LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p FORTNIGHTLY
No 66 JULY 6-19 1988

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40p

For non-sectarian, mass action in solidarity with the liberation struggle

UNITE AGAINST APARTHEID!

Southern Africa is locked in struggle between the racist supremacists and its black people, so oppressed by apartheid.

- The Botha regime has renewed its state of emergency for another two years, after banning 18 legal anti—apartheid organisations and after producing their Labour Relations Amendment Bill — designed to savagely curb the activities of black democratic trade unions.
- The trial of Mayekiso and his comrades continues, while Nelson Mandela remains in jail and the Sharpeville Six face hanging, condemned by the false doctrine of "common purpose", intended to deter all demonstrators.
- Torture and detentions continue unabated with detainees like Zwelakhe Sisulu and Raymond Suttner beginning their second year of incarceration.
- Boer conscripts and their surrogates, UNITA and RENAMO, invade and devastate Angola and Mozambique.
- Abroad, Dulcie September is murdered with like attempts on Albie Sachs and others.

The people are fighting staunchly on against the largest army in Africa which has the backing of the West.

- A Namibian general strike has opposed Koevoet.
- New united action by COSATU and NACTU roused a general strike in South Africa this June. It was against the anti—trade union legislation, supported by three million people and cost the economy R500 million over three days.
- Armed conflict by MK and APLA caused 800 explosions during the past year.
- The Angolans have driven the Boers back to the border, inspiring negotiations from which Namibian independence may emerge.
- The Botswanans, in repelling a military killer squad, captured two of its members.
- The Mozambicans are ousting RENAMO bandits from siezed territory.

The world is responding to this magnificent struggle. The Soviet Union continues to support liberation. Condemnation of the Botha regime as a terrorist state has become an issue in the US presidential election.

EEC members are threatening further rigorous sanctions and diplomatic withdrawal if the Sharpeville Six are hanged. In Holland, Shell petrol stations are being blown up.



On the march against apartheid in 1987. Come out and join the battle against apartheid this year!

Alone Thatcherite Britain opposes sanctions still. Mrs Thatcher, who has dubbed the ANC as "terrorist", is preparing to meet Savimbi, a hardened reactionary terrorist, leader of the apartheid puppet organisation UNITA in Angola.

But the British people detest apartheid well—nigh universally. What is needed here is broad, united, non—sectarian mass action in solidarity with the South African liberation struggle.

The newly adopted policy of the NUJ shows the way. Support the Mandela Marchers! Join the June 17th Rally! Build an enormous democratic Anti—Apartheid movement!

In particular, join the Non—Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, which has endured for over 800 days and nights, calling for Mandela to be free and for the closure of the racist embassy.

Release Mandela, Mothopeng, Mpetha and Mayekiso! Save the Sharpeville Six! Isolate Apartheid! Amandla ngaWethu!

By DAVID KITSON

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign Round-up

Airline Attack



Military forces "guarding" the Gulf

US terrorists out of the Gulf!

290 civilians dead — shot from the sky by state-of-the-art US weaponry — and the Commander of the Joint Chiefs (the USA's top military officer) called it "proper defensive action".

We call it an indefensible atrocity.

And we lay the blame where it belongs: with the US imperialists and their European allies.

Thatcher's readiness to justify this outrage simply places her in league with the murderers. Can it get any clearer? Thatcher and Reagan are the world's terrorists-in-chief.

An "accident" resulting from an impetuous decision taken on the spot by an officer under pressure? Rubbish!

Even if we accept the dubious story about confusion over the size of the radar blips, the fact is that this man was on the spot and under pressure because it is US policy to impose its will in the Gulf by military might, a policy backed up by relentless anti-Iranian propaganda.

At the end of his days, Reagan remains, despite the Moscow jaunt, an immediate threat to the safety and survival of human beings everywhere.

By Mike Marqusee Haringey Labour Briefing

While lamenting the murder of innocent civilians, most bourgeois commentators have been quick to justify the US presence in the Gulf. But the US isn't there to referee a contest between intransigent opponents. It is there to protect the economic interests of an imperialist world order which it dominates.

As long as Britain remains inside a US-dominated military bloc, namely NATO, it will be implicated in these barbarous insanities.

Labour politicians who profess undying loyalty to NATO not only give aid and comfort to the killers. They strip Labour of its ability to advance an independent, socialist, international policy — a policy which can offer more in answer to these atrocities than mere expressions of "regret".

The US and Britain must clear out of the Gulf and Britain must clear out of NATO. These demands are the beginnings of an honest response to this latest episode in the Gulf's long agony.

Disability Alliance

Another Tory cover-up

The Disability Alliance — a federation of over 100 organisations of and for disabled people — has demanded immediate publication of the DHSS's new survey of the disabled population.

The survey confirms that there are now six million people with disabilities in Britain and that many of them are living in poverty, swelled by an estimated 500,000 people who lost out in the government's recent social security changes.

The Disability Alliance accused the government of deliberately delaying publication of the survey results.

A spokesperson said: "It is deeply disturbing that a report of such vital interest to people with disabilities is being treated in this manner. It is no coincidence that the government plans to publish the survey in September when parliament is in recess.

"The results confirm what the Disability Alliance and other disability organisations have argued for many years: that governments have consistently underestimated both the total number of disabled people and also the depths of poverty amongst the disabled population."

Contact the Disability Alliance, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2 8NJ, tel. 01 240 0806.

Taken from Disability Alliance press release

Viraj Mendis

Stop Douglas Hurd signing my death warrant!

Not unexpectedly, the Appeal Court ruled against me on June 17th.

On the same day, Douglas Hurd, in the tradition of British "fair play", appealed for common sense to prevail:

"I said that I would abide by anything the court said and I hope that he (Viraj) will too. The next step should be for him and his friends to draw the right conclusions. He has fought it right the way through. He has put his case in the British courts, he has had a fair hearing, and now he should go."

Only weeks ago, Douglas Hurd spoke out against hanging expressing his concern that innocent people would be killed. What a hyopocrite. He is quite prepared to enter the Church by force, drag me out and hand me over to the death squads in Sri Lanka. Is this not signing my death warrant?

Douglas Hurd's "fair play" relies on a court hearing that neither I nor my barrister could attend. It was a hearing that refused to take into account any of the evidence concerning the danger I face in Sri Lanka, or the 15 years I have lived in Britain — the susbstance of my case.

Douglas Hurd and Timothy Renton dishonestly imply that the Appeal was a full hearing of my case. In this way they take refuge behind the Court decision.

The Courts, on the other hand, put the responsibility for the decision to deport firmly with the Home Office. As Justice Neill puts it: "It is important to underline at the outset the limited role which the Courts can play in cases such as the present."

By VIRAJ MENDIS

In this way the Home Office and the courts are collaborating in a clever deception.

We have of course petitioned the House of Lords for Leave to Appeal. But we realise the narrow terms of reference will apply to the Lords as well.

Before the Appeal Timothy Renton stated that if the Appeal went against me, the deportation "would be effected as soon as could be done."

Now, however, Renton and Hurd are saying that they will not deport me to Sri Lanka until after the appeal to the House of Lords.

However, Renton adds: "We have always reserved the right to secure the removal of anyone who when liable to be detained under the Immigration Acts has taken refuge in a Church."

Saying that they reserve the right to take me out of sanctuary, but not deport me to Sri Lanka until the House of Lords, means that we have fought them to a standstill on the issue of Sri Lanka.

At the same time by "reserving the right to detain" me if I am in the Church, they show us that they are not willing to tolerate us here, as a beacon for a sanctuary movement.

Our sancutary has brought the issues of Immigration into the public eye and onto the mainstream political agenda. With the new Immigration Bill waiting to become law later this month, this publicity is a hindrance to the Home Office. There has never been an effective fightback against any Immigration Act, and this Act is the harshest and most far reaching of all.

The largest part by far of the new legislation concerns the issue of polygamy. Ten sections of the new Act are given over to preventing the settlement of



Viraj Mendis

subsequent wives in a polygamous marriage.

Although this is an attack on Muslims in particular, Home Office figures reveal that only 25 polygamous wives were admitted in 1986. *There is one Clause in this Act for every 2.5 wives.*

The real point of these sections is to whip up sufficient racist hysteria to guarantee the passing of the entire Act without hindrance.

The Act, on the other hand, gives extra privileges to all EEC nationals — giving them the right to bring their spouses, parents, husbands, fiances and children.

Finally, the Act removes the right to appeal on "compassionate grounds" to an "Independent" Adjudicator against a Home Office decision. The only exception is people who have lived here for seven years. **The removal of the rights to contest deportations is a direct attack on the right to campaign against deportation.**

In order to accelerate the deportation procedure, overstaying has now been made a criminal offence. Even if a person has lived here seven years they are liable to arrest and prosecution.

The Court can detain and recommend deportation without the Home Office having made a decision. All black people are liable to be stopped and questioned on their immigration status — in effect, all black people are being criminalised.

The VMDC are launching a weekend of action against the new Immigration Act on July 29th and 30th. We are hoping to unite the widest range of forces to oppose this legislation.

At the same time as opposing the Act we will be laying the basis to defend the vast number of people affected by it — if and when it comes fully into force.

This is because with no rights to appeal, and therefore no time to start a campaign, it is Sanctuary that offers the chance to delay the deportation procedure and win time to campaign for the right to stay.

To this end we are organising a Conference on September 24-25th at the Church of the Ascension titled "VMDC and Sanctuary — Building unity in action against deportations."

If the Home Office manage to defeat VMDC it will strike a mortal blow to the Sanctuary movement. So we must pressurise the government to reopen my case so that all the evidence can be looked at without the limitations of an extremely narrow terms of reference.

We need to build our weekly Friday evening Marches to the Sanctuary. We need every progressive person and organisation to participate in the campaign. If this is done we can give Thatcher a well-earned defeat.

Contact VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL.

Fighting Deportations

New campaigns start work in Manchester

Viraj Mendis is not the only person in Manchester fighting the immigration laws.

Tinu Olowokanga and her six children are under threat of deportation simply because of the breakdown of her marriage. Tinu and her children have been settled in this country for nearly four years.

Her campaign meets every Tuesday, 7pm, at the Abasindi Co-op, St Mary's St, Moss Side, Manchester M15. Write to this address or phone 061 226 6873 for further information.

Paul Ho came to this country from Hong Kong at the age of 16, in 1979. He has also set up a defence campaign against his deportation order.

The Campaign meets every three weeks in Manchester Town Hall, on July 6th, 27th, etc.

The Friday March on July 22nd, at 5pm from Piccadilly Gardens, is organised jointly by VMDC and Paul Ho Defence Campaign.

Paul's Campaign can be contacted through the Immigration Aid Unit, 061 234 3394.

Francis and Moji Okanlami are also fighting deportation. They came to Britain seven years ago and have a two year old daughter.

Francis is working for the City Council Education Department and his trade union, NALGO, now supports his campaign.

The campaign meets every Thursday, 12.30pm, at the NALGO Manchester branch office, 1st floor, Elliot House, Lloyd Street. It can be contacted on 061 834 6564.

These four campaigns alone show the need for an Immigration Aid Unit in Manchester — to give legal advice and to help set up defence campaigns.

On June 21st 500 people lobbied the Labour Councillors in Manchester for such an Immigration Aid Unit. The Labour Group made a commitment to provide the funding at the October City Council meeting.

Have several years of campaigning for an Immigration Aid Unit finally come to a successful conclusion?

By Finn Jensen Manchester

The VMDC has organised a weekend of action on July 29-30th. Please notify them if you can attend.

Accommodation is available if requested in advance, as is further publicity — leaflets and posters in various languages.

Contact the VMDC, North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL, 061 234 3168.

Programme for Weekend of Action

Friday July 29th

12-2pm PICKET Aldine House (Immigration Appeals Office), Bridge Street, Salford.

5pm Assemble for regular VMDC MARCH, Piccadilly Gardens

7.45pm RALLY in the Church of the Ascension, Hulme

Saturday July 30th

9am-6pm All STREET RALLY with music, theatre, speeches, etc., St Anne's Square

8-11pm SOCIAL with bands and sound system, Church of the Ascension

The VMDC issues a Campaign bulletin. The June 24th issue includes detailed news on the Appeal Rejection, and more details about future activities of the Viraj's Campaign. It gives the news that Rajwinder Singh has won his right to stay after a year's sanctuary in Bradford.

It gives details of the September Conference, and includes an interesting "Stop Press" item about the Home Office.

They have denied to MPs and the UN High Commission that weekly records are kept on the fate of people seeking political asylum (a withholding of information contrary to the Geneva Convention, and the only example of this in the EEC).

Yet spotted circulating in the Home Office and to immigration staff is this very information!

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Kinnock in Disneyland

Undoubtedly, we in *Labour Briefing* inhabit what the Party Leader derides as the "ultra-leftist Disneyland of general strikes and armed insurrection to bring down the capitalist system".

Check your history, Neil. So far, the only way capitalism *has* been brought down is through such unpleasant but nonetheless *real* phenomena as "general strikes and armed insurrections".

Of course, this latest attack on the left was just the usual bloated Kinnock rhetoric. His technique has become familiar. Caricature your opponent, subject him or her to a verbal barrage, then huff and puff as if you were Mike Tyson scoring a 90-second heavyweight knock-out.

Such delusions of gandeur are especially pathetic in a political Mickey Mouse who inhabits a special Disneyland of his own — a fantasy world where the baubles of office are mistaken for the instruments of power.

Kinnock says we must "recognise the result of the only polls that count — elections" and accused us of not being interested in getting into power. Here Neil's wacky world has gone really topsy-turvy.

- It is *Kinnock* (or his mentors) who have lost us the last *three* elections.
- It is *Kinnock* (and his allies) who spurn or obstruct every chance of building a workers' movement — and a Labour Party — capable of gaining real power, and using it with a will.

But pity the poor man. Denzil Davies, it turns out, was only the iceberg's tip. Polls have shown that four out of ten Labour MPs are closet plotters, convinced that Neil "something for nothing" Kinnock must be ditched if the Party is to survive the next election.

His problem — leaving aside, for the moment, his political treachery — is his sheer incompetence. He is a failure even in his own terms. What greater idiocy could there be than to condemn Labour's unilateralism as a policy of "something for nothing" only to turn around a week later and embrace precisely that policy — and then expect the voters to approve of it?

Even Kinnock's closest admirers are now recoiling as they realise, at long last, that his deviousness, his dishonesty, his unprincipled opportunism — in short, all that is most detested in forked-tongued, two-faced, vote-grubbing politicians — simply does not go down well with the electorate.

"Kamikaze Kinnock" we called him before the last election, and we've been proved right many times over. His best friends ought to be whispering in his ear, telling him to go now, before he does any more damage. But maybe, like Denzil Davies, they can't get close enough.

It must be lonely for Mickey Mouse in Disneyland.

Throw out the "enemy within"

At last the TUC has woken up and suspended from membership Eric Hammond's EETPU.

How ironic the timing of the suspension is, though. The EETPU has been cocking a snook at the TUC for years now. Not only has it broken every tenet in the book of working class principles, particularly in terms of its own internal democracy, it organised perhaps the most vicious single union deal ever at Wapping. To conspire in the sacking of 5,000 workers to gain employment for your own members is just about as far as you can go in scabbing on the working class as a whole.

The timing may be ironic — but perhaps it is not surprising. The TUC has stood by and watched Thatcher undermine, with round upon round of anti-trade union legislation, every one of the principles the trade union movement was established to defend: the right to organise, strike, and strike in solidarity with other workers — the right to fight the attacks of the ruling class with working class measures.

The TUC capitulated so far, it took Arthur Scargill during the great Miners' Strike to remind them: "you don't cross picket lines!"

But it was only when the EETPU undermined the most basic of principles of a single union confederation — that you don't poach other unions' members — and refused, this time, to obey a TUC directive to desist, that the TUC was forced to act.

But the EETPU is not just Eric Hammond's organisation. There are many militants in the union who have battled for years against the dictatorial, bureaucratic leadership.

They are now making a last attempt to change Hammond's direction. Should this fail, they will be working to bring out as many other militants as possible, and find a framework for remaining in the TUC and isolating Hammond's new gang.

This is the task of EETPU militants. There is a further task which remains for Labour Party activists to accomplish. Once the EETPU is expelled from the TUC, there must be no countenancing of their continued affiliation to the Labour Party. Such a course would be to open the Party to the near complete capitulation on basic principles which the TUC leadership has already made.

It is outrageous that we have allowed the bosses to organise a fake union in the midst of our movement for so long already. Still, the "enemy within" is nearly out. We must make our belated stand against business unionism and its Thatcherite ideology — and drive them from the whole movement once and for all.

Economy

After Thatcher's yuppie boom:

Here comes the Slump!

May's £1.2 billion balance of trade deficit — the gap between exports and imports — is a revealing snapshot of the real underlying trends in the British economy.

By Phil Hearse
Islington North CLP

The economic mini-boom of the last two years, which reduced unemployment (or at least unemployment statistics) by half a million was based on a flood of private credit.

Vast amounts of extra money, based on bank lending, poured into the economy and fuelled a consumer boom among the middle class and the better-off sections of the working class. It fostered the illusion that the British economy had "turned the corner" and helped Thatcher win the 1987 General Election.

