LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
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CAMDEN COUNCIL CANDIDATES:

LEFTWINGERS NEED NOT APPLY!

A number of Labour Councillors in Camden are threatened with surcharge.

Earlier this year, the Local Government Committee in Camden agreed to draw up a panel of prospective candidates in order to replace Labour members should they be disqualified.

Getting onto a panel of candidates is usually a straightforward business, unless you have campaigned or stood against the Party, or been guilty of financial misdealing.

A special meeting of the Local Government Committee on November 19th rejected two candidates by one vote: John White, nominated by Holborn & St Pancras; and Steve Taylor, nominated by Hampstead & Highgate.

Both are on the left of the Party. In a number of other cases,the voting was extremely close, and there was a solid block of 11 (out of 27) votes against anyone who was perceived as on the left.

No reason was given for rejecting the

By Camden Labour Briefing supporters

two Party members, but it was obvious that the right had been able to mobilise and convince their supporters that here was an opportunity to prevent even the possibility of left wingers becoming Councillors.

The voting had no basis in eligibility or otherwise. It was straightforward and political.

Hampstead & Highgate CLP agreed to appeal against the decision to reject Steven Taylor at their General Committee meeting. The decision to appeal was carried without one single person voting against, and it was believed that the Appeal would be a formality.

In the past, right wing candidates have been rejected by the Local Government Committee in Camden. They have always been reinstated by the Regional Executive.

The Appeal was heard at Walworth Road on November 27th by a panel comprising Steve Morgan, Tony McNulty, and George Wheatley.

No objection had been raised at the Panel meeting regarding Steven Taylor's suitability, and there was no reason given for the LGC's decision to reject his nomination.

Indeed, his suitability as a candidate was endorsed by letters of support from Hampstead & Highgate's two ILEA representatives, and Phil Turner, a former Leader of Camden Council and Hampstead & Highgate's Parliamentary candidate at the last General Election.

However, Martin Plaut, representing Camden LGC, argued that the correct procedures had been followed, and there were no grounds for reinstating Steve Taylor onto the panel.

He then produced a dossier of articles and statements written by Steve Taylor, claiming that since these were critical of the ruling Labour Group in Camden then Steve Taylor was guilty of bringing the Party into disrepute and not fit to be a candidate.

Continued back page

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

BRENT FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE

Extend the struggle!

The fight against Brent Council's cuts has shifted to support for the strike by staff in the Housing Needs Unit and building the rent strike against the £7 a week increase.

This follows the victory of Brent Social Workers' strike and the Council lobby on November 9th.

By Pete Firmin
Brent East CLP

On November 25th Housing Needs workers voted to go to arbitration over the issue of providing protective screens.

Some strikers are sceptical about the likely outcome of this exercise, but the vote was not surprising as they have been out for over two months and have been isolated since the Social Workers went back.

The strike itself is continuing while arbitration takes place, and rumours are circulating that the Council intends to remove screens from housing offices which already have them.

Activists on the estates have been busy building support for the rent strike and making links with housing workers.

Meanwhile the Housing Officer on one estate, South Kilburn, has taken it on himself to try and restrict their ability to organise.

Having told receptionists in the tower blocks that rent strike posters cannot be put up on communal notice boards, he is now telling receptionists to check leaflets to see if they are "detrimental to the interests of the Council" before allowing them to be distributed.

Brent Council's untrustworthiness has been shown again by developments since its decision to re-open Crawford Avenue respite centre was endorsed at the meeting on November 9th.

Despite agreeing to re-open for "a trial period" from December 1st, no attempt was made to take on staff or inform parents that it would be opening — in fact, officers were saying it would not.

Only pressure by campaigners through lobbies and the press forced the Council leadership to hold an urgent Policy and Resources Committee meeting on December 1st at which they instructed the officers to re-open the centre.

The excuse given for the inaction was that, although the Council had voted to re-open, it had not voted on financial resources. Only the vigilance of campaigners prevented this issue being forgotten.

