LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING 40p
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Full support to the miners! Kinnock must GET OFF THE FENCE!

The most important task facing delegates at this year's party conference is to halt the shift to the right being imposed on the party by Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and their supporters. This last year seen enormous opportunities for the Labour Party to rebuild the support squandered at the last election. The events of the year completely disprove the myth that Thatcher is invincible and cannot be challenged.

Arthur Scargill has given a lesson not seen in decades of fighting for the interests of trade unionists. The strike's done more than anything else to turn round the political situation in the country. Hundreds of thousands of people, from Liverpool to the British Rail workers, have already directly gained from the impact of the strike.

Yet at every stage this strike has been criticised and sabotaged by the party leadership. Kinnock backed the right wing on the NUM executive on the ballot. He has spent his speeches criticising 'miners' violence — not denouncing the organised thuggery of the police. At the TUC Kinnock's call was for a 'negotiated settlement' — not for the victory which the NUM has in its power to win if backed by the TUC and Labour movement.

Every opportunity to rebuild Labour as a real fighting force is being sabotaged. The policies which are being proposed at conference, including the new ecnomic policy statement, the defence document, and the opposition to black sections show the direction of that course. One year has been enough to make the 'dream ticket' a nightmare for party activists.

Fortunately there *is* another way forward for Labour to that of Kinnock and Hattersley which is being shown — and not just in words. The *real* path Labour has to follow is shown by Liverpool council, the policies being pioneered by the GLC and above all by Arthur Scargill and the NUM.

The path of Kinnock or the road of Scargill. That is the choice for Labour at this conference. There is no point of contact between the two. *Briefing* has no doubt where *it* stands. Neither should delegates.



Photo: Press Association

Women Against Pit closures London March. 11 Aug 1984. Anne Scargill (2nd left) is accompanied by her husband Arthur.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Ealing Victory, Southwark Defeat

A smashing Labour victory in Victoria Ward (Acton) has removed the Tories' overall majority on Ealing Council. Phil Portwood, a left-of-centre candidate, was returned with a majority of 178 votes, overturning a previous Tory majority of 181, and the Tories now have only 35 seats out of 70 on Ealing Council.

However, they will retain control of the Council following the decision of the renegade (ex-Labour) Mayor not to use her vote, even against privatisation or school closures.

The campaign was fought and won on local issues and opposition to cuts and privatisation and resulted in a 9% swing to Labour, almost matching swings in two recent by-elections in Ealing North.

The Liberal vote of 217 represents the third disaster for the Alliance in Ealing by-elections.

Kevin Veness (Secretary Ealing Local Government Committee)

The crushing defeat of September 13th in the Rotherhithe by-election leaves Bermondsey Labour Party in no doubt that the party is indeed over. The trend which began in Burgess Ward in March, continues with another 'safe' Labour council seat falling prey to the Liberals. The so-called 'Hughes factor' clearly had some influence on the result. This was offset by a vigorous campaign, highlighting the Liberal record in Liverpool, and their voting record in Southwark Council.

In contrast to the Burgess by-election the Bermondsey Party worked hard during the campaign and effective hard-hitting literature of a high standard was produced. Unfortunately through the campaign the canvass returns remained static at 30%, unaffected by the broad thrust of the campaign.

Clearly if we are to hold Bermondsey against a Liberal onslaught in the borough elections in eighteen months, then the performance of Southwark Council must improve dramatically and begin to reflect the needs and interests of working people.

Result. Total poll 35.24%.
Pemberton (Liberal) 1,381
Lawrence (Labour) 780
Gray (Conservative) 55
Core (NF) 50.

John Chapman, Agent, Rotherhithe Ward

Why Labour Lost

SOUTHWARK Labour parties suffered another blow on September 13th in the Rotherhithe Ward Bye-election when the Liberals polled 61% of votes cast, beating Labour (34%) by 601.

Although the Labour Candidate, Ian Lawrence, worked hard the continuing running sore which dogs the much-needed Labour comeback in Bermondsey is the Council's real and perceived record on housing. It seems unable to communicate effectively with tenants who feel unwanted, and unable to manage its own considerable, even if dwindling, resources.

To ever regain Bermondsey Labour must take effective action on repairs, its appalling record on empty properties, and the need for real tenant participation. However victim blaming and scapegoating is the present path of the ("new ? left??!") leadership who are now moving to breaking their manifesto and introducing the hated 'PIO' provision of the Criminal Trespass Law (Section 7, Criminal Law Act 1977) to send in the police directly against homeless people who squat.

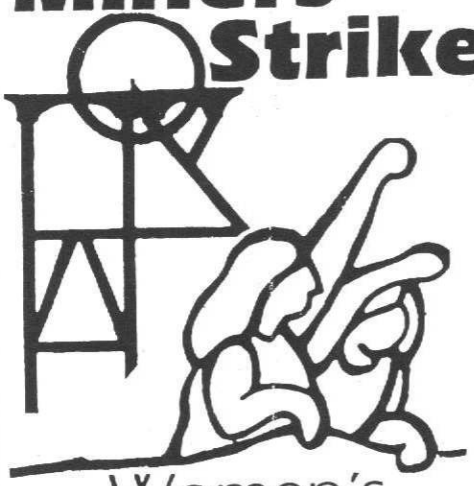
TASCS – the Tenants And Squatters Campaign of Southwark which is fighting this said in a recent leaflet:

"The families it would be used against would not even have the right of a civil Court appearance. No wonder the campaign against this legislation in 1977 dubbed it the 'THUGS CHARTER'. The Council don't seem to understand the depth of feeling against this monstrous piece of Tory inspired legislation. This is an anti-working class law.

Southwark's housing policy should be worked out in the context of fighting the Tory government. The Council should not see its job as administering Tory cuts by dividing the homeless into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' and refusing to help the latter. While it is obviously necessary to provide housing for priority cases this should not be used as an excuse to leave thousands of flats empty. The Council must make its first priority filling empty property by any means necessary – then when its own house is in order it will be in a much better position to demand more new build money and powers to requisition empty property from the Government.

Piers Corbyn, Tenants Representative, Southwark Council Housing Committee for Peckham District (personal capacity)

Miners' Strike



Women's Benefit Concert

All proceeds to miners' families (Women Against Pit Closures)

Organised by London Labour Women

AFTER the five male gala nights for the miners at the Festival Hall, women are organising our own event – a salute from women in the Labour Party to women in the coalfields.

London Labour Women are recalling that in 1926 Labour and Co-op Guild women collected the modern equivalent of £4.8 million to support the striking miners. Now we are organising a big benefit concert at the Piccadilly Theatre on November 25 as a focus of fundraising and support activities for women in London.

During the week before the Benefit there will be a week of action, with lots of local events: speaking tours for Women Against Pit Closures, video shows, street collections, etc.

We are asking every Women's Section and Women's Council to put this on their agenda, to organise an event during that week, and to help us publicise the Benefit.

Immediately, we hope all Briefing readers will help by adding their names to the message of support that will go in the programme for the night. If you're very very poor you can do this for £3, but really we are asking for a minimum of £5. And we'd like you to rush it off to us fast, as we need the cash to get publicity going and secure the theatre booking. (Labour Party branches and women's sections can also help in this way – not just individuals).

You can also help by getting other people to do this. So write for extra copies of the appeal letter to the address below, or get one copy and make your own, to go in local Party mailings, etc.

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

Donation £. . . . . . .

Cheques to GLLP Women's Committee (Miners' Fund). Send to: Joan Twelves, 1 Alverstone House, SE11 5TS.

Miners' children come to Enfield

B.Goddard
(Group Co-ordinator)





In 1926, during the general strike, children of striking miners came to stay in Enfield. In August the trip was repeated, 58 years later.

As part of their activities, the Enfield Miners Support Group invited 25 children of striking miners from the Notts area to come to London for a week's holiday and the week turned out to be a tremendous success. The children were selected on the basis of need by the Notts Womens Support Group and they were accommodated by families in the Enfield area, the activities during the week being financed by contributions from local trade unions and members of the public. The very generous contributions from the trade unions allowed a full and varied programme of activities to take place.

During the week the children went ice-skating, travelled down the Thames to the Flood barrier, went to Margate for the day, visited the zoo, toured the Spurs ground and had a barbecue and a party.

Many of the children came from areas where a minority are on strike and consequently their families are subjected to additional stress and pressure.

Two incidents during the week brought home to helpers the hardship being experienced by these children from Notts. At a reception at County Hall, one of the children, Heather aged 11, refused to eat any of the sandwiches or cakes provided because she had been promised chicken and chips by her hosts that evening and she hadn't had it for so long she didn't want to spoil it. Another girl, Cathryn aged 14, saved her spending money provided by the Group so that she could buy herself a new skirt for school.

Many lasting relationships have been built up between the people of Enfield and the children from Notts. One boy stayed in London for an extra week and many of the children are due to return to stay again with their hosts in the near future.

As in 1926, trade unionists and Labour Party members in Enfield are determined they will do all in their power to bring about a victory for the miners.

For further information ring: B.Goddard 807 9357, A.Thomas 888 3914; or C.Madden. 804 0670.

Black People Support the Miners

The Kensington Labour Party Miners Support Group and the Black Delegation (a collection of black groups from Brent, Camden, Hackney, King's Cross and Southall who came together to show their support for the miners) and miners from Notts, Staffs and Derbyshire (who were guests of the two groups) collected over £2000 for the miners at the Notting Hill Carnival! Over 40,000 'Black People Support the Miners' stickers were taken by Carnival-goers from the two Miners' stalls over the two days of the Carnival. In addition, there was a miners float, and the African Liberation group donated space on on their stall for the miners. The tremendous support of black people was very heartening, but came as no surprise to those familiar with the radical traditions of black communities in Britain.

It is hoped that black people's struggles, such as the Newham Defence Campaign and the Karamjit Singh Campaign will soon be receiving the active support of the miners.

Julian Scola, Kensington CLP

POLICE ATTACK STREET

Police harassment of street collectors supporting the miners was the problem raised by London Labour MPs Frank Dobson, Alf Dubs, Eric Deakins and Nigel Spearing, and Tony Gould and Shelley Adams from SERTUC, when they met with senior officers at New Scotland Yard. The delegation stressed the various forms of harassment which have been used by the police in different parts of London including threats of arrest or prosecution when no offence is being committed, constantly asking collectors to move on, giving inaccurate or misleading information about the law, seizing buckets of money and returning them a few hours or days later. They emphasised that simply by making arrests, whether or not the people are prosecuted, the police effectively prevent the activity, which may or may not be unlawful, from continuing.

Many more people have been threatened or warned than actually arrested or prosecuted, and police policies and attitudes vary not only from area to area but week to week in the same area. The first people charged with collecting without a permit were members of Streatham Labour Party/Lambeth Trades Council whose case has now been adjourned until 5th October at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court. Camden Trades Council members face similar charges and their first court appearance will also be in October.

On 30th June collectors in Woolwich were arrested under the 1824 Vagrancy Act allegedly for 'begging', and their buckets of money seized. Four days later the money was returned and a letter from Chief Inspector Duff informed them that the Commissioner had decided not to prosecute.

Although no permit is required to collect food, to leaflet or to sell 'The Miner', many groups involved in these lawful activities experience interference by the police. The National Council for Civil Liberties has had reports of harassment in Lewisham, Hammersmith, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Southwark, Westminster, Kensington, Peckham, Hampstead, Bromley, Sutton, Hillingdon, Merton, Deptford, Hounslow, Haringey and Brent.

It is easy to conclude that the police are trying to discourage lawful activities in support of the miners.

The most frequent basis for arrests during street collections has been 'unlawful obstruction of the highway'. The police have exercised their discretion to make arrests for obstruction in Croydon, Holborn/St Pancras, Camden, Brent, Muswell Hill and Wood Green. In Camden and Brent there have been arrests for obstructing the police and in Muswell Hill for threatening words likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Harassment in Hammersmith

TWO Labour Councillors and a Labour MP have now been cautioned by Hammersmith police for allegedly organising "illegal" street collections in support of the miners. But the result of police harassment has been to increase support for the miners' cause.

Fund-raising on behalf of the miners and their families has been organised in King Street, Hammersmith, every Saturday since March by Hammersmith and Fulham Community Assembly. It started with collections of food and money but after warnings from the police we switched from collecting money to selling the NUM paper, The Miner. Over a hundred pounds a week and often much more was raised in this way.

Clamp down

In the last few weeks, however, the police have decided to clamp down. On August 4, the police cautioned six of us including myself, as Chair of the Assembly. They took our names, confiscated our takings, told us they would report us and we might face prosecution and finally they threatened to arrest us if we started again. We were told by the Inspector that we had to stop, not because of a change in the law, but because of a change in the police attitude to the law and because instructions had come down from 'on high'.

Our response was to call publicly for the return of the money and for a large turnout the following week. Following protests from the Labour Group, the Law Centre and Clive Soley MP, the police relented to the extent that they returned our money on the Friday evening. On the Saturday fifty people turned out to sell The Miner, including for the first time, other Labour councillors and Clive Soley. The police took no action and we doubled our takings.

Clive Soley

Since then police harassment has been spasmodic though our position has been helped by the presence of Labour notables. Nonetheless six other people were cautioned and had their names taken on September 1, including Clive Soley. The police blundered by telling the press Clive had been arrested and were then forced to withdraw their claim and issue a public apology.

On Saturday September 8, we again had a good turnout of over twenty people. This time there was little sign of the police except one flying visit when they decided to pick on Gordon Prentice, leader of the Labour Group, and report him. Still we raised about £150 in a couple of hours.

We could have to wait weeks to find out whether the police will press ahead with prosecutions, but they at least have learnt that their harassment will not stop us. It has been useful to have more Labour councillors and the MP with us because the police know then that anything they do will not escape public scrutiny and criticism. Still it has been the excellent response from left wing activists and from the public each time the police have tried to stop us that has really boosted our efforts.

There is obviously a grey area of the law around the question of whether selling The Miner really constitutes the sale of newspapers or is just a disguised form of collecting, as the police allege, but the problem only arises because of the police control over the issuing of collecting licences in the London area and equally because of the arbitrary and selective enforcement of the law by the police.

Police used as political weapon

The lesson to be drawn is clear. Large-scale public defiance of the police and the fact that we have had to publicly defend our democratic rights in the face of constant police harassment just go to show how the police are being used as a political weapon in the miners' dispute. Anyone who had any lingering illusions in the fairness and impartiality of the police before the miners' strike will, I hope, realise that progress towards a socialist future, however it is to be achieved, will be an idle dream if we do not effectively deal with this praetorian guard of the capitalist state.

Councillor Ian Harrison

The Public Order Research Group is collecting details of problems encountered by street collections and would be grateful if you could send them information at: Public Order Research Group, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. (Tel 01-734 5831). They are working with the GLC Police Committee Support Group and the National Council for Civil Liberties to cover incidents of policing during the miners' dispute.

COLLECTIONS

Arrests in Kilburn

AFTER weeks of increasing police harassment, on August 18 six members of the Brent Miners' Support Campaign were arrested during the regular street collection in Kilburn High Road. On the following Saturday, police arrested another collector.

Those arrested, all of whom are active members of the Brent Labour Party are: Cllr. Graham Durham, NUT; Cllr. Mark Feeney, NALGO; Brian Prince, TGWU; Emma Tait, NALGO; Paul Wilkinson, AUEW; Tom Wilson, APEX; Mick Woods, AUEW.

They have been charged with obstruction of either the Highway or the Police and one person has been reported for collecting money and a bucket of money was confiscated. They are due to appear in Willesden Magistrates Court on December 5.

The Brent Miners' Support Campaign, formed in the early days of the miners' strike, has been very successful in raising over £75,000 in money and food for the miners and their families. It has organised public meetings and events as well as door-to-door food collections, street and workplace collections. Every Saturday, street collections are held in 5-7 locations around Brent, Kilburn High Road being the most lucrative.

As collectors become less inclined to play cat and mouse games with the police and what was thought to have been a tacit understanding with them turned into the police adopting an aggressive stance and threatening arrests, it became clear that they were determined to stop street collections.

The Brent Miners Support Campaign decided it was important to establish the right to be on the streets; the right to collect money for the miners.

Having been called upon to witness any arrests, the Brent Law Centre now feels unable to provide legal representation and has passed the cases to a local Legal Aid firm of solicitors. The Campaign is asking the labour movement to donate money to help defray any legal costs arising out of the arrests, and any excess funds will of course be passed on to the NUM. Money/cheques should be sent as soon as possible to: Brent Miners' Support Campaign, c/o 375 Willesden High Road, NW10.

The arrests are not deterring the activities of the Campaign. It is organising weekly public meetings in Kilburn High Road and through the Labour Party should be able to get licences for stalls on several sites. It expects to send monthly food convoys to Kent, and will be holding a benefit at the Tricycle Theatre on October 21.

Anyone in Brent who would like further information about the Campaign is invited to contact the address above.

Emma Tait,
Chair, Brent East CLP
Co-convenor, Brent Miners Support Campaign.



Labour Party Photo Library

MONEY FOR THE MINERS! Women collecting, Walthamstow Market

.... even at Party headquarters

In Southwark only one person has so far been arrested for collecting for the miners, he was charged with obstruction. The most serious problem we face here is the constant petty harassment of collectors – particularly of miners themselves.

The regular weekly collection outside the Labour Party Headquarters in Walworth Road always attracts a police presence – they have queried the miners' right to collect on the steps (the private property of the Party) and have threatened to arrest them. A plain clothes policeman visited Jim Mortimer to ask about the collection point. Similarly miners have the permission of Southwark Borough Council to collect outside the libraries – despite this the police have asked them to move on.

The attitude of some policemen is worrying. A miner collecting at the Elephant and Castle was abused by a rude and arrogant young policeman, who asked questions and then refused to listen to the answers. This was not untypical.

Kate Bennett

On Friday 14th September the Bexhill Magistrates Court acquitted 4 women on a charge of 'begging' under the 1824 Vagrancy Act who had been arrested when they were collecting money for the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. The magistrates rejected the police argument that Greenham women are 'idle and disorderly' and that anyone who was collecting for them would be committing an offence. Although the women also denied that they were guilty of collecting without a permit they were convicted but then given an absolute discharge.

Next issue out: 18 October. Deadline for articles: Monday 8 October. To be sent to 54 Bow Road, London E3.

Next Editorial Board:. Monday October 22 at County Hall at 6.30 p.m.

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE FOR FEMINISTS AND SOCIALISTS
MORLEY COLLEGE, WESTMINSTER
(NEAR LAMBETH NORTH TUBE)
WEDNESDAYS, 6.45 pm
FROM OCTOBER 10th
LECTURER: CHRIS KNIGHT
Info: 852 2193

Barking Hospital —"Where the Health Service stands and fights"



Chris Hacclak

"Barking Hospital is the spot where the Health Service stands and fights". That's how NUPE shop steward, Sue Smith described the six month battle to save jobs and cleaning standards.

Private contractor Crothalls Ltd. have:

- *** slashed wages and hours by 40% - 60%**
- *** cut holidays by a quarter**
- *** axed the sick pay scheme**
- *** LRD reported that the shift changes were the worse known to them.**

Cockroaches and ants have infested matresses in the maternity ward where Cathy Cook and other women were sent home, "The Doctor said it wasn't right to keep us in the ward in these circumstances and discharged us". Three Health Inspection Reports have condemned cleaning standards:

"the cleaning is now so far deficient that 'routine' cleaning will be insufficient to redress the situation" — J. McQuillan MIEH

"dead and decomposing cockroaches indicated the lack of regular and effective cleaning" — B. Chapman BSC, MIEH

"if the Hospital didn't enjoy immunity from prosecution" the local Council would bring charges against the hospital and consider closing it down.

CHEAP RACKETEERS

The Government strategy to open the NHS to cheap racketeers, undermines wages, jobs and standards of service. No workers in the public service should be in any doubt that the Government has targetted ancillary workers' jobs in the Health Service as amongst the first to be auctioned off. Local Government Services will be next. The opening up of the public services to multi-national profiteers such as Pritchards should convince everyone of the need to win at Barking.

Action taken in support of Barking by workers in New Zealand, picketing Crothalls offices in Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland and Dunedin have been a great spur to the strikers' efforts.

Many unions have joined the Barking picketline. Visits from South Wales, Kent, Derbyshire and South Yorks miners have been returned by striking domestics visiting the coalfields of N. Staffs and Kent and picketing West Drayton coal depot.

To NUPE General Secretary, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Barking is "our Cortonwood". Barking is a national focus where we can win if we commit ourselves to support the women in struggle. It is at the points of confrontation, such as Barking, that we can make the greatest impact in halting privatisation before contractors secure their foothold.

PICKET LINE

The pressure must be kept up at the picket line. Scabs are still bussed into work at 7am, 1.30pm and 6.30pm. Your branch and your union is needed at the picket line, organise now to support the Barking Domestics!

Contact the Strike HQ on 01-592 5038 or 01-595 4252 for details. Donations to the strike fund are payable to 'Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency — Strike Fund'.

Barrie Neal
Barking and Dagenham Health Emergency

Redbridge Supports The Miners

The following is a report on the support that local Labour parties in Redbridge and the local Trades Council as well as unemployed people have given the miners in the last few weeks.

On Saturday September 1st, in the deeply Conservative constituency of Wanstead and Watford (MP Patrick Jenkin) over £600 was raised in a matter of hours at just two homes operating an open-door policy for the public to bring their gifts and meet miners and their families from Florence pit in N. Staffs. This brought the total collected so far to over £3,000 in less than two months. The public support has been phenomenal for a borough with three Tory MPs and only twelve Labour councillors.

Regular groups of miners have been based at the Ilford unemployment centre at 203, Ilford Lane (514 5116), using it as a resource centre for printing and publicity. The initial offer came from the Trades Council and the staff have worked full-time with them and have also roped in other Labour Party activists as well as unemployed people to go out collecting and leafletting all over East London.

