LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p FORTNIGHTLY
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BRENT IS BURNING



PHOTO: Geoff Cocks

Picket lines in Brent

As the deadlines for the implementation of much of Brent Council's £17 million cuts package approach, action has been stepped up in the unions and community.

By PETE FIRMIN, Brent East CLP

There will be no respite for the Council Leadership.

The General Meeting of the Brent NALGO branch on September 15th was attended by about 250 members who voted overwhelmingly for strike action, and the branch is balloting all its members by September 30th on all-out action against redundancies.

Although about 1,500 people have put in for voluntary redundancy, this still falls short of what the Council is demanding and it will almost certainly attempt to bring in compulsory redundancies to bridge the gap.

Redundant primary teachers are due to go by October 1st and secondary teachers by October 22nd. Brent NUT has already conducted a ballot on half-day strike action which is to take place on the afternoon of Monday 26th.

The best attended meeting of the Brent Teachers' Association (NUT branch) for years on Tuesday September 20th saw around 300 members overwhelmingly support amendments from the left to sharpen up the vague resolution from the local Executive on the nature of future action.

The further ballot on action will now include no-cover as well as extended strike action.

The day before the general meeting the NUT Left (now organised as the Education Action Committee) called a large and noisy lobby of the Education Office which was followed by a lobby of an Education Sub-Committee by students, parents, and teachers.

Despite the fact that the Committee was not discussing cuts, a combination of pressure from anti-cuts Councillors and heckling from 200-300 protestors caused the meeting first to be adjourned for half an hour (in the vain hope that protestors would go home) and finally abandoned to another day.

The following day (Weds. 21st) students from two schools walked out and marched on the Town Hall in protest against education cuts. Although some day nurseries have already been closed with little protest, one of the respite centres is now in occupation (as of Thursday September 22nd) - workers and parents and supporters and children are using it. It could well be a major focus for the struggle in the community to defend services.

Similarly some tenants' associations and activists on the Council estates are beginning to organise for withholding the rent increase of £7 per week due from November 1st. While it would be better to organise to withhold the whole of the rent, if thousands of tenants across the borough can be mobilised in refusing to pay the increase it will have a big effect on the Council's ability to function.

One of the most significant developments of all has been amongst home helps in NUPE. Like every other section of the Council workforce, home helps have received letters asking theem to apply for voluntary redundancy.

NUPE has been the msot cravenunion in supporting the Council leadership, with its Branch Secretary, Kevin Lawton, even going so far as to write to Labour Councillors urging them to "face up to the facts and make unpleasant and undersirable decision in order to maintain a balanced budget"... "To facilitate the unions with a voluntary severance scheme"... and to "prioritise statutory obligations over non-statutory ones."

However, Lawton has now come unstuck. With a 20% reducation in home helps, part of the cuts package (120 jobs), he was forced to organise a meeting for the home helps to meet the Council leadership.

200 home helps turned up to the meeting on Wednesday 21st only to be told that although the Leader of the Council and Chair and Vice-Chair of Social Services had been invited to attend, they hadn't turned up.

Labour anti-cuts Councillors Graham Durham and Helga Gladbaum distributed copies of Lawton's letter to Councillors to the NUPE members (invoking the hatred of the NUPE officers), most of whom hadn't seen it before.

When they asked to address the meeting the chair, together with NUPE Area Officer Mark Irvine, unsuccessfully tried to stop them.

However, they inisted on speaking and pointed out the role that NUPE had beeen playing in backing up the Council leadership and argued against the line put forward by Irvine that NUPE should plead for the home help service to be saved by cuts elsewhere and in favour of a common fight by *all* the Council unoins against all cuts.

Lawton didn't address his members once but left it to Irvine to put on a "left" face by talking of a *further* possible 20% cut in home helps and the need to lobby Social Services Committee against it while glossing over the fact that NUPE had *supported* all cuts to date.

After Graham Durham had addressed the meeting it was discovered that Pam Jordan, Deputy Leader, was in the building and she was eventually "persuaded" by the home helps to speak to the meeting.

In fact she merely added to the insult of other Councillors not turning up by virtually saying nothing and claiming she couldn't tell them any facts because she didn't know any!

