LABOUR
BRIEFING
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DEFY THE CLAUSE!



PHOTO: David Hoffman
The Manchester demonstration against the Clause in February

By PETER TATCHELL

In the biggest assault on lesbian and gay rights in Britain in this century, Clause 28 was approved by the House of Commons last month by 254 votes to 201.

In a month it will be illegal for Local Authorities to "intentionally promote homosexuality".

Lord Caithness, the government spokesperson in the House of Lords, says that Clause 28 is concerned with *"every aspect of the way homosexuality manifests itself"*. In a rare moment of candour, he admitted that the Clause was intended to prevent Local Authorities from supporting such activities as gay library collections, lesbian and gay units, seasons of gay plays, the Lesbian and Gay Pride Carnival, gay rights charters, and organisations for teenage lesbians and gays.

Not since the anti-gay witch-hunts in Nazi Germany has any West European country enacted such sweeping laws against lesbians and gay men. Never, since the origin of local government in this country, have Local Authorities been *compelled* by the central state to discriminate against one section of the community.

Now, in an attempt to justify this draconian attack, government ministers and MPs have mounted a crude campaign of vilification and scapegoating against lesbians and gays, with inevitable violent consequences.

In two outbursts of breathtaking bigotry, Conservative MPs David Wiltshire and Nicholas Fairbairn respectively branded lesbians and gay men as "biologically abnormal" and as suffering from "psychopathological disorders".

These parliamentary "queer-bashers", and the 252 Conservative MPs who joined them in the "Ayes" lobby, have helped create an atmosphere in which anti-gay prejudice is becoming more overt and more "acceptable".

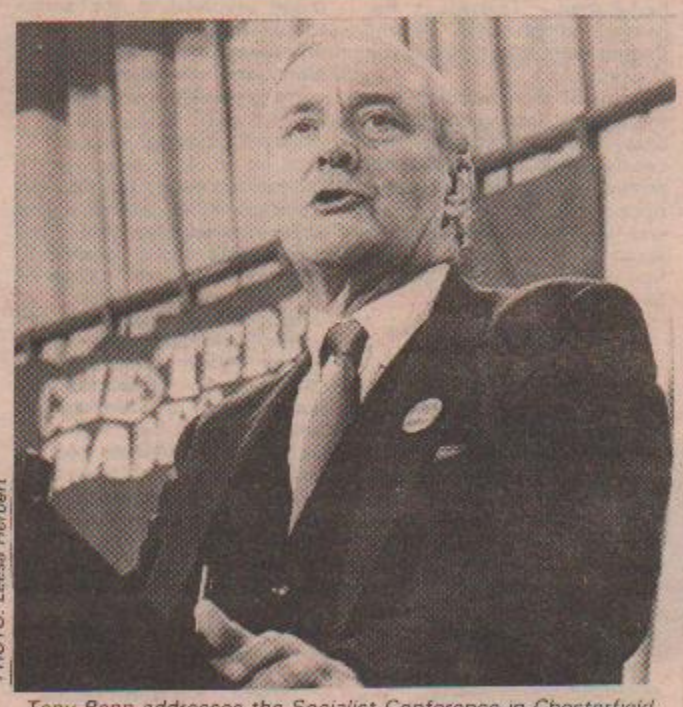
Already, even before Clause 28 has become law, homophobic violence has reached an all-time high. Two weeks ago, queer-bashers armed with a revolver burst into the London Apprentice pub and fired shots at random into the crowd.

A month earlier, just two days before a huge *Stop the Clause* demonstration in Leeds, a bomb was planted outside a nightclub in the city centre. It was set to go off at a time when the club would have been packed with lesbians and gays attending an anti-Clause fund-raising benefit.

Gay venues in London have been repeatedly attacked in recent weeks. A gang of 25 youths smashed up the Vauxhall Tavern. Regulars at The Bell were terrorised by knife-wielding thugs. A gay man was clubbed over the head outside the Two Brewers.

Already, the scale of victimisation is intolerable. With the clear threat of ever mounting discrimination once Clause 28 becomes law, it is morally incumbent on Local Authorities to *refuse to implement the Clause*. Town Halls and trade unions alike must pursue a policy of non-compliance.

What is at stake are the human rights and civil liberties of five million lesbians and gay men. On this question of fundamental democratic principles, there can be no compromise and no negotiation until Clause 28 is repealed and lesbian and gay people at last win the freedom, justice, and equality which we have been denied for far too long.


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert
Tony Benn addresses the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield, October 1987

TONY BENN speaks out on Clause 28:

"Clause 28 is a direct attack upon the rights of people to control their own lives. It is reminiscent of the attacks on lesbians and gay men of the kind we saw in Germany before the war.

It is intended to force people into accepting one view of life, which would threaten the civil liberties of everybody. Labour Party policy on this as laid down at Conference is crystal clear — and should be adhered to."

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

NUS Conference

Politics in second place

At NUS conference, the Kinnock-backed candidate, Maeve Sherlock of the Democratic Left (DL), won the Presidency, guaranteeing another year of inaction for students faced with the GERBill.

There were few political gains for anybody.

By DAVE LANGAN and PETE McDONALD

The "victories" belonged to a new force called *"Students for Students"*, representing a "keep politics — especially international issues — out of our unions" feeling, which has grown because of the poor leadership offered students by the DL.

Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) did however win the key position of National Secretary, beating off a weak challenge from a Communist student supported by the DL. In the part-time elections, the DL vote declined.

The £12,000 Labour Party grant to DL had clearly been spent largely on the Presidential election. SSiN gained one extra position in the part-time elections.

Success

The DL owe their success to the decision of *Militant* and the SWP to vote for the "official" Labour candidates. Without these votes it is unlikely that the DL could have won any major positions.

The SWP used the excuse of SSiN's line on Palestine (twin state), claiming this showed that SSiN were to the right of DL. However, it is SSiN and not DL who have opposed local government cuts and supported the Benn-Heffer Campaign.

Militant's excuse was even worse, saying they would vote for the DL because they were the "official" Labour candidates — in spite of the fact that in Scotland they themselves stood candidates against the DL. The DL have also been at the forefront of the witch-hunt against *Militant*.

Many delegates felt the SWP and *Militant* backed the rightward moving DL candidates through a fear of losing their own "left wing" credentials rather than because of any political principle.

Although *Briefing* students supported SSiN there are clear problems with its methods of organisation. There needs to be more debate within caucuses rather than the current concentration on certain individuals.

Outside

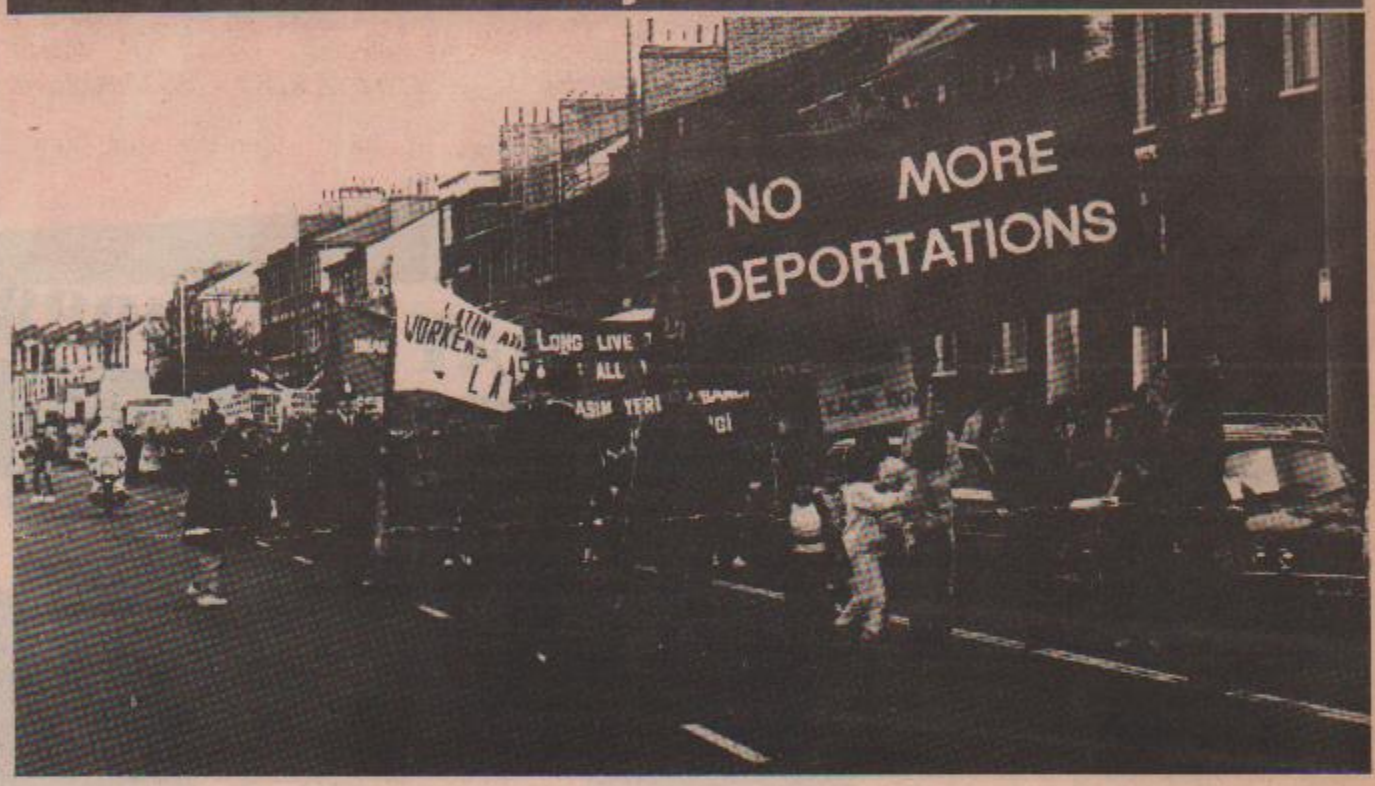
SSiN also need to link up more effectively to struggles outside the student movement. For instance, whilst supporting Benn-Heffer and workers in struggle they did not successfully bring these arguments into the Conference. Their position on Palestine is also unpopular with many independents in NOLS.

Conference generally was devoid of politics (when politics did appear it was in the most rectionary form, by SPUC candidates who stood and were defeated in every election). At one point a suspension of standing orders to hear a P&O striker was voted down, but during in the same session a similar vote was carried to hear what had happened in the last episode of *Neighbours*!

Nonetheless, two good pieces of policy were pased. First, part-time students gained parity — the right to equal representation with full-timers. Secondly, conference voted to call on local Councils to refuse to implement Clause 28.

One of the best bits of Conference was the emergence of a group called Labour Students Left Caucus — centred around Manchester Polytechnic. Their policy is support for SSiN on campaigning issues whilst criticising *Socialist Organiser* lines within SSiN on Ireland, Palestine, and autonomy. In short their analysis is identical to ours.

Viraj Mendis



Sanctuary inspiration

On Sunday February 14th, after 53 weeks, Rajwinder Singh came out of sanctuary from the Guru Nanak Temple in Bradford.

The Home Office agreed to give him a temporary reprieve.

On the day after — the 15th — Salema Begum, who had taken sanctuary in the Chorlton Central church, won her campaign, when the Home Office gave her indefinite leave to remain.

There can be no question that it was sanctuary that forced the Home Office to accept the justness of both these cases. If not for taking sanctuary, both of them would have been deported.

It is also the case that it was because of the existence of our sanctuary, in the Church of the Ascension, that Renukaben Lakhani, Rajwinder Singh and Salema Begum went into sanctuary in the first place.

It might look puzzling that the longest lasting sanctuary, ours, has not yet been successful. But this should not puzzle anyone. It is precisely because we have given a lead and laid the political basis for sanctuary that the Home Office is determined to destroy us.



Viraj Mendis

Struggle

Our campaign has taken on most clearly the general anti-deportation struggle. Our campaign has not just been about Viraj Mendis, but also about the injustice of the immigration laws. Our campaign has been the cutting edge of the santuary movement. These facts make the Home Office determined to strike a mortal blow at the sanctuary movement by destroying ours.

The Home Office may think that by cleaning away the other sanctuaries it will be able to isolate and defeat ours. However, the victory of the other three sanctuaries will strengthen the resolve of all those involved in the sanctuary movement. In fact, whatever the Home Office plans the sanctuary movement is gaining momentum.

Story

The *Catholic Herald*, on February 22nd, carried a lead story announcing that *"the Committee for Community Relations of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales has endorsed the sanctuary movement which allows those threatened with deportation to take refuge in churches and private homes."*

But our opponents are not inactive. The fact that there are forces lobbying to get Viraj out of the church was once again illustrated on Friday February 12, as our regular Friday march to the sanctuary was attacked by the police.

By the *Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign*

VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AL
Tel.: 061 234 3168

Viraj Mendis will stay!
DEMONSTRATE!
Sat May 28th
Assemble 12 noon, Albert Square, Manchester

Haringey Councillors Against the Cuts
sends
May Day Greetings to *Briefing* readers

No Cuts in Jobs or Services!
No suspensions or expulsions!
Back Benn and Heffer!

Lambeth Labour Party
Local Government Committee
No cuts in Jobs and Services!
Full Support to all Councillors against Cuts
Defend the Councillors in Camden and Lewisham expelled from their Labour Group

May Day Greetings from
London Councillors Against the Cuts
No Cuts!
Build the Fightback!

London Fights Back!
Committed to defending local government
The struggle continues!
No Cuts in Jobs or Services!

A Day for Palestine

Show your solidarity with the Palestinians:
DEMONSTRATE!
May 15th
Assemble Thames Embankment, London, 1.30pm (Embankment tube).
Called by the Interim Joint Committee for Palestine, c/o 21 Collingham Road, London SW5 0NU

Palestine
Occupation and the future
Conference May 7th-8th
University of London Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1 (Russell Square tube)
Speakers include:
Awad Abdel-Fattah (Al Fajr journalist), Issam Abdel-Hadi (deportee), Lea Tsemel (Israeli Attorney), Moshe Machover (Israeli academic), Akram Hanniyeh (deported editor of Al Sha'ab newspaper), Sarah Graham-Brown (writer) and Fouzi El-Asmar (Palestinian writer).
Organised by the Committee for the Freedom of Expression of Palestinians and Israelis (CFEPI), BM Box 9585, London WC1N 3XX. Tel 01 226 7050.

Marxism Today
presents
The '68 show
Saturday May 7th, London School of Economics, Houghton St, London WC2
"The red spectre of student revolt is returning to haunt the upwardly ageing Marxists of the 80s. Twenty years on from the May events in France *Marxism Today* — the magazine that epitomises the new mood of consumer-communism — is staging a grand reunion bout of mindless militancy and terminal talkabout. The event culminates in an **occupation** of the LSE by massed ranks of **Yummies** (Young Upwardly Mobile Marxists) at *Marxism Today's* '68 Show, featuring Robin Blackburn, Dave Triesman, Eduard Goldstucker, Bernadette McAliskey, Hilary Wainwright.
Tickets £6 from The '68 Show, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY, 01 608 0265.

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Defend Ron Brown!

So Ron Brown MP has damaged the Mace, symbol of the antique and arcane rituals of the Mother of Parliaments. Big deal!

The response of Kinnock & Co. is both scandalous and depressingly predictable. "Disruption" and "loutishness" in parliament, they say, diverts attention from the real issues, and allows the papers to concentrate on Commons demos, not things like the NHS and social security.

Kinnock's logic only makes sense if you think that the Tory thugs and louts can be defeated by sympathetic media coverage for Labour and by voting in Parliament. Of course, everyone knows that the Tories have a 100-majority and that Labour will never get good coverage in the press, even if its MPs behave like school prefects.

The Tories constantly disrupt parliament to drown out left Labour speakers like Eric Heffer, Dave Nellist and Ken Livingstone. But there are no protests from the Tory papers or the Labour front bench when that happens!

Parliamentary activity should be used by Labour MPs to arouse the country to outrage and action against the measures on things like the NHS and social security. The disruption of the budget speech by shouts of "shame" served to focus on the unjustness of the tax changes. An opposition serious about fighting Thatcher should be disrupting parliament every other day.

Ron Brown refuses to grovel and doff his cap to the Tory establishment. Good for him. Aneurin Bevan often described how the fake grandeur of parliament is used to intimidate radicals and socialists. Kinnock only underlines his subservience and spinelessness by knuckling under to his Tory "betters". Stop the witch-hunt against Ron Brown!

Benn and Heffer — seize the time!

The Leadership fight is on in the Party with a vengeance. Whatever vote that Tony Benn and Eric Heffer get in the electoral college, the campaign has focused the debate about the way forward in the fight against the Tories and for socialism. *The centre of the debate is socialism itself.* At issue is whether the fundamental idea of socialism — a democratic and egalitarian transformation of society — has any relevance to the last decade of the 20th century.

In Britain, there is a mass force for socialism — in the Labour Party and trade unions, and in the miriad of other groups and activities organised and supported by the left. In some other European countries such a force does not exist. So we have an opportunity — and a responsibility — not to squander the forces of militant socialism which exist. The main forces for socialism are getting involved in the Benn-Heffer Campaign and the growing "Chesterfield" movement. Now, and we mean now, we have to maximise the opportunity to push forward socialism.

So seize the time! Take the following practical steps:

- Set up a campaign for Benn and Heffer in your locality.
- Investigate the possibility of raising the issue in your union. Get Heffer or Benn to speak at a fringe meeting at your union conference or event.
- Start the fight now for a Benn-Heffer vote in your CLP.
- Buy stocks of the *Briefing* Benn-Heffer badge (see page 12)!

Organise against the Poll Tax

The Tory backbench revolt against the Poll Tax reflected the profound and widespread unpopularity of this anti-democratic measure. It also demonstrated the limitations of merely parliamentary action against it. The Thatcher government has been embarrassed, but it will sail ahead anyway, determined to press to the utmost its attack on local government and the inner city Labour vote.

How to respond? Petitions, leaflets, lobbies are all necessary but insufficient on their own. The Poll Tax is a combined economic and political attack on the working class. Its effects will be far-reaching and longlasting. Once it becomes operative, the damage it will do the labour movement will not be undone simply by periodic calls for its repeal.

