LABOUR
BRIEFING
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40p

A *miners'* candidate; not a *media* candidate!



WE'RE BACKING SCARGILL!

Billy Etherington
General Secretary, Durham Colliery Mechanics Association

No one could have done more for the miners during the last five years than our National President Arthur Scargill.

Since Mr Scargill took office in 1982 there has been an unprecedented attack upon the Coal Industry and NUM members by the Board and the government.

In my view, if we had had the type of leader who accepted worsening conditions in the pretext of "negotiating" we would have been in a far worse position today than we actually are.

Arthur Scargill has carried out everything he said he would when he was seeking election initially as National President, and certainly no one can fault him on either his integrity or his endeavour.

There has been a campaign now of over ten years duration against Arthur Scargill by the press and media, and I would ask miners to consider what type of leader they require.

If they want someone who is not going to campaign for better conditions and wages; if they want someone who will accept a catastrophic rundown of the coal industry; if they want someone who will stand idley aside and allow unemployment in mining areas to rise, then of course they certainly should not vote for Arthur Scargill.

If, on the other hand, they want someone whose whole life, since a teenager, has been based on his support of the industry, and loyalty to the NUM, then they will most certainly vote for Arthur Scargill.

As a member of the NUM's National Executive between 1985 and 1987 I was very impressed by Arthur Scargill's sincerity. Since the formation of the UDM Scargill has been the main person holding our national union together at a time when no union this century has suffered the sort of attacks the NUM has had to confront.

I urge all our members in the North East to note what the famous Keir Hardie stated over 80 years ago: if several candidates put up for a position to represent working people and you're not sure who to vote for, then look to see who the press and media tell you not to vote for, and make sure you vote for that person.



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

TYRONE O'SULLIVAN
Tower NUM, South Wales
(personal capacity)

Despite what you see in the papers and on television, South Wales miners support our national president, and support the national line on 6-day coaling, the overtime ban, the reinstatement of sacked and jailed miners, and many other issues.

It is only the Area Leadership and some lodge officials who are constantly attacking Arthur Scargill and national policies.

Rank and file members in South Wales have still not been given a ballot on 6-day coaling, even after being promised that no decision would be taken without a ballot.

But when the Coal Board went to the media and stated that South Wales had accepted 6-day coaling our Area Leaders never denied this, and went on to write articles in support of the policy, knowing that if a ballot were taken the whole concept would be rejected.

Of course the Coal Board has achieved its purpose, and persuaded other Areas like Leicestershire that because South Wales was negotiating on 6-day working, they could to.

We should have held fast from the beginning and insisted that only the national union should negotiate on 6-day coaling.

Most South Wales miners support the re-election of Arthur Scargill and want Labour MPs who could not support us during the Strike to keep their noses out of NUM policy and not to try now to tell us who our president should be.

The Coal Industry still has a rosy future, with big bucks still to be made, as those who want to privatise know full well.

We as miners can benefit most by supporting the line the our national president and rejecting the road of "new realism" put forward by Kinnock and other union leaders.

We don't want a society of Democrats and Republicans. We want a society where we still care for the old, the needy, the unemployed and the sick.

Support Arthur Scargill! Support the national union! We can change society.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

Interview: Sharon Raghip

Campaigning for the Tottenham Three

Enghin Raghip is one of three Tottenham men unjustly convicted of the murder of PC Blakelock, which took place during the Broadwater Farm uprising of October 1985. Along with relatives of the other members of the Tottenham Three, his partner Sharon Raghip has been touring the country, speaking on his behalf, and waging a determined campaign for the release of the Three — all victims of a grotesque police frame-up. *Briefing* spoke to Sharon about her activities and hopes for the future.

***Briefing:* Why have you been campaigning so hard for the release of the Tottenham Three?**
Sharon: I know that all three were convicted on no evidence whatsoever, and they shouldn't have been sent down. Everything presented in court points to the fact that they did not commit this crime.

***Briefing:* What's happening with their appeals?**
Sharon: The appeals are on hold at present. They should go before a judge any time now, and he will make his decision whether to give them leave to appeal.

***Briefing:* Then what?**
Sharon: If they get leave to appeal, they go before three judges and put their cases. The three judges then decide whether to quash their convictions or their sentences or whatever.

***Briefing:* Are the lawyers hopeful that leave to appeal will be granted?**
Sharon: Yes, because of the size and importance of the case and the public interest in it. I certainly hope so.

***Briefing:* Why do you think the judge, in the original trial, didn't dismiss the charges as he did with the three juveniles? Do you think he was afraid of a public outcry if he dismissed all the defendants in this kind of case?**
Sharon: Yes. In my opinion it's because of the media, which created this whole public hysteria about the death of this policeman. After the judge let off the three juveniles there was no way he — or anybody above him — could acquit the three adults. Somebody had to pay for Blakelock's murder.

***Briefing:* That was in the jury's mind as well?**
Sharon: I think it must have been, definitely.

***Briefing:* Did you attend most of the trial?**
Sharon: I sat through about six weeks of it. It was nine weeks altogether. I missed the first three weeks because I was down to be a witness.

***Briefing:* You yourself don't live on Broadwater Farm.**
Sharon: No, I come from the Wood Green area.

***Briefing:* But since the trials, you've developed friends and supporters there?**
Sharon: We've been campaigning as a family (my sister's also married to Enghin's brother) and we decided we would go to the Farm and see what they were planning to do. Now we work jointly with the Defence Campaign.

***Briefing:* Do you see Enghin's case as part of the whole general Broadwater Farm case or as something separate?**
Sharon: I do see it as separate because — even though Enghin went to the Farm that night — he left before 9.30 and says that during the time he did spend on the Farm he did nothing and I believe that.

So I can't go around saying Enghin was defending any community because he wasn't. So though it's said the police attacked that community, I don't really believe it should have resulted in that man's death. I don't celebrate the fact that a policeman died.

***Briefing:* You've been taking your petition around the streets in Haringey. What kind of response have you got?**
Sharon: In Haringey the response has been excellent, but a lot of people — especially young black people — have been frightened of putting their name and address on that kind of petition.

You can't blame them. A lot of people do know what's going on and they sign straight away.

***Briefing:* Where else have you gone, outside Haringey?**
Sharon: All over: Durham; Derby; Brighton; Manchester; Liverpool. Mainly to big demonstrations, conferences,



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Sharon Raghip

public meetings, Cambridge University; Northern Ireland.

***Briefing:* Do people in these places already know about the case?**
Sharon: Yes. A lot of people have heard of the case, especially in mining areas, like Barnsley and Kent. They never hesitate to sign the petition. We get a good reception in most places.

***Briefing:* Have you ever run into hostility?**
Sharon: Twice. Once in Tottenham High Road, near the Spurs ground, when one man told us the three men should be hanged. My sister got really mad, but I bit my tongue.

Another time was in Barnsley, when two young lads wrote "Thomas the Tank Engine" on the petition — I hit them over the head with the papers for mucking about. No one's ever turned round and hit me — yet!

***Briefing:* What did you think of the Civil Rights March?**
Sharon: It could have been a lot bigger than it was, and more organised. In the time we had to build for it, we did well, getting people from Manchester and Oxford.

***Briefing:* What's next in your campaign?**
Sharon: In the next few months there should be a meeting in the House of Commons; also a picket either of the prisons or the Home Office; and a public meeting in Tottenham Town Hall on December 1st.

***Briefing:* How are the imprisoned men doing?**
Sharon: I don't hear a lot from Mark Braithwaite, but Winston's fine. He's just holding on.

Enghin's fine. He's got his head held high. He's just hoping that they will reverse the decision. After that, I don't know.

***Briefing:* What do you want people to do?**
Sharon: Lobby your MPs; come to the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign — there's plenty of work to do; and sign the petition.

If any organisations or trade unions want to know more or get a speaker, just get in touch with the Defence Campaign and I'll be happy to come and speak.

***Briefing:* Before all this happened, had you ever done any political activity or public speaking?**
Sharon: No. Only in arguments in the streets!

***Briefing:* Which individuals and organisations have been helpful?**
Sharon: Mainly left wing groups. Cambridge and Oxford students have given us a lot of support. People from *Labour Briefing* have been very involved from the beginning.

On the MPs' side, Jeremy Corbyn is one of the best. Bernie Grant is starting to get more involved.

We have to wait for the House of Commons meeting and see how many are willing to stand behind us.

***Briefing:* How has all this changed the way you look at things?**
Sharon: Now I question things more than I did in the past. If someone gets sent down or if there's any media hysteria, I question it. But I don't like politics, that's the truth.

Lesbian & Gay rights

Synod synthesis

As non-believers, we take no position on current controversies within the Church of England.

However, the Church's debate on gay vicars and homosexuality in general is interesting.

By MARK SEATON

The resolution passed by the Synod represents a compromise, demonstrating once again the tightrope which the Church must walk in modern British politics.

The viciously homophobic resolution proposed by the right wing was rejected by a big majority — an indication that the fundamentalist, moralist right remains stronger in America than Britain.

The resolution which was finally carried comments ambiguously on both homosexuality and the family. Curiously, there was no discussion of lesbianism, an omission carried forward from the days of Queen Victoria.

Both the agreed position — and the rejected liberal amendment — reasserted that only those relationships conducted within the framework of marriage and the family have the Church's blessing.

In the context of the Alton Bill and new attacks on education and social security, the Church's position can ony reinforce Thatcher's retrenchment of the family — ideologically and materially.

Economic Debate

Who is calling the tune?

Mark Cole raises a number of interesting points on the Stock Market crash in the last issue of *Briefing*.

Perhaps the most intriguing is whether or not the internationalism of present day capitalism will prevent an outbreak of inter-state rivalry.

Cole thinks it will; while Alan Thornett in an earlier issue believes such rivalry inevitable, with a consequent growth in protectionism and militarism.

By Paula Watson
Westminster South CLP

It is probably too soon for anyone to predict accurately the outcome of the present crisis. There may well be world recession; but its length, depth, severity and political consequences cannot yet be foretold.

But the extent to which the needs of international capitalism are taking precedence over the political and electoral priorities of individual governments is becoming clear.

- With an election approaching, Reagan wanted neither to raise taxes nor cut government spending — particularly military spending;
- Thatcher and Lawson need to defend their market philosophy;
- Germany and Japan are anxious to protect themselves from the effects of increasing American export competitiveness as the dollar falls.

International capitalism needs a *controlled* deflation in the US, a *controlled* devaluation of the dollar and a *controlled* reflation in Germany and Japan.

After considerable initial reluctance, Reagan has been forced to accept the need for measures to cut the US trade and budget deficits. He is now talking of probably $30 billion deficit cuts in the current fiscal year, rising to $80bn next year. From Congress comes word of $10bn worth of tax increases and $4 to $5bn of defence cuts.

In public Thatcher and Lawson defend the efficacy of the market in determining economic and fiscal policy, but behind the rhetoric their actions tell a different story:

- Lawson is manipulating interest rates to preserve liquidity;
- the Bank of England is buying dollars (at considerable loss to the public) to prevent too rapid a devaluation;
- Britain is supporting attempts by the Central Banks (begun last Spring with the Louvre accord) to establish a new system of stable exchange rates.

It will be fascinating to see whether any of this will work, particularly whether Germany and Japan will continue to reflate as the upward pressure on the Mark and the Yen makes their own goods increasingly uncompetitive.

But what is clear is that the dictates of international capital have forced Reagan to abandon his neo-Keynesian expansionism, and Thatcher her unfettered market.

There's no need to ask "who are the masters now?" The managers of the giant transnationals are calling the tune and nation states dance to it.

Intelligence

Whatever the outcome, recession or slump, for socialists it is all gain — provided we use some intelligence.

Our most powerful enemies, faced with possible disaster, have abandoned competition, the market and individualism, and are calling for control, planning and international co-operation.

So, with two of our main rivals, Keynesianism and monetarism, utterly discredited and our methodology accepted as right even by our deadliest foes, all we now need are the socialist policies and the will to fight for them.

Fight the Alton Bill!

LOCAL FAB GROUPS

This list is as up-to-date as possible; but check with FAB for the latest details. "Names needed" indicates FAB has had contact from that area, but as yet has no public contact name.

Special Interest

Contact FAB for details of: Black Women Against Alton; Christians for Choice; Disability Group; Jews for Choice.

London

Contact FAB for contact names in: Barnet, Brent, Brockley, Camden, Deptford, Ealing, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Muswell Hill, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, LSE.
Contacts needed for: Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Enfield, Havering, Kingston, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond, Southwark, Sutton, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth.

England

Contact FAB for names in Bedford, Berkhampstead, Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Chelmsford, Cheltenham, Cleveland, Coventry, Croydon, Derby, Exeter, Gateshead, Grays, Guildford, Harrow, Hemel Hempstead, Hull, Leamington Spa, Leeds, Leicester, Lewes, Liverpool, Mansfield, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Poole, Reading, Rochdale, Sheffield, Southampton, Southsea, Stockport, Sunderland, Swansea, Uxbridge, Watford, Widnes, Wigan, Winchester, Wirral, York.
Names needed for: Barnsley, Bath, Beckenham, Billericay, Bishop Stortford, Boreham, Bracknell, Bradfield, Camberley, Chorley, Chester, Colchester, Cramlington, Crawley, Crowthorne, Dewsbury, Eastbourne, Fleet, Frome, Gainford, Grantham, Gravesend, Hampton Field, Harrowgate, High Wycombe, Hungerford, Ilford, Ipswich, Lancaster, Leyland, Lincoln, Littleborough, Llellel, London Colney, Loughborough, Luton, Maidstone, Malvern, Manchester, Matlock, Middlesborough, New Lanark, Newark, Northwich, Portsmouth, Preston, Ruislip, Shipley, Slough, Standlake, Stoke on Trent, Stourbridge, Swanmere, Telford, Tunbridge, Wallington, Wallsend, Wellingborough, Weybridge, Wickford, Wimbourne, Wokingham, Woodford Green.

Scotland

Contact FAB for names in: Ayr, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow.
Names needed for: Aberdeen, Aultmore, Inverness.

Wales

Contact FAB for names in Cardiff, Deeside, Newport, South Glamorgan.

Contact FAB: c/o NAC, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU; 01-490 0042/405 4801.

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

OUR TASK IS NOT TO RESCUE CAPITALISM BUT TO BURY IT!

You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

After decades of blinkered efforts at making the capitalist system work better, Labour's leadership is clearly incapable of approaching things any other way.

While the anarchy of the international money markets reached its new crescendo in the October 19th crash, for the Kinnock team it has been virtually "business as usual".

The recipes to meet the crisis trotted out by John Smith and Brian Gould were little different to the traditional tinkering proposals which have always led Labour governments in the past into economic disaster. They concerned themselves solely with attempting to put the capitalist economies back into working order:

- The huge US budget deficit should be rectified, said Messrs Smith & Gould — but not too fast, or European exports would be hit, and recession would follow.
- Interest rates should be cut in Britain and the USA, and the dollar should be allowed to slide downward in value, argued Gould & Smith, to open the way for economic expansion and make US exports more competitive.
- Britain, West Germany and Japan should all expand their economies to create new markets for goods, said the daring duo, breaking little new ground.

It is a dismal fact that these trite proposals almost exactly echoed the answers in words and deeds from the lips of Nigel Lawson, Margaret Thatcher and the Reagan administration.

- Token measures are being taken to trim the US deficit, though the core problem remains intact.
- Interest rates have been cut several times, and the dollar continues downwards.
- Thatcher herself has joined with Smith & Gould in calling on the Germans and Japanese to expand their economies (of course, not least because this would allow in some of the British exports which will now be pressed out of the US market).

It should come as no surprise that Labour's leaders have once again been caught with their political trousers down. Even their Bank Holiday speeches now exclude any reference to socialism, while Gould is leading the charge to expunge Clause IV from the Party's very vocabulary.

Three years ago Kinnock and Hattersley staggered and appalled many Labour supporters by warmly congratulating Ronald Reagan on his economic policies.

Reagan had begun to create numbers of low-paid jobs in the service sector of the economy as a result of his policies of tax cuts for the rich alongside runaway military spending. These policies are of course precisely the roots of the present US budget deficit — and also of the import boom that has pushed the USA deep into a balance of payments crisis.

During 1984 Hattersley in particular urged Thatcher to adopt similar policies in Britain. Yet even the most superficial observer could see that (like Thatcherism at home) Reaganomics has had a brutal impact on vast sections of unemployed and impoverished US workers, while lining the pockets of the well to do, and of some better-paid workers.

Hattersley praised to the skies the fact that in pursuing this lop-sided expansion of the US economy, Reagan was "not afraid to borrow". Small wonder that Labour leaders and the TUC now want to soft-pedal any call for a correction of the US budget deficit.

Indeed, Clive Jenkins and TUC economic pundits have taken the same line further, arguing that "Reaganomics is now Keynesian"; the US budget deficit, they claim, is creating and sustaining jobs.

Small wonder too, that Thatcher's gang were able to make mincemeat of Kinnock's team on economic issues in the last election. With policies as cranky as this, no serious worker could believe a Labour government would not help plunge the economy into a new crisis like those of the 1960s and 1970s.

We know Thatcher's own largely-balanced budget in Britain is a fiction. It conceals a £19 billion trade deficit on manufactured goods, and rests upon a consumer credit explosion, North Sea oil revenues and the asset-stripping sales of nationalised industries. The answer to Thatcher and Reagan is not the global Keynesianism proposed by Gould and the TUC, but the fight for a socialist alternative.

The system's huge capacity to create wealth and create useful commodities must be set free from the stifling grip of private ownership and the drive for profit, and from the shackles of national frontiers. A starting point in popularising this now rather unfashionable socialist approach must be to fight to expose the workings of the system and the wheelings and dealings that have such brutal impact on the lives of millions world-wide.

Workers will soon be confronted by a new wave of management attacks as they seek to survive the looming recession and carve out their "foreign" competitors by forcing down real wages and driving up the rate of exploitation.

The demand must be raised for the opening of the books of each employer and each industry, of the banks and the finance houses to reveal the real mechanisms that push forward such attacks.

Instead of pleading with capitalist governments in the USA, Germany and Japan to open their doors to more British imports, labour and trade union bodies should be appealing to fellow workers to join in a common struggle against the employers.

The contradiction between the colossal US deficits and the trade surpluses of Japan and Europe cannot be resolved by capitalism, short of a traumatic recession which will hit not only the imperialist nations but hundreds of millions in the debt-ridden "Third World".

As socialists we come not to rescue capitalism but to bury it. The crisis unites the interests of workers the world over against their "own" employers and the multinationals.

Open the Books! Print out the Discs! Let's explain and campaign around the need for class action to put an end to this crazy system of exploitation, oppression and mass poverty.

Let's put the expropriation of industry and the banks back at the top of the socialist agenda. Let's put the fight for a planned socialist economy, and a Socialist United States of Europe, back into the debates and discussions of the labour movement!

Briefing on Ireland

NOW, MORE THAN EVER:

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND!

No Irish Republican, and no sympathiser with Republicanism, did not feel grief over Enniskillen.

The deaths were contrary to what the IRA intended and to the long non-sectarian tradition of Republicanism.

As *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the newspaper of the Republican movement, made clear in its issue of November 12th:

"We do not try to defend the action which caused the deaths and injuries inflicted by the IRA bomb."

