LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p FORTNIGHTLY
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40p

SINN FEIN SPEAKS OUT!

WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED!

Douglas Hurd's draconian law is not an attack on the IRA or the ability of the IRA to operate. It is a direct attack on Sinn Fein because Sinn Fein's views are unacceptable to the British government, because we reject British claims to sovereignty over the Six Counties, and because we articulate the demands for national self-determination.

BY GERRY ADAMS

AND

DANNY MORRISON

The British government is hiding behind the pretext that Sinn Fein champions the armed struggle of the IRA. This is the issue which the media have concentrated on for years. The bulk of Sinn Fein statements (most of which have been ignored) have been on the political situation in general, and on social and economic matters in particular.

The British government is also planning to introduce an oath for candidates in elections abjuring the use of force. That is hypocritical. If the same oath was a condition of membership of the British Parliament, then the benches of the House of Commons and the Lords would be empty.

The new censorship laws are part and parcel of the British government's attempt to stifle Sinn Fein and promote the SDLP.

Eight years ago Mrs Thatcher claimed the Republican movement had no support. When Republicans demonstrated their support at elections, the British government then amended the Representation of the People Act to exclude prisoner candidates such as Bobby Sands. When some of us were elected to the Stormont Assembly, exclusion orders banning us from attending and addressing public meetings in Britain were introduced.

Now they are directly censoring a legal political party which has an electoral mandate.

If they have an argument to counter Sinn Fein's views, then they should put it publicly, instead of censoring us.

The new laws are a disservice to the British public. Mrs Thatcher does not trust the British people to make up their own minds on the rights and wrongs of the situation in the North.

The new laws and how the media react to them will have a profound effect on the future. We call on NUJ members and programme makers to show the same type of courage they've shown over South Africa.

Will stories on the North carry this preamble: "This news item has been compiled under the duress of reporting restrictions imposed by the government?"

This latest move should lay to rest, once and for all, any claims that the North is a normal place or that the British government plays a neutral role.



PHOTO: Labour Party Photo Library

Gerry Adams

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign round-up

SINN FEIN BAN

A challenge to the media lapdogs!

The government's ban on Sinn Fein is a totalitarian move and destroys all British pretensions to being a haven of free speech and democracy.

Sinn Fein has one member of Parliament, some 53 local Councillors and about 100,000 voters.

It represents the poorest and most oppressed section of the working class

By Liz Curtis
Information on Ireland Group

community in the North of Ireland.

It is the only party in the North of Ireland which stands unequivocally for a British withdrawal and a united and indepenent Ireland.

Successive governments have bullied and threatened broadcasters to force them to carry only the official point of view, which often consists of lies, misrepresentations, and evasions, as we have recently seen with events surround the Gibralter killings by the SAS.

Now the government has gone one step further. What will the broadcasters do? Will they willingly become government lapdogs, or will they insist on covering all voices from the North of Ireland?

All the people in the North of Ireland have a right and a need to freely express their views on all issues. People in Britain have a right and a need to be informed of all aspects of the situation in the North of Ireland and what the government is doing in their name.

•Lis Curtis is the author of *Ireland: The Propoganda War. The British Media and the Battle for Hearts and Minds, Pluto*, £5.50.

HOUSING

Manchester tenants occupy Council office

Since the beginning of September Hulme Tenants Alliance has been organising a 24-hour a day occupation of Manchester City Council's offices on the Hulme estate.

The occupation took place because the Council decided — without any consultation — to remove two "tenant participation assistants" from the Hulme Project Team.

Two Council workers in the project were suspended for "supporting the occupation". One of them has since been allowed back to work. Disciplinary procedures against both of them have now been dropped.

The reason behind the Council's decision to remove two of the workers from the project was the £110 million cuts package decided last year. Council workers in all departments are shifted around as part

By FINN JENSEN

of a so-called 'restructuring' to fill vacancies.

The Council's response to the occupation was "no talks with Hulme tenants until the occupation has finished". At one point they cut off electricity and the telephone lines in the hope that this would end the occupation.

Tenants compared this macho-style of management to the behaviour that provoked the postal dispute in Manchester in September.

But Hulme tenants are not impressed by the Council's tough stand. As they say in one of their leaflets:

"the Hulme tenants achieved an almost legendary status throughout the country for being one of the few groups to have ever forced a government U-turn. After that the Council should be a walk-over".

The tenants organised a lobby of the District City Labour Party and forced a debate about their demands. But so far, have got no answer to their demand that the two workers be "restructured" back to the Hulme office.

Demands

The Hulme Tenants Alliance, which represents 11 tenants organisations with 5,500 households, has three demands:

•allow the two tenant participation workers, relocated against their will, to return to the Hulme Project Team offices;

•enter into full and meaningfull discussion with tenants about the future of Hulme;

•a change in management style in the Housing Department.

Hulme is a severly deprived inner city area. 50% of all adult men and 30% of adult women are unemployed. Houses are deteriorating, as the Council does not have enough money for repairs.

But the will to fight back is not lacking. The occupied offices are full of activity.

Support for the occupation comes from the Federation of Associations on Manchester Estates, Hulme Tenants Association, Family Advice and Resource Centre (Moss Side), the National Organisation of Tenants Opposed to HATs, the Campaign Against the Sale of Estates, representatives of NUPE, NALGO, TGWU, UCATT, ACTSS and NUS.

Hulme Tenants Alliance can be contacted: c/o Hulme Library, Hulme Walk, Hulme, Manchester M15 5FQ.

Labour Movement Conference on Immigration and Nationality

Manchester NALGO backs the campaign

Five hundred people turned out to demonstrate in Manchester on October 14th.

They were supporting Francis Okanlami's right to stay in this country.

Leader of Manchester City Council, Graham Stringer, and Chair of the Manchester Nalgo Branch and Nalgo NEC member, Lynn Evans, both gave full support to the campaign.

The campaign has also won support from other trade unions, parties, churches,

By FINN JENSEN

community groups and individuals. A petition in support of Francis and Moji's right to stay is being widely circulated.

The next big task is to build a national conference on immigration and nationality. The proposal came from the campaign but was supported by the Nalgo Branch Executive Council.

The Conference will be organised jointly between the Branch, the Campaign, and the Branch Black Members Group, and will be held in Manchester in early 1989, probably in February (to fit in with the date of Francis's appeal hearing).

The aim will be to raise the issue of immigration and nationality within the trade union movement and the wider labour movement, highlighting the sexist and racist nature of the current legislation.

If you want further information about the "Defend Francis and Moji Campaign", or the national Labour Movement Conference on Immigration and Nationality, contact: NALGO, Manchester Branch Office, 1st Floor, Elliot House, 3 Jacksons Row, Manchester M2 5NJ, or phone 061-834 6564 and ask for Rena Wood.

DEFEND FRANCIS AND MOJI'S RIGHT TO STAY.

PLASTIC BULLETS

Victory in West Yorks!

The West Yorks Campaign Against Plastic Bullets held a victory march through Huddersfield on Saturday October 8th.

For the past 12 months we have been campaigning for the local Standard-Brocks Fireworks Co. Ltd. to cease production of plastic bullets and to cancel its contract with the MoD.

Plastic bullets were never produced locally, but were manufactured at the Standard Brocks Fireworks Co. in Dumfrieshire.

A meeting last May between representatives of the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets and the company, as well as the work of the Campaign in Belfast and Huddersfield, led to the company informing us they would not renew their contract with the MoD.

It was this decision which was celebrated by the demonstration. Some 150

By Graham Hellawell LCI Youth Officer

attended, representing the numerous groups who had been involved in the campaign.

Speakers included Frances Meakin from UCAPB, Belfast, whose 21 year old brother, Brian Donnelly, was killed by a plastic bullet; Councillor Garth Frankland from Leeds; and Billy Etherington from the NUM.

The emphasis of the Campaign now needs to be directed southwards. Astra Pyrotechnics, based in Sandwich, Kent, produce plastic bullets.

With the help of Billy Etherington, who has given us tremendous support, we will be seeking to organise a fightback campaign in the south in the near future.

For details contact Keith, 0484-513627.

WOLFE TONE SOCIETY
Picket Astra Fireworks
162 Regent Street, London W1
Friday October 28th
Ban Plastic Bullets!
Boycott Astra Fireworks!
Contact:
Wolfe Tone Society, BM Box 6191, London WC1N

No to racial segregation in Dewsbury!
March
Saturday 29th Oct.
Assemble 1.00pm Orchard St, Savile Town
Rally 2.00pm Mandela Way, next to Town Hall



PHOTO: Lynne Evans

The Manchester demonstration

Editorial

BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

USA: Lessons of a no-choice election

After eight years in the wilderness, the opposition party banks everything on an appeal to the middle ground, on a high profile commitment to competence, efficiency, technology.

An image-conscious campaign tries to shape every media nuance. Every split second of air time is calculated for maximum effect. All faith is placed in the national leader, whose daily doings are designed to show that he is a "better person" than his opponent.

Nothing is said that might antagonise the "floating voter". A judicious silence is maintained on the demands of unions, women, black people, lesbians and gays and peace campaigners.

Result: polling day disaster.

Sounds familiar? It might be Neil Kinnock last year, or in a few years time. But right now it's Mike Dukakis, laying one of the biggest electoral eggs in recent memory.

Of course, the Democratic Party and the Labour Party are entirely different animals. The Democrats have no organisational ties to the unions, have never been even formally committed to anything that smacked of socialism, have no national membership... indeed, no democratic structures of any kind.

The unspoken pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist consensus behind the two party system accounts for the ever-increasing rate of abstention from US "democracy".

This year, a majority of the US working class will almost certainly sit at home (if they've got one) on November 3rd, fully aware that the choice between Dukakis and Bush is a phoney one. It should be exposed as such, not legitimised by bogus dead-end "lesser evil" argument.

The Labour Party, even under Kinnock's regime, remains the hope of the organised working class, and an essential field of battle for socialists. Its history and structures have nothing in common with the US Democrats; but the Democrats do offer a horrific crystal ball image of the kind of party Kinnock wants to create — and of the fate awaiting it.

Tories in Conference: a triumph of the will?

The Tories made their return to Brighton four years after the bomb attack into a triumph of the will in more ways than one.

Thatcher and her cabinet strutted before the adoring loyalists breathing defiance. Their message was clear: nothing could deflect them from their task of making Britain and the world safe for capitalism.

Even the Home Secretary, normally a favourite target of grassroots Tory bloodlust, escaped with hardly a scratch — not simply because the Tories gagged dissent, but because the Party's leaders and its rank and file are largely in tune.

Electronic tagging, privatisation of British Rail and British Coal, more attacks on local government... the faithful loved it. But in comparison to last year's bonanza, when the Poll Tax, and housing and education "reforms" were unveiled, it was a quiet affair. Who needs "new ideas" when so much is already going your way?

In Brighton, the Tories let us glimpse their willingness further to intensify their drive against the working class; and to deepen class polarisation still further.

Not long after their Conference adjourned in an orgy of Thatcher-philia the government showed what's in store for us. Sinn Fein was banned from the airwaves; GCHQ trade unionists finally got the sack; the long established right to silence was overthrown. Now that's confidence.

But they do have their problems. Lawson's Conference speech was pure bluff. His message was: yes, we have some problems, inflation is up, the trade gap is grim, but we'll deal with these obstacles as we dealt with the Miners' Strike, the drop in oil prices, the Stock Market crash... and emerge even stronger than before.

In other words: a triumph of Tory will, regardless of the costs. That's fine for the baying hounds in Brighton, but (as Lawson knows) it is not even the beginning of an answer to his economic problems.

Thatcher's chauvinist anti-Europe crusade cannot win over the sections of her party favourable to closer links with European capital. This is a split created by the real historical choices facing the British ruling class.

In the long run, how can they patch it up? Even on crime, the Tories are storing up trouble. They can electronically tag as many of us as they like, but while its social and economic causes remain untouched, crime will continue to rise.

So, why are they so confident — on will power alone? Their greatest asset remains *our weakness.*

Thatcher in Brighton poured scorn on Kinnock's Blackpool performance — because Labour had already conceded most of the arguments at our own Conference! Against an incoherent, directionless opposition the Tories "more and more of the same thing" looks like forward thinking boldness.

It *is* possible to defeat the Tories. But to do so Labour needs a new direction and a new leadership — one that can expose the hollowness of the Tories' "triumph of the will".

Economic Notebook

The end of Thatcher's Boom?
Caught! The Bulldog's taking steroids!

Last year Thatcher was elected on the back of a carefully engineered pre-election boom.

World stock markets were at an historic high and the UK economy was hyped as "the fastest growing in Europe".

By Dave Palmer
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

Now, one year after the crash of 87, the biggest ever collapse in share values, the party is just about over.

House sales have slowed. Inflation has crept above 6%. Britain heads for a 1988 trade deficit of £12 billion plus — its largest in history.

Lawson applies the brakes by raising interest rates from 8% to 12% in a few months. A slump in oil prices, due to the end of the Iran/Iraq War, makes matters worse.

So Thatcher's boom judders to a halt. But did it ever really exist? And if so, what created it?

No one national government controls the cycle of slump and boom; but government policies can affect the distribution of the benefits or penalties of the ups and downs — both between various national capitals and between capital and labour.

The 79-81 slump saw major cuts in production and a world-wide rise in unemployment. The US Federal Reserve (somewhat like the Bank of England) deliberately raised interest rates to *deepen* the recession.

An overvalued "superdollar" was created — to squeeze inflation out of the system so only the "fittest" survived.

Orthodoxy

Neo-liberal economics, the new orthodoxy, were pursued more vigourously by Thatcher than anyone else. With the relatively weak UK economy, the results were traumatic.

Output plummetted by almost 10%. Whole manufacturing industries were wiped out. Mass unemployment on a scale unknown since the 30s (and unmatched in any other advanced industrial country) caused profound social discontent.

An uneven revival began in 82, again in tune with a world-wide uptum — at the bottom of which was, again, the US.

Vast tax cuts for the rich and an open cheque book for a bloated war machine sucked goods and capital into the US on an unprecedented scale, reviving demand and (extremely uneven) growth in the world economy.

The British upturn was helped by a battery of familiar Tory policies — anti-union laws, privatisation, public spending cuts, high interest rates, and a high £ (making the de-controlled City attractive to the new global financial market).

Thatcher did not subordinate industrial to finance capital, as is often stated (the two are inextricable), but created optimum conditions for big business's "restructuring" and "rationalisation".

Slimmed-down, "flexible" (i.e. easily exploited) workforces were combined with investment in new robot and computer technologies. Monetary controls were a smokescreen for debt-led growth. Public spending (and the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement — PSBR) was hacked back while private sector borrowing boomed.



Thatcher

The financial sector burgeoned. Britain became the world's second largest creditor-nation (after Japan); overseas capital assets reached £150 billion in 1986.

With the general election approaching, Lawson let it rip. Consumer spending grew by about 5%. The problem was that industrial growth was only 3%. The trade gap yawned. A balance of payments crisis became inevitable.

Thus Thatcher's boom failed to overcome British capital's underlying weaknesses, which are now re-emerging with a vengeance. Britain has shared in world capitalist growth, but within that growth its share has fallen as a proportion of the whole.

The US Federal Reserve reacted to the 87 crash by lowering interest rates, drawing liquid capital back into the markets and perking up the Dow Jones average. Lawson followed suit, overheating the economy (the big tax cuts) in a manner obvious even to the Labour leadership — leading to the inevitable.

Industrial growth has lagged behind other advanced capitalist countries, but *productivity* has risen sharply (a consequence of Thatcher's single-minded offensive on organised labour). Foreign-based transnationals are thus investing heavily in Britain — the Nissan-Ford phenomenon.

The Economist observed that even at current rates of growth, Thatcher needed to maintain power (and her offensive) *for another 20 years* before Britain could overtake France, let alone West Germany.

The shape of the coming recession will depend on how "Bushakis" manages the US's twin deficits. When the vastly over-valued dollar finally falls, the only option may be a rapid rise in US interest rates (to sustain confidence in the US debt).

World recession would be inevitable, but its depth and distribution will be affected by the degree of inter-imperialist co-ordination, market management, and the movement towards trade "super-blocs". Here Thatcher has gone out on a limb, rejecting Europe and sticking with the US.

The UK economy — the Bull Dog on Steroids — will enter this new scene weaker than its rivals, but with an internal balance highly favourable (at the moment) to capital.

Trade Union Briefing

EETPU

Membership battle hots up

By TOM JOHNSON

Many EETPU members have now left to join the newly formed Electrical and Plumbing Industries Union (EPIU) and the Manufacturing Science and Finance Union (MSF).

But the EETPU has reacted; and has found allies in UCATT and, predicatably, the AEU.

UCATT and the AEU will continue to recognise the EEPTU as a bona fide trade union. They will neither poach members nor assist in the removal of EEPTU representatives from trade union bodies.

Ian Brown, EPIU national plumbing officer slammed these unions' collaborationism. They had disregarded the fact that "for the first time in the 120 year history of the TUC a union has been expelled because of actions detrimental to other unions."

Ford electricians and Manchester City Council workers preparing to leave the EEPTU have received letters warning them of the 'hard-left' nature of the MSF and EPIU: "politically motivated people [are] intent on causing maximum confusion."

