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40p



Workers can beat down Botha

UNIONS MUST ACT



While Neil Kinnock extends his best wishes to Thatcher's errand-boy Geoffrey Howe on his futile mission to South Africa, the British labour movement remains scandalously passive on the South African struggle.

After 100,000 people took to the streets against apartheid in London on June 28 we might expect to see the unions already fully mobilised: but despite ritual speeches from a few union leaders, they are doing little or nothing to cut the flow of trade between Britain and South Africa. Instead, Kinnock and the TUC are looking to Thatcher to make the running through government-level sanctions.

The courageous boycott of South African goods by Portsmouth NHS stores workers and limited boycott action on Southampton docks are the exceptions that prove the rule. Almost nothing is being done. Urgent action is needed.

Last month ANC leader Oliver Tambo told the International Labour Organisation that the world trade union movement has the power to help overthrow apartheid by bringing all trade and communications to a halt, instead of waiting for the Thatcher and Reagan governments to act.

"Union-initiated" sanctions would be workers' own contribution to the promotion of as peaceful a resolution of the South African problem as possible," he said.

Black trade union officials and stewards have been among the hardest hit by Botha's vicious state of emergency arrests and repression. Their representatives in Britain — not least at the NUM conference — have cried out for action, while in South Africa itself unions defy the violence and threats of the state to fight back against Botha.

Now, with South Africa on the minds of every class conscious man and woman, is the time to step up the fight.

- **Dockers, transport wokrers, maritime and airport staff — boycott South African goods and exports to Botha's blood-soaked regime!**
- **Shop workers and factory workers — boycott supplies of goods or raw materials from South Africa**
- **All unions — begin investigations to uncover the hidden deals and links with apartheid: build the links with black workers in struggle!**

Fighting for unity in action

Editorial

In a divided, battered and often confused labour movement, the call for unity can be understandably attractive and popular.

And how could it be otherwise? How could any of us hope to retain a shred of credibility if we appeared to dismiss a call expressing such deeply-felt and legitimate need?

It is clear that Labour needs to unite and show itself united if we are to win the coming election; it is equally clear that the fate of our movement on the industrial level may to a large extent depend on our success in ousting Thatcher's Tory regime and putting a Labour Government in its place.

Labour's policies – on nuclear power, on disarmament, on the social services – are popular, and we are winning support *despite* the timidity and back-tracking of Labour's front-bench every time they speak.

We in BRIEFING certainly have no intention of allowing ourselves to be branded as "splitters" or an "electoral liability" – especially when it is those policies which the *left* has fought for which are now the basis for Labour's popularity at the polls, and when recent local election results have shown that it is precisely BRIEFING – style hard-left campaigns which generate enthusiasm and bring in the votes.

We are genuinely committed to the unity of our labour movement – but to be of value to the working class, unity must be based on advancing the fight against the employers and their system, and challenging all those who obstruct that fight. Time and again the workers united *have* been defeated because the trade union or political leaders they have loyally united behind have betrayed their struggles.

This pilot issue of the new *Labour Briefing* is the result of a political unity – a unity of those forces on the left of the labour movement seeking jointly to defend and extend the democratic and political gains of the past few years, while taking forward the class struggle against the bosses' offensive, and the campaign for socialist policies under a Labour government.

Nor is this an abstract or passive unity. *Briefing* has a record of consistent struggle to defend and extend class action, such as:

- the heroic fight of the miners and Women Against Pit Closures, Silentnight strikers and others;
- the defiance of Lambeth and Liverpool councillors;
- the fight for solidarity with workers' struggles internationally – in South Africa, Central America, and, crucially, in Ireland.

Our paper is not dominated or controlled by any single political tendency; it represents a common effort by comrades from a variety of currents to develop a serious challenge to the rightward drift which we can see and feel in every corner of the trade union and labour movement.

Though we clearly have differences on the various questions, we are prepared to debate these openly and to determine the line of the paper through democratically-elected bodies.

Of course there are other kinds of "unity" on offer.

- There is the TUC's brand of "unity", which consists in capitulating before every ultimatum issued by the arrogant right wing leaders of the EETPU and the AEU rather than risk a "split" with these splitters. As a result, the TUC has abandoned the last vestiges of opposition to the Tory anti-union laws, while Hammond, Laird and Jordan have become the effective leaders of the TUC.
- There is the traditional "unity" argued by union officials across the land – a "unity" based on tail-ending the lowest levels of militancy and class consciousness. This is a unity of *inaction* rather than unity in action.
- There is the "unity" on offer from the *Morning Star* supporter and others, who, after backing the successful campaign to prevent a sell-out settlement of the News International dispute, restored "unity" in SOGAT by voting unanimously for a resolution handing control of the strike back to Brenda Dean and the right wing NEC, and opposing any policy that might break the anti-union laws.
- There is the cynical, electoralist "unity" with the hard right wing now preached by Neil Kinnock and his entourage of soft left bootlickers. This means "unity" around policies almost identical to the last, disastrous Labour government – and a united drive to expel *Militant* and the class struggle left wing to appease bourgeois "public opinion". Bobbing in the wake of this "unity" is a motley collection of Tribunites, Tankies, armchair socialists and Eurocommunists, each united in their opposition to class struggle today in the hopes of a Labour government tomorrow.
- Now we see a new brand of "unity" from those who were once part of the "Bennite" challenge to Callaghan and Foot, but who have now reduced the fight for women's liberation, black workers and democracy in the Labour Party to deals with prominent individuals, MPs and bureaucrats. For these people, even the principles they defended a few years ago are now dismissed as "sectarian" or "ultra-left".

For workers facing ruthless management attacks on their jobs, working conditions and trade union rights, and up against a tightening bureaucratic straitjacket imposed by their own union leaders, the need for a very different kind of unity in the struggle for trade union action is clear.

For Labour activists appalled at the pronouncements of Kinnock, Hattersley, Cunningham and Kaufmann, the need to organise not only against the witch-hunt but also for socialist policies is more obvious by the day.

For black people, women, youth, lesbians and gay men, up against a labour movement under the thumb of a right wing bureaucracy, there is an obvious need for a focus in the right to mobilise the unions and Labour Party around their problems and struggles at home, on the streets and in the workplaces.

These are the forces with whom the new *Labour Briefing* seeks to unite. These are the essential allies of the left, and the base of any coherent opposition to Kinnock's class collaboration.

BRIEFING's base, traditionally, has been in local government, and this will remain an absolutely central priority for us. Where we have control or influence over local authorities, we will continue as before to use this to defend our local communities, refusing to bow to pressure or threats to make cuts.

But without a wider base – particularly in the trade unions – we are left vulnerable as councillors, and easily undermined from all sides. Unity for us means, among other things, unifying the struggle for local democracy with the struggles of all the oppressed, and in particular the industrial working class. The new content and framework of BRIEFING should bring us a step closer to facilitating this.

We are, then, for unity on this principled basis, around the fighting policies outlined in the pages of this pilot issue. We are fighting to lay the basis for a fortnightly paper to take forward the campaign to organise the left in a democratic, non-sectarian struggle for socialism.

This paper is yours – use it, join us, and united we will win!

Reagan plunges NATO into crisis

By JOHN PALMER, Chair, The Socialist Society



The NATO alliance is in deep trouble.

The actions of the Reagan Administration in massively expanding America's capacity to unleash a nuclear Armageddon and cynically reacting to Soviet proposals for a nuclear arms agreement in Geneva has thrown NATO into crisis.

Washington's European allies — for the most part unquestioning right wing or social democratic supporters of the Atlantic Alliance — have been shocked at US ruthlessness and foolhardiness in deliberately undermining detente.

They are worried that the announced abandonment of the SALT 2 agreement, the proposal to step up chemical arms production, and the strident hawkishness of Washington's Cold War rhetoric risk a disastrous new turn in east/west relations.

None of this has, of course, led to any serious protest by European NATO governments, let alone any determined challenge to US policy inside the Alliance. And, in spite of their ill-concealed scepticism about Regan's nightmare, SDI Star Wars proposal, the European NATO states are now scrambling for their share of the arms research business being generated by SDI.

There is no sign that the European NATO states are capable of overcoming their own differences of interest or have the political will to challenge let alone halt Reagan's Cold War confrontationism.

US policy on Cruise, Pershing, SALT 2, Star Wars, and a range of other issues has, of course, generated massive opposition within the European peace movement.

Even more important, opinion polls taken after the US bombing of Libya show that an unprecedentedly high proportion of European opinion now believes Washington, as much if not more than Moscow, threatens world peace.

Popular

In spite of the failure of CND and the European peace movement to halt the deployment of Cruise, there is a popular base now for mobilisation against US policy on nuclear arms.

And for the first time since it was established in the late 1940s, peace movement supporters are openly questioning and challengng their countries' membership of the US-dominated NATO Alliance, as the very large "No" vote in the Spanish referendum confirmed.

In West Germany the influential Green Party has decided on a policy of withdrawal from NATO, and a substantial section of the West German SPD now advocates at least withdrawal in phases from NATO's integrated military command structure.

The Danish, Dutch and now the Norwegian Labour parties have made it clear they want to have no part in fulfilling the "nuclear functions" allotted to them under NATO contingency plans.

The European left is now openly debating radical new, alternative non-nuclear security and disarmament strategies.

The Labour Party's commitment to the unilateral abolition of its own nuclear weapons and the end of all US nuclear bases is seen widely on the left and in the peace movement in Europe as absolutely critical in any wider European peace strategy.

But there has not yet been anything like the same debate on the relationship between disarmament and NATO membership in Britain that there has been elsewhere in Europe.

The blunt fact is that NATO membership, and the duties it imposes, are the greatest single obstacle in the way of a future Labour government actually carrying through its full unilateralist programme. There has even been a hint from Labour's defence spokesperson, Denzil Davies, that there might be circumstances, in a NATO-designated emergency, which could override the commitment on closing US bases.

The NATO alliance is Reagan's alliance, whether the Europeans like it or not. The presence of US forces and bases in Europe gives the US the power to impose its leadership.

Dismissive

Washington's dismissive attitude towards its allies was recently summed up by a senior Reagan aide, Richard Perle, who, when asked about possible European reactions to the abandonment of SALT 2, replied "Who cares what the Europeans think?"

The moral is clear for all those sincere peace movement supporters who urge strategies of reform of NATO, even up to and including the idea that the **Americans** should be asked to "withdraw from NATO".

The Reagan Administration will not be deflected from its view of the right global strategy for US imperialism; reform of the NATO alliance is a chimera.

Crisis

To the extent that Labour governments in Europe mean what they say about de-nuclearising and de-Americanising NATO, they w directly generate a crisis ov membership of the alliance itsel

To the extent they back off office because of US pressur the case for a complete break w be strengthened. In any event th greater the pressure fo withdrawal from NATO integrated military comman and from the wider alliance, th more seriously demands for "n first use" will be taken.

As a contribution to th growing debate in the Briti labour and peace movemen about NATO, the Sociali Society, together with th Campaign Group of Labou MPs, is publishing an importa pamphlet by Ben Lowe on th case for withdrawal.

Meetings

Together with YCND ar other bodies it is proposed t hold meetings throughou Britain to win support for th case for committing Labour to withdrawal strategy, not apa from, but in the close partnership with our labour ar peace movement allies an comrades in Europe and indee in the US.

It is also hoped to organi schools and conferences t discuss alternative non-aligne and neutralist foreign poli options as well as alternati ideas for a European socialis security policy.

For details of the pamphl being published through Ver contact the Socialist Society at Poland Street, London W 3DG — (Telephone 01 734 850

Labour CND has initiated a campaign within the Labour Party whose object is to make the closure of all US and foreign bases Party policy. The present policy is only to close down nuclear bases.

The new Campaign, which is supported by the Campaign Group of MPs, Labour Action for Peace and Labour Left Liaison aims to include conventional and communication bases in that commitment.

A model resolution for Labour Party Conference has already been reproduced in *Briefing*. At the conference itself there will be a major joint fringe meeting on the Monday night sponsored by Labour CND, Labour Action for Peace and the bases campaign in the Baronial Hall in Blackpool.

The new campaign will meet again during the summer and further activities are planned.

UNIONS

Defend Macreadie!

Hands off the CPSA!

By PAT SIKORSKI

Nothing could have highlighted so graphically the disastrous direction being taken by Labour's NEC on the trade unions, the witch hunt and policy in general than the storm being raised over the important left victories in the CPSA.

John Macreadie is the union's new General Secetary elect. He is also a supporter of the *Militant* newspaper.

The *Guardian* (2 July) was careful to draw a distinction between his success and the success of Chris Kirk in the contest for Treasurer.

She was a candidate of Broad Left '84, a Kinnockite/LCC and Communist Party split-off from the original Broad Left (which in its turn has a *Militant* majority but also a growing and solidly-based "hard left" organised in the Socialist Caucus).

The London *Evening Standard* of the same day was not so discerning. Kirk was lumped together with Macreadie in a witch hunting piece which spoke openly of ballot-rigging, intimidation and slush funds.

The *Times* was no better, talking of ex-Communist Kirk and Trotskyist Macreadie now having acces to sensitive departments like the Treasury and the Defence Ministry.

A massive campaign in the media supported by the right wing has been launched to overturn the democratic decision of a CPSA membership deeply opposed to the right wing and the Tories, and crying out for a strong lead.

The right wing on the CPSA NEC immediately appointed Militant-baiter Alistair Graham (whose resignation to take up a £50,000 post with the Industrial Society cause dthe election to "investigate".

If ever the "cuddly left" needed further proof that Liverpool was a dry run for a full-scale witch hunt this is it.

There is no such thing as a selective witch hunt. They all have to be opposed root and branch.



John Chapman



John Chapman

Wapping: step up the fight!

HAD Brenda Dean managed to obtain a ballot vote to accept Rupert Murdoch's wretched package deal, there is no doubt that the Wapping strike would have been swiftly called off.

But the surprisingly strong 2-1 vote by printworkers to reject the deal has not brought any moves by SOGAT or the NGA to step up the fight.

Instead the SOGAT Conference voted unanimously for a resolution which put the whole conduct of the fight in the hands of Dean and the right wing NEC, and expressly disavowed any tactic which might bring SOGAT into conflict with the Tory courts. Then EEPTU Godfather Eric Hammond was sent on a Kissinger-style "peace" mission to Murdoch in New York. Now national officials have been sent in to lean on the London branches of SOGAT which campaigned so effectively for rejection of the deal: there is even talk of possibly ending strike pay.

But none of the basic issues has changed: the fight is still one for thousands of jobs and trade unionism in the print. Murdoch may have shown signs of weakness: but Dean's moves to weaken and wind up the fight may save him from making any more concessions.

The success of the fight still hinges on sustaining the strikers, cracking down on the scabs (including the NUJ scabs), and spreading the action — in defiance of the courts.

The militant men and women who have endured police violence and five months on the gates need our support more than ever. Let's show our respect for their vote — and step up the fight!

The Wapping dispute has continued for six months. Jane Kelly interviewed LIZ SHORT, acting MOC Times Clerical SOGAT, for her views on the strike.

Briefing: What is your assessment of the SOGAT conference held just after the No vote?
Liz Short:

I think it was a disaster for the dispute. We fought against the media who predicted a Yes vote and against the whole weight of our union and particularly our General Secretary.

The fact that we achieved a No in the ballot was absolutely amazing. I expected the Conference to congratulate us. All it did was to 'accept' the No vote.

It was a big downer for people who had reaffirmed that they were fighting for their jobs; they'd turned down compensation. It was a principled stand, yet the Conference wasn't prepared to congratulate us. More than that it was disastrous because the London leadership capitulated to the National leadership on the conduct of the dispute.

In May and June they got close to taking control of the strike, but once they came within the sound of gunfire at Scarborough they gave in.

They came to a compromise with the National leadership and agreed to vote for each other's motions; but the National Executive motion made no reference to mass picketing or direct industrial action, it overruled that of the London branches calling for escalation. The Chapel leaderships came back from Scarborough saying it was a wonderful deal, that the compromise had preserved the unity of SOGAT, that the strike would be carried forward. This was completely mistaken.

It was evident that nothing would be done to escalate the strike – as had been borne out in the weeks since then.

The direct result of the capitulation by the London leadership was that Murdoch took out injunctions against the union, having seen the sign of weakness at the Conference not to escalate the dispute.

Briefing: What is needed to win the dispute?
Liz Short:

What is needed now is what was needed when we came out on January 24th. If you're going to have an industrial fight you have to fight on every single front.

We should have called on our members in Fleet St. not to handle the titles, picketed Convoy's Wharf; the libraries in all the other houses should have stopped cutting the scab titles; the Press Association and Reuters should have stopped sending scab copy to Wapping; Murdoch's adverts in the papers shouldn't have been touched.

The NGA at Northampton had a ballot and decided to carry on printing the Times' supplements. We should have picketed them.

But the Tory laws are very clever – any secondary action brings sequestration down on the head of the union. The leadership gets nervous and they won't do anything to challenge the law.

But you can't win unless you take on the law. That is one of the lessons of the Miners' strike. Dean and the National Executive's line was that we could win through a media campaign and a boycott of the titles. If you haven't got leaders who are prepared to break the law, to sacrifice their careers, you'll never win.

I think there's a tacit agreement between General Secretaries of unions that it's not 'gentlemanly' to interfere in the affairs of another union.

Because Brenda Dean and the National Executive wouldn't call a national demonstration, it's impossible for the strikers to do so and get a response.

In the beginning I used to meet miners who said, 'We're waiting to come down and support you. When are we going to get the call?'

I couldn't understand why the call didn't come. That is the kind of mobilisation you expect from a national union.

Briefing: What are the lessons of the strike?
Liz Short:

If you let one employer get away with it, every other employer will follow suit. Every other Fleet St. house has jumped on the Murdoch bandwagon; for example, 2,600 jobs at the Express. It is a disgrace tht a national union should allow that to happen. At the same time they isolated what was happening in Fleet St. from us. I feel very bitter about the role of the leadership. Brenda Dean brought us out saying we should get up off our knees, refuse to be shackled, that if we went down so would the whole of SOGAT.

I think that's absolutely right: SOGAT will go down. But the leadership are involved in an exercise of damage limitation.

At the moment we are being stifled by our own union. Instead of supporting us it is being used against us. I think organisation is paramount.

It's important to link up struggles in different parts of the country – the ship builders in the North East, the miners in the South West, the British Rail engineers. The role of the TUC should be to link up all those people who are fighting for the right to work. Instead it's doing the opposite.

Norman Willis says that to kick out the EEPTU will do nothing to get a Labour government into power. I don't go along with this "Don't rock the boat – let's get Labour in". I want to see a Labour Government elected, but you can't watch the erosion of pay and conditions and the loss of jobs and just wait for two years for a Labour government.

It's about time the Labour Party woke up to what's happening. So many people are affected that struggle can be a vote winner.

Briefing: What should be done about the EETPU?
Liz Short:

I want them out of the TUC. I found the spectacle of the print unions getting Eric Hammond to negotiate on our behalf sickening. There's the man who organised the theft of our jobs and the loss of trade union rights going off to negotiate – it's disgusting.

Briefing: What about the way the police have been used during the strike?
Liz Short:

I supported the miners but it's not until it happens to you that you really believe it. I didn't know what it felt like to be on the receiving end – it's terrifying. When people are under attack, brutally thrown out of a job, the weight of the state against them, the police used to intimidate them – people are desperate for support. When their leaders fail them they will turn against those leaders very rapidly.

Briefing: Have you had much support from the Labour Party?
Liz Short:

Labour Party members who have invited us to speak at their meetings, have helped in the Printworkers' Support Groups, have organised fund raising – we have a lot to thank them for, certain MPs like Ron Leyton and Tony Benn. But we haven't heard anything really from Neil Kinnock. He's made a couple of speeches supporting us, but we'd like to see him down on the picket line. The Labour Party is the political wing of the trade union movement and they should be supporting people who are fighting for jobs.

Youth campaign against NATO

The threads of a campaign against NATO are beginning to be pulled together. Youth CND's National Committee agreed at a meeting on June 29th to launch a campaign for withdrawal from NATO by organising a speaking tour in the autumn, followed if possible by a conference against NATO in December.

The campaign will involve as broad a range of Peace Movement and labour movement forces as possible,



By DANI AHRENS

including the Campaign Group of MPs and the Socialist Society. The speaking tour will consist of a series of meetings with a Campaign Group MP and a Spanish youth who was involved in the referendum campaign, including major fringe meetings at Labour Party, TUC, and CND conferences.

This campaign could form the focus for the anti-NATO feeling which is developing in the labour movement and among the public. It provides a vehicle for ideas such as the new Campaign Group/Socialist Society pamphlet, and a forum for discussion of the issues and the way forward through a conference after the speaking tour.

Obviously this campaign will not be an automatic success and its achievements will be very limited unless it has the support and involvement of the Labour left.

Withdrawal from NATO is a crucial component of the socialist policies *Briefing* has been fighting for in the Labour Party and the Trade Unions and the new *Briefing* must be identified with the growing current of opposition to NATO in the wake of the attack on Libya and Reagan's warmongering in Central America.

The campaign will need support, both financially and organisationally, from local labour movement bodies and left campaigns.

***Briefing* supporters should work with YCND and CND groups and other anti-NATO forces to build support for the nearest meeting and should encourage CLPs and LPYS branches to send people to the conference in December. This will include educational workshops on the NATO alliance, as well as a discussion on how to continue the campaign at next year's Labour Party conference.**



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UNIONS

Union conferences sum up the problem

Unholy alliances against the left



John Chapman

WHEN he reasserted the need for class struggle tactics to confront the bosses' offensive on jobs and pay, Arthur Scargill was met by a pre-planned frozen response from many delegates at the NUM's conference in Tenby. Helping to set the scene for this was the reactionary call for a fresh approach to the scab UDM, a move which Scargill has correctly opposed.

Where did this scheme from from? The old guard right wing? No! It surfaced at the Communist Party-dominated Scottish area conference, presided over by Mick McGahey and endorsed by Labour NEC member Eric Clarke. A delighted NUM right wing then had simply to climb on board the bandwagon.

Though the conference pulled up short of calling for direct NUM-UDM talks, it did call for TUC and Labour Party intervention — which implies some recognition of the UDM as a "union".

Who will organise the class struggle fighters in the trade unions? Who will offer a lead in their battles with aggressive employers and an increasingly oppressive union bureaucracy?

That is the burning question of the hour from this year's succession of union conferences and top-level manoeuvres.

The defection of Ron Todd from platforms of the left wing Rank and File Mobilising Committee to denunciation of *Militant* in the popular press has now been followed by the calls from Jimmy Knapp of the NUR for the expulsion of *Militant*.

NUPE's one-time "left" leadership around Tom Sawyer have emerged as leading lights in Kinnock's witch hunt, backed up by thuggish LCC bootboys prepared to get in touch with left wingers but capitulate to management.

Pressures

Mick McGahey's parting shot at militants in the NUM — unleashing an offensive against Arthur Scargill by calling for unity with the UDM — sums up the danger that a leaderless rank and file in the NUM can fall prey to reactionary pressures.

The McGahey move — backed at the Scottish Conference by the NUM's Labour NEC member Eric Clarke — has obviously developed in cahoots with the traditional right wing opposition to Scargill on the NEC.

