LABOUR
BRIEFING
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INSIDE

Your 24-page issue
8-page Labour
Conference pull-out

40p

Neil and Norman prepare for the next election



LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Is Kinnock riding for a fall?

Editorial

Neil Kinnock's speech at this year's TUC Congress, like the "tough talking" at last year's Bournemouth party conference, was riddled with things "we" have to do.

"We have to work our way out of this crisis," he insisted.

Does he mean *us*? He surely does!

The bitter irony of hearing Kinnock — who has never worked on a production line tell the assembled TUC bigwigs (consisting largely of ageing white male bureaucrats, a token sprinkling of rank and file, and a few convenors who have not work on their jobs in donkey's years) of the sacrifices to be made by the workers on the shop floor, was matched by the sickening display of enthusiasm from the ardent "new realists" at Brighton.

"He talked as if he *was* Prime Minister!" slobbered GMBATU new broom John Edmonds, revealing just what kind of line union leaders like him expect of Labour Prime Ministers.

In other words, the Kinnock-Hattersley "dream ticket", which came to Terry Duffy and the TUC right wing in a vision, is leading to a predictable nightmare: a repetition of the now traditional Labour government formula of a "social contract" — embodying *real* increases in physical effort and *real* wage restraint imposed on the working class, together with vague promises of reforms, and soaring profits and handouts to big business.

Kinnock's idea of "we" is really little different from that of Nigel Lawson when he greasily tells us that "We are paying ourselves too much and pricing ourselves out of work," while 19 million working class people live below the poverty line. Meanwhile City salaries go through the roof, and clearing banks jostle to be the first to clock up a billion pound profit in a single year!

The "we" — the notion of a common interest between the working class and the employers — does not exist.

Behind the talk of "consenus" (Kinnock), "national interest" (Heath), and "one nation" (Wilson) there has always been the reality of anti-union laws, wage controls and a widening gap between rich and poor.

Wilson's social contract, with its rigid wage controls, inflicted the biggest cut in real wages for over 100 years; and in fighting to break free, workers found themselves embroiled in the "winter of discontent" of 1978–79, which delivered the final death blow to the Callaghan government, leaving the field clear for Thatcher's ride to power.

Now here comes Kinnock again hawking the same old line, confirming that neither he nor his union backers have learned or forgotten anything after 20 years of successive failures.

This would be bad enough if the new grey politics were electorally popular: but there is nothing that shows this to be the case. As Kinnock has galloped right, Gallup and others have shown support stagnant, and well short of a Labour majority, despite Thatcher's unpopularity. Kinnock, and the cynicism and apathy he is fostering, are her best last hope of a third term!

Kinnock's line is now certain to be rubber-stamped by union block votes at Blackpool. It is already far to the right of Wilson's manifesto of 1974: yet within weeks of taking office Wilson's government was at loggerheads with trade unionists fighting Tory anti-union laws and wage controls.

Maybe the millions of workers who rightly see the only real hope as resting on the re-election of a Labour government to replace Thatcher may not yet be angered by Kinnock's message.

But by setting his face against socialist policies, and calling boldly now for a line of collaboration with the employers at the expense of confrontaton with shop floor interests, Kinnock is presuming that the current low level of strikes will continue.

But the return of a Labour government will help change this situation, and rekindle the confidence and repressed militancy of the working class. Despite this year's bureaucratic block votes and stage-managed resolutions, our new Kinnock and his supporters have yet to impose their policies on ten million already sceptical workers.

Scandal of Tories' racist visa crackdown

Last week a young man came to the UK from Nigeria. He had been removed by the immigration authorities five years ago following a desperate battle to stay here with his wife and three young children and had been applying to return to join them ever since.

His wife was killed in an accident three weeks ago. He presented himself to the entry clearance officer at Heathrow and explained he had come to bury his wife and sort out the future of his children. He was refused entry but was allowed two weeks temporary admission providing he reports to the police at regular intervals.

If the Government proposals to introduce visas had been implemented he might not even have these precious and inaequate two weeks in which to decide the future of the children he has not seen for five years and who do not now recognise him.

The Government have stated that visa restrictions will be implemented in respect of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Ghana. They tell us that this is to ease the congestion at airports and detention centres and enable travellers to establish their status prior to going to the trouble and expense of travelling here.

There are no proposals to impose visas on white Commonwealth countries, nor even America, which requires visas for British Nationals.

This is only the second time that visas will have been imposed on Commonwealth countries. The first was Sri Lanka in 1985. Then it was to stop the "floods of Tamil refugees".

Liz Philipson
Islington South CLP

It was a particularly disgraceful episode. The United National Convention on refugees, to which Britain is a signatory, states that visas shall not be imposed in respect of refuge seekers fleeing oppression.

Theoretically, Britain complies with this. If a Sri Lankan refugee manages to get here without a visa then the visa requirement is not imposed. However airlines are financially penalised if they carry visa nationals without a visa who are not admitted to Britain.

So the airlines police the system and will not allow non-visa holders to board the planes.

Sri Lanka is an island and the only other alternative is to go by boat across the Palk Straits to India to board a plane to a country not requiring visas for Sri Lankans. However, the UN convention also states that the first signatory country to which a fleeing refugee goes is the country responsible for them.

Therefore, fleeing Tamils who arrive in the UK from India, Germany, or any other signatory country, are returned to that country. Thus, in practice, Sir Lankan refugees are prevented from entering Britain without visas. This policy has resulted in the poorest state in India, Tamil Nadu, maintaining over 200,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. Britain, a country that is not only considerably richer but which also bears some historical responsibility for the current position in Sri Lanka, has only about 2,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and has fought every single case.

Despite these circumstances surrounding the imposition of Visas on Sri Lankan Nationals the Commonwealth countries were quite silent. Had they not been then the British Government might have been more hesitant about their latest proposals. It has been reported that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were opposed to the introduction of visas as they were afraid that it would damage Commonwealth relations which have already been strained by the boycott of the Commonwealth games. However, the visa restrictions were pushed through the cabinet by Mrs Thatcher and Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary. Again the Commonwealth have been very quiet.

It is no accident that the majority of the ethnic minority families in the UK originated from the countries that the Government have selected for visa restrictions.

The majority of travellers come here on holiday to visit their families, or to come to a family wedding. Others come for less joyfull occasions: to visit a terminally ill father; to comfort bereaved relatives; to attend a family funeral.

At present many suffer the degradation of racist interviews at the Airports here in Britain, and are held in detention centres and remand prisons. People detained in these circumstances often have established family members and friends in Britain who are waiting to receive them and vouch for them.

They are needlessly held in prison conditions and there is no appeal against this. The detention centres are full of people not convicted of any crime. Indeed the only crime they are accused of is attempting to visit friends and relatives in Britain. Of the millions of people who visited Britain last year only about 200 absconded yet the Home Secretary has admitted it will cost £14 milion to introduce the visa restrictions.

They will all have to apply and wait for visas in their own countries before they are allowed to enter Britain. Because of the penalties faced by airlines, travellers from these countries will find it very difficult to come to the UK without a Visa. However, if anyone does manage this they will be turned around at the airport on the decision of a single entry clearance officer, and sent back home.

As things stand, if they have the knowledge and the connections, they can contact an MP who can appeal to the Minister of State for the decision to be overruled. It is up to the Immigration Service whether that person is given temporary admission or held in detention whilst the appeal to the Minister of State, David Waddington, is made.



Some sections of the Immigration Service are reported to be considering even taking industrial action unless any visa national coming to the UK without a visa is returned forthwith regardless of the intervention of an MP.

Thus there is no choice for these travellers but to apply for visas in their own countries.

At present visas already operate in some circumstances. For instance, a person wishing to join their British partner on marriage must first apply for a visa. The length of the waiting lists is notorious. In some places in the subcontinent they are measured in years, not months.

In order to make such an application a person may have to travel hundreds of miles in areas where there is no public transport. They then have to undertake this arduous and expensive journey again in order to be interviewed. They are likely to be subject to racist and degrading treatment and to be closely questioned about their personal life, when they are already in a state of exhaustion.

There have been several researched reports, including one from the CRE, exposing the nightmares of this sytsem. They have received little publicity, and no action has resulted.

The fact that the Foreign Office have indicated a greater unwillingness to bear any increased costs in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria or Ghana connected with the imposition of visas gives no hope of any improvement on the woefully inadequate systems there to deal with the thousands of new applications that must result.

Thus the British Government is correct in stating that the introducton of visas will reduce the congestion at British Airports and detention centres. It will be transferred overseas and ceases to be offensive to the British public as it is lost in the more pressing problems of third world countries that occupy a small space on the inside of our newspapers.

Except, of couse, to those British people whose relatives can no longer visit them to help with family crises.

British black people can only view this as a further act of harassment and racism. Harassment through the Immigration rules and Nationality laws is not a new experience for British blacks. They have lived with it for years — since immigration restrictions were first introduced.

Only three per cent of the population are black, and only in a few parliamentary seats do black people wield any power to influence policy decisions. The Conservative position is clear, but how much better will a Labour Administration be? The record is not good: the most vicious immigration law — the 1968 Act that was brought in overnight with the sole purpose of keeping out fleeing African Asians — was conceived and passed by a Labour Government.

If the current cries of racism against these visa proposals are not to sound very hollow to the ethnic minority groups then the majority of Labour Party members and MPs need to appreciate the real effects of immigration policy on the day-to-day lives of black people and act accordingly. British black people are listening very carefully.

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

The next issue of Briefing will be out on October 14th. Deadline for articles, Monday 6th October.

Next Steering Committee will be at Polytechnic of Central London, Marylebone Road, at 1.30 p.m. on Sunday 21st September.

How to lose friends but not influence people

Preparing for power with the SDP Programme?



John Chapman



John Smith (IFL)

Liverpool - City Council demonstration

Everyone in the Labour Party wants to see the end of the Thatcher Government. The years since '79, under Tory rule, have been years of counter revolution.

Whilst Labour has at no time since 1945 transformed society from capitalism to socialism, inroads into capitalist society were made and some oases of socialism created.

All these advances have been under attack by Thatcher's Government and, because of rising unemployment and anti-union legislation, the organised working class movement is in a much weaker position than it was six years ago.

Even the municipal socialism of some Labour local authorities, which many in the movement believed could be the alternative to Thatcher's policies, has been seriously weakened.

The attacks from central government, rate capping and abolition measures, the use of the district auditor to bankrupt and disqualify Labour councillors, such as those in Lambeth and Liverpool, who were challenging Government policy, all have taken their toll.

Despite the retreats and defeats, with a positive response, Labour could still surge ahead to win the next election, rebuild the economy, restore workers' and trade union rights and begin the process of transforming Britain into a classless socialist society.

This Labour Party Conference should have had as its slogan: *Preparing for Power with a Socialist Programme*. Instead, we are being offered either watered-down policies or no policies at all.

The public image is everything, policy of little importance. This is being done in the belief that if we moderate our views, the press and the media will support us and the votes will return, simply because socialist concepts have either been dropped or so modified that they frighten no one.

By Eric Heffer, MP

Illusion

It is an illusion. In an article in the *Sunday Express* of August 31, Norman St. John Stevas says that although Neil Kinnock was talking in moderate terms, the reality was that the "militants" actually controlled the Party!

That is bound to be the Tory theme, which will be taken up and extended by a hostile media.

As the Party slides away from clear cut socialist policies, based upon the arguments put forward by Roy Hattersley that we should not promise what we cannot do, the right wing press will not be satisfied.

They will say, and are already saying, either that the retreat is not enough or that although policies have been weakened or dropped, actually that is only a mask, hiding Labour's real plans to nationalise everything!

The questions then surely arises: why retreat from clear socialist objectives? Why put forward policies which are little different from the SDP/Liberal Alliance?

We win no real friends by doing so and in the long and short term can do ourselves serious injury.

Labour Conference should be concentrating on putting before the public clear practical socialist policies, which can mobilise the entire movement to defeat Thatcherism.

Some of the documents contain positive policies, but the Party will be diverted from its task by having to discuss and debate expulsions, and measures adopted against parties across the country.

There will also be arguments about state interference in the internal affairs of trade unions, and the retreat on public ownership. Many will argue against the leadership which wants to "prove" that nuclear power is safe and reliable. As Barbara Switzer, the Deputy General Secretary of TASS, said at the TUC in the debate on postal ballots, the movement is faced with expediencies rather than principles.

The terrible thing is, it is more than doubtful whether it will pay off. What is happening in the Party is that every effort is being made to marginalise the left, to present us as a minority of "loonies", and sectarians.

Critical

Because we are critical of policy on certain important issues, and opposed to expulsions, we are accused of being the dividers, and helping to keep Thatcher in office.

The truth is the opposite. The left are critical of the backsliding, of the witch hunt, such things hinder the struggle to get rid of Thatcher. This is what divides the movement and actually holds back the struggle to get a Labour Government.

Radical

Reading the resolutions for Conference put by the CLPs and unions, it is clear that the membership continues to want radical socialist policies to be placed before the electorate.

The resolutions on nuclear energy, apart from anything else, are proof of this. There are also the demands to close *all* US Bases in Britain, not just nuclear bases. There is also the demand to extend public ownership.

With regard to the witch hunt, although there are only six resolutions on the agenda, clearly there is great unease within the party. It is clear that the expulsions have already gone beyond expelling those who support the *Militant*.

The resolution from my CLP makes the point that the socialist policies democratically decided by Annual Conference are being systematically ditched. That is really what the issue is all about.

Labour can, and I believe will, win the next election, but if it is won without a clear socialist programme, and such a programme is then not fought for, serious disillusion will develop.

We should remember the words of G.D.H. Cole who in his pamphlet of 1954 *Is This Socialism?* said:

"To win an election without a policy is the surest way of losing the next and of spreading dismay and disillusionment among our supporters. If the end is no longer socialism, but something else — what else? If it is still socialism let us tell the electorate frankly how we propose to advance towards it."

It couldn't be put more

WAPPING POST GET HIC'S

Murdoch on the couch ...



It's Rupert the Bare

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CPSA: the democratic dogs that didn't bark

The clearest example yet that the witch hunt is having a decisive effect on the unions is given by the continuing refusal of CPSA's NEC to appoint John Macreadie as its General Secretary.

In the aftermath of the TUC decision on secret ballot it also gives the lie to the fact that Kinnock and the Labour bureaucracy are interested in anything other than transfering power away from the rank and file.

It is now more than 2 months since John Macreadie, the Broad Left candidate, was elected General Secretary of CPSA.

Since then his appointment has been suspended by the right wing NEC who have appointed the Electoral Reform Society to investigate allegations of ballot-rigging.

In this they are being ably assisted by Marion Chambers, the Union's President and joint leader of the controllng right wing group, while John Ellis, the Right's defeated candidate has been allowed to assume the role of General Secretary!

During this time Macreadie and the Broad Left have been subjected to a concerted and unprecedented level of attack both within the Union and the press.

The press coverage which falls just short of alleging that Macreadie eats live babies, is perhaps to be expected. However, the attacks from CPSA bureaucracy have reached new and sometimes farcical heights. (The Broad Left has recenty been threatened with legal action for using the words Civil and Public Services Assocation [CPSA] before its name!)

Hostile

The right wing faction in CPSA is qualitatively different to those in most other unions, including Hammond's EETPU. It is made up largely of SDP and Tory supporters, and receives active suport from anti-labour movement forces.

Individuals such as Bernard Levin and Woodrow Wyatt regularly reproduce the right wing's election material in their newspaper colums.

Secondly, Macreadie has been the Broad Left's General Secretary candidate for more than 5 years now. His selection

Alastair Wallace
CPSA Broad Left

predates the split in the Broad Left which saw Communist Party members and Kinnockites leave to form their own organisation. So while the election result was unexpected, it was no bolt from the blue. Macreadie has a strong base within the Union and is well known as both a Broad Left and a *Militant* supporter.

Another complication is that though CPSA's NEC is Right Wing controlled the Right does not dominate within the Branches of the Union. The electoral system of established slates means that the difference between a right wing or a left wing landslide is usually decided by a relatively small number of votes. It was this extra push which was achieved by the Macreadie campaign.

Marginalise

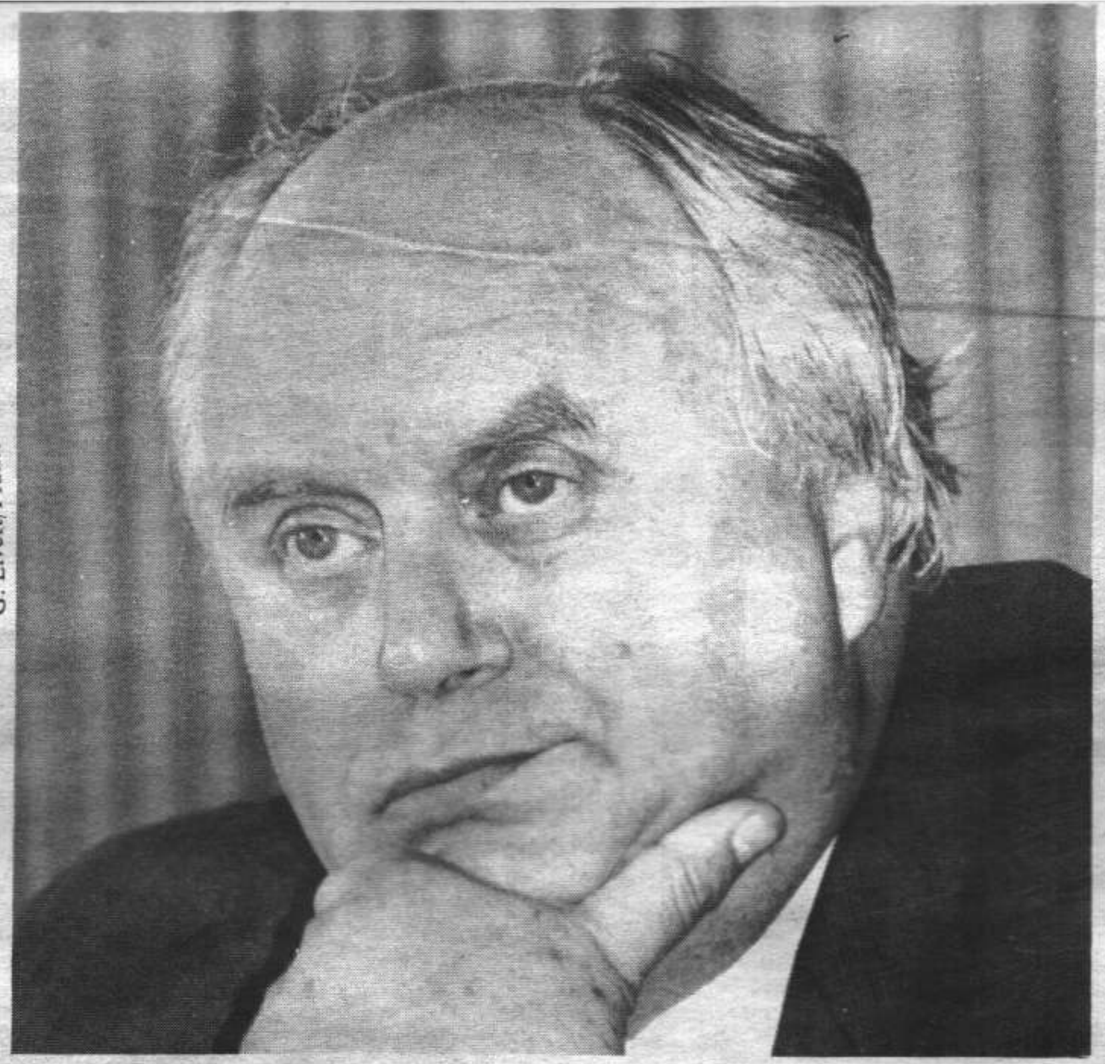
This explains the right's need to smash up the Broad Left organisation and not simply vilify Macreadie personally. It has become a particular priority because of the mobilisation by the Broad Left of branches calling for a Special Delegate Conference to get Macreadie installed — something which is still a major priority.

Macreadie's election provides one of the main lessons of the affair. The electoral system which was fought for and won by the Broad Left in 1980 bears many similarities to those imposed now by the Tories. That the Broad Left has won using this system is an undoubted embarrassment not only to Fleet Street but to the new-found "democrats" of the TUC and the Labour Party.

The example of a union which democratised itself through the action of its members should have been an example to uphold.

The fact that those members then chose a Labour Party member of 20 years standing and the only candidate who campaigned firmly on CPSA's policy of seeking affiliation to the Party, should have ensured support.

Instead, the logic of the witch hunt dictates that when a bunch of Tories and SDP members hijack the twelfth largest union in the TUC against the democratically expressed wishes of its members — silence prevails.



G. Livett/Frame

Norman Willis at Congress House, 2nd June 1986

TUC'86: Workers sacrificed on electoral altar

By Alan Thornett

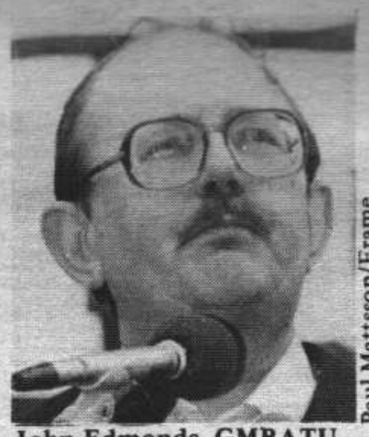
The twin right wing developments of Kinnockism in the Labour Party and the "new realism" in the trade unions were strengthened at the TUC Congress where union leaders avoided the many serious issues facing the movement and lined up dutifully behind the Labour leadership in preparation for the next election.

The first sacrifice on this particular altar were the print workers. The General Council was defeated on the NGA resolution criticising them for not instructing the EETPU to stop doing other unions' work and calling on them to do more to stop the scabbing at Wapping. It was not a decision, however, which will help the 5,500 News International strikers in their struggle with Murdoch. Nor will the General Council be unhappy with it — it did not commit them to *any* fresh action. It was no more than a mild rebuke; a small price to pay to get off the hook on such a major issue.

The problem for the print workers was compounded by the leadership of the NGA which withdrew its demand for the EETPU to be expelled from the TUC.

An equally important victory for the new right wing coalitions which are shaping up within the TUC came with the moves towards accepting labour legislation aimed at the rank and file of the trade unions under a future Labour Government. This came in the shape of the TUC/Labour Party statement which calls for the continuation of mandatory strike ballots from Tory legislation.

The ground work for such a disastrous step had been well prepared in advance of the Congress as part of the general slide to the right which is taking place in the unions. Most significant has been the position of the T&G. Ron Todd and the General Executive Council have supported strike ballots under a Labour Government in flat



Paul Mattsson/Frame

John Edmonds, GMBATU

contradiction to long established T&G policy. This led to a situation at the Congess where even the NUM delegation voted for the statement.

This is the clearest indication yet of the developing influence of EETPU business unionism in the trade union movement.

Nor is this collapse in front of Tory laws something which has developed in the past six months or even since the defeat of the miners. We are now facing a problem which has existed since the Tories took office in 1979.

It was active opposition to the Industrial Relations Act from the rank and file of the trade union movement and to a lesser extent from the TUC which ensured that Act would be repealed by an incoming Labour Government.

The fact is that even the inadequate opposition of the TUC at that time has never been present with either the Prior or Tebbit legislation. They collapsed in front of the Thatcher administration from the outset, now having formally dropped all opposition to the Tory laws they are voting to continue parts of them under a Labour Government even before a Labour Government is in office.

If we look back to 1969 to what the Labour Government of Harold Wilson was trying to do with In Place of Strife and the similarities in terms of the use of the courts with Tory laws today, we should not assume that it will only be the ballotting which will continue.

The political basis for this was strongly reflected in Kinnock's speech on the Tuesday afternoon. Ignoring the fact that the last Labour Government destroyed ½ million jobs he went onto tell us that the next one would this time create a millon jobs. He told us there would be some form of wages policy — which had again been accepted in the forefront despite a long held policy of free collective bargaining voted at conference.

He made it clear that the employers' offensive at shop floor level which has been successfully developed by the Tories would continue under Labour — "we", he told the Congress, "will have to work our way out of the crisis." In other words, continued speed-up and attacks on working conditions at the point of production.

In contrast to some of these things the Congress went on to vote to call for a statutory minimum wage, something which could be a major advance if it could be achieved at a high enough level. Part of the enthusiasm for it is no doubt motivated by a fear of tackling the huge problem of low pay which now exists by industrial means, but if achieved it would be of major benefit to the army of low paid workers which now exists, the majority of them women.

We should reject the arguments of those like Ron Todd who try to argue that it would be contrary to the principles of free collective bargaining. Yet when those principles really are in danger, as they are now from Kinnock — they have been more than willing to compromise!

If the General Council looked in a progressive direction over a minimum wage they soon put that right over nuclear power where not even Chernobyl was able to convince them that nuclear power is dangerous! They successfully opposed — by a very narrow majority — a resolution from the FBU and the NUM calling for nuclear power to be phased out as a priority. They successfully proposed that there should be a "moratorium" on nuclear power until a review of the industry had been completed and the matter discussed again next year!

Nor could the spectacle of people dying every day on the streets of South Africa shift them into action. A resolution was adoped which can be built on to some extent but there were no proposals for the trade union sanctions being imposed as called for by the black South African trade unions.