Of course, this is not the first time a Poll Tax has been instituted — in Britain or abroad. And history, in this matter, does have a clear lesson. A campaign of mass resistance — based on non-compliance with the law — can and must be organised.

Labour Councils should refuse to collect the tax. Trade unionists should refuse to administer it. People should refuse to pay it.

These various levels of action against the Tax need to be co-ordinated, so that one re-enforces and encourages another.

In England and Wales, concrete proposals for non-compliance should be tabled now, so that we are ready to take action when the time comes.

Imperialism in the Gulf

Hands off Iran!

More than 40 Iranian oil workers and sailors were killed in the US naval attacks in the Gulf on April 18th.

The attacks were *murder* pure and simple; the 45 second "warning" to the oil platform workers to evacuate was a joke — they couldn't have got of the platform in that time if they had tried.

The attacks on Iranian naval craft which followed were allegedly in retaliation for Iranian counter-strikes, but that claim is extremely dubious. It seems likely that the Iranian ships which fired at US warplanes did so because they were already under attack.

By HARRY PEEL

The murderous arrogance of US imperialism in disposing of 40 Iranians without a second thought hardly needs comment in *Briefing*. Neither does the pathetic response of the Labour frontbench who failed to condemn the attack outright. Thatcher, needless to say, gave enthusiastic support to Reagan.

The duty of socialists in Britain is to demand that the United States — together with Britain and its other collaborators — gets out of the Gulf. Despite our opposition to the Iranian regime, a regime utterley hostile to the interests of the working class and socialism, these American attacks are a display of imperialist thuggery.

In a conflict between the United States and Iran of this type, we stand with Iran and are for the defeat of the United States. The basic question involved here is that of Iran's self-determination: in this case the right not to have its oil platforms and ships blown up by the US navy. Iran, despite its regime, is an oppressed, dependent nation. We defend it against imperialism.

That has always been the classic socialist position. For example, when fascist Italy invaded Abbassynia in 1936, socialists took the side of the Ethiopians against Italy, despite the feudal leadership of Haile Selassie.

Defending the Iranians, or any other nation in the region against the US navy is probably not highly controversial among socialists. What is much disputed, however, is the relationship of such skirmishes and the Iran-Iraq war itself, which has been going on for eight years with something like a million deaths.

Iran in the aftermath of the attacks talked of the US intervening in a new "US-Kuwait-Iraq" axis, which had made common cause to defeat Iran.

Originally

This analysis is wrong. The US originally sent its ships after it was caught sending arms to Iran. It sent its navy, in part, to defend Western shipping; in part, to be seen as not capitulating to "terrorists"; and, perhaps most of all, to reassure its allies among the Gulf sheiks, who have sided with Iraq and who are nervous about the prospect of an Iranian victory.

The US intervention was meant to be a flag-waving exercise, and not to become directly part of the Iran-Iraq war. The United States does not want an Iranian victory in the Gulf war; but neither would an Iraqi victory suit its interests particularly well either. Either result would create a powerful regional power which did not have a close relationship with the US.

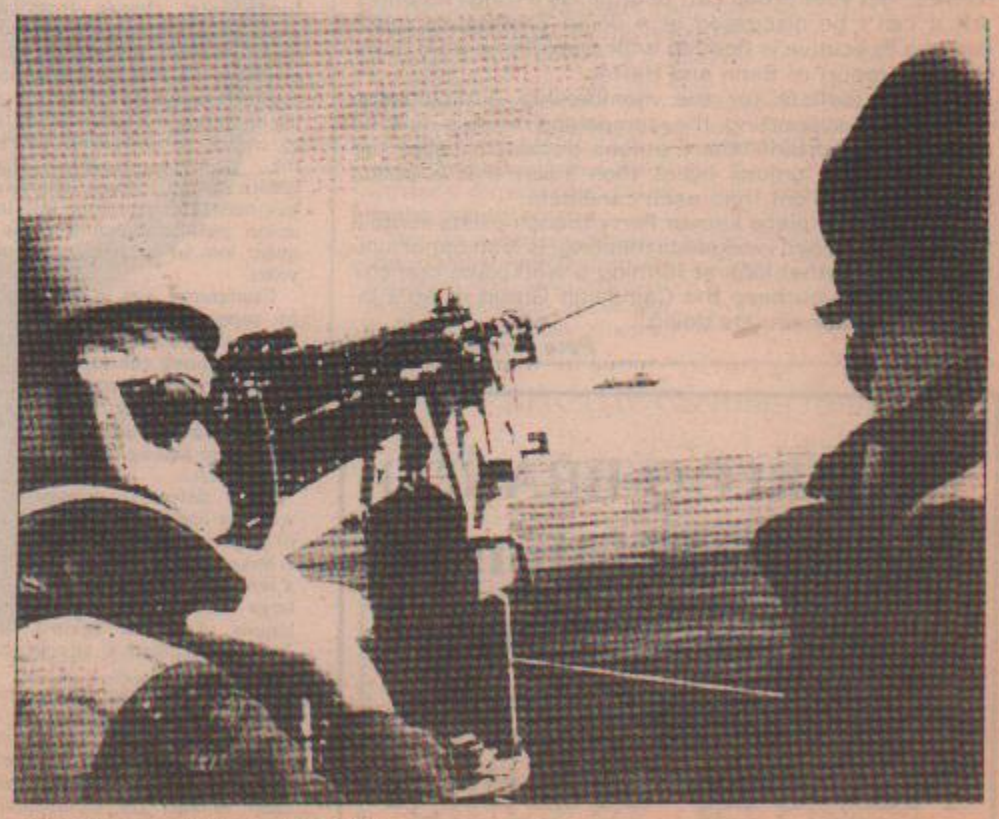
But the United States could get dragged into the Gulf war; it could, especially if it were to feel that Iran was on the verge of victory or was directly threatening the pro-US oil sheikdoms. But in the long run, for the US and the other imperialist powers, a capitalist Islamic regime in Iran is probably the only realistic option. Despite sea battles, the US will have to do business with the mullahs — especially after the Ayatollah's death. Any capitalist will tell you that you can choose your friends but you can't choose your busines partners. The US may hate the Iranian government, but it is prepared to accept it, provided it doesn't try to dominate the region and threaten its closest allies.

There is certainly nothing "anti-imperialist" or progressive in the Islamic regime. It is a government which has the blood of tens of thousands of workers, peasants, women, people from national minorities, and of course socialists and trade unionists, on its hands.

It has killed more people than Chile's Pinochet regime. Its torture chambers and secret police are every bit as horrific as those of the Chilean dictatorship. The ordinary workers and peasants of Iran have no interest whatever in this regime, or its bloody war against Iraq.

The latest US attack was a response to the continued mining of the Gulf by the Iranians and perhaps even to the hijacking of the Kuwaiti jet. In other words, for the moment it remains a limited conflict.

Socialists should raise in the labour movement an end to bipartisanship on the Gulf conflict, and a withdrawal of the British fleet. Full support should also be given to all those fighting against repression in both Iran and Iraq, and especially for the self-determination of the Kurdish people, who have been the victims of repression from both sides in the Gulf war.



Military forces "guarding" the Gulf

Trade Union Briefing

NUT Conference

New realists win — *but not without a fight*

By Martin Allen and Paul Foley Socialist Teachers' Alliance

***"We've spent the last 5 days contemplating our own navel,"* complained a dispirited delegate at the end of this year's NUT conference.**

The complaint is given weight by the media focus on debates around internal union reorganisation, the non-ratification of Doug McAvoy as general secretary designate, and union disciplinary procedures.

Certainly Conference failed to offer clear campaigning policies on many issues confronting members in schools.

The National Executive gave no indication that it was about to launch any serious campaigns on the bread and butter issues of jobs, pay, and working conditions, let alone mount the barricades in defence of state education.

From the bottle labelled "new realism", the National Executive poured out the flat and tasteless liquor which has served this union so badly in the recent past.

This was seen most clearly in the debate around GERBill (Great? Education? Reform?? Bill). The National Executive persuaded Conference to adopt its proposals for an *"independent education commission"* comprising the NUT, representatives of parents, industry, and the churches.

These "authoritative allies" will be charged with defending state education provision and the curriculum from predatory Tory attacks in a continuation of the already stale strategy whose climax before Conference was a mass rally in the Albert Hall which attracted a grand total of 950 to hear an odd ragbag of bishops, academics, politicians, and school recorder bands.

The Socialist Teachers' Alliance argued for a different approach, based on a system of alliances with other trade unionists, and campaigning parents and community organisations, and a strategy which included teachers refusing to co-operate with new testing procedures and setting up community-based campaigns against "opting out".

Thatcher will be delighted with the NUT's meek and tame surrender to the biggest reorganisation of state education since the 1944 Education Act. In the meantime, *Briefing* supporters should invite their local Lord to the next meeting — information on "lobbying" may be obtained from the NUT.

On conditions of service, the union leadership had nothing to offer but advice on how to negotiate with "friendly" employers and a statement of aims for future agreements. With the loss of negotiating rights, the hawkish interpretation of Baker's conditions of service by LEAs, and lack of union leadership, demoralisation among classroom teachers is likely to deepen.

The seven week strike in Haringey was frequently referred to by Executive speakers, but only as a left cover for the absence of any serious campaign of industrial action to reverse the general attacks on teachers' working conditions (including larger classes, longer hours, and cover for absent colleagues).

The pay debate was farcial. The Executive called for increases of 40%. *"We want 'loadsamoney',"* heckled an unimpressed Conference, and with good reason. The Executive offered nothing in the way of a strategy to *win* this "Harry Enfield" claim.

The STA proposed a more realistic claim of a flat rate increase of £2,000, coupled with a realistic action strategy to win it. Unimpressed with the NUT's demands for "loadsamoney", Baker has simply imposed a 4-6% pay increase.

In a union where there is large support for the left, the "new realists" did not have it all their own way. This was obvious in the debate on union reorganisation. The important arguments in this debate concerned the aims and objectives of the union and union democracy.

Impressed by the growing strength of the left, the "new realists" wish to impose centralisation and take powers away from local associations (NUT local branches).

They seek also to impose a fundamental change from a union which attempts to defend the collective interests of its members to one which is in essence a company union offering discounts and fringe benefits to individual members, along the EETPU model. The justification for these changes has been the dramatic fall in union membership and consequent loss of income in recent years.

Conference was in no mood to support such far-reaching changes without a thorough debate among the membership and deferred the proposals to a special conference. This vote and the vindication of the ILTA eight were among the highlights for the left.

After defeats over pay and working conditions and the loss of negotiating rights, the NUT is less confident than it was only a few years ago. Nevertheless, a large minority still support campaigns of action against the Tory government's attacks on state education.

Far from nurturing this mood, the NUT leadership is determined to push the union towards Kinnockite "new realism". It is still far from clear whether the membership will allow this move, and the debate is by no means concluded.

Benn/Heffer campaign

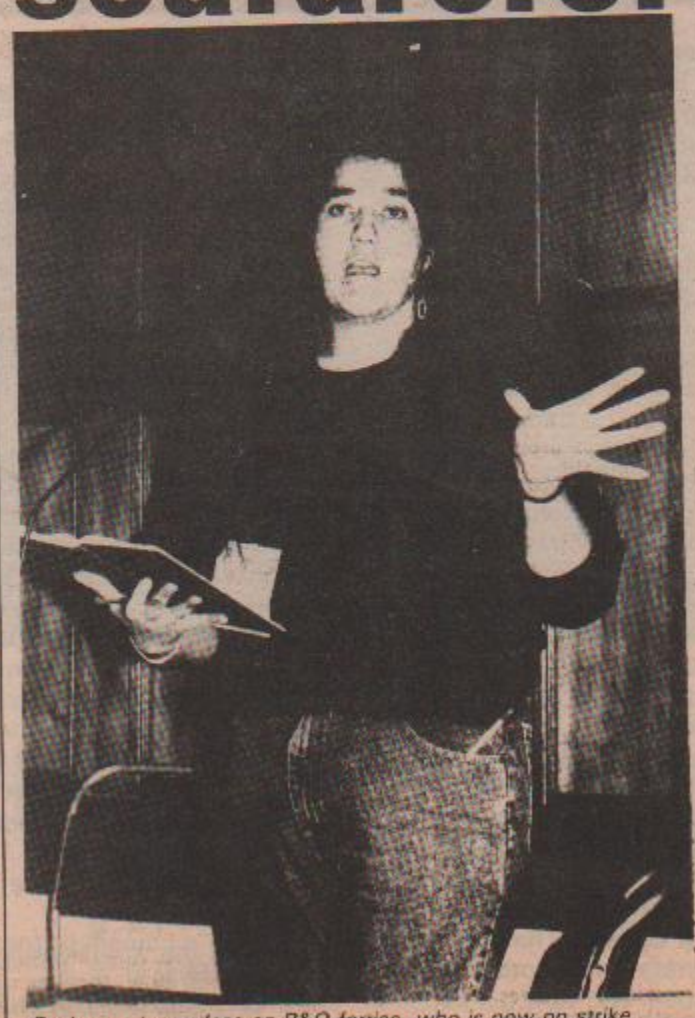
What you can do in your union

- If at all possible, submit a resolution (emergency if necessary) through your branch to Union Conference supporting Benn and Heffer.
- Get the next meeting of your Broad Left, left caucus, etc., to discuss how to take the campaign up with the maximum effect — and use the campaign to build the left in the union.
- Start the discussion in your union journal with a letter supporting Benn and Heffer. Encourage other members to continue the debate.
- Put pressure on NEC members or other officials who support Benn and Heffer to come out openly in their favour.
- Ensure the issue is discussed at all levels of the union and at other bodies, like Trades Councils, to which your branch sends delegates.
- Work with local Benn/Heffer campaigns (or set one up if it doesn't exist) to get it discussed at other trade union branches in your area, providing speakers if necessary.
- Put pressure on the Executive to promise full debate of the issue at Conference even if it's too late for resolutions. Ensure as many branches as possible mandate their delegates.
- Regardless of whether support can be debated at Conference, get your Broad Left to organise a fringe meeting.
- If it can't be discussed at a union conference make sure the Executive is flooded with resolutions from branches in support of Benn and Heffer.
- Produce leaflets for the membership outlining the reasons for supporting the campaigns — this will be especially important where unions decide to ballot the membership. If unions ballot then insist that a policy statement goes out from each candidate.
- Where a workplace Labour Party branch exists invite a speaker to an open workplace meeting. Is it an opportunity to have another look at forming a workplace branch?
- Make sure you keep the Campaign Group of MPs informed of what you are doing.

Pete Firmin, NUR

WATERLOO BRANCH
National Union of Railwaymen
sends
May Day Greetings

Support the seafarers!



Becky, a stewardess on P&O ferries, who is now on strike, addresses the North London Chesterfield Conference, April 16th.

What you can do

The media is downplaying the seafarers' dispute. With the sackings announced as we go to press, it is essential that we do everything possible to mobilise labour movement support for the workers involved.

Every trade union and Labour Party branch should be giving the seafarers a platform to put their case and holding collections to give the strikers the financial support they need.

Solidarity like this has been organised successfully in Hull. In London, Support Groups are getting going. This dispute is not just about the individual workers' conditions of work; it's about whether the shipping companies can remove all the gains the seafarers have won this century — and disregard safety measures for workers and passengers as if the *Herald of Free Enterprise* tragedy never happened.

Organise solidarity now!

London

A group of seafarers is based in London to mobilise support. The seafarers have divided London between them so contact your nearest group.

Waltham Forest
Contact Glenn or Jim on 521 4729.

This Support Group is twinned with Thanet. Send messages of support and donations to NUS, Labour Hall, High St, Ramsgate, Kent.

Southwark
Contact Brian on 582 8433.

This Support Group is twinned with Deal. Messages of support and donations to NUS, Magnus House, Deal, Kent.

Hounslow
Ask for the Seafarers Support Group on 572 3764.

This Support Group is twinned with Thanet. Messages of support and donations to NUS, Labour Hall, High St, Ramsgate, Kent.

(Thanks to Glenn, based in Waltham Forest Support Group for the above information).

Hull

Support grows

P&O Ferries workers raised £900 — and promises of more financial support — in their recent tour of workplaces in the Hull area.

The Hull Trades Council Disputes Committee, which has undertaken solidarity work in the area since the Miners' Strike, worked in conjunction with Hull Dockers to raise the sum in a fundraising tour which lasted two days.

£200 was raised from a meeting of Hull National Union of Seamen, with a further £200 coming from two pits which Hull Trades Council developed a relationship with during the Miners' Strike — Kellingley, and Prince of Wales, Pontefract.

£60 was raised from a collection and donation made when the strikers put their case to Hull North Labour Party General Committee.

The remainder came from workplaces in the Hull area, with more workplaces organising continuing collections from workers in the weeks to come.

The size of the donations, in such a short space of time, shows the significant support which exists in the area for the P&O workers.

NUPE — Hackney Officers Branch
May Day Greetings
No Cuts in Jobs and Services!
Smash the Housing Bill!

TONY BENN on a threat to democracy: Parliamentary Bi-partisanship

The following is a digest of a speech made by TONY BENN at the North London Socialist Conference on April 16th.

The British people, unlike those living in most democracies, are not allowed to elect their Head of State nor their Second Chamber, and even the House of Commons has no power over the Royal Prerogatives by which any Prime Minister — Conservative or Labour — can by-pass parliament.

These Prerogatives legitimise the most corrupting form of patronage under which ministers, peers, judges, bishops, ambassadors, and the chairs of nationalised industries are appointed in secret by the Prime Minister of the day.

In recent years, even our limited democracy has been sharply reduced by attacks on local government, including the abolition of the GLC and the Metropolitan Counties, rate-capping, and the disqualification, by the Courts, of Councillors who try to implement the manifestos on which they were elected.

In addition, the security services are, effectively, accountable to no one. They can do virtually what they like. They have, in the past, attempted to remove an elected Labour Prime Minister, and quite recently they carried out an execution without trial in Gibraltar, confident that their activities will be protected from public disclosure by judges who will ban any publication that gives an account of what has happened.

