BRIEFING

LABOUR-TAKE THE POWER!

September 1991 80p (60p unwaged)

Labour's roll of shame:

"I gave a pledge to stand shoulder to shoulder with my constituents until this tax is finished. With difficulty I could have paid and been respectable in the eyes of some. However, in my own eyes it would have been a betrayal of the millions of people whose only crime is being poor."

Terry Fields speaks: page 4.

These Labour councils are trying to jail Poll Tax non-payers:

Barking and Dagenham
Birmingham
Bradford
Bristol
Burnley
Camden
Coventry
Gateshead
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Hyndburn
Kirklees
Knowsley
Manchester
Newcastle under Lyme
Newham
St Helen's
Sheffield
South Tyneside

The big purge - page 4

Maxwell's minions - page 6

Dromey's dance - page 16

Blunkett bites back - page 24

Broken promises department

LABOUR'S long-standing pledge to take back a controlling interest in BT looks set to follow the way of so many other socialist aspirations. With the government selling off half its remaining 49% stake (thus raising funds for pre-election hand-outs), an incoming Labour government would not be able to afford the £5 billion or so needed to bring the telephone system back under public control. Or at least that's how it was explained by the "senior party source" beloved of our quality press. "The money will just not be there," intoned the anonymous one who must be obeyed.

The same voice was quick to get into print when Jo Richardson announced plans to outlaw men-only organisations. These "would never become policy," asserted the omniscient oracle of Walworth Road. After all, such ideas might "alienate some traditional working class supporters" - and we know how Labour cherishes them!

Labour Briefing is the monthly voice of Labour's independent left. It is produced by a democratic, anti-sectarian network of Labour and trade union activists and is managed by an elected National Editorial Board whose meetings are open to all supporters. We are happy to offer a right of reply on the usual basis to all members of the labour movement.

All articles published in Labour Briefing reflect the opinions of the authors alone unless otherwise indicated. Briefing welcomes criticisms and contributions. Please keep us posted on what's going on in your area. The deadline for the next issue is September 16th.

Briefing is the only magazine on the left which is not funded by any part of the labour hierarchy or by any organised grouping. To survive and thrive we need the support of our readers. Why not take copies to sell at your local Labour Party, trade union or campaign meeting? And while you're at it, take out a standing order - say, £5 per month - to ensure we have the funds we need to keep going. It's an easy and effective way of hitting back at the Labour misleadership!

Contact Briefing at 26 Wattisfield Road, London, E5 9QH. Telephone: 081 985 6597; fax: 081 985 6785.

This is Labour Briefing No. 115, September 1991.

Editor: Mike Marqusee, Co-chairs: Liz Davies and Pauline Purnell, Secretary: Kevin Flack NEB Convenor: Keith Veness, Distribution Manager: Graham Bash, Production Manager: Dave Levney, Production Team: Alick Bridger, Paul Field, Treasurer: Dave Palmer, Promotions: Bryn Griffiths, Bookshops: Dorothy Macedo, Trade Union Editors: Jon Rogers, Keith Veness, Labour Party Editors: Richard Heffernan, Bryn Griffiths, Poll Tax Editor: Brian Harrison.

standing for socialism

The Socialist Campaign Group slate for the Constituency Section of the National Executive:

Diane Abbott, Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Ken Livingstone, Alice Mahon, Dave Nellist, Dennis Skinner.

For the Women's Section of the NEC:
Leonora Lloyd, Pauline Purnell, Anni Marjoram.

For treasurer: Gavin Strang.

For Conference Arrangements Committee: Pete Willsman.
For the National Constitutional Committee: Richard Hanford and Bill Murphy.

A glossy two-colour leaflet with details of all the Socialist Campaign Group candidates is now available for distribution; call 071 254 5582.

This is a rare chance for Labour Party members to cast a positive vote for socialism. Make sure all the members in your area take advantage of it.

Leonora Lloyd: why I'm standing for the NEC

AT LAST YEAR'S Party Conference, I acted as a ballot scrutineer on behalf of my union, MSF, and noticed that many CLPs did not bother to vote for anyone in the NEC Women's Section. Clearly, they felt that the candidates on offer were not "theirs".

For years, the women's organisation has been calling for the five women's places to be elected by the women's conference; but for the moment the trade unions still determine who will be elected. The campaign to ensure that the five women are elected by women must go on, but in the meantime it is important women come forward who do represent the women's organisation and are not beholden to the trade union leaderships. That is why I have agreed to stand.

My labour movement experience has been divided between Labour Party, trade union work and campaigning. Over the years I have been involved in the peace movement, Anti-Apartheid and the anti-racist movement, but most of all in the women's movement, right from its start in the late 60s. Since 1975 I have



played a leading role in the National Abortion Campaign, for which I now work.

Because of women's involvement in the labour movement issues such as violence against women, rape and incest, sexual harassment and reproductive rights have been raised in the unions and the Party.

Women are over-represented amongst the poorest in our society, whether as single mothers or as pensioners. We are the ones who have been most active in demanding an end to nuclear weapons and the spending of the "peace dividend" on social necessities. We need a strong and determined fight-back against the Labour leadership's abandonment of these policies.

In NAC, I have had to work with people from right across the political spectrum without at any time allowing the essential core of NAC's principles to be watered down. This experience has reinforced my commitment to non-sectarianism. I am happy to work with anyone on the left on issues of common agreement. I continue, as always, to be firmly opposed to witch-hunts and expulsions.

Poll Tax non-payers: *stand firm!*

TO SEEK TO imprison people either for their poverty or their politics - which is exactly what the Labour councils listed on our front page are now doing - is vile. The jailing of Poll Tax defaulters has exposed the final moral and political bankruptcy of New Realism in local government.

The jailings serve only one purpose: they are a means of intimidating large sections of the working class into accepting the strategy laid down by the Labour leadership - a strategy of inaction in the face of mounting attacks on living standards, public services and democratic rights.

Labour council leaders have latched on to non-payers as convenient scapegoats for collapsing services and looming financial crises. Certainly it is much easier to attack non-payers, with the media, the government and the courts at your back, than it is to mount a challenge to the Tories.

Labour leaders, local and national, seem impervious to the dangers of the backlash they are whipping up. Who but the Tories can benefit from this insane attempt to divide the working class into "responsible" payers and "irresponsible" non-payers?

We need a counter-offensive which exposes the cruelty and stupidity of this policy.

Non-payers should stand firm. Inside and outside the Council Chamber, left councillors should step up - not wind down - their opposition to the Poll Tax and everything that goes with it. Difficult as it may be in the current pre-election climate, the anti-Poll Tax movement needs to re-establish its public presence so that it can provide a focus for popular outrage at the jailings and practical support for the thousands who may soon find themselves behind bars.

The movement needs to regroup around demands for an end to the jailings and the use of bailiffs, for government reimbursement of the mounting shortfall in Poll Tax revenues, and for an amnesty for non-payers.

An almighty mass struggle will be needed to force the Tories to accede to any of these demands. But it was only through mass struggle - above all, mass non-payment - that we forced the Tories to retreat on the principle of the Poll Tax.

Now we need a renewed mass effort to kill the thing in practise. The Labour leadership's current strategy of victimising non-payers (politically and judicially) will only succeed in letting the Tories off the Poll Tax hook - the one thing the leadership always insisted it could not allow.

The big purge now going on in the Party must not succeed in breaking our resistance to the Poll Tax at the very moment it is most desperately needed.

In this month's *Labour Briefing*

4 Neil's big purge: Terry Fields and Dave Nellist plus grim details from Birkenhead, Lambeth, Manchester, Sheffield, Bedfordshire and the NEC Org Sub.

The Mirror's big lies about the Scargill nailed by Mick Gosling; NUM conference; Lightman latest; Kneel; Citizen's Charter; Nicaragua; Kurdistan — pages 6-9

10 Bank of Crooks, Criminals (and Spies) International: or who regulates the regulators? Dave Palmer on everything you need to know but were afraid to ask about BCCI.

Corbyn's Commonweal, Class Traitor of the Month: Margaret Hodge; reselection rumpus and by-election blues; why *Briefing* was wrong about Walton — pages 12-15

16 Six page trade union special: Jack Dromey - the "hokey-cokey" man; George Durack on the UCW; Nalgo pay ballot; TGWU conference; Women's Workbook update; RMT; AUT; Pergamon 23.

Crisis in the Anti-Apartheid Movement by Mike Phipps; COSATU leaders face show trial; Dessie Ellis; Gerry Adams on the latest killings in the Six Counties — pages 22-23

24 Right of Reply: David Blunkett, July's Class Traitor of the Month, denounces "hate-filled" *Labour Briefing*; Ray Hill and Daphne Liddle defend Searchlight.

Leonora Lloyd on Cagney and Lacey; reviews; Periscope; sport; Famous Last Words; letters from Flett, Willsman and Peter Nielsen; crossword — pages 26-31

September 1991, No.115

"A small price to pay"

"THE POLL TAX is with us this year, next year and the year after that and the harassment of the poor will continue.

I gave a pledge that I would stand shoulder to shoulder with my constituents and people nationally until this Tax is finished and the punitive procedures are stopped. Pensioners, housewives, low paid workers and poor people still face prison.

It would have been possible for me to have escaped imprisonment at the eleventh hour. With difficulty, I could have paid and been 'respectable' in the eyes of some. However, in my own eyes it would have been a betrayal of the millions of people whose only crime is being poor.

Too often politicians and workers' representatives have promised much and done nothing when their personal positions or bank balances are threatened.



Terry Fields speaks photo: Dave Sinclair

I could not live with myself nor face my constituents if I put personal security and well being before them.

I pledge to all my constituents that I will not desist in my campaigning until everyone is free from Poll Tax debts, harassment from the courts or bailiffs or the threat of imprisonment.

I have been sustained and moved by the hundreds of messages of support and thanks for the stand I have made: from pensioners, families, Labour Parties, trade unions, trades councils and workers' organisations internationally.

Sixty days is a small price to pay for this."

- Terry Fields writing from Walton prison.

Kinnock makes a decision

THE JULY meeting of the Organisation Sub-committee was discussing Joyce Gould's report on the Walton by-election when a motion from the leader on Terry Fields was handed round. It called on the Director of Organisation "to investigate the circumstances of Fields' imprisonment" and report back to the July NEC (nine days later). Roy Hattersley, Joan Lestor and Larry Whitty didn't like the reference to prison. There was a suggestion to alter it to an investigation of Fields' links with the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, but Anne Davis said she couldn't support that because members in her own area were part of it. Blunkett said the Militant links were enough and Robin Cook (not a member of the Sub-Committee but eager to be present at the execution) condemned Fields' speech in the House in which he referred to "our programme for nationalising the commanding heights of the economy". Clare Short came to the leader's rescue by moving a catch-all resolution simply to "enquire into the activities of Terry Fields". Kinnock promised action would be taken "against Militant and every other group". Only Benn and Skinner voted against; Anne Davis abstained.

Sheffield

SHEFFIELD CENTRAL Constituency GC voted by 25 to 15 to investigate *Socialist Organiser*. The vote was won with the aid of hitherto unseen delegates persuaded to turn up because they had been told that *Socialist Organiser* supporters do not want a Labour government. This follows moves by Sheffield Council leader Clive Betts to instigate an investigation of Nof Ttofias, a *Socialist Organiser* seller in Sheffield Brightside CLP.

Who's next?

ON JUNE 26th Tory Chair Chris Patten wrote to Kinnock about Fields and Nellist: "Ineffectual criticism of their views is not enough. Unless you act swiftly to expel them from the party - or at the very least stand 'real' Labour candidates against them - your commitment to rid Labour of its hard left element will be revealed for what it is - a total sham."

On July 16th (following Fields' committal to prison) Patten wrote again to Kinnock demanding that Fields and Nellist be expelled. At the next NEC this demand was acceded to. Patten then sent Kinnock another letter with a list of 25 more Labour MPs (an out-of-date list of Campaign Group members, in fact) who should be purged.

The *Evening Standard* revealed that on Ireland and Black Sections was "even more extreme" than Militant.

Lambeth

THE JULY NEC referred the thirteen Lambeth councillors suspended in February to the NCC.

The original suspensions were prompted by lurid tales of intimidation invented by the LCC. NEC members were told that an investigation was necessary because of the seriousness of the allegations, which have now been discreetly dropped. Instead the charges now refer to political stands taken by the councillors. In some cases this means going back four years - to votes cast against cuts made by Linda Bellos!

Under the rubric of "bringing the party into disrepute", there are basically four specific complaints: opposing cuts, opposing the Poll Tax, opposing the Gulf War, and opposing the media ban of Sinn Fein. On all four issues the thirteen councillors acted with the support of the local Labour parties. On most occasions they were also following the Labour Whip.

Also under attack are the 29 ex-councillors surcharged in 1986. Having finally paid off the surcharge and served out the disqualification, they are once again free to stand for the Council. But with the LGC still suspended, the NEC is in control of the by-election panel and rumour has it that none of the 29 will be deemed "suitable". Where the District Auditor failed, Kinnock carries on.

Contact: Lambeth Against the Witch-hunt, 56 Ashby House, London SW9 7SL; tel: 081 769 6803 for more information.

Terry Fields and Dave Nellist Defence Campaigns have been set up. Contact Terry's campaign c/o 16 Elm Vale, Fairfield, Liverpool L6 0NX (051 254 1298); contact Dave's c/o Dave Hofman, PO Box 102, Coventry, CV1 2TJ (0203 220 890).

"Why is this happening?"

"A DOSSIER OF 112 pages has been compiled on me. This could not have been the work of a few hours. It must have been in preparation for months, if not years. Somebody with incredibly malicious timing, so soon before a general election, has decided that this is the best opportunity to attack my position as an MP. Yet I was only recently endorsed by the National Executive as Labour candidate for Coventry South East, with not one voice raised against! I'm the same man now as I was then.



Dave Nellist

So why is all this happening? Are there some who think that the economy in the 1990s, even under a Labour government, will not be able to meet the expectations and hopes of working class people and their families? If that happens, my constituents will put pressure on me to voice their anxieties in Parliament. Is that what Ray Powell, the Labour Whip who led the calls for my expulsion, meant when he said that a Labour government would constantly have to look over its shoulder to see what I was doing when it needed the unconditional loyalty of backbenchers?"

- Dave Nellist in a letter to his constituents.

Manchester

THREE MANCHESTER councillors have been caught in the Walton dragnet. Ray Boyle, John Clegg and Margaret Manning were visiting a Salford constituent locked up in Bridewell jail in Liverpool for Poll Tax non-payment. Lesley Mahmood also turned up at the jail which was evidence enough for the NEC to suspend the three, at least two of whom had already made known their opposition to Mahmood's candidacy.

Ex-lefts Graham Stringer and Keith Bradley MP are leading the purge in Manchester, where the suspended three are among seven Manchester councillors thrown off all committees and outside bodies (including school governors) for opposing Stringer's latest £12 million cuts package.

Eyewitness: Walton

A SOCIALIST ORGANISER supporter who went to Walton to canvas for Peter Kilfoyle reports: "When we returned from our first leaflet run, 'Militant Tendency Identification Forms' were handed out for people to write down details of Mahmood supporters seen. When we refused to give the name of a Leeds University Militant seller, supposedly spotted in the area, one Kinnockite suggested a form should be filled out about us too!"

Birkenhead

FRANK FIELD beat Paul Davies in the re-run Birkenhead selection contest, but only by 53% to 45.5% and not without help from the new North West Regional Officer Eileen Murfin (Peter Kilfoyle's replacement).

Davies alleges that five affiliated organisations (including two GMB branches, the Christian Socialist Movement and the Co-operative Party) cast ballots (for Field) even though none of their delegates to the CLP had fulfilled the voting precondition of attending at least one general committee meeting in the past twelve months. Up to sixteen individual Field supporters who had not paid any subscription to the Party during 1990 despite written reminders were also allowed to vote, although they had been ruled ineligible (by Kilfoyle) in the original contest. After the ballot, CLP Chair Sue Williams said, "I am absolutely appalled that the Labour Party has stooped so low to get the result that they wanted. It's an absolute disgrace. I have never seen such a shambles of a meeting. They have altered the voting and the membership."

Paul Davies and his supporters argue that he would have won the selection ballot by 50.3% to 48% but for the Regional Officer's manoeuvres.

Davies tried to raise his objections to the procedure with the national Party before the selection meeting but had had no response.

He sent details of his complaints to the NEC, but NEC members were only presented with them when they arrived at the July 15th Organisation Sub-Committee meeting which was expected to endorse Field. Tony Benn asked for time to read the document; Clare Short said there was no time. Kinnock moved to endorse Field immediately; only Benn, Skinner, Haigh and Switzer voted against. They were also the only ones to vote against the suspension of the Birkenhead Constituency which followed.

Davies, with the backing of Wirral Trades Council, is now challenging the NEC decision in the courts.

Bedfordshire

WITH THE help of the Liberals, Bedfordshire's minority Labour administration is closing old people's homes and selling school playing fields. After being kicked off committees, a number of dissident Labour councillors resigned the Whip. They then asked Joyce Gould to investigate the Labour Group's pact with the Liberals. After an eighteen month delay she ruled that the rebel councillors must rejoin the Labour Group and support its policies or face expulsion; the County Party also faced discipline if it failed to support the Group. Send messages of support to John Jefferson, Secretary, Bedfordshire County Labour Party, 4 Julius Gardens, Luton, Beds LU3 3SQ.

Campaign Against the Witch-hunt National Working Conference
1-5pm
Saturday, September 21st
Banqueting Suite
Manchester Town Hall

The *Mirror* and the miners: the facts

In 1984-5 Neil Kinnock told us all he was "too busy" to get to a miners' picket line. But in 1991, he found time to present Maxwell's Mirror journalists with an award for their smear campaign against Arthur Scargill. ***Mick Gosling*** *of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom examines the Mirror's record and reveals just what it takes to win a "British Press Award".*

THE *MIRROR* never told its readers that its star witnesses, ex-NUM employees Roger Windsor and Jim Parker, were paid at least £100,000 for their stories - payments which would have raised questions about their motivation and credibility.

In 1989 Windsor moved to France owing the NUM £29,500. He told Maxwell's minions he was "shattered and disillusioned" by the alleged Libyan cash deal, but in his resignation letter to Peter Heathfield he claimed "the dropping of the unilateral disarmament policy by Kinnock was the final blow". On August 23rd 1990, the Guardian reported this; the *Mirror* never bothered.

Jim Parker was also paid by the *Mirror*, having previously received a generous redundancy payment from the NUM (personally negotiated by Arthur Scargill) when he resigned voluntarily in 1989. The *Mirror* never mentioned this either.

Nor did the *Mirror* question the credibility of its two corroborative witnesses - Altaf Abbasi and Abdul Ghani.

Abbasi was introduced to *Mirror* readers as "a Pakistani corner-shopkeeper in Doncaster". It was not till March 7th 1990, in an article tucked on the side of a centrespread, that the *Mirror* revealed that in 1980 Abbasi had been arrested in Pakistan and sentenced to 25 years in jail for his part in a planned bomb attack on a mosque.

Four years later, the *Mirror* would have us believe, this same man, on no less than three occasions, "coolly moved through Customs at Heathrow" with a suitcase stuffed full of Libyan cash for the miners. This at a time when, according to Guardian journalist Richard Norton Taylor, "all the (NUM's) telephone lines, down to branch secretaries, were tapped by GCHQ". Both the *Guardian* and Channel Four's *Dispatches* have also confirmed that "British and United States intelligence services used a Europe-wide telephone tapping system to track funds being channelled to and from the NUM during the 1984-5 strike and for some years afterwards." Altaf Abbasi was honoured by Colonel Gaddafi in 1989 - and dished up to *Mirror* readers as the soul of integrity in 1990.

Abdul Ghani was modestly introduced to *Mirror* readers on March 7th 1990 as a "builder" who claimed to have witnessed the handing over to Roger Windsor of two sums of £50,000 each. The *Mirror* did not report to its readers that, following a nine week trial in 1987, this same Ghani was jailed for fraud for running a massive housing improvement grant rip-off.

The *Mirror*'s original, damning allegation - repeated by the Cook Report on the then 10% Maxwell-owned Central TV - was that "Miners' leader Arthur Scargill got £163,000 in strike support from Libya and used a large part of it to pay off personal debts".

In response to these allegations, Scargill, Heathfield and the NUM initiated the Lightman inquiry, to which they revealed details of the seventeen overseas bank accounts set up (under instructions from the NUM Executive) in the course of the 1984-5 strike to avoid sequestration and receivership.