Meanwhile a 50-strong EPIU branch has been set up in Wigan. We should show solidarity by excluding EEPTU delegates from trade union bodies and recognising electricians in the EPIU or holding sections.

GCHQ

Unions protest at the sacking

By TOM JOHNSON

The Tories have finally sacked the GCHQ workers who refused £1,000 bribes to resign their union membership.

British government employees have never before been sacked simply for belonging to a union.

In response, 5,000 civil servants up and down the country walked out.

The Council of Civil Service Unions is balloting members on a one-day strike for November 7th. The strike call is likely to be well supported. The TUC has declared a day of protest.

The government's move illustrates how determined they are to crush trade unionism. GCHQ workers had offered to negotiate a no-strike deal and to divorce national pay questions from internal issues.

Some trade unionism, of course, is acceptable — next month Thatcher will visit Lech Walesa in Gdansk.

Kinnock has improved slightly on his defence at Conference: "GCHQ workers are as patriotic as anyone!" The issue is now one of civil liberties rather than chauvinism. No doubt the move leftwards is purely rhetorical.

LEEDS AGAINST WORKFARE

The "Slave"-Driver

By Graham Smallwood Chapel Allerton Ward Labour Party

Fifty people attended a public meeting on October 14th on "Employment Training".

It was called by Leeds Trades Council and Leeds Action Against Workfare.

After the pleasure of listening to Derek Fatchett MP and various other "representatives of the labour movement", attention was turned to Geoff Driver.

Cllr Driver is in charge of implementing the City Council's decision to accept ET.

He tried to explain away the Council's defiance of Labour Party and TUC policy by saying the scheme would be a "quality-run scheme"!

He also explained how, being unemployed himself, he understood the plight of Thatcher's millions. He himself had signed the petition against ET when he went to sign on.

Action against ET in Leeds has been organised jointly by Leeds Action Against Workfare, Leeds NALGO, and the Trades Council. Claimants have been petitioned, and information packs have been produced.

LAAW's next step will be to mail Councillors with letters of protest from their unemployed voters. We hope Cllr. "Slave"-Driver will get the message!

Chapel Allerton Hospital

The fight goes on!

By Graham Smallwood Leeds Labour Briefing



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

The prospect facing would-be patients in Leeds

Staff at Chapel Allerton Hospital in North East Leeds have met a setback in their campaign against closure.

The Community Health Council has voted 6-5 in favour of the closure if certain guarantees are met.

The Campaign against closure, organised by Chapel Allerton Hospital Action Group, has held two public meetings — each attended by over 100 people, organised petitioning and pickets.

The second meeting was held by the CHC to "guage public feeling". Fifty members of the public, mainly patients and ex-patients, came to the meeting to register their protest, and 24,000 signatures against closure were presented.

Still the CHC voted to accept the closure — if the Health Authority can meet certain guarantees. The CHC will consider in November whether its conditions have been met; and the campaign will be working hard to prove that they can't be.

We will also be working to hold Labour members on the CHC to their responsibilities. Part of this will be producing a joint leaflet with Chapel Allerton Ward Labour Party.

ORDNANCE CLOSURES

Joint campaign is needed

As Parliament reassembles after its summer break, the Labour front bench has demanded a Parliamentary Inquiry into British Aerospace's asset-stripping activities.

By CHRISTINE FRASER

Factories

The value give to the Royal Ordnance factories upon their sale to BAe last year — which turned BAe into one of the biggest property companies in the country — has been questioned.

Workers at the Patricroft munitions factory near Manchester and Glasgow's Bishopston armaments plant went on strike when BAe announced a programme of 2,000 redundancies for their plants over two years.

They have been joined by workers at Hamble, near Southampton, who also face closure.

Strikers at the three threatened plants are being supported by other Ordnance workers. Stewards at other plants have guaranteed they will not take on any work transferred from the striking factories. A campaign has been established, and plans to lobby Parliament.

Contrasts

This instant action by the Ordnance workers contrasts sharply with the lack of action taken by Austin Rover workers, who have had any thought of action blocked by union convenors.

The campaign against BAe would be even stronger if a united campaign could be established linking all workers under threat from the company.

Education in Birmingham

Cuts fall hardest on equal opportunities

According to Birmingham's Education Sub-Committee, the Council isn't cutting the education budget but "reallocating resources within lower limits"!

By SYLVIA SMITH

This is happening with the collaboration of the largest teachers' union, the NUT — or at least their Executive.

The NUT circulated all secondary teachers' reps in schools with a document about new cover arrangements for secondary schools, which was printed on Birmingham LEA paper and already agreed by the Sub-Committee.

Under pressure from members, the union agreed to call a meeting of reps to discuss the issues involved.

The new arrangements involve getting rid of all casual supply cover (so much for the equal opportunities for women who cannot take up full time jobs) and employing 1 teachers for every secondary school to do the cover work.

Also, teachers will not lose more than 25% of their "free" time to cover for absence.

This seems like an attractive package on the face of it, but does not take into account that Birmingham secondary teachers, unlike those in Coventry, have no guaranteed 'free' time.

The same National Executive member who negotiated the Coventry deal — a guaranteed five "free" periods a week — appears to be satisfied with Birmingham's new deal.

25% of existing "free" time is to go — but 25% of what? Perhaps the difference is that Coventry NUT has a left wing Executive and a very strong STA in their branch!

This so-called "free" time is used for preparation, pastoral and administrative work.

Also, the new cover teachers will be employed at no cost to the Authority, who intend to redeploy large numbers of teachers presently covering for other teachers on courses.

Support

Meanwhile, teachers in the Education Support Service, who provide courses for teachers in the city, have been told that from November 1st they will all be redeployed to deliver Baker's National Curriculum to schools.

This will mean an end of effective anti-racist and anti-sexist work and of courses for teachers in arts and humanities.

The only courses to be offerred to teachers during school time in future will be on the National Curriculum, on links with industry, and on attainment and testing.

Any other courses will be run in "twilight" time — that is from 4.30pm to 7.30pm — and will be voluntary.

Again, this is an attack on all those who have child-care responsibilities, as well as on the conditions of sevice of advisory teachers, who will be directed to work "twilight" sessions.

The Education Support Service is also undergoing a review to look at "structures and efficiency" (read cuts). The NUT has refused to give its members any guidance on their position in relation to this.

Late extra: Four of the "Birmingham 20", members of the Education Sub-Committee, voted (along with the Tories) to defeat cuts in the education service.

The controlling right wingers are furious and have accused them of "collaborating with the Tories" and have been threatened with the whip being removed.

Trade Union Solidarity Conference

In solidarity with workers in struggle

The simple matter of solidarity with other workers in struggle has become a major problem for the trade union movement in Britain.

The first blow came when trade union leaders refused to challenge the illegalisation of solidarity action brought about by the anti-union laws.

Many struggles have been left alone for long periods of time — with a serious need for basic support.

It is these problems which the Conference of the Solidarity Network, on November 5th, is seeking to address.

A major feature of the year long Miners' Strike was the

By ALAN THORNETT
Trade Union Briefing

emergence of a mass non-sectarian support movement based on the general Support Committees and the Womens Suppport Committees.

That was the form rank and file support took at that time. Since then Support Committees, and Womens Support Committees, have been a feature of every major strike which has taken place — Wapping, P&O, and, to a lesser extent, the Vickers strike in Barrow.

One of the aims of the Conference, as with the founding Conference of the Solidarity Network last year, is to maintain that tradition and ensure that it remains in place to support future disputes.

The Network offers not just material support, but political support by being in place to take forward the experiences of one struggle into future ones.

The Conference also aims to generate more support for the strikes which are currently taking place. A particular priority is the P&O dispute, where the strikers are now in their eight month on strike.

The Solidarity Network has developed over the past year, carrying out consistant support work and working closely with the Chesterfield conference.

The Network sees this Conference as a means of strengthening its vital work and improving its own organisational structure.

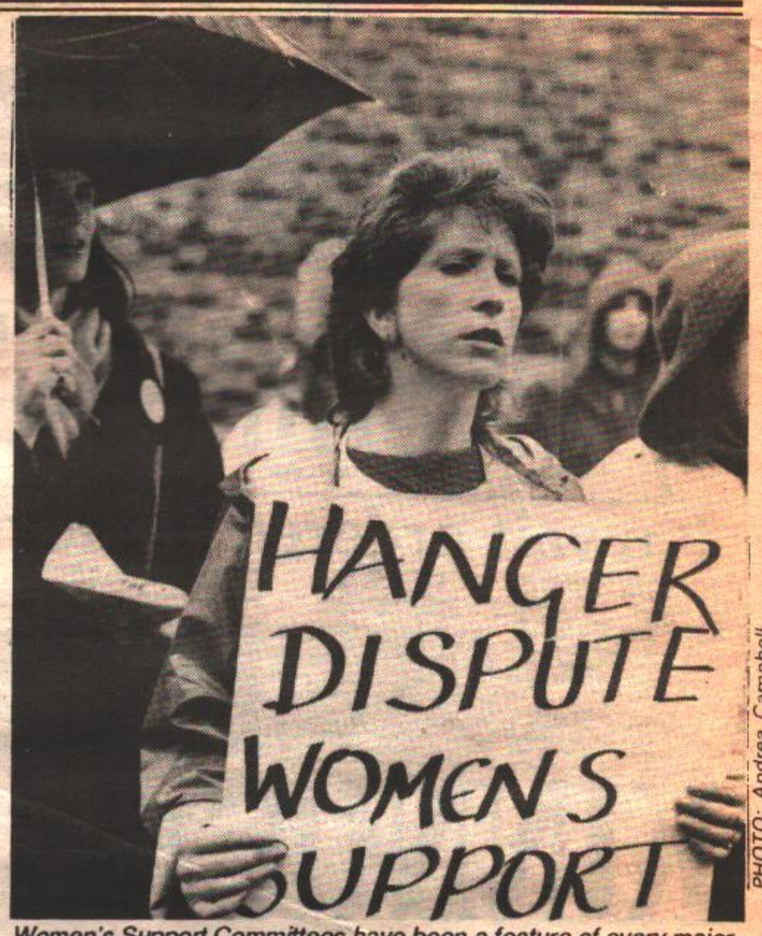


PHOTO: Andrea Campbell

Women's Support Committees have been a feature of every major strike since the Miners' Strike

Solidarity Network Conference
Supported by
the Chesterfield Socialist Conference
Saturday 5th November, 9.00-6.00
Leeds Trades Council Club, Saville Mount, Leeds

The Solidarity Network, set up at a Conference in Leeds last year, seeks to build on the support network organised for the miners and for the printworkers at Wapping. The Network meets regularly and has organised support and publicity for a number of disputes including, this year, the Dover seafarers.
Previously strikers have been left to fight alone and have been defeated. This must not happen to the seafarers. The Network has worked with the Chesterfield Socialist Conference, holding a joint rally in London in support of those in struggle. This conference has been called to extend and develop this work.

Credentials: 2 (waged), 1 (unwaged), strikers free. Creche facilities and overnight accommodation for Friday/Saturday night can be arranged if requested at least a week in advance.
Contact: Janet Seymour, 3 Hill Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs, tel. 0282-812864.

P&O Strike Latest

Militants Organise

Seven hundred seafarers are still on strike after an eight month battle against P&O's attempt to make 25% staff cuts, reduce wages, cut annual leave, and lengthen shifts.

The daily mass picket in Dover remains strong, and the support group kitchens are still operating.

Money from the TUC's hardship fund has been patchy, and strikers have asked for donations to be sent direct to the Womens' Support Groups.

We should join strikers in their daily picket of the P&O HQ in Pall Mall, London, as well as travel down to Dover, and we should argue for regular levies in union branches.

P&O originally wanted to cut £6 million a year from its wage bill. Lloyds recently reported that the strike has cost about £25 million, cutting the shipping group's pre-tax profit growth for the first half of the year to 10.5% instead of 30%.

Sir Geoffry Sterling is prepared, it seems, to continue pumping money indefinitely into P&O ferries just to defeat the strike.

Gary Osterley
South East London Seafarers Support Group

Attempts by superscabs Bruce Gargitt and Dave Andrews to form a European Ferryscabs Association seem to have fallen on stony groun. P&O are hesitant to recognise this so-called union, and scabs have been far from enthusiastic to join it.

In a move that makes a mockery of the "consumer boycott" strategy, P&O's rivals, Sealink, have decided to pull out of the NMB, which negotiates wages nationally for seafarers. So much for being a 'good' employer!

Strikers have found their most determined and enthusiastic supporters in the Women's Support Groups of Yorkshire. Not only have they raised enormous sums of money for the seafarers, they now talk about organising a march from Sheffield to Dover.

An interesting debate has developed in the NUS as to whether it should merge with the TGWU or the NUR.

Bob Rayner, the Harwich Branch Secretary, argues that the TGWU will be the best option as its structure allows greater participation by ordinary members. Bob is standing as the NUS Broad Left's candidate for Deputy General Secretary.

The Broad Left's demands are for a national stoppage in support of safety and defence of jobs and the union; accountability of all officials; no officials to be paid more that the average wage of a skilled seafarer; and merger with the TGWU.

Bob Rayner argues, "The union has drifted away from the members, the Executive has too much power. The balance must be moved back to a Delegate Conference."

Since his betrayal of the national NUS strike, which could easily have won the dispute, Sam McCluskie has failed to provide any alternative strategy.

For months he grovelled to the courts and asked strikers to call off the mass pickets. Now that sequestration has been lifted, McCluskie has nothing at all to say to the strikers. In fact, he is embarrassed by the Dover struggle.

In Dover, the largely McCluskyite Port Committee has retained bureaucratic control of the local union line, while militant strikers organised through Magness House and the Support Groups have provided the practical and organisational lead required to maintain a strike for eight months and get wide labour movement support.

The only way the strike can make any headway now, is if militant strikers organise around demands for secondary solidarity strike action, especially within the NUS, and provide a focus for the rest of the labour movement through mass actions like the rally last August.

Nalgo Pay Campaign

Who's Scapegoating Whom?

By now many comrades will know that the NALGO national ballot for industrial action over local government pay was lost by 45% to 55%.

This was despite a positive recommendation from the National Committee.

Clearly, many members are demoralised by the cuts and attacks on local government in recent years, but the ballot shows that a large section of the union is still prepared to take action over pay.

What was needed was a decisive campaign led by the union leadership in support of their own recommendation with publicity, resources, and activity on at least the scale of the recent, successful ballot for a political fund.

Doug Thorpe
Islington NALGO

Next year's campaign must be based on a claim, drawn up in a democratic way, that reflects the needs of low-paid members. In support of it, the leadership must wage a serious campaign for industrial action.

Some on the left, including the SWP, made the mistake of believing that the leadership was going for an all-out "yes" vote this year.

It was an honest mistake, which, in some areas, however, led to a search for other scapegoats and to attacks on local branch leaderships (including Briefing supporters).

nalgo

The right-wing has been given a field day and the national leadership has been let off the hook. Persistence with this line can only miseducate and further demoralise the membership. After all, if the leadership was serious, and we still lost — what hope is left?

The left must learn from this year's events and unite around demands for a democratic, hard fought national campaign next year which seriously addresses the problem of low pay.

1938 50 YEARS 1988

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
RALLY
Saturday 12 November 1988, 7.30pm



Ernest Mandel
Marxist economist

Heather Dashner
Mexican PRT

Catherine Samary
Paris University Institute of the Soviet World

Charlie van Gelderen
Attended founding conference of FI

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1
Nearest Tube: Holborn
Access: wheelchair access to meeting room, no disabled toilet facilities
There will be a creche. Book in advance to PO Box 705, London, SW19 1HA

SPONSORED BY *SOCIALIST OUTLOOK*

Labour Party

A tale of two leaders!


TONIGHT'S WEATHER: SHOWERS

LATE PRICES EX

Evening Standa

LONDON, TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER, 1988

Kuwait ordered to halve stake in

by John Phelps and Michael Foster

THE State-owned Kuwait Investment Office, one of the biggest investors in the London Stock Market, has been ordered to sell off more than half its £3 billion shareholding in BP after an investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The decision, announced by Trade and Industry secretary Lord Young, will cost the Kuwaitis at least £350 million because of the fall in value of their shares but is also seen by the oil state as a direct snub and could cast a cloud over friendly relations.

Today BP shares dipped 6p on the news and other shares also eased back. The City fear is that the Kuwaitis could decide to flex their financial muscles and sell off chunks of an estimated £15 billion portfolio of UK shares. A major arms deal involving Tornado airplanes could also be in jeopardy.

Officially the Kuwait government restricts itself to the terse comment that it is "extremely dissatisfied" both with the decision and also the reasoning behind it. But the diplomatic language disguises a fury which is believed to be felt all the way up to the Emir himself.

In particular, they take exception to suggestions in the commission report that there is a high degree of probability that "sooner or later situations will arise in which Kuwait's international and national interests will come sharply into conflict with BP and Her Majesty's Government's interests".

Mehdi Varzi, top oil analyst with stockbrokers Kleinwort Grieveson, commented: "The strong statement issued by the Kuwaitis indicates they are going to treat this incident extremely seriously."

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TONIGHT'S WEATHER: MILD

LATE PRICES EXTRA

Evening Standard

LONDON, FRIDAY, 14 OCTOBER, 1988

20p

Be Lord of the Manor in our new free draw!

