LABOUR
BRIEFING
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40p

Tory bid to privatise council services

The Queen's speech on November 12 announced Tory proposals to force local councils to put a range of services out for tender.

Council employees will have to compete for their own jobs against cut-throat private firms: the idea is to force down wages, axe jobs and break up union organisation among over 1 million local government workers while carving up lucrative contracts among the Tories' pals.

The services involved include the dust, street cleaning, cleaning buildings, catering and maintenance of parks and of vehicles.

This move follows over two years of competitive tendering for ancillary services in the NHS, which has led to the loss of thosands of jobs and massive cuts in hours and wages for low-paid largely female workforce at the expense of plunging standards of patient care.

All the policies for fighting this type of privatisation are about to be put to the test, after a year in which Neil Kinnock's rightward evolution has brought:

- Isolation of the rate-capping fight;
- Abandonment of commitments to renationalise privatised industries;
- Escalaton of the witch-hunt;

A cascade of "new ways" of supposedly "defeating" privatisation without taking industrial action;

- A successionof U-turns by unions (most recently NUPE, headed by Tom Sawyer) now agreeing to participate in drawing up "in-house" tenders.

Each of these developments points *away* from any co-ordinated fight against privatisation.

Ignoring the isolation which brought defeat for the ratecapping fight and the heroic struggles of the women in Barking and other hospitals in their strikes against privatisation, the line of all the trade union and Labour leaders is to argue;

- The rate-capping campaign "showed the futility of challenging the government and the law";
- Privatisation "should be fought on a local rather than a national basis";
- The militants should be isolated while "responsible" union leaders negotiate "reasonable" terms with employers (at the expense of cuts in their members' jobs, wages and conditions).

Many allegedly "left wing" councils have made this worse by using the tendering process in the past to award contracts to direct labour, creating real confusion.

In fact the new Tory legislation — learning the lessons of the "pilot run" in the NHS — will make it impossible for the direct labour force to compete on equal terms with private contractors.



John Smith IFL

While grasping investors look forward to British Gas flotation (see back page) competitive tendering aims to carve up council services.

Councils, unions, tenants
CLOSE RANKS TO BEAT TENDER TRAP!



John Chapman

NUPE's Bickerstaffe



Paul Mattsson/Frame

John Edmonds, GMBATU

By Dave Benlow

The Queen's speech helps clarify this point: the Tories will only allow councils to accept the wage cuts and redundancies suggested by the unions if no private firm can be found offering to do the job cheaper!

The only "successful" in-house bids wil be the most vicious in attacking present conditions. This has frequently proved the case in NHS tendering,where many in-house contracts have been won on terms so bad that existing staff leave and new staff cannot be found.

So where is the "middle ground" now? It has long since disappeared. If public services and jobs are to be defended, this must mean a fight by unions and by councils.

Labour authorities must close ranks and insist as a starting point upon a comon policy of no compliance wth this legislation, in any form.

If the Tories atack individual authorities, then public sector unions and labour councils across the country must hit back...

Campaigns, involving councillors, local government and other unions, Labour Parties, tenants and other user goups are urgently needed in each area to work on plans for defending and improving servies without worsened conditions.

Labour councillors must be told not to act like Tory auctioneers for council jobs, but to joint the fight for public services.

In Tory boroughs, the anti-privatisation campaign must be stepped up, with closer monitoring of the contractors, closer links with users, and exploiting the series of fiascoes in NHS tendering to back up their case.

These initiatives should all form part of a major national campaign by the labour movement aimed not only at the achievable goal of preventing privatisation before the next election, and electing a Labour government.

It must also ensure that whatever Labour government does take office, it does not dare to duck the restoration of all privatised services to the public sector.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Home News



PHOTO: David Hoffman

Heathrow airport, October 1986. Bengalis question Asian man who has just arrived 48 hours in Immigration.

Gutter press "visa" coverage

The Liars!

By Terry Smith

The Tory election campaign will not only exploit share issues, tax cuts and anti-Soviet hysteria: it will also depends upon stoking up the fires of racism which have always played a central role in Thatcher's campaigns.

Douglas Hurd's brutal imposition of visa regulations upon visitors to Britain from the Indian subcontinent offered the Tories an each-way bet:

- by denying visitors without visas any opportunity to come to Britain, they eliminated many of the embarrassing exposures by MPs of racist practices against black visitors arriving at Heathrow and other points of entry and denied those excluded any right of appeal;
- by triggering a panic surge in numbers of visitors — through the device of announcing a date for the new regulations while doing nothing to inform people of their rights — the Tories created the huge queues and dramatic scenes at Heathrow which triggered a predictable wave of fanatical racist hate-mongering in the tabloid press.

This is turn created fresh confusion and tides of ignorant prejudice among sections of the white electorate.

Of course the scab muckrakers of *The Sun* led the pack of gutter journalists attempting to foment hatred against the innocent men, women and children who had been deliberately herded like cattle into delays, expense and acute discomfort for the "crime" of seeking to visit their relations in Britain before the Tory gate swung shut.

The tabloids, despite their anti-Communism, bat not an eyelid at the arbitrary, cynical imposition of visa restrictions which are as repressive as those for any Stalinst state, against a section of people chosen purely because their black skin makes them easy targets of racial hatred.

Despite their hostility to public spend it the tabloids do not stop even for an instant to query the £14m extra expense of administering the new visa system, compared to the relatively simple and cheap expedient of increasing staffing at Heathrow.

Nor indeed do the racist immigration staff at the Immigration Service Union, so often quoted by *The Sun* and other gutter tabloids make any call for an increase in staffing. Instead they have consistently helped fuel the tide of ignorant prejudice by demands for tighter restrictions on black visitors.

Though the banner headlines may have susbsided, the Tory initiative has stirred up a ready pool of racism, keeping the issue bubbling beneath the surface.

There is little sign however of Labour's Parliamentary leadership of 15 white men being prepared to make the immediate repeal of this rule and other racist legislation part of their insipid grey election campaign.

The irony is, of course, that for all her efforts to exploit racism, and despite the enactment of the Nationality Act, Thatcher has not felt any need to amend the basic restrictive law on Immigration — the 1971 Act, which was shamefully left intact and implemented by the last Labour government.

Black and white activists fighting racism have no option but to campaign for a Labour victory — but they have no choice but to fight at the same time within the labour movement against a wretched tradition of accommodation to racism, and for their demands to be given priority by a future Labour government.

Though the cabinet decided on September 1 that visa restrictions would be imposed, it was not until October 6th that any date was set for the start of the new rules. Visitors from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were given a mere 8 days notice that the regulations would commence on October 14th: written details of the new arrangement were not circulated for another few days.

People in Britain expecting visits from relatives, and Asian people wishing to visit Britain had been left in complete uncertainty, and then faced a sudden announcement of imminent and unknown restrictions.

misinformation and stony silences, many people brought

By Harry Sloan

forward their holidays and even paid black market prices for air tickets in order to beat the deadline and avoid the restrictions. British residents who are Indian, Pakistani or Bangladesh nationals cut short holidays in Asia for fear of not being permitted to return here.

The atmosphere of panic, the increase in last minute journeys and the concern of relatives here to ensure the safe arrival and entry of travellers combined to create the crush and chaos of Heathrow from October 11th onwards.

This havoc was not the result of any uncontrolled tide **of "absconding" visitors, but of the imposition of visas in a manner designed to use maximum distress and confusion.**

The subsequent deadline for viasa restrictions on visitors from Ghana went by without any comparable disturbance — because the 24-hour notice given by Douglas Hurd ensured that the tide of suffering was contained at Ghanaian airports: sufficient had by then been done to stoke the fires of racism.

(Information from JCWI, 115 Old St, London EC1)

Viraj Mendis must stay!

By Kate Adams
Hackney North CLP

For 2 years the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign have fought to save Viraj from deportation to Sri Lanka.



Early in November after all avenues had been exhausted an eleventh hour postcard campaign was launched to bombard David Waddington with messages supporting Viraj's right to stay. A weekly protest outside the Home Office has been organised. It has been very vocal and well attended and the CPSA Home Office Branch have joined in solidarity.

Viraj came to Manchester to study 13 years ago. When he ran out of money and could not renew his student visa Viraj was forced to work to continue his studies. Exposed to the racism and intolerable working conditions experienced by many migrant workers, Viraj was politicised by these experiences and as a revolutionary communist has fought many successful campaigns against deportation. In this sense Viraj Mendis poses a severe threat to the Home Office.

Their campaign against him began in 1984 when the Manchester Police visited Viraj with information that he was an overstayer. Since then Viraj has suffered a barrage of abuse and intimidation from the Home Office, Police and DHSS. He has appealed against the decision to deport him on the grounds that because of his political opposition to the fascist regime in Sri Lanka he will face detention and quite possibly death. The Home Office adjudicator rejected the appeal on the grounds that Sri Lanka is a democracy where the rule of law applies.

A report from Amnesty International in 1985 shows evidence to the contrary. It documents the killing and torture of Tamil people by the police and army with many eye witness accounts.

Britain has enormous economic interests in Sri Lanka through the Tea Trade and major companies like ICI, Lloyds, Pearl Assurance. Britain has a defence agreement with Sri Lanka dating back to 1948 and has supplied military aid to assist atacks on Tamil towns. The British Government's appalling treatment of Tamil Refugees refusing them the right to stay and detaining them is further confirmation of Britain's support for Sri Lanka.

Viraj Mendis's fight against deportation is representative of a broader struggle against racism and imperialism. It is very important that we support this struggle on both levels by opposing all immigration controls and deportations and by giving assistance to the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign. Viraj Mendis's MP Bob Litherand is to meet David Waddington in a last attempt to appeal against his imminent deporation.

In the meantime support the Campaign by:

- **attending the Home Office protest each Friday 1-2pm at Queen Anne's Gate, SW1 — St James Park tube;**
- **order postcards from VMDC London Support Group, c/o BM Box 5905, London WC1N 3XX;**
- **invite speakers to your Labour Party and union branches.**

Private medicine

By Geoff Martin
Merton councillor

Take a trip down to Guy's Hospital in South East London any day of the week and talk to rank and file health workers and the story you'll hear is one of ward closures, overworked staff and of a service teetering on the brink of collapse.

Cross over the road and the picture is one of a class divide so stark and so obscene it will take your breath away. For here, in what used to be a docklands grain warehouse, is the new private London Bridge Hospital.

The irony is particularly galling for those of us who have roots in London's docklands. It's the ultimate two fingers to the organised working class systematically to destroy the London docks and turn them into a symbol of wealth and privilege.

Private medicine is a parasite which leeches off the NHS in terms of nicking staff and in allowing consultants, surgeons, etc., to line their pockets whilst our people are dying on hospital waiting lists.

But private medicine is also very much a part of the strategy of trying to draw those who've got jobs and a bit of money in their pockets into becoming division four capitalists. It's part of the same strategy as flogging off Telecom, British Gas, etc. Private medical insurance, no matter how limited, is being sold in the same way as washing machines and compact disc players.

Private medical treatment is no longer aimed simply at the rich. Pensioners have blown their life savings on a hip replacement operations because they couldn't face the prospect of three years of agony on the NHS waiting list.

These are **our people**, not the merchant bankers of the City of London who take private medicine for granted. This is the really sinister side of private medicine and it's one that's already taken root.

The socialist response is simple:

- the performance of private medicince should be outlawed and made a criminal offence;
- all private hospitals and clinics should be taken uner the wing of the National Health Service without compensation;
- private nursing homes should also be commandeered and where the facilities are usable they should be handed over to Local Authority Social Service departments.

This solution may well appear simplistic but I challenge anyone to prove that it's unworkable. It could also be a massive vote winner providing that it's linked to a substantial injection of cash into the NHS and programme of work on refurbishing existing hospitals and the building of new ones where necessary.

So next time you see that BUPA advert with the little kids stacking up the building blocks for every new private hospital don't get the hump, just remember that every new hospital they build is another one that we can nationalise.

Health round-up

Don't get too excited about Chancellor Lawson's electioneering decision to hand out an extra £600m for health spending. Prior to his announcement, the far from radical National Association of Health Authorities had argued an extra £650m would be needed next year just to stand still and avoid further cuts in the face of rising demand for health services from an ageing population.

Many health authorities hae already dug themselves into huge financial deficits which would consume the whole of their share of the extra cash and still force major cutbacks.

The £50m allocated to reduce waiting list figures spread over 200 health authorities, is unlikely to be noticed by patients.

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Of the £626m "new money" announced by Lawson, no less than £390 is already earmarked to cover inflation expected to run at 3.75% next year. Another £94m is immediately swallowed up by the government's underfunding of the latest pay awards.

In fact only £102m extra cash is included in the package — and this to be spread across 200 health districts.

300-400 health workers and campaigners — including a strong contingent from the Hangers strike — turned out on a working day to support the national demonstration called by COHSE on November 10.

The march — from the DHSS headquarters at Elephant and Castle to the Maudsley psychiatric hospital in Camberwell — had been campaigned for by Maudsley workers and focussed primarily upon health cuts in London.

However, the turn-out from London branches was embarrassingly small and the event was saved from fiasco only by strong contingents of militant members from Yorkshire and Newcastle. COHSE's insistence that the march had to be under their own banners and control allowed NUPE, GMBU and ASTMS to ignore what might otherwise have been a substantial focus for opposition to Tory health cuts.

London health districts, already facing cuts totalling £210m in real terms since 1982, and further cuts of £135m facing London's 30 health districts by 1994 have been allocated a mere £30m extra.

In the hope of buying votes, Lawson and pals intend to forge ahead with a further stage in the rundown of the NHS: a two-tier service providing a "skid row" fallback for the poor while pushing everyone else towards private medical insurance.

Hospital workers staged a 24 hour sit in at Rhiwfelin Hospital near Pontypridd, after the shock announcement that it will close by December 31st to save Mid Glamorgan Health authority £160,000.

COHSE branch members believe that Rhiwfelin, a 28 bed long stay geriatric hospital, has been singled out for closure because of the successful 9 month campaign to save the nearby Pontypridd Cottage Hospital.

Campaigners are particularly concerned about Rhiwfelin patients, some of whom have been at Rhiwfelin for over 20 years.

Compiled by Terry Smith

Editorial

BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Not the way to win!

The electorate in Knowsley North have delivered their verdict on George Howarth and Neil Kinnock's brand of "socialism". When compared with the thumping majority which should have been achieved, it was a damning indictment.

It now appears certain that the Labour Party in Knowsley North will be suspended.

Their crime? The heinous offence of daring to insist on their right to choose their own parliamentary candidate as against the candidate imposed upon them by the National Executive Committee.

Indeed, the casual observer might be forgiven for thinking that what happened in Knowsley North was a farce rather than a by-election. The Labour candidate flat on his back in hospital, the local Labour Party refusing to canvass for him, while the Party leader insisted that everyone was united.

Unfortunately, many of us did not feel like laughing. The Knowsley North debacle is yet another episode in the vicious witch-hunt prosecuted by Neil Kinnock. The imposition of a candidate on a constituency for no other reason than that the Party leader doesn't like the CLP's own likely choice, strikes at the roots of democracy in the Labour Party. It is now abundantly clear that Neil Kinnock will stop at nothing in his attempt to re-mould Labour policies so that they are acceptable to the ruling class.

Every source of opposition, and therefore embarassment, to the leadership is being eliminated. The Young Socialists have come under vicious attack in the guise of "re-structuring" because of the influence of *Militant* in the YS; the Women's Organisation has frequently supported left demands. They are now faced with a consultation process designed to rid them of what little power they have.

The expulsions of Party members continue apace. It is no longer *Militant* supporters alone. Under the all-embracing term "bringing the Party into disrepute" the witch-hunt has now extended to leading members of Black Sections (Amir Khan), Labour Committee on Ireland (Kevin Scally) and the European Parliament (Les Huckfield). We warned that this kind of thing would happen.

The right wing, of course, continues to ignore Party policy with impunity. We are told that the new Constitutional Committee, which will act as an appeals court, will demand a hefty time commitment from its members — up to two days a week!

It seems that a wider purge of Party membership is being prepared, so that the Labour Party can be "cleansed" in time for the general election and emerge sparkling clean and moderate.

The left must stand firm in the face of these attacks. We must unite in opposition to all witch hunts and in support of the rights of CLPs to select their own candidates. Most crucial of all, we must continue to fight for socialist policies as against Kinnock and Hattersley's "capitalism with a human face". We will not win elections by attempting to persuade the electorate that we can manage capitalism better than the capitalists. Similarly, we will not win any victories by over-riding the wishes of local Parties. To believe that we will, is to treat the working class with contempt.

Even Neil Kinnock couldn't stop some people voting Labour in Knowsley — although he had a good try. Labour won Knowsley North because the most loyal of our supporters were given no alternative. This was no victory for socialism. We must continue the fight for our class which we will have to wage if and when a Labour government is elected.

Knowsley North and the right to choose

Because they fought for their right to choose their own Parliamentary Candidate, Knowsley North CLP now faces disbanding and expulsions.

By Les Huckfield, MEP

This is not the first time they have had an imposed MP:

- When they embarked on their re-selection last year, the process was suspended, and the main left contender, Tony Mulhearn, expelled.
- When for a third time — following Kilroy-Silk's defection to Fortress Wapping and the BBC — they had almost completed the process, despite Joyce Gould's previous promise that there would be a proper selection, once more, the NEC stepped in.

During this latest selection, despite stories of open discouragement from Labour Party officials, I received 27 nominations, including 7 out of the 10 wards, and 14 out of 16 of the TGWU branches.

There were no complaints from within Knowsley North about this year's selection process. So on September 24th, the NEC decided to set up an Inquiry into a "promise" which I was supposed to have given not to return to the House of Commons; the circumstances in which I was supposed to have secured my "release" from this promise; "the effect of this on my standing with the Knowsley North electorate; and matters surrounding my sponsorship from the TGWU. Ample evidence proved that all these accusations were without foundation.

These "complaints" had come from CLPs within the Merseyside East Euro Constituency, though they had never been brought to its officers or its meetings. Most delegates from these CLPs — Wigan, Leigh, Makerfield — had never attended a Euro CLP meeting since the Selection Conference of January 19th 1984.

From the start, Knowsley North CLP maintained that the relevance of these complaints was a matter for the Knowsley North Selection Conference and not the NEC.

When the Inquiry Team at short notice turned up to hear evidence in the constituency on Monday, October 13th, a total of 17 of our supporters were turned away. It was only after I had threatened to withdraw, unless they were heard, that Ken Cure returned by himself. So though the complete Inquiry team had heard all the evidence presented against us, only he had heard the evidence for us!

69 out of 118 delegates to the Euro Constituency signed the following statement which was presented to the NEC:

"We are satisfied with the running of Merseyside East Constituency Labour Party.

"We always receive proper notice of the meetings of Merseyside East CLP, especially that of August 22nd, and are in agreement with the action taken at that meeting.

"We do not believe that Les Huckfield has 'broken any promise' he may have given about seeking nominations for a Westminster Constituency.

"We believe that he should be allowed to stand for Knowsley North."

In the face of this wealth of factual evidence presented to them, the NEC resolved that I had given an undertaking; that the meeting to "release" me from it was irregular; and that under Clause IX (4) of the Party Consitution, giving the NEC powers to adjudicate in disputes, that I should "not be further considered for nomination as Labour Party Candidate in the forthcoming by-election in Knowsley North."

