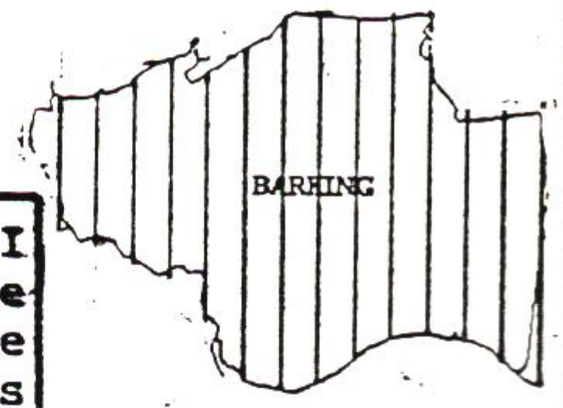
EAST OF LONDON LABOUR 25p

BRIEFING

No 2 SEPTEMBER 1983

ASBESTOS ACTION



The problem of asbestos was one of the first which I met when I became MP for Barking, nearly ten years ago. Because the Cape Asbestos factory had been in Barking, and so many people from the Borough and from the East End had worked in it, there was virtually not a family in the community who had not heard of - or worse still experienced - the tragedy of asbestosis.



As with pneumoconiosis in mining villages, asbestosis was, and still remains, a dread to those who worked with the material and to their families.

Much greater public concern has developed since then, and now the problem is recognised as a national, and even an international one. Awareness of it has produced many reports, and even an EEC Directive on its dangers - and still people are dying of the disease, and still industry is reluctant to change.

But those who have campaigned over the years for tighter controls and for a ban on the use of the material - individuals, groups, our local Labour Parties, the General & Municipal Workers Union and others - can at long last take some comfort, for there are now signs of real action.

The Health & Safety Commission have recently made concrete proposals which are encouraging. They are:-

1. To impose stricter controls on industry in the use of asbestos (though sadly and inexplicably they will not come into force for twelve months).
2. To discuss, with the Department of the Environment, measures to protect the public from the dangers of asbestos.
3. To ask Parliament to BAN imports of asbestos, and to BAN the manufacture of products containing the material.
4. To reduce the level of asbestos dust which is permissible in the air in workplaces.
5. To set up an asbestos working group to report periodically, and check the cleaning of premises.
6. To issue guidelines on the dumping and handling of asbestos waste, which is at present uncontrolled.

That's fine, and I've already written to the Secretary of State for the Environment to ask when he is going to introduce the legislation to ban the material. The Commission also acknowledged that the link between asbestos and cancer is indisputable - a fact that sufferers could have told them in the first place. What we now need to do, is to campaign for more generous compensation from industry, speedier processing of applications for State benefit, and a more generous level of benefit.

Continued on Back Page.....

Jo Richardson MP
Barking

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

SEPTEMBER COMMENT

10

AS we prepare to fight against the most reactionary government in living memory, we should be ready to discuss and chew over new strategies and tactics. The Tories have made it known that they will be cutting local services further, with tighter controls and even bigger reductions in the Rate Support Grant.

Labour controlled councils in London responded to the Tories first wave of cuts in various ways.Some refused to make the cuts and raised rates, others made the cuts.Both of these strategies are now untenable. The former because not only did it make Labour councils unpopular but it will disappear as an option with the governments proposed rate capping: The latter not only because those councils who adopted it cannot be considered to be Socialist, but that services are now already wholly inadequate.

Political Strait-Jacket

The ability to raise the rates to run local services is the last degree of political freedom Labour controlled councils have.The removal of this by rate capping will in effect turn local authorities into apolitical quango's.

The Labour Party was set up to represent working people, as it's first name suggested (Labour Representation Commitee):And not to represent a reactionary government to working people. If we do not want to become the arm that pulls the hangmans lever on the people we represent, we will have to act precisely and in unison.

The mobilising campaign discussed in the article by Nadine Finch, is undoubtedly a major first step.But we have to face the fact that this may only be the first step.

New Strategies

Recently people have been begining to talk about the latter of these options and three ideas have been floated-

1. Mass resignation of Labour controlled councils (London Labour Briefing.Feb '83),co-ordinated with as many councils as possible and with safegaurds to the community.
2. All majority Labour groups move into opposition.
3. Force the government to bring in a commisioner and then isolate them through trade union action.

These and other strategies have to now be discussed and the pages of EAST OF LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING will be open for the debate. The important point is that when we do act we must act together.

As East of London LABOUR BRIEFING develops, we intend to rotate the editorship so that there is the maximum scope for style and opinion. The editorial meetings, which are completely open to members of the Labour Party, will be moved around the magazines catchment area.

September editor

Michael Mckeever

LABOUR PARTY



HEFFER-MEACHER

Will not damage your political health

Now that the media are unable to determine the leader of the Labour Party, by scaring and cajoling the Parliamentary Labour Party into a leader who is sympathetic to the establishment they represent; they have decided to use the unstoppable band-wagon technique. This has taken the form of portraying Kinnock as the acceptable face of the left: but acceptable to whom? The Media's narrow consensual to right wing political standpoint? The Kinnock/Hattersely ticket has certainly been calculated to be likely to cause the minimum damage to the media's interests.

As Reg Race pointed out in last month's London LABOUR BRIEFING, Neil Kinnock's record on the NEC has been abysmal. He has also expressed a strong desire for the abandonment of specific policy pledges in the manifestos and has advocated the maximum freedom for the leadership when in government.(A leaf out of Thatcher's book?)

In the leadership campaign, Kinnock has not only upheld the commitment to expel socialists, who dare to rear their heads on the left of the Party, but has indicated a positive appetite for an increase in this type of witch-hunt. Nowhere has he attacked groups which associate on the right of the Party.

It now looks as though the press has done its job well. Kinnock is likely to be elected but, that still leaves us three essential tasks:-
1) Make sure that as many CLP's as possible back Eric Heffer. This will highlight Kinnock's lack of support with Party activists. (The comrades who actually do the work in the Party).
2) Continue to work in our CLP's and Trades Unions for Michael Meacher as deputy leader.
3) Ensure the election of a Left NEC.

CONFERENCE '83

At our last Editorial meeting (nb. our meetings are open to ALL Labour Party members) a slate was chosen and is reproduced below on point 3. It is, however, a great pity that wider consultation was not possible. This could mean, for example, that subscribers to Militant will split the Left vote (ie Pat Wall, Terry Fields)

Fight the Tories

It is evident that the new leader of the Party must be surround by comrades who are firmly in touch with Party workers on the ground and can be relied upon to end the witch hunt.

Since the General Election tragedy, the NEC meetings have been wasting time on the irrelevant witch hunt. It is an insult to the people who voted for what was the nearest thing we have had to a Left manifesto, in spite of the media attacks. We are supposed to be representing them. VOTE FOR THE LEFT SLATE....LET'S GET INTO THE FIGHT THAT MATTERS....THE FIGHT WITH THE TORIES.

Support the left slate

CONSTITUENCY SECTION

Tony Benn

David Blunkett

Eric Heffer

Michael Meacher

Jo Richardson

Dennis Skinner

Audrey Wise

RESERVE NOMINATION

Norman Atkinson

WOMENS SECTION

Margaret Becket

Judith Hart

Patricia Hewitt

Joan Maynard

Rene Short

Youth Training Scheme: Yes or No?

School leavers this year are being bombarded **with** adverts in Job Centres, Careers Offices, on TV and radio and in the press, all extolling the virtues of the Youth Training Scheme.

Many of them will have been looking for jobs since they left school last May, and will have learned the 'no thanks' and 'ring back later' routine. They are being told that YTS is an opportunity to get some training, so that they will be better equipped to chase what few jobs there are. The message from the adverts is:-

"How are you going to get on if you don't get on a Youth Training Scheme?"

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS ON OFFER????

