winning Unionist trust, such a response is unsurprising. Moreover, Soley has envisioned a united Ireland being a federal structure, and federalism and confederalism is one of the other 'structural arrangements' the report examines. A Northern Ireland within a united Ireland? A separate federal state for the Protestants? But that is how Northern Ireland was set up in the first place! A Northern Ireland by any other name . . . is Northern Ireland. Confederalism is defined by a dictionary as a 'permanent union of sovereign states for common external action' – a sovereign Northern Ireland joining together with Britain and the Republic for common external action in NATO maybe?

SINN FEIN

And Sinn Fein? Well there we have it. What about Sinn Fein indeed. With all this energy, effort, and encouragement being expended it really seems like there are some rather desperate people out there. And there are – Notably the SDLP, and all those who believe like Jim Prior said last November when Gerry Adams took over the leadership of Sinn Fein, that Sinn Fein could turn Ireland into a Cuba on *our* doorstep – perish the thought! Sinn Fein is breathing down the SDLP's neck and with the Euro elections just round the corner the SDLP has been having nightmares. The whole Forum fandango was all SDLP leader John Hume's idea. He needs a life line and he's desperate. He and many others are haunted by Sinn Fein's 43% electoral victory last June. As the *Irish Times* commented on May 3rd – '. . . the last attempts to reach agreement that was seen as vital for the future survival of the SDLP in the face of a growing Provisional Sinn Fein party.' Their editorial the following day warned ominously of the 'appalling prospect' of 'a permanent armed response' that might become 'unstoppable' if the Forum report was not treated positively.

If the forum fails Sinn Fein could succeed. Ten days before the report was published, on April 21st, the *Irish Post* wrote in its editorial:

'If, as is now feared, it proves to be a failure – a failure on the part of Irish politicians – then it will be a very serious situation with considerable repercussions. The immediate beneficiaries will be Provisional Sinn Fein who were excluded from the Forum, despite in the Westminster general elections of last June getting 43% of the Nationalist vote in Northern Ireland. Immediate losers will be the SDLP who in eight weeks' time once again seek to withstand the challenge of Sinn Fein in the European parliamentary election. For the SDLP, the Forum was a lifeline. That lifeline has turned out to be a very frayed rope.

If Sinn Fein ousts the SDLP either in the Euro elections or in the more telling local government elections in the North next year, then the entire Anglo-Irish situation changes. It will mean that Dublin no longer speaks for the Nationalist community in the North. Britain will then have to talk directly with Sinn Fein. The consequences of that remain to be seen.'

The day after the report's publication the *Guardian* headlined its editorial 'If not the Forum way then How?' *The Guardian* does not appear to think there is any other way – but there is and Sinn Fein has it. Danny Morrison commented: 'The Forum has avoided the crucial issues . . . they have totally ignored what we have been saying . . . that there should be an end to the Loyalist veto and that British troops should be withdrawn from Ireland.' But Sinn Fein was excluded from the Forum discussions for just this reason.

Sarah Roelofs

Keep up the pressure!

Model Resolutions on Ireland

Labour Committee on Ireland model resolutions for annual conference:
The LCI is concentrating on 3 policy areas this year – *all* are very important for us.

1. Civil liberties – the need for the British labour movement to take a stand against the acceptance of supergrass evidence, no jury courts and the degrading treatment meted out to the victims of British imperialism, e.g. the strip searching of women in Armagh prison:

'This Conference records its total opposition to the no-jury Diplock Courts. We believe the abandonment of the right to trial by jury marks a further deterioration in the standards of justice and civil liberties in the North.

'We are thoroughly opposed to the practice of conviction in these courts solely or mainly on the basis of the uncorroborated evidence of alleged accomplices – the so-called supergrasses.

'We also express our concern at the administration of the prison system in the Six Counties, in particular the sexual harassment of women prisoners by means of strip searches.

'We call on the Labour leadership to campaign vigorously for the immediate ending of these measures.'

2. Extending the Labour Party to Northern Ireland – would we call on the British Labour Party to organise in Cyprus? or France? What Northern Ireland needs is less – zero in fact – British involvement not more. Such ideas are Unionist and we need to build opposition to them:

'Conference rejects the call for the British Labour Party to organise in Northern Ireland. Aside from its already recognised impracticability, we believe that it would undermine Labour's stated aim of making progress towards the re-unification of Ireland, and fostering unity of the working class movement throughout.'

3. We obviously need to maintain pressure for British withdrawal:

'Conference notes present Party policy in support of a united Ireland and believes that the essential prerequisite for this is an unconditional British political and military withdrawal.'

Grenadians fight back

By John Hartnell (Islington North CLP)

Under the noses of the American invaders, supporters of the March 13th, 1979 Revolution are actively preparing for renewed struggles for a free Grenada.

Despite the dire political situation created by the events of October 19th (the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and others and the formation of the military government), and the US invasion a week later, there is still broad popular support for the social and economic programmes of the Revolution. Significantly, the prestige of Maurice Bishop and other leaders of the Peoples Revolutionary Government (PRG) remains high.

Grenadian comrades are organising to utilise all that is favourable in the situation to remobilise the peoples' struggles. They have set themselves three tasks: the establishment of the Maurice Bishop and October 19th Martyrs Foundation, the publication of a non-US sponsored political newspaper and the reconstruction of the mass organisations under progressive leadership.

