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MESSAGE FROM A LONDON TUBE DRIVER:

TUBES, BUSES, BR... ALL OUT!



It is never a good idea to believe the *Evening Standard*, especially when it reports industrial disputes.

The *Standard's* claim that London Underground Limited (LUL) had offered its drivers £30 a week and two weeks extra holiday, was wrong.

LUL has conceded *nothing*. The unofficial action by drivers has simply forced them to lay their cards on the table earlier than planned.

By PM Grains London Tube Driver

In response to the drivers' claim for £6.43 per hour with *no* strings, LUL has revealed its productivity package for train staff. This includes:

•10% reduction in jobs;
•loss of shift differential payments;
•no extra payment for weekends and bank holidays;
•up to 30 minutes unpaid overtime when running late (which happens about twice a day where signalling has been modernised);
•compulsory paid overtime of 1 hour 21 minutes;
•compulsory re-qualification at least once every three years;
•monthly payment (thus losing many clerical jobs);
•flexible rostering;
•loss of travelling time when picking up a train somewhere other than your own depot;
•loss of time to prepare and inspect trains for service;
•part-time train staff;
•restrictions on transfers to other locations;
•loss of seniority as a criterion for promotion;
•a new grievance procedure which attempts to bypass the unions.

There is no additional two weeks holiday. They have simply re-classified as "holiday" two weeks "banked rest days".

LUL is not making a special case of the train staff. This plan fits into their overall cost-cutting and "efficiency" drive, which has little to do with actually running an efficient service.

All grades and sectors are under attack, and the 7-1 YES vote in the last NUR ballot proves that the members understand this.

The unofficial action by drivers and guards will continue into next month, when a re-assessment of tactics will take place at mass meetings. Train staff recognise that things will move quickly.

Management may well try to impose its package and demand new individual contracts of employment. As almost no one would sign, this would result in a virtual lock-out.

Alternatively, LUL may attempt to buy off the drivers in order to divide staff and undermine NUR action.

The best way to ensure victory for all is co-ordinated action by all, whatever their grades, official or otherwise. At the moment ASLEF seem to be reluctant to ballot their members (about half the train staff are ASLEF members).

It would be suicide for drivers to allow themselves to be split off and isolated from the rest of the workforce. If drivers fight a separate battle and conclude a separate peace while everyone else falls, they will be losers in the long run and LUL management knows it.

UPDATE: After having an overwhelmingly victorious ballot overturned by one Mr. Justice Simon Brown on May 5th, the NUR returned to court on May 10th with additional evidence, only to be faced with... Mr. Justice Simon Brown. Needless to say, the NUR didn't get very far.

Nor did they make any progress with LUL when they returned for further talks. The Executive Committee then decided to re-ballot the membership. The result should be announced roughly the same time as that of the BR ballot. Another resounding YES is expected.

LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER!

Local Government

Camden Labour Group

The worm turns?

In a dramatic and largely unpredicted vote at the Camden Labour Group AGM on 8th May, the hard right were virtually wiped out in the contests for leadership positions and Committee Chairs.

LCC councillors and their allies were thrown out as Chairs of Housing, Grants, and staff. The right's challenge to the leadership and other positions collapsed, and by the end of the meeting, the LCC and their supporters weren't even bothering to put themselves forward.

Councillors Hulme, Smyth and Wakeham were the most notable casualties, although the right did hang onto the Group Chair.

What makes the result startling is the fact that less than a month ago the Labour Group were taking disciplinary action against the left-wing Manifesto Councillors because they had refused to endorse either rent increases or the cuts budget.

A number of these very councillors are now Committee Chairs and hold key positions within the Group and the Council.

The shift in allegiance by members of the Council leadership probably owes as much to exasperation at the antics of the right-wing as any change of political direction on their own part.

By Steven Taylor
Hampstead & Highgate CLP (personal capacity)

The right have adopted an openly confrontational attitude towards industrial relations and have seemed to relish implementing the cuts. In addition, their attitude towards the leadership has tended towards the dismissive.

The price of their arrogance has been a refusal of other cuts councillors to continue to back them. The results of the AGM were largely unpredicted because there had been no policy change on the part of the Group.

