

# DEVON LABOUR 20p

# BRIEFING

with **NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT**  
No. 2 OCTOBER 1984

## MINERS' STRIKE:

The government have not hidden, indeed have been proud to claim, the fact that they regard Arthur Scargill as this year's General Galtieri, the enemy within, to be defeated at any cost. The cost, however, could well include the wholesale destruction of the coal industry and has already led to the impoverishment and the financial humiliation of the miners and their families.

There is no doubt that the stakes are high. The government know that the defeat of the miners could prove more than a body blow to the trade union movement and might well provide a rapid fall from grace for union leaders such as Scargill, Jimmy Knapp, Moss Evans, and even David Basnett, to be replaced by the 'new realism' of the likes of Alistair Graham, Frank Chapple and Terry Duffy. Given the electoral unpopularity of trade unions, such an effective emasculatation of the trade union movement might well bring an electoral benefit to the Conservative government and a singularly unpopular Prime Minister. Mrs Thatcher looks forward to the day when political commentators will be talking of the Orgreave Effect in place of the Falklands Factor.

On the other hand, the miners can foresee the destruction of their jobs and communities, and the decimation of their industry. They can see the re-organisation of their industry to provide 'commercial' (ie short term) profitability and can see only one reason for this: the creation of a commercial company. They can also see the damage that will be done to Britain's long term energy needs, but this, for them, is a secondary issue. Finally, they can see the possibility of the defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers and the repercussions this could have for the trade union movement as a whole, and they are flabbergasted by the patchy response from trade unionists.

Although not a political organisation this Group, initially formed to co-ordinated the collection of food and financial assistance in the South Devon area, contains a number of local Labour Party members. The membership of the organisation committee itself is likely to fluctuate, but the present committee have all agreed to act as collection points for food and other donations; their addresses and telephone numbers can be found below. A bank account, the funds from which will go directly to the miners and their families at Deep Navigation, has been set up, and details of this will be found below.

### Solidarity is spreading

Gerald R Taylor  
Chair

Teignbridge CLP

In Teignbridge our connectuon with the miners began in the first days of the dispute when a handful of men arrived from Deep Navigation colliery to observe the situation at Teignmouth dock and were putup by local Labour Party members. Later when picketing of Teinmouth docks began in earnest the miners moved into Labour Party premises in Newton Abbot, in which they are still based. In such close contact with the miners we have been made very much aware of the hardship that is suffered by them during the present dispute. It is for these reasons that the South Devon Miners' Families Support Group had been formed.

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**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**

## Editorial

The summer is now over and the 'season of politics' has begun. Despite attack from every element of the state and ruling class, the struggle by the NUM has not cracked, but strengthened. Winter will bring victory. In this issue we include an article 'practical help for miners' families' in order to hasten victory.

On a sader note we have to report the treacherous decision, taken in August by the Exeter GMC, not to contest the St. Leonards by-election. Briefing has campaigned constantly against the sell-out Lib/Lab administration of Exeter City council. In an article 'The Logic of St. Leonards' the sad logic of right wing betrayal is explained.

Devon Labour Briefing welcomes more articles from socialists in the Labour Party, particularly in the more far flung parts of Devon. We would like to thank all those comrades who have written for, sold and otherwise helped DLB.

Finally, we report that the new address of Devon Labour Briefing is 79 Pinhoe Rd, Exeter.

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The miners from Deep Navigation Colliery have been picketing Teignmouth and Exmouth docks for the past twenty weeks. The hardship they are presently suffering will not end when the strike does, indeed the first few months of the pay that they receive will go towards paying the debts accumulated during the dispute. In Teignbridge we have worked hard for the miners and undoubtedly there have been others who have done much if not more, but it is still not enough. The miners desperately need our help to win.

## FOOD

The miners of Deep Navigation Colliery receive one food parcel every fortnight. This is what it contains:

5 lbs potatoes, 1 tin corned beef, 1 tin peas,  
1 tin carrots, 1 tin beans, 1 tin tomatoes,  
1 doz. tea bags.

The miners of Deep Navigation benefit directly from money paid into the following account:

Miners Solidarity Fund, Plymouth Co-op  
Bank, Account No. 50393262.

