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NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

POLICE RIOT

The Notting Hill Carnival came to a violent and bloody end — thanks to rioters in blue uniforms.

A trivial incident in the vicinity of All Saints Road provided the pretext for the deployment of riot shields and all that followed, including the clubbing of by-standers, mounted police charges, and random arrests.

Over 150 were arrested and 27 injured, one of whom was a police officer.

This followed a peaceful and notably crime-free canrival. In fact, for a street event on the scale of the Notting Hill Carnival, street crime has always been extremely low.



Police brutality is nothing new. London has seen perhaps more violent attacks by the police than any other major British city. After years of experience, only the most innocent observer could assume that this year's Notting Hill Carnival would be any different from all the other Carnivals of the recent past.

By Dave Holland
Chair, Kensington Labour Party

This year reported crime was well down on last year, which was itself said to be an exceptionally trouble-free year.

Of course, the military-style police rampage had nothing to do with crime or its prevention. It had everything to do with the racist attitudes of a police force which regards large numbers of black people on the streets as an affront and threat in itself.

Police contingency plans for clearing the whole area were well prepared and it only required the slightest incident to set them in motion.

It was no accident that friction began near the All Saints Road and that the first police action was to clear All Saints Road with clubs and riot shields.

The Road is the target of a determined police vendetta against black youth and independent black organisation, in particular the Mangrove Community Association.

Persistent harassment, show trials, and covert attempts to choke off public funding have been the features of this vendetta.

Only a few months ago, Frank Crichlow, a leading figure in the Mangrove, was acquitted of implausible charges of possession of hard drugs after 66 police officers from Notting Hill Police Station took the stand to testify against him.

Police provocation on the streets in the months leading up to Carnival has become a disgusting routine in the last few years.

This past summer, it kicked off with "Operation Condor", a major raid on the All Saints area ostensibly aimed at drug trafficking. No drugs were found but Jeb Johnson, a director of the Mangrove CA, was arrested on public order charges.

Earlier this year Chief Superintendent Pearman revealed the extent of police hostility to the Mangrove when he wrote to the Tory Leader of the local Council asking for his partners in what he called "the corporate enterprise" (a weirdly fascistic term) to help by eliminating funding for "divisive" organisations in the community.

He was particularly concerned about the sale of divisive T-shirts!

Pearman apparently believes that the police have the right to use political criteria in deciding which community groups and businesses deserve funding or planning permission and which do not.

Any tendency to criticise police conduct will consign you and your organisation to the latter category.

A determined campaign was waged to take the organisation of the Carnival out of the hands of people of whom the police

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Education in Crisis

Teacher shortages hit London schools



Teachers shortages have hit the headlines in recent weeks but the crisis has been brewing for a long time.

While Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have been recruiting in Europe, particularly West Germany and Holland, the Tories have been claiming everything is under control and talks of a crisis are "exaggerarted".

As we go to press, the full picture is unclear. While the DES put the figure for teacher vacancies at 1,000 nationwide, the NUT claim the true figure is twice as high.

ILEA has reported that it has 300 unfilled primary school vacancies while the Labour Party has issued a report claiming that some 1500 teachers resigned last summer.

Even if fewer children than expected end up being sent home this term, this remains a crisis that is far from resolved.

A large number of vacancies will have been covered by supply teachers which means fewer supply teachers will be available to stand in for teachers who are ill or away on courses.

During the pay campaign of 84-86 the number of supply teachers employed in schools increased substantially as teachers refused to cover for absent colleagues.

By Martin Allen

Since then, "cover" has become a contractual obligation and many LEAs have attempted to reduce the number of supply teachers.

Many are employed on a casual "daily" basis, with no long term security and open to massive abuse from increasingly desperate headteachers.

A feature of recent months has been the deliberate use of supply staff to "manage" unfilled vacancies. A teacher leaves, the post is allocated to a supply teacher and then written out of the timetable.

In the secondary sector, "job loss" of this nature is common.

Schools may be classfied as "overstaffed" in the humanities area yet at the same time unable to fill a science or maths position for several months.

There are also huge imbalances between the primary sector (where there are many more vacancies) and the secondary sector; between regions, inner city areas and suburbs, northern areas and the south east.

The Tories have attempted to impose a "market forces" argument to deal with these imbalances. They would like to see an end to national pay and conditions of service arrangements, and the introduction of regional pay bargaining.

They have encouraged LEAs and headteachers to use "allowances" — give to teachers with extra responsibilities — to attract shortage subject teachers.

