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BRENT COUNCIL SAYS SINN FEIN ARE



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LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Euro-elections in London

Storm warnings ahead

Not by Terry Ashton

In London's low-key Euro-contest Labour emerged in better shape than many had predicted, taking two seats off the Tories, holding all those it had won in 1984, and generally increasing its share of the vote, though not by as much as in the rest of the country.

Labour now hold seven of London's ten Euro-seats. The results were marked by the collapse of the SLD-SDP right across the capital, with a poor showing even in areas with a strong centre party base in local government or Westminster.

In London South Inner, which includes Bermondsey, the centre party vote was down from 25,000 to 10,000. In London South East, which includes Greenwich and Woolich, the vote went down from 38,000 to a combined total of 19,000 (this was one of the few seats in London contested by both SLD and SDP). In London North East (which indludes Tower Hamlets), it went down from 17,000 to 9,000. Elsewhere, results were even more depressing for Ashdown and Owen.

As in the rest of the country the most startling result was the unprecedented turn-out for the Green Party which garnered just under 300,000 votes in the capital, in comparison with Labour's 780,000. Given the disparities in on-the-ground organisation, electoral experience, funding, publicity, etc., this is a staggering showing for the Greens which puts the Labour vote in perspective.

The turn-out in London was up by just under 5%, with the highest turn-out in London West (41%) where Labour's Michael Elliot increased his majority by 9000 votes and the centre party shrank from 36,000 to 11,000.

The lowest turn out (probably the lowest in Europe) was in London North East, where Alf Lomas' majority was actually cut by some 5000 votes, even though the total poll was up from 25.2% to 27.6%. In what should be a Labour heartland the Tory vote was up and the Greens pulled in 25,000 votes.

A good result for Carol Tongue in London East (her majority doubled to 27,000) was balanced by a bad result in London North West (which includes Brent) where both Tory and Labour candidates increased their vote by 5,000 over last time, enabling the Tory to maintain a majority of some 7,000, a slight decline in the Tories' share of the total vote.

Another disturbing result for Labour was in London Central, where Stan Newens total vote was up by less than 1%, even though the turn-out was up by 5%. The Labour majority was actually reduced in this constituency.

In London North Labour took the seat off the Tories with a 5,800 majority, a swing to Labour of 2.75%, well below the national average. The result in this highly marginal seat, which encompasses both Thatcher's own Finchley stronghold and service-cutting, rent and rate raising Haringey, is significant.

The centre vote plummetted from 31,000 to 8,900 and the Greens rocketed from 4,600 to 30,800. In some areas here the Labour vote was stronger than ever; in others it was well below usual.

Clearly, here as elsewhere in the capital, voters engaged in political muscial chairs, making it difficult to assess where the Labour vote was coming from or where it was going to.

Greater London Labour Party officers were notable by their absence from the Euro-campaign. No doubt they were all down in Vauxhall, taking up the slack left by local Party members who refused to work for Hattersley-henchperson Hoey.

Briefing readers will know only too well that Labour's relative success in London owed everything to mass hostility to the Tories, the demise of the centre vote, and what appears to have been a significant degree of Tory abstentionism.

However, this abstentionism was more than matched by Labour voters in the Party's inner-city strongholds. Here right wing Labur Councils, Vauxhall-style idiocies, and a rapidly corroding Party machinery, coupled with widespread indifference to the European Parliament, resulted in pitiful turn-outs.

The minority of local Party activists who tried to mobilise support during the Euro-campaign found a less than enthusiastic response from Party members of whatever political stripe. Reports from Ward Organisers in every part of London agree: whatever voters may have thought, Party members were overhwelmingly uninspired by Labour's campaign.

The vast majority of them did not even do so much as put up a poster. Hundreds of Wards failed to canvas a single voter. Dozens of CLPs likewise. This is clearly storing up trouble for the council elections next year and the general election soon after. For both of these contests a solid mobilisation of Party members and voters will be necessary.

