LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING 40p

No 60 JUNE 1986

Local election results prove: SOCIALISM WINS THE VOTES

BRIEFING interviewed Linda Bellos who was elected Leader of Lambeth Council following Labour's landslide victory there in the May 8th local elections.

Briefing: What is the significance of Labour's victory in Lambeth?

Linda Bellos: It shows that if you have radical policies, stick to your manifesto commitments and take a firm stand to defend the working- class, then working-class people – black and white – come out to vote Labour. Perhaps Neil Kinnock would take a lesson from our experience and draw the necessary conclusions about manifesto commitments.

B: What is the political shape of the new administration?

LB: It's Left. We were all selected and elected because of our determination to carry out the policies of safeguarding jobs and services. Our manifesto is a natural development of the well-known views and practice of the Lambeth Labour Parties and Labour Group.

B: How are you responding to the media comparisons between you and Ted Knight?

LB: I don't like the oppositional way the question is usually framed. Obviously, Ted Knight is a white man, and I'm a black woman, and naturally there are differences in our politics based on our different starting points. However, I'm full of admiration and respect for the untiring work and commitment to the working-class shown by Ted Knight and all the surcharged councillors.

B: How important is the fact that there are now three black Council Leaders in London?

LB: I'll quote a relevant adage I made up last year: "One's a token, two's a threat, three's a riot". But seriously, Black



John Chapman

Sections of the Labour Party have played a major role in bringing about a significant increase in black representation across London.

B: What contribution will you make as a black woman?

LB: As you know, I'm a black feminist and involved in "Women in Black Sections" in the Labour Party. My black politics, my class politics and my feminist politics are all part of me. They have the same ideological base, i.e. the recognition of systematic forms of oppression against groups of people on the basis of class and economic exploitation, race and gender and/or sexuality. And I differ from many other women in the Labour Party in that I take a radical approach to each of these oppressions. I'm not a moderate feminist and a radical socialist. There appears to be a growing trend within Women's Sections of the Labour Party who appear to be using liberal feminist politics as a cover for their retreat on class and gender issues, and who frequently employ racism in pursuit of this.

I believe that I have support from the working-class people in Lambeth – black and white, men and women – to continue to develop the Council's Equal Opportunities policies and I see it as a major task ahead to fully explain to the whole community why we have such policies and why they should be supported.

B: No doubt in the coming period you'll be expecting further confrontation with the Government. What assistance do you anticipate coming from Labour's leaders?

LB: I hope for more than we got in the past. But the fact is that we have a duty and responsibility to carry out our manifesto commitment, to build homes, help our older people, and meet the needs of our many single-parent families. And if we cannot do this with the rates and grants that the Government allows, then I regret that we will be in conflict. Naturally, I expect the Labour Party leadership to support us in carrying out our socialism but I won't hold my breath till they do!

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

LABOUR BLOWS IT IN WANDSWORTH

One of the more galling sights on election night was Norman Tebbit on the box taking comfort from Wandsworth's Tories hanging on by a knife-edge 31-30 majority. He claimed that their policies of privatisation and rate cutting had proved their popularity. In fact Labour outpolled the Tories by 1300 votes, but failed to win key marginals, despite an overall swing of 5%.

The failure to regain Wandsworth is a bitter blow to those Labour, trade union and community activists who have been fighting successive waves of cuts and privatisation for the last 8 years.

A number of reasons are being advanced for the defeat. "Gentrification" is undoubtedly a factor in keeping the Tories in power, with houses in Battersea changing hands at £¼m, but this is by no means the whole story.

The Liberal/Alliance vote collapsed by a third, but this may have benefited Labour overall. Labour and Tory parties both took one of the Liberals two seats. Contrary to many people's expectations a majority of those who have bought their own council houses stayed with Labour.

Political polarisation

But the fact remains that the Tory vote increased by nearly 12%, which cannot be explained solely in terms of gentrification. There was a clear political polarisation in the election. The Tories argued that their privatisation programme and elimination of "waste" enabled them to keep the rates down. In fact it was a very favourable rate support grant settlement which allowed them to reduce the rate by 20% this year. Additionally, there is little evidence that privatisation saves money, and when it does, it is at the expense of sweated labour conditions imposed on the contractors' employees.

Labour's answer to all this was to promise higher rates, to pay for an extremely limited programme of increased council spending. Incredibly the privatisation issue was virtually ducked altogether on the grounds of it being a vote loser! Labour's failure politically to deal with the fallacious Tory case through a strong attack on the myths and exposure of the realities of privatisation meant that many potential Labour votes were lost. This failure stretches back through the whole period of the last Tory administration.

In general the LCC/right-led campaign was very low profile, more concerned not to make promises which might lead to a Labour council clashing with the government than seriously to deal with the problems besetting Wandsworth's working class. For example, Wandsworth has the highest council rents in the country, the Tories having upped them by 350%, and yet Labour wouldn't promise even a temporary rent freeze.

In fact, Labour's campaign represented the worst of both worlds – few concrete promises to reverse cuts, privatisation and reduction in council charges, but at the same time, definite commitment to raise the rates and, implicitly, rents.

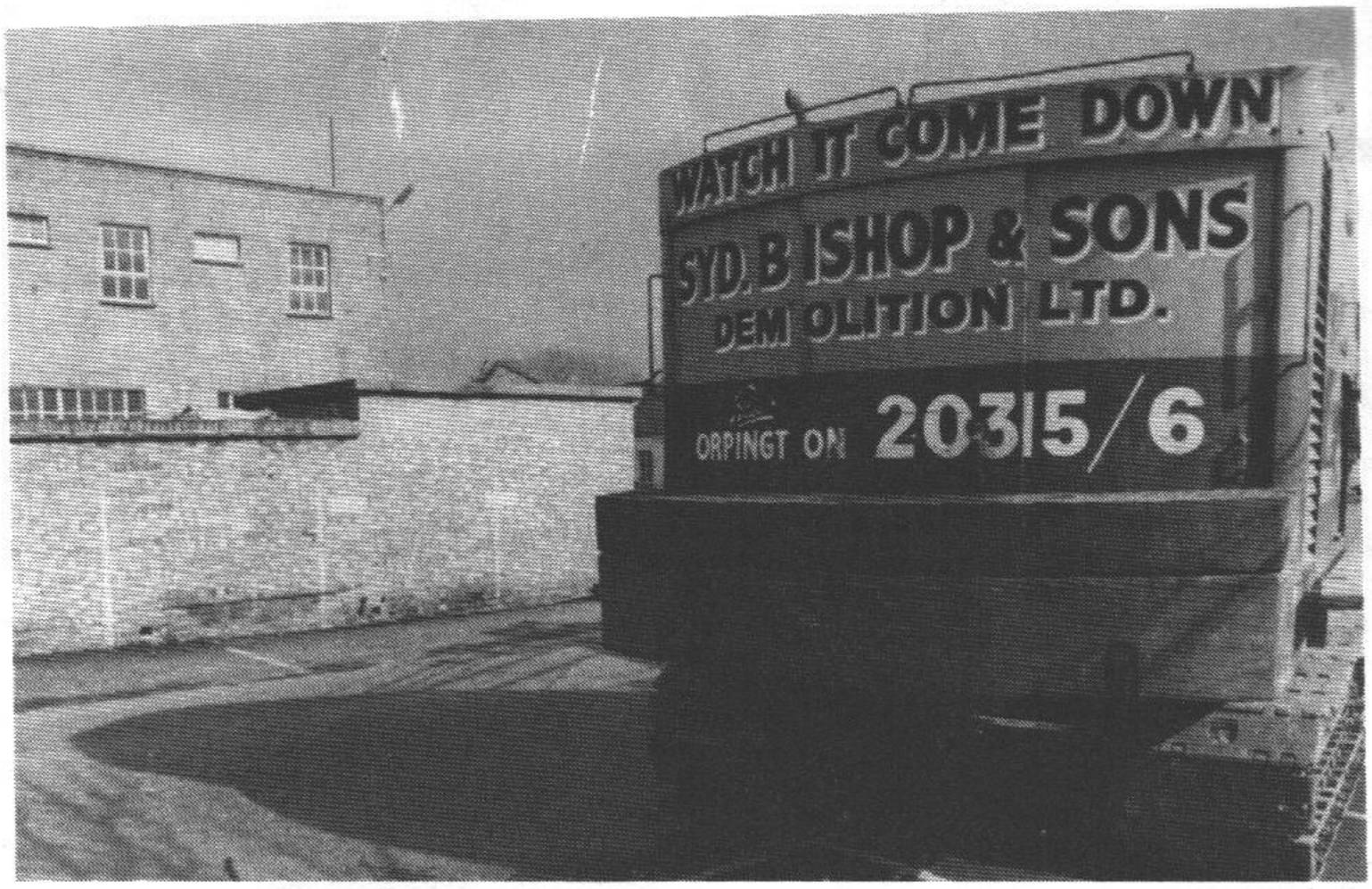
This was justified by Tony Belton, the outgoing Labour Group leader, in terms of Labour being the party of redistribution – making no distinction between redistribution between classes, and redistribution within the working class.

Dissatisfaction with Belton's lacklustre Labour Group leadership surfaced at the joint Local Government Committee/Labour Group "electoral college" following the election, when Mike Barley was elected as new leader and Patrick Roche as deputy leader. This represents a shift to the left. Barley did not argue for a defecit budget strategy supported by Wandsworth Briefing, but did state during the campaign that he would be willing to face surcharge and disqualification over the issue of councils being compelled to put services out to tender. He is a supporter of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and is firm against the witchhunt of Militant and other socialists in the Party.

Prospects in Wandsworth look grim, barring unlikely bye-election victories. The next stage of Tory plans is the systematic sell off of whole council estates. They've already made a start on the Livingston estate with flat prices starting at £70,000 upwards.

Additionally, the recent victimisation of Dave Benlow, Wandsworth NUPE branch secretary, heralds an offensive against union organisation amongst remaining council employees.

Pete Cooper, Mark Hagger
(Wandsworth Briefing)



Wandsworth NALGO

The excellent mechanical workshop depot built by Labour in the 1960s now being smashed to bits having been sold off to make way for a new Sainsbury's!!!



Wandsworth NALGO

Run down high rise estate in Battersea.

SOCIALIST VICTORY IN HARINGEY

The socialist policies of the Labour Party in Haringey were vindicated by our election triumph on May 8th. Last year, in the wake of the rate-capping debacle, a new left leadership took charge of the Labour Group on Haringey Council. The uprising on Broadwater Farm Estate placed this leadership in the national eye and exposed both the Left of the Labour Group and the LP in Haringey to the media treatment previously experienced by Peter Tatchell, the NUM, and the Liverpool councillors. In the weeks running up to the election our socialist policies on the police, on gay and lesbian rights, on travellers, were the subject of near obscene vituperation in the local press. The Tories themselves fought a vile, racist, homophobic campaign, singling out Black and Left-wing councillors for particular abuse. Their main tactic – shared with the SDP/Liberals – was to personally attack Bernie Grant.

Bernie himself, along with his two left allies in Bruce Grove, was returned with an increased majority on an increased poll. For the first time sections of Black youth were mobilised on behalf of the Labour Party and against a Tory campaign that was rightly seen as an attack on the Black community as a whole.

The election campaign, like the results, was an uneven affair. Throughout most of the borough, the Party fought a principled campaign which did not shy away from the allegedly less popular aspects of our record or our manifesto. We showed that confronting bigotry of all types and arguing for positive, socialist policies is a successful strategy for winning elections.

However, there can be no doubt that we suffered a loss of support amongst some white working class people, in particular council tenants. This support can and must be regained – not by watering down our attack on racism or sexism or heterosexism, but by stepping it up, and at the same time improving the delivery of services, and in particular housing services, which many of these people depend on, and which has been unsatisfactory in the past.

Amidst many victories, the Party suffered one major defeat. In White Hart Lane, in the face of a vicious Tory attack, Labour lost three previously solid seats by a large majority. Two of the candidates there were on the far right of the Group and they are no loss to socialism. They engaged in an underhand anti-Bernie Grant campaign in a futile attempt to distance themselves from what they took to be the unpalatable parts of our policy, and they paid the price for it.

The coming year will be one full of opportunities and problems for Labour in Haringey. We must press ahead with all our manifesto commitments. We must rebuild and unite the Left in the Party (which has been depleted by the election of several of our best comrades to the Council), and we must consolidate the support we won during the election by vigorous public campaigning. We owe nothing to Kinnock or Walworth Road; we owe nothing to the media; we owe nothing to the right of the Party. We must not let our advantage slip.

Mike Marqusee
(Haringey Labour Briefing)

WALTHAM FOREST:

ALLIANCE SPOILS THE PARTY

The winning back of Waltham Forest was not the euphoric clean sweep that it should have been. Rather it was more of a relief and anti-climax in what should have been an election bringing us a massive majority. Instead the calculators are already out drawing up just how little dead wood, reneging and absenteeism we can afford just to get the manifesto put into practice.

For the record we won back two seats off the Liberals and three off the Tories, giving us an overall majority of five. More worryingly the SDP took the majority of lost Tory seats – five in all, of which three were held by Labour until 1982 – and the Liberals consolidated their seats in traditionally solid Labour areas.

Winning these back in 1990 will have to be the target of the new council and Party. The new group probably has the first ever leader and deputy who don't think that the borough ends at Lea Bridge Road. A successful decentralisation of housing services into Leyton and Leytonstone, where the Liberals are adept at exploiting local cynicism of previous Labour council's neglect of the areas, will be *the* priority to ensure that we can get back to a comfortable majority in future.

To back this up LGC will have to begin to exist more in practice than in theory. During the last four years there has been a wide gulf between the Party and group which must be bridged. The worst aspect of this was that wards with Liberals in were starved of information about voting records which propped up the previous Tory council. LGC will need to take on the roles of linking the Party to the group and of having a public face to support the council's good policies especially in the areas where apathy among working class people is highest.

A few blood-vessels were burst to gain a small majority and a few more will have to go just to maintain it.

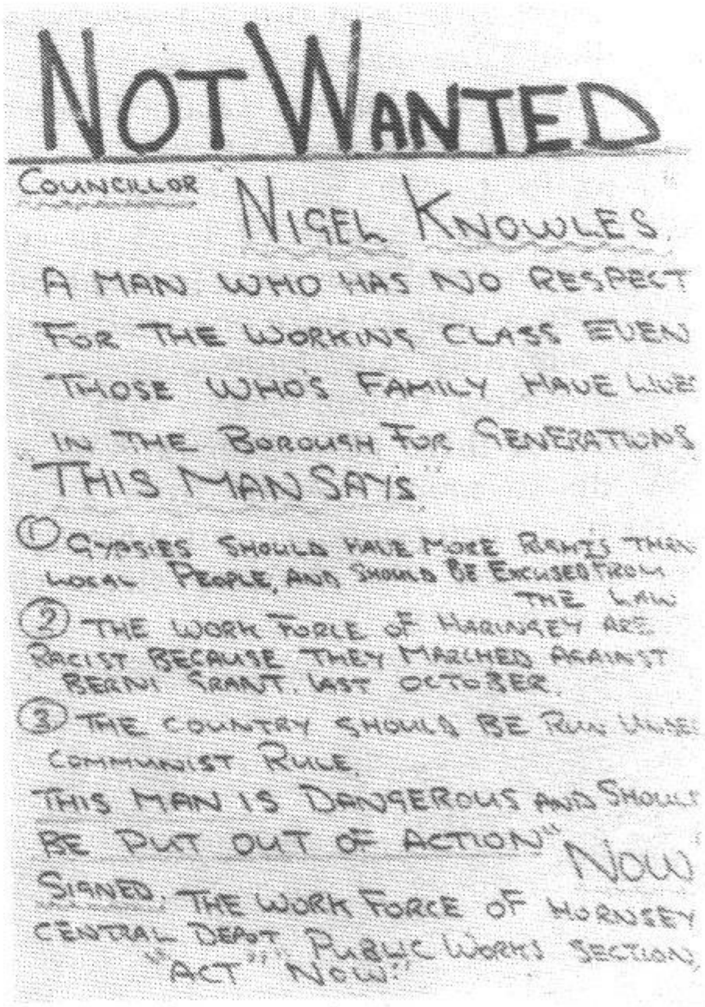
JOHN WRAY

TORY RACISM IN HARINGEY

The Tories ran a disgraceful campaign in Haringey and attempted to link the presence of travelling people in the borough with the death of PC Blakelock. Some of the Tory literature has been referred to the Commission for Racial Equality and to the Director for Public Prosecution. It will be interesting to hear what the lone Black Tory councillor, Blair Greaves, will have to say about the racists that are now rampant in the Tottenham Tory Party.

In Labour's marginal ward of Noel Park, the sitting councillors faced the full might of the Tories. Tories from as far away as Surrey and Southend were crawling all around Wood Green. On the day before the election, an "anonymous" leaflet appeared which shrieked about Labour's Nigel Knowles: "This man is dangerous and should be put out of action NOW". Nigel was further accused of saying that "this country should be run under communist rule".

On election day, the Tory leader Bob Hall abandoned his own ward to work in Noel Park and the Highgate Tories were bussed over. Despite all this, Labour hung on to all three seats. In the surrounding wards, the Tories lost eleven seats in the Hornsey/Wood Green constituency. The days of the wet Tory Hugh Rossi are running out!



Narendra Makanji
Haringey Councillor

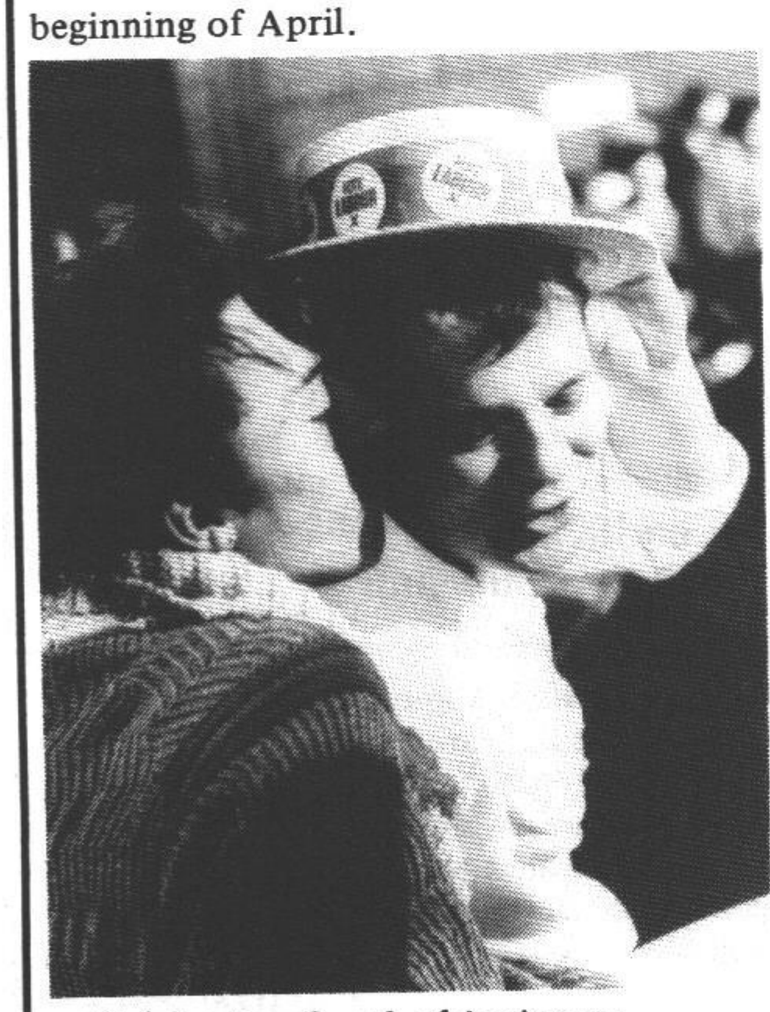
LANDSLIDE IN LAMBETH

Labour swept to victory in Lambeth with a clear mandate to keep on fighting to defend jobs and services. Despite the fact that many of the new Labour councillors were only selected to stand two days before the close of nominations, we have gone from a majority of one to a majority of 16. The result showed what the people of Lambeth thought of the judge's decision to debar 31 Labour councillors from office.

Labour took 3 seats from the Alliance and 5 from the Tories, with swings as high as 24.4% in Angell (with 72% of the vote) and 18.8% in Bishops – a Labour gain from the Alliance. In the ILEA elections, exploiting a legal loophole, two surcharged councillors were elected in Vauxhall with an absolute majority of the votes – and that in a seat nominally held by the Liberals. We captured the Norwood seats from the Tories and came close in Streatham.

The results both vindicated the stand made by Lambeth's Labour councillors and show that consistent campaigning pays off. For us, the election campaign started months before May. The Lambeth Labour Parties have been out campaigning in the community in support of the fight against ratecapping all year. And not just ratecapping. One of the key issues locally is health cuts. Labour has led the way in opposing cuts on the health authority – and people knew this.

With only three of the 'old' group still councillors, the new group is in an unusual position. Labour retained power following the debarment of the 31 – and held on to it at the most bizarre council meeting in the annals of local government, when the Tories were so inept that they were unable to seize power although there was only one Labour councillor present. Now Labour has to take back control. A three person committee can only do so much. Apart from urgent matters, no real political control has been exercised over the officers since the beginning of April.