Knowsley North were "advised" to select George Howarth as their candidate. In pursuance of the NEC's powers under Clause IX (4) to adjudicate upon the dispute which they claimed had arisen "within the constituency machinery in Knowsley North CLP (shown by the unanimous resolution of the Knowsley Park Branch of 14 October 1986) in the event of the EC of Knowsley North not acting upon the advice of the NEC, then George Howarth is endorsed as the Labour Party Candidate for the by-election." Even the Constituency Party did not know there was a dispute on!

The Constituency and I went jointly to the High Court on October 23rd. Mr Justice Hoffman said that the NEC's powers were "arguable". The rules were not clear. However, deciding on the "balance of convenience", he said that even if he "granted an injunction against the NEC, he would be throwing the Labour campaign into disarray without doing me or my supporters much good", for I would still have to receive the endorsement of the NEC, and that "appeared a most unlikely prospect."

By moving the By-Election Writ with the tightest possible timetable in the Commons while we were in Court, the NEC obviously hoped to reduce the scope for further legal action.

An angry CLP endorsed further court proceedings by 58 votes to 9 on Sunday afternoon, October 26, and were back in the High Court, asking for a speedy trial on the NEC's powers, on Monday morning, October 27. Again, Mr Justice Hoffman ruled that, even if the NEC had been wrong, and the CLP went ahead with its Selection Conference planned on Sunday November 2nd, they would still have to face the NEC. He said that "endorsing a different candidate would to say the least make the Labour Party look extremely foolish."

On the afternoon of October 27th, in the Court of Appeal, Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson, and Lord Chief Justice Dillon ruled against the CLP, relying on Justice Hoffman's contention that it was most unlikely that the NEC would change its endorsement. They seemed reluctant to be accused of interference in the internal affairs of the Labour Party.

So, though the Justices gave good hint that the NEC's case was thin, Knowsley North's case was never heard. The CLP still believes that the Party's rules give it the right to choose.



PHOTO: Labour Party Photo Library

Les Huckfield

Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North

Chair: Dave Kerr (GMBATU)
Secretary: Alan Kelly (TGWU)

Trade Unionists for democracy in Knowsley North is a group of rank and file trade unionists who are fighting to raise funds to pay for the legal costs we have incurred in the struggle for democracy. It has cost us up to £14,000 to date.

As you are probably aware, the NEC of the Labour Party imposed a candidate in the Knowsley North by-election. We strongly believe that **every CLP has the right to choose their own candidate.**

An Appeal to the Labour Movement!

Knowsley North has never been allowed to select its own candidate. In 1983, Robert Kilroy-Silk was imposed upon us by the NEC. In 1986, as well as excluding L. Huckfield, 4 other people who had received nomination were excluded from selection. **Your own CLP could be next!**

What you can do to help us

We need money urgently... Please do all you can to ensure that your CLP or trade union branch makes a donation. Copies of our appeal leaflet are available from the Secretary, 7 Hall Dr., Kirkby, Liverpool. Speakers will be provided on request.

Resolutions... Get your Labour Party and trade union branches to send resolutions to the NEC condemning the attack made on democracy in Knowsley North.

Please send donations to: Mrs I Rowe, Treasurer, Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North, 12 Linsdale Crescent, Northwood Kirkby, Liverpool. Please make cheques payable to Trade Unionists for Democracy in Knowsley North. A receipt will be sent to all contributors.

Defend Democracy!
Support Knowsley North!



PHOTO: John Harris (IFL)

Capitalism's human face? ...George Howarth on the doorstep.

Trade Union Briefing

Durham strikes

By Ed Fredenburgh
NJfMC, ex-officio

The Durham Mechanics are spearheading a revival of militancy amongst the NUM rank and file, by carrying out a rolling programme of one-day strikes at selected pits each week throughout the area.

They decided on a 2 to 1 ballot to strike:

- for the reinstatement of Mechanic Geoff Hartwell and all the sacked miners;
- to force the Coal Board to pay back the money stolen from the miners;
- to restore the industry's conciliation machinery;
- to stop the closure of Seaham colliery.

The separate Durham NUM Area reacted to the Mechanics decision with a two-thirds majority in their own ballot, to ban all mid-week overtime. (South Wales has been operating a production-only overtime ban for 3 months.)

The strikes by Durham Mechanics began on September 22nd at Murton Colliery, and the picket line was respected by 100% of NUM members and 90% of UDM members! Dave Temple, delegate from Murton Mechanics, wrote in *Workers' Press*:

"Two mini-bus loads of police were quickly rushed to the scene but in the absence of the huge numbers they were accustomed to, they were forced to take the taunts and jibes of the pickets and could only passively appeal for 'common sense' to prevail.

"The atmosphere was further electrified as wives, girl-friends and well-wishers joined the men on the gate and stayed talking till the small hours of Monday morning... Not a defeatist soul to be seen."

Subsequent strikes at Westall and Tursdale Workshops, with higher numbers or percentages of UDM, were in that sense alone even more successful.

Mechanics secretary Billy Etherington has proposed at several public meetings that other areas need to consider spreading the Mechanics' action in the fight to defend the union and the industry.

How this can be achieved, particularly in Areas with weaker organisation and leadership than Durham, is a major task facing the NUM.



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

NUM and Anti-Apartheid banners on the march

No South African coal

Saturday November 8th saw 250 people march through biting winds four miles to the Wharf at Flixborough.

The Yorkshire Area of Anti-Apartheid and the Yorkshire Area of the NUM were protesting against the landing of South African coal.

These unregistered ports brought in scab coal throughout the miners' strike and today are bringing coal covered in the blood of South African miners.

By Garth Frankland
Leeds councillor

Dave Douglas from the EC of the Yorkshire area of the NUM stressed the solidarity of the Yorkshire Miners for the struggle in South Africa. He declared the revolution had begun and that the "fascist regime" of Botha was on the run. This theme was echoed by speakers from Women Against Pit Closures and Anti-Apartheid.

However, no plans were outlined for any effective picketting of the South African Coal coming into this country. This must be one of the themes for the December 13th Conference for Trade Union Sanctions on South Africa.

No info to South Africa

By Garth Frankland
SCPS, British Library

The Society of Civil and Public Servants, British Library Document Supply Centre branch, has passed a resolution for the continuation of the boycotting of requests from South Africa.

The Centre is South Africa's leading source of information on high technology areas such as electronics and electro-optics as well as atomic energy. The boycott, opposed by the management, has not yet had complete success but information has slowed down considerably.

The National Executive of the SCPS has given complete support to the branch and hopefully the boycott will get more successful.

Polmaise: Victimised miners

By Rowland Sheret
Chair, Central Region
Miners' Support Group

During the miners' strike, four Polmaise men — Alex McCallum, James O'Hare, James Graham and James Rennie — went down the pit to prevent it being sabotaged by flooding. They were all sacked on the spot.

Between them these four miners have *96 years service with the Coal Board*. They are now "time-barred" from an Industrial Tribunal hearing.

Elsewhere in Scotland, Bogside Pit was flooded just before the strike started, and Polkemmet flooded during the strike. There can be no doubt that the survival of Polmiase is very much due to the courageous action of these four men.

Five other Polmaise miners, with a total service of 127 years between them, remain sacked. Four of them are also "time-barred" from a tribunal hearing. The other lost his tribunal case.

Frank Weston, the oldest of the sacked Polmaise miners, died this year of cancer. He had 44 years service in the coal industry and remained sacked at his death.

The victimised men await the outcome of a further review of their cases by the Coal Board, which is taking place now. Meanwhile, the labour movement must continue to fight for the re-instatement of all sacked miners — we cannot forget their struggle for jobs, for their communities, for the future of their industry.

South East takes off

By Ed Fredenburgh
NJfMC, ex-officio

The Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, now 1 year old, has set up regional campaigns in the North East, North West, Notts, Yorks, West Midlands, South Wales, and even the South West.

It has now — at last — a South East Region, stretching from Oxford to London, to Brighton to Kent.

Billy Etherington, NJMC national convenor, said at its launch meeting

"This campaign must try to do what the NUM has been unable to do because of its industrial weakness. The NUM has not been able to carry out a national policy of defending its members. The Coal Board and the state have carried out a classic divide and rule strategy: and so the NJMC has been necessary and successful. The South East can form the biggest and most powerful region of the campaign."

Terry Harrison, speaking for Kent NUM, outlined the stark realities facing Kent miners: 47 still victimised, Terry French still in jail, Tilmanstone voting to accept closure. **"This vote has eroded our confidence in ourselves and in our organisation,"** he said. **"Profitability is not the issue. Rather it is that the Coal Board wants British coal to compete with South African coal, and also with nuclear power: hence the significance of the decision on Sizewell, which will axe 6,500 miners' jobs and 3,000 others."** He asked bitterly what had happened to our trade union and labour movement.

"We are in a different reality to the '60s and '70s. Our movement must be rebuilt, a movement that can inspire workers' confidence. It was lack of this confidence in the movement that led to the aceptance of Tilmanstone's closure." Now miners are being interviewed for Restart at the Kent Job Centres.

The next major focus is the NJMC's second national demonstration and rally in London, on March 7th, which will be followed by a major Heroes concert at Wembley (thanks to £4,500 sponsorship from Brent Council).

Victimised miners are available to speak at meetings. Contact the London Miners Office, c/o Hammersmith Unemployed Workers Centre, 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6; phone 01 603 1831.

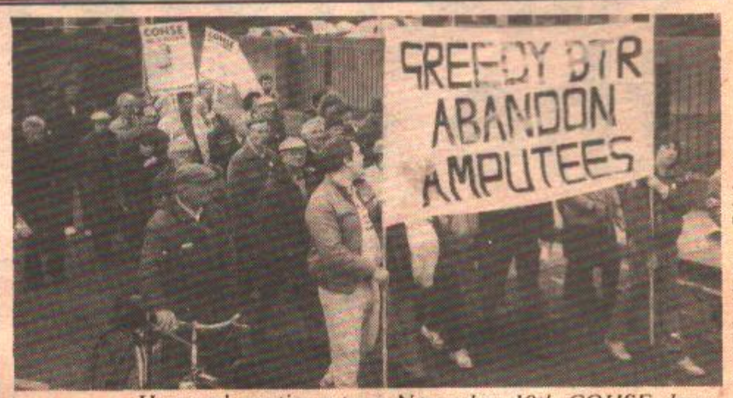


PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

Hangers' contingent on November 10th COHSE demo

J.E. Hangers

By Kathy Pick
Wandsworth councillor,
Putney CLP

JE Hanger's 300 sacked artificial limbmakers have entered the third month of their dispute with the management of this BTR subsidiary at Roehampton.

Management had increased productivity levels in September with no consultation with the two main unions — TASS and FTAT. TGWU shop stewards were sacked when they informed the weekend shift of a union meeting's decision to ban overtime.

All the workers voted to go on a one-day stoppage the following day in support of the four sacked men, on September 17th. 1½ hours later, 300 dismissal notices were served — even to workers on holiday.

Workers at branches in Dundee, Oxford, Brighton and Richmond have been threatened with dismissal if they come out in support of their sacked comrades or even if they refused to handle the 500 limbs which were transported up to them by scab labour. Members of ASTMS are using Rule 27 which says not to do the sacked men's work, but are still crossing the picket line.

Two offers have been made by management recently. The first gave 80 men their jobs back at a lower wage, a few men jobs at Dundee (and to be bussed home on weekends to be with their families) — and the rest to receive redundancy pay of £130 per year for each year worked with a maximum of 20 years. The second offer just removed the maximum limit. The dispute has recently gone to ACAS. TASS and FTAT are standing firm that all 300 workers are reinstated.

These men are highly skilled and were producing 500 limbs a week, about 55% of the UK artificial limb production. Patients are experiencing delays and being shifted around the country by ambulance without being told of the true implications of this dispute. The disastrous effect upon patients was highlighted last week in the national press when one man attempted suicide due to delays and one Welsh policeman had to wait in hospital because there are no limbs available. 17 sacked workers themseles have artificial limbs.

Attempts to get the Hanger dispute discussed seriously on Wandsworth Council have failed. The Tories believe the Council shouldn't be involved in this dispute regardless of the facts that it is the largest manufacturer in the Borough and also the largest private employer.

The recent McColl Report has caused the JE Hanger management to set up the London School of Prosthetics where, interestingly enough, one Wandsworth Tory Councillor works. In fact, I understand that the London School of Prosthetics will be receiving a DHSS contract in the new year which in the past would have gone to JE Hanger's. Both Dr Hiddleston and Stan East are on the Board of Directors of Hanger's and the London School of Prosthetics, which is located next to Hanger's, Roehampton, and fully funded by Hanger's.

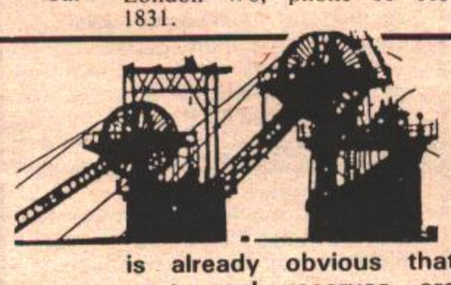
BTR, which is now being picketed by the sacked Hanger workers, is one of the major UK employers in South Africa and caused worldwide outrage when they sacked 920 workers and when pickets were **shot** on the picket line last summer.

A Women's Support Group has been set up by some of the wives, girlfriends and mothers of the men in dispute. Some 30 women attended the launch meeting when Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures and SOGAT Women from Wapping shared their experiences.

An all-women's picket has been called, in addition to the round the clock pickets held at Roehampton and Richmond.

Messages of support and donations to S. Blease, The Hangers Strike Appeal, c/o TASS, Wessex House, 520 London Road, Mitcham Surrey, tel 01-788 9598.

Polmaise, story of a Scottish pit



By Rowland Sheret
Scottish Labour Briefing

Polmaise colliery, near Stirling, has struggled for years against management's closure plans. It has stayed open, despite everything, but the fight is far from over.

1979 NUM & NCB agreed to stop existing production and begin a £22m new development which would link the pit to the Longannet complex.

1983, July Albert Wheeler, NCB Scottish Area Manager, locked out the workforce during a dispute. After arbitration, the Polmaise miners won £40,000 in back pay covering the lock-out period.

1983, October With £15.8m of the development funds already spent, the two new tunnels met with faults. Wheeler ordered work to cease pending an investigation.

1984, January Wheeler orders closure of Polmaise colliery. Workforce goes on strike and are already out when national strike begins in March.

1985, October Coal Board allows development work at Polmaise to resume. Within days the faults are cleared.

Since the end of the strike, early retirement has led to cutbacks in the workforce. Investment restrictions mean that only *one* mine at a time can be worked on. Nonetheless, it is already obvious that vast coal reserves are available in the Polmaise and Longannet complex. The low sulphur content of this coal could help *reduce* acid-rain pollution from power stations.

In the interests of the miners of Polmaise, the village of Fallen in which it is located, and the entire Scottish Central Region economy, we are continuing our campaign for more investment and more productive jobs at Polmaise.

Halifax

Bitter news from sweet bosses

By Alan Scott

On the very same day the Tory goverment released their (fiddled) jobless figures for September 1986, Halifax Rowntree Mackintosh boss Derek Sandall told TGWU shop stewards of his decision to axe 380 jobs at the Albion Mills plant.

Local Tory MP Roy Galley wasted no time in giving his full backing for the company's decision: job losses are a "cruel fact of life", he said.

Since November 1983 more than 450 jobs have been axed at Mack's in Halifax — 143 in 1983, 270 in 1985 and 40 in April this year. The latest threatened job losses amount to about one in five of the total workforce. With unemployment in the Halifax/Calderdale area standing at 10,521 (or 13.3%) there's little chance of finding alternative employment in the area.

Another reactionary aspect of Rowntree Mackintosh practice was exposed a couple of years ago by Labour Euro MP Dr Barry Seal when he refused to accept a "gift" of a large tin of Quality Street toffees, "with compliments" from Mack's. He returned it and told them what they could do with their "gifts".

Obviously such "gifts" are sent to many local "eminent persons". But who are they? Is Roy Galley on the list? Are there any local trades unionists on Mack's gift list?

Meanwhile the local Tory rag *Evening Courier* has reported that TGWU works convenor Steve Smith is now seeking talks with Union officials at national level. Bearing in mind the cowardly performance of the TGWU national leadership over recent years and the sharp move to the right of former "left" Ron Todd in particular, it's difficult to see how this can result in anything other than a do-nothing sell-out.

As local supporters of *Labour Briefing* we must warn workers at Mack's: *a refusal to fight only serves to strengthen the hand of management.*

Halifax *Labour Briefing* supporters say:

- A *Jobs Defence Action Committee* should be set up comprising shop stewards at the plant and ordinary shop floor workers from each department threatened. An action plan of industrial action should be worked out — a ban on all overtime work, organised mass walk-outs, 24-hour and all-out strikes.
- Advance the demand "Open the Books!" for examination of the firm's accounts by members of the defence committee. Let's see where the profits really go. Let's find out who is on Mack's "gift list".
- A *Jobs Defence Bulletin* should be published — weekly if possible — to keep all Mack's workers fully informed of the fight.
- A local *liaison committee* should be set up comprising members of the defence committee, the Halifax & District Trades Council and the Halifax Constituency Labour Party.
- Demand the Union leadership at national level pledge full support for any action taken and give an undertaking to fight for full support from the wider labour and trade union movement. Employees of Mack's in York and Castleford must be fully informed of any developments.

"My position is to preach basic union principles"

On July 1st this year John Macreadie, the candidate of CPSA's Broad Left and a *Militant* supporter, was elected general Secretary of the Union. Since that time the controlling right-wing faction on the National Executive Committee have overturned his election and forced a re-run.

In doing this they have simultaneously changed CPSA's ballotting procedure and instituted a near postal voting system in a clear attempt to bias the result in favour of their candidate John Ellis.

On the eve of the second ballot JOHN MACREADIE spoke to ALASTAIR WALLACE (CPSA Broad Left) from BRIEFING.



PHOTO: Labour Party Photo Library

John Macreadie

***Briefing:* You have said that you think CPSA's right wing is the worst in the TUC. Yet it has not been as closely analysed as the Electricians or engineering unions.**

John Macreadie: I would agree. The first problem we have is that the right wing call themselves Moderates. The majority of civil servants do regard themselves as moderates and therefore they fall for that label.

Secondly, the millionaire press which support the right wing tend to uphold the view that they are the democrats or moderates and that we're the loony left and that has an effect. But I'm increasingly confident that we have and we will undercut that. Where there are Broad Left supporters in Branches who through their consistent work of defending members' interests and openly stating what they believe in, members through their own experience see that it is the Broad Left who are the democrats and who defend members' interests.

***Briefing:* So what would you say about the importance of your election in the CPSA and the TUC?**

John Macreadie: The implications of the Broad Left victory was firstly to show that a Broad left supporter — and by the way a supporter of *Militant* — could win elections. The implications for the movement is that socialist policies are popular and can win. It rejects the view of many in the Labour Party and the TUC that you have to water down your policies.

The second point is that many CPSA members who have seen me on television, or listened to me, or read what I have written, have said to me that they think I'm a very reasonable and moderate person. That's a major task I've got: to show CPSA members and other workers that the policies of the Broad Left are reasonable. All we want is a decent living wage, to defend jobs, a free national health service, Trade Union and civil rights. The majority of workers support these policies and that's why the Broad Left should be supported.