The account Windsor gave to the *Mirror* of his Libyan trip was very different to the version he had given to Peter McNestry, NACODS national secretary. In 1984 Windsor told McNestry he had gone to Libya to address a trade union meeting. Afterwards, and unexpectedly, he was taken to meet Colonel Gaddafi, for which he was "totally unprepared". Lightman reported that "Mr Windsor did not tell Mr McNestry that he had asked Colonel Gaddafi for financial support, but said he had asked for 'trade union support'."

Lightman reached no conclusion on the source of the money Windsor had taken into NUM headquarters but he firmly dismissed the *Mirror*'s central contention: "Mr Windsor's allegation that the cash he had brought in was used to repay Mr Scargill's mortgage is entirely untrue...Mr Heathfield never had a home loan until much later, and Mr Scargill had some time before repaid his home loan out of his own monies".

As for the £29,500 owed to the NUM by Roger Windsor, Lightman proposed testing Windsor's "good faith" by asking him to discharge the debt to the Miners' Solidarity Fund. To date, the *Mirror*'s star witness has failed this test.

None of this mattered to the *Mirror*, which claimed the Lightman Report "PROVES most of our sensational disclosures about Scargill's secret cash dealings during and after the 1984-5 pit strike were true".

After Lightman, the *Mirror*'s Libyan angle died a death until an extraordinary front page story appeared in August of last year headlined "Gaddafi: I will sue Scargill". This was based on a *Sunday Times* report. Since then, not a word has appeared about this claim in either paper. Shortly after, the *Guardian* reported that the official Libyan news agency "had no

Gavin Lightman QC is being taken to court by the NUM Executive, which claims that Lightman had no right to sell his report to Penguin Books. As this report was commissioned by the NUM and compiled entirely with their co-operation and in answer to their queries, they have a point. Certainly Lightman himself thinks so. He's currently seeking an out of court settlement with the NUM.

The CPBF submitted a complaint about the *Mirror* coverage to **Peter Archer MP**, appointed *Mirror* Group ombudsman by Maxwell. Before Archer responded, Maxwell had dispensed with his services - to give the new Press Complaints Commission "a chance". So the CPBF turned to the Commission, which refused to consider the complaint because it was made on behalf of a third party, Arthur Scargill.

Two new employees have joined the happy team at Robert Maxwell's fantastically successful newspaper, The European. They are **Rachel and Stephen Kinnock**, our leader's innocent offspring. Rachel is on the picture desk and Stephen has somehow become a "features writer".

knowledge of any such plans". The *Mirror* never retracted the Gaddafi story, which it had run over three pages.

The *Mirror*'s campaign about the "missing" Russian miners' money was equally dubious. Its "angry Soviet miners' leaders", allegedly chasing millions donated in strike aid, were Sergei Massolovich and Nikolai Terokin. But according to *Tribune*, these two "aren't leaders of anything...They are members of an extremist right-wing organisation, the NTS or Popular Labour Alliance, formed in the thirties, whose members were so anti-Soviet that they collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. Since then NTS has been an intelligence playground".

Lightman claimed that Soviet miners' money intended for striking British miners had been misapplied to the Miners Trade Union International, which was later superseded by the International Miners Organisation (IMO).

On July 5th, the *Mirror* claimed the amount was £3.6 million; on July 11th it was "as much as £1.8 million"; on July 20th, £1.4 million; on July 4th and July 10th, £1 million; and on July 12th, £2 million (including food).

The IMO, repeatedly described by the *Mirror* as "shadowy", has over 40 affiliates and 6.5 million members worldwide; it is recognised by the United Nations, International Labour Organisation and European Community.

On July 20th, the *Mirror* reported the NUM Executive's decision to sue for the return of the "Russian cash" but failed to point out that this step was taken on the insistence of lawyers who had told NUM Executive members that they might be held in "breach of trust" if they refused to sue. On July 26th, the *Mirror* reported that, following a formal complaint to British police filed by an unnamed Soviet miner, "Fraud squad cops go in". Who was the *Mirror*'s mysterious Soviet miner? None other than the aforementioned Massolovich! The *Mirror* must have known he had sworn his complaint during his June visit, but news of it was suppressed until late July to help keep the pot boiling.

Scargill had produced evidence to rebut Lightman's claim that Soviet miners had donated directly to the striking miners but the *Mirror* chose not to report any of it. When the NUM Executive - having been pushed into pointless litigation which eventually cost the union £350,000 - reached an agreement with the IMO, the *Mirror* declared: "Arthur off the hook as NUM gets its £1m". The article underneath this headline was a travesty of the truth. It did not mention the crucial documentary evidence produced in Paris the previous day by IMO General Secretary Alain Simon, which, according to the *Guardian*, "was a Soviet transfer document instructing Mr Simon to pay the money into (an international) solidarity fund." Subsequently the *Guardian* revealed: "it was the Soviet authorities, not the NUM, which ordered money to be sent to a solidarity fund, now controlled by the IMO. The aim was to protect Mikhail Gorbachev's relations with the British government".

On October 11th, 1990, the Mirror gave six inches on page five to the NUM Conference decisions to support the Executive's position, reject Lightman's account of the Russian money and approve Scargill's and Heathfield's handling of finances.

On December 8th 1990, the *Mirror* reported the legal action taken against Scargill by the Certification Officer in a tiny article on page two under the bold headline "Scargill trial date fixed"; the paper also noted that "the police have decided not to carry on with their fraud probe" - the one launched by the *Mirror* some six months before with such fanfare. The Certification Officer's action collapsed in court in June 1991.

For this "classic of serious popular journalism", "a difficult target investigated thoroughly, vigorously and tirelessly", with the results presented with "panache", Maxwell's *Mirror* team have been made Reporters of the Year. In doing so the judges of the British Press Awards have disgraced themselves and the name of serious investigative journalism.

At the NUM Conference in Blackpool, an emergency resolution from Yorkshire Region expressed "profound disgust" with **Neil Kinnock** "for allowing himself to be associated with the so-called British Press Awards given to *Daily Mirror* reporters for their disgraceful smear campaign against the NUM national officials."

Moving the resolution, **Ken Capstick** said: "the journalism involved here was about as far removed from investigative journalism as a giraffe's balls are from its brain...One by one the *Mirror* stories have been disproved and discredited. The leader of the Labour Party knows that...We all want a Labour government after the next election, but a Labour government committed to the principles for which we stand - not a Labour government in the back pocket of Robert Maxwell."

The resolution was carried unanimously...though Scottish NUM leader and prominent Eurocommunist **George Bolton** managed to be out of the room when the vote was taken.



What's the big idea?

*John Major has finally come up with his "big idea" - a "Citizen's Charter" for the public services. Labour has its own "Citizen's Charter" and the Liberals have "Citizen's Britain". **Ben Jones** looks at the politics behind the "quality" debate.*

THE PURPOSE of the Tories' Citizen's Charter is to shift the terrain of the debate about Britain's crumbling public sector.

Major's "big idea" represents no ideological break from Thatcherism; it emerged from Madsen Pirie, President of the Adam Smith Institute, who says that "state services should deliver what they are supposed to, and...the citizen should be able to get those services elsewhere or receive other redress if they do not".

Some public services are already grappling with refunds and methods of redress. British Rail refunded £6 million last year to commuters frustrated by weather and strikes: electricity boards pay £10 if they fail to keep an appointment. In local government, Lewisham is the trail blazer, offering the princely sum of £1 per failed rubbish collection!

Labour Councils in York and Milton Keynes have developed "customer contracts" for services such as refuse collection, street cleansing and graffiti removal. Labour's "Citizen's Charter" incorporates these examples and outdoes the Tories in talk of "quality" and "standards".

But in the context of this debate the buzz-word "quality" takes on a wide range of pseudo-scientific meanings.

Some Labour authorities have become obsessed with the approach developed by Americans Peters and Waterman, who wrote a book called *In Search of Excellence* based on a study of the fortunes of elite US corporations. These management consultancy gurus focus on "consumer satisfaction".

This nostrum has been embraced by leading London councillors, such as Dave Sullivan, a former Chair of the Association of Direct Labour Organisations. They vent their pathological hatred of NALGO as they set worker against user with their "consumer is all" rhetoric.

Major, of course, will go even further down this road. His Citizen's Charter proposes compulsory competition for housing management, council lawyers, architects and surveyors. The Audit Commission is to be given new powers to produce public reports and league tables to shame non-performers into shaping up. The unions are in for a bashing, with performance-related pay lurking in the background.

In short, the Tory Charter promises "more competition, privatisation and contracting out"; what it doesn't promise is an end to the turmoil caused by cuts and the never-ending avalanche of legislation.

Lack of resources is, of course, the heart of the matter. But commerce and welfare also demand fundamentally different methods of organisation. It is difficult enough to set meaningful targets for public services; enforcing them is nigh on impossible. M&S can give you a "no questions asked" money-back guarantee - but what if the local Council doesn't sweep the streets?

There was a man the other day who went into Macdonalds and asked if he could get the roof of his council house repaired that week. He was told they couldn't help him as they sold hamburgers. He said he knew that, but even so, the service was better. He'd only had to wait thirty seconds in one queue before being told he couldn't have what he wanted. The place was clean and friendly and after listening carefully to his request they seemed genuinely sorry they couldn't help. He thought he would go there again if he needed other local authority services.

The ludicrous nature of this approach was illustrated when the *London Evening Standard* stated that "housing staff, for instance, will be required to show how efficient they have been in meeting peoples' need for homes". All the competition and exhortation in the world cannot force someone to build and rehabilitate homes without sufficient cash to pay for it.

Labour's main response to the Citizen's Charter is to cry, "we thought of it first!" This only makes it easy for the Tories. A defence of public services should begin with an examination of what working class people want and need. Central to such an examination must be the specific needs of women, black people, people with disabilities, lesbians and gay men. Are people with disabilities excluded from Council buildings? Are public services accessible to people whose first language is not English? Do women find public transport safe to use?

Together, workers and users in each public service would appraise existing service provision and plan improvements. The "public sector" has to be given real democratic content. Accountability, not an abstract notion of "quality", is the key to defending it.

The next step would be an offensive on public spending which explained why more resources are needed for the NHS, transport, council housing and education - and where we intend to get them. Unfortunately, with Margaret Beckett's fingers on the purse strings, we're not likely to see this.

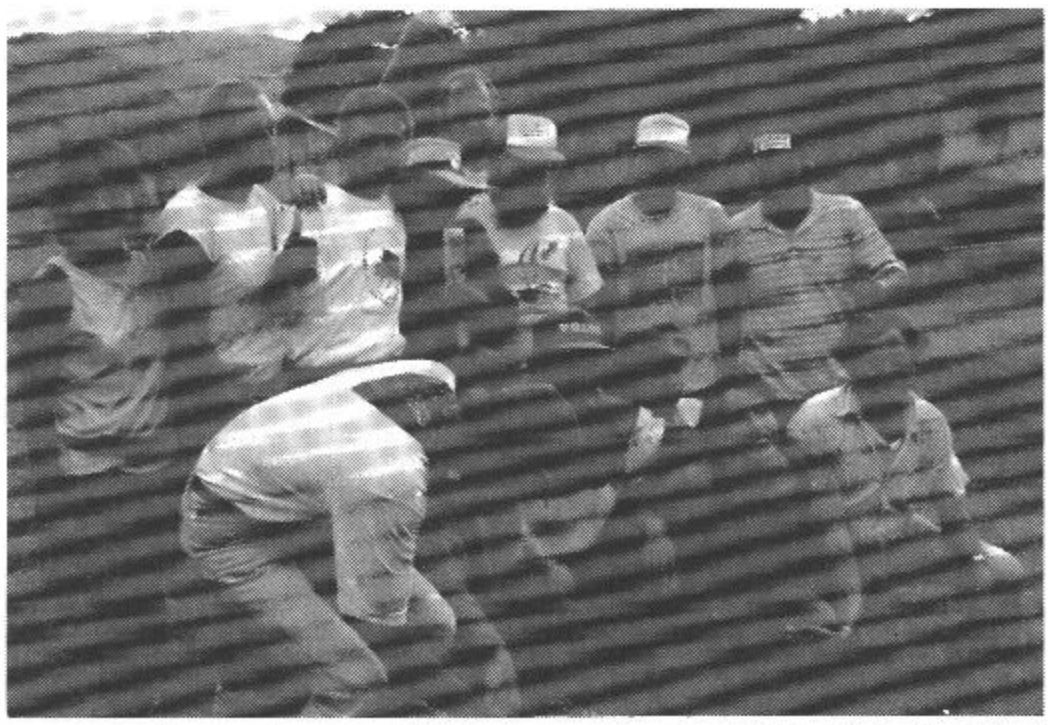
By appearing as reluctant to cough up cash as the Tories, we cede huge sectors of the ideological battleground to Major. Labour's "me tooism" will only help the Tory government exploit dissatisfaction with the public services which the Tories themselves have destroyed.

Ex-contras rebuff "concertacion"

A right-wing offensive against the gains of the Sandinista revolution has put an end to the FSLN's "constructive opposition" to the Chamorro government. ***Mike Phipps*** *reviews recent developments in Nicaragua.*

AFTER FIFTEEN months of constructive opposition to the right-wing Chamorro government Sandinista deputies walked out of the National Assembly indefinitely on June 18th. They were protesting against a bill to overturn the property rights of 100,000 families given land under the previous government.

The bill, proposed by ex-contra leader Alfredo Cesar, aims to confiscate and sell off all such property. It sparked off the occupation of the town halls across Nicaragua and led the ten grassroots, trade union and student bodies which constitute the Sandinista-led Front for Popular Struggle to declare a national "state of alert".



Coffee workers at a Sandanista co-operative, 1989 Photo Paul Field

This is the most polarising development since Chamorro's election eighteen months ago. Before this, most of the government's actions had been petty and vindictive, such as painting over revolutionary murals or destroying much-needed school books because they were too sexually candid.

A symbol of retrogression was the law passed dropping the demand for $17 billion compensation from the US, awarded by the International Court of Justice at the Hague in 1986, after the Reagan administration had mined Nicaragua's harbours.

In the last year and a half, Nicaragua has fallen deeper into poverty as monstrous inflation, weekly devaluations and falling living standards take their toll. Now the IMF is demanding a brutal austerity programme in return for loans of $360 million.

Since the election the FSLN has sought 'concertacion' with the government. This is now called into question by the right-wing offensive on property rights - although interestingly there are divisions within the right on this confrontational policy.

Meanwhile the Sandinistas have tried to rebuild their support in the country. Many former activists who felt the FSLN became too bureaucratic in power - a factor which contributed to the election defeat - have rallied once again to the Sandinistas.

The FSLN had its first ever congress in thirty years on July 19th. An estimated 47,000 people took part in the debates leading up to this, many of which were heated and hard-fought, particularly those on rebuilding in the peasantry, Sandinista abuses of power and the inclusion of women in the leadership. Following a controversial election procedure, a nine-*man* national directorate was elected to lead the FSLN.

One of the issues debated at the FSLN Congress was how to respond to the many ex-contras who, betrayed by Chamorro government, are looking to the Sandinistas to help secure them land to resettle.

In a spirit of reconciliation, the Sandinista-led ranchers' organisation, UNAG, has taken up their demands as a means of gaining a lasting peace.

Yet some former contras are digging up caches of weapons buried near the Honduran border. These 'recontras' operating with the support of the Liberal Party, have attacked police stations, army posts and Sandinista co-operatives. An estimated 40% of Nicaraguans live in poverty. The imminent arrival of cholera is expected to hit at least 10% of the population, according to government forecasts.

With the non-appearance of western aid and a government interested only in settling old scores, the future for most Nicaraguans looks bleak.

Kurdistan: Turkish government turns the screws

DESPITE increased repression by the Turkish government, including a massacre of demonstrators in Diyarbakir, Kurdish resistance is growing. Turkey has used its strengthened position following the Gulf War to unleash fresh military and political attacks on the Kurdish people. In response, government buildings in Hilal, Semdinli and Nusaybin have been bombed and a successful attack was mounted against a Turkish infantry regiment in Van.

There have also been shopkeeper strikes and protests at Turkish embassies abroad. ERNK, the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, which is linked to the PKK, the left-wing Kurdish Workers' Party, is campaigning for an end to economic and military aid to Turkey, fact-finding delegations to visit Kurdistan, and increased exposure of the brutality of the Turkish regime throughout the world.

With Turkey going flat out to improve links with the European Community, Labour Euro MPs should be pressed to take action to expose the brutality of Turkey's war against the Kurds.

Contact the Kurdish Information Centre at 11 Portland Gardens, London N4 (tel: 081 880 1759) for regular bulletins.

BCCI

Bank of Crooks, Criminals (and Spies) International: or who regulates the regulators?

For the benefit of the perplexed and the disbelieving, economics correspondent ***Dave Palmer*** *unravels the BCCI affair.*

ON JULY 5TH banking authorities in Britain and five other countries took simultaneous action to close down BCCI and seize its assets (supposed worth $20 billion). Sixty-six other countries where BCCI has smaller operations were notified and advised to take similar action. It looks like curtains for what Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau described as "a criminal organisation throughout its entire nineteen year history".

The impact of the BCCI closure on the financial system has been limited. For years BCCI had been distrusted in the international banking market; as a result interbank and market exposure was small.

However, BCCI's 48,000 UK depositors are not so lucky; they are owed £652 million. UK banks now face a bill of £89 million for compensating depositors through the Deposit Protection Board (guaranteeing 75% of deposits to a maximum of £20,000).

Over fifty local authorities also had deposits with BCCI: total losses there could be as high as £100 million. Poll Tax payers will be expected to foot the bill for the negligence of council finance officers, City brokers (who picked up fees at both ends) and the regulators. In response, local authorities have made a "flight to quality" with their funds. This has deprived secondary banks of liquidity and forced the Bank of England to bail them out.

BCCI was launched in 1972 by Pakistani banker Agha Abedi with $2.5 million. From its inception it was backed by Sheik Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi and his government, which in 1988 took a 77% stake in the bank.

As long ago as April 1990 Price Waterhouse (PW), BCCI's auditors, told the Bank of England that it had found that "certain accounting transactions had been either false or deceitful". In response, Abu Dhabi formed a reorganisation committee to carry out a drastic restructuring and recapitalisation of BCCI, on which the Bank of England and PW were consulted. Heavy losses required Abu Dhabi to inject $2-3 billion.

> "How do you as a regulator explain yourselves when you have a bank which for fifteen years has cooked the books, totally cooked the books?" - **Jack Blum**, Special Investigator to the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism and Narcotics, giving evidence on BCCI.

In October 1990 PW informed the Bank of England that management had colluded in fraudulent transactions. Abedi and Chief Executive Swaleh Naqvi formally resigned the next day.

The Bank of England insists evidence of the "criminal culture" of BCCI was only uncovered at the end of 1990, when PW informed the Bank of the existence of huge unrecorded deposits held by Naqvi. Robin Leigh-Pemberton at last concluded that "not only the past management but members of the existing, and under the restructuring proposals, the continuing management team" were involved, along with board members and "representatives of the major shareholders".

In March 1991 the Bank of England commissioned a report from PW which was delivered at the end of June and finally convinced the authorities to act.

At BCCI, tax and foreign exchange evasion, bribery and money laundering were routine. Every false accounting practice in the book was used to conceal losses on its lending and financial markets operations. The most serious fraud was perpetrated on its own capital. BCCI lent large sums to its own shareholders to buy shares in itself and subsidiaries. Massive loans were made to "insiders" who never paid them back. It appears BCCI may never have made a real profit in its entire existence.

According to Morgenthau, "much of the bank's capitalization and assets were fictitious". Abu Dhabi officials were up to their necks in it; leading figures obtained loans of up to $500 million. Numerous bad loans were covered up, for example a $700 million loan to Pakistani shipping magnates, the Gokals. Deposits were unrecorded so that they could be used to plug gaps in the balance sheet. There was a unit in the bank whose sole function was to manage the fraud.