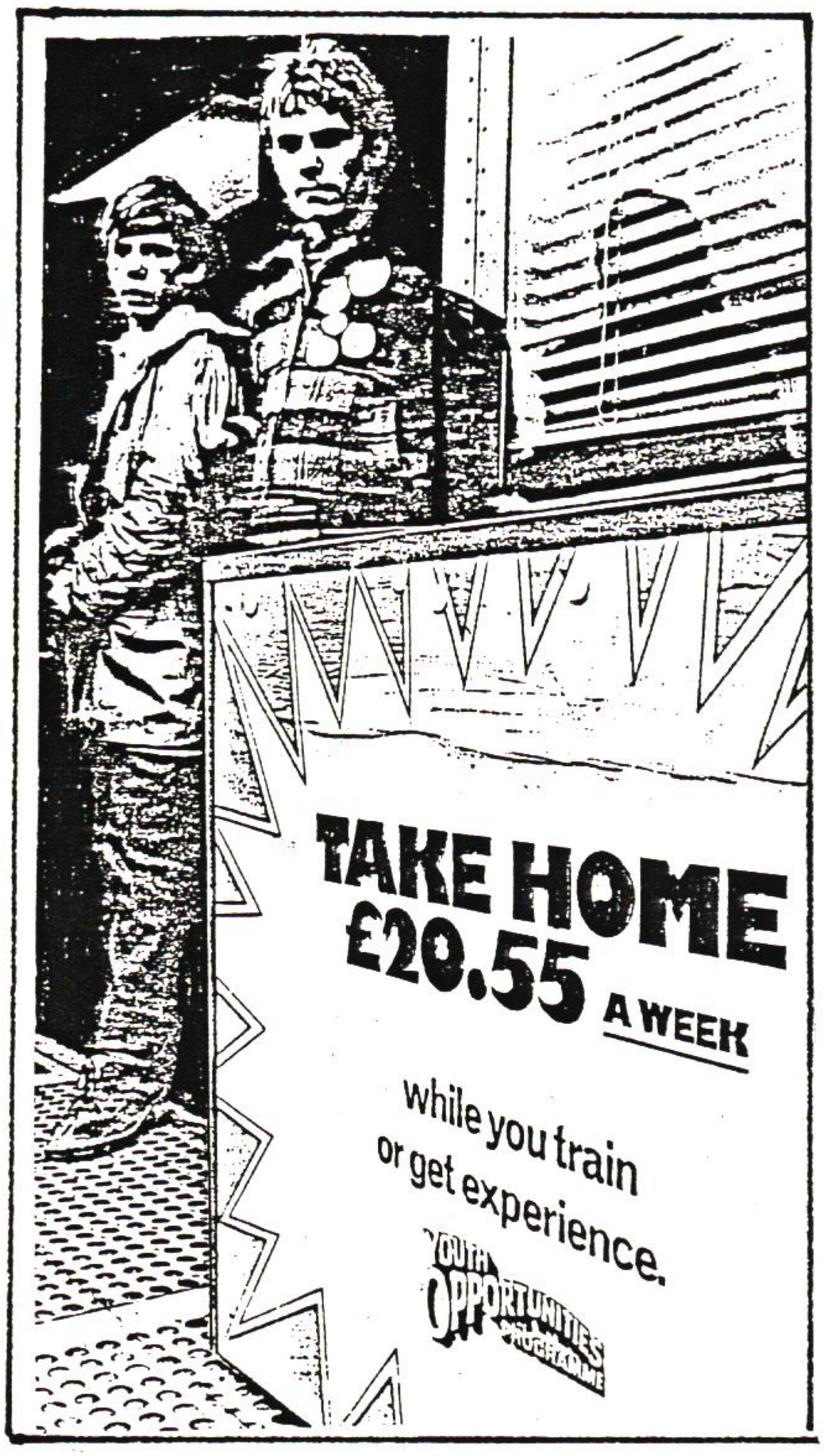
The deal is one year's training with an employer, which should include 3 month's off the job training, and the other 9 months on 'work experience'.

The type of training schemes on offer will naturally reflect the sort of jobs available, so the majority of training will be in offices. There will be some training in shops, engineering and in the building trades. The standard of training varies enormously. There is no quality inspection, so it is pretty much 'pot luck' as to how good the training you get turns out to be.

So whether or not youngsters can improve their chances of getting a job will depend on the nature of the scheme itself. Under the old style YOPS (which YTS replaces) only one in three trainees got a job as a result of the scheme. Under YTS the odds could well be longer, simply because so many jobs will be replaced by the large elements of work experience included in the schemes.

Bear in mind that most youngsters start out in the dogsbody jobs (if they get that lucky) - cleaning floors, running errands and the general 'here and there' work. This will become part of the training schemes. If your job is classed as unskilled, then you will need to watch out. That old nagging fear of being replaced by someone younger and cheaper is now suddenly a stark reality.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE, the employers get a much better deal out of the scheme. Not only do they get free 'trainees', they are actually paid by the Government (out of our taxes) to provide this training. An employer gets £1850 for every trainee he takes on - and if he offers a large number of places, he can become a 'managing agency' and collect £1950 for each trainee. For example the BIG FIVE banks (always in the front ranks of the bloodsuckers brigade) are taking on hundreds of 'trainees' and literally laughing all the way to their own cash tills.



The organisation of these schemes resembles the apprenticeship system it is designed to destroy. The difference between YTS and an apprenticeship is the wage level - a mere £25 a week. So whereas an apprentice at British Telecom can expect to earn about £70 a week, the YTS trainee will get £25.

Ther are other important differences, which the Labour movement needs to be aware of. The apprentice has a contract of employment containing a statement of their hours and duties and protection from race and sex discrimination (in so far as the law provides it). The YTS trainee will have a training contract. He or she will be outside the current employment legislation, outside the race and sex discrimination laws and in a dubious position with regards to the Health & Safety at Work Act.

NEWHAM 8
DEFENCE CAMPAIGN
NATIONAL MARCH
AGAINST RACISM
& RACISTS
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER
24TH
PLASHET PARK
ASSEMBLE 1.00PM

YTS cont...

A recent 'TV Eye' programme explained that in the past year alone there have been 2 deaths and 300 injuries to young people on YOP schemes. These figures are certain to get worse as more and more youngsters are press-ganged into YTS. The trainees are not only exposed to very real chances of exploitation, but their physical safety is put at considerable risk.

So WHY should youngsters take part???
The simple answer is that, come September, when school leavers are able to sign on, THEY WILL HAVE THEIR DOLE MONEY CUT FOR 6 WEEKS IF THEY DON'T. Their money will be reduced from £15.80 to £9.80. If they refuse again they could face a repeat of the same penalty. Many families, already hard hit by unemployment, will find this cut in their income a very serious blow, particularly when they face the loss of the youngsters Child Benefit from September. It is not surprising therefore that youngsters will take up the scheme; they will be conned by the adverts and if they are too bright for that, they will be forced into it by the financial penalties.

What is surprising, is that there are so few voices in the Labour movement willing to speak out against this form of exploitation. Yet it strikes at the heart of everything the Trades Union movement has stood for and it represents a return to the days of a ready, hungry and cheap labour force.

The schemes are coming into effect NOW. Trades Unions, Labour Councils and potential trainees are not politically ready to deal wtih them. In order to promote the necessary debate, within the columns of East of London LABOUR BRIEFING, let me propose the following basic demands that the left should make within the Labour Movement:-

a) TUC pull out of talks with Tebbit and the MSC
b) TUC alert the trades union movemnet to the dangers of YTS
c) The PLP to agitate about the dangers of YTS
d) Labour Councils to pull out of the scheme until financial penalties are removed and job replacement is excluded from it

Careers Advisor & LP member



Defend the GLC

The GLC is under threat! The Tory government with its renewed mandate is determined to get ite teeth into the Labour controlled GLC and ILEA, which have been a source of endless irritation to the Tory massed ranks in the House of Commons.

Can we ignore this threat? Can we from the ethnic minorities, sit back while the GLC is threatened along with the other metropolitan authorities in England? Can we wash our hands of the whole business like some latter day Pontius Pilate, and leave the GLC and ILEA to Mrs Thatcher's carving knife?

We, from the ethnic minorities, see the attack on the GlC and ILEA as a direct frontal attack on us, as an attack on the initiatives taken by these Labour controlled authorities to improve the lot and standing of our brothers and sisters.

True, we may not always have been happy about the manner in which these initiatives have been promoted. We are not uncritical too, about the apparent lack of consultation and involvement in some quarters about the direction and conception of some of these initiatives.

But these qualifications can in no way alter our absolute determination to support and defend the GLC and the ILEA, in the areas of positive discrimination, improvement of job opportunities and enhancing the qualities of our educational facilities.

The GLC is now setting up the necessary machinery to provide the broad front that is needed to block this Tory onslaught. The ethnic minorities are being sensibly consulted and will be playing a major part in the campaign to halt the Tory juggernaut.

We see the next few months, beginning in early autumn, as being the most critical for Londoners, and above all for the ethnic minorities. The dismemberment of the GLC, the carve up of the ILEA and the removal of accountability for services for Londoners is nothing less than a huge backward step for London. Londoners are losing the social gains they have made in the last hundred years and are being forced back to the Victorian soup kitchen era. That is what Mrs Thatcher is aiming to achieve.

We must galvanise all our communities for the battle ahead - the London Labour Movement will not fail us.

Vidya Anand Ilford South CLP
Chair Ethnic Minorities Working Party GLLP

Leyton Shows the Way

Labour in Leyton saw off the defector Magee and the Tory challenge in the general election. It was a tremendous team effort in the best socialist tradition, and the victory belonged to all our Party activists and workers.

Despite lies spread by our opponents of our campaign crumbling one week and disintegrating the next, we were able to say (in an eve-of-poll leaflet) that we had knocked on every door in Leyton and had won massive popular support.

During the campaign we explained our Socialist policies to all by completing a 100 per cent canvass and by producing and distributing over 220,000 leaflets and ward newsletters.

We were not caught napping by the election announcement; our campaign was well planned beforehand with an organisation not only relying upon an effective election agent (this we had), but also based upon an active political organiser and organisers for each branch. My election address was part of our team effort. All branches had sight of an early draft and were involved in having a say as to its final form.

We had a variety of leaflets (we produced ourselves) to meet the special interests of electors; e.g. women, pensioners, blacks, parents taking their children to school, council tenants, workers relying on public transport, etc. Canvassers had never known such a choice of leaflets to hand out. On election day itself we shocked our opponents by man and woman-ing every polling station, having well-organised committee rooms, and by the number of Party workers we had getting our vote.