When a teacher asked why it was that Lawton had briefed her on what to say before she came into the meeting most of the home helps walked out in disgust a the role of their Branch Secretary.

What is needed now is for NUPE members to organise themselves to throw out their leadership and make sure NUPE lines up with other sections fighting the cuts.

Brent Fightback activists were invited by home helps to attend their meeting (much to the annoyance of Irvine and Lawton) and Fightback has been co-ordinating and backing up the actions of different sections of the workforce and community.

A breakthrough was made when a group of the home helps attended the *Fightback* meeting on September 18th, and *Fightback* has now decided to go back to meeting weekly on Sunday evenings (7pm) at the Town Hall.

Anti-cuts Councillor Graham Durham has whip removed.
See inside, centre pages.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

BRENT

Reinstate Graham Durham!

A meeting of the Labour Group of Brent Council on Sunday September 18th, with Regional Labour Party Officer Terry Ashton in attendance, voted by 20-14 to withdraw the whip from anti-cuts Councillor Graham Durham.

By Pete Firmin
Brent East CLP

In keeping with a Sunday meeting, Durham was asked to "repent" his crime of consistently voting against cuts.

Far from doing so he gave a forthright defence of his actions and denounced the Group leadership for restoring to organisational measures in the face of thepolitical disintegration of the Group.

Those supporting this witch-hunt found difficulty in justifying their actions, since virtually *every* member of the Group has broken the whip over the last year.

Even on the scale of Durham's "offences" it is doubtful whether he has done so more often than some of the other anti-cuts Councillors.

However, they are not in a position to withdraw the whip from all 12 Councillors who are now voting against cuts, since this would mean that the Labour Group is no longer the largest Group on the Council.

They see Durham as the "leader"of the anti-cuts Councilors (and, in their conspiracy theories, as the instigator of every lobby by Council workers and service users protesting against cuts).

By disciplining Durham alone they hope to achieve two ends; firstly to silence him in Labour Group and many Council committes and thereby cow the other anti-cuts Councilors, and secondly to show the extreme right of the Labour Group, who have been voting with the Tories for greater cuts, that they are prepared to take action against the left and hopefully pull the right into line.

Far from silencing Durham, he has since played a prominent role in encouraging NUPE members to fight both the cuts and their local leadership; and other anti-cuts Councillors are stepping into the breach, annoyed that they should be regarded by the Group leadership as simply pupets of Durham.

The immediate focus for the fight to get Graham Durham reinstated as a member of the Labour Group is in the local Labour Parties. The majority of the officers of the Local Government Committee voted at Labour Group for the whip to be withdrawn, despite the fact that the LGC haas yet to discuss the isssue, and in the full knowledge that two of the three CLPs have resolutions down for the next LGC meeting *against*withdrawal of the whip form Cllr.Durham.

Oficers of the branch (Cricklewood) that he represents have already issued a statement giving their continued support for his refusal to vote for cuts, pointing out that he has been acting totally in accordanance with the wishes of the branch.

Other branches have also called on Labour Councillors who are voting for cuts to resign.

Now is the time to win the CLPs and LGC to a policyof opposition to the cuts and to unite with those trade unionists and comunity activists taking action against the Council to force both Graham Durham's reinstatement and the restoration of the cuts.

No Toll Road in North London!

Stop the roads madness!

By MARK SEATON

The government's plans to allow major road building through inner London, as envisaged in the East London Road Assesment Study, have met with widespread hostility.

In particular, the idea of transforming the Parkland Walk — running from Archway to Finsbury Park — into a six-lane motorway has sparked fury and indignation.

Speaking to a huge meeting at Hornsey Town Hall on September 14th, MP Jeremy Corbyn declared:

"London's transport problems cannot be solved by building more and more roads to make life a little easier for the majority of commuters who travel into the centre by car.

"The only solution is to develop and improve public transport, put freight on the railways and to protect our city environment.

"I find it appalling that anyone could seriously think of destroying an area of open space to build a toll road to allow wealthy communters to travel faster through our communities.

