CONFERENCE DELEGATES' BRIEFING

TUESDAY BRIGHTON 1989

No To 'Grey' Sections!

BLACK VOICES *WILL* BE HEARD!

In one of the most shameful episodes in the long sorry history of Labour's paternalist relations with Britain's Black communities ("vote for us and shut up") the NEC is today asking Conference to approve its plan for a Black Socialist Society with white voting members.

What's next? Men at Women's Sections? Electricians voting for miners' leaders?

Kinnock and Hattersley are adamant that Black people shall not organise or speak for themselves. Their latest manoeuvre - giving white Party members the right to say who will represent Black Party members - should be rejected as the handiwork of white supremacists.

Kinnock slates the Black Socialist Society idea because "it would be based on racial exclusiveness and would institutionalise apartheid in the Labour Party" but his own proposal would itself "institutionalise apartheid" for the officers and delegates of the new society.

The NEC's absurd device would steal real power from the Black rank-and-file, strip Black officers and delegates of any political credibility, and deny Black Labour politicans any base of support within the Party other than *white members*.

The whole point of setting up a mechanism for "direct representation for Black members" (as stipulated by last year's Conference) was to ensure that the oppressed minority had an independent voice of its own.

But Kinnock and Hattersley want no independent voices in *their* Labour Party, least of all the militant voices of the Black working class. If "gray sections" are set up, just imagine the type of white members who will attend!

16 NEC members rejected a proposal to withold voting rights from white members; their intention is to entrench *white domination* within the Party.

Cook and Blunkett played a key role in frustrating the Working Party proposals. They are not the standard-bearers of "new times" but the lackeys of old-fashioned racist barons of the worst sort (i.e. Hattersley).

The NEC claims that "solidarity" membership for white people is a means of expressing "their commitment to positive policies to combat racism." What a revealing phrase! The *whole* of the labour movement should be committed to such policies - or is racism yet another "vote losing" concern to be pushed to the sidelines?

REJECT the NEC Report!

SUPPORT Composites 6 and 7

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

TODAY'S DEBATES

POLICY REVIEW: A FAIRER COMMUNITY

IN its reliance on market forces this section of the Policy Review is incompatible with the socialist aim of full employment, fails to deal with Britain's unfair taxation and housing subsidy structure, and falls well short on equal opportunities, especially in relation to people with disabilities.

It sets the statutory minimum wage at 50% of the median male wage - "poverty" level, even according to the Tories. Its top tax rate (at 50%, lower than it has been for most of Thatcher's tenure). A wealth tax is a necessity for an egalitarian programme - as is investment in special equipment for people with disabilities, and statutory requirements on employers of all kinds to provide nurseries and other childcare facilities. The Policy Review avoids all these commitments: REJECT it.

LOBBY STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE: 9.15 onwards

•To ensure Comp. 32 on **Lesbian & Gay Rights** isn't dropped.

•To argue for resolution 58 (+amendment) & Res. 59 (**3-line whip on abortion**) to be timetabled (support any reference back of SOC Report called for this reason).

BLACK SECTIONS: Major unions are lining up against the NEC proposals. Delegates must be ready for the debate *and the vote*.

GUIDE TO VOTING

MORNING SESSION

NEC REPORT: BLACK & ASIAN COMMITTEE: OPPOSE.

NEC SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT: BLACK & ASIAN ORGANISATION IN LP: OPPOSE.

COMPOSITES 6 &7: SUPPORT.

POLICY REVIEW: ECONOMIC EQUALITY: OPPOSE.

COMPOSITE 17: SUPPORT. Links pensions & average earnings and/or retail price index.

COMPOSITE 18: Proposing a comprehensive benefit system & anti-poverty strategy. SUPPORT.

