LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p FORTNIGHTLY
NO.82 APRIL 26 - MAY 9 1989

INSIDE:

■For a planned economy
■Has Walesa sold out?
■"Godless Labour"?
■100 Years of New Realism!
■Stop the Section national tour
■ NALGO Pay

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Dockers, unite against the Tories:

TGWU MUST DEFY THE LAW!

The dockers are poised to lead a historic battle with the government over the abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme. And they can win if they get the backing they deserve from the TGWU leadership.

Registered dockers handle 70% of cargo, much of which cannot be switched to non-scheme ports. A Department of Trade and Industry circular admits: "sectors heavily dependent on imports of raw materials or components could face problems quite quickly. Steel, vehicles, chemicals, news print and textiles could all be hit."

By Alan Thornett
Trade Union Briefing

The key problem for the dockers is the attitude of TGWU leaders to the courts. Ron Todd says any strike "must be within the law". But can the strike be contained within the law and if not will Todd support it?

Todd's attempt to negotiate with the Port Employers was a tacit acceptance that a strike against a decision of Parliament would be illegal. Such a ruling by the courts — by no means certain — would be the most far reaching use of the law against the unions since Thatcher came to power.

It would make strikes against other Government measures such as the Baker Bill and the NHS white paper illegal as well. Were the courts to take such a step, they would not be influenced by whether or not the T&G had met the Port Employers.

The announcement by the TGWU leaders that they are trying to comply with the law is an open invitation to the courts to take the harshest decision in support of the employers!

The Port Employers have treated Todd's demands for negotiation with complete arrogance. They see the chance completely to reorganise the docks industry following the abolition of the Scheme — and even used the talks to announce the ending of the industry's national negotiating machinery, a separate matter from the Scheme.

Ron Todd is worried about the funds of the union, but those funds are worthless unless they can be used to defend jobs and conditions of the membership.

A united struggle by all dockers is entirely possible. Several of the non-Scheme ports have already pledged support in the knowledge that their wages and conditions are underpinned by conditions in the Scheme ports.

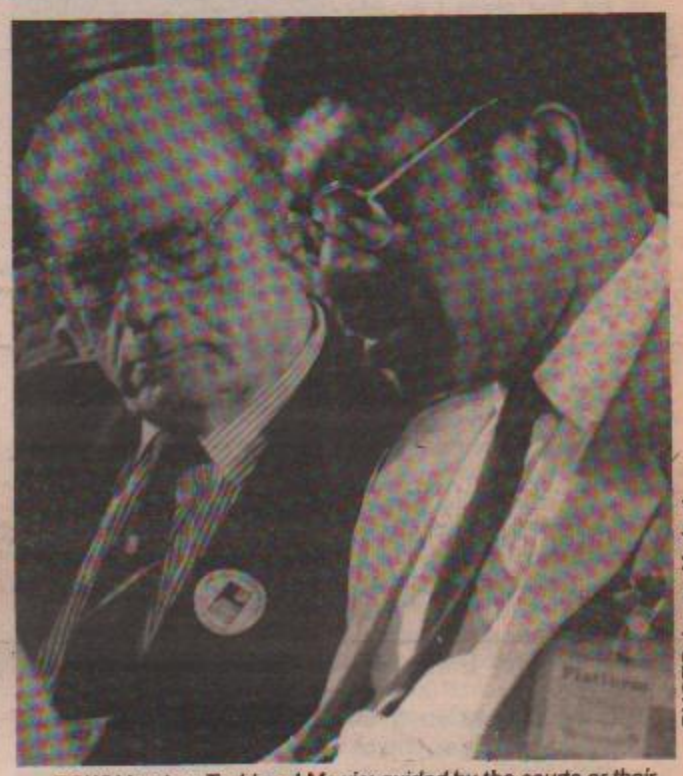


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

TGWU leaders Todd and Morris: guided by the courts or their members?

But if unregistered ports join the strike it will automatically be declared unlawful secondary action. Striking dockers picketing any unregistered ports which continue to work will also be guilty of illegal secondary action.

Previous anti-union legislation was destroyed because it was defied. In 1972 the dockers dealt the decisive blow to the Industrial Relations Act with their defiance of the National Industrial Relations Court over the Pentonville Five.

Since the NUM defied the law during the miners strike and was left isolated, the unwillingness of the union leaders to defy the law has led to the defeat of the print unions at Wapping and the seafarers at Dover.

A national dock strike could be the cornerstone of a fight-back against Thatcherism. NUR workers on London Underground have voted 7-1 for strike action. Strikes are starting in the BBC. A strike ballot is being prepared on British Rail. The AEU National Committee has proposed a series of strikes for a shorter working week and 70,000 power workers are being balloted for action. But to win, the dockers must be prepared to defy the law.

The TGWU, and the rest of the labour movement, must support them.

INSIDE:

Hillsborough: a working class tragedy

★Editorial, p3
★Football Supporters Association's warnings ignored, back page

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Letters

WRITEBACK!

We welcome your letters!

Disagree with something? — write in.
Agree with something? — write in.
Want to raise a new idea? — Write in.

Let's hear your views!

Write to: Writeback, Labour Briefing, 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14 9HB.
Please send letters for the next issue to arrive by Wednesday, May 3rd if possible.
Letters over 300 words may be cut for reasons of space.

Scottish Socialist Party replies

Dear *Briefing*,

I wish to reply to Jim Niblock's letter about the formation of the Scottish Socialist Party.

In the first place I would like to point out that the decision to form the new party was taken well before the result of the Govan by-election.

The decision to break from Labour was not an easy one. It came about through the painful realisation that the left in the Labour Party is unable to stop the alarming acceptance of Thatcherite values within it.

Labour in Scotland is now the main barrier to socialism ever being achieved.

Its leadership and a majority of its members have betrayed the people of Scotland over the Poll Tax. They had the power to stop it but chose not to exercise this power for fear of alienating voters in the South of England.

This is inexcusable.

We recognise that there are still many excellent socialists who are reluctant to leave the Labour Party. To them we offer the hand of friendship.

However, contrary to Jim Niblock's assertions, we will be constesting an election very shortly.

The Glasgow Central by-election will give socialists both inside and outside the Labour Party a straight choice. They can either vote for a Kinnockite such as Anne McGuire, who will probably be selected, or for our unashamedly socialist candidate.



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

And to you lot on my left, I say come and join the Horticulturalists party...

Of course, this decision, like the decision whether or not to pay the Poll Tax, is a matter for the individual conscience.

We must recognise one vital fact. If socialists choose to back a right wing friend of Donald Dewar in the by-election they will be doing nothing to stop the rightward shift in the Labour Party.

Yours,
David G. R. Young,
Scottish Socialist Party

Once again on the A-AM

Dear *Briefing*,

Martin Wicks evidently has a different conception of pluralism to that put forward by Mike Phipps in his article on the Anti-Apartheid Movement to which I took exception in my last letter.

Phipps has employed the usual formulas about "equal respect for all currents", "support for those in struggle", etc.

Martin clearly disagrees, because he regards one current, the ANC, as a gang of Stalinist butchers who will not hesitate to slaughter genuine revolutionaries.

Self-evidently, then, our task must be to weaken the ANC and to build support for genuine "revolutionary forces" by touring them round the labour movement to sound the tocsin against the incipient ANC counter-revolution.

Sectarian

Now this is not "equal respect for all currents". It is precisely because this kind of sectarian silliness often lurks behind the appeal to pluralism that so many are suspicious of the formula.

Solidarity is about concrete support for actually existing forces engaged in real struggles (it is not about solidarising with non-existent forces such as the "black workers party").

This means that nobody engaged in struggle should be denied the support of the A-AM.

But the ANC is not simply one current amongst several; it is the only current which could conceivably form, at the present time, a government commanding wide popular support to replace the apartheid regime.

In this context it is quite correct for the A-AM to recognise its leading role. A solidarity movement cannot avoid making political decisions and choices; if we do not believe this, how can we consistently argue for a prioritisation of the Mayekiso case?

Phil Ward raises many pertinent criticisms of the A-AM, but he still begs the question of what we should advocate to turn the movement in the right direction.

On the trade union question, Phil correctly points out that the A-AM has historically been more concerned with cultivating support amongst bureaucrats than relating to rank and file activity.

Fair enough, but in addition to agitating for workers' sanctions, what proposals do we have for how the A-AM should relate to the trade union movement we have now, bureaucracy and all?

How do we assess the various initiatives which have taken place in the unions, from the coal boycott work with the NUM to the Joint Campaign to Rail Against Apartheid to Mayekiso?

I feel it would be much more useful to have that kind of discussion in *Briefing* than to refight the Spanish Civil War.

The vast majority of people who get involved with A-AM do not do so to fight Stalinism or construct an alternative to the ANC, but to build the broadest possible movement to isolate the apartheid regime.

At A-AM Conferences they see a leadership which, despite its inadequacies, at least seems to share this goal — and a would-be left obsessed with internal minutiae, abstract denunciations, and a seemingly incorrigible negativism towards the ANC.

Situation

This is the situation that has to be turned around and pious appeals to the holy trinity of pluralism, democracy, and a trade union orientation are insufficient to the task.

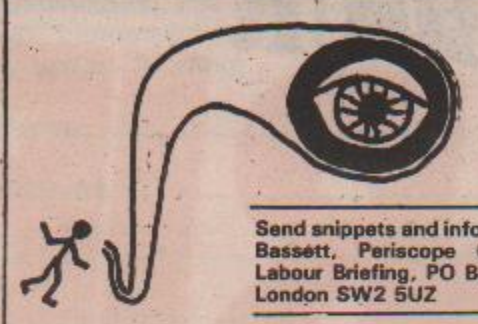
A left which genuinely seeks to lead has to respond to the concerns of the ordinary activists.

Whilst a labour movement orientation for the A-AM is essential, it does not in itself provide a line of march for the movement as a whole.

This requires putting forward serious proposals for work amongst youth, women, black people, the religious community (I realise the mere mention of the latter will provoke some hilarity, but this hilarity hardly betokens a serious attitude towards, for exmaple, the black community), as well as providing a mass campaigning focus for local groups.

Yours,
B.J. Gibbons
Manchester

Periscope



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

OBITUARY
Abbie Hoffman

The unexpected news of Abbie Hoffman's death (apparently by suicide) at the age of 52 will sadden many of those who remember him from the 60s and who were delighted to see him return to active left politics in the 80s.

In recent years Hoffman was touring the country, speaking to students and appearing at demos against apartheid, the CIA, and multinational polluters.

He offered a refreshing and almost archetypal contrast to his erstwhile ally Jerry Rubin, born-again businessman.

It is often forgotten that before his emergence as a media celebrity in the late 60s, Hoffman had spent several years as a rank and file civil rights activist directly involved in some of the fiercest battles against segregation in the South.

Abbie (as he was soon to be called by young people across the USA) had been an organiser for the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), whose direct action tactics were a key inspiration for the worldwide student revolt of 1968.

The emergence in the mid-60s of "Black Power" as a slogan and nationalist self-determination as a strategy tore SNCC apart. Abbie, like many other white radicals, found himself exiled from the Civil Rights movement.

Casting around for a movement that they could call their own, they turned to the "counter-culture" and a new, flamboyant, flippant style of radical politics.

The heart of this politics was opposition to the Vietnam War. Abbie was centrally involved in the October 1967 Pentagon demonstration (an attempt to levitate the building by collective incantation was a failure, but that never bothered Abbie).

He was also involved in the bloody showdown with Richard Daley's thugs in uniform in Chicago in August 1968.

In many respects these were both marginal events in the swelling tide of mass protest against the war.

But the theatrical irreverence of Abbie's tactics (and the brutality with which they were suppressed) gave them a symbolic weight well beyond that merited by the numbers present (only a few thousand) or the politics advocated (a mix of traditional US liberalism and outrageously anarchistic nihilism).

In them the generational, social, and ideological conflicts then tearing the country apart seemed to be crystallised.

Later, at the Chicago Conspiracy trial Abbie showed himself to be one hell of a stand-up political comedian. He also showed himself to be brave and principled.

His politics in the late 60s were scatter-brained and at times dangerously adventurist, but he possessed a humour, imagination, and daring that would not have gone amiss in the grim landscape of Thatcher's Britain, 1989.



TEN TORY YEARS

analysed by the UK's monthly news and current affairs magazine for the trade union and labour movement. In May **Labour Research** looks at how Britain and the unions have fared under a decade of Tory rule, with major features on:

The Economy, Privatisation, Civil Liberties, Employment Law, The Widening Gap Between Rich and Poor.

plus features on:

Trade Unions and International Solidarity, EC and Regional Aid

Out May 1st

☐ I would like a copy of the Labour Research May issue and enclose a cheque/postal order for £1.80 (inc. postage) payable to Labour Research Department.

☐ I would like a year's subscription to Labour Research and enclose a cheque/postal order for £18.75 payable to Labour Research Department.

☐ I would like more information about the LRD and LRD publications.

Name ..... Address .....

Union ....

Please return to Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF

(B)

Briefing Summer Draw!

Raise money for Briefing and for your local group!
Tickets cost £1 per book of 5, and local groups can keep half the proceeds.
Tickets available from J. Wilton, 25 World's End Ave, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1JF (021-422 1366).

No one will be as surprised to read this as John Wilton (unless it's Pauline Purnell), but Neville has obviously been impressed by their work organising the Briefing Summer Draw, and randomly generated number 257 as the winner of this week's 500 Club prize — a share held jointly between John and Pauline. £25... that's 125 raffle tickets...

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Editorial

BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Hillsborough: a working class tragedy

The utterly avoidable slaughter of 95 football supporters at Hillsborough is a tragedy for our class.

No socialist could fail to be deeply shaken by this appalling event — or touched by the spectacle of practical working class solidarity as the wounded and the dying were carried out by volunteers on stretchers improvised from advertising hoardings, or by the displays of collective bereavement in football grounds up and down the country.

And no socialist could help but be moved to outrage at the forces responsible for this tragedy.

The central force involved is capital itself, in which the drive for profit always takes precedence over the needs of people. In the interests of capital, Thatcher has pushed through a programme of economic "rationalisation" which has not only led to mass unemployment and poverty, but has also resulted in the corrosion of the country's physical infrastructure.

This has reached the point where large numbers of people no longer feel it is safe to ride on a tube, train, or ferry — or to attend a football match.

Capitalism's "rationalisation" drive does not only exist at the national and international level: it directly involves individual capitalists, including those capitalists (often locally based industrialists or businessmen) who own and run our football clubs.

At Hillsborough, what was exposed was not only the inhumanity of capital, but the gross irresponsibility of its local agents, who have usurped a popular pastime and public asset and turned it into a vehicle to satisfy their own lust for prestige and power.

"Enemies within"

Again and again these people have resisted supporters' demands for better, safer facilities, for logical ticket allocation policies, and for co-ordinated, co-operative stewarding arrangements inside and outside the ground. Most criminally of all, they failed to heed repeated warnings about the dangers of perimeter fences.

But why were the fences put up in the first place? And why were the club directors so reluctant to remove them?

Here it is necessary to remember that the economic and ideological offensives have gone hand in hand. In order to push through her savage attack on the working class, Thatcher identified a number of groups as "enemies within" — miners, black people, lesbians and gays, most recently dockers.

Inevitably, this offensive spread from the working class at work to the working class at play. Football supporters joined the ranks of the "enemies within". Football itself was defined as a social *problem* which could only be solved by measures of "control over *all* football fans.

Repression, not safety, became the watchword.

Hence the fences, the video cameras, the ID cards, and the huge police presence. What happened at Hillsborough was not the result of one rash misjudgement by one police officer under pressure, but of a deliberately propogated image of working class football supporters as violent and sub-human.

The police failure at Hillsborough can only be understood in this context. Following the lead of the right wing media, they saw the fans as a mindless menace and treated them accordingly. No wonder their first instinct, when suffocating fans tried to escape over the fences, was to push them back into the crush.

The club directors and administrators have also been imbued with this perspective. Hence the grotesque inadequacy of the public address system, resuscitation equipment, and emergency back-up facilities.

These facts cannot be completely hidden from the public (unlike in some other "disasters" and the Tories are now faced with an outcry which threatens to disrupt the smoothe course of their economic and ideological offensive.

Individualised Impotence

But, as usual, they are not deterred. To the feinthearts on her back benches, Thatcher says, "Press on!" Which means ID cards, all-seater stadia, more police powers... and more nauseating propaganda against football supporters. The Liverpool fans who rightly torched copies of *The Sun* now know who the real barbarians are.

