LABOUR
BRIEFING
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40p



STAND AND FIGHT!



PHOTO: John Chapman

Scargill's call to the miners to "Stand and Fight" had a rapid response in South Yorkshire. But the leadership of the Yorkshire NUM seem determined to stop the action.

Two events, one at Frickley and the other one at the Selby complex, have led to a rapid escalation of strike action.

At Frickley six miners were suspended for refusing to answer charges of stoping work twenty minutes early the day before their annual holiday. On returning they were refused entry to the pit; the branch officials called an emergency branch meeting and the miners walked out. The Frickley men then picketed out the neighbouring pits and lobbied the South Yorkshire panel meeting which agreed to support their action.

By the end of the first week 14,000 men were out, 15 pits closed and 50,000 tonnes of coal a day lost.

Meanwhile, during the week of the NUM conference, the branch official at Stillingfleet, in the Selby complex, was accused of "misleading and misinforming" the men. His "crime"? He was accused of informing the men of Yorkshire NUM's policy against producing coal during overtime. He was sacked.

There are just two examples of the way the new disciplinary code, introduced without consultation with the union, is being used. It can suspend officials for telling NUM members of NUM policy. It can go further — and fine miners for events which take place off British Coal property; and dismiss miners for offences the courts have found them "no guilty" of!

Despite the agreement of the South Yorkshire and later the North Yorkshire panel to support the strike, as the best way to defeat the disciplinary code, the Yorkshire EC voted to call the men back to work. Only the Frickley delegate voted against this.

Jack Taylor, area leader, argued that only a total return to work would allow the ballots to go ahead properly. This has been used to demobilise the willing action, and the Frickley leadership are calling it a sell-out.

At the heart of these differences is a dispute about the 1984-5 Strike and how to defeat the Tories' plans for the coal industry now. After the defeat of 1985, former

H.M. Greenway
Yorkshire NUM rank and file

suporters of the miners, including the Communist Party, argued that the strike had been fought "the wrong way", it had "alienated public opinion" and lost the support of "the middle ground". Now these people want to negotiate with British Coal, and the UDM; agree that discipline is necessary and are obviously terrified of the consequences of the militant action of the rank and file.

● Far from the great Strike of 1984-5 being fought "the wrong way" *the opposite is the case.* It was exactly the right way. And it remains the right way, the only way to halt the Tories onslaught.

● Far from the present strikes being an impediment to winning the ballots for action — against the disciplinary code, against the 6-day week, and for the victimised and sacked miners — *the opposite is the case.*

The strikes will increase confidence to fight the draconian code and will build the NUM against the scab UDM.

The Frickley men who have defied the Yorkshire EC call to return to work should be supported by the rank and file in the other Yorkshire pits.

Stand and Fight must be the call to all those who want to oppose Thatcher — local government councillors and workers, civil servants, teachers, workers being made redundant, the Black community. The Labour leadership must be made to fight. Waiting another five years for a possible Labour government is as redundant now as it was before the election. The Yorkshire miners have got it right.



PHOTO: John Chapman

As in Yorkshire today, it took a principled minority in Notts to keep the NUM alive in the 1984-85 strike.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Home News

Fighting deportations

Close the Harwich prison ship!

For well over a month now the *Earl William*, a redundant passenger ferry moored at Harwich, has been operating as an immigration prison.

Refugees fleeing persecution and terror (mainly Tamils from Sri Lanka, Iranians and some Eritreans) have been denied asylum by the Home office and held on the ship, which is being staffed and run by a private security firm.

The National Union of Seamen have condemned the use of the ferry as a prison.

The Tory government is reviving the Napoleonic tradition of incarcerating its prisoners in rotting hulks — although Tower Hamlets Liberal Council is also claiming credit for the idea, saying the Tories

By David Robinson Haringey Labour Briefing

are copying their (now defunct) idea of dumping homeless (black) families on a privately-run ship.

The prison ship is of course part of a generalised assault on Black people entering the country, whose only "crime" is to want to visit Britain or to escape from terror in their own lands.

Various anti-racist and anti-deportation groups, including Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign, the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign and others have organised picketing of the ship on a rota basis. This welcome initiative should be supported, as should the recent establishment of a Haringey Anti-Deportation Campaign.

The demands of the campaign should be raised throughout the labour movement:

- close racist prison ships!

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- defend the rights of Black people and refugees!

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- refugees are political and not criminal!

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Comrades wanting speakers should contact HADC, PO Box 736, Kingsland High St, London E8 (01-254 6689) or the Refugee Forum (01-482 3829).

Model resolution from Southwark Anti-Deportation Campaign

This ..... condemns the detention and imprisonment of refugees and visitors to this country by the government, in particular this ..... sees the use of the car ferry The Earl William at Harwich for this purpose as a blatant escalation of the harassment of Black people wishing to enter this country and as a further attempt to discourage them from doing so. This ..... notes the appalling conditions under which the detainees are kept on the boat and recognises that these conditions result directly from the privatisation of security and catering.

This ..... calls for an end to the criminalisation of Black people through such detention procedures. This ..... supports the campaign against racist immigration controls and will actively mobilise for the demonstration against the Harwich prison ship.

For Civil Rights and Justice!

Mobilising a new campaign

By Dave Palmer Haringey Labour Briefing



The Broadwater Farm Youth Association has launched a *Movement for Civil Rights and Justice*.

The life sentences handed out to the Tottenham 3 — convicted of the murder of PC Blakelock despite a complete lack of forensic or eyewitness evidence — was a watershed in the long sequence of frame-up trials which arose out of the Broadwater Farm uprising.

The media-created demonology around Winston Silcott and the other defendants frustrated the Defence Campaign's efforts to explain the truth about the police operation on the Farm.

The frame-up nature of the trials was obscured not only by the media hysteria but also by the labour movement's basic lack of interest in defending Black people's democratic rights.

The Youth Association has launched the new movement in order to breach these obstacles and enlist the wide support which they have not yet been able to mobilise through the Defence Campaign. Inspired by the US Civil Rights movement, they hope to build something which can appeal to "ordinary" people and which can mobilise the mass of Black people around a struggle for "freedom".

Representatives of the Youth Association are visiting America to meet prominent Black political activists. They hope to involve leading figures such as Jesse Jackson and Stevie Wonder in order to promote the planned October 3rd march which will officially launch the new movement.

The US civil rights movement does not offer complete parallels with the predicament and aims of the Youth Association. The US movement developed around demands to remove the apartheid enshrined in the Jim Crow laws. In Britain, despite the presence of racist laws (mainly on immigration), racism is primarily extra-legal. British Blacks therefore mobilise against a more disparate, less specific target, making united, broad-based campaigning difficult.

This is reflected in some confusion over what the demands of the campaign should be. A shopping list based around specific incidents of police or state racism will appeal only to those already involved in those specific campaigns. Of course, the charges against all the victims of the Farm frame-ups should be dropped. But to build a real movement for Civil Rights and Justice will require broader demands — democratic demands whch speak to the masses currently *outside* the specific campaigns.

The Steering Committee for the movement remains an *ad hoc*, unrepresentative and undemocratic affair, over-populated with activists, mainly white, each with his or her own sectarian interests.

The best way to broaden the Movement is to get sponsorship and support from the labour movement. Trade unions, CLPs, women's sections, LPYS branches, Labour councillors, MPs, and prominent labour movement figures should be approached and asked to sign the special sponsorship letter produced by the Youth Association. Organisations should affiliate to the movement and seek representation on the Steering Committee.

Outwrite issue 60 July/Aug '87

For the last five years, 60 issues of the women's newspaper *Outwrite* have brought us news of women organising, thinking, laughing, fighting all over the world.

Now *Outwrite* is in trouble — starved of funds needed to maintain the basic office structure with sufficient paid office staff to organise a paper with the aid of voluntary labour.

Outwrite has added a unique contribution to the women's movement in Britain: a chance to keep in touch with women's activities from an international perspective. As the editorial collective wrote in issue 57:

By Jenny Fisher Bow & Poplar CLP

"Internationalism, a perspective which has been missing from the women's movement in general, is our most significant contribution. If you believe, like us, that the women's movement here must acknowledge and struggle to change the exploitative connections between their own national economies and those of the third world, to improve the quality of women's lives everywhere so that their own struggle doesn't remain meaningless or insular... then *Outwrite* must live on."

Outwrite is taking a 3 month break to concentrate on fund-raising. So far £3,000 has been raised towards a target of £20,000.

A fundraising leaflet is available for distribution at conferences and meetings; an *Outwrite* supporters group has been formed to pool women's talents and different skills; and a fund-raising anthology of *Outwrite* articles in planned.

Every effort is being made to keep *Outwrite* as a monthly newspaper — although if funds cannot be achieved to keep this format, other formats will be considered to keep the information network alive.

Outwrite is tapping all the support it can amongst its women supporters. How about all you *Briefing* men out there? Don't leave it just to the women to keep *Outwrite* going!

Contact *Outwrite* women's newspaper at Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London EC2 6HG, tel. 01-729 4575.

INTERVIEW

For unity in action!

BRIEFING spoke to JEREMY CORBYN immediately after his election as Secretary of the Campaign Group.

***Briefing:* Jeremy, congratulations on being elected secretary of the Campaign Group. What do you see as the main role of the Campaign Group in the immediate post-election period?**

Jeremy: Thank you very much. The new officers of the Campaign Group are Tony Benn, Chair, myself as Secretary, and Bill Michie as treasurer, and we have elected a new committee, including some of the new MPs on it.

The important issues are first to have the maximum impact within the PLP and to have a major impact on the debates within the PLP on the need for a socialist strategy against the Tories.

Secondly, is the need for better organisation outside Parliament through local Campaign Groups in unity with all left organisations. The Tories are attacking us on inner cities, on race, on economic strategy, and once more on trade unions.

Every industrial dispute should be a basis for a united fightback against the Tories rather than apologising for whatever positions we hold.

The opportunities before us are enormous, but if we as a Party reject



PHOTO: Jenny Fisher

Jeremy Corbyn, speaking at the Briefing Socialist Policies Conference earlier this year.

class and socialist analysis, then we'll slide into an SDP-like morass.

***Briefing:* How many members are there in the Campaign Group and what is its political composition?**

Jeremy: We have 42 so far, about 27 existing members from the old Parliament and the rest are new MPs, most of whom seem very keen on greater united action by the left both inside and outside parliament.

***Briefing:* How would you like to see the working relationship between *Briefing* and *Briefing* groups on the one hand and the Campaign Groups to which you refer on the other? Is there a basis for unity in this period?**

Jeremy: Yes, there must be a basis for unity. The right wing in the Party are pushing for constitutional changes which threaten rank and file influence and grass roots activity. Unity can be achieved through non-sectarian unity in action in the immediate period ahead.

LGIU feedback

The Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) Conference in Bradford and the Annual Conference of the Greater London Labour Party took place over the same weekend.

They were both marked by frequent outbreaks of "new realism", liberally interspersed with plain "old defeatism".

What became apparent at the LGIU Conference was that comrades from all over the country had felt the "media factor" — the media bashing London at every opportunity. Yet many were *more* opposed to London councils retreating or low-profiling our policies than some leading London figures!

There is a feeling (expressed at the ALA and elsewhere) that we should acknowledge problems with service delivery. These problems can be tackled in a way which involves the users, the workforce and the politicians.

This seems to me the best way to approach the government's proposals for housing, education and privatisation of public services. However, there can be no value at all in constantly *publicly attacking* our own services; that way we are seen to be supporting Thatcher's arguments!

If they are bad, there is no use pretending they are good. But if they are good, why claim they are bad?

The beginning of the retreat from equal opportunities policies can be seen in those terms. While some London

By Cllr Kevin Veness Chair of Housing, Ealing (personal capacity)

Councillors are only too ready to accept what many MPs claim about us, Council leaders such as Phil Beeley (Bradford), who chairs the LGIU, were urging us not to retreat on our policies.

During the workshop sessions on Saturday morning, right wingers from London were aping the Kinnock "ditch the Loony Left policies" stance. Yet in the Housing workshop, for example, we were coming under pressure from comrades from Norwich, Thamesdown and North Tyneside not to retreat in the face of the government attacks, but in fact to fight back on our terms.

Labour councils have, during the last 8 years, fought hard to find ways around government legislation and there is no point saying now that the only role we can play is to soften the impact of the Queen's Speech proposals.

The only way we, as socialists, can defend those communities directly under attack from Thatcher, i.e. those people who *need* Council housing,is to ensure that our services are fought for by the people delivering *and receiving* them.

This does not mean just a joint campaign with the unions to defend jobs and services but, in fact, a campaign with tenants and parents and users of Council services which shows that public sector services are worth defending and improving.

Editorial

BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Redraw the map... with socialist answers!

"Roll up that map; it will not be wanted these ten years."

William Pitt's words were forecasting the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars; but similar warnings apply now to the rapidly-changing Labour Party as Neil Kinnock's team lead off into uncharted territory.

Already few of the old terms seem to have much meaning. We read in the Tory press that the "left" won the Shadow Cabinet elections: but this means the Tribune Group won nine of the 15 seats. Bryan Gould, the brains behind the Election catastrophe, is apparently on the "left" of the Tribune Group.

How is it then that we find Mr Gould publicly suggesting the abandonment of Clause IV — while the "right wing" Roy Hattersley emerged as one of the first to rebuke him for endangering Labour's roots?

Hattersley's right wing Solidarity grouping "lost" the Shadow Cabinet elections, dropping from ten seats to five. But rightwingers Hattersley, Kaufman and Smith still picked up the three top posts.

The forces that were pushed to one side were that minority of MPs in the Campaign Group who are still prepared to stand by class struggle and socialist politics. This embarrassed the Tribune group, who voted 37-27 to have nothing to do with a joint slate which might link them with left wing critics of Neil Kinnock.

Even after Kinnock had appointed traditional right wingers in preference to the "left", Tribune chair Anne Clwyd could only grovel: "Neil is the leader of the Party and a member of the Tribune group, and we must support him in the decisions that he takes."

It is this wholesale rightward lurch by the former "cuddly left" that has made the Solidarity right wing redundant.

The charge to the right is being spearheaded by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, of which Gould was a founder member. The LCC is calling for a sweeping "rethink" of Labour's policies on council house sales, privatisation, share issues, tax cuts and Tory plans to encourage schools and council estates to opt out of local authority control. It claims that these policies "offer a form of economic and social participation for increasing numbers of people."

This potentially suicidal line of fighting on the Tories' home ground and conniving at the destruction of Labour's last remaining concentrations of working class support — the big council estates — is already being argued for by some Labour councils.

London Labour Party chair Glenys Thornton goes even further:

"The Party needs to begin to look again at its appeal, or lack of it, to the more prosperous, employed, averagely-earning homeowner who possibly owns shares on a modest scale, perhaps even in a firm that was once in the public sector."

What we are witnessing are attempts to redefine not just our socialist commitments but also our working class base and orientation. So we must restate some fundamentals. Our way to electoral victory is not by chasing the yuppie vote, the professional layers, nor the better off and least class conscious section of the working class if we do so at the expense of fighting for working class unity, including unity with the most oppressed.

Our constituency is that alliance of forces that we saw develop in the Miners' Strike — an alliance of the organised working class together with women, Black people, lesbians and gays. This was not a rainbow coalition, nor a popular front, but a radical alliance of the dispossessed under the banner of the labour movement. That alliance remains to be built and the divisions remain to be overcome. Only by forging such a fighting alliance can the "middle layers" be won back to the labour movement.

The election campaign showed exactly how not to do it. You cannot mobilise the employed, skilled working class by telling them that they must pay for Labour's programme. Those who must pay for our programme are not our own working class supporters nor even the middle class and professional layers, but the forces of capital. The only way to construct an alliance for socialism — an alliance of the employed and unemployed, men and women, Black and white, is to construct an alliance that confronts the power of capitalism.

Instead, Kinnock has renounced any collective, socialist perspective, and is targetting the prosperous individual:

"Our initial approach has got to be from the party to the individual. They have got to be told that socialism is the answer because socialism looks after the individual."

So as unions like the GMB and now the TUC increasingly model themselves on the National Union of Students, offering insurance, financial services and general "campaigns" in place of representation and negotiations, Kinnock ditches any collective class politics as a perspective for Labour. It's everyone for his or herself.

Against this background we can better understand the cynical bureaucratic manoeuvres at this year's union conferences to push through the "One Member One Vote" scheme. By a majority of only 35, TGWU conference delegates defeated a call to keep the system the way it is; and then by only 115 voted to cast 1.25 million votes for a new scheme that had not been discussed by any branches of the union.

By moves like this to break down the limited levels of accountability and Party democracy established after 1979, Kinnock hopes to push through his policy changes and marginalise the serious, class struggle left for all time. The passive "individual", informed only by the media, will form the mainstay of Kinnock's line.

If he gets his way, the slogan of "Total Surrender" will guide every response to the Tory attack, with one-time "left" Labour councils leading the way with self-destroying "caring cuts" in jobs and services and attacks on the unions. This could ensure that there will never be another Labour government.

It has never been more urgent for the left to unite in organising the resistance — in the unions, on the streets and estates, in the Black communities, among women and youth, and in the Council chambers, wards and CLPs as well as the Parliamentary Labour Party. The urgent task is to construct a united democratic left based on the struggles of the working class.

Briefing remains pledged to unite with all those on the left — in the Campaign Group and elsewhere — who are prepared to stand firm behind socialist policies and the practical defence of jobs, services and democratic rights.

Together we can beat the tide of defeatism from yesterday's lefties, and redraw the map with the socialist answers to the problems of the working class.

State secrets

Livingstone speech exhumes 'dirty tricks' scandals

Yes, British soldiers do kill people

For many people Ken Livingstone's maiden speech was the best thing that had happened in the House of Commons since Bernadette Devlin physically assaulted Reggie Maudling the day after the Bloody Sunday massacre over fifteen years ago.