For those of us who have worked in this country for British withdrawal from Ireland, the sadness we felt over Enniskillen has been supplemented by another sentiment. Our new anger is one fuelled by the hypocrisy, play-acting, and crocodile tears of those enemies of Irish Republicanism who have sought to exploit the dead of Enniskillen.

The media coverage and the reaction of Tory politicians reached such macabre levels that at times they seemed to be politically celebrating the tragedy.

And, almost inevitably, the Labour leadership felt compelled to join in this grisly carnival. The dead were not yet buried when Neil Kinnock and Party spokesperson on Ireland Kevin McNamara rushed to Dublin to take part in Thatcher's puppet show to demand that the Irish government introduce extradition.

By Geoff Bell
Hackney North CLP

They then sped to the North where Kinnock gave the Irish a lecture in democratic values and proclaimed:

"Sinn Fein has nothing to offer the people of Ireland."

Here, in the space of a few days, was a powerful reminder of the characteristic British imperialist arrogance for so long manifest in Ireland.

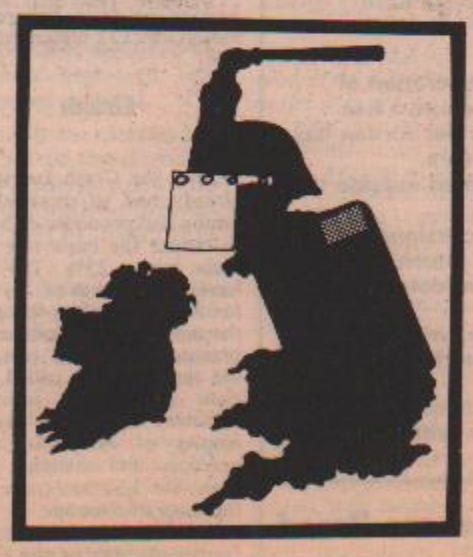
Those who think Kinnock's and McNamara's visit to Ireland should be treated with anything but contempt should remember the framing of the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four, and the Maguires, and ask: is this the justice the Labour leadership wants the Irish to trust? When has Kinnock *ever* raised the issues of the Birmingham and Guildford prisoners?

Injustices

And when has he ever spoken out against the daily injustices perpetrated against the Irish people with the energy and enthusiasm he showed when acting as Thatcher's ambassador in Ireland?

If Neil Kinnock really wishes to contribute something to the well-being of the Irish he should have stayed in London and taken his "soft left" friends in Camden to task for pinning up "No Irish need apply" signs on Council houses, and hiring boats and trains to ship them back to Ireland. Perhaps Kinnock supports that form of extradition as well.

The antics of Kinnock, the Tories, and the media are meant to shame into silence the supporters of British withdrawal from Ireland. But the vulgar ferocity of it all is producing a different response.



Ken Livingstone and Tony Benn have, with a dignity and a courage their critics lack, repeated their calls for British withdrawal and a dialogue with Sinn Fein. "I will continue to speak out in favour of Irish unity until it is achieved or until I die," said Ken Livingstone at a public meeting after Enniskillen.

We should all say "hear, hear!" and say it with increasing volume and determination. Initially, many Irish activists in Britain have been hesitant about speaking out. That hesitation must now come to an end.

The cheap exploitation of the Enniskillen dead by the imperialists and their supporters in the labour movement should only strengthen our resolve. We should advocate increased dialogue with Sinn Fein and proclaim loudly that, now more than ever, a *political* solution is the only solution.

The demand "Britain out of Ireland" will now be taken up with a new determination. Enniskillen will not silence us. British imperialism has sought to suck the last drop of blood from the Enniskillen dead to feed its own parasitical presence in Ireland. For those not dazzled by the media blitz, this apalling spectacle has only further exposed the inhumanity of the British position. The enduring truth is that Britain has nothing to offer Ireland — but the leaving of it.

Trade Union Briefing

NUM Election
Vote Scargill!

With his political opponents keen to manoeuvre and snipe behind the scenes but scared to challenge him on equal terms, Arthur Scargill's biggest problem in running for re-election may be to find a challenger.

Though a walkover would still represent a major blow against the "new realism" and the present right wing majority on the NUM executive, a real fight and a convincing ballot victory for Scargill would be much better.

A campaign would also offer militant mines and Women Against Pit Closures an opportunity to organise in a more systematic way throughout the union.

Once again, Scargill's stand has given a lead to the labour movement, putting his job on the line by resigning his seat and seeking a fresh mandate from the membership. But is is also almost the only means open to him for attempting to break the right wing stranglehold on the Executive that has bogged down the overtime ban, ignored the miners still victimised after the 1984 strike, and generally encouraged British Coal to continue its attacks.

Scargill's courage has not been matched by his cowardly critics who prefer to whinge to the mass media or *Marxism Today* rather than confront him openly.

Scots back-stabber Eric Clarke claimed after the Strike was over that he had favoured holding a ballot: but now he says he will not run in a ballot for the national presidency.

Scots President George Bolton has refused to put his job on the line despite pressure from Pete Carter, Communist Party industrial organiser, to do so. Bolton was in the forefront of the campaign for periodic elections — but is now not prepared to risk his own job.

Welsh defector Des Dutfield won his own position as the pro-Scargill candidate; yet he promptly turned tail to block with the right wing and Communist Party elements on the Executive. He is equally reluctant to put his views to the test of a ballot or his salary at risk by resigning to challenge Scargill.

This is why the media's candidate has emerged as old-style right winger John Walsh, the North Yorkshire Area Agent from the notorious ring wing stables of Glasshoughton colliery. Walsh, who would hope to split the Yorkshire vote, is now the news editors' choice as the "man to stop Scargill".

He could not have been encouraged by the Yorkshire Area's 53-2 vote to nominate Arthur Scargill, though he has since picked up some predictable right wing support.

The big question is whether he has the bottle to resign his "life" position as area agent to challenge Scargill on equal terms. He knows that if he does so, his present post will cease to exist — ensuring that the battle will be "winner takes all".

Though Walsh has run for many posts since becoming North Yorks agent, he has never risked his own job. However, his right wing policies threaten thousands more NUM jobs.

By HARRY SLOAN

In the last 3 months Walsh has been helping the clandestine recruitment for outside (private) contractors employing hundreds of workers at the Selby superpit complex. Yet he has made no effort to defend NUM jobs, voicing no opposition to the pit closures in North Yorkshire since the strike.

But his hesitation to declare his candidacy indicates that he is no more convinced than the news editors that he could necessarily defeat Scargill. Hence the bleats and whimpers of the right wing that for Scargill to go to the membership is somehow "undemocratic".

South Wales NUM leaders are now even prepared to go to the Courts in an attempt to stop Scargill standing for election. These are the same courts which sequestrated S. Wales NUM funds in advance of those of the national union. Many miners see these legal moves as an attempt to delay the January 22 ballot, to ensure that it takes place after Scargill's 50th birthday, thus preventing him, under the rules, from running again in five years because he would then be over 55.

Briefing has voiced criticisms of aspects of Scargill's politics. We will continue to debate these out. But his candidacy for the NUM leadership is a vital and timely challenge to the right wing of the labour movement.

When nominations close on December 14th, the battle lines will be drawn. Vote Scargill — and organise the NUM left for the struggles to come!

Engineers
New deal defeated

In a remarkable 17 to 13 vote the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering (CSEU) Executive has finally *rejected* the notorious deal which Bill Jordan has been trying to push through for two years.

1,000 engineering workers demonstrated outside the meeting where the decision was taken.

The deal involved unprecedented concessions on working hours and working practices in return for a 37½ hour week; and would have eventually affected over 1 million workers.

The vote was a heavy blow to Jordan, who had intended to put the deal to AEU members by postal ballot in the near future.

The CSEU will now open fresh negotiations with the employers on a claim for shorter hours without strings.

Join the Communication Workers Broad Left!

Send £4 (minimum supporters fee) to:
Cheryl Pugh, 131, Whitham Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 2SN

Electricity Supply Privatisation



Miners picketted power stations in the Miners' Strike

Action needed to upset Tories big gamble

Labour describes the Tory privatisation programme as selling off the "family silver".

Is this supposed to arouse feelings amongst their supporters that Thatcher is doing someting immoral?

As a member of the Labour Party from a "silver-less" family and a miner, I don't accept the idea that selling off a supposedly surplus asset is inherently immoral.

It has been estimated that every man, woman and child in the UK has the equivalent of £700 invested in the state-owned electricity supply industry (ESI). What the Tories are coming for is *not* the "family silver" but the clothes off our backs.

Privatisation of the ESI should be seen as the "Steal of the Century" instead of "The Sale of the Century".

To keep the Tories in office Chancellor Nigel Lawson has been given the task of raising approximately £5 billion per annum. This vast amount is to be used to pay for tax reductions and other cosmetic measures specifically designed to ensure the Tories a fourth term in office. The ESI values its assets at £55 billion. Thatcher is only looking to raise between £18 billion and £37 billion from the sale.

Crash

Since the Crash Lawson has already had to reconsider the timing and prudence of his plan to reduce the basic rate of income tax to 25%. The Tories have been shaken by their favourite "market forces" — the same forces which they have previously tried to ram down the throats of so called inefficient miners. To justify pit closures, McGregor used examples of American mining practices and manning levels, Now, the ESI has come under the same microscope.

Alex Henney, an engineer and former member of the London Electricity Board, argues strongly for the de-manning of the ESI in a recent report for the Tory Centre for Policy Studies. Henny highlights the dubious fact that the Japanese electricity industry is twice as efficient in labour productivity terms as the UK industry and thus by implication *half of the existing 130,000 jobs* in the ESI in the UK could be shed. The job losses would be mainly manual workers, but with the inevitable closures of the older and less efficient power stations, Station Managers and the "elitist" engineers would also have to go.

By Daniel Parkes
Yorkshire miner

If privatisation of the ESI goes ahead as envisaged, with one company controlling the national grid and separate regional companies controlling local generation, then the grid operator will contract for supply only from the cheapest generation sources. In Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire it could well be that regional operators would buy into British Coal, thus securing a supply of coal for themselves at the expense of Southern generating bodies. Of course, this could only happen if BC is also privatised.

Further job losses would result in coal, rail, sea and the power engineering sector — totalling upwards of 200,000. In coal, for example, the mining industry would be reduced to 30,000 jobs, with the elimination of mining in the N. East, S. Wales, N. Wales, N. Derbyshire, Kent and massive reductions in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire.

It has been predicted that by the year 2000 the coal industry, whether state-owned or private, will centre exclusively on the Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and S. Midlands areas, with an annual deep-mined production of between 60 million tonnes and 75 million tonnes.

The lower output figure is the more likely if one considers the glut of power station quality coal available on the world markets. China and Colombia are two major new sources of extremely cheap fossil fuels, with Colombia offering to deliver to customers anywhere in the world at a price *lower* than the extraction cost.

If imported coal replaces domestic coal, then domestic transport of UK coal will also be hit hard. *70% of all rail freight is coal* and British Rail have already established a separate management structure dealing with coal freight only. The "collier fleet" moves coal by sea from the N. East coalfields to the Thames Valley power stations.

Coalfield

All the jobs at sea will be lost if the N. East coalfield is closed and domestic coal is replaced by long-haul imported coal delivered direct to Southern and coastal power Stations.

British Coal expect the Selby complex in Yorkshire to produce between 10 million tonnes and 15 million tonnes of coal per annum. This coal was to have been transported by BR to the Aire Valley stations in Yorkshire, thus ensuring long-term employment on the railways. The latest plan from BC, in consultation with the CEGB, is to drive a tunnel with a conveyor system from the Selby complex direct to Drax power station. Jobs on the railways go, but coal supplies would be protected from disruption by railway workers.

The ESI has maintained a Buy British policy, last year buying everything from toilet rolls to turbines in Britain. The total expenditure of the ESI in the power supply industries was a staggering £9 billion. Any private regional operator would follow "the market" and ditch the Buy British policy.

NEI Parsons turbine manufacturerse based in the N. East presently employs 15,000. If the new owners buy abroad, there will be thousands of jobs lost in engineering.

The multiplier effect on job losses would appear to be limitless. With the development of new "super conductors" (Nitrogen cooled high voltage cables) electricity can be supplied over vast distances with no significant loss in voltage. It is conceivable that by 1995, with the completion of the Channel Tunnel, "super conductors" will be used to connect the "private" British grid into the already highly integrated European grid, which by that year will also be interlinked with the Scandinavian grid. The UK grid operator would then be able to cut off the UK regional generating companies and import the finished product, i.e. France's cheap surplus nuclear capacity, or Scandinavian hydro-generated electricity.

What would happen to the regional generators then? What would happen to the jobs in mining, transport, etc., dependent on them?

This horrific scenario can only be played out if privatisation of the ESI goes ahead.

Can it be stopped? Six months ago the answer would have been no, but with the recent Crash in share prices, the run on the US dollar (forcing interest rate cuts), the Third World debt and Middle East crisis, the answer must now be a tentative maybe.

What is required now, whilst the Tories and UK capitalists are floundering, is for the trade union and labour movement to co-ordinate a fightback strategy. We need an "alliance for energy". The fightback must involve a commitment from the ESI unions but must not be left in the hands of the ESI multi-union structure. It is and must be presented as a class issue — not just an issue for those who happen to work in the ESI.

This Alliance for Energy should be built around rank and file solidarity at the grass roots level. It should start with the twinning of trade union branches, with miners twinning with ESI branches, rail and sea branches holding joint meetings, etc. Conferences of the rank and file of sea, rail, ESI, mining and engineering workers should be convened to explain the issues and agree a common policy of action.

Personality clashes between Scargill and Hammond must not be allowed to sidetrack the campaign. The TUC "new realists" must not be allowed to turn the campaign into a mere "public opinion appeal" leafletting exercise! Only *industrial action* can stop privatisation going through.

Joint regional committees should decide what action to take to maximise involvement of all constituent parts of the movement. One-day walkouts by the ESI unions, supported by miners, rail, sea and the power workers, rotated on a regional basis, building toward a *national blackout* would shake the Tories — and might ultimately shift them for good. Without the money from the "Steal of the Century" to appease her lackeys Thatcher might find her fourth term an increasingly remote prospect.

UCW vote for action

Tuffin does what comes naturally

Union of Communication Workers (UCW) members have returned a "yes" vote in a ballot on industrial action.

But the margin in favour was narrow: due in great measure to the weak union campaign and the national leadership's widely known half-heartedness.

166,688 ballot papers were issued. 73,349 members voted for action in support of the claim; and 58,917 voted against.

Everyone in the union accepts that the only way our demand can be won is by an all-out strike before the Post Office's most vulnerable period — Christmas.

If the Executive were to call a campaign of selective or regional action before Christmas it would be directly equivalent not only to admitting defeat, but worse — consciously leading the Union to defeat.

At the time of writing it is not known what strategy the Executive favours — but they certainly aren't in any hurry.

By Pete Cooper
Treasurer London Broad Left
(personal capacity)

General Secretary Tuffin said in an interview on Radio 4 (17/11) that the Post Office has until December 10th to make a better offer. Does this over-paid bureaucrat honestly believe that the two weeks up to Christmas are long enough to win?

The UCW Conference in May called for a three hour reduction in the working week for *all* grades to be implemented at no cost to the membership. The Post Office offered a one hour reduction only to the uniformed grade, to be financed by an efficiency deal.

The clerical and counter grades have been excluded from virtually all reporting of the dispute and, by the sound of things, from much of the negotiations.

But even if so many UCW members have been omitted from the negotiations, little else has been. Now, instead of demanding the three hour reduction, the UCW is entering what a union communication calls "wide-ranging discussions" with the Post Office.

These discussions are about "improving prospects" for the business, the workforce and the customers; in other words, some form of productivity-related sell-out is on the way.

The miniscule UCW Broad Left agreed on November 14th that an all-out strike before Christmas is vital. Unfortunately it is simply too small and too weak to offer an alternative national leadership to Tuffin and Clarke.



A view of the Cowley car plant

Cowley workers strike

Rank and file defies leadership

Car production at Cowley was halted for 24 hours on Monday November 16th by a strike of 3,500 workers in the Assembly Plant.

The strike was touched off by a management decision to plunder £80m from the employees' pension fund.

The Cowley workers were alone in taking action against the Austin-Rover management move, which follows similar gambits by Murdoch and Maxwell — all legalised by recent Tory legislation.

Management have already begun a three year "pensions holiday" — a unilateral refusal to pay their contribution to the pension fund. This will save them £80m during the three year period and reduce the pension fund "surplus" by half.

Having allowed management to implement this plan without protest in September, the union eventually held a ballot of the workforce which produced an overall majority for industrial action.

Despite this majority the Austin Rover National Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) decided to *accept* the management terms and recommend that *no action* be taken.

Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

They did this on the curious basis that not *all* unions had their own individual majority for strike action — despite the fact that the unions had balloted *collectively* on the issue.

The key factor in the JNC decision was the role played by the Communist Party-led delegation from Longbridge. They not only opposed strike action, but stated in advance of the vote that they would not carry out any majority decision which called for strike action. Nonetheless, they were still allowed to take part in the vote!

The decision not to call action was accepted in all plants without further consultation with the workforce, with the exception of the Cowley Assembly Plant, where a mass meeting of 3,500 TGWU members was called.

A recommendation that, under the circumstances, the JNC "no action" decision should be accepted was put to the meeting by the convenors.

The recommendation received only 20 votes. The rest voted *against* the JNC and *in favour* of a strike.

Management decided, unusually, to close down the plant and lay off those not involved in the strike.

Management normally see such a stance as a display of weakness and open the gates as a matter of principle. It seems, however, that they were anxious to avoid a picket and prefered the day to pass quietly, hoping that now the protest is over the pension fund issue will be dead and the management move accepted without further action.

NCU Broad Left Conference



PHOTO: Andrea Campbell

NCU demonstration, February 1987

Soft left prepare for a retreat

The National Communications Union (NCU) Broad Left reached a new low at its AGM in London on November 14th.

A chaotic meeting of 200 in the overcrowded Holborn Library witnessed a cynical coup organised by the soft left Clerical Executive members and backed by the Communist Party.

It would appear that 80 new members were signed up to join the BL in the two weeks leading up to the AGM on a "bash the *Militant*" ticket. Many of these converts duly showed their commitment and loyalty to the Broad Left by failing to reappear after the lunch break.

The day was dominated by ballots for Executive Council, TUC and Labour Party Conference nominations and the Broad Left National Committee (where Brian Healy, a soft left, won the crucial BL National Secretary's position).

There was no discussion whatsoever on the key issues facing the union, which is led by a knife-edge 12-11 BL majority on the Engineering Executive.

Even this majority has been undermined by the right grabbing key committee chairs, and using their casting votes against the left — before retreating in the face of BT management's offensive on key issues.

No campaign has been organised against BT management's offensive against engineers' wages and conditions. Short term and fixed term contracts have been accepted, and no lead has been given to branches confronted with the contracting out of work normally performed by BT staff.

By Billy Carron

Some branches have even accepted "double jobbing" — effectively overtime paid at normal rates of pay.

There was *no* discussion on the defence of City branch members John Deason and John Treadaway, victimised by BT after last January's strike.