These events should set the alarm bells ringing for those who care about civil liberties, human rights, and the democratic use of the ballot box.

But there is another threat which receives little attention: the tendency towards parliamentary bi-partisanship on some of the central political questions of the day, blanking out the electors' choice.

Both Front Benches in the House of Commons are officially agreed about British membership of NATO, with its nuclear strategy, the presence of 30,000 American troops on British soil, and the maintenance of a high and crippling level of military expenditure.

Both Front Benches in the House of Commons appear now to accept British membership of the EEC which, with the adoption of the single European Act, effectively destroys the right of elected British governments to follow the economic and industrial policies necessary if full employment is to be restored and our industries are to be rebuilt.

Both Front Benches endorsed the Anglo-Irish Agreement which locks this country into policies which sustain the British occupation of Northern Ireland and military measures to maintain "law and order".

All the Parliamentary Parties seem to be moving towards an agreement that market forces have a central role to play, leaving only the question of how they can best be administered to be resolved on polling day.

Most astonishing of all is the view, widely expressed at the top, that the apparatus of the State is actually neutral, and that the civil service, the security services, the courts, and the broadcasting authorities are willing and anxious to co-operate, on the basis of impartiality, with a Labour government, once it has been elected by the British people.

These are deadly, dangerous trends because they blank out any serious alternative approach to what should be done, deny the legitimacy of other views, and seek to extinguish the ancient radical and democratic traditions which we have inherited from the past.

These coalitionist tendencies, if they are not challenged, could lead Britain towards a one-party state in which only one view would be acceptable.

Even today those who insist on advocating alternative policies face harassment and intimidation from a handful of rich men who own and control most of our newspapers, and are always ready to hound anyone who challenges the conventional wisdom of the rich and the powerful.

One of the most dangerous developments in Britain today is the persistence of racism and the re-emergence of fascism, must of it directed against the black community, which suffers some of the worst poverty in the inner cities, experiences rigid and unfair immigration controls, and harsh policing.

The experience of the black community in these circumstances makes it absolutely essential that it should have distinct and separate representation in the labour movement by the acceptance of Black Sections.

Apartheid is a world issue and one of the reasons why the British people have not taken a stronger line is that the labour movement itself has not linked racism at home with the struggle in South Africa.

If Labour is to be truly representative, it must tap the experience, reflect the needs, and articulate the demands of black people as a part of the working class movement in Britain.

And if the Labour Party denies these rights, it will weaken itself and undermine its capacity to do what has to be done.

The experience of the black community in these circumstances makes it absolutely essential that it should have distinct and separate representation in the labour movement by the acceptance of Black Sections.



PHOTO: Marlene Stead

Tony Benn at the North London Socialist Conference April 16th-17th

Women for Socialism

Backing Benn and Heffer — *on our terms!*

Following the announcement by Benn and Heffer of their decision to stand against Kinnock and Hattersley, four women MPs resigned from the Campaign Group.

Jo Richardson, Clare Short, Margaret Beckett, and Joan Ruddock have not yet made clear to women in the labour movement why they took this action.

These women are not all in total political agreement, but they do all have some allegiance to the Tribune Group, which may have influenced their decision.

Whatever the individual reasons, the collective effect of the resignations has been to confuse and worry many socialist feminists in the Labour Party.

Perhaps the only good thing to come of these resignations will be a discussion, urgently required, amongst socialists concerning the place of women's and feminist policies in the campaign for the Labour Leadership and in the labour movement as a whole.

Labour women have been preoccupied for the last 18 months by internal discussions about structures, division of votes, and rules. Important as these things are, they are also *boring*!

The only women who found these tedious arguments exciting — the Labour Women's Action Committee Leadership — managed to make every tactical mistake possible in the Review of Women's Organisation and it has led to the demise of their organisation. The Review has demoralised Labour women — and it's still not over!

By Barbara Green
Sponsor of Women for Socialism

The Benn-Heffer Campaign will provide opportunities for discussion and activity around socialist policies and above all a chance to reach out to many women involved in struggle.

Women should support the Benn-Heffer Campaign. But our support is not, and should not be, without conditions.

The Campaign speaks not only for the Labour left, but also for women and men involved in the Chesterfield movement and in many trade unions and community groups.

Policies

Socialist feminists need to discuss and advance the policies we think are necessary to meet the needs of the majority of women — the kind of policies which are passed year after year at Labour Women's Conference, but few people ever hear about because the Party Leadership has such contempt for women's struggles.

Women for Socialism has written to the Benn-Heffer Campaign, raising these issues and proposing to organise a meeting to discuss a Women's Manifesto for the Campaign. In particular, we feel we must debate and agree policies which will fight to increase women's access to abortion and contraception facilities.

In the short time left between now and the third reading of the Alton Bill, we must ensure that the Benn-Heffer campaign does its best to mobilise against it.

We must also look at ways of supporting women facing racism and ensure that Black women's demands are placed on the political agenda.

The Benn-Heffer Campaign should work with Women for Socialism and other socialist feminists to reach the widest audience of women. Another proposal is to establish groups of women supporting Benn-Heffer inside various unions.

If you would like to discuss these ideas or be sent more information about Women for Socialism, please contact: Mandy Moore, Sutton Manor, Polterton Lane, Sutton Scarsdale, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5UJ.

THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Joan Ruddock: well-known CND campaigner before election as a Labour MP; now making her position clear in refusing to back unilateralist challengers to a multilateralist pro NATO Party Leadership.

May Day Greetings from
Hornsey & Wood Green
Labour Women's Section
No Cuts in Women's Jobs or Services!

Labour Party

SNP exploits Labour split in elections

Thousands of poor and needy in this area are being hammered through withdrawal of benefits under the new social security system.

The same traumatic experience is being repeated throughout the length and breadth of Britain.

In Scotland it is compounded by another vicious attack on living standards: delivery of Poll Tax registration forms.

This is the context in which District Council elections are being held throughout Scotland on May 5th.

A revamped Tory election machine with money to burn is fielding a record number of candidates. Their mesage is simply: take Thatcher's medicine — it tastes horrible, but there is no alternative. They have no hope.

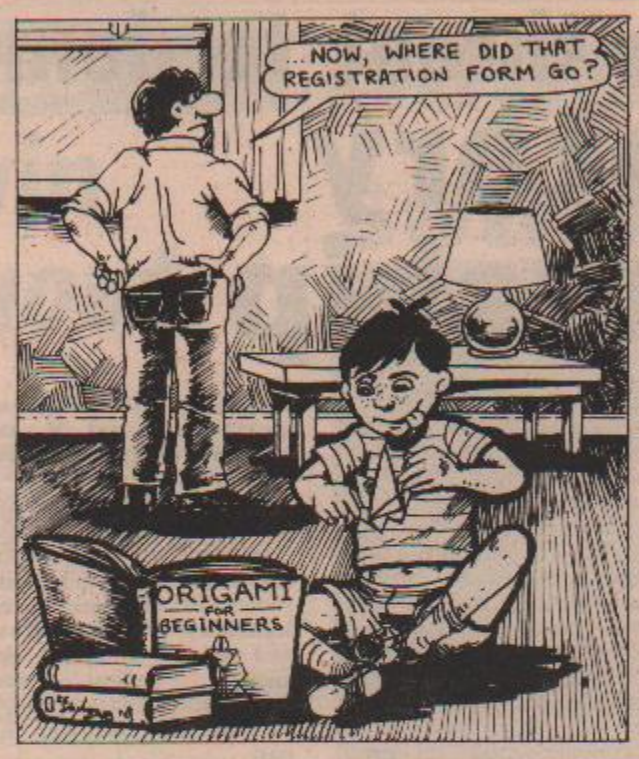
Labour's anti-Poll Tax campaign *Stop It*, launched amid much publicity last October, has been so ineffective and bureaucratic that the jibe is: let's change its name to "start it".

By Jim Niblock
Glasgow

Chair of the campaign, Brian Wilson MP, said *"The campaign aimed to provide a vehicle for the massive public hostility to the Poll Tax."* There is no shortage of public hostility, but the vehicle is a clapped out wreck.

The SNP's line on the Poll Tax is to the left of Labour: they seek to use the elections to build support for a mass non-payment campaign. The nonsense of Dewar & Co. threatens to open a breach in Labour's support; which the SNP may yet prove able to exploit.

Jeremy Corbyn MP
and
Keith Veness (Agent)
send May-Day Greetings to
Briefing readers
Vote for a socialist Leader
—
Vote Benn and Heffer!



Limp legality

The Labour Party in Scotland has committed itself to a campaign designed to use legal means to frustrate the Poll Tax registration process.

By Roland Sheret
Scottish Labour Briefing

The *Stop It* campaign has produced a leaflet *Send It Back*, which explains how it may be hindered. One million of these leaflets are supposed to have been printed but they were only available after the registration forms went out to households.

The labour movement failed badly in the first round of opposition to the Poll Tax. Labour controlled Regional Councils all agreed to the setting up of the Poll Tax machinery. New staff have been recruited to help administrate the collection.

Some Labour controlled District Councils have even agreed to be agents for the collection of the Tax from Council house tenants even though there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

Labour's elected Councillors refused to be the first line of defence against the Tax. The Labour Party Leadership refused to ask them to put up a fight.

Meanwhile the Scottish National Party is fighting the District Council elections this May on a platform asking for a mandate to run a non-payment campaign. They are looking to win 100,000 pledges of non-payment.

The General Council of the Scottish Trade Union Congress has been involved in lengthy discussion with the Labour Party, the SNP, the Democrats, and the Communist Party in an effort to get a united campaign against the Poll Tax. All parties agreed to a six point plan of opposition put forward by the STUC. However, the SNP's amendment, advocating a mass campaign of non-payment, was rejected and talks broke down.

The opportunity is there for the Labour Party and the trade unions to unite with the SNP to stop the Poll Tax. If Labour refuses to fight then crisis threatens.

Labour's Scottish MPs are widely described as the "feeble fifty", showing the frustration many feel as they see the Labour Party unable to capitalise on its electoral dominance in Scotland. The much publicised campaign for a Scottish Assembly has died a death after the General Election.

If the Labour Party is not prepared to challenge Westminster's rule in Scotland, the crisis will not be a crisis of the state: it will become a crisis of the Labour Party.

STOP IT POLL TAX

Scotland says: stand up and fight!

Much of the potential in building a fightback against next April's introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland was shown at a public meeting called by Maryhill Labour Party on April 7th.

By Allan Green
Maryhill CLP

Over 100 people turned out to discuss how to oppose its implementation. Unfortunately, the lack of a fighting leadership was also starkly highlighted.

The main platform speakers were Dougie Harrison, Assistant Secretary of the STUC and a local Communist Party member, and Maria Fyfe, Labour MP for Maryhill. With between 75% and 80% of Scots, according to opinion polls, against the Poll Tax, the meeting did not dwell on the injustices and absurdities of the tax, but, centred around how to channel that anger.

Sadly, the *Stop It* initiative, which insists on legality, was the *only* way forward offered by the platform, although speaker after speaker from the floor drew attention to the need for a much stronger campaign.

Dougie Harrison responded by saying *"If you want to make a martyr of yourself — fine,"* and even, contrary to the facts, talked about prison sentences.

The main question in developing a strategy to stop the Poll Tax is not whether we should at this stage run a legal or an illegal campaign around non-cooperation with the Registration Forms. The question should be *"What is required to stop the Poll Tax?"*

Hackney North Labour Party
sends
Socialist Greetings
to all readers of *Briefing*
We pledge continued support in the fight for justice for all workers in struggle everywhere.

Leabridge Branch
(Hackney North CLP)
sends May Day Greetings
Back Benn and Heffer

MAY DAY GREETINGS FROM
The Campaign Group of Labour MPs
Support Benn and Heffer for the Party Leadership

ALF LOMAS
Euro MP London North East
sends
MAY DAY GREETINGS
TO ALL SOCIALISTS
Let's have a socialist manifesto for the next election!

SOCIALIST MAYDAY GREETINGS
from
LESLIE HUCKFIELD MEP
PO BOX 200, Wigan, WN5 0LU
Telephone (0942) 496957

Local government elections

Birmingham

The capitalist heart of England

One third of the Council, 39 seats, is up for election on May 5th.

At present Labour has an overall majority of 13 seats.

The week after Labour lost five seats last May (fighting on the right wing's manifesto) the Labour Group, contrary to national Party policy, abolished what they term the "vote losing" Women and Race Relations & Equal Opportunities Committee.

This year, they waited until April 19th to launch the manifesto. For the third year running, it has been written in effect by the Leader of the Council, Dick Knowles, and a few group officers, with no consultation whatever with Birmingham District Labour Party (BDLP).

These people always find a new excuse for writing the manifesto without consultation. Two years ago they walked out of negotiations with BDLP Officers, in contravention of Party rules. Last year they had the BDLP suspended by the NEC. This year they conducted a farcical, sham exercise in consultation — but it was never completed.

By a Birmingham Labour Briefing supporter

At the time of writing, this manifesto has still not been seen by most Party members. However, it is likely to be a plan to out-Tory the Tories by building Birmingham as the "big capitalist heart of England". International Convention Centres, Olympic Games bids, and Super Prix road races — all with joint Tory support — will no doubt feature prominently.

The issues concerning people on the doorstep in Birmingham — Social Security changes, Poll Tax, Education, and Housing repairs — are unlikely to get a mention. It is hard to convince people to vote Labour when they can't get their backdoor fixed, but they read of £240,000 being spent on a statue outside the new International Convention Centre. Perhaps the first gathering in the new Centre should be booked for a Birmingham Council Tenants' Convention!

The signs are that after the election the Labour Group will have shifted away from the right, though not into the control of the left. A soft left/middle/centre right unholy alliance is likely to control the group.

The left's task in the new Group will be to put pressure on the soft left alliance by arguing for radical policy, democratisation of the Group, and its accountability to BDLP; and for availability of information on Council budget and policy formulation to Party members.

Not least the left should be arguing for the Labour Council to stop colluding with the Conservative Government and start fighting the Tories!

Leeds

A challenge to the Leadership

Leeds Campaign Group is mounting a challenge for key positions on Leeds' ruling Labour Group.

Councillor Garth Frankland (a *Briefing* supporter) will stand for Leader, the position currently held by Councillor Mudie. The Deputy Leadership will be contested by Pat Winn, Councillor for Richmond Hill.

"Leeds needs a much more open and responsive Council Leadership," Garth commented. "The Campaign Group aims to provide the Party in Leeds with the chance to exercise its democratic right to support such a Leadership."

Garth expressed concern at the falling Labour vote in Leeds, in contrast to many other cities where the Party has made gains form the Tories. No new wards have been gained by Labour since it took office in 1980.

Leeds Labour Party has many radical and electorally popular policies — but unfortunately the current Leadership pursue many of them with little enthusiasm and some not at all.

For example, the Party wants to encourage co-operation with the local community by supporting tenants organisations — this would enable local people to have greater control over their everyday lives.

But recently the Council has been concentrating power more and more with a small group of leading Councillors. This is one important change a Campaign Group Leadership would make.

Another key factor in the Campaign Group's decision to stand is the current Leadership's failure to face up to the Tories' onslaught against local government and the communities of Leeds. The Housing Bill, the Education Reform Bill, the Poll Rax and privatisation are major attacks on working peple. No attempt has been made to mount a concerted campaign of opposition to these damaging attacks.

"The time has come to transform the Labour Council into one which really reflects the needs and aspirations of ordinary people," Garth said. *"To do this we need to force extra resources from central government and stop collaborating with Tory ministers whose only aim is to crush local government."*



PHOTO: D. Kavanagh

Cllr Garth Frankland: pictured on local demo

The Group' elections will be held after the local elections on May 5th. Already Garth Frankland has won the support of five local Party branches, East Leeds CLP (Denis Healey's manor!) and Garforth NUPE branch.

Taken from Leeds Campaign Group press release

Brighton

This Councillor won't vote for cuts

Here we reprint an article by Mark Thompson, Labour Candidate for 7 Dials, from *Brighton Labour Briefing*.

There can be no doubt that the ultimate aim of the Tory government is the complete destruction of the welfare state, from the Health Service through the Council's street cleaning service to the grant for the Rape Crisis line.

Every one is a service for the working class.

Labour Councils are a particular target because they are elected to defend and expand these services. It is for this reason they are removing every real element of power from Labour Councils by ratecapping, enforced privatisation of services, and now by the Local Government Bill with its infamous Clause 28.

My ward, Seven Dials, is one with particularly bad housing problems. Hundreds of people live in overcrowded, overpriced and often damp or inadequate rented flats and houses.

With the Private Tenants Action Group we have campaigned for the Council to enforce the law on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). A team to do this has been promised, cut, and now promised at a reduced budget. How long it will last is anyone's guess.

For many people in the Labour Party the only future is to have token control over a dwindling handful of resources, so that we become the Tories' puppets carrying out their cuts, and defusing any opposition to them. There is no such thing as a mandate for Labour Councillors to vote for cuts. The main reason people vote for Labour in Council elections is to defend and improve Council services, **and I have no intention of betraying that trust.**

The cuts have already angered and bewildered many Council workers, tenants and service users; but this is just the start of a snowball that will bring major strikes next year. We have to take the fight for socialist policies out of internal Labour Party meetings to mobilise everyone who is prepared to fight.

It is not for Councillors to lead a campaign against the cuts, or to decide the tactics, — that is the role of the *Fightback Campaign* — a campaign that includes tenants groups, Council workers, the "voluntary" sector, and service users groups such as the Private Tenants Action Group. This will be a crucial year for Labour in Brighton. Either we stand with those who are prepared to fight, or we disappear into the history books.

Black Sections National Conference

Forging ahead on all fronts

Anyone hoping that after the election of four Black MPs the Black Sections movement would quietly die away will have been sorely disappointed with the Black Sections' fifth annual national conference.

A large number of delegates came to Manchester on March 25th and 26th from around the country, including Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Bristol.

We met to discuss the next steps in the battle against racism — inside and outside the Labour Party.

Media attention focussed on how Black Sections would react to the affiliation proposal floated by Bill Morris of the TGWU. In an article in *Tribune*, Bill suggested that Black Sections should abandon the demand for constitutional recognition on the same basis as Women's and Youth Sections.

