LABOUR
BRIEFING
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DEFEND UNILATERALISM!

STOP THIS SELL-OUT!



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

JOAN RUDDOCK stands waiting to confuse and compromise the unilateralist vote at Labour Party Conference

With the threat of nuclear annihilation constantly present, Labour Party policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament is vital to us all.

Yet far from strengthening last year's policy gains, this Conference saw a dangerous series of manoeuvres in preparation for ditching unilateralism. It is vital that all activists understand what happened in Brighton — and what we must do in the coming months.

JOY HURCOMBE, Chair of Labour CND (writing in a personal capacity) explains the issues.

The Labour Party policy for unilateral nuclear disarmament has been seriously weakened by events at the Labour Party Conference.

Delegates may have thought that the vote for Composite 34, the unilateralist resolution, gave a majority vote for existing Party policy. The resolution even spelt out a timescale for removal of all nuclear weapons and bases: "within the lifetime of the next Labour Government."

Unfortunately, delegates did not realise how quickly this commitment was to be set aside. Composite 30, also passed by Conference, looked harmless enough, with its opening line reaffirming Labour's non-nuclear defence policy. But in fact, it contained phrases which have already been used to ditch unilateral nuclear disamament.

The NEC is now instructed to establish a working party to review the timetable and negotiating strategy through which the next Labour government will advance our non-nuclear policy within NATO.

This, together with the policy review, also agreed at conference, gives the leadership a free hand to overturn conference's clear intention of reaffirming policy. Instead of a clear statement that our Party will remove all nuclear weapons and bases from British soil and British waters, we will end up with a multilateral policy not very dissimilar to Thatcher's.

It has been clear for some time that the leadership have been considering major shifts in policy. An overwhelming vote for unilateral nuclear disarmament by Conference has always tended to be a problem in what it leaves out, in what it takes for granted, rather than a help to elaborate or stick by the policy.

Composite 30 — floated by Kinnock's office and given credibility by TASS support and by the TGWU, led by Ron Todd — was used to destroy the policy which those unions and CLPs have fought for years to retain.

To clinch a highly managed debate, Joan Ruddock delivered a carefully worded spech which signalled that the CND lobby would not stand in the way of a policy review and that review would, of course, involve the restatement of unilateralism in light of international events.

Trident, we are now told, is not to be opposed. Of course the Labour leadership would never use Trident, but, since in the 1990s Trident will be a fact of life, there is nothing wrong with using Trident politically and demanding that the Soviets match our unilateral action. What we would do with Trident is left unclear, all that is said is that it would not be on station.

Clearly her contribution was approved of by the leadership and was intended to confuse and compromise the unilateralist vote, "to turn it on its head" (*Observer*, Oct. 4th).

Ken Livingstone was right to warn conference that there are radical moves to shift conference away from agreed policy. Verbal attacks on him by Healy and the NEC henchman Tony Clarke proved that he had blown the flimsy cover of the leadership plot. Despite the warning, delegates were unable to stop unilateralism from being hi-jacked before their very eyes!

Instead of a clear campaign to argue for abandoning all nuclear weapons and bases, we look set for another watering down which the voters will reject because it will be as unconvincing as the last election campaign.

Last time, we tried to out-Thatcher Thatcher, with statements that we would buy lots more conventional weapons to make up for the loss of nuclear defence — really convincing stuff to the voters who wanted nuclear weapons to match the Soviet's nuclear force. The election defeat proved that if we accept the Tory agenda, then voters will opt for Tory nuclear policy.

Now, we could use international events to support our unilateral policy. We could argue that the super-powers are talking because we put nuclear disarmament high on the agenda, because of pressure to end the nuclear arms race from political parties like ours. We could argue that if the talks succeed, they prove that our policies are right, if they fail, we continue to play our part to act to break the deadlock. The principles remain, unilateral action can be justified whatever the international scene.

Scargill put it well in the debate. The negotiations are "because of" not "in spite of" unilateral nuclear disarmament policies.

In the next few weeks, the Labour leadership will rush through a policy to ditch unilateralism. We know that multilateral nuclear disarmament is supported by people who really believe in nuclear weapons. Our leaders want to take us down that road. They think that it will deliver the next election to us. It won't. The voters have one Tory Party, they don't need another.

The issue is clear. The Left must fight now for no going back on Party policy. All CLPs and Trade union branches should flood the Labour Party HQ with demands for the adoption of Composite 34. Labour CND urges all members to oppose all moves to ditch our policy. We cannot be so easily tricked out of this commitment, the most important one the Labour Party has ever made.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign round-up

The Alton Bill

The fight is on!

On October 27th David Alton's private members Bill will be given its first reading in the House of Commons.

The main aim of this Bill is to lower the time limit for abortion from 28 weeks of pregnancy to 18 weeks.

As Alton came third in the private members ballot, it looks likely that this Bill will have a good chance of becoming law.

Although Alton's proposals are backed — predictably — by Life, SPUC and Margaret Thatcher, reducing the time limit by such a large margin will mean that his Bill will not have an easy ride inside or outside Parliament.

No woman [illegible] to have a late abortion. Those who do have often been forced into it because of reasons beyond their control.

About 6,000 terminations a year are carried out after 18 weeks, often on the most desperate women — older women who mistook pregnancy for the menopause, or younger women who dared not tell anyone.

About 15% of abortions carried out after 20 weeks are done because of foetal abnormalities. Results of tests for some of the more disabling diseases are just not known until after 18 weeks. Women would be forced to carry these foetuses to term — knowing, with some diseases, that their children will die soon after birth.

Many of the later abortions are carried out due to the problems affecting the

By Ann Potter
Streatham CLP

health service or obstruction by doctors earlier in the pregnancies (see p.11 for a run-down on attitudes to pregnant women). If women had easy access to abortion facilities the need for later abortions would be eased considerably.

Many anti-abortionists will be pressuring Alton to make a tactical retreat, realising that such a massive reduction in time limits will make it difficult for his Bill to go through Parliament.

They may well argue for what they consider a more "realistic" time limit to ease the passage of the Bill.

But Alton has already made it clear that he wants to see a big drop in the overall number of abortions. Regardless of the final time limit, any reduction would have a disastrous effect on those women who require later abortions.

A campaign has been set up to oppose the Bill. Already a lobby of Parliament and press conference have been organised to coincide with the first reading of the Bill, 20 years after the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act. A mass demonstration on the scale of the anti-Corrie Bill is being planned to oppose the second reading. This campaign and other aspects of the fight for abortion rights will be discussed at the National Abortion Campaign on October 31st and November 1st — for details, ring 01 405 4801. "Fight Alton's Bill" meets Mondays at 6.30pm at Camden Town Hall in London.



PHOTO: Stefano Caglioni (Report)

1985 NAC demo against the Powell Bill.

Chapeltown

No help from Hattersley

Superintendant Ellis was recently appointed community affairs officer for the Chapeltown district in Leeds, which contains a large Asian and Afro-Caribbean population.

As in many other inner city areas, relations bet-

By Cllr Garth Frankland
Leeds

ween police and youth have collapsed in recent years, and since 1981 the Afro-Caribbean youth have been organising against police oppression.

When Supt. Ellis visited his house, Mr Sharma, leader of the United Asian Organisation taped their conversation (with police knowledge).

On the tape, Ellis says that the area's 15,000 West Indians were a problem, and complained that the courts had let off Afro-Caribbean youth.

Ellis's defence is that the tapes have been tampered with and that the remarks are out of context.

However, at a public meeting, in front of a large audience including the Deputy Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, Ellis admitted making the remarks concerning West Indians and court cases.

Councillor Garth Frankland then wrote to the Chief Whip of the Labour Police Group, Neil Taggart, asking for action.

Councillor Flannigan, Chair of the Community Division, attended the Police Forum and discussed the situation with the angry youth. Meanwhile, Ellis had a vanload of police parked round the back of the meeting place.

The Chair of the Police Committee has called a public meeting to discuss further action. Local youth have passed resolutions calling upon the community to boycott all meetings that Ellis attended.

The Community Relations Council has supported this call, as has Leeds North East Labour Party.

Local people are demanding that Ellis goes now. Most feel he should leave the police force, and above all that he should have nothing more to do with Chapeltown.

In the middle of this crisis, Roy Hattersley visited Chapeltown police station — at the invitation of the Chief Constable. The local Labour Party and the local community had no notice of the visit.

The local press carried a story quoting Hattersley attacking the "anti-police attitude" of a minority of the Labour Party. He said nothing about Ellis.

Local Labour Party activists have added a second demand to the "Ellis must resign" campaign — that own-goal, vote-loser Hattersley must also go.

BP Shares Offer

Prepare to unscramble the broiler chickens!

This month huge, unearned profits are going to be made by all sorts of very undeserving persons.

I refer, of course, to the sale of the 31.6% government holding in BP, which is expected to raise some £7.5 billion to enable Mrs Thatcher to make further tax cuts for the rich and powerful.

So attractive is the offer that a worldwide scramble to buy the shares has developed, with big American and Japanese institutional investors showing particular interest.

This is not surprising. Well before the price of the shares was announced it seemed already certain that investors could expect an instant 30% profit if they sold straight away. Those who hang on can look forward to a yield of over 10%: extremely high, even by today's extravagant standards.

Rigged

Obviously the sale is being rigged. The shares will be sold below their true market value to ensure a successful issue. But BP is, by capitalist standards, a successful company — or rather group. Today it consist of 10 different companies, each with its own director and management, operating all over the world. Its profit forecast for this financial year is £1.45 billion.

Much of its success has been due to the public money it has received from government contracts and direct government grants and investment.

But despite this public involvement, the company has

By Paula Watson
Westminster South CLP

always been "independently" managed (i.e. in the interests of shareholders) and this management has taken some interesting decisions.

Reaction

In reaction to the oil crisis and subsequent fall in oil prices, BP diversified into a number of different fields, including chemicals, plastics, animal feed, food products and other minerals — particularly gold and coal.

BP has one of the largest private sector coal businesses in the world, with sales totalling 28m tons a year and one of its areas of operation is South Africa. The company's profits have been swelled by the production and sale of coal, which helped to defeat the British miners' strike and now comes complete with the blood of the South African miners killed in the recent confrontation there (see p. 14 for a report of the international boycott campaign).

BP has also spent a great deal of money buying up foreign companies.

- In 1978 it bought the plastics and chemicals interests in Europe of Union Carbide.
- In 1986 BP Nutrition purchased Purina Mills in the USA, making it one of the world's largest millers of animal feed.
- In 1987 it acquired complete control of the Standard Oil Company in the US for £4.5 billion, having already bought up 55% of the shares by 1984.

Sense

All this makes excellent sense in capitalist terms, where the whole object is to maximise profit; but in every other way it is crazy. This money was spent acquiring existing companies; nothng new was being created — not a single job, not a solitary factory.

Furthermore, this money was spent in the US, hardly a poverty stricken part of the world crying out for foreign investment. So, while British industry was starved of new capital, BP has poured billions into the US to buy already functioning companies.

In this, of course, it is part of a growing trend. British capital has been gushing across the Atlantic in recent years, attracted by the US government's huge budget deficit, itself the product of massive public spending on the arms industry.

Socialist

What is the socialist answer to all this? Public ownership under democratic workers control, obviously, but how would this work out in practice? Those 10 companies, involved in everything from oil to broiler chickens will take some unscrambling.

What is actually in Britain can be taken into common ownership, enterprises in the sympathetic parts of the world can be given or sold back at bargain basement prices.

But what about Purina Mills and Standard Oil? Assuming that a socialist Britain is faced with a capitalist US, we could sell these companies back at "market", i.e. extremely high, prices, using the billions so raised (and Standard Oil alone is "worth" about £10 billion) to rebuild Britain's economy (without increasing taxes on the working class) and help struggling comrades in other parts of the world.

Protestors tell racist cop: Resign now!

A meeting of the Chapeltown and Harehills police forum in Leeds on September 9th was disrupted by members of the West Indian community enraged by racist remarks made by Superintendent Ellis

By Dave Walker
Leeds N.E. CLP

About fifty protestors turned up at the meeting with banners, demanding that Ellis "get out of Chapeltown", "Resign your job", and "Out, Out, Out — Now!"

The meeting, attended by local Councillors, Chief Supt. Stonley (Ellis's boss), Ellis himself, and Chief Inspector Cowman, looked at first as if it wouldn't take place at all.

At 7.30, the time the meeting should have started, the protestors went in to the meeting shouting "Resign Ellis". But Ellis, Stonley and Cowman didn't turn up till 7.45, when they were greeted with more angry shouts of "Ellis Out Now", and "Out of Chapeltown".

One of the protestors presented Supt. Elis with a banner reading "Ellis out of Chapeltown". Other banners were put in front of him and around the room.

The Chair of the meeting was local Black Councillor Cedric Clarke, who needed five minutes to call the meeting to order. He announced that Garth Frankland, our local councillor, had sent a letter to Cllr Taggart, who sits on the police Authority at Wakefield, about the comments made by Ellis. Frankland wanted to know what action would be taken by the police Authority against Ellis.

The Chair then asked Cllr Flannigan to tell the protestors how they should deal with their complaint against Ellis.

The protestors were in no mood to receive advice and told Flannigan to shut up and sit down.

The Chair then said that there were two options open to the protestors. They could stay and keep the meeting open, or they could have the meeting closed. The protestors said they didn't want Ellis at the meeting and he and his boys should *go now*.

The Chair then announced that as much as he regretted it, the meeting would have to close and a date fixed for another one.

Editorial

BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Take a lesson from Tebbit!

Norman Tebbit got it right.

His keynote speech to the Tory faithful in Blackpool spelled out the recipe which has transformed Thatcherism into the dominant force of mainstream politics in Britain.

And by contrast he also put his finger on the reasons why Labour's leaders have so dismally failed to combat the all-round Tory offensive.

Thatcherism has from the outset seen itself occupying a *vanguard* role, leading the employers, the possessors and the well-to-do from the front. Having decided their next step forward, the Tories have set out single-mindedly to achieve it, by bludgeoning, blackmailing and bribing sufficient people to impose their will.

As Tebbit pointed out, the success of Thatcherism has so far been to capture the middle ground — not by itself adapting or toning down its own politics, but by dragging the "centre" towards the right.

As he jeeringly pointed out, this approach has completely transformed the British political landscape:

"Even our opponents are being dragged behind (Thatcher's) chariot, screaming and shouting, into the new Britain."

Contrast this bold, brutal, class conscious approach with the cringing, cowardly display by Neil Kinnock's yuppie roadshow in Brighton.

If Tebbit epitomises Thatcherism, red in tooth and claw, surely the wretched Bryan Gould, with his renunciation of Clause IV and eagerness to base Labour's policies on the most backward prejudice of "public opinion", sums up Kinnockism — yellow through and through.

While Thatcher's baying pack of Blackpool Tories howled their support for more and more traumatic, radical change, Kinnock's timid herd of bureaucrats proved themselves the real conservatives.

Dazzled like rabbits by the bright lights of the Thatcher phenomenon, their every "new" idea begins and ends with accepting the current Thatcherite status quo.

pular of public services.

● Labour leaders will be even more tongue-tied in defending Social Security from John Moore's threatened "review" — especially since Shadow Chancellor John Smith has already announced his conversion to Thatcher's "low-tax" philosophy.

So the rot goes on. At root, the problem is a basic political one. Labour's leadership, and their backers in the union bureaucracy, themselves comfortably placed in their well-paid niche in the system, have always *rejected* a coherent *socialist* answer to the crisis of capitalism.

Instead they have searched for reforms and legislative policies which could marginally improve things for workers — but always *within the framework of capitalism.*

Their problem is that British capitalism has since the mid 1970s been locked in a particularly severe economic crisis; so policies which hinge on reforming it have also been thrown into crisis.

The socialist overthrow of capitalism is one response: Thatcher offers the other consistent answer. She embraces and epitomises the interests of the capitalist class in its drive to increase profits by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class — and to cut taxes on those profits by slashing back state spending. Though some old-style "wet" elements of the Tory Party and CBI flinched at this at first, they have now been crushed or convinced: the recipe has been seen to work.

But it only worked because Labour and the trade union leaders have been so weak. While the Tory leadership thrived on class confrontation, the labour bureaucracy has flown into a panic whenever workers have fought back against Thatcher.

The miners and printworkers were only the most obvious of a long list of workers cruelly isolated and betrayed by a TUC and Labour leadership that simply longs for the return of the "good old days" of class collaboration, while refusing to challenge Thatcher's offensive.

Thatcherism has all but wiped out old-style collaborationist deals with employers and government; it has also rendered irrelevant the "normal" parliamentary processes and begun to demolish the structures of local government. Flushed out of their natural habitat, most Labour MPs, councillors and union bureaucrats have been unable to survive the harsh conditions, and have now completely lost their bearings.

Worse: their latest "solutions" serve only to cut Labour and the unions still further adrift from the most oppressed layers of the working class, which should be their bedrock support.

For over ten million low-paid; for the unemployed, impoverished and homeless working class men and women who have paid for Thatcherism, the appeal of a genuine socialist solution — centred on the nationalisation of the banks and the major monopolies, and the planning of an expanded economy for social need rather than private profit — is still a potentially powerful rallying call.

Holy Grail

In place of the Gould/Kinnock search for the Holy Grail of a programme that offends nobody and that all will vote for, socialism is both more practical and more popular.

Military strategists argue that the best means of defence is often to attack: Labour leaders have since 1979 shown that a certain way to lose ground *without even a fight* is to retreat even faster than the enemy advances.

Arthur Scargill — one of the few trade union leaders to defy this general line of capitulation and collapse — has repeatedly bemoaned the lack in the labour movement of a leadership "as dedicated to our class as Thatcher is to hers."

The contrast between the Brighton and Blackpool events confirms how right he is.

Tory Party Conference

A mission for counter-revolution

It was not just the wallets fattened by tax cuts and Telecom shares that gave added sparkle to the eyes of Tory zealots in Blackpool.

It was the mouthwatering prospect of even richer pickings to come.

By John Lister

Of course the stage managers as always kept things bowling along according to plan: there is never any real debate at these Tory jamborees, which have no policy-making role.

