# An alternative lens of Leeds – The Leeds Other Paper 1980-89

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

## Abstract

The *Leeds Other Paper* was an alternative Leeds newspaper that ran from 1974-1994. It was part of a larger movement of alternative newspapers dissatisfied with the established press in many British cities. Though the people working on these papers had no formal journalistic training they were, nevertheless, equipped to produce meaningful coverage of stories and people that would have gone voiceless in the mainstream media. LOP editorials and articles illustrate a continued commitment to reporting on people and groups struggling to take control of their own lives and encouraging the 'agency' of their readership to take more control of their own lives or assist in the struggles of others.

This thesis analyses three themes from the 1980s era of the paper through the lens of this agency. In Chapter 1, it argues that LOP's special report on *Protect and Survive* was effective in informing people of how little agency they actually had in a nuclear attack, encouraging the view that the only way to defend against nuclear weapons was to get rid of them completely. Chapter 2 looks at the reporting immediately after the 1984-5 miners' strike ended in March 1985, arguing that the papers focus on the cost of the strike and the idea of the miners up against the state attempts to salvage and justify the agency of the community over the previous year. Finally, Chapter 3 focuses on the campaign against Section 28 in December 1988, arguing that LOP was effective in informing its readership of the threat of Section 28 and encouraging them to get involved in the campaign against it.

# Contents

# Introduction

The *Leeds Other Paper* was an alternative Leeds newspaper started in 1974 during the miners' strike and the three day week. It was intended to be an alternative to the pro-Conservative *Yorkshire Evening Post* and *Yorkshire Post*, providing a media source which covered topics that would have been overlooked in the established press and helping people in community and industrial action find each other and inform others[1]. It aimed at a working class readership and was committed to class struggle, anti-racism and feminism[2]. The paper was formed by a group of ex-students, none of whom had journalistic experience[3] and had to learn reporting, editing, production and distribution skills as they went[4]. Anyone who wanted to contribute to the paper, either through providing content or helping with production, were welcome to do so at editorial meetings. There was no editor, and anyone could have an opinion on what could be in the paper. The paper attracted writers, photographers and cartoonists, alongside volunteers who helped proofread, fold and deliver the paper, many of whom were unpaid[5].

*LOP* was sold at newsagents, through community groups and at trade union branches[6]. The first issue sold around 500 copies, the following issues had a run of about 1000 copies, and sales as a whole never rose above 2500 per issue[7]. Tony Harcup, a LOP volunteer who went on to write about journalism and became an Emeritus Fellow at the University of Sheffield, suggested that the paper served a readership who were isolated from the mainstream media. A 1986 survey reported that 35% of their readership had never read the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 65% had never read the *Yorkshire Post*, around 50% didn't listen to local radio and less than 50% never watched regional news on TV[8]. A

[1] Tony Harcup, '*Alternative Journalism, Alternative Voices*' (Taylor and Francis Group, 2013), p37
[2] Harcup, p38
[3] Harcup, p37
[4] Harcup, p40
[5] Harcup, pp46-7
[6] Harcup, p38
[7] Harcup, pp38-9
[8] Harcup, p46

survey conducted in 1982[9] received about 100 replies and concluded that LOP's readership was mostly white and aged between 20 and 40, with the ratio of women to men being about 40:60. It also found that 40% of those who replied were trade unionists and 35% were members of political groups. 13% of those observed were students, 16% were teachers or lecturers and the rest was split between manual, technical, clerical, community and social work.

*Leeds Other Paper* published monthly from 1974, went bi-weekly in April 1976 and weekly in late 1980. In 1991 it renamed itself the *Northern Star* after a nineteenth century Chartist newspaper of the same name in the hopes of attracting more readers both in general and outside of Leeds[10].The paper ceased production in 1994 after '*the political and economic tide went out*'[11]. Its attempts to attract more readers caused it to distance itself from its original news and politics to favour more listings and popular news, losing touch with its old political base[12]. The few paid staff became more and more overworked as the number of unpaid contributors fell[13], prompting a decline in the democracy at editorial meetings[14].

Throughout its run, it provided reporting on many issues that wouldn't have been done justice in established media, and provided voices to many people that would otherwise have been voiceless. Harcup wrote that '*For twenty years, Leeds had another voice*'[15]. A Radio 4 program in 1988 called *Wilko's Weekly*, investigating different communities through the lens of their local community newspapers[16], called the newspaper '*a parish magazine of the Leeds dispossessed'*[17]. An obituary for Desmond Miller, who helped set up and run Leeds Community Press (the workers coop which published *LOP*) wrote that

[9] Leeds Other Paper, '*LOP survey – what you said'* 19th March 1982 p20
[10] Harcup, p39
[11] Harcup, p39
[12] Harcup, p49
[13] Harcup, p42
[14] Harcup, pp46-7
[15] Harcup, p39
[16] LOP, '*Wilko investigates*' 5th February 1988 p8
[17] Harcup, p39

*LOP*, alongside the *Sheffield Anarchist*, made sizeable contributions to street level political debate in Yorkshire during the 1970s and 80s[18].

*Leeds Other Paper* was part of a wider alternative press movement springing up in the late 1960s and continuing into the 80s[19]. They emerged out of frustration and dissatisfaction with the established press in many cities[20], challenging the social, political and journalistic conservatism of the press[21]. Instead of citing from traditional sources, such as the police and local establishment, they drew from the stories of people who were marginalized in the traditional news process, such as the views of people on housing estates, community groups, trade unionists, the unemployed, the black community and those involved in the gay and women's movements[22]. Most of these publications were produced by people with no formal background, allowing them to find stories that the norms of general practice encouraged the mainstream press to ignore[23]. Each individual paper varied depending on local conditions and the priorities of the team behind them[24]. Writing on the alternative press movement for the *Guardian* in 1975, Patrick Ensor noted that they could be used to understand the problems facing a community. Alternative press in inner urban areas might prioritize property development and play space, and publications in cities with heavy industry and unemployment might concern themselves with local pollution and jobs[25]. At a Yorkshire conference of alternative press publications in April 1984, the movement defined itself as local, anti-racist, anti-sexist, overtly left leaning, not produced for profit, editorially free from advertising influence and ran on broadly collective principles[26].

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[18] Barbara Jane, 'Desmond Miller obituary' *The Guardian* 28th March 2024 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/mar/28/desmond-miller-obituary> <Accessed 26/9/24>
[19] Harcup, p33
[20] Patrick Ensor, 'What the other papers say: Britain's 'alternative' press is enjoying an unprecedented boom in spite of inflation and soaring newsprint prices', *The Guardian* 7th April 1975, p12
[21] Harcup, p33
[22] Harcup, p55
[23] Harcup, p56
[24] Harcup, p33
[25] Ensor, p12
[26] Tony Harcup, 'Reporting the voices of the voiceless during the miners' strike: an early form of 'citizen journalism' *Journal of Media Practice* **12.1**(2011), p29

The movement arose amidst a background of anti-colonial wars, student protests, civil rights movements and industrial conflicts in the 1960s, and alongside increased self-organization in working class communities and activism from movements such as feminism, gay liberation, anti-nuclear, anti-apartheid and anti-fascism[27]. Relatively cheap and easy offset-litho printing made the barrier to entry low[28] and a growing literature around producing DIY newspapers made it easier to develop the necessary skills[29], both of which helping to facilitate the spread of the alternative press. Though the movement as a whole fizzled out by the mid-1990s the alternative press was still significant in challenging the mainstream media[30]. The *Leeds Other Paper* was a prominent member of this group.

A prominent theme of the *Leeds Other Paper* is that of agency. Namely supporting people struggling to take control of their lives or influence decisions made which affected their lives. *LOP* served as an information hub, uniting people in separate struggles and informing their readership about them. In an editorial in the first issue of the paper in 1974, the paper wrote that '*It is our intention to support all groups active in struggling in industry and elsewhere for greater control of their own lives.*[31]' An introduction piece published a year later echoed the same sentiment, saying that it wanted to '*support groups and individuals struggling to take control over their own lives – whether it's in the factory, the housing estate or the home.*[32]' *LOP's* comment on the 1979 election also articulates this same idea, arguing that issues like housing problems, hospital conditions, community activities and strikes were more important than the 'electoral games'. They write '*It is the activities of ordinary people that we are concerned with – more than the activities of politicians and bureaucrats. We want working class people to take control for themselves.*[33]' Furthermore, an internal document drafted by *LOP* worker Gordon Wilson for discussion at a LOP meeting in 1980 called '*Views on the*

[27] Harcup, p33
[28] Harcup, p34
[29] Ensor, p12
[30] Harcup, p58
[31] LOP, '*About Leeds Other Paper'* January 1974 p4
[32] LOP, '*What's this Leeds Other Paper all about then?*' February 1975 p2
[33] LOP, '*Action more important than voting'* 27th April 1979 p4

*News[34]'* also presented ideas of agency and action. It argued that one of the key reasons to have news (alongside educating and confirming beliefs) was '*To move people to action*'[35], and described a good story as one that reinforced the ability of people to do things for themselves and decreased their reliance on others, honing in on the belief that people should have control over their own lives[36].

This mentality can also be witnessed in the *Other Paper*, the short lived predecessor to *LOP* which ran from October 1969 to April 1970[37]. Its first issue editorial states that '*People have no control over the decisions which most deeply affect their lives. But in order to fight for control over their own lives people have to know what is being decided in their name, and it helps to know what other people are doing too. The OTHER PAPER wants to provide that information.[38]*' The people who went on to run *LOP* learned their lessons from running the *Other Paper* (controlling its own press and sticking to what they could do themselves[39]), but the focus on agency and people taking control of their own lives continued.

Finally, some articles provided contact details for the groups and causes they were reporting on. For example, in their article reporting on the Harolds and Royal Parks Community Association's campaign against slum clearance proposals from the council in their area, LOP notes at the end that the group was planning to hold open meetings in the next few weeks, and that they could be contacted via the paper[40]. Another article, focusing on the Equal Rights in Clubs Campaign for Action (ERICCA) provided contact details at the end of the article for anyone who wanted to join the upcoming lobby or picket[41]. These pieces suggest that LOP did not treat its readers passively, it respected their agency and wanted them to utilize it in order to improve their own lives or bolster

[34] Harcup, p171
[35] Harcup, p171
[36] Harcup, p172
[37] Harcup, p37
[38] The Other Paper, '*Editorial*' 10th October 1969 p2
[39] LOP, '*LOP 10 Years – Blowing our own trumpet*' 27th January 1984 p21
[40] LOP, '*Ebors fight demolition'* July 1974 p2
[41] LOP, '*A woman's right to CUES*' 22nd February 1980 p2

the struggles of other people in the community. These editorial pieces and articles have consistently encouraged me to view the paper from the perspective of agency and encouraging people to take control over their own lives, both for my undergraduate dissertation focusing on LOP coverage from 1974-9 and for this postgraduate research.

A discussion paper from a meeting on the 10th September 1973 (during which the decision to go ahead with an alternative newspaper was made) suggested that the precise content of the paper was unimportant, arguing that '*It can be more community based one week, more strike based the second, heralding the revolution the third…*[42]'. This mentality alongside their perception of the mainstream media as shallow and ignoring the real concerns of people[43] encouraged them to report on many different issues. My undergraduate dissertation on the 1970s era of the paper picked up on many themes, such as strikes, council planning, homelessness, fascism, the campaign against cuts, the 1977 silver jubilee, women's issues and nuclear protest, but 10000 words wasn't large enough to fit everything I was interested in, such as LGBT issues, prison riots and movements for prisoners' rights, articles on Chilean refugees living in Leeds and articles on Ireland. Many of these themes persist into the 1980s, but as it turns out 30000 words isn't enough to talk about all of these ideas either! The three main focuses for this research were picked either due to prominence or personal interest and form a loose chronological framework to show how the idea of agency was utilized over time. The *Leeds Other Paper* was accessed at the Leeds Central Library via microfilm and I was able to access a few other newspapers for comparison through my home university and the University of Leeds via the SCONUL scheme.

Chapter 1 focuses on *LOP's* publishing of the first leaked copy of the civil defence pamphlet *Protect and Survive*[44]. Reporting from the *Guardian*, Martin Wainwright called this the papers greatest scoop[45]. *LOP* allied itself with the protest against nuclear

[42] Harcup, p37
[43] Harcup, p40
[44] Harcup, p43
[45] Martin Wainwright – 'Out of the blue, a paper in the pink' *The Guardian* 14th March 1988, p21

weapons, which was bolstered by the impending arrival of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in 1983. The chapter looks at how *LOP* reported on *Protect and Survive*, arguing that its usage of specific text from the pamphlet helped it illustrate the lack of agency people actually had in the face of nuclear attack, reinforcing the idea that the only defence against nuclear weapons was to get rid of them completely. Chapter 2 focuses on *LOP's* first issue after the end of the 1984-5 miners' strike in March 1985. They played a pivotal role in counterbalancing the hostile output of the mainstream media and their focus on ordinary people on the picket lines contrasted the wider media's focus on Scargill and the leadership[46]. The paper vigorously supported the strike from start to finish, championing the cause of the miners and their families and encouraging their readership to get involved too, yet in the end they went back to work without an agreement. By reporting on the cost of the strike and arguing that the miners were up against the entire state, this chapter argues that *LOP* focused on trying to salvage and justify the agency of ordinary people. The final chapter focuses on the beginning of the campaign against Section 28, a law prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities. By looking at its output regarding the law in December 1988 and contrasting it with other papers such as the *Pink Paper* and the *Guardian*, the paper argues that *LOP* was effective in articulating the threat of Section 28 to its readership and encouraging them to get involved with the campaign. Similarities between it and the *Pink Paper* are more impressive considering that *LOP* didn't focus singularly on LGBT issues.

[46] Harcup, pp40-41

## "We have published this in the hope that it WILL cause alarm." – *Leeds Other Paper* and *Protect and Survive*

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw an increase[1] in atomic anxiety[2] as the period of détente came to an end and the Cold War heated up. The Three Mile Island disaster in 1979 raised concerns about nuclear safety, while the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan heightened Cold War tensions. Further raising such tensions was the election of Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister in 1979 and the election of Ronald Reagan as American President in 1981. They were both Cold warriors who caused the temperature of the war to increase. The special relationship between the US and the UK also created its own tensions. Many people in the UK were distrustful of Reagan, seeing him as a cowboy president and a dangerously trigger happy figure. He described the USSR as an 'evil empire', oversaw the largest peacetime military buildup in American history, intensified American military involvement around the globe, bolstered nuclear weapons programs and put resources into his controversial Strategic Defence Initiative[3]. The decision to deploy American cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe in response to Soviet SS-20 deployment sparked an intense amount of protest[4], creating a polarized political situation in the UK. They were due to arrive in 1983, which gave anti-nuclear campaigns a clear focus and a ticking time bomb effect promoting a sense of urgency. All of these factors raised fears of the prospect of nuclear war. The membership of the CND, which fell into decline during the 1970s, skyrocketed to record levels in the 80s[5]. By campaigning for unilateral disarmament by the UK they hoped that other countries including the USSR would follow suit.

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[1] Daniel Cordle, 'Protect/Protest: British Nuclear fiction of the 1980s' *The British Journal for the History of Science* **45.4**(December 2012), p655
[2] William M. Knoblauch, 'Will you sing about the missiles? British Antinuclear Protest Music of the 1980s.' from '*Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear and the Cold War of the 1980s*', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p104
[3] Knoblauch, p107
[4] Cordle, p655
[5] Cordle, p657

*The Times* ran a four part series on nuclear defence, with the first part on the 16th January 1980 drawing attention to a largely unknown government pamphlet called *Protect and Survive* (*P&S*), intended to be distributed in the leadup to nuclear attack. A BBC Panorama documentary on civil defence included a video version of *P&S* that would be broadcast before an attack[6]. *P&S* was intended to provide information about surviving a nuclear attack and easing the anxieties of citizens, but it instead became the centre of a huge cultural shift on the left and centre left against nuclear weapons. It inspired the name of E.P Thompson's *Protest and Survive*, which was used as the motto for a CND rally in Trafalgar Square on the 26th October 1980 which attracted 80,000 people[7].

Lots of nuclear centric literature was created during this period, such as Maggie Gee's *The Burning Book*, which placed women at the centre of nuclear protest[8], Louise Lawrence's *Children of the Dust,* which imagined a post holocaust scenario with alternative models of family[9], Raymond Briggs' *When the Wind Blows* (Which was released as a book in 1982 and as a film in 1986), telling the tragic story of an elderly couple following government advice in the leadup to nuclear war[10] and *P&S Monthly*, a magazine for everyone considering a fallout shelter or survival equipment[11].

TV programs were also produced, such as the BBC's *Threads*[12], which imagined a post holocaust Sheffield thrust back into agricultural production reminiscent of the middle ages and *Edge of Darkness*, a crime drama and political thriller which showed shady connections between civilian and military nuclear establishments[13]. A rich anti-nuclear music culture also flourished due partially to MTV, which delivered protest music to

[6] Cordle, p656
[7] Cordle, p657
[8] Cordle, p669
[9] Cordle, p664
[10] Knoblauch, p105
[11] Cordle, p657
[12] Cordle, p657
[13] Cordle, p665

wider audiences[14](and especially young people). To name a few examples, there was *Protect and Survive* by Jethro Tull and the Dubliners[15], *Shout* and *Mothers Talk* by Tears for Fears[16], *Dancing with Tears in My Eyes* by Ultravox[17], *Land of Confusion* by Genesis[18], *Two Tribes* by Frankie Goes to Hollywood[19] and *This World Over and Living Through Another Cuba* by XTV[20]. The period also inspired many different actions of protest, such as a prominent protest by women at Greenham Common, a program called *Protest and Survive* by Schools against the Bomb created for BBC's Open Door which asserted the absurdity of civil defence planning[21] and the nuclear free zone movement, which saw around 120 councils sign up[22].