In terms of the Trade Union movement; firstly in the Civil Service I hope to be a focus for unity among Civil Servants and Civil Service trade unions. The precise nature of this unity needs to be discussed, for example whether you go for one union for the Civil Service or whether as a more immediate step you go for amalgamation.

If that's true for the Civil Service it's even more true in the TUC. My position as a General Secretary within the TUC will be to try to preach the basic principles of the movement: unity and solidarity. I believe the new realist philosophy has actually undermined those principles. That doesn't mean that overnight Civil Servants are going to come out in support of other workers. But I would hope that through discussion and through their own experiences CPSA members will start to rebuild those links between workers and organisations of the working class: claimants, tenants' associations, community groups, etc.

***Briefing:* Is the silence of the Labour Party and the TUC throughout the period when your election was being overturned indicative of our current leadership?**

John Macreadie: The tradition in the Labour Party and the TUC is that they don't comment or intervene directly in internal union affairs; but every activist knows that they intervene indirectly.

I think the Labour Party and TUC leadership were amazed and embarrassed by my election because it contradicts their views, particularly that the movement can do nothing until the election of a Labour government. I reject that view; we've got to fight to defend our members' interests now.

The same is true for the Labour leadership. At a time when they are trying to expel socialists — some of whom are supporters of *Militant*, some of whom aren't — it was an embarrassment for them.

Of course it's not me personally they fear, it's the ideas of the Broad Left which I represent in the CPSA. The bureaucracy of the TUC are opposed to the election of full-time officials, they are opposed to the view that full-time officials should live on a wage of no more than that of their members, and they are opposed to democratic accountability.

Similarly with the Labour Party, they don't want someone coming forward with ideas that the Labour Party is the party of the working class and must introduce socialist policies. They know that as General Secretary of CPSA if a future Labour Government were to attack CPSA members I will stand with my members against the government.

***Briefing:* Let's move to union democracy. The General Secretary election campaign has highlighted the difference between the Broad Left which clearly has an interest in union democracy, and the right wing which has had to smash that democracy in order to stop the Broad Left coming to power. How do you view the importance of union democracy?**

John Macreadie: It is regrettable that some of the arguments that Thatcher has put forward about unions being undemocratic has struck a chord with many workers because their experience of their own unions has been that they have little say in the running of their own unions or control over their own leaders.

The Broad Left in CPSA has, however, been arguing for union democracy for many, many years — long before Thatcher. It was the Broad Left who argued for the election of senior full-time union officers and is now campaigning to extend that franchise to cover all full time officials. it was the Broad Left which introduced election addresses; it was the Broad Left who campaigned successfully for the political groups in the Union to be open and to tell the members who they were.

We have seen in the context of this election that it has been the Broad Left which has defended the democracy of the Union and it is the right wing which has tried to trample on that democracy. Our record shows that it is the Broad Left which stands for maximum involvement of the members, maximum members' control of the union and maximum accountability of union officials. That's why the bureaucracy are frightened of the Broad Left coming to power.

***Briefing:* Proper accountability means not only representing the interests of the members but actually having those interests yourself. You are widely publicised as saying that you won't take the salary of General Secretary if elected — is this part of a similar conception of democracy which you have?**

John Macreadie: I believe that Union officials must be absolutely honest in their dealings, they must led by example and earn the respect of members. I believe they must be accountable by means of election but also by means of recall. It is not just a case of being elected once every 5 years. We've got to be subject to the members that put us there. If they don't like what we've done they must have powers to bring us back and make us account for it. If they accept our views fine; if they don't then they should be able to replace us.

The other thing is that even though most union officials start off being very sincere and honest, because they become isolated from the workplace and the membership, because of their economic lifestyle, they become isolated from the rank and file. That's why it's important that union officials must not have a lifestyle which is different from that of their members as a further check that they carry out the wishes of those members.

That's what I'll try to do and have done over the past 20 years. By means of that accountability we'll strengthen the workers' movement which potentially is still the most powerful force in society. It is that force which will introduce a socialist society both here and internationally.

***Briefing:* One of the major platforms of the Broad Left is affiliation of CPSA to the Labour Party. What effect do you think the success of this policy would have?**

John Macreadie: Obviously the major power within the Trade Union movement still lies with the major industrial unions. However, CPSA, and public sector unions in general, have got an increasing potential power in society. It's vital that white-collar unions affiliate to the Labour Party and that we join with the industrial unions to fight for a socialist society.

If CPSA went onto the floor of Labour Party conference it could have a tremendous effect because we represent a larger proportion of youth and women than are found in most other unions. We would be a force for a much more radical Labour Party. Clearly they would rather not have us; but CPSA *will* re-affiliate.



PHOTO: John Chapman

TUC enforces Tory law

By Brian Prince
Brent South CLP

One of the laws passed by the Tories on taking office was to introduce a limit of 6 pickets as a means of handcuffing workers forced to take industrial action.

The leaders of the TUC subserviently declared that this should be "voluntary". Whether by Tory legislation or TUC consent, anyone in the recent period who has had to face battalions of baton-wielding "lawmen" will be very much aware of the consequences of this stacking the odds in favour of the reactionary state machine.

If further evidence were required of the TUC's compliance, then it was provided on October 22nd. 500 sacked printers and their supporters were lobbying Congress House, demanding the TUC implement Conference policy to back the printers' fight for reinstatement, and take action against the scabbing at Wapping.

While EETPU scabherder Eric Hammond walked freely into Congress House, TUC assistant general secretary Roy Jackson made clear by his own actions where he stood in relation to the sacked printworkers.

It should go without saying that trade unionists have the right to stand on property paid for out of their union dues. Not so, it appears, from the point of view of trade union bureaucrats unwilling to have their tolerance for scabbing brought home to them by the rank and file members who are being scabbed on.

Jackson took it upon himself to enlist the services of those angelic Boys in Blue to clear the area in front of Congress House of striking printworkers. They were made to stand on the opposite side of the road, while the cops heavily asserted the order of the day from commander, sorry, Assistant General Secretary Roy Jackson. The decree? — that the number of lobbyists outside Congress House be restricted to six!

S-cab radio!

So jittery have TNT scab drivers become because of continuing action by print workers, that they are installing the latest in dial-a-pig equipment.

The scab lorries have been fitted with radio phones for some time now, along with instructions to dial 999 at the first sign of a "Murdoch is Bad News" badge.

TNT had to extend tl e cellular telephone to their vans in March. They were fitted by Manchester Communications and Gerard Mitchell Communications from Surrey. Each one costs over £10 per week to run. Calls can, in certain circumstances, cost up to 40p a minute.

TNT, mindful of the expense, has just secured its own VHF frequency for mobile radio which is much cheaper to run. Range is restricted to about 60 miles. But this is enough for the scabs to stay in contact with the regional depots.

So plans for all the TNT fleet to be fitted with cellular phones have been scrapped thanks to the timely allocation of their very own frequency — courtesy of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Enterprising telecommunications buffs have been calling TNT at no expense to themselves on freephone overnight to chat about the system, or alternatively to tell them what a scabby bunch they are.

Labour Party



PHOTO: John Chapman

Dora Russell addressing WAC fringe meeting: on platform (L to R) Frances Morrell, Ann Pettifor, Jo Richardson, Diane Abbot.

Making links with trade union women

A resolution put to the Labour Women's Action Committee's 1985 AGM concerned the imbalance between Trade Union and constituency delegates representation at Labour Women's Conference.

By Pauline Purnell West Midlands Organiser, LWAC, and Theresa Davies, Secretary LWAC

The West Midlands delegation called for remittance in order that the whole issue of the block vote could be given consideration by the LWAC EC over the forthcoming year.

Many LWAC members in the Midlands are actively involved in their Trade Unions at grass roots level. They believed that it was essential that discussion took place in order to examine the issue of the block vote and its potential influence on Women's Conference.

Two meetings were organised in Birmingham which generated open debate between trade union activists, including shop stewards, chairs of trade union branches, rank and file members of trade unions and WAC. The main issue tackled was that of how women can make or influence policy within their unions and how representative of views the block vote would be.

The passing of the resolution on women's organisation proposed by APEX and amended by Putney and Glasgow, makes it even more essential that the debate is broadened in order that consitutency women who do not have a voice through WAC or their union enter the debate.

If a conference is held next year (depending on the election date) women need to start the debate now in all sections of the Party and encourage sisters to formulate ideas as to what needs to result from the amended APEX resolution. This can be done by following West Midlands' LWAC initiative and making links with trade union women.

Briefing women

Labour women: our challenge

Compiled by Jane Prust

Labour women are facing an enormous challenge over the coming year.

Not only is there the possibility of a general election which will involve women in working for the election of a Labour government (including the 101 mudane tasks which women get landed with during an election); but we also have to organise around the consultation process between the NEC and the national Labour Women's Committee, making sure that the voice of rank and file women activists is heard.

The desired outcome of these consultations for some members of the NEC is a women's organisation stripped of the little power it currently has. They believe that this will be brought about by the introduction of the trade union block vote at the National Labour Women's Conference: the trade unions will safely block the CLP women when they get off on their feminst kick and start passing resolutions calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and an end to the witch hunt. The women's organisation will return to their traditional tasks of licking envelopes and making tea. Well, it's not going to happen that way!

The Labour Women's organisation does need changes. For a start if women were to be given power proportional to the amount of work which we put in we'd be able to outvote the trade unions and the CLPs combined. While the National Conference resolution is not the way forward many of us would have chosen, we must now make sure that the debate is on our terms.

The National Labour Women's Committee, in discussions with the NEC, will be putting proposals as the basis of the consultations. Hopefully, there will be plently of opportunity for women's sections to participate.

Trade union women will have an important role to play here. The officials and bureaucracy do not speak for rank and file activists. Many women trade unionists are eager to see Women's Conference given more power and would welcome an opportunity to participate in its policy making. Jean Travers of APEX is not representative of the majority of trade union women!

A weighted vote/block vote at Conference will give women an opportunity to organise and demand that it is used to represent their views; as well as campaigning to stregthen the women's structures in the unions where these exist, and working towards setting them up in the unions where as yet there is nothing. These structures should be accountable to rank and file women members. Imagine the power of a block vote which is truly and democratically controlled by union women!

The campaign around consultation could also encourage CLP and trade union women to build alliances and learn to work together. If the Labour Women's organisation is to be a focus for mobilising women to fight for socialist demands, then it must be strengthened, and it must build in the Party and in the unions.

Come to Leeds!

The WAC AGM on December 13th in Leeds will be the most important meeting of the WAC membership for a long while, because it will decide WAC's strategy and policy on the consultation procedure on the women's organisation.

If WAC is to have any impact on these consultations (and they must), then the campaign starts quickly. The right wing on the NEC and the union leaders will have their ideas worked out before the consultation begins: we must aim to shift the balance of the debate to the left. By putting forward a coherent plan we will be in a stronger position when negotiations begin.

Clearly there are certain basic principles on which we are not prepared to concede anything, for example, the 5 Women seats on the NEC *must* be elected by the National Labour Women's Conference.

It is vital that there is a good turn out at the AGM. Women's Sections are being contacted and asked to send delegates. This is the most important debate to take place for Labour Women in a long time. It has been forced upon us, but now we must make sure that we set the agenda.

Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights

Major new campaign launched

The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) and the NCCL have launched a major joint campaign around demands for new legislation to advance lesbian and gay rights.

By Terry Conway LCLGR

A national meeting to kick off the campaign took place in Nottingham on October 26th and drew backing from wide sections of the lesbian and gay movement.

The climax of the campaign will be a National Conference in May next year. It is hoped that the conference will be able to draw on the experience of the movement internationally, in particular the recent partial victory of the New Zealand law reform campaign.

Between now and then we need to stimulate a wide-ranging debate throughout the lesbian and gay community and among all other interested parties. This poses a large-scale practical and political challenge. Since its rebirth in the late seventies, the lesbian and gay movement has diversified enormously. There are groups organised around switchboards, social and cultural groups, caucuses within trade unions and political parties, as well as a range of separate lesbian groups, lesbian and gay black groups, groups for people with disabilities, and youth groups.

This development has strengthened the movement and drawn in many people who were not previously involved.

On the other hand, communication between these groups is weak and there are big political disagreements among them. It is hoped the new Campaign will deepen the discussion in a productive manner and enable us to come to effective agreements.

This project is the most ambitious in the history of the lesbian and gay movement in this country. It has been made possible by the recent victories in the Labour Party and trade unions and the political situation opened up by a general election period.

We want the Conference in May to have delegates from labour movement bodies up and down the country. LCLGR has produced a series of concrete legislative proposals in pamphlet form as a basis for discussion.

For further information on the new campaign write to Rm 221, 38 Mount Pleasant, London EC1. Copies of the LCLGR pamphlet can be obtained from the same address for £1 each.



Phil Murphy (centre) at Birmingham Black Sections launch meeting

Sacked — for fighting racism!

The ruling Labour Group of Birmingham City Council decided on November 3rd to remove Councillor Philip Murphy from the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee.

By Birmingham Black Sections

Cllr Murphy was Vice Chair, and one of only two Black people on the 14-strong Committee — in a city where one in four is Black.

Phil Murphy is also Vice Chair of the recently formed Birmingham Black Section and is a *Briefing* supporter. He has been sacked because his strong stand against racism had embarrassed the right wing cabal who control the Labour Group. His "crime" is that he has attempted to implement the District Labour Party's policy on race relations which was passed prior to last May's Council elections but which Labour Group leader, Dick Knowles, refused to include in his personal version of the manifesto.

Phil was instrumental in pushing the Council into setting up the Race Relations Committee and the Race Relations Unit and recently succeeded in getting the Council to adopt a 20% target for the employment of Black people on the Council's staff. He is also known for his work on the excessive use of suspensions against Black school students.

Last month, he presented a petition to the Council asking it to support the Campaign against the deportation of a Black Handsworth resident, Metso Moncrieffe, and for Metso to be given the "freedom of the City". The Council refused even to receive the petition.

This refusal produced chaotic scenes in the Council chamber and in the fracas a white *Labour* councillor punched Phil. This Councillor has yet to be disciplined; Phil has been sacked.

"I have been removed," says Phil, "because I represent defiance to established white power. There is a lot of white racism out there which the Labour Group are not prepared to tackle. Their view is that by opposing racism I am increasing racism!"

Birmingham Black Section has launched a campaign calling for Phil's reinstatement. We need to defend a Black comrade who has been victimised for fighting racism, and also to force the City Council into taking a lead in the battle against racism.

"We have to go into the community and show them that we are fighting," says Phil. "We have to explain that I am being attacked because we're forcing the Authority to face the real issues. When the Black community sees that representatives are not just fighting for their own self-interest then they will come out in support and this will increase the involvement of the Black community."

Letters demanding the reinstatement of Cllr Philip Murphy should be sent to Cllr Dick Knowles, Leader of the Council, Council House, Birmingham.

The going gets dirty in Deptford

The long struggle by Deptford comrades to select a candidate representing and accountable to the local community, Labour supporters and Party members is nearing its conclusion; but not without another bizarre twist.

On October 23rd, the local *Mercury* newspaper ran a five-page "exclusive", under the front page headline "The Rape of Deptford Labour Party", claiming to uncover a "13 year plot" by militant infiltrators to take control of the Party and oust Silkin. Quoting Silkin, it alleges that the Militant Tendency and other Trotskyist groups have ruled Deptford Party since 1981.

Much of the material was derived from the 15-month NEC membership investigation. But the extensive quotes from Silkin demonstrates the level of collusion involved. Comrades at a meeting of the Party EC noted that much of the style of the prose in the *Mercury* articles was "classic Silkinese." Most Party members are viewing the article as Silkin's valedictory address.

By Nick Long
Deptford CLP (Marlowe branch delegate)

Party members thought that when Silkin said he would not seek re-election (ducking out of the selection conference at which he would have been humiliated) the way was finally clear for the selection process to go ahead. The 15-month membership investigation demanded by Silkin came up with only minor administrative errors by branch officers.

Silkin has not attended a GC of the Party in months and has long ago given up providing a Parliamentary report.

In early October a timetable was agreed with the NEC, fixing the selection for December 14th. However even this timetable is still dependent on regional organisers checking branch confirmation meetings.

The feeling of many Party members in Deptford is that these latest developments are part of the attempt by the right and soft left in the Party to circumvent Deptford's right to select a candidate of its own choosing. It is a further attempt to influence the selection outcome by frightening the Party into selecting a candidate "acceptable" to the national leadership.

It is obvious that through the local media Silkin is attempting to plant the seeds that could germinate into another "Bermondsey" or Knowsley North.

Party members have been disturbed by a report from our National Conference delegation of rumours circulating at Blackpool that the NEC was looking to impose Joan Ruddock on the Party.

To date no clear favourite has emerged, although along with Joan Ruddock, Valerie Wise and local black councillor Clifton Graham have been recurring names in branch shortlistings for nomination.



PHOTO: Kevin Flack

Deptford Labour Party banner on Anti-Apartheid demo, 1985.

Deptford: natural selection?

Selecting a prospective parliamentary candidate for Deptford CLP has not been easy. Interminable membership enquiries, procedural innovations and, most recently, scandalous attacks in a local "newspaper" have all helped to confuse the issue.

Meanwhile, CLPs up and down the country have been picking their parliamentary hopefuls. Once the hot air had dissipated, it became clear that most Labour PPCs were — surprise, surprise — white men.

The National Executive Committee is embarrassed by this. Indeed they have even endorsed a rule change to ensure that all-male shortlists are things of the past. (Unfortunately, the Liberals beat Labour to it!)

By Steve Savage
Deptford CLP

Despite this advance, and despite the successes of the Black Sections, it is no surprise to see that in the Knowsley affair all three of the "main contenders" — the outgoing MP, the "favourite", and the NEC's choice — are white men.

Equally, it is no surprise that Deptford's General Committee have called for a shortlist which would exclude white men. For a "safe" seat such as Deptford to select a white man at this stage would be a disgrace. There are just too many white male candidates in safe and in winnable seats.

So — who will Deptford choose? The constituency has been besieged by eager candidates ever since John Silkin, the present MP, announced he would be retiring. Many of them would be willing to live in Deptford. However, few of them have chosen to.

The spectacle of all these people — all these "names" — turning up in Deptford to display their profound desire to serve the people of Deptford must make Party members wonder if perhaps, just possibly, it might be possible to find a candidate — not among all these people who haven't managed to get selected elsewhere and about whom we know little — but among our own comrades in our own CLP.

Assuming the selection process is not — once again — suspended, all should be decided by the end of the year. There is hardly likely to be anyone in Deptford CLP who thinks it a moment too soon.

Left slate for NCC

CLP
Mandy Moore
Ken Slater

Women
Vera Derer
Margaret Vallins

Trade Union
Owen Briscoe
Johnny Jones
Alan Quin

Our slate in the trade union section is chosen on the basis of support for the best nominations made, where the candidate can be supported for this particular committee. Inclusion does not imply automatic support for that candidate on every occasion.



PHOTO: Ann Flowers

Mandy Moore

By Mandy Moore

The Labour Party has suffered a dramatic shift to the right. This year's Party Conference saw socialist principles cast aside on a range of issues not least the fundamental principle of public ownership. The whole tenor of the Party leadership is now one of accepting capitalism not attempting to defeat it.