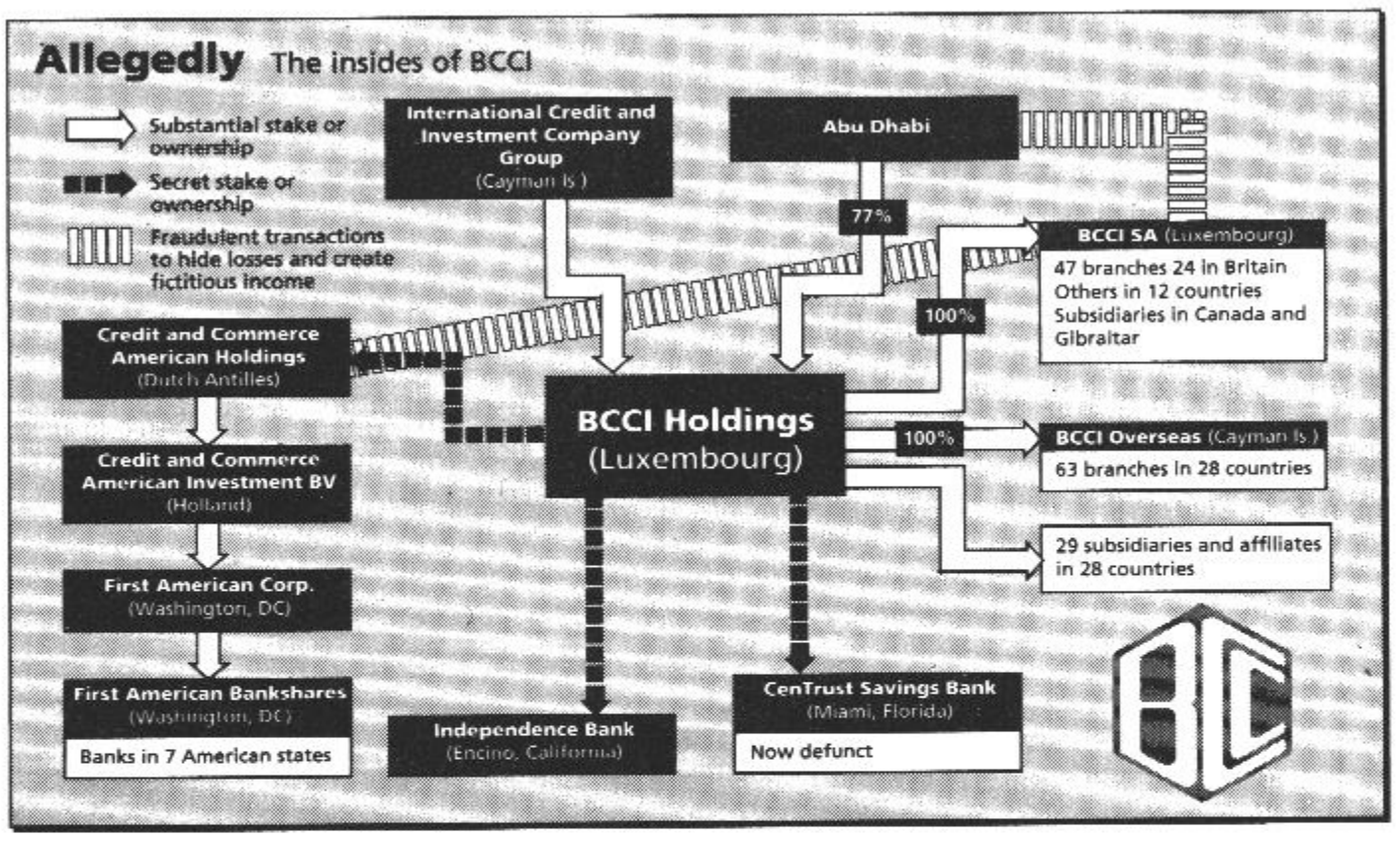
BCCI was structured so that it never came under the jurisdiction of a single regulator (*see diagram*). Its main operations were incorporated in Luxembourg and the Cayman Islands, financial centres with limited regulatory authority.

In 1981, First American Bankshare, Washington's largest bank (assets $11 billion), was one of three US banks secretly bought for BCCI by Saudi and Gulf financiers, including members of Saudi intelligence.

When BCCI was closed it was already under scrutiny in the US by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a Federal Grand Jury in Miami, the enforcement division of the Federal Reserve, the Justice Department and the Manhattan District Attorney. Information on BCCI has emerged primarily as a result of the latter's persistence. The Bank of England, in contrast, has consistently used banking secrecy laws to obstruct requests by Morgenthau and other US investigators for documents which it did not want to become public in the US. Only when it found that Morgenthau and the New York Grand Jury had been provided with a copy of the April 1990 PW report did it change its tune.

In Britain, the BCCI affair is being hidden behind the cloak of official and banking secrecy. The Bingham enquiry is taking evidence in camera, much of which will remain secret, and will take at least a year to report.

In 1990 five minor BCCI officials in the US and two in the UK were convicted in Miami for laundering drug money. BCCI pleaded corporately guilty to the laundering and was fined $15 million. That same year, the Federal Reserve ordered BCCI to close its US operations after its ownership of First American was uncovered.



William Von Raab, former Commissioner of the US Customs Service, alleges that the Justice Department let off higher-level BCCI officials in plea bargaining because it wanted BCCI's help in bolstering its weak case against Manuel Noriega, who used BCCI extensively. Von Raab also alleges that Robert Gates, Bush's nominee for head of the CIA, failed to disclose the CIA's links with BCCI or the bank's ownership of First American when information was requested in 1988.

With 75% of its operations in the Third World, not to mention its "special services", BCCI was just the bank for the CIA, which joined Noriega, Abu Nidal, the mafia and the Colombian drug cartels as fellow customers. A 1986 CIA memo shows that as early as 1982 the CIA knew BCCI was the illegal owner of First American but did not tell the Federal Reserve.

In 1989 Jack Blum, Special Investigator to the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism and Narcotics, took evidence of BCCI's worldwide drug money laundering activities and its ownership of First American to the Justice Department. When the Justice Department did nothing, Blum went to Morgenthau. On July 29th of this year, Morgenthau convinced a New York Grand Jury to indict Agha Abedi, Swaleh Naqvi and BCCI for fraud and theft.

On the same day the Federal Reserve charged BCCI and associated companies, Abedi, Naqvi and five others of illegally controlling three US banks; a $200 million fine was imposed.

In Florida a Grand Jury is still trying to unravel links between BCCI and CenTrust Savings, the largest single casualty of the US "savings and loans" collapse.

Abedi's method was simple: he sought the patronage of politically influential people by spending money on them. The entire Pakistani elite was in his pocket so there is no prospect of him being extradited to the US. In the US, BCCI's front man was Washington lawyer Clark Clifford, a former Secretary of Defence and Democratic Party bigwig: he acted as lawyer for BCCI and was chair of First American. His partner Robert Altman was also a director and First American president. For years both had maintained there was no formal association between BCCI and First American.

BCCI also made donations to former US president Jimmy Carter's Global 2000 charity and to the Carter Presidential Centre in Atlanta. Andrew Young, Carter's ambassador to the UN, was a consultant for BCCI while Mayor of Atlanta.

On the take in the UK was Jim Callaghan, former Labour Prime Minister. Sunny Jim was a paid "adviser" to BCCI and Abedi once paid the salary for one of his researchers. Speaking in a House of Lords debate in the wake of the BCCI Florida drug money laundering revelations, Callaghan called the BCCI executives "people of the highest integrity and probity". Following the BCCI closure, Callaghan described Abedi as "a man of deep moral concern".

Naturally, Tory MPs were also involved. Sir Frederic Bennett, until 1987 MP for Torbay, was chairman of BCCI Overseas Ltd (Hong Kong) until 1988. Right-wing fossil Julian Amery, MP for Brighton

> "Up till then [the end of 1990] no evidence of fraud on a scale to justify revocation had emerged" - **Robin Leigh-Pemberton**, Governor of the Bank of England, to the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee.

Pavilion, was also on the payroll, as was Sir Julian Risdale, MP for Harwich and chair of the British-Japanese Parliamentary Group. Risdale's travel expenses to Japan were covered by BCCI and he helped Abedi get permission from the Japanese finance ministry to open a BCCI branch in Toyko. Lord Griffiths, who headed Thatcher's policy unit from 1985-90 and was on the board of the Bank of England from 1984-86, established a financial research unit at City University chiefly funded by BCCI. The full range of BCCI's "friends" in the UK has yet to emerge. Reports indicate that CIA agents in the UK were also paid through BCCI.

PW appears to have taken audit information on trust from BCCI management. According to the Bank of England, the 6,000 "Naqvi files" which made up "the bank within a bank" were "locked away" from the eyes of PW, but they were apparently freely accessible at BCCI's London headquarters. According to former BCCI Head of Finance, Mashihar Rahman, PW knew about the secret ownership of First American.

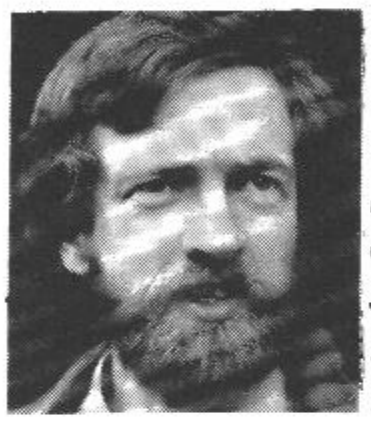
Similarly, the Banking Act gives the Bank of England wide powers to investigate; it could have thrown BCCI out of the country or put nominees on its board. Neither PW nor the Bank of England appears to have informed the Serious Fraud Squad before the "Naqvi files" came to light of crimes committed within BCCI of which they must have been aware.

Events in the US forced the Bank of England to act. If BCCI had been indicted by Morgenthau prior to BCCI's closure, the extent of fraud would have been revealed, BCCI would have collapsed and the Bank of England's role as a regulator would have been called into question.

The sudden reversal of the Bank's strategy of "preserving rather than terminating" BCCI was justified by the timely "discovery" of the "Naqvi files". The real question raised by the BCCI affair is, it seems, who regulates the regulators?

One final thought. The world turnover on the cocaine market is estimated at $200 billion. BCCI was worth $20 billion. So where is all the rest of the coke money stashed?

Labour's NATO Tendency



☐ **Commonweal** *is a monthly column by* **Jeremy Corbyn,** *Labour MP for Islington North.*

ON AUGUST 6TH *I attended a simple and moving event in Tavistock Square in memory of those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and in celebration of the lives of Millie Miller, Moira Gaster and Fenner Brockway.*

Considered wisdom now holds that the atomic bombing of Japan was morally wrong and militarily unnecessary - and had more to do with the desire of the United States to show the Soviet Union its power than with defeating Japan.

There used to be people on the right of the Labour Party who claimed to believe that the Soviet Union was a serious threat and argued that holding nuclear weapons created a sort of armed stand-off. Such people formed a powerful and insidious tendency at the heart of the Labour Party - the NATO Tendency.

Since the Warsaw Pact no longer exists the role of the NATO Tendency has been difficult and it would be churlish of us not to acknowledge this. However, several months of whirring computers and a hundred thousand dead in the Gulf War have brought us the "new NATO" - a political organisation dedicated to "out of area" activities. It has been ably promoted in Parliament by the NATO Tendency.

We now know that the Gulf War was a curtain-raiser for the New World Order: the rich and powerful, white and western will be able to maintain the present economic order with free use of all the weapons they wish for.

Gerald Kaufman has now made it clear a Labour government will keep nuclear weapons for as long as any other country has them. But just what are Britain's nuclear weapons for? Clearly, to hold a weapon means a preparedness to use it; to be prepared to use it means identifying a target. If it is not to be the Big Mac in Moscow or the AMEX office in Prague, it can only be those Third World countries which dare to threaten the "new" order.

How despicable of the Labour leadership to climb on the bandwagon by promising to purchase a fresh Trident? Are they really prepared to use it? At least we were spared the hypocrisy of any of the Front Bench turning up to Tavistock Square on Hiroshima Day.

THE PAST TWELVE *years have seen the most ideologically committed government Britain has ever had. The Tories have embraced a sort of mystic market meritocracy quite different from the upper class noblesse oblige of the fifties and sixties.*

But the problem in British politics is not the awfulness of life under the Tories. Every low-paid or unemployed person can see that. It is the need for the major party of the left to challenge the Tory ideology with a vision of its own.

Promising an investment bank run on commercial lines or "quality" charters that threaten privatisation is hardly a real alternative.

WALTON PRISON IS *a few yards away from an overgrown cemetery which contains the grave of Robert Noonan, who wrote The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists under the pen-name of Robert Tressell. I stopped by to see the grave when I visited Terry Fields, a fine comrade now serving time in Walton because of his beliefs. To add insult to injury Terry (along with Dave Nellist) is now threatened with expulsion by the Party leadership.*

However, in this one-sided world of media smear followed by NEC inquiry, should we not spare a thought for others?

Like Frank Chapple, who supported the SDP candidate in Islington North in 1983, but against whom no action was taken. Or like Eric Varley who refused to endorse the Labour candidate in the 1984 Chesterfield by-election but was subsequently rewarded with a "Labour" peerage.

And then there is the NATO Tendency, who have spent the last forty years undermining socialism and peace in favour of US economic and military domination.

Who represents the greater threat to the principles and heritage of Labour: Dave Nellist and Terry Fields or Frank Chapple and Eric Varley?

wernham printers limited

4 Forster Road, Tottenham High Road, London N17 6QD
Telephone: 081-808 1677
Fax: 081-365 1776

Lithographic Printing

Baroness of Barnsbury?

The new face of caring Labour councils and 1990s "post-feminism" - or just a tired old service-cutting, job-slashing, local government bureaucrat? Yes, this month's Class Traitor is ***Margaret Hodge****, New Realist leader of the London Borough of Islington.*

CONTRARY TO rumour, Margaret Hodge is not related to the Oppenheimers; her single name was Oppenheim and her father was a penniless Egyptian Jewish refugee, not a South African diamond millionaire!

Also, despite impressions, she is not chasing a seat at Westminster. Margaret does not relish the hurly-burly of constituency work. Besides, she has other plans.

She first came to notice (after the usual spell at the LSE) when she was elected to Islington Council in a 1973 Barnsbury Ward by-election.

Hodge was one of the first "gentrifiers" to get involved in Labour politics in the south of the borough. In those days Islington's Labour Parties were a cross between the mafia and a geriatric unit. The influx of middle-class professionals (who had bought cheap houses and wanted a share of local resources) into the fossilised structures of the local Party was not welcomed by the "old guard". A prolonged, intense struggle took place.

As it developed Hodge carefully aligned herself with the forces for change whilst not subscribing to anything too left wing. During a spell in the middle 70s as chair of Housing, she carried out a systematic redevelopment of the borough which avoided the worst excesses of tower blocks and "deck access" flats.

The early eighties in Islington saw the defection of more Labour reactionaries to the SDP than anywhere else in Britain. Twenty-six out of the fifty Labour councillors went over in one fell swoop. Local electors were horrified at the SDP hi-jack of the council; the Labour left were delighted to find the machinery of the Party dropped in their lap. In May 1982 Labour won 51 out of 52 seats in the Council elections and the hard-left were firmly in control.

Hodge was only one of eleven sitting councillors returned and the only one with both leadership designs and experience. She glided into the leadership while most of the left concentrated on chairing committees and instituting radical new measures.

Strong socialist policies soon brought



down the wrath of the Tory government and the gutter press; Hodge found herself having to justify actions on equalities and other initiatives that she did not agree with. Her tactics bordered on the bizarre. It was not unusual for her to deny something to the *Sun* or *Star* at the same time her committees were passing it into policy!

For Hodge, as for others, 1985 was the watershed. She is credited with inventing the idea of refusing to set a rate - a strategy whose inevitable consequences she clearly did not understand. As councils crumbled in face of the surcharge, Islington (because of its huge majority) looked like it would be left alone with Lambeth and Liverpool. Horror-stricken at the realisation that her strategy was actually working and might result in a real confrontation, Hodge managed to swing the Labour Group into an orderly retreat.

This experience, bolstered by the 1987 election defeat, convinced Hodge that threatening the system was not good business. She became one of the most prominent "left" Council leaders to defect to New Realism.

Since then she has justified every cut, closure and rent rise on the grounds that the Tories are worse and we mustn't break the law. "Setting a legal budget" has become the watchword of her remote, managerial regime. Increasingly, she is hostile to self-expression by any part of the community.

Since 1987, she has been a front-woman for a succession of disastrous Walworth Road/PLP attempts to boost Labour in London - by ditching the "loony left" and disenfranchising the London Labour Party.

Recently she was elected vice-chair of the Association of Metropitan Authorities - a sure sign that she has become a reliably conservative fixture in Labour's local government establishment, spouting the rhetoric of "quality" services and attacking Poll Tax non-payers at the drop of a press release.

She has developed a slick media presence that surprised many who remembered her as a clumsy performer in public. Walworth Road now regularly wheels her out as a "safe" Labour woman whom they know can be relied upon never to say anything left-wing or feminist.

Hodge's ambitions now encompass a peerage ("Baroness Hodge of Barnsbury"?) and a post on the opposition benches in the Lords, a job as a top government adviser on a large salary, or heading up Labour's new London-wide authority. Of course, all these dreams depend on us winning the general election.

Devoid of political ideology, Margaret now plays a "Thatcher-like" role on Islington Council as the "lady-in-charge" surrounded by faceless men in grey suits. Her current project seems to be scapegoating Poll Tax non-payers (especially those in her own Party) for the next round of cuts. Sensitive to criticism, she does not take kindly to opposition from the left.

Revealed: Kinnock's recipe for reselection

THE NEC'S latest proposals for selection of Labour MPs and PPCs are an over-complicated mess.

The hybrid option agreed by the July NEC had already been rejected by over 80% of those who bothered to respond to the relevant "consultation paper", including most of the unions. It was railroaded through with little debate during a brief break from witch-hunting on the basis of a last-minute fax from the leader's office to NEC members. The "trigger" mechanism is back, despite having been defeated at last year's conference. It requires, in effect, a vote of "no confidence" in the sitting MP in an individual membership ballot of the whole constituency before a selection contest is allowed to take place. It effectively puts an end to the Party's commitments to "mandatory reselection" and "one woman on every short-list".

A ballot of individual members will also decide, if there is a contest, whether or not to allow local affiliated union branches to take part. If the members agree, each affiliated union member living in a constituency would be given one-third of a vote.

The LCC, dedicated to OMOV with no union input, was quick to condemn the proposals in traditional right-wing union-bashing terms: they got front page coverage for their warning that "card-carrying Tories, Liberals, Trotskyists and fascists could all have a say in the selection of a Labour MP."

Kinnock's office expressed disapproval of the LCC statement but no one should be misled by this phoney war. Informed observers believe the whole mess has been deliberately cooked up by the leader's office so that when it is rejected at conference, Kinnock's real preference - OMOV straight with no union chaser - is left as the only coherent alternative.



By-election blues

IN THE worst election result for Labour in Lambeth since 1968, an LCC-run campaign left the Party barely holding on to one of its safest seats in a by-election in Town Hall ward.

This was meant to be an LCC showcase. Walworth Road official (and LCC member) Phil Cole drew up the short list, and excluded the only ward member who was interested - a JP and ex-CLP Chair - on the grounds that she had signed a letter to the *Guardian* supporting the fifteen suspended local Party members.

Also excluded was one of the surcharged ex-councillors - a black woman now able to stand again. She was told she was "too old".

Even then the ward selection did not go smoothly with less than half the meeting supporting the white male candidate, an LCC hack barely able to string two words together.

Anti-cuts ward officers were excluded from the campaign, which was run by an imposed election committee; it attacked the council for not making enough cuts!

This was probably the worst organised campaign seen in Lambeth for ages. Party members were not mobilised - and those who did turn out were not encouraged to come back.

A similar fiasco followed a by-election campaign in Holloway Ward in Islington. The Labour candidate's sole pledge to the electorate in this working class ward (estimated level of non-payment: 50%) was "I will make sure every penny of the Poll Tax is collected".

In May 1990, Labour's three candidates in Holloway Ward romped home with about 1300 votes each, followed by the Tenants and Residents candidates with 500, Tories with 300, and Liberal Democrats with 200.

Fifteen months later, Labour sneaked through with 753 votes, a margin of only 26 votes over the Liberal Democrats, who were followed by the Tenants' candidate with 468 and the Tory with 355.

AN INTERVIEW WITH Labour's "city and corporate affairs" spokesperson in *Banking World* was headlined: "Labour's Marjorie Mowlem makes friends with the City". Of bankers in general she says: "I think they've had a pretty raw deal under the Tories" and, just to show she means it, she adds, "I don't think there should be government interference" in City regulatory bodies.

Apparently, Mo assured *Banking World* that "some rules are unnecessary where big investors are concerned".

