DEVON LABOUR 40p

# BRIEFING

with NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

No. 1 July 1984

# MINERS' STRIKE:

# DEVON POLICE IN ACTION !

by John Lloyd:
Vice Chair
Exeter CLP:
Personal Capacity

The problem which Devon faces about the refusal of Derbyshire to pay for the deployment of 250 of its police in the miners' strike, neatly exposes the constitutional and operational cracks in the running of Britain's police.

The Devon (and Cornish) police were sent on the initiative of the Chief Constable under the mutual aid provision of the 1964 Police Act. When the three Labour members of the Police Authority objected, we were told it was no business of the Authority.

Police authorities consist of one third magistrates (all Tories in Devon and Cornwall) and two thirds elected members. It is unlikely that our authority would have objected to the Chief Constable's actions, but where police authorities have - as in Yorkshire, Merseyside and Derbyshire - they have been ignored by their chief constables.

The illegal, oppressive and expensive behaviour of the police in suppressing the miners' strike is thus outside any democratic control. The costs, though, will come back to the County Councils. We thus have expenditure without representation.

The Labour Movement over two decades must bear part of the responsibility for this. We have left the issue of law and order to the Tories. We even left the 1964 Act and its undemocratic provisions intact...

Continued over




**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**

It is central to socialism that it is ordered and rationally planned: in contrast, capitalism is essentially chaotic. The task of thinking through the system of justice and policing has not been undertaken by the British Labour Movement.

We know that a Home Office Unit has been planning the mass policing of the coal fields for ten years, since the police were humiliated by the miners in 1974. We now know that Chief Constables are beyond democratic control. We have seen police persistently breaking the law with impunity. We have seen magistrates willingly bend the rules for them. Devon policemen who have been in Derbyshire tell me that they are shocked and ashamed at the behaviour of colleagues from Merseyside and the Met., that most of the violence has resulted from police provocation.

The daily experience which many young working class and black people have of the police in London and Merseyside is now plain for all to see.

Two Labour Party bodies have started to tackle the issue: the Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice and the GLC Police Committee Support Unit are producing papers and policy documents. There is still a big job to be done in this field and we shall be ready to present a coherent socialist approach to the police by the next election.

# Miners in Exmouth

For over three months pickets from South Wales have been in action at the docks in Exmouth. Below, Ray Davison, Secretary of Exmouth Labour Party, writing in personal capacity, answers questions put by Devon Labour Briefing about developments in Exmouth.

DLB: What did you hope to achieve by bringing the pickets to Exmouth and how far have these hopes been fulfilled ?

RD: The immediate aim was to stop the importatio n of coal from Gdansk and Rotterdam. Initially we managed to do this in both Teignmouth and Exmouth. The pickets did an excellant job with the dock workers who are non-registered casual labourers but unionised in the TGWU. The miners persuaded them to implement the TGWU directive to block the movement of coal. Unfortunately the dock manager and owner in Exmouth were astute and managed to persuade the NUM executive in South Wales to give a dispensation to their docks. This threw both the pickets, TGWU District Office and workers into confusion, and they have never recovered from this position. A new agreement was reached after a minor show of force, but only a blocade of the docks would have given the miners the upper hand again. The pickets certainly wanted such a blocade, but could not get backing from the Pontypridd Executive. So coal is coming in all along the Devon coast - even at docks where we placed picket lines - Teignmouth, Torbay, Plymouth, Bideford, etc,

DLB: Are you disappointed by these set backs ?

RD: We wanted to stop the coal and feel we could have done so if the pickets on the ground had been better supported by their Executive who did not know the situation so well. But we don't regret in any way that we called the pickets in. Their presence in Exmouth and elsewhere has been a great benefit to the Labour Party.

DLB: In what way ?