Their objective is to isolate Scargill and Heathfield and return the union to the rotten collaborationist politics of former President Joe (now Lord) Gormley.

Against this shameless attack there are all too few initiatives like the Yorkshire Miners Campaign Group which seek to rally rank and file militants and rebuild the fighting strength of the union.

Conferences of SOGAT and now the NGA have again shown the political limitations of the rank and file militants who voted so splendidly to reject Murdoch's wretched deal at News International. Brenda Dean who had tacitly backed the deal and was shattered when it was rejected, was

By HARRY SLOAN

allowed to regain the initiative by a unanimous conference resolution which placed control of the strike back in the hands of the NEC (i.e. Brenda Dean) and opposed any escalation through boycott action by rejecting any confrontation with the anti-union laws. Key to this resolution was support from the *Morning Star* which eagerly backed it.

Organise

Similary in the NGA, even though militants have learned during the dispute of the need to spread the fight by calling out Fleet Street and picket out the distribution depots, they have not gone from this to *organise* at chapel, branch and national level to force this policy on a blustering Tony Dubbins.

Key to many of these developments is the increasingly open link up between the old right wing and forces from both sides of the now-divided Communist Party, whose whole post-war history has been one of squalid deals to retain full-time posts and influence in the unions.

This is also true in the NUJ, where *Morning Star*-toting officials join hands with General Secretary Harry Conroy and the right wing to prevent any disciplinary action against the 550 NUJ scabs crossing picket lines at Wapping.

Gamekeepers

Yet even when left wing poachers turn under pressure into witch hunting gamekeepers, they can still fall foul of the hard right — as has been the case with Ron Todd, up against a new hardline right majority on the key TGWU committees, while arch-rival George Wright waits in the wings.

Elsewhere, with the exception of the CPSA General Secretary ballot, it has been a year of transition with some gains and consolidation for the right wing in unions like the NCU (formerly POEU) and the AEU. The new Edmonds leadership of GMBATU has emerged from its crysallis with a flashy new populist Kinock-style image, while the fading Jenkins leadership in ASTMS suffered some rebuffs at this year's conference.

And with membership sliding downwards, new mergers are in the air: strong possibilities are link-ups between ASTMS and TASS; the AEU and EETPU; and SOGAT and NGA.

But what about the members? What about the rank and file at shop floor level, the women workers, black members, the unorganised... those who already find it so hard to break their way into the union structures and raise their demands?

Let's learn the lessons of 1986. It is high time the left took on the task of organising to:

- hammer out policies to meet the bosses' offensive;
- fight for them at every level;
- organise support for sections in dispute;
- fight for union democracy.

UDM — Union Dedicated to MacGregor

Bosses' favourites in Buxton

"And now, a word from our sponsor."

The rambling speech from British Coal axeman MacGregor to the assembled scabs and lick-spittles of the so-called "Union of Democratic Mineworkers" was more significant for the fact it happened than for its generally evasive content.

The UDM's conference at Buxton was shunned by the trade union movement: even the scab-herding Eric Hammond of the EETPU and the right wing AEU leadership kept their distance from the grotesque spectacle of wall-to-wall toadies mingling happily with managers and Tory politicians.

Only Labour MP Don Concannon, grovelling for UDM support in his Mansfield seat and three other Nottinghamshire Labour seats, crawled around licking boots, while Neil Kinnock preserved a diplomatic silence.

Subtract Ian MacGregor's shameless support, and the blatantly discriminatory 5.5% pay award to UDM members while the NUM has received nothing; subtract the government sponsorship, with the promise of new legislation if needed to prop up the UDM in areas where it has only a handful of members; subtract the police violence and occupation of pit villages which put strikers under seige and shielded the UDM scabs; subtract the flagrant High Court rulings which created the basis for the UDM challenge to the NUM, and which are now tearing up 40-year old agreements in order to benefit the scab union — and all that would remain of the UDM is a handful of diehard class collaborating ex-NUM bureaucrats like Ken Toon.

Miserable

But even with all of these odds stacked in their favour, the UDM has not been able to grow beyond its miserable Nottinghamshire base: indeed pit closures in Notts and the readiness of UDM members to take voluntary redundancy have begun to whittle down its numbers.

Spectacles like the Buxton "conference" tend to confirm that the yellow UDM has probably already passed its peak membership; and that the process of its more confused members rejoining the NUM is likely to continue — provided it is not interrupted by a Communist Party-inspired "unity" drive.

Victimised miners fight on

The 500 miners who remain sacked following the various reviews and procedures after the end of the strike are still there. They are still organised; they are still fighting and they are still victimised.

They are still supported by many of the Support Groups which are still active and organised under the Support Groups Co-ordinating Committee; by Women against Pit Closures, which is active and well organised; and by the officially recognised campaign

By ALAN THORNETT

— the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

Conditions for defending the victimised men have not been improved, however, by the rightward drift of the NUM at Area leadership level which has intervened in the Justice Campaign to strip it of its political content and make it acceptable to Kinnockite politics.

The Co-ordinating Committee met in May and July and resolved to continue to fight on behalf of *all* victimised miners — rejecting both the implications of the dropping of the word "amnesty" by the Justice Campaign and the comments of Neil Kinnock that a future Labour government would look at the cases of those miners who had won their Industrial Tribunals but were still not reinstated. Every miner who was sacked and every miner who went to prison was a casualty of the most determined action in defence of jobs seen in Europe for decades. To simply accept Industrial Tribunal decisions as a criterion for reinstatement would be an outrage.

For the labour movement to be organised behind the victimised miners is the most effective way to support the NUM in its continued struggle aginst pit closures.

Courageous

Scargill's message that there is no future in compromise and that eventually action will have to be taken is a correct and courageous stand. The same attitude needs to be taken over those victimised. The campaign needs to be maintained at a high profile — the best example is the way the Kent victimised miners are organised. Those who argue "Keep your head down" and rely on negotiations with British Coal condemn the victimised people to a life on the dole and weaken the struggle in the industry as a whole.

A new campaign is needed to take the issue back into the trade unions and Labour Party branches — to link it firmly to the campaigns for the victimised printers and the sacked Silentnight workers. (One meeting of the Justice campaign was held at the same time on the same day as the national demonstration in support of Silentnight, forcing activists to go to either one or the other.)

The national initiatives proposed by the Justice Campaign need to be pressed forward — particularly the proposed national demonstration in Mansfield which will boost the NUM and challenge the UDM in the scab area.

Women from Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures held a caucus meeting in Barnsley on June 27 to discuss how best to take forward the Justice for Mineworkers campaign.

The Yorkshire Area Justice campaign is planning a meeting on July 19 for delegates and representatives of affiliated bodies.

LABOUR BRIEFING

LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Next National Steering Committee will be on Saturday August 2nd at 1pm at Polytechnic of Central London, Marylebone Road, London NW1, preceded by Briefing Women's meeting at 11.30.

Next London Editorial Board will be on Wednesday July 16th at 6.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall.

UNIONS

SCPS Fight for democracy

Build the Broad Left !

One little-publicised effect of the Tory anti-Trade Union laws has been the introduction of elections into the "Society of Civil and Public Servants".

By HOWARD FULLER, SCPS

For years the SCPS has been controlled through the use of Block voting by the Stalinists and *Tribune* supporters in the union's undemocratic structure.

It is sad indeed that democracy (even in the limited form being introduced) has had to be forced upon us by Thatcher.

Socialists in the SCPS Broad Left have been calling for elections (on the basis of one member one vote) since its formation. Included in the demands put forward was the call for election addresses!

Clique

It is a reflection of the politics of the ruling "clique" of the SCPS that they have opposed these basic democratic measures.

Indeed there is no real argument against the introduction of open and free elections. Most unions in the Civil Service already have these. But the introduction of democracy is not going to be an easy task, as Conference paper "A" put to the SCPS conference this year showed.

The document produced by the Executive Council went to great pains to bury the legal requirements for all-member ballots in a lengthy and convoluted argument.

Ballot

One had to read the paper very carefully to discover that the EC will now have to be elected by a ballot of the rank and file membership. It ended with a call for a "return to the election procedures as specified in the constitution."

The curent procedures, of course, are weighted in favour of the ruling group. Indicative of the attitude of the SCPS leadership was a comment made by a Deputy Secretary in the DHSS Group who feared that "democracy might let the right wing in"!

However there remains confusion on the future of democracy in the SCPS, as the Union is opposed like other unions to the other measures in the Tory laws. These attacks on unions (such as compulsory ballots before strikes) are designed to weaken the power of the working class.

Strong trade unionism however requires as a pre-requisite the mass participation of union members. Only by opening up the SCPS can this be achieved. Holding elections based on the block voting system amongst those "in the know" can only alienate the majority of SCPS members who cannot make their voice heard.

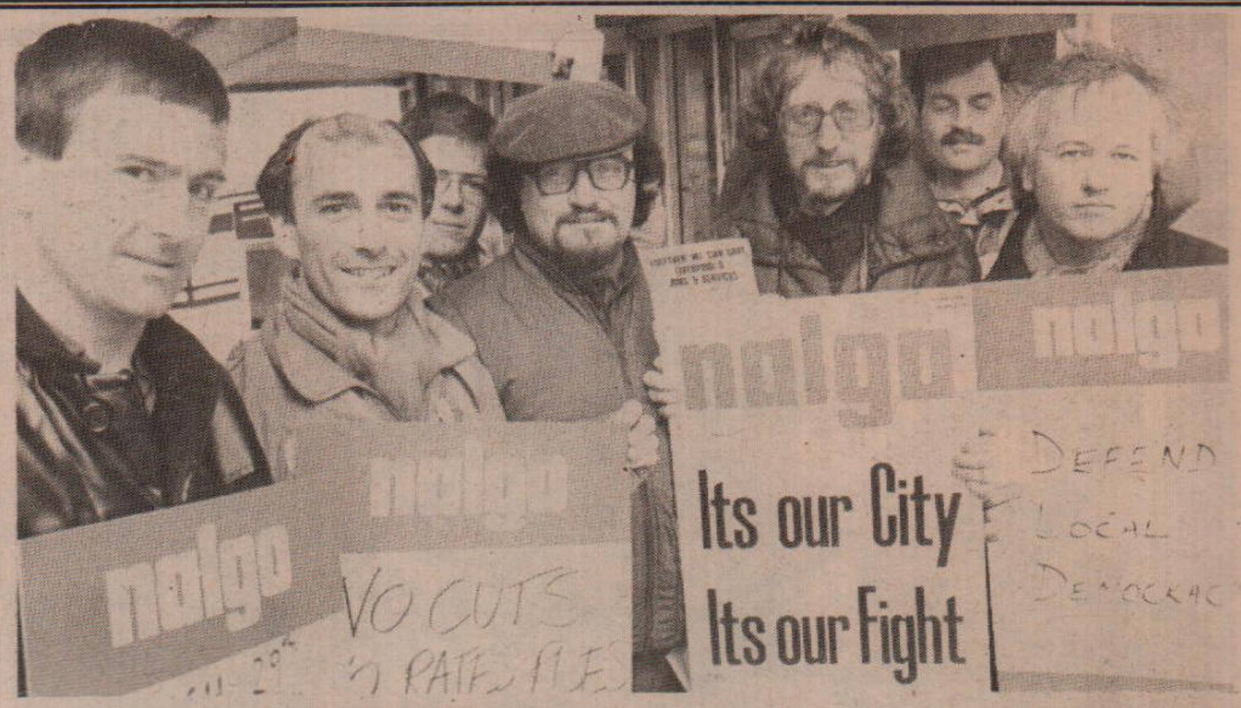
Socialist Caucus

The SCPS Socialist Caucus will be campaigning for further democracy in the SCPS in the coming months. All officers should be elected on an annual basis. Open elections will sharpen the political debate and allow the building of strong rank and file oganisation.

Socialism cannot be built on the passivity of the members as the CP and Tribunites seem to think.

The SCPS Broad Left can be contacted c/o Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2.

The SCPS Socialist Caucus (a "Briefing" type formation) can be contacted via 41 Rupert Gardens, Brixton, London SW9.



NALGO left divided

This year's Nalgo Conference in Bournemouth failed to unite the left in the union. Two issues dominated the whole week, direct links with South African non-racial trade unions and Liverpool City Council.

Bill Hamilton
Newham Nalgo

From the first day in the Local Government Group meeting the national leadership showed a resolve to push their line through with little regard for the floor. When Jim White, Chair of the National Local Government Committee, parroted Neil Kinnock's speech at Party Conference last year, with his reference to Liverpool councillors touring the city in taxis issuing redundancy notices, there wasn't a murmur in the hall. This wasn't helped by the Liverpool Nalgo branch leadership who were quick, on occasion to join the Hatton baiting. Throughout this débâclé the Lambeth councillors and workforce were ignored.

At a large fringe meeting called by the national Broad left, dominated by Militant supporters and dormant for the last 12 months. Derek Hatton and Margaret Hodge sent their apologies leaving Paul Anstley, a Liverpool councillor and Militant supporter to face a hostile audience which very quickly degenerated into a slanging match as the SWP attempted to defend their new found friends in Militant and at the same time argue why the Labour Party was a write off.

The biggest set piece debate of the week was on South Africa and Nalgo's attitude to direct links with non-racial unions. Again this debate quickly sunk to sectarian in-fighting led by a National Executive speaker who claimed that those calling for direct links were from tiny sects on the ultra left and were out to sabotage the ANC. Unfortunately sections of the left involved in pushing for direct links underestimated the tactical capabilities and strength of the associated versions of the Communist Party who have close ties to the union bureaucracy. The result was a large defeat for direct links but hopefully the excellent work done by branches such as Camden will continue although in the face of total opposition by the leadership.

The white male left in the union must learn the lessons of the self-organised groups and other campaigns if we are to take on our right-wing leadership. We need a left in the union which has real campaigns at its centre. To this end a meeting is being organised for the reconvened Local Government Group Meeting, contact Bill Hamilton for details on 01 472 1430 x 22187. Until we place the campaigns at the core of the left the Nalgo Broad Left will remain an empty vessel making a lot of noise.

Beanfeasts for bosses: belt-tightening for workers!

Sell-off move worsens BL crisis

The government's attempts to sell off British Leyland to General Motors and Fords have only worsened the state of the company.

By TONY RICHARDS

It is clear that the talks with General Motors over the truck division and over Land Rover are still going on. Vast amounts of money have been spent on modernising their own truck plants at Luton and Dunstable.

The moves towards a deal with Fords on the takeover of the cars division (now called the Rover Group) were catastrophic.

For several months Fords were allowed a special team of people going through all the books and future plans of Rover group.

Secrets?

Imagine allowing your major competitor to know every detail of your business! And yet these same people defend "business secrets"!

The company has just brought out new Works Rules that mean any shop floor or office workers would get the sack for saying anything about the company's business.

Not surprisingly, Rover Group sales have gone down since the proposed Ford deal.

With huge car stocks, Rover are in the process of cutting out the nightshifts on their Maestro and Montego models.

Nearly everything now relies on the new Rover 800/Honda big car which will sell for about £18–20,000 each.

Lavish

Despite their obvious shortage of cash, management have just prepared a lavish launch for this model by flying thousands of dealers, fleet buyers and journalists to Switzerland.

These people were entertained in £120-a-night hotels and entertained by people like Jack Jones. (The singer.)

Two thousand other sales and service people and journalists will receive similar hospitality in a luxury hotel in Northumberland: among them will be MPs and trade union officials. officials.

But there the luxury stops. Propaganda about the dire financial state of the company is being heavily used by the employers in the run-up to the November wage review.

Resignation

The double standard is even clearer in the case of David Andrews, chief executive of Leyland Vehicles. From his position he could be seen as one of those responsible for the present state of the company. He has just resigned his directorship.

Does he just go, as would any shopfloor worker who resigns — particularly one who can't do the job?

No! He "could receive the largest golden handshake ever paid by a nationalised industry" (*Guardian*, June 11th).

Meanwhile within the plants the speed up and victimisations continue. And the employer is trying to use Japanese techniques to get round the unions.

They have introduced Quality Circles which are generally boycotted. They are putting each of the workers on the new model on a week long course of lectures. They are going to put prospective new employees through a two-day-long interview.

There is a major crisis of capitalist overproduction in both cars and commercial vehicles for which the workers are being made to pay. GM has just announced 1,700 redudancies.

All the government's privatisation plans involve takeovers that will include mass closures. They are not concerned with the survival of the only company that is just about wholly state-owned. Every move they make weakens it. They are about to sell off its Parts Division, Unipart.

Generally the workforce is hostile to the company's moves. The problem is the union leadership — which always accepts the company's propaganda.

"Realistic"

Already a delegate meeting has decided to be "realistic' in the wage claim, and not name a figure but use the word "substantial", and also to allow flexibility on a one or two year deal.

This will give the likes of Ken Cure, one of the negotiators, a free hand.

BACKED BY THE WORLDWIDE RESOURCES OF GENERAL MOTORS

We need to challenge the right of the employers to make us pay for their crisis. Their books should be opened to elected committees of workers. Let us see who is making money out of the firm. The interest payments to the banks for example, are massive. Their books should also be opened.

The only real answer to the crisis of the motor industry is the nationalisation of the whole industry, including components. This should be under the management of elected committees of trade unionists, and production of cars and commercial vehicles should start to be planned as part of an overall national plan.

No rest for Silentnight strikers

By SUE ARNALL, Bury North CLP

Is Stalker the only copper involved in shady business deals?

From the local Barnoldswick paper you would guess not. It reported on June 13th that a team of North Yorkshire policemen will be competing in the *Daily Telegraph's* Three Peaks Yacht Race in a boat named *Silentnight*!

So Tom Clarke rewards the "neutral" arm of the law for protecting his cabs and his factory against the Silentnight strikers.

Meanwhile, one striker is up in court on July 9th for "dropping litter", and the rest are harassed daily as they keep up the picketting outside Clarke's factories.

The strike is now a year old, and the strikers themselves (500 of them) will have been sacked a year on July 22.

"Mr Wonderful"

Tom Clarke, called "Mr Wonderful" by Thatcher in 1984, is losing money at Silentnight, but has so many other companies that he can probably sit it out so long as the action is confined to two small factories in the North of England.

The main strategy of the union (FTAT) seems to be to pressurise Clarke's biggest customers, the Co-op, who still scandalously take 30% of Silentnight's scab production, into boycotting Silentnight beds. But it seems that to date the Co-op has resisted these demands on the basis that not all Clarke's workforce are on strike, and that other retailers will continue to sell even if they refuse.

Support

It is crucial that these strikers are supported in order to win this fight. The union movement needs to put pressure on Clarke's suppliers, on his other companies, on the Co-op too. The Co-op selling these beds can also be brought up through Co-op Parties.

The strike cannot be left to the valiant band of isolated workers. It needs to be spread.

It needs to be made into a far bigger campaign of solidarity. Other unions should step in with offers of support. And the families need to be supported financially. A year is a long time to live below the breadline.

Send money to A. King — but also send your active support.

FTAT Cravendale 92 Strike Fund, c/o Mrs A. King, 10, Rainhill Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs. 0282–813662.

Thousands of women face job loss

School meals crunch

Tens of thousands of women could face redundancy as a result of new Tory attacks on the school meals service.

Already — unnoticed by much of the labour movement and with little resistance from public sector unions — more jobs have been axed in school meals than in the decimated steel industry.

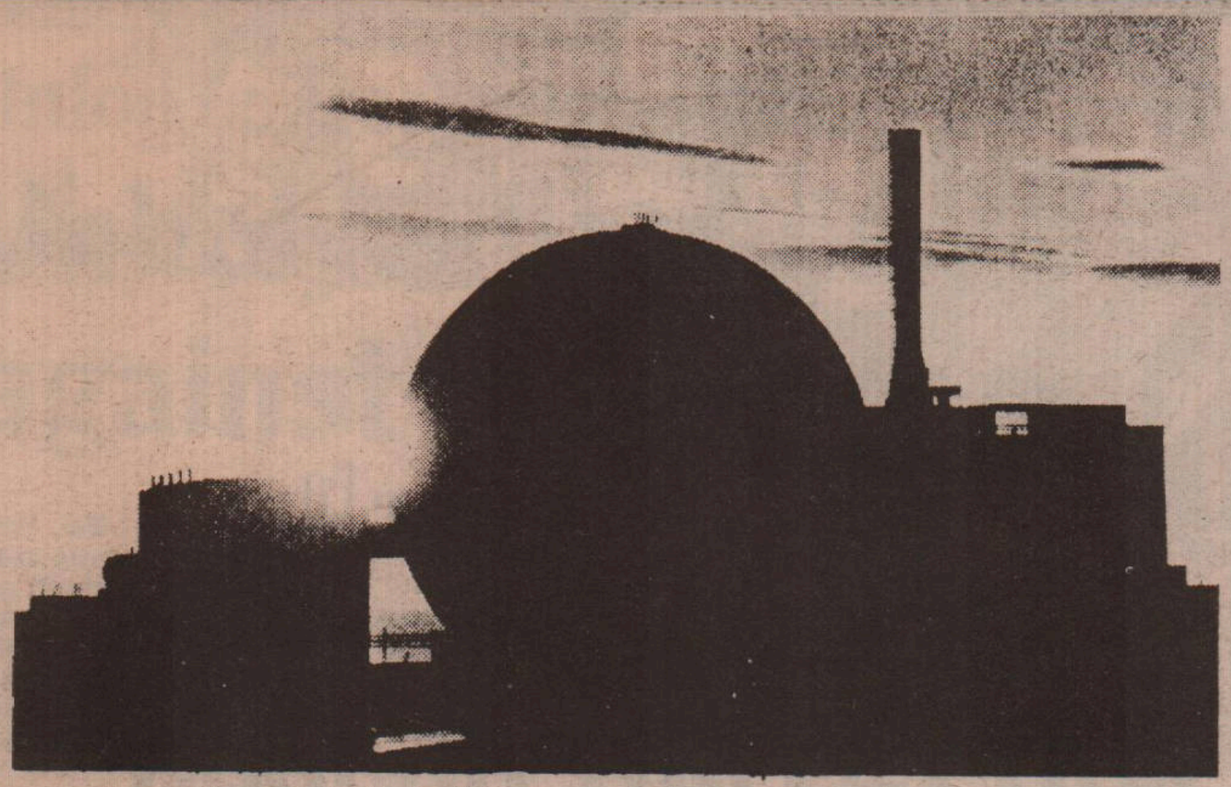
Now Buckinghamshire's Tory Council is planning to go the whole hog and scrap its meals service, providing only a meagre packed lunch to the 8,000 children currently entitled to free school meals. If Norman Fowler's new Social Services Bill becomes law, even fewer children will receive free meals.

Meanwhile, 1,400 women in Buckinghamshire face redundancy; many of them are part-timers who would not even receive redundancy pay. The council expects to save around £2 million each year.

Shutting down

Other Tory councils are known to have ambitions to shut down their school meals service. Hereford and Worcester have already shut down their service, and Lincoln has closed down primary school meals services. The Fowler proposals, which will replace free meals for 610,000 children by a pathetic £2.20 weekly payment through the "Family Credit" scheme, will compound the continuing drop in take-up of meals which was also worsened by the teachers' pay dispute, and by price rises forced on by government policies.

