LABOUR
BRIEFING
No 41 APR 8-21 1987

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40p

Stop this man before he loses Labour the election!

KAMIKAZE KINNOCK!

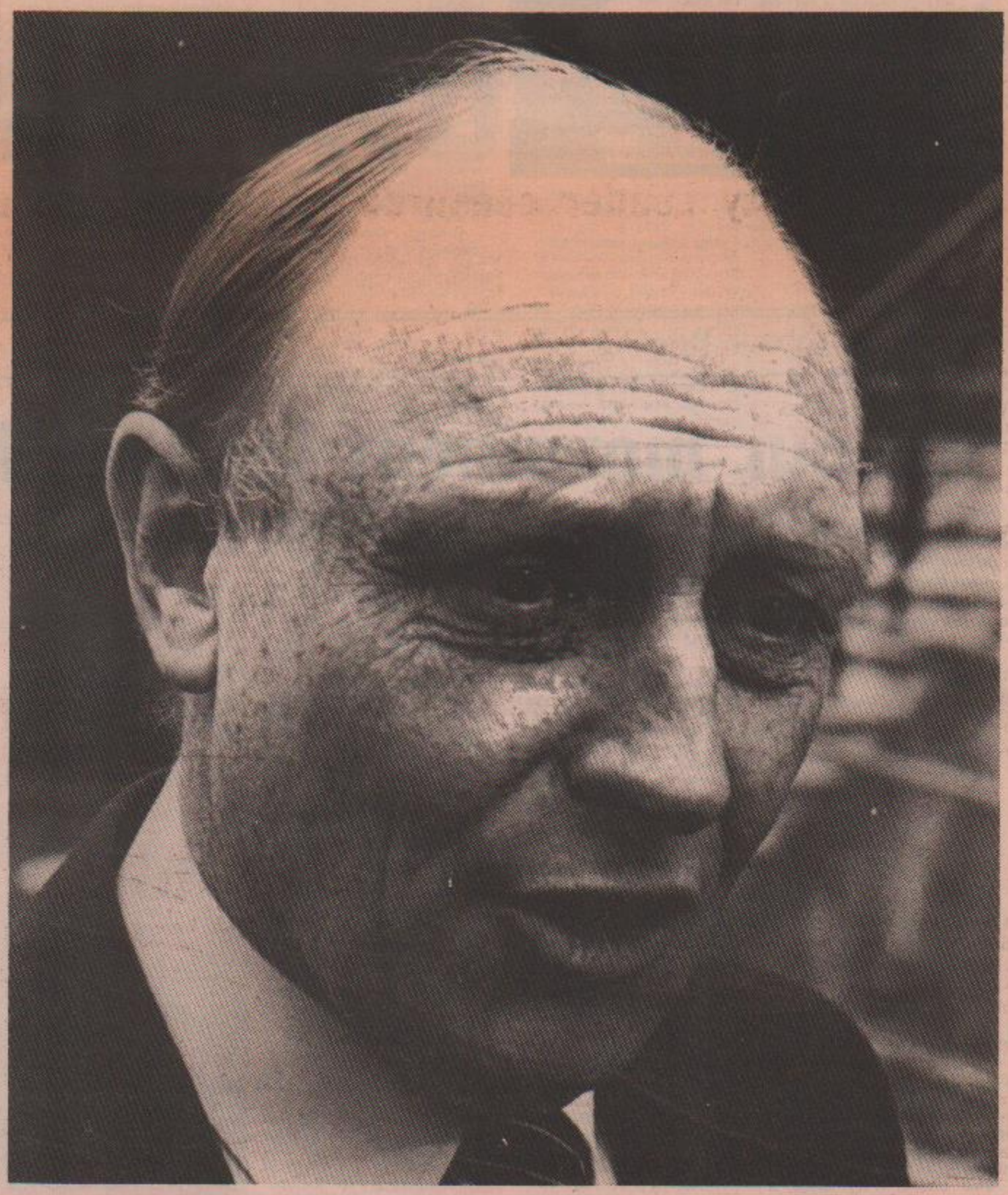
Can you believe it? Labour's leaders are blundering from one own goal to another.

- **The Hewitt letter echoed the gutter press's attacks on "loony left" Councils and lesbians and gay men, despite clear Conference policy supporting their rights.**
- **On Cruise, Kinnock announced Labour would keep them while the superpowers are negotiating in Geneva, despite clear Conference policy for *unilateral* disarmament.**
- **The NEC's racist attack on Black Sections and Black PPCs makes a mockery of the Party's formal commitment to anti-racism and defence of Black people's rights.**
- **Kinnock's ridiculous US trip for a 28 minute audience with Chief Imperialist Warmonger Reagan was a political and media fiasco.**
- **Hattersley has revealed that Labour will delay introducing a statutory minimum wage for up to 2 years, despite Conference policy for its speedy implementation.**
- **Commitment on social security provision, renationalisation and private education are likely to be excluded from the manifesto.**

In just 6 weeks, the leadership has alienated trade unionists, Black people, peace campaigners, and lesbians and gays. All in a frantic bid to be more patriotic than the Tories and more moderate than the Alliance.

After eight years of Tory destruction Labour should be riding high in the opinion polls and ready to form a government. Instead, after 3½ years of Kinnock's leadership, Labour is no higher in the opinion polls than when he took over. And no nearer forming a government.

The bankrupt policies of the Labour leadership threaten another four years of Tory rule. The left cannot and should not stay silent any longer. It is not too late to turn the tide. But only if Labour clearly presents a radical socialist alternative will it have any chance of winning the election.



LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Home News

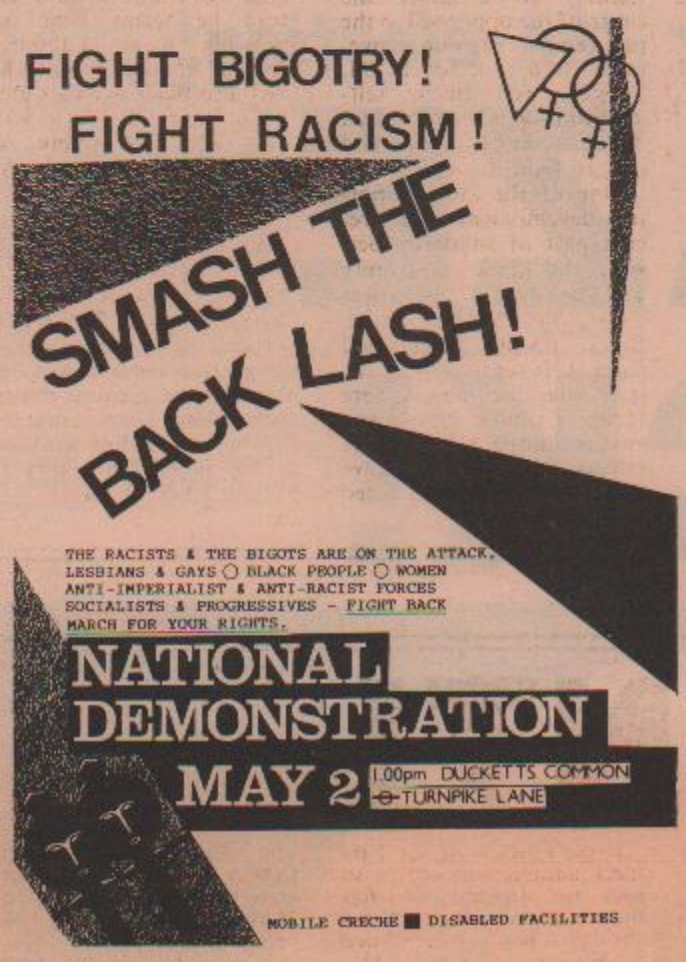
The facts behind the frame-up

The uprising on Broadwater Farm is once again in the news.

The tabloids failed to attend the trial of three juveniles and three youths charged with the murder of PC Blakelock except to report the Prosecution opening; and, in the case of the *Sun*, declare Winston Silcott guilty before the case had been heard...

Three months later, the press corps reappeared at the Old Bailey to hear the sentences. Pages of reports followed the murder trial, including "exclusive" stories about the uprising. The *Daily Star* even pretended to have photographs of PC Blakelock's death (on the wrong part of the estate) and enhanced this with a grotesque comic strip.

By Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign



What the tabloids failed to report was the evidence heard in court on which the Judge had ruled that the three juveniles be acquitted of murder and on which the jury found Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghip and Winston Silcott guilty. Even the "quality" press were quick to divert attention from the case itself to the rules governing bail.

The facts of the trial must become known and widely publicised. The lack of evidence against three youths sentenced to life is startling. Without the State's vital need to find scapegoats for the death of a policeman (recast as the exercise of justice by the racist media), these three young men would surely have been acquitted.

The police investigation that led to the murder trial, and an overall 157 people charged with public order and other offences was unique. About 375 people were arrested and commonly held incommunicado during a violent police campaign that included smashing down doors and threatening people with firearms and dogs.

The trials are revealing more and more evidence of severe police malpractice, including torture, while detainees were questioned. Affray and riot trials are scheduled to continue for at least the next nine months.

The murder trial evidence shared the characteristics of the trials overall:

● A lack of eye witness evidence.

One witness was called against one of the juveniles. But the witness admitted under cross examination to have lied at every stage of police questioning to save his own skin. He revealed that the police, in return for him giving evidence in the murder trial, were protecting him, had given him a flat rent free, had got him two jobs and had given him money to live on.

Although playing a more serious part in the uprising than many of those charged with affray, this "witness" had only received a £200 fine.

The prosecution were forced to drop the case against the 14 year old juvenile.

● There was no description of any defendant, from civilian or police witnesses, such as could identify them as even being present at the uprising.

● Nor were there any photographs, from over 1,000 official photos taken, identifying any of the defendants as being present.

● There was no forensic evidence, such as shoeprints, bloodstains or any other scientific evidence linking any of the defendants with the murder of PC Blakelock or with being at the uprising.

The cases of the other two juveniles were thrown out because the police had flagrantly broken the law in the manner and length of their detention and in the way in which they were questioned.

The police method of conducting an "investigation" was to encourage "confessions"; and these "confessions" were the only "evidence" against the three youths found guilty.

Mark Braithwaite, interviewed for 10½ hours in an 18 hour period "confessed" to being on the Farm, throwing stones and hitting a policeman, but not PC Blakelock. He said the "confessions" were made as a result of threats, claustrophobia, lack of sleep, hunger, being held incommunicado and oppressive questioning.

Engin Raghip, interrogated for over 14 hours, purported to have signed "confessions" after they were read to him, because he is illiterate. In these he admitted throwing stones, pushing over a burning car and witnessing the attack on PC Blakelock, trying to get close enough to kick or hit him. His defence was that "confessions" were made under police pressure and suggestion. He presented alibi evidence to show he was not present at the attack on PC Blakelock.

Winston Silcott, interviewed for 2½ hours and, like the others, without a solicitor present, denied being involved. The police claim that his conduct, actions and demeanour together with his assertions could be interpreted as accepting the police allegation that he was the attack ringleader.

These assertions included "that no one would give evidence against" him, that the police couldn't keep him away from potential witnesses, and that the weapons used against Blakelock had gone. Winston Silcott's defence was that he is innocent and there is no evidence against him.

The three are to appeal. The (lack of) evidence presented in the murder trial must become more widely known. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign appeals to you to help sway public opinion behind the demand for the release of three youths wrongly convicted. Contact the Defence Campaign on 01-885-3752.

Viraj Mendis will stay!

On hearing that Viraj Mendis had been appointed Immigration Officer for Manchester City Council, Home Office Minister David Waddington stepped up his vitriolic attacks.

Waddington called the appointment "an insult to the people of Manchester" and added "when you think of all the people who live in Manchester today who could do that job..."

Enraged over Viraj's continued resistance to his threatened deportation to Sri Lanka where he would face certain persecution and possible death, the Tory government and their loyal allies in Fleet Street have pulled out all the stops to force Viraj from the Church in Hulme, Manchester, where he has been in sanctuary since December 20th.

A few days after Waddington's outbursts, the *Sun* attacked Manchester City Council for being "loonies... running the asylum"; the *Daily Express* editorial cried "Mendis must go..."

As night follows day, these racist outpourings resulted in fascist attacks on the church and campaign supporters. A campaign member was stabbed with a ten inch knife when an armed man burst into the church on March 9th. The following day another supporter was followed home by 3 masked men who broke into her house, beat her around the head, drew swastikas on the doors and carved a swastika on her hand with a razor blade.

These attacks are just some of many whipped up by David Waddington and Fleet Street's gutter press. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has mobilised successfully to resist them — 10 were mobilised to defend the church at a few hours notice.

Viraj has said: "the intensity of my struggle against deportation has now created a political and physical focus for the struggle against racism... As the elections get closer, the Tory government is increasing the attack on black people... Now more than ever a strong political force is needed to put pressure on all political parties to turn back this tide of racism."

The Conference on April 11/12th will be a focus for this, and will begin a national response to the deportations. Transport leaves London on Friday April 10th. Tickets and further details from 01-837-1688, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

Gary Clapton,
Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, London Support Group

Scottish Labour Briefing

Labour movement leaders face the test

The Caterpillar occupation began in January after the company anounced it had changed its mind about investment in the plant, and were instead going to close it, with the direct loss of 1,221 jobs.

