

Socialist ACTION

No 2, April 1988

MANCHESTER BULLETIN

All Out For Benn & Heffer!

The decision of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer to run for leader and deputy leader of the Labour Party presents all socialists in the Labour Party and trade unions with a clear task: we must campaign flat out to ensure maximum support in all sections of the party and the movement for their candidacy.

Some comrades might suggest that the campaign is an unnecessary diversion at the moment, or that it will be divisive at a time when maximum unity against the Tories is required, especially in the wake of all the recent attacks on working-class people. We argue that unity is only relevant when it includes unity with, and support of, people who are in struggle. Even on the issue where there is overwhelming opposition to the Tories - the NHS -, the failure of the Labour Party leadership to throw its weight 100 percent behind striking nurses is a stark lesson to anybody who wants a real fight against the Tories, that Kinnock is not going to lead it.

On the other hand, while neither Benn nor Heffer can be considered perfect on every issue where a fight is necessary, their recent and past records show that they do represent a genuine alternative that at least attempts to relate to the class struggle. Moreover, they are standing with the support of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, which, at the level of the Parliamentary Labour Party and many CLPs, provides a focus of support for many of the policies and campaigns which socialists should champion in the Labour Party: support for the rights of Black people and women to self-organisation, uncompromising support for workers in struggle, most notably the miners, and recently health workers, support for British withdrawal from Ireland, etc.

We have no illusions about the chances of victory in this campaign - they are slim. But we do believe that the campaign will be a chance to put socialism back on the agenda of Labour Party politics, to argue for a class-

struggle alternative to Kinnock's capitulation and betrayals and to prove that there are people in the labour movement who are not going to stand back and accept those methods. Unity behind Kinnock is the unity of the graveyard! A vote for Benn and Heffer is a vote for the sacked and imprisoned miners, a vote for the surcharged Liverpool councillors, a vote for the health workers, a vote for the victims of British shoot to kill policy in Ireland and a show of defiance to those who think that opposing the Tories means begging them for mercy and rounding on your own people when they fight back.

Socialist Action supporters will be active in support of Benn and Heffer along with many others. We appeal to all socialists to unite in this campaign, whatever our differences, either with the candidates or amongst ourselves.

Public meeting:

DEFEND THE NHS

Sun 8 May 7.30pm

Mother Mac's Pub

Back Piccadilly (first small street to the right down Oldham Street from Piccadilly Gardens).

SPEAKERS:

1. Geoff Ryan, Nurse, Manchester Royal Infirmary,
2. A NHS-shop steward from the joint shop steward committee in M/C.
3. A shop steward from Thorn EMI, M/C.
4. Jan Whitehead, Socialist Action.

Socialist Action, Manchester.

Defend the National Health Service.

The massive wave of industrial action that welcomed in the New Year in the National Health Service has abated for the present. The reason for this is simple - the Trades Union and Labour leaders failed to offer any perspective for winning the dispute. Every action that took the campaign forward (such as the strike by nurses at North Manchester General Hospital on January 7th and the London Day of Action on February 3rd) was organised independently of the Trades Union and Labour bureaucrats. Instead of campaigning for industrial action in the Health Service and amongst the rest of the working class the leaders of the Health Service Unions proposed only very limited protests, usually in lunch-times. The Trades Union Congress contented itself with a demonstration in London on March 5th in the vain hope of persuading Tory Chancellor Nigel Lawson to give money to the NHS in preference to tax cuts.

In fact, rather than organise a real fight against the Government, some Union Leaders went out of their way to sabotage such action - for example the NUPE officials in Sheffield who told South Yorkshire miners to reverse their decision to take strike action in support of the NHS on February 14th. Workers who did organise solidarity action were often left isolated by their own officials.