There have been no statements or initiatives that indicate that the more "moderate" cuts councillors are about to change their strategy of compliance with central government.

The marked shift towards the left probably owes as much to the right's incompetence as to the left's ability to mobilise support for a policy of resistance to central government.

The fact remains however, that the surviving members of the Council leadership are now dependent on the left not only for their legitimacy — the left failed, mistakenly I believe, to run anti-cuts candidates for either leader or deputy, and only six councillors abstained — but also for their ability to manage the Council in the twelve months leading up to Poll Tax, the impact of the Housing Act, privatisation, and the run-up to the local government elections in 1990.

It will be a measure of the left's political strength to see how much progress it can make in getting other members of the Group to adopt a strategy which offers an alternative to compliance.

Lewisham

No democracy left for Labour Group

Following a year of threats, suspensions, and finally abandoning the policy of allowing Party members to attend Labour Group meetings, the Lewisham Labour Group has out-stripped its usual hypocrisy by scrapping the "electoral college" for the annual election of the Council leadership and Chairs of Committees.

This electoral system gave the local Labour Party — in the form of the Borough Local Government Committee, representing all three Lewisham consistuencies — an equal say to the councillors in the crucial Group elections.

This was a hard-won democratic demand, pioneered through the local *Party and Group* by many who have subsequently been elected as councillors.

When challenged on this about-face we are told by councillors that they haven't changed their views, and of course, *they* want the Party to have a vote, but they've been told by the NEC that this rule is unconstitutional.

How convenient that it just happens to suit their own political priorities to disenfranchise the Party when time and time again — in Town Hall industrial disputes, ovet the Town Hall extension, and on implementation of the 1986 manifesto — they have been shown to be at odds with the majority of local Party members.

By Lesley Lee
Lewisham East CLP

In fact, the electoral college has always been against Party rules, a fact made clear by none other than Martyn (now Councillor) Day writing in *Lewisham Labour Briefing* in 1984.

As he said at the time, it was known that the meeting would be contrary to Party rules, "but the Group has however agreed to a recommendation that the meeting should go ahead regardless of the NEC's decision and then it will be up to the Group to ratify the decisions made."

Of course, this same situation of a joint BLGC/Group vote being followed by a "legitimate" Group-only meeting to ratify the elections could have continued this year.

Finally, Council selections this autumn will give Party members the chance to choose new councillors who see themselves as part of the Labour Party and not above it in any way.

East London Dockers Support Group
PUBLIC MEETING
Support the Dockers
Weds. 7th June, 8.00pm
Davenant Centre, Whitechapel Road E1
Whitechapel Tube
(turn right, then 2 mins walk)
Speakers from Tilbury Docks plus other struggles

Rushdie Meetin



An open meeting on the Rushdie affair, organised by Haringey Labour Briefing, attracted some 85 (mostly black) members of the public.

Entitled "Defend Salman Rushdie: Socialism, Free Speech, and Anti-Racism", the meeting was marked by serious and vigorous debate.

Most of those present agreed that the meeting had helped untangle the confusions which have bedevilled (and paralysed) the left on this question.

The meeting was ably chaired by Narendra Makanji who in his opening remarks lambasted "the humbug of the British government" and reminded the audience that the struggle for a secular state owed little to Western liberalism and a great deal to anti-imperialist movements for whom it was an essential part of building unity against the oppressor.

A spokesperson from the Campaign Against Repression in Iran said that the Rushdie Affair was nothing new to those who had followed events in Iran.

He described how some Muslims in Britain, in the absence of an effective means of expressing their grievances (due not least to failure of the labour movement) had fallen prey to the manoeuvres of the fundamentalists, who can only offer reactionary alternatives to Western values.

By MARK SEATON

For example, they object to the commercialisation of sex and the exploitation of



Jatendra Verma at the Haringey meeting

Gita Sahga

Haringey

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Haringey meeting *PHOTOS: Leesa Herbert*

women's bodies in the West (as do socialists) but want to replace it with a return to authoritarian repression.