Now the price for the boom is becoming clear — a huge influx of imports and sharply rising inflation. The result is bound to be higher interest rates, less borrowing from the banks, less consumer spending, and less investment: *in other words — a recession.*

Unemployment will start to rise again, the axe will fall yet again on public spending. The Thatcher-Lawson mini-boom of 1987-88, like the "Barber boom" of 1972-73, has been unmasked as a flash in the pan based on easy credit.

Depression

The prospect of a depression in the British economy is reinforced by the gloomy position in all the advanced capitalist countries. Britain is going to be especially badly hit by the aftermath of last October's stockmarket crash.

British capitalism, with a declining industrial base, is heavily dependent on financial services (the City) and foreign trade. But as the world economy slows down, as less financial business is done, British capitalism is bound to fare badly.

Stagnant

The real situation, of stagnant investment, of industrial production barely above 1979 levels, will become increasingly apparent.

The notion that Thatcher — by hammering the unions, through privatisation, through the creation of an "enterprise culture" — has stemmed the crisis of British capitalism — will be exposed as groundless nonsense.

Oppressed

The working class and the oppressed are going to be asked to pay the price for this new crisis. Sections of workers who have seen their living standards rise in recent years are now going to find themselves under severe pressure.



The "yuppie boom" led to building of new, "luxury", housing by the private sector in the South — like these flats in East London. Last October's stock market crash saw £10,000 knocked off the price of £90,000 flats on the Isle of Dogs. Will the capitalist system that created the "yuppies" be the one that destroys them — and all the speculative building they have provoked?

Bankruptcies will increase, and all the Tory fiddling of the figures won't disguise a major rise in unemployment. Attacks on welfare benefits will be redoubled. In other words — an intensification of attacks on all sections of the working class is on the way.

The trend towards slump is a huge challenge to Labour. For two years we have seen Messrs Kinnock and Gould mesmerised by Tory economic "success" and increasingly enchanted by the glorification of capitalism and the market.

Assumption

The underlying assumption was that Thatcherism was working — and making the majority of people more prosperous.

But the truth will become more and more obvious in the autumn and winter months — capitalism in Britain is on the down and down, not the up and up. No amount of "Next" catalogues and "Body Shop" stores can conceal this truth.

Thatcherism *isn't* working. And only a socialist plan, based on productive investment, common ownership, and workers' control, can solve the crisis in the interests of the working class and the oppressed.

Trade Union Briefing

TUC suspend EETPU at last

The enemy within is nearly out!

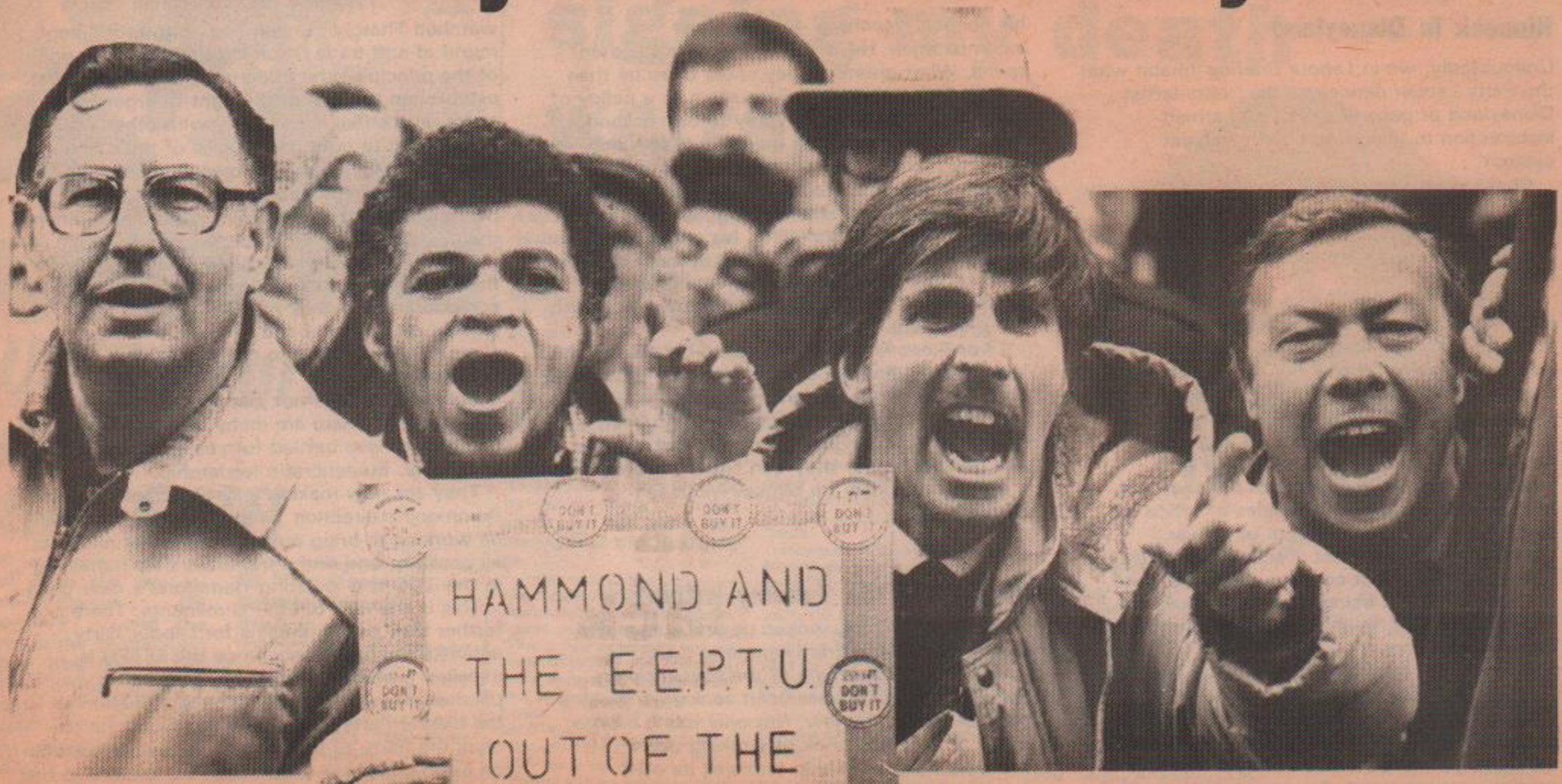


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

On the picket line at Wapping, workers protested at the most flagrant act of sabotage ever perpetrated by a so-called trade union — conspiracy with the bosses to sack 5,000 members of another union, and employ members of its own union in their place — on vastly reduced wages and conditions.

There is a misconception perpetrated in the media that the reason the EETPU face suspension from the TUC is its involvement in single-union no-strike deals.

In fact, the right wing mavericks face suspension for using *particular* single union deals to destroy *existing* trade union structures and to poach other unions' members in breach of the Bridlington agreement.

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

The EETPU refuses to accept a TUC directive requiring them to withdraw from two such deals — one signed with the Japanese electronics firm Orion near Port Talbot and the other with the haulage firm Cristian Salvensen, based in Warrington. Both these deals would involve members of other unions being forced to join the EETPU.

The Bridlington agreement was adopted by the TUC in 1939 and is designed to control inter-union membership wars. Under its terms, the transfer of members from one union to another can only take place with the agreement of both unions concerned.

Since then, Bridlington has been central to the functioning of the TUC and has been used as a matter of course by TUC unions to settle inter-union disputes and to recover members poached by other unions.

In fact the EETPU has used Bridlington to claim members back many times. The most famous recent case was Sean Gerhaty and the Fleet Street electricians, who tried to leave the EETPU and join SOGAT in 1982, after they were refused the right to take solidarity action in support of the NHS workers).

At Orion Electronics the TGWU had recruited 38 workers out of a workforce of 100. They have already applied to management for recognition when the EETPU signed a single-union agreement in return for a no-strike clause.

No one in the workforce was involved and it was signed over the head of the TGWU. Those workers who signed up for the TGWU are now required by the company to join the EETPU.

In the case of Salvensen, the whole workforce was unionised — into TGWU, GMB, and USDAW branches — when the EETPU signed single-union deals with management covering two Salvensen depots.

The issue of single union deals has been the subject of much discussion in the TUC. Norman Willis directly supported the single union no-strike deal negotiated by the AEU at Dundee and made his famous trip to Detroit to plead with Ford management to accept it.

There is therefore no opposition from him — or the TUC hierarchy — to single union deals in principle.

At the same time the TUC Special Review Body has been trying to find a formula to take the heat out of the situation. They have made the distinction between "greenfield" sites, where there is as yet no workforce, and existing sites where workers and other unions are already involved.

They have now produced a code of practice (after a long wrangle over whether it should be advisory or mandatory) which will be put to TUC Congress in October. This code will not, however, resolve the basic problem.

The term "single union deals" as used in the present debate does *not* refer tc workplaces or industries in which the workers were all originally recruited by a single union, or where there have been amalgamations over a period of time — a situation which is generally a positive advantage for the workers.

In this case, the union convinces the workforce to join and then concludes a deal with management to recognise it as the single representative union in the workplace.

Agreement

What is at issue now is the type of agreement negotiated via so-called "beauty contests" between competing unions with the workforce (which may or may not exist at the time) completely excluded from deciding who represents them.

Here, the union offers concessions to management to recognise it as the single union; thereafter, the workers recruited have no choice but to join it.

There is some hypocrisy on the part of some of those attacking Hammond. In his pamphlet Hammond, with some justification, complains that unions criticising him have themselves entered ito identical arrangements. He cites six examples involving the TGWU, eight involving the GMB, and five involving the AEU.

The fact that the EETPU's suspension and possible expulsion arises from a violation of Bridlington (rather than the single union stitch-ups) does not make it any the less significant. Indeed, the EETPU should have been expelled for its role at Wapping.

Once expelled (rather than suspended) it will not only be outside the TUC but outside the Bridlington agreement. Other unions will then be free to recruit EETPU members — and they should take full advantage of this freedom.

A recent conference of 150 militants from the EETPU, organised by the EETPU broad left grouping *Flashlight*, decided to fight for a "no" vote in the ballot currently being conducted to endorse Hamond's position. This is an important first step, but the key resolution declared:

"If the Leadership of the EETPU presists in pursuing a policy of splitting the TUC and setting up a rival organisation then we will seek to find ways and means of remaining within the TUC as an organised block."

Militants

In other words, militants in the EETPU will resign and take groups of members into other TUC unions, some of which have already begun to make appropriate arrangements. Some unions have considered establishing special branches for ex-members of the EETPU which (theoretically anyway) could be wound up if the EETPU found its way back into the TUC — possibly through merger with the AEU.

In reality, the situation will be more complicated. Sections of the EETPU will join other TUC unions organised in the same workplace. Detailed arrangements will have to follow actual practice.

A further suggestion coming out of the Flashlight conference was that EETPU members wishing to stay inside the TUC band together to form a new union which could apply for TUC recognition.

Incidentally, the Stalinists were split at the Flashlight conference. The CPGB argued that it would be wrong to leave the EETPU whilst the *Morning Star* people argued that it was necessary. Some said they could and would bring out blocks of membership into other unions.

Now that the EETPU has been suspended, the question of the union's affiliation to the Labour Party is on the agenda. If the EETPU is expelled it cannot remain affiliated to the Labour Party — which invites affiliates from TUC-recognised unions.

The problem will be that Kinnock's Leadership will not want to get rid of the EETPU. They are loyal supporters of the right wing in policy terms; and in terms of MPs. Many right wing MPs rely on votes from local right wingers who find their way into the EETPU and from their onto GCs to win their reselections. The new procedures may make life more comfortable for right wing MPs — but can they afford to lose these extra votes?

Commitment

Labour Party members should not hesitate to push for a firm commitment for the Labour Party to derecognise the EETPU if it is expelled from the TUC. Activists can start preparing now, with resolutions to establish CLP positions, with an instruction that officers should write in to Walworth Road immediately the expulsion is announced.

The subject is worth considering for amendments to Labour Party Conference resolutions. There will also need to be a campaign to send emergency resolutions to Conference.

We did not admit the scab UDM into the Labour Party: there is no earthly reason why the bosses' EETPU should remain.

NHS

Some 40th birthday present!



The 40th anniversary of the founding of the NHS is both a time to celebrate and a time to protest.

We celebrate that for 40 years the basic principles of the NHS have remained roughly intact despite chronic underfunding from successive governments.

We protest because the Thatcher regime now has thinly veiled plans to carve up the National Health Service and sell it off to private profit-making corporations.

During its 40 years the NHS has soldiered on with a number of serious deficiencies, which have not arisen as a result of the system but as a result of its continual underfunding.

This long term cash shortage has led to the disgustingly low pay that virtually all health workers endure. It has also brought about the closure of wards and hospitals, soaring waiting lists, failure to keep apace with developments in medical technology, and the growing demands of an aging society.

This cash shortage sees most Health Authorities in debt, and many hospitals only able to survive via charitable donations — a tragic return to Victorian values.

For those who can afford it the private sector appears to be an attractive alternative to the queues of the NHS, thus we have a two-tiered health system created — one for Thatcher's constituency and the cash-starved NHS for the rest of us.

This government and the business interests it represents intend to accelerate this creation of a two tier health system by starving the NHS of even more money.

So much for a 40th birthday present!

The 1988 pay award for nurses was aimed at stemming the growing tide of public discontent at the state of the NHS. However, this totally inadequate and divisory stunt is akin to using a sticking plaster on a gaping wound.

A nurse is still paid far less than other workers in comparable professions, as are all other health workers in their desperately low paid jobs.

Demoralisation and resignations are now endemic. Morale is at an all time low. Give healthworkers the pay, and the resources health deserves, and this would change immediately.

Our society faces a simple choice. Either it is super-profit for a handful of multinational corporations, who are sitting like vultures waiting to pick the bones of the NHS; or it is a properly funded, universal health service for all, free at the point of use.

This government has the money to spend. There was Lawson's £2 billion budget hand-out to the rich, money from the profits of the nation's North Sea oil. This money must be diverted into the NHS (and the other desperately underfunded public services) and not squandered on a futile arms race.

Despite its handicaps, the NHS has been of great benefit to the people of this country for the last 40 years. Its services must now be preserved, expanded and improved to meet the growing needs of the society it serves and to which we all belong.

The London Health Workers Co-ordinating Committee makes three demands on the 40th anniversary of the NHS:

- A fully-funded pay rise for all NHS staff in line with current pay claims.
- An immediate 50% increase in funding for the NHS to bring up spending to the level of other Western European countries.
- The right of all workers to strike in the defence of their Health Service.

From LHCC leaflet to mark the 40th annivesary of the NHS.

Contact LHCC c/o Andy Phillips, Union Office, Royal Free, 01 794 0500 ext. 4146.

Support the Seafarers!

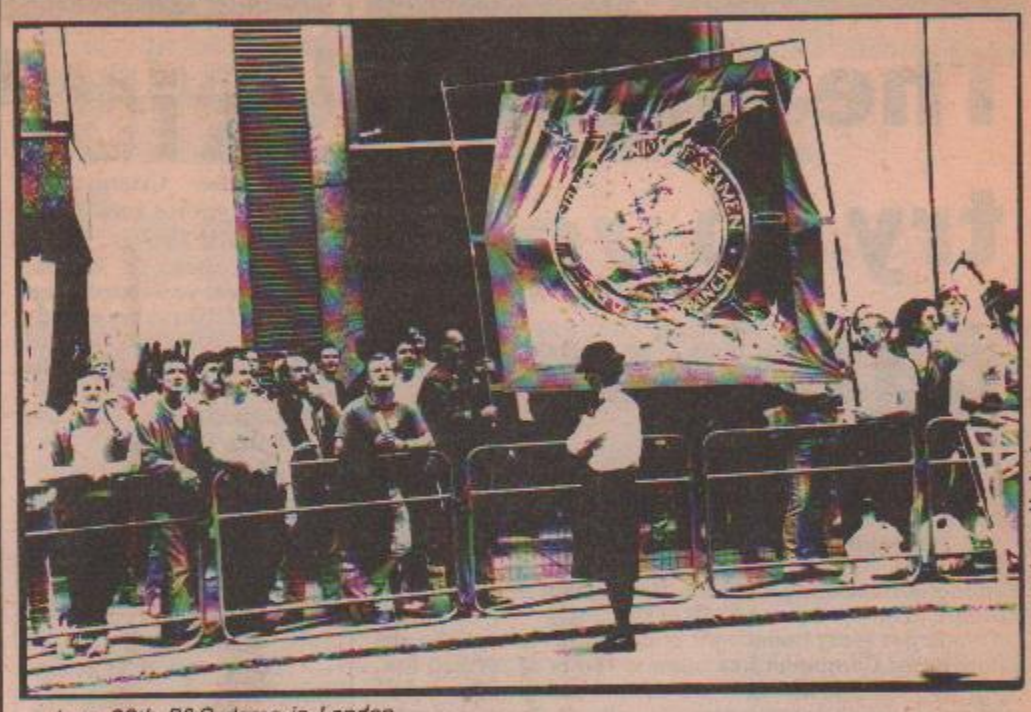


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

June 29th P&O demo in London

Supporters bring the dispute back to P&O

So where's the NUS dispute with P&O gone?

No, it's not been in the news recently. But is the strike still going? YES!

Despite regular picketing at Dover, despite the many seafarers engaged in touring the country speaking to labour movement meetings, the media is keeping quiet about the P&O dispute.

The more people think that the strike is over, or fading, the less keen labour movement organisations will be to organise solidarity action — financial or industrial.