ROSE ASTON

Celebrating Lambeth's victory

Following consultation with the parties, the new leadership was elected. It is a leadership committed to implementing the manifesto and continuing to fight to maintain and improve local services and defend jobs. It is also a leadership which – despite their newness as councillors – includes comrades with considerable experience of local government work, trade union negotiations and party activity. The new leadership intends to work collectively. With feminists as leader and chief whip, the style of leadership in Lambeth will change – but not the political determination to fight for the people of Lambeth.



John Chapman

Joan Twelves

A slender majority and the fight against ratecapping meant that the political differences within the last group were not always obvious. This is unlikely to be the case in the new group. The process of electing the leader and committee chairs very quickly revealed where different comrades stood. Having failed in their bid for positions – because the majority of party members rejected the tactics they used in trying to gain them, and in any case preferred to select those most able to carry out the tasks in hand – comrades associated with the LCC have retired to the backbenches.

One of the first tasks of the new council will be to ensure that the surcharged councillors are supported. An agreement has been reached with the District Auditor to pay off the surcharge at £5000 per month. A campaign has been launched for Standing Orders from throughout the labour movement to reach the £5000 target, and the new council leadership is pledging its support. Unfortunately there are some on the backbenches who are not so forthcoming.

In Lambeth, the fight against ratecapping led to a unity being forged between the group, the parties, the trade unions and the community. With a left leadership elected on a fighting manifesto, that unity will continue to be of prime importance.

Joan Twelves
Chief Whip,
Lambeth Labour Group

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THE LAMBETH FIGHTING FUND, Account No. 90009364, Sorting Code 77-91-09, The Trustees Savings Bank, Brixton Branch, 18 Acre Lane, Brixton, London SW2 5SQ the sum of £ ..... on the ..... day of each month, commencing on ...../...../..... and on the same day each month until further notice.

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..... Copies of 'The Battle for Lambeth' (36 pages) @ £1 each. £.....

.....Copies of 'Councils for the Defence' (20 minute video by the makers of 'The Battle for Orgreave') @ £10 a copy. £.....

Total: £.....

Please make cheques payable to **Lambeth Fighting Fund** and return to:

Lambeth Fighting Fund, c/o Chief Whip's Office, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, London SW2.

LABOUR STORMS EALING!

Kevin Veness
Secretary Ealing Labour Group

The Labour Party scored a stunning success in Ealing, winning 47 seats to 20 Tories, 3 Liberals. Not only did we win every seat in our 'key marginals' list (43), but we won another ward which had needed intense campaigning and another seat (in Northfield ward) which was supposed to be safe Tory.

In fact, in Ealing Southall constituency we won 22 out of the 24 seats and the total votes in Ealing North would have handed us the parliamentary constituency on a plate! And the swing in the Acton wards of the Ealing Acton Constituency would suffice to give Ealing 3 Labour MPs (out of 3).

Despite massive problems of organisation, caused by Tory cuts in the Town Hall, the new Labour Group and Party members have moved into the Town Hall.

Group elections, carried out after a consultation with the Party through the LGC, have resulted in the previous Left leadership being re-elected and there seems every prospect of the Group moving in the right direction. A full report on socialist Ealing will be provided for Briefing readers for next month.

THOUGHT POLICE IN HAMMERSMITH

The election of a new Labour administration in Hammersmith & Fulham with a 30 seat majority after 8 years of Tory-Alliance rule is a cause for great rejoicing in both the local parties. The most revealing aspect of the local campaign was the reaction of the parties to the Briefing front page signed by over 100 candidates including a sizeable number from Hammersmith & Fulham. This fairly bland statement, which appealed to broad sections of the left, was ignored by the right-wing Fulham Labour Party. Its characteristics have been well documented in recent issues of Briefing on the Fulham By-Election.

The supposedly 'left' Hammersmith Labour Party reacted quite differently. All the Hammersmith candidates who signed the statement were sent a threatening letter by the Election Agent endorsed by the Party Officers. The letter called on the candidates to withdraw their names from the statement and warned that 'the electoral consequences of your not doing so are potentially very damaging to both your chances and those of the Party'.

Is this the same Party which condemns Kinnock for failing to support the miners and the surcharged Councillors? Hammersmith Labour Party has always had a strong record on rhetoric and resolutions passed by the GC but when it comes to stating these policies publicly and putting them into practice the same courage and conviction is sadly lacking. Instead the Party hierarchy is ashamed of the politics of their candidates and the confidence of these candidates in their own manifesto.

The Manifesto is a fairly radical document much of which goes further than the Briefing front page. Yet such was the paranoia created by the signing of the statement that the comrades were condemned by the Party Chair for going against the Manifesto and were informed by the Election Agent that the post election publicity would explain why we could not implement the Manifesto once elected!

None of the candidates who were sent threatening letters have withdrawn their names from the Briefing statement, nor will they do so. On the same night when the voters of Lambeth elected a Labour Council with overwhelming community support a good number of comrades were elected in Hammersmith & Fulham who will require the same level of support from their communities and their Parties. The ability of the Hammersmith Party hierarchy to act as a kind of 'Thought Police' is a poor indication of the support those Councillors will have in arguing for the implementation of the Manifesto commitments on the Labour Group.

JEFF KENNER
JACQUELINE ABBOTT
(Hammersmith CLP)

To: J. Kenner, J. Abbott, S. Parry, K. Martindale

22nd April, 1986

Dear Comrade,

As Election Agent I must ask you to write to ***London Labour Briefing*** *and withdraw your signature from the statement to which you put your name last week. The electoral consequences of your not doing so are potentially very damaging to both your chances and those of the Party.*

Yours fraternally,

Duncan Grant
Agent

KINGSTON: Labour hold the balance

In Tory-controlled Kingston the Labour Party achieved a net gain of one seat. Group Leader, Neil Calvert, retained his seat on the Council but one seat was lost to the Liberals with another won by Steve Mama, the flamboyant former Leader of the Labour Group, in the same Ward by only three votes after overnight recounts. So with huge Alliance gains, particularly in Kingson, Liberal/SDP hold 22 seats and Labour the balance with four seats in a hung Council.

In Surbiton a campaign by NUJ members Phil Cooper and Robin Hutchinson to "out-liberal" the Liberals succeeded in recapturing the traditionally Labour-held Tolworth West Ward. Next door in Tolworth South, Doug Reynolds, a right-wing former Borough Mayor, failed by just 79 votes to secure election and doubled the Labour vote over 1982 in the process. However south of the A3 by-pass in Hook Ward a similar campaign based on a populist anti-megastores campaign was overwhelmed by weight of numbers and some lax local organisation on the polling day with the two SDP candidates romping home.

The story in neighbouring Chessington North was worse still. The Liberals swamped the Ward and destroyed the rest of the field achieving over 1,200 votes — in excess of the combined Tory and Labour votes.

In the most South-western ward in the Greater London Area, Chessington South, John Hayball, a supporter of the *Labour Briefing*, fell just 79 votes short of victory with the Liberal Alliance candidates, who stood on a nominal basis only, trailing third.

It remains to be seen how the four-man Labour Group proceeds to deal with its new-found position holding the balance of power in the Council.

John Hayball

WESTMINSTER JUST FAILS TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

PAULA WATSON
Westminster South CLP

On 8 May the Westminster Labour Party just failed to do the impossible – capture control of Westminster City Council, a Tory bastion since time out of mind. But despite natural disappointment, the local party can take consolation from the mauling inflicted on Lady Porter's obnoxious band.

Ten seats were won from the Tories, one from the SDP and one from independents. The Labour Group has nearly doubled in size from 15 to 27 and the overall Tory majority has fallen from 24 to three.

This is a considerable achievement in a borough always rendered difficult by continuous movements of population. A number of factors played a part, not least the genuine fear caused by Lady Porter's extreme Thatcherite policies, especially her plans to sell large chunks of council housing to property developers. Also, as in most other boroughs, we had done very badly in the 1982 'Falklands' election, when a number of normally safe Labour seats had been lost and also the SDP is particularly ineffective in Westminster, with a poor organisation, weakened by a number of recent defections to Labour.

Nevertheless, when all allowance has been made for all these considerations, the local party can still take credit for a well planned and persistent campaign. Over a year ago, the borough was divided into safe, marginal and target wards, which would be difficult to win but essential to gain overall control. Intensive work, including weekly distributions of leaflets and newsletters, was carried out over a twelve month period in the marginal and target areas and the two constituencies pooled their resources, with the stronger North Westminster party sending organisers and members to help in the weaker Southern wards. The strategy worked well, but two target wards, St. James's, covering Covent Garden, and Cavendish, which needed swings of 15% and 23% respectively proved just too difficult. And these two gave the Tories their majority.

The local parties have thus proved themselves adept at campaigning, but they have been less successful at selection. The new group has a sprinkling of committed socialists, a majority of soft left/careerists and about four marginally to the right of Gengis Khan. They will need careful watching.

LEWISHAM: THE RISE OF THE SOFT LEFT

Jon Lansman

In Lewisham, sweeping gains on election night were a mixed blessing for the Left. It wasn't a political victory for the centrist leadership. Nowhere was the devastation of the Tories and Alliance more marked than in Deptford where a hard left party swept the board, winning five seats from the Tories. But its effect was to strengthen the right in the group and therefore the hands of the leadership.

The left had been well organised. A caucus of a dozen or so councillors, mostly new members, had met before the election, and again after, to discuss the group elections. And we paid the price.

The group split into roughly equal thirds: the Left, most of whom had been involved in the caucus; the Right; and a centre grouping around the leadership. It was this last grouping that dominates, now holding most of the key positions in the group. Its composition varies from the downright malicious or sycophantic to the well-intentioned, who aren't in the real in-crowd, but aren't yet prepared to take them on.

Marginalising the Left

And so the leadership has succeeded, for the time being, in marginalising the Left within the group. At present, the Left's response is confused: anger and frustration at the style and tactics of the leadership; determination to resist the cuts and rent increases implicit in the leadership's stance (in spite of its rhetoric about manifesto implementation); but also the realisation that overreaction would alienate members of the group whose support we could win.

In Lewisham, as in the NEC, the PLP, and in Labour councils throughout London, the soft-Left's rise on the Kinnock tide must be a transitory phenomenon. Many of them have gone for good, along the careerist path. Others, even some of those now determined to isolate the Left, are caught up in the blind faith in a Labour victory that simply cannot long survive a general election.

It is these people that we have to win back. The sooner we do it, the better prepared we will be to confront a Labour government backsliding on its commitments to local government. But it will involve a degree of self-restraint which we may not be able to deliver.

Racist

This is not least because the leadership carve up was so clearly racist in its practice, if not in intent. The Leader, two Deputies, and all committee chairs, with the exception of Race Relations, which went to a right-winger, are white. This was after an election in which victory was based on the continued loyalty of the black population, and in which we did succeed in increasing black representation in the council chamber.

The justifiable anger and frustration of black councillors and party delegates flared into the emotionally gruelling scene of a shouting match, causing children to cry, overtly racist outbursts from certain councillors, an attempt of unparalleled insensitivity to move next business, and finally the adjournment of the meeting. Sadly, the display of aggression also succeeded in alienating every woman in the room, even though the only chair contested by a woman had also gone to a white man.

When tempers subsided, a meeting of black councillors and party members together with much of the Left caucus demonstrated considerable restraint and pragmatism – although it will take much more to restore the faith and support of many women in the group. The result was that, at our suggestion, the Leader took the vice-chair of Race Relations, and four black comrades took positions as group officers or vice-chairs. The leadership was thereby let off the hook.

But although embarrassment at the racist effect of their carve-up is genuine enough in many members, nothing has really changed. The drive to isolate the Left continued; and the effective leadership remains all-white.

ARE YOU RACISTS?

On May 8th Labour made overall gains of 11 seats. The new Labour Group is now 50 strong as against 17 Tories. In the new Council there are now 9 Black or Asian councillors.

It's a well known fact that, when compared to other London boroughs, Lewisham Council's past record in Race Relations has been disgracefully poor. Now, perhaps the white councillors of Lewisham will prove by their deeds that they are not racists and practice what they preach on the Council's policy of equal opportunity. We should be horrified, bewildered, if we find that the white councillors grab all the chains and high offices once again; and traditionally as a symbol of Black presence leave only the Race Relation Chair for a Black councillor.

We hope at least the Leader and Deputy Leader of Lewisham will rise to the occasion and will join the Blacks, Asians and other minorities to fight this dreadful disease among the white councillors of Lewisham. Let us hope some Black councillors will also get the opportunity and see for themselves the policy of equal opportunity in practice.

Cllr. Man Mohan

RELIEF IN HACKNEY

The previous Hackney Borough Council leadership was typified by a series of disputes and a total lack of accountability to the Party. Even during the election campaign home-helps found they had to occupy the Town Hall. They won an increase in pay that brings them closer to their demands, but they were confronted by the usual line of "managements right to manage" and that those who take industrial action such as occupying the Town Hall are indulging in "fascist" and "anti-democratic" acitivities.

It is then with some relief for Hackney labour movement that Labour not only increased its council majority by 3 seats, but also at the Annual Borough Conference (ABC), swept the right-wing out of the leadership and off all the committee chairs. The right did not even stand, happy to leave the mess they have created behind them for the new leadership to pick up – such as the numerous special financing deals they negotiated.

The new leader is Andrew Puddephatt, who gained overwhelming support and was deputy to Hilda Kean in the ratecapping fight. His deputy is John McCafferty, elected despite reservations from parts of the Left.

Generally, the Labour Group has moved to the Left and the new leadership has pledged itself to accountability within the party. To facilitate this, the ABC adjourned so that branches can discuss policy priorities and bring resolutions to a recalled conference in September. After this the ABC will adjourn indefinitely but will be subject to recall if the leadership loses the confidence of the Party.



Hackney Gazette

Andrew Puddephat (left) with John Bloom (centre) and Peter Chowney

However, because of lack of notice, branches were unable to discuss nominations and have to debate policy priorities after the event. It would be hoped that in the future, thought is given to the greater involvement of branches.

A disturbing note during the election was the actions of the right-wing in Kings Park ward against Militant supporters which led to an unauthorised leaflet being distributed which only supported one councillor – the other prospective councillor being a Militant supporter. This step was taken without consulting the agent or ward agent and led to separate canvassing. The authority of the ward must be restored and support given to both councillors.

Having defeated the right-wing council leadership and seen the Alliance fail to make its predicted impression in Hackney – in fact they lost two seats to Labour – the Left must take its opportunity ti improve services in Hackney and build a campaign of trade unions, tenants and the working-class against Tory government attacks on local councils. However, we must be prepared to bring the leadership to account if the need arises.

Ian Millichap
Hackney North &
Stoke Newington CLP

ILEA ACCOUNTABLE TO NO ONE

Labour's landslide victory in the ILEA elections is good reason for relief for all those concerned about children and education. Whatever one felt about the old ILEA and its achievements, there is no doubt that the Tories or the Alliance or some indistinguishable combination of the two would have raped, pillaged and generally put the service to the sword in the traditional manner of the British ruling class.

That said, however, there are deep problems brewing at Walworth Hall. The left would do well to shed its workerist indifference and pay attention to the LCC machine in all its brilliance.

According to the unelected officials of the London Labour Party, the new ILEA does not have a Labour Party to which to be accountable. To underline the point, the Regional Officials (i.e. Terry Ashton and co.) refused to send notices and agendas to any members of the London Regional Executive including the liaison delegates (of whom I am one). We did actually discover the where and when of the inaugural meeting of the new ILEA Labour Group and they did not actually stop us going in. Nevertheless, Terry Ashton, chairing the meeting with all the skill and wit of a Regional Official in his prime, made it quite clear on more than one occasion that we had no status. This was quite hurtful since it was Terry who at the Regional Executive Meetings had presided over our election as Liaison delegates and he hadn't breathed a word at the time that he wasn't going to tell us when the meetings were.

The problem is one that I have partly mentioned before. While the Greater London Council existed, no-one appeared to object to the *Greater* London Labour Party voting on policy for the *Inner* London Education Authority. With the demise of the GLC and the birth of the directly elected ILEA phoenix-like from its ashes a nice problem arose. The new ILEA would want to be accountable to a new Labour Party, based on the constituencies that it represented.

Party officials and ILEA buffs, aware of the problem for much more than a year in advance, gave it the keenest consideration. As a consequence, when the elections arrived, no appropriate Labour Party had been established. Additionally, the London Party at its Annual Meeting, in an act of self-flagellation for its past role in education, voted to set up a new structure to deal with it.

Now we come to the point. The implementation of the conference resolution is the job of the London Regional Executive. Until the new structure has been set up, the London Party, which drafted and approved the manifesto, whatever its faults, is the only Party to which ILEA can be accountable for its overall policy. The London officials, presumably under instruction from somewhere near Olympus, argue otherwise. From their viewpoint, the more democratic situation is that it is better to be accountable to no-one than to be accountable to anything as radical as their own Regional Executive.

At the first Labour Group meeting of the new authority, (which, under the guidance of Terry Ashton, took two hours to elect the new Leader [F. Morrell], Group Chair [N. Lucas] and Chief Whip [L. Hammond], members protested,

KEITH LICHMAN
Hackney North Labour Party & GLLP Regional Executive Committee

quite rightly, that they were accountable to their General Committees. Their General Committees, however, need to discuss policy with each other too and that is why an Inner London Labour Party structure for education is required.

In the interim, the only organisation with anything like the appropriate credentials is the Regional Executive. Bearing in mind the performance of the old ILEA, where Group meetings tended to be called on High Days and Holidays to inform the members of the decisions they had made, there is real politics beneath this bureaucratic wrangle. The Regional Executive Committee needs encouragement and support to take up the cudgels on behalf of London Labour Party democracy.

ILEA BRIEFING

A new ILEA Labour Group numbering 39 has assembled at County Hall. Soon it will come under the direction of an ILEA Local Government Committee/District Labour Party thus involving many comrades from CLPs, unions, Women's Sections and Socialist Societies.

ILEA Briefing *will be meeting on Wednesday May 28th to discuss socialist initiatives within the new Labour Group. Socialists from the educational trade unions are welcome as are socialists from CLPs. All members of the new Labour Group will be notified of each meeting of ILEA* Briefing.

The meeting will take place at 7.00pm in Room 171, County Hall, STEVE COWAN's office, on May 28th. Topic for discussion: What are the Socialist Political Priorities of the ILEA?

For further information about ILEA Briefing *phone 740 5483.*

TOWER HAMLETS: WE'LL FIGHT ON

Labour may have lost control in Tower Hamlets but the Liberals have far from 'swept' to power. Their majority of two, is hardly likely to work for the full four years.

Labour won 24 out of 26 seats with the higher poll of 47% to Liberals 35% and all 4 seats for ILEA were retained by Labour.

Labour lost because of the past mistakes of the previous administration and the Labour Party was thwarted by a right-wing group who to the last days showed no signs of standing down quietly, with the attempt to rush through speculative developments such as Central House at the last minute.

The collusion of Mayor Beasley and two others with the Liberals to stand against the official Labour Party delivered the seats to ensure a majority for the Liberals. But they are out themselves. One of their pet projects that was generously funded – the Labour Movement History Museum – now faces threat of withdrawal of funds as a direct result of these renegades' actions.

Blackwall ward failed to return both candidates, due to a racist vote which emerged with the Bengali person receiving less votes than the white one, some ballot papers showing only one vote. So the SDP was returned on a racist ballot. Elsewhere Bengali candidates held and increased the vote – 5 now being returned, proving positive selection was correct.

The Tory vote was insignificant except that it equalled the fascists' poll. Monday Club member Ralph Harrison and ILEA candidate issued racist leaflets and was identified at a meeting called by the British National Party held in John Scurr school. A mobilisation of anti-racists was set on by the fascists in the hall and several arrests were made, the police having broken into the school to allow the meeting to take place.

It appears that the new administration is hell bent on implementing its own version of decentralisation (all functions at once, within 2 years) which means the creation of 7 mini Town Halls and the setting up of Neighbourhood Committees within 6 months. There will be enormous problems created with such a move and the Labour Party is considering its position as to how to block the plans, not only in the council chamber, but in the community and in conjunction with the unions.

With its first consultative conference for the leadership, we hope to have a fighting Labour Group to reverse this temporary setback and get the Liberals out at the next bye-elections.

Susan Carlyle

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LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

MAKING THEATRE OURSELVES

Stephen Parry

The involvement of the Labour Party in the arts, and of the arts in the Labour Party, has been very visible lately. The hugely successful Red Wedge concerts; actors in Party Political Broadcasts; an 'arts day' in the Fulham bye-election; are only the most obvious signs of an upsurge that started four years ago with the founding of Arts for Labour (the Labour Party support group for workers in the arts). The party has responded to the interest from the arts by becoming more involved itself; as Producer of the Red Wedge concerts and now as venue management, at the Red Rose Club in Islington.

The Red Rose has been in the hands of North Islington Labour Parties for two and a half years. It is a socialist centre rather than party offices and its main hall, intended for Labour Party and other meetings, has been used as a theatre on occasions. Earlier this year a decision was taken to promote this use further, and Richard Hadley, the chair of the club, decided on a Festival. Performers and others involved in theatre were invited – mostly through personal contact – and the Festival began to take shape as a Cabaret event (though including a straight play). At this stage a young architect, Fred Pilbrow, became involved and produced designs for a low-cost but innovative and exciting conversion of the hall to a cabaret theatre. This design was carried out– the festival performers provided unskilled labour – and the Festival opened on 13 April. It was to consist of 10 Sunday evenings, the performers including such well-known names as Leon Rosselson as well as unknowns. The hall (capacity 150) has not yet been full, but audiences have been satisfactory and the Festival has now been extended until 20 July.