An ad hoc committee of socialists and communists have provided the back up work and we have already visited the Kent coalfield, union meetings, held raffles and one social evening to raise funds. But besides all the financial support the operation has brought together two starkly different communities and hopefully we will be able to send a delegation up to Staffs in the near future to cement the new comradeship.

It is not known exactly how much the Right Honourable member for Wanstead and Woodford has contributed himself.

John Wray,
Leytonstone Labour Party

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S. African Embassy:

A VICTORY OVER THE POLICE

Robert Latham (Camden Councillor)

For 25 years, anti-apartheid demonstrators have been permitted to picket directly outside the South African Embassy. On May 26th, George Howlett, the local Commander of A Division, decided that they would no longer be permitted to do so. He would only permit them to stand on the opposite side of Duncannon Street. Even this, in Howlett's view, impaired the dignity of the Embassy. He felt that previous practice prevented him from making any greater restriction. Howlett is considered to be a liberal in Met terms. Botha was due to visit Thatcher the following weekend in an attempt to win international respectability for apartheid.

This episode demonstrates the twin problems of the Metropolitan police, their inefficiency and unaccountability. The City of London Anti-Apartheid Group refused to accept Howlett's arbitrary decision. Camden Council had obtained an opinion from a QC that the police action was illegal. Over the next two months, 160 City of London Anti-Apartheid pickets were arrested for exercising the traditional right to stand directly outside the Embassy. 100 police officers stood outside the Embassy to prevent them from doing so, with a further 100 in coaches in reserve on the opposite side of Trafalgar Square.

Despite either the historical precedent or the presumption of the innocence of an accused person, the police asked the Court for bail conditions to be applied prohibiting their return to the picket line for those who had been charged with obstructing the police in the execution of their duties. 5 pickets continued their stand of principle and were remanded in prison when they returned to the Embassy. The press turned a blind eye. "Has there been any violence?" asked one news editor. Told that it was a peaceful and well-disciplined picket, press interest evaporated.



Police Actions Illegal

On 20th July three MPs, Tony Banks, Stuart Holland and Jeremy Corbyn, together with 5 Camden and Westminster Councillors, joined the ranks of those who were arrested and charged. The following Monday, the first test prosecution against Richard Roques began, the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, David Hopkin, gave his decision on the 3rd August. The police actions were illegal and Roques was acquitted. Before rights to demonstrate were to be abrogated, he ruled, he had to be satisfied by clear and unambiguous evidence that the defendant's action had been violent. He could not differentiate between this demonstration and the evidence he had heard about others over the past 20 years. Demonstrations have continued outside the South African Embassy, because they have been successful. David Kitson has confirmed the effect that an 80 day picket had in 1982 enforcing concessions for political prisoners in South Africa. A prison governor told Kitson that his transfer from the Pretoria Central Prison for condemned prisoners was a direct result of representations from the South African Embassy.

When concessions failed to damp the persistence of the pickets organised by the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, the Embassy turned to other means. The Foreign Office confirmed in July that representations had been received from the South African Embassy concerning demonstrations and vigils. The Minister refused to disclose the content of these representations. The Government has been equally reluctant to divulge any representations made to the Metropolitan Police. In May, a pot of red paint was thrown at the Embassy. Commander Howlett felt it necessary to give his personal apologies to the Ambassador for this incident.

No Consultation

The essence of the Scarman policy for policing the Met is that the police should consult the public and win their support for their policies. No consultation took place in this incident. The willingness of the Met to act as the poodle not only of this Government but also a foreign government, gives an insight as to how policing decisions are made at present.

The police have now decided not to appeal against the Richard Roques decision. The charges against the remaining 160 demonstrators are being dropped. Pickets have now resumed directly outside the Embassy. Only a dozen or so officers attend to police the pickets, that is, compared with the 200 or so that were felt necessary previously to prevent the picket. The cost of these repressive policing measures has yet to be calculated. It is clear that Londoners pick up the bill for the policing decisions over which they had no control. Londoners pay for their democratic rights to be removed.

There is now a clear legal ruling that the police were acting in excess of their authority, and illegally. In accepting the Magistrate's decision without challenge, the police clearly hope that the issue will quietly pass away. The fact remains that 160 people have been wrongly arrested and charged, and five of those have spent over a week in custody on remand. The police need to realise that they cannot act in this way without impunity. This episode is just a microcosm of what the police are seeking to do elsewhere.

The story of Hackney Health Emergency

Hackney Health Emergency was the first local emergency campaign set up to defend health services in London. Seen by many as the best thing to happen in Hackney for years, it has inspired the creation of Health Emergency Campaigns in every London district. The campaign's main focus has been the struggle to save a local hospital – St Leonards – originally due for closure in January 1984. Malcolm Alexander and Paul O'Brien, leading activists of HHE, talk to Philippa Jones of *London Labour Briefing* . . .

In August you withdrew the 24-hour picket from St Leonards. Is that the end of your struggle to save the hospital?

Paul: We've fought over the past 18 months to keep St Leonards open, and while we failed to keep the acute medical beds there, we've succeeded in retaining almost everything else. Originally 80 beds were to be lost and now only 30, which means we have actually saved 50 beds in the district.

What is the highest point of the campaign over the last 18 months?

Malcolm: In September 1983 when the campaign had been active for nine months, we achieved a very large demonstration – approximately 2,000 people assembled at Hackney Town Hall – and there was an enormous amount of anger expressed there at the plan of the District Health Authority to close down local health services.

How did you build Hackney Health Emergency into a mass campaign?

P: The local Trades Council got together with the Borough Council and the Community Health Council to form a united campaign against all health cuts in Hackney. We built up by having meetings in local markets, halls, at all the summer fairs and by leafletting the whole borough. Within a few months everyone in Hackney knew that the hospitals were closing.

M: We tried to get away from the tradition of boring meetings. We didn't expect everybody who showed interest to immediately become a campaigner. We asked them at the simplest level if they could just do a few things. A lot of people don't want to sit around and have long discussions and we were sympathetic to that.

What help have you got from people in representative positions of power in the Hackney labour movement, such as the Council representatives on the DHA, the leaders of NUPE and COHSE and the councillors?

M: What amazed me from the beginning was that the DHA reps who were reasonably sympathetic to our aims were not organised. They didn't have any forum or any discipline in the way they approached the DHA meetings. What we attempted to do over and over again was to get the DHA members to meet together and eventually the Council set up a Health Sub-Committee. But not all reps went along, so even at the present we don't feel that the DHA members have organised themselves sufficiently.

Last winter the reps from the Council supported an option from the DHA which included cuts. Were they right to do so?

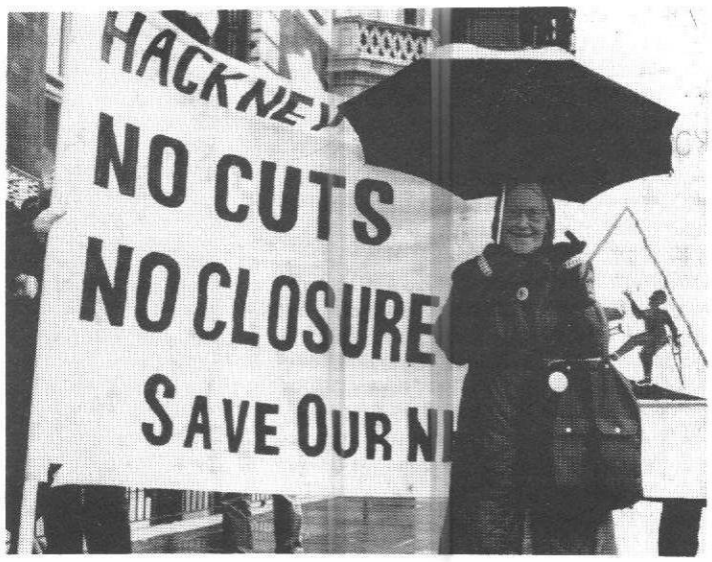
P: Most definitely not. All the years they spent dealing with the health service, their focus was always how to make the most of the DHA. We set up a campaign outside the DHA to carry the feelings of people of Hackney into the health service. And when the health authority responded by offering compromises, the Council reps were very quick to jump in and go for a particular option that had a number of cuts in it. The campaign, based as it is on rejecting all cuts, then felt itself somewhat undermined. So it took a lot of energy to take the fight into the Labour Party and get those reps around to our point of view.

M: We received tremendous support from the Council without which I don't think the campaign could really have got as far as it did. And so it came as an enormous surprise to find that the Council's no cuts policy was available for compromise.

Compromise was argued on the grounds that workers at the hospital would not take any militant action. What actually happened?

M: In February the workers, especially the NUPE workers, inside Hackney hospitals went on strike and defeated the DHA's attempt to privatise services. Over closure the response at St Leonards was very poor but that's got to be seen in a historical perspective because many of the workers at St Leonards have been working in the Metropolitan Hospital [closed] and there've been attempts to close down St Leonards since the '50s.

P: The DHA has threatened and intimidated workers especially at St Leonards. When it came to a fight-back, there were meetings with some hospital workers at which it was agreed they'd support an occupation. The interesting thing is that once the occupation began we got almost



unanimous support from the meetings inside the hospital. But when the DHA took out injunctions, NUPE – which was the basis of the organisation within the hospital – decided that it would challenge the DHA in the court and not on the picket line.

How do you assess the role of the union leadership in Hackney?

M: Inside St Leonards there have been two very active shop stewards but they haven't been able to mobilise enough people. The DHA has since suspended one of them, and another steward who is the COHSE branch secretary for their involvement in the occupation. There has been insufficient disciplined organisation inside the local trade unions and the workers inside the hospitals of Hackney have not felt that there is a strong enough broad structure for them to relate to. This is why it is now a great priority to develop the joint shop stewards committee, although the DHA refuses to recognise it.

The new Council leadership elected in May is even more strongly committed to Hackney Health Emergency's aims. Have they been able to make any difference?

M: The last leadership was very positive about Hackney Health Emergency. What I feel as lacking was a sort of general commitment amongst the councillors despite the very active support of a few.

P: I disagree with that. I do get the sense, although not yet an experience, that there is quite a difference. Now we have a leadership that itself is committed to the 'Three Noes' and to joining with all the other councils that face rate-capping to fight in a way that's parallel to the situation in the health service. The feeling I get is that the new leadership fits in much more closely with the health campaign that can go nowhere unless the budgets that are now being imposed on us are smashed.

How do you assess support from the rank-and-file of the Labour Party?

P: I'm very interested by a number of people – if this minority could galvanise the whole party and the council, then the health campaign could make great strides. All the parts of the Labour Party seem to act autonomously and this reflects the underdevelopment of the Labour Party as a campaigning organisation.

M: What disappointed me was there wasn't a more rapid response from the Labour Party as a whole to the occupation. It was a fundamental thing to have happened in the campaign in Hackney against cuts and the Labour Party should have quickly made sure it got really wide support.

LONDON WOMEN AGAINST RACISM

London Labour Women and the London Labour Party's Standing Conference Against Racism are organising a Conference on Racism: What It Is and How To Fight It, on Sunday October 28 (10 am to 4.30 pm) at County Hall.

The aim of the Conference is to look at how the Labour Party and the trade unions fit into racist Britain by examining our history and traditions and to examine some of the possible strategies for combatting racism.

It is, of course, impossible to deal with racism properly in a one-day conference. The idea is to make a start; and we hope the Conference will come up with further ideas for discussion and action.

The programme for the day is that the morning session will discuss what we mean by racism and how and why the British labour movement perpetuates racist practices and ideology. Workshops in the afternoon will look at anti-imperialism and racism awareness training as two possible strategies, at what Women's Sections can do, and how to tackle racism in the trade unions. We hope that the choice of topics will prove to be provocative and constructive.

This initiative was prompted by a number of different things: the establishment of Black Sections, which has generated a more serious discussion – in some CLPs at least – on the relationship of the Labour Party and black people; the debate on racism which has been taking place within the broader women's movement for some time now; and the demand from black Labour Party women who attended a day of workshops organised by the London Labour Women's Committee at the end of last year that we should do something to encourage black women to get invoived in the Party.

Further information is available from Janice Muir, Herbert Morrison House, 195 Walworth Road, SE17. There will be a creche, and a charge of £1 (free unwaged) at the door. It would help, but is not essential (except for creche) if women registered in advance.

Joan Twelves

Lobby the NEC!

The Black Section National Steering Committee and Vauxhall CLP are jointly organising a lobby of the NEC at 9.30 am on Wednesday September 26 at Walworth Road.

The NEC's meeting in Blackpool on the Sunday before Conference will be the one at which they decide their recommendation to Conference on the eighteen resolutions and five amendments supporting Black Sections – and the one resolution and two amendments (including one from the EETPU) opposing them. We understand that the debate has been provisionally scheduled for the Wednesday afternoon.

The Black Section National Steering Committee has produced considerable literature on the case for Black Sections, and Vauxhall CLP is producing a pamphlet detailing Vauxhall's experience. By organising this Lobby for the Wednesday meeting before Conference, we will be giving NEC members a chance to read our arguments – and, we hope, showing the strength of feeling there is in London in support of Black Sections.

At the 1983 Annual Conference, Composite 28 was remitted, but as a result the Working Party on Positive Discrimination was set up. The promised consultation paper from the Working Party has yet to appear, but an interim report, taking no view of Black Sections, will be put to Conference. Despite the press statements from our Leader opposing Black Sections, we believe it is important to persuade NEC members to support us. We are not prepared to accept remission again – and in Vauxhall (and we hope elsewhere) we are not prepared to shut down our Black Section: the opposite, in fact – we are calling a Special Meeting of our GC at the end of October formally to change our CLP rules on GC and EC representation from the Black Section (our decision to implement this in practice since April was not a formal Rule Change). Regional Office thinks we're wasting our time and is watching us closely . . .

Most of the resolutions to Conference come from London constituencies. The London Labour Party AGM last March supported, on a card vote, the establishment of Black Sections. We are therefore calling on London CLPs – and particularly those with Black Sections – to join the Lobby.

Joan Twelves
Secretary,
Vauxhall CLP/Regional EC member

Science briefing

The Labour Party must face environmental issues head-on and fight for a socialist environmental policy in which the human race lives in harmony with nature and itself.

The world is now bolting-up oil reserves without realising they are gobbling the Last Supper of non-renewable energy supplies. At current rates the world's oil will be exhausted in 30 years. Coal will last eight times that but at present causes damaging 'acid rain'.

The 'Reds and Greens' conference in London on July 21-22 revealed how divisions between 'Reds' (primarily socialists) and 'greens' (primarily environmentalists) in facing this crisis can only be resolved in the context of a socialist environmental action policy.

The Miners' strike came under attack from some 'Greens' who wanted 'low power not coal power' largely because of the problem of Sulphur Dioxide and other acid pollution caused by coal burning. This reason of course is used by the nuclear lobby to justify, more costly, nuclear power. Indeed the CEGB, a central pillar of the nukes lobby and the largest producer of sulphur dioxide in Europe, is deliberately dragging its heels in the introduction of a programme to 'clean' coal and fumes from power stations. It has even purchased a five year delay in doing anything by commissioning a five year £1 million study into the problem!

Just two realisations are central to the planning of Britain's future energy policy:-

*Coal power can be made clean by cheap de-acidification processes whereas NUCLEAR POWER CAN NEVER BE CLEAN.

*Clean coal and renewable (tidal/wind/biomas/solar/etc) power are the fuels of the future. Attempts to run-down coal now are madness.

The choice posed by the miners strike is Coal Power or Nuclear Power. The time is ripe for building a socialist environmental fightback way beyond the present level which is trivial compared with movements in the rest of Europe.

Three practical steps in a fightback for a sane environment were strongly put forward at the conference:-

*An attack on the anti-democratic centralised and pro-nuclear stance of the CEGB. A resolution from Portsmouth to National LP Conference takes this up.

*Action on acid rain to force the CEGB and NCB to clean coal; as the NUM want.

*Campaigning to make use of waste heat from Coal Power stations to heat localities

Model resolutions are available.

Piers Corbyn, Southwark-Bermondsey CLP

You've now got new delegates elected to the DHA. What role should they play?

P: If they can do anything within the health authority it s because they can relate to the feelings of people outside. If you're going to build a successful campaign in Hackney, the prime thing is not how good your arguments are inside the DHA, it is how you can mobilise the people behind you.

M: Yes, but you've got to make good arguments, and what we've got is a new wave of competence amongst the members of the DHA on our side. It is very important that now, for example, the joint shop stewards committee can pass a resolution which appears on the order sheet of the DHA meeting.

Do you think the fight to save local NHS services can be linked with the fight to defend local government services?

M: I think there may be parallel campaigns rather than the same campaign because there are people who are going to fight about democracy or rate-capping or about the health service, but who may not fight for all these things. Sometimes having a broad general campaign for everything can be less successful than having specific campaigns.

P: Some people who were involved around the health campaign would feed into an active organisation around a local authority that is quite clearly going to defend the local people's interests. If the local authority shows ambivalence or in some way doesn't seem prepared to go all the way, then I think you will lose some of the more active people.

What do you plan for the future?

M: It's very important that we defend the trade unionists who have been victimised because of the occupation. Then I think we've got to broaden the campaign so that we're starting to fight a lot of other issues that aren't necessarily just hospital-based. For example, we're very much in favour of patient groups in health centres who challenge the sort of service that is given and the doctor's right to control everything. We must get people to recognise that it is *their* health service and they've got the right to control and make decisions about it.

Stop Private Contractors!

A tidal wave of attacks on the jobs, wages and conditions of health workers and on standards of care and basic hygiene in the NHS is due to break in the next few months.

Tory government directives issued last September to District and Regional Health Authorities, pressing them to put the three basic ancillary services – cleaning, catering and laundry – out to competitive tender, demanded a response by this month.

Though the directives are not formally binding on the health authorities, only a handful have failed to comply; and circulars issued from the DHSS indicate that the screws will soon be turned still further to pressurise the 7 'rebel' London DHAs to fall into line.

DECIMATION

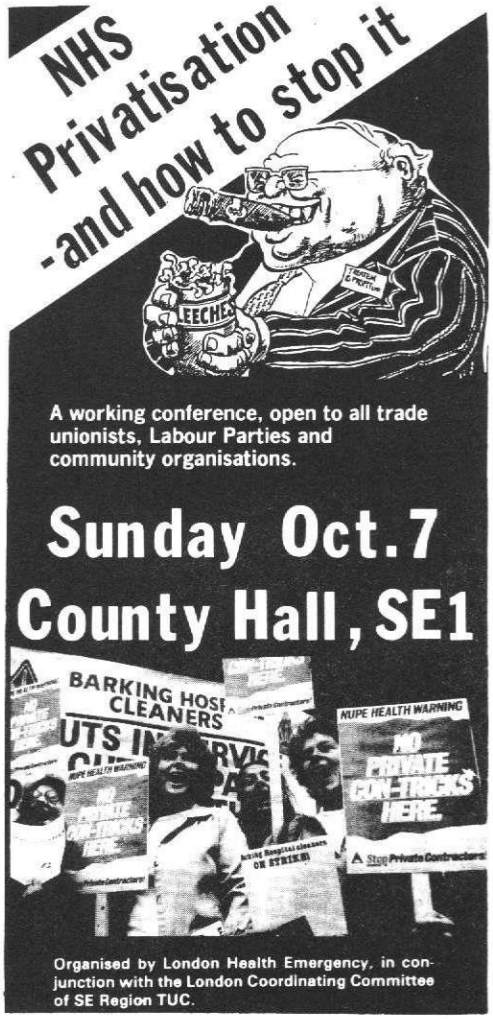
The implication of privatisation in the NHS is the loss of thousands of jobs; the transformation of many ancillary workers – currently some of the lowest-paid but best organised and most militant defenders of the NHS – into part-time casual labour; the decimation of union organisation; draconian wage cuts in the ancillary services (with a knock-on effect on other health workers); and the wholesale lowering of standards, as services become judged by their apparent cheapness and the balance-sheets of private employers rather than by the needs of the patients.

In the bid to cut corners and find profits in the heavily labour-intensive ancillary services, employers have obviously looked at cutting back on the wages and conditions of the workforce.

In every instance, private tenders have centred upon cutting the number of full-time staff, making some redundant and axing the hours of others to the most minimal of part-time – thus minimising or evading National Insurance contributions. The employers also want to slash back or abolish NHS levels of sickness benefits, holiday pay and pensions contributions.

By making each of the services subject to competitive tender, the Tory plan is to make the lowest wages paid by private contractors the yardstick for comparison. So even when local hospital managements set out to draw up their own 'in-house' tender in opposition to the outside contractors, they are obliged to look towards cuts in the workforce, wages and hours of work.

Already the long-running bitter strikes at Barking (against private contractors Crothalls) and Hammersmith (against an equally pernicious 'in-house' tender) have given health workers a flavour of what competitive tendering has to offer.



LOOMING ATTACK

Unfortunately all too few health workers understand the sheer scale of the attack that is looming in the next few months, or the amount they stand to lose even if they are not themselves made redundant.

But the implications are equally serious for non-health workers who rely upon the National Health Service. Privatisation is inter-linked with the wholesale cuts in the service being carried through by the Tory government. In slashing back the hours of work in ancillary services, and handing over to cheapskate private contractors, health authorities are abandoning long-established standards of cleaning and laundry services – and those who suffer will be the patients.

Dirty hospitals and sub-standard laundry leave patients ill-at-ease and at risk from infection. Often work not done by private profiteers is handed over to nursing staff as an additional burden; the only ones better off are the employers (who of course do not use the NHS anyway).

If health workers are to be made sufficiently aware of the dangers that face them, and work out a strategy to fight back against privatisation, then a great deal more publicity is needed at rank and file level in the hospitals, and it is vital to promote a thorough discussion on the way forward.