In Manchester, for example, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions agreed to organise strike action in support of the NHS on February 19th but then did nothing to win support for that decision. Only the workers at Thorn EMI in Stretford took strike action and management then attempted to victimise the Convenor and 3 shop-stewards. The failure of Thorn management to get away with their blatant attacks on union organisation was due almost entirely to the willingness of the Thorn workers to risk their jobs, and to the support they received from Health Service workers.

The role of the Labour Party leadership has been no better. Neil Kinnock and Robin Cook both attacked nurses for going on strike - a political line that put them well to the right of the Manchester Evening News. By failing to endorse the wave of industrial action the Labour leadership threw away a golden opportunity to put themselves at the head of a campaign against the weakest link in Tory policy.



Nevertheless, although the movement has currently declined it has far from been defeated. Some concessions, particularly on pay for nurses and Blood Transfusion Service workers, were won. The union structures in the hospitals remain intact and in some cases are stronger. And while there is no action on a national scale workers in the localities are still fighting back.

For example at Withington hospital nurses, doctors, domestic workers, catering staff, ancillary staff, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and the chaplains have all pledged to resist attempts to close 3 wards by South Manchester Health Authority. They have continued to admit new patients and are working on in the wards. South Manchester Health Emergency, an independent community organisation, is organising Public meetings, lobbies of the Health Authority and Social events to resist closures.

Workers in and outside of the NHS need to organise the greatest possible support for such actions. Such support will ensure that when further battles break out in the NHS - most probably following Thatcher's policy review - the union leaders are not able to derail the movement again.

Vote Labour on 5th May

and continue the fightback.

On May 5th we will have local elections for Manchester City Council. We urge every one to come out and vote Labour that day. To vote for the Tories or the Alliance will only increase the attacks on the working class. The Tory government has already taken £600 million in grants from Manchester since 1979. The government is now taking the Local Government Bill through Parliament, which will further reduce the powers of local authorities.

We will fight for the maximum vote for Labour. However, the mistaken cuts policy of the Labour Council has weakened the popular base for winning support for Labour. The Council decided to make a budget cut of £110 million, ie 25% of the budget. 3,750 council jobs will disappear and the services will worsening. The cuts are a result of the government's cuts in grants to Manchester. But instead of mobilising the labour movement for more grants from the government, the Council (and the City Labour Party) decided to make the £110 million cuts.

Not every one in the City Labour Party or in the trade unions agrees with the cuts policy. A large minority want to organise a fightback. The reason is simple: if no one fights against these cuts the government will come back year after year demanding more cuts. That is why *Socialist Action* took part in establishing *Manchester Fightback*.

The Fightback campaign has to continue after May 5th, whatever the results of the local elections. The massive cuts have already created demoralisation among many Labour activists. This can very well cost the Labour Party votes on 5th May. As members of the Labour Party we will take part in the election campaign to get as many votes for Labour as possible. But we will also take part in the fight against the cuts, in the unions, among the tenants, in the Labour Party etc.



CALENDER OF EVENTS.

- 23 April: Fight the Alton Bill (FAB) - activities. Assemble 11,30 am at Queen Victorias Statue. European anti-racist day of action: the new Immigration Act, the Church of Ascension 4-6 pm and a social in the evening.
- 26 April: FAB lobby of Parliament. M/C Area Campaign Group meeting on the Benn-Heffer campaign, 8,30 pm, Town Hall.
- 27 April: FAB Day of Action. Piccadilly gardens 12-2 pm and 5-7 pm.
- 28 April: Lou Kushnick speaking on the situation in Panama, M/C Town Hall, 7,30 pm. CASC.
- 30 April: May Day demonstration in M/C, from All Sants 11,30 am and ending with a rally at the Mechanic Institute
Clause 28 demonstration in London.
- 5 May: Local elections.
FAB protest at Parliament.
- 7 May: Luis Enrique Godoy, the most famous Nicaraguan singer and composer, at the International.
- 15 May: National Palestine demonstration in London, Embarkment 1,30 pm. Coaches from Manchester.
- Central America Solidarity Campaign (CASC) meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, 7,30 pm in Manchester Town Hall, except on 5th May.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

International Viewpoint is published every fortnight with coverage of the class struggle in main countries in the world, including Soviet Union, China and Nicaragua. Each issue has 28 pages for 85 p.