Not everything went the soft left's way, however. Phil Holt, a *Militant* supporter, retained the BL's nomination for the Labour Party NEC against a challenge from the realigning Dave Wood.

The most heated debate of the day was typically around a successful proposal that the BL stop supporting candidates who stand against BL nominees. This was clearly aimed at soft left Tony Young, and others whose action has reduced the BL majority on the Engineering Executive.

The AGM represented a significant setback for the left as a whole and not just *Militant*. We are all paying the price of *Militant's* failure to build the BL as anything other than an electoral machine in true Communist Party style.

The danger now is that the BL will become a transmission belt for the NEC and ECTEC's retreat before BT, Post Office and Girobank management, rather than an organiser against them.

One positive part of the day's proceedings was the Union's Women's Action Committee high profile campaigning against the Alton Bill — with Clerical Executive member Brian Kenny being attacked for querying the NCU's affiliation to the National Abortion Campaign.

Single-union deal in Dundee

AEU undermines Ford workers

Resentment is running deep amongst workers in Ford car plants over the single-union deal signed on September 26th between Ford management and the AEU leadership for the projected new plant in Dundee, designed to manufacture high-tech car entertainment systems.

The deal is the clearest indication yet of the move of the AEU leadership towards business unionism as practised by the EETPU under Eric Hammond.

Like Hammond at Wapping, it demonstrates a willingness on the part of union leaders to act as a direct tool of the employers.

Now there is a new manoeuvre by AEU leaders following a meeting with TUC General Secretary Norman Willis. Under pressure from the other Ford unions they have agreed to drop the deal providing the *other unions* can persuade Ford management to do likewise!

The AEU meanwhile will continue to back the deal if Ford management insist on it. The only real pressure on Ford would be for the AEU to withdraw from the deal and join the other unions in insisting on the existing arrangements.

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

This deal was not simply a product of the AEU right wing in the shape of Gavin Laird. It has been promoted and defended throughout by the only "left wing" member of the AEU Executive Council, Jimmy Airlie — a leading member of the Communist Party.

Airlie argued that a single union deal had to be accepted because Ford management were insisting on it!

In fact, Ford management have insisted on such a deal every time they have built a plant in Britain — outside Dagenham — but this is the first time they have been successful.

The deal predictably caused a serious split amongst the Ford unions and directly violated the Ford multi-union agreement. Even the right wing national automotive officer of the TGWU, Mick Murphy, was forced into a strong condemnation of the deal:

"It is a violation of standing agreements with Ford which will have serious implications for jobs in other Ford plants in Britain. It is a deceitful operation."

Nor does the deal simply exclude other unions. It makes concessions to Ford management on a range of key conditions of employment, thus posing a major threat to all Ford workers in Britain.

Under the agreement the new plant will not be tied to Ford's nationally negotiated wage rates, which cover its existing labour force of 32,000 shop-floor workers (7,000 of them AEU), but will be tied to what Ford management significantly calls "wage rates comparable with the electronics industry".

The deal wil take the Dundee labour force outside the Ford national union structure. It will exclude the new plant from the closed shop arrangements existing in other Ford plants.

It will have new working times, discipline procedures and working practices and it will introduce complete flexibility of jobs and grades — which has not yet been conceded in other Ford plants.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there is a deep resentment amongst the Ford workforce. They know the new deal is pointed at their heads like a loaded gun.

Local government debate

You stand – we'll knock you down!

This article is written as a way of provoking some thought on this very difficult issue. It is written from the angle of someone who totally opposes the current retreat into the discredited "new realism" but who rejects the idea that everyone elected to office automatically "sells out".

Support for those we nominate is a two way process and many on the left frankly have a totally dilettante attitude to selection and election.

***Briefing* itself arose out of an awakening on the revolutionary left to the notion that capturing power is the key to change; and that local government is a vital area for the far left to intervene in.**

Our successes have certainly been impressive.

The GLC was won for the left within 18 months of our launch.

A year later the "Target '82" campaign united new left wing Labour Parties in a successful bid to gain office in most of the Councils in Inner London.

After that we consistently gained successes in selection meetings for MPs, Council by-elections and key posts in CLPs and Regional and National Executives.

Yet in many cases it did not take long for success to go sour.

- Many comrades who adhered to our various statements soon wavered in the face of what they saw as the "realities of office".
- The GLC and ILEA leaderships soon incurred the displeasure of *Briefing* over their handling of industrial disputes and a variety of compromises they made.
- Successive Council leaderships who formerly identified with us were subjected to vitriolic attacks in the pages of this paper. This was either because they had not carried out the pledges they had made fast enough; or because various small groups of trade unionists came into conflict over local claims for improvements in pay or conditions.

As a result, despite constantly renewing our base and scoring successes, we keep sloughing off various people after they have held office for a while.

On the other side, a strong suspicion has arisen that many of those writing the most acidic attacks are precisely the people who would run a mile if they were asked to hold any office or take responsibility for anything!

What Labour Party members in our traditional areas of support have to face up to is that if our beliefs in accountability and solidarity mean anything, we have to face the terrible problems of being the largest landlord, largest employer and greatest providers of services in the locality!

This means we decide who gets what little there is, that hard choices have to be made and that new problems arise for which we do not have slogans.

None of this justifies the current backsliding being undertaken by those formerly left wing Council leaderships under the guise of "new realism" and "staying in office". These people have sadly crossed the line between compromise and collaboration.

However, this does not mean we do not recognise at least part of why this defection has occurred; and what needs to be done in the future to learn the lessons. Surely this is necessary if we are not to be doomed to repeat them!

By Keith Veness
NUPE, Hackney

It is my submission that we are still hooked on a vision of "heroic leaders" whom we put forward in order to subject them to a series of tests; failure on any one of which leads to demotion and denunication.

Obviously, some comrades do not waver. Their basic understanding and class commitment enables them to stand by principles and not get bogged down in the problems and false perspectives of bureaucracy. Nevertheless, such behaviour fails to clarify in any *socialist* way the method by which we operate.

Heroic individualism will never in itself be sufficient to win power. Socialists need a *collective* approach to issues; and we need to create structures that will support and control those comrades we select and back.

The idea that we elect a left wing Council and then clear off and devote our energies to other things is just plain daft.

- For every Councillor we select we should ensure that five or ten Party members actively work with them.
- Trade unionists and Labour Councillors need to organise together outside the official Council machinery, agreeing jointly what needs to be done.
- We need to establish in each CLP formal machinery for *every* Councillor to answer to — and to lend support for decisions made.

Until we establish a viable framework to back up and organise our representation, we will constantly find we have a Sisyphean task of creating leaders and then destroying them.

If we can learn anything from the rise of things like the rank and file shop stewards committees, the women's movement and the ten year fight for mandatory reselection, it is surely that we cannot ape Tory methods of organising.

Until we seriously organise collective control and support, we cannot use the power we have demonstrated our ability to capture.

Parliament

Kinnock's world

At the behind-closed doors meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party on November 18th, Mr Kinnock unleashed a torrent of abuse on Ireland which embarrassed the right and gave back to Ian Paisley his right to veto plans by a future Labour government for a united Ireland.

By our Parliamentary Correspondent

Responding to a planted question from Barry Sheerman MP (Huddersfield), Kinnock stated that Loyalist consent was an essential prerequisite for a united Ireland. He also stated that he would never ever talk to Sinn Fein or the IRA.

The spontaneity of this outburst can be judged by the fact that his speech was released to the press before it was made. Its real importance, however, was to move sharply away from the formulation on consent previously set out by front-bench spokesman Peter Archer and Clive Soley.

This formula was to accept that, although consent was required, it could be construed by a future Labour government as being "the consent of the peoples of Ireland as a whole"

Mr Kinnock's speech, stating that he would never have contacts with the Republican movement, is also totally at variance with the policy of the Conservative government (who talk to anybody if it suits their purpose), and is also highly embarrassing for people such as Peter Archer and Stuart Bell, who were members of the official Labour Party delegation to Belfast in 1985, which met Sinn Fein representatives.

This new statement of Leader's policy takes us back to the 1940s in its endorsement of the Unionist veto. And Kinnock's recent actions on the NEC have also committed the Party as a whole to support for a bi-partisan Irish policy and in particular, 100% support for the Anglo-Irish Accord.

Labour Party



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Livingstone stands firm on Ireland; while the LCC draws back — where now, Ken?

LCC AGM: Operation Icepick claims new victims:

The saga of "Clause IV"

This year's Labour Co-ordinating Committee AGM saw Ken Livingstone lose his place on the LCC Executive Committee, slipping from 9th to 23rd place in the secret ballot.

When bemused reporters enquired how a "left wing" organisation could remove Ken only weeks after his popularity had been confirmed in the elections to the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, Ken pointed the finger at a group called Clause IV.

Clause IV are an inappropriately named grouping which has manouevred itself into the leadership of the rotting shell of the LCC. In the process it has alienated fellow soft lefts (around such papers as *Labour Leader*) and tarnished the few remaining radical credentials of this once-Bennite organisation.

By Bryn Griffiths
Hackney South CLP

Ken gave us a clue about the nature of this objectionable sect when he suggested that their sole raison d'être is obsessive opposition to Trotskyists. Readers of Michael Crick's witch-hunting guide to *Militant* will know that Clause IV started out as an alliance of people opposed to the growing influence of *Militant* amongst Labour students. They organised their intervention under the grotesque, cold-blooded title of "Operation Ice Pick".

Tariq Ali accurately characterised the Clause IV grouping when he referred to the phenomenon of "Stabianism" — the combination of the Stalinist organisational methods and Fabian political timidity.

John Mann, now a councillor and cutter in Lambeth, pioneered the Stabian approach when he served as Chair of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS).

A pamphlet by Socialist Students in NOLS, *A Stich in Time... the decline of Labour Students*, outlines the undemocratic practices of John Mann and his Clause IV allies. Their antics included:

- Left wing delegations from colleges such as Sussex and Manchester were ruled out of order. In the case of Manchester University a NOLS officer admitted forging membership cards and sat out the remainder of the 1983 Conference in disgrace.
- In 1984 the Conference was closed down amid accusations of ballot rigging when the Conference's left majority suddenly disappeared in the ballot for the National Committee.

Window

- By 1986, what little subtlety there ever was in Clause IV was thrown out the window. An amazing 50 delegates were ruled out of order, allowing the Clause IV-dominated "Democratic Left" (a sense of irony is clearly demonstrated in the selection of names) to win an easy victory.

To be fair to John Mann, he had by then outgrown student politics and was applying his "democratic" skills to the Party's youth movement. Along with Phil Woolas (an ex-NUS president) he penned a Fabian pamphlet that inspired Sawyer's wrecking proposals for the Labour Party Young Socialists.

"Trotskyism" has become a misapplied byword among the Clause IV crowd for any politics to the left of their own hyper-cautious, self-serving Stabianism.

Attacked

This was in evidence at the recent LCC Conference, when they bitterly attacked any idea of taking heed of Livingstone's proposal to co-operate with those sections of the left that participate in Labour Left Liaison.

Clause IV claim to have found a "Third Road" to socialism that is neither revolution nor reform. They justify this by a somewhat one-sided reading of of Gramsci.

These debates are important and a legitimate topic of discussion on the left, but in the case of Clause IV they are little more than window dressing for virulent witch-hunting anti-Trotskyism, and a left fig-leaf to cover increasingly naked opportunism.

The lesson to learn from Clause IV is that if you define yourself solely in opposition to other currents on the left you can only evolve further and further to the right. Witch-hunting becomes your staple political diet.

Clause IV (Operation Icepick) started out as an anti-*Militant* bloc. Today they have ended up masterminding the removal of Labour radical Ken Livingstone and giving full support to the campaigns over recent years against former NEC-member Eric Heffer.

For Ken there are also some important lessons to be learnt. At the LCC AGM Ken saw himself removed from the LCC Executive and on the receiving end of the Clause IV icepick. More importantly, he saw the policy of British withdrawal from Ireland, with which he is closely associated, unceremoniously dumped.

Demarcation

If Ken's strength is the building of alliances, his weakness is a failure to draw lines of demarcation. Ken needs to ask "how did I end up in the same room with these characters in the first place?"

The only way to build a united democratic left is on the basis of policies and campaigns — not on the shifting sands of blocs and personalities.

In his speech at Chesterfield, Ken clearly aligned himself with the hard left. After Enniskillen, Ken maintained his principled stand on the Irish question.

After the LCC AGM he now has to decide whom he will make his alliances with; on what political basis; and around what practical activities and campaigns.

National Labour Women's Conference:
NEC wins out again

Question: how do you get 500 active trade union and CLP women to Blackpool for a weekend, sit them in a hall for one and a half days, and achieve virtually nothing?

Answer: you conduct a policy of marginalising women and women's organisation in the Labour Party.

The NEC has spent the past year attempting to push through its consultation document on the reorganisation of the Party structures for women.

Traditionally, the National Labour Women's Conference has been the most radical section of the Labour Party. This was a vital year — election year — for women to campaign actively and project a high profile in the Party and its policies.

Instead, we have been struggling with a bureaucratic consultative document designed to keep us quiet.

The NEC's wheeling and dealing led to the 1986 National Conference awarding them full rights to reorganise the women's structures as they saw fit — though after "consultation". This year we've seen what a sop consultation is, with the youth consultation fiasco.

By Leesa Herbert
Delegate, Hornsey & Wood Green Women's Section
(personal capacity)



Delegates voting at 1987 National Labour Women's Conference

Annual Conference in Brighton this year again presented to the world the full disregard the Party leadership has for women. The NEC had ignored the 1986 two thirds majority in favour of "at least one woman on *every* shortlist" — a positive action measure so radical it has already been adopted by the SDP!

When women delegates protested at this policy being ignored, first the Chair, then the Conference Arrangements Committee, and finally the NEC used their full weight to block our intervention.

This gave women no option but to storm and occupy the stage, and finally symbolically occupy the MPs' seats on the last day of Conference.

One hundred and fifty motions had been submitted by the original deadline — January. They covered the issues of: Women's reorganisation, the Knowsley by-election, the Ministry of Women, the Scottish Assembly, racism in the Party, the Welfare State, child care provision, NHS, women's reproductive rights, housing, education, employment, nationalisation, inner cities, Police and Criminal Evidence Act, N. Ireland, the international debt crisis, defence, lesbian and gay rights and the economy.

Many were, by now, out of date; but they were not to be discussed for other reasons. The usual structure of a motions conference had been abandoned — no one is clear who decided this; but it is standard practice to use an election year as an excuse to stop policy making at Women's Conference!

The original intention had been to change the usual structure to one of a series of workshop topics, and discussing — but not voting on — those of the submitted motions that fell under those topics. We could talk; but not set policy. Other motions simply fell — including those on Lesbian and gay rights and Ireland (how surprising!) and the many motions on low pay.

This format was upgraded to having workshops reporting back to a short plenary on Sunday morning, with their recommendations, after which motions would be debated and voted on — all before Conference closed at lunchtime!

As the Conference opened, virtually all women supported a challenge to the Conference Arrangements Committee report on the weekend's agenda. After some confusion we were allowed to run workshops on Saturday morning only; and the plenary was extended to include Saturday afternoon in addition to Sunday morning.

The workshop topics were poll tax, child abuse, privatisation, women's health, safety and international links. Most women were concerned by the narrowness of the topics and the limitations within them, which narrowed further the number of policy motions which were taken up.

Dull

With a few exceptions, the workshops and motions proved so uncontroversial that debate was dull. All the motions, including an emergency motion on the Alton Bill, were passed. However, by Sunday morning right wing women were attacking *Militant*-supported motions not through debate, but by witch hunting women *Militant* supporters.

Sadly, during the Alton Bill debate we did not hear reports fronf trade union women on what they were doing about fighting the Alton Bill. Instead, women were asked to raise their hands if they had taken the time to write to their MPs about the Bill! As Jo Richardson said, this kind of activity *is* vital; but we'll need more than that to fight Alton and his supporters...

The height of excitement came when the Stirling Women's Council delegate failed to appear to move a resolution on strip searching that had been slotted in under "women's safety"; and the Chair ruled that the resolution would not be taken.

Chaos erupted on stage as a delegate challenged the chair, who quickly stepped down to allow a vote of confidence to be taken on her ruling, and delegates clutched onto their first card vote in utter confusion.

Toilet

All was put to rights when the Stirling delegate appeared, after being dragged from her refuge in the women's toilet. The resolution was passed!

Throughout the Conference the Chair referred to delegates as "ladies", despite requests to call us women. Ladies is a term originally used to describe women by a class status — "she's a lady", etc. — with a few peculiarities like dinner lady and tea lady.

Women can be called ladies if they choose. The point is the term "woman" includes all women, denoting our gender, and puts all women on equal terms from the start.

There was little time for fringe meetings. On Saturday evening the Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC) held a well-attended meeting. Its plaform of Jo Richardson, Audrey Wise and a FAB speaker concentrated on the Alton Bill.

Later, at the Labour Women for Ireland (LWI) meeting, a speaker from the Irish Women's Abortion Campaign spoke on how the Alton Bill would affect Irish women and informed women of other private members Bills likely to be taken next year.

The most worrying Bill, the Lee Bill, would enforce doctors performing an abortion on a "foreign" woman to notify the woman's local GP. This would further prevent many Irish women from having abortions in this country.

Daisy from Sinn Fein spoke on employment discrimination of the Catholic minority in the Six Counties and the role of trade unions in challenging discrimination both here and in Ireland.

At the 1986 National Labour Women's Conference, trade unions and socialist societies sent only 159 delegates out of their entitlement of 580. CLPs sent 427 delegates out of a possible 572.

This year a similar number of trade union delegates attended as last year; but only half as many constituency delegates attended. They didn't miss much.

But when one of the central planks of the women's reorganisation consultation is to redress the imbalance of trade union and CLP women attending Conference it's sad CLP women should stay away, and not more trade union women be encouraged to attend. Most CLP women failed to attend as they knew that this Conference, more than most, would have little or no input to the Party.

It was interesting to see how only two MPs attended the Conference — Jo Richardson and Audrey Wise. Why should they attend a Conference with no power and no media hype? One would hope to at least support the Women's organisation that exists!

The next National Labour Women's Conference is in Malvern in June 1988. We must build now to ensure the revitalisation of the women's organisation and show the Party how we want not just the return of our Conference to full status but for the Conference to have the right to select its five NEC places, put policy on the national Conference Agenda and be allowed to debate all policy fully and pass motions not just on what the NEC and party leadership deem as our agenda — "women's issues".



Jo Richardson addressing Labour Women in Blackpool

COMMENT

Who shouted loudest at Chesterfield?

It was a pity that the discussions on the economy at the Chesterfield Conference were marred by the dearth of women speakers, particularly on the Sunday morning.

It is true that women were outnumbered, but the situation was not improved by the chair, herself a woman, Dawn Primarolo. Having announced that she would give preference to women, she proceeded to call up speakers in batches of five, invariably four men and *one* woman, although plenty of women had indicated a desire to speak.

When a number of sisters challenged this system, the chair replied that she was trying to achieve a balance between the various groups, although she did not vouchsafe how she could do this, since people did not come labelled with their affiliation, unless, of course, she possessed second sight. On the other hand, I should have thought the differences between men and women were fairly easy to spot.

