LABOUR
BRIEFING
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Inside; in-depth feature on Labour Party Conference.

40p



Labour Party Photo Library

Poor Denis NATO without nukes

The struggle is now on in earnest over the future of British military policy, of American power in Britain and over the future of NATO.

In this struggle the platform of the Labour Party should be supported by all in the anti-war movement. But it must also be criticised on three grounds there are bad proposals in it it is open to interpretation by some in the Party leadership who will happily rip the guts out of it and it lacks the most basic thing that any military policy requires — an underlying, unifying political aim concerning the international political system.

The struggle has got off to an edifyingly dirty, if rather feeble, start. The *Sunday Telegraph* informed us as Labour's Conference opened that the Tories and the Reagan Administration had been engaged in intensive discussions about how to screw Labour on Defence. We then learned from the following Sunday's edition that the military chiefs are going to make fools of themselves by proclaiming that Labour's plans will leave Britain defenceless.

By Oliver MacDonald

The *Times* front page then adds that the US may deny "us" their intelligence information thus threatening British security — presumably the way all other countries are currently so threatened. Worsthorne's editorial in the *Sunday Telegraph* screamed that Labour threatens war, though the text managed to promise us no more than the terrifying prospect of a Franco-American condominium in Western Europe — evidently the ultimate horror in Worsthorne's imagination.

All this was pretty feeble stuff, but the first round of the anti-Labour drive did claim one curious victim: poor old Denis Healy. This was a genuinely interesting move by the Atlanticist establishment in Washington and London. Healy's Panorama remarks were in essence nothing new, just more bluntly put.

First of all, the BBC cut his remark out of its context of anti-Reaganite rhetoric — a bit unfair. But secondly, the Embassy fed the *Times* the real punch the "American sources" pointed out that back in the 1960s Healey had waged a fight against Polaris in opposition so that he could get the Defence job in government and thus ensure Polaris was maintained. The sources added that Healy was, of course, trying to play his old trick again but they doubted it would work this time.

Poor old Denis! He dislikes Reagan's foreign policy, but never believed they could play so dirty! But times have changed: Right-Wing Labour, once the backbone of the American effort in Western Euope, is now in the firing line.

● Cont. on p.16

STAND FIRM, FIGHT BACK!

The left of the Party received a real beating at the Party Conference.

I am not particularly referring to my being voted off the NEC, that is a symptom of the blows against the real left, but by no mens the whole story.

BY ERIC HEFFER

The fact is that although some fronts were held, such as that concerning re-selection of MPs, on most questionns the Party retreated. They turned down policies such as the removal of US bases, and adopted non-socialist policies masked in quasi-socialist rhetoric.

Being quite frank there was time when gloss was put on policy which gave a false impression, such as when David Blunkett spoke on "Social Ownership". David spelled out the sort of policies he wanted to see, but in reality these were not actually as fully committed in the NEC policy statement as he suggested.

The only left winger in the CLP section who held his vote was Tony Benn. Dennis Skinner lost quite a number, as did others, and of course I was voted off.

Tam Dalyell was elected on the Campaign Group slate, and it was threfore more than unfortunate that he should have noted for Neil Kinnock rather than for Dennis Skinner for Vice Chair.

The left vote was about 250,000 the right about 140,000, and approximately 100,000 for the "soft" left. The Soft Left got elected with Right Wing votes.

The position is serious because Neil Kinnock has suggested ideas for changing the role and position of the Chair. It could end up as a gift in the hands of the leaders of the big unions.

It is my view it will not stop there. After the next election, I am convinced that proposals will be brought forward to drop the election at Conference of the NEC. It could be elected on a Regional basis, with CLPs having no direct input. That is what Felipe Gonzalez did in Spain, and I believe such a policy will be passed here.

The Party Conference was stage-managed from the beginning to the end. Delegates of the left were not called by the Chair unless they were actually moving a resolution; such was the case with Felicity Dowling, Wallasey delegate, now facing expulsion.

The stage mangement went right up to the end with the opera singer in a red dress to lead the singing, and the throwing of the roses to delegates. At one stage it seemed as if the Red Flag was not to be sung, but the Party manager had second thoughts.

The second serious development, not I fear understood by all delegates, is the setting up of the new so-called appeals body, actually a disciplinary body, separate from the NEC.

The charge against any member can now be "bringing the Party into disrepute". This of course can mean anything that people want it to mean and perhaps even I could be charged for writing my book "Labour's Future — Socialist or SDP Mark 2?" or perhaps even for writing this article. After all, it is cririca1, and could be "bringing the party into disrepute".

Thinking back over past years, one could have seen the explosive articles that would have been written about the expulsions and the now disciplinary rules and would have appeared in the old "Tribune". Foot and then Clements would have waxed lyrical. Today, it joins in the chorus against the hard left.

The truth is that today, the so-called LCC as well as the paper Tribune, have helped to weaken and attack the left and hand it over to the Right wing. They have got no thanks for it, and of late have actually woken up to this fact.

If, however, ministerial office and careerism, is put before socialist perspectives and principles, then what the "Soft Left" has done is incredible.

The so-called re-alignment of the left has been a failure, because it did not build a left, but was a smokescreen for the move to the right. And those who are real socialists in the so-called "Soft Left" must surely recognise this objective fact, and begin to re-align themselves with the Campaign Forum recently set up. A real left is needed more than ever. It will be difficult to rebuild, especially before the next Election, because of the mood for unity in the Party behind the leader so that Thatcher can be defeated at the polls.

But rebuilding the left has to be done.

All the left groups, whatever their differences, should work together. Also a real efort must be made to build the left in the trade unions at every level, and not just amongst trade union leaders.

Also, the left should be organising Educational groups in every area, which could carry out socialist education classes, and creating socialists.

We should also consider organising a Socialist Book of the Month Club, so that socialist ideas are widely disseminated.

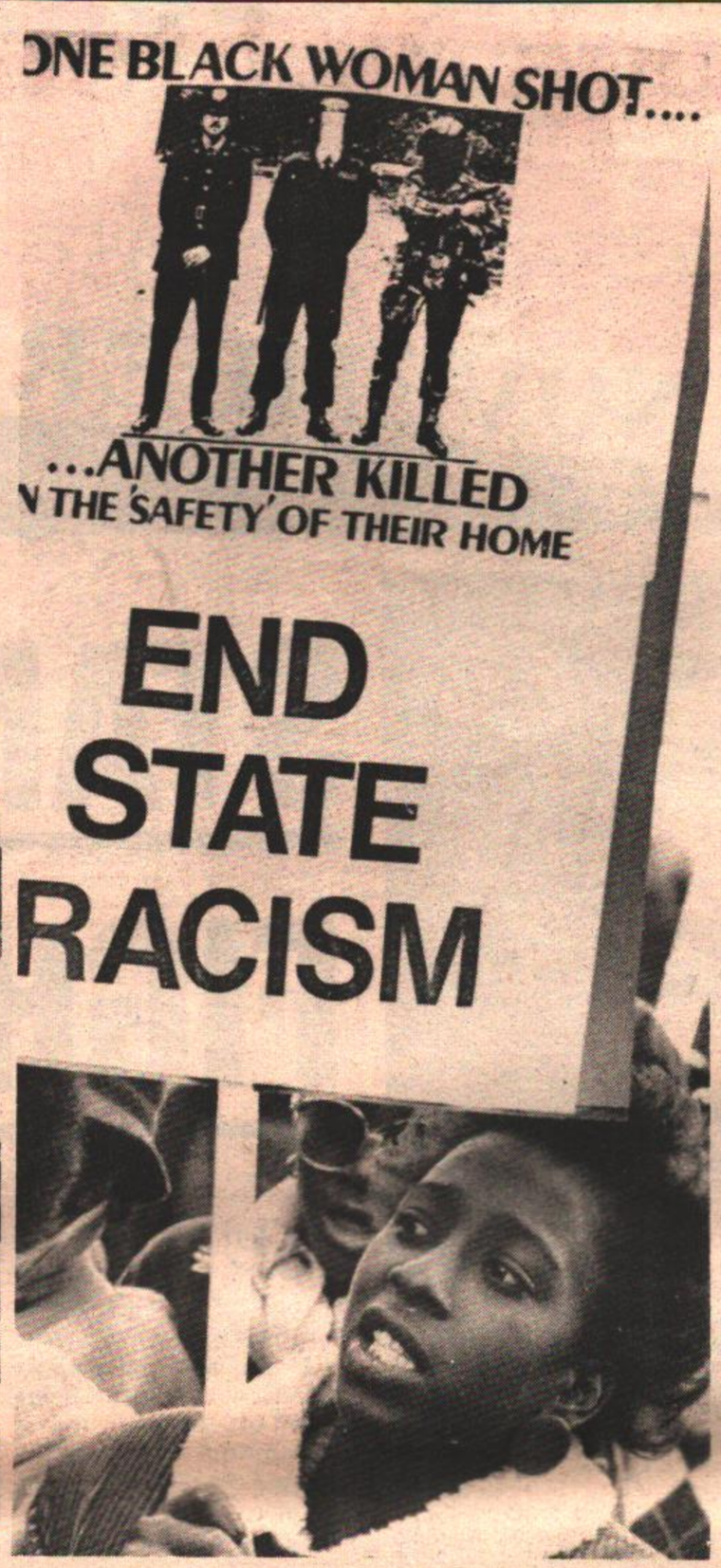
Yes, let us get a Labour Government elected. As Labour Party members that is our responsibility, but also let us step up the campaign inside the Party to get the left more organised to eventually build a classless, socialist society.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Home News

With the trials of those accused of committing "crimes" at Broadwater Farm going on as we go to press, we urge all Briefing supporters to contact the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, 12-16 Tangmere, BWF, London N17, 01-808 1667, 01-885 3752 to find out the latest information on the proceedings and campaigning.





Bournemouth meets the gravy train

By Harry Sloan

Gorged on profits from Jaguar and British Telecom; slobberng at the thought of richer pickings to come from British Gas; gloating at the additioal blows inflicted on black communitites, Wapping pickets, the low-paid and unemployed; revelling in the air, sea and land mobilisation of police to protect them from ordinary people, Tory delegates came to Fort Bournemouth ready to be impressed.

Chairman Tebbit had already chopped out the dissident resolutions from the Conference, which even at the best of times looks more like a rally of the top 5 per cent than a serious political debate.

Three questions dominated delegates' thinking:

***How much will taxes be cut and how much more can be privatised before the next election?**

***How much more lefty, hooligan and criminal blood can be spilled in grisly "law and order" measures: can hanging be restored — especially for biased BBC presenters?**

***Can Thatcher survive the drop in her personal popularity and keep the gravy train going for a third term?**

Talking of gravy, the fourth main concern has of course been the menus for lunch and supper.

Recent speeches, focussing on the 85 per cent of people who are *not* unemployed, on the rising numbers of house owners, on the gains made by the well-to-do from bargain basement privatisation, suggest that the Tories have abandoned any real attempt to project a caring image.

They will angle for the smug vote, the anti-Communist vote,the anti-union vote, and the bigoted racist vote, knowing that they can also cash in on the weakness of Labour leaders in defending their timid pledges.

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A little publicised figure among the shock horror statistics claiming vast losses by Austin Rover is the !70 million the company paid last year in interest payments to the banks — the lingering legacy of the "taxpayers" money" supposedly handed out to British Leyland.

Another useful fact to recall is that until the privatisation of the now vastly profitable Jaguar operation, it was part of the same combine. Were Jags till linked with ARG, the company would be showing a profit.

Health

Compiled by Terry Smith

Royal Free

A life sentence on the 7th floor of a concrete and glass tower block. That is the penalty 100 elderly patients must pay for government spending cuts that have hit Hampstead District Health Authority.

NHS management, desperate to cut cash, will stop at nothing. And, like management in industry, they can count on the willing support of the High Couirt.

This has been clear in the rapid sequence of events around the closure of the New End geriatric hospital in Hampstead. The closure means the loss of over 100 acute beds at the Royal Free Hospital — 25 per cent of its acute cover — and will therefore inevitably increase waiting lists for all patients.

However, management had attempted to evade their statutory duty to consult with the local Community Health Council before the closure by invoking "emergency" powers, and referring to the District's £2m deficit.

When Camden council and the CHC took the health authority to court over this, they won a brief delay for a judicial review. But the outcome of that review was a ruling that gave the non-elected DHA carte blanche to chop away at health services with whatever "emergency" measures it chooses.

Staff at New End responded to this court ruling by occupying the hospital on the Wednesday to prevent the removal of patients: within 48 hours the DHA had been back to the High Court and obtained an injunction against four named leaders of the occupation.

By the following Monday the first patients were ruthlessly bundled out of the hospital — exactly in line with the original management timetable.

The traditional tactic of occupation to defend threatened hospitals has faced major legal attacks in the past two years: we have seen courts sanction moves to bust up occupations in St Leonard's, South London and Neasden Hospitals.

In each case the health authority has shown itself better prepared and more willing to strike fast through the courts.

None of this means that the tactic of occupation should be abandoned: not all health authorities are sufficiently hard-boiled to act in the same way, and in many cases a better-prepared, mobilised workforce in the hospital, the district and elsewhere can play a crucial role in defending occupations against attack.

In any event, no other tactic has proved as successful as occupation in keeping hospitals open once the date and time has been set for closure.

The asset-stripping move to sell-off a large percentage of NHS staff accommodation is an issue which affects not only health workers but everyone on local authority housing lists.

A conference aimed at co-odinating information and organisations opposing these moves has been jointly convened by London Health Emergency and the Assocation of London Authorities. It will be held on Saturday November 1 (10.00-3.30) at Camden Town Hall, Judd St, London WC1. Further details from LHE, 01-833 3020.

NHS policy not promising

You might have thought that with sitting targets like Edwina "Vegetable" Currie, Tony "The - Disabled - Must - Take - Their - Share - of - the - Cuts" Newton, and Norman "Slasher" Fowler, Labour's leadeship would be homing in on health as a major vote-winner for the next election.

Not so. The hovering presence of Roy Hattersley's cash limits has cast its shadow over the timid pledges made by Shadow spokesperson Michael Meacher.

Against a Tory policy that has already underfunded the NHS nationally by well over £1.325 billion since 1982, and an estimate that at least £650m will be needed next year just to keep pace with inflation and other pressures, Meacher has pledged an annual spending increase of... £500!

Plainly this would go nowhere near repairing the damage done under Thatcher, let alone expanding and improving the NHS to meet the needs of a growing elderly population and lift the burden of caring for sick and elderly relatives from hundreds of thousands of women in the home. Indeed the manoeuvres at this year's Labour Conference suggest that Meacher and his fellow Dream Ticket joyriders know in their heart of hearts that they will not be able to deliver even the £500m annual increase.

A long-winded composite, due to be moved by COHSE, spelled out a large number of very basic positions on the NHS — but also would have committed the next Labour government to scrap the present system of quangos and establish elected health authorities.

The implications of this would be far-reaching: there would obviously be no advantage in democratising the NHS if a Labour government were to offer inadequate cash to run the service better. Not only would the reorganisation throw the public spotlight sharply on to the NHS, but it could even trigger an embarrassing defiance of cash limits by newly-elected health authorities.

Late in the day, this fact got home to the union bureaucrats in the midst of the stage-managed performance. NUPE's rightward-moving leaders were the first to respond, announcing that they would now oppose the resolution which they had helped COHSE to formulate, and which was probably the last chance to spell out policies for the manifesto.

COHSE's no less right wing delegation predictably responded not by forcing NUPE to take this stand in front of conference, but by agreeing to remit the motion as a whole.

It all fits well into Kinnock's notion of how to fulfill all his pre-election promises he isn't promising anything

SWEL

The campaign to Save West London Hospital (SWEL) is calling a Trade Union Rally with local and national speakers at Hammersmith Town Hall on Tuesday October 21 at 7.30pm. The following Saturday, October 25 there will be a major demonstration — with all Labour Party and trade union banners welcome. Assemble at 11am, Lillie Road Recreation Ground (near Charing Cross Hospital). March at 12 noon past West London Hospital to Hammersmith Town Hall. Playbus for kids. For further details, contact Dave Shields, c/o NUPE office, West London Hospital, Hammersmith Road, London W6. 01-741 0578.

Victory in Paddington

Paddington and North Kensignton health authority has decided not to evict 20 resident domestics currently occupying their hostels in Bayswater area.

All resident staff made compulsorily redundant by the District as a result of privatisation of services may now remain in their health service accommodation, whether or not employed by a contractor to the District until such time as they find alternative accommodation.

This decision is a major victory for the Paddington Occupation Committee. The campaign was formed and co-ordinated by Paddington resident domestics supported by their Unions, GMBATU and NUPE, The Migrant Services Unit ⅜LVSC½, London Health Emergency, Westminster City Councillors — Cllr Madge Cavalla and Jacki Rosenberg, as well as health workers in other London District Health Authorities.

"We gave them many years of our loyalty, hard work and devotion, yet we had to go through so much anxiety and worry. We had to win this case and we have won it!" said Dolly Angeles, the spokesperson of the Paddington Occupation Committee.

Kinnock tightens his grip

Mandy Moore pointed out at the *Briefing* fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference that while some claim that the left has never been stronger, this belief was difficult to sustain.

On the contrary, since the defeat of the miners, the left had steadily lost ground to the right in the Party, and the desperate need now was for the left to organise itself.

If anyone at that meeting doubted the wisdom of her remarks, then the rest of Conference proved beyond doubt their validity. Eric Heffer, the most consistent opponent of Kinnock's centre-right politics and loyal supporter of the fight in Liverpool, was knocked off the NEC (with the leadership of UCATT, his sponsoring union, "helpfully" denouncing him in the press the previous week), along with Margaret Beckett. The expulsions of *Militant* supporters in Liverpool were upheld, with only a derisory 300,000 votes cast in their favour: even Khan and Scally lost their appeal against expulsion.

Lurch

The witch hunting of socialists from the Party has ensured a further lurch to the right on policy. NEC statements on the economy, social ownership — new right-on term for watered down nationalisation — on industrial relations, all more or less identical to the right wing policies passed at this year's TUC, gained massive support.

The NEC statement on nuclear energy also got a huge majority, despite its fudging on the timescale of decommissioning nuclear power stations — "a decades long process". In typical contradictory fashion the NEC also supported the NUM composite which demanded that the stations should be run down within the term of one Labour Government. Despite the apparently radical nature of this position, it is true to say that the Labour Party still lags behind popular public opinion.

Radical

The one policy area the right have not attempted to displace is the commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. On this the Labour Party retains, on paper at least, a very radical position. Yet it is clear from statements by Denis Healey during Conference on the possibility that US nuclear bases might remain, and Kinnock's statement in his keynote speech on Tuesday that a Labour Government would not remove US defence and intelligence installations, that in reality the leadership have no intention of carrying out anything which would jeopardise our position in NATO. Kinnock reiterated his support for the NATO Alliance despite his tough talk against the US attack on Libya and their interference in Nicaragua.

Veneer

It would be wrong, however, to see what Kinnock is doing as just a rerun of old right wing positions in the Party. It is true that on the fundamental economic and industrial questions he has shifted the Party far to the right, but he has a left cover on social issues. The leadership's support for the Ministry for Women, though not for cabinet status (they were defeated on this), unanimous NEC support for a radical stance on lesbian and gay rights, the acceptance of one woman on every shortlist for reselection — these give his leadership a veneer of radicalism which is very different from earlier leaders.