Genuine anti-imperialism, the CARI speaker pointed out, should not be confused with the "anti-Westernism" of the Khomeini government. He noted that the current confinement of Rushdie was a big victory for the fundamentalists and warned, "give them an inch and they'll take a mile."

Gita Sahgal of Southall Black Sisters (SBS) insisted that women would not allow their lives and loyalties to be defined by self-appointed community leaders. SBS was founded ten years ago in the struggle against racism, and to prosecute that struggle women needed to be united, not divided, according to religion.

She spoke of the battles that had been waged against representatives of *all* religions to set up women's refuges and described how black women are fighting off both fundamentalist kidnapping raids and local authority attempts to send victims back into the families they have fled.

The drive towards separate religious schools and indeed the granting of privileges to any and all religions whould only help to push women back into the home.

Jatendra Verma of Tara Arts said he had been appalled by the insidiousness of the racist coverage of the Rushdie Affair in the media and the uselessness of the Labour Party's response.

He said that the complacent liberalism of Hugo Young and Fay Weldon was the mirror-image of Shabir's fundamentalism and that both racists and fundamentalists falsely presented the black community as a monolith.

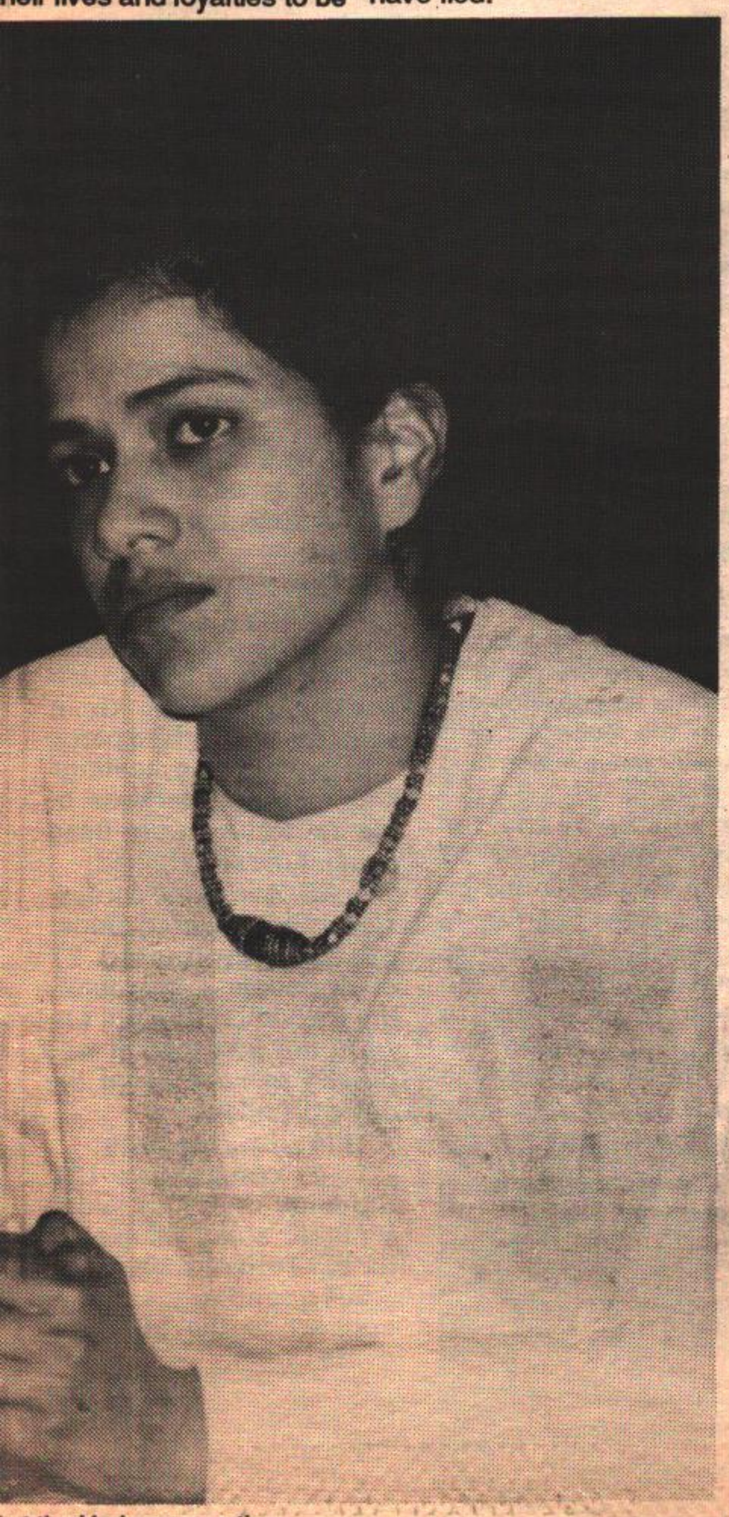
Remarks from the platform were followed by an engrossing and disciplined discussion from the floor, in which several local fundamentalists (all men) participated.