At the very end of the meeting, and after considerable protest, the last male speakers were asked to stand down for three women. This they did with a very ill grace, particularly a charmer from the SWP, whose supporters yelled their shrill disapproval. So much for their commitment to equality!

There is a lesson in all this for chairpersons, women as well as men.

- Always remember that most men are possessed of boundless vanity and self-esteem, loving nothing on earth so well as the sound of their own voices.
- Women are usually shyer and less self confident, needing more encouragement to speak at large meetings, and easily discouraged.
- Often the men who shout the loudest in support of equality and positive discrimination are the first to elbow aside their sisters to strut and posture centre stage themselves.

Paula Watson, Westminster South CLP

Scottish Labour Women's Conference

Women chose the safe way forward

The 64th Scottish Labour Women's Conference was held on November 7-8th in Dundee.

A great deal of Conference time was expended on many worthy but politically uncontentious issues.

Resolutions on Scottish Homes, Childcare, Low Pay and the like were mostly passed overwhelmingly.

One slogan suggested for the campaign against the Alton Bill was "As early as possible, as late as necessary".

The main controversy centred around opposition to the introduction of the Poll Tax (Community Charge). Unfortunately, given the opportunity of providing a lead in the campaign against the Poll Tax, the real issue was fudged.

By Ellen McLaughlin
Maryhill Labour Party, Glasgow

Conference rejected outright opposition called for in a resolution from Maryhill WS; and accepted an amended form of wording from Hillhead WS, limiting opposition to remaining within the law.

Morag Morrel, a Grampian Regional Councillor, ridiculed the Scottish National Party (SNP) position on the Poll Tax question. In her area they do not appear to regard non-payment as a serious option; in other areas the SNP seem to vacillate between principled opposition and actually paying the Poll Tax... albeit in 2p pieces! Stirring stuff.

More seriously, though, a group calling itself the Poll Tax Union is gaining signatures for a mass petition pledging non-payment, and membership of this organisation is claimed to be growing steadily.

Rescheduled

The debate itself was rescheduled to allow Maria Fyfe, the only Scottish Labour woman MP, to sum up the debate. Although Maria gave a personal pledge of principled opposition to payment of the Poll Tax, she was reluctant to call upon others in the movement to go that far, given the risk of surcharge, disqualification, etc.

Much was said about how good slogans can be useful in campaigning work: perhaps Maria's could be "the personal is political".

Organised

Once again an important section of the organised labour movement in Scotland is spurning a golden opportunity to mobilise support for what is clearly another piece of very unpopular Tory legislation, in favour of "legal" opposition.

This will simply mean more empty rhetoric from the Scottish Shadow team, more lobbies that go nowhere, and another circus of parliamentarist manoeuvres masquerading as "opposition".

...meeting peace.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson



Whether "resolute" at Tory Conference, or rejoicing over cuts to come; Reagan and Thatcher share the same vindictive pleasure in hammering the working class for their own class's gain.

USA and Britain:
Locked in a deadly embrace

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

The Special Relationship — an almost mystical bond between Britain and the United States, celebrated by pundits and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic — has been the cornerstone of Thatcher's foreign policy for eight years.

Now, in the wake of the Crash and Gorbachev's international and domestic initiatives, strains are beginning to show.

In the immediate aftermath of the Crash Thatcher made a rare public attack on Reagan's economic policy and issued a most undiplomatic call for the US to slash its enormous budget deficit — a deficit caused largely by a military spending spree predicated on the aggressive right wing foreign policy championed by Thatcher.

Until the Crash, Thatcher had backed Reagan's every manoeuvre and closely tied her own political programme and fortunes to his. On South Africa, Central America, the Middle East, NATO, the Philippines, the Tory government has proved itself the US's most loyal (and in some instances its only) supporter.

All this was accompanied by the promotion of a spurious "Atlantic" ideology which boasted of the two countries' long (and largely mythologised) historic ties, and came near to an openly racist affirmation of the superiority of English-speaking peoples.

Nearly seventy years ago, John Maclean, Scottish revolutionary socialist, warned British workers of the growing dangers posed by American imperialism. He cited the increasing power of US capital and its hunger for world markets, and predicted a new war for world capitalist supremacy — between the US and Britain.

That war never transpired. But the US did replace Britain as the world's leading capitalist power. The British Empire receded and in its place the US imposed a new form of economic and political domination.

The dollar replaced sterling as the world's favoured reserve currency. After the second world war, the US emerged with its industrial power multiplied and its military sway unchallengeable. Britain's ruling class had no choice but to acquiesce — and the religion of Atlanticism was born, with some of its most ardent worshippers found in the ranks of the Labour Party and the trade union leaderships.

In 1981, US support for Britain in the Malvinas provided a sharp contrast with its disapproval of the 1956 Suez adventure. This stance put paid to British dreams of maintaining an imperial role in the middle east, and confirmed in the eyes of the world that Britain was most definitely the junior partner in the new Atlantic alliance.

Along with US political and economic dominance went a cultural influence which helped shape popular consciousness throughout Europe and elsewhere. This bred some resentment in ruling circles and amongst the masses, a resentment usually tempered by raging envy of US prosperity and vitality. This influence also had a progressive aspect. The US Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War movements captured the imaginations of millions and made crucial contributions to reverse the tide of world political development and tumbling the US from its perch of imperial invulnerability.

Amongst the British ruling class, there remained some traditionalist discomfort with US supremacy, and occasional attempts (by both Macmillan and Wilson) to re-establish an independent British "world role".

But the hard-headed Thatcher jettisoned all that, along with much else, and turned the shotgun marriage of British and American capital into a prolonged nuptial feast. The Special Relationship acquired orgiastic dimensions.

Gorbachev's disarmament initiatives, and his image as a reformer at home as well as abroad, undermined Reagan's leadership, and put the US on the diplomatic defensive for the first time since the Afghanistan invasion.

The Libyan bombing, the Iran-Contra scandal, and the subsequent disintegration of the Great Communicator's domestic support all contributed to making the Special Relationship something of a political incubus for the Tories, despite Thatcher's unswerving loyalty.

Labour's inability to challenge the basis of this relationship, its avowals of loyalty to NATO, and Kinnock's desperate and unrewarded pilgrimage to Washington helped turn this potential electoral liability into an asset.

Now the Stock Market Crash has transformed the conditions in which the Special Relationship flourished. Labour must grasp this reality if it is fully to exploit the new climate. Before, Reagan may have been a political drag on Thatcher, but now he — and American capital as a whole — have also become an *economic* drag.

The US budget deficit, in contrast to Britain's shrinking Public Sector Borrowing Requirement, has grown to the equivalent of 6% of the gross national product. It is the product of Reagan's military Keynesianism, a short-term economic strategy which created a fragile and selective boom, swept Reagan into a second term, and despatched the luckless Mondale to well-merited political obscurity.

Alarmed at the unmanageable size of the US deficit, and well aware that the US has now accumulated debts which it can never repay, Thatcher and the German and Japanese governments cry "Cut the deficit!" and win headlines across America.

The US replies: we'll cut the deficit but as a *quid pro quo* we require the expansion of the German and Japanese economies to take up the slack in world demand. Thatcher latches on to the theme and bitterly attacks the German and Japanese trade surpluses.

It's easy at the moment for Thatcher to score cheap points in both directions, but her role as US-spokesperson in Europe will increasingly tie her in knots.

The current US deficit, based on military spending, stems from the contradiction between the US's role as imperialism's world policeman — a role consistently defended by Thatcher — and its own economic weakness.

Nothing more clearly illustrates that weakness than the US trade deficit (much larger even than Britain's), which reached 160 billion dollars in 1986. This reflects the decline of US manufacturing and the penetration of the vast US home market — once a secure bastion of profitability for US capitalists and the basis for their expansion into the rest of the globe — by Germans, Japanese, and others.

It also reflects the ludicrous overvaluing of the dollar, a consequence, once again, of the US's role as capitalism's official world leader.

The US now depends on foreign capital, a large chunk of it British, to fund the day-to-day operations of government. *Half* its budget deficit is financed by foreign purchases of treasury securities. In addition, overall US indebtedness to the rest of the world, including corporate debt, *doubled* in the five



The Sandinistas have single-handedly sus

ALEXANDER COCKBURN is America's leading left-wing journalist and author of the newly published and highly-recommended *Corruptions of Empire* (published by *Verso*) — a collection of writings detailing the insanities of the rule of Reagan and the depravities of American liberalism. In this second part of a special *Briefing* interview with Cockburn, conducted by MIKE MARQUSEE and DAVE PALMER, he discusses the current state and future prospects of the American left.

***Briefing:* What possibilities does the Stock Market crash open up for the left in America?**

Cockburn: In some ways the left in America is invisible. But it is also present in ways people don't sufficiently appreciate.

The obvious focus is Nicaragua. For five years Reagan, Congress, the whole US media has blasted the Sandinistas, refused to give them credit for anything. For the last five years Reagan's been calling for military aid for the Contras and basically for invasion.

Yet there has been no time, except maybe the week after Oliver North testified, that *opposition* to intervention has dropped below 60%. Why?

First, there is the after-effect of Vietnam. No one wants that kind of involvement again. Secondly, the solidarity movement with Nicaragua, I would argue, is the most far-reaching and sophisticated in American history.

If you go to a small town in America, say in the mid-West, and you ask how many people have been to Nicaragua — remember you are not talking to a committed "left" audience, you're talking to church people, teachers, mainstream labour activists — and 60 will put up their hands.

***Briefing:* Who is in this solidarity movement? What future does it have?**

Cockburn: It's mainstream America. Now you can ask what staying power has it got. For example, the Freeze Movement which was enormous is now nothing. It's dead.

Has the solidarity movement got left potential? I think it has, because anyone who has been active in solidarity, going to Nicaragua, etc., has been forced to think about fundamental socialist concepts — not in the liberal and ultimately unproductive frames of mind of the Freeze Movement with its despairing apocalypticism.

The solidarity movement has not only stepped Reagan invading Nicaragua, it's basically led to his present downfall. It was the pressure of this constituency which made it impossible for Reagan to attack the Sandinistas head on, and which forced him to do everything by stealth, and thus gave us the Iran-Contra scandal.

***Briefing:* The US left remains disparate, decentralised, localised. Are there any signs of greater cohesion or political development?**

Cockburn: There is a real failure of national leadership. Yet the stirrings of a national movement are there. There are, for example, a lot of reforming currents in the unions and the churches have proved to be the last bastions of criticality in mainstream culture. The academics — no! But there are a lot of students doing good things on South Africa and especially Central America.

The Sandinistas have single-handedly sustained the American left. They give it a focus and dynanism. People always think of the right in the church — the evangelists, and so on. But if you look where the real action in the church has been, it's on the left — for example, the sanctuary movement.

And the churches have been the bottom line in a lot of urban struggles against Reaganism. They are moving, curiously, towards a coherent progressive movement, though a national leadership has not yet emerged. The next five years will show whether labour reforming activities are going to throw up any really good leadership people, which will be essential.

If we look at Canada, there are signs that the New Democratic Party (NDP) may do extremely well at the next election. Their leader is now the most popular political figure in Canada. There is an enormous chance that we will see a social democratic movement make some headway on the North American land mass, which is bound to have repercussions in the United States.

***Briefing:* Manning Marable argues that the Rainbow Coalition provides the only current option for building a mass movement. The revolutionary left has a somewhat sterile attitude to the problem of the Democratic Party. Is it possible to intervene into the Rainbow without uncritically supporting Jackson?**

Cockburn: The 1984 Jackson campaign showed you could generate mass support around a candidate who was articulating anti-imperialist politics, who was arguing for a national health programme, and this in itself was an achievement.

There are elements in Jackson's own ideology that are awful. The question is how much of the Rainbow is just a rallying point around Jackson and how much of it is a real movement. There is no question that in certain areas in '84 the Jackson campaign produced such a movement. It activated local militancy; it brought together coalitions.

How strong really is that Rainbow? Hard to say. It's very regional. If the local chapters of the Rainbow are real focuses for

years since 1982 and is now well over 2 trillion dollars.

In the same period, British capital, increasingly channelled overseas, invested ever greater resources into US operations, profiting from the Reagan boom and the unbridled speculation unleashed by his deregulation policies. That capital cannot easily be repatriated, and the close embrace of transatlantic investors is one from which British partners will only disentangle themselves at great cost.

The Crash has already led to increased questioning of US foreign and economic policy. Tensions between the great capitalist powers are clearly on the increase. But no one — not Germany, not Japan, and certainly not Britain — can or will step into the US's shoes and take over the leadership of world imperialism.

Recent events clearly spell the long-awaited end of "Atlanticism". Its component parts — membership of NATO, obeisance to US interests in the third world, veneration of the dollar, anti-Sovietism, and, of course, an arsenal of nuclear weapons on British soil — are now all open to political challenge.

The various ministers for NATO who have done service in post war Labour governments must be put out to pasture once and for all, along with their ideology. The Special Relationship must be demystified and exposed for what it has always been, the lynch-pin by which a terminally weakened British ruling class hitched its rickety wagon to the engine of the world's greatest capitalist power.

That engine is running out of fuel.

Dancing after the diving dollar

By JAMIE GOUGH



It is nice to see your enemies falling out, and the verbal warfare of recent weeks between leaders of major imperialist countries has understandably delighted socialists.

One of the main issues over which the thieves have fallen out is, of course, the dollar, which is currently in a very poor way indeed.

Since early 1985, the dollar has declined by 50% compared to the Deutschmark and the Yen. And this is in spite of the "Louvre agreement" reached earlier this year by the main capitalist countries in an attempt to stabilise the US currency.

The Stock Market Crash not only gave the dollar a further push downwards, but has made it more difficult than ever for anyone to do anything to stop its fall.

The dollar's current difficulties mark an important stage in the break-up of the economic and military order which oversaw the great capitalist boom of the 1950s and 60s. This order was founded on the economic and military dominance of the US, with Britain acting as loyal side-kick.

Once that order began to crumble, anarchy reigns, as seen in current battles between the major capitalist governments.

The financial arrangements which sustained the postwar boom were set up at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. These were designed to try to avoid a repeat of the Crash of 1929-32. That Crash had been worsened by the way in which capitalist currencies worked at the time.

A currency is simply a piece of paper and needs to be backed up with real commodities if people are to retain confidence in it. Before Bretton Woods, this backing was the *gold* held by Central Banks.

The problem here was that if the Central Bank had to sell its gold, for example to cover a deficit on the country's foreign trade, then the amount of currency had automatically to be reduced, thus also reducing effective buying power, and resulting in a slump.

At Bretton Woods it was agreed that Central Banks could hold as their reserves not only gold but also *dollars and pounds sterling*, thus known as "reserve currencies". The dollar was fixed in value against gold, could be freely converted into gold, and was thus "as good as gold".

The International Monetary Fund was set up to lend to Central Banks who got into difficulties. In this way, contries could deal with balance of payments deficits without immediately deflating their economies.

This was to everyone's benefit, since it allowed the boom to proceed without serious interruptions by downturns in the business cycle, and allowed massive new investments to be planned with reasonable confidence. The new era lasted for twenty years.

The dollar and sterling were chosen as reserve currencies because the USA and Britain were the two strongest imperialist countries. The financial arrangement went hand in hand with the military one: the USA allowed Britain to keep its colonies and its massive overseas military presence.

A reserve currency status was of benefit to the USA and Britain, since it meant they could, for considerable times, run balance of payments deficits — something they were liable to do because of their large export of capital and their overseas military spending.

These deficits meant a net flow of dollars or sterling abroad. Other countries were prepared to accept this since these currencies could be used as reserves — they were the nearest you could get to a sort of international money.

Thus although the reserve system benefited all capitalists, it was *also* a means by which the USA and Britain sought to steal a march on their rivals.

But this wonderfully co-operative international order was slowly undermined from within, by *the different rates of growth of productivity* in the major capitalist countries. In the greatest military imperial powers, the USA and Britain, productivity increases throughout the boom were rather modest, since US and UK capital had more profitable investment opportunities abroad, and were also weighed down by the burdens of military spending.

Indigenous West German and Japanese industry made better use of the boom, and succeeded in closing the productivity gap with the US. As a result, the *trade balance* of both the US and Britain worsened in the 1960s.

The flood of dollars abroad now far exceeded US gold holdings — supposed to be their ultimate guarantee. Confidence in the dollar slumped.

The devaluaton of the pound in 1967 spelled the end of sterling as a reserve currency. And in 1971 Nixon, forced to end the free convertibility of the dollar into gold, effectively devalued the dollar — thus severely weakening, but not yet finishing, its role as a reserve currency.

This has been a major factor in the long period of international capitalist stagnation which followed.

Since 1971, the US trade deficit has grown massively. The dollar is now worth only 38% of the value in Yen for which it could be exchanged in 1970. And an increasing contradiction has opened up between the dollar's use in regulating the *US* economy and its use in maintaining the *world* capitalist economy.

This is expressed in the nasty choice now facing US capitalists. A lower dollar is necessary to correct the balance of trade deficit — that is, to reflect the decreased relative productivity of US industry. But if they let the dollar fall any further, not only will many worldwide financial institutions holding the currency suffer (there are several trillion dollars held outside the US), but the world economy, dependent on the dollar as reserve currency and major means of payments, will be deflated.

To steady the dollar they must now raise US interest rates and cut the government budget deficit. These moves in turn may well plunge the US economy into recession. For some years, Reagan managed to square this circle by international borrowing. Now the crunch is at hand.

The imperialists' attempt in 1944 to float a pseudo-world currency (the dollar) is now completely on the rocks, wrecked on the *inequality* of world capitalist development, which has moved at different paces in different countries.

This wreck is bad news for everyone in the capitalist world — even in "flourishing" Britain. The immediate reaction of each imperialist power is to take steps to protect its own capital. This happened in 1929 and it only made matters worse. Sixty years of capitalist ingenuity has not resolved the propensity of capitalist money to turn capitalist crisis into world economic disaster.



tained the American left

local activists, then that is where things are. If it really is in the end just a shop-front for Jackson, in which basically Jackson can say anything he wants at any point and in which there is no throughput from the activists, then you are left with very little.

***Briefing:* Zionism has a pernicious influence on the American left. Is there any sign of that log-jam breaking?**

Cockburn: Yes, things have improved since I first went to the States in '76. Then, anywhere outside the far left, you had systematic terrorising of anyone who raised anti-Zionist positions.

The Begin government and the invasion of Lebanon changed things to some degree. Zionism is profoundly divisive on the American left. I constantly point out to American leftists what the Israeli press itself is saying about exploitation of West Bank labour, denial of elementary democratic rights, etc., and ask: why can't you see these reports?

They're ignored not only by the mainstream American press, but in left papers like *In These Times*. There are still enormous inhibitions and difficulties. There are signs that things are changing, but there is a long way to go.

If you look at the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), a lot of younger people in DSA are open-minded. I went to address a group of students at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania Black Monday. They described a visit by Michael Harrington (a long-time prominent self-styled socialist) who came on behalf of DSA.

His first words wre "I am not a communist"! This is the mind-set we are dealing with.

The older generation are still mentally fighting the wars of the '50s. Harrington and Irving Home, who edits *Dissent*, had a recorded conversation in 1984 about American politics in which they didn't even *mention* Jesse Jackson. These people hate Jackson. They always will hate Jackson. And Zionism is the point of focus for that.

