LABOUR BRIEFING
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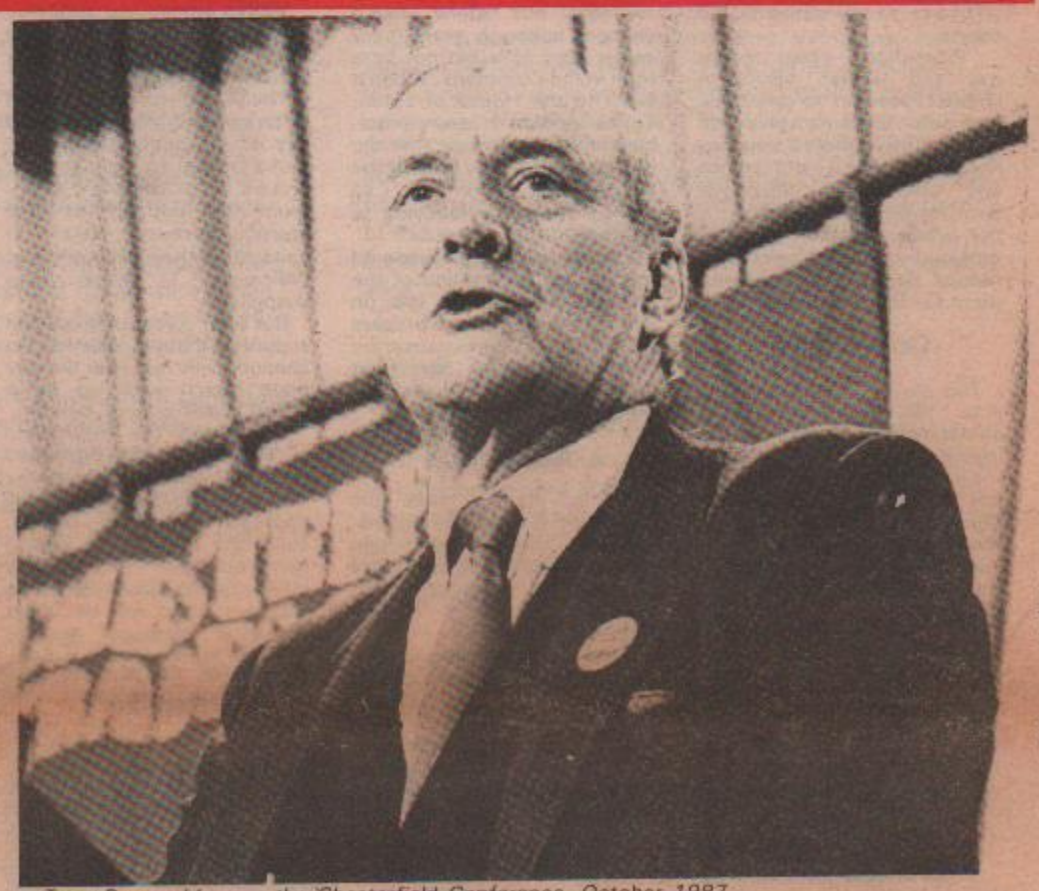
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40p

BENN AND HEFFER

That's the ticket!



Tony Benn addresses the Chesterfield Conference, October 1987

The Labour leadership contest has opened at last. The contenders are off and running. *Briefing* spoke to TONY BENN about his challenge to Kinnock.

Our decision to stand for Leader and Deputy Leader is motivated by three main concerns.

First, we want to give much stronger support to people in struggle outside Parliament, such as nurses and healthworkers.

Second, we want to advance radical and realistic programmes to meet people's immediate needs.

Third, we want to put socialism itself back on the agenda.

This is a long-term campaign for socialism within the labour movement, which will link up with other campaigns for socialist ideas, such as the Green and Socialist Conference, the Campaign for Non-Alignment, and the Chesterfield Conference itself.

By TONY BENN

It won't be just a personal campaign run by the candidates. It should be collectively run, organised and directed. Afterwards, it will still go on — though it's much too early to say what form it will take.

We don't want this campaign to be inward-looking and focussed only on the Party. What we're trying to do is to address, as socialists, the central problems facing people and to campaign to get our ideas across to the mass of Labour voters and potential supporters.

It won't be like 1981 for a whole range of reasons. After 1981, we were moving into a general election period, whereas now we have time to carry on. And I believe this campaign *will* go on.

What we're doing is giving a focus to a lot of people who are socialists but feel they have not been adequately represented in the national or local arena.

One thing is absolutely clear: this campaign won't end on the night of the electoral college. The circumstances of the times make the recovery of the socialist tradition more urgent and necessary than ever.



BENN AND HEFFER

See centre pages



LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

Stop the Clause!

We will not go underground again!

Kursad Karamonoglu is an activist in the North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality. He spoke to Finn Jensen about Clause 28 and the campaign against it.

Gay men and lesbians were expecting a concerted attack from the Tories.

The aim of the Local Government Bill was to curb the democratic powers of elected local government. Jill Knight's amendment adds that local government cannot "promote" homosexuality.

The word "promote" is key, because it is a word lawyers do not recognise. Once the Bill is law the word "promotion" will have to be tested in the courts.

"Promotion" could mean: gay and lesbian books in libraries; licences to gay clubs and pubs (because gays and lesbians meet there); services like gay centres, and advice and information telephone lines for lesbians and gays — the whole range of services provided at the moment as a natural part of local government for the community.

Consenting

The law that homosexual acts between consenting adults over 21 years of age is legal if done in private gave us the same problem as we now will get with "promotion". The lawyers did not recognise the word "private", so it was interpreted by the courts — in the most ridiculous way you can imagine.

Two men kissing in a car is not private; nor is a locked hotel room. If you live in a block of apartments and there is just one other person in the whole block who gets offended by you living as a homosexual you are not in private.

Private

If this is how the courts interpret "private" you can imagine what they'll do with "promotion".

When the government realised the extent of opposition to the "Bigots Charter" (as lesbians and gay men now call it) it tried to modify it. They added one word — "intentionally" — which makes it even more vicious.

Many Conservatives are making the intention of the Clause quite clear, both in interviews and in Parliament. They want to drive lesbians and gay men back into the closet. After 20 years of partial recognition they want to push us underground again. But we won't go.

We are an easy scapegoat. It is so easy to divert people's attention from serious social and economic problems by using popular prejudices.

Simply by living the kind of life we do, lesbians and gays are the biggest threat to one of the fundamental ways the ruling classes keep the masses under control. The family has historically always been the unit used to control society and we are obviously a threat to the family institution.

Defined

We refuse to fit into the well-defined roles. And that is really a big threat to the kind of society the Tories want to create. Remember, there are over six million of us in Britain.

There has been spontaneous and unexpected opposition to Clause 28, not only in Manchester. One of the first things we did was lobbying Parliament to get the Clause changed.

But with the Tory majority we did not stand much chance, although some very senior Tory MPs did not vote for it in the Commons. When it went to the House of Lords, Tories brought in every possible peer to make sure that the Bill passed. Its now back in the House of Commons, so there's still some lobbying to be done.

But we have to be prepared for the implementation of the Bill once it becomes law on April 30th. We have to prepare for a long battle, because we cannot accept a law that would mean a denial of ourselves.

Authorities

We will work to make sure that Local Authorities understand the issue and will fight the law. There will be battles in court, all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.

This campaign has raised political awareness among many gay men and lesbians. That is our biggest strength. In Manchester, for example, it is very important for us to involve lesbians and gays who are not normally part of campaigning.

The Manchester demonstration in February was the biggest in the city for 20 years, but it was also the bigest lesbian and gay demonstration ever in this country. We were very determined to show that lesbians and gay men are everywhere and that the North West has its own share.

The national demonstration on April 30th in London should be followed by actions of supporters abroad on June 1st, when the Bill is likely to become law.

We are asking people to organise protest meetings in front of British embassies and consulates in their own country and to let us know what they are doing. Solidarity messages to our demonstration on April 30th are also needed.

There was a really massive protest within the Labour Party to the front bench's half-hearted opposition to the Clause. I know from Manchester that there were literally thousands of letters to Labour MPs protesting the despicable lack of response.

Within weeks we suddenly saw the line changing, and now Kinnock's calling the Clause "the bigots' charter".

The trade unions are too often scared of the lesbian and gay issue. During the miners' strike lesbian and gay support groups all around the country found it difficult at the begining because miners — in spite of all their militancy and radicalism — were quite suspicious.

But after a year of sustained support things started to change. Only last year the gay pride march was led by a South Wales miners' banner!

We realise the importance of support of the organised labour movement. That is why the North West Campaign will approach trade unions, especially those whose members will be directly influenced by Clause 28 — like teachers, who will be under immense pressure not to mention homosexuality at all.

Attacks

The attacks on lesbians and gay men can be linked closely with the oppression of black communities. This was clear in Britain during the AIDS hysteria.

The press in Britain tried to say that AIDS is a gay plague; or, if not, a black plague. Day by day the newspapers said that AIDS came from Africa, that it is common in Africa. There were even calls from so-called respected journalists and politicians to have compulsory tests for visitors from certain African countries.

That makes the link in the minds of many blacks and lesbians and gay men in this country. At the end of the day we have a lot of things in common, not least a common enemy.

The North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality can be contacted c/o Gay Centre, 61A Bloom St, Manchester.

Wakefield

Lesbian Support Group banned

International Women's Day celebrations in Wakefield were soured after the Council banned a local lesbian group from holding a workshop.

Defending the ban, Councillor Bob Mitchell, who chairs Wakefield Council's Equal Opportunities Committee, issued this statement:

"It was felt that the workshop would be incompatible with Council policy. The Council is committed by its equal opportunities policy document to non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

wakefield

"In response to a recent request for grant aid by Wakefield Lesbian Support Group, the Council determined to refuse it on the grounds that, as far as the Labour Group was concerned, they felt they had no electoral mandate for active advocacy on homosexual rights.

"It is felt that the provision of a workshop would fall into the latter category rather than the former, and therefore there was no alternative but to act as the Labour Group has done."

Wakefield Lesbian Support Group responded by saying: "To deny local lesbians the opportunity to meet together to identify the ways in which Council policies currently disadvantage us, can hardly be described as a positive step to eliminate discrimination!

"We have absolutely no confidence in the Councillor's understanding of, and commitment to, equal opportunities whatsoever."

It appears that Clause 28 of the Local Government Act, which aims to prevent open discussion of homosexuality, is taking effect even before it is made law.

A petition against the ban was circulated during the day.

Taken from
Leeds Other Paper

Leeds notes

● Leeds District Labour Party and Leeds Council have voted to defy the law over Clause 28. The exact form and method has still to be decided.

● A 3,000-strong demonstration in Leeds against Clause 28 was addressed by Peter Tatchell. The SWP issued a leaflet saying it would have been better if people had gone on the Health Demo in London!

● 50 people attended a public meeting of Chapel Allerton Ward Labour Party to hear Peter Tatchell speak about positive images for Gays and Lesbians.

Councillor Garth Frankland pledged that the ward would continue to oppose Clause 28 and go on the offensive over positive images.

Defend Lesbian & Gay Equality

Haringey Tories have played a major part in mobilising forces of bigotry and prejudice against the lesbian and gay communities since 1986. Their policies have led not only to an increase in violence against lesbians and gay men, but also to the introduction of "The Clause". They are now proposing a motion for the Haringey Council meeting on April 25th which is designed to deprive us of equal rights and to ignore the fact that we too are rate-payers.

After the successful demonstrations on January 9th and February 20th, lesbians and gay men and our supporters must continue to show our opposition to the politics of hatred. We must let Haringey Council know that lesbians and gay men are organising resistance to the Clause and all its implications. We shall not be intimidated.

Lobby Haringey Council, Haringey Civic Centre (Wood Green tube), Monday April 25th, 6pm onwards.

Organised by the co-optees of the lesbian and gay sub-committee.

Stop the Clause Calendar

April 25th. Lobby of Haringey Civic Centre
April 30th. Mass demonstration in London. Meet at noon on the Embankment, rally and festival at Kennington Park.
Stop the Clause Campaign Meetings. All lesbians and gay men welcome to the weekly meetings Wednesdays, 6.30pm, Islington Town Hall, London.

Stop the Clause!

May Day Greetings

Labour Briefing invites you to send **May Day Greetings** to the labour movement through our columns.

Rates:

£2.50	per col. inch
£25.00	Eighth page
£45.00	Quarter page
£85.00	Half page
£150.00	Full page

Special May Day offer
Five column inches for £10!
Deadline: April 19th
Send message & cheques, payable to Labour Briefing, to Labour Briefing, PO Box 467, London SW2 5UZ

Defend Marion Gaima!

April 20th is the next important date in the campaign to stop the deportation of Marion Gaima. This is when her case for Judicial Review is to be heard at the High Court in the Strand, London.

The campaign is looking for supporters to attend a picket at 9.30am.

Contact the Marion Gaima Anti-deportation campaign, Hackney NALGO, 245/7 Mare Street, London E8

SUPPORT THE

Right to Read Campaign

Ban the book-burners, not the books!

Defy the Clause!

Buy your books at **Reading Matters** Bookshop, 10 Lymington Avenue, London N22

We stock books for lesbians and gay men, black people, women, socialists — and many others!

★Join the lobby of Haringey Council
★Monday April 25th, 6pm, Wood Green Civic Centre (near Wood Green tube)

For more information about the **Right to Read Campaign** contact **Reading Matters** on 01 881 3187

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

The Challenge of Benn and Heffer

The challenge to Kinnock and Hattersley thrown down by Tony Benn and Eric Heffer will galvanise socialists everywhere.

It will give a focus to all those on whom Kinnock has turned his back: miners, printworkers, teachers, nurses, local government workers, women fighting Alton, black people fighting racism, lesbians and gay men opposing Clause 28, the peace movement and countless others in struggle with the Tory government.

It will give hope to those millions around the country eager for a real alternative to the obscene priorities of Lawson's budget.

The Kinnock-Hattersley leadership has failed every test, balked at every hurdle, squandered every opportunity. It has refused to learn any lessons from Labour's general election disaster. Every day, its gospel of capitulation is proved bogus by events in the real world — from the Stock Market crash to strikes by nurses, carworkers, and seafarers.

The decision to mount a nationwide socialist campaign for the Labour leadership will offer the Party in the constituencies and the trade unions the real choice which it has been denied for so long.

Shaking the dust off the electoral college should require no apologies. Democratic rights (won by the left in years of hard struggle) are worth nothing if they are not regularly exercised.

Of course all the old shibboleths will be used against us. "Leadership contests are a distraction". "A challenge to Kinnock causes disunity". These tired cries should carry no weight at all. They are the arguments of every tin-pot dictator trying to escape judgement by the electorate. And self-righteous appeals for unity come ill from those who have undermined or ignored every attempt by workers to fight back against the Tories.

That disunity has cost the labour movement dear. The people responsible for it must be held to account and replaced.

Like Thatcher, Kinnock's strongest suit has been the cry "there is no alternative". Increasingly, that cry is being used to silence socialists and junk socialist policies. Tony Benn's campaign gives us the chance to stop the rot.

Let the media pundits worry about the probable result. We know what we have to do. Organise a confident, vigorous, unapologetic campaign for Tony Benn and Eric Heffer and the socialist policies they stand for — from one end of the country to the other, in the trade unions, the constituencies, the women's movement — everywhere!

Our campaign will unite under its banners all sections of the working class and all the oppressed. It will inspire and activate the left in the constituencies and the trade unions. It will also provide an incentive for people currently outside the Party to get inside and join our fight for a socialist leadership.

The Chesterfield Conference showed that people are keen to join battle with the Tories and to advance socialist ideas. The leadership challenge will take the spirit of Chesterfield into the heart of the labour movement.

Start organising now!

A Lesson from the US Primaries

Like the Labour Party leadership, Democratic Party bosses in the US have spent a great deal of their time in opposition planning to inveigle themselves back into office by emulating their spectacularly successful opponents.

Their rules are simple. Stick close to the mainstream. Keep well clear of any commitments which might alienate the "centre ground". Forget about contentious policy debates. Find telegenic candidates who can be sold to the voters by ad agencies. Dump organised labour and aim for the "consumer".

Jesse Jackson's campaign has violated every one of these nostrums. Whatever socialists may make of his platform and his personal performance, there is no denying that he has stood out as the candidate of the dispossessed, of the historic victims of racism, and of the more recent victims of Reaganomics — including millions of working class white people. His positions on South Africa and Central America, on Palestine and Cuba, on defence spending and social welfare programmes are all substantially to the left of any of his opponents.

Of course, the test will come when the Democratic Party comes clean and admits that it cannot contain these policies, or run a black candidate — as Manning Marable explains in this issue of *Briefing* (see page 14).

In short, he is anything but a mainstream candidate. And despite all predictions he has been doing exceedingly well, winning big in Michigan, and piling up close seconds in state after state.

Of course, the British media, having belatedly discovered that this man speaks for millions of US workers, pour scorn on his preacher's style, past record, and personal integrity, with not a small admixture of patronising racism.

Briefing readers should take these reports no more seriously than anything else they read in the British papers. Perhaps our Washington correspondents are afraid we might start to draw the "wrong" conclusion from Jackson's success.

Only a clear and conscious break from the mainstream can rouse the enthusiasm of the majority of the population opposed to Thatcher. Benn and Heffer are now offering that kind of break. For once, the British labour movement can learn a positive lesson from US politics.

Dundee: Who loves ya, Ron?

The TUC is fumbling around, trying to decide whether it agrees with single-union, no-strike sweetheart deals with predatory bosses, like the kind Ford were after in Dundee, and with which the AEU leaders were only too happy to oblige.

If they had got away with it, it would only have been a matter of time before Ford demanded no-strike deals with workers in other Ford factories in Britain. Ford have decided that they have to compete with the "labour relations" (sic) methods of the Japanese car manufacturers like Nissan.

Eric Hammond of the EETPU, and Laird and Jordan of the AEU, are selling themselves to the bosses as the people who can organise a low-paid, no strike, servile workforce. They are quite happy to cut up other unions to recruit members on that basis.

The issue for the trade union movement is simply one of business, scab, "yellow" unions; yes or no? In accepting the proposed deal — whether it was really on offer is another matter — Willis and the TUC leadership were giving the thumbs up to no-strike union bosses.

The person who should be carefully looking at his position in all this is the TGWU's Ron Todd. He knows that the AEU-EETPU operation is a dagger pointing at his membership. He knows that he is being carved up, not only by Hammond, Laird, and Jordan, but also by the Labour front bench team who were all for the Dundee deal going ahead.

But think about it a moment, Ron. While you have denounced the Benn-Heffer challenge as a diversion, who exactly has supported the fight against business unionism? Not Kinnock and Hattersley!

The whole TGWU executive should think hard about the meaning of the Leadership election in terms of the crucial issues facing workers in many sections of industry. If they really want a fight against the architects of Dundee and Wapping, they should cast a vote for Benn and Heffer!

Israel: butchery without end

The similarities between the repressive methods of the Israeli "Defence Forces" and those of the South African "Defence Forces" are becoming obvious even to right wing commentators. The Israelis are trying to smash the Palestinian uprising by large scale killing and brutality — just like Soweto. So far, more than 130 unarmed Palestinians have been killed — against two Israelis.

The Israelis are increasingly trying to use the technique of news blackout to hide their murderous deeds. The reasoning given is the same as South Africa: television cameras "encourage violence". The ideological justification of repression is the same: "the people of violence must be stopped" (!) It is, apparently, "only a small minority of agitators" who are to blame.

The rights and wrongs of the struggle in the Occupied Territories are just as clear cut as in South Africa. Israeli rule is rejected by the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians. Virtually all of them see the PLO as the organisation which represents them. And they all want a Palestinian homeland. Yet the "fulfilment of the Zionist dream" allows no compromise.

Doutbless the Israelis are concerned about the worsening of their image internationally, especially in the US. But they can live with international unpopularity if they have the dollar and the gun. US capitalism will continue to give them both.

In the United States itself a campaign has been launched by Nobel Prize winners and other leading figures for cutting off US aid to Israel. The Palestinians are in urgent need of maximum international solidarity, otherwise the Israelis will, like the South Africans, continue to carry out their murderous work undisturbed behind a news blackout.

Hue and cry against *Briefing*

Following our front page article on the events at the Republican funeral which led to the deaths of two British soldiers (*Briefing*, no. 59), there has been a hue and cry against *Briefing*.