Above all, the campaign was politically empty. Our literature was even less specific on policies than any of our opponents. Most Labour candidates made a point of not addressing local issues. Key London-wide issues like transport, roads proposals, planning cntroversies like King's Cross were kept out of the limelight.

And while most Labour candidates mentioned the hated Poll Tax in their leaflets, few if any aligned themselves with the capital's vigorous local anti-Poll Tax groups.

In London, certainly, this was an election the Tories lost rather than one that Labour won. While it shows that we have everything to fight for in next year's Council elections, it also contains a warning: in London Labour's base is fragile, its members passive, its activists alienated, its officers incompetent.

The one thing that is most definitely not in order is complacency.

In solidarity with th



Left to right: Steve French, Rudy Daley, Joan Twelves, Zheng Weibi

Mayor of Lambeth's China appeal

Lambeth Mayor, Councillor Rudy Daley, has launched an appeal for medical relief and other aid for China. All monies received will be channelled through the Red Cross.

Lambeth Leader Joan Twelves, said: "I feel that it is important to join with those in condemning the actions of the Chinese leadership in the killings, beatings and repression of the peaceful protest by students and workers".

Chief Whip, Steve French, said: "The brutality of what has happened starkly exposes the absence of moral or popular support for the ruling clique. It highlights the justice of the students' cause and shows there is widespread support for socialist democracy."

The Leader and Chief Whip were joined by Zheng Weibi of the Lambeth Chinese Association in raising the Town Hall flag to half mast.

Cheques should be made payable to the Mayor of Lambeth China Appeal at Lambeth Council, Town Hall, Brixton SW2.

London Regional Transport

QCs can't fight our corner!

By a London Underground worker

Wednesday, June 21st, the longest day of the year, will certainly have seemed much longer to anybody trying to travel.

And those brave enough to venture travel in the capital will certainly have needed good walking shoes. As we go to press, NUR members in both British Rail and the London Underground were preparing to come out on a one-day strike.

ASLEF drivers and guards on the Underground (LUL) were also planning to come out in support of their claim for a revised rate of pay.

This strike was called after the successful ballot of British Rail members and *two* successful ballots of LUL members.

Train staff on LUL were even treated to a *third* ballot when the union had to ballot them over their specific pay Operation (OPO).

ASLEF will also be balloting LUL members for this same claim.

The membership, especially the activists, are suffering from a new 1980s industrial diseases known as "ballot fatigue".

The symptoms include growing impatience, frustration and anger and tendencies towards mild paranoia as sufferers wonder whether they will ever have the opportunity to put up an official picket line.

As we go to press, it is still uncertain whether LUL or BR will attempt to get an injunction to stop the London Underground action.

Both have been suspiciously quiet. LUL waited until the last minute before it challenged the NUR's attempted May 8th strike, and no one will be surprised if they do the same this time.

Nor will anyone be surprised if their injunction is granted. In the present industrial climate we must assume that the employers will use the courts as an easy way to "settle" disputes.

The court's ruling against the dockers will certainly give LUL and BR management cause for optimism.

If a dock strike is deemed to be "against the public interest", how may the courts view a transport stoppage?

Perhaps the NUR should be prepared to get a ruling on whether underfunding of the railways and underground, reducing staff, and poor safety standards are "against the public interest".

In this context, it is important that the strike goes ahead, no matter what happens, and we must be prepared to carry on with further strikes.

The union leaderships must begin to respect the democracy of the membership over the rule of the courts.

If the members have expressed the wish for a strike, then in the eyes of the union it must be *official*. If unjust laws deem it *illegal*, then we must challenge those laws, not sneak around them.

Nothing will change if we simply bow down to the present law and leave our disputes in the hands of eloquent QC's.



Hands off our hospitals!

Tear up the NHS White Paper!

•NO to major hospitals "opting out"!

•NO to GP cash-limited budgets, allowing only £60 per head per year.

•NO to the bureaucratic anarchy of an "internal market", which will mean longer journeys for treatment and less local services.

•NO to "Hospital Trusts" and "business-style" Health Authorities with no local links, answerable to nobody, and responsible only for balancing the books.