Football matches are one of the last redoubts for the public expression of any collective working class identity. Some of the ways in which this collectivity is expressed — through violence, chauvinism, petty local rivalries, gross sexism and racism — are painful to socialists. But this should not stop us from decisively rejecting Thatcher's answer to the football crisis.

She wants football supporters, like the rest of the working class, to know their place — and sit in it! Her aim is a further atomisation of the working class, bit by bit reduced to individualised impotence in front of their television sets.

The socialist answer stands in direct opposition. Unfortunately, the bipartisanship of Labour leaders over this issue, with Roy Hattersley calling on Thatcher to "delay", not drop, the ID card scheme in order to "unify the nation", represented yet another lost opportunity for Labour, a chance to speak directly to and for millions of people still trembling with rage and grief over Hillsborough.

We should recognise, as Thatcher does, that football is changing. And we should offer a radical programme for its development along democratic and egalitarian lines.

Much work needs to be done before such a programme is complete, but some of its outlines are clear.

We must demand the removal of the perimeter fences, the scrapping of the ID card scheme, and oppose plans for commercial use of football facilities being drawn up by greedy directors who for whom crowd safety is always a secondary concern.

We must oppose the hue and cry for all-seater stadia. Yes, many grounds should have more and better seating at an affordable price. But fans should be given a choice — and removal of the terraces, which are not in themselves dangerous, will strip fans of yet one more option, as well as resulting in prohibitive ticket prices.

Public Ownership

We should also expose the fraud of an enquiry led by a Peer of the Realm who by his own admission hasn't been to a football match in 20 years.

But as socialists we should also advocate all-embracing, radical solutions to the football crisis. Our aim should be to smash the dictatorship of the Football Association and the Football League and strip the arrogant and incompetent bougeoisie who own our football clubs of their unaccountable power.

All grounds must be taken into public ownership, with provision for locally based democratic control. Democratically organised bodies of supporters should assume responsibility for running the game, from top to bottom.

In that context, a full-scale campaign to eradicate racism and sexism at grounds must be undertaken, and we must formulate a long-term plan to advance the interests of women as both spectators and players.

Genuine Voice

All this can only be achieved in and through the football supporters' movement, currently expressed in the legion of alternative football magazines and the growth of the Football Supporters Association as a genuine voice for the excluded majority of fans.

Hillsborough is a working class tragedy, inflicted on us by our class enemies. For the moment, it must be said, only a small number of fans see it that way. But that number is undoubtedly growing, and it's up to socialists — many of whom, after all, are also football fans — to carry these arguments onto the terraces, before they're all replaced by Directors' Boxes.

Economic Notebook

Reality behind Capital's euphemisms

Lawson's squeeze costs jobs



Unemployment is now at its lowest level for eight years!

This is one Tory myth which has insidiously crept into public consciousness, soothing what was, in the early 80s, the public's number one anxiety.

Of course, we all know that a completely different basis of calculation is now used. But it is also necessary to look behind the rhetoric of fiddled figures to seek out the real underlying trends.

Even calculating unemployment on the old basis shows that it has indeed fallen over the past two to three years.

The new jobs are, however, predominantly in the service sector, usually part-time and temporary, abysmally low-paid, and have little in the way of union organisation or health and safety protection.

Above all, they are credit-boom led and will disappear as fast as they were created. Indeed, the latest figures do show a slowdown in the fall in unemployment.

This is what is meant by "slowing down" an "overheating economy". The capitalist class is, as we know, expert at euphemism and these are pretty good ones for recession, deflation, and unemployment.

"Boost for Lawson as high street sales slow down" is the triumphal headline in the *Guardian*, but the closing of the gap between demand and supply is precisely the cause of the latest and worryingly modest fall in unemployment.

If sales in the High Street slow down this has obvious consequences for import and export trade (hence the great desire to take on the dockers to hide these consequences).

It also has consequences for industrial output and employment in what is left of manufacturing industry.

By PETER THOMPSON

It will lead to increases in bankruptcy for new, self-employed businesses, which will then be swallowed up by big capital, their former owners hired as workers in their own firms, i.e. "proletarianized".

"Merger Mania", yet another euphemism for concentration of capital, will increase. The new mega-firms will either asset-strip or rationalize, which in turn will increase unemployment.

This downturn will coincide with increased inter-imperialist rivalry between the US, Europe, and Japan, with their attempts to penetrate each others' markets and productive bases (see the latest Japanese ventures in Wales and Derby).

It will also lead to a massive increase in overcapacity and overaccumulation of capital, which will then need to be destroyed or transferred to other sectors.

All countries which have turned a trade deficit into a trade surplus over the past decade have done so at the cost of an enormous rise in unemployment.

The fall in domestic demand coincides with rises in productivity to produce a situation in which fewer workers produce the same or more goods for a lower level of market demand.

The outlook therefore is bleak. This crisis is world wide. Simply leaving it to the international bankers to achieve a switch to export markets, assuming we had any manufactured goods left to export, is not a solution.

What is required is a concerted atack on the power of transnationals and international financiers to make global production and investment decisions against the interests of workers everywhere.

Of necessity, this includes nationalisation of the means of investment and production and a switch to production to meet international human need, rather than transnational corporate greed.

Campaign!

Socialist Conference: Diary of Events

APRIL

Local Conferences on Socialist Alternatives to Labour's Policy Review

Birmingham: Friday 28th, 7.30pm, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham 4 (behind Marks & Sparks). Chair: Pauline Purnell. Speakers: Dawn Primarolo MP, Mandy Moore (Socialist Conference, Women for Socialism).

MAY

Local Conferences on Socialist Alternatives to Labour's Policy Review

Glasgow: Saturday 20th, 11am, City Hall. Speakers: Bernie Grant MP, Hilary Wainwright (Socialist Conference, Women for Socialism), Scottish Campaign Group MP (invited).

Sat. 13th. **National Convention for Democratic Rights.** Contact: Mike Marqusee, 01-341 9203.

Sat. 20th/Sun 21st. **Local Government Conference. Rochdale** (provisionally). Contact Tony Trehy, 7 East View, Mitchell St, Rochdale OL12 6SF. 0706-526624.

JUNE

Sat. 3rd/Sun. 4th. **Gorbachev & the European Left.** Conference, with Eastern and Western European speakers. Oxford University Conference Centre. Contact: Gus Fagan, 30 Bridge Street, Oxford OX2 0BA. 0865-723207.

Sat. 17th/Sun. 18th. **Third Socialist Conference.** Octagon Centre, Sheffield University.

NOVEMBER

Sat. 11th/Sun. 12th. **Building the Left in the Unions.**

SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

Democratic Rights — A Call to Action!

Open *Organising Meeting* for a National Convention on Democratic Rights
SATURDAY MAY 13TH, 1-4PM
Red Rose Club,
Seven Sisters Road, London N4
(Finsbury Park tube)

All civil liberties, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-censorship, lesbian and gay, Irish, trade union activists welcome.
Help build a *united resistance* to the Tory attack on democratic rights.

For more details contact Democratic Rights, c/o Reading Matters Bookshop, Wood Green High Road, London N22.

Socialist Conference

Going for the hat trick!

The third national Socialist Conference takes place in Sheffield on June 17th and 18th.

It will be even more important for the left than the previous two.

A decade of Thatcherism has left socialists weakened and marginalised. Trade union struggles are stabbed in the back by trade unions leaders. New Realists in the Labour Party are not even capable of winning elections.

By Davy Jones
Islington South CLP



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

First stop Chesterfield... next stop Sheffield!

The left urgently needs to take stock and renew itself as we head for the 1990s. The third Socialist Conference will provide an essential forum for this task.

Entitled *The Socialist Conference: Movement for a New Decade*, the Sheffield event aims to:

•outline an overall socialist programme for the 1990s, a necessary counterweight to Kinnock's "Great Moving Right Show";

•establish clear campaigning priorities and practical goals for Socialist Conference supporters.

It is also hoped that the Conference will agree to adopt the name of "Socialist Movement" and set up an office with full time workers.

Previous conferences have produced many policy papers, some of them mutually contradictory.

This time the aim is to synthesise these papers into a comprehensive document providing a clear socialist perspective on the economy, defence, foreign policy, liberation of the oppressed, and democratic rights.

Where there remain differences within the movement, as on Europe and PR, these will be honestly expressed. But even with unresolved areas, such a document will be a much needed antidote to the Labour Party Policy Review drivel.

The Conference will also highlight:

•the enormous success of the recent *Women for Socialism* conference, with its mushrooming local groups;

•the success of regional Socialist Conference events around the country, especially in Scotland;

•the national conference of socialist trade unionists to be held in Sheffield in November;

•the National Convention on Democratic Rights planned for later this year.

This Conference is essential for every trade union and Labour Party activist, for every campaigner on radical and socialist issues.

It offers an opportunity to forge an exciting, socialist movement which can challenge the ideas and the practice of the New Realists, in the unions and the Labour Party.

Labour Briefing urges all socialists to attend.

The Socialist Conference, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG
Affiliation Form

Name.....

Address.....

.....Telephone No. .....

Enclosed with this form is the affiliation fee for 1988
(£12 for organisations; £6 for individuals, £3 unwaged).
In conformity with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, I hereby agree to the Socialist Conference keeping the above information on file.

Signed.....Date.....

Stop the Deportations!

Victoria and Stephen must stay!

Victoria Apetor and her 16 month old son Stephen are under threat of deportation.

Victoria came to Britain three years ago from Ghana with a male friend, who was studying in Canada.

By GEOFF RYAN

The original plan was to spend two to three weeks in Britain before travelling on to Canada. However, her friend abandoned her at a London railway station, leaving her with just £2.

After sleeping rough for a night, Victoria found help from a chance meeting with a woman, who gave Victoria temporary accommodation and helped her find work.

About a month later Victoria moved to Manchester where she worked in a factory and where she now lives.

Following her move, Victoria formed a relationship with a Ghanaian man, which broke up when she became pregnant. In November 1987, she gave birth to her baby Stephen.

Since coming to Britain Victoria has taught herself to read, write and speak English and has made friends in Manchester. She simply wants to be allowed to make a life here for herself and her son.

A year after Stephen was born Victoria moved back in with his father but three weeks later immigration officials raided the house. Stephen's father was taken to Risley Remand Centre and within three weeks had been deported to Ghana.

Changed

At the time Victoria was not arrested, because of her child. However, the Home Office now appears to have changed its mind and has served her with a deportation order.

They have treated her as an "illegal immigrant" to prevent her using even the limited appeals procedures available under immigration laws.

A number of Ghanaians have recently been deported from Manchester without anyone being allowed to intervene on their behalf.

Victoria is now appealing for a Judicial Review, as she has never been given a proper chance to explain how she came to be in Britain. Tony Lloyd MP is supporting a representation to the Home Office on Victoria's behalf.

For further information contact: Victoria and Stephen Defence Campaign, Chorlton Workshop, Chorlton Central Church, Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton, Manchester M21.

Manchester Labour Movement Immigration Conference

Over 100 people attended the conference on immigration and nationality in Manchester on April 15th.

Steve Cohen of South Manchester Law Centre gave an overview of immigration history in Brtain and strongly criticised Labour's record on this issue in and out of office.

Labour's current spokesperson on immigration, Alastair Darling MP, agreed with these criticisms, but suggested that changes would be seen as a result of the current Policy Review.

Darling also described disturbing developments in the run up to 1992. It appears that non-EC citizens will all get the same treatment at all EC airports — if you are refused entry in Athens you will also be refused entry in London.

Information is already being exchanged in order to build up a computer network to deal with this EC-wide system of exclusion.

A speaker from the Nalgo Black Members Group explained the importance of black workers groups in pressing unions to take up these issues, noting that Nalgo's position had developed since it was forced to take up Mohammed Idrish's case in 1982.

Idrish himself, Francis Okanlami, Marion Gaima and Victoria Apeter — all previously or currently threatened with deportation — addressed the meeting, which decided to establish a liaison network for trade union work on immigration cases.

A booklet and video based on the conference are now being produced.

Finally, the conference agreed to mobilise for Francis Okanlami's appeal on May 15th, at Aldine house, Manchester.

The Rushdie Affair

Back Benn's Blasphemy Bill

On April 12th, Tony Benn presented his Religious Prosecutions (Abolition) Bill in the House of Commons.

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

It was 100 years to the day since MP Charles Bradlaugh, secularist and defender of free speech, had introduced an identical bill — to an equally unreceptive parliament.

The Bill "to abolish prosecutions for the expression of opinion on matters of religion" is simplicity itself.

It stipulates that "no criminal proceedings shall be instituted against any person for schism, heresy, blasphemous libel, blasphemy at common law, or atheism."

Benn's Bill was backed by Jeremy Corbyn, David Steel, Ian Gilmour, Jo Richardson, Cyril Smith, Richard Shepherd, Bernie Grant, Russell Johnston, John Gorst, Diane Abbott, and Eric Heffer.

Benn is now seeking expanded support for an Early Day Motion which favours the "speedy passage" of his anti-blasphemy Bill.

Model Resolution

Bring Rushdie to Brighton!

In the past, *Labour Briefing* has supported and publicised a wide variety of Conference resolutions. This year we are producing a small booklet containing model resolutions which left activists may wish to support in their CLPs.

The booklet includes resolutions from Labour CND, LCI, CLPD, Black Sections, CARI, Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine and others.

It will be updated as we receive further resolutions, so send your campaign's model resolutions as quickly as possible to *Labour Briefing*, 39 Talia House, Manchester Road, London E14 9HB.

Booklets may be ordered from the same address: please include a 19p stamp.

We are also, for the first time, initiating our own resolution, prompted by the "Rushdie Affair", with which so many on the left have been unable to cope.

Please let us know if you move this resolution in your branch or GC and what the response is.

Model Resolution

This Conference supports the right of Salman Rushdie to write and publish *The Satanic Verses* and deplores the "death sentence" pronounced upon Rushdie by Ayatollah Khomeini and the calls being made to ban this book.

Conference believes that free speech must include the right to criticise religious ideas. It also believes that the struggle for free speech goes hand in hand with the struggle against racism.

It deplores the activities of those in the government and the media who have sought to use the "Rushdie Affair" to whip up racism and to launch attacks on the Muslim community.

It believes that, in keeping with its commitments to democracy and equality, the Labour Party should advocate:

1. the abolition of all blasphemy laws;
2. the disestablishment of the Church of England and the complete separation of church and state;
3. the phasing out of all state aid to religious schools, of whatever denomination.

HARINGEY LABOUR BRIEFING

Defend Salman Rushdie!

Socialism, Free Speech, and Anti-Racism

A public discussion

Thursday May 11th, 8pm

Brabant Road Trade Union Centre, Station Road, Wood Green

with

Narendra Makanji
Chair Labour Party Black Sections

Martha Osamor
Women for Socialism

Hanif Kureishi
Writer, *My Beautiful Laundrette*

Gita Sahgul
Southall Black Sisters

Campaign Against Repression in Iran

Questions and contributions from the floor will be welcome!

Lesbian and Gay Liberation

LCLGR AGM

Hattersley leads the betrayal

The Labour Party's Policy Review has effectively dropped the Party's conference commitment to Lesbian and Gay equality.

The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights is therefore organising an emergency campaign for a debate at this year's Annual Conference to have the commitment reinstated.

A comprehensive lesbian and gay equality policy has been one of the few progressive policy gains in recent years, since the 1985 Annual Conference established a firm commitment to equality in law and an end to all forms of discrimination.

This was affirmed with a two thirds majority in 1986. Last year, after Section 28, there was an 84% majority for an even stronger policy.

This original commitment was contained in the first draft of the Policy Review. However, the Labour right has now sunk its claws in.

Even though the whole NEC backed the policies in 1986 and 88, Hattersley has now led a counterattack and has removed the commitment to an equal age of consent — he wants it at 18 — and to the reapeal of discriminatory laws.

This is a scandalous and totally unacceptable betrayal. Lesbian and gay activists from across the whole spectrum of the Party are appalled.

By Peter Purton
LCLGR

But to win a debate at Conference, LCLGR will need more than the often tokenistic support that lesbian and gay rights recieve from the rest of the left.

LCLGR's Annual General Meeting (April 22nd-23rd) has agreed to a major campaign in the coming period based on keeping lesbian and gay rights on the agenda of the labour movement.

The abandonment of Party policy is the week leading up to our AGM lends a new urgency to this struggle.

LCLGR originally had no plans to return to Conference floor this year. Now, and very late, we have no choice and we appeal to the rest of the left to give us the space.