"We have to declare our total opposition to this madness, protect our environment, and campaign for a transport system that does not subjugate the needs of the majority to the wealth of a few."

ILEA STEWARD VICTIMISED

Support needed for Tony Marriott

Urgent action is needed by *Briefing* supporters in Inner London Labour Parties to put maximum possible pressure on ILEA members to secure the reinstatement of sacked ILEA NALGO shop steward Tony Marriott, who was based at Stepney Green Careers Office in Tower Hamlets.

Deirdre Wood, ILEA member for Greenwich and Staff Sub-Committee Chair, has capitulated in the face of ILEA managers' threats to resign if Tony is reinstated.

If Tony is to be reinstated, trade unionists must pursue the matter with determination, chasing up ILEA elected members who do not follow instructions from their GCs.

By Christine Fraser

A good example is John O'Malley, of Vauxhall, who has apparently decided that if Deirdre Wood decides to sack a shop steward without prior hearing or subsequent appeal, let alone reference to ACAS guidelines, then that's good enough for him — and for his CLP, too, despite his GC instruction to fight for Tony's reinstatement.

Make sure your elected members agree to put it to the ILEA Staff Sub-Committee, or the Labour Group.

NALGO has now agreed a national policy of full support for Tony's reinstatement. But remember, despite the pressure from NALGO branches all over the country, your efforts are essential. Wood, and of course Fletcher, must learn that it is not the role of the Labour Party to attack working people's organisations or their representatives.

CAMDEN

"Back to the 19th Century" or "The Parable of the Philanthropist and the Pot of Gold which Disappeared"

Imagine a bourgeois philanthropist[1] whose charitable work is dependent on a legacy[2].

The interest from the legacy is suddenly curtailed and the legacy itself is threatened[3]. Mortified, the philanthropist goes into a decline.

The recipients of the charity[4] suggest joining forces with the philanthropist to effect both a defence and a cure[5]; but the philanthropist curses them for daring to suppose there might be common cause.

The charitable work is undermined and the legacy rescinded. The philanthropist shoots himself, at least 33 times.

Everyone agrees what has happened is a scandal. A workhouse for the undeserving poor is erected in memory of the dead philanthropist. Neil Kinnock[7] officiates at the opening ceremony.

1. Camden Council, richest Labour Authority in the land.
2. The rates.
3. Ratecapping!
4. Honest working class folk.
5. Fight Tory legislation!
6. 33 Camden Councillors have consistently voted for racist policies and cuts in jobs and services.
7. A Peer of the Realm.

By *Steven Makepeace Taylor*

Camden Council

Council launches vicious victimisation

Camden Council suspended Alan Walters, NUPE steward and SWP member, on Monday September 12th and charged him with gross misconduct for misuse of paid leave.

Alan had taken a day off under the Council's dependency agreement to look after his son as the nursery was closed for the day.

Between shopping and going to the zoo, he took his son along with other Camden kids to lobby the Town Hall against increases in nursery charges and cuts in opening hours.

Alan's victimisation provoked a walk out by his own section.

By Fred Leplat
Somers Town Labour Party

Camden Council backed down and reinstated Alan when the NUPE Stewards Committee — which had been co-operating with the cuts — supported the Boiler Section by occupying Council offices and called a mass meeting to discuss strike action.

When Alan was reinstated the Council stated that an inquiry would be conducted to see whether any charges could be brought.

After scraping around for evidence to frame Alan in order to sack him, they are now summoning him to a hearing when allegations will be put... that he broke, in the course of his work, the Council's code of practice on asbestos!

This victimisation is part of an attempt by the Labour Group to pave the way for the next round of cuts and co-operation with the government.

Opposition to this attack has come not just from Council unions but also from Labour Party wards, protesting at the obvious attempt to sack a militant steward.

Tenant



In Lambeth the Government is proposing to take two estates — Angell Town and Loughborough — from Council control and turn them into Housing Action Trusts (HATs).

Dora Boatemah - Chair, Angell Town and Loughborough Estates Joint Action Committee

The Angell Town and Loughborough Estates Joint Action Committee is fighting against this.