SCPS Broad Left launch

By Vanessa Shaw, SCPS

For the last few years, there has been a struggle to set up an open Broad Left in the Society of Civil and Public Servants.

A Broad Left conference on August 9–10 saw the successful results of that struggle. Every major Civil Service department was represented, as well as a number of the public service sections.

There are now Broad Left members in every part of the country, and it was possible for the first time to establish a full system of Area and Group (i.e. Departmental) Broad Lefts.

Part of the conference was devoted to deciding on candidates to stand in the first "open" elections, being held in October. It will be interesting to see how the secret left respond.

Election addresses are being introduced for the first time, something the Stalinists tried hard to stop. Many of us doubt that they will be honest enough to admit their politics.

Workplace ballots will be held and individual members votes will count, not the Branch block vote as before. Broad Left members will have a chance to argue out policies at these meetings and start the process of really involving the membership in the policy making processes of the union.

A whole range of policy items were discussed at the conference. It was possible to see the different factions in action. The SWP, *Militant* and the Socialist Caucus were all represented. The Socialist Caucus was formed in the other major Civil Service union, CPSA, but now has members in SCPS too. The Caucus is an alliance of independent socialists, who in the main operate around the hard left of the Labour Party.

It was clear that there will be differences on some policy items, when the Broad Left holds its next conference in January, and specific motions for SCPS conference are debated.

Socialist Caucus will be arguing for the annual election of all full-time officers, for reserved seats for women, for the right of self organisation for women, black and gay members and flat rate wage increases; all these policies will be opposed by one or both of the other factions.

Although the debate on these issues will continue for some time, the open Broad Left has a major advantage. It is already a hard left organisation. The soggy left are already organised in their secret left.

We do not face the possibility of a split, like the one that occured in CPSA, when the Communist Party and Tribunites split to form Broad Left '84. Policies will be openly and democratically debated, something the secret left don't do.

Everyone came away from the conference with a feeling of optimism for the future. There is still a lot to be done, but we now have a solid base on which to build. We can look forward to the prospect of the membership taking control of their own union.

SCPS Broad Left can be contacted c/o Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2. Socialist Caucus can be contacted via 41 Rupert Gardens, Brixton, London SW9.

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

This issue of the *Labour Briefing* carries a panel listing a large number of supporters. The next issue will carry a further list.

If you would like to be included, simply fill in this form and send it with £1 (50p unemployed) to us at 26 Wattisfield Rd, E5 9QH, and we'll do the rest.

Local groups and sellers are urged to draw this to the attention of *Briefing* readers and other potential supporters.

The statement reads:

"We welcome the campaign to launch Labour Briefing as a fortnightly paper to organise the left in the fight for socialist policies in the trade unions, the Labour Party, and the campaigns of the oppressed".

Name _____

Name _____

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Signature _____

Print Dispute

What price 'unity' at expense of our jobs?

The stakes in our dispute are high; for Murdoch, massively increased profits; for the strikers out on the stones, their jobs and livelihoods and for all working people, the right to organise. By supporting us, trade unionists are fighting for this fundamental principle. We were sacked not for being latter-day luddites, standing in the way of technology but because we had strong and effective shop-floor organisation.

Our unions stood in the way of an employer who wanted to force back the terms and conditions of his workforce to the 19th century. In fighting this attack on basic rights, wrung from unwilling employers by past generations of trade unionists, a lead from the TUC is crucial. But what have we had? Instead of a lead, a downplaying of the issues, and a desperate stifling of criticism, to maintain the unity of the TUC at all costs.

But what price unity when it is achieved at the expense of other fundamental principles of trade unionism — that you don't steal other people's jobs and you don't cross picket lines. EETPU members are guilty on both counts, and further, there is well-documented evidence that local officers in both Southampton and Glasgow recruited scab labour for Wapping and Kinning Park. As the Wapping Post, the strikers' newspaper, pointed out, it is inconceivable that in such a centralised union, the leadership could not have known what its local officers were doing.

So we have the disgraceful spectacle of a member of the TUC acting as a recruitment agency for a union-bashing employer, thereby scabbing on four fellow unions, SOGAT, NGA, AEU and NUS. And the even more sorry spectacle of those four refusing to take issue with the EETPU and force the TUC to expel the scabs. For the strikers it was sickening to watch Eric Hammond on the TV news gloating at the loss of our livelihoods.

No wonder the Sun has taken to calling him "Hambo" as he rides roughshod over our rights, and praises the police who have spent eight months helping to deliver Murdoch's papers and beating up trade unionists who get in their way.

Liz Short,
MOC Times
Clerical SOGAT

So what was achieved at Congress by the motion proposed by the NGA and seconded by SOGAT? In my view, it was a flimsy camouflage for their lack of action on the real issue.

The motion has several paragraphs of admirable congratulation of the strikers, and condemnation of the anti-trade union laws, etc., but only one has any teeth – olose and ill-fitting dentures at that, unable to bite on the substance of the matter! "Congress rejects the decision of the General Council made by 15 votes to 14 on the 5th February 1986, not to issue a directive to the EETPU requiring them to "inform their members to refrain from undertaking work normally done by members of other print unions at Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street."

It was the rejected amendment that contained all the bite: ". . . Congress instructs the General Council to forthwith direct the EETPU to instruct its members at Wapping and Kinning Park to: a) immediately desist from doing the work of AEU, SOGAT and NGA members who are in dispute, b) not to cross official picket lines at Wapping and Kinning Park. Should this direction not be complied with Congress further instructs the General Council to suspend the EETPU from Congress without delay, pending a final decision on expulsion at Congress in 1987".

Was it really a victory, as some would have us believe, to merely reject a decision of the General Council, and not call for action, let alone take action? Unity becomes meaningless when it allows one member to stab another in the back.

Some of us who went down to Brighton to lobby the delegates returned hom depressed, not elated, by the result: another deal, sidestepping the real issues, sorted out in smoke-filled back rooms; the fate of 5,500 people left in the hands of people who don't inform us what's going on, let alone consult us for our views.

There are "secret" negotiations going on at the moment between the management and the TUC print industry committee, which includes the electricians, and if a deal comes out of them, we'll learn of it from the press conference announcement. For the media are more important than the members, and must be pandered to. And that's what was going on at the TUC in the sham fight between the printers and the electricians.

Unity was preserved for the sake of the media image, while a sop was thrown to the strikers, to keep us from noticing quite how disgracefully we had been betrayed.

DAVY JONES

It is with deep regret that Briefing has learnt of the death of Davy Jones, of the Coventry Area NUM.

Davy had been an important member of the regional labour movement for many years and played a leading role in the recent miners' strike, although retired and disabled.

Our condolences to his widow, Councillor Irene Jones.



Press Association Photos

Police versus demonstrators, TUC conference, Blackpool, 1st September

Dean-Dubbins: a double act that threatens disaster

JANE GOSS takes a critical look at the leadership offered to the print dispute — and the dwindling support forthcoming from the London left.

The headline in the Guardian said "Printers Win Wapping Backing"! It was the day after the "debate" about the print dispute at the TUC conference in Brighton. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

The state of the dispute was summed up when Michael Hicks, leading member of the Communist Campaign Group, came out of the conference with his ever present megaphone – which he needs like Linus needs his security blanket – and announced that the TUC had just given fantastic backing to the printers.

There were cheers and clapping. In the crowd was a print worker who has been fighting since the beginning for Fleet Street to come out, for effective picketing, and against the tactics of Dean – which Hicks and the CCG promote. He just stood there, head down, arms folded, and shook his head.

He knew that the TUC vote meant absolutely nothing and far from backing the printers that the TUC, Kinnock, Dean, Dubbins and Willis want to wash their hands of this dispute, negotiate it away.

The role of the leadership of the NGA and SOGAT has been crucial from the beginning. Brenda Dean is clearly (and justifiably) hated by many of the print workers.

She is the villain of the piece. Because she is a woman leading a very male-dominated union the slurs and criticisms of her politics degenerate into attacks on her because she is a woman (and by implication clearly not up to leading a strike).

Her role from the start has been the traditional role of the right wing union bureaucracy – to negotiate.

Like any other right winger, she has deliberately defused any attempts by other sections to get involved in the picketing, and has personally phoned up NUM leadership figures to ensure that no official NUM presence has been on the Wednesday and Saturday pickets on a regular basis.

Tony Dubbins on the other hand gets rapturous applause and standing ovations from the printers. The Dean and Dubbins double act are a bit like classic police officer methods during interrogation. One is hated and the other gains your confidence under pressure so you trust him.

Dubbins is now seen as the "one who is OK".

Of course he has done nothing to further this dispute and has been just as much of a traitor to the workers as Dean – but because she is so awful he seems better!

The crucial question in the trade union movement which comes out in any strike or struggle is the question of leadership. Nowhere has it been more apparent than in the printworkers' struggle.

It was clear from the beginning of the strike that the SOGAT and NGA leaders did not want a fight and would block any attempt to get effective action.

The fact that not even all SOGAT and NGA members handling Murdoch titles were called out was a clear indication of the lack of will to spread the strike at all.

The Stalinists of the CG and CP meanwhile were acting quickly to ensure that they kept tight grip on the picketing and stewarding of the marches through their position in the bureaucratic machinery. Their long-standing and strong hold in the NGA and SOGAT was backed up by well-placed *Morning Star* supporters as NUJ officials. Though the CP split had just taken place, the disunity amongst the Stalinists was not enough to allow a strong challenge from non-Stalinist strikers.

Support group members from Tower Hamlets were threatened by Communist Campaign Group members both at meetings and on the picket.

Printers who were critical of the organisation of the strike and particularly the role of the CCG and CP were physically threatened.

Most importantly of all was the need of the CP to ensure that the question of bringing the rest of the Fleet Street workers out on strike was never raised in chapel meetings or mass meetings and that sacked NI workers who did raise it were discredited and shut **up.**

A small but strong group of printers has been at the fore of trying to gain control of the aspects of the strike from the very powerful and mafia-like CP.

The Fleet Street Support Unit, consisting mainly of printers, was set up about three or four months into the dispute, and is now organising leafletting and lobbying outside the other papers.

The *Observer*, with 550 NGA members with redundancy notices, was the first target.

Organising the left in unions with structures like the print unions is an extremely difficult job — but it has begun.

The bully-boy methods used by the Stalinists should not be underrated in this strike. They ensured at the fringe meeting on Monday at the TUC conference which had Dean and Dubbins speaking that one of their heavies was on the door vetting people going in.

Sacked printers who are known to be opposed to the leadership's conduct during this dispute were denied entry.

The CCG and CP members who campaign vigorously against Dean's attempt to get a "yes" vote in the ballot on the sell-out proposals, collapsed before her at the SOGAT Conference and are now firmly behind her, waiting for a new negotiated sell out, and protecting her from dissenters at meetings!

The women in this dispute have been incredible. Some of the strongest and sharpest of the strikers are the women clerical workers — in marked contrast to Brenda Dean.

Always at the bottom end in terms of the union's organisation, but at the top in terms of the strike. They have been excluded from having any organised say as women in this strike by the bureaucrats.

The militant women know the sell out is just around the corner. The most likely scenario is an increased compensation of £80m plus maybe 200 or 300 jobs in Wapping but no union negotiating structures. The CP will not be campaigning against it this time.

The wonder of Wapping is not that the marches are small now but that people continue to come week after week despite such demoralising tactics.

"The wonder of Wapping is not that marches are small now but that people continue to come week after week despite such demoralising tactics."

Differences

Supporting the printers has always been different from supporting the miners. Supporting it was never about organising collections of food and money. It was always much harder.

It is about getting other workers who are low paid and work in terrible conditions to listen to what the well paid printers are saying about losing their jobs. It is about a continual presence outside the Wapping plant every week for eight months.

Not just one or two romanticised trips to a striking pit village every week. It is about going down to Wapping and being infuriated by the sexism, racism and anti-gay sentiments of many of the workers you are there to support, and having to confront that all the time.

Arguments

It is about constantly talking with the *workers* (and not just the rest of the left) about the need to get Fleet Street out.

The left generally seems to have learned little from the miners' strike. It cannot get itself together to support workers in struggle unless they are clearly onto a winner.

The most militant and political of the printers know that this strike will be sold out.

But they are still in there **fighting, picketing and marching.** ***So where is the trade union and labour movement support from the rest of London?***



Paul Mattson/Frame

Rodney Bickerstaffe addresses printworkers' rally, Trafalgar Square, 6th April

Which way to fight low pay?

Neil Kinnock is in favour of a minimum wage. He is in favour of minimum wages for you, minimum wages for her, and minimum wages all round — the least he can get away with!

GMBATU leader John Edmonds is also in favour of a minimum wage: he has just discovered 8 million low-paid workers in Britain, and finds it useful to refer to them in his speeches. Not that the GMBATU has lifted a finger to recruit these workers, let alone organise them in action against their employers to win a living wage.

Many of the low-paid workers are employed by the hotel and catering industry: yet when a real movement towards unionisation began in this sector in the late 1970s, neither the GMBATU nor the TGWU (which opposes a legal minimum wage but claims to aim for a £100pw minimum for its members) offered any serious help: marathon strikes against Trust House Forte, Garners' Steak Houses and others were left isolated and eventually sold out.

300,000 low-paid workers do ancillary jobs for the NHS: where have the low-pay crusaders like NUPE's Rodney Bickerstaffe been trying to build for action?

Woud Neil Kinnock begin his new minimum wage policy by handing out an immediate increase to hospital workers: or would they need to take strike action — as hospital workers did twice against the last Labour government?

Low pay rests also upon the various slave-labour "training" schemes dreamed up by the Tories to disguise the unemployment figures, and which are now increasingly replacing regular jobs as a source of cheap labour for unscrupulous employers.

Will Kinnock establish the minimum wage for YTS and other trainees — or is it not really a minimum wage at all?

The real catch is in the interpretation. There is no necessary reason why fighting for a legal minimum wage should imply the fixing of a *maximum* wage (i.e. a full system of wage controls) — any more than the demand for a legal 8 hour day prevents workers from fighting for a 35-hour week.

But of course Kinnock, Edmonds and others see it differently. They see the vague pledge of an undefined "minimum wage" as the way to smuggle in wage controls.

Meanwhile the question many workers will ask is how medium or average wages can be protected against inflation under Labour. Experience shows that it is useless looking to the government to protect the value of wages: only the action of trade unionists themselves can do that.

Briefing argues for unions to demand pay settlements including a cost of living clause providing guaranteed increases to keep pace with rising prices, rents and other elements of the cost of living faced by the working class.

The present relatively low inflation offers a chance to popularise the demand, and even begin to raise it in claims. Union officials will of course shy away from any such attempt to block the employer's "right" to maintain their profits at the expense of declining real wages for the working class.

But these are the same officials who are lining up with Kinnock to prepare a new social contract. Under the last Labour government the chief losers from wage controls were the low paid.

There is no magic solution to low pay: even legislation would need to be enforced through trade union monitoring and action against delinquent employers.

Let's take on the much more accurate slogan of MAXIMUM WAGES and throw out the new-model social contract!

Poverty on a minimum wage - Low Pay Conference demands more

With over eight million low paid workers in Britain, the decision of the TUC to support the Labour Party in the promise of a Statutory Minimum Wage will certanly arouse hopes in large sections of working people.

Rowland Sheret
Chair, ACTSS 7/51(58) Branch
Scottish Labour Briefing

Yet the TGWU, with 1½ million members, opposed the resolutions and *Workers Press* (now an important voice on the socialist left) refers to the demand as "empty words".

Left in the hands of Norman Willis and Neil Kinnock, a Statutory Minimum Wage will become an election ploy, the basis for a new Social Contract. However, it could be an important focus for mobilising low paid workers. Firstly to demand a Labour Government legislates a realistic minimum and then ensuring it is implemented.

Here supporters of *Briefing* and Campaign Groups could play an important role in helping organise such a mobilisation around Low Pay Campaigns.

Workers Press are correct to point to the deplorable record of the trades unions over the past few years. The acceptance of the MSC schemes, undermined any struggle against the government's attempts to enforce low pay.

The inability — or refusal — of the unions to organise the unemployed has helped reinforce the acceptance of massive levels of unemployment.

A lack of real support for the miners helped ensure the defeat of the one serious fightback in defence of jobs.

Privatisation of services in hospitals and local authorities; the hiving-off of canteen, cleaning and security services from well organised workplaces to contract firms, the growth of non-unonised part-time work: all of this has led to low pay. On top of this the Government has subsidised firms for paying low wages.

To change all this a massive mobilisation against unemployment and low pay is necessary. The TGWU are right in emphasising the need for well organised trade union action, free collective bargaining and independence of the trade unions from the state.

A Statutory Minimum Wage is not in any way counterposed to such organisation.

But who would complain if Ron Todd showed us that the TGWU is capable of achieving its alternative demand — £100 a week living wage as a mnimum for all its one and a half million members?

I attended the recent Low Pay Conference organised by the Scottish TUC and the Low Pay Unit. The STUC already has a policy in support of the National Minimum Wage. The dangers of the demand merely being an election ploy were clearly evident at the Conference.

Labour Councillors in attendance voiced their support of £116 as a minimum rather than £80. The former figure represents two thirds of the average wage and as such is the decency threshold adopted by the Council of Europe; the latter is the TUC figure. Yet when questioned as to how many low paid workers were employed by Labour-controlled local authorities in Scotland, these same councillors had to reply that no statistics were available!

The credibility gap soon showed and some women delegates, who were shop stewards representing low paid textile workers, voiced their confusion at what targets were to be set and how employers were to be made to pay such wages.

Briefing supporters could start by asking Labour councillors to provide the statistics on Low Pay in their own authorities and what steps are being taken to rectify the situation.

One councillor from Edinburgh District related how their council's steps to implement a 38 hour working week had been met with hostility from other Labour controlled local authorities in Scotland as being in breach of national agreements.

A National Minimum Wage and Low Pay Cmapaign must become demands to mobilise the low paid — not false election promises. We must ensure that in Low Pay Campaigns youth on MSC schemes and the unemployed on social security are brought into the campaigns to link up in one co-ordinated fight against poverty in Britain.

FORUMS ON THEMES INCLUDE:

- Socialist strategies against unemployment
- Reds and Greens — ecology and socialism
- The last ten years of the women's liberation movement
- The struggle against racism and apartheid in Western Europe
- Out of NATO — the need for a European-wide campaign
- The alternative in Eastern Europe
- The new technology and working class responses
- Building a socialist alternative in Britain

PLUS WORKSHOPS LOOKING AT THE EXPERIENCE OF:

- Mitterrandism in France
- Gonzalez and the PSOE in Spain
- West Germany, the SPD and Greens
- The crisis of Italian Marxism
- Ireland and the rise of Sinn Fein
- Denmark and the extra-social democratic left

17-19 October 1986
Kingsway Princeton College,
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★

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

THE THATCHER GOVERNMENT
is facing problems on every front. But the opportunity to offer a socialist alternative to the crisis of British capitalism is being squandered by the Labour leadership. Kinnock has been intent on distancing Labour from workers' struggles, playing down the progressive policies adopted by Labour in the last six years and witch-hunting left wingers. The result has been the 'grey tide' which has increasingly made Labour policies convergent with those of the Alliance.

THE DEVELOPMENTS IN
Britain are only part of a wider pattern of a social democratic crisis of perspective throughout Western Europe. Mitterrand in France, Gonzalez in Spain and other social democratic leaderships have led or are leading the working classes in their countries into deeper crisis.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
will be looking at this crisis of perspective and considering critically some of the alternatives that have arisen to it from workers, women, black people, and the ecology and peace campaigns.

THE AIM IS
to provide a forum of serious discussion on building a socialist alternative in Europe today. Come and help us!

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Ernest Mandel
- Hilary Wainwright
- John Palmer
- Jane Kelly
- Valerie Coultas
- Dany Ahrens
- Joy Hurcombe
- Tariq Ali
- Robin Blackburn
- Patrick Camiller
- Gus Fagan
- Branka Margas
- Jeremy Corbyn MP
- Alan Thornett
- Gunter Minnerup
- Oliver MacDonald
- Erica Flegg
- and speakers from Europe including from the Green movement, the Danish left socialists and SOS racisme.

PLUS FILMS, VIDEOS, BOOKSHOPS, CAMPAIGN STALLS

Creche provided. *Places must be booked in advance.*
The cost of a ticket for the entire weekend is £7 (£4 for unwaged)
Please write for further information on day sessions

For programme and further details please send to:
Symposium,
PO Box 503,
London N1 1YH.

Black Workers strike

On 14th May, forty two black workers were sacked within fifteen minutes at the Kenure Plastics factory in Feltham, near Southall, in West London. This included workers who had worked there from seven to seventeen years.

The AEU has made their dispute official. But the sacked workers were only able to join after they were dismissed. In the past management victimised any attempts at unionisation.

The workers are demanding that they be reinstated.

For more information, contact: Kenure Plastics Workers Support Committee, 1st Floor, 50/2 King Street, Southall, Midx. Tel: (01) 843 2333.

Strong Support for our Campaign

***Briefing* has been overwhelmed with support for our call in the last issue for a fortnightly *Briefing* in its new newspaper format.**

Although a few longstanding supporters are sad to see the old format go, we have had dozens of encouraging phone calls and letters about our fortnightly and new format plans.

In this issue we have listed three hundred names of local and national Party, trade union and campaigning activists welcoming *Briefing* going fortnightly. We have received donations of hundreds of pounds towards the launch from supporters,and we already have one hundred and fifty people in our 500 club paying a regular banker's order to subsidise the fortnightly.

New *Briefing* groups have been set up and relaunched all over the country, and new orders for the fortnightly *Briefing* have been coming in from lots of new towns and cities.

We have agreement from a number of important campaigns and organisations to write regular columns for the new fortnightly — their first material is included in this issue.

We're sufficiently confident of *Briefing's* future that we have rented an office for the paper from the beginning of October; and we will be having our first full time staff member for the paper from that date, with a second and third worker being phased in over the next two months.

The plans for the fortnightly are encouraging. By next month we will be up and running. But we still need your support. There are four things you can do — and get a friend to do them too!

1) Place a regular order for *Briefing* and sell it every issue.

2)If you don't think you are going to get hold of every issue of *Briefing* through a regular seller, then take out a subscription for just £12 a year.

3)Fill in a banker's order form for the 500 club. For just £1 a week you can help subsidise the fortnightly, and get your name entered into a £25 weekly prize draw!

4) If you have not already done so, sign the statement welcoming a fortnightly *Briefing*, and send it in to us, with £1. We will be running a further list of signatories next month.

Send to: 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14 9HB.

PS: Why not make a special donation to the new office? We'll need every kind of basic office equipment — from paper, envelopes, sticky labels, sellotape, staplers, staples, scissors, glue, pencils, pens, paper clips, rubber bands, files and folders, etc. to typewriters and desks!

Have a collection — cash or kind — in your *Briefing* group — and bring your gifts to the September or October Steering Committees. Let's see who can bring the most!

Among our Supporters

Support has been pouring in for the planned fortnightly Labour Briefing. Three hundred people have already signed the support statement below, all in a personal capacity, and we intend to run the ad again in the next issue. The statement reads:

"We welcome the campaign to launch Labour Briefing as a fortnightly paper to organise the Left in the fight for socialist policies in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the campaigns of the oppressed".

Diane Abbott, PPC Hackney North
Sharon Atkin, PPC Nottingham East
Kate Allen, Camden Councillor
Hassan Ahmed, Chair Nottingham East CLP
Paul Ashby, Coventry SW CLP
Joan Andrews, Streatham CLP
Bill Anderson, Selly Oak CLP
Dani Ahrens, Youth CND
Tariq Ali
Dave Anderson, Chair, Brighton LCI
Nina Anderson, Treasurer, Brighton LCI
S Andrews, Streatham CLP

Tony Benn MP
Tony Banks MP
Steve Bassam, PPC Brighton Kemp Town, Cllr.
John Battle, Leeds Cllr, PPC Leeds West
Bob Boswell, Preston Cllr
Dave Burn, Islington NALGO
Marge Bayne, COHSE Hayes
Alton Burnett, Birmingham DLP
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Jeremy Corbyn MP
COHSE Ashford & W Middx 625 branch
Richard Chessum, LCI NC & Warwick D Cllr
Helen Crossfield, Surcharged Lambeth Cllr
Piers Corbyn, Southwark Cllr
Terry Conway, LCLGR
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Peter Cooper, Battersea CLP
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Dave Carter, Cleveland Campaign Group
Helen Carter, Hornsey CLP
Phil Casey, Hornsey CLP
Tony Carty, Tottenham CLP
M Collinson, Hornsey CLP
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Peter Chowney, Hackney Cllr
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Jenny Fisher, Chair Labour Against the Witch-Hunt
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Marc Wadsworth, Chair Black Sections
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Scottish Tories count the cost

The bursting North Sea Bubble

Tony Southall, (Glasgow Hillhead CLP) Scottish Labour Briefing

Until 1986 North Sea oil was the one consistently bright spot in an economy ravaged by the collapse of its traditional and more recent industries.

Oil related industry accounted for 60,000 jobs. Aberdeen had an unemployment percentage lower than London's. Exploration on the West Coast promised an Atlantic shelf boom like that in the North Sea.