Many municipalities in British and American cities published brochures and leaflets describing the effects of nuclear war on towns and cities[23]. A Labour led Leeds City Council, which oversaw Leeds becoming a nuclear free zone in 1981, published *Leeds and the Bomb* in 1983 which described what would happen if a nuclear bomb fell on the town hall[24]. Among the topics it discussed were which countries had the bomb, how a nuclear war could start, the possible effects of a nuclear explosion such as light, radiation, heat and fallout, suggested reasons why Leeds could be attacked, the aftermath and reality faced by survivors and the effectiveness of government civil defence. The range of the bombs aftermath were not just put in terms of distance in kilometers. For example, the flash of nuclear radiation could kill anyone out in the open up to 1 and a half miles from the Town Hall, as far as Holbeck, Hyde Park and Chapeltown, and the light could blind anyone up to 8 miles away, as far as Yeadon, East

[14] Knoblauch, p106
[15] Cordle, p657
[16] Knoblauch, p110
[17] Knoblauch, p107
[18] Knoblauch, p104
[19] Knoblauch, p108
[20] Knoblauch, p108 + 106 respectively
[21] Cordle, p657
[22] Jonathan Hogg, 'Cultures of nuclear resistance in 1980s Liverpool' *Urban History* **42.4**(November 2015), p589
[23] Susanne Schregel, 'Nuclear war and the city perspectives on municipal interventions in defence (Great Britain, New Zealand, West Germany, USA, 1980-1985)' *Urban History* **42.4**(November 2015), pp576-7
[24] Bryan North and Geoff Jones, Leeds City Council Department of Planning, '*Leeds and the Bomb*' (Leeds: Leeds City Council, 1983)

Keswick, Garforth, Morley and Pudsey[25]. The citing of specific place names allowed Leeds citizens to contextualize the impact of the bomb more effectively, especially if they were in one of the affected areas. On the subject of civil war and deterrence it directly disagreed with *P&S's* assertion that nuclear war was survivable, which in its view understated the death and destruction that a bomb could bring.

Part of the motivation of the book for Leeds City Council was a moral obligation to tell Leeds citizens about their real chances of surviving a bomb[26]. Its skepticism on *P&S's* advice and on the effectiveness of civil defence continues at the end of the pamphlet by providing advice for what people should do. Instead of blindly trusting government statements, *Leeds and the Bomb* wanted citizens to make up their own minds and use multiple sources[27]. *Leeds and the Bomb* was not the only pamphlet published on the subject of the nuclear threat; *Leeds Under a Cloud* also exists, providing information on what would happen if a nuclear accident were to happen at a power station at Heysham, near Lancashire[28]. These pamphlets evidence both a demand for information on the impact of a nuclear threat and a moral obligation by local authorities in providing said information. Reporting in 1983, the *Leeds Other Paper* noted that the initial run of 10,000 copies were almost sold out and quoted a councilor saying they hadn't received a single letter of complaint[29]. Overall, they fit squarely into the anti-nuclear culture of the time.

A few general themes underpinned this rejection of nuclear power and weapons. Firstly, there is a theme of vulnerability. By representing a globally threatened humanity, the media of the 1980s created the image of a planet bound by a common vulnerability[30]. Exposing this vulnerability delegitimized the Cold War status quo based on the constant

[25] Leeds and the Bomb, p8
[26] Leeds and the Bomb p3
[27] Leeds and the Bomb p25
[28] George Crossley, Peace and Emergency Planning Unit, '*Leeds Under a Cloud'* (Leeds: Leeds City Council, 1988)
[29] Leeds Other Paper, '*Leeds and the Bomb*' 29th April 1983 p7
[30] Cordle, p667

threat of nuclear peril[31]. Nuclear weapons were also presented as an environmental threat, a theme originating from nuclear weapon testing controversies in the 50s given new prominence due to the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl disasters. Accompanying it was the theory of nuclear winter (in which dust blocking the sun led to dropping temperatures after a nuclear attack) [32], all of which created the image of an assault on the Earth and its ecosystem rather than just a single country[33]. The themes mentioned above both had the effect of decoupling people from different political establishments up to a point and encouraging alliances with each other, creating a peace agenda in the interests of humanity against political establishments seen as threatening ordinary people[34]. Nuclear debate and literature also had the effect of reproducing the competing social visions between left and right, charged by alliance or opposition to the Thatcher regime. Protest was mostly a feature of the left, alongside the idea that protesting against nukes was to work for a more sustainable economy, with deterrence being advocated by the right[35]. The chasm between these two competing ideologies was a distinguishing feature of the 1980s. Finally, a link between nuclear violence and male domestic violence encouraged increased participation from women and the feminist movement[36].

At the centre of this culture was *P&S*, the newspaper coverage of which is the main focus of this chapter. Designed to be released in the leadup to nuclear war, it intended to educate people on how to prepare for an impending attack. While it set out to offer reassurance that an attack could be survived, it actually ended up highlighting the vulnerability of ordinary citizens[37]. It provided comically ineffective measures for riding out a nuclear holocaust, such as drawing curtains, painting windows white and sheltering under doors propped up against walls. The pamphlet would have been accompanied by a series of films which were seen as disturbing due to their monotone

[31] Cordle, pp654-5
[32] Cordle, p665
[33] Cordle, p666
[34] Cordle, p666
[35] Cordle, pp667-8
[36] Cordle, p663
[37] Cordle, pp656-7

narration and low budget effects, such as paper cutouts of houses being destroyed in a nuclear attack[38]. *P&S* had to make visible the vulnerability of the country to attack, but in doing so provoked an insecurity it was unable to quell. It was also released with a major focus on the family, with its logo showing a traditional nuclear family and its advice advocating for people to stay at home. This focus was done for practical reasons but it entered a world where the family was ideologically charged, releasing during a period of nostalgia for earlier periods of domestic and social stability, where the current day was characterized by familial breakdown, high divorce rates and delinquency. To make things worse, it dealt with the deaths of family members in a chilling tone, forcing people to confront not only the possibility of the deaths of their family, but also a world where the regular process of grieving and remembrance were suspended[39].

Furthermore, *P&S* reinforced the image that protection against nuclear war was unfeasible, even if not impossible. The measures in the book represented a devolving of responsibility from central government to individuals, encouraging people to build shelters in their homes instead of pursuing programs to build networks of public shelters or an effort to officially educate people. This implied that the government was responsible for deterrence instead of defence, idea being that if deterrence failed then protection on a national level had failed, which was not an encouraging message for people to deal with[40]. Finally, *P&S* enhanced fears of the environmental impact of nuclear weapons. It sought to quell fears of radioactive contamination by providing advice on relevant precautions, but this evoked fears of nuclear materials and uncontrollable fallout being able to pass through any barriers, especially when contrasted with *P&S's* emphasis on building safe rooms[41]. A lot of media did not directly mention P&S, but it generated immense controversy[42] and became an icon of the 1980s nuclear culture in Britain[43].

[38] Knoblauch, p105
[39] Cordle, p657
[40] Cordle, p656
[41] Cordle, p666
[42] Cordle, p658
[43] Cordle, p656

*Leeds Other Paper* was an avid opponent of nuclear power and weapons, even before the rise of nuclear anxiety during the 1980s. It was one of the themes touched upon in my undergraduate dissertation, which pulled from *LOP* articles on the '*Nuclear State'* by Robert Jungk[44] and interviews with members of Leeds Friends of the Earth against the Windscale Inquiry[45] and the Leeds Torness Alliance against the building of a nuclear station near Edinburgh[46], to illustrate the arguments made against nuclear power and the progression towards a more direct form of protest. This pre-existing opposition to nuclear power expanded to include protest against weapons in the 1980s. To list a few examples, they reported on 'death trains' carrying radioactive material through Leeds[47], carried articles[48] and letters[49] reporting positively about the efforts of the women at Greenham Common and covered other forms of protest such as the 1981 Youth Peace Festival[50] and the Snowball civil disobedience campaign[51]. From August 1980 there was also a feature called *The Fallout File*, providing a selection of nuclear news from local, national and international sources as part of their campaign against nuclear power and weapons[52]. I noticed this was relatively common until around 1984. They also engaged with and reviewed pieces of nuclear literature from this time, one example being a review of Duncan Campbell's *War Plan UK* and Briggs' *When the Wind Blows*[53].

LOP echoed all the usual arguments for the scrapping of nuclear weapons, but they also add a political motive for nuclear power. In an article detailing a visit to Hartlepool power station, LOP stated that '*a political decision has been made to reduce the industrial power of the miners by investing in a massive expansion of the country's*

[44] LOP, '*The Deadly Mushroom*' 10 1979 p5
[45] LOP, '*Getting the Wind up at Windscale'* 17 1978 p9
[46] LOP, '*Nuclear Power: No Thanks!'* 27th April 1979 pp10-11
[47] LOP, '*Death Trains'* 13th June 1980 pp8-9
[48] LOP, '*Greenham supporters close Headrow*' 18th February 1983 p1
[49] LOP, '*Letter – Don't forget Greenham'* 18th January 1985 p9
[50] LOP, '*Give peace a chance*' 6th February 1981 p5
[51] LOP, '*Snowball of peace rolls on*' 9th January 1987 pp4-5
[52] LOP, '*Fall-out File*' 8th August 1980 pp6-7
[53] LOP, '*War Planning*' 4th February 1983 pp10-11

*nuclear power program*[54]'. This illustrates that they could not separate the push for nuclear power and weapons from the perceived Conservative desire to break down the miners and organized labour. Nuclear issues became less prominent in *LOP* as the decade progressed – the Cruise and Pershing missiles were deployed, removing the urgency from anti-nuclear campaigns and arms negotiations between Reagan and Gorbachev reduced the temperature of the cold war as a whole. Despite this, anti-nuclear reporting was still one of LOP's most prominent themes during the 1980s.

*P&S* presented the idea that nuclear war was survivable, but in order to do so it exposed the vulnerability of people in the event of it. *LOP* was one of the first news outlets to get a copy of *P&S* in February 1980. This chapter focuses on how they presented it. As a paper advocating for people to have more agency and to take more control over their own lives, they used the pamphlet to present the idea that they had no agency or defense at all, bolstering the usual argument that the only defence against nuclear weapons was to get rid of them completely. Reporting on the pamphlet and citing full parts of its text also set it apart from most of the mainstream press, which were not able to provide as much information.

## *LOP*'s 'exclusive' scoop

On the 22nd February 1980, the 124th issue of *LOP* was released, carrying on its front page news of *P&S* being leaked exclusively to them[55]. While LOP in reality didn't get the exclusive scoop (They clarify in a 10th anniversary feature 4 years later that it was leaked to numerous publications at about the same time, though they don't specify who else got it or mention any date other than February[56]) the exclusive revealing of its contents

[54] LOP, '*Shrugs, smiles and uneasy memories*' 8th February 1980 p12
[55] LOP, '*What to do in a Nuclear War – Secret Government pamphlet leaked*.', 22nd February 1980, p1
[56] LOP, '*Thanks to the moles that keep LOP & our readers informed of what's going on*', 27th January 1984, pp24-25

to Leeds shaped the discussion around *P&S* and sentiment against nuclear weapons as a whole.

The article in question, '*Nuclear Attack – Secret Report Leaked*[57]' starts with a preamble about *P&S* itself. It was produced in 1976 but was never made available to the press or public. LOP quoted a Home Office representative who told them that the document wasn't restricted, but just wasn't available and that none of the press had seen a copy. They were refused a copy from the Home Office, who replied that making the pamphlet available would alarm the public, and that it would do the most good in the lead-up to nuclear war. A photocopy of the pamphlet made its way onto LOP's desk regardless, and they called themselves the first to see it and reveal its contents to the public. Either they were writing this before they knew other publications had received a copy, or the important part of the statement was in the revealing of its contents.

LOP then directly criticized *P&S* by arguing that the pamphlet ignored the realities and effects of nuclear war, its bland style failing to communicate the destruction and effects on future generations and the environment. The reader can get a glimpse of this style in the extracts quoted on the opposite page, but I can also agree with this having read *P&S* myself. It is solely focused on informing you on how to build a fall-out shelter and preparing to stay in it. While it does talk about the effects of fall-out and the blast and heat from the immediate explosion, it doesn't provide any space to the aftermath that survivors would face[58]. LOP then puts forth some examples of these effects by quoting the experiences of two survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki's bombings. They also gave figures for the total death toll by 1976 (260,000 for Hiroshima, 73800 for Nagasaki) and added that 340,000 were still suffering the effects of radiation, leukemia was five times more prevalent in Hiroshima than it was on average and a quarter of the children of the victims suffered from hereditary diseases. Finally, LOP compared the bombs of

[57] LOP, '*Nuclear Attack – Secret Report Leaked*', 22nd February 1980, pp6-7
[58] Central Office of Information for the Home Office, '*Protect and Survive*,' 1980, pp5-6, From the Wilson Center Digital Archive <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110193>

back then to those of 1980, stating that modern bombs were 150 times more powerful. Furthermore, an attack on Britain could see 70 of these bombs. LOP wanted its readers to think about the effects of a nuclear attack on Britain before hitting them with a government document that refused to engage with that at all.

The *'We Say'* section at the end of the article brands *P&S* as a '*Clause for Alarm*'. It highlights the hypocrisy of not publishing *P&S* for fear of alarming the public yet still engaging in Cold War policies with the US (Citing the deployment of US cruise missiles in the UK as an example). LOP suggested that the government was afraid of people finding out the truth about the realities of nuclear war, lest they become uncontented with their leaders playing around with the future of the world. Though they conceded that *P&S* gave a "*mild*" idea of what the immediate survivors of a nuclear war would face it didn't deal with the realities of nuclear war or publish the information it did have.

LOP then stated their intent for publishing extracts of *P&S* – "*hoping that it WILL cause alarm*". They were alarmed at the prospect of nuclear war and the consequences of any exchange, insisting in the final sentence of the article that the only defence against nuclear war was to rid the world of nuclear weapons. It argued that the issue of nuclear power and nuclear weapons were inseparably linked, advising campaigns against nuclear power and power stations to turn their attention towards nuclear war and weapons. By publishing extracts of *P&S*, it aimed to prove that, even if nuclear attack was technically survivable, they were left completely up to the mercy of the bomb and its aftermath when it would be better to take control over their own lives and prevent an attack from happening entirely. In trying to cause alarm, they wanted more people to realize what was impending and oppose the weapons as a result.

The Contents of *P&S*

About four fifths of the next page are then devoted to the contents of *P&S*. LOP summarizes the contents as telling people how to build a fall-out shelter in their houses and instructing them not to move away from their home towns, but prints 'substantial' extracts from the pamphlet itself just below it. It is unable to print every word from the extract though and they do make omissions that are noticeable, perhaps due to lack of space or threat of legal action. LOP also does not cite which page numbers specific extracts go with, though they do work through the pamphlet in reading order. This means that there is no context on where extracts start or end, how large a certain section would have been and whether certain sections flow directly into others or not. I would like to spend the next section comparing a copy of *P&S* to LOP's coverage to determine exactly what is excluded, working through the pamphlet page by page. I am using a copy from the Wilson Center Digital Archive, which may be the version of *P&S* released the following spring and not the copy leaked to LOP. However, a lot of quotes still line up identically. LOP also states that the booklet is 32 pages long, which is matched by the copy I have. In a brief review of P&S published after the pamphlet was released officially they note that, apart from '*one or two minor word changes*' the released document is the same as the original document[59].

Pages 5 and 6 concern the challenges posed by fallout, blast and heat from the bomb. LOP cites extracts from both but doesn't include everything. Furthermore, equal coverage is not given to both. Heat and blast is cited first, following the order from the book. They cite that a nuclear explosion could destroy everything in a certain distance, but not that the heat and blast and fallout can affect an area larger than the explosion radius. They print that the heat and blast can kill and destroy buildings for up to five miles, but not that there can be severe damage beyond this point. The exclusion of this information might make sense if you consider Leeds as a nuclear target - most people living within the city wouldn't have the luxury to consider the effects of the blast beyond

[59] LOP, '*Review – The nuclear family*', 27th June 1980, p15

the cities borders since it would kill them instantly. They then move on to citing the information given about fallout, printing that it is dust sucked up from the ground by the explosion, that it rises high into the air, that it can be carried for hundreds of miles by the wind and that it was very dangerous. However, they exclude information about the radiation being undetectable, being able to penetrate all but the thickest materials and that it posed a threat to you and your family if it fell around your house. LOP prints an equal amount of information on both threats to survival but prints information about fallout in a way that makes it seem more prominent. They start with the word fallout bolded before proceeding to the extract, making it obvious that it is a section of its own. The section on heat and blast has no such indicator, meaning it is not obvious how prominent it is. Someone reading the article could mistake it for following on from the introductory text printed on the page 4 contents page and not information in an entirely different section.

Page 7 and 8 deal with planning a fallout room and inner refuge as well as advising the reader to stay at home under their current local authority, adding that other local authorities would not help them in the event of an attack. LOP prints this advice almost exactly, excluding caveats about having somewhere else to go or other relatives to stay with. In regards to fallout shelters and inner refuges, LOP prints extracts stressing that a fallout shelter and inner refuge were your first priority and that you would have to live in them for 14 days after an attack. They exclude the rest of the page, alongside its continuation on the following page. All information about the requirements for a fallout room are omitted (safe and far away from outside walls). LOP goes on to include the section starting "*Even the safest room in your home is not safe enough…"* and the following information on blocking up openings and thickening the walls and floor above you. They do not print the books suggestions on the ideal materials to use, such as concrete, boxes/bags of earth and sand, furniture and other dense materials.

Page 9 deals with the adequacy/inadequacy of flats, bungalows and caravans in protecting against a nuclear attack. LOP omits all the information pertaining to flats,

alongside the advice to avoid high floors, use lower floors/central corridors and arrange alternative accommodation with your landlord, relatives or lower floor neighbors. They cite bungalows and single story homes not providing much protection, but not what to do if you live in one (Arrange to shelter with someone else or select a place furthest from the roof and outside walls). Finally, they print all the information on the unsuitability of caravans and the advice to contact your local authority. LOP focuses on printing information about the unsuitability of certain homes against nuclear fallout to suggest that lots of people wouldn't be able to adequately protect themselves in the event of an attack. I wouldn't say this is LOP cherry picking information to prevent the bleakest outlook, since the pamphlet itself doesn't offer much advice except making alternative arrangements.

