LABOUR
BRIEFING
No 54 JAN 12-26 1988

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40p

Not doctors, not judges, not husbands, not fathers, not David Alton, but...

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!

JANUARY 16th sees thousands of people demonstrating their opposition to David Alton's attempt to restrict the time limit for abortions to eighteen weeks.

Local demonstrations have been planned in Glasgow (with the support of the Scottish TUC); Manchester; Oxford; Birmingham; Sheffield; Leeds; Liverpool; Lambeth and Lewisham.

Other areas have planned mass petitioning and leafletting, lobbies and pickets of MPs' surgeries. All this will help build for the national lobby and women's torchlit procession on January 21st.

The Fight Alton's Bill Campaign is gathering strength. NUPE has donated hundreds of pounds to help publicise January 21st. The Scottish TUC has booked a train. Buses are coming from Birmingham; Manchester; Oxford; Leeds; Sheffield and Cardiff.

The first demonstration of the day will be for students, who will be marching against a Bill which particularly affects young women (who may not realise right away that they are pregnant).

From 2.30pm women will be converging from all over Britain on the Houses of Parliament to demand that their MPs vote against Alton in the second reading of the Bill on January 22nd. There will be a rally in Central hall with, among many others, Jo Richardson MP, Wendy Savage, Norman Willis and Hazel Downing.

The TUC's decision to join FAB in sponsoring the national demonstration against Alton sheduled for March 19th is a major victory for the campaign. Only mass action by women and the labour movement can defeat this far-reaching attack on women's rights.

Mobilisation for March 19th starts now!

By GILL LEE
Labour Briefing Women

JANUARY 21st

12.00 noon NUS STUDENT DEMONSTRATION
Assemble University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1

1.30-6.30pm RALLY FOR ABORTION RIGHTS
Central hall, Westminster. Creche available

2.30pm onwards LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT
House of Commons

6.30pm WOMEN'S TORCHLIT PROCESSION
Assemble Lincoln's Inn Fields (Holborn tube)

Stewarding meeting: please help steward on the 21st. Meet Monday 18th January, 6pm, Polytechnic of Central London Students Union, Bolsover Street, London W1

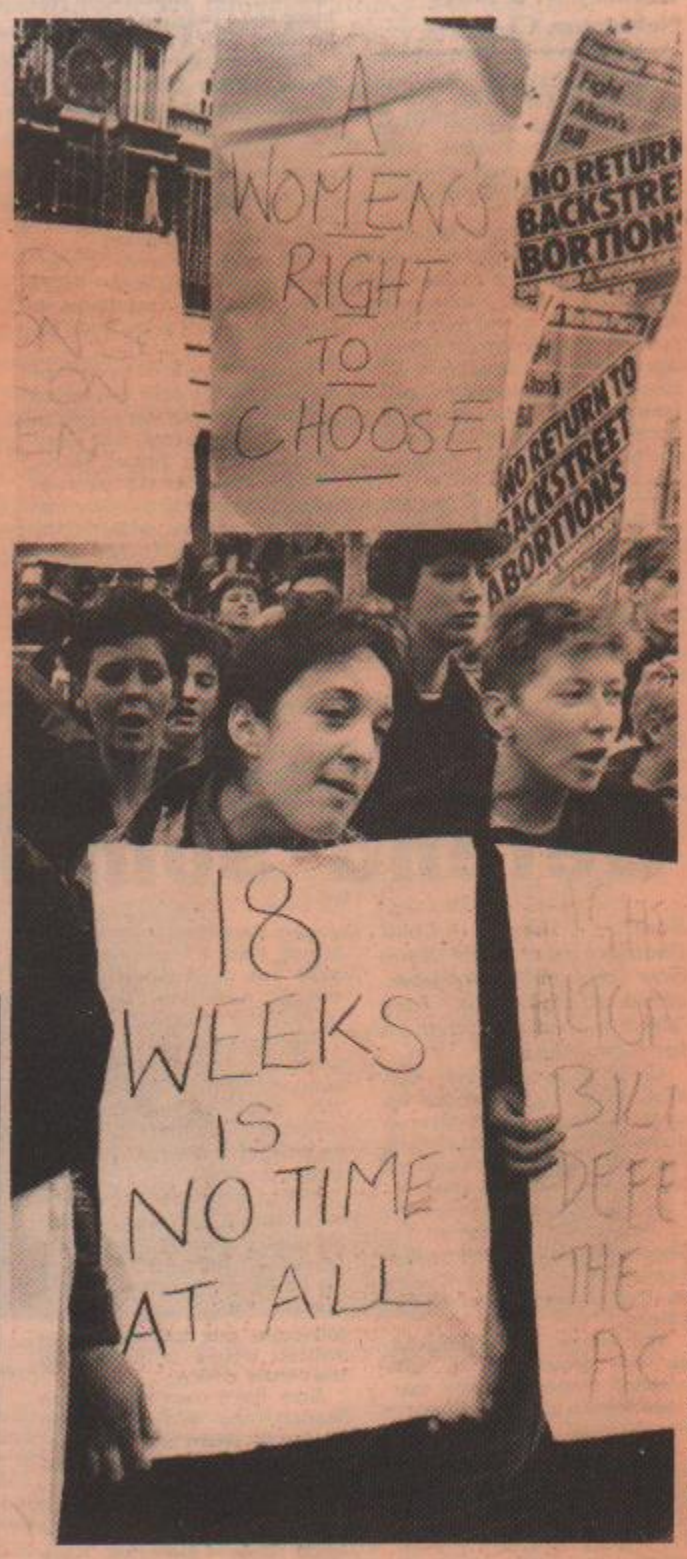


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Picket of "LIFE" rally, 27.10.87

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

Deportation review

Viraj Mendis — one year in sanctuary

December 20th 1987 marked the first anniversary of Viraj Mendis's decision to take sanctuary in a Manchester Church — in defiance of a Home Office deportation order.

In publicly refusing to give in and openly continuing to campaign for his right to stay, Viraj is acknowledging that he has no chance of enjoying the comforts and privacy of a "normal" life.

He is confined to the church and should he leave, immigration officials would immediately arrest and deport him.

Viraj is a prisoner of Britain's racist immigration laws.

In the last year 10,000 people have visited the sanctuary to offer Viraj support. His struggle has wide implications and continues to inspire others in the fight against racism.

His year in sanctuary is a landmark for the anti-deportation movement. Other sanctuary campaigns have sprung up: Renuka Lakhani in a Hindu temple in Leicester; Salema Begum in a church in Chorlton; and Rajwinder Singh in a Sikh temple in Bradford.



Viraj Mendis

By Kate Adams
Hackney N. & Stoke Newington CLP

Renuka Lakhani came to England in July 1986, fell in love with and married Vipin Lakhani, a British citizen. Even though Renuka had a young child the Home Office threatened to deport her.

After going into sanctuary she won indefinite leave to stay.

Salema Begum, a 13-year-old Bangladeshi girl, was to be deported while blood tests were carried out to determine parentage. She won a temporary admission order to stay until early January 1988, with the additional assurance that she would not be detained while the order is in force.

Rajwinder Singh, a 29-year-old Sikh who suffers from mental and physical disabilities, was to be deported to India where there is no one to care for him. Rajwinder went into sanctuary in February 1987, and a local campaign continues to fight for his right to stay.

Viraj Mendis says "My New Year's resolution is a victory for Rajwinder and myself in '88 — and forward with the sanctuary movement."

In spite of the determination of the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC), the year of resistance has not been easy. In March the church was subject to abusive phone calls and racist attacks.

Fascists armed with crowbars, carving knives and screwdrivers attempted to snatch Viraj and a campaign member was attacked in her home and a swastika carved into her hand with a razor blade.

Racist comments by former Home Office Minister David Waddington on television and scurrilous reports in *The Sun* and *Daily Express* helped this racist violence. Bomb hoaxes and death threats to the campaign's chairperson continued throughout the summer.

The movement received a setback when Manchester City's Labour Council capitulated to racists by withdrawing a job offer made earlier to Viraj.

In July a judicial review of Viraj Mendis's case was heard and the Home Office's right to deport him enforced. The Campaign feels that Justice Mann, who presided over the case, was subject to political pressure and failed to address properly the issue of Viraj's 12 years residence (a factor strongly in his favour) or his plea for political asylum.

The latter was dismissed on the strength of a letter from the Sri Lankan High Commissioner stating that Viraj was free to return. This letter chose to ignore well-documented evidence from Amnesty International that the Tamils, and the Sinhalese socialists who support them, as Viraj does, are harassed, tortured and sometimes put to death.

The review concentrated on the legal status of sanctuary and confirmed that it had been outlawed in 1623. This led Douglas Hurd to threaten to storm the sanctuary if Viraj did not comply with the deportation order.

Clearly the Home Office and the High Court are influenced by Britain's considerable military and economic interest in Sri Lanka and threatened by all that Viraj and his campaign represent.

VMDC continues its fight. The campaign will appeal against the decison of the review, although as yet no date has been set.

Gains have been made. The local community have mobilised to defend the sanctuary and Amnesty International, the British Council of Churches, the Liberal Party leadership and the Labour Party have all come out in support of Viraj's right to stay. The Labour Party was forced to take the issue on board when an emergency resolution in support of Viraj was passed unanimously at last year's Conference.

1988 will bring further racist restrictions and immigration controls. The Tories plan to pass a new act removing the right of people to appeal against deportation. The use of sanctuary as a defence will become even more important.

In the present political crisis, with Labour boroughs under attack, anti-racist struggles can all too easily be minimised and forgotten. Now more than ever it is important for the Labour Party to become actively involved in the anti-deportation and sanctuary movement. We can only win any struggle for a socialist alternative with the full support and involvement of Black people.

Every Friday VMDC marches in Manchester (5.00pm from Piccadilly Gardens to the Sanctuary in Hulme). The Campaign meets every Sunday at 7.30pm at the Church of the Ascension.

Get your ward or CLP to affiliate to the Campaign and find out how you can help.

For more information contact **Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign**, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Cresent, Hulme, Manchester M15 AL, tel. 061-234 3168 or the London Support Group, c/o BM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX, tel. 01-837 1688.

Kings Cross Fire

Enquiry cover-up

It's business as usual in the Boardrooms of London Undergound's 55 Broadway HQ since the King's Cross fire.

On British Rail the threat of strike action coupled with public unease led to the immediate shelving of plans to remove guards between Moorgate and Drayton Park stations.

By contrast, after the fire, London Underground chiefs were insisting on more staff cuts and complaining that the NUR was 'over-reacting' to King's Cross.

The tremor that hit the LRT bosses and the government was, however, very real. King's Cross unleased a torrent of information and revelation in the press, which must have given the LRT bosses — always afraid of public debate — serious cause for alarm.

By Dave Welsh

There was an immediate clampdown on staff with the notorious Rule 47 forbidding disclosure or misuse of "confidential information".

The government moved quickly to deflect the debate away from the real issues of staff cuts and lack of funding. The public were told there would be an official disclosure of the "cause" of the fire within days.

LRT then banned all smoking on the underground — implying that a cigarette end had caused the fire. This was, in fact, extremely unlikely — an electrical fault is the most likely trigger.

The government then announced an inquiry based on Section 7 of the Railway Act, chaired by Desmond Fennell QC, a reliable Tory, to kick off in February. It is unlikely to examine anything other than the King's Cross accident — ignoring the far wider issues of safety which have emerged from the disaster.

It would be extremely mistaken to believe that the intention of the inquiry is anything other than to tie up and close the file on King's Cross. Even more worrying is the likelihood that, in the process, individual tube staff will be scapegoated — a gross indecency considering the bravery of LRT workers who led many passengers to safety. Moral censure will not stop the locomotive of cuts on the underground.

- LRT plans to get rid of the guards on the Jubilee line in the spring.
- The means of evacuation on deep level tube lines like the Piccadilly have not been revised.
- Management has more or less admitted that a train driver cannot deal with passengers trapped at the rear of a train cut in half by a fire.
- The immensely hazardous Underground Ticketing System (UTS) is to continue, losing a further 1,500 station and ticket staff.
- Further plans for part-time cleaning staff are to go ahead.



PHOTO: Laurie Sparham/Network

Transport workers unite on the Save Public Transport demo in April 1985

Middle management don't "give a toss" about safety precautions. Staff themselves have reacted angrily to LRT's bland assurances. They, not the bosses, have to take the stick over gaps in the service, piled up rubbish, poor communications with the public and lack of fire safety.

The tube chiefs have, instead, announced one of their periodic "crackdowns" on "unreliable" staff — another scandalous attack on the workforce.

It has emerged that LRT was lucky to avoid a King's Cross-style fire under an escalator at Green Park station in June 1987. A major fire was averted only by the action of five off-duty tube staff. This was the second serious escalator fire at Green Park in two years!

Cleaning staff point to a storage room at King's Cross between the escalators (choc-a-bloc with paper, ticket rolls and rags *before* the fire) and the dangers of possible cable fires beneath the platforms as access traps to reach litter cannot be shifted. *With proper staffing levels, the 32 deaths at King's Cross could have been avoided.*

What is crucial now is a political campaign over safety, privatisation and staff cuts on the tube. Whilst the fire inquiry can't be ignored it should be seen as only *one* focus for wider, independent action to force concessions from LRT and the government. A campaign involving tube workers, trade unions and users of the services is needed whatever the outcome of the inquiry.

*"TUBEWATCH" has been set up to monitor and provide information about the underground. For the first issue of the new "Tubewatch" bulletin and other publications/videos contact: Transport Resources, 21 Cleveleys Road, Hackney, London E5 or telephone 01 806 4365 or 0992 710912

Defend Som Raj

Som Raj, Chief Photographer at the *Soho Star* and NUJ member, came to Britain in April 1983 as a vistor from India for 6 months.

On his arrival in Wolverhampton, he found his sister suffering from nervous complaints. He started nursing her and helped her husband look after their three children.

In July Som met Sarjeet and in August they married. In September he applied to the Home Office for leave to stay as the husband of a British citizen.

The Home Office refused, on the grounds that "the primary purpose of the marriage was to gain settlement in this country".

Even the Home Office-appointed Adjudicator allowed Som's appeal. But the Home Office appealed to the Appeals Tribunal (whom they also appoint). In April 1983 the Tribunal reversed the Adjudicator's decision.

Since then, the Home Office has been trying to deport Som Raj, although the couple are happily married with two young daughters. Som Raj's father, aged 87, and his sister both live in Wolverhampton, so he now has no close relatives in India.

The Som Raj Defence Campaign has been building up support both in Woverhampton and nationally, from religious, community and political groups and organisations.

The Campaign has been supported by Wolverhampton Borough Council and the Mayor as well as 30 MPs and 10 MEPs.

Many churches, temples, mosques and gurdwara have written letters of protest to the Home Office.

Som Raj's own trade union branch, the Wolverhampton NUJ has taken up the case, and this year's NUJ ADM unanimously passed a resolution pledging full support for the Campaign. Many other trade union branches have also declared their support for the Campaign and opposition to the racist immigration laws.

The victory of the Muhammed Idrish and Shahid Syed Defence Campaign with the support of their trade union, NALGO , shows that trade unions can successfully defend their members by supporting Defence Campaigns.

What you can do:

- Write to the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London (quote reference number R220331).
- Write to your MP, c/o House of Commons, Westminster, London asking him/her to take up the case with the Home Secretary.
- Attend Campaign Meetings held fortnightly on Thursdays at 7pm at the Haque Centre, 27 Vicarage Road, Wolverhampton.
- Sign petitions.
- Join and make a donation to the Campaign. (Affiliation fee £1 individuals, £10 organisations).
- Invite a speaker from the Campaign to the next meeting of your organisation.

For further details contact: Ray George (0902-735295, or 0902-54183); Som Raj Defence Campaign, c/o 13 Vicarage Road, Wolverhampton; NUJ (Sally Gilbert), Acorn House, Grays Inn Road, London 01-278 7916.

Socialist Conferences

Building local Chesterfields

Since the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield last October, we have:

- established a series of Policy Discussion Groups on key issues such as economic policy, education, and women's rights;
- planned a recall conference in the summer of 1988;
- finalised a discussion document on the aims and objectives of socialism, for consultation with the movement as a whole;
- encouraged the establishment of local and regional Socialist Conferences;
- begun the construction of a socialist directory, to put comrades who are struggling for changes in society in touch with each other.

The Socialist Conference Organising Committee believe that *we must encourage the blooming of socialist initiatives.*

We are not centralisers. We are not prescribers of nationally determined correctness.

We firmly believe that the movement will be strengthened immeasurably by local initiatives to discuss socialism, socialist policies and the nature of a socialist programme for the 1990s. There are critical issues to be debated:

By Reg Race
Tottenham CLP

- How do we control the City?
- What forms should public ownership take, and why is ownership and control crucial for a socialist transformation of society?
- What is the contribution that green socialists can make? What is the relationship between growth, resources and distribution?
- How can men change? How can women's rights and demands be inserted into the agenda of socialism?
- Socialism has been on the defensive for many years. How can we popularise socialist ideas and principles?
- How can racism be rooted out in society and in the labour movement?
- What should a socialist society look like?

The very fact that these very basic questions have to be addressed at all illustrates the depoliticisation and deradicalisation of the labour movement.

It is *not* sufficient for debate on the movement's problems to be concentrated on questions of electoral efficiency and organisation, even if John Prescott says it is. Politics will not go away.

There is therefore a crying and urgent need for **local Socialist Conferences.**

They should concentrate on the key issues, and spread their net to groups of people who are outside the formal reaches of the Labour Party and the trade unions.

We can help you with literature, with briefing papers, with speakers, and contacts — but we can't organise it for you! Contact Reg Race or Mandy Moore on 01 808 9796 for information and support. And do it soon!

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Vote Scargill

In his five years as President of the NUM Arthur Scargill has displayed courage and principle all too rare in the British trade union movement. He has withstood attack after attack by the Tories, the media, the courts, and Labour Party and trade union leaders.

Throughout this period, he has staunchly defended miners' interests against a ruthless management and vicious government determined to break the NUM and privatise the coalfields. While others have run for cover, he has stood up and said a resounding *no* to the six day week, the extended working day, and the draconian disciplinary code.

His leadership, both during the year-long strike and after, has shown that it is possible to resist the Tories, that collusion and retreat are not the only alternatives. This example has given hope not only to thousands of miners in his own industry, but also to workers throughout the country — and beyond.

By submitting himself for re-election at this time, he has kept his word to his members, and given them a chance to renew his mandate to fight with and for them.

It is no exaggeration to say that his victory will not only be a victory for the left, but for the whole of the working class.