Under these pressures, time is fast running out for NUPE and other public sector unions to mount a real fight in defence of this service; closure would result in worsened nutrition for children, increased pressure on mothers, and the loss of thousands more women's jobs.





John Chapman Cunningham

After Chernobyl

The Civil Nuclear war is on. The Labour Party – but apparently not its leader – has a clear policy to end all nuclear power in Britain, and remove nuclear bases. The forces ranged against this are vast and fundamental to the future of capitalism. The deadly nuclear chain which stretches from British banks through bloody apartheid's uranium mining in Namibia to the US war machine is under threat. The struggle to defeat it is the struggle for an alternative – a new world – a socialist world. In the run-up to the Labour conference, which must lay the basis for the next Labour government we will see, or feel, the effects of the agents of the nuclear chain, the people who have sold their souls for the radioactive decay of our children's future. The most cunning and powerful lie machines and manipulators of opinion are now in action outside and inside the labour movement.

Cllr Piers Corbyn, Southwark
Andrew Corbyn, London and Australia

NO NUKES ARE GOOD NUKES

In the warm summer breeze blowing from the Ukraine no-one, except those who are paid not to, believes there is such a thing as a safe nuclear industry. In the Florida sun warming the debris of the space-shuttle no-one believes that disasters – nuclear or other – only happen in Communist countries.

There are no profits in these truths. British banks back apartheid which occupies Namibia which exports uranium to Britain's 'civil' nuclear plants which make plutonium which is sent to the USA to make bombs which are spread throughout NATO. This is the chain we must break. Apartheid and Britain's nukes are the weak links.

But now the nuclear chain is fighting back . . . with pseudo-scientific mystification, with cover-ups of nuclear accidents, with manipulation of statistics, with (doubtless) buy-offs of politicians and trade unionists of many hues.

In the last three decades the level of background radiation due to atmospheric and deposited radioactive waste has increased everywhere in the world and this extra radiation even emanates from metals smelted in that time. Cancer and leukaemia rates have increased above the general average around every nuclear-related plant or military base in Britain. Yet well-paid experts tell us this is 'not significant'. We will be told there are no alternative jobs for nuclear workers at Sellafield/Windscale, yet on every estate in every city there are almost unlimited jobs to be done, quite apart from 'decommissioning work' on nuclear installations.

MINUTES NOT DECADES

We will be told the nuclear industry needs 'decades to close down'. *This is a lie.* Nuclear power stations can be shut down in minutes. The actual removal of the fuel rods may take up to 18 months because of the capacity of cooling ponds or other factors. That is the only limiting factor in closing down the nuclear pollution and plutonium cooking industry for ever.

There is enough excess capacity in the CEGB to provide almost all the nuclear contribution to the national grid when nukes are shut down; and more coal, or tidal/wind/wave power stations can be built inside 4 years.

FORKED TONGUE EXPERTS

If you hear any statement about any aspect of nuclear power from any 'expert', politician, trade union leader, environmental 'campaigner', or CIA agent ask yourself:–

(i) Who gains from this statement?
(ii) Who pays or supports him (or her), and who backs those who pay him (or her)?
(iii) Why are they telling me?
(iv) Is it true?

CORE = CON

The Australian anti-nuclear movement was manipulated into defeat four years ago. The same methods are being tried here and now. If a fine-sounding organisation appears ask these questions to see what is cooking . . . . In Britain the names behind the fine sounding 'Cumbrians Opposed to Radioactive Environment' (CORE) and similar bodies include, appropriately, Cook and Cunningham! Both Frank Cook MP for Billingham and Jack Cunningham MP for Sellafield have connections with the nuclear pollution and plutonium cooking industry. CORE is the nuclear lobby's glowing trojan horse into the labour movement.

Their recent conference was chaired by Frank Cook. At one point the chair refused to allow a motion which called for the abolition of the nuclear industry in Britain. At another point the chair forced through a motion which allowed for there to be such a thing as a 'safe public level' for radiation and radioactive materials dumped into the environment. The conference also went on to recommend 'safe' exposure levels for industrial workers. An employee of British Nuclear Fuels then made a speech where he said they were doing everything possible to achieve the proposed new industrial safety and environmental standards.

It would appear that the now projected Labour policy from the self-seeking careerists on the nuclear industry will be to close a few nuclear reactors which are past their life anyway and make a few changes to radiation regulations. They most definitely do not intend to close down the nuclear industry.

We will have to fight every millirem of the way to get a clear policy with a 2/3 majority carried by Labour Party conference *and* implemented. Key elements to a practical and effective policy are:–

1. Close down the nuclear power and weapons industry. Most plants to be closed immediately and the rest to be phased out within four years.

2. Provide alternative jobs, in decommissioning and other work, for nuclear power workers.

3. End all secrecy surrounding the nuclear industry.

4. Recognise that there is no safe level of radiation or radioactive waste in the environment and make all radioactive discharges illegal.

5. Fund combined heat and power projects through local authorities to use waste heat from coal/refuse and gas/oil power stations.

Such a policy resolution alone will not break the nuclear chain. We need an action programme starting now to enforce it – in parallel with action against apartheid, the nuclear lobby's troubled brother . . . .

1. Industrial action to stop the transport of nuclear fuels, waste, and nuclear industry related products.

2. Consumer boycotts of nuclear industry related products.

3. Refuse to pay 1/8th of your electricity bill (The nuclear fraction), and seek community and union opposition to cut-offs arising from such non-payment.

4. Demonstrate at Electricity board showrooms against the display and distribution of pro-nuclear propaganda and demand anti-nuclear material be displayed instead.

5. Exclude Frank Cook MP, Jack Cunningham MP, and all agents of the nuclear industry from any anti-nuclear campaigns. (It also goes without saying that Cunningham should be sacked from the post of Labour's environmental speaker.)

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!

AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR INDUSTRY AND POLITICS

The present British situation is similar to the Australian situation in 1982 before the Labour government was elected. The right wing of the then Labour opposition insisted on changing a clear anti-nuclear policy to 'close uranium mines' and 'no nuclear power'. They succeeded by various devices to allow some uranium mines, particularly the world's largest at Roxby Downs.

In this way the Australian Labour Party undermined its own credibility and damaged the position of trade unions which had successfully prevented uranium mining under the previous conservative administration of Malcolm Fraser. There is information that Western Mining Corporation (who own Roxby Downs) was able to corrupt the Labour Party with financial and other support in return for a pro-nuclear policy. Australia is now a major uranium exporting country.

The sell-out by Hawke's Labour Government over nuclear power split the Australian Labour Party – a large section of which started the Anti-Nuclear Party which got big electoral support and secured one senator.

Kick out Cunningham!

By DAVE SPENCER

There will be an avalanche of anti-nuclear power resolutions for this year's Labour Party Annual Conference – even from right wing CLPs.

This should be an embarrassment for the leadership, particularly for spokesperson John Cunningham, MP for Sellafield and great imbiber of British Nuclear Fuels lobby lunches.

After all the question of nuclear power is intimately linked with the question of nuclear weapons. And if we are going to unilaterally disarm, as per Labour Party Conference policy, who needs nuclear power?

The anti-nuclear policy from this Conference should be clear, unequivocal and what's more – very popular.

Grassroots

The task then at grassroots level is to campaign on the issue and to make sure it is carried through by the next Labour government.

This will require vigilance at all levels:

- **witness Gonzales in Spain elected on an anti–NATO ticket and then swivelling full circle;**
- **witness Miterrand in France with 65% electricity from nuclear power, devastating the people and the ecology of the Pacific with nuclear testing, and then putting a blanket of silence in the French media on all things nuclear, including Chernobyl.**

These are fully paid up members with Kinnock of the Socialist International. Does anyone seriously expect Kinnock to be any different? – unless of course extra-parliamentary pressure is such that he can do no other than carry through election promises.

Undoubtedly people are scared after Chernobyl. Einstein said, "With the nuclear age, everything changes – except the way people think."

Apathy

But apathy and stagnation become difficult with radiation around – like in some horror movie, it streaks under the door and through cracks in the window frames, it invades your food, and your water supply – and you can't see it!

The astounding bureaucratic bungling of Chernobyl becomes *immediately* a European problem, even while we admire the heroic Soviet workers – firemen, lorry drivers and helicopter pilots – who have shortened their own lives to save others – showing us the paradox of Stalinism in microcosm.

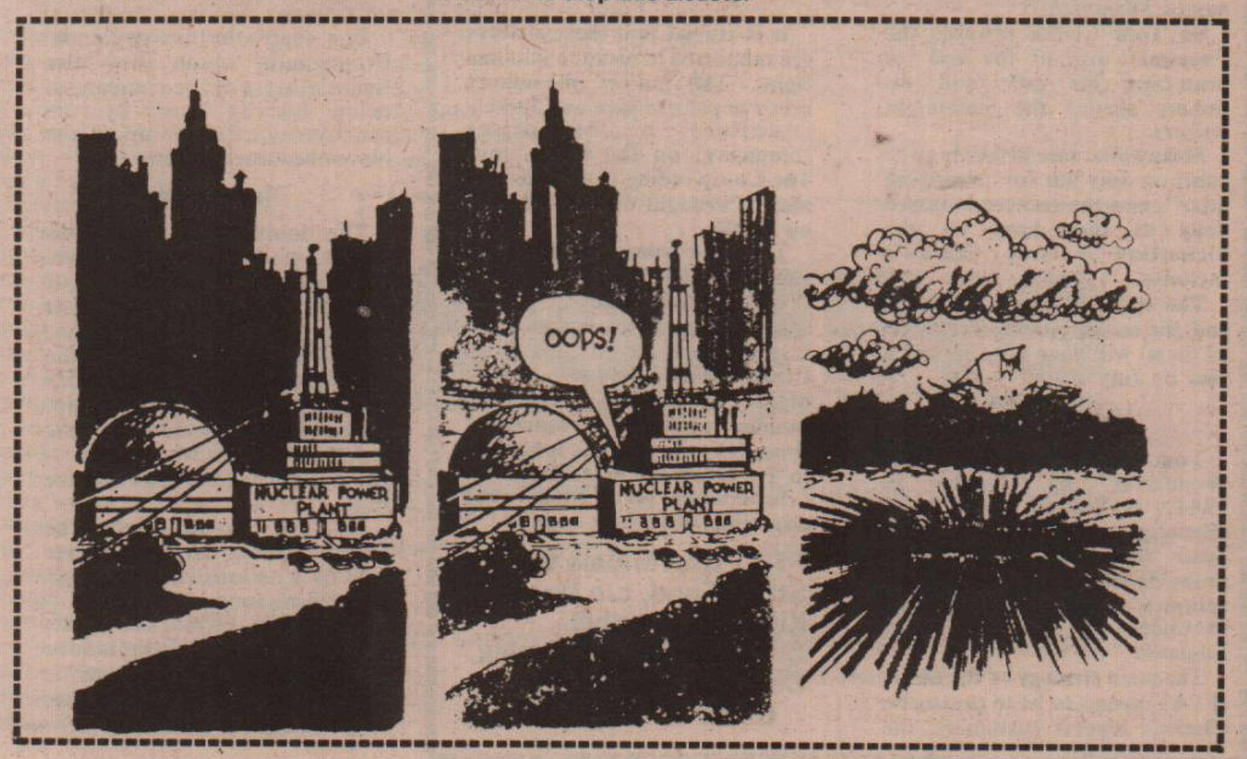
In the capitalist West, ordinary people are shocked out of their comfortable "Well, they must know what they are doing" attitude, because they clearly *don't* know what they are doing, and true to form nobody seems to have any plan of overall control.

Disaster

Anarchy and rampant profiteering is one thing in the international car industry – in the nuclear power industry it is a receipe for total diaster. And cold logic must tell us that those in power at the moment have neither the will nor the inclination to stop this disaster – capitalism in microcosm.

One reason Kinnock, Cunningham and Co. hold back from the necessary call to close down the nuclear power plants is because their politics seek only to reform not overthrow capitalism, and they accept and retail the "facts" and figures handed to them by employers like the CEGB and BNFL.

Here is an issue sufficiently serious and popular to press home these points at this year's Labour Party Conference. If Cuningham won't accept the need to scrap nuclear power and concentrate on cleaning up the mess, then Cunningham should be given the boot and replaced by someone more representative of the rising fear and anger in the labour movement.



WITCH HUNT

CLPs hit back

Signs of a real fight

By KEVIN LEE

As the witch hunt in the Labour Party grows, there are signs of a real fighback beginning in the constituencies and the unions.

Briefing has always argued that whilst in the past *Militant* has borne the brunt of the attacks, the whole of the left would suffer.

The expulsion of Kevin Scally and Councillor Amir Khan from Birmingham by a 13-12 vote on the NEC showed just how far the NEC are prepared to go.

Scally was expelled for exposing the rigged membership of Hattersley's Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party and Amir Khan for setting up a Black Section. If this isn't a witch hunt, what is?

Conference

However, the NEC is not getting it all its own way. The June 21st Conference Against the Witch Hunt brought together delegates from all over the country who voted to establish an ongoing campaign of action against the witch hunt.

The only controversy came when representatives of *Socialist Action* tried to take any campaigning against the witch hunt away from Constituencies and Unions working together, and to run it all by the left groups co-ordinated as Labour Left Liaison.

The fact that the amendment was put forward by *Socialist Action*, rather than a Labour Party or affiliated organisation, might have made it predictable that there would be little support: as it was, it mustered a total of four votes — which has led to *Socialist Action* denouncing the conference as "unrepresentative" and "sectarian".

The speakers from the platform firstly reported on the extent of the witch hunt, with **Amir Khan** from Birmingham and **Tony Mulhearn** from Liverpool describing how they had been thrown out of the Party.

Defence

Mulhearn, in a significant gesture towards a united campaign, called on delegates to defend Black Sections' organisers such as Khan from expulsion — despite *Militant's* well-publicised opposition to Black Sections.

Frances Curran, LPYS representative on the NEC gave a fighting speech in which she pointed out that 51 hours of NEC time had so far been spent expelling socialists — none had yet been spent looking into why the Party's membership had dropped by 10,000.

Audrey Wise described the reasons behind the production of the minority report and how what was supposed to be an inquiry into the running of the District Labour Party turned into a witch hunt; in particular she dismissed much of the so-called "evidence" provided.

Dave Anderson from the Durham Colliery Mechanics section of the NUM said that the only expulsions he would like to see were those of the UDM scabs who are not members of the appropriate trade union as laid down in the Party consitution!

Disillusion

He pointed out that those miners and wives involved in the strike and recruited through struggle would become disillusioned as the Party turned to internal bickering.

Lambeth's Councillors were well represented at the Conference, with surcharged former Councillor **Elsie Horstead**, now elected to the ILEA, chairing the morning session and new Chief Whip **Joan Twelves** chairing the first afternoon session. A second surcharged Councillor, **Hazel Smith**, and finally **Linda Bellos**, the present Leader of Lambeth Council and Vice Chair of Black Sections, both spoke.

On the theme of the fightback, **Val Price** the Chair of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, called for constitutional change to be taken more seriously. **Kevin Scally** pointed out that the attacks on himself and Amir Khan in Birmingham should not be separated from the attacks on *Militant* and the rest of the left.

Students

Speakers from the floor gave details of what was happening in their areas, and **Sue Rossiter** from the National Organisation of Labour Students National Committee outlined the undemocratic nature of the running of that organisation, including the attacks on Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN).

Keith Veness, delegate from NUPE Hackney Officers Branch, recalled the time he was expelled from the Party — only to be eventually readmitted on a resolution moved at the NEC by a certain N. Kinnock. How times have changed!

A delegate from King's Cross NUR pointed out that his branch was taking up the issue through its delegates to CLP General Committees.

Jeremy Corbyn MP closed the Conference with a call for a united campaign to stop the expulsions and ensure that the next Labour Government carried out Party policy.

Plans

The next moves in the campaign are to include meetings and rallies around the country to publicise the extent of the disciplinary actions being carried out, as part of the build-up to Party Conference.

Following that, a further delegate Conference will be organised.The Campaign against the Witch Hunt will be run in the meantime by a Steering Committee of one delegate per sponsoring organisation. For further details or to sponsor the Campaign (cost £10), write to: The Treasurer, Conference Against the Witch Hunt, 17, Wareham Hse, Carroun Rd, London SW8 1AZ.

Write On!

Got something you must tell the world? Angry or delighted with our coverage? The new *Labour Briefing* will feature a regular Letters column, offering readers the right to reply, expound or respond. Get it off your chest — but keep it brief: letters over 300 words may be cut for reasons of space.

Write to: Letter Editor, 162, Millfields Road, London E5 0AE.



"Trotskyism" no crime in 1947 — Heffer

The left must stop the witch-hunt

By ERIC HEFFER MP

The NEC these days spends more time considering Labour Party members for expulsion than anything else. It is a scandal and should be halted.

Contrary to what some in the Party think, the expulsions and disciplinary action against left-wingers of various hues is not doing the Party any good. In the long run it will not help Labour to win, no matter what some may misguidedly believe.

Each time someone is expelled, Labour's enemies demand more. They realise that these internal rows and disciplinary action do great damage to the Party, disillusion Party activists and that is what they want to see. They encourage expulsions. They praise the leadership each time they throw someone out, and call them weak-kneed when they do not.

Weak-kneed

That is what they did over the endorsement of Pat Wall by the NEC. The day after he was accepted as the PPC for one of the Bradford seats, the press was full of Mr Kinnock's weak-kneed position and insisting he must not weaken in his attack on the Left.

One needs to ask the political question. What is it all about, and why is it happening, especially since we are supposed to have a new left-wing leader?

There have been comrades with similar ideas to *Militant* in the Party for decades. In fact, since 1947/8. "Trotskyism" was accepted as a view of some within the Party, rather like Fabianism or Methodism, or Tribunism or Marxism. It has only become a "crime" in the last four to five years.

Revulsion

The truth of the matter is that during the Wilson Governmental years of 1964/70, there was a revulsion amongst the youth to the Labour Government's support for USA policy in Vietnam. This revulsion was shared by the Tribunite Left of the Party who also opposed that policy, but the youth looked to other political forces to lead the struggle against the war in Vietnam.

As a result, a whole number of Left-wing groups were formed, particularly amongst the student groups which had a Left-wing, revolutionary but anti-Stalinist position. Later, many of those who joined the groups felt they were out of the mainstream and joined the Labour Party.

They did not, however, abandon their Left-wing politics.

Those with ideas and support for the *Militant* newspaper had always been in the Labour Party, and over the years pushed their political view within the Party. They attracted the youth in particular and to some extent gave the youngsters something to grasp and hold onto.

After the defeat of Labour in 1970, there was a move to the Left inside the Party, a move that continued even more rapidly after the defeat of the 1974/79 Labour Government. The 1979 Manifesto was relatively Left-wing, the 1983 one was even more so.

SDP formed

The Right either left the Party to form the SDP or stayed in to fight and defeat, if they could, the Left within the Party. They felt after the 1983 General Election that their time had come. That is why they made an agreement to fight for the "dream ticket".

They had looked at the desertions from the Benn camp, and the "reaction" of the new leadership; they decided that the next stage was either to drive out or to marginalise the Left within the Party, now that some of the "Left" were moving away from their previous positions, and attacking the so-called "Hard Left".

They therefore chose firstly to attack supporters of *Militant* as a preliminary to attacking others on the Left. The so-called "Salami" tactics were considered desirable.

Up to now, 12 comrades have been expelled by the NEC for being supporters of *Militant* and many others in certain CLPs. In addition, others — who by no stretch of the imagination could be considered to be supporters of *Militant* — have also been expelled.

They include Left-wingers of different shades, two of them expelled for daring to go on a television programme.

Horror

At the last NEC I remember thinking that *Militant* claim they have 5,000 supporters. If so, then we have 4,900-odd left. The thought of wholesale expulsions of so-called *Militant* supporters followed by others of a Left-wing hue fills me with horror.

I want to make it absolutely clear. I am not a supporter of *Militant*, or of any other Left wing group, other than the Campaign Group of MPs, but I believe all the comrades in their varying groups around their papers and journals have a right to be in the Labour Party, provided they accept Clause IV and fully support the Party at local and national elections.

Nye Bevan

There have been expulsions before. Nye Bevan was once expelled. The Bevanites were called a "Party within the Party". Others were also expelled, and it did great harm to the Party. But this is the worst period of all for expulsions and disciplinary action. It really must stop, and we on the Left must do all we can to stop it.

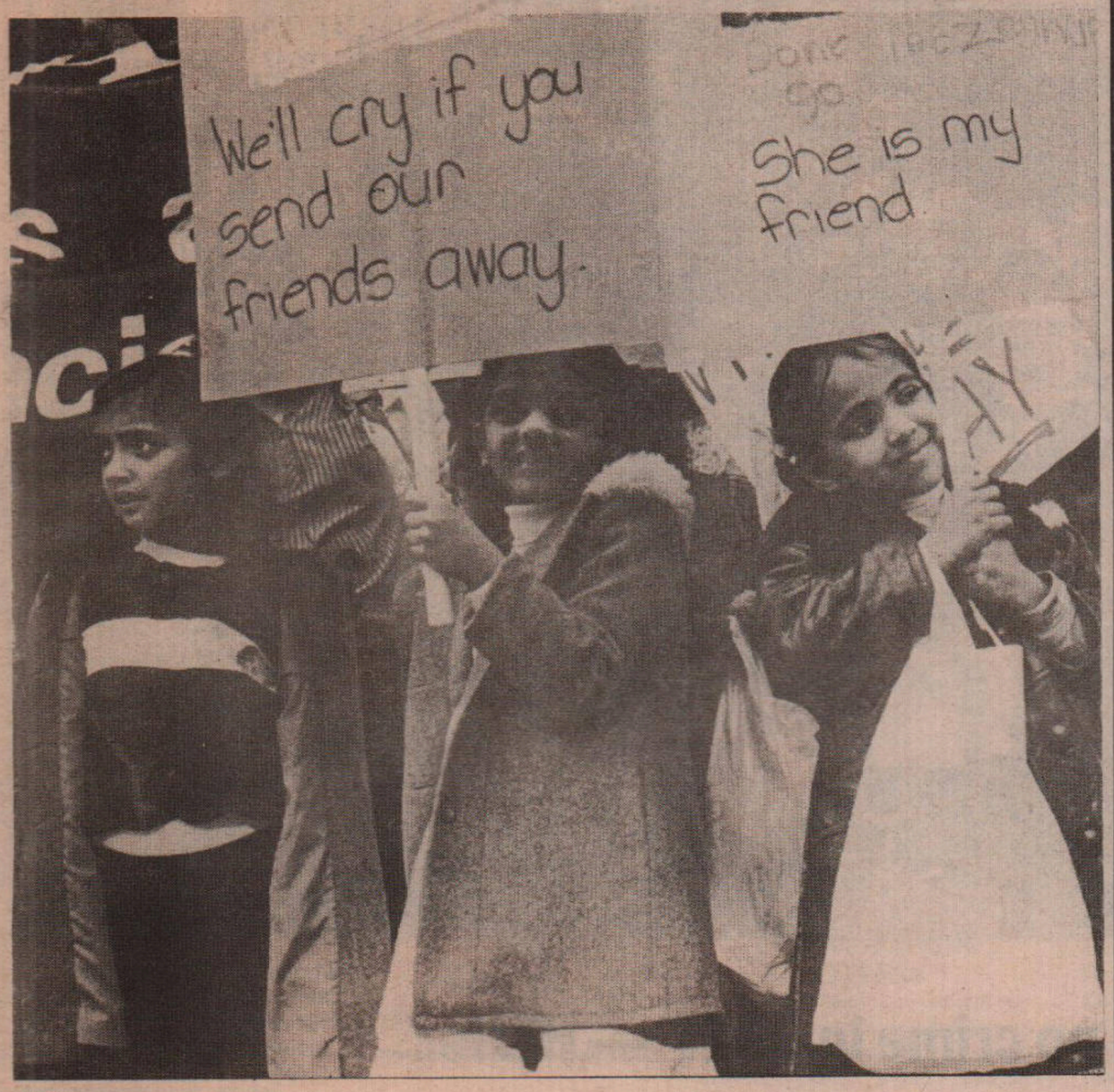
The fact of the matter is the Right-wing organise both inside and outside Parliament. Solidarity Group has an executive. They pay a contribution to belong to it. I don't object to that, but I do object when those who do these things attack others for doing the same; others who have been more successful and undoutedly in the past more in tune with the feelings and views of the mass of Party members.

