LABOUR
BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
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Only one way to stop more, worse outrages:

GET THATCHER'S TERRORIST TROOPS

OUT OF IRELAND!

ALL OF US in the Labour Party were stunned by the devastating bombing of the Grand Hotel at the end of the Tory Party Conference. A few may have regretted – in a moment's fantasy – that the bomb failed to remove this hated Government in one fell swoop (a result which, in reality, might well have produced a military government within weeks). Overwhelmingly, though, our emotions will have been of sympathy for the dead and their kin, and utter horror at the scale of carnage which modern bomb technology can wreak. Few of us, either, can have been unimpressed by the personal courage of those involved – including, yes, the composure and resolution of the Prime Minister herself. If only the leaders of our party could display courage like that!

The bombing will prove to be a shot of adrenalin in the ruling class's veins. It will (at least temporarily) strengthen the state. By stiffening the Government's moral resolve and fuelling popular sympathy at a moment when both were wavering, it may even prove to be a fatal new ingredient preventing any Government retreat over the miners' strike and propelling us onto a new plane of social and political crisis.

At a time like this, it is important to attempt to harness the murderous conflicts which we find all around us as creatively as we can, in the service of a political solution. By this we mean the election of a Labour Government which, by showing the same resolution in defending our class as Mrs Thatcher has shown in defending hers, takes the full power necessary to unravel all the knots (withdrawal from Ireland being the number one task).

We in BRIEFING are socialists and feminists. We refuse to parrot the ritual condemnations of 'violence' because we insist on placing responsibility where it lies. Yes, it so happens

BRIGHTON BOMBING

that we are people – like most in the Labour Party – who by our whole upbringing, and through all our traditions, abhor and are incapable of the use of violence as a substitute for rational argument and political debate. But exclude people from the political process, and they will inevitably explode. It is precisely because we hate violence that our anger is directed at Mrs Thatcher foremost among all.

Millions of the oppressed, in this country and around the world, may be hoping against hope that Mrs Thatcher's personal courage – under the impact of these events – might become transmuted into courage of a new kind. For it *does* take courage to question one's premises anew. Dare anyone hope that such a night in the Grand might have appeared to Thatcher as a premonition of the holocaust facing all of us unless the nuclear arms race is reversed? Dare anyone hope that there flashed through her mind, amidst the chaos and the rubble of that night, the screams of the Belgrano victims sent to their deaths with her single telephone call? Could it be that the cries and pleas of Nottingham miners' wives, their bedrooms violated by rampaging policemen in the early hours, mingled in her ears with the general din? Or that there came to her during her nightmare the screams of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the death-cries of the millions of tribal peoples shot, tortured, bombed and bayonetted over centuries of British and American imperialist savagery, or the agonised screams of those Irish men, women and children who have been the bloody victims of British state terrorism for longer than any other people on earth?

Probably it is too much to ask. But let our 'Iron Lady' know this: those who live by the sword, shall die by it. If she wants violence, then violence she will certainly get. Down that slippery road – pursued to its ultimate conclusion – lies the certainty of unlimited world war, nuclear exchange, and the switching out of life on this planet. Rather more – in other words – than the fate of an individual or even Cabinet is at stake. There is only one way to invert this horrifying logic: elect a Labour Government, remove all nuclear weapons from British soil, disband the new anti-strike police force, withdraw the Pit Closures programme, remove those terrorist troops from Ireland's soil and lead the labour movement towards victory throughout the world.

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

YOUTH BRIEFING

Benn speaks to Briefing on youth

The role of youth, and the youth section of the Party is often ignored by the Left in the Labour Party. Youth are in the forefront of the struggles against the government, yet there are many youth outside the Party who could be attracted to the LPYS. It seems ironic in this situation that the YS budget is now coming under attack from the leadership of the Party. This is a problem Briefing feels we all have to address ourselves to. In an interview with Briefing, Tony Benn argues it is important to link up all youth getting involved in politics for the first time.

Why do you think youth are important in the LP?

Many members of the LP have no idea what socialism is about. They don't understand basic principles of socialism, which is above all supporting people in struggle whether it be miners, blacks, gays, women, youth or for that matter, the people of Northern Ireland. We have much to learn from these struggles and from the people fighting to win them. Youth are involved in every struggle against the Tories, but as you said we have very few in the LP. We must support their campaigns, take on board their experiences, and in that way win them to Labour. We will not achieve this by trying to stuff a clear and over simplified view of socialism down their throat.

What do you think the LP leadership's attitude to youth should be?

Over and above everything, we must support the youth movement. We must understand, of course, that there is a terrible danger in our society today. With mass unemployment, the majority of youth feel they have no future and could turn to the right and you'd get a growth of the fascist element.

It is our responsibility to make sure this does not happen, we must campaign actively on the dole queues and in every big town throughout Britain. Young people willingly respond to the idea they should support us in elections if we are seen to be doing something for them and with them now.

So what can the left in the constituencies do to support the LPYS?

Basically, I think activists in the Party should be trying to bring the youth movement into the LP itself. We should be fighting for funds locally and nationally to be made available for the LPYS to enable them to organise. We must encourage YS activists to organise, to write contributions in newsletters, to speak on our platforms. Finally as I said earlier, we in the LP must give our full support to all the campaigns and struggles of youth, and believe you me that is not going to be easy.

YS praised for miners' support

Dennis Skinner, MP, long time ally of the LPYS spoke to Briefing at LP Conference about the role of young people in the miners strike.

'One of the things that was spoken about before the strike began, was that many young miners and their wives had got themselves up to their necks in debt with mortgages, videos and having a good time. People said they would not be able to strike because they had so much money going out each week. I'm certain the coal board believed that and I think it would be true to say that some in the union felt that as well. But one of the features of the strike, that no one can deny has been that the young miners and their wives have been amongst the strongest fighters in the dispute.

I think it is also true to say that the Young Socialists up and down the country have played a formidable role outside the coalfield areas where they have been predominant in joining the miners support group. One of the problems the YS has had is that it is not getting the money or the support from the NEC to really reach out to recruit youth. One of the things that this dispute has confirmed to me is my support for the LPYS, and my determination to continue to fight for support for the LPYS.'

Black Sections and YS

The campaign for black sections had a big impact at this year's Labour Party conference. Below, are some ideas on how to bring this struggle into the LPYS, from Niall Sookoo who is on the National Black Section Steering Committee.

It's very difficult for young black people to come in to the Labour Party because they're so disinterested in the whole of 'British Society' — for obvious reasons. But at the same time we've seen the campaigns like the one around the Deptford fire victims, involving massive demonstrations, mainly of youth. In Lewisham we have a campaign looking at why 44 per cent of children in care are black when there's only a 17 per cent black population.

These are issues young black people are interested in. We have to organise around policing, on employment, on positive action, on housing, on social services and so on. I think, as the debate on Black Sections and these issues continues, more black youth will become involved.

The Black Sections went to the Labour Party Young Socialist Summer Camp, invited be Colin de Freitas, a leading young black person in the LPYS. The debate really centred around personalities. The Militant tend to believe the Black Sections are just a fast lane for Black MPs, which it's not. It's a question of power — of black people getting the power, the same question as women and gays getting representation. But there were LPYS activists who supported us there as well and they organised a fringe meeting after the main debate.

Left wing members of the LPYS should get together and organise to get members on the regional and hopefully national committees with a slate based on real left policy supporting issues like Black Sections and the struggles of other oppressed people.

Next issue out NOVEMBER 22.
Next National Editorial Board is on Sunday November 25 at 12 noon at Digbeth Civic Centre, Birmingham.

Deadline for articles, Monday November 12. All articles to be sent to 54 Bow Road, London E3.

LABOUR WOMEN AND FEMINISM CONFERENCE

Unfortunately the Labour Women and Feminism Conference has had to be postponed until next Spring. The response we have had from women has indicated to us the interest in and the importance of such a Conference and we are determined to get it off the ground next year. Watch this space . . .

A First Visit To Annual Conference

If ever you cherished illusions that radical changes are buffeting this great movement of ours, a first visit to Annual Conference as CLP delegate confirms your worst suspicions — that, while you are working yourself into an early grave for your local Labour Party, you are also propping up a mediocre collection of middle-aged men in their entrenched positions of power. As a woman delegate, the platform has a stark significance — less than a third of the faces up there are female and you are represented by Sisters Clywd, Dunwoody and Kinnock (who voted for her?).

John Chapman

Early impressions of conference are a series of bemusing contradictions. *Militant* support Neil Kinnock in opposing women/black sections (what's all the fuss about? White men have had their own section for some time — it's called the Labour Party). Being female, black and highly articulate do not, apparently, count as good qualifications for being on the NEC — otherwise Dianne Abbott would have taken her place with the NEC on the platform.

SCHIZOPHRENIC

Then there is the schizophrenic relationship with the media and press, epitomised by the impeccable but bear-like figure of Robert Maxwell, who prowled around the floor of conference, obviously gratified by the knowledge that the Labour Party is not too proud to take his money.

On Tuesday, an outraged conference expelled Larry Lamb and his hacks from the *Daily Express* — on Friday, the same conference gave Glyn Mathias from ITN a vote of thanks!

This split between what the Party says and how it actually conducts itself characterised the whole conference, even down to the venue. The Winter Gardens complex is owned by Thorne/EMI and the catering is done by Trust House Forte — the food was predictable, synthetic and overpriced. The staff, who are non-union, work for less than £2 an hour, though it costs £500 to hire a hall for a fringe-meeting, with a backdrop of what looked like pantomime scenery. Facilities for the disabled were practically non-existent. Anyway, what is the Labour Party up to, holding its Annual Conference at a Tory resort instead of a Labour-controlled city?

MOSS EVANS SELL-OUT

On Monday we had the seemingly endless speeches repeating promises of support for the miners; but this was followed by the carefully-contrived sell-out by Moss Evans and Neil Kinnock. The leader of Liverpool Council was applauded for the stand taken against the Government cuts — but no support was forthcoming from the leadership for other local authorities faced with rate-capping; no strategies, either.

Perhaps those of us who have been used to the carefully thought-out campaigns of the GLC over the past three years have come to expect too much in terms of good practice at Labour Party meetings; the accepted use of "Comrade Chairman" and even "Mr. Chairman" all the way through conference was extremely irritating, as was Eric Heffer's tendency to call fewer and fewer women speakers as the week wore on.

However, what goes on outside conference is as significant as what takes place inside; we perceived that conference operates on at least three additional levels.



Briefing fringe meeting at Conference, Sunday 30 September. Above, Jeremy Corbyn speaks on 'Target Labour Government', with Bryn Griffiths, Brighton Briefing, and the Chair, Mandy Moore, on his right. Other speakers included Tony Benn, Betty Heathfield, Sharon Atticus, Diane Abbott and Paul Canning. Over 200 people attended.