The foundation was launched at a well-attended demonstration in January. The first issue of the paper, the 'Peoples Heroes' was out by March, and daily the painstaking work of re-building the trade unions, women's and youth movements takes place.

The foundation is the main focus for activity. It is a non-profit making charity. It has two objectives: first to keep fresh the memory of Maurice Bishop, his comrades and their ideals, and second to provide practical assistance to those who have suffered in the aftermath of October 19th. To this end, the foundation aims to build a physical memorial to the martyrs, to open a centre for research into the lives of the heroes of the Grenadian peoples, and to organise funds for educational scholarships and the financial relief for needy persons.

The Foundation is open to all who support its aims, and is organised on a parish as well as national basis. It has already met with a warm response from the people. It is also winning international support after successful tours of North America and Europe by former PRG members George Louison, Kendric Radex and Don Rojas.

Briefing supporters are urged to help politically and financially with this important project by winning support for its from Labour Party branches and GC's. As Maurice Bishop's former press secretary, Don Rojas has said, 'The stronger the foundation becomes, the more dangerous it is perceived to be in Washington'. As the US prepares for the show trials of the detainees, socialists in Britain can help the Grenadian opposition fightback by building the foundation. The comrades need our help.

For further information write either to the Foundation at: PO Box 167, Grenville Street, St George's, Grenada or to 33, Alexander Road, London N19.

18th August Demonstration Committee

Press Release

The above committee wishes to announce that a major demonstration marking the fifteenth anniversary of British troops being sent on to the streets of the North of Ireland will take place in central London on 18th August. The demonstration will be calling on the British Government to implement a policy of political and military withdrawal from Ireland. A rally in conjunction with the demonstration is planned to take place in Trafalgar Square.

The demonstration is sponsored by the following Labour MPs: Norman Atkinson MP, Tony Benn MP, Syd Bidwell MP, Dennis Canavan MP, Bob Clay MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Joan Maynard MP, Allan Roberts MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Clare Short MP.

Other sponsors include: Richard Balfe MEP, Lord Gifford QC, Peter Hain, Janice Turner (Chair, Young Liberals), John Arden, Margharetta D'Arcy, Desmond Greaves, Peadar O'Donnell, Spare Rib Collective, Harry Courcha (ACTT Executive), Bill Pitt, MIke Hamill (Councillor, Harrow), Jonathan Rosenhead (all in a personal capacity).

In the long and blighted calendar of Anglo-Irish relations, August is a month that evokes bitter memories. It was in August that Britain's first standing army under Cromwell landed in Ireland in 1649. Over 300 years later on 14 August 1969 the British army appeared once more on the streets of Irish cities. Then 9 August 1971 saw the reintroduction of internment without trial (later replaced by the Diplock Court system).

Military oppression, imprisonment and special legal procedures have been recurrent features of British rule. The fact that they are recurrent is proof of their failure.

This August sees the fifteenth anniversary of the British army's intervention in this phase of the troubles. It is an anniversary that should not go unmarked by the growing number of people who realise that an Ireland wholly free of Britain is the only way to end this calamitous history.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

More than ever it is plain that Britain's withdrawal from Ireland is an issue of national importance, warranting the most urgent attention. Yet for more than a decade Trafalgar Square, the national forum and symbol of free speech, has been banned to organisations calling for withdrawal from Ireland. This is completely unjust and unworthy of a society that values political freedom.

This ban will be challenged. An application will be made for a rally to be held in Trafalgar Square on 18 August in conjunction with our demonstration.

Model resolutions

Conference condemns:

1. the US invasion of Grenada.
2. the CIA/American illegal action in destabilising the popular government of Nicaragua.
3. the continuing US military involvement in Honduras, El Salvador and other military dictatorships.
4. the continuing US hostility towards Cuba.

and resolves that Labour Party foreign policy will be built on peace co-operation between states based on the principle of self-determination, non-interference and anti-racism.

It further instructs the NEC to call on

1. the PLP to send observers to the Nicaraguan elections.
2. Labour local authorities to twin with Nicaraguan towns and establish economic links.
3. the government to cut off all military and technical links with US actions in Central America.

Resolution on the Middle East

In view of the continuing conflict in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, the growing resistance to Israeli occupation and Israel's intensified repression in this area, this Conference:

1. reiterates its recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.
2. reaffirms the Party's 1982 commitment to the establishment of a democratic, secular state of Palestine.
3. calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli troops from Lebanon, the West Bank and all other territories occupied by Israel since 1967.
4. calls for the dismantling of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, in the Gaza strip and in the Golan Heights.
5. welcomes the withdrawal of the 'multinational peace-keeping force' from Lebanon and condemns all moves to prop up the Phalangists' sectarian regime there.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be out on June 21st. Deadline for articles is Monday 11th June. All articles to be sent to 54 Bow Road, London E.3.

The next National Editorial Board will be on Sunday June 24th in Birmingham. For details ring Chris Palmer on 021 523 3608.

Briefing's new address

All correspondence should now be sent to 31 Cranwich Rd, London N16. All articles to be sent to 54 Bow Road, London E3.

Published by London Labour Briefing, 31 Cranwich Rd, London N16.

Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd (TU), Forster Road, London N17