Pages 10 and 11 deal with the inner refuge. LOP only prints some information on page 10 about the necessity and purpose of the inner refuge (greater protection for the first two days and nights) and that it should be built away from the outside walls and lined with dense materials. The pamphlet then goes on to suggest three ideas for an inner refuge, all of which LOP omits. The pamphlet suggests making a lean-to with sloping doors, using large tables and using the cupboard under the stairs.

Pages 12 to 14 list five essential items for survival for the fallout room and LOP mentions all five. The first is water. LOP prints that the family will need enough for 14 days, but not how much per person each day or overall (2 pints a day, 3 and a half gallons). They also omit that you should prepare twice as much water for washing since you will be unlikely to access the mains supply. Advice on sealing as much water as possible and a warning on water contaminated by fallout dust being unsuitable for drinking are also excluded. The second item is food. LOP only cites the advice on preparing enough for 14 days, leaving out advice on the best types of food (cold and keeps fresh) and the importance of having a variety of food. A portable radio and spare batteries are third but LOP only cites its importance as a link with the outside world, omitting its role of receiving instructions after an attack and the suggestion of spare batteries. Number 4 includes tin

openers, bottle openers, cutlery and crockery, and number 5 recommends warm clothing, both of which LOP prints in full. The final suggestion of taking *P&S* into the shelter with you is also included.

LOP excludes information on items to keep outside the fallout room on page 18 (a dustbin for waste and a dustbin for food and other rubbish) but includes information about fire hazards printed over the next two pages. It also includes the only time LOP paraphrases instead of citing directly. Where *P&S* prints "*Remove anything which may ignite and burn easily (paper and cardboard for example) from attic and upper rooms where fire is most likely*." LOP substitutes "*Remove anything flammable from attic and upper rooms where fire is most likely*". LOP's alternative doesn't change the underlining advice given about removing flammable things from upper floors apart from excluding examples of types of materials to remove. If this paraphrasing was done intentionally at all it might just be for the sake of saving space. They go on to print some of the suggestions given to limit fire hazards but not all. Clearing out newspapers and magazines and coating windows with emulsion paint (to reflect the heat flash) are mentioned, while turning off electricity and gas, keeping water buckets on every floor, closing doors and removing burning materials close to the outside of your house are omitted.

The final part of *P&S* deals with what to do during an attack and page 20 starts with listing the three warning signals, the Attack Warning, the Fallout Warning and the All Clear Warning. LOP prints the description given for the three signals word for word, which would allow article readers to understand what they sounded like, but don't include the sound wave graphics for each, which removed some helpful context for interpreting the sounds. Page 21 deals with what to do upon hearing an attack warning. While it discusses what to do at work, at home or out in the open LOP only prints the section on what to do when caught out in the open. It both cites the exact text from the booklet and prints the ensuing image of one man running to a building for a cover and another hiding in a ditch without anywhere else to run to. In fact, they not only print the

picture, but also the text that goes with it, meaning the text advising on what to do if you are caught out in the open is printed verbatim twice in LOP. I feel like this is the most questionable instance of LOP picking out specific information to print, since the image of being caught out in the open when an attack starts feels especially bleak. Furthermore, they only focus on this specific extract and exclude the other advice on how long to stay there (10 minutes).

Page 23 deals with what to do following the Fallout Warning. The section pertaining to what to do while in the open is printed in the article itself. The section advising what to do is printed in full too, both in the article and on the front page of issue 124. Both sections print the text verbatim, but the front page also includes the associated picture of a family entering their inner refuge (a large table reinforced with bags and other materials). This is the only other graphic LOP includes from *P&S*, which is printed on the first page of the issue. The citing of the text within the article itself makes an extra addition, adding the stern warning to not go outside until the radio tells you it is safe. This section is printed within *P&S*, but it is actually printed at the top of the following page. An article reader would not know that these two sections come from different pages. In skipping straight to the warning printed on page 24, they completely omit a paragraph advising you to stay in your refuge for 48 hours and not stay out for a second longer than you have to when going to get food or use the lavatory. However, the necessity of staying within the inner refuge was already in LOP's article from page 10, so this is not a major loss.

The final page LOP quotes content from is page 24, which gives further advice on what to do while staying in your fallout room until the All Clear warning sounds. LOP prints two major sections from this page, the first being the section pertaining to visits outside the house. The second is the section about dealing with casualties. The way *P&S* dealt with the deaths of relatives and family in such a formal and neutral manner is unsettling, so it's no surprise LOP wished to print it. The short sections on listening to your radio for information on facilities and services as they become available and what

to do upon hearing the All Clear warning are omitted. Finally the small text at the end of the section, which includes the publishing/publisher information and a small quote asking the reader to keep this booklet handy are taken from page 31.

LOP's coverage of *P&S's* contents is substantial but not perfect. On the one hand there is only so much you can extract verbatim from a 32 page booklet that can fit within four fifths of a single page. This would exclude some of the more redundant pieces of information, alongside all but two of the pictures, However, LOP intended to cause alarm with their exposing of *P&S* in the hopes of bolstering resistance against nuclear war and power. There is the fear that some of their extract choices were deliberately chosen to paint it in the worst possible light, such as the sections of being caught in the open when the Attack Warning sounds, the section on dealing with casualties and favoring only the unfavorable conditions of bungalows and single story homes in offering protection against fallout. If *P&S* dealt with the realities of nuclear war that LOP then omitted this would be a reasonable concern.

However, *P&S* didn't deal with the realities of nuclear war or provide any space to the conditions faced by survivors in the aftermath of the attack. Furthermore, the booklet did nothing to dispel the bleakness of nuclear war. LOP only prints the advice for bungalows, but the advice given for caravans and flats still boils down to making alternative accommodations if possible. The way *P&S* deals with the deaths of relatives is distressingly distant and matter-of-fact, and the advice given to those caught in the open boils down to find what cover you can and stay there. The bleak and distressing nature of nuclear attack *P&S* portrays is more than capable of causing alarm on its own, which is why the government wanted to release the booklet only when an attack was imminent. Furthermore, if *LOP* really wished to misrepresent *P&S*, taking direct quotes from the pamphlet is the worst way to go about it. Overall, *LOP* provided an incredible amount of direct information about the contents of *P&S* for its readers, which helped them argue that they had very little agency or ability to survive a nuclear strike. The rest

of this chapter will argue that LOP's coverage of *P&S* was unmatched when compared to the offerings of other newspapers from and around February 1980.

What did the other papers say?

*The Guardian* made mention of *P&S* a few days before the release of LOP's piece, but the article in question doesn't deal with its contents. '*A-Cloud Cuckoos'* is an article lamenting the state of the world in 1980, calling everything '*certifiably nuts*'[60]. The threat of nuclear war and the situation around *P&S* receives a lot of the article's attention. Anti-nuclear campaigner James Cameron called the decision to withhold the pamphlet until just before the bomb dropped one of the '*barmiest bureaucratic notions*' created, noting that people distributing the booklet around had 3.6 minutes after the warning and everyone else would have 2 and a half seconds to read and follow its advice. He questioned whether any of the people who created the booklet had ever seen an atom bomb go off and makes a nod towards Hiroshima, noting that they didn't get any information on what to do before being obliterated because what you did before getting obliterated didn't matter. Overall, he described *P&S* as a doctor's placebo, created with the intent to tranquilize the public but doing the opposite.

While the article cannot offer any information on the contents of *P&S*, Cameron holds the same opinion on nuclear weapons as LOP's article does. He argued that nuclear weapons cannot be a defence and can only be a threat, going on to suggest that every honest scientist knew that there was no protection against nuclear attack save for preventing it happening at all. The article also shares the same negative sentiment towards the Cruise and Pershing missiles that LOP does. However, Cameron's article feels more pessimistic in its anti-nuclear stance. He suggests that the only way to prevent nuclear attacks is to eliminate the weapons but concedes that once something is invented it cannot be un-invented. Furthermore, the article doesn't end on a call to

[60] James Cameron, 'A-Cloud Cuckoos' *The Guardian* 19th February 1980, p10

eliminate nuclear weapons, it ends calling for the government to lay off its nonsense about *P&S* and calling the entire affair certifiably nuts. Overall, the article shares LOP's sentiment but doesn't provide any insights into the contents of *P&S*.

An article published a few days later did offer insights into the contents of *P&S*. John Ezard's piece '*Paying the Price to learn how to survive*[61]' is prompted by the announcement to publish *P&S*, referring to the announcement made by Minister of State Leon Brittain on the 20th February[62]. The second half of the article dealt with some of the contents of *P&S*. Considering that both this and LOP's article were released on the same day, and that *P&S* was released to multiple outlets, I wouldn't be surprised if the *Guardian* had received its own copy by this point, though they do not allude to having a copy in the article. They utilize direct quotes when printing the advice to stay at home and not move away and citing the advice given to tower block and bungalow dwellers (though caravans are excluded). LOP makes no mention of the advice given to tower block dwellers, but the advice is still make alternative arrangements if possible. *The Guardian's* article makes fun of this with its opening, saying that tower block dwellers will pay just to be told not to shelter on the top two floors. They allude to precautions such as removing net curtains, conserving water by removing lavatory chains, improvising lavatories and the advice to make a fallout room with an inner shelter. The article also refers to the checklist listing bandages, toilet paper, two radios, a bottle opener and Vaseline, pulling little bits from the five essential items and the other items worth considering. *The Guardian* provides coverage of *P&S's* contents in this article, but this pales in comparison to what is provided by *LOP*. While it was friendly to the CND, its calls for removal in this instance weren't as direct as LOP's.

*The Times* made early reference to *P&S* in a four part civil defence series published in mid-January 1980. In his article concerning British nuclear fiction during the 1980s, Daniel Cordle mentions this series drawing major attention to the UK's civil defence

[61] John Ezard, 'Paying the Price to learn how to survive' *The Guardian* 22nd February 1980 p1
[62] *Hansard* HC Debate vol 979, Col 628, 20th February 1980

needs and to *P&S*[63]. Part 4 focused on the inadequacy of civil defence spending and preparation in Britain[64] and is the one that makes mention of *P&S*. It concedes overall that while an expensive defence system would be difficult politically, Britain lagged so far behind Western Europe and Russia that a small injection of funds could save millions of lives. The third part of the series published the day before looked at the civil defence and preparations in Russia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, France, Finland and Germany to reinforce how unprepared Britain was in terms of evacuation details, shelter building and civil defence[65]. Part 4 argued for, alongside a council inspection system and an incentive to keep people in their areas when attacked, public education on nuclear attack to dispel outdated images of civil defence and allow people to educate and prepare themselves. *P&S* is stated to exist, but the article merely adds that it is unavailable and makes no mention of its contents. It overall concludes on a negative note, both for the state of UK civil defence (calling its lack of preparation of lethal failure of duty) and for *P&S* context.

A *Times* article on the 7th February does provide information on the content *of P&S*, however[66]. The article was produced under the context of Home Secretary William Whitelaw contemplating publishing the pamphlet, but quickly moves on to talking about the pamphlet itself. The article suggests that the four part series on civil defence produced a lot of letter and telephone enquiries about the booklet and civil defence preparations and inspired *Times* readers to contact the stationary office. Several were turned away empty handed, one was told the *Times* made a mistake in publishing the cover in the first part of the series, another was told that the booklet was restricted and one was told that the *Times* had been '*naughty*' in its reporting! It is after this that the article moved on to considering the contents of *P&S*, which they provide lots of. It paraphrased information on the necessity of the fallout room and inner refuge, as well as advising on reinforcing the walls with dense materials. The article also prints the

[63] Cordle p656
[64] *The Times*, 'A Lethal Failure of Duty' 19th January 1980 p13
[65] Peter Evans, 'Russia believes evacuation is still the best protection', *The Times* January 18th 1980 p4
[66] Peter Evans, 'Mr. Whitelaw considers public demand for information on how to prepare homes for attack.', *The Times* 7th February 1980 p4

three different examples of inner refuges (which LOP omits). Furthermore, there is mention of the 5 essential items, the improvised lavatory (Which is not mentioned in LOP's article) and advice on limiting fire hazards. To cap this all off, they published the picture of the family entering the inner refuge from page 23, which convinces me that they definitely had a copy of the pamphlet. If the 6/7th February is around the time *P&S* leaked then it would have leaked to LOP a few days before issue 123 went on sale on the 8th February. With most of the content for that issue decided, LOP would have to wait until two weeks later for its expose on *P&S*. Though I'm convinced that the *Times* had a copy of the pamphlet at this time I know that's different from being able to prove it. *The Times* didn't state that they'd seen its contents, especially since an earlier part of the article made mention of its readers struggling to access it themselves.

Though the *Times* article provided a lot of detail on the contents of *P&S*, including some details that LOP omitted, there are details it didn't cover too. Pretty much everything about the effects of heat, blast and fallout, the three signals and the information on what to do with each one, the inadequacy of tower blocks, caravans and bungalows in protecting against nuclear blast and what to do with casualties are all excluded from the *Times* article. Furthermore, the *Times* article only takes smaller direct quotes from the inner refuge section and doesn't commit to printing extracts like *LOP* did. *The Times* published information on *P&S* sooner but LOP provided more extensive coverage. *The Times* as a whole also had the opposite stance to LOP when it came to nuclear defence. Though this article is not obvious in its beliefs the four part civil defence series illustrates a positive view of civil defence, and while the *Times* wasn't openly advocating for nuclear weapons it wasn't pushing for their removal either.

*The Guardian* and *The Times* both provided useful context to *P&S's* contents during February 1980, though the coverage is not comparable to that of *LOP*. However, the information provided by the *Yorkshire Post* (*YP*) and *Yorkshire Evening Post (YEP)*, two newspapers closer to Leeds, was largely non-existent. The only mention of a booklet in the *YP* is made in an editorial on the 27th February commenting on the state of civil

defence in Britain[67]. I use the vague term deliberately – the editorial only describes a booklet which "*gives very basic but pretty reliable advice*". It would be reasonable for this to allude to *P&S* but it could also refer to a pamphlet published by Civil Aid called "*What to do when the system breaks down*". This is the only mention of *P&S* made during the entirety of February 1980. In a Guardian article talking about the state of *LOP* in 1988, Martin Wainwright, alongside calling *P&S* its "greatest scoop" also said that the *YP* paid £15 for a copy[68]. Either this deal hadn't happened yet or the *YP* hadn't got its £15 worth. The *YEP* made even fewer mentions of *P&S* during February – a grand total of zero.

Neither newspaper had an aversion to publishing articles on nuclear issues. For example, the *YP* printed Pope John Paul's warning on nuclear weapons at the start of 1980[69] and the development of a public campaign to improve perception of nuclear power[70]. There are even some mentions of nuclear issues in its *Evening* variant. On the 7th January 1980 they reported on the changing of the Domesday Clock from 9 to 7 minutes to midnight citing the threat of nuclear disaster[71]. On the 25th February they published a letter criticizing nuclear arms spending and commending a Leeds Action of Peace campaign protesting the issue[72]. The absence of *P&S* from two prominent Leeds newspapers makes it even more important that the *LOP* was able to fill in the gap, since it allowed them to shape the narrative on nuclear weapons and their impact in the community.

[67] Yorkshire Post, '*Editorial – Nuclear fall-out*' 27th February 1980, p10
[68] Martin Wainwright, 'Out of the blue, a paper in the pink' *The Guardian* 14th March 1980, p21
[69] *YP*, 'The Pope gives warning of nuclear nightmare', 2nd January 1980 p9
[70] *YP*, 'Giving nuclear power an acceptable face' 3rd January 1980 p5
[71] *Yorkshire Evening Post*, '7 minutes to disaster' 7th January 1980 p1
[72] *YEP*, You say – We can only hope this campaign leads to lasting peace' 25th February 1980 p2

## Conclusion

Overall, the *Leeds Other Paper's* expose on *Protect and Survive* was effective in illustrating how little agency people actually had in the face of nuclear weapons. They printed large sections of *P&S* to both illustrate the impracticability of the solutions in riding out the nuclear holocaust, but also the pamphlets inability to provide information on what life would look like after surviving the bomb. By outlining this lack of agency, they both argued and bolstered the idea that the only true defence against nuclear weapons was to be rid of them entirely. These arguments fit squarely alongside a burgeoning anti-nuclear culture and protest movement inspired by rising Cold War tensions and the urgency of the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles. Their coverage also stood out against other newspapers at the time, which printed less content from the pamphlet (if at all) and weren't rooted in anti-nuclear sentiment like *LOP* was. Even if *The Times* had published excerpts of it sooner, *LOP's* offerings were more substantial. The lack of information in the *Yorkshire Post* and *Yorkshire Evening Post* allowed *LOP* to easily shape the narrative on nuclear weapons without any competing voices.

# '*A victory for pride and dignity*' *Leeds Other Paper* on the end of the 1984-5 Miners' Strike

It can be argued that the Thatcher administration prepared for the 1984-5 miners' strike in advance. The NUM contributed to the fall of the Heath government in 1974[1], so it's possible that revenge was a motivator. However, the £2-3 billion cost of handling the dispute was far too weighty a cost for mere revenge, especially since they weren't guaranteed to win it. Economist Andrew Glyn suggested in hindsight that the strike was an investment to weaken trade union power[2]. There was a belief that the post-war settlement based on Keynesian economics was breaking down, evidenced by both the 1974-9 Labour government and the 1978-9 Winter of Discontent[3]. Breaking down the trade unions was seen as a necessity to enforcing an alternative economic policy. Trade union power was also an anathema to Thatcher since they rose wages above 'natural' levels and challenged the right of management to make decisions[4].

