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STOP the SWERVE TO THE RIGHT!



LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

LAMBETH AND LIVERPOOL DEMAND:

DON'T LET US DOWN!

by Graham Norwood, Deputy Leader Lambeth Cncl. & Helen Crossfield, Chair of Women's C'ttee.

The Bournemouth Conference is the chance for Labour's Leadership to stand full-square with surcharged councillors in Lambeth and Liverpool.
The 1985 Conference must ensure that Neil Kinnock and the NEC pledge:

(1) Complete political backing for the stand taken by councillors defying ratecapping legislation and cutbacks in government grants.
(2) Financial assistance to those using the courts to fight back against an unelected auditor forcing Labour Councillors out of office and into personal ruin.
(3) A complete amnesty, when Labour is in office, for any Labour Councillor banned, surcharged or bankrupted.

Anything less than this will mean that the Labour Party Leadership will have been complicit with the government in an undemocratic attack on elected representatives.

On September 9th, Labour Councillors in Lambeth and Liverpool received notice that they were being held personally liable for moneys 'lost' by delays in setting a rate. For the Lambeth 32, that figure is £126,947 — roughly £4,000 each.

This exercise in central government dictatorship is made worse because the District Auditor (an unelected, unaccountable officer of the state acting directly now as a political agent of the Thatcher regime), is threatening to change the political complexion of Lambeth and Liverpool Councils.



John Chapman

Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council, greets Arthur Scargill at Lambeth Town Hall

If the councillors fail in their legal appeals against the allegations of "Wilful Misconduct", they can be removed from office, disqualified for five years and be bankrupted.

To combat that councillors have to fight in court simply to have their voices heard — and for the Lambeth 32 alone that will cost up to £100,000 in legal fees. The alternative is to let down the working class communities we serve and allow the Tories to slice into local government, taking more councils as they fight further rounds of ratecapping and the new battles againt privatisation legislation.

The struggles of Lambeth and Liverpool are challenges for the whole Labour Party. As the government tries to make any form of resistance illegal, the Party must link the demands of surcharged Labour Councillors with those of the National Union of Mineworkers.

We must recognise the oppressive nature of Tory laws, and be willing to retrospectively pardon their victims with the same zeal that Conservatives now use the courts to hit at Labour.

Lambeth, Liverpool and the NUM are challenging the Tories and are winning — shifting the tide of public opinion Labour's way. Will our Party Leaders back us? Their responses to our demands in Bournemouth will provide the answer.

SUPPORT THE RACIAL HARASSMENT

Labour Weekly **eventually got around, in its September 6th edition, to publishing an article about racial attacks. It dealt with the terrorist approach of fascists in perpetrating these attacks and the inadequate response of the police to them. It concluded 'It is a demand for real action London Labour MPs will be taking to the Yard on September 27th when they meet Commissioner Kenneth Newman'. But the article, entitled 'Racial Attacks – Society's Failure to Respond', was vague about Labour's response. The question is what 'real action' is Labour demanding and committed to? My Racial Harassment Bill, of which *Labour Weekly* seemed unaware, was published and had its first reading in Parliament in July, with the full support of the Campaign Group of MPs.**

The Bill seeks to stamp out racial attacks which have increased in both number and intensity in recent years. A 1981 official Home Office report found that the incidence of racial victimisation for Asians was *50 times* higher than for whites, and for Afro-Caribbeans *36 times* higher. In 1984 the Policy Studies Institute suggested that the actual number of such attacks could be ten times higher. This is only what the ethnic minority communities already know. Much of this harassment is not reported to the police because of lack of confidence in them. They frequently treat the *victims* with cynicism or hostility.

Racial attacks have already resulted in the loss of life such as that in Ilford recently of Mrs Shamira Kassam, who was eight months pregnant, and her three children. Many other defenceless families live in a state of siege suffering physical injury, damage to property and intolerable psychological suffering.

My Bill will entitle them to the right of peace and comfort in their own home and provide the legislative powers to evict a proven racist rather than forcing the victims to flee for their own safety, as is the case at present.

Specifically, the Bill

- *creates, for the first time, the offence of racial harassment*
- *provides a definition of 'an act of racial harassment' and a schedule delineating types of such acts*
- *lays duties upon the police to conduct investigations, maintain records and publish their findings*
- *lays duties on all landlords and local authorities to inform their tenants and ratepayers of the offence and its consequences*
- *connivance or neglect by an officer of a 'body corporate' in dealing with a racial harassment case is also an offence*
- *injunctions can be sought to stop any further acts of harassment occurring*
- *stiff fines and/or imprisonment are introduced upon conviction*
- *in severe cases, the Bill provides grounds for the eviction of perpetrators. This includes the possibility of a CPO being instituted against a convicted racist owner-occupier, subject to the acceptance of the Secretary of State. A convicted racist tenant who is subject to eviction cannot subsequently be rehoused in accommodation of superior standard.*

With the exception of racists, this is a popular Bill with the public. People's

FORTRESS ISLINGTON STRIKES AGAIN

'Labour would treat very seriously any grievance against a council employee connected with racial discrimination. Racism will be considered "gross misconduct" which could lead to dismissal'.



John Doble

Picket line at Quadrant neighbourhood office

Fine words from Islington Labour Party's 1982 election manifesto. Over the last few years, the Council has introduced some wide-ranging and progressive policies, including an Equal Opportunities policy. In 1984 it launched the 'One Islington' campaign against racism as part of the GLC anti-racist year. This year the Council has begun its decentralisation programme and opened the first of its neighbourhood offices, which has resulted in the recruitment of a large number of new workers, many of them attracted by Islington's reputation, including its positive stand on anti-racism.

Why then is Islington Council at loggerheads with NALGO over racism? Racial harassment had flourished unchecked in a section of the Housing Department for several years and at least four black workers were harassed out of their jobs. When finally the Council was foced to take disciplinary action against individual offenders, it meted out the most minor penalties possible. Then, as part of the decentralisation programme, one of those found guilty of racial harassment by a Council sub-committee was redeployed to a neighbourhood office, working directly with the public.

On August 5, after failing in attempts to persuade the Council to re-think this appointment, neighbourhood office housing and social services workers went on strike. The Council's public position is that the strike is about NALGO's objections to an individual and their own 'right to manage'. The union feels that if Islington Council is to offer a fair and equal service, it must protect the communities it serves by ensuring its workforce is both able and willing to implement its policy on anti-racism, whilst black workers have a right to protection from abuse and discrimination from other workers. Not until the strike was two weeks old did the Council come up with any proposals to issue guidelines on racial harassment, provide training for managers and reconsider the procedure for dealing with complaints and disciplinary hearings in relation to the Equal Opportunities policy.

Labour Party supports the strike

The Labour Party in Islington does not seem to share its Councillors' inability to see that the strike is about racism, not bureaucratic procedures. Both Islington North and South GCs have supported the strike as has the Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn, whilst 12 ward parties have passed resolutions in line with NALGO's position. The Labour Group finally met to discuss the strike on Friday 6th September, with 29 of the 49 Labour councillors mandated to settle broadly on NALGO's terms. Sadly 5 councillors broke their mandate, whilst a further twelve presumably did not find the issue important enough to bother to turn up. Consequently the Council merely 'regretted' the situation, leaving a closed door on any further negotiations.

Return without a settlement

So where do we go from here? In the light of the Council's arrogant refusal to listen to their own party members and after over 5 weeks on strike, NALGO felt it would be unable to gain anything further from industrial action and a return to work was agreed for 11th September. We returned without a settlement, on an issue where we felt compromise was impossible, with a stronger union organisation than ever before, and a firm commitment to continue and broaden our campaign against racism. For those of us in the Labour Party who are committed to the fight for accountability we must ask how much faith can be placed in left-wing rhetoric. With Council reselections looming, we have to look at not the fine words and promises but past actions – and on this basis, how many of Islington's so-called left-wing councillors should be reselected.

Jacqui Brown
Brent East LP and Islington NALGO

BILL

Harry Cohen, MP for Leyton

sense of decency was outraged at the Kassam murders and the press have since given a higher level of coverage to subsequent attacks. Labour activists must exert pressure within the Party for the Bill to become official Party policy. It is already in a form which could become law as soon as there is a Labour Government. I have written to Neil Kinnock to seek such a commitment from him. I hope that Labour Parties, Groups and Councils will endorse the Bill and put pressure on the police to prioritise the issue of racial attacks.

In my constituency, local ethnic minority leaders have told me that the Bill has acted as a morale-booster for their communities. This provides Labour with an excellent opportunity to build better links with ethnic minority communities rather than continuing the insularity which some sections of our movement exhibit on race.

Labour must step up its anti-racist campaigning and promote a harmonious multicultural socialist society. My Racial Harassment Bill is a crucial element of a coherent anti-racist strategy for Labour.

CHAOS IN TOWER HAMLETS

Susan Carlyle
(councillor, Tower Hamlets)

When housing caretakers returned to work after a council lockout lasting a month over the implementation of new rotas, the public in Tower Hamlets might be forgiven for thinking that things would be back to normal. However the council leadership started straight away the next day on other housing workers, leading to over 20 officers being suspended in estate offices and allocations sections.

This is 'normal' industrial relations in this borough with a bitter right-wing-led council fighting the last rearguard action before retiring disgruntled next year. Having no sizeable loyal following within the constituency parties, let alone the public, they wish to pursue their revenge as far as possible to spoil the chances of any incoming administration whether left Labour attempting socialist policies, or Liberal new Tories with policies of privatisation.

Trade unionists and tenants and the increasing number of homeless families suffer the consequences of this muddle, while the opposition parties stand aside and await developments. A forthcoming by-election in Blackwall ward (September 12) will be a test of how far the havoc has gone and whether the SDP will gain their first seat in the borough.

Any housing dispute has widespread implications with the largest handover of GLC housing still in its first months, in a borough with severe cuts in housing expenditure and an appalling record of homelessness and a waiting list of over 9000. Added to that is the whole racist dimension of blaming black people for the state of affairs leading to petrol-bombing attacks, as occurred at Electric House in Bow. The press focus on these events should lead to an increased responsibility towards the Bengali community, who are mainly under attack, but the council is barely coming to grips with this dangerous situation.

The council leadership has only responded when pressurised, and their indifference to the plight of homeless families in Southend was illustrated by their walk-out at last council, before the vote was taken on a left Labour resolution to bring back all families. Preceding their exit were ignorant and misleading and irresponsible contributions about 'queue jumping' and 'awkwardness' of families wanting to live in certain areas. Certain estates in Tower Hamlets are provenly unsafe for Bengali families who make up a high proportion of hostel families and those councillors objecting have ignored these warnings for years.

Less and less public housing for rent will exist soon with the identification of over two dosen sites for selling off and private home-owner development. In this the Liberal opposition and Labour administration are united. Vacant blocks however can be developed for short-term occupation for homeless families which was another resolution that the leadership ignored and which could have been taken up years ago.

The walkout is significant because those councillors command committees dealing with budgets which decide future expenditure and which affect generations to come. They are able to work actively against any paper policy, but are taking other highly important and profitable decisions about how the borough and particularly Docklands will be developed.

The decisions on the city fringe to accept speculators into the traditionally small industrial area and change to office development, drives the rag trade even further to the wall. In Aldgate a firm was displaced employing workers, for an office development, with community gain to the prestigious Whitechapel Art Gallery. This along with membership and active consultancy involvement of Paul Beasley, the present Mayor, who has been able to combine his borough role with firms such as Taylor Woodrow and LDDC and now World Trade Centre. Decisions for development of executive priced housing are endorsed by the Liberal opposition, while working class living standards are increasingly eroded.

Indeed the employment stakes sink for the local people as richly endowed firms move into rent-free accommodation in Dockland with ready workplaces. Beasley on the media says he sees the locals as servicing the growing population of the Isle of Dogs and Wapping with more minicabs and restaurants. His guidance of the council leaves that as the only job prospects, it would seem.

The steady cynicism and disenchantment of working class people is studiously ignored by many activists, but newly selected Labour candidates have a monumental task to persuade the electorate to stick with Labour. The increasing racist backlash has to be organised against and countered by council leadership, which the Liberals have always carefully ducked. In accepting the newly formed breakaway Tenants Forum as a recognised body for district housing committee representation, they now openly support highly questionable tenants who have organised in a racist fashion against the introduction of anti-harassment clauses in every tenancy agreement. The Liberals are as one with the Labour right not just on the question of privatisation.

Both these issues, along with the budget making process, have to be campaigned and won on the election doorsteps next May, and constituency parties are preparing to fight on the Labour policies which include no cuts, no privatisation and no loss of jobs.

We have the hardest task of any London borough to fight the Tory government, but we have to oppose our council leadership to restore what little we can under difficult circumstances. Nine Labour councillors have not been returned to the group. We have to build an alternative leadership now, despite the sabotage of the council, and the political opportunism of the Liberals.

PREPARING FOR POWER IN WALTHAM FOREST

Unlike many other London boroughs who can afford the time and effort to argue over policies and not worry about whether they will be allowed to implement it (by the electorate that is, not the government) here in Waltham Forest we have the triple problem of drawing up a radical manifesto, winning next year's elections on it and then doing our best to break down four years of Tory/Liberal cuts.

We have had a hung council for the past 3/4 years. An overall majority was lost in 1982 when 6 incoming Liberals took over from Labour in long-neglected wards in the south of the Borough. The Liberals decided to support Tory nominations for committee chairs and things haven't changed much since. However the reluctance of the Group and Party to seek Liberal support for these positions hasn't allowed Labour to offer much initiative in defending jobs and services.

In preparing for the elections we have already committed ourselves to introducing some de-centralisation of whatever services are left. Equally importantly will be a proposal to completely re-alter the committee structure and thereby breakdown the self-perpetuating nature of the bureaucracy which otherwise would seek to block any new intiatives.

Alongside this will be the introduction of new committees; a Women's committee, an Ethnic Minorities committee and an Employment and Industry Committee. A move to establish a Police committee has so far been thwarted. However, all this will not just be a break with the present council but also previous Labour authorities. Inheriting a Tory budget and administration after a few years of cuts, rate reductions and job losses is not going to be the stablest of platforms on which to start reform. Therefore there will have to be some rate increase above inflation to get going.

All this will have to be a success if we are to hold on to the borough indefinately. Much of it is run-down and suffers from high rates of unemployment and bad housing. The failure of previous Labour councils to do much about poor services helped the Liberals win wards where poor accomodation was most concentrated. Yet the fact that the Tories and Liberals have done nothing much since could give us the platform on which to exploit their opportunism.

John Wray, (Leyton CLP)

AFTER THE NEWHAM 7

Parvaiz is to sue the Home Office claiming he was beaten up by prison officers in the Old Bailey cells during the trial because of religious reasons. The 'Newham 7' Defence Campaign see the whole trial as a "VICTORY". But the fact that there were guilty verdicts for four Asian youths defending themselves and their community against vicious racist attacks in a context of police indifference and harassment is seen amongst Asians as an injustice.



John Chapman

Hanif has received numerous threats to his life and that of his family. They live in constant fear of their lives. He receives letters through the post like: 'Tell the Khans that you and they are all dead Pakis. In future don't mess with white people or Newham 7 will be only 6'.

Letter-bombing

Racial harassment verbal and physical has increased alarmingly and is at an intolerable level. Letter-bombing, arson, bricks thrown through the windows and physical attacks often causing serious injuries or even deaths are rife in many areas.

Black families are trapped in their houses afraid to venture out because they know they will be attacked by racist thugs. Others have been forced to leave their homes for fear of their lives. It is hard to imagine the pervading sense of fear for these families – where children are terrified to leave their homes to go to school.

Asian families these days are horrified at the escalating racial violence. Many families are at risk to death by arson. Throughout the United Kingdom there are more than 20,000 racial attacks a year and every day there is an increase.

In Ilford South a pregnant Asian mother and her three children were burnt to death in an arson attack. A Sikh family in Coventry managed to escape from their home as it went up in flames after an arson attack in the early morning. Mr Singh's wife, mother-in-law, and three children were all sleeping when the blaze started. Two sisters, Zarina and Zehra, were robbed at knifepoint on the Chalkhill estate, Wembley, Middlesex.

An Asian mother and her seven children escaped when a fire burnt down their home in Redditch. Petrol was poured through the letter box of Dilbagh Singh's home in Slough and then ignited at 5am. Five youths beat up an Asian man, locked him up in the lavatory and set fire to his home in Station Road, Hendon. The ground floor living room was gutted. An Asian taxi-driver from Stevenage, Mr Khan, was kicked, thumped, and his hair singed with a cigarette lighter during a journey.

Trapped in lift

Racism – where can one go? asked Mrs Kaur. She said racial harassment exists on every stop of the housing line of Brasset Point, a Plaistow tower block. We are subjected to the all too common racial abuse. Several times, Mrs Kaur and her children were trapped in the lift, often for up to an hour, when white youths found a way of breaking the circuit. Then burning rags were pushed through the letter box. A transfer to Canning Town was just as bad. Now the family have only one destination in mind – the part of East Ham where the recent 'Newham 7' incident took place and where Asian self-defence exists.

In June 1985, Rudi Narayan was right when defending the Newham 7, he told the court:

Racial "JACKALS" launched murderous attacks on defenceless Asians in Newham, east London and all over. "Communities under attack are entitled to protect themselves. Obviously you do not charge a Chieftain tank waving a wet lettuce. You are entitled to meet force with reasonable force".

A recent delegation from CRE met the Police Commissioner ostensibly to make its concern known about the racially motivated attacks on Asian people; and the latest information on the police response to these attacks. David Key is also concerned about it and organising a campaign against racial attacks.

There is a lack of confidence in police commitment or concern in Leyton. For example, Asians were disturbed by the way the police treated the victims. The police were extremely defensive. If existing protection for Asians is inadequate and if the police is unable or unwilling to protect the Asian community then it is hardly surprising that the Asians take the law into their own hands. The Asian community is not going to take these threats and attacks lying down; they will, individually and collectively, defend themselves and their families.

POLICE RACE UNIT

Alarmed at the growth of arson attacks on Asians, the call for a special unit at the Scotland Yard came from 50 Asian community leaders in Waltham Forest, north London. They condemned the attitude of local police in investigating such attacks and unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in local police in carrying out their duties of protection and law enforcement.