Report compiled by
Jenny Fisher
Bow & Poplar CLP

Indeed, the only media coverage of P&O recently has been a massive advertising campaign by the company, trying to convince the public to sale with their ships!

If the ships are so attractive, if the strike isn't working — why the need to persuade people to choose P&O?

The Courts are in on the conspiracy of silence too. The NUS is still in contempt of court, its assets are still sequestrated — but no move is being made to continue legal action against the union. Again: no publicity is good publicity — for the employers and the state.

Still, some people are keeping tabs on the P&O dispute. At the end of June some of the Dover strikers discussed on the telephone the possibility of staging a car blockade of the port the following day.

They talked about plans to drive up to the port, and abandon their cars.

The next day arrived — and with it came an all too predictable echo of the Miners' Strike. The police were out in force. Police roads blocks were set up throughout the town to stop cars, and some roads were completely sealed.

Strikers travelling in cars were inquisitioned about their destinations. Nice to know you were listening in, chaps!

To counteract the silence, the London Seafarers Support Groups organised a demonstration in London on June 29th.

The day began with a rally at Hyde Park. John Laing chaired the rally on behalf of the Trade Union Solidarity Network. P&O strikers addressed the rally, as did representatives of other labour movement organisations.

One of the speakers was Gareth Mostyn, speaking about the recent successful strike at the North Islington and Hackney Housing Association, which defeated attempts to employ black workers on lower grades than white workers. This must be one of the first victories for the new union MSF!

After the Rally, over 200 people proceeded to march to the P&O Headquarters. Banners from NUS branches were joined by others from the London trade union movement.

A noisy demonstration was held outside the P&O offices, to remind the company that they can't ignore the dispute in Kent.

Further speeches were given — including speeches from strikers, from printworkers, and from Dennis Skinner MP.

The strikers are determined to continue their action in support of safe conditions for workers and passengers. Support is needed from the labour movement to do this.

Since the TUC and Labour Party launched funds for the P&O strike the amount of money being received by the strikers has been greatly reduced, as labour movement supporters direct money to the official funds rather than sending donations directly to the strikers.

The most important aspect in sustaining the strike is that the Women's Support Groups can continue to provide food for the strikers and their families. Therefore, donations should be sent directly to the Women's Support Groups at the addresses below.

Contact the WSGs below, and consider making a "twinning" arrangement with one of them, as was done in the Miners' Strike. Send donations to any one or all of them equally — just keep the solidarity going and the donations flowing down to Kent!

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

Women's Support Groups

Contact these groups.

Aylesham WSG
61 Castle Drive, Whitfield, Dover
0304 820543

Canterbury WSG
75 Tenterden Drive, Canterbury
0227 66768

Deal WSG
Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal
0304 367840

Dover WSG
210, London Road, Dover

Thanet WSG
147 High Street, Ramsgate
0843 587990

Folkestone WSG
7 Tennyson Place, Folkestone
0303 51997

Huddersfield

Support groups have been formed in a number of localities, and some in the most unlikely of settings — such as the recently formed Harrogate Support Group.

In our short existence, we have so far managed to raise £800.

The Group is currently cementing links between the seafarers and the mining communities in the Selby coalfields.

Contact 5 Truro Road, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire.

By Harrogate Support Group

NCU Annual Conference

Delegates go on the offensive

Eighteen months ago British Telecom was hit by its first national strike, provoked by "flexibility" deals.

Three weeks of industrial action resulted in stalemate.

Since the return to work, however, management has been running circles around the union — disregarding long-established agreements, refusing to negotiate, turning the screw at every opportunity.

BT now wants to decentralise the business and introduce regional pay bargaining, further undermining the national structures and unity of the NCU.

The demoralisation of the membership has allowed the union leadership to become complacent and weak. But at the recent NCU Annual Conference, many of their central reports were thrown out and replaced with commitments to action.

Clearly, conference delegates were on the offensive. In major debates over pay, contract labour, jobs, new technology (the "Broad Strategy"), and opposition to YTS, the Executive's conciliatory approach met strong opposition from activists.

By London NCU Briefing supporters

Consider the new round of pay negotations. The Executive's proposed claim was wrapped in vague generalities and open to the lowest interpretation by management. Delegates responded by calling for 10% with no strings, to be backed with a ballot for industrial action if no offer was forthcoming by the end of July. Strong stuff!

For many delegates, the main items were the numerous resolutions calling for the resignation of the General Secretary, John Golding. Following lurid tales in the *News of the World* he was accused of bringing the union into disrepute and had lost any credibility as the union's leader.

This one-time hatchet-man for the Labour Party right wing stood alone as the NEC supported demands for his removal.

In contrast to the isolated Golding, Benn and Livingstone addressed a packed meeting of the Broad Left. As appropriate, they made only passing references to the General Secretary and concentrated instead on the bankrupt policy review.

The resounding applause was reflected inside conference in a big vote against Golding and now, no doubt, the NCU will face a protracted legal wrangle, even though the majority voted for him to pack his bags.

During the week, the privatisation of the Girobank was anounced. The NCU has nearly 5,000 members involved and an emergency debate pledged the whole union to outright opposition, including industrial action, if necessary.

For the large minority of women in the NCU, Conference witnessed a major development when overwhelming support was given to a new campaign aimed at involving more women members and launching a drive against sexual harassment.

A few years ago, this subject would not have been discussed. Such is progress, albeit at a snail's pace.

Labour Party

Birmingham

The Right try to catch up!

Seeing, they say, is *believing*. Well, we wouldn't have believed it if we hadn't seen it.

We felt we had to print the full text of this letter and "Questions and Answers" sheet from the *North Birmingham Campaign for the Re-election of NEIL KINNOCK and ROY HATTERSLEY*.

This is not least because it shows how successful the Benn-Heffer Campaign has been in terms of rattling the right. But we also thought we should perform the public service of giving some wider publicity to the telephone number (see Questions and Answers) the NBCRNKRH gives in its appeal for new Party members.

Good to see they're involved in building the Party. We would suggest, though, that *you* don't just stop at friends, relatives, etc., but recruit anyone who supports the Party's constitution — particularly that Clause IV(4) bit, and the battle to implement it — the battle for socialism.

So next time they tell you it's only the left that organises, show them this *Briefing*.

Next time they tell you that the Right aren't afraid of our *ideas*, it's just our *organising* they object to — show them this piece of intolerant humbug.

And, wherever these sort of people are in control, watch out for the witch-hunt — and fight it. For our answers to this drivel we refer you to all the past copies of *Labour Briefing*. This material is faithfully reproduced, with all emphases as in the original.

Dear

you may be interested to know that the campaign to re-elect Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley is underway in North Birmingham. There is no doubt that Neil and Roy will be elected, but the *size* of the victory will be important in determining press and public reaction to a potentially very damaging debate.

Following our outstanding success in the local elections, the standing of the Party is higher than it has been for a long time. The collapse of the Alliance vote gives us a political opportunity that may not come again.

The Bennite/Trotskyist factions have not and will not come to terms with the crippling electoral defeats that the party has suffered in three General Elections. They continue to denigrate the Party and its leaders on every occasion using the so-called Tory press as the vehicle for such attacks on a regular basis.

This is not therefore a simple exercise in democracy as they would have you believe. It is a calculated move to produce division and confrontation within the Party at a time when it has its first real hope of a significant electoral recovery. This kind of unnecesary divisiveness produces a mood of despair amongst many Party members and supporters.

It is for these and other reasons that the style of the North Birmingham Campaign is unashamedly aggressive. We must not continue to provide a ready store of ammunition for our opponents. A copy of our initial statement is attached. We would welcome offers of support and help. Funds are urgently required to finance meetings, postage and stationery. Cheques should be made payable to the TBEH Fund and sent to me.

Finally, we would like to compile a list of sponsors for the campaign. If you can help in this way, please let me know.

Best Wishes,
Ray Woods
Campaign Co-ordinator

LABOUR LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS
North Birmingham Campaign for the Re-election of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley
Questions and Answers

Q Why are we having this contest at all?
A BENNITE/TROTSKYIST elements of the Party believe that their brand of idealogical purity is more important than defeating Thatcher. They have been plotting to remove Neil and Roy since before the last General Election.

Q Why should we support Roy Hattersley as well as Neil Kinnock?
A We have no particular gripe against John Prescott. The removal of Roy Hattersley in this way would strengthen the hand of the Bennite/Trotskyist factions. Neil has made it clear that a vote against Roy is a vote against him. The worst fears of the public concerning the future political direction of the Party would have been re-awakened.

Q Isn't it democratic to have such elections?
A This is the *third* Thatcher term. Should we be spending our time and money in this way? The Bennite campaigns of the late '70s did as they were intended — *split* the Party from top to bottom, led to the formation of the SDP and opened the door for the disastrous defeats of the Labour Party in subsequent elections.

Q How can we stop this sort of thing happening again?
A The Bennite/Trotskyist left have forced the election. They must accept the price of failure and they must *not* be *forgiven*.

Our principles therefore echo the cries of many ordinary members of the Party and its supporters.

1) Support Neil and Roy in this election.

2) Ensure a *maximum* turnout in the Vote.

3) All organisations not eligible to affiliate to the Party must be disbanded. Examples would be Campaign Briefing, Labour Briefing, Socialist Action, Militant, etc, etc.

4)Labour MPs, Councillors and Officials must come off the fence. There is no future in the Party for those who believe appeasement is the way to deal with the Bennite/Trotskyist factions.

The best way to that you can help in the long term is to sign up your friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances into Party Membership. Application forms can be obtained by ringing 350-1337 before 7-00pm Mon-Fri.

Fighting the Poll Tax

Leadership scuppers chances

In Scotland the Poll Tax (*alias* the Community Charge) comes into force from April 1989.

In each Region, government-appointed Registration Officers are already in place, compiling lists of all residents over 18 years old.

By Tony Southall
Glasgow Pollok CLP

Teams of temporary workers are now going round the doors delivering complex forms for completion by the "Responsible Person" in each household — and returning to collect them later.

This has been done in collaboration with the mainly Labour-controlled Regional Councils. They have provided offices, organised the secondment of staff to administer the tax, and negotiated fees for the job through COSLA (Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities).

Thus the Labour Party in Scotland, despite formal opposition to the Tax, is involved in it up to its neck.

This was the first level at which resistance could have been organised — and it was conceded without a fight. The next level at which the labour movement's strength could have been used has also collapsed.

The local government unions could have wrecked the whole operation through a policy of non-collaboration. The recent decision of NALGO Conference appears, however, to be the death knell to any effective action.

The Scottish Labour Leadership's response has been ineffective. Last autumn they formed *Stop It*, a united front that included the SSLD, CP, STUC, several major churches, etc. It was pledged to use every constitutional means to oppose and frustrate the Tax.

Participate

The SNP refused to participate because the founding meeting wouldn't take up the call for non-payment. Of course, this was pure opportunism on the part of the Nats, but their jump from 14% in the General Election to 21% in the recent local elections shows results of such opportunism in the present climate.

Stop It's Leadership has now turned from propaganda against the Tax to witch-hunting attacks on local anti-Poll Tax Campaigns that have mushroomed in recent weeks (more than 30 in Glasgow alone at the last count).

A two page spread in the *Evening Times* in May claimed these were *Militant* fronts. In an accompanying interview, *Stop It* Chair Brian Wilson MP vowed that Labour would deal with these "Trotskyites".

A patronising line has surfaced in this debate (notably in an article by John Maxton MP in the *Glasgow Herald*) which tries to identify non-payment advocates as "middle class" misleaders.

These people will suffer no harm, the argument goes, because they will simply bank the unpaid tax. Their innocent victims on Social Security and in low paid jobs will end up paying the price.

Calling those working class people who refuse to register or to pay "dupes" is deeply insulting to those who should be receiving encouragement and leadership from the labour movement. It is an attempt to smear and dismiss out of hand those who recognise that only a mass campaign of non-registration and ultimately non-payment will stop the Tax.

The local Campaigns continue to provide the best example of sustained mass political action since the miners' strike. In East Pollokshields (where Labour Regional Councillor Margaret Dick has produced leaflets showing that the average household bill will be 250% of the curent rates) Pollokshields Against the Poll Tax (PAPT) is a real live force, including Labour, SNP, CP, WRP and SWP activists, church members and, crucially in Glasgow's most Asian area; representation of the Muslim and Hindu communities.

PAPT has a clear line of supporting any form of resistance to the Tax. We will try to organise support for anyone who refuses to register or pay.

We've also supported *Stop It's* campaign of frustrating registration by demanding answers to a series of questions. When canvassers are in the area we've been out warning people — and most have responded by not answering the door.

Recently our 300-strong march through the area was strongly welcomed by the populace. We have a regular newsletter and are currently canvassing for supporters to sign up to pay a minimum 10p a month to keep us going.

PAPT's activities are a model of what the Labour Party *could* but hasn't initiated everywhere. *Only* this kind of initiative can defeat the Tax. Instead of attacking people who're trying to turn the tide, Wilson, Maxton, et al should be backing every form of opposition and mobilising Labour to take the lead.

Scottish Labour Action

Climbing out of the swamp

Scottish Labour Action, a left group which split from LCC earlier this year, held a meeting in Edinburgh on June 18th at which a leadership was elected and a constitution adopted.

By Jim Niblock
Glasgow Central CLP

Before the members' meeting an open forum discussed opposition to the Poll Tax and the campaign for a Scottish Assembly.

SLA reaffirmed support for a mass non-payment campaign against the Poll Tax, linked to the demand for an Assembly.

SLA's influence seems to be growing within the Labour Party, but it remains a very mixed bag. Present at the meeting were six Labour MPs and apologies from others were read out.

Majority

Most of these MPs, like the majority of SLA members, come from the soft left; it does look as if the virtual collapse of LCC's base in Scotland has left several generals in search of an army.

Whether they can share the SLA bed seems doubtful, but one got the distinct impression that some were on a reconnaissance mission to see what SLA had to offer.

It's not possible to categorise SLA at present. Their break from the LCC remains partial and results from the political situation that developed in Scotland following the general election.

Their platform (printed previously in *Briefing*) will lead them into open conflict with the Leadership over the Poll Tax at Scottish Labour's recall conference in September. However, their criticism of the Leadership is based on self-preservation; they do not offer a socialist alternative.

It would be an oversimplification to define the SLA as merely the LCC in new clothes; we should certainly support their stance on the Poll Tax. But the best way to ensure SLA does not slip back into the soft left swamp is to build the Campaign Group in Scotland.

Here, a *quid pro quo* is required. Quite simply, the Campaign Group will not become a serious organisation in Scotland until it adopts a correct analysis of the importance of a Scottish Assembly.

Campaign Against Strip-searching

Hidden abuses come to light

The Scottish Campaign Against Strip Searches has highlighted two recent incidents in Scotland.

A party of young women — single parents and a youth worker — were all subjected to customs checks of their luggage at Edinburgh airport, and then were all strip-searched.

By Margaret Stewart
SCASS

They had been taking a short break in Amsterdam — after months of saving up. One of the women was six months pregnant.

When they asked to know their rights they were told to "shut up". Pointed remarks were made because the women came from a deprived area. Nothing was found and after one and a half hours delay the women were allowed to leave.

Police in Dundee, searching for cannabis stolen from a police station, swooped on a public house. One young woman, whose baby was due in ten days time, was taken by a woman police officer into a toilet and made to strip and bend over (to be looked at "inside").

Three female bar staff were also strip-searched on the premises and three men were strip-searched at the police station.

How many incidents like this happen that we know nothing about? Publicity and campaigning need to be increased.

The Scottish Campaign has now produced an Information Pack on where and when strip searching takes place, advice on rights when arrested, on being stopped at customs, a model resolution, petition, sample letters to MPs, Councilors, etc., and a useful contact list.

The Scottish Campaign would like to hear from anyone who has been strip-searched. Obviously, we would treat this information as confidential.

We believe strip-searching is a sexual assault, tantamount to rape, as well as a gross violation of human rights.

For further information contact Margaret Stewart, 36 Queen Street (Top Flat), Stirling, FK8 1HN. The Information Pack on Strip Searching is available for £2 (including p&p) from the same address.



PHOTO: Derek Speirs (IFL)

International Women's Day 1980. Outside Armagh jail.

Haringey witch-hunt

Right take the road to isolation

Ructions have followed the ouster of Mandy Mudd as the democratically-selected Labour candidate in the Bruce Grove by-election and the imposition of right wing witch-hunter Ian Willmore.

On Wednesday June 22nd, the right wing (LCC) officers of Tottenham CLP resigned. The week before, the GC had voted decisively to condemn their part in Mandy's removal.

By Mike Marqusee Haringey Labour Briefing

With their support falling away day by day, the officers were left with no choice at all. Nothing became their tenure in power so much as their prompt resignation.

The left now looks set for a comeback in Tottenham. Elections to fill the vacancies will be held at the July GC.



The illustrations from the Haringey leaflet. Top: white woman walks the streets at night. Above: woman talks to representative of the very force which provoked Cynthia Jarrett's death.



Both Haringey GCs voted on the on the night of June 22nd to nominate Benn and Heffer, a surprise development that signals increasing local opposition to the particularly virulent strain of the LCC which has distempered Haringey Labour politics of late.

Meanwhile, candidate Willmore has issued a leaflet to all voters in Bruce Grove which has enraged local Party members. Under the headline "Preventing Crime" it says:

"Vandalism makes Bruce Grove a worse place to live. Muggings and poor street lighting mean women and old people are worried about going out.