They attempted to exploit the hypocrisy of Western racism but were answered by vigorous interventions from black women rebutting their claims to speak for the whole community.

The depth of concern displayed at this meeting shows that a socialist intervention in this on-going crisis in both necessary and possible. The formation of Voices for Salman Rushdie (see national *Briefing* p.5), invloving many of the participants in the Haringey meeting, is a major step forward.

Briefing groups in other areas should consider organising public discussions on the themes raised by the Rushdie Affair.

If you need help in arranging speakers, get in touch with Voices for Salman Rushdie *via* the *Briefing* office.



at the Haringey meeting

Stop "Blood & Honour"

Nazis gather in central London

Anti-Fascist Action has issued the following call:

On Saturday 27th May a large gig has been arranged by the neo-Nazi group; "Blood & Honour", with six English bands and one French. It is ticket only and 1200 Nazis are expected to attend.

The location of the venue has been kept secret but fascists travelling to the gig have been told to assemble between 5-6pm at Speakers Corner to be given directions.

We intend to take over their assembly point and disrupt this arrangement, and at the very least prevent some of them getting to the gig. We invite all political groups and individuals who claim to be anti-fascists to support this action.

This is much more than a gig; it is a major international event with Nazis coming from all over Europe and America. It represents the biggest neo-Nazi gathering in this country for many years.

Recent fascist gains in elections in Germany, France, and Austria ("Blood & Honour" actually supply some factions with fascist propaganda which is banned in their own countries) and an estimated 70,000 race attacks in Britain last year prove that the complacancy of the "ignore them and they'll go away" brigade is completely and utterly wrong.

Assemble at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park (Marble Arch tube) on Saturday May 27th at 4.00pm.

If you have any useful information we would like to hear from you. Telephone 01-552 7412.

Tubewatch

It's a gas

With all the controversy over safety on the tube, you'd think London Underground management would respond instantly to hazardous situations. Not so is seems in the case of leaking gas.

Tubewatch reports that a fractured sewer pipe at Hyde Park Corner station was not attended to for at least two weeks. The sewerpipe, which ran underneath the station foreman's office, immediately attracted attention through the emission of sewer (methane) gas.

Works order for the repair of the faulty pipe were submitted on the 1st and 3rd February but the repair work had still not been carried out a full 14 days later, when the matter was raised at a Finsbury Park NUR branch meeting.

In other words, no remedial action was taken to deal with this potentially dangerous situation until it was raised formally at a local trade union meeting!

Camden Year of Action on Ireland

Breaking through the lies

On Tuesday, May 9th, a packed meeting of over 60 people at West End Sidings Community Centre in Kilburn heard relatives of the Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 describe the sufferings endured by the prisoners since their arrest in 1974.

The meeting was called by the Camden Year of Action on Ireland and was supported by Camden IBRG, Camden Time To Go Campaign, and Camden Troops Out Movement.

Opening the meeting, Kilburn Labour Councillor Angie Birtill stated that the groups who had united to organise the meeting shared a common belief that Britain had no right to be in Ireland and that the enforced partition and continuing occupation of the Six Counties had brought nothing but tragedy.

"The purpose of meetings such as tonight's is to expose the injustices that have occured directly as a result of Britain's occupation of the North-east counties of Ireland and to break through the censorship and lies that are continually spewn out to people living in Britain."

