CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 1986

stop the witch hunt!

THE DRIVE BY LABOUR LEADERS TO ATTACK AND ISOLATE THE PARTY'S LEFT WING HAS NOW MOVED INTO A HIGHER GEAR.

Since the expulsion of the Militant Editorial Board members at the 1983 conference there have been sporadic attempts by right wing local constituencies to expel Militant supporters. The scale of these moves was consistent with Jim Mortimer's claim at the time that the expulsion of Militant's editors was not to be the green light for a witch hunt.

All that has now changed. Kinnock's direct assault on both Liverpool City Council and the NUM leadership at the party conference has opened the door to both nationally co-ordinated campaigns against Militant and local witch hunts against prominent left wingers.

Numbers of Militant supporters expelled have now reached 32. Devon Labour Briefing supporters in Exeter are currently threatened with expulsion. In Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency councillor Amin Khan, organiser of a local black section and Kevin Scully, secretary of birmingham Labour Committee on Ireland were thrown out of the party last November for challenging what they saw as patronage and corruption there.

Membership applications and transfers are being refused following allegations of support for Militant and Socialist Action and former membership of the Communist Party. Supporters of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy have been expelled for repeatedly raising breaches of LP rules and procedures.

Meanwhile Neil Kinnock has taken full advantage of the isolation of Liverpool Council and of the political weaknesses of the Militant supporters at its head. The so-called inquiry into Liverpool City Labour Party is a vicious ploy to attack these supporters and punish LP members for carrying out the Labour Party's national policy .

In a general sense the right wing has always been prepared to resort to purges of its opponents inside the party. Well known examples include Stafford Cripps expelled in the 1930s, the expulsions in Norwood Labour Party in the 1950s and the closing down of the Young Socialists in 1965 by Harold Wilson.

Closer to home in St Pancras, all 14 members of the opposition Labour Group on the Council were expelled from the Labour Party for opposing the rent increases that sparked off the St Pancras tenants' rent strike of 1959/60.

So witch hunts are nothing new. But why does the present wave come at this particular time?

In the wake of the miners' defeat the right wing has become much more confident. It is bent on making the party appear 'fit for government' by being seen to put its house in order.

But it is also using the witch hunt to clear the way for a possible coalition. As the recent speech by the chairperson of the Parliamentary Labour Party delivered in Northern Ireland made clear, Labour leaders estimate that there is every likelihood of the party failing to win an outright majority at the next General Election.

Far from sending those under attack into disarray the witch hunt is drawing them closer together. Labour Left Co-ordination with the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Campaign Group of Labour MPs are publishing a regular bulletin about the purges. The Greater London Labour Party has condemned the witch hunt and protested to the NEC. Labour Briefing supporters all over the country are mounting a counter-offensive.

Clearly, every expulsion and every new witch hunting move, including the inquiry into Liverpool City Labour Party must be fought all the way.



Camden Labour Briefing

STOP
THE
WITCH HUNT

PUBLIC FORUM
8.00PM
TUES 4 FEB
CAMDEN
TOWN HALL

Borough Conference: LEFT MUST STAY ON THE ALERT

With the Camden Labour Parties having now agreedthe manifesto for the Borough Elections in May, it is vital that the Borough Conference on 8 March commits the incoming Labour Group to honour present council commitments plus the manifesto proposals. The present Labour Group should also cost these proposals.

Whether or not the result of this process will mean a deficit budget for Camden this year, there can be little doubt that confrontation with the Government is inevitable in the future if the new council maintains a commitment to defend jobs and services and to expand services.

Selection of candidates in all the wards where Labour should win indicates that the composition of the Labour Group will probably not alter drastically after the local elections. A right wing group will be opposed by the left with those in the middle holding the balance of power.

In this context the left in Camden will have to mobilise outside the council chamber. It is contact and work with Camden trade unions and with local working class organisations that will count more than ever in the battles to come.

SILENTNIGHT STRIKERS FIGHT ON

The hardest-fought dispute since the miners' battle against pit closures is now entering its eigth month. Support for the 500 strikers at three Silentnight factories in Sutton, Yorkshire and Barnoldswick, Lancashire, has come from all sections of the labour movement, notably from several mining communities.

With the official backing of their union FTAT the Silentnight workers were fighting redundancies and a wage freeze only to be sacked by their employers when they took strike action. Sales of the beds have slumped byt management continue to use scab labour to keep the factories going.

Picketting of local furniture stores which stock Silentnight products is being organised and details will be publicised shortly be CAMDEN BRIEFING. Meanwhile it is vital to arrange speakers and collections in your trade union and labour party branches to help the strikers to hold out.For speakers ring Terry Bennet on (0282) 603055. Send donations to Mrs Ann King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick Colne, Lancs.

JUSTICE FOR THE MINERS

ANNIVERSARY DEMO
& RALLY, SUNDAY 2 MARCH
1.30 pm JUBILEE GARDENS, COUNTY HALL.
Sponsored by the NUM &
National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

stop the witch hunt!

The drive by Neil Kinnock and his leadership to attack and isolate the Labour Party's left wing has now moved into a higher gear. Its longer-term aim is to make the party respectable' for government and to clear the way for coalition if Labour fails to gain an outright majority at the next General Election.

PUBLIC FORUM
8.00 PM
TUES 4 FEB
CAMDEN TOWN HALL
JUDD ST, WC1.

SPEAKERS:
NADINE FINCH
Labour Left Co-ordination & Greater London Labour Party.

CHARLIE TAYLOR
Former St Pancras Cllr, expelled from the LP in 1960 for supporting St Pancras tenants' Rent Strike.

PLUS

PUBLIC FORUM TUES 18 MARCH
8.00 PM CAMDEN TOWN HALL
'WHAT KIND OF SOCIALIST ECONOMIC POLICY FOR LABOUR?
with
ANDREW GLYN Author of the Campaign Group pamphlet..

A MILLION JOBS A YEAR

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