LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p FORTNIGHTLY
No 64 JUNE 8-21 1988

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No retreat! No compromise!

FIGHT, FIGHT, AND FIGHT AGAIN!



PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

This is ERIC HEFFER'S response to the Labour Party policy review — delivered as a speech in Liverpool on May 21st.

The Labour Party NEC has now adopted the draft reports of the Policy Review Groups — including the one called *A Productive and Competitive Economy*.

Unless this document is fundamentally changed, I hope that Party Conference will reject it. As it stands, it could easily have been drawn up by a committee headed by Dr David Owen.

It is a right wing, SDP document and, despite its good points, even some Tories could accept it. I am sure Ted Heath would find little wrong with it. No wonder Dr Owen now says he could, under certain circumstances, rejoin the Labour Party!

This policy document is far more revisionist, and far more right wing, than the similar one which caused so much trouble in 1957. That document, after fierce debate, was carried at Labour's Conference by the block votes of the big trade unions. Two years later, Labour went down to defeat in a general election.

Let's take a closer look at the present document. It says *"Labour's aim is to develop a talent-based economy for the 1990s and beyond."* What exactly does that mean?

Such a statement could have come straight out of a Tory Manifesto. It is a series of words which add up to nothing.

It goes on *"The right balance must be struck between what the market and those operating it can do for themselves and the economy in the short run, and what government can do to establish a framework in which medium and longer-term responsibilities for investment, for improving competitiveness and for harnessing the new technology, can be sustained."*

This adds up to an abandonment of a socialist strategy and a socialist objective for society. No wonder Peter Walker could say recently that there is now little difference between the Labour and Tory parties.

Take, for example, the passage which talks of *"failings (which) can only be tackled with a macro-economic policy of steady expansion, competitive exchange rates and low inflation."* This could surely have come from the mouth of Mrs Thatcher herself.

The policy review talks of a *"new partnership between individual and society"* and goes on to say, *"It will be the task of a Labour government to meet its responsibilities, working with business and with the community to ensure that investment is made, technology is harnessed, economic development is balanced and sustainable."*

That could have come straight out of an SLD policy document. It underlines what I have already said in my

Continued back page

TONY BENN, replying to Neil Kinnock's betrayal of Labour's defence policy, says:

"This will come as no surprise to any member of the Labour Party. Our problem for a long time has not been that we could not persuade the electorate of the justice of our disarmament policy — but that we could not persuade our own Leadership.

"Those who voted Labour last time and now discover our policy is to be reversed must wonder what would happen if a Labour government had been elected. How quickly would it have dropped our disarmament policy? What does the Labour Party believe in?

"Until that question is resolved, there is no prospect of a Labour victory."

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

LMCP AGM

Support the Uprising! Solidarity now!

The Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine AGM had a special importance this year.

We met as the Palestinian Uprising has opened up new possibilities in the Middle East.

It has also put demands on the solidarity movement over here, and created great openings for campaigning work in this country.

By Anna Wagstaff LMCP

The AGM was an opportunity to discuss what the LMCP has achieved over the "post-invasion years" since it was born in the wake of the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon.

We also looked at how the Campaign should gear itself up to the tasks presented by the Uprising.

On the plus side: the LMCP has been instrumental in sharpening and crystallising the shift in allegiances that resulted from the invasion of 1982 and were exemplified by types like Benn and Heffer resigning from the Labour Friends of Israel.

Secular

Taking a clear anti-Zionist position in support of a democratic secular state, we have managed to win sponsorship from 15 Campaign Group MPs and Ken Livingstone of the Tribune Group. We have gained affiliations from more than 20 CLPs (including Bristol South — the constituency of Val Cocks, Chair of Labour Friends of Israel).

In doing so, the cause of Palestine — which was only a few years ago regarded as a right wing cause — has now been firmly identified with the left wing of the Party. Labour Friends of Israel have been left relying on unsavoury right wingers such as Gerald Kaufmann.

On the minus side: while the last five years have seen an increase in sympathy and political clarity within the British labour movement regarding the Palestinian struggle, the historic indifference of the British left over the issue, combined with the downturn in the Palestinian struggle itself, both contributed to preventing this general increase in sympathy from being translated into action.

This has meant that over the past five years the Campaign has been critically restricted by the low number of committed activists. This has not only limited what we have been able to achieve in the Labour Party, but also very seriously affected the work we have been able to undertake in the trade union movement.

Sympathy

The Uprising has not only built upon the sympathy aroused by the invasion of the Lebanon, but has also tranformed that sympathy into something more political, raising, as it does, questions that touch the heart of the Zionist state.

Recognising that conditions for solidarity work have never been as good as at present, the AGM passed a number of resolutions outlining the shape of our work this coming year.

Briefly, these were:

- raise money for the LMCP Uprising Fund to
  a) provide material assistance to the Palestinians of the occupied Territories to prevent Israel "starving them out";
  b) show political solidarity with those groups — Palestinian and Israeli — within Israel raising money for the Uprising;
- begin raising the demand for workers' sanctions against Israel in selected areas;
- support the consumer boycott initiated by the General Union of Palestinian Students;
- send delegates and participate in the initiatives of the interim joint committee for Palestine;
- prioritise joint work with Black organisations to build support for the politics of the campaign among black communities, where feelings for the Palestinian uprising have been very strong.
- build on NALGO's decision to break links with the Histadrut by targetting other unions in which to push this demand and by inviting the NALGO Black Members Co-ordinating Committee to jointly organise a fringe meeting around that demand at TUC Conference.
- Work within and build Students for Palestine;
- Organise regular pickets of the El Al office.

In addition to these resolutions the AGM restressed the importance of getting affiliations from union branches and CLPs, and particularly of getting Palestine on the agenda of this year's Labour Party Conference.

The LMCP has the potential for making great gains in the year ahead. How much we actually achieve depends primarily on how many labour movement activists are prepared to get involved.

Local Contacts
London: Sue, 802 4991
Oxford: Andy, 0865 721637
Leeds: Shaun, 105a Harehills Lane, Leeds LS8 4DN

☐ I/we wish to join/affiliate to the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine.
Membership costs £2.50, unwaged £1.00. Affiliation for organisations £5.00.

Name .....

Address .....

Please return to:
The Secretary, BM LMCP, London WC1N-3XX.

Azanian People's Organisation

Financial Appeal

The South African government has once more responded with an iron fist in an attempt to erode and silence the legitimate resistance of the oppressed and exploited people of Azania.

On February 24th 1988 the apartheid regime restricted and prohibited the Azanian People's Organisation, the torch bearer of the Black Consciousness Movement, and its youth wing, the Azanian Youth Organisation, and 15 other organisations from carrying on and performing *"any activities or acts whatsoever"*.

These restrictions imposed by the apartheid regime amount to the virtual banning of our activities, programmes and plans aimed at the eradication of the apartheid capitalist system.

It is crystal clear that this totalitarian measure is aimed at the creation of a deliberate political vacuum in the black community and to throw into disarray the liberatory efforts of the Azanian masses.

It is also pertinent to mention here that this measure is a continuation of various measures employed by the apartheid regime since the imposition of the state of emergency in 1985 and the detention without trial of over 20,000 political activists.

All these measures collectively have been calculated to close all avenues of legitimate and overt opposition ot the system of apartheid.

We in the Azanian Peoples Organisation are convinced that no amount of totalitarian actions on the part of the apartheid regime can destroy our will for freedom and the creation of a free anti-racist, anti-capitalist Azania.

We are presently considering ways and means of ensuring that the resistance effort of the masses maintains the necessary continuity and direction.

After consulting our legal respresentatives we have decided to challenge the restrictions in the Surpreme Court for both the Azanian Peoples Organisation and the Azanian Youth Organisation.

We will be lodging separate applications for these organisations. The estimated cost on each application is R40,000. We are requesting you to consider giving us financial assistance to lodge these applications as soon as possible.

May we kindly urge you to give immediate attention to our request. We are sure you are aware of the need for us to act as promptly as the situation demands.

All financial contributions and donations could be directly deposited by you in one of the follwing accounts:

- The Azanian Peoples Organisation, First National Bank of SA, Aiken House Branch, Cor. Kerk and Simmonds Street, Johannesburg. Account no. 5000171921.
- Borman and Desai, Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd, Johannesburg Branch. Account no. 000074306. NB: this is a trust account held by our attorneys and if you desposit any monies in this account, duly contact the Secretary General of AZAPO.

Yours in the struggle for a free Azania,
Haroon Patel,
Secretary General, AZAPO.

Interview with Viraj Mendis



PHOTO: Finn Jensen

Vigil for Viraj Mendis

Fighting for my life!

VIRAJ MENDIS has been in sanctuary since December 20th 1986. For more than 500 days a church in Manchester has been his protection against the Home Office's determination to deport him to Sri Lanka — which, according to Amnesty International and many others, might lead to his assassination.

Viraj has now had his final appeal. If he loses, the Home Office wants to send in the police to arrest him. FINN JENSEN asked Viraj on May 13th what he expected from the appeal.

I am on trial for my life. But if I left this church to attend my trial I would be arrested and deported!

Even my barrister was not able to attend, because the Home Office only gave us four days notice — after nine months of waiting for this appeal!

We cannot use our most important material — recent events in Sri Lanka which prove that it would be suicide for me to go there.

Being a Sinhalese who supports the Tamils' right to self-determination by whatever means the Tamils find necessary is a very risky thing in Sri Lanka.

But my appeal in the court was only allowed to deal very narrowly with what happened at my last appeal a year ago. We could not introduce new evidence.

Taking this into account, it went well. Ian McDonald agreed to take the case, at four days notice, and did well with the legal technicalities he had to use.

But that is not enough. My judicial review a year ago went even better — and we lost. We cannot predict the outcome of this appeal.

Central to my case has always been the political aspect. We may win the legal argument, but if the political balance is against us, we will lose.

But the political balance might be better this time than last. We are doing better than ever at the moment. The publicity is extremely widespread. It has been on the national nine o'clock news twice and in the local news. The Bishop of Manchester had a letter in *The Times* today, and there is a non-stop vigil outside the church.

If the decision is against us we will immediately apply for leave to make a new appeal to the House of Lords. But the Home Office has made it clear in the press that if my present appeal goes against me they are *"not going to waste any more time"* in deporting me. That is their most explicit statement yet.

So the next few weeks will be crucial. The vigil outside the church shows that local people are very concerned about the police entering the church to deport me. Public opinion, especially in Manchester, is on our side.

Last weekend we had visits from the sanctuary movement in Europe. A grouping in Holland is trying to co-ordinate the movement.

They had a meeting here in the church in solidarity with my sanctuary. They understood that if the British Home Office could get away with deporting me, it would be the green light for other European governments to do similar things.

My case is a test case. The government knows that if I win it will be the beginning of a sanctuary movement in Britain. They are willing to sacrifice one life in order to stop the sanctuary movement.

It would be useful for more people to write to the Home Office, asking them to give me the right to stay, sending a copy to the VMDC. But it is equally important to write to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

With the new Immigration Act it will be almost impossible for so-called overstayers to appeal on compassionate grounds. More sanctuaries are likely, because people facing deportation have no alternative.

The issue has politicised a lot of people in the church. They know that doing nothing will be to side with the government in deporting black people. A big battle inside the church, as well as that against the Home Office, is likely.

The church has to take a stand on a sharp issue like racism. Support for the sanctuary movement is growing in the church — including, now, the support of the Council of Churches.

When I entered the sanctuary it was agreed with Father John that there would be no violence in the church. Whether such a condition is right or not, it is important to stick to it for the sake of future sanctuaries.

But what happens outside the church is another matter. The people of the local area will not accept the police deporting a local citizen. If the police tried, it could spark off a riot. So my protection is not the church building itself, but the community.

Relevant addresses:
Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign C/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL. 01 234 3168.
The Home Office Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1 0AA.
United Nations High Commission for Refugees 36 Westminster Palace Garden, Artillery Road, London SW1P 1RR.

Viraj Mendis Demonstration

On May 28th 3,000 people took part in a spirited march in defence of Viraj Mendis and against all racist deportations and immigration laws.

Black organisations were reasonably well represented, and there were strong contingents from women's liberation groups, lesbian and gay liberation groups, religious organisations and also anarcho-syndicalists.

But where was a visible labour movement contingent? Undoubtedly there were many individual trade unionists and members of the Labour Party and far left organisations on the march. But Bristol West Black Sections was the only Labour Party banner, and there were only two union banners (one from NALGO and one from the Probation Officers union NAPO).

With the result of Viraj's final appeal due any day now, we need to mobilise maximum pressure to dissuade the Home Office from sending the police into the sanctuary to arrest and deport him.

By Mark Shotter Nottingham East CLP

Comrades in and close to Manchester should try to get along to the marches the VMDC holds every Friday at 5.30pm from Picadilly Gardens.

All comrades should raise Viraj's case in labour movement meetings and take collections for VMDC, who will send speakers to any meetings.

VMDC have called a national conference to formulate the basis for a national anti-deportations campaign for July 30th.

Ring VMDC, get delegated to the Conference — and see what you can do for Viraj before then.

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

The Price of Perestroika?

The pantomime in Moscow featuring Reagan and Gorbachev seems to have yielded small results. Perhaps more important — for the future of disarmament, and indeed the future of workers' struggle worldwide — are the dramatic developments inside Soviet society itself.

As the 19th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party approaches, the struggle of *glasnost* and *perestroika* has become more intense. The exact make-up and relative strength of the contending factions remains unknown (at least from this distance).

It is, however, fairly clear that a "conservative" grouping around Politburo member Ligachev is contesting the speed of Gorbachev's drive towards "openness" and "restructuring". Boris Yeltsin, meanwhile, has appeared on British television denouncing Ligachev and calling on Gorbachev to remove him.

Across the country, Communist Party structures are being rent by a fierce struggle — to elect delegates for or against Gorbachev. In the Soviet Union, politics is re-emerging with a vengeance.

What does it mean for Western socialists? Gorbachev's *perestroika* proposals do imply widespread "marketisation" of the economy. In the short term, this must mean undermining some of the basic gains of Soviet workers — cheap food, housing, and transport, and guaranteed employment.

How will workers respond? In return for those sacrifices, they are being offered an increase in public openness and political freedom. But how much? This is the question which worries many Party bosses and local apparatchniks. Will forces seeking radical democratisation emerge, and will the iron grip of the Party be undermined by *glasnost*?

The Congress proceedings will tell us a good deal about the direction Soviet affairs will take over the next few years. At least one thing is clear. If Gorbachev wins, he will be on trial in the eyes of most Party leaders. There are plenty of old-style Brezhnevite bureaucrats waiting to bring Gorbachev down if his reforms begin to undercut their power and privileges.

Recent moves in both the Soviet Union and Hungary towards openness and political debate should be welcomed. They remain a precondition for the emergence of a genuine, independent workers' movement, which alone can defeat the Stalinist bureaucracy and return to the international socialist ideals of the October Revolution.

No "business unionism"; no "business party"

When Eric Hammond organised scab labour to break the strike at Wapping and helped send 5,000 print workers to the dole, the TUC Leadership failed to bring him to heel. Even the mildest, most ineffectual steps to discipline the EETPU have been faced down by Hammond's mixture of blackmail and bluff. The blackmail is obvious: an open threat to split the trade union movement. But it is also bluff — because the last thing Hammond wants is a membership war with TUC unions.

A socialist response to the EETPU's antics is straightforward. First, there must be no capitulation to scabbing. Unity is vital, but unity purchased at the price of basic trade union rights and effectiveness is worthless. If Hammond organises a split, then so be it.

Second, if the EETPU does vote to leave the TUC, then TUC-affiliated unions should immediately organise an all-out membership war. EETPU members should be recruited to TUC unions — and this should be supported, and indeed organised, by the EETPU left wing.