Ian Willmore will work with local people and the local police. He wants to use the Council's money to help local people stop crime and vandalism.

'The Government hasn't given Haringey Council the money to fight crime properly,' says Ian. 'So it's up to us.'

Labour will back crime prevention schemes, and work with local people to deal with vandalism. We need to stop it if we can, and clear it up fast if we can't.

The streets must be made safer. We can all play a part — by reporting faulty street lights, by getting the police back on the local beat."

This message is accompanied by two photographs. One shows an elderly white woman talking to a friendly local police officer. The other shows a young white woman walking alone down a dark street.

Tories

If it didn't say "Labour" on it (if it didn't have the rose...) you'd assume the leaflet came from the Tories — or worse.

Bruce Grove has one of the highest proportions of black voters in North London. Willmore is being offered to these voters as a replacement for Bernie Grant MP.

Party members across the country — black and white — should lodge protests with Ian Willmore, c/o Tottenham Labour Party, 147a West Green Road, London N15.

Mandy is now waiting for the NCC to set a date for her hearing, expected some time this summer. She intends to contest the trumped-up charges with vigour.

Having witnessed the recent antics of her accusers, local Party members are increasingly rallying to her defence.

Briefing

Money is urgently needed! Yes, *Briefing* readers have many calls on their (mostly empty) pockets, but, remember, Mandy's real "crime" was fighting the cuts — and building *Labour Briefing*!

Send contributions to Haringey Against the Witch-hunt, c/o Ian Lund, 23 Earlsmead Road, London N15.

Chesterfield Policy

Good-bye to all that — and more

At Chesterfield, the Mental Health Policy Group issued a powerful statement.

It supported the SHA's recent document on mental health *Good-bye to all that*, but urged that its proposals include immediate abolition of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and public ownership of the drug industry.

"We reject the current emphasis on illness, labelling, drugs, ECT and institutionalisation, which serves to disguise our collective pain as medical problems of the individual," the statement declared.

"We urge the labour movement to support user involvement in the planning and management of services based on choice of service and the meeting of basic human needs for companionship, housing, employment and freedom from discrimination.

"We urge the abandonment of terms like 'crazy', 'schizophrenic' and 'mentally ill'.

"We call for a campaign to close all mental institutions, with no redundancies, and for properly funded, democratically controlled community care programmes."

Reporting on the work of the policy group to the final plenary session, convenor David Hill made a number of telling points.

"Many of you will have been branded as loony left during the past two years," he said. "If you haven't you probably haven't been working hard enough!

"But I would ask you to think what the term actually means. It doesn't mean you're wrong; it means that what you're saying means absolutely nothing. That many be annoying to us, but there are millions of people around the world whose entire lives are dismissed as meaningless by terms like 'loony', 'schizophrenic' and 'mentally ill'.

Derogatory

"We hope that you will come to understand that such terms are as divisive and derogatory as words like 'nigger' and 'queer'.

"We are determined to return again and again until we have socialist policies for caring, based on people, not on suppressing feelings with chemicals and electricity or on drug company profits."

For more information contact David Hill, c/o Labour Briefing, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ.

Militant's Ally Pally Rally

Razzmatazz Tendency



PHOTO: Militant

Ted Grant addresses the Militant rally in front of the vast portrait of Trotsky. What was that Trotsky said about the cult of the personality when pictures of Stalin started bedecking the Soviet Union?

Billed as "Marxism and Razzmatazz" the national *Militant* Rally 1988 promised an unprecedented political extravaganza.

What it delivered was just one of 57 varieties of socialism and a damp-squib, high-tech presentation which (like the fireworks) failed to go off as planned.

The setting was splendid, if rather bizarre. Across the opulent bourgeois interiors of Alexandra Palace were displayed the banners of a different class, huge and scarlet.

By our Briefing mole

Marx, Engels, and Lenin were dwarfed by a vast portrait of the man himself, Leon Trotsky, handsome and powerful in broadbrush red — our guru for the afternoon.

The audience, 7,500 strong, mostly white working class youth, the majority women, filled a hall the size of four football pitches. It was an impressive political achievement (three times the size of Chesterfield only a week before).

Unlike Chesterfield, these comrades were given no chance to contribute anything (except money) to the day's proceedings. The only role of the thousands present was, quite literally, to flag-wave for the Tendency's white male heroes.

Peter Taafe, John Macreadie, and Tony Mulhearn led the way with familiar fighting rhetoric to rouse the rabble. Only Ted Grant, *Militant's* elder statesperson and "major Marxist theoretician", let the side down. Like some ramshackle academic, he snuffled, sneezed, and hoisted up his trousers during the delivery of an esoteric lecture which seemed only to perplex the eager young comrades.

Nonetheless, hundreds of red flags were produced from under seats to greet his arrival, as though the Royal Family were in town.

This personal adulation reached its peak around the dynasty of Leon Trotsky. The voice of Trotsky's grandson Esteban Volkov (live from Mexico via telephone linkup) was heralded as though it were Trotsky himself. His great-granddaughter addressed the rally in person, evoking the kind of ecstasy in young women with bleached hair and snow-wash denims usually reserved for Madonna.

This cult of the personality around a political leader who spent his life fighting such excesses seemed perverse and even rather obscene.

Backdrop

The backdrop to all this excitement was a clumsily staged battery of special effects (dry ice, electronic music, fireworks, videos) which gave the serious political proceedings the air of a badly-managed rock concert.

The display reached its epitome during the day's unlikely peak experience — the fundraising appeal. Outstripping even Trotsky's grandson in the mass hysteria stakes, this was a cynically cool exercise in crowd control, taking the form of a bizarre adaptation of "The Price is Right".

As frantic messages spelling "*Militant* Appeal", "£££", and "Money, Money, Money" leapt onto giant screens, the chair/compere called "Come On Down!" to the collectors and thousands of pounds moved the length of the Great Hall into the organisation's hungry coffers.

The faithful sent in personal messages with their gifts — £5,500 from a house sale, £500 from a redundancy payment, and, more poignantly, a week's dole money from an unemployed youth and a disabled peson's mobility allowance. The more sacrifical the offering, the more excited the fundraiser became ("a historic donation").

Offered

You got the feeling that if a granny had stood up and offered to commit hara kiri in order to donate her life assurance to the cause, the crowd would gladly have taken her up on it.

When the flashing messages on the video screens declared the £50,000 target had been overshot by a thousand pounds, the compere's voice was drowned out by stamping applause, whistles, and the unmistakeable sound of a woman's scream.

Cheerful

And so, after a cheerful rendition of the "Internationale", the day came to an end with many questions still unanswered.

- Had the absent Derek Hatton been eliminated by a dud firework?
- Did the Tendency's youth project extend to the 300 children in "the largest creche in labour movement history"?
- Why was "Cuddly" Ted Grant the only comrade not to have discovered the *Next for Men* catalogue?
- And (just to put it all in context) will 7,500 comrades attend the *Briefing* AGM?

South Africa

ANC

The Freedom Charter of South Africa

The *Freedom Charter* was unanimously adopted at a "Congress of the People", held in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, on June 25-26th 1955.

The Congress was convened by the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured Peoples' Organisation and the Congress of Democrats (an organisation of whites supporting the liberation movement). It was attended by 2,888 delegates from throughout South Africa.

The Charter was adopted by the four sponsoring organisations as their policy and became a manifesto of their struggle for freedom.

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

- that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;
- that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;
- that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;
- that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief.

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white together — equals, countrymen and brothers — adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes set out here have been won.

The People shall govern!
Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws.

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country.

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex.

Bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, Councils and Authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

All national groups shall have equal rights!
There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races.

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs.

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride.

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime.

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The people shall share in the country's wealth!
The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people.

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people.

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The land shall be shared among those who work it!
Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger.

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers.

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land.

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose.

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All shall be equal before the law!
No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial.

No one shall be condemned by the order of any government official.

The courts shall be representative of all the people.

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance.

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people.

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All shall enjoy human rights!
The law shall guarantee to all their rights to speak, to organise, to meet together, to punish, to preach, to worship and to eduacte their children.

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law.

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province and from South Africa abroad.

Pass Laws, permits, and all other laws restricting freedoms, shall be abolished.

There shall be work and security!
All who work shall be free to form unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers.

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits.

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work.

There shall be a forty hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers.

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers, and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work.

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened!
The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life.

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands.

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace.

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal, and equal for all children.

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit.

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan.

Teachers shall have the rights of other citizens.

The colour bar in culutral life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There shall be houses, security, and comfort!
All people shall have the rights to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort, and security.

Unused housing space shall be made available to the people.

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry.

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state.

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres.

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state.

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all.

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished, and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of nations.

There shall be peace and friendship!
South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation — not war.

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all.

The people of the protectorates — Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland — shall be free to decide for themselves their own future.

The rights of all the people of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all who love their people and the country now say, as we say here:

These freedoms we wil fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty.

Nelson Mandela

Freedom March

Glasgow to London 600 miles

On June 12th 1988, the second anniversary of the imposition of the State of Emergency in South Africa, the Neslon Mandela Freedom March started from Glasgow.

The 25 marchers — each one symbolising one year of the 25 years spent in prison by Mandela's co-accused at the Rivonia Trial of 1964 — call for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all South African and Namibian political prisoners.

Amongst the Freedom Marchers will be a number of former apartheid political prisoners — one South African, one Namibian, one British — as well as representatives of the Liberation Movements of Southern Africa: the African National Congress and the South West African People's Organisation of Namibia.

It is vital that the people of Britain demonstrate their support for Nelson Mandela's unconditional release. You can:

- **Join the Freedom Marchers as they pass through your town.**
- **March the final leg of the Nelson Mandela Freedom March on Sunday July 17th from Finsbury Park to Hyde Park, and attend the Rally in Hyde Park on that day.**
- **Wear the "Free Nelson Mandela" Badge with pride on his 70th birthday on July 18th.**

Free Mandela! Free Namibia! Free South Africa! Sanctions now!

For badges (50p each), or to join the Anti-Apartheid Movement (waged £10, joint membership £13, unwaged £4.50, students £6.50 — cheques payable to the AAM) contact Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW, 01 387 7966.

Resistance i

BUILD A MOVEM AGAINS APARTH

Anti-apartheid activists from all over the July 17th celebrations of Nelson M apartheid movement still needs to be b the resistance in South Africa and at h liberation movement provide a lead f

We also publish the programmatic p organisations, the Freedom Charter o extract from a speech by Haroun Pate which deals with the position of AZA revolution.

Is unit



Oliver Tambo addresses the rally in Glasgow, as the Mandel
Has "glasnost" reached the ANC?

n South Africa

A MASS ENT T HEID!

Britain will be converging on London for landela's birthday. But a mass anti- uilt in Britain. We look at the state of ow the recent debates within the or the building of the movement here. ositions of two of the liberation the African National Congress, and an l of the Azanian People's Organisation PO on the coming South African

AZAPO

The nature of the struggle

The Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) was founded in 1978, against a backdrop of increased repression of the movement towards self-determination. Perceiving political limitations in the mainstream African nationalism of the 1960s it sought to unify black consciousness and socialist class analysis.

The struggle for national liberation in Azania is not simply a struggle for self-determination from colonial rule, but also constitutes a class struggle between the two antagonistic forces of capitalism and socialism.

In Azania, the forces of socialism will have to engage and fight not only the ruling class, but also that element of the black petit-bourgeoisie as represented by the bantustan leaders, and black business leaders.

This reactionary class has been a calculated creation of the Botha regime to serve as a buffer between the racist minority regime and the black working class.

In our view, the struggle for national liberation in Azania, has to be directed against national oppression and economic exploitation. The socialist revolution has to be fought on the realisation that an imperialist victory over the Azanian people is highly unlikely, but that imperialism and its agents haave embarked on a strategy to end colonialism in such a way as to entrench neo-colonialism.

Strategy

This strategy is manifested in the support given to the idea of a national convention, or any other form of negotiated settlement.

The dismantling of apartheid will not in itself bring about a socialist revolution. The consummation of the national liberation struggle in Azania can only be effected if and when,

- first, the remnants of the neo-colonial bureaucratic capitalist state machinery have been completely smashed,
- and second, when the transfer of political power to the black working class is effected, the latter will then transform the property relations of society in the interests of the majority (namely the workers and peasants) who must not exercise control in name only, but also in fact.

In Azania this would mean addressing oneself to:

- the land question, with its related problems of forced removals, balcanisation and bantustanisation;
- the ownership of capital which today rests with multinational corporations and local capitalists, and,
- the workers' ownership of the means of production in Azania.

These constitute the minimum contents of a programme which seriously contemplates a socialist revolution in Azania.

Socially

At this point, let me state that those of us who are politically, socially, economically, psychologically and otherwise of a black character would, without any apology whatsoever, remind the "multi-racials" that the struggle in Azania has alway been and will always remain a struggle for majority rule — not only in terms of the numerical strength of blacks, but equally important, in terms of whether effective political power will rest with the workers who constitute the natural majority of any given society and in our society it is black people.



Steve Bantu Biko (above) remains the figure most associated with Black Consciousness. AZAPO traces its roots back to this movement.

(Speech given by Haroun Patel on European tour in Spring 1987 as agreed by Central Committee. Patel is now General Secretary.)

y between NACTU and COSATU on the agenda?

Unions lead the battle against Botha



reedom Marchers start their walk.

The three day general strike on June 6-8th was a historic action by South Africa's black workers.

It was the largest action of its type in the country's history.

By Steve Potter
Norwood CLP

It confirmed that the black independent trade union movement has become the spinal cord of the resistance to the apartheid regime.

This role was previously played by community based organisations, particularly the United Democratic Front (initiated by the ANC). However, the two years of the State of Emergency have taken their toll.

More than 2,000 people have been killed and about 30,000 imprisoned. The pressure was increased with the banning orders on 17 political organisations, including the UDF and AZAPO, on February 24th this year.

The same order hit the main union confederation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), prohibiting the organisation from calling for political action. Yet the State of Emergency, now renewed for a further year, has had surprisingly little impact on the basic structures of the union movement.

Membership of the whole independent trade union movement now stands at about 1.3 million workers, some 40% of the economically active population of the country. This figure compares favourably with trade union membership in Britain and is above many European labour movements.

Not only is membership still increasing, militancy is also on the rise. In 1986, the number of strike days was 1.3 million. In 1987, despite the calling of the State of Emergency and the arrest of many rank and file trade unionists, the figure rose to 9 million.

Behind these statistics are major strikes in the public sector (particularly rail and post), as well as in the retail trade, engineering and chemicals. It is these strikes that accounted for the spectacular rise in average wages of COSATU members of 18%, far ahead of those won by any other sector of workers, including whites.

Not all strikes were victories of course. The consequences of the defeat of the miners' strike of August 1987 are still very present, as the weak response of the National Union of Mineworkers to the recent stayaway showed.

Generally, however, militancy has not only been maintained — in strongly organised rank and file based unions like the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), detentions of leading figures locally and nationally have not broken the union: others have come forward to fill the gaps.

But weaknesses remain. Not only in relation to those workers as yet unorganised, or in membership of the "official" white trade unions or the scab organisations of Inkatha, but also in relation to the lack of unity with the independent trade union movement itself.

While COSATU plays a predominant role nationally, NACTU has important and well organised groups of members in a number of different industries. Pressure for unity is now growing in the workplace.

In March 1988 an agreement for united work was reached in the metal industry between NUMSA and two NACTU unions, and similar moves have taken place in the chemicals industry where NACTU has the majority of members.

At a national level, the urgency for a united response to the new labour laws has forced the question onto the agenda. The government has won the support of bosses for the new legislation which would:

- outlaw strikes "for the same or a similar reason less than a year after the first work stoppage";
- mean that unions can be prosecuted for damages caused by unofficial action (a direct steal from Thatcher!);
- make days of action illegal and unions liable to prosecution if they call them;
- enable employers to negotiate with minority unions in plants, in an attempt to break down closed shops established by COSATU and NACTU unions and open up the way to Inkatha unions;
- make firing easier, overthrowing seniority criteria.

However, the task of establishing a fighting unity against these attacks between the two federations will be a difficult one. The unions now grouped in NACTU, which can broadly be considered to be associated with the ideas of black consciousness, refused to participate in the founding conference of COSATU, using the largely spurious excuse that the COSATU unions were dominated by white cadres.

However, more recently, NACTU has issued several calls for unity between itself and COSATU. These calls have met with a frosty response from the majority of the Leadership of COSATU, which has defined the scope of united front action through the perspective of those forces which support the Freedom Charter, the programme of the African National Congress.

This was the stand taken by last year's COSATU Congress, which adopted the Freedom Charter as part of the programme of COSATU itself.

But this year's COSATU congress showed a marked step away from this position with the majority of delegates voting for an appeal for "a conference bringing together a broad range of anti-apartheid organisations to concentrate on opposition to repression and apartheid."

This position of not making acceptance of the Freedom Charter (and thereby, by implication, the Leadership of the ANC) a precondition for united action now seems to have been endorsed by the ANC itself.

Shortly before the COSATU congress took place, a delegation from NACTU travelled to Harare for an official meeting with the Leadership of the ANC. NACTU was met by a top-level delegation headed by the ANC General Secretary Alfred Nzo; and a subsequent joint communique stated, "there is more uniting us than dividing us."

Some newspapers commented afterwards that this seemed an attempt by the ANC externally to call to order the sectarian attitude of some of its supporters, not only within COSATU, but in relation to the liberation movement more generally.