The boom was of course exploited unscrupulously by the Tories. By 1983 North Sea taxes and revenues accounted for 12% of total tax revenue and 28% of total industrial investment was oil-related.

When the price began to sag British wells kept going while most OPEC countries and even Norway cut production. As the world's fifth largest producer, Britain had a big responsibility for keeping prices down.

The effect on Scotland's economy has been dramatic. The most obvious repercussions were in the Aberdeen area where oil and oil-related industry has begun to shed labour.

There have been knock-on effects in areas as diverse as air companies and the housing market an on the labour market for school leavers.

But other areas have also felt the draught. At rig builders UIE, Clydebank, the permanent workforce was recently sacked and re-engaged on temporary contracts to give the firm total flexibility in the future.

Scott Lithgow, Greenock, recently launched its last major rig, leaving the shipways empty. The collapse of the new-biuld order book will have drastic effects on orders for steel from the already apparently doomed Ravenscraig steel plant in Motherwell.

In Glasgow, the first week of September saw the pre-emptory sacking of 500 staff from Britoil's HQ, leaving around 800 in work. The company was developing a new office to accommodate twice that number: the second phase has been abandoned.

Its management style was shown in the way dismissed workers were bundled out of the office — notably those having expertise and access to its computer system. Justification was that profits (£120 million last year) were sliding and £30 million wasted on "overmanning" would be saved. The lack of any organised fightback was an obvious effect of the fact that only 26% of the workforce had joined APEX, the only recognised union.

Meantime the NCB, which employed 14,000 before the strike, is down to 7,000 and the vision of total abandonment of deep-mined coal threatens as the impending opening of Torness nuclear power station brings Scotland's overcapacity to at least 60%.

Through all this the Tories in Scotland remain politically at rock bottom. On the latest *Glasgow Herald* opinion poll, with 15% of the vote, they would win only 5 out of 72 parliamentary seats. (Labour 47%, Alliance 22%, SNP 16%).

It is now vital Labour grab the initiative in Scotland by backing the fight for jobs in oil and coal as part of a rounded energy policy that includes an immediate halt to nuclear generation.



Universal Pictorial Press

Viking Piper, a semi-submersible pipe-laying barge. Used by BP to lay pipelines from the Ninian oilfield to the Shetlands

Let's work together to fight the right wing!

This year's Party Conference is certain to register a major shift to the Right.

Conference will be presented with a series of NEC policy papers for rubber stamping. Many left policies established at recent conferences will be swept away by these papers which will form the basis of Labour's next election manifesto.

By Davy Jones Islington South & Finsbury CLP

Kinnock himself in his keynote address will repeat his weary theme of a Labour government promising as little as possible, while maintaining his drive to isolate the Party's left wing.

Indeed the attempts by the Party leadership, aided and abetted by the LCC, to isolate the hard left have been quite successful.

Militant in particular, has found itself extremely isolated. But while demoralisation since the defeat of the miners has taken its toll, it would be mistaken to assess that the "hard left" current in the unions and the Party had been basically dispersed.

Less numerous and less influential within the Left as a whole perhaps, but the hard left remains a significant phenomenon. Many have found their home there almost accidentally as the Party and numerous former "lefts" have scurried rightwards with indecent haste.

Two non-sectarian currents have emerged within the hard left to withstand the rightward pressure — the *Briefing* network, and the Campaign Group. The positive evolution of the latter has been one of the few encouraging trends of the last year.

The Campaign Group gave unstinting support to the miners, has consistently opposed the witch hunt in the Party, and over the last year has taken important policy initiatives with the Socialist Society around economic policy and NATO.

It has supported demands of Black Sections, the Women's Action Committee and the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It has stepped up its work with other left campaigns through bodies like the Labour Left Co-ordination and the proposed Campaign Forum; established local Campaign Groups in many areas, and started a regular paper, *Campaign News*.

It has even led some of the most effective attacks against the Tories in Parliament through Denis Skinner and Tam Dalyell.

But inevitably there are limitations and problems with the development of the Campaign Group. Its very breadth and links into the Party and union hierarchies mean that not all its members or actions reflect the same healthy evolution.

At the recent Campaign Group Rally in London, Margaret Beckett appealed to the hard left to stop rocking the boat in the run-up to the election, while on the trade union front, Eric Clarke was involved in the moves against Scargill at the recent NUM conference.

The Group has been extremely hesitant to spearhead the campaign against the Anglo-Irish Accord, and its support for Black Sections has been weakened by its failure to support Black Sections' candidates for the constituency section of the NEC at this year's conference.

Instead it is supporting Michael Meacher, despite his record on the miners and the witch hunt.

In at least one area, Camden, the setting up of a Campaign Group is a cover for local opportunists intent on defeating the existing left organised in a *Briefing* Group. Nor has the Group nationally yet agreed to become in any way accountable to its supporters throughout the country.

Such problems with the Campaign Group however should in no way detract from the overwhelmingly positive role it has played on the Labour Left in the last period, nor should it lead to sectarian reactions from the rest of the hard left.

Briefing will certainly give the maximum support to the progessive initiatives and projects of the Campaign Group. Ironically many of the steps taken by the Group in the past year such as launching a paper and developing its links with the extra-parliamentary left campaigns and groups were suggested by *Briefing* and the *Briefing*-initiated Labour Left Co-ordination.

Briefing does not see itself "competing" with the Campagin Group or its paper *Campaign News*. There is space enough for both, as long as both are committed to systematic co-operation and collaboration.

Briefing also welcomes the development of a national Campaign Forum, and, in many areas, *Briefing* supporters actively build local Campaign Groups.

But in other areas the hard left is organised through other forums — independent Labour Lefts or *Briefing* groups, as in Birmingham, Brighton, Haringey or Hackney.

It is vital that the Campaign Group works with *all* the forces of the hard left nationally and locally in a non-sectarian way. If the Campaign Group avoids falling hostage to any one left tendency or to its own "Tribunite' wing it can play a vital role in strengthening the hard left.

In that task it will find its most consistent ally is *Briefing*.

Will NUS fight?

Patrick Baker North London Poly Labour Club Islington North YS

Despite the recent withdrawal of part of the Tory programme of cuts, students start this academic year facing a grossly under-funded higher education system, particularly in the case of the rather less elitist polytechnics.

Student grants and student union funds are likewise pathetically low.

However, the Kinnockite-dominated NUS executive has concentrated on defusing any real fightback and joining the witch hunt against the left. Meanwhile NOLS remains a ridiculously small 7,000.

The recent pathetic "campaign" against the Fowler review, a real threat to students' standard of living, as well as the NUS performance at the demonstration against Apartheid, were just the latest examples of NUS President Woolas's wishy-washy approach to political campaigning.

Following the undemocratic exclusion of a number of left delegates to NOLS conference, Woolas & Co. are keen to step in as allies in Kinock's assault on the LPYS and the left in general.

NUS conference in April showed its dissatisfaction with the antics of the past executive by electing 3 representatives from Socialist Students in NOLS, a hard left group organised by Socialist Organiser supporters, and one from the Socialist Worker Student Society, the SWP's student organisation.

It also passed fairly good positions on women's liberation and Ireland, as well as the "No Platform" policy, which has recently been much under attack.

The left minority in NOLS must press for the NUS to organise its 1,000,000 members to fight the attacks on higher education and student living standards; to stand firm in its campaign against racists and fascists in our colleges.

Further, a campaign should be launched within NOLS to join the fight against the witch-hunt. Woolas must be prevented from using NOLS as a pawn in the witch hunt againt the left, particularly the LPYS.

1000 ISSUE

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Conference BRIEFING pull-out

Who thinks up this stuff?

Neil Kinnock has publicly junked even the word nationalisation, along with almost every policy that might get tough wth employers, while eagerly embracing compulsory ballots and wages controls.

Roy Hattersley, arrogantly inventing eocnomic policy as he goes along, insists that public spending will be cash limited as tightly under Labour as it is under Lawson, and twists the arms of Shadow Ministers to prevent them promising to repair Tory cuts.

Who thinks up these policies?

Obviously the union leaders, dominated by the hard right wing, have thrown in their lot with Kinnock having thrown in the towel to Thatcher and the employers' offensive. But much more influential than any labour movement body appear to be the staff of MORI opinion polls, who now have a £150,000 a year consultancy for the Labour Party, producing dubious "surveys" to bolster the anti-socialist gut reactions of Kinnock and the right wing cabal.

MORI is conspicuous among the generally right wing polling outfits for its bias to the SDP/Alliance: small wonder Kinnock's shift is towards this soggy reactionary "centre".



Paul Mattsson/Frame

19.4.86: Libya demonstration, Grosvenor Square

All US bases must go!

Ronald Reagan's terrorist attack on Libya and the melt-down at the Chernobyl nulear power plant have helped to ensure that nuclear questions will be high on Labour's conference priorities in 1986.

Almost 200 constituencies and affiliated organisations have submitted resolutions on nuclear power, and 15 out of the 29 resolutions on the "Defence Policy" section of the agenda deal with US bases.

Fourteen of those demand that the next Labour government throw out all US bases.

The attack on Libya has acted as a timely reminder to Party activists that a commitment to get rid of nuclear bases only is inadequate. Had such a policy been implemented at the time of Reagan's air-raid, it wouldn't have made a scrap of difference to the attack!

What the raid does highlight, however, is that Labour's non-nuclear policy is still riddled with holes. *Defence and Security for Britain*, Labour's policy on nuclear weapons and "defence", was passed at the 1984 Party conference only weeks after it had been published.

Activists hadn't read the fine print. They saw that it committed the leadership to getting rid of nuclear weapons and voted for it with both hands.

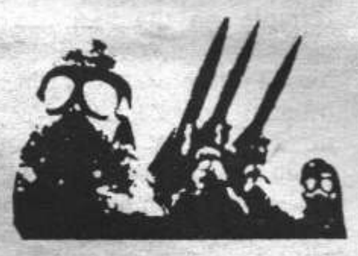
In the 12 months that followed, though, many Party members did have the chance to read between the lines. And the first thing that struck them was the conflict between the pledge to unilaterally disarm all nuclear weapons and the maintenance of membership of NATO, Reagan's nuclear war-fighting club.

By Carol Turner
Labour CND Secretary

That realisation meant a resolution promoted by Labour CND to last year's annual conference, which called on the NEC to initiate a discussion on NATO membership, won a significant minority vote.

In the afermath of Libya, we are confident that our model resolution calling for all US bases to go will build on the growing concern in the constituencies about NATO membership.

The Libyan attack has served as a concrete example of what complicity with the US administration's war-mongering could mean for a future Labour government. Maximising the conference vote on the bases, de facto, raises the question of NATO membership, just as it raises broader questions of a socialist foreign policy.



Labour CND is encouraging constituencies to submit amendments to the Chesterfield and Blaenau-Gwent resolutions on NATO, to ensure that the issue will be directly debated at conference this year.

But we are also concerned to keep the debates separate in order to make sure that the maximum number of constituencies and trade union delegations suport the demand to get rid of all US bases.

Immediately after the attack on Libya LCND launched a US Bases Out Campaign within the Party. It has been supported by other campaigns and groups in the Party with a nuclear disarmament interest, as well as the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour Party Black Sections, Labour Left Liaison, and others.

Out of that campaign has come a fringe meeting on the Monday evening of conference, jointly held by Labour Action for Peace and Labour CND, as well as a model resolution which was sponsored by the Campaign Group and LAP as well as ourselves. Labour CND is confident that the issue of the bases will be given a good airing at the 1986 annual Party Conference.

We are also planning to capitalise on the increased concern about military and civil nuclear power generated by events over the summer by holding a discussion meeting on Thursday evening of conference, after the debate on conference floor, entitled "Will NATO try to stop Labour implementing its anti-nuclear policies?"

And we will be following this up with a day-school in early November.

● If you would like to subscribe to LCND or for further details of LCND's activities at Party Conference contact the secretary: Carol Turner, LCND, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH.

NATO: the killers' club

By Joy Hurcombe
Chair Labour CND
(personal capacity)

Labour CND demands a full debate on the issue of NATO. Further, we support the demand that we must get out of NATO in order that we can adopt a truly socialist, independent foreign policy.

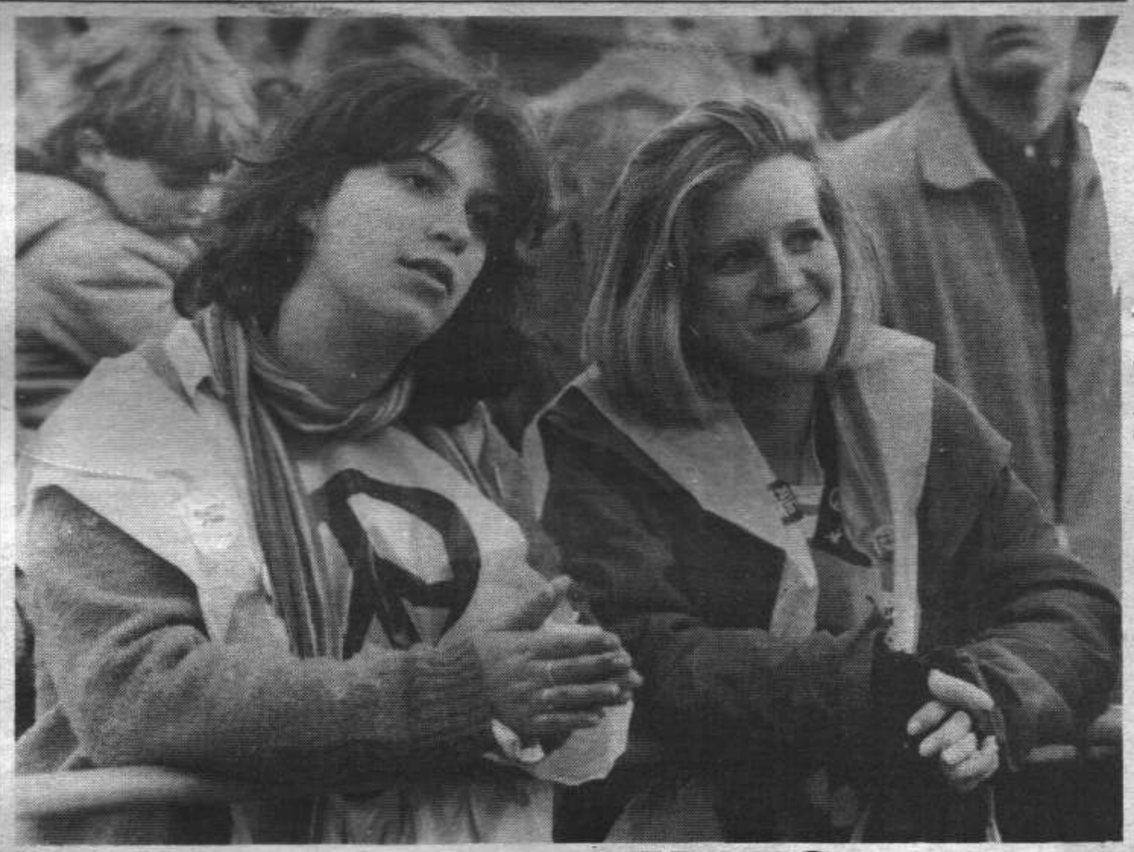
As long as we remain in NATO, we are committed to NATO's policies. Its battle plans integrate totally conventional, nuclear and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons would be used early in any conflict probably from bases in this country. A non nuclear policy is a nonsense.

NATO membership means suporting the aggression of its dominant member, the USA. It means that we participate in raids against Libya and Nicaragua. It means that we stand by Botha in support of apartheid against our black brothers dying each day in South Africa.

Northern Ireland so that the Alliance has a strategic facility in the North Sea area.

The UK economy needs massive resources to create employment, for housing, benefits, hospitals and schools. As non nuclear member of NATO we shall be expected to make vast resources available for conventional weapons. The Labour Party leadership seems quite happy about this. They want to spend more on conventional weapons than the Tories. They vie with the Tories to show their utter commitment to NATO. While other European socialist parties are looking closely at the NATO question, the Labour leadership talk idly about changing NATO. NATO will never renounce its nuclear policies. Let's be honest for a change and get out and try to work positively for peace and co-operation in the world before it's too late.

It means squandering our resources on Star Wars while Africa starves. It means that we continue to threaten any country which is of strategic or economic importance to the USA. It means continuing the occupation of



John Chapman

YCND targets NATO

The issue of military policy and alignment has been much in the public eye recently.

Karina Holyoak
Birmingham YCND

NATO is historically an aggressive alliance and can serve no other role. Any *real* socialist foreign policy must make the call for Britain out of NATO its foremost demand.

The present Labour Defence Policy states total commitment to the removal of Cruise, whilst remaining staunchly in favour of maintaining membership of NATO.

Youth CND has committed itself to anti-NATO campaigning as a priority in the run-up to the next General Election. The CND leadership has provided no lead or direction on the issue of NATO, despite having CND policy to campaign against the NATO alliance.



Youth CND has decided to take up the initiative of some serious anti-NATO work: as our major project for 1986, YCND is holding a national speaking tour on the theme of "Britain out of NATO".

The aim of the tour is to initiate discussion throughout the peace and labour movement on how to fight NATO. Speakers will be from the Campaign Group of MPs, and we plan to involve leading trade union, Labour and Youth CND activists. A youth campaigner from the Spanish Anti-NATO movement will also be speaking.

We are organising a fringe meeting for CND Conference, and will be participating in Labour CND's rally on the issue of "Bases Out", at Labour Party Conference.

Public meetings are being held in Brighton, Birmingham, Bristol, London, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow as the major events of the tour.

For further details, contact Keith Harman at 54, Gammons Lane, Watford.

Britain out of NATO!
NATO out of Britain!

Labour movement must lead fight against apartheid

Sanctions: a class issue



Paul Mattson/Frame

December 1984, Dunnes Stores strikers from Dublin picket South Africa House.

The Call for sanctions against the apartheid regime has become an issue of world-wide significance. It was the main issue facing the Summit Meeting of the Non-aligned Movement in Harare at the beginning of September; the TUC has passed resolutions in support; the Labour Party Conference will, no doubt, pass similar resolutions.

Charlie van Gelderen, (Brent South CLP)

There are two approaches to the queston of sanctions. There are those (and this includes the leadership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement) who believe that the main action should be to bring pressure on national governments, including the governments headed by Reagan and Thatcher.

Others believe that sanctions will only be effective if the campaign is organised and led by the organised labour movement. We argue for this latter approach.

We have only to recall what happened when the Wilson government imposed (sic) sanctions against the Smith regime in what was then Rhodesia. There were British gunboats lying off Beira to stop oil getting through to the illegal regime. But, thanks to Shell and other oil conglomerates, Smith still got his oil.

A whole new sanction-busting industry sprang up. As the South African Minister of Manpower, Piet du Plessis, said: "If someone can make a dollar or a pound they will find ways to do so."

The South African government has boasted that it has stockpiled "literally thousands of items" of strategic goods in the last decade in preparation for the sanctions onslaught. It could not have done so without the knowledge and active connivance of those same big business multinationals who so loudly proclaim their abhorrence of apartheid, and of the governments of the Western imperialist countries.

When several huge tankers leave the Gulf and "disppear", everyone, including the OPEC states, know that they will re-surface in Durban harbour.

The bond between the Tory government and South African capitalism is too close for anyone to expect this government to meet the demands of the great majority of South Africans and to impose sanctions which will bite.

Effective sanctions combined with the resistance within the country would mean not only an end to apartheid, but the end of the capitalist system.

The August 1986 issue of *Labour Research* revealed that nearly a quarter of Tory MPs have company interests in the Botha regime and "donations to the Tories from apartheid-linked companies amount to £1.2 million."

Three Conservatives are connected to companies which pay their black workers poverty wages — the former chair of the Conservative Party and Thatcher's ex-secretary for Trade and Industry, Cecil Parkinson, who is a director of Babcock International; Sir Anthony Grant, MP for South West Cambridgeshire, and adviser to Pritchard Services; and Michael Forsyth, MP for Stirling whose PR company advises Pritchards.

Several Tory MPs are connected with companies paying their black workers below the EEC recommended level. These include the former leading Tory back-bencher, Sir Edward du Cann, chair of Lonrho.

Can anyone really expect this grisly bunch to support a campaign which, if effective, will cut into the rich dividends which they now get from their investments in apartheid?

The weakest link in the South African economy is oil. Although it is the world's biggest producer of oil extracted from coal — economically viable only because of the cheap black labour employed in the coal mines — South Africa is still heavily dependent on oil imports and, through nominees, buys large quantities on the free market.

Now a British company is selling North Sea off-shore technology to South Africa to help the republic cut its dependence on foreign oil. John Brown, part of Trafalgar House since an £80 million takeover in June, is to help build an offshore platform for a petrol-from-gas project off the Cape.

Israel is also being roped in for the fight to stave off the worst effects of sanctions when it comes. In August a joint standing committee of Israeli and South African trade and financial officials met in Pretoria to renew ties of "friendship and economic co-operation".

Only the international labour movement can ensure that the campaign to boycott South African goods has the necessary muscle — by disinvesting union funds; stopping the import of goods from South Africa and the export of goods to South Africa; refusing to handle South African goods at work and campaigning to remove South African produce from workplaces, especially canteens and stores.

We must make sure that the Labour Government makes good Kinnock's promise to the TUC that it will have no truck with apartheid. Some of us remember similar statements from Harold Wilson after Sharpville in 1960.

Labour in power must not only give full support to the liberation fighters in South Africa but it must also give the frontline states, which will face the full wrath of Pretoria, all the help they require, including, *if asked for*, military aid. Words alone will not hurt apartheid.

**Three Labour MPs have South African links — Dr. John Cunningham, Roy Mason and Gordon Oakes — along with one member of the SDP (Ian Wrigglesworth) and one Liberal, Clement Freud (Labour Research, Aug. 1986).*

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Black Sections: fighting "divide and rule tactics"

Our campaign has had to fight on more fronts this year because of the stepping up by the Labour Party national leadership of its "divide and rule" tactics. First came the imposition of the unelected and unaccountable "Black and Asian" Advisory Committee (BAAC). Then came the witch-hunting of two Black Sections supporters in Hattersley's "rotten borough" of Sparkbrook.

The Labour Party
Black Sections

By Marc Wadsworth

We successfully counter-attacked and the resolutions against the witch-hunt and in favour of Black Sections reflect it. The left – including the LCC – has united behind our boycott of BAAC. And the list of "refuseniks" (members of the committee who have either resigned, refused to attend or publicly stated they won't seek reappointment) now totals eight people.

The Black press has described BAAC as a discredited and unsuccessful attempt to head off the popular grassroots demand for a Black Section voice in the Party. (A genuine say in the formation of anti-racist socialist Labour policies).

The Sparkbrook expulsions has the second largest total of motions on the agenda (highest number of amendments?) after nuclear power.

The Labour leadership's witch-hunting campaign (which has already seen eight 'Militant Tendency' members expelled) got a bloody nose over Sparkbrook. Why? Because the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally (CRAKKS) won support right across the trade union movement and from the majority of CLPs. Hattersley learnt that even being the deputy leader of the Labour Party doesn't give you the right to trample on the basic principles of natural justice. You cannot orchestrate the original expulsions, wheel in a friendly right wing trade union boss to hear the appeal and then both of you act as judge and jury on the NEC. Amir Khan was expelled for daring to organise the constituents Hattersley patronisingly calls "my Asians" into a Black Section after the deputy leader said they couldn't have one. Kevin Scally was thrown out for exposing a bogus membership racket which shored-up Hattersley's Birmingham power-base.

It must be put on record that the NEC working group set to look into Black participation in the party recommended the acceptance of Black Sections. There was a minority report but even this supported the setting up of a "Black Rights" campaign. The neo-colonialist idea of a "BAAC" was dreamed up by bureaucrats at Walworth Road – thus making a mockery of 18 long months of study by the working group. Conference, which had been duped by an unholy alliance of Militant and the right wing the year before, rejected the setting up of a toothless "anti-racist" committee but rubber-stamped BAAC.

Comrades, think again. BAAC has failed as a credible alternative to our demands because no Labour initiative aimed at Black members of the Party can work without their active involvement. Black Sections function in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, and Cardiff because they're democratic and more and more involved in Black community campaigns shamefully ignored by the rest of the labour movement.



Keep Kinnock's hands off the YS!



A major new, but not unexpected, element in the right wing's attack on the left has emerged in the proposals from Tom Sawyer's Youth Committee. *Briefing* stands absolutely opposed to changes in the YS without democratic debate and decision-making by the YS itself. We asked next year's YS representative to the NEC, Linda Douglas, a *Militant* supporter, for her views.

5 million reasons to reject the Sawyer plan

Linda Douglas
YS rep-elect on NEC

After 7 years of attacks on young people by Thatcher's Government the 5 million first time voters could be decisive in the next general election.

Yet Labour's right wing dominated youth sub-committee, chaired by Tom Sawyer, has put forward proposals aimed at crippling the Party's youth section, the LPYS.

The most serious plan is to drop the upper age limit to 21 which would debar many of the most active members.

Instead of supporting the campaigns on youth issues inspired by the LPYS, the right wing want to undermine the effectiveness and influence of the youth section.