Third, Hammond's outfit cannot be allowed to remain affiliated to the Labour Party. Neil Kinnock may like to lean on Hammond's bloc vote at Conference (especially when he gets round to jettisoning nuclear disarmament policy) but the presence of a scab, non-TUC, company union inside the Labour Party should be no more acceptable than scab, anti-trade union, capitalist policies.

The Policy Review document on *A Productive and Competitive Economy* suggests state collaboration — "concerted action" — with "firms, the CBI, trade associations and chambers of commerce" and fails even to mention collaboration with unions, let alone workers' control over industry.

This is the politics of EETPU-style business unionism at the heart of Kinnock's attack on socialist ideas.

Labour Party Policy Review

As Kinnock outstrips Policy Review and renounces unilateralism:

The time to fight for unilateralism is *now*!

As the Labour Party NEC poured over the draft reports of the policy review committees, where did it find defence and disarmament policy?

It was hidden in the work of the committee with the grand, and faintly colonial, title *Britain and the World*!

"Hidden" is an apt word, for there is practically no sign of the Labour Party's policy anywhere to be seen.

By JOY HURCOMBE

Just one paragraph is devoted to defence. It reads:

"Labour welcomes the INF Treaty and the quickening pace in arms reduction negotiations between the super-powers. A Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will have an impact on the Trident programme."

You can almost feel the sigh of relief from the members of that committee as they threw aside all the documents sent in to them relating to disaramament policy. They must have been eternally grateful to Reagan and Gorbachev for timing their talks so conveniently!

The INF talks and a changing international situation were used earlier as an excuse for postponing any further review of Party policy. This review will now take place in 1989.

So what are the real reasons for the delay?

Could it be that the Labour Leaders want to throw away our commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons? Are they waiting for opposition to the watering down of other policies to subside before they go for the jugular?

Will they try, once again, to silence debate by the call to "unity"? A year nearer the general election gives them more credibility for this tactic.

Knowing how much we have been forced to concede in the past has made many Party members cynical of the way the Labour Leadership operates on the key issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament. This time is no exception.

There is absolutely no reason for the policy review on defence and disarmament. Time and again Party Conference has reaffirmed unilateral nuclear disarmament. Despite behind-the-scenes manoeuvres to wreck the vote, Conference has, time and again, voted overwhelmingly for the unilateralist resolution.

Conference, not the Labour Leadership, reflects the will of the membership not to be sold out on this single issue.

The problem is that the Labour Leaders fail to listen to Conference and in fact they have never campaigned on the policy in a forceful and determined way.

The glossy material produced last time, *A Modern Britain in a Modern World*, with its Union Jack imagery, was not only deeply offensive but was also weak on commitments to get rid of all nuclear weapons.

It tried to portray our Party as the Party of real defence, with a greater interest in increasing the conventional defence budget than the Tories!

It looks as if they will try these tactics again, despite the way that the electorate did not fall for them. Rumour has it that when the final report is written, it will ditch unilateral nuclear disarmament because *"the world has moved on since we made that commitment."*

High conventional defence spending, total commitment to NATO and to the NATO nuclear umbrella, and movements towards greater European co-operation through the EEC may feature in place of our present policy. Who knows, perhaps even Trident will be used for negotiating a place at disarmament talks.

The fact that the policy review has been put off for another year could be used to our advantage. At this year's Conference we can challenge the whole idea of the policy review.

We can send in resolutions that once again reaffirm our policy of the unconditional removal of all nuclear weapons and bases. We can call for leaving NATO and for the direction of money from nuclear weapons to jobs, schools and the health service.

We can vote for Leaders who have a proven history of support for unilateral nuclear disarmament. We can challenge the idea in the draft report of the policy review that our policies should be altered to fit in with the superpowers' State of the Game.

Labour CND has produced draft resolutions for Conference (see *Briefing* no. 63). Please let your branch and CLP know how important they are.



PHOTO: Gina Glover, Photo Co op

Alf Dubs MP and CND members surround Wandsworth Council to protest at Tories' support for Civil Nuclear Defence. Perhaps the next political gathering we should be surrounding is Labour Party Conference 1988 — to keep Labour's pledge to unilateralism!

As if to prove that we cannot be complacent, Neil Kinnock has outstripped the Policy Review, and for the first time come out *against* unilateral disarmament — calling it a "something for nothing" policy. In response to Ken Livingstone's demand that he reassert Party Policy, Kinnock referred to unilateralism as a "mere incantation".

We can only echo the words of Eric Heffer: "Fight, fight and fight again". We won't let Neil Kinnock get away with it and wreck the Party by taking away this fundamental socialist policy. The time to fight for unilateralism *is now!*

Trade Union Briefing

Norman and Eric square up for a fight:
Bring down Hammond empire!

Although a fudge is always on the cards at Congress House, there is now a real possibility that Eric Hammond's EETPU could be suspended, or even expelled, from the ranks of the TUC.

On Tuesday May 10th the EETPU refused to accept a TUC directive requiring it to withdraw from two single-union no-strike deals.

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

One had been signed with the Japanese electronics firm Orion, near Port Talbot, and the other with the haulage firm Cristian Salvesen, based in Warrington.

The EETPU called on its 330,000 members to endorse its decision, and decided to ballot them.

It also refused to appear in front of the TUC General Council to be formally censured for breaching a previous TUC directive instructing it not to organise or recruit membership at Rupert Murdoch's News International plant at Wapping.

Norman Willis has fought long and hard to avoid such disciplinary action against the EETPU but decided in the end to support a "strong censure" to head off expulsion calls from the print unions.

When the AEU signed a single-union deal for the proposed Ford plant in Dundee, Willis defended Bill Jordan, accepted the principle of the agreement, and even flew to Detroit to try to get Ford management to accept it.

The Orion and Salveson deals, however, are a bit more difficult for Willis. They involve the imposition of new deals into functioning workplaces where other trade unions already exist.

In each case, these deals were signed *over the heads* of the existing trade unions. Those unions have protested strongly to the TUC, and Willis is now responding to this pressure.

Thus the TUC finds itself with a duel position over single-union no-strike deals. They are not acceptable in existing workplaces where other unions are already organised, but they are acceptable on new, or "greenfield", sites.

The TUC Special Review Body is currently discussing a proposed code of conduct to regulate the introduction of single-union deals. No text has yet been produced.

TUC officials are keen to reach accommodation with the AEU leaders, who have already said they will not accept anything which restricts their right to enter into such agreements.

Suspension or even expulsion of unions from the TUC is not a new thing in Britain. A number of unions were suspended in the early 1970s, for example, for registering under the Industrial Relations Act. But the expulsion of the EETPU would represent a decisive break.

The EETPU (along with the UDM, and to a lesser extent the AEU) is spearheading the development in Britain of US-style business unionism. The hallmark of business unionism is not just right wing policies but a qualitatively different relationship to the employers.

This shows itself most clearly in willingness to join directly with employers to destroy other trade union structures.

A split in the TUC is therefore not only a real possibility, but also a necessary development if the trade union movement is to be defended. True, it could be the end of a unitary trade union federation in Britain, which has been a historic advantage for the working class. But there are higher issues at stake.

Unity cannot be purchased at any price. The cost of unity with Hammond is the continued drift of the TUC towards the right wing policies of the EETPU and the continued undermining of other trade unions.

This is shown by Hammond's actions even whilst these things are being debated inside the TUC. The EETPU has concluded an agreement with a consortium of construction companies to train workers for the London Docklands Development project. The EETPU will soon be moving into building trades such as bricklaying and plastering!

Even Alan Tuffin called for the EETPU to be expelled from the TUC when speaking at the UCW conference last week.

For Hamond, leaving the TUC is still a difficult option. Once outside the TUC, the EETPU will be outside the Bridlington Agreement (which outlaws the poaching of members by affiliated unions) and would be vulnerable to recruiting campaigns by other unions.

EETPU members in many workplaces would join TUC unions and breakaways into other unions would, quite rightly, be organised from within the EETPU itself.

The EETPU would be isolated and would seek to unite with organisations like the UDM and the RCN. The AEU is likely to stay inside the TUC; its membership is too vulnerable to unions like the TGWU.

This isolation should be compounded by the disaffiliation of the union from the Labour Party as well. It is a scandal that Michael Meacher has already said that he would be opposed to such a move.

This year's Labour Party Conference needs to debate these issues and take a clear stand against business unionism.

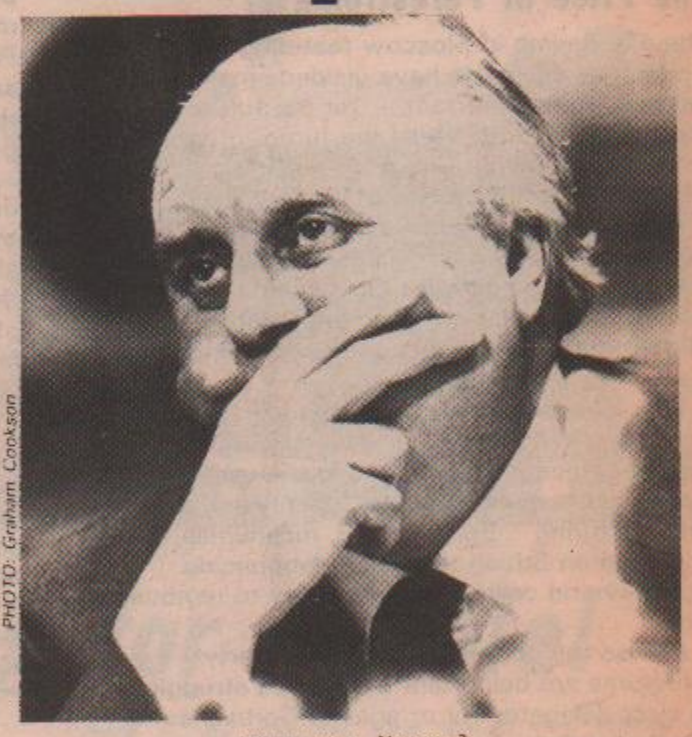


PHOTO: Graham Cookson

Where now, Norman?

UCW Conference

Tuffin lightly toasted

At its annual Conference in Bournemouth, the Union of Communication Workers' membership scored a number of paper victories.

The union is now committed to obtaining annual screening for cervical cancer for all women members in the Post Office.

By Billy Carron

It is prepared to take industrial action should any serious steps be taken towards privatisation of the Post Office, and in defence of the NHS.

It has also affirmed its opposition to share ownership — an important defeat for General Secretary Alan Tuffin, a pioneer of new realism and propagandist of employee share ownership schemes.

Tuffin also suffered a motion of censure against the Executive Council's Postal Group Management Committee — the committee responsible for negotiating last year's defeat on the shorter working week.

But the realisation and implementation of these policies is down to the Leadership. A couple of quotes from Tuffin will give an idea of that Leadership.

On Thatcherism, he said in his opening address: *"How distant from the Tories of the 60s, who at least had some understanding and compassion."*

The Executive invited Princess Anne to address the conference — to speak about the Save the Children Fund.

Presenting her with a pen, Tuffin confided that he hoped that when she used it to dial a phone number it would remind her of the Telecom side of the union's work, and that when she wrote a letter with it that she would be reminded of the postal side of the union's work.

Despite the motions of censure, both Tuffin and the Executive survived motions of no confidence. They also defeated a motion calling for a ballot of the branches to decide for whom the union would vote in the Labour Party Leadership elections.

The Conference ratified the Executive's decision to support Kinnock and Hattersley — a manoeuvre which received considerable support from Scottish and Welsh branches.

The result of the Conference is that the Leadership has had some constraints placed on its headlong drive towards new realism. But in a year in which it has presided over some of the worst debacles of recent years and angered just about every one of the members, its authority remains intact.

UCW vote on overtime

By 70,000 to 50,000 postal workers have voted to reject a proposal to change overtime rates.

It sought to introduce weekday overtime on a single rate, and to remove double-time pay for weekday overtime of 13 hours or more.

By a Reading UCW member

It also proposed to raise slightly the rate for what is known as "scheduled" overtime (i.e. allocated to a particular worker on a guaranteed basis).

Many postal workers undertake a great deal of overtime in order to earn a living wage, especially in the south, where costs are high. With this new agreement, the UCW leaders were once again selling the members short.

In the face of a determined offensive by the Post Office Board they have all but surrendered. They had previously concluded what they saw as an "historic agreement" with the Post Office and thereby forestalled industrial action last Christmas.

A three hour reduction in the working week was the original claim. In the end, that agreement gave us a one and a half hour reduction, phased in by November 1989, together with replacement of the existing bonus scheme, which will lead to reductions for some but small increases for others, plus talks about a five day week and restructuring of some overtime levels.

The agreement received narrow approval in a ballot, but was clearly seen by many members as an attempt to avert industrial action by the leadership, which has shown a marked reluctance to give any kind of lead.

This was despite the fact that they had been instructed to seek the reduction in hours and also to put any offer to a recalled conference. This they did not do.

But this latest vote against the new proposals shows what the members feel about the Leadership. It shows they are prepared to fight despite previous sell-outs.

The last year has seen unofficial strikes at their highest level ever.

The message from the rank and file is clear: provide a lead for our union or we will replace you with a fighting Leadership which is prepared to stand up for the UCW membership against the Post Office management's attacks.

NALGO Conference preview

Would you buy a used strategy from *this* Daly?

As the Tories dismember local government, the NALGO leadership sits on its hands, allowing the carnage to go on and on.

By Fred Leplat
ILEA NALGO
Conference delegate

This year, there have been massive cuts in jobs and services as rate-capping has squeezed Council budgets and the escape hatch of financial creativity has been shut.

With the new Local Government, Education Reform and Housing Acts coming into force, local services will be transformed – if they are still there at all.

NALGO ought to be mounting some sort of campaign to protect its half million members in local government.

Apart from the "Put People First" and the "Make People Matter" campaigns (notable for their failure to achieve anything at all), there have been no initiatives whatsoever from the leadership to back branches fighting cuts in jobs and services.

Even in Westminster, where the Tory Council is introducing privatisation and other attacks even before the new Acts, the NALGO leadership has been notable for its inactivity (apart from getting pictures taken on a local lobby).

To be fair, they have tried to get an agreement with the Labour-run Association of London Authorities to protect members, if possible, from compulsory redundancies and other nasty effects of the cuts.

But the ALA turned down NALGO's offer. After all, London Labour Councils have been able to get rid of some 20,000 jobs in London, change working conditions, and reduce union facilities without the help of General Secretary John Daly.

In fact, Labour Councils such as Camden have found great friends in the courts and have used Tory trade union laws unilaterally to change staff contracts and intimidate union members.

Can NALGO members now reasonably expect that there will be a review of the union's useless strategy, and a return to the successful campaigns of industrial action? The answer is — yes and no!

There will be a review, but only to chuck out the existing strategy of encouraging branches to take all-out strike action against cuts and redundancies, backed by a national levy. The national Leadership (Jim White, Keith Sonnett, etc.) have cynically refused to implement this since it was adopted in 1981.

On other issues, the NALGO Leadership is also taking the line of least resistance and the (now very dented) dented shield.

- It tried to keep resolutions referring to resisting Section 28 and defending victimised lesbian and gay members off the agenda.
- It is now meeting the Department of Education and Science to smooth through the abolition of the ILEA.
- It will not propose non-co-operation with registration or collection of of the Poll Tax.

The Leadership convened a working party to produce a report on positive action in the union, then chose to ignore its proposals and produce its own.

Although still using the words "positive action", the NEC report proposes that representation of black, women, lesbian, gay and disabled members on the NEC should be through the Districts and not through the self-organised groups.

This year's NEC election, carried out by postal ballot, has resulted in the election of some additional left-wingers such as Ivan Beavis (District Secretary and *Morning Star* supporter) and Rita Donaghy (currently president) in London. This is due more to a drop in support for the right than an increase in support for the left.