***Briefing:* So can anything come out of the DSA?**

Cockburn: The DSA is fairly pluralist. I pissed on the DSA in an article and I got an angry letter from one of their younger organisers saying you're wrong, we've conducted struggle, and even if Irving How said he'd resign from the DSA if we ever mentioned Jackson, that's not the truth any more for the rest of us. There are slow stirrings. One shouldn't underestimate or exaggerate it.

***Briefing:* The demonstration in April in Washington in solidarity with South Africa and Central America appears to have been a success.**

Cockburn: The organisers called it a success insofar as they did get people from the labour movement. I always think that the effort to put on these national demonstrations is just too much.

Activists can spend four or five months in their region building for a demonstration, which can be very constructive, then they watch it on television and the numbers are underreported, and the whole thing is marginalised and seems a wasted effort.

***Briefing:* But the labour union sponsors of the demonstration were more extensive than anything during the anti—Vietnam War movement.**

Cockburn: No question. South Africa has the extra dimension of black labour and the crushing of black unions. You've still got the AFL-CIO financing dubious activities in South Africa.

But at the last convention there was some protest about what you might call "AFL-CIA" activities — and that's an important sign. For the first time last year, from the floor, one of the union leaders made a major denunciation of the ties between the AFL-CIO and the CIA.

***Briefing:* One of the themes of your new book is the craven sycophancy and dishonesty of American journalists. How would you compare that to the situation here?**

Cockburn: As regards the main pillars of the British press, and taking into account the extra vulgarities of the British press, it's pretty much the same.

For every monstrosity, distortion and betrayal of the truth perpetrated by the American media and recorded there (in his book *Corruptions of Empire*) you can find an equivalent here.



US flight attendant (APFA member) pickets shareholders meeting; masked in case of victimisation.

What about progressive alternatives? Again, in America there are encouraging signs. Nicaragua has thrown up new possibilities.

It's more sophisticated than it was in the 60s. People have learned a lot. You've got to get their eyes from the top left hand corner to the bottom right without going to sleep!

There's *Rock & Roll Confidential*, which discusses politics and culture in an interesting way. Small publications like *Dollars & Sense*, *Labor Notes*, *Against the Current* are all doing good work.

The mainstream American press has virtually given up writing about labour. It used to be a big deal to be a labour correspondent. Now, it's nothing.

***Briefing:* You talked about the interchange between the intellectual cohorts around Reagan and Thatcher. What about the possibility of developing a similar interchange between the British and American lefts?**

Cockburn: Yes, there's a real need for that. The usual connections are made at the level of organisations. In the 60s there were connections between student activists but there's no more of that.

There's some union contact but it doesn't add up to much on the progressive side.

There's no magic wand. It needs constant exchanges, making contacts.

October 1917 and the "New Soviet Women"

The following is a speech given by CATHY PORTER to the November 14-15th *Outlook for Socialism* event in London.

The early heady days of the October Revolution produced a new generation of women activists.

Thousands, most in their teens or early twenties, and most without children, left home to fight with the Bolsheviks, and set about creating a new life for themselves, no longer bound by family and marriage.

These "new Soviet women", strong, proud, liberated, and idealistic, represented for many all the newness and heroism of the Revolution.

Their image, later replaced by that of the "heroine mother", appears now to be undergoing a long-awaited rehabilitation.

These women believed that only by working and fighting for the Revolution as equal partners with men could women make a new place for themselves within it. For many western feminists now, this self-determination as women may often seem in conflict with their own personal needs, their sense of identity and their sexuality.



Moscow 1920. Meeting of Women of the East, organised by Alexandra Kollontai

Isolated

Because they tended to operate mainly in the world of men, they were often isolated from the strong constituency of women then making their own demands on the Revolution.

Western feminists may find it easier to identify with women like Alexandra Kollontai and other members of the first generation of women Bolsheviks who came to revolutionary politics amid the struggles of European revolutionary movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. A new women's culture of resistance — the "woman question" — was born.

After the 1905 revolution was smashed, revolutionaries were driven underground. Often they found themselves in opposition to the new, creative Marxism, influenced by Freud and a new enlightened sexual psychology, which combined with the new technology of contraception to challenge all previous assumptions about the "woman question".

Kollontai articulated the dilemmas facing women in the movement. The choice was between working to liberate themselves or sacrifice their own interests in the common struggle.

Own demands

Kollontai struggled throughout her life for synthesis, campaigning with Russian socialism for women's rights, and appealing directly to women to make their own demands on the Revolution.

As the Revolution again gained momentum, vast numbers of women were drawn into the Bolshevik Party and became some of its bravest and most militant members. Women initiated the overthrow of the tsar in February 1917.

Kollontai and other women Bolsheviks became some of the most popular political speakers in Petrograd. And women soon represented such a powerful force in the Party that she and others urged formation of separate women's bureaux.

The Party rejected the idea — as did most women, including long-standing Bolsheviks like Konkordia Samoilova, as well as the younger women who took for granted much of what they had struggled for, and feared the separatist implications of such a move.

In October 1917, the Bolsheviks overthrew the old order and pledged to put something better in its place. Some of the first laws they enacted concerned women.

New labour laws gave women (married or not) 16 weeks paid maternity leave, with a grant for a friend to take time off work to help with the birth.

Working mothers were to work no more than four days a week. Creches and warm rooms in factories where working mothers' babies could be breast-fed were established. Mothers were given regular time off to use them.

Marriage law

Then the tsarist marriage law was abolished and replaced by one which allowed any man over 18 and any woman over 16 to marry, and allowed women to initiate divorce and choose which surname they gave their child — thus helping to remove the stigma of illegitimacy from children whose mothers didn't marry.

But despite such progressive laws, the changing of family life was deeply painful for women. Some 88% of women were illiterate. Thousands were widowed by war or abandoned by husbands or forced to leave babies in dereliet orphanages from which they escaped as soon as they were old enough to roam the streets in an everlasting search for bread. Drained and exhausted, many women longed only to rebuild their shattered families.

Yet women also derived immense strength from the three years of war. As Allied intervention struck into the heart of the country, bread rations were cut, conscription was introduced, and the Civil War turned into a people's war of total mobilisation.

At the front

Thousands of women marched to the front to fight and die for the Bolsheviks in men's regiments or special Communist Women's detachments. In front-line towns, they learned to shoot, bandage, fight.

On the home front they were everywhere, feeding cleaning and building fortifications.

At women's meetings they called on their sisters to fight for the Revolution. They were recruited for propaganda, espionage, and police work; gave talks to soldiers on the battlefield and worked at the front for the Party's Political Department, co-ordinated in Moscow by a woman, Varya Kasparova. Women like Kollontai and Samoilova were among the Party's most popular front-line agitators.

Unlike Kollontai, most women did not address the inequalities they continued to suffer after the Boslheviks took power. Nor (unlike Kollontai) would they have had the prestige or experience in the Party to do so had they wished to.

Most *men* who fought at the front talked more of the sacrifices entailed than of their own needs and feelings. The supreme sacrifices demanded of the revolutionary movement, and the special urge to self-sacrifice instilled in women, made women doubly reticent to discuss the details of their personal life at the front and the written records tell us less than we might want of the personal and specific aspects of women's liberation in Revolution.

"We can laugh now at those women who rejected love, reckoning it would get in the way of their work," wrote a single mother from Moscow called A. Prokhorova, who left her three year old son to go to the front.

"Possibly we did err too far in that direction. But I know that the reason we won in those unbelievably difficult days was because we were able to transcend our personal cares and attachments..."

Or, as 19 year old Asmik Papyan, leader of a women's espionage group from Baku, wrote:

"Those weren't the times for growing rubber plants or doing satin-stitch embroidery."

Many women had husbands or lovers at the front, and for those without children, the Revolution replaced the emotional and domestic burdens of marriage with a looser, more impermanent kind of tie. Often they idealised a new kind of sexual comradeship, transcending traditional family dramas and jealousies.

"Happiness then wasn't a pretty dress, a successful marriage and a cosy flat with a gramaphone. Happiness was caring for the wounded, the stricken and the dying," wrote Alexandra Bulygina, a nurse at the Urals front.



Alexandra Kollontai

PHOTO: Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

These women came of age at a time when it finally seemed possible to overstep the conventional female ethic of submission and domesticity. Yet thousands of women working in factories to support their children had their energy sapped by the double burden of work and housework.

Those who left home for the front faced an uncertain future, without home, security, or the chance to have children, let alone a room of their own; while their new confidence was frequently obstructed by men desperate to cling onto power.

Many soldiers and sailors who were Bolshevik supporters were anxious to work with women as equals. But most of them, reared in the tsarist army and exhausted by years of work, exploited women's vulnerability by demanding sexual favours or insisting on endless discussions of the "marriage question".

Women leaders and commissars were subjected to endless trials and tests from soldiers disinclined to follow any orders, let alone those given by a woman. They had to learn to win men's trust, prove and defend themselves, and give as good as they got, if need be with their fists.

Contraception

With no real contraception available, and VD rife, many women must have opted for chastity. Hundreds of women did resort to abortions, from which an estimated 4% died, and over half suffered serious complications.

With the filth, the inadequate drains, and the scarcity of doctors (1 for 5,000), abortion was not a popular option then. But many Bolsheviks (including Lenin) recognised its necessity as an elementary health measure.

By the end of 1918, many women who had been suspicious of a separate women's organisation began to change their minds.

That winter thousands of women streamed into Moscow for the first All-Russian Women's Congress, organised by Kollontai, Samoilova, and others. Women in bullet-riddled coats with stern, worn faces spoke of fighting in Petrograd, Siberia, and the Don.

Rousing

The organisers delivered rousing speeches on women's work and the family. Lenin spoke of the need to abolish household drudgery, and the Congress ended with a resolution to set up national Women's Commissions.

Local Women's Commissions, composed of three elected delegates from the factories and villages, were elected to serve for three months with every Party organisation, to recruit women to fight with the Bolsheviks, to present women's demand to local parties and report back, and to set up canteens and orphanages.

By the end of 1919, with victory on the horizon, and the Whites and interventionists beaten back, the Party had received a flood of complaints from women that the Commissions' work was being undermined. Their status was then upgraded to a new Party Women's Department, the Zhenotdel, staffed entirely by women and responsible for everything that concerned women's lives.

Women workers in regional parties ensured that every group of factory inspectors included at least one woman, to ensure that labour laws were being observed, and that women were protected from night work and allowed time off to breast-feed.

Conferences

Women's conferences were held up and down the country, at which women were elected to work in local government. Soon there were Zhenotdels in every region of Russia, and a vast educational programme was underway amongst the women of Central Asia.

By the end of 1920, the Interventionists had withdrawn, leaving the economy smashed and some 14 million dead. Those who survived were hungry and exhausted.

Families were torn apart by war. Women struggled on their own to support their children. Hundreds of orphans and abandoned waifs roamed the country, hungry, homeless, and desperate. As men returned from the front, women were usually the first to lose their jobs.

Revolutionary hopes suppressed by war came to the surface in meetings and debates. Women who had fought at the front or slaved away in the factories now had the opportunity to discuss their own problems. The Zhenotdel organised political education meetings at which women discussed their problems at work, tackled subjects such as VD and prostitution, and cried out for legalised abortion.

Abortion

Finally, in November 1920, Soviet Russia became the first country in Europe to legalise abortion. This was not presented as a conscious attempt to change family policy. The birth rate had already been slashed by epidemic, famine, and war, and the Bolsheviks' aim was always to make childbirth and motherhood safer.

Though not primarily organisers of women, the "new Soviet women" of the Civil War years were an inspiration to women of the time and later.

Many Soviet women then and now feel they served the cause of their own liberation best where they were, on the front line of the Revolution, struggling against the traditional patriarchal values which underpinned the old order and lingered on into the new.

After Yeltsin's fall: Gorbachev at the crossroads

Where does Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev stand?

On the left or on the right?

This question puzzles the British Left.

However much we may be able to predict how our comrades will interpret other phenomena in world politics we cannot be sure what they will make of Gorbachev. Some of us may even be in two minds about the man and the questions he raises.

For some people the answer is simple. Find out what our domestic enemy thinks of Gorbachev and then think the opposite. The problem is that the domestic enemy is confused as well.

Others look at what Gorbachev says and does and ask whether it is leftist or rightist *in general*, in abstract ideological terms. This too will only confuse the issue.

The only way to understand it is to situate the Gorbachev group within the concrete context of the Soviet system as a whole, and indeed of the world situation, and assess the meaning of Gorbachev's activity in the light of its likely practical consequences for the future.

The Gorbachev group has spelt out its programme pretty clearly, although some of the terminology is open to misinterpretation. It is a programme of liberation, in economics, politics, culture and ideology.

Since one can't proclaim oneself a "liberal" in the CPSU, the terminology is different: openness, democratisation, restructuring. But it all amounts to liberalism:

- a degree of marketisation of the economy, a strong assertion of the rule of law;
- the development of a certain degree of separation of powers;
- defence of individual liberties against the state;
- greater freedom of expression;
- far more cultural pluralism;
- some degree of recognised ideological pluralism;
- a very considerable opening up of the USSR to influences at all levels from the West.

This liberalism is, of course, not capitalist liberalism. Despite some scope for private (non-capitalist) production and service sectors (especially in agriculture), the overwhelming bulk of the economy will remain nationalised.

Unemployment will not be allowed and prices will not be given complete "freedom".

Policy and decision-making will be firmly monopolised by the CPSU and there is no sign of any intention of allowing the right of alternative platforms and tendencies within the Party.

There will be an element of *negative* freedom from arbitrary state action. But there will not be *positive* freedom for the collective producers to determine through open democratic means the course of government policy.

All this has, in effect, been spelt out by Gorbachev himself. Its pedigree is the April 1968 Action Programme of the Czechoslovak Communist Party during the Prague Spring.

The reform movement that has grown within the USSR since Gorbachev came to power is in many ways strikingly similar in ideology and social composition to the movement of the Prague Spring.

By OLIVER MACDONALD

The attitude of the working class is also strikingly similar: opinion surveys in recent months show industrial workers very suspicious of the effects of marketisation (erosion of social rights, rise of social inequalities) while very sympathetic to greater openness and truthfulness in the media.

And the anti-reform current within the Party elite is, like the Czech Novotnyites, seeking to use working class suspicion of *perestroika* to destroy the movement for political reform.

When Novotny was replaced by Dubcek he rushed to the big steel town of Kladno and made a direct appeal to the factory workers there. They and their party organisations hesitated, and the new party leadership responded by declaring the abolition of censorship.

Novotny then tried to stage a military coup but it miserably failed. (The organiser, General Sejna, fled to the west!)

If the USSR was today a socialist democracy, Gorbachev's programme would of course be objectively reactionary. But in reality, the soviet state has been in the grip of a Stalinism far more powerful and deepy rooted than Czech Novotnyism.

Party of that Stalinist reality is great economic and social security for industrial workers, a security they will find eroded to some extent if the more managerial-elitist elements within the reform movement have their way.

Dilemma

This seems then to present the left with an insoluble dilemma: either support workers' social rights plus Stalinism, or support liberal reforms at the expense of the social interests of the working class.

Two phoney solutions to this dilemma are on offer. One is a denunciation of both the supporters of Gorbachev and the supporters of Ligachev (Gorbachev's hard line opponent in the Politburo) in the name of both freedom and workers' social rights and democracy.

This is correct as a final goal, but only sectarians believe you solve a *current practical task* by proclaiming a final goal.

The other phoney solution is to convince oneself that the present situation in the USSR is equivalent to August 1st 1980 in Poland. We are, according to this scenario, on the eve of the rise of a Soviet Solidarnosc against bureaucratic rule, a mass movement led by the strongly egalitarian, erstwhile Stalinist Communist factory militants against the corrupt liberalism of the Soviet equivalent of Gierekism.



PHOTO: (Report)

Gorbachev

Paradoxical

But the paradoxical fact is that Solidarnosc would not have been possible — or, in a certain sense, necessary — without the ten preceding years of Gierekite liberalism. This liberalism not only destroyed the Ligachevs within the Polish Communist Party (Moczar and his followers) it also made possible the relatively free circulation of ideas and information within Poland. It also gradually undermined what the workers believed to be the basis of socialism — social security and egalitarianism.

None of this has happened in the Soviet Union as yet. The Soviet Moczars-Novotnyites are immensely strong and they offer industrial workers a far less painful and risky way of destroying marketisation than Solidarnosc-style insurgence: reliance on the Stalinist wing of the bureaucracy, on condition, of course, that the workers continue to swallow old-style repressive authoritarian bullying.

How then to resolve the dilemma? How to choose between two different programmes, each in its own way posing dangers for the working class? The answer lies in the *real, practical movement for liberal reform*.

For what the Western media calls Gorbachevism is not only a programme, but a *real, living, social movement for greater freedoms*. Within that movement there are forces, expressed most clearly in the Socialist Clubs in Moscow, demanding a freedom beyond liberalisation, a positive freedom to exercise power, to intervene in and shape Soviet life.

These forces seek freedom for the workers to express their claims and aspirations, but they also want to preserve the egalitarian gains and social security enjoyed by working people in the USSR.

This movement has been summoned onto the political arena by the Gorbachev group and until the fall of Yeltsin it was genuinely a movement under the leadership of Gorbachev. No doubt many of the people in this movement had had some illusions about the scope of Gorbachev's aims and commitments. And we on the left know that illusions of this sort can be dangerous. But they are also useful because they give people the confidence to enter the struggle!

In recent months we have seen the base of the reform movement develop and begin to change a programme for quantitative liberalisation into a demand for qualitative political change. Independent organisations of thousands — at the last count there were 48 Clubs in Moscow alone — taking grass roots initiatives in support of leaders committed to "the leading role of the Party". A living dialectic!

The Gorbachev group requires a mass social movement to defeat the Soviet Novotnyites and Moczarites. Yet the spectre of such a movement drives the Soviet elite into opposition to Gorbachev.

Hegemony

He sought to handle this tension through his real hegemony over the reform movement and his refusal to identify a political enemy of reform within the Soviet Party elite. In this way he hoped to both build the reform movement and reassure the party elite.

But the tactic failed. The tension grew explosive. The Novotnyite-Moczarites launched an all-out attack on the Moscow Party organisation, the motor-force of the reform movement.

Gorbachev faced a choice: either break the dynamism of the reform movement from below, or wage an open political struggle against the Stalinist old-guard. The first result of this crisis was the political destruction of Yeltsin.

Much of the bourgeois media has failed to grasp the significance of the fall of Yeltsin. The Moscow party leader was not simply dismissed. He was *politically destroyed*, forced to make a sickening, Stalinist repudiation of his own political programme.

In other words, if the Stalinists have their way, there is to be a *police* attitude towards radical reforming currents within the CPSU. *Pravda's* two-page account of the unanimous lynching of Yeltsin turns Glasnost on its head. It is the reformers who will be publicly pilloried, and media openness can be used against its own champions.

The fall of Yeltsin is a massive victory for Stalinism. Unless the Gorbachev wing of the leadership is ready and willing to mount a counter-attack against the Stalinist Old Guard, it spells the beginning of the end for the movement for genuine political reform within the USSR.

