

DEVON LABOUR BRIEFING

No. 26

OCTOBER 1987

WHAT FUTURE FOR LABOUR?

DAYSCHOOL
SAT. 31st OCT

at Barts Tavern

How to find it

Just carry on down the High Street into Fore Street. Bartholomew Street West is on the right; you can't miss Barts Tavern, which is on the right. The Day School is upstairs.

The Day School organised by Devon Labour Briefing is an excellent opportunity to hear and participate in arguments about the fate of socialism today. There will be opportunities to discuss specific topics in small groups, as well as hearing national speakers.

WORKSHOPS on Ireland,
the Working Class,
Sexual Politics,
South Africa,
Education.



AND AFTER...
Back at Barts'
there will be a
social evening
with entertainment
at 7pm.

THE BRIEFING CONSUMERS' GUIDE
TO ACTIVISM IN EXETER
(N.b. not a complete guide, of course)



Exeter Labour Party

Exeter CLP HQ is at 26, Clifton Hill Exeter. Tel. 75004.

Of particular interest to young people are the Labour Party Young Socialists which meet every 1st and 3rd Wed. of the month at 26, Clifton Hill at 8.00 pm.

Exeter Women's Centre

Situated at 94, Sidwell St., the Women's Centre provides a venue for meetings of all types women's groups (women's health, women's peace movement, women's self defence, women's safety etc.)
Contact: Exeter 219982.

Exeter and District Anti-Apartheid Group

Affiliated local group of the AAM nationally. Campaigns to raise issue of apartheid locally, especially in support of sanctions, and the consumer boycott.
Contact: Exeter and District Anti-Apartheid Group, c/o 12, Springfield Rd., Exeter. Tel. 219378.

Anti-Fascist Action

Set up in 1987 in response to Exeter City Council's support for the planned "William of Orange" celebrations in 1988, and the danger that fascists will take advantage of the Celebrations to campaign and march in Exeter. Campaigns against racism and fascism wherever it appears.
Contact: AFA, c/o 1, Parliament St. Exeter

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Red Wedge

Set up earlier in 1987 after the Red Wedge concert in Exeter, this grouping campaigns for social justice and the arts. It is currently planning an event around young people and homelessness. Contact: Fran Jenkin, Exeter 30556.

Exeter CND

Large and active group with its own shop in Exeter.
Contact: 1, Bartholomew St., Exeter.
Tel. 31447.

STUDENTS

The Thatcher era has inflicted massive defeats on the British working class movement. In eight years the agenda of British politics has been decisively shifted rightwards. The defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1985 at the hands of the revamped British state, unopposed by the Labour leadership, sealed the coffin of extensive working class militancy in the current period. The Labour leadership played its part too in the defeat of the socialist councils, such as Liverpool and Lambeth, which sought to defy Thatcherism. It is not surprising, therefore that the Labour leadership has managed to convince a large section of the Labour Party that class struggle politics is dead and that socialism is impossible.

The socialist student starts out with this kind of analysis in mind. Yet, precisely because of the current retardation of the British socialist movement, the role of the student activist is enhanced.

The idea of socialism is not born out of practical struggle, but from an intellectual comprehension of history. Indeed for socialism to become a reality, the vehicle must be the working class and the broad mass of the people, but the idea and its propagation comes from without. We face a situation, where, as a result of Thatcher's ideological offensive, socialism has largely been driven out of the mental universe of the working class; an absence which has a corroding effect on the Trades Unions and the Labour Party. It is vital, therefore, that socialist ideological work be done and an input on that basis be made into the Labour Party.

Exeter University Labour Group is the place for such work to be done. Resolutions and other interventions can also be made through individual membership of the local Labour Party ward and through the Labour Group's representation on the General Management Committee of Exeter Labour Party. At every opportunity the National Union of Students should be influenced. If the resolve is there, the collective input of very few people can be highly effective. Socialism needs you !.

Education for Exeter

A campaigning group bring together those working in different sectors of education to defend it against the attacks by the Tories. Currently opposing the Education Bill in conjunction with the Campaign for State Education.
Contact: Tim Price, Exeter Community Centre, St. David's Hill, Exeter.

and finally ...

BRIEFING

Devon Labour Briefing exists because Exeter Labour Party is not as it should be. The local party has become corroded. The local party has abandoned socialism as its purpose; any socialist policy or campaign is seen as futile or counter-productive.

Since 1984 the Labour Party has run Exeter City Council in coalition with the Liberals and SDP. In the parlance of Exeter Labour Party the Labour Group is in "minority control". What has happened in reality is that Labour has accommodated itself to the agenda of the Alliance at the expense of socialist commitment. Worse still, on progressive matters favoured by the Alliance, such as the opening up of council committees to public questioning, the Labour Group has formed an unholy alliance with the Tories to defeat them.

Over the past few years Exeter Labour Party has been responsible for a series of odious policies. It ejected the unemployed homeless from the City Council run "UB40 Centre", it supported the hanging of pictures of nude women in the Labour Club bar; it failed to support the conference motion which called for the release of jailed miners, etc. Its latest disgrace is its support for the Exeter City Council sponsored William of Orange celebrations in the full knowledge that William of Orange is the figurehead for contemporary Loyalist domination in the North of Ireland. The National Front have said publically that they are delighted and that they plan to come to Exeter in force to participate in the celebrations.

Devon Labour Briefing was born in the struggle against the conditions prevailing inside Exeter Labour Party.

In no sense is Devon Labour Briefing a small grouplet with a predetermined "line". It is a collective of socialists whose views could be something like this: socialism is not a reformed capitalism, but is a new type of society, the road to which is the product of struggling and campaigning in alliance with the oppressed. This means taking up, not disowning, the struggles of the working class, of women, of the ethnic minorities, of lesbians and gays etc. Despite the current set-backs there is no other road forward.

Contact: Exeter 79531.