# CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 1988.

## CAMDEN NALGO STILL REFUSES NEW CONTRACTS

On a 82% turnout of its 5 400 members, 43% voted for indefinite stike action against the Wapping style new contracts being imposed by the Labour Group. The 57% who votedagainst the strike did not vote to accept the new contracts.

Nalgo has always been prepared to negotiate a new re-deployment agreement. Compulsory redundancies are now unlikely with the level of vacancies and the number of staff wanting voluntary severance. The imposition of the new contracts is therefore designed to attack a union who in the past has supported the council.

Furthermore, the Labour Group is now considering attacking the facilities that Nalgo has. The Black Workers Group will also have its facilities removed. Equal opportunities is being thrown out with a co-operative attitude to the unions. This is in a period when councils face an unprecedented attack through the Housing, Local Government and Education Reform Bills which will require the maximum unity to defend jobs and services. New realist industrial relations is no different to Murdoch's style for council workers.

Tony Dykes admits that only 500 staff have signed the new contracts. That is barely over 10% of the Nalgo membership. Will Dykes now sack 4 900 staff and send them their notices in taxis ?

Fred Leplat (Somers Town LP)

## NEXT CAMDEN BRIEFING MEETING

TUESDAY 1 MARCH

8pm, Camden Town hall

## NO CUTS ! NO PRIVATISATION ! DEFEND THE ILEA ! ALL OUT ON 8 MARCH !

The Ilea Joint Union Committee, the Nalgo Met District Council and the Greater London Association of Trades Councils is calling on local government union branches to strike on 8 March to protest at the cuts which are being imposed as councils cave in to the Tories. The action is also being called to start a campaign against the abolition of the ILEA and the new laws on local government.

The three new laws (Housing, Local Government and Education Reform) which will savage local government are to be on the statute book in June and October this year. This means that the council must state that they will protect jobs and services regardless of the new laws and drop their present attacks, in order to rebuild a campaign with the community and council unions that will fend off the attacks that are coming such as privatisation, the poll tax, clause 28, opting out of council estates and schools, etc...

The strike on March 8 with a demonstration from Kennington Park at 10.30 will mark the beggining of the campaign.

## SUPPORT THE ST PANCRAS LIBRARY OCCUPATION

The reference library is being occupied by the Public Libraries Users Group to protest at the closure of one of the best reference libraries in London. It was scheduled to close after only 7 days notice !

A vital public library is being closed by a Labour council next to the massive new British Library now under construction which will be closed to the general public ! The council is trying to alienate the library users by closing the whole of the buiklding while the occupation lasts This will not be successful as the attendance of 300 at PLUG meetings demonstrates that this campaign has massive support which the Labour Party should listen to and support.

Melvyn Bragg, a leading member of PLUG, has supported the occupation. So should every socialist as the defence of jobs and services starts now !

# KING'S CROSS = IS CAMDEN BECOMING AN LDDC?

**Property developers are drawing up plans for the largest single redevelopment in inner London, at a cost of £6-7 thousand million.**

**The 120-acre site covers the Kings Cross and St Pancras stations, and a vast area of old sidings, industrial tracts and warehouses that stretch a mile to the North of the terminals.**

The Grand Union Canal (Regent's canal) cuts across the site , which is walled in by four major roads: Euston Road to the South; Midland Rd, St Pancras Rd and St Pancras Way to the West, York Way to the East, and Agar Grove to the North.

**By John Turkie**
**Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP**

The British Rail Property Board (BRPB), the area's major landowner, recently reduced the number of competing developers from four to two: a consortium involving Speyhawk and Mc Alpine, and the London Regeneration Consortium (sic) which comprises Rosehaugh Stanhope and the National Freight Consortium.

Once the BRPB have decided which developers' plans they like best, a planning application will go before Camden Council for consideration. It is certain to contravene the Borough Plan.

The LRC have been around longest, and have made most of the running. At the forefront of this organisation are Rosehaugh Stanhope who are backing the 4 million sq. ft Broadgate office development at Liverpool St, and who are involved in the redevelopment of Newham's Royal Docks.

Rosehaugh's plans for the site are reasonably well-known and currently involve a four million sq. ft office development to the south of the canal; a leisure and shopping development to "out Covent Garden Covent Garden" straddling part of the canal; canal-side luxury housing (thereby privatising stretches of the canal); a "business park" at the Northern end; and hotel, shopping and exhibition space on the site currently occupied by the two stations.