The working class needs a victory at the moment. It is up to all miners who support Arthur Scargill to turn in their votes, and make the victory a decisive, triumphant rout of the opposition.

Prescott and the Deputy Leadership

Any challenge to the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership which led us into the general election disaster is to be welcomed. Since the electoral college was set up in 1981 it has been used only twice: in Tony Benn's Deputy Leadership contest with Dennis Healey, and in the leadership election which followed Michael Foot's resignation in 1983.

A genuinely democratic Labour Party would see these key leadership positions openly and frequently contested. Simply leaving the electoral mechanism to rust unused is in itself a bad thing. In that sense John Precott's bid for the deputy leadership is good news.

It is also good news in that it opens up a vital debate for the left. Who can and will challenge Kinnock? And when? It is not enough to press for socialist policies. An alternative leadership, dedicated to left policies and tested in the class struggle needs to be promoted.

John Prescott, unfortunately, is not and will not be part of that alternative leadership. His record on a wide range of issues, notably women's rights and the right of oppressed groups to organise themselves, is poor. What policies does he stand for? Indeed, why is he standing at all? Is he motivated by anything other than self-promotion? Or is this manoeuvre just a fit of pique at the short-changing of the Tribunite left in the Shadow Cabinet elections?

His entry into the race, however, should be the signal for the left to put up a candidate of its own. The Campaign Group of MPs should sponsor a selection Conference at which the left can democratically choose its own standard bearers. Too often the media have chosen them for us. We need a body to which our candidates for Leader and Deputy Leader can be accountable, and which can organise for their victory.

A choice between Hattersley and Prescott is a choice the left should not have to make. But our real task is mounting a long-term, sustained challenge at all levels to Kinnock and his minions. This will not be won in a year or even two. But if we don't start soon — and here the Campaign Group must give the lead — it will never happen at all. And that is a mistake none of us can afford.

Stop Clause 27!

Clause 27 of the Local Government Bill — which seeks to ban Local Authorities from "promoting homosexuality" — is one of the most appalling attacks on civil rights made by the Tory government.

It aims to make local Council policies for equal opportunities for lesbians and gay men illegal; and also to unleash a new wave of hostility and violence against the lesbian and gay communities.

The response of the Labour front bench to this nightmare has been atrocious. Cunningham and Rooker initially supported Clause 27. They went out of their way to denounce the modest equality initiatives taken by Haringey Council and (to a lesser extent) ILEA.

Clause 27 is part and parcel of a campaign to drive lesbians and gay men out of politics, off the street, and back into the closet. And while lesbians and gay men are in the front line at the moment, there can be no doubt other groups will soon come under fire.

It is intended to divert the working class away from fighting the Tories, towards pointing the finger at a fake "enemy" within our own ranks.

When will Labour's leaders wake up? When will they realise that democratic rights are indivisible and non-negotiable? Every retreat in the face of this kind of attack aids and abets the next attack. Every bone thrown to the dog of bigotry only makes the dog hungrier for new and fresh meat.

The defence of lesbian and gay rights is a matter of urgent concern to the whole labour movement. Clause 27 must be defeated at all costs.

Saving the NHS

Suddenly, the NHS is "in crisis". Even the BBC has at last acknowledged what the rest of us have known for some time.

But how is it that the actions of a handful of medical professionals and lobbyists, inspiring industrial action in an already aware workforce, have been able to put the issue on the agenda at last? How have they been able to force Thatcher, for once, on to the defensive?

Labour's performance in the Commons has roused no one to action. Since the defeat of the healthworkers' strike in 1982, the labour movement has failed to build any broad, national campaign in defence of the NHS. Popular support for it has remained strong, but has been given no direction by Labour Party or trade union leaders.

Of course, at a time when Labour Councils are cutting back as furiously as NHS managers, Labour's impassioned pleas for the Health Service ring hollow. And when every attempt to organise industrial action against NHS cuts is either sabotaged or ignored by the trade union bureaucracy, the public can hardly be blamed for looking elsewhere for leadership.

The vacuum left by Party and trade union leaders has now been filled by a coalition of concerned individuals. This coalition will not, however, be able to turn the widespread mood of outrage into anything strong, durable and effective.

Only the labour movement has the capacity to organise and unite workers and users of the Health Service in a campaign to save the NHS. Pressure must be applied now at the grass roots of that movement to force our leaders to act.

Defend the NHS!

NHS: *Now put the boot in!*

They may be cornered — but they are likely to be twice as vicious.

That is how the Tory government is responding to the health crisis created by their own spending policies.

After successfully conning enough voters in June that the NHS was alive, well and expanding, Thatcher hoped that her policy of deliberately forcing a financial crisis would rapidly lever managers, doctors, the media and public opinion into questioning the viability of a tax-funded national health service.

Imagine ministers' dismay when they saw top consultants and professors, joined by thousands of nurses, dozens of Tory backbenchers and a massive majority of the Tory electorate responding to the crisis by demanding more government cash for the NHS.

The Thatcher response has been both a partial retreat — suddenly producing an extra £70m in the hopes of silencing some critics — and an ideological offensive against the most basic ideas of the NHS as a service free to all at time of use.

This is the threat that lurks behind the panic cabinet discussions on the NHS.

- Loopy "think tank" schemes that would have lost votes by the million last June are now being openly debated — including possible charges for GP visits, charges for hospital admission, tax handouts for those taking private medical insurance, and "voucher schemes" that put a price on every item of medical treatment.
- Business sponsorship, fund-raising schemes and "income generation" by NHS hospitals are also being bandied about.

By JOHN LISTER

To make it worthwhile setting up a vast apparatus of civil servants to collect new NHS charges, they would have to be much higher than a "token" level. And since a large majority of NHS in-patients are either pensioners, children or claimants, the charges would have to be even higher again to compensate for the costs of a complex means-testing system and the fact that relatively few would be paying.

For a government which has so consistently argued that its aim is to focus health spending on "front-line" patient care (at the expense of ancillary staff jobs and pay), it seems bizarre that Thatcher should want to set up whole armies of "fund-raisers", charge-collectors and "business managers".

However, the one option that Thatcher appears to have excluded in advance is an NHS adequately funded from taxation.

This may seem strange: after all for the price of simply halving the next 2p tax cut, Nigel Lawson could put the necessary £2 billion into the NHS and win vast popular support. We have to recognise the Tory line as an ideological commitment, for which they are prepared to enrage and antagonise Tory voters rather than compromise.

In six short months, even the pretence of commitment to the NHS has been dropped. But as Thatcher makes her views plain, public concern and media attention (so hard to get prior to June) has helped radicalise previously dormant professional and white collar health workers in new, energetic campaigns.

An indication of the mood came in the 1,200 signatures which flooded in in six weeks from consultants and hospital doctors all over the country in response to a petition promoted by London Health Emergency and the Hounslow-based Hospital Alert. The petition called on Health Authorities to stand firm against any further cuts, and demanded extra government cash.

The demand must be made loud and clear for Health Authorities to defy cash limits, refuse to cut services, and challenge the government to intervene.

Meanwhile, as thousands of demoralised nurses leave the profession in search of a living wage, thousands more have been staying put and fighting back against cuts, organising or joining local campaigns, marches and lobbies and even strikes against hospital cuts and closures.

The £70m handout was not the only victory notched up by campaigners in 1987: the West London Hospital was saved by a popular campaign; so was Mile End casualty; and elsewhere, too axe-wielding Health Authorities have been forced back — or delayed enough for the £70m to be announced.

With no end in sight to the NHS crisis, the media attention still focussed on the continuing tragic saga of Birmingham Children's Hospital and other scandals, health campaigns offer the labour movement probably its best chance of dealing a body-blow to the Thatcher government in 1988.



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

A token presence from Roy Hattersley on one demo is not enough!

The plans that emerge from the cabinet pow-wow will be deeply unpopular — as are the new optician and dental charges already imposed. Most of the Health Authorities in trouble in 1987 will be in a worse plight in 1988.

Only the legendary incompetence of Labour's front bench and a TUC leadership that is pathetically remote from the struggles facing health workers can miss the opportunities now opening up.

For Labour Parties, union bodies, Trades Councils and other community organisations, the £70m hand-out in December should be used as a springboard for renewed campaigning work.

The Tories have already been on the floor once: now is the time to put the boot in.

SOCIALIST TEACHER

SOCIALIST TEACHERS' ALLIANCE



Inner London teachers on the march

Conference starts debate

Education is at the top of the Tories' agenda.

Their aim is nothing less than the destruction of state school education as we know it:

- the use of opting-out and open enrolment to create a hierarchy of schools through competitive market pressure;
- the introduction of the national curriculum and national testing to ensure that education conforms to the Tory ethos, at the expense of progressive curriculum content and methods;
- the strengthening of centralised government control over the schools at the expense of local authorities and teachers;
- the undermining of free and properly-funded provision.

The Tory attack on the principles of free non-selective locally-controlled state education will tie the schools much more closely to the requirements of the employers, and powerfully reinforce inequalities of class, race and gender.

A broad popular campaign of opposition to the new Tory education needs to be built:

- a campaign that draws together teachers, pupils, parents, trade unionists, the Black communities, Labour Party activists and radical educationists;
- a campaign that combines vigorous defence of the best of existing provision with a willingness to re-examine Labour's record and to develop new policies for the content and control of education in the interests of working people and the oppressed.

Our Conference is intended to be an important contribution towards building that new alliance in and for education. In 1977 the Socialist Teachers Alliance, an influential organisation of the left within the NUT, held its first "Politics of Education" Conference. Over 500 people took part in discussions introduced by leading education speakers including Raymond Williams and Caroline Benn.

Now the need for such a forum is even greater, and we have invited leading figures from the Labour left, radical educationists and socialist teachers to introduce workshops and plenary discussions aimed at sharing ideas, developing policies and planning for action.

Full details of the Conference agenda will be available in the near future. In the meantime, you can book your place by filling in the form below.

The New Tory Education

What response from the left?

A broad open conference organised by the Socialist Teachers Alliance in Caxton House, London, on February 13-14th.

Conference on the New Tory Education

Name .....

Organisation (if any) .....

Address .....

.....

Please enclose a cheque for £5 registration fee (£2.50 unwaged) payable to Open Conference Fund, and send to Open Conference Fund, c/o Steve Jenkins, 58 Oakley Close, Isleworth, Middx, TW7 4HZ.

Danger in the colleges

Big business comes to the Polys

One of the attacks on the education system contained in the Education Bill which has so far been ignored is the attack on Colleges of Higher Education and Polytechnics.

***Briefing* spoke to Phil, who works at one of the colleges affected.**

***Briefing:* What is the position at the moment and what is to change?**

Phil: At the moment, colleges and Polys are under the control of Local Authorities, although they have a great deal of independence. The government plans to make them totally independent.

The problem is that Authorities have subsidised the colleges either directly or indirectly — by doing the finance, payroll, legal work and so on. This will stop: so straight away colleges may face a big cut in funding — by 20% in one case — and an increase in spending on administration.

***Briefing:* Who will run the new colleges?**

Phil: There will be new boards of governors of around 25 people (the majority from business), who will be expected to run the place as a businesss. Principals are expected to operate as chief executives.

***Briefing:* In effect you are saying that colleges and Polys are being privatised wholesale. Where does eduation fit into this?**

Phil: It doesn't. The whole point of the exercise is to cut.

Colleges are expected to raise money from industry to pay for some courses.

Head

The head of the new Polytechnics and College Funding Council is Ron Dearing. Look what he did at the Post Office! That's his background, not education.

It's no use suggesting in these conditions that education might perhaps suffer; it's obvious that the effects are going to be catastrophic for education. And of course if a college can't meet the grade, the PCFC will close them in the same way that the NCB closed pits or the BSC steelworks.

***Briefing:* What are the unions doing about this?**

Phil: I don't think that many people have caught on to the scale of the problem.

The unions are working in the framework of Local Government. They have a large but relatively inactive membership. College workers are not the most militant, and the union's strength is elsewhere.

Many Authorities have "no compulsory redundancy" policies, so where jobs are being cut the unions are invoking the redeployment agreements to try and get things back to normal as quickly as possible. That's fine — except that the "normal" is no more.

Some colleges are setting up fullscale reorganisations and purges behind this. They may say they have to lose 20 jobs because of a certain cut; but they may have decided that they need two new finance officers, three personnel officers, and so on.

Loss

The nett loss would still be 20, but many more people will be involved. This sort of thing is rare in local government — but Murdoch did something similar at Wapping, after all: new jobs, new workers...

***Briefing:* And tame unions...**

Phil: Yes, I'm sure many colleges will try to be anti-union in the same way, say, as IBM is. They will have to negotiate pay and conditions at some stage, so why not break the unions now?

***Briefing:* Do you really think that colleges will act like Murdoch, the NCB and IBM?**

Phil: Some of them will. The whole White Paper puts them on that road. Dearing's appointment is another sign to them.

Also, they are paying consultants like Price Waterhouse for reports which will be all about money — how to save it and how to beat the unions to do it.

Finally, there will be officers of the Authority who will be using the current semi-independence of the colleges to push their own plans, plans that at the moment they would not be able to implement because of union or political hostility.

Reorganise

In two years time they will be able to say "We can cut like this or reorganise like this as we did in the Poly. It works; the unions are wrong to say it doesn't."

This situation in the colleges is a testing ground for later cuts in the Authority.

***Briefing:* It's a difficult situation.**

Phil: Yes, but not totally disastrous. As I said, the unions have a large membership. At the moment it is worried.

The unions will have to put forward proposals to mobilise their members, which start from their current low level of consciousness and which organise and educate them — so that they realise that they are working for a "boss" and the boss can be beaten.

To start campaigning, union members need to demand open access to the college accounts, so we can see where the money's really going.

Unions can also demand that all the management consultants' papers are published — which would show how flimsy their arguments for a particular cut really are. It's a small start — but we have to start somewhere.

The union angle

Crisis continues in the NUT

As the Baker Bill progresses relentlessly through Parliament, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) has yet to develop a strategy to prevent its implementation.

By Martin Allen
STA

The Union's effort so far has taken the form of a general publicity campaign attempting to build the widest possible opposition to the Bill.

Effective publicity is an essential *part* of any campaign, but the Union is offering little else. All their efforts are geared towards getting the Bill "amended".

the imposition of Baker's new conditions of service.

They excuse this by pointing to "apathy amongst the membership". Yet they have failed to support those sections of the Union which are prepared to fight — the clearest example being their continuing refusal to reinstate the suspended officers of the Inner London Teachers Association.

Increasing apathy amongst teachers is a reflection of the Union's retreat from a position of confrontation with the government some 18 months ago. The recent National Officers elections saw a narrow defeat for Socialist Teachers Alliance candidate Ken Jones — but also saw the lowest turnout ever in elections of this nature.

Concerned at the increasing influence of the left in the

SOCIALIST TEACHER

SOCIALIST TEACHERS' ALLIANCE

Any talk of industrial action has been ruled out in case this upsets any of the partners in the leadership's carefully cultivated alliance. They have not even responded positively to calls for a day of action — unless it takes place on a weekend!

There is talk of "big trouble" in schools if the Bill comes into operation — but past experience points to little or no further opposition being likely.

The NUT leadership has made the task of organising future action against Baker difficult by winding down any campaign by teachers against

Union (the STA now has almost 700 members and commands large support at Union Conferences), the leadership, based on the Communist Party/Labour Right "Broad Left", is trying to restructure the Union, attacking the autonomy of local branches and even talking about holding Conference on a bi-yearly basis.

The STA will continue to lead the fight against Baker and also take seriously the need to develop an alternative "popular" programme for education ready for a long-term fight against the Tory attacks.

Black Lecturers Group (West Midlands)

To: Anti-racists everywhere

The Bis Weaver Defence Fund:

The Black Lecturers Group (West Midlands) has decided to set up a defence fund in order to provide financial and moral support to one of its members who suffered racial (as well as sexual) harassment.

When she turned to her union for advice and assistance their response was an outright refusal. Instead, they offered their fullest support to the harassers.

Mrs Bis Weaver, who was employed at Bournville College of Further Education, registered a complaint of racial harassment against other members of staff. When Mrs Weaver, a NATFHE member, asked NATFHE for assistance, NATFHE refused, choosing to represent the three members (who were officers of NATFHE) against whom she had made the complaint. At a great deal of personal expense Mrs Weaver took her case to an Industrial Tribunal.

A NATFHE official at the hearing confirmed that NATFHE's policy was not to support complaints involving racism, including complaints with merit, because it could lead to loss of tenure for the members complained about.

Despite severely criticising NATFHE, the Tribunal decided that NATFHE, in accordance with its policy, has a "legitimate duty to protect the tenure of its members and to avoid breaches of obligations to members whose tenure is at risk which outweighs the limited discriminatory effect." Consequently, Mrs Weaver lost her case and is in the process of appealing against the Tribunal decision.

Without doubt Mrs Weaver has shown admirable courage in taking on the whole of the union's machinery. We believe that serious questions concerning the rights of Black and women members in trade unions have been raised by this case, which is now becoming an important test case in the pursuit of those rights.

To support Mrs Weaver in her struggle is not only to help her as an individual victim of the most vicious form of racism, but also to send positive messages to Black people who are all potential victims of such harassment. It would also demonstrate that alternative sources of support exist for such victims.

The Black Lecturers Group is, therefore, asking anti-racists everywhere to demonstate their active support to Mrs Weaver and to send donations to the **Bis Weaver Defence Fund** (Cheques/POs to BWDF), Fazal Iqbal, Bilston Community College, Wellington Road, Bilston, Wolverhampton WV14 6EW.

NUM Rank & File

Ready for action !

The dispute in the Yorkshire coalfield sparked off by action at Frickley Colliery in July gave a true picture of the frustration and anger of the NUM rank and file, and their willingness to fight the new attacks on their union.

By D. Lawsons Frickley Colliery

The strike over six men being suspended for taking a late snapbreak brought Frickley to an immediate standstill.

At a hastily called general meeting it was decided to fight the new disciplinary code in the age-old way of hitting the management where it hurts the most: stop production, smash British Coal's cosy image of "new realist" miners, organise meetings at every pit in Yorkshire and ask for support.

The picketing started initially in the Doncaster Area. Each pit asked for a canteen meeting to be addressed by a Frickley miner. The response after each meeting was the same. The men wanted to fight; they were ready to fight over almost anything.

It gave the lie to the media's picture of miners as broken men sick of industrial action. Branch after branch returned 100% support.

The dispute then spread to the rest of South Yorkshire. Pits that had been divided since the Big Strike became united again over British Coal's new attacks.