BLACK SECTIONS

The call for a mobilisation of the labour movement against racist attacks also came from the Black Sections of the Labour Party. In an open letter to all Constituency parties, it called on them and trade unions to "show the strength of anti-racists in the area", for the labour movement to respond in the same way as it repelled fascist attacks on Jews in the 1930s. "It is up to us to repeat that exercise in the 1980s", the Black Sections letter said.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

In the wake of escalating violence against Asians, their homes and businesses – in August an 'Anti-Fascist Action' organisation has been established. Its aim is to pool information about racial attacks and encourage the formation of self-defence groups among black and Asian communities. One can call it a successor to the Anti-Nazi League of the '70s which successfully stopped the attacks of the National Front. Organisers felt that there was a need for an organised opposition to this crime against humanity. Their objective is to build a popular movement to fight racism and fascism, and to attract support from as wide a social base as possible, free of party political involvement.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-FASCIST WEEKEND: On September 6-7 European Anti-Fascist fronts weekend conference at Antwerpen formed an umbrella organisation to fight the spread of unified extremist activity against minority communities. From Britain, Glyn Ford, vice-chair of the Labour Party Race Action Group, a representative of Searchlight and the newly-formed Anti-Fascist Action delegate Unmesh Desai were present. Desai reminded the conference: "Fascist groups in Britain have been developing links abroad and right-wing groups were being trained by Italian terrorists based in London, while British fascists were printing material for like-minded groups in Western Europe. Fascist activity in Britain", Desai mentioned, "is a direct reflection of increasing links across the Channel".

Man Mohan,
Chair, Lewisham Asian Association.
Deptford CLP Black Section.

RATECAPPING 86: A PRACTICAL STRATEGY FOR THE LEFT



It would be mistaken to see this year's campaign against Rate-Capping as a re-run of last year's campaign. There are a number of factors which not only change the nature of the campaign, but also place it in a different context.

To begin with, the Abolition of the GLC and the threat of privatisation are two major issues which pose a direct threat to our policies. The confrontation which will inevitably occur over Rate-Capping will be thrown into greater relief by both Abolition and privatisation. Indeed, in the trade union context, Abolition and privatisation are a more immediate and direct threat.

Secondly, any campaign which we initiate will be placed in the context of the May '86 elections. The threat to jobs and services will obviously form a major part of our election campaign, but the actual elections will allow us the opportunity to campaign on a much more positive and aggressive basis. We will be campaigning not only against cuts, but also for improved and increased services.

With regard to Rate-Capping, there are three options around an overall policy of non-compliance:

1 To refuse to set a rate
2 To defer setting a rate
3 To set a rate, but refuse to make cuts, and meet Manifesto commitments, i.e. deficit budget.

The first option is the clearest and most directly confrontational. The Council will immediately be placed in a position of surcharge and disqualification. However, given our experience of last year, when members of Labour Groups across London voted with the Tories and Alliance members to set a rate, it will be almost impossible to 'deliver' this policy in the Council Chamber. The local Labour Parties, the unions and the community organisations will be aware of this reality, and it will be almost impossible for us to mobilise effective support for this position.

The second option was the one adopted by Labour Groups earlier this year. The question this time round would be whether or not it is possible to maintain deferral until after the May elections. We believe that this is unlikely. We believe that there are enough Labour Councillors who will be prepared to vote with the Tories to ensure that a rate is set, that the same scepticism which applies to the first option would apply to this, and that it would make us reliant on scabs to a degree which is manifestly absurd. It would be ridiculous for us to place any trust whatsoever in those Councillors who voted with the Tories last June.

The third option is, in the circumstances of having Councillors in the Labour Groups who would vote with the Tories on the other options, both the most viable and, in certain respects, the most constructive.

DEFICIT BUDGET

To begin with, deficit budget allows to campaign positively on the basis of need. The various Manifesto working parties in the Boroughs are currently engaged in the process of identifying policy priorities, needs, and the likely costs of implementing such policies. We would be going into the May elections on the basis of having identified needs and the resources necessary to meet those needs. It would place our opponents in the position of having to identify cuts, it would save us the political embarrassment of a split in the existing Labour Groups, and it would allow us to select candidates for the elections on a confrontational policy of non-compliance in a way which could not be undermined by renegades voting with the Tories. It would also bring us into line with newly won Labour Councillors and existing Labour Councils who, whilst not capped, have their spending severely restricted.

If this policy is to be successful however, there are a number of steps which must be implemented before the '86 elections. The first, and most immediate of these, is to ensure that our candidates support the policy and are prepared to accept the legal consequences of deficit budgeting. The panel of candidates must exclude those people who are not prepared to support policy, and Branches must refuse to either shortlist or endorse candidates who might reject policy at a later date.

Secondly, the present Labour Groups must ensure that budget projections for next year are on the basis of identified needs and not within the Rate-Cap limits. The control of officers by Councillors is of paramount importance, and we must not find ourselves in a future position of suddenly being informed of various budget 'options'.

Thirdly, the various Manifesto working parties must cost the various policy initiatives and changes, and the Manifestos must form the actual basis of policy that an incoming Labour Group would begin to implement after May '86.

Fourthly, the campaign for increased and improved services must begin now. Identifying areas of need and working with both the unions, local parties and community organisations to build support for these policies. We need to stimulate demand for services on a campaigning basis rather than a managerial basis.

NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS

These policies would mesh perfectly with the run-up to next year's elections, give us the time necessary to build and mobilise a more effective campaign, and ensure that our candidates in '86 are fully aware of the position that they will be expected to take and the policies that they will be expected to implement. The 'new' Council would also remove some of the scepticism of the unions and community organisations, and the confrontational aspect of deficit budgeting would ensure a higher level of mobilisation. In the final analysis, deficit budgeting would be a direct and unavoidable challenge to the Tory Government, and the election results, with the prospect of increased Labour majorities, would inevitably strengthen our position.

We believe that this policy forms the basis of a non-compliance strategy, and a strategy which can create both unity and a high degree of mobilisation in the individual boroughs and across London.

Kate Allen, Angela Birtill, Sandra Plummer (Camden Labour Group)

London Letters

Dear comrades,

To call the decision of Deptford CLP Black Section to withdraw from the Parliamentary Selection Process a treachery is far from being honest.

John Silkin is a sitting MP since 1974 in Deptford. A few days after the last election, John Silkin asked for a list of party members, in order, he said, to thank them for their support. He complained to Labour's NEC when his local party refused to give him a list. The Times correspondent wrote "The intransigence of Deptford Labour Party may paradoxically have saved the skin of its incumbent right-wing MP who is facing deselection".

Does that mean the Party may be shut down? asked the reporter. "I suppose it does" Silkin said. "If Walworth Road moves in to run the constituency's affairs, Silkin will be home and dry", wrote the Times.

John Silkin also raised the question that some members of the local party may not have been properly elected or may not be qualified for membership. The whole affair is still in the hands of the NEC.

In its August executive meeting the Deptford CLP secretary reported that he had received an unsatisfactory reply from David Hughes to the question of the CLP being allowed to proceed with selection if we run out constitutional time due to the enquiry. He had therefore written again to the National Agent and again received a non-committal reply. In the same EC meeting on 31st July Kath Butler the Regional Organiser, came to clarify the situation arising from John Silkin's announcement in the press that he would not seek reselection in Deptford. It was noted that GC and EC delegation would be frozen as from 26th July. And *the Regional Organiser would not permit the drawing up of a timetable if the Black Section were participating.*

Deptford CLP was being deprived of its time-tabling process. On Sunday 4th August, at its monthly meeting, Deptford Black Section passed the resolution: *"The Deptford CLP Black Section shall withdrawn from the parliamentary selection process so that the time-table for selection may commence as soon as possible".* On August 14th 1985 after debate it was resolved – "This GC regrets the need for the Black Section to take the action to withdraw from Parliamentary Selection, but endorses their decision and will communicate the Black Section's resolution to the Regional Organiser".

It was a sad evening for all, even for the opponents of Black Sections; and everybody regretted the decision Black Section took. On 9th September at the GC a letter dated 21 August from the Party National Agent was read. In it the National Agent assures us that the process of selection will be able to take place before June 1986. This will follow clearance of the membership issue by the National Agent. The National Agent adds that these are not matters for the NEC!

Deptford Black Section has been under constant strain for a long time. Now, *it has extended the franchise to Deptford Labour Party;* and provided an opportunity to comrades to apply for selection on a democratic basis. We decided on withdrawal so that we do not fulfill the fears of many racists in the party that Black Sections are intent on bloody disruption. We hope that our move could bring about a change of heart in the CLPs and leadership to accept black representation.

It is our understanding that there will be constructive discussion between our CLP and the Black Section on how the re-selection procedure will operate, e.g. the short-listing of applicants and a say in the nominations.

The members of Black Section want to know what the white members of the CLP will do for us, not what they will do to each other. We wish to know and be consulted whom the CLP might be choosing before casting our black votes in the General Election.

The ball is in the court of Deptford CLP and white comrades to prove their stand on anti-racism and equal opportunities. The white comrades have to show a determination where there is a conflict of interest to take the part of the "have-nots" rather than the "haves".

Man Mohan
Deptford CLP Black Section
Chairman Lewisham Asian Association

"The world of SO"

Dear Briefing,

A cursory glance at Bloxam and O'Mahony's article, and you would think that it's about the mistakes, political failings, lack of 'correct' leadership by a vague alliance called the local government left. But if you turn the article on its head and look at it from a different angle, then it could be really about SO's failure to make an effective political intervention in the run-up to the rate-capping debacle. In one sense, the article is an example of how to have your socialist cake and eat it. First criticise a sociological phenomenon called the local government left (I'm still not too sure what it means), for not being left-wing enough in the face of government cuts and so as a consequence leading to the defeat of the rate-capping campaign. Then adopt an 'I told you so' attitude based on the premise that the choice of political appeasement was bound to lead to defeat, and at worse landing activists at the grand old gate of reformism. It must be wonderfully self-assuring with both foresight and hindsight to be able to correctly predict the defeat of a campaign because a large number of left leaders, councillors and activists did not listen to the political gurus of SO. But the question needs to be asked, why this was the case if SO's political analysis was pristine clear and infallible? Some of the answer may be that most Labour party members do see a difference between the rhetoric at Labour Party conferences and the 'real world' of campaigning on the door. So SO's dichotomy between Kinnockite sellers-out and the principled 'hard left' (how hard is hard?) becomes as real as the imaginary good guys dressed in white and bad guys dressed in black in any American Western. In the same way, 'mobilising the community, trade unions, the ordinary people in the street' becomes 'trotspeak' for mobilising the activists to occupy council chambers! SO can claim to have the best political crystal balls in the business, but nobody has the monopoly on truth, certainly not Labour Party truths when it comes to writing the history of the left and ratecapping.

My final point is that the whole episode of rate-capping did reveal something about the question of leadership. If there was lack of leadership from the GLC and local authorities, then there was leadership failure within SO. Surely, within their own terms they failed to influence events as much as Ken successfully succeeded in failing to win a 'no rate option'. I would have thought that many SO comrades would have wondered whether they have been getting VFM (value for money) from their leaders. Maybe it's lucky SO are not a nationalised industry since such a lack of political success would be tantamount to calls for their privatisation. Possibly at the next annual general meeting of SO shareholders, the two managing directors may be called to account for themselves in true democratic Labour Party fashion. If this is not satisfactory, then may we expect another takeover bid from Alan Thornett & Co Ltd?

Yours in socialism,

Martin McGrath
(Lansbury branch, Bow & Poplar CLP) in a personal capacity

Words, words, words

Dear comrades,

I note with interest the alarming result of the Riverside (Southwark) ward by-election on 15th August in which the Liberal candidate secured 65% of the votes cast in a hitherto rock-ribbed stronghold.

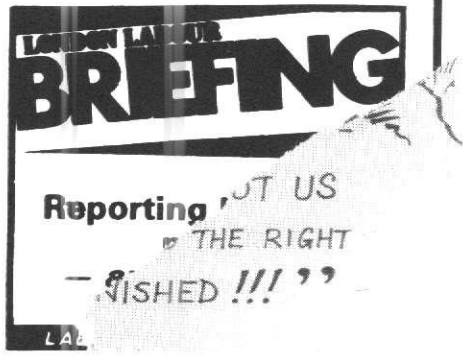
The article in your August edition entitled 'Struggle for Language' by Piers Corbyn gives some indication of the reasons for this debacle and for the long term decline of Labour's fortunes in Bermondsey. Corbyn's article incorporates a brief but vicious attack on Ken Livingstone, who has done more to advance our case in London than any number of the middle class poseurs who have colonised so many inner London Labour parties.

How can we expect voters in Bermondsey (which I seem to recall was once one of the safest Labour seats in the country) to support our party when so many of our active members seem to spend more time attacking our leaders than they do attacking the Tories and the Alliance.

The disastrous result of the 1983 General Election was caused, in part, by a widespread public perception of the party as an organisation torn asunder by factionalism and internal divisions. Our failure to unite and win that election has had disastrous results for working class people – a fact which is probably lost on your largely middle class readership. The expansion of the 'redbrick' universities has a lot to answer for! Sociological theory is no substitute for practical socialism.

Yours for socialism,

Richard Cotton,
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP



WHY LIVINGSTONE ISN'T STANDING

At the beginning of July articles appeared in Tribune and the Guardian saying that Ken Livingstone was standing down as a candidate for National Labour Party Treasurer in favour of Albert Booth. This was said to be vaguely connected with a GC meeting which 'criticised' him for standing, a GC meeting however which was reportedly dominated by those on the left who opposed his selection as PPC.

The truth is somewhat different. Livingstone *had* said he would be willing to stand down in favour of Booth as the candidate of the left (!) in the run-up to conference if Booth had more support. But Livingstone stood down in the first week of July, when not all nominations were in, let alone a wider indication of support!

In fact the first that the vast majority of Brent East CLP members knew that Livingstone was standing as Treasurer was when they saw it in the press (he did 'consult' with 3 individual members of the party). This, not surprisingly, caused widespread annoyance and he was asked to explain to a meeting of party officers how he felt this was in line with his pledge to be accountable to the CLP. And after all, he was only eligible to stand because he had been selected as our PPC.

A special meeting of the GC was called to complete business related to Party conference including a resolution from a trade union branch *mandating* Livingstone not to stand, after this had not been reached at a previous meeting.

The attendance at that meeting was not significantly different to the average GC (apart from the fact that Livingstone couldn't attend), but it was far from dominated by those on the left who opposed Livingstone's selection (there no longer seem to be any on the right), in fact they were probably a smaller minority than normally.

What dismayed many delegates, in addition to Livingstone's odd understanding of accountability, was that his platform for the election – a straight rewrite of Labour Coordinating Committee resolutions on 'modernising the party' – had virtually no political programme bar saying that the present party leadership is a 'winning team'. This from someone who hoped to be a full member of the policy-making NEC!

Of the three delegates who spoke against Livingstone standing, 2 pointed out that they had 'critically supported' him in selection. The motion mandating him not to stand was passed, unamended, by 3 to 1. Within a few days the strange press releases mentioned above began to appear. We may have forced Livingstone to accept a party decision for once, but there's no way to he wants to admit it publicly.

Pete Firmin, Brent East CLP

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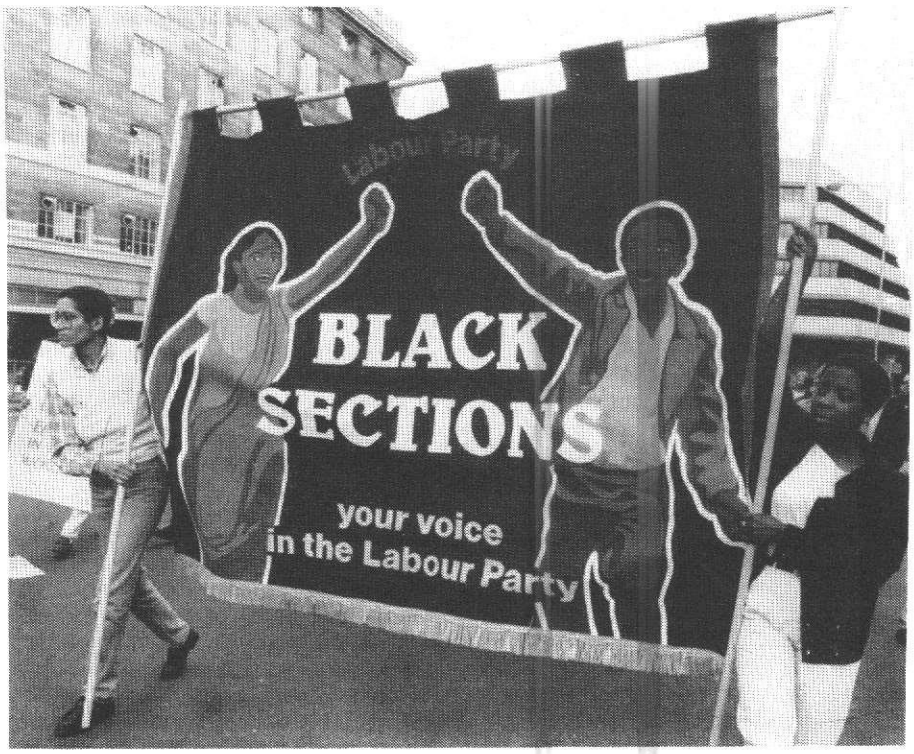
No. 21 October 1985

LABOUR PARTY BLACK SECTIONS: HERE TO STAY!

Marc Wadsworth (Vice-chair, Labour Party Black Sections, National Committee)

Labour Party conference in Bournemouth is set to become a battle between the leadership and the rank-and-file. At stake: the soul of the party. Centre-stage is the struggle over the National Union of Mineworkers' resolution on the reinstatement of sacked miners and a review of the cases of miners in gaol. We must thwart Neil Kinnock's attempts to nobble the leaders of those big uniosn whose members supported the NUM at the TUC. On the issue of Black Sections, sadly, the dirty work has already been done. Black contender for the job of T&G deputy general secretary and a place on Labour's NEC – Bill Morris – has been wheeled out by Kinnock's union to torpedo the Black Sections campaign. Kinnock himself has signalled to the big block votes by condemning our campaign as 'repellent' and its leaders as 'bankrupt'.

He told a select group of all-White and predominantly-male Westminster lobby correspondents that the demand came from just 15 or 20 people. He also crowed that "Asian people will never accept" Black Sections. At Conference the Labour leadership face the reality: 20 motions on the issue from constituency parties representing thousands of Socialists. The Standing Conference of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Councillors back the demand. And the Asian and Afro-Caribbean party members of Sparkbrook CLP in Birmingham and Southall CLP in West London are fighting for the right to represent themselves through properly recognised Black Sections. Asian members have been subjected to an unprecedented attack by Labour's national leadership in both CLPs. In Southall this has meant an investigation into trumped up charges of "membership irregularities". In Sparkbrook this has meant the propping up of right-wing godfathers by Labour leaders in rotten boroughs.



