LONDON LABOUR 40p
BRIEFING
No 57 MARCH 1986

BLOCKADE WAPPING!

Rupert Murdoch and Eric Hammond have thrown down the gauntlet to the whole trade union movement. For the print unions, it is a struggle for survival. If the battle of Wapping is lost, then the demise of Fleet Street union power will rapidly follow. Even the 'liberal' Guardian has now got in on the act in demanding staff cuts while hypocritically expressing 'distaste' for Murdoch's methods. Wapping is also another key test for the Tories' anti-union 'employment laws'. The unions are bound hand and foot, their members sacked and the assets of SOGAT sequestrated for calling minimal solidarity action.

But this battle can be won. Murdoch, Hammond and Thatcher in their different ways are transforming the printers' fight into a popular cause. Mass pickets have been able to delay lorries leaving the plant despite the military-style police operation; these must be escalated. *The magnificent presence of Kent miners returns us to the finest traditions of the miners' strike, the gains of which are there to be built upon now.*

★ FORM a Printworkers' Support Group in your area! For the Printworkers' Support Centre in London contact: Steve Masterson, 102a Cromer Street, WC1. For all queries and information, phone 01-278 2794.

USE YOUR SUPPORT GROUP TO:

★ ARRANGE group-travel and/or transport to the Wapping picket every evening (7.30pm), especially on Saturdays!

★ ORGANISE a local public meeting, fly-posting of your neighbourhood, leafletting, benefits, socials.

★ ARRANGE accommodation for pickets and activists from out of London — especially for miners;

★ SET UP a full-time PSG campaign office in your area and involve the whole of your local labour movement!



Andrew Wiard (Report)

Women's march and rally at Wapping, February 8th

★ BREAK Murdoch's distribution system.

Through your trade union or Labour Party branch:

★ Make the print union leaders fight! Bring Fleet Street out!

★ Get your Labour Councillors and MPs onto the picket line!

★ Make the TUC suspend the EETPU!

★ Demand guarantees that the next Labour Government will ensure that new print technology is harnessed to the needs of the people by nationalising the printing industry under workers' control!

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

LONDON LABOUR PARTY

The London Labour Party AGM will be in a different venue this year, the Brixton Recreation Centre not Camden Town Hall. Will the change of venue give the London Labour Party a kick up the arse or will a combination of bad acoustics, Standing Orders' inflexibility, and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee atrophy us all with boredom and irrelevancies?

The London labour movement is faced with many crucial issues — a more detailed strategy than has been developed to date needs to be agreed for dealing with the effects of GLC abolition on jobs and services; there will be direct elections to the ILEA as well as council elections on 8th May — how will the new body be accountable to the London Labour Party and what tactics should be used to deal with the stranglehold already being tightened around its freedom to determine its budget and policies? The result of the Lambeth and Liverpool court case on ratecapping — crucial for those councils who went into struggle last year — is due at the end of February and will be a major factor in the run up to the elections — if we win, the Tories' plans for the destruction of local government will be in disarray. As the witchhunt sweeps the country what will be London's response? And London printers are engaged in a struggle with as deep ramifications for the class struggle as the miners' strike was last year. Will the AGM rise to the occasion?

Ratecapping

Passing reference is made in the resolutions on local government to last year's "ratecapping fiasco", but the Regional EC is not called to account for the way in which AGM policies on ratecapping and abolition have been overturned. However, resolutions from Bow & Poplar, Deptford and Hornsey & Wood Green call for a continued fight against ratecapping and the AGM will be given an opportunity to overturn the compliance policy adopted at the Special Conference. Bow & Poplar's formula of no rate until after the elections is attractive, but it is too late to organise for — a deficit budget is a better tactic, since incoming Labour Groups can if necessary implement this once in power by revising expenditure estimates. Although the abolition of the GLC is mentioned and there are calls for the next Labour Government to restore an elected strategic authority for London, it is clear that the fight here is over — as it has been, of course, since 8th March last year. As they did at the Special Conference, the trade unions are likely to support the LCC's line of "heads down, get Neil to No.10" rather than defending Londoners' services and their members' jobs by agreeing to any tactics which confront the government on rates and budgets. In this context, Norwood's call for a reaffirmation of the policy of non-compliance with any privatisation laws agreed at the Special Conference must be supported. The line that the class struggle takes second place to passive electoralism needs to be hammered. The working class wants jobs and services from Labour, not capitulation to Thatcherism — they can get that from the Alliance.



The problems facing Londoners as a result of Tory policies manifest themselves clearly in the resolutions on services and jobs. On employment, even the EETPU is calling for all London boroughs to participate in GLEB. Assuming that it is not counterposed, Tooting also calls for London boroughs to initiate their own interventionist strategies and to extent job creation initiatives. On housing, the state of London's housing stock and the mounting crisis of homelessness has brought forth some good resolutions, in particular from Dulwich which calls on the next Labour government to abolish the Right to Buy legislation (can this include abolishing the right to buy Barrett homes in Dulwich Village!) and Islington South which would replace the Right to Buy with a Right to Rent. There could be an interesting debate between straight abolition of the Right to Buy and Feltham & Heston's proposal that sales should only be permitted when receipts are used to build new rented housing stock. The former should be supported and used as a basis for reversing national policy on council house sales.

Equal Opportunities

A central issue for the London LP and for London local authorities is equal opportunities. It is a pity that the only reference to it in relation to local authorities is in Norwood's resolution on privatisation which calls for contract compliance to be promoted. However, emergency resolutions are likely to come forward on the fate of the GLC's central strategic units, particularly the women's rights and ethnic minorities units, which have been central to the development of their equal opportunities policies and which are faced with a lack of support from almost all London boroughs.

More resolutions are devoted to equal opportunities within the Party. Despite a relatively small number of resolutions, there **must** be a debate on Black Sections so that last year's calamitous decisions can be overturned. The resolutions also reflect a recognition of the need for positive discrimination and political education on equal opportunities within the party. The sections on Black Sections and Discrimination must be complementary – political education for white comrades without constitutional rights for Black comrades would be hypocritical – unfortunately that would be nothing new for the Labour Party.

Accountability of ILEA

With the demise of the GLC, the Regional EC has had to examine ways of providing a mechanism by which the newly elected ILEA will be accountable. It has already failed to come up with a mechanism whereby the Leader of the new Group will be elected by any wider franchise than the ILEA Group – at least for this year and probably for next as well. We are told that the NEC is considering setting up an Inner London District Party (presumably on a different model to Liverpool's!), and the amendment from Dulwich addresses this issue by calling for a "newly constituted committee" to act as a local government committee for ILEA. CLPs are being consulted on this – but there is no simple answer and the best formula will depend more on the extent to which parties take education seriously than on its organisational form. The ILEA manifesto conference and the difficulties some CLPs are experiencing in selecting candidates make it likely that the solution will be unsatisfactory.

Ireland

Ireland has been an important issue on the Regional EC during the past year and this is reflected in the resolutions. The blocking by the NEC of the implementation of Composite O has brought forth resolutions calling for conference to reaffirm its commitment to a real debate with all organisations committed to Irish unity including Sinn Fein on the issues surrounding withdrawal and the implementa-

AGM '86

Joan Twelves (London Regional Executive)

tion of Party policy on Ireland. In the same section, there are welcome resolutions on strip searching in Armagh and Brixton which acknowledge the efforts made by the Regional Women's Committee to take this up and which, as with last year's Composite O, call on the Regional EC to act. It is a pity that no resolution clearly calls for the immediate withdrawal of troops as this was only narrowly defeated last year.

The development of policy and getting it across to people need to go hand in hand. Campaigning should not be ignored and the LCC should not be allowed to expropriate it in the meaningless way they do. Islington North are right to keep plugging the need for regional staff to be campaigners rather than policepeople. And it makes sense to attach amendments on the witchhunt to this resolution because of the destructive effect the leadership's "campaign" will have on our public activities. However, it is unfortunate that by putting such a long shopping list of demands which fail to identify priorities for campaign – priorities which must flow from policy – Islington North falls into the trap of presenting a mishmash of good and bad and ignoring some of the positive campaigning initiatives which the left – not the LCC – have implemented, such as organising the tribunal on Ireland and a series of consultation meetings with CLPs on ratecapping and the local elections.

Part of their shopping list includes the demand that there should be a change in the way CLP representatives are elected to the Regional EC. While I couldn't agree more about the need for accountability, there are problems with the solutions being posed. A resolution along the same lines was passed last year (when you blinked) with the result that the Regional EC is putting forward an amendment to Standing Orders for one CLP representative per two boroughs. Problem No.1 with this is that the CLP representatives are only 16 out of an EC of 50. So how about changing the whole structure? – now would be a good time while we're discussing how to establish mechanisms for ensuring an accountable ILEA. Problem No.2 can be seen by looking at the numbers of comrades nominated in the CLP section this year – in 3 out of the 4 quartiles there will be no election! Whilst it can be argued that this is because the Regional EC is seen as too far removed from local experience, it is more likely that it is because it is seen as irrelevant, and expected to become even more irrelevant without the GLC to oversee. This need to be changed politically, but that isn't what is being proposed. And problem No.3 is that the proposed solution will lead to less accountability to the AGM, not more. Elections won't be on the basis of politics but on the basis of the relationships between the various CLPs in the two boroughs.

It is ironic that the Regional Women's Conference has just changed the way the Women's Committee is elected **from** a system like the one being proposed **to** one similar to that which is being discarded. Listen to women and reject the amendment to Standing Orders! Islington North's proposal for change, although it still concentrates solely on the CLP section, does at least call for consultation. As the amendments on the witch-hunt are attached to this resolution, scepticism over other parts (if not lost in compositing) will have to be put aside to ensure the GLLP comes out firmly against the witchhunt.

Chair

The main interest at the AGM will be less on the policy issues than on the fight for the Chair of the London Labour Party. Arthur Latham is being challenged by Glenys Thornton. It is often difficult in these sorts of contests – particularly for those of us who wish to see women and/or Black comrades in leadership positions – to have to take decisions based firmly on politics and not on personalities. But in this contest Arthur Latham should be supported. Glenys is a leading member of the LCC and her 'manifesto' as printed in Tribune is aimed solely at winning trade union votes and provides no clue to the strategies she would wish to see adopted to take the class struggle forward in London. The London LP is faced with many tasks over the next year – and the LCC should not be allowed to lead it away from confronting those tasks.

Briefing's slate for Regional Executive

Chair: A.Latham

Constituency Section. Area 3:
D.Harris
P.Healey
A.Wylie

Trade Union Section
E.Glover M.Walker
P.Moore G.Williamson
P.Taplin
G.Tucker

Standing Orders Committee
Eastwood Spurway
McGarry Sutton
Nichols

London Briefing/Campaign Group fringe meeting

ORGANISING THE FIGHTBACK

Saturday March 1st at 12.30pm at Room 2 St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton Hill (opposite Lambeth Town Hall).

Speakers: Tony Benn (Campaign Group), Bernie Grant (leader, Haringey Council), Diane Abbott (PPC Hackney North), Helen Crossfield (Lambeth Councillor), Alan Barclay (CLPD), speaker from Irish in Britain Representation Group.

Chair: Joan Twelves

WHICH WAY LONDON LABOUR?

In a few weeks the Greater London Council will be abolished – a victim of Mrs Thatcher's vendetta against the largest Labour controlled authority in the country. This abolition together with the other metropolitan authorities is a denial of basic democratic and civic rights enjoyed by citizens of every major city in the world. It could not have come at a more difficult time for those for whom it has acted as a shield against the worst excesses of this most reactionary Tory government this century. In housing, in the areas of equal opportunities and positive discrimination for black and disadvantaged, there will be no London-wide caring organsation to turn to. Already, the Tory government is encouraging their lap-dogs in Westminster and Croydon to take legal action against the GLC which is trying desperately to keep alive the good work carried on by so many voluntary and community organisations in Greater London.

Now is the time for comrades to rally around the party to make it a focal point for all those organisations and pressure groups which the umbrella of the GLC has enabled to surface.

But just at this very moment when the order of the day should be unity, with a forthcoming critical by-election in Fulham and the local government elections to be held throughout the country there is a challenge to the Chair of the London Labour Party. Under the cover of positive discrimination, the campaign for Glenys Thornton is a front for the LCC and the soggy left careerists in the party.

As Londoners begin to feel the first effects of the demise of the GLC with the resultant chaos which will inevitably follow, the time is ripe for us in the Labour party to expect from the next Labour government, a commitment now, before the actual physical abolition, for the re-creation of a new GLC with wider powers, a stronger executive and greater accountability.

The London Labour Party at its AGM will have an opportunity to rebuff the self-seeking careerists and keep the ship on course for the vital tasks ahead, to remove the Tories from the town halls and the ILEA, and make sure that the new breed of socialists who are selected and elected should live up to the socialist expectations of their CLPs, and the London labour movement as a whole.

The forthcoming AGM of the London Labour Party must take an uncompromising stand against Rupert Murdoch, Eddie Shah and their hirelings who are hellbent on destroying SOGAT and the trade union movement in the same ruthless way that the MacGregors imposed upon Scargill and the miners. It must also take an uncompromising stand in the defence of valiant comrades in Lambeth and Liverpool who faithfully carried out Labour party decisions nationally and regionally.

Vidya Anand
Ilford South CLP
(Regional Executive, Personal Capacity)

Equal Opportunities in Islington: actions speak louder than words!

In recent years several people with disabilities have been selected as Labour Party Council candidates and most of them have been successful in their local elections including those in Lambeth, Greenwich, Nottingham County Council, Newcastle City Council and not forgetting the illustrious David Blunkett in Sheffield. However, if one were to suggest selecting a candidate with a severe speech impairment I suspect many of the now well disguised prejudices about disability would rear their heads again. But true to form Islington North CLP Highbury ward has taken the plunge and decided to select me as one of their candidates in the forthcoming borough elections in May. I have cerebral palsy and a major part of my disability is a fairly severe speech impairment. My speech is quite understandable once you are familiar with me but it takes practice to get used to it.



It is clear that my selection as a Council candidate has many implications both practical and political. Since speaking vast amounts seems to be the hallmark of Councillors it has been agreed that I should have a speech facilitator — someone who understands my speech — paid by the Party during my election campaign and then employed by Islington Council if I am elected. My speech facilitator has the unenviable task of repeating what I have said when I am at meetings, canvassing, etc., in order that everybody can fully understand what I have just said. This has advantages and disadvantages, one of the good points is that as a result of my speech having to be repeated I tend to be more clear and concise in what I say and so woffle on less frequently than do many of my fellow Party members!

Two major issues should be addressed here. First, how to change the very male macho image of policies in order to encourage people from a wider spectrum of life to participate and in particular women, people from the ethnic communities and people with disabilities. Secondly, how to make people realise that people with disabilities can be *active* members of their communities and are not just passive recipiants of services. Also there is the wider issue of getting disability to be seen as a major political issue.

It seems if I am elected I will be the first Councillor with a speech impairment. In my mind this is very symptomatic of how society really sees any minority group. The Labour Party has always prided itself on its fight for social change. However, in many cases it is equally discriminatory in its approach and the recent decision to oppose Black sections is a prime example of how the leadership sees democratic socialism. Islington CLP and in particular Highbury ward, where I am a member and standing has always been in the forefront of the fight to combat discrimination and has always encouraged a progressive approach to social issues. I believe that Islington CLP is one of the few with the commitment to select a candidate such as myself when the electorate will, undoubtedly, have many misinformed opinions and ideas about people with communication difficulties. It is only by presenting people with a sound counter-argument in practice that we achieve a less prejudiced society. But I suggest in order to fight discrimination effectively we ourselves must be seen to be taking positive action in our own Party to weed out those lurking prejudices. For instance, my selection was greeted by much enthusiasm by several of our sitting Councillors and some Party officers. However, none of them were familiar with my politics or knew my views on the important issues. No doubt they had some idea where I stood, but as a cynic I could not help thinking that they were being, perhaps inadvertantly, tokenistic, as I was a person with a disability. They seem to emphasise my disability rather than my coherent socialist politics. Tokenism is one of the worst kinds of discrimination.

The fact that I am a candidate with a speech impairment is not the actual problem I have to face. It is the perception of that difficulty which presents the major obstacle. This problem is twofold. First, Party members must be reassured that I can be an effective representative and will be a marketable person to the electorate. Secondly, I have to convince the electorate on two counts: first to get them to believe that they should vote Labour and also assure them that I am a capable person who just happens to have a speech impairment.

Unfortunately many people still equate communication difficulties with intellectual impairment. This is not something one can change overnight but I hope I can do a little to re-educate people away from this stereotype view.

From the wider viewpoint, I hope my candidature helps to focus attention within the Party on how to encourage other under-represented groups to stand for office. Islington CLP may have the reputation of being radical and progressive but in many ways it is still dominated by the macho type politics associated with able-bodied white male Councillors. Fortunately, Islington Council has many members who try to combat this image but it is a long struggle which I aim to join.

Finally, as Islington CLPs have made a major manifesto commitment to disability issues, I hope if I am elected I can act as a credible channel through which people with disabilities can voice their needs and views.

Mike Devenney
Prospective Labour Candidate
Highbury ward, Islington

DUMP HUMPHREYS!

For far too long NUPE members have been "hoodwinked" by the bureaucrats into believing that their union is one of the leading democratic socialist organisations within the labour movement. However, recent events in NUPE's London Division have exposed the union bureaucrats for what they really are: hypocritical, undemocratic witch-hunters.

In November 1985, the London Division of NUPE held its annual conference at which the following resolution, moved by the GLC branch, was passed by a two-thirds majority:

"This Divisional Conference rejects the decision of the 1985 National Conference to purge Militant supporters from the Labour Party. This Divisional Conference instructs NUPE Labour Party delegates in the London Division to concentrate on fighting the Tories and the employers, rather than on internal purges."

Additionally, the conference also supported by a two-thirds majority the GLC branch resolution demanding changes in our delegation to the Greater London Labour Party Executive Committee. The resolution specifically excluded full time officers of NUPE from sitting on this committee

On both counts, the leading NUPE official in London, Chris Humphreys scabbed on these democratic decisions. Firstly, at the meeting of the London Labour Party Executive on 2nd December 1985 (one month after the London conference) Humphreys voted in favour of the witch hunt and the Liverpool inquiry. Secondly, despite the decision to the contrary, Humphreys has also managed to get himself nominated to sit on the London Labour Party Executive for 1986/7.

The NUPE Broad Left has reacted to this flagrant abuse of democratic conference decisions by encouraging branches to send resolutions and letters of protest to NUPE's London Divisional Council. It would also be helpful if Labour Party activists within London could campaign against Humphreys in the run-up to the London Labour Party Conference and try to ensure that he is not elected to the Executive this year.

A NUPE gardener

NHS Cuts Put Beds In The Red

"It is now routine to turn patients away." So say consultants at one of the country's leading teaching hospitals, London's University College Hospital. As Tory cutbacks in health spending combine with draining resources from London to prop up services elsewhere, the state of London's NHS is going from a decline into a crash dive.

Latest cuts include:

- The loss of between 250 and 700 jobs and accelerated closure of St James Hospital in **Wandsworth**;
- All vacant posts frozen; a halt on ordering supplies, and plans for an 8 week closure of a quarter of the Royal Free Hospital **Hampstead**;
- Temporary closures from November to March mean that routine operations at Lewisham, Hither Green and Sydenham Children's hospitals have ceased in **Lewisham & North Southwark Health Authority**, causing further increases in the waiting lists. Yet local Tories have had the nerve to flypost the area with "waiting lists cut" posters;
- Rapid closure of St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, in **Paddington**;
- Closures of Accident & Emergency Units and an increase in day patients through "community care" are putting extra pressure on an already overstretched **ambulance service**;
- In **Bloomsbury**, where wards were padlocked and nurses and doctors left idle by panic Christmas cuts, waiting list admissions have almost ceased. One consultant told the Health Authority "the chances of getting into UCH are zero unless you have an infectious or serious disease." The only patients being treated off the waiting lists are those who would otherwise be likely to die.

London's waiting lists have risen again — 118,000 at last count. The latest cuts mean the actual figures will leap upwards.

Opposition to the heath cuts is coming from strange quarters — in the heart of a Tory stronghold, **Bexley Health Authority** is refusing to comply with South East Thames Region's demands to make cuts to reduce their expected overspend of £420,000, despite the fact that they have been warned that exceeding their budget could be illegal.

In nearby Tory **Bromley**, the overspend will be £1.2m! Much of the overspending is being caused by the Government's refusal to fully fund the 1985 nurses and doctors pay award.

Privatisation is on the increase, cutting services to patients and the jobs, pay and conditions of (mainly women) low-paid hospital staff. Mediclean, already notorious for failing to achieve standards in St Helier and Hammersmith hospitals, are to start new contracts in **Barking, Wandsworth, Ealing** and two more hospitals in **Hammersmith** Special Health Authority.