RD: First, we have been able to focus the energies and drive of the local Party on a major industrial dispute and give members a sense of the importance of the miners' strike which I do not think they would have had if the miners had not come. Second, members have been able to witness at first hand the weaknesses of trade union organisation and political thinking in this area and to contrast this the level of trade union awareness enjoyed by NUM members. Our local trades council has shifted its position from one of weak adherence to the Murray line on the NGA to a much stronger committment to resisting Tory anti-trade union legislation. Under the gaze of the Miners, some conservative members of the Trades Council have had to concede ground to have any credibility at all. We have also been able to see how sectarian interests in the TUC weaken the labour movement and set worker against worker. Education to promote political awareness among workers and Trade Unionists is a clear priority to emerge from our experience.

DLB: How do the striking miners see the Labour Party?

RD: Of the 100 or so who have stayed with us in Exmouth, only two were Labour Party members, although all were Labour voters. The vast majority were dissatisfied with the Labour Party establishment in their constituency (Merthyr Tydfil, M.P. Ted Rolands), accusing it of complacency and lack of political will. They were surprised and delighted by Devon Labour Party members who in all but a very few cases gave them unqualified support and threw themselves totally into the struggle. It does not seem to have occured to them that they are free to join their CLPs to fight the complacency. Many said that they had been heartened by the Labour activists during the campaign and will join us. The miners' position has evolved considerably during the strike as we might expect. Certainly they are presenting the economic case against pit closures more and more forcefully as the strike progresses and refute totally the whole notion of 'profitability' and the closure of 'uneconomic' pits. Industrial action is the best form of political education.

DLB: Do you think they look to Neil Kinnock for leadership?

RD: Yes. I was supprised that so few of them appeared to support Kinnock as leader. I did not get the impression that this was exclusively because of his position on the ballot and his wavering commitment. They see Benn, Heffer and Skinner as their leaders.

DLB: Do you think the miners have lost you support in Exmouth?

RD: No, our support, such as it is, has not been affected; but I hope we have shown the people of Exmouth that the Labour Party exists in a form to be reckoned with. We have had to confront quite a bit of abuse, but I think that facing this abuse is very important and will encourage other Labour sympathisers to show their colours. I hope the miners strike and their present situation will strengthen our position . I'm sure it will.

# EXETER LABOUR BRIEFING

## EDITORIAL STATEMENT:

Following pressure from the Exeter CLP 'Exeter Labour Briefing' has stopped publication. During an acrimonious exchange on the GMC it was stated by a leading opponent of ELB that the real objection was to the content and not to the name, as in the ECs recommendation for expulsion. This confirmed the claims of those who support the Briefing.

As regards the final issue the objection to the content may have gained some justification, although the process of attempting to expel the editors had been set in motion some months previously. This last issue was wrong in presenting an account of a ward meeting coloured, albeit understandably, by personal animosity.

We admit that we have made errors, but would wish to point out that ELB has in the past contained many well informed articles on a variety of themes, put forward in a spirit of constructive debate, within the Labour Party.

So what has happened in Exeter ? The right wing have begun moves to keep the Left in check. We woudl still maintain that it is more than coincidental that this occurs at a time when the Labour Group on the Exeter City Council has entered into a 'working relationship' with the Liberals. So far the Labour Group has not compromised severely on the manifesto, although the fact that the Liberal and Labour manifestos are not dissimilar raises some very obvious questions.

In changing its name, the Briefing has avoided the illegal expulsion of its editors and the inevitable acrimony accompanying any any appeal to the NEC. Thus no precedent can be claimed for moves against other area Briefings and the nationwide collection of forums for socialist debate of the broad left remains undamaged.

Devon Labour Briefing can therefore be launched with a spirit of optimism. Nobody has ever said it is easy being a socialist in Devon, but never has there been a more vital time for us to come together and build a mass campaigning Labour Party. There are many who are acutely aware of the depth of the crisis in Britain and the severity of attacks being made on the working people, the young, the poor, women, blacks, but who feel isolated and impotent. Hopefully Devon Labour Briefing will provide an opportunity for communication and discussion, and be a catalyst for action.

# The Rag-bag Opposition

There is no effective opposition to Thatcherism in this country, only a 'rag-bag' consisting of protest movements, C.N.D., Womens' movements, TUC and a Labour Party trying to recreate itself.