John Chapman

Hattersley

Roy Hattersley is MP for Sparkbrook and, a year ago, he wrote to the Black Sections National Committee saying a Black Section in his constituency would be a "retrograde" step and 'his' Asian members didn't want it. Kinnock and Hattersley are forced to eat their words. Hattersley and his Black stooges set up to speak against us claimed the demand for Black Sections was just from London. The facts tell a different story — nine motions from outside the capital, 11 from London. Our tally could have been higher had we not agreed in a number of CLPs to support Lesbian and Gay comrades struggling for an important first-time debate at Conference.

The Marxist journal Race Today say: "Kinnock's opposition to Black Sections amounts to nothing less than Euro-centric bigotry ... It is not the leadership of the Black Sections that is 'bankrupt' or 'repellent' but the leadership of the Labour

(CONTINUED OVER)

WHAT SORT OF LABOUR GOVERNMENT?

The 1985 Annual Conference will be a curtain-raiser to a period where the Labour Party will be, quite correctly, concentrating all its energies on preparing for government.

But what sort of Labour government?

One essential will be a radically different position in relation to the black working class, to the previous Labour governments. This means action against institutionalised racism in areas like education and housing. It means action to sweep away the current structure of racist immigration controls. Above all it means leaving behind the paternalism of the past and acknowledging that black people have the right to organise autonomously within the Labour Party.

So far the Kinnock leadership shows no signs of understanding these demands — particularly the last one — let alone conceding them. They seem to think they can play the old game of the Wilson years of colluding with white working class racism and relying on the belief that the black vote has nowhere else to go. But another essential is a Labour government which takes its stand on socialist forms of provision as opposed to managing the existing system more efficiently and more humanely than the Tories.

The debate on council house sales illustrates this. The issue at stake is collective forms of provision in housing, education, etc., as opposed to letting the market provide. Nobody suggests that municipal housing isn't an abomination in some areas and needs improvement with regard to basic



John Chapman

standards, repairs service, tenants control, tenants mobility, etc., in nearly all areas. But to argue for massive improvements in the standards and organisation of council housing is one thing. What the Kinnock leadership is saying — that we should retreat from our commitment to the collective provision of housing because selling-off council houses is popular — is another.

Another essential for a future Labour government is its attitude to the state. And this is the significance of the leadership's opposition to the campaign for re-instatement and amnesty for the miners. What they are refusing to accept is that the courts, the judges, and the police, were used in this dispute as an arm of the state. A future Labour government is not bound to accept their decisions.

Nothing has discredited past Labour governments more than the extent to which they become identified with the British state. Whether in relation to their policies on Northern Ireland, membership of NATO or general attitude to the courts and police power.

The Kinnock leadership's attitude on amnesty for the miners seems to suggest that a future Labour government will have the same old symbiotic relationship with the British state. And another spectre looming over a future Labour government is son-of-social contract, a 'New Partnership, a new Britain, the joint TUC/Labour Party statement issued as part of the Jobs & Industry Campaign. It is nicely designed and attractive to look at but it doesn't mention socialism once. What it does hint at is a revived form of incomes policy.

Its attitude to black people and women; its defence of socialist, collective forms of provision; its relationship to the state and its ability to resist the siren son of an incomes policy — a strategy which has failed every time its been tried — these will be the touchstones of the next Labour government.

And these are issues which have to be fought NOW.

It is absolutely essential to win the next general election but it is also essential now and in the coming months exactly what kind of Labour government we will be securing victory for.

Diane Abbott

Black sections: here to stay! (CONTINUED)

Party itself." Even Bill Morris has been forced to hit out at the White party leaders who characterise Black Sections as a form of "apartheid". He says he finds this argument "repugnant".

The message of Black Sections is clear: Black people must get a real stake in the decision-making processes of this society, beginning with the Labour Party. Without Black participation there can be no real solutions to racist immigration laws which divide Black families, racial harassment, the ruthless economic exploitation of Black labour, racist education, bad housing and Black youth unemployment. Right-wing Labour MPs collaborating with oppression by calling for more police in Black areas like strife-torn Handsworth must be stopped.

Mealy Mouthed Platitude

There must be no more sell-outs. Nothing less than total support from White comrades for our struggle is good enough. No more mealy-mouthed platitudes about freedom in Azania (South Africa), or Black rights in Britain. Black Azanian trade unionist Qraish Patel asks: "When the Labour Party was in power what did it do to support Black workers?When it is out of power then the hand of friendship is extended from the Labour Party." The Black Sections National Committee has backed the demands of Azanians like Qraish for complete and inviolable economic and diplomatic sanctions against the racist Pretoria regime. Labour Party and trade union leaders must raise money for the freedom fighters, block South African imports and exports and step-up the campaign for these minimal measures. Here in Britain Black Labour Party members want a copper-bottomed guarantee, enshrined in the constitution the same as for Women and Youth, of our right to self-organise.

Failure by the party to give us recognition will be seen as a major snub by Labour's most loyal supporters. Black communities will perceive the rejection as further evidence that entrenched racist attitudes still persist among labour leaders who want Black votes but not an organised Black voice. Black Sections in 35 CLPs, from Manchester to Birmingham and Nottingham and London, speak volumes of the demand. Proof that we have won the argument for Black Sections each time we have been given a fair hearing at rank and file level has come from the findings of the NEC's own working party. They said 'Yes'. So do a majority of CLPs, the NUM, NUPE, Black councillors and the Labour Women's Conference.

Message to Unions

The grassroots support is growing despite the undemocratic ways of unions like the T&G with their vested interest in toe-ing the Kinnock-line because they sponsor him. Our message to unions with large Black memberships like the T&G is the same as the one we have given to CLPs with large Black memberships — ask those members what *they* want and stop patronising them by acting as if you speak on their behalf. The trade union rank and file must rise up and end the double-standard which allowed all the big unions to back a motion encouraging the setting up of "Black members' groups" at TUC last year — yet oppose Labour Party Black Sections weeks later. At TUC this year, the rank and file backed the NUM's demand for the reinstatement of sacked miners and the reimbursement of fines. The Labour Party national leadership did not. Now is the time to stand up and be counted. Support the struggles of the NUM, Black Sections, Women and Lesbian and Gay people. Help us transform Labour into a Socialist party run by its members. If we fail, the party will remain irrelevant to large sections of our support and we'll perish.

NEC's Economic Statement:
AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOCIALISM

Phil Hearse

One of the problems about living in Thatcherite Britain is that it can dull one's critical faculties – even the most timid Fabian proposals can appear radical and 'socialist' alongside the ravings of the Tories. And no doubt the NEC's economic statement 'A new partnership, a new Britain' will get overwhelming support at Conference. But socialists inside the party should be made aware of the fact that this statement has little in common with a radical socialist solution to Britain's economic crisis.

Not that the *problems* it outlines are in any way controversial. The litany of Thatcher's crimes—mass unemployment, de-industrialisation, infrastructure decay and the ravaging of the welfare state – is familiar and unexceptional enough. Correctly, the document identifies mass unemployment as a deliberate weapon to 'hold down the unions and reduce wages'.

But the problem lies with the solutions the document proposes. Behind the clarion calls to 'take Britain into the 1990s' it reminded me of an unlamented NEC document called 'Signposts for the Sixties'. Even the *New Statesman* was moved to call it 'an orthodox restatement of the status quo before 1979' – and we all know how much that had to do with socialism.

The NEC's proposed solutions to the crisis are a) more investment b) 'a new partnership' between workers and government and c) the urgent need for more 'planning'. All these proposals turn out to be inadequate to do anything substantial, except perhaps reflate the economy through government spending, leading, as in 1966 and 1976, to an inflationary crisis, IMF intervention, savage deflation and wage controls.

The first major proposal is for a National Investment Bank, and state incentives for financial institutions to deposit funds with the NIB. But the scale of investment needed for economic reconstruction is enormous. For example, the TUC plan for the building industry envisages £30 billion being spent over 5 years to create 600,000 new jobs. And this is just a fraction of the capital investment that is needed. To imagine that tax concessions and easily avoidable exchange controls will be enough to get the City institutions to deposit vast sums with the NIB, and to put their capital to the service of human need rather than profit, is just mind-boggling in its naivety.

A socialist plan for economic reconstruction would of necessity put as its very first measure the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions; otherwise the capital needed for economic growth will always flee to where it can most return, not to the vaults of the National Investment Bank.

The same consideration applies to 'planning'. The NEC document envisages drawing up plans and priorities through 'joint discussion with firms and unions' and by 'consulting all those concerned'. Now we've all heard this before, in the proposal of the 1974 Labour government for 'planning agreements' with individual firms – which resulted, I recall, in *one* such agreement before Tony Benn was sacked as industry minister in 1975.

The NEC are pursuing the old, old pipe-dream of multinationals and British monopolies co-operating with government and unions in planning for social need not profit. There's as much chance of advancing towards socialism via this route as there is of a radical reduction in the transportation costs of pig farmers through their animals taking flight. Without nationalisation of the major monopolies real planning of the economy is an empty illusion.

A curious omission is the failure to mention reducing defence expenditure as an obvious way of releasing billions for useful production. But perhaps not so curious. Advocates of 'non-nuclear defence within NATO', like the NEC majority, envisage an *increase* in defence expenditure.

Now we come to the 'new partnership' which the document proposes. It states: "A key feature will be to provide workers with positive rights to information, consultation and representation in company decisions. The aim will be not to impose any particular model or method, but to widen the collective bargaining agenda beyond wages to crucial investment decisions". If you want an example of idle and fatuous dreaming, then this is it. No serious capitalist is going to give the workforce any decisive say in investment and planning decisions just because the government encourages it. Even if consultation were *compulsory*, decision-making power would remain in the hands of top management.

The whole framework of the NEC proposals is permeated with the illusion that there can be 'industrial democracy' within the framework of capitalism. But in the real world of capitalism as opposed to the NEC's social democratic utopia, any measures of workers' control from decisions over production, control over hiring and firing, to decisions over investment, will only be won by the working class in struggle, against the most colossal resistance of the bosses. Any notion of struggle, however, is far from the minds of the NEC's authors, simply because they cling to the idea that through the magic of Keynesian planning, the interests of government, workers and capitalists can be brought into harmony.

With the din of approaching hustings almost audible, the NEC majority will demand 'unity' at party conference, and those who disrupt it with 'quibbles' about class struggle will be chastised as wreckers. But the NEC's plan is one for a shipwrecked and wretchedly right wing government if Labour wins the election – the third such government in little over a generation.

You can't have socialism without inroads into the power and wealth of the capitalist class, and without a government which mobilises the working class to *impose* socialist measures on a hostile enemy. The distance between the NEC's statement and any such proposal is a certain indicator of the distance between Kinnockism and the struggle for socialism.

LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS — HERE TO STAY!

This year's TUC Conference saw the first ever debate on lesbian and gay rights and the Labour Party conference looks set to follow in its footsteps. This success comes after the major impact made in the labour movement by Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and Lesbians Against Pit Closures, which began to develop political and personal links between lesbians and gay men and a key industrial trade union.

In the public sector unions successes had already been registered with the establishment of a number of trade union lesbian and gay groups and the positive responses of a number of unions on the question of AIDS.

But the response of the national Labour Party has been less than adequate. On AIDS the leadership has not taken the opportunity to criticise the government for their failure to put money into research or to give adequate resources to already overstretched health authorities to meet this new demand.

On the attack by Customs and Excise on 'Gays the Word' bookshop, they have not used the opportunity to point out that the Tories are attacking lesbians and gay men's right to exchange information and ideas. Many constituency Labour Parties and a number of individual councils and MPs have taken these issues up.

The fact that support exists among party members was also evident with the support for the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights resolution for this year's party conference. The next task for conference delegates is to make sure that the resolution is heard and beyond that to ensure that it is fully implemented by the leadership, Lesbians and gay men are becoming increasingly organised within the labour movement. We are here to stay. The Labour party and trade unions must begin to represent all of their members and take up every attack on whatever section is under threat.

Terry Conway
Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights; conference delegate Islington North CLP.

BRIEFING on Birmingham

HANDSWORTH — POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OR RIOTS

Finally the elastic band of patience snapped in Handsworth after a long campaign of coercive suffocation policing. Both Asian and Afro-Caribbean people have been victims of a sustained campaign of brutal intimidation by the police under the pretext of looking for drugs. The spark that lit the fuse was the assault of an Asian man by racist police over a minor parking offence. A number of Rastafarians seeing a member of the Black community being beaten up came to his assistance.

As in South Africa, Afro-Caribbeans and Asians came together to fight racism and oppression. Both the South African police and their British counter-parts in Handsworth underestimated the backlash from an exasperated Black community.

Handsworth and Lozells are two of the most deprived areas of the country. Few have jobs but even those that do, live in the most abject poverty. The youth involved in the uprisings came from all the groups in the community in Handsworth, Asian, Caribbean, African and White. Some of the shops attacked were Asian, and these shops were seen to be beacons of privilege in a sea of disadvantage, though in reality those Asians suffer equally from racial and state oppression.

Nothing has changed in Handsworth since the 1981 protests. The Scarman Report made some good suggestions but even these have been ignored. There has been a bipartisan policy of neglect by the Tories and Labour. A few cosmetic changes have been made, a community centre here and a recreation hall there, but little else. Indeed the allocation of resources has been disproportionately prejudicial. Rich areas like Harbourne and Edgbaston extract more than their fair share, because they are tended to by the Tories. Bipartisanship plays no part when the Tories look after their own.

The Labour Party politicians wheeled out 'to speak for Black people', the following morning were white, middle aged, middle class men. The very people whose failure to fight for Handsworth caused the uprisings. Jeff Rooker's (the Labour MP for the area) solution was to 'send in more police'.

A community denied political representation, whose voice is muted and whose protests fall on deaf ears will resort to uprising. In South Africa Black people are fighting for a political say. In Britain we are denied representation, while White male middle class careerists tell us 'they know best'.

Labour Party Black Sections are the voice of the disadvantaged and dispossessed, making claims on the Labour Party policy making machine. Black Sections are about the civil rights of Black members of the Party. A party that believes in racial equality for society must show racial equality at home first. Representation is vital to maintain civil order in society. We have a stark choice: we can either have political representation or we can have riots – but we can't have neither.

Paul Sharma (Labour Party Black Section Midlands Organiser)

THE GODFATHERS REIGN

In January this year the Black Activists Committee (BLAC, a left wing group within the Black Sections) called for the resignation of right wing male MPs in favour of black candidates. Five of these social democrats, masquerading as socialists represent safe Midlands constituencies with large black electorates.

Birmingham, Small Heath, Sparkbrook, Warley East, Coventry North East, and Wolverhampton South East are all made safe by the black electorate.

These constituencies are also some of the most economically and socially deprived parts of the Midlands. So it comes as no surprise they return Labour MPs.

What is surprising is the type of Labour MPs representing these areas – right wing Gaitskellites, supporters of the status quo school of politics. Their constituents live in the most appalling housing conditions, their children attend delapidated schools yet the MPs in these areas believe all would be well with minor adjustments and fine tuning Tory capitalism.

Labour Party members must have jumped for joy when reselection came to their rescue in the early '80s. For here was the mechanism which would allow them to choose a candidate who would fight for their class like the Tories have fought for the upper classes.

Those who did welcome reselection were mainly white (though by no means all of them) left wingers.

CONTRACT

But to other members in these constituencies the democratic process of reselection is viewed as an intrusion into a private contract between themselves and their MPs.

The latter type of Labour Party members are in the main middle aged, black businessmen – the self appointed community leaders.

Men who bring business morality and ethics to socialist politics. They sustain politically bankrupt MPs by delivering votes in return for patronage.

The godfathers recruit black people en masse, often paying the block membership fee by cheque themselves.

The party cards are handed out just before meetings like tickets for a revue, whenever there are party elections.

And it is only at these lightning raids that the new 'recruits' are seen by other party members.

VOTES

With their 'votes' the godfathers purchase patronage from their MPs. The price can be as low as being allowed to be seen around with the MP – this apparently enhances their status.

A few of these pirates have exacted a greater price, some have become councillors.

Politics plays very little part in these transactions. Occasionally when the godfathers have been pressed they become ventriloquists' dummies of their right wing masters.

Obeying instructions from their masters, the godfathers oppose Black Sections. Independent Black Sections would of course damage their mutual interests.

Whenever white left wingers object to membership abuses or even question how the politics of inaction and omission can benefit the constitutency they are accused of being racist.

It takes a very brave white party member to persist.

There is racism in the Labour Party but in my experience it is mainly the preserve of the right wing. Racism is a nasty evil cancer which must be cut out of our party and society. But the unwarranted accusation of racism has now

Birmingham's right wing under challenge

For the first time in many years the right wing in Birmingham Labour Party is being challenged. The threat to its power follows years of entrenched right wing strength which has led to a spiritless, reactionary party. As a result in Britain's second city, stricken with poverty and inequality, Labour cannot boast a solid base. Instead the Labour group is forced to scuttle from election to election trying to 'win' voters on second-hand, social-democratic policies. It is precisely because of this threat Birmingham Briefing was launched to try and turn around the political fortunes and direction of the Labour Party in the city.

The need for a political change has been made all the more pressing because of the complete cave-in by the council in the face of government spending penalties. Added to this, while houses and schools in the city's control are left to fall into complete disrepair, council chiefs have embarked on a series of madcap schemes. These include building a £115 million Convention centre and staging the next Olympics.

In the face of this Briefing has tried to organise a concerted ideological assault on the politics of the Labour group through the Briefing magazine. Alongside this we have set about building an organisational network across the city. This has involved establishing convenors in all the city's constituencies as a base around which to build effective Briefing groups. On top of that we are now coordinating an effective Briefing caucus at district party level.

The results of this firming-up of a hard left in this most right wing of cities are at present limited. However we are winning the arguments. Briefing alone argued against complying with the council's 'strategy' of putting the rates up by 43 per cent.

Next time many more people, particularly those from the LCC who sided with the right wing, will support a fight against government cash limits. A second line of attack has been opened up through a democracy campaign in the city party. Briefing is pressing for the leader of the Labour group and all council chairs to be elected by the district party and not just the council group. To provide a focus for this campaign we are holding a broad left conference in the winter around the theme of opening up the party. We hope it will also provide a platform for preparing for the next round of local government cuts.

Inevitably it will be a long struggle to overthrow the right wing in their heartland. But then the City Council leader Dick Knowles has been rather busy of recent stomping around the different wards in Birmingham castigating Briefing.

Perhaps someone does feel threatened after all?

Maggie Robertson



Dick Knowles

become the first refuge of the black rogue.

By any measure the quality of life for black people is very low. This state of desperation of black people is a radicalising force. The natural allegiance of the black community is probably only just accommodated by the hard left of the Labour Party.

As for black youth I believe they are ready to storm the Bastille.

LOYALTY

What can black people possibly have in common with public school educated right wing MPs who could equally have been merchant bankers or stock brokers but chose Parliament for a career instead?

It is a travesty of loyalty for black people to support the right wing.

