LAMBETH
BRIEFING
Number Two 10p

☆☆☆☆☆ D'YOU WANNA FIGHT ? ☆☆☆☆☆

EDITORIAL

The next five years will see the Tories attempt to dismantle local authorities. Housing policies, privatisation, and other inner city initiatives, plus further ratecapping are all designed to undermine local democracy and increase central control. The Wandsworth experience and the Health Service clearly show that privatisation means cuts in wages , conditions , and services.

The majority of London Labo ur Authorities will not be able to balance their budgets next year. Lambeth's gap is at present estimated at £60-70 million, a third of its spending! As Dave Morgan, the Deputy Leader wrote, the stark choice is to make significant cuts or challenge the Tories. But, like most London authorities, Lambeth Labour Group has already indicated that it is unwilling to have a confrontation, and without a Labour Government they have no choice but to buckle under for the next five years . Many authorities, including Lambeth, are already making invisible cuts through vacancy freezes or drags-high vacancy levels and consequent running down of services has paved the way for privatisation and direct Government approaches to Council tenants. Others are now making full, visible cuts.

The Tories stated that one of their goals is to see Socialism extinct by the end of the century; their policies are designed to quash traditional Labour strongholds in the inner cities, either by moving in 'yuppies' to change the nature of the population or by pressing local authorities into implementing unpopular policies like massive rent rises for properties the local authority cannot afford to repair. The Tories will offer some tenants the 'choice' of transferring their landlords to housing associations or private landlords.

In this situation local authorities will be powerless to offer anything to the local working class. In some cases the Tories will seem to offer more. But for large majorities of the inner city population , and particularly the black population, conditions of life will continue to deteriorate and result in demoralisation and total alienation from the political process. Labour's ability to attract voters will not go unscathed.

However, in both Lambeth and Liverpool , Labour's majority increased . Where Labo ur authorities are prepared to fight they can attract popular support. Where the Labour Party offers no lead , but ben d the

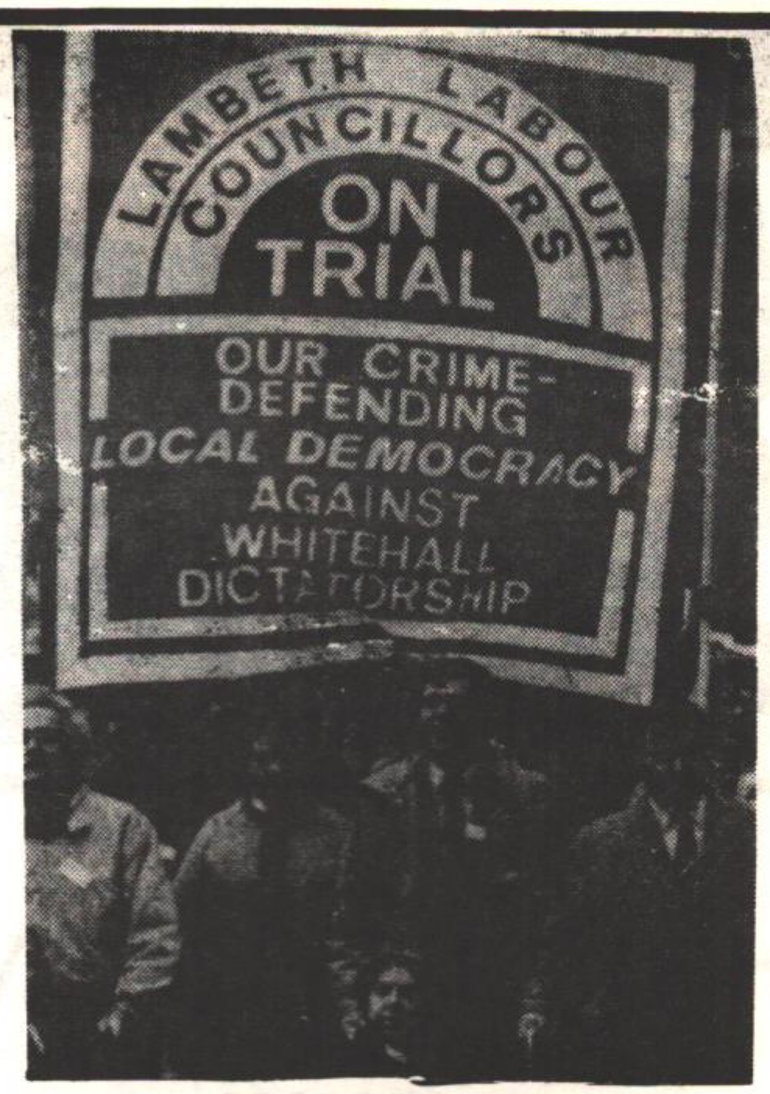
******EDITORIAL******

knee, people are left isolated and demoralised.