If you can supply any of these basic foods or contribute financially, please contact:

Bernard Shore (Group Chairman), 9, Priory Gdns.  
Peter Rosenfeld (Secretary), Clifford Cttge, 42a,  
Clifford St., Chudleigh. Tel: 853868  
Peter Stevens (Newton Abbot LP), 30, Beaumont Rd,  
Newton Abbot. Tel: 65250  
Gerald Taylor (Chair Teignbridge CLP), 4, Palk Cl,  
Shaldon, Teignmouth. Tel: Shal. 2471  
Nadia Roberts, 2, Milton Rd. Newton Abbot.  
Tel: 68603  
John Chambers (NALP) & Sara Chambers (YS) 47, Knowles  
Hill Rd, Newton Abbot. Tel: 61884.

ARTHUR SCARGILL CAN  
EAT 3 SHREDDED WHEAT

## THE LOGIC OF ST LEONARDS

On August 3rd a lightly attended General Management Committee of Exeter CLP passed an NUR resolution which instructed the Party not to contest the St. Leonards by-election, due to be held on September 3rd. The resolution was proposed by Chester Long who leads the Labour/Liberal administration of Exeter City Council. Mr Long clearly hoped that the effect of the withdrawal of Mike Hesford, the Labour candidate, would be the victory of the Liberal, Roger Cockrall, over the right wing Tory, Dr. Adrian Rogers.

Though the decision aquired national significance it was only to be expected. In the May 1984 City council elections Labour concentrated its efforts on the five so-called winnable wards ignoring working class communities elsewhere in the City. A manifesto was designed which was acceptable to the Liberals. And after Tory overall majority was lost, the Liberals in return supported the Labour chairmanship of the council committees. So why should Labour not backout in a seat like St. Leonards where it is in third place and leave the field clear for the Liberals?

St. Leonards marked a further betrayal by the Labour right wing. Prior to St. Leonards the coalitionists could be seen mrely as opportunists (or as they might see it, people fed up with constantly being in opposition) St. Leonards changed the situation; the coalition already had a majority in the council chamber, so why try to give the Liberals another seat when the only effect could be to weaken the Labour influence in the Lib/Lab coalition from 14-5 to 14-6. Inother words some sections of the Party feel it in their interest to strengthen the Liberal influence in the coalition.

The pretext given by the right of the Party is that Dr. Rogers is so right wing that it is essential that he be defeated. This argument is absurd because it would mean that in any constituency or branch the Tories would only have to field a right winger and Labour would withdraw. Equally such an argument implies that Labour is incapable of campaigning against a Tory right winger; this is a task which can only be done by a Liberal.

We, in DLB, leafleted St. Leonardsurging support for the Ecology Party candidate as we were, unable for several practical reasons, unable to stand an independent Labour candidate. Our leaflet pointed out that "In a whole range of issues from nuclear disarmament to socialising production the views of the Ecology Party are closer to Labour than the Liberals". We supported the Ecology Party, in these peculiar circumstances, in order to keep the campaign for certain issues alive (eg, a declared nuclear free zone for Exeter), not because we have any sympathy for their utopianism devoid of class analysis. Furthermore, votes for the Ecology Party (even more obviously than abstentions) were votes against the Labour right wing's actions. Our support for the Ecology Party was wholly tactical.

According to the Express and Echo of September 12, the eve of the poll, "Mr Shepherd (said) that... DLB ...was made up of a few people who claimed Labour allegiance, the rest were Ecologists". DLB is made up of people who not only claim Labour allegiance, but who want, unlike Dr Shepherd, the opportunity to vote Labour in all elections. As for implying that the majority of DLB supporters are Ecologists, Dr Shepherd knows this to be untrue. Not a single known DLB supporter is in any way connected with the Ecology Party.

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The Tories won the seat with a majority of 101. The turnout fell from 53% to 45% as most Labour supporters stayed at home, refusing to comply with the plans of the Labour Party's right wing.

A campaign must be waged in Exeter CLP not only to stand Labour candidates in every ward, but also to have Labour candidates who campaign for socialism, and who do not end up as councillors locked into a suffocating alliance with the Liberals.

Peter Bowing  
Exeter CLP

## THE NEED FOR AN IDEOLOGY

The worker on the shop floor, the worker whose life is dictated by the demands of the intensive industrial processes, confronts capitalism as an individual phenomenon. He accepts his role; for the capitalist - liberal state is constructed to favour and sustain class domination. The State proclaims an individual freedom, the worker is inculcated with the idea that he can freely dispose of his own resources, his own skills, and his own 'wealth' in the same way that the capitalist does. They start, however, from entirely different positions. One need only examine the structure of the education system to see the truth of this claim, eg, the public schools.