Crest of one of the noble families associated with the Lordship

The Evening Standard today announces an exciting new free draw.

By this time next month you could be Lord of the Manor of Brighton, a title which dates back to the time of Edward the Confessor and was once owned by Henry VIII.

To enter all you need to do is to collect ten tokens from the Evening Standard.

When the title was up for auction this summer it was said to be one of the most valuable ever to come on the market, second only to Stratford-upon-Avon, sold last year for £87,000.

As Lord of the Manor of Brighton you will be a popular figure on ceremonial occasions.

And you will be able to have the title added to your coat of arms, entered on your passport and printed on your writing paper.

Tokens

The tokens, numbered one to ten, will be printed in the Evening Standard for the next ten days.

The first is published today on Page 28 along with full details and rules of the free draw. These are also available free of charge either on personal application at the Evening Standard (St Bride Street entrance) at 118 Fleet Street, EC4, or by postal application with a stamped, addressed envelope from Lord of the Manor Tokens, PO Box 471, London EC3S 1BJ.

KINNOCK PREACHES TORY MESSAGE



NEIL KINNOCK sent his party marching into Mrs Thatcher's territory today in an effort to convince voters that Labour is a credible contender for power.

In an extraordinary leadership speech, he instructed Labour's conference not to be hostile to Tory watchwords like "efficiency" and "individualism", nor to be afraid of market forces.

Instead, they should go out and "reclaim" Mrs Thatcher's language and ideas for themselves.

Mr Kinnock began his keynote and carefully-calculated speech by warning any potential critics that he was in charge, whatever the far Left or Mr Ron Todd of the Transport and General Workers' Union might say.

His authority came from the overwhelming victory he and deputy Roy Hattersley had scored in the leadership elections at the start of the conference.

"The fact is, elections have results and results give mandates," Mr Kinnock declared.

He had been re-awarded the leadership democratically and would use it democratically, Mr Kinnock went on. "It will be used very deliberately, very directly for the purposes for which it was given to me by people in every part of this movement – to do everything that can be done to achieve victory for this party and advance for the country."

The Labour leader went on to set twin objectives under the slogan: "Social justice and economic efficiency."

There were some in the Labour Party, he said, who believed efficiency was a threat to social justice. They were wrong. The two went hand in hand.

"If Britain is not economically efficient, it will not have the means to contribute to social justice."

Mrs Thatcher herself could hardly have put it better.

Equally, Mr Kinnock told his troops, it was no good saying that all public ownership was good and all private business bad. The reality was the two had to go together. And Labour had to prove that it could run "the mixed economy" better than the Tories.

Mr Kinnock's aides made clear in advance that, with his Blackpool conference victory behind him, the main target of his speech was the wider party outside and, above all, the voters.

On the most difficult and tricky party issue of defence, Mr Kinnock told the conference effectively that whatever they might decide this week wouldn't matter. All options must be left open for the review of defence policy which Labour is committed to carry out in the year ahead and that review was "sacrosanct."

Conference reports: P2

by Charles Reiss
Political Editor

"NO GRUDGES". Soph
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by Peter Dc

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BIRTHDAY WALTZ: Mrs Thatcher and husband Denis at the Agents' Ball, social highlight of the conference, last night. The PM was 63 yesterday.

ON WITH THE REVOLUTION

by Charles Reiss, Political Editor

THE Prime Minister set out to tell the Tory Party and the nation today that her revolution is not over yet.

In her most important speech of the political year she prepared to show the targets for the next election and the next Thatcher decade.

Top of the list was a commitment to foster "the best in human nature" to create a caring, as well as a prosperous Britain.

In her end of conference speech in Brighton Mrs Thatcher was ready to meet head on the charge from Labour's Neil Kinnock that her Government had created a selfish "me now" generation.

In a direct reply to Labour charges that she was putting a free for all in place of a fair society Mrs Thatcher said that was a false choice.

There need be no conflict, she said, between individual freedom and the wellbeing of the community. It was personal effort and initiative that made communities thrive.

Of Labour she said: "Their cupboard is bare". They did not recognise that prosperity and individual generosity were increasing together.

Right at the start of the speech, Mrs Thatcher was planning to deliver a message of defiance to the IRA. The Tories had returned to Brighton successfully four years after the bombing, even though they had been weighed down by the massive security shield.

In a speech still being agonised over in the early hours and running to 70 pages, Mrs Thatcher was also out to put some oomph into a Tory Conference which has been smooth, but the most unexciting in years.

The speech warned her party to beware of complacency, even though there was no general election on the horizon, the Tories have a commanding lead in the opinion polls and the opposition parties are collapsing.

The speech also brought a fresh commitment to the "green" theme proclaimed by Mrs Thatcher last month with a promise that the Government would protect the fabric of Britain and play its part in nurturing a cleaner, more pollution free world.

Mrs Thatcher was also ready to take on the criticisms from ex Premier Edward Heath and others that she was a reluctant European.

Britain could and should take a practical lead to create a Europe in tune with the vision of freedom of the founders of the Common Market, not some red tape, top-heavy empire.

The Prime Minister underlined her message in a briefing document distributed among the 6000 representatives.

Pledging lower taxes and more privatisation, she said: "Conservative Government does less – but it does the right things and it does them better."

On green issues she said: "We shall take care of our environment, for all Conservatives are conservationists. We shall look after those who cannot cope – while widening opportunities for those who can."

And she pledged: "This Government will not relax. Nor must our party. Next year we must sweep socialism out of the shires and send more Conservative MEPs to Europe."

Maggie gives conference kiss of life

Wages warning as prices rise

Standard Reporter

INFLATION rose to 5.9 per cent in September compared with 5.7 per cent in August. Prices went up just 0.5 per cent, compared with 1.1 per cent last month, according to the new Retail Price Index out today.

Employment Secretary Norman Fowler said if mortgage interest rates were excluded from the inflation figures, the annual rate would be 5.2 per cent.

Mr Fowler urged employers and employees to keep wage increases down.

When tax reductions and prices were taken into account, he said, earnings need only have risen over the last year by 2.9 per cent to maintain purchasing power.

Mr Fowler said: "This needs to be understood and reflected in wage negotiations. There is no justification in these figures for excessive pay settlements."

Increases

His comments came as Chancellor Nigel Lawson threw a lifeline to home owners and other borrowers by saying he did not think interest rates would need to go any higher.

Mr Lawson warned in his conference speech yesterday that interest rates would have to stay relatively steep "for quite a while" to bring down inflation.

But speaking on the BBC's Today programme, he said that he thought the current rate level was "doing the trick".

"If interest rates have to go up further—and there is no sign of that at the moment—they will go up further," he said.

"But in my view the tightening that has already occurred has had a profound effect on the whole of the economy."

TV & Radio 40-41 ☐ City Section 22-25 ☐ London Life 27-38 ☐ Metropolis 42 ☐ Entertainment Guide 44-45 ☐ Critics

TV & Radio 32-34 ☐ City Section 16-19 ☐ Weekend 21-44 ☐ Metropolis 28-29 ☐ Entertainment Guide 36-44 ☐ Critics 44 ☐ Letters 45 ☐ Patric Walker 46

Neil Kinnock likes to harp on about our media image and the need to cultivate it.

He should be well pleased with his own contribution.

By Chris Knight Lewisham East CLP

The contrasting banner headlines in the London *Evening Standard* say it all.

Headline No. 1: "Kinnock preaches Tory message!" screamed billboards across London hours after Neil's sickening "victory" speech at Labour's Annual Conference.

Kinnock had whinged on endlessly about the need to foster "individualism" and increase (capitalist) "efficiency".

"If Britain is not economically efficient, it will not have the means to contribute to social justice," thundered Neil. As the *Standard* commented, "Mrs Thatcher herself could hardly have put it better."

Headline No. 2: "On with the revolution!" referred to Thatcher's triumphant closing speech to the Tory Conference ten days later. No mealy-mouthed middle-roadism here.

Subsequent press comment stressed one point above all others; the Tory leader's evident ability to keep in touch with her own party's "grass roots" by voicing — in simple, strident language — their distinctive aspirations and hopes.

Labour Briefing has said it before, but we must say it again. Yes, Neil, we have a lot to learn from Margaret Thatcher. But they are not the lessons you learn.

What Thatcher's success teaches us is that if you are embroiled in the class war, the best thing to do is to *rally your own troops first*.

Give your "grass roots" a taste of power. Fire them, rouse them. Promise them profound, even revolutionary, changes — (but not in such a way as to leave them feeling anchorless or disoriented).

Class

Appeal to their traditions and class patriotism. Go on the offensive — and retain the initiative through thick and thin. Confront the enemy head-on and exploit all the weaknesses you can find.

Then, once you have secured your own class base, you can begin to reach out and make "new" alliances. Along that road, you can convincingly present your own class interests as those of society as a whole.

Tony Benn might have been a real match for Thatcher in that sense. With his ability to harness the class patriotism and the best traditions of our movement even whilst promising radical change, he might have matched Thatcher blow for blow.

Kinnock, by contrast, is a midget. The only lesson he draws from Thatcher's success is to echo her political message, imagining that if he assumes the same outward appearance, some of her apparent magic will rub off on him!

Kinnock shuns the Labour Party's grass roots activists, who alone can provide the human energy and resource capable of ensuring him an election victory, and who are now, in certain places, beginning to leave the Party in confusion and despair.

He shuns them in case they spoil his new-found Thatcherite media image. He squanders the trust placed in him by the *majority* of Party activists, who are firm unilateralists — comrades who voted him in as Leader believing he would honour *that* commitment if no other.

Instead of combining the promise of change with an appeal to our movement's traditions, he says nothing about changing society and dismisses our traditions as irrelevant.

Kinnock spurns the energy and vision of our vast waiting army of green, anti-nuclear, feminist, black, lesbian, gay and socialist activists. They are all told to sit at home and send back an envelope now and then.

He spurns our past in the name of a dazzling "future" which on a moment's inspection turns out to be... Mrs Thatcher's vision of "standards" and "values" dug up from the age of Queen Victoria!

To clear more space for his cuddles with the media men, Kinnock is setting about the virtual destruction of the very organisational links and potentially democratic structures which have made the British Labour Party such a unique body.

Clearly, this man thinks highly of the David Owen conference-in-a-phone-box route to a mass following! He wants a so-called "mass" party of stay-at-home-and-watch-the-telly atomised individual members, each paying by standing order, linked directly with Neil through Head Office, and allowed to vote by postal ballot from time to time on the question of which pinkish version of Thatcherism is preferred as flavour of the month.

Parliamentary candidates will be chosen and imposed from on high, as will policy documents. In all this, there will be little place for Constituency Party organisations at all, although no doubt what's left of them will still be expected to supply a full quota of canvassers at election times (or will they be abolished in favour of TV ads too?).

Left

Neil Kinnock may be expecting most of us on the left to walk out before long — as thousands of our comrades understandably but unfortunately did in the 1960s when Harold Wilson backed US imperialism in Vietnam. But Labour's grass roots are dug in deep and digging them out won't be easy.

Kinnock's ratting on unilateralism is tragic and outrageous, but we must turn it to our advantage. A *united front in defence of unilateralism* will strike a powerful chord in every section of the Party, and *Labour Briefing* will be among the leading forces in organising for this.

We must never forget that it is we — not the Kinnockites — who are the standard bearers of democracy in the Labour Party. We are implacably against Labour being run on media-dictated lines by a small clique from the top down.

We'll be campaigning harder than ever to democratise *every* aspect of life in the trade unions and the Labour Party, including the block vote system — not by smashing the organisational links which decades of class struggle have bequeathed to us, but by strengthening them, building on them, and making them as accountable as they were intended to be by the generations who forged them in the fight for peace, socialism, and a better world.

SCOTTISH LABOUR CND

Model resolution for Scottish Conference March 1989

"This Conference reaffirms its support for British Labour Party policy for the unilateral removal of all nuclear weapons and bases, including the USA's, from British soil and waters in the lifetime of the next Labour government and the diversion of the resources so released to socially beneficial fields.

"It asserts that this is the policy which can have maximum impact on the disarmament process worldwide. The main objective of the forthcoming Defence Review must therefore be to propose ways in which this policy can be campaigned for to win majority support.

"To this end the Scottish Labour Party supports the Campaign for a Nuclear Free Scotland and will work to ensure maximum labour movement commitment to its organisation and activities.

"The Executive is additionally instructed to initiate the necessary research and consequent campaigning around proposals for alternative utilisation of nuclear bases, facilities and related workplaces in Scotland."

Scottish CND Dayschool
Sponsored by STUC
Global Security: Local Action
Day School/Conference on preventing regional conflicts escalating to nuclear war and the role Scottish trade unions can play
Sunday October 29th, 10-4, £5
TGWU Building, Bath Street, Glasgow

Campaign for Socialism

Re-organising the Labour Left

By MARK SEATON

The Campaign Group has called a national co-ordinating meeting in London on November 12th.

Representatives of the Labour left from all Labour Party Regions will meet to discuss the Campaign for Socialism, the initiative launched jointly by the Campaign Group and the Socialist Conference at Blackpool.

Make sure your Region is represented — and that the delegates in London are representative of all strands of opinion in your local Labour left.

This meeting marks a step forward for the Campaign Group. Linking grass roots activists with MPs and national campaigning bodies can only help build a stronger, more united, more democratic left.

The agenda is sure to include a debate on future leadership challenges, a discussion on a socialist response to the Policy Review, a campaign to defend unilateralism, and a number of pressing organisational problems.

Contact Jon Lansman, c/o Jeremy Corbyn, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA for

BIRMINGHAM

Knowles on the way out?

By John Wilton
Birmingham Edgbaston CLP

The internal struggle in the Birmingham Labour Group and Party shows no sign of abating.

Labour's NCC declared the Group's decision to remove the whip from 20 anti-cuts Councillors "unconstitutional", and they were reinstated.

On October 4th a Finance and Management Committee recommended to full Council a package of £4 million cuts in Social Services and education. Nineteen of the 20 reinstated Councillors abstained and one — Richard Evans — voted against.

A well attended anti-cuts public meeting held by the Summerfield Group (the opposition left Councillors) initiated by *Briefing* supporters, gave the left new confidence.

The District Labour Party (DLP) passed an anti-cuts resolution overwhelmingly. Another resolution at DLP, calling on Council Leader Dick Knowles and two other Group officers to resign because of their roles in the notorious union busting letter to NALGO members (see *Labour Briefing* nos. 70, 71) was also carried by a big majority.

Meanwhile, the Council unions and the Trades Council are launching a public campaign against the Council cuts.

Knowles & Co. are the dinsosaurs of Labour in Birmingham. Knowles' days are numbered. But it remains to be seen who will replace him.

The main candidates are (white, male) Brian Bird, an old style right winger, and (white, male) Albert Bore, a former left wing wheeler-dealer.

Two developments may yet save the Labour right, if not Knowles himself.

•A meeting of some 46 right wing Labour Councillors has decided to call another "Clause 9" meeting to remove the whip from the reinstated 20.

•In a self-inflicted wound, the soft left has called for an NEC inquiry into the Labour Group.

Briefing supporters argued against this, warning that in the present climate an inquiry of this sort will be a gift to the right and will spread to the DLP and CLPs — as the examples of Bermondsey and Liverpool should, by now, have taught us.

Which way forward for the Labour Left?

Challenge Kinnock in '89!

The Campaign Group of MPs must pick up Kinnock's 20% gauntlet and run candidates for Leader and Deputy Leader in 1989.

Such a campaign would provide a focus for the fight against the Policy Review, and build on the gains in grass roots organisation made through this year's Benn-Heffer challenge.

By GILL LEE

It could link up workers' struggles against Tory attacks with the party which is supposed to represent them.

It's getting harder and harder for socialists to explain to workers in struggle why they should turn to the Labour Party. A leadership challenge could be used to offer public support to those fighting the bosses' offensive, and could intervene over the heads of "new realist" union leaders, speaking directly to the rank and file (e.g. the postal dispute).

Campaign '89 should be run on an open, democratic basis, with representatives elected from local campaigns meeting regularly to discuss strategy and organisation.

A major objective should be an improved showing in the trade unions. This means the campaign must be launched well before the major conferences.

We should demand that all unions consult their members before casting their vote. These votes should be split *proportionately* between different leadership candidates.

Where a vote is on an issue of class politics — e.g. whether to strike — it is legitimate for the whole union vote to be cast one way to ensure unity in action. But on issues *internal* to the labour movement, such as the leadership campaign, differences within the working class should be openly and democratically expressed.

The left must fight against the next stage of the Policy Review and in defence of unilateralism — a sure target for Kinnock in 1989.

The "Campaign for Socialism" (launched jointly by the Campaign Group and the Socialist Conference) can be used to develop popular, socialist policies and begin the work of winning majority support for them.

We have to campaign for these policies outside the Party and link up with a wider range of struggles, including the fightback in the NHS and education, the seafarers, opposition to Section 28, the Poll Tax, HATs, etc., taking these struggles into the Labour Party and forcing the Party to turn out to them.

But policies do not implement themselves. Struggles do not win themselves. The left must fight for socialist policies *and a socialist leadership committed to implementing them.* The Policy Review is important, but any gains in policy will be meaningless while Kinnock remains leader.