So far, the first lesson of the Festival is a cheering one – we can Make Theatre Ourselves, in an organisational as well as a practical sense. Other lessons are less reassuring. In terms of actually getting the audience in, *City Limits* – which has sponsored the festival by providing free advertising – seems to have been almost as successful as the Labour Party, which has been contacted by leaflets distributed through branch secretaries in the Islington parties (and others). Although the Red Rose has given a generous deal to performers, this has not usually – because of the number of people a cabaret evening involves – meant much in the pocket for individuals. Ticket price (£3) is in line with other cabaret venues and the unwaged concession (£1.50) obviously cannot be raised either. At the present rate, it will be some time before the Red Rose recoups its modest investment. The venue has already attracted interest from jazz, folk, and theatre producers, and can be expected to produce a letting income from these, but programme control will pass out of the club's hands for such events. Support from Labour party members for the present programme is therefore crucial. The performers, of course, are socialists themselves and there is a rough male/female balance; the festival hopes to correct the under-representation of Black performers, and to include a gay/lesbian group at some stage.



Alex Cross

Rank Starlets

If the festival is a success, the labour movement will have gained a venue which can be used to promote socialist work and performers to the movement and to outsiders. Further, other CLPs – and unions – with suitable premises could repeat the Red Rose's success. Theatre, music and cabaret should all be significant in the work of raising consciousness, and the chance to control them ourselves should not be missed.

The bar at the Red Rose opens at 7pm each Sunday, and performances start at 8pm. Until 8 June the programme is:
25 May: IAN SAVILLE, socialist conjurer, with his dummy Bertolt Brecht.
1 June: WOMEN WORLDWIDE. All -women line-up with Julie Bailue (Australian stand-up comic) Sheila Hyde and others.
8 June: COUNTRY YVONNE AND THE LEFT-WING TEDS – 'the Rock 'n Roll every party needs' – with Rowland Muldoon.

The Red Rose Club is at 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 ('phone 263 7265 , pub hours for further details of the Festival, for posters and leaflets, and for membership enquiries etc).

LONDON LETTER

A REPLY TO RACHEL LEVER

Dear *Briefing*,

I feel that as one of the women elected to the GLLP Regional Executive Committee by the London Women's Conference I must answer some of the points raised by Rachel Lever in her article.

I signed the statement committing myself to supporting the policies democratically decided by the Women's Conference because I believe that accountability is essential and that as a prospective delegate it was right that I should make such a pledge. To suggest that 'WAC, perhaps complacently, simply gave a list of nominees who were simply members of WAC and left it at that' strikes me as the height of arrogance. This suggests that mere affiliation to an organisation immediately makes one supportable. To ignore where the nominees stand in relation to policy matters is to belittle the role of the Women's Conference in decision making and to undermine its role in determining future GLLP policy.

What Rachel chooses to ignore is the fact that the seven women who made the commitment had all been nominated by their Women's Sections who, one presumes, supported their candidature and recognised that they were able to represent the views of women within the Party. Had certain former representatives been more accountable and reflected the views of the women they purported to then perhaps they would not have found that they had been defeated.

I have recently become a personal member of WAC because I think it is important that women organise together. I do not, however, accept the premise that because an organisation has an all-women membership that it is automatically politically perfect. Any such organisation must have policy decisions which will obviously reflect women's perspectives.

The statement circulated was signed by women, active in the Labour Party, with a range of different political backgrounds. To say '*Briefing* had got together a list of good causes (Ireland, Black Sections, lesbians, women with disabilities) and assured us that the women on its slate either had in the past or would in the future champion them' is extremely patronising towards the women. The seven elected include the black woman deputy mayor of Lambeth and vice-chair of National Black Sections, a prominent member of the Association of LGCs and a candidate in the local elections in Greenwich, a candidate in a marginal ward in Fulham and a ward organiser for Nick Raynsford's campaign, a leading member of Hammersmith Labour Party, a leading trade unionist at the GLC, Chair of LCI, women's officer for Hackney North CLP, a campaigner for lesbian rights and on behalf of Irish women and a surcharged Lambeth councillor. Apart from patronising the women it suggests that we are liberals taking up 'good causes' and not socialists fighting for the implementation of policies of importance to women recognising that the needs of black women, lesbians and women with disabilities have been consistently ignored by the Labour Party.

Yours in solidarity

Helen Crossfield
Member of GLLP REC
(in a personal capacity)

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LABOUR BRIEFING

NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

No 28 JUNE 1986

No retreat from Conference policy:

NO NUCLEAR POWER!

There is now a massive groundswell of popular opposition to nuclear power in the wake of Chernobyl. The Labour Party must seize this opportunity to campaign to scrap the nuclear power programme altogether. No-one but the most blinkered apologist of the nuclear military-industrial complex believes "Chernobyl" could not happen here. As Tony Benn said in Parliament on May 13, "This is a technology humanity cannot handle, and, not for the first time, the public are ahead of Parliament in perceiving that".

Yet the Labour leadership continues to put forward Jack Cunningham to speak on these matters when his line is simply "heads down while Chernobyl blows over" (!) – ready for more nuclear power expansion later!

What is needed is:

* A massive campaign to end all nuclear power within 5 years (the time it takes to build a coal power station); and we must start campaigning in the communities and workplaces now.

* The replacement of Jack Cunningham, Labour's current environment speaker, by someone more suitable.

The western response to Chernobyl was interesting, if predictable. The more intelligent pro-nuclear protagonists such as the US nuclear industry said that Chernobyl was "not that bad", fearing an anti-nuclear campaign in their own polluted backyard.

The commie-bashing fanatics declared it was a disaster beyond imagination and communism was to blame.

The key question for the nuclear lobby is how to stop people realising Chernobyl could happen here. But how could it be that the Russians are ahead of, or equal to, the west in nuclear missile technology; but somehow miles behind in nuclear power engineering? Of course it could happen here, and recent incidents at Sizewell A and Hinkley Point show this.

Statistically 10 of the world's 300 or so nuclear power plants have a serious accident every year – which has, or could have, resulted in a major release of radioactive pollution. The effect in Britain of Chernobyl could be up to 1700 extra cancer cases in the next few decades: a Chernobyl at Sizewell or Hinkley Point would be worse in Britain than Russia, which is less densely populated.

Of course, although what we are saying is in the best interests of humanity, the forces against it are huge. The UK backs South Africa which occupies Namibia which mines uranium for Birtain's nuclear programme, which exports plutonium to the USA to make bombs and so on. More than logic alone is needed to shift that lot.

We have to launch our own campaign of resolutions, meetings and mass petitions to MAKE BRITAIN NUCLEAR FREE. In particular, it is vital to be on the alert for attempts at this year's Labour Party Conference to use an "NEC Statement" to water down existing conference policy of outright opposition to nuclear power.

* End all nuclear power within 5 years (and provide alternative work for nuclear power workers)

* Remove all nuclear bases from Britain and leave NATO, the nuclear club.

Councillor Piers Corbyn
Burgess Ward, Southwark



Press Association

CND supporters wearing mock-up radiation suits join Friends of the Earth anti-nuclear protest. They carry a 'nuclear coffin' from the Dept. of Energy offices to the British Fuels Office, 1st May 1986

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

CHERNOBYL: WHO'S TO BLAME?

Boris Shcherbina, who heads the government commission investigating the Chernobyl disaster, has suggested that it was caused by "the coincidence of several exceptionally unlikely and therefore unforeseen failures". If the Soviet government intends to press ahead with its nuclear power industry, and there is every indication since the disaster that it does, then Shcherbina's explanation will likely form the kernel of his commission's final report to the government.

A full explanation of the disaster, however, must go beyond the technical details of the breakdown and the record of "human errors", if any, which transpired in the vicinity of Chernobyl's number four reactor in the early hours of April 26. It must delve further into the labour process of the nuclear power industry – the planning, construction and operation of its plants – for here lie at least some of the causes of the disaster and their human agents.

Since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, there has been great pressure from the highest levels of government to step up construction and exploitation of nuclear power stations. The pace in this sector slowed down considerably at the end of the Brezhnev era and during the drawn out succession struggle. At the same time it became clear that accessible reserves of coal in Ukraine were fast diminishing while mining in Western Siberia was not developed sufficiently to satisfy growing energy demand.

The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union set as its main goal the acceleration of economic growth through the introduction of new technology and singled out the nuclear industry as a priority in the 12th Five Year Plan. It called for a 250% increase in nuclear power capacity by 1990.

Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov stated categorically at this Congress that any lapse in the construction of nuclear power stations was now "inadmissable".

The planners and managers of Soviet industry, the technocratic elite rising to prominence together with Gorbachev and Ryzhkov, are sensitive to such directives. They heed, too, the demands of the military which needs weapons-grade plutonium from reactors such as those at Chernobyl.

Cut corners

Despite the expressed urgency, the volume and quality of construction material and engineered components supplied to power station sites have been inadequate. Lyubov Kovalevska published a detailed report on the problems faced by the Chernobyl station in the February 27th issue of Literaturna Ukraina. She noted that the Zhuk Hydroproject Institute, responsible for preparing Chernobyl's construction budgets, invariably sent them in too late, making it impossible to plan out deliveries of concrete and metal parts. The budgets were also of such poor quality that they required constant amendment on the spot. The government agency which actually ordered materials for the site was functioning chaotically as well. Concrete, wall panels, sheet metal, tiles and machine components did not arrive on time. Some deliveries were turned back because of their poor quality; others had to be accepted and modified; still other incomplete deliveries lay around and corroded.

As a result of poor planning, dislocations in supply and substandard capital equipment, workers at Chernobyl and other stations under construction are not able to build according to specifications and acceptable safety regulations. They must improvise and cut corners in order to fulfil their plan. B. Gordayev, a safety inspector for the industry revealed on April 8th (1) that over 50 "blatant violations of the plan, regulations and techniques of work" were uncovered on several sites in the last six months of 1985 alone. They included "defects in the reinforcement of power blocks, no special checks or tests of waterproofing of water conduits, the sealing of wall panel joints or anti-corrosion measures....dozens of mistakes, amendments, alterations and adjustments in blueprints, even during construction". Traces of these practices were usually covered "in concrete". Gordayev was especially alarmed by violations in assembly he uncovered in the pressurised chambers of power installations.

Kovalevska said that the problems encountered when building the first reactor at Chernobyl remained unsolved and were carried over into the second, third and fourth reactors. Yet the government ordered the timetable for completing the fifth reactor to be cut from three years to two! In 1985, the workers began to build it without the necessary blueprints or material supplies. "But the directing organs", wrote Kovalevsk two months before the disaster, "hasten to impose an unreal schedule without increasing the strength of the construction workers' organisations or providing them with the resources they need".

The workforce at Chernobyl has been built up over 15 years. It includes a core team of highly qualified engineers, technicians, assemblers, repairmen, operators and planners, who acquired their knowledge building and operating nuclear plants in different parts of the Soviet Union. They have been awarded state prizes for their efforts many times.

If there were faults in the construction or difficulties in the operation of Chernobyl's number four reactor, then the blame cannot be placed on its builders and operators. Human errors on a far large scale rest in the Politburo, Gosplan and the state ministries of power and electrification.

(1) Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya
April 8, 1986

Taras Lehkyj

IT *COULD* HAPPEN HERE!

"We do not expect big reactor accidents to happen, the chance of their happening is extremely remote..." **Lord Marshall, Chairman of CEGB, 1983.**

Chernobyl has suffered just such an accident. The scale of the radio-active fallout from the accident is unprecedented in human history with the exception of the fallout from the use of nuclear weapons themselves.

"The consequences of a hypothetical but imaginable accident is to reduce the life expectancy of a person who could have been affected, on average (by)....a few hours or, for an extreme accident, ...a few days". Lord Marshall 1983.

The estimated number of deaths from the Chernobyl accident has been rising steadily since day one. On May 6th experts estimated between 2-2,000 immediate casualties, at least 10,000 lung cancers over the next 10 years in the surrounding area (500-1,000 kms2) and up to 8,000 additional cancers in Western Europe over the next 40 years. (Sources: Friends of the Earth and Guardian May 6).

Averaging out the possible impact over the whole affected population as the CEGB have consistently done and as other public sources have done since the accident is callously dishonest. As Friends of the Earth point out: "a little bit of radiation won't give you just a little bit of cancer. Any dose can be the one that does the particular damage that shows up years later as cancer or genetic defects".

Most victims of cancer will not know for certain if radiation is the cause and will take little comfort in knowing that they are a statistical minority.

"Superior safety systems and a much higher level of technology ruled out any possibility of such an accident (as Chernobyl) in this country said CEGB chairman Lord Marshall and Energy Secretary Mr. Walker." (Sunday Telegraph May 4).

Both Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have asserted that the Chernobyl design is safer than Britain's Magnox and AGR reactors. The PWR, which the Tories want to introduce at Sizewell, came close to an accident of the same proportion at Three Mile Island, USA.

At the Sizewell Inquiry the evidence from Friends of the Earth, GLC, trade unions and other Local Authorities showed that major accidents could results in the following:

"* Milk bans in the immediate vicinity for 50 years.

* Crop bans for one year in a region extending to 800 kms away

* Meat bans for one year extending to over 300kms away from the accident.

* The total crop damage for a U.K. accident was estimated to be a minimum of £1.5 billion. The total clean up costs for the accident could be of the order of £15 billion." (Friends of the Earth, May 6).

Does Neil Kinnock really think nuclear power is a vote winner in the face of all this? Comrades should prioritise anti-nuclear motions for the 1986 Labour Party conference and pass motions now urging the NEC to follow party policy on the nuclear issue.

Andy Porter SERA Council, and co-author of the Energy Fix.

FRONT BENCH'S SHAMEFUL SILENCE

As the full horror of the disaster at Chernobyl began to emerge, the British Government and press rolled out the normal reaction; 'Bad Soviet design'; 'Russians denying the West information'; 'Radiation levels normal'; 'No cause for alarm' etc. This was reflected in the House of Commons where both front benches were obsessed with keeping the debate within limits.

What the limits of the debate were soon emerged; nobody was to challenge the concept of nuclear power and everyone had to accept that British reactors are 'the safest in the world' and that it is possible to safely dispose of high level radioactive waste. Certainly out of order was any link between the existence of nuclear power stations, the development of a nuclear reprocessing plant and the supply of weapons grade plutonium to the military establishment at Aldermaston.

To me the most telling revelation was how out of touch with what people outside Parliament were saying, and seeing with their own eyes, MPs are.

The Chernobyl incident brought home to millions what a fallacy the arguments about 'cheap' fuel are; how is the cost of leukaemia in children and cancers in adults measured; how does one 'cost' the pollution of the Irish Sea?

There has been the biggest movement ever in opposition to nuclear power, and its products from sickening pollution to nuclear warheads.

Last year's Labour Party Conference carried, by a majority of one and a half million votes, a policy of halting the nuclear programme, phasing out the plants and a substantial research programme into alternative energy sources.

Precious little has been done by the Party to explain this policy to the public and the Chernobyl horror has provided an opportunity that was not available before.

With a few exceptions, notably Tony Benn, the Labour MPs all appeared to be accepting the inevitability of nuclear power. Indeed some casual observers in the gallery wondered why the nuclear power industry was worried; they had support from all sides.

As Chernobyl passes from the headlines the real effect will hit; the cloud from this accident will cause between 100 and 1,700 cancers in Britain alone, many of them fatal. The toll of Windscale '57 and Three Mile Island are now being counted.

The nightmare is with us.

Jeremy Corbyn MP

RESOLUTION ON FUEL POLICY PASSED AT 1985 LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

This Conference views with abhorrence and anxiety the present exploitation and abuse of the environment, and in particular the potentially catastrophic effects upon the environment of the continued use of nuclear power.

1) Conference therefore calls for a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants because of:

(a) the links between the civil nuclear industry and the nuclear weapons programme.

(b) the obvious falseness of the Central Electricity Generating Board and the nuclear industry's claim that nuclear power produces 'cheap' electricity when neither can estimate the cost of decommissioning a nuclear power plant.

(c) the threat to civil liberties posed by maintaining security at power stations.

(d) the dangers of disposal of nuclear waste and the pollution frequently caused.

(e) all nuclear activity constitutes a long-term health danger through radiation (from generation, transportation and re-processing) to those who work in the industry as well as to the public, the environment and to the health of future generations.

2) Conference calls upon the Labour Opposition and the next Labour Government to formulate and implement:

(a) the funding of measures for the desulphurisation of coal to solve the acid rain problem.

(b) the funding of research into the provision of alternative energy forms, i.e. hydro-electricity, wind-power etc:

(c) the restoration of the research grant from the existing £5 million to its previous £25 million to the National Coal Board for research into producing liquid fuel from coal.

(d) a national programme of energy saving.

(e) the re-cycling of waste and pollution control.

(f) research into safer means of nuclear waste disposal.

(g) the stopping of the export of all plutonium abroad.

(h) the setting up of policy working groups (at all levels) to carry out these policies.

3) Conference calls upon the Labour Opposition to begin discussion with management and unions in the nuclear power and energy supply industries to plan for and provide alternative employment for those currently employed in the nuclear industry.

'WE'LL SING THE GREY FLAG ONCE A YEAR'

After the 1979 General Election and the winter of discontent the Labour Left adopted the slogan "Never again a Labour Government like the last one". Unfortunately, many of those that used to use the slogan are suffering from amnesia. The realigned left is supporting Neil Kinnock whose project is to moderate the Labour Party in an attempt to secure the confidence of capital and the votes of the middle ground. The realigned left are trying to win Neil to the Left. The "freedom and fairness" campaign is a product of the realigned left's uneasy alliance with Neil.

Tribune welcomed the campaign with enthusiasm. The unknown G. Brown (Labour spokesperson on Trade and Industry) explained how the campaign will reclaim the concept of individual freedom from the Tory right. Such is our leadership's enthusiasm for individual freedom that Neil allowed Brian Walden to counterpose individual freedom to equality and he chose the former.

The campaign is also supposed to abandon Labour's cloth cap image, haul down the red flag and reveal the thoroughly modern party of Larry Whitty. It was unfortunate that it took me nearly 3 weeks to extract a campaign pack from the super efficient Walworth Road.

The pack consists mainly of glossy posters, making it impossible to achieve mass distribution in the constituencies. On reflection, this might not be such a bad thing as the electorate will not get many clues to Labour's policy from the campaign literature. The pack addresses those issues that Labour scores well on in the polls, such as health care, education and transport. It fails to address "difficult" issues such as disarmament, justice for the miners and public ownership.



Labour Party Photo Library

22nd April 1986. Launch of Labour's Freedom and Fairness Campaign

A welcome aspect of the pack was the emphasis given to childcare. In fact this was probably its only saving grace. It was good to see the environment was given some priority. However, in spite of an imput by the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, the pack failed to reveal our opposition to nuclear power. Instead, we are committed to "...clean air, clean water, and more attractive surroundings".

Healthcare and education are covered. However, there is no mention of opposition to privatisation. Commitments to restore cuts, improve pay and abolish the private sector are also ignored. Crime prevention has its own section. We want "more police on the beat". Printers, miners, peace activists and those from the inner cities are offered reassurance by the phrase "more local say".

An astounding feature of the pack is the low priority given to job creation. It needs to be asked – how much freedom and fairness can be secured with 4 million people unemployed?

Finally, it would appear that the realigned left is getting a bad deal. They vote for expulsions, pillary Benn, Skinner and Heffer and get nothing in return. I defy one of our realigned comrades to come forward and catalogue their recent policy gains. So get writing comrades, we're just dying to hear from you.

Bryn Griffiths
Brighton Labour Party

LONDON ELECTIONS: SOCIALIAIST POLICIES WIN VICTORY

One thousand Labour councillors in London. This was the outcome of the Borough and ILEA elections on May 8th. In the process, Labour won control of fifteen councils, and is the largest party in Hillingdon, winning 22 seats from the Conservatives. Labour also holds the balance of power in Havering and Kingston. On the negative side, Labour lost control of Tower Hamlets to the Liberal/SDP Alliance and failed to win the Tory flagship of Wandsworth.

Analysing the results in detail, it appears that the best results were achieved in those wards and constituencies that conducted a vigorous hard-left campaign for jobs and services, for race and gender equality, for the rights of gay men and lesbian women and for the rights of people with disabilities.

However, in Islington South, where a low-key, apologetic campaign was conducted, Labour lost sixteen seats to the SDP. If this result is repeated at a General Election, Chris Smith, who is secretary of the Parliamentary Tribune Group, would lose his seat. Contrast this with the aggressive campaign mounted in Finchley – Thatcher's yard – where Labour took nine seats (gaining five from the Tories) and came to within 200 votes of being the largest party in the constituency.

Grey campaign in Wandsworth

The biggest disappointment of the campaign must be Wandsworth. Here, a new-style "grey" campaign was tested. The Labour Party has three white men as their Parliamentary candidates – Alf Dubs (who changed his mind and now opposes Black Sections), and Kinnock loyalists Peter Hain and Tom Cox. Putney's ILEA candidate was Sir Ashley Brammell, the Authority's former leader, and Tony Belton led the Labour group. The lesson for the general election is that Thatcherism – as exemplified by the Wandsworth Tories – cannot be defeated by slogans like "Freedom and Fairness" if the actions and image of the Party is one of middle-class white men patronising all other sections of the community.