Meanwhile, the battle within the Labour Party has been stepped up by the Labour Coordinating Committee. "Sleeping" members are being mobilised in Brent North to undermine those branches which have disassociated themselves from the Council.

In Brent East, the LCC have launched an attack on Ken Livingstone after he has began to ally himself with the campaign against the cuts, attempting to stop him speaking out.

Livingstone rightly refuses to be shackled and has challenged the right to put a motion of no confidence in him.

In other branches an influx of anti-cuts activists joining the Party is shifting the balance against the pro-cuts Councillors.

No end is in sight to Brent's crisis, with the government having just decided to "claw-back" a further £8.8 million in Rate Support Grant.

The Council leadership has made it clear that it will pass this on in the form of cuts or rent or rate increases.

The Conference called by Brent Fightback on Sunday, 11th December is an important opportunity for anti-cuts activists to prepare for ongoing and future battles.

The Conference is open to anti-cuts activists both in Brent and across London. We hope that activists from outside Brent will attend, both to show solidarity and draw out common lessons from the fight against the cuts which has gone on in many Boroughs.

BRENT FIGHTBACK

Widening the struggle

A Community and Labour Movement Conference

Open to all who want to fight back against cuts
Sunday December 11th, 1.00-5.00 pm
Anson Primary School, Anson Road, NW2
Workshops on:
Building the fightback in the community, the unions, education, housing, Brent's Finance
Invited speakers include:
Ken Livingstone MP, Paul Boateng MP, Cllr Kathy Fraser, Brent's Occupations and Strikes
Registration £5 organisations, £2 waged, 50p unwaged
For further information contact Brent Fightback, tel. 450 1436, c/o 64 Anson Road, NW2 6AD

WALTHAM

Black Counc

A long conflict over allegations of racism within Waltham Forest's ruling Labour Group has boiled over in the local Labour Party.

At the last Walthamstow GC, delegates from the Women's Section and others walked out after the meeting refused to consider motions addressing the key issues.

By Jacqueline Sheehy
Walthamstow CLP

Dissatisfaction among black Councillors goes back to shortly after Labour recaptured the Council in May 1986.

The appointments procedure for Council staff, particularly in education, has been a persistent sore spot.

There was a Manifesto commitment to bring the department in line with other services by centralising recruitment through the Personnel Department. A Principal Personnel Officer for Education was created.

But black Councillors were unhappy about the way the new post was advertised, with preconditions which virtually excluded black applicants, among others.

The black Councillors protested, and the post was readvertised in a new and different fashion. A black candidate was subsequently chosen on merit.

Then another senior education post was advertised — once again in such a way as to bar applicants who did not fit the traditional requirements.

The education officers seemed to assume that the applicants should already be heads or deputy heads.

Black Councillors felt insulted that the lessons about indirect discrimination seemed still not to have been learned. Black Councillors insisted on intervening to change the advert.

It was redrafted, and this time a number of black people and women applied for the job. Once again a black applicant was ultimately successful.

There was an obvious need to formalise the lessons from these incidents and force a reluctant Personnel Department to deal with this vital issue.

In the end, the Race Relations Committee produced guidelines on recruitment which were approved by full Council in April.

In July, with eight head teaching posts vacant, advertising for new recruits began. Two panels for two initial appointments were set up and two of the black Councillors were named to sit on them.

Lambeth La

LCC Leadersh

Lambeth Labour Group was pushed into further crisis at the beginning of December when Regional Officials were sent in to prop up the LCC Leadership.

Greg Tucker
Lambeth
Councillor

Since taking the decision to investigate ways to not co-operate with the Poll Tax the Group has been thrown into disarray.

The LCC leadership under Dick Sorabji has been busy trying to frighten Group into accepting legal advice that even to think about opposing the Poll Tax would lead to immediate surcharge.

When five leadership supporters called a special Council meeting to push through implementation, against Group policy, the scene was set for a stormy Group meeting.