The LPYS welcomes any debate which is constructive. It also supports some of the proposals, such as the election of youth officers in every constituency; holding "Labour Listens to Youth" events in the regions, and the convening of a "Youth Trade Unionists for Labour" Conference.

But the main aim of the right is to drown the Young Socialists' Marxist policies with bureaucratic controls.

If the YS supported the Labour leadership uncritically these attacks would not have occurred. What the right are attempting to achieve is a tame youth section along the lines of the Swedish Social Democrats' where the age limit is in fact 35!

Cutting the age limit will halve the membership precisely at a time when all sections of the Party need to recruit youth. It will effectively exclude many y
c
are in their twenties.

Lowering the age limit is nothing new. In 1936 the same thing was done as a prelude to disbanding the Labour League of Youth. Could this be what they've got in mind for the LPYS?

The proposal to elect the LPYS representative on the NEC by a "wider franchise" would remove the right of the national LPYS Conference to elect its own representative. Under the guise of "broader consultation" it would further dilute the autonomy of the LPYS.

The student organisation NOLS would have equal voting rights for the NEC position, yet only 1,000 of its 6,000 members are also members of the Labour Party.

What accountability exists if these non-Party members have a say in choosing a leading representative of the youth section? It's a ploy by the right to remove the voice of Marxism from Labour's leading youth body.

Tied to this is the proposal to establish an "Annual Youth Conference" made up of delegates from the LPYS, the CLPs, Women's organisations, the student movement and the trade unions, which would become a "rally with workshops". If this is based on an under-21 age limit it would be a very small and unrepresentative conference.

The other major proposal is to "establish youth campaign committees at regional and national level which are representative of the whole of Labour youth."

Again, the YS welcomes any moves towards co-operation with the rest of the movement to win abour. But regional dready exist — they are regional youth committees which are democratically elected at YS Regional Conferences.

As has been proved in Scotland, the right and their shadows on the soft left will use these committees to try and stifle the Regional Youth Committees.

It is no coincidence that these attacks are being made at a time when the Party leadership is shifting away from socialist policies and a previous commitment to decent education, real training and above all a guaranteed job for all youth. The LPYS will fight hard to ensure that these demands are carried out by the next Labour Government.

Furious opposition will be stirred up across a broad section of the Party who recognise the LPYS as one of the most hard working and energetic sections.

What is needed now is a united campaign to defend the YS from these attacks. Already many trade unions have expressed their concern, particularly at the reduction of the age limit. The TASS National Youth Advisory Committee has already passed a resolution against the proposals.

At the same time as passing resolutions against the proposals we can build the YS around the October 18 demonstration calling for **Tories Out!** and the election of a socialist Labour government (leaflets and posters are available from the National Committee members).

By building for this demonstration we can build the YS and also build support in the labour movement to bury these proposals for good.

Send resolutions of protest to: Tom Sawyer (Chair of Youth Sub-Committee), Civic House, 20 Grand Depot Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6SF; with copies to: Larry Whitty, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.



Red Wedge, "Labour Listens to Youth" (?!) rallies, Tracy Ullman videos, "Jobs for Youth" posters! The Labour leadership is surely taking an interest in youth?

It should be an occasion for celebration. Unsurprisingly, given the track record and direction of the leadership, neither the policies imposed nor the proposals dreamt up by Tom Sawyer's Youth Committee could inspire the slightest whiff of merriment.

In a year from now, it is planned that the entire structure of Labour's youth section will be destroyed and replaced by regional workshops and rallies with no decision-making power.

Its elected NEC representative is to be replaced by one elected by trade union sections, CLPs and student clubs as well as YSs, destroying accountability, and most probaby arranged to install one more Clause Four Student, Kinnock supporter on the NEC.

Most damagingly, the sudden imposition of a 21 year age limit (at present 26) will decapitate the youth section. "Positive dilution" they call it. Bureaucratic coup it will be, if it goes through.

Of course the attacks on the YS are part of a wider witch hunt. But if the response by the left to the wtich-hunt has been lacsadaisical, then on the attacks against the YS it has often amounted to indifference.

This in some ways continues a long-standing left indifference to youth issues, despite the role youth have played in all the major struggles against Thatcher.

In some ways it results from the isolation from the rest of the left into which *Militant* has led the YS.

But the Labour left must overcome this past. If we want women's



John Tuite
(Norwood YS)

and Black Sections representation to advance we cannot let our youth section go to the wall.

Certainly any campaign against the witch hunt that doesn't place defence of the *Militant* at the centre of its concerns is especially doomed to irrelevancy and ineffectiveness in the YS as well as in the unions such as the NCU.

Relegating Militant to the back burner while correctly defending others against expulsions is like shutting a window and leaving the door wide open.

So it is a welcome step that LAW '86 has included the YS representative on the NEC, Frances Curran, on its platform at this year's Party Conference.

But it is equally clear that any campaign in defence of the YS that starts by deliberately excluding Militant supporters is disastrous.

Socialist Organiser's "Defend the YS" Campaign combines correct demands that the NEC keeps its hands off the LPYS, with demands on the *Militant* to stop its "sectarian abuse" of the YS. The demand to change the constitution to introduce proportional representation on the YS national committtee is at best sectarian and mule-headed, at worst adding fuel to the fire.

Youth in *Briefing* may or may not agree with these individual demands. But in defending the YS our demands on *Militant* are clear; primarily that it puts this fight right up front, and that it acts to overcome its isolation from the rest of the Labour left.

The YS can't fight alone. Certainly with or without *Militant* support, local YSs should affliate to LAW '86 and ensure that defending Labour's youth section is central to its concerns.

Blackpool crunch vote

Nuclear power – the beginning of the end?



The Labour Party leadership is cautiously tiptoeing towards adopting a non-nuclear energy policy.

Andy Porter
Brighton SERA & SERA Council (personal capacity)

The latest NEC statement, leaked to the press during TUC Congress (and not publicly available at the time of writing) calls for a "diminished and diminishing dependence on nuclear power in a decades-long process of ending its use."

The statement is allegedly backed by Kinnock, and represents a radical shift in policy.

It appears that the main issue at conference will not now be whether or not Labour goes anti-nuclear but the timescale for phasing out and other important details of policy.

25 years between left and right! Both SERA (the Socialist Environment and Resources Association) and FOE (Friends of the Earth) have been calling for a nuclear-free Britain by the year 2000, with a much shorter timescale for phasing out the older Magnox reactors.

Greenpeace, however, are due to publish a report which shows that it is technically and economically feasible for Britain to be free of nuclear reactors *within the life of the next parliament*. Greenpeace are launching a campaign based on this "Shut Them Down" policy.*

It is just this position that *Briefing* and others on the left have argued for some time. Anything less would leave the way open for a future pro-nuclear government to reverse the decision easily and reverse decades-long phase out implies more radiation pollution, nuclear waste and the risk of a British Chernobyl.

We are left with the stark contrast between Kinnock and his supporters talking in terms of 2–3 decades and the left — backed by Greenpeace — arguing for a period of only 4–5 years.

Ask yourself which policy is more likely to win votes, save lives and regenerate the coal industry?

Nuclear power is an issue where you cannot compromise and please everyone — Labour should become *the* anti-nuclear Party and this of course implies getting rid of Jack "Sellafield" Cunningham and pushing for radical amendments to the NEC statement at Conference.

At least one resolution to Conference (submitted by Brighton Kemptown CLP) calls for a 5 years phasing out period. With 196 resolutions submitted it's hard to predict what options will eventually emerge.

Briefing supporters should argue in support of the 5 year timescale and if this is defeated should back the original SERA proposal for a nuclear-free Britain by the year 2000.

Prior to the NEC statement SERA had indentified the following key issues to be pushed at Conference:

(i) Timescale (as above) — phasing out Magnox reactors within 3–5 years and the rest by 2000.

(ii) Cancelling the THORP reprocessing development at Sellafield.

(iii) Immediate closure of Reactors producing plutonium for military use such as Chapel Cross and Calder Hill.

Points (ii) and (iii) appear to have been met to some extent by the NEC statement but it will be important to hold out in support of tightly worded policy statements committing a future government to a clear course of action.

Both SERA and Greenpeace will have a presence at Conference and delegates would do well to liaise with these groups.

Remember the difference between success and failure could be a few years.

***Shut Them Down* — a report on the practicalities of a 4 year shut down programme for Britain is available from Greenpeace, 36 Graham Street, London N1 8LL.**

Civil nuclear war hots up

The struggle for a policy to close down all nuclear power plants, *without delay*, is now at the political centre-stage in Britain and throughout Europe. It is central to the creation of a safe world environment free of nuclear poison for the next thousand years.

Cllr Piers Corbyn

The Labour Party programme for "diminished dependence on nuclear power and the phasing out of existing plants" (which would, it seems, last for decades) is a big step forward from the "pause in the nuclear programme' windbagged into Parliament by Dr "Nuke" Cunningham in May.

However, because of the vagueness of the timescale involved the NEC statement as it stands could just be a "soft fudge option" unless the pace of nuke "phasing out" is forced by campaign action.

By a sliver of a majority the pro-nuke unions got a hard nuclear fudge adopted at TUC Congress. Interestingly the leadership of the "I'm all right at Wapping, Jack" EETPU dropped their strongly pro-nuclear motion "in the interests of unity" around the TUC fudge.

It could be said that the TUC's "freeze on the nuclear programme involving a critical review of all aspects of the nuclear industry" would naturally lead to a phase out of all nukes as they wore out.

However, this is not the purpose of the jackals of the EETPU and their allies in the nuclear chain which stretches all the way to the Apartheid occupation of Namibia to mine uranium. They want to freeze any phase out and put it in reverse.

Fudge tactics are no use to us. We want change and that demands clarity — an unequivocal policy of immediate closure of all nuclear plants — no delays.

The line fought for by the seafarers, miners, FBU, T&GWU and others at the TUC gives the lead for the main way forward.

OPPORTUNITIES

At the same time we must seize the enormous opportunities of the present crisis in energy policy to forge a coherent **environment-conscious democratic energy policy**: a policy which puts human and environmental needs before capitalist plunder of the present and desecration of the future.

In the wake of Chernobyl, although a number of Labour Local Authorities have very good energy policies involving CHP ("Combined Heat and Power" to use waste heat from coal/oil power stations), none of them were able to speak out effectively for a nuclear-free energy policy. This must change.

EUROPE

Thatcher: let them eat yellowcake!

By Dave Spencer (Coventry Labour Briefing)

One of the largest uranium mines in the world is at Rossing in the Namibian desert. It is mainly owned by Rio Tinto Zinc, a British multinational firm much beloved by British Pension Funds, and from it comes 46% of Britain's fuel for its nuclear power stations.

Namibia is illegally occupied by South Africa so that taxes from RTZ's profits help finance South Africa's war against SWAPO, the Namibian national liberation movement.

There are only 1½ million Namibian people in a country three times the size of Britain but there are over 100,000 South African troops there, mainly in the North along the Angolan border, at a cost of £1.5 million a day.

Since 1972 South Africa has declared a state of emergency in Namibia and nearly 100,000 people live in camps as exiles from their homes.

Mining at Rossing takes the [illegible] **radioactive dustclouds covering the area, seen over 40 miles away.**

Conditions of work are unbelievably hard for black workers at the mine with tremendous health risks, and a system of contract labour means that there is no continuous employment and no rights.

Big oil drums of uranium oxide or "yelow cake" are sent to British ports from Rossing to be used in British nuclear power plants. The main plants are Springfields near Preston and the MoD plant at Capenhurst on the Wirral.



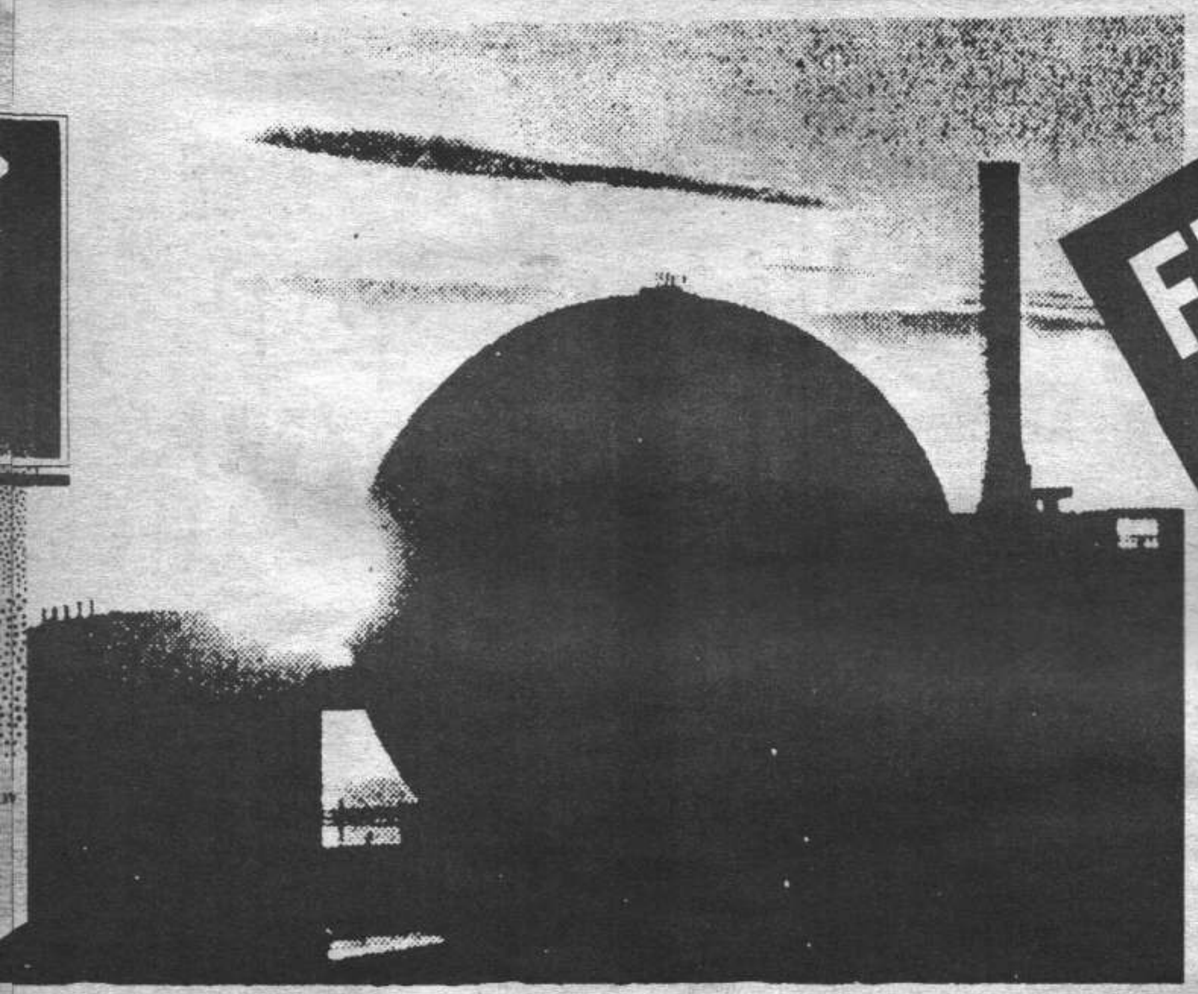
Solidarity action in Britain

The Namibian uranium is supposed to be used for military purposes only — for the future Trident missile programme — but in effect it is virtually impossible to separate the 2 processes of the civil and military cycles and each is dependent on the other.

No wonder the Tories do not want economic sanctions on South Africa! They need the oppression of the Namibian people — to ensure Namibian uranium — to ensure the Trident missile programme and the nuclear power programme!

Unfortunately the last Labour government — with David Owen as Foreign Seretary, remember? — depended on this oppression too.

At this year's Conference we have a chance to demand better from a future Labour Government.



After Chernobyl: Choking on the cloud of friendship

By Dave Spencer
Coventry Labour Briefing

"The best safety precautions of all have nothing to do with the proper design of machinery but with the proper design of society."

Zhores Medvedev

One of the major difficulties in opposing nuclear power internationally — particularly after Chernobyl — is the blanket on information and on protest inside the Stalinist states.

The Soviet CP is clearly committed to nuclear power and intends to forge ahead with its plans to create more and more Chernobyls all over the Eastern bloc.

The best known dissident groups in Eastern Europe have all declared their outrage at the disaster and their opposition to nuclear power.

On May 15, the temporary co-ordinating committee (TKK) of Solidarnosc, Poland, released a lengthy statement showing the direct connection between the Chernobyl disaster itself and the lack of freedom of information and organisation in Eastern Europe.

The first the Polish people knew of what had happened was from Western radio stations — a scandalous situation. Even 4 weeks after the event, no readings of contamination levels had been made public in Poland: its was left to the underground press.

The radioactive cloud is known among Polish workers as "the cloud of friendship" — a sarcastic comment on the relationship between Poland and the USSR.

On May 6, Charter 77 of Czechoslovakia released document no. 15/86 on Chernobyl, complaining about the misleading information given out officially in the Czech media.

Again the whole disaster was played down and a "slight increase in radioactivity" was referred to. The key issue once more is that of human rights to information and protest.

On the same day, May 6, the Soviet Independent Peace Group, the Moscow Trustbuilders, circulated an open letter. They declared that after a series of reports and discussions on Chernobyl in their Group, they had decided to add opposition to nuclear power to their peace programme. Above all they insist on the whole truth being told to the Soviet public.

It is 30 years this October since Khruschev's anti-Stalin speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. After Chernobyl the question of full democratic rights in the Stalinist states is even more a vital issue for us all.

The "cloud of friendship" knows no national boundaries. Without proper information, discussion and possibilities of protest, more disasters will occur.

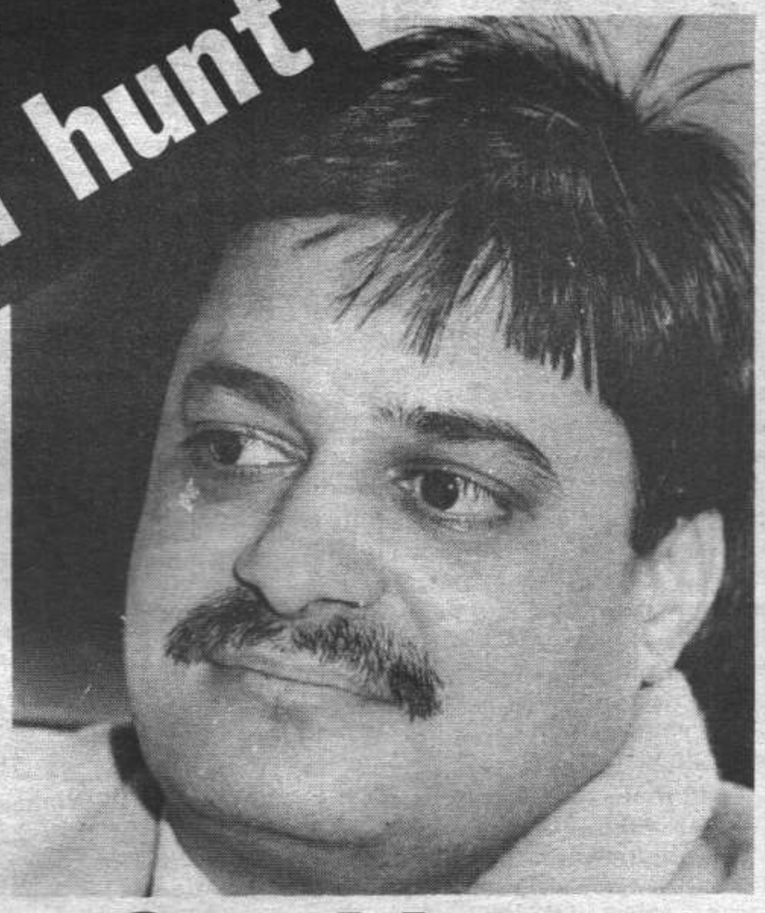
Those influenced by the CP — whether of Euro or Moscow variety or even those who "defend the Soviet Union" because "any enemy of US imperialism must be our friend" — must begin to think hard.

Contact: Voice of Solidarity, 215 Balham High Rd, London SW17 7BN.

NUCLEAR NEWS

- **The German SPD at its Annual Conference in Nuremburg this August committed itself to closing all nuclear power stations within 10 years. The voting was almost unanimous — only 2 votes against.**
- **The Austrian government has announced that their first and only nuclear power plant at Zwetendorf, 30 miles from Vienna — will not start operating and will be dismantled forthwith. This follows a national referendum 6 years ago in Austria which decided against nuclear power.**
- **In Spain a [illegible] has been shut down on safety grounds. In France, Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand have had urgent talks concerning a serious accident at a French nuclear plant near the German border.**
- **In Britain, the International Atomic Energy Agency are to send between 10 to 15 officials to perform an in depth review of safety standards at a British nuclear reactor. It is likely to be one of the 18 Magnox reactors, most of which are over 20 years old and described by some critics as "geriatric".**

Fighting the Witch hunt



John Chapman

Turning the tables in Sparkbrook

Amir Khan

Our campaign to reinstate myself and Kevin Scally has been the best organised campaign – both nationally and locally. We have had the support of many dedicated comrades.

We have got over 30 amendments on to the Conference agenda and Kevin and I have between us attended over 200 meetings. We have used the media well to get our message across to ordinary people.

Locally, we turned the tables at the Sparkbrook GMC which voted to reinstate us.

Sparkhill and Fox Hollies branches and the Sparkbrook YS and Women's Sections have declared their support. We have heard that the NEC will review our case. I think it is a con. We should have a full and open debate at Conference on our expulsions.

Even if our legal experts are confident that we will win our case in the capitalist courts. I think there is more justice in the capitalist courts than in the Labour Party!

I urge all delegates and party members to ensure there is a full discussion at this year's conference.

The fight must go on. There should be no more expulsions of Socialists from the Labour Party.

and at Conference

With the publication of a new book by Michael Crick on the Militant, there can be no doubt that the media will make the witch hunt a crucial issue at this year's Party conference.

All the indications are that the union bloc votes will be wheeled out to ensure no embarrassment to the Party leadership. Even the TGWU is likely to back Kinnock's stand on witch-hunting the Left, despite its formal conference policy.

More and more the Party leadership, aided by the media, argue that socialist policies scare off the electorate and that the socialists who support them must be marginalised and in some cases expelled. Those who dare to challenge the Party leadership, as did Amir Khan and Kevin Scally in Roy Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency, face expulsion.

Of course it is not true that socialist policies are unpopular. Opposition to nuclear power and nuclear weapons, radical measures to tackle unemployment, and withdrawing Britain's troops from Ireland are all popular policies, and those who support them are the very comrades under threat inside the Party from the Kinnock leadership.

Valerie Coultas, Labour Against the Witch Hunt 86



Fortunately not everyone in the Party believes in the 'Unity with Kinnock at all costs up to the election' theme which the TUC and the media have been pushing. LAW 86 was set up from a national conference held in London in June, attended by dozens of constituencies and Party activists. It aims to campaign against the threat of expulsions of any socialists from the Party, be they supporters of Militant, Briefing, Black Sections or the Labour Committee on Ireland. LAW 86's vice chairs are Eric Heffer and Joan Maynard, and its sponsors include the Campaign Group of MPs, CLPD, National Labour Women's Conference and the LCI.

There are many resolutions and amendments on this year's conference agenda opposing the witch-hunt, contrary to the press claims that there is no opposition to Kinnock on this issue. Many of them rightly concentrate on the infamous expulsion of Khan and Scally. But as LAW 86 and the Left in the Party have always said, expulsions of socialists from the Party must be opposed across the board. LAW 86 represents the framework for left unity against the witch hunt at this year's conference and beyond.

Contact LAW 86, c/o 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14 9HB.

No to the Witch hunt



Press Association Photos

Would you sell this man a socialist paper?

LAW 86 Fringe Meeting at conference
No to the witch hunt!
Monday 29 Sept, lunchtime
Station Hotel, Talbot Rd, nr Winter Gdns
Speakers invited include:
Frances Curran LPYS, Khan/ Scally Defence Campaign, Eric Heffer, Black Sections, Joan Maynard.

A Ministry for all women!



When the Labour Party first made known its proposals for a Ministry for Women, to be set up by the next Labour government, many women in the Party were delighted by what they saw as a firm commitment to women's rights.

However, much of the initial delight has now turned to cynicism, and it is worth taking a closer look at some of the reasons for this reaction.

Jane Prust, Deptford CLP

Already the Ministry for Women has been downgraded. Kinnock has made it clear that he does not see the Minister's job as being a Cabinet post, and that any powers which the Ministry has will be severely limited. Jo Richardson has fought for increased power and status for the Women's Ministry, but with little support from the rest of the Party. It is becoming increasingly clear that the party leadership see the Ministry as being only a token commitment to women's rights, along the lines of "Now we've given those feminists a Ministry, perhaps they'll go away and shut up".

Because so much of the discussion so far has been involved with the structures of the proposed ministry, very little time has been spent discussing the policies which a Women's Ministry would implement. This debate around policies is absolutely crucial to the development of the Ministry. A Women's Ministry must fight for all women – black women, working class women, lesbians, – we do not want to see yet another body apparently created to give jobs to a few middle class careerists.