However, it could provide an opportunity for the left to take the initiative against new realism and reassert the necessity of campaigns of national industrial action. This conference will show whether these new NEC members are prepared to take this step.

Finally, there is one very important question that NALGO members want to have answered. Will the NALGO General Secretary John Daly say anthing at all at this year's Conference?

If he does not, it will be the fourth Conference in a row he has sat on the platform with his mouth shut!

What does he do for the £40,000 a year he gets from our dues?

Interview

Come down and support the seafarers!

BECKY SAWBRIDGE, a P&O stewardess involved in the current strike, spoke to PETE COOPER about the dispute.



PHOTO: Martine Stead

Becky Sawbridge addresses North London Socialist Conference

I used to work on the P&O *European Trader* which caught fire a few weeks ago.

At that time it was owned by Townsend Thoressen and the staffing levels used to be about 24. At the time of the fire it was 42! But they weren't experienced. A lot of them hadn't any sea time, or only seasonal sea time.

The fire on the *Trader* was a carbon copy of the fire on the Sealink ferry just two weeks before. In both cases fuel pipes burst in the engine room.

This to any ordinary seafarer would have been logical, bearing in mind that the ships had been idle during our dispute and then brought back into service.

When an engine has been idle for a while it requires a thorough checkover and it seems that this hadn't been done. In both cases the fires were put out by the sprinkler systems – but not before one seafarer died on the Sealink ferry.

None of the ships are sailing to their full quota. They are having extreme difficulty in finding people with the right sort of experience. P&O are pushing crews from ship to ship and in my view it is unsafe to do this.

It takes you a good few weeks to get used to any ship. In an emergency situation a crew is your most important piece of equipment.

We've got no friends when it comes to the courts, so why not let them keep the money? The NUS leadership should be looking after its people, not trotting up to the court every day.

There has been no intimidation or scuffles on the picket line, and members have even been down there with their kids. So it's nonsense to talk about violence and intimidation. It's just an example of them seeking to break us.

Last Thursday, May 27th, at a mass meeting, the union's lawyer and Tony Mcgregor (the NUS Deputy General Secretary) told us to accept just six pickets on the line.

They had a thousand strikers shouting them down. As far as we're concerned our mass demonstrations and pickets will go on. We're fighting for the right to have a union which works for us.

The women's support groups have been the backbone of the strike from its beginning. We've had a total of £200 each from the NUS. The first £50 was after 8 weeks on strike.

The support groups are run totally independently of the union. They are composed of seafarers, stewardesses and strikers' families. We make sure that everyone gets at least one meal a day.

Come down and support us – especially at weekends! Make a day of it!

We're fighting for the right to have a union which speaks for us.



PHOTO: Nick Hazelwood

Wanted: solidarity — financial, moral, physical, political!

With the NUS backing down over national strike action, and the courts piling on the pressure, Dover P&O strikers are appealing to the labour movement for sustained support. MATTHEW JONES of *Coventry Labour Briefing*, interviewed MARK WILLIAMS — a striker working with the Deal Women's Support Group.

How are you organising support for the strikers in and around Dover?

We've followed the miners' example. We've set up six Women's Support Groups, which help feed the strikers, run the kitchens, and go all over the country raising funds.

Deal Women's Support Group were lucky. We were first off the ground and have had a lot of advice from the miners. They've provided the Deal Welfare Club and also Magness House (Kent NUM HQ) as well as a very substantial financial start.

We've had a lot of advice over the sequestration; the Support Group trustees are nothing to do with the NUS, so we have avoided sequestration.

After they froze the union's funds, the Midland Bank tried to freeze the WSG funds. We threatened to take it to the press, and they backed off and gave us our money. A small victory for us!

What's your view of the history of the dispute?

We all thought during the few weeks of national strike action we were coming very close to victory. When Sam McCluskie withdrew the secondary action it was a bitter disappointment.

The only way we can see ourselves winning is through secondary action, which is now deemed illegal.

You want further action by other ports?

Yes, of course. This commercial war against P&O just won't work. P&O are a very large company, one of the top 60 in Europe, with a lot of subsidiaries and they can pull money from anywhere. It just wouldn't be possible to boycott all P&O's subsidiaries.

Have you had any solidarity from the dockers or from the unions in France?

French dockers have met the union and we hope they'll take some action in the form of lightning strikes. The dockers this side of the Channel in Dover are not being helpful, though the dockers in Hull are right behind us.

The dockers in Dover have got a policy which says they will tie up any ship, union or non-union, as long as it's got British labour on board — which is a bit of a kick in the stomach for us.

What's been the response of the TGWU to that?

The TGWU have held a secret ballot of their dockers but it's been locked away without being counted — a really *secret* ballot!

The TGWU are a large union with a lot of money. Obviously they don't want to lose that money and are not willing to stick their necks out for us.

What sort of support are you looking for and what sort of support have you had outside Dover?

We're looking for financial support, obviously, but also moral support. After the national action was lifted, morale hit an all-time low in Dover. We feel we're on our own again.

We need support of all kinds — financial, moral, physical and political — because it's not just a fight against P&O, it's a fight against the Tories, the employers, and everything they've done.

The response from round the country so far has been very good, but we need more. The children are suffering most, because they don't really understand why they can't have any pocket money or anything.

You're asking for things like toys and clothes as well as money?

Things like toys and clothes and disposable nappies and so on — because they really do cost a fortune. During a struggle they're a bit of a luxury, really.

Are you prepared to try to reimpose secondary action yourselves?

If this commercial war doesn't work, we're definitely going to have to do something, because otherwise we'll just be forgotten. It would be another Wapping.

Would you be in favour of pulling out the other ports if you could?

Certainly, that's the general feeling in Dover. It's the only way we're going to be able to win.

What about the police in Dover?

Apart from the policing of the picket line, they're also following people home and stopping them in the street. They're asking questions like where have they been, why they've been there, and where are they going.

They've got to the stage of tapping the phones, which we've come across before during the miners' strike.

Magness House played a big part in that as well. The police have a job to do, but they seem to be using their powers over and above anything else that they've done before. They are intimidating us a great deal, and greatly outnumber us on the picket lines.

Model Resolution

Employment rights for Part-time workers/Repeal of Wages Act

Given that one in five British workers are employed on a part-time basis — a majority of these being women with children — constituting an underclass of cheap and disposable labour, and that weakening employment rights for part-time workers has been a key tactic in the government's drive to deregulate the labour market:

This Conference calls on all trade unions, Labour MPs, Euro MPs and Labour Authorities to support the EEC Directive on part-time work and initiate a campaign against the government's attempts to deregulate the labour market and strip part-time workers of their basic employment rights.

We believe that such a campaign must also demand employment protection for part-time workers employed for less than 16 hours per week against unfair dismissal, and the entitlement of all part-timers to redundancy pay, maternity leave, access to pension funds, job security, etc., just as any full-time employee would receive.

We believe that such a campaign must also be directed against the government's plans to raise the minimum number of hours part-timers must work before they are entitled to benefits to 20 hours per week, resulting in some 300,000 women losing their employment rights under the existing law.

We believe that, while pointing out that *job creation* does not necessarily mean the erosion of job security, such a campaign must urge any future Labour government to repeal the 1986 Wages Act which abolished the right to unsocial hours payments, paid holidays and overtime pay for workers in low paid sectors, and any future acts which seek to undermine the rights of part-time workers, to be replaced by legislation that strengthens and extends the rights of part-time workers, abolishing, as far as possible, qualifying periods of employment and hours of work as prerequisites to receiving basic employment rights.

Remember to let the *Briefing* office (01 733 7016) know which resolutions your CLP has passed, etc. Please also send in model amendments to PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ.

Defend the right to picket!

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

On Friday May 27th, a mass meeting of 1,000 Dover seafarers voted *unanimously* to reject an appeal from the NUS leadership to end mass picketing of the Dover Eastern Dock and thereby clear the way for an ending to the sequestration of the union's funds.

With Sam McCluskie now in hospital, the NUS Deputy Geneal Secretary made the futile appeal – explaining that the judge had refused to lift the sequestration order whilst mass picketing continued.

In an unprecedented move, the High Court ruled that the picket must be restricted to six people — not just six talking to those going in, but any six in the vicinity of the gate! The figure of six had previously been a police guideline (originally a TUC guideline).

The ruling has in effect created a new law which severely restricts the right to picket. None of the Wapping pickets, for example, would have been legal under this ruling.

The decision of the mass meeting to defy this intolerable judgement is a boost for the whole labour movement.

The stand taken by the Dover strikers means that sequestration will continue — and that they must now look to rest of the labour movement for their basic means of survival.

The right to picket is an essential part of the right to strike. The initiatives taken at Dover to defend this right should be widely supported.

Labour Party

The Policy Review under review



PHOTOS: Wayne Edgerton



Why so defensive, Neil? Why not like Brave Bryan, laughing all the way to the Stock Market?

A poor attempt at stealing Thatcher's clothes

The Labour Party's long awaited Policy Review has turned out to be a squalid and disreputable exercise — "*the socialist sell-out of the century*" according to Dennis Skinner.

Tony Benn has described the papers as:

"*superficial and shallow in their analysis, extremely weak and vague in their remedies. They point unmistakeably towards the acceptance of many of the changes made by the Tories since they have been in power.*"

By Paula Watson
Westminster South CLP

The key report is the one produced by Bryan Gould's group on **A Productive and Competitive Economy**. Its answer to the looming crisis of the 1990s is to abandon socialism in favour of a modified form of Thatcherism. The market is all.

Having accepted the limitations of the strategies of previous Labour governments, Gould's document, although it mentions the need for lower interest and exchange rates, largely opts for supply-side economics.

The market, we are told, can "*spur competition, stimulate innovation and widen consumer choice.*" This analysis ignores the fact that the market tends to provide consumer choice on inessentials, not necessities (jobs, houses, schools and hospitals).

The desire for profit as often stifles as stimulates innovation, and is as likely to lead to monopoly as competition, while competition itself is usually a harsh and wasteful means of regulation.

To correct the market's tendency to neglect long-term investment, training, research and development, something called the **Medium Term Industrial Strategy** has been devised in which "*government agencies and Local Authorities work in partnership with firms, the CBI, trade associations and chambers of commerce so that the process of policy-making and industrial development is one of concerted action.*"

This is in line with the ideas of that well-known leftie Michael Heseltine, and is slightly less radical than the tripartite (government, CBI, TUC) system of the Wilson and Heath years, in that it leaves out one of the partners — the trade unions!

The second instrument of government intervention will be the **Public Interest Company**. These companies will be privately-owned but subject to government regulation.

Presumably the privatised public utilities will be converted into this type of operation. All experience has shown that in a capitalist market such attempts are doomed to failure, since regulation inevitably conflicts with the market discipline of profit.

Even on its own terms this paper is fudged and dishonest. Any attempt to intervene in the supply side to secure greater investment must entail some switch from private commodity consumption.

This can only be achieved, in an economy where profit is paramount, by a heavy increase in taxation, or an incomes policy, or both. On this the document maintains a discreet silence.

The paper on **Economic Equality** is, if anything, even worse. Every issue has been dodged.

Recognising the damage done in the last election campaign by the muddle over taxation, the document makes no commitments except to promise an increase in the number of tax bands, of which the lowest will be below 25% and the highest no more than 60% (no punitive taxation of the rich here!). The thorny problem of mortgage tax relief is avoided.

For the rest there is an unspecified commitment to introduce a minimum wage and a meaningless promise to "*end poverty*" — although not in the lifetime of one Parliament!

This is fraudulent. Present low rates of tax are only possible because of the revenues from privatisation and North Sea oil and the massive cuts in public expenditure. As the first two of these run out, a Labour government could not provide increased benefits and public spending without increased taxation.

The electorate knows this. Since such rises would be politically unacceptable, a Kinnock administration would find itself in a 1976 situtation, forced to make ever more draconian cuts in public spending.

The only way to cut this Gordian knot is to take control of capital. Only when the wealth of the City of London is at the disposal of a socialist government will it be possible to combine high public spending with low taxation.

The third of the economic documents **People at Work** is a shameless attempt to hide the fact that the present Leadership has no intention of dismantling the Tory anti-union legislation.

The Tory requirement for strike ballots is accepted outright, while everything else — the right to strike without fear of dismissal, the right to take secondary action, and to organise effective picketing — has been deferred for future consideration at some unspecified time (like never!).

All we are promised is the right for employees to elect representatives to forums, which will play a part (not a big one, I suspect) in decisions on the working environment (the colour of the paint?).

These forums are worrying. By undermining the role of the unions, they could lead to the by-passing of collective bargaining procedures and the eventual breakdown of national agreements (exactly what Thatcher has been hoping for).

The unions will have no real power over important company decisions, because, as the paper informs us, workers lack "*the expertise to scrutinise corporate plans*". Management will be strengthened at the expense of workers — just what the market ordered!

Consumers and the Community is a confusing document, which makes a rather unhappy attempt to colonise some of Thatcher's vocabulary.

Its talk of the community and community action (left carefully undefined) tries to make palatable its enthusiastic endorsement of consumerism. Its attempt to cobble up some safeguards for the private sector consumer and to create a new "enterprise culture" in the public area only re-enforces the strength of its commitment to the market.

The **Physical and Social Environment** is a rather funny paper which seems aimed more at Prince Charles than the working class.

Its expressed intention is to give people new ways of becoming involved "*in the design of their environment*" through open, democratic planning. Unfortunately, the areas over which this planning is to hold sway are remarkably limited (mainly safety and cleanliness on estates and streets).

Nuclear power is apparently to remain with us. No action is suggested on acid rain, industrial and chemical pollution of earth, sea and sky or our part in causing ecological disasters in the third world.

Of course, in a market, planning has to be restricted — otherwise, it may infringe on the prerogatives of capital.

Democracy for the Individual and the Consumer, produced by Roy Hattersley's group, is a timid and conservative affair. It makes no attempt to suggest how the present undemocratic British state can be transformed into a genuine democracy.

But even within its general acceptance of the present institutional framework, no mention is made of the House of Lords, the excessive powers of the Prime Minister, the use of patronage and lobbying, and the inadequate representation of women and ethnic minorities. Nor are there any suggestions for restoring and extending the powers of local government.

Instead we get a handful of suggested reforms in the area of civil rights, such as a Freedom of Information Act (we have heard that before); reform (not repeal) of Section Two of the Official Secrets Act; a Ministry for Women; and repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988.

Welcome as these reforms would be, the basic problems remain untouched.

The whole review, with its cynical contempt for the Party membership and the electorate, is a clear — if desperate — signal to the capitalist establishment that it has nothing to fear from a Labour government.

Briefing answers back!

In response to the recently released Policy Review documents, *Briefing* presents a few policy proposals of its own. These are by no means meant to stand as the final word on the subject, but they are a useful indication of the kinds of policies which Labour could be adopting — and, one day, implementing.

1. Productive Economy

Yes, we want a productive economy which works in the interests of people, not profit. We propose:

- A massive programme of public investment to end unemployment.
- Real social ownership — the nationalisation of the banks, finance houses and big monopolies under workers' control.
- A national plan for rebuilding the economy, and state credit for co-operatives and the small businesses.
- For workers in the private sector, a veto over the bosses' decisions.

2. Economic Equality

Yes, all socialists want more equality. Let's have a minimum wage of £150 per week, and a huge rise in pensions and other benefits. A punitive wealth tax — no one to earn more than £20,000 a year, and no one to own more than one house or flat. Indexation of wages and benefits. A massive programme of housebuilding.

3. People at Work

Yes, socialists support workers' rights. Repeal the anti-union laws, guarantee everyone's right to strike and belong to a trade union. Higher education for all who want it, and proper on-the-job training programmes. End YTS — and fund proper jobs for youth at trade union rates. Positive action for women, black people, lesbians and gay men, and people with disabilities.