And in its weekly *Economic Review*, Kleinwort Benson Securities comforts its readers with the news that "John Smith is widely viewed as a reasonable and prudent man" in the City. Nonetheless, the *Review* goes on, a run on the pound and consequent rapid hikes in interest rates would be certain to follow within days of a Labour election victory.

LABOUR'S PROSPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY Candidates have been sent a Walworth Road missive explaining a number of technical economist's terms:

"BUDGET: the announcement (in March) of the Government's plans on taxation for the year ahead".

"DELORS REPORT: a report written by Jaques Delors."

"DIRECT TAX: things like income tax which come directly from income."

"UNEMPLOYMENT: those of the population in the labour force who cannot find a job."

And who said Labour couldn't manage the British economy?

LabourLine
0898 234 200

To join the Labour Party write to Labour Party, FREEPOST, London SE17 1BR, or ring LabourLine for information, up to date news and comment.

Calls charged at 33p per minute (cheap rate) 44p per minute other times.

LabourLine has a "feedback" facility. For a modest sum, you can leave a recorded message for Neil Kinnock. Since Walworth Road still lacks voice identification equipment, a frank expression of opinion should not jeopardise your Party membership.

Walton: Broad left "deserved solidarity"

Briefing's editorial opposing the Broad Left candidacy in Walton provoked considerable correspondence (see below). ***Hyder Prodhan,*** *Barrow and Furness CLP, was one of the Briefing Editorial Board members who disagreed with the "line".*

LESLEY MAHMOOD was the real winner of the selection contest in Walton. Kilfoyle's 4% majority was achieved via expulsions and suspensions. The "rules" under which he was selected are the distorted and twisted rules of the right wing which now make it well nigh impossible for socialists to stand for Labour in local or national elections.

The Broad Left deserved the solidarity of Briefing at a time when it was under attack from all sides. Only Mahmood's campaign tapped the strength of that vast army of resistance to Rimmerism: the council workforce. Threatened with in excess of 1000 job cuts (over 600 compulsory), the council workers were (and still are) in a real mood to fight. Over 2500 marched on the day the council met to condemn workers to the dole in an area of massive unemployment and poverty. This was an active, mobilised working-class that despised the right-wing Labour council's Tory programme.

It must also be remembered that the Broad Left does not just consist of the Militant. Many non-aligned hard lefts, such as Broad-left council leader Tony Jennings, are active, as well as Ian Lowes, leader of GMB Branch 5, a bastion of resistance, who split to the left of Militant after being expelled from the Labour Party in 1986.

Briefing is correct to warn against a Militant-inspired left exodus from the Labour Party. Kilfoyle polled some 19,000 votes more than Mahmood, undoubtedly including the votes of many working class people who despise the actions of Liverpool council but feel a class loyalty to Labour. There are no real signs that the working class is prepared to break from Labour in any significant numbers.

A refusal to condemn the Broad Left does not imply an uncritical attitude to the Militant or to the Broad Left. Mahmood ran a fairly orthodox, electoralist 'left-wing' campaign, refused to call for all-out strike action by council unions and didn't grasp the opportunity to use the election as a platform to argue for a socialist transformation of society.

Nonetheless, the most class conscious workers in Liverpool identified with the Broad Left campaign.

Dear *Briefing* ...

NOT TO have stood a candidate would have been a dereliction of duty by the Broad Left. It acted to take the struggle in Liverpool between the socialists and pro-capitalist Kinnock clones onto a higher political plane.

Nobody can be in doubt that Kinnockism in local government is an agent of the Tory government, hence the attacks on unions, cuts, use of bailiffs, and jailings of Poll Tax non-payers. If Kinnock has nothing between his ears, he takes pains to prove that he has something between his legs, and he does this by witch-hunting socialists. He began this process in 1985, by attacking almost the whole Liverpool Labour Party. His successes have been gained by frame-ups and brutally trampling on the rules. His hit-man in the city was Kilfoyle.

Kilfoyle made the functioning of the Party impossible when he couldn't get his way. Just as he fixed his own selection in Walton, he went to bizarre lengths to impose his choices on wards for the 1991 council election. When the Broad Left ran their own Real Labour campaign and had such a success, the challenge to this non-entity, with no record in the movement whatsoever, who without any shame thrust himself in Eric Heffer's place, was inevitable.

The opposing forces were already engaged in battle before the by-election. On one side is the Kinnockite camp, stretching from the Lib-Lab councillors all the way to Heseltine and the government; on the other is the Broad Left, the council workforce and the trade unions (remember the Broad Left council candidates had trade union endorsement). The issues are rent rises, cuts, redundancies, political victimisation of union militants, bailiffs, etc. During the campaign, we even saw the "grotesque spectacle of a Labour leader supporting privatisation" (in the words of Arthur Scargill) and then came HATs.

Your editorial focuses on the electoral issue and the problems flowing from it, but neglects to mention the class struggle. Some people would call this 'parliamentary cretinism', but I'm too polite.

Once the Broad Left decided to stand and Lesley Mahmood was selected, the campaign was waged not as some breakaway sectarian stunt, but as carrying on the tradition of the 1983-87 council and of Eric Heffer, as Real Labour. The Labour Party attacked that tradition, blaming it for Liverpool's problems, and not the pre-1983 Liberal administration's cuts or the Tory government.

Hundreds of Labour Party members participated in Lesley's campaign, from Merseyside and outside. It inspired those too young to vote, anti-Poll Tax activists, and pensioners. It was supported by the released class-war prisoners (non-payers).

Many working class people who have come to see the Labour Party as their enemy were attracted by Real Labour. Kilfoyle's 'scab' campaign wasn't seen on the street for the first week of so. His few local supporters specialised in sneaking around photographing Lesley's activists. A few of them were filmed inflicting physical violence outside All Saint's Primary School, but neither *Newsnight* nor The *Guardian* chose to report this. They also threatened Lesley's activists with retribution up dark alleys once the campaign was over.

The Real Labour campaign was the only one to present politics. Unfortunately the result didn't reflect that. Many factors combined to frustrate it; the huge propaganda machine outweighed the excellent literature and public meetings. The opinion poll on the last weekend showing only 10% support resulted in a further falling away and obviously many Labour voters didn't vote.

In my view, the result wasn't central; the campaign putting the political differences was, and in that sense it was a success. The Broad Left will not go away. The fight with Kinnock and his backers is far from over. Of course I only supported Lesley's campaign spiritually.

Fraternally,
Mick Jones
Chester

TGWU: hokey-cokey man stumbles

JACK DROMEY has been dubbed the "hokey cokey" candidate by the TGWU Broad Left. Within a three week period this summer Dromey was in the race for the union's Deputy General Secretary post, then out of it, then in, out and in again.

Dromey is in difficulty with the contest for the £39,000 a year DGS post (vacant since Bill Morris was elected to succeed Ron Todd) partly because it is the first time in a twenty-year career in the labour movement he has ever actually stood for elected office.

Dromey, TGWU national secretary for public services, is seen by the press as a model New Realist trade union official - "moderate", "capable", and utterly hostile to working class action. Through his wife, Harriet Harman MP, Dromey is close to Mandelson and his favourites, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair.

During the Morris-Wright contest Dromey unsuccessfully approached both the Broad Left and the right-wing caucuses, offering his press contacts in return for their support for him as DGS. At one point he was set to back Wright but when he saw which way the wind was blowing plumped for Morris.

Dromey may have thought he had a deal with Morris on the DGS position but at the TGWU's Biennial Delegate Conference in Blackpool (see page 18) the Broad Left (its resolve strengthened by Region 6 in the north west) refused to back him, prefering Jack Adams, a long-time member of the Communist Party, ex-convenor at Longbridge, now TGWU national secretary for the car industry.

Dromey decided not to run and began negotiating for the Assistant General Secretary slot, soon to be vacant with the retirement of Eddie Haigh. But after Harman travelled up to Blackpool with messages from the Parliamentary Labour Party, Dromey changed his mind. He still believed that Morris would back him in the end.

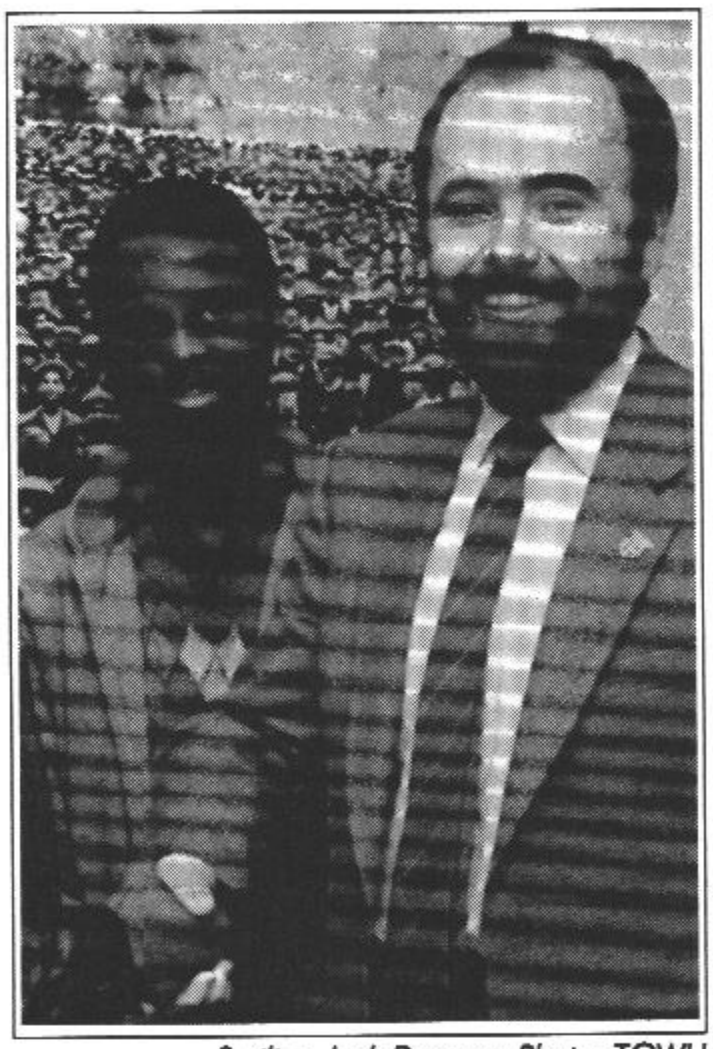
On Monday July 22nd, Dromey officially launched his campaign.

But things fell, apart when Morris made it clear he would be "neutral" in the contest - effectively pro-Adams. Worse yet, the right wing Regional Secretaries, still smarting over their defeat in the GS election, withheld their support; most of them dislike Dromey, seeing him as too young, too close to Kinnock and too opportunistic. Dromey panicked and on Friday, July 26th, withdrew from the race, saying he would back Adams, with whom he claimed "shared values".

Dromey was still hopeful of a deal on the AGS position, but by now the Broad Left had hardened completely against any accommodation with him.

Kinnock was livid and personally called Ron Todd to complain. The Labour leader had stayed out of the GS election on the understanding that Dromey would become DGS, forming a "dream ticket" with Morris. Kinnock's people assured Dromey that they had now fixed it with the right wing machine. They were lying. Nearly all the right wing regional secretaries will either be neutral or will back Adams.

On Thursday August 1st, Dromey announced that he was re-entering the race due to "overwhelming pressure from within the union".



Smiling Jack Dromey Photo: TGWU

Having courted both left and right caucuses and tried to bargain for their support, he now claimed he was standing for a "new settlement" in the union and a break with "the machine politics of the 1980s".

Dromey is now seen as Kinnock's candidate and will fight his campaign via the media with the aid of LCC Chair and public relations consultant Mike Craven. TGWU insiders give him no chance of beating Adams, but watch out for a continuing press campaign against the TGWU Broad Left in coming months.

TOD SULLIVAN, TGWU-ACTSS national secretary, has written to union members advising them to support Jack Adams:

"The actions of Jack Dromey in this present DGS election have made me so cross I have decided to try and put the record straight...at the union's recent Biennial Delegate Conference it was made clear to Dromey that there was little support for him among Central Office Officials and little or no support from either of the two groups of lay members and officers which had supported the main contestants during the GS campaign. The reason for the lack of support was that Dromey was not trusted by either group because of the way he had offered, at different times, to use his press contacts to campaign for both of the main contestants if they would support him for an executive officer post...

Dromey, Harriet Harman MP, a couple of regional secretaries, and other Labour Party people believed to be supporters of Gordon Brown MP, met in the House of Commons. What was at stake was the political future of the MPs and their need for Dromey to be the T&G DGS sitting on the National Executive of the Labour Party with a million votes in his pocket.

With them pumping his ego, Dromey decided to save the union. Like John Wayne, he feels a man's got to do what a man's got to do!

The way he intends to do 'what a man's got to do' is to be elected to the DGS's position by the media. He believes that the *Sun, Mirror, Express, Mail* and the rest of the newspapers win support for him.

He will ignore the fact that these newspapers have consistently attacked the union movement over the past ten years."

Navel gazing at the UCW

THE UNION of Communication Workers is looking desperately for an answer to the continued onslaught from the Post Office.

George Durack
retired UCW Branch Secretary

With little resistance, management has re-organised each of the three separate businesses (letters, parcels, counters) so effectively that the final privatisation programme for Royal Mails will be a mere formality.

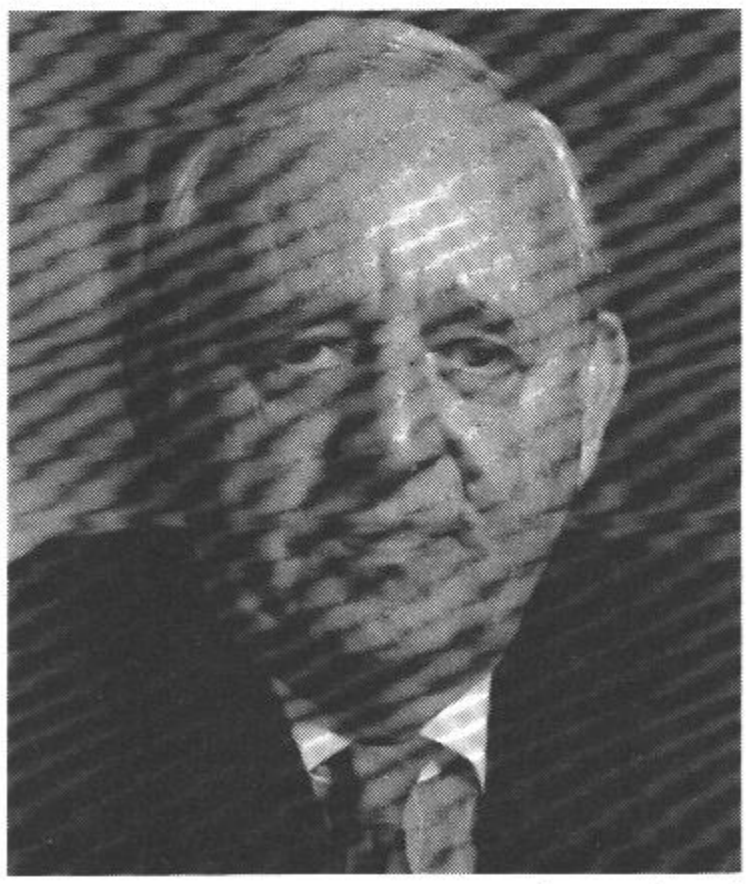
Ever since the political climate became favourable in the early 80s, the Post Office has pursued its aims relentlessly. However, in the UCW it is not acceptable to recognise that the employers organised so far ahead; that would show UCW leadership as incompetent. Instead, the UCW decided to bring in a consultant to see what was wrong with its own HQ. Beginning in 1989, a small firm called Hedley Wood carried out a survey; a report was produced in April of this year and distributed to branches. It contains 149 recommendations which go to a Special Conference in October. The report proposes creating a new General Officer. The EC supports this - at a cost of £100,000 per annum which the EC tells us we can pay for without going into debt. After all, it's only 1p per member per week.

A recommendation which does not get EC approval is

"The Post Office no longer waits for the union"

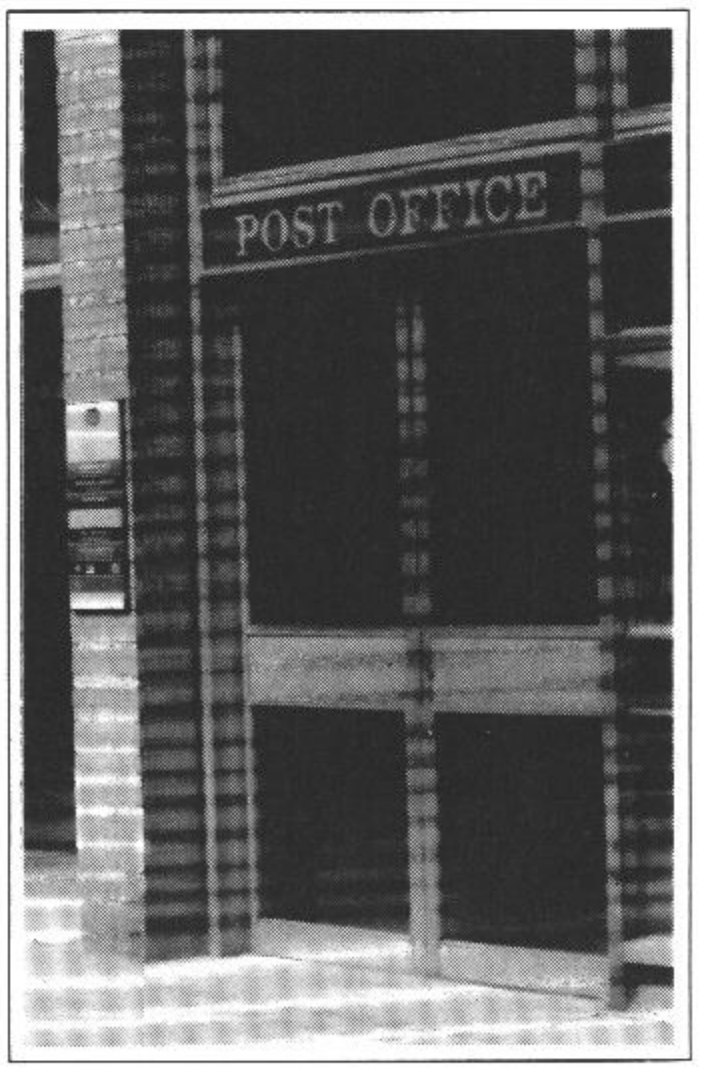
to appoint a Political Officer. Hedley Wood must have examined the record of the Deputy General Secretary; Tony Clarke should have enough to do without spending valuable time fighting Kinnock's battles inside the Labour Party.

Nothing in the report will undo the damage that has already been done. The Post Office no longer waits for the union. The UCW, traditionally a moderate and democratic union, has been pumping "reality" into its own membership, but fails to preach to itself the reality that moderation, democracy, and Post Office financial priorities do not mix. Yes, the answer is to organise a more effective opposition, but much of the best parts of the Post Office have already gone forever.



George Durack

The UCW now has to negotiate with ten different levels of management about operational and personnel issues. Because of the slicing up of the many separate businesses, getting to know who talks to whom is a frustrating business, as it was intended to be. Even Alan Tuffin, UCW General Secretary, was refused access to the Managing Director, Bill Cockburn, who is himself second-in-command to Sir Bryan Nicholson. Clearly, the Post Office believes workers should know their place in the pecking order.



So many changes have taken place in the last four or five years that Regional UCW officers, who used to deal with the now-vanished Regional Directors, can discuss local matters only with very junior Post Office management. London Regional HQ in Old Street used to be a hive of activity; now the London District Council UCW - representing one third of the UCW membership - has no Post Office management of any great status to negotiate with. The Post Office has sought the removal of regional union representatives for some time. With restructuring going on, the situation is in limbo. It is estimated that there will be nine regional Post Office HQs around the country, but regional union officials may not wind up with much of a role.

The Post Office favours local branch discussions on most issues - hoping to undermine unity and isolate national and regional union officials. "If we have a problem, let's talk it through," they say, "we will resolve it". But the UCW itself is partly responsible for this trend. In the early 80s it backed the Improved Working Methods bonus scheme (what a name to give a job-losing exercise). Under this scheme local branches and small groups within the branch indicated where jobs could be cut and where savings could be made without upsetting the service too much. The Post Office got the UCW officials to sell the bonus scheme to the members. They have only themselves to blame if they now find their roles being carved out by management.