The canteen meetings discussed the wider implications of the Wheeler Plan, as well as other issues like six day working, pit closures and the plight of the sacked miners. The meetings showed that the rank and file are well informed, up to date, and sick of morale-breaking jackboot management. They were straining at the leash.

Miners from the North Yorkshire Area, frustrated by the official line of negotiations over the sacking of Ted Scott, approached Frickley pickets and demanded their presence at North Yorkshire pits to help them get off their knees.

Frickley answered the call and picketed North Yorkshire. The lads in these so-called moderate pits (like the Selby complex) didn't even argue the issues; they just shook the pickets' hands and went home cheering.

We all know how the dispute ended. The rug was pulled out from under Frickley's feet. But what is more important was the way the rank and file became united. They showed their willingness to support fellow miners and their ability to fight again if the right leadership is given.

At this moment the NUM is at a crossroads. We are now balloting for the union's presidency. One contender preaches moderation, new realism, deals with the UDM and negotiates with Haslem.

If moderation means accepting the heart-rending morale-crushing dictations of the management's supermarket mentality; if new realism means lie down and take it like we have since '84/5; if it means negotiations which result in £500 pay-back clauses and the worst pay rises in the history of the union; if it means still more job losses through six-day working — then this man is not for me or the rank and file I have described above.

The second contender knows the state of play. He understands that every time the NEC forces him to compromise management comes back for more. Haslem's idea of negotiation is to take something from us and give back nothing.

Has moderation ever won anything? I only know of gains made through action.

The media, British Coal and the Tories all oppose the second contender. A man who has never misled or lied to his members is indeed a danger to them. And anyone who is a danger to that desperate threesome will get my vote.

The battles facing our union can only be won by rank and file action. And the rank and file need a fighting leader. Vote for a fighter. Vote Scargill.

Economic debate

The problem with ESOPS

If the trade union and labour movement pin their hopes for industrial democracy on ESOPS (Employee Share Ownership or Stock Option Plans) they had better read another fable — the one about the tortoise and the hare by the other Aesop.

By FRANK SCOTT

They must not once again confuse control with formal ownership.

ESOPS is a means by which employees take a substantial stake in the share equity of their company. This usually involves a third party (often a Trust) buying up a pre-arranged slice of equity for employees, who then pay them back over a number of years — five years being the favoured time.

The effective control exerted by employee shareholders is totally dependent on the terms of the plan.

One of the most financially succeessful ESOPs (from the point of view of management) was at Weirton Steel in the USA, where the employees have non-voting shares!

An ESOP was brought in at Eastern Airlines in the States, which featured worker directors and a comprehensive "Employee Involvement scheme" — but the Scheme also featured across-the-board pay cuts of around 20%.

Management promised to make good the cuts, but reneged on the deal, singling out one section of workforce for harsher treatment, including longer hours, and cuts in holiday and sick pay benefits.

The worker directors and the unions had to resort to conventional bargaining.

The company sold out to Texas Air shortly after, and the ESOP was not used for consultation with the workforce, let alone joint decision-making. Texas Air, being strongly anti-union, immediately set up an "executive board" in order to preclude any influence from worker directors.

It dismantled "Employee Involvement", then had the gall to offer to buy back the employees' shares *for just 26% of the price originally paid for them!*

ESOPs are no guarantee of worker influence, as is clear from the US experience, where some 7 to 12 million workers are covered by plans.

Somewhat more equitable arrangements exist in other countries, notably Sweden, but the social aspects of Britain's economy are now far closer to those of the USA than to Sweden, so investigators of ESOPs are well advised to look West for relevant information.

Even the prestigious *Business Week* magazine says ESOPs are often phony. Often a partial "sale" to workers is nothing more than managment's use of an ESOP to ease a restructuring strategy or resist a hostile takeover.

United Airlines is pushing ESOPs in its peripheral businesses in exchange for wage cuts, whilst it intends to use the proceeds to offer major shareholders a bonus by which it hopes to fend off hostile takeover bids.

In the case of the Hospital Corporation, ESOP has helped the parent company to offload low-profit divisions to local managers and workers.

It could be argued that companies will use whatever means are necessary to restructure and develop or divest, and that ESOPS should not be misused in this way. This view would mean that an incoming Labour government would have to find ways of preventing misuse, an enormously intricate job for law-makers. But apart from this, are ESOPS a good deal in general terms for employees?

Many firms already run employee share ownership schemes, including some that operate partly as a savings scheme. In general these schemes aren't run in parallel with programmes for pay cuts or other concessions. Companies get tax savings from them, but so do employees, although schemes *can* have a number of drawbacks.

Conventional employee share ownership schemes usually offer slightly advantageous deals to workers over the pricing of share offers, but ESOPS are commonly run via major banking groups (such as Lazard Freres in the USA), and these operators require some payment for their efforts. It's unlikely that the costs are borne solely by employers.

Finally, on the issue of control, ordinary employee share ownership offers little or no promises. For an ESOP to have *any* significance at least 10% of the total equity would have to be held by the workforce (enough to force an EGM for instance). But the real cost to workers of getting this minimum degree of control varies tremendously.

For example, each employee in BAT Industries would have to pay over £3,600, whereas the generally low-paid workers in the Next chain would have to find over £7,200 each, and those in Guinness would have to pay over £17,500.

The expense of a 10% ESOP depends on factors almost entirely outside employees' control, such as market valuation of equities, the labour or capital intensiveness of a firm, type of business activity, and so on.

In this situation it would be near impossible to maintain a coherent political strategy for increasing worker control over industries. ESOPS are more likely to be found where employers, for one reason or another, wish to introduce them.

Unless many other key factors in the economy are radically changed, ESOPS may offer nothing by way of industrial democracy. Rather than being a short cut to social ownership, they could slow it up, as unions get embroiled in complex and lengthy consultation exercises.

NUJ

Journalists strike in North London

Fourteen National Union of Journalist members working on the Advertiser North London weekly free newspapers are on strike in defence of the most basic of trade union rights: the right to be members of a trade union.

All 14 have been sacked.

The journalists are also striking to defend editorial standards and keep local papers local.

Six members of the Chapel, including the Father of the Chapel who has worked there for seven years, were made redundant in November at two hours' notice.

The remaining eight immediately went on strike in protest — and were sacked. The strike has the full official backing of the NUJ.

Brutal

The brutal manner of the sackings was reinforced by terror tactics. Locksmiths were brought in and all the locks changed. Security guards were installed at all entrances. The sacked 14 weren't even allowed to reclaim their personal possessions until three weeks later.

The Advertiser North London Group, which publishes titles in Finchley, Barnet, Hendon, Edgware, Enfield, Hampstead and Haringey is owned by Morgan-Grampian Local Newspapers Limited, a subsidiary of Lord Stevens' United Newspapers, which publishes the *Daily Express*.

Management claim that the redundancies were due to economic reasons, but this is nonsense. The company is highly profitable, The union is treating the matter as a straightforward case of victimisation and as an attempt to crush the Chapel by picking out its most vociferous members, two of whom had been active in disputes elsewhere.



PHOTO: Pete Jenkins

Arrested pickets outside Golders Green police station, Jan 5th, following charges. L to R: Tom Durkin (Vice Chair, Brent Trades Council), Howard Hannah (News Editor, NLA), Susan Doyle (NLA reporter), Ivor Segal.

The Chapel is also trying to defend editorial standards. The recently-appointed Editor, Jeff Steeden, told staff he didn't want stories about hospital closures, inner city deprivation, job losses, union disputes, etc. He didn't even want "Council news" or "Court copy". He wants "froth", whatever that means.

Weekly mass pickets have been organised outside the company premises in Finchley. On Tuesday, January 5th police turned up in force and demanded that the picket line be limited to six people. Picketers were given five minutes to clear off, which they refused to do. Four people were arrested, including journalists Howard Hanna and Susan Doyle. All four declined a police caution and have been charged with obstruction.

The mass pickets will continue every Tuesday morning at 8am at 281 Ballards Lane, London N12. Support is promised from NUJ Secretary Harry Conroy and President Lionel Morrison.

Contact 01 278 7916 ext. 222 (NUJ Disputes Room) for more information. Send donations, with cheques payable to the Advertiser NUJ, to The Disputes Room, Acorn House, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP.

ACTT TV technicians

Lock-out at TV-AM

Two hundred and twenty-nine technicians at the TV-AM studios in Camden, members of ACTT, have been locked out by the company since November 24th.

The previous day, ACTT had held a one day strike to protest at TV-AM's intention to tear up existing agreements on staffing levels.

By Fred Leplat Camden Labour Briefing

TV-AM has recently been trying to increase productivity and flexibility. In the 8 months prior to the lock-cut, staff were cut from 483 to 341.

The one day strike was supported by 80% of ACTT members in a ballot held to comply with the new legislation. The company is now using the lock-out to impose drastic changes upon ACTT members as a precondition for returning to work.

The ultimatum calls upon staff to accept:

- across the board roster changes;
- unlimited use of contract staff and facilities;
- the use of unstaffed studios;
- a reduction in TV-AM produced programmes;
- a 15% reduction in annual leave.

Management has also demanded that ACTT relinquish negotiating rights over the allocation of work and staff, and renounce industrial action on these issues. In return, the TV-AM company would limit reduction in staff to voluntary redundancies and natural wastage. Company demands go much further than before, even at the depths of TV-AM's financial troubles.

The ACTT members are prepared to return to work on the basis of both sides honouring existing agreements, and for the company to negotiate through the established procedures. TV-AM's intransigence has led the ACTT to call for negotiations through ACAS which has been turned down by the company.

Members

TV-AM management's confidence in requesting further concessions from ACTT members stems from their ability to continue broadcasting by using imported news material and programmes such as "Batman" and "Care Bears".

But more importantly, members of the NUJ, EETPU and BETA are crossing the picket line and scabbing. The use of "Batman" and the scabbing has enabled TV-AM to increase its audience and revenue from advertisement.

TV-AM is at the sharp end of a general attack on the TV companies. Skilled television workers have been able to obtain high wages and good conditions through strong union organisation and the ability to control exactly what they do on the job.

Strike action has been able to force the TV companies to meet the union's claims as it was cheaper than losing advertisement revenue. Public opinion is being softened up against TV technicians by the TV-AM management spreading lies to the press such as: "TV-AM technician claims £92,000 overtime for covering the Zeebrugge ferry disaster."

The new anti-union legislation has created the climate where employers can easily attack and lock-out staff. The government's Peacock Report on television is laying the ideological ground for the reorganisation of TV companies by recommending increased choice for viewers with a variety of satelite, cable and regular TV channels, and a general deregulation.

If the TV unions are successfully to resist a Fleet Street-style shake up, then a more determined and co-ordinated response is necessary.

Messages of support, requests for speakers and donations (made out to ACTT) can be sent to the TV-AM lock-out office, c/o ACTT, 111 Wardour Street, London W1V 4AK.

Labour Party

Euro-elections

A vision of a united, democratic and green socialist movement

With the backing of local *Briefing* supporters, PETER TATCHELL is seeking selection as the Labour candidate in the 1989 European elections in the London Central and London North Euro-constituencies.

Below PETER sets out his political platform.

There are many fundamental political issues which transcend national boundaries and affect all the peoples of Europe.

Problems such as acid rain and nuclear waste discharges, the arms race and the political division of Europe, and the immense power of multinational corporations all affect our common futures.

Increasingly, they are beyond the capability of individual governments to resolve.

It is therefore more important than ever that we work with other socialist parties and trade unions throughout Europe to build a European-wide radical left and aim for the ultimate goal of a united, democratic, and socialist Europe which can tackle these problems on a continental-wide scale.

The old arguments about withdrawal from the Common Market are increasingly irrelevant and, more dangerously, a diversion from the real task of the Left — to work for international socialist co-operation and fight for the most radical socialist advances possible in all available political forums — including the EEC.

It's true, of course, that the Common Market is a capitalist club, but so too is the British Parliament!

The fact that the House of Commons was not established by or for the working class has not stopped generations of socialists from seeking to reform and refashion it as an instrument of socialist change.

Likewise, the Common Market's favouritism towards the interests of rich farmers and industrialists should not deter us from *campaigning to transform it* into an institution which is genuinely democratic and representative of the working class people of Europe.

To this end, in the 1989 European elections Labour should campaign, in co-operation with our European socialist allies, for a radically reformed and expanded EEC and a European Parliament with real powers to represent the interests of working people and, eventually, all the nations of Europe.

Labour's vision of a radical socialist Europe must be based on the following key commitments:

- **Common and co-ordinated economic strategies** to create new employment, expand the welfare state, and win economic independence from the United States and the big multinational corporations.
- **Environmental conservation and pollution control** to halt the world-wide ecological devastation which is being caused by nuclear power and radiation leaks, lead in petrol, herbicides and pesticides in agriculture, nitrates in the water supply and the destruction of the ozone layer and tropical rain-forests.
- **Peace, disarmament and the breaking down of barriers between Western and Eastern Europe** by moving towards a more independent and non-aligned foreign policy, and by campaigning for a defence strategy which is not only non-nuclear, but also non-provocative, non-imperialist, and strictly self-defensive and democratic.
- **The safeguarding and enhancement of civil liberties and human rights** — especially with regard to women, black people, migrant workers, lesbians and gay men, the elderly and disabled, and minority nationalities.
- **More aid to the poorer non-industrial nations** — with emphasis on aid which empowers people in those countries and which breaks the cycle of dependence by fostering self-help, autonomous development, and self-reliance.
- **Support and solidarity with democratic and national liberation movements** which are fighting fascism, dictatorship, and imperialist intervention.

Whilst all these issues (and many others) are important, a commitment to a specifically **green socialist Europe** ought to be the centrepiece of Labour's 1989 European election campaign.

Green issues affect everyone, regardless of class or region. We are *all* harmed by the dumping of toxic and radio-active wastes, the rapid depletion of the earth's finite resources, the use of dangerous additives in food and the pollution to the upper atmosphere which is causing irreversible climatic changes — the so-called "greenhouse effect" — which could eventually raise average global temperatures and thereby turn arable land into barren desert (and which could also eventually melt the polar ice-caps and thereby raise sea levels and flood many, low-lying countries).

If this ecocidal trend continues unchecked, our whole planet will be threatened with an ecological catastrophe which could be just as exterministic in its consequences as nuclear war.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Peter Tatchell, campaigning during the Bermondsey by-election, February 1983

To avoid this fate requires international co-operation in planning the economic management and conservation of the earth's scarce resources, the legal protection of the environment, the more efficient use of raw materials, and a fairer distribution of wealth — both between nations and between classes within nations.

It means that our societies will have to be transformed to place the principles of planning before market forces, conservation before plunder, co-operation before competition, human needs before profits, and the common good before privilege.

It is essential that we put green socialist policies at the forefront of Labour's European election campaign. By so doing, we can reinvigorate the Left with innovative and inspiring ideas, renew the appeal and relevance of socialism, and expand Labour's base of electoral support amongst the many people who are concerned about environmental issues but who have never previously identified themselves as socialists..

Labour disarray over UDCs

Rushing to do the Tories' dirty work again

Last December, the Tories announced the creation of three more Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and the extension of an existing one.

The new UDCs will be established in Bristol, Leeds, and Central Manchester.

The Black Country Development Corporation is to be extended into Wolverhampton.

By John Turkie
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

Under the 1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act, UDCs take all planning and development control powers away from Local Authorities within the designated area. In addition, they are given Compulsory Purchase and "Vesting" powers far greater than those of Local Authorities to "acquire, hold, manage, reclaim and dispose of land, and to carry out building and other operations."

There are already seven major UDCs:

- the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and the Merseyside DC (MDC) — which have spearheaded the Tories' attack on the inner cities — were both set up in 1981;
- in early 1987, Development Corporations were set up in the Black Country, Manchester's Trafford Park, Cardiff Bay, Teeside, and Tyne and Wear.

These seven receive yearly grants from the Department of Environment (DoE) ranging from £35 to £65 million.

Labour-controlled Local Authorities are in disarray about how to respond to UDCs. They are in political and financial straitjackets, partly of their own making, and are on the defensive about inner city blight. "Right wing" labour Councils are falling over themselves to invite the DoE to set up UDCs or UDC equivalents in their own areas. Those on the "left" are all rushing into "partnerships" with private developers in an attempt to avoid having a UDC imposed on them.

The principle — and central — issue of the loss and removal of democratic control over planning and development has gone by the board. Indeed, John Cunningham, speaking for the Front Bench about UDCs in July 1987, said "we are not against the principle of Development Corporations", regarding them as no different from the New Towns set up in the 1950s and 60s.

Machinery

But for the Tories, UDCs are not just a new piece of machinery, a new type of development agency. They are specifically aimed at using public subsidies to bring private developers into the inner cities, promoting private enterprise and "market values", and transforming the demography of the designated areas to oust Labour permanently from control.

Each of the new — and far smaller — designations will be able to spend around £15 million over the next four years. They will also be in control of "government expenditure in their areas on urban regeneration grant, urban development grant and derelict land grant paid to the private sector. In some areas this could be considerable."

The relatively small sums of money going into the new "mini-UDCs" shows that the Tories' real objectives are overwhelmingly ideological and political, rather than financial. Indeed, *all* Labour Councils are quite happily co-operating with private developers, and no argument exists between Tories and Labour over the principle of public money being used as a "pump-primer" for private investment.

Left-wing

Take left-wing Manchester Council for example. A few months ago, several large building contractors and property developers put together a £100 million redevelopment package for a large chunk of the city centre, and gained Council support. Surely, Ridley would now lay off Council leader Stringer and Manchester?

But Ridley was having none of it. Instead, he has imposed a Whitehall-directed mini-UDC to oversee the very same area. Much preparatory work has already been done, and much money spent, mostly public (from the Council), but also some private investment, and all now wasted — so keen was Ridley to hammer the Local Authority.

What can people living in and around the new UDCs expect? For six years, the government, via the MDC and the LDDC, have massively subsidised private developers to build office developments, expensive private housing, and retail and leisure developments.

Blatant

The most blatant example is the 12 million sq. ft office development at Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs (where there is an "Enterprise Zone" within the LDDC area). The developers behind the £4 billion project are the largest property company in the world, with assets of over $20 billion. Nevertheless, within ten years they will have received a public subsidy in the region of £1 billion.

There is little doubt that London's Docklands is a one-off. The pressure for up-market development is not to be found to the same extent in other urban areas. Thus, the "success" of the LDDC cannot be repeated outside the prosperous areas of the South East, and therefore has little applicability to the new UDC s in the North East, the North West and elsewhere.