The Conference was stagemanaged from beginning to end. The Chair sat before a forest of hands, calling speakers by name who then materialised from heaven knows where to keep the debate sewn up, away from rank and file delegates' meanwhile the television cameras in the rafters gave the game away by attaching the speakers list to their cameras.

In the foyers, British Telecom, British Airways, British Nuclear Fuels took up all the space, while the class struggle was made invisible. Wapping, Silentnight were left out in the cold. Even the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign was only given a stall after they threatened to picket the Conference.

The Labour leadership's aim of presenting a tamed party, a party "fit to govern" was clearly a success. Moreover we should not delude ourselves: the majority of delegates from the CLPs and the trade unions were behind Kinnock, many of them convinced that this is the only way to ensure a Labour victory.

organise

Although the left was further marginalised and isolated by the events at Conference, this is not to say that it has been defeated. As the Wapping ballot shows there is still a layer of activists in the Party and the unions which is prepared to fight now rather than rely on a future Labour government. But the need to organise our forces has never been clearer.

The decision at the Chesterfield Conference to set up Campaign Forum was ar important step forward. But while the Campaign Group held a large and successful fringe meeting and Labour Left Liaison also had a meeting on the politics of Campaign Forum, you could not say there was any attempt to organise the delegates. In fact the only real organising that went on was through the campaigns — LCI, LCLGR and Black Sections in particular. There were also a number of lunch time meetings of women delegates opposed to the resolution handing over the review of the Women's Conference to the NEC. A pity that Campaign Forum lost such a good opportunity. The left was clearly still there, smaller but still active in the CLPs and in the campaigns.



Eric Heffer consults with Audrey Wise and Tony Benn at Conference

PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Realignment Mark 2

Interestingly the LCC|Tribune forces were admitting to the "spectacular failure" of their attempt to realign the left round Kinnock. Some blamed this on Kinnock himself, for not participating in the profferred realignment. Livingstone's analysis of this was it had failed because not enough of the left had joined in! On this basis he was inviting Campaign Forum to work jointly with the LCC.

Inadequate

The first response was fairly principled but inadequate. The Campaign Group replied that the witch hunt was the bottom line and for any work with the LCC to take place, they would have to oppose all expulsions — not just selective ones. But this is inadequate. The witch hunt is not the only dividing line. Policy on the economy, trade union rights, NATO, the right of self organisation of the oppressed, these also have to be taken into account.

Tactic

However, Livingstone's invitation is a clever tactic. There will be increasing pressure for unity as the election approaches. We will undoutedly see another layer of the left peel off to join the Kinnock camp. The events surrounding the election of Tam Dalyell to the NEC, on the Campaign Group slate, are evidence of the broad politics included in the Group. Dalyell is an ardent supporter of nuclear power. In addition, his first vote on the NEC was for Kinnock and against Skinner for Vice Chair of the Party!

Labour Briefing

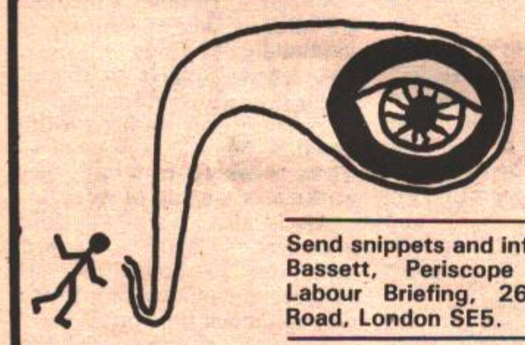
We want the election of a Labour Government as much as anyone. But the strategy adopted by the leadership has absolutely no guarantee of success. Opinion polls immediately after Conference were showing the Labour Party with only a 3 per cent lead over the Tories. This when the Alliance is in real trouble over defence and the Tories have never been less popular. Whereas the majority of the working class don't want to vote Tory, Labour does not provide a coherent alternative.

In addition a Labour Government elected on present policies will have no solution to the economic crisis which we will inherit from the Tories. As Benn points out such a Government will sell out within hours of election.

Briefing retains its position. The left should stand firm. We should maintain and develop our policies -- on the economy and unemployment, on nationalisation; on NATO and unilateral disarmament; on Ireland, on the oppressed; on trade union rights. We should oppose all witch hunts and support all those prepared to fight the Tories now. This and not Kinnock's road is the way to victory.

March to Wapping for Saturday night picket

Periscope



Send snippets and info to Greg Bassett, Periscope Column, Labour Briefing, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.

See You Anon

Would you recognise *your* union general secretary if you met him|her in a bar? If you've only seen them on TV or in the papers you will probably expect them to be much taller and more distinguished looking than they really are.

Certainly nobody has ever accused COHSE's gnome-like General Secretary David Williams of being glamorous or charismatic. But he was well miffed when he went unrecognised at Labour Party Conference.

As the unexciting Williams mingled condescendingly, making tedious conversation with unsuspecting punters at the COHSE reception, one NUPE NEC member shattered his illusions of superstardom by asking if Williams was a branch secretary...

Spirited reception

Following the SDP's trail-blazing as the credit card party, Labour activists are being offered the Mail Order party — as a softener, no doubt, for postal ballots.

A glossy colour catalogue hawks such garbage as a red on yellow apron boasting the old discarded Party logo and the slogan "putting people back to work". At the kitchen sink?

There's more... embarrassing ties and T-shirts; teddies for the cuddly left; umbrellas for the wets; wallets for the wealthy... and a *Daily Herald* tea towel. Oh, and don't forget your oak-framed colour portrait of Chairman Kinnock (a snip at !13.95). If you find this hard to swallow, try a swig from an ever-handy grey Labour Party hip flask, "Putting People First" under the table.

Homes Secretary

One of the most ill-attended debates at Tory conference is always on housing. As the Party of property, Tory delegates know all they want to know already.

One incoming Tory minister even argued he knew plenty about housing because "I have three houses myself" (a statement rivalling the ineptitude of Sir Keith Joseph celebrating his appointment as Education Secretary because "I have always wanted to do things with young people.").

Trade Minister Paul "Mine's a Guinness" Channon is no exception. Challenged by angry constituency organisers on why his wife could not help make up for his repeated long absences from the area, his answer was "She does have three homes to look after." One of them is in Mustique.

Currie in a stew

Edwina Currie, the ghastly new Thatcher clone in the health ministry, has scored a near-maximum in antagonising people in her first month of office.

Her bizarre attempt to blame ill health in the North of England on poor diet rather than poverty has not only angered countless inhabitants of Thatcher's wastelands and her fellow Tory MPs, but has rankled with more weighty forces.

Crisp manufacturers, brewers, distillers and tobacco firms — all of them hefty donors to Tory Party funds — are none too pleased.

Bean and muesli manufacturers told *Briefing* they had observed no surge in North country sales.

Who's Left

"Left in the Dark" is rumoured to be the next big project under preparation by the Communist Party, working jointly with the Young Liberals, Brian Walden and progressive sections of the Federation of Conservative Students. Guest speakers on the broadest platform yet will include Pierre Cardin, Malcolm Muggeridge, Joan Collins, Ted Rogers and Dusty Bin.

Meanwhile a new festival for armchair socialists "Left on the Sidelines" is being organised by Tribune readers' groups, and will operate a complex TV link-up to 300 sitting rooms

There is less encouraging news about the planned carnival of the sectarian left, entitled "Better Left Alone", which has run deep into crisis.

A succession of rows, walkouts and splits reduced the event from a 2-day 25-act cabaret to a double act. Now the double act has broken up, and each performer will now stage their own "Better Left *Well* Alone" in rival telephone boxes in Belsize Park.

Similar problems have dogged the sectarian bookfair "Left on the Shelf", and Ken Livingstone's event for rejected would-be Labour Treasurers "Left on one side".

Union News in Brief

Silentnight

For the second year running, Labour Party and TUC conferences paid only lip service to the long and bitter dispute at Silentnight Holdings.

Now in its second year, the 200 striking FTAT members have had their strike pay stopped by their union to avoid these contributions being deducted from their Social Security payments.

Certainly FTAT are under pressure, with several other employers jumping on Tom Clarke's bandwagon and attacking jobs and conditions in the industry. Yet the determination of the Silentnight strikers was demonstrated yet again in Manchester on the Saturday after Labour Party conference with a picket of a Co-op meeting designed to terminate Co-op trade in scab beds.

Picketing still remains the key to the dispute with the Co-op central in the campaign to stop Silentnight in its tracks. Labour movement support for these pickets will need to be organised by local support groups.

All CLPs and trade unions have the opportunity to turn their conference policy into practice by turning up outside their Co-op stores and Co-op meetings in force. Labour and TUC leaders should be urged to call a national campaign against the Co-op with co-ordinated picketing and collections for the strikers and their families.

Has the labour movement the spirit to rise to the determination of the men and women in dispute at Silentnight? The employers have their eyes on the dispute, has the labour and trade union movement?

J Hangers

300 striking workers have been sacked at J Hangers, Roehampton, London, the artificial limb manufacturer, after a Wapping-style provocation by management. The strike has been made official by FTAT and TASS. Support is being organised for the strikers, and Wandsworth Labour Group supported the picket this week. There are moves among the wives and girlfriends of the strikers to get organised.

Messages of support and donations to Steve Blease, The Hangers Strike Appeal, c|o TASS, Wessex House, 520 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey. Tel 01 646 0260 or 01 788 9598.

Borderways

Borderway's workers have been on strike for eight weeks for union recognition.

Twenty of the company's employees decided to join the metal mechanics craft section of TASS, only to be refused recognition and negotiating rights by the company's management. The employees then elected two shop stewads, who were then called into the office of manager Mr B. Nemashangi, told the company was over-staffed, and given twenty minutes notice.

A ballot of the TASS membership resulted in a unanimous vote for strike action. The company have now dismissed the eighteen striking members (two of the original twenty strikers have gone back to work). The manager's claim that the company was over-staffed seems strange as he has now taken on eighteen scabs.

The Borderway's workers are standing firm. A picket is turning away all deliveries and mail but the company is still functioning. The picket runs from 7 am to 5pm at Borderway's, Catherine Street, Aston, Birmingham 6.

This is a trade union issue of the right of workers to belong to and be involved in a trade union.

All donations to TASS Craft Metal Mechanics Section, 70, Lionel Street, Birmingham B3 1JG.

John Robinson, (TASS Craft Metal Mechanics)

ASLEF debates sanctions (again!)

At this year's Annual Assembly of Delegates in June, ASLEF voted to begin to withdraw all pension fund investments from companies with connections in South Africa — a motion similar to that passed at this year's TUC.

Most members thought this would finally mean an end to our support for apartheid — despite motions passed at AADs since 1981 calling for disinvestment, which the EC have blissfully ignored.

Members got a rude shock when they found the EC had re-called the conference over this saying that up to 90 per cent of our investment was in such companies, and that disinvestment could incur severe financial losses! However, led by the "London Transport Anti-Racist Tube Workers" Group we went along to lobby the Special AAD, thnking that no one would fall for this blatant abuse of democracy.

Inside the meeting, we got a cruel shock. Half way through, the only black member present, a refugee from South Africa, was thrown out for laughing at the Chair.

When the meeting voted to defer disinvestment yet again, by 33-11, one observer was so angry that he threw his union card at the Chair, promising never to return.

This is not the way to fight the right wing — it is cutting off your nose to spite your face. Other observers denounced the EC and other delegates as "racist" and "scabs", and angrily left the meeting. Outside, we decided to form a rank and file group to organise against the manoeuvrings of the bureaucracy.

Mark Thompson, Brighton ASLEF No. 1

All out for Macreadie

By Howard Fuller
Socialist Caucus, SCPS

As *Briefing* goes to press it has just been announced that the ballot for General Secretary and Treasurer of the CPSA is to be re-run.

This announcement comes after months of uncertainty and unprincipled manoeuvring by right wing zealots around the so-called National Moderate Group in the Union, with accusations about "possible" ballot rigging and other infringements of the CPSA's election system.

A report now out from the Electoral Reform Society exonerates the left from any misdemeanours and merely points out incongruities that have existed for many years.

In fact it's now clear to all that the fuss over procedures by the union's ultra right wing was simply a cover for their refusal to accept the result of a democratic ballot of CPSA members.

John Macreadie, the Broad Left candidate (and *Militant* supporter) stands exonerated by the ERS report. He pointed out "there were no complaints against me and the majority of complaints were solicited by the right wing," and went on to say that the right wing were "desperate to win" and didn't like "the fact I won the election democratically."

Socialists in the CPSA now have to ensure that Macreadie takes up his post and oppose *all* attempts to re-run the election. Such a task is not easy in the CPSA, which has had a plethora of anti-Communist witch-hunts over the years, accentuated in recent times by the split in the CPSA Broad Left.

The Kinnockite element of the union around the BL '84 organisation have attempted to further their own career prospects through a protracted witch hunt against *Militant*, the SWP and the Socialist Caucus.

The BL '84 rank and file must *force* their leadership to fight the attempted right wing coup and stop sitting on the fence whilst members have their democratic rights trodden on.

Also the right wing must be *forced* to obey the electoral procedures that they pretend to defend. One of the biggest jokes must be the failure of a number of M.O.D. (Ministry of Defence) branches to hold workplace meetings in accordance with regulations. These are thoroughly controlled by the "Moderates" and have been their "rotten boroughs" for years.

The witch-hunt against Macreadie has brought to light the outrageous collusion between the right wing and the establishment, with the ERS findings being leaked to the *Telegraph* and *Today* before union members had a chance to see it.

Broad Left members face a difficult task against the right wing's "red scare". However, a campaign to get Macreadie into office will allow the Broad Left to expose the undemocratic nature of the CPSA right wing whose arrogance has *wrecked* one of the finest unions.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

John Macreadie — second from right — at the High Court

Support the Broad Left candidates

By Jim Gee
SCPS Broad Left
National Committee

Members of the Society of Civil and Public Servants (the second largest civil service union) will be voting during October for their Executive Council.

This will be the first time that direct voting at workplace meetings will take place — in the past the elections have been by branch block vote at annual conference.

After fierce battles with the clandestine so-called "progressive" grouping in our union (comprising CP, ex-CP, maoist and Tribunite Labour Party members) which has controlled our union for many years, the SCPS Broad Left and other activists won the vote at this year's conference for this democratic reform, to be coupled with election addresses allowing candidates to make their positions clear on key issues.

The SCPS Broad Left is standing 10 candidates in the elections as part of a campaign to transform our union into the strong, democratic organisation it can be.

Years of over-centralisation, closely controlled conferences, "progressive" policies left on paper and not implemented and attempts to stifle open political discussion have left SCPS as a union which cannot live up to its radical image.

The existing leadership have failed to mount the sort of open campaigns of action that can defend pay levels, jobs and trade union rights.

The SCPS Broad Left believes openness, democracy and participation are three of the keys to building a strong union — winning the arguments with and developing what is any union's greatest resource — its members. The truth of this self-evident statement has been ignored by the existing leadership.

Our campaign has met with a good response from the union's membership and some Broad Left members should be elected to the Executive Council. More importantly, many socialists and activists are joining the Broad Left as it develops into a genuine rank and file socialist organisation across the union.

Any reader wanting more information about or to join the Broad Left or BL election materials should contact Lee Kettlewell, National Secretary BL, Flat 1, 19 Buckleigh Road, London SW16.

The Broad Left are standing the following ten candidates for the Executive Council

John Boadle
DHSS Coventry and District branch
John Gallacher
DOE/DTp Eastern branch
David Gallop
GCHQ branch
Jim Gee
DHSS East London branch
Bob Hill
Export Credit Guarantee Department branch
Mary Hughes
DHSS South Glamorgan branch
Lee Kettlewell
Home Office London branch
Nick Langley
DTI Ebury Bridge House branch
Phil Pardoe
DHSS Thames Branch
Chiz Szymanski
Inland Revenue HQ No. 1 branch

Austin Rover

Wth their usual determination to duck a fight with the company, Austin Rover Group union leaders have set about this year's pay round.

They have tabled a "realistic" claim in line with the company's plans — hoping that nobody will feel strongly enough about it to go on strike.

The company wants everyone in one grading structure to allow less militant white collar and supervisory staff to vote on the manual workers' pay offer. True to form, the unions have demanded "harmonisation" with staff conditions.

The company wanted another 2 year deal. The unions have obliged by not specifying a time in their claim.

Union officials now argue that the reason for a "more realistic" claim than last time was because "the company won the propaganda battle" over the review two years ago. But in reality AUEW and EETPU leaders deliberately split and defeated the strike by telling their members they did not support them.

Once again the Joint Negotiating Committee is using similar arguments to blame the membership fo their own inaction, now the company has replied to the claim.

The company replied on September 15. Nearly a month later the unions still have not issued a statement, or held metings of the membership. There has been only one stewards' meeting. Most members do not even know an offer has been made!

While the JNC actually voted "not to communicate" with members, the company has issued two leaflets to the membership.

The offer is 2 per cent each year for two years, with the second year's money now increased by a further 50p. The concessions wanted by the company in exchange run to 70 pages.

They include the right to change the shift system at 2 weeks notice. The system would involve 5 people covering 4 jobs by working 4 nine and three quarter hour shifts, each having a different day out each week. In this way the company hopes to get forty eight and three quarter hours work on the day shift without paying overtime or night shift premiums, and achieving full flexibility for peak production periods.

Similar "flexible" methods are already causing disputes in shipbuilding.

A scheme similar to that at Lucas (whose dispute has laid off all Austin Rover workers(with a "quality bonus" is wanted — where workers condemn their workmates' quality of work.

ARG also wants a joint managers and stewards committee to police the sick scheme, disciplining people who take too much time off.

There is also an extremely contentious scheme to merge the Body and Assembly plants at Cowley.

So far, the membership has not been involved in all this. The JNC will hold mass meetings "some time" — but for information only, not decision-making!

The JNC insists any decisions must be by ballot. And everything they have done so far suggests they are determined to ensure a ballot vote against strike action.

NUJ holds key to Wapping fight

Long-running strikes can be won! Even a union as small and weak as the NUJ can achieve victories!

Even as SOGAT members were delivering their resounding rebuff to Murdoch and showing their determination to fight for jobs, the NUJ's right wing-led Executive overturned a Complaints Committee recommendation of heavy fines against the News International FoCs and MoCs & and instead administered... a reprimand!

Complaints being taken out against hundreds more NUJ scabs seem likely to go the same way or worse & clogged up in the machinery while the Executive allow the Rulebook's time limits to render the complaints invalid.

By Harry Sloan

Yet there is no doubt that had the NUJ struck out at Murdoch with anything like the determination with which they fought the *Nottingham Post*, the printworkers could have been victorious, and the NUJ could have ensured it had real chapels in News International instead of the gang of scabs that now cynically brandish union cards.

The right wing on the NUJ Executive have not even succeeded in ingratiating themselves with the scabs by their grovelling. For even acknowledging the need for action they have been derided by Wapping journalists as lackeys of the print unions!

In the aftermath of the SOGAT rejection of Murdoch's latest "final" offer, Tony Dubbins spoke of returning to the TUC to call on support from the EETPU.

Printworkers and NUJ members should ensure that while these steps are taken, NUJ leader Conroy and the union's NEC are put on the spot to fulfill their mandate from this year's Conference and deliver more significant support for the printworkers than the pitiful few NUJ banners on September 13 and the charade of the present complaints proceedings.