RESOLUTION 141a: SUPPORT. See article p.3

AFTERNOON SESSION

WOMEN'S ORGANISATION: Composites not yet available, but probably *abstain* on all. While quotas seem to be a form of positive action what women really need is *power* for the Women's Organisation in the Party. If RESOLUTION 37 stands, SUPPORT with reservations. It's the only mention of the 5 Women's NEC places being directly elected by Women's Conference (although support for union block vote is dubious as long as there is no organisation for women in the trade unions).

NEC REPORT: WOMEN'S ORGANISATION: OPPOSE. It abolishes National Labour Women's Committee & has more nasty tricks in the wings.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: WOMEN'S ORGANISATION: OPPOSE.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: ELECTION OF OFFICERS: OPPOSE. It requires voting for leader & deputy through so-called one-member-one-vote.

COUNTY (REGIONAL) RULES: SUPPORT. Ensures County Parties appoint Women's Officer.

LCLGR LOBBY

LCLGR's campaign for **full equality** for lesbians and gay men had a boost yesterday with a vocal lobby calling on Conference to overturn the leadership's opposition to Comp. 38 on the age of consent.

Around 50 lobbyists heard messages of support from **Ken Livingstone, Chris Smith,** and **Pat Sikorski** (NUR). In addition, **Robin Cook** sent a message recognising the errors of his ways and pledging future support.

LCLGR announced that CLP and union support (T&G, NUPE, ACTT, NOLS) was building up and the vote on Thursday afternoon will be a cliffhanger.

PREDICTION OF THE DAY: the MPs' section of Conference Hall, nearly empty during most of the week's proceedings, will be chock-a-block for the first and only time when the Leader delivers his "parliamentary report" this afternoon. The brown noses are easily visible under the arc-lights.

TILBURY DOCKS: from joint regulation to victimisation. TGWU. 12.30, Norfolk Resort Hotel, Kings Road.

40 YEARS OF NEW CHINA: Where is Democracy?. Chinese Solidarity Campaign. 6-8pm. Curzon Hotel, Cavendish Place.

WHOSE CHOICE? WHOSE FREEDOM? Democracy & the future of the media. ACTT/BETA/NGA/NUJ. 6.30pm. Pickwick Suite, Bedford Hotel, Kings Road.

POLICIES for POPULAR SOCIALISM. Debate with Bryan Gould, Reg Race, Martin Jacques. 7pm. Preston Bar, Royal Albion Hotel.

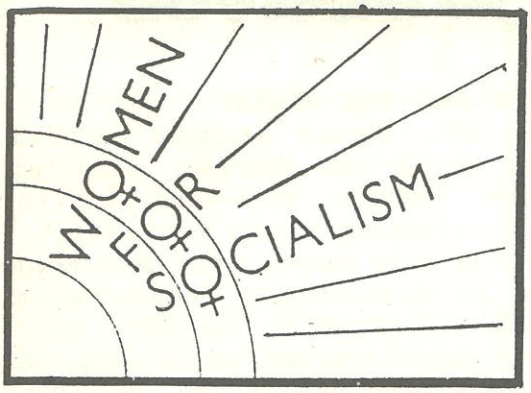
Polish Socialists Speak

Today, 5.30, NALGO Club, off Edward St.

Czeslaw Boronczyk (President of Solidarnosc in Wroclaw Factory)

Tadeusz Rachowski (National Executive, Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution)

David Holland (British Representative, PSP-DR)



HELEN Holland of the National Labour Women's Committee spoke to Conference in the defence debate in support of Composite 47 and 48 and reminded us why the leadership ignores Labour Women's demands.

Even though Women's Conference and the NLWC have had no power, we have often ben a thorn in their sides.