Privatisation

But it was the sheer pace of their leadership's commitment to drive forward the juggernaut of privatisation and wind down the chintz curtain of Victorian morality that got the conference to its feet time and again, culminating in Thatcher's inevitable 11 minute ovation.

Thatcher herself firmly rejected any pause or consolidation: that would not make anyone's blood run any faster, she sneered. The Tory crusade would continue to widen its scope in the mission to wipe socialism off the British map.

To judge from the Brighton Conference, they have not done badly so far; the Labour Party itself, having distanced itself from Clause IV, is now socialist only by historical habit and association rather than in its political programme.

However, Tory representatives were offered even more juicy titbits during the week as Thatcher openened up a new larder of red meat to satisfy the lust for profits.

There will be more privatised share issues, to allow Keith Best to win back the money he lost on his British Telecom conviction. There will be new openings for profiteers in the inner cities, new chances for landlords to make a faster buck, and new frontiers of profit-seeking in the National Health Service. To cap it all, Nigel Lawson promised still more tax cuts.

But this was not a particularly greedy conference: and the main diet served up was if anything more ideological than material.

Tories cheered defence of private medicine; roared approval at new attacks on Social Security; applauded the escalating vendetta against local government and in particular against those inner city populations that had the nerve to vote Labour in June.

Estates

It is ideology as much as economics which calls for the break-up of the Labour-dominated Council estates — a move to be backed up by Norman Tebbit's new plan for a Rapid Deployment political hit-squad to roam the inner cities.

Education

It is no accident that the theme of education ran through so many of the debates and was central to Thather's speech.

Not content with reshaping the political landscape, the Tories want to indoctrinate youth in their values. The Party's commitment to wipe out any element of enlightenment or liberalism through the new national curriculum is matched only to its determination to restore elitist systems of selection and lay the basis for more fee-paying schools.

The one debate where the show of enthusiasm was leess than convincing was on the transparently unpopular Poll Tax. The Conference call on Nicholas Ridley to get the business over with as quickly as possible reflects a recognition that once legislated it will become a new fait accompli for Labour to challenge. They want any shouting to be largely over before the next election.

Pathetic

The pathetic hovering figure of Michael Heseltine, the total eclipse of Ted Heath, the jibes against former blue-eyed-boy-turned-softie John Biffen and the enrolment of Peter Walker to the hard-line camp confirmed Thatcher's most remarkable revolution of all.

The Conservative Party has turned its back on conservatism and nailed its colours firmly to the mast of "counter-revolution" raised by Thatcher in the mid 1970s.



PHOTO: John Harris

Thoughts of the great: "I'm just an ordinary housewife: I like marmite toast, I just don't have to live on it every day."

A labour movement that ignores this, and clings on to the pathetic parliamentary and trade union tactics of the past will continue to fail in its task of defending the oppressed and exploited millions.

Trade Union Briefing

ORGANISE FOR SOLIDARITY NOW!

Since the defeat of the 1984/85 Miners' Strike, workers have not simply retreated in the face of the enormous odds stacked against them.

There have been strikes and occupations, some of them long and bitter.

All too often though these strikes have been sold out by the trade union bureaucracy abetted by the leadership of the Labour Party.

The magnificent battle of the Silentnight strikers showed that workers were not in any way defeated by the Tory assaults.

Faced with unacceptable demands by their management, they walked out, mounted 24 hour pickets, went up and down the country to talk about their struggle and raised thousands of pounds to keep the strike going.

Many of the Silentnight workers were women who had never been involved in any kind of action before. Their strength was like a beacon to the labour movement.

Last December, just a few days before Christmas, the leadership fo the union involved, FTAT, withdrew support for the Silentnight strike. During the long struggle links had been made with the printworkers, with the Hanger dispute (also FTAT, also to be sold out), with Women Against Pit Closures, etc. The Silentnight workers appealed for support to other workers when the union sold them out.

Arising from their experiences and in conjunction with some of the Support Groups which had been set up during the Miners' Strike and the print strike, the Silentnight workers called for a discussion with those people prepared to fight — both the Tories and also the bureaucracy — to look at the defeats and sell-outs of the past few years and to analyse and develop strategies which we can take into our unions to try to stop them happening.

An open meeting was called in Leeds in May which was widely publicised and well attended. The decision of the Leeds meeting was to call a Solidarity Conference which would bring workers from as many different disputes together as possible, along with Support Groups, Black workers and Black Community Groups and other organisations prepared to fight and support those fighting.

By Andrea Campbell Tower Hamlets Workers Support Group

A Steering Committee was set up to plan the Conference and several open meetings have been held to discuss the format and content of the Solidarity Conference.

The Conference has now been called for the weekend of November 7th and 8th in Leeds. It will not be a "rally" with major speeches. It will be a weekend of workshops led by people who have been actively involved in industrial action and/or community fightbacks, the unemployed movement, etc.

There will be plenty of time for discussion and report backs and a major discussion is scheduled for Sunday on the future structure and future work which the Solidarity Conference should.be involved in.

Trade Union Briefing, has given its support to this Conference since the call from Silentnight for a meeting of activists. We do not see it as a substitute for the trade unions, their structures, or their role. We do see it as an important focus for discussing the role of the unions, and especially the bureaucracy in collaborating time and time against with the employers against the interests of their members and against any effective action against the employers' offensive.

Increasingly "bosses" trade unionism is being introduced into British manufacturing, with Hammond of the EETPU and Jordan of the AEU rushing to sign no-strike one-union agreements and undermine national agreements. In the public sector the large unions have failed to respond to the attacks on wages and conditions and jobs posed by cuts and privatisation.

Up and down the country, however, are workers who do respond, often in isolation and in desperation. The Solidarity Conference is a chance to try to unite these forces to share the common experiences and to develop a network of support which will be able to publicise disputes as they develop and give whatever support to those disputes which we can.

Trade Union Solidarity Conference
Leeds Trades Council Club
Saville Mount, Leeds
November 7th, 11-6
November 8th, 9.30-4.30
£3 (waged), £2 (unwaged; creche available
Credentials and correspondence to: Janet Seymour, 3 Hill Street, Barnoldswick, Coln, Lancs. (0282 812864)

With the third term of a Tory government and more anti-trade union legislation scheduled to become law — not to mention recent open threats to slash jobs and conditions further in the public and private sectors — we have no time to waste. Support the Solidarity Conference — and help build the fightback!

Trades Unions Against the MSC!

Trade unions generally have been slow to respond to the activities of the Manpower Services Commission.

Most unions have endorsed schemes, sometimes reluctantly, in the hope that their involvement will lead to improvements.

Others have never accepted MSC schemes, and have strong policies of opposition, at national or more often at local levels. The trouble is that these unions have never advanced their policies to other branches or at the TUC.

But the time for sitting on fences and resting on laurels is now over! The schemes have taken a sharp turn for the worse.

No one should now be in any doubt as to the true motives behind the MSC. The intoduction of the Job Training Scheme — working for the dole — and the proposed restructuring of the Community Programme to make it a benefit-based scheme are simply the realisation of long term Tory plans.

The MSC is not intended to solve the problem of unemployment. It has become, and perhaps has always been, a cynical attack on the unemployed, reflecting the government's policies for a low wage economy and non-unionised workforce.

MSC schemes have been the vehicle for a transfer of finance away from the public sector into the voluntary and charitable sectors. Community Programme projects have often been the only growth areas in inner city boroughs decimated by rate-capping.

This is undoubtedly part of the "softening up" preparations for privatisation, where small (and not so small) MSC funded organisations are waiting in the wings to take over aspects of public sector provision, particularly child care and care of the elderly. Grants from the DoE for inner city "refurbishment" can be conditional on use of MSC labour.

The £35 million Saatchi and Saatchi propaganda campaigns have defined unemployment not as a political issue, but as a personal problem for the individual — who must try harder to find jobs that don't exist.

By Maggie Arkwright Secretary, Trades Unions Against the MSC

Over 700,000 workers are now in MSC limbo of being neither employed nor unemployed, only to discover that the "bridge back to work" more often than not leads straight back to the dole.

Trades Unions Against the MSC is an organisation that aims to co-ordinate a serious challenge to the MSC through the TUC. We plan to have motions on national trade unions conference agendas and to then force a debate and a policy of outright opposition at the TUC.

This will need active support, with individual trade unionists ensuring that motions are adopted at branch meetings and submitted for national conferences.

Our demands are for full trade union rights for unemployed workers and for a programme of job creation and training linked directly to permanent jobs. We stand for breaking all trade union links with the MSC.

There is no doubt that the MSC is moving towards exclusion of trade unions. But there is a need for a policy of opposition whether the "tripartite agreement" of unions, employers, and government is retained or not.

Any policy must be implemented at branch level an arena usually far removed from MSC proceedings.

Trade Unions Against the MSC is calling a conference for trade unionists on Saturday November 7th.

This conference is essential if we are to intervene decisively in the drift towards "workfare" and government plans to organise the unemployed outside the trade union movement.

Demonstrations, lobbies and campaigns against individual schemes are certainly to be supported, but the target is the government controlled MSC itself, which must be attacked directly by joint unions at national level.

This crucial issue will only be debated seriously at next year's TUC if we organise now.

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Trades Unions Against the MSC
Conference
November 7th
Dr Johnson House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4
Registration (£5) from
M. Arkwright, 30 Pembroke Road, London E17
(01 521 4130)

Merger heralds big job losses

On Thursday, October 1st, GEC and Plessey announced to the world their intention to merge their telecoms operations. On the Friday morning, they told their employees.

GEC and Plessey workers can only speculate about where the axe will land. Hard decisions have been threatened before Christmas, with the new joint Company launched in January 1988.

So what are the motives of these two companies' sudden action?

Short term, it is a cost-cutting exercise. Both make the same products (System X is just one, but the most important). Both have failed to win any significant exports. Orders from BT alone are not enough to provide the vast amounts of capital required for investment in future technologies.

The merger is designed to cut out duplication — in production, administration, and to a lesser extent engineering. The products will then be cheaper; hopefully sell more, and generate the desired profits to compete effectively against multinational giants such as AT&T, Northern Telecom and Alcatel.

Long-term, this could work to the advantage of GEC and Plessey bosses. If it doesn't, then the failing Company will be handily separated from its parents — easier to scrap or sell off.

The immediate impact will almost certainly be massive closures and redundancies.

Key to the situation is how the workers respond. Judging from past experience, the official trade union channels will be slow and hesitating.

At a rank and file level a meeting of the Telecoms Union Forum takes place in Coventry on Saturday, 17th October. This provides an excellent opportunity to start planning the fightback.

By a GEC worker

NUM round-up

British Coal have issued a new share deal in CISWO (the Coal Indsustry Social Welfare Organisation) which automatically gives BC an overall voting majority.

They have issued 20 new shares, 10 to themselves, 5 to the NUM, 1 to BACM, 1 to NACODS, 1 to APEX, and the last two to the UDM.

Another important concession conceded by the NUM NEC meeting on September 6th was on the mineworkers pension fund. The Executive agreed to sit with the UDM on both these important committees:

"despite opposition by Scargill. He refused to be nominated for a seat on either of the committees. However, Mr Peter Heathfield, NUM general secretary, and Mr Sammy Thompson, the union's vice president, will sit on the social welfare committee." (*FT*, 7.9.87)

These ill gotten gains of the UDM will be put to good use in the coming period when they will be campaigning for recognition by the TUC and affiliation to the Labour Party.

Till now the NUM has successfully argued against recognition but it will become increasingly more difficult if not hypocritical of them if they are sitting round the table with the UDM.

It would be ironical if the NUM are to be the first union to give recognition to this "scab organisation". The obvious answer, and probably one already used by Scargill, would be to take up the share option but to refuse to sit with the scabs. Anyway, if BC have a built in majority, what's the point in sitting in at all — even if the UDM had never been spawned?

□□□□□□□□□□□□□

As reported in the *Yorkshire Post* (8.9.87), the Sherwood Labour Party's investigation team has made a call for the expulsion of Mr David Prendergast, a Party member for 15 years.

For those not familiar with Prendergast, he is also one of the "super scab" leaders of the UDM based in Notts. He is the financial secretary of the UDM's Nottinghamshire section.

Two complaints have been made against Prendergast. One is that he failed to dissociate himself from his union's decision to recommend to its members not to vote Labour in the last election. Secondly, when Kinnock said "there should be only one mining union in Britain," Mr Predergast is reported as saying "He's not fit to be leader of this country or a political party."

By W. Head Yorks rank and file miner

On a lighter note, a joke heard at the well-supported NUM Notts Annual Gala in Mansfield (5.9.87) is:

"The pit cat has three kittens and an NUM member names the kittens Lynk, Prendergast and Greatrex. His astonished friends, knowing his trade union loyalty, ask him why he had done such a cruel and insensitive deed.

"He answered quite bluntly, 'because I'm going to drown the bastards.'"

Whilst the joke might be in bad taste, it is only repeated here to emphasise the spirit and continued combativity of the rank and file Notts NUM membership.

Unfortunately some of the remaining leadership in Notts NUM aren't as confident as their own members and are whining for dispensation and for Notts to be a special place and to be excluded from the National overtime ban.

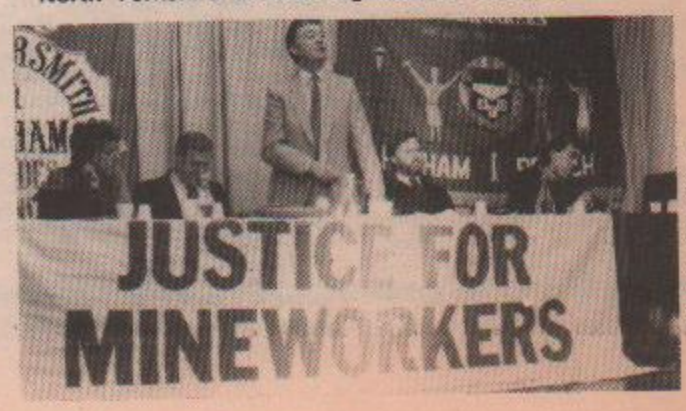
If the Notts rank and file learnt one thing during and in the relative isolation since the strike of '84-85, it is the true value of *solidarity* — the need to stand shoulder to shoulder, win or lose, with the rest of the NUM membership.

Those lads and lasses in Notts had it a lot harder than most and in a lot of cases are still being victimised for standing fast by the Union. These comrades know the full worth of community spirit and mutual aid. They are ready to support the union once again and I believe the majority will not be found wanting.

If some of the faint-hearted turn to the UDM for succour — then good riddance.

Speak

Do you want to go back to the bad old days
Open the doors to the bad old ways
This is the first stage of taking us back
To poor conditions, low wages, the threat of the sack
If we don't wake up soon it will be too late
We're giving them the position from which to dictate
Cause if we say yes to this latest demand
There soon will be no issue on which we can stand
The argument is others will not respect non intervention
Some men have forgotten the meaning of a Union
Their policy is divide them and they will fall
But if we unite together they can't beat us all
Don't let them do it, don't let them through
Don't put the clock back, the choice is up to you
When the time comes use your vote to speak
Say No to the injustice of the Six Day Week.
Barbara Smith
North Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures



PHOTO, Pete Cooper

The AIDS crisis the government ignores

In May this year, government Ministers pledged that the life-prolonging anti-AIDS drug, AZT, would be available to everyone who needs it.

Yet today, five months later, there are still dozens of people with severe AIDS-Related Conditions (ARCs) who cannot get AZT because hospitals haven't got the money to buy it.

Professor Michael Adler, of the Middlesex Hospital, confirms the shortfall in the AIDS drug budget:

"We will only be able to treat 60 patients. A further 150 patients with ARC who would benefit from AZT wil not get the drug. We need another £800,000. Without more money, we will have to ration the drug by the end of the year."

At St Stephen's Hospital, Dr Charles Farthing faces similar problems:

"We have 110 patients with AIDS, but the government hasn't given us enough money to buy AZT for all of them. Until the Riverside Health Authority recently stepped in with emergency funding, 27 AIDS patients were not getting the drug because of a shortage of money. Ideally, we would like to give AZT to an additional 197 patients with AIDS and ARC. However, until we know how much extra funding the government is planning to allocate us, we cannot give them the drug. We haven't got the money. In the meantime, we are rationing AZT amongst our patients."

The country's leading AIDS doctors point to the shortage of money for AZT as symptomatic of the government's failure to develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated strategy to deal with the AIDS epidemic.

"The government urgently needs a strategic, long term approach to combatting AIDS," according to Dr Tony Pinching of St Mary's Hospital.

"Its policy of year by year funding is unsatisfactory and no way to plan anything. The present level of funds for AIDS patient care is way below what we need."

Much the same view is shared by Prof. Adler:

"We are living hand to mouth and stumbling from one financial crisis to the next. The government has

By Peter Tatchell

no coherent response to AIDS. Instead of allocating funds on an ad hoc basis, Ministers need to draw up a five year plan and earmark the appropriate money for its implementation."

The consequences of the government's poor strategic planning and funding are evident at St Mary's. In the fiscal year 1987-88, the hospital received only half the finance it requested for AIDS testing and treatment and the expansion of facilities to meet increasing demand.

"As a result," says Dr Pinching, "plans for a new AIDS ward have been compromised and the development of a new out-patient clinic for people with AIDS has had to be shelved. In some cases, we haven't been able to purchase items of equipment we need. So we have had to make do with what we've got."

Prof. Adler suggests that inadequate government finance is pressuring doctors to "shroud-wave" in a bid for funds. He also claims:

"We sometimes get the impression that the government expects us to compete for scarce resources against doctors treating heart and kidney patients."

It's an allegation which rings true. In the current financial year, the government is providing only £8.5m in direct central funding to the blood transfusion service and the major hospitals which are bearing the brunt of the AIDS epidemic — even though the Health Minister has admitted that the total cost of blood donation screening, heat-treating Factor 8, and the testing and treatment of people with AIDS could be as much as £32 million in 1987-88.

This implies that the government *does* apparently expect health authorities to divert up to £23.5m from other specialities in the NHS to cope with AIDS over the next year.