But even within London's Docklands, "the jewel in Thatcher's crown" — eight square miles into which the Tories have pumped around £700 million in some form or another since 1981 — there has been a *net loss* of well over 56,000 jobs since that time. The manufacturing industries in particular have suffered, many being forced out by rising land values, whilst thousands of office-based City jobs have been drawn into Docklands by subsidies.

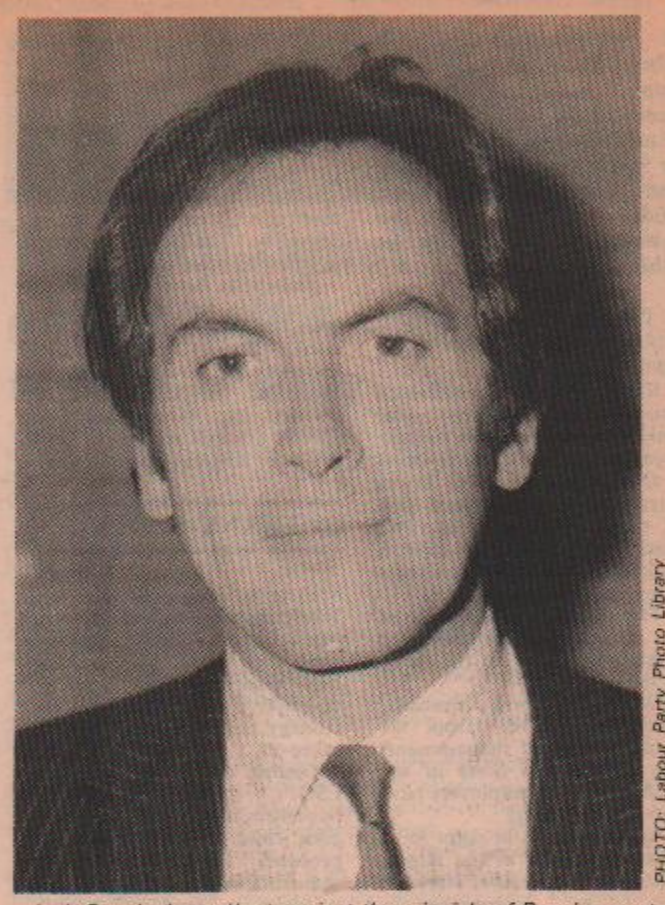


PHOTO: Labour Party Photo Library

Jack Cunningham: "not against the principle of Development Corporations".

Labour has responded to UDCs and the threat of UDCs by looking to the private sector for salvation from the Tories' worst excesses. In the vain hope of limiting the Tories' "final solution" for our inner cities — their wholesale privatisation and heap sale to the property market — Labour Councils are now jumping into bed with the private sector.

But the Tories' plans are about much more than just pushing Labour Councils into the arms of property developers. They are also about stripping them of their powers, and humiliating and compromising them politically. Labour Councils are attempting to "protect" communities from the worst ravages of Thatcherism by doing the Tories' dirty work for them.

The Tories know that, sooner or later, the power they now hold by proxy will be theirs by office. If you play the game by the Tories' rules, you get beat every time.

Clause 27 must be stopped!

Legislating enforced ignorance

It was New Year's Eve and all good North *London Labour Briefingites* were strutting their stuff at Mandy's party.

Red Stripe beer, white wine, black lace party frocks or braces were de rigeur.

Sometime after the witching hour I happened to find myself contemplating the gathering.

By Sarah Roeloffs

"Have you noticed," I said to Mandy, "how lesbian and gay couples are dominating your dance floor? And no one's batting an eyelid at their smooching and canoodling. There's not many straight parties where we could carry on with such gay (sic) abandon!"

"Well," said Mandy, "that's what Positive Images did. If nothing else it educated the left."

Achieve

Haringey's Positive Images Campaign did achieve more than the education of a section of Labour's left. It radically challenged what Ralph Miliband has called "the legitimation of the social order through the school system"* — in this case the heterosexual social order.

Such insubordination on the part of even a fraction of the Thatcher Empire could not go unpunished.

One of the more neo-fascist Tory backbenchers, Jill Knight, has mounted one of the most appalling attacks on civil rights made under this government, and that is saying something. What has come to be known as Clause 27 of the Local Government Bill represents a horrific assault on that basic human right — *the right to know*.

Ostensibly Clause 27 is aimed at Local Authorities who allegedly "promote" homosexuality. Its wording, even at the most explicit level, represents the worst attack on lesbian and gay rights since (male) homosexuality was first criminalised over a hundred years ago.

Deeper

But its implications run deeper. In seeking to outlaw information and education on "homosexuality", what the Conservative government is proposing is nothing less than the legal curtailment of knowledge.

The Labour Party, and the wider labour movement, must come to grips with this threat. Long before the founding of the Labour Party, working class people were fighting for the right to full education, which the co-operative movement called the "light of knowledge".

The 1918 Labour Party Founding Conference called for education for social equality and a 1941 Party report (which laid the policy basis for the '45 Labour government) saw education as a prerequisite for a democratic society.

Clause 27 appears to have inspired a revolution in Labour thinking. To their undying and utter shame Labour's front-bench spokespersons *supported* Clause 27 when it was discussed in Committee on December 8th.

This was for one reason alone. The subject was "homosexuality", which stimulates primitive knee-jerk reactions amongst Labour's leadership. The buzz word in the Clause is "promotion". Local Authorities may not "promote" homosexuality.

"Of course," said the Front-bench Tweedledum and Dee, Jeff Rooker and Jack Cunningham, "we are all opposed to the *promotion* of homosexuality." (here Dum and Dee fell over each other in their mad scramble to win Fleet Street accolades.)

"And anyway," they added, "we never promoted homosexuals. It was only those lunatics in Haringey and ILEA. It was never us!"

Cavorting

On December 9th *The Guardian* published an editorial that exposed this cavorting for the base opportunism it was. While acknowledging the existence of widespread fear and loathing towards lesbians and gay men ("Nobody should underestimate the scale and viciousness of the hostility"), *The Guardian* asked "Will Labour be populist or principled?" and stated firmly that "there are fundamental issues of principle involved and it is important that anyone who believes in civic tolerance stands up to be counted."

Unlike *The Guardian* liberals, Dum and Dee were totally obsessed with counting votes. The Labour leadership are "sickened unto death" (not theirs, but that of our civil rights) with the fatal virus of "electoralism".

Clause 27 could be in force as soon as June 1988. Its effect on lesbian and gay rights will be devastating:

- Lesbian and gay equality units in Local Authorities will have to close.
- All equality work in housing, education, social services, etc., is likely to be illegal.
- Lesbian and gay equality clauses in equal opportunity statements, jobs ads, etc., would be prevented, as will counselling and advice, legal help, etc.
- No Local Authority grants for lesbian and gay groups.
- Likely censorship of books, films, plays and other performances.
- Local Authority licensing of social venues for lesbians and gay men would be prevented.
- Lesbian and gay meetings, festivals, etc., would be unable to book Local Authority venues.

But the worst effect by far will be the release of a new wave of homophobic hysteria as ignorant bigotry is legitimised. Was it just coincidence that the offices of *Capital Gay* (a major London gay newspaper) were firebombed four days after the Clause's publication?

Lesbian and gay individuals and organisations, supported by civil liberties groups and a host of left Labour MPs, responded immediately to Knight's attack. The Committee meeting on December 8th was packed, and Bernie Grant, MP for Tottenham, one of the Haringey constituencies, spoke strongly against the amendment.

Emergency meetings were called all over the country and a mass lobby of parliament was organised for the following Monday, December 14th. Organisers, who hoped for 200, were delighted that over 700 people made their way to the House of Commons. At one point the Central Lobby was packed with lesbians and gay men lobbying their MPs.

The following evening, when the Clause was put to the full House, the Commons Visitors Gallery was full of protestors. In the intervening days the scale of the attack had begun to dawn on some MPs and various amendments were put from both the Liberal and Labour side.

"Out"

Chris Smith, the only "out" gay MP, and also a member of Labour's front bench, had publicly criticised his front bench colleagues, but the latter wanted only to have their cake and eat it too. Their amendments were designed to allow Labour to support the ban on "promotion", but to exclude from it anti-discrimination work.

The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights had called for unequivocal opposition to the Clause, but only Joan Ruddock attempted to submit an amendment to delete the Clause entirely (unfortunately her intervention came too late).

An *ad hoc* opposition campaign — STOP CLAUSE 27 — has now been established and is discussing how to fight the Clause in the Lords, where the Bill resurfaces in mid-January, and throughout the country. Campaigning activities are being planned up to the Spring when the Bill is expected to receive the Royal Assent.

Legal opinion is being sought and test cases planned to establish a definition of the infamous word "promotion". However, lesbian mothers already have plenty of hard experience of court definitions of themselves in numerous lost custody cases.

While campaigning for the broadest possible opposition to Clause 27, lesbians and gay men will be relying on their own strength and determination to defeat this horrendous attempt to enforce ignorance of ourselves and our lives.

*Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, Quartet, 1973.

STOP CLAUSE 27 has not yet established an office, but this is expected in the next few days. Contact LCLGR for latest campaign news: 01-281 4834 or 0865 246900.



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Gay Pride demo 1987: within the broad opposition to Clause 27, lesbians and gay men will play the key role in fighting the amendment.

YS Conference cancelled:

Where now for Labour's youth?

At the recent NEC meeting where Kinnock reprimanded Ken Livingstone for taking a principled position on Ireland, another attack on the left of the Party was made which has received too little attention.

The decision was taken not to hold a Labour Party Young Socialists Conference in the next year.

This move goes beyond the Sawyer proposals passed at the last Party Conference and represents another drastic encroachment on the autonomy of LPYS branches which have had AGMSs forced on them under the new rules in the presence of Party officials whose job is to make sure no one steps out of line.

The bureaucracy has also abolished the Annual Regional Conferences and replaced them with one day "consultation" conferences. It is not clear what form these will take or how delegates will be elected. One thing is certain: they will be markedly different from the old YS Regional Conferences where activists could get together for a weekend of political discussion and debate.

These systematic attacks on the autonomy of the labour movement's youth have to some extent achieved their aims. A whole layer of experienced youth have been cut off from the YS as a result of the reduction of the age limit. A lot of YS branches have simply collapsed, which cannot benefit anyone but Kinnock and his friends.

By Graham Smallwood
York LPYS

One of the saddest things about these attacks on the YS was the lack of any organised fightback against them from either the LPYS leadership or the left as a whole.

One of the reasons that the Labour leadership was prepared to tolerate the "Marxist" leadership for so long was the it did not pose the threat of an organised and lively opposition to its right wing politics.

Historically, the LPYS leadership maintained a separation of the YS from both the general Labour left and from youth radicalisations such as the Anti-Nazi League in the 70s and Youth CND in the early 80s.



What activity will the YS turn to?

Despite these mistakes, socialists should have defended the autonomy of the YS. Unfortunately the YS majority were more interested in passing resolutions on the progressive nature of the Sawyer proposals than organising a united fight against them.

Those surviving LPYS branches and activists should learn from past mistakes and stop the rot now. When the threatened fusion with NOLS takes place, YS activists should take the opportunity to make real links with those student Labour Club activists opposed to the Kinnockite politics of the NOLS leadership, and to take the struggles of students against cuts, etc., in to the local labour movement.

LPYS activists should grasp the opportunities that are open to them and get involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement and its youth conference, due to be held early this year. YS activists could play a leading role on the establishment of local AA youth groups.

They should also break from tradition and take women's issues seriously. This means getting involved in the local FAB groups that have been set up all over the country. If the YS leadership, or whatever replaces it, again fails to take up these issues, YS branches should do so in spite of that leadership.

The only way that the YS is ever going to be taken seriously is if it is seen to be a genuine campaiging force relevant to the struggles of working class and oppressed youth.

Exeter

Orange celebrations

1988 is the tercentenary of William of Orange's landing in Brixham in Devon. The Labour-led Exeter City Council have linked with the "William and Mary Tercentenary Trust" and have allocated £60,000 towards civic celebrations in his honour.

William of Orange, following his victory over the Catholic Irish in the Battle of the Boyne in 1691, became the historical figurehead for Protestant political and economic domination in Ireland. His name was taken by the masonic Orange Order in 1795 to justify their campaign to maintain Protestant hegemony. Today, William of Orange remains the dominant symbol of Protestant hegemony, with his victory of 1691 still being celebrated.

Initially, the Labour Group on Exeter City Council was too politically ignorant to realise what they were doing. But following a broad-based campaign against the celebrations, which forced even Exeter's Conservative MP to express reservations, the Labour Group became well-informed on the matter: nonetheless, they decided to press ahead.

- The National Front have congratulated the Labour Council Leader, Chester Long, for promoting the celebrations. They say that they intend to "bring their supporters from all over the country to Devon". Threatening mail has been sent to the press officer of Exeter Anti-Fascist Action, which is leading the fight against the celebrations.
- The Orange Order has booked part of the University of Exeter for a major conference in September 1988.
- Anti-Fascist Action have made opposition to the William of Orange tercentenary celebration one of its three major campaigns in 1988.
- Many branches and Constituency Labour Parties, including the Regional Party in Bristol, have condemned the Exeter City Council Labour Group for promoting the celebrations. The Exeter Constituency initially opposed the celebrations, but later reversed its position under pressure from the Labour Group.

The Exeter Labour Group claims that the Irish connection of William of Orange can be forgotten, although this is hardly logical given that the National Front and the Orange Order intend to come to Exter *precisely because of the Irish connection*.

The campaign against the William of Orange celebration in Exeter must be stepped up. The celebrations are an insult to the people of Ireland. The campaign in Exeter is being led by Exeter Anti-Fascist Action, 1 Parliament St, Exeter. Resolutions and letters opposing the celebrations should be sent to Exeter Labour Party, 26 Clifton Hill, Exeter.

Peter Bowlog, Exter CLP

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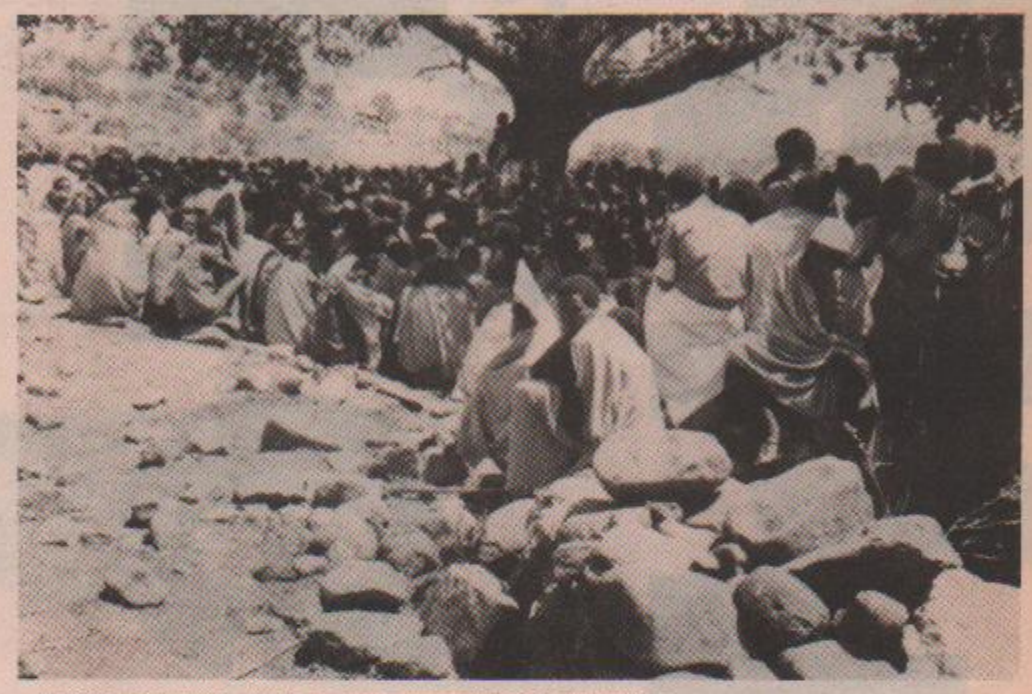
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PHOTO: Graeme Cookson Pro-choice picket of "LIFE" rally, Central Hall, 27.10.87

Features

Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia



Political Education of the masses strengthens the revolution

For twelve years, a little known revolution has been taking place in Tigray in northern Ethiopia.

Now, as famine ravages the region, the media feed the British public nothing but images of starving Tigrayans: "victims" of drought and civil war.

Though the immediate cause of famine is the failure of the rains, the cyclical burden of food shortage has been transformed over the years into an endemic feature of Ethiopia's political-economy.

The root cause of famine is not drought, but impoverishment. An economy of "rural vulnerability", forever dependent on the vagaries of nature, has been created by a social system.

Ethiopia's basic problem is the legacy of centuries of archaic feudal exploitation, which — combined with the dislocation caused by capitalist penetration — caused extensive deforestation, soil erosion, and land degradation.

Famine became a way of life for Ethiopia's rural population under the autocratic rule of Haile Selassie. Indeed, it was a famine in Wollo and Tigray in 1974 that led to his downfall. However, the situation has deteriorated even further under the self-proclaimed Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

After seizing power in 1974, mounting popular pressure forced the new military regime, known as the Dergue, to proclaim radical land reform. The main aim of this concession was to neutralise the peasantry and allow the military to consolidate its hold on power.

The Dergue's main opponents were the student-led civilian left. In addition to land reform,

By R.J. BAKER

they demanded a democratically elected government and self-determination for the different nationalities within the Ethiopian Empire-State.

The Dergue was not prepared to concede such demands. From 1975 it adopted a twin strategy of appropriating the Marxist ideology of its opponents, while at the same time physically liquidating them.

Although it proclaimed a "National Democratic Revolution" in 1976, the Dergue had no intention of setting up a civilian administration, nor of granting national self-determination.

In 1975, the Tigray People's Liberation Front began operations to implement its own National Democratic Revolution. It carried out intensive political education among the Tigryan people, while conducting guerrilla warfare against several rival organisations and the Dergue's military might.

By 1979, it controlled 85% of Tigray, comprising 90% of the population. Only the major towns along the main highway remain outside its control.

The TPLF have carried out radical land reform, which differed from the Dergue's not least in that it was democratically implemented with the participation of the peasantry, rather than decreed from above.

The Dergue's land reform left petty-landlords and rich peasants in economic and political power. In contrast, the TPLF have introduced institutions of self-administration, known as Baito's or People's Councils.