4. Britain in the World

Yes, for a socialist foreign policy. That means Britain out of NATO, and unilateral nuclear disarmament. No to the bosses' Common Market — yes to a united socialist Europe. Solidarity with workers' struggles, East and West. Open new credit and trade relations with Eastern Europe, China, Cuba and the third world. Stop the exploitation of the third world workers by British monopolies. Britain out of Ireland. Sanctions against South Africa.

5. The Environment

Yes, we want a safe, nuclear-free and acid-rain-free environment. End all nuclear power. Control poisonous emissions from power stations. Stop nitrates in farm fertilisers.

6. Democracy and the Individual

Restore all basic rights undermined by Thatcher. For a **Bill of Rights**, guaranteeing full freedom of association, assembly, publication and demonstration. For a right of reply in the media. Disband Special Branch and the security services. Election of judges and democratic control of the police. Restore unanimous jury verdicts. Close down Britain's Victorian prisons. Full freedom of sexual orientation — repeal Section 28.

Repeal the Poll Tax. Restore its powers and finance to local government.

Full equality for women in every sphere of society: equal pay, equal job and educational opportunities (including massive increases in childcare provision), full equality before the law, and full control over our own fertility. End racism and all immigration laws. Positive action for full economic and social equality for black people.

7. The Consumer and the Community

Yes, we need to protect and enhance the rights of working people as consumers. Prosecute manufacturers of unsafe or unhealthy products. End the irrationality of the capitalist market. An end to 2,000 types of soap powders and 10,000 useless drugs! End monopoly super-profits. Socially useful products which people can afford — especially cheaper housing.

A mass campaigning party? The policy review proposes a big increase in Labour Party membership. But Kinnockism inspires no one. Socialist, anti-capitalist policies can and will — if we present them with conviction and coherence, and link them to support for workers, black people, women, and all sections of the community *in struggle*.

By respecting the right to self-organisation of women, black people, youth and others we can build a stronger, bigger, more democratic Labour Party. By adopting **socialist internationalism** we can make links with and draw inspiration from the struggles of working people all over the world.

These are just a few, basic, anti-capitalist policies which could serve as the basis of a socialist alternative. They offer a way forward from Thatcherism, rather than capitulation to it.

LABOUR BRIEFING

Chesterfield Special

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Get out and ORGANISE!

The second Socialist Conference in Chesterfield this month is potentially one of the most significant political events on the left for many years.

It is a chance to put together a new coalition of forces to bring together people who have found, during the past year, that they have much ground in common.

The Conference must pass one fundamental test. Can it establish a credible Movement for Socialism? Can it challenge the rightward drift and general confusion of the Kinnock Leadership of the Labour Party.

There is a serious trajectory behind Kinnock's policy reviews and his Aims and Values statement: to wipe out the political experiences of the last 20 years, to resume the process of "modernisation" of the labour movement, begun by Gaitskell, and to present Labour candidates to the electorate as the welfare officers of an efficiently managed capitalism.

To the current Labour Leadership, the Thatcher "revolution" is irreversible and unchallengeable. Indeed, they do not wish to threaten in any way the fundamental assumptions presently governing society.

A serious Movement for Socialism must dedicate itself to turning round opinion in the wider labour movement and building support for socialist policies in the working class and amongst all the oppressed.

Here, the Chesterfield Movement will face real problems which can only be overcome with skill and determination.

The most serious of these is that "socialism" is identified by millions of working class people with their experiences under past Labour governments — an almost wholly negative experience over the last 20 years.

Thatcher has now presented the left with new ground on which to fight. The proposals to allow schools to opt out of Local Authority control, to hive off public sector housing, and to introduce a Poll Tax, present opportunities for mass work which the socialist movement must seize with enthusiasm.

This new Movement, which is not a new party, must mount a major political intervention in the trade unions. The basis for this already exists in the physical reality of the Trade Union Solidarity Network.

Two challenges are posed to us:

- the need to convince trade unionists that only a socialist transformation of property relations can solve the issues which are now regarded as being the preserve of collective bargaining alone;
- the need to organise to transform the undemocratic character of all our present trade unions, with their stultifying bureaucracy, lack of vision, and anxiety to defuse and divert any challenge to the power of the state.

By Reg Race
Bolsover CLP

The Chesterfield Movement must also build on the exellent work already done by its Policy Groups. We now need to involve greater numbers of people in the policy discussion process — and to avoid the Fabian trap of having an opinion on everything and believing in nothing!

The Policy Groups — which will report in detail to the Conference — offer us an opportunity to clarify socialist ideas and make them fresh and vital.

It is an opportunity to demonstrate the vigour, relevance, and honesty of socialist solutions to social problems at a time when the official Labour Policy Review seems dedicated solely to making socialism attractive to leader writers of national newspapers.

Their attempt to redefine Socialism in terms of its opposites — share ownership, individualism, profitability, competition, market forces — is doomed to failure. Our counter-proposals — practical, far-reaching, coherent — will be needed more than ever.

But it is the vital link between the development of socialist policies and active campaigning and struggle that will distinguish a successful Movement For Socialism from a sterile intellectual hothouse producing splendid ideas and little else.

The Socialist Conference is the best opportunity for the left in nearly a decade to break out of its organisational ghettoes and challenge the basic assumptions of the rightward drive that has bedevilled the labour movement for the past seven years.

Our movement recognises the current weakness of socialism in Britain, and is therefore both realistic and ambitious in its approach. This realism and ambition must be matched by resources and organisational work.

Last year, in Chesterfield, we demonstrated that the left was alive and kicking. Our task now, in a five year strategy, is to turn the labour movement towards socialism.

In the 1990s the oil revenues will begin to run out and it will become clear that the Thatcher "revolution" was not the triumph of supply-side economics which so many claim it to be, but a consumer boom fuelled by unsustainable tax revenues.

We have our work cut out for us. But make no mistake, the opportunities for socialist politics are very real and will become more so as time reveals the bankruptcy of Thatcher and those who try to ape her in the labour movement.



Nurses, demonstrating on March 5th showed solidarity with the Ford strike. Can Chesterfield cement the links between the left and those in struggle?

Chesterfield Special

Chesterfield and the Benn-Heffer challenge

Both the Chesterfield movement and the Benn-Heffer challenge to the Labour Leadership arose from the same widespread feelings of frustration and fragmentation.

Both express the need for a focus for socialist activity and thought, and for a clear and positive alternative to Kinnock, Willis, and the New Realism.

We have seen struggle after struggle isolated and ultimately defeated. We have seen single issue campaigns rise and fall.

We have seen the anger of millions of working class people turn to despair because it is given no voice, no platform, no strategy.

The Benn-Heffer challenge is about offering that voice, that platform, that strategy. Its message is that there is an alternative to continued division and retreat. It is therefore not a distraction from the Chesterfield movement, but a complement to it.

Tony Benn and Eric Heffer are both deeply committed to the Socialist Conference and its goals. Both have shown in word and deed that a broad-based, forward-looking, flexible movement is by no means incompatible with an intransigent advocacy of socialist principles.

Their record of solidarity and political honesty is so superior to the records of any of their rivals that it is a joke to speak of them in the same breath.

But the challenge to the current Leadership is not just about their own virtues. Nor is it even a simple contest between left and right wing policies. It poses in a necessarily sharp and immediate form the question of Leadership.

This is a question which has vexed many of those involved with Chesterfield, and over which there will be much debate within the Chesterfield movement.

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

The question of Leadership is not simply about electing more capable, more committed individuals to responsible posts in the labour movement — though that would make a refreshing change. It is about an entirely new and different *type* of Leadership: collective, democratic, accountable, far-sighted, lending clarity and purpose to grass-roots struggles, and supplying the links between those struggles.

For better or worse, the unity and direction we need will not come about by sponateneous acts of good will from different quarters. It will come about through a consciously co-ordinated strategy that links a developing socialist programme with a multitude of practical struggles — against the employers, against the state, against injustices and oppressions of all kinds.

Many of the socialist ideas coming out of the Chesterfield movement will receive a sympathetic hearing amongst people who nonetheless consider themselves supporters of the current Leadership — in the interests of a miscalled "realism".

We have to show these people that socialist ideas have no chance of becoming reality as long as the current Leaders remain in power. By standing for the Labour Leadership, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer are forcing people to make a connection between abstract ideas and concrete political practice — and none too soon.

This is why interest in the Benn-Heffer challenge is not confined solely to Labour Party members. To those who have been isolated, who have been left in the lurch by the Labour Leadership, the need for an alternative to that Leadership is pressing.

At the very least, there is a widespread desire to register a protest against the people who have allowed the Tories and their class to claim victory after victory. Such a protest can only enhance the authority of the Chesterfield movement.

It has been said that the Benn-Heffer challenge only serves to mire the left in Labour Party structures and narrow electoralism.

On the contraray, the campaign has given activists in the Labour Party a chance to break out of that groove, to organise around fundamental questions of policy and strategy, and to work hand in hand with activists in the trade unions and community.

As both the candidates have said repeatedly, their challenge is part of an attempt to build a movement for socialism. The true result of that attempt will not be registered in the electoral college in Blackpool — and the vast majority of Benn-Heffer supporters know it.

Those who believe that Leadership is unimportant, who see it as a mere personality-game, should examine the very real effects of the style of Leadership we currently enjoy in the labour movement.

The ineptitude and treachery of the NUS Leadership (aided and abetted by Kinnock, Hattersley, and Prescott) in the current seafarers dispute is only the most recent addition to a depressingly long catalogue.

This misleadership inhibits and obstructs the successful prosecution of struggles at every level. It sews confusion and apathy. It ducks controversial issues and promotes false answers to difficult questions. It loathes democratic debate and seeks to crush dissent.

Unfortunately, it is just not possible simply to circumvent this obstacle. The misleadership will not wither away nor will it retire from the fray of its own accord.

We have to challenge it directly at every turn. Ultimately, our aim should be to replace it entirely. The Benn-Heffer challenge is a step toward building an alternative Leadership, and an opportunity for all those who believe we have something better to offer the working class than New Realism and *Labour Listens.*



The first Socialist Conference in Chesterfield, October 1987

Welcomi beginnin new mo

The recall Socialist Conference is here!

Socialists from inside and outside the Labour Party, from the trade unions, from a multitude of campaigns are converging on Chesterfield.

What do we want from this second weekend gathering? What can we expect to achieve from it?

By Jane Kelly
Peckham CLP

The continued existence of the Conference itself, eight months after the initial meeting, is to be heartily welcomed.

In the current political climate — with increased Tory attacks being met by industrial action (in the NHS, among seafarers and local government workers) and mass campaigns against the Alton Bill and Section 28, the very existence, however fragile, of a movement which seeks to regenerate socialist ideas and activities is an enormous plus.

But if it is to develop into a real movement with wide support, permanent structures — including national and regional committees, and local groups, open and democratic structures — will be needed.

These can provide support and sustenance to struggles as they arise, and make concrete the links between those struggles and our socialist ideas.

Such a movement is not, and cannot be, in the near future either a party or a substitute for the existing organisations of the working class. But it should offer a home to everyone who wants to build an alternative to current right wing direction and leadership of those organisations.

Perhaps it is closest in spirit to the Minority Movement of the late 1920s, a movement which brought together tens of thousands of working people in opposition to the mainstream Leadership of the labour movement.

Of course, back in the 20s, the memory of the victory of the Russian workers was still strong in people's minds. Stalin had not yet been able to crush the democratic ethos of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Now, in Thatcher's Britain, even the very word "socialism" is under attack. And as for "Marxism" — it has never found a friendlly ground in England (though finding an occasional expression in the ideas of Irish and Scots socialists like John Mclenn).

In fact one of the British labour movement's key weaknesses has been its hostility to all varieties of Marxism, and to socialis

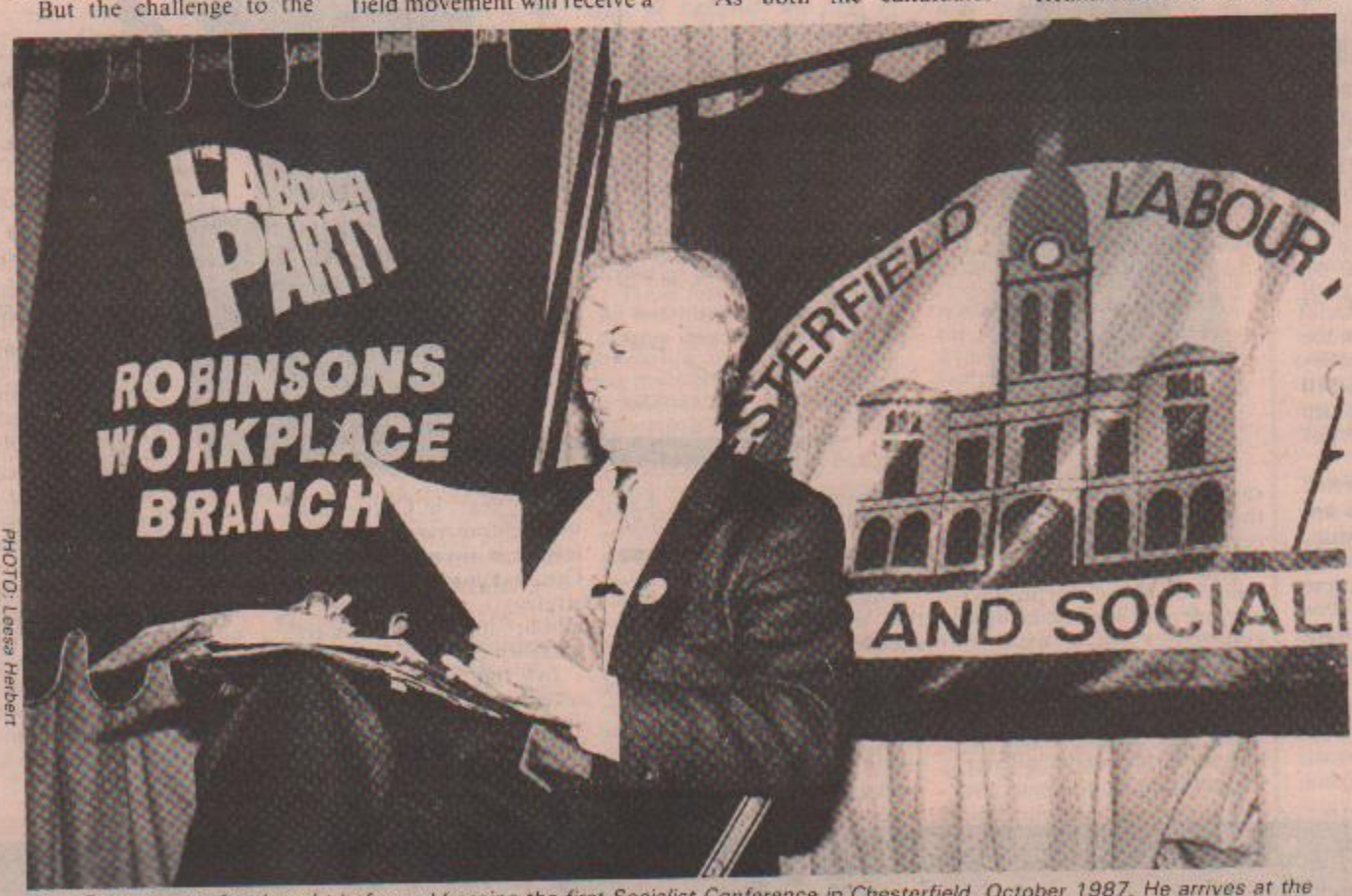


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Tony Benn pauses for thought before addressing the first Socialist Conference in Chesterfield, October 1987. He arrives at the second Conference as a Leadership contender.

Chesterfield Special





PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

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ideas in general.

In bringing together people in struggle and the process of policy development, Chesterfield therefore represents a new opening for the left.