This under-funding has also had an adverse effect on the recruitment of specialist AIDS doctors:

"As part of a general cost-cutting exercise, there is an official DHSS block on the creation of new permanent speciality training posts in the NHS," according to Dr Farthing.

"At St Stephen's, we therefore cannot employ more registrars and senior registrars in AIDS to meet the rising demand of our ever-growing patient caseload. Our AIDS team has only one junior doctor on the ward. Most other specialist medical teams — many of them less busy — have two or three. This is particularly absurd in view of the seriousness of the AIDS epidemic and the need to create new specialist teams of doctors to cope with it."

These financial and staffing problems at St Stephen's have prompted the AIDS team to get private drug companies to fund two of their doctors in exchange for a commitment to research the companies' products.

At St Mary's, when doctors recently wanted to create a new senior registrar in AIDS post, they were told that no new posts could be established because the staffing guidelines of the Department of Health specify that there are already enough.

However, Dr Pinching is adamant:

"The constraints on increases in medical staffing mean that we do not have enough staff to cope with the demand created by the government's AIDS education campaign and the needs of increasing numbers of people diagnosed with AIDS. Without more specialist AIDS doctors, it will be very hard for us to continue to deliver an optimal service to our patients."



PHOTO: John Cole.

Candlelit Vigil for AIDS, organised by the Terence Higgins Trust, Trafalgar Square, London, May 26th, 1986

The doctors also claim that AIDS research is being "hindered and delayed" by inadequate government finance. In the six years from 1981-87, total government funding for AIDS research was a derisory £2.5m. Though a further £14.5m was allocated in March this year, most of it cannot be touched till April 1988 and 1989.

Consequently, Dr Pinching reports that St Mary's is still:

"scraping around for research money. We've missed a number of research opportunities and been unable to fulfill some of our planned projects for lack of cash."

Dr Pinching also criticises the bias in government research funding towards AIDS cures and vaccines to the neglect of support for research into virology, immunology, drug monitoring trials and the investigation of behavioural and lifestyle factors which may influence a person's predisposition to AIDS.

One of Dr Pinching's co-workers at St Mary's, Dr Adrian Renton, has unearthed a possible connnection between the quantity and type of fats a person eats and their likelihood of succumbing to AIDS. Unable to get government funding for his work, he complains that both the government and the drug companies are reluctant to finance this type of lifestyles research:

"It's unattractive politically and economically," he says.

The two other AIDS researchers at St Mary's, Dr Keith Nye and Dr Lesley-Jane Eales, have been plagued by equipment shortages and job insecurity. Despite their internationally-acclaimed research which discovered a genetic link with AIDS, funding for Dr Nye's post ran out in June and it was only the intervention of the medical charity the Monument Trust which has enabled him to stay on till December.

Thereafter, the future of both their posts is uncertain. Unless someone offers the two doctors funding, both will end up unemployed.

In the meantime:

"It's a constant fight to get basic research equipment and materials," according to Dr Nye.

"In the past we've had to borrow and scavenge or make things ourselves. Until a charity recently stepped in, we had to do without an important piece of blood-testing equipment. That slowed down our research and made it very laborious."

An updated and expanded edition of Peter Tatchell's book *AIDS: a guide to survival* was published this month by GMP, £3.95.

American Football strike

Picket-line violence hits the headlines. Strikers are derided as greedy bullies.

Scabs are bussed in to riotous abuse — and hailed by the media as heroic individualists.

Militant union leaders are denounced by management, who claim they are "out of touch" with their members.

Sounds familiar? It's all happening in the USA — in the bitter strike waged by American football players against the owners, who control the National Football League (NFL).

The US media, hardly a friend of unionism at the best of times, have pilloried the players and their union representatives. Public opinion seems to be running against the strikers, who are characterised as overpaid egomaniacs, coldly indifferent to the needs of the fans who idolize them.

The club owners are given unrestricted airtime in which to bewail their betrayal by the players whom they have helped so much. The tabloids speculate relentlessly: which big star will next cross the picket lines?

The reality is that NFL owners are multi-millionaires who reap huge personal profits from the game. For generations, they have bought and sold players like chattel. True, players are highly-paid. But the averge NFL career lasts just 3.7 years, leaving players with a legacy of permanent body-damage and a sharply reduced life expectancy.

Jobs inside or outside the game are hard to come by for ex-players, the vast majority of whom are *not* household names.

The most publicised of the players' demands has been "free agency" — the right of individual players to sell their services to the highest bidder (at the moment the owners transfer contracts from club to club). In negotiation, the players have retreated on this demand and are now asking for free agency only for players with at least *twelve years* in the NFL.

Although this demand will affect only a handful of successful veterans — at small financial cost to management — it has been rejected by the owners, who see it as a threat in principle to their unaccountable, unrestricted power over the professional game.

Less publicised but perhaps more crucial to the strikers are their demands for better pensions and medical benefits. In a country with no national health service and astronomical medical costs, the level of these benefits can make the difference between penury and relative prosperity, or indeed between life and death.

Of the 1,600 NFL players, 95% have stayed on strike. The scabs have been mainly big stars who increasingly identify with the owners against their fellow players, the rookies and unsung team-players who are the backbone of the players' union.

In a country bursting with frustrated football players, finding scabs has been easy, though the quality of play they provide is debatable.

Viewers of Channel Four's regular coverage will know that black quarterbacks are virtually non-existent in the NFL. Given the predominance of black players in other positions, this might seem something of an anomaly.

By Mike Marqusee Haringey Labour Briefing

The explanation is simple: the quarterback is the "brains" of the team, the pivot around which the whole lumbering machinery works, and NFL owners and coaches clearly refuse to accept that such a position of leadership and responsibility can be filled by black people.

Exigencies of the strike, however, have forced them to recruit a few young blacks as scab quarterbacks, thereby maintaining the long American tradition of white owners serving racial division by using black workers as strike-breakers.

This time the trick won't work. Gene Upshaw, leader of the players' union and a former player himself, is currently the only black person on the AFL-CIO executive (equivalent of the TUC General Council).

He has accused the owners of racism, and claims that they find it difficult to negotiate on equal terms with a black man, whom they are more used to seeing in a subservient status.

Upshaw was hammered in the media for this "provocative" statement, but the attempt by the owners to characterise him as a gullible ex-player, goaded and misled by malevolent unnamed white advisors only proves his point.

Support from other unions has been strong. In Philadelphia, truck-driving members of the Teamsters Union circled the stadium with a massive picket line. In Detroit, car workers joined the players with placards and banners. Mineworkers and others have turned up at various grounds around the country to show solidarity with their fellow trade unionists.

The immediate stakes in the strike are much higher for the players than the owners. In a career of only a few years, losing even half a season's pay is a major sacrifice. The owners with megabucks in the bank can hang on. In all likelihood the players will soon return to work with few tangible gains. But in the long run, the real issue raised by the strike — who controls the game? — will not go away.

The NFL strike is just part of what will be a series of contests fought *outside* sporting arenas over who is to reap the benefits of what goes on inside.

Channel Four has already shown one instalment of "scab ball". The strikers are asking everyone to turn to the other side. American football addicts who are also socialists should heed their advice, and write to Channel Four to tell them to get "scab ball" off British screens.

Labour Party Conference

ORGANISE THE RESISTANCE!

This year's *Briefing* fringe meeting was one of the liveliest and vibrant of the whole Conference. Speakers included Eric Heffer, Sharon Atkin, sacked miner Paul Whetton, Keith Veness, Sarah Roelofs, Leonora Lloyd and Angela Berrios from Chile.

We reprint below the contribution from Graham Bash, representing the *Briefing* Editorial Board.

We have called this meeting *Organise the Resistance*. It is a resistance that we are obliged to wage on two fronts: resistance against the government, but resistance also within our own movement.

The threat we face from the government is *not* just business as usual — *not* just more of the same as we've had over the past 8 years, bad as that has been.

Within minutes of winning the election, Thatcher was promising to "sort out" the inner cities. The Tory assault is now moving into the heartland of our strength.

Local authorities and Council workers, Council tenants, the ILEA teachers, the NHS, the whole of the welfare state, youth, women, black people, and trade unionists stand at the sharp end of the fight against Thatcher's Britain.

Till now, Labour local authorities have for the most part managed to maintain council services and jobs — with a mixture of struggle, as in Liverpool and Lambeth, fudge, and creative accountancy. Now the fight in every authority is for real.

What is at stake is local democracy, the role of the Labour Party in local government — and in a real sense the future of our Party as we know it.

Thatcher has made her aim admirably clear — to wipe socialism off the political map, to drive Labour out of local government, to destroy the remnants of the welfare state, destroy the post-war state education system, destroy public services, and destroy the power of the trade union movement.

Faced with the scale of this threat — with the future of our Party and movement very much on the line — it is galling to say the least that we have to organise resistance not only against the government, the employers, the state — but also against our own leaders.

Comrades, it is best to start the week with no illusions. This Conference is going to be difficult. The leadership has found the perfect scapegoat for our election defeat. It's called the Party membership — those of us who have stood by Party policy, those who have defended jobs and services and refused to make cuts, those who have implemented our policies of positive action for women, black people, lesbians and gays, those trade unionists who have struggled and refused to surrender their jobs and conditions.

Our answer is simple. For a start they're on this platform this evening. Our answer is Eric Heffer whose general election result if duplicated throughout the country would have given us a massive overall majority. Our answer is Jeremy Corbyn who doubled his majority and now has the highest Labour majority in London. Our answer would and should have been Sharon Atkin. Had she been allowed to stand there would no doubt today be a Labour MP for Nottingham East.

Our answer is the supporters of *Militant* — and all those comrades who campaigned on a socialist programme, refused to go on the defensive and won resounding victories.

The agenda for the week is New Realism. Neil Kinnock has set the tone. Every socialist commitment we have is up for grabs. He says nothing is excluded.

But what we are witnessing is not just an attempt to redefine our socialist commitments. That's hardly new — they've been doing that since before we had any.

We're *also* seeing attempts to redefine our working class base and orientation — to distance our Party from the trade unions, to weaken the historic link that created the Party and move us in the direction of European Social Democracy.

Faced with this, we must restate some fundamentals. What I'm saying is no profound new analysis, no brilliant new idea — but a simple restatement of some basics.

Our way back to electoral victory and government is *not* by chasing the yuppie vote if we do so at the expense of our working class base. 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 is not a rainbow coalition nor a popular front, but a radical alliance of the dispossessed under the banner of the labour movement.

That alliance was there in embryo. It remains to be built, and the divisions remain to be overcome.

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.

Comrades, it is simple but it needs repeating. Those who must pay for our programme are *not* our own working class supporters, or even the middle class — but the forces of capital.

The only way to construct an alliance for socialism — an alliance of employed and unemployed, men and women, black and white — is to construct an alliance that confronts the power of capitalism.

A second point needs to be added. Our election defeat reflected at an electoral level the material defeats we have suffered as a movement over the past few years. But never forget, at the height of the miners' strike, with no help at all from our Party leaders, we stood at 40% in the polls.

Is it not obvious that if the miners had won, the damage to the government would have been so immense that we would almost certainly have won the General Election? Yet Kinnock and Willis disowned the miners, criticised, marginalised and weakened their struggle. And in so doing, they doomed us to electoral defeat.

To turn the electoral tide, we must begin materially — physically — to stop Thatcher in her tracks. That means that the Party must support — and identify with — all those in struggle against the government, instead of running away from those struggles.

It means also that Labour Councils now in the frontline against Thatcher must stand by our communities and workforces and defend our local jobs and services.

This has not been the road of Camden, of Lambeth, nor now of Haringey and the rest. Nor of Margaret Hodge, Chair of the Association of London Authorities, who tells us defiance is not an option. Nor is it the road of the ILEA with their compulsory redeployment of teachers.

Again there is a simple truth. You cannot mobilise your workforce and community to defend Labour authorities against the government to fight the break-up of Council services and the poll tax if you have spent the last year attacking the jobs and services of that same workforce and community.

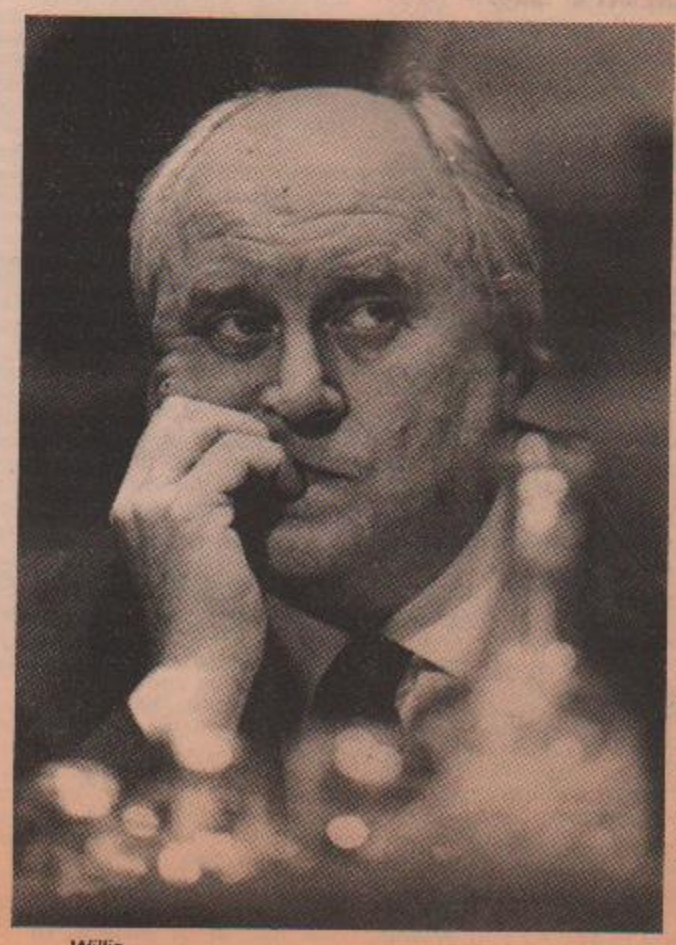


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Willis

Comrades, after our third successive election defeat, of course our movement is in crisis. But the strategy that we will hear this week is a disaster. Not only does it attack, weaken and demobilise the working class; but even in electoral terms it is a failure.

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

I came into the Labour Party almost 20 years ago — as part of a generation in the late '60s inspired by the struggles in Vietnam, France, Czechoslovakia and later in the early '70s in Britain itself. This was a period of upsurge — the working class was immensely strong — and our consciousness of that strength and the knowledge that our movement was strong enough to change the world — has left an indelible mark on us.

We must preserve that knowledge, that confidence in the future, as today, like our predecessors two generations ago — we are having to learn to fight against the stream.

We are preparing for the future, but the key to that future is in the struggle today.

We must rebuild the left on the basis of those struggles unfolding before us. Around these struggles, in local government, the miners, defence of inner cities, the struggles in Ireland and South Africa, defence of Party democracy and women's and black people's representation in the Party — we can and must rebuild an accountable, democratic and united Left across the Labour Party and trade unions. This is the only answer to Thatcherism. Help us build *Briefing*! Help us rebuild the left!

Youth Briefing

Better vibes from Birmingham

Twenty coaches from Birmingham — that's the aim of Birmingham's Anti-Apartheid Youth Committee for the October 24th A-A demo.

With the South African miners' strike still fresh on everyone's mind the task of organising international solidarity becomes even more urgent.

The three week long strike succeeded in bringing out 44 of the 46 mines. Unfortunately, the balance of forces in South Africa at the moment meant that this historic strike did not also bring an historic victory for the Black South African working class.

By Carl Taylor Birmingham Anti-Apartheid Youth Committee

Only marginal gains in death grants being increased and more holiday pay were won. The bosses have not made public the amount of money they lost but it has been estimated at about 17 million rand a day.



The Birmingham A-A youth committee immediately set to action to raise money for the strike and to co-ordinate local LPYS street collections (Warley East LPYS raised £33 in two hours).

The Birmingham Youth Committee has succeeded in completely changing the Birmingham A-A branch. What was once a boring, stagnant and white body is now a large group of youth with black people beginning to come forward and take the leadership.

Hopefully this success will be repeated throughout the country with the establishment of an A-A youth section. In January 1988 there will be a national youth conference in solidarity with the struggle against Apartheid organised by the A-A.

Not surprisingly, though, the Stalinist leadership of A-A are not overjoyed at the prospect and are manouevring to ensure that we don't get a vibrant youth section but rather a pat on the head and a few rah-rah speeches before going home.

With your help they won't be successful and you can help in that process. First, try and amend the Birmingham A-A resolution to A-A conference to include a demand for a youth section. Secondly, and most importantly, you can form a Youth Committee or a Youth Against Apartheid out of the October 24th demo.

The Women's Saga

Labour Party Conference is a shambles and a sham for low-paid workers and for women.

New delegates get little guidance. Major decisions are voted upon within minutes of delegates receiving the information from handouts left on seats in booklets.

Sometimes even these booklets and handouts fail to arrive.

The Conference, attended predominantly by male delegates; with a male dominated platform; with only 88 women speakers as against 172 male speakers from the floor endorses Labour's macho image.

Women had expected the 1987 Conference to confirm (by the NEC bringing forward a Constitutional Amendment) the resolution passed at 1986 Annual Conference: that there must be at least one woman on every parliamentary selection shortlist.

Conference failed to do this, as the NEC did not bring forward the Constitutional Amendment. Women have been let down and deceived by the Party that claims it listens to them.

Giving a little more power to Women's Conference is a sop. If the Labour Party was serious about wanting to create a socialist society it would ensure that it gave representation to women by allowing women to challenge white male MPs in safe seats in future elections.

Eight CLPs (including Edgbaston) had submitted emergency resolutions correcting the NEC report and calling for the Constitutional Amendment to be brought before Conference, From the first thing on Monday morning right through to the end of Conference on Friday the Conference bureaucracy united to prevent the issue of "one woman on every shortlist" being debated.

By Pauline Purnell
Chair, Labour Women's Action Committee (personal capacity)

On Monday morning delegates from the 8 CLPs were asked to see Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) on Tuesday. However, we did not accept that and insisted on seeing CAC on Monday.