NALG0 pay ballot: not too late for action

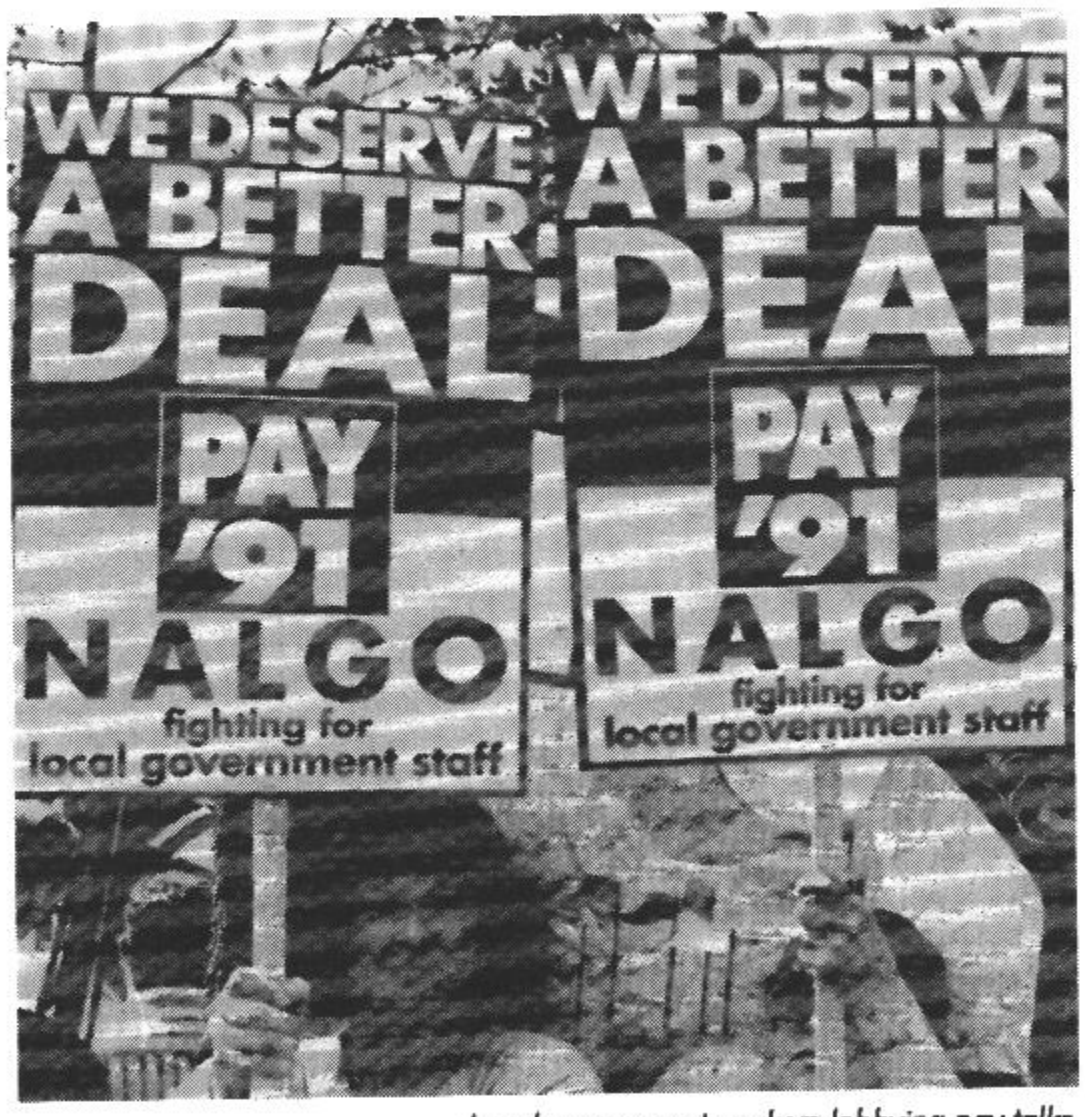
ON JULY 23rd, the NALGO National Local Government Group meeting (a delegate conference of branches representing half a million white-collar Council workers) rejected the employers' pay offer of 6.4% and backed proposals for action made by pay negotiators from NALGO's National Local Government Committee (NLGC).

Jon Rogers
Chair, Lambeth NALGO

The Group meeting voted to ballot members for up to ten days of national strike action to supplement indefinite strikes (on full pay) by selected groups of key workers.

The main debate at the meeting was not whether or not to reject the offer. Although inflation had fallen below 6.4% there was a genuine and widespread feeling that an offer which included nothing for the low paid was unacceptable. The debate on the day was between the NLGC and a number of (mostly northern) branches which united behind a resolution from Manchester proposing to ballot for three rather than ten days of action.

Left-wingers supported the argument put by the NLGC that a programme of industrial action had to be drawn up on the basis of whether it could defeat the employers, not whether it would be easier to win in a ballot. The branches arguing for the full NLGC recommendation included the largest metropolitan branches in England, which provided solid support for NALGO's successful 1989 national pay strike.



Local government workers lobbying pay talks

This was certainly not an indication of a sudden left turn by the NLGC. Indeed, when the vote on next year's wage round instructing the NLGC to submit a flat-rate pay claim was announced, former NLGC chair Jim White was seen to scowl and mouth some most uncomradely remarks.

Inside sources suggest that the NLGC badly misjudged the handling of this year's pay claim. They painted themselves into a corner from which they are now forced to argue for strike action.

Having failed to break up national pay bargaining in 1989, the employers appear to have switched to a long-term strategy of holding down national pay settlements in order to encourage local deals.

This year they delayed responding to NALGO's claim while the recession brought pay settlements and inflation down. But the NLGC is responsible for giving these delaying tactics time to work. In July 1989, there had already been a ballot and six days of strike action; in July 1991, the ballot was only just being organised.

The outcome of the NALGO pay ballot will depend upon campaigns at branch level. A "yes" vote will boost the NALGO left and the labour movement as a whole.

A "no" vote will almost certainly herald an attempt by the NALGO right to overturn the decision to seek a flat-rate settlement in 1992.

Lambeth: sometimes you *can* win!

THE SUCCESSFUL outcome of two industrial disputes in Lambeth show that council cuts can be fought even in the midst of recession and financial crisis.

Consumer advice workers, supported by Lambeth NALGO, ended their ten-week occupation of two threatened advice centres in July when the council agreed to re-open the Lambeth Walk consumer advice centre and to establish new advice surgeries to replace the closed Streatham centre.

NALGO members in Lambeth's Trading Standards Section ended a six-week strike at the same time, having won a permanent job for a "temporary" worker dismissed by the council after working in the same job for more than two years.

Contrary to "New Realist" wisdom, NALGO members in Lambeth have shown that industrial disputes can be fought - and won - across explicitly political terrain (defending services, defending "temps"), even though a branch ballot had voted down a strike call against compulsory redundancies.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT REFUSE collection and street cleaning flooded into Camden Council during the first week the service was run by private contractors Onyx UK.

More than thirty workers walked out, five were sacked and the rate of vehicle accidents increased by 20%. In one depot, ten out of fourteen vehicles had been damaged in accidents, which included a collision with a lorry on a main street.

Onyx also had to pay a £75,000 insurance premium to cover agency drivers.

Onyx is tendering for refuse services all over the country.

N·U·P·E

COUNCIL MANUAL WORKERS have accepted a 6.4% increase for 1991/92. The settlement includes plans to introduce a 37-hour week by 1994, bringing parity with white collar staff.

However, the hours' cut will be subject to local negotiation and worked out within overall existing costs.

In the market for students

THE GOVERNMENT'S White Paper on Higher Education is long on intentions and short on details, but the basic philosophy is clear: introduce market forces into higher education and you can accomplish the trick of educating more students without paying more money.

Steve Reicher
President, Exeter AUT
(personal capacity)

The White Paper has two key elements. The first is an intention to raise the proportion of young people going into higher education from one fifth to one third. The second is to abolish the divide between universities and polytechnics. Both these ideas seem positive at first sight. But on closer inspection the two proposals, clearly interrelated, are not what they seem.

More students does not necessarily mean wider social access to education. The last expansion of higher education resulted in more middle class students gaining admission. There is no reason to expect anything different this time - especially as the replacement of grants by loans will put off young people from poorer backgrounds and many mature students (mainly women).

Can quantity be achieved simply by sacrificing quality? Putting both polys and universities into the same pool, where all can bid against each other for students (and hence funds), will improve "efficiency", claims the government. But because polys have historically had fewer facilities than universities, they can educate students for less money. For universities to bid competitively against polys they will have to cut corners. As with competitive tendering, the end result is an erosion of standards and also of employment rights.

Sadly, it is not just the Tories who see the market as a means of getting higher education on the cheap. Not so long ago Keith Joseph congratulated Labour's Andrew Smith on his ideas for higher education. Smith recently reiterated his belief in competitive bidding for funds between universities.

The simple fact is that if we want more students - and we want them from all sections of society - then we must pay the price.

Universities already face a crisis of funding. In teaching, cuts in staff have meant that the staff - student ratio has deteriorated by 23% since 1979. A recent report estimated that 80% of departments were held back by lack of equipment and that an immediate injection of £200 million was necessary to keep up to international standards.

Staff salaries are in a state of chronic decline. Since 1970, when the present pay machinery for academics was introduced, academics' purchasing power has risen by 1% compared with an average rise of 50% for non-manual workers. Within twenty years over 70% of existing staff will retire, yet it is almost impossible to recruit new staff due to poor salary levels. The government may talk about getting more students, but unless it improves pay it won't have the academics to teach them.

RMT left is getting there

THIS YEAR'S AGM marked a further step forward for the left in the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union. On nuclear disarmament, repeal of the anti-trade union laws, and ballot expenses, the left succeeded in overturning recommendations from the leadership.

The verdict of Assistant General Secretary, Sam McCluskie, given at the end of the AGM, says it all: "You have destroyed a year of our work".

McCluskie and General Secretary Jimmy Knapp have already shown that they are prepared to ignore any AGM decisions with which they disagree. Meanwhile, the increasingly ineffectual NEC is busy being given the run-around by British Rail management. This could lead to a series of defeats over the restructuring taking place in the run-up to privatisation.

The Broad Left deserves credit for the AGM successes. But if it is to force Knapp and co. to accept the decisions of the AGM, it has to sink deeper roots and build up a rank-and-file campaign to defend RMT members from management attacks.

Uneasy peace on Forest Buses

SEVERAL WEEKS of effective industrial action on the London Forest bus division came to an uneasy end in mid-summer. The all-out strike, the first on London's buses since 1958, was organised against the cuts in pay and conditions that followed London Forest becoming the first "in-house" bidder to win a tender for bus services against private competition.

Tony Cordell
Secretary
Hackney Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee



After negotiations between management and the TGWU, a settlement was agreed under which conditions were restored and all staff were granted an immediate pay rise.

On the face of it this sounds fine, but the reality is that London Regional Transport has now taken the Walthamstow-based routes away from Forest Buses and awarded them to private contractors based in Essex. These contractors will pay below the existing rate and offer poor conditions. Despite the success of the strike, several hundred bus workers will lose their jobs.

There may be peace on the Forest buses, but the cost of peace means that service levels will continue to worsen, more union members will find themselves out of a job and the roads will be filled with even more fancy coloured, profit-spinning buses.

Unemployed Workers Charter

LOBBY OF TUC

Monday Sep 2nd
9-11 am

Scottish Conference Centre
Finniston, Glasgow

Pergamon 23: calling bureaucrats' bluff



Some of the Pergamon 23 Photo: Janina Struk

"THERE ARE two sides to every oppression: the oppressor and those who consent to their oppression. What the Pergamon 23 have done is to withdraw their consent." These words, spoken by Tony Benn at the second anniversary rally of the NUJ dispute at Pergamon Press, explain as well as any others the reasons why the long fight by 23 journalists has managed to achieve such a central position within the labour movement in Britain and overseas.

The Pergamon 23 have never been able to mount mass pickets to bring production to a halt; nor are they able to hijack lorries, as did several hundred printworkers locked-out from Maxwell-owned workplaces in France; nor are they fighting for the survival of an industry, like the miners, or facing an industry-wide attack, like the printers at Wapping.

Their strength lies first in their refusal to be bludgeoned into accepting the removal of their trade union rights, second in their refusal to be part of any sell-outs, third from their work in building support for their case from the bottom up.

After more than two years of hard campaigning, the Pergamon 23 still do not know whether they will come out of this strike with anything at all. Time and again they have turned down offers of up to £10,000 in compensation.

Even after Maxwell offered re-employment to twelve of the twenty-three (something he swore he would never do) the Chapel refused to consider it because named Chapel members, including the Father of the Chapel, were excluded from the deal.

It's not easy after so much time and effort to risk everything by refusing to compromise on principles. In "withholding their consent", first to Maxwell's original withdrawal of union recognition and then to any settlement based on money rather than reinstatement and recognition, the Pergamon 23 have been able to blow the whistle on the unholy alliance between Maxwell and the Labour Party; they have been able to call the bluff of a labour movement that talks a great deal about 'basic union rights' but in practice draws back from defending members who dare to fight for those rights.

Although Pergamon Press has now been sold to a Dutch publisher, Elsevier, the 23 are still campaigning for reinstatement; they argue that the new management has inherited responsibility for settling the dispute. They are also continuing to press their claim for compensation against Maxwell.

Soon after Elsevier took over, NUJ officials passed through the Pergamon gates for the first time in two years. But despite this relative thaw in relations, Elsevier continues to drag its feet. The Pergamon 23 are now preparing a new phase of their campaign, starting with resolutions to TUC and Labour Party conferences. They are also planning to spread the campaign to Holland - Elsevier's home base - and elsewhere in Europe and the US. They still need financial support.

Make cheques out to 'NUJ Pergamon Press Chapel' and send to Pergamon Press NUJ, 60 Cricket Rd, Oxford, OX4 3D.

It's all relative

LABOUR RESEARCH has compiled a league table of union membership proportions in twenty-four advanced industrial countries (and Britain!).

The top five places are all filled by Scandinavian countries, with Sweden boasting an incredible 85.3% of the total working population.

The lowest figure is for France. This is partly because many workers only join a particular union there when they have a dispute but nevertheless vote for one or another of the union federations when there are workplace ballots for 'works councils'. The actual paid-up membership at any one time in France is a paltry 12%. In the UK the figure is 41.5%, almost the same as it was in 1970 but a drop of 10% since the high point of 1980 when an actual majority of the workforce were dues-paying trades union members.

In Turkey only one in five workers is in a union, though this is belied by the huge number of strikes and disputes in the three years since these figures were compiled and which must have resulted in a big increase in membership.

"Successful" Germany and Japan have larger percentages of union membership than many countries more renowned for union militancy.

The worst figures for membership decline are those from the USA where the last ten years have seen trades unionists drop from 23% to 16% of the working population. Canada, which has witnessed a 4% increase over the same period, is one of only three countries to buck the trend - the other two being Finland and Belgium.

TGWU in Blackpool: Broad Left in charge?

FOLLOWING ITS success in the General Secretary and Executive Council elections, the TGWU Broad Left won several more notable victories at the union's Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) held in Blackpool in July.

Mark Hill
TGWU member

The TGWU's long-standing commitment to non-nuclear defence (and diversification of defence industries) was reinforced by a huge majority. There was also strong support for lesbian and gay rights and some criticism of the Executive Council for its failure to take action on the policy passed at the BDC in 1989.

Abolition of Tory employment law and its replacement with laws enforcing all ILO conventions was agreed.

Trade union involvement within the current process of mandatory reselection of Labour MPs and PPCs was endorsed, along with support for all-women shortlists where a sitting MP retires or in a by-election. The BDC also restated its support for the sovereignty of Labour's Annual Conference over the whole Party and, in particular, over the NEC, its subcommittees and policy statements. Despite numerous motions on the subject, the BDC took no position on PR, which in effect means it will not support it at Labour Party Conference.

State support for political parties was endorsed. A comprehensive policy of civil and trade union rights was passed with particular support for the new 'Anti Sectarian Unit' set up by Region 11 (Northern Ireland). Motions calling for Labour representation in Northern Ireland were defeated.

Right-wing motions calling for disaffiliation from the National Abortion Campaign and for opposition to Arthur Scargill taking any office within the TGWU (in case of merger with the NUM) were opposed by the Executive and defeated by Conference.

Like most unions, the TGWU has been living beyond its means for some time - the result of falling membership and stable expenditure. The deficit is 10% of turnover and is a source of criticism of the current leadership. However, since the union has so little debt (unlike MSF, NUPE, and others) this criticism seems mainly opportunistic.

This was Ron Todd's last conference and the final day's business was dominated by the presentation to him of the TGWU's "gold medal". In his final speech, Todd spoke of his "single greatest pride", the TGWU's decades of support for the peace movement.

Despite the Broad Left victories, there is little left-wing organisation at the union's grass-roots. Indeed, the Broad Left seems to be open by invitation only. A new "T&G Solidarity" group, based on an alliance forged in 1989 between dockers, car workers and voluntary sector workers was established this year on a formal basis. But given the internal culture of the TGWU, it faces an uphill struggle.

If anyone is interested, Kinnock delivered a familiar attack on Tory "mismanagement". Most delegates considered it a lacklustre twenty minutes, which didn't stop it being hailed as a warm-up for the general election campaign.

TUC AFFILIATION MAY be dropping year after year, but the good news is that the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is to ballot its 24,000 members on affiliating to the TUC. The Executive is recommending a 'yes' vote largely because of the effects on their membership of NHS opt-outs.

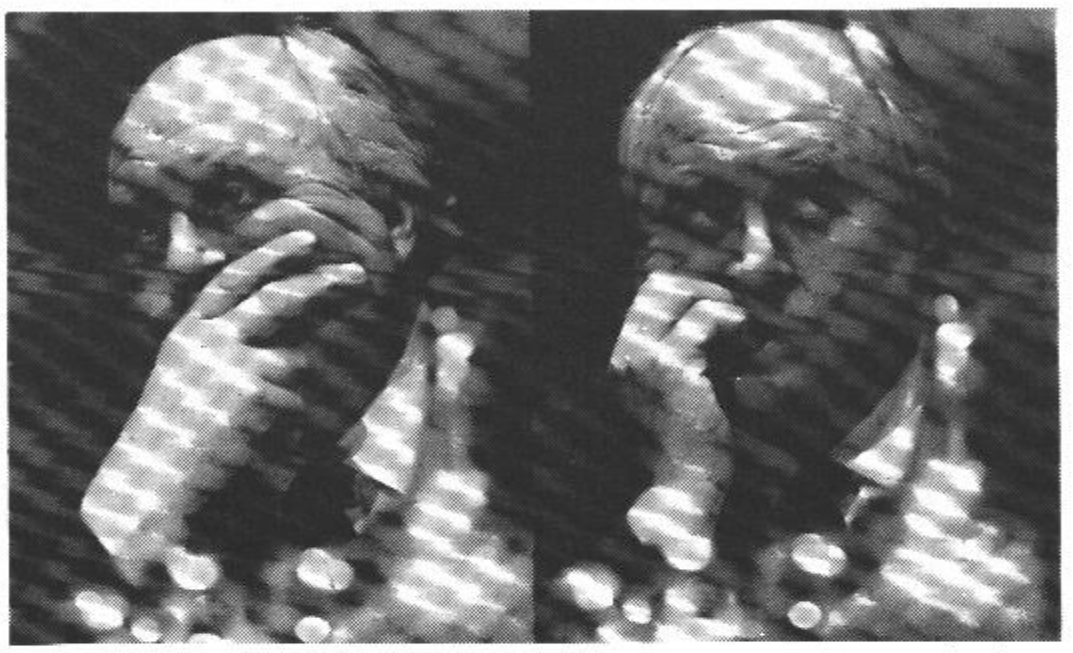
The Society seems to recognise that in the face of Tory attacks on the health service it will need to operate more like a traditional trades union - and be prepared to take action to defend its members.

THE "STAFF COMMITTEE" at Congress House sent round a questionnaire to the TUC's 150 odd employees on attitudes towards job satisfaction. The results revealed that though 76% of staff were proud to work for the TUC and 81% enjoy their jobs, 70% feel that top management does not encourage change or new ideas, and 79% say the TUC's "excessive bureaucracy" stifles initiative.

The TUC suffers from high staff turnover because employees are trapped in an ossified civil service-style grading structure.

As always in such set-ups, the dross floats to the higher echelons, which are full of useless people waiting retirement. Staff representatives are now pressing TUC bosses to open up the career structure.