Join LCLGR

Send £3 (unwaged), £6 (low waged), or £10 (high waged) with your name and address to Membership Secretary, LCLGR, PO Box 306, London N5

A year of Section 28

Sponsor the tour!

Brighton Area Action Against Section 28 is organising a tour of England, Wales, and Scotland during May to mark one year of having Section 28 on the statute books.

The Tour will consist of a minibus with speakers, videos, exhibitions, and press cuttings and will visit 19 towns and cities around the country.

The organisers hope to highlight the effects of Section 28 over the past year and to boost morale of campaigners working for lesbian and gay rights.

But the Tour is not cheap — the current estimate is over £1,500.

We are calling on lesbian and gay groups, trade unions, student unions, women's and youth groups, and other organisations to help sponsor the Tour. Minimum sponsorship is £10, although more money would be appreciated.

For further information please contact us c/o Brighton Unemployed Centre, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 2GY, tel. 0273-671213/676 471.

March Against Section 28 — One Year On
Brighton
May 27th
Hove Town Hall, 2pm
Organised by Brighton Area Action Against Section 28
For more information phone 0273 671213/676471
All comrades in the South East are urged to attend

Stop the Section National Tour Details of Events

(subject to confirmation)

APRIL
28th: Brighton
29th: Portsmouth

MAY
1st: Exeter
2nd: Bristol/Bath
3rd: Cardiff
5th: Aberystwyth
6th/7th: Wolverhampton
8th: Manchester
10th: Aberdeen
12th: Edinburgh
14th: York
15th: Hull
16th: Leicester
17th: Coventry/Leicester
18th: Cambridge
19th: Ipswich
20th/21st: Oxford
22nd/23rd: London
24th: House of Commons/Hounslow
25th: Canterbury
26th: Brighton

Green Party Conference

Wrestling with a Green economy

"The European Greens have 17 member parties from 15 countries," declared Sara Parkin of the Green Party Council.

"Greens now sit in 11 parliaments around the world and have been elected to some level of local government in every West European country except Greece."

Speaking at the Green Party's National Conference in London last month, Parkin also noted the recent election of two Green candidates in the Baltic Republics of the USSR.

The Belgian Green Senator, Ludo Dierickx, attacked the doctrine of economic growth which, he argued, reinforced nationalism and undermined collective solidarity.

In order to meet economic growth targets, Dierickx said that governments are inevitably driven to "export national unemployment, inflation, monetary instability, and disequilibrium in the balance of payments to other countries."

Dierickx also criticised those who call for a united Europe based on the existing nation states.

Instead, he proposed a "Europe on a human scale... Europe of towns, municipalities, and regions would be a Europe closer to its citizens than a Europe of states, nations, and ethnic groups with their past, pride, ambition, discrimination, and exclusivism."

By PETER TATCHELL

BBC sports presenter and Green Party Council member, David Icke, said that to call the Thatcher government green was like "calling Attilla the Hun a pacifist."

"The system has wreaked destruction with staggering speed," he said.

"It has taken the Earth 4,600 million years to evolve. Yet the industrial system has been with us for just 200. Much of the most fundamental destruction has happened in the last 40.

"We must promote a new Green economics which can see the fundamental difference between wants and needs.

"The true needs of all people must be met — and can be met — while the wants, the luxuries, must be limited by what the planet can take, not by what the markets can stand.

"As Gandhi said: 'The Earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed."

Arguing that the redistribution of wealth was "crucial to saving the Earth," Icke warned:

"You can't tell people they must consume less if their children are hungry; it's no good telling a family in some rotting Council flat that they are living beyond the means of the planet...

"We, the fortunate people, must consume less so they can consume more."

Distorting

During the Conference, the West German Green MEP, Jakob von Uexkull, accused the Labour leadership of "distorting and misrepresenting" Soviet opinions on British unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Von Uexkull said that top Soviet leaders had made it clear to the recent European Parliament delegation that they would welcome unilateral disarmament measures by West European countries, including Britain.

The left wing pressure group within the Green Party, the Association of Socialist Greens, held a lunchtime fringe meeting at the Green Party Conference.

Derek Wall called on fellow Greens to recognise the class bias of the ecological crisis, which was hitting the poorest classes and the poorest nations the hardest.

Emphasising the fundamental contradiction between environmental protection and production for profit, Wall urged the Green Party to proclaim a radical anti-capitalist economic strategy.

Picking up on this theme, Freda Chapman said Greens had to give greater priority to challenging the private ownership of industry and wealth.

As the meeting's guest speaker from the Labour Party, I called for a Left-Green Alliance around a radical agenda for social justice and ecological sustainability; and for a campaign of mass demonstrations and civil disobedience to stop the construction of the Sizewell B and Hinkley C nuclear reactors.

Labour Party

Labour Party democracy

Our mass members and theirs

The Labour Party bosses calling for a mass membership drive like to imply that the left is against a larger membership and against more participation by members.

It is high time we dispelled the myth that the left holds power by excluding members from decision-making.

It is also high time we built a mass *active* membership of the Labour Party, rather than the passive, uninvolved, postal-balloting type dear to the crabbed hearts of the Party leadership.

At the grass roots it is usually the left which runs street stalls and recruitment campaigns, organises workplace activities and public demonstrations.

Indeed, some of the left wing branches of so-called unrepresentative London constituencies have more members than the entire Govan Constituency of Glasgow which lost the by-election to the SNP.

The new Party membership campaign swears "it's never been easier to join" and follows this with a form containing 15 separate questions.

The drive is aimed at the credit card-wielding middle classes, the ones used to paying for everything by direct debit.

The doorstep contact appreciated by many, especially older, more isolated Party members, is to go out the window in the drive to centralise membership.

The old "New Members' Pack", which explained how Party Conference made the policy decisions , has vanished in the Policy Review sleight of hand.

By DAN CARTER

With the Party membership centralised, computerised, and de-activated, who will argue for radical policies of any kind?

Future *Labour Party News* supplements will carry order forms like this:

I would like (tick as appropriate):

- ❑ Labour Party tie
- ❑ Multilateral Disarmament
- ❑ Filofax Diary Pages
- ❑ Sales of Council Houses
- ❑ Reduced price copies of the Red Flag.

Party Leaders say they want to involve the membership in decision-making. Yet they go out of their way to make "activist" a dirty word. Giving members a postal ballot form every six months isn't including anyone.

The lifeblood of the Party is debate, discussion, the process of collectively reaching decisions and collectively implementing them.

Who do they think is going to go out in all weathers to get candidates elected, petition against NHS cuts, convince people in the streets and on the doorstep of the need to support Labour?

The research on which they base their appeal to the "millions of people just waiting to join who've never been asked" is in itself suspect.

It includes giving weight to respondents to questionnaires who identified *Labour voters* as "scruffy teenagers who sell *Socialist Worker* and shout."

Larry Whitty has stated: "the campaign is far more than a recruitment drive: it is a strategy for power."

But in that case, recruitment can't be based on organisational moves alone. It must be based on politics, on policies based on a socialist vision of the future.

"Join us to help the Council cut home helps!"; "Join us to maintain nuclear weapons when the rest of the world is getting rid of them!"; "Join us for all the nice things for all the nice people!" won't inspire many.

So how should we build the Party?

By being seen to be active in the community, by reviving "soap box" street meetings and stalls, by petitioning for pledges of non-payment of the Poll Tax, by sustained work in Tenants Associations and local anti-racist campaigns, and by linking the Party with local trade unions.

In the workplace, we should argue for individuals to join, but above all for the continued relevance of the trade unions' affiliations to the Labour Party.

Local union branches should be positively encouraged to affiliate to CLPs and this will be helped by the CLPs taking seriously such issues as transport workers' safety, the Tories' anti-union laws, and support for industrial disputes.

Once recruited, members should be encouraged to attend meetings and the Party has indeed produced useful guides for livening up branch meetings.

We can add that branches can also organise delegations to Ramsgate for the P&O strike May Day demonstration on April 29th, or organise benefits jointly with local anti-apartheid groups or work on the Housing Act on local estates and campaign against Labour Councils cutting services or raising rents.



Whitty gets members on the streets: at an anti-witch hunt lobby...

During industrial disputes, when the Labour Party takes solidarity action, the most politicised strikers still look to and join the Labour Party. We have seen this in the Miners' Strike, and the P&O Strike in Dover.

Often left wing Labour activists have led the support work undertaken by local Labour Parties and Support Groups when groups like the SWP are sitting on the sidelines.

The left is very much *for* a mass membership.

We're wary of *centralised* membership not because of paranoia but because we've seen the Knowsley Norths and the Bermondseys, we remember the threats to close constituencies and suspend GCs at the height of the Black Sections dispute.

Our membership, as the slogan says, is our strength.

We want an active membership that's heard all sides to the arguments — not just the Leadership's in the media — and is equipped to go out with confidence to argue Labour's case in the workplaces, in the streets, and on the doorstep.

Debate: Proportional Representation

Don't be static: be serious!

The contributions of Chris Knight and Ray Davison (*Briefing* nos. 78 and 80) to the rather one-sided "debate" on Proportional Representation display a static, not to say reformist, attitude to the question.

Ultimately, they argue that the question of democratic rights here (in this case, one person, one vote, and having that vote count) is subordinate to the "need" for a Labour government.

By Phil Ward Sheffield

This view is expressed explicitly in *Socialist Action* by Redmond O'Neill, complete with juicy out of context quotes from Lenin.

Where do we draw the line? Do we oppose self-determination for Scotland because, if the Scottish people choose independence, it would remove 48 Labour MPs from Westminster?

Should we have opposed votes for women because women have been disproportionately pro-Tory?

We support *all* reforms that increase the political consciousness, self-confidence, and self-organisation of the masses.

Under PR, each individual's vote will count, whereas now probably less than 25% of the votes cast in elections have any meaning.

This is important, because, in non-revolutionary conditions, voting is the only conscious political act the masses engage in.

Clearly such a change would necessitate a complete reorganisation of the Labour Party, whose history and structure is strongly shaped by the British electoral system.

In that context we would be in favour of measures that would increase participation in Party affairs and accountability to Party members and affiliated organisations.

But we should remember that the Party is not some kind of proto-Soviet which can be magically transformed at some point into a fully-fledged system of workers' councils!

Experience suggests the right will destroy the Labour party rather than concede democratic accountability and a socialist programme.

Chris Knight seems to be stuck on a schema which requires that there be a "radical" Labour government immediately prior to a socialist revolution.

There is no historical precedent for such a schema — most social democratic governments in pre-revolutionary crises have been ruthlessly counter-revolutionary, ready to use all the might of the state against the working class.

Lastly, the question of coalitions: Labour and National Labour have been "in office" for about 35 years, and ruled alone for only 15, so first past the post has hardly avoided coalitions.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the electoral system "imposed" on Labour the "requirement" to depend on the Liberals to stand down and allow direct fights with the Tories in the early part of this century.

Labour was thus born a collaborationist and coalitionist party. It is part of its politics.

If "full-blooded" socialism can come through reforms by a Labour government, then a "little bit of socialism" will be the result of a "little bit of power in a coalition government.

As the "dented shield" policy of local Labour Councils shows, Labour does not need a new electoral system to pursue coalitionism.

Besides, how can anyone *predict* that the outcome of a *fight* for PR will be coalitions? This depends on the forces engaging in that fight and the methods used.

Were the left in the Labour Party and outside it to show a serious attitude to the democratic rights of the masses and take up the fight for PR using class struggle methods, the bourgeois parties might end up a permanent minority.

PR and new forces

Most of the contributions in *Briefing* have been anti-PR and this is an attempt to redress the imbalance.

The arguments against have ranged from an alleged lack of "accountability" (Davison), to a belief that it is part of a "popular front" (Bash, Griffiths).

By Vincent Johnson Erdington CLP

However, for a socialist to have any illusions in meaningful "democracy" under capitalism is either naive or suspect.

Under bourgeois democracy, working class gains remain contained by the capitalist system and are only attained through struggle. But it is important to distinguish between *tactics* and *strategy*.

It is also important to shift the debate away from the narrowly Parliamentarian, both for and against.

For those bound to reformism, be it of the left or right wing type, PR is of course a disaster, it it reduces the chance of electing a majority Labour government.

They will also claim that it leads to rightwards policy shifts. However, for a Marxist, while the election of a Labour government is important, it is by no means central to achieving socialism.

But even within the narrow perspective of electing a future Labour government, no mean feat in itself, things are not so simple. The Boundary Commission, after reorganisation, may cost Labour up to 50 seats.

Given the vagaries of the present electoral system, and the current distribution of Labour votes, it is possible, as in 1951, to have more votes than the Tories, and still lose the election.

It is of course possible to elect a government with less than 40% of the vote. In 1974 Labour were elected with 39.2%, and could have been elected last time with just 37%.

It takes a momentous leap in the imagination to see Labour going much above 43% in the foreseeable future.

Argument

The argument that PR would lead to a more right wing policy shift by the Party holds little weight when we look at what is happening now.

Those of us who oppose election pacts seem to have lost the memory of the Lib-Lab Pact under Callaghan.

We might now be in a more powerful position to prevent such rightwing pacts, as PR would also allow for other radical forces to be elected, such as the Greens.

Without PR, a future minority Labour government might well do a deal with the SDP. Owen favours the Single Transferable Vote, which would be worse than either of the two other systems.

If Labour went to the polls committed to PR, such a deal would be undermined. The fact that Kinnock is against it matters not a jot; he may even not be Leader if Labour lose again.

Representation

PR would be more representative, and would allow hundreds of thousands of workers currently denied a Labour MP to have one.

Some of the arguments used against PR are similar to those used against votes for women, and other forms of electoral reform: unconsciously, perhaps, but it hardly helps discussion.

I have no illusions in radical change coming about through PR. However, reforms within capitalism are still important. If nothing else, it could make more difficult the slide to what has been called elsewhere "semi-Bonapartism".

We will still engage in the same class struggle; it will still take both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms. PR however, allows for new forces to be added, if only on a narrow base.

It may also enable a real socialist party to elect MPs.

Campaign for Socialism

A painful experience

The third national co-ordinating meeting of the Campaign for Socialism was a painful experience.

The Campaign emerged from the loose Labour left networks established during last year's Benn-Heffer leadership challenge.

By Mike Marqusee

Many of us had hoped it would become the national, non-sectarian focus the Labour left has long needed: a genuine link between the Campaign Group in the Commons and the left in the CLPs and trade unions.

Alas, this third meeting (held in Birmingham) was dominated by procedural wrangles and interminable votes on "structure". Responsibility for this lies with delegates associated with Labour Left Liaison (LLL).

Many of the independent left activists who were originally drawn to the Campaign for Socialism had seen this coming. They voted with their feet, and attendance from regional delegates was well down on previous meetings.

One of the most farcical and lengthy wrangles was an extremely confused discussion on "consensus". This notoriously elusive concept was an excuse for all kinds of strange arguments.

While there was a consensus that consensus was *not* a simple majority and was *not* absolute unanimity, there was no consensus about exactly what a consensus was.

LLL's manoeuvring threatened to push politics off the agenda altogether (rendering the "consensus" discussion totally pointless). The meeting just managed to squeeze in a brief discussion of the NEC slate.

The consultation exercise launched at the last Campaign for Socialism meeting was clearly a flop, largely because nobody, besides *Briefing*, made any effort to publicise it.

The Campaign Group's choices, in effect offered on a "take it or leave it" basis, were endorsed by the meeting: Abbott, Benn, Livingstone, Skinner, Richardson, Wise, Mahon in the Constituency Section, and Heathfield, Osamor, Pettifor in the Women's Section.

The Campaign Group is also backing Beckett and Short in the Women's Section, but no one at the Birmingham meeting was happy with this.

Unfortunately, there was no time to discuss publicising this slate or organising to get it elected, which should have been one of the main tasks of the Campaign for Socialism.

When politics occasionally made it onto the agenda, LLL's guiding principle seemed to be opposition to anything put forward by *Briefing*.

They voted down a *Briefing* amendment to commit the Campaign for Socialism to a general struggle for the democratisation of the labour movement and the accountability of labour movement officials at all levels.

This was in addition to already agreed commitments to Black Sections, increased representation for women, opposition to OMOV, etc.

How could anyone be against such an anodyne amendment? The reason advanced was fear of offending trade union officials, who (it was alleged) would use the amendment to claim that the Campaign was trying to interfere in their internal affairs.

Briefing had hoped the Campaign for Socialism would develop greater grass roots and women's participation. The LLL block (which, despite its claims, only occasionally involved the Black Sections representative) formed an almost insurmountable barrier to this.