International Marxist Review gives background analysis of the international class struggle and has theoretical articles on Marxism. Each issue cost £2,50. (3 times a year).

The Notebooks for Studies and Research are special publications on different aspects of Marxism, such as Ernest Mandel on the roots of Marxism, Pierre Rousset on the Chinese revolutions, Daniel Bensaid on revolutionary strategy today, etc. Each Notebook costs £2-£2,50.

You can buy these publications as well as *Socialist Action* from Grass Roots Bookshop (near Piccadilly Gardens).

Stop the Clause!

Kursad Karamonoglu is an activist in the North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality. He spoke to Finn Jensen about Clause 28 and the campaign against it.

Gay men and lesbians were expecting a concerted attack from the Tories.

The aim of the Local Government Bill was to curb the democratic powers of elected local government. Jill Knight's amendment adds that local government cannot "promote" homosexuality.

The word "promote" is key, because it is a word lawyers do not recognise. Once the Bill is law the word "promotion" will have to be tested in the courts.

"Promotion" could mean: gay and lesbian books in libraries; licences to gay clubs and pubs (because gays and lesbians meet there); services like gay centres, and advice and information telephone lines for lesbians and gays — the whole range of services provided at the moment as a natural part of local government for the community.

Consenting

The law that homosexual acts between consenting adults over 21 years of age is legal if done in private gave us the same problem as we now will get with "promotion". The lawyers did not recognise the word "private", so it was interpreted by the courts — in the most ridiculous way you can imagine.

Two men kissing in a car is not private; nor is a locked hotel room. If you live in a block of apartments and there is just one other person in the whole block who gets offended by you living as a homosexual you are not in private.

Private

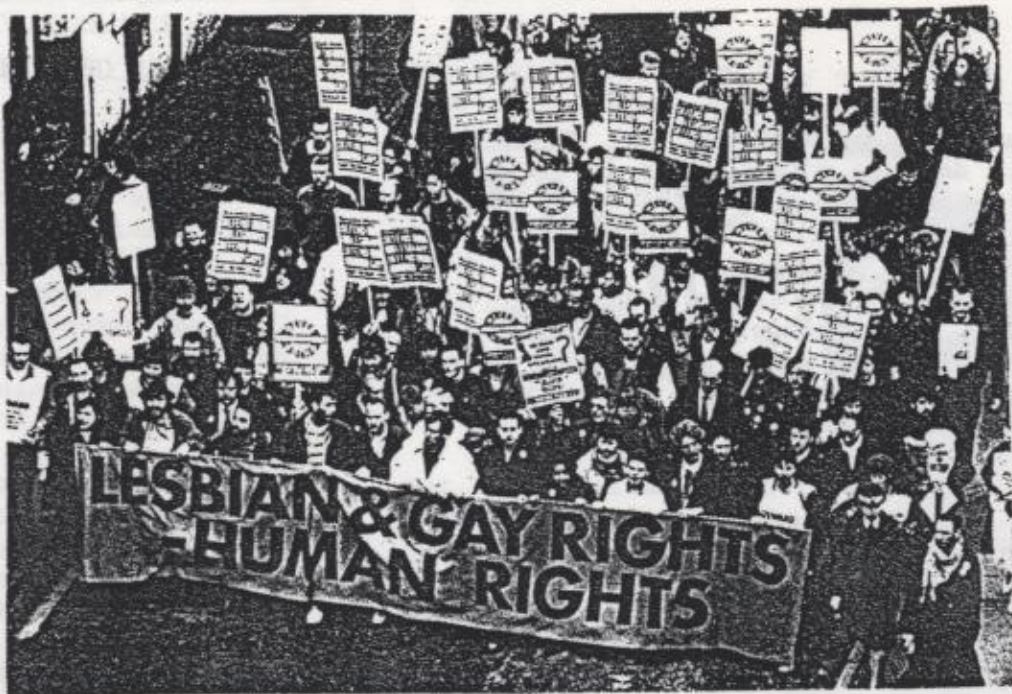
If this is how the courts interpret "private" you can imagine what they'll do with "promotion".