After much discussion we were told that the debate could take place under the Women's Organisation debate on Wednesday afternoon. This was despite the fact that the Emergency Resolutions clearly concerned a parliamentary selection issue and should have been taken under the Party Franchise debate on Monday afternoon.

The struggle to get Conference to debate the issue, first where it belonged under the Party Franchise debate, and then under Women's Organisation (where it was never taken) was strewn with deliberate obstacles and obstruction.

Incompetent

These were mainly of the white male incompetent type, deliberately laid to stop "one woman on every shortlist" going through Conference.

False reassurances were given by CAC, time and energy wasting tasks were handed out by the CAC (like asking us to get the Conference scrutineers together!) and misinformation and disinformation was regularly relayed to us. To say they were economical with the truth would be over-kind!

In the new, modern, efficient, yuppified Labour Party the CAC even managed to lose a tape recording of the vote on the NEC report — the part covering "one woman on every shortlist", of course.

Representatives

At one stage we were asked to meet representatives from the NEC, but low and behold in the vast Brighton Conference Centre they had difficulty finding a room we could meet in!

Voting figures were conveniently mislaid, and irrelevant meetings were set up by



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Women occupy the MPs' seats — most of which were empty by the end of Conference

CAC not only between us and the NEC, but also with Joyce Gould and the Labour Party's all-male regional women's officers. That in itself shows what the Labour Party thinks of women.

All this transparent manipulation by men (and their female stooges) served to unite women delegates

Rostrum

who eventually took direct action by surrounding the Conference rostrum, stopping Conference proceedings and confronting the conference with the issue, and then taking over the MPs' (empty) seats in the Conference Hall.

Unfortunately only a handful of women MPs gave their support (one woman MP ran away when asked to help). Their input was sincere and welcome, unlike one woman MP's husband (an ex-MP himself — now a trade union leader) who pushed in front on the Monday morning delegation to CAC and took up so much time with his "important" male trade union business that CAC were tired, irrational — and wanting their lunch — when we finally got to see them over "one woman in every shortlist".

Lobbying

The difficulty in getting this debate heard at the 1987 Conference illustrates the real status of women in the Labour Party, and as Conference delegates. All the women delegates involved in the action and the lobbying of CAC were in a constant Catch 22 situation. They had to take part in Conference business on behalf of the organisations they represented, and at the same time fight for women's rights to be socialist MPs.

Women must challenge and expose at every opportunity the manipulation and fixing that goes on in the Labour Party. We must challenge the Labour Party's necessity to hold women's meetings in the Ramada Hotel in Brighton (where Kinnock and his friends at head office stayed during Conference) where a ham sandwich costs £3.75 and a glass of wine £1.20.

"One woman on every shortlist" is the only challenge left to sitting MPs, who under the new electoral college party franchise proposals agreed at 1987 Conference can be reselected without challenge on a shortlist of one. The complexities of the electoral college will see CLPs opting for the easy way out and shortlists of one, which will protect the male sitting MPs.

The "one women on every shortlist" issue is one we can easily gain support for. It is an issue that will unite women in the Party and in the trade unions.

The energy it will take to gain equality, though, is a sad loss to the labour movement. It could be used in other directions — attacking the Tories.

The fact that women in the Labour Party have to use up so much time and energy fighting for equality within a Party that professes to be fighting for equality is something that Kinnock should be ashamed to ask of his sisters.

Ireland

The debate moves forward

Composites calling for an end to discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland, and for the renegotiation or scrapping of the Anglo-Irish Accord coupled with a call for the next Labour government to achieve withdrawal in the lifetime of one Parliament were rejected by this year's Labour Party Conference.

However, solid gains were made on the issue of Britain's continued interference in Irish affairs.

The composite on employment discrimination was lost by less than one million votes (2,435,000 for, 3,370,000 against) after the NEC had called for remittance.

While the issue had been unfortunately muddied, under the pressures of compositing, so that the resolution contained a superfluous restatement of Labour's policy for reunification, it is still the case that the bloc votes of the AEU, GMB, EETPU and especially the TGWU were cast decisively against the main thrust of the resolution.

Those campaigning for support for the composite were reliably informed that the T&G delegation left the final say on how its 1.3m votes were to be cast to a phone call to Regional Officer John Freeman in Belfast.

By Patrick Sikorski
NUR

The Orange Veto on any change in employment practice — let alone constitutional arrangements — is alive and well in the British trade union and labour movement.

On the other hand, remittance would have obscured the very real growth in union support for action to challenge sectarianism in the workplace and let the trade union and Labour leaders off the hook.

The withdrawal composite was lost overwhelmingly on a show of hands. Resolutions calling for Labour to organise in the North, and describing Sinn Fein as "neo-fascist" were not taken.

Travesty

The debate was yet again a travesty, taking place as it did last thing on Tuesday, after both the leader's hour-long address to Conference and the important Scottish devolution debate.

Only two speakers (both in support of the motions not taken) and Labour spokesperson Kevin Macnamara were taken from the floor.

At a fringe meeting, Macnamara had made a strong speech in favour of Irish unity by consent, and against the notion that there was any bi-partisanship on Ireland — excepting of course against "the men of violence". He also omitted any mention of the Hillsborough treaty.

Taken, however, with his earlier statement against the Tories' weak proposals against job discrimination and his Conference speech, Macnamara's efforts represented a valiant and honest attempt to keep the debate in the movement going and at least defy the worst excesses of the veto.

But progress on Ireland can only be made now outside the confines of the Constituency Parties and the PLP. That this is possible was dramatically demonstrated by the overwhelmingly successful Irish rally and social sponsored by the LWI, LCI and LCC and attended by over 1,800 people.

They filled the Top Rank in Brighton to hear speeches from Bernie Grant, Chris Mullin, Joan Maynard, Nadine Finch, Ken Livingstone, a relative of the Birmingham Six and Clare Short. Billy Bragg and others from Green Revue provided the music.

The campaign in the unions against job discrimination and the debate on the context in which it flourishes in the North must be extended. Make sure your union sends delegates to the Employment Discrimination Conference!

Ireland: the cause of Labour?

28th November
Camden Centre
Bidborough St, London WC1
Contact: Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX

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Preparing our fightback

A lot of people on the left of the Party came to Brighton feeling very disillusioned.

And the first couple of days lent a lot of credence to that. Yet surprisingly, towards the end of the week, the spirit began to return.

There have been many previous attempts by labour leaders to change the course and nature of the Party, but the attempt made at this Conference has not succeeded any more than previous attempts.

changing policies and I think more and more delegates have seen through it. As they've attended Conference, gone to the fringe meetings, and heard the alternative arguments, they have come to the conclusion that we've got to hold fast.

A good example was when Bryan Gould got up and talked about some new-fangled policy of share-holding and invading the private sector.

He didn't get past the first hurdle. The constituency delegates in particular didn't want to hear that kind of nonsense.

We've got to get our act together on the left. We must make it clear there will be no changes to Clause IV, no shift in policy on nuclear disarmament. We must also understand that tne left on the NEC has to be strengthened.

There has to be more activity in trade union branches, more concerted, organised activity. The block votes of two big unions that wield enormous power are based on a fragile foundation, and could be won to the left if the effort was made.

The TGWU is on a knife-edge, yet not enough attention is paid to it. Those block votes provide the bedrock of the massive right wing majority on the NEC. So there's an organising job to be done, there's an educational job to be done, and we must ensure that the Left — with all its different views — gets its act together.

I don't think people should be despondent about the future for socialism in Britain. Politics is not static. Like a lot of other things in life, it changes.

I remember when I was very young, the TGWU was right wing. And then in a short space of time Frank Cousins — whose family came from Clay Cross — became the General Secretary. Within twelve months, the whole nature of the union changed.

This had a massive impact on the TUC and Labour Party Conferences. No blueprint could have been drawn up to have accounted for that before it happened. But it did happen.

So when you hear these clever people who want to provide a blueprint for the future based on devising a strategy for yuppie votes, remember that things change rather dramatically.

It only needs a couple of struggles of an extra-parliamentary nature to be successful — and it's time we had some victories! — for the whole character of the movement to be changed.

What we've got to do in the run-up to the next election is to start winning victories long before it. Too many people think that the election is all about winning film awards from Montreux to Calais in the campaign — when we have to raise the political consciousness and the confidence of the people.

The means fighting with people who are engaged in battles with the class enemy long before the election arrives.

Then, once you've won a round or two, when you get to the Cup Final — the general election — you're able to win on your own ground, and not be playing away.

—Dennis Skinner MP—

The Party at its worst

The Conference has shown us many of the worst aspects of the Labour Party. It is a Conference at which we have taken real issues and policies off the agenda. We've sacrificed basic principles which we've held over a long period of time.

According to Kinnock, and with the move to the right on the NEC, we can expect mass expulsions in the near future and the removal of some of our basics like unilateral disarmament, Black Sections and black organisation.

If that happens, we will put forward to the electorate no policies and no programme. We must come together in our trade unions and constituency parties — those that remain — and unite with those who are expelled to fight for socialism.



PHOTO: Pandora Anderton, The Next Step

Sharon Atkin

Organise for next year now!

As expected, the 1987 Labour Party Conference was the most depressing for a long time for the "left".

The Party machinery is firmly in the control of the "right".

We should understand, though, that the "right" now encompasses not only Kinnock and the LCC, but also some of the so-called "hard left", who have acquiesced to the leadership and appeared at Conference on all manner of fringe meeting platforms right across the political spectrum.

By John Wilton

What is different though from times in the recent past when the "right" has controlled the Pary machinery is that the control it achieved at Brighton went hand-in-hand with measures that increased the centralised authoritarian strangulation of the Party.

The youth organisation changes, the abolition of *Labour Weekly* and *Socialist Youth*, the changes in selection and reselection, along with other measures all gave more power to head office and the leadership.

The last of these, under the camouflage of an extention of the Party Franchise, included ceding power to the NEC between Annual Conferences to alter the system of selection. Any change has to be ratified at the next Annual Conference, but by then a lot of selections could have been completed under any changed system, making it difficult to overturn.

The unworkable nature of the electoral college agreed at Brighton will result in one of two things. Either CLPs with sitting MPs will opt for shortlists of one (the sitting MP), or the NEC will use the electoral college as a first stage, which when it is shown to be unworkable (and the major trade unions can be convinced) will be ditched in favour of a straight "one member, one vote" system. The NEC can now authorise this change without prior recourse to Conference.

The Constituency NEC results were a further blow to the "left. The loss of Audrey Wise (and Joan Maynard in the women's section), and the failure of Eric Heffer to get re-elected, was a real blow, and the present strength of the real "left" in the constituencies was probably reflected by Heffer's vote.

Whether the vote for Bryan Gould would have been lower if he had made the comments about shareholders he made during Conference earlier, before delegates had been mandated, is an interesting question.

However, whether those votes would have gone to "left" candidates is debatable. Certainly, the new NEC constituency section with only woman, Jo Richardson, is a disgrace and can hardly be called representative.

Up until the closed session on Wednesday morning, delegates on the Conference floor appeared to be still in a pre-election "don't rock the boat" mood. It was noticeable that this changed as CLP delegates became more and more aware of what was being done to Conference and the Party generally in the leadership's pursuance of the share-holding yuppie vote. As the week wore on (literally) CLP delegates became more and more disillusioned on the Conference floor.

The failure of the major trade unions, at the leadership's behest (with notable exceptions like the NUM), to vote for anything connected with Clause IV, public ownership, and the renationalisation of privatised industries, only increased this disillusionment.

Also, the failure of the right wing leadership-controlled NEC to endorse any resolution arguing for struggle, or campaigns against the Tory government by workers, angered many CLP delegates.

It should not be underestimated that there was still a significant level of support amongst CLP delegates at the 1987 Conference for the leadership. However, the contradiction between the socialist Labour Party many rank and file delegates wished to see and the yuppified, share-owning, Labour Party Kinnock, Whitty and Mandelson seek, grew as the week wore on.

More and more delegates realised modernisation of the Party was being used as a camouflage to change the nature of the Conference, and ultimately the principles of the Party itself.

Crawlers

Despite numerous platform crawlers saying what a wonderful campaign Kinnock fought, the support for the leadership was less fulsome than at 1986 Conference. Glorious defeats do not increase support, and as the leadership increasingly fails to deliver, so support will fall away.

Kinnock's speech was undoubtedly the "low spot" of the week. His reference to the election defeat as us being "defeated but not beaten" revealed a new concept. Presumably Napoleon was defeated, but not beaten, and in Scotland the Tories were defeated but not beaten?

The high-spot of the week was the fight women delegates organised in an attempt to get "one woman on every shortlist" incorporated into the selection procedures, as agreed by 1986 Conference. In the event they were unsuccessful, but not through lack of effort.

The manipulation of the Constitution and Conference by the leadership, the General Secretary, and the fixers on the Conference Arrangements Committee was fully exposed by the actions of women delegates. Indeed, they initiated the resistance to the leadership line within the Conference.

The direct action women delegates took at the start of the Thursday afternoon session in support of their demand that the constitutional amendment be debated (in the form of an Emergency Resolution — and as agreed by 1986 Conference), stopped the Conference in its tracks.

Fifty to sixty women at the rostrum in front of Conference was something the leadership could not legislate for in its well-ordered Conference. The leadership on the platform, the General Secretary, and the Party apparatchniks were angry, petrified that their shiny image Conference was being damaged, and did not know what to do.

The strength of organised action by women was clearly visible and the male dominated leadership was powerless to do anything about it. This showed that even in the yuppified Labour Party the rank and file still have great power, if only they realise it. On that Thursday afternoon, women delegates did, and it frightened the life out of the bureaucrats.

In the light of this, delegates must organise for next year in order to get their demands heard. The Party leadership and its bureaucracy must understand that rank and file members are not going to be marginalised and meekly accept the removal of all their power.

The other point to come out of Conference is that the "soft-left" (or is it the "democratic left" now?) intend to challenge for the Deputy leadership next year, in the form of John Prescott. The "socialist left" (OK, if they want to use labels — we will have this one!) should not be afraid to operate the mechanism for the election not only of Deputy Leader, but also for the position of Leader.

If there is going to be a Deputy Leader contest the prospect of a choice between Hattersley, Prescott, and Gould is horrific. But if the "socialist left" is going to contest the Deputy Leadership, why not challenge the Leader as well? At least it will keep him busy!

As Kinnock fails to make an impression on the Tory lead in the opinion polls as time goes by, his popularity in the constituencies will wane. Then he should be challenged. After all, what good is the system and its supposed accountability if it is not used?

If all policies are to be reviewed in the next year under the guise of the statement "Moving Ahead", passed at Conference, why not use that review and that policy space in a Deputy Leader and Leader campaign? And given the sex of the people leading the fight on the Conference floor at Brighton, why not put up socialist left wing women to challenge for both the leader and deputy leader positions?

That could make for interesting contests, especially in the Prescott/Gould/Hattersley deputy leader contest. It could also be a wonderful opportunity to get across the position of women both in the Labour Party and in the wider electorate.

MC RI

Neil Kinnock and his leade ed from this year's Party C in three important areas.

- On every key policy question Kinnock got his way. In any case, every issue of policy is up for "review" by special policy committees, composed of members of the Shadow Cabinet and the NEC.
- The results of the NEC elections have further increased Kinnock's — already very tight — grip on the Party machine.
- The decision on the method of selection of MPs has reversed, at one stroke, the democratic gains made by constituency and trade union activists since 1979. The chances of the political balance in the Parliamentary Labour Party being altered by an influx of left MPs at the next election have been severely damaged.

These successes were not achieved without encountering resistance from sections of the left, including constituency delegates, some trade union delegations, campaigns such as Black Sections and — most dramatically — angry women delegates.

But the lesson of the conference is that the left faces both an unfavourable situation in the Party as a whole and a deep crisis of its own.

The two key policy debates were on social ownership and defence. In both of these, the framework was set for a considerable rightward move when the first of the policy papers emerge from the Party's "review" in the New Year.

The social ownership debate saw the clash of representatives from the left and the right of the movement.

Alan Tuffin of the UCW — representing the mainstream of the trade union bureaucracy and thus the Kinnock leadership — explained that the idea of renationalising the industries privatised by the Tories was an impossibility: an incoming Labour government *would not be able to afford it*.

His arguments were elaborated by Bryan Gould — a central political advisor to Kinnock — whose advocacy of wider share ownership echoed the theme of accepting the economic framework set by Thatcher.

The other pole in the debate was represented by Peter Heathfield of the NUM, who moved an alternative composite advocating the renationalisation of all industries hived off by the Tories and reaffirmed the Party's commitment to the principle of public ownership. All questions of accountability, industrial democracy and so on, he argued, were dependent on taking industries out of the private sector.

Eric Hammond of the New Realist far right explained that the EETPU

PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

OVING GHTWARDS

ship team have emerg- nference strengthened

ould be respecting the right f an elected government to arry out its mandate. It was eft to delegates to guess how he EETPU would be oppos- ng privatisation of the elec- ricity supply industry given hat framework.

But Hammond's outburst as merely a clear expres- ion of the results of the ap- roach of Tuffin and Gould. Why state that a Labour overnment will reverse Thatcher's policies tomor- ow when Labour has ab- olutely no intention of ighting them today?

The NUM composite was arried on a show of hands ut defeated by a card vote 2,397,000 to 3,869,000). Most constituency delegates nd some trade union delegations were clearly op- osed to the leadership's ew economic "realism", eflecting a deeper unease bout the drift of Party olicy under Kinnock.

The theme of capitulating o Thatcherism was con- inued into the defence debate, albeit in a contradic- ory manner. The fact that everyone, from Dennis Healey to Joan Ruddock, is committed to a "non- nuclear defence policy" is ndicative of the emptiness of such a phrase rather than the level of agreement in the Party.

By Dave Shepherd
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

It is important that Conference reaffirmed the commitment to unilateral nuclear disamament. Above all, this reflects the continuing and overwhelming support for the policy amongst Labour's rank and file — including those who have supported the present leadership. However, this commitment is in danger of becoming — like Clause IV — a paper policy, ritually referred to at conferences but bearing no relation to the actual policy and practice of the Party leadership.