Paul Mattson/Frame

Women's march to Wapping

Wave of anger breaks over Sealink

Immediate and determined action by ferry crews and shore staff brought British-run Sealink ships to a standstill as management unveiled their plans for closures and mass sackings.

The occupation and unofficial strikes began as soon as the privatised Bermuda-based company announced the closure of its Channel Island route with a loss of 492 jobs. Action soon spread as it became clear that hundreds more jobs are also under the axe.

The action took place in defiance of Tory anti-union laws, with the National Union of Seamen and the officers' union NUMAS taking tuns to stage 48-hour stoppages and

By Terry Smith

paralyse services while the formalities of a ballot were gone through.

NUS deputy general secretary Sam McCluskie, fresh from a week upholding Kinnock's plan for compulsory strike ballots under a Labour government, was forced to support the stoppages which make a nonsense of that proposal. He told the *Guardian*:

"There will continue to be industrial action, but because of the law it will not yet be all-out action. It will be wildcat strikes, bits and pieces."

NUR members — hundreds of whom stand to lose dockside jobs as a result of the Sealink cuts & have been respecting NUS picket lines with support from General Secretary Jimmy Knapp.

The NUS, NUMAS and NUR action is a splendid illustration of the willingness of workers to fight back against outrageous management attacks, and a case-study of the difficulties a Labour govenment could have in enforcing its policy of compulsory ballots.

But the action must be tightened and stepped up through links with other dockside and transport unions to shut down the sea containers traffic in Britain; and with European unions still operating foreign-crewed Sealink ships and services.

The transfer of Sealink passengers and cargo to other ferries should also be boycotted.

This escalation means going beyond "bits and pieces" to full-scale official support, with the firm aim of spreading the fight until full reinstatement and job security is won.

Printers' challenge

The printworkers have shown they don't give a XXXX for Rupert Murdoch's latest "final offer".

Despite long months of isolation and the betrayal of other sections of the trade union movement — conspicuously EETPU and NUJ — SOGAT members have voted by an even larger margin to fight on.

But will the left in the unions and the Labour Party respond? Will they reverse the decline in support for the picket lines, renew the offensive by picketing Murdoch's distributors, and resume calls for the print unions to call on Fleet Street for support?

Dubbins has talked of returning to the TUC for support: this should be backed up by resolutions from the labour movement and a mass lobby of the General Council. The NUJ in particular must come under fire in every area, calling for its NEC to take action against the 800 scab journalists at Wapping.

Briefing spoke to Liz Short (deputy MOC Times Clerical SOGAT).

I am very pleased about the result. The main significance of the ballot is that a group of workers has *twice* rejected an offer of compensation, and has shown its determination to fight for jobs and union recognition.

The size of the vote against gave the morale of the strikers a tremendous boost. This was demonstrated in an energetic march on Wapping which caught the police on the hop.

Brenda Dean took it very well. She hasn't got any policies to win the strike now, any more than for the past 9 months, just the boycott campaign. The only new ingredient is to ask the TUC to get the EETPU to instruct its members not to cross our picket lines.

I don't think we can go on the way we've been going. We should be working towards no handling of News International products. NI copy is still being handled on Fleet Street, and print union members are still distributing Murdoch's papers. We should continue to campaign for wider solidarity action.

Sequestration of SOGAT's assets is again on the cards. It is a real threat to the union and its leadership — even if we just carry on picketting and demonstrating.

Murdoch's first move has been to appeal to people to apply individually for compensation. This is the same tactic that was used at the end of the miners' strike to demoralise the people who'd stayed solid. The union has to keep the morale of the strikers high by providing a strategy to take the dispute forward.

Larry Hyett, SOGAT delegate to Labour Party Conference, spoke about SOGAT's activities in Blackpool.

We had many ups and downs in our SOGAT delegation meetings.

We won the support of our delegation for the armed black liberation struggle in South Africa on the grounds that the printworkers supported the anti-fascists in the Spanish Civil War in the '30s. I think it's the duty of the delegation now to take that argument back to chapel level to try and win the sort of support for black workers in South Africa that was gained for the Spanish liberation struggle.

This must be coupled with workers' sanctions at chapel level against companies which are linked with South African advertising in our national newspapers. We must also get speakers from the liberation struggle into chapel meetings.

We also succeeded for the first time in winning support for gay and lesbian rights. We felt that it was essential to support the comrades in the movement because they have shown their solidarity not just with the printworkers but also with the miners. They have proven their rank and file involvement in class struggle. I argued that we should seek unity with those who are oppressed.

We failed, however, to win support for black workers forming their own sections within the Party. We have many things in common with black workers. The campaign on Broadwater Farm and in Brixton against police thuggery is the same campaign against police violence in industrial conflict.

Here We Go again

The left in the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign has won the National Council to endorse a call for a national demonstration, rally and Heroes mega-concert in Wembley Conference Centre next March. This follows the highly successful fringe meeting at TUC, with Terry and Liz French on the NJMC with Arthur Scargill. However, things are not quite so straightforward.

Since the last report on the NJMC (June *Briefing*) it has become more and more contadictory, indicating the opposing pressures within the campaign from the rank and file and from the more reactionary NUM Area leaderships in Scotland, Yorkshire and South Wales. For instance:

*The Notts Gala should have been built as a national event; the NJMC agreed this, and Billy Etherington promised national NUM support. Both the NJMC and the NUM left the organising and financing to the Notts activists, instead of mobilising thousands to support the beleaguered NUM at its weakest point.

Yet the last National Council meeting *did* agree unanimously to call a second national demonstration, rally and Heroes concert in London, next March.

*In May, the National Council closed its meetings to non-councillors. As we predicted, the rank and file were squeezed out and replaced by a phalanx of Area executive officers, leaving the left isolated and the bureaucrats to turn the campaign exclusively towards fundraising and away from rocking Kinnock's boat.

Yet the mailing for September's Council meeting (though not sent to most delegates) announced, without explanation, that all Council meetings would once again be open to observers from NJMC affiliates.

*When the London Miners' Support Groups opened the London Miners' Office on behalf of the national campaign, Billy Etherington came to open it enthusiastically as a much-needed base to organise speaking tours for sacked men.

Yet the NJMC has not sent, as it agreed, a single miner down to London.

Regional committees of the NJMC are a way to build a more effective campaign, as

By Ed Fredenburgh NJfMC, ex-officio

they allow full representation of affiliates. Results vary by the Area. Some get more opposition than support from their executive officers.

*In Scotland, the Communist Party leadership has scaled new heights of "realism" by describing the Scottish Coal Board's latest 1,500 redundancies as a partial victory — which will lead to future investment and expansion! This lateral thought is by George Bolton, who is running to replace McGahey as NUM vice-president.

*In South Wales, now operating a mid-week overtime ban against Area Executive advice, Terry Thomas has prevented the setting up of the regional campaign. Until recently, that is: when the miners involved lost patience and set one up with the official sponsorship of the Cokemen's Area executive.

*In the north east, where 3,000 Durham mechanics are organising a rota of one-day strikes over eight weeks, the activists have used the North East JMC to help build support outside the NUM — for instance by lobbying the North East TUC.

The South East Region Justice for Mineworkers Campaign will be launched — not before time — at a meeting on Saturday November 8, 2pm at Hammersmith Town Hall (creche if needed). Speakers include Peter Heathfield, and Kent NUM and WAPC who will be fully involved in the campaign.

The South East JMC can do several things: give a considerable boost to organising the London Miners Ofice, motivating requests for miners and WAPC speakers; help renew links between miners, the women's groups and the support movement at large; and take on much of the responsibility for organising and building the national demonstration next March.

We urge *Briefing* supporters to give their backing to the campaign, in the first place by sending delegates to the launch meeting on November 8.

London Miners' Office, c*o Hammersmith Unemployed Centre, 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6. 603 1831.

Battle on!

Just when the bosses thought it was safe to put the boot in, trade union action is back in the headlines.

As if the splendid example of the SOGAT workers and the Sealink strikers were not enough proof, other events confirm that the unions are far from defeated in the aftermath of the miners' strike.

A new wave of militancy and strike action within the NUM, headed up by the Durham Miners' strike for reinstatement of victimised men, is the clearest example of new confidence.

But elsewhere the militant mood of a workforce that has suffered redundancies and speed-up has persuaded employers to offer pay increases well above inflation at Fords and Vauxhall.

By Harry Sloan

And 1 million local authority manual workers have been offered a 6 per cent pay increase in a move that has horrified the Tory government.

There have also been more localised strikes and stoppages by bus and other transport workers, and by Lucas car components workers, while the vigilant Silentnight strikers and other unionisation disputes battle on.

Building Briefing

Turn back the grey tide

The support for the campaign to build a fortnightly Briefing continues to grow.

We have now moved into our new office — only to find, for a paper trying to "turn back the grey tide", the decor (carpet, walls, door, ceiling, desks) is entirely in grey!

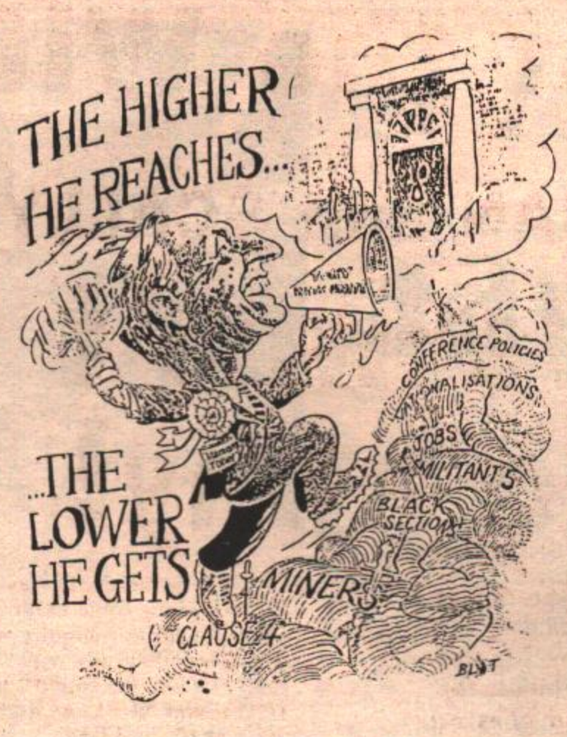
At the time of going to press, we can report that the first week was thoroughly hectic. Trying to find furniture and produce a paper all together did not make for a quiet life!

Still, we had the enthusiasm brought back from our Blackpool Labour Party Conference team to feed off. Everyone who was in Blackpool came back with stories of how well Briefing was received — and most came back with new orders for the paper, names and standing orders too.

For readers who wish to find out more about our time in Blackpool we recommend the Collected Briefing Bulletin Pack — photocopies of the full set of bulletins produced while we were in Blackpool available for £2 the set.

Now, with our campaign concretised in the office, a worker and the support given so far, we can only appeal for a continued effort from all our readers and supporters. We need you subscriptions, your names welcoming the new Briefing (a concerted push will bring us up to 500), your orders for the paper to sell, and your standing orders. Write to us at 26 Crofton Road, London SE5 — sorry about constant changes of address, but we hope to have a PO Box by next issue.

Speaking of the next issue, we need your articles, reports and letters too! Please send them to arrive by Friday November 7.



Sign if you support

In addition to the 300 names in our last issue, more supporters (all in a personal capacity) have signed the statement below.

We'll be running the advert one more time next month — fill in the form below.

Jude Arkwright, Streatham CLP
Linda Austin, Streatham CLP
Mike Barley, Leader Wandsworth Labour Group
Craig Brewin, Haringey Councillor
Peter Crack, Bristol East CLP
RL Denis, Bristol CLP
Alf Filer, Brent East CLP
Chris Fowler, Tooting CLP
Tony Franklin, NCU London West
Fred Hall, CPSA
Mark Hagger, Putney CLP
Frank Hansen, Brent Council
Mike Heiser, Brent East CLP
Ken Jones, NUT Executive
Pat Kane, NCU London North Central Internal, Sec., London Broad Left
Hilda Kean, former Leader, Hackney Council
Andrew Kennedy, Norwood CLP
Heather Lavis, Battersea CLP Women's Officer
Bernie Lloyd, CPSA Socialist Caucus
Steve Messenger, NCU Westminster
Grainne Monks, ILTA Council
Sian Moore, NALGO
Paul Moore, Westminster Branch NCU
Dave Nelson, Asst. Sec., Leyton CLP
Tony Nottingham
Chris Pate, Bow § Poplar CLP
Roland Pease, Preston CLP
Andy Perris, CPSA Socialist Caucus
Stephen Potter, Norwood CLP
Brian Prince, Brent East CLP
Andrew Richards, Hove CLP
Patrick Scott, Deptford CLP
Kevin Simms, NCU London West
Cyril Spector, Urdington CLP
Eileen Stanford, Norwood CLP
Alastair Wallace, CPSA Socialist Caucus
Dave Ward, NCU Horsham
PJ Wilkinson, Vauxhall CLP
Vanessa Wiseman, ILTA Council, GLRLP EC
John Wray, Chair, Leyton CLP
Caroline Young, SCPS Socialist Caucus

"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".

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Letters

Briefing ambiguous on minimum wage

The editorial on low pay and the National Minimum Wage (see page 6, October *Briefing*) was, to say the least, ambiguous. Some of the arguments in the editorial were confused, running counter to the approach of Rowland Sheret (same page).

It is true that Kinnock, Willis and Edmonds are hypocrites about low pay. That, unfortunately, is true about most of the reforms which most labour leaders support. Equally it is true that a national minimum wage is being used as a trojan horse for Incomes Policy and a new version of the Tories' trade union legislation.

Again, progressive measures are often presented as dependent on concessions that the organised working class and the oppressed must make to capitalism. There is nothing new in this.

It is of course correct, as Rowland Sheret's article does, to lay the stress on the fight necessary *here and now* to defend low paid workers and increase their living standards. Having said that we should still be in favour of a law saying what the minimum wage that anybdoy can earn shall be.

Yes; it should be an hourly total &to protect casual and part-time workers). Yes; the overall figure must be determined by how low paid workers themselves see their own needs. Yes; such a law should have no strings. Yes; jobs of all low paid workers benefitting from such legislation will have to be protected in law. All these additions, and others, are necessary to protect fully the rights of all working class and oppressed people.

Having made that clear, it is also necessary to point out that a legislated minimum wage makes inroads against the rights of capitalists and employers. It helps define the principle of need as superior to the principle of the market. It acts as a platform for further argument and struggles which make inroads into "the rights" of capital.

And, it is in that respect that the fight for a national minimum wage is analogous to the battle for the eight-hour day. As your editorial correctly points out legislation on the eight-hour day does not (and has not) restricted the struggle for a 35 hour week. More accurately, it has acted as a base line for that struggle. Whereas an incomes policy confines the workers' movement to the battle over living standards, a national minimum wage can work as a trampoline.

Briefing should support a national minimum wage — unambiguously.

Brian Heron

More on football...

Dear Comrades,

Both the letters objecting to my article about football as part of women's oppression, toe the "it isn't men, it's someone else" line of reasoning.

Whilst the media, football management and capitalism in general may exacerbate, organise or profit from the present dominance of male sports, that dominance is nonetheless an expression of male power.

Funding, media coverage and uncritical support of its gender inequality by men on the left of activities that only, or largely, men do, is an aspect of the continuation of male dominance, which no amount of rhetoric about the culture of the oppressed can disguise.

Di Parkin

Where's the black perspective?

Jacky Harding, women's delegate from Ealing|Southall is active in Black Sections and was one of the women who forced the Chair to allow dissenting speeches at the end of the debate on Women's Organisation. She spoke to Briefing in Blackpool about her experiences at her first Labour Party Conference.

"I live in Southall in London where there are a lot of black people. I've found there are very few black poeple at Conference — so few that I can identify each one by name and where they come from. We all know each other and we stick together.

Also in the town, I feel very self-conscious. I suppose they don't see many black people here, so I'm much more aware that I am a black woman than I am in day to day life.

The black people that are here are quite pushy — we know what we want. We want Black Sections.

We have been trying to speak in the debates but because of what's been going on, we haven't always been called. Also we're easily identifiable, the Chair knows who we are and what we'll say. Russell Proffitt has tried to speak in nearly every debate and the first time he's been called is this morning, on the last day.

We've had a lot of support from people at Conference. Some from areas where there aren't many black people say they are mandatd to vote against Black Sections, but that now they're going back to argue for Black Sections.

We've been inundated with requests for speakers. There's hope for the future and we are not going to go away.

When the women stormed the platform it wasn't an organised thing really. I know there was dissent; it was on a matter of principle. What I wanted to say was that it was the same principle we're arguing for in Black Sections: exactly the same thing, that people should be able to speak for themselves.

The Black and Asian Advisory Committee is chaired by a white woman. It's the same sort of paternalism (maternalism) to propose that the NEC should decide on the make-up of the Women's Conference.

There wasn't a black perspective in that debate. It has happened time and again. The Labour Party can't rely on black people's support for ever.

What politics is about for me is power, the distribution of power in society. At the moment white men have got more power than anyone else. I'm a black woman — I'll say openly to Neil Kinnock or anybody: 'I think you should give me some of your power!' That's what we're fighting for!"

Unite against the Witch- hunt!

A regular column from

Labour Against the Witch Hunt '86

PARTY Conference continued the witch-hunt of socialists from the party. An overwhelming vote endorsed the NEC expulsion of Militant supporters from Liverpool DLP, followed by a closer but still successful vote against the reinstatement of Kevin Scally and Amir Khan.

The conference then voted on NEC proposals for a new National Constitutional Committee. This body will be elected by the conference each year, except this time when it will have to be done by *postal voting*!

Bureaucrats

The union bureaucrats who wield their block votes will be able to determine the make up of the NCC, with the CLPs getting only three places on a committee of 11. The women's seats (2) will as usual be elected by everyone.

By Helen Ward
Publicity Officer, LAW '86

The purpose of this new committee is to streamline the disciplinary process. The NEC has spent too many hours acting as an ad hoc court listening to 'evidence' and hearsay. But apart from shifting the site of the purge, the NCC has also been given sweeping new grounds for expulsion.

Offences

Offences now include "involvement in financial support for and/or the organisation of and/or the activity of any organisation declared to be ineligible for affiliation to the party". This means that anyone supporting (or technically, even buying) a socialist paper could be expelled without having to 'prove' membership as they have in the past.

N.E.C.

The first meeting of the newly elected NEC also showed how it intends to continue. It set up an enquiry into Knowsley CLP with three members on it. These appointed judges include the well-known and impartial Charles Turnock, and no-one from the constituency section!

The leadership's attacks on the left are not over. Felicity Dowling's case has yet to be heard, and the Knowsley enquiry will decide whether the local Party is allowed to reselect who it wishes to replace the right wing Kilroy-Silk. The last NEC before Conference also voted to expel a comrade from Birmingham Selly Oak, Bob Whitehead. His local CLP have agreed to continue recognising his membership, so yet more NEC enquiries and suspensions could be in the offing.

Opposition

The need for a united opposition to all these aspects of the witch-hunt is obvious. LAW '86 held a fringe meeting at the conference, distributed hundreds of leaflets and received support from a number of MPs for our campaign. This needs to be built on urgently.

We have to get resolutions of opposition to the enquiry into Knowsley, the expulsion of Bob Whitehead and other cases passed in as many wards, CLPs and unions as possible. Where local parties are refusing to recognise the NEC-imposed expulsions we should build up support for them.