The occupation came hard on the heels of the Guinness conglomerate's decision to close its recently acquired Distillers Bottling Plant in Stepps with the direct loss of 450 jobs.

A few weeks later another conglomerate, Dalgety, which 5 months previously had bought the Golden Wonder group from Hanson, announced they were closing the Scottish plant at Broxburn, West Lothian, with the direct loss of 340 jobs.

All three plants are modern, high-tech and profitable. All three will be stripped of equipment and closed.

The stand taken by the Caterpillar workers could have forged links with these other plants in a common struggle, if the Trade Union and Labour Party leaders had wished. They called a meeting of 350 shop stewards in Glasgow on February 5th to discuss solidarity within the Caterpillar workers — but no such lead was given. Financial support and a completely useless lobby of parliament, was all the leadership of the Scottish labour movement, including the Euro-Communists, had to offer.

By Jim Niblock
Glasgow Central CLP

Despite this the Caterpillar workers continued their occupation and established contacts with the other European Caterpillar plants who offered further financial assistance, commitments not to handle blacked goods and solidarity action if the company tried to evict the workers.

Meanwhile the management, operating from a suite on the eighth floor of Glasgow Hospitality Inn, were kept busy sending threatening letters to the workers.

At the Scottish Labour Party conference in March Robin Cook MP, referring to the Dalgety outfit, said, "it is unacceptable that a company can buy over a plant one month and close it a few months later with no regard to the interests of workers who have been with the company for over 20 years."

Yes, indeed, but the Labour Party, with a huge majority of MPs in Scotland, have seen this happen time and again over the last few years and have been powerless to prevent it.

The concentrations of industry and capital in the South East of England, and the drift towards mass unemployment in most other regions of Britain, affects large areas of England — and certainly more people than it does in Scotland. Paradoxically, it also increases the massive social problems in London, with overcrowding inflating land prices, and the consequent effects on house costs and ground rents pushing manufacturing industry out of the capital: but it is the Scottish labour movement which must take the lead.

In order to reverse this trend, political solutions are required, which radically alter the existing balance of power. Successive Labour governments have been, and will remain, totally ineffective in challenging this underlying trend. Various regional aid initiatives are no alternative to economic and political power.

The defiant stand taken by Caterpillar workers deserved a more serious response than that given by STUC, Labour Party and Communist Party leaders. Without a clear political lead the occupation will remain isolated and will crumble despite a good shop stewards' committee and massive sympathy. Political action is required to mobilise this support into concrete solidarity work.

Over the last few years, trade union leaders have often said workers who don't fight for their jobs and accept increased redundancy payments and the like, are being bought off with fools' gold. But at the start of the occupation, 94% of Caterpillar workers voted to fight!

Ironically, it will be the job of Jimmy Airlie, one time leader of the UCS work-in and now full-time official of the AUEW in Scotland, to tell the caterpillar workers that the Union can no longer support the occupation in light of a court decision against it, and it should be ended. For Airlie, a leading Euro-Communist, this must be an all time low.

Caterpillar workers haven't given up the fight for their jobs, but the combination of management, legal, media and political pressure will probably swing the balance against them when their union also brings pressure to end the occupation. The Caterpillar workers know all about fools' gold. The surrounding areas are littered with derelict factory sites and mine works. There's no chance here of taking the money and starting another job: only long term unemployment and demoralisation.

The Labour Party will pay a heavy price if this demoralisation continues. With 42 out of the 71 Scottish seats the Labour Party has the power and legitimacy to develop an alternative to Thatcher way beyond the scope of the GLC or left councils of a few years ago, but they refuse to exercise this power and leave workers struggling against unemployment isolated, and the unemployed to the ravages of deteriorating services and cuts.

On Friday March 27th the Distillers Black & White plant closed. The company offered 12 weeks extra severance pay if the rundown went "smoothly". Workers left with cheques ranging from £3,000 to £8,000 — not much compared to the handouts given to sacked Guinness executives or the £25m slush-fund involved in the Guinness takeover of Distillers.

The promise of no redundancies given by Saunders at the time of the bid for Distillers may seem like a secondary matter in light of the subsequent revelations of corruption and insider dealings, but not for the 300 women who worked at the plant, many of them the only wage-earners within the family.

They are sick and angry at the closure. They would have fought; they will still fight when a lead is given. But the cost of misleadership is "fools" gold.

The workers will reject this road only when an adequate political lead is given by the labour movement. Meanwhile a Guinness spokesperson said "the rundown has gone very well."

The workers at Black & White had reluctantly followed the same course as the Golden Wonder plant a few weeks earlier, while the vote to continue the Caterpillar occupation had reduced to a wafer thin majority of 6,368 for and 362 against...

Advertisement

Free the Panther appeal

As most people know by now, the Caterpillar workforce occupying their factory at Uddingston have donated the tractor *The Pink Panther* to Scottish War on Want.

Scottish War On Want had made arrangements to ship the tractor out to Nicaragua for the construction of roads, health centres and rural schools in the most underdeveloped parts of the country.

Caterpillar have taken legal action to prevent movement of the tractor. *The Pink Panther* therefore remains in George Square, Glasgow, courtesy of Glasgow District Council, as a very public testament to a mean-spirited American multinational.

Scottish War On Want is now in urgent need of funds to offset legal costs. Please help us to *Free the Panther*. Any funds raised in excess of legal costs will go to the Caterpillar J.O.C.

Janie Buchan, *MEP, Glasgow*
Ken Fagan, *President, COSLA*
David Hayman, *Actor/director*
Mark Lazarowicz, *Leader, Edinburgh District Council*
George Leslie, *Vice-chair, SNP*
Helen Liddell, *Scottish Secretary, Labour Party*
David Martin, *MEP, The Lothians*

Please send donations and cheques made out to us:
"Free the Panther Appeal", c/o Scottish War on Want, Freepost, 266 Clyde St, Glasgow G1 4LR.

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Kinnock and the NEC's latest attack on the Labour Party Black Sections after their annual conference will come as no surprise to Black activists.

As well as facing discrimination in education, the Health service, employment and housing,immigration laws and social security offices, Black people have long had to face a racist labour movement too.

The recent verdicts in the Broadwater Farm murder trial reveal the overwhelming odds Black people face in their fight for justice and freedom from racist policing and the law. The people on Broadwater Farm, both Black and white, understand in practice that they have a common enemy.

Facing high levels of unemployment, anti-working class and racist policing they are beginning to work together to run their estate as they would like it. The Youth Association cooks the midday meals for the old people on the estate, they help them do their shopping; the shops and mini cab firm on the estate are run by people living there; the milk, the bread are delivered by people on the estate. Out of adversity they are working out common solutions.

The history of the labour movement in relation to such struggles of Black people is not one to be proud of. Labour have operated a bipartisan policy on immigration laws — opposition to the Tory laws in 1962 and 1971 quickly turned to acquiescence when in power; in 1968 they passed an Act which deprived the East African Asians of th right of residence in this country; it was during the Wilson government that the notorious virginity testing scandals were exposed; the Callaghan government introduced a Green Paper on Nationality which formed the basis of the Tories' Nationality Act.

More recently, Kinnock has distanced himself from black leaders who have sought to defend their communities against racist police attacks and the disastrous results of Thatcher's economic policies. Several of the councils attacked by Kinnock and his leadership team for trying to carry out Party policy in local government are led by Black members.

Briefing reserves the right to criticise Councils when they break from their principles, as has happened in Lambeth; but we base any criticism on full and unconditional support of Councils standing up for the rights of the Black community and the working class.

The racism of the labour movement is the product of the complicity of the leadership with Britain's imperialist past and present, a complicity which allowed the bosses to buy them off in return for some of imperialism's superprofits being used for social reforms. Such complicity is evident both in trade unions and the Labour Party.

In the face of this racism Black people have often formed their own organisations — the Indian Workers' Association, the West Indian Standing Conference, the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent, the Black Trade Union Solidarity Movement are a few examples.

The formation of the Labour Party Black Sections is the most recent example of the autonomous self-organisation of Black people in Britain.

As such it represents a huge step forward and should be unequivocally defended against the attacks by the Labour and trade union leadership. Such attacks are mounted because its existence is a continual threat to the power of the labour bureaucracy — a threat because it breaks with the complicity of the leadership with British imperialism. Women's self-organisation represents a similar threat to the sexism of the movement.

The majority of the labour movement do not understand the right of self-organisation and autonomy for oppressed groups. Papers such as *Militant* argue that it is divisive and weakens the working class.

What such arguments fail to recognise is that the working class is already divided by race and gender. The question is not that Black self-organisation splits the working class, but how to overcome the already existing divisions.

Black people and women, lesbians and gay men — all oppressed groups — have the right to organise to work out their demands and force the working class as a whole to face up to and overcome their racism and sexism. Putting the demands on the leaders of our movement (mostly white men!), and fighting to integrate the cause of the oppressed in the programme of our movement, is a task for us all. Support for Black self-organisation is the test of an understanding of racism and how to fight it.

One of the most important developments in the recent past of solidarity between the Black community and the working class was during the Miners' strike. Black people understood from their repression by the state that the miners were facing a similar attack and gave unstinting support. The miners in their turn, gave their recognition, and voted in favour of Black Sections at Labour Party Conference.

The overwhelming majority of Black people in Britain vote Labour. But Kinnock should beware of taking this vote for granted. It is, more than anything, a class vote. But with the distancing of the present leadership from any policies which are in the interests of the working class it is likely that there will be a high abstention rate at the next election.

Such abstentions, already evident in the inner city areas, should be a danger signal to Kinnock. But instead he seems bent on throwing away Labour's electoral chances by attacking those Black activists and PPCs from the Black Sections who are trying to represent the demands of Black people.

The left as a whole must make common cause with Black Sections' right to organise in and influence the Party. The left and Black Sections in particular have the greatest need to win the election, the greatest desire for a Labour victory, and we will be the hardest working in the field. This unity is Labour's best chance.

Labour Party Black Sections

WITCH-HUNT!

The Labour Party National Executive Committee passed a resolution on March 25th attacking the Black Section and threatening to mount a witch-hunt against the activists who are struggling to establish a political voice for the Black people in the country.

By Cllr Madhav Patil National Press Officer, Black Sections

During the past 40 years, despite many well-intentioned efforts, Black people have not been able to establish an organised strong political voice. This has only been achieved by the Black Sections Movement.

For the first time in the history of Black Struggle in the UK a powerful Black lobby has emerged to take the issue of Black Rights to the forefront of British politics.

Having loyally served the Labour Party for decades, Black people are now seen as only good for voting fodder, rather than an ally in sharing the power.

The Black Sections movement demanded power sharing from branch level to parliament, creating alarm to some reactionaries inside the Party, who could not stomach the political advancement of Black people. An old colonial trick was brought into action — "divide and rule". The Black and Asian Advisory Committee was created, with the help of a few handpicked "stooges".

Despite the resources at its disposal, the BAAC could not perform the job for which it was created: to destroy the Black Section movement. It was like asking a mercenary soldier to defeat the freedom fighters!

The Black Section went from strength to strength. It became a symbol of Black political aspirations, while BAAC remained a "poodle" inside the fort of the "colonialists"!

A new trick had to be found to preserve the old colonial mentality of subjugation! Press reports from the Black Section Nottingham Conference were seized as an ideal opportunity to entrap the Black Section movement.

The Nottingham Conference on Saturday March 14th was well attended and well organised. Proceedings were conducted in an exemplary fashion. However, the gutter press went wild.

Many of them were harbouring the injuries of "exclusion" from the Conference: only Black reporters had been allowed inside. Therefore distortion and fabrication went beyond norms of rationality!

What was reported by the gutter press was accepted by the NEC as a correct record of the Conference! No approach was made to Black Sections officers to get a true and authentic version!

For a start, LPBS have no separate manifesto: the Labour Party's manifesto is our manifesto. All we are trying to do is to enhance it, and influence it with a Black perspective.

Other groups are doing the same thing from their own perspective. We are not doing anything wrong when we try to get justice and a fair deal for the Black community by influencing the policies of the Labour Party.

Secondly, we are not a separate organisation. We are part and parcel of the Labour Party. We are a pressure group committed to the Black advancement!

We expect about six of our supporters to win Parliamentary seats in the next general election. They will form a group in parliament to discuss and canvass among other MPs on how to advance the Black cause, how to eradicate injustices, etc. In doing so we do not consider they will commit any offence or break any Labour Party rules!

The "Tribune Group" and "Campaign Group" have organised in Parliament for years. If the "Tribune Group of MPs" and "Campaign Group of MPs" are accepted why not "Black Section MPs"?

How could it be that "LPBS is divisive" and "LPBS is working contrary to the central principles and constitution of the Party"?

We believe that the Labour Party stands for the underprivileged and disadvantaged. Its creeds are socialism and equality in society.

If these are the central principles, how come Black Sections works contrary to it? Black people are disadvantaged. They are crying for equality. They have been victims of racism for years. Black Sections is trying to win justice and equality. Therefore it is clear that Black Sections are not "divisive" or "contrary". On the contrary, the reactionaries who have temporary control of the Party are really and truly "divisive" and "working contrary"!

Having answered all the allegations against LPBS, we believe that the reactionaries will not stop there. Therefore a sharp message has to be conveyed to them that "we are not alone".

Labour Party members "disciplined" for supporting *Militant* had a limited support from the masses; therefore it was easy to crush them. However, we have been backed and supported by the whole of the Black Community. LPBS is the symbol of their aspirations and of their struggle.