In Tower Hamlets, three deselected right-wingers standing as Independents split the Labour vote and let in the Liberals. For the first time in fifty years, Labour has lost control. Paul Beasley, who led the Tower Hamlets council for nearly ten years was one of the three renegades. Under his leadership, Tower Hamlets became infamous for its neglect of housing policies, poor industrial relations and its lack of support for the Black communities in the Borough. The Left fought a tough rear-guard campaign – but the damage done by the right-wing could not be reversed in time.

Not good enough

Overall, the outcome is good – but not good enough. On these results, Labour would win another twenty-four constituencies in a general election. Unlike Fulham, Putney would remain Tory, Islington South would become SDP and there would be close results in the two Tower Hamlets constituencies and in Finchley. National and regional effort needs to be concentrated on the thirty or so marginal constituencies in London. Politically, the right-wing and soft-left approaches have been proved to be a failure. The people's votes go for red and not for grey.

Black councillors

The biggest gain for the left is the massive increase in the number of Black councillors all over London. In 1982, nearly 60 Black councillors were elected, in 1986 there are nearly 250. Bernie Grant, Merle Amory and Linda Bellos have been elected as leaders of Borough Councils and numerous others have been elected as committee chairs. The racists in Fleet Street and elsewhere will be exerting maximum pressure on the Black comrades in an effort to break their resolve to "deliver the goods" to London's Black communities and to begin a national fight against racism and for equality. Without doubt, this progress would not have been possible without the high profile activities of the Labour Party Black Sections in all parts of London, but most notably in Haringey, Lambeth, Ealing, Brent and Islington North.

Women, on the other hand, did less well – mainly because there were not enough women candidates. The Party as a whole and the Women's Sections will have to take specific steps to encourage more women candidates; where such steps were taken (e.g. ILEA and Brent), there was a considerable increase. For the 1990 elections, the aim should be that at least one candidate in each ward should be a woman. In some wards, there may be a case for an all-women shortlist. Alongside this, the work of Borough councillors will need to be alerted so that more women feel able to participate without sacrificing other aspects of their lives. Without such decisive steps, the goal of "at least fifty per cent women" will not be attained, and would stand in the way of Labour receiving massive support from women voters.

Narendra Makanji
Secretary, Labour Party
Black Sections &
Haringey councillor

PREDICTING THE KINNOCKITE FUTURE

The local election results in Exeter, in terms of votes cast, did not contradict the national trend. Both Labour and the SDP won a seat from the Tories, leaving Labour as the single largest party on the council. Nothing much changed, nor could it have. There was little chance of the Tories regaining overall control, nor was it possible, given the seats which were up for election, for Labour to take control. In short, the Labour/Alliance coalition was bound to continue running the council.

The Labour council leader, Chester Long, described the result as 'a vote of confidence in the administration' which, of course, is as much an endorsement of the Liberals as it is of Labour. Nobody could really be surprised that tactical voting against the Tories meant that Labour did well. Labour hardly distinguished itself from the Alliance: it backed the sale of council houses and generally avoided saying anything which was either practical or involved the struggle for socialism. For the local Labour leadership what was important was that Labour won seats and the coalition remained in office: socialist struggle had little to do with it.

There has been no serious debate about the direction of things inside the Party either. All we are treated to is endless rounds of congratulations, compulsory optimism; all of which is framed in exclusive electoralism.

Is Exeter Labour Party, then, merely years behind because it is in the conservative South West? Not at all, under the forceful leadership of John Shepherd, the Party chair, it has perfected Kinnockism. The witch hunt is in full swing. Right wing policies are always presented internally in a leftish style and every attempt is made to show that Labour is 'competent, sensible and able to govern'; that is it will not question the power of capital.

Interestingly, Exeter predicts the Kinnockite future through its promotion of coalitionism. Already, the effects are felt inside the Party. Any campaign or policy which might offend the Liberals or SDP must be jettisoned. Those who advocate or promote socialist struggle must be marginalised or expelled.

As the votes on May 8th were counted, I was glad to see the Tories losing and Labour winning: what I was not sure in my mind about was how the struggle for socialism was being advanced.

PETER BOWING
Exeter CLP

WALES CONFERENCE SUPPORTS WITCH-HUNT

Labour Party Wales Conference held in Swansea on 16th and 17th May witnessed a massive escalation of the witchhunt against Militant. A resolution calling for the expulsion of all Militant supporters was passed by a huge majority (only about 30 delegates voted against).

It is clear that it is not only Militant in the firing line. Anyone speaking against purges was tarred with the same brush. To the right in Wales, anyone on the left is 'Militant'!

Paradoxically, many prominent right-wingers were voted off the Labour Party Wales Executive. The biggest gain for the left was the election of the WAC slate for the four women's seats on the Executive. It is unlikely that this year's Executive will spearhead the witchhunt in the same way as last year's.

Conference also endorsed a rule change, allowing Labour Women Wales Conference to elect the women's seats on the Wales Executive – an important democratic gain for women.

Stevi Jackson
(newly elected Labour Party Wales Executive member – in a personal capacity)

BRIGHTON: NO DEALS!

Labour are now the largest group on Brighton Borough Council, having gained two marginals and failed narrowly to win a third for overall control. The full situation is Lab 24; Con 19; Lib/SDP 4; Ind. Con. 1.

Unlike just about everywhere else in the country, the Tories actually managed to achieve a net swing against Labour in many wards, leaving the Alliance all but finished in the town as former 'tactical voters' responded to the 'red scare' leaflet.

Despite initial confusion, the Party and Labour Group have been quick to reach agreement on the issue of whether to take control. Group leader, Dave Lepper, received loud applause at the Local Government GC as he announced the intention to take the Chairs of Committees only if Labour are successful in taking the Chair of Council. This position was subsequently endorsed by the Labour Group.

Underlying this strategy is a cast iron policy of 'No deals with other Parties', a firm reminder to the Right, who are already contemplating the selection process this autumn!

Dave Lewney
Election Organiser,
Hanover Branch

CONFERENCE AGAINST THE WITCH- HUNT

Called by Hackney North & Stoke Newington, Hackney South and Shoreditch and Vauxhall CLPS

Saturday 21 June, Regents College
Inner Circle, Regents Park, London

It is proposed to hold this Conference on June 21st in London. Labour Parties, their sections (including Black Sections), and affiliated organisations are invited to sponsor the Conference; and are also invited to send two delegates per body. Observers are also welcome.

The political basis is provided by the following abbreviated resolution which was proposed to the Labour party National Executive Committee by MPs Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Jo Richardson and Joan Maynard:

"This Conference is against the expulsions of any members because they read and support the views of journals, of the left or right, within the Party.

"Within the labour movement, and reflected in the Labour Party, there have long been groups of different kinds, standing for certain political positions and views, who are organised, sometimes with paid staff at varying levels.

"The Party, in our view, should not return to the days of proscibed lists and intolerance, but should accept the demand for diversification, groups, tendencies, strands of opinion, journals, newspapers of one kind or another, with widely differing views, are bound to exist.

"Our main test today is to work for the election of a Labour Government at the next General Election. To do that we are convinced that internal attacks on each other, leading to dsiciplinary action, can only help our political enemies, who are backed by an anti-labour press which is geared to do all in its power to stop Labour getting back into government.

"We ask all Party members to stop any witch hunts, to get rid of the witch hunting atmosphere that is beginning to develop in the Party, and to concentrate on defeating Thatcher and her government at the next election."

Along with your sponsorship we are asking for a donation of £10 towards the expenses of conference. We would also ask for any assistance you can give in pubicising this event in the labour movement.

The conference is being organised through planning meetings open to those sponsoring it.

For news of activities against the Witch Hunt read *Witch Hunt News*, 20p per copy, £1 for 10 copies (including postage) from 36 Melbourne Rd., London E17.

Please send your sponsorships, requests for further information, etc., to Witch Hunt Conference, c/o Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP, 96a Stoke Newington High Street, London N16.

Letter

ALL OUT FOR PEACE

Dear Comrades,

The events of recent weeks in Libya present us with an opportunity to campaign for the removal of American bases from this country. The bombing has been unpopular, even with Tory supporters. 1986, United Nations International Year of Peace, must be the year Labour gets across its twin message:

(1) that a nuclear defence policy is no defence policy, only a policy of national suicide;

(2) our actions would strengthen the European peace movements which will in turn put pressure on the USA to take some meaningful disarmament measures.

Equally important we should argue that:

- cutting Britain's military expenditure is vital to our other campaigns on jobs and industry and Freedom and Fairness, as this is the only way we can convincingly answer the question of where the money is to come from for the rebuilding of our society.
- the transfer of production from capital intensive military hardware to alternative labour intensive industries producing socially useful products could generate many jobs.

The 1985 Labour Party conference demanded a campaign on nuclear disarmament by a large majority. It called for:

- The use of party political broadcasts;
- the production of a video film for political education;
- a training programme to include day schools for party members;
- a series of major rallies to promote it.

The CLPs must start to put pressure on the NEC now to start to implement these measures so that we can campaign on our own terms and not those of our opponents. CLPs should make links with their local CND groups who are starting a major nationwide campaign in preparation for the next election. If we are too slow this time Reagan may not give us a second chance.

Billy Walther (Deptford CLP)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

EUROPE vs. AMERICA

The recent history of American foreign policy is not exactly short of failures, yet few initiatives could be said to have yielded results as spectacularly opposite to the intended aims than the bombing raid on Tripoli and Benghazi. Instead of demonstrating the unity of the 'free world' against the scourge of terrorism, it exposed its deep divisions. Instead of defeating terrorism, it invited retaliation and cleared London's hotels of American tourists for fear of such retaliation. Instead of isolating the 'mad dog' Gadafy, it strengthened his domestic and international standing. Instead of enhancing America's reputation in Europe, it united a broad 'anti-American' coalition of forces in opposition to the raid. The British Thatcherites, Washington's closest allies in Western Europe, suffered humiliating electoral defeats at least partially as a direct consequence of their complicity in the attack. At first glance, the fashionable 'Spitting Image' approach to the analysis of American politics – according to which the President's brain went missing years ago – seems the only reasonable one to adopt for a balance sheet of the flight of the F-111s. Yet a closer look at the background and some of the developments since the raid reveals a somewhat different picture.

To begin with, it takes a Neil Kinnock to criticise the American aggression against Libya mainly on the grounds that it was counterproductive in the defeat of terrorism. That was never the purpose of the attack in the first place, indeed some form of retaliation was probably eagerly anticipated. Whatever the real extent of Libya's involvement in terrorism, the Gadafy regime was singled out for punitive action because of its international isolation: as a soft target for another demonstration of the Pentagon's readiness and ability to strike anywhere in the Third World in pursuit of US imperialist interests. Such demonstrations are a necessary part of the casting of America in the role of the world policeman after the disaster in Indochina: Carter's Iranian expedition may have been a bit of a flop, as indeed was Reagan's in the Lebanon, but the success in Grenada was bound to be followed up somewhere sooner or later. Nicaragua may still be a bit tricky given the strong domestic opposition and the European dissent, but surely nobody would object to a little target practice on the mad Colonel? In American domestic political terms, the exercise was an unqualified success and has thereby taken the Pentagon one step nearer military intervention in Central America or somewhere else where it really matters.

Furthermore, it is difficult to ignore the evidence that the raid has met a certain amount of success even on its own terms. The reaction from Libya and the Arab world in general has been remarkably muted and certainly a far cry from the holy war threatened in the first rush of rhetoric. This is hardly surprising, as the demonstration of American ruthlessness has clearly raised the stakes and the pressure is now beginning to be felt not only by Gadafy but by Syria's Assad and others as well. Above all, however, the Tokyo Summit – while stopping short of a retrospective endorsement of the use of military force – delivered the kind of Libya-bashing communique which Reagan required to cover up the cracks in the imperialist alliance and restore the appearance of American leadership. The distraction provided by the Soviet nuclear disaster in Chernobyl also contributed to limiting the negative fall-out from the Tripoli in Europe.

In the short run, therefore, Washington has little cause for regret over its Libyan adventure. If anything, the impotence of the rage in many European quarters only served to underline the fact that when the chips are down, it is the US that still calls the tune. There can have been few more pathetic sights this year than yesterday's men Edward Heath and James Callaghan getting up in the Commons to proclaim that they would have refused permission for the use of the USAF bases in Britain. The realities of the situation were quite succintly expressed by Thatcher's admission that she agreed only with 'extreme reluctance', but that a refusal would have been 'utterly inconceivable'. In plain English: 'I wasn't too keen, but what could I do?' Similarly, the other European leaders have not exactly performed heroics of independence. France and Spain may have denied the F-111s permission to cross their airspace, but in France Mitterand and Chirac are already falling over each other to blame the other's lack of resolve, and in Spain – where Gonzalez is still breathing a sigh of relief after the NATO referendum – the revelations of alleged Libyan complicity in right-wing Francoist plots may well swing the decision the other way if there is a next time. West Germany may not have been directly involved, but the allegedly Libyan (now Syrian) inspired bombing of the LaBelle night club – the official casus belli – was followed by a demonstrative US takeover of control over the West Berlin police force under the 1945 occupation statutes: a humiliating reminder of the facts of life as seen in Washington.

The real targets, in fact of the USAF bombs were not in Tripoli or Benghazi at all – they were in Western Europe. It was not so much the accuracy of their delivery that counted, but the location of their departure. In military terms it would have been entirely feasible to hit Gadafy from the Mediterranean Sixth Fleet assembled just off the Gulf of



Protest outside U.S. Embassy, 19th April 1986

John Chapman

THE LEFT MUST PREPARE

Sirte, but that would have let Thatcher and Howe off the hook. Thatcher and Howe, however, were needed in their capacity as the chief diplomatic bridgehead of the United States in Europe to do the dirty work of whipping the West European allies into line – an assignment finally discharged only at the drafting of the communique of the Tokyo Summit. Pressing Thatcher and Howe into service meant precluding the possibility of a united West European revolt: not that such a revolt could have had much effect on the course of events, but it would have been a diplomatic embarrassment and tricky PR problem. There must be no doubt that the calculation was correct and the operation ultimately successful. Western Europe ***has*** been whipped into line for the time being.

SMOULDER BENEATH THE SURFACE

But the long-term implications are far less clear. European discontent with US foreign policy continues to smoulder beneath the surface. But what exactly is the nature of that discontent? Why was there open dissent against the bombing of Libya, and what can it tell us about the future prospects for the relationship between Western Europe and North America? As far as the ruling classes of the major West European states are concerned, there are, of course, their business interests in the Arab world. Libya is still a major supplier of oil to West Germany and Italy in particular, and Western Europe on the whole depends on an uninterrupted flow from the Middle Eastern oil wells where the United States simply does not. This does not in any sense make them more sympathetic to Gadafy than Reagan is, but it does mean a different approach to the problem of the imperialist stabilisation of the Middle East. The strategic differences on this score between the EEC and Washington have been well known for years. But the differences extend well beyond the regional issues and involve a whole complex of issues which were all affected in one way or another by the raid on Libya: the relationship with the Soviet Union, where the Europeans saw the reckless demonstration of military might in the Mediterranean as unnecessarily provocative when Moscow's collaboration is seen as essential for a stabilisation of the region; the proper relations between Allies where the contemptuous disregard for European interests in the planning and execution of the attack was seen as the slap on the wrists which it was intended to be; the presentation of NATO policy and strategy to the West European public where the use of USAF bases in Britain for intervention outside Europe could undermine confidence in the purely defensive and regional nature of the alliance.

Yet the dilemma of the European ruling classes remains that they can only go so far in openly articulating their dissent. Apart from marginal factions such as the British Powellites, no British Tory, West German or Italian Christian Democrat government can seriously contemplate to break the American connection for fear of the deep economic and ideological crisis such a break would unleash. Even de Gaulle never quite managed to extricate himself from the Pax Americana, and his present-day successors have lost a great deal of their Gaullism, Washington knows this, of course, and is determined to exploit this weakness to the full in order to reassert its supremacy over Western Europe and reshape the Atlantic Alliance in its image.

THE EUROPEAN WORKERS

This is where the connection between the bombing of Tripoli and the Tory losses in the May 8th elections comes in. For the trouble with the American strategy is that the more successfully they subordinate their conservative European allies to their foreign and economic policy dictates, the more they prepare the ground for a resurgence of different political forces in Europe which actually could break the American connection: the workers' movement, the peace movement, the socialist parties. Reaganism on a world scale involves not only Star Wars, Cruise and Pershing, confrontation with the Soviet Union, intervention in Nicaragua and the bombing of Libya, it also involves the offloading of the costs of the world capitalist crisis onto the shoulders of the European workers, the rolling back of the welfare state, austerity and intensified class warfare. And with it the risk of political upheavals in key European states breaking the mould of the Pax Americana from a different direction. The naivety of Neil Kinnock's blustering after Libya may make him an almost endearing figure to Shultz and Weinberger, but Kinnock's party is committed to removing the US Nuclear bases and breaking with NATO strategy as defined by the Pentagon – and may now, after all, come to power. The German Social Democrats may not exactly be Bolsheviks, but their foreign, military and economic policy platforms are pretty incompatible with Washington's plans for Europe, and the SPD may even do a parliamentary deal with the dreaded Greens.

It is this kind of confrontation between Europe and America, not the pathetic whining of the Heaths, Callaghans and Owens – and certainly not the chauvinistic anti-Americanism of the Powellites – that the Left has a vital interest in. Kinnock and Healey are seeking to limit this confrontation, to concoct a new Atlantic formula under which 'European' and 'American' interests could be reconciled through wise social-democratic statesmanship. The Left must prepare for the inevitable collapse of that attempt to bridge the unbridgeable.

by Gunter Minnerup

JOIN THE PALESTINE CAMPAIGN!

The Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine was founded in the wake of Israel's genocidal invasion of the Lebanon in 1982, as the only Campaign working within the Labour Movement that supports the Palestinian struggle on an explicitly anti-zionist, anti-imperialist basis. During its four years of existence it has fought to establish the Palestinian struggle as an issue that must be central to the campaigning work of the *left* of the movement, and to challenge the monopoly that the right wing "Arabists" have traditionally held on the issue.

In the face of a deteriorating political situation in the Middle East, and especially within the PLO, the LMCP has brought representatives from the left of the PLO to address several trades union and Labour Party meetings including a fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference, with an aim to building a base, particularly within the Left of the Labour Party, which would break with the bipartisan approval which the present Party leadership would clearly give to an imperialist dictated "peace settlement" in the region, and which would continue to back the Palestinian struggle until they have won their rights to self determination.

The LMCP has made significant gains since its foundation, both within the Labour Party and the trades unions. Increasing levels of membership and particularly affiliations are not only indicative of these gains, but have also been a substantial factor as a strong base within the Labour Movement capable of fighting a cause which has traditionally faced deep hostility from large sections of the movement's leadership. It is important that this base continues to expand to ensure that the question of the Palestinian struggle gets taken up and discussed throughout the Labour Movement, and I would therefore urge all Briefing readers to join the Campaign and to attend the LMCP AGM on May 31.

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Labour Movement
Campaign for Palestine
AGM
Islington Town Hall
Saturday May 31st
10.00—5.00
For further details
please contact Secretary
60, Cricket Road,
Oxford
Deadline for resolutions
May 17th

Socialism and trade unionism in South Africa

On May 1st, militant Black trade unionism in South Africa came of age. In the words of the Guardian, Black South Africa "flexed its muscles" in a mass stay-away to mark the day of international working class solidarity. This was largely in response to a call for strike action by the newly formed TU federation, COSATU. From now on, Black trade unions under the banner of COSATU will be fighting for the replacement of racist public holidays such as Kruger Day with paid holidays on May Day and June 16th (South Africa Youth Day and the anniversary of the Soweto uprising)

In fact, June 16th this year promises to mark the beginning of a new and intensified campaign against the apartheid state with school students calling for a three day general strike. This upsurge in activity will certainly be matched by increased violence and repression by the organs of apartheid, perhaps along the lines of the brutal occupation of Alexandria by 1500 military and police over the weekend 9th-11th May, to quell a "high level of lawlessness".

It is now being said that the upsurge in Black opposition to apartheid, orchestrated in part by the ANC's call to make the Black townships ungovernable, and coupled with increased militancy in Black trade unions and more cooperation and unity between organisations opposed to apartheid are together leading South Africa towards a pre-revolutionary situation. And yet it is ironic that it is not always those elements in the ANC branded by the Botha government as communist and therefore highly dangerous who are most closely involved in the revolutionary acitivity. Many are people not directly allied to the ANC's national liberation programme enshrined in the ANC. For the increasingly direct intervention of independent trade unions in questions of national liberation, which are in turn linked to the issue of class emancipation, is giving a clear voice to the struggle of black workers as an oppressed class. Many Black South Africans involved in trade unions while supporting the primacy of the ANC as the central pivot of the national liberation movement, remain sceptical and deeply ambivalent about the programme laid out in the Freedom Charter, which is branded by some as a reforming capitalist document.