When the government realised the extent of opposition to the "Bigots Charter" (as lesbians and gay men now call it) it tried to modify it. They added one word — "intentionally" — which makes it even more vicious.

Many Conservatives are making the intention of the Clause quite clear, both in interviews and in Parliament. They want to drive lesbians and gay men back into the closet. After 20 years of partial recognition they want to push us underground again. But we won't go.

We are an easy scapegoat. It is so easy to divert people's attention from serious social and economic problems by using popular prejudices.

Simply by living the kind of life we do, lesbians and gays are the biggest threat to one of the fundamental ways the ruling classes keep the masses



under control. The family has historically always been the unit used to control society and we are obviously a threat to the family institution.

Defined

We refuse to fit into the well-defined roles. And that is really a big threat to the kind of society the Tories want to create. Remember, there are over six million of us in Britain.

There has been spontaneous and unexpected opposition to Clause 28, not only in Manchester. One of the first things we did was lobbying Parliament to get the Clause changed.

But with the Tory majority we did not stand much chance, although some very senior Tory MPs did not vote for it in the Commons. When it went to the House of Lords, Tories brought in every possible peer to make sure that the Bill passed. Its now back in the House of Commons, so there's still some lobbying to be done.

But we have to be prepared for the implementation of the Bill once it becomes law on April 30th. We have to prepare for a long battle, because we cannot accept a law that would mean a denial of ourselves.

Authorities

We will work to make sure that Local Authorities understand the issue and will fight the law. There will be battles in court, all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.

This campaign has raised political awareness among many gay men and lesbians. That is our biggest strength. In Manchester, for example, it is very important for us to involve lesbians and gays who are not normally part of campaigning.

The Manchester demonstration in February was the biggest in the city for 20 years, but it was also the biggest lesbian and gay demonstration ever in this country. We were very determined to show that lesbians and gay men are everywhere and that the North West has its own share.

The national demonstration on April 30th in London should be followed by actions of supporters abroad on June 1st, when the Bill is likely to become law.

We are asking people to organise protest meetings in front of British embassies and consulates in their own country and to let us know what they are doing. Solidarity messages to our demonstration on April 30th are also needed.

There was a really massive protest within the Labour Party to the front bench's half-hearted opposition to the Clause. I know from Manchester that there were literally thousands of letters to Labour MPs protesting the despicable lack of response.

Within weeks we suddenly saw the line changing, and now Kinnock's calling the Clause "the bigots' charter".

The trade unions are too often scared of the lesbian and gay issue. During the miners'

strike lesbian and gay support groups all around the country found it difficult at the beginning because miners — in spite of all their militancy and radicalism — were quite suspicious.

But after a year of sustained support things started to change. Only last year the gay pride march was led by a South Wales miners' banner!

We realise the importance of support of the organised labour movement. That is why the North West Campaign will approach trade unions, especially those whose members will be directly influenced by Clause 28 — like teachers, who will be under immense pressure not to mention homosexuality at all.

Attacks

The attacks on lesbians and gay men can be linked closely with the oppression of black communities. This was clear in Britain during the AIDS hysteria.

The press in Britain tried to say that AIDS is a gay plague; or, if not, a black plague. Day by day the newspapers said that AIDS came from Africa, that it is common in Africa. There were even calls from so-called respected journalists and politicians to have compulsory tests for visitors from certain African countries.