•NO to more NHS privatisation and attacks on national pay, conditions, and union recognition.

•NO taxpayers' subsidies to private medicine!

Hands Off Our Hospitals is a campaign to link all those opposed to the government's White Paper on the NHS which threatens the very basis of our National Health Service.

Health workers, trade unions, pensioners' groups, community organisations, and political parties are welcome to affiliate — and help build local campaigns in every district across London.

Affiliations (minimum £20) can be made to HOOH, 335 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Letter

Dear *London Labour Briefing*,

As Dave Bangs' article makes clear (LLB No.115) the redevelopment of Kings Cross — an 8 million square foot "office city", a Channel Tunnel Terminal, and dual carriageways linking Kings Cross to Docklands and the suburbs — will be a disaster for Kings Cross and inner London.

The pathetic stance of the Council leadership, collaborating more with the developers than with community opposition groups — in the hope of squeezing some "community benefits" out of the developers — has succeeded only in getting the developers to add on 2 million square feet of offices!

For two full years the Council leadership has been under absolutely no pressure whatsoever from the local parties. Even at this late hour, this must change. The left must ensure that the parties' mandate to the Labour Group is to oppose and turn down the developers' application.

This may seem like a boring "planning issue", but the Labour Group's grovelling to the developers is inseperable from their pro-cuts position.

The redevelopment — if it goes ahead — will tear the heart out of London and Kings Cross. What has happened in Docklands will seem like a tea party compared to what Kings Cross will be like in five years' time.

Stop the Camden collaborators. They must be forced to reject the developers' proposals.

John Turkie
Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

e Chinese people



This composite resolution on China was passed by the NALGO Conference.

***Briefing* supporters may like to use this text as a basis for drafting model resolutions for their own unions, making sure to add in a commitment to affiliate and financially support the Chinese Solidarity Campaign (a good substitute for the Red Cross!).**

Contact the Chinese Solidarity Campaign (see centre pages) for latest details of where funds are required.

Conference deplores the massacre by armed troops on June 4th of thousands of innocent civilians engaged in peaceful demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, Peking and subsequent action by the army.

Conference expresses its revulsion at the army's indiscriminate and brutal use of force and condemns the Chinese government's decision to use the People's Liberation Army to attack its own citizens in an effort to suppress the reform movement and retain its own power.

Conference salutes the courage of those students, workers, and other citizens who tried so bravely to withstand the onslaught.

Conference note with mounting concern that the Chinese government is carrying out large scale arbitrary arrests of university students and leaders of the newly fledged autonomous trade unions.

Those arrested now face the threat of torture and execution without fair trial; we demand an immediate end to the purges and the release of those detained.

We applaud the creation of the pro-democracy, autonomous, trade union, and student organisations and support the mass movement against the Chinese government which has acted violently to protect its privileges and corrupt practices and prevented the proper development of democratic government in China.

Conference resolves:

•to protest in the strongest terms to the Chinese government and the Chinese ambassador in the UK and to call for an immediate end to the killing and bloodshed and the recall of all troops to barracks;

•to call upon the Chinese government to respond as quickly as possible to the wishes of the Chinese people by introducing genuine political reforms, including free elections, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press;

•to convey the terms of this motion to the TUC, Public Services International and Trade Unions International, with a request that appropriate action is taken by these organisations;

•to demand of the all-China Federation of Trade Unions that they publicly condemn the slaughter and repression carried out by the Chinese government;

•to call upon the British government to maintain the arms embargo, and to give firm assurances that all Chinese students, presently resident in Britain, are given a one year automatic extension of visa, and exceptional leave to remain or refugee status should they request it;

•to donate £5,000 to the International Red Cross, to be devoted to the provision of desperately needed medical aid;

•to donate £5,000 to the China Student Hardship Fund set up by the NUS;

•to call upon the British government to give all Hong Kong citizens the right of abode.

Conference notes with concern the potential impact of the Chinese government's action for the citizens of Hong Kong and supports the call for the immediate introduction of a fully democratic system of government in the territory.