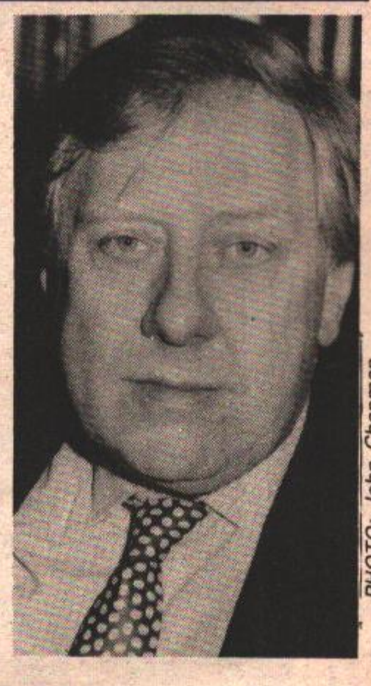


PHOTO: John Chapman

Hattersley
2.7 million voted against his purge.

Meetings and rallies can be held locally to argue for why the fight must go on, and we must return to next year's conference demanding the reinstatement of all expelled socialists. This means particularly building up our support in the trade unions.

LAW '86 is the only campaign fighting on the single issue of opposition to all *all* expulsions. We need *more* support, and urge all those who agree with us to raise the issues in their unions and party branches, sponsor LAW '86 and support our initiatives.

Next steering committee of LAW '86: Saturday 25th October, 2pm, London (venue to be confirmed). Contact LAW '86: c$o 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14.

KHAN and SCALLY
We won't go away!

Despite the defeat at Conference of the resolution for our reinstatement, the campaign goes on.

Both Amir and myself regard a vote of 2.7 million in our favour as being a significant gain, and believe that if enough pressure can be applied to the NEC then reinstatement can be won.

By Kevin Scally

Although General Secretary Larry Whitty favours an enquiry that will lead to us getting our Party cards back, he may not be able to carry the right wing majority on the NEC, which has been strengthened by the elections at this year's Conference.

It is clear from discussions that I had at Conference with sources close to Roy Hattersley that he is not prepared to give way gracefully — what he wants is for us to keep our heads down for a few years, and then reapply.

No decision has yet been made on the form that the "re-examination" will take, although the National Agent, David Hughes has told me that a decision should be made by November.

It is clear to us that the reason why our reinstatement vote was unsuccessful was because many trade unions believed that this enquiry would deal sympathetically with our case. We had the support of the TGWU and NUPE, as well as 80 per cent of the CLPs.

Members of UCATT and TASS, in particular, will want to know why these did not vote for our reinstatement. Their vote is not in the best traditions of these unions.

Campaign

The national campaign, which has won wide support in the Party from both the constituencies and the trade unions, will therefore continue. Pressure must be applied in those trade unions which voted for the witch hunt. Resolutions should be sent from trade union branches to national executives — the failure to overturn these expulsions will inevitably lead to more expulsions elsewhere.

If necessary the campaign for reinstatement will ensure that the issue is raised at each of the regional conferences and even at Party conference again next year. Party activists will have to show the NEC that we won't go away; not just to gain *our* readmission into the Party, but to protect the rights of all those other activists who may be isolated in hard right constituencies.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Frances Curran

Don't divide us!

The LPYS's representative on the outgoing Labour NEC spoke once from the platform during conference.

Given the witch hunt against the left — including the LPYS — one might have expected the speech to be a forthright attack on Kinnock and his cronies. In fact, Frances Curran was speaking *on behalf of* the right-dominated NEC, in opposition to Black Sections.

By Patrick Baker
Islington North LPYS,

For *Militant* supporters, the irony of this must be glaring. While Black Sections joined the dwindling forces fighting the witch hunt, and for socialist policies, *Militant* united with the right in opposition to the right of black people to organise.

Though their opposition to Black Sections is couched in different terms, their position is basically the same. This is hardly a shock for those who know the YS — lesbian and gay liberation was denounced as a "petty bougeois deviation" for years.

However, while the YS leadership is arguing, correctly, in favour of autonomous youth organisation, perhaps it should reconsider autonomous black organisation.

The LPYS has now, on paper at least, joined the rest of the left and recognised the struggle for lesbian and gay liberation. Perhaps next they will extend that to all of the oppressed, and withdraw their opposition to the right of black people to autonomous self-organisation.

New realism is consolidated

Some progress was made in Blackpool in the field of Labour's local government policies — but the Party moved backwards, too.

By Graham Norwood
Norwood Labour Party, personal capacity, and surcharged Lambeth councillor

The one composite discussed in the brief debate anaylsed correctly the attacks on local authorities since 1979 — rate-capping, cuts in grants, privatisation of services and enhanced powers of the district auditor.

It also produced some campaigning suggestions — to obstruct legislation on cuts or privatisation, to work with unions to oppose existing laws and generally to promote council services.

More fundamentally, the composite instructed a future Labour Government to repeal privatisation measures, remove Westminster controls over council capital spending, reform rateable values and scrap the Audit Commission's powers to surcharge and disqualify.

So far so good, but the composite did *not* discuss abolition, the recreation of the scrapped metropolitan councils, paying off the debts of the surcharged councillors, the creation of minimum standards of service in each council upon the election of a Labour Government...

In line with the move of the Party under Neil Kinnock the emphasis has been placed on presentation rather than policy. After a period when Labour-in-office meant Labour-running-councils, the shift is now almost entirely to how Labour will perform in Westminster, not in town halls.

This is wrong, not least because if Labour is to implement its national policies successfully it requires the help of progressive local councils.

More ominous, though, is that those councils are beginning to be a little less progressive.

The ILEA appears to be at odds with some local Labour Parties over lack of consultation over the education budget; some inner city rate-capped councils, including Lambeth, are now seeking to negotiate with the Conservatives over levels of spending through the "redetermination" facility; and some are drawing up very modest plans to come into effect when Labour gains national power, instead of putting forward large spending increases to compensate for Tory cuts and move ahead further still with better services.

That change in mood, the creeping "new realism", was consolidated at the 1986 Conference.

SOGAT at Labour Party Conference

There was no direct reference in the motion to this year's Labour Party Conference to the print dispute, which was a failure by the SOGAT leadership.

By Larry Hyett
SOGAT Labour Party Conference delegate sacked printworker

They missed a prime opportunity to use the platform of the Conference to call for solidarity action on a national scale, and to increase picketing. Such a call would, of course, have been in contravention of the judiciary's guidelines.

The conference itself threw up a couple of motions where we had the opportunity to speak. One was on policing, where Geoff Dixon, a SOGAT member, outlined the tactics of the police and called for their accountability. The other motion was on the media. This was a very weak attempt to publicise our dispute. It diverted attention from the Wapping dispute itself onto the ownership of the media by nationals. We could have expanded the issue to explain the attack by multinationals on trade union rights in this country and internationally.

Kinnock used the News International dispute in his speech as he used Silentnight and international struggles such as in Nicaragua. But he put no real proposals for the Labour Party to support them.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Women's march and rally to Wapping.

Labour Party Conference

Ministering to our needs?

By Sheilagh Priestman
Oxford East CLP

Women achieved one major gain and one loss at Labour Party Conference. The loss was the invitation to the NEC to meddle in the women's organisation` but the agreement to set up a Ministry for Women with Cabinet representation is a gain. Yet by itelf it is in no way enough.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

*"Don't you think you should call at least **one** speaker against?" Women lobby the chair at Blackpool — and win.*

"Ministry of Women for What?" we should ask. How will the Ministry work? How will it involve women in the necessary struggles outside government structures?

Will it be in a remote part of Whitehall? Has anyone met *anyone* who has ever been in, or worked in Whitehall? Don't they all have tightly rolled umbrellas and tightly rolled minds, to keep troublemakers out?

Perhaps local government women's committees are seen as a model. But they, too, have been mainly locked in town halls: they haven't been accessible on the street corner, next to the sweet shop, the sweat shops and the laundrette.

There have been real difficulties in the relationship of local government women's committees, with the women's movement.

It is a mistake to believe that any part of the capitalist state can really belong to the oppressed. But sometimes we have been able to use bits of the local state to advance our interests.

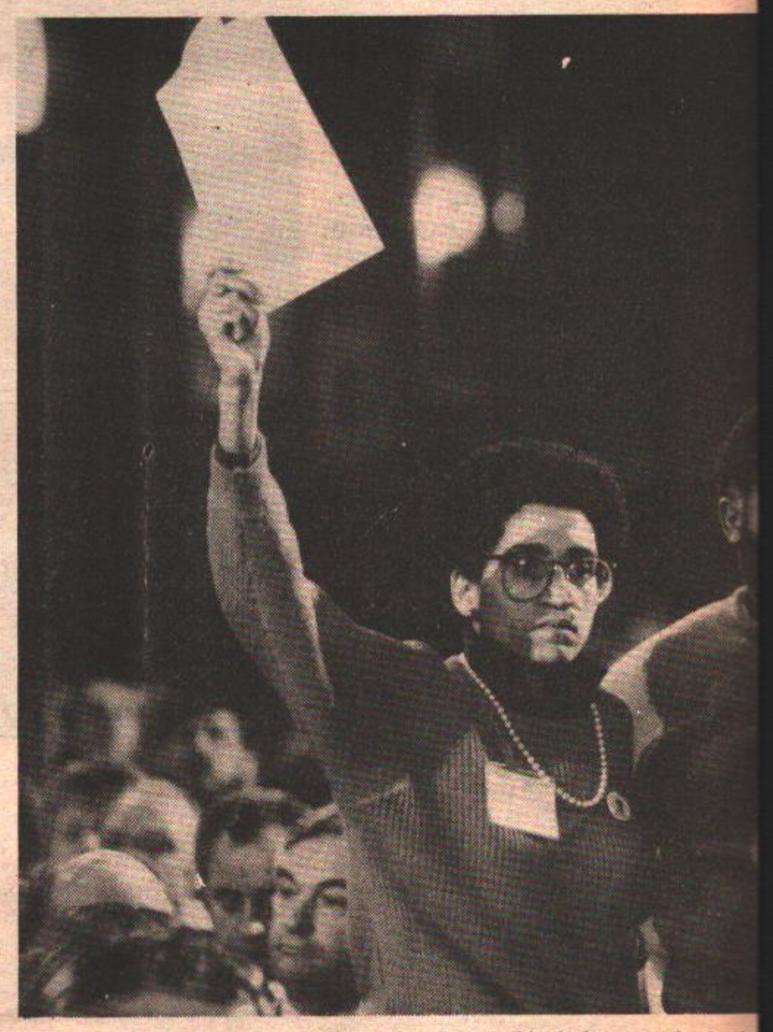
Yet, being the state, women's committees have been lumbered with heavy procedures, and women have become impatient with them. Women's forms of organisation: the circle of chairs, the lack of formality, sit unhappily inside bureaucracies.

For the Ministry of Women to work, its focus has to be on challenging the mainstream realities of power throughout *all* of Whitehall, the *whole* of a local authority, and connecting with women in struggle outside.

But of course the powerful don't give up power just because we pass motions, or put our chairs in a circle.

Women's Committees and the Women's Ministry can only make real changes if they are connected to movements outside Whitehall and the Town Halls — and they are useful in so far as they do so.

Here to



Amazing how a Black face can be invis

Women wo

Women demonstrated their power during the debate on Women's Organisation.

Angry women stormed the platform demanding their right to speak in opposition to Resolution 8 and its amendments. The chair seemed uncertain as to how to deal with the situation, and at one point was heard to say "shut up and listen".

The women stood their ground, however, and eventually he was forced to allow two women to put their case.

The resolution which caused the furore called for the NEC in conjunction with the National Labour Women's Committee, to review the voting at the National Labour Women's Conference to reflect the number of women represented by the delegates, particularly those representing trade union women.

Briefing Women have always maintained that it is necessary to introduce some sort of block vote at Women's Conference. The system as it stands at present is clearly unjust for the trade unions. But, and it is a very big but, we believe that the proper bodies to draw up the necessary proposals are the National Labour Women's Committee in conjunction with Women's Conference.

An NEC which refuses to allow the National Labour Women's Committee to stage a demonstration against strip searching, a demand carried overwhelmingly at Women's Conference is hardly likely to provide for a block vote which is representative of rank and file trade union women. This would be far too much of a threat to Kinnock's electoral strategy!

What we are far more likely to get from the NEC is a block vote

A regular column from
Black Sections

Black sections : one small step

The Labour Party Conference turned its back on the demands for Black Sections to be recognised.

The majority against the motion was marginally reduced from 4.2m in 1985 to 3.9m in 1986 and the furniture workers union (FTAT) — which is at the heart of the long-running Silentnight dispute — voted in favour for the first time. Thus FTAT joined the ranks of the anti-racist, socialist unions such as NUM, NUR, ACTT and NUPE. Also, for the first time, a clear majority of the constituencies voted in favour of Black Sections.

A second motion calling for the disbandment of the bantustan "Black and Asian Advisory Committee" was also defeated. Once again, the block votes came down heavily against the Black Section. The result of the vote was in stark contrast to the debate, which by all accounts was decisively won.

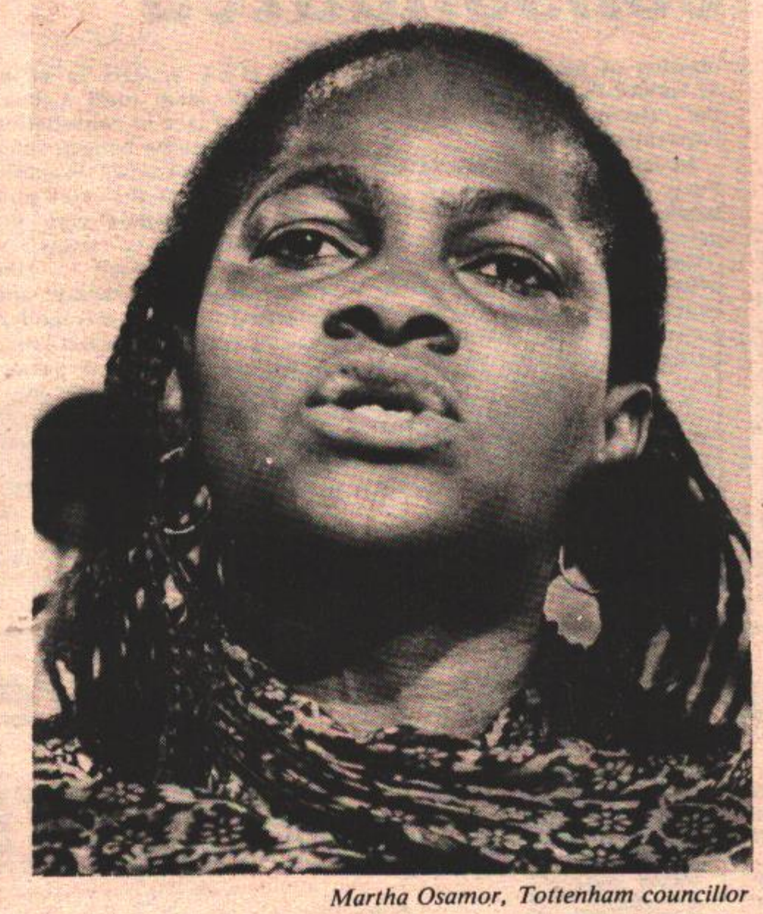


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Martha Osamor, Tottenham councillor

The Labour Party Black Sections

By Narendra Makanji
Secretary, Labour Party Black Sections

The NEC was unable to muster anyone from its large and lifeless right wing to reply to the debate. A year ago, Deputy Leader Roy Hattersley took this on — and made his disgraceful, racist speech referring to "my Asians". This year, Mr Hattersley politely refused the task and the hapless LPYS representative, *Militant* supporter Frances Curran, was wheeled out to do the dirty deed. In a rambling, incoherent speech, she tried to reduce all the arguments to waging the class struggle. The Chair of Conference was forced to cut her speech time in order to avoid further embarrassment for the NEC.

Above all, this debate exposed the political bankruptcy of the right wing, the soft left and *Militant* in one fell swoop.

The task facing the Black Section movement in the coming year is immense. Black activists will turn their attention to raising the issue of self-organisation in the workplaces and trades unions. The Unions' block vote — accounting for over 90 per cent of the total vote at Conference — can ony be shifted by pressure from the grass roots Black members. Important unions such as the transport workers (TGWU), the municipal workers (GMB) and health workers (COHSE) already have some Black members groups and others are likely to be formed soon.

Pressure from such developments is absolutely crucial to the success of Black Sections. All of these unions supported the principle of Black Members Groups (Caucuses) at the 1984 Trades Union Congress but, for some reason, could not support Black Sections within the Labour Party.

Black Sections will also need to complete the project of ensuring Black voices in Parliament. Full mobilisation will be required in the run-up to the general election to defeat the racism that will be openly paraded by the Tories and the Alliance. There must not be any sell-outs by the Labour Party during the campaign.

However, such victories, if secured, can only be a start. If the Commons were truely representative, there would be nearly 40 Black MPs. The historic task of making Parliament democratic will not be complete until this is achieved

To date, the Black Sections movement has been strongest in urban areas with a substantial Black population. However, the political task of developing a Black perspective is obviously more difficult in areas with a relatively small Black population. Areas such as Basildon, Sheffield, and parts of Scotland — despite being Labour-controlled — have not been able to take very many initiatives in fighting racism. For example, Scotland has a Black population of over 100,000, but there are *no* Black Councillors elected to any of the local Councils.

The National Committee of LPBS will have to find ways of increasing the particiption of the Black population in such areas. The racist, colour-blind approach of many CLPs and Labour authorities wil have to be brought to an end by the formation of Black Sections at every level.

In addition, the fight to reinstate Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally as Party members will have to be stepped up. The review of the expulsions promised by the NEC was a device to avoid embarrassment at the Conference. Now, with the Conference out of the way, the NEC, spurred on by Hattersley, will act ruthlessly against Khan and Scally. Such actions will lead to considerable loss of support at the polls from the Black community.

To achieve these objectives, and be involved in the important struggles such as campaigning against immigration laws and for police accountability, the Black Sections will have to be firmly rooted within the Black community. Working closely with Black organisations — inside and outside the labour movement — the principle of self-organisation and self-determination cannot be denied for much longer.

o stay!

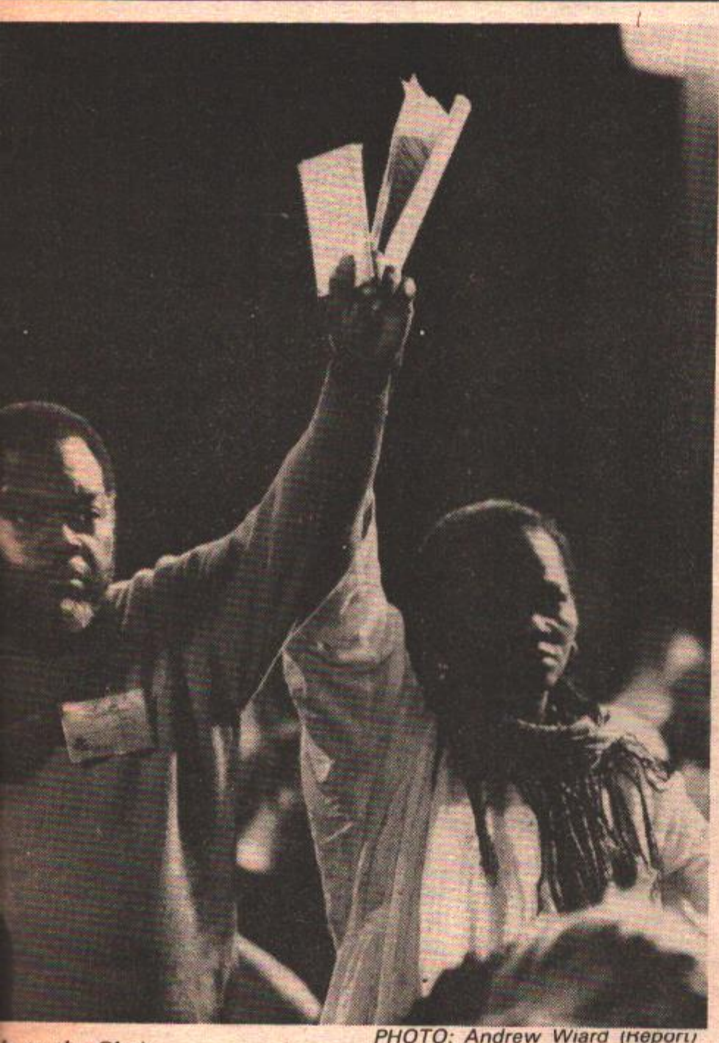


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

le to the Chair...

n't shut up

ontrolled by male union ureaucrats which will operate gainst trade union women's terests.