At present the various health unions have different policies on how to fight privatisation; but as the isolation of the Barking and Hammersmith strikes has shown, these policies need to be developed and turned into practical, urgent action, linking up health workers in a co-ordinated fightback.

At the same time the wider labour movement needs to be informed of the dangers to *their* National Health Service, and shown the ways in which they can fight side-by-side with health workers to beat back the Tories.

VALUABLE INITIATIVE

The London-wide anti-cuts campaign London Health Emergency has taken a valuable initiative in tackling these problems, by convening, with GLC support and in conjunction with the South East Region TUC, a London-wide conference designed to focus on hammering out policies to fight privatisation in the NHS.

The Conference, on October 7th in County Hall, London, will be workshop-based, and aimed at enabling rank and file health workers and labour movement activists to ask their questions and put forward their views.

It is already supported by COHSE and by London committees of NUPE, ASTMS and NALGO. Delegates are invited from other unions and from Labour Parties, and individuals wishing to attend are welcome too. A detailed briefing pack on NHS privatisation is being prepared for all those attending, and credential fees are only £2 employed, £1 unwaged.

An additional project floated by London Health Emergency is a mass-distribution broadsheet on NHS privatisation, designed for door-to-door distribution by Labour Parties and trade unions, explaining in layman's language what is wrong with privatisation, and why it should be fought.

LHE is inviting Labour Parties and other organisations to purchase copies of the broadsheet at a cost of £8 per 1,000 copies, with a reduction for large quantities.

Further details on the Conference or the proposed broadsheet, and affiliation to London Health Emergency (£10) available from 335 Grays Inn Rd, WC1. Tel.: 01-833 3020.

John Lister

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

THE POLITICS OF FOOD

FOOD. Its consumption is essential to our survival. We spend a large proportion of our income on buying it. We spend a large proportion of our time preparing and consuming it. Millions of people earn their livings in agriculture and food related industries. Yet food, in terms of our diet and why we eat what we do, is rarely discussed in a political context. Increasingly we are being made aware that what we eat affects our health. The government, through the Health Education Council, tells us to look after our health and to eat wisely. But how do we know what a healthy diet is when we are constantly bombarded by contradictory information on what is and isn't good for us. The fact is that almost all the sources of our information on food come from bodies which have a vested interest (usually that of food manufacturers) — an interest motivated by profit and not health. Even government (DHSS) advice is subject to the pressure of the food industry. Recently a report drawn up by 'experts' under the title the National Advisory Committee on Nutritional Education (NACNE) and sponsored by the DHSS, recommended substantial cuts in our fat, sugar and salt intake. However even after concessions had been made to the food industry, the government decided not to endorse the report but merely to produce it as a discussion document.

The question of our diet and healthy eating cannot be left up to us as individuals, when personal choice is seriously limited by the pressure of the food industry to accumulate profit. We need to take it up collectively as a political issue, taking into account the interests of food consumers and food producers in all parts of the world. We need to break through the confusion about food, by developing our own sources of information. This issue of the Streetlife Supplement takes up some of these themes.

Jane Stockton

Boycott factory farming

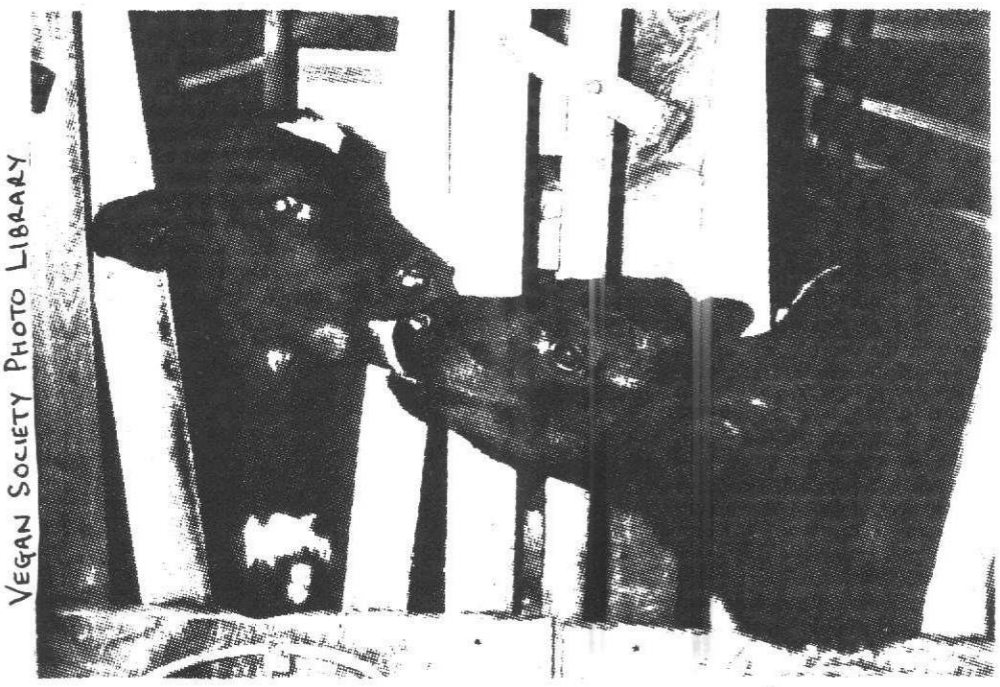
In terms of our personal politics our diet is obviously most important. Selective boycotts of, for example, food from South Africa have shown themselves to be effective campaigns in which we can all participate. This form of action should, I believe, also be aimed at the factory farming industry which currently slaughters millions of animals for our dinner plates.

Our choice of diet is not, as the advertising industry would have us believe, a simple matter of letting our taste buds decide. The barons of the food industry go to great lengths to disguise and distort the image of what we are eating. Dead pig becomes pork or bacon, anaemic calf becomes veal so as to remove the identity of the dead animal that sits glistening in its cellophane wrapper on the supermarket shelf. The factory farming industry cannot, by its very nature, have any regard for the physical and emotional needs of the animals in its 'care' for the economics of agribusiness dictate that sentient creatures become no more than meat machines.

PIG INDUSTRY

The pig industry serves to illustrate the fate of the intensively reared animal. As soon as the female comes into season she is 'served' by the male, sometimes constrained in the 'rape rack' – a restraining device that enables the male pig to move from one female to the next, saving time and ensuring that no female is able to resist the male's advances. After mating, the pregnant females are kept in individual stalls for the 16/17 weeks before birth unable to move around, breathe fresh air, see the light of day, or mix with other animals. Much of this time will be spent lying in their own excrement on the cold concrete floor. At birth the female pig is unable to practise her natural nest building

(CONTINUED OVER)



('Veal calves sharing intimacy')

Why I became a vegan

I was a vegetarian for three years before deciding, about six months ago, to stop eating animal products altogether. Before giving up meat I had been gradually eating less and less of it and it was no hardship to stop altogether. I gave it up on ecological grounds, i.e. using the argument that land could be more effectively used to grow crops than to provide grazing for animals. I wasn't concerned about cruelty to animals at all. Funnily enough, once I had stopped eating them this aspect became more important. I didn't, however, become involved in the animal rights movement.

Last Christmas I read a book about factory farming which horrified me. At the same time several people pointed out to me the lack of logic involved in being a vegetarian but still contributing to the suffering of animals by eating eggs and dairy products. Needless to say, those people weren't vegetarians or vegans themselves and I presume their intention was to persuade me to start eating meat again! I felt a bit stupid that it had never occurred to me that in order to eat milk and cheese I was condemning calves to death, and that male chicks were being pulped for pet food seconds after hatching so that sufficient hens could be produced to provide all those eggs I had thoughtlessly consumed.

WE DECIDED TO HAVE A GO

I have a friend who has been vegan for some years without dropping dead, so I knew it was possible. Also, I live with a man who was prepared to try it. So we sent off for information from the Vegan Society and decided to have a go, making no promises and being prepared to give up without massive guilt feelings if it turned out to be too difficult.

A vegan diet has to be taken seriously. The main difference between being vegetarian and vegan is that as a vegetarian you can just stop eating meat and fish, add a little cheese here and there and you're OK. As a vegan you have to substitute, and you have to be aware of what you're eating, which in itself is fascinating. It's quite easy to buy soya milk now and there is a margarine distributed by Granose Ltd. which contains no animal products and is available in health food stores. (When you begin to look more closely at what is in many packaged foods, it's amazing what contains skimmed milk powder, whey powder or other animal derivatives.) You need to take some vitamin B12 every day – some soya milk and yeast extracts have this added and it has recently been found in seaweed. Previously it was thought that vitamin B12 was only available from animal products or from a laboratory. People tend to worry about protein deficiency but we get a lot of this from many different kinds of food and vegans have not been found to be lacking in it. As long as cereals and pulses are eaten together (e.g. beans on toast, rice and lentils) to complement the essential amino acids, there should be no problem. Vegan Society leaflets are a great help with all this*. The benefits of not eating animal products include low fat, sugar and cholesterol levels and a high intake of fibre.

Of course there are times when you can't check that what you are eating is free of animal products – and at other times you don't want to. This is another difference between being vegetarian and vegan. It's not possible to stick rigidly to a vegan diet in the outside world and I think it's important not to feel guilty if you succumb to the odd bar of chocolate or eat vegetarian food at a friend's house. I have found that friends and relatives are on the whole keen to cook vegan meals for me, but I certainly don't demand it.

WHAT'S IT TO DO WITH POLITICS?

So what does all this have to do with politics? I'm glad 'Streetlife' has acknowledged a connection by planning an issue about food. And I'm particularly glad when it seems to me that the Left is becoming more and more suspicious of the idea that 'the personal is political'. I meet very few socialists who are attempting to make real changes in their personal lives, because it's easier to go to a meeting every night, work yourself into the ground and forget about your feelings altogether. I'm sure there are people reading this who are thinking, 'how can she justify putting all that energy into thinking about what she EATS?' Well, energy isn't a finite commodity, comrade; the more you use, the more you tend to have, especially if you're healthy. More seriously mistaken is the idea that if you consider animals important, you must in some way be ignoring the struggles of human beings. Although some vegans do put their energy into animal rights activities – and good luck to them – I'm sure I'm not unique in being aware of the oppression of animals as complementary to that of people, as part of a broad socialist outlook. An awareness of oppression of any kind can only help us to develop an appreciation of what oppression is and how we can fight it. We live in a society based on violent actions and I see an element of this in the way we treat animals. I'm not a pacifist. I support liberation struggles and I accept that it is sometimes necessary to kill in order to survive. But I reject *unnecessary* violence and am glad I have found that it *is* unnecessary to kill animals for food.

Jenny Muir
Hackney N & Stoke Newington CLP

** Address of Vegan Society: 47 Highlands Rd., Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8NQ*

Boycott factory farming (cont'd)

instinct and the offspring are kept in a stall next to her but separated by iron railings. In natural conditions weaning of the young takes some two months, on the factory farm time is money and the young are stolen from their mother after two or three weeks. In a further five to seven days, as soon as the female shows signs of coming back into heat the whole cycle is repeated. For pigs being fattened for slaughter, physical mutilation such as castration and tail docking is commonplace. The animals are plied with hormones to encourage rapid fattening, and antibiotics to counter the effects of being kept in such cramped and stressful conditions. Even at the end of their short lives the animals are made to suffer in transporter lorries on their way to the slaughterhouse, where the staff, being paid on a piecework basis, have little regard for the animals' well-being.

CATALOGUE OF ABUSE

This catalogue of abuse is reflected in every sphere of factory farming – the battery hen, the dairy cow – all suffer forced confinement, forced pregnancy, theft of the young, and forced consumption of drugs. The animal products in our supermarkets bear witness to institutionalised violence at its most extreme.

As socialists, opposed to exploitation, oppression, and torture, each and every one of us has the opportunity to make a personal statement on this issue. If we do not boycott the products of this ruthless trade then we must be able to justify our continued support for it. To say that non-human animals are on this planet for us to (ab)use is just one small step from saying the same about women or black people.

GLOBAL LEVEL

The reasons for giving up animal products extend to a global level, for factory farming is largely responsible for the malnutrition and starvation that ravages the developing countries. At a rough estimate, cereals grown to feed direct to humans will produce five times more protein per acre than if the same area was devoted to meat production. For vegetables the figure is ten to fifteen times. Enough high protein vegatable and cereal foodstuff is imported by industrialised countries from developing countries each year to meet the nutritional needs of 300 million human beings. Most of this is used to feed factory farm animals. There is the potential to end world hunger if food were redirected for direct consumption by humans, instead at the moment that food is wasted by the West to feed and fatten factory farm animals. Obviously, if world hunger is to be tackled seriously then there would also have to be fundamental changes to the world economic order, but nevertheless this issue shows how the exploitation of animals is linked to human suffering, and how the struggles for animal and human liberation are coupled.

In recent years the animal rights issue has attracted increased attention within the labour movement. There has been a recognition on the left that oppression and exploitation exists beyond the species barrier and a growing view that to discriminate on the grounds of species is as unacceptable as discrimination on any other arbitrary grounds. At the same time there has been a recognition from within the animal rights movement that cruelty to animals is no longer limited to individual acts, but is perpetuated on a massive scale by huge multinational industries. Furthermore there is a growing awareness that the vested interests which oppress and exploit animals are the same as those which oppress and exploit humans; and that the fight to end that oppression will only be won if the basic power structures which exist in contemporary society are fundamentally altered.

SUSPECT ARGUMENT

However, while acknowledging this positive change in our attitudes towards non-human animals, it has to be said that many socialists regard the struggle for animal liberation as peripheral, an issue that will have to wait until other fights are won. This rather suspect argu-

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT
BRIEFING
ON PERSONAL POLITICS

SOCIALISM AND THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Tobie Glenny – Islington North CLP

The slaughterhouse is not just about what's on the dinner plate, but affects every aspect of our lives; it is important that we as socialists should be aware of the politics behind this particular institution.

STARVATION AND ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION

The amount of nutrition that one can derive from an animal like a cow is equivalent to 1/10 of the nutrition that one feeds to it; or to put it differently – 'one person's meat, is ten people's vegetarian casserole'; or to put it differently again – 'the amount of food given to animals, in order to support the European meat habit, could feed the entire population of India and China'.

If people live by a meat based diet, then the vast majority of land has to be put aside to meat production (90% of the world's arable land is such), and that means either that many must starve so that the few can eat meat, or that the natural environment must be devastated for the sake of unnecessary agriculture. At the moment we are pursuing both policies at the same time.

In the west our major import from the third world is oxygen, and our major export is carbon dioxide. If the third world decides to chop down its forests, so that it too can support a western style meat habit, then breathing will become a lot more difficult. What is more, as the global CO_2 level increases, and our ability to process it decreases, so the 'greenhouse effect' will be distorted, and the global temperature increase. If the polar ice caps melt, it could lead to floods like we haven't seen since the end of the last ice age, in the days of Noah's ark, with whole countries getting submerged beneath the oceans.

It doesn't take a genius to see that meat, ecology and equality are incompatible, and



that one of them has got to go.

DEATH AND ILL HEALTH

The major source of illhealth in the west comes not from infectious diseases, but from stress and internal degeneration; both heart attacks and cancer (our two top killers) fall into this category. The fact that a stressful diet (ie meat, alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, sugar) is the major cause of internal degeneration and hence western illhealth, is not widely publicised in the capitalist press. Of course this should not surprise Briefing readers, for the food and drugs industry is one of the most powerful political forces on this planet, with more land wealth and power than governments could ever dream of. When discussing issues of health care we should bear in mind who controls the medical establishment, the media, and other institutions of state control.

BODY STRESS

Meat is difficult to digest, unlike plant matter, and puts stress on the digestive system. It gets absorbed into the blood as complex proteins, amino acids, fats, etc, which then need processing in the liver and kidney – creating further stress. Plants on the other hand are absorbed as simple nutrients that need little further processing. Whilst travelling in the blood the complex animal extracts inhibit blood flow, and clog up smaller capillaries – this can cause high blood pressure and hence heart attacks (our number one killer), and also prevents a good blood flow getting to the peripheries, hence problems like rheumatism. The stress also falls on the hormonal systems, which enable coping with the influx of alien substance – thus meat, along with sugar, is a major cause of diabetes.

CANCER

Cancer is our number two killer, and 80% are preventable. Many, such as cancer of the stomach or bowel, are caused by a high meat, low roughage diet. But it's not simply a question of 'What causes the cancer?' but also 'why can't the body prevent it?' – in many cases a cancer that is caused by a non dietary agent could be prevented if the body had a better diet, since a reduced stress level gives a greater ability to cope with other internal problems.

MILK ALLERGIES

We all know that cows' milk is good for you, because the adverts say so. What we don t know is that 10% of us are badly allergic to it. If you have dandruff, eczema, or bad catarrh, it's probably because your body is using its surfaces to bail out the milk poisons that it can't cope with. If you use a strong anti-dandruff shampoo, then it works because the heavy metals in the ingredients are so poisonous to your skin that the cells can no longer divide (hence excrete) – thus the magic cure.

And so the list continues . . .

Animal Rights:

Chickens: stuffed together so tight that the human equivalent would be five people living together in a telephone box;

Pigs: living immobilised by iron bar cages;

Cows: for so long bred for milk capacity, in the ruthless pursuit of profit, that their vast udders strain continuously giving never ending pain, distress and fatigue.

Veal Calves: Another by Product of the Milk industry – they are separated at birth from their mothers (terrified!), and kept immobilised and in the dark so as to produce a delicate flavour for the connoisseur sadist (rather like foot bound Chinese women).

But on what basis do we justify these atrocities?

– 'Because they are different from us and hence inferior' – that argument is used about women by men and about blacks by whites – hence the whorehouse and the slave market.

– 'Because animals don't have feelings' – anyone with a pet knows how they experience happiness, sadness, excitement, fear, loneliness, and a desire for kinship.

– 'Because animals are less intelligent than us' – apart from the fact that some animals, such as dolphins, appear to be as intelligent as we are – this argument smacks of fascism. Do we believe that since some humans are less intelligent than apes, that it is therefore acceptable to experiment on them, like we do with chimpanzees? Do we accept the principle that people should be graded according to intelligence, and that all power should go to those with the highest IQ? And how does one measure intelligence anyway if it is in terms of ability to interact beneficially with the rest of one's environment then humans do very badly on that score.

STRUGGLE

The slaughter house is a political institution whose function is to maintain species domination. It is responsible for starvation, ecological devastation, ill health, violence, and the ruthless subjugation and exploitation of all other species. It is time that we on the left began to make alliances with, and gave support to, those in the green movements who have been active around these and related issues. It is time that we on the left took up the issue of the slaughterhouse for ourselves, and began campaigning actively for the overthrow of this vile institution.

CONTACT: Co-ordinating Animal Welfare, P.O. Box 61, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 4EN

ment was used against those who fought to abolish the slave trade, and it is sometimes used against those who demand rights for women, blacks, gays, and other groups who suffer repression. To 'prioritise' our struggles is to fail to see that all these issues are linked, and that all oppression is from the same source. To fight one campaign for social justice while ignoring the others merely plays into the hands of those who reap the profits of exploitation and inequality.

'One struggle, one fight, human freedom, animal rights!' is a cry to be heard on all animal liberation demonstrations nowadays and as socialists we have to raise our consciousness beyond the artificial species barrier. Each of us has the power to do that on a personal level, and perhaps it is because changing our attitudes to non-humans means radically changing what we eat, that prevents many socialists from taking this step. With one in ten people in Britain now eating a vegetarian diet the time has come for the left to lead the struggle against factory farming, and embrace animal liberation as an integral part of the fight for a more humane socialist society.

Steve Hampson
Streatham CLP,
South London Animal Movement

BREAST OR BOTTLE? — A FREE CHOICE ?

Why don't more women choose to breast-feed their babies? The government report 'Present Day Practices in Infant Feeding', published in 1978, stated that breast milk is best. It provides all babies needs for at least the first 4-6 months, with none of the health risks associated with bottle feeding. Breast feeding is also, of course, cheaper.

Following this report, emphasis has been put on breast feeding in health education material, leading many women to feel guilty if they choose to bottle feed, even though they have made an informed choice, and one that is right for them.

For women who want to breast feed, however, life is not as rosy as this material implies. The choice to bottle feed or breast feed is not as straightforward as it may seem, and this can be seen in terms of treatment in hospitals, pressure from advertising and social attitudes.

HOSPITALS

Breast feeding in the first days can be difficult. Babies need feeding frequently, mothers are tired, and it is a process that has to be learnt by both mother and baby. In many hospitals, there is not enough staff with the right expertise to provide the care and encouragement mothers need. Also, ward routine can work against something as irregular as breast feeding. Bottles of artificial milk are readily available in the ward – very tempting for tired mothers and staff. Samples of artificial milk are frequently given to parents on discharge.

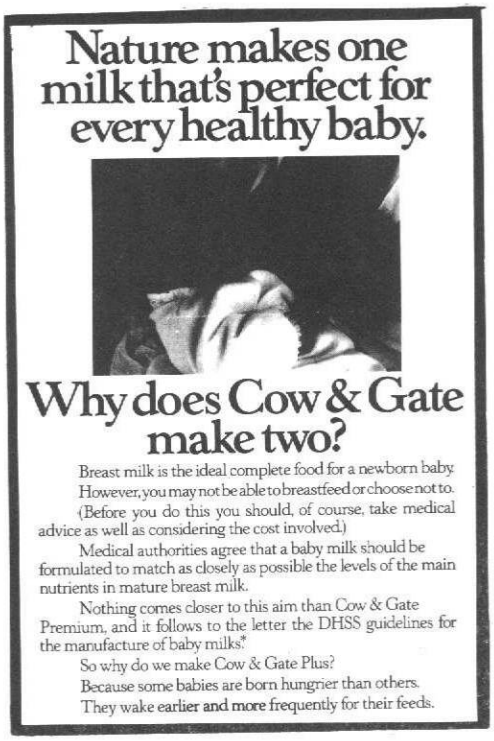
ADVERTISING

Once outside the hospital, parents are surrounded by advertising promoting the virtues of bottle feeding, and implicitly undermining breast feeding. In magazines and shops, there are adverts implying that whilst breast feeding may be more 'natural', bottle feeding is just as good, and also easier and more up-to-date. A major theme of these adverts is the closeness of artificial milk to breast milk, and they make claims for bottle feeding that could be more appropriately be applied to breast milk, using words like 'satisfied' and 'contented'. They do not point out the disadvantages and health hazards connected with bottle feeding.