Conference believes that negotiations on a Basic Law for Hong Kong should be suspended whilst the present regime remains in power in Peking.

When talks resume, Conference urges the British government to take immediate steps to ensure that the Chinese government abides fully by its obligations under the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and that respect for human rights is guaranteed by law.

Conference therefore instructs the NEC to promote publicly education and solidarity work involving districts and branches, particularly those NALGO members closely involved with the Chinese community and Chinese student organisations in Britain.

Ireland

Time to go, Show

By Billy Carron

Originally the organisers of the Time to Go Show had hoped to attract over 1000 people to the weekend of discussion and debate on Ireland.

It was probably attended by about half that number on the first day and by fewer still on the second.

In many ways it was a frustrating experience. Two many of the contributions to the discussion were simply restatements of the eternal truths by people who had been sent along by organisations to make up the numbers rather than for their specialist knowledge and wllingness to learn.

SWP comrades in particular frequently made the same speech three, four, or more times in some of the discussions. This was unecessary and suffocating.

It meant that when people did express genuine doubts or made outrageous comments such as "most people in Ireland don't want the British army to withdraw" from a *Socialist Organiser* supporter, they weren't replied to because too many people knew several days in advance what they were going to say.

These criticisms apart, it is to be hoped that something like the Time to Go show becomes a regular event. The discussions, such as they were, were largely free of rancour, and there was a tangible enthusiasm among everybody there for continuing united work for British withdrawal from Ireland.

If this is to continue all the individuals and currents involved are going to have to quickly sort out how they will work together, and in the case of the Time to Go campaign it will have to sort out a way in which its rank and file can participate in its decision-making.

Sinn Fein Councillors will tour England & Wales as part of the Troops Out Movement's contribution to the Year of Action on Ireland.

The purpose of their visit is to meet local community organisations, including Irish groups and black groups, women's groups, trade unionists, and Councillors to discuss a range of issues including housing, education, the media ban on Sinn Fein, and of course British withdrawal from Ireland.

Public meetings in the South of England are as follows:

Monday July 3rd:

7.30pm, Camden Irish Centre, Murray St, Camden Square.

8.00pm. Black Action meeting. Ring 609 1743 for details.

Tuesday July 4th:

7.30pm. Oxford

7.30pm. Brighton (unemployed centre).

Wednesday July 5th:

7.30pm. Norwich.

7.30pm. Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, Hackney E5.

Thursday July 6th:

7.30pm. Deptford Town Hall, Deptford.

7.30pm. Bristol.

Friday July 7th:

Tottenham Town Hall, Town Hall Approach Road, London N15. Organised by Troops Out Movement and Haringey Irish Working Group. Speakers: Bernie Grant MP (invited), Pat Reynolds (IBRG), Janet Clarke (Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign), and Troops Out. Followed by political theatre by Niall Eastwood and music by The Sheelaghs.

For further information contact the Mary Pearson, Tour Co-ordinator, Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

Irish Year of Action

Communities of resistance

A Sinn Fein councillor will address a rally entitled *Communities of Resistance* on 5th July at 7.30pm at Hackney Town Hall. This is part of a Sinn Fein national speaking tour organised by the Troops Out Movement to mark the 20th anniversary of British troops returning to the streets of Northern Ireland.

Other speakers at the rally are: Martha Osamor and speakers from the Guildford Four campaign (invited), Kurdish Workers Association (invited), Hackney Community Defence Association, and Irish in Britain Representation Group.

In Northern Ireland, the nationalist people face raids, plastic bullets, shoot-to-kill, and strip searching by the British army and its allies. They also face courts with no juries and are denied the right to silence.

The repression of nationalists in Northern Ireland is mirrored by the experience of Irish people and the black community in Britain. These communities are subjected to discrimination, harassment and unjust courts.

The Birmingham 6, Guildford 4, Winchester 3, and Broadwater 3 are but a few victims of such injustice. Political refugees fleeing repression abroad encounter institutionalised racism when they arrive.