Socialist Programme

The contradictions of capitalism and imperialism coupled with the ideology of apartheid point instead to a socialist programme for workers' control, which explicitly involves the overthrow of capitalism. This is at best merely an implicit principle underlying the Freedom Charter, they say. It then becomes easier to understand the uncertainty felt by many of those involved in the trade union movement about what it sees as middle class alliances against apartheid, especially those promoted by the pro-ANC group, the United Democratic Front.

It is now becoming clear that some form of agreement is being worked out between the leaders of the ANC and the militants of COSATU; this much was documented in last month's Briefing. Unity between these groupings on achieving "more than formal political democracy" and "the correction of (....) centuries-old economic injustices" in South Africa are vital. (Text of communique issued by ANC, SACTU and COSATU, Lusaka, March 1986).

The challenge of independent multiracial trade unionism has spurred the supporters of capitalism into action. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi has been provoked by the successes of COSATU into launching his own trade union UWUSA (United Workers of South Africa). It was launched on May 1st in a deliberate attempt to divide trade unionists along racial lines. (UWUSA represents primarily Zulu workers) and to divert them from the struggle against capitalism. The aim is to ally the interests of the workers to those of the capitalists and to tie trade unionists to the collaborationist tactics of Buthelexi's own political party, Inkatha. Like Buthelezi himself, UWUSA supports free enterprise and opposes sanctions against South Africa. Its general secretary is a successful businessman and its political aims are unlikely to include non-racialism in trade unions, national and international worker cooperation and workers' control of trade unions – some of the founding principles of COSATU.

The launch of UWUSA mirrors the fears felt also by white liberals and white business interests. While opposed to the system of apartheid, either on moral grounds or out of a belief that it promotes market rigidities which are not beneficial to the interests of capitalism, such personas are nonetheless concerned to stem the growing tide of Black militancy, which is correctly viewed as fundamentally inimical to capitalism. The Botha regime, too, is seen as unacceptable, having failed to deliver on its promises of reforms. Hence, the approaches made by business interests to the ANC, hence the development of a current even within the National Party (the so-called "New Nats") which wishes to see a fundamental break with apartheid in favour of a society run on the basis of merit not skin colour. All these interests favour a democratic bourgeois transformation of South African society which safeguards the interests of capital.

The participation of the ANC in any fundamental political transformation is clearly vital to its success. But it can also be seen that the ANC is steering a careful course between the militant Black trade unions and workers and the liberals of the Progressive Federal Party, the South African Chamber of Commerce and the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons. How long this balancing act can be maintained is difficult to say. For the socialist orientation cannot now be ignored and is a current with which socialists worldwide will be seeking to make links as it represents a complete break with capitalism.

White Liberals

South Africa's apartheid system demonstrates the fundamental contradictions of capitalism and imperialism perhaps more clearly than any other political and economic system. The replacement of apartheid with reforming capitalism where class oppression will mean the Blacks (and women and other oppressed groups) will continue to suffer is unlikely to be accepted by Black activists who see national liberation and class struggle as inextricably linked. The reforming attempts of white liberal are doomed to failure, and it seems increasingly likely that post-apartheid South Africa may be built on socialist principles going well beyond the immediate aims of the Freedom Charter. This would be a serious blow to the strategic interests of Western capitalism.

Unique role of British capital

Socialists have never hesitated to intervene in the peace movement, which they see as a movement opposed to imperialism in all its forms. Socialists in Britain should likewise become involved in the fight against apartheid in order to highlight the unique role of British capital in the oppression of Blacks in Southern Africa, and in order to further the cause of anti-imperialism of an international scale.

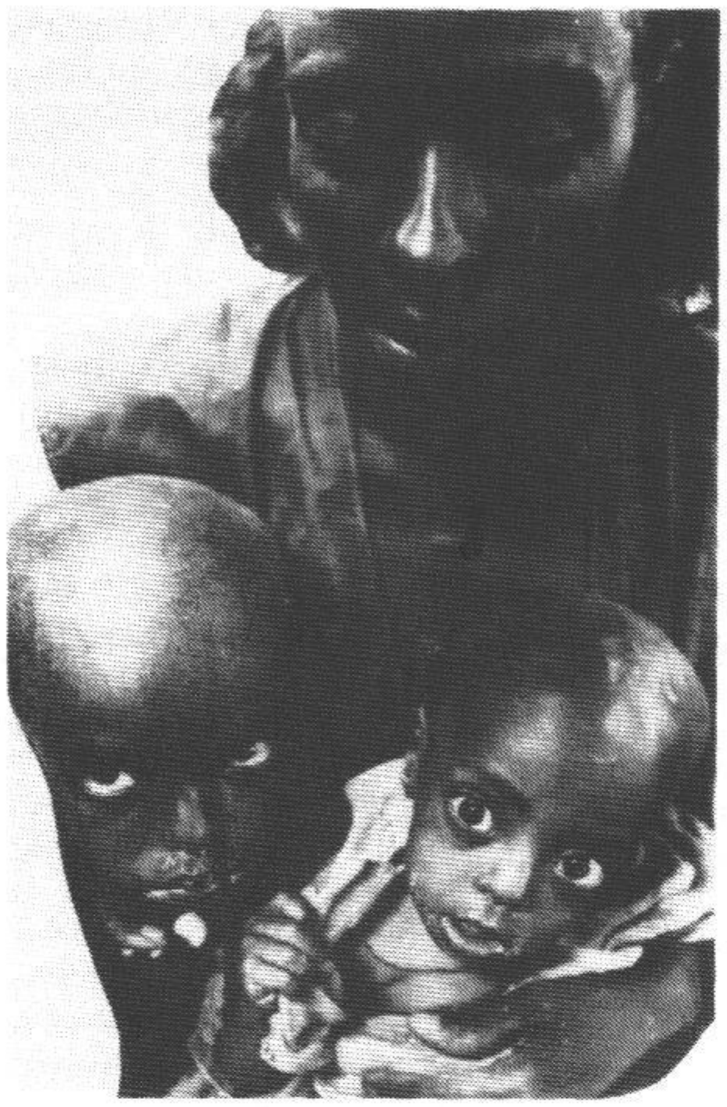
The month of June represents an ideal opportunity to do this. There is to be a period of action from June 16th onwards to express solidarity with the planned upsurge in the activities of Black students and workers; this will culminate in a MARCH FOR FREEDOM on June 28th. What better time for us to give expression to our support for our Black comrades in Southern Africa and also to strike a blow for the cause of socialism and anti-imperialism worldwide.

Jo Shaw (Exeter CLP)

THIRD WORLD FIRST

Third World First is a national campaigning organisation aiming to provide an anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-imperialist analysis of underdevelopment. Too often people in this country assume that what the Third World needs is more aid, advice and technology from the west. Others seem to leave the Third World out of their political analysis altogether. But exploitation of what is now the 'Third World' was the basis of expansion and accumulation of wealth at the time of the industrial revolution in Britain, and remains the basis of the British economy today. What the Third World needs from us is solidarity rather than aid, a recognition of their struggles and an appreciation from British people that, as international capital does not recognise national boundaries, peoples' struggles the world over need to be international too.

Inherent to the concept of aid is that inequalities are natural, that the west is naturally superior, and gives aid out of generosity. The causes of inequality, or the fact that our wealth originates from the Third World, are conveniently overlooked. Band Aid threw this up very clearly – politically ignorant westerners set themselves up as experts on the Third World, without any real reference to African people themselves and how they are already fighting famine and the neo-colonialist forces that created famine, over many years. The lyrics of the Band Aid song are not just culturally imperialist and racist, they say things which are simply not true. Ethiopia is *not* a land where nothing ever grows, no rain nor river flows. The 'Feed the World' slogan reflected a major myth about the world – it is not we who need to feed the Third World, but they who



have been feeding us for years, which, of course, is part of the problem. Famine is not a natural disaster – there is nothing more unnatural than people not being able to feed themselves. Researchers warned of impending disaster, but no-one took any notice. In Tigray, the worst hit area in Ethiopia, more people are dying as a result of the government's resettlement programme than of famine. But the media has lost interest. There are a lot of issues here that we need to confront, stereotypes and misconceptions that need challenging. The main problem is that Africans do not own Africa. The longer we see the resulting poverty as natural, the more we hinder the ringing of fundamental changes which can be the only solution to famine.

Let us hope that Band Aid will use the money raised wisely, and will yet raise awareness of the real issues surrounding famine. Up until now, Band Aid has served to entrench the myths our society holds about the Third World, and as an easy conscience salver may have inhibited any real questioning.

Third World First is holding a day conference in London on July 12th to explore some of the far reaching issues involved in our concepts of aid and the Third World. We will also look at how British aid relates to British people and employment, the effect of aid on women, military aid , and examine the parallels between inner city aid and Third World aid. Third World First works mostly with students; but this conference has been organised by the London non-college group, which consists of ex-students, union activists and others interested in these issues outside of the student arena.

Details of Third World First, its publications, and this conference, from Third World First, 8 Lower Clapton Road, London E5. 01-986 4800. (Those wishing to join or start a non-college group should also get in contact.)

'What is Aid – relief of famine or relief of conscience?' at University of London Union (ULU), Malet Street, London WC1. Saturday July 12th, 10.30-6.00. Wheelchair access. Ring for details of creche. Evening benefit at ULU for Third World First.

MARY WRIGHT

Homerton Ward, Hackney South

DUBLIN TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

Around 30 British trade unionists attended a conference hosted by Trades Unionists for Irish Unity and Independence in Dublin on 10th May. The two main themes were an assessment of the overall political situation six months into the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the impact of the Agreement on practical solidarity work in both the Irish and British trade union movement.

The general consensus of the morning session on the Anglo-Irish Agreement was that we were witnessing a change in the relationship of alliances that make up the forces ranged against Irish unity. The Thatcher government, backed by the Reagan administration has brought sections of the Free State ruling class and the Catholic petit-bourgeoisie in the north together in a new tactical alliance with the twin aims of halting the growth of militant republicanism in the form of Sinn Fein and hitching the Free State to the western economic and military alliances.

The Loyalist community in the north has been whipped up to a frenzy by its leaders who are no longer able to wheel and deal as freely as before for the crumbs from the British state. It is quite clear, though, that the Loyalist leadership may be enraged but in no way have they been dumped by Thatcher and Reagan. In fact, the Anglo-Irish Agreement is simply the current round of the overall strategy to "copper-fasten" partition, and there is no question of the Loyalist veto being in danger.

The trade union response to this sophisticated tactical manoeuvering on both sides of the water must be determined by a careful assessment of what are the most appropriate issues to campaign around in specific unions, and what can be won in the current climate.

Two issues for campaigning activity were clarified in the afternoon session. Firstly, the ludicrous self-censorship on political issues imposed on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has to be challenged. A motion from Derry Trades Council to the ICTU conference will attempt to insert the word 'political' into its constitutional activities in order to allow the debate on partition and issues such as the Agreement to take place.

Secondly, the sectarian nature of the Ulster statelet, including its trade unions, must be taken up strongly in British unions. The apartheid-like system of segregation of Protestant and Catholic workers, or more accurately, Catholic non-workers, has resulted in a trade union movement in the north which is structurally and politically incapable of uniting Catholic and Protestant trade unionists on class issues. Yet the northern membership of British unions can hold the entire membership to ransom with their trade union version of the Protestant veto. For example, the T&GWU has less than 5% of its total membership in the north, yet this group can stop any real debate on Britain's role in Ireland.

Finally, the British trade unionists present raised the possibility of a coordinated campaign to raise the issue of Ireland in British unions, and if this can emerge then we might see real developments within the British trade union movement.

Bill Hamilton
NALGO Campaign for a United Ireland

LABOUR PARTY CONFER

Last year's Labour Party Conference saw the launch of a public attack by Kinnock against the left of the party. Ostensibly centred against the Militant leadership of Liverpool Council, in reality it marked the beginning of open warfare by the centre and right against anyone who wanted to continue the methods used during the Miner's Strike, to fight the Tory Government.

This year's conference will continue the leadership's attempt to isolate the left, to drop left-wing policies, to ensure that the ruling class see the Labour Party as a party to be trusted, a party 'fit to govern'. With the Tories in disarray, with Westland, Land Rover, the Libyan crisis, cuts in education and health, continuing high unemployment resulting in clear defeat in both local and bye-elections, the Labour leadership sees No. 10 clearly in its sights again.

But the situation is double-edged for Kinnock. The Libyan crisis raised immediately the question of American bases, with spontaneous demonstrations against their use in the attack on Gaddafy. For a minority it raises also the question of our membership of NATO. The disaster in the Ukraine immediately opens up the question of the safety of nuclear reactors. On both issues, LP policy as agreed by conference is becoming popular just at the point when the Kinnock leadership is trying to water it down.

In the same way, while the local elections were clearly a significant victory for Labour, those councils which had fought hardest against the rate capping imposed by the Tories either held on to or, in the case of Lambeth increased, their support. In Haringey too, where Bernie Grant spoke out in support of the Black community of Broadwater Farm, the Labour Party received increased support.

The realignment in the Party since the defeat of the Miner's Strike, the peeling off of erstwhile left wingers has not ended, but the issues, the line of divide remains the same. The question of the witch hunt against socialists in the party and the question of whether you fight the Tories now with class struggle politics and mass action, or whether you drop everything now and wait for the solution provided by a future Labour Government, remains the line which marks off the socialists in the Party from the opportunists prepared to compromise because they can smell the scent of power.

However, a hung Parliament remains a real possibility. We must get a commitment that if Labour were the largest Party it would form a minority Government, without any deals whatsoever with the Alliance, put its full programme to Parliament, dare the Opposition parties to vote it down, and go back to the electorate at the earliest possible moment.

But we should be clear. It is not that the choice is between power with compromise or continued opposition with pure politics. It is clear today that a large number of people are looking for a real alternative to the Tories. On social and international issues, but most of all on issues of economic strategy there is a real horror at what the Tories have done — in health, in education, to local democracy, to jobs.

Against the Kinnock leadership's preparedness to jettison any policy that has 'left wing' attached to it, we have to argue *for* left wing policies as the only way to offer a real alternative to the Tories, and for fighting now, against the Tories as the best way to win at the next election. As Hattersley continues to change economic policy without consulting anyone, as Cunningham (friend of Sellafield) shifts policy on nuclear power away from the phasing out of nuclear power, as Healey fudges the issue of unilateral disarmament, as they all try to wrest the cloak of 'law and order' from the Tories, the left must stand firm.

Below are a number of model resolutions prepared by the various LP campaigns, on the witch hunt, on democracy in the party, on nuclear weapons.
Briefing supporters are urged to use them for the conference resolution in their CLP. Please inform both the relevant campaign and Briefing if and when any of them are adopted.

JANE KELLY
Peckham CLP

MARXISM 86

10th annual week of meetings, debates and discussion organised by the Socialist Workers Party
4-11 JULY University of London Union

IT'S been a difficult year for the left. The miners were forced to admit defeat. Kinnock shifted Labour's policy to the right and launched a witch hunt against Militant. However, the Tories are increasingly unpopular.

In this political climate thousands of people have started to ask questions. What can we do about the Tories? Why does Kinnock attack socialists? Can capitalism survive? Was Labour ever different?

MARXISM 86 is about discussing these and many other issues.

DEBATES will include: ★ Is there a parliamentary road to socialism? ★ Socialism and black liberation ★ Spanish Civil War—anniversary forum ★ Can the Sandinistas bring socialism? ★ Should socialists support Israel?

MEETINGS will include: ★ International Women's Rally ★ The Hungarian Uprising—an eyewitness account ★ Cripps, Bevan and Benn—leaders of the Labour left ★ Why are millions starving? ★ The politics of C L R James ★ Japan—the development of company unionism ★ The Moscow Trials: 50th anniversary meeting

COURSES include: ★ What makes a revolution? ★ Capital for beginners ★ Trotsky and Trotskyism ★ Trade unions and the struggle for socialism ★ Ireland: Problems for socialists ★ Resistance and revolution in South Africa ★ An introduction to philosophy ★ Anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism

SPEAKERS will include: ★ Tony Cliff ★ Raymond Williams ★ Paul Foot ★ Harry Wicks ★ Chris Harman ★ Monty Johnstone ★ Lindsey German ★ Marc Wadsworth ★ Nigel Harris ★ Peter Fryer ★ Alex Callinicos ★ John Bevan ★ Duncan Hallas ★ Cynthia Cockburn ★ Sheila McGregor ★ Alan Plater

ENTERTAINMENT: ★ Bands, disco and films every night

COST: £18 for the full week (in advance), £11 for the weekend. **FOR BROCHURE** and further details write to: Marxism 86, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH.

ENCE RESOLUTIONS '86

CLPD

This Conference recognises that the disadvantages faced by the manual working class, women and black people in society at large are to a considerable extent carried over into our Party.

Conference further recognises that good intentions have largely failed to improve matters, and therefore accepts the principle of positive discrimination in favour of these groups to counteract these disadvantages and to ensure their better representation at all levels of the Party. This in turn would enhance Labour's appeal to likely Labour voters, and give the Party more credibility with the underprivileged majority of the electorate.

Conference therefore calls for the NEC Working Group on Positive Discrimination to be reconvened, to draw up concrete proposals for next year's Party Conference. The Working Group should give serious consideration not only to consitutional changes in favour of members from disadvantaged groups, but also to promoting a substantial extension of affiliations to the Party by suitable community, women's and black organisations at local, regional and national levels.

Among the constitutional changes should be:

Alternative 1

the demand repeatedly agreed by the National Conference of Labour women for:

(a) the right of the National Conference of Labour Women to elect the NEC Women's Division, and to submit five resolutions to Party Conference with the right to be debated as they stand;

(b) a special Women's Rules Conference to draw up rules for al sections of the Party's women's organisations;

(c) the mandatory shortlisting of at least one woman for public elections if any women have applied to be considered.

Alternative 2

allowing the establishment of CLP Black Sections where black members so desire, and the mandatory shortlisting of at least one black member for public elections if such members have applied to be considered.

Important Note

It is essential to include only one of the above alternatives. If both alternatives are included, the resolution will be ruled out of order by the Conference Arrangements Committee under the two-subject rule, and will not be published.

THE WITCH-HUNT

This resolution has been drafted for discussion at the Planning Committee for the Witch-hunt Conference.

This Conference notes that the witch hunt conducted against the Liverpool District Labour Party has resulted in an escalating wave of disciplinary actions in the Party against supporters and sellers of journals and pressure groups as diverse as Militant, Labour Party Black Sections and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Conference believes that the limited resources of the Labour Party should be devoted to campaigning for socialist policies and the return of a Labour government and not to the current round of internal disciplinary actions which only help Labour's political enemies.

Within the labour movement, and reflected in the Labour Party, there have long been groups of different kinds, standing for certain political positions and views organised at different levels. Conference therefore accepts that the Labour Party is a "broad church" with many strands of opinions and views. The Party should not return to the days of proscribed lists and intolerance.

Conference is therefore against the expulsions or victimisation of any members because they read and support the views of journals, of the right or the left, within the Party. Conference equally opposes expulsions of members of pressure groups like the Black Sections campaigning to make the Party more representative of the whole working class.

Black Sections

The Labour Party Black Section will again be making a major push for recognition as the legitimate voice of Black people in the Labour Party at the Annual Conference in October 1986. Resolutions have to reach Walworth Road by the 4th of July 1986.

Raised against us by the Labour leadership is the 'scab' 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee'. This divisive committee is the National Executive Committee's answer to demands for a fully constituted Black Section. The concept underlying this committee, that Black people are capable of advice to policy makers but not good enough to participate in policy formation is patronising and insulting.

The other major battleground in the struggle for Black Sections has been Liverpool. Whilst opposing the heavy handed purge against Militant in Liverpool by Labour's leadership, we are still amazed by Militant's support for the Hard Right's fight against Black Sections.

The fight for Black Sections has now been going on for four years. For the last 3 years the National Labour Party Conference and the Regional Conferences have received many resolutions in favour of Black Sections. This has allowed the campaigners to accelerate the struggle. Many gains have been won, 10 Black Parliamentary candidates, 6 of whom are in safe Labour seats including Diane Abbot, the first Black woman to be chosen for a safe Labour seat and a 10% increase in the number of Black Councillors. The first Asian Mayor, Mr Ajeeb, was elected in Bradford. The largest and most powerful trade union in the country the Transport & General Workers Union appointed a Black Section supporter, Bill Morris as its number two (although it must be said Bill as yet still does not support constitutional change), Deputy General Secretary. He becomes the first Black person to hold a trade union post of such seniority.

Last year Black Sections launched a major attack on the Party's stagnant position on Azania. We demanded to know why the Labour leadership thought simple rhetoric condemning Apartheid was enough. The trade union movement could force an end to trade with the Azanian regime. The National Union of Seamen could simply boycott all ships ferrying goods to and from Azania. We demanded rhetoric was put into action.

The Black Sections campaign has received support from nearly all the left groups in the Party

However my fear is that 'White Liberals' may now be getting bored with Black Sections. Many will be suffering from support fatigue. To these comrades, whose support has been vital in the past, I say stick with us. Stick with us until we win. White comrades may have got bored – they may be waiting for fashions to change. Black people have no choice, we have got to continue the struggle for equality. At this moment in time the measure of equality in the Labour Party is judged by the success of Black Sections.

I have no hesitation in demanding unwavering support from all comrades, Black and White.

Please circulate the resolutions in the constituency and attempt to get as much support as possible.

