NORTH WALES & CHESHIRE LABOUR

# BRIEFING

—bulletin—

MARCH - APRIL 1985

Dear Colleague,

The County Personnel and Manage[ment] to you about various issues which ha[ve] dispute. He also wrote to you last week recommendations which the Personnel Sub-Committee. The (Schools and Special Services) Sub-Committee has now accepted those Special Services) Sub-Committee has now accepted those and has passed the following resolutions:-

(a) "That the Arbitration Award for APT&C Staffs be accepted and implemented in its entirety, and

(b) that all those nursery staff on strike be told that unless they return to work by 25th February 1985 they will be liable to instant dismissal as being in fundamental breach of their Contracts of Employment."

I must, therefore, repeat the formal notification to you that any nursery staff who continue to strike after 12 noon on 25th February, 1985 will be summarily dismissed as being in fundamental breach of the Contract of Employment. As you have been participating in the strike, it is for you, should you wish to continue in your employment, to present yourself for work [on the morn]ing of Monday 25th February, 1985.

[Should ill]-health or supervening causes unrelated to the [strike prevent] from returning to work that morning, you must [inform us] of the reasons, immediately, or in any [event not] later than the 26th February, 1985.

[Failure to] attend for work in full on the 25th February, [1985 or to] inform the School by 4.00 p.m. on the [26th Febru]ary, 1985 will be treated as you have been [informed] that other supervening

# WHO VOTED FOR THIS?

## LABOUR COUNCILLORS...

For over six months now, the Labour Group on Clwyd County Council has been at the centre of an increasingly bitter dispute concerning the strike action taken by Clwyd nursery nurses in support of their modest pay claim. During this time, in spite of the fact that public and media attention locally has been to a large extent diverted by the Miners' strike, the plight of the nursery nurses has won a considerable amount of public sympathy and support, extending as far as the editorials and letters columns of the local Press.

Of course, there will always be those right-wingers who refuse to accept that low-paid workers employed in providing a useful public service have a right to use strike action as a means of winning their demands, because of the inconvenience or hardship that it may cause. But it was both disturbing and ironic to find some of our own Labour County Councillors advocating this view - when it had for a long time been within the means of the Council to put an end to this hardship by conceding the nursery nurses' just claim to a decent living wage in line with their training, special skills and responsibilities - a claim which even they dare not dispute, publicly or within their own ranks.

## ...TORY ATTITUDES

### JOBS FOR THE BOYS?

The record of Labour Councillors such as Alf Jones and Ron Drennan on this subject is disreputable and cowardly in the extreme. In 1983, to forestall strike action threatened by NALGO, an assurance was given that, failing a satisfactory

( CONTINUED OVERLEAF )

# (Cont. ...)

outcome of negotiations with the National Joint Council, local negotiations would be recommended. This assurance was later to be denied and rather than face the embarrassment of having to lie to the faces of Union officials, the majority of the Labour Group on the Council immediately took refuge in a declared 'policy' of not entering into discussions with Union officials during a dispute. This is certainly something we would expect of Tory or Alliance councillors, as representatives of political parties that make no secret of their contempt for workers' struggles and hatred of Trade Unions. But since when has hiding behind locked doors been part of Labour Party policy?

* * * * * *

The truth is, of course, that the Labour Councillors in question are no more interested in Party policy or the wishes of the electorate than they are in the welfare of their employees or the quality of service provided for the public. There can be few Labour Party members who have not at some time encountered the typical careerist Labour politician arguing that, since the Labour Party exists to give <u>them</u> a seat on the Council (or in Parliament, or whatever ), then obviously <u>their</u> wishes should be respected and Party members should, for the sake of 'unity', behave accordingly. So much for accountability and democracy!

This can best be illustrated by considering the statements of Alf Jones (Chair of Personnel with Clwyd CC) and Doris Griffiths (Secretary-County Labour Group) to the effect that they would only support an agreement with the nursery nurses made at a national level. Why? Because - in the words of a statement approved by the Labour Group -"... if we have a breakaway agreement with NALGO, we would face the danger of other breakaways." Nothing disturbs the tranquillity of these 'old guard' Labour hacks more than the prospect of workers becoming 'militant' in pursuit of decent wages and conditions and taking part in the kind of struggles that the Labour Party is pledged to support. Especially if these workers are women!

<u>FIGHT BACK!</u>

Unfortunately for both the Tories and self-styled Labour representatives on the Council, neither cajolery nor the pressures of hardship and finance forced the nursery nurses to abandon their struggle. Inspired by the Miners' struggle, which they have supported in exemplary fashion, they held out long enough to show the Public - and in particular rank-and-file Labour Party members - the way forward in standing firm against blackmail and treachery. A Labour Group which originally took refuge in token verbal support of the nursery nurses' claim, has now been forced to show itself in its true colours by supporting the use of scab labour in an attempt to break the strike and failing that, voting to sack all those who did not return to work by a certain date.

It can be surely now only a matter of time before these traitors are expelled from a Party to which they do not belong, or leave to join their friends and co-thinkers in the Aliance. We in <u>Briefing</u> are calling on all Labour Party members to bring that day forward by demonstrating their support for the nursery nurses and repudiating the stance taken by Alf Jones, Ron Drennan & Co. of outright hostility and contempt for the struggle of low-paid women workers.