Perhaps, given Norman Willis' recent mutterings about the need for "quality of work" and "improved efficiency" at the TUC, they could start at the top!



"The thinker" Photos: Graeme Cookson

READERS WILL RECALL *Briefing*'s expose of the TUC *Women's Workbook* scandal some months back, when we revealed that after a complaint from Her Majesty's Inspectorate at the DES, Congress House had banned distribution of a booklet for women trades unionists.

The story was picked up by all and sundry (never, of course, credited to *Briefing*) and has provoked action by Jimmy Knapp, who is chair of the TUC's Trade Union Education Committee.

Neither Knapp nor the TUC Women's Committee knew of the decision to withdraw the booklet until they read about it in the press. They are taking the issue to the General Council, demanding an explanation of the affair and a public commitment by the TUC to women's trade union education.

Anti-apartheid's anti-climax

HAS THE time come to wind up the Anti-Apartheid movement? This was the question discussed by 150 AAM activists at a consultative conference called by the AAM in July, thirty-two years after the organisation was founded.

The agenda was set by an AAM leadership document, 'Beyond Apartheid', which examined the potential for a post-apartheid solidarity organisation (PASO).

Mike Phipps
Greenwich and Bexley Anti-Apartheid Group

According to the AAM leaders, such an organisation would encourage trade, commerce and tourism with the new South Africa. It would undertake research and project work. Its advocates even considered seeking charitable status for the new body!

As for internal structures, the document talks of ensuring a "proper balance between democratic participation and effectiveness"; much of the leadership of PASO would be unelected.

But these technical questions are secondary to the real issue: do events in South Africa justify this step or is it at the very least premature and a diversion from the real tasks facing activists?

On this question the logic of the authors of 'Beyond Apartheid' is staggeringly simplistic. "If we delay too long," they write, "we may find ourselves taken over by events - which at a certain stage may move very rapidly - and find that we have not made the necessary preparations. Or we could find the base of support of the AAM being eroded - if progress is made within South Africa but only very slowly - so that we lack the potential to launch the new organisation."

In other words, PASO is necessary if things move forward quickly in South Africa - and if they don't, it should be launched anyway before the AAM falls apart!

How did the AAM paint itself into this corner? The reality is that over the last two years the AAM has switched its focus from active campaigns to diplomatic leverage. This is in line with the policy of the ANC which it exclusively supports.

The optimistic picture which the AAM executive and ANC like to draw of South Africa is not born out by recent events, particularly the *massive* township violence and the state's build-up of Inkatha as a bulwark against the forces of liberation. Even the reforms themselves have been greatly exaggerated. To give just one example, the abolition of population registration applies only to the newborn - everyone else remains racially classified.

"Even the reforms themselves have been greatly exaggerated"

Many activists are concerned that the whole reform project in South Africa may fall short of the basic demand for one person one vote in a unitary state; de Klerk's constitutional proposals include a white veto.

In any event, constitutional change would not in itself alter the economic core of apartheid - the fact that wages, social security, health and education for blacks is a fraction of what it is for whites.

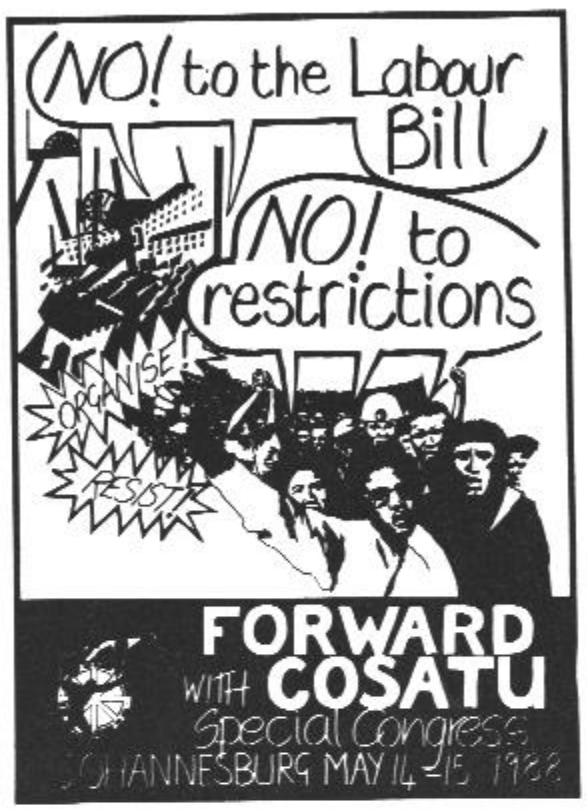
At July's AAM consultative conference there was widespread opposition to the hasty way the AAM leadership had cobbled together its proposals. But as this was a purely advisory meeting, based entirely on work-shops, it will be easy for the Executive to avoid a clear mandate.

Delegates to November's AGM should know it could be the last. If the AAM leadership's proposals for 'post-apartheid solidarity' are not rejected in favour of an accelerated campaign against actually existing apartheid, the movement will have failed its most critical test.

COSATU faces show trial

WHEN COSATU activists spotted a man lingering outside their Johannesburg office fiddling with a partly hidden appliance, they were alarmed - understandably, since the office had been bombed twice in the last year. They made a citizen's arrest of the man and brought him into the office. The man refused to identify himself but a search revealed a radio transmitter linked to the local police.

A press conference was hastily arranged at which the man admitted he was a police agent assigned to snoop on Jay Naidoo, Cyril Ramaposa and other prominent trade union leaders. The police soon arrived and retrieved their agent.



Days later COSATU leaders Jay Naidoo, Moses Mayekiso, Sydney Mufamadi and others were charged with abducting a police officer, a serious crime. It seemed unlikely the state would proceed with such a preposterous case against prominent figures in the midst of the negotiating process. But when negotiations stalled, violence escalated, and with the liberation movement disorientated, the state decided to go on the offensive. It turned the ANC call for "law and order in the townships" against the COSATU defendants.

The trial took place during the ANC conference - thus preventing key figures in the liberation movement from attending.

The first defence witness, Jay Naidoo, testified for three days. It became apparent that the prosecution was angling to change the charge from kidnapping (which was impossible to prove, given the number of eyewitnesses who saw what actually happened) to common purpose - a conspiracy law under which the prosecutor only has to "prove" that the defendants "conspired" to commit an illegal act.

After Naidoo's testimony, it was clear the state had no case. If the court would not accept the testimony of the general secretary of the largest trade union federation in South Africa, then it would not heed the other witnesses. The defence declared it would give no further evidence. The judge postponed further proceedings. A verdict is now expected in October.

There is clearly some disunity within the state about how to proceed in this case. If the present disunity and demobilisation continue, the defendants could end up with ten to fifteen year sentences.

No fair trial for Dessie Ellis

DESSIE ELLIS was extradited from Ireland to England in November 1990 to face charges of "conspiracy to cause explosions" and "possession of explosives".

Before the extradition, Charles Haughey, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, assured Dessie's family that he would receive a fair trial in Britain. But so far "justice" has proved elusive.

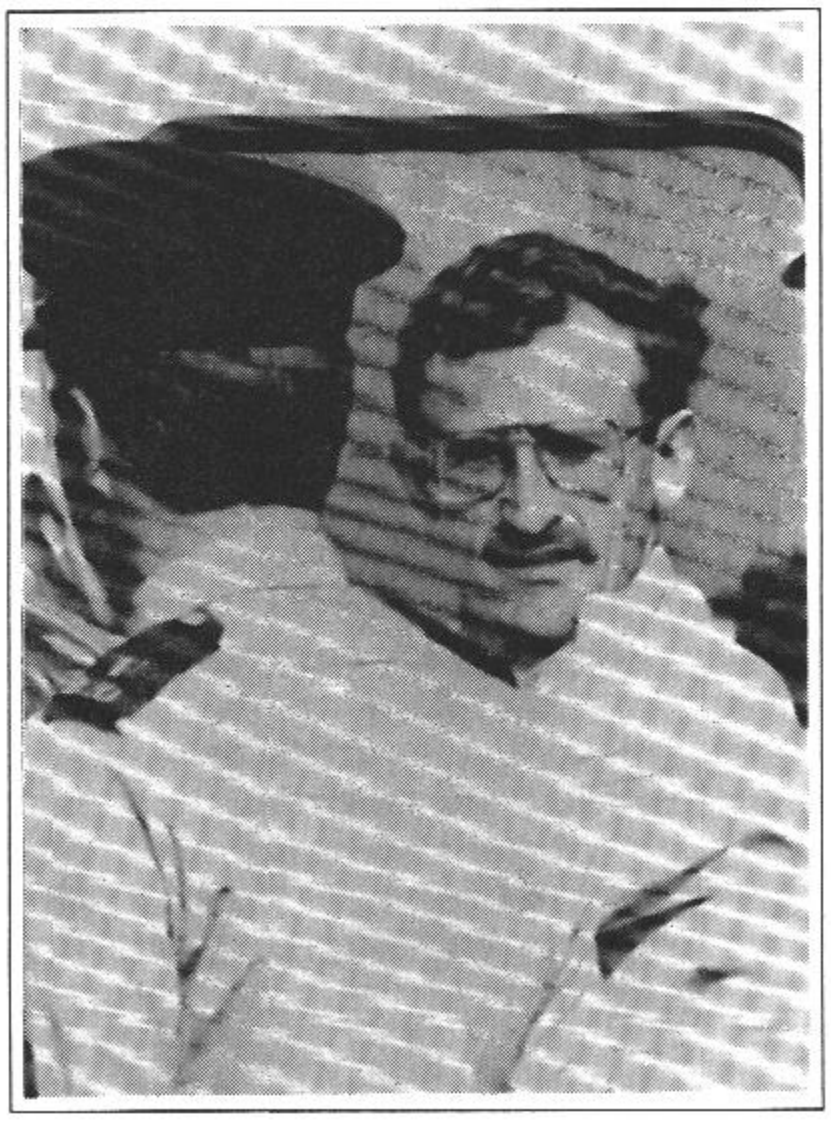
Wendy Pearman
Justice for
Dessie Ellis Campaign

In February 1991 a magistrate refused to commit Dessie to trial on the charges which led to his extradition because there was no evidence that he had ever been in Britain before - and the 1883 Explosives Act under which he had been charged therefore seemed not to apply. But instead of freeing him, the courts allowed other charges to be raised. As a result, Dessie was tied up in a near incomprehensible legal process until June, when Judge Swinton-Thomas finally decided to try him on the charges for which he was originally extradited.

Dessie cannot get a fair trial in London, which has been affected by many of the IRA bombing campaigns. Jurors at the Old Bailey may have been financially or personally affected by the railway station bombing in February. All members of the jury panel will have been vetted by police.

A fair hearing on these charges could be held in Dublin under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. Dessie applied for this but the Director of Public Prosecutions would not permit it.

The trial will coincide with the Tory Party Conference, as did those of Danny McNamee and the Winchester Three. The media will have a field-day, with sensational accounts of the prosecution case, gruesome pictures and wild allegations. Substantial publicity during the extradition process and hunger-strike have already made Dessie a 'suspect IRA bomber'. Of course, defence counsel will be able to raise these issues with the judge. But Swinton-Thomas has heard the arguments before - at the trial of the Winchester Three in 1988, when he rejected every one of them. Why should Dessie Ellis expect any better?



Dessie Ellis escorted by police

Contact the campaign c/o Haringey IBRG, Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, London N.8; tel: 081 248 3352 ext 1432.



Brighton Councillor Richard Stanton, long-standing friend of *Briefing*, was recently elected chair of the Troops Out Movement. At its AGM, TOM committed itself to a new emphasis on trade union and labour movement action and a "War, Peace and Self-Determination Campaign". In 1988 Richard was the first elected representative in Britain to be gagged by the broadcasting ban, when he was commenting on a meeting in Brighton with a Sinn Fein speaker.

Gerry Adams MP on the latest violence in the North of Ireland:

"Thirteen members of Sinn Fein have now been killed by British forces or their allies in the loyalist paramilitaries. In addition a number of former members, relatives and friends have been killed and scores have been wounded. In many cases, the information which helped the loyalist death squads target their victims came from British Crown Forces files.

The purpose of these attacks and the accompanying campaign of vilification, censorship and misrepresentation is to smash Sinn Fein and erase the republican and democratic option from the political agenda.

Sinn Fein will not be intimidated. Our Party activists know the physical risks we face. I appeal to all nationalists and republicans to be alert and vigilant.

There is need also for calm and restraint. The British government and its loyalist allies engage in sectarian actions as a matter of policy. Irish republicans need always to be mindful that they must never given any credibility to British government efforts to present republican actions as sectarian.

The latest spate of killings reinforces the urgent need for a real peace initiative. As we bury our dead this is the objective to which we as republicans recommit ourselves."

Blunkett bites back!

David Blunkett didn't like being ***Briefing's*** *Class Traitor of the Month for July, 1991. He even mentioned the honour in a House of Commons debate - to rebut a Tory MP's ludicrous accusation that the Labour spokesperson on local government was some kind of "left winger"! Comrade Blunkett answered us in two instalments, which we are happy to reproduce in full for the enlightenment of our readers.*

"24th June 1991
Dear comrade,
Thank you very much indeed for sending me the July edition of Labour Briefing with your article on my good self.

I enjoyed reading the article apart from the obvious factual errors.

In socialist comradeship,
David Blunkett
MP for Sheffield Brightside"

"27th June 1991
Dear comrade,
Further to my note of 24th June, I thought it would be useful to let you have my thoughts on your article in a little more detail.

The very entertaining profile of me that you printed was obviously undertaken by someone who really ought to be working for the Sunday Sport. In fact, I think I recognised the venom of one of my old sparring partners!

There were some inaccuracies which you may be interested to note but the thing that really got up my nose was the idea of describing me as "timid". You really do have to have a very vivid imagination or a very poor grasp of English to describe me in those terms. There are many people on the far left and on the right of the Party with whom I have very profound disagreements but I don't make the mistake of describing them as timid when they put their heads regularly above the parapet.

So far as the actual piece is concerned, perhaps it would be worth putting the record straight. I have consistently voted in favour of unilateral disarmament and against the change of policy. I didn't waver from this at any time when the policy review changes were being pushed through and I resent very strongly the ignorant and ill-informed comment which suggests otherwise.

I didn't lead Sheffield City Council from "the Bennite-left", it was led by someone from the right and didn't change its stand throughout the seven years that I was the Leader. Its record - including on the promotion of policies and practices in the interests of women - was a damned sight better than those councils that paraded their gesture politics but did very little. Both in terms of councillors and chief officers the leading position of women in Sheffield was far better than any equivalent - including the GLC. Helping women is not the same thing as helping those who happen to be in the particular campaign groupings receiving grants!

The Local Government Information Unit does not act as a mouthpiece of publicity for me. There have been a handful of occasions over the last three or four years when they have put out material that has mentioned me.

I have never said anything in private that I don't say to Neil Kinnock to his face - including the right of Party members to meet to discuss policy and worries on the Gulf War. The fact that *Briefing* doesn't get a copy of my letters or record my conversations is no excuse for sheer anti-socialist venom.

Factually the piece was wrong about my actions on expulsions. I certainly turned the corner in deciding that Militant were an organisation within the Party with its own programme and policies, campaigning against the interests of the Party and breaching the constitution. Their recent decision to "come out" proves just how right that decision was. Nevertheless, I didn't vote for all the expulsions but listened to the cases put and a cursory look at the records would have shown this - including the fact that I played a leading part in ensuring that Pat Wall was not expelled from the Labour Party.

So far as my front bench job is concerned, to say "he has done little with the brief", is very funny. It shows what a narrow little world the author must now inhabit. I wonder how it is that the constant barrage of campaigning against the Tories can be dismissed so easily and the development of a detailed alternative financial, structural and functional programme for local government can be considered to be so unimportant and so trivial. What an interesting reflection on the present thinking of the far left so far as the future of local government is concerned.

Please keep up the good work of illustrating just how friendly, comradely and genuinely socialist you all are. It must be a real pleasure to spend an evening with you in promoting hate, peddling lies and patronising the working class.

Fraternally,
David Blunkett
MP for Sheffield Brightside"

Fact: David Blunkett voted to refer Mandy Mudd to the NCC; he voted to remove Martha Osamor from the shortlist for the Vauxhall by-election; he voted to suspend Brighton and Birkenhead Labour Parties; he voted to investigate Lambeth Labour group and to suspend the thirteen Lambeth councillors; he voted for the ban on *Socialist Organiser*.

Fact: David Blunkett voted to approve the final draft of the Britain and the World section of the 1989 Policy Review - including the abandonment of unilateralism.

In the Commons, June 20th, 1990, Blunkett spoke in the debate on barring lesbians and single women from access to artificial insemination treatment. "People have an absolute right to be themselves, to reject contact with men or to shun any physical contact with them. That is their choice, but that is not the same as accepting that there is some automatic or inalienable right to child bearing. Child bearing is not a right. It is part of the unfathomable life force. That is why man and woman together must take responsibility for the well-being and love of the child."

More on *Searchlight*...

In the last issue of Briefing we carried an abridged statement on ***Searchlight*** *magazine issued by a group of Black activists. Below, we print replies from two long-standing anti-fascist activists. We welcome more contributions to the debate.*

Dear *Briefing*,

I have been associated with Searchlight magazine for a number of years and have freely given up my time whenever I have been invited to address anti-fascist or anti-racist meetings anywhere in the country. It does not matter in the least to me who organises such meetings and I ask no payment beyond my travelling expenses. My work for Searchlight is also entirely voluntary.

I make the above points to illustrate that I am "my own man." I do not write to you as a "member of the Searchlight team," whatever that may be, nor as a member of any other organised group other than the Labour Party.

You state that "an impressive list of Black organisations" supports the relevant document. Well, you must be more easily "impressed" than I am. It is true that a few of the organisations listed have a good track record and this saddens me but most of these "organisations" are hitherto unheard of groups consisting of three men and a dog. I can only ask where were these groups when, in May of this year, the biggest street battle between fascists and anti-fascists that London has seen since the 1960s took place? The editor of *Searchlight* was there and, despite the fact that he is a man in his mid-fifties and not in the best of health, he was prepared physically to confront the fearsome skinhead thugs of the BNP.

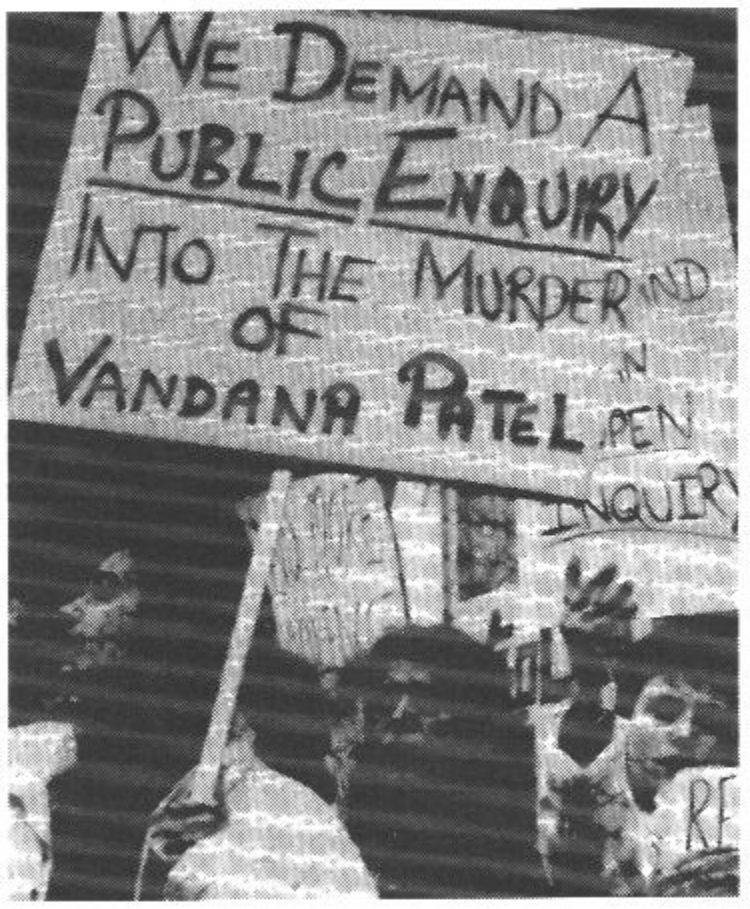
As for the meeting at Ilford, it was called specifically to discuss the desecration of sacred Jewish buildings and burial grounds. That is the reason that it was held in a synagogue (the Rabbi happens to be an exile from South Africa). Two or three black people were not satisfied with this and chose to heckle speakers and to try to change the whole purpose of the meeting. Their behaviour was unacceptable and they were asked to leave. It is quite untrue to say that the Middle East played no part in the matter as this was the subject of the interjections.