However, on its own, land reform could not solve the people's basic problems. What was needed was long-term development, above all soil and water conservation. The TPLF began

For further information contact:
Tigray Solidarity Campaign
PO Box 528
London SW9
or phone:
01-733 5726
061-652 3012
0742 425845

For financial donations to Food Relief contact:
Relief Society of Tigray
27 Beresford Road
London N5 5HS
phone:
01-359 9685

mass terracing and reafforestation projects, which have been highly successful, with peasants reporting fourfold increases in harvests, even at the height of the 1984 famine.

Standardisation

The TPLF has now moved on to an even more ambitious programme, known as "Standardisation". Incorporating the soil and water conservation achievements, this programme is more wide-ranging and targets individual peasant farmers.

It does not require new technological inputs, but attempts to combine traditional peasant expertise with modern agronomical knowledge. By standardising agricultural practices, it aims to raise poorer farmers to the level of the best farmers in Tigray.

Facade

The Dergue, on the other hand, offers only a facade of development, under the rubic of "Resettlement" and "Villagisation'.

The majority of agricultural investment goes into expensive and inefficient State Farms, which receive 76% of all available chemical fertiliser, 95% of improved seeds, and nearly all modern farm machinery.

They produce mainly cash crops, like cotton and coffee, for export, to help pay Black Africa's largest army (which consumes 46% of the national budget).

In 1979, the Dergue called for the total collectivisation of agriculture. This has prompted Mikhail Gorbachev to tell Mengistu to "proceed from realities and not outrun stages of development".

In effect, the Dergue is trying to jump from a period of War Communism straight into a Stalin-style forced collectivisation. Pricing policies have alienated the peasantry, forcing the Dergue to resort to increasingly coercive methods to compel peasants to sell to the government.

For the Dergue, collective farming is a means to secure greater political and economic control over agricultural production, particularly any surplus. No wonder peasants have been unwilling to join collective farms.

The famine of 1984 gave the military a fortuitous opportunity to pursue its strategy. As Dawit Wold Giyorgis, ex-head of the Dergue's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, explained:

"Mengistu ... let nature take its toll and deprive these areas of food and other assistance, starving the guerrillas out, punishing the people, and depopulating the area."

The current famine situation is no different. One aid official in Washington is reported as saying:

"I'll tell you what the government's three priorities are: fighting the rebels, fighting the rebels, and fighting the rebels."

Control

Resettlement provides the perfect opportunity to depopulate rebel areas, and, with "Villagisation", secure political and economic control over a recalcitrant peasantry. In this context, western aid is not only propping up an unpopular, repressive and Soviet-backed regime, but also helping pay for its programme of forced collectivisation.

The Relief Society of Tigray, the humanitarian arm of the TPLF, is at the moment attempting to step up its cross-border food operations from the Sudan, and trying to secure cash for a programme of internal purchasing. But they estimate this can only provide 100,000 tonnes of the 400,000 tonnes of food aid required.

Without a "Safe Passage" agreement with the government, people will simply die, or be forcibly conscripted into the Dergue's army, or "resettled". The Ethiopian government refuses to negotiate with so-called terrorists, a view shared by Western governments.

These governments, along with the international aid agencies, are paralysed by an ideology of "national sovereignty", which compels them to work only through official government channels.

Unless people in donor countries, like Britain, put pressure on governments and agencies to spend money on saving people's lives *whatever their politics*, Western aid will merely perpetuate the policies which have caused the famine, and contribute to the destruction of a popular revolution which the Ethiopian government, on its own, has so far been unable to crush.

The women's health department

Last month I rang Mike Marqusee to invite him round for a seasonal mince pie and a cup of coffee.

After all, it was nearly Christmas, and we only live round the corner from each other, in the Socialist Republic of Hornsey Vale.

"Sorry Tess; I'm very busy finishing this book," he said; but about five minutes later his greed had got the better of him, and he appeared on my doorstep in his new trousers.

"How would you like to write a women's health section for *Briefing*?" he enquired, pouring a modest amount of cream over his mince pies. We authors are nothing if not generous to each other, so I told him to have some more cream and said I wouldn't mind at all.

Mike poured a generous libation of cream on the mince pies (about four fluid ounces — not very healthy that, Mike). "Mind you, I haven't suggested it to them yet," he warned, gulping down a second cup of coffee.

OK. Let the public decide. Here is edition number one — and I promise the future ones will be shorter.

Do any of you out there read the *Nursing Times*? Or *Woman's Own*?

No, I'm not really surprised.

Well, neither do I; but my colleagues read the *Nursing Times* — and my mother reads *Woman's Own*.

Within the pages of the *Nursing Times* is a little bit of good reading called "Sister Plume"

Sister Plume, fictitious though she may be, exists everywhere in our hospitals. She mourns the days, long gone by, when student nurses merely cleaned bedpans and kicked bedwheels straight. She cannot allow any of her patients to use bedpans whilst doctors are on her ward.

The "Nursing Process" is a closed book to Sister Plume. Her weekly column, coming as it does between items such as "The Nursing Care of a Patient with Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation" and the Letters Page (which contains pleas from various Nurse Managers for Nurses to (a) exercise more economy to save the NHS money, and (b) stop nicking things off the wards) brings light relief and a sense of *not* having wasted the money in buying the good old *Nursing Times*. (I still mourn the *Nursing Mirror* — it had a great crossword).

Anyway, to get to the point: every publication has to have its moments of light relief or its readers become bored. That's why I mentioned *Women's Own* too. Sandwiched between the make-up page, the fashion page, the letters page, and the problem

By TESS KEWLEY

page, is a little effort in the Sister Plume mould, called "Me and Mine — a refreshing, sometimes humorous, look at life by Polly Graham."

Now here I must be honest and admit that I don't find Polly Graham humorous. But maybe *Woman's Own* readers do; and I doubt if I'll ever find out, because I refuse to believe that any *Briefing* women read *Woman's Own*. Or if you do, you won't admit it, sister!

Column

Do women want a women's health column in *Briefing*? And if they do, do they mind if *I* write it?

I have the qualifications — I am a trained nurse (not a bit like Sister Plume), a qualified midwife, a mother of two children (one of each — whom Mike Marqusee accuses of being anarcho-syndicalists).

I am also a trained Breastfeeding Counsellor, a telephone befriender for the Miscarriage Association, and I work three days a week as a Radical Midwife. I enjoy writing and I am interested in women's health.

Subjects

Let's face it, the list of subject matter is as endless as the Tory government: pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, abortion, miscarriage, disabled women, black women and the health service, lesbians and the health service, women workers and the health service, infertility, contraception, mental health, smoking, alcohol, fat women, anorexic women, bringing up children, battered women, women addicted to drugs, breast examination, finding your cervix, pre-menstrual syndrome, the menopause, violent mothers, child abuse, incest, rape, how to get your children to sleep through the night... and that's just for starters.

I could add all kinds of other things, but Sister Plume favours brevity. (So does Mike, who told me to stick to 200 words!)

I am not envisaging all you women out there writing to me with your problems, although you can if you like. Perhaps you could write to *Briefing* to let them know what you'd like me to cover.

Refreshing

I'm looking forward to the "refreshing, sometimes humorous look at women's health by Tess Kewley", and if I stick a bit of Sister Plume and Polly Graham in, you might just laugh as well.

That's what I meant about papers having funny bits. I was at a GC the other evening, and someone was selling *Briefing*. The woman next to me yawned and said languidly, "Oh it's getting so dull sometimes now." And Craig Brewin, sitting behind me, only bought a copy in order to read his own article about football.

So maybe an injection of women's health and a bit of humour will boost the readership. You know what it's like: you pick up *Spare Rib* and flick through, and you think to yourself, "Christ, not *another* article about anti-Zionist women", and you make the whole copy into a huge paper plane and send it out of the window. Well I do, anyway.

Personally, I'd rather read a Mike Marqusee novel than certain sections of *Spare Rib*, but that's just one of my foibles. Another is BINGO, which I think I'll tell you about next time.

Till then, Sister Plume sends her regards (she trained me many years ago) and Polly Graham will probably sue me. And I expect the *Briefing* office will be inundated with letters from anti-Zionist women.

Bingo

But when the women's health page is turned into my first full-length publication you'll be able to say, "I've played Bingo with Tess Kewley, and although she didn't mention much about women's health in her first article on the subject I know she knows *something* about it. She told me whilst she was collecting her winnings."

Candlelit procession called for January 24th:

AIDS: a matter of human rights



"Dynamic" government publicity

The World Health Ministers' Summit on AIDS is taking place in London from 26-28th January 1988. It is the first inter-governmental conference on AIDS.

It is also the most important meeting ever to take place on the subject of the AIDS pandemic because it will discuss a global strategy to combat AIDS which will influence the policies of governments all over the world.

If the present repressive polices of many countries are anything to go by, some Health Ministers will argue for international agreement on measures which would threaten the human rights and civil liberties of people with AIDS/HIV.

They may well include threats to the rights and liberties of people perceived to be at high risk of HIV infection.

This would include groups such as African and other Black peoples, gay and bisexual men, users of injectible drugs, and people with haemophilia.

Already many countries, including Britain, have:

- Passed laws to enable the compulsory detention of people with AIDS in hospital against their will.
- Issued decrees to prohibit the entry of foreign visitors with HIV — even if they are fit and healthy.
- Fostered prejudice by refusing to pass anti-discrimination laws to protect people with AIDS/HIV from victimisation.
- Stood by while people with AIDS/HIV have been vilified by the media and while black and gay people have been scapegoated for the AIDS pandemic.
- Failed to adequately respond to requests from the poorer countries for help in fighting AIDS.



PHOTO: John Cole

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

By Peter Tatchell
Co-convenor, UK AIDS Vigil Organisation

It is therefore very important that, on the occasion of the **World Health Ministers' Summit on AIDS**, we highlight the need for a humanitarian and civil libertarian response to AIDS by the world's governments, including a massive western aid effort to help the poorer countries cope with AIDS.

The **World Health Ministers' Summit** gives us a unique opportunity to put the case for compassion, human rights, civil liberties, and solidarity with the poorer countries — both to the government representatives in attendance and, through the 2,000 international journalists covering the summit, to millions of people around the world who will learn about the conference from television, radio and newspapers.

The UK AIDS Vigil Organisation has been established to organise protests to coincide with the **World Health Ministers' Summit on AIDS.**

It is a broad-based coalition embracing people with AIDS/HIV, AIDS doctors, Members of Parliament, AIDS self-help and support organisations, civil liberties and human rights bodies, agencies campaigning in solidarity with the poorer countries, health-care trade unions, Christian and humanist groups, and the lesbian and gay movement.

On Sunday January 24th, the UK AIDS Vigil Organisation is holding a **Candlelit Procession of Remembrance and Action** to call on all governments to respond to AIDS in a way which is based on international solidarity and which respect the human rights and civil liberties of all citizens.

Specifically it is demanding:

- More funds for AIDS research & health service care.
- Anti-discrimination laws to protect people with AIDS/HIV.
- Free anti-AIDS drugs for all who request them.
- Unprejudiced AIDS education & media representation.
- Support to help the poorer countries combat AIDS.

The organisers are advising people to dress warmly against the cold and for safety reasons to bring "stubby" nightlight candles *only* (in a glass jar for protection against the wind).

We are urging all *Briefing* supporters to mobilise their local Labour Parties and trade union branches to attend this Candlelit Procession to ensure that all the world's governments and peoples hear our call for human rights, civil liberties and solidarity with the poorer countries.

Declaration of principles to be submitted to the World Health Ministers' Summit on AIDS, London 26-28th January 1988 by the UNITED KINGDOM AIDS VIGIL ORGANISATION

1. **We call on governments** to reject the various attempts to blame or scapegoat Africans and other Black peoples, gay and bisexual men, users of injectable drugs, or people with haemophilia for the AIDS pandemic; and we urge governments to unite all their communities to wholeheartedly fight the disease, not each other.
2. **We call on governments** to exercise compassion and constructive action — rather than condemnation and repression — to combat AIDS.
3. **We call on governments** to defend the civil and human rights of people with AIDS/HIV; and also the rights of those variously perceived to be at high risk from HIV infection such as Africans and other Black peoples, gay and bisexual men, users of injectable drugs, or people with haemophilia.
4. **We call on governments** to repudiate powers to detain people with AIDS/HIV in hospital, isolation units or quarantine against their will.
5. **We call on governments** to reject proposals for mass or compulsory AIDS/HIV testing of their populations and to also oppose the routine or random non-consenting HIV testing of hospital patients.
6. **We call on governments** to uphold the principle of undiminished confidentiality between people with AIDS/HIV and their doctors.
7. **We call on governments** to declare their commitment to the right of healthy people with AIDS/HIV to travel unhindered between countries; and for governments which have already imposed a ban on the entry of foreigners with AIDS/HIV to repeal those travel restrictions.
8. **We call on governments** to enact anti-discrimination legislation to protect people with AIDS/HIV — and also to protect people perceived to be at high risk from HIV infection — from discrimination in employment, housing, education, health care, insurance, and the provision of other public and private services.
9. **We call on governments** to give all people with AIDS/HIV equal resources, protection, rights, and benefits; and to reject as divisive and discriminatory any attempts to create categories of "innocent" (and by implication "non-innocent") people with AIDS/HIV.
10. **We call on governments** in the rich industrialised nations — both West and East — to fund a massive aid effort through the co-ordination of the World Health Organisation to support the fight against AIDS in the poorer countries — with priority being given to the financing of AIDS risk-reduction education and advertising, the provision of disposable needles and other medical instruments, heat-treated blood and blood products, sterilisation units, HIV antibody/antigen test kits, condoms, and medical training teams.
11. **We call on governments** to fund all-year-round AIDS education and advertising — including education and advertising in ethnic minority languages, braille for the visually handicapped, and sign language and sub-titles for the hard of hearing — using radio, television, newspapers, street billboards and the leafleting of all households.
12. **We call on governments** to promote AIDS prevention education and advertising which affirms the dignity and humanity of people with AIDS/HIV; as opposed to depicting these people in a way which stigmatises and vilifies them, or which portrays them as passive and helpless "victims" or "sufferers".
13. **We call on governments** to produce AIDS education and advertising which is non-sensationalist, free from moralising, sexually explicit, in everyday language rather than medical jargon, and designed to prevent public panic and prejudice by stressing that AIDS/HIV cannot be casually transmitted and that discrimination against people with AIDS/HIV is wrong and contrary to government policy.
14. **We call on governments** to legislate to make AIDS prevention and "Safer Sex" education mandatory in all secondary school establishments.
15. **We call on governments** to provide comprehensive AIDS education and training to all health-care personnel.
16. **We call on governments** — especially those in the rich countries — to increase funding for AIDS research and, through the auspices of the World Health Organisation, for all governments and pharmaceutical companies to co-operate and share their research facilities and findings.
17. **We call on governments** and pharmaceutical companies to put equal effort and resources in finding a cure for AIDS/HIV, as into research to discover a vaccine.
18. **We call on governments** and international agencies to take both individual and collaborative actions to curb the excessive profits being made by some pharmaceutical companies which market drugs against AIDS and HIV-related illnesses.
19. **We call on governments** to provide, free of charge, the most effective drugs and "alternative therapies" against AIDS or HIV-related illnesses to all those with AIDS/HIV who request them; and for the special medical, housing, benefit, and support needs of people with AIDS/HIV to be catered for by the relevant government agencies.
20. **We call on governments** to set up contingency funds to enable them to make special direct grants — over and above their normal health budgets — to those hospitals and health centres which are bearing the brunt of the AIDS pandemic so they can cope adequately with the strain that AIDS/HIV testing, counselling and treatment is placing on their often already over-stretched resources.
21. **We call on governments** to recognise the right of their citizens to organise support groups and self-help networks for people with AIDS/HIV; and for individuals and organisations to be free to produce and distribute AIDS information and "Safer Sex" advice without fear of prosecution or persecution.
22. **We call on governments** to provide state finance to voluntary and self-help organisations which offer AIDS information and support to the general public, to people perceived to be at high risk from HIV infection, and to people with AIDS/HIV.
23. **We call on governments** to adopt a "flexible response" treatment policy towards users of injectable drugs and to provide them with new syringes and needles, without charge, in exchange for the old ones.
24. The UK AIDS Vigil Organisation submits these proposals to the World Summit of Health Ministers on AIDS and urges all governments to adopt these enlightened progressive policies in order to defeat the AIDS pandemic and to quell the panic and prejudice which has followed in its wake.

Contact: 45 Arrol House, Rockingham St, London SE1

Candlelit Procession

Sunday January 14th
Speaker's Corner, Hyde Park
(Marble Arch tube)
Assemble 3pm
Depart 3.45pm (sharp)

Route:
Via Piccadilly & Whitehall to Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Broad Sanctuary, SW1 (venue of World Health Ministers' Summit on AIDS), arriving 4.45pm

Letters

WRITEBACK!

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

An Open Letter to the TUC

The recent racial discrimination case brought by Mrs B Weaver against NATFHE has demonstrated that at least one TUC affiliated trade union is not complying with the 1984 TUC resolution on racism.

This resolution reaffirmed the TUC's total opposition to racism and resolved that *"it will further encourage affiliated unions to pursue vigorously cases of discrimination despite current legislation which puts the onus of proof that discrimination has taken place squarely on the shoulders of the complainant."*

NATFHE had refused to provide advice and assistance to a member of a racial minority who brought a complaint which threatened the tenure of another union member. NATFHE's claimed policy of not providing assistance to any member who brings a complaint which threatens another member's tenure, even when the complaint has merit, enables it to effectively disregard the TUC's resolution.

With NATFHE claiming that its policy is universally applied by all trades unions, will the TUC, and affiliated trades unions, now act to end racially, and sexually, discriminatory policies and rules within the trade union movement?

Comradely greetings,
Gordon Weaver, NATFHE member

Continuing the debate on the unions

Dear *Briefing*,

In his highly critical review of my pamphlet *Labour and the Unions* (*Briefing*, no. 53) Alan Thornett took me to task for arguing that on balance unions had survived the recession remarkably well. But his own assessment of the unions strikes me as deeply confused.

On the one hand he says I have underestimated the setbacks and defeats suffered by workers, and the dramatic rise in the rate of exploitation through speed-up and work intensification. But on the other hand he repeatedly asserts that workers are "basically strong" and "able to fight back".

Yet the whole point of the pamphlet was to argue that despite the problems and setbacks of the 1980s unions are not in the state of crisis envisaged by some sections of the Left. Workers do remain "able to fight back" and it would therefore be wrong and dangerous to abandon the traditional methods of industrial militancy, as some people are advocating.

It is obviously true that some sections of workers have suffered heavier defeats than others, as Thornett suggests. But it is important to assess the state of the whole working class movement, public and private sector, manufacturing and services, and not generalise from a single industry, dismissing the evidence and arguments of the pamphlet as "largely academic" (an anti-intellectual jibe surprising for a Marxist reviewer).