To maintain this shift away from socialism, the Party leadership has to break the power of the left in the Party. Part of their method of doing this is the witch hunt and wave of expulsions that are currently taking place.

The constitutional changes pushed through Conference paved the way for further expulsions and an even firmer clampdown on the left in order to limit our ability to defend our policies and challenge the right.

We must reassert our socialism, reviving debate on economic policy — the most crucial feature of any socialist analysis. At the same time we have to fight the expulsion of socialists from the Party. That means trying to gain representation on the national consitutional committee; representation that will fight for the left and be accountable to the left.

Snap, crackle and pop-ular politics

***"Talkin' 'bout my generation"* turned out to be a wonderfully appropriate title for the "Left Unlimited" debate on youth politics.**

The (white, male 43 year old) chair wrung his hands and apologised for his generation's legacy to the youth of today. *"But what can I do?"* he cried despairingly, *"give up my job to let a young person through?"*

Big mistake that — "Yes!" shouted back the youth.

Embarrassed silence followed as the chair fumbled for the next item **he** thinks should be on "the new agenda for youth". Surely young people today have more pressing things to do than deal with middle class guilt and comfort the pot-bellied generation as they turn 40? Things didn't improve.

By Fran Rayner
Youth Briefing

An invited FCS maverick was, quite rightly, heavily abused; but what was he doing at a left debate anyway? Vital issues like racism and self-organisation had only minimal discussion because the Tory right was set up as an easy target, thus limiting discussion on the **left's response** to Thatcher's attacks on youth.

It's interesting how discussion on youth has been pushed into the side-lines since the '60s, and to see how vacuous this debate was, as the "Who" themselves leave behind the class struggle for the credit card.

Debates like this are the belated, inadequate response to having left youth in the political wilderness in the '70s, an attempt to catch up in the '80s by jumping on every available bandwagon. The class struggle is on compact disc this year and youth politics, it seems, was last year's trend.

A regular column from
Labour Against the Witch Hunt '86

Learn Knowsley North lessons

Not content with imposing a by-election candidate upon Knowsley North, Kinnock has signalled his determination to close down the CLP itself because of its boycott of the campaign.

Luckily local Party activists have refused to lie down and keep their anger under wraps in the interest of Party unity.

It hardly matters whom the NEC came up with to replace Les Huckfield, the candidate the CLP would probably have chosen. The result was a triumph for the Party machine over grass roots democracy. With a 17,000 Labour majority, Knowsley was hardly a marginal seat threatened by the "spectre" of *Militant*.

In fact, Kinnock's fight with the local Party has proved a god-send for the ailing Liberals. The media rejoiced to see police and Party officials united in their attempt to prevent Knowsley activists from hearing the Party leader speak!

By Helen Ward
Publicity Officer, LAW '86

During the by-election campaign the Tories climbed back into top position in the opinion polls. Days before the vote the CBI conference declared openly for the Tories despite all the honeyed phrases from Hattersley and Smith about Labour's concern for manufacturing.

This year's conference in Blackpool showed that Kinnock has persuaded a majority of constituency activists that witch-hunts and abuses of democracy are necessary in the name of a Labour victory. Knowsley shows that this is not so. Working class families on the estates of Kirkby want jobs and improved council housing, not witch-hunts. *Labour Against the Witch-Hunt '86* (LAW '86) aims to bring this message home in a big way in what is likely to be the year of the General Election — 1987.

We need united resistance to NEC expulsions, disbandment of CLPs and refusal to endorse candidates. We have to resist any attempt by the new National Constitutional Committee to extend the purge in election year.

Early in 1987, LAW '86 will be holding a public meeting in London and in February a national conference (details to be announced). To prepare now for these, all CLPs and trade unonists should affiliate to LAW (£10 per organisation), take copies of the LAW petition, and support the right of socialists to argue their case in the Labour Party — without fear of expulsion.

Contact LAW '86 at 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14 9HB.

Education

Positive images in Haringey

By Alan Holder
Finchley LPYS &
LCLGR

The Positive Images campaign In Haringey was set up for two reasons: first, to counter the Tories' disgusting attacks on lesbian and gay rights through the "gay classes" issue; secondly, to put pressure on Haringey Council to implement its manifesto commitments on lesbian and gay rights, part of which was concerned with introducing an education policy into schools that would encourage the positive presentation of lesbians and gays.

This would stop the present isolation of lesbian and gays in schools who are afraid to "come out" because of the adverse pressure and abuse they would receive in being labelled as abnormal.

Explain

Although only set up at the beginning of September, "positive images" has been seeking to explain to parents what exactly a policy of positive images of lesbians and gays would mean in Haringey's schools. It has of course been opposed by the Tory-backed parents' rights group, who have been using some very dirty tactics in their campaigns. One such tactic was to encourage a make-believe campaign of dissent in the schools towards the policy, by telling children and their parents that teachers were on strike when they weren't. The idea was that if enough schools were closed down because of non-attendance, the parents' rights group could say that parents were keeping their children away from school because of the policy.

Concerted

At council level, a concerted campaign of lobbying and letter-writing has taken place to get the issue talked about amongst council members and to find out what they are going to do to implement the policy.

This resulted in discussion of the policy at the Education Committee. Unfortunately, it was only discussed before the full council when five Tory councillors put forward a motion calling for the disbandment of the council's lesbian and gay unit.

Picket

This brought the whole issue to a head. A massive picket of the council meeting on October 20th was organised by "positive images". It was hugely successful. To their credit the council strongly re-affirmed all aspects of their lesbian and gay rights policies including the policy on positive representation of lesbians and gays in schools.

Consultation

Bernie Grant, Davina Cooper and many other councillors spoke strongly in support of lesbian and gay rights. They also said that consultation would now take place between the council and other interested groups on *how* to implement the policy. Everyone in the lesbian and gay community will now be looking to Haringey Council to implement these policies. It is very important that Haringey is upfront about this issue, because it is very much a "test case" for the future development of lesbian and gay rights across the country.

Going strong

Meanwhile "positive images" is going strong and is continuing to leaflet schools about the policy while action is awaited from the council on the issue.

Public meeting

"Positive Images" intends to hold a public meeting soon. For more information about the meeting and the "positive images" campaign, write to: Positive Images, c/o Reading Matters, 10 Lymington Ave, London N22.

Plain speaking at ILEA

"If you want equality, you'll get it. We shoot from the hip."

By Keith Lichman
Delegate from REC to
ILEA Labour Group

The Boys' Own wild west fantasy language would possibly bring a smile to your lips if you read it in the comic section of the *Daily Mail*. You might with some smugness confirm to yourself just how far the supporters of the ruling class have to go before they can be right-on equal opp-ers like us.

One of many

If fact the remark was one of many bawled across the floor of room 142 at County Hall, the bear garden of the Inner London Education Authority's Labour Group, on Monday November 3rd. The progenitor of course was a man — and a weighty individual at that. The target was a woman. For conoisseurs of ILEA's Equal Opportunities Policy in action, there were also:

- "Shut up you bitch";
- Never mind your ILEA Liaison committee, you wanker";
- "Evil woman" (an exclamation);

and, to a woman who was trying to correct a point on which she was being represented:

- "I am making my speech and you can sit down and listen to it. I can block every bloody shout by you — I can shout louder." (And he did).

Degenerate

The meeting was degenerate. Party delegates sent to observe the meeting, notably women, walked out in disgust. The immediate perpetrators were a relatively small number of men but the problem goes much deeper. Leading members of the ILEA are prone to parade their Equal Opportunities Policy as one of their greatest achievements. In reality the policy resides between the covers of glossy PR documents but not in the hearts of most members and certainly not in the operations of the service. But why should they expect it to operate in their institutions when it does not even operate in their own Labour Group?

Ominous

For ILEA's 800,000 employees, the meeting was ominous. Leading members of the Group are under considerable pressure. This probably accounts for the thuggish behaviour, although it doesn't excuse it. The '87/'88 Budget requires something like £150 to £100 million in cuts if its is to be "legal". The out-turn for '86/'87 will be a large deficit. 70% of the organisation's costs are its workers. If there is a pay settlement for teachers and the Government maintains its record of not helping ILEA with finance, then the situation will be even worse than this.

Resignations

At the ILEA Liaison Sub-committee on October 28th, Steve Bundred, the then Chair of the Finance Committee, admitted that the shortfall was so great that jobs would inevitably have to go. On Tuesday November 4th, the day after the squalid Labour Group meeting, both the Chair of Finance and his Vice Chair, Carlie Rossi, had resigned their positions, ostensibly over issues that between them amounted to no more than £2.4 million. New Chairs are to be elected as we go to press.

"Brain death"

One of those unfortunate enough to have to deal with the bureaucracy at County Hall has diagnosed the condition as "brain death". On any issue more serious than guessing the day of the week or the date, no officer is prepared to commit him/herself one way or another. Apart from the internecine warfare taking place between former GLC staff transferred to ILEA and the longstanding ILEA officials, determined to hold on to and expand their empires, an all-pervading, possibly terminal, paralysis has set in. Rumours of total collapse are rife and vital services such as Supplies are barely functioning.

Homework

For those who are interested in the decisions taken at the Group, I will be preparing a more detailed report for the ILEA Liaison Sub-committee and that will no doubt eventually get circulated to Parties. In the meantime, I leave you with a question for homework. Which member of the Labour Group had his room refurbished at a cost of £10,000, with furniture from Heal's and by having the wood-panelled walls tastefully French polished? I'll give you a clue; it wasn't a woman. Why not ask your ILEA members if they know?

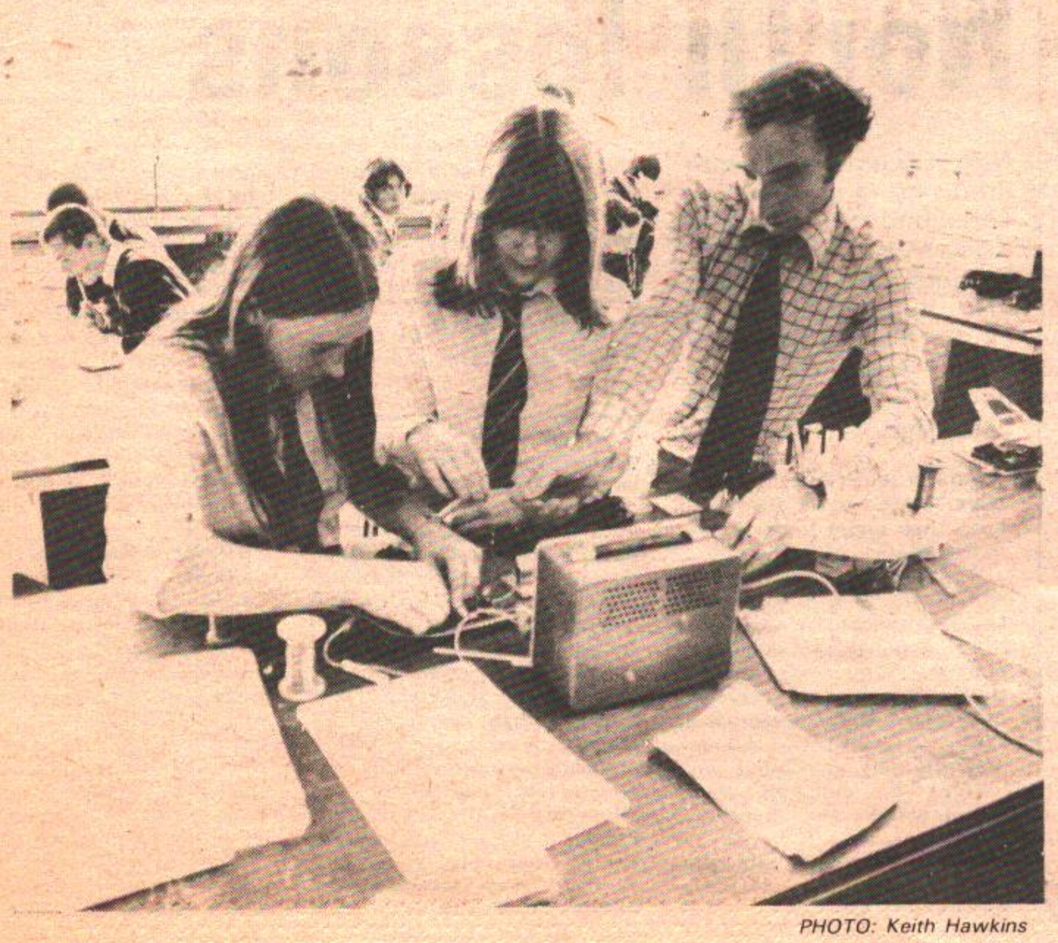


PHOTO: Keith Hawkins

Educati political



From 1979 to 1985, the Tories pursued a consistent education programme: making cuts and restructuring schools to respond to "the world of work" and to the pressure of parents schooled in the Tory virtues of "standards" and "competition".

By Ken Jones
Socialist Teachers
Alliance

Eighteen months of teachers' pay action threw the government onto the defensive. Teachers' pay was seen to be just the tip of a huge problem of educational resources. Parents began to mobilise around the issue of money for education.

Alarm bells rang. Kenneth Baker promised more money for education and more pay for teachers — provided that they accept greater management control, tougher conditions, longer hours and the end of anything resembling free collective bargaining. Baker's extra money won't restore pay levels, nor meet the needs of schools. But they deflect public discontent, and allow the smoother operating of the Tories' educational programme.

This progrmme is as remarkable as it is dangerous. Remarkable because — much more than the Labour Party and the teaching unions — it makes a political issue out of the *content* of education, and in doing so breaks up a forty-one year consensus. Dangerous because it is quite systematic in its intention of dismantling every strong point of opposition to Tory educational values.

In the past, "progressive" or "militant" teachers have been the target of Tory campaigns. Now they are joined by Labour education authorities — Brent, Haringey and the ILEA.

Baker aims to centralise



on is a l issue



PHOTO: Keith Hawkins

trol over what is taught in ools, while at the same time bilising popular pressure inst radical educational ctice. This double strategy is ind the Tory/press offensive inst Labour LEAs. At the y Conference, Baker ounced the setting up of 20 ity Technology Colleges", by private trusts. He also cked LEAs which have eloped anti-racist and anti- st policies.

he press had a field day. nt Council, reported *The il on Sunday*, "has decided appoint 180 Race mmissars for its schools." ringey, wrote the *Daily ress*, is devoted to spreading omosexual propaganda".

Councils with policies that to change education, so that ssists the self-understanding confidence of oppressed ups, are accused of a meful politicising of the ssroom. The Tories have reased parents' representaion school governing bodies cisely in the hope that the ry "consumers" of education will use their new power, keep irresponsible teachers and councillors in check. Squeezed between the pressures of centralism and of parental opinion, the Tories hope LEAs like Brent will abandon their programmes — and other councils will never dare to start.

The left — and the Labour Party nationally — needs to make a political issue out of *what* is taught, *how* it is taught, and *for whom* it is taught. Local initiatives on class, race and gender need to be supported — not greeted with embarrassed silence. If Labour remains silent on these issues, the Tories will set the education agenda much as they please.

These initiatives need preparation. Support for them has to be earned, not commanded. There is an urgent need for a project which unites local Labour Parties, teachers and community organisations in developing policies on what should be taught in schools, and in winning grassroots support for them.

The McGoldrick affair

By Colin Adams
Brent East CLP, Brent NUT (personal capacity)

The Maureen McGoldrick affair has caused much dissension over the past two months.

The Brent Socialist Teachers Alliance and Brent Black Teachers Collective have condemned the campaign mounted by the NUT. It is important to examine the motives behind the dispute, while not judging the innocence or guilt of Ms McGoldrick.

The disciplinary procedures of Brent Council allow for school governors to hear allegations, deliberate and then for an education sub-committee to consider the findings. The sub-committee can hold its own hearing, if they wish. The NUT have challenged the fairness of this procedure, and Brent Council appealed against the High Court ruling supporting the NUT. Whatever the merits of this procedure, several teachers in the past have been dealt with under this sytem, but the union has chosen *this* case to challenge it.

As a trade union member, Ms McGoldrick had every right to legal advice. What has amazed most socialists in the NUT is the vitriolic campaign launched by the Union against Brent Council. Had this campaign been limited to Brent's disciplinary procedures it would have been more understandable. But in September hardly a day went by without a Union officer appearing in the media claiming that Brent's anti-racist policies had created fear amongst teachers. This was siezed upon by the press and TV — the past two months have been open season for Brent (amongst other councils). The union's campaign seriously questions their professional commitment to anti-racism.

Despite the media coverage, NUT officer ruled that a motion condemning the Union's campaign could not be discussed at a union general meeting. Several schools refused to go on strike at the beginning of November, questioning the motives behind the strike.

The Brent Teachers' Association (BTA) officers rely for their electoral support on a machine revolving around headteachers. They leap to the support of heads more rapidly than other members. It is normally very difficult to get approval for strike action in the NUT — in this case officers have been falling over themselves to promote strike action.

In the past, under previous Labour administrations, the BTA officers had a close relationship with Labour Group officers and Education Chairs. In the past few years, as Labour has begun to challenge the stranglehold that the professionals have over schools, the Union has been most vociferous in its criticism. Most of the Union officers have positions near the top of the hierarchy in schools. While claiming to be progressive, they are in fact trying to preserve the status quo.

In the past, Labour allowed the BTA to have a virtual veto over education policy in Brent. It is the loss of this power that the BTA officers resent. Of course, they say they support the Council's anti-racist policies, but oppose the way they are being implemented. They find it very difficult to accept that institutional racism operates in education — many of them are running the institutions, after all.

The effect of the Union campaign has been to undermine the cause of anti-racism in Brent schools and nationally. So what can a Council do when under attack? The obvious answer is to appeal to those parents, teachers and members of the community committed to fighting racism. Unfortunately councillors tend to spend too much time in the committee rooms and on TV, neglecting grassroots activists who want to get involved.

Councillors also have a habit of agreeing policies and doing very little to implement them. Of course, these policies involve far-reaching change and challenge the education power structure.

If the Council becomes more outward-looking and encourages those who support its policies, these past two months may serve as a galvanising force. If it chooses to fight its battles only in the Town Hall, disillusionment will set in.

As for the Union, it has managed to mobilise its more reactionary elements in defence of the status quo. It has also clarified in more people's minds where the vested interests lie in education and whose interests the Union is honest to fight for. If the Union had fought for black teachers in the past as vigorously as this campaign, then the cause of anti-racism would be much further advanced. This has not been a straightforward employer v. union battle — far from it.

Full support to Brent

What the McGoldrick affair points up more than anything is the extent to which racism in Britain is not only alive and well, but rampant throughout the land.

Sadly, at a time when countless thousands of black families are mercilessly driven apart on a daily basis by racist imigration rules — some "suspended" to appalling prison conditions at airports — and thousands of black youth condemned to the hopelessness of the dole queues because of Thacher's economic madness, the nation finds itself obsessed with the McGoldrick affair and Brent's race policies. Why?

Frankly, that is the way most black people see the entire McGoldrick afair. And, unless the Left begins to see it in similar terms, then talk of building alliances with the black struggle for a multi-racial socialist future had better be forgotten.