The anticipation of a conflict with the miners and the desire to break down the power of the NUM and trade unions as a whole motivated several premeditations. The Ridley Report of 1977 recommended several actions in preparing for a confrontation with the miners, which included building up coal stocks at power stations, importing coal from abroad, employing non-union lorry drivers to move coal, introducing dual coal and oil firing at power stations and cutting benefits to strikers and their families – forcing the union to finance them[5]. These steps increased coal stocks and reduced reliance on coal, reducing the ability of the miners to shut the country down. The government non-

[1] Susan Ram, 'British Politics in Wake of Miners' Strike: Margaret Thatcher's Troubled Legacy' *Economic and Political Weekly* **20.37**(September 14th 1985), p1553
[2] Andrew Glyn, 'Economy and the UK Miners' Strike' *Social Scientist* **13.1**(January 1985), pp30-31
[3] Sheryl Bernadette Buckley, 'The state, the police and judiciary in the miners' strike: Observations and discussions, thirty years on' *Capital & Class* **39.3**(October 2015), p420
[4] Mark Monaghan and Simon Prideaux, 'Fighting 'the enemy within': internal state terrorism, Argentina's Dirty War (1976-83) and the UK Miners' Strike (1984-5)' in '*State crime and immorality: the corrupting influence of the powerful*' (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), p195
[5] Monaghan, p199

publication and press leakage of the Ridley Report by the *Economist* in May 1978[6] mirrors the non-publication and leakage of *P&S*. While the latter encouraged controversy about the effectiveness of civil defence and destruction of nuclear war, the former reinforced the view that a Tory government would lead to trouble with the unions.

A legislative approach was also taken to restrict union power and weaken the financial link between the unions and the Labour party. The 1980 Employment Act reduced restricted union power and picketing rights, while revoking civil immunity trade unions had held since 1906. The 1982 Employment Act allowed trade unionists to bring legal action against their own union[7]. The Ridley Report also advised for the building of a large and mobile police force to restrict picketing. Policing methods had evolved due to the industrial militancy of the 1970s and the Troubles in Northern Ireland, resulting in developments such as the National Recording Centre and new training methods and tactics[8]. The criminalization of violent picketing allowed for the justification of a 20,000 strong and well trained police force during the strike to disrupt picketing efforts[9]. Ian McGregor was appointed the leader of the NCB and came outside the industry. While reflecting on the strike in the *Industrial Relations Journal*, Brian Towers described it as a strategically provocative appointment[10]. Furthermore, by 1984 the Falklands War and the success of the 1983 General Election put Thatcher's government in a strong position[11]. The ongoing recession at the time also reduced trade union membership through mass unemployment and made those who still had jobs reluctant to go on strike. With all the preparations they undertook, all the Thatcher government could do was wait for the assumed confrontation, which came in 1984.

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[6] Michael Hatfield, 'Tory views on unions embarrass leaders', *The Economist* 27th May 1978 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/111398> [Accessed 22nd April 2025]
[7] Buckley, p424
[8] Buckley, pp424-5
[9] Monaghan, p199
[10] Brian Towers, 'Posing larger questions: the British miners' strike of 1984-85' *Industrial Relations Journal* **16.2**(Summer 1985), p15
[11] Towers, p15

The miners' strike started in March 1984, triggered by the closure of Cortonwood colliery. The NCB planned to reduce coal output by 4 million tonnes, projecting the closure of 20 pits and a loss of 20,000 jobs[12]. Villages were built around pits and where thus dependent on them as a result. The closure of pits represented a fundamental threat to the way of life in mining communities[13]. There were little prospects for alternative employment in these communities, which threatened to add to the rising unemployment rate. The decision to close Cortonwood also breached scheduled colliery review protocol[14]. The NUM was naturally opposed to such closures, and the Cortonwood closure served as the trigger for strike action. Writing in *Economic and Political Weekly* in 1985, Susan Ram suggested that this was the confrontation the government had dreamed of. It was a defensive strike at the tail end of winter with high stocks of coal ready at power stations[15]. Adding to the government's position was the fact that the official mandate to strike legitimized the area strike but not the national. Since the dispute centered around jobs, miners in more secure coalfields like Nottinghamshire decided not to strike as a result[16]. The divisions within the miners' union allowed the government to use criminal sanctions to out-maneuver the miners instead of the civil frameworks they had spent the previous years building up[17].

The strike was equated as a fight with the 'enemy within' and the entire state was utilized against the miners and the NUM[18]. Disaffected GCHQ staff in the winter of 1990 revealed a 'Get Scargill' campaign undertaken during the strike by intelligence agencies. M15 ran operations to discredit and destabilize the NUM and its leaders by spreading allegations of Libya bankrolling the strike and the leaders depositing thousands of pounds[19]. The police reforms mentioned above created a highly mobile and versatile policing unit which could be deployed to any area. 3000 police were stationed in

[12] Monaghan, p197
[13] Monaghan, p196
[14] Monaghan, p198
[15] Ram, p1553
[16] Buckley, p422
[17] Buckley, p422
[18] Monaghan, p199
[19] Monaghan, pp199-200

Nottinghamshire by the 8th day of the strike, thwarting attempts to picket the area and making the strike national. Road blocks limited the mobility of pickets, preventing a 1972 style victory for the miners, and snatch squads removed the most militant miners from picket lines[20]. Historian Sheryl Buckley has argued that bias in the judicial system also helped break the strike. She suggested that many judges were retired, white and middle class. They were not likely to sympathize with the defense of jobs, and many of them aligned with the late 1970s desire to curtail trade unionism[21]. Once the police removed troublesome miners, the judicial system could use restrictive bail restrictions to keep them away from the picket lines for most of the strike[22]. The criminalization of these miners also encouraged long term penalties and social stigma which encouraged miners to mind their actions on picket lines or return to work[23].

The Thatcher government was able to utilize the full power of the state to fight the dispute. With that in mind, it's no wonder that the miners were defeated[24]. The NUM also had little chance of victory itself without support from the Nottinghamshire region and support from the wider trade union movement[25]. All the stars had aligned for the government yet the strike still lasted for a year, suggesting that their victory was not inevitable. Susan Ram argued that this was due to the ability of an exceptional body of men backed by their families and public support, which served to deny the government the quick victory it was anticipating[26].

More specific to this chapter was the role of the media. Distorted coverage of industrial disputes was a reoccurring phenomenon, especially in print media. There was a general attitude of hostility alongside the assumption that unions were strike prone. Little space was given to the causes of the strike and interviews were conducted with the belief that

[20] Buckley, pp426-7
[21] Buckley, p429
[22] Buckley, p430
[23] Buckley, p431
[24] Monaghan, pp200-1
[25] Towers, p16
[26] Ram, p1553

strikes were wrong[27]. Trade unions were also held in poor regard by the early 1980s, with an April 1984 MORI poll reporting that 90% of people felt that a national ballot should have been held[28]. The 1984-5 miners' strike played host to a relatively compliant British media, which promoted negative sentiment towards the miners and their leaders[29]. They presented the case of the government and the NCB while condemning and underreporting that of the NUM[30].

Many prominent themes jump out, the first of which being a focus on violence[31]. Whie investigating how the *Daily Mail* reported the strike *Labour Research*, an organ of the Labour Research Department, found that they produced 60 major articles on violence between April 1984 and November 1985. 21 focused on picket line violence while the other 39 focused on violence outside of pickets, such as in homes or against working miners families and pets. They found that the first three months of the dispute focused on picket line violence, after which a shift in emphasis to attacks on individuals beyond pickets occurred. 22 of the 39 instances of violence beyond the pickets were in December 1984 when the Back to Work campaign was launched, serving as the best way for miners to disassociate themselves from the 'violent' strike[32]. This focus threatened to paint the strike as being solely about violence. Specific language was used to create the image of a war – words like 'bloody' 'bitter' and 'pit war' were common, while Scargill was likened as the general of army of thugs and militants against the police[33]. The violence was presented as being directed against working miners and the police and presented as a threat to democracy and basic decency, yet violence against striking miners was either underreported or encouraged[34]. The *Daily Mail* only made a single one inch sized article on attacks made against striking miners

[27] Elaine Wade, 'The Miners and the Media: Themes of Newspaper Reporting' *Journal of Law and Society* **12.3**(Winter 1985), p273
[28] Buckley, p422
[29] Monaghan, p200
[30] Towers, p8
[31] Wade, pp273-4
[32] 'How one paper reported the strike' *Labour Research* **75.1**(January 1986), p20
[33] Wade, pp273-5
[34] Wade, pp276-7

throughout the whole strike[35]. Overall, the violent images directed attention away from the complex reasons for the strike. Violent labels and images were invoked instead of analysis of economic policies, a review of NUM/NCB relations or the future of the coal industry[36]. Press coverage also presented a perception of what to expect from miners, which had an impact on how the judicial system judged them[37].

The reporting also gave a misleading image of the strike. The Sheffield Police Watch found that the 200 picket lines they visited were mostly peaceful with violence only breaking out when they were overpoliced. More quality papers reported on the daily routines of miners, which presented the picket line as a regular part of the day rather than a chance to act out violence[38].

A focus on striking miners and their right to work was another theme of media reporting, yet it was attributed to strike-breakers exclusively[39]. The threat to miners who wanted to work was perceived as a threat to democracy and decency and violence against working miners was seen as part of a larger campaign against intimidation and fear, yet the right of striking miners to picket was of little interest[40]. Working miners, seen as representative of everything good about the trade union movement, were juxtaposed against striking miners as thuggish, angry and violent[41].

Another major theme was an uncritical view of the police. Police accounts were often seen as the only explanation of events, with other sources being devalued and those from picket lines going unheard[42]. Analyses of police tactics and their impact on communities was rare. Elaine Wade, writing in the *Journal of Law and Society,* only saw

[35] Labour Research 75(1), p20
[36] Wade, p281
[37] Buckley, p430
[38] Wade, p275
[39] Wade, p275
[40] Wade, p279
[41] Wade, p276
[42] Wade, p280

such discussion in the *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror*[43]. While the activities of striking miners were open to comment and vilification, those of police were often beyond discussion. Only one national newspaper out of 17 printed a still of a young women cowering from a mounted policeman at Orgreave[44]. The *Daily Mail* saw Labour Party attempts to raise questions about the role of the police as 'communist technique' and attempts to present the forces of law and order as agents of repression[45]. The oppressively positive stance on the police alienated any journalist, source or individual who had concerns about the police's role during the strike.

Though he would have sought publicity regardless, the media focused excessively on Scargill and the leadership of the strike, presenting the miners as misguided sheep following the inclinations of their leader. This denied the agency of individual miners and presented picket line violence as the work of mindless troublemakers[46]. This framing gave the impression that there was no substantive reason for the strike as a whole[47]. Yet, miners could be presented as Scargill's mindless wreckers or threats intentionally acting to destroy British democracy depending on what was convenient.[48] The complexity of the strike was often reduced to a faceoff between Arthur Scargill and Ian MacGregor[49]. Scargill was often presented as a revolutionary posing as a trade union official with the aim of bringing down the country[50]. He was usually quoted in the context of violence, and accused of condoning violence against working miners when he did not publicly condemn it[51]. Overall, the British media contributed to the success of the British state in breaking the miner's strike.

[43] Wade, p277
[44] Buckley, p429
[45] Wade, p277
[46] Wade, pp277-8
[47] Wade, p279
[48] Wade, p279
[49] Wade, p278
[50] Buckley, p422
[51] Wade, p276

That the *Leeds Other Paper* was firm in its support of the strike is not surprising considering its origins. It began in 1974 during the three day week and a different miners dispute, it's very first article calling for ordinary people to organize in their support for the miners, for better working conditions and to fight the government[52]. During the miners' strike, LOP reported weekly on pit news. Tony Harcup, who himself worked as a volunteer on the paper, argued that the paper deliberately sought to include the voices of those who were usually voiceless in the mainstream media, such as ordinary men and women in picket lines, pit villages, support groups, solicitors representing arrested miners and academics commenting on the dispute[53]. Harcup wrote that this was evidence of a commitment of going out to pit communities and building contacts, trust and understanding with those involved in the dispute[54]. Out of 281 sources cited, 191 came from those considered voiceless. They provided diary style reports from picket lines and soup kitchens, scrutinized the role of police and politicians, reported the trials of arrested miners, analyzed the economic issues of the dispute and reported on how the benefits system was used to increase hardship[55]. In addition they published positive letters of support[56] and spread awareness of miners benefits[57] and groups like Operation Foodforce[58] and Bigline[59]. There was also a deliberate focus on the rank and file rather than the leadership, with Scargill being quoted as a story source on only three occasions[60]. When interviewed about this Gordon Wilson, one of the papers founders, commented that the mainstream press concentrated on Scargill but the picket lines did not. The strike was their struggle, not his[61].

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[52] Leeds Other Paper, '*Don't Let the Bastards Carve Us Up*' January 1974, p1
[53] Tony Harcup, 'Reporting the voices of the voiceless during the miners' strike: an early form of 'citizen journalism' *Journal of Media Practice* **12.1**(2011), p31
[54] Harcup, p34
[55] Harcup, p31
[56] LOP, '*Nothing could be finer, than a striking miner'* 8th February 1985 p11
[57] LOP, '*Armley Miners Support Group Benefit'* 25th January 1985 p4
[58] LOP, *'Leeds Other Paper has donated this space to Operation Foodforce'* 1st February 1985 p1
[59] LOP, '*Pit strike 45th week'* 18th January 1985 p6
[60] Harcup, p32
[61] Harcup, p32

The reporting immediately after the miners' strike reflected this. '*Dignity on the picket lines*'[62] reported on the dignity of the miners and the importance of their fight through the account of someone who realized this for themselves, while '*You can't kill the spirit!*[63]' celebrated the welfare network supporting the strike, with particular focus on the women who were instrumental in building it. These two articles argue that, while the miners were defeated, their efforts still had tangible benefits and their fight was worthwhile and worth fighting. In doing so LOP suggests that the agency utilized by the miners throughout the year of the strike was not wasted. This chapter will analyze these attempts to justify agency in the reporting immediately after the strike ended. It will do this by looking at how LOP discussed the cost of the strike and the role of the state in breaking the strike while comparing it to more mainstream coverage.

## The Miners up Against the State

LOP's reporting justified the agency and energy of the miners and the communities supporting them by arguing that the miners weren't just up against their employers, but against the entire British state. Their article '*Miners up against the State*' presented this case[64], looking at the role of the Government, police, judiciary system, working miners and press. It started by listing the six recommendations of the Ridley plan discussed above. LOP quickly lists through the points and criticizes the decision to cut state benefits to strikers and their families, cutting off £15 and later £16 off their social security. This crippled the incomes of striking families and left individual miners without any income outside of donations from supporters. Despite said donations, this put strikers through immense hardship, especially during the winter. Through this LOP suggests that the Yorkshire Electricity Board and the Department for Health and Social Security were utilized by the state to inflict hardship on striking miners.

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[62] LOP, '*Dignity on the picket lines'* 8th March 1985 pp8-9
[63] LOP, '*You can't kill the spirit!*' 8th March 1985 pp10-11
[64] LOP, '*Miners up against the State'* 8th March 1985 p13

LOP also put lots of focus on the final recommendation of the report – the building up of a mobile police force to counter picketing. They argue that it was obvious from the start that the police were going to do everything in their power, regardless of financial or communal cost, to break the strikers and prevent picketing. They report that 9,750 people had been arrested during the strike, compared to 250 arrests made during the 1972 strike, using these figures to illustrate higher police involvement. They also talk about specific police actions, such as the road blocks and 'flying coppers' in Nottinghamshire in the early weeks of the strike and the following of strikers into hardline pit villages during the summer. A miner from the Fitzwilliam pit village was interviewed about the pit village invasions in July, where the police reportedly ran riot, hospitalized several people and scared many others. LOP notes that police violence in the picket lines and beyond had an effect of intimidating miners. The article argued overall that not only was police presence heightened during this strike as compared to previous ones, their conduct was also much more violent and intimidating.

They also link the police with the role the judiciary system played, as many of the miners arrested had bail conditions imposed upon them to stop them from taking part in further picketing. Quoting the words of Leeds solicitor Alan Craig in a Nottingham court the previous September, they suggest that the Magistrates and police were working together to break the miners' strike. Craig was unsuccessful in getting the bail conditions of 87 miners, who were charged for unlawful assembly until, as another LOP article elaborates, charges for 79 were suddenly dropped the week before the end of the strike[65]. Craig and these two articles suggest that this was the typical approach of the judiciary system – using serious charges to scare and exclude people from picketing, then drop them before they went to Crown Court. Overall LOP suggested that the judiciary system and the police were used as political tools to disrupt picketing during the strike.

[65] LOP, '*Police have been political tools – Leeds solicitor'* 8th March 1985 p10

I couldn't find many articles in the mainstream press that argued against the role of the police in the same way *LOP* did. The main two I found were in the *Yorkshire Post*[66] and *Yorkshire Evening Post*[67], both reporting on a meeting at the West Yorkshire County Council where Labour Yorkshire Regional Council delegates called for stricter controls on the police. Both also print the words of Colne Valley Labour Party member Jeremy Cuss, who argued that there was a reduction of civil liberties during the dispute, with pickets being stopped miles away from where they were planning to stop and a fear that anyone could be picked up. He called for improved police accountability. While these articles present some negative views of the police role during the strike they aren't the complete condemnations printed in *LOP*.

In the *Guardian*, Stephen Cook presented a neutral view of the strike and its impact on rights and civil liberties, especially around the police. It printed a collection of voices and opinions from across the spectrum, and only really argued overall that the strike shouldn't lead to new legislation restricting civil liberties[68]. Louise Christian, a solicitor representing miners, commented on restrictive bail restrictions and recent withdrawals of criminal charges by calling it a back-door ban on demonstrations. Clive Soley, the MP for Hammersmith and Labour's spokesman on the police argued that the government used the police to make secondary picketing illegal instead of legislating it, hence the rediscovering of 19th century laws. On the other side of the spectrum, Alex Carlisle of the Parliamentary civil liberties group admired the conduct of ordinary policemen and called the behavior of the NUM scandalous. However, he argued that the police had lost their sense of proportion in using 2000 men to escort 2 to work and that the dredging up of old offences was bad for public confidence. Graham Zellick of Queen Mary College in London argued that civil liberties were left mostly unscathed, citing that no special powers were enacted, no special forces were brought in and no equipment like water cannons were deployed. The articles more neutral view of the argument surrounding

[66] Yorkshire Post, '*Labour calls for inquiry into police'* 4th March 1985 p9
[67] Yorkshire Evening Post, '*Call for probe on police actions'* 4th March 1985 p8
[68] Stephen Cook, 'The year of taking liberties' *The Guardian* 4th March 1985 p17

civil liberties and the police during the strike is useful in its own right, but it is not trying to present the police role in the strike in a negative light like *LOP* did.