By Geoff Bell
National Council, Labour Committee on Ireland

The new MP repeated allegations of dirty tricks by the British Army in the North of Ireland and conspiracy in these by the British government.

The allegations have been commonplace for some time. They are based on information supplied by Fred Holroyd and Colin Wallace, ex-Army Intelligence Officers, as well as forensic evidence; but this was the first time some of the detail had been mentioned in parliament.

The effect of Ken Livingstone's speech was such that Thatcher herself broke the House of Commons rules the following day to reply to — or rather, to comment on — the allegations.

She made no attempt to refute the evidence mentioned by Ken, or to answer his demand for an independent inquiry.

Among the charges Thatcher refused to answer were:

- That Robert Nairac, the SAS officer executed by the IRA in 1977, had combined with a Loyalist paramilitary gang, the Ulster Volunteer Force to assassinate a suspected member of the IRA in the South of Ireland in 1974;
- That Nairac had been part of the UVF gang that massacred members of the Miami Showband in 1975 because they were Catholics;
- That the MI5 had attempted to blackmail loyalist politicians and paramilitaries to co-operate with them in illegal activities over their supposed involvement in homosexual rape at the Kincora boys home;
- That Airey Neave — Thatcher's closest adviser at the time and North of Ireland spokesperson — was involved with a group of dissident MI5 officers in ruling "dirty tricks".

Iceberg

These allegations are just a very small tip of a very large iceberg. For example, there is another claim that the 1980 murder of a number of leading members of the Irish National Liberation Army and its political wing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was planned and carried out by MI5 agents as "revenge" for the INLA's assassination of Airey Neave the previous year.

The involvement of British intelligence agents or SAS operatives in a series of bombings in the South of Ireland between 1969 and 1977 is another common accusation, supported by a good deal of circumstantial evidence.

Of course, there is also the whole business of the murder of Seamus Grew and Roddy Carrol in December 1982 which John Stalker was meant to investigate. Whether these killings were carried out by the RUC alone or by the RUC in association with British security/intelligence agents is what Stalker was prevented from probing.

"Counter-terrorism"

British Army thinking behind such activites was spelt out in 1971 by Brigadier Frank Kitson, one of the Army's top experts on "counter-terrorism", in his book *Low Intensity Operations*.

Kitson's remarks that "peacekeeping does not involve the activities of the Army which *formally* attacks one or both parties to a dispute" was widely interpreted at the time as suggesting "informal" attacks.

His view that "it is worth pointing out that as the enemy is likely to be employing a combination of political, economic, psychological and military measures, so the government will have to do likewise to defeat him" can be taken as a charter for "dirty tricks".

The full list of illegal activities of British security forces in the North of Ireland since 1969 may never be known. It would certainly make "Irangate" look like saintly behaviour if it were.

But details of an accompanying scandal is well known. That is the complicity in these activities of Labour governments and politicians. It was, after all, Harold Wilson who first sent the SAS into the North of Ireland to pursue "shoot-to-kill" policies.

And that explains the deafening silence of Party spokespeople when it comes to criticising security operations in the North of Ireland. But the fact that Ken Livingstone in one speech in the Commons did more to rattle Thatcher than Kinnock did throughout the entire election campaign shows how nervous the Tories are when it comes to discussing what "our boys" are up to in the North of Ireland.

Mileage

Even in terms of political mileage to be made, is it not about time the Labour left — including its hardest sections — began harassing the government, in and out of Parliament, on issues like the Stalker affair, the Nairac murders and the many other dirty tricks operations?

Just for once it would be nice to see the Parliamentary Labour Party, or even a small part of it, become a fighting, working class opposition rather than Her Majesty's "loyal" one.



PHOTO: Derek Spiers (IFL/Report)

Will we ever know the full facts behind British Army operations in the Six Counties?

CPSA ballot result

The campaign ends — *but the fight goes on!*

By Alastair Wallace CPSA

The result of CPSA's all-out strike ballot finally put paid to this year's pay campaign.

In view of the serious blows suffered by the union over the last six weeks, the negative response came as little surprise.

The scale of the defeat, however, presents problems for the Broad Left.

The ballot showed just 19,468 members in favour of taking all-out strike action. This represents a third of those voting and only 13% of the union. The figure undoubtedly under-represents the militant core within CPSA but it will serve further to undermine the confidence of the membership.

The fact that the vote was lost in Broad Left strongholds such as DNS Glasgow and Newcastle Central Office serves to illustrate the point.

The problem of confidence is central to CPSA. With no tradition of industrial militancy, this confidence has to be built up from scratch. Members have to be convinced that strike action can win.

It is clear from the result of the ballot that this confidence, which did exist at the beginning of May, has been allowed to slip away.

The difficulty for the Broad Left was that in taking control of the National Executive at the beginning of June, it inherited a campaign with a direction which had already been determined. That direction was the strategy of selective industrial action — one which was doomed to failure.

The seeds of last week's defeat were therefore already sown *before* the Broad Left came to power. Those who are actually responsible, the SCPS leadership and their counterparts in CPSA's soft-left BI '84 will now seek to blame the Broad Left.

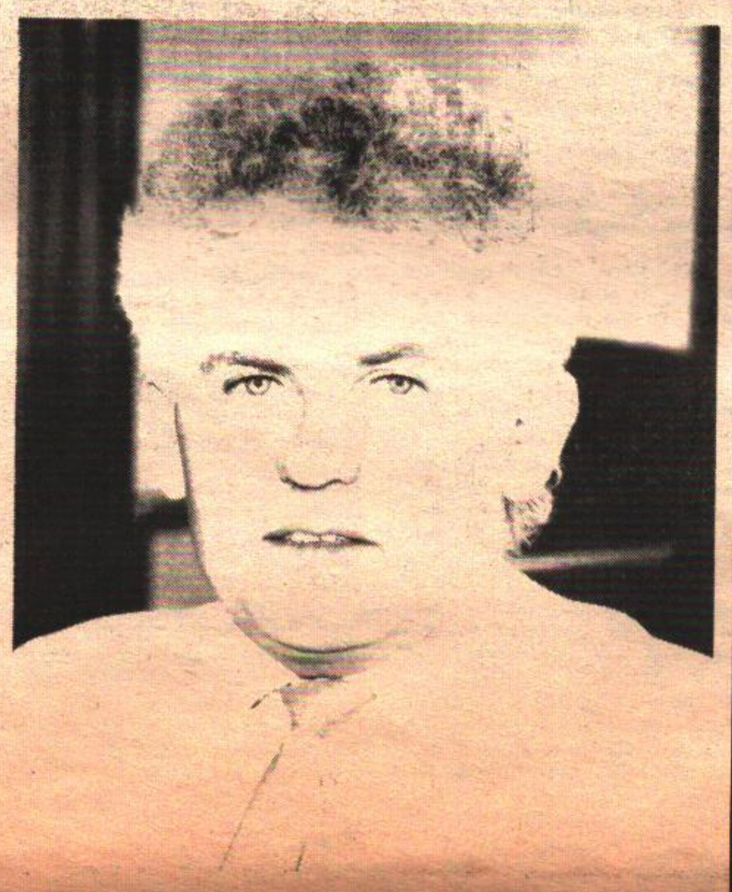
The only way to arrest the downward spiral in confidence was by posing the only way to win: all-out strike action. Unfortunately, the dual blows of the General Election result and the SCPS pull-out proved too much to counter.

Now both the Tories and the right wing within the union will go on the offensive. The introduction of merit and regional pay, designed to smash national pay bargaining, is sure to be a condition of settlement. While there is no doubt that the membership remains implacably opposed to both systems of payment, active opposition will have to be fought for.

The other side of the coin is that CPSA's right wing are already attempting to capitalise on the Broad Left's defeat. A recent *Guardian* carried a report claiming that the election of the NEC was about to be challenged. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen (*The Guardian* is notoriously unreliable when it comes to CPSA;.

However, attacks of one sort or another are bound to come and should not be underestimated.

The future may seem bleak but there are important lessons to be learned from the ballot defeat. The most important of these is that the Broad Left NEC must *lead* the fightback which will inevitably occur in the face of increasing Tory attacks. It is only in this way that the confidence of union members in their own power can be restored.



NUR Conference

Railworkers vote for withdrawal from Ireland

By Pat Sikorski NUR

Delegates to the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) Annual General Meeting in Dundee called on the next Labour government to commit itself to a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland within the lifetime of a single parliament.

The vote was narrow but clear and came after a three-hour debate on all aspects of the situation in the North, which several speakers referred to as "the British problem in Ireland".

The debate on withdrawal was especially clear as delegates had first to deal with an amendment calling for "step by step" withdrawal, "remembering the chaos and bloodshed which followed the hasty withdrawals from India and the Belgian Congo".

It called for withdrawal to be conducted jointly with the Irish government and to be supervised by the United Nations. It concluded that in the meantime a "Bill of Rights" be introduced for the Six Counties. This was defeated, and the basic withdrawal resolution was then carried.

It was passed against the advice of General Secretary Jimmy Knapp, who drew on his West of Scotland background to warn delegates that if they adopted the withdrawal resolution they would be rejecting a political solution and giving victory to the armed struggle and that thousands of Orangemen from the West of Scotland would go over to fight if Labour ever implemented such a policy.

Earlier, with the support of the platform, delegates had adopted two resolutions covering "continuing violation of basic democratic and human rights in the North of Ireland resulting from the injustice of British rule' and support for the McBride principles which put "forward measures aimed at moving towards the elimination of discrimination in employment in the six counties."

The NUR is now pledged to support campaigns against strip searching, the use of plastic bullets, the PTA, and the use of paid perjurers and Diplock courts. Delegates also called for education of the NUR membership on the Irish situation and for District Councils to be encouraged to send fact-finding delegations.

The length and seriousness of the debate reflected the fact that a Conference fringe meeting the night before, organised by the London Transport District Council of the NUR, had been attended by over 80 delegates, observers, members of the NUR Youth Course and supporters in the Dundee labour movement and Dundee Troops Out.

The meeting was addressed by Sean Redmond, General Secretary of the Irish Municipal Employees Trade Union and secretary of the Dublin-based pressure group Trade Unionists for an Independent and United Ireland, and Bill Spiers, Chair of the Scottish Labour Party and Assistant General Secretary of the Scottish TUC (in a personal capacity).

TGWU Conference

Now the good news!

By Kingsley Abrams Secretary, LP Black Sections

An historic decision by the Transport Workers' Biennial Delegate conference (BDC) to support the establishment of Black Advisory Committees at grass roots level went unnoticed by the news media.

There were no headlines about "Black Rebels Threaten Kinnock" or "New Black Sections Row".

Indeed such treatment would have been just as much a distortion as most of what has been reported about our struggles for Black representation in the labour movement. Perhaps the decision was ignored because it was a success.

Black Sections supporters in the T&G had worked for more than a year to win this modest victory. The first breakthrough came with 8 motions appearing in the resolutions booklet — from London, the South West, the Midlands, (including the Nottingham District Committee), and the North.

A striking fact was that out of 800 delegates just 6 were black. Yet Britain's largest union has 20% black membership in important sectors of industry — the only way Black members are going to get their voice heard is through organising.

Black Sections national officers distributed more than 700 leaflets at the BDC; had a speaker, Bennie Bensee, on the Campaign Group of MPs platform; and held our own successful fringe meeting.

The Black Advisories will be modelled on the already accepted Women's Advisory Committee (WACs) — these examine the union policy and have the power to send delegates to decision-making bodies.

We have argued that such a structure can only be a limited response. What is ultimately essential is the constitutional recognition of black caucuses recommended by 1984 TUC conference.

Women in the T&G had to fight for 4 years before they succeeded in getting 'Advisory Committees'. Black workers struggling daily against racism in the workplace and jobs market do not have that time.

The T&G must move swiftly to prove it is committed to positive action. That means improving the lot of Black workers in the lowest paid jobs, organising in the most vulnerable force for Labour, in sweatshop conditions, backing disputes against racism and ensuring more Black full-time and lay officials are put in post.



PHOTO: John Chapman

Ron Todd at Labour Party conference, moving a composite on disarmament. What will he be moving this year?

By Bennie Bunsee

The T&G has repeatedly ducked the issue of self-representation for its Black members.

In 1985 The General Executive Council supported a resolution calling for an investigation into the possibility of supporting structures regionally and nationally to represent and more fully involve Black members.

Nothing has happened — but time has been found to introduce long-overdue initiatives for women and youth.

This year, instead of having a full and frank debate on this vital issue, the BDC urged a remission. This will not do. There is an undeniable and urgent need for self-organisation and representation in the form of Black caucuses.

The T&G must provide its Black membership with the necessary resources not least in the interests of its own "link-up" campaign targetted at temporary and part-time workers. Many of the 6 million trapped in this highly-exploited part of the workforce are Black, women or other oppressed groups, who together constitute a very significant number of the total working population.

Composite 13, Equal Pay

The Union must campaign to ensure equal opportunities agreements are negotiated with all employers. In addition agreement for contract compliance should be sought in the public and private sector. And the General Executive committee (GEC) should ask the next Labour government to implement legislation on contract compliance.

The union itself should implement an equal opportunities policy including through Women's Advisory Committees (WACs) and Black and Asian Advisory Committees, which should be established in line with the WACs. Conference calls on the GEC to emphasise to officers that in negotiating agreements they should endeavour to demand equal pay for work of equal value. Conference also calls for a major campaign to extend equal opportunities in employment.

Priorities reversed!

The more than 330 sacked and victimised miners could be forgiven for thinking the NUM Conference had its priorities reversed.

Taken almost as an afterthought on the last day of Conference, an emergency resolution moved by Terry Harrison from Kent was tabled. Whilst receiving overwhelming support, it requested only another national ballot calling for a one-day stoppage in solidarity.

There was also a proposal for a national conference of sacked miners. This must not become a tokenistic one-day "talk shop", but the launch of a real campaign to reinstate all the sacked miners.

The Conference was lobbied by sacked miners from Notts, Scotland and Kent.

It should come as no surprise to regular readers of *Labour Briefing* to learn that the sacked miners who are also *Socialist Action* supporters spent the week at the T&GWU conference selling badges and giving away free copies of the *Yorkshire Miner*. Very rewarding, I'm sure — but who for?

***William Head*, Yorks NUM rank & file**



PHOTO: John Chapman

Arthur Scargill

Polmaise under threat

British Coal have again announced their intention to close Polmaise colliery, one of the planned pit closures which led to the national Miners' Strike of 1984/5.

The announcement came three days before the annual 3-week holiday shutdown of the Scottish coalfield.

Polmaise is engaged in development work at the present time. £25m has been spent since 1980 on a project to drive two tunnels 10 miles to link up with the underground complex linked to Longannet power station.

Another 3 years work, at a cost of £4m per year, remained to be done. At the end of this, the local mining community of Fallin village expected once again to see a workforce of 600 at Polmaise.

Instead, the only surviving pit in the central region of Scotland is to be closed.

George Bolton, President of the Scottish NUM and Chair of the British Communist Party, has ruled out industrial action in the Scottish coalfield to save Polmaise. Instead, he proposes a political campaign against the closure.

The first blow to such a strategy comes from the decision of the NACODS branch at Polmaise not to oppose the closure. Only 3 of their branch is under the age of 50. This decision has ruled out an appeal through the National Mining Industry Colliery Review procedure, which requires an all-union agreement for an appeal.

The NUM members who had voted against acceptance of the closure are now bitter and confused, without any perspective of a way forward. Even more bitter is the plight of the sacked men at Polmaise. These 8 men are presently time-barred from having a tribunal hearing and have recently protested strongly at proposals from George Bolton that they should apply for jobs with private mining companies operating within the coalfield.

Without the hope of industrial action from the rest of the Scottish coalfield the prospect for all at Polmaise is bleak. If closure is meekly accepted by the labour movement, with its 50 Scottish Labour MPs, and overwhelming political representation in Scotland, then the longer term consequences could be dire indeed.

If 4×9 over 6 = 20%, then −31 over 2 years = 105,000 − 40,000.

This equation took the best part of two days debate at the NUM 1987 Annual Conference.

The National Coal Board wants four 9-hour shifts worked over a 6-day week. If implemented, this will increase production by an annual 20% overall.

The NUM has striven to spell out the consequences of the Coal Board's plan to their members. If there is to be a 20% increase in production, in a static coal-burning market, then it would lead to the inevitable closure of thirty-one mines with a cut in the workforce of approximately 40,000 and far-reaching knock-on effects touching other industries and communities.

Sir Robert Haslam, whilst putting on a reasonable face for the British public, seemed a confused old man to the miners on his visit to the "greenfield" site of the new Margam Drift mine.

Perhaps his state of confusion is the reason for the conflicting statements about Margam that the national media have credited him with. In one breath he says "Margam will not be developed and there would be no new investment in existing mines unless the NUM accepts flexible working and 6-day production." But he also says "three other unions are willing to organise in Margam if the NUM refuses to be flexible."

NUM Conference report

New threats, new challenges

By William Head Yorks NUM rank and file

The Conference decision opposing flexible working endorsed by a 2-to-1 majority gives the NUM a clear mandate for action. Opposition to a national ballot on the issue came from Scotland, S. Wales, Cokemen's area and COSA. They wanted to refer it back to the NEC for further debate.

At a pre-conference meeting the vote was tied, ten to ten. The proposed ballot must not be left on the table in the hope that the rank and file will oppose 6-day working from a gut reaction. A positive result must be campaigned for.

At the Durham Miners 103rd big meeting, Scargill told a receptive crowd that they would have to fight the bosses again. He warned the Coal Board "Thus far and no further!" He told the miners "there is an alternative for the union — *stand and fight*" and added a call for extra-parliamentary action as shown in the '70s: "if any other union organises in Margam," he warned, "the miners will make Wapping look like a teddy bear's picnic."