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

"Why choose the Labour monkey if you can have the Tory organ-grinder?" We need a socialist leadership in the Labour Party, prepared to implement Conference policy — not over-ride it for their own ends.

Kinnock wants to turn the Labour Party into the kind of social democratic party found in most Western European countries. He wants to neutralise (for media consumption) the Party's link with the trade unions.

He wants to destroy the local and regional organisation of activists and replace it with a passive, individual membership system with a built-in bias for the existing leadership and easy prey to media manipulation.

He wants to prove that Labour can run a capitalist economy as reliably as the Tories. But why vote for the Labour monkey if you can have the Tory organ grinder?

Resolutions and letters from individuals and organisations welcoming another leadership challenge in '89 must be sent to the Campaign Group now.

The grey tide will not recede of its own accord; we have to unite to turn it back.

•This article was written in the light of a major political discussion on Labour Party Conference at the October meeting of the *Labour Briefing* National Steering Committee.

The after-conference Conference

THAMES VALLEY SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER

Oxford Road Primary School — Reading
Sponsored by
Thames Valley Campaign Group, Solidarity Network, supporters of the Chesterfield Socialist Conference.

An opportunity for an open debate on the prospects for the left after the Labour Party conference. Most of the day will be for discussion and contributions, although priority will be given for practical activity which can help to strengthen and unite the left.

The Conference will be open to all socialists and trade unionists seeking ways to build a united democratic left, campaigning around the policies and actions needed to defeat Thatcher and challenge the "new realists" who hold back that fight.

For details contact: D Warren, 90 Royal Avenue, Calcot, Reading Tel. Reading 423746 or 422621.

Warnock & New Reproductive Technologies

The Right to have a baby?

"We believe it is better for children to be born into a two parent family, with both father and mother," says Mary Warnock in her report *A Question of Life*.

The Tories will introduce legislation on the New Reproductive Technologies (NRTs), based on Warnock, next year. What are the NRTs and what do they mean for us?

The simplest of the NRTs, and one which has been in some use since at least the eigteenth century, is artificial insemination. Warnock says this should preferably be with the husband's sperm, that it must be supervised by a doctor, and that it's important to study the implications for "legitimacy."

In vitro fertilisation, in which the egg is fetilised outside the woman's body and then implanted in her womb, carries some risks to the donor of the egg (often, but not always the woman herself). "Extra" fertilised eggs can be frozen and the embryos used later.

By Gill Lee
Labour Briefing Women

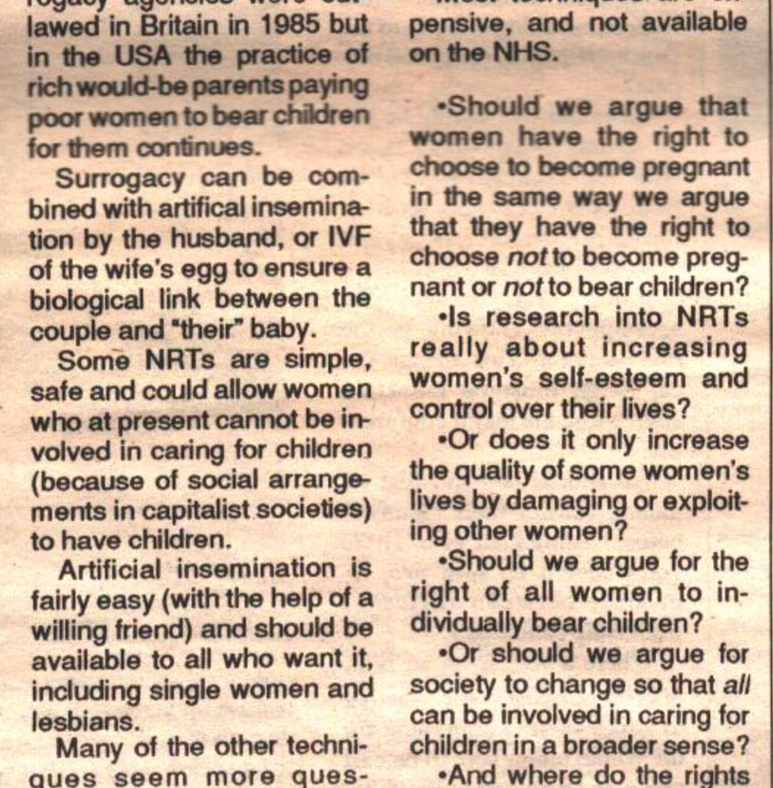
It is only suitable for about 5% of infertile women. There have been cases of women's eggs being washed out for IVF donation without their permission. Warnock says it must be licensed and her main worries are not about the health of donor women but about inheritance law: if an embryo is fertilised first, then frozen, and born second to the same parents, which child should inherit?!

Human embryo research has already been the object of parliamentary legislation, following Enoch Powell's proposal to ban it and give the embryo legal status.

Warnock too thinks "the embryo of the human species should be accorded some protection in law" and recommends no experimentation after 14 days, after which, she argues, the embryo develops an individuality!

As with Powell, Warnock's recommendation would pit a woman's right to choose on abortion against the rights of a piece of jelly.

The case of "Baby Cotton" drew the world's attention to commercial surrogacy arrangements: couples paying women to bear children for them. Commercial surrogacy agencies were outlawed in Britain in 1985 but in the USA the practice of rich would-be parents paying poor women to bear children for them continues.



Technology can be life-saving; but has the medical profession forgotten to care for the "well"?

Surrogacy can be combined with artifical insemination by the husband, or IVF of the wife's egg to ensure a biological link between the couple and "their" baby.

Some NRTs are simple, safe and could allow women who at present cannot be involved in caring for children (because of social arrangements in capitalist societies) to have children.

Artificial insemination is fairly easy (with the help of a willing friend) and should be available to all who want it, including single women and lesbians.

Many of the other techniques seem more questionable. Most rely heavily on the use of their wombs, and rich women who after fertilisation, or birth, become the "social" mothers.

Most techniques are expensive, and not available on the NHS.

•Should we argue that women have the right to choose to become pregnant in the same way we argue that they have the right to choose *not* to become pregnant or *not* to bear children?

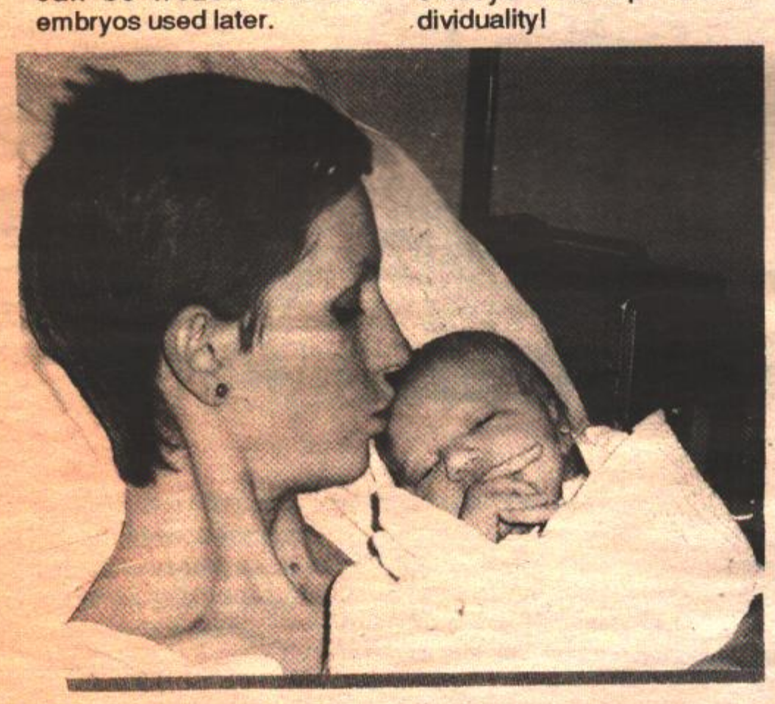
•Is research into NRTs really about increasing women's self-esteem and control over their lives?

•Or does it only increase the quality of some women's lives by damaging or exploiting other women?

•Should we argue for the right of all women to individually bear children?

•Or should we argue for society to change so that *all* can be involved in caring for children in a broader sense?

•And where do the rights of children fit into all of this?



Kim Cotton and "Baby Cotton"



PHOTO: Andrea Campbell

Children have opinions too!

REVIEW

***Feminist Review*, Spring 1988.**

This issue concentrates mainly on abortion in an international context.

The two articles on the Alton Bill offer differing perspectives on the most effective way of winning public support over abortion.

Marge Berer looks at how the struggle to achieve abortion rights has included many outside the feminist movement and why "a woman's right to choose" is nowhere constitutionally enshrined.

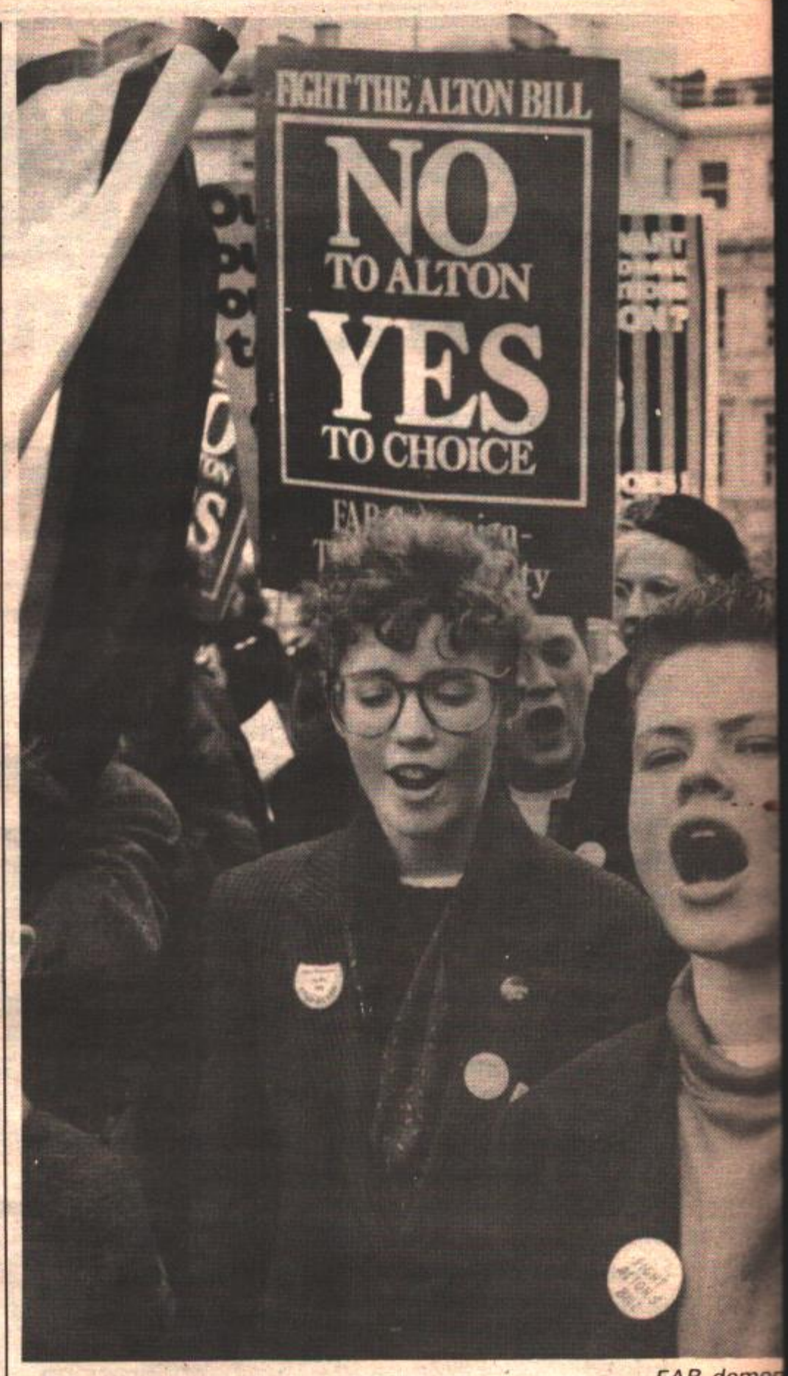
In contrast, the article by Susan Himmelweit explores the issues surrounding the "woman's right to choose" slogan and raises demands for women beyond freely available abortion.

The articles on Nicaragua and Hungary show that even in socialist countries with relatively progressive policies on women's rights there is strong opposition to women's control over reproduction, which only a powerful feminist movement can overcome.

The articles on Ireland and Spain illustrate the difficulties faced by women who have to travel to England to private clinics here because of the unavailability of abortion in their own countries.

There are also articles on China and Australia. The *Review* is a must for anyone interested in the abortion question.

***Kaushika Amin*,**
Hornsey & Wood Green Women's Section



FAB demon

REPROD

An Historic

At the heart of the reproductive rights debate remains, as always, the question of control: control over information and knowledge, over access to techniques and technology and — most of all — over women's bodies.

All societies have used contraception, abortion, and infanticide to keep populations at a sustainable level.

Once the subsistence stage passed, increased populations were needed to wage war and to increase production.

Upper class men needed to control women to ensure sexual fidelity and the reproduction of male heirs. Men's status — and women's security — depended on large families.

Birth control became a battle ground between the sexes and the classes. Women continued to practise contraception and abortion in secret, although this "secret" was usually an open one, not punished unless it threatened the social order.

For most of the Middle Ages, abortion before "quickening" was only punishable by the Church if done to hide an "illicit" relationship, for which both partners were punished.

With the industrial revolution, modern contraceptive techniques began to develop.

Upper class men frequenting prostitutes used primitive condoms to protect themselves from disease. "Preventatives" thus became associated with prostitution, allowing sexual licence rather than preventing unwanted pregnancies.

As the old rural societies broke up, the skills of "midwives" who had previously carried out abortions were lost, and abortion in the new industrial towns became a dangerous operation.

In 1803, when Britain was fighting France, which had a must faster growing population, the first anti-abortion law was passed. At the same time, the newly-emerging medical profession was trying to impose a monopoly over medicine.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the development of the rubber industry, and the availability of rubber condoms and caps, provided a technical basis for mass use of contraception.

However, those who tried to disseminate knowledge to the working classes were hounded, prosecuted, fined and imprisoned. Meanwhile, the two groups most eager to hide knowledge — doctors and clergy — had the most dramatic reduction in average family size.

Whilst feminists and socialists — led by women in the Co-operative Party — fought between the wars for family planning clinics, the church, medical profession, courts and parliament all continued to stop information and help getting to those who most needed it.

Amongst their allies were some socialists who saw "family limitation" as a plot by the ruling class against the workers, or who associated it with Malthusian theories of "racial purity" (and some birth control enthusiasts, notably Marie Stopes, did share such ideas).



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

stration in London, March 19th 1988.

ODUCTIVE RIGHTS

cal Perspective

By Leonora Lloyd National Abortion Campaign.

Meanwhile, illegal and attempted abortions continued to take a heavy toll in women's lives and health. Throughout the 50s and 60s contraception continued to be not quite respectable, and certainly not to be encouraged, but the battle to legalise abortion continued.

The 1967 Abortion Act was never intended to give women increased control over their lives — it was seen primarily as a health issue.

Keeping sexual knowledge from those deemed unable to make wise use of it — whilst at the same time condemning their "incontinence" and large families — continued right up to the 60s, when prosecuting counsel in the *Lady Chatterley* trial made his remark about it being a book you wouldn't want "the servants" to read!

Women controlling their own fertility has historically been seen as a threat to both men and society. Even today, we are told that the current "birth strike" is endangering our future, because, as people live longer, a shrinking workforce will have to support more and more "non-productive" members of society.

There is also a strong racist theme, explicit in France, on the need to offset the "population explosion" of the "non-white world".

Modern capitalism needs women as workers, but it needs them to work in as flexible a way as possible — flexible for the employers, that is.

Modern childcare theory maintains that children need the regular care of one adult: the mother. The upper classes, as always, can leave the care of their children to nannies and boarding schools; other women have to find ways to combine both work and motherhood.

Women today, more than at any other time, demand the right to control their own lives and to be full sexual beings.

They see the right to control their own fertility as part and parcel of this, as demonstrated by their tremendous response when their limited abortion rights come under attack.

The language of the anti-abortionists makes it clear that their objection is not merely to killing an "unborn child" but also to giving women freedom and self-control. For the majority of women, however, abortion is just one way in which they can begin gain control over their own bodies and their own lives.