Leyton Labour Party 'President' 89 year-old Jenny Hammond described our effort and commitment as being 'as good as in the old days', and other experienced Party members acknowledged it as the best campaign in which they had fought.

No wonder we had the best result for Labour in the south-east! Our aim locally now is to build on the links we have established in Leyton during the past year. If we do this, we will have a socialist network of political activists and support which is second to none. I have already told my general committee that I will wholeheartedly play my part as our MP in consolidating and continuing this effort in whatever way the Party sees fit.

TRAGIC MISTAKE

We know that the policies we fought on were right. Our victory locally demonstrates this. To retreat from them now to policies more akin to the SDP would be a tragic mistake and a betrayal of the hopes of millions of our supporters nationally. Our duty is to analyse the reasons for our national defeat — we know full-well in Leyton that we cannot pull off socialist victories in limbo indefinitely — and to make sure that our policies are properly communicated and understood by our people. Factors in our defeat were:

The polls swamping our policies. I would not object to the banning of these polls during election campaigns, but the real answer is to communicate our policies. Locally, we side-stepped the polls and the press by getting out onto every doorstep. We have to make sure that this is done nationally, not just in the four weeks of an election. Our campaigns must be a continuous crusade. We also have to join and lead campaigns against Thatcher-induced job losses, cuts in welfare services and her bigger and deadlier nuclear missiles wherever we can.

We should have a permanent 'rolling' manifesto, updated each year by our Annual Conference, in which our policies are clearly set out and which we can campaign upon.

A daily paper of the Labour and trades union movement should become a reality.

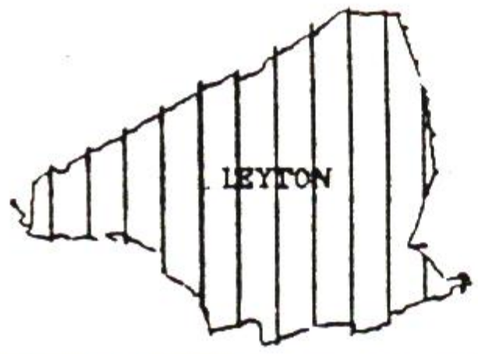
Leadership equivocation over our policies. There was a failure to support enthusiastically Conference policies, eg witness the defence debacle. The anger felt by many towards the Tories was not communicated. Thatcher herself was not shown up as the incompetent she is in many respects and also, tragically, no vision of a better, socialist future was put across.

The divided Party image. I have heard some Labour MPs already blaming reselection for this, in their own desire to turn back the tide of accountability within the Party. But that issue was settled eighteen months before the election. (It would have been settled before then but for their, and the now SDPers, rearguard action.)

What really contributed to this image was the unnecessary witch hunt in the last year. It fed the press lie about extremists which was not properly dealt with. That lie had been going on for four years without reply.

Poor organisation nationally. The national campaign gave the appearance of being organised from scratch in four weeks. Our policies were agreed well in advance and strategies for campaigning on them should have been well prepared. The role of the Campaign Committee

Harry Cohen MP
Leyton



of the NEC, widely alleged to have been inefficient and ineffective, also needs to be fully scrutinised. We cannot properly fight elections if we are organisationally handicapped, and Harold Wilson's phrase about not being able to run a vinegar stall in a chip shop should never be allowed to apply.

WET TORIES

A few final points need to be made:
Cecil Parkinson, the ex-Tory Party chairman, has been shown to have lied when he said that the SDP were a danger to the Conservatives in 80 seats. The SDP's historic role in this election was to take Labour votes and let in Tories throughout the country. One of our jobs now is to expose the SDP/Liberals as wet Tories (Owen, in his first speech to the new Parliament, even asked Thatcher to broaden her base to accomodate them), and support for them just allows the Tories to prosper

We also, though, have to recognise that we ourselves must no longer take what we thought of as our traditional Labour voter for granted. As I have stated, our socialist policies are right in that they are based on the needs and requirements of our people. But we must show that they are relevant. Talking in slogans or jargon, or just talk (whether in the local Council or on the General Committee) and no action within our communities, does not help.

Some of the right of the Party have been speaking in effect of 'following' the voters by latching on to short-term consumerist aspirations. But as a socialist Party, we have to do much more than that. We have to inspire and lead our people into a better future free from the various types of capitalist restriction of all our people before the accumulation of wealth for a few.

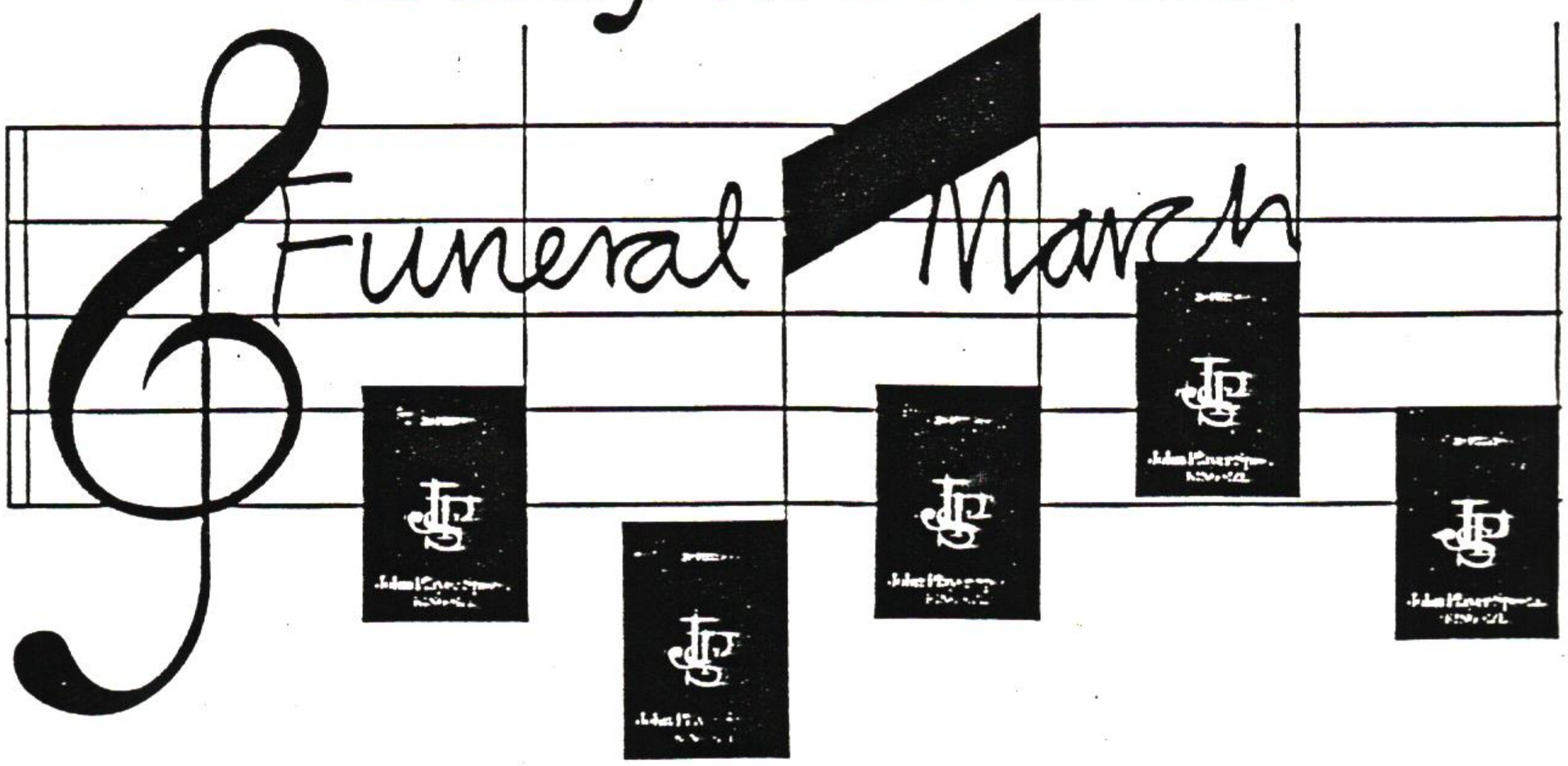
Only if we do this, and learn the lessons of this defeat, will we make Leyton an example for next time to be repeated in the form of socialist wins over the country.

Who said THAT ??

Jack Thomas, Chair Parks and Recreation Barking & Dagenham Council.
Speaking on Thames TV on people asking for local parks to be kept safe for children.

"It is alright for them to sit back when they are not in the driving seat. If they are prepared to accept all the responsibility for over-spending on estimates; if they are prepared to accept that AND pay it on an increased rate AND support the members of this Authority so be it. We would look at it very very seriously. No one is prepared to do that. No one is prepared to have extra rate increases".

