LABOUR
BRIEFING
No 43 MAY 6 - MAY 19 1987

INSIDE

- Gorbachev reforms
- Marcus Garvey cententary
- Tory Britain
- NUT Conference
- The tractor story

40p

We won't shut up!

BLACK WOMEN WILL BE HEARD!



Smiling Neil Kinnock — before knifing Sharon Atkin in the back...

By Sharon Atkin

Nobody can challenge my loyalty to the Labour Party. My 20 years of membership speaks for itself.

That is 20 years during which I have seen Black people sidelined, under-represented and ignored. During that time I have seen Labour governments introduce laws on immigration which were racist, and opened the door to institutional racism by immigration officials and other servants of the state.

I have nonetheless remained fighting for change in the Party. As a councillor in Lambeth, I represented my constituents, white and black. As a shop steward I represented my members, white and black.

But, I repeat, I must and will make representation of the views and needs of black people a priority, whatever political role I am in.

The Labour Party wants black people's votes. But it seems they want them on *their* terms. I cannot accept that.

My comrades in Nottingham East Labour Party know that speaking out for Black people is always going to be a priority for me.

They never thought that would prevent me also being their committed and hard-working constituency MP, representing the whole community in Nottingham East.

Now that winnable seat, I repeat we were going to *win* that seat, is thrown into disarray — not by my actions but by the NEC of our Party. One can only assume that Mr Kinnock believes that silencing me is more important than winning Nottingham East.

I understand Mr Whitty has received complaints, on the phone and in writing, about my "activities" as he calls them. He cannot, however, say how many, or from whom. I know he has received at least 100 letters of support. These were not considered at the meeting where I was "removed" without being able to speak for myself.

Labour MP Frank Field is even less supportive of Labour candidates. He suggests that in some areas people should not vote for them, but for the Alliance. With all my criticisms, I have never made such a suggestion to disillusioned black people!

What is to happen to Mr Field? —A quiet word between gentlemen in the Whip's office, I understand.

What is the political message that Mr Kinnock is sending to black people by this action? The message is — black women, keep quiet, get back where you belong. Give us your votes, but keep your opinions to yourself.

To Nottingham East CLP the message is — you can only have the black candidate of *our* choice, not of your choice.

To the racists in Britain Mr Kinnock has given a green light — the message is "don't worry, we won't oppose you."

This cynical position of Mr Kinnock's is only a continuation of his refusal to support the miners' strike, the fight against rate-capping, the printers.

He actually thinks the working class in Britain *are* racist, *are* fooled by the Tories — or, perhaps, John Cleese.

I do not agree. I have great confidence in the working class in Britain, black and white, to put an end to Thatcher and Toryism.

There are no short cuts in politics, as my 20 years in the Labour Party has shown me. And when "the politics of style", and "the middle ground" and "keeping your head down" and that dreadful pale pink rose have faded, there will still be principled socialists, black and white, fighting for a Labour Party to represent working people.

Reinstate Sharon & Phil! Campaign for a Labour victory!

By Kingsley Abrams
(National Secretary, LP Black Section)

The Black Section Executive met on Sunday May 3rd, to discuss the removal of Sharon Atkin as PPC for Nottingham East, and the suspension of Phil Murphy from the Birmingham City Council Labour Group.

The attack on Sharon Atkin and Phil Murphy is an attack on Black Section and the Black Community. Such actions must be vigorously opposed.

The Black Section Executive agreed:

a) to launch public meetings with speakers from the Black community and the Black Section, in Nottingham, London and Birmingham, to campaign for the reinstatement of Sharon Atkin and for the lifting of the suspension on Cllr Phil Murphy. The meetings will also call for a Labour victory.

b) to support a defence campaign which is chaired by Clare Short that will fight internally for the reinstatement of Sharon Atkin and Phil Murphy.

c) to step up our fight against racism inside and outside the Labour Party and to reaffirm our support for Black people to organise inside the Labour Party.

The Black Section Executive was also attended by Avtar Jouhl, General Secretary of the Indian Workers' Association (one of the largest Black organisations outside the Labour Party), who pledges support for Sharon Atkin and Phil Murphy, and described the actions taken by Labour's NEC as racist.

The Asian Society in Wales have also described the NEC's action as racist.

Every socialist should fight the attack on natural justice and support the Sharon Atkin and Phil Murphy Defence Campaign. The Party leadership should be told in no uncertain terms that together we can still beat the Tories at the next General Election.

Fight the Tories — not Black Sections! Fight racism! Support Sharon Atkin's and Phil Murphy's defence campaign!

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Home News

Verdict on Michael Delaney

Unlawfully killed!

Michael Delaney was a young man of 19 who went out for a drink with friends on Saturday night, January 10th.

By 11.30 he lay dying on an icy road, crushed to death by one of Murdoch's scab TNT lorry drivers.

The police refused to let his friends help him. They arrested a sacked printer who went to cover him with a coat.

They let the lorry continue driving for 25 miles before it was stopped.

The police made every attempt to obstruct the fight by the Delaney family to get at the truth of what happened on January 10th. They even refused to let the solicitor representing the family have copies of statements which they were intending to use. When the solicitor objected to this on the first day on the inquest, the coroner justified the police action by saying that he ran a fair court!

At the end of the inquest the coroner instructed the jury that the most appropriate verdict to find would be accidental death or death by misadventure.

The jury ignored the coroner's instruction and instead found that Michael Delaney had been unlawfully killed. In the coroner's own words this verdict means that the jury felt that the scab driver "had total disregard for the consequences of the act."

To Tower Hamlets residents and supporters of the print workers the "disregard" of the lorry drivers for safety had been apparent from day one of the dispute.

The drivers were under instruction from TNT and from News International to speed through the streets and not to stop their lorries under any circumstances. This was for reasons of "safety".



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

By Andrea Campbell Print Support Group

The local constituency party had passed a resolution in *August* pointing out the danger that the lorries presented to local people and had sent the resolution to Commander Wyn Jones, in charge of policing Wapping. He wrote back dismissing the fears and saying that he was not aware of any dangers.

Meanwhile people were watching the lorries careering around tight corners into busy narrow streets and printers who had anti-Murdoch stickers in their car windows were being intimidated by the lorries on motorways. Early in the strike a lorry had deliberately driven into the picket line in full view of police who took no action against the driver.

Like many people in Tower Hamlets Michael Delaney was not "actively" involved in the dispute, but he was affected by it. After coming out of a pub, and waiting to cross the road, he shouted at the scab drivers.

For this act of solidarity he was killed. The driver knew he was there. He also knew the dangers of turning a large lorry around a corner. He deliberately kept moving knowing there was danger to a pedestrian.

Following Michael's death the Tower Hamlets Print Support Group organised a petition and a visit to Douglas Hurd to present over 2,500 signatures protesting at the use of our streets in such a dangerous way by Murdoch's lorries. The family and local people campaigned to get at the truth. The jury at the inquest found the truth and pointed the finger at both TNT and the driver.

The case will now be referred to the DPP, but most people do not have any illusions that the Department will prosecute and the family are going to consider taking a civil action against the company and the driver.

The print dispute showed how much weight the state is prepared to put into a backing a company which is prepared to smash trade unionism. Whole sections of Tower Hamlets were no-go areas for over a year; approximately £6 million was spent on policing the dispute; riot police on many occasions attacked demonstrations; traffic regulations werre scrapped for the company; lives were daily put in danger and an innocent youth was killed.

Local people are determined that the issues raised by Michael Delaney's death will not just be buried beneath a pile of papers in the DPP's office.

More *News on Sunday*, please!

NEWS ON SUNDAY

***News on Sunday* is a valiant attempt to correct the abhorrent imbalance in the British press. For the good of us all all it needs to stay the course.**

The project has absorbed a considerable amount of energy and has £6.5m of trade union and local authority cash riding on its success.

One should always be cautious about first issues. Publications take a while to settle down. That said, I found the first issue a mixed bag. Enjoyable to read, for the most part, but lacking in substance.

By Geoffrey Sheridan Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

It is certainly fulfilling some of its promise. The writing has a light touch. It is accessible. Muc of the coverage — across a broad range of social, international, and cultural issues — has a radical approach.

The anti-sexism which has featured (in a dubious way) in *NoS's* pre-launch publicity features in the newspaper too,though there were no stories in the first issue that related to British blacks or to gay people, so far as I could tell.

The newspaper *is* much nicer than any other tabloid, but there are several evident gaps.

There is very little hard news for a start. Most of the news is in the sports and international stories. While the latter is a welcome innovation in a tabloid, a paper that is called *News on Sunday* needs to do more to live up to its title (not that the *News of the World* bothers).

Surprisingly, British capitalism did not come in for much of a bashing. There was a good page-three piece on an unemployed punk Labour Councillor in Buckingham, and a spread on nuclear power dangers. But that was about it.

On the same day the (politically unsavoury) *Observer* gave three quarters of a page to comparing a day in the life of a nurse to that of a tycoon. And the (no more savoury) *Sunday Mirror* had a three-page report on rent racketeering — in response to *NoS's* launch?

Most worrying, especially with an election around the corner, Party politics was virtually ignored. Aside from the punk councillor photo feature, only one story was by-lined by the paper's political correspondent — an item on Labour's plan to expose the "raving right" in town halls, together with a brief item supporting education in Brent.

At the very least *NoS* should drop its drippy "Not the NoS" diary-style page and turn over the space to a guest columnist each week.

It could follow the example of *Tribune* and the *London Daily News*, with their (sometimes overlapping) guest politico columns. Or better still, *NoS* could add some "ordinary" working class folk to the guest list. About time they had a voice, as we say.

In brief, *NoS's* claim that it would win some of its readership from the *Observer* always was peculiar. Why should people who like lengthy articles want to read a tabloid?

But *NoS* has to come up with more meaty material for the hundreds of thousands of working class people who, one hopes, are looking for articles worth thinking about.

Whether, in these sober times, there are enough of them with a radical bent to deliver the 800,000 readers *NoS* needs remains to be seen.

● Footnote on first issue sales (print run £1.6m): in a white and black working class part of Tottenham, a newsagent told me at 3.30pm that he had sold out his 25 copies. In a middle class part of Islington, a newsagent's 10 copies had gone by 10am.

Broadwater Farm trials continue

"They weren't interested in the truth, they just wanted me to admit things..."

The Broadwater Farm trials continue. Here is an update on some of the latest verdicts.

Winston James's unanimous acquittal verdict on a charge of affray was a welcome relief for the community in the wake of the outrageous murder convictions.

James, 19, was subjected to severe interrogation, this time at the hands of the infamous duo — D.C. Rex Sargent (who still cannot attend court because his brutal past has caught up with him) and the equally monstrous D.C. Brendan McAllister.

When it was put to him that he had murdered P.C. Keith Blakelock, James "confessed" to throwing a hundred bricks! He said this was the least serious admission that the officers would accept. They had tried to make him admit to making and throwing petrol bombs, turning over cars, etc.

James Preston, another innocent youth denied access to a solicitor, was jailed for 3 years for affray by a misinformed jury, amid all the Blakelock hysteria.

Clearly the jury did not believe Preston, who insisted that he was threatened by torturers Sargent and McAllister, who forced "confessions" out of him.

In court, Preston said that he was threatened by Sargent, who smashed a cup against a wall to imply that if he did not confess it would be his head next.

"I was frightened," Preston said. *"I wanted to go home. I just told them what they wanted to hear. They weren't interested in the truth, they just wanted me to admit things. I thought if I didn't I would be kept inside and perhaps I'd be charged with murder."*

Broadwater Farm Defence Committee
12/16 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, London N17
01-808 1667/885 3752

Patrick D'Aguilar, 24, an innocent Broadwater Farm youth, was sentenced to 2½ years at the Old Bailey for allegedly causing an affray and handling stolen goods.

Len Woodley, the Defence Counsel, had asked Judge Machin to adjourn the case because of the obvious adverse impact the murder trial atmosphere would have. Machin felt there was insufficient grounds and ruled that the "case" be heard.

The only so-called evidence against D'Aguilar were his own supposed statements. D.S. Hagger admitted that D'Aguilar was not in any of the more than 1,000 police photographs of the night in question.

Stephen Bernard, 24, was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment, for allegedly making petrol bombs, and affray.

Like most of the other Broadwater Farm Youth he was tricked into signing a statement saying he did not want a solicitor.

Again, like others, he was asked about his involvement in Blakelock's death. Frightened, he had to make something up, and "confessed" to a lesser offence in order to get out of the police station.

Some sort of justice was done for **Trevor Carnegie**, 18, who had to wait anxiously and unnecessarily for his acquittal.

Like others, he was denied access to legal advice. In court, the custody officer, whose job it is to look after the welfare of the suspect in a police station, said that he did not bother to fill in the custody record, as is his legal duty, because he knew Trevor Carnegie would not get a solicitor anyway and it was a waste of time!

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Statesman joins stampede to the right

John Lloyd, the *New Statesman* editor, has announced his intention to sack the only out lesbian and gay journalists on the magazine, Jane Dibblin and Andrew Lumsden.

The stated reason is "economy measures" required to finance the new post of Deputy Editor to lighten Lloyd's job.

But Lloyd has also made it clear that the choice of journalists to be axed follows from his wish to cut the magazine's coverage of gay, lesbian, women's and black politics, ecology and disarmament, and "Third World" issues — the issues which have been covered by Andrew and Jane.

By Jamie Gough

Lloyd's wish to return to pre-1968 politics is a part of the Kinnock plan for a tamed Labour Party. It is no coincidence that it is *out* lesbians and gay men that get in the way of this wish!

Lloyd has refused to issue a public statement of support for Andrew's stance as an out gay journalist and the *Statesman's* previous record of coverage of lesbian and gay issues, and Andrew is therefore no longer prepared to be on the staff of the paper.

Jane's case is still being fought, with the support of the NUJ chapel.

Scottish Labour Briefing

Putting the Assembly on the agenda

Scottish *Labour Briefing* supporters recently held a Dayschool on nationalism. The debate there has aroused interest in many quarters — not least the Scottish press.

"A campaign of Parliamentary disruption to force Westminster into conceding a Scottish Assembly after the next general election was mooted at the weekend by a Labour MP... Speaking in Glasgow at a forum organised by *Labour Briefing*, which brings together several groups on the left of the Party, (Dennis Canavan) said 'We should go down there (Westminster) on sporadic raids and a determined group of 50 or so Scottish Labour MPs acting collectively could make things very difficult, if not impossible, for any government to get its legislation — particularly Scottish legislation — through'." (*Scotsman*, Monday April 6th.

"Perhaps they (the Tories) underestimate the growing impatience of many people of all political persuasions in Scotland for some form of devolution. But perhaps Dennis Canavan overestimates the ability of parliamentary rebels to bring this about." (*Scotsman* editorial, April 6th.

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Vote Labour and defeat Thatcher! No tactical voting! — no coalition!

The NEC which deselected Sharon Atkin, PPC for Nottingham East, also refused to take a resolution calling for the Party to support only Labour Party candidates.

What is, in effect, a call for Labour Party supporters to vote for another party, now being touted by Frank Field, MP, Stuart Weir, editor of *New Socialist*, as well as *Marxism Today's* Eric Hobsbawm, *The Guardian* and *Today*, is apparently condoned.

But a democratically selected Black woman PPC (one of only two Black women standing for the Labour Party), who thinks that the Labour Party suffers from institutionalised racism, and is prepared to say so, has to be replaced by a candidate more acceptable to the leadership.

The speed with which the NEC came up with a name to fill Sharon Atkin's place shows that forward planning must have been at work.

No ordinary "moderate" candidate, Aslam is an obvious Kinnock supporter. He is known locally for opposition to such things as lesbian and gay rights — but clearly his major attraction to Kinnock must be his opposition to Black Sections. What better way for Kinnock to undermine a caucus of Black MPs in the Commons than to find a way of getting a *black* MP who opposes Black Sections into Parliament? Still, the NEC majority hopes have to stand the test of the ballot box.

So now tactical voting, or TV '87 (not a new television channel as you thought), supported, according to Weir by "many loyal Labour Party members", is flavour of the month — the "only way to defeat Thatcher."

Although Kinnock and Campaign Co-ordinator Brian Gould disavow it now, tactical voting (and its corollary, coalitionism) is in fact the logical outcome of Kinnock's success in leading the Party rightwards. He may protest before the election that he wants to see as many Labour MPs elected as possible — but this is just to put him in the best bargaining position with the Alliance after the election!

Never mind that Owen says he'd prefer a coalition with the Tories; ignore the Alliance chorus that echoes the Tories' desire to expel socialism from Britain — Kinnock's road to the right paves the way for coalition with such forces.

Make no mistake about it, tactical voting represents an attempt to break up the Labour Party and no doubt there are many Labour MPs who would feel much more comfortable in an embrace with the Alliance. Remember where the Gang of Four came from and why they left! The dropping of all left policies, the attacks on the left, on Black Sections, the centralisation of the Party — all these make coalition with the Alliance easier.

But for the Labour Party, both tactical voting and coalitionism are a disaster. In the short term they are electoral liabilities. Already it is clear that in many Tory marginals, Labour is now second where they were third in 1983. Telling Labour supporters to vote Alliance in such places will lose Labour thousands of votes and let the Tories *in* not keep them *out*.

But the longer term consequences coud be even worse. Tactical voting and coalitionism are the logical outcome of the "anti-Thatcher alliance", advocated by the Euro-Communists since the 1983 election. Such popular front politics represent a complete lack of confidence in the working class; a readiness to support and advocate voting for a Party with policies just like the Tories. That road will lead to the collapse of the Labour vote, the likely collapse of Labour as a mass party, defeat for the working class.

Briefing believes that, on the contrary, the only way to defeat Thatcher is to vote Labour. The only way to rebuild Labour's support is to have confidence in working class struggle, to offer a clear alternative to the Tories, to offer socialist policies to deal with the crisis of unemployment and despair and to refuse any deals now and after the election with any anti-working class party.



PHOTO: Cath Tate

Photomontage by Cath Tate. Available from Cath Tate (LLB), PO Box 647, London SW2 4JX

Witch-hunt

Labour Party NEC meeting

An inside view

The NEC meeting was a farce. Debating the elections Kinnock and the Right all weighed in to denounce "tactical voting" for the terrible damage it would do the Party.

Then, in a pre-arranged stitch-up Sharon was dumped as PPC for the "crime" of damaging Neil Kinnock's ego and pointing out that the Labour Party is racist.

Despite the persuasive arguments of Kevin Coombes (Sharon's solicitor) and the NEC left, the rest of the NEC had closed minds: follow Neil, whatever the cost.

Ex-lefts excelled themselves: Tam Dalyell questioned whether Sharon could stand as PPC anyway if her husband and child were both ill. How touching!

And when Tony Benn moved that the NEC ask "tactical voter" Frank Field publicly to call for a vote for all Labour candidates, David Blunkett attacked Benn for being "divisive".

Next business was moved. In the chair, Kinnock gratefully accepted, and Benn's motion was not put.

The right wing male MP Field can call for a vote *against* 150 Labour candidates and the NEC refuses to act. The left wing Black woman Sharon Atkin is dumped as PPC for correctly calling the Party racist. So much for Kinnock opposing tactical voting.

Statement

"I find this move by the NEC appalling.

"Local Parties must have the right to make their own decisions about candidates.

"This type of action will only provide comfort to our enemies in the Tory Party and the SDP."