PAUL SHARMA

1. This Conference welcomes the increased representation of Black people at all levels within the Labour Party over the last year. Conference believes that this progress has been greatest in constituencies with Black Sections.

Despite this Black people are still under-represented at every level of the Party.

Conference notes with regret the failure of the "Black and Asian Advisory Committee", recommended by the National Executive Committee and established by Conference last year.

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to implement the recommendation of its own Working Pary which reported strongly in favour of establishing Black Sections at every level of the Party on the same lines as the Women's Sections and Youth Sections.

2. Conference notes the failure of the Liverpool District Labour Party and the Liverpool City Council to resolve its dispute with the Black Community over the issue of positive action against racism.

The Black Community have been settled in Liverpool for may centuries. Despite this, Black citizens not only face racism but also suffer the brunt of mass unemployment and poor housing. Conference urges the Labour Party to help eradicate this racism which is inherent in British society.

Conference calls upon Labour Party members in Liverpool to acept the right of Black people to organise in Black Sections and to send Black Section delegates to Constituency General Committees and also to the District Party when re-established.

Labour CND

Labour CND is sponsoring a number of resolutions to Labour Party annual conference 1986. Two of them are printed below.

1. Conference calls upon the next Labour government to remove all US bases, including nuclear, conventional and communication bases, from British soil and waters.
Sponsored by: Labour CND, Labour Action for Peace.

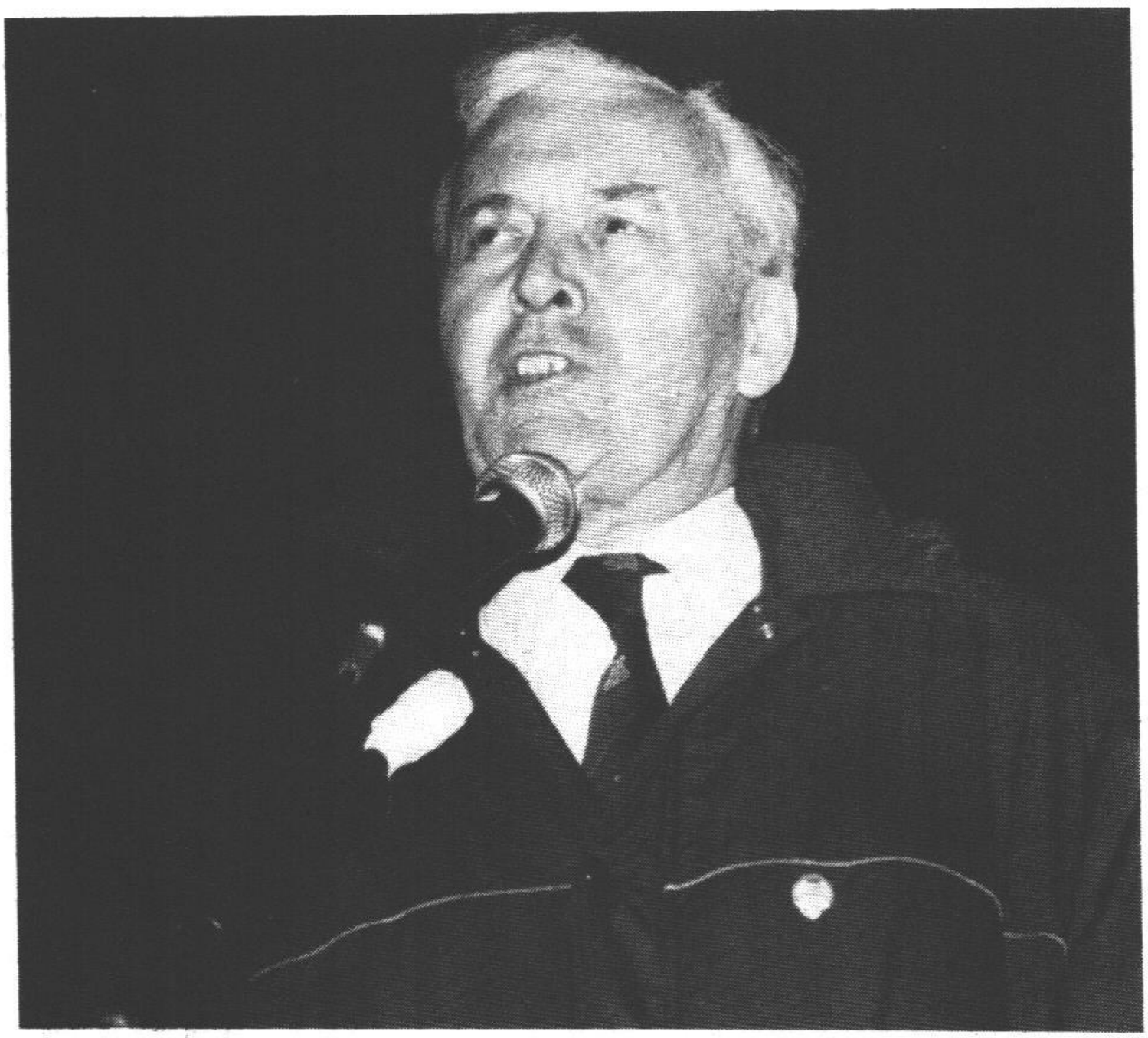
2. Conference considers that Britain's membership of NATO and its consequent association with America's global policies reduces Britain's effectiveness in promoting European and world-wide nuclear disarmament and endangers the security of the British poeple. Conference therefore resolves that the next Labour government will take Britain out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
Sponsored by: Labour CND.

If your ward/section/constituency/affiliated organisation passes any of these resolutions, we would be grateful to hear about it. Contact: Carol Turner, Secretary Labour CND, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH (daytime: 01-254 0261).

BRIEFING INTERVIEWS

BRIEFING spoke to TONY BENN just after the House of Commons debate on nuclear energy

Briefing: *The Labour Party agreed at its last Conference to decommission all the nuclear power stations, as there is no way they can be run safely with present technology. But it appears that Cunningham in particular is trying to water down this policy. What's your view on nuclear power?*



Press Association

4th May, Tony Benn addresses print union members on the Wapping picket line

Tony Benn: I'm in favour of the resolution that went through Conference: that we should phase it out. We shouldn't start up the new Dounreay plant; we should cancel the PWR; you should shut down Sellafield — as a matter of fact there's work there for everybody, cleaning it up. The site is full of radioactivity. You should then decommission the older plants.

We now know from the French — I saw the figure this week — that it would cost £650 million to decommission every single nuclear power station. That's 40% of the cost of building a new one. So we're probably talking about £15 billion, and a lot of skill and jobs in closing the industry down.

I wouldn't worry *overmuch* about what's said on the front bench, not just on this but on anything else. Because it seems to me that one of the weaknesses of the left has been to concentrate too much on the task of making the front bench say what we want, instead of organising to get what we want — which is a different process.

I've got with me — I expect you've seen it — the so-called "Chesterfield Challenge", which is a statement of the aims and objectives of the Chesterfield Labour Party, which include, I might add, the ending of all nuclear weapons and bases in Britain, the phasing out of civil nuclear power, and so on.

It seems to me that a manifesto of demands, rather than struggling for a manifesto of promises is a better way of looking at the job.

So I'm not all that concerned, in that sense, about what is said at the top. So long as what we're working for among the rank and file is the right thing. On that basis, I think you can really transform the role of the Party, and make it much more real to people.

Similarly, I do not believe there is any future in trying to seize the Party for one's sectarian ends, or for one group. I think that you've got to organise it on a geographical basis. That is to say that you've got to try and get in individual areas, and trade unions, support for a particular kind of view and then you've got to put the bits together. When that happens you're more likely to get it done, and when you get a Labour Government you're more likely to get the muscle to pressurise a Labour Government.

But if you sit back, and say "We're always going to be let down", it seems to me to be very destructive, and *not* the basis on which you win support. I'm tacking a general answer to a specific question!

Briefing: *We're probably about halfway between the end of the miners' strike and a general election. I'm sure all of us on the left are gearing up towards that General Election. What do you think should be the main areas we should focus on?*

Tony Benn: It ties in to the point I made a moment ago. I think what we should be doing is winning Party, public and trade union support for certain clear policies.

The guts of the things we've gone for in Chesterfield, in terms of policy, are full employment and a non-aligned foreign policy. That is to say those are the things we are working for and everything that is happening now — whether it be Libya and the bombing or Chernobyl, or whatever, whether it be the growing unemployment which is making Mrs Thatcher unpopular — confirms the idea that these are the two highpoints.

Having said that, there's an awful lot of other things as well: trade union rights, civil liberties, women's rights, the rights of the black community, and a whole range of other things. But I think that the things that will register more than anything is a feeling that an incoming Labour Government would be pressed to tackle the two questions of really a major crisis in unemployment, and all the poverty associated with it, *and* the present subservience of British foreign policy to Washington.

Briefing: *What specific policies have you got in relation to those questions? It's one thing to say "full employment", or "let's remove Britain from America's sphere of influence: how do we achieve them?*

Tony Benn: I agree with that, and I'm not belittling policy, but you're not getting much policy out of the National Executive at the moment. What you're getting really is sort of Charters, and public relations stuff, and we've always done that. When I was looking back at the literature we published before the 1959 election, there was a very glossy pamphlet, called "The Future Labour offers you". I think that side of it, you need to push aside.

What we've done, in the Campaign Group, is to publish a pamphlet called "A Million Jobs a Year", which was designed to show a way in which you *could* get back to full employment. It would indicate the magnitude of the task, and it would involve huge changes in economic policy.

As far as the non-aligned foreign policy is concerned, I think you begin by saying "No US bases", for which there is very widespread public support. Then you begin looking at the NATO question; then you look at cuts in the defence expenditure, and the way you can reallocate the resources.

And the funny thing, you see, about these policies, both of which are more radical than the front bench are prepared to accept, is they're also very popular. And so, far from the theory that if you follow this course you're going to lose support, whereas if you follow the so-called "harsh realities" of front bench thinking, you're going to win support — it's the opposite!

I think that one of the readings that I make of the local elections is that the polarisation is very strong. Indeed, I saw a Gallup Poll the other day, which they never published, but they sent me the full one: 70% of the people in Britain think there's a class war. It was admittedly a bit higher at the end of the miners' strike, when it was 74%. But when you think *70%* of the people — it must include a lot of Tories — identify the choices in terms of class, then clearly if we are seen to be on the side of our people — for jobs or peace and freedom — I think you're more likely to win the election.

I think some of the results — Lambeth in particular — indicate that if you take a strong, principled line and people believe you, they'll support you.

TONY BENN

I'm diverting you deliberately away from scapegoating the right — for very good reasons.

Briefing: *It's true, also, of course of Haringey — where the Council leader has stood out in support of his own, black, community.*

Tony Benn: Yes, that's right.

Briefing: *Some people are saying that the Left, as a result of the realignment after the defeat of the miners' strike, has marginalised itself — it has only itself to blame, in a sense, for its isolation at the present time. I'm talking about the hard left, which I think you would agree is fairly isolated. What do you think the left should be doing to try to break out of that kind of isolation?*

Tony Benn: I don't know that it is really as weak as it's made out. It is true that after the '83 election the analysis that was hammered into place was "We lost the last election because of the left"; that it was all the constitutional change, and all the detailed policies. And therefore there was a big move, encouraged by the media, to go back to Wilson and Callaghan type policies.

Actually the way I read it was different. I read it that 10% of the Parliamentary Labour Party had defected; that we supported the Falklands War (*I* didn't — some did!); and that really when it came to it a very weak, crumbling Labour leadership just fell to the appeal, the clear conviction politics of Mrs Thatcher — at least you knew where you were with her.

It's now nearly three years since the election, and there has been a very big change in policy. Indeed, I'm not sure how clear our policy is, because it's much more in terms of campaigning.

But I don't think that what the Left, or Hard Left, or however you want to describe it, is saying is really so very far from what people are feeling. What is true is that a lot of people have shifted their allegiance inside the upper echelons of the Party around the new leadership elected in '83... and that was the big 1984 realignment story. But when you come back to it in '86, you find that Libya, Chernobyl, unemployment, the experience of Liverpool and Lambeth indicates that there is a terrific support.

So I don't think that we should accept that we've ghettoised ourselves. I think that some of the language that the left uses is sometimes mistaken, because they will go for support by attacking the leadership. I'm not in favour of that. I think that's a mistake. I mean, I've never believed in attacking anybody by name — that's why I'm against Thatcherism as an analysis.

I think if you do that, then you do tend to isolate yourself, because at the moment my feeling — and I can only sum it up as an impression — is that the generality of the Party want three things. They want to get rid of Thatcher and win; they want to rally round their leader for that purpose. They don't want to see people of any kind in the Party attacked: and as far as the witchhunt is concerned, they think that the whole thing is a total waste of time and would like to see it buried.

Briefing: *You played a very particular role in the organisation in your own constituency, in Chesterfield, calling it a Campaign Group, which links in to the National Campaign Group. Do you see the role of the Campaign Group of MPs as being what you've carried through in Chesterfield? Or is there a debate going on within the Group itself as to its role?*

Tony Benn: The Group is discussing its function. The thing about the Group is that it isn't sectarian. You get Tam Dalyell, and Brian Sedgemore, and Gavin Strang, and people of that kind, and then you get Terry Fields and Dave Nellist, then you get Dennis Skinner and Bob Clay, Joan Maynard and myself. It doesn't purport to be a sectarian group.

What it is trying to be is a different type of Parliamentary Group, that is to say working with the movement outside, and seeing the Labour MPs in the Group as being paid officials of the Labour Movement — which is the way I see it anyway.

Briefing: *Are we likely to see the Campaign Group play more of a role, however, in linking up the various local experiences to which you refer. I'm sure we agree on their importance, but if they're isolated in their areas, not linked up at a national level, then it perhaps won't be as significant a force as it could be.*

I think a lot of people in the constituencies are looking to the left wing MPs to provide the focus for a campaign which links up the various areas. I think one of the criticisms which has been made of the Campaign Group up to now is that it's still had at some levels too much of a Parliamentary orientation. I wonder if we're going to see the Campaign Group organising in the labour movement as a whole more?

Tony Benn: Well, you say the Campaign Group should do more, and then say it's too Parliamentary-orientated. You see there's a slight element of contradiction about that, because in my opinion the Campaign Group is a resource for the movement — it isn't claiming the leadership for a different type of Parliamentary Party.

I think that Alan Meale himself told me that the Campaign Group itself, 35MPs, raised £65,000 from our own resources for the miners. That's an awful lot of money. We levied ourselves heavily; and we've levied for the printworkers, and we've been round and done a mass of meetings.

There are now 80 Campaign Groups in the country and the only condition we lay down is that when they're set up they must not be taken over by a particular sect. We do not want to find that one Campaign Group's under one particular control or the other: we want it to be broadly based, with the same perspective — but still, 80 Campaign Groups is quite a lot.

There are other links through Campaign Group News, which we've set up and which I think will go to a 12-page paper by the end of the year. There are links with the trade unions; and there is of course the Broad Left movement in the trade unions.

But I'm not in favour, perhaps partly because of the experience of recent years, of trying to set up a comprehensive left organisation within the Party, because I don't think it'll work. I think people have got to follow their own experience, traditions and character: they need encouragement, not direction.

When I think of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, which worked very hard in the Deputy Leadership Campaign and was very helpful — it was around a particular question: who do you want as Deputy Leader? As soon as the Deputy Leadership election was over it changed its character. Then we tried, I think it was Labour Liason, or I forget what – I had another idea, and that didn't really work, and it split and split.

The splintering of the groups is I think a diversion for the purpose of winning the argument. Having said that, I also read all the left papers, because I think that they are schools of thought that need to be studied and read. But I do not believe that one group will ever become dominant. And certainly, the Labour Party has never been taken over by one group.

What I think is strong is where you get for example a network of Printworkers' Support Groups, Miners' Support Groups, Greenham Common Support Groups: where you get, as you have now begun to get throughout the country, a lot of people who are fighting all the battles, who are self-sustaining, who have their own lateral links, but they don't look to a group in London, or wherever, to provide them with their ideology packaged ready for them.

Now I don't know whether you'll agree with this, but I'm just giving you an explanation as to what I think will happen: it'll grow like a jig-saw puzzle, and one day you'll find that the bits that have got different colours on them will come together in a picture. And the picture will be a confident labour movement demanding social change, changes of policy. And that's a more modest aspiration, but at least nobody could say that was Parliamentary-orientated — the very opposite.

Briefing: *There's a discussion going on at the moment within the Labour Party about the possibility of setting up a Ministry for Women after a Labour victory. What sort of things do you think that Ministry should be organised around, and how should it fight for women's rights?*

Tony Benn: I think the technical organisation of it is less important than a clear commitment to equal rights for women and all that goes with it. Indeed, I once drafted a Bill, which would give a minister for women, although there is also a view that it should be a Minister for Equality and not just about women. But I can imagine administering the power by statutory instrument, to change and remove all legislation that has discriminatory elements, to challenge all other tax or administrative provisions that have a sexist or racist element in them.

Were you to do that it would be quite possible for Parliament quite quickly and radically to change things and provided the Ministry was one that was open to pressure from the movement. So that when you came across an example, different retirement age, different tax provision when you were married or when you were living together or whatever, different discrimination against gays or whatever it happened to be — you'd go to that department and they would have a statutory political duty to see that any administrative, legal or financial barriers that stood in the way were changed.

These things are always really very simple. One of the offences of Parliamentarians is to make it all seem very complicated.

As you probably know, we've introduced lots of Bills I've drafter, dozens of them over the years: one on getting out of Ireland; one on Justice for Mineworkers; one on justice for councillors; general powers for local authorities. The reason we've drafted them is to show that Parliament is an instrument you use, and the mystification of it — you've got to have a Bill of 800 clauses, that will take two years to get through the House of Lords — load of rubbish!

You have to move quickly — and the Tories do. Remember when they discovered they'd made a mistake in dealing with London, when London went to the courts and got £40m back from the Minister? So they immediatley changed the law, in 24 hours. We'd have to do the same.

TRADE UNION BRIEFING

PRINTWORKERS FIGHT SELL-OUT

Briefing interviewed Larry Hyett, of the SOGAT London Machine Branch, Chair Lambeth Printworkers Support Group and Chair of the Union of Printworkers Support Groups.

How effective has the print unions' picketting and consumer boycott campaign been against News International?

I've always thought of the consumer boycott as a wet issue. What has always been needed is a strong political campaign. The boycott would not and could not work, and unfortunately we've been proved right about it. The campaign should have involved rank and file members, FoC meetings and report backs. These have never really taken place, although that's beginning to change now.

The police clearly decided to put the boot in on May 3rd. What has been the union leadership and membership's response?

The size of last Saturday's (May 10th) picket was down because of the police violence. When a section of the population is beaten to a pulp, when state terrorism is used against pickets, it's bound to have an effect. But we have got to go out to encourage people to come out again.

Since the union leadership has given control of the picketting to the London District Council, fringe groups and political parties have been welcomed, when at the start of the strike the NEC tried to exclude everyone who wasn't a printworker. This has not been overturned officially, but in practice, because of the popularity of these groups with the rank and file printworkers, who recognise them as friends, there is now a harmonious arrangement between printworkers and their supporters.

But I do condemn the collaboration of the stewards with the police, when the police have broken their word time and time again. I understand that the stewards will be going back yet again to negotiate a peaceful arrangement with the police.

Briefing and others in the support movement have argued for the necessity of Fleet Street coming out in order to have a chance of defeating Murdoch. What do you think of this and what are the possibilities now?

At the start of the strike we put resolutions calling for the mass involvement of printworkers. But because of the membership's reliance on the FoCs (shop stewards) you were lucky to get a seconder. Now the difference is that we're getting an echo back from the floor in all chapels that we've got to get the rest of Fleet Street out if we're going to win this.

Brenda Dean purged SOGAT's contempt last week. What's the feeling of the News International printworkers?

The printworkers are as determined as before to win this dispute. Purging the union's contempt is not going to take the strike forward because we've still got a number of writs out against us. Now that the union has apologised to the court, it puts other sections who've been supporting us, such as the NUR and the London Wholesale SOGAT, in the front line. How can we ask them to continue the blacking when our own union has given in? It's our dispute after all.

Brenda Dean is pinning hopes on a future Labour government, rather than trying to win the strike. I personally don't believe that a future Labour government will, for example, repeal the legislation which prevents trades unionists from defending themselves. So she is prepared to sell us down the river in pursuit of something which probably won't help us. Thousands of jobs have been lost in Fleet Street because we haven't got a fighting leadership, but a leadership which believes in the new realism.

What moves are there to organise against the sellout in SOGAT?

There is now a Fleet Street Support Group composed of strikers and non-strikers, from all the unions involved. All offices in Fleet Street are represented. You've got to remember that SOGAT sold thousands of jobs at the Mirror and the Express, and so the jobs crisis is general. We're trying to organise a fightback under the banner of "Crisis in the Industry".

Picketting takes place every night at Wapping (nearest tube Tower Hill), with mass pickets every Saturday night from approx. 8.30pm onwards.

The Union of Printworkers Support Groups (USPG), the Women's Printworkers Support Group, (ask for Celia), and the Fleet Street Support Unit can be contacted at 733 5670.

The Crisis in Education

The NUT's 18-month pay action has been enough to make education a major issue on the national political agenda. But it hasn't been enough either to resolve the long-term issues of teachers' pay and conditions or to generate alternative popular approaches to the deepening education crisis.