Peter Evans of the *Times* presented an article detailing the police tactics and response during the miners' strike[69]. It defined the components of the police's strategy, which were increased flexibility in tactics, stepping up training and making more than a million officer movements. It then listed some of ways this strategy was put into action, such as the creation of the National Reporting Centre to move officers around, a training manual tailored to each rank, the formation of police support units to increase flexibility and tactics such as wedging and trudging to move through a crowd, snatch squads to break up crowds and the use of terrain to either hide or display reserves. The article comments that, thanks to these changes, the police now had the mobility of the army. Far from criticizing police conduct or tactics, the article instead present the reasons as to why the police were so effective at controlling the pickets. Finally, the *Daily Mail* offered an interview with Nottinghamshire police chief Charles McLachlan, who praised the police for their role in handling the strike, arguing that no other force in the world could have handled the dispute with such courage and restraint and that they had nothing to be ashamed of[70]. He thought that the police did a good job overall, and that sensible people would appreciate them for their efforts. Overall this article is the opposite of LOP in terms of how it treat the police, praising the police for their efforts and condemning the miners for their violence and threat to public liberty.

The working miners also get a mention in LOP's '*Miners up against the State*', alongside another article pertaining to them specifically. In the former they allege that the barrage of legal cases brought to the NUM by working miners, which resulted in several costly cases and the sequestering of all their funds, were supported with '*financial and legal backing from right-wing organizations'*. LOP does not cite this claim or go into detail about it, but the previous month's issue of *Labour Research* could be where they got it

[69] Peter Evans, ' Biggest test of police tactics and response' *The Times* 4th March 1985 p2
[70] June Southworth, 'What hurt most was the campaign of lies' *Daily Mail* 4th March 1985 p6

from. The article presents research into the characters and affiliations of some of the people involved with the working miners movement[71]. To quote some examples, David Hart, a key figure in promoting and financing the National Working Miners' Committee, was described as advising Thatcher on matters of state, holding up the script for MacGregor in his TV debate with Scargill, who had a family friend in Ian McGregor, was responsible for placing ads for the working miners in several newspapers and organized a banner criticizing Scargill which was flown at the previous year's TUC in Brighton. They also suggest that working miners received funding from figures such as Sir Hector Laing of *United Biscuits* and Lord Taylor of Hadfield, affiliated with right wing think tanks such as Freedom Association and Aims of Industry. *LOP* and *Labour Research* argue that, far from asserting their right to work or enthusiasm for trade union democracy, working miners were being manipulated into tools used to break the strike. Due to Nottinghamshire miners voting against the strike, hence not being scabs in the traditional sense, LOP needed to take this route to criticize the working miners movement without splitting the community further.

Another LOP article provided a scathing view of working miners through their report of an incident involving a Garforth woman and her friend on the TUC day of solidarity[72]. After learning that a friend of theirs was a working miner they visited his house to discuss the strike, which was described as an amicable meeting. Later that night two working miners attacked the pair. The pair also say that they were pursued by a transit van a few days later and one of their families had to start leaving home for days at a time to avoid harassment from working miners. Though this article presents an unfavorable view of a group of working miners, it is a stretch to suggest that this speaks to working miners as a whole. Overall the two articles suggest a negative view of working miners, who played a role in breaking the strike down and intimidating strikers into submission.

[71] 'Working miners' *Labour Research* **74.2**(February 1985) pp40-41
[72] LOP, '*Intimidation by working miners'* 8th March 1985 p11

To much of the mainstream press, the working miners were one of the main reasons for the defeat of Scargill and the NUM. The *Yorkshire Post* praised working miners who honored the rules of the NUM, labeling the strikers and the striking leadership as the true scabs[73]. *The Times* labeled the contributions of working miners as the most important for the defeat of the NUM, citing them as a living reminder of the union division and rule breaking by the leadership and commending their efforts in depriving the NUM of funds[74].

The *Daily Mail* gleefully comments that trade unionists were instrumental in stopping Scargill, praising the efforts of working miners, dockers and steelmen. Instead of being traitors to the Left, they argue that it was a confirmation of the good sense of a majority of working people[75]. The *Daily Mail's* presentation of the working miners is interesting in that it presents them both as heroes to the nation yet passive and vulnerable against retaliation from striking miners. Charles McLachlan countered the view that there would be no more violence if the police left, since that would mean there would be no one to stop them from beating working miners into submission[76]. John Edwards presented an article on the divided community of Whitwell village, yet only looks at the division from the side of striking miners. It considers the case of a striker disowning his twin brother, a father wanting nothing to do with his son, another being unwilling to buy at a store while a working miners wife worked there and a fourth implying that there would be threats and violence upon return to the pits where the police couldn't protect them[77]. In its front page piece two working miners predict there will be problems now that the NUM had been smashed to pieces, and they would be seen as the scapegoats[78]. Finally Amit Roy, presenting the working miners as the figures who defied Scargill and broke the strike, questioned how the working miners will be remembered in history. By the majority of people they would be seen as the people who stood up for the democratic rights of

[73] Yorkshire Post, '*Grimly inevitable'* 4th March 1985 p10
[74] The Times, '*The Face of Defeat'* 4th March 1985 p13
[75] Daily Mail, '*The ballot box will not be mocked*' 4th March 1985 p6
[76] June Southworth, 'What hurt most was the campaign of lies' *Daily Mail* 4th March 1985 p6
[77] John Edwards, 'Where even twins are enemies now' *Daily Mail* 4th March 1985 p7
[78] Daily Mail, '*Surrender*' 4th March 1985 p2

trade unions, but by the extreme left they would be reviled and their efforts erased[79]. This coverage also presented working miners as a single group, when in reality they were split in between those who opposed the strike from the start and those who were forced back via destitution.

Overall, most of the mainstream press was not interested in doing anything other than seeing the working miners as the people who broke the strike. LOP's report on the intimidation by a group a working miners is the only article I've seen from this time which suggests that working miners could be as intimidatory and violent as striking miners were often presented as. This was an underrepresented perspective as working miners and their right to work was a central theme in the media coverage of the dispute.

Finally, '*Miners up against the state'* had a little note on the media coverage of the strike, which it describes as being composed by the Government and NCB. The article '*Fleet Street dancing to the Govt's victory tune*[80]' goes into more depth on the press' support of the government and NCB. It serves as a summary of the big press opinions on the ending of the strike, which it used to argue that the mainstream press was on the side of the Government. Specifically, it drew from the *Sun*, *Times*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror*. To roughly summarize, they pulled from papers which presented the previous week as a humiliating defeat of Scargill and 'Scargillism' (Which LOP argued was a synonym for working class militancy), that the cost of the strike was a worthwhile investment and that the power of big unions and the NUM had been reduced. Even the *Guardian* and *Mirror*, the former taking a stance on the issue of unemployment and setting up job creation initiatives in mining areas and the Mirror taking the stance that nobody had won, were unable to convince *LOP* that they were either on the side of the miners or neutral. While this article served as a scathing review of the press, the article does not serve as a review of press coverage throughout the entire strike, instead merely focusing on the week just

[79] Amit Roy, 'Heroes to the nation, villains to the Left' Daily Mail 4th March 1985 p9
[80] LOP, '*Fleet Street dancing to the Govt's victory tune'* 8th March 1985 p12

after it ended. They present the predictability of the mainstream press' condemning of Scargill as the cherry on top of their yearlong support for the Government and NCB. While it cannot serve as a condemnation of the press coverage on its own, it would reinforce the view of and speak to anyone who, having lived through the strike at the time, would have believed this themselves.

The only piece I could find from around the end of the strike which commented on the press coverage of the dispute was an article by John Torode in the *Guardian*[81]. Written following a dispute between the Glasgow University Media Group and Stirling University Professor Alastair Hetherington, it comments on the difficulties of reporting upon and analyzing a big industrial dispute. The article makes its biggest point on the ease of presenting bias in TV. Suggesting that TV reporting on picket lines tended to put itself in the police point of view by default, contrasting the steady advance of the police against the screaming pickets, it argued that the message would be different if the camera was placed behind the strikers' lines. Combine that with the need to edit down hours of footage into a minute of violent images, and the article presents its case on how TV reporting created bias and denied understanding of both sides' perspective.

The article then moves onto the press, where it takes a more neutral approach. It lists the main criticisms of the press to be bias distortion, one-sided comment and the blurring of distinction between report and editorial comment, then moved to discuss the difficulties with forming a consensus on how the media treat an event. Pressure groups investigating bias could be biased themselves, with them often being manned by activists and funded by interested parties. He argued that the aims of critics and those funding them were just as subject to examination as the ownership of the press and reporting method was. Finally, the article disagreed with the common remedies of increasing balanced reporting and right to reply. Balance was difficult to apply when reporting was either right or wrong, and beyond that it shouldn't override a paper's right to an opinion. None of Torode's suggestions are incorrect, and his suggestion that it

[81] John Torode, 'The built in bids on TV against understanding' *The Guardian* 4th March 1985 p22

would take detailed and politically neutral academic research to properly scrutinize the role of the press is a reasonable one, but the article as a whole does not make a comment on the reporting of the dispute, nor does it account for the fact that many people and groups, *LOP* included, weren't going to wait for introspection to form their own opinions.

Overall, *LOP* presents a scathing picture of the state working together to sabotage the miners and their cause in order to praise the efforts of said miners. At the end of '*Miners up against the State*' they state that '*In the face of everything that was thrown at them, it is a tribute to the courage and fighting spirit of the mining communities that they lasted so long.*' Instead of being seen as a defeat, they argued that the fortitude and agency of the mining community should be celebrated instead.

The mainstream press as a whole did not entertain the idea of the British state being utilized against the miners, but leftist news pieces echo these ideas. *Workers Vanguard*, the newspaper published by the Spartacist League, noted that the miners spent a year fighting against British bosses and the Thatcher regime[82]. It asserted that '*Miners and their wives resisted heroically against tremendous odds. Their pickets were arrested and beaten, even murdered; martial law was instituted in the coal fields; mining villages were devasted by Thatcher's occupation army of cops and thug*s.' It went on to compare the hardship miners and their families suffered to the General Strike of 1926. The miners had not just resisted, *Workers Vanguard* argued, but had profoundly shaken the Thatcher regime and the foundations of British capitalism. *Workers Vanguard* was aligned with *LOP* in its view of the role of the state and their positive view on the efforts and agency of the miners. *Daily Worker* in New York only spared the space for a picture and caption when the dispute came to an end, but they still called it one of the most bitterly fought strikes in British history, calling attention in particular to the instances of repeated police violence[83]. It attached a picture of Arthur Scargill being beaten by police

[82] Workers Vanguard, *'Bloody Thatcher Beats Back Heroic British Miners'* 8th March 1985 p1 + p8
[83] Daily Worker, '*British miners' strike ends'* 5th March 1985 p5-D

at the Orgreave coking plant the previous June. Overall, what I could find of the leftist press echoed *LOP*'s sentiment on the resilience of the miners and the ruthlessness of the state.

In contrast, I noted two mainstream editorials attempting to debunk the idea of the state against miners. The *Yorkshire Post* made a note on the mystery of some miners and their allies believing that the Scargillites were in the right and that they would have won had the Coal Board and Government had played fair or, in its assertion, had capitulated[84]. It's a bizarre oversimplification of a complex situation that presented the miners as sore losers rather than people asking questions about the powers of the police, judiciary system, press and state.

*The Financial Times* took this stance as well. Starting by criticizing the inflexibility of Scargill's style of negotiations, it goes on to assert that this debunks the '*Conspiracy theory of history.*' And argued that '*Far from the Government seeking a confrontation with the miners, it has won largely because of Mr. Scargill's intransigence.*[85]' This aligns with the view the Labour Party and Neil Kinnock held, stuck between hating Scargill and his style of leadership and their natural disdain towards Thatcher and their broad support towards the miners. A different leader might have led the union to a different outcome. However, this is still a simplification of the strike. While presenting Scargill as one of the major reasons for the strike's failure was a common theme in the press, this editorial presents the government in an entirely passive light. Its suggestion that the victory was achieved more so by good luck rather than good management also supports this view. It could be argued that the government didn't go confronting the miners in the literal sense of the word, but to present them as entirely passive (and to blame the strike's end entirely on Scargill's inflexibility) ignored the influence of the Ridley report or the roles of the police, press, judiciary system or the working miners in whittling down the dispute. It also ignores the suggestion that the government could have lost the strike

[84] Yorkshire Post, '*Grimly Inevitable'* 4th March 1985 p10
[85] The Financial Times, '*Lessons of the strike'* 4th March 1985 p22

even with its planning, especially if a national strike had emerged. These were the only two editorials I noted which opposed the view of the entire state vs the miners. Considering that the rest of the mainstream press mostly deals with the working miners and, to a lesser extent, police, it goes without saying that the other papers didn't view the strike from this perspective.

Counting the Cost of the Strike

In an article titled '*Fighting for a human future*[86]' the *Leeds Other Paper* focuses on both the cost and economic justification given for the strike. It starts by being critical of the cost the government paid during the dispute, citing a question Scargill had posed the week before while speaking at Castleford: '*whose economics?*'. Who was the economy benefiting, he asked. '*The dispute is costing the Government £120 million a year, yet it can't afford to spend £50,000 a year on a kidney machine to save a person's life.*' Citing statistics from City of London stockbrokers and figures thrown around the House of Lords that the total cost of the strike ranged between 3 and 6 billion, it argued that so many other things needed investment, such as housing, the health service and schools. More importantly, it argued that the true cost of the strike barely mattered to the Government, who made a political choice to beat the miners at any price. The article continues by equating the Government's conduct of the strike to fighting a war, saying they behaved like First World War Generals. They support this view by citing Thatcher's comments about the 'enemy within', the use of contingency reserves, the consistent propaganda stream against the miners and the policing of the dispute. Overall, this part of the article asserts that the immense cost of the strike, which could have been put to better use elsewhere, was instead spent by an irresponsible Government intent to defeat organized labour.

[86] LOP, '*Fighting for a human future'* 8th March 1985 pp8-9

The rest of the article focused on challenging the economic justifications given for pit closures. It cites two groups of people, the first being a group of accountants led by David Cooper, Price Waterhouse professor of accounting at Manchester University. They found that costs were arbitrarily assigned to pits which made the difference between a pit being in or out of profit. Often these costs weren't even that of producing coal. The other research LOP cites comes from Andrew Glyn, a Follow in Economics at Corpus Christi College Oxford. Based on the idea that an unprofitable pit isn't necessarily uneconomic to society at large, he looked at every pit and concluded that it would not be economic to close a single one after accounting for redundancy costs, dole and tax payments lost from jobless miners. LOP does not cite where they get this research, but I found it being mentioned within the February 1985 issue of *Labour Research*[87]. The critiques of the cases to close pits by Andrew Glyn and the group led by David Cooper are both printed[88]. By presenting the arguments made for closing uneconomic pits, LOP stated that the '*union can win the argument*', and that the mining communities were in the right for coming out to defend their communities. The article ends by coming full circle, suggesting that the shaky economic justifications for closure didn't matter to a government intent on destroying organized workers, emphasizing its maliciousness. Overall, this article places the miners on the right side of the dispute (thus justifying the effort put into the strike even if it failed) while placing the government in the wrong.

I couldn't find many news pieces from immediately after the strike ended that are as critical of the cost of the dispute as *LOP* is. Those that are don't use it as evidence to place one side of the dispute over the other. The work of Victor Keegan, a respected economic commentator, from the Guardian echoed this mentality[89]. His first piece focuses on the cost of the strike, putting the cost at £3 billion or £140 for each working person in the country. Most of the article is spent listing the major costs of the strike. The cost of importing fuel oil and coal for power stations was put at £3 and a quarter billion. Lost output in the coal industry was put at £70 million but was offset by £2.2

[87] 'Coal: no case for closures' *Labour Research* **74.2**(February 1985) pp35-6
[88] Labour Research 74(2) p36
[89] Victor Keegan, 'The three hundred thousand million pound bill' *The Guardian* 4th March 1985 p17

billion in reduced wages. Public expenditure, split between nationalized industry spending and policing and social security costs, were put at £1.8 billion. The strike had reduced economic growth by 1 and a quarter percent. The article then moved onto the hidden costs of the strike – increases in crime rate in police deprived areas and the impact of the strike on the pound. This article conducts itself in the same way many articles from around this time counted the cost of the strike, but it changes course at the end as it considered the biggest cost to the government, which would have been in electoral terms had they lost. Keegan argues that even their political victory came at a huge cost that would require years to recover from, and that was bolstered by redundancy and the social costs of financing unemployment in pit villages. He ends by questioning whether the government would have embarked on the strike if they knew what it cost in advance but doesn't present an answer.

Another article by Keegan, focusing on the upcoming Budget, echoes a similar sentiment[90]. While arguing for the inadequacy of the Budget in regards to creating jobs, he suggests that the biggest tragedy of the strike was that the government had paid an unacceptably high price to further the natural decline of the coal industry while doing nothing to promote job prospects in affected areas. Keegan's article echoed *LOP* in its sentiment that the cost was too great but takes a neutral stance overall. Though he acknowledges that the government had their expensive political victory, he doesn't answer the question of whether they would have embarked on the strike while knowing its costs. *LOP*, in its sentiment that the government would break down organized labour at any cost, answers that question with a resounding 'yes.' Furthermore, while Keegan is critical of the government, he doesn't juxtapose this by arguing for the righteousness of the miners case or disputing the criteria by which pits were judged as uneconomic. Overall, these articles simply criticize the government without promoting the perspective of the miners.