On the Thursday of Conference, Briefing organised a meeting in defence of the NUM, following the service of a writ on Arthur Scargill at Conference. 700 people packed into the Spanish Room, and we raised the biggest collection for the miners at Conference – over £1,200.

There are the 'closet' politics of compositing and lobbying, which require considerable expertise and intense competitiveness in order to influence the business which is actually taken on the floor of conference. Then there are the fringe meetings, pamphlets and publicity, which offer a marathon consciousness-raising, and heightened an already electric atmosphere.

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

There is also tremendous socialising, which for us provided the opportunity to mingle with like-minded comrades from other regions. "Making connections" was the most positive aspect of conference — realising the links which are being forged between so many groups on the left of the labour movement — miners' wives, Greenham women, black activists, lesbian and gays — all of whom are now working together in solidarity to ensure that the Labour Party delivers for the working class, because they identify with each other as part of one struggle, one fight!

Robina Smith (Brent South CLP)
Emma Tait (Brent East CLP)

BLACK SECTIONS

LABOUR Party conference for the first time took the question of black involvement within the party seriously and although the votes went against us, there is no question that Black Sections are "Here to Fight, Here to Stay".

Remember, historically the labour movement opposes any radical change to its structure, but in nearly all cases the left always manages to win in the end.

There will be some within the old Establishment who will hope that the whole question on Black Sections and positive action will vanish. Those comrades have no idea of the fight that black people have had in beating slavery, indentured labour and racist immigration laws. The defeat at conference only gives us more incentive to fight, for what undeniably is our basic right.

The year ahead will be vital. It will be a year when black people are finally put on the Labour Party's map. A year when the Labour Party must stop talking about black people in a negative way. This will be a year when the Labour Party must tackle the whole question of race in a positive manner before sizeable inroads are made into the substantial one million black votes the Labour Party gets at the election.

Niall Sookoo, East Lewisham CLP

CONFERENCE AND THE MINERS

EXCERPTS FROM THE DAILY BRIEFING CONFERENCE BULLETIN

"TUC — PREPARE FOR THE GENERAL STRIKE"

Tuesday October 2nd

"GAOL US — AT YOUR PERIL!"

— Arthur Scargill

Emergency editorial statement:

At 4.30 yesterday afternoon, Arthur Scargill was served in conference *with a writ for 'contempt of court'. Shortly afterwards, four other leaders of the NUM were served similar writs. At a special meeting of the NUM executive last night, it was decided to defy the courts — continuing the official strikes in Yorkshire and Derbyshire — even at the risk of being gaoled within days.*

Let all of us here this week make our warning to the Tories crystal clear. If Arthur Scargill or any other NUM leader is arrested or physically violated in any way, the country may face an industrial and social explosion to put 1926 in the shade. Both the TUC and Labour Party conferences have now legitimised the miners' strike to the full in the eyes of our movement as a whole. There are no higher bodies — no sources of labour movement legality — higher than these. This strike is now our *strike; and it is our law or theirs.*

Any use of physical violence or draconic sequestration of our assets on the part of the state and courts in this context can only be met with the abandonment of all restraint in defending our class. IF SCARGILL GOES TO PRISON, IT MUST MEAN AN ALL-OUT AND INDEFINITE GENERAL STRIKE. The issue is now becoming far, far bigger than that of pit closures — vital and central though that remains. It is becoming — as the Tories are now themselves saying — 'Who rules?' Either we break the power of the Tory state — or they will break us.

Let every one of us here understand the implications. The balance of probability may well be that the courts will draw back from their folly; certainly they would be fools to send Arthur Scargill to gaol. But let them be warned: yesterday's events at Conference — the unanimity and intensity of support shown for the NUM in its Titanic struggle — shows that our movement is ready, waiting to answer in kind. Delegates should be considering the way in which Conference — the sovereign body of the whole labour movement — can respond to this historic challenge.

Thursday October 4th

CONFERENCE VERSUS THE HIGH COURT

THE HIGH COURT'S moves to sequestrate the NUM's assets or jail its leadership are an attack on every one of us.

The 'process server' who intruded into our proceedings on Monday afternoon entered without credentials, showing that the long arm of the state feels quite at liberty to violate our *legality at will.*

The Tories tell us to bow down before the 'law'. The source of this 'law' is the Tory Government and its ruling-class courts. We, on the other hand, recognise our own source of legality, which is of a different kind. Both the TUC and Labour Party conferences have now legitimised the miners' strike to the full in the eyes of our movement as a whole. There are no higher courts — no sources of labour movement legality — higher than these. Both have debated the issues and ruled that the strike is fully-official and legal in our eyes.

Any contradiction of these decisions is therefore a clash between two kinds of law. Their law — or ours? That is the issue which is now posed. If we were to allow Arthur Scargill to be jailed or the NUM's assets to be seized, then the Tories' 'law' will rapidly reveal itself to be naked class dictatorship — naked violence by the state to crush the many on behalf of the few.

It is therefore we, today, *at* this *conference who must organise our defence of the NUM. Conference still has the opportunity to remove any doubt which may remain that we stand shoulder to shoulder with the NUM in facing the onslaught of the High Court in the so-called 'contempt' proceedings. And the most urgent task is this. Jointly with the TUC, we must lay contingency plans to ensure that any seizure of the persons or property of the NUM leads to an immediate General Strike and a massive national demonstration and augmentation of the picket lines in support of the miners' struggle. Unless the Tories back down, our resistance must be transformed into* indefinite *generalised industrial action, backed with the full authority of the TUC and the Labour Party nationally. There is no other way.*

Ken Livingstone
Jeremy Corbyn, M.P.,
Ted Knight.

Abridged version of speech by Phil Holt to the Labour Briefing meeting on the miners' strike on October 4. Phil is a member of the POEU NEC and National Secretary of BLOC.

"FOR our delegation this conference has also been an historic one. For the first time we voted the full left slate. In doing so we helped reinstate Eric Clark (NUM) back on the NEC. We also supported those propositions giving full support to the miners including national industrial action in the event of the sequestration of the miners' property or funds. The ten Broad Left supporters on the delegation signed the petition identifying ourselves with the NUM's contempt of court. In addition to this the five Broad Left Executive members on the delegation have called for an emergency meeting of our NEC in the event of punitive action against the NUM over the current issue. Arthur Scargill has asked we stand up and be counted. Well, the POEU Broad Left is doing that now.

But it is not just the cause of trade union solidarity that motivates us. As with any issue of principle, there is also a definite material justification. In our case it is directly tangible. We, too, are faced with manpower surpluses not just created by new technology but by the setting of artificial financial budgets. This is producing "surplus" engineers, despite large social needs and despite massive profits and massive investment. As a result we are having to fight for jobs. We are putting to our conference in November that we should go in for a claim of a 32 hour, four day week and are seeking authority to take action if negotiations break down. If the miners lose our fight will be much more difficult. If they win we have hope."

County Hall, London S.E.1.

Dear Comrade,

Please make copies and circulate the following resolution, which has just been passed by Lewisham East CLP, and use it as the basis for an identical resolution (amended as necessary with regard to place, time and title of body) to be proposed at the organisation of which you are an officer or delegate. Please IMMEDIATELY rush copies of your resolution(s), when passed, to: Ken Livingstone, County Hall, London S.E.1.

'This General Management Committee of East Lewisham Labour Party, meeting at Limes Hall, Lewisham on October 5th 1984, repeats the statement by Arthur Scargill that



Arthur Scargill addresses Labour Party Conference. John Chapman

Mineworkers' Defence Committee

The Mineworkers' Defence Committee was established on Thursday October 4th during the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool. The occasion was a 700-strong packed meeting organised by Labour Briefing and chaired by Ken Livingstone. In addition to a £1,200 collection for the miners, speeches were made by Jimmy Knapp, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Muriel Williams, Bernie Grant and Phil Holt.

Jeremy Corbyn, MP, read out – to general acclaim – a statement establishing the Defence Committee and defining its aims. These were stated to be the co-ordination of all the forces of the labour movement to respond adequately in the present crisis to the ruling-class onslaught on the miners and the working class.

In particular, with very few exceptions, every participant in the meeting individually signed a statement of contempt addressed to the High Court, and pledged also to go back to seek official endorsement of this from trade union executives and labour movement bodies.

It was made clear that the sinews developed through this on-going exercise would be used to provide adequate political expression to such industrial action as would follow any sequestration of the NUM's assets.

On the following day, a working meeting (representing a spectrum of political tendencies) elected a small provisional Secretariat which was entrusted with the task of responding adequately and quickly to events as they arose. This meeting was public and had been announced from the platform the previous day. Ken Livingstone was voted Secretary.

BELOW AND TO THE RIGHT ARE TWO URGENT STATEMENTS – PLEASE READ AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

the current industrial action of the National Union of Mineworkers is an official strike, and thereby repeats and affirms the contempt of the High Court allegedly committed by the President of the National Union of Mineworkers.'

'This G.M.C. further requests the Labour Group to pass a similar resolution.'

Our aim is to present the High Court with the fact that the G.L.C., Liverpool Council, Sheffield, Manchester and many other City Councils, together with the Executives of a number of trade unions and other organisations the bulk of the Labour Party, are in 'contempt' of it. The resolution is being pressed in view of the failure of the Conference Arrangements Committee at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference to allow a similar (more moderately-worded) resolution to be moved as an emergency by the Transport and General Workers' union. The CAC's legal advice was that for the Labour Party to have passed that resolution would have brought the Labour Party as such into contempt, with the risk of all its funds being sequestrated. We feel that it is our duty in this situation to underscore our solidarity with the National Union of Mineworkers.

Yours in solidarity,
Ken Livingstone
(Secretary).

Our law —or theirs?

Mr. Justice Nicholls is now in receipt of a declaration of contempt of the High Court. It repeats the contempt allegedly committed by Arthur Scargill:

"We, the undersigned, in our personal capacities but with the full intention of involving where possible the organisations we represent, do hereby declare the present industrial action by the National Union of Mineworkers to be an official strike. As participants with Arthur Scargill in a meeting held in the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, on October 4th, 1984, we jointly repeat, with him, the so-called "contempt" of the High Court, by repeating collectively that this strike is official."

Signed: by over 500 people: MPs, Executive Committee members of major trade unions, councillors, Labour Party and Trades Council officers and delegates, including

Ken Livingstone, Leader GLC,
Tony Benn, MP,
Tony Banks, MP,
Jeremy Corbyn, MP,
Bob Clay, MP,
Merle Amory, Deputy Leader, Brent Labour Group,
Ted Knight, Leader, Lambeth Council,
Pat Wall, President, Bradford Trades Council,
Phil Holt, (POEU NEC)
W.J. Fry, (POEU NEC)
Dave Ward, (POEU NEC)
D. Macdonald (POEU NEC)
Peter Spalding, President, Greater London Association of Trades Councils.