Right wingers in the Party, like St Helens MP John Evans, have been quick to call for "action" against us, chiming in with the gutter press smears about "leftie loonies".

All this is just a follow up to the hysterical media response to the deaths of the soldiers.

Briefing's reply to our critics is simple: we were right to defend the Republican movement, and the nationalist community in West Belfast, aginst the hysterical slanders thrown at them.

And it is quite legitimate that an anti-imperialist position should be expressed inside the Labour Party.

The killing of the two soliders has been used for all its worth, by the Thatcher government, by the Loyalists and the media to divert attention from the assassination of unarmed IRA volunteers in Gibralta, and the murderous attack on their funeral by a Loyalist gunman.

The RUC played a murky role in that Loyalist attack. Whether or not they were directly implicated in that event, they and the British military are certainy complicit in allowing the armed thugs of Loyalism to carry out their attacks on Catholic civilians virtually unhindered.

The largest single category of deaths in the 20 years of the "troubles" is the more than 500 Catholic civilians assassinated by the Loyalists — and yet the Loyalist militia, the UDA, is not a banned organisation and numerous members of the Ulster Defence Regiment give active support to the UDA, UVF, and other Loyalist assassination squads.

We repeat what we said about the deaths of the two soldiers; in the circumstances they were inevitable. Contrary to the distortions of the media, we don't revel in or welcome what our article described as such "shocking scenes". Like all killings in any war, they were regrettable and an unnecessary tragedy for the bereaved families to have had to endure.

The soldiers shouldn't have been there. They were armed and on active service, racing at 40mph along a pavement and penetrating to the funeral hearse itself. What on earth they thought they were doing there remains a complete mystery, but no fair-minded person can possibly be surprised at the reception they provoked.

During the funerals of the volunteers assassinted by the SAS, unarmed republican supporters conducted themselves with outstanding heroism in disarming the Loyalist gunman, Michael Stone. At the subsequent funeral they believed themselves to be under attack for a second time from the occupants of the car.

Socialists who support the Republican struggle and the fight for self-determination in Ireland have to stand their ground, even when under sustained attack and witch-hunt. What is going on in Ireland is a war.

Shoot-to-kill and covert assassination are the stock in trade of the security forces in their fight against the nationalist population. While dozens of people face arrest and long prison sentences as a result of the soldiers' deaths, the SAS professional assassins who murdered the IRA volunteers will remain free and are strongly congratulated by the government.

That's the character of the war that is being waged. In that war *Briefing* has chosen its side.

It is the opposite side to that of Thatcher, Kinnock and the media: that is in the nature of British political realities. But it is not a position on which we will renege when the going gets tough.

Many thousands of Labour Party members oppose the British occupation of Ireland, way beyond *Briefing* supporters and the "hard left". It is no surprise to us that the right wing want to utilise the occasion to attack and witch-hunt us.

That witch hunt has little to do with passionate feelings about the situation in Ireland, and everything to do with finding any reason — kindly provided by the *Daily Mail*, the *Star* and the *Telegraph* to attack *Briefing* and the left.

That is the character of the present Labour Leadership — a growing authoritarianism and intolerance which Tony Benn has rightly denounced.

Briefing will continue to demand the right to free speech and free debate on Ireland and oppose the witch-hunters of the right. Our demand is that Britain ends these killings in the only way possible — by ending its armed presence which is prolonging this war.

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Trade Union Briefing

Bosses' backlash against upturn

The upturn in industrial struggle which has emerged over the past few months — particularly in defence of the NHS, in the car industry, and with the ferry crews — has produced a backlash from both the employers and the courts in an effort to stem its further development.

Steve Forey, Assistant Secretary of the ASLEF branch at Kings Cross, and four shop stewards in Manchester have been sacked for calling for support for the NHS day of action on March 14th.

A ballot on strike action in Steve Forey's defence was lost by 150 votes to 124 (see page 5 for full story).

The decisive factor in this vote was the role of the courts where the case marked a major development in the use of the law.

The injunction obtained by BR was not aimed at the union — as in previous such cases — but at the individual workers, who were told they could be held responsible for loss of trade by BR. The injunction was also open ended and will remain permanently in force.

As well as these legal moves management threatened to sack everyone who took action on March 14th. With this kind of pressure even a strong campaign from the branch was unable to obtain a strike vote.

At Dover, as well, there has been unprecedented use of the courts against the NUS, whose executive decided to ballot for national strike action after pressure from the crews at Dover — who have been on strike for nine weeks.

The union had already taken a heavy blow two months ago when it called a national strike in support of the striking Isle of Man crews. The courts declared the strike secondary action and ordered a return to work.

McCluskie first said that he was prepared to defy the law and go to prison — then called off the strike and complied with the court.

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

The new strike call and ballot was not a decision to defy the law, but was based on a new legal argument which McCluskie hoped would avoid an injunction. He argued that the matter of staffing levels was a matter for the whole industry — which is obviously the case — and therefore would not be secondary action.

This was laughed out of the High Court by the judge who ridiculed it as "an ingenuous way to get round the law."

On the basis of this, the Court then ordered the withdrawal of the national strike ballot which was by then in progress since, it said, the ballot itself was now *illegal*!

It was now illegal for people to express their opinion on strike action even if the decision of the ballot was never carried out. To enforce this incredible new departure a suspended sequestration order was issued against the NUS, to be invoked if the ballot went ahead.

By the time the sequestration order was issued, however, the voting was completed. The court then ruled that it was now illegal to count the votes, although they had been cast! McCluskie called off the ballot and had the papers locked in the vaults of the union's bankers — where they will never be counted.

These increasingly outrageous interpretations of the law are part of a pattern which the Tory government have developed since the first legislation was introduced in 1982. At first they only enforced the laws very partially. Then they were used against the NGA and against the NUM during the miners' strike.

Since Wapping, and the collapse of any resistance to them by the TUC, they have become the order of the day, dominating the industrial situation. They are now being interpreted in their full force and new interpretations being invented go beyond that.

The new moves the government has made at GCHQ are no less extreme. Mike Grindley, one of the main organisers of those trade unionists still resisting the ban on trade unions at GCHQ — the government intelligence gathering centre in Cheltenham — is beng ruthlessly persecuted by management.

Mandarin

Grindley has worked there for 26 years as a Mandarin Chinese language expert. He has now been accused of making public classified information and suspended on full pay. All the things he is alleged to have disclosed were already in the public domain anyway!

His positive vetting clearance has been suspended and he has been ordered to keep management informed of his movements in his spare time — including any nights he may spend away from home!

All this is taking place with no response from the top of the trade union movement, where most of the leaderships are still moving to the right, despite the emergence of militancy at the base of the movement. These are major moves which substantially alter the conditions faced by the unions and there is not as much as a comment from the TUC.

Offensive

Another aspect of this offensive is the moves by Ford management. They have managed to overturn completely the policy of the TUC on single union deals with their manoeuvres around their proposed new plant in Dundee. This massively strengthens the position not only of the new realists but of business unionism in the shape of Hammond and Jordan who champion single union deals.

Under these conditions the left have a responsibility to give full support to the sections of rank and file workers who are challenging these developments.

Steve Forey must be given full and active support. His sacking was a blow against solidarity action with NHS workers, but also a blow against rail workers as well. A defence campaign has been set up and should be given full support. It has the support of rail union branches and the Campaign Group of MPs.

The 2,300 seafarers at Dover are now sacked. It is a direct attack on a major organised section of workers on the scale of the attack on the print unions at Wapping. If they are defeated it will mark the virtual end of trade unionism in the shipping industry and a massive deterioration of working conditions in the industry.



PHOTO: Martine Stead

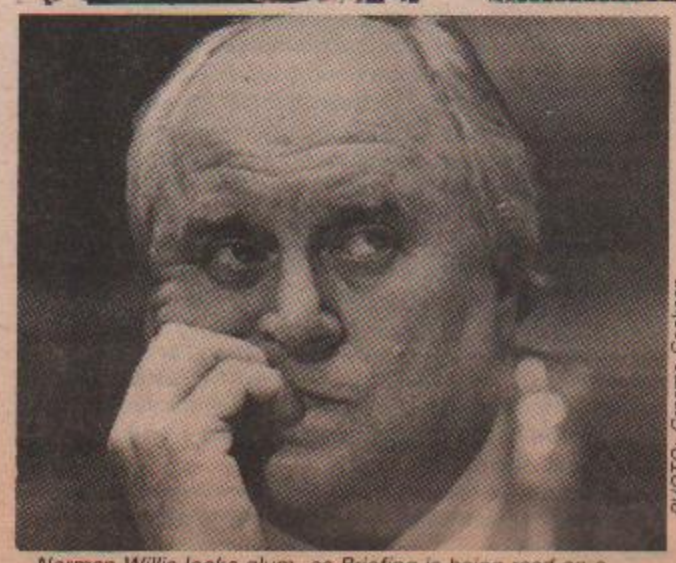


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Norman Willis looks glum, as Briefing is being read on a healthworkers' picket line!

The movement must respond to this. There were support groups organised for the printers and there must be support groups organised for the ferry crews! Money and food needs to be collected and a network organised which can respond to their initiatives and give them support.

The TUC and single union deals

Dundee: *what really happened*

The policy of the TUC on single union deals has effectively been changed.

The change has been forced by Ford management's decision not to build a new components plant in Dundee — and blame their withdrawal on the opposition of the unions to the single union deal they had signed with the AEU last October.

However, it has to be said, the TUC were well on the way to a climbdown already.

In any case, it is far from clear that the real reason for Ford pulling out was opposition to the deal from the unions.

Although the other Ford unions like the TGWU had complained to the TUC about the AEU deal they had done absolutely nothing about enforcing it and had no intention of doing so. They have done nothing in other places where such deals have gone through.

It is therefore hard to see that Ford had a problem. They had a deal with the AEU which would have stuck, and they knew of the opposition of the other unions when they signed the deal.

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

Whatever the motivation of Ford management, the principle is a crucial one for the trade union movement. The main thing about these deals is not that they are single union, but that in return for giving a single union sole negotiating rights the employers demand a heavy price — usually in the form of no-strike clauses, compulsory arbitration and low wages.

In the case of Dundee Ford wanted the plant placed outside the Ford "Blue Book", lower wage rates and its own conditions of employment. Such a development would be a direct threat to wages and conditions throughout the Ford plants.

Deals of this type have become an increasing problem over recent years with few unions maintaining a principled opposition to them. The TGWU has quite rightly led the opposition to the deal in Dundee, but AEU leaders have been able to exploit the fact that they have been involved in similar deals elsewhere.

The same double talk exists over the defence of jobs. The same unions who talk, quite rightly, about defending these 450 jobs in Dundee at all costs sit back and see jobs go by the thousands, often by the tens of thousands, often without a word.

When was the last time the TUC made a fuss about the need to defend jobs? They are doing nothing to support the Dover Ferry crew who are fighting to defend more jobs than were promised for Dundee! Yet no sooner had Ford announced their decision, than Norman Willis had changed the policy of the TUC and flown to Detroit to tell Ford management that they would accept anything in terms of wages and conditions and agreements for the plant.

The way to defend jobs, it seems, is to let the employers do as they like — not defend agreements and the rights of the workers!

After grovelling to Ford, the TUC delegation got short shrift and came back empty handed. Single union, "sweetheart" deals are now the official policy of the TUC — a development which is extremely serious for those fighting to defend the trade union movement and to defend jobs on a principled basis.

Once again the "business unions" have determined the policy of the TUC.

P&O dispute

A call for solidarity from the labour movement

***Briefing* spoke to Steve from the London Strike Support Centre and George Pratt, Chair of the Deal Women's Support Group.**

What is the mood and morale of the strikers at the moment?

Steve: The mood is very confident and the morale is good. After the overwhelming vote at the meeting on Saturday April 3rd management has resorted to what I would call "operating through the back door." They are trying to bypass the unions by sending ballot papers for the NUMAST (ship officers) ballot to each member direct.

George: There was only one vote against continuing the strike at last Sunday's meeting. The ballot of NUMAST members is taking place today (Thursday April 7th) and all the signs are that they will reject the proposal to use foreign crews on P&O ships.

Steve: As NUS members we're disgusted with the behaviour of P&O management. I wouldn't be surprised if they tried to sell off all their ships. But the strike is solid and we mustn't budge.

What's your view of the use of injunctions by the courts against the NUS?

George: Well, to be honest it was expected, wasn't it? If we're all having injunctions, my question is why didn't the union try and get an injunction to stop the ballot on using foreign crews? By using the Courts against us, management have actually hardened the attitude of many of the members in this dispute. It had the opposite effect if they're trying to scare us off.

What do you think of the role of the NUS leadership in the dispute? Have they given you enough support?

George: They were a bit slow to respond at the beginning. I think they were a bit frightened of the courts. But now they are slowly beginning to come round to giving us more support and recognising the importance of this dispute.

I think McCluskie has been slow in giving us the full support we needed.

What about support generally from the labour movement?

George: That has been very good. We've spoken at meetings all over the country, at trade union branches, Labour Party meetings and union conferences.

The response has been excellent. Today (Thursday 7th) for example, Dennis Skinner is coming to us, to speak at the Welfare Club in Dover, to lend his support.

What are the next steps in the campaign to spread the action?

George: We will be trying to get more of a response from the other ports. That is vital.

We will be asking for unofficial support among other NUS members in defence of our jobs and conditions.

We expect a good response on this. Members are now beginning to realise that if Dover is defeated then they could well be next. The importance of our fight is beginning to be understood.

We will be looking to the ports at Liverpool and Felixstowe in particular, and the Sealink crews at Dover for support on this.

In terms of international solidarity we are talking to French, Dutch, and Belgian crews to get them to support us as well in any way they can.

TV-am

Turn the tables on the militant managements!

"Victims of TV-am's militant management team."

That's how pickets at TV-am's north London studio at Camden Lock describe themselves.

229 members of the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) have been locked out since November 24th, 1987; and sacked since February 16th 1988.

That the management team around Bruce Gyngell (himself replaced following a heart attack on March 19th by Deputy Managing Director Adrian Moore) have been "militant" in pursuing their shareholders' interests is beyond doubt. Unfortunately, the response of the ACTT cannot be described in a similar vein.

The TV-am sackings are a warning to the workers and unions not to oppose the wholesale restructuring of working conditions currently underway. The union-busting operation at TV-am has to be seen in the context of all the attacks currently raining down upon workers in the TV and film industry.

Thatcher

Thatcher discusses the industry at cabinet level and raised the stakes by referring "the last bastion of trade union restrictive practices" to the Monopolies Commission.

The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into broadcasting (with particular reference to deregulation of the BBC and ITV network, satellite, cable and subscription) is expected soon.

ITV companies are announcing redundancies and major changes in working practices

By an ACTT member London Freelance Division

(see box). LWT, Thames and Tyne Tees are leading the scramble. They hope to use the uncertainty created after the TV-am sackings to push through packages to give themselves a "competitive edge" over their rivals.

The unions in the industry, the ACTT, NUJ, BETA and EETPU are already signing away traditional conditions and rates of pay, supposedly to guarantee jobs in the ITV companies by making these companies "competitive". Just how the companies are *all* going to become "competitive" when these wage-cuts and changed conditions are implemented *everywhere* is a question that does not seem to have occurred to anyone in union head offices.

This is an important point to grasp about the situation at TV-am and in the industry in general. At the moment it is the *potential threat* of the changes that has made the unions deliver — even the "left"-led ACTT.

After the barrage of media lies about working practices, conditions and rates of pay at TV-am, ACTT backed off into a corner. After the TV-am sackings it consulted its ITV membership on what action to take.

Crucially, there was no recommendation for any form of action. It was left up to the different shops and divisions to decide on what action would be appropriate.

Not surprisingly, the rank and file did not spontaneously decide to carry out nationally co-ordinated industrial action — the only form of action that would have been (and still is) appropriate. Most shops decided to levy members to support those sacked by TV-am.

Meanwhile, Alan Sapper, General Secretary of ACTT, continued to call upon the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) to intervene and discipline its "rogue" management at Camden Lock.

Sapper pushed the line that a company that had to screen repeats of "Batman" and produce programmes without skilled workers could not survive. But the pickets at TV-am found themselves standing alone, with numbers dwindling.

There has never been any attempt to enforce the picket line. Both NUJ and BETA members at TV-am voted to cross the picket line, while scabs are doing ACTT members' jobs. Sapper's threat that anyone doing an ACTT member's job at TV-am will never work in the industry again is quite empty.

Key features of LWT proposals:

- Management to determine crew size and manning (sic) arrangements.
- Maximum overtime rate double time (excluding bank holidays).
- Management to sub-contract as necessary.
- Removal of inefficient job demarcations.
- Introduction of new equipment without lengthy and inhibiting consultative process.
- No payment for hours not worked.

The absence of any attempt to *lead* this struggle and campaign for solidarity action from other workers in the industry simply amounts to the union's leadership hiding behind the doubts and uncertainties of the membership. Worse, it makes any fight over the sweeping changes across the industry as a whole that much more difficult.

TV-am's shareholders are laughing all the way to the bank. The company turned in its best ever profits recently and ratings have not been affected by the undoubtedly diminished quality of TV-am's output.

The problems facing workers in the TV industry are not reducable to what Alan Sapper does or does not say and do.

Membership

It is true that the ACTT is a union with a relatively passive membership that has enjoyed good wages and conditions, won in a period when the TV industry in Britain was far more structured, regulated and profitable than now. It is true that new technology *threatens* to undermine the power of the unions.

It may be the case that the leadership is not capable of winning a majority either nationally or in local areas for strike action to defend those sacked at TV-am and to roll back the employers' offensive.

But to give up without a fight, hoping that the IBA will intervene to save the unions the bother of having to fight, and that managements will see the sense of putting "product quality" before profits is simply to ignore the reality of what is happening here and now.

Union members should take a leaf out of Bruce Gyngell's book. Militant tactics are only unfashionable these days with the "new realist" trade union leaderships and those who are bending to the logic of their arguments. Militant tactics are all the rage with the employers at the moment.

While such a stance can never guarantee success for the union in advance of the struggle, *refusing* to fight *guarantees* defeat. The call for nationally co-ordinated industrial action is already long overdue and should be a central demand at the ACTT's forthcoming annual conference.

King's Cross

Union militant sacked

British Rail have succeeded in sacking ASLEF militant Steve Forey for union activity.

Management admitted as much at the appeal against his dismissal on March 25th — which upheld the original decision.

Kings Cross ASLEF branch took a decision to strike in support of the NHS on the COHSE Day of Action (March 14th) after NHS militants had been round the depot talking to members.

Management took out a High Court injunction against six branch officers to call off the action. In fact, management served the injunctions at a time when they knew that an ASLEF official was at the depot, in an attempt to get them to call off the action, but before he had the opportunity to talk to the officers.

The six were immediately sent home by BR on full pay (with full shift allowance, etc.), although they denied this was suspension. The branch officers complied with the High Court decision and called off the strike and returned to work on Tuesday March 15th.

BR then took disciplinary action against all six officers (despite the strike having been called off!). Five were served with a final warning which stated:

"Should you at any time in the future similarly appear to induce others to breach their contracts of employment I will not adopt a lenient approach and the consequence is likely to be your dismissal."

In others words if they are involved as branch officers in calling any action they could be sacked.

Steve Forey, the Assistant Branch Secretary, was singled out for sacking. The additional charge against him was that he distributed the branch newsletter calling on members to take strike action.

By a *Briefing* supporter on the railways

In fact he did this under instruction from the branch as an officer. The disciplinary hearing lasted over three hours, during which all management's arguments were knocked back, but of course he was still sacked.

That evening (March 16th) the branch had a special meeting to decide how to respond to the sacking. Although a motion for immediate strike action was moved, this was defeated in favour of balloting the membership with a recommendation for a yes vote.

In the run up to the ballot on March 22nd-23rd, management sent individual intimidatory letters to all ASLEF members doubting the legality of the ballot (which had been thoroughly checked with solicitors) and whether a strike was "worth it".

In the face of this management pressure Forey and the branch got no support at all from ASLEF. In fact officials went around querying the legality of the ballot in exactly the same way as management and even hung back before signing Forey's application to the Industrial Tribunal against unfair dismissal!