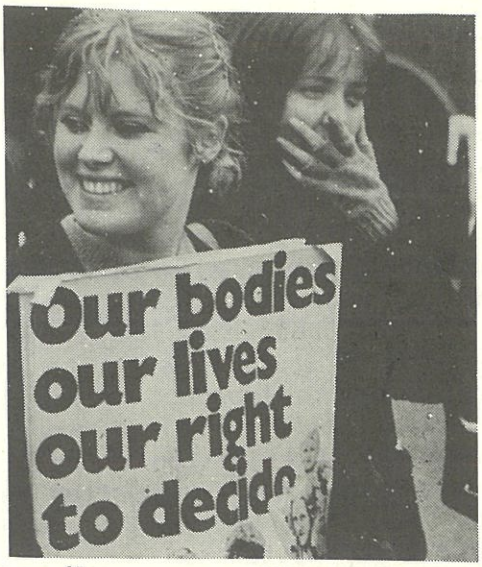
But now the debate about increasing our power in the Party has been sidetracked into talking about quotas. This year's Women's Conference was conned into supporting the "idea" of a 40% quota of women on the NEC *instead* of continued support for the long held demand that Women's Conference elect the five existing women's places on the NEC.

The LCC has promoted a national media campaign for quotas of women throughout the Party. The Labour Women's Action Committee supported the quota proposal.

WOMEN FOR SOCIALISM did not. This was not because we are opposed to quotas as such. WOMEN FOR SOCIALISM supports all forms of positive action for women: the 5 NEC women's places are in fact a form of positive action.

But WOMEN FOR SOCIALISM *is* opposed to *powerless* quotas. And we are certainly opposed to quotas of *image instead of* quotas of *power*.

It is clear from the section of the NEC Report that other plans are afoot to attack Labour Women. NLWC is being merged with the NEC Women's Committee and will be constituted so as to give the unions an overwhelming say in its composition.



Labour Women are calling a picket of
LIFE's MEETING
with STUART BELL and LORD LONGFORD
TODAY 7.15pm Wagner Hall, off West Street

6 women will be elected by the trade union section at National Labour Women's Conference and 11 by Regional Women's Conferences - which themselves involve trade union delegations.

The women members of the NEC are automatically included. So CLP women will have little hope of a voice.

A re-examination of the whole question of women's "places" on the NEC is proposed. One suggestion is that the 5 women's seats should be replaced by the 40% quota. The report makes clear that only if the union block vote had effectively silenced women's voices (or, as the Report puts it, that "the new arrangements for the National Conference of Labour Women are working effectively.") would the Women's Conference be allowed to elect the 5 seats.

WOMEN FOR SOCIALISM will continue to fight for power for women and for our voice through the women's organisation to be heard. We won't go away and we won't be fobbed off by powerless quotas.

WOMEN FOR SOCIALISM

At a small but productive meeting, **Tracey Lambert** (COHSE) spoke on the NHS; **Valerie Vaz** on local government; **Maria Fyfe** on the Poll Tax and discussions in Scotland about women's participation in the Constitutional Convention; and **Martha Osamor** on Black Sections. Discussion from the floor focused on attacks on the Women's Organisation and on anger at the Labour Life meeting, with attention being drawn to Stuart Bell's role in "Cleveland"

COUNTING WOMEN'S UNPAID WORK

SUPPORT the call for reference back of SOC Report to timetable Res. 141A, or this vital topic won't be mentioned in the Economic Equality debate. The resolution calls for the implementation of **Mildred Gordon's** Bill (*Counting Women's Unremunerated Work in the GNP*): needed if we are to recognise the right of mothers and carers to benefit is not a charity, but a right for their contribution to society.

Yesterday's Debates

ECONOMY

TOM Sawyer kicked off the debate claiming responsibility for Labour's 10% lead in the polls. No mention of Poll Tax, NHS cuts, soaring interest rates, or the summer of discontent.

A lacklustre **Brian Gould** moved the economic Policy Revew papers. The following debate was equally lacklustre.

Eric Heffer made the best contribution, warning against Labour's Bad Godesburg, insisting that in Britain as in the Soviet Union the answer to economic crisis "lies with the working people not the market."