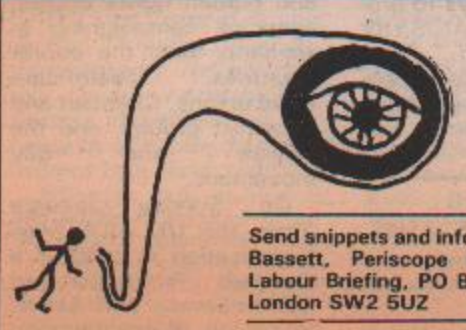
Finally, Thornett's claim that I ignore what he calls "Scargillism" is difficult to square with the fact that two chapters of the pamphlet defend the economic struggle of trade unions against "soft left" and right wing detractors.

Nevertheless, I hope that these and other issues in the trade union movement will be debated more fully in the months ahead, both in the pages of *Briefing* and elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
John Kelly

*We inadvertantly left the publishing details of John Kelly's pamphlet out of the review. *Labour and the Unions*, by John Kelly, is published by Verso.

Periscope



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

A Question of Honour

The Queen, in consultation with the Prime Minister, has announced her annual list of New Years Honours, awarded for services to the ruling class.

Briefing, in consultation with no one in particular, here announces its own New Years Honours, also awarded for services to the ruling class.

Bea Campbell — for services rendered on interminable late night chat shows on Channel 4.

Jack Cunningham — for his impassioned defence of the nuclear family.

Fred Jarvis — for removing the ILTA thorns from Kenneth Baker's side.

Peter Kellner — for his indefatiguable deployment of unsubstantiated assumptions, groundless assertions, and vacuous generalisations in the columns of the *New Statesman* and elsewhere.

John Walsh — optimist of the year.

Owen Oyston — by appointment, asset-stripper of the labour movement.

Donald Dewar — Scotch by name, Malibu by nature.

The RCP — for being everything the Special Branch could want, without even being asked...

Bryan Gould (OBP) — for preaching the virtues of share-ownership the week before the Stock Market crash.

Stuart Weir — who sabotaged the politics of the Socialist in a successful attempt to play the Statesman. Long-overdue recognition.

George Galloway — Knight of the Garter for personal and financial probity.

Germaine Greer — Victoria Cross, member without contraception.

Derek Hatton — services to menswear.

Neil Fletcher (Leader, ILEA) — for valiant action behind enemy lines.

Margaret "Enver" Hodge (Leader, Islington Council) — for her moderate, sensible, realistic, polite approach to the destruction of jobs & services.

Toby Harris (Leader, Haringey Council) — for showing that police can be placed under Local Authority control, when they are used to attack and imprison left wing opponents.

Gareth Smyth (Chair, Camden Housing Committee) — Airey Neave Award.

Brenda Dean — the Wapping Award for News Internationalism.

Norman Willis — for exuberant oratory in pursuit of a free lunch.

Neil Kinnock — no explanation required.

Wrath of God strikes Orange celebrations

The 10th anniversary celebrations of the Chandler's Ford Silver Jubilee Loyal Orange Lodge were due to take place in Southampton on the Saturday after the Great Storm.

But with travelling conditions still dangerous, Lodge members from across the South of England had obviously chosen to stay at home.

So with only the protection of the police (and God?) the Imperial Grand Master, Martin Smyth, and James Molyneaux MP, were left to lead a pathetic handful of band members up the High Street!

Treading the tightrope

Another gem from the London Region Co-operative Retail Society AGM agenda (that's the one where a "speaking ban" is the first item to be discussed).

You may recall how the Silentnight strikers spent many a long, fruitless hour trying to get the Co-operative stores to support them by refusing to stock Silentnight beds made with scab labour.

The Political Committee report to the AGM acknowledges this:

"... we supported steps to use the purchasing power of the Co-operative Movement to..."

Wait a minute. To help the strikers achieve victory, perhaps? No. To:

"bring about a meaningful dialogue between the two sides, leading to a resolution of the dispute."

A resolution was eventually reached, of course. Faced with an intransigent employer, Tory anti-union laws, lack of money and lack of solidarity action from other workers (as the PC report concurs) the Silentnight strikers were forced to end their action.

They were also faced with their union — FTAT — ceasing backing for the dispute — a factor omitted from the Political Committee list.

The PC summary — "the Silentnight dispute finally came to an end — by decision of the strikers themselves" — seems, then, to follow Sir Robert Armstrong's advice: be economical with the truth!

Will the real Toby Harris please raise his jug?

Are there two Toby Harrises?

One chap named Toby Harris has regularly appeared in the media in recent weeks, passionately denouncing cuts in the NHS. He is the Director of the National Association of Community Health Councils and has made a name for himself as a critic of government policy.

The other Toby Harris is Leader of Haringey Council and the driving force behind £46 million cuts currently being imposed on the borough, including cuts in support staff at the local hospital.

Further, there is one Toby Harris who is cutting support to lesbian and gay groups; another who is sponsoring the AIDS vigil.

In fact, the two Tobies are one and the same.

What can explain this strange process of psychological bifurcation? Memory lapse, perhaps?

Alas, the explanation is more mundane.

It is the familiar fate of the Labour careerist: condemned to an endless downward spiral of hypocrisy and mendacity.

Follow that!

What could follow **Derek Hatton's** surprise appearance as a *Sun* model last year, mercifully with his clothes on (and very nice clothes they were too), obviously doing his bit to extend solidarity to the print unions.

Well, now for only 38p per minute (or 25p off peak, if you can wait) you too can hear Derek's dulcet tones on the **Derek Hatton Live Line**.

I made the mistake of giving in to my curiosity and ringing the number — only to hear the *Militant's* erstwhile hero warbling on from what sounded like the waiting room of some main line station (probably on his way to tea with the Queen!).

The topic picked for the day I rang was the weighty subject of the IRA.

"Of course we are all absolutely delighted when someone guilty of atrocities is caught and put away for a long time... Of this there is no doubt... Violence never solved anything..."

Dopey Derek is very concerned about the "increasingly worse situation in Northern Ireland caused by years and years and years (sic) of British involvement."

A quick swipe at Margaret Thatcher (of course), but as Derek was quick to point out "the capture of just one IRA bomber is not even going to begin to solve that problem."

No indeed, Derek; better put all the Irish in prison, just to make sure, eh?

Coming soon: The Ted Grant Dial-a-Recipe Slot (take the top two hundred monopolies, one Enabling Act, and 400 Marxist MPs, mix thoroughly...)

If anyone knows of any impediment...

Exeter Labour Party, with its ruling Lib/Lab pact on the City Council, has been outdone.

The Devon County Council Labour Group, angry with its Alliance partners for *overspending* on the social services budget, voted out their administration and agreed to manage the Council with the Tories.

The big debate at the Exeter GC is which Labour Group has made the better marriage.

Building Briefing

CONTACT BRIEFING

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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Next meetings: Friday January 15th; Tuesday January 19th.

Deadline for articles:
Issue no. 55 (out January 26th): notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday January 19th.
Issue no. 56 (out February 9th): notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday February 2nd.

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This week's winner

The winner this week is number 107 — again a long-standing *Briefing* supporter's number comes up at last — Jo Fawkes of Camden.

BOOK REVIEW

Behind the rhetoric

***Beyond the Rhetoric: Politics, the Economy and Social Policy in Northern Ireland*, edited by Paul Teague, Lawrence & Wishart, £6.95**

By Geoff Bell
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

The pretentiously arrogant title and the blurb which accompanies this collection of essays is immediately off-putting.

We are promised "acknowledged experts writing in a measured tone rarely associated with the subject" — Ireland — and are asked to accept that such an approach will of necessity go "Beyond the Rhetoric".

Such rhetoric exists only in the imagination of British publishing houses (who think the poor undeveloped Irish left need to be shown how to conduct a debate) and academics from the North of Ireland (who twitch uncomfortably when they happen to stray into the political activities of the wild-eyed natives).

The reality is that politics in the North of Ireland is carried out and discussed — especially in the working class communities — with a level of sophisticaion unknown in Britian or elsewhere in Ireland for decades. Whatever it is we have to go "beyond", it is not this feverishly imagined "rhetoric".

The book claims to offer a "pluralist perspective" — in other words the authors of the essays disagree about lots of things. The editor makes much of this virtue, presumably a demonstration that the Irish left can put forward their conflicting analyses in a civilised fashion.

I suppose the model here is an Oxbridge debating society. The book therefore doesn't actually attempt to say very much.

One author, Bill Rolsten, points to the unreformable nature of the North Irish state, while another three in a joint essay look at the interventionist role of the Industrial Development Board and say that "it is essential that the staff making the decisions is of sufficient quality and expertise" and imply that if this was achieved everything would be hunky dory.

Nonetheless, the book includes some informative articles. Those by Rolston and Bob Rowthorn are the best, and there are useful statistics and economic tables. There is also the odd mistake as in the chronological account of Bloody Sunday.

The real problem is the book's own self-set limitations: its political prioritisation of experts writing in a "measured tone". It would be understandable if a middle-of-the-road liberal British publishing house decided that this was what the mad Irish need, but the publishing company is Lawrence and Wishart, long associated with the Communist Party of Great Britain, which has in the past produced such revolutionary classics as *Ireland Her Own* and *The Life and Times of James Connolly*.

BOOK REVIEW

Vietnam Today

January 20th sees the 20th anniversary of the Viet Cong's Tet offensive against the US armed forces in Vietnam.

The startling success of that surprise attack spurred the worldwide anti-war movement and was a harbinger of the victory of the Vietnamese over the US, finally achieved in 1975.

Photographer Tim Page gained a reputation for reckless daring in his years covering the war in Vietnam. He returned to the country in 1985 to cover the celebrations of the 10th Anniversary of the Liberation — and to exorcise the ghosts of one of the most horrific of all modern military conflicts. His new book of 103 striking colour photographs *Ten Years After: Vietnam Today* (Thames and Hudson, £15.95) is an affecting survey of a nation painfully reconstructing itself in the face of continued hostility from the US, and indeed almost everyone else.

The photographs are linked by Page's own highly personal, often wayward commentary. Not a propaganda exercise, and marked by occasional (misplaced) nostalgia, Page's book offers a new and necessary imagery of a people still remembered in the West mainly as victims of a blood-crazed US imperialism.



Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Ha Noi

BOOK REVIEW

Miracles and Mirages

***The Crisis of Global Fordism*, by Alain Lipietz, translated by D. Macey, Verso, £8.95**

By Shahid Tilley
Haringey Labour Briefing

Rapid industrialisation in the 70s of some Third World countries caught many left theoreticians off guard.

Dependency meant underdevelopment, it was thought, and not the birth of New Industrialising Countries (NICs).

In response some on the left dusted off their Marx and Lenin (and Rostow!) and hailed imperialism as the "pioneer of capitalism", marching toward the unification of the international proletariat — gravedigger of capitalism.

Lipietz cautions against replacing one dogma with another in the effort to explain the demise of international capitalism. Using Marxist analyses and refining materialist categories, he tries to understand the new economic configuration, through an open-ended emphasis on the local balance of forces and their complex integration into the circuitry of the new international division of labour.

Accumulation

Lipietz focuses on what he terms *regimes of accumulation*. These are described as situations where there is a fairly stable allocation of social production between consumption and accumulation, and a certain correspondence between conditions of production and reproduction of labour.

Thus, the post-war period in the industrialised world has witnessed the stabilisation of an intensive regime centred upon mass production and mass consumption within a context of social democracy.

Lipietz also adds that there is nothing predetermined about what form a regime may take. Any outcome is dependent upon a host of factors such as class struggle, competition between capitals, politics of the nation state, and the wider economic market.

The book proceeds to examine recent economic developments in certain NICs through the categories of *bloody Taylorism* and *peripheral Fordism*.

The former refers to a process where the skills of the worker are systematically expropriated through scientific management which facilitates higher levels of exploitation; it becomes "bloody" (especially in many third world countries) when it is combined with super-exploitation, predominantly of female/agricultural/immigrant labour under very "primitive" conditions.

This can be seen in many South East Asian countries in textile and light electronic manufacturing, which are labour intensive, repetitive, and use very cheap labour under severe conditions.

In contrast, *peripheral Fordism* is associated with economic activity which has greater reliance upon local capital, a sizeable middle-class, a significant element of skilled working class, and state intervention geared towards enhancing national manufacturing capital (e.g. car and ship industry in South Korea).

Lipietz claims that these developments give the lie to the old model of the division of labour in which the centre imports raw materials and exports manufactured goods to the periphery. Instead, we now have a very complex world trade which by no means has a single hegemonic centre. In the new division of labour many NICs export manufactured and engineering goods to OPEC and the rest of the periphery.

Lipietz also looks at the political implications of this new peripheral Fordism, and analyses the "Crisis of Dictatorships" in the immediate periphery (Spain, Portugal and Greece).

Lipietz's understanding of the complex linkages between Fordism and the pressures for democratisation have been confirmed by subsequent developments in Brazil and more recently in South Korea and needs to be further developed. It will be interesting to see if the rumblings in Taiwan follow the schema as well.

The final chapter examines the crises in the world economy and the rise of monetarism in the centre, which has left peripheral Fordism in a very vulnerable state. The latter faces mounting difficulties with the decline in world trade, huge debt repayments, and the imposition of import quotas by the centre.

Lipietz is scathing towards monetarism and accuses it of exacerbating the crisis and bringing the global economy to the brink of collapse. He tentatively outlines an alternative set of demands for "socialising" the debt and an expansion of international trade linked to "human rights".

This is a challenging and contentious book which tries to overcome the weaknesses of existing left theory on imperialism. Though the book is difficult to follow at times, with its dense and detailed arguments (and its forbidding price), it nevertheless provides an opportunity for militants to develop a more comprehensive perspective which takes account of the complexity of the international economy.

For those of us in the "belly of the beast", it rightly emphasises the urgency of fighting imperialism in the centre, instead of our usual tendency to "lay down the line" on how socialist and progressive forces should fight it in the periphery.

IN PERFORMANCE

Ben Elton live at Hammersmith Odeon

Album: *Motormouth*, Phonogram

That Ben Elton has assumed superstar status became apparent when at the end of November and the beginning of December he filled Hammersmith Odeon (capacity 3,500) five times — something most rock bands can only dream about.

What is the attraction of this man whose act can, as he puts it, consist of "fart, fart, shit, shit, fuck, fuck, vote Labour"?

In the first place the humour is brilliantly observed. For two and a half hours he had the audience eating out of his hand and thinking "now why didn't I think of that?"

Class

However, he has another attribute which separates him from the other observation comedians around today. That is *a recognition of the class divisions in society and a deliberate and passionate* attachment to one side over the other.

This makes Elton not only one of the most popular and talented stand-up comedians in Britain, but also one of the most despised. He breaks up his two and a half hour act by parodying his critics and answering them with a terse "fuck off". When your critics are not on the same wavelength, what more can be said?

By Craig Brewin
Haringey Labour Briefing

The main thrust of his act is an attack on the images forced upon us in the media portraying the idealised lifestyle that Mrs Thatch and her classmates want us to strive for.

Couples

The ideal man, as presented on "Blind Date" is in fact "a sexist wanker". This is *Sun*-reader TV for people who merely want to know whether or not the couples "shagged".

And what of *The Sun*? According to Elton, at the bottom of Dante's Inferno is the paper's editor, *"looking up Judas Iscariot's arsehole to see if he's queer"*.

The real venom is aimed at the advertising agents who gave us the "Shake and Vac" woman, the "Renault family" and people who are frightened that their dinner guests might find out they are serving instant coffee.

And why do multinational corporations feel the need to advertise how much money they make? "They're not going to give *us* any."

God

Elton also asks why is it that the main source of humour on British TV appears to be "tits" when the penis is far more amusing, not only because it's ugly (proof that God is a woman) but also because of men's attitude towards it.

Toilets

Despite claiming that only 2% of his act is scatological, he finishes with a 20 minute toilet joke.

Elton now has a problem: despite a great deal of new material in his new act, it is not dissimilar to his old one. Although the sketches are different the source of the humour is the same. For his next tour and album he will certainly need new targets to stay fresh, How he responds to a change in government I await with interest.

BOOK REVIEW

FOUL!

***Foul — best of football's alternative paper 1972-76*, edited by Mike Ticher, Simon & Shuster/Sportspages**

By Craig Brewin
Football Supporters Association

Many football supporters who followed the game in the early 70s will have heard of FOUL, although far fewer will have read it.

Its fame and notoriety spread far wider than its circulation. Despite the fact that there were only about 30 issues produced during a four year period, and that the contributors ended up as part of the media establishment they so often criticised, this compilation is a timely reminder of one of the earliest manifestations of what is now known as the alternative football movement.

FOUL was a product of its time. It regularly criticised the negative style of football becoming popular on the field of play, as well as the role of club chairmen, media commentators and Alan Hardaker.

The paper was well written, innovative in content and style, investigative, funny, but unfortunately sexist in parts.

The great strength of this book is that, despite being up to 16 years old, many of the articles selected for inclusion still have a great deal of relevance today.

The current interest in FOUL has developed from the growth of a new generation of alternative magazines. Mike Ticher, the editor of the excellent *When Saturday Comes*, acknowledges his debt to FOUL by editing this volume, and includes a fairly extensive list of the current alternative magazines as an appendix.

All, like this book, are well worth reading.

International Briefing

John McMichael and Elizabeth Windsor:
Irish blood on their hands

The Christmas period in Ireland was dominated by the IRA's assassination of UDA leader John McMichael and the Queen's reference to violence in Ireland in her Christmas Day broadcast.

Both McMichael and the Queen were portrayed by the media as peacemakers. The reality is different.

McMichael was directly responsible for countless sectarian killings in the North of Ireland. Elizabeth Windsor is herself titular

By Geoff Bell
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

head of the security forces in Britain and the North of Ireland. What the British Army, its Ulster Defence Regiment and the RUC do in Ireland they do *in her name*.

What follows is a list of those from the nationalist community who have been killed or badly injured by loyalist gangs or British security forces since the signing of the Hillsborough Treaty in November 1985 – an event which was heralded as the start of a new deal for Catholics in the North of Ireland.

This list is by no means exhaustive and it does *not* include members of the IRA killed on active service.

Most of the incidents referred to went unreported by the British media. None of the victims were mourned by British politicians or by the Queen.

1. Killed by Loyalist Gangs

1986

14th January. LEO SCULLION (50), married man with two children, from Ligoniel, Belfast. Found, bound hand and foot and shot in the head, in Ligoniel Working Men's Club.