The choice is clear. If a radical Socialist opposition to this Government is to survive, then we to fight. In Lambeth, the trade unions will be on the receiving end as the Tories continue their onslaught aganinst organised labour. It is up to the local Lambeth Labour parties and councillors to unite behind the unions and support any action they take. Instead we had the council docking pay for atending NALGO meetings.

Across the council unions we must establish a fighting left current which can organise an effective campaign against cuts in jobs and services. It must combat any tendency for inter-union fights over a declining budget 'cake'. We must go out to tenants, the grant-aided sector and black organisations overcoming the racism which is increasingly fostered by the Government and media. We must demand that Labour Councillors ensure the council recruits full establishment, stop their attacks on Council trade unions, fights privatisation- creating jobs rahter than selling them-and commits itself to no cuts, even if this impl ies illegality. We must begin to build a campaign which will offer proper political opposition to the government and show the Lambeth working class that there is a socialist alternative.

In Lambeth, Briefing is committed to building the largest possible unity among all those in the trade unions, the Labour parties, on the Council and in community organisations who are willing to fight against the Tory attacks, whether they come in the form of cuts in services, redundancies and job freezes, privatisation or rent and rate rises.



At the Lambeth Left Caucus on 13th July, Briefing supporters argued for a recalled borough conference for delegates from trade unions, Labour parties and community organizations. The conference has now been called for 13th September by the Labour Group. All party members, trade unionists and users of council services must be mobilised to attend.

We must demand the full facts on the Council's financial position, and that all Labour Councillors are committed to the pledges they made in the manifesto on which they were elected - no cuts in jobs or services and no rate or rent rises. We also argue that the conference should be a launching-pad for building and strengthening the campaign.

In addition to the call for a recalled borough conference, the Left Caucus also decided to support a call from Camden NALGO for a London-wide meeting of all those willing to fight the Tory attacks on Local Government on September 19th. Clearly this will not include those Labour Councillors who have been proposing - and implementing - 'responsible' cuts in a desperate attempt to placate the Tories and their allies in Walworth Road.

CPSA - action and lessons

On Tuesday 5th May 1987, the CPSA held 4 days of industrial action for a 15% pay increase and better working conditions, refusing to accept the 4.25% offered to us.

During the first day of the strike, a mass meeting was held at the Town Hall. An important issue was raised - how the people on Supplementary and Unemployment benefit would be affected whilst the members were out on strike during that week. A sudden decision had to be made between the DHSS and DE in the South London area (who were present) with NALGO.

A large majority of CPSA members were in favour of emergency payments for extremely urgent cases only. The NALGO leadership and SWP members decided against our proposal, arguing that the only hope of getting support from the unemployed was to make payments across the board. In effect blanket payments of £14 per adult and £10 per child were to be organised from the Town Hall. Most NALGO members opposed their leaderships resolution favouring emergency payments. Why oppose blanket payments? Why should the unemployed support us in our struggles for a 15% pay increase and improved conditions for the workforce?

The Government has made numerous attacks on the unemployed with various types of 'work for you dole ' schemes. Availability testing and 13 suspensions (all ploys to scare people off the register) hoping to reduce their appalling track record! The CPSA has fought hard against such threats and has succeeded in keeping Ethnic Monitoring out of the DE.

It was up to our members to show the least amount of co-operation as possible during the week of action. The idea of blanket payments played right into the hands of the management and the Government, weakening our campaign.

Blanket payments were made from the Town Hall by NALGO members who actually volunteered to.

As the situation now stands a national vote for regional selective action has taken place. The South London Branches have had a further two days of action on the 8th and 9th June.

by JAQUIE BLACK.

LESSONS FOR THE CPSA!

The CPSA action suffered a serious blow when the SCPS leadership pulled out of the agreed selective action. The conclusion CPSA members are forced to draw is that the SCPS leadership is more concerned with attacking the Broad Left leadership of the CPSA than winning the pay campaign. In the short term this led to a mood of defiance, but in the longer term made it more difficult to win the ballot on all-out action.