Thatcher's government has forged ahead with its policies, dismantling the welfare state with ever increasing programmes of privatisation of services, cuts in benefits, selling off profitable parts of nationalised industries, the passage of a repressive Police and Criminal Evidence Bill which will legalise the illegal and often brutal measures taken by the police against the miners and the Greenham Women. Random stop and search road blocks will soon be seen in the streets of England as they are in Northern Ireland. The government, not content with 'rate-capping' to control local councils seeking to improve services remain determined to abolish Metropolitan Authorities; and having deliberately provoked the miners strike (no miner chooses the summer time in which to act) they continue daily to provoke and confront while the media revels in one-sided reports of violence. The divisions in the country between the jobless and the waged increase and we are all being made fearful of losing our jobs, of the nuclear threat, of the hoary old red menace.

As I see it the rag-bag has utterly failed to become a cohesive political force; it has found no authentic expression in the institutions of democracy. In the words of Beatrix Campbell 'we already know more about the rise of the new radical Right than we do about the demise of the old Left'. We have failed dismally to recruit the young unemployed and the mass of working people. Those who have suffered most, the clients of the D.H.S.S. and the (un)Employment Office see no point in protest. Their total lack of faith in our ability to achieve change and their despair are very worrying. We seem unable to give them answers. Anger would be better than apathy.

Parliamentary opposition seems to be lacking in will and in unity. With a few notable exceptions there are no strong voices and no clear leadership; few M.P.'s for example are seen at picket lines. We all seem to be too concerned about upsetting the middle ground. It seems to me that to be effective we have somehow to become much more involved with the other rags in the bag and much more supportive of each other. We can learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. Out of the rag-bag has to come a brand new party dress. So how about a big demo in Exeter in support of the miners for a start? with, of course, the banners of the party, C.N.D. and the Unions all being seen together.

Pam Penhale
Tiverton CLP

# LABOUR STAND ALONE




Scratch a Liberal and underneath the glossy veneer you will find a Tory. Indeed, Marx himself felt that there would be room for only one major Capitalist Party, namely the Liberals - the Liberals, however, have become, due to historical circumstances, the Tory second eleven to be boosted by Capitalism when the Tories look like becoming unpopular. The Liberals have recently been joined by the traitors of the SDP, a Party set up by the rich to try and desroy the Labour Party - they have failed. What are the empricists up to now? Like the myth of a crock of gold at the end of the rainbow - a mish-mash of opportunists in the form of Frank Field (Lab. Birkenhead), Lord Michael Young of Dartington (Chair, SDP Devon) and Eric Hobsbawm (erstwhile theoretician of the so-called Communist Party) are busy with their brushes painting the rainbow.

With these types, the hue looks blue, and may become increasingly so as they invite the wet nappies of the Tory Party (Pym, Prior et al.) to join them whenin the times ahead, Thatcher stumbles and falls.

Who are these coalitionists? Each would claim to be a gentleman of principle. Frank Field agrees with his GMC when it suits him. Lord Michael Young runs a paternalistic operation in Devon reminiscent of the nineteenth century; David Steel calls himself a democrat because he ignores his own annual conference; Dr. 'Death' Owen calls on the Tories to use the anti trade union laws against the miners; Eurocommunists like Hobsbawm, are in reality Liberals with their phrase 'let usunite all progressive forces'.

These would-be saviours of the nation believe they are having original thoughts. What they don't realise is that they are the mouthpieces of others who see the coming storms for the Tories and are busy cobbling together an alternative. The Rainbow Group need Capitalism to provide th ir expensive suits and the daily bloating of red wine and fine steaks. The fear of a left Labour government coming to power drives them together.

The Labour Party must reject outright advances made from without to water down the drive for a proper socialist programme, and must have no truck with those within - the Trojan horses who are trying to stem the leftward shift of Labour.

The rainbow is merely a transitional phenomenon. What we must ensure is that when it dissolves into the blue sky it is overcome by the red hot ball of the sun. Labour must stand alone!