Lily Hill then gave the meeting a moving account of the circumstances in which her son Paul, one of the Guildford 4, was arrested and tried by "British Justice".

She described in detail the hateful trial by media of both the Birmingham 6 and the Guildford 4, and the brutal treatment meted out to them during their 15 years of imprisonment. Only the courage of her son kept her going.

"Every minute of every day my thoughts are with my son," she said "and it is only hope which keeps us going."

A lively discussion followed and it was agreed that as many people as possible should attend the Court of Appeal hearing on the Guildford 4 scheduled for October 9th this year.

It was also resolved that Camden Year of Action should add their support to those who were demanding that the Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 campaigns be represented at the London Irish Festival this year.

South London Year of Action on Ireland DAYSCHOOL

Ireland:
20 Years After the Civil Rights Marches
820 Years After British Invasion
Saturday June 10th
Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane, Brixton
10.00am - 5.00pm

Speakers: Mary Mason (TOM) on the solidarity struggle Geoff Bell on James Connolly: Lessons for Today Workshops led by Pat Finnegan (Colonialism and Emigration), NALGO activist (Solidarity work in the unions), Diarmuid Brentnach (Politics of Irish culture)

Plus: Two short plays and evening Social with Irish music. Details from SLYAI, c/o Lewisham Labour Club, Lime Grove, SE13.

POLL TAX ROUND-UP

Don't Collect! Don't Pay!

How we can beat the Poll Tax

A recent conference of twelve local anti-Poll Tax campaigns in South London launched the South London Anti-Poll Tax Federation (SLAPT).

This decision was taken after may of the groups found themselves excluded from London Against the Poll Tax (LAPT). SLAPT is open to *anyone* campaigning against the tax.

But the only way the Poll Tax can be stopped is through a mass campaign by trade unions, tenants and community groups, in which trade unionists refuse to collect the tax and residents refuse to pay. This means breaking the law, and risking fines, sequestration of union funds, and even inmprisonment.

For Labour Councils, the Poll Tax represents an impossible dilemma: maintain services by setting a high Tax and collecting it ruthlessly, or cut vital local services to lower the Tax. There is no *legal* escape from this dilemma.

Although council officers have legal responsibility for implementing the Poll Tax, councillors have to provide sufficient extra money on top of that given by the government to make implementation possible.

The new left leadership in Lambeth is committed to breaking the law by refusing to grant any further funding than has already been agreed. This should be a demand on all Labour Councils.

In contrast, Southwark Council, in their enthusiasm for the Tax, sent registration forms out early in April, nearly two months before it had to. Like many other Councils, they have spent over #1 million on special accomodation for the Poll Tax officers.

By Gary Ostrolenk Southwark Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax

The cuts that will follow introduction of the Poll Tax give council unions no choice but to fight. Refuse to participate in or to service implementation! Refuse to divulge information on residents for the Register!

Any discipline of workers who follow this policy must be answered by industrial action. Difficult discussions with workers already employed to collect the Tax must be undertaken.

Councils now have the unprecedented right to seize the Tax at source from wages and benefits. All unions should boycott any such confiscation, and commit themselves to industrial action if employers deduct the Tax or discipline workers for the boycott.

You may now be feeling the pinch from inflation, rent rises, and interest rates. Wait till you get your Poll Tax bill! Many families will have to pay more than four times their current rates.

How can we avoid it?

You can dodge registration and "go underground". But Councils can use lists of tenants, benefit claimants, and ratepayers, the Social Services register, and the electoral register to locate you. And if you slip through the net, you can't vote, claim benefits, get health care or education for your children or even live in secure housing.

The only option is to link up with other people refusing to pay. If enough of us don't pay the Tax, and join with the trade unions and Labour councils like Lambeth's in a mass campaign, the government will have no choice but to withdraw the Community Charge.