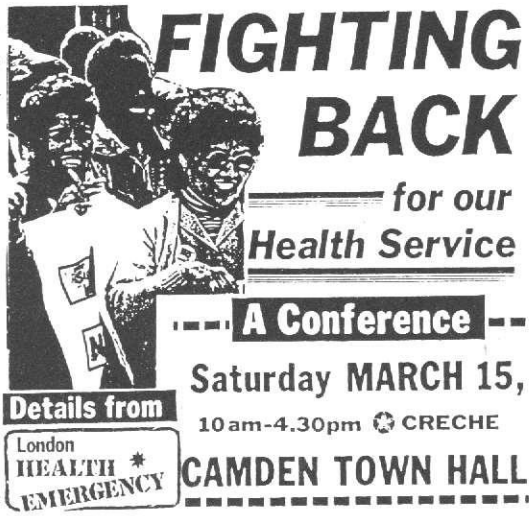
Elsewhere, staff are losing out through ridiculously low in-house tenders whereby they remain NHS employees but with terms and conditions and a workload not much better than under a private contractor. In **Haringey**, for example, an in-house tender for a domestic contract was £106,000 cheaper than the lowest private contractor and will result in heavy job losses.

From **Bromley**, comes proof that private contractors cannot provide better services for less money. Following last year's sacking of Hospital Hygiene Services for constant poor standards and another costly tendering exercise, the work has returned in-house.

In **Croydon**, Crothalls (of Barking Hospital fame) have been given 6 weeks to improve their standards or be thrown out — they have so far failed to achieve the necessary quality in any of the 12 clinics they clean. They have already been sacked from one contract this year, in **Maidstone**.

Join health workers and local campaigners at London Health Emergency's Conference **"Fighting Back"** on Saturday March 15th at Camden Town Hall. There will be dicussions on ● the cuts, ● privatisation, ● community care, ● women and the fight for the NHS, and ● accountability and democracy. Delegates are welcome from union and Labour Party branches and local health campaigns or just come along as an observer. For further details or the latest information on health cuts and privatisation in your area, contact: *London Health Emergency, 335, Grays Inn Rd, WC1 (tel. 01-833 3020).*

Kevin Flack
East Lewisham Labour Party



Covent Garden Redevelopment

Paula Watson (Westminster South CLP)

The part played by local authorities in planning and development has always been fraught with difficulties; and charges of incompetence, and even corruption, are commonplace. And yet this is an area which affects people's lives and environment in a very direct and permanent way. Part of the problem seems to be that Labour Councils, although often starting out with the best intentions, quickly get deflected when faced with "experts" and professionals.

The redevelopment of Covent Garden is a case in point. The GLC, owner of much property in the area, began with an admirable policy of excluding office blocks from any developments under their control, but when it came to the Jubilee Hall site, the planning committeee abandoned this commitment and accepted a scheme, backed by the Covent Garden Community Association, for a development including an office block and flats. The contract was awarded to Speyhawke, a firm of property developers, and the architectural work went to Covent Garden Housing Project, a private firm set up by Jim Monahan, who has established a dominating position in the Community Association.

Monahan supported the Speyhawke scheme on the grounds that the offices were necessary to pay for the flats and anyway it was the only practical plan on offer. This does not appear to have been the case. A rival scheme, involving no office block and with the residential accommodation moved to a derelict site elsewhere in Covent Garden, was put forward by a local activist, Alan Spence. He had secured adequate financial backing, but the GLC consistently refused to consider the proposal, although a subsequent planning inquiry concluded that it was the better scheme, since the Jubilee Hall site was too noisy for residential accommodation. Bu by that time the GLC had sold the lease to Speyhawke for £1 million (£1.85 million less than they themselves had spent on the site) and work had already begun.

Alan Spence, disturbed at the way in which Monahan, apparently confusing his own business interests with those of the community, had been able to influence both the Community Association and the GLC Planning Committee, lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman.

The Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party would perform a useful service if it set up an inquiry into this sorry mess, while the London Labour Party should consider drawing up guidelines for Labour Councils and local parties to enable them to act more effectively as guardians of the community.

This is particularly necessary in Covent Garden, where new trouble is brewing over the redevelopment of the Gainsford Club, in which a children's play area will make way for an office block, and where Monahan is now urging the formation of a Trust to take over the GLC sites after abolition. The Community Association would have a prominent role in such a Trust!

LEARNING FROM BROADWATER FARM

Please use all of your imagination and put yourself in the following position:

You are a young son or daughter sitting in front of the telly, with your mother sat by your side. Suddenly you hear the front door latch turn and you expect to see another member of the family walk in. Instead, four large and menacing uniformed police plus a plain clothes detective walk in. Your mother asks the reason for this intrusion into your private household. They never produce a warrant to search your home, and ask you lots of questions. You are now very scared because of the intimidating behaviour of the police. When your mother tried to protect the privacy of her own bedroom, she is callously pushed aside, whereupon she falls to the ground, gasping for her breath. You are now in a panic, you can see there is something wrong with your mother. Despite the obvious distress that your mother is in, the police do nothing except step over her and carry on searching (nothing is found). You then have to rush to a telephone box to ring for an ambulance which arrives 45 minutes later. But it is too late. SHE IS DEAD.

How would YOU feel? This could easily happen to YOU. Do you want your mother or any other relative to die in this undignified manner?

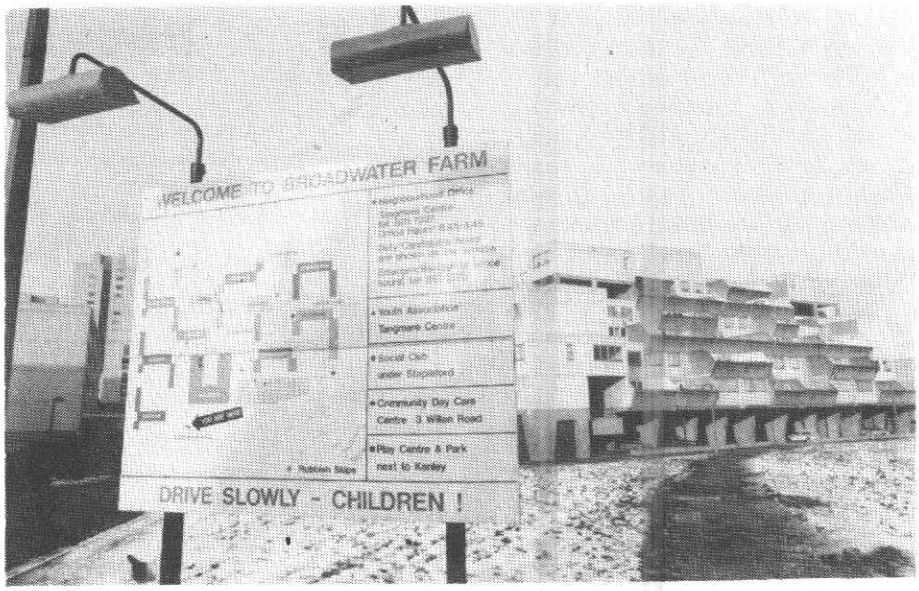
This really happened. It is NOT a fantasy. LET'S NOT FORGET IT — EVER.

The Broadwater Farm Youth Association produce a regular newsletter for the estate — as is done by many other community groups across London. The passage above is how the lead article in the latest issue starts. The youth of the estate have had enough — they are tired of being treated like dirt. The newsletter continues:

"In reality, with this government, we are no more free than under any other so-called repressive regime. The repression here is simply a lot more subtle — as is the English way. You won't find this out until you start to challenge in any small way, the establishment as it stands today... There will surely be another death caused by the irresponsible police action if they are not stopped and made accountable... We MUST fight back; the youth had to fight back. The Youth Association is an example of people working together, not only for themselves but for everyone in the community — black, white, brown and olive... Don't let them crush either individuals or organisations fighting for the estate and the people who live and work on it".

Bernie Grant was quick to speak up for the youth of Tottenham. He is continuing to do so, choosing more measured terms than those that led to him becoming the latest Left bogey-man. But sometimes he seems a lone voice from the Labour Party, with most activists more concerned with power struggles in the Party, in Parliament or in the Council.

The Youth Association, pensioners, mothers, children, council workers on Broadwater Farm have all been in the front-line over the past months. The police levels may not be as overwhelming as before Christmas. But towards the end of January eighty officers marched through the estate to arrest one man. The court cases of 142 arrested *and* charged (267 have been arrested in all) since the night of October 6th are just beginning. (The appearance at Tottenham Court of council carpenter Hughie Sutherland on February 24th saw a walkout by all council staff on the estate, manual and non-manual). The Fraud Squad have spent over £6000 in sending two officers to Jamaica. Egged on by 'The Mail' and 'The Mail on Sunday' they are supposedly investigating a ludicrous suggestion that youth leader Dolly Kiffin has embezzled public funds. (The officers flew to Jamaica before coming to Tottenham to speak to Mrs Kiffin). The continuing investigations are delaying Government and GLC funding for new projects on the estate. Many on the estate have been unable to get back from the police clothing and household items taken 'to aid the Blakelock murder enquiry'. Solicitors have documented police denying access to clients, and juveniles have been interrogated in intolerable conditions. It is police actions that have scarred the estate.



Broadwater Photographic

As well as direct support for Broadwater Farm, there are also wider questions of policing. The report to the Haringey 'Police Community Consultative Group' (a body on which there are no Council representatives) by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Richards, with its 'lakes of petrol' allegation, has been discredited — not least by the statements of Chief Superintendent Colin Crouch and WPS Gillian Meynell. Are the consultative groups that the Metropolitan Police must set up under Section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) to be used as mouthpieces for blatant propaganda lies? What action is being taken to prevent another death like Mrs Jarrett's? (The inquest into Mrs Jarrett's death has left blood on the police's hands). Why were the D11 armed unit called to Tottenham soon after 2pm on October 16th but not deployed until 9.40pm, 2 hours after the first shots? Why did the police seal off the estate? Why were police plans for the 'taking' of Broadwater Farm left in Tottenham Police Station? Why was PC Blakelock sent into the estate with a few other officers at 10pm when the police argue that it was too dangerous for officers to advance onto the estate until 4am the next day? We need to be demanding the answers to these questions and to many more?

The Broadwater Farm Defence Committee need practical support, and financial help. They can be contacted at 12-16 Tangmere, Willan Road, London N17 (Tel 808-1667).

BLACK SECTIONS CONFRONTATION?

The number of London CLPs who support Black Section participation in selections has been growing over the past year, but to date only three parliamentary candidates – Russell Profitt in Lewisham East, Stuart Holland in Vauxhall and Tony Banks in Newham NW – have been refused endorsement and the NEC has done little more than demand the selection conferences are held again without Black Section delegates.

The selection of ILEA candidates is causing a bit more of a problem. At least six CLPs have selected – or made it clear they intend to do so – with Black Section involvement – all three Lambeth CLPs (Vauxhall, Norwood and Streatham), Lewisham East, Islington North and Deptford. Candidates selected with Black Section involvement include the ILEA's Chief Whip, Lesley Hammond, and two surcharged Lambeth councillors, Irma Critchlow and John O'Malley.

The Labour Party bureaucracy is faced with a problem. Selection is from a panel of endorsed candidates – so the threat of non-endorsement doesn't work. Many CLPs are finding it difficult to select their ILEA candidates anyway because a number of comrades have pulled out and the panel wasn't particularly brilliant in the first place. Most of the constituencies involved are key seats we must win and contain large black and ethnic minority populations. A row over Black Sections would not be the most electorally sensible thing to do (not that that usually worries Walworth Road). And the elections are only three months away.

In an effort to "solve" the problem, Larry Whitty is going to the next Regional EC meeting and Joyce Gould (the Director of Organisation) has asked to see Vauxhall CLP's officers. Are they planning to negotiate or has the time for confrontation arrived?

Joan Twelves,
Secretary, Vauxhall CLP

DEPTFORD, COME CLEAN!

Racists, opportunists, Uncle Toms and masqueraders of the Left sabotaged the right of the Black Section to take part in the ILEA Selection Conference at Deptford on February 12th. First, the newly elected CLP officers did not send the Black Section candidate, Man Mohan, an invitation to the selection conference. Secondly, when the Black Section candidate withdrew from the Selection Conference as a candidate in order to take his place as a voting delegate, the unholy alliance against Black Sections left the Conference, leaving it inquorate. The Selection Conference was postponed once again — another blow against the right of Black Sections to take its rightful place in the selection process.

Readers of Briefing will recall that I pointed out and explained in the October issue why Deptford Black Section withdrew from the Deptford Parliamentary re-selection. Among many other reasons, "we decided to withdraw so that we do not fulfill the fears of many racists in the Party that Black Sections are intent on bloody disruption..." And these are the exact words a comrade sitting next to me muttered: "bloody disruptive Black Section" in the GC meeting on the 13th January while discussions were on about the involvement of Black Section delegates in the ILEA Selection. I quietly opened the October Briefing page of my published letter and handed it him to read for himself without a word.

As one black, in the 99.9% white dominated GC, I felt humiliated, choked, utterly disturbed and agitated to find that they have the nerve to discuss if the Black Section can or cannot participate in the selection. The chair even lost his sense of proportion when he asked for a vote!! It was too much to bear and I had to challenge him on constitutional grounds.

Black Sections are part of a campaign by those who have been traditionally excluded from access of decision-making within the Labour Party. In this respect Black Sections are no different from the campaign for women, Young Socialists, etc. Black members in Deptford waited and waited to see if a 'SUITABLE' Black candidate will ever be nominated from a branch for ILEA. Repeated attempts for Black representation from Drake Ward were consciously blocked by racists and fellow-travellers in the ward, who are masquerading as so-called left-wing. In the end the Deptford Black Section — in response to a call from the ILEA leader and London Labour Party for Black candidates, accepted the challenge and nominated its own candidate which the racists did not like.

On the 13th January GC, the Secretary informed us that he has received instructions from the Regional Organiser that she will not attend if the Black Section was involved. The CLP Secretary therefore refused to organise the selection meeting if Black Section is involved. The Chair had to take the responsibility for organising the selection meeting.

On Wednesday 22nd January ILEA selection meeting took place; there were four candidates present. One of them was also the Black Section delegate to the GC; therefore there was only one Black Section delegate left to participate. Before the meeting attempts were made to persuade him not to take part and discouraged him with a sort of blackmail. The Regional Agent also cornered him and had words before the meeting. After a long debate, the two external candidates refused to participate in the presence of the Black Section. The selection meeting was postponed. **Why the GC did not accept and endorse the remaining two internal candidates is a mystery.**

When will they learn? The ILEA selection is different to the Parliamentary selection because all candidates have to be on the panel of endorsed candidates; so the sanction of non-endorsement cannot be used. It is the Regional Executive (not the NEC) who oversee these selections; and candidates must be selected in time for the election of May 8th, which is not far away.

And above all, every member of the Black Section is not looking for a career, position and glory — whatever one might call it. Black Sections is a dedicated movement — with principles, aims and objectives; for which it will fight to the end. The tragedy is that the majority of civilised, well-meaning socialist comrades are being taken for a ride by an unholy, unproductive alliance of racists and masqueraders in Deptford GC. It is the principle of Black Sections and a true socialist society that matters.

Man Mohan (Member of the National Committee, Black Sections)

FARRAKHAN AND THE BRITISH LEFT

The proposed visit and subsequent banning of Black American antisemite Louis Farrakhan has on the whole met with a bemused silence from the Left press. Perhaps people on the Left who are neither black nor Jewish have feared to open their mouths on an issue which, on the face of it, would seem to counterpose the aspirations and interests of two different ethnic minorities.

But the banning cannot be discussed independently of Farrakhan's anti-semitism. In rallies from New York to Los Angeles he has made remarks like "Jews are the bloodsuckers of the poor" or "the skunks of the planet Earth".

Now Farrakhan claims to be just "anti-Zionist". But his anti-Zionism has nothing to do with a principled analysis of the Middle East and is more nearly akin to the "anti-Zionism" of the National Front. It is as clearly anti-semitic as the words of one of his leading supporters in this country who was once so good enough as to tell me "Zionists control the Brent education system". Anyway Farrakhan himself gets us off that particular hook: "I'm not just separating Zionists out because Zionists are an outgrowth of Jewish transgression."

What is more, Farrakhan has attracted the support of leading American and British neo-nazis who have said things like "He speaks out against the Jews in Washington". The National Front has wished Farrakhan well in "their common struggle for the same ends". (See Searchlight, December 1985).

Now no socialists should be relying on the State to do their work for them. But it is surely legitimate to call for the Italian fascists who are facing terrorist charges in Italy to be expelled or for Ku Klux Klan leaders to be banned. The fact that Farrakhan was banned and the Ku Klux Klan's Bill Wilkinson was not shows that the Government is willing to take action against what it perceives as 'Black Power' but not against overt fascists. To that extent the Labour Party Black Sections are right to point out the double standards involved here. But the 'liberal' call for 'free speech for all' that they make is curious since they would, presumably support a policy of 'no platform for fascists'.

If we as socialists are not to rely on the state we have to confront the problems within our own movement. For instance how was it that a Hackney Labour councillor was responsible for issuing an invitation to a notorious anti-semite?

Banning has solved nothing and worrying questions remain. As Jews, we must protest against statements such as that of Hackney councillor Lester Lewis who is reported to have said "Farrakhan will come to Hackney, despite the pressure, power and influence of the Jews" or Caribbean Times columnist Roy Sawh ('The Limer') who wrote "Jews have got nothing to do with race relations". But it remains the case that Farrakhan's vision of Black economic independence *is* profoundly attractive to a lot of Black people. The Left must confront this issue seriously since it raises questions both of the economic organisation of society and of ethnic/national autonomy within a particular state.

What Farrakhan is in effect proposing is autonomous black capitalism. As socialists, Black, Jewish or neither we must look seriously at what the Left has to offer black people in return. The lessons, positive and negative, of GLEB and of the employment policies of boroughs such as Hackney, Haringey or Brent should be looked at carefully in this context.

As Jewish socialists we stand consciously in the tradition of autonomous ethnic and national organisation in the socialist movement. (After all when the SWP closed down their 'Black Section' they accused it of 'Bundism', citing the classic case of the polemic between Lenin and the Jewish Socialist Bund). We will be glad to debate these issues, in a spirit of common commitment with comrades from the Labour Party Black Sections or any other Briefing comrades.

Michael Heiser,
(Jewish Socialists' Group and Brent East CLP)

'Jewish Socialist' costs 85p (annual sub £3.50) and is available from JSG, BM 3725, London WC1N 3XX.

Fulham By-Election — Your Help Needed!

Steven Cowan

John Chapman

The Tories have already abandoned the Fulham Constituency bye election and with it hopes of retaining control over the Hammersmith and Fulham Council. Their ultra right wing council Leader, John Putnam is to stand down in expectation of defeat in May.

In normal circumstances a by election in an area like Fulham ought not to pose serious difficulties for the Tories. Like many parts of London's inner core Fulham has over recent years been colonised by a plague of hooray Henrys and Sloan Ranger types. Gentrification has been intense and this has produced a slow but decisive swing in favour of the Tories.

Suddenly things seem to have changed. The death of Martin Stevens MP could not have come at a worse time for the Tories. Their control of the council and holding of the Parliamentary seat is partly the product of the failure of the Alliance to establish a coherent presence. The bye election campaign is likely to leave as one of its legacies a strengthened Alliance organisation in the constituency and this is likely to attract Tory voters in May. Any swing to Labour in such circumstances produces a Labour victory.

There have been problems within the CLP in recent years. A deeply entrenched old guard have stoutly resisted change. To secure their control over the party a branch system has been devised which amalgamates wards. Properly formed ward branches will need establishing to weaken the influence of a paid agent thus extending control of party affairs to broader layers within the membership.

Despite some recent bitterness over selections (the Right wing leader of the Labour Group, Gordon Prentice, was ousted from his ward as a candidate) the reaction to the challenge posed by the bye election has been wholly positive within Labour Ranks.

SOCIALIST GROUPING

Attempts by elements of the Right Wing within the CLP to unseat the Party Chairperson whh is a respected local doctor and socialist, will now have to be halted for the sake of party unity. An encouraging feature of recent years within the Fulham Labour Party has been the emergence of a strong and purposeful socialist grouping of members, many of whom have been selected to fight winnable Borough Council seats.

We have waited for a long time for the emergence of a mainstream Labour Group in Hammersmith and Fulham, free from the domination of mavericks and masons and next May promises to produce the goods.

Complacency in Fulham in the weeks before the by election would be fatal for Labour. Plenty of hard work is still needed to confirm the clear lead Labour has in opinion polls. Underpinning the rising confidence within Labour ranks are the results of a determined electoral registration campaign which have added over two thousand voters to the register.

This has been achieved by relatively few people working very hard over the past few months. Additions to electoral registers may hold the key to Labour victories not only in Fulham but elsewhere such as in Westminster and Ealing.



Nick Raynsford with Glenys and Neil Kinnock, 30th January

NICK RAYNSFORD

Labour's candidate, Nick Raynsford, would undoubtedly strengthen the PLP's housing team. He has been director of SHAC for the past few years and is respected nationally for the contribution he makes in this field. In an area of striking housing contrasts where, in the same street one can find trendy sloans living in luxury and the elderly and unemployed living in rented units without basic amenities, Nick Raynsford will make housing an issue in the bye election and that is no bad thing.