In the aftermath of the pay campaign, the challenge facing the NUT is one of establishing the links between teachers, parents, community organisations and the labour movement that can provide the framework for popular campaigning on educational issues. One of the lessons of the pay campaign is the NUT's weakness in this respect. It was only towards the end of the strike action that links began to be formed with parents' organisations, and it was only in a very patchy way that teachers were able to gather support for their action in trade unions and the Labour Party. One of the consequences of this latter weakness was the ease with which leaders of Labour Local Authorities were able to collude for a time with non-TUC teaching unions to exclude the NUT from important aspects of the pay talks.

In March, the employers, the NAS/UWT and the non-TUC unions made a deal which set up a framework for a trade-off between pay and conditions. In return for a bit more money, the unions would negotiate on whether voluntary activities should become contractual and whether teacher assessment would be compulsory. The NUT refused to sign this deal, and was excluded from subsequent discussions.

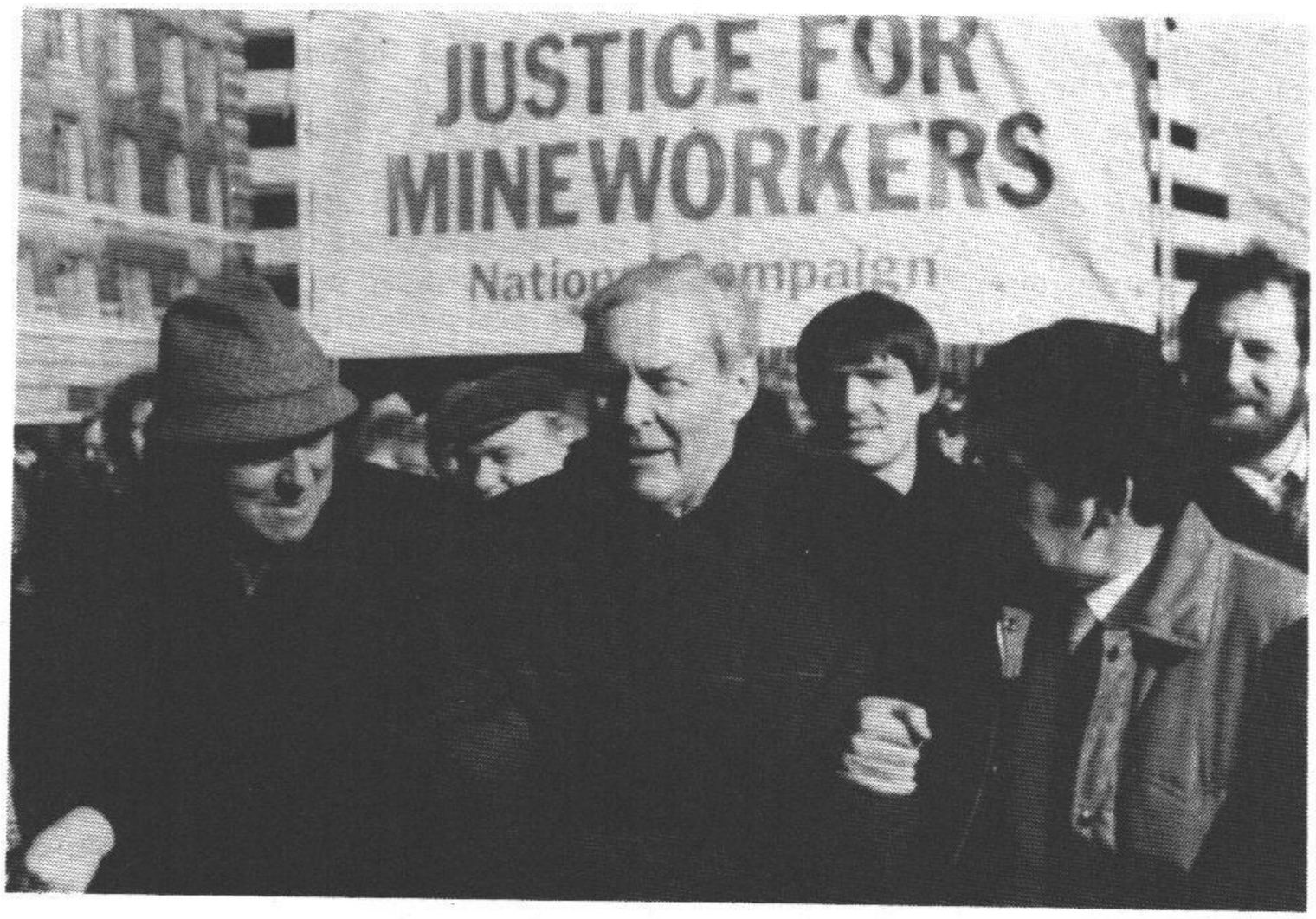
The left in the union opposed any participation in the talks, fearing that the union would be led into a trade-off, whatever its original intentions. But, at Easter Conference, the executive's line of participation was endorsed. Since then, the union has won an interim award of 5.7% and, in return for pledging 'peace and calm in the schools', has won admission to the ACAS talks. Some of the sanctions employed in the salary campaign have now been dropped – but membership pressure has ensured that 'no-cover' action has been largely retained.

The big question is whether participation is a prelude to trade-offs of conditions for pay. At the moment, having back pay in their pockets, and having won 14-15% over the last 2 pay rounds, teachers do not feel defeated. But a deal of that sort would knock the stuffing out of teachers' determination to fight the government right across the education front. NUT members will need to be very watchful over the next few months.

Ken Jones
(Socialist Teachers Alliance)

National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign
SLIP-SLIDING AWAY?

It looked like every activist's ideal of a united front meeting. In a school hall near the Notts coalfield, the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign was holding its April meeting, with 200 supporters from all over the country. Among them were most of the rank and file campaigning groups of both sacked and working miners; executive members from ten NUM areas; Women Against Pit Closures from all over the north; miners support groups, including their National Co-ordinating Committee; NUM branches and lodges, and the recently-sacked Notts branch officials; delegates from the branches and districts of the trade unions and Labour Party; the secretary of the Campaign Group of MPs; the NUM's delegate to Labour Party NEC. In the chair, Billy Etherington, from the left of the NUM's national executive; the secretary, from Trade Union Briefing, the treasurer a sacked Durham miner; guest speakers from Silentnight and the printworkers.



This is the broad campaign that Briefing has argued for since we took the first steps in setting it up. This is how we were able to build a national demonstration and rally of 10,000, in winter and one year after a brutal and far-reaching defeat.

In the school hall, however, the cracks began to show. The clearest pointer came when an activist proposed that the NJMC ask Kinnock to confirm in writing his statement on Scottish TV – that 'the Labour Party will reinstate all sacked miners'. This brought down the wrath of Eric Clarke, who said such a demand would put Kinnock in an impossible position with the right-wing; our job was to put our trust in Kinnock. We learned, of course, how much to trust Kinnock during the strike. The activist withdrew his proposal under pressure.

This sums up the orientation of the meeting. Clearly, the area officials had come not to build the campaign but to assert their control over it. To this end the secretary of the Campaign Group, echoed by Socialist Action supporters, put forward proposals that reduced the campaign to a fundraising body: we should 'organise "Heroes" benefits across the country and at Labour Party conference, as the number one priority.' Fine, no disagreement as long as this role is combined with an ongoing, active political campaign, which consistently involves the militant base of the campaign. March 2nd was both, and that's why it successfully launched the campaign nationally.

These proposals, however, were accompanied by a series of political and organisational manoeuvres which will, if carried out, depoliticise and weaken the campaign.

Billy Etherington opened the meeting by announcing that future National Council meetings would exclude all but the 48 delegates; minutes are now being sent only to those 48 instead of the full NJMC list; the model resolutions were thrown out again; the secretary's address has been removed from the NJMC notepaper; the miners support groups are considered unable to elect a delegate to represent a whole area on the Council, so they are to be 'convened' by NUM area officials; and the new regional committees of the NJMC are to submit their proposals to area officials for approval.

Briefing supporters in the NJMC want a different type of campaign; one that is open to all supporters to attend and speak, so that it becomes a forum for the activists and a national platform for the victimised miners; that seeks to keep its broad support without paying a political price, that retains a necessary autonomy from the NUM; that unites the miners and their supporters in a strong political campaign that stays visible on the streets and in the conferences; and that continues to demand *as a minimum* that the Labour Party acts on its policy to support the NUM, and as a real party of the working class.

We will be arguing for the campaign to support the call for a *national* march and gala in Notts this summer, and for all areas and supporters to build it. We will push for mass lobbies of TUC and Labour Party conferences, and for a petition on the NEC to carry out its policy on the NUM. The campaign can choose to base itself on electoral tactics which are ultimately decided by Kinnock; or on the activists who are still there and still organising.

Jane Segal
Trade Union Briefing

TGWU SWINGS TO THE RIGHT

By Bill Peters

THE swing to the right in the trade union movement since the end of the miners' strike has been dramatic and obvious.

The TUC has abandoned its "opposition" to the anti-union laws and refused to discipline the yellow EETPU for its union busting role at Wapping. The AUEW has accepted Government money for ballots, and previously "left" unions like NUPE hve played a leading role in the wtich-hunt against *Militant*.

What may not have been so obvious, however, is the shift to the right in Britain's biggest union, the TGWU.

The fact is that since the victory of the "left" candidate, Ron Todd, in the election for General Secretary last year, the union has moved further to the right than any time since the latter years of the Jack Jones era, sending out echoes of the Arthur Deakin regime which ended in the late 1950s.

There was an organised right wing campaign around the elections for the union's National Executive last December, which resulted in a swing to the right. Walt Greendale, the left-wing national chair of the union, was defeated for his own place on the Executive and was replaced by the right-wing nominee Brian Nicholson.

Ron Todd has added his weight to the rightward move, with a lengthy article in the *Daily Mirror* supporting the witch-hunt against *Militant* — in flat contradiction to the policy adopted at last year's TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference. He condemned the seven Labour NEC members who walked out and stopped the disciplinary hearing against *Militant*.

It is no accident therefore that Todd and the National Executive have refused to discipline their scab members who are crossing print union picket lines and distributing Murdoch newspapers. At its last meeting the Executive instructed the drivers not to go into Wapping, but at the same time made it clear that there would be no disciplinary action even if they did.

Two weeks ago Todd announced that the union had made an important breakthrough and had managed to recruit the *Queen Mother*.

This week Todd has joined with other right wing union leaders to hint at some kind of incomes policy in the event of a future Labour Government. "If you want to see Labour in power there has to be a form of discipline exercised by us."

(CONTINUED OVER)

TGWU (CONTINUED)

There could not be a more fundamental shift of the TGWU line than on incomes policy. The TGWU has had a consistent policy of free collective bargaining since Jack Jones was defeated on it at the 1979 Biennial Conference on the Isle of Man. At the 1981, 1983 and 1985 Conferences, free collective bargaining went through on the nod in resolutions moved by the National Executive. That the one-time "left" Ron Todd now challenges the long held and symbolic policy of the union serves to show the scale of the shift to the right which is taking place.

It is not just a matter, however, of an individual like Ron Todd collapsing to the right under the pressure of the job he has been elected to. His shift to the right is certainly remarkable; but it is linked into the political situation wnich has existed in the labour movement since the defeat of the miners' strike last year.

Since then a growing section of union leaders have concluded that industrial struggle will not win against the Thatcherites and that the only hope for the trade unions is in the election of a Labour Government at the approaching election.

At the same time the much-strengthened right wing in the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock is spelling out that the only way to win the election is for the Labour Party to shift to the right and the trade unions to present a moderate face.

It is under these political pressures that the "left" speeches of the Todd election campaign have given way to the present situation within a few short months.

PRIVATISATION — A CHALLENGE FOR NOW, NOT 1988

An early test for the resolve of Labour Parties after the Council electoral successes of May 8th will be the political leadership that they offer in the resistance to privatisation. Great debate will no doubt rage about whether this Government will resurrect legislation to force tendering upon local authorities. This is irrelevant. The Labour Party must assume that all services are under threat at all times and construct a co-ordinated campaign to deal with it.

Most of the organisational resistance to privatisation has come from the main losers by it: the unions and user-groups. But the third and vital ingredient — the political leadership that should be provided to these struggles by the Labour Party — has mainly failed to materialise.

TENDERING: Tendering is an act dressed up to look fair, yet is always loaded against direct labour. The government will prevent any local moves to redress this balance. So there should be no involvement with the tendering process whatsoever.

RALLYING POINTS: These should be the defence of existing services, or, at a more advanced level, alternative plans drawn up by workers and users. Such unity of interests and involvement will help overcome alienation felt by both public and workers.

EXISTING CONTRACTS: Any privatised service must be brought back into direct labour and before the expiry date of the contract. This can be done quite justifiably, by integrating unions and user groups into a fully-accountable monitoring body.

A bureaucratic concept of monitoring, relying on Council management feeding complaints to a 'co-ordinator' must be ..ed. No matter how sussed these 'co-ordinators' may be, they will never be able to cope with what could best be called the management/contractor 'muck and brass effect', which has dogged so many Council building contracts for so long. The only known antidote to this effect is to get those actually suffering from it to get up and say so.

But local political tactics have only been one part of the problem. The Tories have always seen this as a national strategy, and no amount of campaigns in any one locality will resist this pressure. Yet the Party has absolutely no national strategy for fighting Council privatisation. Nor, alas, have any of the Council unions. The political mood of the leadership of the labour movement is opposition to such widespread campaigns for fear of damaging the project of 'consolidation' around Kinnock. The fight within the unions for national campaigns must be supplemented by the fight for co-ordination and national political leadership by Labour. Party policy should be quite clear:

*** No compliance with tendering instructions from legislation, regulation or any other authority.*

*** Campaigns for better services based upon workers'/users' plans.*

*** Co-ordination of campaigns on a district, regional and national level.*

*** Tearing up of privatised contracts and re-municipalisation.*

In facing up to the tasks necessary to resist Tory policies such as privatisation now, Labour will be organising its own political future — if the Party doesn't, it can kiss goodbye to 1988 in 1986.

Dave Benlow (Branch Secretary, Wandsworth NUPE)

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

The Anglo-Irish Accord dominated this year's AGM of the Labour Committee on Ireland. The conference was united in opposition to what one resolution described 'seeking to preserve British economic, political, military and social interests in Ireland through consolidating Partition and escalating repression, the Accord further delays a solution in Ireland which can only be found through unconditional military and political withdrawal of Britain.'

This AGM was the most ambitious so far, spread over two days, and with a large number of guest speakers, including Derry-born journalist Nell McAfferty, and speakers from the NUM, the Women's Trade Union Committee Against Strip Searching from Dublin, and from the Irish in Britain Representation Group.

Even Peter Archer, Labour's front bench spokesperson on Ireland, although differing fundamentally with LCI's politics, feels it is a significant enough organisation for him to address.

However, this was also the LCI's most divided conference, the unanimous agreement on the sentiments quoted above did not extend to the question of how LCI should relate to this new situation, and in particular, to those who have supported some of the LCI's aims, but who also supported the Accord. The divisions around these issues seriously hampered the AGM's ability to chart out a course of action for the coming year.

There have been some real achievements in the past year. Labour Women for Ireland in developing its anti-imperialist feminist analysis is gaining considerable influence among feminists in Britain, and is making progress in extending the dialogue with feminists in Ireland.

LWI played a prominent part in all the debates over the weekend.

The work of the Trade Union Department was the subject of one of the more fruitful debates of the weekend. Work in the Trade Unions is the most vital — and most difficult — area for raising the Irish question. The AGM voted to make this work a priority, and to strengthen the Trade Union Department.

Labour and Ireland has achieved widespread credibility as one of the most serious journals on Ireland in Britain. Responsibility for its editorial content and production, though, has been heavily concentrated in the hands of the editor. Conference agreed on the need to broaden this control. But in one of the more contentious debates, the proposal from LWI to establish an elected editorial board consisting of half women was narrowly defeated.

Since the LCI's formation, Labour has officially broken from its bi-partisan policy on Ireland, and is committed to a united Ireland.

But this formal commitment to an end to British rule, and to its more unattractive aspects, has not meant any fundamental shift in Labour's thinking on Ireland. It has never been turned into action. The favourite line of our front-bench team is 'unity by stealth' — an attempt to avoid the awkward political problems of confronting the unionist veto on a united Ireland by looking for what they hope

YOUTH BRIEFING

N.U.S. CONFERENCE SWINGS TO THE LEFT

The April 7th-11th conference took place against a background of continuing Government offensives against students, on living standards, education facilities, and student union autonomy. The resulting student radicalisation was echoed at NUS Conference with a marked swing to the Left.

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) strengthened their leadership. The 20-person Executive now has 13 Labour students. The opposition "Left Alliance", a Liberal/Right/Kinnockite bloc, was roundly defeated, and has only 4 Executive places.

However, there are divisions within NOLS. NOLS is led by the Democratic Left (DL) faction, who control the NOLS apparatus. Best described as Left Kinnockites, they are muted in their criticism of Kinnock's rightward drift, but on paper support radical policies on important social issues – women, gay rights, racism, Ireland, defence.

On these issues DL are to the left of the second NOLS faction, Militant. Although strong in NOLS, Militant do not take student unionism and NUS seriously. They were a negligible force at Conference.

The third NOLS faction is the hard-left Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN), run by Socialist Organiser, but winning wider support, and making major gains at Conference. Three of the 13 NOLS NUS Executive members are SSiN, including one full-timer who beat a DL backed Independent.

SSiN made a formal anti-DL bloc with Militant at the March NOLS Conference, because of alleged DL bureaucratic manipulation of NOLS. NOLS Conference degenerated into a tragi-comic bear-garden, a sectarian slanging match, from which no faction emerged with credit. Little wonder that NOLS has declined to under 7000 members.

Back at NUS Conference the potential for a mass campaigning left-wing NOLS was visible for all to see. On Ireland, a gigantic step forward was taken with adoption of a pro-Republican policy. Uniquely for Britain, a truly mass organisation (1 million plus) called for unconditional British withdrawal, prompt reunification of Ireland, and opposed the Anglo-Irish accord.

A general theme of Conference was support for the liberation movements. On women, a near-comprehensive pro-feminist policy was adopted overwhelmingly, with greater powers for the autonomous Women's Campaign Conference, including its election of a sabbatical Women's Officer. For the first time ever, a majority of NUS Executive are now women. A comprehensive anti-racist policy was agreed, including re-affirmation of "No Platform". An excellent debate was held on 'students with disabilities', the "fourth liberation campaign".

The task now is to ensure these campaigns and issues are taken up actively in the colleges, and alongside this to build NOLS. The DL NOLS leadership will be tested over the next period as to how far they achieve this.

Dominic Johnson
Secretary, Oxford Polytechnic Labour Club (personal capacity)

AGM

ROSEMARY SALES
Hackney LCI

will be uncontentious areas – economic co-operation between North and South, and above all, 'security'.

In this atmosphere, the stampede of Labour MPs back to bi-partisan support of the Accord was predictable though profoundly depressing.

The debate on this question had some of the worst aspects of debates in the left. The original motion – composite from the Labour Women for Ireland and others – was overlong and wide ranging, and the alternative position put forward by Labour and Ireland editor Martin Collins and others posed as an amendment, but was in effect an alternative motion. The movers of the LWI resolution argued that the Labour Party's acceptance of the Accord represents a real defeat for the politics of the LCI, marking a return to the old bi-partisan politics. The resolution deplored the Party leadership's support for the Accord, arguing the need for LCI to differentiate itself clearly from those who had supported it. A model resolution for Party conference opposing the accord was proposed.

The amendment opposed the Accord in the words quoted above. However, the movers set up a phony counterposition of the two positions. In dwelling on the need to build a 'broad campaign' and to 'open out', they implied that others were not interested in this. Instead of proposing a Conference resolution, the amendment proposed consulting with 'sympathetic groups' first, thus effectively renouncing LCI's claim to political leadership on Ireland.

It was ironic that these born-again 'broad campaigners' won the vote as a result of the large number of new LCI members many of whom we are more used to seeing selling that journal of the broad campaign, Socialist Action, than as activists on the Irish question. The use of this kind of tactic damaged the atmosphere of the debate, created a great deal of frustration among LCI activists. The form of debate prevented the conference discussing properly its immediate tasks. A meeting to try and create a structure to revive the flagging London branch was also beset by some quite unnecessary bickering. It was agreed to call another meeting for all London members on 14th June. It is crucial that an effective structure is established then to carry out the vital work which needs to be done, and which is going on, in London.

The LCI faces the coming year bitterly divided over tactical questions, but united on the major political task ahead: To build opposition to the Anglo-Irish Accord. Let us hope that the real gains which have been made over the past year, and the serious work which is going on in many areas, will push the divisions into the background.

YOUTH CND REPORT

Youth CND remains the section of the peace movement most ready to accept the need to act in solidarity with British and international struggles for peace and justice and against imperialism. The resolutions passed at YCND's annual conference this February have shown once again that YCND has a strategy which, if it could be implemented, would be able to pull the peace movement back from the brink of collapse.

CND are to be commended for the swift and appropriate response to Reagan's bombing of Libya. Mass demonstrations such as the ones called in April have been recognised as necessary by YCND and the left in CND for several years, despite the drive of the CND leadership to play down mass action and turn the campaign towards parliamentary lobbying and persuasion.