That makes the link in the minds of many blacks and lesbians and gay men in this country. At the end of the day we have a lot of things in common, not least a common enemy.

Stop the Clause Calendar

April 30th. Mass demonstration in London. Meet at noon on the Embankment, rally and festival at Kennington Park.

The North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality can be contacted c/o Gay Centre, 61A Bloom St, Manchester.

SENIOR COLMAN:

The Senior Colman strike in Sale near Manchester has finished. In the article below Tony Lowe explains why. The interview with Tony Lowe on this page (taken from Labour Briefing) was made just before the strike finished. We think the interview brings lessons to be used by other strikers. In that sense it is not out of date.

EX-STRIKERS RETURN SOLIDARITY ACTION.

By Tony Lowe, Ex-Secretary, Strike Committee.

After 13 months, one week and three days, the strike at Senior Colman is over.

The majority of the strikers accepted an increased financial settlement offered by the Company. After such a long, hard struggle I feel both disappointed and disillusioned. By accepting the offer we not only sold our jobs but our principles, which we had proudly defended for so long.

Manchester is a hive of activity at the moment, and is leading the campaign in defense of the NHS.

The strikers from Senior Colman, who enjoyed tremendous support from rank and file trade unionists, will now rally around one of our biggest and most solid supporters, Thorn EMI, whose four shop stewards have been victimised for coming out on strike, with over 500 workmates, in support of the recent health service demonstration.

We must also not forget the lessons learnt during our strike. We hope we have proven to others (that includes trade union officials) that at some time you must stand up and fight for your rights.

The Senior Colman strikers have been on strike for 12 months. They travel 2,000 mile per week to address meetings. "We will continue to do that until we have got our jobs back," says TONY LOWE. FINN JENSEN interviewed Tony for *Briefing*.

How does it feel to be on strike for more than a year? Five years older! But you also learn more during one year of strike than five years on the factory floor, or ten years being a union official! It's a real education.

But it must have affected your economy and family life too?

Judith works 12 hours a week, so that is a help, for we have two children.

The Senior Colman strikers have done all kinds of fundraising in the labour movement. The miners were quick to come with financial support and are continuing to do so. Their support has been superb.

Could you briefly explain how the strike started and what the situation is today?

The company was taken over in July 1986 by a very big multinational company with interests in Europe, America, Australia, etc., called Senior Engineering Group Ltd, whose chair is professor Roland Smith.

He was a former chair of Silentnight, and he ran the 18 month dispute there.

Within two weeks he forced redundancies on non-unionised staff. He tried to impose compulsory redundancies on the shop floor, which we successfully fought.

The company then tried to introduce a whole series of changes in working practices: new contracts of employment, which they refused to negotiate. They tried to force us to take holidays when it suited the company, four weeks in the winter and no weeks in the summer.

They wanted to time people at work in order to make cost cuttings and at the end of the day redundancies.

We refused to accept any of the things the company put in our way, until the union and the full-time officials had negotiated.

We managed to get a meeting arranged for January 20th 1987. We headed off for Christmas but noticed the company was stockpiling our work. There was overtime when we felt it was unnecessary. People worked seven days and 12 hours per day. And we suspected that there was something in the air. We tried to explain to the workforce that it was not right to stockpile that amount of work — and we could smell a rat.

After Christmas the company issued time sheets which hadn't been agreed and instructed four people to follow them. The company then sacked the four people, who refused to use the new time sheets.

We decided to have a secret ballot for industrial action. The feelings were very high; out of the 112 workers 110 voted for industrial action. The company was notified of the result and asked to re-employ the four sacked.

They told us to get out of the room and not to waste their time. As could be appreciated the feelings went even higher.

We walked out and withdrew our labour. We elected a strike committee, we organised a 24-hour picket rota and visited factories throughout Manchester and Stockport.

The company then told us quite clearly that if we didn't return to work the next day we would all be dismissed.

We received confirmation about dismissal on the Thursday morning. The company had

advertised our jobs the day before we were sacked!