If the LPBS is strangled the Black advancement will be set back for decades! Therefore Black communities will not allow their hard earned political achievements to be destroyed!

It is really time for the NEC to review the situation cooly and calmly. With the Labour Party's standing in the opinion polls low and falling further, the NEC is embarking on a crusade to alienate its most loyal supporters, who will turn away from the Party in sheer disgust.

The NEC is endangering Labour in dozens of inner city seats which are dependent on Black votes. For the NEC it will be a political harakiri!

It must be said that Black people are firmly and solidly with the Black Section movement! Any disciplinary action against the leaders of Black Sections will be a provocation to the Black community as a whole. We won't take this attack lying down!



Cllr Madhav Patil leading a mass picket at the racist club in Southall: Black Sections in action!

NEC resolution, March 25th 1987

The NEC deplores reports emanating from the unofficial conference of Labour Party Black Sections held in Nottingham on March 14/15th and condemns the statements attributed to that meeting that imply separatist organisations and caucuses in a way that is both divisive and contrary to the central principles of the Party. We further resolve that any decisions to undertake selective support for candidates, separate campaigns, statements or manifestos, will result in action being taken under the Party Constitution against any Party members endorsing or acting upon such decisions.

The best interests of the Black and Asian communities are served by everyone in the Party, white and black, recognising the need for positive action and more substantial representation of the interests of ethnic minorities in the Party and in society, but continuing to resist firmly divisive calls for separatist organisations.

To this end the NEC endorses the positive work of the Party's Black and Asian Committee whose status and resources have now been enhanced.

How they voted:

For: Ambler, Boothroyd, Tony Clarke, Colling, Cure, Dunwoody, Evans, Haigh, Hattersley, Hough, Jeuda, Kinnock, McCluskie, Meacher, Rogers, Sawyer, Renee Short, Tierney, Turnock.

Against: Benn, Blunkett, Eric Clarke, Dalyell, Douglas, Maynard, Richardson, Skinner, Wise.

Black Sections Model Resolution on Labour Leadership attack on Black Sections

This ..... is appalled at the resolution passed by the Labour Party NEC on March 25th attacking the Black Sections and threatening to mount a witch-hunt against Black people struggling to establish a political voice.

Not only was the resolution based on false information gleaned from the gutter press but also party leaders failed to ask Black Party members under attack for their version of events.

Such acts of undermining by Party leaders are viewed as racist by our Black supporters and can only lead to disaffection in inner city constituencies where the party is dependent on Black votes to win elections as well as having a negative effect for Labour everywhere else.

We call on the NEC to revoke its threat of disciplinary action against Black Section supporters. Instead of caving in to racism, the Party leadership should mount an assault against this social evil. Black politicians fighting to further socialist policies must be supported and not threatened with expulsion.

Trade Union Briefing

National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign

The NJMC has been dealt a cruel blow. Billy Etherington, NUM NEC member for Durham Mechanics Area, has not been re-elected to the NEC.

Billy, an ardent campaigner for the victimised and imprisoned miners, has been involved with the Justice Cmapiagn since its launch at the 1985 Labour Conference. It's felt that without the hard work and determination expressed by Billy the NJMC may have folded quite some time ago.

Billy has not received the recognition for this hard and difficult task that he deserved. Further his non-election goes to prove the sacked and victimised miners case is a dead one. Where is the "left" involvement and support for the NJMC? They also have moved on to greener pastures, where more recruits can more easily be ripped off.

Billy, I support your stand for the sacked miners and urge you to continue to fight for our dismissed comrades because if you don't no one will... Billy's voice on the NEC was the voice of the sacked miners.

If you, the reader, believe the sacked "class war casualties" of the miners strike shouldn't be forgotten, then attend the next NJMC meeting, in Nottingham on Sunday April 12th at 1pm. For further details, contact NJMC, c/o 26 The Avenue, Durham, DH1 4ED. Why not take £10 worth of scratch cards to sell on behalf of the sacked miners? Support is out there if you take the trouble to look!

D Parkes, A miner lucky enough still to be in a job — one who won't forget!

Margam & the secret national ballot?

The call for a "secret" ballot on the Coal Board's proposals for the Margam drift mine received a boost on Saturday March 28th in Chesterfield. This was the venue of the second National Broad Left meeting, a venture heavily dominated by *Militant* and the SWP.

The ballot call came in a resolution moved by *Militant* supporter Ian Issacks of S. Wales. The resolution was welcomed by the *Militant* supporters. The SWP didn't speak against the notion of the secret ballot (that was left to non-aligned delegates) but they did vote against.

Issacks opposed pit head branch meetings where a democratic vote by a show of hands could be recorded on the Margam proposals. In arguing for a "secret" ballot he failed to recognise Media manipulation of the ballot and ignored any Coal Board propaganda tricks learned in the strike. He totally discounted NUM sabotage: even when a delegate from S. Wales told conference that his "Lodge" of the NUM had voted overwhelmingly against Margam, only to discover that in a matter of hours his lodge delegate to the special Coalfield Conference reversed his mandate and voted in favour of Margam!

The resolution was carried by 49 votes to 14 *on a show of hands*, which is clearly more democratic than a secret ballot. Come on *Militant*, wake up!

Daniel Parkes, Yorkshire rank & file

NUM elections — now face the Margam challenge!

William Head, a Yorkshire rank and file miner, looks at the recent NUM election for National Vice President and the Yorkshire part of the National Executive Council elections.

There were 4 nominations for Vice President: one "moderate", one sacked miner and two left-wingers.

It became a two horse race, with Sam Thompson from Yorkshire and "Stalinist" Eric Clarke from Scotland being hot favourites and both jockeying for the left ticket.

Sam Thompson, the new Vice President, replaces leading "Stalinist" Mick McGahey, holder of the post for the last ten years. Thompson could tip the balance on the NEC against a witch hunt of Scargill. If Eric Clarke had been elected, demands for Presidential reselection would have put Scargill's job on the line.

Sam Thompson is widely thought of as a Scargill man; but talk of Yorkshire "going it alone" is believed to be the reason Scargill swung in behind Sam. Scargill needs the support of Yorkshire if he is to fend off the threat from the Stalinists from Scotland and S. Wales.

Twelve men — "tested and true" — contended the 4 NEC places available to Yorkshire. The best hope for the "left" from amongst the 12 was Dave Douglas, Hatfield Main delegate and present Yorkshire EC member.

Although firmly on the "left", Davey is seen as a "maverick", and his dubious actions, such as his exposure of the "left" in a pamphlet "Bores under the Floor", clearly make his politics questionable.

Successfully elected, the worst of the 12 is hardened right winger and blatant careerist John Walsh, North Yorkshire Area Agent. Known locally as "Walshy", who he is an agent for is often in doubt.

NUM

He took over his present post from Sir Jack Smart, another careerist from the same Yorkshire pit, Glasshoughton Colliery, that also spawned Bill O'Brien MP, JP.

Walsh's primary drive comes from self-interest. He wants only the best for himself, and has challenged for every conceivable NUM position over the years, including National President. Presently enjoying a salary of about £18,000, + car, + petrol, + telephone, etc. He was recently called before the Yorks EC to explain why he wasn't doing his job.

He was accused of having "Lynks" with the UDM in the strike and has previously taken Yorks NUM to court for not filling a post vacated by Owen Briscoe. He wanted the job! The post was not filled as part of the in-house cost-cutting to keep members' contributions down, and reflected the loss of membership.

If he had to resign from his present post before challenging for any other, he would have been out of a job years ago. Instead, he was elected for life and has been a thorn in the side of the "left" since the early '60s. His election will add to the NEC right wing "Stalinist" supported block against Scargill. It is expected he would support S. Wales on the Margam issue paving the way for six day working of the Selby super pits — an area of his responsibility.

There is to be an NEC to discuss the Wheeler plan in detail, followed by a Special Delegate Conference to spell out policy. The 6 day 9 hour shift pattern planned for Margam is a key component of the "Wheeler Plan". All mineworkers must reject retrograde changes to the working week and oppose 6 day working. They must demand that their views and interests are taken by the delegates to the Special conference.

If enough S. Wales NUM branches reject 6 day working then the S. Wales leadership decision can be overturned. Des Dutfield, ex-Scargill man and S. Wales President, has promised his members a ballot — but I bet it's not a show of hands at NUM Branch meetings! Margam working 6 days has implications that will sweep through the industry and will affect *all* miners including those in UDM Notts. The members of the UDM must also make themselves heard and demand Lynk & Co. break their marriage vows with British Coal.

Come on lads, make yourselves heard and demand better working conditions. Support National NUM policy and break from "federalism and petty parochialism"!

UCW LEFT GROUPING
Meeting
Saturday April 11th
Liverpool Trade Union Centre
24, Hardman St,
Liverpool 1
12.30
Speakers include Les Huckfield

Lessons of the Wheelers strike

By Jabez Lam and Ai Meun Lim
Wheelers Strike Support Group

The strike by 4 Chinese chefs at Wheelers restaurant has ended with a pay-off of £22,000.

The amount, although relatively small and of course no substitute for reinstatement, is considerably more than the strikers could realistically have hoped to receive in an industrial tribunal.

The ruthless exploitation of migrant labour in the catering sector and fierce opposition of union membership make the settlement significant. Within the Chinese working class community, the impact will be even greater. Chinese workers have remained alienated from the trade union movement; but the success of the strikers in forcing a financial settlement 4 months after they had been sacked will make organised struggle seem an increasingly viable option.

Sell out

For the labour movement, however, and the left in particular, the "settlement" is a sell-out rather than victory. The Wheelers strike has, like so many other official strikes undertaken by black workers, questioned the trade unions' commitment towards its black members. Not only was the support for the strike minimal, but the strikes' militancy and radical demands were consistently compromised by their union representatives.

The TGWU, despite often having a progressive stance on many trade union issues, was not prepared to lend its weight to this dispute. Branches were not informed of the strike for over 2 months, despite the twice daily pickets, the campaign to boycott Wheelers and the desperate need for resources.

Ironically too, whilst the employers and High Court both acknowledged the weakness of the picket without the presence of an interpreter, the union did nothing to organise interpreters to the picketline, and only agreed to pay their fees following a lobby by the Support Group.

Regardless of the enormous language difficulties faced by the strikers and their relative inexperience of organising, the full-time officer took no responsibilty for the direction or progress of the strike. All leaflets and press statements were drafted and printed by supporters; all benefits, demonstrations and public meetings were similarly organised without any input from the Union.

Neither the Branch Secretary nor regional officer made any move to mobilise support, refusing even to call a meeting of the strikers' own branch. Instead, threats to withdraw union backing for the strike were used, either to counter criticism (e.g. when the strikers and support group saw the total inadequacy of the officers' application to the industrial tribunal) or to suppress certain actions (such as a motion to the branch put forward by the strikers).

The final blow came when it emerged that the full-time officer had in the past week conducted and virtually concluded negotiations with the Wheeler management entirely behind the backs of the strikers.

The efforts of the strikers and support groups had forced an offer. The union officials ignored any suggestion that this showed the increasing vulnerability of management which could be pushed further, and strongly advised the strikers to accept and cease *all* industrial action immediately.

Over the years the TGWU has had several high-publicity drives to recruit workers in the service sector and specifically in areas such as the hotel trade and catering. However, the TGWU and the trade union movement as a whole continue not to address some of the fundamental differences between service sector employees and the manufacturing sector.

The smaller numbers of workers in service sector workplaces, the predominance of black workers, of non-English speaking migrant workers, and the very irregular working hours, all militate against the active unionisation for these workers. The TGWU has made the right noises, but the Wheelers strike has highlighted the emptiness of such recruitment policies for black workers in the catering sector.

On a minimally publicised visit to the Wheelers picket line, Ron Todd, TGWU General Secretary, said:

"Every strike in our Union, whether there are 3 members or 3,000, every strike is of importance... the issue at stake is the principle to be represented by the union... the chance of success of this dispute is dependent not just on our collegaues in dispute, it also depends on all our branches and other groups giving them moral and financial support."

Yet when challenged about his commitment to the strike, one officer replied: "Many lay members felt that the Union has put a disproportionate amount of resources into a dispute that involves only 4 members."

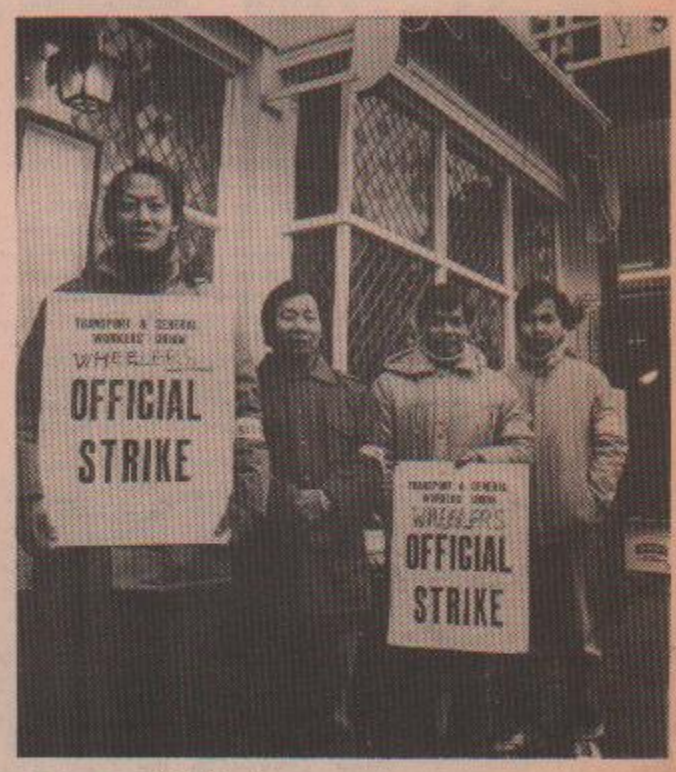
Only when black workers can organise autonomously alongside the white working class can the labour movement cease actively to exclude them from participation.