The promise of Chesterfield is that, by fusing theory and practice, by linking active resistance to capitalist attacks with the formulation of real alternatives to them, socialism can reach out and become a driving force to millions of working people.

Occupations

Unlike Labour's Policy Review (*"Labour Listens to the CBI"*), Chesterfield's policy groups should learn from strikes, from occupations, from sit-ins, from campaigns of all kinds; in this way we can develop demands which inform and strengthen our daily struggle.

For all this to become a reality the movement must be democratic and accountable. We cannot afford to model our movement on the existing top-down structures and traditions of the labour movement.

If Chesterfield is to build a real alternative to the rightward-moving forces of New Realism in the Labour Party and the TUC, it must be characterised by democratic debate and decision-making at every level.

Such a democratic, open movement will need the goodwill, honest commitment, and tolerance of all its participants. Groups on the left with narrow sectarian aims should take note of the fragility of the exercise, as well as its necessity.

We appeal to the SWP, *Militant* supporters, the RCP — whose party-building aims have in the past undermined our ability to build a united, democratic movement — to recognise the importance of what we are all trying to do at Chesterfield, and behave accordingly.

If we are to build a movement capable of sustaining real solidarity in the class struggle, if we are to develop demands which answer the needs of that struggle, and help it grow, we cannot afford to misuse this opportunity.

It should not be treated solely as the fertile recruiting ground by those who proclaim themselves "the revolutionary party". Such a party, which would involved hundreds of thousands of activists, does not exist today. And Chesterfield is not the beginning of this kind of party. It is however, the beginning of building an organised left alternative to Kinnock, Willis, & Co. — the beginning of a movement for socialism.

Women for Socialism

You know what you can do with your Red Roses

It is not terribly controversial to list the dreadful attacks made by the Tories on women.

Every aspect of women's lives has been affected by the Victorian values of Thatcher's cabinet.

But what *is* controversial — and, let's face it, more interesting — is to look at the response of the Labour and trade union Leaderships.

By Barbara Green
Islington South Women's Section
Sponsor, Women for Socialism

The Chesterfield Conference and Women for Socialism's part of it provides a space for us to do this.

How many of you have seen Norman Willis or Neil Kinnock speaking in defence of women's rights to abortion and contraception, or on a picket line defending women's jobs?

Well, I seem to remember catching a glimpse of Neil during the last doom-ridden election campaign with "lots" (relatively speaking) of women MPs. Policies were a bit thin on the ground, but the Red Roses were lovely!



PHOTO: Graeme Conkson

FAB campaigns — with £200 of top labour movement support!

And I'm sure that the National Fight Alton's Bill Campaign just could not have managed without the £100 that the TUC donated to the March 19th demo!

The constant and conscious marginalisation of women in the labour movement must be fought and overcome if we are to defeat Thatcher. The Labour Party and trade union Leaderships never really gave much power to women but the little that we won is now under attack again.

The Labour Leadership has its heart set on weakening the Labour Women's Organisation and ensuring that the sort of left policies that came out of it die a quiet death.

But women in the Labour Party continue to fight to defend their organisation and policies. Time and again we learn the same brutal lesson — women need an independent women's movement — based on and in the labour movement, but able to discuss and act independently.

Last year women at Chesterfield pressed home the urgency for women to build a democratic, socialist women's organisation under the name of Women For Socialism.

Since then many women have written in to sponsor Women for Socialism. Some discussion and activities have taken place through the regional Socialist Conferences.

The kind of plans we will be discussing for the future are:

- establishing a women's manifesto to be used in and out of the Labour Party, in particular with the Benn-Heffer campaign;
- trying to organise with black feminists planning a conference in September in Birmingham;
- and having a newsletter to keep women informed of activities and discussions.

At Chesterfield women's issues wil be integrated into as many policy areas as possible. On Saturday lunchtime Women for Socialism will host a meeting of women to discuss future activities and elect a Steering Committee.

Make sure if you are unable to attend Conference you keep in touch by contacting Mandy Moore, Sutton Manor, Polterton Lane, Sutton Scarsdale, Nr. Chesterfield, S44 5UJ.

Trade Union Solidarity Network

Looking for a prominent place for the trade unions

A notable ommission from the many discussion groups formed at last year's Chesterfield was the trade unions.

Nonetheless, the other groups were all concerned with issues that are of great importance to trade unions and their members, who are forcing many of them on to union agendas.

Since then a number of policy working groups have been set up and it is positive to see trade unionism amongst them.

By John Lang
Solidarity Network

A day school took place recently at Sheffield, where many of those present agreed that the Socialist Conference needed much closer links with trade unions. We hope this will be reflected at the reconvened national Conference.

The Solidarity Network has been working alongside the Socialist Conference and trying to bring its message into the unions.

The Network was formed after the miners' and print disputes. Support Groups from Leicester, Oxford, and Tower Hamlets, along with strikers from Silentnight and other disputes decided that the kind of links that had been formed during these struggles should be placed on a more permanent basis.

After a series of planning meetings, a conference was held at Leeds in November 1987, where the Network was officially launched.

Since then, many groups and individuals have affiliated. It has been involved in linking support for campaigns and industrial disputes on both local and national levels.

The Network does not see itself as an alternative to trade unions, but rather as a means of activating and drawing together support within the union movement.

The Network also operates outside the union movement, among the many people within local communities who are often forgotten by the trade union bureaucracy.

If the Socialist Conference is to get its policies across to the wider labour movement, trade unions and their substantial working class membership must be given a more prominent position. The Solidarity Network hopes to be able to assist in this.



Solidarity in the miners' strike ... the Solidarity Network aims to develop this in further struggles

Contact the Trade Union Solidarity Network

John Lang, 74 Kingsland Road, Plaistow, London E13
Tony Richardson, 2 Allin Close, Blackbird Leys, Oxford
Ross Galbraith, 2 Wainegrove Walk, Abbey Rise, Leicester
Andrea Campbell, 12 Shiplake House, Calvert Avenue, London E3

Chesterfield Special

INTERVIEW: HILARY WAINWRIGHT

Creating space for a socialist policy review

HILARY WAINWRIGHT was one of the main organisers of last year's first Socialist Conference — and has remained centrally involved in the activities which sprang from it, including this month's second meeting in Chesterfield. DAVY JONES interviewed Hilary for *Labour Briefing*.

One of the Socialist Conference's main aims has been to establish a set of alternative socialist policies. How much has been achieved in this regard since last year's Conference?
The first Conference only began to air general debates on our major themes — political democracy, the economy and industry, international relations — and we hope that this reconvened Conference will go into these questions in much more depth.

A number of policy groups were set up last year, have been meeting regularly, and have prepared briefing papers which will go out to all Conference participants.

These will be the basis for discussion at the reconvened Conference. We hope we can get some real work done — especially on Saturday.

The point of this policy work is not specifically to provide policies for a future Labour government, but policies which can be carried into trade unions to influence bargaining positions, to support campaigns and struggles, as well as offering an alternative to the things coming out of Labour's official policy review and, of course, to Thatcherism itself.

What's the status of the Aims and Objectives statement which will be submitted to the Conference?
This document is a very basic summary of what we think everyone coming to Chesterfield has in common.

It tries to distinguish the Socialist Conference from a parliamentarist approach to socialism, for example, or from an acceptance of the mixed economy. It signals clearly a very different direction from that being taken by the current Labour Leadership.

The Aims and Objectives document seems to draw the line between the "hard left" inside and outside the Labour Party and the people to our right. Is this line static? Can it change in response to events?
First, I don't find the "hard left" label useful. It's been put on a section of the left by people hostile to it in order to narrow it down.

The ideas and principles in the Aims and Objectives Statement will actually be supported by many people who, in the practice, in struggle, are on the same side as many people who are called "hard left", but wouldn't think of themselves that way.

Of course, over time, the basic policies that unite the Socialist Conference will develop and change — because events in society raise new problems that we haven't tackled yet. Each moment in history requires us to apply our basic principles in ways that may lead to new debates and sometimes divisions.

I hope the Socialist Conference will operate in a way which will minimise false polarisations, and will lead to positive resolutions of necessary debates.

Many people on the left are suspicious of policy reviews, fearing that they are a codeword for a move to the right. On some crucial questions we do have basic answers — getting out of NATO, taking control of the economy — and some people are nervous that this process of policy review will deny these basic answers. How would you allay their fears?
The question arises from the problems of the Labour Party and of being in the Labour Party, simply because it's a Party that unites people with fundamentally different views.

With the right invariably in the Leadership, the left will always feel that their fundamentals are under attack. Therefore, it's got into the habit of suspecting all policy reviews.

But the point of Chesterfield is to create some space independent of the Labour Party, though not ignoring it, and give the left the opportunity to set its own agenda rather than always allowing it to be set by attacks from the right.

It gives us the chance to spend our energies *applying* our fundamental principles to the problems of present day capitalist society.

For example, the international character of the economy requires new ways of applying the principle of social ownership, which related in the past largely to nation states.

As for allaying fears, people have got to decide whether they can trust other socialists. Trust is always developed in practice. A lot of the trust involved in Chesterfield comes from the experience of the miners' strike and the unity that it created on the left.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Health workers demonstrating on March 5th.

A possible danger is that the policy groups will operate separately from other activity. One wing of the movement goes off and organises solidarity and campaigning and the other sits in rooms and develops policies. How do we ensure that those two sides of our struggle are integrated?
All our policy work should start from a recognition that the new ideas and insights which make up socialist policy come from people with a vested interest in that policy. As we've seen with the Lucas Aerospace or GLC Popular Planning experience, socialist policy-making has got to be a process of listening and struggle.

It's *not* a *Labour Listens* affair in empty halls at 10am in front of television cameras, but listening to people in the course of struggle. Socialist ideas come from action as well as reflection.

The Socialist Conference should give people confidence in putting forward ideas. After all, resistance always presupposes some implicit notion of an alternative, a belief that things can be different.

Capitalism induces a sense of hopelessness and inferiority as a result of which poeple don't articulate those alternatives. There's a confidence-building aspect of Chesterfield which shouldn't be underestimated.

How then would you contrast the Socialist Conference policy groups to the Labour Party's policy review and *Labour Listens*?
We respect working class people far more than *Labour Listens* because we actually *participate* with people. A lot of the ideas being raised by our health policy group came out of the campaigns waged by nurses and healthworkers in the last year.

Labour Listens has patronised people — and tried to con them. Their views haven't beeen fed into the actual policy work.

In contrast, the involvement of the Socialist Conference in campaigns and struggles will be the impetus for much of our policy-making.

[redacted]

SOCIALIST CONFERENCE IN CHESTERFIELD
FRINGE MEETING
Labour Briefing and the Politics of Leadership



Sharon Atkin
Self-organisation and the struggle for socialism

Mandy Mudd
Fighting the witch-hunt and fighting for socialism

John Wilton
The Benn-Heffer Campaign; building a socialist current in the Labour Party

Chair
Mike Marqusee
***Labour Briefing* Editorial Board**

Saturday June 11th
6.15-7.30
Chesterfield Technical College

Briefing bumper badges offer!

Briefing's bumper "Benn-Heffer — that's the ticket!" badges are going like hot cakes!

Bulk orders have been taken by *Briefing* supporters groups, Benn-Heffer Campaign groups, and trade union branches.

At 1½ inches, and in three colours (red, yellow and black on white) they offer a large, easily recognisable badge. As many other Benn-Heffer supporters have already realised — there's no better way to spread the word!

A "That's the Ticket" badge is now easily the most valued fashion accessary at most labour movement events!

And our bulk order rates mean that by ordering quantities of this easily saleable badge to sell, you can raise money to fund your Benn-Heffer campaign whilst spreading the campaign message.

Send your name, address and order to B. Griffiths, 11 Fremont St, London E9. Please include a cheque or postal order made payable to Labour Briefing. (Stamps will be accepted in payment for a single badge).

Recommended Retail Price: 35p
Bulk Order Rates:
Single badge: 35p
20 badges: £6
50 badges: £13
100 badges: £23
200 badges: £40

Tory collapse? Or another lost opportunity?

The last few months have seen the Tories lurching from crisis to crisis.

On the NHS, the Poll Tax, the Social Security changes, and the Budget Thatcher has faced mass indignation.

On top of this has come the well-publicised Lawson/Thatcher disagreement over interest and exchange rates.

But do Thatcher's retreats on the NHS and Social Security (minor though they are), and the backbench Tory revolt on the Poll Tax, herald the imminent collapse of Thatcherite Toryism?

A clue to the answer came in the local government elections on May 5th. Overall the Tories fared badly and Labour did well.

But Labour's success was the result of an anti-Tory vote (boosted by Thatcher's recent problems) linked to Council Tenants' fears over the Housing Bill.

In reality, very few voters in the local elections voted Labour for positive reasons. Let's face it, they were not presented with any positive Labour policies, so they could hardly vote for them!

A further clue to the real state of affairs can be found in the opinion polls. In the June 1987 General Election the Tories polled 42%, Labour 32%, and the Alliance 22%. The opinion polls now give the Tories 42%, Labour 40%, the SLD 8%, and the SDP 6%.

Even allowing for the vagaries of opinion polls this still shows Labour's increased poll rating has come entirely from the Alliance collapse. Tory support has held up, despite recent disasters.

In what was generally considered a poor local election result for the Tories, they still managed to win around 38% of the national vote, just 4% below their opinion poll rating. Bear in mind, they usually poll *less* well in local than in General Elections.

Labour's local election national vote share of 41%, just 1% above the Party's opinion poll rating, is hardly likely to provide a landslide Labour victory in a general election.

By John Wilton
Birmingham Edgbaston CLP

The Tory collapse does not look imminent. Nor is it likely to become a reality until Labour starts to argue for a positive socialist alternative to Thatcher.

Their requires not only socialist policies, but a socialist Leadership prepared to argue for them at every opportunity — inside and outside Parliament.

Kinnock's apologetic version of social democracy, with its non-existent policies, offers no alternative to anything, let alone Thatcher. It offers no hope to the millions suffering under Thatcher.

The Kinnock/Hattersley "dream ticket" has turned into a nightmare. Having been handed a golden opportunity a couple of years ago over Westland — with the Tories in disarray and two Cabinet Ministers resigning, they still allowed Thatcher to be re-elected with a 100 seat majority.

Now, with the Tories again in disarray, Kinnock and Hattersley are still offering no positive socialist alternative and are about to let Thatcher off the hook again. They are hamstrung by their belief that the House of Commons is the centre of "real life" and the focus of ordinary people's attention.

The Tories' support will not collapse until we have a Labour Leadership that understands it cannot win by fighting the Tories on their own ground and by their rules.



PHOTO Graeme Cookson

Is Thatcher slipping?

What goes on in the House of Commons, and what the *Times* political corespondent thinks about it, may seem important to Kinnock, but to the millions struggling to make ends meet what matters is the daily impact of Thatcherism — and how to resist it.

The best way to fight the Tories is on our ground, with our rules. It means standing on picket lines with health workers, seafarers, and others.

It means arguing for non-payment of the Poll Tax, and for Labour Councils to refuse to collect it. It means arguing for non-compliance with Tory laws, including the infamous Section 28.

After all, it wasn't Kinnock and his cronies, with their "brilliant" debating skills on display in the House of Commons who first forced Thatcher to back down on the NHS. It was action taken by the Manchester nurses!

The Tories may have had a few crises lately, but they can still come up with policy ideas to benefit their class — whether it's Norman Tebbit and Michael Heseltine manoeuvering for the abolition of ILEA, or Cecil Parkinson planning the privatisation of the coal industry.

If we are to demolish the Tories once and for all we need socialist counter-proposals. These will come through our class experiences in struggle and solidarity.

And, let's face it, there is precious little of that in the House of Commons these days.

OBITUARY

A pioneer of British Trotskyism

Reg Groves (1908-1988), one of the founders of British Trotskyism, died in the middle of May.