In the light of the High Court's judgement, we will now seek immediate offical endorsement of the contempt declaration from every Labour-controlled public authority, trade union and labour movement organisation in Britain. The collective contempt statement will be presented to the High Court on November 8. This will coincide with the date of the GLC's mass lobby against the Abolition Bill, and follows a day of industrial action throughout London on November 7.

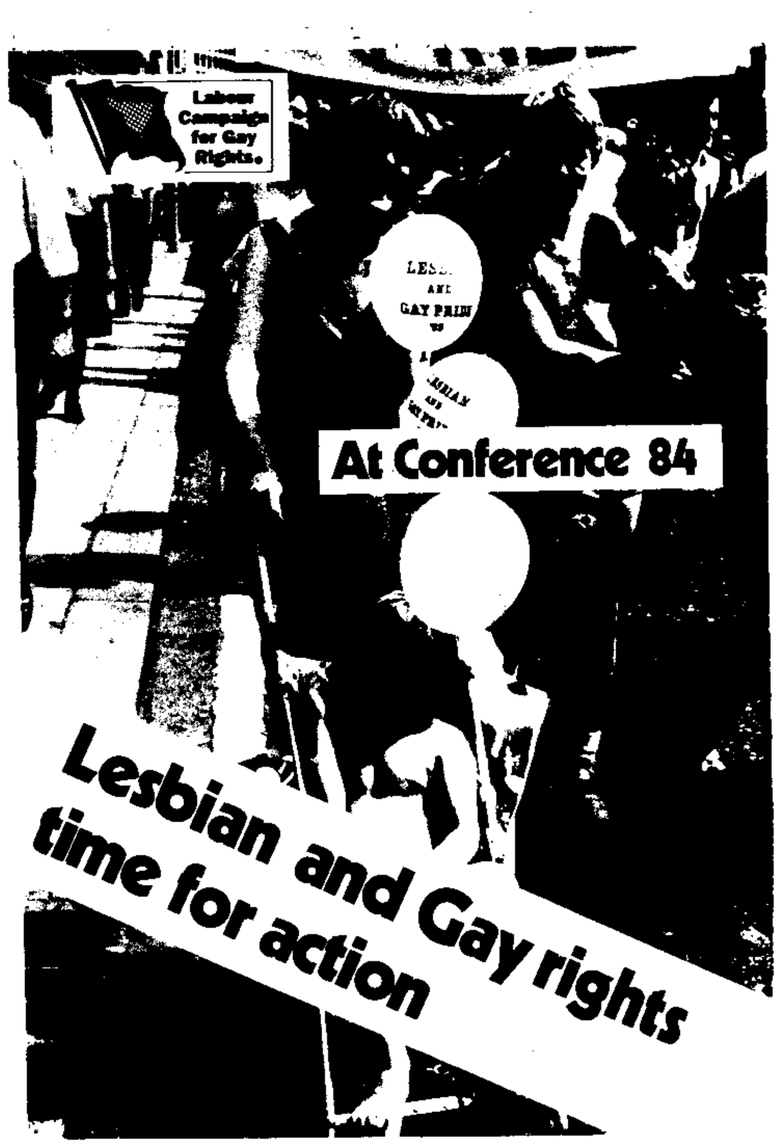
The High Court's ruling challenges the existence of trade unionism in Britain. We face a threat potentially as great as that faced by Solidarnosc in Poland. No Tory Court can override the decisions of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference when what is at issue is the status of a strike. It is unprecedented for Tory Judges to usurp the functions of a trade union executive in this way. The TUC and Labour Party Conferences are, for us, the highest courts in the land, with sole rights to adjudicate on such issues. Both have ruled clearly that the miners' strike is official in our eyes. Any contradiction of these verdicts can only provoke a direct clash between our "courts" and theirs. We will take whatever steps are necessary to defend our legality.

Ken Livingstone

Gays, Blacks and Women Unite!

WHAT do the Sun, the Tory council in Rugby and the NEC of the Labour Party have in common? They all wish that lesbians and gays would go back to the closet and shut up and at times they act as though they want all women and all blacks to join us! Well, the message from Blackpool is that we are getting together, but we're not going to shut up. Conference 1984 was notable for the warm comradely support between our three groups in our separate struggles to be properly recognised within the labour movement and the Labour Party.

This was the first year when we'd managed to get sufficient motions and subsequent amendments to conference to give us a fighting chance of having a debate on lesbian and gay rights. But ours was the only one with that degree of support not to be included on the Conference timetable. We understand that this was because of the NEC's reluctance to allow the issue a public airing. Our principal supporting delegates went through the necessary motions of wasting time trying to get Conference Arrangements Committee to change its mind and narrowly lost a challenge to its decision on the floor. Instead of providing socialist leadership the NEC once again were on the defensive. Perhaps they thought that if they sat on their hands and smiled sympathetically but sadly, we'd go away.



Tories on offensive in Rugby

So once again the Labour Party let the Tories take the offensive. The week before Conference, Tory-controlled Rugby council had voted to remove the phrase "sexual orientation" from its dqual rights policy, and then announced that it would discriminate against gay men in its employment. Presumably they felt it was unthinkable that women had an interest in sex, as the Tories didn't mention lesbians. The Sun, while saying it "has nothing against homosexuals", declared that Rugby was its "Top Town! – let's all follow Rugby in fighting back!" The Chair of the Labour Group drove up to Blackpool to join us in demanding support and action from the Party leadership. What we got was Conference Arrangements Committee refusing to allow time for an emergency motion.

But we were – and are – on the real agenda of the movement. Our own fringe meeting was attended by over 200 people. It was important for us to have the shadow Home Secretary on our platform, and for us to put forward a lesbian perspective from Labour Movement Lesbians. All our speakers – on the platform and on the floor – presented strong and reasoned points of view. It was evident that as a group we were far more assured than we had been two years ago. But just as important was the clear unqualified support we received from platform speakers at other fringe events, notably Labour Herald and the Black Sections meeting.

Working Together

Most, if not all LCGR/LML/GYS members fully support the demands of Women's Action Committee and for Black Sections. For those of us at Blackpool, the Black Sections meeting was a crucial event. It demonstrated yet again that we face a common opposition, an unholy nonalliance of the Party leadership and Militant.

We agreed that the fight for the Black Sections motion was of primary importance which, for example, should if necessary take precedence over our motion in daily Briefing bulletins. This is because the changes in the Party which could follow from recognition of Black Sections and that which will follow agreement to WAC's demands, will be of major significance in liberating the Party at the top from its current conservative path.

Chris Beer Putney CLP
Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

Women's Action Committee – Where to now?

As informed readers will know, the four Conference resolutions on women promoted by WAC were once again wiped out by the union block vote. Four of the five women supported by WAC for the Women's Section of the NEC were also defeated. The 14 members of the NEC who voted to recommend rejection declined to answer the debate, and it was left to Gwyneth Dunwoody to field the hospital pass and answer the angry women for the Executive.

Of course, it was not all bad news. We had solid support from CLPs on both resolutions and slate. The speakers in the debate were, as ever, excellent. We had successful fringe meetings, with our pantomime – a feminist cinderella – widely publicised on TV. And we got a free gift from Neil. Caught at the end of a Panorama interview by a question on women, he came out with a set of ignorant cliches: we were unrepresentative and irrelevant, and anyway it was fathers with daughters, like him, who would produce a bright new future for us girls. We made hay with this in the press and in the Conference debate.

FOR THE FUTURE

For the future, WAC as a whole must decide the way forward: a few personal thoughts follow. We must build on existing links with black activists, whose resolutions fell for similar reasons to ours. We must reach further into the party grass roots, championing issues of interest to women, eg NHS cuts and most particularly getting CLPs to adopt positive discrimination on short-lists as re-selection looms. We must continue to champion individual causes like that of Anita Gale, nearly passed over for the Organiser's job in Wales. We must improve our representation on the National Labour Women's Committee (what committee, as Mandy Moore said in her speech) and harry the NEC for positive policies for women.

And we must somehow shame the unions (the NUM as honourable exception) out of their staggering sexism and racism. Unions who pride themselves on impeccable left-wing views on all other subjects clearly prefer right-winger Anne Davies on the NEC than one of *those* women. We need to reach out to union women urgently, perhaps stressing our commitment to the block vote as a valid part of the democratic process at Women's Conference. Recently, casting around for something newsworthy for a TV programme, I offered my contact some definitive evidence of complete bigotry towards women in one particular union. 'But that's not news' he replied and I had to agree. A sobering thought to end on.

Josie Edwards, Press Officer WAC

The Labour Party's Defence Statement: What we should do now

Joy Hurcombe
Chair Labour CND
(personal capacity)

The NEC document passed by the Labour Party conference on a card vote of 5 to 1 is now party policy. The Labour Party is comitted to refuse cruise missiles, cancel Trident, remove US bases — the nuclear ones — and scrap all nuclear weapons including Polaris. Regretably, it is also committed to stay in NATO and to a policy of non-nuclear defence and increased conventional arms spending.

The task of the Labour Party members is to get the Labour Party to start campaigning on the politics that we have clearly won. We should expect Walworth Road to organise publicity material and campaigns to get the policies over to the voters. We should hear the party's spokespersons losing no opportunity to explain why we are safer without cruise, Trident, Polaris and the US nuclear bases. We should press for demonstrations and close cooperation with CND up and down the country.

It is very doubtful that this will happen. What will happen is that the pro-NATO Atlanticists in the party will have a field day. The Healeys, Shores and Callaghans will, unashamedly, put over their views on a strong, effective modern defence armed with every conventional weapon iun the book. At the same time they will attack the party's position on getting rid of Polaris and US bases. They will take about negotiating with America and they will insist that the programme is taken step by step.

Our best plan is to continue the fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament but at the same time take on the issue of NATO. We have gained nothing by trying to keep the policies separate. Gavin Laird (AUEW) was right. Unilateral nuclear disarmament doesn't mean very much if you belong to a nuclear alliance. It means even less now that we are aware of the consequences of the nuclear winter. But even this is not enough. We should start demanding that all bases, British and American are taken out of Europe. We should insist that all foreign troops are off our soil and the British Army recalled from the Rhine and from Ireland.



US base at Greenham: Will it be removed under Labour? Ann Flowers

We must demand a nuclear free zone around these shores and no visiting nuclear ships in our ports. We have to close down the nuclear research est ablishments at Aldermaston and the nuclear re-processing plants at Sellafields (Windscale) and Capenhurts.