We feel that HATs are undemocratic, that tenants should be allowed to vote on whether the estates become HATs (even in the Housing Bill's "pick-a-landlord" scheme the tenants are allowed to vote) — so far the government has denied us that right.

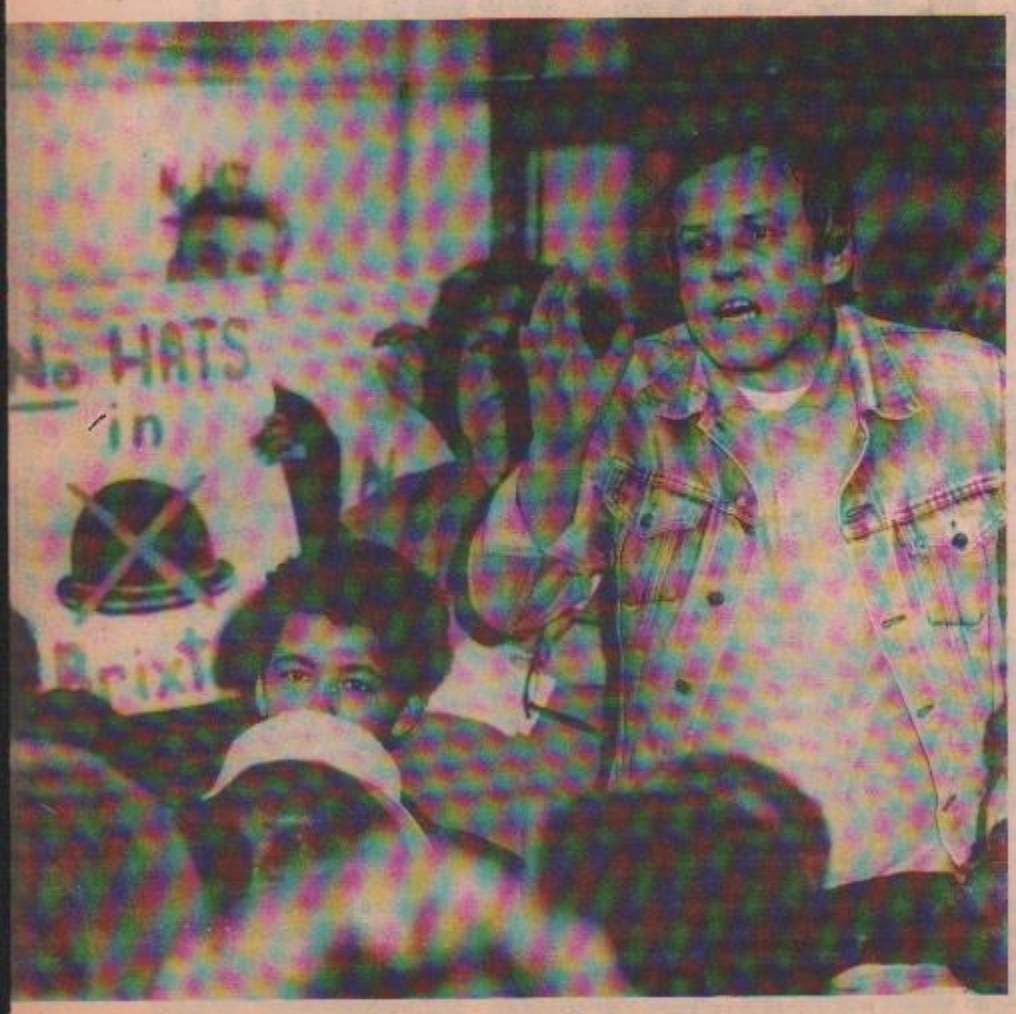
Our estates have the highest unemployment, the highest number of single parents and the highest number of what the government calls "problem families".

The majority of tenants are Black or from ethnic minorities. HATs have no responsibility for



Lambeth

s fightback against HATs



housing the homeless and we worry about the effect on the next generation.

The Government says the HAT will do our flats up, but who are they going to do the flats up for? Certainly not us. We all know what Thatcher means about paying attention to the inner cities.