The TGWU, by refusing formal status to black caucuses in its branches, undermined the International Branch established in the Union's Catering Trade Group. Without positive moves to promote this branch, the specific black workers associations are simply there to recruit union members, for whom union services remain illusory.

Clearly, unionisation in itself will not serve the interests of black workers. The battle for well-resourced, powerful black self-organisation in the TGWU has been taken on by organisations like the Labour Party Black Sections, but it requires far greater support from all sections of the labour movement.

Unionisation of Chinese workers

Among the many positive aspects of the Wheelers strike was the grass roots support for the strike from the Chinese community. The strike succeeded in raising many issues regarding collective action and employment rights amongst Chinese workers.



Pickets outside Wheelers restaurant

From the start, the strikers established solidarity with other workers in struggle, such as printworkers and NCU engineers; and, with the support groups, embarked on a campaign to unionise other workers in Brighton's restaurants and fast-food establishments. This gave the Chinese organised working class profile in the British labour movement, which challenged stereotypical views of the Chinese as a passive, insular community.

A major conference is now being organised for mid-May. It aims to set up a strong, independent Chinese restaurant workers association to complement the mass recruitment of Chinese workers to the Union.

The legacy of the Wheelers strike should not be one of disillusionment. However, the growing disillusionment of black members who feel, justifiably, that their trade unions act against their interests can no longer be ignored by the labour movement and the left in general.

Ken Loach

The media recognises, quite consciously sometimes, that their role is ideological, they are there to perpetuate and develop, to interpret an ideology.

That weapon in the hands of the state has become more and more powerful, and important. We are controlled by an increasingly powerful police force, but it is also by manipulation and control through broadcasting.

The political role of broadcasting has grown since the 1926 General Strike, when it played a crucial part and established a notion of objectivity, never really challenged by the left.

This has developed to the time of the miners' strike when Scargill was vilified night after night in the living rooms of his own members. The power of broadcasting is now, I think, the key element in the way the state can manipulate consciousness.

Mandy Mudd, Positive Images

Someone in the Lords said: "It (homosexuality) will lead to the ultimate breakdown of family life, upon which the whole tenor of this country and its ways, the whole civilised world has been formed."

We all disagree here with this imperialist ideology — but the basic argument is absolutely right! The struggle to get the oppression of lesbians and gay men recognised and to begin to combat these, on a personal and institutional level, will inevitably show the role the family plays in maintaining the capitalist state. The family is essential in reproducing capitalist values and as a comercial unit of consumption. The Tories know this even better than we do.

Fighting for lesbian and gay liberation should be a prominent part of our struggle for socialism, not just a trendy issue that we take up for a couple of months.

Mildred Gordon, PPC Bow & Poplar

Right wingers would rather lose Labour strongholds than have socialists in Parliament.

I went to a conference for women candidates the other weekend, and all these advisors were there talking about "key" words and "buzz" words, like "investment". That's a buzz word, investment in people.

It seems to me that they're so intoxicated by the heady perfume of the roses they're surrounding themselves with, they don't know what's going on in the real world.

The only buzz word for me is socialism. The buzz words for the working class are socialist policies.

When Black women join miners' wives support groups, when Irish workers are linked with English workers, where gay rights groups are respected and link up with other workers in struggle... all these links lead us towards socialism, counteracting the Tory aim to win another election on the basis of prejudice and racism.

Narendra Makanji, Vice Chair, Labour Party Black Sections

We're not prepared to have the fight against racism trivialised or undermined by anybody and that includes right wing Labour MPs.

We shouldn't be defensive about what we're doing. When you look around the country these kinds of policies are being followed elsewhere. Our anti-racist policies are similar to those being taken up by Bradford and Manchester, many of our policies on anti-sexism are finding an echo in local Labour controlled councils everywhere.

Sometimes we don't realise how strong we are. There are only 3 cities that are controlled by the Tories — Guildford, Winchester and Portsmouth. All the others are either Labour-controlled or are hung councils.

Sinn Fein

Britain will never be a socialist country until such time that it withdraws its troops from Ireland. Imperialism is part of the capitalist system and *Labour Briefing* must be congratulated for overcoming this anti-Irish and anti-Republican bias by inviting Sinn Fein to come and put across a view that is basically censored both in Ireland and Britain.

Hangers

Hangers workers, in dispute since September 16th 1986, told the Conference how the police cut down a banner advertising the Hangers dispute to the crowds watching the Boat Race — hung with the co-operation of BBC workers, and the consent of Hammersmith & Fulham Council. Adverts proclaiming the capitalist principles of Nissan and Beafeater Gin were of course left in place — but somehow the Hangers' banner was "political advertising"!

For further information on the dispute contact Steve Blease, 01 646 0260; for information about the May 2nd demonstration, contact Kath Crosby 01 671 6811.

Stevi Jackson, *Briefing*

The response of the trade union and Labour Party leadership to Thatcher's onslaught is one of ineptitude and betrayal.

There is a preparedness to fight, but every time people fight back it seems the leadership sells us out or betrays us.

New Realism is spreading to the NUM itself. In South Wales the issue of 6 day working at Margam pit fits in with the strategy of the South Wales leadership.

Their position is now backed by the Labour Party regional executive. The debate there was very instructive. It congratulated the South Wales leadership for standing up to Scargill: he was seen as the enemy — not the Tories, not the NCB, but Scargill.

What was going on was that the T&G in South Wales said that they would organise Margam if the NUM didn't agree to the 6 day working week. The T&G would offer their services to the Coal Board to organise Margam.

This is partly what convinced the rank and file in there. Two guns were being held to their head: one by the Coal Board who said they wouldn't have the jobs unless they agreed to the 6 day week, and one by the T&G, who said if you don't agree we'll scab on you.

The discussion in South Wales was not critical of the T&G threatening to scab on the NUM, but of Scargill.

The only organised resistance to all this has come from South Wales Women Against Pit Closures.

Our Conference

Two main themes emerged at the Socialist Policies for a Labour Victory conference organised by *Labour Briefing* at the end of March.

Firstly that the right of the Party, by junking any remnants of Conference policy, by refusing to fight on socialist demands and by attacking those in struggle, risk losing Labour the next election.

Secondly, that in the face of this wholesale retreat the left must organise itself, in the trade unions, the Party and the campaigns — across the labour movement.

The labour movement faces a crisis of leadership both in the Party and in the trade unions — it is the responsibility of the left to begin to work out an alternative set of policies based on the needs of the working class and those in struggle.

Without such policies the left will not be able to organise effectively and fight back. *Briefing* started this process at the weekend.

The two plenary sessions included speakers such as Eric Heffer MP; Mildred Gordon PPC; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Narendra Makanji, Vice Chair, LP Black Sections; Joy Hurcombe PPC; John Palmer, Socialist Society; Sharon Atkin PPC; and speakers from Positive Images, Sinn Fein and *Briefing*. There was also a number of workshops on the themes of economic strategy, international policy and social policy.

One of the most interesting speeches was given by John Palmer. He pointed out that although the situation in Britain looked bad for the left coming up to the next election, it was important not to succumb to the pessimists of the *Marxism Today* variety. Their views on the decline of the working class in Britain are contradicted by looking at the growth of the class struggle world wide. Rather than taking a short term view of the rightward moves of Labour, we should look at it in a European context.

In many countries — Spain, France, Greece, Germany — Social Democracy is in crisis. But these countries are also experiencing waves of struggles by the working class as it tries to overcome the crisis of leadership. In France the students and railworkers, in Spain students and hundreds of thousands of rail and health workers, in Greece a general strike and in Germany a renewed fight over the 35 hour week — all point to a combative working class prepared and ready to fight back against austerity. There is evidence here too that workers are prepared to defend their jobs against Thatcher's attacks. Here are some of the highlights of the weekend.

Eric Heffer MP

Fight the Tories — *not the left!*

A lot of damage has been done to the Party's prospects over the past few weeks in particular, but I am afraid also over a longer period of time.

For some in the Party to refer, like the Capitalist Press, to our Councillors and Local Authorities as "loony lefts" is a gift to our political enemies.

To expel Councillors and members for supporting the *Militant* newspaper or any other left-wing paper in the Party, is a gift to our poliical enemies.

To threaten comrades with disciplinary action because they are members or supporters of Black Sections is a gift to the political enemy.

To fail to support the rights of minority groups like Lesbians and Gays is a gift to the political enemy.

To fail to support Women's Rights is a gift to the political enemy.

It is wrong for people in the Labour Party to distance themselves from workers who are involved in class struggle, who are fighting for basic Trade Union rights and who require solidarity from all sections of the movement.

The miners should have received wholehearted support, as should the printworkers and others. They did not get it, either from some trade union or Labour leaders, and their fight was weakened as a result.

The defeat of the miners was a watershed for the movement. In the past when workers have been defeated in industrial stuggle they have tended to look for political solutions. They have looked to the Labour Party, but on this occasion, because of the cracked note sounding from Labour's trumpet, workers have hesitated and are not sure where to go or what to do.

It is our task on the Left to give them some answers and political direction.

The question must be posed. When we talk about creating employment, how do we do it? Can it be done by investment alone, which by itself does not solve the problem? We need to have the means of production, distribution and exchange as laid down in Clause IV carried through by the Party. There's no other way.

First, Labour must take back into public ownership all those industries and companies, etc., which have been privatised, with the minimum of compensation, perhaps limiting it to those in real need, those who were kidded into taking out a few



shares, but which adds up to very little. The rest we don't need to give any compensation at all.

Secondly, in addition to the areas where limited public ownership is proposed like the establishment of an Investment Bank, we should be pressing for the Banks and financial Institutions to be taken over, and placed under democratic control.

Without this control how can we seriously stop the flight of capital, the constant movement of capital; how can we hope not to be at the mercy of the international financiers and speculators.

To get full employment, to deal with technological development in the interests of the workers and people and not the owners of industry, it is essential that public ownership, with forms of workers' control is clearly on the agenda.

As socialists, our job surely is to fight and work for our economic and political independence from the USA, and at the same time not to fall under the domination or control of the Soviet Union.

We must be pressing for a policy of non-alignment. To end both the NATO and Warsaw Pacts, and to press for a Nuclear Free Europe, both in weapons and energy. We must demand that the policies accepted at last year's Party Conference on energy and on getting rid of all Nuclear Weapons and bases is actually carried through.

We must welcome the proposls being put forward by Gorbachev, and test them out in practical terms. We must welcome Gorbachev's statement that there should be no blank page in Soviet history, and that there must be more democracy within the system.

Obviously in the Soviet Union it is one group of the bureaucracy fighting another, but the reforms help loosen the bonds upon the working people of the Soviet Union, and that can mean that at last the basic socialist ideas of the October revolution can again become real after decades of Stalinist darkness and oppression.

"I don't know whether the Labour Party in London is happy with the establishment of a non-elected committee to vet statements from Councillors and Council leaders and prospective candidates in London. If you are you're a lot of cowards and you shouldn't allow it to happen."

We must, therefore, support the struggle for freedom in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as we rightly support the struggle in Central America, Latin America, South Africa, the Philippines, Pakistan and elsewhere. We must also ensure that we do not only look to far away countries, but also do all we can to get a democratic socialist solution to the issue of Northern Ireland, so that the whole of Ireland can be free and united, and eventually socialist.

Comrades, it is clear that we on the Left of the Party cannot sit idly by and allow the Party to become the SDP Mark 2. If we do, that is a sure way to ensure the victory of our political opponents, including the SDP/Liberal Alliance. We must go out and fight for our socialist principles and policies, knowing that in reality, they were the only policies that in the last analysis can deal with the problems that we in this and other capitalist countries face.

The emphasis must be on the class basis of politics with the various minorities and fringe issues integrated into the overall strategy.

Part of that must be rebuilding the Left in the Trade Union movement. I see from the press that there are efforts being made to try and use the TGWU to overturn Conference decisions. The answer to that is for the left to organise in the unions and fight to get our policies accepted. We've tended to depend on certain trade union leaders and when they went we had nothing. That's wrong. *We* have to build the base. If you don't build the base, you don't build anything.

Don't despair, don't drop away, don't look for easy solutions such as leaving the Labour Party and joining something else. Our job is inside this Party. It is to rebuild its socialist base on a better foundation, to ensure that class politics are brought into the movement and catered for, and that they are totally identified with the Party.

All of us want to see this Thatcher government defeated. That must be our main priority. But we mustn't hide our socialist policies. If we do that we'll be stopping Labour winning.

Youth Briefing

"The LPYS needs policies for Black youth"

PATRICK BAKER from *Youth Briefing* spoke to Steve Jomoa, Black Sections candidate for the YS NEC place.