In many secondary schools in London it is not uncommon to find almost an entire maths department on some form of responsibility allowance, so that heads can keep teachers at the school.

Meanwhile, the Humanities or English departments have mainly "main grade" teachers with the same workloads in practice as their maths colleagues.

The Tories also plan to introduce a "licenced teacher" sheme whereby individuals can come into teaching from other areas of employment at a lower wage than trainined teachers.

Thus the aim will be to attract craft teachers from industry to fill vacancies. This approach to widening the entrance routes into teaching will reduce overall wage levels.

Teacher shortage is the consequence of extensive attacks on the resources going into education and of the Education Reform Act.

This legislation has meant a huge increase in workloads without extra pay, attendance at more and more meetings and a general increase in levels of stress.

In the last two years, teachers have taken pay cuts, as pay awards have been below the rate of inflation.

The teaching unions still do not have their negotiating rights bak after Kenneth Baker abolished them "temporarily" following the defeat of the pay campaign.

The huge contradiction for the Tories is that their reforms are in jeopardy because of the shortage of resources.

There is talk within the NUT leadership of an "interim" pay claim.

Most classroom teachers get a 5.9% rise in April only to see a summer of strike action by NALGO members and an award of getting on to twice that for some town hall staff.

Activists within the union must turn this talk into reality and call for industrial action and solidarity with other workers. All attempts to introduce regional or "merit" payments must be opposed.

As socialists we should recognise the need to look at alternative ways for working class people to enter teaching (the teaching unions support an "all graduate profession").

This should not be at the expense of overall attacks on wage levels and the "Licenced teacher" schemes should be rejected, particularly by Labour Authorities.

Campaigns and action on salaries and the teacher shortage must also take place in the context of *opposition* to the ERA.

The clear acceptance of this legislation by the labour movement bureaucracies is reflected in the "Give us the tools and we'll finish the job" approach of much of the NUT leadership.

Kinnock and Straw follow this road with their uncritical responses to the content of the national curriculum and their virtual endorsement of LMS.

The dominance of New Realism within the labour movement has not bypassed education. It will lead us to a dead end and make the fight against the Tories and for a decent education for the working class much more difficult.

March ... Rally ... Cabaret

HANDS OFF OUR NHS!

Tear up the White Paper!

Saturday OCTOBER 21

March from St Thomas's Hospital (target for "opting out"):
ASSEMBLE: 4pm, Belvedere Rd, London SE1
MARCH: 4.30pm via Waterloo Bridge and Kingsway
RALLY: from 6pm, Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1
CABARET: 7.30pm, "Rip It Up!" - by Popular Productions (Sheffield) - "a fast-moving and hard-hitting entertainment on the NHS"

All welcome! Bring your banners! Tell the government what to do with their White Paper!

Camden Councillors

Punished for voting against the Poll Tax

On July 17th, Labour Councillors in Camden voted with the Tories to implement the Poll Tax.

The proposals brought before the meeting had been rushed through without either discussion or consultation.

There was no attempt to either explain or justify them and they were agreed without debate and without reference to the local Labour Parties, trade unons, or community organisations.

Two Labour Councillors voted against the proposals: Angela Birtill (Kilburn) and Adrian States (Swiss Cottage).

Their reasons for voting against the proposals were outlined in a statement made to full Council.

They argued that the Poll Tax was in direct contradiction to everything they promised when they were elected in 1986, that it was impossible to implement in a humane manner, and that its fundamental basis was iniquitous.

They also argued that the absence of consultation with local Labour Parties and the wider commmunity placed the decision in breach of Labour Party rules.

As a consequence of voting against the Poll Tax in Council Cllrs. Birtill and States will now face disciplinary charges.

Support Angie and Adrian!
Lobby the Labour Group!
Camden Town Hall
Monday September 25th, 6pm
Bring your banners!

A number of Labour Councillors are demanding their expulsion from the Labour Grup which would mean that neither would be able to stand as a Labour candidate in 1990.

Suspension from the Group would eliminate them from debate and decision-making and might still make them ineligible for selection as candidates.

If the Labour leadership in Camden spent half as much time opposing the Poll Tax as it has spent attacking alleged political enemies on its left, it might become possible for the people of Camden to regard their Labour Council as something more than a bailiff for the Tory government.

NALGO PAY STRIKE IN HARINGEY

Surprising success

After two years of retreat in the face of cuts and redundancies, the effective local conduct of the national strike — and its ultimate success — has given Haringey NALGO a much needed boost.