If the Gorbachev wing fails to grasp this they will find themselves on the road of the Dubcekites after the Moscow Protocols of August 1968: kept in office to destroy the popular movement, by crushing its hopes, only to be tossed aside (as Dubcek was in April 1969) without a whimper of protest from a bitterly disappointed mass movement.

Activists must follow Conference gains through

New realism reared its corporate image at the Annual CND Conference on November 20-22nd.

The CND leadership see the signing of the INF disarmament treaty on December 7th between Gorbachev and Reagan as a victory for the peace movement.

They claim this success — paradoxically — as responsible for the shrinking membership and declining activist base of CND.

However, new opportunities for campaigning are opened up by the INF treaty and Gorbachev's glasnost policies according to these geniuses. In fact, of course, it's the same old popular front stuff in a different form — downplaying direct action, refusing to criticise established politicians, failing to make the solidarity links with industrial and international struggles.

Despite a smaller Conference, the leadership still did not win the day. Activists won the vote on adding to the priorities for next year continuing campaigns against US bases and NATO, and the link between higher defence spending with cuts in the social wage.

The key question, of course, is making the new leadership carry out these policies.

Dave Spencer, Coventry END



Dorothy Hayball on her sponsored bike ride from Blackheath to Tunbridge Wells in aid of CND on September 27th. "Many thanks to all my sponsors," says Dorothy, "the £169.80 raised will help us carry on our work for lasting peace."

Letters

Why do AAM silence Dave Kitson?

Dear Editor,

When a branch of the Anti-Apartheid Movement was set up in Falkirk a few months ago, I was elected to the local committee. Being engaged in the task of completing a book on *Africa and the British Left* from 1883 onwards, I felt I ought to do something in Falkirk and district to contribute to a greater awareness of the "totalitarian" situation in South Africa.

By July of this year, when a decision had been taken to invite Dave Kitson to address public meetings in Falkirk and Stirling, I became aware of a whispering campaign designed to prevent him from speaking at Anti-Apartheid meetings.

As an independent socialist — and a socialist who belonged to the Movement for Colonial Freedom in Edinburgh and London in the 1950s — I was appalled at the *sleekit* attempts being made behind the scenes to prevent Dave Kitson from speaking at Anti-Apartheid Movement meetings in Scotland.

After unofficial whispering advice from officials of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Glasgow, the Falkirk committee decided to invite someone from the Scottish committee to come through to Falkirk to explain why Dave Kitson seemed to be unacceptable as a speaker.

When I was a student at Ruskin College, Oxford, in the early 1950s, I saw a lot of Dave Kitson. What I remember most was not Kitson the member of the Communist Party, but a sympathetic, warm-hearted iconoclast whose irreverent sense of humour marked him out from the Party hacks.

Yet Africa was never far from his thoughts; and, when I met him one night in London in, I think, the early 1960s, I suspected that he was going back to Africa to avoid the communists' doctrinal disputes in London.

Although he was always interested in ideas, he was, above all, an activist. I did not see him again until April of this year when I went down to the Ruskin College Fellowship Reunion.

Then when I saw Dave in Oxford, he told me something about his political disputes with the leadership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London. But I confess that I did not — and do not — understand where and at what precise points his analysis of the situation in South Africa and the role of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain differed from that of the official leadership.

On Monday October 27th 1987, John Nelson, an official of the Scottish committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, came to Falkirk to "advise"us not to invite Dave Kitson to a public meeting in Falkirk:

- In the first place, Kitson was only interested in promoting himself at the expense of the South African liberation movement.
- Secondly, only "the sects" were interested in Kitson's differences with the real leadership.
- Furthermore, Kitson disagreed with the leaders of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London; he insisted on standing for election to the national committee although he had been "advised not to do so"; and he would not accept majority decisions.
- If Kitson came to Falkirk, he would advocate (unspecified) policies at odds with the interests of the black South Africans. By providing Kitson with a platform in Falkirk, we would be taking action detrimental to the activities of the ANC in South Africa.

In reply to questions, John Nelson described Dave Kitson as "a renegade". Moreover, the South Africans were "engaged in armed struggle", and they "could not therefore afford" the luxury of democratic debate.

What upset me and the other members of the Falkirk committee was Nelson's attempts to smear and discredit Dave Kitson without offering any clear or coherent account of the political issues at stake. I do not know whether I would agree — or disagree — with Kitson's analysis of the tasks of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain. This is not really the major issue; the issue is one of free speech, free debate and open discussion.

Also I am very disturbed by the almost "totalitarian" attempts at censorship being imposed by members of the Scottish committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Totalitarianism in South Africa cannot be fought by employing Stalinist methods of thought-control in Scotland.

The black South Africans surely deserve better than that; and so do the Scots who are supporting the South Africans' emancipation struggle against a brutal, totalitarian dictatorship.

Yours sincerely,
Dr James D Young
Falkirk

Getting to grips with Chesterfield

Dear *Briefing*,

I was a little disappointed in *Briefing's* coverage of the Chesterfield Conference.

Like many others who attended this important meeting, I found that one of the problems with the way in which it was organised was that as I could only attend one theme conference and one workshop, I had little idea of what was happening elsewhere.

I had been looking to *Briefing* to fill the gap and this you failed to do, so perhaps other readers will be willing to share their experiences and ideas as to how things could be improved at the follow-up conferences?

My first suggestion would be that if the same format of themes and workshops is followed then there should be short summaries of the work and conclusions from each section at the final plenary.

Secondly, in the economics workshops, which I attended, it was very noticeable that both the briefing papers prepared in advance and the introductory talks were completely ignored. Instead, a galaxy of speakers trotted through their party pieces with very little reference to anything that had gone before or what had been said by anyone else.

The only exception was John Palmer, who did try to pull the discussion together.

Now, all this was enormously enjoyable, revealing yet again the wealth of richly comic characters on the left. My own personal favourite was the man who, having listened for some time to the usual arguments by third worlders versus pro-Europeans, firmly announced that there was no need to co-operate with anybody, since there were no socialists outside Britain!

However, since the object of the conference was presumably not to provide entertainment for hoary old theatre buffs like me, but to start a serious debate on socialist policies, I would recommend that next time the papers coming out of the policy discussion groups should each be introduced by a speaker and used to focus the subsequent debate so that decisions can be made and policies formulated.

Paula Watson,
Westminster, London

Livingstone cannot be trusted

Dear *Briefing*,

Ken Livingstone asks (*Labour Briefing*, no. 51):

"Can you trust me? Put it this way. In order to sell out, I'd have to junk lesbian and gay rights, the Irish question, and much else besides."

Unfortunately, as was shown when he failed to open a "second front" against the Tories during the Miners' Strike over abolition and rate-capping, Livingstone cannot be trusted.

Livingstone's hallmark is that he retains good positions on ideological issues *and* sells out at crucial times. He may "mortify the Tories" (as he puts it), but he's the type of politician they can live with, in the last analysis.

We are suffering from a lengthy absence of leadership, and Livingstone is now exploiting this to great effect. *When* he puts himself forward as the Left's standard bearer, we will have no option but to actively support him. But to trust him would be political suicide.

In any future leadership position, Livingstone would fail again to provide adequate leadership in taking on the Tories when it came to the crunch. We must learn from past mistakes and make preparations for the eventuality of a sell-out. We must make sure we're in a position to be able to take over leadership of the struggle.

Yours comradely,
John Turkie,
Hackney, London

WRITEBACK!

We welcome your letters!
Write to Labour Briefing, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ

Telex from Des East, Administrative Secretary, National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).

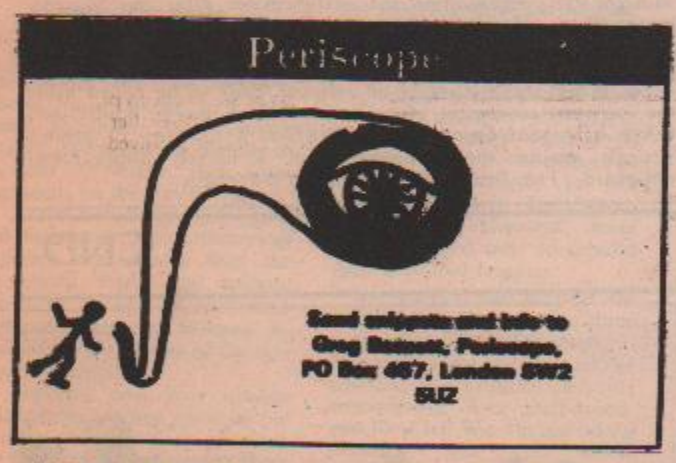
NUMSA has discussed the ongoing campaigns for the release of our General Secretary, Moses Mayekiso, and the others charged with him, and for the workers dismissed by BTR Sarmcol.

NUMSA calls for the continuation and intensification of these campaigns.

NUMSA notes with appreciation the campaign for the release of Cde Mayekiso and others by many groups including the Friends of Moses Mayekiso, the IMF and the UAW. The solidarity shown has been very gratefully received by Cde Mayekiso and the whole union. The material support has been shared with the dependants of all those involved in both Alex trials. We call for further efforts, especially by the labour movement, on this crucial and precendent-setting trial.

NUMSA calls for the intensification of the campaign of solidarity with the workers of BTR Sarmcol. The efforts of the labour movement and organisations in the UK and other countries is vital to our efforts to obtain justice for these workers, and we call for even more activity on this campaign. The work done by the TUC and its affiliated unions and by the IMF continues to be central to our efforts to obtain the reinstatement of the Sarmcol workers.

Periscope



"Perhaps"

Former Black Sections activist **Paul Sharma** recently turned up at Haringey's Local Government Committee to get himself elevated to the Council by-election panel.

In his speech to delegates he denounced both wings of the Party for their conduct during the long, bitter debate over cuts in jobs and services and said that he personally believed there was a middle way between illegality and swingeing cuts.

Delegates on both left and right eagerly awaited Cde. Sharma's recipe for reconciliation and financial recovery. Alas, they were disappointed.

To questions from the floor demanding that Sharma share his secret formula for compromise and complete happiness, the would-be Labour Councillor simply kept repeating "There is a middle way".

Amazingly, this avowal was taken on faith by a majority of the delegates present, who voted the man on to the panel.

Undoubtedly the most succinct comment on Sharma's performance belong to the anonymous delegate who inscribed his or her ballot paper with the single word "perhaps".

Income distribution: going to extremes

In the US, the gap between the rich and the rest has never been wider. The bottom two fifths of families received only 15.4% of total national family income in 1986 — the lowest percentage recorded since the government began gathering statistics in 1947.

The top two fifths got 67.7% — the highest share ever recorded.

Most of this booty went to the top fifth of families, who got 43.7% of all income — also a record. Indeed, the wealthiest 5% of families alone earned more income than the bottom 40%.

And the centre does not seem to be holding: the middle fifth of the population received one sixth of total income — another all-time low.

A close look at the poorest families reveals further cause for alarm. Poverty rates tend to rise in recessions and fall in expansions, but poverty has fallen very little in the current expansion.

The 13.6% of families in poverty in 1986 is the highest poverty rate recorded for any year at a comparable point in the business cycle. The 1986 poverty rate makes the 11.7% poverty rate in 1979 look good by comparison.

So can we look back on 1979 as the good old days? Well, not really. The share of income received by the bottom three fifths of the population has been falling since 1969, although the tumble did speed up dramatically in 1980.

But what the 1986 figures show is that even compared to 1979, the economy is working less and less for the US majority.

Courtesy, Dollars & Sense

Building Briefing

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The *Briefing* Editorial Board, and the following Commissions, can be contacted at PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ, 01 733 7016:
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Briefing Steering Committee:
Next meeting: Sunday December 6th: ***NOTE 11.30 am starting time.***

Deadline for articles:
Issue no. 53 (out December 9th): notify EB as soon as possible; all articles in by Tuesday December 1st. There will be a Xmas break after issue no. 53.

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This week's winner

Apologies for technical difficulties hindering printing the names of recent winners in the paper.
This week's winner is no. 466; Jane Stockton from Oxford.

BOOK REVIEW

Rosa Revisited

Rosa Luxemburg — A Life, by Elzbieta Ettinger, Harrap

Previous biographies of Luxemburg have emphasised the differences between Rosa's life and the lives led by most other women.

This book, written from a feminist perspective, concentrates not on the politics but on the personal life and passions of the famous revolutionary.

Her life has all the elements of excitement and tragedy one expects from a feminist heroine.

Growing up as a Jew in Poland, suffering disablement from polio, she struggles to get to university where she scores outstanding academic success.

Here she falls in love, becoming a leader of first the Polish and later the German socialist movement, where she launches a major battle against the betrayals of socialist principles by the leaders of German Social Democracy in the years leading up to the first World War.

After several years in prison she is triumphantly released, only to meet her death at the hands of the reactionary *Frei Korps*, carrying out the orders of Social Democratic leaders, as the German Revolution ends in defeat.

Ettinger, editor of a book of love letters between Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, includes new information about Rosa's family life and love affairs.

Her lover Jogiches comes across as a man who is jealous of Luxemburg's enormous energy and strength of character. He is unable fully to return the passion that Luxemburg heaps on him and maintains a cool distance that would drive any woman to distraction.

Rosa turns to other men to fulfill her compulsive desire to be loved — Paul Levi, Costia Zetkin, and Hans Diefenbach. Throughout her adult life Luxemburg is torn between her aspirations as a revolutionary leader and the needs she feels, as a woman, to have a home, a child, and a stable love life.

By Valerie Coultas Vauxhall CLP



Rosa Luxembourg

The brave and often lonely choice that Luxemburg makes is one that a male revolutionary did not and does not have to make. This awareness gives the book its strongly feminist edge.

Ettinger does not make the mistake of idealising Luxemburg. She includes tales of Luxemburg's arrogance in faction fights and anecdotes and comments that show Luxemburg's contempt and impatience with her own sex.

Rosa suggests that Clara Zetkin, one of her closest friends, was a rather dogmatic Marxist who had few ideas of her own, and likens Sonia Liebnicht to a slightly spoiled, pretty doll.

Ettinger is critical of Luxemburg's stand on the Polish and to some extent on the Jewish question. Luxemburg's ideas on the party and the masses are not detailed, but where the book touches on this subject Luxemburg is portrayed as the defender of democracy in opposition to Lenin's elitism. Ettinger is unequivocal, however, about Luxemburg's respect for Lenin and general defence of the Russian Revolution.

The love of the German labour movement for its greatest leader comes across strongly. It's my guess that the author had a female audience in mind — but men would also benefit from reading Ettinger's well-researched, moving account of the Luxemburg story.

BOOK REVIEW

'68 Generation

Street Fighting Years, by Tariq Ali, Collins, £12.95

Next year, 1988, is a year of important anniversaries.

It is the 50th aniversary of a very important socialist conference, hosted by one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution, held in the French countryside (if you don't know what I mean, ask your *Briefing* seller for clarification).

But it is also the 20th anniversary of the Tet offensive in Vietnam; the May-June general strike in France; and the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Twenty years already! 1968, and the years of student and worker rebellion which it symbolises, are for younger comrades just as much a part of revolutionary *history* as the Spanish revolution.

Tariq Ali's new book tells his personal story of these years.

Tariq was propelled into the leadership of the Vietnam and radical student movements not so much by his journalism, but by his oratorical flair. As the most articulate spokesperson of the new wave of revolutionary socialism, he became a media "personality".

While much of the media coverage was hysterically hostile and put him from time to time in personal danger, nonetheless it put him in a unique position of being sought out and courted by a wide range of intellectuals and celebrities.

Much of the charm of this book lies not so much in the story of 1968 and after, but in the tales of the people. A dinner party hosted by Marlon Brando; NUM leader Lawrence Daly on a visit to Vietnam (failing to keep intact his malt whiskey present for Ho Chi Minh); a summons to meet the Redgraves; Perry Anderson's energetic dancing technique — these are just a few of the dozens of entertaining anecdotes.

All this will of course be anathema to the po-faced sectarians in the far left whose commitment to Marxism is heavily laced with puritanism, moralism and a total lack of humour.

Already the most hostile review of Tariq's book has been written by the SWP's doctor turned lumpen-rock-critic David Widgery who asked in *New Society* "What has the British left done to deserve this man?" The import of Widgery's review is that the British left can well do without these foreigners coming to give us lessons.

By Phil Hearse Islington North CLP

Street Fighting Years is above all a defence of 1968 and the generation which rebelled in such spectacular fashion. While this generation had many illusions and made many mistakes, nonetheless in taking up the fight to change the world it was absolutely right.

Tariq talks of the "fantasies and illusions" of the '68 rebellion. More precisely, ultra-leftism was the dominant political trend, and many talked of a "decisive clash" between the workers and the ruling class — happening within a few years.

As the years went by and revolution did not occur the radicalised militants were forced to come to terms with serious long-term work in the labour movement. Inevitably there were casualties, as people became disillusioned and moved towards the right.

There have been some spectacular renegades. Regis Debray, theorist of the Cuban revolution and collaborator of Che Guevara, became a factotum of Mitterrand, peddling his poisonous foreign policy, and befriending arch-reactionary US ambassador to the UN, Jean Kirkpatrick.

Andre Gluckman, Maoist theorist of the French barricades, became a mystical and reactionary philosopher. Henri Weber, ideologue and leader of the Trotskyist Ligue Communiste, went off towards social democracy.

Casualties

Yes, casualties and renegades there have been. But overall, the '68 generation has remained remarkably steadfast, despite all the difficulties and setbacks.

A young comrade, in his early 20s, recently remarked to me that all his active political life Thatcher had been in power. He had known little but setbacks and defeats, mainly defensive struggles. "You people from '68 are lucky," he said.

In truth we are. It is difficult to convey the thrill of seeing the first reports of the Tet offensive, announcing that NLF units had taken over the US embassy in Saigon; or that of seeing the first reports of the barricades in Paris ("It's just like the revolution" was the headline in the *Evening Standard*); or that of marching with thousands behind banners shouting for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution.

What we had the privilege of seeing in 1968 was what it could be like when the masses rebelled, and when the powers that be become vulnerable. It is one thing to reason intellectually that socialism and revolution are possible — it is something else again to know it in your bones, to feel it, to see it unfold, in embryo, before you.

Read *Street Fighting Years* because it's a good story and because it's fun. But be wary of Tariq's slightly downbeat and depressed conclusions. The key slogan of 1968 was "Ce n'est qu'un debut — continuons le combat!"

Yes, indeed: 1968 was just a beginning — the struggle continues.

RECORD REVIEW

Spare parts and broken hearts

Tunnel of Love, Bruce Springsteen, CBS records.

Macho individualist or working class hero?

Sentimentalist or social critic?

People's poet or pretentious poseur?

If you haven't yet made up your mind about Springsteen, his new album *Tunnel of Love* probably won't tip the balance, but as an intriguing stylistic departure for the New Jersey bard, agnostics may well find it of interest.

Springsteen has dispensed with his E-street Band in all but name. The arrangements on the new album are spare, often featuring discordant elements, unexpected bursts of synthesiser and sound effects, and an emphasis on bold, sometimes disturbingly naked vocals.

None of this means Springsteen has joined the ranks of pop innovators. He remains a collector and renovator of musical cliches and familiar styles.

In *Tunnel of Love* he has expanded and altered his range while imbuing it, as always, with his own peculiar power and strength of feeling.