Three decisions were made which undermine unilateralism and place a question mark over the policies of a future Labour government.

- Rejecting British withdrawal from NATO leaves Labour with a contradictory policy of pursuing a "non-nuclear" policy in a nuclear alliance.
- Arthur Scargill's argument that money currently squandered on nuclear weapons should be spent on jobs and social services was rejected. The position that it will, instead, be converted to spending on conventional "defence" concedes the myth of the "Soviet threat" and therefore undermines the credibility of a unilateralist policy.
- Most importantly, the way that the Party leadership posed the question of "reviewing the timetable and negotiating strategy" for disarmament left little cause for doubt about the direction of Party policy. It is away from unilateral disarmament and towards some kind of input — in the framework of NATO — into the arms reduction talks of the superpowers: a multilateralist position which is everything the peace movement has fought against.

The drive to the right was equally apparent on other policy questions. On local government, for example, a composite which called for support for workers taking action to defend jobs and services was rejected, in favour of empty phrases about opposing the Tories' plans "within the law".

Similarly, on education, a fiery speech from Jack Straw, the new Shadow spokesperson, contained not one word about the long battle of the teachers' unions in defence of education and their negotiating rights, let alone any reference to progressive anti-racist and anti-sexist education policies.

The *Financial Times* (2.10.87) commented that the debate in the Party is now about "how much of Thatcherism... should be accepted." When the policy papers start appearing early next year the answer will almost certainly be: more or less everything.

The election of Bryan Gould to the NEC and the loss of Audrey Wise and Joan Maynard amount to a big step forward for Kinnock in his attempts to achieve total dictatorial control over the Party apparatus. Gould will no doubt be playing a major part in the forthcoming policy review and other attempts to mould the Party in Kinnock's image.

The vigorous campaign to reinforce the power of the Party centre, both in terms of organisational control and policy making, was a marked feature of Conference.

- The decision to introduce the electoral college system for parliamentary selection was accompanied by the effective abandonment of the commitment to have at least one woman on every shortlist. In most "shortlists of one" the sitting MP in question will be a man. In addition, the NEC now has the power to make any changes it sees fit in the selection procedure.
- The reduction of the age limit of the LPYS to 22 and the abolition of its regional structures is the beginning of the total disbandment of the LPYS and its replacement by youth structures effectively under the thumb of the leadership and its supporters.
- There was no resolution of the continuing question of the organisation and Conference of Labour women. However, the decision on selection procedure does not bode well for the leadership's future attitude towards women in the Party. The leadership has moved a further step forwards in its attempts to resist women's demands, with their "dangerous" implications for the Kinnock line.
- The rights of black people to organise autonomously in the Party were again denied. Kinnock even attempted to claim credit for the election of four black MPs. This was doubly hypocritical, given the role of Black Sections in getting black candidates put forward for selection, and the NEC intervention to over-ride the selection of Sharon Atkin, and ensure only "acceptable" black candidates were chosen. If it wasn't for Black Sections, there would be no black MPs. If it wasn't for Kinnock, there would be five instead of four.

Black Sections supporters argued that black members were being denied the rights given to women and youth within the Party to have their own structures and conferences. This is a correct point to make. However, the leadership's refusal to give black people this right ties in with their attempts progressively to remove it from women and youth. No centre of potential or actual opposition to the Kinnockites is to be allowed.

The potential for organising resistance to the drive to the right was evident in a number of ways.

- Widespread doubts about the drift of economic policy were evident in the support given to the NUM composite on social ownership.
- Opposition to the continuing witch-hunts and expulsions was voiced by many in the closed session which dealt with the expulsion of Felicity Dowling, the report of the National Constitutional Committee and the resolution defending Nottingham East's right to select Sharon Atkin.
- The overwhelming support within the Party for unilateral nuclear disarmament was something that even this leadership had to take account of.
- More than 90 angry women delegates mounted protests on the floor against the abandonment of the policy of at least one woman on every shortlist.

This potential for resistance was not realised. The marginalisation of the left — which is the result of defeats suffered by the labour movement over the past years — was exacerbated by the crisis within the left itself.



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Disarmament

There was no clear leadership given to those who wanted to fight the drift to the right. On certain questions — nuclear disarmament, for example — figures such as Scargill and Livingstone did make a stand and give a lead.

But Livingstone is still operating with one foot in the Kinnock camp. His high vote in the NEC election was partly the result of his being supported by the LCC as well as the hard left. Seated next to Gould on the platform of the LCC's conference rally, he made no criticism of Gould's statements on share ownership.

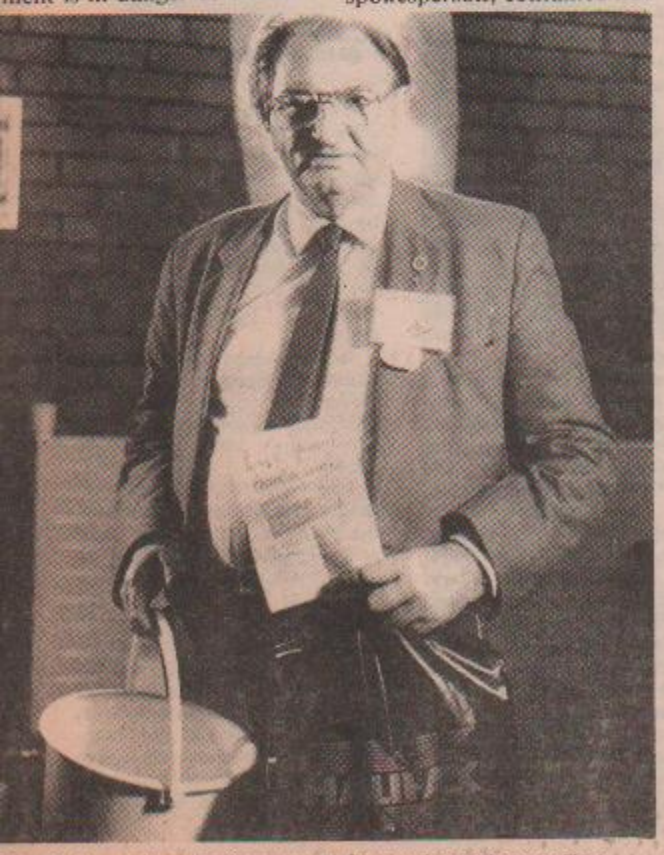
The left should certainly work with figures such as Livingstone on issues where he is prepared to fight the Party leadership. But we cannot rely on the likes of Livingstone to build an across-the-board political alternative to Kinnockism.

What is required is an all-out root and branch opposition to the new defeatism of the Party leadership; an opposition which bases itself on the class struggle and on socialist policies, and organises itself democratically across the Labour Party and the trade unions.

There was no evidence of such an opposition at this year's conference — despite ample evidence of the potential for one. This is the task that *Labour Briefing* should be addressing in the weeks and months ahead.

We can turn back the tide

Eric Heffer MP



Eric Heffer: still collecting money for surcharged councillors

The membership of the Party is still recovering from the election, and there's a deep worry among our members about where we are going.

They've been bought off for the time being with the argument that there's going to be a "review" of our policies. This can mean anything or nothing. But a number of us fear it will mean a watering down of our basic ideas, and if that is so, then next year there will be much more opposition.

But there has been a move to the right on the NEC, and more concentration of power in the hands of the Party leadership and so there may be less chance of raising opposition on the Conference floor. That's a dangerous situation.

The mood of the Conference was one of "wait and see", but also of a great uneasiness amongst constituency delegates in particular, but also amongst some trade union delegations. I don't think anybody is particularly happy. The response to the leader's speech was not particularly enthusiastic, but for the moment, people are holding their fire.

The left at the moment is in a bit of chaos. If you look at the NEC elections, if I had got back on, that would have been a major defeat for the leadership. That didn't happen. The waters were muddied.

I've been watching on TV one of the new NEC members elected on the left wing slate — and if he continues in the way he's going, he won't be much different from some of the others on the soft left who have got on and end up on the other side of the fence.

So I say to the left of the NEC — just watch what some of those who have just been elected are doing.

In a broader sense, throughout the Party and the country, what the left has to do is to begin to organise a minimum programme. All the various sections of the left must get together and say "these are things we believe in, we're going out to fight for them." This is both for policy and organisational issues. We must do this to keep the party on a socialist basis.

The left must reorganise, mobilise and go the Chesterfield Conference. We must look outwards and mobilise our forces who have a socialist perspective and organise a fightback.

Local Government

A sell-out is *not* sensible!

In an interview in the *New Statesman* (18.9.87), Margaret Hodge — leader of Islington Council and the Association of London Authorities — put forward the justification for co-operating fully with the Tory cuts under the banner headline of "Sell-out or sensible?". This marks the most honest detailing of the collapse of formerly socialist council leaderships into the "New Realism" of Kinnock & Co.

In this article, Keith Veness, himself a former Islington Councillor, replies on behalf of those trade unionists and Party members who reject capitulation as a strategy.

Probably the biggest success *London Labour Briefing* has had — even more than our struggle for a left GLC — was the "Target '82" Campaign which aimed at putting socialist councillors into the leaderships of London's Boroughs.

The alliance of revolutionary socialists, community activists, left-wing trade unionists, the women's movement and Black Sections — along with quite a chunk of the old "Tribunite" left — proved to be remarkably successful in the period from 1981 to 1987.

After Ken Livingstone had won the leadership of the GLC and Bryn Davies that of ILEA, the new left went on to win control in 1982 of Islington, Hackney, Camden, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark and Greenwich.

There followed a most profound period of change in which red flags were flown, equal opportunity policies pushed through and a whole mass of new structures and changes brought about.

Initiatives

Women's Committees, Police Monitoring, support to Lesbian and Gay Groups and a number of Black and Ethnic initiatives were some of the most visible activities to cause apoplexy amongst the gutter press and Tories, and also amongst the national leadership of the Labour Party.

However, despite the successes of 1986 in adding Ealing, Waltham Forest and Brent to the ranks, this broad alliance of the "hard" and "soft" left has now disintegrated into bitter warfare and a profound defeatism on the part of many of our former allies.

Rate-capping

The abolition of the GLC, the failure to defeat rate-capping and (most importantly) the return to office of Thatcher on June 11th has convinced many former lefts that Council services cannot be defended and that all we can do is mitigate the disaster confronting us.

The failure of the Kinnock/Gould strategy to defeat Thatcher has, paradoxically, produced a surge of support for them in its wake.

Policies

Where overtly left candidates fought on overtly socialist policies, such as in Islington, Liverpool, Bradford and Lambeth, the results were good. In contrast the Nick Raynsford/Ossie O'Brien type of "moderates" were shown to be totally unable to take on Tory policies.

Yet the failure of the "Seventh Cavalry" view of an incoming Kinnock government has split the London labour movement at a time when we face a torrent of privatisation, hiving-off and abolition legislation.

It has to be said that *Briefing* nevertheless warned that even if "Nuclear Jack" Cunningham had taken over at the DoE, London Councils would still be facing the crisis of budgets that has already hit Haringey, Camden, Lambeth and Hackney.

In her interview in the *NS*, Margaret Hodge has now formalised the new non-strategy of fudge and compliance — to the obvious delight of the middle class wallies on that periodical.

Yet Margaret has failed to see the three big flaws in her argument.

● There is not one jot of evidence to show that those who comply with the government get treated any better than those who refuse.

Ridley and Baker are determined to dismantle local government and see it as a luxury capitalism can no longer afford. Whether they cut our throats or we cut them ourselves is of only academic interest to them.

● Her strategy of re-examining all our provision and use of services will not produce the savings she supposes but just the opposite.

The meals-on-wheels, pensioners' holidays and lunch clubs proudly shouted about by Councillors are in most areas not responding to the numbers of Black and Ethnic elderly now increasing fast in inner London.

Under 5s provision has not taken on board the increase in part-time women workers and any sort of re-examination of housing resources would merely highlight the massive shortfall of housing for single persons, childless couples and the frail elderly that results from our very narrow "family-oriented" housing that has wrecked so many communities.

In any case, the left in Islington would be more impressed if Margaret practised what she preached. Her latest creation has been a highly-paid and utterly irrelevant "Leader's Unit" that seems to have no other role than to be her "entry section" into the local Labour Parties! Many of us would prefer to see set-ups like *this* "critically re-examined" and the money deployed to save jobs amongst our manual and junior officer staff.

● Most seriously, her strategy makes the decisive error that it places Labour Councils *between* the Tories and those they intend to attack.

Council tenants will see Labour Councillors voting for massive rent rises, trade unionists will see Labour Staffing Committees sacking their members and GCs will see elected leaderships tearing up manifestos and defying accountability to them.

Such a strategy smashes any united campaign against the government and no amount of excuses will convince working class electors to support those who attack their standards of living and services. The disaster at the kernel of this non-strategy will become sickeningly clear very soon.

For our part, we agree with the article that the two major obstacles facing the "new realists" are the class struggle socialists around *Briefing* and the anger of Council trade unionists fighting cuts in jobs and conditions.

Defiance

In the next few months we need to unite with tenants groups, Black and Ethnic organisations and the community sector to prepare defiance and remove those whose "dented shields" are going to be needed to save them from the outrage of their own supporters.

Sadly an era has passed and the old broad alliance that won such advances is dead. All we can now offer to our erstwhile comrades whose political fear has destroyed their defiance is the old maxim that if they do not wish to fight — *then step aside for those who do!*

Margaret Hodge, leader of Labour councils in London, wants to lead a revolution in the way left-wing local government delivers services.* CHRISTIAN WOLMAR *talks to the pretender to Ken Livingstone's crown

'THE DAYS of flying banners from town hall windows and hoisting up red flags on the roof are over,' says Margaret Hodge. Indeed, as the left-wing that took over most London Labour councils in 1982 abandons the posturing politics that created the notorious 'London factor', it seems that in London only the buses — and Ken Livingstone — are still red.

Brent and Hackney, for example, are about to drop plans to appoint nuclear-free zone co-ordinators. Even in Haringey, where the left is at its hardest, Labour councillors last week rejected a financial strategy that would have led to almost certain disqualification, and this week the leadership resigned. A measure of the shift that is taking place in London council politics is that Bernie Grant MP, still a Haringey councillor, abstained on the vote and has already been dubbed a 'right-winger' and 'class traitor' by those who voted for illegality. As a result, left and right, ha[rd] and soft are becoming irrele[vant]

Sheffield

Leadership makes the workforce pay!



"Brian Turton has less than a year to save his job as supervisor at the Council's Eccleshall Wood sawmill. For Brian was told in April that he had just one year to prove to Recreation Department bosses that he and his fellow workers can make the mill pay its way."

This report, from Sheffield City Council's internal newspaper, is typical of the new approach evident since the election.

In the same issue of *Working for Sheffield*, Council leader Clive Betts openly threatens Council workers with the sack if they do not co-operate with management reorganisation proposals:

"...jobs will simply not be retained inside the Authority unless work is done more efficiently."

Faced with a major financial crisis after 3 years of rate-capping, the leadership's response is to make the workforce pay. Under the threat of "competitive tendering" (privatisation), new working practices have been forced on bin collections, Town Hall cleaners, and Recreation Department workers. Works Department, the largest group of manual workers, is still resisting attempts to impose new hours, pay and conditions.

Gone is the commitment to save jobs *and* services. Now services are the key issue, with only a woolly commitment to try to maintain the overall number of jobs dependent on the Council.

If the Tories' objective is to break up local government, then the policies of Sheffield Council's leadership play right into their hands.

Because of severe restrictions on the capital spending programme the Council was building no houses. A "Partnership Scheme" including finance from the banks was set up to bypass government restrictions. Houses are now being built — but not Council houses.



● Clive Betts

Clive Betts explained at the July District Labour Party that the way forward was more of these schemes which would attract private capital. But as he also explained, this would mean winning the confidence of the financiers. In other words, it means making no attempt to fight government policy.

In *Working for Sheffield*, Councillor Betts is clear: "The Council is committed to the economic regeneration of the City, jointly with the private sector."

The new thinking of the leadership is well-advanced. So far there is little evidence of any organised opposition inside the Labour Party. Over the next few months the debate on the 1988-89 budget will take place which will be about the new orientation.

One of the major debates to have with those unhappy with the new direction of the Council will be whether it is worth managing the local Authority on behalf of the Tories and private finance.

"This woman is wanted!"

For closing down a Home Helps Service... For not paying the workers... For saying a Labour Council doesn't care for the elderly...

An open letter to Margaret Hdoge, the Leader of Islington Council; handed out at Labour Party Conference

Dear Councillor Hodge,

Why have you let Islington's Home Help Service collapse? Why have you left elderly and disabled clients at risk? Why have you stopped paying Home Care Organisers, who run the service, even though they're still working?

You might reply that it's because we won't operate your plans for 24 small home help districts... But you *know* that your plans won't work, that they'll cut the hours of service, that they'll leave elderly and disabled clients uncared for if any one of our staff are ill. You know that your managers have said the plans will lead to *chaos*.

Even though you stopped our pay from 21st September we've stayed working — because we *care* about our clients. We want to sort out our dispute, but we refuse to hit the clients to do that.

But you're trying to end the dispute another way. You ordered our managers to steal all the clients and home helps' records from our office — so we couldn't work. You've left two top managers to try to run a service that hundreds of clients use.

We tried this week to negotiate with Islington Council to end this dispute and protect the clients. Why did your Council colleagues refuse to talk to us at all, until you get back from (Labour Party Conference in) Brighton.

What's more important — speeches at the Conference about protecting the elderly and disadvantaged, or doing it? We've come here to try to protect our clients — will you talk to us?

Islington Home Care Organisers

The politics of pregnancy and birth:

An "invisible" prosecution of violence against women

Many of the things done to women in the name of "safer" childbirth are nothing more measures to fit in with — usually male — doctors convenience; some are nothing more than assault. Add in the cuts in the NHS, and it's not suprising women are fighting back for a bigger say in what is done to their bodies.
TERESA KEWLEY, a member of the RADICAL MIDWIVES organisation, looks at the facts and the experiences.