***Briefing:* Could you explain why you are standing for the youth place on the Labour Party NEC?**

Steve: I'm standing to advocate Black Sections' bold, anti-imperialist, socialist policies; also because the present LPYS structure is stagnant or even declining — it has no Black youth policies.

So I'm standing to meake sure that Black self-defence campaigns, issues of Black unemployment and homelessness are raised. Education also is a crucial sphere of polcy — we feel that "multicultural" education is useless without an anti-racist thrust. Policing is a key issue as well — the police have seemingly declared war on the black community.

All these issues and more have to be taken into the YS time and time again.

***Briefing:* What is your view of the recent Broadwater Farm trials?**

Steve: These were show trials — a sick joke — and they meant that the Black community lost any faith in British justice.

Revenge is no justice, and that's what it was. The trials are continuing and we'll support the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign — the black youth in struggle.

It's a community which is at the sharp end of racism in this country. Black Section youth attended all the campaign's pickets; where were the YS? Nowhere to be seen.

***Briefing:* What did you think of the recent YS London Region Conference?**

Steve: The only resolution on Black Sections was knocked off the agenda, and in the debate on racism it was noticeable that all the speakers were white! Black people, coming from an experience of racism, know best how to challenge it.

I said "The only way to have unity is to have black unity first. Once we have eradicated that central divide — racism — we can have the strong working class unity that we all want."

***Briefing:* What is your attitude to the witch-hunt of the LPYS?**

Steve: We are against the Sawyer proposals — it's an attack on youth.

We want the YS widened, not restricted. The YS is important to promote socialist policies to the youth of this country and it has to be controlled by youth — not a youth committee of old, white men.

It has to be seen as a witch-hunt. There are attacks on Youth, on Black Sections, gay men and lesbians; and on the *Militant* — who we disagree with, but we support them. We totally decry any expulsions from the Labour Party.

So, yes, I think it's part of a co-ordinated attack on the left.

***Briefing:* Do you support the Positive Images/Haringey Black Action campaign?**

Steve: Yes. Haringey Black Action is a major campaigning force for Black people, for Black gay men and lesbians, and they are organising a major demonstration. Positive Images have to be fought for against the backlash of the "moral majority" and the Tories.

LPYS Conference fringe meetings

Saturday April 18th

Lunchtime: *Black Sections*

Sunday April 19th

Lunchtime: *Labour Against the Witch-Hunt '86*

Briefing Youth will be organising at the conference and producing a daily conference bulletin

Haringey Labour Briefing urges all socialists to attend

National demonstration for Lesbian and Gay Rights Haringey, May 2nd, 1pm

Called and organised by HARINGEY BLACK ACTION and POSITIVE IMAGES

Assemble Ducketts Common, outside Turnpike tube (Picadilly line)

Smash the Backlash! Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights! Fight bigotry! Fight racism!

★ Mobile creche ★ ★ Disabled facilities ★

We urge all CLPs, wards, trade union branches and campaigns to make every effort to sponsor this demonstration and make every effort to attend. Bring a banner!

Labour's alterna the new Tory Ed

How many people could name Labour's spokesperson on education? How many could remember a single thing he's said?

The veil of anonymity that shrouds Giles Radice is due to three things:

- **his failure to speak out vigorously in support of the teachers' action;**
- **his failure to speak out in support of Councils like Brent and Haringey under attack from the right for their education policies;**
- **his failure to offer a radical and appealing alternative vision and programme for education capable of challenging the Tories.**



The shadowy Giles Radice...

Radice's failure is of course Labour's failure. Labour's promise to spend more on resources, buildings and teachers than the Tories is hardly a radical commitment, especially as no figures are given. It also promises a number of reforms which should be fully supported, in particular the abolition of the grammar schools and nursery provision for all who want it.

Ideological

But compare the timidity of this programme with the bold and radical approach the Tories have taken. The problem is that Labour hasn't faced up to two unpalatable facts. The first is that Labour's past record is pretty threadbare, and to warm it up again, slightly updated, doesn't inspire much confidence.

The second is that, partly because of this, the Tories' offensive has struck some real popular chords of response. People may not like the Tory cuts, but they are less certain about opposing Tory attacks on anti-racist teaching, or mixed ability classes, or many of the other progressive practices of recent years.

By Richard Hatcher
Ladywood CLP
Socialist Teachers Alliance

The Tories have had some success in unseating Labour's egalitarianism in the name of "standards" and "parental freedom". Labour can't simply respond with a defence of what is: for many people, pupils and parents, school breeds alienation and confirms inequality.

A real alternative from Labour would take up the Tories' challenge on four fronts: on *equality*, on *content*, on *standards* and on *control*.

Equality

In spite of the (partial) introduction of comprehensive schooling, inequality of outcome remains. The schools disproportionately fail working class school students, especially black students and girls.

The first pillar of Labour's programme has to be *a commitment to root out inequality*. The precondition is the abolition of selective education, whether grammar or private.

Content

The Tories want an education that transmits the values, the knowledge,the attitudes of the Thatcherite ethos. Labour has to develop *an education that reflects just as uncompromisingly the interests of working and oppressed people*, building on the existing practices of radical teachers and some left LEAs.

We need, for example, an education that counters racism and sexism, that questions militarism and global underdevelopment, that reaches out beyond the classroom and explores in a critical way community issues, the crisis of the cities, the "world of work".

Standards

The Tories claim that equality and radical content and methods are inimical to high standards. Labour has to *repossess the banner of standards*, by demonstrating that a combination of increased funding, greater success for working class pupils and more meaningful learning experiences are the best possible bases for higher standards all round, not just for an elite minority.

Control

The Tories have understood that to change education you need new and powerful mechanisms of control: greater government powers plus parental pressure. Labour has to draw the same lesson, and seize the initiative from the Tories in terms of *popular participation and power*.

Labour needs to combine strong national policy frameworks with a radical extension of democracy at every level: school students and



Nursery education: worth fi

Labour LEAs mu no to Baker's I

Kenneth Baker is relying on Labour LEAs as well as Tory to impose his will on teachers. Ratecapped and otherwise financially squeezed, he calculates that they can't and won't refuse.

His assessment is well founded. The record of Labour Authorities during the Teachers' dispute is nothing to be proud of.

They were among the first to start docking pay from teachers refusing to cover and they willingly collaborated with the leaderships of the Labour Party, TUC and NUT to impose on teachers a pay and conditions package very little different from Bakers'.

The first major offensive against teachers since Baker's Law is being led by the "left" ILEA, proposing the compulsory transfer of 1,000 Inner London teachers while, at the same time, the National Officers of the NUT move again to discipline the leaders of the ILTA for organising a fightback against Baker.

The campaign for non-compliance with Baker's law has to be a a fight within the unions and crucially within the Labour Party too.

Over the next months a priority for socialist teachers and the Labour left will be to join together to commit Labour Authorities not to implement Baker and not to discipline teachers refusing to comply. Through this, we can begin to build an alliance of socialists within the NUT and Labour Party around an alternative agenda for education.

Throughout our long dispute, this opportunity has been largely lost. Nevertheless over the past months, there have been prominent examples of the left in the NUT and the Labour Party, at local level, jointly defending major educational policy advances against a coalition of forces, including their own leaders.

In Brent, left teachers and black teachers defend

tive to ucation Act

teachers councils in every school; the right to elect the headteacher or abolish the post entirely; genuine participation by parents and communities going beyond the Tories' 1986 Act; direct representation of organisations of parents, women, black people and the labour movement on LEA education committees; real mechanisms for dialogue between teachers, parents, students and politicians at local and national levels.

Pillars

These are the four pillars of a socialist policy on education. Putting it into practice requires three things. The first is *money* — for resources, for teachers, for parental involvement, for time to make changes. Let's not pretend that it can be done on the cheap. Schools not bombs, nuclear *or* conventional, should be Labour's slogan.

The second pillar of our programme is *experiment*. Labour should inaugurate an explosion of creative educational experiment aimed at liberating the energies of students, teachers and the communities from the Tory straitjacket, in order to crack the real problems of inequality and content.

The third is *a campaign to win popular support*. It isn't out there simply waiting — it needs to be built.

It isn't a question of waiting, blueprint in hand, for the return of a Labour government. The campaign starts now. It starts by supporting teachers, schools and LEAs that come under vicious attack for attempting to put radical policies into practice. It starts by building alliances with parents who oppose Tory cuts. It starts right now by Labour refusing to do the Tories' dirty work by disciplining or docking teachers taking action against the Baker Act.

It is a real weakness that there is no organised current within the Labour Party consistently raising these issues, comparable to the Socialist Teachers Alliance in the NUT. The Socialists Education Association is of course the affiliated education body of the Labour Party, but it confines itself to playing the role of semi-official policy advisor from a centre-left standpoint, and largely abstains from campaigning or union activity.

Briefing supporters, teachers and non-teachers, can play an important role in getting a radical campaigning perspective for education on Labour's agenda.



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ed Brent Council's anti-racist policies and its right to hold an enquiry in the McGoldrick case and campaigned for this against the leadership of Brent NUT.

By Val Graham
Haringey STA & Briefing
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

In Haringey, the local NUT is a prominent supporter of the Council's policy to introduce positive images of Lesbians and Gay men into the school curriculum and has campaigned jointly with *Briefing* supporters and Lesbians and Gay men for its implementation against backsliders and a reactionary backlash.

We need to put things on a firmer footing. Supporters of the STA and *Briefing* must take a lead in fighting for non-compliance.

Baker's Law is aimed not just at worsening conditions and destroying teacher trade unionism. It is the cornerstone of measures aimed at smashing the influence of Left Labour Councils, rooting progressive policies out of schools and giving Thatcherite educational policies a clear run.

In implementing Baker, Labour is not only helping to crush the teachers; they are also collaborating in their own destruction.

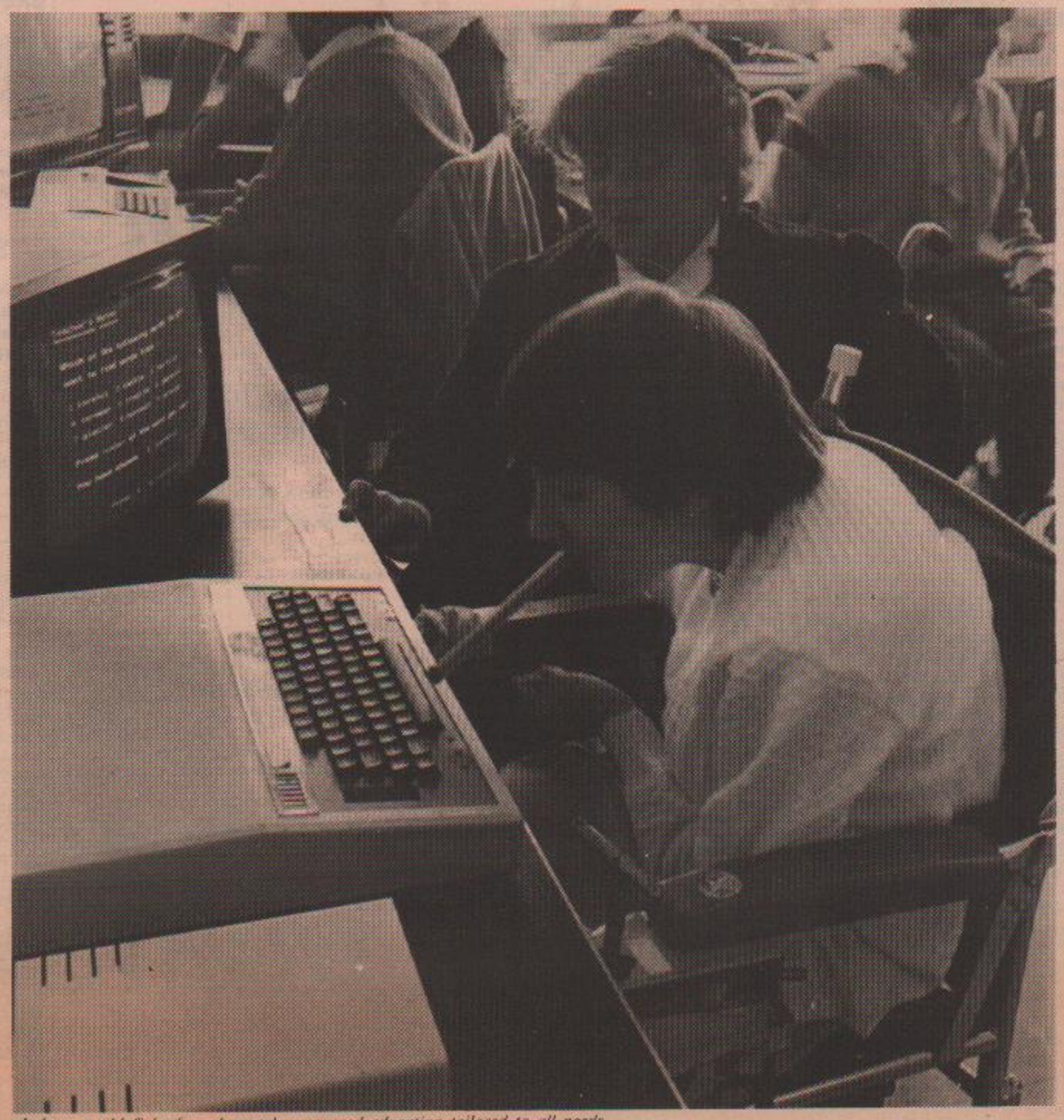


PHOTO: David Hoffman

Labour could fight for adequately resourced education tailored to all needs.