The London Regional Women's Committee has called a conference to discuss policies for the Women's Ministry, details of date and venue will be included in the next issue. It promises to be an interesting and lively debate. It is vital that we, as women, make our voices heard on this issue and do not allow ourselves to be hi-jacked by the male party bureaucrats. The Ministry for Women must represent and work for us, not Neil Kinnock and his cronies.

Sisterhood and solidarity

On Tuesday September 30 Labour Women for Ireland (LWI) and SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign (SWSC) are holdng a joint fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool: "Ministry for Women — sisterhood *and* solidarity".



A panel of speakers, including Bernadette Devlin McAlisky, Councillor Martha Osamor, Ida Jimmy of SWAPO and Joan Ruddock (invited), will discuss changes that Labour women want to see in women's policy and foreign policy under the next Labour government.

Proposals for a Minstry of Women under a future Labour government are currently under consideration.

All women need to participate fully in discussion on the role this Ministry could play in affecting Labour's policy on support for national and women's self determination both in this country and internationally.

SWSC and LWI feel this aspect of the proposed Ministry is vital and should be tackled now.

The record of the Labour Party in government is hardly better than that of the Tories in its policy and actions on Ireland and on Namibia and South Africa.

The Labour Party has also failed to tackle effectively the issue of racism in Britain and the problems faced by black and Irish women, among others, living in this country. However Labour *women* have a record of opposition to Britain's oppressive foreign policies in their stance against the Malvinas war and in their support for Greenham women, as well as in support of the people of Ireland and Namibia.

South Africa's brutal and illegal occupation of Namibia (aided and abetted by successive British governments) bears many resemblances to Britain's own military occupation of Ireland.

The British and South African armies use Ireland and Namibia repectively as a testing ground for developing techniques of repression. Women in both countries face constant sexual violence and intimidation by the occupying forces.

The rape of Namibian women and the use of strip-searching and the Prevention of Terrorism Act against Irish women are essential factors in the wars being conducted by Britain in Ireland and South Africa in Namibia, while black women in this country face intimidation by a racist police force.

In both Namibia and Ireland women organise to strengthen their involvement in the struggle for national and women's self-determination and liberation.

Ministry of Women — Sisterhood and Solidarity* will be held on Tuesday September 30 at 6.30pm in the Banqueting Hall at the Cliffs Hotel, Queen's Promenade, Blackpool. This promises to be an exciting meeting and we look forward to seeing a large number of women there. *For more information contact Ros Young on 01–267 1941.

No rooom in centre for Labour!

Anthony Arblaster

socialist SOCIETY

This is the first of a regular series of columns from the Socialist Society.

This year's Labour Party Conference, which, as everyone tells us, may be the last before the next general election, looks like being not much more than a pre-election Party rally, with the few murmurings of discontent being drowned out by strident calls for unity and repeated choruses of "Sit down, you're rocking the boat."

This is understandable enough. Labour got a terrible fright in 1983, not so much because Thatcher did so well — in terms of votes she didn't — but because the Alliance emerged as such a serious competitor for the non-Tory vote. The Alliance has not gone away, however much Labour may wish it would. It is still doing very well in both local government and parliamentary by-elections, and will certainly offer a strong challenge to Labour at the next election.

Labour needs, at the very least, to emerge from that election as the largest single party in parliament. If it cannot do that it could easily be replaced by the Alliance as Britain's second political party. Perhaps in the long term (if there is a long term) that would lead to the restructuring of the Left and the emeregence of a genuine socialist party that many people hope for. Perhaps. What is certain is that for the next decade or more the collapse of Labour would be a disaster for the entire Left in Britain.

None of this, I hasten to add, is meant to imply that I look on Labour as a socialist party, or imagine that the next Labour government will make a dramatic shift to the Left. The argument is a different and more modest one: if people in Britain are not even sufficiently radical and class-conscious to vote for a moderate and pragmatic party like Labour, rather than an anti-socialist grouping of the centre, what hope can there really be of putting anything so radical as socialism on the agenda of British politics?

Labour's desperate desire to win the next election is thus entirely understandable, even from a socialist point of view. Hence the passion for unity and the impatience with any kind of dissent or criticism.

Nevertheless, this intolerance of dissent is mistaken, and should be resisted. For we still have to ask whether Labour, and the Labour leadership, are in fact going the right way about achieving that victory. And the first thing to notice is that Kinnock's chosen path, of "moderation" coupled with vehement attacks on *Militant* and the Left, has not been especially successful in rebuilding Labour's support, to judge by the opinion polls. Labour's recovery has been modest and, as the Newcastle by-election underlined, remains very fragile.

The right wing response to this is what it always is: to move still further Right, and occupy the supposed centre-ground of British politics. There is one problem with this strategy — and it is a major one. The centre-ground is already occupied. We already have a centre party. It is called the Alliance. And if people really want to support a centre party, that is what they will vote for — and *are* voting for. By comparison Labour in that role looks phoney and unconvincing.

No. The success of the Alliance must, in the long run, force Labour to accept its position as a party of the Left. And the sooner the better — not merely from a socialist point of view, but from the point of view of Labour's own survival. For a truly radical and socialist party has far more potential popular appeal than the apostles of "realism" and "common sense" are ever likely to recognise.

Take just one example: the issue of nuclear power. The Chernobyl disaster brought to the surface all the submerged fears that people rightly have about the nuclear industry. There is now a huge groundswell of opinion in favour of doing away with the whole dangerous, arrogant and expensive experiment. But Chernobyl found Labour's leaders tongue-tied. Having brushed aside last year's conference vote against nuclear power as "unrealistic", they now find themselves running to catch up with the tide of public revulsion against nuclear power.

The message is clear: a radical vision and a political courage equal to the vast problems and dangers we now face, internationally as well as nationally, will not do Labour any harm, electorally or otherwise. Hesitating on the centre ground is not a recipe for success.

Mitterrand's missed opportunity

Fran Rayner Hampstead & Highgate CLP

The discussion document on a British Ministry for Women's Rights praises the French Ministry and says that it "continues to command the support of the majority of French women."

It is true that substantial support from women helped to bring the French Socialists to power in 1981. In part they were voting against right wing austerity, but they were also voting in favour of Mitterrand's clear election pledge to create a Ministry for Women's Rights with its own Budget.

However, hesitancy and an over-reliance on measures of formal equality, left the Ministry marginalised within the Government. It lacked support from working class women, and became a prime target for the right-wing backlash.

Although the Minstry's Budget increased yearly, it was still only a tiny amount, and was spent mainly on inaccessible and unaccountable Ministry bureaucrats, rather than measures of direct intervention.

Before the election individuals within the Ministry had roundly condemned the spread of poorly-paid part-time work, as a central part of the Socialists' plans to help the employers ride the crisis, the Ministry actually championed part-time work, urging women not to miss "the third Industrial Revolution"!

As well as undermining the position of women in the workforce, the Socialist Government introduced their "Plan Famille" which actively encouraged women to return to the home.

Immigrant women found no support from the Ministry — either locally or nationally — in their fight against the fascists.

Because the Ministry looked to changes in the law at the expense of the active support of the women who had helped elect it, it was over-ruled and ignored by the rest of the Government, lacking power and muscle.

Its future under the new government of the right hardly seems secure.

The French experiment is a warning to all those who see a Ministry for Women's Rights as an end in itself. The undoubted support for such a Ministry in Britain stems from the desire of women to control their own lives and the policies of a Ministry should build on this so as not to degenerate into bureaucratic elitism.

Unless it has the courage and political will to fight for radical changes for women, it will be defeated by its own timidity.

Help at hand for the humourless

Battleaxe raises its head

At last... for humourless feminists, tired Trotskyists, mindless militants... help is at hand.

Stereotyping has always been a handy weapon to keep the oppressed in their place. Recently Labour's nouveau right have been flailing it about like there was no Thatcher. We're all dinosaurs, it said so in the *New Statesman*! Class politics is so passé, dear: ask any contributor to *Marxism Today*. And *Militants* are just so BORING they ask to be expelled: just look at *Tribune*!

For those of you who don't agree with the above propositions, for those of you who haven't shed your revolutionary aspirations with last year's Joseph Tricots; for those of you who baulk at saying "I'm not a feminist, but..." even in the politest company: *you are not alone*.

We started *Battleaxe* because we believe women's liberation and socialism are inseperable, not just as a general truth but in practice here and now. We don't believe that men (including working-class-revolutionary-left men) will give us our liberation.

Nobody will free us but ourselves. And it has to start here and now. Unlike the so-called "soft" or "democratic left" (a bigger misnomer than Hitler's National Socialist Worker's Party — at least half the words were true) we don't think "answering capitalism is the answer to women's problems.

We don't think/see a contradiction between class politics and women's liberation. Black and white working class women will be in the forefront of the revolution or there will be no revolution.

We brought out a pilot issue of *Battleaxe* in time for Labour Party Women's Conference. Shock horror, it's glossy, lively and humorous fomat sold quicker than we could staple the pages together.

We'd definitely proved there was an audience for it. Since, we 've hit a few snags. No major distributor wants to handle it because the profit margins are too low.

That includes "alternative" distributors who also found the name unfeminist (such a shame that men have no sense of humour!). Unlike Rupert Murdoch we don't have a fleet of lorries to get around the problem.

So we're reliant on subscriptions. The next issue is out mid-September, price 60p, If you believe Women's Liberation/Socialism has a future, IS the future...

If you want to be sure of getting the next issue then fill in the subscription form; enclose £10 for an annual subscription and return to *Battleaxe*, 8 Aubyn Square, London SW15.

Name .....

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Special offer to Briefing readers: £7.50.



PHOTO: Dave Evans, IFL



A future that won't work

The NEC recently published a detailed statement on the economic plans of a future Labour government.

The future they envisage is not socialist; nor will it do much to fight unemployment, despite the rhetoric.

The plans are posed in terms which are designed to cause the maximum confusion about what they really mean. It is vital for the Left in the Party to understand what is being proposed.

The joint John Smith-David Blunkett statement "Social Ownership — a vision for the 1990s" is a succinct statement of the NEC's proposals.

Its key planks are the establishment of a National Investment Bank (NIB), a new corporation to boost investment called "British Enterprise", and the extension of "social ownership" to replace the "outmoded" concept of "nationalisation". It sounds very radical, but the small print of the proposals belies the radical phrases.

What is the "social ownership" being proposed?

It is two things: worker co-operatives and employee share ownership plans (ESOPs). This is what replaces "old fashioned" nationalisation.

Now, no one on the left would want to oppose worker co-operatives, indeed they would have an important role in any socialist plan for the economy.

But the problem has always been that worker co-ops which have to operate in a capitalist economy are subject to the same imperatives of profitability as normal capitalist companies. The result is that they have a hard time flourishing under capitalism, when the entrenched capitalist corporations can squeeze them out.

The case of the Meridan motorcycle co-op in the 1970s is a classic. Despite the support of the then Industry Minister Tony Benn, the Meridan co-op was simply crushed by capitalist competition.

Worker co-ops won't blossom in any decisive sectors of the economy without state financing: and this would mean supporting them against the existing capitalist firms — something which a Kinnock-Hattersley government is unlikely to do.

In the real world worker co-ops are likely to remain small and marginal to the economy. Seetting up a workers co-op car factory or steel mill in opposition to the existing firms is both economically irrational and self-defeating.

What about ESOPs? This is the decisive proposal of the new "social ownership" plan.

ESOP companies would be required to be run on the basis of giving workers voting shares. Workers, owners and managers would all have shares and votes.

Now this proposal can work if you have a new, small firm, with no existing pattern of share ownership. It would be, in fact, a worker co-operative.

By Phil Hearse (Islington North CLP)

But is it in the least bit likely that existing British industry, the multi-national giants, or even the medium sized British manufacturing companies will become ESOP-ised?

The barriers to such development are enormous. The bait being offered to existing owners and managers — state financing — is not enough to make them give up their present capitalist ownership.

Most will continue to go to the High Street and merchant bankers for their capital, without the overhead of having to give their companies over to the majority votes of worker shareholders.

And in any case, what do you do with a company which declares for ESOP and government financing, but has hundreds of existing shareholders? How do you prevent the workforce being outvoted, without expropriating the existing shareholders, something which of course is definitely *not* proposed.

The truth is therefore that worker co-ops and ESOP-ised companies are going to remain, at best, marginal companies on the fringes of an overwhelmingly capitalist economy.

The experience of the 1974 Labour government with voluntary planning agreements (i.e. that nobody volunteered) should tell us exactly what is going to happen to ESOPs.

Finally, the notion of ESOPs as an alternative to nationalisation is not so new as David Blunkett and John Smith think — it has a remarkable resemblence to the old Liberal Party doctrine of co-ownership.

It is worth making the point once again that this tinkering with "new" forms of social ownership is justified by Blunkett and Smith on the grounds that the existing nationalised corporations are bureaucratic monoliths which alienate people and haven't done much to change the real structure of ownership and control of the economy in Britain.

This startling insight, a constant theme of the LCC-style soft left, gratefully taken up by the leadership as a weapon to beat the left which defends nationalisation, is really not so new either.

In fact, any militant socialist would have told you exactly the same twenty or thirty years ago when the Party leadership were still defending Morrisonian nationaliation.

The problem with existing nationalised industries is that they are the nationalised sector of a *capitalist* economy, and act under capitalist economic imperatives and with capitalist labour discipline and authority structures.

Our alternative is nationalised industry as the dominant sector of the economy, democratically run under workers' control.

The "radical" Blunkett-Smith alternative turns out to be small-scale tinkering with marginal firms.

If social ownership is the selling point of Hattersley-economics the most operative point is the National Investment Bank and the new corporation "British Enterprise".

The national Investment Bank (NIB) will encourage deposits from investors through "tax incentives". In this way the money will be found to boost the economy. Such a plan is fraught with problems.

Among the most obvious are:

● The amount of money needed to really renovate the British economy is so vast that the NIB can't possibly raise it.

For example the TUC has proposed a minimum of £30 billion be spent in five years on renewing infrastructure — roads, hospitals, schools, the collapsing sewers and so on.

This amount of money will never be raised by the NIB, nor the equally large amount needed to recapitalise industry.

● Return on capital invested with the NIB is not likely to be higher than short-term speculative gain which the by-then de-regulated Stock Exchange can get by investing abroad, on takeovers, etc.

Tax concessions and penalties for investing abroad can easily be evaded, and in any case won't compensate for the differential on the rate of return.

● In the last analysis, without imposing stringent controls on capital movements, which would need to be rigorously enforced, the NIB would rely on the goodwill of investors to raise the money.

The major banks would lend some money through the pressure of the Bank of England. But the sum would be marginal to any serious plan to boost the economy sufficiently to make a major impact on unemployment.

Once again we are left with the conclusion that the NIB and British Enterprise would be marginal bodies, as was the National Enterprise Board in the 1970s, at least in terms of the scale of the investment needed to create jobs.

The comparison with the National Enterprise Board is an interesting one because this body merely acted as a funnel for state handouts for private industry, and got nothing back in terms of industrial democracy or workers control in return.

Indeed, while the NEC was pumping money into British Leyland, the BL management was in the first stages of slashing the workforce and trying to destroy shop-floor organisation.

Perhaps the Party's economic spokespeople have a premonition that their plans won't produce much because they have drastically pruned their objectives.

The new NEC—TUC plan is for a reduction in unemployment by one million in two years. With real unemployment between 4 and 5 million this is less than ambitious. But then to do more is inconceivable without mobilising vast amounts of new investment capital, only possible by nationalising the banks and the finance companies.

It goes without saying that this is not being proposed by the NEC; for the British capitalist class it is a crunch question, one which they would do everything in their power to prevent. But then we never are going to advance towards socialism without confronting the ruling class, are we?

One final point on the "Social Ownership" document — its proposals on renationalisation.

Since expropriation is deemed out of the question, the plan for renationalisation of for example British Telecom involves exchanging shares for non-voting investment bonds. Short term capital gains through early selling of the bonds will be severely penalised through taxation. Only long-terms investors will make a substantial profit.

It is not (surprise, surprise) envisaged that this plan would be carried out immediately, but only after several years of Labour government.

The weakness of the plan is of course that the large capitalist institutions which have the lion's share of the private investment in BT, and will have in British Gas and other formerly nationalised industries, might well be content to leave their investment to accrue substantial capital gains over the long term.

The non-voting bonds ploy does not circumvent a change in the structure of nationalised industry — a huge chunk of it will remain privately owned.

The NEC's proposals on the economy have to be set in the context of two other proposals, one explicit the other hinted at but definitely on the agenda.

● The NEC-TUC document on labour law retains statutory compulsion for strike ballots, and a labour relations tribunal backed by the force of the law. A move to delete the word "statutory" from the document by Tom Sawyer of NUPE at the NEC was outmanoeuvred by Kinnock who put it back in a subsequent paragraph.

● Second, the proposal for a statutory minimum wage, very modestly posed by the TUC at £80 per week, is being interpreted by Hattersley as meaning that in order to maintain the value of this minimum, other sectors of workers will have to show "restraint".

In an interview with Jonathan Dimbleby on March 16, Hattersley made it clear that although there would be no formal pay norm, the unions would have to come to an "understanding" with the government on how much was available for wages.

The Hattersley-Smith-Blunkett plans for the economy after the election of a Labour government are flawed because the mechanisms they propose will turn out to be peripheral to the basic structures of ownership, control and investment decision-making.

Thus they will be incapable of either dealing with unemployment or making any steps towards socialism.

The Left should not be fooled. The elephant of capitalism will swat the gnat of "social ownership"— or better still ignore it.



John Smith facing shipworkers' lobby of Parliament

G. Livett/Frame

ON THE FRINGE

'DEFEND THE LAMBETH 31'

Date: Monday September 29th
Time: 1pm
Venue: Renaissance Restaurant, Winter Gardens
Speakers: Ted Knight, ex-Leader, Lambeth Council
Joan Walley, Surcharged Councillor and PPC for Stoke-on-Trent North
Anna Tapsell, Lambeth NALGO.

Campaign Group of Labour MPs

Fringe meeting on NUCLEAR POWER

Venue: Prince Henry Room, New Clifton Hotel, Talbot Square, Blackpool.
Date: Monday, September 29th 1986, 12.30 till 2.00pm
Chair: Martin Redmond MP
Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Frank Cook MP, Gavin Strang MP, Mike Malina — SERA, Anne Suddick — WAPC & LINKS.

ON OUR WAY BACK

Fifteen years ago Tariq Ali wrote a book entitled 'The Coming British Revolution' which concluded – 'Given the developments throughout West Europe and the turn of events in the United States, coupled with the favourable balance of forces in Asia and Latin America, one can say that we shall once again see soviets in Europe in the seventies'.

The book was a product of that strange messianic utopianism which sets in when the Left appears to be at a high of successful intervention in the labour movement and which rapidly degenerates into despondency and disillusionment when the revolution is found not to be round the corner and capitalism demonstrates its resilience to stumble on.

Sweeping All In Our Path

Cumulative victories by the Left from 1979 onwards linked to the developing crisis of capitalism leading up to the miners. strike and the GLC and ratecapping campaigns instilled a similar euphoria in many Left groups and individual socialists. Between 1979 and 1985 we seemed to be sweeping all in our path – gaining major constitutional reforms in the Party, controlling the National Executive Committee, forcing through major new policies on the Conference floor, radicalising local government with the election of Left councils, building Marxist organisations within the Party, and establishing the role of oppressed groups within the revolutionary struggle – especially women, ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians and people with disabilities.

The miners' strike and the ratecapping struggle were major tests of the strength of this development of the Left. They proved inevitably that there were still major weaknesses on the Left. The Left still gullibly allows itself to be used as a vehicle for Labour movement opportunities and careerists. There is still a failure to take theory seriously, particularly the development of a clear analysis of the state and the capitalist economy. There is an ever present tendency to sectarianism, especially prevalent when setbacks occur.

Resilience of the Left

Nevertheless, what has proved impressive over the last 12 months has not been the weakness of the Left but its resilience. Despite some disorientation after the miners' strike and the various sectarian splits in several major Left groups, the Left has sustained and is currently regrouping in strength.

Articles in Tribune and the New Statesman, combined with the diatribes from the LCC, have read like premature obituaries of the Left. The message from the 1986 Party Conference to Kinnock and his Tribunite/LCC acolytes is that the Left is alive and kicking. We're not going away and we're not going to stand on one side whilst he seeks to push the Party back down the path of Wilson and Callaghan in government.

Although we may have lost some media-megastars to the Right over the last year the basic resources on the Left are undiminished. Within the trade union movement workers at Wapping, Silentnight, the NUM, within the Health Service, have proved their willingness to continue to fight the Tories. The newly elected Labour councils across the country are placing demands on Kinnock which they will seek to force on him in government. The impetus of the Black sections movement has proved to be unrelenting and women in the labour movement have built a base of support for their demands which even this right wing leadership cannot ignore.

The role of the Left now is to ensure that the current regroupment holds firm and addresses the weaknesses the post-miners' strike period revealed. The concept of Campaign Forum bringing together the coalition of Left organisations within the CLPs under Labour Left Liaison, with the Campaign Group of MPs, is a breakthrough. It could provide for the first time a powerful link between rank and file socialists in the CLPs and MPs capable of forcing issues onto the Parliamentary agenda. The next stage in the development of the Campaign Forum must be the rebuilding of a Left organisation within the trade unions to form the third arm of the Forum including the CLPs, the Campaign Group of MPs and firm Left trade union groups in the individual trade unions.

Co-operation within the Campaign Forum gives us the opportunity to break down the damaging sectarian methods of working which have bedevilled the Left over the last year. Left discipline is bitterly hard to establish. This first step towards cooperation could prepare the way for a concerted intervention by the Left when Kinnock goes into government and buckles under capitalist pressure to turn on the working class.

The Campaign Forum initiative should also not be allowed to become solely an organisational pact. It could provide a locus for the development of comradely debate on the Left, of theoretical discussion, and the preparation and advocacy of socialist concepts, policies and programmes. We need to drastically raise the level of political consciousness in the Party.

Despite Kinnock's wishful thinking the Left is not on its knees. Over the last 12 months experienced has matured us. We're on our way back.

John McDonnell

BRIEFING

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

Fringe meeting
Sunday 28th September, 1.30 to 4.00
Station Hotel, Talbot Rd, Blackpool (opposite the Winter Gardens)

Turn back the GREY TIDE!

Speakers:

Tony Benn MP, Campaign Group
Liz Short, MOC Times Clerical SOGAT
Mandy Moore, National Labour Women's C'ttee
Derek Hatton, Liverpool Council
Nadine Finch, chair, Labour C'tee on Ireland
Narendra Makanji, Sec, National Black Section
Joy Hurcombe, chair, Labour CND
Linda Bellos, leader, Lambeth Council
Kevin Scally, expelled member of Sparkbrook CLP
Steve Reicher, Labour Briefing
Jane Prust, Labour Briefing, chair

CONFERENCE GREETINGS

Hayes and Harlington CLP
Fighting racism
Fighting repression
Fighting back!
FORWARD TO SOCIALISM

Secretary: Cllr. Michael Walker. President: Peter MacDonald

LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT 86 urges all Labour Party and trade union members to take issue with Party leaders and trade union bosses who support the purge of socialists from the Labour Party.

Forward to a united campaign against the expulsions and for a Labour Government that changes the lives of working people!

HARINGEY LABOUR BRIEFING
Fighting for Lesbian and Gay Rights and for Broadwater Farm
Stop the frame up trials!
Drop all charges now!

Vauxhall Labour Party calls on all Conference delegates to support:

* LAMBETH'S SURCHARGED COUNCILLORS: They followed Conference policy and fought to defend jobs and services;

* And RECOGNITION FOR BLACK SECTIONS: For black representation at all levels of the Party.

Camden Briefing sends
GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE
Solidarity with the Printworkers!
Troops out of Ireland!

INDIAN WORKERS' ASSOCIATION
sends greetings to Conference

OPPOSE TORY IMMIGRATION LAWS.

OPPOSE THE ENTRY VISA CONTROLS.

President: Piara Singh Khabra, c/o Southall Town Hall, High Street, Southall, Middx.

HACKNEY LABOUR LEFT
Sends Greetings to Conference
Oppose the Anglo-Irish Accord!

Labour CND campaigning for a nuclear free Britain, the closure of all US bases and withdrawal from NATO.

Hackney South CLP sends socialist greetings to Labour Party Conference

Brighton Briefing sends greetings to Conference
"LABOUR TAKE THE POWER!"

Socialist greetings from Oxford University Labour Club

REINSTATE KHAN AND SCALLY
Birmingham Labour Briefing

Labour Party Black Sections

The Labour Party – Black Sections

Sends greetings to conference
Support Narendra Makanji
Russell Profitt
Diane Abbott

Brighton Kemptown CLP sends greetings
No to nuclear power!
End the Witch Hunt
Support the Brighton Kemptown resolution and amendment

Greetings from COVENTRY BRIEFING GROUP
Keep up the fight for the release and reinstatement of all victimised miners!
And in memory of Davy Jones, courageous fighter for all working people

Brent Briefing sends
GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE
No Witch Hunt!
Amnesty for Sacked and Gaoled Miners!

Non-fiction Book of 1986

***Peter Kent-Baguley* reviews *AIDS: A Guide to Survival*, by Peter Tatchell, published by GMP, 1986, £3.50.**

AIDS concerns everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, and Tatchell's message is simple and brief: "Ultimately, it's a choice between survival or suicide."