MINIMUM DEMANDS ARE OUT

We need to build a mass movement and we have to start now before the right capitalises on their gains made at the Labour Party conference. Minimum demands are out. Any compromise on, say, the bases or Polaris will be exploited in the same way as our diffidence over campaigning for withdrawal from NATO.

We should insist that lower defence spending is the priority for the next Labour government and that we have conference policy to support this (Composite 40).

Most of all, we should insist that non-nuclear defence is a nonsense and a deception whilst we are in NATO. Outside of a nuclear alliance and in the context of our commitment to a socialist foreign policy, non-provocative minimum defence of our coast, territory and air-fields could be a demand of the party membership.

Ending the arms trade and making a 1% commitment to overseas aid and a demand for the closure of the Defence Sales Organisation are demands that the party has toned down in recent years. It is time that we campaigned for them in a broad programme of demands. Single issues or particular weapons systems are just pieces of the jigsaw. The fundamental pattern is our understanding of international socialism and the common cause of the working class throughout the world.



Dora Russell addresses the Women's Action Committee fringe meeting. John Chapman

BRIEFING'S GUIDE

Over the past five years, the Tories have made numerous attempts to reduce the level of local government expenditure. Some proposals, such as those for local referenda, failed to pass through Parliament. On 26th June, the Rates Act, the ultimate measure, became law. A month later Patrick Jenkin announced his hit list of eighteen authorities, including Tory Portsmouth. Perhaps of greater significance was the inclusion of Sheffield, a marginal authority for ratecapping, but whose leader was on Labour's NEC.

The selection of the hit list authorities had been a careful act of political judgement by Jenkin. The legislation required him to apply common criteria to all authorities. His choice was the criteria to select. Had his basis been the level of expenditure in 1984/5 compared with 1978/9, both the City of London and the Metropolitan Police would have been on the list. They share the distinction with only four other authorities of having increased their expenditure by over 150% during this six year period.[1] Jenkin selected rather those authorities whose expenditure was 4% or more over target, and 20% or more over GRE. Hackney only appeared on the list because Jenkin decided to ignore joint finance and Urban Programme projects.[2]

DEROGATION

The first option open to the hit list authorities was to apply for derogation. Applications had to be submitted by 1st October and include detailed information relating to expenditure and staffing levels. Jenkin was then obliged to review his proposed expenditure level in the light of his information. The catch was that should he permit a higher level of expenditure, he could impose any requirement on the authority's expenditure or financial management as he thought appropriate. The authority would become his mere puppet.

It had been suggested that Portsmouth had been included on the hit list merely to demonstrate how 'a reasonable authority' would behave, and how 'reasonably' Jenkin would respond to the application for derogation. The trap was so apparent that no authority applied for derogation. It is now too late for them to do so. This must cause acute embarrassment to Jenkin in view of the arbitrary manner in which he has fixed expenditure targets.

GRANT RELATED EXPENDITURE

The formula for distributing government grant to local authorities was changed in 1980. It is now allocated on the basis of each authority's Grant Related Expenditure (GRE). This is supposedly a formula whereby the government computes what it thinks that a local authority should spend. After the 1981 riots, the government stated its concern for the plight of Inner City areas. The GRE formula is strongly weighted against Inner City problems, and is biased towards the Shire counties.

Difference between GREs and Council Budgets 1984/5 (England)

	Excess of budgets over GREs
All London Councils	+34.2%
All Metropolitan Councils	+7.5%
All Non-Metropolitan Councils	-1.3%

(Source: CIPFA, Finance and General Statistics, 1984/5)

The expenditure levels fixed by Jenkin for 1985/6 have been based solely on net expenditure levels for 1984/5. The expenditure level for Camden is £117.4m for 1985/6 compared with a net expenditure of £118.5m for 1984/5. In fact, Camden's real expenditure for 1984/5 is estimated at £126m (when the use of balances and special funding are included). Camden's expenditure for 1985/6 on the basis of a tight standstill budget is £130m. No amount of juggling with figures could reduce £130m to £117.4. Camden, as with other Labour hitlist authorities, has no choice but a policy of defiance.



OPTIONS FOR DEFIANCE

1. REFUSAL TO FIX A RATE

The purpose of this option is to create a broad coalition between the hit list authorities together with their staff and voters. The authorities will refuse to fix a rate on the terms imposed by the government. A crisis would thereby develop to which the government would have to respond.

The manner in which this crisis would develop is unclear. Although the General Rates Act 1967 imposes a duty on local authorities to fix a rate sufficient to cover their estimated expenditure, there is no obligation to fix a rate by a particular date. Precepting authorities (the GLC, ILEA and metropolitan authorities) however are obliged to fix their precept by early March (at least twenty one days before the financial year commences). The consequences should a precepting authority fail to meet this deadline are unclear. Uncertainty would be created for all authorities under a duty to collect the precept. Should the City of Westminster merely collect its own rate, or wait until the precepts have been determined?

Should no rate be fixed by 1st April, no rate would be due. Tenants paying their rates weekly with their rent, would merely be liable to pay the rent element. It had been thought that any expenditure incurred by a local authority in these circumstances would be unlawful. The Liverpool experience would suggest that this is wrong. The Liverpool conflict was unique and is not one that can be relied upon.

The government could respond to the crisis by sending in Commissioners. Legislation would be needed (it was reported that draft legislation was prepared as an option in Liverpool). Recent experience suggests tha that the government would be loath to become involved in this way.

A local authority could default on its debts if it was unable to borrow. This would generate a major loss of confidence among city institutions, equivalent to a large city institution going bankrupt.

It is more likely that a state of increasing chaos would slowly develop as the authority found contractors increasingly reluctant to carry out work, or suppliers to provide goods. The cost of such contracts would increase, as would the cost of borrowing. Chief Officers could advise that such additional expenditure was caused by wilful misconduct or was unlawful. This would be the prelude for intervention by the Audit Commission with the prospect of surcharge and disqualification.

It has been suggested that the government has draft legislation available that would force Chief Officers to levy a rate at the ratecapped level (this would lead directly to the deficit funding option).

Issues relating to this option:

- ★ Would precepting authorities be able to adopt this strategy?
- ★ What will be the position of unions when their members' wages are at risk?
- ★ Council services to those in real need could be affected.
- ★ Would all Councils face insolvency at the same time. (Some have significant balances. Would the government still pay rate support grant to those still entitled to it?)
- ★ No rates would be payable for some months. Large bills would then arrive. Many vulnerable ratepayers who had not set money aside, would be acutely embarrassed.
- ★ Would this option be adopted by authorities who are not ratecapped but who face further withdrawal of rate support grant?

2. DEFICIT BUDGETING

For a rate to be lawful, it must be sufficient to cover estimated expenditure. Expenditure could be reduced by undisclosed savings to be identified thereafter. This is the tactic adopted

TO RATECAPPING

by the outgoing Liberal administration in Liverpool and which was a major factor in the subsequent crisis when the new Labour Group decided to increase expenditure instead.

A no cuts budget would be adopted, the ratecapped rate level would be agreed, and the equation would be completed by the appropriate level of unidentified savings.

The dilemma would then arise. How would the Council respond when asked if it intended to make the savings? Silence could be misconstrued by the unions and voters alike. Any admission that there was no intention to make the savings could invalidate the rate.

Any ratepayer could then seek to challenge the rate in the courts. Those least sympathetic to the Council would withhold their rates until a ruling was made. The council could be kept afloat by the most vulnerable in the community. The chief officers would probably refuse to collect the rate if they feared that the rate was illegal. Otherwise they could face surcharge for the wasted expenditure in seeking to levy an illegal rate. This option could be used to fudge the issues. Some authorities could survive the year without making cuts through use of reserves and accountancy techniques. The May 1986 local elections would then be in sight . . .

Issues relating to this option:

- ★ A stated decision to carry through a deficit budget would be a non-starter. It would not be levied by officers. It need not be paid. The rate would be illegal.
- ★ There is no consensus as to how this option would operate or how it would be presented.
- ★ Each ratecapped authority would be in a unique financial situation which would make unity difficult.

3. THE THREE NO's

The cry of no cuts in jobs or services, no rent increases and no rate increase has regularly been heard but has never been adopted. This option now envisages rate increases in line with inflation. The policy was advocated as the means of defiance against massive rate increases generated through loss of rate support grant through penalties. It is more difficult to envisage it as a response to ratecapping.

Members in Hackney have argued that this is a form of deficit budgetting. A budget should be drawn up on this basis and a rate fixed (and levied?) accordingly. The rate would be illegal on two grounds: (1) A rate increase in line with inflation would *exceed* the ratecapped level, (2) The rate fails to comply with the requirements of the General Rates Act 1967 in that the rate is insufficient to cover the estimated expenditure. This rate is not a valid rate. Effectively, the authority would not have fixed a rate.

It is unclear whether such an authority would attempt to levy this rate. Chief Officers would not willingly comply or they would face surcharge. They would refuse. Equally, no ratepayer would be obliged to pay the rate.

It is argued however that this option guarantees surcharge and disqualification for the members on grounds of wilful misconduct.

Issues relating to this option:

- ★ Is this a realistic option?

4. MAJORITY OPPOSITION

This option has been mooted in the past. It is not now realistically considered. Councillors are elected to assume power, not to refuse it. If the Tories were foolish enough to accept control in these circumstances, they would draw up a rate based on cuts. The majority opposition would vote it down. No rate would be fixed, and the majority would be exercising control. Were the majority group to boycott the rate fixing meeting, they would be permitting cuts to be executed.

5. SUBSIDIARY OPTIONS

These options are not strategies for defiance in themselves. They are however, tactics which could be used as part of a strategy:

- ★ Non-payment of creditors.
- ★ Non-payment of the Metropolitan Police Precept.
- ★ Default on debt repayments.

All these options would shatter confidence in local government and in financial institutions. In the short term the local authority would have some extra cash. Payment could be secured within a few days through High Court action. There is an express power for the Metropolitan Police to appoint a Receiver to secure payment of their precept.[3] All sums borrowed and interest due thereon are secured as a charge on all the revenues of the authority.[4] These actions would carry the risk of surcharge and disqualification. They could be used as warning shots across Jenkin's bows.

STAGED RESIGNATIONS

Mass resignations would merely hand over control for a short period to the opposition. The gesture would not be understood by the electorate. Staged resignations could be held on the GLC precedent to demonstrate that there was no local support for ratecapping. It would also provide an opportunity for those who were not prepared to risk surcharge to step down.