As an ex councillor, local resident and parent of three daughters, Nick Raynsford will be projected as a reliable, nice, wholesome fellow all of which he is.

Being somewhat to the Right in Labour Party terms may mean that the media hounds will find it more difficult to pin some of their usual epithets upon a Labour bye election candidate.

The selection, two weeks ago, of Tony Powell and Barrie Stead as the two ILEA candidates for Fulham comes as a bonus for Nick Raynsford as they are the two previous parliamentary candidates. They both bring considerable local support. Nevertheless it is a shame that we are seeing Labour once more retreating into the ghetto of selecting White, Middle Class, Male Politicians to the exclusion of other sections in society.

Victory in Fulham will boost the whole London Labour Party and pave the way for further victories in West London in May. Has your CLP been in touch with the Fulham campaign organiser yet?

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING

Reporting London's news
— and making it!

Annual subscription £6.

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

NAME . . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . . .

Please send to Central Books Ltd., 14, Leathermarket, London SE1. (Cheques payable to "Central Books Ltd").

Next London Editorial Board: Monday 24th February at 6.30pm at County Hall.

Typeset by Bread N Roses [TU] Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd [TU]. Published by Labour Briefing, 162 Millfields Road, E5.

LABOUR
BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
25p
No.25 MARCH 1986

AS PRINTWORKERS FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL:

STOP MURDOCH'S PRESSES!

By Alan Thornett

The sequestration of the whole of the funds of SOGAT 82 marks a very significant stepping up of the offensive by the courts against the trade union movement. Not just because it is yet another attack or because of the overall obvious importance of the Wapping dispute, but because it was a meted out in the first instance and used directly as a *punishment* on SOGAT. Previous sequestrations, such as the NUM and the TGWU, have been imposed after a warning period and ostensibly in order to recover fines after the refusal to pay.

It is another example of the courts acting politically and imposing the harshest measures that they think they can make stick in a given situation and presents another major challenge to the trade union movement and the policy of opposition to the anti-union laws adopted in 1982.

Not that there is any chance of the TUC responding in defence of SOGAT 82. The sequestration came on the same day as the TUC scandalously let the EETPU off the hook over their role in Wapping by giving them a list of demands they knew they could accept. They voted by a majority of one not to ask the EETPU to instruct its members not to cross SOGAT picket lines.

Not that these developments are a great surprise. The fact is that a series of events over the past two years have already had a profound effect on the trade union movement and it has been the EETPU which has led the march to the right under the banner of the new realism and is now going far beyond it.

Business Unionism

It has led to a situation where the EETPU no longer represents simply the most right wing and collaborationist brand of British trade unionism but an extreme form of US type business unionism. This type of organisation rejects any form of class principle, openly organises with the employers to break other independent unions and bases itself on the need for profitability in industry. The most open form this takes is the relationship which the EETPU is developing with the CBI.

The EETPU is not necessarily a company union of the Japanese type, but it is close to becoming it. Its nature is defined by its relationship to the employers which is based on legally binding no strike agreements, the end of the closed shop and the unchallenged right of management to manage.

The EETPU already have a one union deal on these lines with Eddie Shah who is preparing the next stage in the demolition of the print unions. They have signed single union agreements with Japanese firms which meet every requirement of Japanese management. In one case they signed a single union agreement over the heads of 200 T&GWU members on the site.

They denounced the NUM and the striking miners and now organise directly with Roy Lynk and the beleaguered UDM, which was created by the NCB.

Continued on next page



Sacked Printer, Larry Hyatt's children with his T.U. branch banner.

BRIEFING INTERV

***Briefing* went to talk to Eric Heffer MP, once a candidate for the Labour Party leadership, about his views on the state of the fight for left policies in the Labour Party.**

B: *We are almost a year after the miners' strike: how do you see the state of the Labour Party and the Left in this period?*
EH: I think the party actually has moved steadily to the right in the past period, and the left itself has been increasingly disorganised and disorientated. Unfortunately, we have now seen the growth of the LCC and other groups of that kind which have moved very much to the right. That is the negative side of the picture.

The positive side is that there is a much deeper understanding than one would expect, by people in the party that the party has moved to the right; that this must be opposed; that the tide has got to be stemmed.

This sort of "two trends" is worrying and I don't think we should underestimate the problems that are arising. But on the other hand, we must not believe that all is lost. I believe the fight back is actually beginning.

B: *One of the most worrying development has been the witch-hunt against socialists in the party. One of the issues you have been most centrally and publicly concerned with has been Liverpool District Labour Party. What are your views on these issues?*
EH: I thought and I still think that the NEC proposal to conduct an interview and inquiry into the Liverpool Party and to suspend it was an absolute disgrace. In the North East, one time, there was genuine corruption in the party and nobody proposed that these parties be suspended. Where there was genuine corruption the people concerned were dealt with through the courts.

When you look at the "evidence" against people in the Liverpool party, it is all hearsay.

I was appalled at the LCC evidence. One case was one comrade saying to another comrade: "Let's settle it outside." I've been in the Party now some 40 years, and I've heard all sorts of people say "Say that again, or come outside." It is unebelievable that this could be considered serious evidence against anybody

We can criticise the tactics and stratgey of the councillors but, in my opinion, in this movement it's our responsibility to give them unqualified support. People in Liverpool have been in genuine struggle and in the course of struggle they will make and have made mistakes, but that doesn't mean it gives a green light to the right wing of the party to say "Let's seize upon this opportunity to suspend the party and to expel people." That is what I am afraid of, it is not just Liverpool, not just *Militant*. In all parts of the country expulsions are taking place; fostered by certain people in my opinion at the highest levels. I think that is an absolute disgrace and must be fought. We have even had arguments over people in the party office. If we don't fight it it will begin with *Militant*, it will then be people around other newspapers like *Socialist Organiser*, *Socialist Action*, the ILP paper, *London Briefing*, and so on, until each section one by one will be knocked off and in the end they'll come for me. Won't they?

STOP MURDOCH'S PRESSES - continued

Nor is the problem only with the EETPU. The AUEW is moving along very similar lines, and other unions like NUPE have shifted dramatically to the right. The main responsibility for this development, however, lies with the TUC. Their decision to call a special Congress in February to reverse formally the official opposition to the anti-union laws established at the April Conference of Executives in 1982 represents another negative historical turning point for the labour movement.

In Place of Strife

In the 1969-1974 period Harold Wilson's "In Place of Strife' and Edward Heath's Industrial Relations Act were in the end defeated. Now, for the first time ever, the unions are to accept the intervention of the courts into industry on the side of the employers. Wilson was only forced to repeal the Industrial Relations Act because of the strength of continuing opposition.

That this capitulation comes in the form of a capitulation to Gavin Laird and Eric Hammond over the use of Government money for trade-union ballots makes it worse. Business unionism was strengthened as a result.

The EETPU and the AUEW should have been expelled from the TUC. It is true that the price of this could have been to split the TUC and probably it would have created a new right wing federation. But not to expel them meant shifting the whole TUC to the right since they had no intention of making a single concession. They should have been expelled and the 1982 decisions defended.

But the betrayal did not start with the issue of ballotting. In fact TUC opposition to the use of government money for ballots was the only time they had stood out against any aspect of Tory anti-union laws. It was the TUC betrayal of the NGA over the confrontation with Shah at Warrington which was the marker for it all. The NGA appealed for support under clear TUC policy and was rejected and ordered to work normally. TUC policy was destroyed there and future events shaped by it.

The Miners' Strike

The miners' strike was another watershed. It was the greatest struggle in Europe for many years against the creation of mass unemployment as the spearhead of the employers' offensive. The outcome of that strike was always going to determine the shape of the labour movement in the aftermath. Victory or defeat of the miners was always victory or defeat for the whole labour movement. There was no escape.

It was not only the greatest strike in Britain since the General strike, but it was a strike which very evidently could have been won. It was not lost through any lack of tenacity and sacrifice in the mining communities but because that sacrifice was not matched by support from the rest of the movement the isolation was not broken.

Yet the movement had everything to gain. A victory for the miners would have provoked dramatically different conditions to the ones we face today. There would most likely have been a sharp swing to the left, a growing Scargillite current in the unions and a serious challenge to Kinnock in the Labour Party. The employers' offensive would have been knocked back and the best possible lead given to workers in other industries.

The lesson of the miners' strike was that the working class are prepared to confront Thatcher's government even under conditions of mass unemployment. Although the miners are the most militant section of the working class, they are a part of the class as a whole. The additional factor with the miners was a determined leadership with a class struggle line.

That, however, is not the lesson drawn by the TUC. They draw the convenient conclusion that compromise has been the right way after all. Kinnock was greatly stengthened inside the Labour Party by the argument which has underpinned the march to the right.

Since the end of the strike the employers have pressed home their advantage. Seven hundred victimised miners have been joined by workers sacked at Silentnight, Forgemasters, Ffestiniog slate quarries, Morris of Glasgow, and Fleet St. There is a rapidly growing band of victimised workers looking to the labour movement for support.

All this is not to say that the basis is not there for a fightback: it is. But a fight back cannot be organised unless the depth of the problem is recognised and an understanding of it developed at the base of the unions.

At the same time a class struggle line of direct action against the actions of the employers has to be developed against those who say that strike action is no longer the way. The left needs to be strengthened and organised in the unions to meet the growing confidence of the right. A renewed struggle for democracy in the unions has to be developed.

The print unions must be defended against the courts and the employers. A campaign has to be mounted to stop the TUC retreat over the anti-union laws and implement the decision of 1982. The print unions themselves should take the lead in this and pull out their members on all national newspapers.

The miners' support groups need to be strengthened and organised to embrace the cause of the print workers alongside that of the victimised miners and the growing ranks of victimised workers in other industries.

The march and demonstration on March 2nd needs to be built into a massive protest and linked directly with Wapping.

A fight back of this kind can help to build a movement amongst the rank and file which can challenge the prevailing trends which are dangerous to the future of the labour movement.

IEWS ERIC HEFFER

Press Association Photos



Eric Heffer walks out of Labour Party Conference after Kinnock attacks Liverpool Council

B: *You spoke about the role of the LCC and the outrageous decision to suspend Liverpool DLP. How do you see the role of these people on the NEC itself, such as the kind of grouping around David Blunkett?*

A: There is a bit of a myth actually to suggest that there is a grouping around David Blunkett. He is very much an individual. Sometimes he supports us on issues, and I welcome that; other times he doesn't. You might say perhaps Tom Sawyer might go with him and Eddie Haigh. Apart from that it is not true to say there is any sort of Blunkett faction, any more than there is a Benn faction or Heffer faction.

What there is, unfortunately, on the NEC — and that includes most nowadays of our trade union representatives — is a body which is either centre left or centre right or totally right wing and they usually gang up against the Left. It is very worrying. It means you have to do a lot of work to consolidate the Left on the constituency section, but also to gain people more representative of workers in the trade union section.

B: *How specifically do you see us relating to the leadership of the party, Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, as they will probably lead us into the next general election?*

EH: If we did have a leadership election at present this would be used against the party as a whole. So, we certainly have to contain any movement on the part of the leadership on basic policies and principles, and oppose any watering down of socialist concepts.

We should make it quite clear that we believe, for example, that public ownership and socialist planning is the only way to deal with unemployment. Certainly you have to argue most strongly for self-management of industry by the working people.

We have to say to the party leadership that you have said you believe in unilateral nuclear disarmament and we are going to keep you to it. There has got to be no weakening on our defence policies. That means we have to say quite clearly: don't be misled into believing you can actually carry out our disarmament, anti-nuclear defence policy by putting all your eggs in the NATO basket.

We want a clear declaration too that there will be no backsliding in relation to getting rid of all this anti working class, anti trade union legislation. Plus we should be much clearer that all privatised industries must be taken back into public ownership, and we must not be mesmerised either by this concept of giving large sums of compensation. In my opinion maybe you pay the price they paid for it at the time back to ordinary workers who might have bought shares but with others I would say it isn't on. Thatcher has carried out a counter-revolution. We intend now to carry through a revolution, as against the counter-revolution.

If we pretend that we can be another social democratic party mark 2, to win the middle ground, I can tell you the "middle ground" goes over to Dr Owen, not us. You only win people on the basis of being firm, determined and they see where you stand.

B: *Can we speak a bit on some of the issues where perhaps we wouldn't have total agreement with you? At Labour Party Conference, at the Labour Left Co-ordination fringe meeting, you explained your views on black sections. Could you do so for the audience of Briefing?*

EH: I want to get one thing on the record in case people think because I am not wildly enthusiastic for black sections, that makes me reactionary. The only way I can answer that question is to point out that part of my family is black; always has been black and as far as I know will always be black!

So it is not a question of in any way being anti-black, anti-coloured, I rather take the sort of wider, socialist context, that our responsibility and duty is irrespective of colour of any kind, whether it is black or yellow — remembering my part of the world in Liverpool, they have a very big Chinese population — or Asian. We are socialists. I take the view that what is very important is that, as socialists, we have to be totally colour blind. You shouldn't even think about it and it rather worries me that one is beginning to have to think in terms of colour rather than the basic class attitude.

Having said that, I do accept the fact that in our capitalist society in Britain, if you are an unemployed black worker, you have the problem of not only being unemployed, you also have the problem of being black as well. And there has got to be positive discrimination.

But I am still not very happy about the concept of separate black sections of the party.

I do believe and have argued for that if the various ethnic groups believe that they wish to form organisations that can have direct affiliation to the party at national level and local level, I am in favour.

If comrades form a black section and feel in their areas this is the right thing to do on a voluntary basis, I'll accept that. That is a genuine feeling amongst them, fair enough for me. But I think constitutionally the answer lies along the line I suggested.

This interview will be continued in next month's Briefing, where Eric Heffer gives his views on Women's Organisation, the Anglo-Irish Accord, and what demands we should place on a Labour government.

Confronting General Motors

Motor industry shop stewards on Merseyside will host an historic conference in mid-March. Workers' representatives from at least six other countries are expected to attend the Liverpool meeting to discuss strategies for confronting General Motors' plans for global restructuring of the auto industry.

GM, capitalism's largest industrial manufacturing corporation, employs more than 650,000 worldwide including more than 20,000 in Britain at the Luton and Ellesmere Port sites. In the past decade, GM has responded to mounting international competition and periods of sagging profitability by declaring massive redundancies and more recently by introducing speed-up and attempting to undermine established working practices.

The stewards' conference organised under the aegis of the Liverpool Trades Council parallels earlier steps toward international workers' co-operation in Fords' and Kodak. Delegates from GM factories in North America, Brazil, the Philippines, South Korea, and possibly South Africa should participate in the sessions which will hopefully mark a first step in transforming militant but often isolated shop floor resistance into a programme that can begin to challenge the mobile power of multinational capital.

The conference's chief organiser, W. Wainwright, the AUEW convenor at the AC/Delco spark plugs in Kirkby, has issued an appeal for funds to assist delegates from the less developed countries in paying their fares. Details can be obtained from the Liverpool Trades Council, c/o Merseyside Trade Union and Unemployed Resource Centre, 24 Hardman St, Liverpool (tel. 051-709 3995).

SOCIALISM'S NOT FOR BURNING — STOP THE WITCHHUNT!

Local Constituency Parties and Union Branches should be taking up the issue of the witch-hunt now, before it escalates even further. Here's a checklist for action:

- Distribution of "Witch-hunt News" shows the extent of the attacks on all sections of the left, and proves that it is not confined to Liverpool or to "Militant". Take bulk orders for yourself, and get your union or Labour Party branch, section or constituency party to place a regular order.
- Invite a speaker from Labour Left Coordination on the witch-hunt or one of the expelled comrades — details from the same address as "Witch-hunt News".
- Consider now putting a resolution to YS, Women's or Annual Party Conference on the witch-hunt and send copies to "Witch-hunt News".
- Support Labour Left Co-ordination meetings which will include information on the witch-hunt at the forthcoming Regional Conferences.
- Pass resolutions through trade union branches to put pressure on Union representatives on Labour's NEC and Conference delegations. Put resolutions to Union Conferences opposing the witch-hunt.
- Get your Constituency Party to support Hackney North's call for a conference against the witch-hunt to be organised in conjunction with Labour Left Co-ordination, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Campaign Group of MPs and "Militant".
- Send information on what is happening in your area to "Witch-hunt News" to ensure it is fully up-to-date.

Kevin Flack
(Lewisham East CLP)

Defend Kath Crosby

It has been brought to my attention by women who are members of the Women's Action Committee in Manchester that a campaign is being waged against one of the very few working class women to be selected in the current round of Parliamentary selections, i.e. Kath Crosby. The basis for this campaign is the fact that she was in arrears to Manchester Council for her rent.

It is my strong view that, whereas middle class people are able to be in arrears to Access and Barclaycard and not be penalised for it, working class people who live in Council flats are subject to extreme harassment. I find it truly deplorable that the Labour Party, who should be supporting Council tenants, and women single-parent Council tenants in particular, should be part of any campaign that undermines a strong woman candidate like Kath Crosby.

I know Kath very well and was very proud and excited when I heard that she had been selected for Stockport. There is no doubt in my mind that she will be one of a small number of Labour MPs in the next Parliament who will genuinely fight for the rights of working class women. She will do that because her experience is their experience.

I understand that there is to be a vote at the next General Committee of Stockport party which may result in the constituency losing confidence in her. If this were to be the case, the women's movement in the party would lose complete confidence in the ability of Stockport constituency party to advance the interests of working class people, and in particular working class women.

Ann Pettifor,
London Representative, National Labour Women's Committee.

LCC backstabbers

The final outcome of the fight against the witch-hunt will be determined by the positions adopted by forces around Blunkett, Livingstone and the LCC. So far we've seen Livingstone make a strong personal stand against expulsions and Blunkett vote against the expulsion of Sheffield councillor Paul Green at the NEC.

Then Blunkett himself moved the expulsion of Paul Green from the Labour Group. Peter Hain, in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the LCC, has written to Amir Khan offering his public support, yet the 'Chartist', the LCC house journal, has published an hysterical attack on the Liverpool District Labour Party from Merseyside LCC. Tribune also carried edited highlights of this statement spread over two issues.

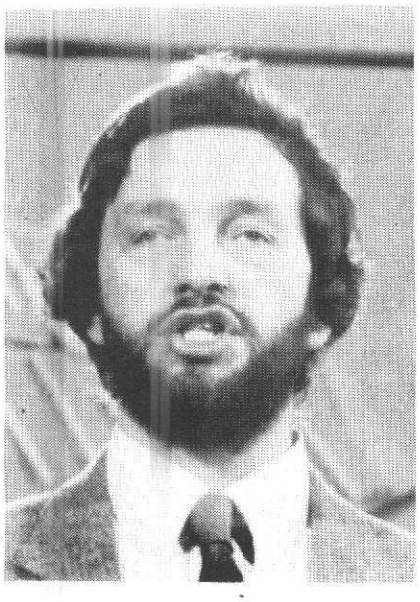
These 'soft left' forces may sign statements against the witch hunt but some of them at least are deeply implicated in pushing the campaign against the left much further. Their real target is not just the Militant comrades in Liverpool and elsewhere, but also the hard left leaderships in CLPs and District or City Parties around the country. The LCC submission to the NEC Inquiry makes it quite clear that they want to see the influence of rank and file trade unionists substantially reduced at District and City level. Their statement calls on the NEC to propose rule changes to District Party constitutions which would remove the right of trade union branches to nominate delegates directly to the District Party. In this the LCC recognise only too well that in many towns and cities it is the District Party, or its equivalent, which has been the power base for the left to make inroads into right wing Labour Groups. The influence of rank and file delegates from union branches has been a significant factor in this shift to the left.

These backward steps to close off District Parties from rank and file union influence play into the hands of the right wing with the LCC cast in the role of 'bouncer'. These bureaucratic manoeuvres are also being extolled in the trade unions themselves by the likes of Alistair Graham of the CPSA.

He has called for secret ballots for all branch officer positions, as opposed to open elections at branch meetings, in order to, in his own words, 'destroy the role and influence of the Militant Tendency'.

The present witch hunt is a significant component of Kinnock's overall strategy to sanitise the Party making it 'fit' for government in the eyes of the establishment, leaving the remains of the hard left isolated and powerless. He must not and will not succeed.

Bill Hamilton
Labour Left Co-ordination
Witch-hunt Sub-committee.



John Chapman

Blunkett

Labour Left Co-ordination

Campaigning against the witch hunt remains the top priority for the Labour Left Co-ordination. With the inquiry into Liverpool due any day, and further moves against supporters of Militant reported daily, it is urgent that the whole Labour Left unites against the witch hunt.