The company had recruited a new workforce of scabs into the factory to replace the old workforce. Just like at Wapping the company had planned the dispute. You don't have a strike, sack the whole workforce and recruit a new one without a lot of preparation.

And today there are 29 out of the 99 still on strike?

Yes. 30% still on strike after a year is still impressive. The 29 are committed to stay and fight. But the vast majority of people stuck it out until August-September last year, when the company made their third financial offer: a cash inducement and an assurance that should any vacancies occur the former employed would be favourably considered. Unfortunately 66 people took the financial settlement from the company.

At that time we wanted to thank these 66 for being with us for nine months but in hindsight my feelings have certainly changed. I now think they let us down. They took the easy way out, using excuses like family pressure — which we all know very well — and took the money. The rest of us just had to carry on.

How would you describe the response from you union, the AEU, to your strike?

Absolutely disgusting — without any reservations at all. But the rank and file have been absolutely supreme.

Certain officials have been supreme. But we have been a great embarrassment to the union and the labour movement, especially during the election campaign and at the TUC Conference.

I have no faith in the full-time officials in the AEU. I make a few exceptions, but they have done absolutely nothing for us at top level.

We called for a one day strike during the election campaign, which we wanted through the Confed. We had the support of the rank and file, convenors, etc. And the full-time officials and the standing Labour candidate campaigned viciously against this.

At the TUC Conference, for example, we were unable to have a stall. They insisted on us paying £1,500 for the stall. I have got no faith in the leadership of the AEU.

But you have got a lot of support from other unions, the NUM, for example.

The miners have been absolutely superb. When you have been in a dispute you find that the vast majority of the support you get is from people who have experienced some of this themselves. The miners have been the main. I can't find the words to describe it, it's very emotional actually.

At Christmas, for example, they turned up with toys, etc., for the kids. And that support has been throughout the year, from Durham, South Wales, and Nottingham — where the NUM has its own problems. They are 100% behind us. They are a credit to the trade union movement.

Mobilise for the 28th May
demonstration.

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) has called for a national demonstration on Saturday 28th May at 12 noon from Albert Square in Manchester. This demonstration should be built in the trade unions, in the Labour Party, in the campaigns, etc. Last summer the VMDC had a demonstration in Manchester with 4,000 people. This years needs to be even bigger.

Viraj Mendis has been in sanctuary in the Church of Ascension in Hulme in Manchester since 20th December, 1986, which is over 16 months! If he leaves the church the Home Office will deport him to Sri Lanka, where he is likely to be killed. Viraj has been living in Britain for 14 years, but the Home Office calls him an overstayer.

In a few weeks Viraj Mendis' final appeal will come up. The Home Office has already indicated that if Viraj loses the appeal the Home Office is likely to send the police into the church to arrest and deport him. The VMDC is therefore working flat out to make sure that he will win the appeal.

But, of course, Viraj Mendis is not the only one who is under threat of deportation. About 50 black people are deported every week from Britain. Many families are separated, because the Home Office will not let a wife, a husband or even the children into Britain. With the governments new Immigration Act, it will be even more difficult to unite families. More black people will be deported, and we will see more people in sanctuary.