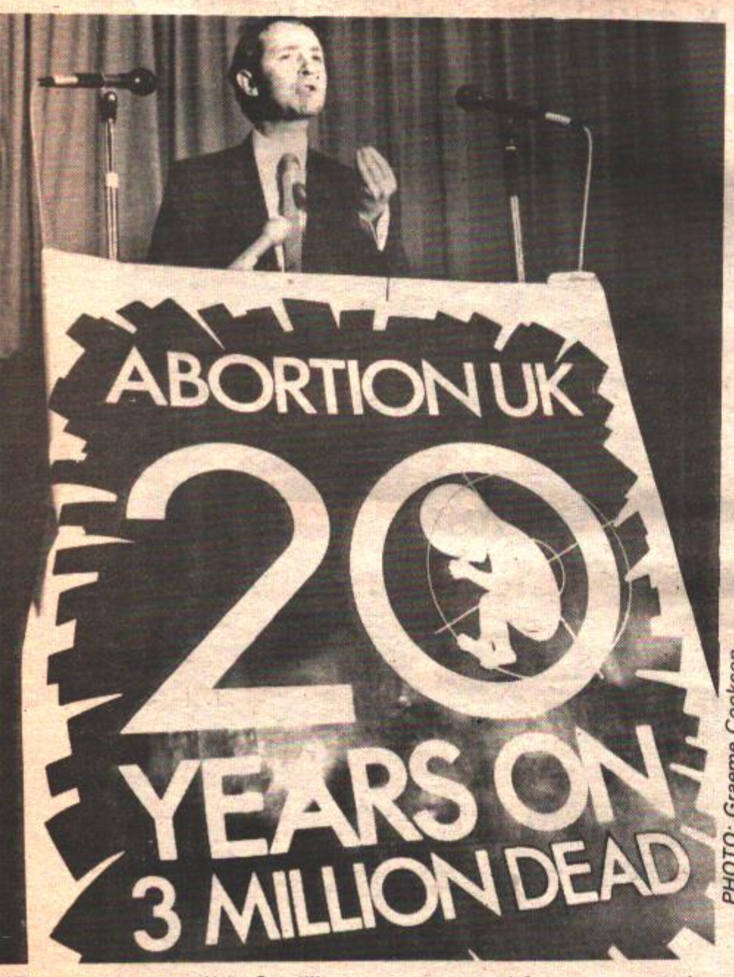


PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

"Twenty years on" is 3 million women saved from unwanted pregnancies and backstreet abortions. Alton chooses to align himself with emotive SPUC propaganda.

A BLACK FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Beyond "A Woman's Right to Choose"

By Kaushika Amin Hornsey & Wood Green Women's Section

Twenty years after the 1967 Abortion Act, strategic differences on abortion between black and white feminists have yet to be resolved.

For black women, questions remain about the slogan "a woman's right to choose", which may not directly answer their own experiences.

Historically, the politics of abortion has had a racist dimension — a dimension often overlooked by the women's movement.

The emphasis on individual choice has indeed challenged the assumption of the medical profession (and of men in general) that women are not to be trusted with decisions about their own lives and bodies.

For black women, the choice to have an abortion or not has never been in their own hands.

Even in the 1980s, women still complain about the medical profession's eagerness to offer abortions for their own racist reasons, rather than as one choice among many. Some black women have been told that they can only have an abortion if they agree to be sterilised at the same time.

The mainstream racist view is still that black women are less likely to be informed about contraception than white women and therefore less able to make their own decisions.

•Asian women are thought to be ill-equipped because of lack of knowledge of English and pressures to have children from "uncivilised" men.

•Afro-Caribbean women are thought more likely to have children while still young and single.

Women's campaigns for reproductive rights have yet to challenge the racist stereotypes and practices which cloud black women's sexuality.

The 1970s "numbers" panic about the size of the black population in Britain included headlines about Asian women "breeding like rabbits". At this time Depo Provera came into use, causing long-term damage to black women in Britain and abroad.

The majority of black women are bringing up children on lower incomes than white women. They are more likely to live in poor areas, where childcare provision is limited.

For all these reasons, black feminists have argued that demands must be integrated with wider demands around childcare provision, health facilities, and income.

The debate will not become easier as reproductive technology becomes more sophisticated. For example, techniques for determining the sex of a foetus raise disturbing issues. In India, many private clinics are making enormous profits on such tests, and female foetuses are being aborted.

Whether this choice is made because of pressures on women to have male children, or because the individual actually makes her own decision, is not a simple question.

Reproductive technologies reflect and further extend inequalities. Most procedures will be out of reach of poor women and many are likely to exploit the poor in varied ways.

•In many developing countries sterilisation (and abortion) are offered free — but not as real free choices.

•Women are guinea pigs for tests on contraception methods which will eventually benefit women in the developed world.

Black feminists want these developments to be part of a full debate around reproductive rights.

All women make difficult and painful choices about abortion under specific social and material conditions. The right to have a safe and free abortion is vital. However, many feminists are now arguing that the abortion debate needs to move away from mere individual choice towards demands that place abortion within a wider context.

Black feminists, who have been arguing for 20 years for a more complex understanding of abortion issues, are at long last being vindicated.



PHOTO: Geoff Cox

"Black women bring[ing] up children on lower incomes" — striking nurses outside Central Middlesex Hospital on the NHS Day of Action in March this year.

Features: Spotlight on the Tories

BRADFORD: Trial for model Tory Council

Bradford is to be the guinea pig for an experiment in local government.

The Tories pledge to use their control of the Authority to strip away services and slash the budget.

By the time the Poll Tax is introduced they hope to have made cuts in the region of £17 million in the annual budget and reduced the Council workforce from 25,000 to 16,000.

The equivalent of 2,500 full-time jobs are to go by the end of this financial year.

Tory leader Eric Pickles boasts that "success" in Bradford can set a pattern for driving Labour out of local government in the cities.

The new Council leaders have only released information piecemeal. However copies of secret documents are circulating rapidly.

As we go to press, we are waiting for the full programme to be revealed on October 25th. The casting vote of the Tory Lord Mayor will be needed to carry the package.

Savings to enable the Poll Tax to be as low as possible for Pickles' supporters in the leafier areas like Ilkley are to be made at the expense of people in the inner city.

Council house rents, and charges for school meals, home helps and leisure facilities, are deemed to have been "artificially low".

School meals charges are to be raised by a third, and schools will face further cuts, including restrictions in cleaning and caretaking and delays in filling vacancies.

Pickles will embrace new housing legislation to get rid of Council housing. Fifteen residential homes for elderly people are to be sold, while so-called "care in the community" will be promoted. Many Council-owned sports and leisure facilities will be sold.

By DAVE MILES

The Tories also plan a privatisation drive. They aim to make the Council a "client" dealing with private contractors who will actually deliver services.

A benefits take-up campaign is being scrapped and "Benefits Shops" in Bradford, Keighley and Shipley are being closed. A single "one-stop shop" will provide the only open access that people have to City Hall for housing and other problems.

Committees, working groups and services devoted to sex equality are already being rolled up. Minority language and bilingual facilities in schools, Social Services and throughout the Council are under threat. "Race trainers" are "politically undesirable".

The Tory group is also directly attacking democracy. Members of the public are to be largely excluded from the corridors of City Hall.

The secret plans stress that there must be a distance between the elected, "political" side and the executive. They also suggest that in the transitional period the Council Leader *alone* will be directly involved in dealing with the administration.

It has been suggested that only 12 Councillors out of 90 will sit on Committees and that there will be only three major ones.

Top management will be given cash-limited staff budgets but greater "flexibility" in spending. They will have freedom on matters of workers' conditions and discipline without scrutiny by Councillors.

Performance targets will be set and a proportion of salary related to their achievement. Business-style "perks" will also be introduced. At the same time many staff will face redeployment or redundancy. Many will have to compete for re-appointment.

There is a school of thought in the Bradford left that the Labour Group actually wanted the Tories to take control of the Council and carry out a cuts programme.

In this hypothesis, overspending was hidden in the budget to force the Tories to make larger than anticipated cuts. They would reap the unpopularity and the Labour Group would return to power in 1990 without having to get its hands dirty.

What is certain, according to former left Councillor Bob Cannell, is that there was little political direction in either the Group or the District Labour Party (DLP), with the control of Council budgets forming the Group's horizon.

The DLP set no political criteria for allowing people onto the Council panel, and it was the resignation of a Councillor who had defected from both Labour and the Tories which gave the Tories their latest seat on the Council.

Neither the DLP or the Group have given a public lead to the resistance, although they have had a secret meeting with Joyce Gould (often in the city to assist in expelling *Militant* supporters).

Nevertheless, campaigns have sprung up around old people's homes, community groups and facilities threatened by the cuts.

Unions have begun to mobilise; particularly NALGO, currently balloting members on a policy of non-co-operation. A special general meeting is expected to support a ballot for all-out strike action, and there will be a half-day strike in order to lobby the Council.

Local officials say they have the full support of their national leadership.

The clear opposition to the Council's proposals remains, at the moment, unco-ordinated, as a number of sectional campaigns work to get Council leader Pickles to "change his basic position", with no alternative on offer.

The left will have to take up this challenge or the initiative may remain with the Tories and popular opposition be wasted.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Thatcher's dream is realised

YOUTH FIGHT BACK

Beating the march blues

Despite general demo-weariness, the turnout for the march was encouraging.

The level of police presence was not.

Behind boardings and on rooftops police sharpshooters kept close watch. At the closing rally a low flying helicopter drowned out most speakers.

This was not a march along the Falls Road, but one through Tory-occupied Brighton. This was October 13th, at the *Beat the Blues* march organised by Sussex Area NUS and funded by the Poll Tax Campaign.

The route went past the Conference Hall and Grand Hotel, where marchers were at their most vocal. Present was a large Troops Out contingent and uppermost in people's minds was the bombing of four years ago.

Nearly all joined in chanting "No more Gibraltars; Troops Out Now!" Even Acid House was against Thatcher, one banner confirmed.

The Tories responded by waving the Union Jack. Some marchers sought revenge, chasing an unguarded and perturbed Michael Heseltine down the street.

At the rally there were speakers from NUS, the Poll Tax Campaign, Brighton's Section 28 Campaign and IBRG.

By Joanne McAuliffe Brighton Women & Ireland Group

Though not given media coverage, the march followed a press release issued by Councillor Richard Stanton telling of a public meeting to be held on November 2nd, with Sinn Fein on the platform. The Tories were outraged and trying to get it banned.

Brighton's IBRG speaker, Siobhan Heir, made a speech drawing the links between restrictions placed on Irish people under the PTA and those placed on Lesbians and Gays under Section 28; and surveillance techniques used in Ireland and those that will be used to implement the Poll Tax.

She highlighted the harassment experienced by the Irish community in Brighton in recent months. The police had demanded the names of members of the Irish Club and had interrogated individuals.

On the evening of the rally the Labour Party called for a picket and boycott of the showing of Question Time. Members of the audience were required to tell police from which organisation they had obtained their tickets. No assurances were given that such information would not be stored on police computers.

During the day, a demonstration had taken place amidst a massive "security" operation such as forms part of everyday life in the North of Ireland. We all appreciated better how state repression operates there.

See Periscope, page 12, for more details of the Tory occupation of Brighton

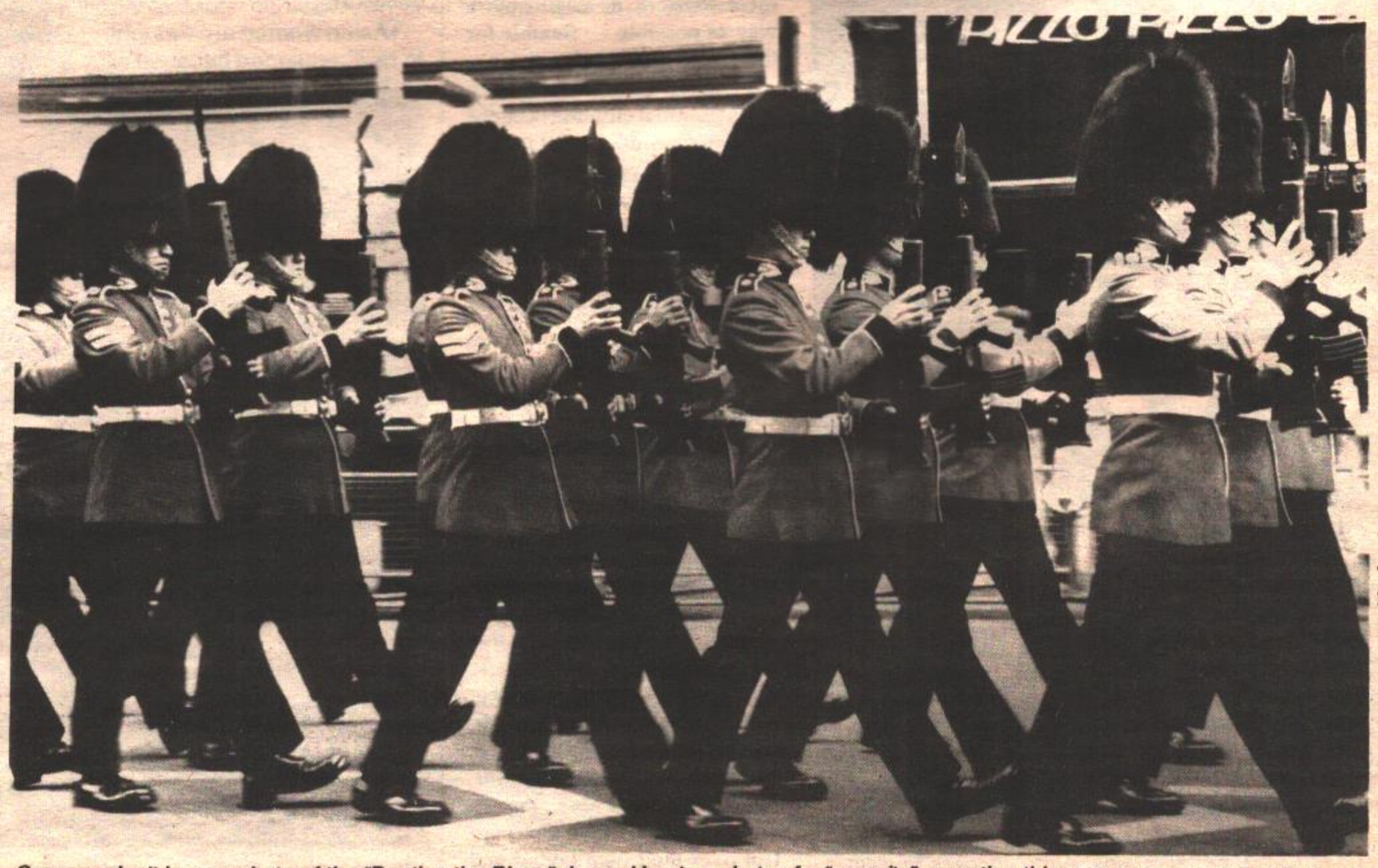


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Sorry we don't have a photo of the "Beating the Blues" demo. Here's a photo of a "security" operation this summer — guarding Turkey's President Evren and Q.E.II from left wing demonstrators.

Post-Fordism; Post-Modernism: Post Socialism?

In the brouhaha surrounding the Communist Party's discussion document, *Faces to the Future* (*FF*), a great fuss is made of "post-Fordism" and "post-Modernism".

According to these notions, a "new technological revolution" rules out any socialist alternative in the foreseeable future.

At the centre of the picture is the end of "Fordist" mass production and the post-War political consensus built on it. The new system is being erected around core workers able to adapt to technological change.

On the fringes remain the service workers, the part-timers, the unemployed. Old class divisions are crumbling as privileged wage-earners are both "exploiters and exploited". In some mysterious way, one group of workers is said to live off the other.

Thatcher is praised for having "recognised the new terrain". The left is damned for failing in this.

"In future," we are told, "the left's imagery, programmes and struggles will have to flow from the new order or 'post-Fordism' — flexibility, diversity, differentiation, decentralisation, and internationalisation."

The landscape is fixed; we have to stay within its limits. "Socialist modernisation" means negotiation about implementing post-Fordism, not overturning it.

One of the leading theoreticians of post-Fordism, Alain Lipietz, has *explicitly rejected FF*'s technocratic approach.

By ANDREW COATES

To Lipietz, labour flexibility, the break up of old working practices, came to the fore as a demand of employers responding to the "question of profitability".

The growth of large scale production in low wage cost countries like Korea, and the austerity programmes of the 70s, counted for more than robots and office machinery. To *FF* these are facts of nature. To Lipietz they are the result of a particular economic strategy.

FF calls for a "new relationship between the central state, decentralised local democracy and individuals." Non-state institutions should be strengthened in civil society.

A range of bodies from women's groups to charities should take over responsibility for social care. "Democratic regulation" of companies ought to take place ("regulation" as distinct from control).

The role of the state is "to enable people to come up with their own chosen solutions to problems through a plurality of autonomous collective organisations in society."

If the state is "opened up", as *FF* proposes, who will benefit? By the logic of *FF*'s view of post-Fordism, that section of the bourgeoisie pushing for "flexibility, diversity" will be the winner.

To temper this, and to appeal to the left, *FF* wants to give power to "autonomous groups", including charities and churches, associations of local businessmen, and diverse pressure groups.

In place of "Fordist" welfare provision we will have... alms givers! As if Lady Bountiful was a better socialist than the "archaic" builders of a universal and equal system of benefits! Socialists should be fighting to change society, not to "influence" it.

The rest of the European left has had to face the ideas doled out in *FF* for over a decade.