[90] Victor Keegan, 'The miners' strike has failed – and so will Nigel Lawson's next Budget' *The Guardian* 4th March 1985 p21

The other major newspaper that criticized the cost of the strike was the *Daily Mirror*, whose stance at the end of the strike was that every major party was a loser. This is reflected in its 5th March editorial comment[91]. It stated that '*the toughest regiment in trade union history was crushed by a government prepared to pay any price for victory*'. It also criticized the warlike conduct of the government, commenting that the miners were not Argentinians or the 'enemy within', but were British people. While it echoed similar themes to *LOP* it does not present the same message. While *LOP* focused on the righteousness of the miners versus the maliciousness of the government, the *Daily Mirror* argued that no victory was achieved at all. The government hadn't achieved a perfect political victory, as the strike had ended with Labour ahead in the polls, Thatcherism now having an unacceptable face for many. The *Daily Mail* had no interest in glorifying the conduct or agency of the miners, summarizing the dispute as a *'revolutionary Marxist determined to vanquish the government*' against '*an ageing American tycoon, put in to smash the National Union of Mineworkers.*' It preferred to condemn both sides rather than pick a favourite.

An article the day before by industrial editor Geoffrey Goodman echoed the same sentiment[92]. The main body of the article dealt with the cost of the dispute, the cost being between £2-3 billion alongside major costs to the mining industry. A cartoon on the same page (printed below) parodied the cost of the strike and the view of it being a victory for the government. Thatcher is pictured celebrating the end of the strike while a depressed looking Nigel Lawson sat amongst a pile of papers. A graph titled 'strike losses' shows the increasing costs throughout the strike and puts the overall cost at £3 billion, in parity with the general sum agreed by the press around this time. It doesn't match the exact reaction of Thatcher and the government to the end of the strike (Be it Thatcher's overwhelming relief or Peter Walker's insistence on there being no gloating from the government) but it parodies the notion that the strike could even be seen as a success with the costs it drew up, putting any desire to celebrate the strike at odds with reality. Goodman's article and this cartoon match the overall 'no victory' stance that the

[91] Daily Mirror, 'NO VICTORY – now the price' 5th March 1985 pp1-2
[92] Geoffrey Goodman, 'Losers all – Strike over – now for reckoning' *Daily Mirror* 4th March 1985 p2

*Daily Mirror* took at the end of the strike, which was marked by a criticism of the cost and both sides of the dispute, rather than LOP's condemnation of the government and exemplification of striking miners.

[93]

A selection of the mainstream press take the polar opposite view of LOP and the papers scrutinized so far. They echo the stance taken by Nigel Lawson in the House of Commons on the 31st July 1984 where, in defense of the money spent during the dispute he called the spending a '*worthwhile investment for the nation.*[94]' The editorial published by the *Yorkshire Post* stated that '*however much the strike may have cost the country, never mind the miners and their families and the NUM – the economic and political cost of a surrender to Scargillism and Marxism would have been horrific.*[95]' In the eyes of this editor, the immense cost of the strike were completely justified in the service of beating down a Marxist threat. These editorials each have a little quotable section like this. The *Daily Mail*[96] recounts the '*grisly cost*' of the dispute, billions of pounds that could have been spent bringing hope to the unemployed, but instead were poured into fighting the strike. It seems like *LOP* and the *Mail* might have found common

[93] Keith Waite, from 'Losers all – Strike over – now for reckoning' *Daily Mirror* 4th March 1985 p2
[94] *Hansard* HC Debate Vol 65, Col 306-7, 31st July 1984
[95] Yorkshire Post, '*Grimly inevitable'* 4th March 1985 p10
[96] Daily Mail, *'The ballot box will not be mocked'* 4th March 1985 p6

ground, but upon reading '*But the price of allowing Arthur Scargill to claim victory would have been so profoundly grievous as to transcend all the hardship and expense of the past twelve months*' you realize that the two are arguing for different things. *The Times* too echoes this theme, pleased at announcing that '*the attempt by Mr. Scargill to use industrial muscle to challenge the parliamentary system, the policies of a freely elected government and the rule of law has been defeated.*[97]'

The editorial of *The Economist* similarly justifies the cost of the dispute, but in economic rather than political terms. It presents the strike not as an argument between the miners and Thatcher, but between the right and wrong way to run the industry. '*The wrong way had ruled the coal industry for too long.*' it suggests, '*It was essential for the right to win. It did.*[98]' The editorial of *The Financial Times* argued along the same lines. As it drew to its conclusion, suggesting that victory was achieved by good luck rather than good management, it argued that victory should not lightly be thrown away as '*There is now the opportunity to run the coal industry as a business…*[99]' They do not directly justify the cost of the dispute, but they frame the ending of it as an opportunity to make necessary change to the industry and get it back on track. It goes without saying that *LOP* would be appalled by the arguments these pieces make. The suggestion that the price of the dispute was worth paying, either to defeat a perceived Marxist threat or to usher in a period of necessary change for the coal industry, was the furthest thing from what they believed, especially since *LOP* believed and argued that the miners were on the right side of the dispute.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, *LOP*'s first reporting of the miners' strike after it ended focused on justifying the political agency of the miners and their communities. By criticizing and

[97] The Times, '*The Face of Defeat*' 4th March 1985 p13
[98] The Economist, '*Going back to what?*' 9th March 1985 pp13-14
[99] The Financial Times, '*Lessons of the strike*' 4th March 1985 p22

debunking the economic grounds for closing uneconomic pits and presenting the government as willing to pay any cost to defeat the miners and organized labour as a whole it placed the miners on the right side of the argument and condemned the government for paying such a ridiculous cost for their political goals. Even though the miners lost they were in the right for fighting this battle, and their struggle for economic survival wasn't misplaced. Finally, LOP stated that the miners were up against the entirety of the British state. The Government, National Coal Board, police, the judiciary and courts system, press and the working miners all conspired to bring the miners down. The fact that they held out for a year despite unfair and tremendous odds was presented as something worthwhile, something worth celebrating. Above all, it argued that the miners' strike was worth fighting, if not just for its own sake, but to celebrate the control over their own lives that miners tried to retake for themselves, and to be ready for future battles.

## '*Gays and lesbians fight the clampdown' – Leeds Other Paper* vs Section 28

In the view of sociologist Ken Plummer, the lesbian and gay movement during the 1980s was not a single monolithic entity, but instead different groups of people in different social worlds which made competing claims for change[1]. To list a few examples, self-help social worlds developed a support system for community members dating back to the 1960s with organizations like the Albany Trust. When the London Gay Switchboard launched in 1974 it received 20,000 calls in its first year with a million coming in overall in the following decade[2]. An academic wing of the community started as a small group in the 70s and developed into a steady stream of gay and lesbian academics by the 1980s with conferences, taught courses and libraries of books[3]. Starting from virtual invisibility in the 60s aside from negative press and unsuccessful magazines, an established media market for gay readers existed by the 1980s. There were newspaper publications like the *Gay Times*, *Capital Gay* and the *Pink Paper*, and TV programs like Channel 4's *In the Pink*[4]. Bookshops like *Gays the Word* in Manchester sold LGBT books.

Even the groups vying for change in society were going about it in different ways. On one hand, there were voluntary pressure groups concerned with rights and legal change, such as the *Homosexual Law Reform Society*, the *Albany Trust*, the *Campaign for Homosexuality Equality* and *Stonewall*[5]. The *Defend Gays the Word Campaign* used letter writing, lobbying, media coverage and a parliamentary campaign to exert political influence[6]. Stonewall focused on assimilation, celebrity figures like Ian McKellen and Michael Cashman, professional lobbying and the drafting of equality bills[7]. On the other hand there were smaller groups making radical claims through slogans, street marches

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[1] Ken Plummer, 'The Lesbian and Gay Movement in Britain: Schisms, Solidarities and Social Worlds', from '*Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics'*, (Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1999), p141
[2] Plummer, p139
[3] Plummer, p139
[4] Plummer, p139
[5] Plummer, pp137-8
[6] Graham McKerrow, 'Saving Gays the Word: the campaign to protect a bookshop and the right to import queer literature' from '*Queer Between the Covers, Histories of Queer Publishing and Publishing Queer Voices'* (London: University of London Press, 2021), pp108-9
[7] Plummer, pp144-5

and other methods. Groups like the *Gay Liberation Front*, *ACT UP* and *Outrage* sought widespread revolutionary change and a restructuring of gender, family and society[8]. Groups of people in the community were marked by divides, such as race[9], gender[10] and age[11]. The developing AIDS campaign split between focusing on prevention, treatment and research[12]. These conflicts, Plummer argued, were necessary for the vitality of the movement[13], since without that dynamism it would stagnate.

There were two major campaigns for the lesbian and gay community in the UK during the 1980s. The first resulted from the outbreak of the AIDS crisis and the second was formed in opposition to Section 28 (also known as Clause 28) of the Local Government Act, a 1988 law which threatened to outlaw the 'promotion of homosexuality' by local authorities[14]. Plummer noted that Section 28 was both the biggest attack on gay rights since the founding of the *Gay Liberation Front* in 1970 and the precipitator of a new generation of activists[15]. Major demonstrations against the clause attracted large numbers. One in Manchester attracted between 13 and 20,000 people, one in London attracted 30,000. Angry lesbians abseiled into the House of Lords in early February and invaded BBC's 6'O'clock News in May[16]. The 1988 Gay Pride march was unprecedented in terms of size and political involvement[17]. Overall, I agree with Plummer's view that Section 28 was a watershed moment in the struggle for gay equality and a coming of age for the lesbian and gay movement[18].

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[8] Plummer, pp145-6
[9] Plummer, p150
[10] Plummer, p144
[11] Plummer, pp150-1
[12] William F. Flanagan, 'People with HIV/AIDS, Gay Men, and Lesbians: Shifting Identities, Shifting Priorities' from '*Legal Inversions: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Politics of the Law*' (Philadelphia: Temple University Pess, 1995), p211
[13] Plummer, p141
[14] Plummer, p142
[15] Plummer, pp143-4
[16] Plummer, p143
[17] Plummer, p140
[18] Plummer, p143

A Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher was in the background of the lesbian and gay movement during the 1980s[19]. It pledged for a return to traditional and family values and attacked the permissive period of legislation during the 1960s[20]. Most Conservative MP's and members were opposed to even basic equality for gays and lesbians and were willing to play on anti-gay sentiments among the electorate[21]. Thatcherite homophobic attitudes placed themselves between homosexuals on one side and bigots on the other to present itself as a centrist and rational response. The image of the self-limiting, closeted, desexualized and invisible 'good homosexual', in opposition to the perverted 'dangerous queer', was offered a place within the normal social order. While the image of the 'good homosexual' did not and cannot exist, this did not stop the invocation of this figure in order to present homophobic rhetoric as tolerant[22]. Lesbian and gay people faced heightened homophobia from the media, political and religious leaders, government authorities and queer-bashers in the street[23]. The police and state were powerful reinforcers of homophobia, utilizing community norms to keep homosexuality and its imagery out of the public eye. Gay materials were routinely censored in Britain more than in other countries[24]. Operation Tiger was conducted by Customs and Excise against the *Gays the Word* bookshop in 1984, during which they seized thousands of imported queer books[25].

Under cross examination in the resulting trial against *Gays the Word* and its directors, customs surveyors admitted during cross examination that gay books entering the country were automatically detained[26]. The police invaded queer clubs and spaces, raided shops and even used *agents provocateurs*, nicknamed the pretty police, in order to lure and entrap gay men[27]. Lesbian and gay men were brought to courts, even just for

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[19] Plummer, pp135
[20] Plummer, p136
[21] David Rayside, '*On the Fringe: Gays and Lesbians in Politics*' (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), p21
[22] Anna Marie Smith, 'The Imaginary Inclusion of the Assimilable "Good Homosexual": The British New Right's Representations of Sexuality and Race', *Diacritics* **24.2/3**(Summer-Autumn 1994), p64
[23] McKerrow, p91
[24] Rayside, pp34-5
[25] McKerrow, p91
[26] McKerrow, p105
[27] McKerrow, p93

kissing in public[28], mothers who were found to be lesbians in custody cases lost custody of their children and the 'homosexual panic' defence could be used by anyone who killed a gay man to avoid or lighten a sentence. A Scotland court of session 1981 ruled that it was reasonable to assume that homosexuals were a risk to children, hence being able to sack them without proof of complaint[29]. The judiciary, courts and police frequently menaced the LGBT community in the 1980s.

Joining them in being powerful forces of homophobia were the mass media, particularly the tabloid press[30]. Hostile media far outweighed affirmative, yet timid, media. *The Daily Mirror* and *Sun* had 2.5 and 4 million in circulation respectively, compared to less than a million for the *Times*, *Independent* and *Guardian*. Every paper apart from one was supportive of Conservatism, and even the *Mirror* vouched for a morally conservative variant of Labour[31]. Once it was apparent that the risk of AIDS could extend beyond the gay community[32], the AIDS crisis provoked increased tabloid coverage and open homophobia. Coverage of the 'gay plague' drew a line between the promiscuous and infectious gay male population vs other people who were presented as victims[33]. The press also campaigned against local government socialists who supported lesbian and gay positive image campaigns[34], born from authorities willing to challenge the decline of their services and the government prompting it[35]. Their actions threw themselves open to lampooning and misrepresentation by right wing tabloids as the '*loony left*'[36], a label that was so effective that even Labour were using it in their circles[37].

[28] Rayside, p35
[29] McKerrow, pp93-4
[30] Rayside, p35
[31] Rayside, p36
[32] Dorothy Nelkin, 'AIDS and the News Media', *The Milbank Quarterly* **69.2**(1991), p297
[33] Rayside, p36
[34] Marie Smith, p60
[35] J.A Chandler, '*Explaining local government: Local government in Britain since 1800*' (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p249
[36] Chandler, p250
[37] Rayside, p37

Gay Labour MP Peter Tatchell, abandoned by party leadership after he got the nomination to stand for the Bermondsey seat in 1981, was savaged by the press while the Liberal campaign watched[38]. Finally, the timidity of more positive media on homosexuality matched that of the Labour Party. There was a general lack of acknowledgement of the gay community as an entity, and the actions of gay men and women went unreported. Huge organizations and protests against Section 28 in 1988 went mostly unreported in the media[39], and the *Campaign to Defend Gays the Word* was ignored[40]. The British state under Thatcher was responsible for increased homophobia during the 1980s, where the democratic rights of gays and lesbians to free speech, democratic representation, privacy, right to be free from arbitrary policing and others were dramatically reduced[41]. By the time Section 28 rolled around, Britain had a more hostile legal apparatus towards lesbians and gays than most other liberal democracies[42].

What would become Section 28 of the Local Government Act started out as an unsuccessful Private Members Bill in the Lords proposed by the Earl of Halsbury[43]. It dictated that local authorities were prohibited from intentionally promoting homosexuality or publishing material with the intent of doing so. Furthermore, it banned the teaching of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship. An exception was made in the law for any actions or education that could prevent the spread of disease. David Rayside wrote that it was part of a larger three hundred year history in preserving the respectability of the realm, while also shoring up the postwar pattern of tolerating homosexuality in private while keeping it out of public space[44]. The law prohibited the promotion of homosexuality but not homosexuality itself, continuing the theme of tolerating the chaste, socially isolated and politically inactive 'good homosexual' while

[38] Rayside, pp27-38
[39] Rayside, p38
[40] McKerrow, p97
[41] Marie Smith, p70
[42] Rayside, p38
[43] Davina Cooper and Didi Herman, 'Getting "the Family Right": Legislating Heterosexuality in Britain, 1986-91', from '*Legal Inversions: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Politics of the Law'* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p165
[44] Rayside, p19

making a scapegoat out of the rest of the community[45]. The arguments of bigots and the opponents of Section 28 could be presented as equivalent extremists, with Section 28 being seen as the only reasonable way forward[46]. It drew from official and popular homophobic traditions, such as the idea of sexuality not being fixed biologically (opening up children to corruption through improper education)[47] and the fear of 'loony' local government being responsible for dangerous education policies[48].

The Section was seen as a very poor law, with highly ambiguous language that only concerned the actions of local authorities. The third clause on disease left possibilities open[49]. Furthermore, an interpretative circular going around shortly after it passed stated that local authorities could not be stopped from offering services to homosexuals that it also offered to other residents, which undermined the section[50]. Davina Cooper and Didi Herman described the law as an ill-conceived attempt by the government to look like it was doing something in the face of backlash against local authorities.[51] On the one hand, the language was so vague that it was uncertain what exactly the law was going to do, on the other the language was so vague that it could mean literally anything, the latter idea being the main takeaway of the gay and lesbian community at the time. Despite these issues, the section passed pretty much intact despite protest in major cities and a widespread condemnation of it as repressive and anti-gay thanks to Conservative majorities and party discipline[52]. Writing in 1999, Ken Plummer noted that the law had not been put into effect, perhaps due to is dubious quality, but encouraged self-censorship and fear[53].

[45] Marie Smith, p64
[46] Marie Smith, p66
[47] Marie Smith, p60
[48] Cooper, pp174-5
[49] Plummer, p143
[50] Cooper, p174
[51] Cooper, p173
[52] Rayside, p19
[53] Plummer, p143

Arguably as ineffective as the law itself was the reaction of the other two major political parties to it. Labour's weak response to the bill was due to its reluctance to appear pro-gay[54]. Though some Labour local authorities and groups such as the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights were effective in pursuing gay rights policies the leadership were never truly behind these issues and feared alienating voters[55]. The left of the Labour Party was seen as the reason for its defeat in 1983[56], and another loss earlier in the year inclined them to not take any chances over Section 28. To some extent, Labour's timidity should also be seen as a mark of success for conservative efforts linking LGBT policies and Labour to 'loonyism'[57]. Labour's embarrassment over LGBT issues and their attempts to distance themselves from 'loonyism' were manifested in the responses of front bench politicians to Section 28, who were quick to add their support and clarify that its councils did not have a duty to promote homosexuality[58]. While Neil Kinnock came around to condemning the bill in January 1988, calling it '*crude in its concept, slanderous in its drafting* [and], *vicious in its purpose…*[59]', the campaign to oppose Section 28 had got off the ground without Labour.