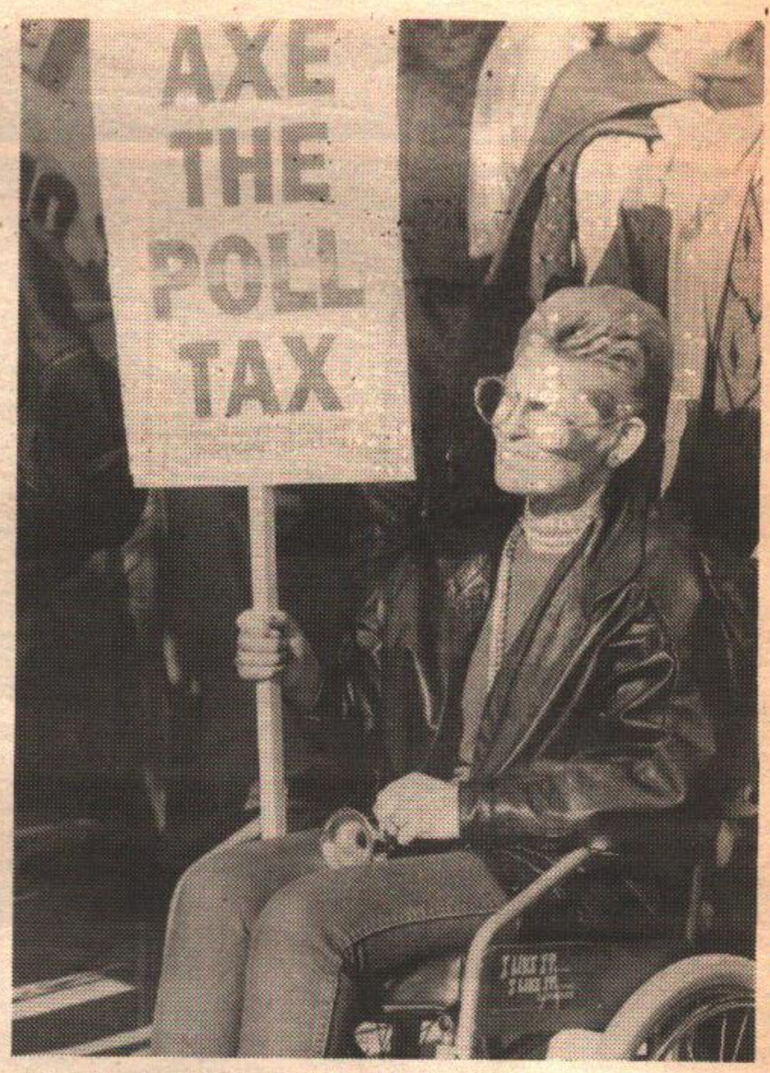
To build the campaign we are arguing for people to delay and obstruct registration, and to organise through their tenants associations or to form local anti-Poll Tax unions.

We are organising marches and rallies, collections or burnings of registration forms, and regular stalls across South London giving advice and talking to people about the Poll Tax.

Councils can take no action against you until they can prove you have received the form (by sending it registered post or by delivering it in person and you acknowledging receipt).

When you get your form, *bin it* or *burn it*. Don't sign for suspicious letters. If a Council officer knocks at your door, use your imagination! Suggestions have ranged from pretending you're the au pair to saying you're just the burglar, and "they're out".)

We can't beat the Poll Tax simply through delaying and obstructing registration. But we can build our campaigns, get invaluable publicity, and begin to organise people for the battle next year over payment. With the current upsurge in trade union militancy, we have a real chance of winning.



London Against the Poll Tax, March 1988

Lambeth

Left block spending

The Poll Tax is set to be a major test for the new left-centre Council administration in Lambeth as registration approaches and a vast Poll Tax bureaucracy is assembled.

So far the new leadership has jumped the first hurdles, pulping the leaflet prepared by the previous LCC-dominated administration, and saving about £10,000 earmarked for an advertising campaign advising people to register.

More significantly, it has refused to bow to officer pressure to call meetings to allocate £300,000 worth of "hi-tech" furniture (including hat stands) to the Council's Poll Tax Officer.

By John Tuite Lambeth Against the Poll Tax

When the officers used their special Poll Tax powers to call the meeting anyway, all they got was an indefinite postponement, and no hat stands.