But the Libyan crisis was another example of an opportunity to call for Britain to withdraw from NATO, which was missed by CND. At the very time when one of CND's most fundamental policies would have received popular support, CND failed to mention it. Compare this with YCND's recognition that "it is impossible to campaign against British nuclear weapons whilst ignoring the fact that Britain is part of a warmongering alliance". (From a resolution passed at YCND conference 1986).

Youth CND passed resolutions in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua and South Africa, in support of the Moscow Trust Group, in favour of making links with YTURC, and decided to organise a national demonstration and festival, which is due to take place this autumn.

Unfortunately, the resolution on the festival was considerably weakened by an amendment which removed the commitment to make it an explicitly political and internationalist event, by deleting such sentences as: "We will aim this campaign at every youth in the country, but expecially those who suffer most from the effects of nuclear policy, i.e. school students, unemployed, YTS trainees, women, black and other ethnic minorities, lesbian and gay youth".

Right-wing elements on YCND NC and attacks from CND mean that the struggle to keep YCND as the most progressive section of CND will be very difficult. Nevertheless it must be won if the peace movement is to have a chance of survival, let alone victory.

Davi Abrens
YCND NC
(personal capacity)

SHEFFIELD AND REALIGNMENT

Jeremy Hamm (Sheffield Central CLP)

Most people in the Labour Party in Sheffield have probably not heard of any realignments that have taken place in the Party – if they have, it is from articles in the Guardian or New Socialist they will happen to have read, not from their own experiences of political involvement.

And yet, if the context of realignment has been the attacks and pressures of Thatcherism, involving a new accommodation with the status quo of significant sections of the old Bennite coalition, Sheffield has not been unaffected. The key issues of the miners' strike, rate-capping and expulsions have all left powerful marks here. So why have the forces of realignment not worked themselves through?

A central fact to understand is the extent of Labour Party domination in South Yorkshire. In Sheffield, except for a brief period at the end of the 1960s, Labour has been in control of the Council for as far back as most people in the city can remember, and there is no prospect of it losing office. In other parts of South Yorkshire, the Party's domination is even more complete – in Barnsley and Rotherham, for example, Labour now controls respectively 62 and 63 of the Council's 66 seats.

Left labourism

It is not so much Labour's electoral strength that concerns us here as its political and cultural hegemony. Over the decades, the Party's ideology has permeated strongly through the industrial trade unions and local working class communities. Its hold over the population has put it in an unassailable position, from Left as well as Right.

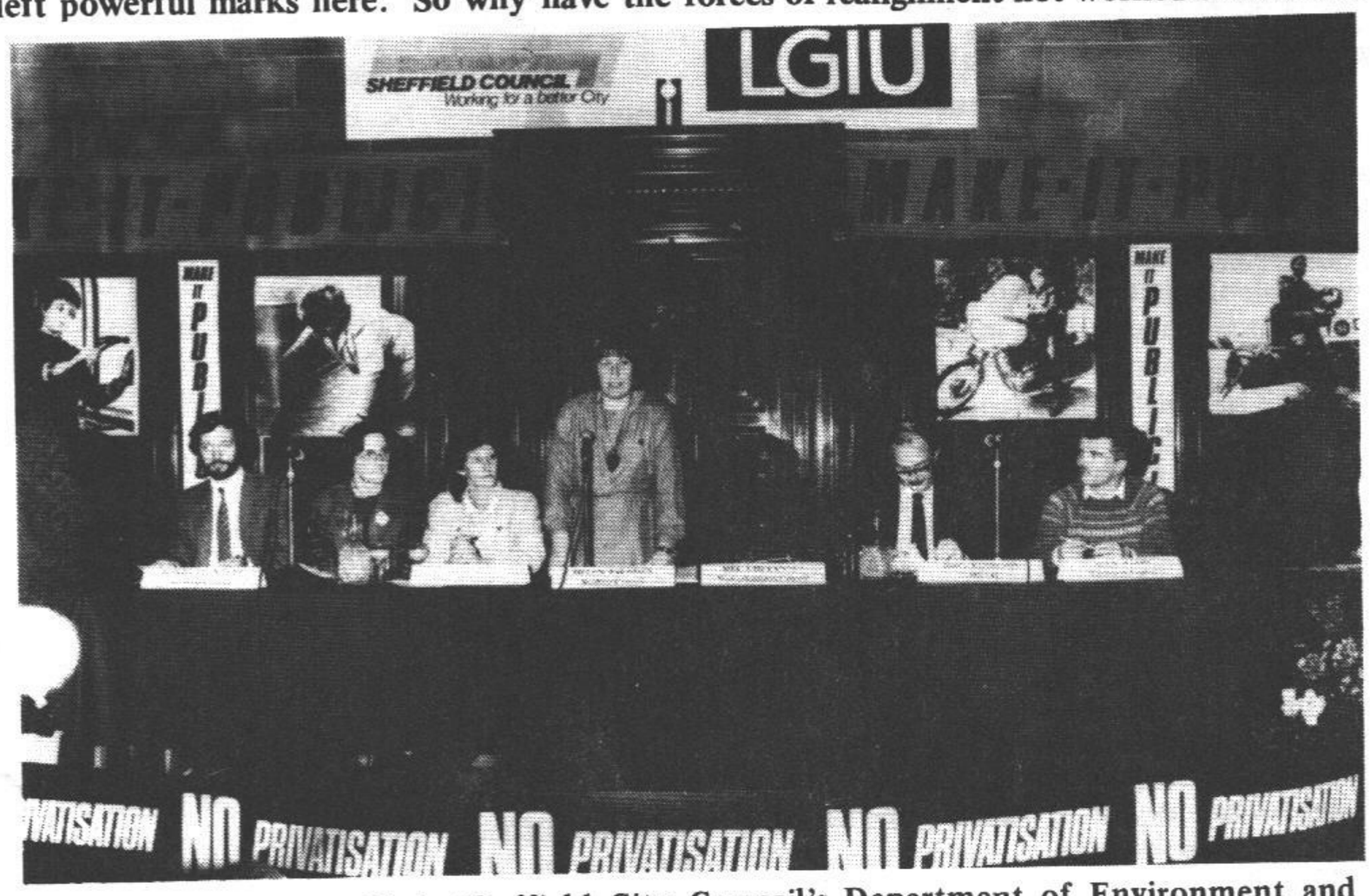
Yet the basis of the Party's power has been labourism – albeit of a radical kind – not socialism. Over the last 10 years over 35,000 jobs have been lost from Sheffield's steel-related industries. Roughly 60,000 people in the city are unemployed, that is about 20% of the workforce. Poverty is rising, the state of housing is critical, and the education and personal social services departments are struggling to manage. The latest attack has been the removal of the 'jewel in the crown' of the socialist republic – the cheap buses; now the fares have been increased by 250% and may well rise still more sharply when the Transport Bill becomes law.

The collapse of the resistance to rate-capping means that the Council is more than ever in a position of acting as policeman, passing on and enforcing the Tory cuts. This year, the cuts have not been particularly severe, but next year they may involve compulsory redundancies.

The mood of the Party in Sheffield at the moment is sombre. The catalogue of defeats has taken its toll. There is no doubt that amongst many activists and formerly left-wing councillors, Thatcher has succeeded in creating a climate of opinion in which struggle is seen as doomed and in which the 'dented sheild' approach to politics is the only viable one.

Going back to the labourism of the Sheffield Council, it should be noted that this political formation was set in place in the 1930s, when the Party ceased to organise as a mass socialist force (leaving work in the trade unions to the Communists) and dedicated itself to winning political power at the ballot box.

The left-wing character of this labourism was seen clearly in the miners' strike, when the Council collected large amounts of cash and food for the miners, released many administrative resources for them, and publicly associated itself with their cause.



Cllr. Helen Jackson, Chair Sheffield City Council's Department of Environment and Economic Development, at Sheffield's "Make it Public Conference", November 1985

Labour Party Photo Library

But in many ways the Council's radical side has worked to obscure its fundamental limitations of perspective and strategy. Many of the defects of the national Labour Party are to be seen here – the division between political and industrial activity; the confinement of decision-making to a small number of councillors and activists; and, linked to this, the pervasive culture of paternalism; the fear of mass mobilisations; and an over-reliance on electoral processes. The defeats inflicted by Thatcher expose these weaknesses. In truth the crisis facing the Labour Party in Sheffield, and the poverty of any serious strategic thinking by its leadership, is glaring. At present, the Party is going nowhere, paralysed in the face of the attacks of Thatcher and the collusion of Kinnock.

It is significant that Blunkett's assumption of power in mid-1980 as a left-winger did not entail a complete political rupture with the old Right. Compared to the conflicts in London, Manchester and Liverpool, this 'coup' was a relatively smooth bureaucratic transition.

Over the last 6 years, 'unity' has been a dominant principle of Blunkett's leadership. In many ways this has been positive – but from a longer-term perspective it has also been stultifying for the Left. So, in the aftermath of the rate-capping fiasco, the sanctions taken against the 20 Labour councillors who destroyed the Party strategy by voting with the opposition to set a rate have been minimal. In the case of the expulsions issue, most recently, 'unity' has come to mean unconditional compliance to the decisions of the NEC: following the upholding of Paul Green's expulsion from the Party, Intake ward persisted in its support for Green's continued candidature as a councillor; Heeley CLP backed this position, but senior councillors organised their forces in such a way that the pressures on Intake and Heeley to back down from confrontation were too great.

For the most part, the style of leadership has been quite acceptable to the Left in the city.

But now the council is moving to the Right. The result is disorientation for socialists. Besides the various left groups, there is no focal point for socialist ideas and strategy. Indeed, the very meaning of who the Left is, or what it represents, is not clear. The parochial culture of the local labour movement, involving a mysterious lack of connection with national political debates, encourages this identity crisis.

An emerging Left

In spite of all that has been said, however strong the accommodating pressures are, there do now seem to be the conditions in Sheffield for the emergence of an independent Left. Indeed, on 19th June, the inaugural meeting of the Sheffield Campaign Group is due to take place, preceded by a public rally a few days before. Besides the obvious reason of the increasingly evident right-wing role the Council is put in the position of playing, I mention 4 others:

(a) the historical disconnection of the trade union manufacturing base from the Labour Party. Before the decimation of steel and engineering in the recession, unions like the AUEW and the ISTC were major power-houses in the city. These days are gone, the Trades Council is weaker than in the past, and forces of profound cultural and political destabilisation have been released. Many of the younger shop stewards in the rising white-collar unions do not identify at all with the Labour Party as it stands. It seems likely that as the Council is drawn into greater conflict with its workforce, militant stewards will be attracted to an independent Left based on struggle and socialism.

(b) the legacy of feeling from the rate-capp-

THE LABOUR PARTY'S TOY TELEPHONE

Paul Sharma
(Midlands Organiser
Labour Party Black Section)

After the Labour leadership had orchestrated the defeat of Black Sections at the Annual Labour Party Conference last year, they offered the Black and Asian Advisory Committee as an alternative. This debacle was a watershed in the Labour Party's relationship with its Black members on the one hand and the Black community on the other.

Conference '85 debated a report produced by an NEC sub-committee set up in 1984 with the job of examining how to involve more Black people in the Labour Party. This committee was reluctantly set up after Black Sections had started to take root in the Party.

The committee commenced its work in early 1984 and reported just before the Annual Conference in September. The document produced, 'The Labour Party and the Black Electorate' was a consultation paper. It discussed the issues raised by the debate on Black Sections and invited comments from the Labour movement.

The consultation exercise was one of the biggest ever conducted by the Party. The response received was one of the biggest ever received to any consultation. Nearly 2/3rds of the respondents favoured fully constituted Black Sections in the Labour Party.

This majority was arrived at despite strenuous efforts by the Labour leadership to poison the debate against Black Sections. Indeed Neil Kinnock said in desperation on the 23rd of May 1985 'I am adamantly against Black Sections. . . . I would not give a damn if the whole Labour Party was against me on this.' Two thirds of the Party members were against Mr Kinnock on this – so much for democracy in our 'democratic socialist Party'.

The NEC meeting of the 24th of July rejected the report produced by its own sub-committee. Instead an advisory committee to the NEC was proposed – the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. Conference '85 gave approval for this committee to be set up.

Its terms of reference specifically exclude policy formation, it has purely an advisory role on 'organisational matters'.

The Labour leadership refused to listen to the recommendations of the NEC consultative committee, which were arrived at after consultation with the whole of the Labour movement. But they tell us 'hand on heart' they will listen tentatively to the advice of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee.

COLONIAL TECHNIQUE

Advisory committees are a well tried and tested ploy to thwart legitimate aspirations of democratic representation. It is a technique perfected by the British in periods of colonial rule.

Following the strike by Black African mineworkers in Zambia in 1935 at Mufulira, Nkana and Roan Antelope the British set up a Commission of Enquiry. The response of the Commission was to strengthen the hand of the elders who had been appointed earlier by the British.

In 1938 as a channel of communication between Africans and the Government the Urban Advisory Councils were introduced. Their membership, however, was nominated from the tribal elders. By 1942 the nominees were elected and were now called 'tribal representatives'.

The Government's response to attempts by Africans to seek self-Government was to set up even bigger advisory committees, the African Provisional Councils. They were just bigger failures.

The failure of the Native Representative Councils after the II World War in South Africa provides another example of the futility of advisory committees.

The proponents of participation recognised the Councils purely advisory nature but continued to argue it was a useful platform. Though some like Dr Moroka who accepted membership in 1942, later claimed he joined to smash it.

TOY TELEPHONE

Ir time, however, even the hopefuls became disillusioned. The miners' strike in 1946 was the last straw. The Council was completely ineffective even as a talking shop. Council member Moroka said, 'You sat down there, you come with resolutions, you talked until your mouth was dry and that was the last you heard of it. It was a disgrace; tomfoolery out and out.' Paul Moroka summed it up as a 'toy telephone'. Here onwards the Council started to die, eventually being abolished in 1951.

The British Labour Party's whole approach to Black people in Britain has been fashioned by the colonial experience. The Party's approach to Black people has been, on the one hand to deny Black people rights of representation and on the other to set up advisory committees which pretended to take seriously the problems of Black people.

In 1962 a sub-committee of the Home Policy Committee chaired by Harold Wilson produced a pamphlet, 'Integrating the Immigrant'. This came to nothing. In 1964 another Party committee chaired by Ant'ony Greenwood was established with a fanfare of publicity. This advisory committee did not even finish its deliberations.

Ten years later the Working Party on Human Rights, a sub-committee of the NEC's Home Policy Committee was established. This group did produce some material but it was ignored when the manifesto was written.

The National Executive Committee set up the Race Relations Study Group in 1976 with much the same membership of the 1974 advisory committee. This committee was charged with looking into inner-city deprivation. It lasted 3 years and its finding disappeared into the Human Rights Sub-committee.

The Human Rights Sub-Committee re-emerged in 1980. This time it lasted until 1984, giving way to the Consultative Committee which produced the report on Black Sections.

So now we have come full circle. The last 25 years have seen the leadership produce one Buntusan advisory committee after another. All have closely followed the colonial models used in Africa and India.

Labour's policy making and management bodies consist of delegates elected by various Section's which make up the Party. If women, youth and Jewish people (through Poale Zion) can elect members to represent them, why can't Black people? Advisory committees to advise white policy makers is not good enough. We don't just want a slice of the cake, we want access to the recipe.

We ask all those who are sympathetic to Black Sections who have accepted membership of this committee to resign immediately.

We believe that the Black and Asian Advisory Committee is a cruel charade to our society's most disadvantaged section perpetrated by our society's most cynical section.

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ing struggle. The Community Enquiry (in which community groups across the city gave detailed reports about their resources and needs), the demonstrations, and the climate of defiance all succeeded in raising the demands of community and labour movement activists.

(c) the exclusion of radical social forces from power. The Council's radicalism is largely confined to traditional labour movement concerns. Its character is deeply patriarchal, and when it comes to the demands of feminism and anti-racism, suspicion and ignorance abound. So, there is no women's centre in the city, there is much dissatisfaction amongst Council employees about issues such as women's low pay and status, and creche facilities are grossly inadequate. As far as black people are concerned, besides the lack of facilities and resources, there is much resentment about the fact that less than 1% of the Council's workforce is black. There are many groups in the city whose politics do not fit easily with those of the Council and who may be drawn to the banners of a campaigning Left.

(d) the provocations of the 'soft Left'. Blunkett's alignment with Kinnock has not gone unnoticed in Sheffield. His recent statements and actions have been met with dismay and anger. In a city where there are already 3 Campaign Group MPs (out of 5 Labour MPs), a natural consequence of these developments is the formation of an organised 'hard Left'.

The progress that the Sheffield Campaign Group makes will be crucially decided by how it answers some of the following questions.

First, how in practice are Sheffield communities to be mobilised against Tory attacks? How is the prevailing insularity of politics to be overcome, so that struggles are seen as part of a national fightback, and that there is a clearer picture than before of the situations in other cities?

Secondly, how will the Campaign Group organise in such a way that feminist and anti-racist politics are fully addressed in its political practice, perspectives and strategy? Also, how are other "non-traditional" issues (e.g. gay rights, policing, etc.) to be taken up?

Thirdly, how can we develop ways of communicating with young people in the City, who despite their experiences of poverty, unemployment etc, are completely alienated from traditional politics?

Finally, how will the Campaign Group argue and organise against any future attacks on Sheffield people by the Council – redundancies, rent rises and so on?

Struggling to become an alternative pole of authority in the City – that is the way forward for the Sheffield Campaign Group!

FORWARD TO THE FORTNIGHTLY BRIEFING!

Over 200 supporters of *Labour Briefing* met in London on May 10th to discuss the launch of an exciting new paper which will play a vital role in the left fight-back. The discussion was lively and positive in tone – the left may have suffered defeat, but we're still in there and fighting!

The morning session of the conference was taken up in discussing the present political situation, and the discussion was focused around 2 documents – firstly 'Where We Stand', which laid down the political basis for the new paper, and 'Labour Take the Power!', which attempted to sum up and codify *Briefing*'s distinctive methodology and political identity, particularly in relation to our attitude towards the central question of power. Fundamental to the debate was the question of the 're-alignment of the left' as put forward by the Kinnockite soft 'left' and the Marxism Today current of thought, and the position which *Briefing* must take in relation to this. We must stand firm with the hard left or class struggle left rejecting all attempts to re-align around the Kinnock grouping, and at the same time, exposing these so-called 'lefts' for what they really are.

Women participated fully in the debate, with many women speaking. The point was made strongly that it is no longer sufficient for the left simply to tag on women to their list of demands. Feminist ideas and ways of working must be taken on board at every level of the struggle and this will mean a fundamental shift in the balance of power and in our methods of working.

The 'Where We Stand' paper was passed in spirit, but it was felt that some revisions were necessary, so it was referred back to the new Steering Committee for this to be done. The 'Labour – Take the Power!' document was passed in its entirety.

The afternoon session of the conference considered detailed proposals for the re-launch of *Labour Briefing* in a new format. It was agreed that the role of the new *Briefing* will be to combat the Tory offensive and the right-wing attacks inside the Labour Movement by mobilising, organising, expanding and educating a hard left opposition in the unions, in the Labour Party and in the struggles of the oppressed. The target audience of the new paper will therefore need to reach beyond existing supporters of *Briefing* and the Labour Party and must include the hard left in the unions, workers in struggle and the mass struggles and campaigns of the oppressed.

Conference voted for a new, fortnightly *Briefing* as the best vehicle to respond to these challenges. The new *Briefing* will have a tabloid, newspaper format, and will be produced by a full-time team of workers. The paper will be produced in such a way that it will be possible for local Briefing groups to incorporate it into their existing publications.

The effect which the new campaign will have upon the local *Briefing* groups formed an important part of the afternoon's discussion. It was emphasised that the new *Briefing* would in no sense do away with the need for local groups, but on the contrary, should be an important tool for them to use in their campaigning. To this end a resolution was passed calling upon the National Steering Committee to draw up a programme of support for local groups to include the introduction of a monthly mailing. It is clear that the success of the paper will to a large degree depend upon the link between National *Briefing* and the local groups.

Any major project such as the launch of a new paper requires cash to enable it to start life on a sound financial footing. The campaign to raise money for the new *Briefing* starts now. We urge all our supporters who have not yet done so to purchase supporters cards, and also to participate in the *Briefing* Draw, which costs £1 per week, with a £25 prize every week. We need as much money as we can possibly raise if this project is to be a success.

The campaign to launch the new *Briefing* starts now, with the aim of producing the first issue of the new paper at National Conference. It is hoped to produce a pilot issue which can be used to build support and for fund raising purposes. There will then be a 'Launch Rally' at Conference which should be a major event in the Conference week.

The tasks facing us are clear and we believe that the political will for carrying them out is strong. *Briefing* has an important role to play in organising the left opposition inside the Labour Party and the trade unions, and the new paper will give us a powerful weapon in the struggle. Join us, together the working class will win!

Jane Prust

Labour Briefing National Steering Committee

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STOP THE ORANGE PARADE IN SOUTHAMPTON

Sunday June 1st
12 noon
COUNTER-DEMO
East Park, Southampton
The local Orange Lodge and Fascist groups will be marching through Southampton. Help us oppose them. Further information from Paul Wozny, tel. 0703–221150.

LABOUR BRIEFING

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