Despite resistance from the Women's Action Committee (which in effect sends three delegates to the meetings), *Women for Socialism* were allowed to affiliate — but only given *one* delegate.

The discrepancy came because WAC (last AGM, 30 women present) argued that *WfS* (last conference, 450 women) was mostly made up of women outside the Labour Party.

Similarly, when a request from the North Oxfordshire Campaign Group, asking to be involved, was reported, "next business" was moved. There was no desire to involve comrades in North Oxfordshire, still less to work with them to set up a functioning Southern Region of the Campaign.

It is hard to see where this initiative is going. The locally based independents are drifting away, the Campaign Group MPs appear to have lost whatever slim interest they once had.

CLPD has played a vital role in past struggles and continues to perform a service to the left. But it is *only one* component of the left and simply cannot continue to overstate its own importance and use its weight to block proposals from other quarters.

Similarly, WAC cannot claim a monopoly franchise on "women's questions" and Labour CND (or rather the *Socialist Action* supporter who is there to represent LCND at these meetings) cannot claim a monopoly on unilateralism.

These are concerns of the whole movement (as is Party democracy) and we will only succeed in these areas by mobilising people at the base of the Party and the unions.

This should have been the remit for the Campaign for Socialism. If the Campaign continues to fail to perform this function, something else will have to be built to take its place.



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Benn addresses the Socialist Conference: but the forces assembled for the leadership challenge are being driven away.

In search of secularism

"Godless Labour"?

Last year *Labour Briefing* carried a number of articles on the growing impact of religion on British politics and on the left in particular.

At the time this may have seemed a topic of minor interest. In the aftermath of the Rushdie affair, its significance is clear.

By Andrew Coates
Ipswich CLP

Some Labour MPs, notably Keith Vaz and Max Madden, have come out in favour of a wider recognition of religious allegiance.

Vaz argues that as a "godless" party Labour has failed to take account of the needs of religious minorities. Madden says, "Labour must repay the loyalty which the Muslim population has shown.

By this he means first, that the law must be altered to protect all religious beliefs from "blasphemy", and second, that support must be given to religiously organised education.

For Madden, Vaz, and others, this is the only way in which Labour can respond sensitively to the passions aroused by *The Satanic Verses*.

In contrast, Tony Benn, himself a Christian, believes that religious belief should be granted no special state privileges.

The Committee Against Blasphemy Law, associated with longstanding "rationalist" campaigners, has argued that extending the existing blasphemy laws "would still cause injustice by giving protection only to religion and not equally strongly held non-religious beliefs."

Others (including *Labour Briefing*) have said that rather than increase state finance for religious education, we should aim to end *all* public subsidy for specific faiths.

Recent moves to compel school assemblies to adopt an explicitly "Christian" stance have strengthened this view.

Why should socialists be secularists?

To begin with, any institutions that give special rights to religious doctrines (either through restriction of free speech or through state hand-outs) cannot also advance the basic principle of the labour movement, that of equality.

Extending the blasphemy laws to "protect" deeply felt beliefs will exacerbate rather than reduce inequalities and may actually promote conflict between religions.

Much of the debate following the Rushdie flare-up has revealed just how intolerant transcendental faiths are towards one another.

The New Testament "blasphemes" traditional Judaic law, and the Koran "blasphemes" Jesus by its assertions that he did not die on the Cross.

All of the monotheistic faiths regard "pagans" and, even worse, atheists, as blasphemers.

A socialist anti-racism seeks to create a common, public sphere in which all are addressed as equals, not as bearers of protected creeds.

It is noteworthy that the French anti-racist group *SOS-Racisme* held a public demonstration *in support of Rushdie* a few days after Khomeini's threat against him. Why have our own anti-racist groups not shown the same vigour?

Perhaps it is because we do not have a clear model of what an anti-racist secularism could mean. We support the development of an education system that is open to different cultures and aware of British racism.

Yet we have shied away from recognising that anti-racism can be undermined by those who wish to impose their own religious authority on oppressed communities.

We will only be able to move forward if we can develop the kind of synthesis aimed at by *SOS-Racisme*, a mutual and self-critical examination in which all social groups are engaged.

Tory MPs and the hard right are only too happy to obstruct any such examination, hence the support from these quarters for increased religious schooling and censorship.

Madden and Vaz have done a grave diservice to the labour movement in inching towards the same position.

Tribune was justified in saying of Vaz:

if "...he feels so strongly that religious views should have a privilege and power in our society above and beyond other convictions, then he might consider fighting the next election as a religious independent."

However, two qualifications have to be made about this call.

First, unless we have worked out a programme that removes *existing* privileges for Anglicans we cannot be consistent in making such a demand *exclusively* in regard to one faith.

Secondly, unless the left is able to abandon its previous ambiguities, and embrace a new secularism enriched by the anti-racist combats of the last 30 years, we affirm nothing but an abstract liberalism which will be unable to cope with the challenges ahead.

Briefing Dayschool

What future for Local Government?

The 1990 local elections:
Strategies for the left

April 29th 10am-5pm

Polytechnic of Central London, Marylebone Road
All *Briefing* supporters invited
Creche - bookable in advance only, phone 01 801 6041 for places and more details

Planning and workers' control

No future under capitalism...

Why we need a *planned* economy

We are told that capitalism, plus or minus a bit of tinkering, is the best system for satisfying people's material needs.

But 200 years of industrial capitalism have shown this is untrue.

In many different ways capitalism has proved itself a failure, and a brutal and violent failure at that.

But there is an alternative. *A democratically planned economy can solve or at least begin to remedy some of the greatest failures of capitalism.*

The best argument for a planned economy is that *it begins to deal with the real, pressing problems we have now — problems which capitalism creates and can never solve.*

What are the main failures of a capitalist economy from the workers' point of view? And how can planning *by workers* deal with them?

•Capitalism cannot give full employment.

In its boom periods, like the 1950s and 1960s, capitalism produced more or less full employment in the rich countries, while turning Third World economies upside down and producing in them massive unemployment, poverty and starvation.

The history of capitalism since the first industrial revolution shows that these long boom periods are followed by long periods of economic stagnation.

Sure enough, in the 1970s and 1980s there has been high unemployment in the rich capitalist countries. In the Third World there has been economic barbarism.

There are many causes of these long booms and slumps. But the driving force, the "compass" of this switchback, is the *profit* that firms expect to make, relative to their investment.

In boom periods the average rate of profit is relatively high. Firms invest, boosting demand, increasing productivity, and keeping profits up.

In periods of stagnation, the average rate of profit is relatively low. Firms are reluctant to invest.

Productivity and demand stagnate, deepressing profits. The result is a criminal waste of human time, of machines, and of natural resources.

A planned economy would not have to take the average rate of profit as the guide to total investment. The central planning body would decide directly how much investment was needed to maintain full employment.

To do this, it would need to own the majority of the nation's investment funds, so that it could keep up the rate of investment regardless of the average rate of profit.

This would also have the effect of increasing productivity as fast as possible, freeing human time and natural resources.

Capitalism can *never* do this, because total investment is determined by a myriad of private firms, which invest *inevitably* according to the expected rate of profit.

•Capitalism systematically invests too little in meeting certain needs.

No capitalist economy has ever invested as much as it materially could in the collective care of children, older people, and the sick. Women are forced to do most of this work unpaid.

By Jamie Gough (Holborn and St Pancras)

Capitalism systematically underinvests in long term projects like physical infrastructure because of its financial risks. It systematically underinvests in training since firms always think they can poach.

Where there is a low paid workforce, capital doesn't bother to invest in machinery. This is obvious not only in the Third World, but also in the booming sweatshops of the "rich" countries.

In many industries, capitalism underinvests in *real* diversity of products. Look at privately run bus systems, look at the media.

A planned economy could change these priorities.

The rate of profit in each industry would be *taken into account*; after all, a surplus has to be produced in order to be invested. But allocation of investment funds could also reflect social priorities.

In industries which sell their product, the *long term* profit on these investments will be quite high, especially if you don't have a crisis-ridden, switchback economy. This profit will be available for investment to meet.

•Capitalism systematically invests too much in wasteful activities.

Completely useless economic activities, like advertising, much packaging, most of the City, and production of luxuries eat up valuable investment funds.

There is also enormous duplication of investment in industries like retailing, distribution, and retail banking.

Privatised consumption is often wasteful of resources — compare cars to buses and trains. Huge amounts of perfectly usable machinery and buildings are underused or scrapped every year, even in boom periods and boom industries.

Without capitalism, the useless areas of investment would disappear. With democratic control, investment in particular industries like retailing could be matched to need and given a longer productive life.

•Capitalism cannot give continuity and security of employment.

Even in boom times, investment is constantly shifting between workplaces, towns, regions and countries in search of a higher rate of profit.

In the process, it destroys the networks of friendship and support within workplaces and neighbourhoods, and it destroys workers' collective organisation.

It forces workers to migrate nationally or internationally to get work. The current changes in world financial markets are making this problem worse, as capital becomes more and more mobile.

Planning can address these problems through the central allocation of investment *to* different enterprises and areas, and to some extent through planning bodies in these enterprises and areas being able to stop profits from draining *out of* them.

The policy should be to enable people to continue working in the same place, if they want.

•Capitalism systematically creates divisions between workers.

In a capitalist economy, your job is dependent on how well your firm does, and how well your national economy competes with others. Competition between firms therefore inevitably produces competition between workers.

Underinvestment in the Third World and in the employment of black people everywhere produces racist competition and division between workers. Underinvestment in the care of dependent people creates sexist divisions.

In a planned economy, there could and should be a policy of directing investment to equalise the productivity of labour as fast of possible.

In line with this, there could and should be a policy of equalising wages — through giving money or time compensation for nasty work. Since you would still have a wage economy, shortages might mean temporarily paying higher wages for some skills.

•Capitalism systematically creates dangerous, unhealthy and boring work.

The aim of private firms is to extract the maximum amount of work from workers at minimum cost.

The health and safety of workers, the interest and variety of work, and the possibilities for co-operation between workers are not in themselves aims of management, and are consequently sacrificed to the need to extract more work.

It is true that firms need some degree of cooperation from workers to get work done. But this does not necessarily require good conditions. It can often be secured by the threat of the sack or the threat of the firm declining.

In an economy controlled by workers, workers in each industry would participate in the design of machinery and set minimum standards for its use. Workers in each workplace would have greater leverage over working conditions.

There should be a policy of reducing the division between "thinking" and "doing" jobs.

There should also be a policy of equalising the intensity and nastiness of jobs across the economy. This means that workers in particular workplaces cannot have the final say on their own intensity of work.

•Capitalism systematically wastes natural resources and endangers the living world.

Individual firms have no *interest* in considering these issues.

Capitalist firms taken together only have an interest when waste and pollution become *so bad* that they threaten the average rate of profit.

That can be pretty bad. Even then, the fundamental independence of firms means that the state cannot necessarily impose a solution on them.

In a planned economy, the environment could and should be a major consideration in investment decisions, from the international to the workplace level. This should affect both production processes and products.

Again, control of investment decisions is the key. The quality of products, including their environmental quality, is better controlled by producers than by consumer demand, since it is much easier for producers than consumers to be well-informed.

Though this would slow down the growth of the volume of products produced, the effects of this solution would be shared fairly between all workers. And all workers, albeit unequally, would gain from an environmental policy.

All this is to talk only of solving the *economic* failures of capitalism.

The capitalist class seeks to solve economic problems through violence against workers, against the workers' states, and against other capitalists. This violence is, of course, a central reason for getting rid of capitalism.

But the point here is that, even in production and the organisation of work, capitalism systematically fails workers.

Kinnock and the Communist Party, with all their talk of "new conditions" and "post-Fordism", have not been able to show how *a single one* of these failures of capitalism has been eliminated.

As we have seen, planning would need to operate at the national, local and workplace level, and in particular industries.

There would certainly be big conflicts of interest between these different planning bodies. Workers thinking nationally would often see things differently from workers thinking about their own workplace.

But these are contradictions *for* workers, not conflicts between workers and capital. The more open the debate, and the more democratic the planning, the system, the better these contradictions can be dealt with.

A planned economy, *even* within a single country, is much more efficient than capitalism — though severely and sometimes decisively hampered by sabotage and attacks from capitalist states elsewhere.

But the more *international* planning is, the more it can achieve. A national workers' economy should therefore harness its resources as much as possible towards spreading the revolution elsewhere.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Transport: once an industry largely under public control, now being sold off by Thatcher and offering increased hazards to consumers and to workers.

Motto:
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o we get there?



PHOTO: Martine Stead/Jim Thain

Unite workers across workplaces!

By Jamie Gough
Holborn and St
Pancras CLP

Especially important are demands which help to *unite the working class*, across the myriad divisions which capitalist competition creates. For instance:

•Demands which benefit everyone equally

Common wage and benefit rises above the rate of inflation, demanded at a common date, for all. Continuity of employment for all workers. Safe, healthy working conditions for all.

•Demands which directly benefit the most oppressed sections of the class

Positive action for the unemployed — reduce the working week until everyone is employed. Positive action for oppressed groups. Hence the need for workers' control of hiring.

•Unite workers across workplaces

Strong workers' organisation in one workplace can achieve results. But such workplaces are always vulnerable to competition, as numerous workers' co-ops have shown.

The organisation — and the control — must be extended to all workplaces in the same industry, and beyond.

It would therefore be necessary to *take control of investment funds and investment decisions* out of the hands of all medium and large companies and financial institutions.

These demands are increasingly national in scope. Workers should demand that the government, especially a Labour government, backs them up and implements them.

But there should be no faith in the government bureaucracy. Workers' organisation to run the economy has to be built *outside* the existing state.

And this organisation would then be an *alternative* to the existing state, the core of a workers' state.
and beyond, or it won't survive, even in one workplace.

•Unite workers across nations.

In multinational firms, workers should organise to present common demands. Controls on international trade should be used only to protect industries which are controlled by workers, not to defend one group of workers at the expense of another.

Success with these measures would lead to capital refusing to invest, and transfering its money elsewhere. Economic collapse would follow.

Lessons of Eastern Europe

Why nationalisation is indispensable

It is universally acknowledged on the right, centre, and a good part of the left that East European experience has proved that nationalisation and planning cannot work.

Put the other way round, we are told that only competitive markets can work, and even they don't work unless the motivation and opportunities provided by private ownership are included in the package.

Furthermore, we are told that only in competitive economies (and, in the right's version, private ownership) can you gain and consolidate democracy.

This political point is supposedly confirmed by both West European and East European experience. And anyway, doesn't Mr Gorbachev himself confirm all or most of this message?

To rub these points home the left is accused of:

- rejecting the concept of profit as an operational element in a socialist economy;
- of repudiating the concept of efficiency as bourgeois;
- of pouring scorn on efforts to raise productivity in a socialist economy;
- of rejecting any notion of opportunity costs;
- or of the need to make choices in the face of scarcity;
- in short, of rejecting economics altogether.

As for nationalisation, it is seen as synonymous with bureaucratic state domination taking precedence over the interests of citizens.

There is only one thing lacking from this litany: any serious assessment of its supposed empirical starting point, post-war East European experience.

We know that the Soviet economy is in a mess. We know that it has had centralised planning and nationalisation.

Some people find this quite enough East European pudding for proof. They might at least have the courtesy to eat some Yugoslav or Hungarian pudding as well to taste the less savoury flavours of East European radical marketisation.

It is often glibly assumed that when an economy reaches a certain level of development, central planning, which is OK for extensive growth, must give way to a generalised market principle for intensive growth.

What we don't get is serious discussion of the most advanced and most successful East European economy: the German Democratic Republic.

The GDR has enjoyed a much better growth rate over the last three decades than the UK. By the early 1980s it had, according to *The Economist*, surpassed the UK in average living standards.

It has a welfare system reckoned by a majority of West Germans (according to opinion polls) to be better than what's on offer in the Federal Republic (and accepted by academics in the field as superior in many respects to Swedish welfare provision).