Angell Town and Loughborough are in prime areas, ten minutes from the City and near the tube. House prices in Brixton are rising by £45 a day. A one bedroom flat in Brixton can cost anything from £68,000 upwards. They wil do the estate up to yuppify the area — they know they can make the money.

One reason they chose our estates is because of the number of voids and empty properties. They can shunt people from one block to another to empty the blocks and sell them off at market prices.

Under HATs rents will be forced up, tenants will be forced to pay for repairs and then they will have to pay the Poll Tax. Gradually tenants will be forced out of the flats because they cannot afford to pay the rent.

Because Lambeth Council has done such a bad job on maintenance and repairs and morale is low the Government thinks it can walk all over us and take our homes away without a fight.

Well, the tenants are fighting HATs. When Bill Woof, from the Government, came to Angell Town the tenants made their views clear.

Woof was surprised as he expected the tenants to think anything would be better than the Council and that we would accept anything he offered. We feel we are in a war zone and we will fight in any way we have to.

The campaign has adopted a policy of non-cooperation nationally. We will not talk to any consultants and we have asked Lambeth Council to instruct officers not to give consultants information.

We feel that Lambeth Council and the Labour Party should be supporting us and be seen to be supporting Angell Town and Loughborough in their fight against HATs and fighting a national campaign against the Housing Bill, making tenants aware of the problems they will face under it.

We have approached NALGO and UCATT and they have agreed to instruct their members not to cooperate. In the middle of September the unions addressed a meeting in Angell Town and promised their full support in terms of non-cooperation — they know their members jobs will be lost under the HAT.

We are asking the general public, whether they live in private or Council rented accommodation, to support our campaign against the HAT — it may be us now but who will be next?

HATs are part of this Government's policy to attack the working class — they are trying to move us out of the area . We are mostly Black and single parents — the yuppies would not want to buy flats with us living there.

They think we won't fight - but we will.



POLL TAX

Lambeth Campaign backs demo

Lambeth Against the Poll Tax has now been formed after a successful conference called by the Local Government Committee.

Over 50 delegates from wards, trade unions, the Communist Party (CP), and the Socialist Workers Party spent a Sunday afternoon discussing the Poll Tax.

It was unanimously agreed to form a campaign on the broadest possible basis, making no precondition on the various tactics which may be put forward by sections of the campaign, from mass petitioning to mass non-payment, from civic non-cooperation to civil disobedience.

Whilst not making it a precondition of support the Conference did agree a resolution from Norwood CLP which included calls for:

•a campaign of civil disobedience, including the returning of non-completed registration forms;

•support for those unable or unwilling to pay the tax;

•Lambeth Council to refuse to co-operate with the tax, and Council workers to refuse to implement it.

By Greg Tucker
Secretary,
Lambeth Local
Government
Committee

We also agreed unanimously to sponsor and build the march called for October 22nd from Brixton to Kennington Park.

The united approach is the only way we can be successful. Nevertheless the campaign contains many strands of opinion which were vigourously argued out at the conference.

Most odd was the LCC view that Poll Tax registration was a good thing because it would help draw up a better electoral register with more Labour voters on the list. Unfortunately the reverse has been the case in practice in Scotland.

At the same time the LCC, joined by the CP, argued that the Council should do nothing to impede the Poll Tax, except use different headed notepaper.

The Council has already started to employ Poll Tax officers, and there were other demands from the floor that the Council stop doing the Tories' dirty work.

Whilst being broad based, it is obvious that the Campaign will sooner or later have to confront the Council, particularly if it starts to take people to Court for refusing to register next year.

Maudsley Hospital

Preparing for further action

The industrial action taking place at the Maudsley Hospital was suspended last weekend.

This is not a defeat. The nurses decided to go back while morale was high.

By Brian
Harrisson
Lewisham Labour
Briefing

•They had not received sufficient support from the national union who failed to recognise the action and promote it nationally.

•The action did not spread to other hospitals as hoped; although there were limited stoppages elsewhere

The time was not right for nationwide action; so rather than let the strike peter out it was a wise move to return to work united and confident and consolidate the lessons learnt.

What has been gained? The Campaign has not ended. The Maudsley strikers wü l be going out again; there's a planned mass lobby of the Tory Conference; and links have been forged with other trade union and labour movement organisations.