By a member of Brent NALGO

Let us be clear. Brent, by itself, did not create the McGoldrick affair. The Left has. In all that rhetoric about "stamping out racism" and the need for "firm and positive action" the Left has created conditions in which McGoldrick-type situations are bound to occur.

And that, frankly, is no bad thing — unless, that is, we really don't mean anything should follow in terms of action when we pass those wonderful resolutions calling for "anti-racist action", or make passionate speeches about "rooting out racism" in British institutions. All Brent is trying to do is to put these words into action, recognising that conflict will follow. And for that Brent deserves full support.

So before we run for cover and start talking of vague "class solidarity before race" or become experts after reading the hyped-up versions of the issue given by the right wing press (not noted for its stand on the rights of the labour movement, let alone the rights of black people) let us ask a few questions.

First of all, why is the Stalinist-led Brent Teachers' Association so afraid about the truth about McGoldrick coming out that it is using all the powers of the capitalist courts to prevent this?

It appears that McGoldrick said "no more black teachers" because some governors were pushing her in that direction. So the governors' hearing was biased.

The Council must be able to satisfy itself on this — thus the second disciplinary.

Secondly, should we take a differnt view of suspensions and hearings when allegations of racism are made about headteachers, as opposed to, say, manual workers?

Not so long ago, a manual worker was not only spuspended but sacked by Brent for racism. There was nothing like the current press controversy about that or the public statements and postures, as we have seen with McGoldrick.

Frankly, if I'm right in what I argue that this issue merely shows up British racism at its worst, then, given the need to tackle institutional and personal racism, this clearly will not be the last time a council finds itself in the firing line.

Take away all the clap trap about "race spies" and "classroom commissars" and the red herring about Kuba Assegai, and what we are left with is the central dilemma the Left must face.

Do we really mean to create the conditions in which black people can participate in Society as equals (which will mean taking painful decisions and sticking to them) or do we wish to see race equality created, but nicely and without fuss.

Another way forward for teachers



PHOTO: Keith Hawkins

At the time of going to press, the outcome of the teachers' salary negotiations remains uncertain.

By Martin Allen
Socialist Teachers Alliance

As the leadership of the NUT and the employers struggle to reach agreement, it is becoming more likely that Secretary of State Kenneth Baker will attempt to impose his plans for a teacher's contract and the abolition of teachers' traditional negotiating machinery.

The intervention of Baker, while a direct attack on the collective bargaining rights of trade unions, has been facilitated by the antics of the NUT leadership over recent months. Of a dispute that has gone on for nearly two years. Their decision to call off industrial action and enter the ACAS talks (supported by the anti-trade union Professional Association of Teachers and the Head Teachers' Associations) was a ditching of Union policy.

The talks, endorsed not only by Labur authorities but also by the Labour Party leadership, were established to tie future pay rises to tighter (and worse) conditions of service for teachers, in line with Sir Keith Joseph's plans for a more "adaptable" teacher force. The NUT had opposed any trade off of conditions and had demanded a £1,700 pay rise in 1986 for all teachers.

The recent weeks have seen the NUT Executive under heavy pressure from large sections of the membership not to "sell out" on issues such as "cover" for absent teachers and compulsory attendance at out of hours meetings. The lack of progress at the recent Nottingham talks was a cnsequence of this. Yet the NUT leadership is arguing that a package with the employers is the only alternative to Baker.

There is another way forward. In Scotland the EIS have rejected the attempts to worsen their conditions of service outlined in the Main Report and are likely to be resuming strike action. South of the border, the Socialist Teachers Alliance will be calling for the resumption of industrial action around a flat rate pay claim and for unity with the EIS and the other TUC affiliated teacher organisation, the NAS/UWT whose leadership — though largely for opportunist reasons — opposed the Nottingham talks.

The success of any campaign depends on the support teachers are able to win from other trade unions and also from Labour Party activists.

Local CLPs and *Briefing* groups should invite NUT/STA speakers and demand that the next Labour government throws out any Tory legislation on teacher contracts.

Building Briefing

Briefing: fortnightly in the New Year

Thanks to the support of all our sellers and readers, the last National Steering Committee was able to agree that Briefing should go fortnightly in the New Year.

There will be a further issue of the paper in December — a week earlier than usual — and then, after a Xmas break, we'll start our new schedule.

Our supporters club now stands at over 200 standing orders coming in each week — watch this space in the next issue, for details of the first winners in our weekly prize draw!

Of course, if you haven't sent in a standing order form yet, your name won't be amongst the winners! So clip the coupon now, and post it in.

Taking the decision to go fortnightly doesn't mean Briefing supporters can rest on their laurels, though. We still need more standing orders, more orders to sell the paper, and more financial support. Going fortnightly will need increasing resources.

So in the next few weeks, please redouble your efforts to build the campaign to launch the fortnightly on a sound financial footing. With an election now so much nearer, the political need for a fortnightly paper of the left, uniting workers, Labour Party activists and activists campaigning against special oppression and imperialism is even greater.

Remember: together we can turn the tide! — Watch this space.

We welcome the campaign to launch Labour Briefing as a fortnightly paper to organise theleft in the fight for socialist policies in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the campaigns of the oppressed:
Kate Adams, Leabridge branch LP
Steve Barton, Brent East CLP
Kevin Carey, Victoria branch LP
Iain Coleman, Hammersmith & Fulham Labour Group
Shaun Cohen, Leeds NE CLP
Lesley Courcouf, Secretary, Hackney LGC
Cllr Steve Eling, Warley East CLP
Lyn Gregory, Warley East CLP
Tim Gregory, Political Education Officer, Brigg & Cleethorpes CLP
Chloe Hood, Worley East CLP
Grant Keir, Hackney North CLP
John Lawson, Glasgow
Keith Lichman
Terry Mcalister, Hackney councillor
N. Martin, Agent, Hackney North CLP
Brian Murch, AUEW, Holloway
Chris Murray, EETPU LSE
Alan Porter, Tower Hamlets councillor
Sally Powell, Hammersmith & Fulham Labour Group
John Robinson, Erdington CLP
Maire O'Shea, Victim of PTA, Irish in Britain Representation Group, Sparkbrook CLP
Ian Sewell, Spelthorne CLP
Alun Severn, Abbey branch LP
Chris Severn, Abbey branch LP
Malcolm Speake, Ladywood CLP
Cyril Spector, Erdington CLP
Helen Shaw
H. Stock
Tim Staten, Tower Hamlets councillor
Rod Sweeney, Coventry SW CLP
Cllr Brenda Taylor, Warley East CLP
Godrey Webster, Vice chair, Abbey LP
Brian Woodbridge, UCATT
Abra Quin, Sussex University Labour Students
Ros Young, Islington South CLP

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Left group launched in Lewisham

Briefing **is pleased to report the setting up of Lewisham Left Forum, launched at a meeting of 40 people at the end of October.**

Nine branches were represented, along with members of the Councillors' Left Caucus and the Prospective parliamentary Candidate for East Lewisham.

The group aims to organise the left in the Labour Party in Lewisham at a rank and file level. We will be holding a fringe meting on the witch-hunt at the Local Government Conference and producing a newsletter to give left wing coverage of local issues.

Above all, the comradely debate at the opening meeting bodes well for a non-sectarian, welcoming organisation that all comrades on the left will feel has a valuable role to play.

The meeting heard from workers under threat at the London Strategic Policy Unit and voted to lobby Lewisham Council and call for the union's full demands to be met.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday November 26th at 8pm at Deptford Town Hall in New Cross Road, with a discussion on Ireland.

Letter

Tokenism at trade union colleges

Dear Briefing.
The recent fuss about David Selbourne at Ruskin College raises general questions about the role of so-called trade union colleges. Obviously I have no sympathy for him (I am more worried about David Kitson) but I write to highlight the hypocrisies of *Coleg Harlech.*

It is largely funded by the Welsh Office and the DES. Various unions provide scholarships — including my own — but they have no say in how the College is run. I received a nasty shock on my first day when they gave me the remnants of my grant with a Barclay's cheque!

However, it is the lack of a workable Equal Opportunities policy which really worries me. The college has a bi-lingual policy but the handful of Welsh speakers here won't translate for the union.

Our main concern is the lack of creches — the subject of our motion to NUS Conference this year. Whoever heard of an Adult Education College without creche facilities?

We have managed to organise one, but the SU is apparently hard-pushed to spare the necessary £200 a term. If that runs out, we will try and run it with volunteers. There's no way we can persuade the management to help us.

At the SU AGM I argued unsuccessfully that the creche was an absolute necessity and that we should allocate unlimited resources. We are trying to work something out with the village playgroup (and posssibly Gwynedd County Council) but the local community has been unco-operative.

We are asking NUS to take equal opportunities seriously. We would like them to campaign for state-funded creches in all colleges. But you would expect better in a TUC-supported college. Equal opportunities should be a practical necessity, not a token policy.

Andy Gibbons,
Coleg Harlech SU Chairperson

Obituaries

Inspired by their lives

Carlton ward of Brent East Labour Party suffered two tragic blows with the sudden and early deaths of its Secretary, Ray Bladen, on October 21st and its Treasurer, Rosemary Deane, on October 30th. Both comrades were supporters of *Briefing.*

Ray was 35. He died of pneumonia in St Mary's hospital, Paddington. Despite only joining the Party in 1983 he had served as a GMC, EC and LGC delegate and as ward treasurer last year and secretary this.

Ray naturally inclined towards the hard left in the Party. His incisiveness led him to sniff out hypocrisy and double standards very quickly and he was intensely suspicious of all politicians.

Rose was 30. She died of a brain haemorrhage in the Royal Free Hospital. She had been active in Brent for some years, both in the Labour Party and on the issue of single homelessness. She was one of the first on the hard left in Brent East to see through Ken Livingstone's sham leftism in his campaign to become PPC. She campaigned without respite for the hunger strikers and was one of the first to raise the issue of strip searching.

Rose was a Republican, socialist, and a feminist, who fought hard in the oppressor nation for the freeedom of her country, her class and her sex.

A dear friend and comrade, Jan Rebane, died suddenly of natural causes on Sunday November 12th.

Jan was well loved and known throughout the labour and trade union movement, not only in Lambeth where he worked and Lewisham where he lived but also wherever else he went across the country.

Without Jan's efforts, there would not have been a Trade Union Resource Centre nor an Unemployed Centre in Lambeth as he was instrumental in the setting up of both.

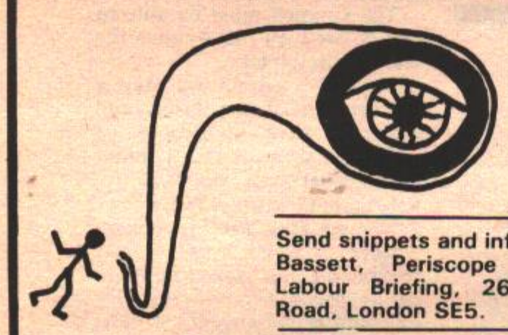
This double tragedy has stunned all who knew them. Let us all take inspiration from the way they lived their lives. We ask other comrades to honour their memories by building a socialist movement.

Brent East Women's Section have set up a fund for the Campaign Against Strip Searching in memory of Rose. Donations should be sent to Jackie Brown, 76a Hanover Road, London NW10.

His death is not only a great personal loss to many of us but also a severe blow to the movement.

A memorial fund is being set up and donations are to be sent to: Jan Rebane Memorial Fund, c/o Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, Unit 117, Bon Marche Building, 444 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EJ, telephone 274 4000 x 372.

Periscope



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

Share cropping

Gas consumers with cash to spare get the chance to buy shares in British Gas.

Virgin record-buyers (and buyers of Virgin records) are offered a grinning slice of greasy Richard Branson.

Now hot-air consumers get their chance — with the flotation of shares in *New Socialist*, the tediously trendy mag for armchair socialists.

Of course the union bureaucracies are expected to pick up block votes to help keep out the left and ensure space for John Edmonds — by spending more of our subs buying shares.

They want all the hot air in *New Socialist* to be passed by the management.

Making tracks for Whitehall

No — it wasn't Warsaw Pact manoeuvres in East Anglia!

The noises you heard would have been the tank-brigade Stalinist leadership of TASS arriving in Bishop's Stortford for a cosy get-together with the ASTMS NEC as part of their merger talks.

The TASS forces were under orders to leave behind their uniforms and wear Jaruzelski-style civvy suits and ties for the weekend session at the ASTMS Whitehall College. The lone woman on the TASS NEC was told to wear a frock. (She refused).

TASS hatchet men, ice picks in vest pockets, celebrated the 1956 Hungarian invasion by airing their views on how ASTMS should deal with its hard left "Trots".

Ken "Gorbachov" Gill coolly informed the ASTMS NEC that the entire TASS leadership is controlled from top to bottom by a "Broad Left".

The rightward-moving Clive Jenkins (who until recently hysterically attacked "Trots", "Broad Lefts" and "Votes against" as a simple concerted challenge to his personal rule) simply smiled benignly. No doubt he was mentally totting up the extra subs to flow from a merger, and was not displeased at the arrival of Stalinist reinforcements to help prop up ASTMS' rather tired bureaucracy.

Sore points — such as ASTMS scabbing on TASS members in the Hangers Strike, and the TASS victimisation of anti-apartheid veteran David Kitson — were skilfully avoided.

But there is hot debate on the name of the prospective merged union. The front runner appears to be the Stalinist Health, Insurance and Technical Staffs.

Today — or was it not today?

Who was further to the left — Derek Jameson or Peregrine Worsthorne? Crowds of Yuppies at the *Marxism Today* "Left for Dead" jamboree appeared to give barely critical support to Royalist "man of the people" Jameson as a progressive section of the bourgeois media.

Perhaps the Communist Party should draw the logical conclusion, drop the divisive (and misleading) word "Marxism" from the magazine's title, and think about a launching middle-brow daily paper in full colour?

Out of this world

If ever a silk purse was made by the press out of a sow's ear, it was the temporary creation of Alastair Graham — lifelong nonentity and one-time CPSA General Secretary — as an authoritative voice of the trade unions.

Promoted as the voice of the "new realism", Graham won the hearts of the media chiefs for his tireless opposition to class struggle and to *Militant*, his empty gestures over GCHQ and his support for the TUC sabotage of the Warrington and miners' struggles.

Now he struts around his padded cell as the proud but boring recipient of a £50,000 salary as boss of the little-known "Industrial Society". His job is devising silly ideas to popularise capitalist exploitation.

Peering down on the world from the serene heights of his wallet, Graham has announced that the best solution to unemployment would be for workers to take a wage cut — so the bosses could afford to hire more workers. (Ideally of course everybody would work for nothing — then everyone could have a job — or two, or even three!)

Graham also wants to persuade us of **"the crucial use to which profit can be used to create increased market share"** (sic — as quoted in the *Guardian*).

The fact that Graham's own salary could provide a living for six or seven nurses, teachers or other useful human beings seems to have escaped him — as has all contact with material reality.

As he stares wildly and babbles on, you realise looking into his eyes that through the lights may be on, there is no one at home.

Moles wreck COHSE plan

COHSE leaders are expected to launch a major inquiry into the leaking of leaflets advertising their national demonstration against NHS cuts on November 10th.

Rigid security measures had been taken to ensure that General Secretary David Williams would have the 3 mile route through London largely to himself.

But infiltrators or irresponsible elements allowed word of the event to get out, and 300-400 determined marchers (a good 30% of them from Yorkshire) turned out to witness a classic demonstration of half-cock organisation fouling up what had been a strong initiative by COHSE members at the Maudsely Hospital.

Leaflets were as rare as a belly-laugh in a crematorium, while the handful of posters are reportedly fetching Rembrandt-style prices at Sotheby's.

"The Archer"

(An everyday story of millionaire philanthropists)
Episode 16

"Hallo... I've never met you, of course. It must be terrible for you. I know — why don't I give you £2,000 to get away for a short holiday? Yes, I'll send it down to you at Victoria Station. Thank goodness that's all sorted out..."

(Fade to signature tune)

The empty place

As he departs to collaborate with Cecil Parkinson on the definitive Tory sex education textbook for ILEA schoolkids, Jeffrey Archer leaves Thatcher with a problem of succession.

Harvey Proctor is too "tied up" with other things, and is apparently dead beat at the end of the week.

Bill Wyman is too old.

It could wind up a flip of the coin between Edwina Currie and the versatile but dependable Dusty Bin.

Debate

The Hindawi affair: How should *socialists* see it?

By Phil Hearse

The severing of diplomatic relations between Britain and Syria was the dramatic culmination of the El Al bomb plot affair.

The prosecution claim during the Hindawi trial was that Hindawi had been in the pay of the Syrians, and that the bomb, carried by Hindawi's unwitting girlfriend, had been provided by the Syrian embassy. The guilty verdict gave Thatcher the opportunity she wanted to break off relations with Syria, with the gleeful support of the Reagan administration.

Legitimises

The whole business fitted in perfectly with the Reaganite political offensive which posits terrorism as the major enemy of the West, and which legitimises the US cold war posture. Thatcher has toddled along behind this political offensive, oblivious to the fact that its main intention is to bring Europe to heel behind US leadership.

The reluctance of the EEC to fall in behind the British position on Syria was symptomatic of West European refusal, at least for the time being, to have its own positions in the Middle East further compromised.

Thatcher

For Thatcher taking a tough stand against "terrorism" serves any number of useful political objectives, reaffirming the image built up during the Malvinas war, and cranking up reactionary sentiments at home. The declaration of a 200-mile fishing cordon around the Malvinas serves much the same purpose, with the added bonus that there might be some nasty little clashes in time for the election.

It might be tempting, therefore, to see Hindawi as a victim of crude political calculation, with the British courts helping Thatcher create a new "terrorism" scare. But things are rather more complicated than that.

Long shot

Any "frame up" thesis is frankly a long shot in this particular case. Hindawi's defence was exceedingly weak, consisting of the assertion that he thought he was smuggling drugs, not planting a bomb.

Even if the real facts are at this stage unknown, it would be entirely characteristic of the very nasty Syrian security service to utilise a Palestinian like Hindawi to carry out its dirty work.

Weakness

Terrorist actions, like random bombings, air hijackings, and attacks on Jewish restaurants and synagogues, are a symptom of the weakness of the Palestinian movement. Even when carried out by sincere Palestinian militants, driven to desperation by the blows which the Palestinian population has suffered at the hands of Israel, Shi'ite fundamentalists, and others, many of these actions cannot possibly be supported from either a political or *moral* point of view.

Reactionary

Bombing a synagogue in Istanbul is simply a reactionary act, based on a confusion between Zionism, the zionist state, and the Jewish people. Apart from being an attack on innocents, such activity only strengthens the Zionist equation between anti-Zionism and anti-semitism. In the Hindawi case, how can it possibly be claimed that anyone travelling to Israel on an El Al plane is a legitimate target for assassination? That is to adopt the morality of the oppressors of the Palestinians.

To state these facts bluntly is not at all to excuse the hypocrisy of Thatcher and Reagan who keep quiet about the hundreds of deaths among the Palestinians over the past five years at the hands of the Israelis, and the Shi'ite movement Amal in Lebanon, which is keeping the refugee camps under constant seige. But random terrorist attacks are no solution to the problems of the Palestinian people, and in certain cases even set their struggle back.

Secrecy

Another problem with terrorist tactics is that by their very nature they require utter secrecy. They are carried out by groups not under any kind of democratic control. This renders them wide open to manipulation and provocation by state security agencies.