By OLIVER MACDONALD

And leading sectors of its economy, such as the machine tool industry, are outstanding by world standards

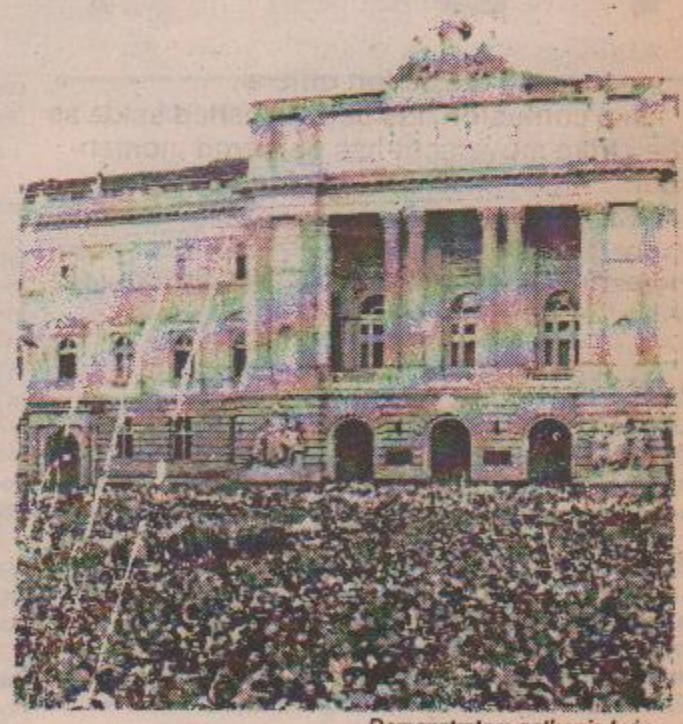
In short, innovation and productivity improvements have been impressive, at least by British standards. And all this has been achieved without a competitive market. How?

Some irritable answers are offered. It's because of the culture — they're Prussians after all. Or, it's because the GDR is the 13th member of the EEC (without paying a pfennig in VAT).

Or it's the longstanding secure and very generous "swing credit" deal from Bonn and all sorts of similar perks from the FRG.

If such answers are correct, the marketisers must face the consequence: that the internal institutional arrangements of an economy are not necessarily decisive or even important in determining its growth rates, innovative capacities, etc.

What counts is the general civic culture and the relationship with the West. But if the latter is so crucial, why is it that the Yugoslav economy, which has not faced Western economic warfare, has got into such an appalling mess?



Demonstrators gather in Lviv



The reason may not be marketisation plus the economy's opening up to Western capital; it may have more to do with disastrous errors of government policy and management.

But let us at least hold our tongue about "East European experience" proving the inevitable superiority of the market as the dominant regulative principle.

As for the Soviet economy, we should not forget that in living standards it is right down at the bottom of the East European league table.

The level of civic and political culture under Brezhnevism was rock bottom — and utterly corrupt apparatus and a thoroughly demoralised intelligentsia.

Any fool could predict that *no planning system* could hope to function in such circumstances.

As for the argument about private ownership being economically necessary, it is a little hard to swallow in the year of water privatisation.

Just how cost effective is the rentier class? What value for money do we get from it? What benefits would the junk-bond industry offer the people of Sverdlovsk?

The UN tells us that the West's bankers are responsible for the deaths of roughly half a million kids a year in the Third World.

We might also ask what their failure to give us some sustained growth of the World capitalist economy implies about the system they advocate.

Let's turn to the *political* aspect of nationalisation and planning.

Both for the right and the left, of course, this means *wholesale* nationalisation, which is another way of saying the expropriation of the capitalist class.

All decisions about what should be done with the productive resources of the country become *public* decisions that must be taken by the "political authority.

The right calls this "state control", thereby invoking a vision of a repressive body governing all aspects of economic life.

This does confuse some people on the left, who rightly see the State as a repressive body and tend to think of nationalisation as meaning that this repressive body gets its hands on the whole economy.

The right's solution then seems reasonable. "Free" the economy from state control, and you weaken the state and strengthen the people (or so-called civil society). This brings you closer to "democracy".

But all this is a verbal trick. When the economy is in *public ownership* the political authority is *responsible to citizens* for what happens to the citizens' economic resources.

It is answerable to them for what happens on jobs, prices, income distribution, economic priorities.

And this answerability has operated in Eastern Europe, in conditions where there have been no formal mechanisms of popular control, with far, far greater effect than anywhere in the capitalist West.

When you take industries out of nationalisation you do not "free" the citizens from control from above; you *transfer* control over economic resources from public political bodies into the hands of a private, unaccountable dictatorship of employers.

The effect of this is also to *free the government from a vast number of its obligations to the citizen.*

In other words, you strengthen the government's ability to do as it pleases because you narrow the sphere of public responsibility. And without this public sphere there can be no pretence of democracy.

This, at least, should be one lesson of Thatcherism. The rhetoric of privatisation, that it frees us from state control, is the big lie: privatisation means freeing the state from democratic control and simultaneously strengthening the unaccountable power of private capital over our daily existence.

The Women's Page

Now you see it — now you don't

How the Briefing Women's page is produced

Since January, a Briefing Women's page has appeared in every issue.
The response from women has been generally positive. Well, no-one has suggested dropping it yet! But the women who have been involved so far realise that we have some way to go before the page is one that informs and organises, reflects the concerns and debates of socialist feminists, and supports women in campaigning activity.
To achieve this, more women need to be involved in producing the page. In the article below Jane Connor describes how the page is put together and illustrates the different ways women can get involved in the process.

Deciding on themes

At national Briefing Women's meetings, often prior to Briefing National Steering Committees, those women present (never enough) asses the last few issues.

Have any letters been sent, phone calls received, complaints made, ideas for articles put forward?

The meeting then decides on the issues and themes to be covered in the next few women's pages and goes through a diary of events so that the page can be used to build, intervene, or comment on particular campaigns and conferences.

For example, the women's page on education was timed to co-incide with NUT conference.

A group of three or four women are then asked to take responsibility for a fixed number of issues as a sort of "editorial collective" for want of a less grand title.

Turning ideas into articles

The EC then meets to put ideas into practice and find authors to write articles.

Who is asked to write an article? This usually depends on which women EC members might know who are interested in a particular issue, and/or are confident enough to write about it.

It's especially important that more women are involved in this part of the process so that we can broaden the range of articles and contributions.

It takes about 1,200 words to fill a page of *Briefing*, leaving room for headlines and graphics. The EC has to decide how long each article should be within this framework.

Ideally, commissioned articles should arrive prior to the given deadline, at the place they were asked to be sent to, typed double-spaced, and the right length. If you don't have access to a typewriter, write neatly: double-spaced.

The deadline for the women's page is generally earlier than the rest of the paper to enable the EC to read and possibly edit articles and write an introduction if necessary.

The EC is responsible for making sure articles arrive on time — if you have promised to write an article and have problems, it's better to contact the person who asked you to write it than to wait until she calls you!

When articles come into the office they are then sub-edited. This is when spelling, grammar, length and sometimes style are changed *without* altering the political content.

Articles for the women's page are not sub-edited by men, but it's a skill that would be useful for more women to have. Everyone's articles are subbed, whether you're an MP, an "intellectual", or an activist and so it doesn't mean that your article was bad.

Words become print

If by this point an promised article still hasn't materialised the EC and the office panics, then follow a number of options ranging from taking the article over the phone, using a big graphic, putting in an advert or using an article from stock (which we don't have)!

When the articles are sub-edited they are then typed into the computer. If you have access to an Amstrad WP you can type the article yourself and send the disc to *Briefing*.

Articles are then checked for spelling before being put through the desk top publishing system (DTP) which allows the operation to create big headline, use different type styles and sizes.

The page is then laid up. This involves fitting the text on the page, choosing illustrations and deciding which articles should go where on the page.

Once the page is completed it is sent to the printers, andif everything has gone to plan, and if enough people have been able to help out, the paper comes out two Wednesdays each month.

All that's left to do is to sell it — and send the money to *Briefing*.

If you have ideas for articles, if you are interested in collectively editing the page, or sub-editing, or learning lay up skills contact Jenny or Jane at the *Briefing* office. It's your page — it needs you.

National Labour Women's Conference



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Hands up, who's for Bridlington? Or: delegates voting at 1987 National Labour Women's Conference

Come to Bridlington!

Following in the great tradition of the Labour Party bureaucracy, this year's National Labour Women's Conference is in Bridlington (Sat 24th-Mon 26th June), ensuring a very long journey for women, apart from Hull Women's Section.

Bridlington is the sea-side resort where the LPYS were historically herded, prior to the abolition of its conference — does the same fate face National Women's Conference?

Perhaps it's Bridlington, or perhaps it's the fear that your resolution will be ruled out of order under Kinnock's new model Labour Party rules, that means there are only 103 resolutions printed in the booklet this year.

That's 20 fewer than 1988's all-time low.

This represents less than one sixth of constituencies and Women's Sections entitled to send delegates and a resolution.

By JANE CONNOR

Even with the rule changes which give the trade unions a greater weight at Conference, only 15 unions have sent motions.

Of the motions tabled, very few are particularly contentious, apart from the Poll Tax and an excellent resolution from Hackney North and Stoke Newington Women's Section calling for the EETPU to be disbarred from all levels of the Party.

There are a number of good, campaigning resolutions around the Tory offensive on health, housing, and the Poll Tax, and a number of thoughtful motions on the issue of child abuse.

Of course, the small number of resolutions should mean more time for debate and discussion. On the other hand, it might mean women being subjected to hours of tedious speeches by men about how to win women's votes.

Socialist

That said, *Briefing Women* is encouraging socialist women to get delegated (deadline May 5th) and Women's Sections and Councils to send in amendments (deadline May 5th).

Amendments on particularly on Poll Tax, Ireland (supporting all activity around the Year of Action), Defence, and Childcare (calling for full nursery provision, workplace nursery campaigns, and full rights for part-time workers) are particularly useful.

Briefing Women doesn't have the resources to organise accommodation, but we do want to know about *Briefing* supporters who are attending as delegates and observers.

Organising

Briefing Women will be organising leaflets, delegates' briefing meetings, and supporting *Women for Socialism* initiatives, as well as having a good time.

This year's conference may be small, but *Briefing Women* will be there to make sure that socialism, feminism, and democracy are on the agenda. If you will be attending conference please contact Jane or Jenny at the *Briefing* office (01-809 3927).

"Keep your laws off our bodies"

Women march in Washington

Half a million people marched in Washington DC on April 9th against recent attacks on abortion rights and for a woman's right to choose.

The march was called in response to an attempt by anti-abortion forces (backed by friends in high places in the Bush administration) to get the US Supreme Court to reverse its historic Roe vs. Wade decision.

This decision established the legality of abortion under the Constitution, and is to be challenged in the forthcoming Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services case.

Placards reading "Keep Your Laws Off My Body" were common on April 9th. The demonstration was one of the broadest and best attended in recent history.

It was called by the National Organisation of Women (NOW), the main US feminist organisation, and co-sponsored by the Americal Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL.

It was supported by a number of unions, including the auto workers, hotel workers, atomic workers, and government workers, not to mention the Eastern Airlines strikers.

Also present were delegations of Palestinian women, church and synagogue groups, and a large contingent of Catholics for Choice.

Many of those present had clearly never been on a demonstration before.

This did not make them any less angry or determined, particularly in light of the fact that right wing "Right to Lifers" had set fire to a Miami abortion clinic only hours before the march.

From Janet in Washington

The marchers were addressed by a variety of celebrities and well known mainstream feminist spokesperson such as Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug, and Eleanor Smeals.

Jesse Jackson was the only national male political figure to speak, though his strong support for abortion rights was somewhat muddled by his notion that the advance of women was represented by the likes of Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Golda Meir.

The march won front page coverage across the States, though George Bush, ensconced in the White House, could only mutter: "No comment."

One thing the marchers made abundantly clear: no matter what the Supreme Court decides, we'll be back on the streets again and again, insisting on our rights.

TELEVISION REVIEW

Out on Tuesday...

A victory for visibility

Channel 4's lesbian and gay community programme *Out on Tuesday* was a landmark in television history.

As the world's first nationally televised series by and for lesbians and gay men, it represents a major breakthrough in media access and visibility.

That is a tremendous achievement, especially in the homophobic political climate following the passage of Section 28.

In such a period, it's important that we acknowledge and celebrate our victories. *Out on Tuesday* is one of those victories.

Without question, the series would never have been agreed by Channel 4 had it not been for the lobbying initiatives of lesbian and gay pressure groups and the letter writing campaigns organised through *Capital Gay*.

In 1984, when the first serious campaign for a lesbian and gay community programme began, Channel 4 suggested that there wasn't enough material of public interest to sustain a regular series.

Nigel Sheldrick of Tyne Tees TV and I responded by submitting separate proposals which outlined the breadth and diversity of lesbian and gay issues.

By PETER TATCHELL

This initiative, together with he first mass write-in campaign, produced a change of tack within Channel 4.

Liz Forgan, then Assistant Controller of Programmes, conceded that there was sufficient material for such a series, but said, "we haven't got the money for it."

In May 1985, on the initiative of Jeremy Corbyn MP, ten Labour MPs signed a letter to Channel 4 calling for a weekly lesbian and gay programme which:

"as well as meeting the needs of the lesbian and gay community... could also potentially have a far broader appeal and educative function in relation to the heterosexual population."

In reply, Channel 4's then Chief Executive, Jeremy Isaacs, was notably positive. During the second letter writing campaign, Isaacs promised to "take a long term look" at the question of lesbian and gay programming.

Soon afterwards, he confirmed that Channel Four had given the go ahead for the documentary series *Six of Hearts* which profiled gay people in the arts such as Kris Kirk, author of *Men in Frocks*.

This series, which focused on the exotic and camp side of gay life, was not what we'd been seeking. However, it did represent a significant concession by Channel 4 to the pressure of lesbian and gay opinion.

In a subsequent letter, in July 1985, Isaacs referred to the "debate" within Channel 4:

"You say that homosexuals are a community that is neglected by television.

"Some here agree with that view, but believe that we ought not to make separate provision, but rather present a broader representation of homosexuals in the whole of our programmes.

"Others, again, agree with your view but argue that other communities have a stronger claim on our limited space. Others are simply against making any separate programme for homosexuals."



Out On Tuesday team. Left to right: series producers Susan Ardill and Jane Beaven, and series editor Mandy Merck

PHOTO: Channel 4

The sustained lobbying undoubtedly influenced Channel 4's agreement to the *Gays in Film* project, which resulted in the *In the Pink* series of lesbian and gay films broadcast in late 1986 (the world's first televised season of lesbian and gay movies).

Channel 4 was also influenced by two other initiatives.

First, was Margret Michie's work with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom which resulted in the National Union of Journalists' adoption of non-judgemental guidelines on the reporting of homosexuality.

The second was the publication in February 1986 of the *Gays and Broadcasting* report *Are We Being Served?*.

This concluded that lesbians and gay men were massively under-represented in television and often referred to by the media in perjorative ways and in negative contexts such as AIDS.

In June 1986, the pressure on Channel 4 intensified with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom's conference *Screened Out*.

Attended by more than 40 film makers, producers and gay activists, this conference agreed to send a delegation to meet Channel 4 executives and to submit concrete, detailed proposals for a lesbian and gay magazine programme.

It also launched a renewed campaign to mobilise the lesbian and gay community to write to Channel 4. A few months later, Channel 4 announced that it had agreed to the idea of a lesbian and gay community programme.

Out On Tuesday was the result. It represents a major victory for the lesbian and gay community over those who have for so long sought to keep us invisible. We can all feel proud of that!

BOOK REVIEW

What happened to US unions?

An Injury to All, by Kim Moody, *Verso*, £9.95 (paperback)

The election of Jimmy Carter as US President in 1976 was warmly welcomed by America's trade union leaders.

But that didn't stop the *New York Times* from observing that:

"big business has the ear of Jimmy Carter, Democrat, to a greater degree than was true of Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, Republicans."

US unions have been in decline since their dynamic heyday in the 1930s and 40s. Today, membership is only 17% of the workforce, half what it was at the end of World War II.

In building and mining the drop is even greater. Yet organised workers still earn over 25% more than their non-union counterparts.

In *An Injury to All*, US socialist Kim Moody conducts a well researched investigation into the reasons for this long decline.

In his view, the corrupt and short-sighted union leaders who tied the fortunes of the workers' movement to US capital and to the Democratic Party are the chief culprits.

Moody identifies "business unionism" — a conservative philosophy which "seeks only to negotiate the price of domination" as the key problem in the history of the movement.

He charts how bureaucracy developed, or rather was *imposed*, within the comparatively militant Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO), American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1955.

Business unionism achieved some financial gains, whilst ignoring the unemployed and the low paid and fuelling racism, the curse of the US working class.

This prepared the way for fusion with the right wing aided by anti-Communist witch-hunts in the late 40s and early 50s.

By Mike Phipps Woolwich CLP

While the wages gap between black and white workers narrowed in the 1940s, it widened in the 50s. The AFL-CIO merger, coinciding with the dawn of the Civil Rights movement, reinforced segregationist principles within the unions.