In capitalist societies the state does not interfere directly in the market, but does indirectly by regulating the money market or by constructing the machinery for the enforcement of contracts. The political and legal structures are almost entirely responsive to the requirements of the capitalist mode of production, while at the same time concealing economic class power.

Capitalism, as a power system, entails the self-perpetuating dominance of the bourgeoisie over other classes and strata.

Capitalism requires an ideology to maintain itself, which is disseminated by the ideological state apparatuses such as the schools (particularly the public schools), the media, churches, etc. In politics this is reproduced by most (bourgeois) politicians.

What is needed is a forceful presentation of a completely alternative Socialist society. We should not try and contend that we will merely make capitalism work more efficiently or with a more human face as Wilson and Callaghan tried to do. At the same time socialists should be submitting every aspect of the failure of capitalism to the most severe scrutiny. We must develop an ideology. Marx pointed out the active character of 'theory formation' in human knowledge. Data has to be interpreted in light of theory. As he points out in 'Das Kapital', a capitalist society cannot be understood in its own terms. It is up to us to present a coherent, philosophically penetrating critique of the whole motivation and structure of capitalism.

The so-called 'Alternative Economic Strategy' was merely a piece of opportunistic pragmatism lacking coherence as a theory. For the first time since Burke, the Tories have presented their policies as a coherent and astute mixture of thinkers like Hayek, Friedman and Nozick. The left must be equally forceful intellectually. We must draw on thinkers such as Poulantzas and Miliband.

Jim Salter  
Chair Exmouth and E Devon  
Trades Council



## COAL AND NUCLEAR POWER

Coal is a vital national asset. It has been Britain's most valuable resource for hundreds of years; Without it there would have been no industrial revolution. Once the short term North Sea oil bonus has been completely frittered away, we will once again be almost dependent on coal as an energy resource.

The government of course is not at all concerned at the conflict, and possible resultant run down of the coal industry. In so far as it can be said to have any energy policy at all it does seek to promote a nuclear power industry and ensure a good supply of plutonium for its nuclear weapon's programme. Apart from their wish not to be dependent on the coalminers and to lessen the risk of suffering from their 'industrial muscle', I believe that the plutonium supply is of paramount importance.

A depleted and less efficient coal industry makes the nuclear power industry look more attractive by comparison. This government has to be condemned, and I am afraid previous Labour administrations are guilty too, for its failure to provide adequate investment in the coal industry. Nuclear power as always is awash with funds. Only this week we have seen 1.2 million spent to show by crashing a train that nuclear waste flasks are safe! The government propaganda machine is currently seeking to prove that acid rain (a known problem some of us have campaigned on for ten years or more - to defening silence from Westminster) is an argument for nuclear power.

Energy conservation is as vital a part of what should be our total energy policy, as is coal. Look what the government spent on research and development in 1981/2: Atomic Energy Authority £172 million: Energy conservation £1/2 million: all other energy sources combined £43 million.

We must seek to expose the real reasons for the government's desire to run down the coal industry: we must show how they have starved it of investment to enable them to claim pits are 'uneconomic'. And we must seek to widen the debate away from the sectional confrontation between the group of workers concerned with their jobs and the government: we must make it clear that this is not a narrow issue, it is one that concerns us all.

Exeter CND has shown the way forward by passing a resolution in favour of the miner's case and recognising the plutonium connection. Let the more timid now join the argument.

Roger Giles  
Exeter CND



## FIGHT BACK ~ JOIN THE LABOUR GROUP

The publication of the October issue of DLB coincides with the start of the university autumn term. In the past there has always been a socialist unity of purpose between Exeter University Labour Group and DLB. We hope the unity will continue.

There are a number of ways in which a socialist Labour Group at the university can assist in the class struggle.

First, because students have an intellectual training, they are well placed to develop Marxist analysis which can usefully be imported into the Labour Party and thus challenge the theoretical vacuum which serves only the Party's anti-socialist right wing. The Labour Group can also use Marxist analysis to impede the dissemination of bourgeois ideology in the university, especially in the social science department.