I think that it is important to point out that far more black people remained until the end of the meeting than were asked to leave during the course of it. They played a full part in the discussion which followed the speeches. One of these black people actually shook me by the hand and expressed his regret at the behaviour of those who had tried to disrupt the meeting.

The allegation that *Searchlight* has no interest in police harassment of black people is plainly ridiculous to anyone who reads the magazine.

Finally, I have shared platforms in the past with some of those more permanent and credible groups who have signed this unfortunate document. I have also spoken at meetings arranged by some of them. I can only say that I have always been treated with respect by them and believe that on this specific issue they are wrong, I still regard many of them as my friends and my services are still available to them. This is a storm in a teacup which blew up because of misunderstandings and hot-headedness. It is not a serious enough matter to divide the anti-fascist and anti-racist movement and I appeal to all concerned not to allow foolish pride or hurt feelings to have this effect. It is time for reconciliation.

Yours faithfully,
Ray Hill



Labour Briefing July 1991

Dear *Briefing*,

I agree that criticisms could be made of some statements that have appeared in *Searchlight* recently, especially some of the remarks made by the Jewish Awareness Group. It seems that *Searchlight* is much more ready to recognise sectarianism in Black separatist groups than in Jewish separatist groups.

The way to resolve this problem is to inundate the *Searchlight* office with letters and phone calls of protest. In the days of Ken Sprague's editorship of the paper this kind of pressure was successful in ending an even worse editorial policy.

But to attack *Searchlight* in ways that undermine its circulation and funding would be incredibly stupid.

Politics apart, *Searchlight* plays a unique and irreplaceable role within the anti-fascist movement in monitoring the fascists, providing information to anti-fascists and warnings to those who have been targeted by the fascists.

Searchlight does not have a bottomless pit of funds and has suffered recent cuts from local government grants. We cannot afford to take its existence for granted. It needs our support, if sometimes that has to be critical support.

State and media racism may be the greater enemy than the NF and BNP right now but one of the main reasons the NF and BNP are not bigger and more dangerous is because every time they organise a meeting, rally or event the area is packed with protesting anti-fascists - forewarned by *Searchlight*.

Nothing is more daunting to new fascist recruits, who drop away quickly after a couple of bad experiences.

My late colleague Dave Roberts, who infiltrated the fascists in the mid-70s and exposed their para-military activities, always claimed it is far easier to split the fascists than unite the anti-fascists.

Defeating the threat of fascism means all of us will have to overcome that problem and work together with other anti-fascists whose political positions on other issues are quite different to our own. Sectarianism, whether black, Jewish or whatever, just helps the fascists.

Yours Sincerely,
Daphne Liddle

Life and art, Cagney and Lacey

"Why do women find certain TV programmes unmissable?" asks ***Leonora Lloyd****, Labour's PPC for Hendon South and currently a candidate for the Women's Section of the NEC.*

A LOT OF my friends who watch the soaps (I'm seldom in early enough to do so) tell me that many of the women in these are strong female models. As an *Archers'* fan, I suspect that the real strength of the soaps is their concentration on everyday life, which pulls you into believing the characters and enables you to become a "fly-on-the-wall" observer of other people's lives.

For many of us, the one totally compulsory programme is *Cagney and Lacey*. No matter how many times it is repeated, we cannot miss a single episode. To see it is to be hooked. But for socialists, despite the often strong liberal themes in many episodes, the series presents dilemmas.

After all, Cagney and Lacey are police officers, upholding a system that we know is sexist, racist and corrupt. OK, New York's finest have probably gone further in integrating minority and women officers than the British police, but the system they are defending is, if anything, more deeply racist, sexist and divided than in London.

And it is not just *Cagney and Lacey*. In the past there have been a number of British policewomen series which were very popular. *The Bill* currently has a woman Chief Inspector. So the women we admire are in roles we ourselves would not want to fulfil.

I know why I like *Cagney and Lacey*. These are real women, with real problems, and come complete with faults. They are spunky, prepared to argue back, brave, resourceful, intelligent, working as their male colleagues equals, feminist without losing their femininity, but at the same time not using feminine whiles to get their way. Cagney's single state is as valid as Lacey's married state.

They make mistakes and argue and are not afraid to show their weaknesses as well as their strengths. They are women we would like to be. The fact that the police story framework makes for excitement is what keeps us watching week after week, but it is the characters who ensure that we are prepared to watch the repeats!

Another programme which many women enjoy is *Prisoner Cell Block H*, one of those Australian soaps you watch to mock and learn to love.

Again, it shows mostly women, and it is probably one of the very few programmes - perhaps the only one apart from comedy shows - in which most of the women are a wide range of sizes, with most being, frankly, overweight by TV standards. I can empathise with that! And many women appreciate the fact that lesbianism is taken for granted and - most of the time- does not cause any problems. Apart from the Deputy Governor, all the men in the series are condemned to die, or otherwise disappear from our screens after a few episodes. If only life could imitate art!

The Nature of the Beast

US Hegemony under Siege: Class, Politics and Debt in Latin America
by James Petras and Morris Morley, Verso, £9.95 paperback.

JAMES PETRAS is known for his deep knowledge of Latin American politics and burning contempt for imperialism. He is also a gifted thinker able to theorise concrete developments across Latin America without being either tendentious or simplistic.

What is remarkable about this book is its breadth of analysis: in different chapters, the authors write as sociologists, economists, political scientists and historians.

The book kicks off with an overview of the region since the fall of the military dictatorships in the 1980s. The "Reaganisation" of Latin American politics saw the emergence of a breed of shallow populists (like Argentina's Menem and Brazil's Collar) wedded to economic liberalism and ready to break their election promises within hours of being sworn in. But with Latin American per capita incomes falling every year since 1981, the continent has experienced intensified class struggle. The new "civilian" regimes have turned back to the military to crush strikes (Brazil), political opposition (Argentina) and protests (Venezuela).

The core of this book examines recent changes in the US's approach to Latin America and the "Third World". The 1970s defeat of America in Vietnam and the emergence of OPEC marked a decline in US hegemony but created a political climate in which state terror became increasingly deployed as an instrument of policy. New political types crystalised around the Reagan administration: the military adventurer as presidential adviser (Ollie North), the political gangster as policymaker (Elliot Abrams) and other "lumpen intellectuals" (Jean Kirkpatrick, Richard Perle). Their job was "projecting demonological propaganda to justify illegal terrorist and militarist politics" such as the bombing of Libya, the attacks on Nicaragua, military aid to Pol Pot, and the terrorist state in El Salvador, not to mention support for the Israeli devastation of Lebanon.

> ***"In Santiago, 220,000 are in grass-roots organisations"***

The authors argue that the development of the US state's military role has permitted its chief competitors, Japan and West Germany, to undermine its hegemony in the economic sphere. The "American century" was promised at the end of World War II, but America's share of the international market in goods and services has declined since the 1950s.

The book also explores the changing nature of the opposition to capitalism in Latin America, where a highly differentiated labour force, both proletarianised and deracinated' has emerged. Latin American workers do not work just in the factory, but in the street, market and household. Struggle is not confined to the point of production, but breaks out at the place of habitation or in the public thoroughfare.

Of two million slumdwellers in Santiago, Chile, 220,000 are in grass-roots organisations. Community organisations more than doubled there between 1983 and 1985.This is not the decomposition (as some socialists have claimed) but the growth of the urban working class, creating embryonic dual power at critical moments.

Mike Phipps

Book Review

Deeds Not Words,
by Hilda Kean, Pluto Press, £6.95 paperback.

IN THIS fascinating account of the lives of suffragette teachers, Hilda Kean concentrates on the lives of four women; Theodora Bonwick, Agnes Dawson, Ethel Froud and Emily Phipps, between the 1880s to the 1930s.

This is not a conventional biography, but an account of political activity, mostly centred around the National Union of Women Teachers. What comes across strikingly is how all four women saw their political activity as the real stuff of their lives. All four women believed, the author says, that "they had a duty to articulate their political case and to do it competently if they were to win an argument...Their achievements in the public sphere as headteachers or politicians, or officers of a feminist union were, they believed, a validation of their political views. It was their politics which influenced the way they viewed themselves and the world".

"A common feminist identity was central to the lives of these women"

Hilda Kean draws an interesting picture of the culture of the suffragettes. We get a clear sense of the excitement of their campaign and their methods of organisation: "On Women's Sunday 1908 the WSPU had organised 30,000 women dressed in white to symbolise women's purity. The 1926 demonstration to extend the franchise included a similar idea. The disenfranchised under-30s were asked to wear green, one of the union's colours. For the occasion bulk purchases of green silk were made from John Lewis's store so young teachers could make their own dresses."

A common feminist identity was central to the lives of these women; demonstrations as well as leisure activities organised by the NUWT reaffirmed this identity. Friendship was built round political activity. Hilda Kean discusses whether these close female friendships were lesbian in nature or not, but what is clear is that the women themselves did not feel that this was an issue. As Kean points out, there was no "discourse available to create positive identities or to develop a personal 'language of sisterhood'".

I found particularly fascinating the similarities and differences between then and now. Campaigns that the NUWT started are still going on - campaigns for decent school buildings and decent levels of pay for all teachers. There was a struggle then as now with the often reactionary arguments put forward by the NUT Executive and certain sections of the Labour Party. Then as now, there was a fight for a wide curriculum that went beyond training and for the compulsory establishment of nursery schools.

"A large number of campaigns that the NUWT started are still going on"

The activities of the NUWT were rooted in the suffrage lifestyle of the Edwardians; by the late 1920s the NUWT community seemed old-fashioned and odd. Nan McMillan is quoted as saying of the NUWT : "It was like the suffragettes. It was their end-all and be-all with many of them. They were possessed of almost a religious fervour about it...it was their lives."

Keren Abse

Book review

The Whole Truth,
by Rosalind Coward, Faber and Faber.

IN THIS study of alternative health, Rosalind Coward puts the arguments around alternative medicine, food and living into their correct social context. Using crypto-Marxist analysis she investigates the origins of modern interest in various theories regarding health - theories that at first sight do not fit easily into the high-tech late twentieth century.

Though adherents would deny it, the alternative theories share much common ground with religious Puritanism.

Like Puritanism, alternative medicine tends to internalise any and all problems. It is seen as the duty of the individual to restore her/his own balance so that she/he can accept her/his lot within society. If this is not possible blame is placed on the individual victim and not on society.

Many alternative therapies fit all too neatly into the norms of our society - a society that promotes self-help as the way around all problems. Often advertisements for these therapies claim that treatment will give the recipient a better frame of mind to secure a better job and a higher standard of living. This is what our rulers would like us to believe. The possibility of success is there for us all, but we have to work hard for it and if we fail it is because we lack commitment.

Promoters of alternatives like to claim some links with the past. Ancient origins or close ties with 'nature' are of great commercial value. Indeed, in these claims antiquity and 'nature' are often interchangeable.

Coward points out that nature is not an all-comforting provider; it is a harsh world where sicknesses long expunged by modern medicine thrive.

Followers of alternative health programmes rightly point out that twentieth century living has health dangers of its own, many previously unknown: diseases brought about by pollution, stress, bad diet. But since these problems are unknown to 'nature', it seems unlikely that 'nature' will be able to cure them without help from modern society.

"Though adherents would deny it, the alternative theories share much common ground with religious Puritanism"

Coward's book also takes an interesting look at the growth of vegetarianism. She admits that there can be health advantages in eating only vegetables but is cautious about some of the claims made for it. In modern society it is almost impossible to eat food that is not connected in some way with industrial production. Even if we eat only what grows in our back garden it will be tainted by air pollution. What comes from shops, however expensive, will have had exposure to whatever the twentieth century is wont to throw at it.

The important thing is hygiene. Whether we eat meat or vegetables we have no say in the processes that our food goes through before it reaches us. That will remain the case while we live in a capitalist society.

As Coward remarks in her conclusion: "...many adherents (of alternative health theories) proclaim they are the avant-garde of a quiet revolution. Yet the journey to this social revolution is rarely a journey towards social rebellion."

Dave Hammond

PERISCOPE

Injury time

Council workers in stressful, low-paid jobs are constantly attacked in the Tory press and by right-wing councillors of all parties for supposedly high rates of sick leave.

Why the stunning silence, then, at the revelation that last year the **police** took no less than a million days off - at a cost to the public of £120 million. Nearly one in three coppers took seven days off at a time.

No wonder *Class War* felt obliged to bring back its "Hospitalised Copper" feature.

Paranoid or persecuted?

Some months ago, **Margaret Hodge** got the crazy idea that her long tenure as leader of the Association of London Authorities (ALA) might be under threat from a malcontent posse of fellow Labour council leaders. She suspected then Lambeth leader **Joan Twelves** of organising an opposition caucus within the ALA which aimed to replace Hodge with Camden leader **Julie Fitzgerald**.

Hodge's subsequent complaint in a phone call to Walworth Road helped precipitate the witch-hunt of Twelves and Lambeth Council.

Now Julie Fitzgerald and Camden have become the latest victims of contrived press outrage at "loony left" Labour local government. Of course, Fitzgerald, who has cut services, attacked workers, gutted equalities initiatives and is now trying to lock-up Poll Tax non-payers, hardly qualifies as any kind of left-winger, "loony" or otherwise. No matter. Walworth Road, **Glenda Jackson** (Labour's PPC in Hampstead and Highgate, which lies in Camden) and the Parliamentary Labour Party have been happy to let Fitzgerald twist slowly in the breeze.

With friends like this...

More torment for Camden.

In an effort to counteract some of the bad publicity the borough was receiving and lay to rest the myth that Tory boroughs are cleaner than Labour ones, **MP Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras) challenged Tory local government minister Michael Portillo to take a walk along the Westminster/Camden border.

"Most of the time," Dobson proudly assured the House of Commons, the minister "would not be able to tell the difference".

Don't Come Back Dept.

"Why the hell should we bother in August if Jack is up to his waist in a Norwegian fjord during an important political week when the Commons is still sitting?"

The object of this vituperation was none other than **Jack Cunningham MP**, Shadow Leader of the Commons and Labour Campaigns Co-ordinator.

It seems Cunningham failed to notify Kinnock that because of his early departure on a fishing holiday he would miss the last meeting of the Shadow Cabinet before the summer recess. The leader took his usual revenge, arranging for Nuclear Jack to be slagged off by an unnamed **"front bencher"** in the columns of the Sunday Times.

Major Barbara

Labour's Prospective Parliamentary candidate for marginal Hornsey and Wood Green, **Barbara Roche**, has at last summoned up the courage to criticise one of the local Labour council's many devastating cuts.

It was the axing of the borough's discretionary grants scheme for war widows which finally did the trick.

With the local gutter press summoning up the Dunkirk spirit, Roche bravely declared herself a champion of the war widows: "We owe it to them for what they have done for Britain".

Roche felt no similar need to speak out on recent council cuts in child abuse prevention, mental health schemes, school meals, libraries, and play-groups.

In the end, the Labour Group, besieged by the **British Legion**, voted to restore the war widows' grants. Other cuts in services will remain in force.

Roche's usually assiduous record of attending public functions in the constituency was marred recently when she declined to turn up for a local meeting on miscarriages of justice with **Billy Power** of the Birmingham Six and **Sharon Raghip** of the Tottenham Three.

Once upon a time, Barbara Roche was a proud member of something called the "soft left"...

"Dear *Briefing*..."

Briefing received the following sober and thoughtful analysis of our position on the Walton by-election from one **Phil Davies** in Liverpool:

"I was disgusted by Briefing's totally predictable defection to the Labour right-wing that was heralded by *Briefing*'s craven failure to back **Lesley Mahmood**, the Socialist Real Labour Candidate, in the Liverpool Walton By-election. Despite all *Briefing*'s years of radical rhetoric, when it came to the crunch *Briefing* sided with Kilfoyle, Kinnock and the witch-hunting Stalinist social democrat Labour leadership. While Real Socialists were standing up to be counted *Briefing* was plotting with the leadership to stab them in the back.

By supporting the right-wing Kinnock yes-man **Kilfoyle** and condemning the socialist comrades in the Broad Left for taking the class struggle to the streets *Briefing* has thrown its support behind the Thatcherite agenda of the Kinnockites. This means that *Briefing* supports the imprisonment of the poor who could not pay the poll tax and the harassment of poll tax non-payers by the capitalist police state's bailiff thugs. *Briefing* now supports the privatisation of council services and council housing by the right-wing Liverpool Labour Council. *Briefing* has come down in favour of the right-wing anti-union thug Rimmer throwing council workers on the dole. And *Briefing* now will be regarded as a supporter of the Labour leadership's backing for the totally unprovoked US imperialist genocide of innocent Iraqis in the Gulf War. *Briefing*'s apparent support for Iraq wasn't worth the paper it was printed on.

Does *Briefing* think that class traitor Kilfoyle is an acceptable successor to a socialist MP like **Eric Heffer**?

In the final analysis, the working class will never forgive *Briefing* for its totally sickening abandonment of the class struggle at this crucial juncture. Kinnock will doubtlessly look for *Briefing*'s support for his purge of Militant socialists from the "Labour Party" and his other planned attacks on the working class. Perhaps we shouldn't have been shocked by *Briefing*'s opportunist betrayal when it continues to print articles by reactionary bourgeois elements like Corbyn.

As *Briefing* is now a right-wing paper, I confidently predict that this letter will not get printed on *Briefing*'s letters page.

Yours in total disgust..."

Periscope is happy to fulfil your prediction, Phil.

Sports boycott crumbles...too soon

With indecent haste, world sporting bodies are queuing up to readmit South Africa. ***Arthur Chandler****, for one, won't be joining the celebrations.*

THE RETURN of South Africa to international sporting competition is not moving along as uncontroversially as may appear.

There are many, including those attracted by major commercial opportunities, who seem desperate to get back to "normal". They are lobbying for the ban on Gatting and his rebel tourists to be lifted, and for the South African cricket team to be admitted to next year's World Cup. However, no one seems that keen actually to play against the South Africans.

In June, the meeting called to announce the merger of the South African Cricket Board and the South African Cricket Union to form the United Cricket Board of South Africa was boycotted by Imran Khan. At that point, the Pakistan government was still unsure how to respond to developments in South Africa.

Eventually Pakistan endorsed the new body but the West Indies Cricket Board remains unenthusiastic. Alan Ray, a former President of the Board, does not see a West Indian cricket team touring South Africa for some time. "Let England play them first," he has said, "they dragged them in."

The sheer speed of the South Africans return has taken people aback. Only last year Mandela was saying at Wembley: "we should reject any suggestion that the campaign to isolate the apartheid system should be wound down...It is only those who support apartheid who say that the Pretoria government should be rewarded for the small steps it has taken."

Presumably, the steps taken in the last year are now considered something other than small.

It was always argued that the sporting boycott was not simply a campaign to integrate sport in South Africa but an important part of the larger campaign to isolate the regime. Now, however, the progress of integrating sport and integrating the rest of society are considered to be separate. Even Mandela is pushing this line. He commented upon the merger of the SACU and SACB: "we have extremists who say that there can be no normal sport in a racial society. But it seems to me that sport is sport and quite different from politics. If sportsmen (sic) here take steps to remove the colour bar, then we must take that into account."