Instead, we should accept the compromise of an anti-racist socialist society affiliated to the Labour Party in the same way as socialist societies such as SHA, SEA and Poale Zion.

The issue was debated in a closed session on "The Way Forward". Conference agreed to support the National Committee's recommendation which had been produced after a wide-ranging consultation with local Black Sections:

"Should a precise proposal come forward which meets our criteria and has the support of significant unions and/or Labour's National Executive, our National Conference (will) be recalled to decide whether or not to accept. Irrespective of this, we should continue as before but with much greater emphasis on deepening our roots in Black community struggle and more attention to trade union work."

Conference agreed that Bernie Grant MP, as Secretary of the parliamentary Black Section and as a National Committee member, should approach Party officials to see whether any serious proposals were being made.

However, Conference was adamant that any proposal would have to recognise two fundamental principles: the right of Black self-organisation and guarantees of Black representation at all levels of the Labour Party. Until these principles were conceded, the battle for constitutional recognition would continue, including motions to Labour Party Conference.

By Chris Khamis Black Section, West Midlands Organiser

The increased emphasis on supporting Black struggles, both in Britain and internationally, was reflected in the Conference debates and resolutions. Black Sections committed itself to campaign against the Poll Tax, the Immigration Bill, racism in the Youth Training Scheme and the new MSC adult training programme.

Internationally, Conference expressed its solidarity with the people of Palestine and Azania following addresses by Youssef Allen of the Palestinian Trade Union Federation and a representaitve of the Pan African Congress.

Neil Kinnock was condemned by delegates for his press statement at the end of his recent tour of Palestine in which he gave no recognition to the PLO but did praise the Israeli Labour Party, thus disregarding Labour Party policy on recognition of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people. (The Israeli Labour Leader, Shimon Peres, supported the murder of Abu Jihad — does Kinnock agree?)

A major debate was held on a National Committee education paper, *Opting for Equality*. This described how, rather than providing more choice for Black parents and children, the Education Reform Bill would mean that the only choice for most Black people would be under-resourced "sink" schools, staffed almost entirely by white teachers and run by white governors.



PHOTO: Martine Stead

Black Sections will campaign for Black control and better resourcing of such schools, more Black teachers and governors, and the introduction of mother tongue teaching where there is a demand. Independent Black schools, or "opting out", were rejected as an answer to racism in the school system.

The Conference also agreed to support the Benn-Heffer leadership challenge.

A new Executive was elected. Narendra Makanji, one of the Haringey Councillors fighting the curs, was elected Chairperson. Marc Wadsworth retired after two years as Chair (the maximum period allowed under Black Sections' constitution), but was elected as Campaigns Organiser.

Alton Burnett from Birmingham and Martha Osamor from Haringey were elected as the two Vice Chairs, and Sharon Atkin was elected Women's Organiser.

Over the next year, Black Sections will face many challenges, not the least of which is deepening its roots in the struggles of the Black community. But after the Manchester conference there is no doubt: the Black Section is here to stay, and here to fight.

SPARKBROOKGATE!

Two heads are better than one... sometimes

The Sparkhill ward in the Birmingham Sparkbrook constituency — where Deputy Leader Roy Hattersley is MP — has managed to end up with *two* Labour candidates in the May elections.

This is accompanied by an ongoing case in the High Court.

The situation arises from the attempts of the right wing to deselect the sitting soft left Labour Councillor, Mick Rice.

Sparkhill branch was closed down immediately after the general election last June after a number of Sparkhiill and Sparkbrook branches called for a vote for the Tory candidate in that election.

These people were longstanding Hattersley supporters, and may have just been confused and not able to tell the difference.

The branch was reopened in November 1987 with an attempt to hold fresh elections for officers. However, this had not been notified on the Agenda; and in any case, the validity of the 1987 AGM was not disputed.

Following complaints, the GC dissolved the branch. A membership validation process was then supposedly carried out, largely under the control of the right wing Constituency membership secretary. However, no report of members names from this process was ever given to the GC.

By STAN YARRUM

A branch AGM was finally held in February 1988 — when some twenty longstanding members were refused entry.

A shortlisting meeting for the selection of the Council candidate was held on March 24th. The chair announced that a head count showed 102 people present; but only 85 people signed the attendance register.

87 votes were recorded in the final ballot which elected Mick Rice in favour of three right wingers. The list of irregularities at the meeting goes on.

The District Party then set up a right wing dominated enquiry team which was to report to an April EC meeting. The right *then* realised that the members of this team would not be able to vote at the EC if they were reporting to it on the enquiry!

The EC was unilaterally cancelled, and the inquiry team endorsed a right-wing candidate selected at a subsequent meeting.

Irregularities at the selection meeting were raised; but the member making the complaints was threatened from the right wing with getting "his head kicked in" — a threat ignored by the many Party officers present.

The person selected at this meeting and Councillor Rice both submitted nomination papers... so Sparkhill ward now has to "Labour" candidates.

Three members of Sparkhill branch have started legal action to obtain membership records of the ward and declare the shortlisting meeting invalid. Two High Court hearings have taken place and been adjourned at the time of wriring.

The Right are now threatening to expel anyone to the left of Genghis Khan, especially anyone who supports Councillor Rice.

Meanwhile, the "soft left" who were so quick to call for an enquiry into Liverpool a couple of years ago are conspicuously absent in what is not the first time membership irregularities have come to light in Sparkbrook.

French Presidential elections

Juquin poses a socialist alternative

Opinion poll forecasts before last Sunday's (April 24th) first round of the French Presidential elections make FRANCOIS MITTERRAND, Socialist Party President of the Republic, the clear favourite to win in the second round.

His closest challenger, JACQUES CHIRAC of the Gaullist RPR, is currently Prime Minister and would use a Presidential victory to push France to the right — and initiate far reaching "Thatcherite" reforms.

If Mitterrand succeeds in beating off this challenge, should socialists celebrate? Yes — and no. Yes, because a victory for Mitterrand against the right amounts to a rejection of Thatcherism in French colours. No, because there is nothing much really socialist about Mitterrand's policies.

Indeed, argues FRANK STEVENS, the real socialist alternative in the French electoral campaign has been provided by dissident Communist PIERRE JUQUIN.

The French Presidential electoral system consists of two rounds, in which all of those candidates with less than 15% of the poll are eliminated.

Usually, minority candidates of the left and right stand down between rounds to allow one candidate of the left to contest one candidate of the right.

And so it will most likely be this time. Leftists and socialists of all hues will rally to Mitterrand in the second round to defeat the right; that's how it should be!

But for socialists on the left of the Labour Party, the policies of Pierre Juquin, and not those of the official Socialist Party candidate Mitterrand, are those which we would recognise as our own. Juquin stands for:

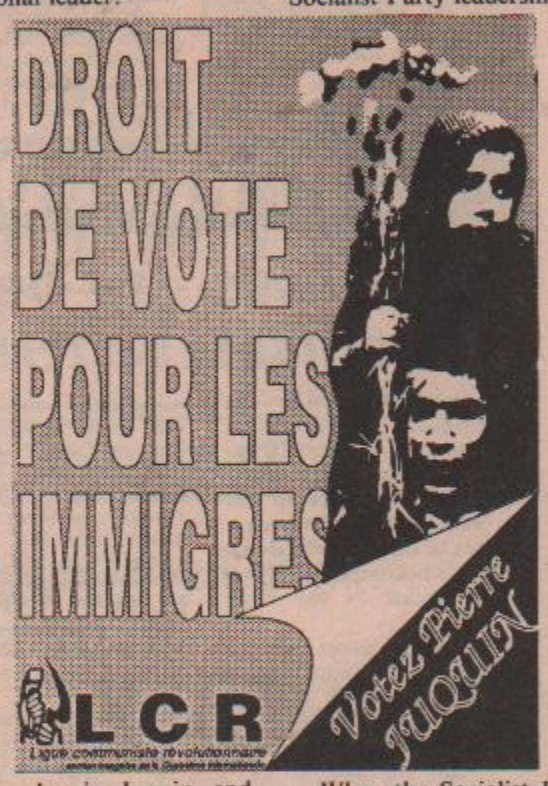
- Unilateral nuclear disarmament by France; an end to the "force de frappe";
- For a 35-hour week with no loss of pay; an end to austerity policies;
- For women's rights, including 50% women on all public bodies, even the National Assembly;
- An end to discrimination against lesbians and gay men;
- Full rights for immigrant workers, including the right to vote;
- Against racism and for mass mobilisation against the fascist Front National.

Juquin is the only candidate to stand for these policies. In particular the demand for French unilateral nuclear disarmament is considered a real scandal by the "official" left candidates — Andre Lajoinie of the Communist Party and Mitterrand — in a country where there has never been a mass peace movement like CND.

Neither of the two main left candidates have championed the demands of immigrant workers, and the Parti Communiste Francais (PCF), for example, does not support the right to vote for immigrant workers. And of course demands in support of lesbians and gay men, and for 50% women in public bodies are considered lunatic by the "official" left.

One of the most scandalous aspects of Mitterrand's campaign has been the "discrete" attitude he has maintained towards the neo-fascist candidate Jean Marie Le Pen. Mitterrand hopes that when Le Pen is eliminated in the first round, he can pick up some of Le Pen's expected 10% of the vote if he has not openly denounced Le Pen during the election campaign.

Mitterrand's silence on Le Pen is a real betrayal of the immigrant workers who are victims of a rising tide of racism, fuelled by racist demagogues like the Front National leader.



So who is Juquin and where does his support come from? Pierre Juquin is a long-time leader of the French Communist Party. For more than a decade before 1986 he was the main public spokesperson of the Party, other than the General Secretary George Marchais. During the 1970s Juquin was one of the strongest supporters of Eurocommunism inside the PCF political bureau.

Since the end of the 1970s the PCF has been in drastic decline, as both electoral support and members have drifted away. The PCF, which enthusiastically supported the invasion of Afghanistan and the suppression of Solidarnosc, has increasingly been seen as both Stalinist and not particulary radical. It suffered especially from its participation in the government led by Francois Mitterrand from 1981-86.

The crisis of the PCF has in the last two years finally created internal political dissent. Juquin emerged as the leader of the "renovateurs" — the "renewers" — who have thousands of supporters inside the PCF. Many have been expelled and formed a national co-ordination, which is debating the formation of a new radical socialist party.

Juquin's campaign has received wide support. Although he is only likely to end up with about 3% of the vote, Juquin had addressed tens of thousands of people in meetings all over France.

Strong support for Juquin has come from prominent figure in the mass anti-racist campaign SOS-Racisme, including its charismatic Black leader Herlem Desir.

Hundreds of support committees exist, including many workplace based committees. Central in building these committees have been left wing organisations like the *Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU)* and especially the Trotskyist *Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire*.

If it is the crisis inside the PCF which has provided the opportunity for an alternative socialist campaign in the election, Juquin's campaign is also a rejection of the kind of politics pursued by Mitterrand and the Socialist Party leadership.

When the Socialist Party formed the government in 1981 — together with the Communists who had four ministers — they at first carried out some positive reforms, like abolition of the death penalty, an extra week's holiday a year, and some decentralisation of government. These were real gains for the working class.

But as the economic crisis is Western Europe deepened Mitterrand abandoned his original expansionist economic policies and turned to austerity and deflation. After much agonising the PCF finally left the government in 1985.

The defeat of Mitterrand's government in 1986 was a result of mass abstentions by left wing voters, not any overall increase in support for the right.



Since 1986 Mitterrand has remained President with a right win Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, in a system of "cohabitation". Mitterrand has utilised his power of Presidential veto on government measures very rarely, and the Chirac government has been a right wing capitalist government. Mitterrand has largely ignored left wing calls to veto Chirac's privatisation measures and force another general election.

The period of Chirac's government has seen some important struggles which give hope for the emergence of a new type of politics in France. At the end of 1986 millions of French students — far more than in 1968 — took part in a movement against the government's proposed elitist reforms of higher education.

In early 1987 this was followed by a strike wave in a number of industries. However, in common with most West European countries there is a sharpening divide in France between support for the Left and the Right.

In particular, one of the most negative features is the rise of racism in general and the neo-fascist Front National (FN) in particular. Although most of those at Le Pen's rallies appear to come from the more prosperous sections of the population, nonetheless there is a definite working class component of his support, especially in the south. Alarmingly, opinion polls have found that many disillusioned PCF voters have shifted over to Le Pen.

On the other hand, the rise of *anti*-racism among the young is also very marked. Anti-racism was a universal theme of the 1986 student movement. The rallies and rock concerts of the anti-racist movement SOS-racisme are hugely attended, and its badge *Touche pas a mon pote* ("hands off my mate") is everywhere.

The results of the election, the first round of which will be known when this appears, will tell us a lot about the way French politics — and French society — is going. Of course, the central thing is whether Mitterrand beats the leading right wing candidate, probably Chirac, on the second round.

But the other results to look out for are the score for the Front National's Le Pen; the result of Andre Lajoinie the PCF candidate, and particularly whether he does a lot better than Juquin; and of course the result for Pierre Juquin himself, who is contending with a virtual TV and radio boycott, ordered from "on high" (Mitterrand's office) after his very successful half hour TV "face to face" programme.

However, whatever the score on the first round, all the left wing candidates (with the exception of Arlette Laguiller — see box) will call for a vote for Mitterrand on the second round to keep out the right wing.

If Mitterrand and the left are the overall winners, then a new political situation will be created in France. Since the leading candidates are the Socialist Party President and the Gaullist Prime Minister then it is a direct test of strength between left and right.

Left wing socialists, of whatever party, are all calling for the dissolution of the National Assembly (parliament) if Mitterrand wins and the right is defeated, since the President has the power to do this at any time. There would then be the possibility of defeating the incumbent right wing RPR-UDF government, and replacing it with a government of the left.

STOP PRESS

Results confirm predicted success for

counted they are:		
Mitterrand	**33.95%**	**Waech**
Chirac	**19.96%**	**Juquin**
Barre	**16.64%**	**Laguil**
Le Pen	**14.43%**	**Bousse**
Lajoinie	**6.71%**	

What's modern i

Extracts from Juquin's declaration of his preside

On disarmament...

What is modern, is peace. I propose that France accomplishes a bold stroke in favour of disarmament by elaborating a defence policy which ceases to rely on the nuclear deterrent.

On employment...

What is modern, is to give everyone a skilled and interesting job, to allow everyone to express himself in a trade. What is modern, is to go much farther than the simple and indispensable guaranteeing of the rights of wage-earners at work, by allowing everyone to be aware and to have a say in what the enterprise produces, and how it produces. What is modern, is to reduce the time spent by everyone in forced work.

On racism...

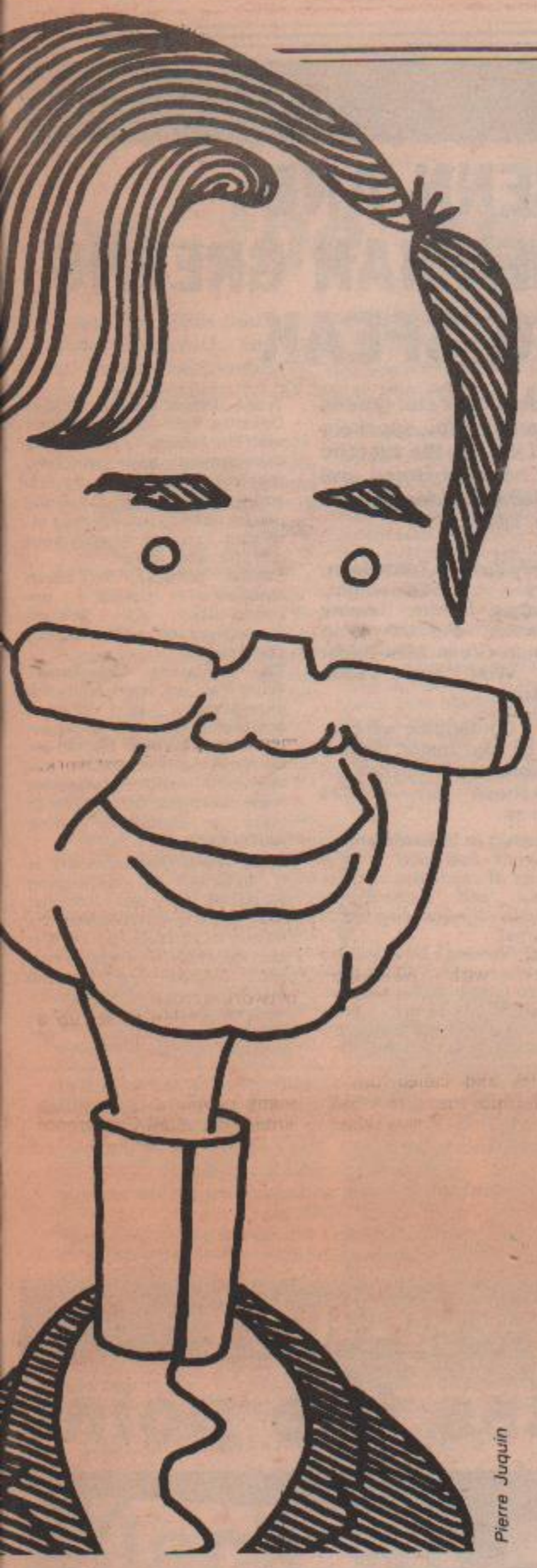
What is modern, is equality. I propose that immigrants can vote in the next municipal and European elections in 1989.

On women...

I propose that the Constitution be altered in such a way that elected assemblies and government bodies have equal proportions of women and men.

On the aged...

Must one, because one is poor, suffer every exclusion, every injustice? Must an old person go away to die alone in hospital? What is modern, is solidarity. I will open up a social security which will be wider in scope because it is renewed, a real integration of the old into social life, an overcoming of every form of exclusion.