Jean Travers, moving the solution for APEX, made it undantly clear that her union ould use the block vote to vote wn any progressive proposals ming from the Women's onerence, when she talked of motions carried against the ishes of the majority of trade ion delegates."

The Executive of the Labour omen's Action Committee had cided to support these oposals. Many women legates who support WAC re saddened and angered when is decision was announced to em The LWAC leadership ust pay attention to the views women activists in the Party if ey are to retain their position the major Labour Party omen's campaign.

As for the rest of the debate — Composite 58 calling for the inclusion of one woman on every shortlist was carried — and none too soon! It is already Liberal Party policy! This very minimal demand should have been passed long ago. Composites 59 and 60 calling for the Women's Conference to elect the women's section of the NEC and for positive discrimination, predictably were defeated.

What must we do nowIt is essential that women in the Party and in trade unions campaign around the block vote. We should draw up our own proposals for the block vote at Women's Conference, and present these to the National Labour Women's Committee. We should then put pressure on the NEC to accede to our demands.

We may have lost a battle, but women will win the war!

Get involved in WAC!

Tracy Doyle, delegate from Brighton Pavillion, and Jane Kelly from Labour Briefing interviewed Mandy Moore from the National Labour Women's Committee on the Women's Organisation debate at Labour Party Conference.

***JK:* The main point of contention in the debate was the APEX resolution. What is your position**

MM: The one thing that has to be recognised is the right of the women's organisations to take part in any discussion of the changes. Therefore I couldn't support the APEX resolution as amended by the UCW. It ruled out any consultation with the women's organisations.

***JK:* It has now been passed, amended by Glasgow Hillhead. What should women who opposed it do now and what is the role of the National Labour Women's Committee**

MM: The NLWC also opposed the APEX|UCW resolution but supported the Glasgow Hillhead amendment which was carried. The amendment gives the NLWC the right to participate in the discussion. I think the job now is going to be a long and arduous one. In some respects it will be damage limitation.

The other thing we've got to do is to look at what sort of Women's Organisation we really want. We must work out how to put forward radical proposals to bring that about, rather than allow the narrow views put forward in the resolutions to set the debate.

***JK:* In the past women representing Trade Unions have only had the same vote as women coming from the constituencies, who represent fewer women.**

MM: No, it's not strictly true. Any trade union sending delegates to Women's Conference has twenty votes as opposed to two votes from women's sections. The Trade Unions already have ten times as many votes as the CLPs. The problem is that not many trade unions send delegates.

***JK:* Why not**

MM: It's an historic thing. Until 1980|81 the conference was not very radical. It debated what were considered women's issues, didn't do anything that was considered difficult for the leadership of the Party.

As soon as support built up in the women's organisation for structural changes to give women power, then those who have the power saw the threat that it posed to them.

That threat is mainly to the trade union leaderships because of the control they have over Annual Confernece and over the Women's Section of the NEC. It hinges on the issue of how the Women's Section is elected. It's a question of power.

***TD:* The NLWC supported the resolution amended to include consultation with the women's committee, while WAC supported even the resolution which excluded consultation. Meetings of delegates at conference didn't support either. The problem of NEC intervention is very real, you only have to look at what they are doing to the Youth Organisation. Some women think the NEC will be prepared to discuss the five places on the NEC while others think that they will attack the Women's Conference.**

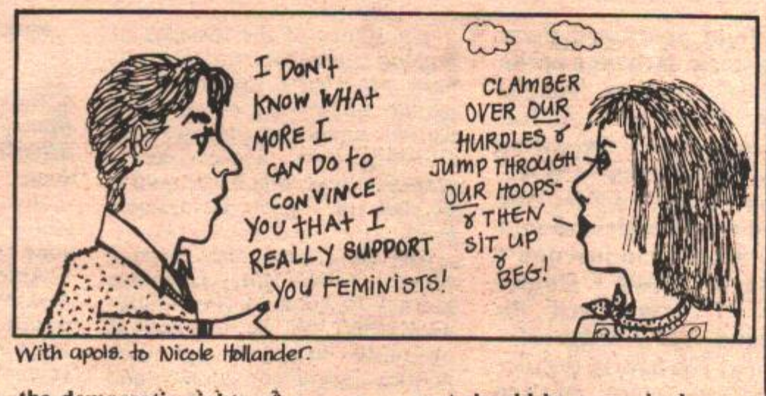
MM: The NEC ignores the women's organisations, especially the NLWC. There has never been a clearly defined role for the NLWC and the NEC Women's Committee.

The former has no power at all to carry out the decisions of Women's Conference. We have no money; anything we try and do has to go first to the NEC Women's Committee for support and then to the full NEC. The NEC ignores the Women's Organisations. For example they produce documents about women, organise meetings on women's issues without the involvement of the Women's Organisations.

The problem of the five places on the NEC is tied up with the political complexion of the NEC. It's quite feasible that they will argue that they can't consider it because it has been rejected by Annual Conference.

They could bring proposals which would be perfectly acceptable to the trade unions which still didn't involve the Women's Conference. That is still the crucial issue.

***JK:* WAC has played a good role in the past, raising the issue of the democratic rights of women in the Party. But a lot of women are sceptical about handing over control to the NEC. How should these women organise?**



With apols. to Nicole Hollander.

MM: We have never had the right to make our own decisions. In that sense it hasn't changed much. The role of the NLWC is as custodian of the decisions of Women's Conference. We must use the Committee to organise women, take the views of women, up its profile.

***JK:* But I don't think anything will happen at the level of the national committee unless there is a groundswell of support for what the Women's Committee is doing. What is WAC's role? There's been a lot of criticism at conference, but their role in the past should be recognised.**

MM: Yes, WAC has a crucial role to play too. At the present it is the only women's organisation capable of pulling together women of all different political views behind organisational issues. Whatever criticisms of WAC there are, whatever faults it has, it is still the only organisation in a position to do that.

We need to get more and more women to join WAC, to participate, to come along and give their views, to open out the debate so that WAC becomes a mass voice for women. The more women involved the better. If it is to fulfill its role it needs rank and file women everywhere to participate in its decisions.

JOIN WAC
Send application forms to Anni Marjoram, 12 Chatham Row, Bath, Avon.

A regular column from

Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights

Labour Party supports lesbian and gay rights

Don't let them renege

One of the few positive decisions of Labour Party conference this year was the 79 per cent vote in favour of our rights.

Last year's resolution gained a simple majority against the NEC's recommendation: this time not even the right wing voted against it on the NEC. Their tactics were rather to hurry it through in minimum time, staging the debate when there would be no TV coverage and press interest would be firmly focussed on the NEC elections!

Jo Richardson, for the platform, made an extremely militant speech, concluding that there will be no lesbian and gay liberation without socialism and no socialism without lesbian and gay liberation. En route, she promised that the needs of lesbians would be fuly integrated into the work of the Ministry for Women's Rights.

She apologised that progress on last year's decisions had been so slow and went on to say that the informal working party would now become a priority. She chastised those labour authorities who continued to break party policy by excluding lesbian and gay rights. Finally she committed the next Labour government to action on the law; specifically to equalising the age of consent but generally to legalise all acts which are crimes only if they occur between lesbians or gay men.

Lesbian and gay activists are very clear that these promises will only be adhered to if we are able to build up a balance of forces that could seriously embarrass the Labour leadership if they reneged.

In local government, that work has been going for some years. Current major campaigns include Glasgow, where the Labour council is refusing to include lesbian and gay rights in their equal opportunities policy; Nottingham (the same) where a national demo is being organised on October 25; and Haringey, where the Tories and other right wingers are launching a major attack on Council policy, particularly in Education.

Finally the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights together with the Campaign for Homosexual Equality and the National Council for Civil Liberties are launching a major campaign on what law reform we want from the next parliament, culminating in a conference in London at the end of May. We want the widest debate in the lesbian and gay movement about exactly what our demands are and maximum support from the labour movement in making sure Labour implements Party policy when it comes to government.

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

Breakthrough for the abortion law we need

HE 1985 Labour Party onference saw a tremenous victory for the olicies and tactics of the ational Abortion Camign, which since its inption in 1975 has always en work in the Labour ovement as a priority.

The 5½ million votes opposed the 'conscience' vote for MPs abortion was the result of rs in the major unions. Since n, NAC has made another jor breakthrough, with the afation of the mainly male on, NCU.

But out there, in the real rld, more women than ever being forced to seek abors outside the NHS. Michael acher's working groups on NHS have looked at the ole area of private medicine, what a Labour government uld do about it — and decided to even consider the subject abortion clinics.

t's true that the NHS has a lorable reputation for the hand way many women seek- abortion are treated, should they be amongst the lucky ones who get NHS abortions. NAC is currently conducting a survey of facilities in England and Wales, whilst the Scottish Abortion Campaign is doing the same in Scotland. Early results show more or less what we expected — patchy provision and cutbacks.

By Leonora Lloyd
NAC

Facilities will be one subject for discussion at the 11th NAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE, in London on 1/2 November. The opening session will look at the main area of attack in recent years (other than the insidious one of cutbacks) — young people's rights, highlighted by Mrs Victoria Gillick's court case.

Our panel of speakers will consist of young women themselves, and those who work with young people. We particularly welcome young people to the conference (which is open to women and men who support NAC), and will be having one workshop for young women only.

We will be having international speakers on Sunday morning, and in particular we are expecting a woman from Spain who is involved in the abortion campaign there. Despite some liberations in the law there, 20,000 women still continue to come to Britain for abortion, thousands more go to Holland and elsewhere, and many thousands more seek illegal abortions.

Spain is an object lesson in what NAC has always said — one cannot be for or against abortions, only for or against legal abortions. Women are no more prepared to put up with unwanted pregnancy today than they ever have been throughout history.

The 1987 NAC conference will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act, and we will be looking at ways to use this anniversary to bring home to people the shortcomings of the Act and to campaign for the *Abortion Law We Want*. That would mean: decriminalisation, the choice to be the woman's alone: and mandatory provision of facilities.

And that brings us back to the Labour Party. Over the next period, we will be watching closely to ensure that the next Manifesto includes a much stronger commitment to what is, after all, Labour's policy, than did the last manifesto, which completely fudged the issue.

That's why it is so important for Labour Parties, women's sections and unions to affiliate to NAC and to help us strengthen our work in the labour movement. Only this level of commitment to the campaign will allow us to fight for our programme in the PLP and in the next Labour Government.

** NAC produces a magazine, NAC News, available from some bookshops, price 60p or 78p incl post from NAC, Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, WC2B 4AX. Details of membership and the Conference from the same address, or leave a message on our ansaphone, 01-405 4801.*

Labour Party Conference

Briefing women

Neither heroes nor villains — but political differences

A couple of years ago there was a historic exchange at the end of yet another fraught Labour Women's Action Committee Executive meeting. The then LWAC secretary leaned across the polished round table and said firmly "Sarah, you just don't understand." And I stoutly replied "I damn well do understand, but I *disagree*!"

And there you have it: the root cause of so much of the horrendous tension within *the* most important Labour women's campaign. Political differences have been translated as plain stupidity at best and outright mutiny at worst. Persistent differences have induced near apoplexy of outrage such that an imminent "off with their heads!" is expected.

The source of the temerity of arguing alternative strategies has been vigorously sought in a manner reminiscent of searching for reds under beds. In fact little searching was needed as a scapegoat was right (or should it be left at hand — Labour Briefing.

Mutineers were said to have support for this infamous journal in common (we didn't necessarily). But we were seen as obviously incapable of such political argument alone, and must have been duped (?) or brainwashed (?) by some other coldly calculating cleverer person — indeed the editor of Labour Briefing himself, Mr Graham Bash.

For feminists this was an odd — to say the least — line of deduction as it clearly implied that the women raising differences were not intelligent enough to think on their own — there must be a man behind them.

Not only that, it also gave gratis credit to Mr Bash where none was deserved at all!

Amongst Labour Briefing women who have repeatedly rowed with said editor this was known only too well. We have sometimes had cause to wonder whether Labour Briefing's unwavering support for women's autonomy wasn't motivated by the teeniest bit of desire for some peace and quiet.

For the record, Labour Briefing Women's political differences with LWAC strategy have never been determined in discussion with the men. We are genuinely autonomous, i.e. *self*-governing, and have no need, nor desire, for Mr Bash's assistance. Our grey cells are in full working order all by themselves.

For at least the last three years there has been spontaneous organisation by disaffected feminists at annual Labour conferences.

In 1984 several women delegates and observers felt unhappy that LWAC had failed to organise politically through the week. They decided to meet and organise themselves as LWAC wasn't taking the initiative. After the Conference the LWAC EC co-opted some women, but dissatisfaction remained.

1985 Conference

At the end of the 1985 Conference a meeting called at a day's notice by Women's Fightback supporters attracted some 100 women. Such was the anger and disagreement with LWAC strategy that the setting up of an alternative was strongly argued.

Some LWAC EC members *and* Labour Briefing women who were present argued equally as strongly against, on the basis that LWAC, as LWAC, was crucial to all Labour women and all the criticisms and alternative proposals should be taken to the LWAC AGM.

This was done in some part (but *not* totally and to allege so is insulting to the other women involved) by Labour Briefing Women. For this heinous mortal sin of attempting to clarify the differences, putting forward alternative proposals and standing some alternative candidates for the LWAC EC, we are never to be forgiven.

Differences at the 1986 annual conference actually erupted on conference floor in full glare of live TV coverage. A small group of women persisted in arguing with the Chair until they won their right to speak in opposition to the NEC being requested to reorganise National Labour Women's Conference structure.

1986 Conference

They were not all Labour Briefing supporters and for several it was their first Labour Party Conference and the first time they had had any contact with LWAC.

Purely and simply they *disagreed* with LWAC EC's majority decision to support NEC involvement, and they wished to say so in the debate.

By Sarah Roelofs
Hornsey Wood Green Women's Section, personal capacity

LWAC EC members responded with undisguised fury, variously accusing Mr Bash (again), Mr Steve Cowan (who the hell is he?), and others of "organising to smash Labour women" and being "anti-woman". "Thou shall not disagree" had been flouted yet again — and in public too.

When some of the dust had settled LWAC majority EC members reapeatedly and vigorously asserted that

*the large majority in favour of NEC involvement in restructuring Women's Conference was a *tremendous* victory for Labour women (said with such animation one wondered who they were trying to convince)'

*the imperative need of maximum unity of Labour women at next year's Women's Conference.

Certainly we need unity — imperatively. But the issue — the bartering of our autonomy for we know not what — has caused deep political divisions.

It is, of course, true that constitutionally, the NEC has the last word (or rather next year's annual conference). It does not, however, follow that we must give away our autonomy from the word go. What chance does this give us to argue our feminist terms

Neither does it follow from opposition to NEC involvement that we are also opposed to a weighted or block vote for women trade union delegates at Women's Conference. Several of us were arguing for such effective and democratic power for trade union women long before it became a dominant issue at this year's women's conference (the same year British withdrawal from Ireland policy was overwhelmingly passed — am I being paranoid?).

LWAC Unity

The billion dollar question facing the LWAC AGM early in the new year is *how* will maximum unity be achieved? Is this appeal an implicit enjoinder not to rock the boat in such perilous seas? Is it instructing us that we cannot afford any disagreement now?

We have heard such strictures before — from the Party leadership to a critical left. Unity in this sense becomes an undemocratic moral imperative to impose the leadership's values. This is unity at the expense of an open and full discussion of various political alternatives before arriving at a majority decision.

LWAC, as Labour women's foremost campaign, needs a unity that openly and confidently acknowledges the political differences within it, viewing such debate as necessary and positive.

The forthcoming AGM could be a forum for discussion on strategies to deal with what *is* a very pernicious situation. Through debate and discussion we can arrive at a genuine unity reflecting what we all agree on.

There will still be disagreements obviously. These areas can be the subject of continuing democratic debate. Such a unity will support and strengthen us all. Truely, at the 1987 conferences, we as Labour women *will* show that when the "women are touched, rock has been struck."



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Women protesting at not being allowed to speak, Blackpool 1986.

An agenda after Conference

For five days at Conference I went to fringe meetings hoping to hear someone acknowledge the problem the Left faces within the Party and open a debate on the way forward. I waited in vain.

I heard speeches made about how strong the Left was within the Party; speeches of self-congratulation; attacks on groups within the Left. We cannot afford these ego trips while the right wing of the Party tights its grip as we approach the election. We need constructive criticism.

The Left has a strong *base*, but it has no strong central purpose. (I would have said *unified* purpose but this is not a plea for unity as such.) The Left is in disarray because it has no central purpose, direction or leadership.

Many gains have been made in policy areas by single issue groups; but many of them appear not to understand or acknowledge the nature of the Party leadership.

Gains made on policy are nothing if the leadership ignores them. Policies which are "unpopular" with the leadership will either not be included in the manifesto, or included but not campaigned for — as happened to many advances won before the 1983 General Election. Yet still we have not learnt the lesson or even acknowledged the nature of the problem.

The Left has to stop being frightened and defensive, especially now with the witch-hunting season in full swing. The Party leadership has to be challenged. Leader and Deputy Leader positions must be contested as the only way to defend democracy and accountability.

The Party leadership will be at its weakest after the Election when a Kinnock-led government operating Hattersley's economic policy runs into trouble. When the Party leadership turns to screw the working class, it must be challenged.

By John Wilton
PPC, Birmingham Edgbaston

Further constitutional advances are needed: such as control of the manifesto and election of the cabinet and shadow cabinet by Conference.

Structural changes are fine. But to challenge the leadership the Left requires its own leader. Like it or not the Left has to be led. Someone in the Parliamentary Party has got to be prepared not only to "stick their head up", but also to lead.

Having waited five days to hear this at Left fringe meetings, I attended on Thursday a meeting of Labour Left Liaison (LLL). This meeting proved to be a perfect example of the problems the Left faces.

Unfortunately the Chair was worthy of Larry Whitty, the Chair of Conference Neville Hough, and the right wing fixers on the Conference Arrangements Committee. Contributions from the floor were mainly restricted to those who had been picked out before the start. Others were deliberately ignored and eventually discussion was stopped and debate curtailed.