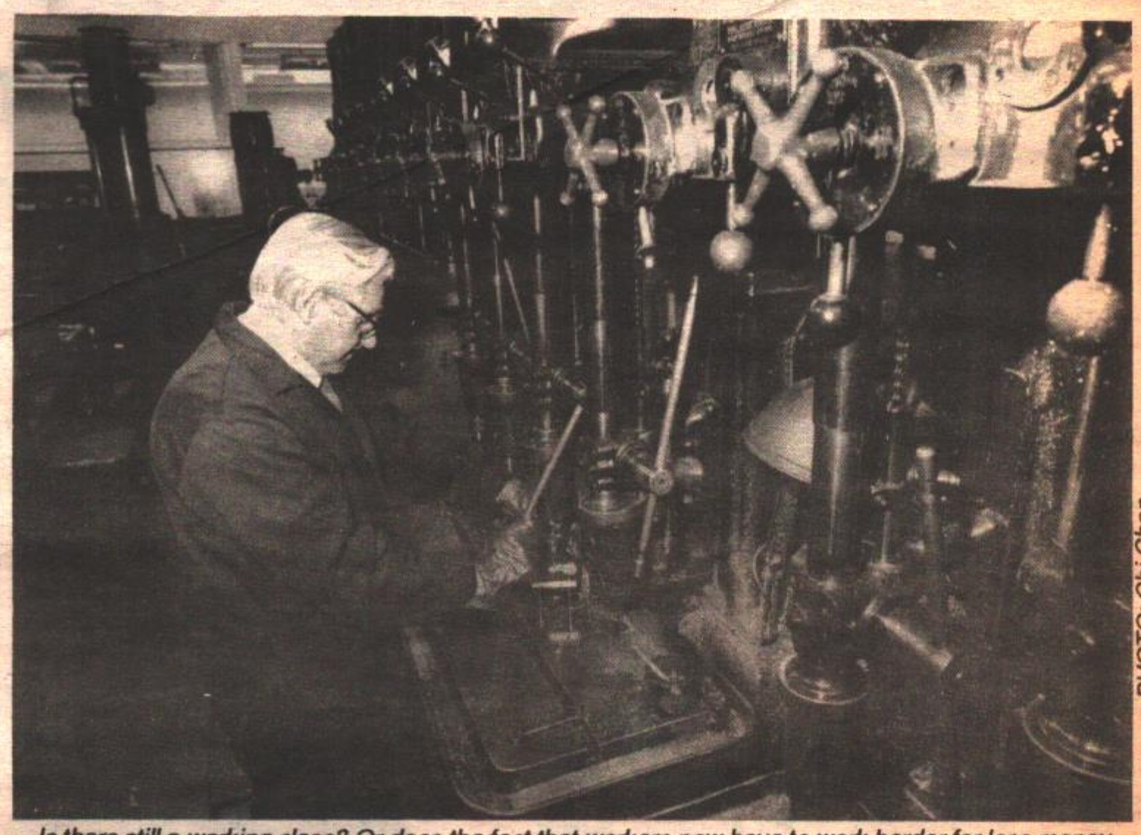


PHOTO: Chi Chan

Is there still a working class? Or does the fact that workers now have to work harder for less money mean that we are all happier?

Powerful intellectual forces on the German, French and Italian left have long argued that the class struggle is obsolete.

The "post-modernist" picture of a fragmented and individualistic society was developed in the late 70s.

Jean Baudrillard, heralded as the latest in fashion by October's *Marxism Today*, has been repeating this message for over 20 years. Like others of this type, he is sceptical about *all* attempts at "liberation".

The authors of *FF* have drunk deeply from this "new reformism". They have turned to the "new social movements" of feminism and ecology in an attempt to breathe some life into their programme. They have talked of "empowering" and "transforming" the state to hide the fact that they are merely *adapting* to Thatcher's version of post-Fordist production.

The left needs theoretical tools with which it can fight the changes in society. If we are looking to France, it would be more useful to look at the alternatives advocated by Lipietz himself and by Pierre Juquin's Presidential campaign.

Their aim has been to discover *alternatives* to the present restructuring. They have responded to "flexibility" by calling for workers' plans, shorter hours, and ecologically sound policies. They have tried to impose a different logic on the seemingly inevitable.

ANTI-RACISM UNDER ATTACK

Organise resistance now!

As all readers of *Briefing* should know, anti-racism has been increasingly under attack over the past few years; and this attack has accelerated in recent months.

In particular, attacks on Labour-controlled Local Authorities have been related to their attempts to tackle racism (and sexuality too).

We may recall the press and TV scaremongering about "race spies" in Brent, followed by the inquiry into Brent's Development Programme for Race Equality (DPRE) by both HMI and Sir David Lane.

These reports have now both been published and in many ways must be disappointing to the government. There is no outright condemnation of the DPRE to be found.

HMI said that "At present the evidence suggests that the programme is developing satisfactorily. Most of the work seen in classrooms is of sound quality and addresses the needs of ethnic minority children within the normal curriculum."

Lane concludes that "Brent deserves praise for a bold, and innovative approach."

In spite of this the report has been taken up by Tory right wingers as a stick to beat Brent with yet again, quoting some of the less favourable comments of the two reports and in particular Lane's recommendation that conditions be laid down for the approval of Section 11 funding for the scheme.

By Debbie Epstein
Birmingham
Sellyoak CLP

These conditions include an arrangement whereby the government should approve the appointment of the substantive head of the DPRE. Similarly, it is government policy that the Secretary of State must approve the appointment of all new Chief Education Officers — powers which give Baker patronage in education on a scale unprecedented in this country.

It also means that the Head of DPRE will probably be someone reluctant to rock the boat — and if anti-racist education does not rock the boat it is not fulfilling its objectives in a racist society.

Currently, DPRE is relatively protected from the savage cuts in Brent because of its 75% Home Office funding. But the Education of all children in the Borough, black and white, is being devastated by insecurity, lack of continuity, and loss of teachers and other staff due to cuts.

Meanwhile in Dewsbury the banning of the anti-racist march called by the Kirklees Black Workers Group has been backed by North Kirklees Community Relations Council and some Labour Councillors (*Briefing* no. 69). This is of course in line with the new realism of these people.



PHOTO: Broadwater Photographic

The Labour Party leadership gives tacit consent to Tory attacks by not opposing vigorously racism wherever it occurs... We need to resist." — Above: then Leader of Haringey Council Steve King joins William Silcott and Stafford Scott on the Old Bailey picket line, protesting at the racist frame-up of the Tottenham 3.

Instead of backing anti-racist initiatives, they take sides with the police, just as instead of standing out against the white parents with their racist demands they capitulated completely to them.

One does not need a conspiracy theory of history to understand that attacks on anti-racism are linked. The prevailing culture supports racism. The government regularly attacks anti-racism officially, and puts forwards racist legislation; and the Labour Party leadership gives tacit consent by not opposing vigorously racism wherever it occurs.

The implications for anti-racism of these events are serious, especially given the introduction of the national curriculum (and the report on maths says that "multicultural" maths has no place in the curriculum).

We have been working against the stream, finding the cracks within which to try to develop a genuinely anti-racist education. These cracks are being rapidly filled not only by the Tory government but with the help of so-called "allies" in the labour movement.

We need to resist; to join in anti-racist marches and other initiatives; and to fight in our constituencies and in our unions for support for anti-racist policies and practices.

Building Briefing

HUDDERSFIELD LABOUR BRIEFING

New group is on the map!

By Graham Hellawell
Huddersfield Labour Briefing

***Huddersfield Labour Briefing* is well and truly launched.**

After numerous setbacks we held a successful meeting on October 12th on the theme of "Which way forward for the TUC?" The speaker was Alan Thornett, himself a victimised trade unionist.

The left is small in Huddersfield, but we were encouraged by the attendance. Even the SWP put in an appearance, just to see what we were all about!

The third issue of our bulletin will be out shortly, covering issues such as the Poll Tax, racism, plastic bullets, and the Solidarity Network Conference.

Our launch meeting has shown us that there is much potential to build a strong left in Huddersfield; and we hope the bulletin will draw in wider support.

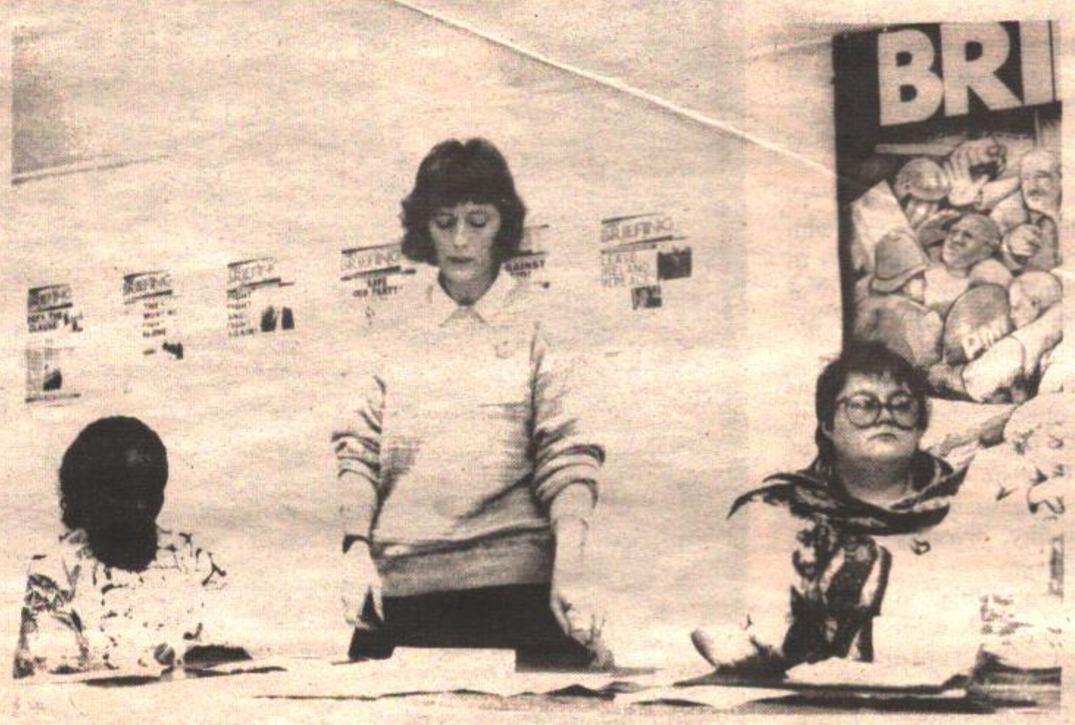


PHOTO: Wayne Edginton

Briefing women on the Briefing fringe platform at Labour Party Conference

Demonstrate for Palestine!
Commemorate the start of the Uprising!
December 10th, London
Watch this space for details

BRIEFING WOMEN MEETING

November 12th, noon

Polytechnic of Central London
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Discussion and Debate!

All Briefing Women welcome!
For details ring 01-733 7016

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The *Briefing* Editorial Board, Trade Union Briefing, Briefing Women and International Briefing can be contacted at PO Box 457, London SW2 5UZ, 01 733 7016:

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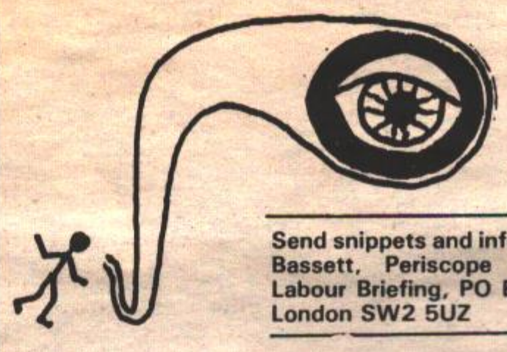
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TORY CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON

A taste of the Six Counties

By D.L. MARTIN

As many of Brighton's 10,000 Irish population will tell you, the unprecedented security operation surrounding this year's Tory Conference began months ago.

During the summer, East Sussex police posters appeared, urging residents to twitch the net curtains and report anything suspicious or unusual.

Well, there were some unusual incidents, as *Labour Briefing* can now report.

Many people were "visited" by Special Branch in the run-up to the Conference; some have lived here for decades. Prostitutes, expecting an increase in business for the week, were also vetted.

Readers will probably have read about the "ring of steel" around the Brighton Centre, Grand Hotel, and Kingswest Complex. Five cinema screens, two discos, and bars were closed down: entry with passes only.

You will also have heard of the minesweeper half a mile from the beach, and of snipers on the tops of strategic buildings.

Less publicised was the armed guard on the town's barracks.

Workers and students at the Polytechnic got a taste of the Six Counties as they crossed the line of fire of rifles held by soldiers who would easily qualify for LPYS membership.

The town centre was strangely empty during Conference week, with people either worried about possible explosions or fed up with the constant harassment and the atmosphere of suspicion.

Spot searches have affected everyone, from commuters having car engines and boots checked (why not inside as well?) to snooker players whose two-piece cues were neutralised.

Probably the most eerie aspect of the operation was the presence of police helicopters fitted with "latest surveillance technology".

"*It hovered above my house.*" "*It followed me down to the front.*" These remarks were common; whether the helicopter was hovering or following doesn't really matter. The fact is many people *thought* it was.

Not surprisingly, a poll conducted by one of the local papers revealed that 73% reckoned it wasn't worth it. And this was *before* the Conference began!

Brighton Labour Council is to consider a report on this week's events and to decide whether the town will host future Conferences of the party in government.

Still, when Brighton people see reports of Ireland on the news, memories of the 105th Conservative Party Conference will be triggered.

BOOK REVIEW

The truth about Afghanistan

The Tragedy of Afghanistan, by Raja Anwar, *Verso*, £17.95.

Raja Anwar's seminal study is the first book seriously to explore the origins and consequences of the Soviet invasion, based on an understanding of the cleavages within Afghanistan and its ruling party, the Stalinist PDPA, and of Afghan history.

Before the 1978 revolution, 76% of Afghanistan's children got no education, 80% of its doctors worked only in Kabul, and 13 of its 15 million population were landless.

The revolution came to relieve this suffering, but the criminal policies of Stalinism only intensified it.

Anwar traces the factionalism of the PDPA to its Soviet links and its exclusively intellectual origins.

Even by 1978, there were no working class or peasant members on its 30-strong Central Committee. The sharp internal differences, present from the outset, stemmed mainly from personality clashes.

The 1978 Revolution was a genuinely popular process and had little to do with external Soviet interference.

Anwar observes that this aspect of the Afghan struggle has been repeatedly distorted, due to the racial prejudice of Western commentators who are:

"Unwilling to accept that an Afghan pilot could possibly have the skill to fire a missile accurately enough to hit the Presidential Palace. However, when Afghans join the fight against communists, they are credited with the miraculous ability to bring down Soviet jets with ordinary rifles."

The Revolution ushered in many reforms, particularly on the land and in ending child marriages. But within two years, all its major and minor figures had been murdered, jailed, or exiled.

By Mike Phipps
Woolwich CLP

PDPA factionalism meant there had to be *three* Deputy Prime Ministers.

Despite its commitment to "decentralising power and handing it over to the people", the PDPA made all decisions through the existing state structure and severely curtailed local initiatives.

It adopted straightforward Stalinist models, right down to absurd personality cults modelled on Kim Il Sung in North Korea.

The USSR directly intervened at the height of the factional warfare, after the country's ruler Taraki had been murdered by his deputy and rival Amin.

According to Anwar, the invasion was a blunder, as behind-the-scenes manoeuvres could have secured Soviet interests just as well. Instead, Brezhnev imposed the Karmal regime, many of whose factional opponents then joined the opposition guerrillas.

Anwar is consistently anti-Stalinist and also scathing about the imperialist-backed rebels. Their historical inspiration was Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, Afghanistan's turn of the century ruler and "one of history's worst sadists" who at one point imprisoned over a tenth of the population.

For the guerrillas, horrific torture and execution of prisoners became so routine that in the first four years of the war they handed over *only eight* Soviet captives to the Red Cross. The rest had been killed.

Yet so internally divided were they that all Soviet intelligence about the rebels resulted from each wing informing against the other.

Anwar, a Pakistani socialist, met many of the actors in this tragic chapter of Afghan history in the three years he spent in the infamous Pulcharki prison in Kabul.

His translator describes this work as "the only truthful book written on Afghanistan". His analysis is penetrating and his eye for detail meticulous.

He concludes with some observations on Gorbachev's role in breaking out of the dead-end Soviet policy in Afghanistan. But he is not hopeful about any decline in American support for the rebels.

Zia has gone and Soviet troops are pulling out, but it is still too early to be optimistic about the future for the Afghan people.

BOOK REVIEW

"Even with nothing... we could defeat them"

No Child's Play, by Caesarina Kona Makhoere, *Women's Press*, £3.95.

This exciting book tells the story of Caesarina, a militant of the 1976 Soweto uprisings.

Arrested for her part in the fight against the discriminatory Bantu education system, she carried on her struggle in prison and became the scourge of the prison authorities.

Betrayed by her own father, a policeman, at the age of 17, Caesarina was sentenced to five years in prison, later extended for a further 60 days because of an assault on a prison officer.

By JUDITH ARKWRIGHT

She became an inspiration to other political prisoners with whom she linked up to organise continuing protests against the bad food, prison clothes, and conditions, and for equality with white prisoners.

So relentless was their campaign that some limited gains were actually won.

It all started when Caesarina spied a peach tree in the exercise yard at Kroonstad jail in the Orange Free State. She decided that the peaches should be only for the blacks.

Through persistent badgering of prison wardens the black prisoners established their rights over the tree. They went on to organise boycotts of prison clothes, hunger strikes, etc.

Caesarina explains that kindling her own anger and taking action in this way was what kept her going in prison and often under torture. She explains how much this form of protest taught her.