Sean Brogan
Vice Chair Teignmouth Labour Party (personal capacity)

# Greenham

Many people in Trafalgar Square on June 9th will have heard the Greenham speaker's passionate call for IO million women to withdraw their labour and join the Greenham peace camp for ten days between September 20th and 30th. Since then, word has spread quickly, at least within the feminist and peace movements. Greater links - with women all over Britain, in workplaces, homes, unions etc. - will have to be worked for and cemented before anything near the ten mil lion target can be reached. The problems involved in organising a women's strike are not, however, arguments for cynicism. They point to the very reasons why such a strike is necessary, and, if successful, why it will be the most revolutionary act against the forces and institutions of militarism, capitalism, and patriarchy in Britain that any of us will have ever witnessed.

A strike is a test and show of power, strength, and solidarity. It challenges an imbalance of power and attempts to redress this by withholding vital labour, making the point that this labour is of greater value than its economic and socia l status would suggest. However, since most of the work that women do is given no economic status or value a t all - i.e. unpaid domestic labour - the imbalance of power is greater here than in any other area of work. In the wa y that most of our labour has been made invisible - care of children, elderly, male partners, maintenance of home and family, social and sexual reproduction - so our power, too, appears invisible until we start to use it. This is a crucial point because we will be told repeatedly between now and September that we cannot strike effectively when we have no industrial muscle, no traditional organisation, no status, no value, no power. This is the surface picture that patriarchal captitalism presents us with.

In reality, though, the power and the muscle is there, and if its value will only be recognised through strike action, through non-cooperation with employers and male middle class business interests which make female labour a low-paid ghetto, with the state war machine, with man made laws and hierarchies that require women to produce and service a labour force that faces lifelong exploitation on one hand and nuclear destruction on the other - then we must withdraw this labour to assert and prove its value. Our absence will be noticed if our presence is ignored.

Ten days of non-cooperation, though, will be ten days of positive action and political advance. Negative value and a sense of powerlessness can be redirected and channelled to make links that divide-and-rule government seeks to destroy: between millions of women who share economic and sexual exploitation, between the expansion of the nuclear war industry and the destruction of the coal industry, between the running down of the health and social serv-

ices and the encouragement given to women to remain in the home etc. It will be a strike like no other. Whether women decide to flood Greenham or establish a chain of local actions all over Britain - and hopefully numbers will allow for both - our effect will be explosive. Women in Exeter and the SW region have already started meeting and organising for the strike. Since many women will be unable to get to Greenham for ten days at a stretch, we must have strong chains of support and action in all areas and at all levels. This relies on energy and initiative - and support of course from men, eg child care facilities - and widespread publicity for maximum impact. There will be another regional meeting in Exeter on Saturday July 21st at 1 pm in the Victory Centre, Magdalen Rd. for women interested in organising local actions and publicity for Greenham. Exeter Women for Peace are having an open meeting on July 12th (see Flying Post dates list). We need as many women as possible to get together and plan for the months ahead: leaflets, public meetings, discussions, and publicity in both local and national media must be utilised if we are to get our message across. It is up to women in the Labour movement and all progressive groups to activate their members and resources to make these ten days a political success.

Contact Exeter Women for Peace, Devon Labour Briefing, Anne Cahill/Pat Marshallat Exeter 218384 for more details.

# Local government

After the council elections most of the Labour Party seems content to leave the conduct of the council's business in the hands of the elected few. In their turn these 'municipal careerists' seem unlikely to change the operation of the City Council very noticeably. The scope for initiative is very narrow and most of the funds are already committed. Dependence on Liberals is a further inhibition to the development of radical policies.

I want to argue that the Labour Party can use its control of the District Council to make small but significant impacts on the daily lives of the population which may, taken as a whole, start to establish a new constituency, particularly among those who are at present so little attended to by politicians of all parties that they are unlikely to vote at all. We can learn considerably from the experience of local government in London and Sheffield, where unorthodox initiatives by local politicians have built up unprecedented support for Labour administrations which have been prepared to step out of the tradtional bounds of council work and pay attention to the real needs of minority groups and the poor. We cannot expect our existing councillors to take such initiatives on their own, for the very reason that they have become used to the ways in which the council works, and because they are answerable to the tradtional Labour supporters who voted for them. In Exeter it is important that the Party establishes that it is prepared to look to the needs of a wider constituency than the council estates where the solid Labour seats are.