So no-one was surprised when a Regional Official turned up. But the fact that he also happened to be a local Party member, a supporter of the LCC who was known to attend LCC caucuses (his right of course!), hardly inspired confidence in his impartiality.

And so it proved. Constantly interrupting Group members speaking from the floor, he tried to rule out any discussion on the actions of Group officers in breaking Group decisions.

Beginning by ruling out any immediate vote of no confidence, he panicked when presented with a notice of a motion for another meeting in three days time.

We had to watch as he scurried off to find a phone to get advice from his superiors. All they could think off was a new rule, invented for the evening, that all meetings had to have a week's notice.

LETTER

Larner replies

Dear *Briefing*,

In his letter to *Briefing* (issue no. 105) Tom Durkin avoided the political points made in my own contribution by making use of his own saying "if you've no case, abuse your opponent."

I would like to return to the point of the political role of the Trades Council in Brent, but first it is necessary to deal with some of the claims made by Tom on the redundancy of me and my colleague.

Firstly, my "threatening" letter to the management committee was a workers' report, pointing out that the claim made by comrade Durkin and some of his fellow Trades Council representatives (that the Unemployed Workers' Centre was not covered by employment legislation and therefore had no statutory obligations to its employees) was incorrect.

A substantial part of the proposed payment was made up of statutory redundancy, outstanding salary and holiday pay. Regardless of whether or not Brent Council agreed to fund the payments, the UWC as our employer had a legal obligation to make these payments.

Tom Durkin, on the many occasions he has made verbal and written accussations against me and my colleague, has failed to grasp this point although, as he admits in his letter, the majority of the committee members did accept their responsibilities as employers and we were paid with cheques signed by committee members nominated as signatories by the majority of members.

Tom's statement that the bank and Brent Council have initiated proceedings for fraud is simply untrue.

To return to the point, Tom Durkin's attacks on the UWC workers are not simply based on personal animosity, but formed part of a campaign to undermine the UWC.

For a long time, the only credibility Brent Trades Council has maintained has been through the Local Economy Resource Unit and the Unemployed Workers' Centre.

The intention of the controlling Stalinist clique was that the two organisations service and resource the Trades Council, with LERU producing its occasional copies of Brent Trade Union News, and the UWC providing a source of free labour to do the donkey work with only a few, carefully "screened" unemployed people allowed to take an active part.

In spite of constant attempts by a handful of Trades Council representatives to undermine the workers and circumvent the management committee, the UWC continued to fulfil the aims stated in it's constitution: to provide a centre where unemployed people could meet, take part in activities and organise politically.

The crisis point was reached with the decision of Brent Council to become involved with Employment Training.

With the UWC's refusal to reverse it's opposition to the scheme, Tom and his colleagues reached the conclusion that for LERU to continue to be associated with the centre presented a threat to the Trades Council at a time when the Local Authority was cutting its funding to the voluntary sector.

Without the resources provided by LERU, the Trades Council, having no political base in the Borough, would cease to function.

As an act of self-protection, a handful of Trades Council delegates decided to jettison the UWC. Frustrated by the management committee's decision to try to carry on, those delegates locked out workers, volunteers and centre users.

Tom Durkin may make as many speeches as he likes on his involvement in the establishment of the Unemployed Workers' Centre. His action on the day the locks were changed and the doors boarded up display his true attitude.

Julie Larner

IRISH YEAR OF ACTION

Campaign takes off in North West London

After a succesful launch meeting attended by over 120 people, activists in Brent have held planning meetings to build the "Time to Go" Year of Action in North West London.

Local Trade Union branches, Labour Parties, Irish organisations and others are being written to, asking them to sponsor the Year of Action or to invite a speaker to their meetings.

Two further public meetings are already planned, one against the media ban on Sinn Fein on December 15th, and one a few days before the Bloody Sunday march on January 28th, which next year takes place locally from Kilburn to Harlesden.

It is hoped to get large delegations from local organisations on the march.