Scargill, Heathfield, and now Thompson should organise a new "rank and file national left", to replace the bankrupt "National Miners' Forum" election machine. They should campaign vigorously and openly at mass meetings spelling out the consequences of a negative and positive ballot result. Everyone realises what a 6-day week means but the Coal Board are sweetening the pill with financial inducements of up to £20 per week extra. It is vital that they tell the rank and file what they intend to *do* with a ballot result that rejects 6-day working. No one should be left in any doubt about the consequences or the importance of their vote!

The new disciplinary code of conduct imposed without agreement by the NCB could be interpreted to read that any employee distributing or writing inflamatory literature would face immediate dismissal. Under these very difficult conditions for mineworkers there is a clear continuing role for the Women Against Pit Closures movement and Miners' Support Groups to reassert their organisational skills and distribute literature on behalf of the NUM.

If the NCB's media campaign is to be countered it is vital that informative, agitational leaflets be produced weekly and distributed nationally. This kind of campaign, linked to mass meetings, would ensure the leadership the support of the rank and file.

LRT Builders

Our fight to save jobs

London Regional Transport's builders have been on strike for over three weeks in a desperate fight to save jobs and the future of their department.

In 1984, before LRT came into being — and Londoners still exercised some degree of democratic control over their public transport system through the GLC — London Transport's Works and Building Department employed 1,300 staff.

Now, with only 300 builders left, LRT are demanding 13 compulsory redundancies.

The builders voted on June 29th to take immediate strike action. LRT responded by issuing the 13 concerned with dismissal notices on July 3rd.

On July 6th the builders voted by an increased majority to reaffirm their earlier decision.

The LRT Works and Building Department is a Direct Labour organisation and, as with other DLOs, has suffered under Tory legislation from a macabre mixture of managerial incompetence and political vindictiveness. Since the imposition of competitive tendering, LRT management have, for instance:

- Prevented the W&B Department submitting bids for contracts worth several £ms. It would take only £640,000 of work to keep those who face the sack employed. Even when the W&B Department are allowed to tender for work, LRT often award the contract to private contractors who employ "lump" labour and thus undercut by avoiding paying income tax, National Insurance, sick and holiday pay.
- Covered up a secret report which found that the fire at Oxford Circus tube station was caused by cowboy operators leaving inflammable solvents on the platform — contrary to all health and safety regulations. (Apart from the danger to passengers, that fire cost LRT £5.5m).
- Said the work performed by their own builders is of "too high a standard".
- Cut the W&B Department revenue from £15m in 1984 to a present level of £3.9m.
- Listed the redundancies by grade. At the bottom of the list is "Senior Convenor" i.e. the senior trade union representative.

By Dave Pugh Branch Representative, 1/317 Branch, Camberwell Bus Garage

At a time when all LRT workers' pay, conditions and jobs are under attack, it is the builders who are the first to face compulsory redundancies. Their decision to take a principled stand in support of their comrades facing the sack is not only to be applauded but built upon. They need our support.

Offers of help and donations can be directed to: Chris Murphy, LRT Builders Senior Convenor, c/o Camden Trades Council Support Unit, 102 St Pancras Way, London NW1 9ND, tel. 01-482 4136.

LRT Catering workers:

Back in the front line!

The latest group of London Regional Transport (LRT) workers whose jobs are being threatened by tendering is the catering workers.

LRT announced recently that the Leyton, Cricklewood, Tottenham and Camberwell Bus Garage canteens, plus two Underground canteens, are to be put out to tender.

Catering workers are the lowest paid in LRT and are in the main Black women.

Traditionally, private catering companies have been poor employers. Although the workers at the threatened canteens have been offered work at other LRT units, it is likely that there are plans to extend privatisation of the canteens so that all workers will ultimately face accepting lower paid jobs with longer hours, or being sacked.

During the 1986 pay negotiations, management tried to force pay cuts on catering workers. They brought in agency staff in an attempt to undermine and divide them.

This only sharpened the resolve of the workforce who responded by agreeing at a mass meeting to walk out when agency workers were again brought in to the canteens. Management responded by disciplining strikers — some of whom received final cautions.

By John Francis Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

The bus crews showed their solidarity with the canteen workers by striking for two hours. In one instance, where the Waterloo canteen workers were especially badly treated, bus crews held a 24-hour strike and maintained a picket of the canteen over several days.

As a result of the action the Chair of LRT agreed to an extra £2,000,000 expenditure for 1986 on the condition that a joint Union/management working party be set up to look into LRT Catering.

It is from this working party that the proposals to put the canteens out to tender come!

At present there seems very little hope of motivating canteen workers to oppose these new moves towards privatisation as the union is seen to be colluding with management in these plans.

Clearly there would seem to be a contradiction between the union on the one hand opposing the tendering of bus routes and on the other agreeing to the tendering of canteens. However, there may be a parallel between the 1986 canteen pay negotiations and our own current opposition to tendering.

On May 11th this year there was a 24 hour strike of bus crews across London opposing the tendering process following a 9-1 ballot in favour of industrial action. The initiative was clearly with the union.

Again, a major opportunity was lost when the Union directed that all industrial action be called off pending the current court proceedings, started after the ballot.

It is clear that at best all that could be won in Court would be some concessions in severance pay, — and that would make no difference to the tendering process!

So, as with the catering workers in 1986, a method has been found to dissipate the feeling of the workers. For bus crews to continue with industrial action, another ballot has to be held.

It is unlikely that we will be able to gain the same level of support, particularly as since the court case started bus crews at Norbiton have been forced to take lower wages, and it will seem to many that the battle has been lost.

Labour Party

Witch-hunt

What the right wing are up to

STEVE GLENNON was expelled from the Labour Party on July 8th.

He was found "guilty" of "being a member of the *Militant* tendency".

Steve's is not an isolated case — he is one of 10 members of Stevenage Party facing similar charges, and other cases are going on all round the country.

However,the details of his case do go to show the current state of the witch-hunt in the Party and highlight the need for the left to campaign for more vigorously against it — it is bound to spread.

A *Briefing* special correspondent reports.

A member of the Labour Party for 16 years, Steve has the misfortune to live in Stevenage, where the Party is run by a group of right wingers.

Their time and energy seems to be spent cataloguing the movements of members of their own Party rather than fighting elections — as their recent ignominious defeat shows.

Party officers have produced a four page typed list of correspondence and telephone calls made to each of the ten defendants, including descriptions of what was said on the phone.

Copious meetings have been held to "deal" with the defendants; thick piles of "evidence" have been produced. This must have amounted to hours of Party Officer time spent to hound these comrades.

The "evidence" brought against Steve Glennon was disgraceful. The exact words on the "charge sheet" are worth reproducing in detail:

"Particulars of evidence in support of the charge:

1. Steve Glennon organises and promotes the policy and objectives of the *Militant* Tendency within and outside the Stevenage Constituency by:

a) his work as a member of the central committee of the *Militant* Tendency;

b) his work as a member of the Central Committee of the *Militant* Tendency;

c) his uninvited attendance at Young Socialist meetings in the adjacent constituency of North Hertfordshire;

d) his defence of a member of the Peterborough CLP who was subsequently disciplined by that CLP for bringing the Party into disrepute through his "*Militant*" activities;

e) his distribution of *Militant* leaflets at a meeting of the Chells and Mobbsbury Branch of the Stevenage CLP in November 1985.

2. Steve Glennon organises and promotes fund-raising activity on behalf of the *Militant* Tendency by:

a) regularly selling the *Militant* newspaper in Stevenage and outside Labour Party meetings in Stevenage and other constituencies;

b) contributing to a collection for the *Militant* Fighting Fund with a £10 note at a *Militant* Public Meeting held on 20.05.86;

c) taking part in fund-raising for the "*Militant* Supporters Group" at St Peter's Church Hall, Stevenage on 28.05.85.

3. Steve Glennon participates in public activity on behalf of *Militant* Tendency by:

a) taking part with at least one other alleged member of the *Militant* Tendency from Stevenage in a demonstration outside a GC meeting of Ipswich CLP in support of two self-confessed member of *Militant* Tendency."

A number of things can be seen from this "evidence".

First, the Party is prepared to accept uncorroborated statements to condemn the defendant.

The first piece of evidence (1a) comes from the Michael Crick book *The March of the Militant*.

The CLP Secretary/Agent has called Michael Crick "an independent Labour Party member". However, she has been unable to provide any source material to back up the allegation — beyond asserting that it must be true, as Steve had never taken action for libel against it!

The evidence under 1(b) consisted of two statements from people saying they were recruited into the *Militant* (only one actually naming Steve Glennon). The prosecution did not see fit to interview either of these people when taking evidence in the constituency or indeed to call them as witnesses when the case came before the National Constitutional Committee.

Items 1(c), 1(d) and 3(a) are beyond belief. Guilt by association is the only interpretation. The Secretary Agent has a photograph of the Ipswich demonstration, and can proudly point Steve out with his banner.

It now appears that representing another Party member, or lending them support on a demo, is evidence of your own guilt.

Lastly, it is clear that the main "evidence" being used is the selling of *Militant* and giving money to *Militant* collections.

Jim Mortimer, speaking in January 1983 on the NEC resolution on *Militant*, said that selling newspapers, giving money, etc., would **not** constitute evidence of membership of an organisation. Times have changed! (We await the reintroduction of the "ducking stool".)

Steve Glennon was found guilty at the NCC hearing and guilt of membership of *Militant* elicits only one punishment. He was not allowed the right to make a statement in mitigation even though the procedure carried by Conference gives that right. He was just expelled after 16 years Party membership.

One member, one vote

Party unity or new divisions?

By Vladimir Derer
Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Since Labour's defeat in the general election the Party Leader and other members of the NEC have been tirelessly repeating that "elections are won in years not weeks."

They acknowledge that a major cause of Labour's defeat was its image as a divided Party.

This image is not just a fabrication of Labour's enemies. The failure to give full support to the miners' strike; the critical attitude to Labour Councils fighting Tory cuts; attacks on CLPs like Nottingham East and St Helen's preventing them choosing their own parliamentary candidates; pandering to the lies about the "loony left", and blaming Labour's problems on the "London factor" (i.e. progressive policies on women, Black people, lesbians and gays); expulsions of minority viewpoints, and so on have all been grist to the Tory propaganda mill.

But the lesson of defeat — that we need a united Party if we are to win — has not been learnt.

The votes had hardly been counted before the leadership was announcing the next round of internal warfare. Again the chosen enemy is not the Tories, but the accountability of Labour MPs to the membership of the Party.

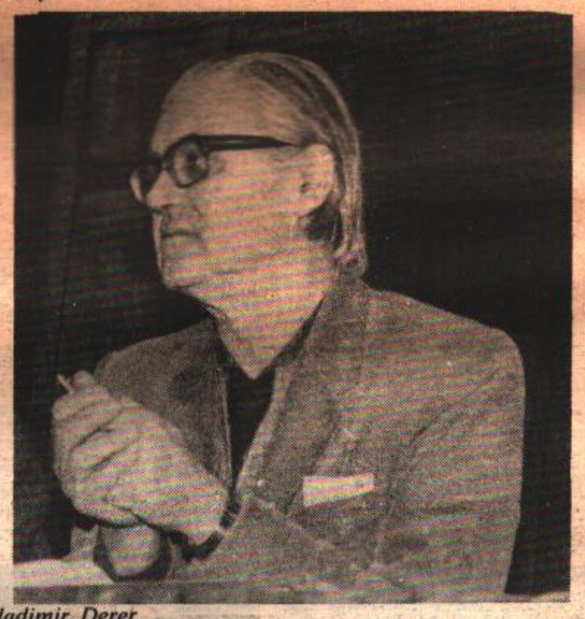
John Evans, who was himself twice imposed as a candidate upon an unwilling CLP, and who now chairs the NEC subcommittee dealing with this matter, explained his view on FV:

"Whether or not (the proposed procedure) would be used to have MPs deselected is ... a doubtful premise ... the best sort of candidate will be selected in the first place because every Party member will be participating in the choice." (Week in Politics, 26.6.87)

The "doubtful premise" here is that the "best candidate" — as opposed to the one most wanted by the media and the PLP — will be selected.

Rather than involving more members in the selection, as its advocates claim, "one member one vote" in fact sacrifices all influence that the rank and file presently has over the PLP.

The NEC advocates of the new proposals have already shown their attitude to the Party membership in overturning the provisions of Composite 39, carried by a decisive majority at the 1986 Party conference. This called on the NEC to refrain from opening the argument over new proposals until after a general election, due to the likely damage to Party unity.



Vladimir Derer

The present mandatory reselection procedures were the major gain of the democratic reforms introduced in 1980 with the backing of both the CLPs and the majority of the trade unions. They had seen the 1964-70 and 1974-79 Lbaour government retreat from the policies on which they were elected, and which the Party conference continued to support.

Mandatory reselection once in the lifetime of every parliament, to be carried out by the general committee, ensured MPs would not be able to defy Party policy with impunity.

The MP felt obliged to attend their GC and discuss their parliamentary activities, ensuring a continuous exchange of views between the membership and the PLP. And the power of the GC in reselection ensured that the views of the membership were in one way or another conveyed to the PLP.

The essence of the new proposal is to break the regular relationship between the MP and their GC. When the GC no longer has the power to decide on the MP's readoption, the pressure on the MP to maintain ongoing communciation with the general committee will go, and with that will go the voice of the rank and file in policy decisions.

Monthly meetings with the MP will be replaced by five yearly aggregate meetings, at which it can be confidently expected that the MP will be readopted by acclaim.

Seven weeks after Party conference, at the November '86 NEC meeting, the NEC voted down a position moved by Dennis Skinner and Joan Maynard that the consultation should be delayed until after the general election, and carried the position to go ahead with the consultation immediately, by 16 votes to 12.

The justification for this was an alleged "groundswell" of support for "one member one vote". But this was a "groundswell" entirely started from the top, rather than the ground!

The proposal originated with David Owen and the Gang of Four before their defection, and was kept alive by the EETPU leadership. It was taken up by MPs threatened with deselection, and now by the NEC, which has relentlessly sought backing from the trade union leaders. With unseemly haste the NEC is seeking to railroad the proposal through this year's conference.

The consultation with the Party membership and affiliates does not end until July 31st, yet the *Guardian* of July 8th already states that "The report will recommend a change".

The introduction of the proposal will not make the issue of accountability go away. On the contrary it will simply mean that the disputes, tensions and misunderstandings which are presently resolved within the relative privacy of the GC will become more public, and more open to media attention. Hardly the way to unite the Party!

Labour Against the Witch-hunt '86

Labour Party blood sports going strong!

By Chris Ramsey
Press Officer, Law '86

The Kinnockisation of the Labour Party continues to gather momentum.

Under cover of what Larry Whitty is pleased to call "... a united, disciplined and positive approach" (*Tribune*, June 26th), witch-hunting socialists is still a popular blood sport in some quarters.

The NCC's current and future workload includes:

- 10 members in Stevenage accused of being members of *Militant* — one already expelled;
- Ian Issac, St John's NUM lodge secretary and local councillor, expelled in South Wales;
- Trevor Ennis in St Helens given the bullet for circulating "offensive and scurrilous material";
- Alan Conchar, an LCLGR national committee member from South Wales, under investigation for "insulting the Party leader";
- Michael Bagan expelled from Knowsley South, Kevin Gill from Rotherham;
- Sharon Atkin still faces disciplinary proceedings;
- Sparkhill ward in Birmingham and Broad Green in Liverpool suspended.

The list just grows and grows.

In the same *Tribune* article, "our Larry" states that "a degree of *Glasnost* in the labour movement would be welcome. Yes Larry — it certainly would!

Glasnost — "openness" — about the extent of the witch-hunt; openness about the right wing dominated Kangaroo Courts of the NCC travelling from area to area; about the flimsy "evidence" needed to "convict"; about the "crime" itself — socialism! — would be very welcome.

The need for an active campaign against the witch-hunt has never been greater. Without the cares of office to distract them the right will step up the purges.

Hand in hand with the "radical rethink" of policies and "one member, one vote" the witch-hunt is part of the drive against collectivism and towards the cult of the individual — the individual yuppie, that is.

If we are to stand against the tide of the new social democracy we must look to the much abused traditions of the labour movement: solidarity with those under attack; organisation — locally and nationally — to fight back; unity against the attackers despite other political differences; stand up and be counted. That is the only way to stop the expulsions and win reinstatement for those already booted out.

Labour Against the Witch-hunt '86 (LAW '86) is campaigning here and now for such a united campaign. We need the widest possible campaign against the attacks on the LPYS, *Militant* supporters, Black Section activists, Irish activists, lesbian and gay activists and all other supporters of causes unpopular with Walworth Road.



PHOTO: John Chapman

Still under threat: Sharon Atkin

A campaign like this, built from the grass roots, needs your support. As Mildred Gordon said at the *Briefing* fringe meeting at the London Labour Party Conference "workers want fighters — if you can't fight for yourself they won't believe you can fight for them."

- get your ward/CLP/LPYS/Women's Section/trade union to sponsor the campaign;
- get your organisation to pass a resolution opposing the witch-hunt and calling for the reinstatement of all socialists;
- invite a speaker from the campaign to your local meeing;
- organise a local rally against the witch-hunt — contact LAW '86 for speakers and contacts;
- support any lobbies of conferences or NECs against the witch-hunt;
- send us some money!

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

Sponsorship: Organisations £10, individuals £5; cheques payable to "Labour Against the Witch-hunt '86".

London Borough of Haringey:

On the brink of defiance?

A special Haringey Council meeting called on Monday July 13th, failed to take any decisions about Haringey's budget crisis.

Threats from the District Auditor remain unanswered. But, for the moment at least, Haringey retains its commitment to a position of no cuts in jobs or services.

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

The climax to a long night which witnessed furious manoeuvering by Labour right wingers and a chaotic emergency meeting of the Labour Group (during a one hour adjournment of the full Council meeting) was the defeat of all three motions put to the Council.

The Tory motion called for £50 million worth of cuts to be agreed by an "all-Party working group". Labour councillors were united, at least, in rejecting this.