There are a number of differ nt areas where it should be possible to take initiatives without needing large sums of money. While the local manifesto is helpful in some areas there is a continued need to develop policy in the light of the Party's experiece of governing.

(1) Morality: Much can be achieved at little expense by such gestures as the establishment of a Nuclear Free Zone, ensuring thatCity investments are withdrawn from South African firms, that the interests of animal rights campaigners are taken account of. Even such a simple gesture as permitting suitable political organisations to use City premises for meetings, fund raising events, etc, can do much to weaken the arguments of those who regard the Labour Party as too old fashioned to be worth supporting. There are a number of wards where Ecology or Liberal protest votes are potentially crucial.

(2) Information: Municipal administarion in this area has a tradition of secrecy which is hard to break. If we are to establish any real participation in local government then electors must be given much more access to information. At present alot of the councils business is not open to public debate, either because it is never reported to committee at all or because it is conducted in the private part of the meeting. If members of the public do manage to penetrate to the place where the committee is meeting (and more could be done to publicise the agenda and the venue) then they will be fortunate if they can follow the business. In the Guild Hall they will be lucky if they can hear what is going on. They certainly won't be permitted to participate at all in the meeting. Committees can include members who are not councillors, but in Exeter only the leisure committee has any non-council members. This would be a way in which different groups might be involved.

The City has never produced a proper Annual Report, as it is obliged to do under the terms of The Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980.
Most councils produced their first report in 1981. Exeter has not even produced one yet. In general the City has not been very forthcoming with information The explanation they send out to Housing Benefit applicants is a particularly bad example. Most applicants are pensioners, and many are likely to have problems reading. The explnation consists of four pages of small type which most people would find completely incomprehensible, even if they could read it. It is to be hoped that the new administration makes a start by improving the information that the council gives out to people who need its services.

(3) Servic s: Tories are not actually interested in the services which the council provides for the poor, so they left them to the officers to run as they saw fit. Some of them, particularly in Housing, which is the biggest of the services provided at District Council level, have been abominably run. Housing Benefit, the Homeless Persons Act, and the allocation of council houses have been used to manage and control the poor. They could be used creatively, but that would involve reclaiming them from the officers who manage them at the moment. Housing Benefit, for example, was devolved to the City Treasurer in April 1983, with the proviso that he reported back to the Housing Committee after sixth monts. There is still no sign of any report.

It will take a considerable effort before ordinary people feel that it makes some difference to them who controls the City council. Unless that effort is made it will become increasingly diffiult to drag people to the polls, and this apathy will spread over to other elections.

Martin Rathfelder
Exeter CLP

EDUCATION briefing

# Teachers' dispute

Devon's teachers have at last woken up ! After several years of humiliating and devastating cutbacks combined with a series of derisory pay offers, large numbers of teachers have decided that it is time to fight. Admittedly their most recent strike actions have been supported by full reimbursement of pay from their union's meagre funds, but at least they did something.

Things began in a small way with some token strikes against the recent cut of £1.4m in the Devon Education budget. Then the public utterances of Keith Joseph nationally and Ted Pinney locally infuriated and united teachers. But why has it taken teachers so long to decide to make a stand? Shirley Williams' "Great Education Debate" of the last Labour government began the demoralisation of teacher activists who had voted Labour. This was followed by repeated cuts in education budgets which lowered the quality of the service. In a spirit of naive altruism many teachers accepted the inevitability and increased work load of the cuts. They meekly accepted whatever pay increases Thatcher was prepared to offer. So total was the demoralisation of teachers that union meetings became sparsely attended and the will even to discuss the strategy for a fightback disappeared. During this time the greatest champions of education were not the Labour Party or the teacher unions but interested parents and organisations like the Campaign to Advance State Education.

Matters were made worse by the apparent reluctance of teacher trade union leaders to actually lead, in the mistaken belief that 'militancy' causes the mass resignation of members. Rules were passed to prevent NUT branches from taking action on local issues. In London there was a witch hunt of NUT members who took action which was considered "unofficial" by the NUT Executive.