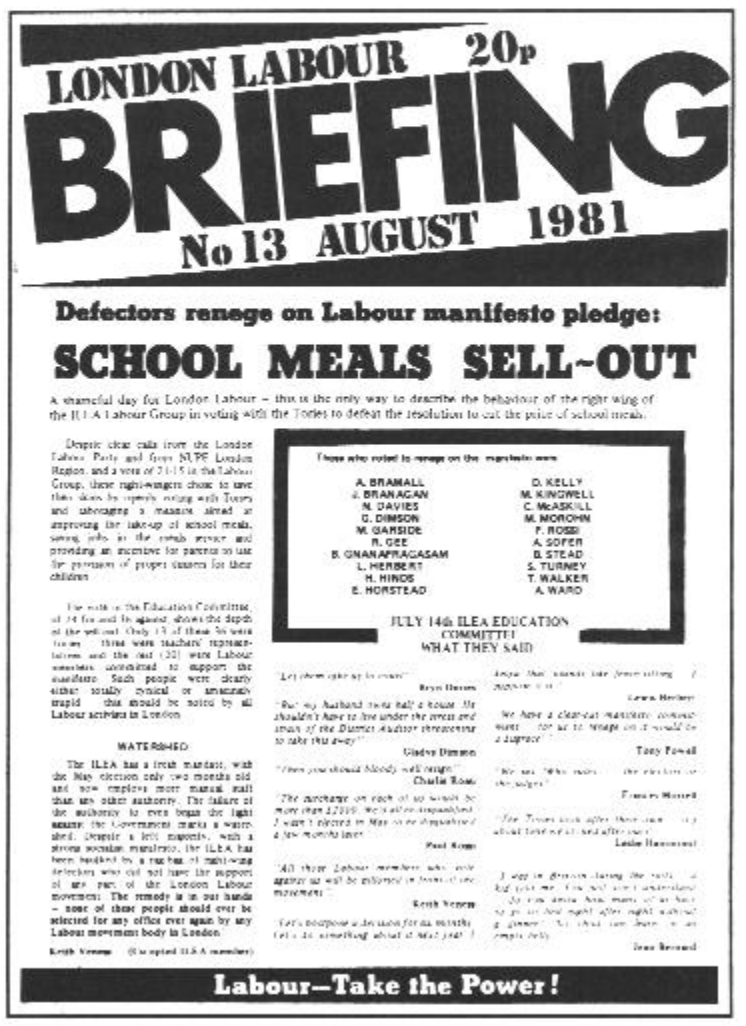
To say that sport exists somehow outside of the rest of society is ridiculous. When South Africa does return to international competition it is likely to be represented predominantly by whites, not just in cricket and rugby, but also in athletics.

Most of the athletes expected to be a force at the Olympic Games are white: Elana Meyer who ran the third fastest 5000 metres in history; Zola Budd, who is back from retirement; Mytle Bothma who ran the second fastest 400 metre hurdles in the world last year; Evette de Klerk who was the sixth fastest over 100 metres; Dries Vorster who was eighth fastest over 400 metres hurdles; and Francois Fouche who ranked tenth in the long jump.

No one would want to undermine the achievements of Ali Bacher and Sam Ramsamay, but watching white South Africans competing abroad over the next few years will be difficult to stomach. Real multiracial sides and real multiracial sport can only happen when apartheid and the culture that supports it have been destroyed.

Famous last words...

Ten years ago *Briefing* was stunned by a sell-out on the ILEA, where a manifesto commitment to cut school meal prices was abandoned by right-wing Labour councillors (several later defected to the SDP) terrified of the surcharge. "We say: 'who rules - the electorate or the judges?'", said Frances Morrell. Keith Veness promised "all those Labour members who vote against us will be pilloried in front of the movement". The interminable debate about local government strategy - setting/not setting/delaying/defying rates - filled pages. Ken Livingstone analysed Heseltine's latest attack: "there can be no doubt we are entering the final phase of the struggle with the Tories.... we must mobilise total opposition..." Ian Williams, then sitting on the NUR Executive, attacked Livingstone for his "intemperate remarks" on the threatened strike of London underground workers. Nigel Williamson declared that the Benn deputy leadership campaign "grows from strength to strength". Articles on black self-defence in Southall, youth revolts in Wood Green and a campaign against strippers at Ruskin House, Croydon's labour movement HQ, rounded off the issue.



LONDON LABOUR 20p

BRIEFING

No 13 AUGUST 1981

Defectors renege on Labour manifesto pledge:

SCHOOL MEALS SELL-OUT

A shameful day for London Labour – this is the only way to describe the behaviour of the right wing of the ILEA Labour Group in voting with the Tories to defeat the resolution to cut the price of school meals.

Despite clear calls from the London Labour Party and from NUPE London Region, and a vote of 21-15 in the Labour Group, these right-wingers chose to save their skins by openly voting with Tories and sabotaging a measure aimed at improving the take-up of school meals, saving jobs in the meals service and providing an incentive for parents to use the provision of proper dinners for their children.

The vote in the Education Committee, of 14 for and 16 against, shows the depth of the split on it. Only 13 of those 30 were Tories – 10 were teachers' representatives and the rest (3?) were Labour councillors committed to support the manifesto. Such people were clearly either totally cynical or amazingly stupid – this should be noted by all Labour activists in London.

WATERSHED

The ILEA has a fresh mandate, with the May election only two months old and now employs more manual staff than any other authority. The failure of the authority to even begin the fight against the Government's cuts is a watershed. Despite a left majority, with a proven socialist minority, the ILEA has been hooked by a rag-bag of right-wing defectors who did not have the support of any part of the London Labour movement. The remedy is in our hands – none of these people should ever be selected for any office ever again by any Labour movement body in London.

Keith Veness (ILEA member)

Those who voted to renege on the manifesto were

A. BRAMALL
J. BRANAGAN
N. DAVIES
D. DIMSON
M. GARSIDE
R. GEE
B. GNANAPRAGASAM
L. HERBERT
H. HINDS
E. HORSTEAD
D. KELLY
M. KINGWELL
C. McASKILL
M. MORPHIN
T. ROSE
A. SOFER
B. STEAD
S. TURNEY
T. WALKER
A. WARD

JULY 14th ILEA EDUCATION COMMITTEE WHAT THEY SAID

"Let them take up the cudgels"
Bryn Davies

"But my husband owns half a house. He shouldn't have to live under the stress and strain of the District Auditor threatening to take this away"
Gladys Dimson

"Then you should bloody well resign"
Charlie Ross

"The surcharge on each of us would be more than £2000. We're all unemployed. I won't elected in May to be unemployed a few months later"
Paul Kemp

"All those Labour members who vote against us will be pilloried in front of the movement"
Keith Veness

"Let's postpone a decision for six months. Let's do something about it next year"
Tony Powell

"Labour Take the Power!"

LETTERS

Your letters are welcome, but please keep them short. Write to Briefing at 26 Wattisfield Road, London E5. Or fax to 081-985-6785

Dear *Briefing* ...

I don't know if Neil Kinnock is a cricket fan, and I wouldn't fancy being a batsman if he was the umpire, but I can't see how Arthur Chandler's comments on how to reform the reactionary practices at cricket's HQ, Lords, would lose said Kinnockio any sleep.

Get a test player to 'refuse to play' in front of an all male Pavilion? Come on, *Briefing*, even Roy Hattersley would probably support that!

The way to get reform in cricket was shown by Peter Hain and others who organised the 1970 'Stop the Tour' campaign against South African tourists. If Chandler is serious I suggest a campaign to disrupt play at Lords until women are given full equality. Nothing would please me more than to give Middlesex captain Mike Gatting, whose home ground is Lords, a bit of his own 'singing and dancing' medicine.

Yours sincerely,
Keith Flett
Tottenham

I would like to make a few points about Keith Veness's very distorted account of the meeting that was called to discuss the method for agreeing a left NEC slate in future years.

According to Keith, CLPD "once a movement of thousands, is now a rump of sectarians". The fact is that many of the comrades around the table at our EC meetings are the same people who were there in the 70s.

Nothing much has changed in that respect. Nor in some other respects. Ten years ago we were having rows with Keith and we are still having rows with him! Unfortunately, Keith hasn't lost the crude habit of labelling as sectarian those who robustly disagree with him.

CLPD has lost some influence for the same reasons that the left in general has declined. In fact, a case could be made that we have held our own a little better than some other left forces. For further information on this point see *Socialist Outlook's* case for pulling out of *Briefing*!

Keith went over the top, even for him, when he tried to suggest that CLPD believes that we alone represent the left. That is plain daft.

CLPD wants a credible method for drawing up a slate that involves the whole left and is acceptable to the majority. We simply think that Keith's preferred option is not available. The paper which he presented to the meeting contained better options, but he rejected these out of hand.

Yours,
Pete Willsman
Woolwich

In response to Aly Mir (July *Briefing*), I'm sorry I missed one meeting of the Leisure Services Committee, but my record as an Islington councillor is clear. I have not paid my Poll Tax and have been attacked by the Labour leadership in the press as a result. I have worked closely with the Islington Anti-Poll Tax Union and spoken at public meetings and lobbies of the council against the Poll Tax and against cuts in services.

I have also worked closely with local trade unionists, including NALGO and NUT.

As for abstaining on the Poll Tax in council, I made it clear to the ward that I represent that I intended to vote against it. However, they mandated me not to vote against. Accordingly, I abstained. It is my intention to vote against cuts whenever the opportunity presents in full Council.

As far as I am aware, not a single member of Haringey council publicly protested when it recently commenced imprisonment proceedings against non-payers.

Yours
Cllr Liz Davies
Islington

For twenty years, driven mainly by my childhood experience of poverty, I worked very hard for the Labour Party at no little cost to my personal life and probably at the expense of any career I might have had.

I am not griping because it was my own choice. It was an experience which is common to many comrades, I am sure. I took up the cudgels in Worcester in 1970 and soon became the CLP Chair, later a County and District Councillor. In due course, I fought Parliamentary seats in 1979, 1983 and 1987.

There is nothing that I have to offer the Labour Party today that it wants. It has been so corrupted and subverted by forces seeking to neuter it in preparation for power that it is beyond redemption.

You and your comrades on the Labour left are wasting your time if you ever expect the Labour Party to be anything other than a bribed, broken-backed, defeated ideal. It will never stand up for humanity because it is a stuffed dummy giving the appearance of a party of compassion when it is nothing of the sort. It is a bourgeois cuckoo in the socialist nest.

I think you should walk out of the Labour Party and fight it in elections. Why should Tony Benn, for example, have to put up with being humiliated time after time on the NEC by a lot of cronies of right-wing union leaders? Where will it get him to go on supporting the election of a Labour government under Kinnock? Why go on perpetuating the myth of the 'broad church' when the myth is just a device to exert control over radical change?

The left in the Labour Party was defeated by the SDP whose policies are now those of Labour. The right can only be defeated in a similar way. They must be shown to be unelectable and that can only be done by the left either standing and splitting the vote or by supporting the Liberal Democrats where the Liberals can win in order to achieve proportional representation and thereby allow the empowerment of diverse political groups.

I want to see and hear real socialists fighting under their own banner in elections. I want to hear the things in which I believe being said on a candidate's loudspeaker system. I want imperialism, which continues to cause the majority of humanity to live in underdevelopment, poverty and ignorance, condemned. I want to hear that the practices of people who cause the destruction of the environment will be *stopped, not 'phased out' over* the next fifty years. That will get me out on the stump again.

What you are advocating is the old paradox where Labour canvassers fight for people and policies to which they are personally opposed in the name of 'unity'. The only 'unity' in the Party today is the common purpose of right and left to defeat the Tories: the left because it hates the Tories; the right because it wants their jobs.

The Labour Party is where it is today after 85 years! What a flop. I am not giving another ounce of effort or second of my time to it. I wash my hands of it and I recommend you do the same.

Yours fraternally,
Peter Nielsen
Gloucestershire

Standing for Socialism
Monday September 2nd
7.30pm, West Bar, Banbury Trades and Labour Club
Speakers: NEC candidates Jeremy Corbyn MP, Ken Livingstone MP, Pauline Purnell
Chair: County Councillor Dave Barber
Organised by North Oxon Socialist Campaign Group

Evening Class:
Human Origins
An introduction to social and physical anthropology
Lecturer: Chris Knight
Tuesday evenings
from September 17th
6:45-9pm
30 Camden Street, London NW1
(back entrance,
St Pancras Community Centre)
Tube: Mornington Crescent or Camden Town
Fees: £2 or less each week (income related)
to enrol, come at 6:30pm on Tuesday, September 17th.
Organised by the Radical Anthropology Group

National Anti-Poll Tax Conference
Finishing off the tax...
October 26th
Manchester Town Hall

Contact:
Tottenham APTU, 72 West Green Road, London N15 (081 802 9804)
Yorks 3D, 2 Lunley Walk, Leeds 4 (0532 623822)
North West APT Forum, PO Box 9, Eccles, Salford M30 (061 707 1584)
South West APT Federation, 84 Colstone Street, Bristol (0272 255504)
APT Action Network, PO Box 311, Edinburgh (031 229 9552)

Labour Briefing

Rough Justice: Labour's Silence

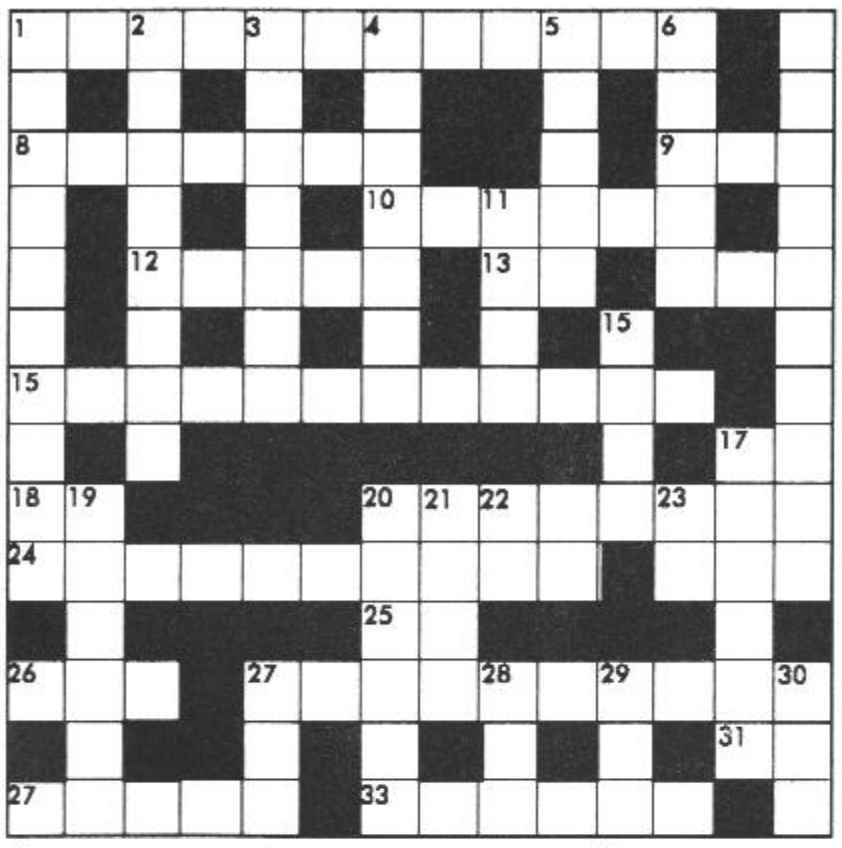
Fringe meeting at Party Conference

Billy Power, Sharon Raghip, Terry Fields, Jeremy Corbyn
Lunchtime,
Monday, September 30th
George IV Room, Royal Albion Hotel
Brighton

Birmingham Edgbaston CLP
Rally for Socialism
7:30pm
Thursday, September 5th
Harborne Hall Secondary School
Harborne Road
Birmingham
With NEC candidates:
Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Ken Livingstone, Alice Mahon, Dave Nellist, Pauline Purnell
Plus: John Wilton (Labour PPC for Birmingham Edgbaston) and John Cunningham (UCATT)
£2/£1 admission

Living in a war zone
Belfast women visit Brighton, November 1991

Women community activists from Belfast will be coming to Brighton from November 4th-9th. They will be talking to community and trade union groups about the struggles of women under British rule in Northern Ireland.
The Brighton Women and Ireland Group is hosting the visit and needs funds to finance it.
Please agree to sponsor the visit for a minimum donation of £5.
Make cheques payable to BWIG, c/o Flat 5, 66 Ladysmith Road, Brighton.



Across

1. Only labour produces this
8. Chilean Desert
9. Bankers International
10. Hungarian Philosopher
12. Effect of 5 down on sea
13. Life saving after drowning
14. Wants British military out of Ulster
16. Willis - not stormin!
18 Russian rifle initials
20. US/Canadian lake
24. Greek or Marxist method
25. Preposition
26. Bit Cleopatra
27. Top of paper display
31. Hardly relevant
32. Tour de France instrument
33. Bring into being

Down

1. Soviet battle or Paris suburb
2. Right wing opposite action
3. Hero of the Hellespont
4. Marine crustacean
5. Month - not calendar
6. To be!
7. *Briefing* is often this
11. Hindu avatar
15. E.H. - historian
19. US report on sex
20. Not mobile - electric
21. Scottish isle
22. Laptop or desktop?
23. Opposite of superego (Freud)
27. London College
28 Optical organ
29. Government selloff of estate
30. Aswan or Hoover

The only way to get *Briefing* before it sells out!
Annual subscription: £11.50
Supporting sub: £15.00
Overseas sub: £25.00
Name .....
Address .....
.....
Amount enclosed .....

Return to *Labour Briefing*, 26 Wattisfield Road, London E5 9QH.

Get your message across to the movement!
Advertise in *Briefing*'s special Labour Party Conference edition:
Two column inches for £12
Eighth page for £20
Quarter page for £35
Half page for £60
Deadline: September 16th
Send cheques and copy for adverts to: Labour *Briefing* 26 Wattisfield Road, London E5 9QH

Another flogging for British justice

Scientific tests on Winston Silcott's so-called "confession" have shown that crucial passages were faked by the police. ***Shaun Waterman*** *of the Tottenham Three Families Campaign analyses the latest developments.*

WITH NEW evidence confirming the police frame-up of Winston Silcott, another public flogging for the British judicial system now seems inevitable.

Kenneth Baker's response to the revelations was to order a police re-run of tests already repeated six times under police supervision. This reflects more than just a cynical desire to delay any appeal until after the general election. Baker wants to ensure that responsibility for ordering a new hearing is spread around as much as possible, thus deflecting the predictable rage from the Police Federation and its media lackeys.

Police and gutter press have launched a bitter 'counter-campaign'. But for all their howls of indignation, representatives of the Police Federation continue to refuse to debate with representatives of the Tottenham Three Campaign. "I will not under any circumstances appear with any of those so-called Tottenham Three people," Police Federation Chair Alan Eastwood told *Breakfast Time* TV.

The hypocrisy of their injunctions to "remember the victims" and their cynical calculation in wheeling out PC Coombes and his terrible injuries for the cameras is demonstrated by one appalling silence.

Amidst all the talk of the "innocent" who are still suffering, no mention is made of the death of Cynthia Jarrett. Because she was black, her life is considered worthless; because she was killed by the police, her death is being deliberately forgotten.



Bernie Grant MP and Tottenham Three Families Campaign lobby the Home Office

An Early Day Motion tabled by John Butcher, Tory MP for Coventry South West, urged MPs to remember "the victims of crimes perpetrated by Winston Silcott". Butcher reproduced a version of Winston's criminal record which contained a number of fictional offences. Oddly enough, they were identical to the ones listed in an article the previous day in the *Sun*. Only three other MPs were stupid enough to sign Butcher's EDM.

Predictably, the response of the Labour leadership to this excellent opportunity to embarrass the government has been pathetic. Barry Sheerman, front bench spokesperson on criminal justice, did table one question and will doubtless raise the issue again. But his senior, Roy Hattersley, has refused point blank to meet the families of the Tottenham Three or to have anything to do with their campaign for justice.

Pressure on Hattersley and co. will mount, however, especially if the issue is raised at Labour Party Conference (one resolution and a number of amendments have been submitted). Liberty (formally the NCCL) has thrown its weight behind the Tottenham Three Campaign as well as launching its own programme for reform of the criminal justice system. Arguing for these positive and necessary changes goes hand in hand with raising the cases of the Tottenham Three, the Bridgewater Four, Judith Ward and other wrongfully convicted prisoners.

More and more Labour Party branches are affiliating to the Tottenham Three Families Campaign. The relatives will speak at a number of fringe meetings at conference, including *Labour Briefing's*.

Contact: Tottenham Three Families Campaign, c/o 247A West Green Rd, London, N15.

Deportations deterred

AFTER a five-year-battle in Birmingham, two Bangladeshi brothers, Hiron Miah and Monuhar Ali, have won the right to stay with their family in Britain. In the course of the fight with the Home Office Monuhar served a 17-day prison sentence, but a sustained effort by the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign forced the Home Secretary "exceptionally to allow" the brothers to remain in the UK.

In Lewisham, Beatrice Offeh, a young mother whose case was taken up by another local community campaign, has also won the right to stay.

And in an astonishing about-face, the *Sun* has responded angrily to efforts by the Ugandan Government to lure back members of its Asian community expelled under the Amin regime.

"We hope the Asians stay. They are ours now. We need them," declared *Sun* editor Kelvin McKenzie, obviously affected by the recent alcohol ban at Wapping.

Printed by Wernham Printers Ltd (TU), 4 Forster Road, London N17