Play it Black



or

SMASHING THE CONSENSUS

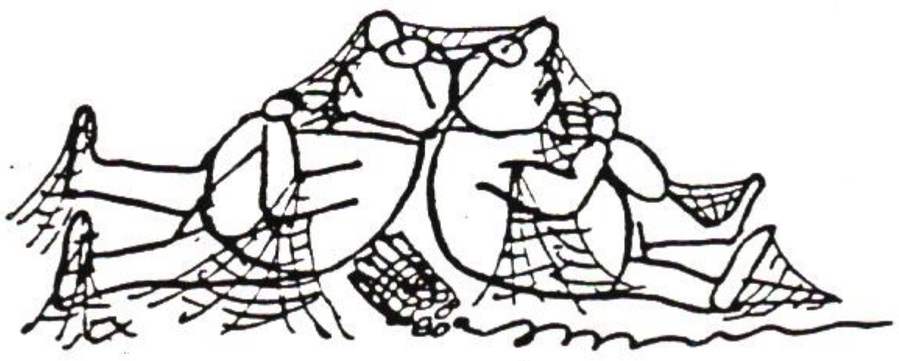
The debate over the future role of London Labour councils and the London Boroughs Association is reaching a crucial stage. BREIFING readers might find it useful to have a summary of the position.

The LBA is an association of London Boroughs, set up to speak on behalf of local government in London when discussions with central government, or other bodies are needed. Its political composition reflects the political compositions of the various boroughs. Consequentially, it changes hands from time to time.

Whether in the majority or the minority, the Labour delegates to the LBA have tended to be the 'old guard' established leadership figures. The younger radical councillors have rarely been involved. Until recently the same has been true of the Tory delegates.

However, particularly since the 1982 elections, the influence of doctrinaire Thatcherism on the Tory group has grown rapidly, in some respects mirroring the growing influence of the hard left on Labour councils over the same period.

In autumn last year, when we established the Association of Socialist Councillors, we declared ourselves opposed to the so called 'bipartisan' attitude taken by the older generation of Labour leaders on the LBA and the other local authority associations. We believed that these leaders had always tried to use the opportunity to negotiate with the Tories, in these arenas, as a means of softening the conflicts caused by the cuts and the attacks on local democracy. They would argue, for example, that the Rate Support Grant settlements had been less terrible than they could have been, because of the technical arguments they had put forward in private meetings. We felt this approach was wrong. What should have been central to the thinking of the leaders of Labour councils was public campaigning and not private supplication.



The leadership were using the LBA, AMA etc. as excuses for NOT fighting. We wanted to remove these excuses from the political field, and open the road to a more confrontationist style.

We need not have been so anxious. The Tories were more than willing, for their part, to break the 'bipartisan' approach.They steamed into their 'Smash the GLC' campaign with a degree of energy and ruthlessness that we should try to emulate in our own activities.

The Labour old guard were horrified. Where were the nice gentlemanly Tories of yesteryear? One might almost think that the Tories were fighting the class war.

Last year's London Regional Conference responded angrily, and by a clear majority called on Labour councils to pull out of the LBA. The London Labour Leaders Group began to make plans for an alternative organisation, which eventually became the Association of London Authorities (ALA), to which all the Labour Boroughs, except Tower Hamlets, have now affiliated.

Growing support for ALA

The growth of support for the ALA and a series of withdrawals of Labour Councils from the LBA began to alarm the Tories and created a new opportunity for the Labour right to manouvre again. Both of them began looking for ways to attack the ALA and to force the Labour Party back into the LBA.

Leading Labour right wingers began privately to lobby the NEC on behalf of the LBA. Roy Shaw, deposed leader of Camden, and Jack Smart from the AMA continually pressed the NEC to overturn the Regional Conference decision, on the basis of no mandate other than their private enthusiasm for wheeling and dealing with the Tories. Eventually they gained a tactical advantage. By sheer persistence, they got NEC endorsement for their line. It must be asserted in every discussion on this subject that their is no democratic mandate whatsoever for this interference with policy formulated by Regional Conference. It represents nothing more than the activities of a handful of dedicated right wingers.

The Tories saw their chance to go into the attack and help Shaw in his attempts to isolate the left. At the LBA General Purposes Committee in June, they adopted a hardline statement claiming to be the ONLY group able to speak for local government on London,and decided to begin a campaign to force the Labour Party back into the LBA.

Their main line of attack was going to be on grant making. The LBA makes a certain number of grants to voluntary organisations whose activities cross borough boundaries, so that some joint funding machinery is obviously sensible. In 1983/4 they have budgetted to give out £750,000 (about the same amount as the GLC is giving just to sports this year) However, they will lose the power to make these grants if they cannot show that they represent ALL the boroughs. Four boroughs have already pulled out of the LBA and so no grants can be made next year unless other arrangements are made.

....Where do we go after the LBA?

The Tories and the right wing of the Labour Group on the LBA wanted to use this factor to blame the left boroughs for the hardship caused to the voluntary organisations and their clients. They began making contact with the voluntary organisations concerned and seeking to persuade them to bring pressure on the four councils that had pulled out.

How could this argument be countered? We can point to the previous record of the Tories and the Labour right on the LBA to expose their, recently aquired, concern as hypocrisy. The LBA has never used its grant making powers to the full, and Roy Shaw was not even willing to argue that it should do so (even though the Group had agreed that this was the line). Paul Beesley, leader of Tower Hamlets, went so far as to agree with the LBA GP Chairman that it was helpful to have a restricted grants budget, because it makes it easier to .turn away unwanted applications.

GLC grants

When the GLC began to pump out grants money in a serious way, the response of the LBA Tories was to review their own grants with the intention of making compensating cuts if there was any GLC money going to any of 'their' organisations. At least one Tory borough now regularly turns away all grant applicants, telling them to go to the GLC first. This is the information we should use to reply to any pressures from voluntary groups who want the LBA system to continue.

The ALA however, was not dull enough to be caught in this trap. ALA leader, Margaret Hodge wrote to Tory LBA leader Bowness, suggesting joint discussions to arrive at a voluntary joint agreement for grants to be paid. Bowness rejected this out of hand; his hands were tied by the Tory hawks line that the LBA was the ONLY body of London local authorities.

The next counter move from the Labour side was Brent's offer to co-ordinate joint funding by the London Boroughs. It is perfectly legal for any group of boroughs to work together in this way, whether or not it is done through an association like the LBA. The indications are, at this stage, that several Tory boroughs will refuse to take part in this venture, and thereby avoid making any grants, so the fault for removing funding to the voluntary groups falls back onto the Tories. The GLC has not yet had time to discuss the position, but leading spokesmen at County Hall are anxious to reassure the voluntary groups that they will give "very sympathetic consideration" to their needs.

Many Labour activists are involved with voluntary organisations all over London, and it is important that tha Tories' arguments are rebutted at every opportunity, and that the Tories should be shown up as the party who have disrupted the work of the voluntary organisations and used them as political pawns.

All the same points can be made about the other arguments that the LBA puts forward about its reasons for existence. Housing mobility for council tenants would be a good example. They point to the 'Inter Borough Nomination Scheme' (IBNS) as one of their great contributions. This is a voluntary agreement intended to allow some tenants, from overcrowded inner city areas, into council housing in the 'leafy suburbs'.

Whitewash

In fact it was a whitewash job from its inception, designed to camouflage the fact that the abolition of GLC Housing, by the Tories, would demolish the real chances of moving into the suburbs for inner city tenants. To say nothing of the damage done to the chances of getting a move into the outer boroughs, resulting from Council House sales, which the Tories welcomed so enthusiastically.

The pressure to return to the LBA and to abandon the struggle for the creation of a fighting Labour-based association of local authorities will not go away yet. The old guard still have the ear of the NEC but, their line should be opposed as undemocratic and flying in the face of policy created out of discussion at Regional Conference.

More subtle pressures come from other directions. In the fight against the imposition of central controls over local democracy, there will certainly be attempts to trick us into alliances with the Tories, Liberals and other species of vermin, in defence of an abstract conception of 'democracy' that would encompass the right of Tory authorities to resist comprehensive education or other progressive measures.

Right not stupid

What is more, the Labour right are not stupid. Realising that they have lost a lot of ground, they are now looking for opportunities to counter attack, and we can expect organised right caucuses at various levels to begin to operate. In the LBA Labour Group, Barking's Deputy Leader, George Brooker, made an unexpected appearance to voice his proposal that the 'Eastern Bloc' of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking & Dagenham should form the basis of just such a caucus within the ALA.