In fact quite the reverse has been the case in Devon as the membership of the NUT has risen steadily with the increase in action. As people have seen a teacher union doing something positive they have joined it. A strong call for action from the NUT leadership has brought a good response from the membership. (Admittedly Devon's response was limited but nationally the response was solid). It is interesting to note the reason for this new thirst for leadership which has been aquired by the NUT executive. At the recent National Conference of the NUT, the executive resisted the grass roots movement towards a flat rate salary increase that would benefit the lower paid teachers. Time after time during the week the executive moved procedural points to delay a final vote. It was no coincidence that the 4⅛% pay offer was rejected soon after. The teachers' leaders had at last got the message and a deal with the rival NAS/UWT unified the action.

But this reurgence of activism by teachers may only be short lived. Far too often in the past teachers have fallen for the traditional employers' tactics. Byappearing inflexible and then making a minor concession, the employers have managed to convince the unions that they have won a major victory. This was the case with the NUT's recent campaign against the cuts in Devon. Many claim that referral to arbitration represents another great victory. On the contrary our leadership may well have to accept an arbitration award which falls far short of teachers' expectations and this may lead to renewed demoralisation. Furthermore, Devon councillors Pinney and Sayers have promised us that hundreds of teaching jobs will be lost if the award is above 4⅛%. Devon County Council has a policy known as "The Pay Loss Factor" - the cost of every pay award will be made up by job losses.

For those Devon teachers involved in the recent battles against education cuts and the pay issue, the way forward seems clear. We must resist any job losses caused by Devon's "Pay loss factor" policy. We must continue to fight this year's cut of £1.4m in the education budget. We must persuade the right wing male headteacher dominated Executive of our union that a flat rate pay increase is the only way to improve the standard of living of the majority of teachers, ie women. To a head teacher a 4½% increase is a substantial pay rise, but to a teacher on thelowest salary scale it is an insult.

We must ensure that our pay award is not gained at the expense of other public sector workers or consumers. Wemust work wiht other public sector unions and mount a joint attack on the rate capping issue. Teachers and others must be persuaded that they are engaged in a permanent struggle against a government that does not care about the education of the children of ordinary working people.

Teachers work hard in the classroom to compensate for the inequalities in Britain today. They showed that they were prepared to work just as hard to improve their pay. Now if those same teachers were prepared to be just as hard working and militant in defence of the public sector as a whole, then we would be making some real progress.

Steve Leonard
Devon NUT and Labour Party member

# SIGNS OF CRISIS

REFLECTIONS OF A UNION ACTIVIST FROM THE TORY BACK WOODS

Budleigh Salterton has often been considered the outpost of Empire, the home of retired colonials and service officers, where the workers knew their place and supplied suitably deferential service to the gentry. The atmosphere in Exmouth is somewhat similar. Trade unionists are still somewhat suspect, as I have experienced while working as a dustman for the local authority.

The pressures on local government to save money are now at full blast and, as always, it is the manual staff who must provide the increased efficiency. Bonus values have been changed, two dust-carts have been taken off, a number of men made redundant, the pace quickened and, of course, there is always the possibility of privatisation if the employees protest too much. The last thing management want is a 'militant', ie, an efficient shop steward.

Thatcherism is based on the proposition that the only productive workers are those that produce surplus within the capitalist system. The ideological battle is taking place between politicians and academics but the harshness of the present regime is being felt on the shop floor and by the millions relying on meagre state benefits. The unions must be made ineffective and this means an atmosphere must be created so that union activists either lose thir jobs or find it difficult to get them agin if they do lose them.

By increasing unemployment, monetarism dampens workers willingless and ability to resist heavier workloads making their collective organisations ineffective. At the same time there are drastic limitations on the right to picket, and severe restiction on the right to call sympathetic strikes, renewed attacks on the closed shop and blatent interference with the rights of unions to run their own affairs in accordence with their own rules.