POWERS OF THE AUDITOR

An authority's account are audited annually. The experience in Poplar demonstrated how slow it is for this mechanism to deal with illegal expenditure. The Audit Commission can now direct an extraordinary audit either on its own volition or on complain from a local voter. The powers of the Auditor are twofold:

(i) losses caused by wilful misconduct
To be guilty of wilful misconduct, the person concerned must appreciate that he is acting wrongly, or is wrongly omitting to act, and yet persists in so acting or omitting to act regardless of the consequences, or acts and omits to act with reckless indifference to what the results may be. If the auditor finds that a loss has been incurred or a deficiency caused by wilful misconduct, he is under a duty to certify the amount and recover it from the persons responsible. They are liable jointly and severally. If the loss exceeds £2,000 they are automatically disqualified from holding office for five years. There is an appeal to the courts against the amount certified. The disqualification is automatic (subject to the loss incurred) and is merely suspended pending the appeal.

(ii) Expenditure contrary to the law
This is the procedure applied in the Camden Supplement case in which the District Auditor sought to argue that the minimum wage of £60 was so excessive as to be unlawful. The Auditor applies to the court for a declaration that the expenditure is unlawful. If the court accepts his argument, the court then goes on to consider questions of surcharge and disqualification (if the sum exceeds £2,000). The court has a discretion as to the period of disqualification. No question of surcharge or disqualification arises if the court accepts that the person acted reasonably or in the belief that his actions were lawful.

There is clearly a grey area where either procedure could be adopted. If in doubt, the auditor would apply for a declaration. Chief officers are equally liable to surcharge if they are responsible for the expenditure. Clear advice of illegality which was ignored, would absolve them. It is an open question whether someone who abstains or absents themselves from the meeting can be made liable.[5] Liability could be established for failure to take action to reverse an illegal decision.[6]

A surcharged councillor could face bankruptcy. It is suggested that it is more likely that such steps would not be taken in practice. Rather, any savings would be taken and a heavy weekly repayment would be fixed depending upon the financial circumstances of each councillor. Councillors could be forced to sell their homes. It is suggested that this would be unlikely particularly if there were children or an innocent partner. The larger the number of councillors at risk, the more public concern there would be. It is a political judgement whether a government could or would permit a united group from several councils to be surcharged or disqualified.

THE LIVERPOOL EXPERIENCE

The government bent over backwards to reach a compromise with Liverpool. It advanced payments of rate support grant without any deduction for penalties. Emissaries were sent round the money markets to assure them that Liverpool was creditworthy. The local auditor was kept at bay. Liverpool also compromised. A 17% rate rise was agreed, items were cut out of the budget and revenue expenditure was capitalised.

This time Jenkin is prepared for conflict. The timing is his.

CONCLUSIONS

Few Tories believe that ratecapping will work. The Audit Commission report in July castigated the GRE system as being ineffective and unfair. It had added £1.2 billion to the rates over a three year period through the uncertainties that it had created. The Audit Commission report into Basildon, one of the hitlist authorities, has killed the lie that ratecapping has anything to do with efficiency. Basildon was commended for its management of its services. Ratecapping is to do with jobs and services. The dangers ahead for councillors cannot be underestimated. Neither should the uncertainties facing the government in enforcing this legislation.

Cllr. Robert Latham

1. The GLC, Leicester, Camden and Hackney were the others.
2. Hackney's expenditure was 4.92% above target including these disregards, but only 3.89% without them.
3. s15. General Rate Act 1967.
4. The Local Government Finance Act 1982 introduced amendments aimed specifically at emphasising the creditworthiness of local authorities.
5. Surcharges were made against two Clay Cross councillors who were absent. The District Auditor concluded that they should have attended, knowing of the illegal resolution. They did not appeal, so the decision is untested.
6. The new batch of Clay Cross councillors were surcharged for their failure to end the continuing illegal expenditure.

LABOUR AND THE POLICE

THE level of debate at the Labour Party conference offered the press an easy opportunity to present the party as a load of manic demented police bashers. The Party leadership was running scared of the intense anger of its own members at the nature of the policing of the miners' strike. Despite an unparalleled number of resolutions on policing, the four composites on the subject (each containing a shopping list of policies) were timetabled in such a way as to allow no time for debate. Less successful, however, was the attempt to get two of the composites remitted, as Conference voted all four to be party policy.

Press Association

Neil Kinnock's speech showed that the Labour Party leadership are still trying to fudge the whole issue of the role of the police in the hope that it will somehow go away. Kinnock described the police as hapless stooges caught in the middle of the dispute between the NUM and the NCB – "the meat in the sandwich". Meanwhile the police themselves were well aware that he had got it wrong. Statements made by both the Chair of the Police Federation and the Head of the Chief Superintendants Association in the same week made it clear that the police themselves found it difficult to sustain this image. The hesitant condemnation of police violence finally made by Kinnock unleashed a torrent of police abuse in return.

The Labour Party is failing to come to grips with policing as an issue. The police are not the hapless tools of a wicked Tory government. The more frightening truth is that they are way out of control, even of a Tory government. And the charge against the police is not just one of incidents of violence (although they certainly exist) but of an ethos of policing in which violence has been glamorised, and racism, sexism, authoritarianism and a cult of masculinity is the norm. This police subculture was extensively documented in the case of the Metropolitan Police in a Policy Studies Institute Report of November 1983 commissioned by the Met themselves.



Police clear the way for a van leaving Messenger Group of Newspapers plant, Warrington, 23 November 1983 (NGA dispute).

Miners' strike

The vicious way in which the miners' strike has been policed has not happened suddenly; the techniques used were developed in Northern Ireland and have been used against black people for years. But the problem is not just the amount of riot gear or equipment or even the numbers of police. It is the assumptions and value judgements which underlie policing operations; and it is these above all that show that the police role is decidedly not neutral. In a Channel 4 television programme on July 31, the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire made it clear that he saw his role as being only to serve the working miners (those who are being "beaten") and not those on strike (who he identified as doing the "beating"). Meanwhile, other senior police officers in Nottinghamshire have filed sworn evidence in a recent High Court hearing stating that is the "sole intention" of every striking miner on a picket line to use violence and intimidation against working miners. It is clear that the police themselves do not see their role as innocent stooges but as prime movers. The Labour Party must stop pretending otherwise. Nor would this recognition involve a purely negative approach. On the contrary it could be just what is needed to enable the party to promote a positive and wholly different view of the role of policing in our society, while having the courage of its convictions to publicise the present often ugly reality.

The system of values in the police force (its "occupational culture") can only be changed by a radical rethinking of the position of the police in our society. The police have become a "force" rather than a "service"; their supposed independence enables them to claim virtual immunity from both the law and from complaint. They must be made to change not just their priorities and concerns, but their whole role in and relationship to the community. The Labour Party should be arguing for a society where the concerns of ordinary people are made paramount. In the case of policing, this means not only protection and security for everyone (including black people, gays, lesbians and women) but also public confidence in the policing system to promote reconciliation and concern for people instead of violence and confrontation. The police will not learn how to treat the victims of crime more sympathetically unless they start to deal with crime itself in a radically different manner. This entails a view of themselves as the servants of the people which simply does not exist at present.

Police Accountability

The Labour Party has correctly identified police accountability as the policy most likely to provide an alternative means to law and order. But police accountability has to mean far more than setting up a few arid committee structures which may have little power and less effect. It means facing up to the political nature of the choices which have to be made in the course of law enforcement and demanding real control over them. There is a choice about the way in which industrial disputes are policed and a decision to stop using saturation special riot policing was actually made by Conference and equally quickly condemned by both Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley in radio interviews. Admittedly the wording of the motion in question was none too happy but the mover explained clearly that there was no intention to stop the ordinary enforcement of law during strikes. The problem is that the leadership do not recognise the distinction between ordinary and riot policing.

Reselection: a power to be used

'The Party must get selections and reselections under way'. This was the NEC's unambiguous undertaking given to Conference on October 1st by their official spokesperson, John Evans. But although Conference succeeded in defending its hard-won Reselection procedure, it cannot be assumed that CLPs will now be left to make free and open selection without interference.

In this respect there are clear lessons to be learnt from the previous round of reselections. Its many negative features included:–

* *Widespread adoption of 'Shortlists of One'* – even when more than one candidate was validly nominated. From Pontefract to Dunfermline, candidates with significant support were crudely eliminated without any contest. In West Bromwich West, Cllr. John Edwards was denied a hearing even though he received no less than 8 valid Branch nominations.

* *Failure of Party officials* to inform CLPs that Shortlists of One are, in such circumstances, not just at variance with natural justice but also in conflict with the NEC's own guidelines. Some Party officials, indeed, were alleged to have actively opposed any idea of alternative candidates.

* *Widespread failure to shortlist women, black people and manual workers* and other disadvantaged groups. A CLP's EC has always got the right to propose such additions to the shortlist for its GC's consideration, and to challenge the unproven prejudice that such candidates are 'unelectable'.

* *Failure by those unhappy with their sitting MP to get together* in promoting alternative candidates and build enough support for them in time to win their selection. Comrades need not be alarmed by predictable screams of 'Caucussing!', providing that such discussions are purely 'advisory' and are not themselves conducted in such a way as will exclude or alienate potential supporters.

* *Allowing the NEC to simply prevent Reselection occuring* (as in Brent East) – and then to pin the blame for this on the CLP itself! The Euro results in Leeds and in Yorkshire South present fresh evidence that deselection of sitting candidates can lead to excellent results at the polls.

* *Accepting the establishment's assertion that criticism of an MP should be based not on 'ideological grounds' but on 'constituency performance'.* The establishment would like us all to accept that a Labour MP should be allowed to advocate nuclear weapons and incomes policies till s/he is blue in the face – provided that s/he answers constituents' letters and keeps an occasional 'surgery'. We must not swallow this kind of rubbish.



John Chapman

John Evans sums up on reselection

All those CLPs with sitting MPs must now be prepared for a series of sanctimonious lectures, not just from the Tory media but also from the Party's own establishment.

The words 'rights' and 'loyalty' will be widely heard. What the Party must decide is *WHOSE* 'rights' and *WHAT* 'loyalty' is most important. The 'rights' of a single individual to pursue his/her parliamentary career for yet another 5-year period? Or the rights of a whole CLP to freely choose the candidate who it thinks will represent the Labour interest with the closest perception and the greatest vigour?

As to 'loyalty', there is always a higher loyalty than that to a sitting MP (however decent a person and however full of 'experience'). It is the socialist loyalty to the Party's policies – and to all who require their full and speedy implementation.

The whole purpose of Reselection is to assist the necessary 'shift in the balance of wealth and power'. We must not leave it rusting on the shelf. We owe it to all to use it to best effect.