The lyrics have also changed. If there is no single song on the album with the social fury of *Born in the USA*, it is nonetheless marked throughout by a varied mixture



Bruce Springsteen

By Mike Marqusee Haringey Labour Briefing

of defeat and defiance, rooted in the daily struggles of rust-belt America.

The album is full of enigmatic tales of romantic love dissipated in hard years of wage-earning domestic grind. "We're the same sad story that's a fact/One step forward and two steps back... another battle in our dirty little war."

Against a background of artificial fairground merriment Springsteen observes "It's easy for two people to lose each other in this tunnel of love." In *Spare Parts* he tells the tale of an unwanted pregnancy and how a single mother's despair turns to proletarian practicality at the pawn shop.

The deceptive *Tougher than the Rest* is sung with a mournful resignation that belies its macho chorus, and the fear of loneliness is poignant in *When You're Alone* and *Valentine's Day*, as is the melancholy self-mockery of *Ain't Got You*.

Springsteen's fantasies of escape, so ecstatically affirmative in earlier albums, have turned brittle with age. His celebrations of anarchic individualism have grown bitter and forlorn.

Much of this is in keeping with what he has been saying in interviews about "responsibility" and "being an adult" but it is light years from the pseudo-maturity of puerile yuppiedom.

Thank god, Bruce has kept faith with his primary constituency, while extending his appeal beyond it. Unlike so many others, he hasn't drowned and bellied up in the gold fish bowl of world-wide rock 'n' roll celebrity.

On last year's big live album, Springsteen included a rendition of Woody Guthrie's *This Land is Your Land*, a classic statement of American radicalism: patriotic, populist, compassionate. A fitting anthem for Bruce Springsteen, a one-man popular front, for better or worse, in an era of reaction and sanctified selfishness.

BOOK REVIEW

A heroic page in the history of anti-apartheid struggle

Gone with the Twightlight, by Don Mattera, Zed Books, £6.95 (paperback)

By Charlie van Gelderen Brent South CLP

Sophiatown has a special place in the history of the struggle against apartheid.

It was one of the Western Areas townships outside Johannesburg where Africans had succeeded in buying land before the prohibitive 1923 Urban Areas Act was passed.

The nearby municipal refuse dump made Sophiatown unattractive to whites. It grew into a vibrant society embracing, in addition to the predominant Africans, people who were to be officially classified as "Coloured" and Indian. There were also some Chinese who, by some quirk of the apartheid legislation, were considered to be "whites".

Sophiatown was a mixture of prohibition era Chicago and Greenwich Village. Gang warfare existed side by side with a rich melee of music, poetry and crime.

The author symbolises this mixture. He had an Italian grandfather and a Tswana mother — "coloured" in the official lexicon. In his youth he was the leader of one of the more notorious gangs, the Vultures. From this he developed into a political activist and a poet.

The biggest threat to white power was the growth of an urban black proletariat. Control of the cities became a necessity to strengthen white supremacy.

Their answer was enforced segregation; the tool, the Group Areas Act of 1950 which the Prime Minister of the time, DF Malan, described as "the kernel of the apartheid policy."

Places like Sophiatown, adjacent to the plush white suburbs of the Rand, had to be removed. The mixed population had to be broken up into their component parts as defined by the all-white Parliament — African, "coloured" and Indian...

But this was not enough. The African majority had to be subdivided into "tribal" groups to prevent their cohesion into a solid opposition force.

Nowhere was this more fiercely resisted, nowhere was the fight against the forced removals more intensive, than in Sophiatown. It became, in the turbulent 1950s, the "Years of Defiance", the symbol of that struggle.

It was as an Anglican priest in Sophiatown that Father Huddlestson became involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and which was the inspiration for his book *Naught for your comfort*.

Don Mattera gives a graphic account of this heroic page in the history of the anti-apartheid struggle; of the anguish and the anger when the bulldozers came to raze Sophiatown to the ground, and the forcible removal of its inhabitants; of their irrepressible humour and unconquerable spirit.

This is a book which should be read by all who want to experience at second hand the agony of being black in South Africa and the faith in ultimate victory which is summed up on the last page:

"I knew deep down inside of me, in that place where laws and guns cannot reach nor jackboots trample, that there had been no defeat. In another day, another time, we would emerge to reclaim our dignity and our land. It was only a matter of time and Sophiatown would be reborn."

SINN FEIN ON 6-COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

Our challenge to the British government!

Sinn Fein has recently issued a detailed analysis of employment discrimination and how it should be countered. Reproduced here is an edited version of that document.

Discrimination in Ireland on the grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion has been synonymous with and is a product of British colonial rule.

Privilege was the foundation stone of British control. Inequality is the price of a system of privilege.

When Britain partitioned Ireland in 1921, it was a sectarian head-count which decided the territory of the Northern state. Partition led to a much more structured sectarianism in the system than that which had existed before. The state in all its decisions — political, social, economic, educational, employment practices — reflected that basic sectarianism.

So it is the British government and its predecessors which must be held responsible for the discrimination against Catholics.

From 1921 until 1969, Britain maintained the convention that *"the domestic affairs of Northern Ireland"* were not discussed at Westminster. Since 1972, it has been directly responsible for the deliberate refusal to take the necessary steps to eradicate job discrimination.

Fourteen years ago, over a four-year period from 1973 to 1976, Britain was engaged in a seen-to-be-doing-something exercise which successfully removed discrimination as a live issue from the political agenda.

The *Report and Recommendations of the Working Party on Discrimination in the Private Sector of Employment* (the van Straubenzee Report) was published in 1973. The Fair Employment Act was passed in 1976, followed by the creation of the Fair Employment Agency.

Clearly, Britain was engaging in the illusion of movement as a brief chronological review of statistics shows:

1968 Stormont rule: Civil Rights Movement campaign against, among other issues, job discrimination.

1971 Unemployment rate:
Catholic/nationalist: **17.3%** (male); **7.0%** (female).
Protestant/unionist: **6.6%** (male); **3.6%** (female).

1972: Direct rule from Westminster.

1973 Van Straubenzee Report.

1976 Fair Employment Act and creation of Fair Employment Agency.

1981 Unemployment rate:
Catholic/nationalist: 30.2% (male); 17.1% (female)
Protestant/unionist: 12.4% (male); 9.6% (female)

1985 Unemployment rate*:
Catholic/nationalist: 38-40% (male); 18-19% (female)
Protestant/unionist: 18-20% (male); 11-12% (female)

1987 Almost 20 years on and against a background of disimprovement, the structural nature of job discrimination has not been tackled.

Twenty years on and the only areas in which there is broad public agreement is an acknowledgement that job discrimination does exist and the general manner in which it manifests itself.

The public debate on the issue has forced the British government to acknowledge and reiterate the basic facts:

- Discrimination and inequality of opportunity in employment on the grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion does exist.
- Its effects are both qualitative and quantitive on the Catholic/nationalist population.
- The rate of unemployment for Catholics/nationalists has varied between double and two and a half times that of the Protestant/unionist population;
- The former suffer more long-term unemployment.
- They are over-represented in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations and in industries which are more susceptible to the effects of economic recession and recurrent high unemployment.
- They have a major problem in gaining access to the higher grades and earnings of, for example, supervisory and managerial positions.
- That pattern applies to both public and private sector employment.
- It obtains throughout the Six Counties — even in areas of relatively high employment. This structural inequality is shown by the disparity between the mainly Catholic rural west and the mainly Protestant industrial east, and again by the high rate of Catholic unemployment in those areas where they are a minority and industry is located. (See table)
- It persists despite an annual turnover of 100,000 jobs in the Six-County workforce (representing some 20% of that workforce) and despite a progressive convergence of educational attainment between the two communities.

Sinn Fein supports the MacBride Principles for equality of opportunity in employment because of their inherent justness.

We support the ethical investment campaign for the adoption of these modest measures by US companies operating in the Six Counties.

Our position is based on the clear understanding that equality of opportunity has not been realised.

Investors have a responsibility for the provision of equality of opportunity in employment. They should be obliged to uphold that responsibility.

In a very real sense, the MacBride Principles campaign has put job discrimination back on the political agenda and provoked the British government's consultative document *Future Strategy Options* and the *Guide to Effective Practice* in September 1987, with legislative proposals in the pipeline.

Sinn Fein suspect that the British government is involved in creating yet again another illusion of movement on the discrimination issue, aimed at relieving the political pressure and getting the issue off the agenda. Its attitude to affirmative action would indicate that this is the case.

In formulating the legislation based on the van Straubenzee Report, the then British Labour government totally ignored one of the major elements within the key affirmative action proposal of that report — the use of statistics for purposes of monitoring and establishing goals and timetables.

The consultative document *Future Strategy Options* does not even make reference to the goals and timetables concept. It *is dealt with in the Guide to Effective Practice* but only in relation to job applications, thus excluding a vital element in affirmative action from being applied to hiring, training, transfer or promotion.

There is no legal obligation to implement anything contained in the guide. There is no indication that the explicit use of goals and timetables will be codified in any future legislation.

In addition, the British government has been trumpeting "contract compliance" as a major incentive for ensuring that employers provide quality of opportunity in employment. Sinn Fein agrees that contract compliance can be an effective contributory measure.

However it is the detail of what employers are required to comply with which ascertains the potential effectiveness of that measure. In this case they must be signatories to a new Declaration of Practice.

Indications are that the wording of the affirmative action content of that new declaration will be very restricted, immediately diluting its potential. In effect, the current 8,000 signatories of the Declaration of Principle and Intent will simply be transferred to a register of signatories of the new Declaration of Practice, thus validating their contract compliance.

Overall, the British government version of contract compliance appears unlikely to be an effective measure in either the short or medium term.

Furthermore, the British government's deliberate use of the "merit principle" as the sole criterion for employment can only be interpreted as deliberately insulting. Implicit in that criterion is the suggestion that the victims of discrimination are:

- unemployed because they are incapable of working;
- unskilled because they are incapable of learning a skill;
- excluded from higher grades and earnings because they are incompetent.

It implies that it is the victims of discrimination who are the problem and not the system of discrimination. For those most affected by discrimination — its victims — the "when" is of at least as much importance as the "how".

On the basis of its proposals, the British government must be challenged to answer:

- When does it estimate that discrimination will be eradicated?
- When does it estimate that equality of opportunity will be realised?

Political pressure has proven to be the only effective measure to cause the British government to move in any direction on this issue.

Political pressure must be maintained until that movement proves to be constructive, until evidence of positive qualitative and quantitive effect is produced, until discriminatory practices are eradicated and until equality of opportunity is realised.

To realise fair employment, equality of opportunity and the eradication of job discrimination, Britain must dismantle the system of economic apartheid on which the state is maintained (and on which it was founded).

Sinn Fein does not believe that the eradication of discrimination can be achieved within the confines of the Six County state or under the auspices of a British government. Nevertheless, the responsibility of attempting to tackle this historic/structural problem lies with the British government as creators of and apologists for the Six County state.

We repeat that the ultimate criterion of any proposals is the actual effect of their implementation — they must lead to an end to sectarian discrimination in employment within tangible timescales.

*Estimated figures by Bob Rowthorn, a Cambridge economist.

Sinn

Only the eradication of discrimination and the realisation of equality of opportunity in employment — clearly visible in a workforce which by and large reflects the denominational ratios in the community as a whole — will indicate that the definitive effective policies and practices concerning those issues have been arrived at and implemented.

Until such a situation is reached, all measures — legal, institutional, procedural and remedial — must be considered, subject to ongoing regular review on the basis of their effectiveness. There must be no blind allegiance to any legislation or agency established by law.

Subject to that criterion, Sinn Fein submits its proposals.

1. The existence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion is irrefutable, as is the denial of equality of opportunity in employment which flows from that discrimination.

Clear and comprehensive legal powers are required to eradicate discrimination and to ensure that equality of opportunity is realised.

2. Current provision outlaws direct discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion. Legal provision must be made for the outlawing of indirect discrimination and the practices entailed therein, which have the same consequences as direct discrimination.

3. Self-regulation has proved almost totally ineffective. Statutory obligations for the eradication of discrimination and the provision of equality of opportunity are essential.

The obligation to provide equality of opportunity must be imposed on all employers in both the public and private sectors.

That obligation must entail, as a minimum, the eradication of all discriminatory practices — both direct and indirect — and monitoring.

4. Failure to meet those obligations must be met with effective legal sanctions in the form of fines, grant

The MacBride Principles

Conference patron SEAN MACBRIDE remains the only person to have been awarded both the NOBEL and LENIN Peace Prizes.
Formerly an Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs, he was the founder of Amnesty International, and author of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
The MacBride Principles have attracted considerable support in the United States where a number of State legislatures are insisting that US companies operating in Northern Ireland adhere to its anti-discrimination guidelines.

★ Increasing the representation of individuals from under-represented religious groups in the workforce including managerial, supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs.
★ Adequate security for the protection of minority employees both at the workplace and while travelling to and from work.
★ The banning of provocative sectarian or political emblems from the workplace.
★ All job openings should be publicly advertised; and special recruitment efforts should be made to attract applicants from under-represented religious groups.
★ Layoff, recall, and termination procedures should not in practice favour particular religious groupings.
★ The abolition of job reservation, apprenticeship restrictions, and differential employment criteria, which discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnic origin.
★ The development of training programmes that will prepare substantial numbers of minority employees for skilled jobs, including the expansion of existing programmes to train, upgrade, and improve the skills of all categories of minority employees.
★ The establishment of procedures to assess, identify, and actively recruit minority employees with potential for further advancement.
★ The appointment of a senior management staff member to oversee the Company's affirmative action efforts and the setting up of timetables to carry out affirmative action principles.

Unemployment Rates by District Council Area, Sex and Religion (%)

District	Catholic Male	Protestant Male	Catholic Female	Protestant Female
Antrim	24.5	10.5	20.4	9.6
Ards	21.2	9.8	12.0	9.8
Armagh	28.8	10.2	15.9	9.5
Ballymena	22.1	11.1	14.0	9.0
Ballymoney	30.0	16.4	13.7	9.1
Banbridge	23.1	11.0	18.9	9.8
Belfast	31.4	15.6	18.3	14.1
Carrickfergus	20.5	22.7	8.9	10.6
Castlereagh	8.6	9.2	6.9	16.4
Coleraine	27.5	16.4	13.9	10.1
Cookstown	43.3	14.4	26.6	12.6
Craigavon	30.4	11.0	19.5	9.6
Down	19.7	8.9	11.6	9.0
Dungannon	36.7	12.7	24.0	11.6
Fermanagh	30.1	11.1	17.1	9.6
Larne	34.0	13.1	13.7	10.9
Limavady	36.7	14.3	16.2	11.4
Lisburn	22.1	8.8	15.8	9.6
Derry	35.8	14.4	17.6	10.1
Magherafelt	31.9	16.5	17.5	11.0
Moyle	31.1	16.5	17.5	11.0
Newry & Mourne	35.5	14.8	20.0	12.0
Newtonabbey	18.1	11.8	11.5	8.9
North Down	11.1	7.1	9.2	7.0
Omagh	27.2	10.9	15.6	9.4
Strabane	39.0	21.9	20.4	13.6

Source: 1981 Population Census, unpublished data
Note: The true figures for Catholic unemployment may actually be higher; the 1981 Census was boycotted by many nationalists in protest at the British government's "criminalisation" policy.

DISCRIMINATION: Fein proposals

withdrawal or ineligibility to tender for public contracts.

This must include not just public funding but grants from the International Fund established after the signing of the Hillsborough Treaty.

Legal provision must allow for the imposition of sanctions not just against employers but also members of staff — particularly personnel staff — who practise discrimination.

5. Monitoring is essential but it should not be construed as, nor advanced as being, affirmative action.

Of itself, when effectively carried out, it does no more than to inform us in detail of what we already know more generally.

Effective monitoring, therefore, provides the information upon which the need for remedy is identified.

The following appropriate affirmative action is proposed:

a) Employers must be obliged to monitor the perceived religious affiliation of:

i) their current workforce, including job category (i.e. skilled, unskilled, clerical, supervisory, managerial, etc.);

ii) all job applicants for new-starts or those judged suitable for training, transfer, promotion and those appointed;

iii) all those who resign, are dismissed, made redundant, retire, etc.

b) Employers must be obliged to conduct such monitoring on an ongoing basis, make regular returns to the relevant agency and be open to assessment vis-a-vis the effectiveness and accuracy of their monitoring programme.

c) This requirement to apply to all employers with ten or more employees.

d) Financial assistance must be made available to employers in the public and private sectors to set up monitoring programmes.

6. Legislation must allow for the initiation of investigation into both discrimination and the provision of equality of opportunity by the relevant agency on:

a) the initiative of the agency itself;

b) the issuing of a complaint by an individual;

c) the issuing of a complaint by individuals or groups which have a legitimate third-party interest, and, where either or both are identified, to impose appropriate effective remedies.

Such remedies must be subject to ongoing review vis-a-vis their effectiveness and, where necessary, subject to revision without the requirement of a new investigation.

7. Where discrimination or failure to provide equality of opportunity are identified either as a result of monitoring programmes, investigation by the relevant agency or where evidence of such already exists in reports of investigations carried out by the Fair Employment Agency, appropriate agreed affirmative action programes must be implemented.

The scope of such affirmative action programmes — the explicit use of which must be codified in legislation — must include as a minimum:

a)Outreach programmes which will effectively attract candidates from the under-represented group by bringing job opportunities to their attention and providing them with the skills to compete:

i) through advertisement of job opportunities in the appropriate media;

ii) through advertisements expressly welcoming applicants from the under-represented groups;

iii) by developing sustained contact with schools, youth organisations, community groups, etc., in the community from which, hitherto, the workforce has not traditionally been drawn;

iv) by the provision of comprehensive training on government training schemes at secure, accessible locations.

b) The use of statistics for purposes of establishing goals and timetables to eradicate discriminatory practices, to realise equality of opportunity practices, or both, and to redress the imbalance in the make-up of workforces which such abuses have resulted in.

c) The exercise of preferential treatment between equally qualified candidates in favour of the under-represented group where there is gross under-representation.

8. The current practice of self-certification whereby an employer simply signs the Fair Employment Agency's Declaration of Principle and Intent in order to be entitled to an Equal Opportunity Certificate — and eligibility for inclusion in British government contract lists — is at best ineffective, at worse a fraud.

The FEA cannot refuse to allow an employer to sign the Declaration and the requirement of a long formal investigation before a signatory can be removed from the register of certified declarants guarantees its ineffectiveness. To date, not one employer has been removed from the register of declarants.

a) The disbursement of all British government grants — training, equipment, investment grants and employment subsidies — and eligibility for inclusion in British government contract lists must be made conditional on all employers committing themselves to equal opportunity practices in a new Declaration of Practice.

This to apply to all grants from the International Fund and, where applicable, to Industrial Development Board (IDB) grants and Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU) grants and financial assistance.

(IDB and LEDU grants must also have a general equality discipline.)

b) The wording of a new Declaration of Practice, to have any potential effect, must encompass the full scope of effective equality of opportunity practices.

c) All current signatories must have their employment practices vetted in a specified period of time — the length of that period being conducive to the realisation of equal opportunity practice in the short term.

d) All new declarants must have their employment practices vetted before being allowed to take the Declaration.

e) The life-span of the Declaration must not be open-ended. It must be limited, after which an employer must justify renewal of the Declaration. The life-span of the Declaration must be conducive to the realisation of equal opportunity practice in the short term.

f) A new Declaration of Practice will be as potentially ineffective and fraudulent as the current Declaration of Intent and Principle if British government funding for the relevant agency is not commensurate with its task (i.e. it would take ten years to vet the current 8,000 signatories of the Declaration of Intent and Principle at the rate of 15 per week).