He first entered political life in the Christian Socialist movement in the Catholic Crusade of Conrad Noel and joined Westminster ILP in the mid 20s.

He left the ILP and joined the Communist Party in South London.

He became Assistant Organiser of the London District of the Communist Party and was the first writer of the *Workers Notebook* column when the *Daily Worker* was set up in 1930.

By AL RICHARDSON

He early on showed his knowledge of the history of the labour movement and in March 1930 was invited by Riazonov to work with him on the Collected Works of Marx and Engels at the Marx/Engels Institute in Moscow.

In 1932 he led the split of the Balham Group from the Communist Party to join the Trotskyist movement and founded the Communist League, the first real Trotskyist organisation in Britain.

At the end of 1933 the Group split, the majority following Groves, refusing to enter the ILP as advised by Trotsky.

In 1934 they joined the Labour Party and Groves became Chairman of the London District of the Socialist League, and a member of its Executive in 1935.

In 1937 Groves broke his links with the Trotskyist movement and in 1938 was selected to fight the famous Aylesbury by-election, where the Communist Party supported the Liberal candidate against him and called him "a friend of Franco".

Among his writings are: *We Shall Rise Again*, a history of the Chartists; *Rebels Oak*, a history of Kett's rebellion; *The Peasants Revolt, 1381* (with Phillip Lindsey); *Sharpen the Sickle*, the history of the Farmworkers Union; *Seed Time and Harvest*; *The Strange Case of Victor Grayson*; *The Balham Group*; and *Conrad Noel and the Thaxted Movement*.

He was a particular supporter of the rights of the rural working class and was always included on the delegation of the Farmworkers Union to the commemoration of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

Although he returned to his religious convictions, his pioneer work for Trotskyism in Britain will never be forgotten and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Speculum: a midwife's musings

Breastfeeding problems... and how to solve them

I make no apology for continuing my discussion on breastfeeding, since I am firmly convinced that our health depends on the food we eat!

I recently looked after a woman who was in premature labour with twins. I asked her if she intended to breastfeed them.

She gave me a pitying look and said, *"no, I'm not stupid."*

I'm sorry, but I think she *is* stupid to count it out. Premature babies in particular benefit from their mother's milk.

I know one woman who successfully breastfed her *two* sets of twins. She is Jenny Stables, author of *A Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding* — a book I highly recommend.

I also recall a mother of three who had twins. She successfully breastfed them with no fuss, no problems, and no top-up bottle feeds. She just trusted her body to produce the milk and, of course, it did.

The secret, if secret it is, is that the more often you put a baby to the breast, the more milk you make. It's as simple as that.

By TESS KEWLEY SRN, SCM

The main reason women give for abandoning breastfeeding is **"insufficient milk"**. The reality is that women are totally unprepared by the medical establishment for the constant demands which the baby will make for milk.

Breastfed babies go to the breast about eight to 12 times in each 24 hour period (less during the night). However, baby books tend to paint a rosy picture of four hourly feeding regimes, where the baby conveniently falls asleep between feeds.

When a woman seeks advice from her Health Visitor, instead of reassuring her that her baby's behaviour is normal, the majority of Health Visitors suggest she give a bottle or two.

This reduces the time spent at the breast, diminishes the woman's confidence in herself, and diminishes the milk supply until it eventually dries up.

Sore nipples are the second reason why women abandon breastfeeding. Advice on this is first that there is no need to "prepare" your breasts with creams, etc., ante-natally.

If you have flat or inverted nipples, shells should be worn. They really can help to "bring out" flat nipples. Ask your midwife for advice about when to wear them.

Sore

However, sore nipples can happen to any woman, whatever the size or shape of her breasts and nipples. I estimate about 80% of women suffer with this problem, some to the extent that the nipples bleed, and each feed is a nightmare. I was one of the lucky 20%!

It seems to me that correct latching-on of the baby to the breast is the essential step in avoiding sore nipples. You *must* bring the baby to the breast, and never strain to place a nipple in a baby's mouth.

The baby should be close to you, supported on a pillow, and you should be sitting in a low armchair with your feet firmly on the ground, leaning slightly forward.

Rooting

Don't bother to try to feed a sleepy baby. Wait until the child is really rooting for a feed; then hold the baby firmly close to your body and offer the breast.

At first you will need the assistance of an experienced midwife or Breastfeeding Counsellor to check that you've got the baby in the right place. But most babies learn to spot a nipple at 100 yards by the time they're a week old, and it's surprising how quickly you get used to handling your baby.

Don't hesitate to enlist the help of a Counsellor if you have trouble. Ring **01 778 4769** for the number of your nearest one.

Don't use Rotersept spray. It's only diluted Savlon, and it costs the earth. Also, it destroys the natural flora on the nipples, and actually *causes* sore nipples, whatever the tin says.

Hydrous ointment B.P. (from your Chemist) is just as effective. Both Kamillosan and Calendula ointments are good, too, and can be used for nappy rash if you don't finish the tube up on your breasts.

Feeds

None of these creams need to be washed off prior to feeds, and can be applied as many times a day as you wish.

If **cracked nipples** are a real problem, Calendula Mother Tincture works like magic.

Resting sore or cracked nipples does *not* help them to heal. You should continue to feed as before. Rubbing your nipples with an ice cube just before you feed acts as a local anaesthetic and dulls the initial excruciating pain.

Take each day as it comes, and realise that sore nipples sometimes take up to a month to feel better — and that they will feel better each day as you persevere.

If your nipples are bleeding, you should continue to put the baby to the breast. The blood will not harm the baby.

There are women who find the whole idea of breastfeeding repugnant. It is not up to individual women to feel guilty about this — since, I believe, it is society's fault that women are taught poor body images.

A really useful book about breastfeeding is *Breast is Best* by Penny and Andrew Stanway. I recommend all pregnant women to read it before deciding how they are going to feed their babies.

I could go on and on about breastfeeding but just to wind up, perhaps I can remind women that they *must* trust the baby, and the baby only. Clocks have no place in the successful establishment of breastfeeding. Neither have most Health Visitors!

Letters

Raise *your* morale at the...

Labour Briefing AGM

a chance to debate, discuss — and organise!

The Briefing AGM: to build a non-sectarian, united, democratic left

Saturday, July 2nd.

Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth Street (off Grays Inn Road), London. Near King's Cross Station.

Details of Arrangements:

Creche: Available on advance booking only (we want the creche participants to enjoy themselves as much as the AGM-goers, so we want to plan for the exact numbers). Phone Paula Watson on 638 5308.

Refreshments: will be on sale all day (tea, coffee, snacks)

Pooled fare: we will operate a pooled fare, so that comrades from outside London are encouraged to attend!

Bookstall available at the meeting

Signer: We have *not* booked a signer. If you would like to attend and would like us to book a signer, please ring 01 733 7016 as soon as possible

Access: The Venue is groundfloor, and easily wheelchair accessible. There is adjacent car-parking which we can reserve for you with notice. A detailed access report will be printed next issue, after we have carried out a site inspection. For further details please ring 01 733 7016.

10.00am Registration
£5 waged, £2 unwaged (payable on the day). Anyone interested in *Labour Briefing* is welcome to come along, listen and participate. Voting is open to *Briefing* Supporters. Supporters cards for 500 Club members will be available for collection on the day. 1988 Supporters Cards can also be purchased on the day (£10 waged, £3 unwaged).

10.30am Introduction
The Tradition of Briefing — Graham Bash

11.00-12.30 The Year Ahead: Briefing's Role
Open discussion. A paper to introduce the subject will be published in the next issue of Briefing. It will be introduced by Jane Kelly and Mike Marqusee. Amendments to the paper are *welcome* and will be fully debated. They can be submitted beforehand or on the day — but please try to submit or bring 200 copies!

12.30-1.30 Caucuses
A chance for women, lesbian and gay, youth and student, and black Briefing supporters to meet together and discuss ideas and activities.

1.30-2.30 Lunch

2.30-3.30 Workshops
Local Briefing Groups
How and why to start up or build a local group. A chance to share frustrations, ideas, gimmicks, etc.

The Paper
How is the paper put together? How can you contribute to it? How can we strengthen links between the paper and local groups? A chance to complain about the paper, make suggestions, and get involved.

International
A session with Briefing activists in various international campaigns. How can Briefing improve its coverage of and participation in international solidarity movements? How can local groups get involved in these movements?

Trade Unions
A chance for Briefing supporters in various trade unions to discuss what they're doing. Building the Solidarity Network — and building Briefing and/or left currents in individual unions.

The Labour Party
How can activists deal with the LCC, the New Realism, the Rampant Right, etc. How to *survive* in Kinnock's Party — and to what end? A chance to air a list of grievances — and share practical remedies.

3.30-4.00 Reports
From Caucuses, and workshops. Voting on resolutions. Election of Steering Committee for next year. Interested in standing? Don't be Bashful (except Graham). Find out more in the next issue of Briefing.

4.00-4.30 Tea Break

4.30-5.30 Rally for Benn-Heffer
With Jeremy Corbyn, Martha Osamor, Sharon Atkin, Mandy Mudd (invited).

Periscope



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

Kim Philby: a product of the establishment

Kim Philby, along with Blake, Burgess, Maclean and Blunt, devastated Britain's Intelligence service.

With each succeeding exposure of their role as highly placed agents of the KGB, in the very nerve centre of Britain's espionage and counter-espionage network, so did the credibility of the system totter and founder.

Even today, what were described in MI6 as the "horrors" have not gone away, as "informed" leaks insist that former spy chief Sir Roger Hollis was the KGB's top mole.

The establishment could never forgive Philby. He demonstrated to an incredulous world that where incompetence and stupidity were concerned, British Intelligence bowed the knee to no one!

The "old-boy network" had run the show, deciding the promotions and determining the postings. Then, not out of loyalty, but from sheer blinkered class obstinacy, they had refused to countenance the idea that chaps born in the right class and educated in the right places could ever let the side down.

Ironically it was Philby's background and class position that perfectly prepared him for the role he played. The intelligentsia in Britain, having no independent class position of its own, in its great majority identified its interests with those of the bourgeoisie.

They had gone out from Oxbridge, therefore, to run the state and its empire — privileged and well paid, but nevertheless still servants to their ruling class masters.

By the early 30s a number of intellectuals had become less confident about their own ruling class. The capitalist world was gripped by slump, and in Germany Hitler and his Nazis were in power. New solutions were apparently needed, and to some the USSR appeared as one such solution.

For the Kim Philbys, Stalinism appeared attractive. It held state power. It commanded the resources provided by such power. What's more, it dealt in the politics of "realism" and had by then dropped all that nonsense about world revolution and workers' democracy.

Having been nurtured and trained to be functionaries and advisors to their own rulers, Philby, Burgess, Blunt and others never entertained the idea that the working class constituted an agency for social change.

For them, power resided with those who ruled, and the rulers were the only ones who could change things. Having grown disillusioned with their masters at home, it did not need a change of outlook or personality to transfer their allegiances to the new power of Stalinism.

Philby was hardly a proletarian revolutionary but we do have some things to be grateful to him for. His "betrayal" of the US and British backed secret invasion of Albania led to the deaths of many state agents. I suppose we should chalk that as one up in the fight against terrorism.

The secrets about the USA and UK nuclear plans that he and his friends told the Russians did nothing but good, and almost certainly meant that we could sleep in our beds a little more safely at night.

The more the secrets of our ruling class are exposed, the more of their agents who have their "cover blown", the more they get in crisis and that can only be to the common weal.

True enough Kim Philby was no revolutionary socialist, but he did make life nasty and uncomfortable for our class enemies. That's not such a bad epitaph to take with you.

Bob Pennington

OOPS!
The telephone number we published for SERA — the Socialist Environment and Resources Centre — last *issue was mysteriously garbled. So let's try again.*
Contact SERA at 26 Underwood Street, London N1, tel. 01 490 0240.

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Briefing Editorial Board:
Next meetings: Thursday June 9th, Thursday June 16th.
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This week's winner

It took Neville a record *nine* invalid random numbers (a number greater than 500, or an empty share number) to arrive at a paid up share — no. 473. It had to happen one day: it's Graham Bash.

Book Review

New forces, old faces



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Ralph Miliband, co-editor of Socialist Register, speaks to the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield, October 1987

Socialist Register 1988: Problems of Socialist Renewal East and West, **Edited by Ralph Miliband, Leo Panitch and John Saville, *Merlin Press*, £7.95**

By Dave Palmer
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

The dialectic of history — as any armchair Marxist can tell you — is full of surprises.

One of the most distressing of these, on the 20th anniversary of the French "events", is the rise of a far right mass movement and the continued hegemony of Mitterrand's "Euro-socialism" in France.

In contrast, in the two great arbiters in the world polarity of unfreee socialism and "eternal" capitalism — the Soviet Union and the USA — the ice is finally beginning to crack.

Are we at last witnessing the real implications of the Tet Offensive and the Prague Spring?

Within the left, these developments are reflected by "Gorbymania" and "Jacksonitis". Whatever else may happen, something very important is now presaged: the return to the world political stage of these two dormant giants — the Soviet and US working classes.

This year's *Socialist Register* attempts to address the rapidly changing world situation. Its primary concern is the effect of the Gorbachev reforms on "the renewal and advance in socialist direction" both East and West.

Five out of the 15 articles are on Glasnost, and only two on US politics (no doubt it would contain more if it had been published later).

Decline

Other articles on Nicaraguan land reform, the continued decline of the French CP (hurrah!) and British working class fiction are included for no particular reason. Coherence has always been a problem with the *Socialist Register*.

The introductions try to impose a unifying theme on what is usually a rather heterogeneous collection. Making a break with this tradition, and concentrating, for example, on Gorbachevism might have been a more fruitful approach.

Frankly, the introduction by our august trio could have been written in their collective sleep. This is not to say that it's bad; it's just that after 15-20 years of very similar introductions their approach has become overfamiliar.

How many more times do you want to read them on the crises of European social democracy and the Communist Parties? It makes me want to scream. Why don't they try coming up with a few more specific answers for a change?

K.S. Karol's article assesses changes in the Soviet Union from much the same pro-Gorbachev stance as the editors. Karol knows the Soviet Union well, particularly its cultural life, and is as usual worth reading.

He sees Gorbachev as a sort of Soviet "Roosevelt" introducing a socialist New Deal for the Soviet working class. (Much more interesting by Karol is his autobiography, *Solik*, about his wartime experiences as a Polish Jewish refugee in the Soviet Union).

Prescient

Politically more acute is David Mandel's prescient and well-written account of the likely limits of "perstroika", its consequences for the Soviet working class, and the intra-bureaucratic "crisis of the top" that is certain to ensue.

On the US, Vicente Navarro analyses the Rainbow Coalition and attacks the notion that it is a vehicle for 'the new social movements" (as claimed by many of its own supporters). Rather, he sees it as a *class based alignment*.

Elsewhere, Les Panitch considers once again the components, history and current isolation of the "Bennite" Labour left. I found his recent book *Working Class Politics in Crisis, (Verso)*, disappointingly inconclusive.

Worthy

This article seems more to the point. He sees the hard left's worthy attempt to transform the Labour Party foundering on the Party's sheer irreformability.

With his co-editors he looks to the formation of a mass socialist, albeit reformist, party in Britain — the vehicle, of course, being the Chesterfield process.

His conclusion is that the Labour left's "democratic project" should now "concentrate less on reforming the Labour Party and more on building a long-term independent campaign for a democratic socialism that transcends the limits of Parliamentary paternalism."

Will it work? we ask ourselves. Can we take hours and hours of SWP, RCP and/or other hacks? Have a good read, meanwhile — and come armed for the fray!

Book Review

Remembering a mass murder of gays

The Pink Triange, by **Richard Plant, *Mainstream Press*. £9.95**

By PETER TATCHELL

"We must exterminate these people root and branch."