"We learned some lessons in their prisons... We first learned that we could win against them. Even with nothing, even with only our hands and our comradeship and our determination, we could defeat them..."

Simply and movingly told, this story is a beautiful piece of writing, and an inspiration to all those in struggle.

BOOK REVIEW

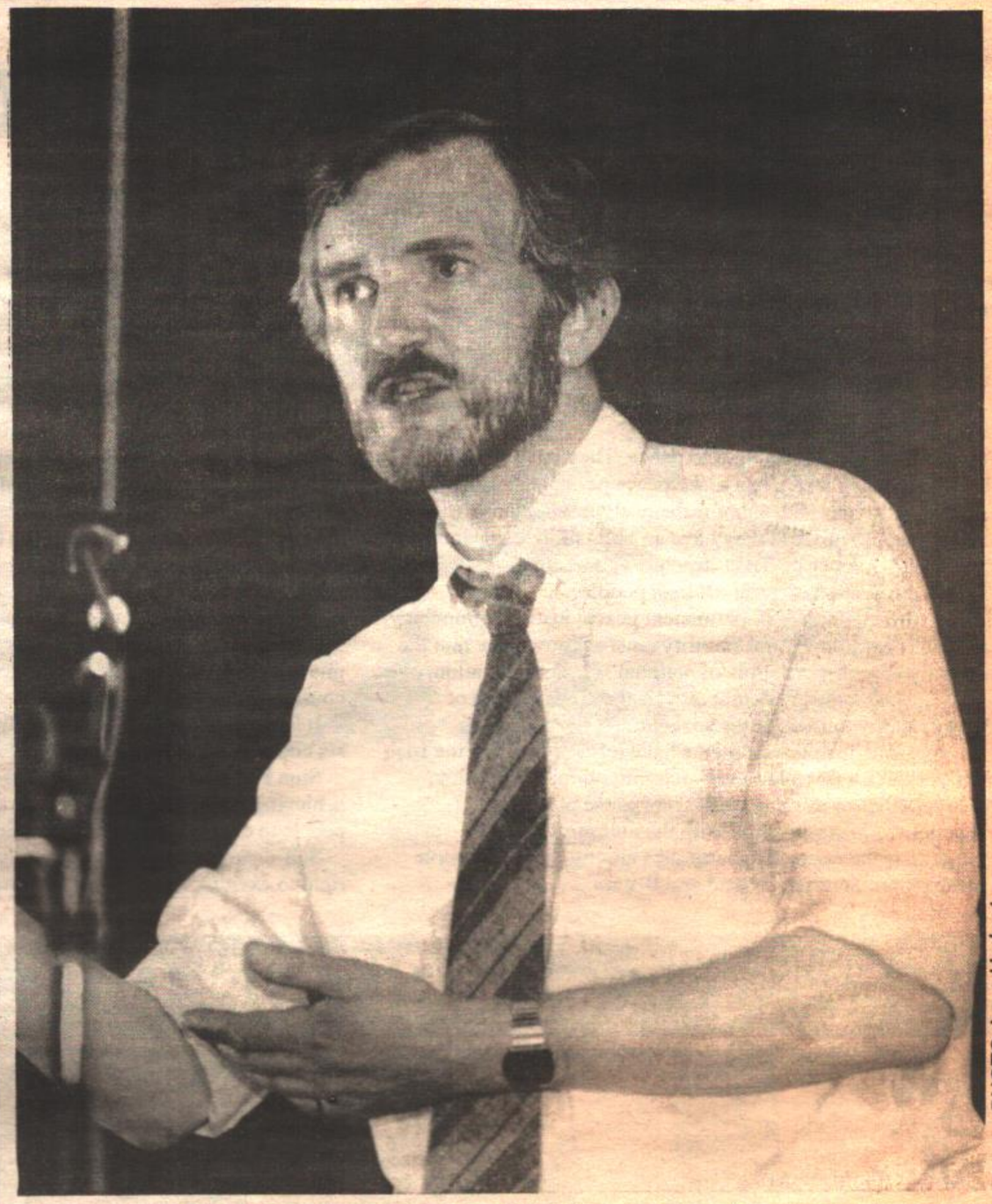


PHOTO: Lesa Herbert

Michael Farrell addresses the rally for British withdrawal (see report, p14)

From Civil Rights to National Rights

Twenty Years On, edited by Michael Farrell, *Brandon Book Publishers Ltd*, C. Kerry £4.95

By Jim Thain
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

The nine contributors to this book, which marks the 20th anniversary of the Irish Civil Rights Movement, were all as active then, as they are now.

They write from personal experiences and a variety of political perspectives.

The book is rich in hard information — such as Eilis McDermott's account of the Emergency Powers Act, the excesses of Castlereagh, the Diplock courts, and the "supergrass" system.

Even more important, the book provides a chance to share the *subjective* experience of the *objective* political realities of imperialist oppression.

In 1968, television brought images of the Tet offensive, the Prague Spring, and the May events in Paris into millions of homes. In America, black people marched for fundamental civil rights, a cause with which the Irish particularly identified. The birth of the Irish Civil Rights Movement, twenty years ago, was marked by all these developments.

Gerry Adams writes of the initial absence of any demands for a united Ireland. It was the reaction of the state which raised the constitutional question.

Adams describes how, in August 1969, the six counties became the scene of "the biggest forced movement of population in any part of Western Europe since the Second World War."

Twenty years on, he says, democracy remains the central issue. While there can be no Loyalist veto on reunification, "we who are denied our civil rights do not seek to deny these rights to others."

Michael Farrell tells how unprepared the Civil Rights movement was for the appearance of British troops. This led to the Provisionals' reliance on a military response.

The Civil Rights leadership was unable to provide defence for the community or to offer political direction to which militarisation would be subordinate.

Despite some politicisation of the IRA, there remains an urgent need to rebuild mass support on a non-military basis.

Bernadette McAliskey gives a lively account of her parliamentary career, describing her attempt (with Michael Foot!) to talk out the UDR Bill, and exposing Labour's collusion with the retrospective amendment of the Special Powers Act.

She makes it clear that — after Bloody Sunday — there could be no illusions in parliamentary democracy where Ireland was concerned.

Regular *Briefing* contributor Geoff Bell describes the difficulties in building a solidarity movement in Britain, particularly given the desire of certain left groups "to shape the Irish struggle in the image of their own."

Margaret Ward explains how women have been marginalised from the outset, and how militarism has elbowed out wider political considerations. There is a need to link the demands for national liberation and women's liberation.

Real progress on this question, she insists, can only come with the dismantling of the Border.

Inez McCormack looks at social services and the trade unions, Ed Moloney at the media, and Carol Coulter gives us a view from the South.

An indispensable introduction to the Year of Action. Buy it.

International Briefing

GERRY ADAMS ON SELF-DETERMINATION

The key to peace in Ireland

The Irish people have never known peace. Despite some periods in which war was absent, the conditions fostered and imposed on us have ensured perennial conflict.

Peace is not simply the absence of war or conflict. It is the existence of conditions of justice and equality which eradicate the causes of war or conflict.

The Irish people have a right to peace. They have a right to political structures which can make peace permanent.

They have a right to decide for themselves what those structures should be. And they have an obligation to ensure that the ethos and practice of those structures guarantee equality for and serve the best interests of *all* Irish people.

Those who claim to seek permanent peace, justice, democracy, equality of opportunity, and stability must acknowledge that the universally accepted principle of national self-determination, one of the basic principles of democracy, is the surest means of furthering those political and social aims.

Successive British governments have refused to allow the Irish nation to exercise its right to self-determination. That policy, which continues to this day, is the root cause of conflict.

That policy, in conjunction with the measures taken to maintain it, is the cause of the ruptures among the Irish people themselves and between Ireland and Britain.

By GERRY ADAMS

Division and coercion have always been and are the basic tenets of that policy. Division obtains not only in the physical division of the country through partition, but in the British government-sponsored division which spawned the civil war in 1922 (and has moulded politics in the 26 County State ever since).

Division obtains in the divisions between nationalists and unionists cultivated by an inequitable system of privilege (and sustained by the British government-bestowed unionist veto) and finally in the very real divisions among nationalists themselves.

The Irish working class, whether urban or rural, has suffered more than any other class in Irish society from the economic consequences of imperialism.

It has been divided geographically by partition and within the six counties it has been divided yet again by political allegiances.

Sinn Fein believes that the only solution — the only way of achieving real unity — is a democratic one: allowing the Irish people to exercise their right to national self-determination.

Self-determination, as universally accepted, means a nation's right to exercise the political freedom to determine its own social, economic and cultural development without external influence and without disruption of national unity or territorial integrity.

Maximum political unity in Ireland, based on the principle of self-determination and geared towards persuading the British government to adopt a policy of disengagement in the context of Irish reunification, is a fundamental part of a strategy for justice and peace.

As a step towards such a strategy, the Dublin and London governments should consult together to seek agreement on the policy objective of Irish reunification.

Having agreed this, both governments should issue a public statement outlining the steps they intend to take to bring about a peaceful and orderly British political and military withdrawal from Ireland within a specified period.

In the likely event that the British government would refuse to enter into such a consultation, at least its intention of maintaining partition would be clarified beyond doubt, for the benefit of those who claim the British role is a neutral one.

There is a substantial body of international goodwill and sympathy towards Ireland, including a significant body of political opinion in Britain itself.

The channelling of that opinion around the progressive demand for Irish national self-determination could ultimately prove to be beneficial not only for the Irish, but also for the upholders of the true Labour Coalition in Britain itself.

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND





PHOTOS: Leesa Herbert

Michael Farrell (left) and Bernadette McAliskey address the Rally.

Rally inspires us to struggle on!

The October 14th rally for British withdrawal from Ireland, held at Haringey Irish Centre in North London, was inspiring.

By Jim Thain East London Irish Year of Action Committee

A packed hall (over 400 people) listened eagerly to Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey, Michael Farrell, people from the Guildford Four and anti-PTA campaigns, the Irish Prisoners Support Group, and locals Janet Clarke (Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign) and Bernie Grant MP.

The Hairy Marys entertained with hilarious dance routines and Beyond the Pale with traditional Irish music.

The ovation which greeted Bernadette McAliskey rivalled Thatcher's at Brighton. Once the youngest, and most radical, MP Westminster had ever seen, she now has 20 years experience of the struggle for Irish freedom behind her. The audience was rivetted.

Her performance ranged from a knockabout description of her political education ("I didn't know I had a political thought in my head until someone hit me over it with a baton") to hard-hitting analysis of the British Labour Party's record on Ireland.

This disgrace belongs to the leadership, she said, but Kinnock isn't the Party, and progress was up to the membership:

"No one can *give* you the labour movement — *take* it! You have nothing to fear!"

Over the past 20 years, Irish people had lost their rights and their friends. Over 400 political hostages had spent eleven or more years in gaol. Some families spent three days a week visiting relatives in far flung prisons.

Has it all been a waste of time and effort? No.

Would black people on the plantations have considered their suffering in vain before slavery was abolished? Should *they* have quit?

Not even the reintroduction of the death penalty would cow her people: "Irish youth laugh at the hangman."

Bernadette gave Bernie Grant some sound advice which she herself had received when first entering Parliament: "Stick you with the extremists and you'll be all right!"

Michael Farrell, founder member of People's Democracy, was another key figure in the civil rights movement. He told how the late 60s international wave of protest overwhelmed Irish Catholics "gombeen" acceptance of second class status and galvanised Irish youth.

The growth in awareness of social injustice was accelerated by loyalist reaction to any assertion of the Catholic community's rights. When peaceful demonstrators are "lawfully" beaten down and murdered, the role of the state comes into question.

Modest demands for housing and employment were transformed into demands for national self-determination. Bloody Sunday dispelled any doubts about the political agenda.

When in Ireland, Stan Orme denounced the Special Powers Act as fascist; a few years later he signed the detention orders when Merlyn Rees was on leave. And the left was too busy lecturing Irish socialists on making links with the Protestant working class to mobilise real solidarity action.

Farrell concluded by saying that partition and the artificial, gerrymandered statelet it created had been economic and political disasters:

"The 26 County state has failed; the Six County State has failed. What we are talking about is building a socialist united Ireland."

Hearing Theresa Smalley speak on the plight of her nephew, Guildford Four prisoner Paul Hill, aroused anger. Since his frame-up in 1975, Paul Hill has had 49 prison moves and 150 cell changes. When he was in Winchester he was strip searched every 15 minutes.

Even Merlyn Rees now accepts the Four are innocent. Two hundred MPs (mostly Tories) have called for the case to be reopened. Yet they, the Birmingham Six, the Maguires, and many more remain hostages in British gaols, pawns in a sinister game of repression, miscalled "Prevention of Terrorism".

Margaret O'Neill gave a graphic and moving account of how she and her late husband had suffered under the PTA. They had been ordered out of bed at gunpoint, and imprisoned without charge for nine days.

Her husband had suffered a nervous breakdown and later committed suicide.

The PTA is now permanent, and Hurd is proposing to "tighten it up".

Many left this unforgettable night with renewed determination in the struggle for Irish freedom — and for international socialism.

US Presidential elections

Dukakis strikes out!

There is one certain victor in the coming US elections.

Running once again without finance, without organisation, without media coverage, this third-party ticket will without doubt outpoll both Democrats and Republicans (and possibly both put together): "none of the above".

By Mike Marqusee
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

Participation in US elections has been on the decline for over 20 years and looks set to hit a new low on November 3rd.

Some 50% of the electorate will not bother to turn up at America's automated polling booths. As ever, the non-voters are overwhelmingly working class, with the most oppressed sections of the class least likely to vote.

To many over here, the lengthy primary process seems haphazard and wasteful. But for the US ruling class it is a boon, a winnowing process, under the guise of popular democracy, trimming the field until the simple kind of choice it likes emerges — no choice at all.

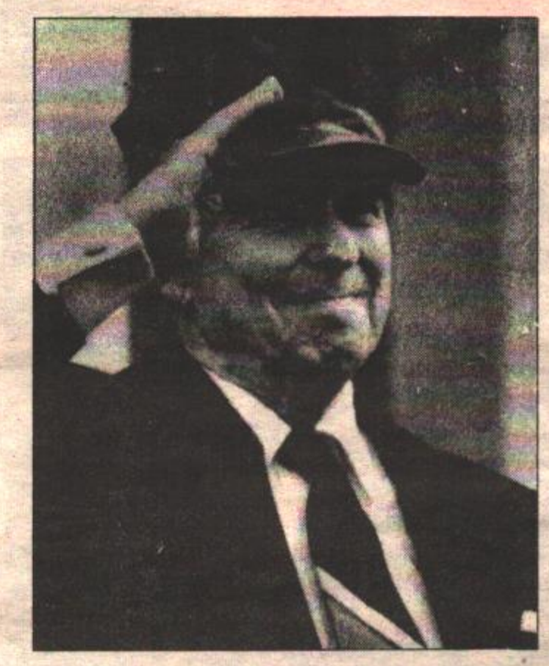
This year the process has worked as well as ever. The Jackson upsurge has been marginalised (though only for the time being). The electorate is being asked to choose between two solid servants of the ruling class, both dedicated to maintaining the existing order.

In their own apolitical way, those tens of millions of working class non-voters are more clearly on to the game being played than the anguished liberals who will once again dutifully cast votes for "the lesser evil", a minor demon incarnated this year by Mike Dukakis.

The presence of spoilt rich kid and prize idiot Dan Quale on the Republican ticket is an undeniable spur to vote Democrat. And there are some real differences between the candidates, notably on the question of abortion.

But, comparing policy statements (and you have to read the fine print to pick up the differences) misses the real point, revealed in all its banality by the poor quality of political debate in the world's most self-congratulatory democracy.

The narrow media agenda, obsessed with individual







The Rogues' Gallery: Reagan, Bush, Dukakis

"character", is entirely accepted by both candidates. For them, the contest is not a clash of ideas, no less of classes, but a competition for personal power, and the right to manage a system which nobody questions.

At the moment, all seems clear sailing for Bush. The popular vote may be close, but the electoral college (which actually elects the President) will be one-sided.

Bush has sewn up most of the southern and western states, which are over-represented in the electoral college (whose inherent reactionary bias was built in by the slave-holding "founding fathers").

Two win, Dukakis would have to take California, the North East, and the rust-belt states of the mid-west. He may well lose nearly all of these, though by small margins.

In a desperate effort, to recoup lost ground, Dukakis has tried to rally the old core constituents of the Democratic coalition with a burst of flag waving economic popularism and an eleventh hour call to Jackson, deliberately sidelined for most of the autumn.

It's all too little, too late. Even before the nominating convention, Dukakis and his team decided to play safe and appeal to the middle ground: no tax rises, no cuts in military spending, no commitments to civil rights or pro-union legislation.

But US voters are not as stupid as British media hacks like to make out. They can spot an inferior imitation when it's on offer and will either plump for the real thing or not buy at all.

Democratic big-wigs are now scrambling for cover. Already the traditional excuses are being heard. Dukakis, believe it or not, is said to be "too liberal". Next time, they say, an even more conservative campaign is needed.

Alongside the Presidency, every seat in the House of Representatives, one third of the Senate and innumerable state and local offices are up for election. Large numbers of Bush supporters will vote Democratic in other races, and "split tickets" of all kinds will be more common than ever.