After the ritual rejection of both CLPD (C11) and *Militant* (C12) composites we are left with what the Leyton CLP delegate called "Red Rose Capitalism".

Recent opinion polls show a call for more socialist planning backed by 38% and opposed by 29%. But Labour's leaders still failed to get Beyond the Casino Economy.

Bryn Griffiths, Tottenham CLP

NUCLEAR POWER

SCARGILL moved the composite calling for phasing out nuclear power within 15 years. The EETPU railed against *coal pollution* and extolled the virtues of nuclear power. After all the talk of "greening the Labour Party" the NEC called for remittance. Scargill refused. The Composite was defeated by 2,859,000 to 3,243,000. So much for **Peter Mandelson's** "Red-Green" Party.

BRITAIN AND THE WORLD

FOR the NEC, **Gerald Kaufmann** waffled on how the world has changed, referred to Gorbachev, Namibia, Nicaragua, and topped it all by claiming he was a socialist.

In the defence debate, the main argument for the multilateralists composite (moved by USDAW supported by the NEC) was that dropping unilateralism would help Labour win. **Bruce Kent**, moving C47, a reduction in defence spending, received a stirring ovation - much to **Kinnock's** discomfort.

Speeches for unilateralist C48 by **Benn, Ruddock,** and **Todd** enlivened Conference. The **Surrey SW** delegate (ex-unilateralist and pround of it) gave the left someone to shout at.

Predictably, following summer manoeuvres at union conferences, C46 was carried by 1 million votes and C48 fell by the same. To our leaders' dismay, C47 was carried by a substantial 2 million votes.

In the Middle East Debate, **Danny Sergeant** attacked the Policy Review for not going far enough; the Palestinians should be given the same support as other oppressed peoples.

In opposition, **Poale Zion** came up with tired excuses for Israel's oppression. The **SOGAT Composite** was carried - against NEC advice. Speakers on the South African Composite made good points - but most were lost in shuffling, walking, talking...

MSF: WHAT? NO CARD VOTE?

WHY no card vote on "Britain and the World"? The show of hands looked pretty even. Could it be that Chair **Jo Richardson** wanted to spare someone the embarrassment of having to register MSF's hefty block vote - *against* the leadership (and in accordance with union policy)?

ZIONIST SMEARS DON'T STICK

Labour Zionists are panicking. Yesterday saw a spate of nasty leaflets apparently aimed at swaying the Middle East debate. Thankfully the **Poale Zion** resolution fell and the SOGAT Composite (and Policy Review recognising the PLO) were carried. Conference must follow through its own logic and break links with the Israeli Labour Party and Histadrut. For more information contact LMCP, BM Box LMCP, London WC1 3XX.

SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

AFTER the retreat from unilateralism and the removal of **Ken Livingstone** from the NEC, this meeting was a welcome attempt to dispell the gloom by promoting the twin-track strategy of opposing the Party's present direction and at the same time demonstrating a socialist alternative to it.

Peter Tatchell spoke on socialist Europe, **Nadine Finch** on **Women for Socialism**, and **Tony Benn** on the main political issues around which the Socialist Movement is organising. This is the beginning of a process of transforming of transforming public opinions through linking socialist ideas to the practical struggles of ordinary people.

Fringe Reports

BLACK SECTIONS DELEGATES BRIEFING

NARENDRA Makanji dubbed the NEC's plans for a Black Socialist Society with white members the "coconut initiative" and condemned the "payroll vote" mobilised by Kinnock to smash his own Working Party.

Tony Benn, reporting from the NEC, commented on proposals for white "solidarity" members of the Black Society that "real solidarity is backing black people in struggle - not wanting a vote so you can vote *against a radical black*."

Bernie Grant said: "If this mish-mash of proposals are passed we'll have to work against them."

N. IRELAND PLP/LCI

KEVIN "Ban Gerry Adams" McNamara demonstrated his commitment to democratic rights at a fringe meeting called by the PLP N. Ireland Committee by telling the 40 people there that the question of voting on the PTA was "a minor point of tactics, not an argument of principle."