Maternity services in this country are in grave peril; the Tory cutbacks are hitting hospitals very hard and wards are closing all the time.

In the ones which remain open, the staff are under serious pressure and clients are not receiving adequate care.

Women are not being helped to breastfeed their infants because the midwives have too much work to do.

I personally have had *the sole care* of twenty-two women and sixteen babies during an eight hour shift — one woman was in labour and needed a lot of attention.

Two of the babies were premature and needed extra nursing care. This is in a large London Teaching Hospital where we have closed a post-natal ward in the last week due to lack of midwifery staff.

Politics

Quite apart from this, there remains the problem of the "politics of birth". Women are, for the most part, unaware of their rights, don't realise that all medical procedures carried out on them can be classified as assault if they don't agree to have them done, and, unfortunately, trust implicitly in "the hospital" to do what is best for them and their babies.

The medical profession on the whole do nothing to dispel this lie. Obstetrics has become a speciality and a lot of doctors are making a lot of money out of birth — by delivering women in private hospitals (always by forceps or Caesarean Section, so that the women can claim on their private health insurance — normal deliveries do not count!).

Degraded

Also, women are being dominated and degraded within the Health Service and the medicalisation of birth which is, after all, a natural process has been hailed as a great advance.

Doctors are, for the most part, only interested in viable pregnancies, and in labour and birth. Women who lose their babies in early pregnancy are largely unsupported and uncomforted by their GPs.

For example, a woman went to her GP because she was thirteen weeks pregnant and bleeding. However, he refused to acknowledge her pregnancy because she had had the temerity to diagnose it herself with a home pregnancy test; she had already had one child, had missed three periods, and recognised the signs of pregnancy in herself. But the doctor sent her away without examining her because she hadn't let *him* diagnose the pregnancy, therefore, he argued, she probably wasn't pregnant!

Agony

Later that night, in agony, she lost her baby (and a great deal of blood) and called the doctor out. His only remark was that it was "just one of those things." He offered no apology or sympathy; neither did he send her to hospital to ensure that the miscarriage was complete.

This is not an isolated case.

Another woman, a single parent living on Supplementary Benefit, lost her baby and was devastated and grief-stricken. Her Social Worker told her that it was a good thing that she'd lost the baby because she "couldn't cope with the one she'd got".

Not true, incidentally: she had survived incest, the abortion of her father's child, two violent relationships, rape, and was caring for her slightly mentally retarded three year old son.

Two days later she slashed her wrists.

Nobody really cares about women like this. I know an intelligent, articulate woman who had her third ectopic pregnancy (when the baby implants and starts growing in the fallopian tube, before it reaches the womb where there is space to grow) a couple of weeks ago.

When she asked for a doctor to come and see her in the middle of the night (because she recognised that her fallopian tube had ruptured and was in severe pain) she was told not to be a nuisance.

Doctor

Five hours later a doctor came. He said, "Aren't we being a little hysterical? Your scan showed that the baby was in the right place so you must be okay."

She was discharged home (barely able to walk) the next day; then she was readmitted with a serious pelvic infection and the ruptured ectopic pregnancy was demonstrated on Ultrasound.

Apologies? Certainly not. This particular woman is taking the matter up with the Health Authority; but countless others suffer in silence.

Women's instinctive feelings about their bodies are discounted and even ridiculed. Doctors don't want to know about miscarriage because they can't do much about them. But they are extremely interested in labour and delivery! (Mind you, once the stitches are in, they quickly lose interest again.)

The post-natal period, certainly the most difficult and traumatic for the woman, is seen as boring by the medical profession and they leave everything to the midwives.

Breastfeeding, surely the single most important thing a woman can do for her infant, is not even studied in medical school; at the first sign of trouble most doctors suggest changing over to bottle-feeding. The trouble is, there are no opportunities for medical interference in the post-natal period!

That's another reason why Home Birth is frowned upon by the medical establishment — they are unable to take over the woman's body, nor can they interfere with the birth process if it takes place where the woman is in her own environment.

Vulnerable

But in hospital, women are vulnerable and are treated as *patients*. They are frequently given very little information to enable them to make real choices about how they want to give birth.

Drugs are used, and women have to labour at a certain rate or they have the process speeeded up with artificial hormones. Many hospitals don't allow women to push for longer than half an hour (!) so forceps are applied if the woman hasn't "succeeded" in the allotted time.

Caesarian

One in ten babies are born by Caesarian Section (one in five in the USA). Freedom of movement is denied most women; continuous monitoring of the baby's heartrate means the woman has to be wired up to a machine for the whole labour, despite the fact that this procedure has been shown only to increase the instrumental delivery rate.

Perinatal

It has not improved perinatal mortality rates one iota. Doctors keep quiet about the statistics which prove that the safest place to give birth is at home!

Nobody seems to know that the ultimate decision on the place of birth rests with the woman herself. How often do you hear women say "I wasn't *allowed* to have the baby at home — my doctor doesn't do it."

Allowed? Whose body is it anyway? And why don't these doctors advise women that they don't legally have to seek medical advice during pregnancy and birth? Midwives are trained in all aspects of maternity care, starting with pre-conception clinics and ending with breastfeeding counselling. The vast majority of babies in this country are delivered by midwives.



Technology can be life-saving; but has the medical profession forgotten to care for the "well"?

Routine

Doctors are necessary, of course, *if things go wrong*, but they don't need to see women routinely in labour. When they do, a great many of them insist on interventionalist procedures being carried out.

Invasive techniques lead to more invasion — women often describe how they felt like a piece of meat, not a human being. Some women find vaginal examinations intolerable (I suspect because they have suffered sexual abuse) but lots of doctors say things like "I don't know how she got pregnant in the first place..." — often in front of the suffering woman, just to add to her humiliation.

Lesbians

Lesbians are treated as extreme oddities or as objects of disgust (how *dare* they inseminate themselves!!). In short, women are dominated, violated, and assaulted during labour — and all in the name of technology.

We are beginning to fight back, as we are in other areas . . where . . we . . are mistreated. We *will* breastfeed in public. If the public don't like it, ask them why they quite happily look at Page Three girls' breasts. And we *will* give birth at home if we choose, in the position we find comfortable. And we will continue to trust our instincts — even if our GPs don't.

Apologies?

My deep apologies to that minority of doctors who don't treat women as foolish children when it comes to birth and childrearing. If I sound cynical, it's due to many years of personal experience in caring for women — from miscarriage, through labour, and on to breastfeeding.

I know there are some excellent doctors out there — but I'm sorry, you're few and far between!

Sisters

Sisters, educate yourselves; don't be fobbed off. So many aspects of birth are examples of violence against women — we will not continue to tolerate this travesty of "care".

And by the way, Mrs Thatcher — midwives would quite like a decent standard of living; if we earned more, the hospitals wouldn't be closing wards for lack of staff.



Episiotomy: helpful for the mother or tidy for the surgeons? The debate continues.



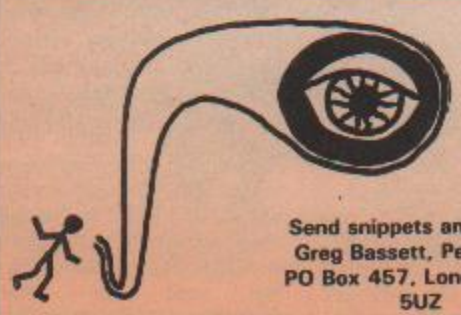
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Next meetings
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Both at Polytechnic of Central London, Marylebone Road Site, opposite Baker Street tube

Periscope



Send snippets and info to Greg Bassett, Periscope, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ

A wider franchise

That great company British Petroleum, shortly to be privatised, has shown its strong faith in democracy by participating in the quaint electoral customs of the City of London.

The City is the only local authority area where non-resident voters can be created by leasing, at nominal rents, bits and pieces of property from an existing freeholder.

BP has gone one better. As a limited company it has no corporate vote, but it has added some 200 voters to the registers of Cripplegate ward by leasing to its staff at Brittanic House their desks at peppercorn rents.

Although the protests of the local Labour Party have been rejected by Guildhall, it seems the local police are investigating the matter. *A.N.*

It's my party...

Gasps of amazement were heard at the recent Birmingham "Superprix" junket, when one of the guests in the Civic Hospitality tent turned out to be ex-Liverpool Trot Derek Hatton.

Who could have invited him? It was in fact ultra-right wing Cllr John Charlton, the Chair of the Road Race Committee, a founder member of the Council for Social Democracy (sic) in the seventies.

Apparently he met Our Derek on holiday in Sunny Corfu and they got on like a house on fire...

Was Mr Hatton selling out?

Later that week Cllr Dick Knowles, leader of Birmingham Council and not exactly a *Militant* fan, was asked if he had had a nice time with Comrade Derek over tea and scones.

"Not on your life," says Dick. "You wouldn't catch me talking to the likes of him. I spent the afternoon with Denis Thatcher instead."

Well, they say if you can't beat 'em, join 'em... *F.*

To boldly go where no man...

Pity the poor male carpet seller who chanced with his samples into the *Briefing* office the other day — on one of the (many) occasions when only female staff and helpers were present.

"Hello girls," he said; before casting his beady eye over the office.

"*Where's the guv'nor?*" he added. Caught unawares, the "girls" began, reasonably, explaining how to get in touch with the management of the unit-block in which *Briefing* resides.

"I want to show him my carpets," said the errant male, wafting his samples.

We caught on: "we've got a carpet," we explained — pointing to what he was standing on.

"I can see you've got a carpet," said our visitor, as if we must have thought him stupid. "If I hadn't thought you might be interested in a better one, I wouldn't have asked if you wanted one. Now, is the guv'nor in, or if not where is he and when's he getting back?"

Faced with our insistance that we had a carpet, and our reluctance to provide a "guv'nor", sample-man took his product away, muttering. We got on with the work of producing the paper, and doing the accounts. Perhaps if we work hard enough, one day we too will be lucky enough to grow up to be a carpet salesman... *J&L*

Procreating for Star Wars!

"The birth dearth is coming," warns Ben Wattenberg, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a right wing US think tank.

Demographic projections show the United States and Western European nations approaching zero population growth by the mid 21st century, while high population growth rates will continue in the third world and the Soviet bloc nations will experience a mild population boom.

Wattenberg worries that the falling fertility rate in Western nations will result in the downfall of Western economies and of Western-style democracy.

Wattenberg represents an influential camp of self-styled "supply-side demographers". Not surprisingly, his theories have found adherents on the right, among them Republican presidential aspirants Jack Kemp and Pat Robertson.

"If you're talking about Star Wars," he frets, "you need a helluva huge tax base and enough people and enough industries to make this technology possible."

From Cradle to Bank

Will teaching kids to manage money before they're old enough to drink or drive produce better capitalists? Some people think so.

This summer, four Florida resort hotels sponsored money management camps for children 10 to 15 years old.

Five hundred dollars bought a child-sized ($100) portfolio the kids could invest and a week of daily two-hour sessions with two Shearson-Lehman investment bankers, who explored the pros and cons of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

The kids also learned how to read the *Wall Street Journal*.

(If you think we're going to tell you how to sign your child up for next summer's camp, think again.)

Periscope goes West! Thanks to *Dollars & Sense* for a Periscope-eye view of the States.

Letters

Opposing privatisation

Greg Bassett,
Labour Briefing

Sir,

Your unilateral interpretation of our Union's campaign on behalf of staff and patients in the Health Service strikes a sour note.

Had you the courtesy to contact me I could have told you that COHSE had always supported the Trade Union movement in its opposition to privatisation. Instead, you assume I spend my time releasing right wing statements and driving through picket lines. Your imagination knows no bounds as your creative journalism decides which political parties I support without first asking me. For the record, I fully support the London Bus workers' struggle against privatisation. I am a member of the Labour Party and a trade unionist representing Health workers in a Regional Health Authority with a £9.6 million deficit in their budget for this year. We are fighting competitive tendering, privatisation and closures in hospitals throughout London. The majority of our members are on low wages and receive the pittance of London Weighting. It is in this background that our members want the DHSS to provide extra funding for this and a whole range of necessities. Therefore, Sir, could I suggest that if you want your paper to have some creditable journalism you either contact the sender of a press release or, failing that, you have the choice of printing the press release in full or ignoring it. Any of these options would be more creditable than inventing fairy stories to fill out your pages.

Yours sincerely,
Brian Lynch,
COHSE London Officer

Tilley should stop sniping!

Dear *Labour Briefing*,

I have just come across an issue of your paper and as a black advisor I am horrified that you chose to print the article by Shahid Tilley in your last issue attacking and ridiculing the efforts of multicultural education advisors and the Black Sections movement which has done so much to give us black people a voice in the Labour Party and Parliament.

The remarkable efforts of the Black Sections activists who have raised the vital issue of white people's racism cannot be ignored any longer; they have been in the forefront of providing positive images and role models of successful black achievements (such as those of Bernie Grant, Keith Vaz and Linda Bellos).

Tilley would do well to stop sniping at their efforts and learn from the article published below his, where Onmesh Desai rightly points to the alliances which must be made to increase race awareness and eradicate and stamp out the evil of racism from white people's diseased culture and minds.

Onmesh rightly points out that white people have learned and absorbed the vice of racism and must now begin the unlearning process by making alliances with the broadest possible range of black people. This includes multicultural advisors and racism awareness trainers!

Similarly, Tilley sarcastically attacks our religious leaders in a manner which is more reminiscent of white racist trash. The self-oppression and self-hate of Mr Tilley suggests that even he as a black person might benefit from racism awareness training that black led local authorities run.

In anger,
Kale Cuthra,
London W8

Repression in Mexico

On Sunday 11th October, at 12.30pm, a six year old girl, Kirsten Lopez Luke, was kidnapped outside her home in Puebla, Mexico.

She is the daughter of a comrade who is the representative of the PRT (Revolutionary Workers' Party) in the state of Puebla. Her father is also Secretary of the Human Rights Committee of the UGOCP — one of the main peasant federations.

Messages protesting her disappearance should be sent to: the Mexican Embassy, 8 Halkin Street, London SW1.

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Reviews

Turn left at Land's End



Turn Left at Lands End, **Alan JP Dalton, Red Boots Publications, £2.95. Available from Red Boots at 3 Montpelier Grove, London NW5 2XD (add 50p p&p). Any profits will go to Cornwall County Labour Party.**

Political activists have funny holidays. Wherever they go, they manage to sniff out a picket line or a protest march; wherever they have a drink, they find the local shop steward or a crew from Greenpeace.

Alan Dalton planned a dream holiday for political activists. He spent six weeks walking the Coastal path round Cornwall, talking to the local political figures he met on the way. *Turn Left at Lands End* is the result of his journey.

This book tells you the things that don't strike most holidaymakers about Cornwall — the full day's journey to the nearest hospital or dole office; how second homes are upping the house prices out of the reach of local people; and that the level of unemployment is worse than most of South London.

A member of Camelford and District Labour Party asks how we'd feel at having a 60-mile round trip to attend a General Committee meeting!

Dalton meets Labour Party members, trade unionists, peace campaigners and Cornish nationalists. Lynne Isaacs, Chair of St Ives Labour Party, talks of the campaign they spearheaded to try to save the Geevor tin mine. I remember my own holiday in Cornwall in '86, and the surprise at the "Tin Miners Support Group" stickers all over the Lands End peninsular.

It spurred me into visiting the mine and as the people there said, there's no other local employment outside the tourist industry and a

By Dan Carter

few jobs on local farms. It was also one of the strongest workplaces in terms of union organisation — and now that's gone too.

The experiences of support work carried out by the St Ives Labour Party were very similar to those we carried out across the country during the coal miners' strike.

The most depressing parts of the book outline the collapse of traditional Cornish industries — fishing, tin mining, and now the China Clay works. It is indicative of many parts of the country that many trade unionists interviewed by Alan are now public sector workers. Cornwall's isolation has accelerated its industrial and manufacturing collapse and tourism hinders rather than helps any recovery in the local economy.

This books allows those of us who only know Alan Dalton from his work at the Labour Research Department to get through to a real person behind the statistics and economic tables. For alongside the stories of unemployment, low pay and lack of childcare are the Cornish pasties, the scenery and the sunsets.

My favourite story is the local rock musician who's become a Labour Councillor — "I think the Labour Party is the Party least likely to stamp on you" he says. The book is well illustrated and easy to read.

Holiday

If you've every been to Cornwall on holiday, this book is a "must" — if only to recollect the pubs he visits on the way and describes in "Good Beer Guide" detail. If you haven't been and you read it, I guarantee you'll want to go next summer — and will get a lot more out of it after reading this book.

The biggest lesson of the book is how both the history and present day realities of rural socialism and trade unionism are ignored by much of the modern labour movement except on the day of the Tolpuddle Martyrs rally.

As Alan concludes: "All of us have to take a longer and deeper look at Cornwall beyond your 'holiday season' view. People work and live there and make it nice for when we go on holiday. What do we owe them in return? First of all we could start to listen to them, and that goes, especially, for the leaders of the Labour Party and the national trade unions."

Child Abuse debate

CHILD ABUSE: "the family" is the problem

"I have discussed the question of child abuse with six different New Guinea anthropologists who collectively have spent approximately 150 months in the field. With one minor exception, none of them reported anything that could reasonably be construed as child abuse and they all agree that child abuse, if it occurs, must be exceedingly rare."

L.L. Langness'

This quotation is from an important volume of studies on child abuse edited by anthropologist, Jill Korbin.[2] The book's basic finding is that child abuse is virtually impossible in cultures with "extended" family systems. The horrendous stories of sexual abuse and cruelty towards children which have been making headline news in Britain and the United States in recent years stem directly from the pathologically restricted, isolated, private, unaccountable and anti-social form of kinship system now prevailing in the capitalist West.

Briefing readers will have been horrified at last month's Old Bailey case in which an elaborate network of alleged sexual abusers in Lewisham were let off when a nine-year old girl witness broke down and cried in the witness box. And earlier this year, they will have been angered at the venomous gutter-press attacks made on those Cleveland social workers and paediatricians who with some courage attempted to measure up to the scale of the problem of child abuse in their area.