Viraj Mendis has shown that it is possible to fight back. For 16 months a public campaign has made it impossible for the government to deport Viraj. Others have followed his example of taking sanctuary when under threat of being deported. And as a result most of them have won their cases. Barbara Ahmed and her child have just won their right to get their husband and father into this country. It is possible to beat the Home Office if you build a campaign.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Mobilise for the 28th May: get your organisation, church, trade union etc to support the demonstration, distribute leaflets about the demonstration and bring banners on the 28th May.
2. Support the VMDC: every Friday at 5,30pm VMDC has a demonstration from Piccadilly Gardens to the Church of Ascension. And every Sunday evening at 7,30pm, it holds an activist meeting in the church.
3. Lobby at the appeal: when the date of the appeal for Viraj Mendis is known VMDC will organise a mass lobby. Coaches will go to London from Manchester, so contact the VMDC if you want to go to the lobby.
4. Help the sanctuary: You can help Viraj Mendis in sanctuary with all kinds of practical tasks - 24 hours a day! Contact the VMDC, Church of Ascension, or phone 061-234 3168.
5. Other campaigns: Paul Ho has started his campaign for his right to stay in Britain. - Begum has a campaign for her husband to be allowed to come to Britain. - Both campaigns need activists. Contact Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, Room 713, Town Hall, Manchester M60, tel. 061-234 3394.
6. The Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit is itself campaigning for funding, so it can be properly established. If you want to support the setting up of an Immigration Aid Unit then come to the open steering group meetings in the Town Hall. Ask for details on 061-234 3394.

Support the Palestinians.

Since mid-December 1987 a full-scale popular uprising has taken place in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The British media have shown some of the things happening all over the areas of Palestine occupied by Israel in 1967. It is no longer possible for Israel's supporters to deny the reality of a brutal occupation that has lasted over 20 years: over 100 Palestinians civilians have died in the territories as a result of violent suppression of the popular protests at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers.

When the Israeli policy of shooting was 'changed' to beating to reduce the death toll (and international criticism), the first few days saw the hospitalization, according to official Israeli statistics, of several hundred Palestinians, mainly youth, with broken limbs. Tear gas and rubber bullets led to further casualties. Yet the uprising continues, supported in many areas by a complete commercial strike and reaching even the most isolated villages and rural communities.

The uprising demonstrates the total rejection of Israeli military occupation. Since 1967, over half the land of the West Bank has been brought under direct Israeli control: one third of the adult male population has spent some time in Israeli prisons for alleged political offences: some 20,000 houses have been demolished: schools and universities have frequently been closed, trade unions and voluntary organisations harassed and obstructed: trials for political offences are carried out by military tribunals without the right of appeal and a recent Israeli report has established the use of physical violence and torture as a routine method to extract 'confessions' from Palestinian prisoners.

The Palestinian people urgently need the solidarity of the British labour movement. If you want to get involved in building such solidarity work, or require speakers/model resolutions etc you can either contact:

Palestine Solidarity Campaign,
BM PSA WCIN 3XX. or
Manchester Palestine Solidarity
Campaign, c/o Grass Roots Bookshop,
Newton Street (Near Piccadilly Gardens).
M/C PSC meets the first and third
Tuesday of each month at UMIST.

A Day for Palestine



Show your solidarity with the Palestinians:

Demonstrate on May 15th!

Assemble at the Thames Embankment, London,
at 1.30p.m., Sunday, May 15th. (Embankment @)

Called by the Interim Joint Committee for Palestine,
c/o 21, Collingham Road, London SW5 0NU

Save the

Sharpville Six.

The Sharpville six won a stay of execution through international and internal pressure. The five men and a woman were sentenced to death for a "crime" which even the prosecution and judge admit they did not commit!

The Sharpville six deserve our total support in order to ensure permanent reprieve. - Further protests are therefore needed in the coming weeks. Manchester Anti-Apartheid Movement is campaigning for the Sharpville six every Saturday from 11 am to 2 pm in front of Mark and Spencers. If you have some spare time, come and help.

Fight the Alton bill.

The Alton Bill will reach its third reading on Friday May 6th and the outcome is still less than certain. It will come back from the committee stages with certain exemptions such as for severe handicap and rape victims under 16 but essentially unchanged.

The Fight Alton Bill campaign (FAB) will step up its activities locally and nationally to show the high level of opposition to this attack on women's rights. The 27th April is the 20th anniversary of the implementation of the 1967 Abortion Act. 20 years of safe legal abortion, if not on demand as women really need, at least available to women up to a 28-week limit. We are going to have to fight very hard if those rights are not to be significantly reduced by David Alton's bill.