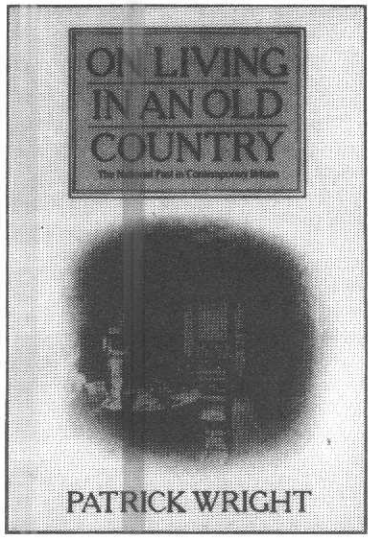
A travesty achieved by a cynical manipulation of a disparate community.

Sincere left wingers have been muted into a state of despair by false accusations of racism. Black left wing party members must therefore act. We must challenge the godfathers and expose their corrupt dealings.

It is our duty to smash the cosy alliance between businessmen and Parliamentary careerists. We must return left wing politics to a community who are dazed by being hoodwinked too long.

Paul Sharma (member of Ladywood CLP and Black Sections)

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TRADE UNION BRIEFING

Peter Heathfield says

UNITE IN DEFENCE OF THE NUM

TRADE UNION BRIEFING interviewed Peter Heathfield, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, after TUC conference had voted to support the NUM's composite resolution. The resolution called on a future Labour government to legislate the return of all fines on the union, the release of sequestrated funds, the union's release from receivership, and for a review of all prison sentences.

TU Briefing: The result of the vote at TUC conference on the NUM resolution was for most of us a surprise victory, and a major setback to the right's campaign to isolate the NUM. How do you assess the significance of this result?

Peter Heathfield: The first thing to say is that it was an excellent result. Despite a considerable propaganda campaign from the media, and the general pressure from the leadership of the labour movement to keep quiet and wait for the next election, we still won a majority. I think that this reflects the deep concern across the labour movement about the state of the NUM. Rank and file delegates have seen the continuing attacks by the National Coal Board and the government; and they were not prepared to stand by and passively watch.

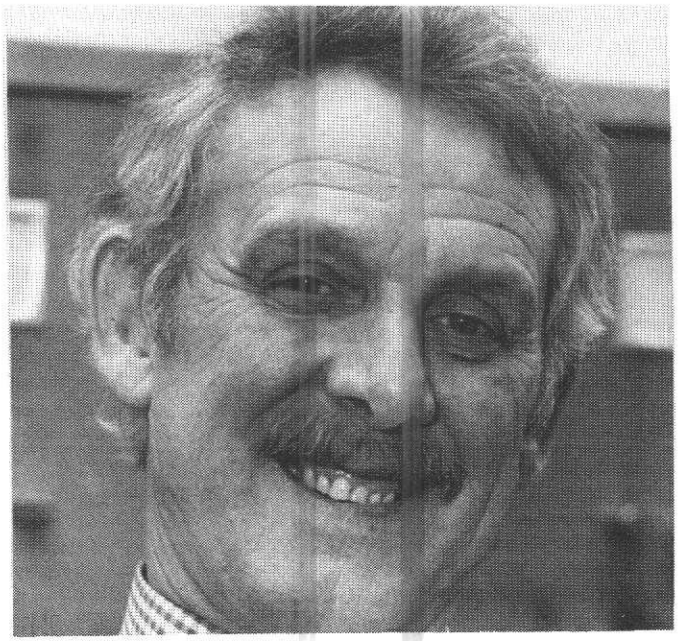
Of course the media's treatment of our composite was to label it controversial. What was perhaps more surprising was the TUC leadership's campaign against the composite before it was even formulated; because the aim of the NUM, and of our supporters across the labour movement, was to attempt to build unity in defence of the NUM, and in defence of trade unionism as a whole.

TU Briefing: What would you say about Labour Party conference: will it succeed in committing a future Labour government to be a part of that unity?

PH: The Labour Party conference will endorse the TUC conference decision, I think. Labour Party members around the country have been active in every miners support group; they have done tremendous work throughout the strike and they are continuing to be active in the support groups. They see the NUM and its members as victims of the Tories' vicious anti-union attacks, along with the NUR, the NGA and GCHQ; they see these attacks as part of an offensive aimed at breaking the unions' strength and influence. I think we will see delegates closing ranks for the survival of the trade unions.

TU Briefing: How do you see the tasks of the labour movement in the run-up to the general election?

PH: We must make it clear that we expect and demand that a future Labour government commits itself to carrying out the policies of the Labour Party. This will give the electorate a purpose in supporting the Labour Party. It will forge a stronger link between the working class and its party. The press must not be allowed to continue exposing the weakness of the labour movement, and the way to prevent it doing so is to unite the movement round its democratic policy decisions.



Press Association

TU Briefing: You talked about the miners support groups around the country. Many of them are still very active, still collecting, and campaigning now on the demand for amnesty. But many others have disbanded or shrunk to a small core, and they express frustration and confusion over the lack of national focus. What would you say to the support groups?

PH: The miners support groups must continue to function. They represent a new development in the labour movement. Now the strike is over, the crucial need is to continue and build the campaign for amnesty. The support groups may also recognise that they have accumulated a lot of experience and contact in their communities, so they are in a strong position to help and organise in other areas – particularly against unemployment. Thatcher has managed to get this crucial issue off the headlines, without yet paying a price. We must unite round our own policies, in our own class interest, to make the Tories pay that price.

Peter Heathfield will be speaking at Trade Union Briefing's conference fringe meeting, organised in conjunction with the Rhymney Valley Miners Support Committee. 12.45 on Tuesday 1st October in the 'Thistle Room' of the Angus Hotel, Bath Road, Bournemouth.

Solidarity with NUM class war prisoners

"I AM LEADER of the Labour Party. It will be on my view of the manifesto that we will fight the next general election".

With those words Neil Kinnock has thrown down a challenge to every Labour activist who believes in accountability.

The miners were defeated on their demands against pit closures. But the miners' strike was a great step forward in revitalising the labour movement. Or at least it could be.

The miners' strike lifted a lot of people up – transformed them into activists, put them on their feet and fighting. It taught us all basic truths about capitalism, the state and class struggle.

What will happen now to that new militancy, anger and inspiration? It could develop into a force to transform the labour movement. Or it could peter out into nothing more than an extra contingent of foot-soldiers for Neil Kinnock.

Neil Kinnock wants it to peter out. He wants the sacked and jailed miners discarded and forgotten about. After demanding throughout the strike that the miners conduct their struggle according to rules of 'non-violence' and ballot-box legality laid down by him, he now wants no demands on him from the miners.

He doesn't want the new activists coming into the labour movement as a result of the miners' strike to have any democratic control over the leadership. And if the activists try to exert control, he will defy us: "I am leader... my view of the manifesto decides".

With his arrogant statement after the TUC vote to support the miners' demands for a review of sackings and jailings and the return of confiscated funds to the NUM, Neil Kinnock has tied together into a single knot the issues of accountability and of Labour's attitude to the energy and class spirit coming out of the miners' strike.

Do we want accountability, or do we want Neil Kinnock as leader to do exactly what Jim Callaghan did in 1978-9 over incomes policy: put the needs of 'responsible', 'respectable' administration within the framework of capitalism above the decisions of the labour movement? Do we want the miners' anger, courage and class militancy drowned in a sea of electoralist syrup, or do we want that industrial battle developed into a political offensive?

Do we leave the sacked and jailed miners to the mercy of the Tories and the NCB? Do we allow gloom and pessimism generated by the miners' defeat to creep through the trade unions? Or do we rally and revive the movement with a vigorous campaign for the class-war prisoners?

The NUM's resolution for Labour Party conference calls for reinstatement of all miners sacked because of the strike, a review of the cases of all those jailed, and the return of confiscated funds. Other resolutions, including ours from Basingstoke (no.136) call not for a review but for the release of all jailed miners.

Both should be supported.

Yes, some miners used violence during the strike. A scab taxi-driver was killed. But after a class battle like the miners' strike we should not leave our prisoners of war in the hands of the class enemy with only a plea that their cases might be looked at mercifully.

The miners struck as the only way to defend their jobs against an assault by the Tory government. They assembled on mass pickets, they threw stones and bricks, they burned coaches, as the only way to defend their strike against massed ranks of heavily-equipped police who made up the law as they went along.

Maybe some of the miners who faced that police assault would now criticise or regret their own or others' tactics. That's their right. Neil Kinnock, who got to the picket line just once, in a chauffeur-driven car, at the point when he decided that the strike was so much on the defensive that he could safely go along, has no such right.

Nations fighting serious national wars, or classes fighting serious class wars, know how to defend their own. The Tories found a way to amnesty Ian Smith and his colleagues, guilty of terrible crimes against the people of Zimbabwe. A Labour government worthy of its name would free our class-war prisoners on the first day it took office.

Between now and the Labour Party conference we must campaign to make sure that both the NUM's resolution and the stronger ones get passed – and especially for a two-thirds majority for the NUM resolution, to ensure that it goes into the manifesto. Neil Kinnock should be told bluntly: accept the decisions of the movement, or get out and let a socialist take your place.

Mandate CLP delegates to support the resolutions. Make sure that unions which supported the NUM at the TUC stick by that support, and don't wriggle out by backing some anodyne NEC statement instead. Pass the following model emergency resolution:

"This Conference deplores the response of Neil Kinnock to the passing of the resolution moved by the NUM at the TUC Congress on Tuesday September 3.

His statement that he would prevent the policy commitments contained in that resolution appearing in Labour's Manifesto, even if they were also carried at this year's Labour Party conference, can only damage the Party and the movement. Such claims for a veto have no constitutional basis and are repugnant to the overwhelming majority of Party members.

This Conference repudiates Neil Kinnock's claim and calls on all Party representatives, including the Leader, to ensure that Labour's democratically agreed policies are loyally put before the electorate".

Alan Fraser
(Conference delegate, Basingstoke CLP)

A history of the miners' strike

'The Miners' Strike in Oxford', ed. Alan Thornett. Oxford and District Trades Union Council Miners' Support Group, £3.50.

In spite of the deluge of material which followed the miners' return to work, very few pamphlets and books have managed to capture the spirit and feeling of the miners' strike. Much of the material reads like academic examination of events by disinterested observers. Some have read like obituaries.

'The Miners' Strike in Oxford' is different. It manages to describe what the strike was really like for those of us involved in the local Miners' Support Groups (MSG). Not because it has hit upon the correct academic formulation but because it allows the participants to talk for themselves. With over twenty contributors and a hundred photos and illustrations, the book makes a valuable contribution to the task of providing an historical account of the strike. The more serious political contributions also have a significance that goes well beyond Oxford.

Working-class women

Anne-Marie Sweeney has written an excellent piece on the 'Oxford Women's Support Group'. She describes what motivated the initiation of such a group.

"We were witnessing the emerging of a mass movement of working-class women committed with an energy and passion which inspired us all to take on the government and win victory for the miners".

Anne-Marie describes how the women from the mining communities were warned that Oxford was full of feminists with 'strange ideas'.

"Of course the ideas were not so strange to the Maerdy women and it was not a question of the 'liberated' enlightening the 'oppressed' so much as sharing the experiences of women from different communities, on how we felt oppressed

(CONTINUED OVER)

PIT CLOSURES: WOMEN FIGHT

'And it's: Here We Go! Here We Go!
For the women of the working class . . .'

With this, the 'anthem' of the Women Against Pit Closures movement echoing round the hall, seven hundred women left the WAPC Conference in Sheffield on August 17th. The day confirmed that the changes their year-long fight for jobs in the pits had made on the women of the mining communities were still there.

For many women, the fight did not end back in March. Speakers from the Notts. Area told us how since the return to work they've still been going out, leafleting Notts. miners. It is the women's job to argue the case for staying with the national NUM, as the men face the new Area leadership trying to stamp out their campaign, and the Coal Board looking for any excuse to discipline and sack. They appealed to other women to come to Notts. and support them.

For others, too, the consequences of the fight still affect their lives. The wives and relatives of sacked men have paid dearly for playing their part in the struggle; but those with husbands and fathers in prison have paid dearer still. Women who endured the hardship of the strike with all the rest now face the future on social security; some, in addition, are on their own. And women are leading the way in understanding that hardship, and working to relieve it.

'Our fight is your fight' was a slogan in the strike. Now it's 'Your fight is our fight'. Women announced themselves ready to help the railworkers; they spoke about fighting cuts in the health service, education and social services; and showed their solidarity with the black struggle in South Africa with a standing ovation to a sister from SACTU.

But despite the strength gained from being together again, many women left the Conference seriously disappointed



John Chapman

A history of the miners strike (CONTINUED)

and put down and what we are doing about it".

The Oxford Women's Support Group made on the request of the Maerdy women a banner for the massive women's demonstration in London. The banner and its slogan, 'Your fight is our fight', captures the attitude of the Women Against Pit Closures movement.

NUM leadership

The book looks in a critical way at the tactics of the NUM leadership during the strike. Alan Thornett reports that whilst the Oxford MSG supported and admired Arthur Scargill's militant stance they were concerned with some of the NUM's tactics. Alan reiterates the argument he put at last year's Briefing meeting at the TUC conference that the NUM should have called for a General Strike in their TUC resolution. This was because it was felt by the Oxford MSG that the compromise struck with the General Council was not enough to win the strike and if the NUM had campaigned for a General Strike the TUC would at least have been forced to tighten up its resolution. Whether this is true is difficult to judge, but as the book illustrates with the example of Didcot Power Station, the TUC guidelines did prove to be totally inadequate.

Later on in the strike the Oxford MSG supported the demand that the TUC conference be recalled so the NUM could demand that solidarity action could be taken with the authority of the TUC. The case for this would appear to be overwhelming when it was clear the TUC guidelines were failing so badly.

Labour Party

A criticism I would like to make is of the Labour Party coverage. Whilst the book does note that there 'was unanimous opposition to the role of Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party leadership' the point is not expanded upon. A piece on 'support in the Labour Party' only recounts resolutions passed and solidarity activity.

If the full lessons of the miners' strike are to be learned then we must not only fight for a trade union leadership such as that of Scargill. We must also take up the political fight against Neil Kinnock and the Labour leadership. The resolutions promoted by Labour Briefing challenging Kinnock that were put in the constituencies at the end of the strike were a good start. The campaign for a miners' amnesty is also of great importance. However to fully capitalise on the education people received through their involvement we must ensure members are recruited to the party on the basis of transforming it into a party that fights for working-class interests.

In Brighton many MSG activists have been drawn into the party – they all supported a resolution calling for a challenge to Neil Kinnock. In some branches the MSG activists form the core of left caucuses. If the lessons of the miners' strike and what we have all learnt through our experience can be taken into the party we can begin to have a dramatic effect.

Bryn Griffiths
Coordinator of the Brighton Miners Support Group 1984/5

ON!

with the Women Against Pit Closures movement. For although 468 delegates from pits right around the country were present, they were not allowed to vote on the future of their own movement.

CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

WAPC has been run up to now by a 22-women national committee (including 5 ex-officio non-voting members). Facing the task of establishing a more permanent structure, the NC decided to call a broad based *consultative* conference to gather opinions. They would then draft proposals to be put to a further conference, called on a more 'representative' (i.e. smaller) basis.

The anger of so many women at not being allowed to vote can only be understood in the light of the history of WAPC. Many local groups were never able to discover the basis for being delegated to WAPC conferences held during the strike; never had report backs; some didn't have the papers for this Conference. During the strike, many women's groups were too busy to pursue this, but now they want to be involved.

The National Committee put forward proposals on structure and future activities. It was not that everyone was against the proposals; but they wanted to discuss them and vote.

As the demands from the floor grew stronger, the Conference became even less democratic, with the National Committee voting at lunchtime to curtail the debate from the floor by taking one speaker from each Area.

BITTERNESS

There was great bitterness at Conference over the NUM's rejection of Associate Membership for WAPC. Here, again, the National Committee seemed out of tune with the rest of Conference. They pointed out that with Associate Membership, WAPC could join in the NUM's education courses. This fitted in well with the NC perspective of WAPC being groups of women getting themselves educated; but less so with groups who wanted to campaign vigorously on the issues listed above.

Mick McGahey went some way to put the NUM refusal to rights, by pledging to win Associate Membership for Scotland. This was welcomed, and will be a good basis to continue the fight for recognition nationally.

Women Against Pit Closures won't go away; and the NUM, as well as the rest of the labour movement, will have to recognise this. But if we are to be 'for the women of the working class', WAPC must be a democratic movement, responsive to the needs and wishes of its members. Rank and file WAPC groups can still win democracy in WAPC; and the WAPC National Committee must recognise this too.

Jenny Fisher
Bow & Poplar (South)
Women's Section

THE DUNNES STORES STRIKE

On July 19th, 1984, Mary Manning, a cashier at Dunnes Stores in Henry Street, Dublin, was suspended for refusing to check out South African fruit. Her action was in line with the policy of her union, the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU). Eleven of her fellow workers came out in support of her. They have maintained a picket ever since.

Fourteen months on, with worldwide messages of support, including an invitation from Bishop Tutu to visit South Africa (which they did, only to be turned back at Johannesburg Airport), a statement of support calling for a shoppers' boycott from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), a call for mass picketing on Saturdays by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, support from clergy, politicians (minor) and even a standing ovation at a UN conference on economic development in the Third World; they remain outside Dunnes.

Dunnes Stores, which has over fifty outlets throughout the 32 counties, are well known union bashers. Their largely female workforce (apart of course from their largely male middle management, known as 'the Suits') is subjected to poor wages and conditions and petty harassment. (Only eight minutes in the toilets please, ladies, and only twice a day!) As a vocal and committed member of her union Mary Manning's initial suspension and later sacking was an anti-union move by Dunnes.

Now management are claiming that this is a purely political strike and they are the hapless victims of some uppity worker's over-large conscience.

In many ways the strike has attracted such publicity and support precisely because of its anti-apartheid aspect, and if public support were enough to win strikes, then the ten women and one man would have had their jobs back long ago. The same applies to trade union resolutions. But as Mattie Merrigan, the outgoing President of ICTU, said in another context: 'The trade union movement has a habit of clutching brave resolutions to its breast and giving them the kiss of death'.

The strike has not been spread to any other Dunnes outlet and trade unionists cross the picket line to deliver goods to the Henry Street store. This despite the fact that ICTU sanctioned an all-out picket in the first days of the strike.

IDATU's general secretary John Mitchell was quoted in the *Irish Press*, September 6th, as saying that he believes an agreement with Dunnes is unlikely. 'We are dealing with a company that will never give in.' 'We have had no significant negotiations with them at all.' He instead hopes for 'some significant action from the Departments of Labour and Foreign Affairs.'