The no-vote in the CPSA all-out strike ballot finally put paid to this year's pay campaign. In view of the serious blowssuffered by the union over the past six weeks the negative response was little surprise, showing just 19,468 in favour of taking all-out strike action. This represented a third of those voting and only 13% of the union. The figure under-represents the militant (small m) core within the union but serves to further undermine the confidence of the membership.

With no tradition of industrial militancy, confidence has to be built from scratch. Members must be convinced strike action can win. It's clear from the ballot result confidence has been allowed to slip. The difficulty for the Broad Left was that in taking control of the NEC it inherited a campaign already determined:- the seeds of defeat were sown before the BL came to power.

PTO.

NEARLY THERE IN STREATHAM

BY ANNA TAPSALL.

The Streatham result was remarkable.However,it is being studiously ignored by Walworth Rd,and the media. This myopia is particularly fascinating given that the Streatham campaign centred very much around women and organised in almost complete independece of the national campaign.

Even so it was not easy to shake off the daily drag on agreed policies.An example of this was Labour's policies on crime and policing,where there was substantial back-tracking by Gerald Kaufmann on police accountabilityand with absurd forays into the realms of crimeometers,etc.The insistant refusal to be clear on defence was disastrous. This is not a peripheral issue nor should it be.Tied up in this issue are people's fantasies about Britain's role in the world.

The Labour Party must take time to publicly analyse the nature offorces that dis-embowel our policies and sabotage our efforts to gain power.We know of course who they are.So do the large number of young people and black people who didn't vote and who won't register unless they can be convinced that we know how to deal with these forces ranged against us.

To get back to Streatham and to Lambeth.We have four years to expose the system.Every-thing in the Queen's Speech reinforces that obligation on us.The campaign in Stretham was about engaging the Party in dialogue with the people who live there.We were strengthened by the fact that that our help camenot from Walworth Rd, computers and the media,but from Lambeth comrades who were visible,approachable and coherantly socialist.

NALGO SETTLES FOR LOW PAY



NALGO's campaign for fair pay has collapsed at the first hurdle, without so much as a fight.

The employers' first offer which gives the lowest paid just £200 a year extra, whilst giving those on £18,000 a further £1,300 has been accepted on the recommendation of the National Executive Committee.

Nine emergency motions at Annual Conference demanding ballots on industrial action were refused a hearing.

This despite figures showing that nearly half of all NALGO staff are on wages below the EEC 'Decency Threshold'.

Once again the lowest paid gain the least. NALGO must build a campaign for flat rate increases in future that truly give FAIR PAY FOR ALL.

NEXT LAMBETH LEFT CAUCUS meetingis on AUGUST21st.discussing the Borough Conference ,Budget strategy,uniting with the Campaign Group,etc..

CPSA LESSONS,continued.

The only way to arrest the downward spiral in confidence is by posing the only way to win:-all out strike action.The most importatnt lesson from the defeat of the ballot is that the BL NEC must LEAD the inevitable fightback in the face of increasing Tory attacks.Only this way will confidence of members in their own power be restored.

Lambeth budget

On 16.7.87. labour group rejected any commitment to the 1986 manifesto and voted against basing our 1988/9 budget strategy on the principal of no cuts. However with the support of the leadership, the left voted down calls to reject the tactics of illegal defiance, mass resignations , or majority opposition. But it took only four days for the Deputy Leader to tail the Labour Coordinating Committee and propose that outright opposition and non-cooperation must be rejected and a lawful balanced budget achieved. The only way to achieve this is to start making cuts now, and the leadership won support for a borough conference to start thi s process. However no Leaders report was given a t the last Local Governmednt Committee and already more cuts (based on the 1987/8 budget) have started.

An urgency committee of the co uncil agreed to allocate the staff slippage to individual budget headings and council departments. At a meeting prior to this, a senior council officer claimed that the only way he could achieve more slippage in his department was for the council to change its recruitment procedures. Meaning that 'slippage' is now clearly a vacancy freeze.

In the same breath , group have rejected any fight against privatisation. They are not confident there is a mood of mass defiance to the Tory proposals. Ignoring the fact that they have created a mood of total compliance locally.

We are faced with a Labour leadership in lambeth who will offer no challenge to the Tories. They meekly accept that £60 million cuts are needed, whilst calling for a mass campaign against the Government cuts in local government expenditure. This contradictory attitude will only lead to misunderstanding and further demoralisation. Labour Group must base its budget strategy on the principles of the 1986 Manifesto, i.e.; no cuts in services, no redundancies , continued recruitment , no privatisation , and no rent rises.