Moody also documents the changing structure of US industry and how the rise of multinationals produced an increase in the US service sector. At the same time, powerful new political pressure groups serving business interests were launched in the 1970s.

The number of corporate Political Action Committees increased from 89 in 1974 to 1,467 in 1982, spending a total of *$85 million* influencing US politicians.

This offensive, along with the close ties to the Carter Presidency, opened the way for massive attacks on the working class in the 1980s. The response of the union leaders was to retreat, scattering concessions galore to the employers.

They negotiated the introduction of non-union workers alongside unionised workers. They accepted intra-plant competition for work and plant by plant wage cuts (which provoked the Hormel meatpackers' strike in 1985-6).

Moody's study also contains fascinating detail about the rank and file movements which fought these betrayals.

He discusses the many unofficial strikes and the opposition caucuses in unions like the Teamsters, and the leading role Black and Latino workers played in them.

He charts the sustained growth of women in the workforce (41% in 1986), but notes that the proportion of women in unions is now only 14% of the total female workforce.

One area of wider interest is the foreign policy of the US trade unions.

In the early 1960s under President Kennedy, the AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labor Development) was set up, sponsored by the AFL-CIO as well as the likes of Nelson Rockefeller, ITT, Exxon, and Shell.

Since its involvement in the coup d'état in Brazil in 1964, the AIFLD has had a notorious record in international politics, most recently making links with extreme right wing groups in El Salvador.

The international work of the AFL-CIO is unremittingly negative. Its African offshoot, the African America Labor Centre, distributes money to unions in South Africa if they refuse to join COSATU.

Some of Moody's chapters are a little sketchy, but this is a small quibble with a book of such breadth and ambition.

It is hard, too, to argue with his main conclusions: that the lack of an independent political party based on the working class remains the central problem for US trade unionists, and that such a political party will only emerge from the struggles of the workers themselves.

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FILM REVIEW

"You've never had it so good!" (as Macmillan said to Profumo)

Pale pink lipstick!

I'd forgotten about this important part of getting dressed up at the start of the 60s, until I saw Mandy Rice-Davies (16) lovingly smearing it on as she and her friend Christine Keeler (17) get ready to go out and knock the blokes dead.

By Linda Clarke Haringey Labour Briefing

My heart went out to them all through the film.

It still does when I remember other scenes, like when Christine, on recognising that Mandy's in the same predicament as her of reassuring their mums that they've got nice jobs, simply says, "shall we go for a drink?"

Or when Christine yawns her head off as Profumo (Ian McKellen) laboriously grinds away; or Mandy, coming out of Court smiling and waving defiantly.

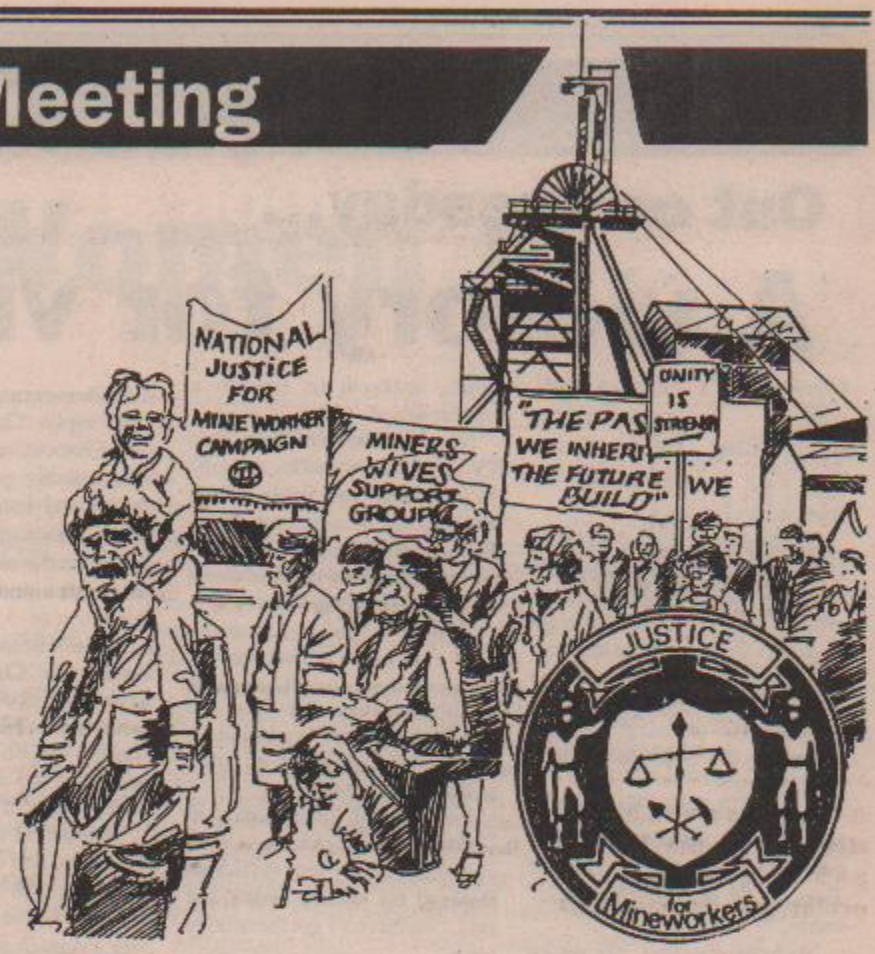
Today, ten years into Tory moralising, this film is a historical reminder of their hypocrisy in its portrayal of two fun-loving young women trying to survive in London (touchingly played by Joanne Whalley-Kilmer and Bridget Fonda) exploited by rich, powerful men.

And 26 years after the story broke it seems most people's sympathies still lie with Stephen Ward (don't let John Hurt's performance seduce you!) and Profumo ("well, he's still alive, you know... Shame, isn't it?")

Meanwhile, we'll put Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies in our *own* history, where they rightfully belong.

NJMC Annual Meeting

Still wanted: justice for the miners



The National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign held a successful AGM in Sheffield on April 5th, attended by over 200 supporters and delegates, about a third of whom were miners and Women Against Pit Closures.

The meeting was adressed by the President of Sheffield Trades Council and by victimised miner Terry French, Tony Benn, Mick Gosling (recently sacked by Ford) and Jason Groombridge from the striking seafarers at Dover.

By ALAN THORNETT

Four years after the end of the miners' strike, the size of the meeting was a measure of the respect in which the miners' struggle is held and in particular the role of victimised miners as a symbol of that struggle.

Terry French, speaking on behalf of victimised miners, pointed out the various problems which have beset the campaign:

"At the end of the miners' strike, a strike which was sold out for political ends, there were approximately 1,000 miners sacked and 150 in Thatcher's jails.

"There are now 167 still victimised and two still in prison, Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock.

NJMC, South East Region
May Day Benefit
Fifth Anniversary of the Miners' Strike
Hackney Empire, 291 Mare Street, London E8
Monday May 1st, 7.30pm-Midnight
with: Skint Video, Jacket Potatoes, Simon Korner Experience, Billy Stevens, King Biscuit, John Moore
All proceeds in aid of 198 victimised miners
£5 waged; £2.50 unwaged
Contact Ed Fredenburgh 01-359 0258 for more information

"And let's remember that whilst we are celebrating the 5th anniversary of the strike they are sitting in a cell... In 1987 we were told that when Labour won the election we would all be reinstated.

"Well, we lost that election and was it any wonder?

"If the NUM would recognise its responsibility to sustain these men (and I am not talking of the national officials) the NJMC could devote its considerable energies and talents not in running jumble sales and benefits but in securing the reinstatement for these victims of Thatcher's war against the miners.

"It was to that end that I submitted a resolution to my branch last year calling on the national conferenc of the NUM to hold a ballot for a 50p levy to sustain us.

"That resolution became policy but to this date has not been implemented. We are told that it is 'on the back burner' and that 'there are more important issues at stake'.

"In the meantime the victimised miners continue to live in their twilight world of insecurity...

"Well, I'm fed up with being 'on the back burner'. The strike has been over for four years and each and every one of us remaining victimised is an ugly stain on the NUM and the trade union movement.

"It's high time that this stain is erased and to that end I demand that the ballot for the levy be implemented as soon as possible.

"Then the Justice Campaign can concentrate on gaining justice — which means reinstatement for sacked miners."

Tony Benn said that the miners' strike had been seen everywhere as a crucial struggle. He spelled out the arguments against nuclear power.

All the important issues of the day, he said, could be traced back to the miners' strike.

He said that what people wanted today was a political lead. He strongly supported a strike in the docks industry in defence of the National Dock Labour Scheme and called for solidarity groups to be formed to support the strike.

He said that if the lessons of the miners' strike were to be learned and the docks received the support they needed, a national docks strike could see the demise of the Tories.

Mick Gosling paid tribute to the work of the Justice Campaign. He said that people were being picked off one by one and that solidarity was vital in today's struggles.

He said he had been victimised "because we had had the Ford Motor Company closed down and could have won everything we wanted".

He reminded people of the struggle in the North of Ireland and said that that was where the methods used against the miners were perfected.

Jason Groombridge spoke of the fourteen months of the seafarers' strike. It was a strike, he said, which could have been won. "Twice we had every port in the country at a standstill and twice it was let go."

NHS Review bites in Manchester

Health Authority jumps the gun

Manchester is the site of the first major battle in the war declared on the NHS by the government's White Paper.

Central Manchester Health Authority has announced its intention to look at the possibility of its three major hospitals — Manchester Royal Infirmary, St Mary's Hospital, and the Royal Eye Hospital — "opting out" of District Health Authority control.

By Geoff Ryan NUPE Shop Steward, Central Manchester Hospitals Branch

Whilst public statements insist that no firm decision has yet been made, there is no doubt that the majority of senior managers are committed to some form of self-governing hospital trust.

The main disputes appear to be whether to have three seperate trusts (favoured by Unit General Managers) or a single trust (preferred by the District General Manager and the majority of the District Health Authority).

So far, no-one seems to have even thought about the Community Unit (which includes the Division of Psychiatry) or Barnes Hospital (a small hospital for the elderly).

The eagerness with which Central Manchester DHA is moving towards self-governing status for its hospitals is not surprising.

First, the chronic underfunding of the NHS has been particularly acute in Central Manchester. Last year, for example, the Royal Infirmary was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The response of the DHA has been to embrace each and every Tory scheme for fund-raising, such as expanding facilities for private patients, setting up shops and hair-dressing salons, etc (which just about raises enough money to employ the magnificent total of an extra four staff nurses!)

Secondly, Mike Ruane, District General Manager, participated in the government's propaganda video for the White Paper.

"Opting out" has been seized on, by both managers and DHA members, as a way of raising extra cash without a fight with the government. They believe that the Tories will reward the first hospitals to "opt out".

It is also a way of increasing, or at least preserving, their own power and prestige.

The only opposition within the Health Authority has come from the Local Authority nominees which is why, of course, they will be removed from Health Authorities under the terms of the White Paper!

A particularly disgraceful role has been played by the Chair of the Health Authority, Councillor Ken Collis.

Councillor Collis is a Labour councillor nominated by the Tories. He seems to believe that because he is not one of the official Labour Council nominees he can consistently vote against Party policy.

Whilst he has been very careful not to openly espouse "opting out" — he says the Health Authority is simply looking at the possibility — he has failed to carry out the Party's policy of clearly opposing any such moves.

However, real opposition is mounting. Where staff have seen the government video they have tended to become even more opposed to the White Paper.

Managers have accused opponents of the White Paper of making "party political broadcasts" or"not having to make difficult decisions".

But such crude attempts at intimidation carry little weight with NHS staff who are aware that the White Paper was drawn up by five members of the Tory government, including Thatcher, and that therefore it is a party political issue.

The video begins with Thatcher and ends with Clarke, both telling us how wonderful their proposals are.

The appearance of Thatcher on the screen immediately produces a chorus of boos and hissing. It is clear that the video will fail miserably in its task of winning sceptical health workers to the Tories' cause.

Groups of health workers have begun to meet together to discuss ways of mobilising opposition to the White Paper. So far, this has been on an informal basis.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Steps will now be taken to organise an official campaign, uniting all the health service unions and professional organisations in Central Manchester.

A public meeting has been organised by one of the Local Authority nominees on the Health Authority. The Community Health Council has organised a conference for local residents.

Stretford MP, Tony Lloyd gave a full report to his Constituency Labour Party on how "opting out" proposals will adversely affect the health care of his constituents, particulary those living in the Old Trafford area.

They are used to thinking of Manchester Royal Infirmary as their local hospital.

But under the White Paper they would only be able to make use of MRI if Trafford Health Authority made a contract with Central Manchester.

Stretford CLP is now discussing how it can get involved in any campaign — including what steps can be taken to force Councillor Collis to carry out Party policy.

It is possible to build a campaign with deep roots in the labour movement — a campaign that can force Central Manchester Health Authority to retreat from its slavish support for government policies.

Such a campaign will also help spur the sort of national action that will be needed to defeat the White Paper.

Oxford

Action in balance

March 30th 1989 was a proud day for NHS trade unionism in Oxford.

A one day strike by the lowest paid admin and clerical staff took place at all the main hospitals in Oxford, and 40 clerical officers at Norton General Hospital, Banbury stopped work.

The strikers are trying to win a local agreement on upgrading the lowest A&C grade — clerical officers.

UCW post delivery, T&G card-holding delivery drivers and even some medical reps refused to cross the picket line.

It was the first co-ordinated action by NHS workers throughout Oxford's hospitals since the 1982 national pay dispute.

The clericals' work to rule has meanwhile been suspended. Sister Ruth Reid, local Nalgo branch President, told a mass meeting after the strike that this was a tactical move, because management were offering talks again.

Briefing supporters argued that we should sustain the work to rule, but delay further action during the talks.

It was resolved to suspend the action, but ballot on further sanctions.

As *Briefing* goes to press this ballot has still not been conducted. The future of the dispute hangs in the balance.

Messages of support to; Jane Wheeler, Branch Secretary, Oxfordshire Nalgo Health Services Branch, c/o Medical Records, Churchill Hospital, Oxford.

By Steve Akers NUPE Oxon Health Service Branch (personal capacity)

A look at trade union history

100 years of "New Realism"!

In this second of two articles on British trade union history, MARTIN WICKS explains how the vigorous class-based "New Unionism" of the 1880s and 90s was affected by the development of the Labour Party and by union officials' acceptance of Fabianism.

A huge wave of industrial struggles in the 1911-13 period, combined with the prolonged struggle over Irish Home Rule, brought Britain to the verge of a revolutionary crisis.

The First World War cut it short.

The decision of the Labour Party (together with most of the so-called socialist parties on the continent) to support the war, declare a "class truce", and urge workers to fight their German "enemy" dragged the unions into the war effort — and collaboration with the employers.

Even one of the chief architects of the New Unionism, Ben Tillet, threw in his lot with the English rulers.

Support for the war and for the accompanying increase in the exploitation of workers in the name of the "national interest" was an important stage in the bureaucratisation of the new unions which had successfully broken with the sectionalism of the old craft unions.

For example, Arthur Henderson, the Labour leader who particpatd in the War Cabinet, had been an official of the Friendly Society of Iron Founders.

"The employers make no secret of their absolute desire to sweep away industrial democracy and replace it with the absolute despotism of Capital...

"Trade Unionists know what this means. But do other citizens know that it means:

"•the disorganisation of English Labour, and the degredation of the English home life;

"•the gradual loss of our high manufacturing character in the markets of the world;

"•the transfer of industrial diplomacy from our public and responsible TUC and its Parliamentary Committee to secret organisations;

"•the confirmation of revolutionary doctrines and revolutionary temper;

"•and the beginning of an embittered class war instead of the give and take between Capital and Labour to which England is accustomed.

"We plead for an overwhelming expression of public opinion against the disasterous attempt at social disorganisation."

Was this a first attempt to replace outdated class struggle methods with the mobilisation of public opinion, a strategy embraced by today's New Realists?

In the same year Ramsey Macdonald, then condsidered a left winger, but a typical exponent of Fabian cynicism, wrote:

"Of course, the socialist who sees in every tall hat a traitor, in every respectable outline...

"a money grabber and in every appeal to reason a bait of the enemy's, will not for the moment allow that the coming revolution is to be directed from the study; to be one not of brutal need, but of intellectual development, to be, a revolution in fact, of the comparatively well to do...

Bureaucrats such as Henderson took on the role of policing their members for the state. For instance, they supported the Munitions of War Act which imposed compulsory arbitration and suspension of trade union rights.