I believe the expulsions should cease and those expelled in Liverpool, Birmingham and elsewhere should be reinstated. What we need is mediation not administrative methods to throw people out. We must step up the fight against expulsions. It is the only sane way forward for the Party.

Witch Hunt News

20p per copy £1 for ten copies (including postage).
c/o 36 Melbourne Rd, London E17.

Child's-eye view of deportation fight



Zeynep

'That really happened to me'

A children's book *by Zeynep Hasbudak and Brian Simon*

By ANN BLISS, East Lewisham CLP

This is the story of Zeynep and Fatih Hasbudak who were deported to Turkey with their parents in April 1985 after a long, hard and yet exciting campaign to let them remain in Hackney.

Because of their eventual deportation the story has a sad ending but what comes through is the enormous amount of support and solidarity shown to the children and their parents.

The first half of the book is written by Brian in warm, simple, down to earth language, giving an account of the children's life when they were in hiding.

There was a time when they had been in hiding for some weeks, they decided to go to the park and were seen by a policeman...

"Zeynep and Fats were bored. So Dad took them out for a walk to the park. It felt good to be out of the house and running round and round. Fats went on the swings. It was windy. It started to get cold. There were no other children at the park now, because they were all at school.

"While Zeynep's Dad was pushing Fats on the swings, she looked at her Dad's face. It looked tired and sad. He noticed that she was looking at him, so she turned away and pretended that she wasn't. She stared at the tall grey buildings, and up into the sky. The clouds were moving very fast like they were in a hurry, she thought. Fats loked funny. He was wearing a hat that was too big for him. Dad had given it to him to hide his face. Zeynep wore her hood up, and dad was wearing his hat too.

"As they were walking back to the room with the lights and the camera, they saw a policeman coming towards them.

"Zeynep thought, 'He will recognise us, he will know who we are.' She felt afraid. She wanted to hide, but there was nowhere to go. Then Fats suddenly started wriggling about.

" 'No,' said dad, 'just walk on.' Zeynep saw that Fats was afraid.

"The policeman came nearer. He was looking at them. He looked down at Fats.

" 'Oh no, here goes...' thought Zeynep, but the policeman just smiled, as he looked at Fat's funny hat, and he just walked right past them. Zeynep and Fats and Dad carried on walking. They were too scared to look back."

The second part is in the form of photographs with accompanying text written by Zeynep, then aged 9.

It's not only of value to children, it's an activist's book as well — any adult or group engaged in a similar campaign would learn a lot from just looking at the photographs and the activities which were organised.

Power

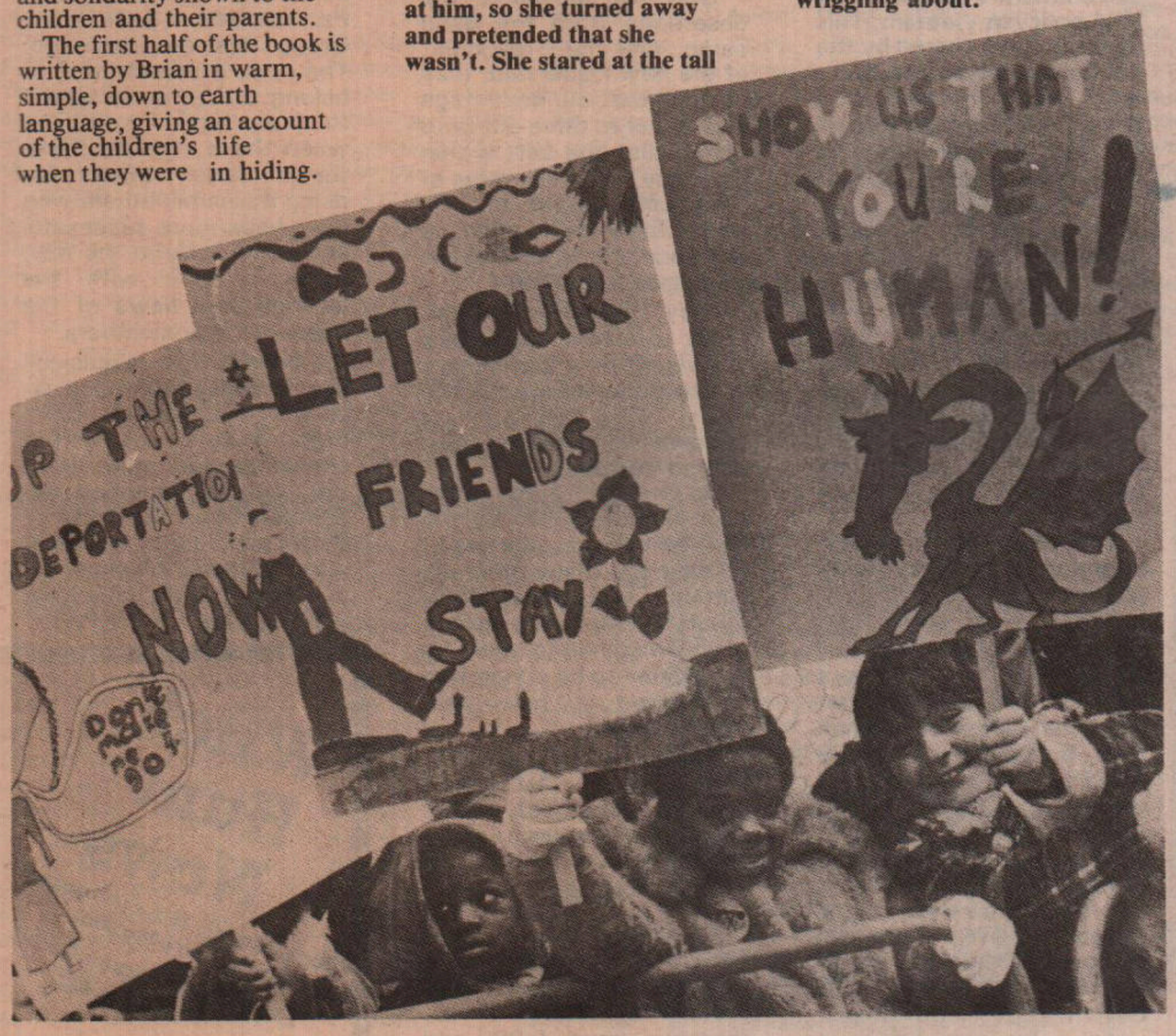
The story shows very simply and starkly that despite the enormous support — both locally and nationally — one man, Mr Waddington at the Home Office, had the power to prevent Zeynep and her family from remaining in Hackney.

The point about a few people having all the power and most people having no power should not be lost — even on an eight year old.

I hope that everyone directly involved with schools will order copies from the ILEA or from ALTARF*. And anyone else can order directly from ALTARF or from your local bookseller for their own children or for a friend's — it really is a lovely story!

**ALTARF, Panther House, Room 216, 38 Mount Pleasant Rd, London WC1X OAP.*

Also available is a ten minute video from ALTARF.



Boycott Kinnock's toothless committee!

The launch of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee (BAAC) at the end of May backfired in the face of the Labour Party leadership. Instead of press reports covering all the wonderful things this motley crew would do for Black people, the stories in the papers homed in on the call by the Labour Party Black Sections for a boycott of this sham committee.

The opposition of the Black Sections to the BAAC is based on a fundamental principle. We stand for the right of Black people to decide for themelves how they should organise and how they should fight racism.

We believe that Black people should organise autonomously within the Labour Party and the broader labour movement and that we should organise for power. We believe that it is central to anti-racism that Black people have a right to determine their own future.

The Black Section approach comes into head-on conflict with the old "client" type of relationship between the Labour Party and Black people whereby (white) hand-picked community

CHRIS KHAMIS, Black Section National Committee, puts the case against Labour's Black and Asian Advisory Committee.

"leaders" are given a little bit of prestige in return for Black votes in elections and on GMCs.

It was precisely this client relationship which Councillor Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were challenging in Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency — a challenge which has led to their expulsion from the Party.

Unfortunately, the BAAC fits neatly into this client type of relationship.

No Power

For a start, it has no power: it is only an advisory committee and its terms of reference specifically exclude policy formulation.

In contrast, Black Sections have stressed the importance of giving Black people power in the Labour Party by recognising their right to be represented at all levels of the Party.

The very title of the BAAC is divisive, seeking to place barriers between Afro-Caribbean and Asian people. Black Sections have always stressed the importance of political unity between all Black people.

The history of the British Empire is full of similar attempts to set up powerless bodies pretending to give some sort of representation. Divide and rule has also always been a fundamental tool of British imperial rulers. This is the tradition which the Labour leadership and their tame BAAC are firmly placed in .

Opposition to the Black Sections' boycott campaign has been voiced on the grounds that any forum for discussing racism is valuable and that the Committee can do useful work such as ethnic monitoring of the Labour Party's recruitment procedures. What these arguments ignore is that the BAAC was set up in response to the Black Sections movement and in order to destroy that movement.

This fact has been recognised by some people who have withdrawn from the BAAC.

It is sad that it has not been recognised by some friends and supporters of Black Sections. We call on these people to recognise the democratic decision of the 1986 Black Sections Conference and withdraw from the Committee.



John Chapman

Tip of a racist iceberg

By JOHN LISTER

Even the normally reserved *Nursing Times* has called for the resignation or dismissal of John Minter, the chair of North East Essex health authority who scrawled racist notes on applications for a post of consultant psychogeriatrician.

His comment was "Oh God, can't the region do better than three unqualified wogs?" It came to light because the papers he had written on were routinely photocopied and circulated to consultants in the psychiatric unit.

Of course he hurriedly denied that he was racially prejudiced, and put the episode down to "exasperation", "on the spur of the moment and at the end of a strenuous day."

Only a few weeks earlier Health Minister Barney Hayhoe made a big show of calling for action to combat racial discrimination in NHS employment policies.

But Minter, as a health authority chair, is directly appointed by the government, and accountable only to Norman Fowler. Why has he or Hayhoe not kicked out Minter?

Of course the comment is just the tip of an ugly iceberg of racism in the NHS: Minter clearly felt confident others would share his repulsive views.

And if this level of racism is evident in the selection of a consultant, what chance has a black nurse, porter or domestic cleaner got of fair treatment or a sympathetic ear from N.E. Essex DHA?

The very fact that most applicants for this psychogeriatric post were clearly black speaks volumes for the way in which racial discrimination pushes many black doctors into the least glamourous jobs, caring for the elderly and the mentally ill, while the trendy specialities in cardiac and other surgery are largely monopolised by the conservative white hierarchy.

As a major employer of black workers the NHS itself is an overdue case for treatment in the surgical removal of racists: but to do this their powerful network of allies, and sponsors in the government will need to be confronted.

Briefing Women: who we are

A longtime left activist (male) said recently that he had heard that Briefing Women were "harridans" and he had been pleasantly surprised to find them to be effective and forceful fighters for feminism and socialism.

After some digging in Roget's Thesaurus "harridan" is found alongside "virago" and "battleaxe" — we are strong and effective fighters indeed, so perhaps it is not inappropriate!

For those further right in the Labour Party, however, Briefing Women are seen as being treacherous to feminism and manipulated by their male comrades in *Labour Briefing*. Why have we provoked such hostility? Who are Briefing Women anyway?

Sexism and the daily grinding marginalisation of women's issues in political organisations has led to the need for women's autonomy.

Organise

As women we need to assert ourselves as women and to organise against our oppression, but this does not mean that we are *only* women or that we no longer have political differences between ourselves.

Evidently our differences with the woman Margaret Thatcher are so deep that no common identity with her as a woman exists. We also have political differences with the views of some other women in the Labour Party.

Democratic

The broad feminist current in the Labour Party has prioritised for several years the democratic issue of women's constitutional position within the Party, as summarised in the demands of the Labour Women's Action Committee. We have been quite right to do so.

We desperately need women to be represented in the Party, but for what? We need women's representation (e.g. the Women's seats on the NEC to be elected by Women's Conference) to advance political positions which will be of benefit to women.

We differ, in *Briefing* with some feminists in the Labour Party on the content of these positions. In differing, we form different alliances.

Conflict

For us, capitalism will not be nibbled away piece by piece; there has to be conflict with capitalism. It comes down to a question of which side are you on: for or against the destruction of capitalism?

Women's liberation is meaningless without socialism, similarly, socialism is meaningless without women's liberation. We do not feel that our sisterhood which binds us is more important than that which divides us from those *not* in favour of the destruction of capitalism.

Being in favour of witch hunts, attacking trade unions in struggle, making Tory cuts, all put you on the side of capitalism, whatever commitment you have to feminism or democratic socialism.

So Briefing Women take different positions from women to the right of us in the Labour Party. Of course, there are occasions when we are fighting for the same demands as women to the right of us: we are committed to the democratisation of the Party in favour of women, and to the LWAC demands.

But there isn't a broad mantle which wraps us all together sweetly at all times as women and which obliterates our differences. We also recognise that for different women oppressed in different ways, there will be different priorities.

By LABOUR BRIEFING WOMEN

For example, a black woman may very well feel that her priority is to organise around her oppression as a black person rather than simply her oppression as a woman — or she may want to prioritise her oppression as a black woman. Similarly lesbians and women with disabilities may feel the need to prioritise their particular form of oppression.

Support

But these special oppressions different women face should not divide us. As women we should give each other mutual support in the different roads we follow to the liberation of all women.

Because we are for class conflict politics we work in *Briefing* with our male comrades.

But (oh, dear!) there they are hearing we are harridans. That is precisely because we are *not* manipulated by them, kowtowing to their leadership.

Majority

50% of the places on the *Labour Briefing* National Steering Committee are reserved for women — elected by women. For the last two years, because we believe that reserved women's places don't automatically lead to 50% reserved men's places, we have been elected into a majority. We also organise autonomously as Labour Briefing Women.

Briefing attempts to practise positive discrimination as we see this as being absolutely fundamental to our methods of organising.

Briefing Women have, over the years, challenged the sexism of our comrades, and raised issues of sexuality, difficult things which confront our male comrades who cannot get away from the issues which we raise. Women's demands must no longer be something "added on" to socialism, they must be there, absolutely fundamental to the whole of the struggle.

To stand in a ward fundraising jumble sale and watch the nine women and two men working at it, makes you realise over and over, that the battle has scarcely begun to get men to do more of the menial and women to do the important in Labour Party politics.

Briefing Women, like good harridans, are helping the process along.

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Labour Briefing Women produce a monthly newsletter, Labour Briefing Women's News. If you would like to receive this please send £2.50 waged, £1.50 unwaged, along with your name and address to: Jane Prust, Labour Briefing Women's Convenor, 51, Musgrove Rd, New Cross, London SE14 5PP.

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NATFHE conference on equal opportunity

NATFHE's residential conference on "Equal Opportunities and the Education of Adults" was held in the fabulous surroundings of the NUT Conference Centre of Stoke Rochford Hall.

By SUE ARNALL, Bury North CLP

I'm sure that for many weary trade unionists it was seen as the just rewards for hours spent in smoke-filled rooms!

Certainly, used to many scruffy conferences in scout-huts and sleeping on floors, I was amazed and curious to see how trade union conferences can treat their delegates!

However, the theme of the Conference was a serious one, and most delegates were concerned, because they work in the field of adult education where equality of opportunity does not exist.

The conference was workshop-based with a plenary session to open and close the discussions. We were asked to consider the major areas of disadvantage as sexism, racism, attitudes to disablement and sexual orientation, but to integrate these aspects in our discussions.

It was pointed out by several delegates from the start that the issues needed to be seen within a context of capitalist oppression and that equal opportunities was a liberal concept which ignored the structural inequalities. Rather we should be talking about anti-racism, anti-sexism and positive action for disabled people; nor should we ignore class oppression and exploitation.

In the workshops we began to discuss our own understandings of the way these oppressions affected our students and ourselves as union members.

Expanding

Adult education has traditionally been staffed by women part-timers, to teach domestic skills to women, but organised and controlled by men. It is now expanding beyond the purely needlework and domestic science areas, to extend the opportunities for women to learn non-traditional skills, to become more confident and assertive. It is also expanding to meet the needs of people with disabilities who, with more now living in the community as opposed to hospitals, have a right to expect courses to suit their needs.

English as a second language provision is also usually part of adult education, as is working with the unemployed. In each of these areas the Government has put money, under certain conditions, to encourage expansion.

However delegates pointed out that strings were always attached and the courses were often only financed for a limited period, with no job security for the part-time workers.

In Bradford, one third of the ESL staff expect to be sacked in September because the Council is only able easily to get rid of part-timers and has to cut its education budget.

Problem?

What is the union's response to this? "We have a problem," say the NEC members present. There are 30,000 part time lecturers, and only 3,000 are members of NATFHE.

"But why is this so?" say the part-timers. Is it because the union has no strategy to recruit them and no real concern to use the full-timers' muscle to win their demands for parity of pay and conditions?

The main theme emerging was this: oppressed groups are marginalised by the union and by Education establishments.

To have any effect, demands for change will cost money. It's not cheap to adapt a building to take wheelchairs. It isn't cheap to provide Braille handouts or signing interpreters in class.

Creche

Creches for women also cost money. And here the union excelled itself! The Conference had a creche — which was free. But to take my children on the weekend was supposed to cost me £30 in accommodation and £20 in transport! A typical example of the sorts of barriers to participation experienced by oppressed members.

So the Conference was well worthwhile, raising as it did so many contradictory issues and asking delegates to consider strategies for moving oppressed groups out of the margins of both the Union's concern and our management's, into the mainstream of educational provision.

So far we have merely raised the issues, and achieved equal opportunities policies only on paper; seeing actual results from these demands seems a long way away.

As a postscript — delegates from the North of Ireland tentatively raised the issue of religious discrimination. Technical colleges were always, apparently, the home of male apprentices for shipbuilding and industry, and as such mainly Protestant. Some inroads are being made by women, Catholics, disabled, but very, very slowly. And very hesitantly on the part of NATFHE too!

WAC calls for electoral college

The Labour Women's Action Committee is putting forward a proposal that an electoral college should be established at Women's Conference to elect the five women's places on the NEC.

Every year the Women's Conference passes resolutions saying that they, as the representatives of Labour Women, should elect the women's NEC seats, and every year this is voted down by the union block vote at National Conference.

The electoral college suggested by WAC would be split 50:50 between the women's sections and councils on one side, and affiliated organisations — the unions and socialist societies on the other, on the basis of their women's membership.

This proposal is to be welcomed. Hopefully it will form a basis for negotations with the trade unions on this question, and will help to bring women activists in the Party and in the unions closer together.

It will also help to prevent the situation which arose in Rothesay, where right wing women were able to exploit the friction between the unions and WAC in order to launch a general attack on the left.

The unions are right to feel aggrieved. Women's Conference does not give them representation in proportion to their women's membership. Perhaps the electoral college will prove to be a first step towards rectifying the situation.

Support Labour women's choice!

These are the 5 women elected in the Shadow Elections for the women's seats of the NEC held at National Women's Conference. They are Labour Women's choice of women to represent them on the NEC, please give them your support in the elections.

Dianne Abbot
Joan Maynard
Clare Short
Mandy Moore
Frances Morrell

Not all these women were on the *Briefing Women's* slate at Women's Conference: in particular, *Briefing Women* felt that at those elections we could not support Frances Morrell, who had lost the confidence of many women during her time as leader of ILEA, not least because of dealings with the unions. We must now, however, unite behind the Women's Conference decision, and push forward the campaign for women to elect their own representatives on the NEC themselves.

Campaign for fortnightly Labour Briefing

Turn back the GREY TIDE!

The right wing of the labour movement has been getting away with murder: policies and principles have been slaughtered. Kinnock, Hattersley and a cabal of union bureaucrats have been setting the agenda and setting the pace towards a new witch-hunt.

New alignments have helped the "new realists". Urging on the process of ditching and diluting Labour's policies have been:

- The new *Tribune*
- The new Livingstone
- The new *New Socialist*
- The new *Marxism Today*

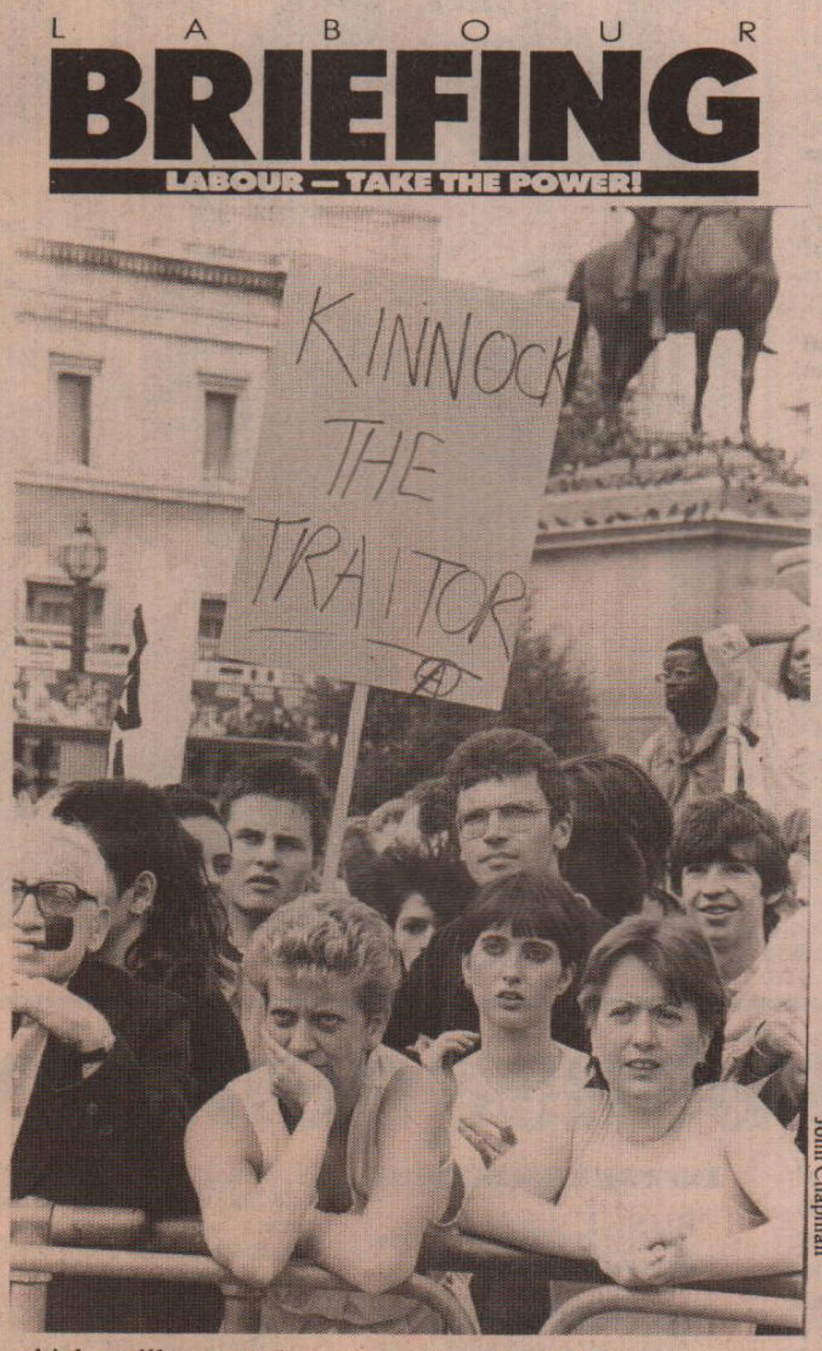
All these elements are central to the new grey election campaign (never mind the politics, feel the breadth!).