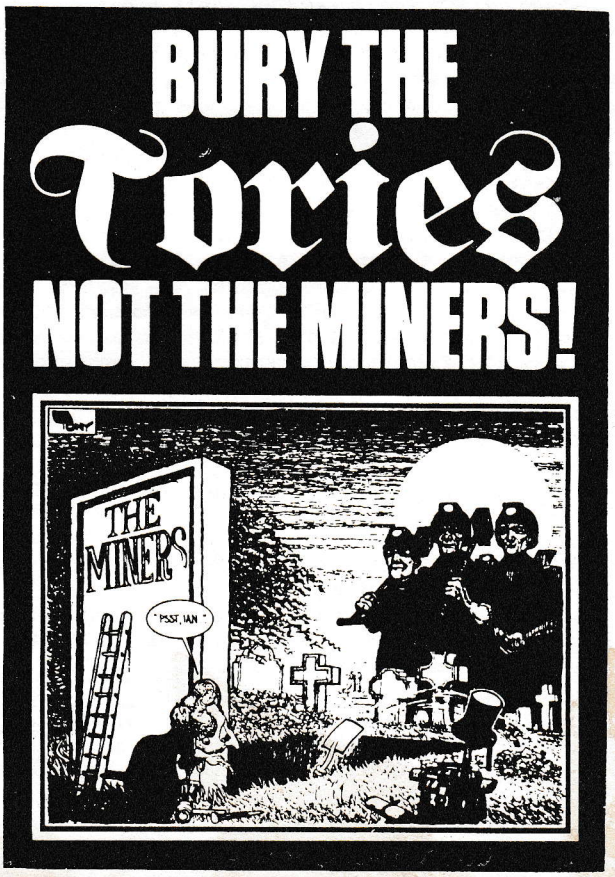
The miners have felt the full force of the capitalist state apparatus in the behaviour of the police. But it has no really touched the leafy lanes of places like Budleigh Salterton or those whose income is well above average and quite assured. There are now two nations the rich and the poor. The trouble will be confined to the inner cities , to the now decling industrial and mining areas and only reaches East Devon slowly. We did however get quite a suprise recently when Exmouth entertained what seemed like alien invaders to some - the groups of miners who were picketing Exmouth Docks.

Perhaps it is when the policies become so extreme and the crisis becomes so apparent that a change may come. The scale of unemployment and bankruptcies required may even be too much for some Tory supporters to stomach, but opposition to Tory policies can only effectively come from the workers themselves. This is why the present miners' strike is so vital to prserve both the validity and future of the trade union movement and also the Labour Party. We cannot rely on the disquit that some Tories are now expressing. The 'wets' do not impress Mrs Thatcher. The miners' strike gives us some grounds for hope and there is no doubt that the Labour Movement has become very actively involved in recent months. They have seen and felt the apparatus of the capitalist state in the form of the police, judiciary and the press and they may also have begun to rediscover a solidarity lost from the days of comparative full-employment.

Marx was undoubtedly right in pointing out the contridictions of capitalist society between the individual interests of capitalists and the collective interests of the working population. If the working class and their organisations merely accept a framework which already exists they do not challenge the structure of capitlism. The miners' dispute is not about money it about preserving communities and the work which gives not just income but also identity. Arthur Scargill challenges the coal board on economic grounds but also the whole philosphy of monetarism, of capitalism, of the divisions between those in work and those who have no hope of finding work, of the divisions between North and South.

There is hope in the present situation. There is nothing which so concentrates the mind as actively being involved in industrial action. There are alternatives. Socialism does not spontaneously explode within the working class and it is often when they are in a crisis situation that workers realise how they have been conned over the years. It was that common sharing of experience of all classes in the war which created the conciousness which completely shook the Tories under Churchill. The more the working class get involved in the present dispute the more they will realise how deparate this government is to preserve the capitalist structure. Of course in their deparation they will certainly use the police, the media and possibly even the army in the last resort. People are now beginning to realise that there are alternatives and not the comprmises usually offered whenever a 'socialist' government has taken power in the past.

