CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 1984

This month's meeting:

'Labour and Ireland', with Martin Collins, Editor of the Labour Committee on Ireland's journal.

Venue: The Cock Tavern, Chalton Street, Somers Town.
Thursday 16th February, 8p.m.

HARRODS - THE AFTERMATH (from this month's New Labour & Ireland Editorial)

When the outcry over the Harrod's bomb has died down I have a feeling we will be left with a hollow feeling in our stomachs that another opportunity to have done something constructive to resolve the Irish situation has passed us by.

The response of the Labour Party leadership has been to bury its head. The Unionist and Tory outcry coupled with the call to ban Sinn Fein should have been exposed for the cynical manoeuvre it was. Witness Thatcher's unguarded comments to journalists recorded on tape by the Guardian - 'Well Gentlemen, how do you want me to play this? Shall I link it all in with Christmas?' This should have been contrasted to a different and positive alternative for ending the war.

After the Birmingham bombings in 1974 the rush to increase repression and intimidation of the Irish community in Britain was masked by the misnomer - 'Prevention of Terrorism'. Like its updated version the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, the PTA did much to undermine civil liberties in Britain, preparing the way for further legislation like the Police Bill.

It is now almost 10 years since Birmingham; the tide of public opinion has shifted in favour of the one political solution that will work - withdrawal. The Labour movement in Britain does not, as yet, reflect this change, but we are surely not in for another 'dark age' where Ireland cannot be discussed. The wall of silence and disinformation has begun to be broken, even if it is only a beginning.

The fringe meeting with Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein women was the second biggest at the Labour Party conference, but the Unionist veto is still supported by large sections of the movement - particularly the unions. The battle of ideas in the party must continue....

OPEN EDITORIAL MEETINGS CAMDEN LABOUR CLUB: 3rd MONDAY EVERY MONTH, 9pm