Unfortunately, under this prssure and isolation the branch officers took a decision on the eve of the ballot that in the event of a successful outcome rather than take immediate all-out action (which everyone had assumed to be the case) there would be a special branch meeting to decide on the *sort* of action to be taken.

The ballot result was surprisingly good in the circumstances — 124 for strike action, 150 against. That so many voted to defend Forey in the only way possible is a tribute to the effort made by the branch to convince the members via several special meerings, leaflets, etc., as well as calling metings for railworkers from other London branches to tell them what was happening. But at the end of the day Forey remained sacked. The enormity of their task in the face of such concerted opposition proved too much for many.

Since Forey's appeal was rejected a circular has come to light sent out by BR to its area managements *before* his original disciplinary hearing saying they could expect industrial action later that day *"because of the disciplinary action being taken against Driver Forey."*

It is clear that the decision to sack Forey was taken by BR at top level and has similarities to the decision of BT to sack John Deason after the strike last year. When it went to a tribunal BT offered no defence — they were prepared to pay extensive damages to be rid of a militant. Many activists also feel there was collusion between ASLEF and management.

The case has serious implications for union activists everywhere, not just railworkers. A militant has been sacked for carrying out branch policy; although the strike was to be in support of the NHS, the "official" movement has not even spoken out in defence of Forey or the other branch officers when the full weight of the anti-union laws was used against them.

For railworkers it is another indication of how hardline management has become in the run up to various important issues (traincrew concept, proposals to scrap the present negotiating machinery) and how compliant sections of our leadership have become.

Kings Cross ASLEF are committed to providing financial support for Steve Forey and will probably be organising a benefit. They are also initiating a campaign around the issues raised by this sacking and the role of ASLEF in it and are calling a series of open meetings to involve railworkers and others.

NUT Conference



PHOTO: Martine Stead

March 8th "Save ILEA" demo shows wide support for education in London. Did NUT Conference listen to the demonstrators?

Teachers resist Clause 28

Education is the major battlefield in the Clause 28 campaign.

The Tory media has conducted a propaganda offensive of lies and disinformation to rake up pretexts for this discriminatory and oppressive law.

At its annual conference, the NUT repudiated these lies and affirmed its support for both the employment rights of lesbian and gay teachers; and the rights of lesbian and gay students to sex education programmes which meet their needs.

The conference took the opportunity to debate these issues and send out a clear message to reactionary bigots.

The recent case of Dr Austin Allen suspended last month by Bradford Local Education Authority after he refused to lie to his pupils about his homosexuality, has been used to remind any teacher that they are in danger of losing their job if they "come out" in the classroom.

The strength of any trade union lies in its members' refusal to allow themselves to be divided. Lesbian and gay teachers, like any other group of workers facing harassment and discrimination, have a right to the full support of their union.

Lena Milosevic from Leicestershire made the speech of Conference when she described the everyday suppression of sexual and personal identity she faced as a lesbian teacher.

Susie Burrows from Hackney, seconding the lesbian and gay rights motion, argued that the Tories were seeking to make bigotry and prejudice legal through Clause 28.

She explained how she had countered anti-gay and lesbian prejudice in her infant classroom. When a parent complained about a particular book, Susie let the parent read it. "That's a lovely bok about feelings," the parent said after.

Conference was still and silent during the debate. It was a dramatic contrast to the Jersey Conference of a few years ago, where lesbian and gay teachers were loudly heckled.

Lena received a standing ovation and the two national executive speakers who followed spoke sympathetically to an amendment that emphasised the civil liberties implications of the Clause.

By Roni Held Convenor STA Women's Caucus

The new realists of the NUT leadership made clear that they were not prepared to campaign to repeal the Clause. Neither were they prepared to counteract stereotypes and misconceptions about lesbians and gays by the presentation of positive images of lesbian and gay sexuality and lifestyles.

Neither were they prepared to back the main motion which called for the specific defence of lesbian and gay teachers attacked under allegation of "promotion" under the terms of the Bill.

In spite of the defeat of the motion which lesbian and gay teachers had put forward, we achieved an historic victory in passing a resolution which commits the union to maintain its support for any teacher victimised on the grounds of their sexual orientation and will not allow itself to be manipulated by those who seek political advantage in whipping up hatred against oppressed groups.

All heterosexual delegates left conference having had their consciousness raised dramatically as a result of the intervention of lesbian and gay comrades. Let's hope they take their new found awareness back to schools in order to take on the bigots there.

The next issue of *Briefing* will publish a fuller analysis of NUT Conference.

W. Midlands

Does Malvern dilute the Labour message?

The West Midlands Regional Labour Party Conference in Malvern on March 19th/20th hit a new low, even for the West Midlands.

Attendance was down for the third year running.

Peter Snape, speaking on behalf of the West Midlands MPs, referring to the possible Leadership challenge, argued Tony Benn "should put up or shut up", and that Benn should stand so he could see the lack of support in the Party for yesterday's men.

The right wing manoeuvred so much off the agenda there was little left to debate. The Alton Bill, North of Ireland (including, disgracefully, the Birmingham Six), local government, and public services all fell off the agenda.

An amendment in one of the resolutions in the local government section called for the Regional Executive and all affiliated organisations to campaign in opposition to Clause 28. The Regional Executive had decided to oppose this amendment — in opposition to Party policy!



By Pauline Purnell
Birmingham Edgbaston CLP

Calls in resolutions and amendments for non-implementation of the Poll Tax, and one day general strikes in support of the NHS were opposed by the Regional Executive and shamefully defeated by the trade union block vote.

In the debate on women's organisation it was pointed out to the male trade union delegates that there have been no women elected to the Regional Executive trade union section since 1943!

But they still voted three to one to defeat the resolution calling for the four women's places on the Regional Executive to be elected by the trade union women and constituency women at the Regional Women's Conference. West Midlands is the only Region in the country not to do this.

Despite the efforts of the excellent woman chair the tone of the conference was set on the first day, when of the 36 speakers only five were women, and only two speakers were black. In fact only nine women's organisations were represented at the Conference.

A fringe meeting sponsored by Birmingham Campaign Briefing, Women for Socialism, Coventry Labour Briefing, and Sandwell Briefing, amongst others, was packed. Bob Cryer from the Campaign Group said he favoured a Leadership challenge. Speakers form Land Rover, LWAC, FAB and the Birmingham Six outlined their various struggles.

The attendance at this meeting shows there is a desire in the West Midlands to organise on the left and challenge the right wing domination on the Regional Executive. The first step towards this is a regional West Midlands Socialist Conference planning meeting, open to all comrades, to be held on May 10th at 8pm at Palfrey Community Centre, Milton Street Walsall.

West Midlands Socialist Conference

The journey from Chesterfield to the West Midlands may not be far in miles on the road, but in political terms the two places often seem light years apart.

Those of us who travelled to Chesterfield last October for the Socialist Conference at least came back feeling some hope was appearing on the horizon, and there was a way of trying to shorten the "political journey" between the West Midlands and socialism.

By John Wilton
Birmingham Edgbaston CLP

The first stage in this is to arrange a West Midlands Socialist Conference. An open planning meeting for this was held at the end of March, sponsored by groups in the West Midlands, including Birmingham Campaign Briefing, Coventry Labour Briefing, Sandwell Labour Briefing, and the Walsall Tribune group.

The meeting decided to hold the Conference in Birmingham in September; and fixed the next planning meeting for May 10th, 8pm, at the Palfrey Community Centre, Milton Street, Walsall. All comrades are welcome.

The left in the West Midlands has traditionally been weak. Yet a large number of comrades from the West Midlands attended the first Socialist Conference in Chesterfield last October.

If you want to attempt to build a united broad democratic left in the West Midlands come to the planning meetings. For further details contact John Wilton, 25 Worlds End Avenue, Birmingham B32 1JF, tel. 021 422 1366.

Hattersley's unique contribution to the *Labour Listens* campaign...

Winning the women's vote, eh?

As the women in Birmingham FAB discovered recently, the Labour Party's Deputy Leader is not content simply to *ignore* Party policy on the issue of abortion — he positively relishes in rubbishing it in public!

Birmingham FAB decided to confront Hattersley at his surgery in Sparkbrook to demand an explanation for his absence at the Second Reading of the Alton Bill in Parliament.

By Karina Holyoak
Birmingham FAB

No apology had been forthcoming: our Deputy Leader proclaimed instead that the situation existing before the 1967 Act was much the preferable one as far as he could see!

Outraged, one woman asked if he was aware that several hundred women used to die annually from backstreet abortions in this country before the '67 Act was introduced. He responded by shrugging his shoulders, saying it was their choice to die, and it had nothing to do with him anyway!

The women on the picket could scarcely believe their ears, but there was more...

When challenged again by the FAB women — who were quite understandably fuming by this stage — Hattersley declared in the pompous manner to which we are by now accustomed, that his point of view was the more valid because he had thought about the abortion issue for the past 20 years, and given it careful consideration (!) whereas these women were simply getting emotional and worked up about things on the spur of the moment! Roy knows best, dears!!

When asked if his sponsoring union was aware that his views on abortion were contrary to their union policy, Hattersley retorted that it was not their concern, because it was "up to a man's moral conscience to decide on such issues"!



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

"Listening? Course I'm listening. Can't you see my mouth's open?"

Labour Party member: Bob Whitehead, It's official!

At its March meeting, the NEC agreed to accept Bob Whitehead immediately into membership of the Party.

He is now free to take his place as a full member of Selly Oak CLP, Birmingham.

By a Birmingham *Labour Briefing* supporter

And so ends a saga of witch-hunting which stretches back two years for Selly Oak, and for Bob a previous two years in addition, with Yardley CLP.

Prior to his acceptance, Bob was interviewed, along with Selly Oak officers, by a representative of the NEC. The central allegation against Bob was explained to the officers for the very first time during the dispute, that of IMG membership.

Following his questioning, Bob was asked by letter to sign a summary of what he had said. After making a couple of corrections, he did this, and this seemed good enough for the NEC.

Essentially, the charge of IMG membership did not hold up, but, linked to this, has to be the resistance and solidarity shown by Selly Oak CLP against the right's attempt to have him removed, over a long period.

In the end, Selly Oak did in fact bow to the NEC and excluded Bob under threat of disbandment, but by then the point had been made. It seemed to have been worth too much trouble to continue excluding Bob without a watertight case, for what it was worth.

Following the victories against the attacks on Amir Khan, Kevin Scally, and Phil Murphy, this latest breakthrough must send a strong signal to the hardline right in Birmingham to think twice before embarking on any more destructive attacks on socialists in future. It is also a message to all sections of the left that determined resistance to all witch-hunting is the only effective policy.

Birmingham Black Sections

Letter to Larry

From: Birmingham District Labour Party Black Sections
To: Larry Whitty, General Secretary, The Labour Party

Dear Mr Whitty,

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter sent by a constituted body within the Birmingham District Labour Party to Birmingham Labour Group officers. We should point out that the Birmingham Labour Group did not take any action against Cllr Gray.

Why did not the Labour Party take action against Cllr Gray for a public outburst which offended a wide range of people in the Birmingham Labour Party and which could be interpreted as bringing the Labour Party into disrepute?

Does the Labour Party, on the race issue, confine itself only to disciplining Black members, such as Sharon Atkin?

We should point out that Cllr Gray's public denunciation of a Black colleague in a religious celebration within one of the Black community groups came 23 days after Cllr Murphy, a Black councillor, had been sacked from the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee, of which Cllr Gray was, and still is, Chair, because he was considered, according to Cllr Knowles, not to be "working for a proper race relations policy."

Recently, 14th April 1987, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party stated in the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, "In Birmingham, the Black and Asian British are part of the Labour Party. They are not open to exploitation by ambitious gamblers." This would be a commendable objective if it was not so easily disregarded by those entrenched in the Birmingham Labour Party power structure.

If the Labour Party, as Neil Kinnock claims, prides itself on advancing the cause of Black People in Britain, then it must stop its discriminatory practices against Black people.

Comradely tidings,
AR Barnett
Birmingham District Labour Party Black Sections

From: Ethnic Minority Liaison Committee
To: The Secretary of the Labour Group, all members of the Labour Group, Secretary of the District Labour Party

This Committee is outraged at the uncontrolled response by Councillor Gray to a comment from the floor during the occasion of the celebration of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday at the Jami Mosque, Small Heath, on the 26th November.

After Cllr Gray's speech, when he was asked to substantiate his claim, made in the speech, that he was a genuine anti-racist and to provide evidence of his credibility to be the Chair of the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee, Councillor Gray took the opportunity to launch a virulent attack on Councillor Murphy, who was not present. Cllr Gray stated that Cllr Murphy was pursuing race relations policies according to his own interpretations and that Cllr Murphy's interpretations were not representative of what the community wanted. Cllr Gray said that Cllr Murphy was a law unto himself, who would not listen to anyone else's point of view and who did not act in a democratic manner.

This attack on an Afro-Caribbean councillor was made at a social gathering of about sixty to eighty people, which included members of the Afro-Caribbean, Asian and White communities.

We deplore the action of Cllr Gray in denouncing an elected representative from the Afro-Caribbean community in a public meeting. It is increasing evidence of the disdain that Cllr Gray has for members of the Afro-Caribbean community, when as the Chief Guest at this occasion, he can attack one of its members in an audience consisting of representatives of different ethnically based community groups.

Cllr Gray, as the Chair of the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee, damages the image of the Labour Party, when he unleashes an attack on a member of the Afro-Caribbean community in such an unbridled manner. Cllr Gray's action can only be interpreted as an attempt by him to create divisions in the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities and is typical of the divisive tactics used to separate community groups, in order to maintain white paternalistic leadership.

The type of behaviour, exhibited by Cllr Gray, is usually demonstrated by our party political opponents and reflected in the "sensationalist" media. We do not expect it from those who claim to have the interests of the Black communities at heart and who claim to understand the roots of racism and racist practice, least of all from someone who chairs the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee.

We would expect the Chair of the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee to reserve his venom for attacking racists in the City not in attacking a known and committed anti-racist. Or, perhaps, Cllr Gray does not know the difference.

In our letter to you of the 29th September, we highlighted Cllr Gray's unsuitability for the post and this further action demonstrates yet another example of his unsuitability. We, therefore, call on the Labour Group to remove Cllr Gray from the Chair of the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee before he does further harm to community relations.

Labour Party

The Real Great Moving Right Show

The move to the right in leading sections of the Party since 1981 has now filtered through to many Constituency Parties.

In London, particularly in Brent and Haringey, Kinnock devotees of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee have worked with sections of the centre right to win Constituency positions.

They have brought the "new realism" seen in Labour Councils to the constituencies.

By Richard Heffernan Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

Leading the movement are many activists who cut their teeth in the student movement and who learnt methods of political organisation in NOLS. For such people, student politics was about "power" without any responsibility, which has led to a preoccupation with winning positions — and acquiring a lengthy "curriculum vitae"!

Emergence

The emergence of this right moving force escalated after the 1983 election defeat and was spurred on by the subsequent election of Kinnock as Party Leader. Unwilling to challenge the Miners' Strike while it was being waged, and unable to oppose the anti-ratecapping struggle, this new right used their "realignment of the left" debate to move sharply to the right.

The move was very clear, despite the mystical references to the self-defined "democratic" and "participating" left, as the LCC supported Kinnock in whatever anti-socialist venture he decided to undertake.

The majority of the LCC is now actually allied with traditional right and centre people, with the result that on any political issue there is no disagreement between them. Indeed, on many issues (particularly the question of Party democracy) some centre right people are to the left of the LCC.

Given the success of Kinnock in shifting the Party apparatus to the right, it is not surprising that sections of the Party have followed — nor that it is a section which has had its political baptism in the student movement.

So profound has the shift been that few of the older established members of the LCC who remain cannot fail to notice that it has travelled a long, long way since it began in 1978. Having been established to oppose the principles which underpinned the Wilson and Callaghan governments, it has now squared the circle and rests itself upon seeking office at all costs.

LCC politics in London offer nothing in the battle for socialism, nor do they offer anything towards fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of working class people.

The new right of the LCC have seen every setback and every electoral defeat as an oportunity to move further to the right. They are now the best cheerleaders for Kinnock's plan to realign the Party permanently.

Tariq Ali coined an adjective which defines the politics of the majority of the LCC. They are *Stabians*: Fabian in politics, interested in office rather than socialism, and Stalinist in organisation and method.

Constant

The left remains constant in the opinions it expresses and the politics it upholds. It is necesarily a broad left that is unconcerned with personal success and will only accept positions of power in the interests of the movement — and primarily as a way of advancing its principles. Once principle becomes secondary to personal advancement then politics becomes meaningless.



Kinnock "watering down the policies" from Kissing Toads, a compilation of Cath Tate's photomontages, published by Virago, £3.95 paperback

Southampton

Organising for the campaign

We reprint a letter sent out by *Southampton Labour Briefing* to a wide audience in the area, in an attempt to get the campaign off to a good start.
Contact *SLB* c/o Paul Wozny, Southampton 221150 — other *Briefing* groups, send out your own letters now!

Dear Comrade,

I am writing to you about the most important development in the Labour Party since last year's General Election. I am sure that by now you are aware of the decision of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to challenge for the leadership of the Labour Party, with the backing of the Campaign Group of MPs. This provides us, Socialists in the Labour Party, with our own challenge. We are given both a great opportunity and a great responsibility.

Opportunity

Our opportunity is that this fight gives us the chance to put forward the Socialist alternative to Thatcher's "popular capitalism". After three general election defeats, the Trade Union and Labour Party Leadership have abandoned any commitment to anything approaching a Socialist perspective. Defeated and demoralised, they are accommodating to Thatcherism — trying to put forward Thatcherism with a "human face".

Unfortunately, the Labour left have also been in disarray. Most of the leaders of the old "Bennite left" have long since given into the "New Realism" of the right. *They* will rally around Kinnock in this election. Those of us who have stood our ground have been marginalised — in some cases through ridicule, intimidation and even "witch-hunting". The "New Realists" have failed to provide a coherent and effective opposition to the Tories — our leadership is the *weakest* parliamentary opposition since the Second World War.

Many good Socialists have been driven into apathy, cynicism and despair. Some have given up on the Labour Party, others have given up on politics altogether. There are also those who have remained active but have just given up hope. The leadership challenge gives us all a focus. We can and must reassert the Socialist alternative. The recent Health Service crisis and the Ford dispute, have shown that the working class can and will fight. The question is — can Socialists in the labour movement provide the leadership to win?

The responsibility we face is to carry on this struggle at a local level. There are many in the labour movement — even in our area — who will respond to the challenge. Our local *Briefing* group must take the initiative to organise the campaign locally. The right will rally round to defend Kinnock — we must unite to put forward the alternative.

Writing

I have already taken the liberty of writing to Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Jeremy Corbyn (Secretary of the Campaign Group of MPs) offering our full support and inviting them to speak or provide speakers in Southampton and possibly neighbouring towns. I have also made contact with people outside our area who we might be able to work with. In addition, I am sending this letter to a number of people (in Southampton) outside of our normal mailing list.

We have a great deal to discuss — more importantly, we have a great deal to plan and organise. We need your ideas and commitment.

Fightback goes national!

Snow in April did not deter 80 delegates from attending the London Fights Back conference on April 9th.

The meeting was called to discuss the situation in local government now that budgets for '88/'89 have been set and the Local Government Bill has become law.

By Tom Loucas Westminster Fightback

The dozen London Fightback campaigns, Councillors Against the Cuts, Labour Parties, local government and education unions, and London Bridge were represented. Brighton and Birmingham were there to represent the Fightback outside London.

Conference

It was clear from the Conference that the fightback had grown over the last six months from the action taken by users and workers and, in particular from the March 8th strike.

However, it was the view of the Conference that the first round had been lost as the cuts budgets had gone through.

It was agreed that the campaign now had to broaden its base to take in the fight against the mass of Tory legislation as well as the cuts. A position of non-compliance with Clause 28 was adopted. Action by workers up to and including all-out strike action must be linked to action by users in the form of occupations, rent strikes, etc.

The presence of activists from outside London showed the need to work towards a national organisation and it was decided to hold regular meetings of delegates from the out-of-London fightbacks.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14th, at the Grays Inn Resource Centre.

South West

Deserted Island Discussions

The 41st annual meeting of the South West Region of the Labour Party was held at Coral Island.

This is a privately owned complex of amusements, bars, and pools, located in the holiday resort of Torquay — a network of buyable fun, sensory gratification and commerical images.