We made a useful start in London on 21st January when 150 people attended a rally organised by the LLC with the Campaign Group of MPs and the London Region of the Labour Party. They heard Joan Maynard MP, Diane Abbott, Ken Livingstone, Amir Khan and Kevin Scally from Birmingham Sparkbrook and Steve Reicher from Exeter all speak out against expulsions as a drive against the whole of the Party's left wing and its socialist policies. The first issue of Witch Hunt News, an information bulletin produced by the LLC detailing the disciplinary actions and expulsions against socialists in the Party, has had to be reprinted, and was distributed in subscription copies of New Socialist magazine. The second issue will be out by the end of the month with more information about the latest moves against the Left. In many regions too LLC supporters have been successful at pushing the model resolution against the witch hunt supported by the LLC, CLPD and Campaign Group. The witch hunt will also be a theme along with justice for the miners, positive discrimination and a socialist economic policy at joint fringe meetings being organised by the LLC, CLPD and Campaign Group at the regional party conferences. (Details of these meetings below). Finally the LLC is calling for a lobby of the NEC on 26th February when it hears the Liverpool inquiry report.

Discussions are now underway within the LLC about the left's slate for the NEC at this year's party conference. There is wide agreement that Meacher should no longer receive support from the Left and that he should be replaced in the constituency section with a positive discrimination candidate. There is also considerable support for the shadow elections being held by the Womens Action Committee, which has now affiliated to the LLC, to decide the candidates for the women's section of the NEC. Further negotiations are being held over outstanding differences on the NEC constituency section slate.

The last LLC meeting took a discussion on Ireland introduced by the Labour Committee on Ireland and Labour Women for Ireland, around tasks for the Left in opposing the Anglo-Irish Accord. The next meeting on Sunday March 9th at 2pm at the Fabians (!), 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1 will discuss positive discrimination, particularly in relation to the NEC and other party posts.

If you want more information about the LLC please write to the Secretary, Davy Jones, at 13 Morland Mews, London N1 1HN (please note the new address).

Order Witch Hunt News
Make cheques payable to: "Witch Hunt News"
20p per copy (includes postage)
£1 for 10 copies (includes postage)
Send orders to: WitchHunt News, c/o 36 Melbourne Road, London E17.

Getting the facts right

Dear Comrade,

In your February edition of Labour Briefing, Paul Sharma perpetuates the myth that I was expelled from Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP for 'supporting the formation of a black section'. This is not true and Paul Sharma should know that it is not true since he heard me explain to a Birmingham Briefing meeting last December that the reasons given for my expulsion were that I had participated in the television programme – the Bandung File – and had spoken of serious membership irregularities in this constituency. The CLP had refused to investigate them and it is believed by some that some very senior party figures would be severely embarrassed if the full facts became known.

It does not help my case to misrepresent the facts. For Briefing's benefit – I do support the setting up of black sections but have played no part in setting one up. Anyway, I am white Irish and it is not my job to do so.

Thank you for your support,
Fraternally yours,
Kevin Scally

DAGENHAM CLP TRIES TO STIFLE CRITICISM

Many of you will have seen the article criticising Barking & Dagenham's Labour Group policies (December Briefing) and the Council Leader's reply (February Briefing).

Since then, Mick McKeever has been summoned before his local E.C. for 'bringing the Party into disrepute'. Despite stating in his defence that the article was written in a personal capacity and appeared in Briefing as such, the Chair ruled that he was nevertheless defaming the name of the local Party.

Despite calls from some Councillors for his expulsion, a resolution was passed condemning the article and stating that such matters should be brought before the local Party. The Chair commented that he considered any repetition of this 'offence' to be grounds for expulsion.

This represents a crude and unconstitutional attempt to prevent a Dagenham Labour Party member from commenting, even in a personal capacity, on local policies outside the party committee rooms.

Given that the Council had (and used) right of reply in Briefing, such a judgement seems extreme and might even be considered by the rest of us in London as somewhat paranoic.

Mick McKeever is currently seeking advice on his constitutional position.

To the members of the Labour Party NEC and other Labour Party members.

An appeal from Howard Voris, expelled member of St Helen's South CLP, for readmission to the Labour Party and for justice.

I am a member of the St Helen's South CLP in Merseyside, and I was expelled from the Labour Party for a period of six months which is due to expire shortly. The reason given for my expulsion was that I "brought the Labour Party into disrepute."

My "crime" was that I was supposed to have written an article in the *Unite and Fight* newspaper, which said that Gerry Caughey, Brian Green and other leading members of the St Helen's South CLP were "witch-hunting" the Young Socialists in St Helen's.

The fact is that the article in question was not written by me, did not bear my name and was not written on my authorisation. Also, it has been admitted by the leadership of St Helen's South CLP that the article in question is factually correct.

In what sense then did I bring the Labour Party into disrepute? I can only think it was defending the *Militant* supporters in the local YS against their accusers — Caughey and others, on the issue of democratic rights in the Labour Party.

I appeal to all members of the National Executive Committee to uphold my wish for immediate readmission to the St Helen's South CLP, so that I can take a full part in the campaign for Labour in the upcoming local elections and towards the next General Election. An outside observer could only note that one result of my being excluded for six months is that I have not been able to have a say in the selction of candidates for the local council, and also have been prevented from putting myself forward for candidature.

My fight for readmission has been supported by Gerry Birmingham, the local MP, by my Ward Branch and by many trade union branches in the area. For daring to talk to other members of the Labour Party about my case I was "banned" by express order of a letter from Gerry Caughey from "speaking" to any Labour Party member.

Once again, I am not guilty of bringing the Labour Party into disrepute. I did not write the article I was accused of writing. In any case that article has been admitted to be factually acurate. I want immediate readmission to the Party I support and appeal to the NEC to uphold my right to be active in the Labour Party.

SHADOW ELECTIONS — WOMEN TAKE THE POWER!

This year's National Labour Women's Conference will see the start of an important campaign centring on the election of the women's seats on the Labour Party National Executive Committee. At present, while trade unionists vote for the trade union seats and CLPs vote for the Constituency seats, the whole of National Labour Party Conference votes for the women's section. A resolution was passed at last year's Women's Conference committing the National Labour Women's Committee to organising "shadow elections" for the women's places on the NEC at Women's Conference. They will then mount a campaign around the women elected at National Conference, saying that these are the women chosen by Labour women to represent them on the NEC.

It is of vital importance that the women chosen in the Shadow elections are socialist feminists, committed to campaigning on the issues of concern to women, and representative of all women in the party, black women, working class women, lesbians and women with disabilities. Briefing would therefore suggest nominating the following women for the Shadow Elections: Sarah Roelofs (London Briefing), Gill Jenkins (South Wales Briefing), Dianne Abbot and Mandy Moore.

We feel that these women will fight strongly for socialist and feminist principles and will therefore be the best women to carry forward our fight for the right to elect our own NEC representatives.

Ballot papers have already gone out to women's sections, and nominations must be returned to the National Labour Women's Committee by 27th March. Each women's section can nominate one woman, who must be a conference delegate.

Please try to nominate one of these women! It is particularly important to nominate Sarah and Gill as they are not so well known nationally as some of the other women who are likely to stand.

All four of these women are members of the Labour Women's Action Committee and will be participating in the ballot WAC is going to hold to decide upon its slate, so please support them here as well!

Jane Prust
Deptford CLP
Labour Briefing Women

LONDON WOMEN CONFERENCE VICTORY

Women at this year's Greater London Labour Party Women's Conference made a political decision to elect women who supported left policies to the Regional Executive. The women elected have a record of campaigning on issues such as British withdrawal from the North of Ireland, working with black women in black sections and with lesbian women and women with disabilities. These women stated in an open letter to the conference that they were opposed to witch-hunting and that they would ensure that they represented the policy made at the Greater London Labour Women's Conference on the Regional EC. The alternative slate was the Labour Women's Action Committee (LWAC) slate which only managed to get three places on the Regional EC — and two of these women, Sarah Roelofs and Nadine Finch, were included on both slates.

This was a political defeat for LWAC and is due to their failure to accept that Labour women form an active part of the broad based movements within the Party — in fact, in many cases, women are at the forefront leading these campaigns. Women have a feminist perspective in all areas of party policy and will not be ghettoised into what has been defined by men as "women's work" within the labour movement.

Ireland

There could be no better example of how women in the Labour party are spearheading radical policy than on the issue of Ireland. At the Conference the section on Ireland received more motions than any other and many women spoke in the debate for the motions and against the interventions of women from *Militant*.

Alison Clarke from Bow and Poplar (South) Women's Section moved the composite motion calling upon the Regional Labour Party to extend campaigning and debate on Ireland, to oppose the Anglo-Irish Accord and to seek the views of London Labour Women on the issue of British withdrawal from Ireland. She stressed the need for socialists in the oppressor nation to "Shoulder the responsibility of crimes perpetrated by that nation", and that the Labour Party has to recognise that it is the same imperialist Britain that created a "Unionist Frankenstein" sixty-five years ago. She continued with her vivid metaphor of the monster and the British Labour Party who are "too scared to bury it — indeed they even hold up this Frankenstein and say 'If we don't pacify our monster it will run riot and create a bloodbath.' "

The controversial issue of the day was the appalling creche facilities for women with children. This was made worse by the assistant regional organiser asking a very well behaved eight year old girl to leave the conference hall (no doubt to go off to play in the freezing cold creche in the basement with no facilities). Women were rightly very angry and demanded better child care at future events. All in all a sad reminder that although Labour women may be breaking new ground in Labour Party policy they still have to win against their own Party bureaucracy for child care provision.

Cecilia Tredget
Tottenham Women's Section

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8th is International Women's Day. This year, as every year, women all over the world will be celebrating sisterhood and women's solidarity in struggle. It is particularly interesting, therefore, to use this opportunity to look at the origins of this celebration and of how we came to have a "day for women".

On March 8th, 1857, women clothing workers in New York took to the streets in their thousands to protest at their inhuman working conditions and to demand the right to organise in trade unions. Most of these women worked a 12 hour day for starvation wages in workplaces which were poorly ventilated and which had grossly inadequate sanitation provision. On top of this they had to provide their own sewing machines and pay for the materials which they used.

Violent and Brutal

The police used violent and brutal methods in an attempt to put the strike down, and many women were battered and seriously injured. Despite this they continued to organise, and further strikes of garment workers occured in 1879 and 1908. The women adopted the slogan "Bread and Roses" to symbolize women's rights, not only to physical survival, but also to truth, beauty and freedom — to the things which make existance worthwhile.

In 1910, Clara Zetkin, a leading German socialist active in the fight for women's rights in the Second International, moved a resolution at the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen, that the courage and determination of the women garment workers should be commemorated by making March 8th International Women's Day. A day for women all over the world to celebrate the long history of women's struggles and to bring women's demands to public attention.

So it has remained ever since. On March 8th we make links with women in workplace and trade union struggles; with women fighting the racist apartheid state in South Africa; with women in Nicaragua, facing the threat of United States imperialism; with women fighting British imperialism in Ireland; with women in the peace movement; with black women, working class women, lesbians, women with disabilities, all fighting their particular oppression.

Labour Movement

As women in the labour movement March 8th is a good time for us to remember and to celebrate these battles. We are fighting for the same aims as the women on strike in New York over a hundred years ago, their struggle is still ours.

As we come marching, marching we bring you
hope at last,
The rising of the women, is the rising of the
class,
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil
where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories, Bread and
Roses, Bread and Roses!

Jane Prust
Deptford CLP

WENDY SAVAGE INQUIRY — VINDICTIVE CHARADE!

The official inquiry into the competence of Wendy Savage, the consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist suspended from the London Hospital nine months ago, opened at the start of February at Addison House, Chart Street, N1. A crowd of supporters including parents with toddlers and babies braved the freezing temperatures to greet her on her arrival.

In the past, the HM(61)112 procedure has been used against alcoholic, drug dependent or similarly incompetent doctors. It is the first time that an enquiry of this kind has been used to enforce conformity to one end of a spectrum of legitimate medical views and this promises to be a test case for all those who believe in a 'woman centred' approach to ante-natal care, labour and delivery. The inquiry is based solely on Mrs Savage's handling of five cases, said to have been selected by her colleagues following a trawl through her files covering a two year period. In each case she is accused of failing to conduct a caesarian section within an "acceptable" time limit. She has argued that there should not be a definitive limit on the length of time a 'trial of labour' – an attempt to give birth vaginally – should last. While the number of Caesars performed in England and Wales is rising, there is no evidence to show a concomitant fall in perinatal mortality.

Only one of the five cases submitted an official complaint. Three of the others are among Wendy Savage's most public supporters, while the fourth who was fifteen at the time of giving birth finds the publicity generated by the use of her case extremely unwelcome and obtrusive. Denise Lewis, the mother of five children, failed in her attempt to prevent Tower Hamlets DHA from using her medical records to prosecute Savage. Ian Kennedy QC, counsel for the health authority told the inquiry, "Her notes are the property of the department. We, as the health authority, have the custody and use of them. There is no question of this patient or that saying they are not prepared to have the facts examined. They do not have the knowledge the profession has about whether this or that is right or wrong".

S.P., another of the five cases, is now pregnant again and has said that she would welcome the opportunity to be cared for by Wendy Savage.

The focus of the inquiry in the first week was the evidence of Professor Jurgis Grudzinskas, Mrs Savage's head of department at the London. On the Tuesday he denied that he had ever said that Savage was "dangerous and incompetent" and added that he found her "an extremely hard working individual with many commitments". The following day the inquiry was told in an affadavit from Professor Ronald Taylor from St Thomas's Hospital, that as soon as he was appointed, Grudzinskas had said that his first task was to get rid of Wendy Savage. Grudzinskas denied the allegation although he was later forced to acknowledge that he did not believe Wendy had shown incompetence in her ante-natal care of one of the cases.



Hackney Gazette

Wendy Savage (on left)

It was disclosed during the first week of the inquiry that the remaining obstetrics consultants at the London had abandoned the community care programme for pregnant women, pioneered by Wendy Savage. Significantly, the scheme, which had been in danger of collapse since Savage's suspension, was finally discontinued on the first day of the inquiry.

If, as the inquiry appears to be confirming, Wendy Savage is not either incompetent or dangerous, why is this vindictive charade taking place? It would seem that she is being victimised by a cosy male fraternity who are more interested in spending time in their Harley Street consulting rooms than in providing the kind of obstetric care women in Tower Hamlets want and need.

Even if Wendy Savage is totally exonerated by the inquiry, she cannot be awarded costs. Win or lose, she alone will be responsible for her legal fees, which could be as high as £100,000. An appeal fund has been set up but is still a long way short of its target. Donations may be sent to Dr. Sam Smith, 20 Malford Grove, South Woodford, London E18 2DX.

For further information and copies of the pamphlet "Does Anyone Out There Care; – women's views of maternity services in Tower Hamlets" please contact Myra Garrett at 21 Old Ford Road, London E2.

Heather Reid

Hargreaves Bill down but not out

On Friday 24th January the MP Hargreaves attempted to pass another version of the Powell Bill through Parliament. The only difference was that some of the previous amendments to the Powell Bill were accepted into this Bill. As with the previous attack on our reproductive rights the Bill fell because it was filibustered out. However, we should not sit back and breathe a sigh of relief. The Catholic press has said that the Bill will again be presented to Parliament at the beginning of May. Even if this is not the case, the government is still committed to putting the recommendations of the Warnock Report into legislation.

The Hargreaves Bill, if it had been passed, would have had serious implications for all women. It would have undermined and attacked the 1967 Act, by giving legal protection to the foetus from the moment of conception. It would also have controlled the way in which in vitro fertilisation is carried out and vetted who could benefit from it.

Defending and asserting our rights

Quite clearly the Labour movement has to guard against any legislation which will undermine our existing rights. The composite passed at the 1985 Labour Party conference is a good starting point in that it calls for defence of the 1967 Act, better education and significantly no conscience clause for MPs (comrades should write to their MPs getting their opinions).

Another question that we must continue to raise is our right as women to make choices, control our own bodies and make decisions ourselves about our treatment. But, the Hargreaves Bill and others do raise the question of accountability of research. We have to assert what we want. We have to find out what research is being done and question whether or not it serves our needs.

Bernie Wilde,
National Abortion Campaign
(Birmingham Branch)

SCOTLAND: ORGANISE THE FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

As we approach the Scottish Labour Party's Annual Conference at Perth, the popularity of the Tories in Scotland is at an all time low. That's the product of seven years during which most Scots have seen Thatcher's government as totally unconcerned with the nation's problems.

These are of course rooted in economic factors that go back a good deal further. But the 1980s have seen the devastation of most of the country's traditional industrial base — shipbuilding, engineering, coal and steel, leaving only 22% of jobs in manufacturing (35% in 1960). Worst hit is the central belt, from Dundee in the East to Ayreshire in the West. That's compounded by social problems arising from long-term unemployment — especially amongst older and young workers — and a local authority housing stock deprived of resources. In Strathclyde last year 61% of 16 year old school leavers had no job a year later. One in two council houses is in urgent need of repair.

But, say Tory propagandists, Scotland is actually booming — in oil, computers, tourism — and unemployment, while high at 16%, is no longer double the UK average.

Industrial Decline

Reality is more pessimistic. Scotland is actually in a more advanced state of industrial decline, symbolised by the impending closure of the Ravenscraig steel works.

Oil related industry accounts for around 60,000 jobs — mostly in the North East. But 1986 is the projected peak year of production so it's downhill from now on and, whatever the publicists say, Aberdeen is not about to become the Dallas of Europe.

The Computer Industry now accounts for 40,000 jobs. But "Silicon Glen" has been at least as badly hit as other industries by recession. Like oil, it too is a branch, largely assembly based, of US/Japanese multinationals.

Most ominously, then, if we're looking for growth — or even stability — we're forced to acknowledge the importance of arms-related activity. Rosyth naval dockyard is now the largest single site employer. In the West, Yarews naval yard, Babcock's, Bow and Strouds, all up to their necks in defence work, are amongst the largest employers. And Scotland has the heaviest concentration of military bases — more than 100 of all kinds — in Europe.

Glasgow Herald Opinion Poll
Feb 1986

Labour	46%
Alliance	23%
SNP	17%
Conservatives	14%

Seats at Westminster
1983 Election

Labour	41
Alliance	8
SNP	2
Conservatives	21

Consistently Strong Support for Labour

The consistently strong support for Labour in Scotland is actually remarkable given the Party's record. In the late 1970s it was Labour's uncertainty that meant the necessary 40% vote was not gained for the Assembly — a body that would certainly have acted as a focal point for resistance in the 1980s. Unfortunately neither has the Party itself tried to give a real lead.

By the late '70s, the LCC had gained overall control. Since then we've seen at first hand the results of leadership from what Peter Hain calls the "left". It's featured a constant willingness to talk left with an unwillingness to do anything about... anything. Examples abound:

- The fight against Scottish Office curbs on local government spending brought letters from the Executive affirming a policy of no job loss for council employees but there was absolutely no lead in co-ordinating action to that end.
- During the miners' strike, there was an unwillingness to cut across the traditional division of labour, in which the Labour Party controls electoral politics and the Communist Party dominates trade union activity. This meant that while Party activists were involved in local support work, there was no centralised solidarity initiatives that could have helped stem the slow but sure haemorrhage of strikes lately.
- Most recently, similar politics have meant the biggest *political* presence in the fight against the closure of Gartcosh has been the SNP

LCC/CP Domination

The long time LCC/CP domination of Party/Union politics is what's also made the emergence of a real left in Scottish politics a long overdue event which will however be fraught with problems.

Above all, this will happen around organising a united fight led by the Party

- against closures, especially of Ravenscraig;
- against local authority spending cuts and for united defiance of these;
- for maintenance and extension of health services and housing;
- for total elimination of all nuclear bases;
- for unconditional reinstatement of all sacked miners.

The elements of such policies appear in various resolutions to the Perth Conference. All experience shows, however, that it will only be initiatives taken by local or district Parties that will at this stage provide the lead so urgently required for an organised fight in Scotland against the Tories.

Tony Southall
(Glasgow Hillhead CLP)

MASSIVE CUTS IN HAMPSHIRE

Hampshire's share of the already shrinking central government grant to the Local Authorities has been cut this year by between £9 to 10 million and the consequences of this have sent MPs and Councillors reeling. The Tories are cushioning the Borough and District Councils from the worst of the cuts by imposing them on the Shires. Why should this be – when the Shire Counties are traditionally Tory and have relatively low rates which support poor levels of service? The answer of course lies in the District and Borough elections this May. Thatcher doesn't want to undermine the Tory vote in these elections so the Shires who don't go to the Polls until 1989 are being hit now.

Hampshire's Tory MPs made a fuss to begin with – it even looked as though a major Parliamentary revolt was on the cards. They soon backed down when they were promised the proceeds of Rate-Capping however. The Tory led Council with a budget of £666 million is still looking at a rate rise in excess of 20% to maintain services at their present inadequate level. They cannot trust their own Government to come up with the 'blood money' from inner-city Rate Capping so it's 'cuts' or 'massive rate rises' for Hampshire.

The only concerted opposition has come from the Hampshire Joint Trades Unions Committee and the Labour Group on the Council. The HJTUC have initiated a Campaign of User Groups and Workers to obtain a Rate Support Grant adequate to fund a good level of service. Whilst the unions are lobbying at every single Committee Meeting on the Council, the Care Campaign has its eye on a crucial by-election in Fareham.