31st January. MARTIN QUINN (34), Bawnmore. Shot dead by loyalists after they broke into his mother's house. She was assaulted.

15th March. JOHN O'NEILL (25), Boodles Hill, Ligoniel, Belfast. Found dead in Glen River in Ballysillan. Beaten to death.

7th May. MARGARET CAULFIELD, Ballysillan, Belfast. Shot dead by loyalists who broke into her home and shot her and her husband.

12th July. BRIAN LEONARD, Fintone. Shot dead by loyalists in Belfast.

16th July. COLM McCALLAN. Killed by loyalists in Belfast.

19th July. MARTIN DUFFY (28), Manor Street Belfast. Shot dead by loyalists after being lured by a fake taxi call.

26th August. PADDY McALISTER (47), Rodney Drive, Belfast. Shot dead by loyalists who burst into his home.

16th September. RAYMOND MOONEY (34), Ladbrook Drive, Belfast. Shot dead by loyalists outside Ardoyne Chapel.

17th September. JOSEPH WEBB. Shot dead by loyalists at Smithfield, Belfast.

16th October. KATHLEEN MULLAN (75), and her son **TERRY** (31). Shot dead by loyalists at their home in Dromore Road, Ballynahinch.

14th November. ALICE KELLY (66), Carrickfergus. Died of a heart attack following sectarian attack on her home.

6th December. PAUL BRADLEY (30), Lisburn. Beaten to death by loyalists.

1987

2nd April. LARRY MARLEY (41), Ardoyne. Shot dead in his home in Belfast.

7th May. GARY McCARTAN (17). Shot dead at his Ormeau Road home, Belfast.

23rd May. DERMOT HACKETT (37), Castlederg. Shot dead in Drumquin.

26th June. DANNY O'CONNOR. Shot dead outside his home in Belfast.

3rd July. EDDIE CAMPBELL (40). Shot dead by loyalists.

23rd August. MICKEY POWER Murdered whilst driving to Mass with his wife and children.

8th September. PATRICK HAMIL. Shot dead in his home in Belfast.

20th September. JIM MEIGHAN. Shot dead whilst taking his girlfriend home in North Belfast.

9th October. FRANCISCO NOTARANTOINO (66), retired taxi-man was murdered at his home in Ballymurphy, Belfast.

2. Attacked by Loyalists

4th January. TERESA McKEE (17), Unity Flats, Belfast. Stabbed by Loyalists on the Crumlin Road.

11th January. JOHN O'ROURKE (34), Newcastle. Shot by Loyalists.

27th January. NOEL WILSON and **KEVIN BRENNAN** shot by the UDR as they sat in a car, Kildress Inn, Cookstown. No charges were preferred against the UDR soldiers.

18th June. Five nationalist schoolchildren injured after their school bus was attacked.

23rd July. ALAN McGOLDRICK (20), Ligoniel, Belfast. Shot several times by loyalists.

1st August. HUGH GAULT (44), Alliance Avenue, Belfast. Shot by loyalists.
Taxi-driver **SEAN O'HARA** shot twice in the arm by loyalists as he drove his taxi along Stewartstown Road, West Belfast.
JOHN McGEE (18), **ANGELA QUINN** (16), **KAREN STURGEON** (16), **JOSEPH McKEOWN**, all injured after hit and run by loyalists, Stewartstown Road, West Belfast.

2nd August. 18-year-old youth attacked by crowd of loyalists on Alliance Avenue, Belfast, suffering knife wound to the head.

4th August. JOHN LOGAN, New Lodge Road. Shot at and assaulted by loyalists.

10th August. Gunmen try to shoot young nurse and her husband as they sit in car at the Mater Hospital, Belfast.
BRENDAN McGEOWN (24), Callanbridge Park Estate, Armagh, had to dive into a river to get away from loyalist gunman who fired a shot at him.

11th August. JOHN ROCKS (16), North Belfast. Assaulted on Oldpark Road, suffering serious head injuries.

17th August. JAMES TOWNSEND (22), West Belfast. Kidnapped and assaulted by gang but managed to escape.
Loyalists try to murder West Belfast taxi-driver. The RUC ignored the taxi driver's phone call to them.

29th August. JAMES WEATHERUP (22), Newington Street, **SEAN GIVEN**, Orient Gardens, Belfast, attacked by loyalists with iron bar.

15th September. Catholic shot in arm and leg in Newtownards by loyalists dressed as RUC men.

16th September. Two Catholics working in shoe shop, Upper North Street, Belfast, shot at.

12th December. Two Belfast nationalists abducted and badly beaten by loyalists. One man needed 100 stitches.

29th December. JIM CORRIGAN (21), Ardoyne. Shot by loyalists outside chip shop.

1987

3rd February. ROSEMARY TAYLOR, Ballynahinch. Shot by loyalists.

7th February. Nationalist man receives cuts to throat and hands in Belfast City Centre by loyalists.

18th March. Murder bid on **DAN McCANN**, Cavendish Street, Belfast.

6th April. Husband and wife received burns after their home is petrol bombed, Ballynahinch.

11th April. Two Catholics homes attacked by loyalists petrol bombers, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim and Kilkeel, Co. Down.

13th April. KEVIN BELL (19), Dungannon received cuts to throat, arms, hands, before escaping from loyalist gang.

30th May. ALEX MASKEY (35), Andersonstown, shot and seriously wounded by loyalist gang at his home.

8th June. EAMONN BURNS (40), Kashmir, shot by loyalists at his place of work.

15th August. A group of Nationalists fired on by loyalist in Portadown.

13th September. Loyalist gunmen attempt to murder Nationalist at his home in North Belfast.

17th September. Loyalist gunmen try to abduct youth in Ardoyne area of Belfast.

17th September. Loyalist gunmen attempted to shoot nationalist at his house in North Belfast.

Victims of British Crown Forces

1985

24th November. JOHN McKENNA (28), Curclaghan, Clogher, assaulted by RUC. Injuries received: broken hand, ten stitches to head.

9th December. JOHN PARKER (34), Armagh, died in a fall involving RUC men who were trying to arrest him.

22nd December. BERNIE McGOVERN (19), Derrygonnelly, County Fermanagh. UDR fire four shots at him after he ran off because he was being threatened.

1986

4th January. PADDY FOSTER (25), Donagh, County Fermanagh. UDR fire one shot at him at check-point.

3rd February. THOMAS (25), and **PEDAR** (19) **McLAUGHLIN**, assaulted by RUC during raid on their Camlough homes. Thomas detained in hospital with damaged kidney.

4th February. ANTHONY LOUGHRAN (23), Newtownhamilton, assaulted by UDR. Needed stitches to head wound.

18th February. FRANCIS BRADLEY (20), Toomebridge. Shot dead by Brit undercover squad.

5th March. PAUL QUIGLEY (22), Roslea. Assaulted by RUC while in Gough Barracks.

8th March. MARK TINNEY (19), Springhill, Strabane. Assaulted by British soldiers. He lost three teeth and suffered bruising.

17th March. ADRIAN McCARTAN (20), Kilkeel. Assaulted by RUC after a St Patrick's Day Parade in the town. He needed stitches to a head wound.

18th March. PAULINE DEVINE (16), Derry. Shot with a British army plastic bullet. Suffered severe bruising.

18th April. VIVIAN McGEE, Cappagh. Assaulted by the UDR and left unconscious on the road.

20th April. MAURICE O'NEIL (22), and **CONOR MULHOLLAND** (24), assaulted by RUC. Suffered bruising, cuts and black eyes.

21st April. FRANCIS McSHANE. Stabbed by British soldiers in Crossmaglen.

20th June. SEAN O'BRIEN (20), Garrison, County Fermanagh. Shot in the back by a British soldier while standing in a bar.

18th July. JOE CALLAGHAN (32), Distillery Walk, Belfast, assaulted by the RUC. Suffered severe bruising, cuts and badly strained hand.

19th July. LAWRENCE McGAHEY (28), Culmore Gardens, Andersonstown, assaulted by the RUC. Suffered broken arm and black eye.

CHRISTOPHER CAMPBELL (23), Creggan, Derry, assaulted by the RUC. Suffered severe bruising.

8th August. THOMAS JERVIS (56), Downpatrick. Deliberately shot by the RUC with a plastic bullet.

9th August. JOE DOWNEY (25), Ligoniel, Belfast. Assaulted by a British soldier and later shot by the RUC with a plastic bullet.

ROBERT DEVLIN (29), Lower Falls, Belfast. Shot by the RUC with a plastic bullet. Suffered broken leg.

JOHN MANNING (19), Sultan Square, Belfast. Assaulted by the British army. Suffered bruising and needed stitches to his jaw, mouth and head.

7th August. MICHAEL WALKER (5), Springhill Avenue, Belfast, needed stitches to his head after being hit by stones thrown by soldiers.

8th August. THOMAS JERVIS (20), Downpatrick, assaulted by the RUC. Suffered black eye and was knocked unconscious.

9th October. Intensive raids in Dungannon. Several families assaulted.

15th October. Strabane youths beaten up by the RUC. **COLMAN McCROSSAN** (20), received stitches to a head wound.

16th October. Callanbridge housing estate, Armagh, sealed off by scores of British soldiers. Several homes raided and damaged.

19th October. Marine Commandos assault several nationalists in West Belfast.

7th November. Two nationalist youths threatened by the RUC in Lurgan.

18th November. County Louth man kidnapped by soldiers and taken to Gough Barracks.

21st November. Two nationalists assaulted by the RUC in Armagh city.

22nd November. Kilkeel man threatened by UDR.

1st December. Disabled Derry man **EDDIE McSHEFFREY** assaulted in Castlereagh Interrogation Centre.

3rd December. Fermanagh man **MICHAEL O'REILLY** (26), beaten by the RUC. Badly bruised and broken nose.

4th December. 15 flats raided in Rossville Flats, Derry. Several badly damaged.

5th December. South Derry man, **IAN HURL**, assaulted twice in two days by British soldiers.

7th December. Dungannon family, **KEVIN** and **ANN McCUCKIN**, harassed while visiting the graves of their two young children.

16th December. RUC raid homes in Derry for the third time in a week. Over 30 houses were searched and damage was caused to property. In one case **NELLIE McGLINCHEY** (62), a semi-invalid, was assaulted.

1987

6th January. Two Sinn Fein Councillors, **BOBBY LAVERY** and **MITCHEL McLAUGHLIN** arrested.
RUC beat up Galbally man, **OLIVER NUGENT** (20). Rifle put to his head.
Disabled man, **PADDY DEVLIN** (46), asasulted by the RUC during raid in Castlederg.
Serious increase in harassment in Short Strand, Belfast.

8th January. KATHLEEN GLEESON, Fermanagh schoolteacher, harassed by the RUC.

7th February. British soldiers assault several people in West Belfast. **LIAM SHANNON** (20), hit on the face by a plastic bullet.

10th February. THOMAS McCOURT (21), Beechmount, assaulted by British soldier in Beechmount. Rifle butt to face.

15th February. Pregnant woman, **GERALDINE STILGES**, assaulted by the RUC.

18th February. 81 year old south Armagh woman, **MARY ANN TOMAMY**, battoned by the RUC. Four members of her family were also assaulted.

24th February. CIARAN ADAMS (18), Lower Falls, received four stitches to head wound after being hit on the head by a brick thrown by a soldier.

26th February. JOSEPH McCOLL Turf Lodge, hit in the face by British Army rifle butt. He had two teeth knocked out.

5th March. Two Short Strand men beaten by the RUC. **RAYMOND SMYTH** (26), had to be taken to the City Hospital for X-rays.

6th March. Two West Belfast men, **BRIAN McKEE** (21), and **JOHN CUNNINGHAM** (35), arrested by soldiers, beaten and robbed outside loyalist club on the Shankill Road.

24th March. Derry man **EDDIE McSHEFFREY** (27), assaulted while in Castlereagh.
RUC man fires into Oak Grill, Castlewellan. Five customers narrowly escaped death.

26th May. RONALL MAG UIDHIR (30), **BRENDAN MEEHAN** (27), from Derry, badly assaulted by RUC in Strand Road Barracks, received treatment in Altnagelvin Hospital for cuts, bruising. Meenan had five stitches for an eye wound.

27th May. RUC seriously assault Ardoyne youth **EAMONN McKENNA.**

30th May. Family attacked by the RUC. **BRIDIE CROWE** (44) Lenadoon, Belfast, received severe bruising to her right eye. Her son **ALEX CROWE** (25), receved a broken nose. Family friend **PAUL HENRY** received four stitches to a head wound and was treated for large burn on his right arm.

3rd June. British soldiers fire blank rounds at Sinn Fein election workers.

5th June. Sinn Fein election workers fired on by RUC on the Ballygawley/Augher Road, Co. Tyrone.

11th June. MARGARET HEALY, a grandmother, assaulted by British soldiers in St James' area.
Sinn Fein's North Belfast candidate in Westminster election **PADDY McMANUS** and Sinn Fein Councillor **BOBBY LAVERY** along with 3 other men arrested and assaulted by RUC after leaving the count at the City Hall.

19th June. ARTHUR FEGAN (27), who lost both legs in a loyalist "no warning bomb", along with his friend **AODH O'RUNAI** were both seriously assaulted by RUC in Short Strand.

26th June. MARIE McGROGAN, mother of 3, was beaten by RUC after visiting her 13 year old son who was under arrest after allegedly throwing stones at Crown Forces.

4th July. British soldiers tried to abduct Sinn Fein activist **ARTHUR MORGAN** from Carlingford Lough.

5th July. MICHAEL WARD (38), father of five, fired on by RUC undercover squad near Greencastle, Co Tyrone.

7th August. 4 Derry men assaulted by RUC in Derry City.

12th August. RUC threaten 22 year old Beechmount man into becoming an informer, youth refused, he was badly beaten by RUC.

18th August. PAULINE PALMER (27), from Ardoyne, went into hiding after 7 days of torture, physical and mental, at the hand of the RUC.
Twinbrook man **PATRICK McGREEVEY** threatened and beaten by RUC after refusing to become an informer.

25th August. MATT THORNTON had a severe heart attack and his wife badly beaten whilst RUC raided their home.

26th August. Derry man **HUGH McMONAGLE** (28) received beating after refusing to become an informer for the RUC.

2nd September. Lurgan man **GREGORY BURNS** (29) abducted by British army to become an informer. He refused.
Downpatrick man **ANTHONY HILLING**, after refusing to become an informer was abused by RUC.
JOHN McNALLY was badly beaten by RUC in Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone.

3rd September. UDR loyalists tie up 23 year old nationalist and beat him very badly in Co. Tyrone.

17th September. Lower Falls youth **MALACHY TULLY** (16) badly beaten by British army.

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.

SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY

Demonstrate for British Withdrawal

Saturday, January 30th

LONDON

Meet 12.30pm, Whittington Park, near Archway tube

End labour movement silence on Israeli oppression!

The violent uprising that rocked Palestine during the last few weeks of 1987 came as an unplesasant surprise to the West, and particularly to Israel.

It had seemed as if the King of Jordan might be ripening to negotiate a bilateral settlement on the occupied territories over the head of the PLO.

Then the Palestinians of Gaza, the West Bank and Israel erupted into two weeks of the most widespread, violent and protracted demonstrations to have taken place since Israel first consolidated its occupation in 1967.

Imperialism viewed the development with alarm — showing unprecedented interest in the Palestinians' wellbeing. Clearly anxious that Israel's "excessive use of force" would yet further cut the ground from under the feet of any possible negotiated settlement, the British delegate to the UN was among the first to raise criticisms of Israel in that body.

Even the US was forced into some mild admonition. Faced with a thoroughly "evenhanded" resolution at the Security Council condemning "violence on both sides" the US — despite heavy pressure from Israel — actually abstained!

Indeed imperialism is right to be concerned. The two week uprising never called into question Israel's military control over the Occupied Territories. But it has dramatically transformed the political situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

Important repercussions have been felt both among "Israeli" Palestinians and throughout the Middle East — particularly Lebanon and Egypt.

All this came at a time when Israel had, on the face of it, more reason to be self-confident than ever before.

Following Israel's brutal 1982 invasion of the Lebanon, forcing the evacuation of the Palestinian military forces, the PLO had politically been lurching from crisis to crisis. In 1983 it split wide open with live ammunition being exchanged across the divide.

Soon after, Amal, a major ally of the PLO, turned its guns against the Palestinians in what turned into the bloody and protracted "war of the camps".

The destruction of the PLO base in Lebanon and the subsequent political impasse were a harsh blow to the morale of the Palestinian masses. Even the brief unity at the 1987 Palestinian National Council and the fierce resistance in the Palestinian camps could not restore Palestinian confidence in the political and military perspectives of their leadership. To Israel, and to Jordan, the period seemed ideal for boosting the credibility of a "stooge" alternative leadership.

By Anna Wagstaff

Then it all blew up in their faces. The trouble started in Gaza — which ever since its militant resistance during the first years of occupation was crushed has been little more than a festering mass of deprivation, desperation and demoralisation, with twice the military presence and only a tiny fraction of the political activity and militancy found in the West Bank.

From Gaza it spread to the West Bank, and finally came the first time since the state of Israel was established that the Palestinian nation stood united in confronting their colonial oppressor.

It was not only the unprecedented scale of participation that made this uprising such a historic event. The confronations with the Israeli military reached new levels of militancy.

Western journalists, mostly seasoned stalwarts who have covered the area for years, sounded genuinely shocked as they witnessed teenagers running towards the soldiers, bearing their breasts and taunting them "Go on, shoot me, I dare you".

That this level of struggle could be kept up for two solid weeks in the face of constant use of live ammunition (leaving over 20 dead and over 300 wounded), tear gas and mass arrests, and in the absence of any clear political leadership, demonstrates a depth of anger and militancy among the Palestinians which makes Israel's attempts to reach a "peaceful settlement" look laughable.

The most important point is that the Palestinian struggle — so recently at a low point — has come out greatly strengthened on many fronts.

The mood in the Occupied Territories has changed from one of disorientation and demoralisation to militant defiance. The experience of standing strong and united against the occupying army will not quickly be forgotten.

It will certainly lead to an upsurge of support for the PLO, and a swelling of active participation within the various trade unions, women's committees and student and youth committees which under conditions of military occupation form the basic units of mass organisation of political groups within the PLO — principally the PFLP, DFLP and Fatah.

Under these conditions, Israel's "alternative leadership" stands no chance of becoming a credible political force for some time to come. Imperialism's goal of stitching up a settlement in the area over the head of the PLO has been stymied at least for the time being.

The second front on which the Palestinian struggle has been strengthened is within Israel. The successful one day strike was a huge development in Palestinian self-organisation. This is every bit as worrying to Israel as the insurrection itself, and led to calls for the reimposition of the military control exercised over the "Israeli" Palestinians until 1956.