The Liberal Party wasn't too different from Labour in its response. Despite having the most progressive record on gay rights at the time[60], the Labour rebels who joined them to form the SDP-Liberal Alliance left due to rejecting their parties perceived move to the Left. As a result, the Alliance moved to the right, dropping references to sexual orientation from its 1983 manifesto and colluding with the tabloid press and conservative governments to promote the view of the loony left[61]. Overall, there was no more opposition from the Alliance to Section 28 than there was from Labour. Without much support in Parliament, it was up to members of the lesbian and gay community themselves to coordinate the campaign against the bill.

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[54] Rayside, p26
[55] Rayside, pp28-9
[56] Rayside, p31
[57] Rayside, p29
[58] Rayside, p30
[59] Rayside, p30
[60] Rayside, p32
[61] Rayside, pp33-34

*Leeds Other Paper* was mentioned in a *Pink Paper* article discussing what a lesbian could expect from living in Leeds, inspired by its authors recent move to live and work there. While they criticized the paper for being prone to proofing errors and having exasperatingly uncritical coverage of supposedly radical causes, they added that it was the city's one regular forum for left wing debate and the prime source of information on lesbian and gay news in Leeds[62]. While LOP did report on LGBT issues, I didn't see it being a common feature of the paper until the second half of the 1980s. At that point, *Out in the North* became a regular feature toward the end of LOP issues, which compiled lesbian and gay news, upcoming events, adverts and groups. Aside from that, to list a few examples, they reported on the victimization of a University of Leeds student in early 1980[63], printed a press release celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Leeds Gay Switchboard and inviting their readers to a benefit concert for it later in the month[64], reported on a week of awareness held by the Leeds University Lesbian and Gay Society to combat the moral panic over AIDS[65] and interviewed Julian Clary when his 1989 Mincing Machine Tour came to Leeds[66]. LOP also kept up with the campaign to stop Section 28 during 1987-88, reporting on major demonstrations, such as the one in London[67] and Manchester[68], and remaining firmly on the side of the community against the clause.

This chapter will focus on the first month of the Section 28 campaign in December 1988. It argues that *Leeds Other Paper's* first coverage of Section 28 was effective in informing their readership of the clause, its effects and of the campaign against it. Furthermore, by pointing to its provision of contact details, it suggests that LOP assisted the campaign by encouraging its readers to take part. Finally, by making comparisons to other press coverage from December, it argues that LOP's coverage shared similarities

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[62] Jo Smith, 'Pink Stringers – Leeds' *The Pink Paper* 5th August 1989 p22
[63] Leeds Other Paper, '*Victimized for being gay'* 11th January 1980 pp1-2
[64] LOP, '*Out in the North'*, 10th February 1989 p21
[65] LOP, '*AIDS: hysteria or awareness'* 8th March 1985 p4
[66] Saeeda Khanum, 'Mincing machine' *LOP* 19th May 1989 p9
[67] LOP, '*Protest against 'bar bigotry"* 15th January 1988 pp8-9
[68] LOP, '*Stop the clause'* 26th February 1988 p1 + p7

with dedicated LGBT newspapers like the *Pink Paper*, and that it stood out from the negative and neutral sections of the press.

## LOP and Section 28

The first mention *LOP* makes of Section 28 is in an article published on the 18th December 1987 called '*Gays and lesbians fight the clampdown*[69]'. It starts by using specific quotes from the legislation to inform its readers on what the law intended to do, prohibiting the 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities, the teaching of it as a 'pretended' family relationship and giving financial aid or assistance for any of the previous two reasons. The promotion of homosexuality and teaching clauses are quoted exactly from the legislation (or at least the version of it when it was enacted, which is listed at legislation.gov.uk). Using the exact wordage of the legislation was more useful for informing the reader as to its stated intentions – it allows them to see the vague wording for themselves.

The bulk of the article spends its time discussing the possible effects of the clause. It draws a long list of implications from a draft created by Manchester City Council's legal department. This list includes stopping councils from carrying out activities supporting LGBT groups, publicizing facilities for lesbians and gay men, providing a positive image for the LGBT community, countering discrimination, licensing clubs or any group that caters to lesbians and gay men exclusively (LOP cites social services policies as an example), financing LGBT groups or letting them use council resources, having policies or making statements that support gay causes and distributing any material that could be accused of promoting homosexuality – which would also remove gay literature from libraries. The list mostly focuses on what it would prevent councils from doing but readers would be able to read between the lines on what they would mean for lesbians and gay men. It would prevent councils from providing and funding services that would

[69] LOP, '*Gays and lesbians fight the clampdown*' 18th December 1987 p6

improve their lives. LOP grounds the context of what it would do to Leeds by making a comparison to Leeds City Council, stating that even its limited support would be rendered illegal under the clause. Finally, the last section of the article states that '*The bill is an attempt to remove the possibility of lesbian*[s] *and gay men being able to fight for our most basic civil rights.*'. LOP uses the language of agency, or specifically agency being taken away, to make the case of how the clause will negatively affect the lives of lesbians and gay men. The use of the word '*our*' is also noteworthy, since it implies that the article was written from the perspective of the LGBT community, arguing their case directly as to how this clause will negatively affect them. This type of language comes up one other time, when the article writes that '*we have no access to funding*' when describing the campaign against the clause. There is no author credited to confirm or deny this, and the two word choices are not enough on their own to confirm anything else, but it is possible for someone from the community to have written and submitted this article for LOP.

The article also implores the reader to think beyond the clauses' effect on councils by taking a lengthy quote from a letter sent to the *Guardian* by the leader of the Manchester City Council[70]. The letter, signed by Graham Stringer and 24 members of the Manchester City Council Labour Group, calls the law '*the most massive attack on civil rights and civil liberties ever launched by an elected government on any group in this country*' and alleged that its effects would be '*extremely far-reaching*'. It would not just prevent local authorities carrying out their responsibilities to lesbian and gay rate payers, it would also prevent the tackling of discrimination or working to increase awareness of the right lesbians and gays have to equal treatment in society. Young heterosexual people, surrounded by media presenting homosexuality as a second rate sexuality, would be encouraged to hold irrational hostility towards gays and lesbians, and unprovoked attacks on them would increase. Finally, life would be made even worse for gays and lesbians, who would have less accurate information about themselves or positive role

[70] 'Letters to the Editor' *The Guardian* 12th December 1987 p12

models to look up to. The letter and LOP present the clause as an attack on the rights of gays and lesbians that would result in making their lives noticeably worse.

Finally, the article concludes by providing information on the developing campaign against the clause. It lists an upcoming meeting for women at the Trades Club on the 21st December and an open meeting at Leeds University on the 18th, providing starting times for them both. The article also gives information on where to send donations, which were sorely needed as there was no other access to funding. Most importantly, it mentions a planned national demonstration on the 9th January. The article isn't just giving information about what campaigns were going on, its giving enough for readers to get involved and help defend the rights of lesbians and gay men. Overall, the article describes what the clause is, the effect it will have on lesbians and gay men and provides information for readers to get involved to defend their agency.

Other papers against Clause 28

LOP's first article on Clause 28 shares a lot of similarities with the first article of the *Pink Paper*, a national newspaper for gay men and women which was still in its infancy when the Local Government Bill was being drawn up. The article in question, '*Hysterical Prejudice*[71]' uses the language of the legislation to describe what the bill intended to do, stating that it aimed to ban the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities, outlaw the teaching of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship and prohibit the funding of any organization whose actions could be construed as promotion. It then moves onto talking about what the law would stop local authorities from doing. The abolition of local authority units, voluntary services, lesbian and gay centers, the right to use local authority services and resources and the banning of any material that could be seen as promoting homosexuality all echo the consequences suggested in LOP. The only two differences come from the *Pink Paper* suggesting that LGBT teachers would be

[71] The Pink Paper, '*Hysterical Prejudice*' 10th December 1987 p1

gagged, preventing them from speaking about their experiences, and that gay initiatives on AIDS would stop receiving funding. Both papers are similarly effective in dealing with the bill's impact on councils specifically.

Like *LOP's* article, the *Pink Paper* also suggests that the clause would go beyond local authorities to negatively affect the lives of lesbians and gay men. A sub-title describes the bill as a '*bid to smash lesbian and gay rights*' and the text calls the bill an attempt to '*make official the increasing backlash against lesbians and gay men*'. It also calls the bill a '*draconian measure*' when discussing the support it received from the Prime Minister and MP's from all sides of the political spectrum. The two papers are similar in their use of language to describe the bill as a threat (LOP's title uses the word '*clampdown*' – suggesting an act of suppression'), though the *Pink Paper* is more frequent in its use. The paper also cites the negative comments from several figures; Neil Fletcher of the Inner London Education Authority called it a piece of '*central government paranoia*', Helen Dawson of the Association of Labour Authorities' Gay and Lesbian Committee said that it was '*the worst sort of pandering to hysterical prejudice*' and Terry Wailer of the Manchester Gay Centre said the clause threatened '*our very existence'*. These quotes have a similar effect to the section of Manchester City Council's letter cited in LOP, pointing out the damaging nature of the bill and the bigoted intentions of the group pushing it through Parliament.

Terry Wailer, a figure associated with Manchester's Gay Centre, was said to be taken aback by the rushing through of the clause, which is an example of the *Pink Paper* acknowledging the wider context around the clause. It comments on the coincidence of the bill being released six weeks after an anti-gay law restricting safe sex information was proposed and passed in the United States. This is referring to Senator Jessie Helm's proposal prohibiting the use of funds to provide AIDS education, information, prevention materials and activities that promote or condone homosexual activities[72]. It also takes note of the fact that it was pushed through on the same day as the

[72] https://www.congress.gov/amendment/100th-congress/senate-amendment/963

Washington Summit between Reagan and Gorbachev, meaning that press and popular focus would be on that instead of the clause. It speculates that its timing was deliberate to reduce knowledge about the bill. By situating the clause in the context of surrounding events, it further highlighted the bigoted intent of the bill, alongside the fact that the right was seemingly getting bolder in their attacks on homosexuality. A comment used in the article from Jennie Wilson of the Organization for Lesbian and Gay Action echoes this, calling the bill the action of '*frightened bigots*.' LOP, with its regional instead of national focus and its focus on more issues than just those pertaining to homosexuality, is not able to provide the wider context of events around the bill, which the *Pink Paper* is more capable of doing due to its singular focus on lesbian and gay issues.

Despite this difference, the two papers end the same way by drawing attention to the beginnings of campaigns against the clause springing up around the country. The *Pink Paper* draws particular attention to the actions of London Councilor Bob Crossman organizing a meeting at Islington Town Hall on the 10th December at 7:30pm, supported by lesbian and gay organizations. The article advises readers to contact their local switchboard or the London Switchboard for details of upcoming protests. *LOP* and the *Pink Paper* don't just engage with the news of the clause, but also the fight against it, organizing their readers to help defend against the impact of the clause.

A follow-up to this article appears on the front page of the following issue, titled '*Fighting for our lives*[73]'. The LOP article is the only major feature about the clause during the month of December. There is a letter talking about a writer's dissatisfaction with a reply they got from an eloquent letter sent to Denis Healey about his support for Clause 28 (He replied - '*I fear I agree with the position of Labour's Frontbench*')[74] and there are the usual '*Out in the North*' features in the later pages of LOP, but there is no article space devoted to the campaign for Clause 28 until January. While LOP's article is effective at making the case against the clause and publicizing the campaign against it, the *Pink*

[73] The Pink Paper, '*Fighting for our lives*' 17th December 1987 p1
[74] LOP, '*Letter – Thanks for nowt Denis!*' 25th December 1987 p11

*Paper's* reporting and singular focus allow them to follow along with updates in the campaign against the clause, the movement of the bill through Parliament and to reinforce the possible effects of the clause as new information arises, all three of which are demonstrated in the follow-up article.

A follow-up the on the 10th December article reports on the results of a meeting at Islington Town Hall. It was attended by over a hundred people who quickly agreed to a Parliamentary lobby the following Monday on the 14th December. Said lobby involved over a thousand people swooping in on the Houses of Parliament to protest, alongside many making their protests known through letter and phone. The article is also able to update its readers on the progress of the bill through Parliament, adding that a collection of amendments were all aimed at modifying the proposals, though they weren't expected to be successful. It adds that the House of Lords, due to debate the bill in January, was currently the strongest hope of modifying the clause. In addition, the article also expands on the negative implications of the clause, drawing from the results of scrutiny by lawyers. It focuses less on the impact of the clause, citing only the closure of pubs and clubs, and focuses more on what the scrutiny revealed about the intent of the clause. It calls the law the beginning of an attempt to criminalize homosexuality and suggests that the goal of the law was the abolition of any public display of homosexuality. Furthermore it cites Graham Stringer's letter calling the law the most massive attack on civil rights, saying that this view is echoed by the National Council for civil liberties and Parliamentarians across the political spectrum such as Lord Griffon, Simon Hughes, Michael Brown and Ken Livingstone. Finally it quotes Bernie Grant, who said that the government was being stampeded by '*loony, rabid, right-wing fanatics*' and that the law would be a signal to fascists and everyone opposed to homosexuality that the government was on their side. The *Pink Paper's* second article builds upon the case made by the first one in a way that LOP is unable to replicate due to the latter not focusing on homosexuality exclusively.

Even more information about the campaign is given in the *Pink Paper* if you follow the articles ending suggestion and move to page 3, the entirety of which is covered with information about the campaigns against the clause. The largest article, '*England in the Third Term*[75]', reports on the Parliamentary lobby which happened on the 14th December, on the first day of the debate over the Local Government Act. This and the *Guardian* are the only papers so far where I have found reporting of this first day protest, the rest of Britain's press usually concerned themselves with the disruptions caused by activists on the second day (And LOP doesn't report on either day). The *Daily Mirror*[76] and *Financial Times*[77] articles on this debate are the only articles for their respective papers which mention clause 28 during December. They report on the event without engaging with the wider debate or the campaign for or against it, both mentioning the bill as preventing the promotion of homosexuality and talking about the arguments made on both sides of the debate.

'*England in the Third Term*' is a positive report on the lobby. It described the queue of people, which went down the street and around the corner, as good humored while they waited for their chance to talk to MP's about the human rights of lesbians and gay men. While it does concede that none of the MP's held out much hope of removing the clause in the Commons, the tone of the piece is still positive and it didn't stop people at the time from trying to make their voices heard. It takes lots of quotes from people who were there, such as MPs Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn, Tony Benn, Chris Smith and Mildred Gordon. The interviewer also talked to Billy Bragg, Jennie Wilson of OLGA, the staff of a lesbian pantomime which was attacked in the *Sun* and *Daily Mail* and many ordinary people who had come to take part. The article name comes from the words of Islington councilor Bob Crossman, who said '*This isn't Germany in the Third Reich – it's England in the Third Term*'. The protest also received support from all over the country from organizations such as the British Youth Council and Manchester City Council

[75] The Pink Paper, '*England in the Third Term*' 17th December 1987 p3
[76] David Bradshaw, '*Gay Fury Stops Commons Debate*' *The Daily Mirror* 16th December 1987 p2
[77] Tom Lynch, '*Commons suspended after gay protest*' *The Financial Times* 16th December 1987 p8

which were read out and lesbian activist Robin Tyler even rang to tell the crowd to keep fighting.

The article ends with information on the next meeting to discuss tactics, which was scheduled for 6pm on Thursday 17th December at the Association of London Authorities. While the largest article deals exclusively with the lobby short features on the rest of the page talk about other developments in the campaign. One section deals with a whirlwind campaign by the North West Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Equality, entailing meetings and the petitioning of MP's. Another short section declares that '*Scottish Support is Strong'*, describing the positive outcome of a demonstration against the amendment in Edinburgh. It attracted 1000 people overall and a petition was signed by 600 people. The Scottish Homosexual Action Group was also formed to organize demonstrations, create links between different groups and run benefits for relevant organizations. Finally, the page details a '*Save our Children and Families*' campaign launched by the parents of gays and lesbians aimed at lobbying the Lords in the new year. They urged readers to contact their nearest group and take action immediately. Overall, the *Pink Paper's* reporting allows for an insight into the meaningful campaigning efforts even during the first month of its existence which LOP, outside of the information of two meetings, cannot replicate. The *Pink Paper* is overall more effective when it comes to informing its audience about clause 28 but considering that it is a paper made for lesbians and gay men this is to be expected. The *Leeds Other Paper* being as useful as it is when it comes to the clause, despite its focus on more regional issues with homosexuality being only one of them, is still worthy of positive note.

Another paper which highlights LOP's lacking coverage in December is the *Guardian*, albeit in a different way. The Guardian features multiple pieces about the clause during December but each one focuses on a different aspect of the clause. A piece by Sarah Boseley is the earliest to appear in the *Guardian* during December and it focuses on an education perspective[78]. It describes the bill as a ban on the promotion of

[78] Sarah Boseley, 'Bigotry fear if gay sex teaching banned…' *The Guardian* 9th December 1987 p3

homosexuality in schools and on the acceptability of gay and lesbian family relationships, suggesting that it could lead to intolerance in the classroom, hamper teachers trying to provide sex education, talk about their homosexuality, warn about the dangers of AIDS and prevent discussion of homosexual figures in the past. The article touches upon the vagueness of what '*promotion*' means, with Doreen Massey of the Family Association Education Unit fearing that the bill would prevent homosexuality being mentioned at all. The article ends by stating that the definition of the term '*promotion*' would be critical. A small section is devoted to the impact of lesbian and gay organizations, which would suffer due to no longer being able to receive funding from education and local authorities, but the article as a whole places more focus on the clause's effect on education.