Whatever the case, the meeting had its impact on the Conference. The anti-apartheid Conference called by COSATU would not be on the precondition that all accepted the Freedom Charter, but "on the basis of disciplined mandates, democracy and free and open debate."

Other resolutions also reflected this spirit, such as the decision to form Industrial Area Committees that could organise local communities around campaigns led by the unions — a step towards replacing the vacuum which has existed with the weakening of the UDF and other popular forms of organisation.

These developments mark the recognition that the process of political recomposition within the liberation movement is very far from finished. The adoption by the ANC of a more pluralistic aproach to the question of united action within the resistance marks a break with the practices of recent years.

Such practices are not restricted to the situation within South Africa. Within the anti-apartheid movement in this country, failure to adopt a practice in line with A-AM's formal position of supporting all those forces fighting against apartheid, has resulted in splits and divisions which have diverted from the task of building the mass movement in the labour movement, the black community and amongst youth.

The failure to adopt a straightforward position on the question of the unions encouraging the closest possible links between South African unions and their British counterparts has put the A-AM at loggerheads with the TUC and several prominent unions such as the transport workers.

The insistence, for example, that all aid be channelled through the ANC-linked South African Congress of Trade Unions, on grounds of "security", has been rebutted on frequent occasions by the South African unions concerned.

Likewise, the scandalous boycotting and attempted sabotage of the Moses Mayekiso campaign by A-A ha. aroused incomprehension and then anger from national unions such as the NUJ, as well as the campaign's many supporters in the USA and Europe.

Again the picture seems to be changing slowly. There is a perception that the Moses Mayekiso issue was handled "immaturely", and the proposals to incorporate the campaign into the events surrounding the Mandela march was a welcome, if limited, step forward.

The A-AM Leadership has to realise that until it changes its sectarian attitude towards the black consciousness and other non-ANC traditions their capacity to build in the black community will be greatly hampered.

If there is a pluralist wind of change blowing from South Africa, it can only strengthen the movement here.

Features

Orange celebrations in Exeter

How the Falklands Fracas entered the fray



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

How can we fight this shady alliance of fascists, the police and the state? Crucial is following the call from organisations like Anti-Fascist Action, and Broadwater Farm (above), to unite our forces.

Like other Cathedrals, Exeter's is bedecked with the decaying standards and battle-honours of the Devonshire Regiment and earlier (now disbanded) military formations raised in the county.

These flags, of course, never were "unfurled in the strife unblessed" since our cause was always (arrogantly assumed) to be "right". God (being male and white) was *always* on our side.

By Chris Churchward
Ex-sergeant, British Army, Feb. 1941-Aug 1946
Local Contact for Ex-Services CND Group (personal capacity)
Devon Labour Briefing

In his weekly "sound off" column, the right wing editor of the *Exeter Leader*, a weekly free sheet, refers to "militants" hi-jacking the Tercentenary Celebrations.

He comes (reluctantly) to the conclusion that ugly confrontations in Exeter are increasingly likely in September.

He wants the Police to "blow the whistle" — and ban both the marches of the Orange Order and of Anti-Fascist Action.

He also reports on the first of the Celebration events in Exeter — the much vaunted (by the local Labour Party) "Flower Festival" in Exeter Cathedral.

Labour has replied to its critics by stressing the entirely inoffensive and non-political nature of this event, but the fact is it has been "hi-jacked" by the imperialists and militarists.

Now, by some remarkable mental contortion, the "authorities", whether of Church or State, find it convenient to link the fracas in the South Atlantic with William and Mary. Personally, I'm too obtuse to see what the connection is between Thatcher's Bloody War and the "Bloodless" (though not in Ireland!) Revolution of 1688.

The Devon and Dorset Regiment was the one in which Colonel "H" Jones served as a Second Lieutenant before progressing (is that the term?) to the Paras, gaining exalted rank, getting himself killed in an act of bravado, and being posthumously decorated and declared one of Thatcher's "heroes".

Tony Benn has got it right when he advocates the disestablishment of the Church of England. It is disgusting that the Labour-led Exeter City Cuncil, and the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral, can lend themselves to this exploitation of the "Falklands Factor".

Counter-demo success in Chesterfield

Making their first public appearances of 1988, National Front members joined Ulster loyalists in an Orange Celebration march in Chesterfield on June 18th.

By DAN CARTER

A counter-demonstration, organised by the umbrella Campaign Against Loyalist/Fascist Parades (including Anti-Fascist Action, Labour Committee on Ireland, and Troops Out) was some three times larger than the 300-strong loyalist march.

FASCIST FREE
Anti-Fascist Action 505
PO Box 370 London E7 8US
ZONE

Chesterfield Labour Council, like its counterparts in Exeter, have provided the impetus for the Orange parades by their willing participation in the William of Orange tercentenary celebrations.

All anti-fascists should now be preparing to mobilise for the public activities in Exeter in September.

Labour Students Left Caucus

Calling all socialist students!

The Left Caucus of Manchester Polytechnic Labour Club has issued a draft programme for discussion amongst socialist students looking for a new way of organising the student left in a non-sectarian manner.

The following is the introductory statement of general principles.

An initial meeting to set up a left group along these lines is being considered for September. Any students interested in receiving copies of the full document, getting more information, or becoming involved should contact: Roland Wood, 22 St Hilda's Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 9PQ. 061-872-3258 (01-641-4158 after July 31).

Labour Students Left Caucus is a radical new formation inside NOLS and NUS based in Manchester.

Our starting point is a rejection of the bankrupt Leadership of NOLS as well as the inadequate SSiN opposition. Though we are very small and only just beginning to organise, we feel it is necessary to begin the struggle for a new alternative Leadership in NUS.

We are a hard left campaigning and democratic organisation fighting for socialism. This means we demand a Leadership that is willing to fight against the Tory government's attacks on education and student living standards, actively promoting rank and file action and the widest possible involvement of NUS members in this struggle.

We are also fighting for a Socialist Labour government which will promote socialism and working class interests as firmly as Thatcher represents the interests of her class.

We are internationalists. We therefore uncompromisingly support:

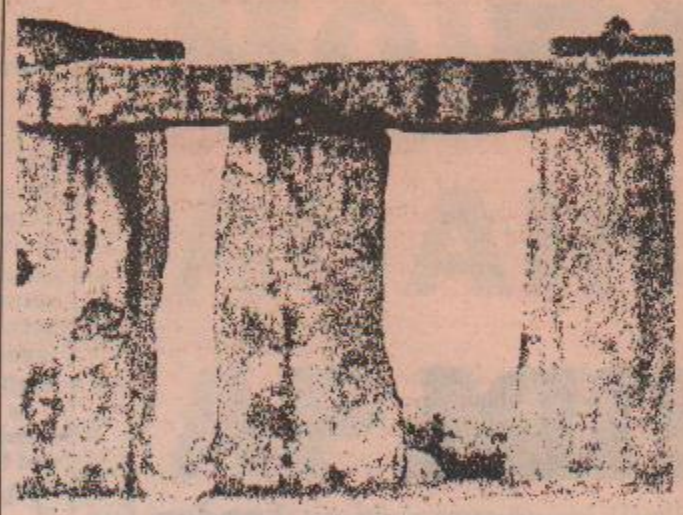
- self determination for the Irish people and a united Ireland;
- majority rule in South Africa and an end to the Apartheid system;
- self-determination for the Palestinian people and the recognition of the PLO as their legitimate representatives;
- the Nicaraguan people's struggle for survival against US imperialism;
- and support for the struggles of oppressed peoples the world over.

We are not dogmatists or sectarians, but we believe that these demands are the bottom line as basic socialist principles.

In our view NUS is dominated by various shades of bureaucracy and careerism. We consider bureaucracy and careerism to be obstacles towards the proper functioning of mass participatory movements.

We are therefore against all manifestations of self-interest in the Leadership of the union, as we are opposed to manoeuvre and deceit to gain political advantage. Only an honest and democratic movement can defeat the Tory attacks and play a role in the fight for socialism.

Behind the Battle of the Stones



This letter has been sent to the police officer in charge of the police attack on the crowds who made their way to Stonehenge for this year's summer solstice by a traveller who was trying to attend the celebrations.

Dear Mr Smith,

When Mr Cook was in charge of the Solstice celebration last year, there was no battle. I negotiated with English Heritage (with a man from the NCCL acting as mediator) for a hired coach to collect the disabled, pregnant women and young children from the sites and take them to the Stones, *not* because I feared a violent confrontation, but because some of us can't walk 12 miles, including myself, as I am confined to a wheelchair.

I assumed from the helpful response of English Heritage in their willingness to provide transport, that the walkers would be allowed into the Stones, as in 1987.

I was parked up on the smaller site near the Parkhouse roundabout. I informed everyone on site that the attitude of English Heritage was positive and that those genuinely unable to walk could have a seat on the bus.

Kevin Oubridge, aged 10, son of Brig who is Chair of the Green Party, was planning to come on the bus with us, but at the last moment he opted to walk.

He ended up having two narrow escapes, once when a descending truncheon was separated from his head by one person only, and later when the police caused the walkers to flee.

He was almost trampled in the retreat.

Women were coming out of that situation terrified, especially if they had taken children with them.

There were no grounds for any of us to assume what you were planning. If you were a general, then you would need congratulating for playing your cards so tight to your chest that your "enemy" failed to read your mind.

But senior police officers are supposed to be above this simplistic "us and them" mentality.

I didn't read your mind till too late. The local news reports on the radio had been reporting developments in completely non-emotive language until midnight, when we were suddenly referred to as an army.

That's when I knew you were preparing a scenario of confrontation.

I have heard both the new-age travellers and the local rate-payers comment that the whole police operation is a stupid waste of money, but I think it is both intelligent and sinister.

It gives you a rare training opportunity to turn your lads into mindless militaristic robots capable of hurting women and children!

So what if the office in charge on the ground cannot keep control because his voice is drowned out by the din of helicopters? It's all good practice for the lads and therefore well worth the money.

A friend of mine claims to have observed plain clothes police agents provocateurs in the front of the crowd.

I used to do police liaison work for local CND in Befordshire, so I have some understanding of the breadth of personal discretion among senior officers. It was certainly within your power to choose peace or war at the Stones.

In July or August 1985, Mr Grundy wrote to me saying that he hoped I would never again have cause to complain about the conduct of police officers in Wiltshire. Well, this time I am complaining about attitudes at the highest level.

I cannot expect you to feel what we feel for the Stones. It is a religious experience and therefore difficult to communicate to a non-believer.

You are about to leave Wiltshire. What sort of prejudices will you hand on to your successor?

Is the battle of the Beaufield and the battle of the Stones just a beginning in a protracted war in which the police can have the yearly pleasure of practising the tactics of confrontation?

Child Custody Scandal

"Loving mothers" become "evil lesbians"

Not the least sensational issue thrown up by the Cleveland child abuse inquiry is the allegation that innocent parents have been deprived of their children.

For this, the manipulative tabloid press blame over-zealous doctors, social workers, and judges.

But similar concern seems singlularly lacking when it comes to another group of innocent parents — lesbian mothers — whose children are routinely taken from them by the courts.

According to the Lesbian Custody Project, every year at least 30 women are legally denied custody of their children — simply because of their sexuality.

These women are not accused of abusing their children. Their love and care for them is not disputed.

At the end of the day, however, all their positive attributes as mothers count for little. Their lesbianism alone is sufficient for judges to deem them unift mothers.

A survey by the Lesbian Custody Project found widespread judicial ignorance, prejudice, and bias. According to the survey, where conflicting evidence was given by father and mother, judges were included to favour the fathers' side.

They also gave greater weight to psychological and welfare reports favourable to the father's case. As a result, fathers tended to get custody, sometimes in spite of a history of personality problems and violence.

According to one lesbian mother: "The feelings, wishes and welfare of my children, and what was best for them, was not taken into account at all. The object of the exercise seemed to be to punish me for doing wrong (i.e. being a lesbian) by depriving me of my children."

In cases where fathers were given custody, the woman's access rights were often restricted by stringent conditions: they had to keep their lesbianism a secret from the children, they were forbidden to go to the children's school, and their lovers were not allowed to be present during visits.

Describing her ordeal in court and the subsequent supervision order placed upon her, one woman said that she and her lover were made to feel that they were "the worst, most despicable criminals in the land".

Indeed, in the view of Lord Justice Wakins, delivering judgement in an appeal case in 1982, the granting of custody to a lesbian mother "can only be countenanced by the court when it is driven to the conclusion that there is, in the interests of the child, no other acceptable form of custody."

However, even the lack of acceptable alternative custody does not always tip the balance in the woman's favour. In one case, despite welfare reports which highlighted the father's "shortcomings" and the mother's "stronger character and discipline", the judge awarded custody of their six year old boy to the father.

"He is obviously a young man (28) and no doubt capable of development," the judge explained.

A 1978 appeal case involved a father who had won custody *despite* his admission of indulging in "abnormal sexual practices"; *despite* his lack of suitable accommodation for the children; *despite* welfare and pyschiatric reports which recommended custody for the mother; and *despite* the children's opposition to living with their father.

On appeal, Lord Justice Orr ruled that it was reasonable for the lower court judge to ignore the welfare report recommendations and to prefer the opinions of the father's psychiatrist over those of the psychiatrist appearing on behalf of the mother.

The other appeal judge, Lord Wilberforce, stressed the need for the courts to maintain "vigilence and severity" with regard to "the risk to children at critical stages being exposed or introduced to a way of life which might lead to severance from normal society, to psychological stresses and unhappiness, and possibly even to physical experiences which might scar them for life."

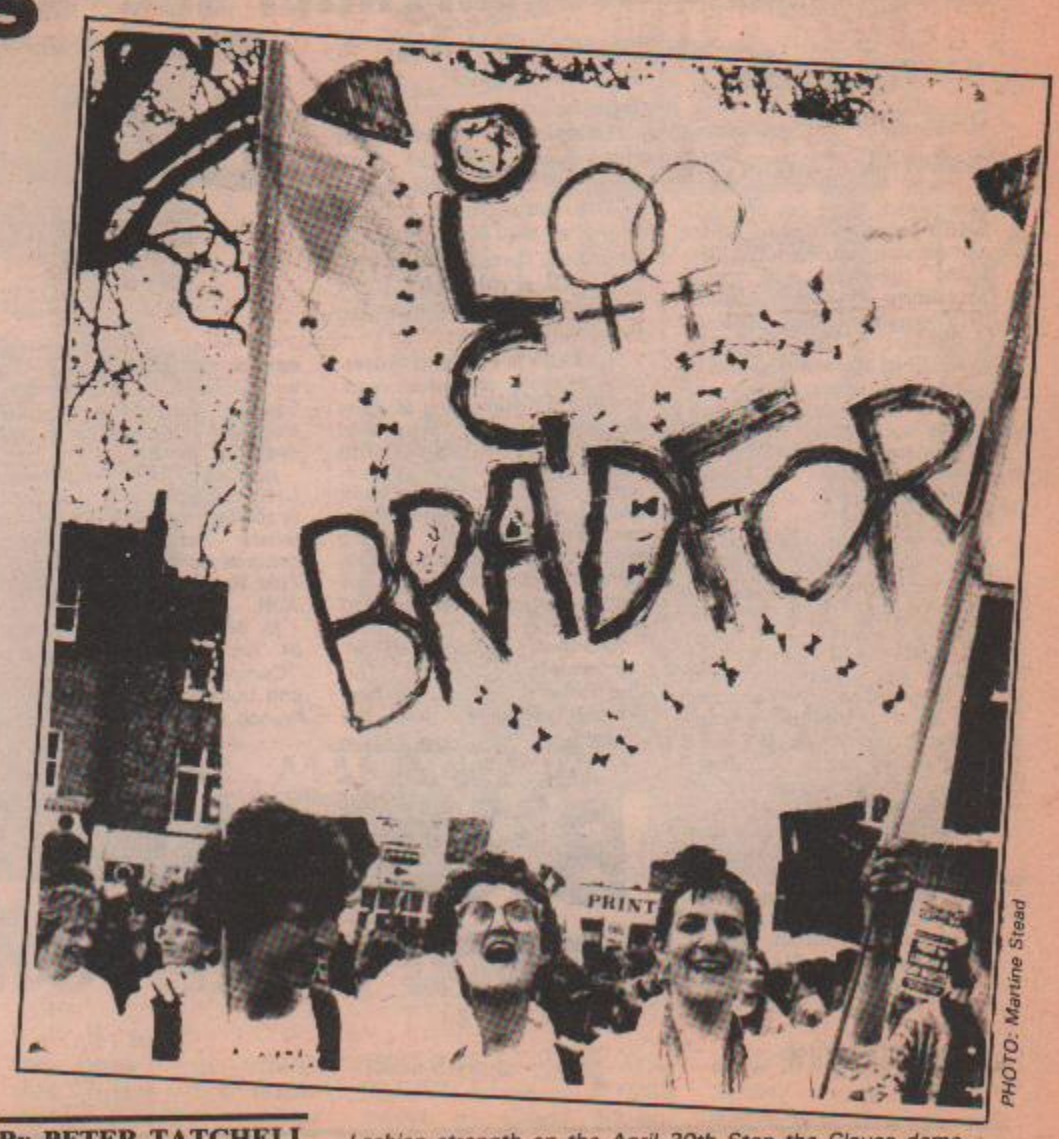


PHOTO: Martine Stead

Lesbian strength on the April 30th Stop the Clause demo

By PETER TATCHELL

One of the most overtly political rulings against a lesbian mother occurred in 1976. After conceding the quality of the woman's care and concern for her five year old son, the judge desribed the potential "damage" to the boy from living in a lesbian household as "inestimable".