The initial public meeting of the Campaign was held on the 4th February in Fareham to concentrate the minds of the electorate on the consequences of returning a Tory to the Council. The death of Sidney Trott left the Tories with just 49 seats out of 102. The Tories control the Council with the support of two Independents but one is unreliable so they need this seat to retain control.

At the meeting Andy Holdup for NALGO outlined the case for increased central funding. He spoke of over 35 children in many reception classes in Hampshire's schools, school buildings which have leaking rooves and outdated crumbling structures, a home-help service second to none in its lack of availability and many more horror stories. The meeting also heard the Labour candidate Harry Burstow outline Labour's plans for expanding services. The Tory candidate declined the invitation to appear but the Alliance sent their candidate Jim Murray along. Unfortunately he declined the offer to speak but when answering questions denied any knowledge of the Alliance councillors' refusal to back teachers' demands from government – demands supported by the Labour Group. No-one at the meeting defended existing services as adequate – and no group has any desire to poach money from the inner cities' Rate Capping 'Blood Money'. There must be no job losses amongst Hampshire's employees but the Care Campaign will in the months ahead be fighting for better services, more jobs – paid for by central government.

Nick Jarrett
(Campaign for Care in Hampshire)

THE DISTRICT AUDITOR BITES AGAIN!

In 1925, Paul Robson in a Fabian pamphlet described him as the 'old menace in a new disguise', the uncrowned king of local government slightly intoxicated by the prospect offered of so many new worlds to conquer. In the 1982 Camden Supplement case (in which he argued that a £60 minimum wage was so generous as to be unlawful) the High Court described him as the ratepayers' watchdog who had bitten the wrong leg. The District Auditors for Lambeth and Liverpool (Messrs Skinner and McMahon) have now issued certificates of surcharge of £126,947 against 32 Lambeth councillors and £106,103 against 49 Liverpool councillors.

Their appeals to the High Court against these certificates have been heard over the past month. The hearing was anticipated to last until 14th February. The High Court will give its decision a few weeks later. If the councillors fail, they will be disqualified from being members of a local authority for five years. They will be jointly and individually liable for the full loss, and if bankrupted would be barred from standing for Parliament.



John Chapman

NEW POWERS

District Auditors now act under new powers given by the Local Government Act 1982. The Chief Executive of the Audit Commisson, John Banham, has sought to emphasise the independence both of the Commission from the government, and of individual local District Auditors. They have a new role to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local government. John Banham has said that it was merely a matter of convenience that the auditors in Lambeth and Liverpool issued their certificates on the same day through the auspices of the Audit Commission.

The reality is somewhat different. In 1984, Liverpool fixed a rate a whole month later than last year. No action was taken by Mr McMahon. It was generally thought that Patrick Jenkin, the Environment Secretary, was biding his time. In 1985 he would have his ratecapping powers.

By March 1985, the ratecapped authorities had indicated that they would not fix rates. Liverpool, incidentally, was not on the hit list. On 14th March Patrick Jenkin set out his strategy in a parliamentary answer to a Tory stooge, John Watson. There would be no negotiations. The government would not pay housing benefit subsidies on Crown properties until rates had been fixed. Councillors would risk surcharge and disqualification for any loss. As a matter of record, the government subsequently conceded to Camden that they had been wrong to withhold the housing subsidies. Payment of rates on Crown properties cannot be legally enforced. They are paid at the whim of the government pursuant to a convention dating back to a Treasury minute of 1874.

District Auditors Skinner and McMahon took the message. A series of letters were sent to the authorities which had failed to fix rates. On 9th May, they were told that if they had not fixed rates by the end of the month, a surcharge loss would be certified. Acting independently of government and of each other, the auditors issued notices against Lambeth and Liverpool on 6th September. The loss alleged in each related solely to loss of interest due to delayed payments of housing benefit subsidies and Crown rates. Other losses would be assessed in due course. Identical grammatical mistakes in the two written decisions were merely coincidental.

Had the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors failed to appeal against these certificates that losses of £126,947 and £106,103 were caused by their 'wilful misconduct' they would have automatically been liable for these sums and their periods of disqualification would have started.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE

Similar points have been raised by both Lambeth and Liverpool. They have argued that the District Auditors acted without any regard to the elementary principles of natural justice. The councillors were never given details of the case they had to answer. They were never given the opportunity of an oral hearing to explain their actions. They were assumed to be guilty. If these arguments are upheld, the certificates issued would be nullities and the auditors would have to start again from scratch. Sknner and McMahon would probably need to be replaced on grounds of bias.

Other arguments relate to the legal duty to fix a rate. The existing legislation specifies no date by which a rate has to be fixed (this is to be changed in the current Local Government Bill). Did the Councils act unlawfully? Did any loss or deficiency arise – one public purse benefited at the expense of another? Who was responsible for the loss – Patrick Jenkin or the councillors? Was the loss offset by other compensatory gains?

The issue then arises as to whether 'wilful misconduct' had been proved. Tony Scrivener QC for the auditors argued that the councillors had sought to persuade the government to repeal the Rates Act by quasi industrial tactics of threatening chaos. They had a duty to fix a rate to generate interest. But if the councillors did not know the specific illegality alleged against them how could it be shown that they had deliberately done something knowing that it was wrong or with reckless indifference as to whether it was wrong or not?

The unreality of the hearing was demonstrated on the first day when Lionel Read QC for Lambeth suggested that any campaign by a local authority against the government would be unlawful. 'That would make life very dull' commented Mr Justice Russell dryly. Little more can be said for the bench save that Lord Justice Glidewell ruled in favour of the GCHQ unions, subsequently to be overturned on appeal.

EITHER WAY

The view seems to be that the appeals could go either way. Lambeth and Liverpool do not necessarily stand or fall together. The rate eventually fixed by Liverpool was still unlawful. The law relating to the duty to fix a rate is unlikely to be any clearer. Action could be taken against other authorities. Camden and Greenwich passed the 31st May deadline. Sheffield, Hackney, Southward and Islington fixed rates in May. A decision adverse to Lambeth and Liverpool would not be fatal to the other councils. Each case would depend on its own facts.

One point has been clarified. That is the nature of the independence of the Audit Commission and of the District Auditors. The ratepayers' watchdog is this government's poodle. They would serve their office better if they concentrated on the corrupt rather than on socialists motivated by principle. The reality of the beast has not changed.

Robert Latham
(Camden Councillor and Barrister)

LOW KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

The Labour Party Local Government Conference in Norwich at the beginning of February was a fairly low key affair. At the final plenary speaker after speaker assured us that we had displayed the high degree of unity necessary for the Party to do well in the May local elections. Certainly there wasn't the degree of open division which I'm told has been a feature of previous conferences, notably last year with Neil Kinnock's famous 'dented shield' speech.

This year Kinnock did include a passing dig at those local authorities who stood out against ratecapping: "local government isn't about the search for epitaphs for heroic defeats", while saying that he believed that the surcharging of individual councillors is wrong. He told us that we had every right to be proud of Labour local government and singled out decentralisation measures, equal opportunity policies and local economic strategies for special praise. What he didn't do is tell us how a future Labour Government would assist Councils to develop these policies further.

Cunningham

John Cunningham, the front bench speaker on the Environment, was only slightly more helpful. The Rates Act would be repealed. Authorities would have control over spending their capital receipts. In the long term there would be a "new financial interface between local and central government" (I think this means that rates may be reformed). Many key questions went unanswered. Would Rate Support Grant be restored to the 1979 level? Would there be controls over capital spending? Would Councils be given cheap loans? Cunningham's only definite promises were salaries for some councillors and legislation to outlaw racial discrimination.

How about the voice of local government? David Blunkett continued his current strategy of building bridges. He described Kinnock's speech as the most positive contribution he had ever heard from a Labour leader on the issue of local government, while at the same time making a strong plea for support for Lambeth and Liverpool. Ted Knight's intervention also focused on the surcharges, calling for the next Labour Government to introduce retrospective legislation to remove them.

The most surprising thing about the conference for me was the total absence of any discussion on the tactics for resisting ratecapping and other Tory financial pressures on local government in 1986-7 (apart from a workshop on creative accounting measures). I went to a *Labour Herald* fringe meeting hoping to hear some ideas there, but was disappointed apart from some enigmatic remarks from Ted Knight. He told us: "I'm not against selling the family silver. I've been looking for it for years. Every year we operate under capitalism, we do things which build up problems in the future. There is no issue of principle in selling the Town Hall". A few days later the papers announced that Lambeth was seeking to do precisely that.

Worrying Trend

There is a worrying trend that even left councillors now seem to be relying on struggling through to the next General Election via creative accounting. Compared with the same stage last year the anti-ratecapping campaign is barely visible. There is a great danger that when councillors are forced to recognise that the crunch has come and any more manoeuvres are clearly cuts, that it will be too late to revive the energy and enthusiasm of the campaign in the spring and summer of 1985.

Kevin McDonnell
(Holborn & St Pancras CLP)

science briefing

Contributions to Science Briefing to Piers Corbyn, 55 Innis House, East Street, London SE17 2JN. Tel 701 5691.

Pass this energy resolution

The crucial fight for Labour's COMMITMENT to a decent energy policy in harmony with human needs and the environment is now on.

Nuclear power is crucial to Thatcher's attack on the Unions – particularly the NUM – and her craven prostitution of Britain's human resources to the US military-industrial complex. British investment is the lynchpin of the South African Apartheid regime which is occupying Namibia by military force which provides most of Britain's Uranium requirements which are used for 'civil' nuclear power which creates Plutonium by-products which are exported to the United States where they are used to make bombs.

The stakes surrounding this house that Maggie and Ron and their predecessors built are high, very high. So it is no wonder that the right of the Labour movement are wriggling hard to get out of the vital anti-nuke Composite 70 passed at last year's conference. SERA – the Socialist Environment and Resources Association have launched a campaign to get next Conference to back such a policy by an over 2/3 majority and so make it LP Policy. Get YOUR WARD, CLP and UNION branch to back it:

"(Your CLP/Union branch) welcomes the recent Annual Conference vote in favour of Composite 70 (Fuel Policy).

In view of:

1) The strong support for Composite 70 (61% of the votes) and the likelihood of greater support in the following years, and

2) the opposition to Nuclear Energy from an overwhelming majority of people as highlighted by all the public opinion polls,

(Your Branch) believes that it is important for the Labour Party to have a clear energy policy on time for the next general election.

Therefore (Your Branch) urges the Leader and the NEC of the Party, to make sure that a statement on energy will be put to the next Annual Conference and will include all the points of Composite 70".

Don't delay, do it today.

SHUTTLE DISASTER A BLOW TO STAR WARS

Piers Corbyn
Bermondsey CLP

The obsession of the US military with Star Wars and their consequent desire to race ahead with an expanded space shuttle programme was bound to lead at some time to the tragic loss of human life witnessed in the Shuttle disaster.

This disaster is also a serious setback for Star Wars plans. What the US public were not told is that many Space scientists doubted the recyclibility of the Space Shuttle, that manufacturers had downgraded most of their estimates fo the safe number of flights for various major components very drastically – e.g. from 10 to 3, and that despite all this the US military and Space Agency were planning regular fortnightly shuttle flights which would alternately be entirely military missions and a bit more public/'scientific'/TV consumable flights.

Now Uncle Sam will have to delay his plans. In the meantime let us hope the American public begin to get a grasp of what the Shuttle really is all about. It's not about TV razz-ma-taz experiments on weightlessness or 'lessons from space' but about a programme to launch offensive military hardware into orbit to threaten Eastern bloc cities with laser-lighted firestorms.

TRADE UNION
BRIEFING

DEFEND THE NUM!

Broadsheet No 2

REBUILD THE NUM IN NOTTS!

The emergence of the UDM as an organised expression of the concerted scabbing which occurred in Notts, South Derbyshire and Leicestershire coalfields during the miners' strike has caused massive damage to the NUM both in the East Midlands and nationally.

The National Coal Board has assumed that all miners in Notts support the UDM. But at Bevercotes colliery, two NUM members were fined for allegedly damaging a conveyor belt. This they refused to pay. Both NUM and UDM members on their shift called a 24 hour stoppage in their support and when the UDM officials instructed their members to work normally, only a handful did so. 60-70 UDM men rejoined the national union on the spot. Pressure has been kept on the UDM in the wider labour movement, with motions being passed in a number of constituencies to refuse new or continued membership of the Labour Party to UDM members, although Labour's National Executive Committee have allowed UDM members to remain in Labour Party membership, while barring any new memberships. This 'have your cake and eat it' attitude has prevented a serious campaign against those councillors and officers in Notts who have gone with the UDM and MPs like Don Concannon, who openly supports the UDM. However, the East Midlands Regional Executive of the Labour Party has refused to endorse any candidates who are members of the UDM. Trade Union Briefing supporters in the NJMC will be arguing that there is an urgent need for a boost to be given to the campaign for rebuilding the NUM in Notts, and for a national demonstration to be called in Mansfield as a follow up to the demonstration on March 2. This has been provisionally set for June 14.

It is vital that as many labour movement bodies as possible give their sponsorship to this demonstration and actively build for it and support it.

THE TIDE IS TURNING

By Peter Heathfield, General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers.



The national rally on Sunday March 2nd marks the anniversary of the 84/85 miners' strike. It is a good time to stand back from the hectic activity of day-to-day campaigning in defence of our union and its members, and get in perspective the events and developments of the last year, and what has been achieved.

While the tide is beginning to turn for the NUM, at first sight the situation in the coalfields might appear gloomy:

* 6 NUM members are still in prison for fighting for their jobs and futures of their community
* 28 pits have closed and another 5 are under review
* 47,000 jobs have been lost in the mining industry over the past 2 years
* Safety standards have slipped as pit managers have implemented MacGregor's harsh regime.
* The NUM's assets are still, of course, in the hands of the receiver.

And the most dangerous threat to our union remains the existence of the breakaway organisation, with its backing from the Tories and their friends in the press.

But there is another side to the story. A reality the newspapers have not printed. The struggle against pit closures has continued. We have kept open Darfield Main, Bates, Polmaise, Betteshanger and Tilmanstone. Just as throughout the strike, the support movement has played an important role in this campaign.

The continuing and growing strength of the support movement is shown by the growth of the National



WHAT IS TRADE UNION BRIEFING?

Patrick Sikorski,
L.T. District, NUR.

Trade Union Briefing is the newsheet of trade union activists who support Labour Briefing magazine. Produced monthly, Briefing has contributions from trade union and Labour Party members from all around the country.

Trade Union Briefing was in at the start of the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, co-sponsoring, with the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the fringe meeting at last year's Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth that led to the founding of the campaign to get justice for sacked and victimised mineworkers.

It was one of the most dynamic, militant and united meetings at the Conference, with over 300 delegates and observers listening to speeches from Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard, Tony Benn, Liz French, Billy Etherington (from the NUM National Exec.) and others. Called to rally support for the sacked and victimised miners, it helped to ensure that the NUM resolution calling for a revue of all cases concerning those victimised during the strike got passed. Many of those present at the meeting stayed on to discuss building a centralised campaign. The march and rally on March 2 stands as living proof of the success that the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is building.

The aims of the campaign are outlined elsewhere (see box). But what will *Trade Union Briefing* be doing over the coming months?

We believe there are many things to be learnt from the experience of the miners' strike of '84-'85, and the Labour Party Conference that followed it. Most importantly, is the fact that despite the huge mobilisation and determined stance of the NUM and its leadership, the left in the Labour Party and trade unions was neither politically coherent, nor well enough organised to force the whole movement into solidarity actions. Most importantly, the bureaucratic top-leadership of the trade unions did almost nothing to support the miners — and paid no political price for their inactivity! To win, the miners needed solidarity strike action from other sections of the labour and trade union movement. Because we could not secure this, we are now reaping the whirlwind at Wapping.

Now the media is trying to get us to believe that the Tories are about to change their spots because they feel they must get rid of Thatcher to avoid electoral anihilation. Meanwhile, Kinnock and Hattersley are trying to lead us further into the arms of a coalition with Owen and Steel. Under the cover of a blizzard of 'theretical' articles in the Communist Party's 'Marxism Today' journal, political currents from the right of the Labour Party, to the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and the Communist Party itself, are trying to sell us the idea that *fighting* the capitalist class and its system is an outworn fad! But the capitalist class is not so self-conscious when it comes to defending their profits. Ask any of the millions on the dole, or the 5,000 sacked by Murdoch; ask anyone living in the inner city areas that are continually being run down; ask the women, the black communities and the youth who bear the brunt of the collapse of the Health Service, of job opportunities and the increase in 'Law and Order' policing strategies. Whilst the most oppressed sectors of society suffer from the Tories policies, profits have risen year after year since the Tories came to office.

Trade Union Briefing does not pretend that it alone will politically and organisationally co-ordinate the fight in the unions for socialist policies and leadership. As trade unionists active on the left in the Labour Party, we are convinced, however, that we can play a part. The development of socialist policies and organisation in the unions is possibly the most important job of the moment. It must go hand-in-hand with a similar fight in the Party. If we ignore the unions, the bureaucrats and their control of the block vote will crush any fight-back.

The traditional idea in the movement, that the unions can look after conditions at work, and leave the Labour Party to look after the 'politics' in councils and parliament, is what allowed Wilson and Callaghan to introduce mass unemployment. If we want to avoid a re-run of the labour Labour Government, with its £3 billion of social services cuts and the 5% wage freeze in the so-called 'Social Contract', then we must build a left that is capable of fighting effectively on *all* fronts, that doesn't flinch from taking difficult decisions to defend points of principle.

Trade Union Briefing stands in defence of the political gains of the miners' strike. The mass solidarity movement — a political movement lead by women; the start of a fight-back to defend basic trade union principles, 'You don't cross picket lines'; for the idea that industrial struggles are part of the solution to workers' problems, solutions that challenge the bosses' attacks head on. We defend the political links that were established the mining communities and the lesbian and gay support groups, the oppressed population in the north of Ireland, and the black communities in the inner cities. We applaud the fact that the links made were continued and developed when miners and their supporters visited Broadwater Farm estate after the youth uprising last year; and that the leadership of both the NUM and Women Against Pit Closures have visited the Wapping picket line and called for NUM and WAPC support at Wapping.

(Peter Heathfield)

Justice for Mineworkers Campaign nationally. The demonstration on March 2, together with the 'Heroes' Concert, is a big step towards reorganising the movement that grew out of the experience of our great strike. That experience is now being fed into the printworkers' dispute. We have called for miners' banners on the Wapping picket line. We will not forget the support we received from the printworkers. They are struggling against scab unionism, just as the NUM has had to do in its fight against the NCB-sponsored organisation. But just how great is the threat of the UDM? It represents 13% of the entire coalfield workforce, but only 2% of its members are outside Notts. It was a great blow to the UDM to lose the vote in both Leicestershire (64% to stay in the NUM), and North Wales, where a 90% turn-out voted 9 to one to stay in the NUM. Similarly, in Lancashire the UDM has also received its marching orders.

The UDM can only survive because of the backing it gets from the Tory press, and its friends in the EETPU. In area after area it is losing support and this is surely related to its leadership's unilateral decision to sell out its members' interests on the issues of pensions and wages. In South Derbyshire, almost half the miners have joined up with the NUM, and even in Nottinghamshire itself, the NCB is having to collude with the UDM to hold back miners wanting to return to the NUM. So it's clear that the tide *is* turning against the UDM. At Bevercotes colliery, an NUM walk out was supported by UDM members, some 70 of whom rejoined the NUM.

Notts coalfield is in the frontline of the fight to break the scab organisation. Just as they receive unlimited backing from their friends in the government, the press and in the EETPU, so we must rally to support those in the thick of the struggle for the NUM. The campaigning groups in Notts, both in the NUM and outside it, and in particular Women Against Pit Closures, have fought long and hard to defend the national union, and rebuild it.

The movement as represented by the March 2 demonstration, must direct its support towards those campaigning for the national union in Nottinghamshire.

This campaign puts into action the resolutions passed in support of the NUM at last year's TUC and Labour Party Conferences. The solid and enduring links that are being established across the labour and trade union movement by our campaigning activities, will act as a powerful lobby to ensure that our just demands are carried out by the next Labour government.



BRIEFING EDITORIAL

The demonstration and rally on 2nd March is the first major action called by the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. Our basic aim is to mark the anniversary of the miners' strike, to state the demands of the campaign and organise around them, and to give the campaign itself a base and a visible political purpose.

Our next step for the campaign must now be clear. The deadliest threat for the NUM is the continuing existence of the breakaway UDM; and the deadliest threat for the labour movement as a whole is posed by the EETPU leadership, and its link-up with the UDM and with other potential scab unions. This right wing union alliance is organising against labour, and it aims to drag the TUC with it, around their policies of:
— acceptance of government money for ballots
— negotiating no-strike deals
— TUC and Labour Party recognition for the UDM.

The TUC has responded by doing *nothing* to defend genuine trade unionism. It has organised *nothing* in support of printworkers against Murdoch's Wapping project; it has attacked Hammond with a feather duster. The logic of this 'new realist' response is to shift TUC policy down Hammond's road, and in particular to recognise the UDM.