Russell Profitt,

PPC,

Lewisham East

Nottingham East: No confidence in Aslam

By Rick Simon
Vice Chair, Nottingham East CLP
(personal capacity)

At a special meeting to discuss the NEC decision to remove our PPC, Sharon Atkin, Nottingham East Executive Committee voted no confidence in the imposed candidate, Mohammed Aslam.

Contrary to a number of press reports, Aslam was not runner-up in the selection process to Sharon, and was not even shortlisted. He has consistently opposed Black Sections, and the rights of lesbians and gays, and his imposition can only be viewed as an extreme provocation.

Nottingham East EC is asking Aslam to resign as PPC, asking the NEC for permission to begin his deselection as candidate, the only constitutional way of dealing with it, and is calling for Sharon Atkin to be reinstated as our democratically selected PPC.

The defence of Sharon Atkin and other Black activists demands a campaign throughout the Labour Party and trade unions. Hopefully, Nottingham East's campaign can be co-ordinated with those established in Birminghan and by Labour Left Liaison in London.

"I too repeat that the Labour Party is racist. Sharon said it, I now repeat it. It is.

"I don't think the Labour Party is any worse than any other institution in this country, but I don't think it is any different.

"Within it are practices, procedures and even individuals who adhere to racism. Black people were the right people to recognise racism and point it out.

"As yet there has not been a word of public criticism of these prominent people (who criticise Party policy), one of whom actually encouraged people not to vote Labour. Sharon and I have never done that."

London Daily News, 30.4.87

Linda Bellos,

Leader,

Lambeth Council

Defence campaign launched

By Rik Simon
Vice Chair, Nottingham East CLP
(personal capacity)

At a meeting in Birmingham on Sunday May 3rd around 70 activists agreed the basis and structure of a national campaign in defence of Sharon Atkin and Phil Murphy.

Following a report from the National Black Section which had met earlier in the day, it was agreed that the basis of the campaign should be directed at opposition to the disciplinary action against Sharon and Phil, for their immediate reinstatement and for the right of the CLP to select its own PPC.

A statement from the Black Section, endorsed by the meeting, called for a vigorous campaign involving public meetings, leafletting and a pamphlet.

The Black Section indicated that they saw their primary objective to be mobilising the Black community in support of Sharon and Phil, and that the national campaign should play a parallel role within the Labour Party and Trade Unions.

It was clearly felt that, although a national campaign, its steering committee should reflect its natural areas of support in Birmingham, Nottingham East and National Black Sections. It was agreed to have equal representation for each.

Clare Short agreed to be the Chair of the campaign. A model resolution is being drawn up for circulation to Labour Parties and Trade Unions, and will be published in *Briefing* as soon as available.

The campaign can be contacted at 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Trade Union Briefing

Caterpillar occupation ends

SELL-OUT!

The 103 day occupation of Caterpillars Uddingston plant ended on April 27th.

Compulsory redundancies will now begin on October 16th, instead of May 11th — one of the few concessions won from management.

Hopes now rest on finding a new buyer or lessee for the plant.

Sir Monty Finniston, Chair of an obscure company called MPAT Holdings, claims he can save 400 jobs; but much scepticism surrounds this outfit. It is claimed to be an R&D firm,

By Jim Niblock
Glasgow Central CLP

employing 22 people; but one Sunday paper quotes the brother of the company's founder as saying only 3 boys are employed by it!

Moreover, Caterpillar contacted MPAT in the eleventh week of the occupation about the possibility of them taking over a part of the plant. Two weeks later Monty Finniston was suddenly desperate to start production at Caterpillar — which could only begin, of course, if the occupation ended.

Mick McPake, a senior steward at Caterpillar, said:

"The whole thing is a joke, more worthy of Monty Python than Monty Finniston. The shop stewards regard this as a red herring, an attempt to get some of our union bosses like Jimmy Airlie and Gavin Laird off the hook."

On the last day of the STUC conference two days before the occupation ended, John Brannan, leader of the occupation, told delegates of his disappointment at the role of his union — AEU — in the struggle:

"I ask this question: why should a punter be subjected not only to legal pressure or government pressure, but union pressure as well to rethink the strategy. Surely that pressure should be applied to the employer?"

Expected

Perhaps naievely, Brannon, like the majority of his union members, expected more from their union. They certainly didn't expect they would line up behind the company to crush the occupation!

Jimmy Airlie, Scottish leader of the AEU, rose to answer Brannan:

"We have an agreement which may not be the best in the world, but was the best one possible in the circumstances. There are tensions, and emotions obviously run high, but at the end of the day we have achieved a magnificent victory. (?)

"Workers get enough defeats without giving ourselves self-inflicted wounds. This is the end of a stage. The second part is to get the maximum number of jobs at Uddingston."

If a magnificent victory had been achieved, Brannan's speech would not have made sense. But in fact the AEU leadership had clearly threatened him — either you call a mass meeting and recommend a return to work, or we will.

Of the 1,200 jobs at stake, fewer than 100 will be retained when MPAT Holdings move in; but most informed observers don't expect MPAT even to get off the ground — far less to build up to 400 jobs.

Airlie's statement that workers get enough defeats without self-inflicted wounds is a real choker coming as it does from the man who held a pistol at the occupation's head!

This leading Euro-Communist has lost all credibility in the rank and file labour movement. His role as a left messenger boy for the politics of the AEU right provided the essential medium and cover for the sell-out.

If only all right wingers had a Jimmy Airlie in the cupboard, as *Marxism Today* and *Seven Days* preach, the new realist Communist Party could play an important role... for the right wing.

Lessons

One positive and two negative lessons are clear from the experience of the occupation. On the positive side it's clear that when workers take the decision to fight and stick firmly to it, then public support is no problem. The political parties and Union leaders, as well as management, must take this broad support into account.

On the other hand, broad support is no good unless it's translated into clear political demands on the union and Labour Party — a process the bureaucracy fears above all others.

The demos in support of Caterpillar were strange affairs, with Tories and SDP-Liberal speakers on the platform. These mini "popular fronts" effectively suppressed any move towards raising clear political demands, as this would "undermine unity" and the broad support.

Instead of using the broad support as a tool to isolate the Tories, the Labour leaders do the opposite. They embrace the Tories and SDP with cynical talk of unity; and leave the workers, with no political leadership, watching the real unity that exists in the factory being slowly suffocated by the "unity" of popular frontism.

The other negative feature of the occupation was the lack of organised support. This is obviously linked to the last point; but still much more could be done to establish links at rank and file level.

The STUC called a west of Scotland shop stewards' meeting early in the struggle, where 350 attended: but this was a one-off exercise, dominated by the bureaucracy and held more for face-saving reasons than anything practical.

Rank and file links must be re-established to learn the lessons of recent struggles and avoid repeating mistakes as well as preparing to extend solidarity with future struggles.

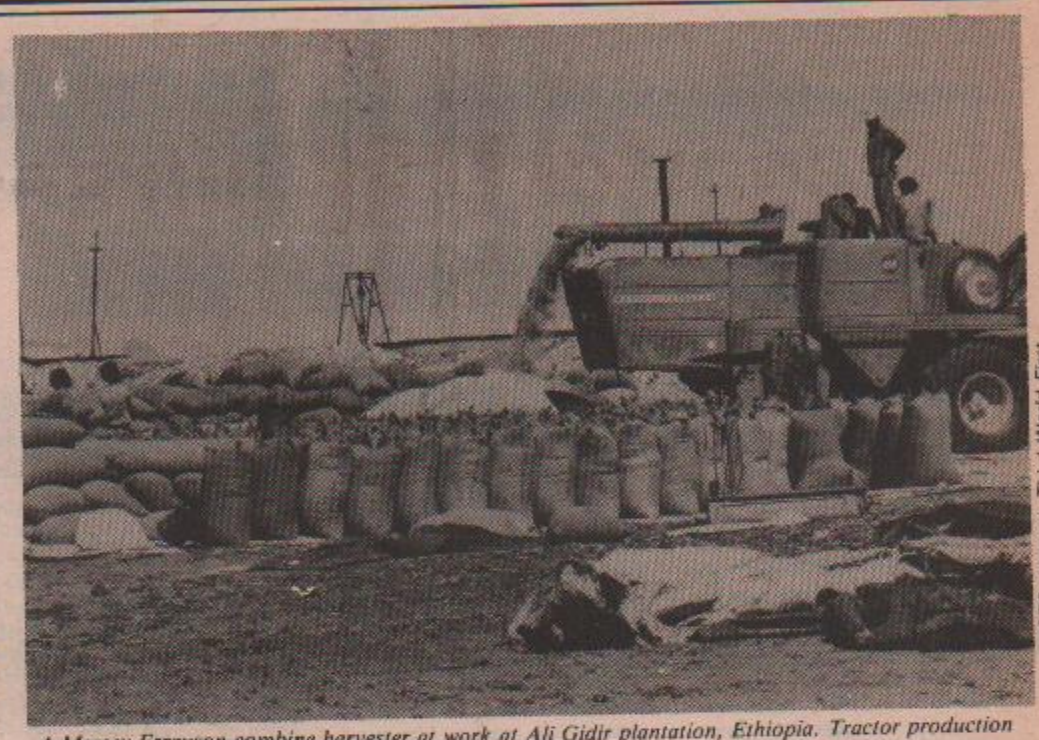


PHOTO courtesy Third World First

A Massey-Ferguson combine harvester at work at Ali Gidir plantation, Ethiopia. Tractor production decreases in Britain; need increases throughout the world.

Tractor crisis - international solution

Tractors not Trident!

The following article was written just before the announcement on April 15th of 1,000 redundancies at the Massey-Ferguson tractor plant in Coventry. The Canadian-based multinational has also threatened pay cuts on the remaining 2,500 workers.

The current crisis in the tractor-manufacturing industry, highlighted below, has been presented starkly in the latest announcement.

ROD SWEENEY charts an answer for workers in the industry, and potential purchasers alike.

The tractor industry faces huge world-wide problems.

UK sales last year fell by a quarter to fewer than 19,000 units, the lowest for twenty years.

There has also been a price war raging, with Case International Harvester of Doncaster being the most aggressive, offering discounts of up to 40% off the official price in some areas.

In one freak case last year, an unused tractor was sold two years after it was made — at a 62% discount.

The market leaders in the UK are Ford, New Holland (24%), Massey-Ferguson (20%), Case IH (18.5%) and John Deere, a US company (13%). (Source, *FT*, 17.2.87).

In Coventry Massey-Ferguson has the largest tractor factory in the Western world. In its heyday, in the seventies, it employed about 7,500 workers. At present, it only employs a dismal 3,500.

A 3-day week has been introduced on the shop floor and as recently as March 12th it was announced that 90 staff jobs are to be axed.

There will not be any wage increases for any workers in 1987.

As if all this was not bad enough, the MF workers now face a new problem. Eight separate companies under the MF umbrella are being set up, each responsible for their own profits. Four distribution companies (in the UK, France, Germany and N. America); one spares, two manufacturing (France and Banner Lane, Coventry) and a manufacturing plus distributing company in Italy.

Workers now not only have to compete with other tractor companies, but also with internal corporate sub-divisions. It is obvious if MF has, let's say, an order for 2,000 tractors, it will invite its three manufacturing units to tender separately for the work with the most competitive offer sure to win the order.

By Rod Sweeney
Coventry S.W. CLP

As socialists, we recognise that capital has no national allegiance, and acts in an international manner to secure maximum profits. It is time Labour understood this and acted in the same manner.

Why should, for example, British and French workers compete with each other to increase the profits of multinationals?

The British or French workers who "win" this particular battle, will do it only by accepting lower wages and conditions than the "losers".

Tractor manufacturers say that demand worldwide is falling. This is absurd.

Third World countries are crying out for agricultural machinery to combat starvation and their dependence on the US and the EEC, who engage in "The Politics of Hunger" to bolster capitalism.

Their line, to put it crudely, is: "You do as we say, or starve." The demand is there; the ability to pay is not — such is the "indebtedness" of most poor countries.

Shop stewards committees, socialists, and all Labour organisations, should unite in a campaign for world-wide workers' take-overs of tractor factories with the overall strategy of making the third world countries self-reliant in food.

A Labour government in Britain could make a start. We should employ more workers in the tractor industry, which would reduce unemployment, thus reducing the wage involved in benefit payments.

But the real benefit to any country participating in this strategy would be goodwill from third world countries, who should be given interest-free, long term loans to finance the purchase.

Compared to Trident, it's the bargain of the century.

Scottish Trade Union Congress 1987

Fine words - shame about the action

The 1987 STUC annual congress was dominated by the publication of their document "*Scotland — a Land fit for People*".

This is an assessment of Scotland's economic climate, and how the trade union movement could reverse the degeneration and de-industrialisation of Scotland's economy.

By Alan Pow
Delegate, Sterling District Trades Council (personal capacity)

Whilst many delegates praised the document, it hardly offered radical solutions; although it could be a stepping stone in the correct direction.

Too many of its ideas have been heard and put forward before; but still the STUC should be congratulated for making a serious attempt to address Scotland's industrial problems and provide some kind of platform to campaign from.

The energy debate was typical. The STUC General Council cobbled together a composite motion (thereby managing to get the support of both the NUM and the AEU) calling only for a moratorium on the construction of new nuclear power stations in Scotland.

Considering none are currently planned, it can hardly be regarded as very forward-looking!

Our delegation was greatly disappointed that the motion did not include Torness. Torness has yet to be commissioned, after a delay for further safety checks, so this should have been the ideal circumstances for the Scottish trade union movement to campaign against the power station ever being commissioned.

Dounreay

One positive alteration to congress policy was the decision to oppose the European Demonstration reprocessing plant at Dounreay.

Congress also decided to oppose the Job Training Scheme and therefore hopefully influence the TUC to alter its policy on the question.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly, but I felt that should some compromise arrangement come forward, giving greater trade union participation in approving and monitoring schemes, the STUC may give in. So it will be important for trade union activists to make sure that their union campaigns for this policy nationally.

However, Congress did not oppose the YTS, which Sterling Trades Council had argued it should do. We were only supported by two national unions: COHSE and the NCU.

Assembly

The STUC has always given strong support to a Scottish Assembly with proper economic and revenue raising powers, but it was interesting to note that Congress agreed that any assembly should include a Ministry for Women structure comparable to a national ministry set up under a Labour government.

A Ministry for Women as proposed by the Labour Party was adopted, calling for women in the trade unions to have a say, but bearing in mind it is essential that the Ministry work with and on behalf of working class women.

There are 3 women on the STUC General Council, all elected from the women workers section by the whole Congress.

Caterpillar

Finally, Congress was greeted with the news of the ending of the Caterpillar occupation, which dampened the week's events.

On Friday morning, John Brannan, convenor of Caterpillar shop stewards, addressed Congress and told delegates that union pressure on his members had been unacceptable. "This pressure should have been on the employers," he added.

Jimmy Airlie, National Executive member of the AEU, and former leader of the famous UCS work-in, defended his union's policy in calling for an end to the occupation.

Therefore Congress concluded with another depressing story of a national union failing to give its members continued support that, they so richly deserved.

Tory NHS pay concession

No comfort in nurses' deal

Norman Fowler must be feeling well pleased with his nifty escape from a tight corner on nurses' pay.

But the pre-election government pay award will do nothing to prevent the flow of nurses out of the NHS and the desperate staff shortages that are hitting hospitals in the big cities.

Even the DHSS now admits a 20% shortfall of qualified nurses in inner London, and an overall shortage of 16% across the capital.

Fowler's objective was to be *seen* to do something to stem this growing crisis, but without spending too much money. His ideal cover in these circumstances has been the back-room deliberations of the nurses so-called "independent pay review body" which was set up after the 1982 pay dispute deliberately to remove nurses' pay from normal union negotiations.

The health unions have helped in this, by falling utterly silent on the issue of nurses' and NHS pay — and by failing to challenge the status of the "review body" which now pronounces with the unchallenged authority of the Pools Panel.

Worse, the unions are now even demanding that if management will not agree an acceptable increase on ancillary workers' pay, a new "independent" body should be set up to pronounce a "fair" settlement! This would effectively wipe out traditional union negotiations for the vast majority of health workers.

By Jack Doberman

Having tried might and main (and failed) to bludgeon the nurses' review body into awarding a minimal 3-4% pay increase, Fowler was quick enough to recognise the potential electoral damage of being seen to oppose the 9.5% average offer he saw looming up.

While the unions remained tongue-tied, and the Royal College of Nursing was allowed to make all the running with its empty calls for a 17% increase (including a £1,000 minimum increase for every nurse), Fowler simply defused any embarrassment by agreeing to the review body's proposals, and dipping into Chancellor Lawson's money box to pay up.

Opposition

The opposition was gobsmacked. Michael Meacher, who had made loud noises that Labour would fund the full review body award, was challenged to say whether a Labour government would pay *more* than this "independent" body had recommended. Fowler then put the boot in with the obvious jibe that even if Meacher wanted to pay more, Roy Hattersley wouldn't let him!

The RCN, which had made loud rhetorical noises about possibly calling a mass meeting of all its 160,000 members to discuss some kind of action, lamely accepted Fowler's handout and ditched its calls for 17%.



PHOTO: John Chapman

No action on pay from Bickerstaffe: oh, Rodney — what a plonker!

The unions, who had done nothing to mobilise their members (a majority of nurses) before or duing the pay review, began making irrelevant belated moans and groans — after the increase was announced.

The real losers in the whole affair of course are the nurses themselves (not one nurse could be found to say she was satisfied with the increase, despite the efforts of teams of eager media hacks prowling hospital corridors) and the patients.

Patients will suffer the consequences of continued and worsening short-staffing on wards, as nurses, who were given no lead for a collective fight, vote with their feet as individuals, and walk out on the NHS in search of a living wage and jobs bringing less stress and better working conditions.

Generous?

Patients and other staff will also suffer from the apparently small but still significant short-funding of Fowler's apparently generous offer. Between the actual £714m cost of the review body awards this year and the government funds to cover them is a gap of £30m nationally, averaging out at £150,000 per health authority — more or less the cost of running a ward for a year.

Norman Fowler claims this could be easily covered by "efficiency savings": but up to now almost all of these "savings" have amounted to cuts in ancillary services, job and pay packets.

All in all, the deal offers little comfort to health workers, to patients, or to those who saw the possibility of making NHS pay central to a concerted challenge to the squalid Tory record on the NHS.