A strike support committee was set up last month in order to break the impasse. Their decision to place 24-hour pickets on the supermarket led to the occupation on Saturday 31st August. A 'Suit' fumbling with the keys to a main door led to a spontaneous decision by the picketers on duty to push past him and to occupy. The occupation was ended later in the afternoon, against the advice of half of Dublin walking by who gave the occupiers the thumbs up and said it should have been done from the beginning. (Half of Dublin does walk down Henry Street on a Saturday and Dunnes have suffered huge losses at that store. Management admit to a fall of 60%.)

The Irish Labour Party's youth organisation and its Militant tendency have been great supporters of the strike but when the Labour Court recommended in June of this year that the strikers return to work immediately and leave the retailers to all get together and work something out between them on the issue of South African products, the Labour Party's Minister for Labour, Ruari Quinn, told the strikers to accept the court's decision. The workers declined. While this strike can only be won in Dublin, and by the union, international support is vital. Political, industrial and of course, the old perennial, financial support. (Money, please!) The fight against apartheid will be won by workers' actions inside SA and out; as will the fight for trade union rights and socialism everywhere.

IDATU's address is 9 Cavendish Row, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

Mary O'Connell,
Strike Support Committee

Support the gaoled miners

In May of this year at Cardiff Crown Court, a verdict of murder was imposed on two young Rhymney Valley miners, Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland.

Those of us who fully supported the miners in their 12 months struggle know only too well the frustration of the miners — being herded up like animals at the pit-head, being prevented from peacefully picketing at their place of work. Dean and Russell were victims of that anger and frustration.

SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE TWO YOUNG RHYMNEY MINERS WHEN THEIR CASE COMES UP FOR APPEAL.

OCTOBER 21ST & 22ND

9.30am OUTSIDE THE APPEAL COURT, LONDON

This peaceful and dignified picket is being called and supported by:

NEWPORT MINERS SUPPORT GROUP
HEADS OF RHYMNEY VALLEY MINERS SUPPORT GROUP
OXFORD MINERS SUPPORT GROUP
BRISTOL & AVON MINERS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

For further details contact: County Councillor Ray Davies 0222-886695, Gethin Jones (NUM) 0685-842228, Mary Crofton 0633-215983

WOMEN AND PAY BARGAINING

There has recently been quite a stir about "free collective bargaining." The T&G biennial, the TUC/Labour Party statement, and recent pronouncements from Congress have all been clearly for or against a return to some form of incomes policy.

But no-one, in all the rhetoric, has analysed the implications of current wage bargaining practices for women, the invisible half of the workforce. The very expression "free collective bargaining" has a macho ring to it, conjuring up eyeball to eyeball confrontations, whisky chasers, ostentatious whisperings behind hands in hotel conference suites. It was all there at TUC Conference; miles of hand stitched lapels (courtesy of the NEC, brother) gallons of booze — lots of middle-aged men getting off on a bargain basement version of the capitalist big boys game of privilege. Not all that different from the home life of our own dear Queen.

"Free collective bargaining" has become a virility test for Left Man, who in most of his forms probably wouldn't recognize the fine print of a typical pay deal form what's written on a cereal packet. Even to raise an eyebrow at untrammelled wage bargaining is heresy — but what about women?

Wage bargaining is tied to the marketplace. The worker sells his/her labour for the highest price possible, taking into account the amount of agro withdrawing it will cause. Power workers, electricians, telephone engineers, computer programmers, all fare well under this system. A closely related practice is to sell "spare" hours as well as actual labouring time via productivity deals, adding an extra lump sum, or better still, a further percentage, to pay. Under the iron rules of traditional pay bargaining, through the operation of differentials which were in some cases underwritten in the '70s by binding arbitrations, workers are either above or below the salt — a key benchmark grade in the industry of activity. This is frequently a male dominated skilled grade, with those above, and therefore also tied into the differential settlement, also often mainly men. Naturally enough, this "wages dominoes" works best in large, unified or well organised industries or workplaces.

For those below the benchmark — cleaners, dinner ladies, typists — there is no compunction on the employer to increase pay by the same differential. Historically this had divided the British workforce into two classes — skilled (well paid) and unskilled (poor). Even when some low paid are belatedly brought into the differentials system, this is usually too little, too late, since they are receiving a percentage on a pittance. Often the only way out, other than productivity deals, is more and more overtime.

Vicious Spiral

In this vicious spiral, for both skilled and unskilled alike, hard cash comes first in the pay round, with non-pay related benefits such as longer holidays, better maternity leave and creche facilities a long way behind.



Jak Kilby

It is an inescapable conclusion that present wage bargaining practices are inimical to women's needs. Women ARE the low paid, the part-timers; they cluster in occupations dubbed 'unskilled', and a few equal pay cases will not change this overnight. Women need better holidays, maternity leave, child care in the workplace. Women work in small isolated workplaces where pay unity is harder to achieve. Women cannot make up their low pay with vast amounts of overtime.

Incomes policies are not the answer. By pegging pay, particularly in the public sector where many low paid women work, they actually make things worse for women. Throughout periods of pay restraint, there was no evidence that what was available was being channelled towards those most in need. But unions should consider structuring pay and pay related demands to favour the large number of women in their ranks. This need not be by robbing Peter to pay Pauline. There are many devices that can be used to improve matters without this happening. Unions can lay greater stres on non-monetary aspects such as better holidays. They can agree low pay or part-timers supplements that do not affect holy differentials. No-one complains when one worker rather than another gets a state supplement such as FIS, and low pay supplements can be regarded in a similar way. Some progressive Labour LEAs are already using this device. Flat rate rather than percentage increases are also helpful for the low paid.

Limitations

In the last analysis, even those groups of (male) workers who have traditionally done well out of wage bargaining may find that it has its limitations. The Tories are very keen to promote the ultimate form of the art — local or plant bargaining — which except for a handful in the right place at the right time, isolates groups of workers against pockets of local unemployment and drives wages down. Blue collar workers, skilled or otherwise, may finding themselves slipping behind their white collar bosses who are increasingly taking their "remuneration package" in the form of perks such as the low cost mortgage, the company car.

The unions need to critically examine fond assumptions to help the millions of low paid women in their ranks. Given recent trends, they might even be doing the men a favour too.

JOSIE EDWARDS

NALGO BROAD LEFT

The 1985 Nalgo conference will be remembered as conservative, boring and the year things didn't change. The status quo won out and the Met. District (London area of Nalgo) found itself politically isolated from other parts of the country.

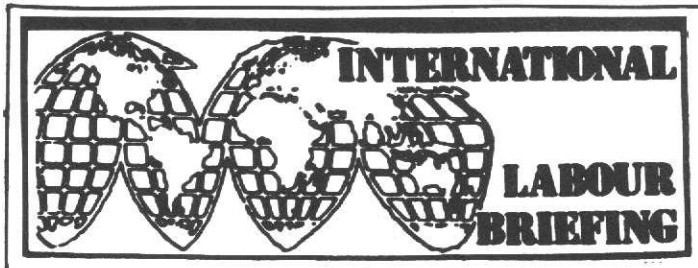
The real arguments at conference arose when the NEC were being told either do something or spend some money. Great sounding motions on policy were passed almost without dissent, as both left and right knew that their implementation was very unlikely. On such issues as Disabled access to annual conference; financially supporting Lambeth if they are forced out on strike and putting resources into helping members beat privatisation; conference backed the NEC stance of doing nothing.

In the wake of the coal dispute our union has shifted to the right, both in its attitudes and especially its leadership. In London the left has grown numerically stronger both because of attacks such as ratecapping but also because of the involvement of members via the self organisation groups (eg. Black workers). This strength however has not been coordinated and so the most left wing district in Nalgo elects the most right wing NEC members.

The Met. District Broad Left aims to change this by making sure that next year we elect NEC members who are accountable to the Dist. Council (the policy making body of all London branches) and who will push the policies of the Broad Left.

There was a meeting in early September to draw up a slate and the National Broad Left conference will be held on the 21st of September. If you wish to receive details of this meeting or other Broad Left activities please send £2 to Ian Wingrove, 20a Graveney Road SW17.

Ian Wingrove
Convenor Met Dist. Broad Left



LABOUR'S INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

Jeremy Corbyn

International Policies of the Labour Party and Trade Unions have often been seen as an academic exercise that is not central to the thinking of the Party and activities of Trade Unions. An examination of the history of Trade Unions and the Labour Party over the major part of this century, shows confusion over the relationships with colonies and newly independent countries and a lack of determination to seriously strengthen international trade union links. The weakness of these links was frighteningly obvious during the miner's strike, when vast amounts of coal and oil, and uranium, were ferried into this country to break the strike.

The development of international policies for a future Labour Government are very important, and there is little sign of cohesive debate taking place around international strategy. Most of the debate is around single issues, such as continued membership of the EEC, the UK's attitude towards the Lome Invention, future aid policies, future trade policies and relations with some governments, such as the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua. What is desperately required, is some basic international role and understanding in this.

Essentially, the European Economic Community acts as a body to bring power towards European Governments and to provide a large European market place for multinational companies. Increasingly, the pressure within the community is to increase the powers of the EEC as a whole and to give greater authority to the European Parliament.

Much lip service is paid in the Labour Movement and throughout Europe to the problems of the 'debt crisis' and the consequences for Western European and North American banks if major debtor countries in Latin American countries or elsewhere default on payment.

A similar debate did not go on around the real reduction in commodity prices paid to Third World countries and the increasing debt repayments that they have to make. The ultimate problem of the debt crisis which many of the Third World countries are now having to face is that, in order to survive, they are forced to seek loans from the International Monetary Fund or other International institutions, who in turn extract an enormous political price. Many in the Labour Movement bitterly remember the 1976 IMF debt crisis in Britain. For many Third World countries, that debt crisis has never gone away, and the IMF control on public spending, real wage levels and policies towards the poor in those countries is a major factor in political life.

It is therefore necessary, for the Labour Party, not just to vastly increase overseas aid for specific projects of aid to poor in those countries, but also to undertake serious trade discussions and trade arrangements on a bilateral basis, with producer countries so that they are able to have some form of guaranteed market.

The political relations that the Party and Trade Unions have in different parts of the world is a matter of essential debate. In the case of Nicaragua, it is to the credit of the Nicaraguan Campaign that there is so much support for the Sandinista revolution and what it has achieved in Nicaragua and so much understanding of it. Unfortunately, the same does not apply to liberation movements in many other parts of the world, where there is both a lack of knowledge and understanding and also a confusion about the need for the Labour Party to build direct relationships with liberation movements.

If a Labour Government is to be able to pursue a genuinely independent non-aligned role in the world, then the inconsistencies in current arms and defence policy have to be examined. The Party has voted overwhelmingly to support unilateral nuclear disarmament and to remove American Nuclear Bases from this country. If this policy is to be successful, then it has to be campaigned for in the strongest possible way and not assumed that it is a policy that will somehow or other creep through the next election with no opposition.

Dennis Healey is fond of quoting that the Labour Party Conference has voted overwhelmingly to support unilateral nuclear disarmament, but even more overwhelmingly to remain within the membership of NATO. If we pursue non-aligned foreign policy and some genuine independence in international relations, then the whole membership of NATO has to be discussed and has to be debated. If we don't do that, then a Labour Government will be elected with the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, but will be hamstrung by membership of NATO, which, in Denis Healy's analysis, would assume to take precedence over internal policies such as unilateral nuclear disarmament.

There has never been a time, when it is so vital that the Party discuss and debate international matters. The so-called debt crisis, is in reality, the debts left by colonial relationships with Third World countries and increasingly, the unity of the 'debtor' countries against Europe will force Europe and North America to re-examine its position and come to terms with it. Also, the growing political opposition to United States policies in Central America and British and European policies towards South Africa and towards apartheid as such, have forced changes in foreign policy.

To achieve the kind of relationship that socialists want with other peoples in the world and other movements in the world, we have to cease our Euro-centric role in policy making and cease our dependence on the United States in arms and defence matters.

The history of the Labour Movement in international matters is one of some confusion. In 1914, the Party was split asunder over participation in the First World War. Throughout the twenties and thirties, there were very deep and fundamental divisions over protectionism and self interest of British Industrialists who tried to drag trade unionists with them in their opposition to industrial development in the then colonies and now independent countries. The same kind of dillema is now taking place. It is up to the Party to open that debate now, so that a future Labour Government is not elected with the confusion of policy that currently exists.

We Need Your Money

As we approach a general election it is crucial that the left organises itself to fight for a socialist programme. This is even more imperative in view of the party leaderships recent declaration that they will openly flout policies which the party has democratically agreed. Indeed so confident has Kinnock become that after the NUM had won the amnesty debate at the TUC conference, he stated that nobody would tell him what to do and that it was up to *him* to interpret party policy.

This however is only the thin end of the wedge and almost every day we see more of the party's policies that we have fought for, being ditched. Against this background it is essential that we organise and mobilise to stop the drift to the right and build the forces necessary to carry our ideas through.

In this task Briefing can and will play a pivotal role, in that it is already a paper and organisation with a history of organising the hard left in a non-sectarian way; we must expand our work.

In order to be effective however we need finances and your support to build a hard-hitting left organisation with the power to stop the right dead in its tracks — FINANCE IS POLITICAL and we call on all of our supporters to stabilize our income by committing their hard earned cash — an investment in socialism!

By making a committment, by standing order or regular payment, of between £1-£10 you will become a supporter of Labour Briefing and receive a card which entitles you to vote at our AGM and take part in the activities of one of our many local groups.

Mick McKeever (Treasurer)

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South Africa in a pre-revolutionary situation

THE MAIN TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

The international working class can undertake quite specific initiatives in order to assist the black workers and their allies in South Africa today. That country has entered what can only be called a pre-revolutionary situation, one in which the black working class, the radical sections of the black middle class and individuals from the white middle class (mainly intellectuals) are engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the white capitalist class and its allies (the white middle and working classes and the reactionary elements among the black middle class).

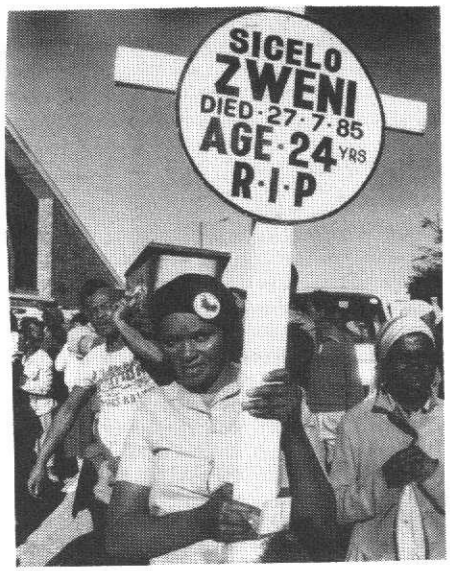
The fundamental aim of international solidarity with the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa must be at all times to strengthen the revolutionary forces in that country. This goal has to be effected both in the medium-term sense of a 'war of position' and in the short-term tactical sense of tipping the balance of power in favour of the exploited and oppressed at any given moment during a crisis situation. The international solidarity movement, therefore, has to undertake campaigns and actions that will strengthen the revolutionary forces against the South African establishment, which is backed by and dependent upon international capital.

We have to approach this question from two sides even though the fundamental impetus of our solidarity work has a single source in the international proletariat. It is necessary to look at the question from the two sides of capital and labour.

International capital will do (and does) everything in its power to strengthen the racial capitalist system in South Africa from which it has profited for a hundred years. It is vulnerable to two kinds of pressure, viz., 'moral-political' pressures deriving from the political and economic effects its continued support for the apartheid regime could have on the electoral, i.e., power-political, arithmetic in the capitalist countries, or on the corporate image of their multi-nationals in their own countries. In response to such pressures, the multinationals have undertaken improvements in working conditions in their South African plants and initiated or supported cosmetic social reforms. They will also respond to the normal market-related trends in the South African economy. If the prospects for profit look dim, they will generally tend to disinvest in one way or another.

The former process has been taking place over the past decade or so mainly via the Sullivan and EEC codes, the latter process has begun in earnest now that both the recession and the politically induced instability have led to economic disaster in South Africa.

It is clearly possible and necessary for the international solidarity movement, especially via the trade union movement, to apply maximum and consistent pressure on international capital to force it to apply pressure on the system of racial capitalism along both these axes. There are very obvious contradictions between the two kinds of processes but these are resolved by the militant and revolutionary activity of the South African proletariat itself. The non-question about whether disinvestment 'hurts the blacks' should simply be ignored. It is a vicious red herring that does not concern the black working class in the least. Whether unemployment derives from drought, capital-intensive industry, insufficient demand for South African goods or from 'disinvestment', in the end for the South African proletariat it is essentially a question of the way in which economy and society are organised, i.e., a question of racial capitalism. Only the destruction of this system (in both its terms, not merely the 'racial' component) will ensure full and meaningful employment to all.



Gideon Mendel/La

August 3rd 1985. Funeral of 11 victims, held in defiance of Government restriction on funerals.

Crystal clear

From the side of labour specifically, the tasks of the solidarity movement are crystal clear and largely being carried out, even if not always in as co-ordinated and synchronised a manner as is possible. These tasks can be tabulated as follows:

(1) *Organise maximum anti-apartheid publicity*, drawing the attention of the whole world to the crimes of the apartheid regime against humanity. In this activity, though it is of necessity variegated and often tailored to the absorptive capacity of a given audience, it is essential to reveal the umbilical connection between racism and capitalism. This anti-apartheid propaganda helps to isolate the racist regime and its capitalist backers and is, therefore, an important facet of the war of position between the South African proletariat and the capitalist class.

(2) *Do everything possible to facilitate the emergence and growth of a united national liberation movement under the leadership of the black working class* in South Africa. Ideally such a movement would consist of a single organisation. Historically, this is not yet possible because of the manner in which the liberation movement has developed out of the social, political and ideological complexity of South Africa. It is essential that the international solidarity movement acknowledge the existence of three/four significant political-ideological tendencies within the national liberation movement, whatever the specific weight of any one of these tendencies at a given moment of South African history. This does not preclude at all the preference of given solidarity groups for one or other of these tendencies in the South African movement. It does, however, prohibit the treatment by the international solidarity movement of any of these tendencies as 'enemies of the people'. To the extent that the international solidarity movement tries or helps to elevate any of the major tendencies in the South African struggle to the status of the 'sole authentic representatives' of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa, it would be instrumental in reinforcing a suicidal sectarianism, one which – in most cases – it would denounce in horror in any of the countries where it itself operates on the basis of organisational pluralism. It is quite simply a fallacy, a strategically and tactically disarming fallacy, that any given organisation or tendency at this moment represents the overwhelming majority of the oppressed and exploited people in South Africa. And even if any organisation were to acquire that desirable status, the international solidarity movement would still have to accommodate other groupings as representative of genuine revolutionary albeit minority currents in the South African totality. Kingmaking can boomerang badly. Witness Zimbabwe!