His rhetoric on democracy is about as consistent as the Policy Review position on Ireland - we must have unionist consent to do anything, but this doesn't mean they've got a veto.

THE **LCI/LWI** meeting gave a constructive approach. **Jeremy Corbyn** and **Mick Gosling** of the CPBF spoke to a 300+ audience strongly denouncing the broadcasting ban on **Sinn Fein**, pointing out that more SLD MPs than Labour had signed the petition against the ban. **Joan Maynard** forcefully refuted the Labour leadership's line that terrorism is the problem in Ireland: "You can't teach the British ruling class (Labour or Tory governments) anything about terrorism"; "Ireland was divided without consent and by force." **Gerry Adams** received a standing ovation (and a physical attack on the platform) for his forceful restatement of the case for British withdrawal and Irish self-determination.

LABOUR PARTY NEWS

THE Walworth Road house journal sponsored a meeting to promote four recent Labour authors: **Benn, Gould, Austin Mitchell, Giles Radice**. Referring to his latest volume of *Diaries*, Benn outlined the difficulties facing any new Labour government and described the task of managing capitalism in a humane fashion as "impossible". He asked his fellow authors to consider why, despite years in office, Labour had always failed to make lasting change on Britain's political institutions.

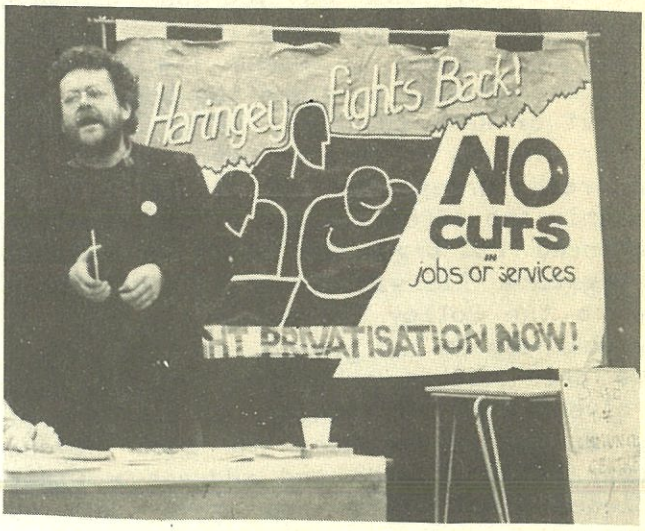
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

THE consensus at the **LGIU** fringe was surprisingly optimistic. A Labour General Election victory, it seems, will sweep away local government's problems.

But nothing was said about resisting Poll Tax or its implications on Council spending. There was silence on how the Local Government Finance & Housing Bill will affect Council rents.

However, **Blunkett** was exposed over CCT and the Policy Review, where Labour will only modify (not scrap) Tory laws. Blunkett denounced "incompetence" in Council services and paid homage to competition - promising that uneconomic services would be put out to tender.

Paul Inglefield
Hammersmith NALGO/Norwood CLP



Haringey Councillor Steve King addresses a local anti-cuts meeting.

FORD DAGENHAM IN DANGER

A breath of industrial reality came to Conference fringe at this launch meeting of a campaign to stop closure of Fords Dagenham. 100 people heard **Jack Adams, Steve Hart** (T&G officers), **Carole Tongue** MEP, **Brian Gould** and **Ron Todd**. Adams reported that Ford management intend moving the Sierra to Genk leaving Dangenham with the down-market Fiesta, a prelude to closure in the near future. Ford wants to relocate in bigger, nationalised European plants with "flexible" work agrements. The company denies this but insists: "The Dagenham workforce itself could well close the plant." Carole Tongue stressed that Ford's plans showed what 1992 was about.