The Abu Nidal group, responsible for many terrorist actions, is based in Damascus, and kept under tight Syrian control.

Terrorist groups, especially those under the control of reactionary governments, very easily degenerate from having clear political-military objectives, to simply trying to carry off "successful" operations — generally measured by the degree of international publicity, and not by whether they actually succeed in promoting the struggle of the oppressed.

Every day

Every day the Palestinian camps in Lebanon are under attack from Amal, the Shi'ite-led movement. And who is behind these attacks? None other than Assad, the Syrian leader, the main political and financial backer of Amal. Assad does not want a strong independent Palestinian movement. On the contrary, he sees it as a threat to his own control of Lebanon. It is a sad commentary on the fate of the Palestinian resistance that desperate militants now align themselves with a mortal enemy like Assad.

Problem

Terrorist actions pose a particular problem for socialists in the imperialist countries. They are magnified out of all proportion by the imperialist politicians for their own ends. Moreover, socialists have generally supported — and rightly so — armed struggle by oppressed peoples against imperialism. But we have to face the fact that many terrorist groups, from the Red Army faction and its successors in Germany, to the Red Brigades in Italy to the Palestinian splinter groups, have nothing whatever to do with popular armed struggle, which requires mass mobilisation.

Abu Nidal

Abu Nidal has little in common with the original fedayeen fighters or the active service units of the Irish Republican movement. If that is true for small terrorist formations, it is doubly true for the ruthless state security agencies of countries like Syria and Libya.

Our enemy's enemy is not always our friend. We should be wary about giving any credence or support to reactionary terrorist activities, just because their perpetrators carry them out in the name of "anti-imperialism".

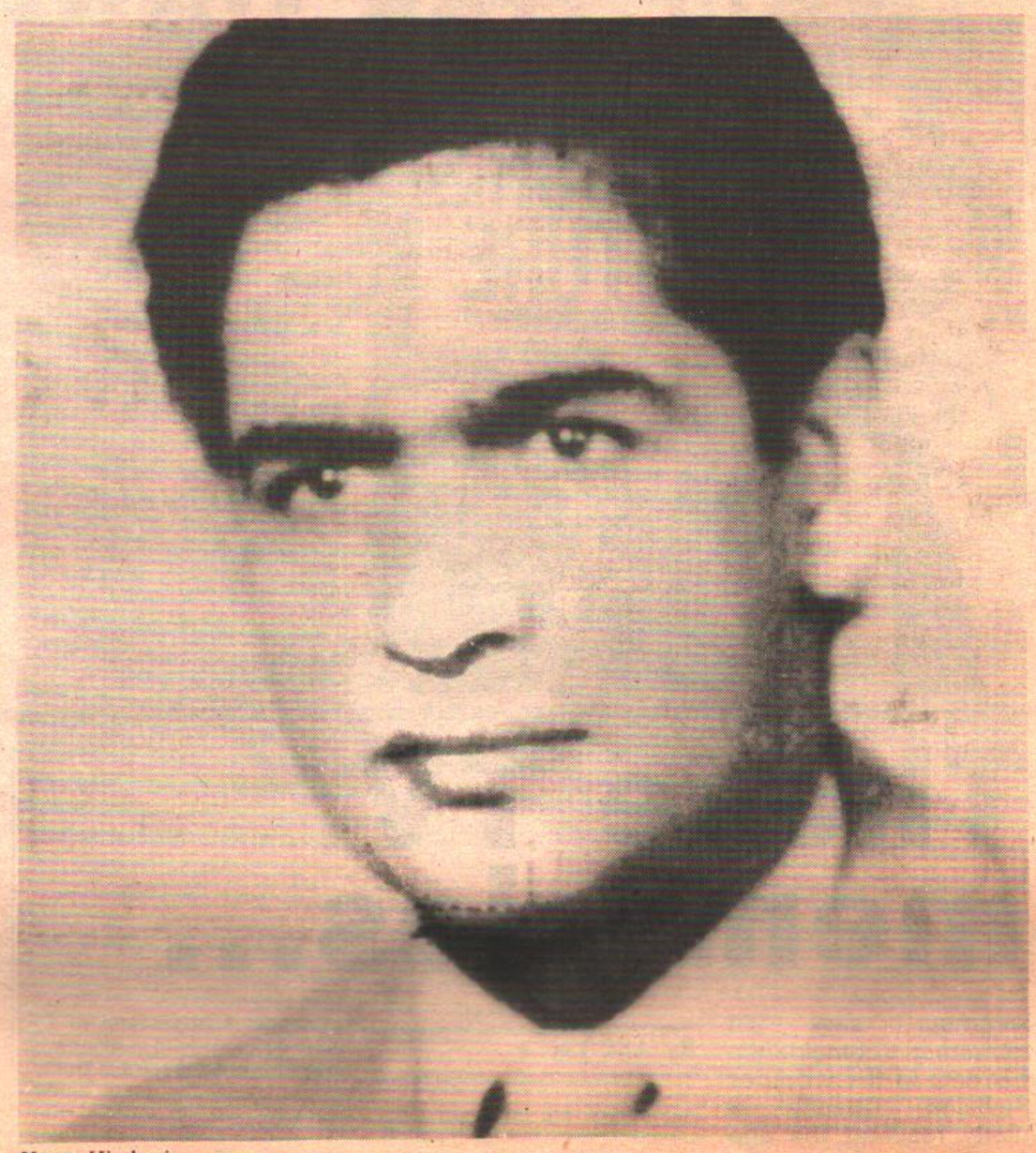


PHOTO: Labour Party Photo Library)

Hezar Hindawi

A regular column from **Socialist Society**

Who's against terrorism?

A visitor from Mars listening to the current pronouncements of Western leaders might naively suppose that they were all pacifists.

President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher have declared "war" on terrorism, and the airwaves are loud with righteous denunciations of the use of violence for political ends.

All this is, of course, sheer hypocrisy. There are no pacifists among the current crop of world leaders (have there ever been?). All of them without exception are perfectly prepared to use violence, or support its use, when they think it necessary. The woman who gave the order to sink the Belgrano, and the man whose planes were bombing Tripoli only six months ago, are in a poor position from which to lecture the rest of the world on the wickedness of violence.

This obvious point needs to be made, over and over again, because one of the purposes of the Reagan-Thatcher propaganda campaign against "terrorism" is to stifle rational discussion about political violence, and silence all those who might dare to dissent from their position and their policies. Those who refuse to join in this crusade against the "men of violence" are smeared with being their accomplices.

We socialists must not be cowed or shamed into silence on this subject. What is at issue, if we are not pacifists, is not whether we are for or against violence, or even terrorism, but under what circumstances and for what reasons we might, however reluctantly, be prepared to support it.

It is clear tht neither Reagan nor Thatcher have renounced violence. But what about terrorism? Although people seldom stop to define it, terrorism is usually used to refer to two rather different kinds of

By Anthony Arblaster

killing, or threatened killing. On the one hand, there are acts of political assassination, or attempts at it — like the Brighton bombing.

On the other, there are the random killings of the relatively innocent, which can result from a hi-jacking or a bomb placed in a pub, theatre or cafe.

Of the two it is the random killings which are the more dreadful. They shock and frighten people, quite rightly, far more than attempts at political assassination. The random killing of ordinary civilians is surely very hard to justify, however just the cause for which it is done.

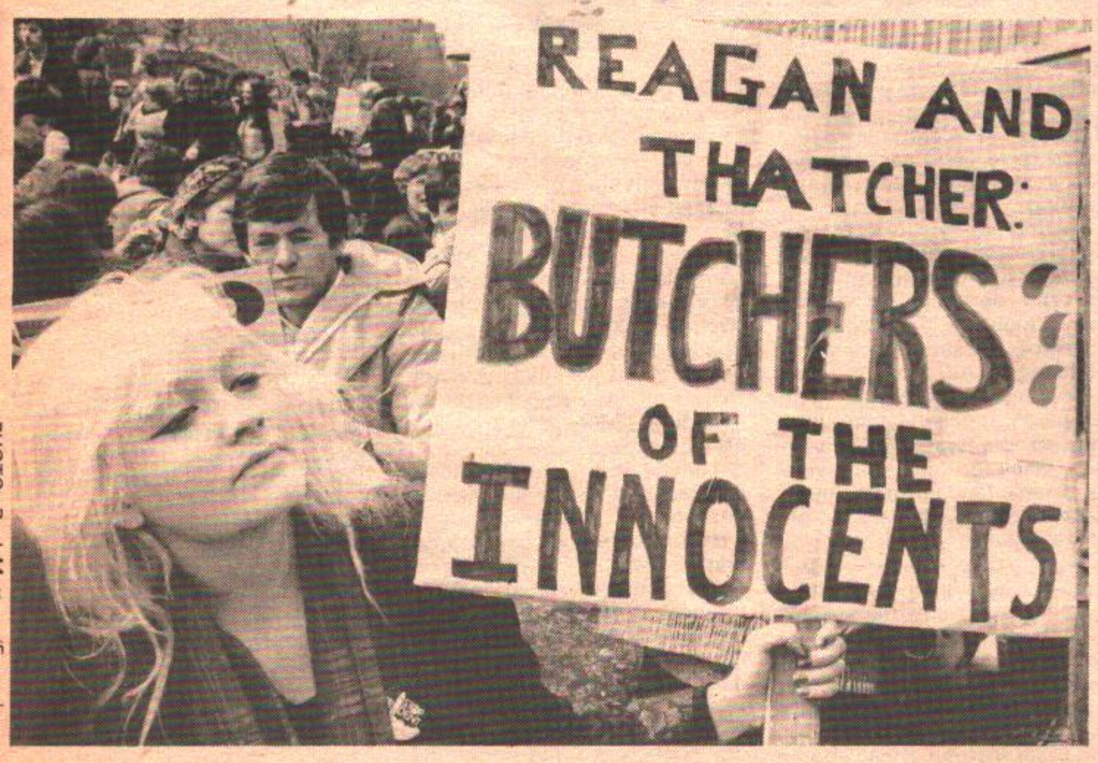
But random killing was exactly what was involved in the American raids on Libya last April; and random killing is exactly what is involved in the Contras' attacks on villages, schools and hospitals in rural Nicaragua. For all this random killing Reagan is directly responsible, and in the Libyan case Mrs Thatcher was his enthusiastic accomplice. What is the moral difference between dropping a bomb and planting a bomb — if both kill innocent civilians?

There is none. The one difference might be that the one is state-authorised violence, which is supposed to be legitimate, while the other is, as it were, private violence, which is not.

But Thatcher and Reagan have deprived themselves of that argument, since they are campaigning against what they call "state-sponsored terrorism". The activity of the Contras is also state-sponsored terrorism, and the sponsoring state is the USA. Other states that sponsor, or organise, terrorism include South Africa, Chile and Israel; but Reagan has no plans, so far as I know, to bomb Pretoria, Santiago or Tel Aviv.

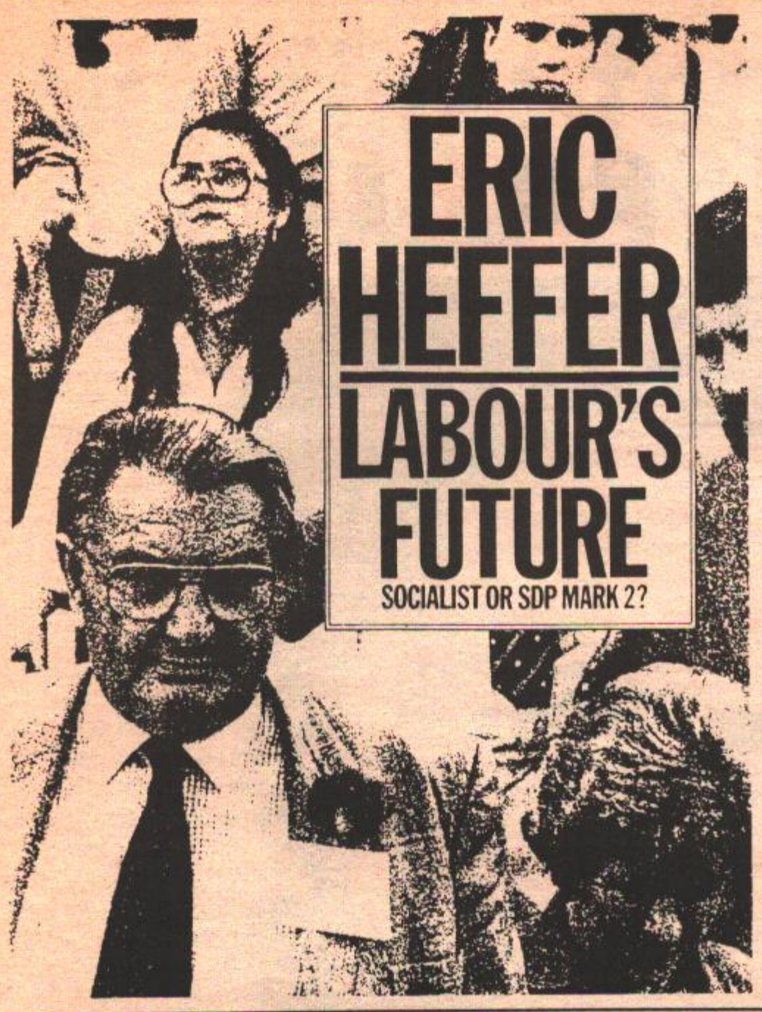
Like the denunciations of violence, then, the Western campaign against "Terrorism" is a dishonest propaganda exercise, based on hypocrisy and double standards. What Reagan and his international supporters are trying to do is to stamp out, or at least punish, one particular strand of political violence: Palestinian and Arab terrorism directed against Israel and the West. To Right wing terrorism in Central America and elsewhere they either give active support or at least turn a blind eye.

It is possible that bombing Tripoli, or breaking off relations with Syria, may have some marginal effect on the level of violence in Europe and the Middle East. But the root cause of Arab terrorism is, of course, the wholly unresolved question of Palestine and the Palestinians. Until America and the West address themselves to that question, and put serious pressure on Israel to come to terms with the Palestinians, there is little prospect of an end to this particular current of terrorism.



Grosvenor Square: demonstration against US bombing

Reviews



Why the left must fight Kinnock

BRYN GRIFFITHS of *Brighton Labour Briefing* reviews ERIC HEFFER'S book *Labour's Future — Socialist or SDP Mark 2?* (Verso, £4.95).

The title of Eric Heffer's new book poses the central question facing the Labour Party.

Unfortunately, its publication coincided with Eric's removal from the National Executive Committee — surely another step away from socialism and towards an "SDP Mark 2"! The main reason for Eric's removal was that as Merseyside MP he supported the struggle of Liverpool Councillors (to whom the book is dedicated) and was vocal in his opposition to the expulsions of socialists.

Labour's Future outlines how a Labour left, that grew in strength after the disappointments of the 1974/79 Labour government lost its momentum and allowed Neil Kinnock to emerge as an autocratic leader. The book is made all the more readable by its autobiographical style. It is the testimony of a committed socialist's struggle to extend the Left's influence within the Party.

For new or younger Party members (or for ex-Lefts with short memories) the book usefully recounts the key events in Labour's recent past. It recalls the dismal experiences of the last Labour government which culminated in defeat by Thatcherism and how the Left then began the process of repairing the damage.

In one of the most illuminating sections of the book, Eric outlines how the Right counter-attacked the left by reducing the role of the Party Conference and the National Executive Committee. Policy making was wrested from Conference and the NEC and power was concentrated in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

While the Party as a whole gave consistent support to the miners, the Parliamentary leadership was "...lukewarm, and often privately hostile," according to Eric, "to Arthur Scargill, the NUM Executive, and even the strike itself."

Refreshingly, Eric places great emphasis on socialist internationalism. A strength of his politics is his combination of anti-imperialist opposition to NATO with an uncompromising critique of Stalinism. His activity in the East European Solidarity Campaign has helped keep the cause of workers in the Stalinist states on the labour movement agenda.

The book concludes with chapters on "Socialism and the State" and "Democratic Socialism and Revolutionary Reformism". I disagreed with some of the political points advanced in this section. In a review as brief as this, it would not be possible to do justice to Eric's position. Perhaps it would be a good idea to start a debate with Eric on these points.

Nonetheless, I strongly recommend this excellent and readable book.

Those TV memories...

November saw an interesting coincidence of events in the world of television. Channel 4 quietly reached the age of four. BBC TV celebrated its fiftieth aniversary with a week-long wallow in memorable moments. And the Conservative Party Central Office launched its attack on the BBC, charging it with "political bias" against the Tory Party and "our allies" the USA.

By Alix Lee

The cumulative effect of all this may be to rekindle fondness for the broadcasting services we have all known and loved and moaned about for so long. In the face of such manifestly manic vitriol, the status quo can seem like a radical alternative worth fighting to preserve.

The BBC's birthday beano proved how large a role television has played in the formation of popular, collective and personal memories. The "festival of remembrance" was kicked off by "That's TV Entertainment", a 3-hour long montage of clips from old programmes, interspersed with recollections from people involved in making them, and celebrities recollecting their early hours watching the box.

To Norman Tebbit, the "Golden Days" are probably those of 1926 when, during the General Strike, pressure was exerted over the BBC to ensure that only the government's point of view was transmitted in news broadcasts, and the voices of opposition were effectively stifled. As everyone knows, injunctions are still regularly served on broadcasting organisations to prevent the transmission of "politically sensitive" material, most notably and frequently concerning Northern Ireland.

In this recent affair, Tebbit seems to have been taken over by the spirit of his "Spitting Image" facsimile, giving his claims such a ring of rabid vitriol that he may have swept the ground from under himself.

Tebbit's notion of "impartiality" starts and ends with loyalty to government policy. This is, in many ways, just an extension of the way that "balance" and "impartiality" are generally applied by broadcasting institutions, i.e. within the context of mainstream parliamentary politics, which leaves countless groups and oppositional ideologies out of the equation.

Channel 4, the bearer of so many different (and conflicting) hopes for change on this front, had undoubtedly made some headway in increasing the alternatives available on British television. But anyone who saw Jeremy Isaacs, the Channel's Controller, on the anniversary edition of "Right to Reply" must wonder how far we've got and how much further we'll be able to go.

In the face of some rather mild criticism from viewers in the Videobox and the RTR studio, Isaacs blustered, hectored, and shouted them down, virtually foaming at the mouth with smug assertions of self-satisfaction and superiority. I was half expecting some magnificent symbol of megalomania to burst out of the top of his head, or for him to stand over his critics waving a whip and demanding penance for their affrontery, but it was not to be. "Spitting Image" has a lot to answer for.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Provos, Protestants, and working class politics

THE DEBATE ON IRELAND

A unique confrontation between views on the left. What sort of united Ireland could win the support of Protestant workers? What way to working class unity?

Workers' Liberty no. 5 is available, price £1 plus 18p postage, from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

What's it all about, Norman?

After a summer of public rows about the BBC's alleged left wing bias, the Westminster season opened with a bang.

By Tom O'Malley Information Officer, Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

The BBC dropped its defence of the Panorama libel case amidst allegations that witnesses had been pressured into withdrawing their evidence. The dust had hardly settled when Norman Tebbit, with Cabinet approval, issued his report alleging anti-government and anti-American bias in BBC TV coverage of the Libyan bombings.