N.W.London Time to Go Committee can be contacted c/o Clare Moran, c/o Brent Irish Centre, 76 Salusbury Rd., London NW6.

Fight the broadcasting ban!

PUBLIC MEETING
Speakers:
Ken Livingstone MP
Kyran Connolly
(NUJ Executive, personal capacity)
Representatives from Sinn Fein and National Council of Civil Liberties
Brent Irish Centre, 76 Salisbury Road, London NW6
(Queen's Road tube)
Thursday December 15th, 8pm

Collets

Victory!

Fourteen sacked workers at Collets bookshop in Central London won a complete victory at the end of November when management caved in and conceded full reinstatement.

Management were clearly more worried about the critical effect the picket line was having on their Xmas trade than the rights and wrongs of a so-called left wing bookshop sacking its workers without notice.

M FOREST

cillors rebel

The black Councillors asked repeatedly for copies of job specifications, advertisements, and details of candidates.

A final request, made in writing, explained that without the appropriate information the Councillors would be unable to sit on the appointment panels. The two black Councillors received the required information less than 48 hours before the panels were to meet.

They were horrified when they saw the job specifications, which seemed to have ignored all the lessons of previous mistakes. They told the Chief Education Officer and the Chair of Education that they could not sit on the panels in these circumstances.

The Group leadership finally decided to postpone the appointments only on the morning of the interviews — with the candidates already assembled.

Local Tory Councillors rang Tory central office, who duly alerted friends in Fleet Street. Distorted and damaging stories soon appeared in the *Sun* and the *Mail*.

Despite some black Councillors' protests, Council officers then decided to proceed with the appointments, which were made without participation by the black Councillors.

Many of the black Councillors feel they can no longer stick up their hands in Council for policies that have no credibility in the black community.

Black Councillors met the LGC Executive, provided them with information, and urged them to investigate the matter. But the Executive decided to back the Labour Group officers and refused to address the issue.

The black Councillors concerned are now not taking part in the Labour Group.

Support for the black Councillors and concern over the handling of the issue is growing in the local Labour Parties and among black workers in the Borough.

Black Councillors feel that those responsible should be disciplined. Some Labour Party members are insisting that the Party and the Group officers take responsibility and issue a public statement on the matter. We cannot simply ignore the concerns of the black community.

A recent offer by the LGC Executive to set up an "independent arbiter" has been rejected as too little, too late by the black Councillors.

Confusion over the Council's implementation of equal opportunities policies is longstanding and has come to a head over the appointments question.

The Party cannot duck such a sensitive issue. The issue should be fully discussed at all levels of the Party and the concerns of the black community should be taken seriously.

bour Group

ip in Crisis

Attention then turned to the question of the Council meeting. Once again the LCC panicked, rather than attempt to get support for their actions. We had nearly an hour of points of order and challenges to the Chair (himself a right winger).

John Mann, using all his Stalinist training from NOLS, challenged the Chair at least eight times, over such important issues as whose amendments should be taken first.

They succeeded in talking out the meeting. This is hardly a great victory, given that this leaves us with existing policy not to co-operate with the Poll Tax.

The LCC are trying to hold onto power at any cost. They feel confident of Labour Party support nationally, despite the fact that their support locally is evaporating as their policies bring the Council to the point of collapse.

Their more rabid members were even threatening to hold onto office by using their control of the Council against any Labour Group decision.

Walworth Road may be wheeled in. But it is clear that the LCC flagship — capturing Lambeth from the "ultra-left" — is sinking fast.

LCC Chief Whip had to be told that it was going too far for the rest of the Right in Group to be seen to be voting on a Tory motion.

No qualms though on the third go, when the Tories voted with the Right for a Labour minority resolution giving the go-ahead to officers to go out to contract for a Poll Tax computer system and to advertise for senior Poll Tax posts.

Despite this setback the Lambeth campaign will continue to press for a non-cooperation strategy.