Rarely, if ever, before has Israel seen such a demonstration of unity among the Palestinians within its borders. That this unity emerged in solidarity with Palestinians outside Israel revealed the strong nationalist consciousness that for various reasons — not least its illegality — has never until now achieved such an organised expression.

The overwhelming response to December's strike call was out of all proportion to the real strength of the organised Palestinian nationalist forces within Israel, which, historically, have always had to battle (principally against the Israeli Communist Party) for the allegiance of Palestinian militants.

The Israeli CP, with a largely Jewish leadership and an overwhelmingly Palestinian membership has the advantage of being a legal organisation with a legal daily publication. Against it, however, when it comes to recruiting Palestinian militants, is its rampant Israeli nationalism. (For example, the CP's is the only daily which changes its red masthead to blue on Israeli "independence" day!)

Politically, Palestinian nationalist organisations will be the ones to gain, such as Abna al Balad (Sons of the Village) — which already has an important base in militant areas such as Umm el Fahm and within Palestinian student politics.

Increases in active membership and in their broader following and resonance within the "Israeli" Palestinian community are likely.

Exacerbated contradictions experienced by Palestinians in the CP will either lead to a significant exodus from the Party, or the development of some coherent Palestinian "opposition" within it — or possibly both.

The third front on which the Palestinians will be strengthened is their political leadership. The crisis of leadership (particularly since the military defeat of 1982) will clearly not be resolved simply by an upsurge of militancy in the Occupied Territories.

Yet recent events will further discredit the strategy favoured by Arafat of relying solely on diplomatic manoeuvring to negotiate a settlement with Israel and imperialism, which has dominated Palestinian politics (albeit causing huge ruptures within the PLO) since the 1982 defeat.

In practice this "diplomatic manoeuvring" has meant signing deals such as the Ammam agreement, signed by Arafat and Hussein in 1985, which repudiated both the PLO's sole right to represent the Palestinian people and the goal of Palestinian self-determination — without getting any concessions at all in return.

Such actions have largely discredited Arafat's strategy already. At the 1987 "unity" PNC he was even forced to repudiate both the Ammam agreement and the links he renewed with Egypt. David Mellor's attacks on Israel will be a further nail in the coffin for "diplomatic manoeuvring".

These factors, backed by implicit criticism from the USA at the UN Security Council will boost those elements in the PLO arguing for mass struggle as the only way forward.

Furthermore, the demand for a secular democratic state which has tended, at best, to be reduced to some ultra-long term goal will certainly now be given a new lease of life by the experiences of united action taken by the Palestinians on both sides of the "green line".

It is not only among the Palestinians that benefits of Decembers's events will be felt. The stone-wielders of the Occupied Territories managed, in two weeks, to deal a significant blow to imperialism's hold over the Middle East in general.

As the sharpest point of conflict between imperialism and the Arab masses, the Palestinian struggle has always had resonance throughout the Arab world, at times having a decisive impact on centres such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Today, with the Iran-Iraq war still unresolved, the American navy parading the Gulf waters, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries fearing attack from Iran and subversion from within, Lebanon still a melting pot of warring political interests, and militantly anti-American Islamic fundamentalism on the rise throughout the region, imperialism has clearly judged that this is no time to take up the challenge of the Palestinians in revolt.

This is why concern for the Palestinians' welfare has suddenly been adopted by Britain and the US, and why they are putting such pressure on Israel to beat a tactical retreat.

They are hoping to prevent the insurrection from becoming a focus, particularly for Islamic fundamentalism, which could trigger a wave of violent demonstrations and uprisings throughout the volatile Middle East.

Already, however, there have been reports of demonstrations in Egypt — the only Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, and central to US strategy in the region — which have resulted in violent clashes with the police and mass arrests, adding fuel to the already strong Muslim fundamentalist opposition to the government. That is what lies behind imperialism's desperate attempt to pacify the Palestinians.

A final point concerning the impact of the uprising which must be made here relates to matters closer to home. Where was the Labour Party Shadow Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Gerald Kaufmann when Tory David Mellor was declaring in favour of Palestinian self-determatinion in the middle of the camps of Gaza? Answer: he was visiting King Hussein.

In reply to Mellor's headline-hitting attacks on Israel, Kaufmann managed to come up with a comment about how Israel's conduct during the disturbances was a cause for distress among her friends as much as her enemies!

What happened to the resolutions we passed several years running recognising the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people? What of their right to self-determination?

That the Labour Party, at a time like this, could get away with acting almost as an apologist for Israel demonstrates not only the general right wing nature of its leadership, but the historic indifference with which much of the Labour Party left has treated the issue.

The time for a renewed offensive on the question of Palestine is clearly ripe: it would be shameful if the forces on the left within the labour movement let it pass.

Join the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine
Individuals £2.50 (waged), £1 (unwaged)
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Along the Color Line

Puerto Rico and Black America

Within less than two decades, the largest non-white population in the United States will be Hispanic, not Afro-American.

The political implications for US Blacks are profound.

Whereas the majority of Cuban-Americans clearly support conservative foreign and domestic policies, which are fundamentally at odds with Blacks' interests, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly support progressive politics.

Clearly, a mutually advantageous relationship can be developed here.

In October I delivered a series of lectures at the Social Science Research Center at the University of Puerto Rico. Students and faculty alike expressed interest in Jesse Jackson, the Rainbow Coalition and the current state of the US Civil Rights movement.

Most revealing were the private discussions I had with progressive political leaders and activists who advocate Puerto Rico's independence from the United States.



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

Puerto Rico is an island of the most profound social contradictions and economic contrasts. At first glance, the major city of San Juan boasts an environment of affluence, luxurious hotels and casinos.

White Americans who come here as tourists do not see how the majority of Puerto Ricans actually live and struggle. They do not see the overcrowded public housing facilities, or the poverty amd misery in the rural districts. They have little knowledge of the unrest felt by thousands of young people on campuses, or the massive discontent of wage laborers.

Most Afro-Americans share their ignorance. They may be aware that Puerto Rico is a US colony, and perhaps know that at least one third of its population has African ancestry.

Some Puerto Ricans with European features like to pretend that racial discrimination doesn't exist on the island. But when the Americans seized Puerto Rico back in 1898, the first thing they did was to establish their odious system of Jim Crow in San Juan.

Today, Black Puerto Ricans still appear to be disproportionately represented among the lowest paid workers and the unemployed. Racial prejudice is *different* from the US, partly because of the Spanish cultural heritage, but it is still a major problem.

By Dr MANNING MARABLE

The Reagan Administration likes to point to Puerto Rico as a dynamic economic success story which should be a model for the Caribbean and Latin America. When compared to much of the Third World, or to neighbouring Haiti, the economic situation in Puerto Rico does at first appear robust.

With a *per capita* income of $3,900 a year in 1983, this island of three million people produces more for external trade than Columbia, with a 26 million population. Even a casual visitor notices the large number of automobiles in San Juan.

Puerto Rico has four times the number of jobs in manufacturing than in agriculture, an inversion of the usual Third World economic structure. Three quarters of all people own their homes, and over one million attend schools.

But these statistics mask the profound degree of exploitation and dependency imposed by the North Americans. More than half of the population is forced to live on food stamps, which were introduced thirteen years ago.

The official jobless rate stands at 20%, but the real figure is said to be closer to 30%. More serious is a labor force participation rate of approximately 40% — meaning that about six out of every ten Puerto Rican adults are not working, or surviving only by means of the "subterranean economy". Wages are low, and the crime rate is growing.

The entire economy is organised to benefit US corporations. American businesses made $8.1 billion in profits from Puerto Rico in 1981, but little of this money was reinvested in the island's economy. The social and economic distance between the local upper classes and the poor is tremendous.

All this is sytematically hidden from the world. The US has too much at stake in Puerto Rico to sacrifice the illusion of widespread prosperity. For military as well as corporate reasons, the American government intends to hold on to its Third World colony. Advocates of independence have been victimised, harassed, imprisoned, and even murdered.

Black Americans must support the goal of self-determination for the Puerto Rican nation. I personally favor the unqualified independence of the island, but that choice must be freely made by Puerto Ricans themselves, not by the US. Puerto Rican rights must be merged with the Afro-American political agenda for social justice.

Fight the Alton Bill! — local round-up

PADDINGTON & N. WESTMINSTER

The local FAB groups have been active since November, lobbying our MPs and leafletting and petitioning on street stalls in Portobello Road, Bayswater and Harrow Road, and holding a public meeting on January 12th with Jo Richardson.

Motions of support for FAB have been passed by: Westminster North Labour Party, Westminster Trades Council, Westminster Teachers' Association, Westminster NALGO, Kensington Labour Party, and Kensington Trades Council. We have made links with our local CHC and Law Centre.

We have affiliated to the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, contacted the local press, and used community services to put out publicity.

We have been co-ordinating activity with Westminster FAB, which operates mainly in the south of this very large borough and at the Polytechnic of Central London.

We will be building for events on January 21st and in March. For further information contact 01-969 3192.

Kerry Leech, Paddington & N. Kensington FAB

CAMDEN

Camden FAB was set up by the local Labour Party Women's Section, along with other groups in Camden including students, teachers, and local government workers. We have organised a picket of local Tory MP Sir Geoffrey Finsberg's surgery, street meetings, petitioning, and a successful meeting at Camden Training Centre.

Camden FAB is sponsored by Camden NALGO, the Polytechnic of North London (PNL) and Kingsway Princeton Students Unions, and Camden Teachers Association. These unions have also been organising FAB activity in their workplaces. Camden NALGO run a lunch time stall and students have set up FAB groups and meetings at their colleges.

In preparation for the lobby of Parliament on January 21st we have organised:

- A public meeting (14th Jan., 7.30pm, Camden Town Hall).
- Local Day of Action on Jan. 16th (mass petitioning and street meetings).
- Next planning meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 26th Jan., Kingsway Princeton College, Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Further details: Camden Labour Centre, 267 1676.

Gill Entwhistle, Camden Labour Briefing

GLASGOW

On December 13th David Alton came to Glasgow to speak to Scottish Anti-Abortionists. He was greeted by over 100 FAB Campaigners determined that his visit to Glasgow would not go uncontested.

FAB activists carrying placards saying "No return to back street abortions" and "As early as possible, as late as necessary" lambasted Alton's supporters with angry slogans as they arrived at Glasgow's Albany Hotel to hear the man speak. FAB supporters were denied entry to the hall despite the fact that it had been advertised as a public meeting.

Although the West of Scotland is one of the strongholds of the reactionary anti-abortion movement, it also boasts an active FAB Group which has been out on the streets of Glasgow every Saturday this winter petitioning and leafletting against the Alton Bill.

The trade union movement has for many years been a close ally of the pro-choice movement in Scotland, and on January 16th a Scottish Demonstration and Rally has been called in Glasgow by the STUC and Scottish FAB to launch the National Week of Action against Alton's Bill.

FAB is hoping to change the image of Glasgow from that of an anti-abortion stronghold to that of a city *supporting* a woman's right to choose.

Anne McChlery, Glasgow FAB (personal capacity)

BRENT

In December, Brent FAB held a very successful meeting of 150 people with Wendy Savage. Other speakers included Chair of the Women's Committee, Hazel Baird, and National Organiser for MPU/ASTMS, John Chowcat. The presence of LIFE supporters ensured a lively debate but the meeting overwhelmingly opposed Alton's amendment in favour of the 1967 Abortion Act.

Local MPs Ken Livingstone and Paul Boateng were unable to attend but they stated their opposition to Alton's amendment. The Tory MP for Brent North, Rhodes Boyson, can't even answer a letter from a "genuinely concerned" constituent. Brent FAB organised a picket of his surgery in December.

Every Saturday sees Brent FAB out on the streets petitioning. On January 16th we are planning a street meeting in Kilburn Square followed by a motorcade through the main shopping areas of Brent. In the evening we are having a social to raise money — and enjoy ourselves!

Brent FAB meets every Tuesday, 7.30pm, at CHC, 25 High Street, Harlsden. For further details contact Brent FAB, c/o 25 High Street, Harlsden, London NW10.

Tessa van Gelderen, Brent South CLP

HACKNEY

Thanks to the City and Hackney Health Authority it won't make any difference to working class women in Hackney whether the Alton Bill is passed or not.

It agreed in October to tell women seeking abortions after 12 weeks and with "no significant medical grounds" to have them done privately — not much of an option if you're unemployed or low paid.

The Authority is £2 million over budget this year and could be up to £5 million in debt by 1989 due to central government cuts. Although abortion rights are first in the firing line this time there are plenty more cuts to come.

At its January meeting the Authority is proposing to close a 19-bed ward at Hackney Hospital and stop Phase 2 building development at Homerton Hospital. Hackney has already lost 30% of its acute beds since 1980 and now has 7,000 on the waiting list for in patient treatment.

These cuts represent a massive attack on the health of working people in Hackney — in particular the old, the mentally ill and women. Hackney FAB and Hackney Health Emergency are collaborating in linking the issues of the health cuts and abortion rights.

One clear lesson to be drawn from these cuts is that in fighting the Alton Bill defending the status quo is not enough — Alton only wants to reduce the time limit to 18 weeks! For an abortion rights campaign to have any meaning in this context the demands for free abortion on demand and the right of all women to choose whether or not they want to have an abortion must be central.

Health cuts, like abortion rights, affect the living standards of the whole working class. FAB nationally must take this on board and link up with Health Service workers, other public sector workers and all workers whose jobs and conditions are under threat to smash the Bill and win decent abortion and health care facilities for all.

Lobby of City and Hackney DHA, Monday January 25th, 4.30pm.

Gill Lowe, Hackney FAB (personal capacity)

Action Round-up

Send us short reports of what your FAB group is doing so we can print them and help everyone keep in touch.

Send reports to arrive at PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ by Tues Jan 19th

Urgent info phone 01 733 7016 Weds 20th, Thurs 21st

Please send reports of your activities on Jan 16th (include photos if you can!)

F.A.B.: PCL Students Union, 104-108 Bolsover St, London WC1

Published by Labour Briefing, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ
Printed by East-West Graphics Ltd.

Local Government News

Southampton

Council drops racial harassment clause from tenancies

Southampton City Council is the first Council in Britain to *drop* a clause from its tenancy agreement that specifically prohibits racial harassment on pain of eviction.

At an understandably emotional full Council meeting last October, Labour Councillors made impassioned pleas that the tenancy agreement be kept intact, in the face of the most sanctimonious and hypocritical opposition from the Tories and the Alliance.

Labour Councillor Angela Mawle, who herself had only recently suffered from a racist attack on her home and has been the victim of late night calls and intimidating letters, even went to far as to say that it took us nearer to the mentality of the Third Reich.

After the Council voted to accept a new tenancy agreement that excluded the racial harassment clause, the whole Labour Group then walked out of the Council Chamber.

By Rob Evans
Southampton Labour Party

To understand this episode one has to return to the adoption of the original clause in September 1986. At the time there was an all-party "consensus" on the Council — a "consensus" shared not only by the CRE but also by Local Authority associations and even central government.

In fact by adopting the clause Southampton had joined a growing number of Councils up and down the country. Just how fragile this "consensus" always was will be clear from the fact that both the Tories and the Alliance had previously boycotted the Council's Standing Advisory Committee on Race.

A few months later the local press launched an attack on the Council's equal opportunity policy and the racial harassment clause, claiming that it was "divisive" and "massively unpopular".

That this claim was largely fabricated and/or based on anecdotal evidence was clear from the Council's initial "consultation" in November 1986. Out of 16,000 letters sent out there were only 20 responses!

It came as no surprise when the opposition broke the "consensus".

During the May local elections, instead of putting forward a clear case for the policy, the majority Labour Group became increasingly defensive and as a result were an easy target for the Tories and the Alliance. After Labour was left in a minority of one, the opposition then claimed that they had a mandate to drop the clause.

Vigorous

From May onwards Southampton CRE undertook a vigorous campaign to persuade the Council to reconsider by collecting a petition and informing the Council of the legal implications and of the likely effect on race relations. Since October it has sought to ensure that the Council does at least implement the remaining equal opportunity policy.

The lesson to be learnt from the whole episode is that a personal commitment to equal opportunity policy on the part of individual Councillors is not enough. Policy needs to be developed in consultation with the black community and properly explained to the public.

In Southampton the Labour Group adopted a totally bureaucratic approach that allowed the Council officers to decide how the policy was to be implemented. This approach resulted in virtual sabotage when the first letters "informing" tenants of the new policy were sent out in April.

explanation of the policy, they were written in a condescending and deliberately threatening manner. The letter itself was counter-productive and underlying it was the dangerous illusion that the Council could depend on the police to take action against the racists.



PHOTO: Andrea Campbell

March in Tower Hamlets

Beginning the Fightback in Thamesdown

Haringey Councillors Kevin Hargreaves and Martha Osamor spoke to a public meeting organised by Swindon Labour Party on the question of rate-capping.

By Martin Wicks
Swindon CLP

Swindon is in Thamesdown, which has been placed on the rate-capped list and is liable to stay there for the life of the present government.

If no struggle is organised, then one way or another "survival" for the Local Authority will only come at the expense of the local working class.

The leadership of the Labour Group declared immediately after the General Election that their only hope lay in electing a Labour government at the *next* General Election.

We had to "play them at their own game", which means getting money out of the same developers who have already ripped the heart out of the town centre. Of course, under government restrictions, in order to have £1 million pounds to spend, they have to sell £10 million worth of land.

The left is in a weak position to challenge this leadership, which has only a handful of serious opponents in the Labour Group. The District Labour Party has already changed its policy to allow the sale of assets in line with the Group leadership's wishes. Only four Party branches opposed this.

The public meeting decided to set up a Swindon Fightback Campaign. There was a useful discussion on what was needed, including making contact with anti-cuts activists in other areas.

The weakness of the meeting was that there were only half a dozen NALGO members present, and none at all from NUPE.

A fightback against the local leaders can *only* be successful if the left is able to organise amongst the workforce, and in particular to break into NUPE, which has been cordoned off from it by a reactionary leadership which, together with certain Councillors, has always tried to set NUPE members against NALGO, and against the tenants (NUPE members were mobilised to demonstrate *in favour* of a rent increase, because they were told it was necessary to save their jobs).

The biggest problem remains that of discussion and co-ordination at a national level. If we are all left to fight alone in our own localities, we shall go down to defeat. There is an urgent need for a national meeting of all those forces — Councillors, local government workers, tenants, etc. — fighting againt the new wave of attacks being organised by Labour as well as Tory Councils.