Pierre Juquin

Mitterrand and growth in Le Pen vote. After 96.5% of the vote

er	3.81%
	2.11%
r	2.01%
	0.39%

s... socialism!

ntial candidature

n democracy...

hat is modern, is democracy. Nothing is more chaic in our day than the extreme personalisation of wer. I would wish for my campaign itself to be the casion for the largest number of people to come gether, to make their voices heard, to get results. Is t that the road that is called self-management utogestion)?

n nuclear power

it necessary, after the accidents of Three Mile and in the US and Chernobyl in the USSR, to rsist in the construction of nuclear power stations? it necessary to live under the threat of a war which reatens the destruction of the human race? ust the developed industrial nations fester in their otism? What is modern, is to place sincerely on the ble all the information on scientific and technical oblems; I propose an honest and thoroughgoing bate on civilian nuclear power.

n the Mitterrand left government...

ut the deceptions of the seven year term now nding have taught us that in order to realise these pes of change, it is not enough that a tame left and dogmatic Communist Party win the elections.

n imperialism...

hat is modern, is the alliance of all those who live the earth; I propose that France renounces every rvival of colonialism, writes off all debts due to it om third world countries, and sets out on a policy of onomic justice on the planet. These could be the ses of an alternative politics, sincere and urageous, creating a new society.

"Tonton Manie"

French socialists at the polls

Journalists all over Europe went into a flurry of activity when, at the end of March, Francois Mitterrand finally announced that he would restand as a Presidential candidate.

What the French are calling *tonton manie*, a popular "craze" for "uncle Mitterrand", reached a crescendo.

By ANDREW COATES

There was a "spontaneous" demonstration of joy on the Champs Elysees. Mitterrand, it was said, had come to unify France and to heal its divisions.

But on what basis is Mitterrand running for re-election?

The Socialist and Communist governments after 1981 did enact some useful reforms. They nationalised the banks, increased labour protection, and liberalised the judicial system. Yet ultimately radical reform was dropped in the face of the financial orthodoxy of Jacques Delors, Minister of Finance.

In 1984, a new Socialist Party government under Prime Minister Laurent Fabius opted openly for "realism". The *Parti Communiste Francais* was soon out of the cabinet. Economic "flexibility" and "rigour" became the watchwords.

The Socialists drifted so far to the right that they watched impassively as Mitterrand proposed to revise the *"entire philosophy of governance"* — in effect, a policy for modernising French capitalism and forgetting socialism.

Originally a collection of diverse factions, with quite separate historical pedigrees, the *Parti Socialiste* went through some profound changes during its period in power. What has been described as "dogmatic realism" took hold at the centre of the organisation.

Serge July, the once leftist editor of *Liberation*, declared in 1986 that Mitterrand's historic task was to *"render us normal"*. The new "normality" of French politics came into play after legislative elections of March 1986, when the Socialist President began to "cohabit" with a right wing alliance headed by the new Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac.

Despite numeous "reservations" abut Chirac's actions (notably over his handling of the student deonstrations in the winter of 1986 and the privatisation of parts of the television service), this combination worked remarkably well. Mittterrand took it upon himself to mitigate the "extremes" of Chirac's cabinet. He no longer pretended to represent a socialist alternative.

It would be foolish not to sympathise with those French electors who fear an out-and-out right wing victory. Chirac's RPR is a tightly disciplined party committed to neo-liberal ideas of a "minimal state" and the free market.

Like Thatcher, whom he admires, Chirac offers a state that is anything but "minimal" when it comes to dealing with immigrants and workers. His right hand man, Charles Pasqua, was responsible for some of the worst brutalities committed during the students' uprising.

At first sight Raymond Barre might appear to represent a centrist alternative to Chirac. However, his backing, in the collection of parties known as the UDF, is extremely diverse. Some members of Giscard's former grouping, the Parti Republicain, are even greater admirers of Reagan and Thatcher's "conservative revolution" than Chirac is. Others, in the Centre des Democrates Sociaux (CDS), recoil from the racialism of the RPR. Mitterrand has already made gestures to the more amenable members of the UDF to join him in a coalition.

Out on the extreme right Jean Marie Le Pen's Front National has grown in influence. In the legislative elections of 1981 the far right gained a mere 0.35%; now, it registers 10% in the opinion polls.

The Front National, like the RPR, declares itself to be economically "liberal". But its social policy envisages the gradual creation of a system of French apartheid — a stand supported by the claim that the "identity" of the French is threatened by immigrant culture.

Many bourgeois commentators believe that Le Pen draws his backing from former Communists. Serious studies have shown a much more significant phenomenon: the high number of voters for the Front National who *voted for Mitterrand* in 1981 — *22%!*

Chirac has tried to seduce these people by saying that he "understands" their racial anxiety. What Mitterrand will do to woo these voters back remains to be seen.

On the left the campaign of Andre Lajoinie for the PCF has gone down like a lead balloon. Communist support has declined to around 7%. Parallel to this fall has been the rise of the Communist "renovateur" Pierre Juquin.

His campaign has already helped create a remarkable political alliance of left wing Eurocommunists, Trotskyists from the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, parties for self-management, like the Parti Socialiste Unifie, anti-racists and ecologists.

The French "Greens", "les verts", have remained at a distance. Their candidate, Antoine Waechter, has pompously demanded that Juquin "cut his umbilical cord with the left".

Despite this minor setback Juquin has had a national impact. His programme calls for the vote for immigrants, a 35 hour week, and the ending of France's nuclear "deterrent".

It has succeeded in capturing the imagination of young people disillusioned with Mitterrand's move rightwards and the PCF's retreat to the "fortress" of Stalinist purity.

The candidates

The Right

Jacques CHIRAC

Candidate of the Gaullist RPR. Prime Minister and former Mayor of Paris. Wants to deepen the French course towards "Thatcherism". His government has a hard anti-immigrant position, designed to win supporters away from Le Pen. Leading right wing candidate.

Raymond BARRE

Candidate of the "liberal" (really: conservative) UDF. Barre is a former economics professor and has a more "serious" image than the hard boiled Chirac. Campaign held to be lacklustre. No basic policy differences between the UDF and the RPR. Predicted to drop out after the first round.

Jean-Marie LE PEN

Neo-fascist demagogue, hugely popular with sections of the "Poujadist" petty bourgeoisie, but has some working class support. Chirac and Mitterrand both trying to get the lion's share of his predicted 10% of the vote. Most famous remarks: "the gas chambers were a detail of history" and "I have no personal knowledge of whether six million really died."

The Left

Francois MITTERRAND

Veteran social democratic politician, current President. Minister of the Interior during the Algerian war. Has a record of almost infinite political flexibility. Strong supporter of the "Western alliance" as well as the French nuclear "deterrent". Effective head of the government during right wing socialist government from 1981-6. His campaign highlights his detachment from "petty" politics. Key slogan: "Le force tranquille" ("the calm force"!).

Andre LAJOINIE

Fall guy for the French Communist Party (PCF), whose real leader George Marchais is not standing — in order not to go down in history as the candidate who had the PCF humiliated. Lajoinie is so ordinary and boring that he has been labelled "Monsieur Dupont" (Mr Smith) by the satirical magazine *Canard Enchaine*. Effusively supported by the British *Morning Star* who know a faceless Stalinist hack when they see one.

Pierre JUQUIN

Candidate of France's militant left. Attacked by the British *Morning Star* as an "agent of Mitterrand and the Socialist Party" and an "anti-communist". (They know someone breaking from Stalinism when they see them!)

Arlette LAGUILLER

Candidate of the workerist Trotskyist sect, Lutte Ouvriere (Workers' Struggle). Although the only woman candidate, is opposed to feminist demands. Her campaign is *less* political than that of Juquin, concentrating on basic economic demands of the working class.

Pierre BOUSSEL

Candidate of the MPTT (movement for a workers' party). Better known by his nom-de-guerre Pierre Lambert, a name uttered by ageing Trotskyists to frighten their children. Was for a long period a close collaborator of Gerry Healy, with whose methods he has a lot in common. Enough said.

The Greens

Antoine WAECHTER

Antoine Waechter is the candidate of the French Greens, who seem to have little in common with their German counterparts and seem to make a principle of being apolitical. Waechter has sharply attacked Juquin for merging socialist and ecologist themes, demanding that if he wants to be a good environmentalist he should "break his umbilical cord with the left". Not much sympathy for Green Socialism here I'm afraid.

Features: May Day

Red & Green

Why a Green & Socialist Conference?



PHOTO courtesy Third World First

Red and green need to unite to preserve an ecologically sustainable society

One of the most important tasks facing the left over the next few years is to promote dialogue, solidarity, and convergence between the green and socialist movements.

Socialists need to integrate the insights of the greens into their political agenda and address escalating ecological disasters such as the destruction of the ozone layer and nuclear radiation leaks.

By PETER TATCHELL



These disasters are already creating possibly irreversible climatic and genetic changes which may, ultimately, threaten the basis of human life on this planet. Without the capacity of the Earth to sustain the survival of the species, the struggle for socialism is a futile fantasy.

Green and socialist co-operation is equally vital to ensure that greens recognise that it is the capitalist system of private ownership, production for profit, and market forces which — harnessed to imperialism — have wrought world-wide environmental havoc.

A crucial prerequisite for an ecologically sustainable society is, therefore, the rejection of capitalism in favour of a green-rooted socialism where common ownership and economic planning can guarantee the nurturing of the natural environment.

The left's embrace of green politics could be the key to reviving the relevance and popular appeal of socialism. It might, additionally, be a means for the creation of a much larger and more powerful left wing radical movement.

In the 1987 General Election, the Green Party's manifesto was much more radical than Labour's and the trend towards socialist ideas within the Green Party has led to the formation of the Association of Socialist Greens. Indeed, many of us on the Labour left now have more in common with the radical greens than with the right wing of our own Party.

The forthcoming Green and Socialist Conference is an attempt to bring reds and greens together to identify common values and specific areas of agreement, as well as disagreements and divergences.

The issue of economic growth is likely to be one of the most contentious areas. For decades, both the right *and the left* have been committed to the goal of maximum economic expansion. Yet, as the greens have now made us aware, indefinite economic growth is physically impossible and morally indefensible.



In the space of less than two centuries, capitalist industrialisation in just a handful of mainly western countries has resulted in the rapid depletion of the Earth's finite and irreplaceable natural resources.

As these begin to run out in 60-100 years time, our societies will face catastrophic economic collapse and the prospect of ruthless inter-imperialist wars for control of diminishing resources.

To avoid this barbaric fate, the left must campaign for economic growth which is strictly bound by the following green-inspired socialist principles:

- Growth must be socially controlled to ensure that it is ecologically compatible and that its benefits are shared by all.
- It must be based on the use of renewable and recycled resources.
- It must be orientated towards resource efficient collective provision to meet human needs rather than towards private ownership and consumption.
- It must be rooted in less resource intensive technologies and services, such as preventive health care, in contrast to current NHS emphasis on hi-tech curative medicine.
- It must be targetted and restricted to projects of proven social need, such as inner city housing renewal and job creation in depressed industrial regions.

This synthesis of green and socialist ideas, by offering a solution to the dilemmas of economic growth, points to the possibility of a distinctive *green socialism* which can combine commitments to both ecology and social equality. Given the apocalyptic scale of the emerging ecological crisis, the Green and Socialist Conference, and other socialist initiatives, must work to make sure that this possibility becomes a reality.

BENN AND GERMAN GREENS TO SPEAK

Leading reds and greens are among the speakers lined up for the historic first national Green and Socialist Conference on May 14-15th.

They include Tony Benn, Hilary Wainwright, Jonathan Porritt, Jeremy Seabrook, and left wing German Green MPs Frider Otti Wolf and Jacob Uxekull.

The Conference will consist of two major plenary sessions and dozens of workshops on themes such as:

Capitalism or Industrialism? Is the world ecological crisis a product of capitalism or of industrial and technological revolution transcending social systems?

Global Planning? How will we meet the need for global planning to control pollution, conserve the Earth's finite resources, and share out the world's wealth more fairly?

Trade Unions for the 1990s? Does the fight for jobs conflict with the battles to protect the environment and overcome the inequalities between rich and poor nations? Do trade unions need to rethink their attitudes towards employment and the work ethic?

Sexual politics? Do harsh masculine values unconsciously impose themselves on political ideas and actions?

The European Experience? What can we learn from the experiences of greens, socialists, and the independent left in Europe? Should we be working for greater co-operation with socialists, trade unionists, and greens to build a European labour movement?

Third World Development? Is it sufficient for developing countries to win socialist revolutions and nationalise the means of production? Or is it also necesary for them to halt the outflow of natural resources into the western industrial metropolises? Would this mean decline in our western standard of living?

The Green & Socialist Conference is being held at Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth Street, London WC1, on Saturday May 14th and Sunday 15th, commencing at 10am. The cost for the two days is £5 waged and £2 unwaged.

For registration forms and agendas, please send an SAE to:

The Green & Socialist Conference, c/o Socialist Society, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

Football League Centenary

Celebrations miss the point

The Football League reached its hundredth birthday on April 17th.

But, judging from the way the League itself has chosen to celebrate the occasion, one wonders if it has forgotten the whole point of its own existence.

By Craig Brewin
Football Supporters Association
(personal capacity)



PHOTO: Simon Inglis

Somerton Park, ground of Newport County — finishing bottom of the Football League this season, centenary year. Will they be around for the next centenary?

The League is not the oldest football authority in the world. That is the Football Association (FA), formed in 1863.

Nor is it the oldest football competition. The FA Cup was first contested in 1871-72. Even the idea of a League was copied from competitions organised by North American baseball leagues. Nonetheless, the Football League is one of the most successful and enduring ideas in the history of British sport.

The simple object was to provide regular competitive games between teams of similar ability, thus making the sport more attractive to supporters. Previously, football was organised mainly on a friendly basis, with the exception of knock-out cups, such as the nationally organised FA Cup and local cups organised by local FAs.

Because of their one-sided nature, these games were often poorly attended. Many large clubs drawn at home would often agree to play away in order to attract larger crowds.

Friendly games were therefore often more lucrative, but difficult to organise, given the unpredictable demands of knock-out competition. Football clubs, having become professional, needed a regular income.

The League's founder was William McGregor, a member of Aston Villa, and a man who claimed to have played football only once in his life. McGregor wrote to the major clubs at the time suggesting formation of a League and became its first president.

Twelve clubs were invited to join, and all but Accrington are still members. The first championship was won by Preston North End, the "Liverpool" of their day, undefeated during the season and also winners of the FA Cup.

All the founder members came from the north and the Midlands. Professional football only began in the south several years later.

As crowds became bigger, they became increasingly working class. The evidence suggests that it was initially the skilled working class which flocked to matches, with unskilled workers not attending in large numbers until after 1918.

In 1907, McGregor, in one of the first signs that the League was unable to understand its own appeal, stated that *"the lowest class has never taken to football and are not likely to take to it either."*

Modern football was developed in public schools. The creation of the League was a key factor in making it into a mass spectator sport, watched by all sections of (male) society.

One hundred years later, the administration of football in Britain is still divided between the Football League and the Football Association, which remain bitter rivals. Both are merely reactive to the problems facing the game. Both are incapable of radical thought.

There is still no professional women's league in Britain (they do exist elsewhere in Europe) and the FA still prohibits mixed football above junior level.

The rise of black players has been mirrored by a rise in terrace racism, to which the League and FA have been unable to respond.

The League's centenary celebrations show just how out of touch the Football League Management Committee is, and how little it understands the game it is supposed to administer.

Their Centenary Sub-Committee chose to celebrate the 100th anniversary of regular competitive football by cancelling the entire League programme for the weekend and staging a series of irregular, uncompetitive matches, all shunned by supporters.

A centenary concert at the Albert Hall was headlined by Elkie Brooks, hardly the most popular turn on the terraces at half-time.

The centenary was seen only as an excuse for a few money-spinning events, most of which turned out to be a disaster.

If they had asked me, I would have suggested dividing the League's 92 Clubs into four divisions, based on last season's final positions, and having the teams in each division play each other twice — once home and once away — over a nine month period.

The team finishing top of the First Divison would be deemed League Champions, with three divisional awards also presented. If this proved successful, it could be done again next season and, hopefully, *ad infinitum*.

Put mental health back on the agenda!

Since the 1960s and early 70s, when Ronnie Laing, Peter Sedgewick, and others exposed the limitations of traditional psychiatry, the issue of mental health has been ignored by all but a tiny minority on the left.

By Dr David Hill
Southall CLP

The Mental Patients' Union has now evolved into the Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression — a small group, but already branded in the House of Lords an "inherently evil".

Over the last three years this lone voice in the psychiatric wilderness has been joined by a growing number of radical mental health action groups, many organised by users of mental health services.

These groups are now linked by a national support network called *Survivors Speak Out*.

The strength of feeling underlying this new movement can be guaged by the recent response to the demand from the Royal College of Psychiatry for a new law which would permit psychiatrists to forcibly drug people in their own homes.

Apart from the serious threat to civil liberties, the political implications of the proposals were made clear in the College's statement, which argued that such a law would contribute to "solving the problems of the inner city".

At less than two weeks notice 14 London groups were represented at a meeting which set up the London Alliance for Mental Health Action (LAMHA) in August 1987. While focussing initially on campaigning against this legislation, LAMHA also resolved to remain in business beyond the campaign and to co-ordinate the work of progressive mental health groups.

These groups include the voluntary sector, Community Health Councils, and user-led groups such as Camden Consortium, Islington Forum, and Ealing Mental Health Action Group. Efforts to gain affiliations from union and Labour Party branches are beginning to bare fruit.

The campaign against forced drugging included a successful march from Marble Arch to the Royal College of Psychiatry in December. The demonstration was addressed by many "ex-patients" who described an array of mistreatment and abuse.

They were joined by nurses and by MPs Keith Vaz and Jeremy Corbyn. Mike Lawson (Ealing North CLP), who has spent years in psychiatric institutions, laid a wreath to commemorate the many who have died in these so-called "hospitals".

Inhumane

The issue is directly linked to current confusion about hospital closures and community care. The long overdue closure of large Victorian institutions is now under threat because of lack of provision in the community. But keeping these inhumane "hospitals" operating is no answer.

Tory attacks on Local Authorities, which are supposed to provide care in the community, have claimed many casualties. But what of the thousands of less publicised casualties on the back wards — permanently drugged and denied any hope of a meaningful life?