The British government must publish immediately the financial and personnel resources it intends putting at the disposal of the relevant agency so that its seriousness in regard to these issues can be assessed.

9. The effects of discrimination and/or the failure to provide equality of opportunity are both qualitative and quantitive. Evidence of progress can be easily measured and verified.

Annual progress reports — both general to the workforce as a whole and specific to individual employers — must be published on an annual basis and made available to members of the public on request. Statutory obligation to do so must be placed on the relevant agency and all employers with ten or more employees.

10. All major economic decisions must have an equality discipline.

In this context, steps must be taken to redress the discriminatory effects of such matters as the location of industry.

The British government must provide the necessary incentives and infrastructure to attract proposed new enterprises and actively encourage co-operative enterprises in the most disadvantaged areas.

11. Equality of opportunity in employment is directly impinged upon in a workplace where the working environment is provocative, offensive, intimidatory or perceived as such by a section of the workforce.

Employers must be obliged to keep the workplace free of all political/religious emblems, flags, grafitti, rallies, marches, etc., which might be offensive or intimidatory to other groups of workers.

Legal sanctions must be used against employers who refuse to comply with the necessary stipulated measures.

Employers, in consultation with the relevant trade unions, must adopt effective disciplinary procedures for dealing with transgressors.

Legal sanctions must be used against employees or others who intimidate.

IRELAND: THE CAUSE OF LABOUR?

Employment discrimination Conference

Saturday November 28th

The Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1, opposite St Pancras station

Women and Ireland

International Women's Day Delegation to Ireland: March 3-7th 1988

This will be an opportunity to talk to Republican women about their lives and to learn more about the nationalist community. There will be a chance to take part in the annual Women's Day picket of Maghaberry Women's Prison and protest against strip searching. The trip will cost approximately £80; help may be available to cover travel expenses.

For further details contact International Women's Day Delegation, PO Box 70, Liverpool L69 8BE.

Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM

Mayekiso defence is top priority

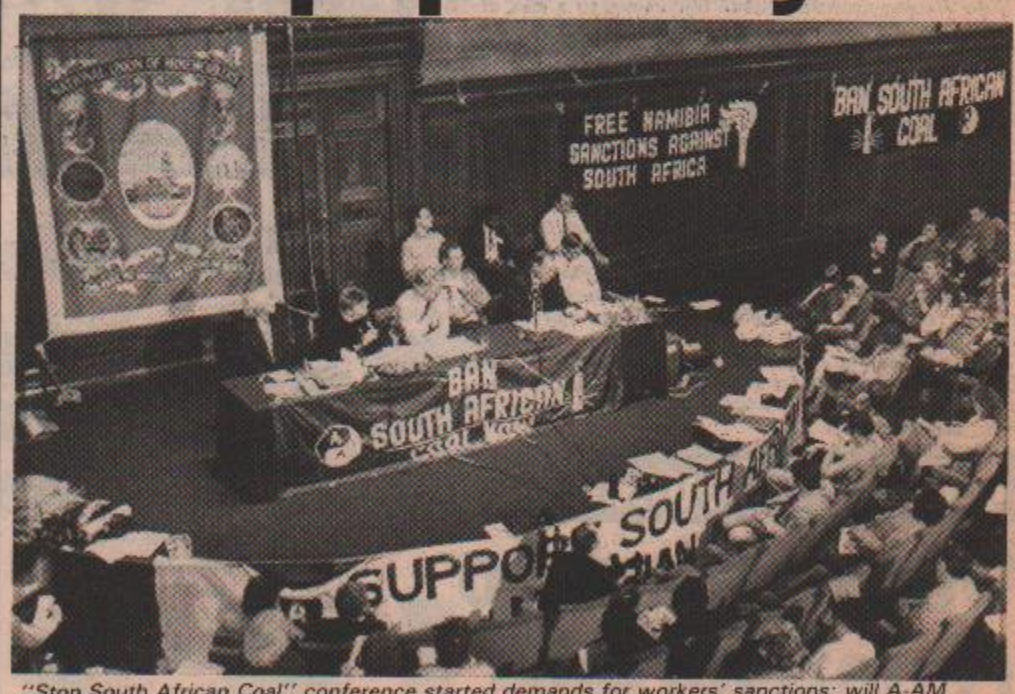


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

"Stop South African Coal" conference started demands for workers' sanctions: will A-AM follow suit?

After another year of the South African state of emergency, a year which witnessed the biggest-ever industrial action by black miners, delegates to the Anti-Apartheid Movement's Annual General Meeting will be engaged in a crucial debate on the way forward.

By STEVE ROBERTS

Resolutions submitted to the meeting make it clear that for many member-organisations the defence of imprisoned metal-workers' leader Moses Mayekiso is a central part of the organisation's campaign.

The strike by 375,000 black miners overshadowed all other developments in the past year. It was a positive confirmation of the leading role of industrial workers, but the relative downturn of wider struggles in the community pointed to the mounting toll of state repression.

Strike

Anti-Apartheid was unable to respond fully or rapidly to the miners' strike, and never mounted the kind of solidarity action that was needed. Instead, the A-A concentrated its campaigning efforts in the last year on the misconceived "Manifesto for Sanctions" — a futile attempt at a non-partisan intervention in the general election which aimed to win cross-party support for a pro-sanctions policy.

Following the general election A-A now lacks any central policy or clear priorities. The Commonwealth summit demonstrated the failure of its lobbying approach, and actually saw Thatcher encouraging British business to take advantage of the economic space left by the disinvestment carried out by other countries.

If the fight for sanctions is to make any future progress a new approach is needed. While the demand for the British govenment to implement sanctions must be maintained, the primary emphasis must be on winning workers to take unilateral action to block trade with Apartheid.

Some developments in this direction have already occurred. In September a "Sanctions Against Coal" conference, jointly called by the National Union of Mineworkers and A-A, heard Arthur Scargill call for action and urge delegates follow the example of the Liverpool dockers and the Dunnes' Stores workers.

The coal issue is likely to be central for the A-A in the future, with the possibility of a denationalised and decentralised British electricity authority buying coal on the world market. But the methods of struggle proposed by Scargill should also be generally applied.

Action

Current TUC policy promises support for groups of workers who take action to boycott trade with Apartheid, but what is really needed is a campaign by the TUC and A-A to *initiate* such action.

Close contact with the independent trade unions in South Africa is essential for achieving an effective boycott. But A-A has failed to make progress on this front.

Indeed, with its old allies in the South African Congress of Trade Unions, it has actually tried to sabotage some of the most important efforts to promote and consolidate this contact.

Spurious arguments have been used against the Friends of Mayekiso campaign for example, including claims that Mayekiso was not in favour of the campaign, and that it actually endangered his life.

Rebuff

These fabrications have received a sharp rebuff with Mayekiso's union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), sending a telex to British supporters commending the efforts of the Friends as well as other bodies in campaigning for Mayekiso's release.

Other important initiatives have been taken by A-A groups around the miners' strike and the tour by strikers from BTR-Sarmcol performing their popular play *The Long March*. Now A-A must put these activities at the centre of its work.

What is needed at the A-A Conference is a resounding vote in support of the Mayekiso campaigns and a real programme of solidarity with workers' struggle in contrast to the grudging or even hostile attitude adopted by the A-A leadership.

Issues

Other important issues for the AGM are:

- The cultural boycott: A-A's application of the cultural boycott has resulted in bans on progressive artists opposed to Apartheid. Dissatisfaction with this policy, which in effect meant that only ANC-organised events were permitted, prompted Oliver Tambo to make a statement earlier in the year opposing this restrictive interpretation.

Unfortunately, in line with the vigorous form of sectarianism ascendant in the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, this advice from the ANC has been ignored. The AGM should adopt a new and more pluralistic policy to allow progressive artists to visit Britain.

- Namibia: the Namibian Solidarity Campaign has achieved a great deal in bringing the issue to the fore in the labour movement. However A-A has always been ambivalent about its attitude to the NSC.

A-A should applaud the gains which have been made in building the NSC, and welcome the development of an independent sister campaign, and abandon its organisational jealousy.

The decision to have a SWAPO speaker at the A-A demo this year was a welcome step forward.

- Youth Against Apartheid is another new movement that A-A should fully back. After the success of the 1986 demonstration and concert, which mobilised a quarter of a million youth, this year's demonstration was disappointingly low key.

Youth, and in particular black youth, will be best mobilised in an organisation under their own control which reflects their preoccupations and will produce a whole new generation of anti-apartheid activists.

Anti-Apartheid AGM

November 28-29th

Octogon Centre, Sheffield University, Western Bank, Sheffield

Local Round-up

COVENTRY

March against NHS cuts

Despite appalling weather, 3,000 people marched through Coventry on Thursday November 19th in protest against the closure of Whitley Hospital — the latest in a series of severe cutbacks in local NHS provision.

The Whitley closure is itself equivalent to a loss of 15% of all NHS beds in Coventry, and comes on top of closure of the Paybody Hospital and speculation that the last main hospital in the city will be reduced to an emergency-only service by Christmas.

The marchers included delegations from hospital workers, Massey-Fergusson and Rolls Royce workers, and City Council workers. The local NHS Joint Union Committee is meeting this week to discuss future action, including possible occupation of the hospital.

Another blow fell on the people of Coventry the night after the march, when the Labour-controlled City Council voted through big cuts in social services, including abolition of the social work system of Child Guidance, the closure of a home for people with mental handicaps, the scrapping of the entertainment and holiday budget for people with disabilities, and an increase in meals-on-wheels prices from 80p to £1.

Only Cllr George Lindfield, already suspended from the Labour Group, opposed the cuts. Other Labour Councillors, including those instructed by the Ward Labour Parties to vote against the cuts, supported them.

Camden Council shame

Opposition to repatriation grows

Hundreds of demonstrators outraged by Camden Council's policy of repatriating homeless people lobbied a meeting of Camden's ruling Labour Group on November 16th.

They were addressed by left wing Labour Councillors opposing the policy and the cuts in jobs and services which led to its implementation.

Calls were made for the reversal of Labour's racist and indefensible moves forcibly to return homeless Irish people to Ireland, and for the resignation of the Councillor primarily responsible for them, Housing Chair Gareth Smyth.

The Group refused to receive a deputation from the protesters, who included Irish, Black and women's organisations, as well as trade unionists and Labour Party members.

Inside the meeting, Smyth defended his repatriation "solution" to the Borough's homelessness crisis in terms that clearly revealed a bigoted ignorance of Ireland and the Irish.

He was defended by Council Leader Tony Dykes. Once the cuts juggernaut is rolling, nothing is sacred, including much-vaunted anti-racist and equal opportunities commitments.

Left Labour Councillors, now formally joined together as the "Manifesto Group" because of their determination to defend the manifesto on which they were elected — will continue to oppose the scandalous repatriation policy both inside and outside the Council chamber.

SCOTLAND

Nurses win a round

Edinburgh nurses have something to celebrate.

They have become the first nurses north or south of the border to force management to increase staffing levels.

Their seven-week overtime ban and work-to-rule at the Royal Edinburgh psychiatric hospital resulted in management agreeing to appoint another 59 qualified staff.

By John Lister
London Health Emergency

It was the threat that unions would ballot on indefinite strike action which finally seemed to persuade Lothian Health Board to open talks on November 2nd.

The agreement — increasing the nursing establishment of the 923-bed hospital to 692 full time posts — was reached after 11 hours of "heavy negotiations" and endorsed by a ballot of all 550 union members.

"It was all about patient care," said Jim McLaughlin, Chair of the health union COSE, whose members joined with NUPE nurses in the long-running dispute. "Our quarrel was not so much with local management as with the inadequate funding from the Health Board."

The unions had been campaigning for increased staffing for over two years, complaining that patients were suffering because there were insufficient staff to care for them.

"Incontinent patients could not be helped to the toilet. There was no social life or recreation for many others because we just didn't have the staff," said Jim.

NUPE and COHSE produced a weighty dossier on conditions arising from short-staffing in the hospital. Listing a devastating catalogue of misery, the report claimed:

- Wards are repeatedly forced to run with less staff than the "emergency cover" provided by unions during strike action;
- Up to 80% of patients on acute admissions wards get no care during whole nursing shifts.
- Patients are suffering accidents "which could be prevented if more nurses were involved".
- To save time, immobile patients are being taken about in wheelchairs instead of two nurses walking them: "Eventually these patients become unable to walk."
- Patients are left sitting all day, yet "The more they are left with no stimulating input, the worse their dementia becomes."
- Staff shortages meant that doors on day hospital wards and wards containing over 300 elderly patients were kept locked — contravening mental health legislation.

These grim findings have subsequently been echoed by the government-appointed Mental Welfare Commission, which has recently published its own criticisms of short-staffing and underfunding of Scotland's psychiatric hospitals.

Rebelling against this, the Royal Edinburgh nurses began an overtime ban, and "days of action" in which large numbers of nurses went on strike, though providing emergency cover "to make sure the patients were comfortable."

"The victory gives people a bit of hope that nurses can stand up and fight for the rights and conditions of their patients," said Jim McLaughlin.

"Now we will also be able to determine where the new staff will go. The psychogeriatric area is chronically short-staffed.

"Of course the Board will try to cut the money from other services. We will have to watch them like hawks."

Lothian management are looking for ways to impose cuts as they attempt to trim 3% from this year's budget. Edinburgh consultants have complained against Board proposals that they should cut back on prescriptions, on the use of laboratory tests and X-rays, and reduce orders for equipment and supplies. Consultants were also asked for suggestions on how the Board could raise money, including the use of shops in hospitals.

LEEDS

School Secretaries vs. Labour Council

The right wing leadership of Leeds District Council have tried hard to smash the resolve of the School Secretaries currently in dispute over hours and regrading.

Open encouragement of scabbing and discipline threats have been used against them.

Even nearby Bradford Council has already conceded the regrading claim to all its School Secretaries.

Council Leader Mudie, an unelected NUPE full-timer, has used the handful of secretaries in NUPE against the nearly 300 NALGO members.

Councillor Mudie sent a dozen education officials to confront the striking school secretaries individually in an attempt to force them to sign his agreement. The vast majority refused to bow to pressure.

NALGO Brnch Secretary Dave Roberts told *Labour Briefing*: "The School Secretaries have held out for reasonable demands under unprecedented pressure. They have asked for meaningful discussions that could lead to an amicable settlement. Management chose simply to avoid this."

EXETER

Orangeism in Exeter

Labour-led Exeter City Council is spending £60,000 to promote the tercentenary of the landing in Britain of William of Orange. This is to be next year's major civic celebration in Exeter.

Devon Labour Briefing and Anti-Fascist Action have mounted a campaign against the celebration and have warned Labour Councillors of the meaning of Orangeism. But the right wing Labour Group remained unmoved even when the National Front congratulated Council Leader Long, and promised to bring "supporters from all over the country to Devon next year".

The Labour Councillors have always maintained, quite ludicrously, that celebrating the tercentenary of William of Orange does not indicate any support for Orangeism. They will now have to eat their words. The Orange Order has already booked part of the University of Exeter for its triannual Conference.

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Red & Green

DEFEND PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

If they don't lose their nerve, and if the Stock Exchange can handle it, the government plan to privatise the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI).

This is a bold move, even for Thatcher. The ESI is Britain's largest single industry and largest employer.

The asset value of the sale will be approximately four times *all* of the industries privatised up to 1987 — a staggering £15-18 billion.

The announcement of the programme for privatisation has been promised soon. It is expected that legislation will be before Parliament in August 1988 ready for a sale in 1991; just in time for pre-election tax cuts and a mini-reflation of the economy.

In the short term the most dramatic effects of privatisation will be on jobs in other industries.

The CEGB currently has a commitment to buy 70 million tonnes of coal from British Coal each year — about two thirds of BC's output.

At today's price coal imported into Europe sells at around £25 per tonne, compared to £42 per tonne for British deep mined coal. The difference in price reflects a higher level of state subsidy on imported coal.

Free of the commitment to buy British, the privatised ESI would quickly shift to buying cheaper imports. It is estimated that within five years between 30 and 48 million tonnes of British coal would be replaced by imports. The NUM say that this amounts to between 47,000 and 69,000 jobs.

Scotland

By the mid-1990s all the deep mines in Scotland, the North East, North Derbysire and Kent would be closed. In other areas output would fall and production at less than half of today's levels would be concentrated on the super PCs.

Other industries will also be hit. At present the CEGB relies on two British **power engineering companies**: NEI-Parsons and GEC-Babcock.

Competition with, for example, Mitsubishi of Japan would be likely to force one of these out of business.

If NEI-Parsons closed 15,000 jobs in the North East would be lost directly and the effect on the regional economy would be devastating.

The **Rail Freight industry** would also be badly hit as coal makes up over 70% of all rail freight. Jobs would also be lost in the collier fleet and in the electricity industry itself.

The NUM research department estimates that at least 100,000 jobs would be lost directly, with a further 70,000 jobs going as a knock-on effect.

It's harder to defend the CEGB. Many anti-nuclear activists have campaigned against its policies for years.

As Britain's most powerful monopoly industry, the CEGB has been able to dictate policy on energy to successive governments.

The CEGB has overproduced, has championed nuclear power, and has been secretive and unresponsive to criticism. It has ensured that British energy policy has been about increasing electricity production rather than about energy conservation.

But privatisation is not the answer. It will certainly not get rid of nuclear power as some had hoped.

The ESI is saddled with its ageing and unsaleable Magnox reactors, its badly designed and uneconomic AGRs, and mountains of radioactive waste it doesn't know what to do with.

All but one of the models proposed for privatisation to date include a separate *state run* nuclear power agency.

The financial, ideological and military commitment to nuclear power is so great that even the Tories won't trust it to the market. Besides, with the costly exercise of decommissioning Magnox looming, no one in their right mind would buy shares.

By Andy Porter
SERA

The only alternative to a state run British Nuke Agency is to sell off the ESI as *one* company — creating the biggest single monopoly in western europe. Parkinson, as Energy Minister, opposes this and is likely to advocate setting up separate regional companies, with another company managing the national grid.

Before long the price of electricity will vary from one part of the country to another.

We need to take the ESI into a democratic form of **public ownership**, to make it more open to public scrutiny and more responsive to criticism.

The CEGB itself should be made more accountable to the Department of Energy, and energy policy should focus on energy conservation rather than expansion of electricity supply.

None of this will happen under the Tories. It certainly won't happen if the industry is handed over to "entrepreneurs".

The Electricity unions have formed the FUSE campaign (Federation of Unions Supplying Electicity) to fight privatisation. What is needed is a locally based trade union campaign involving consumers, workers *and* energy campaigners and environmentalists.

If the NUM, the FUSE unions and the anti-nuclear movement could unite to campaign against privatisation, there would be a real chance of mounting a successful campaign.

The FUSE unions are GMB, NALGO, EETPU, EPA, T&G and AEU. Contact your local branches now, and propose a locally based campaign committee.