Francis Prideaux

LABOUR AND THE POLICE

(continued)

The other composite which the NEC tried to get remitted called for day to day operational accountability of the police. Operational accountability is the only way to control the deployment of police officers. It does not mean control of individual prosecutions, but it does mean control of decisions about how many police officers should be placed in an area, as well as decisions about, for example, the use of panda cars and transit vans. Last year the Labour Party conference passed unanimously a motion committing the Party to operational accountability but by this year the NEC was recommending remission of a motion on the grounds that it rejected what should *already* have been accepted as party policy. Fortunately, the conference reaffirmed its position unequivocally.

Unrealistic

But, the discussions in the Party about real accountability are only just beginning. Many people reject accountability as an unrealistic policy because they argue that the present personnel in the police force cannot possibly be changed. I do not myself believe that the Labour Party can or should campaign on the basis of sacking any group of workers, even the police, but these things should be discussed. Radical reorganisation of the structure of the police; and of recruitment and training; are as essential as accountability in changing the nature of the police force. The most radical proposal in this area which has not even begun to be discussed by the Party nationally, was contained in "A New Police Authority for London", (GLC Police Committee Support Unit Discussion Document No. 1) which suggested that the police should become local government workers and that each local authority should be elected on the basis of a manifesto on the police, just like housing or social services.

Undoubtedly, the miners are going to win and by next year's conference the strike will be over. But the issue of policing will not go away unless more grass roots pressure is exerted on the leadership. Otherwise Labour will continue with a wholly negative voice on the police and with no alternative policies. One thing is certain, if the Labour Party continues to run away from this subject, it will lose more and more votes.

Louise Christian
Streatham CLP

British Telecom: Why the Tories are selling off

The planned sell-off of British Telecom in November is the biggest prize in the Tories privatisation programme and its sale has been carefully planned and prepared. Soon after taking office in July 1979 the Tories announced that the Post Office was to be split into two corporations: Post and Telecommunications. A year later in July 1980 the Telecommunications Bill was published allowing private competition in the supply and maintenance of telephone equipment. Now with the sale of 51% of BT for an estimated £3 billion the plan is complete.

The new private owners will receive an increasingly profitable company. The merging of telecommunications with the new micro-chip technology will create vast new markets. All much too lucrative for the Tories to leave to the Public Sector.

But the Tories are not just interested in transferring public assets to private profit. At its simplest the sale of BT, like all the other de-nationalisations, represent straightforward asset stripping. The sale of public assets gives short-term cash gains to the treasury in the hope of keeping down the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement and possibly even assisting the elusive promise to reduce personal taxation. But the Tories also have other more sophisticated political aims in mind.

REAL AIM

The real long-term aim of Tory strategy, stripped of its increasingly transparent cloak of monetarist 'theory', is to break the strength of the trade union movement and to re-establish the catastrophic levels of profitability of British Industry by driving down living standards. This is now openly admitted by the likes of Chancellor Lawson who speaks of the need to remove 'Labour Market Rigidities' (unions) and the only cure for unemployment being for those without work to take lower paid employment in the service sector. In relation to the well organised public sector industries like BT the *Economist* openly posed the issue in July 1982:

'Britain's unions are cowed but not broken . . . The union grip is strongest in the Public Sector monopolies. The most effective way to reduce public sector union power is to end the state monopoly or near monopoly in the services they provide.'



Competition and Privatisation are two important steps in this direction and the resulting reorganisation of BT over the past two years has aided the process. BT is now organised into a number of autonomous 'Profit Centres'. Each has its own separate profit targets and accountancy systems, and the pressure towards local wage negotiations, bonus schemes and redundancy agreements aimed at undermining the unions nationally (as the miners area based bonus scheme did in Nottinghamshire) is obvious.

THE TORY DREAM

But the Tories also have another political aim in mind in the sale of BT and they are even willing to allow a lower initial return on the sale to achieve it. £8 million has been spent on advertising over the last couple of months, and elaborate schemes have been devised to create the Tory dream of a 'share owning democracy' – ensuring that every punter no matter how 'small' has an 'interest' in the system.

And to ensure that shares are not sold as soon as possible to make a quick profit, most of these incentives are only available if the 'small investor' hangs on to the shares for between 2 and 7 years. If they are successful they hope to create mass opposition to Labour's re-nationalisation plans.

Unfortunately the response of the BT unions was too little and too late. Culminating in a humiliating climbdown by the POEU in November 1983 when faced with the threat of sequestration of union funds for disobeying a Court Order to connect the private network Project Mercury to the public system.

As a result a certain level of apathy of apathy and cynicism set into the POEU membership from which it is only beginning to emerge as it prepares to face the consequences of privatisation in the form of threatened job losses and attempts to undermine the national union.

Mick Sullivan

GMBATU sell-out at Cammell Lairds

37 workers at Cammell Lairds shipyard have been thrown into jail for occupying a gas rig and the destroyer 'Edinburgh' in a fight against redundancies which have decimated the yard's workforce. Two sections at the yard – the stagers (scaffolders) and the plant maintenance section –voted to take action and their decision was given official sanction by GMBATU.

Following the jailings, management called for manual workers to return to the yard. The 500 staff have been working throughout. Despite an appeal from the 37 (reprinted here), hundreds of workers, including senior shop stewards, are crossing the GMBATU picket daily.

The GMBATU's response to the jailing of their members has been little short of pathetic. Despite heavy lobbying they refused to support an emergency resolution to Labour Party. conference, demanding the freeing of the 37. The union called a 'national demonstration' in Liverpool on Friday October 12, leaving local activists only days to prepare it. They refused the spontaneous support of GMBATU members working for the City Council who were prepared to strike on behalf of their comrades.

At no stage has there been any attempt to bring out workers in other yards, despite a Confed decision to support any yard which took action in defence of jobs. GMBATU refused to sanction visits of delegations from Lairds to other yards which could have spread the action.

The whole handling of the dispute by the GMBATU leadership has shown their fear of a fight and their total ineptitude.

Strong support has come from Liverpool City Council and from the Merseyside Group of MPs, with the notable exception of Frank Field, who from the start labelled the occupiers as 'hot-heads'.

The dispute is still on and it deserves full support. We must respond when 37 of our people are thrown in jail. The message of the 37 is coming over. If we want to win, we have to fight.

Message from the Lairds prisoners to the staff.

We have now been gaoled for fighting for our jobs and against anti-trade union laws.

Any staff members who enter the yard to work during the dispute are as responsible for jailing us as the prison wardens who lock our cells and the police who took us from the yard.

We appeal to all staff not to cross the picket line, to turn back and to join us in our struggle to save the yard.

The Courts, the police and Lairds management will not prevent us fighting for our jobs, the jobs of our children and the future of our community.

Our fight is your fight, our victory is a victory for the whole yard.

Don't leave us in Walton. Support the occupation. Save the Yard. Join the picket.

The Lairds Prisoners
HMP Walton

Students: campaigning in the new term

BUILDING support for the miners and campaigning for a New Deal for students are the central objectives of the Left in the student movement. Briefing supporters allied with Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN), the Left grouping within the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) will be working to ensure that the National Union of Students gives full support to the miners.

This will doubtless need much work since the so-called Democratic Left leadership of both NOLS and NUS has consistently followed Neil Kinnock in its slavish adherence to legality. At last year's Christmas conference a motion proposed by the NUS Executive condemned 'violence' in the NGA dispute, displaying the same spurious even-handedness as Kinnock did over violence in the miners' strike.

Miners Support Groups are being set up at Sussex University and Worthing Technical College. The group at Sussex University is being set up jointly by the Students Union and the campus trade unions. We hope this takes place in colleges throughout the country.

The NUS New Deal campaign is the other major issue in the student movement. It consists of a demand for an improved standard of living for students over a range of issues. These include a 14% increase in the student grant, a £30 per week minimum for Further Education students, a minimum grant of £900 per year, the restoration of cuts in travel grants and the development of better education or training for young people.

The NUS strategy is twofold: one is a 'Claim It' campaign designed to expose the hardship the present system of financial support causes amongst students.

The other element is a series of political activities to press student demands. Much of this consists of the well-tried and fairly futile letter-writing, MP lobbying exercise the NUS leadership seems to enjoy so much.

The NUS Executive has also floated the idea of a National Rent Strike in support of the demands of the New Deal. They now appear to be backing away from this idea – not surprisingly since it seems to be an uncharacteristically radical proposal. However, on closer analysis it can be seen as a typical Democratic Left manoeuvre: a superficially radical strategy which is unlikely to succeed in practice defuses attacks on them from the Left. The proposal for a National Rent Strike has a number of weaknesses. It excludes colleges without their own accommodation, i.e. almost every Further Education college. The strategy also fails to build alliances with campus trade unions, and local progressive groups. But despite these limitations, Briefing supporters will be campaigning in support of the New Deal.

Alick Bridger,
Sussex University Labour Club
(Personal capacity)

National Front Stopped in Brighton

From the Mosleyites of the Thirties to the National Front and international nazi terrorists today, Brighton has been a centre for fascist activity. In November 1981 a National Front march attended by 150 fascists was driven off the streets by 600 Anti-Nazi League, a well-organised and easily mobilised group. However, now that the Socialist Workers Party have closed down the ANL there is an obvious need for a group to monitor and respond to fascist activity whether it be race attacks or NF mobilisations.

On a local level when the NF planned a march in Brighton, the organisation of a counter demonstration at short notice was fraught with problems. The NF planned a march supposedly against the ritual slaughter of animals. This is clearly an opportunist attempt by the NF to jump aboard the animal liberation bandwagon as a cover for attacks on Jewish and Muslim communities. Indeed the march was a provocation against Hove's large Jewish community; its arranged meeting place was on the same road as a Jewish Old People's Home and the date around Jewish New Year was hardly accidental.

Despite short notice an ad-hoc group of anti-fascists leafletted schools and fly-posted the town. Interestingly, it was the SWP, once the organisers of the Anti-Nazi League who opposed the counter-demonstration. Their argument was in a period of working class activity (ie the miners' strike) fascist groups could not grow and therefore need not be opposed. This economic determinism of its crudest kind totally ignored the relative growth of fascism during the 1974 miners' strike, and is a clear illustration of the SWP as a dying and irrelevent sect. Despite their intervention the march was opposed!

The march on September 22nd was a resounding defeat for the fascists. The police insisted that the NF change their assembly point from the one advertised. This disorientated anti-fascists temporarily, but we soon reassembled close by. A motley crew of about 50 NF eventually moved off, flanked by over 100 police. The march was first driven up side-streets as several anti-fascists streamed after them. The march only managed to assemble in the main road with the aid of police horses, vans and motor-cycles. Several anti-fascists were arrested when they tried to block the road.