Rather than demand a stop to hospital closures or the right to drug people on the streets, the answer is to organise an effective campaign for properly funded, democratically controlled community care.

Community

Some ideas in the recently published Griffiths Report on community care should be supported. Handing over responsibility for community care to Local Authorities, for instance, would, if properly funded, be a significant inroad on the medical monopoly currently causing so much damage.

We must remind ourselves just who it is that ends up labelled "mentally ill". Women, ethnic minorities, and the unemployed are admitted to psychiatric hosptials at much higher rates than the rest of the population. This cannot be explained within the medical framework.

As the last report by the Health Education Council, *The Health Divide*, clearly demonstrates, oppressed groups are more likely to be driven to despair, confusion, and suicide. How convenient for capitalism to have a group of highly paid professionals ready to dismiss its human debris as "mentally ill", as an individual's biochemical problem.

This is not a fringe issue. Every year in Britain there are nearly 200,000 admissions and over a million and a half visits to psychiatric outpatient clinics. Each year over 25 million prescriptions are written for addictive "minor tranquillisers" (librium, valium, ativan, etc.). One in twenty of our population are now estimated to be addicted to these drugs; the vast majority of them are women.

Electricity

The more powerful tranquillisers (modecate, depixol, haldol, etc.), routinely injected into "in-patients", cause uncontrollable shaking ("tardive dyskinesia") in about a quarter of cases, sometimes creating permanent brain damage.

Even Hoffman LaRoche — one of the largest multinationals in the business — admit that between five and ten million people worldwide are suffering from tardive dyskinesia!

Electricity is still used 135,000 times a year in Britain. They call it "Electro-Convulsive Therapy". We call it electrocution.

It is time we developed socialist policies for mental health. It is not good enough to imitate the simple demands of others for more money with no thought about what sort of services are necessary and who should control them.

Chesterfield

The Chesterfield Conference in June has scheduled a full session on mental health, an improvement on the usual approach of submerging the issue under "health" or "disabilities". The starting point will be a document published by the Socialist Health Association's Mental Health Working Group, *Goodbye to all that?* The booklet (available from SHA, 195 Walworth Road, London SE 17, £2, inc. p&p) discusses the social and economic causes of emotional distress, the relationship between race and mental health, and a progressive community care policy and staff-and-user democracy.

It calls for an alliance of trade unionists, users, radical professionals, and the left. *"Unless this progressive alliance succeeds, patients will be trapped between the old horrors of the institutions and the new ones of living in the community — exploited by private landlords and lacking opportunities to work and have decent material and social support."*

To receive information about groups near you, or to affiliate to LAMHA, contact:
London Alliance for Mental Health Action
c/o Hacker Centre
5-6 Anglers Lane
Kentish Town
London NW5 3DG



Speculum: A Midwife's Musings

Black women and the health service

I'm sure you don't need to be told that Black women get a raw deal when it comes to health care, as both consumers (patients) and workers.

As a white woman who has worked for years in the Health Service, I've seen plenty of examples.

The vast majority of the lowest paid, most boring, unskilled jobs in the Health Service are performed by Black women.

They also, of course, work as nurses and midwives. But for the most part, the domestic work is done by Black women and women from countries such as Portugal, the Philippines, and Spain.

Their wages are pitiful, and their ability to organise within trade unions is becoming more and more limited as hospital cleaning and catering are put out to tender.

Thus, women's "usual" work of childcare and housework is duplicated and undervalued in the Health Service. Men *assume* that women like boring, repetitive jobs, and make sure they get them!

Promoted

Where women are employed as carers (nurses, midwivers, and nursing auxiliaries), again, Black women are less likely to be promoted and far more likely to work as auxiliary nurses (with appalling pay). There are lots of male nurses around, of course, but I've never seen a male auxiliary.

By Tess Kewley
SRN, SCM

Black women doctors exist, but their chances of rising beyond the level of Senior Registrar are almost nil. There are male Black Consultants, but very few Black women consultants.

This is overt racism and sexism. One often overhears staff muttering about the Black doctors (how dare they come and take "our" jobs?).

Often, the patients aren't much better. I've lost count of the number of times patients have asked me not to let the "coloured" nurse near them. I've even heard a white male doctor say, *"this child needs an eye kept on him — just to make sure he doesn't have another fit — get that Black SEN to do it — they're pretty lazy and we don't need anyone intelligent for the job."*

Black women frequently work the night shifts in hospitals because they're supposed to be lazy, although in fact the work isn't any less demanding at night than in the day.

I suspect that because the pay is slightly better at night, the women work these extremely unsocial hours to make ends meet, often getting no sleep during the day because they have children to care for — or their husband's breakfast, lunch, and dinner to make.

Women as receivers of care fare no better. If you can't speak English, many staff assume you're stupid, and put you in beds where they can't keep a good eye on you. Only last week, in my own hospital, a Bengali woman was placed in the post-natal side of the ward (where it is *very* noisy, owing to the fact that babies tend to cry!)

This Bengali woman hadn't had her baby, and our policy is not to put ante-natal patients at the post-natal end of the ward because they don't get a wink of sleep. However, she was unable to communicate, so it "didn't matter". (Needless to say, Tess moved the poor woman immediately she arrived on duty.)

Sickle Cell Anaemia and Thalassaemia are two diseases seen only in Black and Mediterranean people. The amount of research money given to the staff investigating these diseases is miniscule. It seems black people simply don't count!

As a midwife in a community where there are many Bengali women, I have observed that they enjoy a standard of care very different from their white counterparts.

Many staff resent them coming to this country and accuse them of abusing our Social Security system, taking up Council accommodation, and claiming "huge" amounts of supplementary benefit. They are also accused (secretly) of having large families in order to get more benefit.

The truth is, of course, that back home in Bangladesh, large families are the norm because of the disastrous infant mortality rate, and also because the men aren't keen on their wives using contraception (they want lots of sons).

I once delivered a Bengali couple of their sixth daughter and handed the baby to the supposedly proud father. He handed me back the child, saying *"What use is a girl to me?"*

Sometimes, Bengali men hit their wives when they're in labour if they think they're making too much fuss. They also don't let them have pain relief, even though the women are clearly asking for pethidine or gas and air.

In every field of medicine, Black people are given second class treatment. Space simply doesn't permit me to go into it all in detail.

Next time: Breast *is* Best, and *why*.

CHESSINGTON SOUTH
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Labour
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says
Get well
Graham!

Letters

WRITEBACK!

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What are we going to find at the end of the Rainbow?

Dear *Briefing*,

So, Jesse Jackson can be compared to Tony Benn and Eric Heffer and the Labour Party can learn lessons from the US primaries (Editorial, *Briefing*, no. 60, April 13th). What rubbish! Nothing could be further from the truth.

As I write, the news of the US dawn raids on Iranian oil platforms signals a further escalation of imperialist aggresssion in the Gulf. Jackson's reaction? Full supporrt for the administration's "measured response".

His public pronouncements on the Middle East take as their starting point the defence of Israel; on Central America, the need to stop "communism". If Jackson speaks for *"millions of US workers"* then they are in desperate need of a new spokesperson.

His positions may well be *"substantially to the left of his opponents"*; but, when you look at the field, that really isn't saying very much.

Aside from the doubtful interpretation of Jackson's own (capitalist) politics, the editorial is misleading on the question of the Democratic Party. This is one of the two most important imperialist political parties in the world. Its representatives have started and waged bloody wars in Korea and Vietnam, pursued vicious anti-working class policies and fuelled the nuclear arms race. It has no organic links with organised labour. To be sure, the major union buraucrats give it their support, but this is something which socialists should oppose.

Unlike the British Labour Party, it is not in any sense a working class party. To vote Labour in Britain is an elementary class act for millions of workers (regardless of the pro-capitalist policies of Labour's leaders). To vote Democrat in the US (whether Jackson or Dukakis) is quite the reverse.

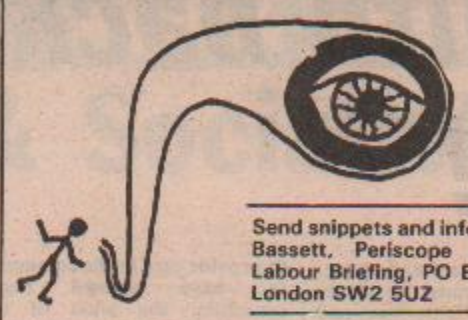
The Democratic Party — and in particular successive "left", "pro-labour" developments within it — have been the tried and tested mechanism by which the capitalist class in the US has incorporated and rendered less dangerous any potential political challenge.

A real "break from the mainstream" would take the form of a break from the Democratic Party towards independent working class politics. This is not the project of Jesse Jackson. Nor is it the dynamic of the "rainbow coalition".

Socialists, whether in the US or Britain, should make it their job to explain these points — in a comradely way — to activists and militants who have illusions in Jackson and the "rainbow".

David Shepherd,
Hackney North &
Stoke Newington CLP

Periscope



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

When did you stop killing patients, nurse?

So the RCN nurses voted overwhelmingly against strike action did they?

Fact. They voted 3-1 in favour of the following proposition:

"Do you endorse the RCN's policy against strike action by its members and its opposition to any form of action which places patients at risk?"

In the shadow of the rock...

80,000 people marched through Madrid on the second weekend in March, demanding Spanish withdrawal from NATO. Our own Jeremy Corbyn MP attended. But not a word in the British press or TV.

Funny. All the British correspondents in Spain were invited to a press conference, but not one turned up!

Any grovel you can do, I want to do better

Ron Brown's sarcastic "I grovel, I grovel" addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons after the Mace incident was clearly inspired by our Great Leader.

Apparently Neil "Show me the establishment and I'll grovel at it better than any of those dafties" Kinnock was embarrased by the sincerest form of flattery — i.e. imitation — and has suspended Brown as a warning to the coterie of sycophants currently pressing in on him.

One minor criticism of Cde. Brown's heroic endeavours: surely more useful and permanent damage could have been done with a heavy blunt object like the mace?

No soul for Dover

The Democratic Left (DL) showed their real commitment to workers in struggle at the recent NUS Conference.

A P&O striker addressed a number of fringe meetings (including the Liberals), but the reaction of DL was cautious.

"You'd better ask one of our full timers," commented the person on the DL stall.

"No," was the reply from the full-timer.

Their NUS Liaison Officer was a little more helpful. After a long pause, he said:

"We're having a social tonight, so I don't think that it will go down very well." Pause. *"Quite frankly all we want to do is get pissed."*

Deficit budgets rule OK (for us)

A mole tells Periscope that the Co-op Bank auditors report on the Walworth Road Lubianka is a heavy number.

Funny how champions of "socialist" mangement like Jack Straw can't seem to turn around their own organisation.

The Co-op report is being kept under wraps. Maybe Kinnock's afraid of its effects on the current Leadership contest? Or is he worried we'll take this as a covert endorsement from on high of the deficit budgetting strategy?

Some Party members might be less impressed with the Kinnock — Whitty — Mandelson axis if they knew what a cock-up they were making with our money.

Briefing AGM

This will be held on July 2nd, 10.30am-5.30 in London.

Start planning now: make a list of all *Briefing* supporters who can come, and plan transport arrangements. We've planned a special AGM day, with plenary discussions on the way forward for *Briefing* as well as workshop discussions to collect real feedback from *Briefing* supporters everywhere and to share the lessons from *Briefing* groups everywhere.

Supporters cards will be sent out soon to all those in the 500 Club. If you aren't, take out a standing order now!

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Workshops include: Local Groups, The Paper, Trade Unions, International (including South Africa and Palestine.

Commission meetings include: Women, Youth and Student, Lesbian and Gay, Black people.

More details follow — see you there!

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Briefing Steering Committee:
Next meeting: Sunday, May 1st, London.
Briefing Editorial Board:
Next meetings: Friday April 29th, provisional: Thursday May 5th.
Deadline for articles:
Issue no. 62 (out May 11th): notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday May 3rd.
Issue no. 63 (out May 25th): notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday May 17th.

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It is very expensive to produce a socialist newspaper — despite our high sales up and down the country, we still need a subsidy to keep the paper fortnightly and keep up with all the activities we want to be part of. We have no rich backers, no hidden sources of income.

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This week's winner

This week's winner is, again, one of our long-standing supporters. Perseverance has paid off this week for no. 449, Gill Entwhistle of Camden.

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.

Reviews

RECORD REVIEW

Class struggle in the studio

The World at One, a cassette compilation of dance based music from all over the world, *NME tape no. 035*. £2.75. Order from: NME cassette offer, Harcourt, Halefield 14, Telford TF7 4QR; cheques payable to IPC Magazines.

All socialists should buy this tape!

As internationalists, we should need no encouragements to broaden our cultural understanding beyond our eurocentric, decaying, capitalistic environment.

I can't understand anyone who says they don't have time for music!

As Amira Baraka (a music critic aligned to black nationalism in the 60s and now a Marxist) said:

*"Above all, music should make you **feel**, and the point of living seems to me to be to get to your actual feelings, because we **are** our feelings, or lack of them."* (something feminists have been trying to tell us for years).

Irish revolutionary socialist James Connolly said: *"No revolutionary movement is complete without its poetical expression. The movement (must be) marked by joyous defiant singing of revolutionary songs."*

I sometimes think the bosses have a better understanding of the role of music in class struggle then we do, e.g. *Application of functional muzak to worker efficiency* (title of a business research report).

But I'd like to think that the non-alienated, joyous feeling music presented on this tape will survive and nourish the struggles of the oppressed as it has already done for centuries.

The music of of the African and Romany people has long served this purpose. Wherever they have been scattered, their music has asserted the beauty, innovation, and continuity of their cultures against all odds. It has been a graceful protest against oppression and an expression of hope for the future.

By *Briefing* music correspondent MAJOR UNREST



Ofra Haza: Israeli Yemenite singer

The popular (mass-marketed) music business has continually appropriated these qualities from folk music. It has recognised that money is to be made in the context of an advanced monopoly capitalism by marketing pale, gutted, bastardised imitations of it, which attempt to destroy any sense of community other than that of mindless consumerism.

As Marxist music critic and musician Chris Cutler says (in his book *File under Popular*):

"In the crossing over between the two musical forms (popular and folk) we can identify the site and expression of a class struggle, where culture as a form of collective expression and culture as a commodity vie."

This struggle, in which the alienation business has long had the upper hand, is apparent in the music on this tape. On most tracks, the folk-collectivist feel is strong, but new musical technology is not shied away from, and several tracks go for mainstream western-style dance-production.

We could argue all night about whether international exposure and mass-marketing of folk-rooted musics is a good or bad thing, but we should recognise that it's been happening since the early stages of capitalism.

Fossilised

Rather than hanging on to fossilised folk forms, socialist musicians should have a critical awareness both of the folk roots of all popular musics, and of the continual innovations taking place at the crossroads between pop and folk, in which fusion-music-making possibilities increase with the creative use of new musical technology (in addition to real instruments, of course).

Imperialism

Of course, cultural imperialism has given the masses radio for its own purposes, and the negative influence of mass-marketing in capitalism can be seen in some of the tracks on this tape. But most of the musicians here are so self-assuredly brilliant (and have managed to find sympathetic recording set-ups) that compromise has been minimal.

Whether any of them will get lasting international recognition in the capitalist market without ever-increasing compromises is debateable, but, as William West said in the last *Briefing*, popular music is a powerful medium that occasionally gets out of hand (the hand of capitalism, that is). (This happened with Bob Marley — which is why I for one suspect possible foul play in his untimely death).

Ofra Haza, whose track is one of the best on the tape, appears to be a Zionist from the oppressed Yemenite Jewish Community in Israel. Her voice is breathtaking, and her music innovative, using new studio techniques alongside traditional instrumentation (and now she's working with some of the 3 mustaphas 3!)

Buy this tape!

BOOK REVIEW

Voices from El Salvador

El Salvador: Testament of Terror, by Joe Fish and Christina Sganga, *Zed Books*, £22.95 hardback, £6.95 paperback

The *Testament* comprises eye-witness accounts of the Salvadorean struggle linked by journalistic narrative, and illustrated with images of suffering and resistance.

In giving a platform to the oppressed, the book is to be welcomed, but it lacks a clear political perspective and comes across as an appeal to the liberal bourgeois conscience.

This results in some contradictions.

"The strength of the popular movement lies precisely in the fact that its unity is founded on principles of ideological pluralism."

But the alleged unity quickly disintegrates:

"Agreement between such diverse groups is always difficult to maintain."

The events depicted are rousing and harrowing. Amongst other excesses, counterinsurgency forces have adopted the primeval intimidatory practice of mutilating corpses. In the word of a medical auxiliary:

"They say that we are now so used to seeing corpses it is more effective to cut up the bodies in pieces to make us more afraid."

But the journalistic impulse to dramatise imposes distracting stylistic pressures on the narrative, as in the rather *Boys' Own*-like:

"Inside the rebel-controlled northern Morazan province I listened eagerly to the radio reports from La Palma with a column of equally excited guerrilla fighters."

At times, the characterisation reads like a second rate melodramatic novel:

"Gustavo, a labour leader with years of bitter experience and wisdom etched in the lines around bright eyes piercing his leathery face..."

By Jim Thain
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

What the often moving testimonies really require is a strong support structure of facts. Those presented are indeed cogent, but the chronology is eccentric and there is much repetition.