That the complex is privately owned was the reason given for threatening the *Militant* sellers with the police and for moving the *Briefing* sellers beyond the pale... the car park chains.

No one without the permission of the Standing Orders Committee was allowed to sell or leaflet political material within the complex.

Informal

The YS could not have a room for an informal meeting. Fringe meetings could not be held without having applied in writing and the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign collecting tin was snatched from a Young Socialist's hand.

In contrast, the well attended CLPD fringe meeting proposed challenges to the illiberal climate of the Labour Party's increasing centralisation and power structure which are stifling debate and killing the youth movement.

By FRAN JENKIN

The fringe meeting addressed the issues of lesbian and gay rights, women, and economic strategy. Unlike Conference, it saw the failure to place all of these so-called single issues in a coherent policy with a working class analysis, and in an international context, as the reason for Labour's loss in the last election.

The Conference itself discussed the issues, tightly composited, to a tight schedule. Without much dissent, we agreed we were against the poll tax, for child benefit, for safe energy, against electoral reform... and we agreed to leaflets, information packs, campaigns... nothing surprising really and certainly nothing illegal.

The Young Socialists did get a voice in the end and we did hear the voice of one black person who had to use the debate on women to get onto the agenda... And we did pass a resolution calling for a Labour whip against the Alton Bill (to an accusation of "fascist" by one delegate)... And I gather everyone had fun.

Weariness

If you gather a hint of weariness in this summary, well... you'd be right. But I would add that there were enough strong voices for socialism on Coral Island to make intervention still worthwhile in this often forgotten region of rural deprivation (which hits women particularly hard) and right wing control.

NUS

As we go to press, the National Union of Students (NUS) Conference is taking place in Blackpool. SIMON KEMP, Oxford East CLP, looks at the issues up for discussion.

National Executive elections will see a battle between those who wish to fight and those who do not. But Conference will also have a series of debates which ultimately will determine whether or not there is a National Union prepared to join in the fightback.

In every debate prioritised for discussion the same argument will emerge: does NUS wish to fight or not? Over Clause 28, for example, there will be attempts to overlook the question of non-implementation.

The key objective of the present "Democratic Left" (Clause IV)/Communist Party leadership is to force policies on the union which confine themselves to letter writing and lobbying and which reject direct action at all costs.

These issues will come to a head in the debate on the future of NUS itself. Conference Document Five outlines the way in which the present leadership wishes to see the union change.

Entitled "The next Five Years" (a name which has been used before!) it enshrines the very attitudes which have plunged NUS into its present crisis. It continues the "dented shield policy" of hanging on and waiting for Kinnock to be elected. Indeed, the timetable "coincides" with the likely date of the next General Election!

Amongst the suggestions are a change in election procedures to give greater autonomy to the liberation campaigns; an idea to fund the Area Organisations centrally; and to reduce the size of the National Executive from 21 to 12 — although all would be full-time.

Such ideas are not unwelcome, but there are two key drawbacks.

- All the proposals are prefaced by a clause stating that any changes have to bear in mind a "declining financial base". In other words, you can only make changes if "we" can afford it — which is bound to constrain any useful and progressive moves.
- Not only are students and education under attack, but NUS is too. Its only answer is to bow to the Tories, run away and hide and pray for the election of a Labour government. Conference Document Five, as submitted to Conference, offers nothing more than a capitulation to the forces pitted against the student movement.

Feature: Labour Leadership election

Not a distraction, but a campaign for socialism!

By Bryn Griffiths
Hackney South CLP

Labour Briefing **has been amongst the most enthusiastic in advocating a Campaign Group challenge to the New Realist leadership of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley.**

And naturally we were delighted when the Campaign Group selected Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to stand.

Others in the movement are far from delighted at having their records scrutinised in the middle of the delicate process of shifting the Party to the right through the mechanism of *Labour Listens* and the policy review.

The fact that the Campaign Group has decided to stand will open up the debate about policy in every Labour Party and trade union branch.

Key to the election will be the record of New Realism. Roy Hattersley has quickly entered the fray arguing "One distraction is this nonsense that we can beat Thatcher now instead of waiting for polling day."

Our approach is quite different. Support for workers' struggles today is the key to electoral success.

It was the action of the Manchester nurses, not the parliamentary interventions of the Labour front bench, that forced the NHS up the political agenda. The response of the New Realists was to turn their backs on the healthworkers by rejecting the Campaign Group NEC resolution that supported the strike action.

The key to an effective campaign will be the alliances we forge with those in struggle. The Budget day meeting organised by the Socialist Conference movement and the Solidarity Network at which Tony Benn joined striking trade unionists on the platform showed the way forward.

In our local Labour Parties we should use the Benn-Heffer ticket as a focus for recruitment. Campaign meetings should reach out beyond the existing activists to all those that want to fight the Tories.

Local Benn-Heffer campaigns should draw up plans to convince those involved in the FAB, Clause 28 and NHS campaigns that their natural allies are their local Labour Parties.

The trade union leaders, with a small number of honourable exceptions, will be amongst our most vociferous opponents.

In the unions the campaign provides us with an opportunity to fight for the democratisation of the Block Vote. Union leaders that have rushed to the press to announce their support for Kinnock and Hattersley must be reminded that they are not the union.

The New Realists in both the trade unions and the Party oppose not only the Benn-Heffer candidature but, quite understandably from their position, the election itself.

New Realism rests on the demoralisation and apathy of the members, so the development of a visible fighting alternative strikes at the heart of their strategy.

New Realism echoes the Thatcherite cry of "There is no alternative". This campaign more than anything gives us an opportunity to provide a public alternative to Thatcherism itself, something the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership have clearly failed to do.

While the opponents of Benn and Heffer will denounce the contested election as a distraction, we must use it to widen out the debate around the policy review and to show there is an alternative — a popular, workable alternative, for the first time from the Labour Party not put on display at the General Election — to the Thatcher regime.

At last a campaign against the Tories!

All socialists both inside and outside the Labour Party will be heartened by the decision of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to stand against Kinnock and Hattersley this year.

The necessity of such a challenge has been repeatedly emphasised in *Briefing* in recent months.

The Leadership contest provides an opportunity for the left to advance the case for the socialist alternative to capitalism and to set it against the accommodationist and wholly ineffective social democratic agenda of the existing Leadership.

The *Economist*, of all publications, put the coming election in perspective when it described it as essentially a choice between a socialist Labour Party and a non-socialist Labour Party.

For this reason, the Leadership challenge must involve not only Benn and Heffer. It must become the campaign of everybody who wants a genuine socialist alternative to the present economic system.

The campaign against the Kinnock Leadership will become in effect a campaign *against the Conservative government*, because it is the only campaign against *capitalism*. It will show that there is an alternative to the vain attempt to win Conservative voters by eschewing all socialist commitments.

The record of the present Leadership since 1983 inspires little confidence in anyone. Both its basic incompetence and its ideology are in doubt across wide sectors of the labour movement.

Kinnock and Hattersley will abandon any principle in the erroneous belief that elections can only be won with the support of the ruling class. In this defeatist perspective the Labour Party is expected to appeal to an undifferentiated mass of electors by referring the "national interests", "realism", and "pragmatism".

By Richard Heffernan
Haringey Labour Briefing

However, unlike traditional social democrats, Kinnock has proved singularly unable to win office and has been soundly rejected at the polls. As Leader, he has failed every test put before him. He has proved totally incapable of challenging the Tories on every issue from Westland to the NHS, a fact recognised by all shades of Party opinion across the political spectrum.

Repeatedly in the House of Commons, the only place where the Leadership is to be found, the Conservatives have simply brushed aside the usually ineffective, often feeble, sometimes negligible protests of the Labour Front bench. Never mind asserting socialism, they have failed even to *oppose the government*.

This record of political failure and incompetence will be called to account by the Benn/Heffer campaign.

The limitations of the present Leadership are, of course, most graphically illustrated by Labour's "brilliant election defeat" in June.

Despite the slick presidential-style advertising campaign, the Party failed even to reduce the Tory majority significantly. In the face of such a defeat the Labour Leadership now argues for a *further* move to the right in another doomed attempt to out-Thatcher Thatcher.

The current leadership challenge is necessary if we are to reverse this course.

The Leadership camapgin will enable us to force the links between struggles. Its success will require approaches both inside and outside the Labour Party. Our aim is to mobilise support up and down the country for an alternative based upon class politics. The campaign will have to go into the community and into the rank and file of the labour movement.

It cannot be content with winning the Constituency Management Committees, nor the support of trade union executives, however vital may be. We are after the support of masses of individual Party members and trade unionists.

A campaign within the trade unions focussed on the workplace will prove the key to the left success. For example, as Kinnock has yet to appear on a healthworkers' picket line, or even on RCN demonstrations, pretending instead to "support" the NHS by asking the Chancellor of the Exchequor, very nicely, for some extra money.

The left can only gain by linking up with NUPE and COHSE workers. The message is: back Benn and Heffer to support the NHS.

Tony Benn himself has argued that the aim of the Leadership campaign is not just to assert the necessity of socialism but to assist in the development of optimism by exposing the pessimism which "paralyses the will and creates the solid pedastal of compliance which the establishment needs to preserve it power."

The Leadership challenge is not "self-indulgent". It is necessary not only if the Labour Party is to win an election but if it is to be a serious political party with socialist principles and practices.

It must not be a "supporters" club" of an entrenched Leadership who merely exist to seek election under the direction of a market researcher, seeking the trappings of high office without the intention of holding real power. That is the real "self-indulgence" and it must be defeated.

The Leadership campaign, regardless of its outcome, will challenge this kind of politics and in so doing open the way for real socialist advance.

A focus for socialis

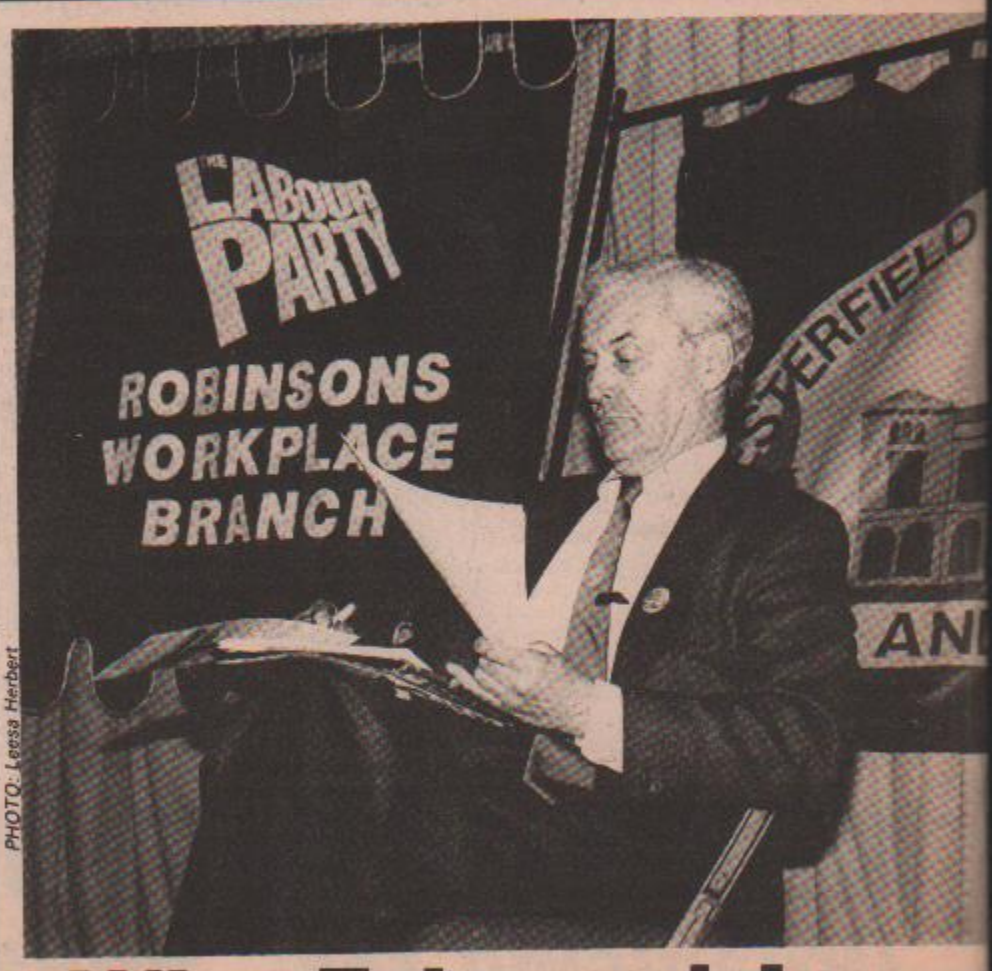


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Why Eric and I are standing

Why are you and Eric Heffer standing for Leader and Deputy Leader?
We were nominated by the Campaign Group. There were various discussions and we consulted the movement for about two months. A large number of people wrote in.

There was a problem of the timetable. If you left it too late it would be hard to get it round the trade union conferences. If you did it before you consulted it would not be right.

I wasn't present at the meeting of the Campaign Group which voted to nominate us so I can't tell you much about it. But it did decide, by a substantial majority, to hold the election. Eric and I were nominated and we accepted.

Our decision was motivated by three main concerns. One was to give much stronger support to people in struggle outside Parliament. The second was to advance radical and realistic programmes to deal with people's immediate needs. And the third was to put socialism back on the agenda.

It's going to be seen as a long-term campaign, not just confined to two candidates in 1988. A long-term campaign for socialism within the labour movement. And of course it links in with the other movements towards socialism, the green and socialist conference, the non-alignment conference, the Chesterfield Conference itself.

To sum up, it's about the recovery of the socialist traditions within Britain which the circumstances of the times makes absolutely necessary.

What are the main policy areas which you will be raising in the campaign?
The two basic documents of the campaign are the aims and objectives of the Campaign Group, which have already been before the National Executive, and an Agenda for Labour which is a paper examining all the areas of policy, including international relations, defence, democratisation of the state, and Ireland.

The policy work that the Chesterfield Conference is doing also provides a powerful source of ideas which we hope will be discussed very widely throughout the movement.

How is the campaign going to be organised?
I'm hoping this will be done by involving as many members of the Campaign Group as possible in the various jobs that need to be done, in the regions, the trade unions, the constituencies, etc. So it will be collective in character.

It won't be just a personal campaign by the candidates. It should be collectively run, organised, and directed, and afterwards it will still go on — though in what form it's much too early to say.

Will you be trying to involve other organisations such as women's and black organisations, etc?
Absolutely. One of the things that makes the Campaign Groupn different from the Tribune Group is that we've always seen our function as above all linking the struggle outside with our work inside Parliament. Labour Left Liaison, Black Sections, WAC, CLPD, are part of the Campaign Group. The purpose is to make it very broad. The Campaign Group has endorsed the aims of WAC and Black Sections and rights for lesbians and gays, and is linked to other initiatives including the green and socialist conference and the non-aligned conference.

You've said you thought this campaign will probably be more low-key than the last one. But most people on the left are elated by your decision to stand. They feel the time is right to make a strong, unapologetic challenge to the leadership over a whole range of issues.
Perhaps low-key was the wrong phrase. There is a feeling, which I share, that we don't want this to be inward-looking and focused only on the Party.

What we're trying to do is to address as socialists the central problems facing people and use the campaign to get across our ideas to the generality of Labour voters and potential supporters, and not allow it to become like an American primary.

When the campaign is over in October, the momentum and the coalitions built up mustn't be dispersed. As with the Chesterfield Conference, we need something on-going and long-lasting.
To be candid, one of the reaso the Chesterfield Conference w called was because the disc sions held before the Gene Election led people to belie you couldn't actually challen for the leadership during election campaign, for tacti reasons, and that therefore was better to set up an indepe dent socialist movement.

And out of the success of t flowed the impetus to carry into the Labour Party in t way, as part of a long-te campaign.

But it won't be at all like 19 for a whole range of reasons one of which is that after '81 were moving into a general el tion period, whereas now have time to carry it on.

And I think this campa *will* go on. The work must ne stop. What form it takes m change.

The one continuity we lo forward to is Chesterfield C ferences, which will undoubt ly appeal to people outside Party and help to build up support for socialism inside Party and the trade unions a elsewhere.

How do you see the Chesterfi movement developing in t future?
I think it will continue a grow. There's no doubt th whatever view people may ha about the Leadership electi it's given a filip to the Ches field movement and simila the Chesterfield movement give it a continuity that will way beyond the June C ference and I presume futu conferences.

Whether there's anot Leadership election will have be decided, but this thing is the move now and I do believe it will be checked.

Also remember in 1989 so-called listening exercise a the policy reviews come to end in the Labour Party. Th fore in a way 1989 will be even more critical year.

If, as many people fear, the time the policy review a the listening is over we're ad ed to adopt policies that h more in common with the cen than with socialism then I th you'll find there will be renewal of activity, in Labour Party as well as throu Chesterfield, and maybe for I know the acceptance of principle of an annual lead ship election.

The kind of leadership campaign we want

As Tony Benn himself makes clear in this issue of *Briefing*, the purpose of this year's challenge to Kinnock and Hattersley is far more ambitious than just tallying up a decent total at October's electoral college.

This is nothing more nor less than a campaign for socialist ideas. As such, it's target is as much Margaret Thatcher as Neil Kinnock.

Indeed, one of the keynotes of the campaign must be that *only* the bold, unashamed socialist appeal associated with Benn and Heffer can knock the Tories from their perch and reverse the rapidly accelerating rightward course of British politics.

If this wide-ranging, longlasting campaign is to prosper, it must be built from the ground up. Backdoor stitch-ups, whether at union conferences, or GC meetings, are irrelevant. We must work to fashion a vital, grass roots campaign that can inspire rank and file Party members and trade unionists.

Local Benn-Heffer organising committees should be set up wherever possible. They should be non-sectarian, democratic, non-exclusive.

Through press releases, leaflets, meetings, social events, etc., they should aim to rouse popular enthusiasm and heighten political consciousness. They should draw their strength from local and national struggles — those many critical struggles, from the NHS and Local Authority cuts to Clause 28, FAB, and immigration laws, which Kinnock and Hattersley have betrayed.

Local committees should not feel obliged to restrict their audience to Labour Party members. They should address any and every one outraged by Tory crimes and frustrated by Kinnockite inertia.

The Chesterfield conference initiative provided the impetus for the leadership challenge. Now we can bring the excitement of that challenge back into the Chesterfield movement. Everyone will gain from this interchange.

Self-organised groups of Black people, women, lesbians and gay men, people with disabilities, and others should be given free rein to agitate for Benn and Heffer in their own communities.

This is no time for passivity, for business as usual. The aim should not be merely to win your ward or section or YS branch for Benn and Heffer, but to use the vote as an opportunity to speak with as many members as possible — and to recruit new ones.

Already the AEU, UCW, NUPE and the GMB are planning membership ballots of one kind or another. Again, there is an opportunity for left activists to broaden their base and strengthen their organisation. Benn-Heffer campaigns need to be set up in each affiliated union, with workplace organising committees determined to bring the arguments to the point of production.

Cross-union and regional campaigning groups can also be set up, for example, why not "London Healthworkers for Benn and Heffer", "Carworkers for Benn and Heffer", "British Rail" or "London Regional Transport Workers" or "Teachers for Benn and Heffer"?

The long-term spin-offs of this kind of activity are obvious. The campaign is an opportunity to bring the arguments for socialism — and for socialist leadership — to new constituencies. It is an opportunity to forge political links between the diverse, often highly sectional, struggles which have preoccupied many activists in recent years.

It is an opportunity for the left to moblise, educate, and organise on a new scale. Let's not blow it, comrades!

Trade Unionists and the campaign

The failures of the Leadership of the "political" wing of the labour movement to fight the government and bosses are mirrored by the failure of the trade union leaders to conduct a fightback.

Kinnock and Hattersley are shored up and encouraged in their "Policy Review" by the "New Realists" in the Unions.

The fight to replace one is inevitably a struggle against the other, so an active campaign to support Benn and Heffer can strengthen the left in the unions.

Just as the trade unions leaderships have refused to campaign amongst their members in support of the NHS or against Alton's Bill, so Kinnock never supported the Miners' Strike, and rarely even comments on other strikes; the most anyone has wrung out of him being his "understanding" for striking nurses.