It was essential, he said, that the boy "develop along strong, normal, masculine lines."

In refusing the mother custody, the judge declared that if people came to approve of lesbianism, "it would mean the decay of society... We definitely cannot have approval. It would be detrimental, anyone might be influenced if it were approved of."

Perhaps those who have shown such passionate commitment to the rights of Cleveland parents should now extend their crusade for justice to the many caring lesbian mothers who have been deprived of their children — for no other reason than their love for another woman.

Lesbian Mothers' Legal Handbook
***The Women's Press*, £3.95**

Lesbian Custody Group, c/o Rights of Women, 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1 (01 251 6576)

Speculum: a midwife's musings

By TESS KEWLEY SRN, SCM

Eating by numbers

People these days seem to want quick, easy meals.

The fact that a lot of refining and processing has to be done in order to make food quick and easy to prepare is often forgotten.

Apart from this, a great deal of food is *coloured* (to make it more attractive to the consumer) and certain foods are *irradiated* in order to prolong "shelf-life".

The manufacturers tell us that this is for the good of the consumer, so that food is safe to eat for longer. However, let's not forget who makes the profits when prawns, for example, are rendered "sterile" by irradiation.

Despite the fact that some men pay lip-service to "helping" with the housework, in mixed households it is, on the whole, the woman who does far and away the bulk of the chores, including shopping and cooking.

We mustn't forget that primarily we eat to remain alive, and that the addition of substances to make food attractive is unnecessary and indeed harmful in many cases.

Given that many women work outside the home, speed in preparation of meals is important; but so is nutrition. Food additives are, therefore, a women's issue!

Let's take a closer look at "E" numbers. An "E" number is awarded to additives in use in the EEC which have undergone safety checks. Many "E" numbers denote food additives which are entirely innocuous, e.g. E300, which is Vitamin C, used as an anti-oxidant, to prevent fatty foods becoming rancid.

However, many substances which have been awarded "E" numbers are not at all safe and cause a wide range of diseases. The artificial colourings E102-155 are azo dyes and are a prime cause of hyperactivity in children.

Some manufacturers are waking up to the idea that people don't want artificial colours of this nature and are starting to use safe natural alternative colourings which don't cause side effects. These are E160-172, and you should check the labels carefully before you buy.

Flavour enhancers (monosodium glutamate, for example) are under consideration for the "E" prefix, despite they fact that they cause quite unpleasant side effects, including nausea, palpitations, dizziness, and migraine-like symptoms.

Several "E" numbers are not permitted in foods intended for children under the age of 12, but manufacturers frequently ignore this directive.

The answer, of course, is to try to buy unprocessed food, organic vegetables, and to drink fresh fruit juice rather than squashes which proudly say "contains no artificial sweeteners, colourings or flavourings', but omit to mention that they call contain sulphite-based preservatives (usually E21 or 223) dangerous to asthmatics.

I remember writing to Rowntrees beause Smarties contained E320 (or maybe E321), an antioxidant not permitted in foods intended for babies or small children. I pointed out to the company that Smarties were aimed primarily at children.

Their response was that the orange Smartie was the only one treated with E320, because it made it taste better, and the orange Smartie is the most popular!

However, I have recently noticed that the additive is no longer being used in Smarties, so it shows that writing to manufacturers may be worthwhile — even if you get silly replies.

As for artificial sweeteners, "Nutra-Sweet" (aspartame) has never been proved safe. Indeed, it has been linked with serious diseases, such as cancers, as have saccharin and mannitol, which are also permitted sweeteners.

If you have to sweeten food, honey is best (or plain sucrose, in small quantities).

I'll admit here and now that the treatment of cancers and other serious diseases by diet is not a subject I know a great deal about, but it has worked for countless people, thus proving that diet plays an enormous role in our health and well-being.

We are a nation of heart disease sufferers. It can't be coincidence that we also consume vast quantities of "fast-food" — OK for the occasional snack, but highly unsuitable as a staple diet.



The miners' strike was a breakthrough in showing that eating can be a commual activity. Can we go a step further, and take control over what goes into our food?

Letter

WRITE BACK!

NATFHE breaks new ground

Dear *Briefing*,

The B. Weaver v. NATFHE case (which arose out of NATFHE's policy of refusing advice and assistance to members who make complaints of racial harassment on the grounds that such complaints might threaten the tenure of the member(s) complained against) has raised a number of issues outside the scope of the original complaint.

One such issue has arisen from the evidence submitted to both the Industrial and Appeal Tribunals, namely that NATFHE "would not support somebody where the member acknowledged that his conduct was unlawful, including breaches of the Race Relations Act."

The logic of this policy is that official union support would not be provided to any member who acted unlawfully by contravening trade union laws, such as secondary action in defence of the jobs or conditions of other trade unionists.

If complaints were made that members were acting unlawfully, and if they acknowledged that they were engaged in unlawful secondary action (which would be difficult not to acknowledge), NATFHE's policy would preclude the provision of advice and assistance to them.

Comradely greetings,
Gordon Weaver,
Birmingham

Building Briefing

Local Briefings

Bulletins launched in Nottingham and Birmingham

"Benn and Heffer — Robin Hood Rides Again!"

This is the headline of the first issue of *Nottingham Labour Briefing*.

The latest local supplement to the indispensable national fortnightly kicks off with a powerful front page statement backing Benn and Heffer.

"Unlike Kinnock and Hattersley/Prescott and their supporters," Nottingham *Briefing* supporters argue, "Benn and Heffer stand full square with the millions of people in Britain who believe in collective work and strength and who loudly condemn the Tory selfish, greedy, immoral 'loadsamoney' class exploiting the working people of Britain and the world."

And that's just for starters! Informative articles on Chesterfield, Viraj Mendis, Woman in Black Sections, the new Social Security Act, City and County Council politics, Section 28, local hospital closures, abortion rights, and the P&O strike follow.

It looks like *Nottingham Labour Briefing* will have plenty to offer independent left activists — or those who might become activists. **Contact 93 Zulu Road, Nottingham, NG7 7DR.**

In Birmingham, the demise of the (somewhat uneasy) "Campaign Briefing" group and bulletin has signalled the launch of *Birmingham Labour Briefing* with a broadsheet calling for support for the 20 Birmingham Labour Councillors suspended from the Labour Group for voting against cuts.

The Birmingham comrades set out a list of practical tasks and political demands and invite left Councillors and Party members to join in building a "united, democratic, socialist left".

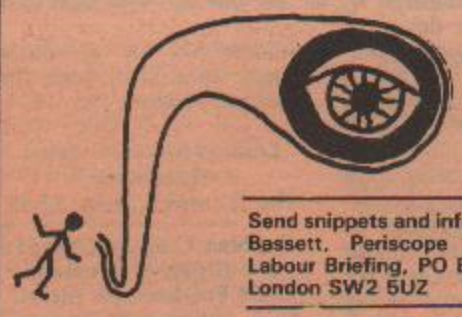
Contact John Wilton or Pauline Purnell, 25 World's End Avenue, Birmingham B32 1JF.


BIRMINGHAM LABOUR
BRIEFING
WHIP WITHDRAWN FROM 20
BIRMINGHAM LABOUR COUNCILLORS


NOTTINGHAM LABOUR
BRIEFING
NO. JUNE 1988
10p


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

Periscope



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

The hallowed free-market economy may not be serving Thatcher's property-owning democracy as effectively as is claimed.

House prices in the South East are rising so fast that even stereotypical middle class newly-weds can't get a foot onto the property ladder, let alone a foot across the threshold.

It's all a question of supply and demand. In their fervour to cut local government expenditure the Tories have drastically reduced the number of Council houses being built, thus reducing the overall housing stock supply.

The private sector expansion in house building has been insufficient to meet the overall demand. Thus, in 1978, 279,000 new houses were built, 130,000 Council and 149,000 in the private sector. In 1987, after eight years of free market Thatcherism, 203,000 new houses were built, 32,000 Council and 171,000 private sector — an overall drop of 76,000.

The same is apparently true in that other bastion of incremental cost-efficiency, the USA — land of the brave and (erstwhile) *home* of the free.

Home prices have more than doubled there in the past ten years and the proportion of people under 35 able to buy has fallen from 64% to 53%.

Never mind. Republican Senator Alphonse D'Amato of New York has an answer which will no doubt soon find its way into Thatcher's catechism on wealth and morality.

D'Amato's plan involves giving tax relief on money saved to buy a home. "If you give someone that opportunity," he says, "they'll work two jobs, three jobs, they'll make it."

Those of us finding it hard enough to hold down one job, or even find one at all, can only admire the innovative brilliance of this answer to the housing problem. Crisis? What crisis?

Socialist InAction

A West Midlands Regional Chesterfield planning meeting held on June 28th produced yet another bizarre example of the increasingly cranky politics of *Socialist Action*.

Nine comrades from *Socialist Action* turned up to the meeting in Birmingham — about the same number of *SA* supporters who turned up for the National Conference in Chesterfield — speaking for the Birmingham Campaign Group.

They denounced the Chesterfield initiative as a waste of time and lashed out at poor old *Labour Briefing*, the source of all evil in this great movement of ours.

Still, the *SA* brigade showed enough interest in the reviled Chesterfield process to use their one-off majority to vote to exclude non-Labour Party members from the West Midlands Regional Conference.

Wonder what the Socialist Conference's newly-elected National Steering Committee will make of that?

LGIU Puzzler

"Poll Tax will undercut democracy but any strategy based on illegality is a non-starter."

That's how the latest *Poll Tax News* (bulletin from the Local Government Information Unit) kicks off. Inspiring stuff.

Not surprisingly, one of the main topics at the annual LGIU Conference (Newcastle, July 8-10th) will be "how to nail the blame where it belongs when Poll Tax begins to hit home."

LGIU have already extended the deadline for the "People's Petition Against the Poll Tax" once. In the absence of any other strategy, perhaps they'll just spend the remaining years of Tory rule collecting signatures.

That is, if Labour Council cuts and trade union impoverishment don't close down the operation first.

Ashton reveals secret tolerance for a left activity shock

It was hot the Sunday two *Briefing* supporters went over to Kensington to canvass for the forthcoming by-election.

So hot, in fact, that one of them took his jacket off and slung it over a chair in the Committee Rooms — momentarily oblivious to the fact he'd left his *Briefing* Benn-Heffer badge staring out from the lapel.

Enter Terry Ashton — full time General Secretary of the Greater London Labour Party. Finding himself suddenly face to face with this infiltrating advert for evil Left Wing Opinions, our Terry demanded: "whose is that?"

"Mine," the *Briefing* supporter courageously admitted.

"Ah," rejoined the Ashton. "I wondered, because we've had people coming into Regional HQ trying to buy them."

I'm just an honest cop, guv

There was a break-in at the *Briefing* premises recently. Nothing was taken from — or even moved in — our office, but it was odd that in a multi-user building, our unit should be the one selected for forced entry.

When the local bobby made his way down from Brixton nick (his dress more suited to the tabolid image of a football hooligan than a respectable policeman — but that's another story) your office worker was moved to volunteer a list of people with an interest in breaking into the *Briefing* penthouse.

Hesitantly, your worker suggested that it was not unknown for MI5 to be interested in the likes of us.

"Don't ask us," CID replied, taking the suggestion much more seriously than the timid *Briefing* worker had dared to make it. "If it was them, we'd be the last to know!"

Postscript: Supporters will be glad to know that someone still has their priorities right.

On being told of the office intrusion, Graham Bash's first comment was "Did they take any papers?"

Scurrilous, Unfounded Rumours

No, it's not true that members of the *Briefing* Editorial Board put the brandy in Denzil Davies' coffee.

Nor were we responsible for the timing of the stockmarket crash — just weeks after Bryan Gould's innovatory acclamation of the virtues of share ownership.

And it is certainly not the case that we packed the meeting of the TGWU Executive which refused to endorse Kinnock's nomination.

Furthermore, we categorically deny the outrageous calumny that *Briefing* supporters bribed the judge in the Michael Meacher libel case.

However, we are prepared to accept full and legal responsibility for the bad weather that interrupted play on the first afternoon of the Third Test at Old Trafford.

If you don't like it, sue us!

SUBSCRIBE TO BRIEFING

Make sure of your copy of the fortnightly Labour Briefing. Annual subscriptions are £12 (individuals), £24 (institutions). Write to Labour Briefing, PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ (cheques, etc., payable to Labour Briefing).

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If you're a regular reader, you obviously feel the need to read each issue of *Briefing*. But why keep the good news to yourself?

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Trade Union Briefing, Youth Briefing, Student Briefing, Lesbian & Gay Briefing, Briefing Women and International Briefing.

Briefing Steering Committee:
Next meeting: Sunday July 24th
Briefing Editorial Board:
Next meeting: Friday July 8th.
Deadline for articles:
Issue no. 67 (out July 20th) notify EB as soon as possible, all articles in by Tuesday July 12th.
Issue no. 67 will be a summer special designed for sale over summer break. Contact EB/office for details.

BRIEFING 500 CLUB

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

The *Briefing* 500 Club exists to offer our supporters the opportunity of making a small regular donation and enter a fortnightly draw for a £25 prize — this for just £1 per week, or £4 per month. Will you spare the cost of a pint of beer of less than a packet of cigarettes each week? We can't guarantee you'll win the prize — but we will guarantee that unless you enter, you won't!

500 Club supporters also receive a *Briefing* supporters card automatically. Just fill in the standing order form below, and return it to PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ.

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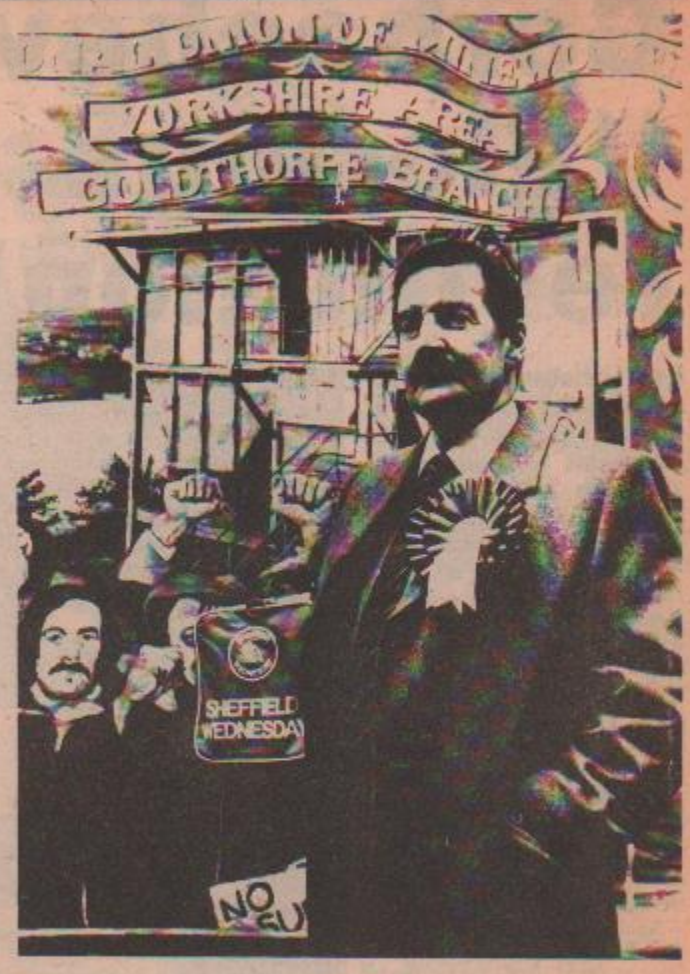
This week's winner

This week, Neville returns to his nostalgia trip. No. 54 came up lucky in this week's draw for Graham Topley of South London.

Television Review







Harry Perkins — *Take the Power!!*

A Very British Coup, *Channel Four TV*, **Sundays, 9.15pm**

Over-slick, reformist, and unconvincing it may have been, but *A Very British Coup* still packed some punch.

It brilliantly spotlighted the utterly ruthless ruling class dictatorship which preserves capitalist rule behind the scenes, regardless of which party happens to have a majority in Parliament.

Running concurrently with coverage of the Soviet Union's Nineteenth Party Congress, Channel Four's "political thriller" may have made some viewers wonder whether we couldn't do with a bit of *glasnost* and *perestroika* over here!

Imagine Arthur Scargill in charge of a future Labour government, and you roughly have the picture. The ruling class pull out all their extra-parliamentary stops.

But perhaps to equate Arthur with the fictitious Harry Perkins is unfair. For surely a Scargill administration would attempt to assert its power more vigorously than does the likeable Harry on television?

By Chris Knight
Lewisham East CLP

What is catastrophically absent from Perkins' strategy is the organised working class. The whole story focuses on what goes on within the so-called "corridors of power". Mass action on the streets to smash through this whole rotten system is neither seen nor — apparently — even contemplated as a possibility.

Each Perkins "victory" is the result of some bureaucratic manoeuvre from on high — as when the "reactionary" power workers' industrial action is overcome, not politically, but through a threatening telephone call to the electricians' CIA-backed leader!

In this, the film accurately reflects the worst weaknesses of sections of the Bennite left. (The series is based on a 1982 novel by Chris Mullin, sometime *Tribune* editor, now House-bound MP.) They have a good idea where power in the state really lies — but very little idea what to do about it.