The labour movement's fightback is spearheaded by Notts NUM, Women Against Pit Closures, and the support groups in Notts, in their struggle to rebuild the NUM in the coalfield; and also by the printworkers in their war against Wapping. The fight against the UDM *can* be won, as other articles in this Broadsheet show. To give real help to the NUM in Notts must mean a direct expression of support for all those who struck in the Notts coalfield, and who have for two years been a harassed minority.

***Briefing* backs the Welbeck Amnesty Group's call for a demonstration of support for the NUM in Nottingham.**

We *can* roll back this offensive against the trade union movement. We need to unite those prepared to take action in defence of the movement, and to build a broad campaign that combines:
— mass action
— the fight for a Labour Party leadership accountable to its conference policy
— continued pressure on the TUC to refuse all recognition of, or dealings with, the breakaway UDM.

TRADE UNION BRIEFING

TOWER HAMLETS PRINTWORKERS SUPPORT GROUP

Public Meeting
'Defend Sacked Printworkers'
Tuesday March 4, 7.30pm
York Hall, of Cambridge Heath Rd
(Bethnal Green Tube).

DEFEND PRINTWORKERS

By Steve Masterson

The 'Dirty Digger' plotted to provoke the printworkers' strike! The conspiracy letter leaked by Murdoch's legal advisors has proven that he intended to sack the existing 5,000 strong trade unionised workforce wholesale. It was the 'cheapest way' to 'dispense with the present workforce' under Her Majesty's Law, says the letter; but he couldn't have got this far without the help of Hammond's scab union operation!

Thatcher's anti-union laws make 'illegal' all effective trade union activity by printworkers to defend their jobs. With a fourth round of anti-union law waiting in the wings, this strike assumes an historic importance. It is for the future of trade unionism itself. It is for the future of the Labour Party, which was built and is politically and financially kept alive by the unions. The TUC and the Labour Party leadership must take up the fight of the printworkers. Not by fixing deals with Hammond's scabs, but by organising and leading the fight to make the anti-union laws themselves inoperable.

For generations, workers have fought for the most basic and democratic rights: the right to work; the right to withdraw labour; the right to vote at mass meetings; the right to organise; the right to give solidarity action; the right to picket. These are *now* under threat. The only way to throw back this employers' offensive is mass industrial action, in solidarity with the sacked print workers.

The 'legality' of the sacking of the whole unionised workforce, and the 'illegality' of effective resistance illustrates two things. First, that the Tories are relying on the timidity of the Trade Union and Labour leaderships to defend those who have to 'break' these laws to protect their jobs.

Second, is that any effective response will involve mass 'illegal' action, with or without the consent of the Labour and Trade Union bureaucrats. It's urgent that we organise *now*.

WE CAN WIN

Like the miners' strike, the printworkers' dispute looks likely to be long and bitter.

Unlike coal, newspapers are a commodity that cannot be stockpiled. In fact, if any single part of the production or distribution process is slowed down, this highly perishable commodity can lose millions of copies.

Unlike pits spread here and there. Wapping is only a mile away from Fleet Street print workers, who, given a strong lead from their union leaderships, would certainly respond. They know that their jobs are next in line if Murdoch gets away with sacking the 5,000 News International employees.

Unlike the countryside pits, Wapping is at the heart of Britain's largest concentration of organised workers, a city whose communities know what unemployment and oppression are all about; a community which organised as women, gays and lesbians, youth and blacks to support the miners' struggle.

Women have already organised a militant march on Wapping, swelling the picket line at one stage to 4,000. The impact of the miners' strike on those involved in this dispute is already making itself felt.

Unlike pit shifts changing at all hours, Murdoch *must* get his papers out between 8.00pm and 11.00pm, giving pickets plent of time to get organised to get to and from the Wapping plant.

Unlike the time of the miners' strike, the Tories are in the midst of their own crisis over Westland, and are registering a poor third in the polls.

ORGANISE NOW!

We must utilise all the lessons we learnt during the miners' strike. In particular, we must not repeat the mistakes of the chaotic organisation of the support groups. From the word go, we must establish the greatest possible unity and common purpose possible amongst the support groups, organising to back the printworkers.

We must be under no illusions that the Tories will not use every weapon at their disposal to beat the printworkers, as they did with the miners. Anyone who remembers the events at Eddie Shah's plant at Warrington, or anyone who experienced the police riots in the pit villages, will understand that the bosses are quite happy to use the full weight of the state against trade unionists. The workers' movement in response, has *no choice* but to use all its resources to defend every sacked or victimised printworker. We have the right to expect of our leadership that they act to defend our hard won rights. We must organise to ensure that the betrayal of the miners' strike is not repeated.

In every borough (local or city council out-of-London), Printworkers' Support Groups should be organised involving the *whole* local labour movement.

At this early stage of development, the activities of the Printworkers' Support Groups should include:

* **Organising** to support the mass



Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

"Learn the Lessons of the Miners' Strike"

By Eric Heffer MP

This rally has been called by the National Justice for Mineworkers' Campaign to recognise the anniversary of the Miners' strike. We should also recognise that all of us in the movement who said a defeat or set-back for the miners would be a great tragedy for the British working class movement, can now see the truth of this in what has happened to the NGA and SOGAT '82 workers in Fleet Street.

If we had all stood four square — I am talking about the whole Trade Union and Labour movement here — Fleet Street workers would not be under such attack from the Tory offensive. This offensive could have been stopped in other areas too. I now see that the people down at GCHQ are saying that it's time to make a stand. Of course, I don't disagree with that: but if the miners had been backed, supported, and united, we could have dealt a severe blow to the policies of this government, to their anti-union legislation, and to their use of unemployment as a weapon against workers.

The end of the Miners' Strike was, I think, clearly a defeat. But it was not a *total* defeat. The way the miners were driven back was a bad day for the British working class, who now have a lot of ground to make up. But I want to say also, that the miners have, over the past year, given us a lesson in fighting to defend our unions. Despite the establishment of the so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers, despite the continuing grip of the receiver on NUM income and assets, despite the massive job losses and pit closures since the end of the strike, together with the vicious harassment of NUM members in the mines, and despite the victimisation of nearly six hundred miners — against all these odds the NUM has held firm and is beginning to re-consolidate. That is a real gain, and one that we must support and build upon.

I have to say this to the members of the TUC General Council: it is time to get off your knees. It sickens me to see union leaders constantly backing off because of Government legislation. Of course the Tories have brought in their laws to break up British Trade Unionism; to bankrupt it with massive fines and sequestration of the assets of any union that breaks their laws. But the unions will be broken up anyway if they try to keep within the law; backing away from confrontation will only help the government in their anti-union strategy. The time has come when the working class movement, through the TUC and trade union leadership, has got to start fighting back in a much more vigorous and organised way than they have up 'til now.

So I'd say: yes, let's salute the miners; salute the great struggle they put up; salute their courage, their determination; salute their leaders like Scargill and others who have made a tremendous contribution, who didn't sell-out, who stood four-square. But having said that, let's learn the lessons — that the time has come for the movement as a whole to join in the fight-back; and that means fighting back on every trade union front.

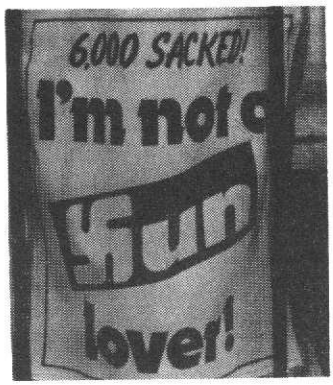
I would also like to pay a great credit to the women of the Pit communities. The entire movement owes a great debt to them. I think they showed themselves to be not *behind* the miners, but *with* the miners. They were, and are, sometimes out in front of the miners. And they showed the very point I have argued before; that we have to consider ourselves not only as women, or as black, and so on, but in fact as an essential part of the movement as a whole. And, by God, they showed that, with courage, endurance and imagination.

Together with the support of the movement as a whole, both national and international, and with the miners themselves, they were and continue to be a great inspiration to us all.

→ picketing of Wapping. This could be every Saturday, as well as one day of the week. All Boroughs should picket on Saturdays, and the other days of the week shared out amongst the various Boroughsd.

* **Picketing** any local wholesalers, or even newspaper shops where van drivers/deliveries may be gently persuaded about the basic trade union principles of respect for picket lines!
* **Building** close links with the chapels in Fleet Street and bringing printworkers and their husbands/wives into the local Printworkers' Support Groups.
* **Getting** printworkers and other speakers around to every Labour Party branch, CLP meetings, to all trade unions, shop stewards and trades council meetings, to lobby Labour councillors for material support.
* **Organising** public meetings, benefits, socials, distribution of leaflets, raising funds, etc.
* **Arranging** accomodation for activists from out of London to come to the pickets, especially miners/Women Against Pit Closures, etc.
* **Pressuring** all Labour and Trade Union leaders, including MPs and Councillors, to get them onto the picket
* **Setting up** full time campaign offices in each Borough, with printworkers and local activists available to speak at meetings, etc.
* **Approaching** other trade unionists engaged in struggle, especially teachers, council and health workers. workers, trades councils and other

Even as we go to press, Printworkers' Support Groups are being set up by Briefing supporters, printlabour movement activists. A Conference to co-ordinate such groups should be called as soon as is practical. Trade Union Briefing has already set up a London-wide Printworkers' Support Group co-ordinating office.



Ann Flowers

Printworkers Support Centre
102a Cromer St, London WC1
Phone 01 278 2794

Tower Hamlets Printworkers Support Group Contact Dan Jones 01 790 6430 or Terry Sullivan 01 739 8701

Lambeth Printworkers Support Group Contact Larry Hyatt 01 760 4676

Camden Printworkers Support Group Contact Fred LePlat 01 387 1361

Student/Polytechnic/College PSG Contact George Binette 01 278 2794



Chair:
Billy Etherington
NUM Durham Mechanics
26 The Avenue
Durham DH1 4ED

NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINEWORKERS CAMPAIGN

Secretary:
Ed Fredenburgh
49 Milner Square
London N1

Treasurer:
Arthur Oxley

ACAS DEAL ON PAY SELLS OUT TEACHERS!

As the current dispute passes its anniversary most teachers are bitter and angry at the 'dirty deal' done by the leadership of the NAS/UWT with the non-TUC smaller unions. Up and down the country NUT members have been striking to attend rallies to build support for continuing action in the face of a sell-out. In Southampton 1500 teachers crowded into the Guildhall to hear Doug McEvoy, Deputy General Secretary of the NUT, explain the deal and why the NUT had refused to participate in the negotiations under ACAS. Although the rally was organised by the NUT, many NAS/UWT members joined their colleagues on strike. NAS/UWT members are bewildered at the result of the negotiations and now understand why the NUT refused to participate in them.

UNITY IN ACTION

All through the last year of action in schools, NUT and NAS/UWT members have worked together to maximise the impact of their strikes and withdrawal of goodwill. At times the NAS/UWT leaders have tried to undermine this but the vast majority of classroom teachers have stuck together in their struggle for decent pay and more resources for education. However, following the reconstruction of the Burnham Teachers panel by Keith Joseph the NAS/UWT leaders under their General Secretary Fred Smithies (soon to be Lord Smithies we hear), formed an unholy alliance with the non-TUC unions.

With the non-TUC unions Smithies could get a majority on the Teachers panel for a sell-out, even though the NUT command between 48 and 49% of teachers. The unions involved are the National Association of Headteachers and the Secondary Heads Association whose members have done their best to undermine the teachers' action, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association which is the old grammar and public schools organisation and the PAT, the Professional Association of Teachers. This last organisation was started by Tories in conjunction with the Freedom Association and its contribution to the struggle for better resources for education has been to ask Keith Joseph to impose a 5% settlement on teachers by Act of Parliament! With this mottley crew what did Fred Smithies hope to achieve?

TEACHERS MUST FIGHT ON

All NAS/UWT members must vote 'NO' in their ballot and instruct their leaders to continue action for a decent pay rise for all teachers and restoration of Hoghton relativities. NUT members must demand continuation of action and fight against the calls for suspension of action during the NAS/UWT ballot. Labour Parties up and down the country must demand proper negotiations on the 1985 pay claim and tell Nicky Harrison to stop undermining teachers' action. The Labour led employers' panel have been doing the Tories' work for them for far too long and must start sticking up for education. If the Harrison leadership can't fight the Tory cuts then they should make way for leaders who can.

Nick Jarrett
Divisional Association of the NUT
(Personal Capacity)



London Teachers' Demonstration, 23rd January Paul Mattsson

WHAT THE ACAS DEAL OFFERS

For the first time the Government will be involved in negotiations on teachers' conditions of service which will be merged with pay negotiations. If the Tories get their way they may release an additional 3% which will still not bring the teachers up to the expected inflation rate for 1986.

WHAT THE ACAS DEAL COSTS

ACAS nominees will replace Burnham members in control over pay and conditions of service.

Teachers will be required contractually to cover for absent colleagues, attend all staff meetings out of hours, undertake any duties the headteacher requires of them (which means what it says).

A no strike, no sanctions agreement for 6 months of negotiation.

An end to the principle of restoration of Houghton relativities jealously guarded by teachers as a measure of their real value to society.

BROAD LEFT '85

The massive membership of the TGWU, reflected in the block vote, makes it a vital factor in the struggle for socialism. Traditionally, the TGWU has been a 'left' union but with the Stalinist politics of the Morning Star. This has resulted in a firm stance on anti-union legislation and support for the miners' strike and the current Print dispute but, at the same time, a failure to campaign around these issues amongst the membership.

In fact the failure to enforce picket line discipline during the miners' strike and with the TNT drivers at Wapping is indicative of the problems which exist inside the TGWU. The 'left' stance of the leadership is built on sand – on the ability to manipulate a vast, bureaucratic machine better than the right wing. The union itself remains an anachronistic monolith which has failed to adapt to the changing structure of British industry. Power remains, to a large extent, with the white male from the docks or the car works. Democracy in theory but not in practice!

The complex trade group and geographical structure also works against rank and file involvement. In Region 1 alone 147 'dead' branches failed to return any votes in either the political levy ballot or the General Executive elections. Any member in such a branch is effectively disenfranchised. The need now is for organisation amongst activists at rank and file level to translate policy into action and to push for a democratisation of the union. With this aim in mind Broad Left '85 has recently been founded. Any TGWU member who is willing to fight for socialist policies within the union should contact us via PO Box 79, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 3QL.

LPYS — FIGHT FOR BLACK SECTIONS

The last year has seen a major increase in the level of racist attacks in Britain. At the same time, black and Asican youth are organising to defend themselves from fascist and state violence. Increasingly, young people are linking the struggle against racism in Britain with the struggle of the black masses in Southern Africa. Within the Labour Party the debates continue on the self-organisation of black people and support for black sections; and on action against apartheid. These are two of the key questions facing the YS today.

The regional conferences of the LPYS, taking place all round the country during February and March, have shown up the inconsistencies of the LPYS leadership in the face of continuing pressure from supporters of black sections and black self-organisation.

In London the conference voted down support for black self-defence campaigns (like those around Broadwater Farm and the Jarret and Groce families) on the basis, presumably, that they are primarily campaigns of *black people* and therefore "divisive". This was not the case in Yorkshire and the South, where the LPYS correctly supported these campaigns.

In the Southern Region we were told that the LPYS doesn't oppose self-organisation of the opressed around specific issues — like Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and Women Against Pit Closures — but condemns autonomous organisation if it is taken up on an ongoing basis.

In Yorkshire a resolution supporting black sections was defeated by only 4 votes as many young miners followed the example of the NUM leadership and voted in favour.

And overall we see more and more black members of the LPYS being encouraged to go onto regional and national committees and increase the profile of black people and the fight against racism within the LPYS. There is no doubt that the debate around anti-racism and black self-organisation has put a great deal of pressure on the LPYS leadership.

Winning the LPYS as a whole to support for Black Sections is obviously still a very long way off. But at this year's YS national conference (Bournemouth March 29–31) the discussion on the direction the LPYS should take in fighing for black youth will be at the top of the agenda.

Kingsley Abrams of Wimbledon LPYS is being backed by Black Sections to stand for the LPYS place on the Labour Party National Executive Committee. Standing against him as a black woman who supports the policies of the present LPYS leadership is Linda Douglas of the LPYS National Committee and Vauxhall LPYS. This opens up major possibilities for supporters of black sections in the LPYS to campaign for a candidate who will bring into the conference the issues we have been fighting around in our local branches and regions.

Kingsley is standing on a platform which puts opposition to the witch-hunt right at the fore, opposing attacks on the LPYS, black sections activists and Liverpool District Labour Party. He combines his fight for black youth with the need for a real debate about how to provide jobs for black youth and opposition to slave labour training schemes which are shot through with racial and sexual discrimination. He links the fight with black people with that of women, lesbians and gay men and other oppressed groups. He prioritises support for national liberation struggles from Southern Africa and Ireland to Central America.

Kingsley is quite clear about two things. Firstly, he is not standing as "The Anti-Militant Candidate". He is circulating a statement of his policies, and invites LPYS branches and groups within the party to support him on that basis. He states quite firmly that if he was to be runner up in the election and if the bureaucracy were to witch-hunt the LPYS representative off the NEC he would not take that place. He can see no gain for black sections at all in benefitting on the back of a witch-hunt.

Secondly, he wants to run a campaign that is open and democratic, accountable both to black sections itself and to all LPYS branches and other forces in the Party who are supporting him. He is calling a meeting (provisional date March 15th) open to all who support him, to discuss the strategy for his campaign, and building for the black sections fringe meeting at LPYS conference. So far he has the support of a number of LPYS branches, Labour Left Co-ordination and a large number of its component parts as well as the National Organisation of Labour Students and the LCC!

Our task now is to wage a political battle throughout the LPYS arguing why branches should go to Bournemouth and support Kingsley. We also want the left in the party as a whole to recognise the importance of taking up the question of black sections within the LPYS, which up till now has done Kinnock's dirty work for him in attacking them viciously. So we need as much support as possible.

Kingsley can be contacted on 01 879 0640, 3 Dora Road, Wimbledon, London SW9 7EZ and is willing to speak at meetings.

Copies of his statement are available from him or from Tracy, 57, Viaduct Road, Brighton; and Fran, Flat 7, Maresfield Gardens, London NW3.

Tracy Doyle
Brighton LPYS

YOUTH BRIEFING

EXETER LPYS UNDER ATTACK

The current witch-hunt in Exeter is not only an attack on Devon Labour Briefing, it is one of a long series of attacks on Exeter LPYS. The three members chosen by the EC for expulsion; Peter Bowing, Paul Giblin and Neil Todd are also leading members of Exeter LPYS. Peter is now in his third year as chair of the LPYS, Neil has been LPYS GC and EC delegate and is now the group's secretary. Paul preceded Neil as secretary and has also been the group's EC and GMC delegate. The 1986 LPYS AGM showed its contempt for the expulsions by electing Neil and Paul as GC delegates.

Since its inception a few years ago Exeter LPYS has faced hostility from the leaders of Exeter CLP. The Party initially refused to give the LPYS any money and did not explain its procedures to the young members. EC delegate Kalbir Shukra (a black woman) was actually told to "go back to where she came from" by the leader of the City Council. The Chair of the Party tried to excuse this obviously racist comment by claiming that he was referring to Exeter University! Paul Giblin was then barred from entering the EC because he had not been ratified by the GC, a procedure not explained to him and certainly unheard of by the previous LPYS EC delegate, Ralph Cook.

With the advent of the miners' strike LPYS members were busy collecting food and money out on the streets. But the Labour-led City Council refused to grant licenses to collect on Saturdays and a motion requesting this was voted down by an angry GC. LPYS members undertook illegal collections on Saturdays and collected with the Exeter Trades Council during the week.

Meanwhile a whole series of LPYS resolutions were voted down, ruled out of order, or very often simply not debated by a GC determined not to discuss policy. Motions on the miners' strike, nuclear free zone policy, NATO, unfair rents and squatters' rights have all been taken as personal attacks on Exeter CLP's Councillors and Party leaders.

When personal abuse and bullying have failed, no end of more subtle practices have been employed against the LPYS. The names of LPYS delegates have been omitted from countless EC and GMC minutes, nominations and other documents submitted to the Party have been mysteriously 'lost', and resolutions have even been labelled with the words 'From the LPYS' underlined, a treatment not given to motions from other branches. It was only a few months ago that we even discovered that the upper age limit for LPYS membership was 26, not 25 as we had been informed by the Chair of the Party.

Such treatment of the LPYS by constituency parties has occurred all over the country and is easy to understand. Young people face the brunt of Tory cuts and have not developed interests, material or otherwise, in the bourgeois system. They call for change and do not see socialism as embodied in political careers and social status, but as action to challenge oppression in all its forms. Rather than encourage such feelings, many Party leaders pour scorn on the demands of youth; Neil Kinnock's refusal to guarantee full employment is mild compared to Exeter City Council's attempt to criminalise squatting.