But beneath the thin veneer of "new" politics lurks the same old reality: Kinnock's gang are limbering up for a period of Wilson-style Labour government pledged to capitalist policies, and certain to attack the working class.

We can't yet stop the careerist bandwagon which Kinnock is driving, or stop some former left wingers jumping aboard. *But we don't have to concede the initiative to the right wing.*

We can begin to organise the hard left to fight back in defence of socialist policies, class struggle methods, and the demands of the oppressed.

That's why we need the new, fortnightly paper to be launched in the autumn, which will expand and improve upon the present *Labour Briefing*.



John Chapman

The new *Briefing* will argue for the policies which the labour movement needs to fight back against Thatcher and combat Kinnock's retreat.

Our aim is to stop the rot. Our allies and audience are the most militant forces in the trade unions, the Labour Parties, women's campaigns and struggles, black struggles, the Lesbian and Gay movement and among young people — anyone committed to the fight for a socialist solution to the crisis.

The new paper will be tighter in focus, harder-hitting in its line, but broader in scope than the present *Briefing*. It will still be democratically run, and offer a forum for debate as well as a basis for organising the left. It will be basic reading for activists, but understandable to workers on picket lines and first-time readers.

The campaign for the new paper was launched at a 200-strong conference in May. Now we need YOUR support to help raise the funds and assemble a network of sellers and supporters.

If you agree that it is time we fought back against the witch-hunt and the right wing rampage, we urge you to:

- **Join our "500 Club" scheme: pay £1 per week towards the Launch Fund of £8,000 — and be entered for a weekly £25 Draw! (See standing order form alongside)**
- **Make a donation to the launch fund: send cheques (payable to Labour Briefing No. 2 account) to: Launch Fund, 162 Millfields Rd, London E5.**
- **Pledge a regular sale of the new paper in your workplace, Labour Party or neighbourhood. Order your copies from Millfields Rd.**
- **Tell your local comrades about it: organise a Launch Meeting, with a speaker from *Briefing* (write in, or tel. 01-533 2593).**
- **Subscribe to the paper — £12 per year.**
- **Order copies of our *Turn Back the Grey Tide* leaflet to spread the word and promote the new *Briefing* from 39, Talia House, Manchester Rd, London E14 9HB.**

CONTACT US for any further details.

TOGETHER WE can *Turn the Tide!*



Sending greetings

"I welcome the fact that *Labour Briefing* is now going fortnightly. This will be helpful to the rest of the movement towards a greater understanding of what is happening in the Party and the movement as a whole. I send all my warmest greetings and best wishes for the future of the paper."
***Eric Heffer*, M.P.**

"*Briefing* has contributed greatly to the socialist struggle by *being there*. Many causes — Black Sections, Gay Rights, Women's Rights, International issues — have to thank *Briefing* for providing a platform before they became popular or fashionable.

I am delighted that the paper is going fortnightly and hope that in so doing it is able to keep its refreshing honesty."
Russell Profitt
East Lewisham

"The struggle in the min
redundancies and increased p
ever. The battle for the re
victimised miners continues
that I welcome the new *Labo*
do putting worker in touch
isolation that was felt by the
and is now being felt by strik
elsewhere. It should also pro
South Africa and the fight a
Nicaragua and Cuba.

Forward to socialism!"
Alan Wassell
Treasurer, Yorkshire Mine

Sign if you support!

This pilot issue of the new *Labour Briefing* carries a few of the initial messages of greeting and best wishes that we have received.

But we want to build a base of support in every town, and every section of the labour movement.

You may not (yet) be a "big name", but your support still matters to us.

Our next issue will carry a panel listing a large number of supporters: we hope it will read like a "who's who" of the hard left.

If you would like to be included, simply fill in this form and sent it with £1 (50p unemployed) to us at 162 Millfields Road, London E5 0AE, and we'll do the rest.

Local groups and sellers are urged to draw this to the attention of *Briefing* readers and other potential supporters.

The statement reads:

"We welcome the campaign to launch Labour Briefing as a fortnightly paper to organise the left in the fight for socialist policies in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the campaigns of the oppressed."

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Organisation .....

Signature .....

Our proposed Action Pro

The new *Labour Briefing* will seek to organise a campaigning, fighting hard left current in the Labour Party and the trade unions focussed around an action programme which highlights the main issues in the run up to the next general election and which offers a way forward for the working class and the oppressed.

We are for kicking out the Tories at the earliest opportunity and their replacement by a Labour government. Such a perspective cannot be counterposed to pursuing a militant class struggle policy today against the attacks of the employers and their government. These two aspects of the class struggle are intimately linked.

We understand that the fight against capitalist exploitation, poverty, the misery of unemployment, the social oppression of women, of black people, of lesbians and gays, the young and the old, and those with disabilities, can only find a solution in a fundamental break with the capitalist system itself. *Briefing* believes that the establishment of socialism is about taking power away from the small minority of exploiters and investing it in the hands of the vast majority — the working class and the oppressed. To this end we fight to defeat the bosses who have always used their apparatus of state — the police, the courts, etc. — to impose their rule, no matter whch party has been in office. We fight for Labour to take real power, basing itself on the democratic, accountable organisations of our movement. And we believe that if our leaders in the trade unions and the Labour Party will not lead the fight to take the power, they must make way for those who will.

***Labour Briefing* also believes that socialism and internationalism go hand in hand. We extend the hand of solidarity to the struggles of the oppressed and exploited in every part of the world, from South Africa to Central America and Poland**

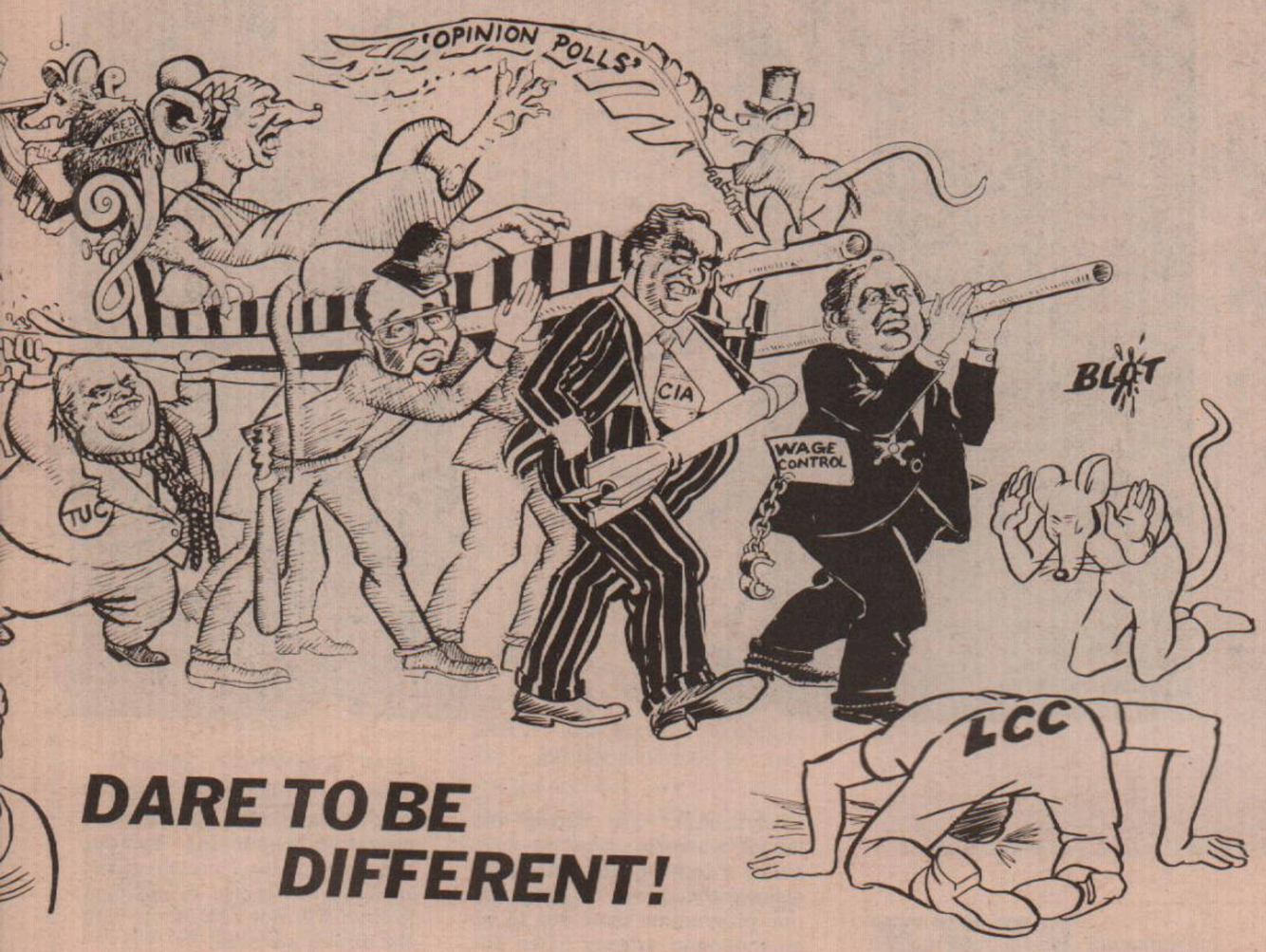
In its fight to build a real socialist Labour movement and secure a real government of Labour which champions the workers and oppressed and breaks from all forms of class collaboration, *Briefing* will maintain the widest participation and democratic involvement of its supporters and readers. As the paper of no single tendency or grouping, the new *Labour Briefing* will be open for debate on all policy and tactical questions our movement faces.

The period ahead will increasingly be dominated by the general election. *Labour Briefing* will be *working for the establishment of a Labour government.*

At the same time we will take an intransigent stand against any form of coalition, deals or arrangements with the Alliance (nationally or locally) in government which would take away the right of the labour movement to decide its own policy.

- ***Labour Briefing* will fight to ensure that a Labour Government reverses the Tory attacks — renationalises privatised industries, restores the cuts, repeals the anti-union laws, the police act and all immigration laws; restores local democracy. No capitulation to Hattersley's plan for wage controls, cash limits or handouts to the multinationals.**
- ***Unemployment* must be tackled through launching a programme of public works which would include a massive programme of house, school, hospital and nursery building — financed by the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions without compensation. This to be part of a national plan of production based on public ownership and workers' control of the major industries.**
- ***Jobs must be defended* through the fight for a shorter working week without loss of pay, to share out the work available; threatened plants and workplaces must be defended through occupation.**
- ***Oppose all wage controls.* Wages must be defended against**

RETTED STICKING WITH LABOUR BRIEFING, ESPECIALLY
E ANTICS OF SOME OF THE MEN IN THE PARTY



DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!

to the campaign

"At last no more mid-month blues! Keep up the good *Briefing* — resist the temptation to go daily!"
Hilary Wainwright, (Socialist Society)

"I am realy glad to be associated with the new *Labour Briefing* and the campaign for the fortnightly."
Ken Loach
Film & TV director

"Socialist greetings to the new *Labour Briefing*. We wish every success to the fortnightly."
Bryn Glover, ASTMS NEC, PPC Leeds NE
Cllr John Battle, Chair, Leeds Urban Development Committee, PPC Leeds W
Cllr Neil Taggart, Chair, Leeds Transport Committee, PPC Pudsey.

"As Chair of the Labour Committee on Ireland I welcome the new *Briefing* and hope it will give full coverage to the anti imperialist struggle taking place in Ireland and also the central role being played by feminists within it."
Nadine Finch
Chair, LCI.

"As trade unionists we welcome the planned expansion and strengthening of the new *Labour Briefing* as a means to organise the left in the unions."
Brian Elkington, Secretary Humberside CATC
Neil Kendrew, Chair, Wakefield COHSE.

"I am really pleased to send greetings to the new *Briefing* paper, and wish you success."
Cllr Lorna Cohen, Deputy Chair, Leeds Industry Committee.

against closure, speed-up, duction targets is as sharp as tatement of the sacked and abated. So it is with pleasure *Briefing*, which has a task to h worker, breaking down the ers in their year-long struggle at Silentnight, Wapping and e updates on the struggles in inst US imperialist threats to

Campaign Group '85

GREETING FROM BLACK SECTIONS
Marc Wadsworth

"Labour Party Black Sections greatly welcomes *Briefing* coming out more frequently than before. The main reason is that no other publication on the Left can claim to have given us such long-standing support.

***Briefing* has played a significant role in helping us promote Black self-organisation in the labour movement and always from the principled position of us speaking on our own behalf.**

We look forward to *Briefing* continuing to be in the forefront of the promotion of our campaign. There must be no place for witch hunters or collaborators with bodies like the Black and Asian Advisory Committee on left slates like the one run by *Briefing*."

gramme for Labour

inflation through the fight for cost of living clauses.

● ***Defence of living standards*** also requires a major redistribution of wealth by means of a wealth tax and the raising of the minimum wage to £150 per week: for a substantial rise in all pensions, social security and other benefits — linked to the rate of inflation.

Labour Briefing supports all the demands of the oppressed, considering them a vital component of the struggle for socialism. We support the ***autonomous organisation*** of women, black people, lesbians and gays, and youth within the labour movement and beyond.

Amongst the many demands and issues that we have raised are:

● For a woman's right to work, with equal pay for work of equal value, and equal treatment in benefit entitlement and taxation; and all the facilities needed for this right to be taken up, including free childcare as of right and a health service tailored to our needs, which can *really* give us "a woman's right to chose."

In the fight ***against imperialism and war***, ***Briefing*** supports liberation movements in the semi-developed dependent countries. We support:

● withdrawal from all inter-imperialist alliances such as NATO and the EEC;

● the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas, particularly Ireland and the Malvinas. We support the right of the Irish people to self determination.

As a step towards breaking with NATO and the Reaganite new cold war, we call for:

● Unilateral nuclear disarmament; the removal of all US bases and the slashing of the misnamed "defence" budget.

● ***Closing down the nuclear power industry*** and expand the coal industry.

Democratising the Labour Movement.

Without a struggle for democratic reform of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party the leaders of our movement will remain unaccountable to the wishes of the rank and file. ***Briefing*** will continue to defend the democratic gains that have already been made in the Labour Party. This process needs to be extended.

● Make the PLP accountable to the Party as a whole; ensure the election of the shadow cabinet by the whole Party.

● Support the right of campaigns, currents, tendencies and journals to exist within the Labour Party and Trade Unions. ***End all witch hunts.***

● Support the autonomous organisation of Black people, Women and Youth within the Party and support the demands for democratic representation within the Party of WAC and Black Sections.

● For the democratisation of the Trade Unions at every level, including support for self-organised caucuses of the oppressed. Regular election and right of recall of all officials.

Briefing believes that the Labour Party should be refounded to become a genuine Party of Labour representing the working class and the movement of all the oppressed.

The policies and demands outlined above are by no means exhaustive. ***Labour Briefing*** has and will continue to promote other demands and issues. The last supporters' conference discussed and passed detailed policy statements which both define where we stand and open a debate on programmatic questions.

Briefing will work in all cases for the broadest unity in the labour movement in support of all these demands and struggles. We will also seek every opportunity to build practical left unity in action nationally and locally. The pages of our paper and our local supporters groups are open to all who support the approach outlined above, if not in every dot and comma. At the same time we make no apologies for defining the need for an intransigent struggle within the labour movement against its current leadership every time it fails to support the struggle of the working class and oppressed, whether here or overseas.

Briefing 500 Club

Help us build the fortnightly *Briefing*

Win £25 in a weekly prize draw!

Pledge us only £1 per week, £4 per month for the Fund to launch the new fortnightly *Labour Briefing* newspaper. Our aim is to enlist at least 500 supporters, to enable us to launch the new paper by Labour Party conference 1986, and to sustain its regular publication as the paper of the hard left in the labour movement.

As soon as we have 200 supporters signed up, we will begin a weekly draw for a £25 prize payout. When we reach 400 supporters we will double the prize money to two £25 lucky number prizes.

To enter the draw, simply complete the Bankers Order form and send it to Labour Briefing. As soon as we receive it, your number will be entered for the first draw: we will forward the form to your bank. A Supporters' Club card will be sent to you in acknowledgement, showing your lucky number.

This money is entirely separate from other *Labour Briefing* finance, and will all be earmarked for the launch fund target of £8,000 to set up the fortnightly paper.

Sign up now: and when you join the 500 Club why not order extra forms to take round your local Labour Parties, trade unions and other campaigns. Help us build the base for the fortnightly!

Bankers Order form for Labour Briefing 500 Club

Please complete every section of this form, and then return it to: **Labour Briefing, c/o Jane Kelly, 26 Crofton Rd, London SE5.**

Bankers Order

To: .....

..... (bank name, sort code)

At (address) .....

.....

From: ..... (your name)

(your address) .....

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My account number is: .....

Please debit from my account each month the sum of £4, in favour of Labour Briefing No 2 account, Co-operative Bank, Stratford E15, Code 08–90–76, Account No. 50349957.

Starting on .....(date)

Thereafter on .....(date) of each month

Signature .....

Dated .....



John Chapman



John Chapman

Unite the left

We are less than two years away from the death throes of the Tory government: the General Election may come within a year.

By JEREMY CORBYN, MP

An incoming Labour Government will be faced with over three million people unemployed; higher levels of poverty than have been seen in this country since the Thirties; 30,000 American troops in this country, along wth Cruise and Trident missiles; and a seriously damaged social and industrial infrastructure throughout the country.

The crisis the Labour Government will inherit will be as great as any since 1945.

Since the defeat of 1979 and 1983, there has been tremendous opposition to the Tory Government. The miners' strike was the most heroic of the industrial struggles, but there have been many other, smaller ones fighting for the principle of the right to work, against the destruction of industry, and the imposition of lower living standards by employers.

Yet previous Labour Governments of '64–'70 and '74–'79 have foundered through setting themselves *against* workers in struggle. An unaccountable Parliamentary Labour Party was able to vote through statutory incomes policies, and wage controls. Both those governments also increased the amount of money spent on nuclear weapons and failed to challenge American domination of either foreign or national defence policy.

Since 1979 successive Labour Party conferences have carried, by overwhelming majorities, very strong policies concerning the restructuring of the Health Service; against the fundamental discrimination against women in society; calling for a vast increase in expenditure on social infrastructure; demanding the control of investment and the flow of capital; and in support of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

There is no question that there is a thirst for change in the country, and an abhorence for the Tories. However, to win that election we have to win around 40% of the popular vote to ensure a majority. This means we must put forward a coherent set of policies that do not make the working class pay for the crisis created by capitalism.

We have to offer the prospect of the fundamental changes demanded by Labour Party Conference being implemented during the lifetime of the next Labour government.

Since the 1983 defeat there have been many explanations as to why we lost. There are those who believe it is all a question of "presentation", and that all the Party has to do is take a series of opinion polls around the country and adapt our policies accordingly.

This idea unfortunately places the cart very firmly in front of the horse. The role of the labour movement, and of active socialists, is to campaign for and lead to a vision of a different and better form of society. The only way these changes can be achieved is for us to work for an economic strategy for the Party that can deliver the policies demanded by the labour movement.

In this sense, the continual call for "realignment" blurs the fundamental issue facing the labour movement.

For a Labour Government to achieve the power to carry out our programme there has to be an economic strategy based not on controlling wages, but on public ownership of the basic industries and financial institutions of the country, and a commitment to create jobs and improve living standards of the worst off in society.

The lack of democracy in the higher echelons of the labour movement, particularly the Parliamentary Labour Party, has allowed the policies of the labour movement to be abandoned in the past. It is essential that we campaign to challenge this and demand adopted Conference policies be implemented, ensuring a fundamental change in society.

As we approach the General Election, the policy of consistently moving Labour policy and its "presentation" towards the centre of political ground will not provide us with the answer we need.

The Campaign Group of MPs have in Parliament attempted to force the issue on economic and foreign affairs.

The formation of local Campaign Groups has been an important contribution to this debate. Throughout the Labour Party there are many people who feel equally strongly on these issues. Some are organised in Campaign Groups, others in *Briefing* Groups or left caucuses, still more in campaigns such as Black Sections, WAC and LCLGR.

Unity of these groups in the run up to the election around the need for socialist policies and an end to witch hunts in the Party is of crucial importance.

Sending greetings to the campaign for a fortnightly

"As PPC for Brighton Kemptown I welcome the appearance on our news stands of fortnightly *Briefing*. I look forward to it making a new and exciting contribution to debate within the left on the major issues facing the labour movement. I believe that as we move towards the challenge of a Labour government it remains vital that we as a Party retain our principles and key policy objectives. The task of a healthy left press is constantly to remind us what these principles are. I'm confident that *Briefing* in its new format will meet that challenge."

Steve Bassam
PPC, Brighton Kemptown

"I have criticised *Briefing* up to now because its main focus has been the Labour Party. It hasn't paid enough attention to the unions — and there is an urgent need to organise the Left in the unions. I'm very pleased that the new *Labour Briefing* has decided to take on this fight in launching the fortnightly paper. Good luck!"

Sue Lister
NEC member, ASTMS.

"I am delighted that *Briefing* is going fortnightly. Hopefully it will be hardhitting, socialist and analytical.

***Briefing* itself has had a good record in supporting British withdrawal from NATO and the closure of all foreign bases. Its analysis of NATO has been outstanding.**

The fortnightly will pioneer a socialist approach to foreign policy and show the interconnections between the struggle for peace and the struggle for socialism.