South Africa's oppressed and exploited people have to determine for themselves who shall represent them in the organs of power generated by the struggle for liberation inside the country and in international forums. Any society is a unity of contradictions. It is certainly possible and desirable for the international solidarity movement to bring pressure to bear on the tendencies in the South African movement to resolve whatever secondary contradictions keep them apart. This would be a great revolutionary help to the struggle against racial capitalism. But until the struggle itself relegates particular organisations and tendencies to the sidelines or even throws them over into the enemy camp, it is *not* the task of the solidarity movement to decide *for* the South African proletariat which groupings alone may represent them and thus perpetuate and intensify the unpardonable folly of divisive, sectarian politics.

Material support

(3) *Material support, especially to the trade union movement* in South Africa, remains vital. The more full-time organisers, newspapers and other media the movement can support and the longer the periods during which it can provide such support, the stronger it becomes and

THE BRITISH CONNECTION

The current economic crisis in the South African racist state make it ever more urgent for the international labour movement to bring its full strength to bear in support of the liberation struggle which is now being waged with increased violence in the black townships. A special response is demanded from the British working class movement because of the historic ties of British imperialism to South African capitalism. The resolutions passed at the TUC conference and which will, without a doubt, be passed with acclaim at the Labour Party Conference, must be given flesh and blood on the shop floor and the university and college campusses.

The economic crisis has brought vividly home the contradictory nature of the South African state. While it is a hightly developed capitalist economy, it is still basically a dependency of world imperialism. While, in the past, this has been part of its strength, with US and Western European imperialism helping to prop up the apartheid state, these supports tend to fall away when the multinationals and bankers of the imperialist world see a threat to their profits. The wave of revolt which is sweeping through the townships, the boycott of white-owned businesses and the potential threat of the growing trade union meeting has 'persuaded' big capital, both in South Africa and abroad to put pressure on the regime to speed up the programme of 'reforms'.

This is not the first time this is happening. It happened after Sharpeville, 1960, Soweto 1976 and after the Uitenhage massacres in March of this year. If there is any abatement in the political and financial crisis, these pressures from the world of commerce, industry and finance will be, at least moderated.

Labour Movement

This is why it is so important to step up the solidarity campaign in the labour movement. Labour's solidarity with the black workers of South Africa does not depend on the profits or losses of the corporations with investments there but on the international relationships which bind the workers of the world in struggle against the common enemy.

British groups employ 350,000 workers in South Africa — 7% of the total workforce, either through subsidiaries or associated companies, according to the latest issue of "Labour Research".

Britain is the largest overseas investor in the apartheid economy, with over £5 billion invested in plant and machinery and another £6 billion in stocks and shares. British companies are responsible for approaching 45% of all overseas direct investment in South Africa. More than half of the 2000 foreign-controlled companies are owned by UK-based groups.

According to "Labour Research", the ten largest UK-controlled South Africa subsidiaries employ 99,000 workers. The list is headed by two banks which run 70 per cent of South Africa's domestic banking business, with Barclays Bank's subsidiary employing 26,338 and Standard Charter employing 21,716.

It is not surprising to find that Lonrho, which also controls giant investments in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zaire, Kenya and other African states is the largest trading conglomerate in South Africa, too, with 10,482 workers. Other UK groups with South African subsidiaries are:
BTR/Dunlop, Courtaulds, Unilever, BET and GEC — each employing between 6,800 and 7,700 workers.

Consolidated Goldfields

By far the largest single employer is Consolidated Goldfields, whose head office is at 49 Moorgate in the City. Consolidated controls 48% of one of the country's largest employers, Gold Fields of South Africa, one of the mining companies which refused to come to terms with the South African National Union of Miners and used intimidation to break the strike in August. Next comes the chemical giant, ICI, with 38 per cent of AECI, which has a workforce of 26,800.

While, on balance, there has been some withdrawal of British funds from South Africa, the level of direct investment is still rising between £200 million and £300 million a year, but this increase is mainly funded from local profits over the past few years.

If the South African masses have not yet put an end to apartheid by the time the next Labour Government is returned to power, one of the first acts of that government must be to immediately freeze all financial investments in that country and to take steps for the withdrawal of all invested capital.

Labour must make the fight against apartheid, in support of the liberation movement a priority, in Parliament, in the unions and in the streets.

Charlie van Gelderen



John Chapman

ANTI-APARTHEID DEMONSTRATION

the more rapidly it grows. The deep roots which the movement has struck among the urban and rural poor can no longer be pulled up even by the most grotesque brutalities of the regime. This, more than anything, makes it possible to say: *Victory Is Certain!*

(4) At given moments of crisis and disequilibrium (as at present) it is vital that the international solidarity movement should *do everything possible to tip the balance in favour of the black working class.* What can be done depends on the circumstances in each country but anything from trade and consumer boycotts, temporary refusal of landing rights to South African aircraft, refusal to handle South African goods by the workers concerned, to harassment of South African establishment figures (sportspersons included) would be legitimate. As long as such action helps to strengthen the vulnerable ranks of the South African working class.

(5) The left elements within the international solidarity movement need to *take up and maintain contact with left-wing tendencies* in all the organisations of the national liberation movement in South Africa. Concerted action along these lines will help to ensure working-class hegemony within the South African national liberation struggle. This could prove to be the most important development on the African continent in the 20th century.

This article was written by a well-known leader of the resistance movement in South Africa. For obvious reasons, he cannot be named.

IRELAND: THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

One of the new-style NEC/PLP working parties is currently reviewing party policy on Northern Ireland. It is far too early to predict what the outcome will be. But one of the policy options being seriously considered is a commitment to Irish reunification and British withdrawal as quickly as this can be accomplished. Such a policy would leave lots of room for argument about how rapidly and in what way the withdrawal would be accomplished. But no-one should underestimate what an historic change this would amount to.

For the past 50 years and more there has been no significant difference in the policy of the Labour and Conservative parties on Northern Ireland. Both parties constantly reiterated their commitment to the Unionists of Northern Ireland that as long as a majority within the Six Counties wished to remain part of the United Kingdom, the British government would support them. This 'guarantee' has been the root of all the troubles.

Ireland was of course partitioned against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of its people because the loyalists threatened an armed uprising if they did not get their way. The border was drawn around six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster because the whole province would have produced a nationalist majority. Self-government was then granted to this falsely assembled unit. Inevitably crude discrimination and gerrymandering of electoral boundaries followed. The Unionists feared that otherwise the differences between nationalist and loyalist birth rates would produce a nationalist majority. These policies were successful. Without discrimination and massively different emigration rates from the two communities, there would already be a nationalist majority in Northern Ireland. Thus the guarantee attempted to give democratic legitimacy to a statelet which was undemocratically created and undemocratically maintained.

Labour and Tory governments were happy to turn a blind eye to all of this until the Civil Rights movement erupted in 1969. Much of its inspiration came from the black movement in the southern United States – the marches, the songs and the commitment to non-violent protest. Britain was embarrassed in the eyes of the world when the marches were beaten by the police themselves or left unprotected when attacked by loyalist mobs. It was a Labour government that sent in the troops who were at first warmly welcomed by the embattled nationalist community. But direct rule failed to bring an end to the discrimination and injustice. This and the absolute intransigence of the loyalists and their resistance to reforms such as the Sunningdale Agreement has convinced increasing numbers of people that Northern Ireland is unreformable. More and more members of the party have begun to take a detailed interest in Northern Ireland. Increasingly members have become convinced that there will be no peace or justice in Ireland until the country is reunited and Britain withdraws.

All of these developments forced the NEC to review its policy. The outcome – which is current party policy – was a commitment to the eventual reunification of Ireland but with the consent of the majority in the North. Whenever party spokespeople put this position in debates in the House of Commons, they are quite reasonably dismissed by Tory ministers. They always point out that the consent of the majority is not forthcoming and that therefore Labour has no policy.

However this policy change, fudge that it was, did move us forward. It enabled Clive Soley when he was junior spokesperson on Northern Ireland, to argue that our policy committed us to taking steps to bring about the reunification of Ireland, stopping short of the final step until a majority in the North consented.

The question now is whether the working party will remove the fudge by deleting the requirement for consent, and simply committing Labour to a policy of reunification. Even if it so recommends, the report will require the support of the NEC and of conference.

It is fairly certain that if the leadership were to back the working party's report, it would get the endorsement of both. But there are many hurdles yet to cross.

The working party had agreed to produce a report for the 1985 conference. This would have canvassed the policy options and invited the movement to debate the alternative. But the researcher at Walworth Road left for another job. There will unfortunately be no discussion document. It seems likely therefore that the report to the 1986 Conference will form the basis for our manifesto policy and hopefully our policy in government. Everything is left to play for and it could all go wrong, but there is a glimmer of hope that we may be at the beginning of the end of Britain's terrible entanglement in Ireland.

Clare Short MP



British troops in Belfast. Set a date for withdrawal ... Syndication International

SETTING A DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL

Labour Party policy on Northern Ireland must change and the next Labour Government must be committed to policies setting a date for withdrawal and an end to the Unionist Veto if we are ever to see the realisation of a reunited Ireland.

At present the NEC/PLP Joint Policy Committee on Northern Ireland is discussing how the Party's present policy can be implemented and possibly changed. During the discussions a number of issues have arisen on which agreement has not been reached and which are fundamental to progress.

Firstly, should the Party adopt a policy of 'setting a date' for withdrawal, possibly within the lifetime of a five-year Parliament which would be worked towards whether or not we were able to win the consent of the unionists, or should we just proceed as quickly as possible ...

In my view, not setting a date would be a disaster. It is going to be difficult enough getting the PLP to make progress towards reunification given the political and paramilitary opposition that will be encountered from the unionists on an agreed timetable. I just do not believe we stand a chance of implementing our policy on an 'as quickly as possible' basis.

The arguments used on the Committee against setting a date – even over a five year period – are:

1. that it will provoke a violent unionist response;
2. that it might prove electorally damaging, and;
3. that it assumes that the South accepts our policy.

Obviously any action we take which appears to move towards the withdrawal of Britain from the Six Counties with the

The Banning of Real Lives

By Geoff Bell

(Conference Delegate, Hackney North CLP)

The biggest, initial surprise on watching the Real Lives television documentary *The Edge of the Union* is that the governors of the BBC should have chosen to cause all the trouble they did by banning it in the first place. It is not exactly the stuff of which agit-prop, anti-Brit, troops-out films are made. There is the complaint that the film-makers allow the impression to be created that all the dead bodies in the North of Ireland can be laid at the door of Republicans. In fact, loyalists and British security forces were responsible for nearly half of the first 2,000 to be killed in the current round of British-in-Ireland Troubles. Moreover, by presenting the conflict as between two extremes — as personified by Martin McGuiness of Sinn Fein and Gregory Campbell of the DUP — *The Edge of the Union* neglects to mention the third extreme involved in what is going on over there — the Brits themselves.

In the end it was nicely ironic that this third extreme did make its presence felt in a manner which meant it came off worst of all when the British Prime Minister, Home Secretary and board of governors of the oh-so-British Broadcasting Corporation banished McGuiness and Campbell from our screens. In so doing they provoked an unprecedented one-day strike by television journalists and exposed the BBC as just one more of Thatcher's poodles.

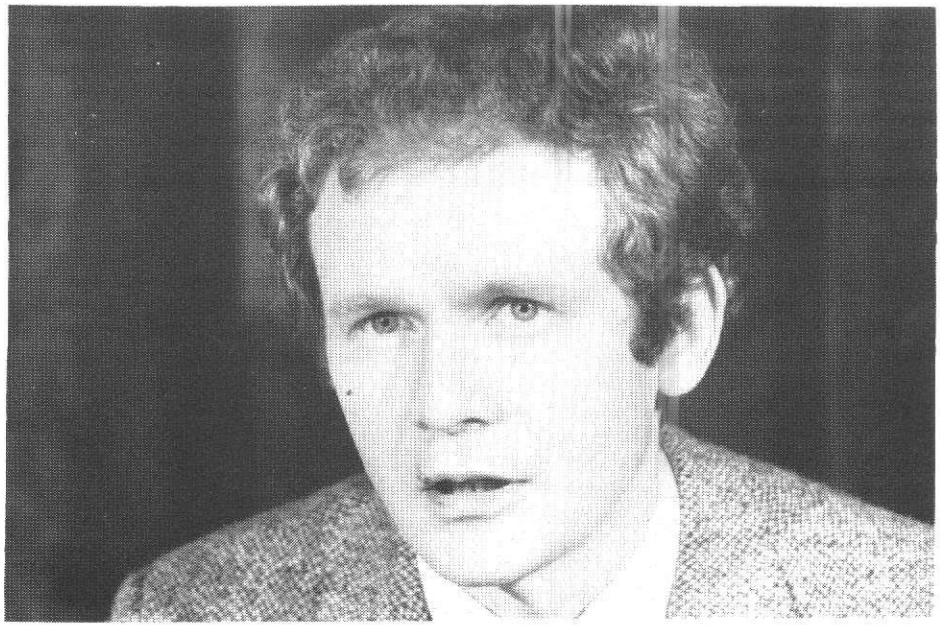
It may be that Thatcher, Brittan and the BBC governors didn't realise the fuss they would cause when they grabbed for the censor's scissors, or it may be that, in the fashion of such authoritarians, they didn't care. The question can still be asked, what exactly offended them?

The answer is in the title to the series. *The Edge of the Union* did depict 'real lives' and it is a reality which the British public must not know. In the programme Martin McGuiness came over as a rational, logical, progressive, warm bloke. Campbell was exactly the opposite: sectarian, hooked on violence, reactionary. Such images were neither a film-makers trick or an accident. They reflect the politics of republicanism and loyalism. The former seeks no more than Irish majority rule, the latter is a philosophy of colonialists. Thus, in *The Edge of the Union* McGuiness looks forward to the unity of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, while Campbell can barely hide his thirst for sectarian warfare. If this reality was really appreciated in Britain then the public here just might sit up and demand that we stop supplying the Campbells of Ireland with the gun the film shows him strapping on his hip. And that is why they banned it.

As it turned out the last laugh went to McGuiness, for there is little doubt that Leon Brittan's inept handling of the whole affair was one reason for his later demotion. As the poor man left the Home Office the Provisionals should have issued a statement claiming responsibility.

CONFERENCE TO LAUNCH LP CHARTER FOR YOUTH

Calls to Walworth Road have revealed that in the forthcoming Conference to launch the Charter for Youth on November 9th only 25% of places will be allocated to the YS. When asked if delegates from other groups would have to be youth delegates their reply was "well, um ... that's the idea". Will this be so in practice? Or is it just another case where the work of the YS amongst youth is either ignored or vilified? It has been hinted that a second delegate from each CLP might be granted if applications are made. So the YS must make sure that it has adequate representation at this Conference and must fight for an assurance that all delegates must be under 26. The title of the Conference is 'Labour Listens to Youth'.



- Martin McGuiness

Press Association

intention of reunification will provoke to some degree a 'violent response'. Indeed during the Labour Party visit to Belfast in June we were threatened repeatedly by unionists with a violent response if the Labour Party made any serious moves in this direction. What we need to be concerned about is how we can limit any such reaction to the minimum while ensuring that any violence – or threat of violence – does not deflect us from our purpose. We also need to ensure that the unionists do not try to delay progress on the basis that after the next election there might be a Tory Government that will stop reunification completely.

The spectre of 'electoral damage' is, of course, well known to us. On many issues whether its abortion rights, public ownership or Socialist policies generally, this argument is used. It has yet to be substantiated: on the issue of withdrawal, I would think it could be the opposite if presented properly.

As far as the South is concerned, serious discussions need to take place. A policy of setting a date, could well concentrate people's minds (not only in Dublin but also in Belfast and London) helping to ensure that other political considerations do not slow progress.

Secondly, should we abolish the Unionist Veto or is it possible to leave it and still make progress towards reunification. . . .

In my view it is important that we confront the veto and remove it (the veto is enshrined in legislation in Section 1 of the N.I. Constitution Act of 1973). Unless we do, we will be confronted time and time again with accusations of constitutional illegality.

The arguments used against abolishing the veto on the Committee are:

1. that such a move would be just an act of political symbolism and not a move leading to practical change;
2. that it would raise the political temperature, and;
3. that it is possible to follow a programme of 'harmonisation' between the North and South without removing the veto.

If the veto is not removed, it can be used at every step by the unionists to slow progress and to claim the right to a referendum on the issue (as set down in the legislation). We must work to expose the fundamentally undemocratic nature of the veto, and adopt a policy of consent which includes the people of the whole of Ireland. It is simply not possible for us to interpret our present policy of consent to have a wider meaning as some members of the Committee would like and still leave the legislation with the veto so it can be used against us.

Obviously such a move would 'raise the temperature', but then every move we make towards reunification will do that. Neither will a policy of 'harmonisation' fare any better. Any moves to harmonise services, whether it be energy, social security, farming or whatever, will cause reaction and raise the temperature. We cannot avoid confrontation – too much of it exists already in the Six Counties – we can only face up to it and try to contain it as we implement the only policy which will ensure, in the long term, its end – the reunification of Ireland.

Mandy Moore

SUPPORT SOCIALIST WOMEN NOW!

Re-selection has been proceeding apace during the past months with approximately 200 seats out of 635 decided. One thing to emerge from the process is that women are losing out. Only 16 women selected out of 200 selections, and, discounting those women who are already MPs, very few of these women have been selected in seats where they can reasonably expect to be elected.

The failure of women to be selected has led to an ongoing debate about the reasons for this within the Labour Party women's organisations. This debate has been particularly noticeable in the Labour Women's Action Committee, as WAC is committed to greater representation of women in parliament.

There are basically two positions which have emerged from this debate. Firstly, there is the 'Bea Campbell' position. This is that sex oppression is the basic oppression as far as women are concerned, and therefore cuts across class oppression, race oppression and any other kind of oppression. The women who take this position argue that (almost) any woman is better than a man, and that all women are automatically in opposition to all men, including black men and gay men, when it comes to the struggle for power within the Labour Party. They totally disregard the fact that there may be political differences between women, and that not all women choose to regard working around their oppression as women as their first priority – for example, black women working in the Black Sections Campaign and lesbians working in the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This argument therefore pays little attention to the politics of potential women candidates, so long as they pay some obligatory lip service to the principle of positive discrimination. At the moment, this appears to be the view held by the majority of WAC's officers.