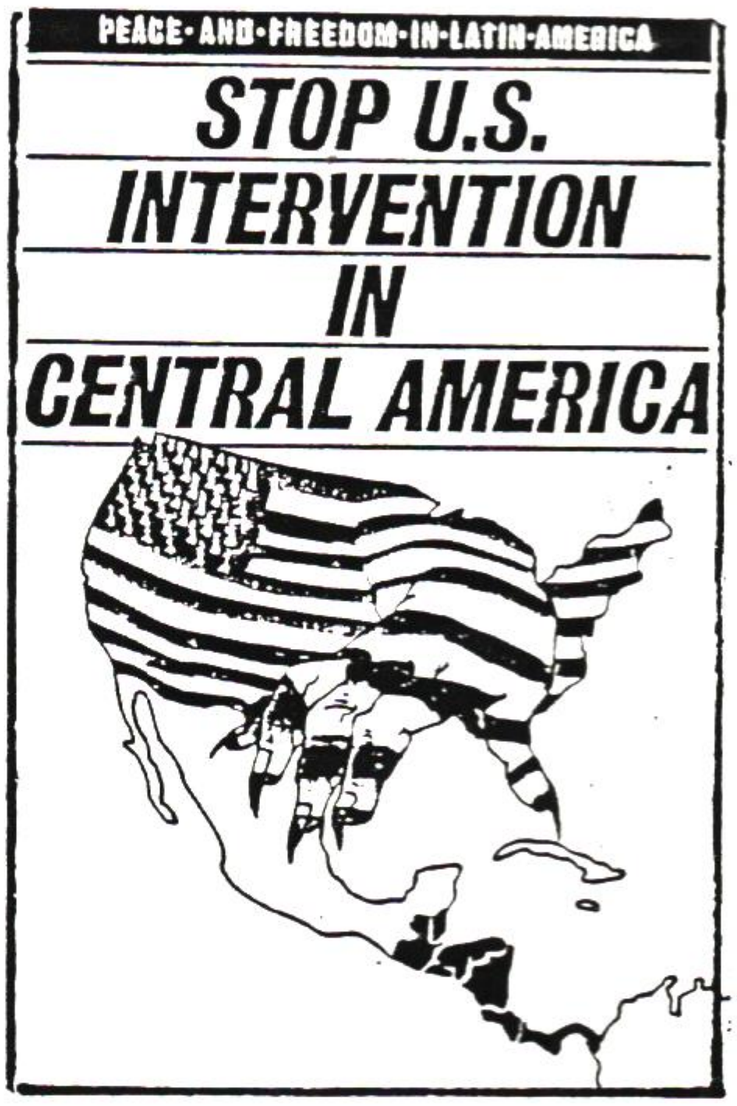
Although these kind of moves are not likely to produce much effect for some time, they will provide a solid base from which the right will counter attack if the London Labour Leaders and the ALA fail to deliver the goods in terms of effective defence against cuts and the destruction of local democracy.

John Plant
Newham North East CLP/Newham Council

CHILE.... THE JUNTA

September 1983 sees the tenth anniversary of the military coup that toppled President Allende and brought the bloody dictatorship of General Pinochet to power in Chile. It also finds the junta at its weakest point ever, with successive waves of protest sweeping the country and casting real doubt as to whether Pinochet can survive.

Protests have been escalating since March, when hunger marches in Santiago, accompanied by street protests on several occasions, began the present wave of discontent. A long and bitter strike on the construction site of Colbun Machicura, followed by protest actions in the mines, focussed industrial action. The May Day marches, attacked by police and plain clothed thugs, were scarcely over when the Copper Workers Union (CTC) called a national day of protest for May 11th. The response of the workers and unemployed of the big cities amazed even the organisers of the protests, and galvanised the increasingly broad political opposition to the junta into coordinated action.



The opposition to the regime is greater than ever before, and herin lies both the strength of the current wave of demonstrations and its limitations. With the country in unprecedented economic crisis massive sections of the bourgeosie, hitherto either allies of the military regime or at least silent in the face of its atrocities, were catapulted into the ranks of the opposition. Spurred partly by their own economic interests and partly by reaction to the repression turned against them, the middle classes deserted the regime in droves. They formed alliances amongst themselves and in some cases with the left, to confront the junta.

Particularly prominent have been the Christian Democrats, who welcomed the coup against Allende. They hold a crucial influence in the workers' movement, especially with the copper miners, whose leadership allies itself with them. Repression has enhanced their reputation, particularly after the July protests when three leaders of the party were arrested and charged with organising the day of action. They dominate the most influential opposition grouping, the Democratic Alliance, formed in early August and incorporating the political centre from social democracy to their own right wing. This has carefully excluded all the left parties, with the clear intention of ensuring that if Pinochet falls the resulting regime will be an overtly capitalist one, intent on safeguarding the interests of Chile's middle and upper classes. Tight control will still be kept over the working class and its political organisations.

The opposition has called days of protest every month since May, around the 11th, and each time both the popular mobilisations and the repression have increased.

July's protests saw the army used as well as the military police. 18,000 troops were ordered into Santiago for the August protest with orders to shoot to kill, to keep the curfew. Dozens have been murdered, includung several children. Thousands of homes have been raided and numerous detentions made.

TOTTERS

Despite this, each month has seen strikes in industry, demonstrations of students and professionals, barricades of burning tyres in all the slum areas and mass confrontations with the army and the police. The evenings of the days of protest resound to the banging of pots and pans.

It is likely that the anniversary of the coup on September 11th., will be marked by the biggest demonstration yet, calling for the end of military rule, which should be matched by a huge turnout on the solidarity march in London.

Were pinochet to fall however, the struggle of the workers will intensify rather than drop off. It is likely that a replacement government would be either a civilian/military one without Pinochet or, a civilian government dominated by the Christian Democrat right. The left parties would be excluded.

It is uncertain whether there would be a complete and unconditional return of the exiles, whether the repressive labour legislation would be revoked and whether there would be a complete amnesty for political prisoners and measures taken against the torturers of the last ten years.

The economic crisis would continue. Any new government would not shift the burden of paying for it from the working class. Workers' aspirations and militancy would certainly rise, and the long struggle to rebuild the left parties and the workers' organisations would continue in the face of virulent opposition from the ruling class, civil or military.

Our job as socialists and trade unionists in Britain is, to continue our support to the resistance to the junta, and should it fall, to continue our solidarity with the Chilean workers and their political organisations under whatever regime may be put in the place of Pinochet.