Second, students are young, fit, concentrated in a small space and do not usually have many family responsibilities. They are consequently able to assist in direct action such as picketing.

Third, many students will, later in life, occupy senior positions in the British state and in the business community. It is obviously important that as many of these people as possible are sympathetic to the Labour Movement.

Fourth, Exeter University has a reputation for being a Tory university. It is vital that Labour students attempt to take control of the Guild and the wider student movement.

Fifth, most students live in the Pennsylvania/St. Davids branch of Exeter Labour Party. Historically, this largely middle class part of the city has produced a Labour right wing which dominated the branch. Yet last year socialist students played a key role in terminating this domination.

Constitutionally, all those serving on the Labour Group executive must be individual members of the Labour Party. The Labour Group has two GMC delegates.

All socialists and progressive students are welcome in the Labour Party. Students and the young have a vital role in the struggle for the construction of socialism.

### BRIEFING

SUPPORT DEVON LABOUR BRIEFING.

- \* Contribute a letter or article
- \* Sell the Briefing
- \* Contribute financially

- CONTACT :  
DLB, 79 Pinhoe Rd., Exeter.

### MEETING

On Thursday October 11 at 7.30p.m. at 26 Clifton Hill, Pennsylvania St. Davids branch Labour Party will be holding a its monthly meeting, which will discuss "THE LABOUR PARTY and THE ENVIRONMENT" It will be possible to join the Labour Party at this meeting. Even if you do not wish to become a member of the Labour Party at this stage but just wish to take part in the debate or to observe, you are still cordially invited.

## WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Despite opposition from right wing councillors the GMC of Exeter Labour Party marginally agreed to include in the manifesto for the May 1984 City Council elections a commitment to establish a Women's Committee.

The case for establishing women's committees is a clear one. It is true that women, like men, from the working class experience class oppression and are thus objectively unified with working class men against the capitalist system. Indeed in the requirement to overthrow capitalism the analysis and commitment of Rosa Luxemburg was equal to that of Karl Marx. Yet a prerequisite for the functioning of capitalism is a system of patriarchy which leads to a secondary oppression of female workers. Furthermore, because patriarchy existed prior to the capitalist mode of production it is more deeply engrained into the fabric of society. Yes, female workers are participants in the class struggle, but they are also participants of the women's struggle.

It is amusing to state some of the right wing pretexts for opposing a Women's Committee. One argued that there was a woman on the throne and one at number 10; the country was in a mess, so why give any more power to women. Another argued that council business could only be impeded by a committee of babbling women. The most convincing was that as there were only two women Labour councillors it would be silly to set up a council committee that would be dominated by Tory women. (Does this not prove sexism inside the Party !)

In fact this argument is mistaken since it is possible to coopt women onto such a committee. Obviously the thought of socialist women having some influence on the council was horrifying.

It is because women are fighting a secondary struggle against patriarchy which not only emanates from capitalist structures, but which also comes from men (and very often from women too) in the Labour Movement that separate women's committees are required.

Exeter City Council requires a women's committee. It should be constituted by two Labour women councillors (There are no women Liberal councillors) and representatives from Exeter women's organisations which are sympathetic to the aims of the Labour Party. The chair of the women's committee shall sit on all other council committees. If the Liberals do not agree to these proposals the leader, deputy leader and all the committee chairpeople (all Labour) should resign.

What would the WC do ? Here I shall compose a list: declare Exeter an 'equal opportunity employer'; reword job application forms, eg, to exclude questions on marital status; provide creche facilities; introduce job sharing; introduce procedures for dealing with complaints about sexual harassment; encourage the recruitment of women to 'male' jobs; ensure that all planning takes account of the interest of women; ensure that housing caters for single parents and gays; the possibility of banning sexist adverts; street lighting; baby feeding and changing facilities; and so on. The WC should hold open meetings and maximum consultation with women's groups in the city should be encouraged. It is vital that there is a mass campaign of publicity to bring the issues of the women's struggle and Exeter's WC to public attention.

on July 26th 1984 the GLC held a meeting on the WCs of various councils. On November 2nd the GMC of Exeter Labour Party will discuss the establishment of Exeter's women's committee.

\* YS \* YS \* YS \* YS \* YS \* YS \* YS \* YS

On October 17, at 8p.m. the Exeter Young Socialists will meet at 26, Clifton Hill. Subsequent meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month. Anyone under 25 is welcome.