This was absolutely crazy! We had heard plenty of speeches from the platform at this meeting (and all week on the fringes). What was required was constructive debate and contributions from the floor. This was not allowed to happen and for me this represented one of the problems within LLL.

LLL has a role to play. Consultation and liaison is needed at the top amongst groups on the Left. But also desperately required is consultation and liaison at all other levels so that "rank and file members" on the Left can be involved and see an overall focus to their efforts.

The Thursday meeting gave me no indication that attempts were being made to do this. In fact LLL, or certain parts of it, appear to be moving in the other direction.

The Labour Party left needs to have socialist policies as an alternative to those of the Right now being adopted, especially economic policy. We know Hattersley's economic policy will fail, but where is the Left's alternative?

The Left also needs an overall strategy linking single issue groups with overall policy development: so that the demands of Black Sections, LCLGR, LCI, LWAC and others are integral to overall economic and social policies, as they should be.

A checklist of demands and posturing are no use and will win nothing. And above all, all this has to be related to winning the leadership of the Party: not "winning over" the leadership a la the Labour Co-odinating Committee (LCC) but changing the personnel.

Mass pressure from single issue groups will not change Kinnock and his friends' position. The rose cannot be pruned. It must be dug up! If the LCC can learn and accept this there may be hope for it, though personally I doubt it. If the LCC cannot, then "those that live by the rose will wither and die with the rose."

LLL (or Campaign Forum) may be able to develop this strategy, but not in its present top heavy form. It needs to reach out to rank and file members,link those involved in single issues at that level, and provide a focus for comrades on the left. It needs to give leadership, but also to link leadership with participation and consultation.

Single issue and single focus campaigns are necessary inside and outside the Party. However, the left must realise that the achievement of its aims requires combined overall change.

The "issue" to bring all groups on the Left together in order to realise their individual aims has to be to change the leadership of the Party and to win the Party to socialism and socialist policies. Now is the time for those in positions to do this to lift their eyes to broader horizons without losing sight of the issues closer to home.

I was going to end with that, but this is not the end. This article is of no use unless action is produced. That must be the next step, otherwise this is as useful as some of the speeches from Left fringe platforms at Blackpool.

Labour Briefing welcomes this contribution to debate, though unfortunately we have had to cut John's article for lack of space. We invite contributions to the debate started here — and hope to make a contribution ourselves next issue.

Briefing and Campaign Forum

This year's Labour Party Conference marked the completion of the counter-revolution in the Labour Party, the process which began with the defeat of Benn as deputy leader in 1981.

We are now witnessing the emergence of the Labour Party as a Mark II SDP in time for the election — a Party shorn of any socialist commitment and many of its socialist members.

It is now clear to anyone who cares to see that a Labour government under Kinnock and Hattersley will not just be a re-run of the Wilson and Callaghan governments. The economic crisis is deeper than in the '70s and the labour movement has been ravaged by 7 years of Thatcherism.

We have also lost left influence on the NEC, which could possibly have acted as a check on the leadership.

The left is deeply committed to a Labour victory. Any other result would be a devastating blow to the whole movement. It is therefore crucial that the left fightback begins now.

It is for these reasons that *Briefing* welcomes the development of the Campaign Forum, initiated by the Campaign Group and Labour Left Liaison, which includes the support of Black Sections, LWAC, *Briefing*, CLPD, *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Action*.

By Jane Prust and Graham Bash, Labour Briefing

The Campaign Forum must help organise the left fightback within the Party. Election victory and the nature of the next Labour government are too important to be left to Neil Kinnock. The new Campaign Forum must organise a broad-based, non-sectarian socialist campaign for a Labour victory.

As part of this it should organise rallies, workshops, and possibly a conference to work out an alternative socialist *manifesto*.

If Campaign Forum itself is democratic, accountable and accessible to the hard left activists in both the Party and the unions at grass roots level, it can become a major focus for this task.

Labour CND

Labour: slowly down the anti-nuclear road



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

CND demonstrators at Labour Party Conference

In spite of Weinberger, and Dennis Healey's annual tantrums, it is now clear that Labour will go into the next general election with the most radical and realistic disarmament and peace policy is ever had.

Nothing like it is on offer from any other political party. It covers the abandonment of nuclear weapons and the closure of all nuclear bases on British soil and in British waters.

Weinberger's activities — which are only a prelude to future American and NATO pressures — have helped to give a high profile to that policy during the conference period. It now needs to be campaigned on in every constituency.

Campaigns

CLPs should campaign themselves; but also ask for the high profile public campaign conference has repeatedly demanded.

Two related weaknesses in the policy remain. It still provides for membership of NATO — America's nuclear arm in Europe; and, while advocating revisions in its strategy, it puts no time limit on these efforts.

The real problem is that in spite of a long-term commitment to mutual dissolution, Conference has reaffirmed that both Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament and NATO are desirable. NATO is not, and the sooner we say so the better.

Utmost vigilance will be needed that our minimum unilateralist policy is not whittled down further, for opponents of the policy, not least in the United States, will try to use the tension within it to weaken unilateralism.

The second weakness relates to the fact that policy is still confined to nuclear bases. While opposed to nuclear strategy, Britain will continue to house the communication bases which control that strategy in Europe. On the other hand the attack on Libya has shown that closing nuclear bases is not enough. All American bases must be closed.

By Walter J. Wolfgang
Vice-Chair, Labour CND

The atmosphere of an election rally is not conducive to major policy changes. But it is significant that no argument against these policies was made in conference — except an implied don't rock the boat. The votes at conference represented a considerable improvement on previous years. Meanwhile the case against NATO has now been convincingly expounded in a Campaign Group Verso pamphlet by Ben Lowe, "Peace through non-alignment. The case for British withdrawal from NATO" (£1.50). CLPs and Trade Unions should discuss it.

Assurances should also be sought that whoever is Labour's foreign policy spokesperson should — like the defence spokesperson — advocate and not dilute Labour's unilateralist policy.

Need for vigilance

We need vigilance that the policy is not watered down; we need public campaigning so that it is understood by the public; and we need Party discussions about NATO and bases.

Linking socialist economic strategies

Walworth Road press officers had characterised the 1986 Party Conference as the "economic conference'.

Labour's leadership would set out an economic strategy to resolve the current economic crisis, reduce unemployment and restore the country's financial viability.

As it turned out, Hattersley's speech to Conference was low key and the NEC statement "the Party of Production" had little new to offer. It simply restated a commitment to Keynesian intervention if Labour returns to government.

By John McDonnell

Labour's economic policy is now acceptable to the City, Wall Street, the World Bank and the IMF because it poses no threat to their power. Above all, the policy is an anachronism. It ignores the new international power relations of capital.

Since the Second World War an international economy has developed through multi-national corporations and the IMF, EEC, World Bank and GATT, have vastly undermined the potential for state planning of individual national economies. International market forces reign supreme.

Britain is especially vulnerable to the international market because of its dependence on international trade and therefore is vulnerable to its fluctuations and crises of confidence. Labour Governments have repeatedly been forced off course in the 1960s and 1970s by exchange rate and balance of payments crises. The next Labour government will be subject to the same constraints and vulnerabilities.

Brian Sedgemore and Dennis Skinner, in their Campaign Group pamphlet "The City and the Big Bang", explain how recent changes in the City and worldwide financial institutions threaten to remove financial power even further from national governments.

They predict that the "Big Bang" merger of existing financial institutions, banks, merchant banks, accepting houses, discount houses, stockbrokers and jobbers, plus the introduction of new technology could result in twenty or so mega-merged financial institutions having more power than national governments and central banks in setting the financial and economic framework in which national economies and companies operate.

At the very least, these new conglomerates will have the power to veto policies of individual governments,

The Hattersley|Blunkett economic stratgy ignores these developments. It is stuck in a 1950s, Keynesian time warp — and even retreats from the Attlee Government's commitment to the large scale extension of public ownership. The City speculators are laughing all the way to the bank!

There is a responsibility on the Left to address this issue and to develop an economic strategy based upon a real analysis of the international and national power relations of capital.

Dialogue

The starting point is that any individual government seeking to introduce even a limited programme of social reform will be confronted by international capital. Internationalist policies are needed, aimed at controlling the international economy.

The British Left needs to begin a dialogue with socialists in Europe and the Third World about how to gain control over the international economy. We need to identify these that could be linked together into a Left international alliance on this issue.

The existing socialist international organisations are largely moribund or have been incorporated into social democracy. New forums are required for contact and discussion to build the international class solidarity needed to confront international capital.

There is a crass ignorance about socialist parties in Europe and elsewhere amongst the British left. Our aim over the coming period should be to use the left press, *Briefing*, *Labour Herald*, and others, to analyse socialist currents in these countries and encourage an exchange of ideas.

Red and Green

The Campaign against nuclear power goes on

Before Chernobyl the NEC statement on civil nuclear power would have been unthinkable.

The Labour Party, and even its leader, are now committed in principle to a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants.

This contrasts with the Tories, who are still committed to an expanding nuclear programme; the SDP and the TUC (!) who are both committed to a freeze and a policy review; and the Liberal Party, unable to implement their longstanding anti-nuclear position through ties to the SDP.

We can at least now present Labour as Britain's anti-nuclear party — something to be proud of when many of the leadership's policy statements leave a lot to be desired!

Unfortunately the statement on nuclear power is incredibly cautious. It lacks a specified timescale: phasing out "will take decades." The relatively new AGR plants, by implication, will continue operating for most of their working lives. Even with the Magnox reactors (seen as a priority for closure) there is no commitment on how long it might take.

THORP

There is also confusion about the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant planned for Sellafield.

The document appears to oppose the expanded operation that THORP implies, and to propose alternative new projects to deal with waste disposal, storage and the decommissioning of reactors.

Good! — but for the phrase "we shall proceed with the construction of the plant at the site intended for THORP but not commission it for purposes of reprocessing."

A complex project like THORP cannot be built and then used for something else. It is rather like building a car and telling everyone it's a bicycle!

We need a clear and straightforward statement opposing THORP and proposing an alternative.

Union call

We need to push in the Party and Trade Unions for a harder line on nuclear power. There may still be one more Party conference before a general election — time enough to rally more support.

This year we were only 24,000 votes short of a two thirds majority for an NUM motion committing "the next Labour government" to halting the nuclear power programme. The NEC found this statement ambiguous (which it is, since it does not specify "within the life of one parliament"); but delegates were clearly voting for the position adopted by Scargill in his speech — a *complete halt within 5 years.*

This position should be the bottom line for *Briefing* and the left.

Meanwhile the campaign against nuclear power goes on. The findings of the Sizewell Inquiry are due any time and, according to the *Daily Mirror*, will be in favour of the Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR).

This will open the way for the quick commissioning of a new programme of PWRs in line with Tory policy.

Construction is unlikely to start or to be far advanced this side of a general election — which makes Labour's clear opposition to the PWR an important factor.

If Labour doesn't win the next election, we would be in a lot of trouble — although of course it won't just be PWRs we have to worry about then...

Andy will be writing a regular column for Briefing on Red and Green issues starting next month with a critical look at Green politics.

By Andy Porter
SERA



PHOTO: John Harris (IFL)

Protest against NIREX nuclear waste drilling programme

Reviews

Tottenham Images

***Andrew Kennedy* looks at "Tottenham's first community arts exhibition" and some of the issues it raises.**



PHOTO: Mark Wastell

"Bending over backwards — the visit of a politician to Broadwater Farm"

Norma Shearer has lived in Tottenham for three years. Recently she got the idea that people in the area could develop and use their artistic potential to become more aware of their environment, their identity and their needs.

She contacted others. In August a two week exhibition was held called "Tottenham Images '86", devoted to people's images of their locality.



Nothing like this had ever been put on by Haringey Council, or the borough's arts bodies, bu they became involved in the venture.

Most exhibitions of contemporary art manage to be both elitist in presentation and obscure or self-referential in their content. This exhibition was neither.

The setting was a school hall. Photos, paintings, collages crowded against each other, the results of the activities of many people, across Tottenham, not just the isolated efforts of a few "star" individuals. And these works were obviously about local people's experiences and concerns.

Boiling Point, a painting by Broadwater Farm artist Bernette Hall, shows the faces of Cherry Groce and Cynthia Jarrett flanked by riot police. Behind is the Youth Association, bearing, in place of its normal sign, the words which form the painting's title. Only the Black press gave this work coverage.

Words that referred directly or indirectly to Black people's presence and struggle were the ones that stood out, but many visitors, Black and white, will have spent more time looking at neat paintings of Tottenham sights and photos of children playing by the river Lea. And why shouldn't pleasure be taken in such images

Perhaps a bridge between these different perceptions can be found in a painting entitled appropriately *Meeting Point*, by Olusunmilayo Awojobi. It shows a busy, vital street where each shop seems to represent a different culture.

Certain elements, however, are rearranged to make the image more optimistic. This suggests that pleasure and pride in the positive features of one's neighbourhood must be accompanied by consideration of how to fight to keep and extend these features, and threfore of one's definition of a "community" — a very important question for this exhibition, as we shall see.

But first, how was "Images" funded and organisedNo doubt, as Livingstone observed when he opened the exhibition, the GLC would have provided funds. That it cannot now do so is, *Briefing* would argue, partly Livingstone's responsibility. It remains to be seen whether Haringey Council, in its association with the exhibition, will keep in mind the GLC-pioneered notion of the local state as an accountable resource base.

On organisation Norma thinks that Tottenham needs to create a more definite image of itself, as Brixton has. But Brixton's identity is a product of the struggles of Black people.

She notes, indeed, that last year's events in Tottenham have made it "more like Brixton" that is, presumably, more conscious of itself as a deprived inner-city area, with a Black population willing to assert its identity against white racism. But is the "Images" project prepared to include such realities in its picture of Tottenham

Realities

If it has done so up to now, this is perhaps due more to the efforts of individuals than to success in developing appropriate structures.

Thus, in spite of attempts to reach out to Black groups, tenants' associations and others, the organising committee remains predominantly white, educated and male.

Exciting

Again, although virtually every entrant had one work accepted, the advance publicity failed to stress the importance of contributions from oppressed groups.

So the idea of a "community art exhibition" remains problematic both in definition and realisation. Nevertheless, the fact that the idea was explored made this year's *Tottenham Images* a successful and exciting event.

Review

Sectional healing

Labour and Youth: The missing generation, by Phil Woolas and John Mann *Fabian Tract 515*. Do you believe in fairy tales? The authors of this pamphlet do!

They tell the story of the wicked witch Maggie who casts a spell over the young people of Britain to make them apathetic, frivolous and concerned only with the present.

By Fran Rayner
Youth Briefing

Then Kinnock the Charming comes to save them on his grey charger, mutters the magic words "Labour Government", and all their problems disappear in a puff of smoke.

They all ride off into a rosy future of Red Wedge concerts and freedom and fairness, living happily ever after in Woodcraft folk camps.

With youth in the frontline of Tory attacks on employment, education and training, the pamphlet is correct to say that there is great potential support for Labour amongst young people.

It condemns YTS as "little more than a clearing house for the nation's youth" and shows how on issues like defence and public spending, young people prefer Labour. Yet that is where Woolas and Mann's strategy for youth ends.

They see young people only as passive *voters* to be dragged out of their apathy by cultural events, rallies and Charters. Tackling low pay, involvement of young people in unions, lesbian and gay rights, contraception — all these issues are missed out.

Whilst they concede that the Labour Party has too often been "paternalistic", they end up merely being patronising to young people and exonerating the Labour leadership.

Predictably, the authors only ever get angry when attacking the LPYS. Everyone in Youth Briefing would admit that the present LPYS is in crisis and that the membership is scandalously low, yet our citicisms of it are aimed at making it stronger and more effective.

Woolas and Mann merely fuel the witch hunt, wanting to make the LPYS a redundant echo of the Labour leadership, holding back those actively struggling for change.

The pamphlet ends "If Labour trusts young people then young people will trust Labour." It contributes little towards this process. It's authors ignore the fact that an effective youth movement would terrify the Labour leaders.

Young people fighting for socialism will measure their own experiences against the rather vacuous arguments in this pamphlet and produce radically different conclusions.

Debate

Luton ban is a class issue

The banning of non-Luton Town supporters from Kenilworth Road is a major issue for the many people who support football, and for all those who are concerned about civil liberties.

By Craig Brewin
Hornsey Wood Green CLP
Haringey Labour Briefing

The media are trying to portray the ban as a necessary action taken to combat "football hooliganism". It is nothing of the sort. It is an opportunist move taken by the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Welwyn Garden City (who also happens to be the "chairman" of Luton Town F.C.) designed to court favour with Mrs Thatcher.

There are many people inside the game who oppose Luton's action — even the Bradford City Chair, after the chip van incident in September, spoke out against it.

Ken Bates, Chelsea Chair, and no friend of supporters (remember the infamous electric fence?) has stated that Luton Town deliberately provoked a confrontation by refusing to compromise over the Littlewoods Cup issue.

This suggestion is supported by the fact that before their expulsion from the competition Luton Town were offered the options of either playing both legs away from home, playing their home leg on a neutral ground, or allowing in season ticket holders and or supporters club members from the visiting team.

It does seem unreasonable that a team should be expected to play a one off cup tie without the support of any of their own fans and on a plastic pitch.

However, the Football League have themselves been inconsistent in their actions. If an away ban is unfair in a cup competition how can it be fair in the League?

The ban is just one action taken in what is essentially a class war in football which the bourgeoisie who control the game are currently winning. Football Clubs are run by wealthy men who seek to buy local prestige, inflate their ego, or indulge their fantasies and therefore have little in common with the ordinary supporters who stand on the terraces week in, week out.

Recently we have seen a variey of improvements to gounds, most of which benefit those who can afford expensive seats or sit in the executive boxes. Drinking is allowed in the boxes but not on the terraces. Terrace supporters, particularly when travelling away, are expected to watch the game through fences and cages, and be herded around by the police.



Euphemisms such as "family environment" are used by the game's controllers which in effect mean that if fewer people are coming to football, we want the ones who can afford to bring "the wife", "the girlfriend" or "the children", although facilities at most grounds for women remain appalling. The patronising attitude of the football establishment towards women is demonstrated by Ted Croker's recent remark that women would prefer to spend their Saturdays watching TV.

It is because the bourgeoisie has successfully appropriated the game that clubs feel able to bana section of working class support without affecting their financial viability.

Facilities at Luton Town have always been particularly poor. The programme is £1 (and not very good); the cost of admission to the ground is higher than average. Following the ban the ground was redesigned with the old Bobbers Stand (built with supporters' subscriptions) knocked down to build — yes, you've guessed it — executive boxes. It is the redevelopment of the ground with the resulting loss of terracing that has made it difficult for Luton Town to compromise even if they wished to.

So why is the League split on the issue? There is the perceived political opportunism, but also concern that Luton acted without the agreement of the large clubs who believe they have a right to run the game. The larger clubs also undoubtedly feel that they benefit from their larger travelling suport.

Then there are severe practical problems with the scheme, as well as the question of civil liberties. Luton would like the scheme introduced at all football grounds, but how can it be when many clubs have the same "catchment area"?

It is significant that many of those Leeds fans arrested at the Bradford City v. Leeds United match were residents of Bradford and would probably have easily obtained membership cards for Bradford City if a similar scheme to the Luton one was in operation there, resulting in no crowd segregation at all.

It is also likely that if the scheme was introduced on a national scale that a thriving black market would develop, as would the incidence of mugging outside the grounds.