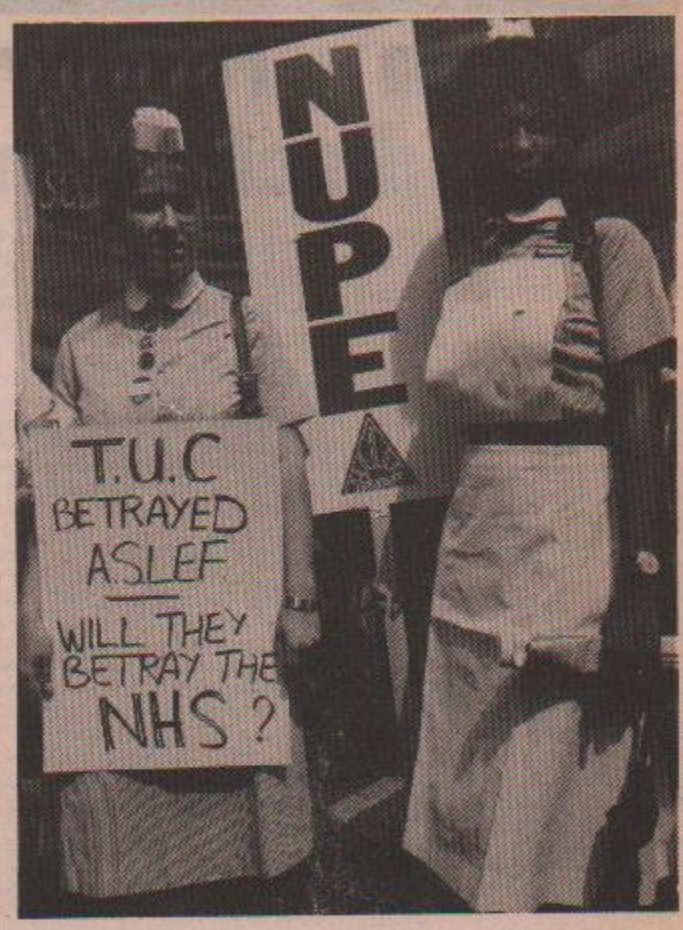


PHOTO: John Arthur

Nurses' pay: when will the trade unions take it seriously?

Hanger's update

The sacked limbmakers agreed on April 21st to vote on the last offer of Hanger's management when it was put into writing.

At the meeting on May 1st there was still no written offer on the table.

As we go to press, the next meeting will be at 10am on Thursday May 7th in Roehampton — after a mass picket from 7am — and if there is a written offer, they will then vote.

On May 1st some members of the disputes committee met the Education Officer from the Metal and Allied Workers Union from South Africa. They represent the Sarmcol Metal Workers who were sacked two years ago on April 30th by BTR in South Africa for requesting union recognition. Ten of the sacked workers have been murdered since.

Plans to do some fundraising for their South African comrades are being discussed. Graham Croucher of the Hanger's disputes committee wishes to encourage fundraising for the Sarmcol workers — he says that the T-shirts they have for sale are absolutely marvellous!

The Department of Employment cancelled the appeals scheduled for April 28th for some of the men who were appealing against not being allowed to claim unemployment benefit, even though they all received their P45s several months ago. Their excuse was that they believed that Hangers was about to come to a settlement!

Please send messages of support and donations to TASS, c/o Steve Blease, 520 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4VQ.



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

NUT Conference

NUT and Labour leaders tighten Tories grip!

The NUT's Easter Conference debated action against Kenneth Baker.

The left narrowly lost — with the result that there will be no national action against Baker, and that there will be no support for those who take local "no cover" action to defend their working conditions.

Instead, members are encouraged to "work to rule", accepting Baker's imposed conditions but applying them to the last absurd letter.

This approach will be linked with half day protest strikes, and eventually with pressure on local authorities to deliver conditions that are an improvement on Baker.

The dangers of this strategy are that it leaves Baker to dominate the national scene and weakens the action that members have been taking, in the more militant areas.

Baker has achieved his year-long success on the basis of national union *inaction*. The present mild approach looks unlikely to challenge his domination.

By the Socialist Teachers Alliance

Nor are Labour leaders providing such a challenge. Education spokesperson Giles Radice has asked the teaching unions to call off their action, pending an election.

Labour authorities will most probably be implementing the new Tory conditions. And in London, the ILEA continues with its plan for large-scale redeployment and for confrontation with the London NUT.

Taken together these party and union responses are a textbook example of how apparent moderation serves to strengthen the Tories' grip.

A year ago, in the wake of the teachers' action, the Tories' standing on education issues was low. The pay campaign had highlighted the government's whole attitude to the resourcing of education and to the teaching force. Twelve months later, the drift of teachers' leaders away from action — a move in which pressure from Labour employers has played some part — has given back the initiative to Baker.

NUT militants have a difficult few months ahead. In a situation greatly changed by the Tories' law and the conference decision, they will need to find the right tactics to continue the defence of working conditions. No-cover action will be important in this. It can maintain members' morale while the pay and conditions campaign is being rebuilt. There will also be dozens of local disputes about the workings of the new conditions, in which militants will be involved. The aim will be to demonstrate that Baker's dictatorship has not broken teacher action.

At the same time, there is a need for a longer-term perspective for rebuilding the union. In this, unity with the other TUC-affiliated union, the NAS/UWT is essential.

The polarisation among teachers during 2 years of action led not only to a growth in militancy, but to a growth of "professional unions". To stop this trend, there is an urgent need to gather those teachers willing to act in defence of their interests in a single union.

Civil Service pay campaign

We have the strength to win!

It's crunch time in the Civil Service pay campaign.

After the rolling programme of industrial action which has hit every region of the country over past weeks, delegates to CPSA and SCPS Annual Conferences will be asking: what next? and when?

The right wing CPSA NEC have already committed the Union to a ballot on all-out action, with voting to begin on May 18th.

This is the Monday immediately following the end of Conference; and with the whole of the bureaucracy and the activists in Blackpool the preceding week, the intention is clearly to lose the ballot.

Within the Broad Left there is unanimous acceptance that all-out action is the only way to win; but that this cannot be achieved without a campaign.

Two tactics have therefore developed to make sure that this occurs:

- to put the start of the ballot back by one week;
- to close down the Conference after the first day.

Although the Broad Left is officially opposed to this latter option, it is gathering momentum among activists and should in my view be supported. Apart from the practical reasons for not taking key activists away from their branches in the middle of the campaign, the closure of Conference to fight for victory in an all-out strike ballot would clearly demonstrate our commitment to win.

By Alastair Wallace CPSA Broad Left

In SCPS the debate is taking a completely different character. The controlling "secret" Broad Left have, it seems, totally rejected the all-out strategy.

They are toying with various ways of repeating or escalating the selective action. Although they may well wait to see what CPSA decide, the probable outcome is a split in the campaign.

This would be very damaging and there are bound to be those who argue that unity must be preserved at all costs. (Indeed this is already the view of some members of the CPSA Kinnockite BL '84 Group). But while unity is important it cannot be held as a gun against the heads of CPSA members.

Continuing *selective* action would clearly be wrong. Both the members and the Tories have not seen the current action as an end in itself, but as a preliminary to something bigger. Continuing with more of the same simply puts off the question of where we go next.

Similarly, escalation short of all-out action will be seen as merely delaying the inevitable, while all the time undermining our ability to achieve it.

If unity is to be preserved then the onus must be on the SCPS to fall in with CPSA and campaign for all-out action.

The lack of a tradition of militancy, and the resulting lack of confidence in our ability to succeed, means activists will have an uphill task winning such a vote.

Yet the objective strength of civil service workers makes us amongst the most powerful in the country. The trick will be to recognise the potential we have — then we can win!

Labour Party

Women's Organisation Review

Women's review needs more discussion!

The National Labour Women's Conference is due to take place in Blackpool on May 16-18th 1987.

Of course, if an election is called for June, normal life as we know it in the Labour Party will cease, and all Conferences, meetings, etc., will be cancelled.

But let us for a moment assume the Conference will go ahead.

There are 14 out of 146 resolutions going to National Labour Women's Conference on the question of the review of how women should be organised in the Labour Party. The debate is extremely complicated and has so far been restricted to few women. It is therefore in many ways only just beginning.

The National Labour Women's Committee (NLWC) has recognised this, and will be proposing to remit all these particular resolutions to a special conference in September. This will allow more discussion in the Women's Sections and union organisations.

This is a good proposal. If any changes are to be made, we must ensure a thorough discussion throughout the women's organisations first.

By Barbara Green
Islington South & Finsbury Women's Section

If Conference adopts a resolution in May, the views of just one gathering of women will have long term repercussions for the women's organisation as a whole.

For example, let's look at one particular proposal backed by the Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC) Executive. This seeks to restrict delegates to two per Constituency, rather than two delegates per Women's Section or Council which is the existing rule. The consequences of this would be to reduce the number of women from the CLPs attending the Conference as delegates.

Representation

We all agree that women in the trade unions should have more representation, but is it necessary to reduce the participation of women from the CLPs to do this?

Nothing I have heard from the WAC executive has convinced me that the so-called "rationalisation" of the Women's Sections delegates will increase democracy in the women's organisation.

We should start from wanting to increase participation of all women in the women's organisation. We should be encouraging the establishment of more Women's Sections, which in turn would be able to participate actively in the National Labour Women's Organisation and Conference.

The WAC proposal would hardly encourage this, as within a particular CLP it would not matter how many different Women's Sections existed — only two delegates would be entitled to go to Conference.

Accountability

The WAC proposal does not deal with the question of accountability of delegates. On another issue, the election of the National Labour Women's Committee, WAC back a proposal that the committee be elected direct at Labour Women's Conference, rather than — as at present — in various regional women's conferences. The argument is that the NLWC should be accountable to the Conference of which it is the Executive — not a by regional conferences.

Yet the effect of two delegates shared between various constituency women's sections has the same drawback. How would these delegates be mandated? By the Sections of which they are members? To the Sections as a whole? (If so, what is the point of having separate Sections with the scope for having different policies?)

Perhaps women in time will be convinced by the WAC Executive position, but it is obvious that more discussion is needed.

The discussion must start from what kind of women's organisation we want and need to win more women to the Labour Party and have a more effective voice in the Party as a whole.

The constitutional changes should flow from that — not the other way round.

WAC should accept that women feel that more discussion is needed, and not attempt to force their proposals through at the May Conference.

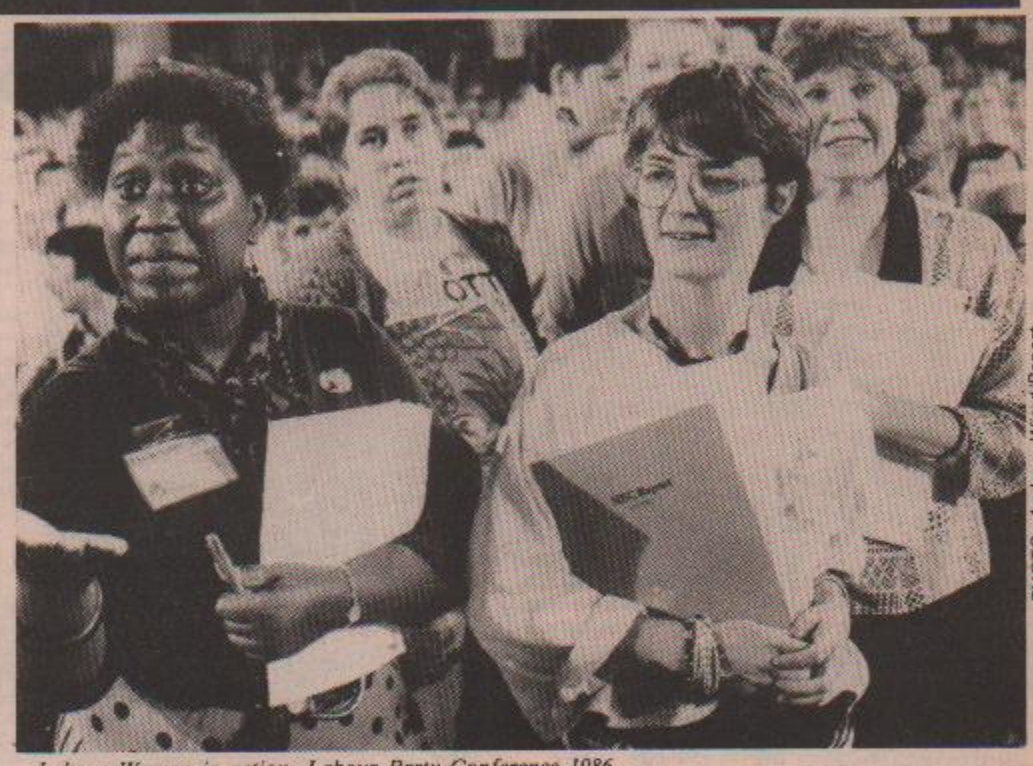


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard/Report

Labour Women in action, Labour Party Conference 1986.

Consider the *Militant* proposal!

As we move into the "consultation" process over the reorganisation of the Labour Women's organisation many women expect there to be a great deal of support from Women's Sections for LWAC's proposals.

Yet on the central question of the voting strength of women's organisations and trade unions at Labour Women's Conference, the proposal emanating from supporters of *Militant* is worth some consideration.

Militant, as personified by Margaret Creer on the National Labour Women's committee, propose that there be one vote per delegate, with the following being the basis of delegation: Women's Sections and CLPs, 2 delegates; Women's Councils, 4 delegates; Trade Unions, 2 delegates per 1,000 affiliated women members, or part thereof, up to 5,000; then one for every 2,000 after that.

If all Women's Sections, CLPs without Women's Sections, and Women's Councils took up their delegate entitlement, there would be around 2,700 delegates. And if all affiliated trade unions took up their full delegate entitlement there would be around 1,000 trade union delegates.

The consultation paper argues that this would "assist in drawing a wide layer of women into activity in both the trade unions and the labour women's organisation. Voting would be linked to active participation by linking it to delegation strength. It would also mean attention to the raising and allocation of funds in both the women's organisations and the trade unions."

By Jane Connor
Hornsey & Wood Green Women's Section

On the surface, this appears a very positive proposal, which would encourage women in the trade unions to take forward the struggle for representation and democracy. For instance, under this system, NUPE would be entitled to 185 delegates (at present they can have 20).

It would be much harder for so many delegates to be "appointed" and could provide a big push for direct election of delegates.

However, many of the trade union bureaucrats have already stated that they "don't have the money" to send even 20 delegates. It's also clear that women's organisations could potentially still have many more delegates than the trade unions, a situation which the trade unions are highly unlikely to accept.

In theory, Labour Women's Conference could have nearly 3,000 delegates. Whilst we might be in favour of such a large conference, those with their hands on the purse strings at Walworth Road are likely to say "no way"!

That said, this reorganisation poses us with the choice of either going for what is most principled and in the long-term interests of labour movement women, or going for the least worst option that might have a chance of winning. I still think that the *Militant* proposal is probably the most democratic, but has the least chance of success. What do you think?

For a block vote at Women's Conference!

"This conference calls upon the NEC in conjunction with the National Labour Women's Committee to provide for (...) a system of voting at the National Conference of Labour Women, after 1987, which reflects the number of women represented by the respective delegates."

That was the view of women at the 1986 National Labour Women's Conference.

The system of representation at our National Conference has been a thorny question for a number of years.

Voting takes place on the basis of one vote per delegate. Women's Sections, Women's Councils and CLPs without a women's organisation can sent two delegates and affiliated organisations (including trade unions) can sent up to 20 delegates.

The trade unions have never been very happy with this system, arguing that it does not fairly represent the numbers of women trade union members. Under the present system a CLP Women's Section delegate who may represent 60 women and a trade union delegate who represents, say, 60,000 women, each have one vote. Clearly this is ridiculous.

It seems likely that the review will end by recommending the introduction of some form of block vote at Women's Conference. At the moment the main proposal on how this should operate is the one put forward by the Labour Women's Action Committee.

WAC suggests that the votes at Women's Conference should be split on a 50/50 basis: that is, the total votes cast by affiliated organisations should have the same weight as those cast by the women's organisations and CLPs.

By Jane Prust
Chair, Deptford CLP (personal capacity)

WAC base this proposal on the principle of "parity of esteme for the two wings of the movement."

This system has the advantage of giving increased representation to the trade unions without necessarily significantly reducing the representation from the Women's Sections.

The underlying principle of "parity of esteme" is more problematic. It is probably true to say that most trade unions do not have structures which adequately represent their women members' views, and that the way their delegates vote at women's conference is determined by policy laid down by men.

In the future, hopefully, this will change! We should be supporting women union activists in their fight for a more democratic and representative structure in their unions.

Union delegates could be voting very differently if they were voting in line with policies decided on by women.

If this were the case, then the best way to build an active, campaigning women's organisation might even (dare I say it) be for the unions to have more than 50% of the vote!

It would be a mistake to engrave the figures 50/50 and the principle of "parity of esteme" in tablets of stone as unchangeable commandments.

Whatever else comes out of the consultation process on the Review, hopefuily some of the artificial barriers between trade union women and CLP women will be broken down, and we will be able to go forward together as sisters in fighting for socialism.

Streatham reselection

Still backing Anna Tapsell!

Anna Tapsell was selected for the second time as the PPC for Streatham on Sunday April 26th.

The selection follows the NEC refusal to endorse Anna after her original selection back in December, because of the involvement of Black Sections.

The NEC had threatened non-recognition and possible imposition of a candidate if Streatham did not have what they called "a constitutional selection"; that is one without the participation of Black Sections.

Streatham Black Section reluctantly decided for tactical reasons not to participate in a second selection, but openly declared its full support for Anna's nomination.

Janice Muir, Labour Party regional officer, a frequent visitor these days to "oversee" Streatham meetings, warned delegates at the selection meeting in no uncertain terms that a tactic of a "shortlist of one" would also be unacceptable to the bureaucrats of Walworth Road.

By Graham Topley
Streatham CLP

In the event there were three candidates: but Ann Pettifor's cynical attempt to stand against Anna Tapsell came to nothing — Anna won overwhelmingly on the first ballot.

The task now must be to mobilise the whole of Streatham Party, to build on the groundwork done during John McDonnell's ILEA election campaign, to unite behind Anna Tapsell and go all out for a Labour victory whenever the election comes.

Brighton rejects Kinnock's retreat

At its last General Committee, Brighton Labour Party discussed the Labour leadership's reaction to Labour's defeat in Greenwich.

Brighton Labour Party was united in its opposition to Kinnock's retreat to the right.

In particular, we:

- rejected the Hewitt letter: we reaffirmed our support for lesbian and gay rights and agreed to sponsor the Lesbian and Gay Pride March;
- opposed the watering down of Labour's defence policy on the question of Cruise missiles;
- rejected tactical voting;
- supported Sharon Atkin's right to stand as prospective parliamentary candidate in Nottingham East.

By Bryn Griffiths
Brighton Labour Party

The resolution also committed Brighton Labour Party to "campaign for a Labour victory at the next election on the basis of *socialist* policies passed at Labour Party Conference."

We rejected Kinnock's strategy of distancing Labour from those involved in struggle stating instead that such groups must be "...an important element of the campaign."

The resolution was referred to the two constituency parties so that practical implementation can be discussed. *Labour Briefing* supporters will be fighting to ensure that the spirit of the resolution is kept to and that the general election campaign is fought on the basis of radical socialist policies.

Is there a new realigment on the way?

Ken's left turn...

With the rapid approach of the General Election, and Labour's disastrous showing at Greenwich and in the polls, some of the tensions which would inevitably have surfaced after the election are beginning to break through now.

It has been clear for a long time that if Labour won a majority there would be a stepping-up of the witch-hunt against all those who demanded a Labour government should take steps in the interests of the working class and oppressed.

In the event of a hung Parliament no one has ever seriously doubted (despite the denials) that the Kinnock leadership would be willing to do a deal with the Alliance for a coalition or some kind of repeat of the Lib-Lab pact.

In such circumstances it would be even more imperative for the bureaucracy to silence those who wanted Labour to maintain its independence from the junior Tories.

If Labour lost the election then a battle royal would begin for the succession and over where to lay the blame. It is highly unlikely that Kinnock could survive as leader if Labour lost the election and he could not deliver a coalition.

The right have already make it clear whom they would blame for such a defeat — the "London factor", *Militant*, Black Sections, "violent pickets", the "loony left", etc. — in effect all those who have in any way resisted the drive to the right. They would move quickly to replace Kinnock with their own candidate — John Smith being the most favoured name in press speculation.