Andy Brown

BRIEFING AT LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE '83

SPEAKERS-

KEN LIVINGSTON

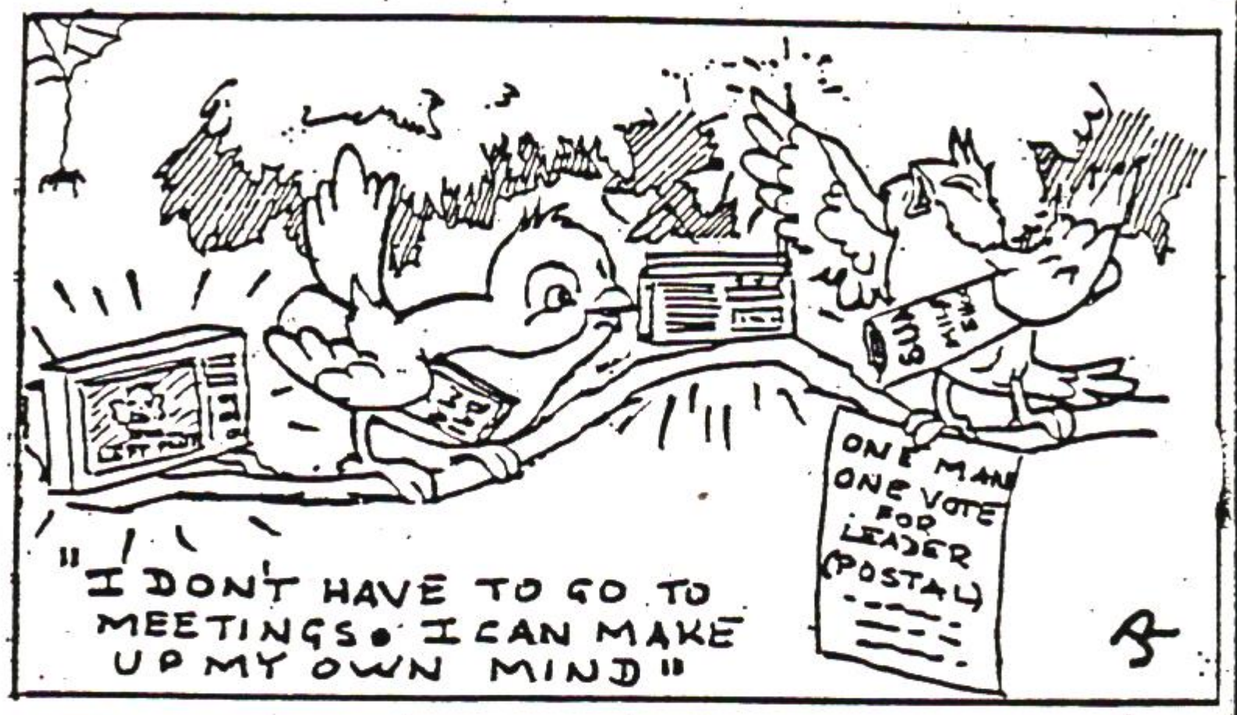
JANE STOCKTON

COLIN TALBOT

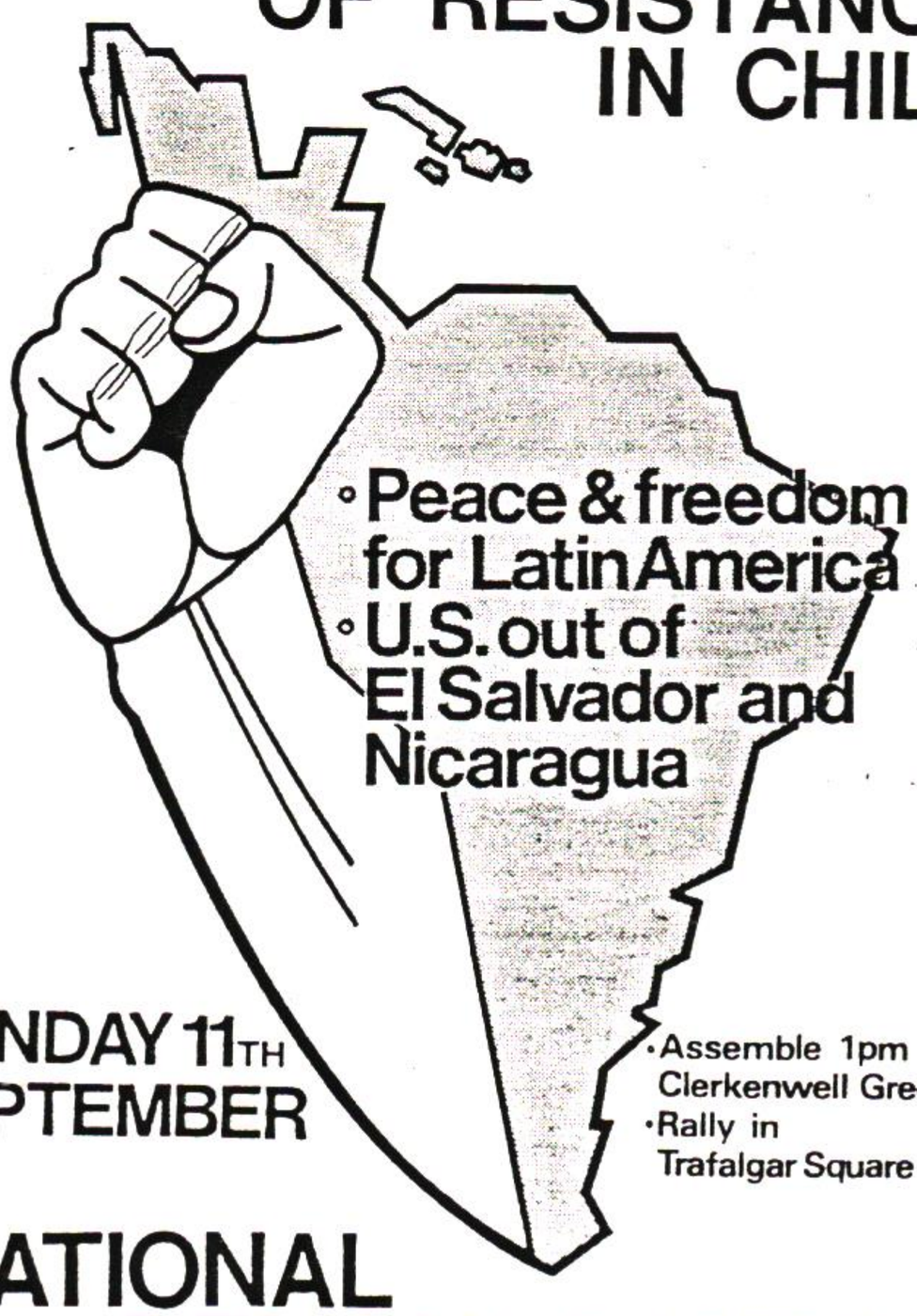
ANNE PETTIFOR

8pm on Sunday 2nd October

Venue to be decided. See London Labour Briefing.



1973-1983: TEN YEARS OF RESISTANCE IN CHILE



SUNDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

•Assemble 1pm Clerkenwell Green
•Rally in Trafalgar Square

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

Organised by CHILE, EL SALVADOR and NICARAGUA Solidarity Campaigns.
For information: Chile Solidarity Campaign. 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7. Telephone: 01-272-4298

* NO BRITISH ARMS FOR CHILE
* END US INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA
* PEACE AND FREEDOM FOR LATIN AMERICA

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

September 11th

Organised by No Intervention in Central America (NICA)

Socialist Radio

The British Labour Movement gets a bad press. This is nothing new: it always has! The decline in popular support for the Labour Party Didn't start with the closure of the 'Daily Herald' in the 1960's, and it is unlikely that the launch of a new national daily, by the TUC, will prove to be the panacea that some on Labour's right would fervently hope.

I'm not arguing that a popular socialist media isn't needed. The vicious Tory lies propogated in Murdoch's tabloids are obvious, and the last decade's studies,by Marxist media academics, have adequately shown how the BBC and the commercial 'independent' radio and TV stations work to construct or encourage a narrow liberal - consensus view of the world, culling their sense of what's news from the 'quality' press.

Something must be done: The TUC daily (at a proposed launch cost variously quoted between £3 and £7 million) is one proposed "solution". As the Labour Movement has finite cash resources I would argue that our money could be better spent on an efficient distribution and guaranteed sales outlet for our existing national papers and magazines, and a range of local media projects. Put crudely, this diverse approach could provide a better ideological return for the money.

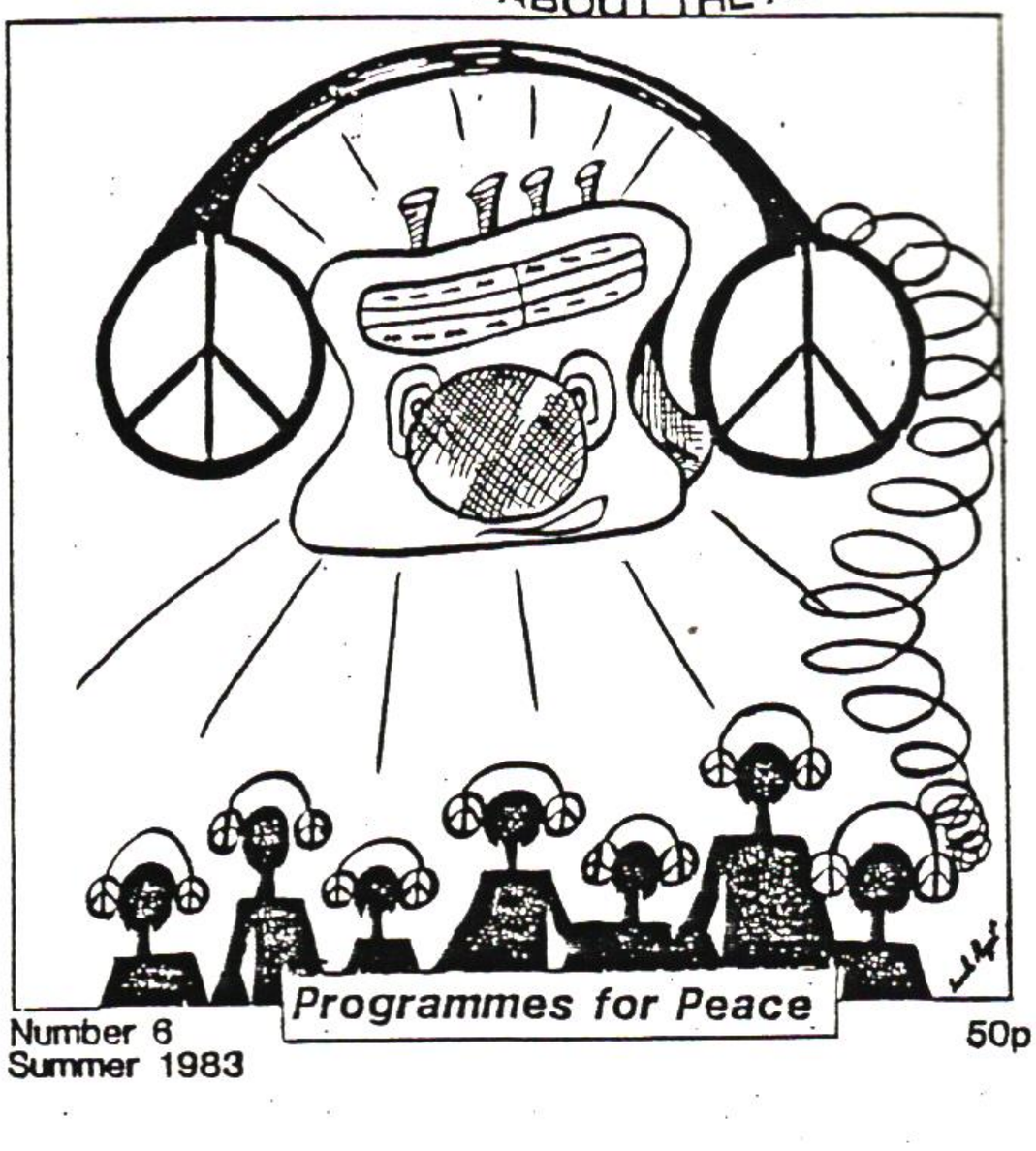
Socialists today are making their best advances on local issues. In London the fight to save the GLC, for instance, is capable of winning popular support. As Town Hall cuts harm more people in our communities, we CAN lead people back into the fight. National publications can't work at this level. For them, reporting a thousand tiny struggles a week is impossible. Local media projects CAN do it.



We're already building up these local campaigns in print. There's little mystique today in producing leaflets, posters and news letters. The next stage will involve using other techniques in film, video, radio and TV.

RELAY

THE OTHER MAGAZINE ABOUT THE AIRWAVES



Number 6
Summer 1983

50p

SUMMER ISSUE INCLUDES: Charles Parker's Radio Ballards * New Zealand's Access Radio * Peace Radio * Non Sexist Speech * Sheffield Radio Conference Report

SUBSCRIBE! Single Issue 65p; 4 Issues £2 for individuals; £5.00 for institutions.