An amendment to the main Labour motion, put forward by Labour councillor Toby Harris, called on the Council to make a "lawful" budget — by cutting 3% off all committee estimates and reducing the contingency fund by £900,000. The Tories abstained on this one. Twenty left Labour Councillors voted against.

In defiance of Party and Group policy, not to mention an unequivocal manifesto commitment, nineteen Labour Councillors voted for it, plus the Council's lone Liberal. With socialist aplomb, the Mayor, Cllr Andreas Mikkides, used his casting vote to defeat the cuts motion.

A vote was then taken on Council Leader Steve King's motion calling on the Council to make no reductions in the 1987/88 budget and to write to the District Auditor accordingly.

Once again, twenty left Labour councillors voted in favour. The rest joined the Tories and the Liberal in voting down Labour Party policy. Clearly, they believed this was the only certain way to avoid surcharge.

In the absence of any new decision by a majority of Council members, the Council's position remains no cuts in jobs and services. How long this can be maintained is anybody's guess.

A bitter defeat in the Noel Park By-election on July 16th (in which a *Briefing* supporter waging a no-holds-barred socialist campaign was defeated by the Tories by some five hundred votes) has now given the Labour right a neat excuse for the retreat they have been planning all along.

This year's budget "gap" is some £56 million. It has been closed by a combination of measures, including an interest rate swap, capitalisation of repairs and other items, and a proposed lease/leaseback scheme. The District Auditor has chosen the interest rate swap as his first target but there can be no doubt that he will bombard the Council with a succession of legal challenges. It seems highly unlikely that the 3% cuts package would have satisfied him and further cuts would have been required — a fact many of the Labour right are well aware of but which they refuse to address either in their "strategy" or in their speeches.

Next year's "gap" threatens to be even larger. Just to stand still — not to mention making any of the improvements desperately needed in Council services — Haringey will find itself in deeper and deeper waters. *Briefing* supporters have argued consistently that socialists have no alternative but to mount a sustained political challenge to the government, including legal defiance, in order to secure the resources the Borough needs.

One of the notable features of the whole affair has been the behaviour of Tottenham's new MP and former Haringey Council Leader Bernie Grant. Grant, who has retained his seat on the Council, voted with the right and even had the cheek to urge a "free vote" on the issue in the Group meeting — on the grounds that "illegality" was a matter of "conscience"!

This right turn came as no surprise to Haringey Labour *Briefing* supporters who have fought Grant's shamelessly unprincipled attacks on local Women's Sections and on campaigners for lesbian and gay rights — as well as his manoeuvres over Church representation on the Education Committee — for two years.

Grant's brave defence of the Broadwater Farm youth in 1985 and the racist abuse he endured from the right wing media have given him a spurious reputation for radicalism amongst many on the Left.

At the crucial Local Government Committee meeting at which the Party debated its response to the District Auditor's threats, Grant delivered an attack on Council services, NALGO workers, and the Council leadership (which he had only recently abandoned) that could have come straight from the pages of the *Daily Mail*.

Another revealing feature of the inner-Party debate has been the flailing opportunism of the local LCC. The myth of the bed-sit Trot must now give way to the fact of the owner-occupier Stalinist. In recent years new arrivals in both Haringey Parties, seasoned in student union manipulation, have joined with the old guard right-wingers and the "realigned" new-style witch-hunters to occupy key positions in the local Parties. They pay lip-service to equal opportunities policies, and prattle on at length about Party democracy, but refuse to participate in any real struggles for equality and are only too ready to sabotage party debate whenever it stands in their way.

In the major struggles surrounding Broadwater Farm and lesbian and gay rights which have engulfed Haringey in recent years the LCC have stood on the sidelines. Not once have they mobilised their forces against the racists and bigots. They disdain all the pickets, marches, leafletting, and petitioning in defence of the Broadwater Farm community. They refuse to engage in debate on the issues raised by these struggles and content themsleves with sticking their hands up passively at GCs to demonstrate their trendy liberalism.

They attacked the Council leadership over their handling of a 6% rent rise — but, unlike *Briefing* comrades who actually voted against the rise and spelt out a clear political alternative to it, they tried to exploit discontent in the Branches while manoeuvring in LGCs and the Group to make damn sure the rise was passed in Council.

They issued a paper on Haringey's budget crisis called "The End of the Road" (described by national LCC as "detailed and damning") which was marred by personal attacks and childish insults, was often inaccurate, and utterly devoid of any concrete proposals for action.

Before the election the LCC line was: wait for a Labour government to bail us out and don't do anything that would jeopardise the election of such a govenment.

Briefing supporters pointed out that there was no guarantee of the return of a Labour government, nor was there any guarantee that such a government would bail us out. Now, following the election defeat, they say — you guessed it — wait for the *next* election, wait for the return of a Labour government, and in the meantime make the cuts and "campaign".



Haringey Council leader, Steve King

A special Hornsey and Wood Green GC was called for Friday July 3rd to determine the CLP's position on the future strategy for the Council. Most branches had met and submitted motions. *Briefing* supporters arrived, prepared to debate, and also prepared, frankly, to lose. We knew that, in the wake of the election defeat, many members had no stomach for a fight.

Apparently, the LCC didn't like the way the balance of forces was shaping up. They remained standing outside in the cold, refusing to sign in, in an attempt to make the meeting inquorate and prevent the CLP taking a stand on a critical issue.

In full view of Party members the leading lights of the local LCC, including the Vice Chair of the Constituency, flaunted their contempt for Labour Party democracy.

Fortunately, their manoeuvre back-fired. Despite efforts by the Chair (an LCC supporter subjected to an embarrassing ordeal by his fellow travellers) to have the meeting called off, there were sufficent delegates for a quorum. A calm, orderly debate ensued. Three *Briefing* motions calling for no cuts in jobs or services and for political campaign of defiance were passed overwhelmingly.

Never was the "Stabian" tag more justified: Stalinist in method, Fabian in politics.

Haringey Labour Briefing's position is clear. We will be fighting any and all cuts in jobs and services, not only within the Party but outside it. We will be taking our campaign into the workforce, the community groups, the housing estates and on to the streets.

Of course, it would be a tremendous advantage to have a committed Labour Group on Haringey Council leading this fight from the front. Indeed, there remains a number of determined Left councillors who will resign their positions and fight from the back benches and from the floor of the Council if the current "no cuts" position is overturned, as seems possible.

There will be resistance to cuts in jobs and services in Haringey — and Haringey Labour Briefing will be in the thick of it, even if this means fighting our own Labour Council.

OPINION

Exeter sickness

***Briefing* can, if it wants, take pleasure in the fact that it was right.**

Kinnockism failed to win the 1987 general election; the ruling class has thus become confident to take the offensive yet again; and the Labour Party has responded by lurching rightwards.

By Peter Bowing
Exeter CLP

Had Kinnock won, the practice of government would have exposed the hollowness of the Labour right to the Party activists and the working class.

But in defeat, with a demoralised working class, the Labour bureaucracy has taken the opportunity to claim that socialism and successful class struggle are impossible, and that, if we are to win electorally, we must move rapidly rightwards.

Thus any radical policies still left after the 1987 manifesto are to be purged, and the Party split apart with the so-called "one member one vote".

The pressure for the rightward shift is on. Yet the strength and type of pressure and the resistance that will be met will differ from constituency to constituency.

In Exeter the rightward shift is quite easy. The "soft left" made its peace with the right years ago. In a thirty minute debate we lost on "one member, one vote" with the party opting for a direct ballot.

The GC threw out a motion calling for opposition to the Council-sponsored William of Orange celebrations, with a restatement of the Labour Group argument that the celebrations would promote tourism!

The meeting took a swipe at the local Anti-apartheid group for being run by "bed-sit Trots".

All of these "Debates" occured against the background of the Party having to cough up £500 towards the legal costs of three *Briefing* supporters who sued the Party to stop a ridiculous and unjustified expulsion attempt.

Yet the right wing had learnt nothing. The leader of the City Council yelled at me that he would "sell his house" to get me "out of the Party".

In Exeter the percentage Labour vote fell in the general election. There was no political discussion of why this was so. For some right wing delegates the defeat was purely organisational, for others it was due to *Briefing* and the Party not being sexist and homophobic enough to appeal to the "man" on the doorstep.

The meeting was acrimonious: my overwhelming impression was not just the rejection of socialism by the meeting, but of a party on the road to nowhere.

Birmingham Witch-hunt

Crunch go the Women's and Race Committees!

In the 3 months since the Birmingham District Labour Party was suspended, the right-wing leadership of the Council have used their new-found "freedom" to maximum advantage.

Free from democratic constraints, the Labour Group have managed to lose 5 Labour seats in the local elections, sack the only 3 women chairs on the Council, and close down the Women's and Race Committees.

By Karina Holyoak
Selly Oak Labour Party, and "62% Campaign"

The right justified the last two moves by asserting that left-wing policies on women and black people had made Labour unpopular in the elections.

Of course, no evidence was forthcoming for their claims — but they grabbed at the excuse for a purge, and the two committees were axed, along with chairs Livingstone, Stewart and Jones.

On the night of the Labour Group meeting a crowd of around 500 strong assembled in front of the Council House to protest against the decision to abolish the committees.

People were outraged at the fact that not only had the Council leaders gone against Labour Party recommended policy (in the case of the women's committee), but that Dick Knowles had announced his decision to the local press *before* the Labour Group had even met, and *before* Trudy Livingstone, Chair of the Women's committee, had even been informed of the decision!

Women activists in Birmingham were so angry that they set up a campaign called "Women Matter" to work for the reinstatement of the Women's Committee. This body has now responded to a call from the Birmingham Black Section to form a joint campaigning committee to re-establish both the axed committees.

The campaign was launched on Friday July 10th under the slogan "62% Campaign" (as this figure is the proportion of women and Black people in Birmingham's population). We have the backing of the Birmingham Trades Council and we hope this will enable us to gather support and delegates from trade union branches and Labour Party constituencies.

We realise that public support for the campaign is vital. But we recognise it will be hard to win Black support in particular, as the record of the Race Committee is not an exceptionally good one. Giving it a white male chair and no budget, the Council leaders had done their best to make the Committee as ineffective as possible — and we have to pick up the tab for this sabotaging of our policy.

It is up to the "62% Campaign" to highlight the racism and sexism that exists and is promoted in the Labour Group. We must demand the reinstatement of committees with full autonomy, and with the *power* to challenge inequality on women's and Black people's terms.

However, the non-participation of the "soft-left" councillors is presenting an obstacle to the campaign's work. Councillor Livingstone's unwillingness to be seen actively challenging the Council's authority presents a serious problem for the left, who obviously want to work with councillors who come under attack from the right.

We want to support these soft-left councillors, but we will do so by continually applying pressure to draw them into struggles. We have seen the extent of their commitment when it comes to the crunch!

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Anti-sexist education



PHOTO: Keith Hawkins

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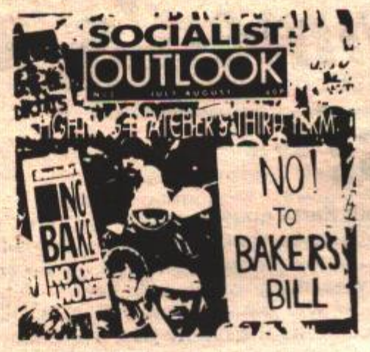
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One of the effects of Tory plans to strip local education authorities (i.e. Labour ones) of their democratic rights to maintain and control schools will be massive attacks on all progressive education policies.

The groundwork has been done by whipping up racism and homophobia around Brent's anti-racist policies and Haringey's "positive images of lesbian and gays" campaign to the point where the very names of these councils have become "buzzwords" for all that the Tories hate about radical educational measures.

Now any other council or progressive policy only has to be compared with Brent or Haringey to arouse immediate, blinkered hostility.

Unfurling the banners of "excellence" and "striving for increased national standards", the Tories intend to give sweeping powers to headteachers, parents and in some cases even to whole boroughs to "opt out" of a local authority — and thus out of any responsibility they may once have had towards their Black and female students.

By Ronnie Held

The Tories will establish a national core curriculum which will give them the right to dictate what will be taught, how it will be taught and how 7, 11 and 14 year olds will be "tested".

The Tories have used the falling morale in schools caused by their own lack of resourcing to blame the kind of radical policies supported by Labour for "falling standards", and to present themselves as the Party which through testing, and other comforting, traditional approaches upholds high academic standards. In this way, the impact on education made by feminism and Black militancy over the last couple of decades could quickly be reversed — "squeezed out" by a rigid core curriculum.

Another populist tack of the Tories is to emphasise parental choice. It is up to Labour to point out this is parental choice to send your child to a "popular" school.

The Tory manifesto states:

"popular schools which have earned parental support by offering good education will then be able to expand beyond present pupil numbers."

Respond

These steps will — apparently — "compel schools to respond to the views of parents".

In other words, parents are to be the major tool for implementing Tory policies. They are being offered power: a power that seems to be to restore quality of education which has dropped during the Thatcher years, but which will turn hollow when the effect of a lack of resources becomes clear.

All equal opportunities initiatives will come under attack as the Tory offensive grows.

These types of offensives, coupled with increased parental powers over schools, will make it all the more important that we do not allow the fight for anti-sexist schooling to become marginalised. Rather, socialists both inside and outside education must see the campaign to defend gains made in the curriculum as part of our campaign to defeat the Tories both ideologically and politically.

Dismantle

Within the context of fighting to defend state education against the moves being made to dismantle it we must place feminist ideas centrally on the educational agenda. Whilst there have of course been widespread developments of "good practice" in schools, largely fought for and won by militant women in the NUT, we simply cannot afford to assume that such practices will continue indefinitely.

We need to campaign through the NUT, through the Labour Party and in our communities for all Local Education Authorities and schools to:

- incorporate a feminist perspective into all subjects — both in content and method;
- counter the effects of Tory attacks on the right of young people to know about sexuality, abortion and contraception;
- develop education programmes about sexuality, capable of challenging Tory assumptions about the hegemony of the nuclear monogamous family and exclusion of other choices;
- continue research and monitoring into gender differences and achievement across the curriculum, so that we can challenge Tory notions of what is deemed "excellence" and for who such "excellence" is possible;
- publicise the ways in which young women lose out in terms of subject examination passes (e.g. in physics).
- show how the Tory plans for CTCs will *depress* standards in technology training for women if they are not informed by a thorough-going policy of positive discrimination (not likely to be instituted by the Tories!).

We must campaign for every school and every LEA to have a stated policy for dealing with sexual harassment.

Such demands may seem obvious. However, under the present offensive we dare take none of our recent gains for granted.



PHOTO: Keith Hawkins

Anti-sexist education: boys learn the work the Tories think women should do, "rewardingly", in the the home.

Frontline: Education

Baker slices up the cake

On the night of her third election victory, Thatcher proposed to "do something for our people in the inner cities".

During the election campaign, and in the Queen's Speech, a radical reform of state education was a major part of Tory proposals for this part of the community. Baker's bill proposes many important changes, including:

- the establishment of City Technical Colleges (CTCs), financed in partnership with big business, as an alternative to local authority comprehensives;
- the devolution of financial control from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to individual schools;
- the freedom for individual schools to increase the number of pupils to 1979 levels;
- the freedom for individual schools to increase the number of pupils to 1979 levels;
- the freedom for individual schools to opt out of LEAs and be funded directly by the state if a simple majority of parents of current students vote for it.

With regard to what is taught, Baker is proposing a "national curriculum", which will take up to 80% of lesson time, and testing at 7, 11 and 14 to ensure that school students are learning what the Tories think it is desirable for them to know.

In addition, Baker has already withdrawn teachers' negotiating rights and imposed his own settlement on the longstanding pay and conditions dispute. In the recent Green paper, he has proposed imposing a "no-strike" condition on teachers.

It is not only Baker but also Ridley at the Department of Environment who is proposing fundamental reforms. Ridley's plans for privatisation will directly affect ancillary services, particularly school meals, cleaning and maintenance. The proposed poll tax will have serious consequences for the financing of state education.

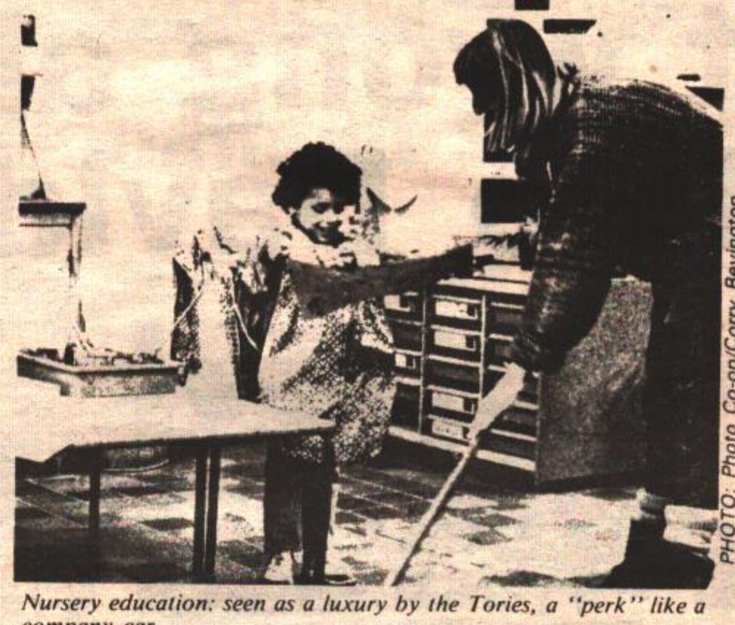


PHOTO: Photo Co-op/Corry Bevington

Nursery education: seen as a luxury by the Tories, a "perk" like a company car...

By Paul Foley
Islington NUT and
Hackney South CLP

In many ways, the plans of Baker and Ridley are simply a continuation of previous Tory policy. Within the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) for instance, the option for Tory Westminster to opt out will save the rich residents and businesses £250m on their annual rates bill — and deprive the education service in the poor inner city boroughs of the same amount.