EDITORIAL
WE *WON'T* LEARN TO LOVE THE BOMB

The defeat of unilateralism and the NEC results are the clearest symptoms of the malaise which hundreds of delegates have felt this week in Brighton. The flat atmosphere, the predictable votes are the inevitable result of Sun-day's vote denying Conference the right to amend the top-down Policy Review.

Nonetheless, there is still plenty to fight for: Black Sections, lesbian and gay rights, an end to anti-union laws. Nor is this the end of the debate about the bomb. Though there will now be reluctance in the CLPs to fight again on this issue, it will return to haunt the Party.

Our lone victory on arms spending contains the seed of left renewal. The conflict between the socialist aspirations expressed in C.47 and the Party's commitment to the bomb (and the market economy) cannot be contained indefinitely. NUPE members (whose leaders voted for C46 *and* C47) will soon find that you can't clean a bedpan with a Trident missile.

The left needs to widen its internationalist agenda, to place the bomb in the context of arms spending, NATO, the Third World, etc. To do this we need new methods and fresh forces. The NEC result reflects not only the effectiveness of the Kinnock-sponsored LCC-organised vendetta against Livingstone (his sin: to pose an alternative to the Policy Review) but a sign of *our* weakness on the ground, even in CLPs.

We need better co-ordination and more involvement of left-wingers at the base of the movement; we need to look beyond Labour Party rhythms and address a wider audience. All this and more can be discussed by delegates at the open meeting called by the Socialist Movement on Thursday evening at the Brighthelm Centre.

YESTERDAY'S DEBATE: COMMENT

PETER TATCHELL on Labour's refusal to phase out nuclear power: "a massive self-inflicted kick in the shins which damages Labour's claims to take green issues seriously."

ALICE MAHON: "The NEC was beaten on arms spending and that shows there's still some fight left in the Party. We won't be able to fund our social programme if we carry on thinking bombs are wonderful."

DENNIS SKINNER: "There's left and there's right and I've not yet discovered who the people are who are supposed to be floating in the middle. When the crunch comes there are always people who vote for the leadership and people who vote against."

BRUCE KENT: "I'm very happy C47 was passed. It reflects much more the real feeling of this Conference than a shoved-through NEC embrace of nuclear weapons."

TONY BENN: "Remember it wasn't a vote for multilateral disarmament. The commitment to Trident represents nothing less than unilateral nuclear *rearmament*. It is a huge *increase* in fire-power. And the only justification offered for it was electoral. That was clear from the speeches and ultimately the public won't be impressed."

JEREMY CORBYN: "Ken Livingstone's defeat and replacement by Prescott shows the need not just for better left organisation but for an increased awareness throughout the Party that the economic and defence policies hang together. The vote for arms cuts is easily the best news of the week so far - but how will it be reconciled with other commitments?

INNUMERATE & IRRADIATION

ACCORDING to **Gerald Kaufmann**, Labour is committed to a "Nuclear Free World" by the year 2000. Yet in the energy debate in the morning session Kinnock's atomic puppets refused to support phasing out all nuclear reactors within 15 years. So the earliest possible date for phasing out nuclear power is well into the 21st century. Some problems with the calculator, Gerald? No wonder our economic policy doesn't add up.

PERGAMON LOBBY

Outside Maxwell's annual beano for Party big-shots; 6.30pm, WEDNESDAY, Grand Hotel.

VOICES FOR SALMAN RUSHDIE

Against fundamentalism and racism
For the right to dissent
Wednesday, 1pm, Brighthelm Centre, North Road

Socialism, Free Speech and Anti-Racism

With: Southall Black Sisters; Campaign Against Repression in Iran; Narendra Makanji (Black Sections).

BEYOND THE FRINGE

Bizarre Scene: Top journos **Stuart Weir** and **John Lloyd** handing out leaflets advertising a fringe meeting featuring a debate between - Stuart Weir and John Lloyd. This head-to-head may be the week's least interesting event.