WRITE TO: RELAY, Box 12, 2a St Pauls Road, London N1

Unfortunately, the BBC and IBA have a total 'duopoly' on the legal right to broadcast on the airwaves. Fortunately there are now more facilities to make radio programmes in London, outside of the 'duopoly' than ever before. You can be on the air with your own transmitter for under £50! How many leaflets can you distribute for that price?

So far, there have only been a few attempts to broadcast regular oppositional radio. Producing 6 hours of interesting, speech orientated, radio a week can tie up a lot of people and time.

However, the technique of ad hoc 'guerilla' attacks on the airwaves has barely begun to be exploited. There should be Radio stations set up for say factory occupations or anti nuclear demonstrations. Broadcasting such as this played a strong mobilizing role in pre Mitterand France. Solidarity broadcast the full negotiations between the government and shipyard workers in Gdansk.

RADIO Cont-----

Such projects could play a useful role in England. In July, for instance, "Radio Avilon" took to the air for three days at the Glastonbury CND festival. With a mere one watt VHF transmitter and a few hundred pounds worth of borrowed equipment, the station provided 12 hours a day of community radio for the 50,000 festival goers. Unwittingly, CND leader Bruce Kent and the GLC Nuclear Bunker Party performers found themselves on the air together with live festival information and peace news.

By the end of the event, 'Avalon' had become required listening. Two weeks of coordination by 15 people, from all over England, put Radio Avalon on the air.

Peace protesters **will probably provide** more opportunities for **one off projects** (oh, if there had only **been a radio** station coordinating the Greenham link-up).

But strikes, days of action and local festivals all provide opportunities for socialist radio. How about running your own election day special? Publicize your station with posters, leaflets and word of mouth and watch the curious tune in (after all, Capital Radio is SO boring!)

Making radio is easy. Hundreds of political activists are now graduates of cable, hopital and student stations. They are just waiting to show you how.

Chris Huculak Barking CLP

BARKING & DAGENHAM Campaign Against the Cuts

The Cuts Campaign held a conference at N.E.London Polytechnic,Longbridge Rd, Barking on 2nd July at which local people, trades unionists and political parties discussed what needed to be done to defend jobs and services in the area.

The emphasis was on the impact of public spending cuts and Tory policies which are designed to attack the welfare state; both locally and nationally.

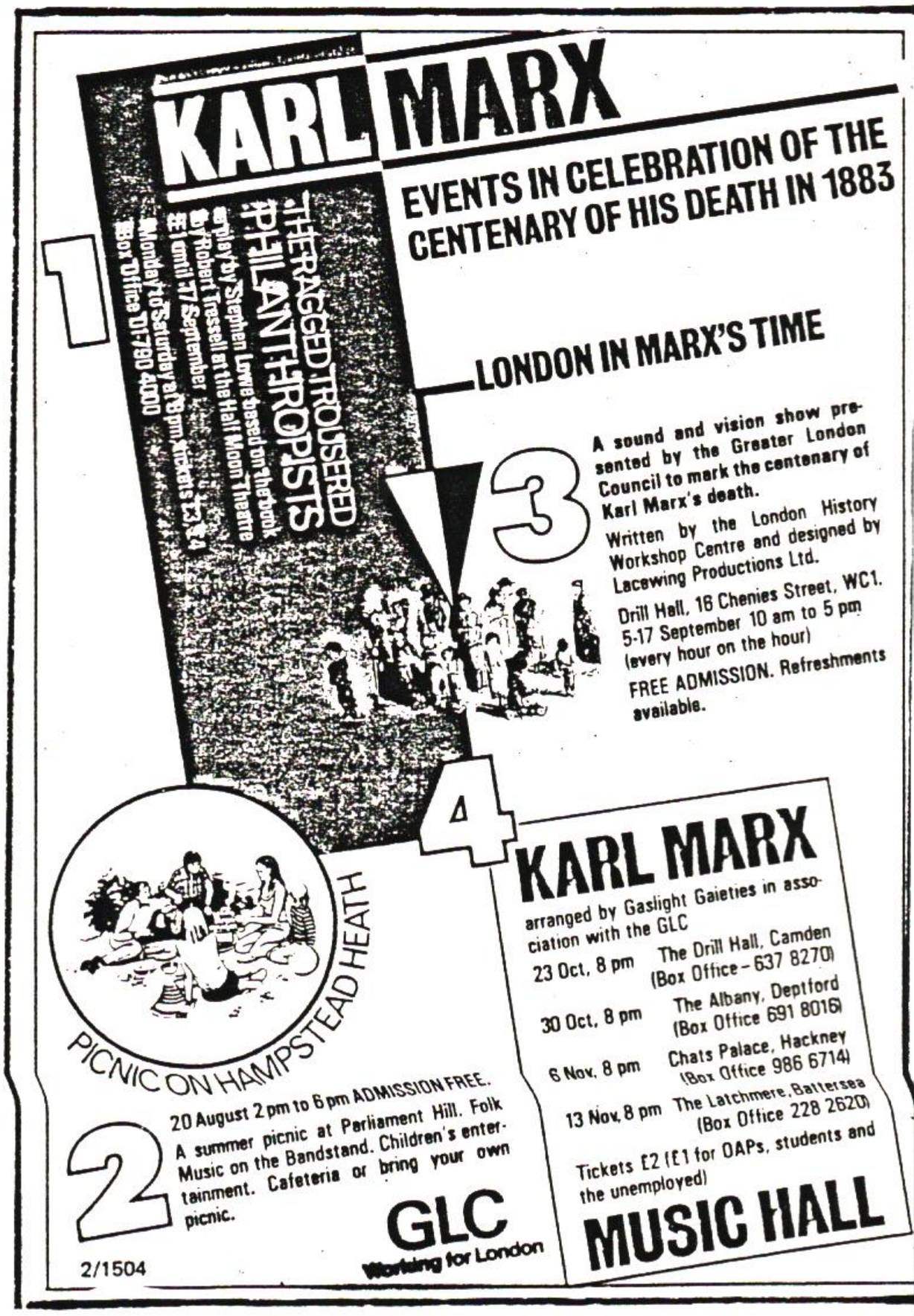
As a result of the conference, we can look forward to increased cooperation between the Labour controlled Local Authority and the Cuts Campaign.

The clear political message of the conference was that Labour Councils can no longer afford to simply manage the local administration. The political situation has changed dramatically. If Labour Councils are to effectively fight for the interests of those who elected them, they will have to behave in a different manner. A new political style is required in which the Labour Party, the Trades Unions and local political and community groups work together; in which the Labour Council gives a clear lead in defiance of Tory policies designed to weaken the organisation and morale of the working class.

Political activity is necessary on every level, at Council level, by an active local campaign in defence of jobs and services.

Immediately, the Cuts Campaign has organised a lobby of the Department of the Environment on Friday 26th August in which the situation prevailing in local parks was brought to the attention of the Tory politicians: it is because of Tory cuts that local children were exposed to risk during the summer holiday period.

Over the next few weeks, the Cuts Campaign is planning a series of publicity events to get the message across about what cuts actually mean to those people directly affected. There are also proposals for a London-wide campaign, in which the Cuts Campaign is involved. Any help people think they can give will be most welcome.



The next meeting of the **Campaign** is on September 5th., at 8.00 pm
ROOM 1015 N E LONDON POLYTECHNIC (BARKING PRECINCT)

J.Roche (Chair N.A.T.F.H.E.)

Barking & Dagenham MCPs

I joined the Labour Party as a natural progression of considering myself a socialist. I believe we are all responsible for the society we live in and making sure that no one suffers unnecessarily.

Having believed the Labour Party stood for equality for all, I was shocked by the attitude I found. Being a single parent, I had to take my son to the evening Ward meetings until I could find a baby sitter. No one chatted to us, or welcomed us and made us welcome. We were outsiders.

only woman

As the only young woman at the meeting, it obviously embarrassed some members that I actually participated in the discussion and had the audacity to have my own point of view. I found that enquiries made at Ward or GC meetings were seldom followed up. "Women are welcome"- said in a patronising manner is the usual response to a request to help women attend meetings, by providing creche and other facilities. Other typical responses are:-
"The party couldn't afford to pay for creches"
"Women shouldn't neglect their children to attend meetings"
"It isn't fair to children to have creches, as meetings go on till 10 pm"
"There can't be a demand for creche facilities as women with children don't attend meetings"
Pointing out that 50% of the electorate are women does not seem to penetrate.

As a parent, of course my son comes first. If I hadn't managed to find a baby sitter, I would have dropped out of the Labour Party.

shocked

I am still shocked that people like me are considered naive: just because we actually expect the Party to carry out its policies. (such as the NEC 'Charter for Equality for Women within the Party).

NO, I don't expect, or accept, only lip service to this sexism; or the belief in racial equality, the Health Service or the other ideals of Socialism. These hypocrites say, when I quote women I have spoken to:- " Why don't they join the Party and come and tell us themselves" or " They're lazy and apathetic and not worth worrying about".

What woman is going to go to the trouble and expense of a baby sitter, to attend a meeting where she is not made welcome and her contributions are dismissed?

not welcome

From what I have seen in my area, the Labour Party does not in any way, represent ordinary men and women. We are not welcome in the Party. They do not want ordinary members to have their say or put forward their point of view, if it differs from their own.