The most commercially valuable part of the site is its Southern end bordering Euston Road. The trouble is that most of that part is occupied by the two stations. To Rosehaugh the answer is simple — move them.

## Options

They are putting forward three options: close St Pancras and run its lines into Kings Cross; build a new joint terminus immediately to the north of the existing stations; or — their preferred choice — build a new joint terminus at the northern end of the site, next to the North London Line near Agar Grove.

Rosehaugh's plannings consultants' report gives no consideration to the strategic and local impact of such an enormous development. It does not even mention the fact that people actually live on the site in Victorian blocks of flats built for railway workers.

Over 150 people live in the Culross and Stanley Buildings and the gas cottages, and there are thriving industrial businesses on Pancras Road, St Pancras Way, Goods Way, Battlebridge Rd, and Camley St. Though the majority of the residents are "short life licensees", in reality many have been resident there for more than ten years.

## Applications

Though Camden Council will not be seeing a planning application for a few months, Rosehaugh began informal talks with the Council in the summer. The leadership were only too pleased to take the opportunity to discuss some "planning gain".

What concerns the Railway Lands Community Development Group (RLCDG) is that the Council is actively engineering the community — and its needs — off the scene altogether, in favour of negotiating an "equity holding" with the developers.

Both the developers and Camden Council must be stopped. If this redevelopment — which is twice the size of Canary Wharf — goes ahead, it will represent another major step along the (Tory) process of selling inner London cheaply to the property market. It is up to Party members in both Camden and Islington, to link up with RLCDG, put pressure on their Labour Groups, and make sure no deal is stitched up between the Council and the developers behind closed doors.

# A statement from the "Manifesto" Councillors

**ON the 8th of February 11 Labour councillors were effectively removed from the Labour group on Camden Council. We remain Labour councillors, but we will no longer be allowed to participate in the discussions that precede council meetings in the borough.**

**It is the first time that action of this sort has been taken against Labour councillors in Camden, and it marks a new low-point in the way that the leadership in Camden have been operating since the June 1986 General Election. The "crime" which has led to our removal from the group is nothing more than our refusal to tear up the manifesto promises that we made when we stood as Labour candidates.**

**Since June of last year, the Labour leadership in Camden have systematically discarded virtually every single promise that they made during the election. Services have been reduced, jobs have been cut, council rents have been increased, voluntary and community organisations have seen their grants taken away, empty properties have been sold to speculators, homeless people have been refused.**

**The current round of cuts being proposed by Camden will mean an overall reduction in services — in addition to cuts already carried out — of between 21 and 50 per cent. As socialists, we were elected on a manifesto which promised to improve and extend services, we have refused to vote for cuts, and we have refused to attack either our workforce or our communities. As a result of this we have now been removed from the decision-making process.**

**We were given a straight forward choice. Either we signed a document which would have forced us to agree with the cuts and to vote for them, or we would be removed. As far as we were concerned, this was no choice at all.**

**We are not prepared to attack working class communities and we are not prepared to carry out the Tories' dirty work for them. We believe that it is the duty of socialists to build opposition to these policies, and to unite with those who are at the sharp end of those policies.**

**We have already received massive support from people who agree that we must fight the Tories rather than surrender to them, and the opposition to the leadership's policies in Camden is growing. We will continue to align ourselves with this opposition and we call all those who are opposed to Labour controlled authorities carrying out Tory cuts to join us.**

**Councillors KATE ALLEN, STEVE BEVINGTON, ANGIE BIRTILL, GRAHAM GOOD, CAROLINE HOLDING, DAVE HORAN, GLORIA LAZENBY, KAREN NEWURY, SANDRA PLUMMER, GRAHAM SHURETY, ADRIAN STATES, Members Room, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1.**

## CAMDEN FIGHTS BACK LAUNCHED !

The Camden anti-cuts campaigns are being merged into one new organisation at a meeting on Wednesday 23 Feb at the Swiss Cottage Community Centre. Fight Back Groups exist in many boroughs and have played an important role in uniting the local unions and community against the attacks on jobs and services. The new campaign in Camden should be able to better defend the community against the poll tax, abolition, the cuts and privatisation. Get your union or Labour Party to affiliate (c/o Camden Nalgo) and to send a delegates to its weekly meetings every Thursday at 5.30pm in the Nalgo HQ, 1 Mabledon Place.