Alistair Milne, the BBC's Director General — a man not known for radicalism — declared that "the Conservative Party is attempting to intimidate the BBC."

The broadcasting unions, Labour, Liberal and SDP MPs, even the right wing Conservative Party backbench Home Affairs Committee, have in one way or another condemned Tebbit's overt attempt to bludgeon the BBC.

But it would be wrong to see the anti-BBC campaign as just another "on yer bike" blunder by Norman. Recent events are best understood as part of a move to soften up public opinion and win wider support within the Tory Party for the idea that the BBC should be dismantled and privatised.

The Peacock Report — published in July — was expected to provide an alibi for introducing advertising on the BBC, but bowed to the overwhelming weight of evidence and opposed the idea. The rest of its recommendations, however, are designed to promote a privatised broadcasting system: selling of BBC Radios 1 and 2, auctioning ITV franchises, increasing the amount of independent productions bought by the corporation to 40% of output, etc.

A re-elected Tory administration would almost certainly move swiftly to introduce the legislation necessary to privatise the BBC and lift public controls over commercial broadcasting.

But the Peacock exercise revealed widespread public support for the BBC, as well as strong sympathy for the Corporation within the Tory Party itself. Hence the need to undermine confidence in the BBC. The furore over *The Monocled Mutineer*, the BBC's coverage of the struggle against apartheid, the appointment of Duke Hussey (a director of Murdoch's *Times*) as Chair of the Board of Governors, the row over *Casualty*, and recently the Panorama and Libyan affairs are all designed to have the cumulative effect of damaging the BBC's reputation.

These interventions have managed to shift the debate about broadcasting onto Tebbit's chosen ground. How can we assert that the BBC is fundamentally unsympathetic to progressive ideas and practices (which it is) when precisely those elements within the system which are worth defending — strong trade unions, the practice of providing a wider range of views than exist in Fleet Street — are under attack?

Nonetheless, it is important to respond to this attack by supporting the broadcasting unions, NUJ, BETA and ACTT, in their defence of workers within broadcasting. John Foster, Broadcasting Organiser of the NUJ, has called for the election of the Board of Governors and the publication of the minutes of their meetings. The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, in its *Media Manifesto**, is attempting to develop an alternative strategy for media reform, which would build public accountability, industrial democracy, and equal opportunities into a restructured broadcasting system.

By developing ideas for media reform which can win widespread support, we can put Tebbit's plan for our broadcasting future into the dustbin of history! Watch this space!

Copies of the **Media Manifesto can be obtained free of charge from the CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. 01-437 2795.*

AIDS: no to compulsory testing

There are now an estimated 50,000 people with the AIDS virus in Britain, and if nothing is done there are likely to be one million by 1990. At least 15% of people with the virus contract AIDS. A Cabinet committee has been established as the Tories now realise that AIDS is going to start killing a lot of people outside the "marginal" groups like gay men.

By Jamie Gough

For the last five years there have been no new funds to the NHS for the extra burden involved. Nor has proper information to all — the one and only thing that can stop the spread of the H IV virus.

A recent survey showed that 50% of people think the virus can be transmitted from drinking from the same cup as someone with the virus. As a result of this ignorance, large majorities are in favour of compulsory antibody testing of the whole population and of visitors to the country. 38% are even in favour of compulsory isolation of people who have the antibody — concentration camps of hundreds of thousands of people.

Compulsory testing of **any** groups of people is a **useless measure**. There is at present no cure for the virus or for AIDS. **It is also a gross attack on civil liberties, and one which inevitably leads to discrimination.** The test will be used to discriminate against the groups which are presently "high risk". Already some employers and nearly all insurance companies have started to require the antibody test from men known to be gay. It will be used to discriminate against people who are antibody positive.

Under the LaRouche referendum proposition recently defeated in California, they would have been sacked from jobs in hospitals, schools and catering.

Testing of visitors or immigrants to Britain would pander to chauvinism and racism — particularly if visitors from "high risk" Africa were targetted. A labour movement response to AIDS needs to be thoroughly anti-racist. The campaign against LaRouche showed the way, by rallying with black groups who were opposing a racist proposition to make English California's "official language".

The government will probably not introduce large scale testing if only because of its high cost. But as a populist electoral move it may well be tempted to test particular groups of workers or "high risk" groups, or into promoting voluntary testing. These should be absolutely oposed.

The government should bring in proper health and safety measures for workers who are at risk — measures which should **anyway** exist to guard against infection from diseases like hepatitis. It should fund a massive TV advertising campaign for safe sex for all. This needs to be absolutely explicit if it is to work — no concessions to bourgeois morality! It should provide extra money to the NHS, including funds for issuing condoms free.

The defeat of the LaRouche propositions shows that a determined campaign can overcome popular ignorance and defend elementary civil rights. But the lesbian and gay movement cannot fight alone. It is time that the whole labour movement made its voice heard on this issue.

AIDS — A Trade Union Issue pack available free from ATUI, 15 Highstone Mansions, 84 Camden Road, London NW1.

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

Anglo-Irish agreement

One year on

When Margaret Thatcher signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, she said that she did so "as a Unionist and a Loyalist." Tom King declared shortly afterwards that the Agreement meant there would never be a united Ireland. But Labour spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Stuart Bell, wrote in *Labour Weekly* that it was "a bridge to Irish unity". Not surprisingly, many Labour activists were confused.

The Labour Committee on Ireland organised a major rally against the Agreemeent. We said it was yet another attempt to achieve an internal settlement *within* the Six Counties, and that its real purpose was to undermine support for Sinn Fein. The Labour leadership denounced us when we suggested that the Agreement was, in fact, incompatible with Labour's policy of campaigning for Irish unity.

In a recent interview, Garret Fitzgerald gave his version of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on the occasion of its first birthday:

"We have no desire to be involved in the process of Northern Ireland any more than is necessary to tackle the problem of the IRA and eliminate it... I would be very happy indeed if the parties could sit down (...) and arrive at agreement on devolution that would enable us to withdraw from all the devolved areas and leave it to the people of Northern Ireland to sort out their own affairs."

Talking to the Unionist Assembly in January, Stuart Bell said that Labour saw the Agreement not as a step towards unity, but as a step towards devolved government in the Six Counties. If the Unionists accepted it, and set up a devolved power-sharing assembly, they could get Dublin off their backs alltogether.

Meanwhile, for the nationalist working-class communities of the North, life has become worse over the past year. The Agreement has done nothing to end strip searching, repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, abolish the Ulster Defence Regiment, reform the RUC, end the Diplock Courts, the shoot-to-kill policy, and supergrasses.

The paid informer system is now collapsing because of its own weaknesses, not because of the Agreement. The level of sectarian violence against Catholics by Loyalists is now at its highest since the early '70s — as a direct result of the Anglo-Irish deal. Catholics are being petrol bombed, intimidated out of their homes, and killed at random as the Loyalists search desperately for ways of reasserting their supremacy.

By Cllr Richard Chessum
Press Officer, Labour Committee on Ireland

In late October, the Labour Committee on Ireland organised a tour of Sinn Fein Councillors to Britain. They met with eight Labour Council Groups in London and a number in the Midlands and the North. Another tour is planned next year.

Until recently it would have been unthinkable that Sinn Fein could be hosted by so many Labour Groups and activists. The success of the tour confirmed that more and more people in the Party are accepting the LCI view. They recognise that there can be no genuine progress towards Irish unity unless we engage in continuous dialogue with those who have been elected to represent the communities which have borne the brunt of Loyalist violence and British occupation over the last 17 years.

We call upon the Labour leadership to end their support for the dead-end Agreement. There will be no self determination for the Irish people until both the signatories of the Agreement are defeated, and Irish Republicans are given the place they have earned through sacrifice and struggle. When our leadership takes *them* seriously, we will know our leadership is serious about Labour policy.

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

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Sinn Fein Ard Fheis
A mixed result

"Abstentionism" dominated this year's Ard Fheis, Sinn Fein's annual conference.

In his Presidential speech, Gerry Adams explained:

"We have said many times that even the most successful armed struggle in the Six Counties — and the struggle there is not merely an armed one — cannot achieve the Republic... we must develop a 32-County-wide political struggle."

Adams successfully took Sinn Fein forward into the electoral arena in the 26 Counties, and minimised the expected walk-out to a mere handful of delegates.

By Steph Grant



The leadership brought with them support from the IRA Army Council and key individuals from the "old guard". In a 5-hour debate delegates put forward the arguments for an end to the old policy of abstaining from the Dail, the Irish parliament; for a political means to extend the struggle in the South and win popular support; for continued armed struggle; and for unity inside the movement after the vote.

Many speeches came from the newly-elected Councillors, who have carried forward Sinn Fein's electoral strategy in the past year. The pro-abstentionists lost the debate, relying on emotive arguments about the collaborationist history of the Southern government, but offering no real political alternative.

The other main debate focussed on last year's policy decision on abortion, endorsing a woman's right to choose.

The leadership had not campaigned positively on this and the result was twelve resolutions on the agenda calling for a reversal on abortion policy. It was women activists who led the debate to clarify and develop this policy. They were criticised by the leadership for going "too far, too fast", and despite winning the debate, which they did forcibly, the woman's right to choose policy was reversed.

At least, the debate is now out in the open in the Republican movement, and has already changed people's opinions. There is now only a small section of Sinn Fein who are completely opposed to abortion on any grounds. The debate will continue, and the leadership will have to organise to defend and extend this policy.

Nevertheless, Adam's leadership role was confirmed throughout the Ard Fheis, bringing a political maturity and responsibility to the movement:

"We must change our strategies but must never let this change our objectives or our aims."

The Sinn Fein councillors' tour of Britain was seen as political success and will be extended with a new emphasis on the trade unions and the black community. We can continue to give practical support to the Republican movement by following up the councillors' tour with organised delegations; by continuing the dialogue with Sinn Fein which cuts across the Labour leadership's attempts to silence discussion on Ireland; and by building the solidarity movement in this country for troops out and self-determination.

Is Zionism racist?

Palestine — absent from NUS National Conference agendas since 1977 — seems set to hit the Conference floor this December.

The Zionists are well prepared; not that they have successfully campaigned for student support for zionism and its aims — quite the reverse. They have, as usual, been conducting a slander campaign against anti-zionists in an attempt to discredit them, while ensuring that zionism itself never gets discussed at all.

They have been greatly assisted in this by a dual development within *Socialist Organiser*: on the one hand *SO's* turn to students which has greatly increased its influence within the left of NUS, and on the other hand its continued political trajectory towards accommodation with zionism, which has led *SO* to adopt the politically undefined term "left wing anti-semitism" as an all too familiar tactic to protect their retreat from attacks from the left.

Furthermore the Zionists have also benefitted from tactical errors made by students fighting for anti-zionist positions, e.g. the banning of the Jewish Society at Sunderland Polytechnic.

Because zionism — unlike apartheid — is not widely recognised as a racist ideology, the action taken against the Sunderland Jewish Society for its explicit support of zionism simply opened up Sunderland's student union to (entirely cynical) charges of anti-semitism, while doing nothing to help expose the racism of zionism within the student movement.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN for PALESTINE

Supporters of Israel could then ensure that a discussion on the nature of zionism at no point featured in the subsequent discussions over the "Sunderland affair".

At the present time the zionists can only gain from being denied platforms — as the Sunderland banning demonstrates. But in the majority of institutions they can only lose if they are forced to defend their racist positions on public platforms, and it is for this reason that the LMCP seeks to engage them in such a debate where and whenever possible. It is for this reason also that they seem determined to avoid such debate!

In the first week of October we received an invitation from the National Black Students Alliance at Essex University to take part in a conference on zionism scheduled for November, along with the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), an NUS representative and someone from the General Union of Palestinian Students (a line-up, incidentally, that would mean we were alone in arguing an explicitly anti-zionist position).

We replied at once that we welcomed the opportunity for such a discussion and were very keen to participate. The time of the conference is already here, but arrangements for it have still not proceeded because the organisers cannot get a reply from the UJS.

By Anna Wagstaff
Secretary, LMCP

Also in October, our student officer Tony Greenstein was invited to address Thames Poly Labour Club. The chair of NOLS (The National Organisation of Labour Students — an organisation with a longstanding support for the Israeli state) wrote to the Labour Club President, David Lee, more or less instructing him not to let Tony speak on the grounds that he is a racist — with no evidence at all to back up this accusation.

David Lee cancelled the meeting and asked the NOLS chair, Ben Lucas, to take part instead in an open debate with Tony, the NUS racism officer, and a Palestinian Student on "Is Zionism racist?" This time the UJS tried to get Tony banned. When they failed with the student union executive, they took the issue to a union general meeting, and were again heavily defeated.

Similar performances were subsequently repeated by the UJS, using the backing of NOLS, as SOAS, and most recently at the LSE. Both times the attempts to ban Tony failed, and the LMCP was given the chance to address very well attended meetings in which perhaps a majority of people there were able to hear and discuss for the first time a political analysis of zionist ideology.

Zionism is a racist ideology. And yet we have no interest at all in preventing zionists from having a platform. We know, and it would appear that they know, who it is that would gain from a genuine debate.

NOLS and UJS branding anti-zionists as anti-semites so as to prevent genuine debates taking place in the run up to NUS Conference must be unequivocally condemned. NOLS and UJS should be challenged on every campus to defend their positions in public debate — a debate that the LMCP would be delighted to participate in.

If you would like a speaker from the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine or would like to know more about the Campaign, please contact the Secretary, BM LMCP, London WC1N 3XX.

International Briefing

Arms control after Reykjavik

By Chris Bertram

With the end of the Vienna talks in mutual recrimination, immediate hopes of a breakthrough in arms control appear to have been dashed.

The sticking point is, of course, the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) — Star Wars — a "protective shield" behind which it can conduct a policy of nuclear blackmail against the Soviet Union.

The attitude of European governments to the arms control process is erratic becaue in the first place they want to maintain a US commitment to European "defence". Secondly, however, they want to have a measure of policy independence from Washington and thirdly they need to calm domestic public opinion.

Star Wars and the prospect of an INF deal have exacerbated these tensions. Thatcher, for instance, having publicly oppsed SDI in a rare breach with the White House, has nevertheless come round to suporting the programme whilst retaining a strict position on anti-ballistic missiles.

The $17m in Star Wars research contracts so far awarded to British firms no doubt makes it easier for her to change her mind.

Since the Westland affair, it has been clear that the Thatcher government is unwilling and unable to mount a serious challenge to the US Star Wars policy. This does not mean, of course, that Thatcher, Kohl and the other West European leaders are not unhappy with some aspects of the US proposals at Reykjavik. Both the proposal to make deep cuts in strategic arsenals and the zero-zero option on INF are profoundly worrying to the European governments.

One of the reasons that the West European governments were prepared to accept Cruise and Pershing 2 deployment was that it was what they were given by the US in response to anxieties they had voiced publicly for some time.

Given the assumption of mutually assured destruction (as a likely consequence of a superpower nuclear exchange rather than as a strategic doctrine) it was unlikely that the US would commit suicide in the event of a conflict limited to Europe.

INF deployment could be presented to West European public opinion as tying the US into European defence to a greater extent than before, but also exacted a price of greater military and economic subservience to the US Star Wars solves the problem of the impotence of the US strategic arsenal and simultaneously gives the US the political initiative and a war fighting capability within Europe.

This is not to say that the zero-zero option does not represent something of a concession from Washington. In particular, giving up Pershing would make some of the Pentagon's war fighting scenarios less viable. However, the loss of offensive capability would be minimal and if the trade-off is Star Wars then the Reagan admininistration will have got what it wanted.

For Thatcher and Chirac however the zero-zero option would place more pressure on them to reduce or fail to modernise their "independent" nuclear forces and thereby reduce the relative weight of those forces. In any case, if ABM was breached those forces would be even less relevant than they are today.

What Reykjavik confirms above all is that the hawks are firmly in the driving seat in Washington.

For the Soviet Union, Star Wars represents a potentially mortal threat. Either Gorbachov must attempt to match Star Wars with a comparable system, and it is unlikely that the Soviet Union has the technology for that, or it must attempt to overload American systems by building up its strategic arsenal.

For socialists in Britain the lesson that must once again be drawn is that NATO is a war-making machine under US domination and the central priority has to be withdrawal. Both cruise missiles and US bases are important objects of attack for the left, but the Pentagon has more than one card up its sleeve — and the ace of trumps is Star Wars.



PHOTO: Bob Naylor

November 1986. Cruise missiles convoy blockaded on the Wiltshire/Hampshire border for one and a half hours.

Socialist International: back-peddling on Nicaragua

At the end of September, the Regional Committee of the Socialist International met in Panama.

By Iain Bruce
Colchester North CLP

The meeting went virtually unnoticed, but its resolutions reflected the increasingly ambiguous attitude of many Socialist Parties to the Nicaraguan revolution.

One "special resolution" expressed "unreserved support" for Costa Rica's neutrality, in the face of the charge taken by Nicaragua to the International Court in The Hague that Costa Rica was favouring the US-backed aggression of the *contras*. The meeting censured Nicaragua for taking its complaint to The Hague rather than dealing with it within the Contadora Group.

The best that can be said of this is that it is pious hum-bug. It completely ignores the fact that it is Nicaragua which has continually tried to secure a peace agreement through Contradora, whilst the other Central American governments, including the "social democratic" government of Costa Rica, have consistently bowed to the wishes of the State Department and blocked any such possibility.

In any case, it is now clear that the Contadora peace process was one of the main targets of Regan's $100m *contra* aid package.

At another point, the chair at Panama referred to Nicaragua as "both protagonist and victim" of the conflict in the region. All this represents a big retreat from the forthright support for Nicaragua by the Socialist International over the last 7 years.

The minority within the SI which has openly been hostile to the Nicaraguan revolution, led by Portugal's "socialist" president Soares, seems to have grown recently, with the most important shift in Spain. Here, as US pressure built up on the PSOE government to renege on its election pledge to leave NATO, so — less visibly — the Spanish socialists' support for Nicaragua has become increasingly embarressed.

The SI's "Committee in Solidarity with Nicaragua", of which Spain's Gonzalez is nominally the president, has all but ceased to function. In March 1985 Spain cut off Nicaragua's credit on the spurious grounds that part of previous loans had not been paid back — in fact, they had not yet reached maturity.

In January, Spain's foreign minister, Ordonez, swept through Central America, offering support for attempts to pull together a dialogue between the Sandinistas and the *contras*, echoing calls from the US and the Vatican.

Leaders of the socialist parties of northern Europe, notably the German SPD and the British Labour Party, have not yet followed down the road of submitting to the diktats of US foreign policy in Central America. Their bargaining position with American imperialism is rather different to that of their southern colleagues, to say nothing of "social democrats" in Costa Rica. Also, for the time being, they are in opposition at home!

Nonetheless, the danger should not be overlooked. If the kind of change in attitude demonstrated in Panama spreads to the majority of the SI parties, it would bring very much closer the prospect of total war in Central America.

Red and Green

Not seeing red...

The "green movement" has now become one of those groupings with which radical socialists are supposed to "have a relationship".

By Andy Porter
SERA

On the one hand, this new ecological awareness among socialists is welcome; on the other, it is dangerously short-sighted in that it takes for granted, first, that there *is* a "green movement" in Britain, and secondly, that socialists should support it.