Promotion of artificial feeding through health care facilities is also extensive. Medical conferences are sponsored by milk manufacturers, and professional journals are full of adverts for artificial milk. Health workers are bombarded by posters, calendars and health education pamphlets with the manufacturers names prominent, and these are displayed in hospitals and health clinics.

The resources and sophisticated methods of these larger companies can easily outweigh the efforts of the Health Education Council, with its minimal budget, and health workers to promote the advantages of breast feeding.

In 1981, the World Health Assembly approved a voluntary international code of marketing of breast milk substitutes. Two provisions of the code were to ban public advertising, including that in health care facilities, and ban free samples. However, British manufacturers continually flaunt this code. A survey in 1981 by War on Want, and others, showed widespread advertising, including a heavy dependence of the NHS on support from the manufacturers for health education material. (The consequences of bottle feeding, and the influence of advertising, is much more severe in developing countries, but space does not allow for discussion of this.)



From 'New Baby' published by B. Edsall and Co Ltd, 1983.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Another obstacle for breast feeding mothers is the attitude of society. Breasts are seen as sexual objects, exploited in advertisements for numerous, unrelated products, and it can be difficult for women to regain the idea of their breasts as functional, rather than decorative. Men can also resist breast feeding – 'some men look on their wife's breasts as their domain. . . They do not take kindly to a little infant coming in on the act – and who can blame them'. Quoted from a baby milk manufacturer's pamphlet aimed at new fathers.

It is difficult for women to breast feed and lead an active life outside the home. They find it embarrassing to feed in public, and there are few facilities provided in shops, restaurants etc., the best that is usually offered being the toilet. Workplaces rarely provide creches; it is therefore virtually impossible for working mothers to breast feed.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many women choose to bottle feed. Widespread breast feeding would be against the interests of baby milk manufacturers, and the pressures of their advertising are great. Social attitudes and lack of facilities work against breast feeding.

Government reports and health workers may be putting more emphasis on breast feeding, but to enable women to make a real choice, advertising has to be restricted, facilities greatly improved and social attitudes changed. How many women breast feed their babies at your branch meeting/workplace/local pub?

Ruth Bernard
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

Looks good.... tastes

The other week I bought a frozen Black Forest Gateau: a convenience food par excellence – bought from a supermarket in a hurry on my way to work. It looked a picture: layers of cream, jam, rich dark cake and luscious folds of chocolate icing. But I had read the list of ingredients on the packet and knew that my gateau was a mere confection of colours, flavourings, antioxidants and preservatives.

But does our food really need the chemical helping hand, and do the additives harm us? Food additives fall into two broad categories: those which prevent food going bad (by stopping mould, bacteria or rancidity) and those which make what we eat more appealing in colour, flavour and texture. Their use has increased along with the boom in processed foods, so that in the US there are now some 4,000 of these chemicals shaken, dripped and stirred into the food.

To argue that all additives are badditives is as absurd as to say they are all safe. However some are more questionable than others, especially cosmetic food colours and flavours which are not fully regulated. These include the all-pervasive monosodium glutamate, associated with the allergic reaction known as 'Chinese Restaurant Syndrome'.

NOT NEW

Food additives are not altogether new. Thousands of years ago the Chinese used ethylene and propylene produced by kerosene combustion to ripen bananas and peas. In Britain in the Middle Ages beer was flavoured for the first time with an additive called hops to cries of 'adulteration!' from outraged realalers of the day.

What has changed is not that we add things to our food and drink to make it look or taste nice, but that it is done now on a huge scale. It is estimated by Health and Welfare Canada (the food standards body) that Canadians ingest some three kilograms of food additives per person each year: and similar amounts are consumed in other Western countries.

A recent study in *Which?* based on large-scale epidemiological research placed additives very low on the list of what causes cancer. Taken together with occupational hazards, pollution and industrial products, they are reckoned to account for only eight per cent of all cancers. But other people, like environmentalist Erik Eckholm, believe that the exact contribution of additives to the cancer rate is 'a conspicuous unknown' and that unpleasant surprises are probably in store for us in future years. He points out that the only certainty is that 'citizens in the wealthiest countries ingest a few thousand different chemical compounds, most of which have not yet been adequately tested for links to cancer, genetic mutations, birth defects or behavioural problems'.

We know very little about the long-term low dose effects of adding chemicals to our food. Some colours are associated with food

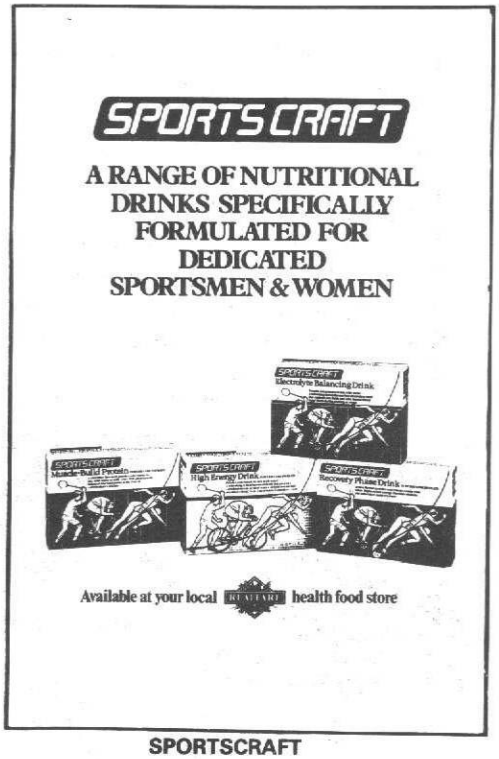
'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT
BRIEFING
ON PERSONAL POLITICS

THE BRAN BROKERS

WALKING into your local health food store can be a disheartening experience. Ranged along one side there's the health food you'd expect to find, all brightly designed and neatly cellophaned to attract the supermarket consumer. Then you spot the Rack of Leaflets, a mountain of material dedicated to persuading you that whatever your diet is, it's inadequate because it doesn't include certain unique components. And the rest of the shop is given over to the components themselves: hundreds of bottles and packets of vitamins, a bewildering mix of sharp marketing and pseudo-scientific wizardry.

In Britain, where there is a health shop for every 56,000, the market is dominated by Booker Health Foods. This company owns the Holland and Barrett chain of shops and also supplies most of the products sold there, under brand names like Allinsons, Prewetts and Healthcrafts.

Booker Health Foods turned over nearly $70 million in 1982, though profits sunk to a mere two million dollars, largely because of massive promotion of a new multi-vitamin and mineral tablet called Ladycare (with menstrual, menopausal and elderly varieties). This investment gives some idea of where their priorities lie. The vitamin market in Britain alone will be worth $70 million this year. What the trade likes to call 'supplements' are pushed as being essential to our health. A recent Booker magazine claimed that the following categories of people need to take supplements because they are 'at risk': pregnant women, women on the pill, growing children, the elderly, smokers, drinkers, people taking regular exercise, slimmers, travellers, teenagers and students. If you don't come into any of those categories you must be pretty special.



SPORTSCRAFT
products from Booker Health Foods

This tactic of spending more promoting pills to counteract the evils of a bad diet than of showing people the importance of healthy eating makes absolute commercial sense. Even ordinary supermarket chains are beginning to stock health foods. Bran, for instance, has taken off in a big way in recent years as people become more aware of the importance of fibre in their diet.

The real aims of the health food industry are best explained by looking at the other activities of Booker Health Food's parent company Booker McConnell. Booker McConnell's multinational empire is worth one and a half billion dollars and includes oil interests in the US, wine and rum (Tia Maria belongs to them), engineering, pharmaceuticals and even the rights to the books of Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, Georgette Heyer and Dennis Wheatley. More importantly, it owns the Budget chain of supermarkets, which of course sells white bread and all the other refined and processed foods that Booker Health Foods agree are so harmful. Booker McConnell also specialises in the development of sugar factories and the manufacture of sugar refining machinery. And one of their directors is on the board of UK Sugar Systems, a subsidiary of the giant sugar multinational Tate and Lyle. To complete the picture, the company is a wholesaler of sweets and tobacco.

These other interests sit uneasily alongside the health stores' apparent promotion of a healthy diet – not to mention their own 'sugar free' products. The important thing, as always, is to make money. The health food industry is part of the food industry – not something in competition with it. And the aim of the food industry is simply to encourage people to consume more.

Chris Brazier

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good....

Troth Wells

This article first appeared in a longer form in New Intenationalist. Reprinted with their permission.

allergies. Others like 'E123' (amaranth – US Red Dye No 2) is outlawed in the USSR, Malaysia and the US because it is linked with cancer, miscarriages and birth defects in humans. Yet it is used in Britain in the blackcurrant drink Ribena, often promoted as a health-giving drink suitable for pregnant women and young children.

And what is considered safe in one country may fail the grade in another. Each country is susceptible to the pressures from the food industry and from consumers.

Since joining the EEC, Britain has harmonised her ingredient labelling, listing the items in descending order of the amount used. Instead of easy-going terms like 'colours' and 'preservatives' there are now 'E' numbers. Broadly the E100 series are colours, E200 series are mainly preservatives, E300 are antioxidants and E400 are a hotch-potch of stabilisers, emulsifiers, gelling and anti-coagulating agents.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Just because we have food regulatory bodies and because some manufacturers are beginning to face up to their responsibilities does not mean we can give up our own responsibility as consumers. There are simply too many powerful vested interests at work for us to assume that the food we are offered for sale is good for us.

If we want to control what goes into our food, and what is sold in our shops, then we have to speak up. We should press for more specific food facts: such as sugar content being given in an equivalent number of sugar lumps instead of being disguised as 'glucose syrup'; or fat being labelled as fat instead of as meat, and so on. We can ask government authorities and consumer organisations to publish lists of the chemicals added to our food and their possible side effects. We can even demand government health warnings on our food. What about one for orange drinks: 'This product contains tartrazine and benzoic acid. Be careful if you have allergy problems'. Or one for cakes: 'This cake contains a high level of sugar. Sugar is associated with obesity, heart disease, diabetes and is the major cause of tooth decay'. Perhaps we should forget about E numbers and chemical names and go in for some plain speaking.

New Internationalist

Top monthly magazine on global issues such as the food industry, arms, aid or the rich. It will never bore you. Twelve issues for just £11.70 per year. Send cheques payable to New Internationalist to New Internationalist, 374 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 4TE.

Do you know what's in your food?

Batchelors
SAVOURY RICE
BEEF FLAVOUR

Ingredients: (Vegetables in alphabetical order) Rice, dried mixed vegetables (carrots, onions, green peas, red peppers), flavourings, hydrolysed protein, sugar, salt, beef fat, colours (E150, E102, E122), flavour enhancer (monosodium glutamate), preservative (E220) and antioxidant (E320/E321)

E150 Caramel
E102 Tartrazine
(MSG) Monosodium glutamate
E320 Butylated hydroxyanisole
E321 Propyl gallate
Butylated hydroxytoluene

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT
BRIEFING
ON PERSONAL POLITICS

Danger Contaminated with apartheid!

Throughout its 25-year life, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has pointed out how Britain's trade and other economic relations with South Africa help to prop up the apartheid regime.

Over the same 25 years there have been massive industrial developments within South Africa. The regime has been able to increase its economic and military power to entrench apartheid and to intimidate or destabilise its neighbours.

British trade, notably exports of machinery and sophisticated modern technology, have helped make this possible.

Anti-apartheid sanctions, to be effective, must isolate the South African regime at all levels – by stopping arms supplies, help with South Africa's nuclear weapons programme, trade and investment, technological help, emigration and tourism, sporting and cultural exchanges. The consumer boycott campaign is just a part of this whole programme.

Not buying South African goods may seem an insignificant and possibly futile individual gesture. But contrary to much popular belief, the consumer boycott *has* had an effect in Britain, particularly in its impact on public opinion and awareness of the evils of apartheid.

For further information on the consumer boycott campaign and what you can do, contact the AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW. Tel 01-387 7966.

JUST OVER 25 years ago, in April 1959, the people of South Africa issued a worldwide appeal for a boycott of apartheid. They were convinced – and still are – that the international isolation of the Pretoria regime would be the most effective form of non-violent support for their struggle.

The appeal for international sanctions has been renewed many times since 1959 by both the African National Congress and SWAPO of Namibia. The Anti-Apartheid Movement, whose formation was prompted by that very call, is relaunching the boycott campaign in its 25th anniversary year.



Picture by Cameron Brisbane

The oddest pack of Fleet Street journalists

It's nice to see that Fleet Street keeps up its subscription to Briefing. Readers of August's Briefing might remember an innocent-looking ad for an alternative Happy Families pack that I have recently produced, on the front page of the Street Life Supplement. Profits from the cards sold through Briefing went to Briefing. The reaction that advertisement produced provides a good illustration of a) how short of news some sections of the press were in August, and b) how those sections of the press will do anything to construct an anti-Labour Party story.

In with both feet went the Daily Mail on August 14th with 'The Oddest Pack of Happy Families'. They dug out MP Nicholas Winterton (they must have been scraping the barrel) to comment on them and also extracted a priceless comment from MP Jill Knight (see illustrations) about them. So keen were the Daily Mail to get hold of a pack to write this little piece that they paid a visit to the printers who printed the cards and offered them £35 in an attempt to get a pack from them! The Daily Mail article claimed that the Labour Party produced these cards, or to be more precise, 'the Left-dominated London branch of the Labour Party' (sic). (For the record they had nothing to do with producing them).

> 'His colleague Jill Knight said: 'This appears to illustrate that even stranger characters are loose in the Labour Party than I ever suspected. 'I do not consider homosexuality a subject to be made into a joke. I wonder whether those who fall within that category will be pleased about this new version of Happy Families.'

So why did the Alternative Happy Families produce such a reaction? It did because it was advertised in Briefing, and the combination of left Labour Party and anything lesbian or gay (the happy families pack has a lesbian and gay family) sets off Fleet St reporters. (The combination of left Labour Party and northern Irish Catholics also gets Fleet St going. Combine all three and watch a Daily Mail reporter froth at the mouth).

Anyway it is comforting to know that the Labour Party is at last regarded as a threat to the bigoted, reactionary world of the Daily Mail that it was considered necessary to write an article like this.

Cath Tate

Packs are available at £1.95 each from Briefing 'Alternative Happy Families, c/o Cath Tate, 39 Kingswood Road, London SW2 4JE. Please make cheques payable to Cath Tate.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Streetlife Supplement will be on the theme of motherhood. Articles, letters, etc., should be sent (preferably typed) to Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16 by Monday 8 October. Graphics and illustrations would also be very welcome.

SUPPLEMENT MEETING

The next meeting of the Streetlife Supplement will be on Thursday 18 October at 8.00 p.m. at County Hall. All Briefing supporters welcome.

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LABOUR
BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
No. 11 October 1984

As miners and party activists advance:

STOP KINNOCK'S RETREAT!

Jeremy Corbyn MP
Islington North

Just over a year ago, Labour lost the General Election in the most chaotic and confusing display of the inconsistencies of its own programme.

Since then the Thatcher government has intensified its policies of creating the huge mass of unemployed to bring real wage levels down, using the local authorities as a means of passing on cuts in spending and establishing a national police force with which to destroy any group of workers who are determined to defend their jobs and industry.

Internationally they have lined up with Reagan to hit at any third world country that tries to achieve its salvation by separating itself from the western economic system.

The media have tried very hard to present the SDP as the viable alternative to the Tories; the reality is that the SDP do not differ fundamentally from the Tory government. The increasingly bellicose and authoritarian voice of David Owen is part of the onward march to the right as the current economic system cannot provide or deliver the living standards needed and expected by working people. Their rightward shift is most clearly demonstrated by the support their conference gave to the "working miners"; the elevating of scabs to the pedestal of their conference ephemera would have done credit to Saatchi and Saatchi. Exactly what a collection for strike breakers is meant to finance is unclear.

In the circumstances the Labour Party



Paul Mattsson

Jeremy Corbyn MP being dragged away by police outside South Africa House.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Kinnock and Liverpool

The fight to defend jobs and services in Liverpool could have been a golden opportunity for Neil Kinnock to prove himself as a real leader of the Labour movement.

Unfortunately, his performance did nothing to dispel the impression that Mr Kinnock is yet another would-be leader more interested in parliamentary manoeuvres than defending working class communities.

Firstly, there was a repeated refusal to actually come to Liverpool either for public events or private talks. Given the media's vilification of the council, it was obvious that Mr Kinnock's main concern was to make sure that the media could never show him sharing a platform with Liverpool councillors, either physically or politically.

When Neil Kinnock eventually met representatives from Liverpool, or when he despatched his sidekicks Cunningham or Straw, the message was always the same. The main point for our elected leader was that the fight for jobs and services could not be allowed to break the Tory laws. This position led his supporters to argue for massive rate rises of over 50% as a way out of the crisis.

Such a disastrous policy was the conclusion of the type of politics which sees fights such as Liverpool's as an irritating distraction, rather than as potential starting points for a genuine struggle to bring down the Tories.

Kevin Feintuck

Gillingham-AGAIN!

A full year since the first attempt to ban sales of Militant *from party premises, the witch-hunt has returned in a more vicious form than before.*

After a motion to ban sales was passed, at the July GC a young supporter decided to defy the ban, and had his newspapers torn up by another delegate. Now one Militant *seller is facing disciplinary action whilst another is threatened by a motion to expel him.*

Clearly the left in Gillingham is facing a very serious situation.

Unfortunately a united left response has not yet been possible, as a discussion over whether to specifically fight the witch-hunt, or whether to head off the witch-hunt indirectly, by seizing the political initiative somehow, has taken place.

However, it does look possible that the left will be able to unite around a left-wing recruitment campaign.

Gillingham is a small town, and only a thin trickle of left activists join the party. These generally become disinterested with a party which is exclusively concerned with electoral and apolitical fund-raising activities (neither of which it does very well). They leave before their numbers build up to any significance.

The losses caused to the left by last year's witch-hunt were very considerable, and this year we will not be helped by the New Unity enthusiasm created by the Kinnock/Hattersley election.

Perhaps, like Ken Livingstone's 'Target Labour Government' we in Gillingham need a 'Target '85', a determined and detailed plan to recruit a whole section of the LP's left periphery, in time to vote down the expulsions, and end this harassment of the left as quickly and cleanly as possible.

Les Hartop

THE MINERS STRIKE: SIMILARITIES WITH IRELAND

Briefing *supporters from Brighton have been talking to a Kent Miner about the police tactics and the similarities with the army's tactics in Ireland.*

'Having been on strike for the last 26 weeks, I feel that there is a definite similarity between the police tactics used in our struggle and the army tactics used in Ireland. The thought of this happening on the mainland never crossed my mind until this strike.

The police seem to have everything planned in advance: stopping you moving about the country, setting up road blocks and deploying thousands of officers overnight.

The similarity does not stop there, what with the searching of houses, the interrogation we get when we are arrested, such as: 'Who did you vote for at the last elections and why?'

One incident sticks in my mind. It was the day we were sent to Orgreave. The police were trying to stop us as usual, but we got through. Later in the day we were faced with a massive police presence including horses and dogs. Our comrades were beaten by police batons, chased by horses and dogs. All perfectly organised by the inspectors.

Anybody who watches the news on the TV has only got to turn the sound off, and they could not tell the difference between the coverage on Ireland and the miners' picket lines.

The question that keeps coming to mind is when will the plastic bullets and tear gas appear on the streets of Britain. We have stood up for 6 months, Ireland has stood up for 15 years. So remember comrades, if you don't run they can't chase you. So stand up and fight for your principles.'

Dave Newell
Kent NUM (Betteshanger)

Stop Kinnock's retreat (cont.)

ought to be able to mount a huge mobilisation of opposition; the authoritarian right represented by the SDP and the Tories should be easy to isolate.

In the last year the threshold of authoritarian oppression has steadily advanced, and the point of opposition of Labour has retreated. The fight over the non-unionisation of the Stockport Messenger Group of Newspapers was not met by united TUC opposition, but by specifically orchestrated TUC retreat. In the miners' dispute, the principles at work have been the carefully prepared Tory attempt to break the power of the mineworkers by creating the notion of 'economic' nuclear power and 'uneconomic' coal and of the use of a national police force through the Chief Constables to destroy the effectiveness of picketing.

In the dispute the interference of the media is to be expected, the pious calls for 'democracy' by the Tory right are to be similarly expected but what is new in the climate is the self-imposed impotence of the TUC and Labour Party leadership to fight the Tory authoritarians.

It is as though the offices of the TUC and the Party have been afflicted with a heavy dose of opinion polls and daily advice from the media. If the benchmark of political leadership is established by the degree of "public acceptability" engineered by right wing journalists there will never be the climate for change.

History shows that support for the policies of others does not reap rewards for the opposition. Just as the 1983 General Election was lost when Michael Foot "spoke for England" (in the words of a Tory) at the start of the Falklands war there will be no prizes for the Labour leadership for their abdication of battle and standing by, thus forcing the miners to fight alone.

The comparison of the timidity of our parliamentary leadership and the poor growth in support for the Party has to be compared to the boldness of the Party members in the battle over local government, and in defence of the local welfare state.