It would also have the effect of banning all neutral suport from football. Thousands of football supporters have been travelling to "away" matches trouble free for years whilst directors come and go why should the directors have the power to say who can go whereWhat other form of entertainment would accept such restrictions

The press have unanimously sided with Luton Town Even the *Guardian*, in one of its most disgraceful editorials, tried to use the memory of those who died in the Bradford fire (caused through appalling crowd safety) and at Heysel (surely no one is proposing to ban supporters from Cup Finals?) to rouse support for Luton.



The Luton ban is said to work. David Evans claims that Luton Town has got rid of its hooligans — yet hooligans from Luton are now the only ones with free access to all 91 Football League grounds.

Luton Town have warned that troublemakers will have their cards confiscated, but most hooligans don't get caught. Meanwhile Luton Town's ground is still heavily policed, yet policing costs were quoted as one reason for the ban.

Mrs Thatcher clearly sees votes in the issue, as the thousands who follow their football team around the Country are still very much a minority.

Kinnock and Hattersley (who constantly use their love of popular sport to demonstrate that they are in touch with the people) are frightened to speak out; the Labour Councillors representing the area surrounding Luton Town's ground have sided with the club; even *Labour Weekly* has come out in support of Luton. Meanwhile football suporters are banned from Luton because they are a "source of confrontation". It's a bit like telling women to stay at home in order to prevent rape and black people to stay at home to avoid racial violence.

A regular column from

Labour Committee on Ireland

NEC: nothing to say on Ireland

The debate at Party Conference on Ireland was an insult to the Irish and all those who have been campaigning hard on British withdrawal from the Six Counties over the past few years since Labour adopted its "united Ireland" policy in 1981.

Doubtless, the NEC and Party leadership will expect us to be grateful that there was a debate at all. After all, Stuart Bell, Labour's shadow spokesperson on the subject, had circulated CLPs informing them that there would probably not be one, and of all the subjects considered inconvenient at Labour's main "pre-election rally", Ireland comes top of the list.

A debate did take place because of the reaction to Ireland's possible exclusion from Party activists and the Irish in Britain. The *Irish Post*, the main newspaper of the Irish in Britain, had a front page headline, "Northern Ireland Debate Essential — Bitter Row over Labour Conference Agenda" in its edition of September 20, and its editorial in the same edition called the situation "a disgrace".

It criticised Stuart Bell for "putting forward consistently a line which amounts to the diluting of the Labour policy on Ireland wich emerged in the early '80s". It concluded "if it is to gain an overall majority in the next election, the Labour Party needs all the help it can get. The present equivocation or worse on N. Ireland will ensure that Labour will not get the Irish vote. In the 1979 and 1983 elections, Labour's Irish support was confined to a handful of constituencies wherein Labour candidates stood with a credible record on Ireland. Now it looks like the same again."

The *Irish Post* expressed the hope that Neil Kinnock might "include something positive on N. Ireland in his leader's address."

In fact, Neil Kinnock's address to Conference dwelt at length on the right of self-determination for Nicaragua and the denial of that right by the Government of the United States. We waited with baited breath for him to mention Ireland. We were, of course, dissappointed.

Before Conference, however, Kinnock *had* intervened in the discussion about raising Ireland at Party Conference. The Labour Committee on Ireland had organised a major fringe meeting on the Anglo-Irish Agreement, with speakers including Stuard Bell, his front bench spokesperson, Sinn Fein Councilllor Tommy Carroll, Bernadette McAliskey, Ken Livingstone, and Deputy Leader of the SDLP, Seamus Mallon.

Kinnock was asked his opinion of the meeting by the national press as he boarded a plane for the Caribbean. He responded with the moronic knee-jerk reaction for which he has become notorious. Denouncing the meeting in the most extreme terms, he proclaimed that he wished it was not taking place, and that "Sinn Fein is not welcome within a million miles of Party Conference."



The national newspapers reported that the Party leadership saw the meeting as a "stunt", and that there was pressure being exerted on Bell by Kinnock to back out of the meeting. Bell then took the line that he was only coming to denounce Sinn Fein in order to minimise their impact at the event.

The interest generated, resulted in the meeting being one of the best attended and most covered of all fringe events at Conference.

By Cllr Richard Chessum
Press Officer, Labour Committee on Ireland

In this context, the conference debate itself was almost an anti-climax. The motion up for debate called for opposition to the Anglo-Irish agreement, British military withdrawal "as an urgent priority", and an end to the sectarian Loyalist state of Northern Ireland.

It was defeated by over 4 million votes to 400,000, with the trade union bloc votes efficiently signed and sealed for the Party leadership long before Conference took place. It will be difficult to explain to the Irish in Britain that the actual vote underestimates the support for Irish unity in the Party, although this is undoubtedly true.

The debate revealed the NEC as being without a policy on Ireland. An attempt to cobble together a statement for Conference floundered at the NEC meeting where Ireland was discussed.

In theory, a working party had been set up by the NEC to produce a document for consultation. No document was ever produced, let alone circulated, and the working party did not meet over a period of nine months"

Its work was allowed to lapse because of "scarce reasources" and "other Party priorities". The Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Women for Ireland, and other bodies had done considerable work on producing and submitting their own documents.

In the debate itself, Peter Archer, Shadow Secretary of Stae for Northern Ireland, conceded that he too was frustrated by the lack of commitment shown by the Party to producing a policy on Ireland.

The farce concluded with Tony Clarke's summing up for the NEC, promising that a document would be ciruclated in the New Year to Parties and affuliated organisations — several months after what had been billed as "probably the last Labour Conference before the election".

The doucment has still to be agreed, but Tony Clarke knew that certain thinks would be in it an end to strip searching, plastic bullets, supergrasses, and the PTA.

The question which the Party as a whole must now address is whether it is possible for Britain to stay in military occupation of the 6 Counties, and, at the same time, rule without repression and the denial of civil liberties which have always characterised the Loyalist state.

Third World First

Join the Fast

THIRD World First is the national student campaigning organisation aiming to give an anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-imperialist analysis of underdevelopment. We aim to give a platform to Third World people to define their own needs and their own solutions.

This year our major campaign is Namibia. We'll be holding a nationwide sponsored Fast from October 28th-30th to raise money for SWAPO Women's literacy packs, for use in the refugee camps in Angola and elsewhere in southern Africa.

Progressive Third World movements tell us again and again that the best thing we in the west can do to support them is to educate ourselves here. That is the beginning of fundamental change. So as well as the Fast raising financial support for SWAPO, we hope it will be a focal point to raise awareness, through speakers, videos, exhibitions, and action against the banks and corporations raking in the profits from Namibia, where conditions for Black people are worse than in South Africa.

Anyone can join in the Fast, students or not. Contact your nearest Third World First Office for information.

Third World First is also holding a conference in Sheffield, November 14-16, on women in struggle (women only). It will bring together women from all over the world to celebrate their struggles.

Our main membership scheme is called AntiPoverty Action, involving a bankers order for £6 per term. Half of this goes to an organisation of the subscribers choice. The other half stays with Third World First and we send you our quarterly magazine Links. APA combines financial commitment with a commitment to learn, and it keeps the members regularly informed. Again, you don't have to be a student to join APA, but if you're earning, we also have a covenanting scheme, the APA Trust.

More details of all this from:

232 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1UH. 0865-245678.

29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9HD. 0532-430151.

29 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX. 031-667 8550.

8 Lower Clapton Road, London E5 0PD. 01-986 4800.

Interview — Tommy Carroll

Making links

Briefing spoke to Sinn Fein councillor Tommy Carroll

***Briefing:* What was your message for Labour Party Conference?**

Tommy Carroll: That the Labour Party should not have a strategy of trying to bring reforms within the United Kingdom in an internal settlement. It simply cannot work, as previous attempts have proved.

The Hillsborough Agreemnt has made no difference to our oppression, to the number of times I have been stopped and searched by the RUC, for example. While the ending of Strip Search, the PTA, the Emergency Provision Act, 7-day detention and the Diplock courts would alleviate in the short term, they are not enough we would like to see the Labour Party adopt a policy of withdrawal.

In Ireland, partition is the only politics. Look at the 6 counties: we've suffered the worst economic conditions of any part of the UK. In a situation like that normally you get working class politics. We believe if the British government (hopefully a Labour government) would make a commitment to withdrawal it would allow all opinions in Ireland to address themselves to that situation.

If a Labour government continues with attempts to reform the system through the Accord and so on it will be perpetuating partition. Partition prevents the emergence of true class politics in Ireland. The country is split, the working class of Ireland is split; religious differences are used and exploited to prevent working class politics.

In the 60 years of Stormont, there has never been a Labour MP — only nationalists or unionists. The Labour Party should examine its policy on those grounds alone. It should decide on withdrawal to allow proper politics. If you look at the South, there the two parties are conservative because of partition and the Labour Party has shrunk in size.



PHOTO: Bo Bojesen

Partition — before and after

They should not be afraid to adopt such a policy through fear of slaughter or civil war after withdrawal. That is a Loyalist red herring to prevent addressing the question of the British presence in Ireland it is an excuse for being there.

This excuse is also a grave disservice to ordinary protestants because they would not engage in slaughter of Catholics. There may be in the short term a hard rump who would, but it is my belief that the Protestant people will not stand for such a thing.

The Protestants should assume their rightful place in running the whole of Ireland. That's another terrible thing partition has done, it's prevented the radicalism of the Protestant people being injected into the body politic.



Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

Loyalists are caught in a terrible trap, neither contributing in a meaningful way to politics in Northern Ireland or politics in the United Kingdom. No matter how many MPs they have they have no influence in bringing any social reforms and are at the mercy of Westminster.

The Unionist MPs in 1948 opposed the introduction of the Welfare state, and now they have no influence over attacks on it. We in the 6 counties, the working class, have not and never can have any influence.

***Briefing:* Can you tell me how you operate as councillors in the 6 counties?**

Tommy Carroll: Councillors within the 6 counties of whatever party have very little influence and no power except over emptying dustbins and burying the dead. But even within these parameters Sinn Fein has difficulties because the Loyalists refuse to recognise us as elected representatives.

The SDLP compound this by sitting in total silence and tacit collusion while the unionists try to silence or ignore us. Although Sinn Fein councillors may be denied our rights in the debating chamber, when we deal with the DHSS, Housing Executive, Department of the Environment or council officials there is no problem in getting things done.

***Briefing:* What is your relation to the movement on the ground outside the council chamber?**

Tommy Carroll: Those who called on us to test ourselves at the ballot box and then changed the rules, refusing to speak to us or have us on delegations and things like Health and Education boards; this could make people think there was no point in voting Sinn Fein.

This puts us in the position where we have to prove actively on the ground we can do things. We don't ignore people and we live in the oppressed areas so people see us every day, know we understand and experience their problems and are not just seeking votes. So people come to us in increased numbers to sort things out.

Going back to the hypocrisy of the British. They challenged us to run for elected office and then when we were elected changed the rules and asked us to denounce violence but it is the British presence which is the cause of the violence.

The popular media like to portray Sinn Fein and the republicans as the cause of the violence. This is a lie. Resistance is a symptom of occupation, not the cause. It is Britain who brought the gun to Irish politics.

People must realise that Westminster and the British establishment are kept in Ireland by the barrels of 30,000 guns. While they accuse us of having the ballot box in one hand and an armalite in the other they have SLRs, sub-machine guns, jails and interrogation centres to impose their politics on us.

While the British government may impose its will on Ireland by these means, it is not necessarily the wish of the British working class that this should happen, and I think they should work through the Labour Party to bring about a removal of this oppression visited in their name, but against their wishes, in Ireland.

Since coming here I have realised that if the republican movement could make more links over here it would advance our cause. More delegations from the Labour Party and Trade Unions especially should take an interest and come over to see how the fruits of their labour are being squandered in our country.

If the trade unions raised the consciousness of their members, it would help us to inject into the Labour Party an abhorrence of what is going on in Ireland.

International Briefing

El Salvador: the long struggle continues

By Iain Bruce

President Reagan's Central America policy hasn't done so well these last three months, after the high hopes raised by his successful Contra-aid vote in June.

It isn't just the embarrassment of two CIA supply planes crashing, or that the major Latin American debtor countries have continued to push the Contadora Peace initiative in their bargaining with the International Monetary Fund; nor is it that the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Harare echoed their firm opposition to American policy.

It wasn't even the likely repercussions for Central America policy of Congress over-ruling the presidential veto on South African sanctions. Much less was it the long ovation Neil Kinnock received in Blackpool for his defence of Nicaragua.

All these have been important, and are welcome. But it is in Central America that the freshly-packaged US strategy of "low intensity warfare" has shown its real weakness.

On September 19 the third round of talks between government and guerillas collapsed in farce. President Duarte drove into Sesori, accompanied by his defence minister, the American ambassador and hundreds of government employees and gave a speech appealling for the FMLN-FDR to keep their rendez-vous.

Not a single guerrilla would be seen within miles of Sesori that day.

The town was teeming, however, with troops who had occupied the town just three days after Sesori had finally been agreed as the site for the talks.

The FMLN-FDR were not going to invite a repeat "strategic blow" against their top leaders. Their delegation would not turn up unless the army withdrew 10 kilometres from Sesori, as their own fighters had done.

Duarte apologised pathetically, claiming he had invited the battalion — so it was all right. Either he had no intention of serious talks, or he was incapable of controlling his field commanders. Possibly both!

The chief victim of Sesori's comic opera was Duarte's own credibility but behind this lay a much more weighty casualty: the United States's strategy for a *military* solution to the Central America "problem".

The FMLN-FDR had been demanding further talks ever since the end of 1984. Throughout 1985 and early 1986 "talks" and "peace" became unifying calls of a disparate but burgeoning mass movement, led by the militant trade unions, and later joined by many of the moderate ones that had previously supported Duarte.

But it was only after his disastrous trip to Argentina, Uraguay, Brazil and Peru, in May, that Duarte finally made his call for renewed talks.

The problem is that this "diplomatic" arm of Low Intensity Warfare can only be effective if its military and political counterparts are seen to have some credibility on the ground. In El Salvador, they don't.

It is true that the Salvadorean Armed Forces achieved possibly their greatest success of the 7-year civil war in January to March this year when they managed to force the FMLN out of their important Guazapa volcano stronghold, just 20 kms from the capital. But subsequent attempts to shift the guerrillas from their historic rearguard zones in the north and east of the country utterly failed.

The political aim of the army's "low intensity" strategy is to use aerial bombardment and relocation of large chunks of the population to separate the FMLN from their civilian base. The effect has been the opposite: to spread their influence right across the country, to put them back in contact with many sectors untouched directly by the war in recent years, and to encourage the emergence of new actors on the political stage, including the unemployed in the cities, the seasonal coffee pickers in the west, and even the refugees themselves — all led by a growing union movement now organised around UNTS, The National Union of Salvadorean Workers.

It is this mass movement that lies behind the growing popular insistence on peace and talks, and which Duarte's debacle in Sesori, and the disarray and division on the far right are unable to handle.



Piers Cavendish/Reflex

Salvadorean soldier

A delegation from the British labour movement visited El Salvador in January 1986. In this new pamphlet they report on the effects of the repression and war on the country; their meetings with trade unionists, politicians, refugees and prisoners. They started building some important links with the Salvadorean labour movement and concluded that assistance needs to be stepped up from our own own labour movement in Britain.

***El Salvador: The struggle for peace and freedom*, 24 pages, 18 photographs, £1 plus 30p postage and packing (10 per cent discount for 10 or more copies, bulk rates available on request) from Labour Movement Delegation to El Salvador, c|o 13-16 Borough Rd, London SE1 (cheques payable to Labour Movement Delegation to El Salvador).**

A regular column from

Socialist Society

Britain out of NATO

By John Palmer

After the defence dramas at Blackpool, including Kinnock's simultaneous commitments to scrap British nuclear weapons and US nuclear bases as well as remain in NATO; after interventions from Perle and Weinberger; and after Healey's retraction of his willingness to contemplate US nuclear bases, it is time to ask a question. Does the Labour leadership accept Washington's view that commitments to remove nuclear weapons and bases would "seriously diminish" or "lead to the unravelling" of NATO?

Some media reports warned that implementation of Labour's defence strategy could lead to US economic reprisals. What steps would an incoming Labour government take to meet such a challenge?

In his keynote speech at Blackpool, Neil Kinnock referred to the other US bases and military facilities and said that while Labour did not propose to touch these, the US would "not want to put them at risk".

What exactly did that mean? Does it mean that a Labour government would deny the Americans the use of them if they try to impose economic or other sanctions in the event of the nuclear bases being closed? If not, why not?

And what exactly is Denis Healey up to? Before the Weinberger outburst, he said Labour might reconsider its commitment on US nuclear bases if the other European NATO states were to plead for a rethink or a go slow. What response will be made to any such intervention by parties in or out of government in Europe?

Then there are the armed services chiefs who, according to the *Sunday Telegraph* are prepared to intervene directly and declare they could "no longer guarantee the defence of Britain." What will the Labour leaders do to nip this in the bud?

Kinnock described the timetable the next Labour government intends to take to secure unilateral disarmament. It does not seem to allow much room for those who would wish to reinterpret the policy to subvert and ultimately overturn it.

The left must ensure the leadership implements its promises and is given the political support it will need to counter pressure from the Tories, the Americans, NATO and the media over its commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. Part of this is the education of the labour movement on NATO and the alliance with Reagan.

The truth is that Labour Party defence and foreign policy are now in irreconcilable conflict. Weinberger Co. are right that Labour's disarmament policy poses a deadly threat to NATO. Attitudes that might be acceptable from non-nuclear NATO states, such as Denmark or Canada, are simply unacceptable from one of Reagan's client state "pillars" of the Atlantic Alliance.

Obviously the Tories and — when they have got their act together — the Alliance, will try to press home this contradiction. Building a national campaign to secure Britain's withdrawal from NATO and adoption of a non-aligned foreign and defence policy is vital. There is growing support for such a a policy in the peace movement, and also in the labour and "green" movements.

Blackpool went unambiguously on the record in support of NATO as well as in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament. But the leadership must now be pressed to say which commitment they will adhere to if the Americans force a choice between them.



*An invaluable aid in campaigning is the important new Socialist Society pamphlet *Peace Through Non-Alignment* by Ben Lowe, which has a forward by Tony Benn and Jeremy Corbyn. It provides detailed amunition on NATO and the case for withdrawal. Available (price £1.50) from Verso, 6, Mearid Street, London W1.

Chile: youth in struggle

By Roberto Diaz
Chile Support Group

I can still remember vividly that morning of September 11 1973.

There was nothing unusual about it: I had already had my breakfast; said goodbye to my father and made my way to school one fine crisp morning that I will always remember. I will never forget the expression on the face of our headmaster when he told us to go back home. It was a mixed feeling of relief and fear, a strange feeling... "There has been a Coup d'etat," he told us in a nervous voice, and as blunt as that.

Back home I found my father and told him the news. We had expected this to happen, everything that happened previously was an indication of what was to come, but the brutality of the Coup fell on everyone with such force that it left us with a sense of helplessness, not believing this was happening.

Obliterated

From then on events developed at an incredible pace. Three years of popular government; crushed, destroyed, obliterated.

A whole generation of Chilean youth has been brought up under a dictatorship, where the words Allende and Popular Unity are mentioned with determination and strength, of what once has been and of what will be. Others have been brought up in exile living the Chilean reality in another country.

In Chile itself the Chilean student movement is playing an important role in the anti-dictatorial struggle, from secondary school to university and further education students.