Privatisation of ancillary services will also mean financial cuts and provide the additional bonus for the Tories of undermining trade union power and influence as well as opening up another area of profitable exploitation for big business.

City Technical Colleges will involve big business directly in the financing of state education — not that they expect immediate financial reward, but they gain an opportunity directly to influence what is taught in schools and how it is taught.

It has been a long cherished Tory ambition to involve big business in the curriculum of schools and to extend vocational training initiatives directly into the secondary school curriculum. CTCs provide an opportunity to do this.

The freedom of schools to opt out of LEA control will serve two purposes. First, it will provide a mechanism for defending grammar schools. The race to be the first to opt out seems to be between Tiffin School in Richmond and the King Edward grammar school in Birmingham, both of which are earmarked by their respective LEAs for turning comprehensive.

The Tories also hope to use the opting out scheme directly to attack the influence of those Labour controlled LEAs, such as Brent and Haringey, who are implementing anti-racist and anti-sexist educational strategies.

With regard to teacher unions: the Tory objective is simply to smash them with a similar effect to the smashing of the Civil Service unions at GCHQ.

The Tory agenda for state education attacks the labour movement on two fronts. First, it is an attack on the fundamental rights of trade unions in education and their ability to negotiate on behalf of members. Secondly, it is an attack on the institutions and structures through which the Labour Party controls the provision of state education, particularly in the inner cities.

The means of doing this are depressingly familiar: systematic underfundng leading to demoralisation and a level of service totally inadequate to meet either educational needs or the expectations of students and parents. Add a furious media campaign against aspects of the service that are perceived to be unpopular and the expected result is a crisis of confidence.

This is followed by providing better off parents who can afford it with the opportunity to opt out and establish well-funded middle class schools in middle class neighbourhoods whilst providing a basic minimum service for working class students whose parents cannot afford to opt out.

In effect we are heading swiftly back to the days of middle class schools for middle class kids (grammar schools) and working class schools for working class kids (sec. mods.).

Despite the Tory victory in the general election and **the general conclusions drawn by the "realistic" sections of the labour movement, it is not inevitable that the new Tory proposals for education wil be either popular or unopposed.**

Brochures

Glossy brochures from Baker, the marketing man, will not paper over the cracks of crumbling school buildings nor will they substitute for a lack of basic equipment and text books. The wave of teachers' strikes in 1985/6 highlighted the under-resourcing of state education with such effect that it was generally regarded as a massive vote loser for the Tories.

Baker's new proposals do not seem to have attracted any significant support from either teachers or parents. Although "opting out" may be attractive at first sight, details of financing opted-out schools are not clear. There has been talk of pupils paying for a wider range of basic services: parents may well find that by opting out, they are opting to foot an even bigger bill.

Quite apart from the fact that state schools, especially comprehensives, are more popular than is generally thought, the new Tory proposals are largely irrelevant to the problem of under-resourcing which is the reality faced by most schools today.

Race and Eduation

Part of the inner-city attack

The election victory gives the government a new impetus to tighten its grip around schools and local authorities.

The Tories now aim to use a combination of centralised control and market forces further to increase inequality in education.

By Richard Hatcher
Ladywood CLP,
Birminghan Socialist
Teachers Alliance

This restructuring of education entails driving out every element of radical egalitarianism — in what teachers teach, in how schools are organised, in local authority policies. Anti-racist education is in the front line.

It is no accident that the most important struggle in education over the last year, apart from the teachers' dispute, was Brent.The real issue at stake there was whether serious anti-racist policies would be implemented or not, which is why the Tories and the media whipped up such a vicious national campaign against Brent's Black-led Council.

The Tories do not want simply to eradicate education for racial equality (ERE) — that would be impractical and politically suicidal.

They are lookng instead at an *incorporation* of ERE within the Tory framework — marginalised within the new national curriculum, stripped of its radical edge, more perhaps than token, but certainly less than effective.

At the local level, the tide is turning against the ERE policies of the early '80s as Labour Councils, their dented shields disintegrating under Tory pressure, make electoral concessions to racism. Brent unfortunately is an exception.

The most likely scenario in the coming months will be Labour authorities, from Birmingham to ILEA, in retreat from even their own limited ERE policies in order to appease opposition.

Strategies

The Tories' interest in "race and education" will lead them to develop strategies for incorporating Black youth, in which the schools have a part to play.

Over a year ago Lord Young, now lord of the inner cities, said that the role of inner city schools was to instill "respect and good citizenship" and "an awareness of how wealth is created". He suggested that technical courses in secondary schools should make a considerable contribution to creating enterprises in the inner cities (*TES* 14.3.86).

One step in this direction is the targetting of City Technology Colleges — privileged selective technical secondary schools jointly financed by government and private industry — on Black areas: St Paul's, Moss Side, Handsworth, Chapeltown.

My guess is that over the next year the government will unveil a variety of proposals linking schools into their inner city projects. They will aim to tie schools further into the privatisation of the inner cities, and attempt to buy off a section of the Black communities by creating a ladder up for a privileged few at the expense of the many.

These bold Tory moves highlight the bankruptcy of Labour's response — no inspiring radical programme for education; no credible strategy to regenerate the inner cities; in retreat on racism; refusing to support those in struggle, whether Black youth on the streets (it will happen again), Black Sections in the Labour Party, or public sector workers on strike.

Opposition

But in spite of Labour's failure, opposition remains among those on the receiving end of Tory policies and among those who are expected to deliver them: the Black community, teachers and other public sector workers, city Labour Parties. **That is the triangle of opposition we have to build on.** In terms of anti-racist education, it means:

- placing anti-racist education in the context of the wider struggle, especially around the Tory attacks on the cities, that will dominate politics during the next year;
- defending what is positive in existing ERE policies and practices against Tory attacks and Labour retreats;
- developing new policies, incuding a concept of anti-racist education which is rooted in the real world of racism outside the classroom and the struggles against it;
- building a triangle of alliances between the NUT, the Black communities and the Labour Party. That means: giving anti-racism a high priority in the NUT, and pressing for stronger Black representation within it; rooting the Labour Party more deeply in the Black communities and their concerns; raising education issues much more forcefully inside the Labour Party; and supporting the local struggles around racial equality in education that will continue to erupt in the months to come.

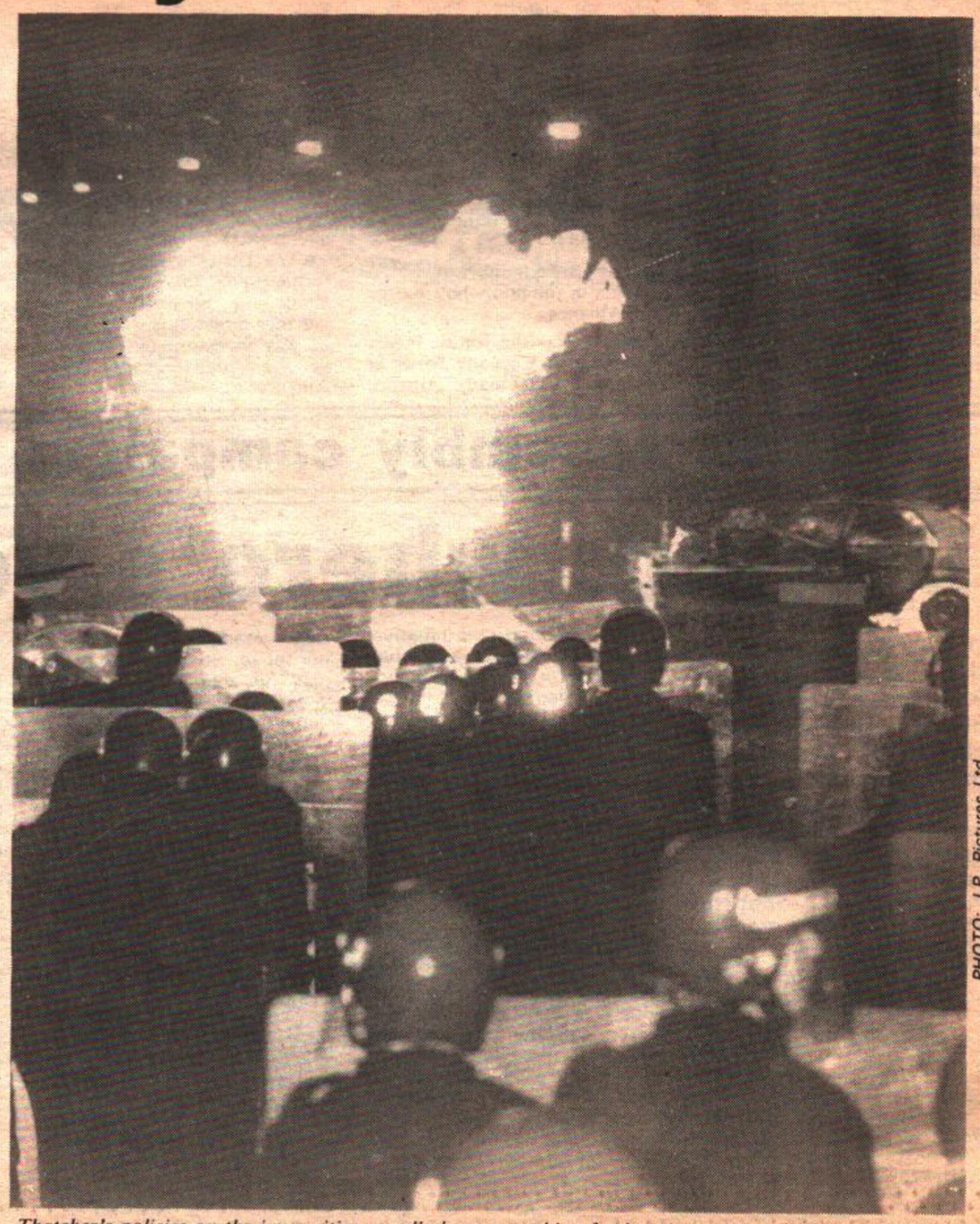


PHOTO: J.P. Pictures Ltd

Thatcher's policies on the inner cities are all about provoking further riots — and then smashing them down with the state forces who are waiting for them. What better way to crush resistance?

Feature: the future of the Alliance?

Did Spitting Image get it wrong about the Two Davids?

Spitting Image's lampoons, with little David Steel being bullied by big David Owen, did the Liberal leader real political damage in the election.

This was the verdict of private Liberal opinion polls — revealed by Des Wilson, in his book about the Alliance election campaign.

But did they get it the wrong way round? Is "little" David about to do a thorough job on "big" David and swallow up the SDP into a new, Liberal-dominated, Party?

In the Alliance row about a merger, David Owen looks to be in real danger of losing the fight to keep the SDP as an independent Party, and thus losing his position as a key leader of the Alliance.

The bitter battle in the SDP about merger stems directly from the sharp electoral rebuff suffered by the Alliance. It has led to a debate not only about merger, but about the whole future of the Alliance.

In order to judge the likely outcome, we have to look at the role the Alliance plays in British politics, and whether that role has now effectively ended.

The 1981 split in the Labour Party and the subsequent launching of the SDP and then the Alliance served a very precise role for the British ruling class. It set up an infernal machine for losing Labour elections, and a permanent pressure on the Labour Party leadership to move to the right.

It is not difficult to grasp the reasoning of ruling class circles which welcomed the formation of the SDP with such glee. By the early 1980s all sections of ruling class opinion considered the Labour Party "dangerous" as a governmental choice.

The "Bennite" revolt and the adoption of nuclear disarmament and other left wing policies put Labour beyond the pale. Thus the alternating two party system, which until 1970 seemed relatively safe, had to be ditched.

In 1964, *The Economist* and the *Financial Times* backed Labour in the general election. By the early 1980s such a stance was absolutely inconceivable.

Despite the move of Party policy to the right under Kinnock, the attitude of big business and the bosses to Labour has not fundamentally changed. They are not convinced that Kinnock has purged the left sufficiently. They are especially not convinced by his failure thoroughly and completely to ditch nuclear disarmament.

The best result of the election from their point of view would have been a Tory victory and a good result for the Alliance, preferably pushing Labour into third place. Why didn't they get this result?

There are a number of related factors in the poor showing for the Alliance.

- Such was the frantic media campaign to elect the Tories at any cost that many Alliance voters switched over to Thatcher.
- Labour's campaign, though not left wing or socialist, was more professional than in 1983 — and certainly better organised than the shambolic performance of the Alliance.
- The poorest and most oppressed voted massively for Labour as the only credible alternative government.
- The Tory Party (as opposed to the ruling class) was worried about the possibility of an Alliance threat, and went out of its way in many constituencies to campaign against the Alliance.



PHOTO: John Chapman

What future for the Alliance? A suggestion on a election campaign hoarding.

By Phil Hearse

In the class polarisation which the election represented, the Alliance was squeezed until the pips squeaked: the ruling class and the media had done a good job in getting Thatcher re-elected, but damaged their second team option in the process.

The vicious factional fighting in the SDP's Cowley Street headquarters, with William Rodgers, Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins all lined up against Owen over merger, is further destabilising the Alliance.

But the real question behind the issue of merger and the temporary factional line-ups is whether there is still a role for the Alliance in British politics. Does it still serve a useful purpose for the ruling class?

The answer must be a resounding "yes". **There is no prospect of any serious ruling class commentators arguing for a return to the two-party system unless and until Labour becomes "safe" again.**

That could only happen if the Labour left were utterly crushed, with thousands of expulsions and the ditching of every vestige of left wing policies. Given the existing relationship of forces in the Labour Party and the labour movement as a whole this is a completely impossible scenario in the short term.

Thus the essential role of the Alliance, exerting its permanent pressure on the Party leadership, and as an insurance against Labour electoral victories must be maintained. But politics in the real world is more complicated than the ruling class would like.

Does the damaging Alliance battle over merger mean that they have gone into a spin from which they cannot recover? It is not easy to give a definitive answer.

It seems likely that David Steele's campaign for a merged party will be successful, with David Owen departing to the sidelines. If the SDP ballot on merger gives a "yes" vote then the bulk of SDP activists, candidates and MPs will go along with it. The result will be a merged party dominated by the Liberals, but one probably in better fighting shape than the two separate parties.

If the SDP ballot gives a "no" vote, then the Alliance is in real danger of flying apart.

Of course, David Owen's opposition to merger is motivated by personal ambition and a wish not to see the Liberal Party apparatus take over. But in emphasising policy differences, especially on defence, Owen has a point.

The Liberals have built their forces in the country through the emphasis on community activism, local issue campaigning around "Focus" and tapping incipient radicalism for a thoroughly backward cause.

A large portion of Liberal candidates are suspicious of Owen's gung-ho pro-nuclear stance. A merged party could well give rise to policy fights which Owen and his friends would find distasteful.

Socialists of course will rub their hands with glee at the Alliance tearing itself apart. But it is far too early to start writing obituaries. Given the continued role of the Thatcherites in government, and the strength of the left wing of the labour movement, there is an objective political space for a third party sustained by the ruling class, even if that class does not back an Alliance government or even a coalition.

The real condition for the disappearance of the Alliance is a thorough purging of the Labour Party, and the right wing firmly in control at every level. Such a development could prompt an attempt to reintegrate a section of the SDP leadership back into the Labour Party or a big move, backed by the Labour right, for a coalitionist perspective.

Such a scenario presumes massive defeats for the Labour left and the working class in the battles that lie ahead.

Scottish Assembly campaign:

Donald: where's yer troops?

Donald Dewar, leader of the Labour Party in Scotland, has been conducting the assembly campaign in typical parliamentarist fashion.

His main emphasis is to appeal for concessions from Malcom Rifkind, Scottish Tory secretary, so that the 50 Scottish Labour MPs don't appear entirely powerless.

But Rifkind and his new team at the Scottish Office won't play ball. They're not about to provide a cover for Labour's impotence.

When confronted with the assertion that Thatcher now has no mandate for her policies in Scotland, they reply that what Scotland needs is more, not less Thatcherism.

The only important initiative taken by Labour's leadership is the call for a "Rally of Scottish Democracy" on September 12th in Glasgow.

But this event is being undermined by Dewar himself, who suggests the rally should be confined to those parties who accept devolution *within the framework* of the United Kingdom.

By Jim Niblock
Glasgow Central CLP

It is to be hoped that supporters of Scottish devolution won't swallow this blatant sectarian manoeuvre. They should go out of their way to build the rally, something Dewar obviously has no intention of doing.

His strategy of harrassing the Tories on the Scottish Parliamentary Committees and "ambushing" them when they least expect it is nonsense. It allows him to play his cards close to his chest so as not to give the game away.

What's required to achieve victory in the Assembly campaign is an open, mass campaign with public rallies and meetings throughout Scotland. This would further isolate the Tories.

Significantly, the Scottish Tories have delayed their election post-mortem until after the rally. If this event is downplayed and turns out to be anything less than a popular success, then Rifkind will clearly understand that Labour's assembly campaign is just hot air and he can get on with business as usual.

If the rally is a massive event which launches further activities then the Tories may have to think again, and deliver some real concessions.

These certainly won't be won by a timid parliamentary campaign. Labour MPs can huff and puff all they wish; Rifkind will not be impressed.

Labour's credibility in Scotland is already in jeopardy, as can be seen from the loss of a rock-solid Labour seat on the Monklands District Council to the SNP at a by-election in the beginning of July.

One of the unfortunate side-effects of Labour's victory in Scotland was to place Dewar firmly in the leadership, at least for the time being. Even if no direct challenge to Dewar is possible the new layer of Scottish Left MPs must begin to organise an active campaign around the assembly. If Dewar won't mobilise the troops, the others must step into the breach.

The triumphalism of the 50 Scottish Labour MPs following the election is still in the air and will linger for some time.

A similar situation arose in 1922 when another group of newly-elected Labour MPs were preparing to head for Westminster. Before setting off, one of them, James Maxton, addressed a packed meeting in St Andrew's Hall in Glasgow, where he declared:

"People talk about the atmosphere of the House of Commons getting the better of the Labour men. They will see the atmosphere of the Clyde getting the better of the House of Commons. All Labour members are personal friends. We are not leaving Glasgow as so many individuals but as a team working towards a goal — and that is the abolition of poverty."