The rally has been organised by the Hackney Irish Year of Action Committee. As an unfunded organisation, we depend on trade unions and community groups to support initiatives such as this rally. The estimated cost of the event is #400 and we would be grateful for any contributions.

Leaflets publicising the event are also available and we ask you to indicate how many leaflets you would like for distribution. Please make cheques payable to Hackney Irish Year of Action Group, c/o Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8.

Local government debate

Unity against the cuts

By John Calderon

My letter calling for a discussion on opposition to rate increases and crucial votes prompted two replies.

However, we are no nearer understanding why there was a "political collapse" on the morning of 30th March.

I would agree that the left should not make choices as to which cuts are worse for the working class (rate increases or financial cuts or redundancies) but should oppose all cuts consistently and seek to exploit the political crisis which massive cuts produce for Labour Councils, to drive out the right wing who make the cuts.

To quote the resolution *Briefing* supporters put on the budget crisis, proposed by Councillor Doble:

"point 5. That the first priority of this Labour Group is to transform the financial crisis of the Labour Council into a political crisis for the Tory Government. The immediate basis for this must be laid in the budget proposal for 1989/90 which must include a) No further cuts in services or jobs b) No rate rise c) No rent rise

... "the government has imposed so many constraints that Haringey Council has now become impossible to run" and "that therefore in line with our pledges to the electorate in 1986 and our duty to the working people of Haringey we intend to refuse to implement any further Tory cuts either in services or in the living standards of the people of Haringey, even if this leads to our surcharge and disqualification."

The fact that seven Councillors abstained on the final vote needs discussion and that was the actual intention of the letter.

It asked a number of crucial questions.

Firstly, do left Councillors abstain on a 57% rate increase and £6 million cuts? How does breaking their ward mandates affect their decisions; how are their decisions affected by what they have previously stated in public?

Secondly, is it the job of left Councillors to decide that it was wrong to vote against the Labour right's budget the night before, yet all right to abstain in the morning because the "alternative" was worse?

Thirdly, is it inconceivable, as Councillor Doble suggests, that the unions would not have fought against mass redundancies?

The same week that Councillor Doble attacks my judgement, NALGO walked out on strike against their Labour employers' manipulations of conditions of service — not the sign of a spent force, I would argue.

Housing Repairs workers have been taking industrial action over cuts in the Public Works Service since May 10th.

Fourthly, did the abstention of the seven Councillors weaken the ability of the Labour left to fight cuts, rent and rate increases, and redundancies?

To what degree did it confuse and demoralise the Council employees and service users.

Fifthly, wasn't the strategy of opposing the rent and rate increases not a means of opposing the Labour right's policy of making working class communities pay?

If we refused to allow through right wing budgets, but made the Labour right vote with the Tories, would that not reveal to Labour voters that right wing Labour has no solutions to the crisis of local government?

In concentrating on the letters' "tone, its inacuracies, and distortions", and saying that the letter was a "thinly disguised sectarian attack" on *Briefing* and "divisive", the response from the "Haringey *Labour Briefing*" group did not discuss the points I tried to raise in the letter as much as Councillor Doble did.

In my opinion there is a political difference between the seven Councillors who abstained and the four Councillors who voted against the 57% rate increase and £6 million cuts.

I would like to discuss these political differences further amongst comrades in *Briefing*.

Adams, McAlisky meeting cancelled

Brent Council extend Sinn Fein ban!

In the latest phase of its strategy for alienating every possible section of the community, Brent Council has cancelled the booking of a Time to Go Rally to be held at Brent Town Hall.

The Rally on June 30th, called "For British Withdrawal from Ireland: Time to Go" features Bernadette McAlliskey, Gerry Adams and Martha Osamoor as the main speakers with Ken Livingstone in the chair.

It has been sponsored by many local labour movement bodies (including Brent Trades Council and some Labour Party branches) as well as Irish organisations and has received messages of support from, amongst others, Benjamin Zephaniah, Donald Woods (exiled South African, comrade and biographer of Steve Biko), Sue Townsend (author), Ken Loach (film-maker), Andy de la Tour (alternative comedian), Peter Gabriel (singer), Adrian Mitchell (author) and Barbara Rogers (editor, Everywoman magazine).