Scargillite

A Perkins, Scargillite, or Bennite Labour government would face all the problems which this film depicts — and no doubt more. But it would also have an ally capable of resolving these problems.

Perkins has all the right instincts, but he lacks weapons — he lacks a sufficiently organised, centralised, ruthless alternative to the utterly ruthless state machine of the ruling class.

Lessons

It is impossible not to conclude with the obvious Leninist lessons! A future "Perkinsite" Labour government would stand no chance unless it was backed up by an organised revolutionary movement.

Victory would mean mobilising the working class to occupy and take over the factories, streets, and major public buildings so as to defend the revolutionary legality of the administration.

Soviets would have to be set up in order to form a new state machine on which the administration could rely. The Monarchy would have to be abolished, and all the top Generals, Admirals, Judges, and Civil Servants sacked.

Defence

Armed workers' defence squads would have to be established and the existing armed service confronted, split, won over where possible — and finally mastered by the Labour administration. (There would be no reason to doubt that the bulk of the "other ranks" would be sympathetic to an assault on officers' privileges in such a social and political climate).

None of this could be accomplished purely "from above". Only a revolutionary party rooted in the living struggles of the working class could defend a "Perkins" government, answer ruling class sedition with working class insurrection — and by that means translate office in Parliament into real state power.

Book Review

Benn battling through the 80s

Fighting Back: Speaking out for Socialism in the Eighties, **by Tony Benn**, *Hutchinson*, **£6.95**

This collection of articles and speeches by Tony Benn is a welcome contribution to the present Leadership debate.

It is part of the wider campaign to assert the primacy of socialist politics within the Labour Party.

Fighting Back ranges over many topics. There are thoughtful observations on socialist and democratic concepts and practical contributions to the various political struggles of the period under consideration — the Thatcherite 80s.

When compared with Neil Kinnock's literary effort *Making Our Way*, Benn's book illustrates yet again the enormous gulf between the two candidates for the Party Leadership.

Tony Benn's greater vision and commitment to socialism is complemented by a larger talent. While Benn writes his own stuff, Kinnock, purged of rhetoric, is merely the piffling sum of the opinions of his political advisors.

If Party Leaders were selected on basic ability, then Tony Benn would be an easy victor at Blackpool.

By Richard Heffernan
Hornsey and Wood Green CLP

Benn's book is not meant to be a "set text" or "socialist manifesto". It is a personal contribution to the politics of the present.

Fighting Back includes Benn's response to the Falklands War, his advocacy of the miners' and the printers' causes, his case for British withdrawal from Ireland, his arguments for a democratic and informative mass media, and his ever-relevant plea for a Labour Party committed to all the struggles of the dispossessed and the oppressed.

Throughout the book, Benn makes constant reference to the democratic and liberation basis of socialism. Whilst many of the speeches illustrate his parliamentarist approach, Benn, despite remaining within the rules of the House of Commons club, vigorously chastises the authoritarian nature of the British state.

Whilst he champions the rights of the legislature against the dominance of the executive (in the British Radical tradition), his arguments illustrate that existing institutions can not be in themselves the means to advance socialism.

Nor can they protect what he calls "inherent inalienable and ancient democratic rights" — rights which he believes require the extension of democracy beyond the limits of the existing system.

Fighting Back makes a useful case for a socialist foreign policy based on non-alignment, a non-nuclear defence policy, and internationalist principles.

While Benn (characteristically) makes no criticism of the Eastern European bureaucracies he argues for the dissolution of Cold War structures and for an end to the NATO alliance.

Above all, *Fighting Back* illustrates Benn's incorrigible optimism and his positive belief that socialist values, presented with vigour and conviction, will gain widespread support.

While Benn is clearly worlds apart from the present Labour Leaders, his book makes no critical references to them — nor to the present direction of the Party. Nonetheless, much of it effectively exposes the bankruptcy of the Kinnockites, and, incidentally, embarrasses the "Bennites" of 1981 who have since become the born-again social democrats and fashionable pessimists of 1988 — currently ensconced in the upper reaches of far too many Constituency Parties.
Parties.

Finally, *Fighting Back* illustrates many of the reasons why Tony Benn remains a leading advocate of socialism and why socialists, both now and in the future, will be in his debt.



Scenes from A Very British Coup show Harry Perkins in full flow.
PHOTOS: Courtesy Channel 4

19th CPSU Conference

Gorbachev and the "glorious revolution" of 1988

The socialist revolutions of the 20th century have a similar pattern to the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries in Holland, England, and France.
The latter threw up dictatorial state forms — most notably those of Cromwell and Napoleon.

By OLIVER MACDONALD

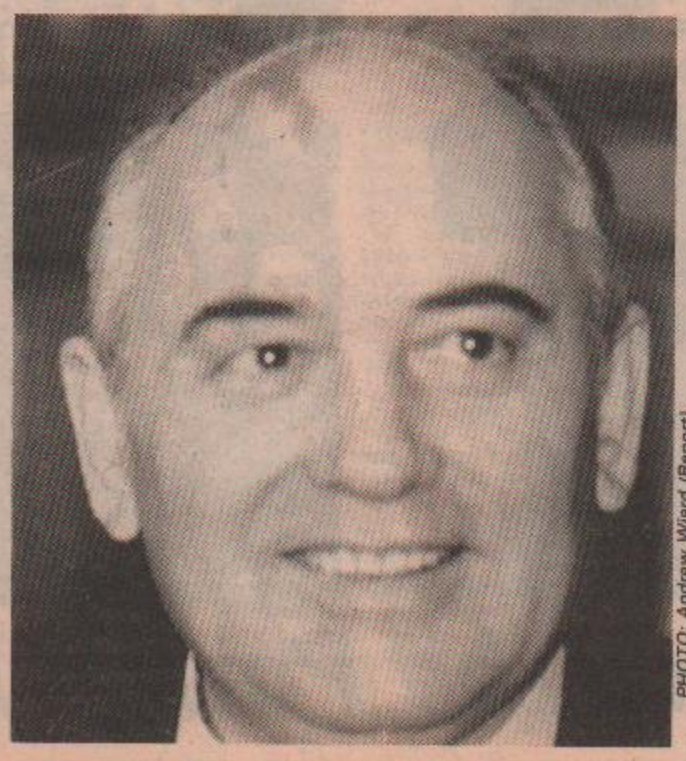


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Gorbachev: where is he leading the Soviet Union?

The initial democratic impulses were thrown back and, in England at least, it took hundreds of years to carry through basic democratic political aims.

So the democratic impulses of October 1917 were crushed, and the world's first proletarian state was twisted into a Stalinist dictatorship.

Ever since, socialists have asked how long it will take for the democratic political revolution to triumph in the USSR. Will it take as long in this proletarian state as it took earlier in the bourgeois world?

Conference

Some see in the events surrounding the Soviet Union's 19th Party Conference the arrival, even the triumph, of this long-awaited political revolution. And, indeed,the awakening of popular politics in the last 18 months has raised hopes of all kinds.

One thing is sure, the process that has begun there is open-ended; no one can know its eventual outcome.

The greatest error the left here can make is to judge the reform movement on the basis of the Gorbachev Leadership's economic, social or foreign policy. The overriding issue is the democratic battle for popular power in the USSR today.

The Gorbachev Leadership has raised the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets!", coupled with civil liberties and freedom of opinion. Will these slogans be taken up and transformed into the realities of popular power by the working people of the Soviet Union in the months to come?

If they are, then anti-egalitarian trends in the policies of the Party Leadership will stand no chance of undermining the social rights of working people. At the same time, Gorbachev has made it abundantly clear that his own aim is not a democratic political revolution. He is no Jacobin; he is closer to the Whig politicians who made the "Glorious Revolution" in England in 1688.

Ideology

Their ideology was provided by the Liberal theorist, John Locke (whose collected works were published in the USSR last year). They called for civil liberties, down with dictatorship, freedom of conscience and opinion, the rule of law, and all power to an elected parliament — *not* popular democratic power.

Locke's ingenuity lay in justifying the control of parliament by the landed gentry and bourgeoisie. Gorbachev's ingenuity lies in justifying the control of the Supreme Soviet by the political establishment of the Communist Party.

In his opening speech to the 19th Conference he claimed that setting up opposition parties was an "abuse of Perestroika" and made no call for a change in Party rules to legalise inner-Party tendencies and factions.

So, "all power" to the Soviets in the state — but leaving all power *in* the Soviets to a 20 million strong Communist Party, controlled from above.

But if Soviet workers in the main centres begin to move, stamping their will on political events, the reactionary camp within the Party could be swept away (though removing them from other centres of power would be more difficult).

Up to now, the great bulk of the Soviet working class has remained uncommitted, and thus has not yet felt its own strength. Within the Party Leadership, its voice has been Boris Yeltsin: in favour of democratisation and egalitarianism against the privileges of the Party elite.

Working class Communists throughout the USSR saw how the Party Leadership savaged Yeltsin last autumn, with Gorbachev making no attempt to distance himself from the primitive Stalinist frenzy.

What matters in the months ahead is whether the forces for whom Yeltsin acted as a partial mouthpiece (dubbed "social demagogues" by Gorbachev) can become *an organised power within the reform coalition.*

This will open a path for the workers to move onto centre stage and turn the "Glorious Revolution" of the Soviet Whigs into a democratic political revolution for authentic Soviet power.

Upsurge in the Baltic

An army of skeletons marches on Moscow

Nowhere are the implications of Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev's *Glasnost* policy more subversive than in the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

After a brief period of independence following World War I, all three countries were occupied by Soviet troops as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, which sealed the short-lived deal between Stalin and Hitler.

By Colin Meade
Surbiton CLP

In 1941, tens of thousands were deported from the Baltic regions, many never to return.

This experience led to a widespread belief that Hitler was preferable to Stalin — at least before the Nazis had had time to show their true colours — and was a major reason why collaboration with the Nazis was not uncommon amongst the Baltic peoples.

The return of the Soviet army in 1944 saw further deportations, while guerilla forces continued to fight the Soviets for years after the war.

In Estonia — where protests have been most open — a demonstration in August 1987 saw calls for the publication of the text of the 1939 Pact and its notorious secret protocols.

Protestors also demanded the abandonment of a phosphate mining project, restrictions on the immigration of non-Estonians into the Republic, and increased efforts to teach Estonian to non-Russians.

It is reported that in December the Central Committee of the all-Union Communist Party passed a resolution claiming that *Glasnost* had gone too far in Estonia.

In February, despite threats of police action, a big demonstration took place to commemorate the founding of the independent state in 1918.

Then, in April, the official cultural unions drew up a comprehensive programme in which they urged the Estonian Communist Party (ECP) to adopt a series of positions on economic and political autonomy, immigration, cultural freedoms, free contacts with abroad (including Estonian communities — and non-Communist political currents!), defence of the national environment, promotion of the Estonian language, and the recognition of Stalin's crimes as crimes against humanity.

On June 16th, M. Vialas, a pro-Gorbachev Leader, took over at the head of the ECP. The following day significant ECP figures took the platform at a massive nationalist rally in Tallinn, the capital, and promised to present the demands to the Soviet Party Conference in the form of a general proposal for reordering relations between the constituent Republics of the Soviet Union.

Movements of this kind strengthen Gorbachev's position within the Party. Only he has the credibility to engage in a dialogue with their Leaders and isolate what he and the Party view as nationalist extremism.

Nonetheless, they also present him with a sticky problem: can he satisfy a demand for a complete break with the past when this could imply a demand for a break with the Soviet Union itself?

Whatever happens at the Party Conference, the nationalist dilemma will continue to haunt Gorbachev in the foreseeable future.

Namibia

Students and workers strike

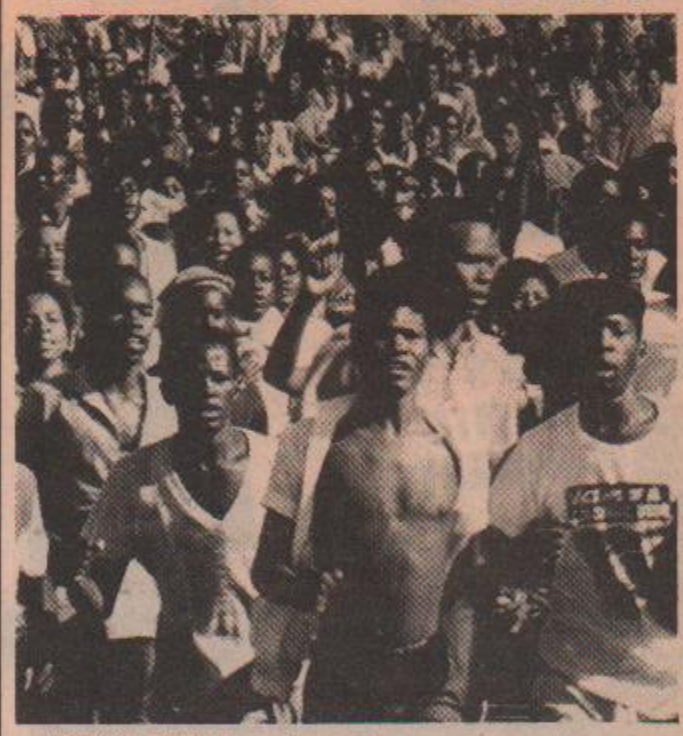


PHOTO courtesy Action on Namibia

Namibian students on the march

Events have overtaken the recent negotiations between Angola, South Africa, Cuba and the US.

The talks, over Namibian independence and the war in Angola, had reached stalemate anyway.

By Piers Mostyn
Namibia Support Committee

Now, the recent Angolan military offensive is generally recognised to have inflicted the most serious military setback on the South African invading force in over a decade.

In Namibia a general strike by workers has combined with a burgeoning school student boycott to produce the biggest mass mobilisation in the country since the 1971 General Strike by contract workers — a high point in Namibia's century old struggle for independence and self-determination.

The student protest is against the proximity of South African military bases to their schools. It began in March when 700 pupils at Ponhofi High School vote to go home indefinitely until a nearby base occupied by the brutal counter-insurgency unit *Koevoet* was removed.

The bases are deliberately sited close to schools and hospitals to intimidate students, nurses and teachers. When SWAPO guerrillas launch stand-off attacks on bases, the troops vent their fury by firing shells on schools — knowing them to be sympathetic to the liberation cause.

Soldiers have been responsible for a catalogue of rapes, assaults, and covert bombing centred on schools over the years. In April 1987, 13 primary schools in the North were burnt down in the night by soldiers. Teachers have featured prominently among those subject to mass arrests and the death squads.

By May, 20,000 students were boycotting classes in the Northern war zone — closing ten secondary and 20 primary schools. By June the protest had spread South — with all schools in Namibia's largest Black township, Katutura, on strike in solidarity.

With 40,000 on strike, the movement has become the largest student protest in the seven decades of South African rule over Namibia.

The South African response has included mass arrests — raids on the pro-independence newspaper *The Namibian*, and the arrest of its editor; and the break-up of student gatherings by police assaults with rubber bullets, tear gas and sjamboks.

On June 21st and 22nd, the unions affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) — the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN), the Namibian Food and Allied Union (NAFAU), the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU) and the Namibian Public Workers Union (NAPWU), between them organising 60,000 workers — held a general strike in solidarity with the mass student protest and its demands.

Miners Union General Secretary Ben Ulenga, an ex-Robben Island prisoner, has explained that it was the workers themselves who insisted on the strike — not the union Leadership.

He said the strike could be seen as "an expression of how serious the workers feel about South Africa's occupation of Namibia... they have all had relatives or friends arrested, family members assaulted or harassed, or had property destroyed by the army. It is really surprising that the workers have not risen up before now."

Ulenga is one of dozens of signatories to an advert in *The Namibian*, placed by a campaign called *Release the Comrades*, demanding the release of detainees such as Jason Angula, SWAPO Secretary for Labour, and saying "They must imprison *all* Namibians if they want to silence us. We stand behind you: Namibia will be free!"

The workers and students of Namibia are in urgent need of our solidarity. This is a tremendous and heroic struggle by an over-exploited, oppressed nation of one and a half million against the full might of South Africa and the multinationals.

It is essential that we break the relative silence that still exists about the situation. Suport for SWAPO, the trade unions, and students needs to be built in the Labour Party and Trade Unions.

A useful focus would be amongst teachers and students, as already begun in the NUT — and calling on the Leaders to take action.

A central aspect has to be opposition to British silence and collaboration — whether by companies or the government.

Find out more about the Namibia Support Committee's solidarity campaign. **Contact NSC, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW, tel 01 267 1941 for information and resources. Donations are urgently needed!**

Colombia

Call for trade union boycott

Briefing supporter LUIS GARCIA interviewed ASDRUBAL JIMENEZ, founder member of the United Workers Confederation of Colombia (CUT), Banana Workers' Leader in the Uraba Region, currently in a London hospital after being shot four times in the latest wave of repression.

The CUT was founded in 1986 after 40 years of relative workers' passivity and sectarian party political divisions.

Its base lay with the independent unions which had refused to join any of the old party-controlled confederations. The Communist Confederation (CSCTC) dissolved itself and thousands of workers abandoned the Liberal and Conservative blocs.

One million strong, comprising 80% of organised labour, the CUT is not affiliated to any political grouping and maintains full internal democracy.

As a result, the workers have been able to push their organisation into the political arena. The CUT now takes up political positions on a number of questions independently of the ruling class and of its instruments within the labour movement.