What's behind the Baker Act?

Tories launch a final offensive

SOCIALIST TEACHER
SOCIALIST TEACHERS' ALLIANCE

Margaret Thatcher has set herself the task of eradicating "socialism" from the British scene.

In education, the Tories have taken several steps towards this goal — and there are more to follow.

At present, their most obvious target is teacher trade unionism. Kenneth Baker's "Pay and Conditions Act" not only abolishes the right to negotiate; it also imposes a contract that lengthens the working day and introduces a list of compulsory duties.

It is a charter for management, that encourages attacks on trade unionism in the workplace as well as at the national level.

In campaigning for this law, Baker has claimed that it corresponds to the wishes of parents for "peace and calm" in the schools — and the Act itself will give parents the opportunity to sue employers who are reluctant to implement it.

This appeal to parents is very much a part of the wider picture of Tory education policy. For as well as using the *negative* power of the state to put an end to resistance, the Tories are also using its *positive* powers to create a new network of institutions in and around education.

This network includes a new apparatus of central control — as well as arrangements which are meant to stimulate local pressures and movements that operate to the benefit of Conservative interests.

By Ken Jones
Socialist Teachers Association
Hackney S. CLP

The combined effect of negative and positive powers will be — Baker hopes — the crushing of the strength of teacher trade unionism, the blocking of local authority policies of educational reform, and the eradication of what remains of the "progressive" influence on the curriculum.

The imprint of Tory centralism can be found everywhere within education: from the influence of the MSC, to rate-capping, to the new, government-directed priorities for in-service training.

Baker promises yet more — a *national* school curriculum. All these developments reflect and promote Tory ideology.

"Education for the world of work" has already become a staple of education policy. Now, if Baker's speeches are anything to go by, it will be joined by an emphasis on national values, on our shared "national heritage".

Increasingly in their second term, the Tories have paid attention to the *detail* of policy, aiming to create a dense and closely-defined pattern of contractual obligations and curriculum prescriptions that will affect everyone involved in schooling.



Kenneth Baker

The strengthening of the centre deprives local authorities of much of the space to develop their own initiatives. This is quite deliberate. The Tories want to close off the possibility of LEAs developing radical educational policies, and to discredit any attempt to do so — hence their interest in Brent.

But it would be wrong to describe Tory policy only as centralist. The determined use of central power is essential to their strategy — as a means of smashing opponents and setting financial and educational limits to policy. But they also know that centralism is not enough; it must be complemented by a structure of local power.

It is with the setting up of this local structure that much Tory thought is now occupied. The 1986 Education Act — which is in many ways the creation of Tory backbenchers and educational militants — takes them some of the way there.

Schools and LEAs are now obliged to take account of the views of the "business community" and of the police in determining their work. School governing bodies will have increased control over curriculum and resources, and will report to annual parents' meetings.

The hope is that parents will have been well enough educated in the virtues of Conservative policies to maintain a permanent pressure on the school, so that teacher militancy and curricular practice are kept in line.

In these ways, the Tories mean to finish off what they see as the vices of English and Welsh education: a system over-committed to egalitarianism, allowing too much scope to progressive experiment and teacher autonomy and ceding too much influence to teachers' organisations.

Building Briefing

Our Conference
Graham Bash

Below we print extracts from the speech made by Graham Bash in closing the *Briefing* conference at the end of March.

The strategy of our leaders is a disaster. Not only does it attack, weaken and demobilise the working class; but even in electoral terms — which is the only justification given to it — it is a total failure and plays into the hands of the Tories.

Now there is every danger the Tories will win the election.

People will vote Tory not because they are attracted by industrial decline, decaying public services, unemployment and Cruise missiles — but because of the absence of any alternative.

Instead of disowning the class struggle we must base ourselves on it. For that is our only road to *office* and *power*. Whatever the defeats, there is still a wilingness, a determination, to fight back. The printworkers, the British Telecom workers, the teachers, the workers at Hangers — have shown that, all too clearly.

Instead of disowning the struggles of the oppressed, we must unequivocally identify with and support those struggles. The experience of the GLC, however limited, shows the enormous reservoir of support we can win if we do that. By going on the offensive in support of their policy of dialogue with Sinn Fein, support for the black community, for women, lesbians and gay men, the GLC transformed the terms of debate, won massive electoral support and vindicated our policies as a huge electoral asset as well as a better way of running London. After the debacle of Greenwich, those lessons should be engraved in our memories.

Instead of hiding our commitment to peace and disarmament and apologising for Party policy, we could win enormous support if we believed in and argued for our unilateralist policies. The Tories could be put on the defensive as the Party of the nuclear arms race madness, and our defence policy could be transformed from a massive vote loser into a crusade for peace — involving millions — which could yet win the next election.

And instead of apologising for socialism, we must fight for our movement to speak with its own authentic working class voice.

Far from being an electoral liability, a programme of action that escapes from the economic impasse, that defends the living standards of our people, that confronts the crisis of capitalism, that fights the power of the capitalist system and its state machine — this is a precondition for our mass popularity and becoming a pole of attraction.

Lesbian & Gay Briefing

Over the weekend of the *Briefing's* Socialist Policies for a Labour Victory conference, the first meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Commission took place.

As the two elected convenors at that meeting, we are now looking to establish a national network of lesbian and gay *Briefing* supporters.

The most important job of the network will be to ensure that we get good, regular coverage of lesbian and gay campaigns and discussions in the pages of *Briefing*. Can comrades involved in lesbian and gay work please contact the convenors (see below) so we can put you on our mailing list.

It would also be good if ideas for articles or series of articles were sent in. The next meeting of the commission will be in not less than four months time.

Alan Holder, 27 Leicester Road, East Finchley, London N2 9DY.
Leesa Herbert, c/o 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.

Classified Ads

***Briefing* is branching out into classified ads! Let the world know about your meeting, event, for sales and wanteds; promote your ego, deflate others' — for just 5p per word, +50p semi-display, +£1 *Briefing* box number. *Briefing* meetings advertised free. No paid ads accepted without details of access and childcare facilities. Other advertisement rates available on request.**

Send copy to 26 Crofton Road, London SE5. Deadline for next issue: Weds April 15th.

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EVENTS

FRI APR 10
★ *Briefing* Editorial Board

SUN APR 12
★ **National Justice for Mineworkers** meeting. Nottingham, 1pm. Details from NJMC, c/o 26, The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED.

SAT APR 25
★ **CND/Friends of the Earth**, March for a Nuclear Free Britain! 11am, Victoria Embankment, WC2; rally 2pm, Hyde Park.

SAT MAY 2
★ **Hangers march**, support the locked-out limbfitters, Roehampton to Putney (though we hope it won't be necessary!). Assemble Roehampton Lane, W15, 10.30am, march to Bishop's Park, for rally 1pm. Details: Steve Blease 01 646 0260.

★ National **Demonstration for Lesbian and Gay Rights**, Haringey. Sponsored by Positive Images, c/o Reading Matters, Lymington Ave, London N22.

SUN MAY 3
★ ***Briefing* Teachers' Group**. Contact Anne Potter, 01-274 3551.

WED MAY 6
★ Meeting for *Briefing* supporters in **NALGO**. 6.30pm, County Hall.

SUN MAY 24
★ Lesbians & Gays ***Laying Down the Law*** Conference. Details: LCLGR, 01 226 1097.

SAT JUN 27
★ **Lesbian & Gay Pride Week** carnival.

500 Club Winner

This week it's back to London for the 500 Club lucky draw prize winner: congratulations to Ann Potter from Lambeth — £25 is on its way to you.

***Briefing* needs your support: fill in the standing order form to help us publish our fortnightly paper.**

TURN BACK THE GREY TIDE!

Bankers Order form for Labour Briefing 500 Club

Please complete every section of this form, and then return it to: **Labour Briefing, c/o Jane Kelly, 26 Crofton Rd, London SE5.**

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Signature .....

Dated .....

POSTAGE STAMPS

We're not asking you to organise jumble sales, run socials or record hit records (though we're open to offers) — but we are asking you to raise money for us.

How? Simple! Every activist out there must get handfuls of letters each week. We're asking for a moment of your time; to tear off the used stamps and keep them for us.

Send them in to us, or bring them along to a Steering Committee, and help make money for *Briefing*. It's that simple!

SUBSCRIBE TO BRIEFING

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Contact *Briefing*:
Commissions:
Trade Union Briefing: Pete Cooper, 56 Wroughton Road, London SW11.
Youth Briefing: Fran Rayner, Flat 7, 35 Maresfield Gdns, London NW3.
Student Briefing: Patrick Baker, 6, Clissold Court, Greenway Close, Green Lanes, London N4.
Lesbian & Gay Briefing: Leesa Herbert, c/o 26 Crofton Road, London SE5, and Alan Holder, 27 Leicester Road, East Finchley, London N2 9DY.
Briefing Women and **International Briefing** can be contacted c/o 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.
Briefing Editorial Board: contact c/o 26, Crofton Road, London SE5.
Next meetings: Friday, April 10th; Thursday, April 16th, Friday, April 24th.
Deadline for articles for issue no. 42: notify EB by Friday, April 10th, articles in by Wednesday April 15th (we cannot guarantee to print articles received after this date).

Greg Basset is on holiday; Periscope will be back next week.

Labour — Take the Power!
New pamphlet out now.
Available from 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.
Price 30p, plus 30p p&p.
Bulk order rates available on request.

Letters

Write to 26, Crofton Road, London SE5.

A right to choose... *what?*

Dear *Briefing*,

Reading Jane Kelly's little piece on the "right to choose" I was prompted to ask some more questions.

She is saying that the court's decision to authorise the sterilisation of 17 year old "Jeanette" is another attack on a woman's right to choose. But I am not sure it is that clear cut.

After all, Jane's proposal boils down to permanent contraception, with abortion as the back-up in the case of failure, both of which would be, apparently, without "Jeanette's" informed consent. As far as I understand this particular situation, Jeanette is too handicapped to understand the issues.

I can see that sterilisation, being permanent and irreversible, is a drastic step. So we need to have safeguards against health staff easily using it as a method of contraception. I understand the point Jane makes about the horrors of accepting sterilisation of "undesirables", as in the Eugenics movement.

But I want to ask: is forcing Jeanette, against her will, to take the pill every day for the next 30 years a liberating procedure? Are there not serious life-threatening consequences? How do you get Jeanette to willingly terminate a pregnancy resulting from the coil failing, or the cap?

And if you can't persuade her to terminate, what do you do when she has a baby? Does the baby stay with her, however inadequate a parent she is? And if not, what will Jeanette feel when she is deprived of her child?

If we are sure she would be a poor mother, and so we are prepared to suggest permanent contraception and abortion (as Jane is) are we not also denying her the right to motherhood, just as surely as sterilisation would, but with additional potential health risk, distress and trauma?

I suggest that the question can't be answered in the abstract. We need to know more about Jeanette, her abilities, her feelings, her understanding. Maybe she *is* capable of understanding, and making her own decisions. We don't know.

The people who *do* know her say she is not able to understand any of the issues, but she is able to enjoy sexual and affectionate relationships. So the question is should we demand Jeanette's right to free, enjoyable sexuality, without fear of pregnancy, or must we value more her theoretical right to pregnancy and so insist on caretakers watching her social life, supervising her social life, supervising her contraception and forcing her to have an abortion when they fail? The right to choose doesn't seem to come into it.

In sisterhood,
Sue Arnall
Bury.

PS The word these days is "self-advocacy" for people wth a mental handicap, a principle that wherever possible people should be enabled to decide and speak for themselves. Is this being applied in Jeanette's case? And is 18 too soon to make final decisions?

I think we have to acknowledge that there are tens of thousands of people with handicaps who are daily having decisions made *for* them. We are pushing back the margins so that wherever possible self determination happens, but this requires a good ratio of carers, and people who are aware and respect the individual, but nevertheless choice may be meaningless for many.

It isn't funny

Dear *Briefing*,

Since when has *Briefing* been in the business of attacking women's committees for being "poker-faced" (Periscope, *Briefing* no. 40)? Has the author of Periscope been taking lessons from the leader writers at the *Sun* and the *Mail*?

"Humour" like that just isn't funny, and it leaves a very sour taste in the mouth when *Briefing* starts parrotting the phrases used time and time again by the right wing and the ruling class to put down and marginalise the women's movement.

If Periscope's anonymous (and presumbly male) author can't get his act together, perhaps he should be advised to look for a job working for the sort of tabloid that will appreciate his journalistic skills!

Yours angrily,
Dani Ahrens,
Watford.

Gremlins downplay London cuts

Dear *Briefing*,

Thank you for printing my article on the London left.

But the printing gremlins got to it! Instead of stating that Inner London local authorities had lost nearly *£2,000 million* in Block Grant since 1979, as my text stated, you inadvertantly printed that London authorities had lost a mere £200m.

As one of the purposes of the article was to set out the precise difficulties that London local authorities had to face, this was — to say the least — an unfortunate printing error.

It must be put right!
Best wishes,
Reg Race,
Tottenham

Statement from Labour CND:

STAND FIRM ON CRUISE!