In London the campaign to save the GLC and oppose the rate capping measures has completely altered the political climate. Eighteen months ago the GLC was supposed to be very unpopular due to its support for minorities, international work and confrontation policies. A refusal to bow down to the media has generated a new respect and support. What other group in the Party would deliberately call four by-elections as a test of public support?

The next General Election is at most three years away and to win it, and win back the support of those lost to the SDP last time, the Party has to lead and show itself determined to defend the worst off and those in trouble. Retreat before the media hysterics and shelving of the policies designed to help the position of women in society, of anti-racism and of the growth of local services will not do that. The more that socialist policies are abandoned to the media, the more voracious their appetites will become.

Neil – Never on the picket line — says Dai Davies

Dai Davies is a member of the South Wales area executive of the National Union of Mineworkers. He told Valerie Coultas what he expects to come out of the discussions at the Labour Party conference on the miners' dispute.

We will be looking for total support from the Labour Party for our dispute. We want no ambiguity about it. I think Dennis Skinner has shown us what can be done.

He has spoken on 88 platforms in support of the National Union of Mineworkers. He's also been on picket lines, unlike the leader of the party who condemns the violence of the miners without once going on a picket line himself.

The view Neil Kinnock puts over is that of the Tory press and the police. It's unsurprising that you accept their view if you only learn about it second-hand through the press.

Riot

I was at Orgreave on that Monday in June. We arrived at 6am in our jeans, shirts and trainers and we were straight away confronted with lines of police in riot gear. By the time lorries went out at mid-day in the second convoy it was like a greenhouse with the sun beating down on the glass visors of the police. They had come prepared to have a battle. Thatcher was determined to have a battle. The bias in the reporting that day was incredible. Throughout the strike 700 police have been reported injured but the NUM has had **3,000** lads injured. Two lads died last Saturday coming off the picket lines in a car accident. Two have already been murdered by the police. But the press portray violence as if it's just one side. At Kellingley pit today they wouldn't let lads speak to those going into work. Loads of pickets had head injuries at the end of the day. The riot police are wild. When they know a miner has been injured they bang their shields together.

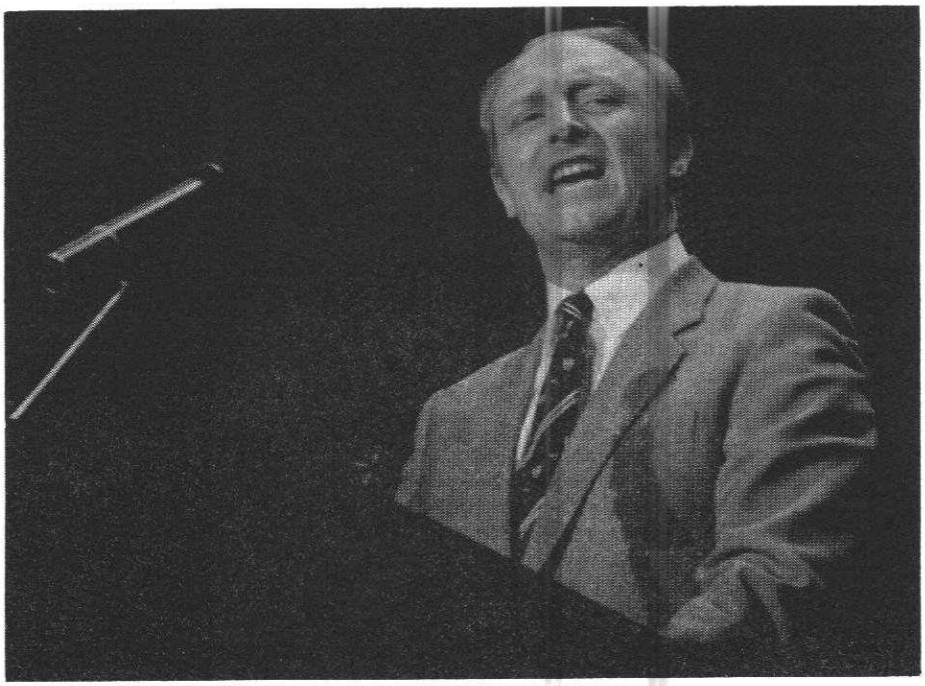
What I would like to emphasise about this is that it's not completely new for us. In 1910 in Tonypandy village they brought troops and police into the valleys. In 1921 South Wales was the huge producer of coal. The Yorkshire lads now are the big producers. That's why a lot of the police violence is concentrated there. They hold the key to the dispute. The TUC leaders cannot be trusted to implement Congress decisions. We've got to ensure our negotiations are not taken over by them. Arthur Scargill's speaking to delegates and rank and file members of the unions to get these decisions carried.

Barristers

The South Wales executive will be going to the Labour Party conference to get our MPs active in this dispute. In South Wales we've got too many barristers, solicitors and the like as MPs to do something positive.

We've got to really hurt them to win. We made a big mistake in 1981 when we returned to work after four days. In three years she has been able to stockpile the coal and now she's ready for us.

The ordinary Labour Party members have been great in this strike. I've been to Bristol and Birmingham. Some ward parties are paying well in excess of the levy. All the meetings I've been to have been outstanding. I don't think they'll sttle this dispute until after the Conservative conference. I think after that Thatcher will agree to a settlement. If we win she'll have problems whenever she settles. Some elements in the Tory Party are already moaning. McMillan has said that you should never embark on a battle with two things, either the armed forces or the National Union of Mineworkers.



John Chapman

Nottinghamshire striking miners visit Belfast

We were first asked to go to Northern Ireland by the Secretary of our Trades Council who is a member of the Troops Out Movement. We decided that with the tactics that the Police were using on our picket lines that it would be beneficial for us to witness things at first hand and draw our own conclusions as to any similarities with what is happening in our villages.

We were shown around areas of West Belfast (the Twinbrook and Polglaise Estates) by supporters of Sinn Fein. We also attended workshops at the Conway Street Mill just off the Falls Road. We visited all the forts that the British Army had built to justify their presence. We also saw the sophisticated monitoring systems which aid the repression of the Nationalist population in the surrounding areas of West Belfast.

Despite the obvious deprivation and the continual presence of the British Army, the local people gave us striking miners (there were 14 of us from all coalfields) a marvellously enthusiastic reception.

On the Sunday, the striking miners and the Troops Out delegation were asked to lead the march commemorating the twelfth year of internment. As we moved off the tension in the air was obvious. The British Army, RUC and UDR lined the procession's route with guns at the ready.

On arrival at our destination we witnessed an RUC attack on the march which was to result in the murder of Sean Downes and injuries to scores of women and children. This was something that I will never forget. It was a nightmare.

The ex-Commissioner of the RUC is now the co-ordinator of the policing of the miners' strike and to date 15 Police Forces have been trained in the use of plastic bullets, there being a massive stockpile of 20,000 of these lethal weapons. We believe there is an increasing liklihood that the appalling reality of Northern Ireland will soon be a fact of life for working people in mainland Britain. Is it plastic bullets for us next?

MARTYN BOWER (COTGRAVE NUM)

Notts women strike back
... and much much more!

AT Labour Party Women's Conference this year amid overwhelming support for the miners' dispute, with particular emphasis on the Women Against Pit Closures groups, there was one view expressed which had less consensus. A miner's wife from South Wales said that the Welsh women "were not like the petticoat wives in Notts who didn't support the strike" – there was immediate objection from the back of the hall where the delegation from Notts were sitting. For a miner's wife supporting the strike in Notts the struggle is especially difficult. As well as working in the soup kitchens and making up food parcels, these women are regularly on the picket lines, addressing rallies and fundraising meetings and suffering police harassment and occupation of their communities. Some support groups have had to "sit in" for several days in order to secure premises for their use.

However, our Welsh sister is forgiven, those were relatively early days when the media would have us believe that every Notts miner was a scab and the women were jubilant about it. We know better now.

Effectively organised

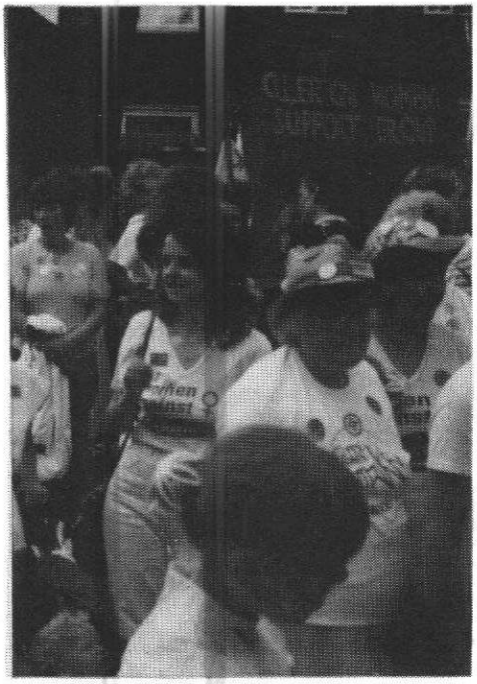
It is probably a result of these added pressures that the Notts miners' wives have become so effectively organised and have embraced issues other than the strike. There are now 25 Women's Support Groups at pit communities throughout the Notts coalfield which **were set up by the women with mutual** support and cooperation. These groups come together to make the Notts Women's Support Group which is the representative, coordinating body for the whole of the area. Delegates from each group attend regular weekly meetings which exchange information, discuss policy and activities and decide on how food and money raised should be distributed. Through this meeting groups cooperate democratically, in raising funds, organising speaking tours, printing badges, 'T' shirts, leaflets and writing and **publishing a regular bulletin. This group** has been crucial to maintaining mutual support and fundraising efficiently; it is vital to the winning of the dispute in Notts.

This level of commitment and activity has also challenged the role of women in the home and sexism in the mining community generally. Men are having to stay at home, baby sit and get meals while women are out raising funds and demonstrating. Women in Notts are saying that when the men return to work, when the battle is won, they won't be going back to business as usual at the kitchen sink.

Influx into the Labour Party

Recently one of the women took 100 application forms for the Labour Party for distribution at her pit! The picture across the coalfield is similar with a massive influx into the Labour Party, with the majority of the new members being women. They are joining despite the lack of meaningful support from the Labour leadership, despite Labour councillors who continue to cross picket lines and make it as difficult as possible for them to get premises for soup kitchens.

The women have seen the support Labour Party ward activists are giving and those, all too few, Labour MPs such as Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Ann Clwyd, who haven't been afraid to champion their cause. The polarisation of the Labour Party around the dispute is nowhere more apparent than in Notts.



Making the links

Not only are the women joining the Labour Party but they are making all the links between other issues and campaigns and will be taking these into the Party and the women's sections they plan to set up. Women have visited hospitals under threat of closure and are joining the campaign against NHS cutbacks locally. Recently Women for Peace in conjunction with support groups organised a Women for Mines not Missiles March, drawing together the issues of pit closures, nuclear power and nuclear weapons. Greenham women have consistently given their support to the dispute while mining women have visited Greenham and some plan to go back and stay.

For these women the fight will continue, in the Labour Party and outside on a whole number of issues which they have taken to heart and are relevant to combatting the policies of the Tory government and replacing it with a Labour government which truly represents their interests and the interests of their communities. Their presence will invigorate the Labour Party locally as well as posing the omnipresent question of women's representation.

In Notts and nationally the Labour Party will have to sit up and take notice. "Here we go" has become the victory chant of the strike and is also the title of the Notts Women's Support Group bulletin – for the women of Notts it could just as appropriately be "Here we come".

Tina Yemm
Notts Women's Support Group
East Nottingham CLP

**Donations to the group are much needed and very gratefully accepted. Please send cheques made payable to "Notts Women's Support Group" to the group at NUPE, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham. Tel: 0602-603522 ext. 29. We are always keen to send speakers to meetings etc. so please contact us.*



LABOUR WOMEN AND FEMINISM — BUILDING THE LINKS

Labour Briefing are organising a conference for Labour women on 'Labour Women and feminism'

In the last few years there has been an upsurge of political activity amongst women. Large numbers of women have been involved in campaigns and activities, for example the peace movement, reproductive rights campaigns, anti-imperialist struggles and industrial struggles — the Barking Hospital strike and the miners' strike being two recent examples. Yet in the 1983 General Election only 26% of women supported the Labour Party. Quite clearly the Labour Party has failed to express that activity on its own political agenda, and has failed to use its political power to give effect to those campaigns.

By organising the Labour Women and Feminism Conference we hope to stimulate a discussion, aimed at building and strengthening the links between the Women's movement and the Labour movement, and between women engaged in various aspects of political activity. In particular we have suggested two themes for discussion. Firstly, how should the Labour Party fight for women's liberation? In other words what kinds of issues should we be demanding that the Labour Party raises and uses its political power to support. Secondly, how could the Labour Party be made more accessible to women? For example, what structural and constitutional changes need to be made to encourage all women to identify the Labour Party as their political power base.

Jane Stockton (on behalf of Briefing women's group)

The Conference will take place on 17th and 18th November at County Hall, London SE1.

AGENDA

Session 1

How should the Labour Party fight for women's liberation?

Workshops on fertility, peace, sexual harassment, racism, women and anti-imperialism, violence against women and pornography, heterosexism and sexuality, women and mental health, women and the cuts.

Session2

Making the Labour movement accessible to women.

Introduction plus workshops on women in trade unions, black women and the Labour Party, women with disabilities women with children, women and class, older women.

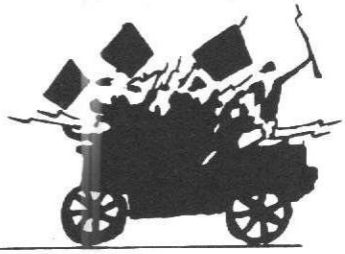
Session 3

Forum on 'What strategy for Labour women'.

Speakers from Briefing women and L.C.C. women.

For registration details and other information contact: Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16.

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WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK are holding a DAYSCHOOL FOR WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

On SATURDAY 20th OCTOBER 1984 At UMIST, SACKVILLE ST, MANCHESTER.

There will be a number of Workshops to choose from both in the morning and afternoon as well as a special workshop session on WOMEN AND PIT CLOSURES and also a final session on WHAT NEXT FOR WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT?

Please register in advance (it is cheaper). Let us know how many creche places you want. Waged individuals and delegates £2; unwaged individuals £1, including lunch if paid in advance. Waged individuals and delegates £2.50, unwaged individuals £1, including lunch, on the day.

From: 42 DUXBURY SQUARE, MANCHESTER 15. Cheques to Women's Fightback.

Repeal the Racist Immigration Laws - No 'Special Cases'

Social worker and NALGO member, Muhammad Idrish will be addressing a Labour Party conference Fringe Meeting on Wednesday 3rd October. The subject is the racist immigration laws and how the labour movement must organise to fight for their repeal. It is organised by the Mohammad Idrish Defence Campaign and the Immigration Widows Campaign, with sponsorship from Ladywood CLP, Birmingham.

Many readers will know already of Mohammad's fight against deportation. The Home Office are trying to deport him on the grounds that he and his wife are separated. There is no claim that his marriage is not 'genuine' and they are not divorced.

Not a special case

The defence campaign is now nearly two years old, and fights for Mohammad not as a 'special case' (for example advising him to train as an athlete or sell double glazing) but demanding his right to stay as part of the struggle against the racist immigration laws.

It differs from other anti-deportation campaigns in its emphasis on seeking support and taking the struggle into the labour movement, as well as the black communities. Initiated by trade union and Labour Party activists, the campaign continues to draw on support from trade union and Labour Party branches across the country.

His case has the national backing of NALGO, and was debated at both the 1983 and 1984 annual conferences of the union. This therefore marks a significant breakthrough in the anti-racist struggle within the labour movement. Two large demonstrations have been organised in Birmingham and London together with various pickets of the Home Office and High Court. Regular joint meetings are held with NALGO officials and NEC members. However, the campaign committee retains most influence at the branch level through its affiliates.

This was demonstrated recently when the NALGO bureaucracy attempted to go against conference policy and refuse to pay for Mohammad's application for appeal to the House of Lords. Through its contacts, the campaign was able to mobilise pressure from branches and get the decision reversed.

National day of action

NALGO is committed to a national day of action in the event of a deportation order being served, and the campaign will be mobilising for strike action on that day. Activists within NALGO have a crucial role to play in making sure this and other conference decisions on Mohammad are implemented in full.

Local Labour Parties should affiliate to the campaign (£5), invite speakers, mobilise support of affiliated trade union branches and organise public meetings against racist laws. Mohammad is only one of 250 people a month deported or leaving under threat of deportation. This is a direct result of immigration and nationality laws. Labour must be committed to repeal all such laws.

Barry Lovejoy,
Secretary, Mohammad Idrish Defence Campaign
Vice-Chair, Ladywood CLP

For more details contact 30 Antrobus Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham 21. 021-523 8923.

Public Fringe Meeting, 12.30 p.m. Wednesday October 3rd, Gresham Hotel, Blackpool. (Gerald Kaufman and Clare Short invited).

INTERVIEW WITH A. SIVANANDAN:
RACE & CLASS

A. Sivanandan, Director of the Institute of Race Relations, has been active in the black movement since the 1960s. He was interviewed for Briefing by Tony Greenstein and Lili Rosweare from Brighton Briefing.

Briefing: *What do you think the left of the Labour Party should be fighting for, in particular with respect to the next manifesto, on racism?*

A.Sivanandan: That is a non question for black people. It's totally meaningless. The Labour Party is not and has never been serious about fighting racism. Even when it has made some overtures to such a fight for example in 1976 it never came to anything.

But the Labour Party is not a monolith. There's Hattersley and the Centre Right. These people are ostensibly egalitarian but they do not relate race to class – egalitarian but not revolutionary. Secondly there is the traditional left represented let's say by Heffer – the so called revolutionaries – who subsume race to class. When people thought Scarman was suggesting positive discrimination, Heffer roared bovinely against such measures because it would privilege one section of the class! Then there is the 'new left' of people like Ken Livingstone. They are egalitarian and ostensibly revolutionary, but they have never accepted black working class struggle (largely extra-parliamentary and extra-union) as an intrinsic, indeed revolutionary, aspect of working-class struggle as a whole; they have never acknowledged its contribution to this country. The 'new left' never incorporated the struggles of black working class people – at Imperial, Mansfield, Perivale Gutterman, Courtaulds and finally Grunwick where for a brief moment of time Labour Party and Trade Unions flattered and failed. In the end Grunwick was an attempt to incorporate the black workers in the Trade Union structure and the Social Contract and not an attempt to take up the cause of black people and therefore of the class. To put it differently, the resistance of black people has been both in the workplace and in the community, as a people and a class, as a people for a class. And the left's inability to incorporate such struggle as part of the struggles of the working class in this country is an aspect of racism. When you people talk about incorporating, you talk about incorporating cultures – that if you learn to like rice and curry, Indian dancing or play a tin drum then you've incorporated black cultures into your culture. Bullshit. Our culture is the culture of resistance to racial oppression and class exploitation. The presence of black people in this country has been like an anti-body in the body politic – that's in the very nature of a tradition and history which had to take on both colonialism and racism.

But in Britain we don't have a settler working class. How would you characterise the impact of racism on working people?

Of course you cannot have colonialism and slavery without racism and racist culture. Racism is as English as Shakespeare and as old as slavery. It is in the milk you suckle at your mother's breast. 500 years of slavery and colonialism have created a culture which is so racist that inevitably the working class have begun to look at black people as enemies. Also, colonialism benefitted the working class in the metropolitan countries. In the post-war period after independence, white workers have suffered from the breakdown of the welfare system, bad housing, schooling, employment. It is working class people who are bearing the brunt of the recession now. They see the people next to them competing for those same houses, jobs etc, as blacks and enemies; therefore there is division.



Labour Party Photograph Library

But is unity possible?

I must think that it is possible. Maybe it is an article of faith and not justified by the empirical data around me. But it is the black community and the black working class that have held out the possibility of such alliances. It is a failure of white working class leadership that it has not made use of those opportunities. The richness of our history is not only in the struggles here but also in the struggles against colonialism. There is a continuum between the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles; some of the traditions we developed in the fight against colonialism were brought to our struggles against racism here. That is why the question of community and class, from pre-colonial societies and colonial-capitalist societies, has something to teach white capitalist societies where the working class struggle has become purely economistic. The struggles of black people in this country have a political dimension. They are struggles against power not solely for a wage. We are returning to the British working class (whose struggles taught us a lot in the colonies) lessons from our own struggles against imperialism and racism – but you don't want to know. You insist that we learn from you – and that is an aspect of racism.

You've said on another occasion that the left had been left with 'the ethnic baby' but you didn't know what to do with it. What did you mean?

Because the race/class struggles of black people in this country had not become a part of working class struggle as a whole, the Labour right was able to isolate race from class and treat the former as a problem of culture rather than a symptom of exploitation. Anti-racism took on a pluralist, culturalist, 'ethnic' aspect rather than a class aspect. And Roy Jenkins, Labour's Home Secretary at the time, was the prophet of that pluralism. Multi-culturalism became the substitute for anti-racist struggle. The challenge of black workers in this country, the challenge of resistance to the system and the state, as a people and a class – all those struggles of resistance against the system – became translated from the horizontal to the vertical, from class to 'ethnicity'. The divisions of society that we are talking about are class, horizontal divisions. What the system tries to do is to divide the working class into vertical divisions of race, religion, sex and so on. The task of radicals, militants, is to turn the vertical into the horizontal. You began that is to resolve the problems of racism, and the problems of class inherent in racism, in cultural, ethnic terms. The solution you felt was to create a black or cultural bourgeoisie; the answer was cultural-

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ism and not classism. Hence multi-racial education and multi-cultural activities. Your struggles were not enriched by our struggles but your culture was by our culture or, rather by the superficial cultural artefacts – food, clothing, dance, drama, arts that sort of thing. And having thus separated us from our white fellow workers you divided us into cultural, ethnic groups. Black people united by the common experiences of colonialism and racism became compartmentalised into West Indians, Asians, Africans – and among the West Indians into islanders and among the Asians into Bangladeshi and Pakistani, Muslim and Hindu. And the system having divided us all can now begin to beat the shit out of the working class – white and black.