The strike has proved that mass public support for the healthworkers is still strong. Most importantly, the 24 hour psychological barrier has been breached. This is the first time nurses have been on strike for longer than a week and been prepared for more.

If the healthworkers are prepared for further action, the labour movement must be ready to back them up. To build support across the labour movement resolutions must be passed at trade union and Labour Party branches and public meetings with COHSE speakers must be organised.

NHS support groups must be formed, where labour movementr odies can unite with health service users and workers to organise practical and political support for future industrial action.

For details of campaigning health organisations in your area, contact London Health Emergency, 335 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, 01-833 3020.

For details of the situation at the Maudsley contact the COHSE steward, Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, Camberwell, Southwark, London SE5; or phone 01 703 6333 and ask to bleep the duty COHSE steward.

Benn-Heffer Challenge in London

A Strong Left Showing

Early results from London CLPs show good results for Benn and Heffer.

Three CLPs which have finished conducting individual membership ballots have backed Tony Benn (Tottenham, Kensington, and Brent East).

Tottenham and Kensington backed Prescott over Heffer for Deputy Leader on second ballots and Brent East supported Heffer.

Ealing Southall (of which Kinnock is a member) voted for Benn and Heffer, as have Islington North, Hackney North, Deptford, Hornchurch, Eltham, and Woolwich.

In Hornsey & Wood Green, the final count, which includes postal ballots, is to be made on the eve of Conference. Results in branch ballots in this CLP, claimed by the LCC as a stronghold, indicate a victory for Tony Benn and a strong showing by Eric Heffer.

Tony Benn Wins in Tottenham!

A secret ballot of Labour Party members in the Tottenham Constituency has produced a narrow victory for Tony Benn, who beat Neil Kinnock by 105 votes to 101 votes.

In the Deputy Leadership contest, Eric Heffer led on the first ballot with 81 votes to John Prescott's 79 and Roy Hattersley's 42. Most of Hattersley's votes then transferred to Prescott, to give him victory over Heffer by 103 to 83.

Speaking for the local Benn-Heffer campaign, Mike Marqusee said, "Some months ago local Labour right-wingers publicly claimed there was little support for Tony Benn and predicted an easy victory for Kinnock. The ballot result show that they are out of touch with the local membership."

Islington Backs Benn/Heffer

Islington North CLP has voted overwhelmingly for the Benn-Heffer ticket using the "OMOV" formula.

Out of nearly 300 ballots cast, Benn polled 72.5% to Kinnock's 27.5%. Heffer won backing for Deputy Leader with 63% to Prescott's 25% and Hattersley's derisory 12%. The CLP also voted 71% to 29% in favour of Gavin Strang for Treasurer.

Val Veness, CLP Secretary, commented, "This result shows the lack of confidence our members have in the current leadership. It was also a triumph for practical organisation and demonstrates that ordinary Party members will respond to a real socialist alternative."

Psychiatry on trial



On Saturday, September 17th psychiatry went on public trial.

The London Alliance for Mental Health Action (LAMHA), an alliance of more than 20 mental health pressure groups, conducted the trial at Chatts Palace in Hackney.

Seventeen "mental patients" presented personal testimony, and a further 32 submitted written witness statements.

The charges levelled at the psychiatrist and drug company rep in the dock ranged from grievous bodily harm to defamation of character.

The audience of around 80, acting as the jury, unanimously found the defendants guilty as charged.

LAMHA spokesperson David Hill said "Resistance to psychiatry's abuses of human rights is growing from strength to strenth.

"It is finally becoming safer for people to speak out about the damage done to them after decades of any such criticisms being dismissed as a part of their 'illness'.

"We urge socialists to join us in the struggle to allow everyone to think and feel without fear of being labelled, drugged, and electrocuted."

LAMHA plans to continue its campaign against forced drugging, psychiatric electrocutions and psychiatry's efforts to extend further their legal powers.

Cable Street Beat

The musical arm of Anti-Fascist Action will be holding a gig on October 4th at the Electric Ballroom, Camden Town, London to celebrate the Battle of Cable Street with: The Men They Couldn't Hang, Attila the Stockbroker, and other acts.