Questions need to be asked at your branch, General Committees, workplace branches, Womens Sections and LPYS meetings - how has the Labour Party arrived at a situation in N.Wales of having to support Councillors whose contempt for Party policy and struggles of the Labour Movement is plain for all to see?

We suggest passing resolutions of the kind already passed by Delyn CLP, Chester CLP etc. (copies obtainable from Briefing) and sending them to the County Council, as well as raising the issue in the local Press. Only then can we start to build a genuine democratic, campaigning Party ensuring maximum opportunity of participation of members and full accountability of Party representatives. Such a restructure in N.Wales is clearly long overdue!

# miners still need support!

Throughout the country, the miners' strike has shown how magnificently the Labour Party rank-and-file are capable of responding to the call for solidarity with workers in struggle, and North Wales is no exception. Like many places, we have had our share of 'lukewarm' Party officials who have been more notable for their energetic denunciations of alleged 'violence' by pickets than for any concrete demonstration of support for the miners - they have constantly bemoaned the 'bad effects of the dispute' on the Party, whilst most of us have accepted that any loss of support for the Party during the dispute is as a result of the pathetic and farcical attempts by the Party Leadership to 'sit on the fence'. Anyone who equates the Party solely with Kinnock, is bound to feel disillusioned after the spectacles of the past twelve months. The Leadership should be pointing out the strengths within the Party that showed throughout the strike, the qualities of courage, resourcefulness, integrity and determination that were displayed by striking miners and their families and the Parties rank-and-file. We expected our Leadership to display all of these qualities throughout the dispute - it is to our great disappointment that the Leadership seemed lacking in every way.

However, the Miners' Support Groups still have a part to play. Many have worked hard in N.Wales, there are groups in Deeside, Mold, Flint, Wrexham as well as Chester- none of these groups were exclusively Labour, though a strong Labour Party representation was to be seen in all. Since the miners' return to work they have pledged to continue their work, both in raising vital cash to help those miners who have stayed out until the end and supporting those miners who were imprisoned or sacked. Whilst the Tories plan to close pits, privatise the industry and oversee the sacking of 700 miners - one thing is clear, the fight is far from over!

For this reason, the involvement of Labour Party members is still as important as ever, the collections at meetings should continue and the lessons from the strike must be learnt. We must make our plans for the future.

Our first edition of Briefing will include discussion on what we see as the priorities for Labour in the coming months with reference to the miners' struggle. in the meantime, we urge supporters to get involved in Support Group activities - further details are available by contacting Briefing at the address given.

NO TO PIT CLOSURES!

NO TO PRIVATISATION!

AMNESTY FOR ALL SACKED NUM MEMBERS!

# EDITORIAL

The Nursery Nurses issue (front page) highlights the need for a new journal of the Left - and more importantly,a campaigning Left. The behaviour of certain Labour Councillors towards their own Council workforce is an indication of how certain 'leading' Labour politicians might behave (and how many Labour Governments have behaved) towards workers in struggle when these politicians take government power. We have to ensure that the next Labour Government is not permitted to act like the last Callaghan Government.

If the Labour Party fails to support workers in their struggles,if it betrays them,then it is no better than any of 'bosses' parties - SDP,Liberal or Tory. Fortunately,with the majority of rank-and-file Party members this is not the case. The miners' dispute has seen magnificent solidarity action carried out by ordinary Labour Party members.

However,this contrasts strongly with the disgusting attitudes of the Leader of our Party and his cronies. If Kinnock had spent one tenth of the time that he used to attack 'violence' by striking miners,in explaining the NUM case (which he claimed to support!)and using his authority as Party Leader to show clearly that the Labour Party backed the miners all the way,instead of constantly trying to distance the two,then the tasks of those arguing for solidarity would have been made far easier.

The same goes for much of the Trade Union Leadership. If any one reason can be given to explain the defeat of the strike,it surely is BETRAYAL. The TUC did not use the authority it had been given at its 1984 Annual Conference,it backed away from direct action which was needed when the NUM funds were seized,Scargill was nearly arrested and we saw the disgusting spectacle of the Leadership of the Trade Union movement crawling to Thatcher to present a surrender document on behalf of the NUM,a document which,to their eternal credit,the NUM firmly rejected.

What has our movement done to deserve Leaders like these? The supporters of N.Wales & Cheshire Labour Briefing intend to take up the fight for a genuine,Socialist Labour Party,for the election of a Socialist Labour Government,Socialist Labour Councillors and for the developement of a leadership in the Trade Unions that is at least as good as that of the NUM.

Briefing supporters will be producing the first issue of our journal by the begining of May. We invite all those interested in its promotion to subscibe,contribute in any way (see below ) or sell copies. All help would be welcome.

---

The need for those on the left of the Labour Party to make <u>their</u> political contribution into the L.P. has never been greater,both nationally and locally. North wales and Cheshire Briefing is produced by a broad left group of individual L.P. members.If you are interested in the politics of this publication and would like to contribute to Briefing in any way, contact us c/o 24,Chichester St.,Chester

COMING SOON.....FIRST BRIEFING MAGAZINE.....WILL INCLUDE ARTICLES ON HEALTH SERVICE, MINERS,YOUTH,CND,TRANSPORT.....

**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**