What do you think of the GLC anti-racist year?
What the GLC has done is to chart a path through territories that the left, and the Labour Party in particular, have never traversed. And that is a tremendous achievement when you realise that they had no anti-racist tradition – on the left, in the Labour Party or in the unions – to draw on. They are pioneers and they have made the mistakes that pioneers make such as confusing (personal) racialism with (institutionalised) racism – which in turn has led to the belief that 'racism awareness training' is a step in the anti-racist direction. But that is nothing compared to all the good they have done. They have given us black people our heads, and that is a considerable beginning for a country which for 40 years has been intrepidly racist.

Why are you critical of racism awareness training?
As I said before, 'racism awareness' confuses personal prejudice or racialism with institutionalised racism – and therefore believes that if you get rid of your racial prejudices you then get rid of a racist system i.e. you get rid of the structures of racism by changing your attitude of mind. That's a bit too metaphysical for me; the world is not in my head, it's out there. Racism awareness training is like potty training for whites – it promises to get rid of white racist shit neatly, clinically. And it makes white people feel guilty. I want white people to feel ashamed. Guilt is to transgress other people's rules and conditions – the Prime Minister's, the Headteacher's, God's. Shame is about failing your own standards. I am not against awareness, but awareness has to be an awareness of everything around you – of poverty and injustice and the rose next door – and that is the business of living and perceiving – the ability to live on the tip-toes of your sensibilities, to become whole again and not fragmented the way that capitalism wants us to be.

Do you see the Uprisings in 1981 as a seminal event, not least in terms of black/white unity?
Yes, absolutely. It was that moment of time when the injustices, disabilities, inhumanities visited on the people of the inner cities were so huge that the youth irrespective of race had to shake out the system. It was not a question of black youth and white youth but of youth in the inner cities and their rebellion marked a hunger for a different sort of life. It was significant in that it was a moment of time when black and white youth came together to protest against Thatcherite monetarist policies, against the decay of inner cities, *against the impossibility of living in these urban jungles*. It was a protest against the type of living that the Tories had held out – the dog eat dog, competitive living, impersonal, exchange value living. But the moment was lost – because there was no left leadership that could effectively bargain with the state – to see that the life of people in the inner cities improved dramatically. Hence, the political battle was lost to people like Scarman. (The British have always done this in the colonies: whenever there was trouble, they brought in a commission.) The next thing they did was to generate a black petty bourgeoisie, and create all these culturalist avenues for black people to go into: arts and crafts, TV *Black on Black*, *Eastern Eye* – that sort of thing. Now it would be a different matter if black people were allowed to go on Panorama or Weekend World to talk about Britain, Israel, America in the mainstream programmes. Why have we become ghettoised into channels where we are allowed to have our little bits of culture? It is an aspect of that same syndrome I spoke of earlier: it is because our working class struggles have not become a part of your working class movement here that we now have culturalist programmes reproducing a black petty bourgeoisie to manage racism, weakening thereby not only black working class struggle but working class struggle as a whole.

WHY WE OPPOSE NOT FIXING A RATE

There are two tactics for defending our local communities against Tory rate-capping. One is the refusal to fix a rate (supported by Ted Knight, and Claer Lloyd-Jones in the last *Briefing* and the other is to introduce an illegal or deficit budget on the basis of no cuts, no rent rises and no rate rises above the level of inflation. We would like here to recommend a deficit budget!

Not fixing a rate is motivated on the basis of achieving a simultaneous unity of Councils whose money would run out at different times with deficit budgeting. But 'when the money runs out' is secondary for deficit budgeting which is a proclamation of illegal intent as soon as it is adopted, unlike the refusal to fix a rate which is really illegal only when the money runs out. Such illegality with no rate is thus not consciously prepared for but arrives more by default than by design.

There may also be differences in the 'period of financial solvency' which Ted Knight has mentioned for Councils refusing to fix a rate. Their income would be from rents and charges which may vary with each council. And as Claer Lloyd-Jones asks of not fixing a rate; "Do we really want tenants subsidising other rate-payers?" There are other differences — precepting authorities have to fix a rate in March by law unlike the boroughs and districts, and for provincial councils, the "London option" may not be so appropriate.

Councils proclaiming and adopting "illegal" deficit budgets in April/March on the basis of the "Three Noes" would all be in the same position — a state of open illegality and principled opposition to the Tory attack. Their position would be clear, rather than left ambiguous.

The refusal to fix a rate is a weak tactic that concentrates our defence on the weakest element in the potential opposition to the Tories — the formal agreement between councils not to fix in rapidly changing circumstances. It places the burden of struggle in the council chamber rather than extending it to the community as a whole, tenants and workers. It would create a chain of uncertainty with poorer councils dependent on richer ones not to go for an individual deal. Any such move would cause a chain reaction the other way in forfeiting the position of those who had remained solid and impossibly compromising further opposition. It wouldmake 'personal liability' determined by declaration rather than by 'proof' of 'Wilful Misconduct' being obtained and narrow our appeal against this determination!

It is a "passive" tactic which does not project itself beyond the refusal to fix a rate and awaits the response of the Government. But the Government could call our bluff and sit it out as it's done with the miners' strike. Jenkin has said he'll not send in commissioners and hand Labour a target for struggle on a plate. We must not just plump for a tactic which we think will cause a quick early crisis or is merely dramatic, or is made more easily compromised on by its being ultimatistic but adopt a tactic that will last.

Apart from leaving the running with the Tories, the refusal to fix a rate also leaves the political initiative with them. It allows the question to be posed in terms favourable to the Tories and their media — "carte-blanche high-rate seeking councils" or worse "irresponsible Labour councils". By focusing attention on the rate, it diverts from the real questions.

NO RATE RISES

An ommission in all the motivations for not fixing a rate is the specific commitment to no rent rises and, in particular, no rate rises at least above the level of inflation. Indeed it is precisely left open by the refusal to fix a rate. In the past rate rises could be seen as a progressive local taxation, but with present rate-levels in inner-city areas (especially London) any increases are wholly regressive on sections of the working class who are made to pay for Tory policies.

No rate rises must be one of the first "ground rules" of any tactic we employ. By refusing to specify it, councils would fly in the face of every principle of trade-union negotiating practice. They would begin by signalling to the government that their position is open to compromise, rather than resolutely maintaining the optimum demand. Recent statements by Cde. Knight reported in *The Guardian* and the statement of the A.L.A. calling for such things as the continuance of government aid to urban projects beyond its current 3 year limit would seem to confirm this, and move in the direction of a "shopping list" of "items", rather than intransigently maintaining our full demands! Not fixing a rate is also supported by those who see the opportunity for increasing rates which they consider a solution to their dilemma. They ask: "If you don't raise rates, how are you going to pay your workers' outstanding wages" as if this were not also a problem for councils refusing to fix a rate as they run out of money. They thereby betray their labour-management, rate-raising, business-as-usual" mentality. Since the Tories have put us all in the same boat, deficit budgeting, based on the three no's, provides a basis of unity for our fight. We say we must get out of this swings and roundabouts sectionalism by honestly explaining to our tenants, rate-payers and workers that guarantees for the future depend on the outcome of the fight. If we surrender or just increase rates, there are no guarantees that the Tories will respect in relation to the council workforce's contracts, conditions, wages or even redundancy payments!

UNCERTAINTY

There would be much less uncertainty for our communities with a deficit budget than the refusal to fix a rate. A deficit budget removes the rate-payers' worry about legal obligation to continue paying rates, extant if a new one is not fixed. Also, *payment* of a new fixed rate would mitigate the severity of any future demands for arrears.

Some cdes. have suggestes that there is no contradiction between fixing a budget which specifies a rate but not levying it. But in fact these are logically exclusive. If you can publish a rate then why not levy it? The only answer can be that you want the freedom to levy a different rate from the published one, sometime in the future, depending on your dealing with the government. And this would still be unacceptable.

What occurred in Liverpool was a deficit budget. This was the point about it being referred to as an "illegal budget"! The threat of its adoption and its mass support was what forced Jenkin to make concessions. It was not the absence of the fixing of a rate, (9%), which was only caused by the action of the six renegades. We therefore regard the tactic of illegal, deficit budgeting, which should be based on the strategic orientation of the "Three Noes", as the best strategy for victory.

Phillipa Jones, Joe Murphy, (Hackney South CLP)
Pat Jordan, (Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP)

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Edited by Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge

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CONFERENCE

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Richard Chessum (Warwick District Council)
Roger Grenville (Warwick District Council)
Barbara Long (Warwickshire District Council)
Don Worseley (Chair, Coventry South West C.L.P.)
Mota Singh (President, Leamington Indian Workers Association, cive-chair Leamington CLP)
Tony Wheeler (President, Leamington Trades Council)
Chris Long (Secretary, Leamington Trades Council)

Manor branch (Brent South CLP) sends greetings to Conference.

Kinnock and Hattersley, get off the fence! Full support to the miners!

Brent East CLP sends greetings to conference

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND! SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!

Abolish the Monarchy and the House of Lords!

Andy Harris GLC/ILEA member Putney
Bryn Davies GLC/ILEA member Vauxhall
Steve Bundred GLC/ILEA member Islington North
Lesley Hammond GLC/ILEA member Dulwich
Paul Moore GLC/ILEA member Lambeth Central
George Nicholson GLC/ILEA member Bermondsey
John Carr GLC/ILEA member Hackney Central
Charlie Rossi GLC/ILEA member Holborn & St Pancras South
John McDonnell GLC member Hayes & Harlington
Jenni Fletcher GLC member Tottenham
Tony Hart GLC member Hornsey

Greetings to Labour Party Conference delegates and Briefing supporters from officers of the University of Sussex Student Union
Fight education cuts! Victory to the miners!

Fiona Morton (President)
Vice-presidents: **Jane Speare (Social Services), Alick Bridger (Finance), Martin Huseyin (Education), Janice Turner (Communications)**

GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE FROM THE HOUNSLOW 6 — EXPELLED FROM THE LABOUR GROUP FOR DEFENDING PUBLIC SERVICES.

VICTORY TO THE MINERS!

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Chris Hickey

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Sends greetings to Labour Party Conference delegates and to all Briefing supporters

Ealing Briefing meets every month at the West London Trade Union Club, Action High Street, London W.3.
For further details, contact:
Andy Kelleher (Ealing North CLP) at 841 4640
Ruth Clarke (Acton CLP) at 840 2099
Peter Purton (Southall CLP) at 574 2420

GREETINGS

Hanover branch (Brighton Kempton CLP) sends greetings to Labour Party Conference delegates

LEWISHAM EAST CLP SENDS GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE

SUPPORT BLACK SECTIONS!

Black Sections National Steering Committee

Greetings to all Labour Party delegates and Briefing supporters. Black Sections are here to stay! Support Diane Abbott and Keith Vaz, candidates for the NEC.

Fraternal greetings to Labour Party Conference delegates from Cllr Colin Penfold (Wirral Borough Council) VICTORY TO THE MINERS!

Fraternal greetings to Labour Party Conference delegates from CLLR JOHN McCABE (Merseyside County Council)

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GREETINGS TO LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

BRIEFING CONFERENCE MEETING

"TARGET LABOUR GOVERNMENT"

Sunday 30th September at 7.30pm
Claremont Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool

Speakers: **Tony Benn M.P. Ken Livingstone**
Diane Abbott (Women's Action Committee)
Kirstine McDowall (Labour Movement Lesbians)
Betty Heathfield (Women Against Pit Closures)
Sharon Atkins (Black Sections National Steering Committee)
Speaker from the L.P.Y.S.

Socialist greetings to all Conference delegates. Support the WAC resolutions.

Mary Honeyball
(Joint Chair, London Labour Party Women's Committee)

John Chapman (Bermondsey Labour Party) sends socialist greetings to all Conference delegates and Briefing supporters.
No to one person, one vote for re-selection!

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WHICH OPTION?

Speakers:

Hilda Kean and Ted Knight

Claremont Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool
Tuesday 2nd October at 12·30

Organised by LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING, HACKNEY LABOUR LEFT LEWISHAM LABOUR LEFT

Next issue out: 18 October. Deadline for articles: Monday 8 October. To be sent to 54 Bow Road, London E3.

Next Editorial Board: Sunday October 21 at Digbeth Civic Centre, Birmingham at 12 noon.

Why we should oppose the Defence Statement

Joy Hurcombe,
Chair Labour CND
Vice Chair CND
(in a personal capacity)

THE Defence Statement "Defence and Security for Britain" will be presented to Annual Conference without discussion in the constituency parties. Delegates will receive this long statement (57 pages) just before conference and they will be informed that they will be required to vote on it without amendment. Very little time, if any, will be given to debate on it, as it will be taken with the disarmament resolutions. They will take second place to this statement, once it has the endorsement of conference. This would not be a worrying matter if the statement contained the disarmament policies which conference has adopted to date. But apart from a holding position in which nuclear disarmament by Britain is accepted, many of the policies of the past have been ditched.

Of particular concern is the abandonment of the commitment to reduce Britain's military expenditure to that of the average of our major European allies. By this we have always assumed a major cut from the present level of 5.6% to about 3.9%. It has been a basic demand that escalating military expenditure must be reduced in order to lower international tension, re-direct investment to create alternative work for the defence industries and to ensure that money is spent on welfare, hospitals, schools and jobs. The statement says that defence reductions could not be achieved in the life-time of a single parliament. In a section on alternative work for defence workers, the statement admits that reduction in defence spending results in a higher rate of economic growth. Yet in the face of its own research, the Labour Party wants to take a very different line. This is to advocate increased spending on conventional weapons. This is the key commitment in this document.



Labour Party Photo Library

Women surround Greenham Common Base, 12 Dec 1982

Totally opposed

It is totally opposed to our past policies. Last year, we voted almost unanimously for a resolution which contained the statement that "the UK expenditure on nuclear and conventional defence produces a massive distortion in the use of Britain's industrial and research resources". Ron Todd, in moving the resolution said that he would not take back a single word of that resolution. Why have the Labour leaders moved so far from conference policies? There are two probable reasons. Firstly they believe that, if they play Thatcher's game of appealing to nationalism and to echoes of former glory when Britain ruled the waves, they will win the next election. Secondly they are buying the silence of the right wing who refused to accept unilateral nuclear disarmament without major concessions. This is a very dangerous game to play for now the spirit of Labour's defence policy has taken on right wing tendencies and even the commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament may be threatened in future deals.

Roy Hattersley has hinted that there are certain "ambiguities" in the document. He is probably already thinking of a new formula which will allow US nuclear bases to remain here in order to retain our contribution to the NATO alliance. It is on the question of NATO that this statement gives most cause for alarm. In the past we have never been so unquestionably committed by our leaders to continued membership of NATO. In the draft Manifesto, last year, there was a section on the desirability of the mutual dissolution of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The support for withdrawal from NATO by the constituency parties and the left is well-known. Labour CND and Labour Action for Peace have constantly argued for withdrawal from this aggressive nuclear alliance which perpetuates the division of Europe and forces each and every new phase in the nuclear and conventional arms race.

We will stay in NATO

The document doesn't tell us why we must belong to NATO. It insists that we will stay. There are long passages on NATO's new weapons and advantages in high technology, surveillance, precision guided missiles and electronic warfare capability. The enemy is assumed to be the USSR, which is another very worrying departure in this document. Tony Benn's addition to the preface, modified by the drafting committee, is an obvious attempt to alter the strident attitude to the Soviet Union. The preface notes that the USA and the USSR were both our war-time allies and that both are engaged in a relentless arms race. But less than a page into the document, words such as the "Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies have a large military capability which could pose a potential military threat to Western Europe" and "British and NATO policy must be designed to deter the Soviet Union from military attack" start to appear.

There is a link between the commitment to conventional spending and the enthusiasm for NATO. This is the biggest sell-out of them all. NATO is demanding greater spending on conventional weapons by European allies, in the Rogers Plan. This will mean a strong front-line in Central Europe and the adoption of Deep Strike battle strategies. Conventional weapons will not however replace nuclear weapons in the new strategies. Conventional weapons will not however replace nuclear weapons in the new strategies, they will be integrated with nuclear strategies by NATO. So when the Labour leaders call for more conventional defence spending, they are well aware that NATO's nuclear strategy, with or without Britain's nuclear weapons, will remain intact. So much for the past conference resolutions to commit the Labour Party to reversing the nuclear arms race.

The document contains many further inconsistent and contradictory passages. It has very little to do with disarmament. Its commitment to removing Cruise and US bases is apologetic and out of character to the rest of the document. This statement is a major step backwards. It should be thrown out by conference and delegates should insist that conference policies alone should form party policy.

REPORT

END Convention

By Dave Spencer

Councillor Dave Spencer was a delegate from West Midlands County Council to the Convention.

Since the 2nd END Convention in West Berlin last year, Cruise and Pershing II missiles have been deployed in Western Europe. When you consider that a Pershing II missile fired from West German soil can destroy Sofia within four minutes or Moscow within eight minutes, you begin to realise the horrifying possibilities. Already new missiles are being positioned in Eastern Europe to answer the threat. It is estimated that at least 3.5 billion dollars went to the multinational firm converting Pershing I to Pershing II. It is almost certain that the order to develop Pershing III has already gone in. The decision to deploy 464 Cruise missiles is only the thin end of the wedge – the US Air Force has a programme for 3,780 air launched Cruise, whilst the US navy has plans for 3,994 sea-launched Cruise missiles. Then there is the US government's decision to produce 200 MX missiles with ten warheads each which can be directed to ten separate targets with laser and radar systems – to be deployed from 1986 – with the Soviet answer SS-17, SS-18, SS-19. And so on, and so on.

Many socialists stuck into the nitty gritty of CLP trench warfare seem oblivious to the missile madness going on all around us. When a group of us were watching the Carl Sagan video on "The Nuclear Winter" last month, it is the first time I have seen genuine shock and emotion amongst some hard-bitten Lefties. I include myself. "Oh my god, this is awful!" one cried out. We know that international capitalism is bad, but just how obscene, wasteful and destructive can perhaps be seen in the expenditure on these awful weapons.

What do to about it?

What to do about it? Peace activists in Perugia were certainly in a very serious mood. The mass protests, the mass petitions, the peace camps have roused large numbers of people to face the unfaceable – but the missiles are still here. Stories from West Germany tell of the increasingly vicious police methods used by the State against protesters, the rubber bullets, the bone breaker water cannon – the same from Italy and the USA. Other political methods must be found as well as the familiar mass demonstrations. Here, of course, is where the discussions started. There are various buzz words coming from some key figures in END – for example, "non-alignment" and "dialogue". This view saw the European Peace Movement as an honest broker or intermediary encouraging 'dialogue' between the two super powers, together with various 'non-aligned' non-nuclear powers, like the six signatories of the "four continents peace initiative" of 22 May 1984. But as one East German exile put it quoting Stalin, "The Pope? How many army divisions does the Pope have?" Our divisions are the people we can mobilise on the streets, East and West, to threaten the super powers – we cannot have a dialogue with them on the basis of rational discussion.

Empty seats

This question raised a key problem at the Convention known as "the question of the empty seats". Some Peace Movements had been refused visas by their respective countries. This included all the unofficial peace movements from Eastern Europe and the peace representatives from Turkey and Israel. At the same time the official peace movements from Eastern Europe were very much in evidence, arguing,



would you believe, for 'dialogue' and 'non-alignment'. This caused a good deal of confusion amongst delegates. There were those who were very angry at their presence at the Convention – they were not present at Brussels or in West Berlin, the two previous Conventions. At the opening ceremony a number of comrades staged a demonstration, taking over the stage and demanding the release from prison of the leaders of Solidarnosc and of peace activists. Other peace activists genuinely wanted to have a 'dialogue' with the official delegates, to change their minds, to persuade them to go back and argue for the withdrawal of SS20s. However, when an Argentinian delegate enthused how marvellous this 'dialogue' was and regretted that US representatives of the Reagan administration were not there, too, he paused for applause – and there was a stony silence. I confess to being jaundiced in these matters. I recalled a friend from the past, an old Trotskyist, who used to say "Whenever you see a group of smiling Soviet delegates, you must always ask the question: Which one is the KGB agent? We must never become deaf to the screams from the bowels of the Lubyanka".

A real tonic

The great joy of these Conventions is the exchange of news, ideas and addresses among the delegates. Workshops of all sorts spring up all over the place. This Perugia Convention must be the most chaotic and disorganised event I have ever attended – yet the energy, the enthusiasm, the seriousness, the goodwill of the delegates was a real tonic. In Brussels 1982, the Greenham women burst through the conference arrangements committee and seized the imagination of the delegates. In West Berlin 1983 the sheer numbers involved were an inspiration. In Perugia 1984 I will recall the large contingent of steelworkers from Trevi on the final evening's vigil through the narrow streets of nearby Assissi, past the bassilica of St. Francis, shouting, "The people united will never be defeated". They gathered at the end to listen eagerly in translation about the British miners' strike and threw their equivalent of £5 and £10 notes to the miners' fund and the money just kept coming. The class solidarity is there, the serious purpose of the peace activists is there – the political leadership is missing. The CP change "the workers" to "the people" and raise the blind alley of "non-alignment" and "dialogue" with the peace activists – we have plenty to learn as well as perhaps drawing them into political struggle.

Letters

Dear *Labour Briefing*,

Congratulations to *Labour Briefing* for establishing itself once more as the conscience of the Labour Movement. The need to ensure that the PLP contains more black people, women and manual workers is vital. We only have to look at the new intake of London Labour MPs in June 1983 to see this: Banks, Sedgemore, Corbyn, Smith and Cohen. All white, all men, all middle class. Strange, isn't it, that none of them appeared on your hit list?