The migrations of peasant farmers and rural workers to the cities, which previously acted as a passive, backward influence on the unions, now have a different effect. The rural immigrants and their grown-up children are today more radical in their demands and have a high level of consciousness.

The growth of independent working class activity has led to growing repression. At first the employers and right wing politicians organised the assassination of left wing politicians and union leaders on an individual basis. Recently, assassinations have taken on a different character, with hundreds of workers and peasants shot or abducted over the past year.

Asdrubal Jimenez worked for the banana workers union in the main banana zone of Uraba in Antioquia. Traditionally, the banana growing regions have been very backward, with schools, hospitals, sanitation, roads and housing insufficient for the people's needs and income levels amongst the lowest in the country.

Recently the multinationals (such as United Fruit) have been losing some ground to a cartel of national growers. These growers proved even more repressive than the US corporations which had in the past organised some of the worst massacres on the continent.

For the national bourgeoisie, union organisation was equated with the guerrilla activity that also existed in the region and it demanded a military response.

With the murder rate running at *twice* the national average (already the highest in a world for a country not at war), the death squads and the army crushed the unions and removed the fragile protection enjoyed by labourers' packers, and dockers.

The truce which the previous Betancurt government arranged with the guerrillas took away the employers' main excuse for violent attacks on the unions. The workers used the resulting breathing space to rebuild their unions, which grew rapidly.

When the truce broke down in 1987, there was a resumption of repression and remilitarisation of the region.

The repression has become a massacre: over 700 banana workers have been killed since 1982. Numbers of workers being gunned down now run into double figures.

Trade unionists should back the call for the boycott of Colombian products, in particular coal, flowers, coffee and bananas. The Colombian Solidarity Committee and the Committee for Human Rights have produced an informative report on the banana zone which will help motivate the boycott.

Asdrubal Jimenez is prepared to speak to union branches and other labour movement bodies on the experience of the banana workers, the political situation in Colombia, and the boycott strategy.

Unions will be asked to provide material support to workers who refuse to handle Colombian products. We have to prevent the victimisation of workers who act in solidarity with their Colombian brothers and sisters by gaining official union backing for such actions.

The fight for the boycott is a fight for the *right to life* of hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, political activists, and peasant farmers in Colombia.

Contact:
Colombian Solidarity Committee, Priory House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6.
Colombian Committee for Human Rights, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1.

Year of Action on Ireland



PHOTO: Jim Thain

IBRG march earlier this year: now the Year of Action gives us the opportunity to mobilise the British working class in support of the Irish nationalist struggle.

Time to go!

By Stephanie Grant
Islington North CLP

1968 was an eventful year in the North of Ireland, as elsewhere.

Why, then, is so little said of the Irish dimension in magazine articles and TV retrospectives dedicated to the twentieth anniversary?

Because, 20 years on, the struggle in Ireland continues.

What began as a civil rights movement in 1968, inspired by black struggles in the United States, has developed into a war fought at a cost of £1 million a day to the British government.

A *Year of Action* to mark this 20th anniversary has been launched. It offers socialists a unique opportunity to make Ireland a major issue in the British labour movement.

A campaign for unconditional British withdrawal has enormous potential support, indicated by:

- policy successes in the Labour Party, National Labour Women's Conference, and national trade unions in recent years;
- the increased political profile of the Irish community in Britain;
- the continued resistance of the nationalist community in the north of Ireland itself;
- political developments among anti-imperialist forces.

The Charter on withdrawal from Ireland, launched by Clare Short MP, which aims to gather public support from well-known figures, is a welcome initiative.

The Charter's organisers plan to call a national march and carnival in August 1989 to mark the twenty years since British troops were sent into the North. *Labour Briefing*, along with many others, will work to make this a massive public show of opposition to Britain's presence in Ireland.

But the debate about building an effective campaign for British withdrawal cannot end there.

Unfortunately, the manner in which the Charter was launched has caused disagreements. As a result both the Irish in Britain Representation Group and the Troops Out Movement have pulled out of the Organising Committee.

The Committee was only opened up for their participation after the key decisions had effectively been made and the Charter drafted — with little consultation.

The Charter's wording is somewhat ambiguous and this has been exploited by some of its sponsors. Clare Short said:

"We are saying a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland entails a British withdrawal and we have got to get on with the debate about how that is to be accomplished, leaving behind a stable system. We are not talking about pulling everything out and letting go."

A "settlement" can mean many things to many people. A large number of Irish activists have been concerned that the Charter may represent more of a focus for British lefties to sit around discussing Ireland's future, rather than uniting *in action* around the right for withdrawal — without conditions.

Our objective should precisely be to *pull everything out and let go* and not to "leave behind a stable system". That is an issue that only the Irish people can deal with.

The latest issue of *Labour and Ireland* (journal of the Labour Committee on Ireland) gives great prominence to the Charter. It appears mesmerised by the willingness of well-known people to put their names to it.

The editor of *Labour and Ireland* recently told the Chesterfield Socialist Conference that a withdrawal movement will *not* be led by socialists or republicans. Presumably, his strategy for building a withdrawal movement relies on winning worthy and influential individuals to the cause.

This is mistaken. Socialists and those identifying with the national liberation struggle have always led the successful struggles against imperialist domination and colonialism (Vietnam, India, Zimbabwe). Why should Ireland be any different?

A renewed, strengthened, united withdrawal movement will be constructed through systematic activity in the local community, by making the links between Ireland and other issues, and by centrally involving the Irish community, the labour movement, and the women's movement.

Of course we want the support of prominent politicians and individuals, but not if this means excluding socialists and republicans from political leadership of the movement.

The whole left must make Ireland *a priority issue* during this *Year of Action*. Wherever we are active, we can make the links:

- women's oppression — and strip-searching;
- civil rights, the repressive state — and Stalker, Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, etc.;
- new police powers, plastic bullets — and harassment of the nationalist community;
- Alton's attack on abortion rights — and Irish women's continued need for travel to England for abortions;
- Labour Councils' housing policies and cuts — and anti-Irish racism and repatriation;
- the disarmament debate — and Ireland's neutrality;
- the crash, the economic crisis — and Ireland's massive debts;.

The building of a mass movement for withdrawal should also be made one of the continuing themes of the Chesterfield Conference.

Our aim is to involve *everyone* who is prepared to mobilise on the issue of withdrawal. In the short term, the best way to do that is building local campaign committees around the Year of Action.

Success here will be measured by our ability to cement real working links and build open, democratic, non-exclusive structures. A Women's Year of action, organised on this basis, offers a real opportunity to draw new women to the cause of Ireland.

Briefing supporters can:

- discuss the *Year of Action* locally;
- help set up local *Time To Go* Committees, on an open, democratic basis;
- approach local campaigns active on Ireland to set up the committee (for example, via a public meeting) ensuring that the Irish community, women, trade unions, students, civil liberties groups, and local politicians are invited to participate;
- draw up a timetable for the year, to get existing labour movement, cultural, and community events;
- consider local initiatives such as: a lawyers' conference, a film festival, a prisoners' appeal, exchange visits, and Local Authority Conferences on the needs of the Irish community in Britain.

Sweden

Left opposition grows

The Social Democrats in Sweden (SAP — the main workers' party) have governed most of the time since the Second World War.

This has often been with the support of the Euro-communist VPK.

But since 1982, when the Social Democrats returned to government after six years in opposition, they have implemented austerity policies, starting with a big devaluation of the Swedish krone and an increase in VAT.

This bourgeois policy from a labour government has created fierce opposition among Social Democrat members and trade unionists.

It started with the so-called "Dala uprising". (Dala is a Swedish county.) Lifelong Social Democrats began publicly challenging government policies. The "uprising" came to a standstill with the assassination of the Swedish Prime Minister Oluf Palme, which created a mood for unity.

By FINN JENSEN

But the "uprising" is now more active than ever. Social Democrats in trade unions are demanding an extra 1,000 Sv. kr. (£80) per month for everybody and strikes in support of this demand have already broken out.

Rank and file members of the Social Democratic Party have formed "Socialdemocratic Alternative" as a left opposition inside the Party. They will be issuing their own literature in the campaign for the general elections in September, and placing their own candidates on the official Social Democratic slate.

In the County of Jonkoping, the Alternative have seven Councillors in the city of Nassjo. They will need about 20,000 votes to get one MP.

The Socialdemocratic Alternative have declared themselves in favour of a policy of solidarity with the workers' movement and opposition to bourgeois policies which have cut down the public sector and transferred wealth from the working class to the monopolies, the capitalists, and the bureaucrats.

The Social Democratic government in Sweden does not have a majority in Parliament. It needs the votes of the Euro-communist VPK. But to the Socialdemocratic Alternative, the Euro-communists offer no alternative as they support the policies of the government.

The VPK also has big internal problems and might not pass the 4% limit for representation in Parliament at the general elections in September.



NSC Invitation

Coffee is Nicaragua's biggest export earner and is vital to the country's economy and the survival of the Sandinista revolution.

So, since 1984, International Brigades have gone to Nicaragua from all over the world to supplement the workforce during the coffee harvest.

The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) sends four such brigades every year. Each brigade is in Nicaragua for six weeks.

If you feel you would like to take this opportunity you should apply *without delay* to NSC Brigades, NSC, 23 Bevenden Street, London N1 6BH.

From NSC press release

LABOUR BRIEFING

Benn-Heffer round-up

Setting the pace on policy

Here's our final round-up before *Briefing's* summer break. But don't forget that the campaign goes on during the summer! Keep sending in details, and copies of local leaflets you produce. The round-up service *Briefing* has been providing has been a valuable point of reference, and we don't want to lose touch just because the paper's on holiday.

We'll be back with the latest news in September!

● London For Socialism

The campaign in the capital has already scored a number of unexpected successes, with Benn and Heffer winning nominations in at least 20 constituencies (including Brent East, Southall, Hackney North and South, Hornsey and Wood Green, Tottenham, Islington North, Norwood, Deptford, Bow & Poplar, Walthamstow).

A number of CLPs expected to go for Kinnock and Hattersley have made no nomination at all (Brent North, Hornchurch). However, Prescott has emerged as a soft option to Eric Heffer and several CLPs have nominated Benn for Leader and Prescott for Deputy.

London for Socialism, the co-ordinating body for the Benn-Heffer challenge in London, is issuing a trade union leaflet (contact Pete Cooper, 228 7000) and is planning a major London-wide eve of Conference rally on Spetember 23rd at the Camden Centre.

Meanwhile, meetings and hustings are going on in all parts of the city.

The next London For Socialism meeting will be held on July 17th, 8pm, at the House of Commons (roomed booked by Jeremy Corbyn). Make sure your local group is represented. Contact Joan Twelves, 582 2955.

● Nottingham

Tony Benn will be speaking at the East Midlands regional rally on July 8th at the Rainbow Rooms, Broad Street, Nottingham at 7.30pm. Contact the Nottingham & District Benn-Heffer Campaign, c/o Pete Radcliffe, 7 Victoria Road, Sherwood.

A "Nottingham Open Conference for Socialism" will be held on July 16th at People's College, Maid Marian Way. It is being organised by the Benn-Heffer Campaign, which promises that the day will be "an opportunity for local people, inside and outside the Labour Party, to join the debate," with workshops on a wide range of political topics and contributions from Sharon Atkin, Ken Livingstone, and Marc Wadsworth.

More information from Nigel Lee, 51 Braidwood Court, Hyson Green, Nottingham, 788059.

● Newham

The Newham Campaign for Socialism held a meeting addressed by Tony Benn on July 5th. The organisers believe that the Benn-Heffer message "will strike a cho[illegible] with the people in the [illegible], which has suffered severely from racial violence, hostile government intervention, and the excesses of the LDDC's yuppie redevelopments."

A strong local dimension was added to the Campaign, with Benn being joined on the platform by Connie Hunt, respected campaigner against the City Airport.

● Woolwich

Over 500 heard Tony Benn and Eric Heffer speak at a South East London rally held at Woolwich Town Hall on June 21st. Both made scathing attacks on the Labour Leadership's accommodation to "market forces" — which Benn defined as "an American multinational in Detroit telling workers in Dundee what union they belong to."

Warmly recommending Channel 4's *A Very British Coup* he slammed the authoritarian core of the British state and called for democratic control over the security services. Eric Heffer called for renationalisation of privatised companies without compensation and for Britain's withdrawal from NATO.

Sue Haines of the NUS made a powerful appeal for solidarity. Audrey Wise took up environmental and international issues, referring to her recent trip to Nicaragua.

The hall was full, the balcony had to be opened to accommodate the crowds, and the creche was packed in the biggest turnout by the local left since the end of the miners' strike.

£200 was collected for the seafarers. LCI, Anti-Apartheid, the Campaign Group, *Labour Briefing*, *Socialist Action*, and the NUS all ran stalls.

● Swindon

The Swindon Benn-Heffer campaign has issued a new bulletin with updates on the latest campaign speeches by Benn and Heffer, and their comments on recent actions by Kinnock.

The bulletin also concentrates on organising solidarity for P&O strikers.

Contact the campaign at 333 Welcombe Avenue, Swindon.

● Repealing Anti-Trade Union Laws

At the Northumberland Area NUM Annual Picnic in Bedlington Tony Benn announced that the Campaign Group of MPs would soon be introducing a Bill to repeal all anti-trade union legislation passed by the Tories since 1979.

Referring to Bills introduced by the Campaign Group on a range of topics — justice for mineworkers, Ireland, nuclear bases, industrial democracy, the EEC crown prerogatives, common ownership of land, abolition of the House of Lords — Benn said "Labour has got to be clear now about what we will do when we return to power, and we have got to prepare the legislation now that would carry our policies into effect."

● Huddersfield

Local MP Barry Sheerman tried to use a Huddersfield GC meeting to launch the right's attack on John Prescott, but delegates took too literally his claim that there is no political difference between Hattersley and Prescott — by voting to nominate Tony Benn!

During the debate, it was revealed that the Executive Committee had used its powers to act between GCs by organising a postal ballot on the Leadership contest. This was a complete surprise to most delegates, as it reversed the Party's previous position of conducting branch ballots.

Left activists have since met to discuss the Campaign and decided:

- to organise a coach to Bradford on July 15th to see Benn speak;
- to attempt to organise Benn supporters at ward level across the four CLPs in the area;
- to organise a local Benn-Heffer meeting with a Campaign Group MP speaker;
- to attempt to reverse the decision to have a postal ballot;
- to take the campaign into local unions by arguing for local ballots and a vote for Benn-Heffer.

● South Humberside

A meeting will be held at Scunthorpe Labour Club on June 21st with Jeremy Corbyn speaking on the Benn-Heffer challenge. The meeting is sponsored by Scunthorpe UCATT No. 2 Branch and local Benn-Heffer supporters.

● Birmingham

The Benn-Heffer challenge is proving stronger in Birmingham than expected. Prescott turned up in town on Friday July 1st but failed to respond to the challenge issued by local Benn-Heffer supporters for a city-wide debate on the Leadership contest.

Edgbaston CLP has nominated Benn and Heffer (Kinnock received only four votes) and tight races are expected in Selly Oak and Erdington.

Clare Short fails to get CLP support

MP Clare Short's well-publicised split from the Campaign Group over the Leadership challenge has isolated her from her Birmingham Ladywood CLP.

The GC voted unanimously to nominate Benn and Heffer and passed a motion by a majority of 2-1 "deeply regretting" her decision to leave the Campaign Group. Short was unable to tell her Constituency whether she would vote for Kinnock or abstain.

● ASLEF Conference

Addressing the assembled ASLEF delegates in Blackpool Tony Benn laid out a five point peace policy for Labour:

- negotiate bilateral treaties of co-operation with all European countries, east and west;
- convene a European Security Conference (NATO, Warsaw Pact, neutrals) to prepare the ground for the replacement of the military blocks with a Pan-European Security Treaty;
- British withdrawal from NATO and the removal of all US troops and bases;
- transfer of money from military to social issues, health, homes, education, and pensions;
- direct links with non-aligned countries, increased foreign aid, and cancellation of Third World debts.

"Such a bold peace policy would, if advocated with courage and commitment, certainly attract the backing of millions of people, of all political persuasions in Britain, and would replace the despair which now grips us by a new sense of hope for the future."

Defeating Apartheid

This is not a conflict confined to South Africa in which we are merely spectators, for the British economy is closely tied up with South Africa, with whom we do a great deal of trade and from whom we receive a number of important raw materials.

For example, the uranium which we use in our nuclear power stations comes from Namibia which South Africa occupies, and British power stations turn that uranium into plutonium which is then sent to America where it is used to make the warheads for the US Cruise missiles that are stationed here.

Apartheid also benefits those American and British companies which have invested so massively in South Africa because that system keeps wages low, and profits high, by suppressing black trade unions and civil rights.

And all the millions of pounds of British capital which is exported to South Africa goes there just because low wages under apartheid make it financially attractive to invest in that country, rather than here, in our own countries, which would create jobs in Britain.

Thus many of the unemployed in Britain are themselves paying a price for apartheid, too.

Certainly a complete boycott of all South African goods, including coal and uranium imports, and an ending of all sports, and other contracts, would help, but, unless that is backed up by the tightest possible Government ban on all trade and investment, preferably as part of a United Nations blockade it will be little more than a gesture.

But we must be ready to go further than that, and if the Africans need weapons to pursue their struggle for democracy, as they will, Britain should be ready to supply them.

TONY BENN

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