Of course, as he points out, the choice is not "between AIDS and abstinence but rather between AIDS and playing safely" (p 31). He goes on to lay the ghost of promiscuity *in itself* being the source of disease:

"The key to playing safe and preventing AIDS is not how often people have sex or how many partners they have. It is the *way* people have sex."

With the emergence of AIDS in the West, gay liberationists were confronted with an awkward dilemma: how to change the form of sexual behaviour without abandoning the essence of sexual liberation.

Irreconcilable

The personal and the political suddenly seemed irreconcilable. The shortage of medical facts, along with the abundance of undisguised and unrestrained hysterical hatred against gays unleashed by the press, made the personal and political reassessment doubly difficult.

The book celebrates the resilience, resourcefulness and radicalism of the gay community's response in developing self-help care, funding research, publishing information and generating a responsible political consciousness; a staggeringly successful response in the context of media-hyped horror and hysteria and Government indifference and inaction.

Seriousness

Tatchell recognises the seriousness of AIDS *in itself* while emphasising its (as yet) relatively small death toll compared to deaths from cancer, road accidents, diabetes, heart diseases and cervical cancer. It is also a difficult disease to catch, and his concern is to ensure that AIDS remains both a relatively minor killer-disease and also a difficult one to catch.

His argument for taking the HTLV-3 Test is strong:

"Since knowledge is power, taking the test and knowing the result enables informed decisions to be made which enhances a person's sense of control and mastery over their future." (p. 29)

The third chapter, *Fighting Back Against AIDS*, is full of clear suggestions and essential reading for *everyone*, not just those with the HTLV-3 virus or AIDS.

We all need reminders of the care and maintenance needs of our bodies; possibilities, not proscriptions are introduced, encouraging the reader to construct a personal daily programme for a holistic health routine.

In a sensitive and moving way, Tatchell emphasises that people with AIDS "need to face up to the possibility, though not the inevitability" of death and explores a range of practical issues faced by those severely debilitated with AIDS.

He slams the "sordid and morbid" press coverage and the Government's lack of a "coherent, comprehensive and co-ordinated strategy for the prevention of AIDS, the treatment of people with HTLV-3 or the development of a vaccine." (p. 111) He outlines a six-point programme with a minimum funding of £30 million which the Government should implement immediately.

Sound

At last we have a book on AIDS offering sound suggestions and sensitive support for AIDS sufferers and admirable advice for everyone. It is a positive and cogent challenge to national negativism.

Seldom is theory and practice, the personal and the political, so effortlessly interwoven as it is here. Arguably the most important non-fiction book of 1986, it deserves to be a best-seller; certainly everyone should read it.

Peter Kent-Baguley is a member of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and is the Reviews Editor and Features Co-Editor of the Campaign's magazine, *Lesbian and Gay Socialist*, published quarterly (70p from alternative bookshops or £1 by post from PKB, The Old Vicarage, Newchapel, Stoke on Trent).

'GAY RIGHTS' — or Gay Liberation?

Nearly two decades after the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement in Britain, there is *at last* growing suport for gay and lesbian rights within the labour movement.

By Peter Tatchell

There is, however, still very little awareness and commitment to the ideals of lesbian and gay *liberation*.

The difference between gay rights and gay liberation is not just a matter of words. It is a political difference between two fundamentally distinct concepts of homosexual emancipation.

The gay rights philosophy is essentially a reformist one. It is about lesbians and gay men winning equality with heterosexuals in the realms of employment, child custody, housing, age of consent, immigration, the armed forces and so on.

Discrimination

Given the continuing vast scale of discrimination against gay people in these areas of everyday life, it is only natural and proper that this civil rights struggle ought to take precedence for the foreseeable future.

It should not, however, preclude a simultaneous commitment to the longer term goal of lesbian and gay liberation. This goal is based on the recognition that since both homosexuality and heterosexuality are socially-conditioned rather than biologically determined, we can and ought to strive to remove the cultural and legal restraints which restrict and deform their expression.

Self-destructive

To this end, and somewhat paradoxically, the ultimate objective of gay liberation is wholly self-destructive: to abolish homosexuals as a distinct category of persons.

In place of separate homosexual and heterosexual people, gay liberationists affirm the intrinsic and universal capacity for *everyone* to experience the homosexual dimension of their personality and, by implication, their heterosexual dimension too!

Whereas the gay rights philosophy often seems to assume that homosexuality is destined to remain perpetually a minority sexual practice, gay liberationism asserts that given the plasticity of human sexuality, in time homosexuality could become part of typical sexual/emotional expression for the *whole* of the population — on an equal par with heterosexuality — *if* the institutional and ideological restrictions against it were removed.

Structures

The difference in perspectives is also evidenced by the way some proponents of gay rights seek equality with heterosexuals on *their* terms, within the dominant sexual structures. They stress, for example, that gay men can be just as much "real men" as heterosexual males and that lesbians can be euqally as feminine as heterosexual women.

But are the prevailing patterns of heterosexual masculinity and femininity worthy ideals to emulate? The advocates of gay liberation think not, and accordingly reject the prevailing sexual norms and institutions — the gender division between men and women and the traditional masculine and feminine roles which function to oppress both women and gay men.

Gay liberationism is therefore a truly *revolutionary* political philosophy, not only because it refuses to accept exclusive heterosexuality as the permanent majority form of sexual expression, but perhaps even more so because it rejects the male heterosexual cult of masculine competitiveness, domination and violence in favour of affirming male sensitivity and affection between men — or without men in the case of lesbian relationships!

By so doing, gay liberationism has profoundly radical implications, not only for homosexual men and women, but also for oppressed peoples everywhere: it actively subverts the male heterosexual "machismo" values which lie at the heart of *all* relations of domination, exploitation and oppression.

Gay liberationism is therefore absolutely *central* to human liberation in general because without the successful creation of a cult of heterosexual masculinity and the existence of a mass of aggressive male egos (which some women such as Margaret Thatcher and some gay men such as the Japanese fascist Yukio Mishima also occasionally acquire) neither class, sexual, racial, species nor imperialist oppression are possible.

All these different forms of oppression depend on two factors for their continued maintenance. First, on specific political and economic structures. Second, on a significant proportion of the population, mainly heterosexual men, being indoctrinated through the family, school, church and media into accepting "macho" values.

The internalisation of these harsh masculine values is what makes so many millions of people pyschologically suited and willing to be part of oppressive systems of exploitation and domination, often against their own objective self-interest.

Human liberation in all its different dimensions therefore requires us to change *both* the social structure *and* the individual personality to create people who no longer crave the power to dominate and exploit others and who are thus unwilling to be the agents of oppressive regimes and institutions.

Liberation

By challenging the ascendency of exclusive heterosexuality and the cult of heterosexual masculinity, lesbian and gay liberation goes way beyond the limited reformist horizons of gay rights and offers a unique and revolutionary contribution to the liberation of the *whole* of humanity from *all* forms of oppression.

labour campaign for lesbian and gay rights

Conference Debate

We have ten resolutions/amendments on lesbian and gay rights, and so hope for a debate at Party Conference. Our aim is to get the two thirds majority — and so a space in the next manifesto. We particularly need support from those Trade Unions that didn't give us backing last year — so if there are any activists/delegation members in such Unions, who may be able to help us, then please get in touch.

Manifesto

Our campaign activities at Party Conference will also see the launch of *Legislation for Lesbian and Gay Rights: A Manifesto*. This document — sponsored by ourselves, CHE and NCCL — gives a wide ranging account of changes in the law that we feel are necessary to give genuine legal equality to Lesbians and Gays.

The manifesto is comprehensive, controversial, and far reaching, and by dealing with such areas as "heterosexist policy in the law', and "the legislation of sexual morality" it unearths a considerable can of worms. Were it to be implemented it would have implications reaching far outside the lesbian and gay communities.

The purrpose of the manifesto is to help launch a sizeable campaign within the lesbian and gay communities, and will help build for a conference before the next election, that will be orientated around the demands.

Such a campaign could have a sizeable impact on a possible Labour Government, with a possible manifesto comitment. We need to let the Labour leadership know that the issue will not just go away — to know that action means soon, not some dim and distant future.

Nottinghamshire

Another issue which we will be raising at our conference fringe meeting will be our campaign in Nottinghamshire. The local County Council has ditched its manifesto commitments on lesbian and gay rights, despite support for the policies from the local Labour Parties and trade unions. As a result a number of initiatives are underway to get this reversed. A national demonstration has been called for October 25 (Notts — Old Market Square — 12.15), and we are hoping to overcome their resistance as happened recently at Rugby and Stockport. A similar campaign is underway in Glasgow, where yet another Old Guard Labour Group is digging in its heels.

● *All these issues and more are dealt with in greater depth in the latest issue of Lesbian and Gay Socialist. Our conference tringe meeting will be held on Tuesday night at 5.30. For further information on the Campaigns, the Manifesto, or the magazine — then contact LCLGR, c/o Tobie, 119 Riversdale Road, London N5 2SU.*

MARCH
For Lesbian and Gay Rights
PROTEST
at the refusal of Nottingham Council to implement its manifesto pledges
SATURDAY
November 27
Nottingham
Called by LCLGR



Policies made by the media?

Both these books seek to provide trade unionists with "new" answers. One looks at a particular aspect of the miners' strike and the other covers various aspects of labour history.

Strikes and the Media, by Nicholas Jones (Blackwell's)
Political Strikes, by Peter Hain (Viking)
Reviewed by ANDY GIBBONS (Oxford East CLP)



Nicholas Jones, who is BBC Radio's labour correspondent, explains how the media can be used to damage unions. Peter Hain (on sabbatical from the Union of Communication Workers) uses a popular history to argue for a new "political" unionism.

For different reasons both authors see unions campaigning for wider public support.

Jones looks briefly at the propaganda tactics of Michael Edwardes at British Leyland and British Rail's Peter Parker, before getting stuck into the NCB, NUM and use of the media by the Government during the miners' strike

The book centres on Arthur Scargill's fascination with the news media. He is given some credit, but criticised for refusing professional help from the NUJ.

Jones concludes: "The NUM's failure to adopt an overall strategy for communications and publicity should serve as a warning to the trade union and labour movement."

Unfortunately Jones seems to think public sympathy is more important than industrial action.

When Peter Hain states that,

"The picket line confrontations moulded public opinion by obscuring the real issues motivating the miners,"

he is criticising the role of the police and the media bias.

I have heard Nicholas Jones argue that because there has been violence at Wapping, the dispute is unwinnable. He praises Brenda Dean for her media image, when he should be exposing the police tactics and anti-union bias.

However his book is important for trade unionists interested in the media.

Peter Hain's book should appeal to a much wider audience.

He traces the development of the state's attempts to control unions from the late nineteenth century through the General Strike up to the Thatcherite attacks with separate chapters on policing and the law.

Apart from sequestrations, incredible bail conditions and injunctions against unions, the courts can sometimes be used to check the government. The NALGO-led publicity campaign to keep Water public was successful because a legal loophle scared the Tories. The Gas campaign on the other hand proved that public sympathy alone isn't enough.

Hain's final section draws it all together and suggests radical changes towards creating a new "political" unionism.

In order to combat Thatcher's attempts to "Americanize" unions and the new breed of "hire 'em and fire 'em" managers, Hain urges the unions to:

"overcome their historical limitations by ... broadening their sectional interests into community-wide ones... revitalising and democratising their structures... and most important, campaigning for industrial democracy, as a step towards real workers' control."

Some on the left might criticise Hain's historial analysis or the details of his "manifesto", but when it reaches the Penguin mass market many new readers will have their eyes opened.

Hain's book should help us challenge the media "brainwashing" and campaign for principled policies within the unions.

NALGO is widely recognisd as a leader in the field of trade union communications but many activists if not the leadership are aware of the dangers in over-reliance on public sympathy.

The danger with Nicholas Jones's ideas is that you can become so obsessed with public opinion that you compromise your principles.

We must not allow the "new realists" to get away with saying "the media won't like it therefore we can't do it."



Why we don't find Widdecombe fair

The Widdicombe report on local government responds to Tory hysteria over "political activities" of local councils by proposing various fetters on democracy. The most notorious is the proposal that principal officers should be barred from being councillors, and forbidden to write, hold office or canvass for a political party.

Di Parkin
Oxford East CLP

The impact of these proposals would be to undermine local democracy and attack civil liberties, yet the particular proposals of the report, unlikely to be brought before this parliament, are less significant than its general tone and atmosphere.

Widdicombe adds to a climate which discredits the role of those committed council officers who challenge the status quo. The behaviour of officers defending the status quo against the wishes of elected councillors is not similarly scrutinised.

This bias in Widdicombe derives from its assumptions about the nature of local government and the position of women, Black people and other sectors of the oppressed.

Widdicombe starts with a concern about the increased "politicisation" of local government, by which he means increased "party politics". They are not at all the same thing.

The report also has a conservative concept of what is political, which defines actions critical of the status quo as political and actions in defence of it as normal and non-political.

This view is also held in traditional Labour fiefdoms, which exclude the interests of women and minorities as much as Tory areas.

In the past the greater role of "Independents" on local councils was for Widdicombe evidence of the lesser role of "politics". In reality, the opposite was the case. "Independents" were frequently members of the Liberal or Conservative Parties and (certainly) voted with and represented the same interests as those parties.

Widdicombe's concern at the "increased polarisation" of local politics is a concern at the increased attempts by the powerless to gain access to the local state.

Widdicombe speaks nervously of this as the "increasingly sectionalised" nature of society because his notion of councils representing the "whole community" has come under challenge. This is clearly rubbish: society is no more sectionalised now that it ever was, and councils are no more influenced by sectional interests than they ever were.

Changed

The Rotary Clubs, the Lions (and Orders of other animals), the Church, the interests of businessmen and shopkeepers have always held sway over local government. What has changed a little is that some of the interests of the powerless have come to be more represented in local government.

Even now, only 19% of councillors are women and 10% are council tenants. One of the ways that women and other powerless groups have attempted to influence council decisions has been the practice of co-option.

This extension of local democracy is also opposed by Widdicombe who wants co-optees reduced to non-voting "advisers", serving thereby a merely token role.

According to Widdicombe, because I am employed by a London local authority, I should not hold my office of ward chair in Oxford!

Employer

A major local employer with considerable interests in an area, or a Church dignatory with a particular view on moral or recreational issues would still be allowed to stand for office: but someone operating in an unrelated area in "public" service would not!

What all this is about is diminishing the role of "political" officers, or officers committed to the work of the local authority.

Attempting to shift the balance of power to the powerless is a difficult job which we know cannot be done from inside Town Halls alone. But some committed officers believe in such change.

There is no such thing as "neutral", "value free" local government officers. What is meant by Widdicombe's search for neutrality is a demand for supporting the status quo.

socialist SOCIETY

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CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE: AN MEP FROM DIE GRUNEN; LUCIANNA CASTELLINA (PCI); TONY JEREMY CORBYN MP; MIKE DAVIS; MIKE GAPES; BEN LOWE; GUNTHER GREENSTEIN/PALESTINIAN SPEAKER; HILARY MINERUPP; JOHN PALMER; JONATHAN STEELE; HILARY WAINWRIGHT; JOHN WILLIAMS/PETER MASZINSKY;

ATLANTICISM IN CRISIS

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Animal rights

The animal liberation movement is now firmly established in Britain. The movement's basic tenets are that animals should enjoy the same basic prima facie rights to life and non-harm that humans should be accorded.

Dominic Johnson
Oxford East CLP,
British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, Animal Aid, and the Vegan Society.

This article argues that animal liberation should now be incorporated into Marxist/socialist theory and practice.

No doubt many will greet this assertion with ridicule or hositility. Similar prejudies were, of course, faced by black, women's, lesbian and gay liberationists and their supporters before their demands were accepted as legitimate and progressive.

This article contends that animals suffer oppression, institutionalised in our society, as is the ideology of speciesism, or human chauvinism, which underpins it. Speciesism says that because humans are more "intelligent" than animals, we can therefore treat animals as we wish.

This oppression of animals takes many forms: we eat them, having raised them in conditions of terrible cruelty; we hunt, shoot and fish them for sport; we factory-farm and snare them for furs; we poison them with cosmetics and other chemicals; we torture them in psychology labs, etc. Last year, for example, 3.25 animals died in experiments, while over 400 millon were killed, quite unnecessarily, for human food.

Oppression is not a subjective phenomenon, related to one's awareness thereof, or one's ability to organise and struggle against it. There are many unaware and unorganised humans who are oppressed.

To be oppressed it is enough to have objective interests which are negated, in particular the rights not to be exploited, or gratuitously harmed or killed.

Animals, as conscious beings, able to feel pleasure and pain also have such interests. They have a welfare independent of our utility for them. Their lives have their own intrinsic validity.

Since socialists (should) oppose all oppression, we must oppose animal oppression. The implications include outright opposition to:

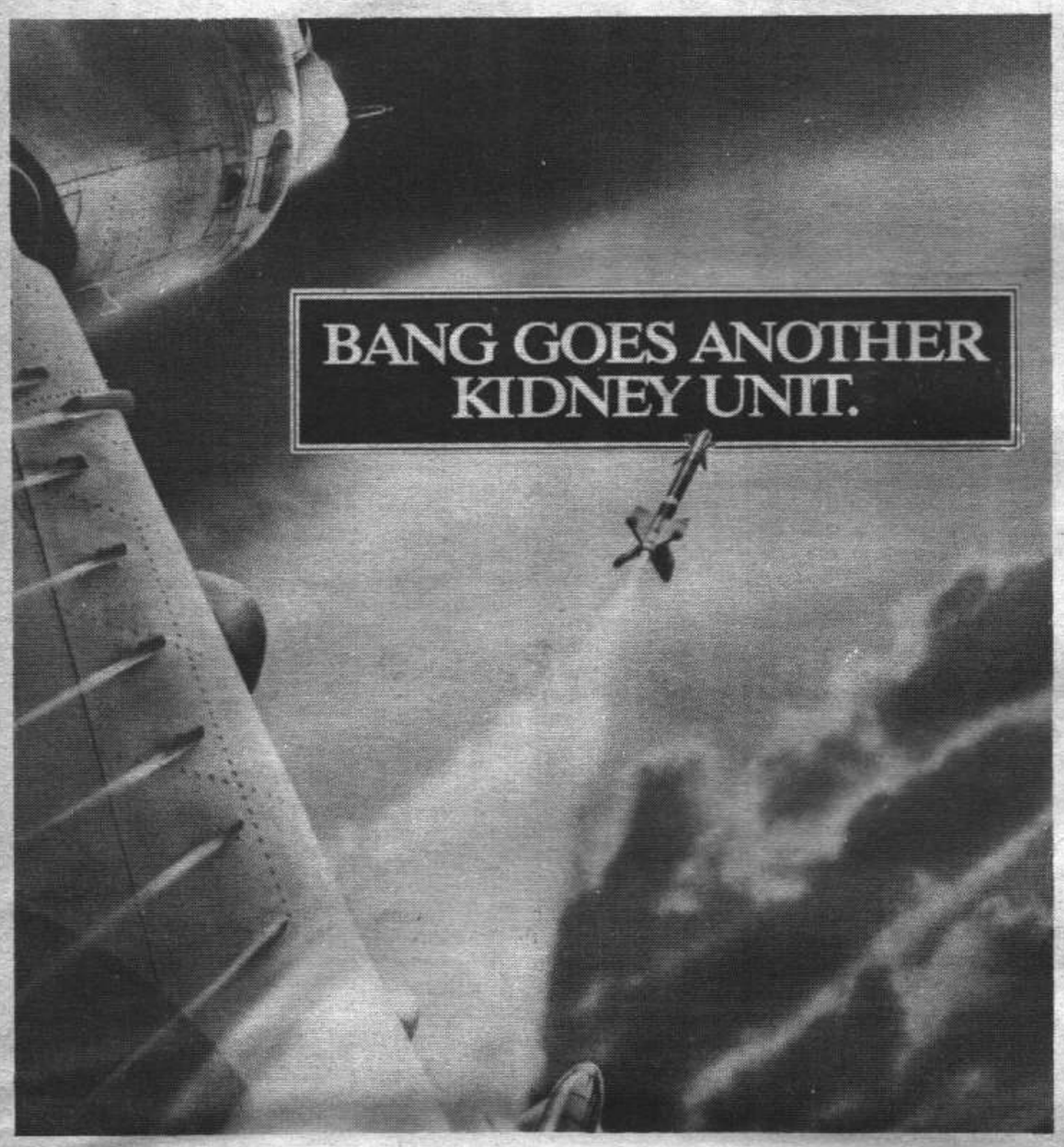
- commercial animal agriculture (eating animals and their products);
- animal use in "science";
- commercial and sport hunting, trapping and fishing.

To those sympathetic individuals who say this is a diversion given other more important issues, two things can be said.

Firstly accept as a valid contribution to socialism those who choose to campaign on animal rights. Secondly, boycott meat (and preferably — certainly ultimately — all animal products) which takes very little time and is in fact healthier.

Becoming vegetarian/vegan is a crucial step for the individual in supporting animal liberation. We must look forward to the day when meat will be banned from socialist conventions, as today we ban

The hidden cost of the arms race



To the person in the street it is obvious that unemployment is "unhealthy". Doctors, however, require "evidence". Government Census Department figures published in the *Lancet* in 1984, showed that men out of work in 1971 had a 20% greater risk of dying prematurely, compared with men in work.

They were particularly at risk from accidents, violence, suicide and lung cancer. Their wives were also at greater risk of premature death, particularly from heart disease. Other studies have shown the impact of unemployment on families: children are born smaller and grow less well; they perform less well at school, suffer more accidents and respiratory disease.

Family breakdown, abuse of alcohol and drugs are other consequences of unemployment. The causes of these health problems are social isolation, stress and poverty.

It is also obvious that war is "unhealthy". The British Medical Association Board of Science reported that a single megaton bomb dropped on a city in this country would create casualties which would overwhelm the entire resources of the NHS.

The arms race is damaging health, even in the absence of a nuclear war. Every two seconds, a child dies from a preventable infectious disease.

It costs just five dollars to immunise a child against whooping cough, tetanous, measles, diphtheria, polio, and tuberculosis; just five dollars to provide oral rehydration to treat the major child killer, gastroenteritis; just five dollars to treat another major killer, malaria.

Every other second a child is permanently crippled by a preventable infectious disease. In those same two seconds in which a child has died and another has been crippled for want of $10, the world has spent $50,000 on arms.

War is also, as Henry Ford said, "bad for business". Military industries are poor employers for a given investment: US Department of Labor Statistics showed that for $1 billion, 76,000 military jobs could be created, compared to 100,000 in construction, or 138,000 in health, or 187,000 in education. Military industries have become increasingly capital-intensive, creating even fewer jobs than they did 20 years ago.

To most people, military industries are major employers and major creators of wealth. If the Labour Party can put over the link between unemployment and militarism in a way which is understandable, exciting and attractive to the electorate, it has potentially its biggest vote-winner.

Armaments workers would almost certainly rather be making something else. They cannot be blamed for doing the only jobs going.

Factories which produce tanks can produce tractors. We have the "blind-landing" technology to land Tornado bombers in the dark, in high winds. This same technology could be helping partially-sighted people negotiate the obstacles in their own homes. Solar power, it seems, is "uneconomic" — unless it's to power military satellites. The same energy could be developed for well-boring, or vaccine-storage refrigerators in tropical countries.

It is vital that the Labour Party makes a major issue of the alternative uses of military technology and the conversion of military industries for peaceful purposes and to provide more work.

Only Sweden has so far acted on the UN Development Report and produced a comprehensive national plan for the conversion of its arms industries for peaceful production. The alternative plans for Lucas Aerospace, Vickers, Rolls Royce and other armaments industries must be brought to full fruition.

The next Labour government must follow the lead of the far-sighted local authorities who have supported product development agencies — among them Sheffield City Council and the West Midlands County Council that was.

Large scale investment in alternative technology for socially-useful, peaceful purposes could create about 500,000 jobs for $1 billion.

It is also important that the Labour Party does not alienate the large proportion of the electorate who witnessed the terror of Nazi Germany, and will not see this country go undefended. Even the Communist Manifesto has a place for a Citizen's Militia, defending the interests of the people; not the interests of capital.

The answer to the problem is a non-nuclear, non-aggressive defence. It is claimed that reliance on conventional defence would be more expensive, but this is true only of offensive weapons: tanks are expensive; anti-tank weapons are cheap, and not threatening.

John Middleton, BM, MFCM, DTM&H. Chair, Coventry & Warwickshire Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, 2 Aldermoor Lane, Stoke, Coventry. Tel: 441043.

The Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons is a non-party political organisation of health workers. It is the UK Affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 1985 recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize. Further information and requests for speakers can be addressed to Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, Tress House, 3, Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT, tel 01-261 1266.

Coventry and Warwickshire Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons is staging a conference, "Arms or Health?" at Coventry Polytechnic on Saturday October 25. The programme will consider the effects of the arms race in the absence of nuclear weapons. Further details and applications can be obtained from Dr Madelience Sharp, 49, Baginton Road, Coventry, tel. Coventry 414512. Everybody is welcome.