Sadly, your August editorial marks the continuing, and probable final, decline of *Labour Briefing* from a journal concerned with political issues to a fan magazine for the self-seeking professional careerists who litter your recent issues with their sloganeering.

Your editorial no doubt signals the beginning of a period of 'Tammany Hall' politics by Left and Right solely concerned with increasing their proportion of GC delegates. It was exactly the same kind of tactics that finished off Bermondsey Labour Party as a political force and ensured our defeat even before the capitalist press put the knife into Peter Tatchell.

If you want to see what Labour Party members in London who aren't interested in furthering their own careers are doing, then take time off and come to Bishops Ward in North Lambeth. In a little over a year we have tripled our membership to over 200 and smashed the Alliance as a political force in our area. Our membership is overwhelmingly working class, and women constitute over half the members. The proportion of black people in our party is over 20%, which is significantly higher than in the population of the ward. All this has been achieved by campaigning in defence of working class interests rather than indulging in sterile internal conflict.

For the first time in a long time people are beginning to think that the next General Election will see the return of a Labour Government. Those, from whatever shade of left or right, who damage the chances of a committed socialist Labour Government in pursuit of their own sectarian interests will be judged the real traitors to the Labour Movement.

Paul Wheeler

Dear Briefing

I was saddened to read in your normally excellent magazine an article in the National Supplement No. 10, August 1984, enclosed within the London Labour Briefing No. 142.

The article I refer to was headed up 'Defend Ahsan' and contained a story about the West Midlands Low Pay Unit and one of its employees, Raghib Ahsan. Knowing something about the case, I read with incredulity the farrago of lies and innuendo which made up the story you published. I can only say that if anybody had taken the slightest trouble to contact the Low Pay Unit to determine the facts then the story would have been quite different.

I won't go into the details of the case, in all fairness I think you should contact the Low Pay Unit to try and find out the details for yourselves. However, I will say that in the past the Low Pay Unit has a proud record of very useful collaboration with trade unions and other organisations on the left and that it is a shame that Briefing should attack such organisations so readily and with such little regard for the facts.

Yours sincerely
(in a personal capacity)
Tom Wilson
Research Department
General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union
Member Brent East CLP

YOUTH BRIEFING

YOUTH PAGE — HERE TO STAY!

From young miners to young women, from youth in CND, to those on the streets of Ireland, young people have nothing to loose and everything to gain by fighting for socialism.

Yet, the Labour Party is unable to offer a way forward — the lowest ever youth vote at the last general ection is an indication of this. Every time the Labour Party sells out a struggle, every time it refused to listen to the demands of women and blacks, it only cuts itself off further from the thousands of youth who are taking their future into their own hands. Attacking the autonomy and budget of its own youth section hardly helps the situation.

Under its present leadership the LPYS itself is small and isolated from the mass struggles of youth. Yet potentially the LPYS could be one of the biggest sections of the Labour Party and a valuable ally of the left. The fight for a mass campaigning LPYS is something the left in the party cannot afford to ignore.

This page is going to be a regular feature of Briefing. If you have any questons or would like to see anything in the next page contact, Tracy Doyle, c/o 54 Bow Road, London E3.

● *The next meeting of youth involved in Briefing is October 27, Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth, Birmingham, at 2pm. All welcome!*

Build LPYS! Build YCND!

Briefing talked with Tarsam Singh, 17 year old school student from Birmingham, who recently went on the Bases Tour '84 organised by YCND.

Why did you get involved in the peace movement?

Having looked at the government's of the world constantly building more and more nuclear weapons designed only for death and destruction, it was clear to me that unless somebody did something — and quick, this political madness would be the end for all of us. CND seemed to be the only people really trying to do something about it. They appeared to be fighting for a world in which we could all live together — world peace! So I decided to join and add my little contribution.

In Birmingham, YCND has organised days of action, occupied Job Centres calling for Jobs Not Bombs, had demos — you name it and we've organised it to try and stop the bomb.

West Midlands YCND is organising an anti-Trident demo, why did you decide to demonstrate against Trident in particular?

YCND has been in the forefront of the campaign for nuclear disarmament and we decided that we'd organise our own demo on October 13 to advertise our resentment towards the proposed Trident missiles that will be based in this country. We wanted to build a march that would be a demo with a difference! At the moment it looks really good, we want to make this the biggest YCND demo snce the 30,000 strong carnival



in May 1983. But to do this we have to and we want to get everybody involved.

The Labour Party Young Socialists had been traditionally very hostile to YCND, but they have now agreed in the West Midlands, at least, to help build this demo. We in YCND saw this demo as a good way to get rid of this frustrating hostility. After all we are fighting the same enemy — the Tory government. During the miners strike, YCND has understood that, I just wish the YS nationally would. We regularly organise our YCND groups to collect money and food for the miners and we will have a YS and a young miner speaking at our rally on 13 October to illustrate our support.

CND alone cannot bring down the Tories — so what do you think of the Labour Party and its present leadership?

Put it this way, if there was a general election tomorrow I would vote Labour, despite the fact I think they are wishy-washy. To me Kinnock and Hattersley epitomise the watering down of Labour Party demands, like their opposition to the black sections and their failure to give any support to the struggles of young people. But I don't believe we'll get anywhere by letting them off the hook, we should be trying to steer the Labour Party away from irrelevant diplomacy and towards supporting the miners, the fight against Cruise and Trident, what I really mean are the struggles of people like you and me.

In many ways I respect the Labour Party Young Socialists a lot more than the Labour Party because I think their demands are a lot more sincere, but I would respect the YS nationally a lot more if they were involved in all the actions that youth are fighting for. I think the LPYS and YCND nationally should be fighting for Jobs not Bombs together. Our demo in Birmingham is one example but we've got to go further. The miners need our support and believe me we need yours — so come on our demo on October 13 and bring your YS/LP banner.

This conference condemns the decisions of the National Executive Committee to cut the Labour Party Young Socialists budget for the second year running since:

(a) in taking away resources from the Labour Party Young Socialist budget, the Party leadership is seriously weakening the ability of Labour to increase its support amongst young people;

(b) if Labour is to win back a majority of youth, then more resources should be given at every level of the Party in the task of building the Labour Party Young Socialists as a mass youth wing of Labour.

Conference recognises that the existence of a youth wing of Labour is a gain for the whole of the working class that should be defended and built by all those in the labour movement. It calls on the rank and file of the movement to campaign against the cut in the Labour Party Young Socialists budget, and against any further attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists by the Party leadership, and to build the Labour Party Young Socialists along with other sections of the Party which are actively campaigning for socialist policies, such as the women's sections.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Committee to:
(i) increase the Labour Party Young Socialists budget from its present inadequate level to £50,000 per annum;
(ii) grant the Labour Party Young Socialists an annual political broadcast;
(iii) call upon trade unions to affiliate to and give sponsorship to the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign.

Wallsend CLP

BRIEFING & THE L.P.Y.S.

We reprint below an "Open Letter from Regional Committee members of the L.P.Y.S. This letter opens a debate on the nature and role of the L.P.Y.S. We also print a first response to this letter. Any further replies should be limited to 400 words.

'FOR A MASS CAMPAIGNING LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS'

One only has to look at the massively successful GLC events like 'Jobs for a Change' and the Carnival against Racism to see the potential to interest young people in the ideas and activities of socialism. At the moment we are in the middle of the biggest battle against the Toreis since the health workers strike in 1982 – the miners' strike. A national LPYS 'Youth for the miners' demo and festival with Youth CND would not only boost support for the strike but would win many youth to the Labour Party and the LPYS.

Wishful thinking is not enough however. Activists in the Labour Party must organise now with YS members to make good ideas a reality and build the LPYS. Drastic measures are needed.

There is an urgent need for a discussion on the left about youth. The Labour Party Young Socialists is presently very weak. The real membership of the YS remains at the feeble end of about 3,000. If Labour is going to have a hope in hell of defeating the Tories and the Alliance, support among youth will have to be built up.

The pathetically low vote for Labour at the last election must be reversed. Part and parcel of this is clearly building a strong, campaigning and democratic young section with its own lively and interesting youth paper.

But the response of the Labour Party leadership is at best total lack of interest and at worst proposing to cut our budget and trying to dictate what can and cannot be sold or distributed at YS events. This must stop. Socialists in the Labour Party must discuss and take part in actions that can and will build the LPYS, we must defend the right of the YS to make its own decisions, to be democratic and independent. Two sets of attitudes in the Party must be overcome. Firstly, the idea that youth are useful doorknockers but of course, if the LPYS gets too left wing or too 'political' its budget will be sliced to stop it from doing or saying anything. Secondly the attitude of many on the left of the Party has been to ignore the YS and leave the present leadership of the YS to get on with it.

Why are these attitudes a problem? The main thing is that no form of witchunt, whether it be a cut in the YS budget, dictates on policy and particularly expulsions can be tolerated. It is vital that in a youth organisation that we have the right to make our policy decisions and map out the way forward for youth. On the other hand, ignoring the LPYS solves nothing.

The conditions exist for the creation of an LPYS that numbers in the tens of thousands and it is to this task that the left must address itself. Such a YS will not and cannot, be built on the basis of a narrow, sectarian programme. It will be built only by involving itself in, and giving support and direction to the struggle that young people are involved in. Campaigns such as CND, womens liberation, campaigns against racism, gay liberation and industrial struggles such as the miners strike. Such a campaigning YS would strengthen no end the position of the left in the labour movement as a whole and would be capable of beginning to overcome the apathy and hostility among a large section of young people to politics. It will only be built, however, if the left as a whole plays an active part in building the YS and taking it out of the hands of the present leadership — by political rather than bureaucratic or organisational means.

There is a growing minority in the YS which is committed to just such a campaigning approach. Its ranks are drawn from the mass campaigns such as CND, and groups such as Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists. These are alongside support for the Labour Committee on Ireland, the campaign against Reagan's wardrive in Central America and other international issues which have received increasing support from youth in the LPYS. This current is beginnign to organise through regional 'minority' bulletins and caucuses at national YS events such as defence of political levy, support for the demands of the Womens Action Committee. A discussion has begun about launching a national journal to organise these activists and deepen our links with the rest of the left. The aim of this open letter has been to open the debate about the way forward for Labour's youth organisation and to begin to build up the links that will be necessary if Labour is to have the kind of campaigning youth wing it needs.

The left wing of the party has been throwing itself into activities such as solidarity with the miners, defending the cities, defending the political levy, winning the demands of the Womens Action Committee and buildiing black sections. But the important task of building up Labour's youth organisation has all too often been ignored. Instead narrow and sectarian politics have been pursued by the LPYS leadership cutting it off from tapping the huge potential which exists among young people. The left must break with this and win the LPYS over to its own campaigning politics.

We appeal to the left at all levels of the Party to join with us in building a mass campaigning LPYS.

Bernie Wilde (West Midlands Regional Committee member)
Dave Sheperd (Southern Regional Committee member)
(Both signatures in a personal capacity.)

For a workers' alternative

Dear Editor,

The Briefing conference at County Hall in July agreed to publish an open letter from two LPYS comrades in the next National Supplement. We are writing in response to that decision, since, in our view, the open letter does not fully represent Briefing policy towards the LPYS, nor do we believe it poses any serious challenge to the Militant's leadership of the LPYS. We would like therefore for our letter to be published alongside the open letter, as a first response.

The letter calls for a "broad-based" campaign – in alliance with CND and similar groups – aimed at "taking the LPYS out of the hands of the present leadership." In our view, given the political and class composition of CND and the other umbrella-groups mentioned, this would endanger the substantial gains made in the LPYS since 1970 in winning it to socialist and working class policies and building amongst primarily working class youth. Any campaign to broaden its appeal amongst organised gays, ethnic minorities, feminists, CND activists, etc., must respect these gains and build on them, not counterpose itself to them. Under the current conditions of witch-hunt, particularly, we must be careful not to allow ourselves to be associated with Neil Kinnock's and the right's characterisation of the LPYS's politics as "narrow" and "sectarian".

The open letter appears not to give an ounce of support to the current LPYS leadership's programme. Given the hostility of the Right towards this programme, this could all too easily be misconstrued as Briefing's hostility, or at least neutrality, on the issues raised. But the nationalisation of the major monopolies under workers' control – the establishment of social ownership of the means of production – is the kernel of the programme of socialism, and any attack on its centrality must be resisted. Our argument is that in order to implement this programme, all sections of the oppressed will have to be mobilised behind it and enabled to understand its relevance to the struggles of their own lives.

Briefing's aim in this respect – with the support which we feel we do have within CND, among gays, women's organisations, ethnic minority groups, etc., – is to provide additional strength, diversity and a broader range of involvement to the LPYS and its fighting leadership, not attacks which could be interpreted as divisive. Briefing has consistently attempted to represent a "coalition of the dispossessed". The Russian Revolution itself was victorious because of the strength of the alliances its working class leadership was able to form. But our fight for this must not be at the expense of the absolute centrality in this coalition of the working class and its own programmatic goals – which intrinsically must be anti-sexist, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist (to a degree which the Militant comrades have so far failed to understand). We would welcome further contributions to this debate.

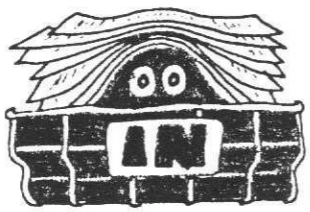
Chris Knight
Graham Bash
Jane Stockton
Stuart Marshall-Clarke
Kevin Flack
Mick McKeever
Jon Pickering
Dave Lewney

LESBIANS AND GAYS the struggle reaches Blackpool

Any conference delegate could easily be forgiven for not noticing that history is being made at the back of the resolution booklet. Turn to page 153 and you find two resolutions and seven amendments on 'Homosexuality'. Not a great number, but compared to what we've been used to it is a quite astonishing amount. Particularly when it is considered that at least five CLP secretaries failed to get their amendments supporting lesbian and gay rights in on time.

This sudden leap in support for lesbian and gay rights is not the result of an overnight-seeing-of-the-light by some in the labour movement. It is more the culmination of months and years of hard, and sometimes painful, work by the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights.

Lesbians and gay men have been joining the Labour Party in increasing numbers recently. And they have joined as 'out and proud' people not prepared to sit back in silence while their identities and rights are ignored by the white, male, heterosexual dominated labour movement. In some places where a single lesbian or gay man has been very isolated it's been a hard slog raising the issue and has incurred predictable abuse. But in others there have been wonderful successes such as in Nottingham where an out gay male councillor was elected. And 1984 has seen the launch of a group no one would ever have dreamed of – Labour Movement Lesbians!



Not all fun and games

Out in the wider world it hasn't all been fun and games either. Gay's the Word bookshop in London was raided by Customs and Excise looking for porn. They only found Mills and Boon but have decided to prosecute anyway. Street harassment of gay men in Earls Court has increased – in subsequent cases the police have frequently been found guilty of lying. And there have been numerous raids on pubs and clubs. Lesbian mothers are still faced with the horrific choice between being out and happy with their sexuality and losing their children, or keeping quiet, living in secrecy and fear and keeping their children. Or there is the current case of a lesbian fighting to keep her home, a council flat, now that her lover has died.



But amidst all this bigotry and state repression has come the beginnings of a response from the labour movement. Back in February the London Labour Party passsed a strongly worded lesbian and gay rights resolution. Southern Region Labour Party subsequently followed suit. In June NALGO almost unanimously passed a similar resolution. NUPE and ACTT have affiliated to the LCGR. There is already a lesbian and gay group in NALGO. Now NUPE lesbians and gay men are attempting to get a group off the ground. The GLC ball has kept right on rolling with the best monument to their policies, the £1 million lesbian and gay centre due to open soon. Other Labour authorities have been adopting similar policies. Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists, with tiny resources and having only been in existence for a year, have managed to force the LPYS to adopt a limited policy. And recent weeks have seen another novel initiative – Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners group. They received an ovation on the recent Women Against Pit Closures march. LGSM also hope to be visiting South Wales at the invitation of the NUM.



LCGR has grown in numbers and influence. Its campaigning work has given lesbians and gay men a long overdue public political profile. This party conference will see our biggest openly lesbian and gay presence, our largest fringe meeting and it could – should – see our first debate.

Something that has become very clear to workers in LCGR is how easily Labour Party members, especially those elected to positions of power, succumb to pure electoralism. What this conference might start to awaken – maybe re-awaken – is a real socialist understanding of the importance of sexuality. No socialism without lesbian and gay liberation is as true today as ten years ago with the beginnings of the gay movement.

Heterosexual interests

The Women's Liberation Movement has long since pointed out that the labour movement is run in male interests. It is also run in heterosexual interests – just look at the publicity in some election or other. If it's a man running – and it's mostly men that run – and frequently when it's a woman – there'll be endless rugby-playing-statesman Himself with Wife and 2.4 kids just in case we missed the message – this guy is absolutely NORMAL! And like racism benefits white people, heterosexism benefits heterosexuals. As long as the labour movement ignores this it will thereby be weakened.

The establishment, Defenders of the Status Quo, Tories – they all know where they can divide and rule. Time is long overdue for the labour movement – Norman of the hitching trousers, Arthur of the hairspray, Uncles Neil and Eric and Aunt Gwyneth and all – to really listen to what we've been saying. Verily it is that united we will never be defeated – but while heterosexism rules okay we ain't united. No way, no how.

Ask not for whom the Bell tolls – it tolls for thee. And we're tolling all the way to Blackpool!

Sarah Roelofs,
Labour Movement Lesbians
Paul Canning,
Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists

Labour campaign for gay rights

Winter Gardens
Tuesday 2nd October at 7.30 p.m.
Ken Livingstone
Clare Short MP
Gerald Kaufman MP
Sarah Roelofs

At conference

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

THE BELGRANO WAR CRIME

Tam Dalyell

When there are so many issues of nuclear and chemical weapons, East-West relations, the Middle East, and the Third World demanding Conference's attention, readers of *Briefing* could be excused for wondering whether priority in prime Conference time on Foreign Affairs ought to be accorded to the Falklands in general, and the Belgrano in particular – albeit with three resolutions and eight amendments.

£3 million a day is the *Sunday Times* figure for the cost of Fortress Falklands – given the soaring costs and technical difficulties of the Margaret Thatcher International Airport at Mount Pleasant, and frigate replacement costs at £150,000,000 a time, I believe the costs are in excess of the £6,000,000,000 before 1987, estimated by Dr Paul Rogers of Bradford.

Nor should those attending be under any misunderstanding that there *could* be a Second Falklands War. It is wishful thinking to suppose that the Argentine military have simply gone away. Nothing of the kind. They have been humiliated, and humiliated machos are dangerous. They are far better armed than they were in April 1982 – partly by British industry, but mostly by most sophisticated weaponry from France (Israeli adapted Nesher Mirage Vs for example), from Germany (Meko 360 frigates, with Rolls Royce engines), from Italy (guidance systems for the Condor missile, which could reach Port Stanley at 4,000mph) and the USA (spare parts and side-winder missiles for the Skyhawks).

LIES

Another set of reasons why Conference should give time stems from the unchallengeable fact that Mrs Margaret Hilda Thatcher has been caught out by a number of identifiable lies. The truthfulness of a British Prime Minister, as long as she or he remains in Downing Street, is a matter of urgent public concern.

If Heads of Government are allowed to get away with lying, then the Health of a Democracy is injured. As Socialists, Truth is a very central part of our political beliefs, and Conference should demand that the Truth be winkled out of the Government.

Mrs Thatcher claimed in Parliament, and on many occasions that the Falklands War came 'out of the blue' on Wednesday 31st March 1982.

Not so.

In her own handwriting, in the first week of March 1982, she was minuting on the Despatches of Ambassador Antony Williams from Buenos Aires, 'we must have contingency plans'.

Those who ask for contingency plans in the first week of March, can hardly claim total surprise in the last week of March.

And, indeed, Defence Secretary Nott admitted in the House that we were 'not unprepared'. Preparations for the Task Force had been going on for weeks.

In Dennis Skinner's words, 'Mrs Thatcher lured the Argentines on to the punch.'

Mrs Thatcher told Mrs Diana Gould, the housewife from Cirencester who questioned her on TV on May 24th 1983, when most of us were out canvassing, that Belgrano was converging on the Task Force, and presented an immediate threat.

NO IMMEDIATE THREAT

Over the last two years, it has become clear that whatever the purpose of Mrs Thatcher in ordering the sinking of the Belgrano, it was not because the 44-year old survivor of Pearl Harbour was approaching the Task Force, or presented an immediate threat.

If Conference thinks that too much is being said about Belgrano, let comrades recollect that the Head of Government who behaved in this way in sinking that ship, is the same Head of Government who has her finger on nuclear weapons.