After the Liverpool witch-hunt the leadership hoped that the media would give Labour a better press. Of course, all they did was point out that other "subversives" (Scargill, Bernie Grant, Brent Council, etc.) were still present!

Now, with it beginning to look as if there is nothing further to lose, the right seems to be pushing for a full-scale witch-hunt, with attacks on the Black Sections AGM, on the Birmingham Black Sections rally, and on left wing activists around the country.

In this situation the pressure on the "soft left" has increased. The dividing line between the "hard" and "soft" left since Kinnock became leader in 1983 has been a fundamental one.

The hard left have solidly supported those in struggle against the bosses and the Tories (such as the miners and printworkers) and clearly criticised the direction in which Kinnock has taken Party policy. On the other hand, the "soft left" have had a project of "keeping Kinnock out of the claws of the right" by swearing undying loyalty and attempting by back-room manoeuvre to keep some semblance of left wing policy.

Denying from the start that Kinnock was in fact *leading* the right in the reversal of policy and the witch-hunt this "soft left" have been the main people arguing for "unity" in order to win the election.

This fence-sitting has proved too uncomfortable for most leaders of the soft left. One after another they have made their peace with the right and abandoned wholesale any pretence to being on the left (Meacher, Blunkett, Sawyer being the most prominent).

They have thrown in their lot with the witch-hunt and denounced the hard left in the same terms as the right. The organised tendency of this soft left, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee has attempted to hold together an alliance of all those who signed up for the project of "cuddling up to Kinnock".

Thus while leading the witch-hunt in Liverpool it opposed some other expulsions (such as those of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally). Whilst supporting the miners' strike in words while it was taking place, it soon denounced it for "violent methods', and the lack of a ballot once it was over. It was the main protagonist of unity behind Kinnock and not struggling against the Tories' and bosses' attacks.

The LCC's major "coup" was to recruit Ken Livingstone after he was disowned by the hard left for his role in selling out the ratecapping struggle at the GLC. Livingstone, always on the lookout for a fan club and never choosy about his friends, was seen as the big catch.

Not having the kind of pressure which the "soft left" leaders on the NEC have to face, Livingstone has stood firm on many issues important to the hard left: against the witch-hunt (after much prompting over Liverpool); support for Black Sections, and lesbian and gay rights, and for British withdrawal from Ireland — although much quieter than during his early GLC days.

Yet whenever it has come to the crunch of having to implement a policy or put his personal career on the line Livingstone has backed down.

As leader of the GLC he made "socialism" popular and stuck his neck out on some issues, particularly Ireland. Yet at the same time he refused to challenge the courts over Fares Fair; failed to support demands which could have gone some way to getting rid of low pay for London Transport workers; and stabbed the fight against ratecapping in the back. His fight to "save the GLC" relied solely on lobbying the Lords for support rather than any thought out action against abolition.

His support for greater representation of women and black people amongst Labour parliamentary candidates left one exception — Brent East — which he saw as "his" seat by right.

For someone who has mastered the art of manipulating the press to make sure his views are known, he kept very quiet on the miners' and printworkers' struggles.

As it has become obvious to everyone, except those who don't want to see it, that Kinnock is firmly against *any* left wing policy, tension has developed within the soft left (and the LCC) between those who are prepared to continue down the road of unity at any cost and those who have belatedly begun to realise that they have no chance of influencing Kinnock and have begun to *assist* in the ditching of left policy.

Not long after joining the LCC, Livingstone announced at 1986 Labour Party Conference that the project had failed and that he wanted a new (second) "realignment of the left", consisting as he saw it of the Campaign Group, Tribune, the LCC and the right of the hard left (leaving the "Trots" out in the cold).

Since then divisions have developed in the LCC over working with Labour Left Liaison (it was rejected), over whether to defend the present system of reselection (rejected) and British withdrawal from Ireland — passed by a "consultative conference", but yet to be considered by LCC conference itself. (It is worth noting that the policy paper, written by Peter Hain, which was agreed sees everything in terms of a *British solution*, i.e. Britain drawing up a constitution, Britain guaranteeing civil liberties, and Britain maintaining its troops in Ireland.)

Livingstone is this year standing for the constituency section of the NEC (he stood for

By Pete Firmin
Brent East CLP
(personal capacity)

treasurer in '86); but is refusing to stand on the LCC slate because the LCC declares its main aim to be kicking off Benn and Skinner (Livingstone welcomed Heffer's defeat last year). Yet he has *not* resigned from the LCC Executive Committee. Livingstone claims, with some justification, to have been on the right side in the arguments in the LCC, but this ignores the fact that as a prominent member he is identified with their decisions and actions.

Livingstone, when pushed, admits that he is unlikely to be on either of the main left slates for the NEC this year (Campaign Group and LLL) yet believes he can win and talks of "unity of the left".

What he in fact means is that he can appear as all things to all people, picking up votes across the spectrum from the LCC to the "softer" wing of LLL. His version of unity of the left is of unity around him as a candidate, not of a united left slate fighting for maximum representation on the NEC.

While swearing undying loyalty to Kinnock, Livingstone is no doubt participating in caucuses to discuss who should be the "left" candidate in the fight over the succession; and it is not only *Guardian* feature writers who see him as the only viable candidate against the right's John Smith.

Here again rather than prepare a strong and democratic left opposition to Kinnock's politics now and for democratic discussion of who would be the left's candidate, we see the *same method* as the right — saying one thing while organising to step in with the minimum of fuss and democratic debate.

Livingstone has been making leftish noises of late. This has less to do with a recognition of the tasks of socialists than with the realisation that if Labour loses the election his opportunity to stand as leader is going to come sooner than he previously expected and he has to regain some credibility amongst the left.

The hard left was taken in by Livingstone before. Yet his politics have never significantly changed. He did not suddenly "swing to the right" to capitulate on rate-capping any more than he is now moving left. The determining factor throughout has been the career of one Ken Livingstone.

The most significant thing about Livingstone' politics is the total lack of any conception of what the agent for change is in society, of the *organised working class* achieving socialism. Such a concept demands an openness and accountability which are anathema to Livingstone.

Briefing must not ignore developments amongst the soft left; or the growing realisation amongst many rank and file labour movement activists who swallowed the "unity" line that it has led to disaster.

We have to be willing to work with them and their leaders such as Livingstone on specific issues where there is agreement. But let's not resurrect illusions in the likes of Livingstone.



PHOTO: John Chapman

Ken (right) and the Queen (left) join forces to admire GLC achievements: opening of the Thames barrier, May 1984. Eleven months later, the GLC was no more. The Queen — and the barrier — remain.

Positive Images in Haringey

Bigots disrupt Council meeting

Tory councillors and supporters exposed themselves for the homophobic bigots they are at a Haringey Council meeting held on April 22nd.

Supporters of lesbian and gay rights turned out in strength to oppose the anticipated presentation of a Tory-sponsored petition attacking the Council's policy of promoting positive images of lesbians and gay men in schools.

In the event, the Tories cocked up their publicity stunt by addressing the petition not to Haringey Council, but to Haringey Labour Party — so it was not presented at the meeting.

This did not stop the bigots from attacking Cllr Philip Jones during a debate on the Tory Social Security Act.

When Labour members appealed for quiet, right wing Tory councillor Bernard Dehnel said he wouldn't be quiet because he had "no respect" for the councillor in question — then proceded to attack "homosexuality" in general.

By Craig Brewin
Haringey Councillor

Jones is an openly gay councillor as well as Chair of Haringey's Community Affairs Committee. The Labour Councillors then voted to exclude Dehnel from the meeting.

But this was only a signal to the raving right in the gallery to take up the attack. One well-known Tory activist screamed that "queers have no right to talk about the family" and refused to leave when ordered to do so by the majority group on the Council.

Police were called in and escorted the offender off the premises. However, in the meantime, local Tory activists showered Labour councillors and members with a hail of appalling verbal abuse — calling us "Red Bastards", "Perverts", "Queers", and (the ultimate insult?) "You're not British!"

The Tories have tried to claim that they are criticising the Council's lesbian and gay rights policy on "educational" grounds. This has now been shown to be a lie.

In collecting signatures for their petition on the streets, they have abused Labour Party members, attacked advocates of lesbian and gay rights as "perverted", "degenerate", "AIDS carriers", and so on.

They are attacking the very right of lesbians and gay men to exist. The fascist thugs sheltering under the Tory label are intent on disrupting Council meetings and any other public gathering at which we try to advance our policy.

However, calling in the police to remove them from the Council gallery is *not* the answer. The Labour Council must itself take necessary steps to protect our supporters in the gallery. The abuse to which they have been subjected at meeting after meeting is intolerable.

If we cannot protect them, then we should advise them not to come.

A Labour councillor should be present in the gallery at all times, helping with the stewarding of the public and controlling admission. Known bigots, fascists and other people with a proven record of attacks on councillors and members of the public must be *excluded* at the door.

Briefing supporters on the Council will propose that we amend the Council's standing orders to enable us to do this, which is entirely within our legal rights.

The bigots were aided and abetted by members of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) who seemed to be following the Alliance line of attacking Labour and Tories with equal ferocity.

Their behaviour in the gallery — far from offering support to lesbian and gay rights — assisted the Tories and demonstrated yet again that this group is only interested in scoring cheap points at Labour's expense.

Wrong as the decision to call in the police may have been, the response of one RCP member, who shouted abuse at Bernie Grant from the gallery, was inexcusable. Calling Bernie "scum" and likening the police action in the gallery to the attack on Broadwater Farm incensed the Haringey Council leader, who responded with understandable anger.

This incident was misreported in the *London Daily News* and elsewhere the following day. Suffice it to say that here again we have proof the media hacks can't even see — no less understand — what's going on under their own noses.

Feature: Tory Britain

While Tories sell us "popular capitalism", it's...

Time for some popular socialism!

The Tories have never set out to please all of the people any of the time.

From day one in office their aim has been to please some people — relatively few people — all of the time.

The prosperous, the smug and the reactionary have been the Tories' target audience — and boy, do they know what turns them on.

They have been feasted on a red meat diet of tax cuts, military spending, and law and order campaigns, laced with heady spices of racism, chauvinism and anti-communism: for those still hungry there has been a side dish of Victorian values in a bigotry dressing.

But the chef's speciality has been prime cuts of nationalised industries, served up to the wealthy handful. Successive portions of shares in privatised corporations have been dished out at bargain basement prices even some workers could afford.

All this — coupled with the additional device of "employee share issues" has helped create the myth of a new "popular capitalism", in which a contented, prosperous body of working people share equally in the fruits of industrial expansion, while a mere handful of ne'er do well scroungers look on in envy.

Of course it is a myth: while huge banks and corporations clean up with record profits, twelve million working class families live below the poverty line; four million are unemployed — despite the Tories' orchestra of statistical fiddles. Against this a mere 2.3m comfortable individuals signed up for British Telecom shares, and now that the hullabaloo is over, less than 1.5m have held on to these shares.

While a relatively small number of workers have been lured into buying tiny parcels of shares in the firms that employ them, their "voice" in the firm is dwarfed by the financial institutions which continue to decide every aspect of management policy.

By John Lister

No amount of garnish can conceal the bitter reality that were workers consistent in pursuing their interests as shareholders, they would be pressing for measures to make themselves work ever harder or make themselves redundant; at which point they woud need to sell their ludicrously tiny quota of shares — which in any case would not provide enough "dividend" to live off — if they were not to fall foul of Social Security.

It is self-evident that workers who buy a few shares have not become capitalists, any more than workers who buy their own houses become landlords, or those who buy Berni steaks become gourmets.

In the 1960s, some defeatists argued that owning fridges, TVs and cars had eradicated working class consciousness: then came new explosions of working class struggle in Britain and in Europe.

Now, as then, the real problem is not "capitalist" workers or the blandishments and con-tricks purveyed by the ruling class, or even the slick Tory presentation. The problem is the leadership of the labour movement: it is they who have rejected any kind of class response.

For millions of working class people in miserable low-paid jobs, sweating on production lines, paying sky-high mortgages, or facing the grim reality of life on the dole, capitalism is not popular at all. Socialism could be made popular for them — and for many workers who have until now been taken in by the Tory myth-machine, and never heard a real alternative.

The potential popularity of a "bash the rich" campaign waged with vigour by a Labour leadership pledging real action for the oppressed has never even been tested.

Renationalisation propaganda, targetted at the real profiteers, those who have now carved up the majority of the shares — along with their vast holdings in other industries — could be popular. Dennis Skinner and others prepared to present such policies in robust, knockabout style to working class audiences can win tremendous support.

If greed and individualism are the weapons cynically used by the Tories to divide and confuse sections of the employed working class, then hostility to class privilege, and class solidarity can be weapons of the workers' movement in fighting back — and attract the best elements of the middle classes, revolted by Thatcherism.

Instead, timid Labour leaders have responded by declaring many of the Party's traditional dishes are "off". Commitments to renationalisation and even verbal aspirations to socialism have been quitely scraped into the bin. The chef has forgotten even the names of almost everything except an almost constant diet of humble pie and marshmallow.

While dreaming of pleasing all of the yuppies all of the time, Kinnock fails really to please anyone any of the time. That is neither popular, nor socialist.



Organising unemployed w

Human Rights the Unemploy

The Prime Minster constantly attacks other countries on the issue of their denial of human rights, but what is her own government's record on human rights?

The most basic right for any person is their right to live a useful, creative life; to have the feeling of satisfaction that comes from having an important and necessary role in society, in association with other human beings.

That right which gives moral stature can only exist if the person has a job doing useful work which pays a proper wage. Everyone must have the *Right to Work* with wages that are just. That basic right is denied by Mrs Thatcher's government to four million people.

There are more people unemployed today than during the economic crisis of the 1930s. More school leavers, women, and members of ethnic groups are unemployed today.

By Ernie Roberts MP

Even though there are such massive numbers of people unemployed there is no united action by the unemployed for the *Right to Work* such as there was in the 1930s by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.

I was an organiser of the unemployed in the Midlands, with Tom Mann and Wal Hannington, in the NUWM during the 1930s. We have many had massive national and local demonstrations of all kinds, including hunger marches and occupations of the Ritz and Oxford Street.

Attempts were made in those days to keep the unemployed passive and unseen with tea and biscuits, cards and darts clubs. They were told to wait for a change in the economic climate, as if their condition was due to Nature, i.e. Unemployment from natural causes.

The situation is not much different today. The millions of unemployed have been cajoled into accepting unemployment as natural and told to keep their heads down and wait for t economic climate to get bette

The state of the natio economy is the responsibility the elected government, whi controls a major area of through taxation and expe diture. The Tory governme for the period of 1987-88 h £144,000 millions to spen They are not spending it in t interests of the working cla and certainly not to solve t problem of unemployment.

They are wasting thousan of millions of pounds. Th spend it in their own interests:

- £18,200 millions on arms e penditure and Trident;
- £16,000 millions on mai taining unemployment which their reserve pool of surpl labour to use to reduce wag and conditions of those in wor
- £17,500 millions in intere to the userers who own the m jority of the National Debt;
- £5,000 millions to hold on Northern Ireland and to t Falklands as military bases;
- £800 millions to remain the international capitali Common Market.

All this expenditure (£54,5 million) distorts the economy.

The productive resources a misdirected and misused to pr duce for private profit and enforce capitalist class pow over the working class.

We need a government whi will take into public ownersh all those areas of the econom which are necessary to satis the needs of the majority of Br tain's people — the worki class.

Massive

There is a massive amount work that needs to be do which the four millio unemployed could do. There a over one million famili without homes; there are ov three million homes in need repair; 600,000 people hospital waiting lists; thousan of slum schools and hospi buildings; thousands of miles pavements and roads in need repair; thousands of kidn machines and other medical a pliances are needed.

The social, welfare, and t health services are in need of considerable number workers. Great areas of Briti industry are in need technological improvements.

Transport of all kinds nee massive investment to make li and work more comfortable f people. In fact there is muc more work that needs to b done than there are workers Britain to do it.

Will spycatchers revelations be Callaghan's downfall?

As Jim Callaghan deliberates over whether or not to admit that his inquiry into allegations of MI5 plots against Harold Wilson was a farce, a number of very serious questions arise.

The first concerns freedom of information. *Briefing* has enough trouble paying its phone bill, let alone a contempt of the High Court, so I will be careful what I write.

To serve writs on the *Independent* and two London dailies for merely repeating sections of a book by a senior security officer that will soon be on sale across Australia smacks of 1984 at its worst.

It also smacks of a cover up. The further you delve into the case, the more you wonder just what's behind it.

The second question revolves around US involvement. It is now clear that much of the MI5/MI6 insurrectionary work was being done following CIA disquiet at Wilson's election as Prime Minister. The best one so far is the CIA's theory that Gaitskell was assassinated by the Soviet Union to let their sympathiser Wilson in — laughable if the CIA wasn't serious.

By Dan Carter

The third question revolves around the associated "revelations" that the Chief of MI5 was gay. In addition, a GCHQ worker who admitted he was openly gay has been the subject of national press speculation: is he a security risk?

Well, if it's all over the national press, it's hardly a security risk because you can't be blackmailed over hiding something fifty million people know.

The whole debate is a chance for Labour's leaders to promise a transformation to a society where you can't be blackmailed for being gay because its not regarded as something you have to hide. Some chance.

The fourth issue is, to my mind, the most worrying. Most *Briefing* readers recognise that the state machinery and departments are on the side of "them" against "us". But just how far would the security forces go to remove a democratically elected government?

This brings us back to Jim Callaghan. It's impossible to believe he didn't know that something was going on under Wilson. Yet his enquiry that Thatcher quotes constantly at all questions was merely into bugging of selected offices.

Why was that? The big question has to be: was Wilson forced out to enable Callaghan to take over; and if so, did Sir Jim ever know?

A final thought as you bolt the door and check your phone for clicking noises. If they thought Wilson was such a threat, what would they do if we got elected?

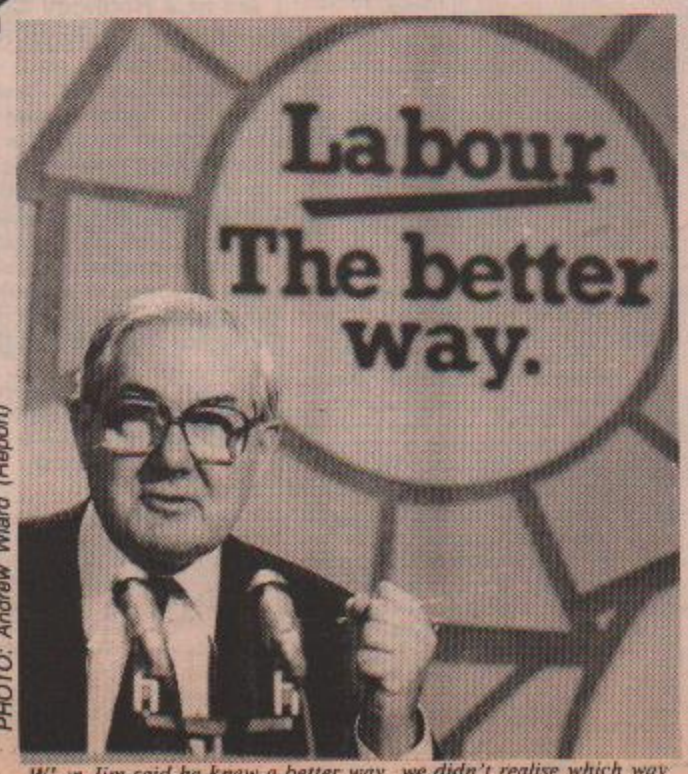


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

When Jim said he knew a better way, we didn't realise which way he meant...