It is vital for the Parties and Trade Unions to start building a challenge to these cuts now. A Lambeth Labour Left must be formed to organise the fightback.

TEVE FRENCH, LABOUR COUNCILLOR, CHAIR OF CONSTRUCTION SERVICES.

Lambeth Campaign Group

Briefing supporters have argued at the Lambeth Left Caucus for its merger with the Lambeth Campaign Group on the basis of adding opposition to all witchunts, and a commitment to fightimng for no cuts, redundancies and rent or rate rises to their already existing platform. Thjis was agreed unanimously by the Caucus. However when we toook this proposal back to the Campaign Group on July 28th as a step towards left unity in the fight against the Tories, unfortuneately the Campaign Group as a whole was not prepared to commit itself to the above positions. Nor commit itself to preparing a campaign to take into the parties and trade unions in preparation for the September Borough Conference, The Campaigr Group thus runs the risk of marginalsiing itself from any real rather than purely rhetorical fight against the Tories plans for local government. However the discussion will continue at the next meeting on AUGUST 25th and we hope to move forward to one united organised left in Lambeth.

Lambeth BRIEFING

PICKET
THE HARWICH PRISON SHIP

Saturday 8th. August
12.00 to 3.00 PM
Farquestone Quay, Harwich Docks

A disused ex Sealink ferry moored off Harwich docks is currently being used as an immigration prison for refugees and visitors. There are plans to buy more. Not satisfied with its blatantly racist immigration laws, the Tories are locking up more and more black people whose only crime is the desire to visit this country, or who are fleeing from terror in their own country.

This revived prison hulk is now accommodating 65 black women and men (from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Ghana, Iran. Eritrea, Guyana, etc) under appalling living conditions. Private companies are being paid by the Government to provide the security and catering. This has resulted in a total lack of accountability, with detainees subject to racial harassment, intimidation, denial of basic facilities and adequate food.

Black people are having their homes and workplaces raided under the pretext of 'fishing' for 'illegal immigrants'. There has been an intensification of policing of black communities. As the Tories begin their third term of office, black people are in the front line of ever increasing vicious state attacks on the working class as a whole.

WE ARE REFUGEES,



NOT CRIMINALS!

MODEL RESOLUTION

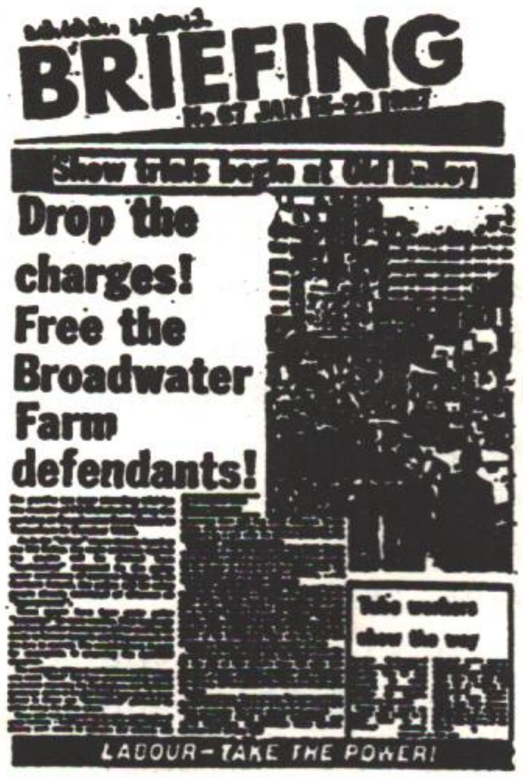
'This.....
condemns the detention and imprisonment of refugees and visitors to this country by the Government. In particular this ..... sees the use of the car ferry, the Earl William at Harwich, for this purpose as a blatant escalation of the harassment of black people wishing to enter this country, and as a further attempt to discourage them from doing so. This notes the appalling conditions under which the detainees are kept on the boat, and recognises that these conditions result directly from the privatisation of security and catering.
This calls for an end to the criminalisation of black people through such detention procedures. This supports the campaign against racist immigration controls and will actively mobilise for the future demonstrations against the Harwich prison ship.

Further Details from:
Ai Meun on 732 3731 or
TU Resource Centre 274 4000
X372.

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