***Briefing*'s strength has always been that it has never seen socialism as a purely national issue. Instead it has emphasised at one and the same time the perspectives of decentralisation and internationalism.**

With much hope, yours for peace, solidarity and socialism."

Walter Wolfgang
Vice Chair, Labour CND.

Socialist Greetings! Briefing's non-sectarian attitude (probably because you read Parnell's quote to "get the advice of everybody worth having – they are very few – and then do what you think best yourself"!) has made it one of the most important vehicles for socialism. In its six years, Briefing has made the Left into a coherent force. I wish our new fortnightly well, and congratulations for past victories.

Val Veness PPC
Nuneaton

"As a long standing supporter of *Labour Briefing* I welcome the campaign for the fortnightly."

Keith Nathan
Chair, Leeds Campaign Group, Leeds NW CLP

"I welcome the new *Briefing* campaign as a strengthening of a Marxist current in the Labour Party."

Dulcie Yelland, East Leeds CLP

(50 years a Marxist in the Labour Party, described by Denis Healy as "The dirtiest old Trot in England.")

"I congratulate *Labour Briefing* on becoming a fortnightly journal. *Briefing* is an economic miracle that has survived to achieve over 60 issues. Founded as a form of uniting the Left in London constituencies it has had enormous sucess in moving the leadership of most London local authorities well to the Left and, through the national supplement, having the same effect in other places.

Now, more than ever, is the time for the Left in the Labour Paty to unite together to ensure that a future Labour Government becomes accountable to the Party and achieves the fundamental political shift in society that is required to end today's poverty and unemployment.

Briefing provides the forum and the impact for doing this, and I look forward to its continued success."

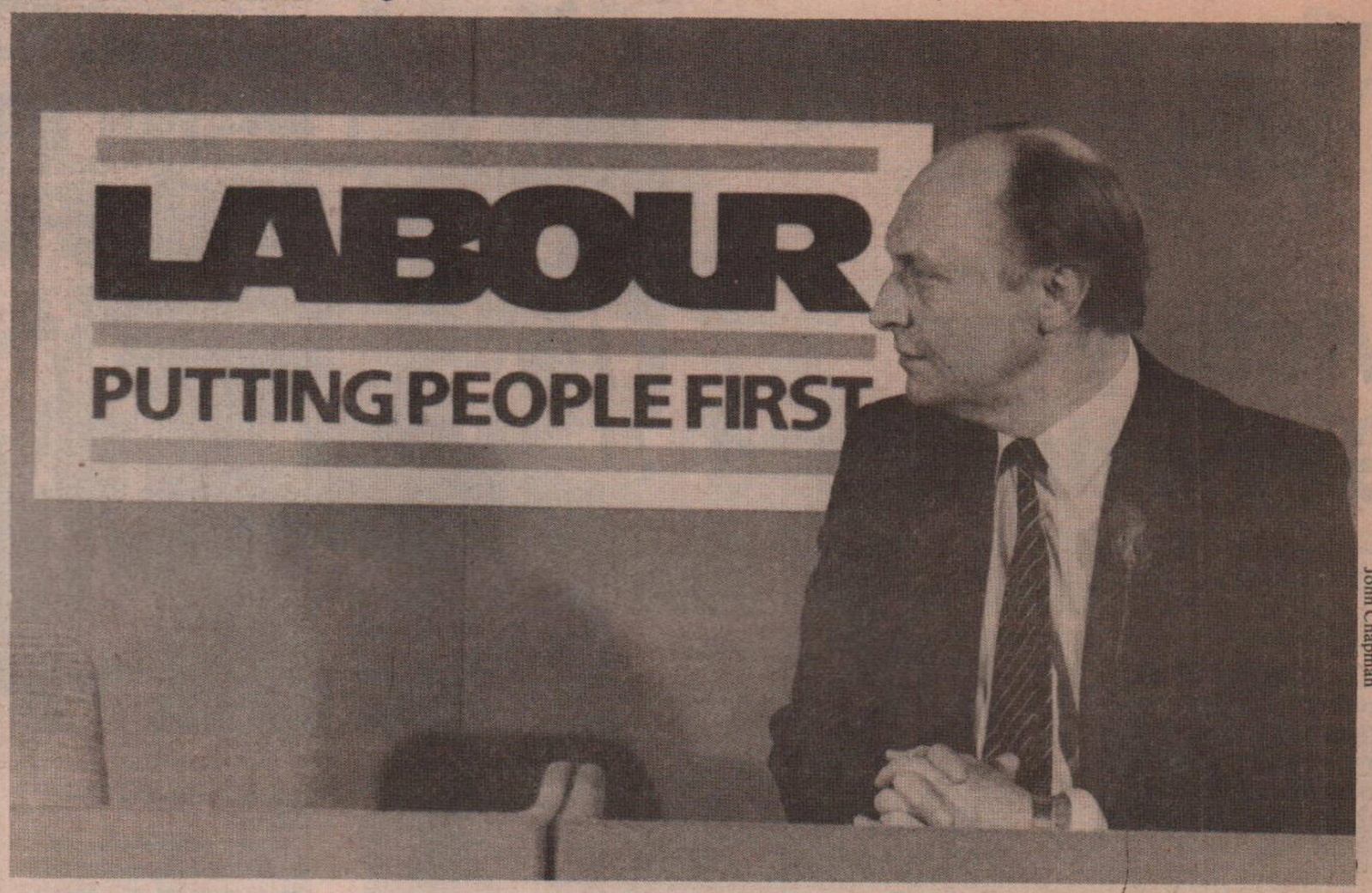
Jeremy Corbyn, MP

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Despite Kinnock and Hattersley



John Chapman

Why we fight for a Labour government

Millions of people in Britain are yearning to get rid of Thatcher's government.

At home and abroad Thatcher has represented right wing reaction hitting the rights and living standards of workers, youth, women, the elderly, black people and the unemployed — huge swathes of the population who have been made to pay the price for the crisis of British capitalism.

A big majority of these people probably see a Labour government as the only way to end the nightmare of the Thatcher years.

It would be impossible to miss seeing that this popular sentiment has meant a huge pressure on the left to subordinate everything to getting Neil Kinnock into Downing Street.

Sceptical

Briefing supporters have refused to bend to this pressure, to subordinate our support for working class struggles and socialist policies to uncritical support for the leadership. While we shall fight tooth and nail for the election of a Labour government, we remain extremely sceptical of what a Kinnock government will bring.

Briefing would like nothing better than to campaign for a Labour victory in the expectation that it would result in a radical socialist government. But self-deception is no better that fooling other people.

The sad truth is that since Kinnock's election as Party leader in 1983 the Left has been pushed back, and Party policy shifted decisively to the right. A Kinnock-Hattersley government is likely to be anything but radical.

Unemployment

The next Labour government will be judged above all on what it does about unemployment. Creating millions of jobs will require vast amounts of investment. Such a level of investment is inconceivable without full control over the banks and finance houses. It is a simple case of only socialist policies beginning to tackle the problem.

But far from proposing such a programme, shadow cabinet spokespeople like Roy Hattersley and John Smith have talked only about a "National Investment Bank" into which financiers will be "encouraged" through "incentives" to invest.

The real truth is that, apart from some increase in public expenditure, there are no real plans by the Party leadership to mount a serious attack on unemployment, because such a project requires radical anti-capitalist measures.

Equally, since 1983, party policy on a wide range of issues has been pushed to the right — on union laws, on NATO and nuclear weapons, on renationalisation and expansion of public ownership, on nuclear power and on many other issues — Party policy has been degutted of its radical content.

Capitalist

The consequence is that if Labour wins the next election we shall almost certainly see a pro-capitalist "Wilson-Callaghan" type of government. Socialists would be utterly foolish to forget the 1964 and 1974 Labour governments and to believe that Kinnock represents something fundamentally new.

Why then do we fight for a Labour government?

First and foremost a failure by Labour to win the next election would in all likelihood create a mood of desperation and despair in the working class, especially if the Tories were re-elected.

Reaction

While the Tories seem a lame-duck government today, with a further electoral mandate they would attempt new draconian attacks on working class rights and living standards. A carnival of reaction could ensue, including further moves to the right in the labour movement.

On the other hand, whatever the policies of the Party leadership, the defeat of the Tories and the return of Labour could create much better conditions for a renewal of working class struggle and for the advancement of the Left.

The defeats which the working class has suffered during seven years of Thatcher rule have created a "keep your heads down" mood among many workers, which is seized upon and encouraged by the trade union bureaucrats to isolate militant workers in struggle.

Once there was a Labour government, the whole atmosphere would be changed. Working class expectations would soar, and people would *expect* something to be done about unemployment, anti-union laws, poverty and privatisation.

Defuse?

And it is not at all certain that a Kinnock government would be able easily to defuse working class struggle in the way that Wilson did after 1974 with the "social contract".

A Labour victory at the polls would put the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership to the test of practice, enabling the left to push forward demands for class struggle and socialist policies.

Take for example the sacked and jailed miners: with a Labour government, the campaign for justice would be put on a new footing, with the Left demanding the implementation of Labour conference policies.

By PHIL HEARSE

The Left could also step up the fight for the implementation of real anti-nuclear defence policies; for jobs not profits; for women's rights, for justice for black people — a host of anti-capitalist policies.

In government it is very hard, over any length of time, to talk Left and act Right — it is much easier to do it in opposition.

Labour in government either means significant steps forward in the interests of the workers or (as we believe much more likely) disappointing the hopes and aspirations of millions.

For the Left in such a situation there is both an opportunity and a big danger.

The opportunity consists in showing thousands of workers what Kinnockite policies mean in practice, and why there is no alternative to mobilising the working class behind socialist policies to go forward. The danger is that mass disappointment could result in the growth of right and extreme right-wing political forces.

The only answer to that, the sole basis for any progress, is the organisation of a militant left wing in the labour movement, in both the trade unions and the Labour Party, prepared to lead the fight against right wing betrayals and mobilise a fightback.

Whatever the strictures of people like *Briefing*, millions of workers will continue to put their hopes in a Labour victory, and to a greater or lesser extent in the present leadership of the Labour Party.

Our task, to paraphrase a great socialist thinker, is to share the struggle for that victory, but not the illusions in what it will bring. On that basis we shall create the best framework for a renewal of the militant Left of the labour movement.

Football as oppression

That isn't really a fair title. I could as well have written: motor racing, horse racing, cycle racing, motorbiking, boxing, wrestling, cricket, American Football, rugby, snooker, bowls sailing...

In fact what I am talking about is (apart from athletics, swimming and tennis) almost *all* the occasions that sport is on the television and in the papers.

What "sport" means, in the main, is men doing things. Either they are one way and another chasing after spherical objects across a green TV screen: or they are driving things very fast, either round and round or from A to B.

This means that hordes of television time, particularly at weekends when there might be a moment to slump down and relax, is full of the sub-hysterical tones of obviously obnoxious men in suits exhorting this or that group of other men to hit spherical objects to greater effect, or drive things faster.

Gabble

It is bad enough that "The World of Sport" features the maniacal gabble of these people, but it doesn't even stay there. News items — when we long to hear about South Africa, Wapping or whatever — are shanghaied by yet more of the ravings, and highlight after highlight of men doing things fast (or skillfully).

By DI PARKIN, Oxford East CLP

Maybe it's just a question of taste.

All of us suffer from the media drivel at one time or another: the soaps, ads, the speculation over Fergie's wedding dress; there are endless reminders that we are not at ease in this culture.

Maybe not liking football (or the other sports) is just like not liking spinach, or radishes — just a question of taste.

Maybe this additional area is neither here or there, in the grand order of the loathsomeness of the TV screen.

Most people on the left agree about the awful racism and chauvinism, the frothing-at-the-mouth idiocy of the commitment to England — always *England* — by the football commentators.

Football supporters can agree with that. But my point is different. The main thing wrong with sports coverage is that it is the coverage of the behaviour of *MEN*!

I object to being subjected to hours and hours of something which is of interest to men.

Some women do like football and other sports, it's true. But it's still *men* we have to watch doing them. I find that culturally oppressive.

It becomes a serious matter in Local Authority leisure provision too — which is predominantly orientated to male sports.

Identification

Football remains all about patriotism — even at the level of identification with a locality — "my team".

That's not something men on the left distance from: most men on the left who like football have a "my team" and will it to win against the rivals, or can be sunk into gloom if it loses.

The antics of men on the television, the aggression and competitiveness, the racism, the NF flags in the Aztec stadium, the violence, the deaths, these are male phenomena which have no counterpart in the behaviour of women.

Men on the left, and football supporters, should acknowledge that their pleasurable relaxation can be seen as part of male oppression.


John Chapman

labour campaign for lesbian and gay rights

Victory for Gay's the Word



By TOBIE GLENNY, LCLGR

After two and a half years of vigorous campaigning, Customs and Excise have finally dropped all charges against Britain's biggest Lesbian and Gay Community Bookshop.

They also admitted that the laws being used to prevent the importing of lesbian and gay literature are invalid — and that the law in this area is now in total disarray.

The Defence Campaign started in April 1984, after a piece of routine harassment by Customs and Excise went completely over the top.

Customs seized virtually the entire contents of "Gay's the Word" bookshop, and raided the homes of workers, and members of the management Committee. Though they returned most of the books, they kept £9,000 of stock, and later proceeded with criminal charges against management and workers.

They then extended their offensive, with raids and seizures against other bookshops stocking Lesbian and Gay literature — making it virtually impossible to import any lesbian or gay material.

Campaign

The choice for the bookshop was basically to lie down and die, or fight back. A massive campaign was launched, which raised more than £50,000 and won the backing of hundreds of organisations — including Labour Parties and Trade Unions.

Widespread coverage in the media, and pressure on the government, combined with legal preparation — meant that Customs were increasingly put on the defensive, and exposed as using powers that were totally inappropriate.

Confusion

Having put off the trial for as long as possible, in the hope that the bookshop would be unable to afford the legal costs, and would just plead guilty — they have now confessed to being in a state of total confusion.

So the books are being returned, charges dropped, and an agreement being drawn up over their future conduct, as regards the importing of literature. A major victory in the struggle for civil rights for Lesbians and Gays.

Support LCLGR resolution!

LCLGR are organising to get Lesbian and Gay Motions onto Conference agenda again. We need a debate to keep up the pressure for the implementation of last year's successful motion, and to achieve a two thirds majority to get our proposals into the next manifesto.

Many GCs are debating the issue, and Oxford West and Salisbury have already chosen it as their conference motion.

What is now needed are amendments to one of these motions, to ensure sufficient support for a debate.

Any amendment to any part of the motions will do — and need be no more than a few words. It's also vital that we get Lesbian and Gay delegates — if there is to be an effective intervention.

For further information, or to let us know what is happening, contact Peter Purton, Fl 21, 1 The Straight, Middlesex UB1 1QX. 01-574 2420.

Discriminating against heterosexuals?



John Chapman

On June 3rd the London Labour Party issued a one sentence press release opposing heterosexism in election literature. Two days later the tabloids, local radio, sundry "political staff" and the Guardian Diary gleefully made a one day wonder of it, primarily to discredit the Labour Party and whip up homophobia.

By SARAH ROELOFS, Women's Section, London Labour Executive Committee

Such is to be expected these quarters. What wasn't necessarily expected was the stoney silence from *all* quarters of the left — zilch coverage from *City Limits, New Statesperson, New Socialist, Marxism Today, International, New Society, Spare Rib, Socialist Action, Tribune, Labour Herald*, etc., etc.

The net result has been no rational discussion of the issue at all.

The London Labour Party's Lesbian and Gay Working Party originally raised the matter of candidates' photographs in election material. The example given was of the new Fulham MP's election photo whch showed the candidate ensconced with wife and three children.

The Working Party argued that as spouses and children are not standing and have no bearing on the candidate's political manifesto, picturing them is irelevant. Irrelevant that is unless the candidate and/or their political organisation is wanting to make the point that the candidate is a "normal, healthy heterosexual".

For the use of such images in a heterosexist society serves only to reinforce the idea that the best candidates — those that can *win* — are married heterosexuals.

Promoting such ideas panders to the bigotry and prejudice that believes there is only one normal sexuality which is biologically engendered and logically superior to any other — and heterosexuality is it!

Offensive

Some titters, smutty smirks and a little opposing argument was the London Labour Executive Committee's initial response when the Chair of the Working Party — myself — pointed out that such photographs were heterosexist and thus discriminatory and offensive.

With strong support from all of the left the EC did, however, agree to the formulation of guidelines on election material by the Working Party for issue to constituent organisations.

And that would have been the end of it if some bright, bigoted spark on the EC hadn't seen fit to leak the discussion to the virulently anti-Labour and homophobic London evening paper *The Standard*.

They ran a suitably nasty little piece in their Diary colum naming me as the lesbian source of the London EC's "amazement". Such behaviour obiously increases the vulnerability of a lesbian or gay man even if they are already "out". Hence the issuing of the press release by the London EC after a subsequent meeting.

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is a comparatively "new" and ill-understood concept to the labour movement. Lesbians and gay men expect therefore to have to go through a period of patiently explaining it. However, the issue of election photos and the related one of stating that the candidate is married in the 200 word biographies, seems to touch a particularly raw nerve.

Faced with requests that we support policy to to refer to marital status and use pictures of the candidate on thir own or in their community, some heterosexuals are wont to cry in anguish — "but you're discriminating against us!"

"The personal is political," they argue, "how can you ask me to suppress *the* most important thing in my life — my family, and the fact that I am married to X? You are denying that the personal is political, you are denying me my rights!"

Reasonable

"Surely," they argue, all liberal and reasonable, "what we want is for Sarah to feel she can appear in a photograph with her — er, her — um, her... ah, friend."

Sarah points out that her so-called "friend" may not wish to appear in any photographs, never mind election ones, given the bigoted, homophobic society we all live in and that the day when Sarah and "friend" do so safely will be the day of the Revolution and that day may be a long time a-coming. What are we all to do in the meantime?

Yup — you've guessed it in one — "discriminate" against heterosexuals. Just as we do with positive action for Black people or for women where effectively white people and men are "dicriminated" against.

And other important arguments scarcely get mentioned. That the image of the happy, white nuclear family is as racist nd sexist as it is heterosexist. That it is statistically not the norm — single parent (read mother in the vast majority) families are increasing.

Back to the London EC. Its Lesbian/Gay Working Party recently organised the first ever public meeting by one of the major political parties on Lesbian and Gay rights. We're getting there.

LABOUR
BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

Labour Briefing is run between Conferences by an elected Steering Committee. This pilot issue was prepared by an Editorial Board consisting of Graham Bash, Jenny Fisher, Phil Hearse, Jane Kelly, Chris Knight, John Lister, Jane Prust, Fran Rayner and Jane Stockton.

Final copy date for this pilot issue — July 3, 1986.

Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Steering Committee. All authors write in a personal capacity unless otherwise stated.

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TOWN HALL

Mass evictions expose Southwark "socialists"

There has been a groundswell of opposition in the labour and tenants' movement to the mass evictions by Southwark council of squatters at Pullens and Rockingham Estates, which hit the headlines on June 10.

However, discussion was blocked in the Labour Group by the same section who called the evictions before the election.

So the third scheduled mass eviction went ahead (on the second attempt) at the Kinglake-Alvey Estate.

At their first attempt, on June 19, the bailiffs were turned back by crowds of tenants and squatters and supporting councillors: two large rubbish skips had been carried by the crowd to barricade off Keston House yard.

On that day police back-up was "insufficient", so they returned mob handed at dawn on Tuesday June 24.

Buses, lorries, and police control vehicles rolled into the estate, blocked off the roads and proceeded to sledgehammer the doors to 24 of the 90 squats on the estate amid torrents of abuse from squatters and the local tenants Association, which vigorously opposed the evictions all along.

Barricades

Some barricades were so strong the bailiffs had to break in through the windows. Fights

Councillor Piers Corbyn, Kinglake-Alvey Estate, Burgess ward, Southwark.

broke out when SPG police arrested people who had been spitting at bailiffs.

TV crews could not find any tenants on the estate who supported the evictions, so had to stop passers-by who did not live in the estate to give them some "balanced" quotes, but coverage as a whole was very good.

The physical resistance and campaign by the community there, as at Pullens estate, has changed the way people think.

In the week after the eviction local tenants were coming up to me — since I also live on the estate — saying how ridiculous the evictions were and complaining that the Council never mends their doors and windows yet rushes in with new doors to replace ones they needlessly smashed to evict the squatters, while there are empty flats all over the place.

Squatters moved back into most of the flats within a few days of the eviction without local tenants generally even batting an eyelid.

Subcontractors

The Council's Direct Labour workforce will not touch evictions so the Council employs subcontractors for the day and following week or so to do carpentry work.

The political leanings of some of these scabs do not even reach the dizzy heights of class consciousness professed by the section of the Council who decided on these evictions and so gave them a fast buck.

One of them, height about 6ft 3ins, turned up on the estate, drunk, on Sunday 29 June, found someone who admitted to being a squatter and present at the eviction and then punched him severely many times about the head, head-butted him and bashed him flat on the bonnet of a car.

Thug

The thug went off saying he would be "back to sort out more squatters." Doubtless the section of the Council who decided on the evictions will take a firm Pontius Pilate attitude but clearly companies who employ such thugs should not be on the Council's "approved list".

The lesson of the whole tragic violent abuse by the Council of some of its strongest communities is that once you cross class lines you will be with the most reactionary elements in society.

Southwark's Anti-Apartheid events and support of squatters at Crossroads camp in South Africa, ironically while evicting its own squatters, will not change the truth.

If you are not part of the solution you are part of the problem, and that goes for the Labour Group as a whole, too.



John Chapman

Police attacking Southwark squatters.

Statement from tenants' association

"We challenge the council"

Joint Statement of Kinglake-Alvey TA Chair, Henry Edwards and local Labour Councillor, Piers Corbyn.
25 June 1986.

"The mass eviction on the Kinglake-Alvey estate in the morning of Tuesday June 24 carried out by Southwark Council is unjustifiable in any terms; and their claim that the eviction was necessary to help people on the housing list is nonsense.

"We find it incredible that a Labour Council can turn one of its own estates into a 'no-go zone' like Wapping or a mining village with a massive 4 hour presence of bailiffs, over 100 police including the SPG who arrested 8 people, and roadblocks; in order to make people homeless.

"We challenge the Council to reveal the true cost of the operation, and believe the money would have been better spent repairing the dozens of empty flats on this rundown estate so they could be used for housing the people the Council wants to put into the evicted flats.

"The Council, as in the Pullens Estate, have been desperately seeking anyone who will accept these flats in order to justify evicting people who have repaired the flats and saved them from dereliction and would have got tenancies if the 'hard-to-let' scheme still operated on the estate.

"The Council had been searching for one year to find people to accept the 24 flats facing eviction yet on the day only 16 'pre-allocated tenants' were interested and many of them subsequently rightly refused to be used to justify evictions. The pre-allocated tenants appear to be entirely single people (there was a family which withdrew) — as are the evicted squatters — and have in many cases only been on the Housing list a few months and were offered 'pre-allocations' in these flats only a week or so ago.