Students from Christian Democrats, Radicals to Communists, are struggling against the dictator and his accomplices in the colleges and universities, where the vice-chancellors, principals and rectors are selected by the junta.

The determination and increasing level of the student struggle are placing the dictatorship in a check-mate position.

The university authorities are retreating before the unstoppable student mobilisation, the resignation of the rector of the University of Chile and the sacking of a senior lecturer at the same university are the first victories.

The National Student stoppage, called by the Confederation of Chilean Students, *Confech*, and *Profeses*, the lecturers' union, early in the year, have been answered nationally. The secondary education students coupled themselves to the stoppage with massive mobilisation and street confrontation with the repressive forces in the centre of Santiago and also in the 5th and 7th regions.

The main issues concerning the students are the ending of military intervention in universities, ending paying for your education, and against the increase in fares for students.

The mobilisation of the students shows the way that must be taken.

A senior lecturer recently expressed: "Victory is in our hands, but we have to make sure of what we have won." The resignation of one or two principals, rectors, vice-chancellors is not enough. All the principals selected by the junta must resign, all the rectors put there by the dictatorship must resign, Pinochet himself must go! Only with the end of military intervention in the country can there be an end to military intervention in universities.

The struggle of Chilean students is linked to the criminal aggression by Yankee Imperialism against the people of Libya and Nicaragua.

We need solidarity nationally and internationally to win. Here in Britain we can step up our solidarity efforts and call on the Trade Unions and the Labour Party to strengthen links. 1986 is the crucial year in the anti-dictatorial struggle: the people in Chile are on their way to victory!

Victory to SWAPO

By Sian Moore
Co-Chair, NSC

NEIL Kinnock may have taken Nicaragua to his heart in his speech to Labour Party conference, but for British people Namibia is of far more direct relevance.

Namibia is currently under military occupation by South Africa. Despite United Nations Decree 435, which makes the occupation illegal, Britain and other Western powers have continually obstructed independence negotiations.

It is not hard to see why — nine British registered companies control virtually all sectors of the Namibian economy, reaping vast profits. British companies also supply the South African army with military technology.

Two fringe meetings at Labour Party conference took up Namibia and the necessity for the left to adopt a strong anti-imperialist and anti-racist stance.

SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign (the women's section of the Namibia Support Committee) and Labour Women for Ireland, in a meeting around the Ministry for Women, drew parallels between the colonial occupations of the north of Ireland and of Namibia. The meeting demonstrated how British racism obstructs international solidarity and urged a future Ministry for Women to extend material and political support to all women fighting for self-determination — in Namibia's case to women in SWAPO.

The Namibia Support Committee meeting pointed to the need for an energy policy which is non-nuclear, and also internationalist.

Britain illegally imports uranium from Namibia's Rossing mine, where workers' conditions are appalling. The uranium is processed by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) at Springfields and Capenhurst and fuels Britain's nuclear weapons programme.

The NSC's Campaign Against the Nuclear Uranium Contract (CANUC) is calling for an immediate end to the importation of uranium and for compensation to be paid to SWAPO on independence.

Jobs

The meeting was attended by BNFL workers who felt that safeguarding jobs in the nuclear industry prevented them from taking action against Namibian uranium. This showed the need for backing from the TUC and the left for workers' sanctions; no-one has asked for individual and isolated gestures.

The EEC's recent very limited package of sanctions against South Africa has explicitly excluded Namibia — against SWAPO's wishes. But SWAPO have been engaged in an armed liberation struggle against South African colonialism for 20 years. They want Namibia to be recognised as an issue in its own right and not as dependent upon events in South Africa. It is not reducible to the struggle against apartheid and indeed SWAPO's victory could be a stepping stone to the final overthrow of the regime in South Africa.

Campaign

For these reasons the Namibia Support Committee, in consultation with SWAPO and with its full support, are launching a national campaign: 'Namibia Independence NOW!' The demands of the campaign are:



— South Africa out of Namibia!
— British Hands off Namibia!
— Victory to SWAPO!

Support Groups

The campaign involves the establishment of certain local Namibia Support Groups and the expansion of solidarity work. It will be launched at a public meeting during International Week of Action on Namibia (October 25-November 1), with SWAPO's General Secretary, Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, as the main speaker. During the Week of Action a wide range of organisations are planning activities and it is hoped that Comrade Ya Toivo will be speaking at some of these events. In particular the Anti-Apartheid Movement are organising a Namibian Mobilisation Conference on the 25th and 26th of October at City University, London EC1. This will be aimed at activists from the AAM and student movement and we urge Briefing supporters to attend. During the Week of Action there will also be actions against companies involved in Namibia.

Information

For more information about the national and local activities of the Namibia Support Committee and how to affiliate to the national campaign, write to PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW or ring 01-267 1941/2.

Launch

Launch of the Namibia Support Committee National Campaign: Thursday October 30, Manchester Town Hall, 7.30pm.

Sisterhood and solidarity



Reaching out beyond the membership divide to groups campaigning outside the Labour Party is a Labour Left maxim.

By Sarah Roelofs
LWI, personal capacity

The miners' strike saw many such links established which have continued to be fruitful, notably NUM support for Lesbian and Gay Rights. On the other hand, feminist anti-racism and anti-imperialism has extreme difficulty getting a look in.

One of the most successful fringe meetings at this year's Labour Party Conference managed to do this — as the result of four and a half months' work by two women's groups Labour Women for Ireland (LWI) and SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign (SWSC).

The two groups first met at Labour Women's Conference in May. SWSC was organising its first Labour fringe meeting, which, with a unique combination of music, stalls and speakers, was undoubtedly *the* event of that conference. LWI was there as the only Labour women's group campaigning on feminist anti-imperialism. We discovered we had a lot in common politically in terms of Labour and the British state's exploitation of Namibia and Ireland, but also our strong explicit feminism caused ongoing tensions with left men!

LWI and SWSC were only too aware that while the male dominated left marginalised their feminism, Labour feminists did not prioritise anti-racism and anti-imperialism. There was concern that the Ministry for Women might not either — that it would concentrate on domestic women's rights issues and treat all women as equal.

However, a new campaign, *One World*, led by Glenys Kinnock and Joan Ruddock, argued in their publicity material that women pay the highest price for the consequences of the "first" World's exploitative strategies. Exactly what policies should a British Women's Ministry adopt to prevent this?

Three anti-racist and anti-imperialist women fighters were invited to lead discussion on answers to this question, as well as CND activist Joan Ruddock from the One World Campaign itself.

Taking up a point once made by Glenys Kinnock, Ida Jimmy from SWAPO Women's Council sharply disputed that "Third World" women needed cooking pots and not guns — "We must have guns to fight the racist oppressors."

Councillor Martha Osamor described the racist policing of the Broadwater Farm estate, saying that Black women there are in the same situation as women in Ireland and Namibia. "Since October 6 last year we have been under seige, we have been occupied — the police have never left us alone. If there had been a Ministry of Women maybe we could have gone to them to ask for support." But white Labour women must ensure Black women are involved "to speak for ourselves, because those that feel it know it."

Pointing to the Unionist response to the Anglo-Irish Accord, Bernadette McAliskey described their supremacy as the "ultimate distillation of racism." Echoing Ida's point she said "people who are suffering, people who are oppressed, can not just be left to apply to their liberal sisters for cooking pots please."

For the rest of Conference people, primarily women, were congratulating SWSC and LWI. Comments included how different the meeting had been from traditional fringe meetings, that it had given support and encouragement to women organising and involved in other struggles; that it was more focussed and practical and less propagandistic; quite simply, how very positive it had been.

LWI and SWSC felt that given one group was used to working in a Labour context and the other was campaigning from the outside, there had been very few problems. If anything, some of the LWI women felt their Labour membership strained by the experience.

Another woman pointed out — "That's all very well, but political work in and/or around the Labour Party involves taking on real debate, battling with a broad range of ideas — you're never just addressing the already converted, so of course it's going to be damn difficult'

Both groups felt they learnt a lot about each other's areas of work and about the similarities and differences between the struggles for women's national liberation in Namibia and Ireland.

Sian Moore, from SWSC, who spoke at the meeting on behalf of both groups, concluded — "A future Ministry for Women must take the initiative in prioritising anti-racism and anti-imperialism and extending political and material solidarity to all women fighting for self determination. We have welcomed the Ministry — the discussion hasn't yet taken up an international dimension, but these are early days yet and we hope it will do so."

LWI and SWSC are looking forward to future joint work, possibly a week-end school on feminist anti-racism and anti-imperialism and feeling, as one sister commented, "it should have been done a long time ago."

Make sanctions bite

IN Reagan's most serious foreign policy defeat yet, the US senate has overturned a presidential veto on sanctions against South Africa.

By Piers Mostyn
Holborn St Pancras CLP

The measures, supported even by hard-line Republicans, include a ban on all coal, uranium, textile and agricultural imports from South Africa. New business investment will be banned as will South African airline landings in the US. South Africans and their agents will not be able to have bank accounts in the country.

Despite the US being Pretoria's biggest trading partner last year (to the value of 3 million rand) and third largest investor, the impact of the sanctions has been held to be largely symbolic. Less than half US imports from the country will be affected and Botha felt confident enough to say that he would hit US grain exports to South Africa in retaliation.

Loopholes

It is not the case that 'anything is better than nothing' — loopholes and omissions only serve to bolster the rulers of apartheid, and are ruthlessly exploited. The omission of coal from the recent EEC sanctions package has generated a boom in South African coal mining shares! Furthermore Pretoria has been boosted by the gold price increase which helped revive the land and compensated for lost foreign investment. Gold saved white South Africa after Soweto and it may do so again.

The Senate's measures will not undermine the South African economy, but aim to give the impression that imperialism is not on the same side as apartheid. This is coupled with a new-found friendliness to its enemies — hence the turn-around to top-level talks with ANC leaders despite their refusal to renounce violence.

Abyss

Some in the Western camp are trying to hold off the impending 'abyss' by being friendly to Botha in the hope of affecting change. This strategy, advocated by Thatcher, Reagan, and Kohl, is now under real pressure with the Senate decision. However the British and West German governments have said they will not be influenced by it and there is no reason to disbelieve this.

The hollowness of the new-found 'support' for Black southern Africa was spelt out by right wing Republican Richard Lugar in the Washington Post just before the Senate vote.

'The real policy goal is to help bring about peaceful change. What we seek are a society and a system that not only are more just in recognising the rights of the Black majority, but offer a more stable future for all South Africans'.

For 'all South Africans' read — 'including rich white businessmen'.

A little-publicised sting in the tail of the new US sanctions law stipulates an investigation into 'communist' influence in the ANC. Given the ANC has never hidden its connections with communists this can only be taken as a coded threat.

So if Congress is unhappy about the ANC's policies being too pro-soviet, anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist, the sanctions will be withdrawn. In fact they may well be withdrawn anyway, without the removal of the Botha regime, according to Bishop Tutu in what has been described as an 'olive branch' to South Africa's whites. 'The sanctions are conditional', he said, 'If the government takes the action we have all be advocating then there will be no sanctions'.

White Racist

Of course the white racists aren't going to wait. Foreign Minister 'Pik' Botha and the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce have urged South Africans to search for 'alternative markets' as a priority. In practice this means alternative ways of getting exports through to the same markets.

Sanctions would have to be far more sweeping to put real pressure on South Africa. Above all it is difficult to see any actions taken by unwilling governments having any real bite, because of the commitment required to cover all the loopholes.

Lesson

This is certainly the lesson from Rhodesia where, under the cover of supposed sanctions, British business links with the regime thrived. And that was when Labour was in power!

Furthermore, without real measures to support the frontline states, the most damaging impact will be on them.

As previously argued in the pages of Labour Briefing, to be really effective a sanctions campaign has to be led and implemented directly by the labour movement. The US Senate decision will be of benefit mainly insofar as it helps to strengthen and encourage the involvement of trade unions in direct action against apartheid.



Demonstrators call for sanctions

PHOTO: John Chapman

NATO without nukes

● from page 1

The precondition for rebuffing these attacks is that Labour has a coherent policy. The second reqirement is that the Labour leadership is committed to the policy. At present neither of these requirements is in existence.

The first commitment is to the scrapping of all British nuclear weapons. This will reduce nuclear stock-piles, East and West; more important, it prevents the big escalation in weapons that Trident would represent.



Labour Party Photo Library

Denis Healy

But no less important are the *political* consequences: without the bomb, the illusion of *Great* Britain — such a vital ideological cement for Toryism — bursts and the state's claim to be number two in the NATO power hierarchy collapses. The State thus becomes less useful to the US as a client lap-dog for Washington's high diplomacy in Western Europe, while one of the key arguments for tail-ending Washington's global policy — not jeopardising the "special nuclear relationship — collapses.

All these are reasons enough for violent opposition to Labour's unilateralist policy inside Whitehall and Washington. But this doesn't in itself take the people of these islands out of the nuclear frontline, because of the US bases here; nor does it in itself shift the balance decisively against a European war.

This brings us to Labour's second commitment removing all US nuclear weapons and nuclear bases from Britain. This, of course, produces the most savage hostility from Washington. But the basis of this hostility is not the military and logistic security problems this policy poses the airfields and naval bases will remain and nuclear-armed carriers will be welcomed here by a Labour government.

The real source of US hostility to this commitment is *political* if Labour can tell the US what to remove and what to shut down, others will try their luck as well — perhaps above all the German SPD. Closing down one US nuclear base could be the thin end of the wedge the radar and communication systems could be next.

But the problem with Labour's commitment on the bases is that apart from making Washington extremely angry, it does not greatly increase our security. The only policy for that would be clearing *all* the key US war-fighting installations out.

The idea that people here will be safe, regardless of what happens in Europe, makes little sense: a genuine anti-war policy must be international even though the nuclear-free zone is a vital beginning. And in the international field, Labour has, of course, the commitment to turning NATO into a non-nuclear alliance.

If it means that the European members of NATO will be pressed to clear all nukes out of Western Europe, to repudiate any alliance that is committed to the use of nuclear weapons against an adversary, and to reject any conventional arms race against the Warsaw Pact in Europe, this is a very radical and positive policy. But no Labour leader has spelt such a policy out.

On the other hand, US military chiefs have spelt out their version: a huge build-up in high tech conventional forces making NATO's tactical nukes unnecessary and allowing NATO to defeat the Warsaw Pact through superior conventional strength!

Poor old Denis has devoted his life to the principle of fitting the labour movement into NATO policy. Now Denis is one of the keenest advocates inside the Labour Party for the phrase about working for a non-nuclear NATO — what seems the most radical phrase in Labour's platform.

His plan has been to say that getting rid of British nukes doesn't get us very far in the fight for peace; nor does getting rid of some US bases they might go to Germany and we'd be worse off!

No, says Denis, this won't protect us from the nuclear winter — so stop fussing over such trivia. Go for the big breakthrough a non-nuclear NATO. And how is this to be done? Unfortunately we must leave it up to Denis to use his Tomahawk mind at those closed NATO Council meetings to bring his NATO colleagues round.

All this is what poor Denis meant by Realism back in that distant past before the Panorama debacle. Now that world is shattered, the Realism shown up as a pipedream, not by the left but by the Embassy.

They've got no time for the Denises of this world any more, because they have big plans for Wetern Europe and Right wing labour has no place in Washington's scheme for suitable governments in Britain or West Germany.

And this brings us to the heart of the whole defence debate. Denis Healy knows full well what Washington is up to: he knows that they are after nuclear superiority over the USSR, he knows they want to be able to threaten Europe with a limited war in order coercively to destabilise the USSR; he knows they want to roll back the West European labour movements and welfare states, whip up hatreds and tensions in Europe, and mercilessly squeeze the third world and he knows that all of this threatens humanity with war and barbarism.

He knows too that the British state elite and capitalist class, guzzling greedily in the Eurodollar trough, has only two other pre-occupations — fear and loathing of the Labour movement, and petty parochial jealousies of neighbouring states in Western Europe, hence the grovelling appeasement of Washington's militarism.

Awareness of these facts has turned large numbers of middle of the road Labour and Liberal supporters towards two inescapable conclusions: first, the US capacity to fight a war in Europe must be replaced by a new power and security system there embracing both Bonn and Moscow; secondly, the Anglo-American links through nuclear weapons, intelligence services and the City benefit none but the Tories and their class backers and must be broken.

Only Labour begins to articulate these political aims, though in a still fragmentary and often ambivalent way. But the Labour leadership refuses to *justify* its commitments on military policy by explaining and justifying the need to *reduce* American power in Britain and Europe.

It fears to do that; it swears loyalty to the American leadership of NATO and therefore insists pathetically and dishonestly that the thorough implementation of the platform would not in the least weaken American power in Western Europe. This is a formula for more ridicule on Panorama lines and for electoral defeat

So the left must take up Labour's commitments, make them coherent and back them with the honest explanations of the dangers we face and with the serious justifications for reducing US power in Western Europe and for establishing a new security framework on the continent.

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More dangerous than Amir

Gina Khan is the chair of the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. She was interviewed for Labour Briefing by Jane Prust.

***JP:* Why did you decide to join the Labour Party**

GK: I've been in Britain for about 15 years now, but I've only been in the Labour Party for the past 4 or 5 years.

Joining the Labour Party was something that came out of the blue, really. We used to discuss politics all the time at home. But it was the Irish martyr, Bobby Sands; his sacrifice for his nation was something which gave me heart.

As black people we have suffered under oppressions and we're used to giving our lives for causes. Bobby Sands' life and his death after the long hunger strike gave me heart.

I started going to Labour Party meetings; some of my black comrades in the Labour Party didn't like it. Then I became membership secretary of Sparkhill branch and they started getting used to the idea that I was there, and I am there to stay.

***JP:* You're now the Chair of the campaign to reinstate Amir and Kevin. How did that come about?**

GK: I got strongly involved in the Campaign because I believe that it's not just for the reinstatement of of Amir and Kevin, but it is for the reinstatement of democracy in our Party and we will have that democracy back in Sparkbrook.

***JP:* You're also Chair of the Sparkbrook Women's Section. Is the Women's Section active in the campaign?**

GK: Well, the women's section supports the campaign. Wherever there is a struggle the Women's Section will support it.

***JP:* Do you find that it's difficult for black women to get involved in the Labour Party?**

GK: Well, I think coming from that kind of background, where the women's place is in the home, I'm the odd one in the Sparkbrook constituency.

I did get verbal abuse, I did get all sorts of abuse, but I don't take no notice of them any more.

I can't see any ordinary Asian woman coming out and joining the Labour Party, because everybody's not as strong as I am.

It will take time, but I'm still there, and God help me if I'm still there, I'm sure that it will encourage other Asian women to join the Labour Party. We have to make sure that they don't get that abuse, and the experience I had.



Gina Khan

***JP:* What do you think the Labour Party should be doing to make itself more representative of black women and their demands?**

GK: I think that it's a very, very hard and very, very difficult question to answer. Because I still go back to our traditions.

If the men are finding it hard, it's even more difficult for black women to achieve the power we want.

***JP:* Do you think that Sparkbrook CLP will take action against you for speaking out in support of Kevin and Amir at Conference?**

GK: For the last 6 months they are working on that strategy, how to get rid of me. Roy Hattersley himself, he said "that woman of Amir's is more dangerous than Amir is." Well, I'm still there, and God help me while I'm still there, I'll make sure that I'm a danger to him, because if he plays around with black people's dignity, I'll make sure that his dignity is also hurt, the way we are hurt.

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!