The proposal to cancel the booking was raised up by Deputy Leader Pam Jordan at a badly attended Labour Group meeting on Sunday, June 11th just as people were leaving and was passed by 12 votes to 2.

It was then rushed through Policy and Resources Committee on Tuesday 13th and a press release was immediately issued. The first that the organisers, the North West London Time to Go Campaign, knew about the cancellationas when they were contacted by the press for a comment.

Rather than come out openly and say they object to Gerry Adams speaking on Council property, the Council leaders have attempted to hide behind three technical "reasons".

The first two, that the purpose of the booking was not made clear, and that the hirer's name does not appear on publicity material, are blatantly untrue as is the "rumour" that the booking was made by someone outside the borough. In fact a perfectly *bona fide* booking was made through the Council's entertainments department with no attempt to deceive anyone.

The third reason given is that the rally would be "divisive" and "inimical to the local community". This is, of course, a Catch 22 phrase — how do you prove something is (or isn't) divisive?

No doubt someone could be found to argue that most events which take place on Council property are "divisive" — not least Council meetings where services are cut and massive rent and rate increases are agreed.

In banning Sinn Fein from a commercial booking, Brent Council are in effectextending the Tories' media ban.

By Pete Firmin
Brent East CLP and North West London Time to Go Campaign

This despite the fact that the '86 Council manifesto contained a commitment to campaign against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and to meet the particular needs of the Irish community.

Two of the three CLPs in Brent have a long-standing policy of demanding British troops out of Ireland, sending resolutions on this to L.P. Conference and both Labour MPs, Paul Boateng and Ken Livingstone, are sponsors of the Time to Go Campaign.

Many of us believe that the long arm of Walworth Road is behind this move, with Brent's "New Realist" leadership merely doing its bidding. This now extends to preventing MPs from speaking even on independently-organised platforms.

North West London Time to Go Campaign is not taking this attack on democratic rights lying down. While we have ensured that the rally can go ahead on the planned date by booking an alternative venue (Conway Hall), we are also attempting to get the Council's decision overturned.

We are following the appeals procedure by writing to the Chief Executive, but he has already told us informally that he does not want to adjudicate on the issue as it was a political decision.

We are writing to all Brent Labour councillors objecting to the decision and calling on them to get it overturned, and left councillors are trying to requisition a special Council meeting to challenge the decision (which will be vigorously lobbied).

We are asking supporters elsewhere to send protest motions to Dorman Long, Leader, Brent Council, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex and to circulate our petition (below). Copies of resolutions or petitions should be sent to : North West London Time to Go Campaign, c/o Brent Irish Centre, 76 Salusbury Rd., London NW6.

Model petition/resolution:

No to censorship on Ireland!

We, the undersigned, condemn the decision of Brent Council to ban the rally for withdrawal on June 30th. We feel it is a sinister development for a Labour Council to ban a public meeting which was to have been addressed by two Members of Parliament and which sought to increase public debate about the crucial issue of Ireland.

Tickets for the rally (£2 waged, £1 unwaged) can be obtained from the above address or from Green Ink Bookshop, 8 Archway Mall (rear of Archway tube). The venue can be checked by ringing Green Ink bookshop on 263 4748.

Brent Fightback Social; Friday July 14th, 8 till late
Food, cheap drink, music at Brent Nalgo Social Club Tenterden Rd, off Preston Rd, Wembley (Preston Rd. Tube) £3.00 waged/£1.50 unwaged

North West London Time to Go Meeting

For British withdrawal — Time To Go!

SPEAKERS
Ken Livingstone
Gerry Adams
Bernadette McAliskey
Martha Osamor
plus music and special guest appearances
Friday June 30th 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
(nearest tube Holborn)
Tickets available Green Ink Bookshop(Archway Road) or at the door. £2.00 waged, £1.00 unwaged