So, we call on all LPYS members everywhere to campaign against all expulsions. The hostile witch-hunt climate threatens the very existence of the LPYS. Savage cuts in our budget have already occurred, the South West Regional LPYS conference, for instance, has been reduced to a mere one day event. Such attacks on the youth section of the labour movement must be spotlighted by linking them to the widespread persecution of leftwingers of all ages. I originally intended to write about passing anti-witch-hunt resolutions in the South West Regional Conference, but my thoughts soon turned to the treatment of the LPYS by Exeter Labour Party. I feel strongly that this behaviour should now be exposed everywhere it occurs. Labour's leaders have effectively declared war on their own future with their pathetic attempts to replace socialism with social democracy.

Unite and fight back!

Paul Giblin, Exeter LPYS

WHAT EXACTLY *IS* RED WEDGE?



Steve Rapport Report

One successful tour under its belt, a cabaret tour beginning on the 28th February visiting thirty dates and much more in the planning. So what have Sade, Lloyd Cole, Paul Weller, Animal Nightlife, Bananarama, Heaven 17, Junior Giscombe, Everything But the Girl, Tom Robinson, Lenny Henry, Jerry Dammers, The Communards, Laurna Gee and Attilla The Stockbroker all got in common? The list could on on, it is still growing because many artists have still to reply. As Band Aid becomes the phenomenon of 1985, so Red Wedge could well shake Britain in 1986.

Already the potential for Red Wedge seems enormous and the optimism of its organisers is great. Over 2000 inquiries in the last few weeks shows the sort of excitement and interest Red Wedge has generated. But what exactly is Red Wedge? The brainchild of Billy Bragg and Paul Weller it got off the ground in June 1985 when both felt overwhelmed with requests to do benefits. Billy Bragg believed there should be an agency or organisation to coordinate benefits. From this idea Red Wedge has sprung to life.

It has three roles: 1) organising its own tours with major artists, 2) finding artists for benefits around the country and 3) in the future becoming a mouthpiece for the views of young people – addressing itself mainly to the Labour Party. Politically it covers a wide range of the political spectrum and could be described as a Broad Left Alliance. It is not affiliated to the Labour Party as such but has close links. However its independence, political and financial, is regarded as very important. At present much of the work is responding to the enormous response since the "Five Cities" tour. In the future, the third point is likely to become more important, Red Wedge hopes to "advise" the Labour leadership on its policy and attitude towards youth but how it hopes to do this is not exactly clear. It is a role viewed with great responsibility and Red Wedge make it clear they would like to speak from a position of strength. Therefore it is unlikely to be rushed but intends to build up a firm base from which to draw opinions. An example of this kind of work is the workshops held in the afternoon during the first tour and attended by artists accompanied by local Labour MPs.

However, by campaigning, if not overtly then fairly clearly, on behalf of the Labour Party then young people are likely to ask what are Labour's policies. It has to be said that a casual glance would not exactly fill the heart with socialism. We need to ask a number of questions like will every YTS trainee be guaranteed a full-time job? will the Labour leadership give full support to the print workers (or will they be left out in the cold like the miners)?, on nuclear disarmament will Kinnock throw out US bases? And what of the attacks on the LPYS budget? A serious attempt to undermine the youth wing of the Labour Party. While Kinnock gives his support to Red Wedge as it tries to get him elected he will not be so keen if it attempts to advise/criticise. The Left needs Red Wedge to help us ask these questions – and get some answers.

In the meantime the role of Red Wedge is seen as one of disseminating information using star names and spreading the message that if young people are better informed, hopefully it means they will make a better choice. And that choice will be Labour. The Labour Party has lost touch with young people and as a result was beaten in the last election through more young people voting Tory than ever before – or not voting at all. The impetus to change this may be achieved by the formation of Red Wedge.

Ian Millichap,
(Hackney North and
Stoke Newington LPYS)

Southern Region YS 'in complete disarray'

This year's Regional Conference, held in Brighton February 8th & 9th, was very subdued and uninspiring, and again was smaller than the previous year's. The main issues taken up by supporters of Briefing and Youth Fightback were: South Africa and racism, a woman's right to choose, miners' amnesty and the witchhunt.

We won support for the Justice for the Miners Campaign and the demo on March 2nd. During the debate on black sections and fighting racism, we were subjected to the familiar attacks on black sections activists as 'middle class careerists' and asked if we wanted special sections for tall people as well!

The biggest shock of the weekend was the discussion on an emergency resolution from Lewes LPYS calling on the conference to condemn the attacks on Briefing supporters in Exeter and follow this up by recognising the importance of a united campaign against the witchhunt and supporting the campaign organised by Labour Left Coordination (which includes black sections and the Campaign Group etc.) At first the regional committee tried to get us to delete the second bit. Eventually we agreed it should be taken in parts. When it came to the floor of conference the Chair realised that even if it was taken paragraph by paragraph they would still have to justify opposing the LLC campaign.

The first time we won the vote with some of the platform voting with us, but another vote was taken and we lost. Supporters of the Militant were in complete disarray, running around like headless chickens! Some of them, including regional committee members, came up to us to try to work out how we could make sure the resolution as a whole was not defeated. Eventually we succeeded in suspending Standing Orders to delete the second half (in order to get the bit on Exeter passed which was obviously most important) and therefore let the Militant off the hook. But it is very interesting that they have no political reasons for not supporting the LLC campaign (except implying it is something to do with the LCC!)

Geraldine Konyn, Lewes LPYS.

NO COLLABORATION WITH THE ANGLO-IRISH ACCORD!

For all her many troubles the one thing that seems to be going right for Margaret Thatcher these days is her Irish policy. A couple of months after signing the Anglo-Irish Accord with Southern Irish leader Garret FitzGerald, matters seem to be working out better than she could have dared expect.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

By Geoff Bell



Press Association Photos

Democratic Unionist leader Ian Paisley with Official Unionist leader James Molyneaux

First there are the Unionists. Their bitter opposition to the Accord remains. In the recent series of by-elections held in the North of Ireland the Unionists, despite the loss of a seat to the SDLP, did manage to increase their total vote. But with the elections over, divisions within the Unionist camp are starting to re-emerge. On one side there is Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and the potential mass militia of the Ulster Clubs. Both these are hallmarked by a growing anti-Britishness as well as an accelerating anti-Catholic sectarianism. On the other hand the more middle and upper class dominated Official Unionists still hope to win concessions from Thatcher. After the elections two such Unionists, John Taylor and Harold McCusker, called for "tri-partite discussions" between the British and Southern Irish governments and the Northern Unionists with the aim of establishing a new, devolved government in the North.

Loyalist Splits

Splits in the Loyalist camp are emerging elsewhere. There appears to be a growing restlessness in the ranks of the R.U.C. whose "Trade Union" or Police Federation has recently been gagged by the Chief Constable for demanding greater British Army presence on the border. Behind this complaint is an implied suggestion that the British are not matching up to their post-Accord promises on increased border security. Elements of the notoriously sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment are also making their own protest against the Accord in thir traditional brutal manner. In *Omagh*, at the end of January, a UDR patrol shot up a car carrying two Catholics, apparently because the two had been drinking in a pub from which the UDR men had been asked to leave. Loyalist terror gangs out-of-uniform have also been in action murdering Leo Skullion in early January and Martin Quinn at the end of the month. Both these Belfast victims were killed for no other reason than they were Catholics.

While few Unionist politicians will worry about such violence it is clear that none of the leading ones are prepared to endorse it on a mass scale. But neither do they have any united strategy to put in its place. Over the last fifteen years the Unionists have always been united in what they oppose — what has divided them has been what to support. It is this disunity which has minimised the potential of the mass Protestant 'backlash' much prophesied by those who oppose the removal of British troops from the North of Ireland. Again, while there is no doubting that the Unionists are serious in their opposition to the Accord, and increased Loyalist terror is likely to be one manifestation of this, there is no question of the rivers-of-blood civil war scenario being realised.

What the British government is hoping for is that eventually the Unionist opposition to the Accord will fade away as the main purpose of the Accord is realised. That purpose was and remains the defeat of the republican resistance to British presence in Ireland, as represented in particular by the IRA and Sinn Fein. The recent by-elections did show some small progress for the British on this front. For although Sinn Fein defeated the SDLP in two of the four seats where there were such contests, the Sinn Fein vote did drop by a third. Nevertheless, given the context in which these elections were fought, Sinn Fein could have done much worse and still have been optimistic about their future prospects. Moreover, the victory for the SDLP in the Newry and Armagh constituency could well prove embarrassing for the British. The successful candidate, Seamus Mallon, on the "Green" wing of the SDLP, is a constant and forceful critic of the UDR and has said that he sees one of the major tests of the Accord to be whether the UDR will remain as it is or not. But the British cannot afford to antagonise the Loyalists much more at the moment so Mallon and his Green wing of the SDLP could end up either growing restless with the Accord, or losing credibility among the Nationalist electorate for supporting it.

It is because the Accord carries within it such inbuilt tensions that its aim of defeating radical republicanism will remain illusory, but where the Thatcher government is having its greatest success as far as the Accord is concerned is with the collaboration that is being offered by the Labour Party leadership. Two examples will suffice. One concerns the treatment meted out to those Labour MPs who voted against the Accord, protesting as they did that it was against party policy of Irish unity. Each of the thirteen MPs received a special letter from the Labour Whip's office, summoning them to individual meetings with the Whip where they could be duely admonished. The second concerns the reaction of the Party leadership to the decision of the leader of the Labour delegation at the European Parliament, Alf Lomas, to allow a free vote on the Accord. Frantic cross-channel phone calls from Neil Kinnock's office threatened Alf with all manner of punishments. To his credit, Alf allowed the free vote to go ahead and himself voted against the Accord.

Just when, it can be asked, will the Parliamentary leadership show the enthusiasm they have displayed for collaborating with Thatcher's Accord for the party's policy on other Irish matters? Will any MP who refuses to vote against the renewal of the PTA be summoned to the Whip's Office? Will any Labour representative who refuses to call for the banning of plastic bullets and strip searching in Northern Ireland receive phone calls form the party leadership? You only have to ask such questions to know the answers. Of course there will be no pressure from the party leadership on MPs or others to abide by party policy on Ireland. But it must also be said that there is similarly little pressure being put on MPs from the rank and file of the party. It is now clear that the Accord has thrown much of the left into a somewhat confused silence. Only when that changes will the party leadership begin to get nervous for lining up with Thatcher. And until it does change those who stay silent or inactive on the left on Ireland will be as much part of Ireland's British problem as Margaret Thatcher and her Accord.

MAIRE O'SHEA ACQUITTED

After 13 months of hell Maire O'Shea was acquitted of charges under conspiracy law and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Everyone on the left and certinly large sections of the Irish community rejoiced at the acquital.

The evidence presented against Maire was:

1. She knew the man alleged to hae masterminded the bomb plot.
2. She was alleged to be named (code name Findlay!) in letters from the 'mastermind' to his "intelligence officer" with whom she was also acquainted.
3. She accommodated the person charged with possession.
4. She gave a lift to that same person.
5. She allowed her car to be used by others in the trial.
6. She is a fanatic about Ireland.

Few would rush to admit they knew someone who masterminded a bomb plot but most readers would be guilty of accommodating people they don't know, giving lifts to people they hardly know, and (probably fewer!) of lending their cars to others. Certainly all of us have been called "fanatic" at some time or other.

Under conspiracy law the prosecution doesn't have to prove a thing. They just have to create enough suggestion and innuendo through associations, political beliefs, reading material and circumstantial "evidence". Usually a person in this situation is found guilty because a jury is sufficiently convinced that they *could* have been involved.

The lessons from Maire O'Shea's case are valuable to us all:

1. *Fight back immediately*. Do not allow the "there's no smoke without fire" attitude to prevail. Immediately Maire's house was raided she began a campaign of protest by contactng English friends to complain to politicians and the media in Britain. In Ireland she contacted the press and politicians herself and was front page news for a number of days. She announced she was returning to England, cutting her holiday short, to make a complaint against the police. Hardly the action of a guilty person, particularly when she knew the others in the case had been arrested. Ususally defendants in Irish Conspiracy Trials understandably avoid publicity because it is so adverse. Maire and her daughter Deidre, being prepared to speak out, has made the future easier for us all. It has inspired confidence in others to speak out. The government and police can no longer depend on intimidating into silence defendants in PTA cases.

2. *Establish a Campaign Group immediately and win credible support*. With all due respect to the left-wing organisations who love to see their name sponsoring every worthwhile cause they are not going to be the catalyst to make a lot of people stop and think. The Maire O'Shea Support Committee along with Associated Staff for a United Ireland (A pressure group within ASTMS — Maire's union) set about winning support from people who had previously never spoken about Ireland. The usual MPs and sympathetic trade unionists were contacted to set the ball rolling. As the campaign progressed there was impressive support — 3 national unions, ASTMS, COHSE, NUPE; 35 MPs; 25 MEPs; 12 Trades Councils; National Labour Women's Conference; Nuneaton Labour Party; constituencies and branches; trade union branches; women's organisations; black organisations; Irish organisations; health and psychiatric groups. The list is endless. This support was unprecedented for someone charged with conspiracy to cause an explosion.

3. *Make the Defendant a credible person*. Maire was already very well known for her pioneering work in psychiatry and her consistent campaign for a United Ireland. She was also well known locally as supporting other progressive causes — Health Service Campaigns, CND, Industrial Disputes, CARF, etc. Most people in such trials are never projected as human beings. Instead a sinister image is created in media reports. Even though it dented Maire's vanity we projected her as an old granny who was in ill health and had spent her life doing her best. We ensured a personal as well as a political profile in every public statement. In a conspiracy trial the defendants will get publicity. We had to make it positive by confronting the media on their own territory. We had to show that there was nothing sinister about Maire O'Shea as a person. We could then have more open minds to talk about the political issues.

4. *Make Clear the Political Demands of the Campaign*. It is very tempting to include "revolutionary overthrow of capitalism" in all our campaigns but it is not always the most productive demand. Maire's Support Committee ensured that the main slogans were 'Maire O'Shea is innocent" and "Drop the Charges". We also ensured that all our material opposed the PTA and Conspiracy Laws. Some supporters tried to use Maire's Campaign as a general attack on the police and state. "Smash the Fascist State" and "Put the Pigs in the Dock" — very gut stirring stuff for the committed but the support committee believed we would reach more of the uninitiated by limiting the demands as stated.

5. *Ensure the Best Possible Legal Defence*. Most solicitors believe in keeping politics out of law! Maire's solicitor Gareth Pearce and her barrister Mike Mansfield as well as using every legal head on. One ASTMS observer at the trial said that the jury must be the best educated twelve on the history and politics of Ireland! Apart from Maire being allowed to expand on her political views how many other trials do you know where defence witnesses were called because they were members of T.O.M., had their homes raided, were specialists on police harassment of Irish people and the anti-Irish bias in the media? The issues were confronted at every turn. Most lawyers run a mile from this sort of defence yet it is the only possible defence in a politically motivated trial.

This was written in the midst of elation at Maire's acquital and withdrawl symptoms from not having a press release to write. It's an off the cuff response. By the time it is printed I will probably have additional things to say. I would welcome comments from anyone who has been involved in work around Maire.

What is most significant for everyone is that this case has blown apart the case for the PTA. It has clearly exposed it as an act of intimidation and harassment. Equally important is the way great inroads have been made in organisations, trade unions in particular, who have previously refused to discuss issues relating to N. Ireland. We have all got a golden opportunity to use Maire's acquital to build the discussion and movement for British withdrawal from Ireland.

On behalf of Maire, Deidre, and the Support Committee I'd like to thank everyone who played their part in ensuring that Maire was acquitted. Maire in a short time will be prepared to speak throughout the country. Contact Maire O'Shea Support Committee, c/o 448 Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11 4AE. Tel 021-773 8683.



Birmingham Troops Out

Troops Out Movement Public Meeting, 31st January. Left to right, Maria Connolly, Emma Groves (blinded by rubber bullet), Cath Pearson and Zarina Khan (LP black section).

Mary Pearson
(Birmingham Troops Out Movement)
Press Officer — Maire O'Shea Support Committee

UNIONS AND POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Bob Fine

The launch of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) marks a great step forward in the process of development of independent working class organisation and politics in South Africa. It highlights the role of trade unionism in the broader democratic movement against apartheid and of the black working class in the struggle as a whole. There is an urgent need now to assess the achievements of trade unionism and its future direction.

There is nothing new about trade union organisation among black workers. The present trade union movement has been built on the shoulders of the non-racial trade union movement led by the South African Congress of Trade Unions in the 1950s. The special significance of trade unionism today, however, is that it provided the *first* organisational form in which black workers reconstructed a working class movement in the 1970s after a decade of defeat and demoralisation. In this period, trade unionism has ante-dated working class political organisation. The immediate question is whether black workers will rest content with their initial forms of organisation alone, or, as is now becoming evident, address the question of their extension into politics.



Transport and General Workers annual general meeting (Soweto, 1984)

Photos from 'Working Women: A Portrait of South Africa's black women workers' – to be published by Pluto Press in September.

A School for Socialism

Black workers have made substantial gains through their unions.They have won significant improvements in wages and conditions, albeit restricted to a small section of the working class and precarious in the face of recession and repression. They have shown they can win! As important, black workers have through their unions won for themselves a recognition of their rights as workers and human beings. They have acquired the knowledge that their problems within the workplace are not personal but political, and the power no longer to bow before seemingly all-powerful economic forces but to change them for the better. Trade unions have served as a "school for socialism" for many black workers through their experience of collective organisation and struggle as well as through the formal education provided by the unions. Workers have built up their own sense of democracy, such that they themselves participate not only in action but in the decisions to take action and have real mechanisms to hold accountable those who represent them. Through their unions, black workers have often gained a vital experience of non-racialism: African, Coloured and Asian workers combining together regardless of "race", with white workers free to join (though very few have) and white organisers, teachers and helpers serving as a visible symbol in some cases of non-racial commitment.

Black Women

The entry of black women into the industrial workforce since the mid-1970s has given rise to an increasing involvement of women in the labour movement and an increasing awareness of the importance of taking up women's issues (equal pay, equal access to jobs, sexual harassment, rape) in the here and now.

The unification of unions into national federations has given workers a national presence, not just as a collectivity of employees of a particular company, factory or industry but as a class capable of expressing its own mark on the future of the nation. Through their unions black workers have crossed national boundaries to forge contacts with workers in other countries. Direct contact has been made with workers in Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland as well as migrant workers from Mozambique. Contacts have been formed at all levels with the international trade union movement in the West and in part with the free unions, like Solidarity, in the East. As a result, workers have won not just concrete assistance but a sense of the workers' movement as an international movement and a critical appreciation of the meaning of state socialism divorced from workers.

Lastly, through their unions black workers have always engaged in politics and the more so as the crisis of apartheid intensifies. They have won significant reforms in trade union law and developed their own forms of response to liberalisation in this area. They played a leading role in boycott of the racist new constitution introduced by Botha. They formed the backbone to the two-day political strike in the Transvaal in protest particularly against the military occupation of the townships. They led and participated in consumer boycotts in protest against the emergency laws, the killings and the torture. The President of COSATU has given notice of a mass defiance campaign, if the pass laws are not repealed.

Where to go from here

Black workers have made great strides in translating the idea of working class leadership from image into actuality. Now the debate centres on where to go from here. Trade unions provide for workers only a limited voice; there are many social and political questions beyond their perview. Coming into focus now is the extension of working class democracy into the political arena, the extension of independent working class activity beyond the unions. At issue are three sets of factors: the programme of the liberation movement, the methods of struggle it uses, and the organisational forms through which it is led.

The programmatic debate centres around the adequacy of the Freedom Charter. For thirty years now the Freedom Charter has been a vital expression of the struggle for democracy in South Africa. At issue now, however, is the depth and extent of the democracy the movement against apartheid is fighting for. On the economic side, the Freedom Charter is committed to the transfer of the mines, banks and monopoly industry to the ownership of the people and to the freedom of workers to form trade unions. But it makes no mention, for instance, of whether nationalisation will take the form of democratic workers' control nor of the right to strike. On the political side, it is committed to universal suffrage and a state based on the will of the people as a whole. But it does not say whether a future parliament will be based on a one-party or multi-party system of representation or the relationships envisaged between parliament and the state bureaucracy. These omissions have led some trade unionists to call for the creation of a new workers' charter with a stronger class perspective on democracy than that present in the Freedom Charter.

The debate around methods of struggle has focused in part around the lack of reference to

WESTLANDS: THE HIDDEN STATE

The Westland saga illustrates two truths that are all too often overlooked in the labour movement: the first is that the state has two faces, and the second is that capitalist classes have to struggle on two fronts.

One face of the state is its parliamentary paraphernalia: ministers responsible to Parliament, policies collectively decided in cabinet by politicians and then chewed over in the Commons, while the select committees keep their hawk eyes on what the departments are up to. This face of the state is entirely made up of party politicians.

The other face of the state involves small committees of bureaucrats in constant contact with big business figures as well as with the officials of other states. These committees, insofar as they handle important issues are not departmental, but within the central executive machinery of the Cabinet office which draws people from this department or that. The lynch-pin holding these two faces together is the Prime Minister's office and the Cabinet Secretary. The role of politicians in government is to decide how much the public world of Parliament and the party can take.