Jim Salter (Honiton CLP)
Chair Exmouth Trades Council
(personal capacity)




(Tiveron CLP)



# Women Work Together

On 16th and 17th June 'Housewives and Dialogue' held a GLC funded conference which coincided with the eighth aniversary of the Soweto uprising. The conference addressed itself to women's work all over the world: women do two thirds of the world's wor, receive only five percent of the world's income and owns less than one percent of the world's assets. While women in the more affluent often work harder than men for less money, the vast bulk of the unpaid, uncounted female labour in the world is done by women in Third World countries. Socialists, who claim to be anti-imperialist must take account of the disproportionate exploitation of black people , and black women in particular. It is appropriate therefore to structure a conference on women's work internationally, around the demands of black immigrant women.

Much of the discussion centred around 'invisible' work which women do (housework, emotional care and support for husbands, parents, etc,) and the economic dependence of women on men. While the oppression of women may not be entirely explicable on the an economic basis economic dependence on men is something that the vast majority of women have in common, and it is a significant factor in determinin g women's lives. It is something that unifies women, and therefore campaigning behind a slogan such as 'wages for housework' is a good basis for a broad , grass roots women's movement.

On the subject of how women from different back grounds, different sexual orientations, different colour, etc, can cooperate, and how women can cooperate with men, the conference favoured autonomous organisation. Autonomy is NOT the same are separatism, and emplies that different groups can organise and discuss issues independently, with the final aim of coming together with a better understanding of their own individual positions. Speakers included Pragna Patel from Southall Black Sisters, a woman from SWAPO, a Greenham Woman, and Wilmett Brown. In Britain, the Peace Movement is oriented towards preventing war, but imperialism is placing much of the world in a state of war now. While we are working towards the same ends, we adopt vastly different means depending on our situation. Cooperation thus requires a great deal of repect for the decisions made by others, which was illustrated by women on the panel. One woman from Greenham, for instance, came from a tradition of non-violent direct action against the nuclear industry, whereas the SWAPO women is fighting the same economic interests, but is involved in armed struggle Yet they had such obvious respect for each others campaigning work that the unity of purpose was highlighted rather than the differences between them. The unity of perpose also applies to the Labour Movement and its relation to the Women's Movement and the struggle of black and Third World People.

Another central point is accessibility; organisations, campaigns, meetings and literature must be equally accessible to all, which is illustrated by the writing produced by some of the women who help organise the conference, such as Sex, Race and Class by Selma James, Black Women: Bringing it all Back HomE by M. Prescod-Richards and Norma Steele, The Rapist who Pays the Rent by R. Hall, S. James and J. Kertesz, Black Women and the Peace Movement by W. Brown. These are published by Falling Wall Press, in Bristol, and I reccomend them to you.

## FROM TONY BENN

Dear Mark: 4th June 1984

I was concerned to hear that the Executive of the Exeter Labour Party are recommending to the GMC, on June 15th, that you and your two colleagues be expelled from the party for editing Exeter Labour Briefing.

As you know various editions of Labour Briefing are published in different parts of the country, and are widely welcomed because they help to broaden the discussion of problems facing the Party.

Nowhere has it been argued that the name Labour belongs in any legal sense to the party as such - hence Labour Herald. There are many groups inside the party which use the word Labour in their title, even when some of them support policies that are at variance with Conference policies...

If by chance the GMC were to expel you, and your colleagues, from the Party on these grounds, it would be open to you all to appeal to the NEC.

Were you to appeal I am almost sure that the NEC, on the basis of recent decisions, would disallow your expulsion and reinstate you all.
But of course the best thing that could happen would be for the GMC not to proceed with the motion to expel, when it meets on June 15th.

With the Party now working together so well, we really do not want to damage our prospects of victory in the next election by starting a series of expulsions.

You can, of course, quote this letter and I am sending a copy of it to John Shepherd, as a courtesy to him and the officers the Exeter Party, many of whom I have had the privilege of knowing, and working with, over the years.
I am also sending a copy to the National Agent and the Regional Organiser, in the hope that they may be able to help avert this problem before it arises.

Yours fraternally,
Tony Benn

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