An article published by Boseley the next day elaborates on this, focusing on the response of lesbian and gay organizations to the bill[79]. These organizations feared that that the bill would force organizations to cut off their funding and that the vagueness of '*promotion*' could be used to encompass council activities. Tony Waller of the Manchester Gay Centre said that the centre receives all of its income (£25,000 a year) from the council which would force them to '*battle to survive'*. A spokesman for the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard said that they faced being dragged through the courts based on the '*crazy wording*' of the law, and the Lesbian and Gay Workers in Education group said that grants to gay youth groups could be challenged. These two articles together provide an image of the impact clause 28 would have, but individually they are more focused on specific groups. The articles don't engage with the campaign against the clause either.

Nicholas de Jongh provides an article on the 12th December with a stronger focus on the impact on the LGBT community. The title '*Tory clause 'to suppress gay life''* also communicates that it is a negative one[80]. It suggests, citing from a claim made by the

[79] Sarah Boseley, 'Gays angered by Labour betrayal over grants' *The Guardian* 10th December 1987 p4
[80] Nicholas de Jongh, 'Tory clause 'to suppress gay life'' *The Guardian* 12th December 1987 p3

National Council for Civil Liberties, that gay life would be suppressed. The same council also suggested after taking legal advice that gay clubs in England and Wales were liable to lose their licenses under the clause. The article also mentions that Manchester City Council had been told that all literature regarded as promoting homosexuality would have to be removed from public libraries. Graham Stringer also said that the clause would prevent local authorities from working to end discrimination. Finally, the article mentions local councils fearing that they would have to stop theatres they fund from showing plays depicting homosexuality positively. The article also makes mention of some of the actions made against the campaign, such as Manchester Council's policy community passing a resolution condemning the clause and the plans made by gay organizations to lobby the Commons on the following Monday. An addition to the article by James Naughtie mentions two amendments proposed for the bill which would reassert the civil rights of homosexuals and their protection from discrimination, alongside ensuring that the bill didn't stop all discussions of homosexuality between teachers and pupils. While these mentions of actions against the clause are positive so far, they lack the call to action potential that LOP and the *Pink Paper* had. By not printing contact or meetup details the article doesn't encourage the agency of the reader as effectively.

A *Guardian* editorial also discusses clause 28 focusing on the Tory strategy of the bill, similarly to the *Pink Paper's* focus on the deliberate timing of the bill[81]. Starting by suggesting that the Conservatives were '*onto a winner*', it cites the previous year's Social Attitudes Survey (7/10 felt that homosexuality was always wrong), the fear of AIDS, the fear of homosexuals having contact with children and the cost that Labour paid for promoting homosexuality in elections to establish homosexuals as the most unpopular group in the country, with their unpopularity growing stronger. It alleged that the Conservatives had sensed milage in being the anti-gay party, suggesting that the amendment was, in their eyes, an easy win in terms of public favour.

[81] The Guardian, '*Editorial – Will they be populist, or principled?*' 9th December 1987 p12

The editorial then goes on to voice its skepticism about the bill. The Government was, for the first time, suggesting that one aspect of life shouldn't be studied in any circumstance, as supposed to just laying down the broad limits of what should be in the curriculum. This was also done in the Local Government Bill, not in an Education Bill where it would be more suitable. The editorial argued that the bill was designed on the principle '*that to discuss a subject is to promote it and to study a point of view or way of life is to endorse it*'[82], despite this notion being rejected everywhere else in education. Finally, the bill based its view on highly sensationalized accounts in tabloid newspapers, many of which had been discredited multiple times. Overall it argued that the bill was based on a lie, stating that homosexuality was a fact of human existence and the Governments national campaign on AIDS was an admission of this fact. The article also points out the hypocrisy of the bill stopping local authorities from mounting AIDS education of any kind until they were specifically exempted. *The Guardian* calls the bill an attempt to encourage state indoctrination and the persecution of minorities, two things the government said it was against. The piece concludes by saying that opponents of the bill would have to choose between being populist (playing along with the gay bashing) or principled (defending the human rights of a group of people). Overall the editorial is incredibly effective at pointing out the bill's bigotry by focusing on the circumstances and biases underlying its creation.

None of the *Guardian* pieces mentioned above, including the editorial, promote the campaign against the clause and utilizing the agency of their readers as in the same way as specifically campaigning papers such as LOP and the *Pink Paper*. To be specific, only the article by de Jongh really tries. However the *Guardian* has multiple examples of letters sent to the paper about the clause which serve as examples of their readership engaging with the debate. The letter sent from Graham Stringer and the Manchester City Council Labour Group has already been mentioned, but the same issue also saw a letter from a teacher who saw the Local Government Bill as the last straw after teachers had already been abused and insulted[83]. He says that he has never had a desire to

[82] The Guardian, '*Editorial – Will they be populist, or principled?*' 9th December 1987 p12
[83] The Guardian, '*Letters – Bill that promotes ideas of a second-rate gay sexuality*'12th December 1987 p12

encourage any of his pupils to do anything sexual, let alone become homosexual and was angry at the idea that he could be prosecuted for doing so. The letter goes on to ponder on who gets to define encouragement. He gives the specific example of 'am I encouraging homosexuality if I'm not preaching that they should rot in hellfire', suggesting that encouragement could entail any slightly positive mention of homosexuality. To conclude, he calls the step '*clearly regressive*' and says he doesn't want to be an instigator of a generation less tolerant than his own. The letter provides an insight into how a teacher viewed the clause, and his fears of stoking intolerance in the next generation due to the value judgements of Conservatives.

In my opinion, the two most important letters published during December in regards to clause 28 are the two published on the 15th December[84]. The first is written by Bob Crossman, who I have mentioned above while taking about the *Pink Paper*. He was the first openly gay mayor in the UK, being the mayor of Islington from 1986-1987. He expressed his irritation towards the right for telling lies about millions of people all over the country, including himself. The letter goes on to express his disbelief at the current state of affairs, suggesting that 5 years ago the idea of the government taking steps to make mentions of an entire group of people illegal would have been unimaginable. He personally asserts that he, alongside millions of gay men and lesbians, was determined to live openly and thus refused to be victims of the prejudice promised by the bill.

The second letter is written by a gay playwright who drew upon his life experiences to include positive representations of gay people in his plays which were praised by parents, teachers and pupils alike. The clause threatened his livelihood, but the letter writer believed that was less important than the threat posed to the civil liberties of gay men and lesbians. He concludes his letter by making reference to negative propaganda created against Jews, suggesting that the banning of positive imagery about a group allows prejudice and discrimination against them to thrive. These two letters serve as examples of members of the gay community themselves using the *Guardian's* letter

[84] The Guardian, '*Letters – Bill to dismiss a cultural identity as an aberration*' 15th December 1987 p12

space to talk about their experiences and the threats posed by the bill. The *Guardian* doesn't encourage agency in its readers in the same way LOP and the *Pink Paper* do, instead curating (mostly positive) debate and discussion in its letter spaces, which aligns with its more liberal stance.

Newspapers supporting the Clause

Publications which had a positive view of the clause, such as the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*, have initial articles that approach the bill in the same way. The *Telegraph's* first article was a piece by Nigel Dudley which labels the clause as a '*triumph*'[85]. The article accepts the myth that homosexuals were encouraging people to be homosexual themselves. A quote from David Wiltshire MP used in the article echoes this mentality – '*Society has the right to prevent homosexuals from encouraging others to be homosexual'*. A lot of the anger behind the bill was directed at left-wing authorities promoting homosexual causes, with particular mention being made of books like '*Young, Gay and Proud*' being available to children. This presents the fear of homosexuals multiplying or spreading like a virus, using the AIDS epidemic as a metaphor, and suggests that they target children in particular. Labour Environment Spokesperson John Cunningham is quoted saying that it has never been the duty of local councils to promote homosexuality and implied that they knew this quite well despite their actions. The last section of his quote suggests a degree of maliciousness, that local councils were encouraging homosexuality despite it being wrong. The article doesn't necessarily explore the ramifications of the clause, instead trying to justify its existence by focusing on loony left councils and invoking fears of homosexuals spreading like a disease. As a side effect of this, there is no consideration of what a law like this would do the LGBT community.

[85] Nigel Dudley, 'Council Finance for homosexual groups banned' *The Daily Telegraph* 9th December 1987 p4

The initial articles of the *Daily Mail* echo the same sentiments. The article on 8th December[86] echoes the misconception that people can be influenced into being homosexual, quoting the words of Dame Jill Knight who worried about homosexuality being forced onto children in particular. The article focuses exclusively on the clause curtailing local authorities and teachers, the latter of which would be prevented from giving '*gay lessons*'. '*Gay lessons*' is a peculiar phrase used in both the headline and article text, an interesting addition considering that the article already addresses the clause stopping the promotion of homosexuality by schools. While it could be interpreted as teachers talking about homosexuality or homosexuals talking about their experiences, the tone of the article would suggest to take the meaning literally – children are being taught to be gay. The focus on children is both continued and joined by a focus on parent support in a follow-up article published in the following issue[87]. A Yasmin Ahmed of the Campaign for Real Education, described as campaigning against left-wing indoctrination, said the clause was '*fantastic news*', following up that the policies had brought lots of suffering that the clause would bring to an end. John Andrews of the Professional Association of Teachers spoke for his members by saying '*we are very much opposed to this sort of teaching being introduced*'. It is unclear what kind of teaching he is talking about. The article starts with a suggestion – '*schools presenting homosexual behavior as normal*'. Finally, the article ends by switching its focus back to the councils, citing the words of the spokesman of Ealing council who echoed the idea that his council had no policy to promote homosexual education. This was brought up in response to mention of a gay and lesbian working party being affiliated with the council, who urged that homosexuals should be invited to give lessons in schools.

Both of these articles parrot familiar myths and focus on parents, local councils, children and schools without sparing a glance to the possible impact on the LGBT community. They both echo the sentiments of political figures like Wiltshire and Knight to build the case for clause 28 and ensure that their voices reached a larger audience.

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[86] Daily Mail, '*Move to ban 'gay lessons"* 8th December 1987 p3
[87] Daily Mail, '*Parents back ban on gay lessons'* 9th December 1987 p9

Just like the *Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* focused less on the impact of clause 28 and instead on justifying why the clause is necessary in the first place.

## Conclusion

Overall, the *Leeds Other Paper* was effective in informing its readership on clause 28, its possible effects and the campaign against it. By providing contact details, meeting times and addresses of relevant groups and events, LOP also assisted these causes by advertising them to its readership, encouraging them to use their political agency as individual citizens to defend the rights of lesbians and gay men. By taking a stance against the clause, it stood with publications like the *Pink Paper* and the *Guardian*, both of which criticised the amendment and encouraged the participation of their readership in different ways. They stood against publications like the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*, both of which published articles which make the case for why the clause was necessary. These articles base themselves on false ideas (that people can be influenced to be homosexual), pander to left-wing and local council paranoia and exclusively focus on the perspectives of parents, children and councils instead of the group the bill is actively trying to curtail.

In looking at the pro-clause articles, it was interesting to note the lack of agency utilization in the sense of a call to action present in any of them. These articles definitely stirred hatred against homosexuals, but if the information given in the *Guardian's* editorial is any indication, such a thing already existed in spades. Since no agency was really needed, I think it would be fair to call these articles the campaign for the clause. There is a difference in the effort that needed to be put in by both sides. On one side lesbians, gay men and their allies had to protest and fight for their right to be positively represented, for their funded local services and groups, for their right to inform and educate others, their right to fight against and speak out against discrimination, their right to even exist. On the other, the Conservatives and the right simply had to keep

stoking the fire, to make sure popular disdain for homosexuals continued until and beyond the bill's passage through Parliament, which concluded in late May 1988. The anti-clause press, *Leeds Other Paper* included, deserve a lot of appreciation. With the herculean effort required in campaigning against the clause, the movement needed all the positive coverage they could get.

# Conclusion

Being part of a larger alternative press scene in the 1970s and 80s, the *Leeds Other Paper* reported on stories and ideas that would have been disregarded by the mainstream press of the time. Several editorial pieces reinforce a continuing commitment to reporting on groups of people in the struggle to take control of their own lives and encouraging their readership to take action for themselves, which have encouraged me to view LOP through the perspective of agency for both my undergraduate degree and this masters by research.

Chapter 1 was set amidst a sharp increase in nuclear anxiety and protest in the early 1980s, due to (among other factors) the 1979 Three Mile Island disaster, the election of Cold warrior leaders in both the US and UK and the ticking bomb effect of the decision to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in the UK in 1983. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also heightened the atmosphere of unease. When LOP got the exclusive scoop on the *Protect and Survive* pamphlet in February 1980, they were able to print extracts from the pamphlet to bolster their arguments against nuclear weapons. By pointing to the actions written in the pamphlet they argued that protection against nuclear weapons was impractical, if not impossible, suggesting that the reader had little agency in their ability to survive a nuclear attack. In their view, the only true way to protect against nuclear attack was to remove the weapons entirely. LOP's reporting on *Protect and Survive* provided more on the contents of the pamphlets than much of the press at the time. This is especially true in respect to the *Yorkshire Post* and *Yorkshire Evening Post* which barely mentioned the pamphlet, making it easier for LOP to direct the conversation on nuclear weapons in Leeds.

Chapter 2 focused on the miners' strike, during which LOP provided positive reporting which both gave a voice to strikers that would have gone unheard or misrepresented in the mainstream media and encouraged support for the strike among the readership. After the strike ended in defeat, LOP's immediate reporting focus was on justifying the

effort and agency the miners and the community supporting them put into the strike. In their article on the cost of the strike they justified the economic arguments made by the miners and the NUM and presented the image of a government willing to pay any cost to defeat the unions and organized labour. By exploring the idea of the miners being up against the entire British state and criticizing the role of the government, police, judiciary, press and the working miners they presented a case for the immense odds the miners had struggled against. They argued that rather than just being wasted effort, the actions of the miners and their families were worth celebrating. The press of the time did not share LOP's opinions on the cost, which ranged from taking it literally to justifying it as an investment or necessity, nor did they criticize the role of the state as much as LOP did.

Chapter 3 focused on the fledging campaign against Section 28 in December 1987, though LOP's reporting on LGBT issues is evident before this. Overall, LOP was effective in informing its readership of the threat the bill posed to the lesbian and gay community. Furthermore, by providing information on meetings held by those campaigning against the bill, they encouraged their readership to take action to stop the bill, using their agency to help defend the LGBT community. Though LOP's coverage of Section 28 wasn't as prolific as publications like the *Pink Paper*, their efforts despite not focusing exclusively on LBGT issues deserve praise.

The three main ideas for the research were picked mainly due to prominence and personal interest in the political representation of ordinary people in issues directly affecting their lives. Nuclear issues were prominent in both the early issues and early days of my research and that impression stuck with me throughout, assisted by LOP's feature on *Protect and Survive*. Being a member of the LGBT community and being interested in LGBT history (alongside not being able to include anything about it in my undergraduate dissertation) encouraged me to lock in AIDS or Section 28 as a major theme early on. With one theme at the start of the decade and one theme at the end, it

made sense to pick one in the middle of the decade and have the chapters in a loose chronological order. Due to this, the 1984-5 miners' strike was a natural final pick.

Many other themes I noticed during my research went unexplored. Ireland was originally intended to be the fourth and final major theme until workload and word count concerns caused it to be dropped in favour of expanding the other chapters. LOP reported on many issues related to Ireland, such as commemorating Bloody Sunday[1], discussing the Prevention of Terrorism Act[2] and coverage on prisoners[3]. Another theme I noticed a lot was that of race, especially deportation cases. While researching I was sad to see that campaigns for people like Anwar Ditta[4][5] and Viraj Mendis[6][7] were still going even after I moved to different years. My focus on Section 28 also meant that a lot of reporting on the AIDS crisis went unutilized in the final text[8]. LOP reported on more strikes than just the 1984-5 miners' strike, and I remember being interested by the Silentnight strike in particular. These ideas are worthy of exploration through the lens of agency but would also be useful in more general explorations of these ideas or more specifically to Leeds and its community.

The conduct of my research and the circumstances of the course lead to a few limitations. The word count limited the research in the same way it did for the undergraduate dissertation, since I was unable to explore all of the ideas I found. I was unable to look through the entirety of this decade of LOP, though I got through a substantial part of it. I wasn't at the library every day and even when I was I didn't feel comfortable manning the microfilm for the entire day since they only had four. Finally while the large volume of primary material was fun to locate and collect, it was very overwhelming to sift through. This encouraged me to reduce the size of my scope, which

[1] Leeds Other Paper, '"*I have never seen such a cold-blooded murder*"' 21st January 1983 pp10-11
[2] LOP, '*Family shattered by Terror Act*' 8th February 1980 pp4-5
[3] LOP, '*Very tense in Irish jails'* 2nd January 1981 pp10-11
[4] LOP, '*Asian woman fights racist laws'* 4th April 1980 p11
[5] LOP, '*Anwar Ditta is still waiting – WHY'* 16th January 1981 p5
[6] LOP, '*I will not voluntarily return to my death*' 9th January 1987 p4
[7] LOP, '*Letter – Two years inside for Viraj'* 13th January 1989 p11
[8] LOP, '*AIDS – who is at risk?*' 16th January 1987 pp12-13

is why the Miners' Strike chapter focuses on the few days after it ended and the Section 28 chapter is focused on December 1987. Despite only focusing on December 1987, I worked through and collected every article on Section 28 from the papers I could access from December 1987 to June 1988. I don't regret framing the chapters in this way, but I definitely missed the potential for a wider analysis. It led me to a large number of other sources which, despite going unused in this research, could be interesting to look through for a future project.

During the process of research and of discussing it with my supervisory team, It was suggested that LOP promoted a sense of populism. Their focus on the agency of ordinary people, their distrust and criticism of established political elites (such as local councils or the mainstream Labour Party) and their concern for issues affecting ordinary working class people form an early manifestation of populism that would develop into a more prominent part of British politics in the 21st Century, placing LOP within a wider developing political narrative. It was also suggested that this populism of the left could easily be hidden beneath the current pejorative connotations indicative of far right politics. My research on LOP and its concern for the agency for ordinary people points towards this idea, and there is potential for future research exploring this as well.

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