The process of bureaucratisation was initially resisted by the rank and file. In 1908 the General Secretary of the Engineering Union, George Barnes, had resigned rather than see his Executive's policy overturned by members in the North East.

Distrust of the full-time Executive continued to build up and in 1912 a Delegate Meeting of the union, in making new rules, decided to declare all the Executive posts vacant.

The Council members refused to accept a new provisional Executive to take over administration.

The old Council refused to give way and barricaded themselves in the head office until they were ejected by the provisional Executive, who broke through an adjoining wall into the premises.

Union leaders such as Henderson and Ernest Bevin were greatly influenced by Fabian "gradualism" and its notion of the constitutional road to socialism. To a large degree they succeeded in channelling New Unionism into parliamentarism.

Fabianism (like its Kinnockite grandchild) had that peculiarly British penchant for appealing to the ruling class, in the midst of ferocious class war, not to be uncivilised.

Thus in 1887 at the height of the great engineering lock out, the Fabians issued this leaflet:

"When men are strong in the strength of intellectual faith, the discontented will still be at our command and explosive as ever.

"We may have to use them or we may not; but should the worst befall, their destructive power will be skillfully directed and will not cause ruin, but clear a way... it will be the tool not the designers."

This language may be blunt for today's Fabians, but the mentality is the same.



PHOTO: Graeme Cookson

Norman Willis: contemplating the last 100 years?

The working class is a passive object. Socialism is not the outgrowth of their struggles, but is granted to them by the good works of their intellectual superiors.

In its day Macdonald's haughty arrogance could boast of a "socialist" colonial policy, which shared with the ruling class imperialists a mission to "civilise" the world.

New Unionism frightened Fabianism, just as the miners' strike in 1984/85 frightened Kinnock, because it stripped bare the democratic veneer of capitalist society, exposed the class power behind it, and made clear the oppressive nature of a state machine which Fabians believe is "impartial".

Fabianism had initially opposed the struggle for an independent workers' party, in favour of the "permeation" of its ideas amongst educated layers of society, including the rulers.

This did not stop it adapting to the reality of the Labour Party when it was founded.

Ironically, it was none other than Fabian Sydney Webb who framed Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution as a sop to the left in the face of a political crisis at the end of the war.

Nalgo and the Poll Tax

Two-prong strategy

Over 30 Nalgo branches and about 70 delegates attended the Nalgo Poll Tax Conference called by Lambeth Nalgo on April 15th.

The conference aimed to improve co-ordination between branches on Poll Tax work and to address the inaction of the national leadership.

By Sian Moore
Vice Chair
Lambeth NALGO

Speakers included Paul Holmes from the Nalgo NEC, Lambeth Councillor Greg Tucker, Terry Conway from the Newcastle Conference Steering Committee, and Stewart Petrie from the Pollockshields Campaign Against the Poll Tax.

All emphasised the complementary relationship between trade union and community action against the Tax. The ensuing discussion echoed this, though the SWP continue to discount community action.

Other speakers stressed that is was still early in the struggle and many delegates reported fierce debates on non-cooperation within their branches, in which many members are looking to the national union for a lead.

Workshops discussed civil liberties, linking up with local and national campaigns, organising in branches and Annual Conference.

The latter workshop began to work on a composite motion committing the leadership to organising a ballot on non-cooperation and supporting members who refuse to cooperate with the Tax.

The final conference statement called on the Nalgo NEC to build a campaign of non-compliance amongst the membership, backed up with industrial action.

At the same time the statement recognised the importance of Nalgo being part of a broad national movement of resistance, including anti-registration and non-payment.

Strategy

The SWP continued to rage against this two-pronged strategy, whilst offering no indication of how they would implement their own purely industrial action strategy.

The statement included a committment to organise a rally against the Poll Tax at Annual Conference. This would help mobilise support for our resolutions.

Post Office

Recruitment package — Another "historic deal"

Union of Communication Workers members voted recently in favour of the agreement on recruitment and retention in the letters business of the Post Office.

By a UCW
***Briefing* supporter**

This was the result of the negotiations which followed last year's national strike. The majority in favour was a mere 90 votes. In many large branches the deal was heavily rejected.

The agreement is seen by both the PO and the UCW leadership as a solution to the problem of staff turnover in the South East.

It claims to have ended DRAS (difficult recruitment area supplement), but lump sum payments to new entrants, included in the deal, look very similar. DRAS payments were the cause of last year's stike.

The union also states that it has obtained a commitment from Royal Mail Letters to national pay bargaining. But this statement is a contradiction.

RML is only one business in the PO. This deal excludes UCW members in the Parcels and Counters business: the PO management is getting its own way on netgotiating on a business by business basis without any union opposition.

The sweeteners offered were the introduction of a new £15 per week payment in the South East, an increase in inner London weighting by £6, and in outer London weighting by £10 per week.

There is also a maximum pay for new staff after 6 months (instead of a year) and full rate at 18 instead of 19. Those small concessions have been successful in persuading certain sections of the membership that the agreement is good.

The second part of the agreement is far worse. It introduces a "new" overtime restructuring very similar to the one rejected last year.

Failure

This package makes scheduled overtime more attractive financially, but obliges it to be performed on a contract basis. Failure to perform it can result in penalties.

The Post Office seeks to reduce overtime to around ten hours per worker per week. They want overtime performed on their terms, when it suits them.

The agreement concludes with a commitment to examine measures to improve "quality of service" in the South East and to begin negotiating a new national productivity scheme: bullying staff into working faster and encouraging corner cutting.

This kind of pressure has been a major cause of staff wastage in the PO.

The UCW leadership will be greatly relieved that this agreement has temporarily papered over the cracks and postponed any fight with the PO management.

However, it will almost certainly fail to solve the problem of recruitment and retention. The job market in London and the South East is such that it pays to leave PO employment.

The UCW Executive Council will face an angry conference this year. Some officers may be defeated in the coming annual elections.

Their attempts to appease an aggressive business style management have failed miserably, and the mak and file have lost confidence in them.

TGWU

Discussing defence

For the first time since the 1960s unilateral nuclear disarmament will be a hotly debated subject at June's TGWU Conference.

By BILL PETERS

For over two decades unilateralism has been maintained as an article of faith, going through Conference on the nod.

But New Realism and Kinnock's Policy Review has changed all that. This year there are 80 resolutions on the agenda on unilateralism, just over half of which support the existing policy.

The T&G decision on unilateralism could be crucial to the Policy Review as a whole and there has been an organised campaign by the right wing to change policy.

This has mainly taken the form of a campaign for a ballot on unilateralism. There are 13 resolutions calling for a ballot — an unprecedented proposal which is not provided for under rule.

Despite these resolutions and the pressure on Todd through his Moscow trip to see multilateralism at work in the Gorbachev era, a change of policy still seems unlikely.

But the near unanimous votes of previous years will probably change.

Poland

Workers vs. Regime: Round Two

Solidarnosc has been legalised. Socialists everywhere should welcome this. There can be no advance to a democratic and attractive model of socialism without the existence of legal independent workers' organisations.

Nonetheless, the deal recently struck in Warsaw gives grounds for disquiet.

The opposition is deeply divided. The Jaruzelski regime has taken a giant step towards legitimacy, both at home and abroad, and especially in the eyes of Western creditors.

The conduct of the negotiations was in stark contrast to the 1980 shipyard talks which gave birth to Solidarnosc.

Then, the government negotiators faced a democratically accountable strike committee in an occupied plant. All negotiations were broadcast on the plant tannoy to the striking workers.

In return for the legalisation of Solidarnosc and limited access to the mass media and the legislature, Walesa's "constructive opposition" will police the imposition of further austerity on Polish workers.

Walesa has also promised to tour the world "begging on his knees" for credits to bail out the crisis-ridden Polish economy.

Meanwhile, the radical section of the opposition, grouped around the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) and the Fighting Solidarity organisation is likely to face sharp repression.

By Dave Holland International Office, PPS-RD

Two weeks ago, Jerzy Kolezowski, press spokesperson for the PSP-DR, was attacked, severely beaten, and hospitalised by unknown assailants on the street in Warsaw. The assailants had first demanded to see his identification papers.

On the day Walesa received his passport for Italy, Jozef Pinior, a prominent PSP-DR leader, was refused a passport, after months of waiting for a decision.

This repression is the government's response to the radical opposition's refusal to suspend the struggle to defend working class living standards in exchange for the sops offered by the regime.

All sides recognise that it was the mass strikes in May and August last year which forced the government to the negotiating table.

The strikes made it clear that further austerity could not be imposed without the co-operation of at least part of the opposition.

With the Soviet Union preoccupied with its own problems, the radical opposition argues that Jaruzelski has wide freedom of manoeuvre. The chief constraint on democratic change is the threat it poses to the governing team itself.

Much attention has focused on the promised elections in June. Walesa has hailed them as "opening the road to full democracy and freedom." In fact, they are a deeply undemocratic manoeuvre designed mainly to confer legitimacy on the regime.

The elections to the lower house, or Sejm, will be "fought" on a united list, in which 35% will be conceded to the opposition, while the Party and its puppet organisations will retain the remaining 65%,

A new upper house, or Senate, will be created, open to "free" elections, which will have rather similar powers to the British House of Lords. That is to say it will be almost entirely decorative in function.

However, the Walesa team are busy carving up the opposition's seat allocation in both houses of parliament.

They will avoid contests and endorse candidates supported by the Citizens' Committee, created by Walesa and accountable to him alone.

No one will be allowed to stand as a representative of any opposition political party. Candidates will stand as individuals. Radical candidates will be denied Walesa's endorsement.

A new Executive Presidency is to be created, with wide powers of decree. This will be elected by both Houses of Parliament voting together. There is thus a built-in majority for Jaruzelski.

The radical opposition, represented by PSP-DR and almost certainly Fighting Solidarity, will boycott these elections.

They believe responsibility for further austerity should be borne by the government and those who have struck a deal with it.

The Congress of the Opposition Against the System, which includes PSP-DR and Fighting Solidarity, has already demanded the immediate convening of a democratic congress of Solidarnosc.

This would elect a new leadership to replace the self-appointed elite around Walesa and would democratically decide the union's policy.

PSP-DR also demands a return to the programme of the Self-Managing Republic agreed by the first Solidarnosc congress in 1981.

The Senate, they say, should be replaced by a Chamber of Workers' Self-Management organisations, which should have decisive competence in the economic field.

There are clear signs that Walesa's authority amongst the workers is not what it was in 1980-81. Demonstrations of youth have demanded his removal. Spontaneous strikes are endemic.

Solidarnosc's own research showed recently that a third of workers thought Solidarnosc should boycott elections conducted on a manipulated "united list".



The struggle in the coming months will hinge on the mood in the big workplaces. The PSP-DR is advancing in the plants on the basis of its support work for the strikes of 1988.

In the big steel works in Krakow, Nowa Huta, a strong PSP-DR group has emerged, led by Andrej Szelczuwaniec, President of last year's strike committee. Groups of militant miners have joined the PSP-DR in Jastrzebie.

In the Gdansk shipyards a group of PSP-DR militants are organising around the paper *Nowa Solidarnosc*.

British socialists should do everything they can to support the emerging socialist opposition in Poland.

Protest against refusal of passport to Pinior

The biggest protest possible must be mounted against the denial of a passport to Jozef Pinior, one of the main leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution).

He was invited to June's Oxford Conference on *Gorbachev and the Left* and intended to participate in the Socialist Conference in Sheffield.

There has not been a year since 1981 in which Pinior has not spent time in prison. He is one of the most courageous and active leaders of the radical wing of Solidarnosc.

Ostensible

He was a member of the national underground leadership of Solidarnosc during martial law and was imprisoned from 1983-86.

Now, in the new period of "liberalisation" he is being denied the elementary right to travel abroad and meet the international labour movement.

The ostensible reason for the refusal of the passport is the one year suspended sentence which he received last October for activity in connection with the mass strike in May.

Pinior was convicted of assaulting a state functionary after he and three friends, two of whom were women, were attacked by a group of 20 factory guards near the Dolmel plant in Wroclaw.

This will have a familiar ring to veterans of the British miners, printworkers, and seafarers strikes.

Organise protest resolutions now from your CLP, Branch Labour Party, union branch, etc. Send them to:

•The Polish Ambassador, Embassy of the Polish People's Republic, 47 Portland Place, London W1.

•General Czeslaw Kszczak, Minister of the Interior, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnetrzych, ul. Rakowiecka, Warsaw.

Send messages of solidarity to: Jozef Pinior, Wroclaw, ul. Piastowska 37 m 8, Poland.

Press your MP, MEP, local Councillor to write in protest.

Model resolution:

This (.....)

1. Welcomes the legalisation of Solidarnosc in Poland.
2. Is deeply disturbed by the continuing denial of democratic rights to socialists in Poland.
3. Notes that Jozef Pinior, a leading member of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) has been invited to speak at the forthcoming conference on *Gorbachev and the Left* in Oxford and the the Chesterfield Conference and that the Polish authorities have refused him a passport.
4. Resolves to write in protest against the denial of a passport to Jozef Pinior, to the Polish Ambassador, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Polish Republic and to send a message of solidarity to Jozef Pinior in Poland. It further resolves to request elected Labour representatives to do likewise.

Contact the PPS-RD International Office at The Basement, 92 Ladbroke Grove, London W11. Please forward to PPS-RD any copies of resolutions or letters you send to the above people.

PICKET
the
Polish Embassy
MAY 1st,
1.30-2.30
Portland Place,
London W1
(Great Portland St. tube)

Namibia

South Africa's strategy

What is the real story behind the war in Northern Namibia which threatens the country's move towards independence?

The situation, as it developed, was so suited to South Africa's secret plans to thwart Namibian independence that it almost looked like a Pretoria plot.

No one disputes the fact that SWAPO fighters infiltrated the country.

But South Africa says the guerrillas crossed the Angola-Namibia border *after* the ceasefire which became effective on April 1st, while SWAPO insists its forces had been in the country for some time before then.

Independent reports from the North appear to verify SWAPO's version. Andrew Corbett, of the Windhoek Legal Aid Centre (LAC), said they had received several reports indicating the SWAPO forces had moved in prior to the ceasefire.

From our correspondent in South Africa

The LAC offices in Ongwadena and Rundu have been monitoring repression and army activity in Northern Namibia since last year.

According to their reports, the guerrillas were under the impression that once the ceasefire took effect they would be able to give themselves up to the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG).

UNTAG has admitted that it was not in a position to monitor or control the situation. It also admitted that the investigation of what had happened on April 1st was conducted by only a single, unsupported UNTAG officer.

Despite this, the UNTAG representative hastily agreed to the remobilisation of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), Pretoria's puppet army in Namibia, and also the 202 Batallion in Kwango, near Rundu.

An important factor in the situation was that SWAPO was *never* involved in the ceasefire negotiations — in contrast to the "Rhodesian-Zimbabwe" settlement where both ZANU and ZAPU were direct participants.

THe Soviet Union, Cuba, and Luanda took it upon themselves to represent SWAPO's position, without prior consultation.

Whether the SWAPO infiltration was a strategic error or not, Pretoria quickly seized the opportunity to strengthen its position. This has already led to rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

What is feared now is that Moscow and the frontline states will put increasing pressure on the ANC to halt the armed struggle and to move toward "negotation", although this will not happen before the elections in October.

Namibia Emergency Campaign National Mobilising Conference May 13th, Birmingham

The Namibia Emergency Campaign has been established jointly between the Namibia Support Committee and the Anti-Apartheid Movement to provide a focus for solidarity work in Britain over the coming period. We have two basic aims:

Ito raise the maximum financial support to enable SWAPO, the national liberation movement of Namibia, to fight an election campaign;

Ito expose and counter South African sabotage of the independence process and to campaign against all forms of British collaboration with such sabotage.

In order to achieve these basic aims, it is vital that as many individuals and organisations as possible attend the mobilising conference to hear from SWAPO about the current situation and to discuss how we can respond.

For more information contact the Namibia Emergency Campaign, c/o 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW. Send your donations in now to the same address (cheques payable to Namibia Emergency Campaign).

"De-Ideologising" world conflict

Gorbachev's foreign policy

"George just can't stand being outshone by Mikhail" observed a White House staff member.

Indeed, every commentator notes that in response to Gorbachev's foreign policy offensives, the US seems bogged down in a rut.

Even worse, public opinion in the West accepts that it is the Soviet Union which is making the positive proposals on disarmament and various world crises, not the USA.