PHOTO: Richard Atkinson

workers
s for
ved!

There is no real excuse for unemployment. The £70,000 million taken out of Britain and invested abroad should be invested here in British industry and services. The £18,200 million arms expenditure should be cut and the money used to pay for more useful and necessary goods.

The nation's wealth in the budget of £174,000 million should be so allocated that the real needs of the working class are satisfied. The Gross National Product of £230,000 million should be distributed in the interests of the working class which creates the wealth.

Opportunity

Wages, hours and conditions of work can be so arranged that all who wish to work have the opportunity and right to work. That means there must be a reduction of hours in the working week, as demanded by the TUC, to 35 hours; longer annual holidays; and a reduction in the retirement age.

There should be adequate time off to study and so improve oneself, and consequently improve production.

All this will mean that a considerable number of extra workers will be needed. This will cause the thousands of milions of pounds which at present go in profit to the exploiters of workers to go instead to the working class itself in wages and salaries. This, in turn, will create a great demand for more goods and services and create even more jobs.

This can only happen if a Labour government has real control over the means of production, distribution, and exchange. That is, public ownership of the economic centres of power which must be managed democratically by all those who work within them.

Unemployment is a human condition created by humans and can be cured by humans. Unity of the unemployed with the support of the employed can bring to bear the necessary pressure upon government and employers to solve the unemployment problem and give everyone the Right to Work.

To unite the millions of unemployed in their efforts to achieve the *Right to Work*, over 200 MPs, MEPs, Trade Union leaders and local leaders of the unemployed called a meeting in the House of Commons on April 27th to consider the organisation of the unemployed nationally.

Watch out! UDCs are coming to your area!

Oppose Tory quangos!

JOHN TURKIE looks at Tory plans to extend the "experiment" of the London and Merseyside Docklands Development Corporations to other "depressed" areas, and studies the local and national Labour Party responses. Don't believe the "favourable" treatment given to London will be repeated in other places!



PHOTO: David Hoffmann

Contradictions of the LDDC: high tech swing bridge and builders' rubble. The industrial landscape of the 1990s?

Hailing Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) as the saviours of the inner city, the Tories are, for the moment, setting four more in motion.

UDCs channel public money in a "pump-priming" operation to attract private sector investment. The chosen areas for an extension of the operation are Manchester's Trafford Park, Tyneside, Teeside, and the West Midlands.

Labour-led councils in these recession-hit areas are "reluctantly accepting" Ridley's offer of a UDC and around £150 million over a seven-year period. As Trafford's leader, Barry Brotherton, says:

"We may not like the concept and prefer local control and more democratic accountability but we have to face reality."

Barry has recently accepted a seat on the Board of the local UDC.

Regeneration?

UDCs are unelected and unaccountable quangos. The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) — which have existed for six years — have taken control of planning and redevelopment away from affected local authorities, resulting in an irrevocable loss of local, and often regional, democracy.

Political control of the corporations is firmly in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Environment. To date, every Secretary of State has supported all UDC planning applications or supported the corporations at Local Plan Inquiries.

Since 1981 the LDDC has received around £400 million in grant from the Department of the Environment (DoE). Over the same period, Docklands unemployment has more than doubled to an average of 30%, as land which once housed traditional riverside industries has been gobbled up by property speculators eager to build private luxury riverside dwellings.

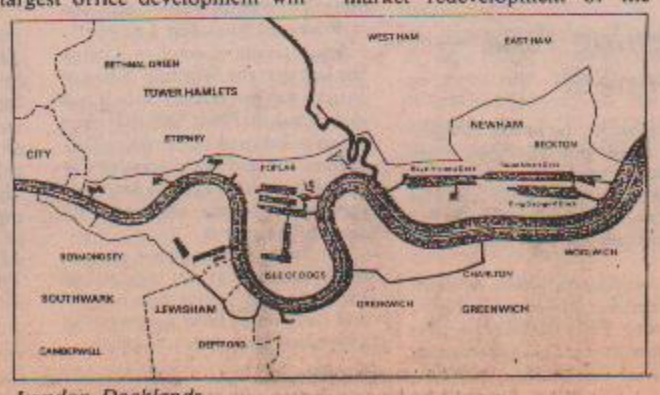
Commercial and private developments have stimulated incredible pressure on land values, with land in some parts of Docklands currently changing hands at £5 million per acre.

If the gigantic Canary Wharf goes ahead (East London's "Wall St on water"), Docklands' descent into a paradise for the rich will become complete. (Europe's largest office development will not be subject to planning permission or public scrutiny, and the developers behind this exclusively private project are to enjoy around £2 *thousand million* in public subsidies).

The net effect of the "regeneration" of this once heavily industrialised area is a radically altered local economic base which squeezes out local people and local industry. The LDDC's market-led approach comprises a dual strategy: a combination of private luxury housing, with offices servicing the worlds of high finance and high-tech. As big money has rolled in, local people have been pushed out.

Labour leaders, who favour co-operation with UDCs, argue that this process will not be repeated in other areas. There are principally two reasons why London's Docklands have attracted so much private investment: its proximity to the City and the benefit of huge amounts of public money available via the LDDC.

However, these Labour leaders, who also argue that UDCs are useful ways of using public money in a pump-priming exercise to attract private sector investment, cannot have it both ways. London's Docklands *will* attract more private investment than other areas, but the same *pressures* on development will exist in all areas, if not to the same extent.



London Docklands

Merseyside

As an indication of what we can expect outside London, let us take a brief look at the MDC, which over the last 6 years has received around £200 million of public money.

The private sector has been loathe to invest in Merseyside despite the available public subsidies. So far, the achievements of the MDC consist of the upmarket redevelopment of the Albert Docks into a shops, office and cultural complex interspersed with private luxury housing; and the building of the International Garden Festival.

The property company behind the Festival Gardens — Transworld — eventually collapsed with £5 million losses and 500 creditors.

The leisure-orientated developments may have attracted some new tourism, but they have made absolutely no impression on Merseyside's chronic unemployment; the only MDC-created jobs being part-time, unskilled service jobs.

True, there has been little or no disruption to existing communities compared to London's Docklands, but there never was going to be. London's Docklands has a population of around 50,000; Liverpool's docklands a few hundred.

The Labour Party's response

Discussion about whether to co-operate with the proposed UDCs has so far been limited to the respective Labour Groups. Indeed, leading Labour councillors in all areas have accepted seats on the Boards of the new UDCs (just as Mellish and O'Grady did in Southwark and Beasley in Tower Hamlets).

It is hardly surprising that these areas have no idea what is about to hit them. However, it is not yet too late for the whole question of UDCs to become a major political issue within the Labour Party nationally.

This will mean taking on the leadership of the Party. Cunningham and his friends seem quite enamoured with UDCs. They may be unelected, undemocratic, and unaccountable quangos, but they possess quite extradordinary powers — far greater than any local authority. A Labour Secretary of State could do remarkable things with such a tool with the right people on the Board — or so the argument goes.

Of course it is par for the course that there should be such Labour Party co-operation with these Tory Boards. Political debate must begin in the Labour Party, up and down the country, to ensure that the aim of the Party is to campaign for the abolition of these unelected quangos and for the restoration of local democratic control.

The Tories know that their chances of taking political control (through the ballot box) of urban local authorities are slender, and therefore see UDCs as replacing "anti-development" and "anti-enterprise" councils. To ensure their efficiency, the UDCs have been granted enormous powers of "vesting" (taking) public land and purchasing private land through Compulsory Purchase Orders.

At present Development Corporations have sweeping powers over planning, land, and redevelopment. Thatcher and senior ministers are studying ways to extend their powers to other "problem" areas such as housing and education. One senior source has been quoted as saying: "What we don't want is the 'loony left' running things. If we can't get rid of them, then what powers do we need to take away from them?"

Public money — private profit

It is more than likely that the new UDCs — like the MDC — will generate a minute amount of private sector investment, but at a high cost to the area. If past experience is anything to go by — and it usually is — then the new developments will take place at the expense of both the local communities and the policies of local councils.

The massive amounts of public money going into the coffers of UDCs go largely to subsidise private developments. Land zoned by local authorities for existing industry and public sector housing is taken over by UDCs, prepared with public money, and then sold off (often very cheaply) to property developers.

The Tories' concept of "regeneration" is defined not by local needs, but by the needs of the property market. For the Labour Party, it should surely mean meeting local needs and regenerating the local economy — not pandering to the property market.



PHOTO: NALGO News

No Budget tax cuts for me!

Did You Know:

- This government says employer subsidised childcare is a perk
- Parents using workplace nurseries face massive tax bills
- Many Conservative MPs, the opposition parties, leading employers and trade unions oppose this tax
- Nigel Lawson refuses to scrap the "toddler tax" in his budget, preferring to offer election tax cuts in other areas

★For further details about the campaign to abolish the "toddler tax" write to: Workplace nurseries campaign, Room 205, South Bank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ.

Building Briefing

500 Club winner

Not only North of Watford — but this week we go North of *The Border* for the winner of our lucky number prize draw!

This week's winner is K. Thomson of Stirling — congratulations!

New standing orders are still coming in each week from new readers and supporters who want to take part in the 500 Club. Why don't you join them? Just fill in the standing order form on this page, and post it to us. Remember, *Briefing* needs your support, we have no rich financial backers.

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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Briefing election news

Our plans for publising *Labour Briefing* in the next few weeks will be shaped by the election announcement. We originally intended to publish this issue on May 12th, but brought it forward when election fever hotted up. This is to enable us to bring out an "election special" issue for use during the campaign.

The Election Special will be shorter than usual; but also (if it's possible!) crisper, more hard hitting and of even wider appeal. It will be saleable to all labour movement activists, but also of appeal to a wider audience.

As we go to press now, we are still waiting for the election announcement to decide the exact publication date. *Briefing* sellers are therefore encouraged to phone in to find out further details as soon as you receive this issue.

But before you phone, think about increasing your order of this extra-saleable issue. If the election campaign is short, we may not publish again until after polling day, so you will have more time to sell. You'll also need to check with us to establish the exact date of the post-election publication. As we'll be rushing to print as quickly as possible after polling day, printing may not be on the usual weekday.

Of course, if the Tories decide *not* to cut and run, the usual *Briefing* will be with you again. But keep in touch to find out what's happening!

Briefing AGM

The 1987 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Saturday July 4th at Polytechnic of Central London Marylebone Road

Admission by *Briefing* supporters card:
available on request to shareholders in the 500 Supporters Club
or on payment of £10 (waged) £3 (unwaged)
(cheques payable to Labour Briefing)
from: 26, Crofton Road, London SE5

EVENTS

THU MAY 21
★**Marxist discussion forum rally**: *Cuba & Latin America*. Speakers Jaime Lopez, rep. FDR/FMLN, El Salvador; Mario Mann, Sec. Latin America T.U. Association, Columbia. Bryant St Church, Bryant St, off West Ham Lane, Stratford, E15, 7.30pm. Disabled access (incl. wheelchair); disabled toilet.

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

SAT MAY 30
★**Socialist Health Association**. Conference: *The Labour Party's plans for health*. 9.30-5.00, The Council House, Bristol.

SAT/SUN JUN 20/21
★**Sisterhood & Solidarity**: towards an anti-imperialist & anti-racist women's labour movement. LWI/SWSC weekend school, Camden Town Hall.

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

★**Kent Miners Gala**. Assemble 11am, Market Square Aylesham for march & rally. Invited speakers include Tony Benn, Peter Heathfield, Bruce Kent, Kay Sutcliffe, Mick McGahey. Afternoon: open air rock concert. Evening: Snowdown joint choir & band. Progressive organisations invited to bring stalls. Gala sponsored by Kent NUM, SERTUC, SE-JMC.

★**SUN JUN 28**
★**Kent Miners Gala**. Daytime: children's 5-a-side. Evening: Ceilidh.

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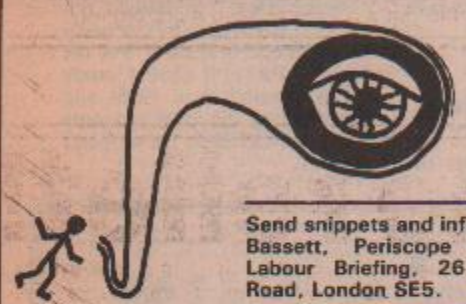
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Send snippets and info to Greg Bassett, Periscope Column, Labour Briefing, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.

Health chiefs' sick joke

"Propaganda on the rates!" is the shrill Tory complaint when Labour councils make any attempt to criticise government policies.

What, then, is the correct label for pro-government propaganda pumped out by a non-elected health authority in the run-up to the coming General Election?

Members of **Barnet** district health authority — which covers **Margaret Thatcher's** Finchley constituency — have been sent draft "briefing notes" which management want to distribute to candidates for the four local parliamentary seats.

Surprisngly for a district which has suffered heavy bed losses,a substantial cut in funding and now boasts one of the fastest growing waiting lists in London, health chiefs have chosen to concentrate on justifying the closure of acute beds in the district!

Angry DHA members may yet prevent these "briefing notes" from playing their clearly-intended role of defusing political debate on health services in the district. But the attempt at a political intervention shows once again the hypocrisy of Tory criticisms of elected local councils, while they hand tens of millions each year into the control of appointed health authorities — a national network of quangos, which run health services with no hint of accountability to residents of the locality they cover.

Cloak and Dagger Road to Socialism?

"If we really want to get rid of the Tories, more of us have got to become Knights of the Garter."

This is the shock conclusion of **Professor Eric Hogwash**, writing in the latest **Masochism Today**.

"It's no use clinging on to the old hidebound class-ridden view of society; more of us should hang on creatively to hidebound scabbards, swords, cloaks, funny hats and blue ribbons if we really want to hit capitalism where it hurts — in the Palace reception rooms," urges the veteran Masochist historian.

"They sneered at Ramsay MacDonald; they groaned at Clement Attlee; they snored over Lord Wilson's Diaries; but now Callaghan's knighthood has brought everyone to attention. It is just not enough to win the yuppies and the wets: we must win left-leaning sections of the aristocracy, the Royal Family and relics of the Round Table over to the Broad Popular Alliance," the old windbag waffles on.

"A combination of Sir Jim's deep entry work with my line of Sabbatical Voting (whereby only college lecturers on leave get to vote for the Alliance candidate of their choice) could bring a triumph within the next..." (here the manuscript breaks off).

Fielder found on sticky wicket

Who really stands for unity in the Party, part 37:

MP Frank Field (sort-of-Labour, Birkenhead) has given real encouragement to Labour candidates fighting difficult seats.

He's called for voters to "tactically vote" Alliance in areas where Labour came third at the General Election.

As this includes Ynys Mon, where Kinnock's brother-in-law stands a real chance of winning Keith Best's old constituency, we await with bated breath the same demands for disciplinary action that were made of Sharon Atkin.

D.C.

Sir Jim's secret

Why is **Jim Callaghan** so reluctant to support an investigation into the MI5 moves to destabilise Harold Wilson's government?

Periscope has laid hands on an exclusive preview of a new book by **Pincha Chappedbum** which lifts the lid on Callaghan's role in the whole squalid affair.

According to Chappedbum, Callaghan himself was the "31st man" in the conspiracy, and remains to this day a member of the entryist **"Workers Intelligence League"**, an extreme pro-NATO group of agitators.

The aim of the conspiracy was to oust Wilson,and install Callaghan himself as Prime Minister,knowing that he in turn would cleverly prepare the way for the 1979 Tory victory.

The only difference between this and many other conspiracies unveiled by Chappedbum is that it *worked*!

Slipping on the Garter

"Stay down on your knees, Sir James: that's how we remember you best."

"Thank you, your majesty; may I lick your boots while I'm here?"

Evening Post — scooped!

Briefing has hit the headlines again.

The eve-of-poll *Yorkshire Evening News* reprinted Cllr Garth Frankland's article from the last issue of *Briefing* on the Council election campaign on their front page.

Cllr Frankland's article in *Briefing* — a labour movement paper — supporting Party democracy was presented by the *Post* as a massive, divisive split in the Council Labour Group.

The pages of the *Post* carried comments on this allegation, including one from Cllr Jim Trickett, who seemed to have undergone a swift conversion to the moderate wing of the Labour Group — if his care not overtly to deny the split is anything to go by.

Anyway, the trouble the *Post* obviously took to research and write their in-depth analysis of Cllr Frankland's article, and solicit comments on it — especially in the face of local policy not to talk to the Tory rag — was obviously what held up the appearance of the article. Just as well they made it before the election, eh? C.M.

When is a group not a group?

Threatened witch-hunting disciplinary action against **Hillingdon** *Briefing* supporters appears ideally timed to smash any remaining Labour electoral hopes in the area. But it also raises a few interesting questions.

According to the *London Daily News*, at least two of the individuals concerned could face expulsion from the Labour Party for alleged membership of the **"Workers' Socialist League"**.

Small points of detail — such as the fact that the Workers' Socialist League has not existed since it was disbanded in 1984; and that even when it did exist none of the Hillingdon accused were members — appear to matter little to local raving right wingers obsessed with personal vendettas.

But how do you prove that an organisation does not exist? And how can you prove you are not and have never been a member of something that does not exist?

Rats desert?

After recent hygiene scares and a sustained boycott of the doctors' canteen by knowledgeable microbiologists, rats have been seen angrily leaving the kitchens at Fulham's **St Stephen's Hospital**.

A spokesrat told **Periscope**:

"It's disgusting in there: we just can't take the filth any more. My members have decided to turn tail. We hear that at least one mole has left the health authority; other rodents are weaselling out; even the cockroaches are fed up and beetling off."

Broad Popular Alliances (Part 23)

Having failed even to sign up **Lawrie MacMenemy**, leaders of ASTMS and TASS were plainly short of a "big name" sponsor for their policy on safeguarding staff in takeovers and mergers (of companies by other companies rather than one union by another!)

Imagine their joy when a retired judge came riding to the rescue! That grand old friend of the labour movement, **Lord Denning**, has apparently put in a good word for the policy in the House of Lords. Now a special full-colour reprint of selected highlights from his speech is being rushed off the presses,together with deathlesss prose from ASTMS's own **Baroness Turner of Camden Road**, and TASS peer **Lord Monkswell**.

That should guarantee success for the campaign.

Letters

Write to 26, Crofton Road, London SE5.

Whose "right to chose" is it?

Dear *Briefing*,

I felt I must comment on the current debate surrounding women's right to chose, in the wake of the Court ruling that a mentally handicapped woman ("Jeanette") must be sterilised.

Sue Arnall asks what happens if women like Jeanette are not persuaded to have abortions should contraception fail: I can give two examples of exactly what happens.

Seven years ago I nursed a woman who was classed as "high grade" subnormal. (This terminology itself is disgusting and degrading.)

The women had requested the insertion of an IUD since she was pursuing an active sex life (to the horror, I might add, of the people in the Home where she was being cared for).

When she came to the hospital for the insertion of the coil, a procedure which was undertaken under general anaesthesia (in case she didn't "co-operate"), it was discovered, after the anaesthetic had been administered, that she was in fact twelve weeks pregnant.