If "green" is simply a word that implies a general concern for the environment then there are certainly a lot of "green" people about — more than enough for a movement, to be sure. By this definition the Countryside Commission is "green" — and if it was possible for the analysis to stop here we would be left asking how socialists should relate to a popular but diverse and largely non-socialist movement.

However, there are those who see "green" politics as a radical new spiritual expression; as the politics of a "New Age". For the Greens, it implies a philosophy embracing all aspects of human life, with an emphasis on self-awareness, planetary awareness, non-violence, sustainable economics based on renewable or recyclable resources, and an overall commitment to harmonious relations between humans and between human society and the environment.

Sounds nice, doesn't it? But Green politics also generally implies a denial of the importance of class-based politics and expects change to come through a major shift in individuals' perceptions and an unprecendented development of consensus overriding class divisions.

The Ecology Party (now called the Green Party) Manifesto of 1983 states quite clearly that "the old fashioned politics of class conflict are grinding to a halt" and that we must move from the "politics of class interests to the politics of life interests." The same theme emerges in *Seeing Green*, the widely acclaimed book written by leading Green Jonathan Porritt. Here class divisions are seen as "notional" products of an "old-fashioned" way of seeing the world. Porritt sees changes in individual awareness as the key to the Green revolution and apparently believes that such changes will come as part of an inevitable and natural process.

Holding ideas like that must make him feel very secure when he tucks into his muesli every morning but unfortunately it neglects the little item of the role of the ruling class. Whilst *individuals* within that class may undergo radical changes in their approach to the world, the *class as a whole* is bound to continue striving to maximise its power and profits. Since there is no precedent in known history of a class as a whole simply voluntering to give up its power and privileges, we are forced to conclude (along with Marx) that radical change will necessarily come through conflict rather than through individual enlightenment.

Other green theorists (e.g. Raymond Williams and Andre Gorz) have approached the issue of ecology and social change from a more socialist perspective. In West Germany the green movement has a strong anti-capitalist element within it. In Britain, however, the Porritt approach has become dominant amongst those who identify themselves as "Green". When we talk about the "green movement" we therefore need to make clear whether we are referring to the *environmental* movement or to "New Age" Green politics.

It should come as no surprise that green politics has been so uncritically embraced by the "soft left" — after all it's not just in the Green Party that class struggle has become unfashionable.

Faced with this situation, the task of creating an eco-socialist theory and practice which is as uncompromising about class as it is about the environment should be a priority for all of us.

(Sections of this article have previously appeared in a longer form in The Energy Fix, Porter, Spence & Thompson, Pluto Press.)



Solidarity with El Salvador

The death toll, injuries and tremendous suffering which the recent earthquakes have caused and will continue to cause in El Salvador is the result of a natural phenomenon.

It adds to the intense misery already suffered by the poor majority, the result of 6 years of civil war and decdes of deprivation and repression.

The war, clearly not a natural phenomenon, has caused 60,000 deaths, 6,000 "disappeared", 500,000 inernal refugees and 500,000 exiles from a population of just 5 million. It sprang from social injustice and the efforts of the Salvadorean people to resolve that injustice. It has been prolonged by massive US interference.

The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign's Earthquake Appeal will provide *direct relief* to those poor who have suffered most from this recent catastrophe. It offers hope to precisely those people who have not been reached by and distributed through the Duarte government.

We hope that those who do not already know the causes of the war will now inform themselves through us. We are convinced you will then want to continue your support for the people of El Salvador.

Send donations to: El Salvador Earthquake Appeal, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL, or pay direct into the bank account, Elephant and Castle Natwest, no. 27761880.

South African war against Mozambique

An International Commission of Inquiry has been set up to investigate the circumstances of the shocking crash, on October 19th, in South Africa, in which Mozambique's President Samora Machel and 33 others died.

Whether they will be able to prove South Africa's culpability for the disaster or not is secondary to more fundamental considerations for anti-apartheid campaigners and socialists the world over. The facts are that:

- South Africa has, since 1981, been waging a devastating war againt Mozambique through the so-called Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), created by Rhodesian counter-insurgency in 1976 and taken over by Pretoria when Smith's regime was replaced by independent Zimbabwe.
- South Africa's campaign against Mozambique has also included direct bombings and commando raids by the SADF, as well as less visible undermining economic pressures, mainly through the strangulation of Mozambique's railways and ports system.
- Having forced the Frelimo government into signing the notorious "non-aggression" Nokomati Accord, in March 1984, South Africa itself never observed the agreement and — when exposed to the world by the undeniable evidence captured with the MNR's Gorongosa headquarters, in central Mozambique, in August 1985 — moved the main logistical base for their MNR operations into Malawi.
- In response to the neighbouring Front Line states' pressures on President Banda, in September this year, to end Malawi's role in South Africa's campaign against Mozambique, an intensified invasion of MNR bands swept into the Mozambican provinces bordering on Malawi, paralysing agricultural production, destroying economic structures, disrupting transport and communications, and occupying villages and towns, sending new waves of refugees to join the one and a half million people already displaced by the war.
- In the very week before the fatal crash of the Mozambican Presidential plane, South Africa had radically escalated its attacks on Mozambique with a propaganda campaign blaming Maputo for alleged ANC landmine explosions in South Africa bordering on Mozambique; and, more seriously, forbidding further migration of Mozambican workers onto the South African mines, which will mean the loss of about 50 million US dollars annually to Mozambique's plummetting foreign exchange earnings, thus exacerbating its general economic crisis.

Despite this succession of blows, culminating in the loss of a popular President — and 31 other valuable cadre — Mozambique has not "collapsed" as anticipated in so much of the press. The cohesive collective leadership of Mozambique, in the Frelimo Party's 12 man Political Bureau, have chosen the new President of the Party and the state, Joaquim Chissano, and he has declared their determination to continue the struggle to the end, to completely eliminate the criminal MNR bandits (as they are known in Mozambique).

If there were military and political circles in South Africa aiming to weaken Mozambique to such a degree that the Frelimo government would be forced to come to an agreement with the MNR, and even incorporate them into the government, that macabre plan has not succeeded. Even less feasible is the idea that South Africa could impose an MNR puppet government on Mozambique and sustain it here without seriously straining the resources needed to deal with the deepening revolutionary struggle within South Africa itself.

In fact, the dominant South African strategy against Mozambique is to continue and intensify the campaign of military and economic destabilisation in order to keep Mozambique in a permanent state of crisis. This is an important part of South Africa's regional strategy to hold all the countries around it in the firm grip of economic dependence... or force them into compliance.

Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia are already in this situation. Mozambique and Angola — situated along the Indian Ocean and Atlantic coasts of Southern Africa — could play a vital role in enabling Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Zaire to find alternative outlets to the sea, to South Africa's transport and harbours system, and begin to withdraw from their general economic dependence on South Africa.

This is why both Mozambique and Angola are the main targets in the region of South African aggression and destabilisation. Of the two, Mozambique is more important to South Africa, as well as the closer and weaker target.

It is vital for all anti-apartheid campaigners and socialists throughout the world to argue for substantial political, economic — and military — aid to be given to Mozambique (and any other country in the region) as part and parcel of the struggle against the South African regime.

1986 Labour Party Conference unanimously supported composite 28 on Central America, which called on the NEC to:

- put sustained pressure on the United States to withdraw support for the Contras and to condemn the US administration every time there are proposals of action damaging to Nicaragua and its revolution;
- put pressure on the British government to reinstate all trade links with Nicaragua;
- organise an appeal for increased aid including goods, volunteers, skilled workers, investment, etc.

What you can do:

- Affiliate to the Central America Labour Group (CALG) and assist CALG's campaigns for stronger links between the labour movement in Britain and in Central America, and for greater material aid to the people fighting against repression and US intervention. Send £4 individuals (£2 unwaged) or £10 organisations to CALG (address below).
- Send a delegate to the CALG Annual General Meeting which is 10-5, Saturday December 6th, LSE SU, Houghton St, London (Holborn tube): send £4 (waged), £2 (unwaged) to 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL for registration, cheques payable to CALG.
- Affiliate to the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) and El Salvador Solidarity Campaign (ELSSOC), which campaign to support the liberation struggles in Central America.
- Ask CALG, NSC or ELSSOC to send a speaker to your Labour Party or union branch meeting.

Mozambican workers' appeal

The Mozambican trade union movement, the OTM, has appealed to workers throughout the world to step up their solidarity with Mozambican workers in the face of growing South African threats.

In a statement from the organisation's secretariat, the OTM points to the possibility of an imminent South African attack against Mozambique, and accuses the Pretoria regime of trying to strangle the Mozambican economy.

The statement refers particularly to the South African government's recent decision to cease the movement of Mozambican migrant workers into South Africa, and to expel those alrady in South Africa at the end of their current contracts. The OTM notes that there are about 61,000 Mozambicans working on the South African mines.

The OTM statement thanks the South African National Union of Miners (NUM) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) for their expressions of solidarity with the Mozambican miners. It pledges the OTM's continued support to South African workers in their struggle against apartheid.

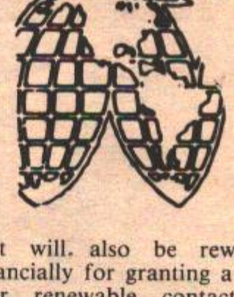
The OTM also calls on Mozambican workers "to organise ourselves in the defence of our country threatened by racist barbarism. In all workplaces let us prepare to defend our economy and our sovereignty." The Pretoria regime, says the OTM statement, wants to export the conflict between itself and the South African people to the neighbouring states and, to this end, Pretoria "finances and infiltrates bandit gangs to destabilise our country and to sow destruction and death."

AIM (Mozambican Information Agency), 14.10.86

The farce of Disinvestment

According to the Financial columns of the British press, there has been an "exodus" of multinationals from South Africa.

By Charlie van Gelderen
Brent South CLP



Coke, General Motors, General Electric, IBM, Honeywell, Warners, all corporations with parent companies in the United States, have pulled up stakes in recent weeks. Spokespersons for these multinationals have denounced apartheid and claimed they were leaving because the pace of Botha's reforms was not fast enough.

But before anyone takes their word for it, they should examine the facts. For example, by selling its South African operation to a new company formed (according to a full-page IBM ad) "for the benefit of the employees of IBM South Africa", IBM has actually strengthened its base there and given its offspring the freedom to side-step the Sullivan Code, which prohibits the sale of products made by US companies to South African government, police and military agencies. Indeed, the announcement that the Sullivan Code was to be toughened brought a storm of protest from American companies operating in South Africa.

All the companies who have announced that they were "pulling out" of South Africa have been quick to reassure South African customers that, in the words of IBM, they "will continue to get the service excellence which is only associated with IBM Products."

These companies, far from withdrawing from South Africa because of their repugnance for apartheid, are simply changing the form of their involvement. Like IBM, Coca Cola and the giant Waner Communications Group, will also continue to supply the South African market through new conduits.

General Motors is selling out to the executives of its local company. But General Motors products will continue to be produced in South Africa. Components and kits will still be supplied to the local company. The parent company will receive licence fees for the use of its trade marks and will actually gain substantially by its alleged "anti-apartheid" move. The company has not made a profit since 1981. With access to a major new market — the South African military establishment — this situation could now be remedied.

Apart from the new and lucrative access to formerly prohibited government and military markets, the supply of technologies, components, and assembly kits to newly independent subsidiaries is a highly profitable business.

IBM, for example, will receive financial compensation for granting the exclusive IBM franchise to the local company.

It will. also be rewarded financially for granting a three year renewable contact for spares and services.

Royalties will also probably be paid to IBM for the supply of new technology. Thus, the much-touted "exodus" of the multi-nationals is little more than an *apparent* concession to the anti-apartheid movement.

A recent issue of the *South African Metal Worker* points out that "... disinvestment is a far larger issue than just creating or destroying jobs. Workers need to talk about this issue in a different way. For so long as workers have no say in how money is invested — into what industries and what areas this money should go — they will be bound by decisions made by the government and bosses (local and foreign). Surely the issue for workers is not the amount invested or where it comes from, but how workers can begin to control these investments so as to make a real contribution to the struggle to create a South Africa which is free from capitalist oppression and exploitation in the form of apartheid... to ensure that social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all."

Two nations in struggle

The "Big Red Diary" is produced every year by Pluto Press, always a good sign of credibility and an easy present to give to a socialist friend.

While some people move to the right and others take up filofax, Pluto Press have moved their themes to focus on the central liberation struggles in the world.

The 1986 theme was Nicaragua, and the diary was a big success for the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign. The "Big Red Diary" for 1987 has been compiled jointly by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Namibia Support Committte, with the title "Southern Africa, Victory is Certain".

By Gareth Mostyn

The format has changed: sleek, black, and modern, it will fit more easily into pockets.

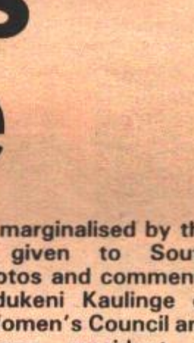
The diary includes a short history and background to South African and Namibia and is a weekly reminder of the struggle in Southern Africa. Important historical events and anniversaries are included, with pictures and quotes from the leaders of the ANC and SWAPO. At the back there is a useful directory for the activist as well as 16 blank pages for addresses and notes.

It is good to see Namibia feature in its own right as it is too easily marginalised by the attention given to South Africa. Photos and comments from Pendukeni Kaulinge of SWAPO Women's Council and Sam Nujoma president of SWAPO are included as are those of the famous Tambo and Mandela.

The Diaries are available from bookshops but a good gesture of solidarity would be to buy it straight from the AA or the NSC. Your local AA group should sell it or the NSC is offering a set of 4 very good solidarity postcards if you buy it through their mail order service, all for the same price of £3.95. The address to write to is: The Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW.



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Address .....

..... **(Postcode)** .....



Paul Mattson



Gerard Livett

Murdoch defied: printworkers call for Fleet Street Action

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

Murdoch has only got 1,500 enquiries and probably only 800 acceptances on his individual redundancy offer, and many of these are near retirement age.

The fact that he has had to extend the deadline shows that the strike is still solid. Each chapel has called well attended meetings where rejection letters were handed in en masse. Anyone not handing in this letter by November 10th will be deemed as having acepted the "offer" and will be expelled from the union.

George Hall (Father of *News of the World* clerical chapel) was greated with loud applause at a packed meeting of SOGAT strikers when he called on Brenda Dean and the SOGAT Executive Council to call a 24 hour strike on Fleet Street in support of the News International strikers.

The London SOGAT Clerical Branch has recently voted for such a stoppage and the *Guardian* clerical chapel has now endorsed the call.

Dean's response was predictable. She told the meeting that it "couldn't be achieved," and warned that it would lead to the resequestration of the union, which neither she nor the Executive would tolerate.

The SOGAT leadership is so obsessed by the threat of sequestration by the courts that the issue of how to win the strike has been completely subordinated.

She told the meeting that the shouting of "scab" by even the six official pickets was prohibited and that she would put a national full time officer down at Wapping to police the pickets!

Dean, with the collusion of newly elected Communist Party executive members Freeman and Hicks could offer the meeting no way forward. Once again she claimed, with no evidence, that the consumer boycott was hitting Murdoch.



The TUC had asked the print unions to resubmit their complaint about the EETPU's scabbing, but emphasised the difficulties and made no demands on the TUC for action against them.

Suspicions have been raised by another TUC sell-out deal when Dean defended NGA General Secretary Tony Dubbins' proposal to recognise the EETPU's position at Wapping if they joined the strike. This would legitimise their right to do print union members' work.

The SOGAT leadership has produced a glossy magazine in support of the proposed 58p levy. A national ballot has been called to authorise this levy — quite unnecessarily since the EC has the power to call a levy without a ballot.

But again the SOGAT's cynical atittude towards the strikers is revealed by the fact that the levy probably won't be paid to the strikers anyway, but its main purpose will be to pay off past fines and for a contingency fund if Murdoch goes ahead and sues for the £4m he is threatening to.

Dean denied having written to Jack Taylor (President, Yorkshire NUM) and other trade union leaders asking them not to send pickets to Wapping despite accusations from Terry Flancy on the floor, based on a recent visit to Yorkshire.

The News International strikers are looking to developments at Maxwell's the *Mirror* where two NGA lay officials have been fined £15,000 for calling a chapel meeting during worktime. It looks as if Maxwell may be planning to do a Wapping himself in the near future.

The national print support groups are calling a demonstration at Wapping, with a feeder march from South London. Be there and show your support for us in the difficult time before Christmas.

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LABOUR BRIEFING
NO 33 DECEMBER 1986

Tell Sid (and Neil): IT'S BRIBERY!

Bribery on a scale not seen since the demise of the "rotten boroughs" last century is a central Tory tactic to win Thatcher a third'term.

But while the old landowners bought votes using their own vast wealth, the present vote-buying spree won't cost the Tory Party a penny.

The latest binge of privatisation, and Chancellor Lawson's sudden mini-budget of increased public spending are both timed as part of a corrupt and cynical Tory pre-election campaign.

They have caught Labour's leadership flat-footed, exposing yet again the need for what Arthur Scargill has called **a leadership as committed to our class as the Tories are to theirs.**

After luring millions of prosperous voters towards the bait of British Telecom and TSB shares, the Tories now hope to draw up to 20% of the adult population into the scramble for shares in British Gas — giving as many as 8 million people a vested interest in returning a Thatcher government.

Lawson's latest £5 billion pakage of spending is simply a state-owned assets among those with ready cash to spare underlines the Tory electoral stratgey of seeking the smug, Southern, selfish vote at the expense of the unemployed and the millions in poverty.

Thatcher is also eager to exploit every division she has helped open up within the working class. The lastest example is Douglas Hurd's vicious "visa" regulations, imposed as a deliberate move to rekindle racist reaction.

But while Thatcher makes a clear and unambiguous bid to bribe the well-to-do, and foster reaction, the Labour leadership lacks any comparable



Going for greedy vote — Thatcher

John Chapman

By Harry Sloan

sop to worried Tories alarmed at the collapse of NHS and education standards in the run-up to the next elections — and a hand-out to CBI chiefs looking for profitable "infrastructure" contracts.

So while Kinnock apes the Alliance with vain, vague talk about "consensus", and "national interest", devising new and not-so-new schemas for "planning" British capitalism and playing down the real class divisions, the Tories are shamelessly exploiting and widening those divisions.

The whole carve-up of the determination to mobilise the exploited and oppressed.

Everything, from Kinnock's watered-down programme to Labour's new glossy up-market pamphlets seems geared to competing with the Alliance for the fickle "yuppie" vote, while ignoring the working class.

Seven years of Thatcher stealing from the poor to give tax handouts to the rich, of closures, speed up and asset-stripping in industry, have thrown nearly a third of the population — nearly 17 million people — into poverty. Nearly 9 million workers are low paid — while few manual workers earn anything approaching the laughable "average" wage of £206 per week.

These impoverished millions, together with the trade unionists facing speed-up and other attacks on their conditions, the black communities, women in the home, lesbians, gay men and other victims of the Thatcher backlash, must be the bedrock of the fight back. If they are not enlisted as the basic forces in the fight to get rid of this Tory government and prevent another one, and if their needs and concerns are not addressed by Labour's leadership of wealthy white middle class men, Kinnock could hand Thatcher a new victory on a plate — while her pals laugh all the way to their banks!

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!