This is, according to your point of view, evidence of "voters' maturity" or general irrelevance of most of the choices on offer.

For me, this now includes the candidacy of the US Socialist Workers Party, a stalwart in the Presidential elections for decades. I've supported the SWP in three Presidential elections, but this year I'm joining most of the discontented working class and abstaining completely.

The US SWP has become a bizarre cult, whose electoral campaigns are utterly inconsequential. They play no role in the left at large, and have made no contribution to the serious strategic debates spurred by the success — and failure — of the Jackson campaign.

Unlike Reagan, Bush will come to power not on a tide of reaction backed by a well organised right wing, but simply because the Democrats handed him the Presidency on a plate.

His administration will be weak, saddled with a Democratic House and Senate, and embroiled in economic turmoil. If the forces which rallied behind Jackson can get organised, they could seize the initiative.

YUGOSLAVIA

The federation must survive!

In 1910, the Bosnian delegate to the Congress of the International pleaded for assistance to fight Austria's annexation of his country.

By Peter Chowney
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

He received a polite hearing; but no realistic support.

Four years later, a young Bosnian socialist shot dead Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, and an excuse was provided for war.

Socialists failed then, as they still do today, to understand the complex balance of nationalism and socialism in the Balkan states.

In 1918, the Allied Forces established the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, an unlikely but geographically convenient grouping of fiercely nationalistic Balkan states.

Serbia, the largest, remains the centre of political power in the federation (known as Yugoslavia from 1928).

Despite a mass of destabilising pressures, Yugoslavia has survived and progressed economically. Always fiercely independent, it broke from Stalin's economic block in 1948 and has achieved international status far outweighing its size and wealth.

The political philosophy of Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party, referring not to the "Second World War", but the "Yugoslav Revolution", helped to unite the Yugoslav people as an oppressed class fighting a common enemy.

Tito led an independent system of government; a cumbersome but democratic national autonomy within a socialist federation.

One in five Yugoslavs holds political office, and every workplace is managed by committees elected by the workers themselves.

Today, eight years after his death, every shop, bar, cafe, and public building still displays a picture of Tito. In Slovenia, a smart, crisp-suited businessman is displayed; in Bosnia, a stern military general; in Croatia, a bohemian philosopher in open-necked shirt.

The caricature of national qualities distilled into the memory of Tito is almost comical.

For Yugoslavia, the problem is the old, old story of nationalism versus socialism — never more profound than it is today. The shiny new BMWs and Audis of Slovenia give way to the rusting Zastavas of Bosnia and the ox-carts and mules of Macedonia.

The entire contrast of European wealth and poverty seems to be encapsulated within one country; ironically, a socialist country.

Since Tito's death, the notion of class solidarity has dwindled. Slovenia and Croatia have held on to their comparative wealth; Macedonia and Montenegro have lacked capital investment.

As inflation passes 200%, egged on by a vast burden of foreign debt, the high degree of national autonomy and the lack of central consensus allows the wealthier states to consolidate at the expense of the poorer.

Encroaching symptoms of capitalism (such as increasing wage differentials) are fuelling dissatisfaction amongst poorer Yugoslavs. Resulting nationalistic demands made on politicians by their electorates means that no one is prepared to come to terms with Yugoslavia's deepening central economic crisis.

But in spite of the desolate picture painted by the Western press, the termination of the Yugoslav road to socialism is by no means inevitable.

Steel workers striking in Titograd in early October were waving Red Flags, not the Stars and Stripes. The demands of the workers are for more socialism, not less.

While Slovenian Communist Party leaders openly question the relevance of socialism, far more powerful voices in Belgrade, notably Slobodan Milosovic, the Serbian Party leader, call for stricter central control.

Milosovic is not another Tito. Clearly identified with Serbia, his leadership of the Federation would be strongly opposed by wealthier Northern states who object to what they see as their "subsidy" of the poorer Southern regions.

Yet the danger of Western-backed secession of a capitalist Slovenia is light. Whether the solutions lie in a new transnational leadership or Serbian hegemony, the Yugoslavs know the Balkan states would have no more hope of independent survival now than they had in 1910.

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

The Troops Out Movement (TOM) is organising the "Year of Action on Ireland" campaign in an attempt to build local and widespread support for British withdrawal from Ireland based on our two demands of "Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole!" and "Troops Out Now!".

Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey will be touring Britain speaking at public meetings organised by TOM. Dates are:

Cardiff: Nov. 7th, Central Hotel, St Mary's St.
Birmingham: Nov. 8th, Carrs Lane Church Centre.
Sheffield: Nov. 9th, Memorial Hall, behind City Hall.
Liverpool: Nov. 10th.
London: Nov. 11th, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

NAC-SPONSORED TOUR

Irish pregnancy counsellor in Britain

Despite the Irish Supreme Court ruling that giving information about abortion services in England is now illegal, Ruth Riddick continues to maintain a phone service.

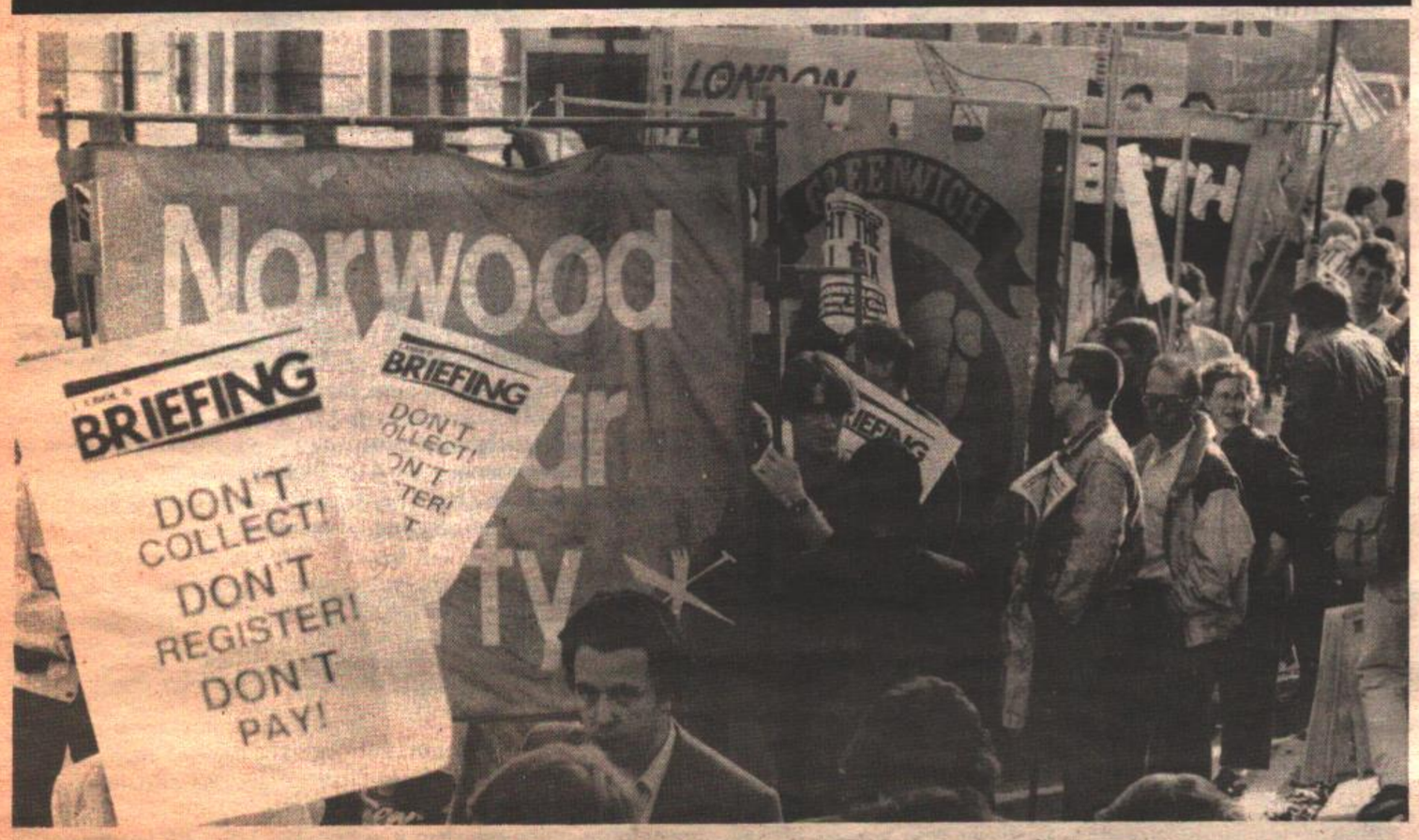
She will challenge the ruling in the European Court part of this campaign, Ruth is touring Britain to publi the ruling and to raise support. The tour is also sponsor y NUS, LWI and the Irish Women's Abortion Support G .

Dates below are in November, the first venue bein daytime meeting, the second one being in the evening. For further details contact NAC: 01 405 4801.

1st: Bath, Bristol. 2nd: Swansea, Cardiff. 3rd: Warwick, Birmingham. 4th: Liverpool, Manchester. 7th: Glasgow, Gla ow. 8th: Stirling, Edinburgh. 9th: Newcastle, Newcastle. 10th: York, Leeds. 11th: Sheffield, Sheffield. 14th: Nottingham, Notting m. 15th: Leicester, Norwich. 16th: Cambridge, Essex University. 17th: Brighton, London. 18th: London, London.

LABOUR BRIEFING

Poll Tax



First Steps in building opposition

Approximately 250 people marched through Lambeth, on October 22nd, as the first part of a London wide Week of Action Against the Poll Tax. Elsewhere in London other local campaigns held meetings and other events over the week.

Small but spirited, the march, organised by the South London Socialist Conference, also marked the first public activity of Lambeth Against the Poll Tax.

The aim is now to build up a public awareness of what the Poll Tax is, hand in hand with a programme of opposition to its implementation.

It is quite clear that, despite the overwhelming unpopularity of the proposed Tax, most people still do not understand its full horrors.

In particular, many young people do not realise it will apply to them, or believe that they can easily sidestep it.

Our task is to get across how Poll Tax is far more than just a major financial attack on individuals.

Greg Tucker
(Lambeth Briefing)

The Tax is a direct attack on all our civil liberties.

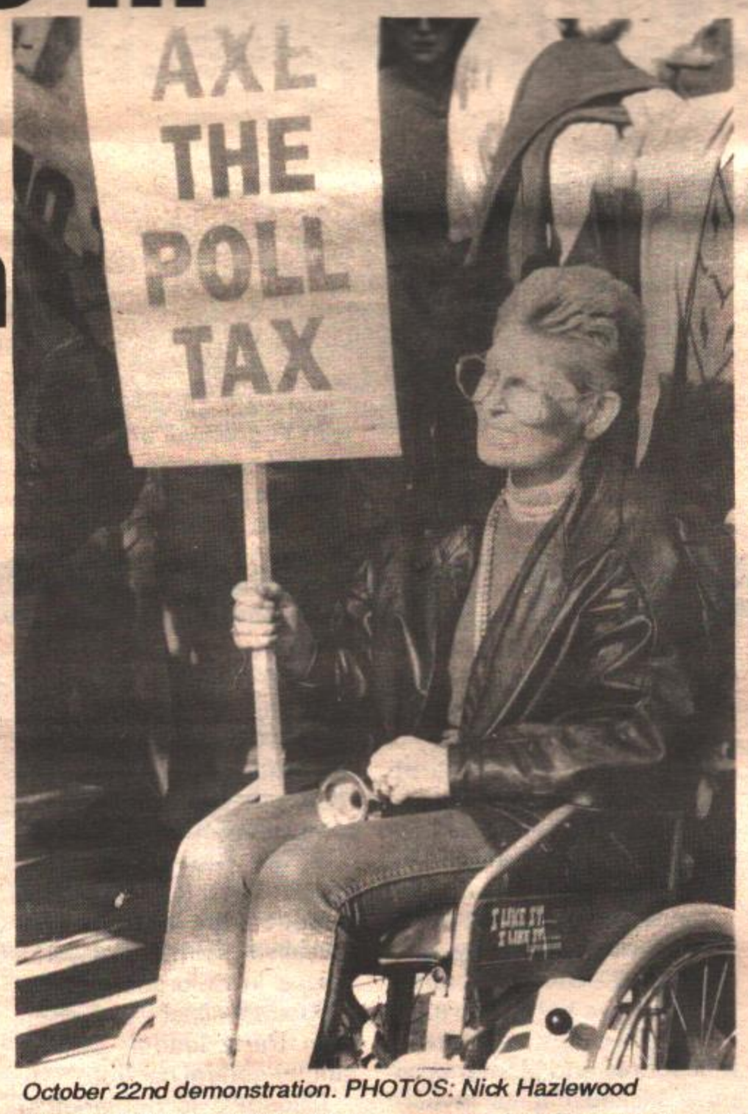
- Sex snoopers will have to check on who is living with whom.
- If you move you will have to report it to the Council within a month.
- For the first time there will be a national record of everyone's whereabouts — the first stage to national "pass law" identity checks.

As well as explaining the facts we have to build a programme of opposition.

Speaking at the end of the march, Harry Cohen MP declared, "We must be prepared to break bad laws."

This theme was echoed by Bernie Grant MP who pointed out, "They break the law in the City every day — but I don't hear people complaining. Whilst I have the luxury of being able to afford to pay this Tax, how can I do so and keep faith with my constituents whom I know can't afford to pay?"

Individual statements are fine but Lambeth Against the Poll Tax also used the march to collect signatures from local people calling on the Council to refuse to implement the tax.



October 22nd demonstration. PHOTOS: Nick Hazlewood

We will be lobbying the Council on November 9th (6pm onwards outside the Town Hall).

Councils and Council workers must take a lead. For as John Tuite, speaking for the Lambeth campaign, explained to the marchers:

"Not only will Lambeth people be financially attacked, with tax levels rising to over £700 per person per year; there will be enormous pressure put on the Council to lower the level of the tax by making cuts.

"Council workers should realise that short term gains in recruitment of Poll Tax workers will be wiped out by the long term loss of jobs. It is in everyone's interest to fight this Tax."

The Poll Tax and Women
Thursday 27th October
7.30pm
at
Friends Meeting House,
Euston Road
Organised by London Against the Poll Tax

NATIONAL
ACTION CONFERENCE
AGAINST THE POLL TAX

Sponsored by:

THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 10
11.00 – 5.30
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Platform for the National Action Conference Against the Poll Tax

This platform has been adopted by the Socialist Conference Organising Committee and will provide the basis for the National Action Conference.

"We believe that the Poll Tax is aggressively regressive, a major threat to our civil liberties and the franchise, and further undermines the independence of local government. We recognise the need to examine alternatives to both the rates and the Poll Tax.

We believe that defeating the Poll Tax is essential for the defence of our liberties and we call for the broadest possible protest.

To this end we call on all those groups - local broad-based anti-Poll Tax groups and unions, tenants, labour movement bodies and trade unions at every level, churches, political parties and groups, voluntary organisations - and all individuals opposed to the Poll Tax to join together and support the National Action Conference on the Poll Tax in Newcastle.

We aim to gather together all these groups and individuals into a national network of resistance - to support each other, to exchange information and materials, to organise local and national demonstrations and lobbies.

We aim to unify and co-ordinate the various tactics of resistance and civil disobedience, from disruption of the register and payment, including mass non-payment, to public, trade union and civic non-co-operation."

Other Sponsors include:

MPs
Maria Fyfe, John McAllion, George Galloway, Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott, Harry Barnes, Mildred Gordon, Harry Cohen, Bob Clay, Eric Heffer, Tony Benn.
Trade Unionists
Geoff Revell (NUR); Alan Quinn, Tom Hart, Mike Gibbons (TGWU)
Councillors
Joan Twelves, Steve French, Greg Tucker (Lambeth); Pat Waylett, Jon Lansman (Lewisham); Piers Corbyn (Southwark); Vince Gillespie (Haringey); Bill Dodds (Newcastle);
and
Rebecca Fleming (NUS London), Ernie Roberts, John McDonnell.
[all sponsors in a personal capacity]

SMASH THE POLL TAX!

NATIONAL ACTION CONFERENCE
AGAINST THE POLL TAX
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE MEDICAL SCHOOL
DECEMBER 10

AGENDA

Introductory Plenary
Chaired by Harry Barnes MP
11 – 1
Speakers:
Alice Mahon MP
Gary Kent (London Against the Poll Tax)
Speaker from a Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Caampaign
Susan McGregor (invited)
2 – 3.15
Workshops on:
Women, Black People, Poverty, Local Government, Trade Unions, Civil Liberties, Civil Disobedience, Youth and Students
3.15 – 3.30 Tea Break
3.30 – 5.30
Final Plenary
Reports from Workshops
Speakers:
Lorna Reid (LAPT)
Scottish speaker
Discussion from the floor + voting on statement prepared by Steering Group

Registration Form

I would like to register for the National Conference Against the Poll Tax on December 10.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

I enclose £10 delegates ..... I require use of a creche .....

£5 waged ..... No. of children .....

£3 unwaged .....

Cheques to: National Action Conference Against the Poll Tax
Return to NACATPT c/o Terry Conway 10b Windsor Road London N7 6JG