Those like the seafarers battling against the courts as well as their employers are not given an ounce of support from a leadership which refused to commit itself to repealing the Tories' anti-union laws in the General Election campaign.

John Prescott is of course the ideal bureaucrats' candidate. Claiming that he has no *political* differences with Kinnock and Hattersley, his campaign is supposed to be only about the "role" of the Deputy Leader, and he declares himself willing to work alongside Kinnock.

He appeals to those with muted criticism who don't want to rock the boat by challenging Kinnock directly and who don't want to open the Pandora's box of policy discussion too widely to the membership.

Of course it is obvious to anyone that Kinnock and Hattersley *both* see the role of the Leadership in purely parliamentary terms, and that politically it is *Kinnock* who has succeeded in shifting policy to the right and away from the unions, with Hattersley merely tagging along.

The growth of new realism in the unions and the support of the bureaucracy for Kinnock means that a concerted campaign amongst the membership for Benn and Heffer is essential not only to achieve the maximum political impact but also if any unions are to vote for them in October.

This makes the lateness of the decision to stand a big problem in the trade unions. Ideally every branch would discuss the issue before a full debate and decision at conference. It is already too late for resolutions to many Conferences.

Unlike in 1981 there is probably not a single union executive which can be *relied* upon to give support to Benn and Heffer, or even ensure proper discussion of it. Indeed, General Secretaries are already lining up to tell the media how "their" union will vote.

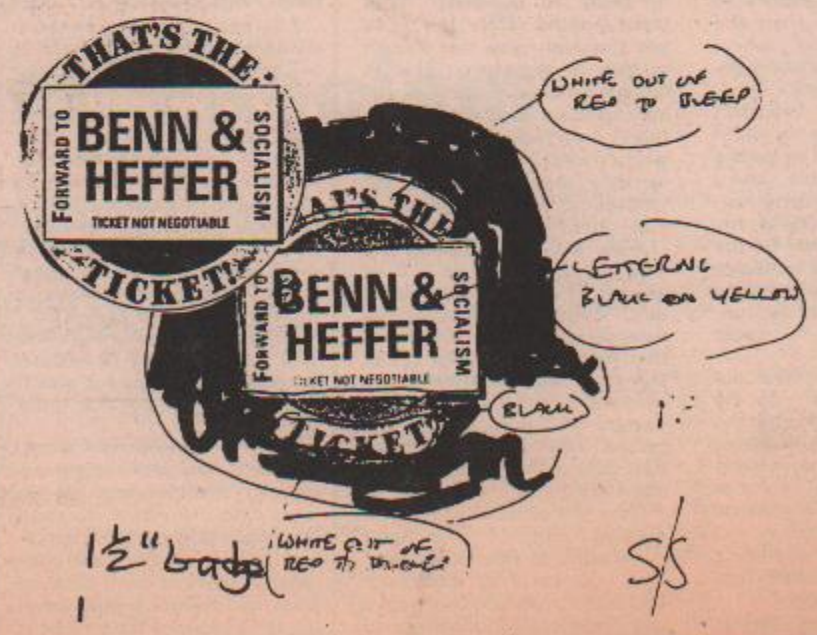
If the bureaucrats have their way discussion will either be restricted to the executives, or, alternatively, some may go for a ballot of the membership with no attempt to counteract the propaganda of the media.

None of this means we can't make a big impact in the unions with the campaign and mobilise grass roots support for Benn and Heffer, but it does mean we have to move quickly.



PHOTO: Wayne Edington

Bumper badges offer!



To get the Leadership campaign off to a quick start, *Briefing* is rushing out a set of Bumper Badges — see the artists' impression on the left!

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Benn and Heffer: *that's the ticket!*



As an old Chartist I always believe in annual elections.

So you can't anticipate it but the one thing that is absolutely clear is that it won't end on the night of the electoral college when the results are announced, whichever way they go. I personally think that the forecasts in the press are wildly wrong and don't correspond with my own experiences at all.

Will Chesterfield develop more into a movement? It's beginning to take root in some areas, with Women for Socialism and links with trade union forces, etc. But will it develop into a rooted movement with democratic structures, etc?

I always imagined to begin with it would be very well placed if it was like CND. That is to say, CND is a movement outside the Labour Party for nuclear disarmament and I've always thought what we needed in Britain is a movement for socialism that could begin to influence a range of organisations, including the Labour Party and even other political parties.

It is necessary to say that it isn't the intention to set up a new political Party with its own electoral machinery. I've always thought that would be a mistake. This is a movement for socialism which clearly will have a profound effect because it is an independent initiative and doesn't therefore stand or fall on what happens at Labour Party Conferences.

Are you going to be setting up specific campaigns in each union?

I think you'll find that the Broad Lefts of the unions are interested in and anxious to promote not only the leadership contest but also the idea of socialism having a life of its own. How they interrelate — how the contest is linked to the broader questions — is a matter we can't anticipate.

Somebody said the same people keep doing the same work under different headings. You find the same people go on Nicaragua demonstrations, anti-apartheid, CND, against victimisation of lesbians and gays, for miners, printers, teachers. What we're doing is giving a focus to a lot of people who are socialists but feel they have not been adequately represented in the national or local arena.

Features

Twenty years of the 1967 Abortion Act:

Reasons to celebrate

April 27th sees the twentieth anniversary of the implementation of the 1967 Abortion Act. There are many reasons to celebrate the Act, and to defend our gains, even whilst we recognise that the Act does not go far enough and that we must — as we have since 1975 — continue to campaign for the law we want, for the choice to be truly women's and women's alone. In a speech given to a meeting organised by Birmingham FAB, Leonora Lloyd (NAC) looks at our reasons to celebrate.

Saving Lives and Health

Before the 1967 Abortion Act was fully implemented, some 30 women a year died from illegal abortions in this country.

Between 1968 and 1972, the death rate from all abortion fell dramatically (much faster than the maternal mortality rate) as did hospital admissions due to septic abortions.

Three deaths in 1986 as a result of abortion compares with 31 deaths related to pregnancy and birth.

Fewer young women pressurised to marry

The number of "shot-gun" or "seven-month" marriages amongst young women has fallen dramatically.

- Between 1969 and 1973, the annual rate of illegitimate births to women under 25 fell by 5,875.
- In 1970, 49% of pregnancies in unmarried teenagers ended in marriage, and 21% in abortions. By 1980, only 23% ended in marriage, and 44% in abortion.

This trend seems to be continuing. Youthful marriages are notoriously unstable, with the young woman being left literally holding the baby after a few years.

Changing attitudes to single-parenthood

Attitudes to illegitimacy have changed. A pregnant young woman is assumed to be able to choose between continuing the pregnancy or an abortion. If she decides on the first and does not marry she has a further choice between keeping the baby or adoption.

At least until the mid-70s, the availability of abortion did not reduce the number of babies waiting to be adopted. However, the number of healthy, white, protestant babies available fell, whilst the numbers of Roman Catholic, non-white and handicapped children unable to find adoptive parents increased.

Women no longer feel compelled to continue a pregnancy only in order to give their babies away. Single parenthood is seen as a positive choice.

Figures for "illegitimacy" have rocketed in recent years; but a majority of such babies are born to couples having a stable relationship, signified by both parents' names (with the same address) appearing on the birth certificate.

Women have more options today. They no longer feel forced to marry, although of course many do; they do not feel they have to give their baby away, although of course many do; and they need no longer feel ashamed about an "out-of-wedlock" baby — and, hopefully, few do!

No longer a shameful secret

Whilst the anti-abortionists still try hard to make it shameful even to contemplate abortion, more women are prepared to talk about abortions they have had, or to consider the circumstances under which they would have one.

The failure of anti-choice propaganda is seen by the slow, but steady, rise in the number and rate of abortion. An increase in the numbers of abortions is not something to be glad about when family planning facilities are being drastically cut, unemployment is growing and more people are becoming homeless; but at least women do not feel cowed by the anti-abortionists into accepting their fate. The issue is openly discussed in many schools.

The pro-choice groups can take much of the credit for this. NAC, in particular, with a perspective of mass action from the start, taking the debate into the labour movement, and being straightforward and matter-of-fact about the subject, has helped to revolutionise attitudes.

Research shows that cultural attitudes towards abortion are probably the biggest single factor determining how women feel about their abortions — more important than the treatment they receive at the time, for instance.

Women gain more control

By 1986, 2,053,090 resident and 585,100 non-resident women had had abortions in England and Wales — safely and legally. We have no way of knowing how many were unable to exercise choice.

Some women undoubtedly were pressurised into having an abortion they did not want or felt uncertain about — many others were probably pressurised into not having an abortion.

Still, many thousands of women over the last 20 years have been able to take more control of their lives and have had a choice that before was denied them, or could only have been taken at great risk.

Motherhood is a positive choice

Attitudes towards family planning have changed. Women expect to plan if and when to have children.

New methods of contraception continue to be developed, even if not always satisfactory! Vasectomy and sterilisation are much more common. Women need no longer view themselves as baby-producing machines.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Torchlit procession against Alton

Abortion rights internationally

Since 1967, other countries have liberalised their abortion laws, whether as a result of pressure on their health service from illegal abortions (as in Turkey), because of pronouncements by the Courts (as in the United States) or as a result of mass movements of women forcing changes in the law (as in Holland).

We can congratulate ourselves on being one of the first countries to initiate a mass movement campaigning for abortion rights, and for taking the initiative in organising an international movement.

As we celebrate 20 years of legal abortion, let us not forget our sisters unlucky enough to be faced only with the choice of travelling for abortion, illegal abortion — and perhaps death, illness or imprisonment — or enforced, unwilling motherhood.

Whilst we continue to fight for the law we want, let us not forget that part of that fight must be to continue to support our sisters all over the world, in their struggles to take control over their lives.

Speculum: A Midwife's Musings

Intimate knowledge of Roy Hattersley

Sisters, I have been insulted.

Our Women's Officer, when asked to write a report on the recent women's TUC conference, decided to model it on my style: "not intellectual," she said, "but anecdotal and interspersed with jokes".

So you want intellect, as well as healing hands? The sauce of it! To get my own back, I'm following up our Women's Officer's own idea for this issue of *Speculum*: *Intimate knowledge of Roy Hattersley*.

Promise

No, hang it! I'll stick to my promise and go on about the pill. As you are by now well aware, it takes very little to sidetrack me from my train of thought, so I might bung Roy Hattersley in somewhere.

You may remember that I mentioned in my last article about the Cap that I was firmly in favour of barrier methods of contraception, and dead against the Pill and the IUCD (coil).

Painful

The coil can be painful when inserted, even more painful when removed, and can cause menstrual chaos. It is also associated with dysmenorrhoea (severe period pain) and heavy bleeding.

Occasionally, the device perforates the uterus and the hapless woman has to undergo major abdominal surgery for it to be retrieved. Babies have been born "clutching the coil", so it isn't too great a contraceptive, anyway.

And, of course, the use of the coil is strongly associated with pelvic inflammatory disease, so that the fallopian tubes can become blocked, thus preventing conception when the woman chooses to try to have a baby.

By TESS KEWLEY SRN, SCM

When a woman who has a coil in becomes pregnant, the incidence of ectopic pregnancy is significantly higher (where the baby develops in the tube, or elsewhere in the abdominal cavity!. This frequently leads to rupture of the tube, thus making the women sub-fertile.

Women in the Third World are being fitted with IUCDs without explanation, and no follow-up is done, so the women have the devices left in forever. There is no doubt that some women have died because they were unable to consult a doctor or nurse about prolonged heavy bleeding.

Scandal

Finally, most of you will have heard of the Dalkon Shield scandal, where women are sueing the manufacturers of a particular coil, because some of them have been rendered sterile as a result of its use.

Back to the Pill. The Pill works by inhibiting ovulation. Absolute contra-indications to its use are: raised blood pressure, malignant liver disease, and history of blood clots in the deep veins. Women who smoke, who are older than 35, or who are seriously overweight should not really take the Pill, because of the risks of heart disease and blood pressure problems.

Side-effects include: severe nausea, migraine, loss of libido, thrush, weight gain, mood changes, and suppression of lactation (breastfeeding). Therefore women who are breastfeeding should be prescribed the "mini-pill", which doesn't contain any oestrogen.

Marketed

When the Pill was first marketed, the dose of oestrogen it contained was considerably higher than the dose employed now, which accounted for the serious side-effects first described.

I personally wouldn't swallow one to save my life! I just feel that it must be wrong to tamper with nature, and I don't want lots of nasty hormones circulating round my body uninvited. It may be the safest contraceptive available (in terms of preventing pregnancy) but it is undoubtedly the most dangerous, too.

Here I will stick my neck out and enrage many of you, by saying that I don't believe the Pill should be readily available to young women, particularly those under twenty. I'm not taking a Victoria Gillick moral standpoint on this issue — I just think it's bad for women's bodies to have unnatural hormones floating around.

I do believe that freely available contraceptive advice should be available to all women, young and not-so-young, and I think that more people should be educated about the dangers of the Pill and the advantages of barrier methods emphasised. Condoms should be promoted more, especially since AIDS is with us now.

NB: If you *are* taking the Pill, you don't have to have "breaks" from it every couple of years. Nor do you need to stop taking the Pill for a week in order to have a withdrawal bleed. You can safely continue taking the Pill indefinitely with no gaps, so that you don't have a period at all.

Conceive

Also, if you come off the Pill in order to conceive, **wait three months** before you try to get pregnant (use the sheath or cap in between). This is because the incidence of spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) is considerably higher in women who conceive as soon as they stop taking the Pill (proves it isn't too good for you, eh?).

Also, if you are taking the mini-pill, you *must* take it at exactly the same time each day. Even two hours difference can render it ineffective for that particular cycle. Vomiting and diarrhoea, by eliminating the Pill from your system before it can be absorbed, also render it ineffective during the cycle, so use something else.

Now the bit you've all been waiting for — intimate knowledge of Roy Hattersley! Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I'm afraid I don't *have* any intimate knowledge of Roy Hattersley. Thank god.

Football Focus

Yuppie Valley

Like many other Charlton supporters, I was delighted to hear of the move from Selhurst Park.

A recent visit to London had included a pilgrimage to the Valley, and seeing the ground in its current state was most depressing.

By Graham Speller Birmingham

As with other great event, fans will no doubt recall the exact moment when they heard of the move. It's a bit like knowing where you were when you heard that President Kennedy had been shot (is my age showing?).

I have to admit I was awakened in the night by a friend who is a Chelsea supporter, and who couldn't wait till the morning.

However it's worth noting that behind all the exultation there is no commitment to return to the Valley, but only to somewhere in Greenwich. It is therefore possible to speculate on the Valley being sacrificed in order to build houses at great profit, while the Club moves to somewhere like the gasworks.

After all, Charlton British Rail station is only 20 minutes from London Bridge and ideally situated for the get rich quick City slickers.

Such a development would also be in line with the government's "revitalisation" of the inner cities. In reality we know this means destroying an important feature of the local community, move it some distance away and replace it with housing too expensive for anyone in the community to buy.

You only have to look a short distance up the road to see examples in Surrey Docks and on the Isle of Dogs.

If this is the case, what are the chances of such developments being named after great players who once graced the vast expanses of the Valley? Along with Sam Bartram Close and Valient Heights (I did notice they didn't rise very high, surely the architects don't know our history?) we could have Johnny Summers Way, Killer Close, Peacock Avenue, John Hewie Street, Eddie Firmani Way.

It's also possible to speculate on the name of the road leading into the estate. Perhaps it would be called Wembley Way — a long, hard road full of interest. (In reality it's more likely to be fairly short and lead to a dead end.)

In a recent interview Michael Norris (Vice Chair of CAFC) stated that as negotiations were very sensitive they had to be held in secret. The announcement of the intended move changes all that. What is not known at this stage is what the final result of the move will be.

To further the answers to this question an Open Conference could be held where all interested parties were invited to put forward suggestions, listen to ideas and exchange views. In this way, the future of the Club could be determined by all those who share an interest in it. If the Club felt unable to take up that challenge, then perhaps others would.

A test of the Club's resolve to rebuild for the future will be the way developments are handled over the next few months. Consultation and partnership would help the community go forward and create a team capable of scaling the greatest heights.

Jackson at the crossroads

Jesse Jackson's massive victory in the Michigan caucus late last month raised the possibility of the Country Preacher winning the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Jackson campaign manager Gerald Austin and Rainbow Coalition leader Ron Daniels have argued repeatedly that Jesse has a mathematical possibility of winning.

But the political powers and corporate interests which have decisive influence in the Democratic Party will not allow a progressive or Black presidential nominee, regardless of the popular votes he receives.

Party leaders have created a "superdelegates" category for 640 Congresspersons, Governors, and Democratic officials — not elected by the public, but participatants at the convention.

Already, Dukakis is quietly consolidating a base among them, pushing the case that he is the only electable Democratic candidate.

Counterattacked

Austin has counterattacked ineffectively, claiming that "fairness" will be a major issue in Atlanta. But there was nothing "fair" about the 1984 Democratic Convention, when Jackson came in with nearly 20% of the total popular vote and came out with only 11% of the final delegate vote.

Jackson is now at the political crossroads. One route could take him even further down the road toward political moderation. The impulse to be seen as a "serious" candidate with a reasonable chance of winning nomination has already led to the watering down of several progressive policies, including the Middle East.

Black Democratic leaders like California's Willie Brown are uniting behind Jackson largely for narrow, opportunistic reasons. They know their exhortations against him backfired in 1984, and there was little chance to derail the Rainbow's momentum in 1988. By embracing Jackson, they are doing as their Black constituents expect.

In this context, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's endorsement of Dukakis was at least an honest display of his own backward and bankrupt politics.

Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition will go to Atlanta with great expectations, only to discover perhaps that the "real deal" which selects the nominee has already been cut. At one level it's a question of simple arithmetic.



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

Even if Dukakis wins New York this month, and the important Ohio, New Jersey, and California primaries later this spring, he will probably be short of the delegates required. But he could still secure the nomination.

One way would be via the superdelegates' votes. The other manoeuvre would be to give Al Gore, who will probably come to Atlanta with about 600 delegates, the Vice Presidency. Gore would accept this, because even if their joint ticket lost in the final election, the race would put him ahead for 1992.

Jackson will be left out of the wheeling and dealing because he is seen as too far to the "left", and also because he is Black.

The Rainbow can expect some concessions in the Democrats' manifesto, and can press for Black, Hispanic, and progressive leaders to be appointed to high administrative office under a Dukakis presidency.

Available

But there is a second political road available to Jackson. It is filled with difficulties, but would have a fundamental impact upon the future of American politics. Jackson could tell his constituency what every white political pundit knows — that he will probably never be given the Democratic nomination.

He could explain candidly that the American political system is not designed to produce fundamental alternatives in either the primaries or the general election.

Jackson should state clearly that even if he somehow emerged with the Democratic nomination, both major parties would conspire to derail his election.

The real value of his campaign in the primaries has been to elevate key progressive policies, which the Democratic mainstream has tried to bury in its futile effort to be "Reaganism with a Human Face".

The Rainbow challenge is an assault on the conservative trend within the Democrats and a logical, electoral extension of the more progressive parts of the Civil Rights Movement.

But that movement came to realise the basic limitations of electoral politics. Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X never ran for office, yet they had a powerful impact upon Black American history.

Jackson has a similar opportunity to alter the course of political and social history if he sees the necessity to build a permanent structure and movement *outside* the Democratic Party to advance his positions and ideals. Whatever the outcome of the November election, most of the new administration's and Congress policies next year will probably differ little from the legislative initiatives of 1987-88.

To break the two-party monopoly we must establish *a permanent Rainbow political bloc outside the Democratic Party*, which can organise voters, lobby legislators, picket and lead demonstrations, and educate the mass of people.

This approach takes a long-term view of the democratic struggle which must be waged against both major political parties, as well as the elitist and powerful interests which dominate the legislative and electoral process.

Overdue

This road would force open a long overdue debate over American policy, and illustrate that the economic, educational, social, and political interests of Afro-Americans are generally identical to those of a majority of working American people — Hispanics, Native Americans, the unemployed, working women, the homeless, the elderly, and others.

Which road will Jackson take? Ron Daniels understands these alternatives; others close to Jackson realise the historic opportunity, yet still see the current mobilisation in traditional electoral terms, thinking only of the possible concessions in Atlanta.