There are many hurdles yet for Council officers to surmount before they can impose the Poll Tax.

The Anti-Poll Tax councillors will now be talking with NALGO to work out how they can best coordinate their shared non-co-operation policies.

GREEN LIGHT TO POLL TAX

Following the Labour Group meeting, the next day saw the full Council meeting agree to give the green light to Council officers implementing the Poll Tax.

But it took three attempts before the Tories and the Right on Group united to get the measure through.

To their embarrassment, and the delight of Anti-Poll Tax campaigners in the balcony, the first attempt by the LCC to get through implementation was defeated by the Labour Group majority, even though the SLD voted with the LCC.

The second attempt, a resolution from the Tories, was lost, but only after the

WOOLWICH

Black community organises against racist attacks

On Sunday June 19th Ranvir Samra, a ten year old Asian boy from South East London, was forcibly kidnapped by a white man, dragged into a car and driven to Woolwich Police Station, for allegedly throwing a stone at the man's car.

By Mike Phipps
Woolwich CLP

The police interrogated the sobbing boy for 25 minutes before handing him back, terrified, to the stranger to drive him home. No attempt was made to contact his parents who were frantic at the child's four hour disappearance.

At a public meeting organised to mark the tenth anniversary of GACARA (Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks), the boy's mother spoke powerfully about her fight for justice.

GACARA is taking up the case as just the latest example of racist policing in Woolwich. It is still campaigning on behalf of Mr Kalahasti Rajah, who in 1984 suffered a broken collarbone while in police custody after he had been beaten unconscious in a racist street attack hours earlier.

Speakers from the Newham Monitoring Project and the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign pointed to the need for increased community self-organisation and direct action in the face of these escalating attacks, rather than reliance on the "professionals".

Labour Council race units were hopelessly ineffective, when the same Councils were making the kind of cuts that can only fuel racial violence.

Nationally too, the Labour Party, for all its hot air about social justice, has nothing to say about the frame-up of Winston Silcott and others at the hands of the police and courts.

The links between these attacks and the cases of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four were repeatedly emphasised. Now the campaign must be stepped up to make these cases a central issue in the broader labour movement.

PLAISTOW FOUR

On June 5th, East London police broke up an Asian christening party at 11.00pm and turned all the guests out, including those who had planned to stay overnight.

With 50 police surrounding the tower block, the guests, incuding young children and a pregnant woman, were forced to walk down 13 flights of stairs to police taunts on each floor.

Four guests who objected to the behaviour of the police, many of whom had their identity numbers covered, were arrested, dragged out, and racially and physically abused.

Local groups have documented hundreds of similar cases of racist policing in Newham. The case of the Plaistow Four comes up on January 25th.

Invite one of the Four to address your branch meeting, sign the petition, and send some money to the campaign for their acquittal. Further information: PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7.

Picket the Scrubs!

Squash the convictions!

The second report of the independent inquiry, chaired by Lord Gifford, into the disturbances on Broadwater Farm in October 1985 has now reported.

By Dave Palmer
Hornsey & Wood Green CLP

It has been given extensive coverage in the national media.

It is three years since the "events" surrounding the death of Mrs Jarrett and PC Blakelock.

The distance of time has allowed sections of the media to countenance the possibility of wrong convictions in the cases of those picked up in the wake of the Broadwater Farm events — notably in the case of those convicted of killing PC Blakelock.

The facts surrounding the post-Broadwater Farm "riot" convictions are now well documented. The convictions are largely based on suspects being held incommunicado and providing unsubstantiated confessions for the police.

The second Gifford Report reinforces Amnesty International's call for the Home Secretary to review the cases of all those convicted in the murder trial "with a view to the granting of a full pardon."

The case of the Tottenham Three has joined the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four convictions as a touchstone of the rottenness of the British judicial system.

In early December the Law Lords will decide whether the Tottenham Three will be given leave to appeal, already denied at a lower level.

In the wake of the appalling farce of the Birmingham Six retrial, and the Tory government's new rampant authoritarianism, it will be surprising if this is granted.