The surgeon immediately performed an abortion. This woman woke up after the operation never knowing that she had been pregnant, and never having had the chance to decide whether or not she wished to keep her baby, or opt for termination.

I also delivered the baby of a woman who was mentally ill (as opposed to mentally handicapped) and although it was clear that she would need a great deal of support from various agencies in order for both her and the baby to survive (and in my opinion, the stress "normal" women go through when they undertake to have children is immense in any case), this woman's child was taken into the care of the local authority when he was a week old.

I shall never forget the look of grief and bewilderment on the woman's face as the Social Worker took away her baby.

Who *does* have the right to chose? Certainly not women! I might add that of course it would be wrong to force permanent contraception such as the Pill on handicapped women, but enforced sterilisation is not the answer either.

And who are judging whether or not particular women are fit to bear children anyway? Male judges, male obstetricians, male partners of women who wish to have abortions.

This is a sick and disgraceful state of affairs. Sisters, we have a long way to go. We don't have a right to chose anything.

In sisterhood,
Tess Kewley,
Hornsey, London

Wales View

Annwyl *Briefing*,

Recently there's been some discussion of Scottish Nationalism and the need to campaign for an Assembly in the pages of *Briefing*.

As a socialist living in Wales, I would support self-government for Scotland *and* Wales, and like Jim Niblock (*International*, no. 9) I agree that "the fight must be to establish a socialist federal republic and the vanguard of this struggle may well exist in Ireland, in Scotland, in Wales rather than the South East of England."

Unfortunately in North Wales that vanguard doesn't appear to be in the Labour Party. The Party moved to the right a long time ago, and like Scotland the main opposition is from the Nationalists.

I would go into great detail about constituency problems, but I'm glad I can still vote in Oxford!

Dafydd Elis Thomas, despite his recent support of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, is a very good MP and Labour will never regain the seat when they talk about "personal" voting and regionalism.

The consultative paper on local government reform calls for "a single tier of most-purpose local authorities... and a directly elected regional body for the whole of Wales," with hardly any powers.

Hugh Roberts is a typical safe Kinnockite prospective candidate and, possibly for the first time in a general election, will be supported by a (non-political!) NALGO campaign.

He finds it easy to express concern on social issues but will not win back the working class vote by lobbying travel agents in Birmingham.

Incidentally, if the profiteering Keith Best had been forced to resign and cause a by-election in Ynys Mon, it would have been an interesting test case for the new found organisational strength and NALGO's reluctance to set up a political fund.

In my opinion, the future of the Labour Party in North Wales is bleak — but it's only made worse by ignoring the national question.

Andy Gibbons,
Merrionnydd Nant Conwy CLP

K.K. - OK!

Dear *Briefing*,

We fully support *Briefing's* attack on "Kinnockism", which as a reactionary ideology cannot advance the struggle for socialism in either the short or long term.

If the left build up now,' hopefully we will come out of the general election much stronger, having captured ideological territory and being in a better position to fight the right and the Labour bureaucracy.

The analogy with a kamikaze pilot is good, except:

(a) he was a strong believer in his cause, and

(b) he used his life to gain advantage for his cause.

Neither of these apply to Kinnock.

Best wishes,
Peter Bowing
Devon *Labour Briefing*.

Where is the Political clarity?

Dear comrades,

Declaring itself as "hard left", the *Labour Briefing* pilot issue (July/August, 1986) declared that it is the intention of *LB* to "develop a serious challenge to the rightward drift...", and also fight "against all those who obstruct that fight." This is a clear and uneqivocal declaration that *LB* intends to fight for the utmost political clarity and to win leadership.

Far from attempting to "develop a serious challenge", etc., it seems to me that the *LB* "hard left" are in reality soft — especially when it comes to a fight against other "hard leftist" elements who in reality actually "obstruct" the fight against the rightward drift!

In *LB* No. 31, October 1986, Eric Heffer MP (page 3) claims, among other things, that Labour governments in Britain since 1945 have created "some oases of socialism". Thus even with the likes of Attlee (a Freemason), Wilson, Callaghan and now Kinnock at the helm, it's possible, according to Heffer, to create "some oases of socialism"! The fight for real poltical clarity and leadership is thus minimised.

The *LB* "hard left" were clearly so impressed with Heffer's previous article that they gave him the *front page* of *LB* no. 32.

Heffer now says that it's possible to "eventually build a classless, socialist society", via the method and practice of broad Leftism! That is, by "all the left groups working together, whatever their differences," by "organising left educational groups in every area", by "organising a socialist book of the month club, etc.", and by "stepping up the campaign in the Labour Party to get the left organised."

The British Tory ruling class will already be trembling in their boots at such a prospect! My point is that no direct criticism at all of this centrist mish-mash ever appeared in *LB*.

Also, despite an "in-depth feature on the Labour Party Conference" there was no criticism at all of the utterly diabolical actions of the *Militant*-led "Liverpool 8" on their refusal to address conference and defend themselves against expulsion from the Party.

The actions of Hatton and Co. were of course eagerly defended by *Militant* and yet in reality it amounted to a real stab in the back for all those Party activists and trades unionists who argued at CLP and TU branch level for a position of non-expulsion of the "Liverpool 8".

I would like to refer readers to the writings of Leon Trotsky, the "guiding light" of *Militant* supporters. He wrote:

"The following elements of these (Lenin's) tactics are of *special importance*: (1) the necessity for Communists to work in the most reactionary trade unions in order to fight to win over the masses under conditions of all kinds; (2) *the necessity for Communists (i.e. Trotskyists) to enter the Labour Party and fight against being expelled from that organisation...* and (3) the necessity for a struggle against the right opportunist deviation as well as against the ultra-left." (Trotsky's *Writings on Britain*, Vol II, p. 193 — emphasis added).

And yet the *Militant*-led "Liverpool 8" actually withdrew their appeals against expulsion from the Party! So much for the "Trotskyism" of the *Militant*!

Doesn't *LB* see these actions by *Militant* tendency as an "obstruction" in the fight against the right wing? Apparently not.

LB no. 33, Dec. 1986, carries an article by Euro MP Les Huckfield (page 3) in which he defends the joint legal moves by Knowsley North CLP and himself in an attempt to prevent the NEC imposing George Howarth as the PPC onto the constituency.

No criticism at all was ever put forward by *Briefing* on this question — and neither was any critical support offered to Knowsley North CLP activists for their decision to abstain from the election campaign.

Shouldn't *LB* have urged local activists in Knowsley North to mount their own independent campaign for a Labour vote — and yet at the same time urge local activists to fight for positions in the official campaign in order to embarrass Howarth & Co.

LB, no. 36, Feb. 1987, carries an extremely wordy interview with Bob Clay, "newly elected Secretary of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs" (page 10). This "special" is as much sickening as it is unreadable.

The *LB* interviewer didn't even ask Clay how he felt about Tam Dalyell's vote for Kinnock instead of Dennis Skinner for the position of Vice Chair! Was this question "too embarrassing" for our intrepid "hard left' interviewer? So it seems.

Comrades, real political clarity and leadership can only be achieved by waging, in the words of Trotsky, a "struggle against the right opportunist deviation as well as against the ultra-left".

The alternative, of course, is the present course of the *LB* "hard left" which is the creation of a centrist movement — which appears "left" but refuses to criticise "leftism".

Yours fraternally,
Alan Scott
Victimised ex-NUPE shop steward
Halifax

The LPYS needs some answers!

The escalating attacks on the left from the Party leadership, of which the Sawyer proposals on "reforming" the LPYS form a part, increase the importance of a forthright and united response from the '87 LPYS conference.

Unfortunately, this did not occur.

On the contrary, the conference marked a further step in the decline and political degeneration of the LPYS. While the former is partially attributable to the attacks from the Party leadership, the latter is not.

The YS majority, supporters of *Militant* demonstrated their inability to develop a strategy for defending and building the YS. It is largely as a result of this that the number of voting delegates had fallen by 20% since the previous year.

In the aftermath of the defeat of Liverpool, the comrades had no example to point to — this was their showpiece in previous years. At this Conference we were treated instead to triumphalist declarations, with no supporting evidence, that "thousands of youth" were going to flood into the YS; and crude attacks on all other tendencies.

There was also a reversion to the worst aspects of *Militant's* Labourist politics — we were informed, for example, that Black Sections were similar to apartheid, and that neither the Labour leadership nor the Party were racist.

A further retrograde development was the cancelling of any debate on lesbian and gay rights, which added to the sense of deja vue of many delegates.

Resolutions condemning the use of strip-searching and plastic bullets in Ireland were also voted down.

This political failure was compounded by failure to defend the YS; no proposals were forthcoming in the debate on YS structure on defending the autonomy of the YS; rather, the principle of reform by the NEC was accepted at the same time as purely rhetorical denunciations of the Sawyer proposals as a witch-hunt.

The conduct of opposition tendencies such as *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Action* gave little more cause for optimism.

They likewise accepted the principle of this witch-hunt, in reality using it in an opportunistic way to attack *Militant* without the inconvenience of a real political struggle within the YS.

Socialist Organiser mounted a campaign of sectarian attacks on *Militant*, combined with pathetic personal slurs on its individual supporters.

Socialist Action, on the other hand, made sure that they ran the whole of the Labour Left Liaison campaign, to the exclusion of all others, to suit the needs of their mythical "alliance for socialism".



PHOTO: Steve Rapport Photography

LPYS Sawyer-style?

By Patrick Baker
Youth Briefing

Yet they could not even manage this efficiently, failing to produce any Conference bulletin for the final day; this ineptitude was confirmed by their failure to produce the Conference edition of their own paper until most of the delegates were leaving on the final day.

The Black Sections NEC candidate, Steve Jomoa, ran a reasonably good campaign with the support of *SA* and *Briefing*, but achieved a rather disappointing results of 17 votes (as compared with 13 for *SO*, 4 for Workers' Power, 161 for *Militant*).

Briefing produced a daily conference bulletin, taking up the political debates, and helped to organise a successful LAW '86 fringe meeting. Forty comrades — including *Militant* and Workers Power supporters and independents — heard John Wilton, PPC for Birmingham Edgbaston, describe the background of right wing corruption to the closure of Birmingham DLP, and the left's response; Greg Tucker, from the "Lambeth 8", on the attacks on the "loony left" council; and Steve Jomoa on the attacks on Black Sections.

Fran Rayner, on behalf of LAW, opened a lively and constructive debate on how to fight the witch-hunt and defend the LPYS.

Overall, the Conference can thus be said to have been pretty disappointing. It confirmed the picture of a declining LPYS, battered by witch-hunts, bickering over largely stagnant and irrelevant politics.

Yet the need for intransigent defence of an autonomous Labour Youth organisation remains as great as ever: it is not through Party interference, in fact aimed at decapitating the YS, that it will become more relevant and attractive to youth. This can only be achieved through political struggle within the parameters of the YS.

Yet the conference, taking place in the context of an escalating witch-hunt against the left — particularly Black Sections — should also confirm the need for all Labour and trade union activists to unite against the attacks from the right. The need for the left to put serious resources into the campaign in the YS, and to build a campaign against the witch-hunt as a whole has never been more urgent.

A welcome relief!

Well, after all the fuss and hullabaloo, Paul Simon's controversial Gracelands tour reached Birmingham on Saturday, April 4th — and it most definitely was an anti-apartheid concert.

The entire concert was devoted to the music of Africa, with Simon himself only taking part in roughly half of the stage show.

When all the advance publicity had died down about whether the Stalinist-controlled anti-apartheid movement would give the tour its blessing, Paul Simon introduced a glittering array of African musical talent.

Simon should be congratulated on bringing together Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba and Ladysmith Black Mambazo all on one stage. And it was their performances that made this concert one to remember.

Masekala's trumpet-playing, particularly the song evoking the suffering of the migrant black workers travelling from all the Southern Africa states to the goldmines of Johannesburg, was especially poignant.

By Alan Pow
Stirling

The contribution of the South African township's Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and their charismatic leader Joseph Shabalala, was particularly moving, with their rhythmic movements and tribal vocals, a highlight of the concert.

Simon himself performed reasonably well, only showcasing two songs from the Gracelands LP, both played to an African beat, but to my mind he was outshone by his African musicians.

While I enjoyed the concert, it is debatable whether it enhanced the anti-apartheid cause; the audience was predominantly white, liberal and middle class, and was older than those who usually attend pop concerts.

At £15 a ticket is wasn't surprising that unemployed, working class youth were very much absent, so while I wouldn't accuse Simon of hypocrisy, the effort to publicise the cause of apartheid was only surface-deep with this sort of event.

Still, in the overwhelming morass of crass American music this was a welcome relief, and Simon's attempts should at least be applauded for trying to reverse the trend.

Finally: my most abiding memory will be the haunting notes of Hugh Masekela's trumpet, and he should be more widely heard and appreciated.

Paul Simon concert

Feature: Marcus Garvey

Marcus Garvey centenary

The compelling force of Garveyism

Proposals are now being drawn up for a programme of events in London to commemorate the centenary in August 1987 of the birth of Marcus Mosiah Garvey by the Association of London Authorities, the London Strategic Policy Unit and other organisations. NARENDRA MAKANJI looks at Garvey's life and ideas.

London, as a metropolis, offered Marcus Garvey a telescopic vision of "a new world of black men, not peons, serfs, dogs and slaves, but a nation of sturdy men making their impress upon civilisation and causing a new light to dawn upon the human race."

It was in London that Garvey resolved "that the black man would not continue to be kicked about by all other races and nations of the world."

Garvey first came to London in 1912 after journeying through Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia and Venezuela to study and compare the conditions of "Negro" workers and observed with great indignation the inferior status of blacks on the plantations, in the mines, tobacco fields and construction sites.

In Costa Rica, Garvey became so distraught with the conditions of "Negro" field workers that he protested to the British Consul over the treatment of Jamaicans working on banana plantations of the United Fruit Company.

The British official's nonchalant indifference convinced Garvey that no white person would ever "regard the life of a black man equal to that of a white man."

It was in London that Garvey learned what he could about the condition of blacks in other parts of the British Empire, and became interested in the position of blacks in the United States.

Jamaica

It was from London that Garvey, with his "brain afire", set forth to his country of birth, Jamaica, and set in motion on August 1st, 1914, a mass movement. The Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, usually called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), had become the most compelling force in the life of Africans and people of African descent spreading across four continents.

Between 1912 and 1914, London provided a fertile ground for the nurturing of Garvey's idea of an organisation and a programme that would work for the general uplift of Black people of the world and "to do all in their power to conserve the rights of their noble race and to respect the rights of all mankind."

The kernel of this compelling force is Pan-Africanism, which calls for the total liberation of Africa's labour and resources from international monopoly finance capital.

Pan-Africanism also seeks to destroy and prevent the development and refinement of functional racism — an internationally operating predatory system of capital accumulation with the attendant spread of degradation, falsehood, violence, and confiscation of land.

Garveyism

This motivating force, Pan-Africanism or Garveyism, has propelled many political and social-economic movements and stimulated worldwide opposition against racism and discrimination as epitomised today by the Anti-Apartheid Declarations.

It is important to recall the fact that the Civil Rights legislation in the United States and the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Acts in Britain were the responses of these two nations to this compelling force.

Awakening

Out of Garvey's vision of Africa was nurtured a political and cultural awakening with its own vitality and independence propelling anti-colonialism in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, crystallising later in Britain and in Azania.

These idea provided the political base for the politics of Mahatma Gandhi, Kwame Nkrumah, Malcolm X, Steve Biko and Maurice Bishop (all downed by imperialist intrigue and violence).

Garvey's vision forms the dynamic of the Rastafarian movement which apart from its nursing grounds in Jamaica has found a home in London. An expressive development worthy of mention is the drive of the "Black Sections" movement in the Labour Party for auto-emancipation.



PHOTO: James Van De Zee, courtesy GRVHA

Marcus Garvey, New York, 1923

London gave a home to Garvey in his last years. After he had been "framed-up" by the US government he was imprisoned in Atlanta and later banished to Jamaica. He was forced to leave Jamaica. In 1935, Garvey transferred the headquarters of his movement to London.

That same year, Mussolini's Italy launched a predatory attack on Ethiopia. Hyde Park and Marble Arch provided Garvey with a platform to denounce Italy's late imperialist ambitions in Africa.

Garvey died in London on June 10th, 1940.

The force that Garvey unleashed opened up a new jurisprudence of Civil Rights in the United States and Race Relations in Britain destined to establish new forms of redress for blacks and successively other victims of functional racism including the Irish, Travellers, Migrants and Refugeees.

This new jurisprudence, while allowing victims of racism to be able to claim special, compensatory rights, would also increasingly be available to youth, the elderly, lesbians, gay men, and people with disabilities.

Legislative

The State response to these increasing demands is the Equal Opportunities and Sex Descrimination Acts. These compensatory legislative measures by the British state have tended to contain the threat of the status quo and shied away from total structural changes of society.

Unlike the US, the British state cleverly "liberated" itself from direct responsibility to enforce the law where racial malefactions are concerned.

According to the teachings of Marcus Garvey, victims of racism, whilst respecting the laws of the land of their oppressors and exploiters, must at times struggle relentlessly against "equal justice under passive laws".

He cautioned that passive laws are passed only to suffocate black resistance and not to uproot racial malefactions in a white dominated society.

He warned that Blacks have every right to suspect and resist, by any means necessary, any new laws designed to achieve "equal justice" which does not entitle and enjoin a specific arm of the government to be the sword and propel itself out into the streets, communities, towns and cities and all places of work, education, recreation and leisure. There, it must discover and prosecute injustice and eliminate all racist practice and function — for it is only the government which has the ability and resources to do so effectively.

Red & Green

Left without a strategy

Economic policy poses increasingly difficult questions for the Labour Party and for the Left in particular.

When it comes to economics, Thatcher appears to have it all sewn up.

She after all can run the economy in the interests of international capital without having to apologise for it — and by equating overall profitability with the common good she can even argue that she's acting in the "public interest".

The Labour leadership does not have the luxury of such "honesty", and has to balance economic constraints against demands for social change from its supporters.

By Andy Porter
SERA
Convenor of Brighton Labour Party/Trades Council Economic Development Committee

Currently, Labour's commitment is to create 1 million jobs in 2 years. Kinnock has stressed, however, that this will not be based on a significant increase in public spending and that at least half of the jobs are expected to be in the private sector.

Recently both Hattersley and Kinnock have taken to playing down the role of local authorities in Labour's economic plans, and the package is looking more and more like minor tinkering.

Thatcher at least appears to be aware that capital has no national loyalties, and is set on creating the conditions (i.e. low pay and high unemployment) that will make investment in the UK look attractive (!).

Kinnock and the Labour leadership, on the other hand, are appealling to the loyalty and integrity of a nationally based capital that has largely ceased to exist, and which would have little interest in a partnership with Labour in any case.

The Left's response to this situation has been predictable — we criticise the leadership and we call for a programme based on higher public spending, nationalisation, higher wages and a shorter working week.

Deliver

It's hard to disagree with this — but it's something none of us expects either capitalism in general or the Labour leadership in particular to be able to deliver. Surely it's time for the Left to go beyond such a familiar headbanging approach!

The crucial issue we have to tackle is that whether Labour wins or loses the election, *socialists will be in opposition*. We don't so much need a programme for a future government as a strategy for action for ourselves.

One way of bringing "economics" into everyday life and away from the policy makers is to challenge "profitability" and "lack of money" as criteria for decision-making every time the argument is put — in work, in local authorities and so on.