"Safe" issues

A welcome outcome of child-abuse publicity has been a much greater public awareness of the dangers facing many childen within the assumed safety of their family situations. But predictably, the Government and media have focused on "safe" issues — such as the need for video-links in court cases (an obvious and welcome measure) and alleged mistakes by social workers (always popular with readers of *the Sun*). As far as both Government and media are concerned, anything is better than conceding the inescapable truth: that the abuse of children is not just a crime perpetrated by a few isolated deviants who must be tracked-down and punished. It is endemic within our kinship system itself.

Alarming.

Child abuse in Britain is growing at an alarming rate. The NSPCC's register research provides the most accurate figures.[3] These show a 42 per cent increase in registered abuse cases in 1985 compared with 1984, and a 34 per cent increase in 1986 compared with 1985. In 1986, 2137 children were placed on the NSPCC's registers; of these, the majority were physically injured in one way or another, 87 of them "fatally or seriously". The most dramatic increase has been in the number of *sexually* abused cases. In 1986 some 527 children were registered by the NSPCC as having been sexually abused, a 137 per cent increase over the 1985 figure. 80 per cent of the sexually abused children were girls; 18 per cent were aged less than five.

The NSPCC's report *(Research Briefing No. 8)* notes:

"The sexually and emotionally abused children were just as likely to be living with a father substitute as with their natural father..."

Natural mothers and fathers were almost equally implicated in the injury cases (32 per cent and 31 per cent respectively). Natural fathers were implicated in 31 per cent of the sexual abuse cases in contrast to 1 per cent of natural mothers. Father substitutes, stepfathers and cohabitees (but not visiting boyfriends) were implicated in

By Chris Knight (Department of Anthropology, University College, London)

26 per cent of the sexual abuse cases. Father substitutes were implicated in 69 per cent and natural fathers in 55 per cent of these cases where the child was living with him. In most cases for all types of abuse, "marital problems" were cited by social workers as having created the stress which precipitated the abuse. Finally, whilst it is of course true that child abuse is now being reported more often, owing to greater awareness, the figures assuredly give us only a fractional glimpse of the real picture.

China.

In the book mentioned above, Korbin (pp. 175-6) demonstrates that chld abuse is virtually non-existent, not only in "primitive" or "traditional" societies with extended family systems, but also in modern China. The Chinese revolution represented, in many respects, a joining together of the future with the "primitive communism" of the past. Whilst rooting out many features of feudalism in the kinship system, the revolution drew on and even strengthened the ancient tradition of extended families, so that the three-generational family became seen as a mini-collective, a small mutual aid group and the core of the street committee or neighbourhood committee. The state's education and welfare services mesh in with such extended forms of kinship, and rely heavily on local initiatives. "If a child is ill-treated by his parents" explains a Chinese informant (p. 166), "the neighbours usually interfere. Sometimes the neighbourhood committee ...comes and criticises the parents...". It is because of this extension of accountability, limitation on privacy and local involvement between families that, as a Chinese informant explains (p. 166),

"cases of child mistreatment are very few in China, and still fewer are brought to the courts. The main reason is that everybody is aware that children are not private property to be dealt with at will."

Endemic.

It is well known that in the West, abusive parents "tend to have limited social networks" (Korbin, p. 175). But "abusive parents" are only one end of a spectrum. Stress in relation to childcare is endemic in our kinship system, which leaves women isolated in the home, allows men to be totally unaccountable in their "private lives" and places impossible expectations of and burdens on the marital relationship. There is no escape from Korbin's basic finding: it is the pathologically isolated and private structure of the Western capitalist nuclear familiy which produces child abuse as a matter of course, the more horrifying reported cases being just the tip of a vast iceberg of hidden childhood suffering.

Conclusion.

"It seems to be a regularity in the cross-cultural record," concludes Korbin (pp. 175-6), "that extended households act in a variety of ways as a deterrent to harsh and punitive child-rearing practices." In societies with an adequately collective kinship system, there is no need for a vast army of social workers, no need for the involvement of police, no need for nine-year-olds to make speeches in courts. A child in potential trouble can just pop next door. There are lessons here for us all.

Notes

1. In Jill Korbin, *Child abuse and neglect: cross-cultural perspectives*. University of California Press, 1983, p. 25n.
2. As above.
3. Thanks to Sarah Brown of the National Children's Bureau for these statistics.

South Asia

Will nuclear war start here?

The world is full of political hot-spots, but which is the most likely source of nuclear conflict?

Attention has been focused on Europe, but this is implausible for a number of reasons.

Nor is a strategic nuclear exchange between the US and USSR — over the European heads, as it were — a very likely scenario.

No, the likeliest contenders for the role of Sarajevo of World War III are in the Third World, and more and more people in the west are beginning to realise this.

The most unstable area is not the middle east, where Israel's bomb is obviously a danger, but where so far no Arab rival has emerged — but the south Asian subcontinent.

India already has the capacity to make nuclear bombs, and Pakistan is on the verge of acquiring it, secretly, if it does not already have it.

Why are the nuclear elites of India and Pakistan more likely to use the bomb than their superpower colleagues?

By Achin Vanaik

It is certainly not the case that the former are more "irresponsible" than the latter. Such an accusation only lends credibility to the bomb lobbies in the sub-continent which claim that if the north has the bomb then the south should follow suit and that anyone who argues to the contrary is a victim of colonial mentality.

Of course, things are more complicated than this. One must try to stop *both* horizontal and vertical proliferation through partial or comprehensive measures on various levels. One initiative here would obviously stimulate others in different spheres.

There are at least four reasons why a regional nuclear war in South Asia is possible. First, a deep mistrust persists between the governments of the two countries. This historically rooted hostility has manifested itself in three wars since 1947. Only the middle east, where Israel and the Arab regimes have fought each other four times, has a worse record. By contrast US and Soviet troops have not directly fought with each other since 1922.

Secondly, Pakistan continues to be India's main rival and chief obstacle to regional hegemony, a long-term and vital goal for the Indian elite. Pakistan's strategic alliance with the US makes Pakistan a formidable power, even if the US did not directly involve itself in an Indo-Pakistan war.

Thirdly, a conventional war between these two countries is always a real possibility. If both have the bomb the pressures to use it will grow as neither side can afford to "lose" the war or even to "lose face".

Firebreak

The firebreak between conventional and nuclear warfare in the sub-continent has been eroded, as it has been in Europe. But the likelihood of a conventional war in Europe, across the east-west divide, is much less than that of an Indo-Pakistan conventional war.

Fourth, a regional nuclear war in South Asia would be *unlikely* to trigger off a strategic thermonuclear exchange between the superpowers.

Horrendous as the damage would be, the subcontinent could still survive tens of millions dead on both sides. The psychological barrier to the use of nuclear weapons may therefore be weaker than in the case of the superpower stand off in Europe. The debate over the nuclear winter "threshold" does not have wide resonance in the subcontinent. This danger does not weigh heavily on the nuclear elites of India and Pakistan.

Peace movements in the subcontinent (which are just beginning to emerge) and peace movements elsewhere, for example in Britain and Europe, must begin to make links and fight for a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) in south Asia and in the Indian Ocean.

END, CND, the British Labour Party, other social democratic parties in Europe, as well as progressive movements in general, must come together to demand the creation of a NWFZ in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean.

The time to make such a public demand on the governments of India and Pakistan is now and not in two, three, four, or more years when both countries hav been sucked further into the terrifying logic of a regional nuclear arms race.



PHOTO Themis Michaelidou

Ruth Mompati, ANC representative, during a recent speaking tour of Britain

ANC reject gay rights

Two leading members of the African National Congress of South Africa have expressed their opposition to lesbian and gay rights.

They have indicated that homosexuals can expect little tolerance or acceptance in an ANC-led post-apartheid state.

Solly Smith, the ANC's representative in Britain, said:

"We don't have a policy. Lesbian and gay rights do not arise in the ANC. We cannot be diverted from our struggle by these issues. We believe in the majority being equal. Those people (lesbians and gays) are in the minority. The majority must rule."

When asked if the ANC was opposed to discrimination against gays, and if it would repeal the Botha regime's anti-gay laws after South Africa was liberated, Smith replied:

"I have no comment on that."

His statement comes in the wake of earlier comments by Ruth Mompati, a leading member of the ANC national executive based in Lusaka who was recently in Britain on a speaking tour. She professed:

"I cannot even begin to understand why people want lesbian and gay rights. The gays have no problems. They have nice houses and plenty to eat. I don't see them suffering. No one is persecuting them... We haven't heard about this problem in South African until recently. It seems to be fashionable in the West."

When quizzed about her reaction to the formation of anti-apartheid gay organisations in South Africa, Mompati insisted:

"They are not doing the liberation struggle a favour by organising separately and campaigning for their rights. The (gay) issue is being brought up to take attention away from the main struggle against apartheid. These other problems can wait till later. They are red herrings."

Mompati justified the ANC's lack of policy on lesbian and gay rights by stating:

"We don't have a policy on flower sellers either."

Whilst she believed that women have special problems and interests, Mompati was adamant that "lesbians and gays do not."

"We are not going to single them (gays) out for special attention and treatment."

Did she agree gay people should be free from oppression?

"I'm not going to comment on that," replied Mompati.

On being further pressed, she stated:

"I hope that in a liberated South Africa people will live a *normal* life. I emphasise the word *normal*... Tell me, are lesbians and gays normal? No, it is not normal. If everyone was like that, the human race would come to an end."

These statements by Smith and Mompati contrast with the more sensitive remarks made by ANC representatives to a South African student delegation in Harare in April 1986. According to the student's written report — entitled *NUSAS talks to the ANC* and since declared a banned publication by the Botha government — the ANC representatives said they had "no policy" on lesbian and gay rights, though they "kept an open mind on the issue."

The ANC is also reported as having stated:

"ANC policy grows as it confronts social questions that need to be addressed. A democratic state should restructure and accommodate issues related to oppression... freedom of association is enshrined in the Freedom Charter (the ANC's declaration of principles)."

Meanwhile, a number of prominent anti-apartheid leaders inside South Africa have recently expressed their support for lesbian and gay rights.

Earlier this year, the Chair of the Rand Gay Organisation of Johannesburg, Siphiwe Alfred Machela, encountered problems in finalising a trip to address gay organisations in Sweden. When Winnie Mandela, wife of the imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, heard about these problems, she offered to help sort things out and to send a personal message to the Swedish gay movement.

Additionally, she has given her backing to gays involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, including Tseko Simon Nkoli who is currently on trial with 19 others charged with treason and could face the death penalty.

Support for the gay cause has also been forthcoming from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who has met Siphiwe Machela and visited Tseko Nkoli during his trial, giving them both his personal blessing.

In June this year, Dr Beyers Naude, the outgoing general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, stated that he welcomed the involvement of lesbians and gays in the fight against apartheid. The same month, Murphy Morobe, a leader of the main legal anti-apartheid organisation, the United Democratic Front, assured Siphiwe Machela of his support for gay rights and expressed his satisfaction at the anti-apartheid commitment of the Rand Gay Organisation.

Along the color line

Drugs, alcoholism and suicide



Dr Manning Marable

A personal view of current affairs in the USA by Dr Manning Marable

Whenever I have lectured before a large audience in recent months, inevitably I am asked the same question.

Essentially, it goes something like this:

"The Black community is in the midst of an unprecedented social crisis. Why aren't Afro-Americans rioting in the streets? What is keeping a check on Black urban militancy, when the material and social conditions which gave rise to the riots of the 1960s are actually much worse today?"

There is no precise chemistry which can reliably predict the creation of an urban explosion, even though critical volatile elements are currently present.

Too often, social discontent and rage are channelled away from meaningful public protests into purely self-destructive activity. The energy and dynamism of Black urban youth are manipulated into self-defeating activity.

The struggle against illegal drugs is being lost in most of this country's major inner cities. Recent federally-financed studies state that the major group which has turned away from drugs such as cocaine in the past five years is the well-educated, white upper middle class.

Many Hispanics, Blacks, low income people and those with less than a High School education have continued and/or increased their collective drug dependency.

The crack epidemic continues in poor urban communities virtually unchecked. In one recent study of heroin addicts in New York City, it was determined that Blacks and Hispanics comprised about 75% of all the city's addicts.

Another 1982 survey of data on drug dependency, based on material from over 30,000 treatment centres, showed that 44% of all addicts were Black; 20% were Hispanic, and only 36% were white.

There was no recognised "drug problem" in this country until the crisis of illegal drugs began to claim thousands of victims among the daughters and sons of the white upper middle class. As long as cocaine was identified with Black musicians, street people and / or prostitutes, no real social problem was said to exist.

Illegal drugs serve to diffuse Black collective action, and recent data indicates the drug issue now receives less governmental and media attention because its victims have become once more predominately Black and poor. As Dr Mitchell S. Rosenthal, head of Phoenix House, a network of drug treatment centres, states:

"In the heroin crisis of the late 1960s and again with crack in recent years it was the threat to the middle and upper middle class kids that put pressure on state legislatures and Congress. There is a danger that if they feel less of a threat, the resources won't stay with the problem."

Another continuing social problem for Blacks, as well as other Americans, is alcoholism. There are an estimated 6 to 9 million confirmed alcohlics in the US. Blacks, especially those with lower levels of income and education, are a disproportionate number of them.

There's also evidence that alcoholism is a rapidly growing problem for Black women. Statistically, most Black women are more likely not to drink alcohol than are white females. However, the proportion of heavy or "problem drinkers" among Black women is about three times the proportion of white females classified as heavy drinkers.

There is also growing evidence of an unprecedented rise in the suicide rates of Blacks, especially younger Blacks, since the civil rights era. Between 1950 and 1977, for instance, the annual suicide rate of Black males soared from 6.8 per 100,000 to 11.4 per 100,000.

Also in these years, the Black female suicide rate more than doubled, from 1.6 per 100,000 to 3.5 per 100,000. Nearly one half of all suicides among Afro-Americans occur today among young adults, between the ages of 20 and 34. Within the more narrow age group of 25 to 29 years, the suicide rate among Black males is higher than that for white men and women living in urban areas.

Why are Black young adults killing themselves in record numbers?

You don't need an occupying army to wipe out a spirit of resistance among an oppressed people. You simply pump unlimited supplies of cocaine, heroin, and other drugs into their neighbourhoods. You burden them with an unemployment rate of 20% and higher. You give them poor schools, few health clinics, and reinforce white corporate standards of beauty and materialism in the media and popular culture. Drug dependency, alcohlism and suicides are the inevitable result.

BTR strike is over

The Long March

South Africa's longest labour dispute is over.

On 1st May 1985, 800 workers at the BTR-owned SARMCOL plant in Howick were sacked after a strike for union recognition.

BTR refused to meet the strikers or discuss recognition of their union MAWU (now NUMSA).

The union was forced to take BTR to court. After 39 days of hearings, spread over a year, the court found that there were no gounds for reinstatement.

This is hardly surprising. The impartiality of the court was questioned right from the start.

In particular, the union raised objections to the appointment of Charl de Witt. A labour relations consultant, he is believed to be an academic bursary from the Anglo American Corporation, and a part-time fee-earning management consultant who had expressed himself in favour of a return to common law for the regulation of labour disputes.

The impartiality of the president of the court, Pierre Roux, was also questioned by the union. Sarmcol has conceded that their dismissal of the workers was based on advice from a leading industrial advisor, Andrew Levy, who would presumably be called as a witness.

Right in the middle of the trial, Levy organised a seminar geared to management which was to be addressed by all the BTR lawyers and formally opened by the president of the court, Pierre Roux.

Some of the comments contained in the judgement make startling reading and more than confirm the union's suspicions.

Referring to the employment of members of Buthelezi's fake United Workers Union of South Africa (Mwusa) (which has caused great bitterness among the sacked workers), Roux said:

"The effect of the dismissal of the 890 employees — all members of the Metal and Allied Workers' Unon — was that Mawu's influence at BTR waned and for all practical purposes Mawu disappeared from the workplace at BTR. Consequently Uwusa, a rival union, was allowed to start organising at BTR and... canvassed the majority of the replacement staff."

By Charlie van Gelderen
Brent South CLP

Equally remarkable was his criticism of Geoff Schreiner, a union official, saying his evidence was "influenced to a certain extent by his youthful idealism. He was obviously intent on furthering unionism, and in evidence he was inclined to justify the actions of union members." How strange for a union official!

The court also severely criticised the union for their 'complete insensitivity to the economic losses being occasioned to BTR by the sustained industrial action..."

Finally the court had something to say about the way Mawu reached its decisions:

"A disturbing feature which was disclosed by the evidence in this case was the form of collective democracy practised by this union... union activity depends solely on the collective will of the members. This has the convenient effect that no individual member can he held responsible or called to account for his action or inaction..."

In the opinion of the court, collective democracy of the kind practised by unions should not be tolerated in South Africa.

BTR is one of the 10 biggest companies in Britain. It took over Dunlops 3 years ago, and last year sacked 300 J.E. Hangers (Artificial Limb) workers at Roehampton who went on strike following the company's summary termination of the employees pensions agreement.

Concrete support for the Numsa workers can be given by supporting the play *The Long March* which is currently touring Britain. All the actors are Sarmcol strikers and this play is about their own lives and their own struggles. It is a story of solidarity and survival.

Get a list of BTR's network — the company is so diversified, its lists of subsidiaries fill pages and pages of "Who owns whom". *The Long March* programme contains a useful list.

Get your union to take appropriate action in support of the BTR strikers in Britain, and in South Africa.

For further information contact: SAWCO, c/o 12 Manor Road Extension, Leicester LE2 4FF. Tel. (0533) 712041.

Container leaves for Nicaragua

On September 23rd, the Nicaragua Campaign's 5th container of material aid to Niaragua set sail on its month-long journey to the port of Corinto, on Nicaragua's Pacific coast.

The contents of the container range from wheelchairs to wellington boots, from saucepans to toolkits and trousers.