There are however, women, both inside and outside WAC, many of them *Briefing* supporters, who are putting an alternative, more positive viewpoint. Women who are arguing that to ignore our political differences *as women* and to impose a spurious unity along sex lines only which does not exist is a recipe for disaster. Furthermore, women are arguing that to ignore and discount the justifiable demands of other oppressed groups on the grounds that these groups include men, will only pit us against each other, which is exactly what the party leadership would like to see. As women we have to be prepared to work with and liaise with groups such as Black Sections and LCLGR. No-one will gain if parliamentary selections are carried out on the basis of a kind of 'Richter Scale of Oppression', and we end up trying to calculate whether a white, working-class lesbian has more brownie points than a black, disabled man, while a white, heterosexual middle-class man slips in yet again!

We also have to be totally unequivocal in saying that we support *socialist women*. Unhappily the male sex does not have the monopoly on careerists. Ever since WAC became a force to be reckoned with in the Labour Party Women's Organisation there have been some women who have hastened to declare themselves as WAC supporters, when their commitment to WAC's aims and principles has been questionable to say the least (let alone their commitment to socialism!). We want women who are committed to fighting for working-class women, lesbians and black women, not women whose main interest lies in furthering their political careers.

The present situation must not be allowed to continue. As women we must face our differences, draw strength from them and go forward together. Only if we do this, can we expect women's interests to be properly represented.

Support Socialist Women Now!

Jane Prust
Deptford CLP
WAC Exec Member
(in a personal capacity)

The Labour Party and Women. Challenging the Born

This year, the Labour Women's Action Committee enters the lists at Annual Conference with fewer resolutions on the pad and a key name missing from its slate for the NEC (Frances Morrell). I have argued before for closer liaison between WAC and other oppressed groups in the Party with similar aims such as the Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and Black Sections (Briefing Nov '84). But I would like to concentrate here on the question of getting women into Parliament, couched in the WAC demand for one woman on every shortlist.

The worthy intentions of CLPD have left us, in mandatory reselection, with a kangaroo court biased towards selecting exactly the sort of pushy, ambitious "happy amateurs" that are chosen for high office in the rest of the Establishment — the Civil Service, industry etc. It ought to be a source of shame to the Party that the people its activists (often of impeccable left wing hue) admire and choose as MPs are from exactly the same background and class as the average judge or under secretary. Or failing that, from the next lot just one or two rungs down the ladder, the good grammar school/redbrick university or polyocracy crowd. These types are young, gifted (in their opinion) and white. Also male, protestant, heterosexual ...

The sort of assumptions that define the "best" people as from a narrow social spectrum, with a particular (right) way of expressing themselves and tackling things has to be emphatically challenged. Even without



Labour Party Photograph Library

One who got through the net, Mildred Gordon, P.P.C. for Bow and Poplar

the legitimate claims for positive discrimination from women, blacks and others, the arrogant class, race and sex biased view that one small group of middle-class Anglo-saxon males have got it right is what has created the complacent and ruthless oligarchies that dominate power in Britain and intend to keep it that way.

The answer is not simple and needs much further thought. But we must start by defining what we want in an MP. We then have to design a selection procedure which willnot only enable us to find the best qualified candidate, but will also overcome the biases which will otherwise come to the fore in the average General Committee. In the last analysis, people choose in their own image, if their are not given adequate guidance. Hence white, male middle-class GCs will choose ... guess who?

Instead of concentrating on surface appearance as seen at selection meetings, we should examine evidence of candidates' real achievements and committment to socialism. We must redefine these to include not only upfront or politically glamorous activities such as fronting a trendy pressure group but also, for example, a lifetime of grassroots party or trade union activism. And we must get away from the idea that the clever, useful members of our society are those who can woffle without substance on a wide range of subjects.

The "happy amateur" concept — that over-conflict, shallow "all-rounders" are the best chaps — ties in with the male careerist assumption that the average MP will swan around the front bench before settling for a glittering and varied ministerial career. MPs are of more use handling constituents'

Book review

FACING UP TO ANTI-SEMITISM — HOW THE JEWS IN BRITAIN COUNTERED THE THREATS OF THE 1930S.

published by JCARP. £1.50 + 25p p&p

Anti-semitic stereotypes of Jews as passive victims of fascism are shattered in 'FACING UP TO ANTI-SEMITISM — HOW THE JEWS IN BRITAIN COUNTERED THE THREATS OF THE 1930S' by DAVID ROSENBERG. The book documents the rise of ani-semitism in the post depression years in Britain and gives a detailed account of how the organised fascists of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists was met by equally well-organised working-class Jewish resistance.

The Jewish establishment, notably the Board of Deputies, attempted to play down the extent of anti-semitism and told Jews to lock their doors and close their eyes to the rise of fascism in Britain. However, Rosenberg explains that for working-class Jews the choice to 'keep out of trouble' did not exist. Grass roots organisations were set up and the fascists were confronted on the streets.

The Battle of Cable Street represents the most successful opposition to the fascists in the 1930s, when thousands of East End Jews stood shoulder to shoulder with the Irish of Limehouse under the slogan 'They shall not pass.'

Not only does 'FACING UP TO ANTI-SEMITISM' remind us of the tradition of anti-semitism which still exists in Britain, but it raises many issues which are still relevant to the fight against anti-semitism, racism and fascism. The need to confront fascism on the streets, as well as through propaganda comes through very strongly and the headline from the 'Sunday Pictorial' declaring that 'Refugees get jobs, Britons get dole' highlights the many striking parallels between the anti-semitism of the 1930s and the anti-black



National Museum of Labour History

racism of recent years. However, these parallels are not merely academic but must form the basis of united resistance, especially since all types of racist attacks are on the increase.

One of the aims of the Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project, the group which publishes the book is to draw on the experience of the 1930s in order to more forcefully challenge anti-semitism and racism today. This book is a valuable contribution to the realisation of this aim.

The book is available from JCARP, Southbank House, Black Prince Rd, London SE1 7SJ at £1.50 + 25p p&p.

Michele Carlisle

to Rule

casework, standing on picket lines, getting arrested outside the South African Embassy or infighting away on something they know well, like social security or US bases in Britain.

As far as judging candidates' political stances, the sort of pat questions asked at selections are useless, since candidates can simply trot out the right (left) answer. Again, the only answer is to examine candidates real achievements, even if only in one or two fields. Someone's likely line on, say, ratecapping is best deduced from the evidence of their position in their own chosen fields.

The short speech/interview presently used by most CLPs is worse than useless for really assessing candidates. With nothing much to go on, GCs are driven back onto their own prejudices. This intimidates all those potential candidates — blacks and women for example — who instinctively know that as a result of the operation of these nebulous prejudices, they are beaten before they start. Hence the low application rate from such groups.

Women, blacks and all other oppressed in the community will benefit from a radical overhaul of selection procedures. This must be begun now as a matter of urgency.

JOSIE EDWARDS WAC
Writing in a personal capacity.

science briefing

Profit squeeze costs lives on the airways

The profit squeeze is costing lives on the airways. This is clear from any close reading of the tragic events of the last few months which have claimed 1,400 lives.

The airlines' embarrassed response has been to issue statements to allay public fears while at the same time finding they need to probe deeper than they care to admit. The central economic fact of air transport is that competition and the huge capital cost of aircraft (about £100million for a Boeing 747) necessitates the maximum use of the machines. This leads to safety cuts, which are especially dangerous now that many aircraft have reached half their expected working life.

- Many planes on European flights may fly continuously for over a week, only stopping for 20 minutes or so between flights. This does not leave much time for checks.
- Many planes, especially on charter flights, have 10% more seats than the manufacturers' recommendation. This impedes movement as does the corresponding closure of some emergency exits. This 10% extra seating may have led to many of the Manchester 737 deaths. British Airways has sealed up two wing exit doors on its 747s; the pilots' union has criticised them for this, saying proper evacuation tests have not been done. The US Federal Aviation Administration is under pressure to prevent such modifications. The *Financial Times* comments that increasing competition is pressuring airlines to squeeze in more and more passengers.

737 ENGINES

- The Pratt and Whitney JT8D-15 engine which exploded at Manchester had previously had its combustion chamber altered. On August 30th the *FT* reported the BA were withdrawing their 4 (of a fleet of 44) 737s which had had this modification. Nine days later the *Observer* reported the BA had grounded 25% of its 737s.
- The hydraulic control system for the fins and ailerons of 747s may have a weak spot which could lead to loss of all or most control (*New Scientist* August 22nd). This may have ultimately led to the JAL 747 crash.
- Even when emergency procedures are operated, evacuation is hampered by excessive duty-free junk and duty-free drunk passengers. Stewardesses (who are not highly paid) have to supplement their income by duty-free sales. Many passengers do not realise that alcohol has more effect at the reduced pressure in an aircraft and so-called jet-lag is often drink-lag. These sales should be banned.

How can air safety be ensured? The Civil Aviation Authority and the US FAA must be forced to impose stringent conditions on airlines, but the only real check is the power of the workers in the pilots' union and the stewardesses/stewards' union (TGWU) who actually live these dangers daily.

Piers Corbyn, Bermondsey CLP

Science Briefing, 55 Innis House, East Street, London SE17 2JN. 01-701 5691.

ABOLITION: THE RISKS OF CO-OPERATION

Now that the Local Government Act to abolish the GLC and Metropolitan Councils has been passed, the Labour movement urgently needs a strategy for dealing with the new situation. For many, the response has been total surrender. In the political vacuum co-operation with the successor bodies has been seen as the only sensible way forward. The Labour Party in London and nationally, and the national unions – with the exception of NALGO – have all followed this line. It is not clear whether the unions have the support of the membership in adopting these policies. NALGO convened a national delegate advisory meeting on August 7th, which voted overwhelmingly to continue supporting the national policy of non-co-operation, though the objective was changed from preventing the passage of the Act, to securing proper rights for staff and preventing redundancies. The latter objective has been severely undermined by the eager compliance of Labour authorities throughout London. Because NALGO is not affiliated to the Labour Party, its views are not taken seriously, it would appear.

It is also not clear what level of consultation there has been within Labour authorities. The Association of London Authorities represents the leaderships of the various Councils and their decision to proceed with some levels of co-operation directly contravenes the policy of many of their own workers, the NALGO members. It is not encouraging to go into the second round of rate-capping with employers acting directly against the policies of their workforce unions.

LONDON BRIDGE STEWARDS' DAY

Our policy has been reinforced by the London Bridge Stewards' Day, held on July 31st, which discussed the issue of abolition at length. Our debate probably reflected the questions and concerns of Labour councillors – how best to protect jobs and services, how to safeguard the voluntary sector, how to secure basic employment rights for transferred workers, and simple employment for those not covered by any successor bodies. We recognised that any policy threatens jobs and services and none can be presented as a watertight protection. But the more we talked, the more we realised that the government was trying to set council against council, council against worker, and workers against workers. Already some voluntary organisations are blaming NALGO for their impending redundancies, though if we were to co-operate we would simply be shifting the blame off NALGO and onto the councils, who then become responsible for deciding which jobs and projects survive and which go to the wall – which isn't even a dented shield, it's no shield at all.

And the London Co-ordinating Committe takes this role even further, actually overseeing the wind-up of the GLC. At the same time as unions are trying to secure provision for the workers left behind, the councillors will be implementing those redundancies. Perhaps the councillors think they can secure job protection through such a body, rather than through supporting their unions during negotiations with the government.



If so, this is a serious misjudgement. Their compliance removes even the bargaining position of non-co-operation.

Without that bargaining position, it seems some 3,500 or more jobs will be lost – on the government's estimation. Many of these workers won't qualify for compensation or redundancy pay, as they will be too young or too recently employed – a government ruling which will particularly affect those workers taken on under the GLC Equal Opportunity Policy. And those workers who do keep a job in the Tory boroughs will face immediate privatisation.

All in all thousands of jobs will be lost by April 1986. We cannot let them go without any active resistance.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Moreover, the GLC jobs are not the only ones at risk. There is the threat to the voluntary sector and the potential threat to all other local government workers within the affected areas. The government is forcing Labour authorities to take on functions they cannot fund. The transfer of the voluntary sector demands a financial commitment that starts at 25% in 1986 and rises to 100% by 1990. Any other adjustments made to cover the costs of transfer next year may not be delivered in subsequent years, when it is too late to complain. So, the councils are having to stretch their decreasing finances to support increasing services. The only way they can deliver such promises is to take a serious stand against the government control of their finances through the Rates Act and rate support grant system. They have a choice: if they co-operate with the abolition of the GLC they will have either to defy the government's restrictions on spending or make cuts.

London Bridge is urging defiance, though the lack of consultation with local unions and the disregard of NALGO's policy on abolition suggests that councillors are getting used to the idea that cuts are the best way in that empty phrase, 'to protect jobs and services'.

Will Fancy (Lewisham NALGO) and Johanna Fawkes (Camden NALGO), London Bridge Steering Group

LIVERPOOL — SUPPORT THE STRATEGY NOT THE SECTARIANISM!

One danger in writing about Liverpool City Council is that anything you say is likely to be out of date by the time it appears in print. As I write this, 49 Labour councillors have just been issued with surcharge certificates, and the Joint Stewards Committee has called for strike action on 25 September. We must assume that there will then be a hiatus whilst we await the dates of a High Court hearing.

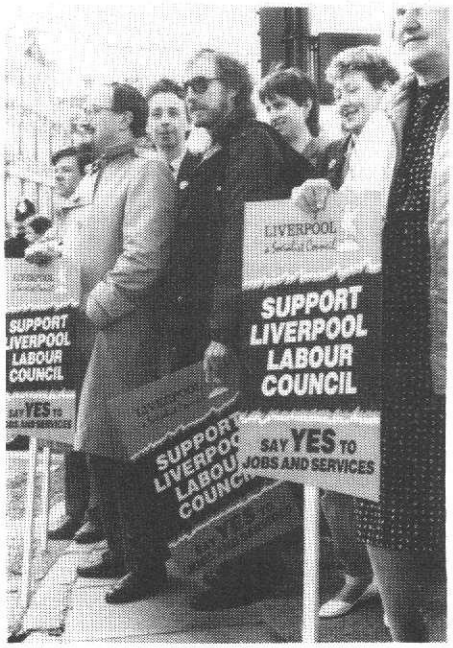
But the problems of Liverpool's budget are so vast that, quite honestly, the issue of surcharge and disqualification, important as it is, pales into relative insignificance. Whatever happens in the courts the reality is that by January, 30,000 City Council employees could be without pay, and either laid off or on strike for several months. The question of just what *does* happen when (if?) the money runs out has been the subject of some almost unbelievably inept public relations by the City Council.

First it was announced that redundancy notices would be issued to 30,000 employees. Then, when the trade unions made their views on such a staggering proposal quite clear, it was announced that this was a 'mistake' – workers would now be 'laid off'.

One more day passed, and the Council's Finance Committee announced that employees contracts would be 'terminated' when the money ran out – but, don't fret, there would be 'no redundancies'! Make of that what you will, but, again as I write, the unions have had to tell the Council that this makes nonsense of the 'no cuts' programme, and could not be accepted.

Missed opportunities

To some extent this episode simply highlights the problems of a major city 'running out of money'. It isn't a tidy, clear-cut procedure, and it is bound to be confusing. But in other ways it sums up the missed opportunities in the Liverpool saga – a basically sound strategy flawed by secretiveness and sectarianism.



Let's be clear on one point: practically the whole labour movement in this city (except for the 'loony right') supports the City Council's budget strategy. The financial position is so bad that there appeared to be no realistic alternative. But the support the strategy could have generated has been put at risk by some of the behaviour of elements of the council leadership.

First and foremost, there is the 'Sam Bond' affair – the ill-starred attempt to foist a 'Militant' supporter onto the black community as 'Principal Race Relations Adviser'. It is *impossible* to exaggerate the damage this episode has done to the labour movement in Liverpool. It even led to the idiotic situation of Militant walking off a major trade union demonstration against unemployment, as they could not be guaranteed 'protection' from the wrath of the black community!

Divisive conflict

But there have been a whole series of other quite unnecessary and divisive conflicts. And, of course, anyone who does oppose Militant is accused of being a 'traitor', and even (as I have been) an 'agent of the Tories'. As readers might gather, this is not conducive to unity.

Nevertheless, the basic facts remain. Liverpool Labour Councillors and City Council trade unionists are right at the sharp end of the struggle against this Tory government. Comrades everywhere should learn from the errors made in Liverpool – but they should not allow those errors to undermine support for a vital campaign.

Pete Creswell
(Secretary, Liverpool City Council Joint Stewards Committee).

PS. It shouldn't be assumed that the JSC would necessarily agree with everything in the above article.

ABOLITION OF GLC LONDON BRIDGE POLICY AS AGREED AT STEERING GROUP ON 15TH AUGUST, 1985

"London Bridge at a conference open to stewards of all unions representing employees of the GLC, ILEA, London Boroughs and non statutory organisations, resolved to maintain and intesify non co-operation with the abolition of the GLC with the objective of securing full protection of current services for the people of London, and jobs for those employed to provide them.

London Bridge will continue to campaign for an elected Londonwide strategic authority.

Non co-operation must include a continuation of the refusal to supply information, attend meetings, or make plans for transfer, and a boycott of posts created to arrange transfer.

Co-operation would only be given if:

1. *There was full maintenance of existing services of the GLC, ILEA and the Boroughs, and the Boroughs and other successor bodies were provided with resources sufficient for this purpose. Rate-capping must therefore be withdrawn, and none of the service privatised. Funding must also take account of the increase in overall cost if services are distributed among successor authorities.*
2. *There is no job loss, and employees are statutorily transferred with the services they provide, which excludes ring fencing arrangements.*
3. *Protection is given to earnings and conditions of all employees. Where workers come together under a new common employer, harmonisation of differing rights and conditions should be at the level of the best.*
4. *Protection is given to employees to maintain rights of appeal and no loss of rights if a transfer is reasonably refused.*
5. *Full maintenance of existing services and jobs must apply equally to all non statutory organisations currently grant funded by the GLC. Funding at the level necessary to maintain the existing services must be guaranteed without time limit and a democratic machinery acceptable to the employees and managing bodies should be established to continue the allocation of these funds.*

Great training robbery continued

Eighteen months ago 'The Great Training Robbery' drew attention to the fact of privatisation of YTS. That pamphlet showed that:

The quality of training was suspect
The MSC was incapable of monitoring its own scheme
There was a lack of Trade Union control and involvement
Racial and sexual discrimination was rife

The Great Training Robbery Continues is a follow up report and clearly documents that things haven't changed — they've just got worse!

Young people going through YTS know what is wrong with the scheme. What this report does is dot the i's and cross the t's, giving the labour movement the facts.

Youth don't want schemes, they want jobs. The G.T.R. Continues gives the arguments why this scheme can no longer be supported. Youth know why — it is time the movement supported them. Read this report and use the facts to campaign for real jobs for youth.

GTRC available from:
TURC Publishing, 7 Frederick St, Victoria Works, Birmingham B13HE

CONFERENCE

The Lambeth Labour Parties say —

Black Sections Here to Stay!