Eighteen months later in the same Hall, Maxton had a very different tale to tell. In unambiguous terms he illustrated the inevitable loss of vitality and growing frustration of the group when separated from their popular base.

Maxton's nephew James Maxton is one of the present Scottish Labour MPs, but up to now he has displayed none of his uncle's radicalism. Maybe it's time he and the other Scottish Labour MPs strengthened their roots before demoralisation seeps in. After all, 50 MPs are a mild brew when diluted in a 102-seat Tory majority at Westminster.

They have the choice of setting a new agenda in Scotland and being in the forefront of the struggle against the Tories throughout Britain or working within the agenda set by Thatcher.

For the SNP, Labour's timidity is an answered prayer. They will benefit from Dewar bowing to Thatcher's authority — mandate or not. And she so mean she won't even let Rifkind throw the old dog a bone!

Strip-searching — the facts

Institutionalised sexual violence

Condoned by the State

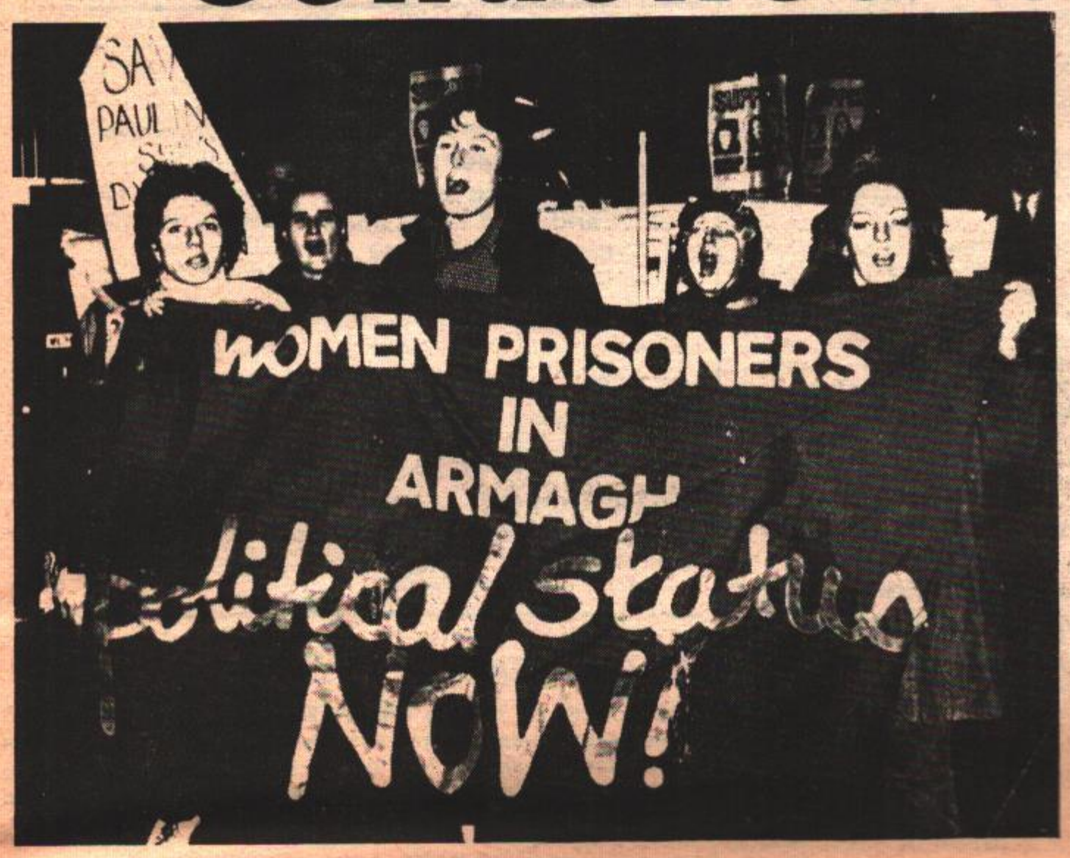


PHOTO: Joanne O'Brien

Protesting for rights for women in Armagh jail — now strip searching in Scotland exceeds that in Armagh.

Strip searching was introduced in November 1982 in Armagh Jail, Northern Ireland.

Since then over 2,000 strip searches have been endured by women, the majority of whom are unconvicted prisoners awaiting trial.

The same requirement on strip searching apply to the new women's prison at Maghaberry which opened in March 1986 when Armagh closed down.

The new prison is described as "super deluxe", "super secure". It is equipped with £5 million worth of the latest high security equipment, including metal detectors.

This prison is hailed as the most secure prison in Europe. Yet the strip searches on women still continue as before.

By Margaret Stewart Organiser, Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searching

Between November 1982 and March 1983, women in Armagh were 32 times as likely to be searched as women in prisons in England and Scotland. Yet statistics would prove that the practice has spread with alarming rapidity into prisons in England and Scotland.

It was not until July of last year that people in Stirling realised, through a newspaper report, the appalling number of strip searches taking place in Corntonvale Women's Prison, Scotland's only women's prison, in Stirling.

The Scottish Home and Heath Department admit that in 1985 4,219 strip searches took place. The prison had an average population of 172 during that period.

The figures for 1986 show a slightly reduced total but a broadly similar pattern: women in Corntonvale are strip searched on admission and discharge; during routine room searches; during special room searches; and after open visits.

Rules governing strip searches both in prisons and police stations seem to be worded in such a way that it is difficult to challenge them.

There are Prison Rules and Police Station Standing Orders. According to a report by The Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, the Scottish Prison Rules provide for every prisoner to be searched "on admission and at such times subsequently as may be directed".

Different

The Northern Ireland Office appears to be getting by with a very different set of directions from that of The Scottish Prison Department. In Northern Ireland, prisoners are routinely strip searched on admission to and discharge from the prison; when going on and returning from home leave; when making inter-prison visits; when engaged on a working out programme; when appearing at court for remand hearings or for trial on a random basis.

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, held on remand for 10 months in Brixton Prison on conspiracy charges, were subjected to 25 strip searches each month for the first 8 months. As their trial approached these strip searches increased each month until they reached the level of 3 per day during the trial. Not once was any unauthorised object found on them or in their cells.

In February this year there was a report that women prisoners who took part in a peaceful demonstration at Risley Remand Centre, near Warrington, last October were stripped by male prison officers. Two of the women involved gave sworn affidavits yet the Home Office denies that regulations on strip searches were broken.

It has recently come to light that another place where there are high levels of strip searching is at Customs checks at ports and airports. The customs unions have estimated that there has been a thousandfold increase in the use of strip searches in the last 18 months.

A very large number of these seem to be against young women. Recently a pregnant woman was strip searched at Customs on return from a holiday in Tenerife and suffered very serious ill-effects from shock.

More effort seems to be put into the enforcing of stripping than in the search. One woman arrested at Greenham Common was strip searched and had to remind the police to search her boots and handbag!

Another relevant fact is that when men and women are arrested on the same or similar charges, only the women are strip searched.

The practice of strip searching, because of the way it is conducted, its frequency and the fact that the strip searches are mainly carried out on women prove that the main reason is not security but **the humiliation and degradation of women.**

It can be described as "institutionalised sexual violence" condoned by the State. Depriving people of their clothes, making them strip naked, is a well practised method of humiliation. It gives the prison officers a sense of power; it makes the prisoners feel degraded, humiliated, powerless, vulnerable. It takes away a person's basic human rights.

The media plays a large part too in distorting the facts as to why women are in prison. Many people going about their everyday lives do not know what is happening in our prisons and probably do not care.

Increase

The media would have us believe that there is an increase in crimes committed by women, and that these crimes involve acts of terrorism and violence — all very much part of public propaganda put out to justify the punishment and to ensure that women receive very little public sympathy.

Yet from research into women in prison today there is conclusive evidence that women confined in prisons in Britain are usually poor, working class women. They are mostly imprisoned for offences which are rarely vicious or dangerous. Their crimes are usually petty thefts, shoplifting, public order offences.

So what are we going to do to get this practice stopped? Clearly the present government will never stop it. Nevertheless we must continually pressurise them.

The Labour Party have stated that they will replace it with more acceptable security measures (what these would be they have yet to reveal!).

Unfortunately we do not have a Labour government, and even if we had the ending of strip searching would probably not be too high on their list of priorities. Campaigns over the next four years must change this situation.

Public awareness and pressure groups will be the most important element in the future.

Scottish Campaign against Strip-searching

Join the Scottish fight!

On Saturday July 4th the practice of strip searches in Northern Ireland and their rapid spread to Scotland and England was discussed at a meeting in Glasgow called by the Glasgow Branch of the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searching (SCASS).

Kathy Finn, ex President of EIS, (personal capacity) was in the chair.

Maria Fyfe MP, speaking in a personal capacity, said that her interest in the campaigns to stop strip searches had been sparked off after 9 women taken from a peace protest at the Clyde submarine base were subjected to humiliating personal searches in public and in the presence of male officers and arrestees.

The police stations concerned were Clydebank and Maryhill.

After a public enquiry into this incident Strathclyde's Chief Constable made reassurances about Strathclyde only, and these were not detailed.

There was also concern about how little public accountability there is in the adoption of new rules and procedures.

The level of strip searching in Corntonvale Women's Prison in Stirling is higher than in Armagh — the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties recently stated that in 1984 the incidence of searches in Armagh was less than a quarter pro rata of what it is in Scotland.

Maria told the meeting that the 21 Labour women MPs have already met twice, and are going to hold regular meetings to discuss issues relevant to women. Strip searching has already been discussed and they will keep up continual pressure with parliamentary questions, early day motions and so on.

Margaret Stewart (SCASS) gave a detailed background to strip searching and went on to talk about the Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searches. This Campaign was set up as the result of the revelations of the number of strip searches in Corntonvale.

There was a group of women in Stirling previously discussing the issue because of their concern and horror at intimate body searches of women from Faslane in 1985 (as mentioned by Maria).

With the disclosure about Cortonvale an urgent meeting was held and the Campaign was set up. In 1985 the Scottish Home and Health Department confirmed that there were 4,219 strip searches in Corntonvale in that yaer.

Margaret went on to say that the Campaign also agrees with the concern shown by Maria about the public enquiry in Strathclyde. Successful press releases were put out by the Campaign when the results of the enquiry were published, and pressure is being put on Strathclyde Police and Fire Committee by the Campaign to get more accountability from the police.

By Maureen Brisbane Member, SCASS

The main aim of the Scottish Campaign is to get the practice of strip searching stopped. The Campaign believes that their practice is using women's bodies as a weapon against them and is sexual assault and harassment.

The Campaign is actively campaigning for an immediate end to this degrading practice and is planning an official Public Launch and Information Day in September of this year.

Margaret said that The Scottish Campaign would like to see many more campaigning groups set up in Scotland under the umbrella of the Stirling group. The more campaigning groups formed, the more effective pressure will become.

The Scottish Campaign fully supports and will work in conjunction with Labour Women for Ireland, The Irish Prisoners Appeal Group and others campaigning on this issue.

The meeting was thrown open to discussion and several constructive points emerged as to what could be done, which the Campaign will be implementing.

For further information on the Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searches contact: Margaret Stewart, 36 Queen Street, Stirling. Donations and letters of support will be very welcome!



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

Labour Women for Ireland demonstrating: build a campaign against strip searching!

Building Briefing

500 Club Winner

The winner of our £25 prize drawn from amongst the lucky numbers this week is Number 88 — J. Hale of Kensington, London. Congratulations!

Remember — you won't win the £25 prize unless you have a standing order!

Fill in the form, and send it to PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ — then make sure you get your regular copy of Labour Briefing to check up on the progress of your lucky number!

Summer Break

Briefing is — like many of our supporters we hope! — heading for its summer break. We'll be back with you on September 8th.

But although the paper is taking a break, the Editorial won't be — and we ask our supporters not to forget us completely either!

Firstly, although the fortnightly Briefing will be resting, the class struggle won't! So local Briefing groups should make sure they produce local bulletins where necessary and useful.

Secondly, the office staff will be seizing this opportunity to contact all Briefing sellers and supporters to make sure we lay the best financial basis for the year ahead. Our fortnightly Briefing is a year old now — a tremendous achievement for a paper with no rich financial backers, which relies entirely upon its supporters.

Now, aswell as heading into our second year, we also face Labour Party Conference looming. Briefing had a very successful time last year, but it cost us a lot of money, and it is bound to cost a lot this year too.

So, please keep this checklist to hand, and use the break to help us improve our financial standing.

★Paper sales money: send it in! The office target is *no paper debts at all by August 31st* — so send your money in now before we get on the phone to you!

★500 Club: are all your *Briefing* readers and the supporters in your area members of the 500 Club? Get checking now — don't leave it to others. Phone 01 733 7016 for details of your areas' standing orders, or for supplies of forms.

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★Have a good holiday — and see you in September!

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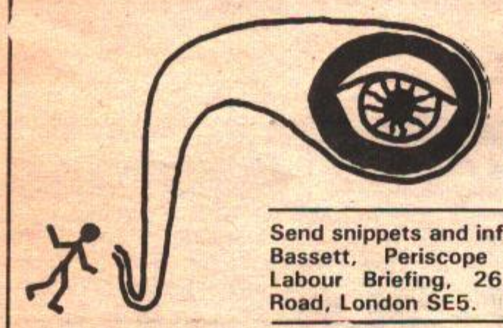
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Briefing Women and **International Briefing** can be contacted c/o PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ.
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Next meeting: Friday July 24th.
Briefing Steering Committee: next meeting Sunday August 2nd.
Deadline for articles for issue no. 47: Notify EB by Friday, August 28th, articles in by Wednesday September 2nd (we cannot guarantee to print articles received after this date).

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Periscope



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

Capitalism for beginners

Someone really ought to check over the punctuation between the "financial news" headlines on LBC — the London local radio station which provides the background entertainment in the *Briefing* office.

A recent bulletin announced: "There was a power cut on the Stock Exchange today. Shares fell, and then surged ahead."

We always wondered how the System worked. *C.M.*

The 'other' London effect

Was it a piss-take? Or was this really the Supplementary Report on the General Election to the Greater London Labour Party Conference, as written by Glenys Thornton (Chair), Brian Nicholson (Treasurer), and Terry Ashton (Gen. Sec.) and unseen by the Regional Executive?

"Knowing an election was due," said the report, "our preparations regionally included putting a long-needed coat of paint on the regional offices, internally and externally, and beginning the installation of central heating."

Periscope kids you not — this is a quote.

Perhaps, as one delegate was heard to remark, they were trying to sum up their attitude to the whole campaign: smarten up the presentation on the outside, and plenty of hot air on the inside. *E.N.*

Cloth cap and cane

Joe Ashton's new caucus for white, macho, horny-handed, mushy pea-eating professional proletarian MPs (The Working Class/Grass Roots Group) got off to a bizarre start with a meeting on July 15th.

Star speaker was Chief Yuppie Peter Mandelson, trendy consumerist marketing manager of the Labour Party, who would sooner die than be spotted with a knotted hanky on his head.

The theme of the meeting was the Labour Party's literature, publications and party political broadcasts "and how we can aim them better at working class voters."

Mandelson was expected to suggest a mail-shot the Porsche-owners' club: Ashton, to judge from the lumpen rubbish in his *Daily Star* column, is more likely to opt for leaflets featuring Samantha Fox.

Old School Tie?

While avoiding the posturing belt-and-braces approach of Joe Ashton, Jeremy Corbyn MP has cut a distinctive sartorial figure in the House. His relaxed jeans and T-shirt style has got right up the toffee-noses of Tory public school boys, whose first real post-election offensive has focussed on efforts to enforce the wearing of jackets and ties.

On July 8th, the highest elected body in the land was called upon by Tory MP Tony Marlow once more to devote its attention to this vital matter.

"Did the Speaker have discretion not to call ill-dressed MPs?" he asked.

Clare Short rode to the rescue. She angrily retorted that "We should be responsible for our own clothing."

The Speaker, Sir Bernard Wetherill (formerly a taylor), who had not apparently attempted to interfere with MP's clothing, replied that he "rather agreed".

"My concern is for the health of Hon. Members. If Hon. Members come in without jackets, they are quite likely to get a cold. I had a bad cold last week."

No questions appear yet to have been asked about the wearing of trousers, underwear, or surgical appliances. All appear optional. *Periscope* will keep you posted: a special Editorial Board may be convened to decide our line.

Pleasing the punters

Following the announcement that they may not be allowed to flog off their town hall and other assets after all to raise £24m, Brent councillors are reportedly looking at a new money-making plan involving speculating on fluctuating interest rates.

Alternatively, they may opt for the latest scheme put forward by *Briefing*'s financial columnist and an indicted City swindler Ivor Postbox.

"It's quite simple," he told *Periscope* from Zurich. "They just draw out all the available cash and invest it through me in stable, yet fast-moving, upwardly mobile stock.

"There is no messing about. If the horse comes in a winner, we're all laughing. If not, we're all for the high jump.

"It's a proletarian policy too: workers would understand the problem and be supportive if Labour councillors went to them honestly and explained they'd lost all the rates income on a horse.

"I call it my race relations plan."

Putting the lid on it

Low-paid health workers may feel that it is high time they got involved in a wage spiral — provided the spiral was upwards.

The National Association of Health Authorities does not agree. It commissioned a report spelling out an alternative enabling local premium rates to be paid to avoid a rise in the national basic rate. Calling for collaboration between different health districts the report's chair said: "Non-co-operation and secrecy will produce the sort of wage spiralling which we are determined to avoid."

This should come as no surprise: the words come from right wing Labourite Lady McCarthy, who showed her feelings for health workers and patients when, as former Chair of Oxford Area Health Authority, she played a key role in pushing through the closure of Longworth hospital.

Secret eating

The warning signs were all there, and somebody should have guessed.