But politics is, in the final analysis, the raw struggle for power. The rainbow can advance the real struggle for progressive and Black empowerment only if it is bold and uncompromising. If it takes the easy road of compromise and deal-making, it will betray its own vision of a just, democratic society.

Searchlight under scrutiny



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

The first march to commemorate the death of anti-fascist activist Blair Peach. The ninth anniversary of his death falls this month (see article on Europe-wide Day of Action, below).

What do Kuba Assegai, Iran/Libya, the Green Movement, and Arab Terrorists have in common with fascist organisations?

The answer, according to the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight*, is they are all part of "Britain's Right".

By YASMIN MAYAT

The January *Searchlight's* special report on "The Right Connections" uses such blanket terms to make dubious connections between neo-fascist organisations and black nationalist and Muslim groups and countries.

The September *Searchlight* carried similar investigative journalism. The cover depicted what it called "the new Axis", making connections between Louis Farrahkan, Colonel Quadhafi, Ayatollah Khomeini, and a British fascist named Nick Griffin.

Its editorial points to *"an international conspiracy which is financed by Iran and Libya and organised in Washington and Chicago by a strange coming together of Islamic fundamentalists and neo-nazis"*.

The National Front's promotion of Louis Farrakhan's separatist ideas and Qadhafi's Green Book are signs of these links. *Searchlight* says *"The National Front and Farrahkan are looking for support among the same people in the British Black community. These include Spartacus R, a South London musician, and Lestor Lewis, a former Councillor in Hackney."*

The same issue says: *"for the last couple of years the NF has been promoting the concept of black separatism in its journals, Nationalism Today* and *NF News*. Their game plan is to promote strife between various sections of society, making Jews and Asians the scapegoats for the problems that beset unemployed black youths, in the same way that they use unemployed white youths as canon fodder for their plans."

Searchlight is valuable and plays a fundamental role in the fight against fascism. However, its use of such questionable terms as "Arab terrorists", insinuating that fascist organisations are funded by "Arab" countries and a complete failure to distinguish between black nationalist groups and right wing organisations is not acceptable.

Why "Arab terrorists" were included in the list of the British Right remains a mystery. What is even more mysterious is why the Israeli Right were not included, particularly when their activities both in Israel and the Occupied Territories are well known.

Nor did *Searchlight* mention their funding of Christian Phalangist organisations in the Lebanon and their financial and political support of the apartheid regime in South Africa and of the American-backed Contra war against Nicaragua.

In the USA, Zionist propaganda groups are increasingly fostering close alliances with right wing Christian fundamentalist organisations. In fact the former Israeli president, Begin, bestowed upon Jerry Falwell one of the highest awards which Israel can give to an individual.

In many instances *Searchlight's* anti-fascist platform is being used to propogate anti-Arab racism and ferment divisions between Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities. *Searchlight* are inadvertantly reproducing the National Front's racist politics by placing too great an emphasis on the supposed divisions between Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities.

Right wing views within Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities are not a reflection of the whole communities. And struggles against them have been carefully recorded.

In its response to criticism *Searchlight* (March '88) admits to failing *"to distinguish, graphically, between relations of co-operation between groups and relationships where one group is deliberately infiltrating another and where the second is an innocent party."*

It goes on to say *"we will be a little more careful when we return to the subject."* Let's hope *Searchlight* incorporates an anti-racist, anti-Zionist and — dare we say — a socialist perspective in the future.

Searchlight has played a crucial role in monitoring the activities of fascists and extreme right wing organisations. However, it is important that anti-fascist organisations need to act and be seen to act not only against anti-semitism but against all forms of racism, including racism against black people or Arabs.

Europe-wide Day of Action against Fascism

For the first time ever, there is to be a European-wide Day of Action against racism and fascism. The occasion is Jean-Marie Le Pen's "Front National" candidature in the French presidential elections. The date is Saturday April 23rd. DAN CARTER reports.

Activities across Europe include demonstrations and rock concerts in Copenhagen, West Berlin, Stockholm and Oslo, and other activities in France and Belgium.

In Britain, Anti-Fascist Action, the umbrella group bringing together black groups, community organisations, trade union activists, Labour Party members and others, is organising a demonstration.

The march will start outside the Home Office at 12 noon, present a petition to the French Embassy, and rally in Hyde Park.

The march willl be joined by European anti-racists including the French migrant workers' group FASTI. Both FASTI and the USA Center for Democratic Renewal (formerly the Anti-Klan Network) will address the rally.

The demonstration will be followed by a rally in Southall at 4pm at Villiers High School, Boyd Avenue, commemorating the anniversary of the death of Blair Peach in 1979 and organising against racist attacks today. The rally is also organised by Southall Monitoring Project and Caribbean Focus.

Anti-Fascist Action have a fast-growing reputation for serious mobilisation against British fascists wherever they organise and are also concentrating this year on opposing the William of Orange celebrations in Exeter this summer, as readers of *Briefing* will be well aware.

In London, they have highlighted the racist presence at the Albert Pub in Kings Cross and counter-leafletted against the fascists in Hackney. AFA has a growing national network and branch structure.

Affiliation to AFA costs £20/10 and details can be obtained from PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. Please write for publicity material for the above events.

Who is Le Pen?

Jean-Marie Le Pen is the Leader of the French Front National. He is expected to pick up 8-10% of the vote in the '88 Presidential elections.

His party has the same record of violence as the NF in Britain, with a socialist flypost-er being killed by an NF member in 1986 and a Jewish student being shot by another member in 1987.

In 1984 the NF received 10% of the vote in the Euro Elections, giving them ten seats in the European Parliament under the French PR system.

Recently, Le Pen's no. 2, d'Ormisson, resigned from the Le Pen's European Parliament group, the European Right, in dismay at the growing violence that follows Le Pen everywhere.

This hasn't stopped John Taylor of the Ulster Unionists joining Le Pen's group.



Le Pen is particularly hostile to immigrant communitites, with remarks about "swamping France", and advocates repatriation. The FN is calling for the return of the death penalty, stronger army, and locking up of gay AIDS patients.

Letters

WRITEBACK!

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

Against SSin *and* the Democratic Left

Dear *Briefing*,

I wish to comment on Simon Kemp and Ian McLarty's article on the National Union of Students (NUS) in *Briefing* no. 59.

Whilst agreeing with most of their points I disagree with their conclusion that for all its faults, SSiN is the only alternative.

I also believe that the headline — "Back SSiN to beat the Stalinists" — is misleading. Ian's previous article in *Briefing* no. 57 on the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) Council outlined the "Stalinist" tactics of the bureaucrats controlling NOLS but it is wrong to label DL as a "Stalinist" organisation.

DL is a tiny organisation (like *Socialist Organiser*) which is able to bureaucratically control NOLS through a loose coalition of Kinnockites, Clause IV supporters and "soft left" factions like the LCC.

Simon, who supported SSiN before he was a supporter of *Briefing*, knows a lot more about their organisation that I do, but (in common with the SWP) I do not see them "as a left-wing alternative to the DL".

Faced with a straight choice on a presidential election I might well support Simon Pottinger against the "official labour candidate" but I don't see that *Briefing* students should necessarily support SSiN.

A majority of the delegates at last Easter's NUS Conference were opposed to the incompetent leadership, but that doesn't mean SSiN are capable of staging a coup.

They may well "have proposed effective campaigns" but so have other groups, particularly *Militant*/FELS. Anyway, without an open, democratic organisation, I fail to see how the proposed campaigns could be effective.

Finally, I believe there are at least two other choices for *Briefing* students to consider. Rather than work with either of the two main factions they could operate independently like *Militant*/FELS or work towards a third force (possibly in conjunction with SWSS). I know that the *Socialist Action* front, *Campaign Student*, failed to get off the ground, but we do not have the same political problems and our way of organising is ideally suited to *united* front work.

Andy Gibbons,
Oxford East CLP

Disregarding workers' rights

Dear *Briefing*,

It would appear that some LEAs and college governors are able to apply their own extra-legal and extra-constitutional criteria, by disregarding Colleges Instruments of Government, Teachers Grievance procedures and the decision in the McGoldrick v. Brent case, when dealing with matters concerning the rights of employees.

Governors are apparently able to disclaim responsibility for failing to act within required procedures and the LEA appear to believe that it is not accountable for failing to ensure that established procedures are followed.

Will the Baker Bill make it easier for Local Authoritites and college governors to disregard the legal and college constitutional rights of employees?

Comradely greetings,
Gordon Weaver,
Birmingham

Differences among the Right

Dear *Briefing*,

In the last issue of your paper (*Briefing*, no. 59) you published an interesting article by Dave Palmer on recent developments on the New Right.

While it valuably drew attention to right wing involvement in the opposition to Labour's positive images policy in Haringey, it was not so helpful in suggesting that the New Right is taking up authoritarian "pro-family" campaigning as a central part of its strategy.

While the article is certainly onto something in noting the connections between the Freedom Association, the Committee for a Free Britain and the Parents Rights Group, the New Right — unlike its American counterparts of the 70s — is far from agreed about prioritising sexual issues.

Publications of such groups as the Adam Smith Institute or recent revelations in the *Independent* about proposals to set up a Free Market Secretariat make it clear that much of the New Right is still focussed on continued economic "liberalisation".

In addition, the continuing tensions between the Thatcher government and "pro-family" groups over abortion, under-16 contraception, embryo research and the AIDS campaign show how far the New Right is from being united on morality. Indeed, the article's reference to New Rightist Teresa Gorman, on the "pro-choice" side of the Alton row, should remind us of that.

Certainly, the Thatcher government in the last two years has taken up some of the moralist demands and there are signs that more of the New Right than in the past want to take them up too. But the right's populist campaigns around social issues remain disparate and are often likely to clash with the Thatcher government rather than encompass it.

Yours,
Martin Durham

A damned silly place to put a fence anyway

Dear *Briefing*,

In a short item — "Coming down firmly on both sides of the fence" — (Periscope, *Briefing* no. 58), your anonymous author manages to make a number of mistakes.

1. The ILP is not a political party. Its initials have stood for Independent Labour Publications since I joined it in 1975.

2. I'm the Labour MP for North East Derbyshire and not the ILP's MP. In fact nowadays as an MP I only qualify to be an associate (non voting) member of the ILP.

3. I *did* vote against the Alton Bill and will continue to do so.

Furthermore, if I appear to your writer to be a parliamentary Zebadee "jumping frenetically" from side to side of the political fence which separates the Tribune and Campaign groups; then I would just like to point out that it was a damned silly place to put a fence to start with and I am likely to continue my act until it is knocked down.

I invite *Labour Briefing* to publish my statement to Tribune and the Campaign Group in full so that we can have a serious discussion about the possibility of reconstructing the Labour Left in a way that is both practical and principled at one and the same time.

Yours fraternally,
Harry Barnes MP
House of Commons

Marxism and Green Politics

Dear *Briefing*,

In "A View from the Green Party" (*Briefing*, no. 59), Mark Douglas rightly criticised countries in Eastern Europe for pollution, but then used this as "evidence" that socialism can't deal with ecological issues.

That is only valid if you accept that Stalinism is socialism, or that socialism can exist as a pocket in a capitalist world. Despite some progress and socialist forms of property ownership, those countries are a long way from real socialism.

Socialism in one country, or even a group of countries, is impossible. There is no such thing as a socialist state or even a socialist continent.

By the beginning of this century most original socialist thinkers had already accepted that socialism can only truly exist when it destroys and replaces capitalism worldwide.

The defence expenditure needed to prevent capitalism reconquering those markets by force, the fact that capitalism will seek to exploit that market, and that the workers in these pockets can't be isolated from the all-pervasive consumerist ethics of the rest of the world, forces "Socialist" countries to compete with capitalist production methods to preserve the limited gains they have made.

On the basis of this dubious "evidence" Mark then claimed that Marxism had lost its "historical relevance". Marxism is not a philosophy, but a scientific theory of cause and effect, the basis of which is that the productive process and the social relations of production are what determines the nature of society.

This theory is either true or false: it can't be rendered irrelevant by data not available at its discovery. Of course Marx did not include an ecological perspective — the data that makes that imperative now simply wasn't available in the late 1880s' on any scale.

It is entirely consistent with Marxist theory to say now that current ecological problems result from attitudes forced on society by the capitalist system of production and people's relationship to it. The failure of the Marxist left to address ecological problems doesn't stem from a fault in the original theory, but from a failure to incorporate new evidence into the practical application of the theory. That is what must be done now, indeed what should have been done many years ago.

Mark asks socialists to make an unconditional alliance with the Green Movement and then goes on to state his opinion that the immediate political task is to form a "thorough-going pluralism" that will topple the Tories. How you have a "thorough-going pluralism" within an "unconditional alliance" is not explained.

How does he think that an alliance with various forces that have never shown the slightest desire to do more than modify capitalism can advance Green or Socialist Politics? Does he think it is possible to achieve an ecologically sound capitalism?

There is no possibility of compromise between Green/Socialist ideology and capitalism. The achievement of a Green society depends on the end of consumerism; a Socialist society depends on the end of capitalism — in reality it is a common objective.

Certainly it will not be easy for many socialists to come to terms with the problems, but some already have. I will not quarrel with any Green who refuses to work with socialists who are not prepared to address ecological questions, as long as they don't expect me to enter into an "unconditional alliance" with any Green who is only interested in the reform of capitalism.

Pat Waylett
Lewisham Councillor,
SERA member

The shame of your useless sloganising

Dear *Briefing*,

Your centre page spread (*Briefing*, no 59) on green politics was impressive. The article by Peter Tatchell linking global poverty, environmental degradation and the way they must be solved together is a real example of the urgency and relevance of green ideas.

However your editorial "Green Politics" in the same issue was a disgraceful example of the sectarianism that the left has become famous for. You accuse us of being "all too reluctant to oppose racism, sexism and homophobia, and often fanatically anti-trade union".

I don't know what you are referring to — it certainly isn't the Party that I've been in for nine years.

I am a passionate believer in trade unionism and recognise the immense amount that trade unions have achieved. I would not be a member of a party that was fanatically anti-trade union. I am not.

We are genuinely attempting to create a politics where we all can participate, rather than just a few males with large egos. It is a hard thing to do and will take much restraint and courage in equal quantities. At least Greens are trying.

With regard to racism our policies look to the roots of racial discrimination and the economic conditions in which it thrives. Decentralisation, a basic income, and a grass roots democracy will all help to eradicate these conditions.

We state that we "celebrate the diversity of culture in a multi-cultural society". We are not interested in forcing everyone into the trap of our monolithic industrial society. Like all parties in this country, we are regrettably white dominated. It is a problem that will take time and effort to solve.

The Green Party has managed to put green politics on the map in this country. While lack of a sensible system of proportional representation hinders our growth unlike our sister parties in Europe, we are continually raising issues and making people think.



Our manifesto guarantees the right to strike and the right to join a union. This right should be extended to the armed forces. A main thrust of our economic policy is co-operative working and alternative plans by workers and unions.

To describe the Green Party as being reluctant to oppose sexism is nonsense. The Greens have consistently tackled sexism in ourselves, in our organisation, and in society. Feminism and a new attitude to sex and sexuality is recognised as being a key plank of green politics. It goes beyond resolutions and policies because we are changing the way we do politics.

It is a job that is by no means over which is why the Green Party will continue to quietly thrive. Meanwhile we have to learn from left and radical movements — like yours — as you will have to from us.

You conclude the article with "Down with the Green Party — up with green socialist politics". You should be ashamed of such useless sloganising. It reveals how much you are a part of the old politics which is constantly warring with people who should be your friends if not your allies. Let's hear no more of it.

Yours in peace,
Tim Brenan,
Exeter Green Party

Will the real democrat please raise their hand?

Dear *Briefing*,

I found Josie Irwin's article on the Women's TUC Conference (*Briefing*, no. 59) both interesting and informative. I was, however, worried by the implication in her last paragraph when she states that:

"...voting on a show of hands only (as opposed to block voting at the mainly "men's" TUC) has encouraged genuine debate."

Surely at a representative labour movement conference, delegates should represent the views of the bodies that delegate them. If democratic decisions are to be made, then voting at delegate conferences should be organised to reflect the numbers represented — in other words a block voting system.

It is not the block voting at the TUC which is undemocratic, but the way in which the system is manipulated by the (mostly male) bureaucrats who run the show.

Yours fraternally,
Glenn Sutherland,
Chair,
MSF Charing Cross Branch

Watch out! There's a bigot about!

Dear *Briefing*,

Last year I attended an open political meeting in Birmingham. At one point a man stood up and started ranting loudly and waving a booklet in his hand saying it was filth displayed in Haringey schools, corrupting the children.

His performance was convincing. Even I began to wonder if Haringey had gone over the top.

At the end of the meeting I spoke to the man who had come up to Birmingham "just for the night" (no need to guess who had sent him — this is Jill Knight's constituency).

He showed me the booklet. The "filth" was a well written, well illustrated book that most parents would be happy to show to their children or allow them access to in schools.

I relate this story as Haringey is once again to hit the Tory press.

Comrades need to be aware of these stage-managed displays of outrage. If I had been assertive enough to have demanded that the book be passed round the audience the argument would have been lost. I have regretted my reluctance to challenge ever since.

Be forewarned and help to stop the suppression of new and imaginative books that help to present a realistic picture of life to our children.

Pauline Purnell
Edgbaston CLP

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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Deadline for articles:
Issue no. 61 (out April 26th): notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday April 19th.

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This week's winner

A casual observer in the *Briefing* office the other day asked Frank "numbers" Neal (the *Haringey Briefing* supporter who checks off the 500 Club shares) why it is that *Haringey* Briefing supporters win the 500 Club draw so often. Numbers had a clear conscience: he doesn't conduct the draw.

However, they've done it again. Congratulations this week to no. 27 — Leone Turner.

Haringey *Briefing* group has the largest number of standing orders of any *Briefing* group... perhaps that's how it's done??

Please note: sorry that 1988 Supporters Cards haven't yet been issued, we're still arranging to have them printed, and will send them on in good time before the AGM.

RECORD REVIEW

Morrissey, pop, and politics

Barely four months after the demise of *The Smiths*, the band's enigmatic singer, Morrissey, is back with a solo album called *Viva Hate*.

"So what?" *Briefing* readers may ask. What's

By William West
Haringey Labour Briefing

Morrissey or pop music got to do with politics?

All cultural objects — be they the murals of Diego Rivera, or *Blind Date* and Cilla Black — are inescapably *social*.

Through understanding such objects we can hope to understand the society which produces them.

So where does Morrissey, darling of the apolitical, angst-ridden adolescents of Thatcher's 80s, fit in?

In times of crisis, we tend to either turn outwards to political action or inwards to introspection. With his grandiose gestures of self-indulgent melancholia ("here I am — the ugliest man", etc.), Morrissey seems to personify the latter.

But Morrissey takes these gestures to their logical and ridiculous extreme. He sees that nothing new can be said and so, in postmodern fashion, adopts tired old cliches to describe the world — a world that is tired and old, and needs changing.

Condemned as "sick" by a Tory MP, the final track entitled "Margaret on the Guillotine" is the perfect finale to an album which seems to deny that the world can be changed.

Moving from the humble and self-defeating "please die", the track ends by urging "king people" to "make the dream" of the song's title "come true". Hardly politically sophisticated, but this is the stuff that pop is made of.

Sometimes direct statements can be more effective than complex ones. Morrissey has more sway than William Morris! And that's the crucial thing about pop — it's potential to communicate to a mass of people.

Morrissey is in a position to do that. And he does it well. He turns in upon himself to explode and expose the myths surrounding our tired, old, and self-obsessive lives.

ART REVIEW

All about liberation

***Works on Paper*, by Gerald Morris, is on at the Francis Graham-Dixon Gallery, 17-18 Great Sutton Street, London EC1 until April 10th**

A new art exhibition has opened in London at the Francis Graham-Dixon Gallery featuring "Works on Paper" by Gerard Morris.

Morris is a prominent figure in the Glasgow art renaissance, an increasingly popular expressionist movement which is committed to the world of labour — people working on machines, on the land, or on canvasses.

Exhibition

This is Morris' first one-person exhibition and he has chosen to display his latest series on "Brendan's Voyage". St Brendan was a fifth century abbot who sailed from his native Ireland to America.