"On the day they were offered rent-free period enticements to sign tenancy agreements without seeing the flats in order to move into the homes of people many of whom have been around over two years but have been given 'zero points' on the housing list as punishment for 'squatting'.

"The Council's actions make a nonsense of the 'housing queue' they claim to be defending, and show their claims that they need the properties to house families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation are ridiculous. The Council isn't allocating according to need but according to a suspect allocation system with a discriminatory point scheme which sets one group of homeless against another.

"We insist the Council stop all eviction processes on the estate, offer alternatives to the 'pre-allocated tenants' — who are entitled to three offers like anyone else — and negotiate with the Tenants Association about the future of the estate and the introduction of a new non-discriminatory 'hard-to-let' scheme which can fill empty flats and grant tenancies to homeless people currently squatting in the older blocks on the estate, as appropriate."

Suppport the Kinglake 8!

Enquiries 701 5691

WITCH HUNT

Black sections supporters expelled

Last month, in an unbelievable exhibition of contempt for Britain's Black Communities, the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) voted by 13 to 12 to uphold the expulsions of Councillors Amir Khan, and Mohammed Rafiq, and of Labour Committee on Ireland activist Kevin Scally.

By CHRIS KHAMIS

At the 1985 Labour Conference, deputy leader Roy Hattersley boasted that in his constituency there were three Asian councillors. At the 9th June NEC he voted to expel two of them;

The official charge against those expelled was that they had allegedly "brought the Labour Party into disrepute". On Cllr Amir Khan, the susbtantive part of this deliberately vague charge was that he had organised a large meeting in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, to discuss the setting up of a constituency Black Section.

The "crime" of Kevin Scally, who has been a member of the Labour Party for over 10 years, was his appearance in a TV documentary — The Bandung File — to expose membership irregularities in Sparkbrook Labour Party.

He showed how Asian people were being cynically used to boost the right wing of the local Party. As secretary of Sparkhill ward he had received a large number of bogus membership applications. Some had come from addresses which did not exist, others from people who did not exist.

After vainly trying to get these irregularities investigated internally, he finally decided that the only course of action was to go public. Within days of the TV programme, Amir and Kevin were expelled by Sparkbrook CLP.

The 9th June NEC received a report by Ken Cure who had heard Amir and Kevin's appeals. Neither Amir nor Kevin had been shown the report officially.

They were not given the opportunity to answer the case against them in front of the NEC, nor were they able to challenge Ken Cure's interpretation of events. This was not the only travesty of natural justice: both Ken Cure and Roy Hattersley voted to uphold the expulsions, thus acting as both prosecutors and judges.

The NEC also voted not to record the votes (what are they scared of?) but we can reveal that Neil Kinnock, Alex Kitson and Charlie Turnock all voted for the expulsions. (Comments from TGWU and NUR members should be directed to their unions' representatives.) Those who voted honourably on this issue were: Dennis Skinner, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson, David Blunkett, Michael Meacher, Eddy Haig (TGWU), Eric Clarke (NUM), Margaret Beckett, Joan Maynard, Audrey Wise and Tom Sawyer (NUPE).

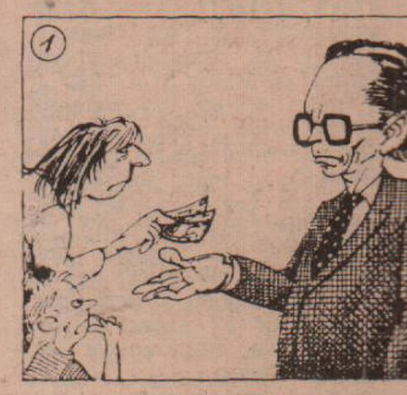
The breaches of natural justice have finally pushed Amir and Kevin into taking their case to the High Court for a judicial review of the Labour Party's appeal procedure. It is a great shame that the pig-headedness of some of the Party leadership should make such a course necessary.

The Sparkbrook two need your support. How can the Labour Party be relied upon to defend democratic rights in society at large when it behaves so undemocratically internally?

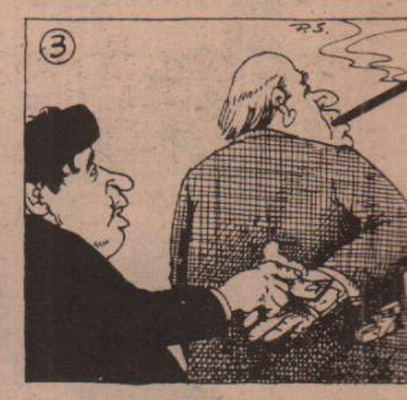
The Labour Party Black Section appeals to CLPs to pass resolutions condemning the expulsions and send them to the NEC. Labour Party activists should press their councillors, Prospective parliamentary Candidates and MPs to make public statements against the expulsions.

Further information and speakers are obtainable from Gina Khan, Chairperson of Sparkbrook Black Section and of the Campaign to Reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, 56 Phipson Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11.

Fight the Fowler Bill!







If you thought YTS was bad . . .

Review of the MSC pamphlet *Action for Jobs — opening more doors.*

While discussion continues in the labour movement on a strategy to end mass unemployment and create jobs, the eyes of the Tory government are, not surprisingly, fixed firmly in the opposite direction.

Their resources are being ploughed into creating cheap labour schemes and training of various kinds, all of which are designed to temporarily cut the dole queues, while not creating a single real job.

What is more, a number of new and re-vamped schemes, described in the new MSC/Department of Employment (DoE) booklet *Action for Jobs — opening more doors* actually represent a rather large door being slammed in the face of the trade unions.

The whole thing manages to combine the creation of a rapidly growing layer of non-unionised and isolated trainees with resultant attacks on the rights and conditions of existing workers.

While some of the projects listed below are still only provisional, they combine to form a devastating attack on the young and long-term unemployed. If you thought YTS was bad — you ain't seen nothing yet! Probably the most worrying plan is the **Re-start Programme** — Big Brother is watching you with a vengeance:

"By March 1987, local Job Centres will have invited everyone who has been out of work for a year or more to come for an interview."

Interview

Everyone interviewed will be offered either a "suitable job", help with finding a job, setting up a business or one of the following:

● **Community Programme** (CP) — this is the long established scheme for over 18 year olds working mainly part time on very low wages (£40–50 per week) for up to a year. Most of the work covered by the CP should rightly be done by workers in the Social Services or Direct Labour Organisations of local authorities. This summer the CP is to be massively expanded to 230,000 workers.

● **YTS** — the new two year YTS which is being widely publicised as the solution to the problems of British industry will mean a weekly income for 16/17 year olds of £27.30 per week for the first year rising to the tremendous sum of £35 in the second year.

● **Job Training Scheme** — successor to the TOPSs provides six to seven months of vocational training with an allowance of £38 per week.

● **Jobstart Allowance** — the government will pay you £20 per week for six months if you take a full time job with gross earnings of less than £80 per week.

● **Voluntary Projects Programme** — fancy working part time or full time for no money at all? Yes, you did hear right!

"Participation is voluntary and does not affect entitlement to benefit."

Erosion

Though obviously a refusal to participate could be seen as a reluctance to try to find a job, resulting in being kicked off the dole. As it covers a similar range of projects as the CP, this will tend to further erode the rights of existing CP workers, even perhaps being presented as the logical place to go when your CP scheme ends. It's also a convenient way to make up for the cuts in state welfare provision.

● **New Workers Scheme** — "Employers are given a £15 week subsidy if they provide a job for people under 21 at rates of pay which reflect their age and experience." — i.e. the princely sums of £55 per week or less for the under 20s and £65 per week or less for the over 20s. The effect of this is to extendYTS for yet another year.

● **Job Splitting Scheme** — employers wil receive a "financial incentive" (bribe) of £840 a year for each part time job they create by:

a) taking on two part time workers from a training scheme or YTS, CP, etc.;

b) combining existing "regular overtime into a new part time job" (presumably with no increase in wages for the regular workforce);

c) splitting an existing full time job into two part time jobs.

Concern

Even if you aren't at present at school or unemployed (or a woman) and therefore likely to be directly affected in the immediate future by the rag bag of schemes listed above, there are many good reasons why you should be concerned.

Students threatened with the replacement of the grant should take note of the new "Career Development Loans" brought to you by the DoE and selected Banks (including the Co-op) which provides a loan to help the unemployed take a job-related course for up to a year.

This is a pilot scheme being tried for three years in Aberdeen, Bristol, Manchester and Reading/Slough. Obviously this will have an effect on the government's plans to further attack the rights of students.

The cumulative effects of mass unemployment and proposals like all these, is to further bring down wages, erode existing conditions and weaken the unions by creating a layer of workers who have never known what it is to hold down a proper job or be organised in the labour movement.

Whimper

The publication of this booklet and the mushrooming of new schemes has so far not been been met with a whimper from the TUC, which is complicit with the MSC.

As for the Labour Party, Kinnock's own plans for a revamped YTS and declarations that a job for all youth is an "impossiblist" demand does not bode well for any adequate fightback.

The introduction of these schemes will be an absolute nightmare. Everyone should get the booklet if you want to know what AIT stands for or what is a WOPT or OPT. The booklet is available from Post Offices and Job Centres.

By TRACY DOYLE, Brighton LPYS



Attack on unemployed and homeless centres

One of the few sources of hope for the long term unemployed is about to be snatched away from them.

After much delay the government has now announced that it's to close all 19 of its re-establishment centres by March 31st 1987.

These centres, administered by the DHSS, offer a total of 500 training places for long term unemployed men (the DHSS does not yet recognise long term unemployed women!).

Courses are tailored very much to the individual's needs and are designed to help men regain their self-respect before going into employment or further training.

By TONY NOTTINGHAM, CPSA, London Resettlement Units

An immediate response to this threat has come from the three Civil Service Unions involved (CPSA, SCPS, CSU).

They organised a nationwide day of action on June 10th. Staff in the centres took strike action and many more DHSS staff attended protest meetings.

As an indication of their support trainees at some centres joined picket lines.

Everyone connected with the centres is outraged that such a vital service can be withdrawn without there being anything approaching a reasonable replacement.

No other schemes or courses offer the same easy access. No qualifications need to be processed. No tests need to be taken. No interviews need to be passed. All that is needed is a willingness to attend.

Without such courses most of the trainees would have little or no chance of coping with employment or a more demanding course.

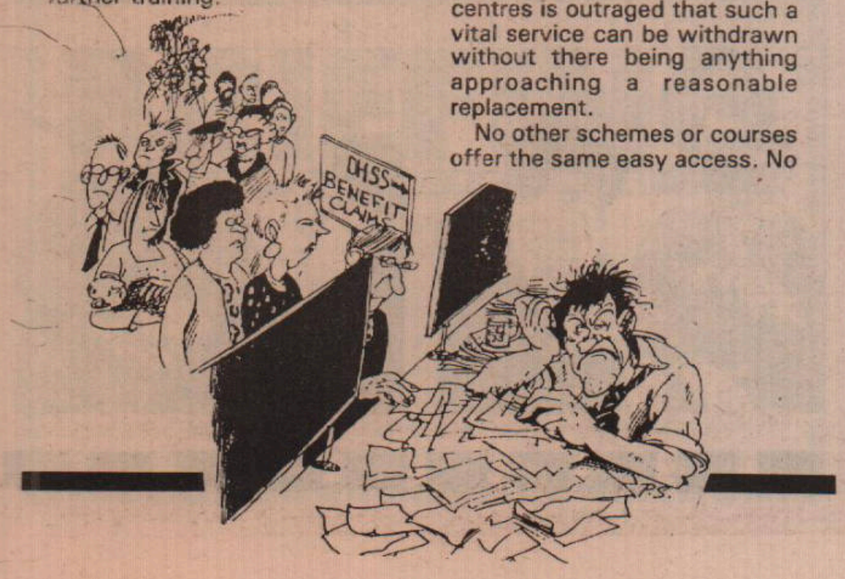
Threat

The threat to the re-establishment centres is frightening enough, but there is an even more sinister one lurking behind it. Most of the centres share premises with resettlement units. These units offer round the clock access for the homeless and attempts to help people back into "a settled way of life".

It's no secret that the government has even less time for the homeless than they do for the unemployed.

If they do succeed in closing the re-establishment centres, their attentions will quickly turn to the resettlement units. As long ago as February 1985 Tony Newton announced that this was the intention.

The consequences of the units closing in the present economic climate do not bear thinking about. Clearly, unless the trade union and labour movement mount strong opposition, Thatcher will have restored another little bit of Victorian Britain.



Tories squelch community radio

By RICHARD BARBROOK, Hampstead & Highgate CLP

Early last year, the then Home Secretary Leon Brittan surprised many people by announcing plans to licence community radio stations. There were to be 21 franchises, scattered around the country.

Two hundred and sixty-six different groups applied for these licences, many of them from ethnic communities.

There was some confusion about what the Home Office meant by community radio. To some, it was small-scale commercial radio, broadcasting pop 'n' prattle all day.

Others thought that community radio should be based on overseas experience, where radio stations are run as co-operatives or voluntary organisations on a non-profit-maximising basis, with access to the airwaves for their listeners.

This participatory form of broadcasting has attracted many who have been excluded from the airwaves, such as ethnic communities, women, lesbians and gays and many, many others. Abroad, even trade unions and left-wing groups can run their own radio stations.

Wide Spectrum

This type of community radio has been advocated by the Community Radio Asociation, a body embracing a wide spectrum of people interested in radio. Two leading members of the CRA were asked to serve on the advisory panel of "great and good" who were to select the lucky winners of franchises.

This panel duly reported in January. Then, suddenly, the Home Office started prevaricating on announcing the successful applicants.

What had Leon Brittan left for his successor, Douglas Hurd?

If the shaky finances of commercial radio were not to be threatened by competition, then the Home Office would have to licence radio stations which might give access to those minorities that bigots hate most. The perils of free speech are hearing what you don't agree with.

The CRA was anxious to help the Home Office through its problems, suggesting a regulatory body and a development agency. But, in the end, the politics of paranoia prevailed.

On June 30th, the community radio experiment was axed, among gossip about fears of "extremists on the airwaves" and racism within the Cabinet. What a fiasco!

To those who believe the present Tory government is incapable of any progressive act, this sorry tale will hold no surprises. Many radio pirates are saying "told you so" and are preparing to step up illegal broadcasting. There seems no chance of change this side of an Election.

But this presents a chance for the Labour Party, both locally and nationally. There are many potential broadcasters and listeners who want community radio stations licenced. These people have votes!

The Labour Party should nationally campaign for a nationwide system of community radio stations, serving many different communities. There should be plans drawn up for such stations to receive adequate funding, regulation and development advice, ensuring they are successful and survive.

Local councils can start now by supporting those community radio groups active in their area. Labour Party members can become involved in these campaigns.

The Tory media policy is in a shambles. Now it is up to Labour to provide a practical and democratic alternative to the present inadequate system of radio broadcasting.

The Community Radio Association can be contacted at: The Membership Secretary, CRA, c/o WACAT, Office A, Chartridge, Westmoreland Road, London SE17.



Behind the Anglo-Irish deal

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed in November 1985 by this British government and the equally capitalist government of the Irish Republic.

Yet by skillful use of the media, and aided by the high level of ignorance about the political situation in Ireland, the agreement was projected as an inherently "progressive" step.

Members of the Campaign Group of MPs argued that if the Unionists did not like it, it must be good. Members in the CLPs argued that "harmonisation" of structures between the North and South of Ireland must inevitably lead to reunification.

Perspective

Both these arguments highlight a failure to place the crisis in Ireland in its true historical perspective. We need to abandon the myths about Ireland.

By NADINE FINCH, Chair, Labour Committee on Ireland



L. P. Photo Library.

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

The crisis is not fundamentally about religion. Otherwise, why don't we have similar "troubles" in the Catholic enclaves of Kent?

The crisis is not about the lack of civil rights in the South. The result of the recent Irish divorce referendum should appall every socialist. But it should also underline the fact that the Irish Republic itself will not be free from the aftereffects of British imperialism until Ireland as a whole is re-united and has time to develop its full potential.

The crisis in Ireland was created by the age-old British tactic of divide *to* rule. In Ireland, they fostered division by religion. In Guyana, it was by race. In Cyprus, it was by country of origin.

They perpetuated it by giving certain privileges to Protestant loyalists. Even today the British government awards contracts to the Harland & Woolf shipyard which employs a mere 5% of Catholic workers, in a city which returns a Sinn Fein member as one of its MPs.

No mention

The Hillsborough Agreement does not mention tackling the real cause of much dissent in the North, the continuing inequalities in employment, access to housing, to recreational facilities and to basic civil rights.

Even the government's own Fair Employment Agency reported a discrepancy in unemployment rates in January 1986, with 10% in loyalist Protestant areas compared to 25% in Nationalist Catholic Areas.

Article 8 of the Agreement talks about "the harmonisation of laws and improving public confidence in the administration of justice."

Yet not one step has been taken since then to end a situation where one "Diplock" judge also acts as jury in cases where up to 24 defendants are tried and convicted on the sole evidence of one paid informer.

Not one step has been taken to control the use of lethal plastic bullets. (Unless "harmonisation" in this case means ensuring they were also available all over Britain.)

R.U.C.

And most fundamentally nothing has been done to reform a local police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which at best has 7-10% Catholic employees and whose ability to enforce the law is at doubt from two radically different standpoints. Both the nationalists and Thatcher are worried about their ability to "police" Loyalist protest.

The lid being put on the "Stalker Affair" is needed if, as is alleged, Senior RUC officers tried to "cover up" the "shoot to kill" practices of their Mobile Support Units, and Diplock judges colluded with them in seeing the police force as a legitimate judge and jury for suspected terrorists. (In summing up a "Diplock" judge in a case of 3 RUC officers accused of murdering a "suspect" Lord Justice Gibson commented, "their courge and determination in bringing the 3 deceased men to justice, in this case the final court of justice.")

We have to ask ourselves, where are the benefits for the Irish people from the Anglo-Irish Agreement? Where are the new legal and civil rights? Where is the prospect of a lasting, political solution for those most affected day to day by the violence outside their own doors?

In this regard, the Agreement has been a dismal failure. Nationalists already disadvantaged and heavily "policed" by the security forces have been victim to renewed sectarian attacks.

One hundred Catholic families have been burned out of their homes since November.

Arms Call

The Rev. Ian Paisley is issuing "calls to arms" reminiscent of Sir Edward Carson. The RUC have been given an extra £1m to "arm" themselves for the coming Loyalist marching season. Some Loyalists are talking about a U.D.I. they could never sustain deprived of the massive British investment presently propping up the Northern Ireland economy.

And behind all the Tory confidence, they are also aware that the Accord was a calculated gamble on their part, a subterfuge to gain time.

Why *did* Prince Andrew and Fergie suddenly appear in the North attending an RUC Sports Day and meeting the family of the same politician, Ian Paisley, that the day before had issued a "call to arms"?

To provide a gloss of normalcy? To try and appease the loyalists?

Or was it part of the continuing British imperialist policy of "containment" to ensure that Ireland remains acquiescent and no strategic or political threat to Britain and her NATO allies?

Containment

The need for containment has become increasingly necessary as Sinn Fein has continued to develop a socialist and an Irish response to the situation.

This places them firmly in the context of oppressed peoples internationally who through struggle can define a solution that is progressive and socialist and draws on feminist and anti-imperialist theory, as well as nationalism.

They now command 40% of the Nationalist support in the North. This poses the present problem for British imperialism.

There are no positive economic reasons for them to retain a "colonial" relationship with the North. Devolved government continually fails.

But a "neo colonialist" domination through NATO alliances needs to be based on an acquiescent ruling class, unchallenged by a maturing socialist movement or an out-dated supremacist loyalism.

This is what the Anglo-Irish Agreement is really all about.



L. P. Photo Library.

Troops out now!

Six counties: Britain's apartheid state?

On the eve of the gigantic anti-Apartheid demonstration in London, Paul Weller told TV-am that not only was he unconcerned about the effect on his career of appearing for a political cause, but that his opinions on South Africa led him to see a striking parallel between that country and the situation in Northern Ireland.

The reaction was predictable. The purveyors of tabloid TV froze in horror for a second and the conversation was terminated.

Of course it would be wrong to stretch the analogy too far; but a way of presenting many of the features of Ireland's British problem and shattering the hypocritical wall of silence in the British labour movement this idea goes a long way.

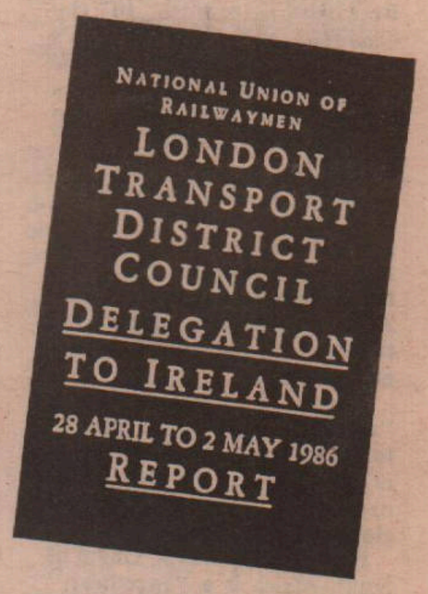
The report of the recent National Union of Railwaymen's London Transport District Council's delegation to Ireland makes it clear that there has been no fundamental change for the Northern Catholic nationalist minority since the beginning of the present stage of the struggle in 1968.

Outsiders

What minor improvements there have been have been enjoyed by the Catholic middle classes. The working class nationalists remain outsiders in their own country whose continued resistance faces oppression, criminalisation and armed occupation of their estates.

The gerrymandered sectarian Orange Statelet remains firmly gerrymandered. At the 1983 General Election an Official Unionist needed 24,000 votes to get elected; a Democratic Unionist 51,000; an SDLPer 137,000 and a Sinn Feiner 103,000.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, having sold off all the council houses it can, has imposed £44 million of cuts on its remaining 60% of tenants who are on housing benefit.



In eduation there is a stubborn "under-achievement" factor amongst Catholic working class kids due, says the Fair Employment Agency report, to "different social class and unemployment experiences."

It is of course the Catholic "experience" of unemployment which so graphically underlines the exclusion of working class Catholics in their own country. On most working class estates in West Belfast, Derry and elsewhere the rate is nearer 80%.

Occupation

Continued resistance to this situation has led to a complete suspension of "British Common Law"; its replacement with a system which is nothing less than a permanent state of emergency and the armed occupation of working class areas.

The Unionist veto is well known for its operation on initiatives from Westminster but what really came home to the delegation was its total effectiveness until very recently in the Irish labour movement.

At the May Day march in Dublin organised by the Dublin Trades Council in its centenary year the border, the Anglo-Irish Accord and the situation in the North were taboo. The trade union leaders fear that any introduction of "sectarian" politics would provoke a split in the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (ICTU).

In practice this has meant keeping the national question and republicanism off the shop floor and conference floors. The result is that socialist solutions to the problems of Ireland as a whole never see the light of day in the bulk of the organised Irish labour movement.

There is therefore no party of the working class claiming a socialist tradition with mass support throughout Ireland. It is impossible to construct one outside of confronting and opposing the border and the British presence as the number one over-riding task.