Labour CND supports the Soviet Union's proposal for the removal of all intermediate-range nuclear weapons from Europe.

We welcome the support of Labour Party spokespeople for such proposals and their initial commitment that a Labour government would urge that such talks be unconditional and not tied to other factors.

The possibility of getting rid of the intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) from Europe represents a practical first step towards a nuclear free Europe and a nuclear free world.

However, Labour CND is gravely concerned at the suggestion made by Neil Kinnock that the removal of American Cruise missiles from Britain should be delayed pending the outcome of INF talks.

On Thursday March 19th, Mr Kinnock made clear in a statement to the press that in his opinion not only should the removal of Cruise missiles be held up during such negotiations, but if those negotiations resulted in an agreement to keep a limited number of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe then a Labour government should continue to delay the removal of Cruise missiles from this country.

It was also claimed that these commitments, which were to be made to Ronald Reagan during Kinnock's recent visit, are not contradictory to Party policy of unconditionally removing all nuclear weapons in the lifetime of the next Labour government.

This statement by Neil Kinnock represents a clear retreat from the policy of unilateral disarmament which has been overwhelmingly reaffirmed at successive Labour Party conferences. As the general election draws nearer there has been no shortage of attacks on this policy, including from within the Party. Mr Kinnock's latest statement can only give added confidence to all those who would see Labour abandon its nuclear commitment.

Labour must draw a sharp line between the position of our Party — our commitment to abandon unilaterally nuclear weapons in Britain as the best way of encouraging the elimination of all nuclear weapons in the world — and that of the so-called multilateralists like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Our leadership must point out that it is not the policies pursued by these politicians, but the strength of the peace movement in West Europe and the commitment of the Labour Party to nuclear disarmament which offers the real hope for beginning the process of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

This is not only the best way of building support for nuclear disarmament but also of convincing the British electorate that a Labour government would increase the security of this country by abandoning nuclear weapons. Labour must also point out that so doing would assist in the vital priority of creating jobs for Britain's growing unemployed by diverting those resources into socially useful production and rebuilding public services run down by the Tory administration.

We call upon all Party members, and especially on MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates, to endorse our position and to make their views known to the Party leadership. It is the urgent task of every single nuclear disarmer to call a halt to the shift away from Party policy that this latest statement by Neil Kinnock represents.

This is an abridged version of a statement issued by the Labour CND executive on March 22nd, 1987.

Copies of the full statement, Composite resolution 40 (passed by a two-thirds majority on a card vote at Labour Party Conference 1983) and a letter to all CLPs and branches can be obtained from Carol Turner, Secretary Labour CND, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH.

LCND model resolution

This ..... rejects any shift away form Labour's policy of nuclear disarmament in the lifetime of the next Labour government and affirms its determination to campaign during the general election on Labour Party policy of unconditionally removing nuclear weapons from British soil and waters.



PHOTO: Paul Mattson/Frame

Bruce Kent, Paul Johns and Joan Ruddock outside the U.S. embassy, April 4th 1986.

Labour and unilateralism

Unilateralism has a greater radical potential than even many of its supporters realise.

Unilateral disarmament would severely weaken the British state, rupture the Anglo-American alliance and undermine the imperialist strength of NATO.

Many observers have pointed to successful capitalist countries — such as Canada and Denmark — which have no nuclear weaponary on their soil, to prove the compatibility of "unilateralism", NATO membership and capitalism. However, this line of argument ignores both the significance of Britain's nuclear weaponary and the overall effect of Britain, under a Labour government, becoming non-nuclear.

The British State

The decision to develop British nuclear weaponry and to support the formation of NATO was taken by the Attlee government. In other words, the military linking of Britain to post-war world capitalism and imperialism, along with the attempt to retain super-power nuclear status, was taken by the Labour bureaucracy.

Post war settlement ideology stressed the "threat from the East", and Britain's front line position in the defence of "free Europe".

Militarism

This officially sponsored militarism sought to galvanise the reactionary jingoism of the working class, in the same way as the war with Argentina was used in 1982.

Today, Kinnock reluctantly accepts unilateralism; but he tried to present it within the terms of the same military logic, which recognises the "Eastern threat" and legitimises conventional rearmament.

In Britain, nuclear weaponry forms a military and ideological prop for capitalism, and has been supported universally by the bourgeois parties and historically by Labour. This prop is even more vital in the 1980s as the economy grinds into deeper crisis. Labour administrations, as part of a wider deal with the ruling class, have agreed never to tamper with the political and military superstructures of the British state.

Unilateralism, however, hits the heart of the military establishment and the state's claim to "super-power status" and defence of liberal democracy. Labour will not confront this issue, and is hiding from the consequences of its own policy.

By Peter Bowing
Exeter CLP

The Anglo-American Alliance

From the dark months of 1940-41, if not before, British capitalism and imperialism was linked as a junior partner to that of the United States. Attlee abandoned spheres of imperial interest which the British state could no longer control, such as Palestine, Greece and Iran, and handed them over to the United States. The "special relationship", military, political and economic, between the two capitalisms gave the United States its European island base.

The military alliance was nuclear, with technology moving Eastwards (the latest example being Trident). The US was content with Britain's high military spending and her complete loyalty to American interests.

The removal of Britain from the independent nuclear club is a loss, but much more important is the threatened termination of America's oldest and securest European nuclear outpost. **However much Neil Kinnock patronises the US and however many times he visits that country, the fact cannot be altered that unilateralism damages American imperial interests and ruptures the Anglo-Saxon alliance.**

For Kinnock to say that American conventional weaponry can remain is as meaningful as saying that Red Indian bows and arrows can be kept in the UK. If the US is ready to invade Nicaragua to prevent the spread of the Sandinistas' example, the stakes are far higher when it comes to the kind of action against American militarism and imperialism Labour's proposing.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NATO, the brainchild of Truman and Bevin, is the military cement that interlocks the major advanced capitalist countries on both sides of the Atlantic. An attack on one capitalist brother is an attack on them all.

As part of the politics of Post War reconstruction, some working classes did not resist the Alliance; others, notably in Greece and Spain, saw through the guise and protested.

Four decades after its foundation, cracks are beginning to appear in major countries: the Greens in the Federal Republic and the Labour Left in Britain. The carte blanche for US nuclear occupation of West Europe is increasingly questioned.

Though Kinnock may preach the virtues of NATO membership and the continuing "Eastern threat", he cannot escape the fact that a unilateralist Britain would be the biggest boost to the Anti-NATO movement to date. British unilateral disarmament would dwarf the French disengagement of 1966.

A unilateralist Britain would severely undermine NATO, rupture the Anglo-Saxon alliance and weaken the power base of the British state. For just as the bourgeois parties oppose unilateralism for these reasons, so for these reasons do socialists defend unilateralism to the hilt.

Labour's contradictions

For the Labour right the real problem with unilateralism is its revolutionary significance. Owing to rank and file pressure the Labour right are not able to abandon unilateralism, though they would dearly like to. Their only answer is to package the unilateral commitment with support for conventional rearmament and try to present British unilateralism as part of the logic of NATO militarism. This argument is obviously contradictory even when explained by the best propagandist.

First, if unilateralism is to make sense on a political as opposed to a purely moralist basis, it must be coupled with the rejection of the "Eastern threat" notion. If the "free world" really were under constant threat from the nuclear East, there is obviously a case for Britain retaining nuclear weaponry, if only to supplement NATO. The Labour leadership, deeply anti-Soviet and pro-American, thus reinforces the Cold War ideology that legitimates nuclear weaponary in Britain.

Second, everybody knows that unilateralism was won in the Labour Party on moral, anti-American and anti-NATO grounds. The shadow cabinet argument that the prime case for unilateralism is a military one sounds neither true nor genuine.

The Labour Party elite before the 1983 general election and again now attempted to square the circle by linking unilateralism to East/West negotiations. Clearly, this adds to the contradictions rather than solving them: if unilateralism is tied to the outcome of negotiations, the policy is not unilateralism! Yet the Labour leadership have preferred to become tongue-tied on this red herring rather than confront the issues head on.

CND is embroiled in Labour's contradictions. Though CND has a significant "non-political" element, in reality it is welded to Labour's politics, and thus faces two clear choices. Either it refutes Kinnock's packaging, realises the full consequences of its policies and develops its anti-NATO resolutions, or it will become a small bureaucratic adjunct to Kinnock's current pragmatism and will enjoy no mass support.

For the Labour left, the significance of the leadership's nominal commitment to unilateralism should not be underestimated by focussing only on the NATO question. Unilateralism is the trojan horse in the social democratic camp: we should use it.

Where's the money going?

Labour is offering the electorate a very good package covering improved health, housing, education and other public services. It is also promising to increase overseas aid and create millions of new real jobs. This adds up to a redirection of priorities in public spending of which defence is one of the biggest items. Unless Labour's new defence policies offer a big switch from war preparations to welfare and from missiles to civilian jobs then Labour's promises may be delayed or unfilled



due to a shortage of public funds. The Labour government of Clem Attlee fell in 1951 because it put arms spending first. The 1964 and 1974 Labour governments also failed to cut back arms spending but were making cuts in other areas of public spending related to bread and butter issues on which Labour wins or loses elections.

We ask you to move the following resolution (or use it as a basis):

This ..... welcomes Labour's commitment to cancel the Trident nuclear weapons system. It believes that Labour in government should plan to spend the savings from this £11,000 million project on welfare, including the National Health Service, and not on increasing conventional arms.

Please send copies to:
Denzil Davies MP and Neil Kinnock MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, and
Larry Whitty, General Secretary, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

Please let Labour Action for Peace know of any action your labour movement body takes: write to Ron Huzzard, Secretary LAP, 37 Hollingworth Road, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1AQ.

International Briefing

Labour movement conference on Central America:

Organise for solidarity action now!

340 people gathered in Congress House on February 28th for the Labour Movement Conference on Central America, the largest such conference for nearly four years.

It came as a timely reminder of the stakes involved in solidarity with Central America and as a sharp warning not to let Reagan's "Contragate" debacle lead to complacency.

By Ian Bruce

The visiting speakers from Nicaragua and El Salvador, Jose Lopez of the Sandinista Workers Confederation (CST), and Hector Oqueli of the FDR-FMLN's Political-Diplomatic Commission, both described the relentless increase in US interference in their region and its hardly imaginable human toll.

No doubt

Delegates were left in no doubt: support for the Contras "by whatever means necessary" from the Reagan administration and its network of illegal operations throughout Central America was not the rogue activity of some cowboys in the basement, but a central plank of US foreign policy.

The present difficulties facing Reagan and the Contras may even increase the risks. For, as Oqueli said, there is a danger that "the Reagan administration becomes a prisoner of its own strategy."

In other words, "once these present interventionist plans fail — the counter-insurgency war in El Salvador and the support to the Nicaraguan counter-revolution — the US may follow the Vietnam model and escalate further their intervention, up to the point that they will have to launch a massive and direct invasion using their own troops."

The US attempt to impose a model of "repression with reforms" in El Salvador has visibly begun disintegrating around its protege President Duarte with big mobilisations on both the left and the right.

Disarray

Deepening disarray amongst the Contras since the conference, especially the resignation of civilian leader Arturo Cruz ("the acceptable face of counter-revolutionary terrorism"), and the revelations about bungled British government connivance in support for the contras, reminded delegates of the special responsibility of the solidarity movement here in Britain.

Partly it is a question of paying back old debts. Peter Heathfield for the NUM recalled the lump he felt in his throat when, in the middle of their strike, the British miners got a message of solidarity from the Nicaraguan gold-miners at El Limon... with a $5 note enclosed.

More practically, what happens here does make a difference in Central America. Both Jose Lopez and Hector Oqueli emphasised how important a Labour victory in the general election could be in dissuading the US from invading.

It was good, therefore, to hear George Foulkes for the Labour front bench reiterate the Party's forthright support for the struggle in Central America.

Important

This is important for those of us on the left of the Party arguing for clear, socialist policies, for it is one of the only areas of radical commitment that hasn't yet been ditched with the Party leaders' lurch to the right.

The only way to ensure that this remains the case is to make certain the smell of enthusiasm and action amongst rank and file union and Labour Party members makes the cost of retreat greater than the cost of standing firm.

Discussion

How to organise that action was the subject of lively discussion in the afternoon's workshops, grouping unions in different sectors, plus the Labour Party (see *four priorities for action in 1987* at the end of this article).

As Audrey Wise pointed out from the chair, solidarity action, and its reflection in Labour Party and Trade Union policies, has an effect whether or not Labour is in government. Not only does such action have practical effects in Central America; in return we get the political benefits of a closer relationship between our movement in Britain and the experiences of the struggle in Central America.



Demonstrating against US involvement in Central America

Support

Jose Lopez had the last word on this theme in his closing remarks. "We will continue to welcome you from the depths of our heart," he said, "and to share with you openly the experience of our struggle, without hiding any of the difficulties, because, in the end, our struggle needs and depends on your support."

Labour Movement Support

The Conference was sponsored by the Labour Party and 14 national unions. 201 delegates and 139 observers registered, covering 29 different unions from all over the country. There were delegations from 6 National Executives including one General Secretary (not including speakers). The collection raised £1,232 which was the largest collection that the Congress House porters remember seeing.