Partial victory on NHS cuts

SINCE March of this year health workers employed by the Bethlem & Maudsley Special Health Authority have been engaged in a determined struggle to fight off cuts in the services they provide.

The relative success and high media profile they have gained have led to COHSE chosing the Joint Hospitals of the Bethlem and Maudsley as a focus, and venue, for a *national demonstration against health service cuts on November 10.*

The Maudsley Hospital, in Cammberwell, South East London, and the Bethlem Royal in Beckenham, Kent, together with the Institute of Psychiatry form one of the major teaching organisations in the country for psychiatric medical and nursing staff.

In addition to this national function they serve the local population of South Southwark and have a unique 24 hour Emergency Clinic which provides a service for all of London, the South East and beyond.

In March the recently appointed General Manager, Eric Byers, announced that the Joint Hospitals were "overspent" by £400,000 on the 1985-86 budget. A further £400,000 overspend was forecast for 1986-87, so Mr Byers produced a set of "options" for cuts in patient services of over £¾ million — and invited suggestions from hospital staff on alternative ways in which the services could be cut.

The staff responded immediately to a call by the Maudsley Branch of COHSE and the RCN for a mass meeting on the issue on March 13. From that meeting the Bethlem and Maudsley Action Committee (BEMAC) was born.

A campaign made up of mass staff meetings, regular BEMAC bulletins, staff and public petitions, leaflets, maximum press exposure and the threat of industrial action, culminated in a march, rally and lobby of the Special Health Authority meeting on May 12 when the proposed cuts were on the agenda.

The SHA had before it a document detailing reduction in services at the Emergency Clinic, the Alcohol Unit, general and community psychiatry, child and adolescent services, the neuro-surgical unit and mental -handicap — all supposedly government "priority" services.

The document was widely criticised as being randomly selective of the hospital's specialist service. It was drawn up without consultation, and used false information.

Just before the SHA meeting, which was to take place in front of over 400 staff, TV cameras and newspaper reporters, another meeting took place which determined the day's outcome.

Leading SHA members, agreeing to accede to staff demands for a further approach to health ministers, decided to defuse a potentially explosive gathering in full public view by postponing a decision on most cuts. A token holiday closure of one ward on the neuro-surgical unit was passed.

The resulting meeting with Junior Health Minister Ray Whitney gave the Joint Hospitals an extra year to "get their house in order". The achievements of pressurising both the health authority and the government into abandoning their original "hard-line" positions have strengthened the confidence and resolve of BEMAC and the hospital staff. The threat remains, however, and fightback will continue.

BEMAC is determined to play its part in uniting with other campaigns and maximising the pressure.

The National Demonstration on November 10 assembles at 2pm at Rockingham Street (next to DHSS headquarters at Alexander Fleming House), Elephant & Castle, London SE1, and will march to the Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, SE5 for a rally at 4pm. *All those who support the struggle by health service workers are encouraged to attend. Health workers are angry — this will be just the beginning!*

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Letter

Pilot issue: It's great!

Kippax, Leeds

Dear Sir,

Yesterday, at the People's Festival (Leeds), I was accosted (in the nicest possible way) by one of the thousand individuals who seem to spend their lives constantly pushing some publication or another at me.

As the face behind the papers was that of a friend of several years, I did not hurry by with "Sorry love, can't read", as I usually do, but told him quite honestly that I couldn't afford it. (When you have nothing to do for a week or two, I will tell you about the problems I am having with the DHSS).

Still, I digress. As I said, the vendor *was* a friend. I wonder if he will still be my friend when I blow the gaff on him. Because, he thrust a paper at me with a "well, take this one, and say nothing, but *read it*."

It is now the "early hours". I need my beauty sleep, damn you — and I feel condemned to write you a "cover note" and send the price of the paper.

It's great.

Quite obviously you will have difficulty keeping up this standard, but Good Luck to you, I like it.

Since the end of the miners' strike (remember that little episode) I have "come home" with, literally, hundreds of different papers of varying degrees of quality — but this is the first one that I have read that "feels right" (if you'll excuse the expression) to me.

I'm unemployed, I'm broke, but, for what it's worth, I'm on your side.

Best wishes *Briefing*,

Sincerely,

Jean A. Gittins

Scots and stereotypes

Dear Comrade,

I am writing concerning the article on the NUPE Conference which was printed in the July issue. It mentioned the disgraceful behaviour of some Stalinist thugs who attacked comrades at the Conference.

Each time these incidents were mentioned the nationality (Scottish) of the people involved was painstakingly made clear. Although their rank (full-time officers), their state (drunken) and their politics (Stalinist) are obviously worth reporting, the frequent mentioning of their nationality can only have one meaning.

Your correspondent obviously thought that their Scottishness was linked to their behaviour.

This reinforcing of a well-known stereotype of "drunken Scottish thugs" is a disgrace in a socialist publication. Could your correspondent seriously argue that s/he would have taken such care to refer to "tired and emotional English Stalinists" had this been the case?

Since coming to live in London it has become clear to me that while some comrades on the left can understand why they should not reinforce racist stereotypes of Black people, or derogatory images of Irish people, they cannot carry over the analysis to Scottish people.

This was made very clear by the reactions of most people I spoke to of having the National Conference of Labour Women in Rothesay this year. The reactions ranged from laughter to anger and disgust at having to travel all that way. When challenged, they uniformly protested that, of course, they didn't mind having a conference in Scotland, it was just that bit of Scotland they objected to.

The fact that the bureaucracy tried to take advantage of such backward attitudes on the part of potential delegates and the press in order to keep the conference small (which it wasn't) and to keep the decisions made there quiet, does not excuse such backwardness.

While I obviously do not rank these attitudes as being on a par with racism against Black people, I think they show a complete misunderstanJing of the national question and are out of place in socialist journals.

Yours,

Jeanette Findlay
Hackney South & Shoreditch CLP

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How Briefing got it wrong on CORE

In the article by Piers and Andrew Corbyn in your last issue CORE was accused of being in league with the nuclear lobby industry in lobbying for support in the Labour Praty.

CORE was made to sound like nothing more than a dupe and a tool of the CIA. Surely this is not the group which has undertaken so much direct action and campaigning work against the nuclear industry?

Members of CORE have staked everything they own against the nuclear industry and some of them have even risked their lives in actions.

● In 1983 CORE members, in fighting a court case against the terminal in Barrow, placed their homes in jeopardy by refusing to pay costs after losing the trial.

British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) had tried to get them to sign a deal saying that they would agree the nuclear industry was safe, and they would waive costs. We did not pay a penny until the bailiffs were sent in.

● In 1981 myself and another CORE member swam in the docks in Barrow, at night, to stop a spent fuel ship unloading.

● It was we who dumped the mud in Whitehall in 1983, an action which resulted in the area being closed while chemical teams were sent for.

● It was we who worked closely with Yorkshire Television on their award-winning "Windscale the Nuclear Laundry" — the film which brought the world's attention to the high rates of childhood cancer in Seascale.

We have lobbied, marched, demonstrated, produced written evidence and done everything possible to stop Windscale's forward march.

Piers and Andrew Corbyn's article was filled with inaccuracies about CORE in general and our conference on low-level radiation in particular.

First of all, it is untrue that Frank Cook or John Cunningham are in any way linked to CORE. Frank Cook has never been a member and to suggest any connection between CORE and John Cunningham is frankly laughable.

Our conference on low-level radiation did not take a stand against all nuclear power for the simple reason that this was not the remit of the conference, which was called to discuss all low-level radiation; this did not in any way mean that CORE is not opposed to the nuclear industry: of course we are!

At no point did we accept there was such a thing as "safe level" of radiation. The preamble to the recommendations states the position of the conference very clearly — that there is no safe level.

So why have any level at all? We recommended a dose of 0.25mSv per year (one-twentieth of present levels) because we had to leave room for people to have x-rays and radiotherapy; *some* radiation can be used to cure and help people. Andrew Corbyn, in a very confusing way, did try to raise this issue, but he obviously found it very difficult to explain.

Had the conference accepted "no level" then every time a radiographer in a hospital got an accident case in they would be breaking the law. The vast majority of the conference recognised "no level" as unworkable and impractical and that is why they quite willingly voted for the recommendation.

As can be seen from the printed recommendations, at no point is there a recommended level of safe discharge from the nuclear power industry. Since the conference was not there to discuss the industry, the topic was hardly likely to arise. This is simply a fabrication.

The BNFL employee was the only BNFL exployee at the conference. As we can see Mr Corbyn chose only to quote him out of all the people who did speak. Of course, the BNFL man defended the industry. What would Mr Corbyn have liked us to do? Knee-cap him?

Overall, the statements in the Corbyn brothers' article about CORE are wildly inaccurate.

We are painted as an organisation which is somehow friendly to the pro-nuclear lobby, whereas exactly the opposite is true. The long record of hard wok on this issue by our members show this is the case. It really is incumbent on *Labour Briefing* to put the record straight.

Jean Emery,
Secretary, Cumbrians Opposed to a Nuclear Environment

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Comrades,

What a pity that the pilot issue of the new fortnightly *Briefing* was marred by one of the most scurrilous and utterly unfounded personal attacks on Frank Cook and "CORE" (Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment).

This quite explicit suggestion that Frank and "CORE" are in some way apologists for the nuclear industry is so utterly absurd I would not have believed it could appear in print.

I have known Frank Cook for a long time and know that he has done as much as any person in Britain to oppose nuclear power and weapons in a whole range of ways. I find the attack on him particularly offensive because in fact he sharpened my own opposition to matters nuclear quite considerably, and I owe him a debt for that.

I am also familiar with "CORE's" activities and am quite confident they are doing an excellent job in Cumbria, and further afield.

Please — no more vicious libels in *Briefing*!

Yours fraternally,

Bob Clay,
MP for Sunderland North

WE REPLY

We withdraw without reservation certain incorrect remarks in the last issue of *Briefing* made about "Cumbrians Opposed to Radioactive Environment" (CORE) in the article entitled "After Chernobyl". In particular we wish to make it clear:

(i) The conference referred to was *not* a CORE conference and we do not consider CORE is a "Trojan Horse" for the pro-nuclear lobby, but a positive anti-nuclear organisation.

(ii) Neither Frank Cook MP nor Jack Cunningham MP are members of CORE as the article implied and we positively welcome Frank Cook's hard campaigning work against nuclear pollution and nuclear power.

***Labour Briefing* Editorial Board, Andrew Corbyn, Piers Corbyn.**

The great football debate

In a year in which the fight against apartheid has been carried more spectacularly than ever on to the sporting ground, the Left should beware of the dismissive attitude toward organised spectator sport illustrated by Di Parkin's article "Football as Oppression" (*Briefing* pilot issue).

In the July *Briefing* there was an article entitled "Football as Oppression". In my opinion socialists tend to underestimate the importance of sport so I was pleased to see the article.

However, I cannot accept that sport in itself is a form of male oppession. Sport as portrayed by the media perhaps.

I'm a fan of many sports but I'm sick of the endless media coverage. It could be argued that sport reflects society and the media distorts its worst aspects.

Di Parkin says, "All of us suffer from media drivel... there are endless reminders that we are not at ease in this culture." It is the media's fault not sport itself.

There are many things wrong with the way sport is run (particularly football) but we shouldn't ignore it. Any serious discussion of the rule of sport in society and the media's attempts to glorify its (male) stars should be welcomed.

Andy Gibbons

Parkin confuses the values which sport is made to carry in a capitalist, sexist society with the nature of sport itself. Our quarrel is not with some intrinsic quality of football but with the way in which this society organises and presents football.

Football, like other forms of popular culture (television or pop music) is *used* by the ruling class to re-enforce chauvinist and individualist values. We should expose this manipulation and try to reclaim popular culture, not simply dismiss it as an irrelevance or a male indulgence.

Football and other sports can and have at times become a platform for the social expression of the oppressed, including women, and for promoting collectivity, solidarity and democratic initiatives.

The Left's enemy is not sport itself but the self-apointed sports establishment who have appropriated the people's games for their own purposes. We should seek to enfranchise on all levels the majority of sports followers who are systematically excluded — on class, sexual and racial grounds — from the corridors of sporting power.

We should back initiatives like the Football Supporters Association, which seeks to democratise football by giving the people on the terraces a voice in running their local clubs, the F.A., and the League, as well as resisting the sexism and racism which so disfigure the game.

In her strictures on "violence' and "deaths" in football, Di Parkin merely parrots the bourgeois moralists who dominate the sports pages and the airwaves. They attempt to lay the blame for the crisis in football on the masses who enjoy the sport rather than on the elite which controls it.

Is she aware that deaths in Bradford and Heisel were caused not by "hooligans" but by the indifference of football directors to the health and safety of the public?

Competitive team sports like football can have a beauty and dramatic power which can be enjoyed by everyone.

Team sports also have a democratic premise: everyone (in theory) plays under the same rules and is subject to the same obstacles.

That is precisely why people from oppressed sections of society, for example Black people in the United States and Britain, have been able to express themselves in sport while they remain excluded from other public stages.

While the World Cup, the Test Matches, the Olympics, etc., are often the occasions for orgies of nationalist, ra ist, and sexist sentiment, it should be remembered that these events also demonstrate the *internationalist potential* of sport. It is a form of human activity which surmounts all language barriers and which can excite admiration among all cultures.

Its inclusive and democratic character is perpetually at war with the reactionary programme of its current masters. Football is not, therefore, as Parkin argues, a diversion from the real issues, but yet another field of struggle for the Left, and one which we belittle at our own peril.

Craig Brewin
Mike Marqusee
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP
Haringey Labour Briefing

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LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

Debate needed

This year's Labour Party conference may be the last before a General Election. It will also be the first since the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed. It is therefore crucial that a substantial debate takes place on N. Ireland.

Councillor Richard Chessum (Press Officer, Labour Committee on Ireland)

For the past 6 years, the Labour Committee on Ireland has been campaigning for British withdrawal, an end to the Unionist veto, and a united Ireland. We have had some notable successes on the civil liberties front. The Party has recently committed itself to working for a united Ireland, and Conference has opposed strip searching, plastic bullets, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, supergress trials, and the no-jury Diplock Courts. Whilst maintaining our own distinctive political position, we have engaged in dialogue with the Labour Front Bench and republicans in Ireland, and it is hoped to have both speaking at our fringe meeting this year.

Confusion

However, there is great confusion in the party and the wider movement concerning the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and the main debate this year must centre on that and its aftermath in the north of Ireland. The confusion has, in part, been generated by contradictory statements of Labour's official spokespeople – Stuart Bell MP in particular – and in part by the extreme reaction of most Loyalists who have a strong interest in portraying the Agreement as a Dublin take-over.

In the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Agreement, Stuart Bell informed readers of Labour Weekly that "The Hillsborough agreements shall provide a framework for a future Labour Government to advance towards its own policy goal... a united Ireland". He also asserted that the Agreement "kills at a stroke all talk of a unionist veto". Just two months later, he was telling the Northern Ireland Assembly unionists in the 6 Counties, "We, in the Labour Party, see the Anglo-Irish Agreement as going towards devolution rather than towards unity... it is a means of finding a way that will bring power-sharing closer in N. Ireland".He told them that they could get the Agreement off their backs altogether by agreeing to power sharing, and reassured them that the present Labour leadership had a policy on the unionist veto over Irish unity which "is no different from that of successive governments since 1922".

Internal Settlement

The second analysis of the nature of the Agreement (which totally contradicts the first) represents the view of the Labour Committee on Ireland, and that is why we are asking delegates to support the motions which oppose the Agreement. Far from being a step towards Irish unity, it is another attempt to bring about an internal settlement within the 6 Counties. It will fail, as others like Sunningdale have failed before, because of the combined opposition of Loyalists and Republicans.

Moreover, it is exposing the nationalist population in the north to some of the worst sectarian violence since the early '70s, but at the same time bringing them little or nothing in return in the way of social, economic, legislative or judicial reforms.

In July, Stuart Bell made a speech in Cardiff, a summary of which was sent to Constituency Labour Parties, with an offer to speak to them about what he called 'Party policy on Ireland'. The speech was short on references to Irish unity, but specific about devolution in N. Ireland. It was condemned by the Irish Post, the newspaper of the Irish in Britain, as "bad news for those who care about Labour and who care about Ireland". Clearly, a big debate is called for, and the Labour Committee on Ireland protested strongly this month when Bell sent another letter to Constituency Labour Parties informing them "there will probably not be a debate on Ireland at Party Conference this year".

Working Party

A working party set up by the NEC allegedly to thrash out a statement on N. Ireland failed to meet for nine months. It was to have circulated a document for discussion to constituencies and affiliated organisations, but no such document was ever produced. In this context, the absence of a substantial debate at Conference will simply leave the policy of a future Labour Government at the discretion of the leadership. Democracy, the Labour Party, and Ireland would all be losers.

Our basic case on the issue is unchanged. The 6 County State was an artificial entity imposed by Britain in the context of a Loyalist rebellion against the struggle for Irish freedom. It is an inherently sectarian state incapable of fundamental reform within its own boundaries. 17 years of war and violence have impressed this truth on many who had not understood it before. Now is not the time to backtrack on our united Ireland policy or brush it conveniently under the carpet. The issue is not will Britain withdraw, but when; not will there be a united Ireland, but how soon; and the ending of the Loyalist veto,, which is not only written into the Anglo Irish Agreement but registered as a treaty at the United Nations by the Governments of Thatcher and Fitzgerald, must be an immediate demand if progress is to be made. If we do not convince the movement of our case at this Conference, it could be back to the bad old days of Mason and Concannon with a vengeance.





The Revolution gone missing

JANE KELLY reviews the new film "Rosa", directed by Margarethe von Trotta.

Interestng as the film is, it presents an ambiguous portrait of Rosa Luxemburg. Was she a revolutionary or a pacifist? The film never really makes it clear.

And after the inital credits, where she is described as "an ardent pacifist", her repudiation of the premature call for insurrection by Liebknecht could be interpreted as a refusal to contemplate the violence of revolution, rather than a political assessment of the situation.

There are, however, many good points about the film: the fact that it was made at all, and in its showing will surely encourage many to read more, both about Rosa herself and about the 1918–19 German revolution, so successfully expunged from German history!

The film is especially good when investigating the problems faced by a woman revolutionary. It shows the many aspects of her life, bringing together the theorist, the mass orator — the political with the personal.

Her relationships with other women activists, including Clara Zetkin, and with her companion, Leo Jogiches, show clearly the difficulties experienced by a woman revolutionary fighting against the traditional role played by women.

Her male comrades think she should concentrate on "the woman question"; only Clara understands, making a sharp comment on the men's inability to cope with Rosa.

But the political situation in Germany, the SPD, the USPD and the Spartacists, the strikes, uprisings, the *revolution*, all are presented in a confused and confusing way. Sometimes they are hardly seen at all.

The 1914 debates in the SPD over war credits, at the outbreak of the war, with Liebknecht the sole member of the Reichstag to vote against; the break of the USPD with the social democratic SPD, the split by the Sparticists, the life and death decisions during the revolution — all are inadequately dealt with.

Anyone seeing the film without any previous knowledge would find it difficult to follow.

Perhaps the biographical form itself militates against political clarity. While the role of individuals in a revolutionary situation is always significant, the revolution itself is the expresson of class conflict at its most extreme, of masses no longer prepared to go on "in the old way" and of the ruling class no longer able to continue "in the old way".

While the film shows Rosa as the courageous and single minded woman she was, it cannot explain why things went as they did.

And in its concentration on the biographical, excluding a number of important aspects of her life, including her debates with Lenin on organisation, it does her less than justice. At best the politics seem ambiguous — at worst misrepresented.

Perhaps the contemporary political situation in Germany can explain this, with the pressure of the Greens and radical feminism playing their part in determining the way Rosa is seen.

But we are left dissatisfied. Compared with a film like "The Battle for Algiers", this film of Rosa Luxemburg is a disappointment.

Voices of the oppressed

"Voices" is Maria Tolly's second album — and it very nearly wasn't. The record manufacturer's refused to press it.

They said the Irish songs were "too controversial". Have we not heard that one before? — So often it's like a stuck record, so familiar it's well nigh tedious. Political censorship on Ireland — again.

Indeed, soldiers shooting children with plastic bullets is "controversial" to say the least. The song "Living in a Nightmare" describes women's unceasing fear for their children when they are simply "playing in the garden, sitting on the doorstep".

"Voices", by Maria Tolly. Stroppy Cow Records, £5.

Sarah Roelofs

Irish women voice the "too controversial" — British rule in Ireland includes the sumary execution of children for stone throwing.

Maria comments on the lyric sheet, "When my kids were little the greatest danger they had to face was crossing the road..."

But such is the nature of the Irish nightmare that the man who did finally press the record does not want to be named, and another manufacturer has had to be found to press further quantities.

Though shaken and rather frightened by the whole experience, Maria is damned if it "will change what I do — I cannot change how I think and feel".

There are four songs on Ireland translating the arguments for troops out, an end to the sexual harassment of Irish women by strip searching, for the repatriation of Irish prisoners, and the banning of plastic bullets; into clear, melodic vocal music.

Written in support of the struggle of the Irish people to determine their own future, these songs were particularly inspired by the women of Belfast. It is their views and their feelings — their anger at Britain's manifest, sadistic injustice — that is voiced.

Many other voices are here too. Women from the mining communities, Nicaraguan women, South African exiles, women with disabilities, trade union women, older women.

The latter song — "A Model OAP" — involves a razor sharp imitation of Mrs T.'s voice. This time it is the voice of an oppressor, but as damning as the other songs in its indictment of Tory maltreatment of the elderly — "It's not as if dying wasn't free."

"Tres Morillas" is described as "the oldest anti-imperialist song I've come across." It is an allegory of 15th centry Spanish imperialism which later became a popular rebel song during the Spanish anti-fascist struggle.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that recordings can seldom capture the atmosphere and essence of live performance. Maria is definitely a *live* performer giving intense, energetic and stimulating shows. Some of this vitality is obviously lacking on an album, but is compensated for by being able to re-hear and absorb the words and music.

Though I found some of the words on "Voices" slightly naïve, the complete lack of political cynicism — which some activists appear to covet as stylishly cool — is to be celebrated.

Dedicated to "my lesbian sisters and my Black and Asian friends", the song "Waves" rejoices in the inspiration provided by their strength and optimism:

"Where the ripples turn to waves, and the waves grow higher and higher; you can't stop a wave from rising up and rising up again"!

***Voices* (£5), is available from all good record stores now, or from Box 53, 10 Lymington Ave, London N22 6JA. Also available is *Gonna Get Up* (£4). Both are also available on cassette. Maria Tolly is recommended for Labour socials, etc., especially women's ones! Contact as above.**

Not good enough!

BORN IN THE RSA, reviewed by STEVE PARRY.

***Born in the RSA*, is set in South Africa in mid-1985, soon after the apartheid regime declared its first "state of emergency".**

The play has a cast of seven, and it opens with the actors giving, in turn, a sketch of the character they are playing.

Four of the actors are white and three black; the whites speak first, and occupy a large part of the rest of the play. In my view these facts (given the actual make-up of the population of South Africa) fairly indicate the value of this play.

***Born in the RSA* has familiar good intentions. The play has been created by the director and cast; it ends (to quote the director) with "a defiant trade union song... an indication of the kind of spirit we hope will one day lead us."**

Its individual episodes are often powerfully moving; and it also raises, but doesn't explore, the parallel between racial and sexual oppression.

But whatever the intention, what the play represents — at its roots, in the way it has been made — is an unacceptable model of power-sharing: give the blacks some power (artistic or political) — under white direction, of course, and maybe that will satisfy them...

It won't — nor should it, even in the theatre. This play is not in the same class as the products of black South African theatre.

Black

One of the actresses in this very play first came to Britain with a Black production, and would have created a play here in 1984 had British Actors' Equity not prevented her.

It is time for white South African theatre workers (and owners) to concentrate on their own achievements; what Britain and South Africa need is the black voice.

Next month, New York has a Festival of South African Theatre; nearly all, I understand, black (apart from *Born in the RSA*). How about it, London?

S. African resistance hardens

Despite over 2000 people killed in the last two years, 15,000 in detention and the executions of three more militants of the African National Congress at the beginning of this month, black resistance to the South African government's State of Emergency remains strong. At the same time, the 'reforms' announced by the President, PW Botha, in January, and used by Thatcher and Reagan as evidence of 'progress', have ground to a halt.

By Steve Potter

In the front line of the struggle is the rent boycott launched in June in at least 48 townships throughout the country. In Soweto, scene of the White City massacre of 27 people on 27th August, two thirds of the 750,000 households are still withholding rents.

The response to the massacre was the opposite to that intended by the authorities. Instead of intimidating people to pay rents resistance has hardened. On the day set for the mass burials of the victims, despite the police stealing the bodies and secretly burying 12 of them, 78% of Soweto workers stayed away from work in the largest such action since the 1976 uprising.

The stayaway indicated the continuing strength of the independent trade unions organised mainly in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). During the period of the emergency strikes have continued to occur. *Work in Progress*, the Johannesburg radical labour magazine, reports at least 35,000 workers participating in strikes over the June to August period. Over 700 workers were detained en masse at Nels Dairies factories during the course of one such dispute.