It was filled by a range of different groups who donated goods themselves, and by many people in the country who gave money, which the NSC used to buy urgently needed materials in bulk. Part of the container was filled with goods bought by the Women's Container Appeal, specifically aimed at women's needs in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan people are in the midst of a severe economic crisis, blockaded by the US and having to devote precious resources to defence against the attacks of the US-backed contra forces.

In response to the blockade, the Nicaraguans launched the *Nicaragua Must Survive* Campaign in 1985, an appeal for international solidarity, of growing importance as the crisis deepens.

To be distributed where the Nicaraguans consider the need to be greatest, many of the goods are destined to provide basic help to the people displaced by contra attacks.

For details of the Campaign contact N.S.C., 23 Bevenden Street, London N1 6BH; or Tony Quickenden, 01-608 0414.

Taken from NSC press release

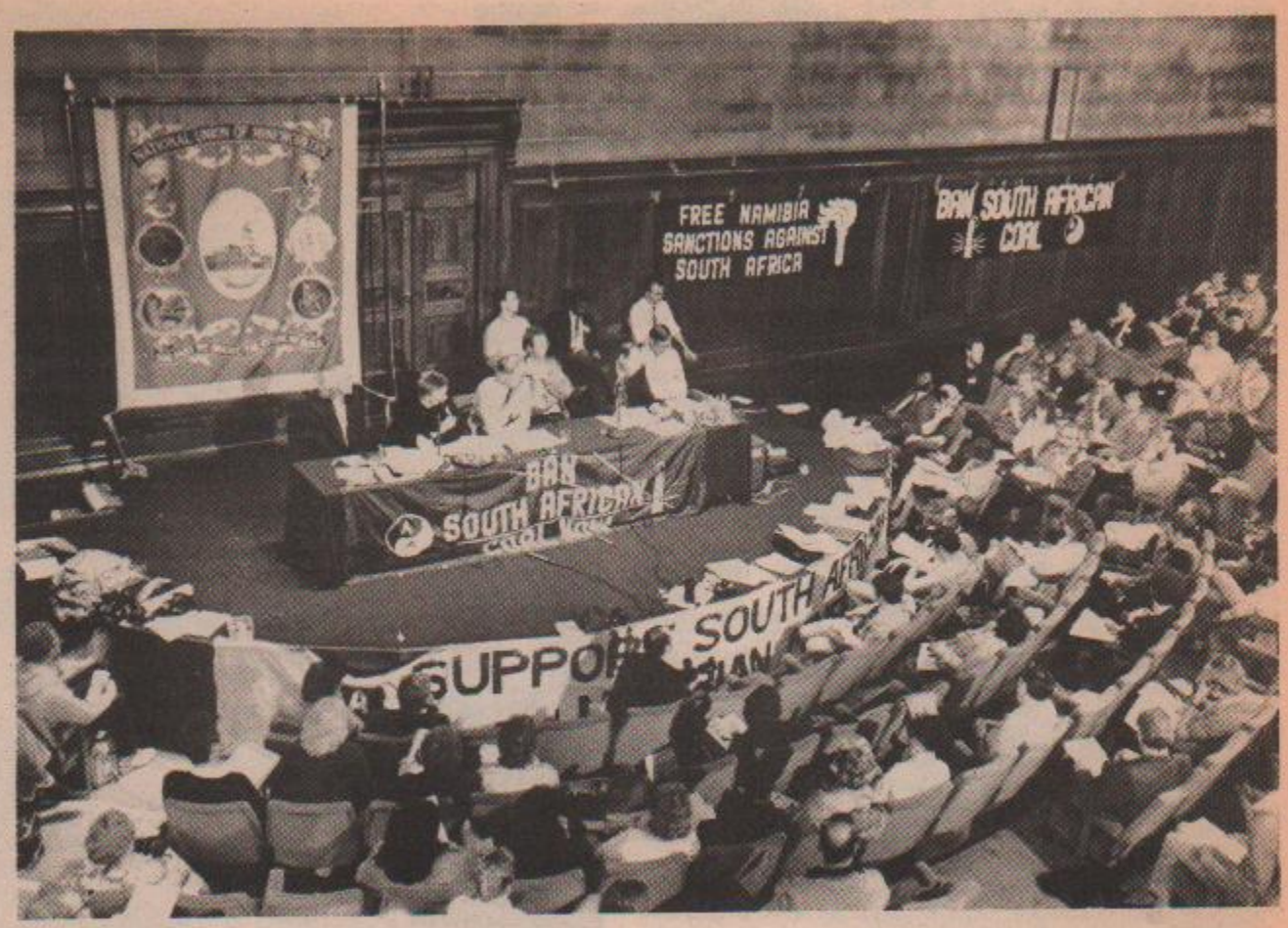


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Stop South African Coal! — conference, Sheffield

STOP SOUTH AFRICAN COAL!

The three week strike of South African miners in August has again underlined the crucial role that the mining industry plays in propping up the apartheid economy.

It is gold which has been viewed as South Africa's central lifeline.

By Steve Roberts

But today coal is playing an increasingly important role, becoming the regime's second largest contributor to export earnings and providing 75% of the country's energy requirements.

In recognition of this growing strategic importance of coal, an international campaign has been launched by the National Union of Mineworkers to block all South African coal exports into Europe.

Since the early 1970s South African coal production has more than trippled from 53m tonnes to 172m tonnes, making South Africa the world's third largest producer after Australia and the USA. This increase had the dual purpose of satisfying the country's energy needs, and creating a major export industry.

The strategy was particularly aimed at Europe. The South African authorities calculated that if they could stimulate an appetite for cheap South African coal, this could mean energy costs low enough to act as a further disincentive against taking effective action against apartheid.

The export of coal is directly linked to undermining sanctions. In 1971 the South African government announced its plans for the expansion of the coal industry in the 1990s. These plans were centred on the allocation of export quotas, linked to the increase in the handling capacity of the loading terminal at Richard's Bay to the north of Durban.

There was surprise and dismay among South African mine owners in 1976 when, out of a total quota of 20m tonnes, Shell was allocated 3m and a further 3m were allocated to Ermelo (a consortium of BP, Total and Gencor).

Three years later the reason for the government's "generosity" became clear when Chris Heunis, then South African minister for Economic Affairs, explained, "Export quotas for BP, Shell and Total have been subjected to the condition that they continue their obligations in supplying petroleum fuel to this country."

Thus the implementation of the coal export strategy was also a carrot to bribe the oil monopolies to maintain vital imports.

Not surprisingly these companies also figure largely among those who actually ship the coal to Europe. Shell in particular owns a large number of coal bulk carriers with which it ships coal to Europort, Amsterdam, Ijmuiden, Aabenraa, Antwerp, Taranto, Ancona, Augusta (Italy) and Carboneras (Spain). Other major shipping companies are BP (UK), Cetragpa (France), Bocmar (Belgium), Cobelfret (Belgium), Carboex (Spain), Thyssen (West Germany), and Nippon Yusen Kaisha (Japan).

About half of South Africa's coal exports are shipped to EC countries. Italy, West Germany, the Spanish state and Belgium are the major importers.

Sanctions imposed by France (1986) and Denmark (1987) have drastically reduced the amount of *direct* shipments of coal into those countries. However the South African authorities have responded by increasing the secrecy surrounding the shipments of South African coal.

Neither is the coal trade limited to Europe. Hong Kong plays a crucial role in the transhipment of South African coal to South Korea and other countries in the Far East.

Numerous methods exist to circumvent sanctions:

- **semi-direct shipments:** discharging part cargo in another port prior to discharge of the remaining South African coal cargo in another port.
- **transhipment and temporary storage in some European port** (usually Rotterdam) before shipment — on another vessel.
- **import and subsequent re-export of South African coal** by a European country to another, perhaps with a new "certificate of origin".
- **mixing of South African coal with other coal,** either during shipment or in port.

Stopping the remaining 21m tonnes of apartheid coal coming into Western Europe was the aim of a new campaign launched in Sheffield on September 19th. A conference called by the National Union of Mineworkers and the Anti-Apartheid Movement drew together 430 labour movement delegates, including 103 representatives from pits and the Women Against Pit Closures movement.

NUM President Arthur Scargill opened the conference with a speech applauding the South African miners' strike and condemning the refusal of the South African authorities to let Cyril Ramaphosa attend the conference. The NUM collected £375,000 from all over Europe to assist the strike, with much more on the way.

Scargill called on governments in Europe to stop completely the import of coal stained with the blood of the 48,000 South African miners who have lost their lives this century in accidents. However, concluding his speech, Scargill said that it was not sufficient merely to demand sanctions. "We as trade unionists should impose our own sanctions. We should take a leaf from the book of the Liverpool dockers and the Dunnes Stores strikers."

The Dunnes strikers were shop assistants in a large Dublin store who refused to handle South African goods, were sacked and remain in dispute with their management. A representative of the Liverpool dockers explained to the conference that, following an appeal by Ben Uulenga, General Secretary of the Mineworkers of Namibia, they refused to handle shipments of Namibian and South African uranium into the port.

The conference went on to adopt an action programme which included:

- Disinvestment campaigns against all companies involved in the coal trade, particularly Shell, the number one target of the international anti-Apartheid movement.
- Action to be organised at all ports of entry.
- Research into sanctions evasion.
- A campaign in the European parliament.
- Action to ban all South African coal transhipments via Rotterdam and Hong Kong.

After the South African miners' strike, one of the best ways that militants can support their struggle is to choke the coal connection between apartheid and Europe.

Travel ban on Ramaphosa

South African miners' leader Cyril Ramaphosa was refused permission to leave South Africa for the Sheffield Conference. The only basis on which the apartheid authorities were prepared to allow him to leave the country was on a passport of a designated homeland. Accepting such a passport would have enabled the authorities to deport Ramaphosa to the Venda homeland as an alien on his return to South Africa. Strong protests from the British NUM and Trade Union Congress eventually secured the necessary documents for Ramaphosa to visit Britain, although, of course, too late to attend the Conference.

March for Civil Rights and Justice

Saturday October 3rd saw 2,500 people march the 13 miles from Broadwater Farm to Downing Street, and then on to a rally in Hyde Park.

The march was organised by the BWF Youth Association, to launch the "Movement for Civil Rights and Justice".

A wide range of organisations supported the march, notably a strong Irish contingent.

The main demands of the march, held on the anniversary of the police killing of Cynthia Jarrett and the subsequent clashes on the Farm, were for:

- an immediate public inquiry into the events of October 6th 1985 and the following massive police repression;
- the immediate release of all the 40+ youth still jailed in the subsequent "conveyor belt" show trials.

At the rally in Hyde Park Dolly Kiffin told the crowd that "We are going to go on and on, until the last drop of blood, because I will not accept that because I am black I do not have equal rights in this country."

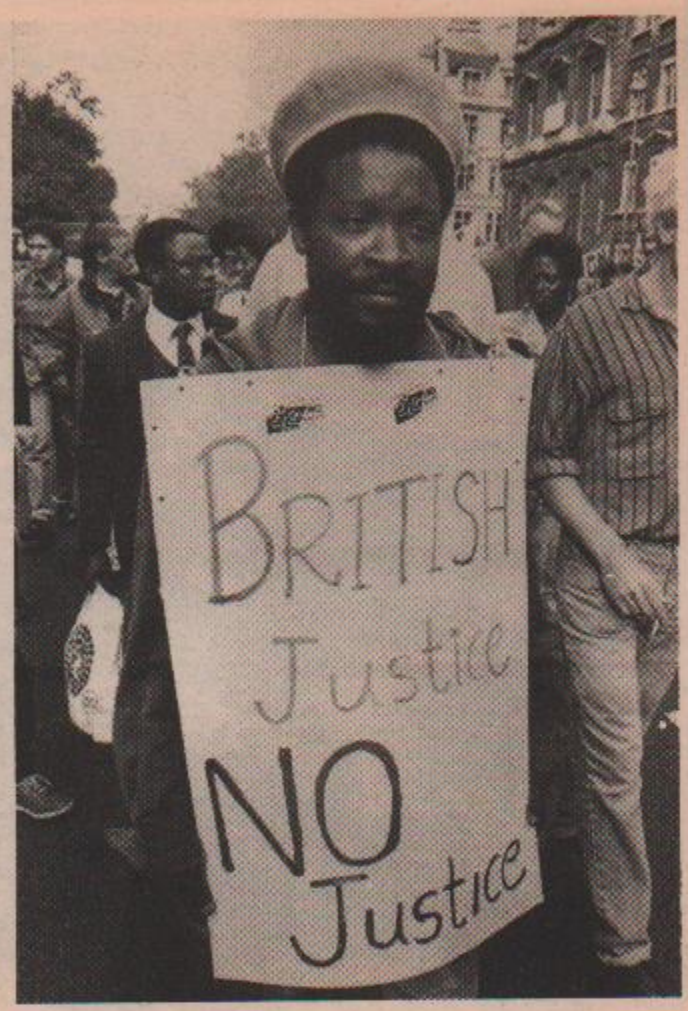
Stafford Scott of the Youth Association congratulated the marchers for "standing up and being counted and demanding justice" and went on to attack the Labour leadership's vain search for the "middle ground".

"Any reasonable person knows that the yuppie vote and the working class vote cannot go together," said Scott.

The relatives of the "Tottenham 3", framed for the killing of PC Blakelock, also addressed the rally. Sharon Raghip, whose husband Engin is serving 30 years for the Blakelock killing, said "Engin, Winston Silcott, and Mark Braithwaite were made scapegoats by the British police... I am glad that there are people who know the truth and who are willing to come out and fight for it. We have the strength to beat the system."

Other speakers included Annette Monnerville, lawyers Mike Mansfield and Tony Gifford, Diane Abbott MP, former Haringey Council leader Steve King, and representatives from the Viraj Mendis campaign, Catholic Association for Racial Justice, Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Irish Freedom Movement.

By Dave Palmer
Haringey Labour Briefing



The March succeeded in keeping the BWF events and the imprisoned youth on the national political agenda. As a locally based campaign, the "Civil Rights" Movement has succeeded in its initial objectives.

The breadth of the platform assembled in support of the Farm is important. It shows the direction in which initiatives organised against state racism and in defence of the democratic rights of black people and the working class should, and can, develop.

Briefing will continue to fully participate in and support both Civil Rights Movement and all other campaigns in defence of democratic rights and against state racism.

The objective now should be to take initiatives like the Civil Rights Movement into the labour movement nationally.

Scottish Labour Briefing

STRIP-SEARCHING CAMPAIGN

Alex Falconer, Euro MP for Mid Scotland and Fife, helped launch the Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searches at the Cowane Centre, Stirling, on Saturday 26th September.

The organisers were pleased with the high turnout — the meetings was well attended by representatives of community groups, trade unions, student organisations, political groups and interested individuals from all over Scotland.

Letters of support were received from many public figures including Jo Richardson MP, Gavin Strang MP, Carole Tongue MEP, Winnie Ewing MEP and Margaret Ewing MP.

Margaret Stewart added "I am very encouraged by the response to Saturday's launch — a strategy for the future was decided. This in turn will result in more pressure groups campaigning for an end to this practice, described by many as 'institutionalised violence'. I am hopeful that this launch is the start of a campaign which will grow from strength to strength."

"A degrading and humiliating practice," was how Margaret Stewart, one of the National organisers described strip searching. In a moving speech she quoted one prisoner who stated that strip searches were "a method of inflicting pain without leaving surface bruises."

The launch had the twin purpose of informing those attending of the issues surrounding strip searching and that of planning the future actions to be taken by the campaign in the coming year.

After a lively discussion, the group chose to bring out a factsheet to be distributed nationwide in early November, followed by an "information roadshow" with literature, speakers and a video touring various groups throughout Scotland.

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LABOUR BRIEFING
Racist sentences reduced
Chinese community defends the Diamond 4
On Monday October 5th following a rigorous five-week campaign culminating in a picket of the appeal hearing, the four Diamond Restaurant waiters' original sentence of 2 years was reduced to 9 months.
This decision confirms the blatant partiality of the British Courts, but also acknowledges the pressure mounted by a successful campaign.
In summing up, the Appeal Judge was forced to concede that the waiters' "vulnerable" working conditions and the support they had received from the Chinese community, including the very many character references organised by the Campaign, had to be taken into account.
The Campaign has clearly touched a raw nerve in the Chinese community. The incident itself has brought years of resentment to the surface; but despite increasing violence and racist incidents in Chinatown and elsewhere they have not been given the police protection necessary to prevent such attacks.
Instead the police have allowed — and even encouraged — the view that Chinese restaurants and take-aways are easy targets for perpetrating racist verbal abuse, causing disruption and carrying out assaults.
The launch of the campaign, however, has brought forward urgent and united demands that the workers are not victimised for their everyday experience of having to defend themselves from violent, racist customers. The Campaign has highlighted the need for solidarity with other black communities determined to resist racist attacks to themselves, their homes and their workplaces.
By Jabez Lam and Ai Meun Lim
Regular street leafletting and collections in Chinatown have enabled the Campaign to achieve a prominent profile, with donations amounting to £3,600 and 1,200 signatures collected in a short space of time.
A public meeting on the issue was attended by over 100 Chinese people and speakers from the waiters' families, as well as Jeremy Corbyn MP and Dave Turnbull, Branch Secretary of T&G catering sector.
The atmosphere at the meeting was particularly charged when Lin Fatt Man, a take-away shop owner, came forward with video recordings of the almost daily harassment he and his family receive, ranging from lighted cigarettes being deliberately thrown into the cooking oil, the destruction of furniture, threats and abusive language to assaults by gangs of whites. The police, if they arrive, inevitably fail to take action against these gangs — leaving the family more open to attack the next time.
The wives of the waiters spoke of their gratitude for the moral and financial support received, and their determination to expose the discriminatory nature of the police and the court.
Most importantly, this Campaign has added to the growing recognition that Chinese workers need to organise themselves in order to achieve not only better pay but also better and safer working conditions. The Chinese bosses have shown, throughout this period, that even when their interests are not directly opposed to those of the workers, their role remains one of subverting direct action and radical demands.
Following on from the Wheelers strike, the call for a Chinese Workers Association, for workers to organise and mobilise autonomously but within the trade union movement, is now stronger than ever before.
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!