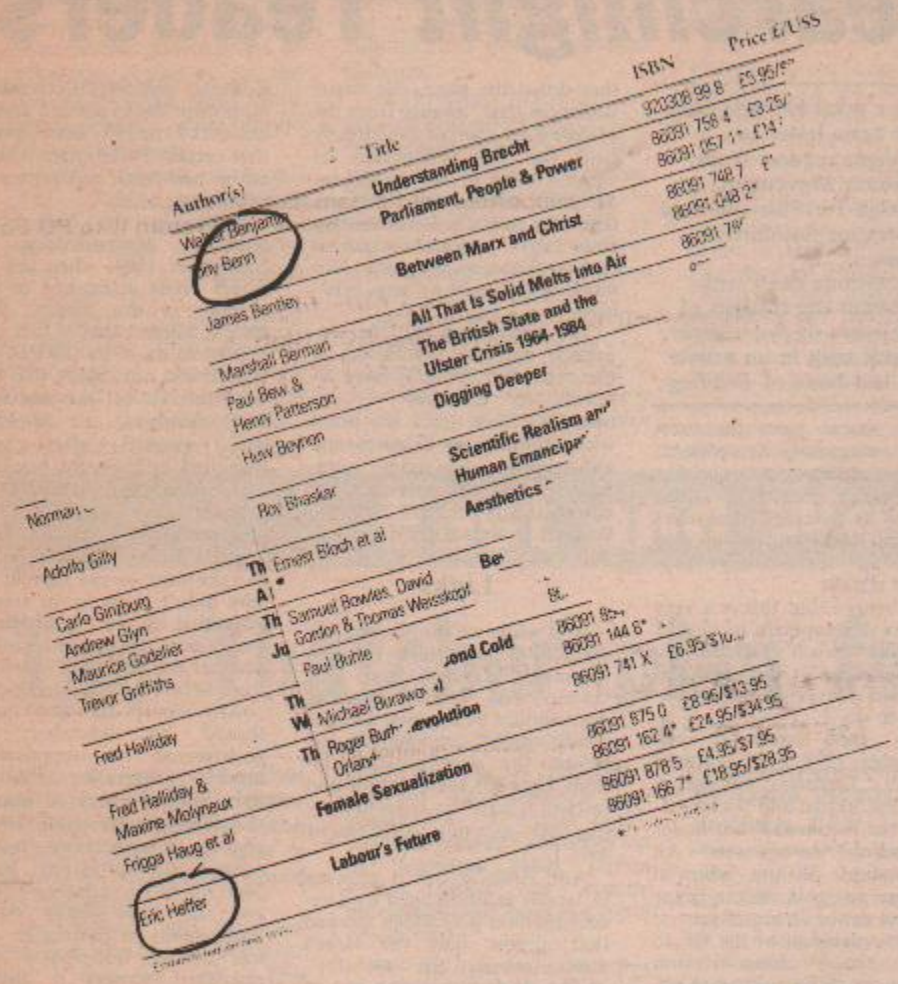
While staunchly opposed to US colonialism, the book's discussion of the wider Central American context is superficial.

Of course, it claims only to be a "testimony", not a theoretical treatise. But testimony is an act of interpretation, and to testify effectively one must have and express a sound grasp of the determining political causes and processes.

These criticims aside, the book does fill a gap in what is a slim bibliography. And the photos are very good.

If it hasn't been closed yet, ask your library to get a copy.

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PLAY REVIEW

Brenton's *Bloody Poetry*

Bloody Poetry, by Howard Brenton, currently revived at London's Royal Court as part of a retrospective Brenton season, *Plays for Utopia*.

Of all English poets, Byron and Shelley are perhaps the best loved by the left.

Shelley we have long recognised as one of our own, a true revolutionary, whose *Mask of Anarchy* is required reading.

Byron is revered throughout Europe for his part in the Greek freedom struggle.

Yet admiration is tempered by our knowledge that the lives of both men demonstrate a sharp contrast between word and deed.

Howard Brenton's play *Bloody Poetry*, revived at London's Royal Court as part of a retrospective Brenton season, *Plays for Utopia*, salutes the two poets but makes no attempt to hide their contradictions.

The play covers the period from 1816 to 1820, when the poets, with Mary Shelley and her half-sister Claire Claremont, were in exile from a cruel and reactionary Britain (echoes here of our own Thatcherite times).

It raises a number of questions about the role of the artist, the relation between theory and practice in public and private life, the nature of friendship and male exploitation of women.

By Paula Watson
Westminster South CLP

Shelley insists *"there must be a revolution in England; I write for it every morning."* But, while *"English soldiers are murdering Irish liberty"* and *working men and women, armed only with banners"* are massacred at Peterloo, the poet sits *"impotent in Italy, in the sun."*

He writes about men and women being *"free and equal"* but he spouts revolutionary rhetoric while Mary, unnoticed, mourns their dead child, a victim of Shelley's restless wandering across post-Napoleonic Europe.

Byron is presented as the liberal he was, whose hatred of tyranny leads to involvement in Italian underground politics and eventual death at Missolonghi. Yet he behaves like a chauvinist shit to women in his life.

There are plenty of men still around like this, but without Byron's charm and genius. He insists on sending his daughter (by Claire Claremont) to a convent school, where she dies, with the mother meanwhile denied all access — on Byron's orders.

Brenton presents the four — Byron, Shelley, Mary, and Claire — as essentially modern figures: free thinkers who pay a grim price for defying the rules of a corrupt society.

What comes over wonderfully well is the deep bond between the two sharply contrasted men — Shelley (Mark Rylance), the ardent visionary, and Byron (Nigel Terry), arrogant, generous, cynical, and self-dramatising.

The acting throughout is excellent. Well worth seeing.

International Briefing

Colombia
Repression on the rampage

Over 100 national union leaders and 100 local leaders have been killed in the past year.

A large number of union activists have "disappeared" and 300 CUT leaders are on published death lists.

Political opposition leaders have also been eliminated: *Unidad Patriotica*, the legal opposition party, has lost four out of 14 deputies. Those remaining alive have gone underground.

The UP President was murdered last year. Five regional deputies, 20 Councillors, and two Mayors have also been killed.

Other left organisations such as *A Luchar* and *Frente Popular* have lost leaders.

Leaders of armed groups, such as the M19, which have tried to negotiate a truce have been gunned down. Progressive members of the oligarchical Conservative and Liberal parties and two Presidents of the Human Rights Committee of Antioqua province were killed, despite impeccable bourgeois credentials.

A *Briefing* supporter and a TGWU official met with Angelino Garzon of the United Union Confederation of Colombia (CUT) at the invitation of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign.

Comrade Garzon described the current repression in Colomiba and the union movement's response.

Priests, judges, and children (witnesses to murders) have also been eliminated. One thousand political murders were recorded in one year, with 11,000 dying as a result of the generalised terror.

The government claims the death squads are really drug traffickers, subversives, and common criminals, with funding from abroad. Human Rights and International Agencies say it is part of a systematic campaign of terror by business, ranching, and agricultural interests, by reactionary sectors of the ruling Liberal and Conservative parties, and by the Armed Forces.

The link with the US embassy is plain. The higher officer ranks go to Pentagont training colleges. Military advisors operate directly out of the US embassy.

The drugs barons are also involved. Their mafia gangs have attacked strikers, voting booths, etc. But the drugs barons do not initiate the repression, they merely assist it. The purpose of this "Dirty War" is to paralyse all social reform and to prevent the unity of workers and peasants.

Hundreds were killed during municipal elections held in March. Whole regions of the country are in a state of siege so no voting could take place. In these conditions the UP could not stand candidates.

However, 20 areas were won by UP and in some 50 other municipalities alliances with other progressive forces defeated the oligarchy. In the Banana Zone the repression was horrific: 56 leaders of the banana workers were killed and candidates had to go underground.

The dirty war has now entered a new stage of *mass terror*. Twenty-four banana workers and 12 peasants were massacred in this zone in March. Seven Young Communists from the city of Medelin were also despatched.

New attacks on the CUT are being planned. We expect bombings and murders. In response, the CUT leadership is organising workers' self-defence.

The CUT itself is only an embryonic organisation and is working to consolidate its position. The First Congress of Women, held this year, was a massive success, with 2,400 delegates attending.

In the political arena progressive parties are discussing unity, including the Communist Party and the regroupments from the National Unity Committee. A Congress of Unity against the repression (planned for the end of last year but postponed) is still being discussed.

In the guerrilla movement there are also moves towards co-operation. The *Co-ordinadora Simon Bolivar* was an important step forward: here the armed groups discuss and plan joint activity.

Although the CUT is completely independent of all guerilla and political forces, we welcome these moves. The UCT also support the efforts of the Catholic Church to mediate between the armed groups and the government.

The masses are looking for ways to struggle and organise against the repression. There have been big strikes in the oil, cement, and banana industries demanding that the bosses guarantee the lives of union leaders. The CUT believe it is time to organise a *General Strike for the Right to Life*.

We are very concerned that world public opinion is made aware of what is going on. We want the TUC to send a delegation to Colombia. The CUT is not affiliated to any world union confederation: it welcomes direct links between British and Colombian unions, for instance, between the TGWU and the Avianca airline union.

We also need international support for those leaders most threatened. We are proposing that the *week of May 30th to June 4th be designated International Labour Organisations Week of Solidarity with Colombia*.

We need recognition from the TUC. Only two small confederations, part of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, are recognised, but they have 15% of unionised workers, while we have 80%.

Affiliate to the Colombia Solidarity Committee, Priory House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6.



Portugal
Revolution in perspective

This is the first of four articles on Portuguese politics by JIM THAIN, Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP.

Later articles will describe the course of the 1974 revolution, paying particular attention to the roles of the military and working class movements, to the histories of the Portuguese Communist Party and Socialist Party, and to the post-revolutionary consolidation of social democracy.

The fascist regime of Antonio Salazar grew out of an era of political turmoil, to which it presented itself as the only practical solution.

The Republican revolution of 1910 had been isolated by the Vatican, which was angered by its anti-clericalism, and by the other imperialist powers, who described the country as a *"Republic of Terrorists"*.

Liberal pro-labour concessions merely stimulated proletarian militancy (general strikes in 1918, 1919, and 1920) and alienated the petit bourgeoisie. Forty-four administrations fell in 16 years.

Portuguese sailors may have discovered half the world but the country's position as a world power was repeatedly compromised.

After the Spanish War of Succession, Portugal signed the Methuen Treaty with Britain in 1703 (and again in 1810). This was a protection racket whereby, in exchange for continued independence, Portugal would open its market to British goods, thus contributing to Britain's supremacy over France and Spain.

Imports

British loans would be spent on British imports, so Britain would benefit both from the profits made on the goods *and* from the interest on the loans. Later, Portugal made a similar arrangement with Germany, Britain's great imperialist rival.

Nearly all Portugal's coal and iron were imported. Its mineral resources were mostly externally controlled. As Portuguese capitalism tended increasingly towards monopolism, with concomitant export of capital, financial speculation became rife. The economy was sustained by the:

"surplus value generated by an ever more intensive exploitation of the workforce, creating (and relying on) a pool of cheap and dependent workers who experiencd proletarianisation without real possibilities of increasing their share of national income." (Martin Kayman, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Portugal*)

Coherent

Without coherent political organisation, the working class failed to win socialist reforms under the Republicans, and in 1926 came the successful right wing coup. Twelve years later, Salazar, a leading Catholic intellectual, became Finance Minister.

To stabilise the economy, Salazar made it a criminal offence for government departments to exceed their budgets — which were set by the Finance Ministry. He became Prime Minister in 1932. Under the new Constitution of 1933, the *Uniao Nacional*, which he had founded three years earlier, was entrenched as the only legal political party.

Mythology

The mythology of a neroic nation-state was promulgated, notably by Marcello Caetano (who ultimately succeded Salazar as Prime Minster in 1968). Education was tied to the doctrine of subservience to Church, State, and Family.

To foster the illusion of a united Portugal, ever more repressive legislation was passed restricting freedom of expression: the blanket censorship of oppositional political viewpoints, detention without trial (eventually up to 180 days), the formation of a secret police force, political courts, and the prohibition of strikes.

The underlying tensions did not simply disappear with the introduction of such legislation. There were riots and mutinies and general strikes in 1934 and 1938. An ultra right coup was foiled in 1935, and there was an assassination attempt on Salazar in 1937.

Deficit

Salazar did turn a balance of payments deficit into a surplus. Even allowing for the oppression of the mainland working class, however, this economic miracle was only made possible by an exploitative colonial policy, which contained a fundamental politico-economic weakness. Given Portugal's poor standing in the world market, Salazar concluded:

"the logical solution is for the colonies (particularly Angola and Mozambique) to produce the raw materials and to send them to the Mother Country in exchange for manufactured goods."

The problem with this model of state monopolism was that the bulk of Portugal's manufactured goods were imported from Britain, or, to a lesser extent, from Germany (which contributed to Portuguese "neutrality" in which the Nazis were supplied with wolfram while the Allies were permitted the use of the Azores). Economically, the Portuguese mainland was little more than a trading post for British imperialism.

Privileged

For Portugal, Africa was not simply a privileged market place. The slave trade was an important source of business too, justified, in the 1930 Colonial Act, as being for the "moral uplift of the natives". Over a period of decades, the regime supplied South Africa with millions of Mozambican blacks, in exchange for half the workers' wages and trade spin-offs.

In the long term, monopoly capitalism would be unable to reconcile the inherent contradiction of an economy sustained by colonial exploitation while its indigenous working class is kept in poverty by the imperialist policies of a foreign power.

Ultimately, the will to self-determination welling up in the colonies would expose the flaws in the system and generate social conditions in which radical political change would become inevitable.

An open letter to *Searchlight* readers

Here we print extracts from a joint open letter to *Searchlight* readers from the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The questions dealt with here, about the content of recent issues of *Searchlight*, was dealt with in an article in the last issue of *Briefing*.

In the recent past, the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*, has lent support to imperialist strategies in the Middle East through its coverage of matters related to that area, and has also taken an increasingly pro-Zionist stance.

We believe that this is a very negative development in view of the valuable work which *Searchlight* has done in the past, and which, to a large extent, it continues to do. (...)

The front cover of the September 1987 issue featured Colonel Gadafi, Khomeini, Louis Farrakhan and Nick Griffin of the National Front under the heading "the new axis". An examination of the editorial relating to this front page revealed as the first and central point the decision of the NF to use the black/Muslim separatism of Farrakhan, Khomeini and Gadaffi, as expressed, among other places, in Gadaffi's *Green Book*, as propaganda in support of their own white supremacist separatist politics.

Beyond this there was a mention of the presence of a Canadian Nazi and also of Dr Fulani "Farrakhan's New York cohort" at an international gathering in Tripoli "of people from several progressive groups' to commemorate the US bombing of Libya, and further down the page, the vague statement that "money from the Middle East sources has already paid for the production of various items of NF propaganda", and reference to NF hopes that they might receive funding from Libya on a scale accorded to Farrakhan in the past. Not much evidence of a "new axis" here.

The separatism of the oppressor and the separation of the oppressed certainly have interests in common — we ourselves have made the point with reference to Zionism and anti-semitism on many occasions — however, this does not automatically make Zionists, Gadaffi or Farrakhan fascists.

Links

And while we would certainly agree that any links between Khomeini, Gadaffi and Farrakhan with fascist organisations should be exposed and unconditionally condemned, exposing the unprincipled relations between these forces and fascism is a far cry from presenting them as a new world fascist axis. (...)

Anti-Arab racism is growing in Israel, as underlined by a recent opinion poll which showed that almost half the Israeli public favoured the "transfer" of the Arab population out of the Israeli-occupied areas, as well as by attacks on Arabs which liberal Israelis did not hesitate to label as "pogroms".

Apart from one very brief item on Kahane, *Searchlight* has never covered the rise of the far right, racist and fascist forces in Israel. While ignoring these developments, as well as events such as the New York luncheon given in March in honour of Le Pen which was hosted by Jacques Torczyner, President of the World Union of General Zionists, *Searchlight* considered it appropriate to publish an article in its June 1987 issue alleging that certain Palestinians attended a neo-Nazi conference 18 years ago. (...)

Following the Sabra and Shatille demonstration in September 1982, when the National Front attempted to participate in the march, *Searchlight* alleged that it had been invited to do so by the PLO office. It did not report that they were thrown off the march by PSC members, one of whom was arrested after being assaulted by the same fascists.

Subsequently *Searchlight* did print a letter from the PLO representative in London denying that the NF had been invited to take part in the march, but why didn't it go to the trouble of calling up the PLO office in the first place and asking whether the invitation story was true, before rushing into print?

Anti-semites and other racists should be denouced; any government or organisation, however progressive its credentials might otherwise appear, should be condemned if they encourage or support neo-Nazis or other racists and fascists. But in *Searchlight's* treatment of Israel and the Arab world — the Palestinians in particular — it has steadily adopted a more one-sided stance; it appears ready to give credence to any and every story which suggests that the Arab and the Palestinians in particular support neo-Nazis and other right wing extremists, while Israel and its supporters get off very lightly indeed. (...)

Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine
BM LMCP, London WC1N 3XX
Palestine Solidarity Campaign
BM PSA, London WC1N 3XX

USA Presidential elections

New York primary

Where is the Rainbow Coalition going?

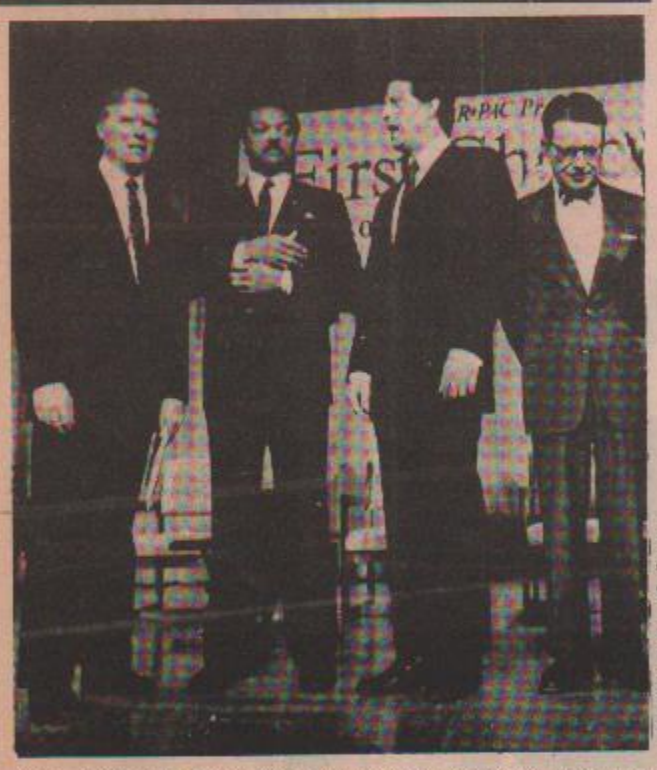


PHOTO: Dollars & Cents

Jesse Jackson (second from left) lines up with other Democratic hopefuls

The New York primary was always going to be one of the toughest nuts for Jesse Jackson's Rainbow campaign to crack.