Throughout the march's progress through the town we collected many people to march with us. The NF on the other hand were 'insulated' by the police presence and were unable to give out the leaflets. By the time we reached the fascists rally point we had doubled our original numbers and the nazis were unable to make their speeches because of the noise we were making! The police then bundled them all into a coach and whisked them away. Brighton's NF organiser, Martin Wingfield, in the local paper was quoted as saying that the NF would not march in Sussex for a "number of years". Next time I hope there will be a national organisation to call upon for mass mobilisations rather than relying upon a few individuals.

Brighton Labour Briefing

Her "Enemy Within"

The Law is the law is the law!
And Order is order is order!
A Judge is the best judge
And a Policeman the best lawyer
When he steals the funds of a union,
Or batters the head of a miner.

Look, "Ulster is British, is British!"
And "Murder is murder is murder!"
— As she counts her plastic bullets
For busting children's heads in,
On her side of the Border.
Oh but, "Violence is violence is violence!"
Incessantly she sings

— With her real Polaris necklace on,
And her Trident ear-rings.
And an Election is an Election
And Tory is Tory! she said
— As she viewed the South Atlantic
For any sign of blood.

Well, I closed down the Belgrano
In a single afternoon:
Now for those miners' families
— My enemy within.

Denis Knight
(Brighton Kemp Town CLP)

Glasgow Troops Out Demonstration

On Saturday September 8th, for the first time in three years, a demonstration calling for the withdrawal of British troops from the occupied six counties marched through Glasgow's city centre. The previous one, held in 1981, was disrupted by counter demonstrators and resulted in a temporary ban on marches relating to the Irish question. The latest march was attended by well over 3,000 people and it won back the right to demonstrate on the streets of Glasgow against continued British repression in Ireland. The march was organised by the Clydeside Troops Out Movement, Sinn Fein and the Scottish Republican Band alliance. In attendance were supporters from the Glasgow Labour Committee on Ireland, the RCP, the IRSP and the Scottish Republican Socialist Party. Throughout the length of the march, there was constant harassment from some 500 Loyalists, 73 of whom were arrested. The march, however, reached its destination, a rally in the City Halls.

Despite having their banner on the march, the Glasgow LCI voted by a small majority to decline the offer of having a speaker on the platform. The reason the majority gave for this was that they did not want to share the platform with fringe groups like the SRSP and the RCP. This was an excellent opportunity to link up with Republican sympathisers which was stupidly thrown away.

The main speaker at the rally was Vincent Malloy of Sinn Fein, who said that the euphoric atmosphere "reminded him of the night Bobby Sands was elected". "Sinn Fein", he said, "realised that more than armed struggle was necessary for victory." Malloy went on to stress the need for a political campaign, which did not depend on unconditional support of the IRA. The main demands of such a campaign, he said, should be — Oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Against Strip Searching and Troops Out Now!

Scott Goldie (West Dumbarton LPYS/ Vale of Leven Labour Party Branch)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

Irish Trade Unionists visit Party Conference —

UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

Party Conference '84 saw a flowering of the Irish fringe — from the Fabians leftwards, each tendency put its views. Perhaps, the most significant contribution of all came from the Irish trade union movement. That is on top of the £10,000 the three visitors brought over for the miners!

For the first time since the days of Connolly and Larkin, a section of the leadership of the Irish trade union movement has resolved to campaign for national unity and independence and to use their unfluence here. 'There is', they say 'no contradiction between "bread and butter" work as trade unionists and campaigning for Irish unity'.

The weakness of the Irish trade union movement and the working class as a whole has been a failure to look for the political solution of its problems, 'partition has impeded the economic, social and political development of the Irish working class for too long'.

The reunified Ireland these people have in mind bears little resemblence to the set up in the South today, it is a welcome socialist vision.

Aware of pressure from the United States and Britain for Ireland to enter Nato they carefully named their group 'Trade Unionists for Irish Unity *and* Independence'(TUIUI). Chatting easily in the bar with conference visitors from the 'Stop Plastic Bullets Campaign' and ex-Armagh prisoner Linda Quigley, Sean Redmond (who is Gen.Sec of the Irish Municipal Workers Union), Alice Moore (Assistant Gen.Sec. Local Govt Workers' Union) and Des Bonass (Dublin Trades Council), explained that the group wished to see a British declaration of intent to withdraw. 'The problem of how to prevent what is referred to as the 'bloodbath' is a problem for our labour movement', they insisted, 'not for the British'.

From contacts made at Party Conference, the TUIUI intends to step up its work in Britain by arranging discussions with individual unions and possibly making a submission to the NEC subcommittee whose revision of the party's 1981 Northern Ireland Policy document is expected next year.

Irish campaigners won a noteable victory by winning the party's opposition to both the sexual harassment of strip searches in Armagh and the conveyor belt system of non-jury Diplock courts used in the North. (It is the first time at conference that the unions have challenged an NEC reccommendation on Ireland since the 20's.)

The disappointing vote on the withdrawal composite should not mask progress being made. The 'unity by consent policy' has now been substantially remodelled and the defeat of the 'men of violence' is no longer credible as the prime policy objective.

If we are to win the party to a position of unconditional withdrawal, the dialogue with republican, feminist and labour movements in Ireland must be extended into the unions.

The formation of the TUIUI and their participation in the debate at party conference is a vital step in this direction.

By Martin Collins

Greetings from Sinn Fein

The following statement was sent to the Labour Women for Ireland fringe meeting at annual conference in Blackpool:

A Chairde,

We send fraternal greetings to the sisters attending this Fringe meeting and trust that this mutual exchange of views between Republican women and women in the Labour Party will help in building dialogue and debate; two essential tools in breaking down the barriers which years of misrepresentation, expounded by the British government, have prolonged the struggle of the Irish people for unity and self-determination.

Sinn Fein Women's Department was formed in 1980 as part of the Party's developing policies on social, economic and cultural issues and out of a growing realisation by Republican women that the question of Women's freedom could not be postponed until national freedom had been won.

Sinn Fein Women believe that immediate campaigning against the repression of women is an integral part of the overall fight against the national, social, economic and cultural repression of which Ireland, North and South, is presently ruled. We believe that within the existing system, only the most minimal concessions can be gained, nevertheless, these concessions themselves and the increased awareness which ensues from such campaigns will make women's demands impossible to ignore in a free, united, socialist republic.

The day to day reality of working-class anti-unionist women in the six counties is that they



Harassment – daily occurance

are subjected to constant armed patrolling of their areas by the British army and the RUC: that they have the highest prison population per head in Europe, with at the present over 700 prisoners in jails – not to mention the many thousands who have been imprisoned since 1968.

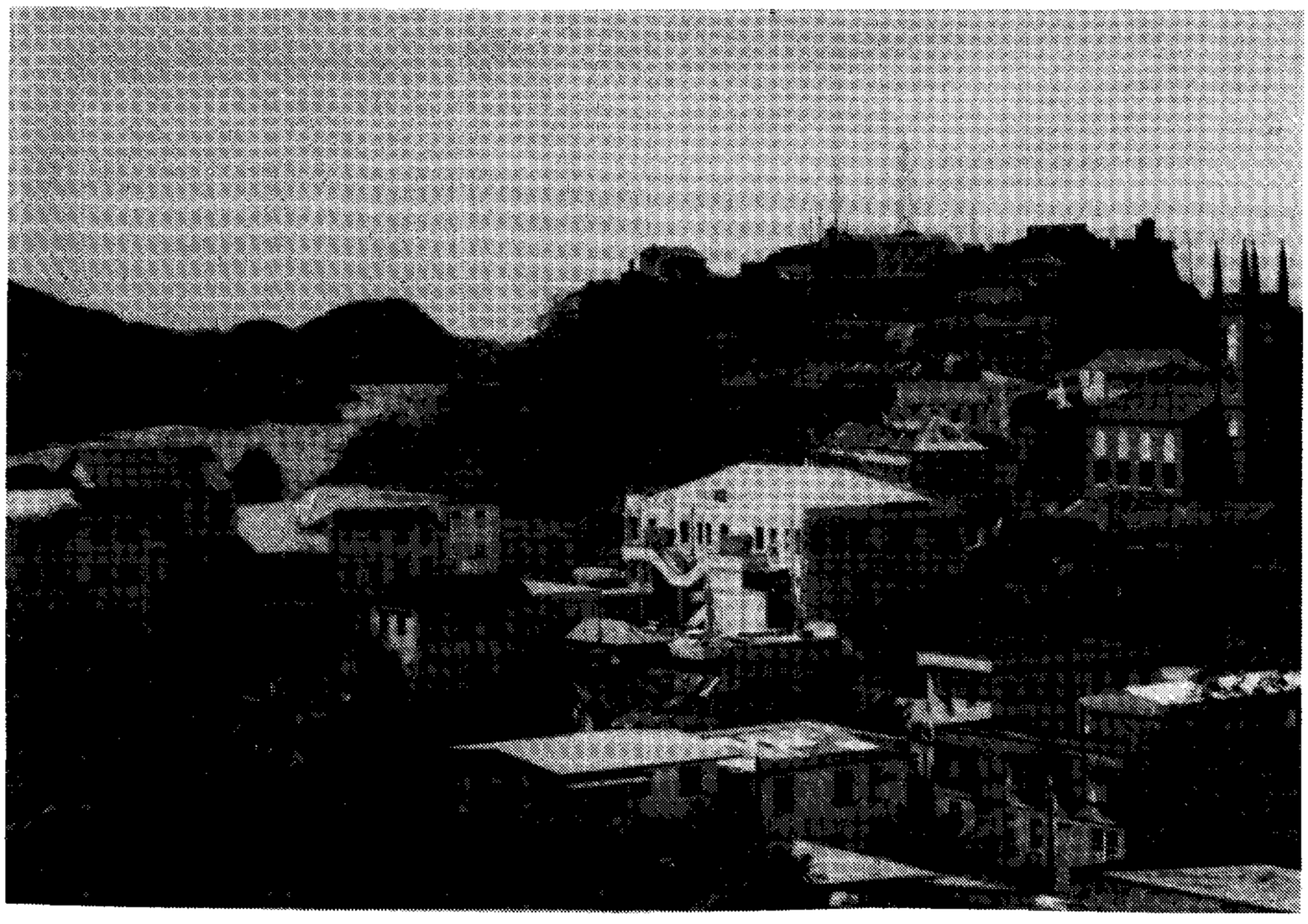
Sixty-two years of neglect have ensured overcrowding in dilapidated estates and 30-70% unemployed. Women from 17 to 70 years of age are arrested, interrogated, physically abused, thrown into jail. They are maimed and killed by plastic bullets and live bullets on the streets, and in their own homes. Many of them spend their lives in endless rounds of prison visits – that includes women travelling to England, to arrive at prisons only to find that their loved one has been deliberately and secretly transferred to a prison at the other end of the country. To these women, a better life means that the Brits go home, that the six county state be dismantled, that the political power of unionism and of the Church be removed.