The hospitals' corridors had been blitz-cleaned by hard-pressed Mediclean staff.

Flowers had been brought in to liven up the drab, run-down surroundings.

But it was only when the catering manager at Merton's St Helier Hospital walked in with a couple of sides of smoked salmon that the truth was forced out: Edwina Currie was on a secret visit, seeking to prove that the NHS is safe in her teeth.

Cunningham is not Stunning 'em

Word in parliamentary circles is that Dr Jack "nukes" Cunningham is rather less than enchanted with his reappointment as Shadow Environment Secretary.

He had already announced his departure and waved a glad farewell — only to be grudgingly drafted back by Neil Kinnock. He shows no interest in what could be a high-profile post, fighting the battery of Tory attacks on local government.

Equally disenchanted were the media hacks who broke up a good afternoon's drinking to attend the first committee hearing on the Local government legislation, expecting the first shots of Labour's fightback.

The Tory nominees included MPs notable for their links to the private firms bidding for contracts under compulsory competitive tendering.

But a far-from radioactive Cunningham gave them a sigh of relief followed by an unexpected political field-day: instead of denouncing their blatant vested interests, he tamely got up and declared his own; as a GMB sponsored MP!

Debate: child abuse

Why child abuse is a class issue

The past month has seen a great deal of muddled talk in the press over the question of the sexual abuse of children.

Some has deliberately cast doubt on the seriousness of the offence, suggesting that parents will now be afraid to show affection, to cuddle their children, and has sympathised with the accused parents.

Right wing MP Stuart Bell (wholeheartedly championing Parental Rights, police involvement and claims of Social Services Empire Building) has contributed to this backward step.

Yet Cleveland looks like a Local Authority attempting to take DHSS guidelines seriously ("The Child's welfare must be the overriding concern of profesional staff... A child's statement that he or she is being abused should be accepted as true until proved otherwise. Children rarely lie about sexual abuse.") They have believed the child and refused to dismiss childish distress as a Freudian fantasy.

It is unlikely that these children were complaining about cuddling and carressing. There have been repeated incidents of children telling of rape and buggery, paediatricians finding abnormal damage to genitalia and of adult women remembering their own horrific experiences which as children they were unable to tell, as the London Inquiry into rape and sexual abuse assault documented.

We are confronting an incredibly difficult dilemma. Child sexual abuse has been taboo for decades (though in the 1880s-1900 there was a feminist campaign on this issue) with only the horrific tip of the iceberg hitting the headlines when murdered children are found to have been mutilated. The press sensationalises, the prison population brutalises the murderer, and the public calls him a monster.

By Sue Arnall
Bury CLP

But what of the countless untold child rapes? Studies estimate that sexually abuse is more frequent than physical abuse. Victims are typically girls (10:1) and often small infants. Almost all abusers are male (97%) and three quarters are known to the child, many being family members or other caretakers (priests, doctors, school caretakers, babysitters, etc.).

Brownmiller

Brownmiller reports that force was used in over half the cases but in a quarter "the lure was more subtle, and based on the child's natural loyalty and affection for a relative."

Warning kids not to talk to strangers often misses the point. The real danger is within the home, where they expect to be safe, and where the consequences of telling are frightening and known to the child. They may love and need the affection of the abuser, they may feel shame, blame themselves, and doubt that anyone will believe them.

Overshadowing this confusion of feelings is the private nature of the nuclear family itself, and the power relationships within it. There is a parallel here between child abuse and the violence many women experience from lovers or husbands. The cause isn't so much sex, as the dominance of the man, and his ability to control and coerce.

Childen have begun to break their silence. Anonymous reporting systems such as Rape Crisis, Childline, and Incest Survivors have enabled children to unburden their feelings without fear of repercussions. This has alerted professionals to the scale of the problem, and they have become more aware of tell-tale symptoms and signs.

After receiving a savage press campaign over failure to protect children from physical abuse, social workers are naturally anxious to be seen to protect children from sexual abuse. Paediatricians and hospital casualty wards have begun routinely to look for physical symptoms and in this atmosphere of anxiety they have found what they were seeking.

But they have not go the resources to then act in the child's best interests. The community expects them to place the child out of danger, but then complains that parental rights are ignored. Marietta Higgs remarked that the abuse she received is only what happens to children who tell if they are left at home, to be blamed, disbelieved or possibly attacked for breaking family loyalty. So to allow the child home in this atmosphere is to risk further abuse.

A previous *Briefing* article suggested that removal of the abuser was preferable to removing the child. I am assured that this is usually suggested, but that without evidence it can't be enforced.

"Rape by an authority figure can befuddle a victim who has been trained to respect authority... no area of sexual abuse is characterised by unchallengeable authority to a greater degree than the sexual abuse of children, for to a child all adults are authority figures."
Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*

The police too have become sensitive to their role and want a free hand to interview all concerned. This is obviously traumatic and alienating, and new procedures need quickly to be agreed on all sides.

The Great Ormond Street Special unit has been criticised for methods which might put suggestions into the child's mind, and which may be as abusive mentally as the behaviour they seek to uncover was emotionally.

Cleveland is accused of exaggerating the problem to gain more money for Social Services. You can't judge whether there is an over-reaction, but it is likely that Social Services everywhere are grossly under-resourced to provide any kind of half decent service to all manner of clients; so if they seek to take sex abuse seriously, it will put additional strains on their service.

If we want swift, sensitive, effective therapeutic help available to children, more resources are needed. But Thatcher says there's no more money; find it from elsewhere in the budget — i.e.cut from the elderly, handicapped or ill.



Children deserve a better deal from the system

Parents

Parents in Cleveland complain they were not consulted, visited, helped, and it's probably true: all the workers could do was to remove the children. But that does not offer them a safe, emotionally fulfilling future — nor does it prevent other abuse.

For prevention we need to look at the source of the problem, at the power relationships in the family and at the way sexuality is regarded as something to be bought or fought over, with man as predator and authority figure, woman as object or submissive weakling. Casual everyday pornography contributes to the incidence of sexual abuse and rape and the likelihood of the victim remaining silent or blaming herself.

Schools

Of interest is the acceptance in some schools of the need to prepare young children assertively to refuse the approaches of strangers. *Kidscape*, the "good sense defence" programme, teaches children that they have rights and that their body belongs to them, particularly their private parts, and that it's all right to say "no" to anyone. It assures children that they should *tell* — without fear that adults will be angry with them. It is an excellent scheme, but it has to assume that the abuser is not the parent or it loses essential parent support — and given increasing parental control over sex education in schools that is a problem.

Finally the question of family poverty can't be ignored. *In Care in North Battersea*, a research project, illustrated that increased unemployment, housing stress and lack of day care went along with a sharp rise in reception of children into care. Poverty increases stress, families can't cope, their children suffer and are removed, perhaps permanently, to be placed with more affluent, substitute families.

Neglect

Whether from abuse or neglect, children in care is a class issue when positive and loving feelings between parents and children are destroyed, maybe for ever, because of a lousy capitalist system of inequality and poverty line benefits.

There has to be a better way to protect children than by removing them from home. There has to be a better way for adults to relate to children than in terms of coercion and power.

Reviews

Our socialist history

South London's radical past

***The South London Record* No. 2, by South London History Workshop, 1987, £1.95.**

In this latest booklet, the South London History Workshop resurrect more fascinating, little-known fragments of working class and socialist history south of the Thames.

Roy Webb's contribution presents a brief biography of the black Liberal turned socialist John Archer (1863-1932).

Liverpool-born and active in local Battersea politics for half a century, Archer was also a leader of the Pan African Organisation which pioneered the first wave anti-colonial struggle at the turn of the century.

Later, in 1906, he became Britain's first ever black councillor and eventually, in 1913, he was elected Mayor of Battersea.

Subsequently, Archer joined the Battersea Labour Party and following the Liverpool Race Riots in 1919 he devoted much of his energy to defending the black community. In 1931, just a year before his death, Archer was elected Deputy Leader of Battersea Council.

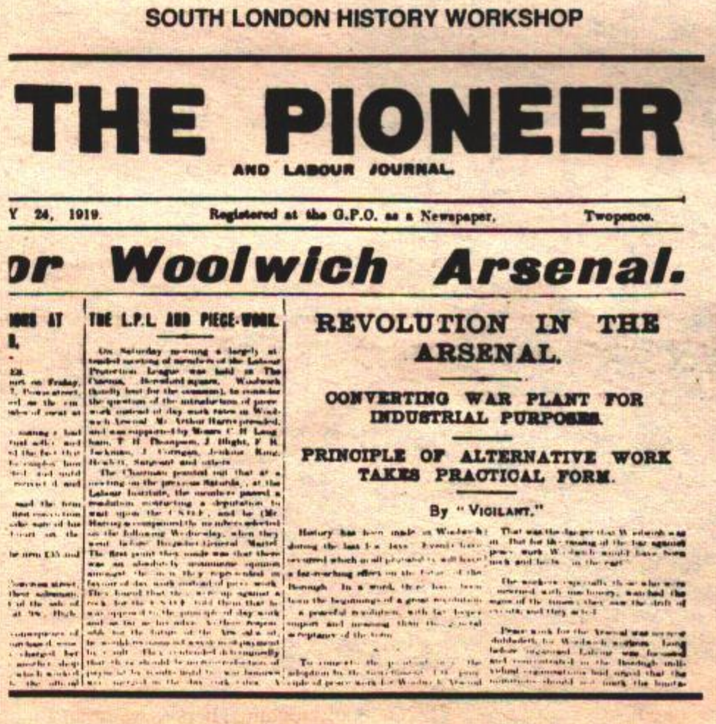
By Peter Tatchell

The story of the "Peace Arsenal" by Dan Weinbren documents the campaign by workers at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Woolwich for alternative employment.

Faced with huge lay-offs, due to the declining demand for armaments in the aftermath of the First World War, the Woolwich workers called for the conversion of the munitions industry to peaceful production. The government responded by authorising a limited programme of alternative work, including the repair of railway wagons and lorries and the manufacture of locomotives, milk churns, GPO equipment and doors.

Dave Russell gives an interesting account of the early Irish independence movement in Southwark. In the 1880s, local branches of the Home Rule Association and the Anti-Coercion Association were set up to oppose Irish land evictions and the suppression of the Irish National Land League by the Gladstone government.

Prominent local members included Helen Taylor and Jessie Craigen who later went on to become pro-Irish campaigners of national repute.


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REVOLUTION IN THE ARSENAL.

CONVERTING WAR PLANT FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

PRINCIPLE OF ALTERNATIVE WORK TAKES PRACTICAL FORM.

By "VIGILANT."

No 2 1987

Red & Green

I was just starting to get over the General Election result when I read that Nuclear Jack Cunningham had retained his post as Shadow Cabinet Minister for the Environment.

Nuclear Jack is hardly the man to lead Labour's opposition to the nuclear industry during the years ahead.

Having publicly proclaimed his commitment to the industry time and again, he is clearly at odds with Labour's existing anti-nuclear policy. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to conclude that Kinnock is less than committed to one of the Party's most popular and radical policies.

SERA's model resolution on energy policy for Party Conference contains a number of commitments that would make Cunningham's position even more incongruous.

The resolution would commit Labour to phasing out nuclear power by the year 2000, to halting construction of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant at Sellafield, and to mothballing the two AGRs at Torness and Heysham. A timetable of four years is suggested for phasing out all the Magnox reactors.

It's probably too much to hope that Cunningham would be honest enough to resign if such a resolution was passed. Despite the presence in the Shadow Cabinet of many who are clearly opposed to nuclear power, it looks as if anti-nuclear campaigners will be getting precious little support from the Labour leadership. One wonders how "easy" they will find it to oppose even the Sizewell PWR in four years time with an election due and construction well on the way.

Meanwhile, the Tories plans for the Sizewell PWR project have met with a temporary setback. The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) have refused to grant a licence for construction work due to new doubts about the reactor's safety.

By Andy Porter
SERA

Independent experts have expressed doubts about the proposed PWR's ability to cope with a sudden loss of power which could lead to overheating and possible disaster. The problem was noted at the Sizewell Inquiry by the Inspector himself who was not satisfied that the CEGB could deal with the problem. To date the NII are not satisfied either.

Finally, it has been disclosed that Department of the Environment officials were seconded to the Inquiry secretariat and actually took part in the Inspector's evaluation of documents. So much for an impartial inquiry!

Despite delays, the Sizewell PWR is almost certain to go ahead. Labour should make a statement that under no circumstances will a future Labour government retain or operate a PWR. Over to you, Jack.

Namibian uranium

Workers' blockade begins to bite

"BNFL dependence on processing southern African uranium explains why Mrs Thatcher fought so hard to exclude a uranium ban from the Commonwealth and EEC sanctions packages."
Theo Ben Gurirab, SWAPO Secretary for foreign relations

"You find that people who live in Arandis live with their families. But then about half of Rossing's workers live in hostels, and, of course, here the question of families not being allowed applies. So one can say about half of Rossing's workers live without their families. They are not exercising this right: they live in hostels alone."
Ben Ulenga, General Secretary, Mineworkers Union of Namibia

Liverpool dockworkers have taken a historic stand in solidarity with the people of Namibia. They have categorically refused to handle shipments of Namibian and South African uranium.

Their decision follows a direct appeal from Ben Ulenga, General Secretary of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, speaking at an Anti-Apartheid labour movement conference in Transport House, Liverpool, in February.

The docks management, or BNFL who process the uranium, or Edlow International who import apartheid uranium into the USA may now either force a confrontation in Liverpool, or switch the export route to Felixstow, Tilbury or elsewhere.

This, however, may not be so simple. The TGWU Bienniel Delegate Conference has endorsed the stand of the union's Merseyside members, adopting strong policy on all goods from Namibia:

"Conference welcomes the formation of new unions in Namibia affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers and endorses the call of Ben Ulenga for TGWU members to boycott trade in all Namibian goods including uranium until South African troops are withdrawn and Namibia achieves independence under UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978)."

By Phil Boyd
Namibia Support Committee, CANUC
(from *Action on Namibia*, Summer 1987)

According to Lynda Chalker, Foreign Minister, "The CEGB contract with the Rossing mine ended in 1984 and has not been renewed. Imports or uranium from Namibia have therefore ceased." (written in response to a petition from York AAM).

The stand made by Liverpool dockworkers blows the government's position clean out of the water: **Namibian uranium *is* coming into and going out of Britain and now the world knows about it.** Secondly, they have shown that the campaign for a blockade is a realistic one.

Uranium passes through Liverpool in the form of uranium hexaflouride (or hex). Hex is manufactured at BNFL Springfields, near Preston, as one of a series of processes transforming "yellowcake" — the form in which uranium leaves the Rossing mine in Namibia — into fuel rods for nuclear reactors, or the highly enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons.

BNFL Springfields does "hex conversion" for the British power and weapons programme, and for overseas customers — hence the traffic through Liverpool docks.

Behind the Liverpool action lies over two years of painstaking research into transport routes and contracts involving sightings of containers arriving and leaving BNFL Springfield, the matching up of container numbers with those on shipping documents obtained by SWAPO, and getting to grips with the structure of the nuclear industry world wide.

Research by the Namibia Support Committee's Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts (CANUC) shows:

- BNFL's export processing operation is up to 90% dependent on southern African imports. For instance during the first six months of 1986, a total of 141 containers arrived at Springfields of which 96 certainly came from southern Africa and 41 probably did so.
- BNFL processes Namibian and South African uranium on behalf of the following customers: Kansai Electric power Company, Tohoku Power Company, Japan Atomic Power Company (all Japan), Synatom (Belgium), ENUSA (Spain), EXXON (US) and Kernkraft Isar (West Germany). There may be more.
- In 1987, 35% of Japanese uranium purchases will be Namibian and 9% South African.

At the same time a number of secrets remain. Some southern African uranium arrives through Southampton, and there are other routes. Belgian press reports suggest shipments of Namibian yellowcake via Zeebrugge to East coast ports in Britain.

What is the current role of F. Edmondson, the Morecambe hauliers, in deliveries to Springfields? And what of the 1,100 tonnes of Namibian uranium contracted for in 1975/6 which Tony Benn believed was for the weapons programme?

The threat which the Liverpool dockworkers pose internationally to Rio Tinto Zinc's (RTZ) involvement in Namibia is considerable.

- In the US, purchases of southern African uranium by domestic power companies are banned, while yellowcake imports for export processing are the subject of intense political debate. Should these also be barred, then BNFL's current "middleman" role can only increase.
- In Canada (see *Action on Namibia*, Winter 1986/7) the government has declared a ban on all export processing work on southern African uranium from 1988.
- In Holland, the UN Concil for Namibia is poised to start legal action against URENCO, the uranium enrichment consortium to which BNFL also belongs, for its violation of UN Decree No. 1.

In the end it could well become either impossible or simply too much trouble for power companies to continue their purchases of Namibian and South African uranium — especially when there is a glut of alternative supplies.

After years of being on the defensive since the CEGB Rossing contract ended, and with the general lack of information, the campaign can now seize the initiative. But we need to act quickly:

- Build support for the stand of Liverpool dockworkers within the TGWU, particularly among dock and transport workers.
- Build support within other trade unions especially the NUS and rail unions.
- Mobilise the wider peace, anti-apartheid and anti-nuclear movements (CANUC has called the first of a series of mobilising meetings in Liverpool on Saturday July 25th to plan for a Summer and Autumn of action).
- Step up disinvestment campaigns aginst RTZ shareholders.
- Develop campaigns against Japanese, West German and other purchasers of Namibian uranium.



PHOTO: Namibia Support Committee

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

Namibian resistance

Workers' action will only be stronger!

At 4.30am on July 3rd, 1,600 workers living in the workers' compound in Luderitz, a seaport in the south of Namibia, were brutally attacked and raided by the illegal occupationist police and army.

Over 200 people were detained by police and army, also known as *Koevoet*.

Among the detained are workers who were seriously wounded in the raid on the compound. One worker has been hospitalised with serious head and arm injuries.