Refusal

In the meantime the silence surrenders the arena to the Loyalist-dominated Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU. The NIC refused to met the delegation.

It is the message of Protestant intransigence from the NIC-ICTU which Alex Kitson of the T&GWU so loyally relays to the British labour movement.

The NUR's refusal to accept this permanent veto and decision to adopt a policy in favour of Irish reunification has put it at the forefront of the movement to open the debate with the Irish labour movement as a whole.

Within a month of the LT delegation a delegation from the Irish T&GWU was in London meeting the full NUR NEC.

Only by confronting the Loyalist veto in the British and Irish labour movements can the debate on the border and British withdrawal be opened up.

Then support can be offered unconditionally to the struggle of the Irish to rid themselves of interference from the British state and its agents in the apparatuses of the Irish and British trade union and labour movements.

By PAT SIKORSKI

Copies of the report can be obtained from L. Cotton, Secretary, NUR LTDC, 6, Buckley Court, Carysfort Road, London N8.

The spectre of fascism behind Botha?



SWAPO

One particularly worrying aspect of the crisis of apartheid has been the rapid growth both of white and black forms of fascist reaction.

By BOB FINE

(who writes for Socialist Organiser)

On the "White Right" the AWB, complete with swastika look-alike symbols, has won significant popular backing, especially but not exclusively in the old Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State.

The sight of AWB militants forcibly preventing government mnisters from speaking has brought home the point. The AWB are reported to have considerable influence in the army and especially in the police.

Within the apparatus of the apartheid state, the road has been prepared for the emergence of a military dictatorship under the increasingly thin veneer of civilian, parliamentary government.

War on the borders of South Africa and the states of emergency within South Africa have allowed the defence and security forces almost free rein in the repression of enemies without and within.

Legislation

New legislation has now been passed institutionalising and extending the powers the police possess during a state of emergency as normal under law.

The constitutional reforms of 1984 were not only aimed at drawing a section of the "coloured" and "Asian" people under the wing of the state, but also at consolidating the power of the state executive against any form of parliamentary control.

Governmental power now lies far more with the state security Council, dominated by the military, than with the parliaments or even the cabinet.

It would not be the first time that military dictatorship and police state evolved within a constitutional shell.

But there has also been a widespread development of reaction among "black" people. There have always been "black" collaborators with the apartheid regime, but what is new is the extent of popular support being mobilised behind them.

This has expressed itself in the growth of vigilantism both in the "homelands" and in the "black" townships.

The most infamous instance is the employment of vigilantes by the "mayor" of Crossroads, Ngxobongwana — with the active support of the police — against opposition to the banana-republic style rule he has imposed over the years.

Ngxobogwana himself is a wealthy man, whose resources came from "taxes" imposed on squatters, rents, fines imposed by his courts, businesses and the like. His mansion and gold car stand out from the squatter shacks and his private police force has long provided him with security.

Now, however, he has mobilised broadly, relying on fear, patronage, respect for "elders", disenchantment with the violence and lack of direction of some of the radical youth and their "representatives", populist appeal on the basis of the gains he has negotiated for Crossroads, like its extension into New Crossroads, and divisions between squatters and the more permanently settled.

Repeated

If we are to believe David Beresford's reports in the *Guardian* and Fink Hayson's report in *Apartheid's Private Army* (CIIR), what has happened in Crossroads has been repeated in many other "black" townships.

Finally, in the "homelands", black reaction under the guise of a refurbished traditionalism has also grown apace. The most noted example has been that of Zulu nationalism, under the tutelage of Buthelezi's Inkata movement.

Parading himself as a "moderate" black voice opposed to the violence and communism of the ANC, he has been organising fast against all elements of the Left.

His United Workers' Union of South Africa is a "sweetheart" union and more of a populist movement than a union, but it is proving a very dangerous enemy of independent trade unionism in Natal.

Appeal

Buthelezi's "Impi Warriors" have attacked and killed a number of trade unionists as well as political activists. The appeal to workers of Buthelezi's opposition to sanctions and disinvestment on the basis of the slogan "jobs not hunger" should not be underestimated.

The growth of reaction in Kwazulu has been repeated in many of the other "homelands". In Kwa Ndebele, for instance, soon to receive "independence", opposition from the Redi tribespeople in the neighbouring province of Moutse to their incorporation and from people in Kwa Ndebele itself to their "independence" has been lethally suppressed not just by the local police, but also by the vigilante organisation, Imbhokoto, set up by Kwa Ndebele's businessman/ruler, Simon Skosare.

The particular danger emanating from "black" reaction is that some "liberals" within the country and many outside, either believe their image of "moderation" or help to replicate the myth.

Accommodation

Reagan and Thatcher's strategy, for instance, seems to be to push for an accommodation and unity between black and white forces of reaction under the guise of a step-by-step, "non-violent", negotiated solution.

If this strategy were to succeed, the result of the death of apartheid would be a new form of state, still further to the right.

The tendency in the past among opponents of the apartheid regime to paint it in fascist colours — a characterisation that has been more emotive than analytical — may blind them to the impending dangers of the growth of fascism in South Africa.

From afar, degees of evil may not seem to matter, but to the people of South Africa the differences are deeply felt.

Threat

Trade union, community organisations, and women's groups, the radical press, the political broad fronts, the right of any opposition — all are under threat.

It is beyond the scope of this article to offer an explanation for the causes of this blacklash.

Among the key factors, however, that canot be discounted are the strategies pursued by the liberation movement and the apparent exploitation by the Right of the popular discontent with the weaknesses within them.

The issue of the day is whether the movement is able to learn from its mistakes in order to stop the reaction and offer a viable democratic alternative to apartheid.

From abroad, we need to do what we can to help in this process.



Bujak arrest

A body-blow to Solidarnosc

ON 31 May Zbigniew Bujak, member of the Solidarity TKK, the underground Solidarity leadership, was arrested in Warsaw after 4½ years underground.

Gus Fagan

Bujak was born in 1954 in the village of Lopuszno. His father, a farmer, had served during the war in the London-organised Home Army (AK). At the beginning of the '70s he went to work in the big Ursus tractor plant in Warsaw.

He was called up for military service in 1974 and thus missed the big wave of strikes in 1976 in which Ursus played an important part. In the late '70s he made contact with the democratic opposition and became a distributor of the underground press, including *Robotnik* (*The Worker*) produced by members of KOR.

On 1 September 1980, the day after the Gdansk Agreement was signed, Bujak set up a Founding Committee of Solidarity in the Ursus plant. Three days later a Founding Committee was set up in the Mazowie (Warsaw) region. Bujak became its chair and as such joined Solidarity's National Commission. Later, when proper elections were held, Bujak was elected Chair of the Warsaw region, winning 630 of the 784 votes.

Martial Law

When martial law was imposed Bujak was one of the few top Solidarity leaders to escape detention. He returned to Warsaw where he began to organise the underground structures of the Union. On 22 April 1982 he became a founder member of the TKK.

Since the formation of the TKK Bujak has become a national figure and his arrest is a significant blow to Solidarity's morale and a propaganda coup for the authorities.

Whatever its practical consequences within the Polish political movement, his arrest is an important symbolic break in the history of Solidarity.

At the time of his arrest Bujak was the only elected member of Solidarity's national leadership left in the TKK.

The others, such as Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, were arrested earlier. In a sense, Bujak personally represented the continuity of Solidarity's existence.

Continuity

He represented that continuity also in a political sense. Bujak continued the political orientation of the Walesa leadership — moderation, alliance with the church, openness to dialogue with the regime.

But during the 4½ years of Bujak's leadership of the TKK the political movement in Poland has undergone a profound process of differentiation and polarisation.

Although the majority of the parties, groups, newspapers and currents that exist in the Polish underground publicly identify with the Solidarity experience of 1980–81, many of them are openly critical of the Solidarity leadership.[1]

Opposition

On the right, the Liberal-Democratic Party "Niepodleglosc" is openly contemptuous of Solidarity, regarding it as a spent force.[2] On the left, a new left-socialist current known as the Workers' Opposition has condemned the "passivity" of the Solidarity leadership and its adaptation to the ideas of the preponderantly pro-capitalist current among the democratic opposition outside Solidarity.[3]

In particular, these left currents reject the conception of the Solidarity leadership of "a unity of the entire society against the regime" and the strategy of building an "alternative society" bit by bit in the underground.

The arrest of Bujak will obviously have its effect on the authority of the TKK, which was, in any case, becoming largely symbolic. A statement issued by the TKK after his arrest promised that it would continue its activities. It was signed by its only two remaining named members, Jan Gorny and Marek Muszynski.

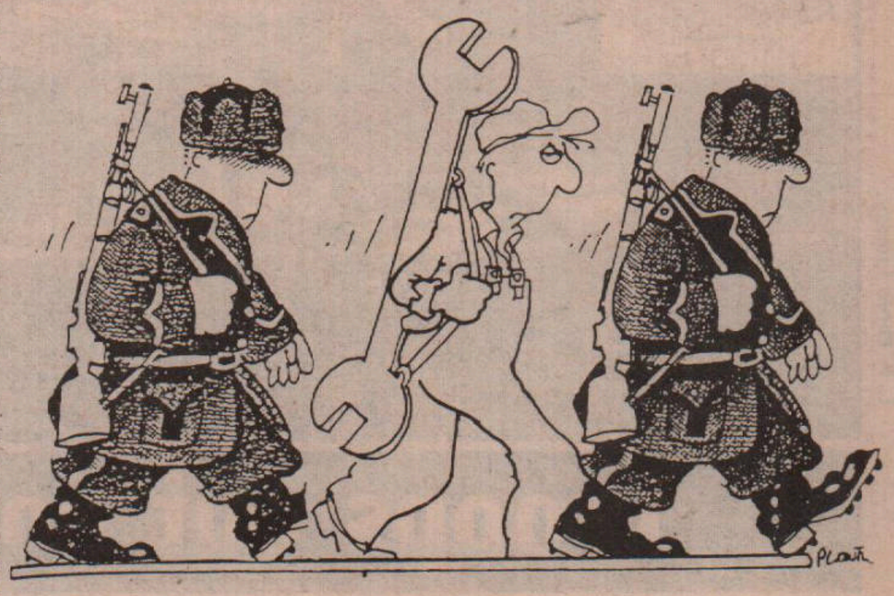
Bujak has been charged with "preparing to overthrow the system of the People's Republic of Poland", an offence which carried a 10-year maximum sentence.

TUC

In Britain, the TUC condemned Bujak's arrest, saying that the Polish authorities have no grounds to persecute workers' representatives who only wish to fulfill basic trade union rights. The TUC appealed for Bujak's release.



1. For an account of political groups in the Polish underground see article by Gus Fagan in the May issue of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe.
2. The Liberal-Democratic Party in Poland has links with the Liberal Party in Britain.
3. The founding statement of the Workers' Opposition is in the February issue of the bulletin of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, available from EESC, 10 Park Drive, London.



Hillsborough — a lesson in deceit

Almost eight months ago the Hillsborough Agreement was signed in a carefully orchestrated fanfare of media publicity. Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald told the world that a new era had dawned and that the Agreement would provide the framework for peace in Ireland.

Brian MacDonald
National Director of Publicity,
Sinn Fein

Political leaders in countries throughout the Western world reacted on cue with messages of support, while political parties and most people in Britain and Ireland acclaimed 'the great initiative', not for what it had achieved but for the peace and stability which it promised to deliver.

DISSENTING VOICES

There were dissenting voices, amongst them the voice of Irish Republicanism represented politically by Sinn Fein. How can this deal bring peace, we asked, if it does not address itself to the source of violence? Our objections were ignored by a hostile media which was already committed to a 'positive approach' to the Hillsborough story. And more importantly, perhaps, even the serious media seemed to accept totally the false argument upon which the Thatcher/FitzGerald accord was based.

This argument defined the Irish problem as an unfortunate rift between two politico/religious communities, and side-stepped the reality that the problem of inter-communal division is just one symptom of the fundamental problem — British colonial interference in Ireland.

By avoiding the issue of colonialism, the Hillsborough promise of peace and stability was simply an exercise in deceit. The real objective of the exercise, then and now, was to supplement the British alliance with unionism with a wider alliance which would include 'constitutional nationalist' parties in Ireland. The need for such a supplementary alliance arose because it became clear that the unionist alliance was incapable on its own of protecting British interests against the sustained campaign for national liberation being waged by the IRA.

POWERLESS ROLE

In return for their help in undermining support for Irish Republicanism, the Dublin government and the SDLP were given a powerless consultative role in the administration of the Northern statelet and the promise of reforms which would, they claimed, 'end the nightmare' for Northern nationalists.

To date none of the promised reforms have been delivered and it is no secret that the Dublin government and the SDLP are seriously worried. Strip-searching of women prisoners, show-trials which make a mockery of justice, the use of plastic bullets and the imprisonment of Irish language activists still carries on, while Tory direct-ruler Tom King gloats over improved security collaboration.

Even if cosmetic reforms were introduced in any of the areas outlined above, the central injustice would remain and despite what people in Britain have been told, the Irish Republican struggle will continue so long as that injustice continues. Moreover, that struggle will continue to be based in an increasingly politicised nationalist base which has no illusions about Margaret Thatcher or her commitment to justice and true peace in Ireland.

Renault apes BL

Renault, the "loss-making" state-owned French motor manufacturer, is carrying out a package of measures reminiscent of Michael Edwardes' purge on British Leyland.

By TONY RICHARDS

French trade minister M. Madelin is using government loans of 5.5 billion francs to push the firm into new attacks on the workforce, with a major series of job cuts.

Renault also faces slice-by slice privatisation. Management have announced that its entire paint sector is to be made into a subsidiary, and talks are underway with the giant German Hoechst group who are expected to become a partner in the paint operation.

This is very similar to the hiving off of sections of BL: the most recent victim is the privatisation of its spare parts division, Unipart.

These types of measures ensure that the "rationalised" state firm cannnot be viable in its own right by flogging off the profitable sectors and leaving the government holding the biggest economic liability.

As in Britain, the French automotive trade unions have formally opposed the new measures. But the weakness is that in each case the leaderships have been lured into the dead-end nationalism of calling for defence of a "French" or "British" car industry, while the employers gang up on a European and world scale to attack jobs and conditions.

USEFUL CAMPAIGNS

BLACK SECTIONS: Narendra Makanji, 10a Palmerston Road, London N22
WOMENS ACTION COMMITTEE: Anni Marjoram, 12 Chatham Row, Bath, Avon
LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS: 119 Riversdale Rd, N5
LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND: c/o BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX
LABOUR CND: Carol Turner, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, SW9
LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE: c/o Anna Wagstaff, 14 Argyle Street, Oxford OX4 1SS
CAMPAIGN GROUP NEWS: Alan Meale, c/o House of Commons, Westminster, SW1
SOCIALIST SOCIETY: c/o 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG
SERA: c/o 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG
CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM, c/o 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG
LONDON HEALTH EMERGENCY: 335 Grays Inn Road, London WC1
NAMIBIA SUPPORT COMMITTEE: 2 Leverton Street, London NW5
ANTI-APARTHEID: 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW
CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY: 10 Park Drive, London NW11
CND: 22/24 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ
AMNESTY: 5 Roberts Place, Bowling Green Lane, EC1 0EJ
NCCL: 21 Tabard Street, London SE1
RED WEDGE: c/o 150 Walworth Road, London SE17
NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: 20 Compton Terrace, N1
LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE: c/o 15 Greek Street, London W1
EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN: 13 Borough Rd, London SE1
LABOUR WOMEN FOR IRELAND: c/o Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2

Central America



'NO, THAT'S NOT THE GANG I'M LOOKING FOR, MA'AM — I'M AFTER COMMUNISTS!'

Reagan raises the temperature

Three events in the last week of June saw Central America burst back into the front line of world news.

By IAIN BRUCE, Norwood CLP

On June 25, the US Administration sucessfully pushed its package of $100 million military aid to the *contras* through the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives, just 3 months after an almost identical proposal had been narrowly defeated.

President Reagan, clearly over the moon, coyly described it as a big step forward for bipartisan US policy in Central America, since open military support to the *contras* was needed, "in the hope of forcing a negotiated solution."

To evey one else it looked like a calculated move to drive a coach and horses through various Latin American governments' attempts to keep alive the long-suffering Contadora peace proposals.

Opposition

On June 26th, the Nicaraguans again closed down the opposition daily, *La Prensa*, after it had run a front page banner headline welcoming Congress's support to the *contras* (imagine the *Daily Mirror* backing the Brighton bombing!).

There were also reports that *La Prensa* staff had been in Washington before the Vote, lobbying on behalf of the *contras*. Sandinista leaders have made it clear they will not allow *La Prensa* to play the same role as the notorious *El Mercurio* played in preparing the downfall of Allende's Chile.

There were also unconfirmed reports that members of the Independent Liberal Party (PLI) had been arrested on similar grounds.

President Daniel Ortega had already announced that the suspension of certain constitutional guarantees decreed last November had so far been applied too liberally and that stronger medicine was required.

Constitution

Nonetheless, it seemed that the 84 country-wide public meetings to discuss the new draft constitution would go ahead from this month as planned.

The following day, June 27, the International Court in The Hague finally announced its verdict, by 12 votes to 3, that US support for the anti-Sandinista forces constituted an illegal aggression; that it should stop immediately; and that compensation should be paid to Nicaragua.

The US administration, of course, has refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the World Court over such matters, ever since its previous verdict against the CIA mining of Nicaraguan ports. It therefore presented no defence in this case, and will not take a scrap of notice of the outcome.

(It is only one of many ironies that the US administration, in its efforts to iron out squabbles between its own allies, has been quite happy for the governments of El Salvador and Honduras to take their own border dispute before the same World Court.)

Of course, it is true that these developments show more clearly than ever that the single, over-riding goal of US policy in Central America is to remove the Sandinistas and rub out the insurgency in El Salvador.

The elaborate diplomatic footwork around the Contadora treaty; the appointment of star "peace-maker" and remover-of-tyrants Philip Habib as special envoy to Central America; the charade of crossed-swords between the State Department and the Pentagon; and the encouragement to President Duarte to call another round of talks with the FMLN-FDR in El Salvador, all have to be seen against this central, transparent and *bipartisan* objective.

Cancer

Secretary of Sate Schultz has described Nicaragua as "a cancer in Central America that has to be removed": who negotiates with a cancer?

But it would be simplistic to jump to the conclusion that the decks are already cleared for a direct US military invasion.

What has been equally clear from the build up to this week of events is that the obstacles to US policy goals in Central America, both at home in the form of stubborn public opinion, opposition in the rest of Latin America and Europe, and on the ground in Central America, are still very great.

Our solidarity can make a modest contribution to enlarging these obstacles.



Cartoon from the Los Angeles Times

A Kinnock "down under"?

Australia's Neil Kinnock, Labour Prime Minister Bob Hawke, has called for trade unionists and the whole working class to take cut in living standards to help bale out the floundering economy.

In phrases familiar to those who remember Denis Healey's speeches of 1974–79, Hawke declared on June 4 that the government had to cut public spending. He called for workers to buy less imports, and for the 600,000 unemployed to volunteer for unpaid community work.

Union leaders have not rejected Hawke's demands out of hand: the "new realism" is a worldwide current, whose international victims are the working class.

LABOUR BRIEFING
LABOUR — TAKE THE POWER!

UNIONS MUST ACT

South Africa is locked in the death struggles of apartheid. The apartheid regime, imposing mechanised jackboot violence, faces the determined resistance of the South African people in their protracted struggle for liberation and democracy. It has not hesitated to disregard the efforts of the Eminent Persons Group to negotiate a settlement, by invading neighbouring frontline states and by imposing another state of emergency. The stink of the accompanying draconian legislation quite overwhelms its racist attempts to gull the world and the oppressed people of South Africa with its cosmetic sop in ending the Pass Laws.

The embattled, oppressed people are subject to detention by the thousand, charges by the hundred under racist laws and the daily murders of men, women and especially, children, under the veil of a news blackout. Yet the people fight on after eighteen months of heightened unrest stemming from blatant state violence to make the country ungovernable by apartheid but governed by the Comrades. This struggle is accompanied by industrial action, school strikes and general strikes.

The people know the fight for liberation is theirs but have appealed to the world for help in the form of mandatory sanctions. They hope that the complete isolation of apartheid might lead to negotiations, with the participation of freed Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and an unbanned ANC.

Yet Mrs Thatcher remains deaf to such pleas, seeking delays on sanctions by sending Howe on a procrastinating mission. The British people must bypass the Tory allies of apartheid by disinvesting, by boycotting everything South African in Britain.

Let trade unionists not only pass anti-apartheid resolutions but act now like the Dunne's strikers and the Portsmouth health workers. Let us picket every South African presence and every manifestation of apartheid profiteering by banks, shops and supermarkets. Join the Non-Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square.

Release Nelson Mandela now!
Isolate Apartheid!
Victory to the ANC!

Dave Kitson



INSIDE your 20-page issue
Fighting NATO
Nuclear power
Councils
Briefing Women
Heffer against the witch-hunt
Black struggle
Lesbian/Gay struggle
Unions ■ Ireland



Defeat Labour's anti-union plans

Many socialists will be appalled by the new proposals being discussed by Labour's NEC on union legislation.

These will be adopted by the TUC this September and rubber-stamped for inclusion in the manifesto this October.,

They mark a clean break with the "tradition" of keeping the law as much as possible out of industrial relations.

The proposals involve trade unions losing tax relief and other legal benefits if they refuse to hold secret ballots for strikes and for elections of their executives.

Kinnock and his allies say that this will provide a "radical new framework" of positive labour law which will broaden the rights of all workers and diminish the role of the courts and common law in industrial relations.

Grievances

Any aggrieved worker would be able to go to a new body, the Industrial Democracy Commission (IDC) which would have legal powers. The IDC (replacing ACAS, industrial tribunals, etc.) would have the right to remove a union's certificate of independence — thereby depriving it of tax exemptions.

It is all profoundly individualistic, has nothing to do with socialism and seeks to deepen the integration of the workers' movement into the bourgeois state and legal system.

Workers have no individual rights as against the present state. Ask the 5 million on the dole about the right to work. We only have collective strength — which if exercised free from state interference can win collective advancement and defend it.

Far from the role of the courts being diminished, the lessons of the miners' strike were clear. Disgruntled members not getting satisfaction from the IDC would simply follow Roy Link and the UDM scabs, and obtain High Court injunctions and sequestration of funds.

Labour's proposals are silent about this. They only rule out *employers* going to the court.

This would never stop management stooges in future disputes aping their fellow collaborators in the UDM and the EETPU at Wapping.

Security?

In return, the Labour leadership offers the formal right of job security, protection against unfair dismissal, etc. Outside of decisive moves back to full employment (a million jobs a year?) all of this is empty hypocritical humbug.

Inevitably Kinnock and Co. will bleat for "unity" around these proposals. They will tell us that the Tories must be prevented from saying that power will go back to the union barons if Labour win the next election.

But unity around these proposals will lead to unity of the graveyard. And there will be Hammond, Jordan (new leader of the AEU), Graham, Kinnock and Hattersley dancing on the grave.

These anti-union laws must be opposed in every union and Party branch.

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