A time limit of 18 weeks would be disastrous for thousands of women who need late abortions for a variety of reasons - not least of which NHS delays and cuts. Even the reduction to 24 weeks which has been suggested as a compromise would be a loss of rights for women. It would mean doctors and women being faced with a completely arbitrary limit of 23 weeks of pregnancy which it is not possible to prove. Yet the burden of proof would lie with the women and her doctor in defending against prosecution. Which doctor would risk this? The answer is that a 24-week limit really means a 22-week limit "to be on the safe side", thus affecting a large number of women.

FAB has organised a number of activities in the coming weeks, on 23rd April in Manchester Piccadilly from 11.30 am to 3 pm, on Tuesday 26th April with a lobby of Parliament in London, and on 27th April with a regional day of action with activities at Piccadilly Gardens 12-2 pm and 5-7 pm, followed by a FAB meeting in the Town Hall. Lastly there will be a demonstration on the eve of the third reading in London on 5th May. We need a big turnout for this.

Labour women through the Labour Women's Action Committee have played a leading role in FAB. It is intolerable that Labour MPs contributed to the Bill's successful 2nd reading by voting

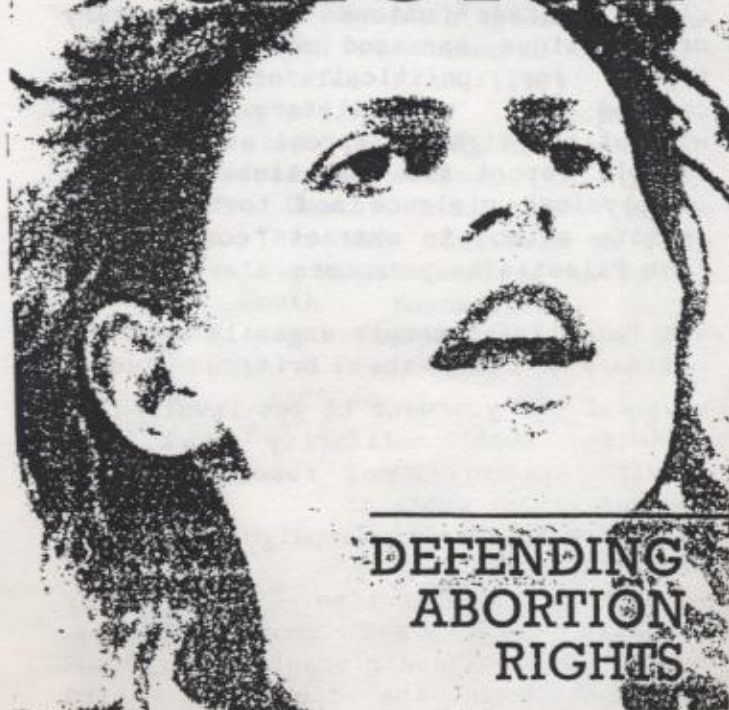
contrary to party policy. There must be a continuing campaign to replace these men with women who will act in the interests of women's rights in Parliament.

The following Labour MPs in Greater Manchester have failed to vote against the Bill at its 2nd reading: Alfred Morris, James Lamond, Tom Pendry and Gerald Kaufmann.

Lastly we must defend a woman who is being witchhunted for her activity in FAB. Lesley Farrington from Leigh Labour Party is facing an enquiry from her CLP and possible the NEC. Her 'crime' was to write to the NUM and the local paper saying that Lawrence Camliff, MP had voted against Labour Party and his union's policy on the Alton Bill. Lesley must be defended. Look out for a model resolution to be circulated later.

Get FAB literature and model resolutions, invite a speaker: contact Cath Potter, 93 Ewan Street, Gorton, Manchester - Tel. 223-4470.

WOMEN'S CHOICE



DEFENDING
ABORTION
RIGHTS