WORKING FOR CAMDEN

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

SHORT MEMORY EDITION • SEPTEMBER 87

OUR PRIORITIES

Everyone has the right to a decent home. Labour has the determination to challenge the housing crisis, to help the homeless, council tenants, private renters and owner occupiers. Together we will demand an end to housing cuts. We insist that the Council improves its performance, especially on repairs and empty flats. Only Labour cares about *all* householders.

Our social services (meals on wheels, day centres, home helps) are among the best. So are Camden's voluntary services, many funded by the council. Labour will continue to improve community care. And to respect the independence and dignity of the people we serve.

A parent's right. Under 5's are a major priority. Labour have started a pioneering programme to provide day care for all Under 5's in Camden. We have also



A Message from Phil Turner

I am proud to say we have achieved a great deal in the last few years.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE BIG ONE • BP • BROKEN PROMISES
IN MAY 1986 THIS LEAFLET WAS DELIVERED TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN CAMDEN
the leadership of the Council are now proposing a 20%
cut in services • a £40M reduction in spending • the loss of 2,000 jobs

We all have the right to equality whether we are male, female, black, white, disabled, gay or heterosexual — discrimination against one brings shame on us all.

We have taken up the rights of women — childcare, jobs and services have all been improved as a result.

Black people and other minority groups face discrimination. Labour is proud of its stand against racism.

A Camden to be proud of. Only we can protect the Heath from the Tories. Our libraries, community centres and local festivals are already good — we'll make them even better. The Clean Up Camden campaign has been a big success — and we've made a start on roads, pavements and street lighting.

Investing in our future. School leavers and the unemployed face a bleak future. In Camden today, 15,000 people are on the dole. We will conti
businesse
new jobs.
back to work.

remains to be done. One in every six are out of work; 1,500 people are homeless; far too many live in

'Just Say No' - Madonna 1987

ahead. And honestly, only Labour is equal to the challenge.

Phil Turner

Phil Turner
(Leader of Camden Council)

Can We Deliver?

We make no easy promises. We face a difficult time ahead. The government has abolished the GLC and left us to pick up the pieces. They have placed Whitehall bureaucrats in charge of local spending. But Labour in Camden has never carried out Tory cuts, and never will. We can, and will, protect and improve local services — for the sake of **everyone** who lives in Camden.



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY
VOTE LABOUR MAY 8
THE LABOUR PARTY

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

QUESTION: WHEN IS A MEETING NOT A MEETING?
ANSWER: WHEN THE RIGHT WING THINK THEY WILL LOSE THE VOTE!

Since the May 6th AGM this year, the LGC has suffered a series of attempts to undermine its functioning and credibility. While many of the arguments have taken the guise of differing interpretations of the Labour Party rules and the LGC standing orders, it is clear that they add up to a political onslaught on the Borough Party, designed to wreck any vestiges of accountability, involvement and consultation within Camden. At a time of such crisis and internal debate the left has continued its fight to strengthen such a structure in order to co-ordinate Labour Party involvement in the Council's decisions, and to unify Camden's Labour Movement in the face of the attack upon local democracy.

The latest development has been attempts to totally by-pass the LGC during this crucial period when the Council is deciding its political and financial priorities into the next decade. Objections to the Constitution, dating back over four years to a period when the right controlled the LGC, have been used to stop the majority view in the Borough prevailing. They have connived to stop the LGC meeting in September and tried to block the LGC Officers carrying out their duties - during a period of so-called consultation.

The Labour Group, as well as the Parties, *need* to debate these vital issues in a Borough-wide forum which can take meaningful decisions. The accepted forum for this in the past few years has been the Camden Borough Conference. Hampstead & Highgate Constituency Party and many comrades in Holborn & St. Pancras have asked for this accepted process again, and the LGC Executive, meeting during the August "recess" in place of the ordinary full LGC, agreed to convene a Borough Conference. The right wing are now doing their best to destroy the Conference, and the Labour Group Leadership are doing little to support a proper consultation process.