Industrial and agribusiness interests are strong upstate.

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

Vast, wealthy, largely white suburbs sprawl to the north and east of New York City; and in recent years the city itself has been gripped by a race war fuelled by reactionary Mayor Ed Koch.

Despite longstanding labour union and "progressive" traditions, the potential constituents of Jackson's coalition in the New York area have been deeply divided along ethnic and political lines.

In this context, Jackson's 37% — following a dramatic campaign focused on the ghetto streets and factory gates — is a respectable showing.

Of course, Dukakis's 51% clinched his grip on the Democratic nomination. Unelected and unaccountable "superdelegates" (Democratic Party bigwigs) will now flock to his banner of technocracy and "sensible" militarism.

Jackson, however, will continue to campaign vigorously in the remaining big primaries in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, leading up to the finale in California in June.

Meanwhile, one welcome byproduct of the New York primary appears to be the political demise of Ed Koch, who banked everything on a virulent anti-Jackson campaign (*"Jews would be crazy to vote for Jackson"*) only for Jesse to emerge a narrow victor within the city itself.

Jackson's candidacy galvanised New York's black and hispanic workers and may have laid the basis for a black-hispanic coalition in next year's mayoral elections.

In the past, Koch has exploited fear and bigotry, and triumphed because of divisions among his opponents. The three-term mayor — fanatical Zionist, buddy of big business, speculators' spokesperson — may have finally met his nemesis.

Jackson himself, after the primary results came in, commented *"We've laid a precedent for change in New York City that will be with us for a long time."*

The British media were slow to acknowledge the significance of the huge protest vote being mobilised by the Jackson campaign.

In recent weeks, of course, the pundits have been working overtime, shedding verbiage but little light.

***Briefing* offers the following quotations from Jackson's programme and supporters in the hope that they will be useful in stimulating an informed debate on the campaign.**

"I come from a tradition of those who march in solidarity for jobs and peace and justice. In the 60s we marched for civil rights; in the 80s we march for workers' rights."

A Worker's Bill of Rights

By Jesse L. Jackson

1. Workers have a right to a job
People need jobs and there are jobs to be done. We can build the housing, roads and bridges that we need as well as provide care for this nation's people. We can end plant closings without notice and unemployment without hope.

2. Workers have a right to a democratic union
All workers, including public employees, should be able to organise themselves into democratic unions, have those unions recognised, and work under a collective bargaining agreement.

3. Workers have a right to a living wage
People who work full-time should be able to rise out of poverty on their pay. American families need family wages. Young workers (youth) need opportunity.

4. Workers have a right to a healthy life and a safe workplace
Workers need affordable and accessible health care, a right to know the dangers at work, and good faith enforcement by skilled experts of the laws meant to protect their lives.

5. Workers have a right to both work and family
No one should be forced to choose between a paycheck and a sick child, or between keeping their job and giving birth.

6. Workers have a right to pension security
A pension belongs to the worker, not to the company. Every worker is entitled to one as secure as FICA. Workers should have a voice in ensuring that their pension funds be used in their own interest, not against them.

7. Workers have a right to fair competition
International trade needs a level playing field. Recognition of the basic democratic rights of workers at home and abroad to organise, bargain collectively, and to have enforced workplace standards is needed. Free labour cannot "compete" with slave labour.

8. Workers have a right to freedom from discrimination
There also needs to be a level playing field at home — affirmative action for those locked out of better paying jobs and pay equity for those locked into low wage jobs.

9. Workers have a right to an education that works
Workers need a basic education for basic skills, vocational education for current jobs and life-long education for a changing economy.

10. Workers have a right to respect
The contributions of workers, past and present, deserve a prominent place in the education of future workers. Those who give a life of labour deserve to have the companies for whom they work reinvest in their industry, in their community, and in their country.

A project to organise a movement

Despite the contempt and condescension of the media — or perhaps because of it — Jackson went to the most remote and isolated grass roots in the American social landscape to find the strength for a campaign that has already begun to transform politics. For five years his distance from the funders, the managers, the mediators and the consultants who manipulate the Democratic Party and legitimise its candidates has allowed Jackson to do unimaginable things and say unspeakable words — about race, about class, about equality and, indeed, about democracy. To an extent that may be unique in presidential elections in this century, he derives his power from the people. The enormous energy that his campaign releases has created a new populist movement, overtaking the languid hours and dull days of conventional politics and imagining possibilities for substantial change beyond the usual incremental transactions of the two-party system. It offers hope against cynicism, power against prejudice and solidarity against division.

The Jackson campaign is not a single shot at higher office by an already elevated politician. Rather, it is a continuing, expanding, open-ended project to organise a movement for the political empowerment of all those who participate. In the beginning, Jackson identified his basic constituency as the most "dispossessed and disaffected" Americans of all, the blacks of the rural South and the Northern ghettos, people who seemed permanently disenfranchised from citizenship and thus denied entrance into the system of rewards and privileges that is every citizen's right. In a real sense, the campaign became a new civil rights movement with an added dimension of economic justice deriving in spirit from the last campaigns of Martin Luther King Jr. with the Black working poor."

The Nation, April 16th 1988

The Rainbow

The Rainbow is multi-partisan in the sense that it is not really locked into the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. It is an independent political organisation.

There are two existing parties. Historically the Democratic Party has been the party which has greater affinity for the kinds of issues that the Rainbow constituencies are raising.

The struggle therefore is to more broadly define the nature of the Democratic Party, to open it up to more political participation... That is the nature of the struggle at this stage. Obviously that will have to be evaluated over time...

The Rainbow Coalition can't exist solely to help elect Jesse Jackson as President. No single person can alter the character of the American system; you have to have an organisation in place... More important than any election is the building of institutions that will carry on the progressive idea of the campaign...

The problem is the problem of a system, racism and capitalism. We've got to organise at the ground level; we have a commonality of struggle here and we must confront it.

Ron Daniels, Executive Director, National Rainbow Coalition

East and West

The Thatcher plan for Poland

When Margaret Thatcher first met Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, she realised that this was a man with whom she could do business.

According to sources close to the Prime Minister (as revealed to *The Observer's* Neal Acherson), Mrs Thatcher, on her forthcoming visit to Poland, hopes to offer the Polish government a:

"development and recovery plan... financed and managed by the European community nations with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund."

Since *"the Polish regime's record of handling western loans has been a disastrous tale of incompetence and waste,"* a "Thatcher plan" will be proposed to channel aid to *"selected weak points which would be strictly monitored and even cut off if misapplied."*

All the partners in this business would reap rewards. The Polish military dictatorship would get new credits and investment to lift it out of its present stagnation and strengthen its political credibility within Poland. The Soviet leadership would hope to be relieved of some of its Polish burden, while the products of new technology in Poland could be re-exported to the Soviet Union itself.

The West would have a profitable outlet for some of its capital surplus, and massive new credits would dissuade the Polish government from attempts to write off any part of its $40b foreign debt.

By Colin Meade
Surbiton CLP

A special perk for Thatcher herself would be a plentiful supply of cheap Polish coal to help her restructure the British coal industry.

But there are some snags. The first and lesser one is the impact of collaboration with General Jaruzelski on public opinion in Britain. Isn't this the man who crushed the Solidarity free trade union movement, to the outrage of all decent people, thereby proving the need for increased defence spending?

To cover her tracks Thatcher will probably urge the Polish government, to accept "independent representative of the Polish people" (perhaps Walesa or a nominee of the Catholic Church) as partners in the plan. No doubt the Pope can lend a hand.



Gorbachev pops up, ready to do business, just about everywhere these days!

At the same time we will be told that "we" must do everything in "our" power to help Gorbachev defeat his conservative opponents. Watch out for heightened media interest in repression in countries like Czechoslovakia and Romania, whose leaderships are considered to be resistant to *Perestroika*.

The big snag, however, is the Polish working class. They have shown an unwillingness to understand why the path to their country's salvation should lie through a reduction in its already meagre living standards and the removal of whatever social and economic guarantees they currently possess.

Last November a majority of Poles refused to turn out to vote "yes" in a referendum intended to legitimise *"full implementation of the program for radical reconstruction of the economy"*, despite the World Bank's message (widely publicised by the official Polish Press Agency) that *"Poles should support the program of reforms presented to the government; this is an historic opportunity for the Polish people."*

The prospect of an explosion of resistance to austerity programmes in Eastern Europe is a matter of serious concern to Western leaders. Neal Acherson's sources fear *"another Polish collapse and revolt (which) could devastate East-West relations, and, if they led to a national uprising, destroy Gorbachev's hopes of reforming the Soviet Union."*

The American establishment's token Pole, Zbigniew Brezezinski, writing in the *International Herald Tribune*, sees five countries in Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) as being in a "classic prerevolutionary situation".

While believing that *"gradual change in the region is certainly desirable"*, he fears that a *"large scale explosion could have tragic consequences"*. Against this background, important sections of the Western ruling classes are planning joint action with the Gorbachev leadership to manage the East European crisis — and make a few bob in the process.

LABOUR BRIEFING



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FAB report

No restrictions on the '67 Act!

One hundred and fifty pro-choice activists met in London on April 16th to discuss opposition to David Alton's Bill, which seeks to restrict the legal time limit for abortions from 28 to 18 weeks.

The FAB local groups' meeting heard reports on the legal and medical implications of any restrictions on the '67 Act; held a series of workshops on the trade unions, the Labour Party, and students; and discussed future mobilisations of the campaign in the run up to the third reading, which will probably take place on May 6th.

Two amendments have been made on severe fetal abnormality and on rape to girls under 18 (see *Briefing* no. 60). Andrew MacKay, Tory MP for Berkshire East, has laid down a 24-week amendment for the report stage. This amendment must be opposed.

Opponents of the Act in the House appear to be capitulating to a mood of pessimism and are preparing to engage in risky tactical manoeuvres. Lack of confidence in our ability to defeat the Bill as a whole may lead them to opt for what they see as the best compromise.

This must be resisted. The Bill can still be defeated as a whole. FAB locally and nationally must mobilise to show our opposition to any amendements which restrict the '67 Act. This is required not only to defeat the Bill, but to place the campaign for reproductive rights in the strongest possible position to campaign after Alton.

Pettifor

One of the most important discussions of the Conference was around the relationship between FAB and the Labour Party. Ann Pettifor, representing the Labour Women's Action Committee (LWAC), put forward the view that FAB as such should neither demand a three line whip on the Alton Bill.

Nor should it support the lobby of the NEC called by Lambeth Against Alton and Women for Socialism to demand that the Labour Party enforce its own policy in favour of a woman's right to choose. She refused the support of LWAC for the lobby. *Briefing* supporters argued FAB should support the lobby.

Behind this debate lay different conceptions of the relationship between the working class and oppressed and the Labour Party. Behind the LWAC argument is the concept that only those who hold individual membership of the Labour Party should be allowed to comment on its policies or try to change them, and that any change will come through a fight inside the official structures.

The other view is that the Labour Party, as the mass party of the working class, must be forced to respond to, and campaign around, the demands of the most oppressed.

Campaigns built to defend the interests of the working class and oppressed have a right and a duty to do everything possible to force the Labour Party to adopt policy in their support; and when that policy has been adopted, to enforce it and mobilise around it.

Fighting

This kind of pressure cannot be exercised through the internal structures of the Labour Party alone. When the Labour Party has adopted policy in the interests of the oppressed, on lesbian and gay liberation, on abortion, it has been as the result of a mass movement of the oppressed fighting for their rights, as well as through internal pressure from resolutions, etc.

Women have a right to expect the Labour Party to defend and extend their reproductive rights and have a right to mobilise in whatever way is necessary to gain that support.

The need for external pressure on the Labour Leadership becomes even more important when the Labour Party has official policy which it is doing little to implement. The Labour Party and trade union Leaderships have so far given only token support to the fight against Alton. Roy Hattersley has said he is against all abortions. Norman Willis was too busy meeting Ronald Reagan on January 21st to speak at the FAB lobby of Parliament.

The TUC gave just £100 to the costs of the March 19th demonstration and mobilised very few of their members for the demonstration. The Labour Party NEC has failed to take the most simple measure necessary to defeat the Alton Bill: dispense with the boys' club Parliamentary Labour Party standing orders and implement a three line whip against the Alton Bill.

By Gill Lee
Labour Briefing Women

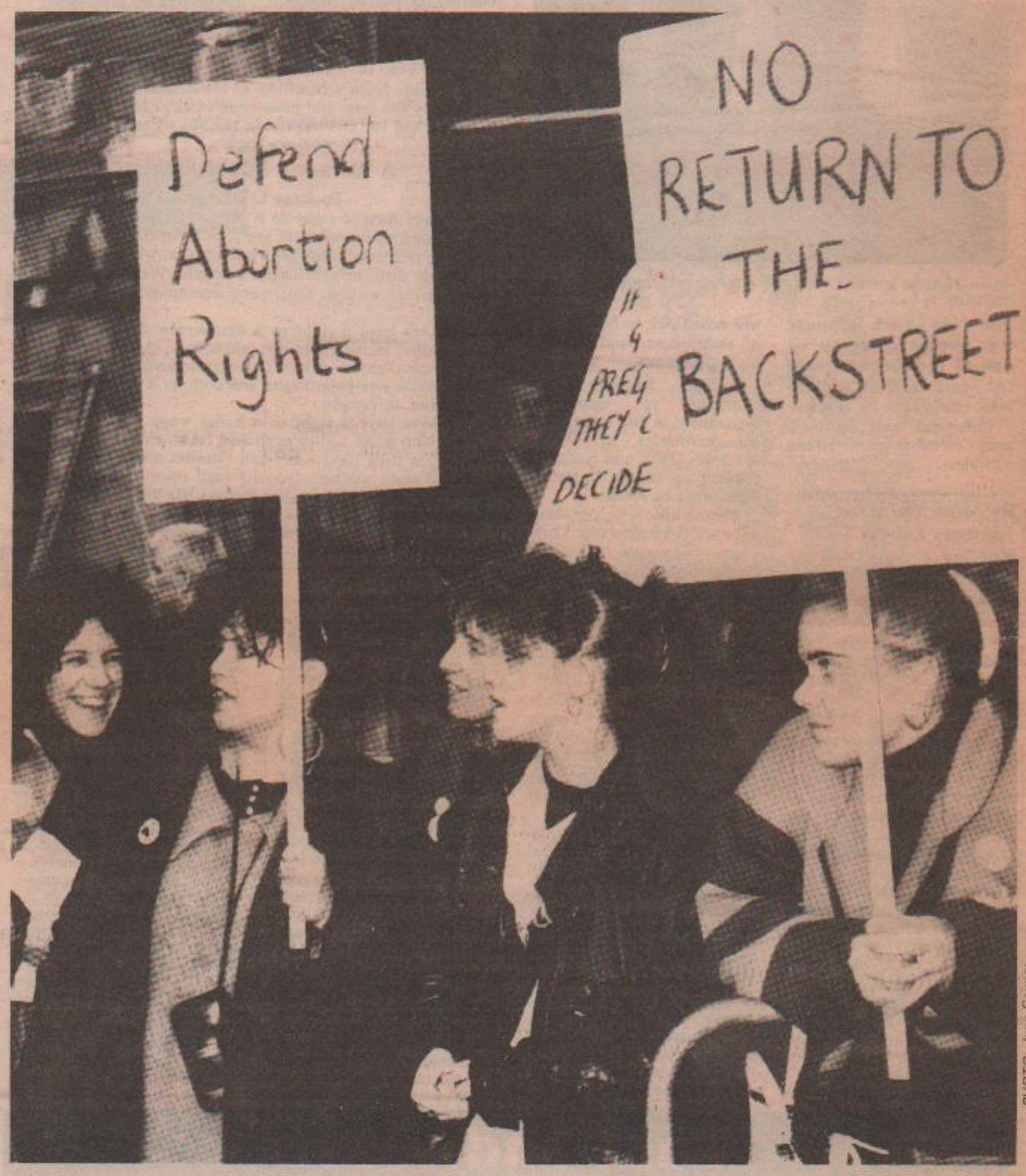


PHOTO: Jane Connor

Women standing up for their rights: FAB lobby of the House of Commons, January 21st 1988

MODEL RESOLUTION

This ..... condemns the investigation by Leigh CLP into Leigh member Lesley Farringdon for "bringing the Party into disrepute" because she has been campaigning for her MP, Lawrence Cunliffe, to vote against the Alton Bill in line with Party policy.
We call upon the NEC to instruct Leigh CLP to cease the investigation into Lesley Farringdon and to make it clear that membership of FAB, which is sponsored by the Labour Party and by the NUM, Lawrence Cunliffe's sponsoring trade union, is not incompatible with membership of the Labour Party.

We agreed to write to Lesley Farringdon to express our support.

Hull North Labour Party against Alton

Supporters of FAB in Hull have scored several successes recently against the pro-Alton Labour MP for North Hull and front bench spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Kevin MacNamara.

At his own ward meeting — which MacNamara was present at, despite the fact that it was budget day — FAB and *Briefing* supporters won a narrow vote on two resolutions of censure of MacNamara for his role in helping the Bill on the first stages of its passage through the Commons.

This was despite an attempted mobilisation of Life supporters replete with the usual literature. At the same meeting Nora MacNamara, the MP's wife, was mandated to vote for the motions of censure at the next GC.

Several other wards passed the two motions with more substantial majorities and some trade union branches passed similar resolutions or made financial donations to FAB.

At the GC meeting itself both motions were carried by a majority of two to one. They were carried despite the MP's warning that the wording of the resolutions — to *instruct* the MP which way to vote on the next reading — were in breach of Parliamentary privilege.

It remains to be seen which way MacNamara will actually vote at the next reading of the Bill — but the size of the vote in his own constituency shows that the left have successfully taken up and beaten the ideas of one of Alton's most prominent Labour supporters on his "own ground".

By Hull *Labour Briefing* supporters

Future activities

Demonstrate against the Third Reading!
Thursday May 5th; assemble ULU, Malet Street, 6.30pm
Depending on the timetable in the House of Lords, FAB will be organising another national demonstration.