After Kensington & Chelsea, Barking & Dagenham have the largest number of single parent families. So, fellow Socialists in Barking & Dagenham, who believe in equality and justice for all, where are you? Are you going to leave me feeling like a voice crying in the right wing wilderness.

Get up off your backsides at Ward and GC meetings and support us. Tell all the Party geriatrics we need the energy and idealism of women in the Party, as well as the experience of the veterans, of whom we have a surfeit. (who of course are mostly men)..... No wonder the LABOUR PARTY is Dying.

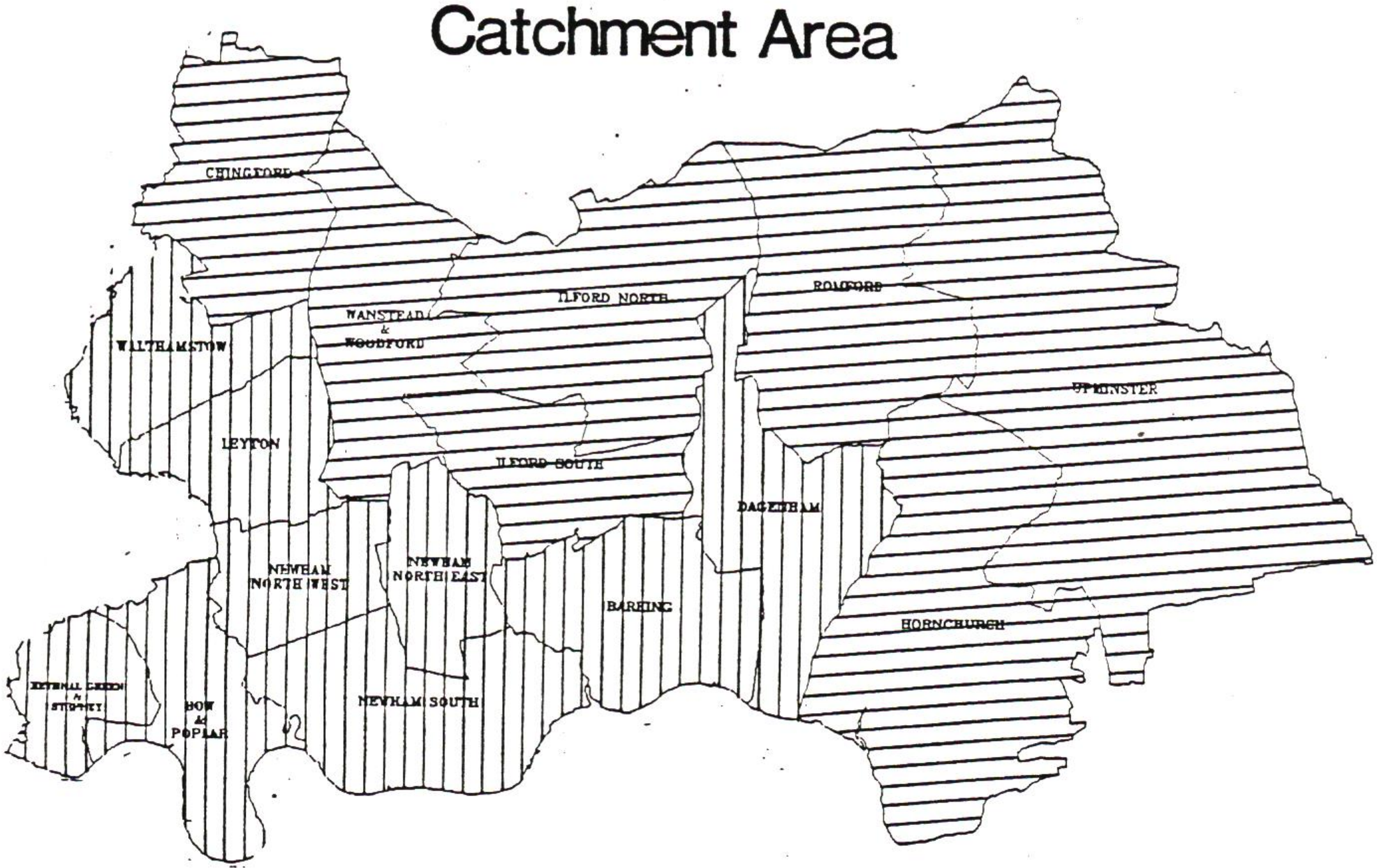
Anne Fell Dagenham CLP

NEWS ???

Ring 01.517 3876

East of London LABOUR BRIEFING

Catchment Area



. . . a policy statement

There has recently been a realisation in the outer London CLPs, that party activists are isolated in their Constituences. This has meant that many good local initiatives have remained just that. London LABOUR BRIEFI NG also has problems of penetration in outer London CLPs, which is mainly due to its meetings being at County Hall. This has limited the editorial and local stringer inputs into London LABOUR BRIEFING.

In a bid to provide a forum specifically for East London, and a permanent input channel for London and National LABOUR BRIEFING, East of London LABOUR BRIEFING has been set up. The format will be news, views, comments and policy disection in the magazine's catchment area (see above). The articles that appear in the magazines will not necessarily be the opinion of the Editorial Board, or the Editor of that particular month's edition. But, will be a reflection of our policy of covering as wide an area of debate and opinion as possible.

The East of London LABOUR BRIEFING will be a Bi-monthly magazine and the responsibility for producing an Editor and hosting Editorial meetings will be rotated within the Editorial Group and catchment area respectively.

The next Editorial meeting is advertised in this edition. All Labour Party members are invited to attend. Its your magazine, why not contribute to it? If you can't make the meetings, ring 01.517 3876 with items you would like to see included.

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

The Labour movement are invited to sponsor and participate in a half day conference on the theme of racism,the police and education.The aims of the project are to monitor racist activity in Newham and the response of the police and local authorities.A typical incident the project has to deal with is the case of Osei Owusu.

A 45 year old black resident of Newham,faces charges of assaulting police after they raided his home in early August.

Osei Owusu, although not driving, was challenged by a police officer who claimed he was drunk and wanted to breathalyse him. Mr.Owusu said he had not been driving and therefore refused to be breathalysed.10-12 minutes later while he was at home, police their way into his home and brutally assaulted him with truncheons.
At the police station he was breathalysed and was found not to be over the limit.As a result of this brutal attack he suffered 13 stitches.

The conference will be held on Saturday 1st October,from 1-6pm and will discuss (1)the conspiracy laws which are now being used against the Newham 8,and (2) the police Bill which is expected to be brought before Parliament in October '83.
Speakers include:-
A Sivandan (Institute of Race Relations),and Anwas Ditta.
Deatails from Unmesh Desai
Newham Monitoring Project
Tel.01-555 8151

ASBESTOS ACTION Cont

The Commission's proposals are welcome, but why has it taken so long? The General & Municipal and Boilermakers Union, the organisation SPAID and many others have produced detailed, documented reports which could have been acted on before.

The answer is that private industry is responsible for the processing of asbestos, private industry makes a profit from it, and private industry isn't accountable to anyone but its shareholders. Some firms provide proper protection for the workforce, others are lax about it. There has been too little development of alternative materials and at too slow a pace.

Well they will have to get on with it **now**, and do what so many of us have been **trying** to achieve for so long. But I **warn** you, they'll struggle.

VIEWS or NEWS ... your chest
Get it off

01.517 3876
...ring BRIEFING

TOWER BLOCK CAMPAIGN

Newham has more tower blocks than anywhere else in England - over a hundred - and so a high percentage of families are forced to live in high rise blocks.

The Newham Tower Block Tenants Campaign (NTBTC) was founded approximately two years ago, following the suicide of a young mother - who threw herself out of a 21st floor flat - and the announcement of proposed spending cuts in tower block maintenance.

Though many problems have become apparent during the lifetime of the campaign such as frequent lift breakdowns, faulty and expensive heating systems, endless waits for repairs, condensation and infestation of cockroaches and ants and lack of play area for children, the NTBTC has concentrated its campaigning around three fundemental issues which we believe are common to tower block tenants, no matter where they live:-
a the need to re-think the way high rise flats are allocated, to all categories of people, regardless of whether they are disabled or families with young children.
b the need for increased spending on tower blocks, so that conditions are not only maintained but improved.
c the need for more reasonable rent and rate levels to be fixed (flats are rated higher than comparable houses).

NTBTC is trying to make links with tower block tenants everywhere, to build up pressure on central government to build more council houses, so that the last families can be moved out of tower blocks.

National conference

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOWER BLOCK PROBLEMS IS PLANNED ON SATURDAY 22nd OCTOBER AT EAST HAM LONDON
DETAILS FROM NTBTS c/o 81 HIGH ST SOUTH, EAST HAM. 01.472 6652

THE NEXT EAST OF LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING EDITORIAL MEETING WILL BE HELD

Wednesday 14th September, 1983

Newham North West Labour Party Headquarters, 306 Stratford High Street, LONDON, E15 At 8pm

PRINTED BY BARKING & DAGENHAM LINK c/o 245 PORTERS AVE DAGENHAM
PUBLISHED BY EoL. LABOUR BRIEFING c/o 245 PORTERS AVE DAGENHAM