It's a strange subject for someone whose art is supposed to be rooted in the struggles of working people but, as Morris explains, *"the voyage is very contemporary — not only because Irish people are still being forced to leave their community, but also because people are still having to struggle to overcome poverty and deprivation."*

Morris certainly manages to convey the vitality and vibrancy of people labouring against a hostile environment. Using

By C. HELSEA

thick pastel strokes and reducing every object to its primary contour and colour, the larger-than-life figures seem to burst out of the frame.

Although most of the paintings are of individual figures, there is a strong feeling of collectivity. *"They're not portraits, but representations,"* Morris explains. *"Like* ***The Scholar*** *which is a close-up of a face and a book. That could be anyone. Any person who strives to liberate themselves in some way through knowledge."*

Morris's work is all about liberation. Which makes it an inspiring and invigorating antidote to the depressing time we live in. Go see the exhibition. You won't be disappointed.



"The Scholar", Acrylic, 1987

Book Review

The evolution of political thinking through free debate:

A guide to the PLO

***The PLO — the struggle within*, by Alain Gresh, *Zed Books*. First published 1983, new edition 1988. £8.95 (paperback), £29.95 (hardback)**

Critics branded the first edition of Gresh's history of Palestinian political thinking as "lucid and serious".

Today, as the region erupts again, such a work is indispensible if we are to understand the new phase of the Palestinian revolution.

Alain Gresh offers a detailed explanation of the complicated mechanisms of decision-making, the ideological struggles and the strategic and tactical motivations of the whole range of political groupings.

For example, the PLO today calls for an international conference. What are they hoping to achieve? A Palestinian state? Which state, and in what territory?

Gresh leads us in a meticulous study of the evolution of Palestinian leaders on these issues, concluding that the Palestinian Resistance was incapable of clarifying these issues in their political programme. They were not able to define conclusively *"who would be a Palestinian citizen, and who not?; whether there would be two nationalities?; what would be the status of a state only in part of Palestine?"*

Under an agreement signed in May 1970, the PLO was to be an umbrella structure for all the Palestinian organisations.

Its highest body, the Palestine National Council (PNC), represents all tendencies and is the only policy-making body under the National Charter. This made the PLO unique amongst national liberation movements.

Its component organisations can take independent decisions (sometimes in opposition to the PLO line). But this diversity was contained by a flexibility little short of anarchy, which allowed wide-ranging democratic debates, particularly on the future of Palestine, involving currents as diverse as Marxists and Ba'thists.

Gresh draws out the differences between the eight "armed organisations" and their roles in the political history of the Palestinian Resistance.

● **Fatah**, the eldest and largest, was founded against the dominant political trend of the time: the Nasserite and Ba'thist pan-Arabism for which the idea of an independent "state in the whole land of Palestine" was anathema.

Even after Nasser set up the PLO in 1964, its first national charter forbade its *"exercising regional sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza"*. Palestine was then defined as *"an Arab homeland bound by ties of nationalism to the other Arab countries which, together with Palestine, constitute the greater Arab homeland."*

Fatah started elaborating, then winning the bulk of Palestinian people to, the distinctive view that Palestinian liberation was primarily a "Palestinian affair". This was the first breach in the prevailing pan-Arabism which set Fatah, from the start, as a direct rival to the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) pan-Arab set up in Beirut in 1950. Further elements were to be added, such as the concept of "people's liberation war".

From 1965 onwards, Fatah embarked on armed action. When their fighters crushed vastly superior Zionist forces at the battle of Karameh, in March 1968, Fatah became the major political current in the PLO. Yasser Arafat became chair of the PLO Executive Committee in 1969.

By JACK GOLDBERG

The first group of Fatah's main rivals were born out of the Arab nationalist movement.

● **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine**
Led by Dr George Habash, the PFLP was the most clear proponent of pan-Arabism, proclaiming for a period that "the road of liberation of Palestine goes through Amman".

Self-proclaimed Marxists, the PFLP had no illusions in the Arab regimes, nor in the PLO's diplomatic manoeuvres of the early 70s.

After opposing negotiations in 1974, they played this role again ten years later, this time pulling the PLO away from the clutches of King Hussein of Jordan. They broke with the Right, refused to participate in the 17th PNC in Jordan, and vociferously demanded Arafat's resignation.

● **The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine**
The PDFLP (later known as DFLP) was an early split from the PFLP led by Nayef Hawatmeh. It kept its Marxist credentials, but steadily moved to the right. From 1973 until 1977 it allied itself with Fatah to call for a Palestinian mini-state. At times a transmitter belt for the twists and turns of the Soviet bureaucracy, it continuously called for the setting up of a Palestinian Communist Party.

● **The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command**
The PFLP-GC left the PFLP in 1968 led by Ahmad Jibril, and had marginal influence until recently. It led an offensive to overthrow Arafat after his capitulation to King Hussein, giving considerable support to the "dissidents" inside Fatah; recently it drew prestige out of daring operations inside Israel.

● **The Palestine Liberation Front**
The PLF was an anti-Syrian split from the PFLP-GC, but never made any significant gain.

The second group of Fatah's rivals were creations of Arab regimes to represent the interests of specific political ideologies. The two main organisations were **Sa'iqa**, set up by the Syrian Ba'thists, and the **Arab Liberation Front** (ALF), its counterpart in Iraq.

● **The Palestine Popular Struggle Front**
The eighth "armed" organisation, the PPSF has remained small and uninfluential since its launch in 1968.

With the Palestine Communist Party (an extension of the Jordanian CP) these eight main components of the PLO provided the political plurality which gave impetus and vitality to its political development.

Also significant was the political period that heralded the renaissance of the Palestinian movement. Arab nationalism engulfed the Arab world, led by new rising stars: Nasser in Egypt and Qassim in Iraq. The union of Egypt and Syria in 1958 opened up new horizons and the Arab masses believed that unity of the Arab world was around the corner.



Yasser Arafat

After the defeat of 1967, the Six Day War, delivered a mortal blow to Nasserism, the PLO guerilla organisations emerged as the new leadership — Fatah in particular. Very quickly, the politically diverse Resistance faced enormous political and organisational challenges. Palestinians now lived under Zionist rule, under Jordanian rule, in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and the Gulf.

The quest for unity and consensus has continuously marked their political approach. However, they didn't stifle debates. For a long time, while there was consensus on the concept of the people's war, the complementary political strategy proved more difficult to crystallise.

Between 1967 and 1970, the Resistance entered intense debate on the "democratic state" (or, as some refer to it, the "democratic secular state"). The armed struggle, despite some initial success, lost its edge in a matter of years — effectively dampened by the Israeli military machine. But still the organisations debated, as if liberation was around the corner.

Rejection

Rejection of the creation of a state in the West Bank and Gaza emerged as a unifying theme. But what about the Jewish settlers? Fatah advanced the most clear-headed definition of the future Palestine: *"a democratic, progressive, anti-sectorian state in which Jews, Christians and Muslims would live together in peace and enjoy the same rights."*

This novel concept created considerable controversies. The most credible critiques, not surprisingly given their Nasserite origins, came from the PFLP and the DFLP. For them, an independent *"democratic state was a utopia"*. They spelled out their opposition to Fatah to the Sixth PNC: *"the popular democratic state of Palestine shall form an inseparable part of a federal Arab state in the area."*

The DFLP refined its position as the debate developed. It talk-

Continued on next page

International Briefing: Review feature

A guide to the PLO

Continued from previous page

ed about "Jews and Arabs" rather than "Muslims, Christians and Jews", came to favour national rights for Jews, and finally saw *"the removal of Zionism as depending on the success of Arab revolution in the area."*

"Black September", King Hussein's massacre of the Palestinians in 1970, and the expulsion of the armed organisations from Jordan, changed the debate.

"Rejection of the state" became common to all: partly because it was seen as a US plot to finish off the weakened PLO (which would be incapable of running such a state), but more importantly to resist Hussein's charges that a Palestinian state was a divisive breach of the two banks (East and West).

King Hussein tried to force the PLO to reaffirm *"its attachment to the unity of the two banks"*, so they would end up defending his position; and then delivered the ultimate blow — the proposal for a United Arab Kingdom.

Survived

The PLO survived and started to adjust to the new situation. The tenth PNC in 1972 buried King Hussein's proposals, calling for the *"expulsion of Jordan from the Arab League"*. For the first time it recognised the existence of two peoples, Jordanian and Palestinian, and proposed unity on the basis of *"complete regional equality of rights and duties"*.

As the call for the overthrow of King Hussein began to recede, the Palestinian struggle in the occupied territories started having an impact on the resistance, with uneven result. The DFLP was first to suggest a new direction: *"From 1972 onwards, we thought there was a need for a political programme... to take acount of our historic rights, the problems of the Jews and the real relation of forces... we adopted what we called the programme for a national authority in the West Bank and Gaza. For the first time, a programme was put which did not speak of the territories occupied in '48 and stressed those occupied in '67."*

There followed a lengthy polemic between the DFLP on the one side and the PFLP, PFLP(G-C) and elements from Fatah on the other. Habash resuscitated the "democratic state" slogan — *"the aim of the Palestine revolution is a free, democratic state on all the land of Palestine... The strategic objective is the democratic state."*

Exchange

The exchange was cut short by the unexpected October 1973 war. Sadat, who benefitted from the war, put pressure on the PLO to participate in the peace process — or else. Arafat knew tha the "democratic state" slogan, i.e. destruction of the state of Israel, had to be shelved if he was to gain any concessions by negotiating.

The Palestine National Front (a co-ordinating committee of mayors and other nationalist figures in the West Bank) was the first to come to his rescue, demanding that he go to Geneva to secure a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This was no surprise: the Stalinists who dominate the PNF have always been in favour of the existence of Israel and a separate Palestinian state.

Arafat was cautious, hoping for the blessing of the PNC first. The DFLP was the second grouping to favour an "independent Palestinian national authority"; followed by Fatah and Sa'iqa in a joint document.

In November 1973, the organisations opposed to all settlements formed a united front, the "Rejection Front", including the PFLP, PFLP(G-C) and ALF. The main argument was that imperialism would impose conditions: *"demilitarisation area, international presence, recognition of Israel, economic co-operation, etc..."* and the only way forward was *"continuation of the revolutionary struggle."*

The Soviet Union then intervened. Their ambassador in Beirut, Azimov, delivered a memo to the PLO calling on *"the Resistance to adopt a realistic and constructive attitude"* and requested that *"it participate in the Geneva Conference."*

Arafat pulled out all the stops at the 12th PNC in June 1974 to produce a majority in favour of a ten point programme, in fact the basis for a fundamental shift in strategy. Arafat was ready to participate in the peace process. His address to the UN General Assembly in November 1975 was a personal triumph and opened up the era of diplomacy.

It was short-lived. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the Camp David agreement left the fragile momentum for a negotiated settlement including the PLO in disarray. From then until the Zionists' blitzkrieg on Lebanon in 1982, the PLO leadership concentrated on weakening Camp David. Arafat, having successfully cleared the decks for a negotiated settlement, was now clearly excluded from the peace process.

After Beirut, the political horizon has again fundamentally changed. The leadership was cut off from its base, the military forces scattered, and the whole political and administrative apparatus destroyed. Arafat, in despair, threw himself into a frenzy of diplomatic manoeuvres hoping for dialogue with the US, while a serious backlash arose in his own Fatah.

Colonel Abu Musa broke with Arafat, denouncing corruption and the personality cult, to lead the "dissident" faction into a bloody armed confrontation with Arafat loyalists.

The early PLO unity was profoundly shaken. Left to his own devices, Arafat ran from Mubarak to Hussein and finally came to a dead end. Not until 1987, after months of negotiations, did the organisations bury the hatchet and come together at the 18th PNC.

While many of us follow current events, the causes, backround, and underlying mechanisms appear sometimes impenetrable. Gresh's study and analysis of PLO documents and archives will make this task much easier.

Limitations

There are, however, many political limitations. The research focuses almost exclusively on the leaders and ignores the internal movement of the rank and file, as if they had no influence on the leaders — an omission which Gresh recognises.

Another serious mistake is his overestimation of the democratic process. This is important, since the whole basis of Gresh's work is a detailed description and analysis of the evolution of political thinking through free debate.

Debates did take place but, at times, heresy was not tolerated. Several outspoken Palestinians were eliminated. Gresh names Hammami and Sartawi, killed by the Abu Nidal group — who stayed outside the PLO. However, he is silent on the imprisonments and the hard repression, including occasional assassinations, of elements within Fatah that threatened the Arafat leadership.

Another fudge is Gresh's account of the PNC. While it is true that the sessions of the PNC are lively and democratic, Arafat has, for many years, had unfaltering success, thanks to his control of the Independents. Whatever the diversity of debate on orientation, the decisions on strategy are inevitably influenced by the Right.

Finally, Gresh does not disguise his view that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be resolved through a negotiated settlement. As such, while being rigorously evenhanded in his description of the input of all the political leaders, he gives more credence to Arafat. However, whatever our disagreements with Gresh, his scholastic work remains valuable.

How the Zionists are organising

The Zionists, it seems, prefer to leave little to chance as they scramble to justify their continued repression of the Palestinian people.

The British Israeli Public Affairs Committee News Briefing of March 14th — marked "restricted circulation — has fallen into the the (doubtless un-"restricted") hands of *Briefing*.

It begins with highly selective items of "news", including coverage of:

- The PLO general strike call for March 9th, including selective quotes.
- The hijacking of a bus, in which three Israeli and three "terrorists" were killed. The account is used to denigrate Fatah. After further, unsubstantiated scare stories, two named Arabs are quoted condeming (a) the attack (b) violence, on behalf of "the majority of Israeli Arabs".
- A series of selective quotes implying that most Israelis oppose the US Peace Plan.
- Unsubtantiated allegations that Arab police officers and other professionals in the occupied ("administered") territories are being terrorised by those supporting the uprising.

It continues with a number of short, unrelated quotes from PLO radio and Colonel Quadhafi, and a series of quotes from the international press which press for the Palestinians to make concessions too if Israel does, and shows that even "moderate" Arabs may question the right of the Zionist state to exist (i.e. don't trust any of them...!.

Where does all this lead? Well, to the last section of the BIPAC brief: *How to complain to the media*. This emphasises the usefulness of short quotes and relevant figures — culled, perhaps, from the preceding, slanted sections?

So next time you hear an articulate Zionist on the radio or TV, contorting logic to explain how a people can be free only by mass repression of others and indiscriminate murder, perhaps you'd like to ring up and make public the existence of these spurious "New Brief" propaganda sheets. We reproduce below BIPAC's own list of "useful telephone numbers when complaining". Happy dialling.

BBC television	01 743 8000
BBC radio	01 580 4468
ITN	01 637 2424
TV-am	01 267 4300
Channel 4 News	01 837 2424
Anglia TV	0222 34321
Central Independent TV	021 643 9898
Border TV	0228 25101
Channel TV	0534 73999
Grampian TV	0224 646464
Granada TV	061 832 7211
HTV West	0272 778366
HTV Wales	0222 21021
LWT London Weekend	01 261 3434
Scottish TV	041 332 9999
Television South	0703 34211
Thames TV	01 388 5199
Tyne Tees TV	0632 610181
Ulster TV	0232 28122
TV South West	0752 663322
Yorkshire TV	0532 438283
LBC	01 353 1010

France

Mitterand: *candidate for what?*

The greatest of all French poets, Francois Villon, once rhetorically asked *"Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?"*

Listening to another Francois — Mitterrand — as he spoke on Europe 1 to announce his candidacy for a further term as France's President, one was tempted to also ask about the disappearance of the beauties of the past.

Where was the 1980 *Projet Socialiste* which talked of a way to "socialism and self-management"? Where were Mitterrand's famous "110 propositions" which promised radical social change in 1981?

Since he adjusted to a period of "cohabitation" with the neo-liberal Jacques Chirac Mitterrand has tried to present himself as a moderating "father of the nation". Whatever socialist principles he once professed have been dropped. Mitterand's "realism" would make even Neil Kinnock appear as a dangerous leftist.

His run for a new term of office was heralded by a speech which began in a timid tone. Mitterrand, it seemed, had been forced to stand by the country's "tonton manie". But this soon turned into a hectoring and blustering discourse which menaced civil strife if he were not elected.

By "an experienced Mitterrand watcher"

One's hatred of Mitterrand, the gravedigger of much of the French left, grows rather than diminishes over the years. His repulsive combination of humility and conceit barely covers his ambition to destroy the possibility of any revolutionary alternative in France. He has "normalised" the land as surely as a Husak or a General Jaruzelski.

Fortunately, this time round, with the candidacy of Pierre Juquin, the French left can strike a blow for real socialist change. France's genuine Left, for so long a beacon to the entire world, has resisted Mitterrand's attentions. With all our hearts we should wish Juquin and his supporters every possible success.

Would that Mitterrrand were like the snows of yesteryear and would slowly melt away!

Sandinista ceasefire

Why did they sign?

On April 1st 1988, a 60 day ceasefire started in Nicaragua.

This was part of an agreement between the Sandinistas and the Contras which included a commitment to continue negotiations for a permanent end to the six year war.

The Sandinistas agreed to a general amnesty for imprisoned Contra mercenaries as well as for those convicted for crimes committed during the Somoza dictatorship. The Contras will be allowed to form legal political groups and to contest elections if they "rejoin peaceful life".

The Contras are such a low down, disgusting bunch of murdering mercenary thugs that it is hard to see the point of signing an agreement with them. However, there must be something behind it, because the Sandinistas are an astute political leadership.

Over here, people on the left will be asking: was this a defeat, a tactical retreat, a play for time and international sympathy, or a victory for the Sandinistas? We can say that it appears to be one step backward with the possibility of quite a few steps forward.

Sections of the US ruling class who are opposed to Reagan's policy in Central America see the Sandinista-Contra agreements as a serious defeat for the policies of the present US administration.

By Gareth Mostyn Hackney South & Shoreditch CLP

The Contras were pushed towards a ceasefire by their own weakness. They are a mercenary army who have very little popular support in Nicaragua. Six years sacrfice and bloodshed have done nothing to improve their standing.

The Somozista leaders of the Constra know that they are a pawn of the Reagan administration. As the spearhead of a US intervention they could dream of fame, fortune and glory, but as it is they are merely a central tactic used by the US government to put the Sandinistas under pressure.

In short the Contras don't trust their paymasters in Washington and are looking at possible ways out in case they are left stranded or endlessly to fight a losing battle.

The Sandinistas', motives are economic and humanitarian. Militarily, the Sandinistas give the Contras a regular beating and politcally the Contras are the weakest of the internal opposition currents. However, the death toll of the war is relentless, and



what is politically even more of a problem, the war is devastating the economy.

The limited gains in health and education that the revolution has brought are threatened by the war, while the day to day standard of living of many workers is worse than under the Somoza dictatorship.

The Nicaraguan people have shown themselves to be willing to pay a high economic price for greater political freedom and national sovereignty; but for how long? If the war were to end it would allow the people's sacrifices to go more directly towards improving their economic conditions.

Finally, the probable outcome will not be seen immediately. In the short term the ceasefire is unlikely to hold 100%, but it is possible that the level of conflict and casualties will substantially reduce. Both sides would gain political credibility, but the Contras would gain more because they are the outside, irregular force.

The Sandinistas have given the Contras a serious dose of legitimacy by negotiating with them, but they will still bear the high economic cost of a fully mobilised army.

In the longer term a lot will depend on outside factors such as the result of the November Presidential elections in the USA. If the money keeps on flowing in, there will always be at least some mercenaries willing to fight. However, the longer hostilities cease for, the higher the political price to be paid by the side who starts the fighting again.

If the struggle returns to a more conventional arena of elections and newspaper propaganda, with the Sandinistas enjoying both popularity and control of the state, the Sandinistas will have a lot to gain.

The human and economic cost of the war is the biggest threat that the people of Nicaragua and their elected, revolutionary government face today.

Of Presidents and Present Dangers

This month sees the most important British conference challenging US imperialism since the 1970s. Hundreds of people are expected in Sheffield to hear speakers from all over the world talking about US strategies and radical liberation movements, and to discuss how to challenge the American empire over the next decade.

The Conference, "Of Presidents and Present Dangers", is the inspiration of a group of activists and academics in Sheffield, who were horrified by American's invasion of Grenada and its attack on Libya, and decided a major initiative was required.