Union officials of NAFAU and NUNW found much evidence of heavy-handed police action, including blood, teargas canisters and rubber bullets. Private property was damaged and stolen from workers in the course of the raid.

42 locked shanties housing workers were broken into. When crowds gathered, including children, they were dispersed with teargas.

As many workers are detained, workers are not going to work and most shops are closed. Hosea Kaulinge, Secretary of the Workers' committee at Ludritz, was detained as part of the raid, having been held earlier for questioning.

The raid comes in the wake of strikes and widespread dissastisfaction amongst the severely underpaid and exploited workers at Luderitz. The entire black workforce in Luderitz is unionised under NAFAU and NUNW.

NAFAU and NUNW condemn in the strongest terms this criminal action on the part of the occupationist police and army. Intimidation of workers will not be tolerated by NAFAU and the NUNW.

While the workers of Luderitz have been shocked by this terrorist attack, their spirts are as high as ever. Workers are determined to resist such attempts at intimidating them.

NAFAU and NUNW note that this is the second attack on workers at their place of residence in a short period of time. If this is to set a trend, then the illegal puppet government and employers can expect stronger worker action in response to such attacks.

Signed
MacDonald Ka Ntlabathi, *Chair NAFAU*
Barnabus Tjizu, *Chair NUNW*
(Taken from a press statement from the National Union of Namibian Workers and the Namibian Food and Allied Workers Union)

CANUC campaign materials

Namibia: a contract to kill **— 100p booklet, £1.50 inc. p&p**
Briefing papers — up to date information, £1 inc. p&p
Speakers notes — 50p
The Capenhurst Connection **— campaigning video, £5 hire fee**
Blockade Namibian Uranium poster — 50p (big discount on bulk orders)
T-shirts — £3 inc. p&p
Badges — 50p inc. p&p (big discounts for bulk orders)
Namibia Solidarity Committee: PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW. Tel. 01-267 1941.



PHOTO: Namibia Support Committee

Ben Uulenge meets Terry French, victimised Kent miner

Iranian Workers' Movement

Surviving repression — building for victory!

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing



***The Iranian Workers' Movement*, Campaign Against Repression in Iran, Information Bulletin No. 1**

The Iran-Contra scandal revelations have proved — if further proof were needed — the reactionary nature of the Iranian regime.

Despite the rhetoric of anti-imperialism on one side, and of anti-"terrorism" on the other, the mullahs of Iran and the bourgeoisies of Western Europe and the United States are only too happy to work together for mutual benefit.

All those in the British labour movement who opposed the Shah and initially supported the 1979 Revolution need to read this pamphlet.

It is the first in a series of information bulletins to be published by the Campaign Against Repression in Iran (CARI), which describes itself as "a broad-based campaign which aims to organise solidarity with all those struggling against the repressive Islamic regime and to bring to the attention of British public opinion, particularly the labour movement, the terrible plight of the Iranian people and the efforts of the progressive opposition to this regime."

The pamphlet makes clear the crucial role which the organised working class played in the upsurge which dethroned the Shah, and the cynical manoeuvres and violent repression necessary to contain and ultimately reverse the gains made by workers during that revolution.

The development of the "independent shoras" (workers' councils) in post-revolutionary Iran is explained in fascinating detail. Resisting manipulation and repression, the shoras repeatedly raised workers' basic demands and initiated strike after strike. To defeat this movement, the regime had to combine an ever more strident anti-imperialist rhetoric with constant escalations of state-sponsored violence against the masses.

The US embassy occupation, a worldwide media spectacular, came at a crucial time for the regime and helped to dissipate the mass movement in theatrical displays of anti-Americanism.

The pamphlet analyses the anti-working class nature of the regime, cataloguing its labour legislation (which outlaws all collective bargaining), its economic policy, which has resulted in a sharp decline in working class living standards, and the ideological inanities with which it justifies its arsenal of repression.

The advent of the Iran-Iraq War was a tragic turning point for the workers' movement, with all too few voices raised against the mindless chauvinist appeals of the mullahs. The war was used as an excuse to unleash a further wave of censorship, arrests, and killings and further restrictions on pay and conditions.

Perhaps the most important contribution the pamphlet makes is to chronicle how, despite everything, the workers' resistance has survived and matured. Strikes, go-slows, and disputes remain common. Clandestine organisation has grown more extensive.

The pamphlet is also an indictment of the roles played by the Tudeh Party (the Stalinists) and the Mojahadeen. Their cynical opportunism led them to give unqualified support to the regime long after it had begun to destroy the mass movement which brought it to power.

Indeed, the Tudeh actually assisted in the physical repression meted out to workers and Left oppositionists. When the mullahs no longer had any use for the misleaders of the masses, they dispensed with their services.

The repression was turned against the Mojahadeen, and then the Tudeh itself. It was too late for either of them to rally the support they needed, and they paid a heavy price in blood for their collusion.

Many in the British labour movement will have run across the Mojahadeen, and their self-styled National Council of Resistance, and many will have been swayed by their display of gory pictures and their claims to hegemony within the Iranian opposition.

In 1985, Masud Rajavi, Mojahadeen leader, fell out with his wife and father-in-law, the bourgeois ex-President Bani-Sadr, and inaugurated his own "ideological revolution". He promoted the wife of one of his lieutenants to co-leader of the movement — and then married her.

The divorced husband of the new Mrs Rajavi declared his assent to the manoeuvre by thanking god for permitting him "to participate in this beautiful ideological decision."

The autocratic cult of personality, coupled with double-talk about a new "Islamic" republic, indifference to the struggles of workers, women, or national minorities, and now an open alliance with Iraq's reactionary dictator Saddam Hussein, indicate that Rajavi would be scant improvement over Khomeini.

He has mercilessly purged all independent opinion from the National Council of Resistance, and, as a consequence, neither he nor the Mojahadeen can any longer be regarded as a serious threat to the Khomeini regime.

The task of organising resistance and solidarity falls therefore to the left. CARI was formed last year to facilitate this task in Britain. Future CARI information bulletins will report on the situation of women in Iran and on the development of opposition to the endless purgatory of the Iran-Iraq war.

Invite a speaker from CARI to visit your Labour Party or trade union meeting. Affiliate to CARI and get copies of this excellent pamphlet from: BM CARI, London WC1N 3XX.

Coup in Fiji

Restore democracy now!

On May 14th, the democratically-elected government of Fiji, made up of a coalition of National Federation Party and Labour Party of Fiji, was overthrown in a military coup.

The constitution under which the previous ruling party had governed for 17 years was torn up overnight.

Why? Because the new government advocated non-nuclear policies. Former US Generals Walters and Singlaub (a leading Contra-supplier) were spotted in Fiji days before the coup.

The Western media have tried to portray the conflict as a racial one between Indians and Melanesians. In Fiji itself, the military has tried to stir up racial division by vicious attacks on the Indian community, including looting, arson, and physical assault.

The "Action Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Fiji" has been formed to publicise the facts about the coup and provide solidarity with its victims.

Contact: *Action Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Fiji, 58 Princes Avenue, London NW9.*

Along the Color Line

Racist plague on university campuses

During the spring term at Purdue University, in Indiana, a series of racist incidents polarised the entire community.

On January 25th, a Ku Klux Klan-style cross burning occurred on the lawn of the university's Black Cultural Centre.

The next month, a racist threat was carved on the office door of a Black adminstrator. University officials responded with "benign neglect".

When asked what action should be taken to deal with campus racism, specifically the cross burning, the Purdue President advised Blacks to "forget it".

Over 150 outraged students, faculty, and staff protested this casual — and indeed callous — approach to race relations.

The racial incidents at Purdue are only one example of a growing national crisis — the escalation of racial vigilantism and violence against Blacks at predominantly white universities. A short list of dozens of campus incidents includes the following cases:

- at the university of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, a cross was torched in front of a new Black sorority house;
- at the University of Texas-Austin, white reactionary students have formed the "Aryan Collegiates", with the specific goal of eliminating all Blacks and other "outspoken minorities" from their campus;
- at Minnesota's Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, a Black former student filed discrimination charges, asserting that the institution disciplined Blacks more severely than whites, and that he was also forbidden by college adminstrators to date a white woman;
- at the university of Colorado, a white fraternity circulated posters on Dr Martin Luther King Jr's birthday of a revealing portrait of a Black woman — the poster was captioned "come play with me".

At Wellesley College last January, a white college trustee who also owned a Los Angeles-based manufacturing firm, declared that she had trouble keeping Black workers from going "back to the streets to earn more money" selling drugs. The trustee, Henrietta Holsman, was pressured to resign from the board by outraged Black students.

But a number of white administrators and professors were still prepared to overlook Holsman's gaffe. Wellesley economics professor Marchal Goldman insisted that "people's sensitivities" were upset because the former trustee had bluntly described "her real life experience on the factory floor... In academic life there comes a time when you don't tell the truth."

At the University of Michigan, an outbreak of racist violence culminated in an 18-hour occupation of an administration building by 400 progressive white and Black students on March 19th. In the wake of the demonstration, 35 neo-Nazis displaying swastikas rallied for white supremacy in Ann Arbor; subsequently a Black student was threatened with "lynching" in an anonymous note.

On March 26th, more than one thousand people rallied at Columbia University to protest a racist assault against Afro-American students by a gang of whites. And at Northern Illinois University, about 2,000 students held an anti-racist demonstration, in the aftermath of the distribution of Nazi-like, racist flyers circulated across campus. When Jesse Jackson was invited to speak at this university last February, a group of white thugs yelled racist epithets at people attending the lecture.



A personal view of current affairs in the USA

By Manning Marable

How can we explain this upsurgence of racist violence against Blacks on white campuses? There are several interrelated factors which reinforce the campus climate of prejudice and race hatred.

First, white univerities are rapidly cutting back programmes to increase the number of Black students, faculty and staff. Most institutions make only half-hearted efforts to implement affirmative action and minority recruitment. At Wellesley, for instance, there are only two Blacks out of 124 tenured professors, and in the past 8 years only one minority person has been granted tenure.

At the University of Michigan, Black enrollment was 7.7% in 1976, and has dropped to 5.3% today. Purdue University has only 15 Black professors, below one half of one percent of all instructors. Statistics from the American Council on Education indicate that *the number of Afro-Americans enrolled in undergraduate school declined by one fifth between 1980 and 1985.*

Black studies and other academic programmes which reinforce cultural diversity are being destroyed or reduced. Not surprisingly, white students receive the unambiguous message that it is "OK" to exhibit racist tendencies. Similarly, given the Reagan administration's overt hostility towards civil rights, many white youth logically conclude that their bigotry is sanctioned even by their "commander-in-chief".

Campus racism can't be uprooted unless there is a firm commitment to social justice, racial equality and affirmative action in our government, courts, the economic system and society as a whole. Universities only mirror the racist realities of American life.

Subs appeal

Thanks to all *Briefing* supporters who sent in money towards financing subcription copies of *Briefing* requested by various organisations in South Africa

We have raised the grand total of £78 so far, thanks to:

Jane Connor (Haringey), Pete Cooper (Wandsworth), Pete Firmin (Brent), Fred Leplat (Camden), and T. Tomkins.

If you have not yet donated, please send a cheque right away, so that these sub copies can get out to our comrades right away.

Cheques should be made payable to Labour Briefing, and sent to PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ, marked "South Africa appeal".

Camden update

Camden NALGO votes to fight cuts

By Jo Fawkes
Chair, Camden NALGO

The largest ever Camden NALGO Branch meeting voted on Tuesday July 14th not to co-operate with the Council in making cuts.

The 2,500 members present voted to defend all workers threatened by the current policy of ending temporary contracts, and all workers threatened for taking action in line with National NALGO policy of "no cover for vacant posts".

The debate centred around a choice between the Executive Committee motion calling on shops to take action in defence of workers threatened with cuts, and an amendment proposed by *Marxism Today* supporters (and backed by a leading SDP NALGO member).

This amendment called on the Council not to make cuts without "consulting" NALGO, offering, in turn, negotiations on "flexibility of working and changes to the redeployment agreement", and was finally defeated by 1,229 to 854.

The meeting started with Julie Fitzgerald, Deputy Leader of the Council, outlining the reasons why the Council had decided to make cuts now while considering its response to next year's crisis.

She emphasised that failure to make cuts now would have led to action by the District Auditor and affected the capital programme. When asked how many jobs she was prepared to see lost in order to stay within a legal budget, she gave no answer.

The meeting was then asked if it wanted to hear from Graham Shurety, one of the *Briefing* Councillors, who were resisting cuts. The meeting agreed and Graham made an effective speech highlighting the splits within the group and the anti-NALGO campaign active within the Labour right. He made it clear that those who were relying on a Labour Council to defend them were on to a loser.

The ensuing debate on the motion, proposed by Branch Secretary David Eggmore, and the amendment was extremely good. The choice was spelled out quite clerly: either admit defeat now and work with the Council, trying to limit the damage; or act as trade unionists and defend your colleagues, despite the odds against success.



PHOTO: Bryan James (Public Eye)

Given that most of those present would never have been to a union branch meeting it is extremely significant, I believe, that they chose to resist. It shows that when confronted with real cuts not everyone gives up in despair.

I personally was also very moved by the extraordinary hard work and commitment shown by a number of stewards who managed to make the meeting possible. It had originally been scheduled for the previous Thursday, but Friends Meeting House was unable to hold the 2,000+ who turned up.

Between Thursday and the following Tuesday a group of Branch officers, stewards, and other members organised the Sobell Sports Centre, the chairs, the PA, a creche, a signer for those with hearing disabilities, publicity for every workplace, a phone call to every steward and transport from all over Camden to take members to Islington.

It really was collective action for a common cause at its very best. The Branch has set up a Campaign Committee which meets weekly and will provide a focus for this new energy.

However the elation of Tuesday was swiftly dampened on Wednesday when Camden NUPE held their mass meeting.

The motion, proposed by the Stewards Committee and Branch Secretary John Suddaby, was very similar to the amendment rejected by NALGO the day before — though this motion went even further in being prepared to contemplate compulsory redundancies on condition there was full consultation with the unions, voluntary organisations, Labour Parties, etc.

A counter motion, proposed by the SWP, was defeated by 690 to 190.

Again Graham Shurety made a strong speech against the Stewards' motion. The quality of debate was even higher than at the NALGO meeting, as rank and file trade unionists appealed for the union not to surrender its independence.

A significant contribution was also made by a Home Help steward, who had originally supported the co-operaton line until local management told her to double her workload and cut the service to clients as part of the Council's "savings" policy. Faced with cuts she reacted like a trade unionist, and there may be many more who do likewise over the summer months.

The Camden unions will now have to consider how these Branch decisions will affect our long-standing joint union organisations. Councillors are already hoping to exploit this split for their own purposes; and there are those within both branches who may campaign for reversals in their union's policy over the coming weeks.

The Left will obviously be encouraging all those who wish to fight cuts to work together, formally or informally, within the unions, the Party and the voluntary organisations (who are also outraged at the Council's attempts — foiled so far — to cut their budgets).

There is now a strong foundation in Camden for resisting cuts, through it will need hard work to consolidate and extend that base.

Camden NALGO's first thought was to consider hosting a cross-London conference in mid-September to mobilise all those in the unions, Parties and Councils who see cuts like those in Camden on the horizon and wish to organise against the increasingly nauseating sight of Labour Councillors defending their implementation of Tory policies.

The NALGO vote in Camden should offer hope to all those looking for a fightback.

Camden *Briefing* is holding a meeting on the crisis at 7.30pm on July 29th at Teatro Technis, Crowndale Road, London NW1.

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LABOUR BRIEFING

Shadow Cabinet elections: NEW MEN WITH OLD IDEAS



Jo Richardson: a welcome addition to the Shadow Cabinet

The Shadow Cabinet election results confirm the view that there is now after the General Election a significantly larger left minority within the PLP centred in the Campaign Group, but that the dominant political force within the Parliamentary Party remains the alliance of soft-left and hard-right.

By Reg Race
Tottenham CLP

This bloc of around 180 MPs is united around one principle: the need to support the leadership and the perceived necessity of "adjusting" the Party's electoral appeal by changes in policy and posture in order to win the next election.

They are also very determined to exclude the real left from any significant influence in the Party.

The specific election results are of little concern. Out go some leading candidates for the title of yesterday's men (Peter Shore) and others who some believed had difficulty in producing joined up writing (Barry Jones). But the newcomers will give Kinnock no trouble: most of them are career politicians with few untradeable principles just like the sitting tenants.

There is one important exception to this generalisation, however. The election of Jo Richardson to the Shadow Cabinet is a long overdue triumph for women and the cause of women's rights, which Jo has championed. She has real principles and will give some of those men a hard time.

This success could not have happened to a nicer person.

The true meaning of the election is that we are light years away from the kind of PLP that would seriously wish to change society in favour of the working class.

The soft left/Kinnockite majority in the Shadow Cabinet is now utterly indistinguishable in broad philosophy from the hard right elements in the Party.

They do not believe that capitalism can be successfully challenged; they are sceptical of Labour's ability to win a majority of any kind; they believe that collectivism is an outdated concept, with some exceptions such as the National Health Service; they believe in a definition of socialism which stresses individualism and freedom, rather than structural economic changes leading to real freedoms being established.

These are, of necessity, generalisations; but they are nonetheless correct. In a very real sense the present Shadow Cabinet majority is sub-Thatcherite, and revisionist in terms of Labour's policy, programme and practice without Gaitskell's flair for head-on confrontation over shibboleths rather than substance.

However, these people do reflect the 1987 Labour Party. They do see society as being essentially consensual, and they see the Labour Party as a truly national party which in government performs an umpiring role between different interests of roughly equal merit. They do not believe that the Party *can* influence the attitudes of the working class — rather the reverse: that the changing attitudes of the class should prescriptively determine Labour policy.

For them, the working class has been expunged as a force for change in society. And if they ever get into government, the limit of that government's reformism will be largely self-imposed.

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!