Heseltine did a scandalous deed by ripping down the curtain and showing us a good deal of the state's hidden face, hidden, that is, from the public. By doing so, he suddenly made Parliament look ridiculous. We can take for example, the select committees. We are now being offered what is supposed to be an heroic spectacle of the defence select committee fearlessly rooting out the facts. In reality it is ferreting around trivial titbits of departmental gossip trying to discover facts known to the entire top civil service and many business leaders already. The select committees are not even allowed to know what the 80 or so cabinet committees *are*, let along know who is on them or get their documents. Yet a private citizen by the name of Cuckney walks right in and sits down at one. And even as the MPs try to bellow away to show the public how powerful they are and restore some semblance of their authority they still bow down to the pillars of the hidden state: how dare so and so doubt the unimpeachable integrity of this top bureaucrat or that top businessman?

Why did Heseltine do it? Because of his standpoint over how the double sided struggle of the capitalist class in Britain should be conducted. One side of this struggle is against the British working class and here Heseltine has no quarrel whatever with Thatcher's aims. But as far as the other front of battle is concerned – that of British capitalists against foreign capitalist classes – Heseltine is at war with Thatcher. The issue is simple: manoeuvre in alliance with West European capital or with US capital?

These days more than ever international capitalist rivalry directly and intimately involves what the state does, especially in the military and high tech fields. The American masterstroke for asserting its own dominance in these fields is Star Wars. Heseltine opposed the Star Wars deal, Thatcher outmanoeuvred him and forced him into the humilitation of publicly carrying the can for it. It is 90% certain that she also struck a deal with United Technologies via Reagan over the Westland company at the same time. UT, the seventh largest American company and about the biggest in the Star Wars field has offered Star Wars work to Westland.

Thatcher is deeply committed to the American connection, and her domestic political strategy against the working class – let the free market decide everything – entails giving complete freedom of operation in the British economy to the power of US multinationals. Heseltine – like the French, German and Italian governments does not subscribe to that approach. The BL affair is a classic demonstration of this split.

Labour leadership

The Labour leadership has studiously avoided taking any stand on the way the state is run or on its attitude towards tackling the power of multi-national capital. Only Tony Benn pointed to the Star Wars issue in the House of Commons debates. The parliamentary leadership desperately wants to demonstrate to the establishment within the hidden side of the state that it is more than ready to play by their rules. And it is equally desperate to prove to the American capitalists that their interests in Britain are safe with Labour.

Will this exercise in persuasion succeed? It seems unlikely. At the start of February, the US Deputy Secretary of Defence, Richard Perle breezed into London and gave a speech on British politics. *He said that there was one threat to NATO from within bigger than any other, and it was the British Labour Party.* A report of the speech went out on the tapes but no newspaper thought it newsworthy.

Labour must take Perle's words seriously. If the US will not tolerate and help Labour governments the way it used to, the very least we must do is start an urgent debate in the party on alternatives to Atlanticism. But we must also remember that if US big business won't play ball with Labour, there is little reason to hope that the far more jittery British big business will do so either. Alternatives to NATO atlanticism must involve socialist policies at home.

Oliver MacDonald



this issue in the Freedom Charter. This absence is important because democracy needs to be constructed in the process of the struggle if it is to have any hope of realisation at the end of struggle. Questions are raised, for instance, on the contribution of the particular kind of armed struggle waged by the ANC for the building of a workers' democracy, or of the limitations of a strategy of "ungovernability" in the absence of alternative forms of government in the townships. The experience of a real workers' democracy in the trade unions has raised the question of their extension into the political arena. If political organisations are to represent workers, then — as far as is possible under the repressive conditions of apartheid — workers should actively participate in them and their leaders should be accountable to and elected and recallable by workers. It would be impossible for organs of struggle to pre-figure in their entirety the democratic goals to which they aspire in a liberated South Africa, but a start can be made. The fight for legality is crucial in this respect, since democracy is necessarily curtailed in illegal, underground organisations.

These political questions raise directly the relations of trade unions to the leading forces of the liberation movement: especially the ANC but also the SACP, Azapo, the Cape Action League, the New Unity Movement, etc. It raises the thorniest of all issues: the building of a united workers' movement out of the trade union and political forces which currently exist. For the solidarity movement in Britain, it should impel us to re-examine how best we can support and take strength from this most exciting instance of a democratic workers' movement.

Kinnock's anti-socialist manifesto

By Phil Hearse

Neil Kinnock's Fabian lecture on the 'Future of Socialism'* is part of a sustained attempt by the party leadership to define the meaning of 'democratic socialism' – counterposed both to 'social democracy' (the SDP) and 'ultra-leftism' (that's you and me). Inside the party its target is the left, its objectives and methods. We should not underestimate the extent to which Kinnock's ideas could gain currency inside the party – they need to be seriously considered and addressed.

The ultra-left sustains a 'dogma which regarded liberty as a tedious bourgeois fad'. This argument of Kinnock's is one of his most central barbs at the 'hard left'. While the social democrats undervalue the need for social change, he says, the hard left undervalues liberty and freedom. Only 'democratic socialism', it appears, can combine the two. For Kinnock, liberty and freedom are safeguarded by, enshrined in and exemplified by parliamentary democracy. He states:

"Democratic socialism in Britain is built on parliamentary democracy. It is an essential implement for democratic socialism. It is our preferred and deliberately chosen system of government. It is our basic tool for change and we are committed to using it and improving it. We require Parliament — not just the institution but the whole system of government by deliberation — as a platform for our views, the most dependable means for securing and sustaining progress".

How should socialists respond to this? It is true enough that democracy cannot function without some form of *representation*: 56 million people cannot participate in every decision. Socialists do not object to the notions of universal suffrage, a national assembly, or free competition between political parties. Whether under socialism the structures of representative democracy would enshrine the antique rituals and structure of Parliament must be at least open to question. But leaving that aside, Kinnock's argument is flawed in more fundamental ways. First, socialists seek not a limitation but a massive extension of political liberties for the mass of working people, and these necessarily go beyond the limits and concerns of parliamentary democracy.

Such an extension requires, at least, a massive reduction in working time to ensure that workers can participate fully in public affairs; it would require a huge stepping up of free child care provisions; free access to the press and media by workers and their organisations, political parties and community groups; workers control of the factories and enterprises to guarantee adherence to democratic decisions in the economic field; statutory rights of representation for women, black people and other oppressed groups in all instances of the national and local government; and fully accountable and immediately recallable public officials at every level.

Such a series of demands of course is a very minimal account of what a real extension of democratic liberties and genuine political rights means for socialists. Without them socialism fails to address itself to the structural constraints to freedom and liberty under capitalism,



which Parliament by its very nature is insufficient to provide.

Moreover, when Kinnock prioritises Parliament as the decisive 'tool for change', he naturally prioritises Parliamentary action over class struggle and extra-Parliamentary campaigning as the decisive mechanism for advancing towards socialism. And thus he prioritises the rights and activities of the Parliamentary Labour party, of the party tops against the activity of the rank and file of the labour movement and the struggles of the oppressed.

As Kinnock would be the first to admit, means and ends are intimately connected. If you want a socialism based in the self-activity and self-government of ordinary people then you have to have a means to fight for it which encapsulates the very same values. These are alien to our party leader.

Equality

Kinnock argues that the third basic value of democratic socialism after freedom and liberty is equality. Equality, he rightly says, is perfectly compatible with diversity. The problem is that he poses equality as 'equality of opportunity' — a slogan which rolled off the tongue of Harold Wilson for decades, and meant not much more than comprehensive schools plus the NHS; all well and good, but hardly striking a death blow to inequality. In fact Kinnock betrays himself when he polemicises against the 'social democrats':

"The essence of social democracy is that it is not concerned with the structure of property ownership or the transfer of economic power; rather it is defined in terms not of social change, but of social relief not of eradicating inequality, but relieving its grossest manifestations".

Any socialist could agree with this excellent polemic; the problem is that it comes from a party leader who puts forward not a single serious proposal for fundamental change to capitalism in his definition of socialist democracy, who opposes basic socialist demands like the nationalisation of the banks, whose deputy leader is prioritising the 'fight against inflation' over items like renationalisation, and who is witch-hunting people for standing for the nationalisation of the major monopolies! The creed he criticises sounds dangerously like the one he and his predecessors have put forward for decades.

Kinnock gives the game away when he states that equality is 'not of the same order' as values like freedom and liberty. It is less fundamental, less vital, an added extra. This view lacks any comprehension that the real freedom, the 'life opportunities', the practical liberty of working people is directly related to the structure of economic ownership and power. Is it really necessary to point out such a commonplace to a grand theorist of 'democratic socialism'? Our assertion of this basic idea of Marxism and socialism — that the material prerequisites of an extension of democracy are the time, material means and form of social organisation to guarantee it — are at the heart of the dispute with Kinnock and his ilk.

Kinnock's slaughter of far left straw people reaches its climax with a long attack on 'democratic centralism', via jokes at the expense of the WRP and its erstwhile leader. In fact democratic centralism, for all the mythology surrounding it from right and left, is a simple notion of organisation — whether you agree with it or not. It merely proposes that socialists should organise their activity on the basis of discussion and voting, and then applying the policy decided by a majority.

Such a thing is of course unacceptable to a parliamentary leadership which jealously guards its explicit right not to adhere to any decision of party conference which it happens to disagree with.

Neil Kinnock's attempt to make a definition of democratic socialism is part of an atttempt to make the hard left in the party an anathema, to cast it out from the fold of the righteous, to caricature its beliefs and activity as authoritarian and anti-democratic. The cross and holy water are being prepared for an exorcism. We should ensure that the 'socialism' of the witch hunt does not gain credibility as 'democratic'.

* *Neil Kinnock, The Future Of Socialism, Fabian Society price £1.*

LABOUR BRIEFING
Streetlife Supplement
on personal politics

Innocence or incest?

I lived in a middle class American family in a suburban neighbourhood of Florida. Our family seemed quite typical in that my father worked and travelled a lot, while my mother stayed at home and looked after the house and children. (I have two sisters and two brothers). The incestuous relationship with my older brother Guy began when we were quite young. My bedroom was a "girls" room with pink walls and pictures of ballerinas hung about (yes I was made to attend ballet lessons), also I had a huge canopied bed with a frilly lace bedspread. A common bathroom linked my room to Guy's room which was a "boys" room all decorated in blue and green. He always had GI Joe men playing war games spread about his floor, along with bits and pieces of train sets and racing cars and at Christmas time I got the dolls and dresses while he received the punching bag and model airplane kits.

Although Guy was only one year older than me, he was assigned to protect me on the way home from school and had to help me cross the street and make sure no-one harmed me. My father used to tell me horrible stories about young girls being raped and killed by dirty old men while walking alone. My brother Guy would steal my father's pornographic magazines which were *hidden* under my parent's bed, along with several sex toys (mostly dildos), and take them into his room and play with them (sometimes the neighbourhood boys would join in). He began coming into my room with his magazines and urging me to help him emulate the positions shown in the magazine. He put a lot of pressure on me to allow him to fondle my body, and wouldn't leave me alone until I submitted. He used to say things like "I won't hurt you" and "don't worry, nothing will happen", or "trust me, just let me put it in", and after each session he would make me promise not to tell our mom and dad because since I had participated we were both equally guilty.

The first time I had sexual intercourse was when Guy decided he wanted to experience "coming inside me".

He usually avoided me in school or at the bus stop and pretended not to notice me publicly, yet privately he still bothered me for sex. I tried to avoid him at home, but he stood peering into my bedroom and came in whenever he wanted to.

Who can I tell?

I did try to get Guy to leave me alone on many occasions. But I usually felt helpless confronted with his constant pressures and there wasn't anyone I could talk to about what was happening. I felt I couldn't tell my parents because I was "equally guilty" since I had allowed it to happen. My identity was closely linked to what other people thought of me, and I was afraid to "come out" at the risk of losing the love of my family (including Guy). I feared telling my parents would trigger off a fight between them (my dad sometimes hit my mom) and their arguing was extremely upsetting to everyone in the family. I didn't want to be the cause of a fight between my parents.

I spent a long of time in school wondering whether or not I was pregnant (I didn't use birth control), while everyone else saw me as "the good little girl scout", "the cute pianist" or the "precious ballerina". I spent most of my childhood trying to appear good, so to mention incest was *not* good.



I had girlfriends at school but couldn't tell them because they were such hypocrites. My girlfriends talked constantly about men, and dressed "to attract men", but even though a lot of us were having sex (a fact admitted to me just recently), we all had to pretend that we were virgins. I lost a clique of girlfriends once when there was a rumour going around that I *wasn't* a virgin!

I left home at 16, immediately after graduation, to get away from such confusion and by this time my parents were in the middle of a very messy divorce. (My mom had shocked my father with news of an affair with one of my friends!). I was shocked about my mom and felt that this was the time to mention the fact that Guy had been pressuring me for *years* to have sex with him, and that we had quite a long history of incest between us.

My mom's first question to me was whether I was pregnant or not, then dad told Guy and me to stay away from each other. They have both since then shrugged off the entire event as a natural biological occurence.

Biological-vs-Sociological

In the past, I felt that my passivity and inability to resist my brother's wishes was largely due to biological differences between us. I felt women naturally had a passive nature, and that Guy was instinctively expressing a naturally held drive.

But now I feel differently having been through a whole maze of sexual exploitation ranging from "office sex" to being kidnapped and raped several years ago. I have come into politics as a direct result of my personal experience and now cast aside the idea that biology determines social life through instincts.

In examining my own history and that of other women in America I have come to understand how society divides its labour by determining men's and women's roles in society according to their biological differences. This sexual division of labour is expressed in the resistance of men to allow women to participate in their work. Womanhood/manhood and femininity/masculinity are social states used to help develop the capitalist economy that we know today by keeping women in domesticity and placing men above women in the social hierarchy. (Throughout history, in different societies, the activities of men and women have varied cross-culturally).

As a socialist feminist, I believe that the Labour Party must come to appreciate these personal issues as they uncover how important it is to work towards changing the structure of society. It must recognise the crippling effect of believing that the sexual division of labour is a natural one, when it is society that places people in the social states of masculinity/femininity for capitalist gain.

Recently!

Several months ago I was in Florida (I stayed with my family) and I saw my brother Guy and he asked me to have sex with him. (Some people never learn). I told him NO and refused to be bullied. In the same week my 13 year old brother, after watching a porno film with his friends, lent to them by my Dad, asked me if his friends could "gang bang me", and said "Hey, I heard incest is best". I told him to forget it, and told the boys to go and masturbate!

Titan Jones

Child abuse — a social worker's view

Child abuse must be considered as an overall social phenomenon, not a series of individually wicked events.

Press and therefore public attitudes view abusers as abnormal monsters.

Social workers are of course seen to be responsible since they represent the "permissive society".

The crazed scapegoating of social workers will, if we are not careful, result in an "if in doubt whip 'em out" practice by social workers who know that not only they, but their family will be crucified by the press if any risks are taken or anything goes wrong.

But one must also consider the damage done to a child by removing it from its parents, particularly if the nature of the injury may leave some doubt as to whether or not anything untoward has really happened. Blom Cooper recommends, following Beckford, that the child's interest be put before the parents, but the family is not so easily separable as in a law court. It must first of all be established that their interests are in conflict.

Studies of previous cases indicate a number of factors in child abuse such as a history of abuse in the parents' own childhood, marital stress, unemployment, bad or overcrowded housing, social isolation, step parenting, unplanned children. Certain of these tend not surprisingly to predominate amongst the poor (no prizes). When a government or economic system is systematically destroying jobs, housing and welfare provision, dismembering our communities and nation there will be casualties as sure as night follows day. The weakest suffer – the children. So as a social worker I should keep under close scrutiny any poor family – even though this very scrutiny may be yet another stress.

Alternatively I might seek to prevent stress and possible child abuse by providing nursery provision, a job and a decent house, providing hope by encouraging them to fight for these rights. Poverty and squalor *are* forms of child abuse. Child abuse typically happens within the private confines of the nuclear family. Detection often comes from the extended family – grandparents, aunts and uncles. There is less child abuse by single parents.

The nuclear family is the product of capitalism (as extended families were broken up to provide a mobile labour force). Today few communities as such exist, apart from in social work rhetoric. They exist among some groups, for example in mining communities and in some black families. They are a source of strength to their members. This is why the state seeks to destroy them.

To remove these stresses would prevent much detectable child abuse but would also protect children from the less detectable forms of neglect. If a child is being driven mad by its parents it won't show in an X-ray, nor may incest.

So who is responsible for child deaths? The actual batterer cannot be absolved entirely nor can neglectful social workers, but if we are less interested in blame and more in change we must look to the deprivation and havoc wreaked in the pursuit of a system which is unable to provide for basic human needs for all.

True social work must be inseparable from the struggle for socialism. Social workers are agents of change in people's lives. We have a choice of change in Britain today. It is the same as it ever was but closer — Socialism or barbarism?

Mark Francis,
Hastings and Rye CLP

STREETLIFE MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the FIRST MONDAY of every month and are open to all **Briefing** supporters. At the next meeting on 3rd March we will be discussing the issues raised for the Labour Movement by the articles we are publishing on child abuse. For details of time, venue and any other information, contact Jane Stockton or Ann Flowers, 01-802 4604.

The following motion was passed at the recent London Labour Party Women's Conference:

"This Conference views with deep concern the growing evidence of the widespread nature of incest and sexual abuse of children, particularly girls, within the home. We believe that this situation must not be allowed to continue given the devastating effects it has on the lives of thousands of women.

We call on the Women's Organisation at both Regional and National level to publicise this problem wherever possible both within and outside the Labour movement.

We call on the joint NEC/PLP Women's Policy Group to formulate a policy statement for women, deploring the current situation and committing the Party to urgent action.

We call on the next Labour government to set up a ministerial enquiry to assess the scope of the problem with a view to urgent legislation.

Furthermore, we call upon the Government to provide immediate funding for Rape Crisis Centres, Incest Survivors Groups and Women's Centres, where girls and women can get help and support if they have been sexually abused".

NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue we will continue the theme of child abuse. All contributions are welcome, particularly those from people who can write from personal experience. For reasons of space they should be no more than 800 words, and should preferably be typed.

We also welcome letters and comments and suitable graphics or illustrations. And don't forget contributions for **Briefing**'s version of the **Guardian**'s Naked Ape column! (We have decided to call it a Hairy Baboon column!)

Contributions should be sent to: Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16 5HZ by March 10th.

An Economy that doesn't work

Dear Briefing,

It was with a growing sense of incredulity that I read "Challenging Old Orthodoxies" by Richard Barbrook (February *Briefing*). Under the guise of a critique of Andrew Glyn's *A Million Jobs a Year*, Barbrook lets us know how he thinks socialists should run the economy. Barbrook's approach is, I think, unique. He manages to condemn both markets *and* planning as instruments of economic management. Instead a network of grassroots democracy will attempt to "control" capitalism, which cannot be abolished "Pol Pot-like".

Socialists who believe that markets are necessary and irreplaceable (like Geoff Hodgson and the LCC) are condemned by Barbrook by the simple method of suggesting that their views are indistinguishable from those of the SDP. The good old Stalinist method of amalgam. Having rejected markets, Barbrook goes on to condemn planning, condemning Andrew Glyn as a "direct descendant of writers like GDH Cole". Now it is worth remembering that Cole was the foremost advocate of "Guild Socialism" (a form of radical participatory democracy similar to that advocated by Barbrook) until his conversion to Stalinist-type planning in the 1930s, but the suggestion that central planning is inherently insensitive to the needs of the working class and the oppressed groups has to be rejected. Some decisions just have to be taken centrally and it is for socialists to find a means for democratic participation in them.

Barbrook thinks it is impossible to simply decree the abolition of capital. Putting matters in these terms is simply a cover for his ideological nakedness. The fact is that capitalism cannot coexist with a socialist government and socialists must decide at once on coming into social ownership or not. Vacillation is fatal, to avoid economic collapse the government must either guarantee the security of capital (and renounce its policies) or it must expropriate the capitalists. No policy of "control" of capital and democratic supervision would be sufficient to prevent economic sabotage.

Barbrook concludes his article with a hymn of praise to co-ops and "any other community initiatives" but fails to tell us how these enterprises are to be related. Are they to be allowed to trade with one another — in which case we have a market system? Or are they to exist in glorious isolation from one another — in which case we shall all starve to death? Or is a planning authority going to impose quotas — in which case (according to Barbrook) we have something akin to Stalinism?

In my view, *Briefing* should have rejected this weak-minded article. Socialists have to face hard questions about the relationship between markets, planning and democratic forms of rule and in the end we shall have to accept some sort of trade-off between the demands of efficiency on the one hand, and autonomy and equality on the other. To refuse to face up to this problem by primitive sloganizing and name calling is the height of irresponsibility. It is all very well to call Andrew Glyn "pre-feminist", but what's so feminist about an economy that doesn't work?

Chris Bertram
(Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP)

Next issue out: March 19th. Deadline for articles: Monday 10th March. Next National Steering Committee: Sunday 23rd March at 1pm in London [for further details ring 01-533 2593]. All articles to 162 Millfields Rd., London E5.

Published by Labour Briefing, 162 Millfields Road, London E5. Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd [TU].