The socialist ideal of production and services for human need has to come down from the realms of rhetoric and become something that we actively argue for — not just in general but about specifics as trade unionists, as Council tenants, as parents or whatever.

The green movement in West Germany has gone a long way simply by reasserting old socialist ideals like this one, and arguing that it represents an alternative logic for society whose time has come.

For many on the Labour left the Party has become a bolthole that provides a semblance of political activity whilst having little impact on the world outside — if we learn one thing from the Greens it should be that talking to other people about our ideals and striving to put them into practice is more fruitful than endlessly talking to each other.

The Gorbachev reforms in the USSR:

What does "glasnost" mean for workers?

Do the Gorbachev reforms open the way for socialist regeneration in the USSR?

If they do, the world-wide legacy of Stalinism might be rapidly overcome.

But there are other possibilities. The reforms may really be cosmetic and insignificant; or they may, like similar moves towards marketisation, e.g. in Yugoslavia, be the prelude to a crisis of the bureaucratic regime.

The political reforms are extremely limited:

- the extension of elections, and permission to have several candidates in certain elections is important; but organising around alternative political platforms remains prohibited;
- censorship remains in force; many political prisoners remain in the camps and psychiatric hospitals;
- Gorbachev's "radical speech" to the Central Committee in January went out of the way to praise the work of the KGB.

By Sue Owen
Leeds

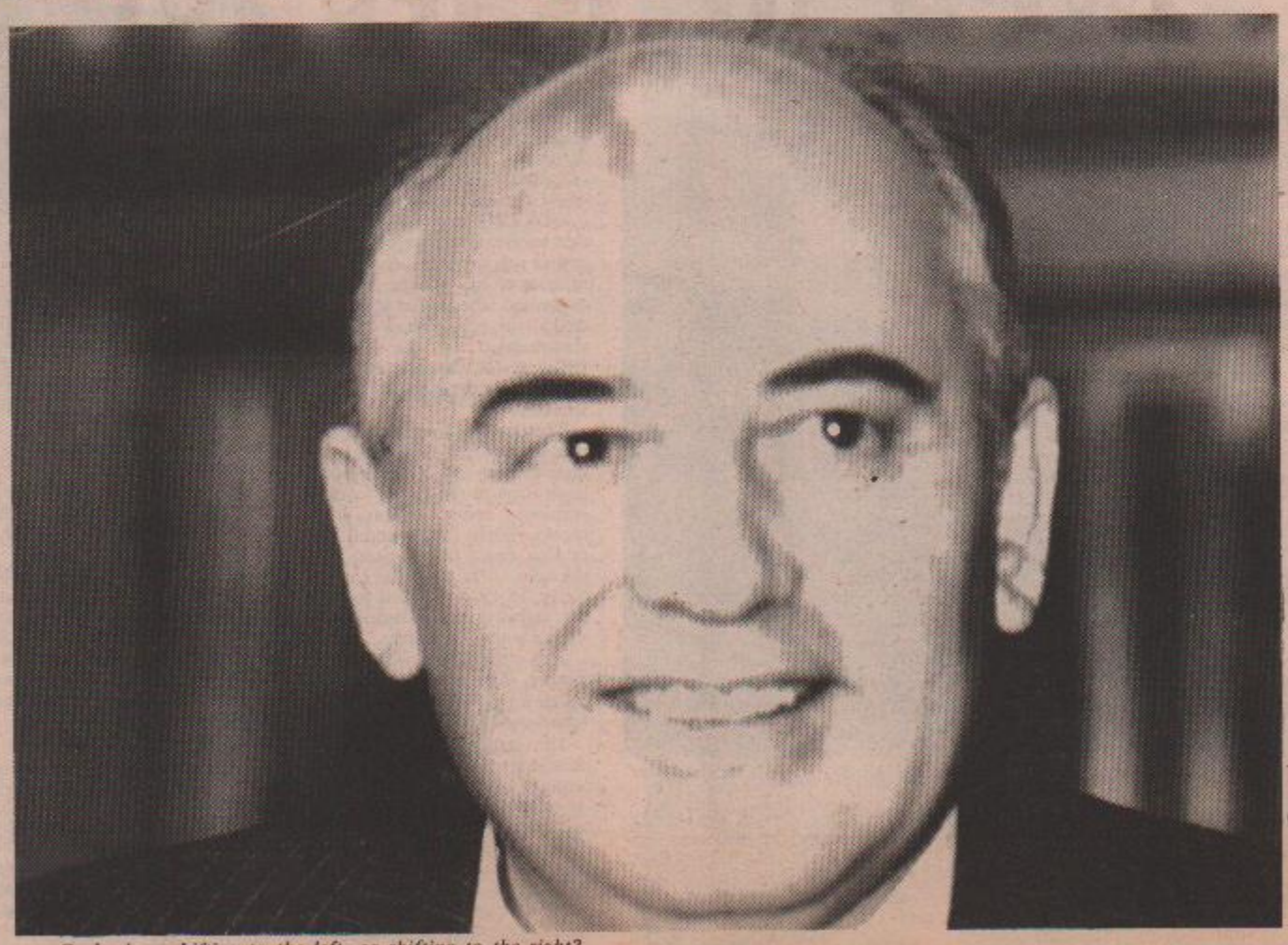


PHOTO: (Report)

Gorbachev: shifting to the left, or shifting to the right?

In this context, it is obvious that what Gorbachev means when he calls for openness ("glasnost") is *not* to unleash the creative potential of the masses!

The "criticism" the Soviet leadership is interested in is not criticism of its own policy, but criticism of the past, of its bureacratic rivals, the Brezhnevites. Even when it comes to the criticism of the Stalin period, the "reformers' " criticism has a definite slant.

Selective quotations from Lenin's Testament are published; a rehabilitation of Bukharin, leader of the Right Opposition, is rumoured to be in the pipeline — but no general rehabilitation of the leaders of the Revolution murdered by Stalin.

It is fairly clear that "democratisation" is a lever to force through the economic reforms that are proposed against the resistance of vested interests entrenched in sections of the bureaucracy.

The key to understanding the Gorbachev reforms, then, is their economic content. Is this in the interests of the working class or not?

The speeches make fulsome references to workers' participation. But it is not participation in effective decision making which is proposed. Rather workers are being asked to participate, as in participation schemes in the capitalist countries, in *"giving a collective guarantee of productive discipline"* (*Pravda*, Feb. 25, cited in *International Viewpoint*, Feb 23).

The "workers" councils that are to be set up will *"bring together representatives of the administration, the Party organisations, the unions and the Komsomol (CP youth) as well as team councils etc..."* (*Nouvelle Revue Internationale*, Oct. '86, cited in *IV*, Feb 23). In other words, they will have representatives of the bureaucratic organisations, not of the rank and file. Strikes remain illegal.

The main burden of the Soviet leadership's proposals is to give more power to the factory managers, and the question is openly being raised of firing surplus workers.

An article by Tatiana Zaslavskaya in September in *Kommunist* reports plant managers as saying that where there was more autonomy for an enterprise, it would be both necessary and possible to reduce the numbers of workers. So the direction of the reforms is to promote speed-up and unemployment.

At the same time the reformers are launching an attack on "irrational" subsidies, low rents and low food prices. The "attack on the black market" involves a small element of criminal prosecutions and a large element of extending the legal market in food and services.

This leads to a sharp rise in prices and deepening social inequality. This is why one of the first demands of the Gdansk strikes in Poland was food rationing.

In social policy the orientation of the reformers is to strengthen the family. Bureaucrats talk of "freeing women from physically hard and harmful work," i.e. excluding them from "men's" jobs (*IV*, March 23, p9). An article on "homosexuality" in the Moscow Komosol paper blames insufficient differentiation of male and female roles for the "disease of homosexuality":

"The overwhleming dominance of women teachers in our schools contributes to the growing equalisation of sex roles. Who, according to teacher is the best boy in class? — a quiet, obedient one. And the best girl? One who is energetic and active. And we can count the purely male or purely female professions on the fingers of one hand. The common goals and targets that we put in front of our children lead in their minds to a sexually neutral self-evaluation." (*Guardian*, March 25, front page)

Thus "homosexuality" is used as a bugbear to reinforce the oppression of women.

In international policy Moscow continues to deepen its orientation of peaceful coexistence. The proposed deal on intermediate nuclear forces, for all the embarrassment it has caused in Washington, amounts in fact to capitulation to US imperialism's demand that disarmament and "Star Wars" be separated.

The statements of the bureaucracy continue to support the proponents of reform and class collaboration in the capitalist countries, and even to right wing bourgeois forces. Conversations of Western correspondents with foreign policy officials in Moscow suggest that the Kremlin would prefer a Thatcher victory in this country, as a Labour victory might "destabilise" NATO.

The "Gorbachev reforms" therefore represent a shift not to the left but to the right. This shift to the right in the USSR has come — as it came in China after the fall of the "Gang of Four" — because of the failure of the "leftist" policy of *bureaucratic* central planning *in a single country*.

Claiming to "build socialism in one country", the bureaucracy sees itself as above classes and above class struggle. Its "left" offers something like Morrisonian nationalisation with its flaws magnified a hundredfold; its right, like the Kinnersley leadership of our own dear Party, accept the economic terms of reference of the capitalist class.

Market

Do the reforms then show that those pro-capitalist politicians and theorists are right who claim that the market is the only and best way of organising the economy, and that fuller steps towards the restoration of capitalism — or at least a "mixed economy" of the sort we were supposed to have here in the sixties, according to the Labour Party leadership — is inevitable?

There is an alternative, the alternative put foward in the 1920s in the USSR by the Left Opposition: *to recognise that it is not possible to build socialism in one country.*

What is possible is to maintain the power of the working class in that country as a bastion of the world struggle for socialism, and to use the strength of that country to carry forward the *world* struggle.

The key to real economic planning is workers' democracy in deciding the plan and the political mobilisation of the workers in implementing it. This requires a complete break with all forms of bureaucratism, with attempts to solve problems by administrative decree, and with the cult of the expert and the technocrat — all of which is a far cry from the interests of Gorbachev's intellectual and technocratic supporters. In today's USSR it means the violent destruction of the political power of the state/party bureaucracy and the removal of its material privileges.

The bureaucracy, left and right, claims to be the guardian of the "national" interest — but its classless schemas can produce nothing except stagnation and attacks on the interests of the working class.

Internationally it is the same: both tendencies within the bureaucracy urge on the working class the most craven class-collaborationist policies, which can only end in defeat and *increase* the isolaton of the workers' states and the pressure of capitalism on them.

It is a profound testimony to the bankruptcy of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the USSR that the policies of the Left Opposition, first put forward in the 1920s, retain all their relevance today. The obstacle to Gorbachev's reforms is the rock on which the Bolshevik Right of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky foundered in the 1920s.

Pursued systematically, their policy would lead to the restoration of capitalism. It thus threatens both the job security of the bureaucracy — and the class interests of the Soviet working class. The policy of the "Brezhnevites", on the other hand, amounts to no more than clinging to power by force and manoeuvres — a policy for paralysis.

The Gorbachev reforms will not solve the crisis of the USSR; but they may lift the lid off it, creating, as in Poland, working class resistance — which is the only basis of solving the problems of the USSR.

But even such an alternative can be no more than a rebellion, a protest which ends in defeat, unless it finds the way to the politics of the Left Opposition, the politics of the Fourth International, and *forcibly overthrows* the bureaucracy and takes the power into its own hands.

CND Demo, April 25th
A photographic record
by Ann Flowers



International Briefing

South African elections

Apartheid confronts the working class



PHOTOS: Wayne Edginton

As the all-white elections draw nearer, the apartheid regime is showing increased signs of panic.

The elections were called, two years before they were due, because the ruling National Party wanted to consolidate its position with the Afrikaner volk and to stem what it saw as the growing threat to its hegemony from the far right of the white political spectrum.

By Charlie van Gelderen
Brent South CLP

The emergence of a "left" revolt of Afrikaner intellectuals made it all the more necessary for Botha to demonstrate to the right that the future of white domination was safe in his hands.

The closing weeks of the election campaign has been marked by increased repression. South Africa's prisons are overcrowded with thousands of people held, without charge, under the security regulations. Many of them are children in their early teens or younger.

Thousands of people, none of them accused of anything, have been in jail for 10 months or longer. "Detainees are becoming long-term prisoners," commented Johannesburg attorneys David Dison and Steve Kahanovitz.



British workers in solidarity with South African workers

In many respects, these detainees are subject to harsher conditions than prisoners awaiting trial and convicted prisoners. For example, emergency detainees are allowed no letters to anyone outside without permission from the Police Commissioner. Letters are subject to censorship.

They are allowed no reading matter except the Bible or other holy book or selected magazines supplied through prison. Studying is permitted only with permission of the prison head or police.

Despite this increased repression, the resistance continues. This is particularly true on the labour front. Of all the mass organisations fighting apartheid, the Black trade unions, especially those affiliated to the giant Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have stood up best against the state's onslaught.

COSATU has found that its democratic structure has been a source of strength. A wave of militancy has swept through organised labour; the ten month strike in the retail sector, spearheaded by the 10-week strike at OK Bazaars has been followed by the strike of railway workers.

The Botha government saw this as a direct challenge. The state-owned railway is the only institution in the country which employs more whites than blacks. When the National Party first came into power, with the help of the all-white Labour Party, in 1924, it filled jobs on the railways with dispossessed "poor white" peasants.

This together with white miners, has provided the National Party with a solid core of white working class support.

The strike started with the dismissal of a black worker for a minor infringement — instead of handing in money which he had been sent to collect on Friday, he handed it in on the Monday — but it soon became an issue of union recognition.

16,000 workers came out in support of their dismissed comrade. In a confrontation with the police, the trade union headquarters in Johannesburg was wrecked and six workers killed.

COSATU is now considering how to respond to this latest act of state brutality. For the Botha regime, failure to meet this challenge with a show of force would have led to a further haemorrhage of its supporters to the right. It is this fear whch also led to the assault on allegedly "terrorist" targets in Zambia.

If you want it tough, Botha is saying to the white voters, they don't come much tougher than me!

It is this same fear of growing union power which has now led to the charging of Moses Mayekiso, a leader of the COSATU affiliate Metal and Allied Workes' Union with high treason after months of detention without trial.

Moses Mayekiso was a leading element in trying to combine trade union activity with more overt political objectives by organising street committees; launching rent boycott; forming people's courts, etc. Together with four other Alexandar community leaders, he is alledged to have tried to "overthrow, usurp or endanger the authority of the state with seditious intent..."

They are believed to be the first people in South Africa to be charged with treason for running people's courts, street, block and areas committees, and for forming an action committee. The state describes these structures as "organs of people's power".

They are expected to apear in court on August 3rd.

The labour movement in Britain and internationally must be galvanised into solidarity action with the railwayworkers in South Africa and with Moses Mayekiso and his fellow accused. Resolutions from trade union and Labour Party branches must fill the post bags of the South African ambassador.

HE The Ambassador,
South African Embassy,
Trafalgar Square,
London WC1

South African Railway & Harbour's Union,
Box 7459,
Johannesburg,
South Africa

Metal & Allied Workers Union,
268 Jeppe Street,
Johannesburg,
South Africa.

Don't ignore Namibian struggle!

The media and Namibia conference

According to a recent South African news release (Reuters, Feb 1987) armed resistance against the illegal South African occupation of Namibia has been all but wiped out.

The press release claimed that during the war between South African armed forces and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the armed wing of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the latter had lost 10,350 combatants.

This is equivalent to 1% of the entire population of the country (500,000 combatants in British equivalent terms!!).

If the South African goverment made such statements about their military operations in South Africa itself, this claim would be seriously investigated by the press. Yet like so many aspects of the struggle in Namibia, the issues raised by this claim went unreported in the British media.

Events in South Africa regularly grab the attention of the news media in Britain. Despite the South African government's severe reporting restrictions journalists and news editors from newspapers, TV and radio cover all current affairs issues from the whites-only elections to the formation of the independent black trade union federations.

The same cannot be said of Namibia. This is despite the fact that, unlike the rest of the region, it is an "International Territory", the direct responsibility of the United Nations — especially all the permanent members of the Security Council such as Britain.

The *Media and Namibia* conference is being organised by the Namibia Support Committee under the auspices of the United Nations Council for Namibia. It will engage all sections of the British media that aim seriously to cover southern African affairs in a discussion about what can be done to ensure:

- access to reliable news information;
- up to the minute reporting of events as they happen;
- in-depth analysis of social and political developments within Namibia.

Journalists, current affairs specialists, politicians, trade unionists and academics will be joining representatives of the United Nations Council for Namibia, leading members of SWAPO, delegates from the Namibian Council of Churches and others to discuss:

- why the media should cover Namibia;
- the South African propaganda war and the Namibian response;
- Britain's role in Namibia;
- better reporting of the war in Namibia and Angola;
- filming in Namibia;

and other questions.

If you are interested in further details about the conference, send your request with details of your name; organisation, newspaper or programme; address and telephone number to The Media and Namibia Conference, Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW.



Free Eleuterio Gutierrez!

For many decades, Bolivia has been one of the most exploited countries of all by world imperialism.

The whole economy rests on exports of tin, largely to the USA: 75% in the 1920s and '30s. Recent figures showed that tin exports were over 50% of Bolivia's economy.

And now,the collapse of the tin market is creating even more havoc with the economy.

The enormous superprofits for imperialism from the labour of Bolivian tin-miners produced one of the most militant of industrialised unions ever known and was the foundation of the sharp class struggle that has set the tone of Bolivian politics this century.

The current President, Victor Paz Estensorro, through large debts and the need for more borrowing from the IMF, is at the beck and call of world imperialism and has placed stringent "austerity" (read "starvation") measures upon the workers and poor peasants. The Bolivian workers are fighting against a ruling class terror based in New York and London.

Eleuterio Gutierrez, a skilled engineer, has worked in the Bolivar mine for 17 years. In response to yet another attack of austerity measures by the (IMF) government in September 1985, it was yet again miners who led a very tenacious resistance by the working class, through a general strike.

Throughout the September "state of seige", many trade union leaders were arrested, including Eleuterio. Almost all of them were released promptly when "normality" was restored, but not Eleuterio — against whom accusations of theft were thrown by a locally well-known petty criminal Rufino.

From Free Eleuterio Gutierrez Campaign

The state mining company, Comibol, enforced the arrest and immediately a workers meeting assembled which scorned the accusation of self-robbery of the mine and demanded his release.

Eleuterio Gutierrez has been incarcerated in a Bolivian jail for over one and a half years. And now that, finally, the comrade goes to court in Oruro, the judge has said there are too many problems with this case, it isout of his jurisdiction, and the case is now in "recess" with the possibility of it going to the highest court in the land in the capital city of Sucre. Much more is going on here than meets the eye.

- Get involved in the campaign. Get your trade union, Labour Party or other organisations to send a representative to our campaign meetings.

Tel 01 737 7930.

Letter from Eleuterio Guteirrez

Comrade workers of Britain,

With this letter I have the honour to send you revolutionary greetings from all my worker comrades here. I know about the considerable economic help being organised and about the many mobilisations and pressure against the Bolivian Embassy in London and about the publication of my case in many newspapers, and how you are fighting for my immediate release. I am sending you my sincere thanks and also in the name of my family, which are at this moment in a state of abandonment.

As a mineworker for the Bolivian Mining Corporaton in the mining site of Bolivar, I must tell you again that I have been falsely accused through slander, under the pressure of the government and the company where I used to work.