George Foulkes, Labour Party spokesperson on Latin American Affairs, said that a Labour government would halt the training of officers of the El Salvadorean army. He referred to the new ten-point plan that had been agreed by the National Executive of the Labour Party, and added:

"We must do everything in our power to put pressure on President Reagan to stop funding the contras, and to assist a just and peaceful settlement in Central America. Terrorism is no solution to political differences."

Four priorities for Action in 1987

1. Support the "Blood Money" campaign against the US backed contras, launched on March 24th by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign. Get your union or Labour Party to support the campaign, add its name to the petition and collect signatures in workplaces and communities. Petitions should be returned by July 1987. Get Labour Parties and unions to send people to the July 19th events. For campaign material and petitions contact the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 23 Bevenden St, London N1 6BH.

2. Help raise funds and materials for the Nicaragua Must Survive containers (either for the general appeal or the one directly linked with your union — e.g.the NALGO, ACTT, NSC Health Fund, or the Labour Party container).

3. Support the advert of support for the UNTS earthquake reconstruction project, to be printed in a British and Salvadorean newspaper on May Day 1987. Get your branch to donate £10 to add its name to the advert (to be sent to ElSSoc by mid April at the latest).

4. Send a mesage of support to the UNTS of El Salvador and make a donation to the earthquake reconstruction appeal. This could also involve earthquake collections in workplaces and communities. Speakers and slides on El Salvador are available if branches want to organise back up meetings. (Health unions may wish to consider the Medical Aid for El Salvador project, general unions the FENESTRAS project and media unions the Radio Farabundo Marti project).



Israeli state clampdown on free expression

The catch-all trap of "terrorist"

Repressive measures by the Israeli government against freedom of expression have been increasingly extended to include Israeli individuals and organisations in recent years.

By Ros Young
Islington South CLP

Michel Warschavsky, Director of the Alternative Information Center (AIC) in West Jerusalem, was released on bail after one month's detention following the police raid and forced closure of the AIC (see *Briefing*, no 40).

His trial, due to start soon, may be a long one and he could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted. According to the AIC collective, the charges document against Michel is unique, and it appears that the state is trying to convict Michel as a pretext to keep the AIC permanently closed.

Michel is accused of acting on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) by:

- organising the typesetting of articles for Al Taqadum (a Palestinian student newspaper from Bir Zeit University) and for Al Mara' (a women's magazine circulated in the West Bank);

- for organising the typing and duplicating of leaflets for "prohibited organisations" (they don't say which ones);

- having in his possession leaflets, newspapers and other materials belonging to the PFLP and other "terrorist organisations")which are not named).

(*The State of Israel vs Michel Warschavsky* — charge sheet)

Michel vigorously denies the charges and states that all material produced by the AIC was legal and all had been passed by the Israeli censor. Despite this it is clear that the Israeli state is seeking to clamp down heavily on Israelis who support Palestinians. Michel and the AIC have been charged under the 1980 Amendment of the PTO (1948), known as the "Tamir Law", which bans any form of support or political identification with organisations defined by the Israeli government as "terrorist".

Attacks on freedom of expression are also aimed at meetings between Israelis and Palestinians. Three Israelis are currently being tried under the 1967 Amendment to the PTO — the "anti-peace law", which bans contacts between Israelis and members of a "terrorist " organisations, which includes political representatives of the Palestinian people. The three were part of a delegation of 21 Israelis to an international symposium in Rumania in November 1986 which met a PLO delegation.

Briefing supporters are urged to help build support for Michel Warschavsky and the Alternative Information Centre. We are demanding that all charges against Michel and the AIC are dropped and that the centre be reopened.

A petition is available from *Briefing*. For more information contact the Committee for the Freedom of Expression of Palestinians and Israelis (CFEPI), BM 9585, London WC1N 3XX.

LCI looks to the election and the unions

The Labour Committee on Ireland is to launch an extensive general election campaign and redouble efforts to build a trade union conference — "Ireland: the cause of Labour?"

These were the most important results of the AGM of the LCI held in Manchester on the first weekend in April, at which members showed a considerable degree of unanimity in agreeing the most important initiatives the LCI should take in the coming year.

On the general election the conference agreed:

- To question Labour candidates on their views on a whole series of Irish policy issues.



British occupation

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

- To circulate CLPs with a model statement which could be included in their election addreses.
- To produce a special election pamphlet outlining steps Labour should take in Ireland when in government.
- To organise a rally during the election campaign with Labour candidates and representative from the Irish in Britain Representation Group and Sinn Fein.

By Geoff Bell
LCI Election Organiser

The overall message of these steps is "make Ireland an issue" in the general election. The overall message of the other major initiative of the LCI in the coming year is to "make Ireland an issue" in the trade unions.

To this end the AGM endorsed the building of the November trade union conference which will focus on employment discrimination in the North of Ireland.

This conference has already been backed by a series of organisations including the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Labour Women for Ireland and Labour Left Liaison. Individual sponsors include Peter Heathfield, Alan Sapper, President of the Television Technicians union, and every member of the NUR national executive.

In supporting the conference the AGM agreed that the "central focus" to the LCI's trade union work would be "the campaign against employment discrimination in the North and for the adoption and implementation of the McBride principles" which are a series of anti-discrimination guidelines.

The trade union and general election discussion occupied the first day of the conference. Among invited guests who spoke on these issues were Euro-MP Les Huckfield, Prospective Parliamentary candidate Barbara Roche, and Billy Etherington, Secretary of the Durham Mechanics of the NUM.

Another speaker was Niall Donnelly from the Sinn Fein trade union department who warmly endorsed the Novemmber trade union conference and reported Sinn Fein's enthusistic backing for the campaign on the McBride principles.

In general, the AGM was conducted in a businesslike fashion and without any sign of rancour. There was overwhelming support for resolutions calling for the prohibition of Orange Order membership in the Labour Party, continued sponsorship of the Bloody Sunday demonstration, and to support a labour movement demonstration on the twentieth anniversary of the sending in of British troops in August 1989.

The conference further agreed to "joint work with all organisations" who opposed the Loyalist veto on Irish unity and to seek closer consultation with the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, whose consultative conference recently backed British withdrawal from Ireland. The LCI will also continue to send observers to Labour Left Liaison.

The general mood of the conference was unity. But allied to that there was a continuing determination to insist that Ireland should become a priority for the labour movement — both before and after the general election.



A scene from everyday life in the Six Counties: troops conduct a house search.

Solidarity with Namibian workers!

Labour movement welcomes Ben Uulenge

Last month saw the first visit to Britain of Ben Uulenge, leader of the recently formed National Union of Namibian Workers and of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, and a former SWAPO political prisoner.

By Sian Moore
Co-Chair, Namibia Support Committee

The visit was an opportunity to develop links between the Namibian and British working classes and to get commitments of material and political solidarity from the British labour movement.

During his visit Ben Uulenge met the General Secretaries of both the Scottish and English Trade Union Congresses and the secretaries of NUPE, the NUR, ASLEF, USDAW and the CPSA.

Importantly, Norman Willis expressed the support of the TUC for the NUNW and its affiliated unions, and its commitment to mandatory United Nations economic sanctions against South Africa, if it persisted with its illegal occupation.

In Sheffield, Ben Uulenge met Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield and a public meeting organised by Sefield Namibia Support Group highlighted the links between the mining unions and communities of Namibia and Britain, with speakers from the National Union of Mineworkers and Women Against Pit Closures. The meeting was particularly well supported by local black organisations.

At a meeting held by Preston Trades Council, Ben Uulenge was able to enter into a dialogue with an AUEW convenor from British Nuclear Fuels, which illegally processes Namibian uranium, and he stressed that a management-sponsored visit of trades unionists from the Springfields processing plant to the Rossing uranium mine in Namibia would not be welcomed by the Mineworkers Union of Namibia.

Ben Uulenge additionally spoke at the Merseyside Anti-Apartheid Trades Union Conference on workers' sanctions, where the TGWU promised material solidarity, possibly in the form of a vehicle for the NUNW.

One of the highlights of the visit was Ben Uulenge's visit to the Betteshanger pit in the Kent coalfield, organised by the NUM's International Department. Here he was able to meet and share common experiences with Terry French, a miner jailed during the British Miners' Strike, who had been released the day before.

It is vital for the survival of the Namibian unions that British union leaders are reminded to keep their promises of support and that British unions make links with the emerging Namibian unions; the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, the National Food and Allied Union, the Namibian Municipal Workers — and the recently launched Metalworkers and Construction Workers Union. Information about these unions and the solidarity fund established by SWAPO and the Namibia Support Committee can be obtained from NSC, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW.



PHOTO: Namibia Support Committee

Namibian miners' leader Ben Uulenge with Terry and Liz French at Betteshanger Colliery

Red & Green

What price economic growth?

"Economic growth" is still seen by Left and Right alike as an indication of success and as something to aim at.

You might be surprised to learn, however, that according to the normally statistical criteria the economy has been growing steadily under the Tories!

This is because the annual rate of growth is measured in terms of the Gross National Product (GNP) — a purely financial statistic which tots up all the economic activity for the year in monetary terms.

It is not, needless to say, a measure of useful productive activity or useful services.

Take for example the flotation of British Telecom. This will have provided work for civil servants and for people in the Stock Exchange. The sale of shares by the government counted as an economic transaction; and in some cases as a further transaction if they were sold again at a profit.

By Andy Porter SERA

All of this adds to GNP for the year and of course bears *no relationship at all* to the number of phone boxes or the quality of the service that BT provides.

With a statistical methodology like this it's easy to see how the Tories have managed to achieve "economic growth" whilst closing down industries and cutting public services all over the country. All previous Labour governments have used the same criteria for measuring economic performance.

The GNP measurement has also been criticised by "greens" and in particular by SERA for taking no account of environmental impact. In fact, if an industry is "dirty" and people have to be employed to deal with the ensuing health or environmental implications then this registers as yet another increase in economic activity.

Labour's Environment Statement includes a commitment to developing a new criteria for measuring economic activity that takes the envirnoment into account. Nothing has been heard of this commitment since it was passed at Conference.

Briefing supporters discussing economic growth at the recent dayschool agreed that the left should be arguing in favour of an entirely new economic indicator measuring both the environmental and social impact of economic activity.

Having established that "growth" should be measured in a different way — are we for it or against it? Clearly, in the current period we must be for an increase in socially useful productive activity and socially useful services. We should be against economic activity that is damaging the environment or to the social infrastructure, or which as in the Stock Exchange amounts to mere financial speculation.

Whether running the economy according to this criteria would lead to an overall increase in GNP is impossible to predict and largely irrelevant.

The issue for socialists is not "growth" or "no growth" but what sort of work? Under what conditions? With what objective, and with what possible side effects?

How to achieve an economy run on these terms is another question and one that the left is not too good at answering. Certainly Kinnock and Hattersley won't do it.

Watch this space!



PHOTO: Chi Chan

Is this the future for economic growth?

Published by Labour Briefing, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5. Printed by MPS (TU), Acre Lane, London SW2.

LABOUR BRIEFING

NO DELAY ON MINIMUM WAGE!

"Some sections of the (Labour) Party leadership favour delaying the introduction of a statutory minimum wage by an incoming Labour government for two years."
(*Guardian*, 1.4.87)

Unfortunately this is no sick April Fool joke but another craven policy retreat by our leadership in its desperate, but so far fruitless, search for acceptance by big business as a reliable capitalist alternative to the Tories.

About 16 million people, one quarter of the UK population are living at or below the miserable officially defined poverty level. Many are in part or full time work. The majority are women, and a disproportionate number of Black people are low paid.

Deliberately

The Tory government has systematically and deliberately created the conditons for the reappearance of mass poverty amongst those in paid work through:

- unemployment;
- the abolition of Wages Councils and fair wages clauses;
- a reduction in the entitlement to and the real value of state benefits;
- terrorising claimants through schemes like "Job Start";
- forcing youth into slave labour YTS schemes.

The Tories argue, against even the official evidence, that British workers are "pricing themselves out of a job" and that there is a causal link between wage levels and the level of employment. British wage levels are amongst the lowest in Western Europe while unemployment rates are amongst the highest.

Fanfare

The statutory minimum wage policy was launched amidst a fanfare of publicity at last year's TUC and Labour Party conferences. Many on the left such as the TGWU leadership opposed the idea in the belief that it was merely a device to "sell" a statutory incomes (limitation) policy to the labour movement.

But this is to throw the baby out with the bathwater! A statutory minimum wage, long ago achieved in, for example, Italy and Canada, would set a floor to wage levels and lift millions out of poverty overnight — if the level were high enough, and the trade union movement actively monitored, and fought for, its implementation.

Inadequate

Unfortunately no figure was set at the conferences, and the commonly mentioned £80 for a 40 hour week would be utterly inadequate really to escape the poverty trap, particularly for part time workers and those with dependents.

Disastrously, the labour and TUC leaderships seem now to favour a "National Economic Assessment", i.e. yet another "voluntary" incomes policy policed by the union leaderships. No wonder, then, that they seek delay on the statutory minimum wage. In this context, it would lead to "leapfrogging" wage claims to re-establish differentials, and thus the undermining of the incomes policy as a whole.

It is now up to the left to keep up the demand for a statutory minimum wage of £120 per week. But this can only be achieved by building a strong campaign across the labour movement linked to a unionisation drive amongst the low paid, and by supporting all union battles for pay increases.



Schoolmeals workers, Hillingdon: this kind of "women's work" is traditionally low paid.

PHOTO: Philip Wolmuth

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!