We ask: *If a Borough Conference is good enough to adopt the Council Manifesto, why isn't it good enough to decide whether or not it should be 'thrown out the window'???*

Una Doyle, Chair, Camden LGC

CAMDEN WITCH-HUNT

The eight Councillors who voted against Camden Labour Groups's decision to implement 12 million pounds' worth of cuts, were subsequently removed from their positions as Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees by the Labour Group without any consultation with local parties and against the wishes of Hampstead & Highgate GMC. In addition to this Councillor Graham Shurety was removed as Chair of Grants, even though he had not been present at the Council meeting of 2nd July, because it was thought that he probably would have voted with the eight if he had been there.

These attempts to stifle any debate about the real political issues have continued. Tony Dykes, Leader of the Council, issued instructions saying that the workforce will be paid if they attend "consultation meetings" on the cuts, but only if the nine Councillors against the cuts are excluded.

Councillor Ken Hulme, a leading member of Camden's right wing caucus and Secretary of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, has launched a scurrilous attack on Camden's newly formed Lesbian and Gay Unit. Hulme informed the local press of "left wing freemasonry" at the Town Hall. He alleges that the Unit's staff are all supporters of Briefing. "These allegations are totally unfounded," replies Councillor Sandra Plummer - one of the nine and now ex-Chair of the Lesbian and Gay Committee. "Ken Hulme opposed the setting up of the Unit from the beginning and is obviously using populist tactics to boost support for his own bankrupt politics."

Hulme's attack was swiftly followed by Councillor Bill Saunders, also a member of the right wing caucus. Saunders alleged in an interview with the local press that Cllr Plummer "jumped the housing queue". She was, in fact, transferrred on the grounds of sexual harassment, in line with Council policy. Councillor Plummer, a Briefing supporter, is also an "out" lesbian. The Leader of the Council, Tony Dykes, has been asked by Cllr Plummer to openly condemn the behaviour of Hulme and Saunders and she has demanded a public retraction from them both. She has so far received no response from him.

It is clear that these attacks are an attempt to silence any political opposition and if that fails they will try to discredit and smear individuals. These most recent tactics by the right wing, and, one can only assume by his silence, the tacit support of Tony Dykes, pander entirely to the homophobia one would expect from the Daily Mail or the Sun. Yet these people are members of the Labour Party. They not only discredit themselves but bring into disrepute the Labour Party's commitment to Equal Opportunities.

The only conclusion one can draw is that the leadership of the Labour Group and the right wing caucus are terrified of any open political debate and in line with national Kinnockite policy wish to dump any commitment, however minimal, to issues of Race, Disability or Lesbian & Gay Rights.

ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE - AN ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

The Labour Party leadership blamed the left in the Party for the third General Election defeat in a row. It has decided that the way to win next time is by attacking the power and democracy of local Party organisations. Thus this year's Labour Party Conference will probably amend the Constitution to introduce a system of "one member, one vote" for the selection of MPs. The result of this move will undermine the participatory and representative system of democracy of the Labour Movement.

If this proposal goes through MPs will be selected by a meeting of all Party members in a Constituency which will presumably meet only once every five years. At present all members do have a say in electing delegates to a GMC where a check can be kept on an MP on a monthly basis. The new system will mean that the GMC has no power over the selection and monitoring of the MP as this will be in the hands of a meeting which is convened only once every five years!!!

In opposing "one member, one vote" one should not defend the inadequacies of the present structures. Delegates should be mandated and their votes recorded, and be able to be removed by the organisation that selected them. This should apply not only to the GMC delegates but also to MPs and Councillors. Votes and procedures of the NEC should be published and Regional Officials should be chosen by elected bodies and be accountable to them.

"One member, one vote" is designed to remove power and responsibilities from Local Parties and stengthen the centralist hand of Walworth Road - it should be rejected.

Fred LePlat