Like the women in El Salvador, South Africa, Nicaragua, we recognise that political action in one area only can bring temporary concessions for women, but without involvement in a mass movement fighting all aspects of repression, improvements for one class, or one sex in the end, changes nothing.

Women in Sinn Fein, though the Women's Department, and the general work of Sinn Fein are active in Sinn Fein's Advice centres.

NJM ON TRIAL IN GRENADA

ONE YEAR after the US invasion of Grenada, the NJM leadership have been subjected to renewed torture, 24 hour confinement to cells and have been denied proper access to relatives and lawyers. The trial is due to start on 16th October with the elections set for 3rd December. The defence lawyers will be moving constitutional objections to the political bias shown by the judiciary and interim government, as the chances of any fair hearing for the accused in the midst of a heated election campaign are minimal.



Fort Rupert: Scene of the killings.

THE TRIAL

The preliminary enquiry into charges against 20 persons accused of the murder of Maurice Bishop and seven others on 19 October 1983 ended on 3 August. 19 persons, including ten members of the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement, have been committed for trial.

The result of the preliminary enquiry heightens concern that political objectives are of more weight than judicial considerations in the courts of Grenada today.

PROSECUTION

The prosecution produced 27 witnesses, most of them being formal witnesses (eg police describing arrests etc). Only two witnesses claimed to have seen the death of Maurice Bishop. Both testified that Bishop and his comrades had been lined up against a wall and shot, on the orders of an officer. However, there were contradictions in their evidence, and it is not certain that their evidence will be conclusive. The evidence supporting the prosecution's case that the execution was carried out on the orders of the Central Committee was very weak.

Despite this, the magistrate decided to commit for trial all but one (ex-Commissioner of Police Ian St.Bernard) of the accused.

For political reasons, the occupying forces want the trial to take place as quickly as possible. Additionally, the leader of the prosecution, Trinidadian QC Carl Hudson Phillips, has let it be known that he would not be prepared to proceed with the prosecution if Gairy is returned to power.

RAILROADED

The case involves a number of complex legal issues relating to military, constitutional, international as well as criminal law, and that research to prepare the defence properly will obviously take some time. Of course the large number of defendants and the number of witnesses already called by the prosecution will make preparation time longer. Further, defence work is hampered by the fact that the majority of the lawyers are not resident in Grenada, and because of commitments in their own practices, can only travel to the island intermittently. Most important too, money to pay legal fees has to be raised by the families of those accused, and since none of these are rich, this will clearly take some time.

Possibilities of a fair trial are further hampered by the current situation in occupied Grenada. The US 'Psychological Operations Battalion' is still working hard at its propaganda effort to poison the minds of the population against the revolution and especially the imprisoned leaders of the NJM. This is likely to affect chances of an unbiased jury. Moreover, defence lawyers claim that witnesses approached by them have been threatened and harassed by the authorities and by sections of the population still very emotional about the painful October events.

PRIME OBJECTIVE

There can be little doubt that the prime objective of the powers-that-be is to eliminate the remaining leadership of the NJM. If they cannot achieve this by legal means (by the imposition of the death penalty by the court) they will find other means.

From 'Grenada Update'.

women

in its Housing, Social Welfare Departments and in the anti-drug and anti-maternity closure campaigns. Through their work in Advice centres, women activists are not merely providing a service, processing complaints – which is the traditional role of the clinics of establishment politicians in order to buy votes. The effect of Sinn Fein's advice centres has been to support the growing militancy of people struggling to organise themselves against injustice.

Through their work, women have become more confident and more vocal, both inside and outside Sinn Fein. As a result, the profile of republican women has risen and will continue to rise and grow. This is reflected at Ard Fheiseanna (Annual Conference) where women are increasingly visible, both on the platform in leadership positions, and taking part in debates.

Like all colonised countries, Ireland, and especially the six counties, is caught in a time loop of reaction which cannot be broken by the usual forms of lobbying and campaigning of party politics. The civil rights marches of '68 and '69 brought nothing but further repression on the anti-unionist population. For all the talk of enlightened reforms, of fair employment agencies, of Housing being taken out of the hands of Unionist-dominated councils, the six counties has not changed. The artificial majority can still blackmail a willing British Government into channelling jobs into their own areas, shelving Housing plans intended for overcrowded nationalist areas. The six-county statelet is irreformable.

The only form of political activity which keeps Britain's last colony in the headlines, worries establishment politicians and most importantly, keeps alive the hope and the fighting spirit of hundreds of thousands of Irish people, is the War of Liberation.

It is for these reasons that women, alongside their male comrades, are engaging in armed struggle.

Every day they face the prospect of long years in jail, injury and death. This is why we in Sinn Fein wholeheartedly and unequivocally support their right and the right of all Irish people to take up arms against the foreign military and oppressive forces occupying our country.

We in Sinn Fein's Women's Department will continue struggling for freedom; freedom from our own oppression as women; freedom from British rule which imposes that repression. Only through this struggle do we envisage a real and truly lasting peace in Ireland for the Irish people as a whole.

In solidarity and sisterhood
Sinn Fein Women's Department

PICKET

The African Liberation Committee, together with CLS, the Committee for Human Rights in Grenada and other organisations are holding a Picket outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, W.1., on 25th October, 1984 from 4.30--7.30pm.

AMANDLA!
POWER!

THE FOLLOWING motion was passed by conference despite an NEC recommendation to remit.

International Briefing would also like to acknowledge the vital part being played by the many black trade unionists affiliated to the Federation of South African Trade Unions, the black consciousness unions of the Council of Unions of South Africa and the community unions such as the South African Allied Workers Union. In future issues we hope to open up a debate on the events unfolding in Southern Africa and how the British labour movement can offer solidarity and support. Contributions are welcome.

This Conference expresses its condemnation of the current campaign by the South African minority government to attempt to gain international credibility through visits such as that organised to the United Kingdom for President Botha. It criticises the United Kingdom Government for having given international recognition to such a visit.

Conference calls upon the next Labour Government to adopt as part of its foreign policy a firm and unequivocal pledge to oppose and help to bring an end to the evil system of apartheid brutally enforced upon the black people of Southern Africa by a white minority.

Conference noting the continuation and entrenchment of apartheid policies in South Africa (including Namibia) calls upon the National Executive Committee to formulate a vigorous policy of opposition to the South African regime. In particular it calls for.

(a) the severing of economic, military and diplomatic links with South Africa, and specifically for the cancelling of the contracts that Rossings have with the United Kingdom Government to mine uranium in Namibia,

(b) the National Executive Committee to jointly determine the details of policy with representations of the African National Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the South West African People's Organisation, etc. and to give financial support where possible to these movements; this policy to be a priority of the Foreign Office, influencing our relations with other countries and our European Economic Community partners,

(c) the rejection of the policy of 'linkage', as proposed by the Reagan administration, whereby the independence of Namibia is made conditional on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola,

(d) the production of a campaign pack by 1st March 1985, to be distributed to all affiliates of the Labour Party, outlining Party policy on Southern Africa and giving concrete proposals for campaigning;

(e) the popularisation of Party policy against apartheid by working with the Anti-Apartheid Movement to draw up a schedule of visits to the Labour Party's regions by speakers from the South African and Namibian Liberation Movements so that by the time the next Labour Conference is held every region will have been visited by speakers;

(f) the production of educational material concerning the situation in South Africa should be combined with an intensified campaign to isolate the apartheid regime in all fields.

Conference condemns the sale by Co-operative stores of any goods emanating from South Africa.

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Anti-Apartheid Movement, to prepare and publicise a comprehensive list of products and companies with links with South Africa and to urge all sections of the Labour movement and the public to boycott them.

Further, Conference commits the Labour Party to:

(a) support the African National Congress, through the work of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, in its struggle to fight apartheid in South Africa,

(b) fight to end the supply of arms to South Africa,

(c) support the development of full trade union rights in South Africa.

Moved by Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section). Seconded by Loughborough CLP.

***International Briefing** is interested in opening up a debate on what action local parties and trade unions can take to support those struggling in Southern Africa, and would welcome contributions.*

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFING

7.30 Friday
October 26th County Hall

TODAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Discussion (with speaker from ANC and others)

Chester Humphrey extradition protest

THE US continue to press for the extradition of Chester Humphrey, ex Vice President of the Technical and Allied Workers Union. Chester was held by the US for seven months without charge and then re-arrested on August 8th at the request of the Americans who wanted him back in the US to face charges of smuggling arms. These charges were subsequently changed to 'issuing false documents' and 'crossing state lines' as the first charge could be deemed 'political' and extradition opposed on that ground.

Telegrams deploring the extradition attempts should be sent to: Nicholas Braithwaite, Chair, Interim Advisory Council, St George's, Grenada, with copies to. Committee for Human Rights in Grenada, c/o 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

Letter

Dear Comrade,

I read with interest Tony Greenstein's analysis of the Israeli General Election, (August, Supplement p.10 and October, Supplement p.19) and await with interest his analysis of the General Elections in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, North and South Yemen and other Middle Eastern countries.

Fraternally, Harold Smith.

Rough justice

Many innocent people were killed or scarred for life as a result of the Birmingham Pub Bombings in November 1974. What is less widely recognised is that victims of that tragic event include the 6 innocent men convicted wrongly of planting the bombs.

The case of the six men convicted in 1975 for the Birmingham pub bombings raised many questions which have *never* been answered.

– The six men have always protested their innocence.
– The IRA stated categorically that the six men were never involved in that organisation.
– Considerable doubt has been cast on statements which were signed by four of the six men and formed a crucial part of the case. (Especially after statements by prison officers in 1976 to the effect that the men had been assaulted by the police.)
– Forensic evidence supplied at the trial was taken to indicate proof that the men had handled explosives. This evidence was seriously challenged by experts at the time, and further research since the trial has cast even stronger doubts on this whole area.
– Circumstantial evidence brought up at the trial has similarly been thrown into question – eg the role of Kenneth Littlejohn in the case.
– A list of people – *not* the six men imprisoned – thought to be responsible for the bombings was given to the Home Secretary, but no action was ever taken on this.

ROUGH JUSTICE – an independent Relatives Support Committee – urges concerned individuals and organisations to support their campaign to have these questions explored publicly.

The Campaign are asking for support from Labour MPs, councillors, CLPs, Trades Councils and other organisations. This is an important issue that has been neglected far too long. The Campaign also needs money, so please donate what you can.

I/we, the undersigned, agree that there are serious anomalies in this case and support demands for independent enquiries into the various aspects of the case.

Name . . . . . .

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Please return completed sponsorship statement. as soon as possible, to: Mrs Hunter, Rough Justice, c/o 29 Alder House, Heath Town. Wolverhampton, W.Mids.

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