These words, spoken by the head of the Gestapo, Heinrich Himmler, sum up the Nazi plan for a "final solution" to the "homosexual problem."

The mass murder of gay people by the Third Reich was not an incidental by-product of Hitlerism, but an integral part of Nazi policies.

The creation of an Aryan master race demanded the eradication of all "genetic inferiors" which in fascist eyes included Jews, homosexuals, criminals, gypsies, and people with learning disabilities.

Himmler was alarmed at Germany's declining birth rate. Though this was largely due to the loss of over a million men in the First World War, Himmler put much of the blame on the country's estimated two million homosexuals.

"If this vice continues," he warned, *"it will be the end of Germany."*

Praising the ancient Teutonic practice of drowning homosexuals in bogs, he went on to brand gay people as *"sexual saboteurs"* and justified the Nazi genocide policy as *"the extermination of abnormal existence."*

Long before they came to power, fascist thugs had terrorised the homosexual rights movement and even attempted the assassination of its leader, Dr Magnus Hirschfeld.

Within little more than a month of Hitler assuming office in 1933, gay political organisations were banned and many gay leaders were arrested.

Soon afterwards, gay bars were closed and Dr Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science was ransacked and burned to the ground.

Before the year was out, the first homosexuals were being deported to the new concentration camps at Dachau and Fuhlsbuttel.

In October 1934, Himmler set up a special SS department to combat homosexuality and ordered local police to draw up "pink lists" of men known or suspected of being homosexual.

Based on this information — which was gathered from seized medical records, lists of subscribers to gay magazines, membership rolls of gay clubs, and by the torture of known homosexuals to get the names of others — the Gestapo launched its first mass round up of homosexuals.

By this time, Himmler had become totally obsessed with the erasure of every trace of homosexuality from the German *Volk*.

In 1935 sweeping new anti-gay laws were enacted. Homosexual offences, the new laws decreed, did not actually have to be committed to be punishable. Intent to commit such offences was deemed to be criminal in itself.

Men were interned for writing love letters to men or "glancing lewdly" at other males. In one infamous case, a man was arrested after he had been watching a young couple make love in a park, because the Gestapo claimed that he had been observing the actions of the male partner with greater interest — and this was proof of homosexual desire!

According to official Nazi records, 63,000 German homosexuals, including 4,000 juveniles, were sentenced between 1933-44. This figure does *not* include those who were simply seized and shipped off to the concentration camps without legal formalities.

Nor does it take into account people who were sent to prison for other "crimes" and then transferred to the camps on the grounds of their homosexuality; nor the significant numbers of homosexuals imprisoned in Nazi-occupied territories.

The true number of gay people sent to the camps is probably well in excess of 100,000.

For gay inmates, life behind barbed-wire was a double nightmare. They were the lowest of the low, often treated even worse than the Jews. As well as being maltreated and sometimes raped by the guards, they tended to be assigned to the dirtiest, hardest, and most degrading tasks. As if this wasn't bad enough, they faced abuse and brutality from other prisoners.

The mortality rate for gay inmates was higher than for any other group.

All this and much more is documented in Richard Plant's new book. This scholarly volume illustrates the link between Nazi racism and homophobia, drawing on interviews with gay concentration camp survivors and the contents of personal diaries and official Nazi documents never before translated from the German.

Plant brings to light many previously unknown facts:

- that towards the end of the war the increasingly desperate Nazis allowed some homosexuals out of the camps to work in the arms factories, providing they first agreed to castration;
- that Nazi "doctors" performed hideous medical experiments on gay prisoners in Buchenwald;
- that the guards at Camp Butzow rewarded male inmates with a bottle of schnapps for every lesbian prisoner they raped.

This books powerfully reinforces the old exhortation: *Never Again!* Read it!

Postscript: The Nazi anti-homosexual laws remained on the statute books in West Germany until 1969. Unlike other concentration camp prisoners, gay ex-inmates have to this day been refused compensation payments for their suffering.

A Prayer for the Dying

Micky Rourke condemns anti-Irish film

The recent film *A Prayer for the Dying* has been condemned by its leading actor Micky Rourke and its director Mike Hodges.

They claim that the film has been edited to give a distorted and stereotyped view of the situation in Northern Ireland and the Irish Nationalist cause.

"Director Mike Hodges and I have publicly disassociated ourselves from the film," said Rourke. *"It is not the film I agreed to make or wanted to make.*

"I believe the politics of the subject matter intimidated the producer, Sam Goldwyn, who removed the footage of my character that contained statements sympathetic to the Irish nationalist cause. By eliminating the motivational wellsprings of the main character the film was gutted of meaning.

*"**Prayer** has been a critical and commercial failure. I don't understand why it was selected for the British Film Festival.*

"As a concerned Irish American Catholic I wholeheartedly support the Troops Out Movement and all efforts designed to assure equal human and civil rights for all citizens of Northern Ireland, especially the MacBride Principles.

"There is no place in Ireland for British troops or second class citizens."

International Briefing

INTERVIEW: Tseko Simon Nkoli

On trial for treason

PETER TATCHELL interviews the gay anti-apartheid activist, TSEKO SIMON NKOLI, who faces the death penalty in the Delmas Treason Trial in South Africa — a trial which has already dragged on for over two years.



The Delmas Treason Trial defendants; Simon Nkoli bottom row, right

Can you tell us about your family background and childhood?
I was born in Soweto in 1959.

Most of my childhood was spent on a farm south of Johannesburg in the Heilbron district of the Orange Free State. I had to walk 15km to and from school and there were continuous problems trying to find enough money to pay the school fees.

Because they could not find work in Heilbron, both my mother and stepfather moved to Sebokeng in the mid-1960s and I joined them in 1971.

Life at home was hard. My stepfather was a heavy drinker. The person with whom our family lodged, a Mr Sekhamane, beat me frequently.

On one occasion, things got so bad that I ran away from home and stayed in Johannesburg for a week with a white man who had given me a lift when I was hitch-hiking.

When did you begin to become politically aware?
While I was at school I realised that I was not getting an education equal to white students. Black education was very poor and we did not have enough facilities, especially for subjects like science. We also experienced problems like low standards of teaching and excessive corporal punishment.

There were no student organisations at our school to deal with these problems. On many occasions I found myself singled out for particular punishment, which included being flogged for petty things like smiling during class.

In 1976, when I was in Standard 8, the language issue arose. Afrikaans was compulsorily introduced as the medium of instruction and it was very difficult to master.

We read in the papers that other schools, mainly in Soweto, were protesting against Afrikaans. So we also started complaining.

In 1980, I finished high school and began studying at the Commercial College in Johannesburg.

That year I joined the Vaal Branch of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). Our main aim was to strive for a free and equal education for all students in South Africa. That same year, I also started attending and speaking at anti-apartheid meetings.

In October 1980, the first executive committee of the Vaal branch of COSAS was elected. Gcina Malindi, a co-accused in my trial, became chairperson and I became general secretary.

Among the things that COSAS did were to create centres for adult education and organise commemoration services for those who died in the Soweto and Sharpeville massacres. Later, COSAS was declared illegal by the government.

What did you do after you left college?
I worked as a co-ordinator of the Education Support Programme of the South African Institute of Race Relations.

I also got involved in the Detainees Support Committee which was set up to help political prisoners and their families, and in the Rowntree Support Committee which was established to aid people sacked form the Rowntree factory during the big strike there.

When did you first realise you were gay.
1980 was a year of crisis in my personal life. Although I had realised that I was gay in 1978, I didn't come out till 1980 and the pressures that I came under drove me to attempt suicide.

How did you first get involved with the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA)?
I joined GASA in April 1983. It was supposed to be a non-racial organisation. But soon after I joined I noticed that there were few blacks in the organisations and they felt very isolated.

I decided that we needed a special group within GASA which would bring together black and white gay people. I wrote an article in the newspapers publicising my proposal and inviting people to an inaugural meeting.

In September 1983, 54 black gays and 18 white gays came together to set up a working committee for the establishment of a multi-racial gay organisation. This was eventually launched on May 31st 1984 as the Saturday Group and I became the co-ordinator.

What were the circumstances leading up to your arrest?
On September 3rd 1984, the Vaal Civic Association — which is affiliated to the country's main legal anti-apartheid grouping, the United Democratic Front — organised a "stay away" from work and schools. It also held a march to protest against the government-imposed rent increases.

Initially the march was peaceful. However, after some unruly elements created trouble, the police moved in to disperse the protestors. There was a lot of shooting by the police. It was during this violence that an anti-apartheid activist and close friend of mine, Joseph Sithole, was killed.

When I attempted to attend his funeral on September 23d I was arrested as soon as I entered the churchyard. By the end of that day, more than 900 mourners were seized by the police. Most of them were charged with attending an illegal meeting.

Were you surprised when the police arrested you?
I did not even suspect that the police might be looking for me. I had a feeling that they would probably arrest some people after the protests of September 3rd 1984, but I certainly didn't figure that I'd be amongst those who would be picked up.

The only thing I did was to take part in the protest march against the rent increases. I did this because I wanted to associate myself with the people of the Vaal region, since I had lived there much of my life and my mother, and other relatives and friends, still live there.

> *"The struggle for lesbian and gay rights is an inseparable part of the struggle for the human rights of all South Africans."*
> **Tseko Simon Nkoli**

What happened when you were arrested?
I was detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. This Act is one of South Africa's harshest laws. It is designed to repress the political opponents of apartheid.

Under this Act, the security police can detain a person and interrogate them for up to 180 days without charge. After 180 days are up, the government can renew the detention order for another 180 days.

So what often happens is indefinite detemion without trial. People can be held for more than two years before being charged. Sometimes people are detained and never charged. They simply get released after a couple of years and there's nothing they can do to get compensation for their imprisonment.

What are the charges against you?
The main charges are of subversion, terrorism, murder, and furthering the aims of the outlawed African National Congress. If found guilty, we could face execution.

The state prosecution alleges that at a meeting convened by organisations affiliated to the United Demcoratic Front in the Vaal region, some of us mobilised and incited people against the government-imposed community Councillors in the black townships. It is alleged that our action led to the murder of five of those Councillors.

It is claimed that I attended the inaugural meeting of the anti-apartheid Vaal Civic Association in 1983 and that I spoke at this meeting on behalf of the banned student organisation COSAS.

It is alleged that in my speech I stirred up the people to hatred and violence against the community Councillors. In fact, I did not attend that meeting because on that day my lover had been involved in a car accident and I was in Johannesburg with him.

In court, I freely admitted that I participated in the protest march on September 3rd, but I denied all the other accusations.

How did GASA react to your arrest and imprisonment?
At the time of my arrest, I often wondered whether they had done anything to support me. In fact, I received no support or communication from GASA from the moment of my arrest and detention, through to the trial itself. Even now, since my release from prison on bail, GASA has not contacted me.

What were conditions like in prison?
Prior to being released on bail in June 1987 I had been held in prison for a total of 33 months. Nine of those months were spent in solitary confinement. It was terrible.

Once I was out of solitary confinement, I was allowed one visitor twice a week for 30 minutes. Though I was permitted to write and receive letters, they were always censored. That made it hard writing to my lover.

Our books were censored too and there was only one newspaper we could read — the pro-government *Citizen*. Food parcels were forbidden.

Things were especially hard for me as a gay person becaue I couldn't have contact visits from my lover.

How did your co-accused respond to your gayness?
With my co-defendants there were moments of tension when some of the muttered things about AIDS and passed anti-gay remarks. While some of my fellow accused didn't want to associate with me because I am gay, others knew about my gayness and accepted me fully.

In particular, Gcina Malindi and Johnny Mokoena have been very supportive. Though they are not gay, they have gone out of their way to reassure me that I am not alone and during my imprisonment and trial they have become good and loyal friends.

What conditions have been attached to your release on bail?
Strict bail conditions stipulate that we must hand in our passports to the police, report twice daily to police stations, stay away from the five black townships of the Vaal region even though it is where our families live, and make no political statements and attend no political meetings.

The last condition means that I cannot even attend the funerals of friends who are killed if there is any chance that there might be political speeches made at the graveside.

Do you still have to attend the trial, even though you have completed your evidence?
All of us have to be at court every day. When we were granted bail, the judge stressed that if we do not attend the trial, we will forfeit our bail money and be taken into custody for the rest of the trial proceedings which could last another year.

This requirement to attend court all day every day has caused us a lot of hardship. It means we cannot get a job to support ourselves.

Since your release on bail, how have you coped with your new-found freedom?
I am still trying to adapt to the outside world after nearly three years in detention. At first, I found it extremely hard to communicate with people. But it's been encouraging to discover that so many people have been aware of my plight and concerned for my well-being.

With the restrictive bail conditions, I still feel only semi-free. Then there is the ever present uncertainty of what the outcome of the trial will be and the prospect that some or all of us may face the death penalty.

How has your imprisonment and trial affected your relationship with your lover?
It's had a very bad effect. I'm too tense and my lover is more possessive than before. At the moment I'm looking for a flat of my own. If we live separately for a while things may work out better.

What are your future plans?
To comply with bail conditions, I no longer attend political meetings or get involved with political organisations. I am, however, keen to contribute some non-political assistance to the gay cause in my spare time.

I plan to visit isolated and lonely gay people in hospitals, prisons and homes for the elderly. I want to resume organising social functions to bring gay people of all colours together and do advice and counselling work for gays with health and education problems.

Do you have a mesage for the British lesbian and gay movement?
I want to thank gay people in Britain for their support. It was very important in helping me through the long period I spent in prison.

The letters and messages of solidarity I received were a great morale boost. They gave me strength and reassured me that I was not alone in the fight against apartheid and for lesbian and gay rights.

The support that I received from gay people in Britain is an example to gays everywhere in the world that international solidarity is important and that gay rights cannot be separated from other human rights. They are part of the same struggle.

British lesbian and gay organisations have been an inspiration to me and have given me much hope for the future. I hope that they will continue supporting myself and my co-accused throughout our trial, until we are free.

Letters of solidarity can be sent to Tseko Simon Nkoli via his solicitors. Write to Cardine Nicholls, Chris Naidoo and Associates, PO Box 8694, Johannesburg 2000, Republic of South Africa.

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The NATO election: Stalemate in Denmark

On May 10th Danish voters went to the polls for the second time in less than a year.

What triggered the new elections was a Bill in Parliament which instructed the government to send letters to the captains of foreign warships visiting Danish harbours telling them not to bring nuclear weapons on to Danish territory.

The election result means that a small majority for the policy remains in Parliament.

Since 1982, Denmark has had a minority Tory government, but with a majority in Parliament for reduction of nuclear weapons.

Though a new government has not yet been formed (there are eight parties in Parliament) the old arrangement is likely to continue. Denmark has had a policy of no nuclear weapons on Danish territory in peacetime, and has been a "foot-note nation" (like Greece) when NATO has passed resolutions on nuclear weapons.

So Parliament's decision to send letters to the captains of foreign warships is not a radical new departure. (The captains are not even asked to reply to the Danish government!)

By FINN JENSEN

What forced the government to declare general elections was that the letters to foreign warships was the 23rd defeat in Parliament for the Tory government on foreign policy and nuclear weapons.

Arguing that "our" NATO allies could not live with the decision of the Danish Parliament, Prime Minister Schluter hoped to win a snap election.

Though he may continue as head of a minority government, he did not get a majority to overturn the Parliament's decision on nuclear weapons.

The Social Democrats, who presented the Bill in Parliament that triggered the general election watered down its importance during the campaign.

The Party was keen to be seen as a true defender of NATO, and reluctant to champion initiatives to reduce the nuclear arms race.

During the election campaign several leading American politicians and former military leaders were quoted as saying that British and American warships have been bringing nuclear weapons to Denmark for years.