The new Leader, Joan Twelves, hit the front page of the *South London Press* with a declaration that the Council wouldn't pursue people who cannot or will not pay the Tax.

Lambeth Against the Poll Tax launches its non-payment Charter on Tuesday May 23rd, the same day Registration Forms go out.

So far, so good. But let's hope left Councillors, whose powers over Poll Tax implementation are legally limited, don't fall into a convenient passivity.

Lambeth Against the Poll Tax called on the old LCC Leadership not to co-operate with the Poll Tax. There is every reason now to double, rather than reduce those calls. And every reason for people to join our local demonstration.

Lambeth Against the Poll Tax

Public Meeting

Tuesday May 30th 7.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall

"Everything you ever wanted to know about the Poll Tax but the government's afraid to tel you ..."

Demonstrate

Saturday June 3rd 12.00 noon Clapham Common March to Kennington Park followed by rally

Speakers include John Fraser MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Dora Boatemah, local trade unionists, Lothian Campaign Against the Poll Tax

NUS London Conference

Walk-over for "Unparalled Extremism"!

The NUS London Conference, held on May 6/7th, marked a sea change in the recent history of London student politics.

The left won the debates on loans, environment, the Silcott affair, transport, sexual abuse, and romped home in the elections. Louise Holloway was elected convenor by 45 to 16, and all the other officers' posts fell to us by similar margins.

We won three of the five executive officers, with the SWP and "Democratic Left" picking up one each.

By Alistair Chisholm NUS London General Secretary elect

The Broad Left has rescued NUS London. If we had not mobilised during the year the anti-loans campaign would have been left to isolated activists in individual colleges. We have promoted London-wide action and in the process begun to build a united, democratic left wing in the student movement.

The Conference was small. NUS London is traditionally underdeveloped with only two sabbaticals servicing 130 institutions from the large universities to the smallest FE colleges.

It was bizarre for the very people who have led NUS London during its five years of existance to try to blame the left for its inadequacies. They have consistenly failed to mobilise our best resource: the membership.

Some of the less sectarian right-wingers admitted that this year we will have a hard-working, campaigning executive. Last year many executive members did nothing or resigned!

For the last few months it has been *impossible* for them even to reach a quorum!

The Conference heard guest speakers from the AUT and the Campaign Against Repression in Iran, both of whom were well received.

Conference decided to defend the LSE decision on Winston Silcott, provoking much gnashing of teeth. The right were clearly prepared to let the Tories get away with using racism to push through attacks on student union autonomy.

Some delegates from Goldsmith's College and City Poly walked out, but the quality of debate was not affected. In the end, Conference was quite clear: to give an inch would only vindicate the lies of the gutter press.

The Broad Left is now preparing to put its policies into action. We are going to consolidate and develop our base in the colleges and prepare for mass action next term.

We will be ready for Baker's White Paper on loans, to fight tuition fee increases and the Poll Tax, to make sure student interests are not ignored with the break-up of ILEA, to launch a campaigning London National Union of Overseas Students, and to push the development and involvement of FE student unions.

Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign: Telephone: 01-885 3752. LSE SU: London School of Economics, Students Union, London WC2

Pass this motion in your union, Labour Party, student union, Labour Club, etc.

This ..... notes:

1. That Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite were convicted on the basis of no forensic or photographic evidence.

2. That Lord Gifford has called the verdict on the Tottenham 3 "The worst miscarriage of justice for ten years".

3. That the Tottenham 3 were scape-goated to cover up for the racist policing on Broadwater Farm and the killing of Cynthia Jarret which led to the uprising in October 1985.

4. That after the uprising:

a) many "suspects" were held incommunicado for at least 36 hours without access to a solicitor or any third party,

b) that bullying, beatings and extreme methods of mental torture were used against those detained,

c) that one of the confessions, volunteered under duress, implicated 27 other people — eventually the individual who put forward the information was proven to have spent the day at Windsor.

This ..... resolves:

1. To congratulate LSE Students Union for taking a public stand for justice for the Tottenham 3.

2. To send a message of support to the LSE Students Union.

3. To affiliate to the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.

4. To press-release the decisions of this motion.