No Cuts!

No Surcharge!

Support our councillors!

Norwood, Streatham & Vauxhall CLPs.

Amnesty for all gaoled or sacked striking miners
WIRRAL WEST CLP

EAST LEWISHAM LABOUR PARTY

(including Prospective Parliamentary Candidate Russell Profitt) Sends Greetings to all Delegates and Visitors

SUPPORT BLACK SECTIONS!

Brent East CLP sends greetings to Labour Party Conference

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

Hayes and Harlington CLP sends greetings to Labour Party Conference

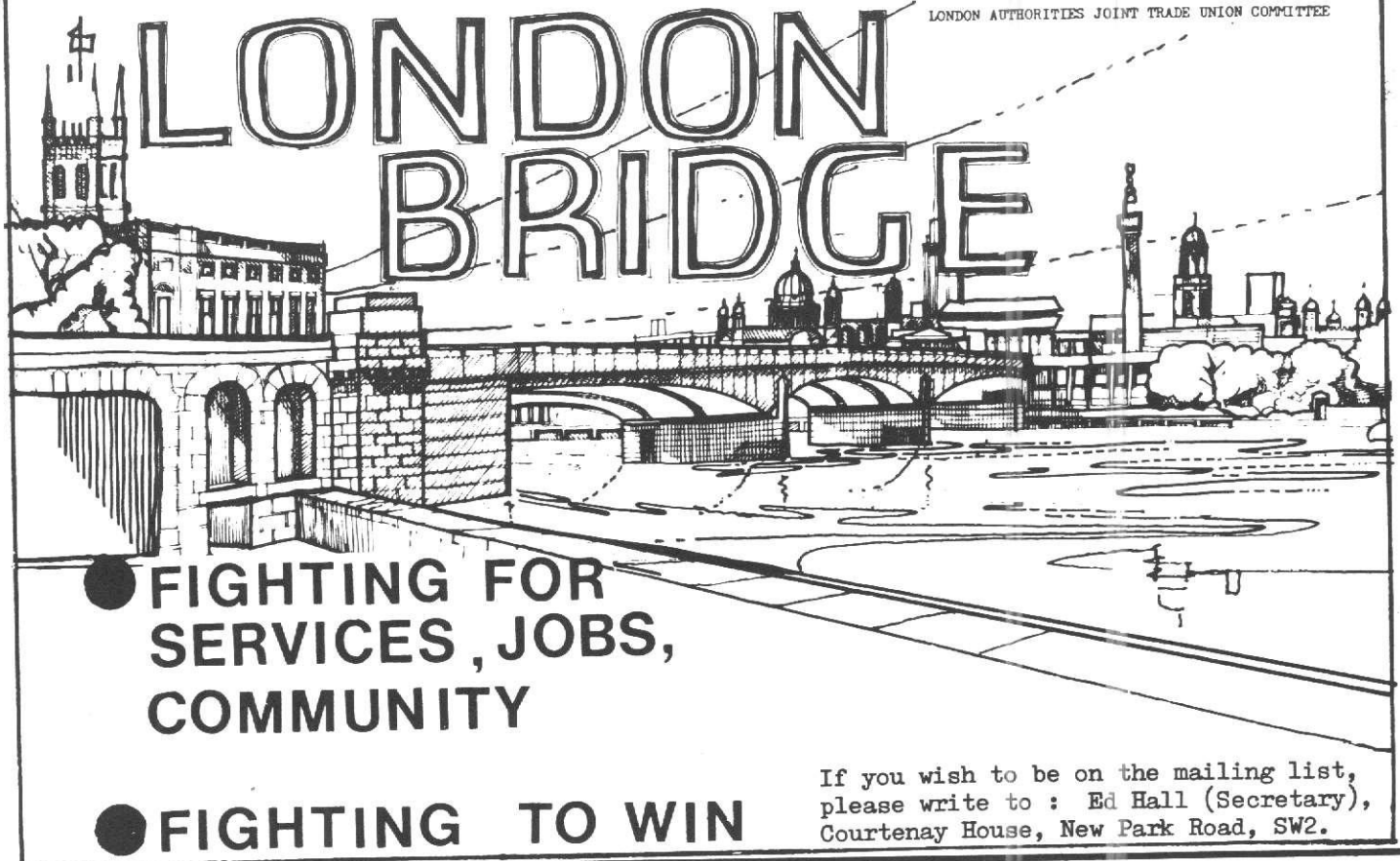
Hanover Branch (Brighton Kemptown CLP) sends greetings to Conference.

Hither Green branch (Lewisham E. CLP) says Support Black Sections!

● FIGHTING WITH SURCHARGED LABOUR COUNCILLORS

LONDON BRIDGE

LONDON AUTHORITIES JOINT TRADE UNION COMMITTEE



● FIGHTING FOR SERVICES, JOBS, COMMUNITY

● FIGHTING TO WIN

If you wish to be on the mailing list, please write to : Ed Hall (Secretary), Courtenay House, New Park Road, SW2.

GREETINGS

CAMPAIGN GROUP OF LABOUR MPS

OPEN VOTING IS TRULY DEMOCRATIC

AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS WIDENING THE FRANCHISE, WE CALL FOR RECORDED VOTES FOR THE SHADOW CABINET ELECTIONS

Chair: Joan Maynard MP
Secretary: Alan Meale
Treasurer: Bob Clay

over 1,000,000

LABOUR VOTES AT THE LAST ELECTION CAME FROM THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The Labour Party Black Sections

WE DEMAND CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION FOR AN ORGANISED BLACK VOICE IN THE PARTY

Black Sections

HERE TO STAY

● Fringe meetings: Tues Oct 1 (delegates briefing): Thurs Oct 3 (rally). Both at the Wessex Hotel 7pm

Conference Greetings to all Socialist delegates and visitors from BIRMINGHAM LABOUR BRIEFING

Full amnesty for all jailed and sacked miners.
Brighton Briefing

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING FORWARD TO WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT!

HARINGEY LABOUR BRIEFING GROUP sends Socialist Greetings to all Comrades Supporting RE-INSTATEMENT OF ALL SACKED MINERS AMNESTY FOR ALL JAILED MINERS and the formal establishment of BLACK SECTIONS

Amnesty for all jailed and sacked miners

BRENT BRIEFING GROUP

YOUTH FIGHTBACK

'Build the LPYS'
'Stop the witchhunts'
Issue 2 out now
20p from 57, Viaduct Rd, Brighton

Socialist Viewpoint says:

Amnesty for sacked and jailed miners

Read Socialist Viewpoint at Conference
Or order your copy from: BM Box 3956, London WC1N 3XX

Brighton LPYS
sends socialist greetings to conference

REPEAL THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT!

Cllr Dave Spencer (WMCC, Coventry SE)
Cllr Terry Donovan (WMCC, Coventry SE)
Cllr Malcolm Speake (WMCC, Birmingham Ladywood)
Geraldine Egan (President, Birmingham Trades Council)
Mary Pearson (Birmingham Trades Council)
Maurice Moore (Coventry Trades Council)
Godfrey Webster (Warley East CLP, Sandwell)
Cllr Richard Chessum (Leamington District)
Cllr Roy Benjamin (Birmingham City, Sparkhill)
Cllr Mick Rice (Birmingham City, Sparkhill)
Greetings from the West Midlands

TGWU—ACTSS

LEGAL WORKERS

BRANCH

Do you work in a Solicitors Office?

JOIN US NOW in our struggle for decent wages and conditions in legal firms.

Details from: 8 Waldemar Avenue Mansions, Waldemar Avenue, Fulham SW6 5LT.

CONFEDERATION OF HEALTH SERVICE EMPLOYEES 618 HILLINGDON & DISTRICT

★ **SUPPORT OUR POLITICAL PRISONERS**
★ **SUPPORT THE BARKING WOMEN**
★ **SUPPORT BLACK SECTIONS**
★ **NO WITCH HUNTS**
SUPPORT DEMOCRACY & ACCOUNTABILITY

CONFEDERATION OF HEALTH SERVICE EMPLOYEES NUM 618

FREE the NUM Political Prisoners

VOTE JOHN MCDONNELL
FOR THE NEC

COHSE 618 salutes the COHSE pioneers on COHSE 75th Anniversary

LABOUR PARTY·RACE ACTION GROUP

Conference Fringe Meeting
Thursday 3rd October at 8pm
At Crest Hotel, The Lansdowne, Bournemouth

"RACE: THE WAY FORWARD"

Speakers

BILL MORRIS (National Secretary, TGWU Passengers Service Group)

SHARON ATKIN (Chair Labour Party Black Section, National Committee)

UNMESH DESAI (Newham 7 Campaign)

ALF DUBBS (Labour Race Spokesperson)

CHAIR:

KEITH VAZ

(PPC Leicester East)

BRIEFING'S SLATE FOR THE NEC

CONSTITUENCY SECTION
A. BENN
D. BLUNKETT
E. HEFFER
M. MEACHER
J. RICHARDSON
D. SKINNER
A. WISE

WOMEN'S SECTION
D. ABBOTT
M. BECKETT
J. MAYNARD
P. OLLEY
C. SHORT

TREASURER
A. BOOTH

Briefing has had a long discussion about the slate for Labour Party Conference; particularly about which names should be recommended in the Constituency section.

There has been basic agreement upon six names for the slate: that is, those listed above, with the exception of Michael Meacher. All of us felt most reluctant to support someone who has so clearly abandoned the left on so many, many occasions.

However, we were also very conscious of the fact that supporting a white male in place of Michael Meacher would be most unlikely to lead to a better candidate getting elected, but rather to *one of the women being knocked off the NEC*. We do not wish to be responsible for this, either in terms of affecting the female representation on the NEC, or the politics of it.

The only candidate we felt we could support in place of Michael Meacher would have been a candidate put forward by the Black Sections. Unfortunately such a candidate has not been forthcoming; despite attempts by the Black Sections to find one. We felt that there is strong evidence that many CLPs vote for the left slate *except* the women; that is why the women receive the lowest number of votes. But black candidates, we felt, would fall into the same category: a black male would not take votes away from the women, nor a black woman from the white women.

The lesson for us all is that the left has been irresponsible this year.

Next year, the left **must** organise. And next year, we must present a candidate we can all support in place of Meacher, unless he takes the opportunity of the year ahead to change.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Briefing will be out on 16th October.
Deadline for articles, Monday 7th October
All articles to be sent to 162 Millfields Road, London E5.
Next National Editorial Board:
Sunday October 20th at 1pm at Digbeth Civic Centre, Birmingham.

WAR ON WANT CONFERENCE MEETING

'In the Eye of the Storm'
Eyewitness Reports from Central and Latin America

Embassy Hotel
Meyrick Road, Bournemouth
Tuesday October 1st at 5.30pm

Speakers:
Judith Hart MP
George Foulkes MP
Frank Larue (Guatemala)
Campbell Christie
Jeremy Corbyn MP
and speakers from Chile and El Salvador

SOCIALIST LEGAL SERVICES CAMPAIGN

CHAIRPERSON: Valerie Vaz, 25 Lewis Road, Southall
WORKING FOR A NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICE

LABOUR BRIEFING CONFERENCE MEETING
"PREPARING FOR GOVERNMENT"

Sunday 29th September at 8.30pm
(at close of Conference Session)
At Angus Hotel, Bath Road, Bournemouth
Speakers:
Sharon Atkin (National C'tee, Labour Party Black Sections and Lambeth Councillor)
TonyBenn MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Sarah Roelofs (Labour Briefing Editorial Board)
Chair: Tessa van Gelderen

LONDON HEALTH EMERGENCY

Labour Party Conference Fringe Meeting:
"HEALTH CUTS — HARSH FACTS BEHIND THE TORY FIGURES"
Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn, MP.

WESSEX HOTEL,
WEST CLIFF ROAD,
on WEDS. OCTOBER 2ND
at 12.30 free admission

TARGET LABOUR GOVERNMENT FRINGE MEETING CAMPAIGNING TO WIN

1p.m. SUNDAY
29th SEPTEMBER
ROYAL BATH HOTEL
BATH ROAD
BOURNEMOUTH
with

Dodie McGuinness, newly elected Sinn Fein Councillor
Russell Profitt, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Lewisham East
Jenny Edwards, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Westminster North
Speaker from the Newham 7 Campaign

Socialist Organiser Labour Party conference fringe meeting

SOUTH AFRICA: BLACK WORKERS BREAK THE CHAINS

Speakers: Bob Fine (author of 'A Question of Solidarity: Independent Trade Unions in South Africa'; recently returned from South Africa) and a sacked miner.

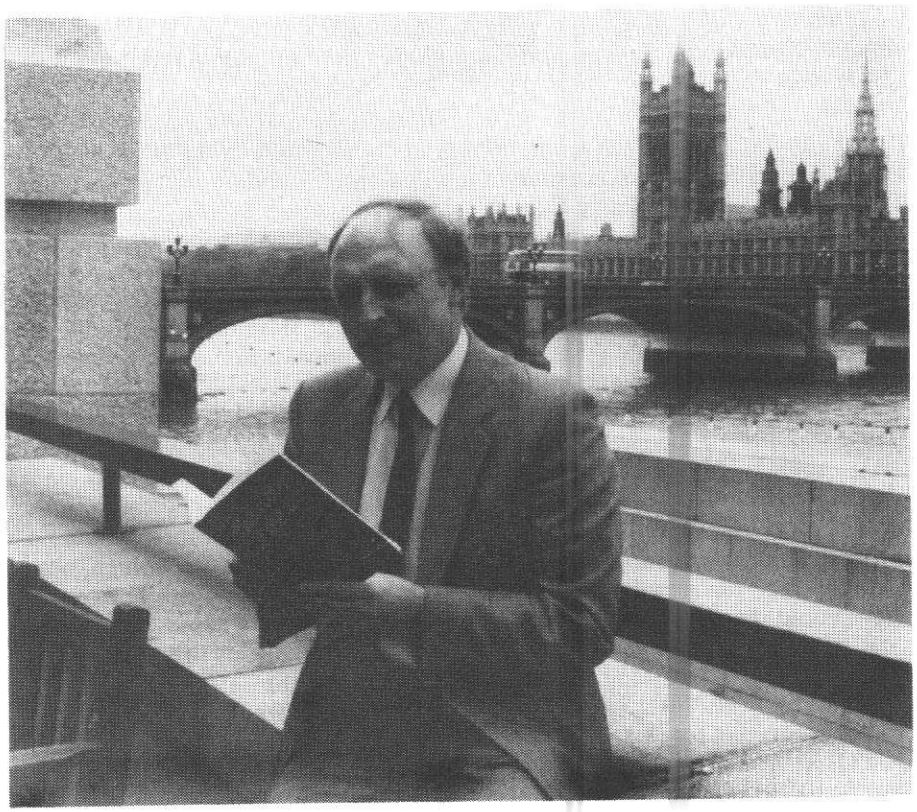
Monday September 30, 5.30pm, Purbeck Suite, Wessex Hotel, West Cliff Road.

The Witchhunt: Kinnock's road to nowhere

Calls for Labour unity are coming from all quarters of the Labour movement. It is by now a truism that Labour cannot defeat Thatcher and form a government without unity. The somersaults turned at the TUC conference only serve to underline the point. In flat contradiction to this, however, the Party leadership continues to encourage a witch hunt of the left and votes ruthlessly for expulsions on the NEC.

Neil Kinnock's attack, at this year's TGWU conference on what he called "the fringes" and his advice to them to "go and play elsewhere" was the latest in a long line of media orchestrated invective from the leadership designed to bring about the intimidation and expulsion of his serious political critics. Ideologically, it indicates Kinnock's lack of confidence in his ability to win Party policy through democratic debate.

The last few years have demonstrated that his deeply held principles are few, but they invariably place the interests of the capitalist state above those of the struggling working class. While the Labour Party has followed leaders like Kinnock down the road to nowhere before, the lines this time have been drawn so clearly by Thatcher, that the MacDonald, Attlee, Wilson, Callaghan tradition is much more difficult to impose. Hence the need for expulsions.



John Chapman

Red Scares

Kinnock's attacks obviously cannot bring about Party unity. Nor do they placate the media, whose MI5 vetted journalists have little desire to see a socialist government elected. Instead, they serve two purposes. By giving credibility to the red scares so frequently employed against Labour in elections, they undermine public confidence in the Party and raise the stocks of the Tory and Alliance Parties, opinion polls notwithstanding. Red scares are also an invitation to the Party to stop thinking. It is in the nature of witch hunts that once the accusations have been made, every action of the accused, whether of denial or of self-justification only confirms their guilt. Prejudice and fear replace common sense political judgement. And that suspension of political judgement is what Kinnock needs to win his policy.

Like it or not, the Party is stuck with Kinnock until the next election. There is no realistic alternative candidate for the leadership, who will either dare oppose him or who stands any chance of winning. What the Party does not need to do, however, is give up its principles or its socialist policies. With the witch hunt, the erosion of its political sense is already well underway. Will this year's Party Conference stop the rot?

Keith Lichman,
Secretary
Labour Against the Witch Hunt

STOP FUDGING ON DISARMAMENT!

The message of all the conference resolutions on disarmament is that we demand a commitment from the Labour Party organisation for a serious campaign which aims to explain our policies to the people well before the run-up to a General Election. Such a campaign would prevent the total catastrophic mess that we presented to the voters at the last Election.

It would at least mean that the Labour Party would be presenting policies which said that a Labour Government would: send back Cruise Missiles, cancel Trident, scrap Polaris, close all nuclear bases, remove all nuclear weapons, including the US ones, from British soil and British waters and direct resources to conversion from military products to products that are socially desirable.

We have already had indications of fudges on the question of the bases. We could tighten up our demand that all US bases have to go since they are all part of the US and NATO nuclear strategy. We could make sure that the Labour Party is committed to reducing the defence budget as the Labour CND composite of last year and the resolutions of the past 5 years have spelt out. We need to make sure that in no circumstances will this country accept nuclear weapons and if that cannot be guaranteed whilst we stay in NATO, then we have to have that debate out in the open.

We have to have a close look at the Labour Party's 'Defence and Security for Britain' document which was thrust on the last conference without debate. We have to look at what we mean by non-nuclear defence without the jargon and preconceptions of a supposed enemy. What are we defending and against what? International socialists have a different answer to the Western capitalist, pro-NATO position of the document.

In many respects the resolutions on campaigning are a salvage operation, a holding position whilst the real debate goes on. What we really need is a socialist international policy, not a series of limited demands that we wring from reluctant leaders who renounce them as soon as they find a way out. Central to a socialist policy is the issue of withdrawal from NATO. This issue has attracted several resolutions at the conference this year. We have a chance to make the case for withdrawal from this military alliance which makes nonsense of our commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

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