The former American Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Warnke said: *"Your government knows very well that we brought (nuclear) weapons"* to Denmark *"and you have accepted it."*

The election result shifted only 11 out of the 175 seats in Parliament — with 12 parties participating in the elelctions. Most significant was the growth of a racist Party from nine to 16 seats. This Party is opposed to immigrants, state bureaucracy, and high taxes.

The Social Democrats got 29.8%, the Socialist Peoples Party got 13%.

The Left Socialists, whose slate included candidates of the Socialist Workers Party (Danish Section of the USFI) went from 1.4% to 0.6% and did not get into Parliament.

The Communist Party (DKP) had been offered a place on the slate too, but refused. It got 0.8% and did not get into Parliament either.



Danish socialists campaign to keep Denmark non-nuclear

Budapest: change at the top

A new deal for Hungary?

What's the smart thing to do if you want to become a Leader in a Warsaw Pact country?

Pay a visit to Margaret Thatcher.

Gorbachev did it.

And at the recent Conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Karoly Grosz, another former guest of Our Leader, replaced 76-year-old Janos Kadar as General Secretary of the ruling party.

By Colin Meade Surbiton CLP

Grosz, with a mere 57 summers under his belt, has made himself Mikhail's man in Budapest, and has benefited from the pressure for a bloc-wide changing of the guard which goes with the new face in the Kremlin.

Altogether less certain are Grosz's reformist credentials. As Prime Minister he was responsible for a harsh austerity programme imposed in September 1987.

He is seen as someone who will break through the resistance to market-orientated reforms and take bold steps — such as the removal of subsidies and the creation of unemployment.

Attempts

At the same time — in line with Gorbachev's own policy — attempts will be made to broaden the base of the regime by extending the boundaries of permitted political activity.

One of his noted supporters is Imre Pozsgay, the leader of the so-called "Patriotic People's Front", which organised those sections of the disbanded non-Communist postwar parties prepared to accept the Soviet hegemony and the leading role of the Communist Party (now the HSWP).

Efforts will be made through this front to involve people in the reform programme who do not support Stalinist ideology. No doubt national unity will be the keynote.

It will be interesting to see how Grosz responds to the problem of the large Hungarian minorities living outside the country, in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

In particular, the 1.5 million Hungarians in Romania face systematic discrimination from the ultra-nationalist regime of Nicolae Ceausescu, quite apart from sharing the general misery of all Romanian citizens, which has led to significant illegal emigration from Romania into Hungary.

Challenge

Grosz must also decide how to respond to the challenge of the increasingly diverse and confident independent movements now functioning with considerable openness in Hungary. One example is the recently formed Trade Union for Scientific Workers, which has pledged itself to defend members' living standards.

Grosz's predecessor, Janos Kadar (in his day presented in the Western press as a daring reformist) made his views plain at the Conference, when he urged the delegates to condemn *"efforts which aim at disrupting the unity of the trade union and youth movements."*

Does Grosz share this view? "Unity of the trade union and youth movements" under state control is a vital instrument in ensuring that there is no resistance to plans to get the working class and other less-well-off sectors of Hangarian society to pick up the tab for the $18 billion foreign debt run up by the country's rulers.

French legislative elections

Another triumph for Mitterrand?

The big mobilisation of the left electorate between the two rounds of the Presidential elections gave Mitterrand an unprecedented 54% to 48% victory.

The people of the left voted against the policies of the Chirac-Le Pen axis and seem to understand clearly the difference between parties of the labour movement and bourgeois parties.

By Dave Kellaway Newham South CLP

Yet Mitterrand has been doing everything he can to give the defeated right wing a leg-up by inviting some of them to join in a grand reconciliation.

It was only the sheer scale of the right's post-election disarray that prevented them joining the new Rocard government. Hence one of Mitterrand's original options — going immediately to a broad-based government and not calling new legislative elections — was ditched.

There was also some pressure from inside his Socialist Party (SP) to capitalise quickly on the presidential success.

There were few takers from the right for safe slots on the SP electoral slate: only 33 "Republicans" (out of more than 500 including Left Radicals who are old SP electoral partners). In places where such candidates have been imposed there has been some anger at the SP base.

Today the polls point to a 100-seat SP majority. Ironically, the decision of the Chirac government to drop proportional representation (because they assumed a Mitterrand defeat) will now further weaken the right itself.

The two mainstream conservative parties, Barre's UDF and Chirac's RPR, are standing in a common front, but they are still shattered by the 14% breakthrough of Le Pen's neo-fascist Front National.

His movement will force further divisions in the right over whether to strike deals between the two rounds of the legislative elections.

A landslide victory for the SP does not exclude further manoeuvring by Mitterrand to open his regime to the centre. Leading right wing figures have already made noises about their future availability and faction-fighting inside their parties has only just begun.

Mitterrand has even sounded out the Communist Party (CP), Juquin, and other left forces about joining a broad government.

Some observers argue that even if big Socialist majorities do not prevent blocs with the right, at least they will create ructions inside the SP, which will be good for the left.

Swallowed

But the SP left swallowed all the austerity and pro-imperialist policies of the recent Socialist government without so much as an old-style Tribunite whimper.

All its leaders have been given posts in the government. It has few links with the trade union movement, let alone with extra-parliamentary struggles of any sort.

The social composition and style of the SP base is middle class — even more so than the Labour Party. The bulk of the hard left and revolutionary forces are outside the SP.

Unlike the famous victory of 1981, Mitterrand's recent triumph has not been accompanied by grand promises, nor by any expectation from the workers' movement of significant changes. During the election period there was no industrial truce and important strikes continued in key factories like Chausson (engineering) and Michelin.

But the bosses are sanguine. One of them interviewed in a post-election survey, stated: *"I think the left are going to carry out a centrist policy, which adds up to a right wing one."*

Le Pen's Front National is likely to drop a third of its vote in these elections. It will be hit by the first-past-the-post system, the new union of the respectable right, and the different nature of the legislative elections, which are less open to a "protest" vote around one national personality.

However, Le Pen has already said that if the voice of the Front National is not heard in Parliament (he is likely to go from 32 to 5 seats) then it will have to be expressed on the streets.



Mitterrand

The Mitterrand line of going beyond the old divisions between left and right and his continuing austerity policies play right into Le Pen's hands. Le Pen can roundly denounce the deals being made in high places and at the same time demagogically distance himself from the effects of austerity.

The bankruptcy of the SP line is best symbolised in Marseilles, where Le Pen got 30% of the vote. The SP response is to put up an independent, Bernard Tapie, a pop entrepreneur of the Richard Branson type.

The Communist Party should regain a few percentage points, partly from the far left electorate (Lutte Ouvriere is not standing) and partly because of the nature of legislative elections.

This will not relieve its crisis. Marchais's complacent comment that "our influence is bigger than our vote" was rejected by a group of internal dissidents who launched an open appeal for a re-examination of the Party's line and functioning.

These internal dissidents (some of whom have illusions about renewing the Party from within) share many of the same concerns as the "Renovateur" (renewal) current, headed by Juquin, now outside the party.

Current

The Juquin current are not standing candidates this time, as they felt there was no time to clarify their politics and that it could make it more difficult to link up with the internal "renovateurs".

This is unfortunate. However, they clearly want to assert their independence both from Juquin (whose personal control of the presidential campaign rankled with these refugees from Stalinist practices) and the Juquin support committees (whom they see as politically incoherent).

Juquin himself, and most support committees, are in favour of standing candidates. The right schedule and the money required mean only about 50 will stand, mostly in areas where the Juquin vote was strong.

The Juquin vote was disappointing. This was due to the newness of the movement, the emotional pull to vote against the right and Le Pen by voting Mitterrand (even in the first round), and errors made in the last few weeks of the campaign.

Juquin made ambiguous statements about whether he would join an SP government and his last TV broadcasts were vague.

However, the overall vote for the far left was close to 5% and if you add a part of the ecologist vote it approaches the CP score. With the CP deep in crisis, this shows that there is still potential for an historic recomposition of the left.

LABOUR BRIEFING

Benn-Heffer Campaign

The Campaign gets going!

Tony Benn and Eric Heffer have been addressing rallies and meetings up and down the country.

2,000 people turned up to hear the candidates in Liverpool and 1,000 in Edinburgh. A fringe meeting at the Wales Labour Party Conference attracted about half the delegates present — a big breakthrough in a right wing dominated region. 180 delegates packed a meeting at the NUPE Conference.

The national campaign is now producing three different leaflets which will be available soon from Joan Twelves, Members' Room, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW1.

Report compiled by Mark Seaton

of local Benn-Heffer groups in London held on May 31st discussed building the campaign in London and using it as a springboard for reconstructing the London left after the election in October. It was decided to call the campaign in the capital *London for Socialism*.

25 people were present, representing most areas of London, and reported on the progress of the campaign so far. Developments are clearly uneven. Some local campaigns are already engaged in serious publicity and political debate and others are just getting together.

Pete Cooper of the NCU was assigned the task of co-ordinating the trade union campaign in London (call 228 7000) and it was also agreed to make contact with the peace movement in the capital.

The next meeting will be held at the House of Commons (room booked in Jeremy Corbyn's name) on June 27th at 7.30pm. Please make sure your group is represented. Call Joan Twelves for more information (582 2955).

●London for Socialism
A meeting of representatives

●NUPE Ballot
NUPE will be balloting its members on the Leadership contest. The Executive will meet on July 22nd to make a recommendation. Ballot papers will go out on August 12th and must be returned by September 29th.

The ballot will be conducted on a branch by branch basis, with each branch counted as a block, so make sure your branch discusses the issues and casts its votes — for Benn and Heffer, of course!

If you would like to help with the campaign in NUPE, write to Jon Lansman, c/o Jeremy Corbyn MP, House of Commons, London SW1.

●Haringey for Benn and Heffer
Haringey for Benn and Heffer has been meeting regularly and drawing in activists from a number of campaigns and currents. We have produced a leaflet to launch the campaign locally, which is now being distributed to all local Labour Party members, to trade unionists and community groups.

On June 18th we will be running a *Haringey for Benn and Heffer* stall on Wood Green High Road to publicise the campaign and collect money for striking seafarers.

On June 24th we have organised a fund-raising benefit with members of the Microdisney Band, alternative comedians, and other attractions. We will be helping to build a big attendance for the North London Benn-Heffer rally planned for July 25th in Islington Town Hall.

Besides our general leaflet (which links the themes of the national campaign to local issues) we are producing leaflets by and for trade unionists, women, and the local black community.

We hope to run an advert in the local press late in the summer with a long list of local sponsors.

We will also attempt to deliver an open letter in late August to every Party member appealing to them to take part in the branch ballots scheduled for September — and of course to vote for Benn and Heffer. We also hope to organise small informal meetings in local workplaces and colleges.

●NALGO Conference in Brighton
Tony Benn Rally — called by Campaign Group of MPs, organised by Morning Star, NALGO Briefing, and NALGO Broad Left — with Tony Benn, Carolyn Sikorski (Chair, Newham NALGO; and Labour Briefing), Tony Chater (Morning Star editor), Anti-Apartheid Speaker, Seafarers' Women's Support Group, Syd Platt (North-West TUC), Paul Holmes (NALGO NEC, NALGO Broad Left). Wednesday June 15th, Brighton Conference Centre, 6pm.

●North-West Report
Many CLPs in the North-West are already organising their own Benn-Heffer campaigns (eg Salford East, Chester, Manchester Withington, Birkenhead, etc). Others are planning events to ask *all* candidates where they stand.

Others are organising "questionnaires" to the contestants, asking which way they voted on Alton, whether they support British troops withdrawal from Ireland, whether they will vote for expulsions and suspensions of parliamentary candidates, etc.

The biggest rally this month in the North-West will be in Manchester — 7.30 on Friday June 10th, Manchester Town Hall, wheelchair disabled access now available, with Benn, Heffer, Mahon, Wise and an NUS speaker.

●Benn-Heffer in Berks
Five constituencies were represented at a meeting setting up a Berkshire-wide Benn-Heffer campaign. There was discussion about limiting the campaign to internal Labour Party structures, but the overwhelming feeling was that the campaign is an opportunity to reach new people and bring them into the Party as part of an organised fightback against the current Leadership.

It was considered especially important to organise in trade unions and workplaces. We aim to get speakers to trade union branches, and to produce leaflets directed at particular groups of workers and workplaces explaining why the Benn-Heffer campaign is important to them.

It was also agreed that the Campaign would be the first step in an ongoing effort to co-ordinate the left in the local Parties.

A local witch-hunt was discussed — five members of Bracknell Labour Party are being expelled for alleged association with *Militant*.

It was agreed to hold meetings in Bracknell, Reading, Slough, Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead, and possibly Newbury to assist in building for big meetings with the candidates in Reading and Slough later in the year. Contact D. Warren, c/o 90 Royal Avenue, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire.

●Heading South-west
Tony Benn will be speaking in Exeter on September 1st at the Barnfield Theatre on Barnfield Road at 8pm.

For further details of the Benn-Heffer campaign in the area contact: Ray Davison, 55 Salterton Road, Exmouth, tel. Exmouth 277481 (for Exeter and South East Devon); or Neil Bathurst, 21 Cowley Moor Road, Tiverton, tel. Tiverton 253878 (for mid-Devon).

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Fight, fight and fight again!

Continued from front page

book *Labour's Future* that some people in the Labour Party want to abandon socialism and accept that the capitalist system, with some minor changes, is here to stay.

There is not one word in the document about working with the trade unions. It says it is essential that government agencies and Local Authorities work in partnership with firms, the CBI, trade associations, and chambers of commerce "so that the process of policy-making and industrial development is one of concerted action."

Apparently, this means concerted action between capitalist firms, without the trade unions!

The whole document is obsessed with competition, the hallmark of the capitalist system. Surely, as socialists, we believe in production for use, not for profit. That concept is now being abandoned and competition is being placed at the centre of Labour's policy.

Some competition in a publicly-owned socialist economy would need to be considered, but what is being proposed there is competition without any fundamental change in society and that, in essence, is accepting Thatcher's agenda.

The document talks of a new approach to public ownership. A new approach is one thing, but abandonment is surely something else.

Instead of genuine public ownership, we are offered the *"public interest company"* and *"strengthened regulating authorities which will have the power to monitor and enforce those standards."* The standards are *"service to the consumer, investment, pricing policy and other measures of economic performance."*

The document does admit: *"In some cases a change in ownership or control as well as regulation may prove necessary if the consumer and economic interest is to be fully safeguarded."* Big deal.

Forgive me, but I thought public ownership under democratic control (as advocated in Clause IV of the Party constitution) was essential to get rid of class society and the privileges that arise from it, and that it was the means by which we could transform an undemocratic capitalist society into a democratic socialist one.

The document talks about Sweden. Sweden may be better than Tory Britain, but it is still not a truly socialist society.

Today, with the tremendous advances of modern technology, Britain with a publicly owned socialist economy can, together with other European countries, create a Europe-wide socialist society.

When the document talks of *"developing a new agenda for European co-operation"*, it is words without context. The real issues are not seriously raised.

Who is to own and control the means of production, distribution, and exchange? What are we to do about the monopolies and the multinationals? Who has power, and how do we transfer it from capitalist companies to the people?

I call upon members of the Labour Party to oppose this document and to defeat it at Conference.

The truth is that after the policy review of 1957, Labour did not win the 1959 General Election. Gaitskellite reformism, with its compromise on basic socialist issues, was a disaster.

Today, we are hearing the old Gaitskellite argument rehearsed once again. It is the argument of retreat and compromise, of acceptance of the capitalist status quo masquerading as realism. The answer to it is to relate the argument for socialist policies to the lives of the people.

For example, if we want safety at sea, we need public ownership of our ships, ferries, docks and shipbuilders. Had we had genuine socialist public ownership in this area we would not have had the Zeebrugge disaster.

We must advocate People before Profits, and explain why and how public ownership can make that idea a reality.

Published by Labour Briefing, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ
Printed by East West Graphic (TU), London