Hackney Council smashes occupations

The Libraries are reclaimed!

At 3am on September 22nd, High Court sheriffs, police,and scab contractors hired by Hackney Council smashed their way into the three occupied libraries.

By Jim Thain
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

A similar attempt on September 9th had been foiled by the sheer number of occupiers mobilised.

This time the Council had organised a far stronger force and had managed to keep the eviction date secret.

Occupiers sleeping in the libraries were summarily evicted and were unable to retrieve all their belongings. The private contractors began their six hour task of boarding up the buildings immediately — no attempt was made to remove the books for distribution to other libraries.

Our photographer, taking pictures of the boarding up crew later, was told she would have her camera smashed. Such is the climate of violence Hackney Council nowadays fosters.

The occupiers quickly organised a rally at Hackney Town Hall.This was attended by library workers, Social Services and Information workers, NUPE members, local residents and activists.

The seafarers once more showed their solidarity. NALGO's promised strike action, however, failed to materialise, and its leadership has against been called into question.

NALGO bureaucrats had been overheard claiming it would be unreasonable to expect the membership to adhere to a branch policy which was two months old!

A NALGO mole further reveals that there are plans to axe six more libraries next year.

The Council's behaviour throughout the campaign has reminded many of their attack on the Stamford Hill squatters (many of whom became staunch supporters) earlier this year, when they resorted to using riot police.

The parallel between a Council which refuses to negotiate with or consult its workers and residents and then takes them to court and P&O's use of the courts against the NUS is also clear.

The only difference is that we expect this kind of behaviour from capitalists, who have only their own interest to consider. Hackney Council, on the other hand, has pledged to protect local working class people from cuts in jobs and services.

The smear tactics used against squatters were also echoed as Leisure Service Chair Tommy Sheppard and his cohorts systematically spread misinformation about the campaign through the local media.



PHOTO: Martine Stead

Time and again, Hackney Council has been exposed as hypocritical, undemocratic, bullying, and philistine; not an ally in the class struggle; not fellow socialists campaigning to promote access to information, culture and leisure facilities: but a grim collaborationist enemy determined to crush any working class initiative.

We denounce them.

•STOP PRESS. Within hours of Council-hired thugs boradingup Goldsmiths Row Library, new occupiers had reclaimed it and were ready to issue books.

Private contractors had failed to spot a simple way into the building. What took six hours to vandalise bureaucratically took a mere 45 minutes to restore to the people.

Summerford Grove Library has also been re-opened.

It is vital that the work rotas be maintained. Phone 729 7242 to arrange a couple of hours of practical support.

MARCH *and* RALLY

AXE *the* POLL TAX

Assemble: 12 noon
Brixton Oval
(opposite Lambeth Town Hall)
March to Kennington Park
Saturday

22 OCTOBER

speakers include:

John Fraser MP Stuart Holland MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Cllr Joan Twelves
Cllr Linda Bellos

sponsored by:

Lambeth Against the Poll Tax
London Against the Poll Tax
Lambeth Labour Local Government Committee
Vauxhall Labour Party
The Socialist Conference
Anti-Poll Tax Campaigns from:
Islington, Greenwich, Lewisham, Newham and Tower Hamlets

organised by:

South London Socialist Conference

BRITAIN IN IRELAND

'68 — '88

20 YEARS ON

RALLY AND MUSIC

SPEAKERS
BERNADETTE McALISKEY
MICHAEL FARRELL
BERNIE GRANT M.P.
RELATIVES OF THE BIRMINGHAM 6 AND GUILDFORD 4
LOCAL SPEAKERS

MUSIC
BEYOND THE PALE
SHEILAS
HAIRY MARYS

7.30 – 1.00AM
HARINGEY IRISH CENTRE
PRETORIA RD., OFF WHITE HART LA., TOTTENHAM, N17
FRIDAY 14th OCTOBER

ADMISSION: £3 WAGED
£1.50 UNWAGED

TICKETS: GREEN INK BOOKS
8, ARCHWAY MALL, N19
(Back of Archway Tube)