The same magazine reports that as trade union organisers and activists have been detained or gone underground, shop floor workers and activists have come forward to take over positions, demonstrating the deep roots which the independent non-racial trade have sunk in the workplaces and the development of a new leadership under the emergency.

In the townships too the anti-apartheid *Weekly Mail* reports that community activists have managed to continue to meet clandestinely in such townships as Alexandra, despite the detention of such important figures as Moses Mayekiso (see box).

The campaign against the rents has struck a central blow against Botha's plans to change the face of apartheid. The establishment of black councils was seen as a first step towards the creation of independent black 'city states'. But they have never enjoyed legitimacy, with only 10% of the black electorate turning out to vote in such townships as Soweto.

The councils are dependent on the rents from public housing to finance them, but as a Soweto pamphlet put it: 'We are no longer prepared to finance our own oppression. We won't pay rent. We won't pay the salaries of our enemies, the puppet councillors, and their police'.

The councillors have got the message with all but one quitting Soweto. There are signs, too, that the leaders of the tri-cameral parliament chambers for Indians and 'coloureds' are ready to quit as political pressure mounts on them. Moderate blacks whom the government wanted to incorporate into the new advisory 'National Statutory Council' are also hesitant as the government refuses to meet their preconditions of the release of Nelson Mandela and a black representation in parliament. Generally Botha's reform programme is collapsing.

Neither, despite the rise in the price of gold and platinum, is there an upturn in the economic situation. According to the recently published report of the South African Reserve Bank, capital continues to pour out of South Africa.

However, the road to the revolutionary overthrow of apartheid in South Africa remains long and hard. The necessity of firmly unifying developments in the communities and the workplaces still remains a burning task, linked to the problem of building a working class leadership out of the existing mass movement. However that movement itself remains strong and vigorous.

We can support these developments in the British labour movement through building not only mass action for sanctions, but also building a movement for workers' sanctions now amongst the labour movement rank and file.



While Thatcher's minister patronisingly offered a destitute Bolivian government £600,000 towards the cost of police operations to stop cocaine traffickers, Ronald Reagan has handed $100m to the Contras fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

What is the connection? The Contras are known to be up to their elbows in drug trafficking themselves, as a profitable sideline to the murder, rape and miscellaneous brutality for which they are so generously paid by the White House.

Bolivian economy shuts down

The cultivation of the coca plant for cocaine extraction has for many years been the most profitable industry in Bolivia: now it is virtually the only one, following the government decision to close most of the country's tin mines, at a cost of 15,000 jobs out of a mining workforce of 20,000.

The miners, traditionally the backbone of the Bolivian workers' movement, and with a history of insurrectionary struggle, hit back in August with a 7,000-strong march on the capital La Paz.

Right wing President Victor Paz called out troops with tanks to halt the march, declared a 90-day "state of seige". March leaders, and other trade union and church leaders were arrested, and the marchers herded onto trucks and shipped back to the remote mining districts.

The rickety Bolivian economy has always rested upon tin exports, and has been knocked sideways by the recent slump in prices that has also brought the closure of Cornish tin mines in Britain. Last year the tin mines in Bolivia lost $248m.

Bolivia has also been hit by a slump in the price of its other legitimate lucrative export; natural gas to Argentina.

Now reports suggest that whole mining families are packing up and moving to the tropical lowlands where cocaine is grown — while US narcotics agents and troops, British ministers and others converge in an effort to shut down this operation too.

Cocaine production in Bolivia has long been linked with corrupt elements in the armed forces, and has been such big business that one of the growers offered at one point to settle the whole multi-billion dollar Bolivian national debt provided he was allowed to trade in peace.

But it will take more than this opium of the people to settle the crisis of Bolivian capitalism: the workers have not yet had their final say.

Profiting from apartheid

According to a booklet recently produced by the Labour Research Department (LRD) there are at least 280 British companies with known involvement in South Africa. The booklet shows that the toothless 'EEC Code of Conduct' has no effect on the behaviour of British companies operating in the racist republic. More encouragingly it details the massive rise in trade union organisation amongst South African workers — especially the formation of COSATU which has about 650,000 members.

Most of you will already know of the action taken by Southampton dockers, and health workers in Portsmouth and Brent, although the action of NUS members on ferry fleets in refusing to handle South African produce is less well known. The Dunnes strikers receive the credit they deserve and other activities get due attention.

Apart from trade union action there is also the question of local authority action against apartheid which should be required reading for all Labour councillors — does *your* council use any contractor on the list of 280? Allied to this is pension fund disinvestment — but why limit it to local authority pension funds?

Given that a consumer boycott campaign against all 280 companies would pose certain difficulties it probably makes sense to focus on the companies with the greatest involvement in apartheid.

Especially worthy of note are BTR (originally British Tyre and Rubber and owners of Dunlop) who sacked 1,000 workers at their SARMCOL subsidiary in South Africa

Profiting from Apartheid Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF. £1.40 incl. p&p.

Hawke-like policy hits Australia

A package of cuts that would make Thatcher proud have just been imposed on Australian workers by Bob Hawke's Labour government.

Attempting to grapple with an escalating economic crisis stemming from an acute lack of socialist policies and plummeting world prices for Australia's commodity exports, Hawke's government has surprised nobody by resorting to traditional capitalist solutions.

The package includes £538m in new taxes on petrol, wines, bank accounts and health care.

£208m is cut from the welfare budget, £125m from health spending, while fees are reintroduced for university students.

Treasurer Paul Keating has not yet imposed wage controls; but he has said he is looking for cuts in wages, while inflation is running at 8%.

Ironically it is the fall in commodity prices which has helped Thatcher cut inflation to new low levels in Britain which has caused the damage in Australia — and many other raw material-exporting countries, especially in Latin America and Africa.

Indeed Australian foreign debts now rank in the Latin American league, at £37.5 billion, with interest payments taking up 35% of export earnings. By 1987, the payments could total 30% of the country's whole Gross Domestic Product.

Of course the Labour Government in Australia argue that there is no alternative to making cuts: but then they do that everywhere, don't they? In fact capitalist governments all over Latin America are doing exactly the same.

They don't bother to call it the new realism: there's nothing very new about it.

Free Moses!

Moses Mayekiso, aged 38, is the national general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union and leader of the Alexandra Action Committee. He was detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act on his return from an overseas trip three months ago and is still being held. Mayekiso was one of the key organisers of the November 1984 Vaal stayaway for which he was also detained. He is a familiar figure to many anti-apartheid activists in Britain as a result of his tours here. Rush messages of support for his release to: MAWU, PO Box 9451, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa.

PICKET TO FREE ELEUTERIO

Eleuterio is a militant miner, local trade union leader and a Trotskyist who was imprisoned during last year's general strike in Bolivia, without charges.

There is mass support for his release. On the anniversary of his jailing:

PICKET

Bolivian Embassy, Tuesday September 30 11am–2pm at 105 Euston Square, London SW1

For more information contact Steve Masterson, 435 5652

Bitter lessons of Hungary

30 years after the uprising

By John Lister

A "workers' state" attacking workers with tanks and high explosives; "Communists" against revolution.

The dramatic events in Hungary thirty years ago serve as a stark reminder of the irreconcilable contradiction between the working class and the vicious, bureaucratised regimes in Eastern Europe and elsewhere which are so often loosely referred to as "workers' states".

The Hungarian workers, in taking to the streets and organising themselves independently as a class for the first time in nearly 50 years since the brutal repression of the 133-day Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 had seized upon the weakening grip of a discedited ruling Stalinist clique as a chance to raise their own demands.

FRAME-UP

Caught in the fall-out from Khruschev's "Secret Speech" to the Soviet Communist Party Congress in February 1956, designed to distance the new Kremlin leadership from the crimes of Stalin, Hungarian Party chief Rakosi had been forced to admit in March that the massive show-trial and execution of Politbureau member Laszlo Rajk in 1949 — which Rakosi himself had helped stage — had been a frame-up, based on phony charges of collaborating with Yugoslavian leader Tito.

Struggling to retain his grip on the Party leadership, Rakosi made a few economic concessions to his opponents, and released some of the country's political prisoners, while making vicious political attacks on the intellectual circles which had become the main focus of opposition to the regime.

His days were clearly numbered, and an anxious Moscow leadership intervened to replace Rakosi with his no less objectionable and unpopular sidekick Erno Gero.

SOLIDARITY

Meanwhile the Polish workers had erupted into mass strikes and demands for reforms. By the autumn of 1956 this example had spilled over to Hungary, with a 100,000-strong demonstration called in Budapest on October 23, at least partly in solidarity with the Polish movement. It was far from politically homogenous, with some workers and students carrying pictures of Lenin, other pictures of the former Communist Prime Minister Imre Nagy. The *Internationale* and the *Marseillaise* were sung; but there was unity on one level — a gigantic statue of Stalin was pulled to the ground!

When Gero hit back by broadcasting a stinging attack on the demonstrators, angry crowds converged on the radio station — only to be fired upon by the hated secret police,the AVH. The fighting spread, and Soviet troops garrisoned in Hungary moved in.

The next day saw the start of a general strike, with the fighting and upsurge spreading beyond Budapest to the provinces. The ineffectual Gero was replaced, and Nagy (with reluctant Moscow acquiescence) took over for a second term as Prime Minister.

Nagy was no worker, nor was he a leader spontaneously thrown forward by the struggle. He was a career bureaucrat, Moscow-trained, who had held the key post of Minister of the Interior in 1946, and served consistently in the regime since it was set up after the war.

Nagy did not call for the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops; nor did he make a clean break with the old Stalinist regime. But while failing to meet the demands of the workers, he made a gesture towards the right by including two leaders of the suppressed right wing Smallholders Party in his government.



Meanwhile the workers had begun to sense the potential power in their hands, and rapidly organised themselves into workers' councils challenging the control of the hopelessly bureaucratised ruling Party;

"In the space of forty-eight hours all the factories in the country had their elected councils, and at the moment of the ceasefire [November 29] several central councils, representing the workers of a whole town or department were formed, in particular at Miskolc, Magyarovar and in certain suburbs of Budapest."

(Midlos Molnar, *Budapest 1956*)

On October 31 a Parliament of Workers Councils for the whole of Budapest spelled out the extent of the frontal challenge to the power of the ruling bureaucracy, and the extent to which the leading layers of workers saw the revolution as taking *their* nationalised economy under their own control. A statement on the basic rights and responsibilities of workers' councils contained nine points, beginning:

"1) *The factory belongs to the workers.* The latter should pay to the state a levy calculated on the basis of the output and profits. 2) The supreme controlling body of the factory is the Workers' Council, democratically elected by the workers. (...) 4) The director is employed by the factory. The director and the highest employees *are to be elected by the Workers' Council.* (...) 7) In the same way the Workers' Council resolves any conflict concerning the hiring and firing of all workers employed in the enterprise. 8) The Workers' Council has the *right to examine the balance sheets* and decide the use to which the profits are to be put..."

(B. Lomax, *Hungary 1956*, emphasis added)

On top of this challenge to the economic control exercised by the Hungarian bureaucracy, workers on the streets had linked up with students and with Hungarian troops in joint committees, and had turned their pent-up anger on the savage forces of the AVH secret police — the main arm of political repression — which had files on over 1 million of the 10 million population.

Such a far-reaching attempt to unseat a Stalinist bureaucracy from the base of its power and privilege in Hungary would have been disturbing enough for the Moscow leaders, who since Stalin's rise to power at the head of a vast conservative state bureaucracy in the 1920s, had increasingly viewed any workers' revolution as a threat to its own power and privilege.

But it was compounded by Nagy's insistence upon a complete removal of Russian troops, followed in swift succession by his announcement of intentions to leave the Warsaw Pact, and declaration that Hungary would become a neutral.

For the Kremlin this was too much: they set up an alternative Hungarian government under veteran Stalinist Janos Kadar, and on November 4 set about installing him in office over the dead bodies of the Budapest workers.

Despite the bombardment and the deployment of 200,000 Russian troops,the workers' councils and sporadic strikes continued right through to January 1957. On November 14 a Budapest Central Workers' Council was formed, and both Kadar and the Soviet forces were forced to negotiate with them. As late as December 11 the arrest of leaders of the Central Council provoked a solid 48-hour general strike.

While the workers showed huge courage in their attempts to lay hands on the positive gains of the nationalised Hungarian economy, they found themselves politically limited by the effects of ten years of Stalinist repression of independent working class politics, following on decades of dictatorial rule under the Horthy regime. However there is no serious evidence that the Hungarian workers looked in any way towards a restoration of capitalism as was predictably claimed by Moscow.

When Khruschev sent in the tanks and heavy artillery he destroyed more than buildings and 20,000 Hungarian dead. He killed any hopes of a self-reform of the Moscow leadership after the death of Stalin; and he ended for thousands of Communists the illusion that the Moscow leadership represented the interests of the working class: 10,000 disgusted members left the British CP alone.

MATERIAL FORCE

Albeit unwittingly, Khruschev had confirmed Trotsky's analysis that Stalinism is not a set of ideas or a wrong political programme which could be remedied by debate or a change of individuals. It is a massive material social force which quite cynically chops and changes its ideology to meet its immediate needs.

It is precisely because it is *not* a new social class, but a bureaucratic layer feeding off nationalised property that Stalinism is forced to maintain such total repression of independent working class mobilisation: unlike capitalists, who have their individual wealth to fall back upon, an ousted Stalinist leader is at once cut off from the source of wealth, power and privilege.

Trotsky also argued that the working class must inevitably clash with this bureaucracy; and that it would need a new Marxist party to lead the necessary political revolution to overthrow Stalinist rule while maintaining nationalised property.

FAITH

He was never to see this political revolution; it remained almost an article of faith for nearly twenty years until the explosion of workers' anger in East Germany (1953), Poland and Hungary showed it to be more than a theoretical question.

The more recent struggles of Solidarnosc revived similar questions, and again pointed to the need for a Marxist leadership capable of relating to the confused oppositional movements in countries where "official Marxism" and state repression act as a major obstacle to political development.

In these lessons the spirit of the Hungarian Workers' Councils lives on for us 30 years later, and has much to teach the British working class.

Loyalists step up intimidation

The marching season in the North of Ireland has passed and the "right" of loyalists to assert their supremacy as they please has not been seriously challenged by the British government.

Piers Mostyn
LCI

This and the now official view that 1986 has seen the worst period of anti-Catholic sectarianism since the early 1970s, signifies a new phase in the loyalist campaign against the Anglo-Irish Accord signed last November.

In August the Northern Ireland Housing Executive admitted that intimidation has reached its highest level in over ten years. Over 300 families have been forced out of their homes this year — the vast majority of them are nationalists.

Given the unwillingness to report attacks these figures must be an under-estimation.

In Lisburn, over 124 familes are officially registered as being forced out in response to death threats, attacks on individuals and the petrol bombing of homes. The still-legal paramilitary group the UDA, using the code name "UFF", has stated its aim of removing all Catholics from the town. Already up to 1,000 out of 6,000 have gone.

With the killing of taxi driver Paddy McAllister on August 26, the number of sectarian murders since November has risen to eight, almost one for every month. The *Guardian* has desscribed this year as "the worst for Protestant paramilitary murders" for a decade.

The intimidation campaign has begun to take on new forms, suggesting that the real loyalist backlash may be yet to come. Sensing the lack of serious opposition from the British military forces and given the failure of the "moderate" unionists to bring about a withdrawal of the Accord through persuasion, terrorist organisations and the so-called "hardliners" have come to the fore, putting the campaign more on to the offensive.

Loyalist councillors who broke the agreed refusal to allow normal working to take place on the councils are to be disciplined and the call for all 330 loyalist councillors to resign by November 15 makes the final retreat from all existing political structures.

Alongside the incursions South of the border, in Clontibret and Dundalk last month, there have been less well-publicised attacks on towns in the North where the population is majority nationalist.

In an attack on Keady the RUC stood by — firing only two plastic bullets — while 2,000 loyalists went on a midnight rampage stoning individuals and petrol bombing houses.

In early August, the "UFF" and UVF issued statements threatening Catholic workers operating in Protestant areas. Subsequently death threats were made to Catholics working at Shorts Brothers, some of whom found dead rats in their lockers.

Shorts, state-owened and the largest factory in the six counties, has only 5% Catholics in its workforce despite a campaign of supposedly "affirmative" action over several years.

The management's response in ordering the removal of loyalist paramilitary regalia led to a walkout by 1,000 loyalist workers and did little to allay the fears of nationalists. According to Sinn Fein, since this "ultimatum", the number of sectarian symbols on display in the factory has increased.

The loyalists themselves have declared their pleasure at the outcome of negotiations which will lead to the Union Jack being flown all year round.

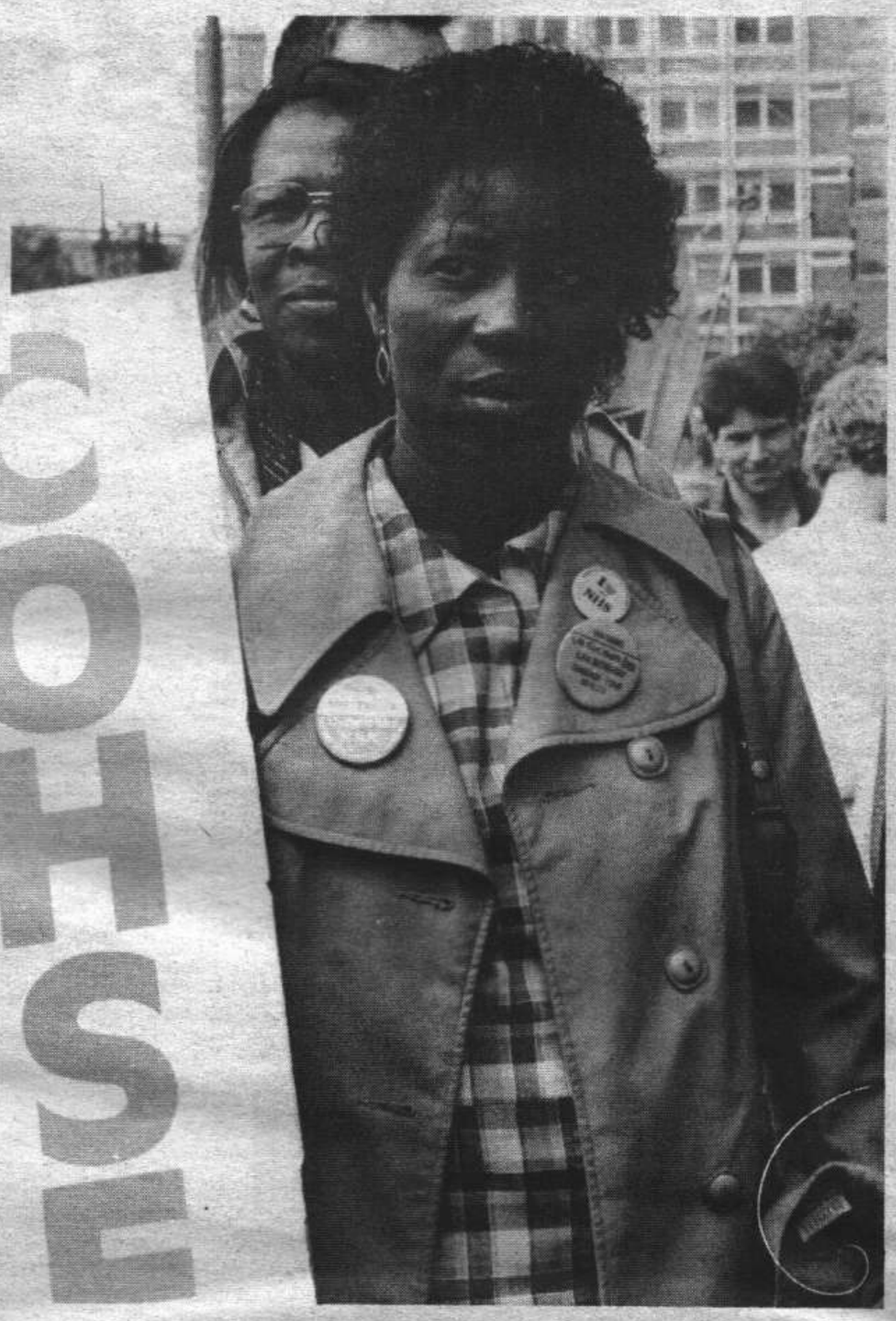
Threats against Catholic social service workers led to a walk-out of staff in 14 offices on August 20. Contrary to the hopes of groups like *Militant* and the SWP, however, there is no chance that this action (welcome as it is) will develop into generalised Catholic-Protestant worker unity.

The overwhelming in-built majority of loyalists in the Northern Irish unions will see to that.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the British TUC have so far maintained silence over workplace sectarianism in the name of this so-called "unity", preferring to attack the right of republicans to defend themselves against the "security forces" and its collaborators.

NEC candidates speak out

Black Sections' political platform



We demand the immediate recognition of all the Black Sections established in Constituency Labour Parties around the country.

The recommendations of the NEC's special working group, in favour of Black Sections being set up where Black Party members want them, should be incorporated in the constitution.

This means Black Section representation at GMC, District Party, Regional Party and national Party levels.

The party's national leadership has adopted a two-pronged attack on the substantial gains made by the Black Section campaign.

The first prong has been to set up the neo-colonialist "Black and Asian advisory committee".

The second has been the expulsion from Party membership of two leading Birmingham supporters Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

These tactics are well-known to us and have been perfected over many decades of "divide and rule". We totally oppose the witch-hunting of Socialists from the Labour Party. Furthermore, we would refuse to serve on the Black and Asian advisory committee or any other body aimed at Black people but not elected by and accountable to them.

We are committed to furthering the Black Section's anti-imperialist intervention in politics. This means stepping up the fight for Black national liberation in Azania (South Africa), support for the demands of the Palestinians and support for British withdrawal from Ireland. Britain must withdraw from NATO.

The grip on developing countries of neo-colonialism and big business has to be broken. The Labour Party must replace its patronising approach to international aid and development with policies relevant to Black people at home and abroad.

But the most urgent priority is to isolate racist South Africa. We restate the Black Sections' demands for:

1) immediate disinvestment by unions and Labour Authorities;

2) a national Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters supported by a national publicity campaign spearheaded by the trade union and Labour Party;

3) an officially-backed refusal by trade unionists to handle South African goods;

4) the unconditional release of all South African political prisoners;

5) a manifesto commitment that a Labour Government will break off diplomatic relations with Pretoria's racist regime and rescind rights to residency in Britain of the one million White South Africans who currently have this entitlement.

Labour must back up its anti-racist statements made in opposition with bold action in government.

Labour's economic policies must be geared to full employment. Ownership by the workers of the commanding heights of British industry must be swiftly achieved.

There must be a national minimum wage. Youth Training Scheme slave wages must be ended. Trade union rights for all workers must be guaranteed.

Positive policies aimed at ending racism — including contracts compliance and employment equality targets — must be implemented.

The health service workers — many of whom are low paid and Black — must be properly valued and rewarded. The NHS should be adequately resourced.

Education for all means a crusade against racist stereotyping by the British school system. The culture, achievements and history of Black people must be positively portrayed.

Racist immigration laws must be repealed. The police must be freed of racist practices and placed under the democratic control of elected representatives. We fully support Black Section policy on policing in that the next Labour Government must:

1) repeal the 1984 Police Act, the Public Order Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act;

2) enshrine in law the duty of the police to prosecute perpetrators of race attacks;

3) set up a fully independent police complaints body;

4) ban the manufacture, stock-piling, and use of firearms, CS gas, plastic bullets, water cannon and other life-endangering equipment.

Black Section supporters on the NEC will be accountable to all Constituency Labour Parties and will communicate regularly with them.

There will be report-backs and discussions with the Labour Party Black Section National Committee, its annual conference and duly elected officers.

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LABOUR BRIEFING
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NEC ELECTIONS: Vote Left!

Last year, *Briefing's* support for the seven sitting members of the Constituency Section of the NEC was the subject of much discussion and disagreement. This year the situation is clearer.

Two of the sitting members — Michael Meacher and David Blunkett — have allied themselves with the right of the NEC — notably over the witch hunt, but also on many policy issues where they have taken stances in opposition to other members of the Constituency Section and contributed to the attempt by the right to isolate Tony Benn and Eric Heffer.

So far has this gone that *Briefing* can no longer support their re-election. The question for the Left now, then, is who should replace them!

Briefing's position on this has always been that any effort to change the status quo on the Constituency Section *must* take into account the need to give representation to Black people on the NEC and improve the representation of women.

We also have to bear in mind the fact that any attempt to unseat a white man will only have the consequence of weakening the position of and even possibly removing the only two women in this section from the NEC (year after year they get the lowest vote of all the elected members because of the sexist voting of some constituencies).

It would therefore be unacceptable for *Briefing* to support any replacement white male candidate as long as there are alternative black or women candidates (and there always are, if you go and look for them!).

This year *Briefing* is therefore supporting the two candidates put forward by Labour Party Black Sections — Narendra Makanji and Russell Proffitt, in addition to the five sitting members (Jo Richardson, Audrey Wise, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, and Dennis Skinner).

Briefing Slate for NEC Constituency Section:

Tony Benn
Eric Heffer
Narendra Makanji
Russell Proffitt
Jo Richardson
Dennis Skinner
Audrey Wise

By Jane Stockton



LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!