They have managed to achieve what many others would have felt too daunting a task. Paul Sweezy, leading US Marxist, is one of many coming from across the Atlantic. Joma and Julie Sison, two of the most important figures in the opposition movement in the

By Ben Lowe

Philippines over the past decades, will attend. There will be representatives from the ANC, the Polissario front, the Palestinian movement, the anti-bases movement in Belau, the Indian Ocean campaign, etc.

Also present will be some of the main experts on various aspects of US imperialist and regional policy from around the world. These include Duncan Campbell and John Stockwell on intelligence matters; Teresa Hayter and Susan George on debt; A. Sivanandan and Richard Hart on imperialism, racism and the role of new technologies; Lou Kushnik and Cees Hamelink on Cultural Imperialism and Mind Control.

The opening plenary, on Friday, April 22nd, kicks off with a unique threesome: Tony Benn, Paul Sweezy and the Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The final plenary, on Sunday April 24th, has Federico Castilblanco from Nicaragua, Tariq Ali, and speakers from the ANC and the West Bank. This will be an extraordinary gathering of anti-imperialist forces.

Inevitably, with all the travel costs incurred in such a gathering of international speakers, the conference is not cheap. The fee is £18 for waged people, and there is a concessionary fee of £10. People with institutional support (e.g. academics) are asked to pay £58 — which is one of the main sources of conference income. People who register now can get free accommodation.

For further information about the conference, write to Ankie Hoogvelt, Department of Sociological Studies, 302 Western Bank, the University, Sheffield S10 2TN. Tel. 0742 663962/367031.

Anti-apartheid

Conference on Kitson's case

The release of David Kitson and his return to this country in 1984 after 20 years imprisonment in South Africa was widely acclaimed by anti-apartheid campaigners and British trade unionists who had fought for his release.

As a former student at Ruskin, this college took a special interest in David's welfare and we were proud to welcome him as a tutor — a position funded by his union TASS which was honouring its pledge to help David "build a new life".

However, as a result of an internal dispute in the anti-apartheid movement which led to David and his wife Norma being suspended from membership of the African National Congress, TASS began to impose political conditions on continuing financial support for David's job, citing the ANC suspension as the reason for withdrawing funding completely in the summer of 1987.

Over the past year numerous labour movement organisations and individuals (including former fellow political prisoners) have called unsuccessfully on TASS to resume its previous policy of unconditional support. In addition many MPs and MEPs have appealed on David and Norma's behalf for the ANC to lift their suspensions. Ruskin College's continuing support for David has been shown by the decision last November to bestow on him its first ever Emeritus Fellowship.

TASS has now merged with ASTMS to form the new union MSF. ASTMS members, concerned at the democratic and human rights implications of TASS's action, and its infringement of academic freedom, have been urging the new merged union to restore funding but as yet the problem of financing David's teaching post remains unresolved.

We believe the wider trade union, labour and anti-apartheid movement has a responsibility to ensure David Kitson is treated justly and that financial support for his job is secured.

We are therefore inviting organisations to sponsor and participate in a national conference aimed at bringing together those concerned about David's treatment by TASS and who want to extend action in his defence.

The Conference, "Justice for David Kitson", will be held on Saturday May 21st, in Camden Town Hall, London.

It is proposed that planning meetings of sponsors will be held to organise the conference and consider production of material for prior circulation.

For further details contact Ruskin College Kitson/Mandela Committee, Ruskin Hall, Headington, Oxford.

Blood, Tears and Repression — *made in Britain*

Mrs Thatcher claims that British capitalist investment in South Africa is the most important force working to reform the evil apartheid system.

The British Tyre and Rubber Company (BTR) is a good example of how wrong she is.

By Jeremy Paton
UCL Anti-Apartheid Group
S. London NUMSA Support Group

This British based multinational has subsidiaries in Trinidad and South Africa.

One of them, the Sarmcol plant, near the black township of Mpophomeni, paid 950 black workers slave wages until May 1985.

The workers then went on strike to force the company to recognise and negotiate with their union, the Metal and Allied Workers Union (now called the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa — NUMSA). They were all sacked.

Since then, they have been struggling for reinstatement and union recognition.

Survival is difficult in an area where BTR is the only employer and in a country where black workers do not qualify for any unemployment benefits.

They have set up co-operatives to grow vegetables, buy food in bulk, and provide health care. They also produce T-shirts for sale in South Africa and abroad, including Britain.

They have taken the company to court, organised mass picketting and received support, including "secondary" strike action from other workers. Both the police and armed members of the black collaborationist movement, Inkatha, have savagely attacked the Sarmcol strikers.

In March 1987, less than three months after the murder of four strike leaders by Inkatha, the company signed a "single union" deal with UWUSA, an Inkatha scab outfit. Over 400 people have been killed in the Pietermaritzburg area (of which Mpophomeni is part) since then, but... the struggle continues!

The Sarmcol strikers are appealing to the British labour movement for solidarity. Our common cause is very clear. BTR shows the same attitude to its workers in Britain as it does in South Africa. In 1986, they sacked all the workers at Hanger's, Roehampton — the artificial limb-makers.

BTR produces a remarkable variety of products, ranging from "Pretty Polly" tights, through helicopter components to "Dunlop" tennis equipment. They are therefore vulnerable to pressure from workers and consumers in Britain.

We cannot expect the TUC to take the lead in this. We need to organise our own action against BTR, while we can't let the TUC off the hook — it has a responsibility to act.

The NUMSA Support Group has enlisted support from a number of Trades Councils, including Lambeth and Hammersmith in South London alone, as well as the Hanger's strikers.

Last year *The Long March*, a play about the struggle, written and performed by the workers, toured Britain. It attracted large audiences from the black community and the labour movement.

Fundraising events all around the country are being held to help feed the strikers and their children. A model resolution is being circulated to encourage trade unions to affiliate to the campaign. Local Support Groups have been set up in places like South London.

To add insult to injury the BTR Company Annual General Meeting on May 18th is being held in the luxury Hilton Hotel. The NUMSA Support Group has called a national demonstration outside.

Make sure your Anti-Apartheid group, trade union branch, Labour Party ward or student union is there in full strength!

● NUMSA Support Group can be contacted c/o Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, 12-14 Thornton St, London SW9.

Gay War Resister Gaoled

One of South Africa's leading gay anti-apartheid campaigners has been gaoled for 21 months by a Capetown court.

Dr Ivan Toms was imprisoned following his refusal to be conscripted into the South African army which, he says, exists primarily to defend the "viciousness of apartheid".

By PETER TATCHELL

Tom is a founder member of the radical anti-apartheid group, Lesbians and Gays Against Oppression. His outspoken stance has resulted in ugly homophobic attacks on him and the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), which is supporting his refusal to serve in the South African Defence Force.

Professionally printed posters and stickers have appeared all over Capetown emblazoned with slogans as "The ECC does it from behind", "The ECC believes in fairy tales", "Tom fucks young boys", and "Ivan Toms has AIDS".

As a result, Toms has been deluged with death threats, obscene phone calls, and crude hate mail. He has had a truckload of pig manure dumped on his doorstep, his car tyres slashed, his house daubed with paint, and the wheels of his car loosened.

The smear campaign against Toms has been orchestrated by a government-sanctioned Special Propaganda Unit within the South African army. In February, three soldiers were sentenced to three months military detention for conspiring to reveal publicly details of this covert "dirty tricks" campaign against Toms and the EEC.

Commenting on the gay-bashing campaign, a South African exile and supporter of Toms said: *"The tactics used by the apartheid regime show clearly where its roots lie — in the homophobic and racist philosophy of fascism."*

Dr Ivan Toms sprang to prominence in 1980 when he helped establish the first ever clinic for the thousands of displaced black residents living in the Crossroads squatters camp on the outskirts of Capetown.

Following police and army attacks on the camp in 1985 — which left 18 dead and 178 injured — Toms won admiration for the way he carried on treating the wounded despite threats and harassment.

In September 1985, Toms was one of three people who went on a 21-day hunger strike to protest against the army occupation of the black townships. At the end of his *Fast for a Just Peace*, he received a rapturous ovation from a 4,000-strong multi-racial audience at Capetown's City Hall.



Despite his open gayness and the savage homophobic campaign against him, Toms has won the backing of prominent clergy in the Catholic and Anglican churches, including Desmond Tutu.

The London-based Committee on South African War Resistance is currently campaigning in solidarity with Dr Ivan Toms and 22 other South African draft resisters. According to Roger Field of COSAWR: *"As a gay anti-apartheid activist, Ivan's stand against conscription gives strength and hope to all progressive gays struggling against the related evils of homophobia and apartheid."*

● Leaflets, posters and T-shirts advertising the Ivan Toms defence campaign are available from COSAWR: BM Box 2190, London WC1N 3XX (01-278 6928).

Labour Briefing

Annual General Meeting

Yes, the event you've all been waiting for. Never mind the Socialist Conference, the NHS, or even the Labour Party Annual Conference in Blackpool. The Labour Briefing AGM will be held on Saturday July 2nd, in London.

Workshops, reports, debates, a rally and a social are planned — so mark your diaries now and start organising to ensure that *Briefing* supporters from every part of the country attend.

Details of planned events — and arrangements for transport and accommodation — will be announced soon.

LABOUR BRIEFING



Contact FAB:
Wesley House,
4 Wild Court,
London
WC2B 5AU

Get into gear for the third reading!

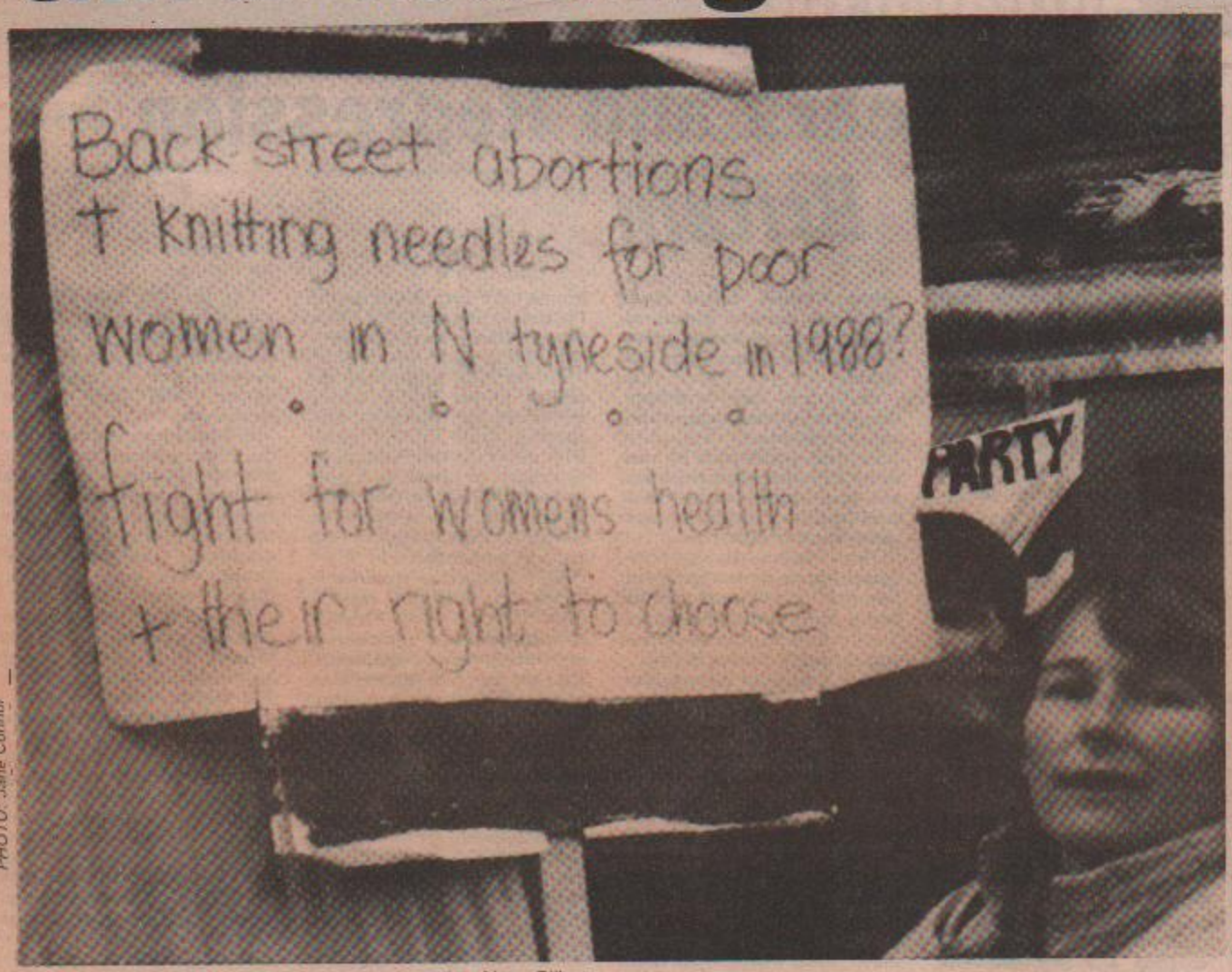


PHOTO: Jane Connor

On the FAB lobby of Parliament against the Alton Bill

The Alton Bill, which seeks to reduce the time limit for legal abortions from 28 weeks to 18 weeks, is out of committee.

The most likely date for its third reading is May 6th.

The only way the Bill can be defeated now is through talking it out or voting it down.

The Corrie Bill was talked out, after a huge camapign of mass mobilisations put pressure on MPs in favour of the Bill and gave support to MPs who opposed it.

By Gill Lee
Labour Briefing Women

However, the anti-choice lobby learned the lessons of Corrie, and as a one-line amendment Alton's Bill would be difficult to talk out. Its opponents in the House of Commons are coming under pressure to "play cricket" with the Bill: to allow a proper debate and a vote.

MPs must be shown that women are not interested in this approach to an issue which so deeply affects women's lives. We want this Bill defeated and we don't care what tactics our parliamentary representatives use to get this done.

FAB is launching a series of activities in the run up to the third reading to show opposition to the Bill, in whatever form it eventually takes. Mass mobilisation is the way to put maximum pressure on all MPs.

As well as the national activities listed below, local FAB groups should once again be picketting and lobbying their local MPs: those who voted for the Bill or abstained on the second reading, and also any who might be tempted to vote for the Bill in an amended form.

All Labour MPs must be mandated by their CLPs to be in the House and to vote against the Bill. Every vote will count.

Two amendments to the Bill were passed in Committee. The first, by Bernard Braine (Tory MP for Castle Point) exempts from the 18 week time limit cases of "severe fetal abnormality" and danger to the woman's life. If an abortion on these grounds is to be carried out in a non-NHS clinic a woman will require the signature of a consultant gynaecologist as well as two doctors, and the type of disability must be registered.

There are only some 750 consultant gynaecologists in the whole country, not all of whom are pro-choice. This requirement will slow down the whole process a woman has to go through to get an abortion.

The definition of "severe" will probably be laid down in Department of Health guidelines, with no reference to what an individual women herself feels able to cope with.

The second amendment is by Anne Widdecombe (Tory MP for Maidstone). It exempts girls aged under 18 who are victims of rape from the 18 week rule.

This amendment divides women seeking abortions into "guilty" and "innocent" women. It also seems to suggest that older women who are raped are not going to be as severely traumatised (or are not as "innocent"?) as younger women.

How is rape going to be defined — where it has been reported to the police within a certain time limit? The majority of rapes are not currently reported to the police for many reasons: among them fear of the police, distrust of the judicial system, or because the perpetrator is a "friend", relative or even husband.

Whatever her individual motive, a woman has a right not to report rape. Women Against Rape fear that such an amendment will lead to women being accused of falsely reporting rape in order to get access to abortion.

The anti-abortionists hope to gain support for the Bill through these amendments. MPs must be told to vote against the Bill whatever the amendments. The Labour Party should apply a three line whip.

Women need to be able to choose when and if to have an abortion. Women should decide for themselves if they want an abortion on finding any fetal abnormality. Women should have the right to decide on abortion if they have been raped, if they have been victims of incest, if they feel too old or too young — if they simply do not want that baby.

The '67 Act does not give women this choice, but *any* amendments will make the situation worse. Alton's Bill must be defeated.

FAB: coming events

April 16th
FAB local groups meeting, London School of Economics, 10am-4.30pm
Tuesday April 26th
Mass lobby of Parliament. Meeting in the Grand Committee Room, 2.30pm
Wednesday April 27th
Local Day of Action. Picket and lobby MPs' surgeries.
Lobby of the NEC, called by Lambeth Against Alton, 9am, Walworth Road.
Day before the Third Reading
Demonstrate! Watch press for date of third reading, contact FAB for assembly point and details

Labour MPs and the Alton Bill

Name	Constituency	Sponsoring Trade Union(s)
For the Alton Bill		
BATTLE, John	Leeds West	
BELL, Stuart	Middlesborough	GMB
BRAY, Jeremy	Motherwell South	T&GWU
CAMPBELL, Ronald	Blyth Valley	
CAMPBELL-SAVOURS, Dale	Workington	COHSE
CANAVAN, Dennis	Falkirk West	COHSE
CLARKE, Thomas	Monklands West	
COOK, Francis	Stockton North	TASS
CROWTHER, Stanley	Rotherham	T&GWU
CUMMINGS, John	Easington	NUM
CUNLIFFE, Lawrence	Leigh	NUM
DIXON, Donald	Jarrow	GMB
FIELD, Frank	Birkenhead	CPSA consultant
GROCOTT, Bruce	The Wrekin	NUJ member
HARDY, Peter	Wentworth	NACODS
HUGHES, Sean	Knowsley South	
LAMBIE, David	Cunninghame South	USDAW
LAMOND, James	Oldham Central & Royton	TASS
LOFTHOUSE, Geoffrey	Pontefract & Castleford	BACM consultant
MACDONALD, Calum	Western Isles	
MARTIN, Michael	Glasgow Springburn	TASS
MCAVOY, Thomas	Glasgow Rutherglen	Co-op
MCFALL, John	Dumbarton	
MCNAMARA, Kevin	Hull North	T&GWU
MILLAN, Bruce	Glasgow Govan	APEX
MORRIS, Alfred	Manchester Wythenshawe	EMA advisor
O'BRIEN, William	Normanton	
OAKES, Gordon	Halton	T&GWU
PARRY, Robert	Liverpool Riverside	NUPE, organiser
PENDRY, Tom	Stalybridge & Hyde	NUPE
REID, John	Motherwell North	Full time organiser, Trade Unionists for Labour, Scotland
ROBERTSON, George	Hamilton	GMB
ROWLANDS, Edward	Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney	USDAW
SMITH, John	Monklands East	GMB
THOMPSON, John	Wansbeck	NUM
WORTHINGTON Tony	Clydebank & Milngavie	GMB
Did Not Vote		
DALYELL, Tam	Linlithgow	NUR
DEWAR, Donald	Glasgow Garcadden	NUR
DOUGLAS, Richard	Dunfermline West	Co-op
DUFFY, Patrick	Sheffield Attercliffe	GMB
GALLOWAY, George	Glasgow Hillhead	
GRAHAM, Thomas	Renfrew West & Inverclyde	
HATTERSLEY, Roy	Birmingham Sparkbrook	NUJ member
HENDERSON, David	Newcastle upon Tyne North	
HOGG, Norman	Cumbernauld & Kilsyth	NALGO
HOME ROBERTSON, John	East Lothian	
HOWELL, Denis	Birmingham Small Heath	APEX
JONES, Barry	Alyn & Deeside	NUT
KAUFMAN, Gerald	Manchester Gorton	GMB; NUJ member
MARSHALL, David	Glasgow Shettleston	T&GWU
MCKAY, Allen	Barnsley West & Penistone	BACM
MURPHY, Paul	Torfaen	
ROBERTS, Allan	Bootle	
WALKER, Harold	Doncaster Central	AEU
WRAY, James	Glasgow Provan	

Labour MPs who have indicated they will support an amendment for a reduced time limit, though they did not vote for the Bill at the second reading:
Roy Hattersley (Ab), Sparkbrook, against all abortion
Denis Howell (Ab), Birmingham Smallheath, Conscience vote
Llin Golding (A), Newcastle-under-Lyme, 24 weeks
George Galloway (Ab), Glasgow Hillhead, Reduction
Jack Straw (A), Blackburn, 24 weeks ("a majority vote can never cancel out the exercise of conscience by a minority")
Ann Taylor (A), Dewsbury, Consider 24
Peter Pike (A), Burnley, 24 weeks
Terry Lewis, Worsley, 26 or 24