In order to sustain the campaign against the convictions, the families and supporters of the campaign to quash the convictions of Engin Raghip, Mark Braithwaite, and Winston Silcott are holding a picket at Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London where two of the three are held.

It is important that the fullest mobilisation is made to support the picket and all moves to bring the defence of democratic rights into the political mainstream.

END THE SILENCE!
FREE THE TOTTENHAM 3!

Picket Wormwood Scrubs Prison
Sunday December 11th, 7pm
(near East Acton tube; buses 7, 12, 52A, 72, 383)
Join us to give strength and comfort to the families of these young men, and to add your voice to the chorus calling for an end to silence, and freedom for the framed!
For more information contact the Defence Campaign: 01-885 3752

SOUTHWARK

Labour's day of shame

November 2nd was a day of shame for Southwark.

By Cllr Piers Corbyn
Southwark Twelve

It was the day when "anti-apartheid Southwark" allowed a South African boxer into its prime Leisure Centre, despite a huge demonstration.

The Labour Group subsequently voted "no confidence" in the Chief Whip, John McTernan, who had worked to defeat in full Council a motion by Leader Anne Matthews to appeal against the High Court judgement that the match go ahead.

At that point the London Regional Secretary intervened — not to congratulate Councillors for their principled stand — but to overrule their vote on procedural grounds.

This naked meddling by Region was met by a walk-out of 12 Councillors who are demanding London Region back the Group's decision to sack John McTernan, who has now resigned anyway.

Association of London Authorities
Lesbian and Gay Committee meeting
January 11th 1989
To discuss the role of Councils in a range of issues affecting lesbian and gay people. Likely topics include immigration, housing, health, education, funding.
Further details: 01 222 7799

ANC Fund-raising
New Year's Eve & Dinner Dance
Sat. Dec. 31st, 8pm-1am
Stoke Newington Town Hall
Stoke Newington Church Street, N16
£10/£5 (concessions)
Jointly organised by London Borough of Hackney & ANC
South African Heroes Day
Public Meeting
December 16th, 7.30pm
Friends House, Euston Road
(Euston tube)
Speakers include:
Billy Masetlha (ANC)
Ken Gill (General Secretary, MSF)
Shirley Mashiane

On By-elections and Tower Hamlets

Tony deserves better...

Amidst all the doom and gloom, the loss of Govan, the loss of the ILEA by-election in Bermondsey, there is yet a small flicker of hope.

Labour won the Tower Hamlets Council by-election, in Lansbury ward, on November 24th. There are now 25 Labour Councillors, set against 24 Liberals and one SLD who are grimly hanging on to power by the casting vote of the Mayor.

By Cllr Christine Shawcroft
Bow & Poplar CLP

Like the ILEA by-election, we were trying to win a seat back from the Liberals. But whereas the ILEA campaign bore all the hallmarks of the dead hand of the advertising agency, we fought on socialist principles, with a good class fighter as a candidate.

And, just to repeat, we won. Maybe we know something that the national (and London) Party doesn't?

As a helper at the elections in Bermondsey, Greenwich, and Kensington, I can see a terrible pattern to all of them. Similarly with the ILEA by-election. Although it's true that I was too busy in Lansbury to work in the ILEA contest in Bermondsey, I've seen leaflets.

And what leaflets they are! Incomprehensible graphs. "Tony deserves better." The latter had an adorable little boy on the front. So blond! So cute! So... *Aryan.*

Yet you had to search these leaflets carefully for any reference to the Labour Party, a dash of red — even a rose, for heaven's sake!

Similarly, in Kensington, leaflets were put out saying that the Poll Tax isn't a political issue. In Greenwich, we were told that Deirdre Wood *understands.* I can only assume that the hidden message was: don't worry, she's not a socialist — she's a psychiatrist.

Although the Greater London Labour Party expected us to win in Lansbury (proof, if it were still needed, that they don't have the faintest idea what is going on) it was a long, hard slog.