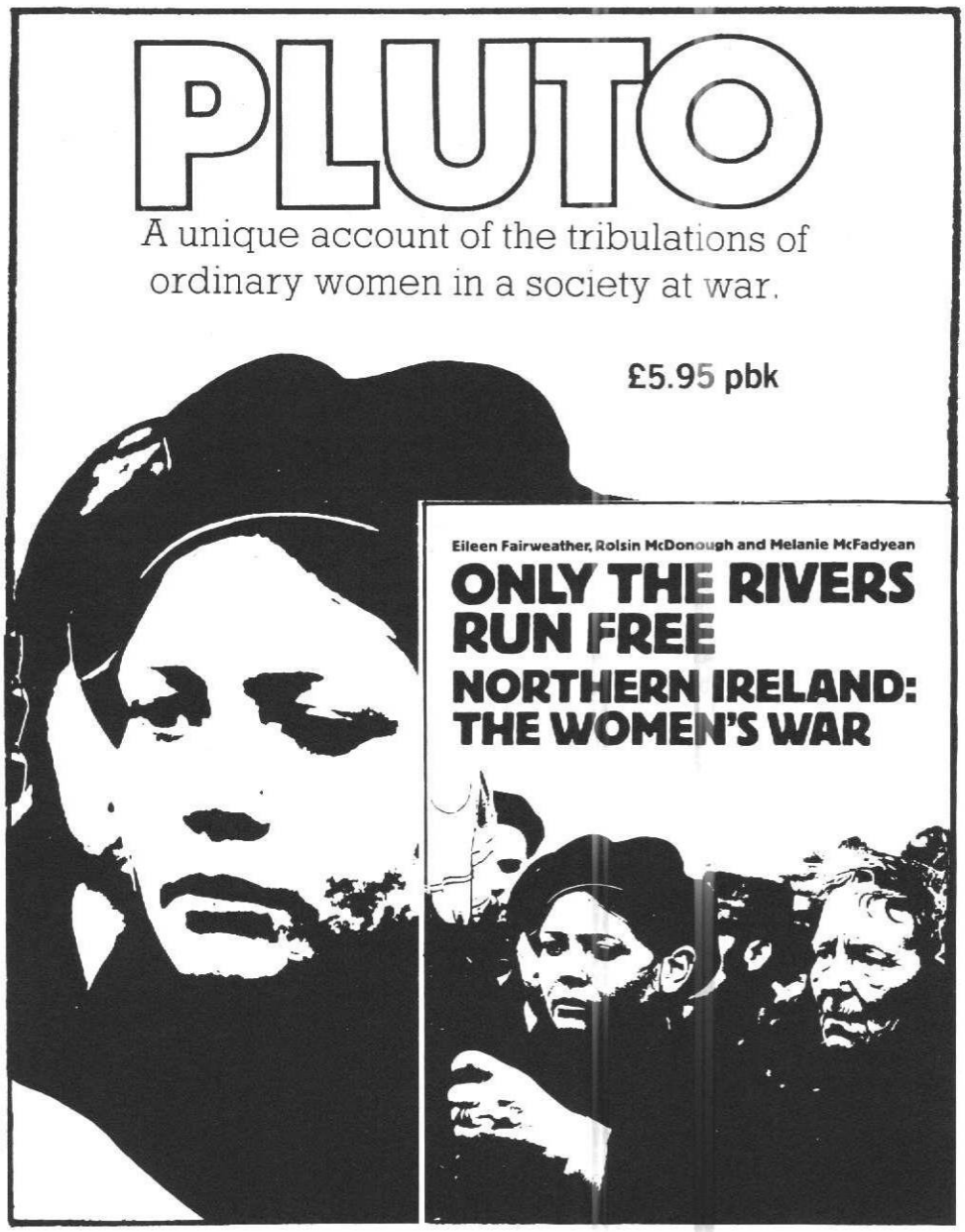
Mrs Thatcher claims that no indications of the Peruvian Peace Proposals reached London until three hours after the Belgrano was sunk.

A mass of evidence proved that this is not true.

For Domestic Political Reasons she wanted Her War.

Mrs Thatcher is wicked and evil.

Is the Labour Movement going to allow her to get away with it?



REAGANISM FIRMLY IN THE SADDLE — by Mike Davis

At a time when the Labour Party leadership is insisting more strongly than ever that Britain must remain a loyal subordinate to the US in NATO, and even justifying this course as the best means to ensure peace and security in Europe, we asked Mike Davis of New Left Review, author of numerous studies of contemporary US politics, to describe what sort of American 'leadership' we can look forward to as a result of the November elections.

Reagan is set for a massive victory in November, probably on the scale of Lyndon Johnson's victory over that earlier harbinger of Reaganism in 1964, Barry Goldwater. Those who hope that this victory may be balanced by Democratic victories in the simultaneous Congressional elections are likely to be disappointed. While the Democrats may pick up extra seats in both the House and the Senate they are unlikely to seize control of the Senate from the Republicans, who are superior in both finance and technology and will be able to tip the balance through injecting millions of extra dollars into the TV networks. And those who are encouraged by the stronger anti-Reagan stand of the Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, overlook the fact that his second in command, Wright of Texas, the House majority leader, is collaborating more and more openly with the administration, ensuring, for example, the passage of Reagan's appropriations for El Salvador.

In short, those who want to grasp the dominant trend in US politics in the next months and years have to look inside the Republican Party. And the Convention in Dallas showed that the Party is dominated not just by Reagan but by Reaganism, the Republican far right. That wing didn't just write the platform, which is far less binding than manifestos here, but they dominated the delegations from every corner of the Union. The so-called liberal, Rockefeller wing of the Party, dominant for so many decades since 1940, faces virtual extinction. It had to take refuge in its own little meeting at the convention, totally vilified by the bulk of the delegates. The most symbolic moment in the whole event occurred when Goldwater rose and made more of less exactly the same speech he made in 1964 — "Extremism in defence of liberty is a virtue". The self-confidence of the Reaganites is illustrated by the fact that they are openly working to get Percy, the liberal Republican senator from Illinois, defeated by a liberal Democrat so that arch-conservative Jesse Helms of North Carolina will become chairperson of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Percy's place.

If Reagan wins by a 10% margin (and the polls now show him 27% ahead) the Congressional opposition will keep its head down, at least until the expected collapse of the economy towards the end of 1985 and Reaganite Foreign Policy will have a pretty clear run. For the first time ever, the main lines of this policy are being laid down not in the State Department or the National Security apparatus but in the Pentagon, by Weinberger and his group.

The largest group in the foreign policy establishment supports the military build up as a means towards an eventual new set of deals with the Kremlin, on terms more favourable to the US. But this group has been unable to spell out the terms for such a new deal. The Weinberger group, on the other hand, aims to use the military build up not for a deal but for permanent destabilisation and mounting pressure on the USSR and the non-capitalist world as a whole, seeking 'windows of opportunity' on the path to some sort of Soviet 'blow-out'. This Weinberger group is smaller than the first group, but it is more powerful, with tentacles into burgeoning New Right think-tanks like the Hoover Institute and Georgetown University.

In Europe, lots of people pin their hopes on a third group who are now warning, often in apocalyptic terms, about the dangers of Weinbergerism and who want to end the new Cold War. This group includes such distinguished architects of the first cold war as Harriman and MacNamara, as well as Ball and Vance. They are much touted over here by people like Denis Healey, but they have little clout in Washington these days and those who pin their hopes on them are living in a dream world of lost Atlanticism.

The Reaganites' first target after the election will be Central America. In recent months the White House has strengthened its commitment to victory in El Salvador and to the overthrow of the Sandinistas. It has also learnt that plans on these lines meet no serious congressional resistance provided the administration makes gestures towards negotiations.

The other side of the coin of Reagan's victory over the Rockefeller Republicans is the collapse of the New Deal coalition in the Democratic Party — what held the old Republican East Coast Establishment together was precisely its acceptance of the New Deal. The most dynamic element in the Democratic Primary Campaign was Jesse Jackson's drive to build new coalition of the working poor — the Blacks, Hispanics and women. The old party machine and AFL-CIO Executive — Mondale's apparatus — faces Reagan preserving his inroads into the white, ethnic blue collar vote in the North East and Mid-West, while it had been totally incapable of building an alliance between organised labour and the working poor. Jesse Jackson's campaign has produced a new force in American politics out of the ruins of the New Deal Democratic Party. It is the one hopeful development in American politics.

Jackson's team understood that they had to go to the electorate not only with the symbols of black nationalism but with social democratic politics. They demand that the working poor be brought into the high wage economy and point out that this can be done only by an absolute cut-back in the military budget. At the same time, they link this with a foreign policy which involves support for basic social change and revolution against US-backed dictatorships in the third world.

This policy has been developed by Jackson aides like Berkeley Congressman Ron Dellums, the first self-declared socialist in Congress since Vito Marcantonioin 1948, and Mayor Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, Jackson's campaign chairman. These people have their roots in the struggles of the black industrial workers and the black community. In Foreign policy, Jackson has turned for advice to the Institute of Policy Studies, which is a radical anti-militarist group in Washington.

The large votes that Jackson gained in the primaries showed the great potential of what he called the 'Rainbow Coalition' based on these politics to mobilise the working poor. The campaign also surprisingly transformed the debate in the Democratic Party into a battle between Mondale and the Left.

Jackson also successfully polarised the black population against the black establishment in the Democratic Party, the crisis managers of the inner cities like Andrew Young, Coretta Scottt King and Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles. When Young tried to oppose affirmative action (ie. positive discrimination) at the convention in the name of party unity with the Mondale camp, he was booed down by the majority of Jackson delegates.

For forty years groups like the Democratic Socialists of America have been looking for some sort of social-democratic constituency inside the Democratic Party. Yet when Jackson produced just such a force, the DSA bent over backwards to keep their distance from him, backing Mondale — this was another useful clarification.

It would be wrong to call Jackson's campaign a complete, radical alternative, but it is a new social democratic pole in the political system that won't disappear. It is the only force in American politics with a coherent and thoroughgoing alternative to Reaganism and the Cold War. It is to these forces and not the manque establishment figures like MacNamara that the British left should turn in its search for American allies against American militarism.

PALESTINE MEETING BANNED

On the advice of International Department Secretary, Jenny Little, an advert for the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference has been banned from the Conference Diary. The reason being that we are advertising a speaker from Matzpen — an anti-Zionist Israeli socialist group — that is opposed to a sister party of the Labour Party, ie the Israeli Labour Party which is a member of the Socialist International.

What this means is that anti-Zionist groups cannot speak on Labour Party platforms, nor can speakers opposed to some of the rag bag of parties in the Israeli Labour Party, in particular of course the racist and apartheid Socialist Internaional. The International Department also took exception to the PLO speaker. Ms Little wasn't in the least concerned with Conference rsolutions supporting the PLO. It was the NEC to which she was accountable. She refused to comment on suggestions that the Foreign Office had more influence in the International Department than party conference. Both Tony Benn and Joan Maynard have agreed to raise the banning of the LMCfP meeting on the NEC. Last year we were banned because we were not registered.

SOUTH AFRICA~STATE OF REVOLT

South Africa is in a state of revolt. August and September, intended by the racist prime minister PW Botha to be a period of triumph with a new constitution designed to perpetuate white rule into the next century, have turned into a nightmare.

Spearheaded by the United Democratic Front, a massive campaign against the elections was organised in the coloured and Indian communities. The final polls recorded were respectively 18 and 16 percent — an abysmal failure for the South African regime. Their strategy of co-opting the coloured and Indian population groups as junior partners in the oppression of the 76 percent African population has failed in the face of growing unity amongst the oppressed.

PROTEST AT ELECTIONS

The elections held at the end of August were accompanied by countrywide demonstrations and protests. Half a million black schoolchildren abandoned their classrooms and took to the streets to mobilise support. Trade unions, women's organisations, community organisations and churches campaigned for a boycott. Underground units of the African National Congress carried out widespread sabotage attacks on government installations and police stations. The apartheid authorities responded with a massive show of force, arresting thirty leading members of the United Democratic Front on the eve of the elections and brutally crushing demonstrations, leaving a number of people dead.

VIOLENCE ERUPTS

If Botha hoped that the repression unleashed during the elections would put a stop to demonstrations of opposition, he was badly mistaken. Sharpeville erupted into violence as a huge demonstration against the new constitution was met by police repression. Simultaneously ANC guerrillas struck at key targets in the centre of Johannesburg. Armed police sealed off the town ship, army units were placed on standby and a reign of terror was unleashed against the population. In the first two weeks of September the uprisings spread to a number of other urban areas and the death toll rose steadily as police and army units moved in. Black schools were closed down and an order was issued banning 'any gathering held where any principle, or any actions of the government ... is attacked, criticised or discussed, or which is in protest against or in support or in memoriam of anything'.

GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS

The uprisings sweeping South Africa today have many similarities to the nationwide student and worker actions of 1976. Since then, an intense process of political education and organisation has taken place in the oppressed population. The African National Congress has reasserted its leadership of the struggle and its non-racial perspectives have taken root in many of the groups that in 1976 were advocating black consciousness views. Amongst community and student organisations there is now a much more developed awareness of the need to map out tactical and strategic objectives and to move from organisation around specific grievances to organised mass resistance aimed at the overthrow of the apartheid state. There is also a much greater organisational unity on a non-racial basis, symbolised by the United Democratic Front.

TRADE UNION ACTION

The black and non-racial trade union movement is now far more powerful than it was in 1976, with organised membership pushing towards the half million mark. Many of the unions have eschewed 'economism' and are committed to a political struggle against the apartheid regime.

GUERRILLA ACTION

Despite Pretoria's ruthless efforts to stamp out any external support, the ANC's guerrilla structure is much stronger than it was a decade ago. The Nkomati security pact with Mozambique has not affected the level of ANC military activity in South Africa, despite Pretoria's belief that most guerrillas passed through Mozambique.

The regional balance of power has also shifted decisively against Pretoria over the past decade. Zimbabwe is now independent and the pressure on the South African occupation of Namibia is mounting.

NATIONAL SECURITY

To meet the growing threat to his regime, Botha has embarked on a 'national security' or 'total strategy' policy. This involves economic and political reforms to accommodate relatively privileged sectors of the oppressed population — the Indian and coloured people and the growing skilled urban African workforce. But the power of the state and its armed forces has been immeasurably strengthened by a centralisation of power, a comprehensive militarisation programme and a massive expansion of the Defence Force. But the reforms have been decisively rejected by precisely those groups they are meant to co-opt. Resistance to the elections was strongest in the urban areas, and the 'potential middle class' in the schools and universities are in a state of revolt.

OUR RESPONSE

Botha's visit to Britain and other European capitals earlier this year was intended to put the seal of approval on his 'reformed' apartheid state. And when six UDF members asked the British Consulate in Durban for refuge, their first response was to show them the door. Similarly Britain abstained in a UN Security Council vote to condemn the new South African constitution. While the apartheid system will be destroyed largely by the actions of the oppressed South African people themselves, the need for international support has never been more urgent.

Israeli Labour forms a Government of National Unity

The recent elections in Israel confirm the trends apparent since Likud first gained power in Israel in 1977. The Oriental Jews will not vote for the 'Labour' Zionist capitalists who control Histadrut and the Kibbutzim. Despite inflation of 400% and the invasion of Lebanon, Labour actually lost a seat as its own base continues to decline.

On the left the secular Zionists of the Civil Rights Movement and the new Progressive List for Peace, gained two seats each. Of the 38,000 people who voted for the Jewish Arab list, only 5,000 were Jewish (cf to the 26,000 who voted for Kach). The major beneficiaries however were the fascist right. Meir Kahane's Kach, as predicted in the last months *Briefing*, gained representation in the Knesset and the 3rd largest party is Tehiya (5 seats) with its religious wing Morasha (2 seats). When Kach openly call for expulsion of Arabs from Israel, it is only saying aloud what has always been the unwritten policy of all Zionist parties. We can expect to hear a lot more from Kach as it and Tehiya continue to grow.

To those who see the Israeli Labour Party as a radical even socialist alternative to Likud, the Government of National Unity must seem a shock. People forget that from 1967-70 Labour and Likud were in coalition, and this included Mapam, the 'marxist' Zionists. Peres & Shamir, the two leaders will take turns as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Likud will retain the Treasury and Labour defence. Given that Labour's economic policies are based on the western (Ashkenazi) labour aristocracy in an Israeli capitalism financed by the United States, they will have no difficulty living with Likud stewardship of the economy. If anything they are to the right of Likud, with Histadrut — the 'Trade Union' which is Israel's second largest employer — calling for Arabs to be sacked first if there is unemployment. The diffrences between Labour and Likud over settlement policy in the West Bank and their attitude to the Reagan Plan have not proved insurmountable.

What is clear though is that a West Bank state is an illusion. It is annexed in all but name (which allows its Arab inhabitants to be denied civil and political rights). Israeli forces will continue to stay in Lebanon indefinitely. Indeed nothing at all has changed in Israel except that the ex plicitly racist Zionist parties have grown from three to eight seats. Zionism like Apartheid has a logic of its own, the results of which are catching up with the secular Zionists. Mapam, who are nominally staying out of the coalition for the moment, want a democratic liberal Zionism when the essence of Zionism, with its denial of Palestinian self determination and its racist nationalism is fundamentally undemocratic. Repression of the Palestinians is bound to affect democracy within the Jewish community just as it has within South Africa's white community. When Meir Kahane states that Zionism is not democratic, he is only reiterating what happened before, when the Zionists opposed independence for British Palestine when they were a minority. A Government of national unity heralds far deeper changes within the Zionist establishment in Israel.

Tony Greenstein

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE
CONFERENCE MEETING
Tuesday October 2nd
7.30 Clifton Hotel
Speakers include: Stuart Holland MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Moshe Machover — Matzpen
PLO speaker
Anna Wagstaffe — LMCP

REAGAN STANDING IN CENTRAL AMERICA

November, it seems, is the preferred election month for United States interests, at home and abroad. Not only are the conservative moneyed class of the US putting their razmataz all behind Ronald Reagan's bid for a second term in the USA but also in the Caribbean and Central America.

In each November election – US – Nicaraguan – Grenadian – this bid for power is thinly cloaked in democratic rhetoric. Each person is to be guaranteed the right and freedom to vote (once every 4 years). Which is not in itself a bad principle; but the US increasingly put it forward as the one and only test of acceptable and democratic government. As long as El Salvador has elections; the bodies can pile up and the US government will continue to vote for more 'aid'.

THREAT OF NICARAGUA

Governments such as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua who dare to extend the democratic boundaries beyond the US limits are a threat, however. Access to day-to-day decision-making, education and collective power is too much of a threat to the hegemony of US money; abroad and at home.

Reagan will spend millions to be re-elected. He will also spend millions to install a Nicaraguan government prepared to repudiate its allegiance to social and economic progress for all Nicaraguans. As it is he has built airports and military bases the length of the Honduran border. His navy is on permanent exercise in Caribbean waters and there is a standing army in Honduras with a more mobile army of US-financed and trained contras all over the region.

And yet news that Nicaragua is constructing its own defensive airport is taken as the ultimate provocation; serious enough to justify a US invasion. And as at many times since the Cuban missile crisis 20 years ago the spectre of Soviet aggression is called up as further evidence of America's moral right to act as world policeman.

But this time the socialist supporters of the Sandinistas must not be put off by Stalinist red herrings.

US-trained contras – soldiers who learnt to kill under the dictator Somoza – and US forces themselves are destroying co-ops, oil stores and social projects, killing literacy tutors, farmers and children. They are putting extreme economic pressure on the country and offering every large or small businessperson promises of riches if they turn against the Sandinistas.

WHEN THE TABLES ARE TURNED

No one ever questions the fact that the capitalist parties of the USA have an almost unassailable advantage in elections in terms of finance and media coverage. But when the tables are turned in Nicaragua the Americans are swift to support the capitalist opposition parties who claim that the Sandinistas have an unfair advantage in respect of visible achievements. In the USA, setting up polling facilities is seen as democracy enough, but yet in Nicaragua the US are full of angst in case one little party (such as contra interests) loses out. And so the US, through their surrogates, Nicaraguans returning home from New York, demand that the Sandinista government hold talks with the contras before they will contest the elections.

Do they therefore think that the Sandinistas alone should decide the future of the country before the people have their democratic chance to vote in the election?

THE MYTH OF US DEMOCRACY

The myth of US democracy is being exposed as clearly as it was in Vietnam. But the left and the Labour Party are being characteristically slow to react. Neil Kinnock has cancelled his trip to Nicaragua. Only 4 resolutions appear on the agenda for conference. It all seems so far away?

Like it or not, however, the front line is over there and events there will affect prospects for a whole range of socialist change here.

Father Fernando Cardenal and Miguel d'Escoto now seem set to face excommunication rather than desert their role as socialist ministers in the Nicaraguan government. If the Catholic hierarchy is successfully challenged by the liberation theologists of the region, it would release enormous numbers of the people from the yoke of a repressive, capitalist-oriented church.

The Sandinistas seem set to stand firm against all US pressure. Will we learn anything from them in preparation for when we demand that the US remove their military bases from our own region?

Nadine Finch
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

CONCERT FOR CHILE

The Chilean exile group Inti Illimani return to Britain in October for a ten date concert tour, including a concert in the Royal Festival Hall on Friday October 26th. They are probably the best known of the Chilean exile artists, very popular in Britain after a highly successful tour last autumn. As in previous years, all the concerts are benefit events for the different Latin American Human Rights Committees and Solidarity Campaigns.

At the Festival Hall concert there will be a speaker from the important trade union and Labour Party delegation which visited Chile at the beginning of September, the first such delegation since the coup 11 years ago. With the Chilean people once more on the streets in massive numbers demonstrating their defiance of the military and demanding an immediate and unconditional return to civilian rule, our support to the Chilean union and popular movement is especially important after the delegation's visit.

Andy Brown Chile Solidarity Campaign

inti-illimani
IN CONCERT FOR CHILE & CENTRAL AMERICA
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
Friday, 26th October, 1984
at 7.30pm. TICKETS £2.50 (Unwaged), £3.60 £4.70, £5.80, £6.90, £8.00

¡Nicaragua Libre! IMPRESSIONS

Forty-one people from Britain went to Nicaragua and came back changed. In glimpses and snapshots this pamphlet records that visit

Published by Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign and New Socialist. Single copy 50p (post free); five or more copies 30p each. From NSC, 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1. Tel 01-359 8982

CENTRAL AMERICA: WHAT NEXT?

Emergency Conference, 13 October

Key Topics:
- **Air-War in El Salvador**
- **Elections in Nicaragua**
- **Consequences of US Elections**
- **Guatemalan Refugees**

Speakers:
Jeremy Corbyn, MP
Maxine Molyneux
James Dunkerley
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