They have been using a well known criminal and anti-social element to accuse me of something I never committed at any moment. This is only because of my participation and because I am a leading member in the union over many years and I have been known as a "dangerous element" for the managers of that company.

At this time I am detained in the public gaol of Oruro since 30th September 1985. Until now no solution has been produced for resolving my problems, becaue the whole judicial system is very slow and because of the incapacity of the judge.

As you can see, comrades, I am totally innocent of the crime of which I am accused. Comibol and the government are involved in a manoeuvre against me an they are trying cover and obscure the political meaning of these problems.

Without more details I again send you my high regards and I think with proletarian world unity we will go forward for a better future for the workers.

Eleueurio Gutierrez M., 17.1.87

The true face of Sinn Fein?

I would like to comment on the article in *Briefing* no. 70 on the elections in Ireland.

I was a member of the Irish Labour Party for six years before I came to England.

By Mairtin O'Brudair Runai Exeter LPYS

I find it incredible that you have, on the one hand, the right wing of the Labour Party supporting a bi-partisan policy with the Tories on Northern Ireland, and, on the other, supposed leftwingers like yourselves giving support to a sectarian party like Sinn Fein.

In the Irish labour and trade union movement we sometimes felt that if this was the only position either section of the Labour Party could offer, ye should say nothing.

Individuals in the British labour movement who give support to sectarian parties of any colour (green or orange) do nothing to help socialists in Ireland who are, in spite of difficulties, trying to create workers' unity.

"Bent British"

When I lived in Ireland Sinn Fein members used to refer to the elements in the Labour Party who supported them as "Bent British". Of course, when the republican movement is in Britain it adopts a different approach to leftwingers.

The *Briefing* article contains some incredible passages. "Traditional bourgeois nationalism, in the form of Fianna Fail, remains the political framework to which other forces must relate."

The only way any socialist could relate to FF is vigorously to oppose it.

It is interesting, considering *Briefing's* considerable emphasis on the questions of racism, lesbian and gays, and women, that it supports SF. Sinn Fein is not very forward looking on these issues, and this is in some ways an understatement.

SF is a nationalist party who refer to people in *Briefing* and similar journals as "Bent British" — not a very non-racial attitude.

During the recent divorce referendum the advice of the SF leadership to their supporters was: "vote yes, but if your conscience dictates against divorce do as you see fit" — hardly the advice a socialist should give.

I come from Limerick and during the divorce referendum the party which your article describes as "building a revolutionary challenge to a reactionary state" was completely absent from the campaign. This situation was repeated in many parts of the country.

In the forefront of the campaign were the Irish Labour Youth and socialists from other parties and ordinary trade unionists. But I suppose Irish socialists who do not indulge in killing protestant workers are not worthy of your support.

Referendum

During the referendum to prevent abortion being available in Ireland, SF in certain parts of the country campaigned actively in favour of this. Again, it was ordinary Irish trade unionists who were in the forefront of the campaign.

The Irish Labour Party, as in the divorce referendum, officially supported the progressive campaigns. Two members of the Irish PLP were expelled for their active dissent.

John Joe McGirl, SF candidate in Sligo-Leitrim in the recent election and a vociferous supporter of Gerry Adams at the last Ard-Fheis, was prominent as a rabid reactionary during this campaign. Is this an example of "building a genuine radical alternative"?

Women

If you are familiar with the book *Only the Rivers Run Free: an Account of the Women's War in Ireland*, you will know that the status accorded to women in the Nationalist movement was disgraceful. Positive discrimination is not practised in SF. The only party in Ireland who practice this policy (which your paper regards so highly) is the Labour Party.

The position of lesbian and gay men in Republican areas is dictated by the Catholic Church which SF does nothing to challenge. Gay clubs do not last very long in Belfast or Derry due to the bigots on both sides of the sectarian divide closing them.

I was an active campaigner against coalition when I was in the Irish Labour Party. SF members used regularly to tell me there was never any chance of Ireland becoming socialist.

You ask in the article how much longer can *Militant* relate to the Labour Party as a force representing working class politics in the south? I think the question must be asked of *Briefing* how much longer will it be hoodwinked by the sexist, homophobic and racist party of SF?

Socialists

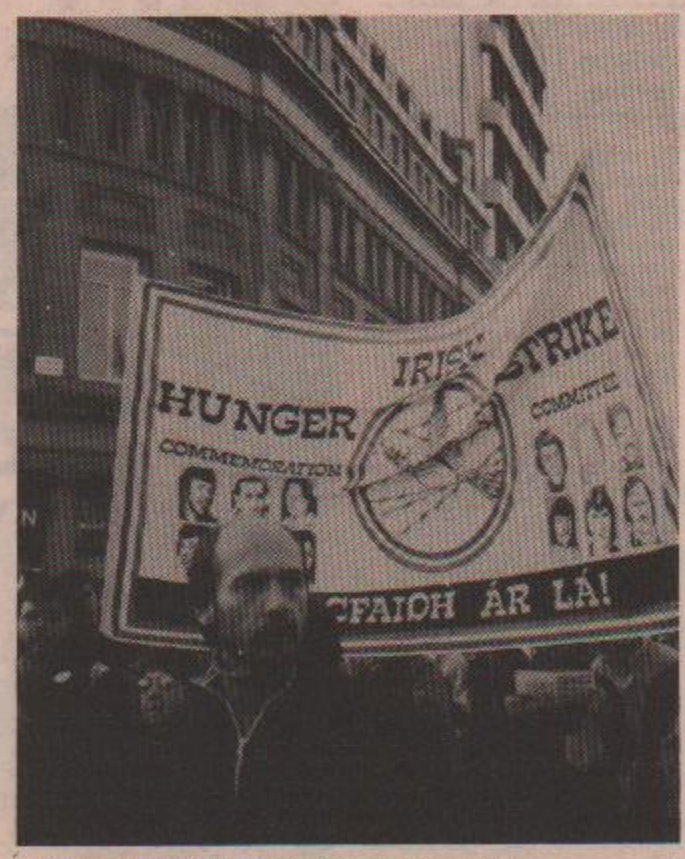
Socialists in the Irish Labour Party who have managed to break the party from coalition offer the most radical alternative for Catholic and Protestant workers in Ireland. Far from ignoring the national question we confront it and point out that under capitalism there will never be a united Ireland.

A united capitalist Ireland is not of any use to Irish workers. SF and *Briefing* would have us believe that it is. Even if it was, would ye seriously hold up a priest-ridden republic as an ideal?

It is a fact that SF have many sides. In rural areas in Ireland where their support is greatest they present themselves as a nationalist conservative party. In urban areas they adopt a more "socialist" approach.

This Jekyll and Hyde act only convinced 32,000 people in the Republic and in the North; it still only convinces about 30% of the Catholic population, which is only 12-15% of the total population.

But it is obvious SF have done a good snow-job on *Briefing*. Never mind the pub bombings which killed and injured so many working class youth in Birmingham. They were, as SF puts it, "regrettable civilian casualties". I would say, comrades, that these were our brothers and sisters in the British labour movement who were the victims of the mindless dead-end of individual terrorism.



British solidarity: Bloody Sunday demo, 1986

The British labour movement has to address the question of Ireland — but it has to be in a class fashion. It must seek to support those forces which are attempting to unite the Irish working class. It cannot align itself with either of the sectarian groupings who throw up the barriers to working class unity.

The national question has to be raised in terms of jobs, housing, education, etc. Can a united capitalist Ireland hold any hope for the Irish working class? Only by a socialist campaign by the labour and trade union movement with the support and solidarity of the British Labour Party can the bigots be defeated.

The British army will not be bombed out of Ireland. The Protestant working class cannot be driven into the sea. Only the labour movement can force the withdrawal of the army and the disbandment of the RUC and UDR.

It is the labour movement which will unite the class and defend it against sectarianism. Only the labour movement can unite Ireland on a socialist basis and prevent the descent of my country into a barbaric and Lebanon-style situation.

Tiocfaidh an la — ar aghaidh leis an lucht oibre, Le ghach dea ghui.



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

Anyone mention Ireland?

A couple of weeks ago the Labour Party National Executive issued a policy statement on the North of Ireland — but without the glossy brochures, red roses, or patriotic speeches we have come to expect from Neil Kinnock on these occasions.

Unlike other NEC policy statements, this one was presented quietly, almost shamefacedly, as if not to draw attention to the fact that the Party has anything to say on Ireland.

The statement itself reflects this atitude.

It had been promised for the Party Conference last October. When it didn't appear it was explained that this was because it needed to be so substantial, far-reaching and detailed that there hadn't been time to prepare it.

Now, it finally emerges as little more than a cobbling together of selected conference resolutions, current misconceptions, and past prejudices.

Clearly, Ireland will figure not at all in Labour's election campaign; at least, not if the Party leadership has its way.

The Labour Committee on Ireland has different ideas, and has now sent out to every prospective Parliamentary Labour candidate a questionnaire on Ireland, taking up such issues as British withdrawal, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, strip-searching, non-jury courts and the disbandment of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

By Geoff Bell Election Organiser, Labour Committee on Ireland

In many instances it will be up to constituency activists to *ensure* that candidates reply to the questionnaire and do so in a way that corresponds with principles of Irish self-determination.

Those principles the NEC statement at best avoids and at worst denies. As with the previous statement in 1981, token support is given to Irish unity, but practical support is given to partition.

The NEC says that unity can only come when it is supported by a majority within the Northern Ireland state. In other words, majority rule in Ireland can only be allowed when a minority — the loyalists — agree to it.

Achieving such consent, says the NEC, "will not be an easy task," which is one of its more realistic utterances.

The NEC also promises "to defeat the scourge of paramilitary violence," by which it presumably means the IRA, by seeking to "deploy security forces effectively." Whether or not this will be "an easy task" is not said.

The NEC's other plans involve applying the Party's industrial and investment strategy to the North of Ireland, as well as "strengthening economic links between the north and south of Ireland." This is to be achieved by trying to "harmonise the economic and welfare systems throughout Ireland." The government of the South of Ireland will thus be pressured to construct its society as a replica of the one in Britain and the North of Ireland.

Absurdity

The absurdity of the NEC statement is most apparent when it turns to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Labour supports the Agreement, says the NEC, because it "helps to promote understanding between the two parts of Ireland," — an observation which blandly ignores the increased Protestant sectarianism the Agreement has produced, as well as the lack of any progress towards equal rights for Catholics.

All of this suggests there is little good reason why Irish people in Britain should vote Labour with any enthusiasm. However, there are sections of the NEC statement which do reflect the gains Irish campaigners in the Party have made in the last few years. There is a commitment to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act "in its entirety"; to "end the humiliating and degrading regime of strip searching"; and to end the use of plastic bullets.

And while the conference policy of ending Diplock Courts is watered down — there is only the promise to "work towards" jury courts (in the meantime there will be three judges instead of one acting as a jury) there is a pledge to end supergrass trials.

These are reasons enough for Irish people in Britain to vote Labour, but these will be strengthened if individual Labour candidates speak out unambiguously in favour of Irish self-determination. Most important of all is the fight to make Ireland an issue in the election. The Labour Committee on Ireland is determined to do just that in the weeks ahead.

Sisterhood and Solidarity

Women's discussion weekend

The days of June 20th and 21st are dates to book in the diaries of women all over the country.

That weekend, Labour Women for Ireland and the SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign are hosting a major discussion school.

Held in Camden Town Hall, London, it will be entitled "Sisterhood and Solidarity — Towards an Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Racist Women's Labour Movement."

It will cover various topics such as British colonialism, women's resistance struggles, strategies for fighting racism, and the potential of the women's labour movement.

Each of the main themes, introduced by a panel of speakers, will be followed by block workshops in which all women can participate.

Speakers include Amrit Wilson (journalist), Jenny Bourne (researcher for the Institute of Race Relations), Bernadette McAlisky (Irish Republican), Councillor Martha Osamor (Tottenham, London), Liz Short (SOGAT), as well as representatives from Southall Black Sisters and other women's groups.

There will also be representatives from resistance movements themselves, including Sinn Fein, SWAPO and the PLO.

The discussion weekend has been supported and sponsored by a number of women's groups and Labour Women's Sections and individuals — Joan Ruddock, Joan Maynard MP, and Christine Crawley, MEP, amongst others.

For further information contact Ros (01 267 1941, daytimes); Alison (01 986 2326, evenings).

Positive Images Demo

Thousands march against bigotry and racism

Smashing the backlash in Haringey

Over 3,500 people joined the "Smash the Backlash" demonstration called by Haringey Black Action and Positive Images on Saturday May 2nd.

Both organisations were formed last year to fight the homophobic and racist onslaught whipped up in response to Haringey Council's policy of promoting positive images of lesbians and gay men in schools.

The "Parents Rights" Group, some religious sects, the New Patriotic Movement, and of course the raving rightists of the local Conservative Associations have been disseminating vile propaganda not only against the Council's policy (part of the manifesto on which Labour won a decisive victory last year) but against lesbians and gays themselves.

This onslaught has fostered a climate of fear, hostility and violence in the Borough.

The mere fact that thousands succeeded in marching safely through the streets of Haringey is a major victory not only for those immediately under attack — lesbians and gay men, black and white — but for all oppressed people in the capital, and for the socialists battling with them.

Credit goes to the march organisers from both sponsoring bodies. With little outside support, they spread the word across London and much further field and built a united, disciplined and well-organised demonstration in which a great variety of organisations and people took part. The substantial Black presence on the march was one of the key factors in its success.

By Mike Marqusee Haringey Labour Briefing

Lesbian and gay groups from all over the country joined in. Banners proclaimed support from numerous women's groups, from NUT and NALGO branches, from the Viraj Mendis Campaign, CND, SWAPO support groups, Troops Out, Anti-Fascist Action, Labour Party groups, SWP, CP, RCP and many more.

The march was led through Wood Green Shopping City and down Lordship Lane by Quadrophonic Sound System from the Broadwater Farm Estate. More important perhaps than the numbers demonstrating were the numbers watching — which must have run into the tens of thousands as the procession made its noisy but peaceful way through streets crowded with Saturday afternoon shoppers. Attempts by small numbers of bigots to goad the marchers were rebuffed.



PHOTO: Pam Isherwood

At Bruce Castle Park demonstrators were addressed by Dolly Kiffin from the Broadwater Farm Youth Association — who stressed the unity between the struggles of the people of Broadwater Farm and the lesbian and gay community — by Tottenham Councillor Martha Osamor, by Cath Gillespie of the Council's Disability Subgroup, by the Viraj Mendis Campaign, the Legislation Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, by Left Out, by Troops Out, and by Minister Barry Thorley of St Matthew's Church, Brixton, among others.

Although *Briefing* supporters played a major role in organising the demonstration and publicising it far and wide, participation from the Labour Party as a whole was disappointing. Only a handful of CLPs from outside the Borough attended, and the right wing of the local parties was notable mainly by its absence.

The success of the march shows yet again that Labour cannot win the lesbian and gay rights struggle — or indeed any other struggle — within the confines of the Council chamber. The 20-strong contingent marching behind the Haringey Labour Group banner have their work cut out for them in making Labour's manifesto promises on lesbian and gay rights a reality. That struggle is far from over. The "Smash the Backlash" demonstration has laid the best possible basis for continuing it.

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

LABOUR BRIEFING

Crude, cynical and dishonest

Another onslaught on the unemployed

Government plans to cut unemployment figures and further attack living standards for the young and unemployed are steaming ahead, with the present massive expansion in the Job Training Scheme, and recent threats to stop unemployed people under 18 from claiming supplementary benefit.

The expansion in part-time work, the success of the "Restart" programme in scaring people off the dole, and the growth in MSC-funded "make work" schemes mean that since August 1986 unemployment has fallen from 9.1% of the population of working age to 8.7% (11% of the workforce).

Unemployment may even dip below the magic figures of 3 million in May, which could be announced in June — just in time for the general election.

Yet the proportion of the population with jobs has not risen. Just exclude those on Community Programmes and adjust the big increase in part-time workers to a full-time equivalent; and total employment has clearly fallen as a proportion of the populaton of working age.

Signs are now in the air that the Tories — as part of the "secret manifesto" for a third term of office — are considering some form of US-style "workfare" scheme, where benefit entitlement is work related: "a mixture of forced labour and tightening of benefit rules."

The concrete signs of this trend are:

- A recent study by the Department of Employment to consider a possible shift of responsibility from the DHSS for all benefits paid to the unemployed and their families. This would enable far stricter policing of the unemployed, and an extension of "Restart" and other "availability for work" rulings designed to weed out any unemployed people deemed not to be trying sufficiently hard to find work, or to be too fussy about the quality of work and pay they require.
- The major extension of the new Job Training Scheme, which has just been expanded to 110,000 places by the government — against the advice of the Manpower Services Commission.

By Tracy Doyle

Aimed at the under-25s and linked to cuts in the Community Programme (average £60 per week gross — too "well paid"), the JTS is intended to provide an average 6 months work experience and training to the long-term unemployed.

Employer-based, it is even worse than YTS. There is no provision for off-the-job training, and participants will be paid no more than their existing state benefits.

In the worst case (a single person living with their parents) a JTS-er will get only £24.35 a week. Not only is this masively less than the normal wage of their fellow workers, it is even less than the £28.50 paid to a 16 year old YTS trainee!

The £206m scheme will cost the government nothing. £102m for so-called "training allowances" is simply the money that would have been paid in benefits, and the rest is to come from cuts in existing MSC training programmes. Yet still the Tories present this as the solution to youth unemployment!

The TUC has done no more than express its reservations on the level of trainee payments and funding.

Concrete opposition has come from NALGO which has decided to boycott JTS completely. Local authorities, where NALGO has substantial membership, are major providers of all YTS places (18%) and Community Programme places (44%). Trade Union approval is still formally required before any local MSC scheme can go ahead, so a NALGO boycott, backed by Labour local authorities, could really put the spanner in the works!

After the Scottish TUC voted overwhelmingly in April also to boycott the scheme as "a crude attempt to cook the unemployment figures for the umpteenth time, just in time for the general election" — the pressure must be on for the TUC to rethink its collaboration in the MSC and failure so far adequately to oppose the blatant exploitation of previous schemes such as YTS.

Even USDAW, the shopworkers' union, which originally supported the scheme, changed sides at the STUC, with Garfield Davies, General Secretary, stating:

"The Tories cynically and dishonestly try to kid young people that somehow training itself will provide job opportunities. The JTS is the last straw, and we should not be seen to be giving credence to this vicious exploitation."

The very height of cynicism and dishonesty was surely Thatcher's speech in the House of Commons on April 23rd: "I think we shall very soon be putting to the electorate whether young people who neither stay at school nor take training, nor take a job, are entitled to receive supplementary benefit."

With the recent expansion of YTS, and increased stringency in benefit availability, not to mention the removal of Wages Council protection for young workers, there is no doubt that the Tories are looking forward to a time when all young people are economically conscripted onto one low-paid non-unionised job or scheme after another, with absolutely no expansion in real jobs or education.

Unemployment is still the biggest problem in Britain today: yet the Labour Party's damp squib "no promise" promises will hardly motivate the young and unemployed to vote Labour. Instead, the Labour Party and the TUC should unite and pledge an end to these slave labour schemes, a guaranteed job for every school leaver, a massive increase in benefit rates, an end to low pay, expansion in education and a major programme to end the scourge of unemployment.

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!