But we didn't duck issues. We didn't tell people they'd have to pay the Poll Tax. We didn't court yuppies. We didn't talk of partnership with the London Docklands Development Corporation.

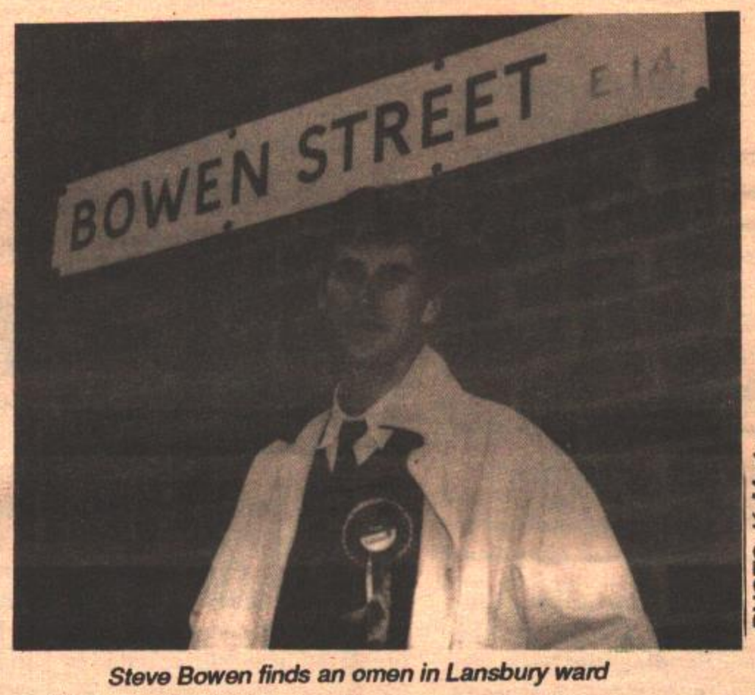


PHOTO: K. Morton

Steve Bowen finds an omen in Lansbury ward

We weren't afraid to talk about the working class in our leaflets, in case it was too left wing! (Unlike another Council by-election I could mention, where the candidate insisted on putting "ordinary people" which, he felt, was free from revolutionary overtones.)

We had all the usual problems: not enough helpers, not enough hours in the day, cutting Labour Councils providing material for Liberal Focus leaflets, etc.

But we also had a hard working and committed candidate (now Councillor Bowen), and a core of workers who've been through many Council and Parliamentary elections, here and farther afield, and have learned the lessons.

And that, it seems, the Party hierarchy can't, or wont't, do. Recently Neil Kinnock was berating those who don't want to pay the price of victory. What victory?

We know more about victory than he does; we can tell him about the price. When will he be prepared to pay it? Poor Tony. He deserves better.

Labour Briefing
and
Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine

Public Meeting

"One year of the Intifada: report from inside the Uprising"

Guest Speaker:
Bashir al-Khairi
First deportee from the Intifada; participant in last PNC

plus

Speaker from the Israeli Protest Movement

Friday December 16th. 7.30-9.30pm
Admission £1 (50p unwaged)

Haringey Civic Centre,
Wood Green High Road
Wood Green tube

Haringey Labour Briefing New Year Social

11 Springfield Road, N15
Tottenham Hale tube
£3 (waged); £1 (unwaged)
50p reduction on admission if you bring an unwanted Xmas present for:
Unwanted Xmas Present Auction
December 31st; 9pm-late/(early!)
•Disco •Booze •Raffle •Fun
Tickets: 801 6041

Camden Councillors

Continued from front page

Plaut had no authority to produce this dossier. It had not been agreed by either the LGC, its Executive, or its Officers.

The Appeals Committee, after reading the dossier, said that the dossier had no bearing on the Appeal. They then proceeded to reject the Appeal on the grounds that since all the correct procedures had been followed, there was nothing they could do.