But socialists in the West should look closely at exactly what Gorbachev is proposing in the international area before they get swept away in clouds of "Gorbymania".

We have to look at the overall thrust of Soviet foreign policy — its basic long-term intention — and the effects of that policy on specific struggles and disputes.

The fundamental Soviet proposal is for a "de-ideologisation" of international affairs and for a negotiated solution to world conflicts.

The Gorbachevites are saying, very loudly, that the key problems which the world faces — the ecological time bomb, nuclear weapons, world poverty — can and must be solved by an international process of discussion and collaboration, without regard to the ideological and social differences between states.

It is exactly such propositions which are making Gorbachev popular in the West, including among many people on the left.

But the Soviet position is in the end wrong and indeed harmful to the cause on international socialism, however popular it may be.

From a theoretical point of view, the Soviet idea of "de-ideologisation" of international affairs is either naive or cynical.

It is not possible to achieve it so long as the world is dominated economically and politically by the big imperialist powers.

It is impossible, for example, to negotiate an overall solution to the problem of nuclear weapons because, in the end, world imperialism will never disarm itself.

By Phil Hearse
Islington North CLP

Militarism is a crucial part of its power and its ability to exert its economic and political strength. What, then, is the rationale of the Soviet proposals on international affairs?

Simply summed up, Gorbachev has realised that to gain more room for economic manoeuvre he desperately needs to relieve Western military pressure on the Soviet Union and cut back the Soviet defence budget, objectives which socialists do not, in principle, oppose.

But the mechanism which Gorbachev has chosen for this venture is not to mobilise a massive new surge of the international anti-war movement, or to link the fight of the Soviet Union against US militarism to anti-imperialism.

Rather he has chosen to attempt, through adept negotiating ploys and big concessions, to outflank the US, to "end the Cold War" and do a deal with imperialism.

There are parts of this "deal" which socialists can endorse.

For example, the withdrawal of Soviet occupation troops from Afghanistan is progressive, whatever the Soviet motivation for doing it.

Equally, a reduction of the Soviet defence budget from the crippling, absurd levels of the 1970s is a welcome step.

Socialists have never argued that the Soviet Union can be defended by trying to match every piece of United States nuclear and conventional hardware.

But there are other aspects ot Soviet policy which are less progressive, where Gorbachev has shown himself quite happy



to do deals with imperialism at the expense of those in struggle against it.

For example, Nicaragua today has ceased to receive oil from the Soviet Union and has to buy it from Venezuela, in a situation of total economic collapse after years of contra war and the 1988 hurricane.

In Southern Africa, the USSR is utilising every bit of weight it has with the South African Communist Party and the ANC to force them into a negotiated regional "settlement" which would leave the apartheid regime intact.

The Soviet behaviour in backing South Africa against SWAPO in the recent conflict over the Namibian independence agreement has been utterly despicable.

In the Middle East the Soviet Union has tried to re-establish its influence by re-establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, has been cautious in condemning Israeli atrocities against Palestinians, and has pressed the PLO to negotiate a settlement, involving the recognition of Israel.

In Indochina, the Soviet Union has been keen to force the Vietnamese into participation in the regional "peace process", which involves bringing the Khmer Rouge back into the Kampuchean government.

All this is in line with the Soviet attempts to created a new *modus vivendi* with world capitalism.

It is a policy of "peaceful coexistence", which has been, in different ways, the guiding policy of Soviet foreign affairs since the 1930s.

There is a paradox here. By being seen as the "peacemaker" Gorbachev has undermined Cold War and anti-Soviet prejudices.

But there is a real danger that he will also help to undermine struggles against imperialism and in fact get very little in return from the US.

It has to be pointed out that the only thing Gorbachev has won from the US, so far, is the INF treaty, which in hard military terms is mainly symbolic.

The paradox of Gorbachevism is summed up by the state of CND and the peace movement in Britain today. In the early 1980s CND mobilised up to 400,000 people on the streets, but is now in rapid decline.

This is not because it was "defeated" over the the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain but because in the epoch of Gorbachevism, the Kinnockites and some CND leaders have succeeded in convincing people that unilateralism is no longer relevant and that the best way forward is through international negotiations.

But the fact is that world peace, social justice, and democracy cannot be achieved primarily through negotiations with imperialism.

In the end it can only be achieved through the political struggle of millions of people. That is our basic socialist difference with Gorbachev's foreign policy.

Gorbachev and the European Left

June 3rd-4th

St Cross Building, Oxford University

A conference to address the major policy issues facing the European left in response to recent developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Organised by the Socialist Conference
Sponsored by:
New Statesman, Tribune, New Left Review, Critique, Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Labour Briefing, Socialist Worker, END, Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Socialist Society, and CSE.

Conference themes are:

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

With Tony Benn, Ludmilla Arutunyan (Armenia), Ernest Mandel, Edward Batalov (Moscow), M Lazic (Yugoslavia), Z Kowalewski (Poland), Teodor Shanin, Norman Geras, S Maliqi (Kosovo), L Arutunyan (Armenia), Steffi Engert (German Greens), Olga Ivanova (USSR).

ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM

With Diane Elson, Edward Ambartsumov (USSR), Wlodzimierz Brus, Chris Harman, Branko Horvat, Ken Coates, Catherine Samary (France), Andre Gorz, Kate Soper.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

With Yegor Yakovlev (USSR), Luciana Castellina (Italy), Tariq Ali, Denis Healy, Victoria Brittain, Alex Callinicos, Fred Halliday.

FUTURE OF EUROPE

With Otto Latsis (USSR), Julia Szalai (Hungary), Oliver Macdonald, Peter Glotz (West Germany), John Palmer.

Prior registration is advisable as seating space is limited. Creche must be booked in advance. For further details contact Gus Fagan, 30 Bridge Street, Oxford OX2 0BA, or phone 0865-723207

USA: Eastern Airlines Strike

Bush and cronies battle union

George Bush is doing his best to maintain Ronald Reagan's policies, but he has none of his predecessor's populist appeal.

Indeed, all indications are that this will definitely not be a "teflon" presidency.

This makes one wonder if Bush might not have chosen Dan Quayle as a running mate in order to make people think twice about impeachment proceedings, especially if Bush's involvement in Contragate becomes a big embarassment.

The new President has been busy doing what he's good at — visitng suburban high schools to deliver vacuous moral tirades against drugs.

Woody Haut
Hampstead and Highgate CLP

With so many of America's adolescents exposed to this danger, one might think the President would have time for little else, but, like his former boss, he can always spare a moment for a little union-busting.

Dispute

This is exactly what he's been up to in the recent diuspute between Eastrn Airlines machinists and the nation's foremost industrial asset-stripper (and Bush pal) Frank Lorenzo.

"Just say no," says Bush — to both high school audiences and bosses like Lorenzo. After all, Lorenzo is a prototypical free marketeer and must be protected from, union demands for decent wages and conditions.

Poor Lorenzo. With Texas Air under his belt, he wasted no time before raiding every airline in sight.

Centralisation

With such centralisation of ownership, it's no wonder the price of air travel is beyond the means of most Americans. It now costs more to travel from Los Angeles to Denver than it costs to travl from Los Angeles to London!

Lorenzo's plan was obvious: strip loss-making Eastern of it assets and out them into the more profitable Continental, which runs on non-union labour.

Machinists

But the machinists wouldn't buy it and a bitter strike began, soon supported by the rest of the Eastern workforce, including the pilots.

Lorenzo's sordid empire is based on huge borrowing (his companies are now some $5 billion in debt) and political connections.

His supporters include Frank McClure (former Texas Air chief and now Bush's Congressional relations director), former Carter cabinet member Joseph Califano, former Democratic Party Chair Robert Strauss.

They also include current Democratic Party Chair Ron Brown, who besides being Jesse Jackson's ex-campaign manager comes from a law firm with close links with Lorenzo.

During the first frew weeks of the strike it looked like organised labour was at long last going to flex its flabby muscles.

Obvious

The issues were obvious: asset stripping and union busting, the loss of 31,000 jobs, pay cuts of over 50%, tyrannical working conditons, profit placed before safety, a Bush-backed policy of no arbitration, an an inept management responsible for a $450 million loss in 1988.

Despite court injunctions against secondary picketing, there was strong support from fellow union members, especially in the related transport industries.

Attention

The strike won a good deal of media attention, if only for the inconvenience-factor, and despite a fiercely hostile media does enjoy some public support.

It may not yet be the reawakening of the US labour movement from the slumbers of Reagan-land, but at least an alarm has been sounded and a line has been drawn. With Bush's past creeping up on him, it could be that his particular style of interventionism — from Iran to Eastern — might yet be his undoing.

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Hillsborough: fans warnings unheeded

Time to Reclaim the Game

Ask any regular football supporter if he or she was surprised to hear of the Hillsborough disaster.

Angry? Yes. Saddened? Certainly. And possibly worried too, about friends who might have been at the Game.

But no one would have been surprised. For years terrace supporters have been warning that *something must be done.*

Ironically, Liverpool fans in particular have been shouting loudest.

They had stood on the crumbling terraces of Heysel after witnessing the shambolic organisation at the 1985 European Cup Final and they knew that there were more reasons for the deaths there than just hooliganism.

They had complained after the 1986 Cup Final that the stadium was overcrowded and that people had been allowed in without tickets.

And after the 1988 semi-final they had complained that Hillsborough's Leppings Lane End was too small for a club of their size.

Buck-passing in football is too easy: someone else is always responsible.

Why were Liverpool given 9,000 standing tickets compared to Forest's 20,000, when Liverpool have twice as many fans? "The police dictate which club gets which end," answers the FA.

So why go to Hillsborough, particularly after last year's complaints? "We have never had any trouble like this there before," insists the FA, "it's one of the safest grounds in the country."

What about the Spurs vs. Wolves FA Cup semi-final in 1981, when the same problems of over-crowding and crushing occurred?

And what about the fences in front of the terraces? "That's a decision taken by the clubs," says the FA. "The police tell us to do it," say some clubs. "The Local Authority make us do it," say others.

And who do the police blame? The fans, of course. And the press? All they want is a convenient scapegoat. "Who left the doors open on the Herald of Free Enterprise?" becomes "Who opened the Hillsborough 'gates of death'?"

By Craig Brewin
Secretary,
Football Supporters Association
(personal capacity)

In 1987, warning of the prospect of a disaster due to overcrowding, the Football Supporters Association presented a six point plan to the FA, including recommendations designed to prevent such an occurrence.

"Filter fans to the turnstiles, link ticket allocations to demand, improve communication between stewards and police," said the report. The FA made no reply.

When voluntary "membership" (i.e. ID card) schemes were introduced, the FSA went to the Minister of Sport.

"Your anti-hooligan policies are dangerous," we said, "You must consider the problem of over-crowding." "The government is pursuing a package of measures, etc., etc.," he replied.

A week later, at a cup tie at Queens Park Rangers, the kick-off was delayed for an hour because of overcrowding caused in part by the membership scheme.

The fanzine *When Saturday Comes* observed that "people would almost certainly have been killed had there been fences in front of the terrace."

There have been repeated cries to pull down the perimeter fences. A year ago, a prophetic editorial appeared in the *Off The Ball* fanzine. It said:

"Common sense and the evidence of previous tragedies tells us that at least one element of modern safety measures — the increasingly prevalent fencing-off of crowds from pitches — actually puts supporters at considerable risk...

"Tear them down now, before another club has to echo the words of Bradford's Stafford Heginbotham, 'There are a number of things we all wish had been done prior to this terrible tragedy.'"

The authorities were warned not only by fans at the grass roots but by some of their own advisers.

The Bradford fire disaster of 1985 led to the Popplewell inquiry. Popplewell warned of the dangers of perimeter fencing and recommended improved disaster planning.

He too was ignored, except for one recommendation: ID cards. If this had been in force at Hillsborough on April 15th, the tragedy would have been even worse.

The cause of the Hillsborough disaster wasn't just the combined incompetence of the police, Sheffield City Council, FA, Football League, Sheffield Wednesday FC, and the Tory government, though all these contributed.

It is more deeply rooted than that and can only be dealt with by radical measures.

The cause lies in a society which places "football hooliganism" at the top of the political agenda while ignoring the needs of the vast majority of supporters for basic safety.

It lies in the drive for profits which produced Zeebrugge, King's Cross, and Clapham, and put footballing profits above fans' lives.

It lies in a government and media which have for years characterised football supporters as "the enemy within", and treated them accordingly — like cattle, to be herded, penned-in, branded, and, now, slaughtered.

The cause of the disaster must also be sought in a system of football administration apparently designed more to inflate the egos of administrators than to meet the needs of spectators.

Fans should no longer modestly beg for "a hearing" from the people who run the game. They should demand real power over it.

Let the fans pick the venues, allocate the tickets, and use their collective experience to mould the game's future.

And let's municipalise every football ground in the country, stop the fatal trade-off between ground improvement and team improvement, and introduce the democratic accountability without which the safety of the public can never be protected.

Let's reclaim the game.



Fans hand out warning to FA





TOP POP: Ossie Ardiles took time off from his FA Cup preparations yesterday to relax with sons Pablo (left) who's 12, and Freddie (8).
● Glenn the gem—Page 30.

Fears of Heysel repeat at Final

THE FA were delivered a grisly warning last night that the Wembley Cup final showcase is in danger of turning into a Heysel-style disaster.

By COLIN PRICE

As Spurs, Watford, Coventry and Leeds dream of their weekend semi-finals, the FA have had to digest some grim reading in a 36-page dossier of danger.

It was delivered at Lancaster Gate yesterday by the Football Supporters' Association, who have spent almost 12 months gathering evidence.

Crammed

They say arrangements at Wembley last May were so chaotic that only the fact it was the Friendly Final between Everton and Liverpool prevented serious trouble.

And the FSA warn that a Final next month between Spurs and Leeds has tragic potential.

Craig Bruin, chairman of the London branch, said: "It's no scare story. Last year was appalling. All the bad organisation evident at the Heysel Stadium, when 56 fans died, was there at Wembley—except the violence.

"We shudder to think what could happen if Spurs and Leeds reach the final."

Bruin claims ticket forgeries, poor policing and slack stewarding meant well over 100,000 crammed into Wembley last year.

"People were leaving at half time because of the crush. The terraces were literally vibrating," he said.

The FSA say the FA must take the following steps:
- Give the finalists a bigger ticket allocation so fans are properly segregated.
- Hand-pick policemen for experience.
- Early inspection of tickets to pick up forgeries before fans reach the turnstiles.
- Better exchange of information between police and Wembley officials.
- Stricter control of gatemen to keep out fans without tickets.

Nonsense

And they warn: "It gives us no pleasure to predict that, unless this happens, there could be disastrous consequences if Spurs and Leeds are the finalists."

The FA dismissed the warning yesterday, though Press Officer Glenn Burton said: "It's nonsense for anyone to suggest Wembley is not safe. It has been inspected and licensed.

"We need time to review all the points the FSA make and will be replying in due course."

Daily Star covers FSA warnings: 11.4.87

MONSTROUS ERECTIONS

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The debacle at the Q.P.R. v West Ham cup-tie earlier this season should have come as no surprise to anyone who has seen at first hand the way that membership schemes have been introduced. Although these incidents took place some time ago, they have still not been satisfactorily explained, and important issues have not been settled. Paul Caulfield *was our ace newshound on the spot...*

with Chelsea in September, they had taken the East side of the South Africa Road paddock out of the scheme.

Drama

However, according to what Phillips has to say, Superintendent Briggs is being unduly modest in blaming everything on the membership scheme and the forged tickets, since his own force were by no means content with a walk-on role in the drama. As visitors to other London grounds (e.g. Spurs and Chelsea) will have noticed this season, the police have been experimenting with metal detectors as an additional means of checking away fans for anything they shouldn't be carrying (such as money, keys etc). The West Ham match was the first in which these machines (borrowed from Gatwick Airport) had been in action at Loftus Road.

Since they went off virtually every time someone went through, this inevitably slowed the passage of fans on to the terrace almost to a trickle. As a result, there were apparently almost 3,000 people still outside the ground at

Articles from Off the Ball (March 1988); When Saturday Comes (May 1988)

Join the FSA

Send this form with £2 membership fee to Football Supporters Association, 59 Oakwood Road, Liverpool L26 1XD.

Surname.....

Forenames.....

Address.....

.....

..... Tel:.....

Age: Under 16 ❑ 16-21 ❑ over 21 ❑

Are you disabled? No/Yes: Physical/Sight/Hearing

Team Supported:.....

Signed:..... Date .....

Editorial, p3