The implications of this decision are extremely far-reaching. In effect, it means that any Local Government Committee can reject any candidate on any grounds, and that, provided correct procedures have been followed, there is no right of appeal.

In political terms, it sets a precedent. It means that whichever political opinion is in the majority on a Local Government Committee, then that majority can reject all nominations which do not reflect their political tendency.

A further, worrying, question is: where did this dossier come from? It included material up to three years old.

Either someone decided recently to collate a dossier. If so, how was the research done to find such a collection of articles written and statements and petitions signed by Steve Taylor?

Was the research done by an individual; or was an information collecting agency involved, one which has been collecting information and is prepared to supply it to (necessarily right wing) Labour Party sources?

The alternative possibility is that

- **someone decided three years ago to begin collecting a dossier, on the off chance it may one day be useful to have a dossier against Steven Taylor.**

However the dossier relating to Steven Taylor was prepared, it cannot be an isolated case. It seems that the only possible conclusion is that someone, somewhere is collecting material on left wing Labour Party members and is prepared to supply it to right wing Labour Party members.

How many articles are clipped each week, from *Briefing* or anywhere else, by whom, and how many left wingers this involves is anyone's guess.

There are two provisos that the Region appear to have given to their decision. The first is that the panel of candidates was for by-elections and not full Council elections.

In other words, there would be some, unspecified, right of appeal had the nominations been for the 1990 London-wide elections.

And secondly, there is nothing to prevent Steven Taylor's name being resubmitted by his CLP. Obviously, this will happen, but the politics of Camden have been completely distorted by his rejection from the panel.

Over the past year, the Local Government Committee has been hijacked by the hard right who are in a majority on the Holborn & St Pancras GC. Against opposition, they are able to force through not only their policies and candidates,they are also able to delegate only their own supporters onto the LGC.

Indeed, whenever a Holborn delegate has voted against the right on the LGC, they have been immediately dismissed as a delegate.

Camden LGC has become a franking machine for the right. Steven Taylor and John White (whose appeal has yet to be heard) are victims of this machine. The failure to uphold an appeal under these circumstances signals not merely a victory for New Realism but an entirely new reality.

STATEMENT

The following extracts are taken from Steven Taylor's statement to Camden branches.

Dear Comrades,

I September of this year I was nominated by Hampstead & Highgate CLP to be included on the panel of candidates for local government elections.

My nomination to the panel was rejected by 13 votes to 14.

No reason was given for rejecting my nomination and no objections were raised regarding my suitability for the panel.

In October Hampstead & Highgate CLP decided to appeal against this decision to the Party Region. This decision was made without one single member of the General Committee voting against.

The Appeal was lost on the grounds that the Local Government Committee had followed the correct procedures and that, given this, there was nothing that the Region could do to overturn the decision.

I am intending to resubmit my application, and I am asking that Party members, especially in Holborn & St Pancras support my nomination for three reasons:

1. I believe that whatever position in political spectrum a Party member occupies — I am on the left — they should be allowed to put themselves forward for consideration as candidates.

2. That the choice of candidates, provided they meet the criteria of eligibility, should be left to individual Branches and not censored by the Local Government Committee.

3. That branches should be allowed a choice that reflects the entire political spectrum and not just a narrowly defined section of Party views.

I believe that the decision made by the Local Government Committee is an act of political censorship and should be overturned.

No reason was given by the Local Government Committee for rejecting my nomination, but the fact that the Chair of the LGC produced at the Appeal a dossier of articles that I had either written or signed makes it abundantly clear that my rejection was entirely on political grounds.

The dossier, which was produced without any authorisation by the Local Government Committee, its Executive or its Officers, was a selection of articles that I had written over the past three years, petitions to which I had put my name, or statements which had my endorsement.

The Appeals Committee rejected the dossier, but it was a perfect illustration of why my nomination had been rejected.

I am not asking to be made a Councillor. I am merely requesting that candidates with left of centre views should be allowed onto the panel for consideration as candidates.