Over 80% of local members took part in all six days action. Despite the decline in the quality and quantity of service provided by the Council, the public remained remarkably sympathetic to the strike.

The driving force behind the strike was not those sectors of the union with a tradition of strong organisation (Housing and Social Services) but the Education Service, where the majority of the union's lowest paid members work.

In many services there was a tendency towards passivity; a willingness to strike was not matched by a commitment to picketing and campaigning work.

In contrast, and despite practical difficulties presented by a workforce dispersed in over 120 sites, NALGO members in schools organised the most effective and enthusiastic picketing and held daily mass meetings.

This service also benefited from solidarity from the Haringey Teachers Association, who raised over £3,000 for the Nalgo strike fund.

The all-out action by key workers was also effective and the branch was given a big boost by the decision of the telephonists to join NALGO and come out on strike.

Mistakes were made during the strike, although some of these can be put down to a lack of experience.

Many services and indeed the branch as a whole didn't see the necessity for regular and open meetings of both members and stewards.

For a number of reasons the Branch Executive did not function effectively in leading the strike and the one mass meeting was badly timed and poorly built.

By Glyn Rowlands
Haringey NALGO

We must now make efforts not to squander our improved organisation and morale.

Although it was a national strike about pay and conditions, it went to the heart of the major threat posed to Haringey NALGO members — the continued Tory-generated crisis of local government.

We have won one battle in a long war. The defence of national pay and conditions is linked to local cuts and redundancies, endless legal changes, and the Poll Tax. These issues must continue to provide the focus of activity by Haringey NALGO.

It is important to learn the right lessons from the strike. Clearly, building links with both service users and other trades unionists is vital.

For example, the solidarity shown by the NUT must now be built into joint action against the threat posed by Local Management of Schools.



However, it is also important that the lessons of the strike are not misinterpreted.

A combination of national rolling strike action and all-out strikes by key workers was, in this case, successful. Given the level of combativity within NALGO nationally this was the best way to start the action.

But if selective and rolling action of this type comes to be seen as the way to win all disputes and is counterposed to the union's ultimate weapon — the all-out strike — then dangerous illusions will be fostered which ultimately could lead the union to defeat.

For the moment we can enjoy that warm feeling, so rarely felt these days, of having won a victory and upset the government.

Everyone will have her or his own inspiring memories of the strike.

Mine is the quiet determination shown by NALGO members in the schools, epitomised by the example of one junior school which was completely closed on the first day of the strike by action of the NALGO member at the school.

Tenants fight back in Haringey

Winning a battle, but not the war

During the long summer any remaining faith that Haringey Council tenants had in the Labour Council wilted in the sun.

Haringey Labour Parties have abandoned their rent freeze policy with a vengence.

In the last two years rents have more than doubled. Basic services like repairs, cleaning, and caretaking have been eradicated. Any possibility of a transfer has disappeared.

Haringey Council continuously comes up against the laws which force landlords to keep their rented accommodation in a state of good repair and in a condition which does not damage tenants' health.

These laws were enacted by Tory governments to control slum landlords like Rachman and his ilk. Today, tenants' only protection is to use these laws against Labour Councils who have the cheek to describe themselves as socialist.

On March 6th the patronising "socialists" who run Haringey decided to increase rents by 60% over the the next year. In real terms this meant an average rise of £13 a week, in many cases much more.

These rent rises were agreed virtually in secret as Tenants Associations weren't notified in advance of the meeting which agreed to increase the rents.

By Scott Reeve
Hornsey and Wood Green CLP

The Labour Party was prevented from discussing the issue let alone voting on it. The Chair of Hornsey & Wood Green GC ruled out of order a motion from South Hornsey, hardly a stronghold of the hard left, against the rent rise.

Despite a majority of delegates voting against this ruling, the rent motion was still not discussed as a two thirds majority is required to overturn a Chair's ruling.

Tenants told the Council that the rent rise was unlawful, but the Council leadership preferred to believe their highly paid lawyers.

As a socialist and a long-standing member of the Labour Party it gave me no pleasure to take a Labour Council to a Tory court on a point of Tory law.

My case was that the Council broke the 1985 Housing Act by failing to give four weeks notice of the rent rise to Council tenants.

It also broke its tenancy agreement by failing to consult Tenants' Associations.

That did not matter to the Council as the tenancy agreement is a meaningless piece of paper, and anyway it treats tenants and their organisations as it treats the rest of the working class movement, at best with contempt and at worst with undisguised hostility.

After the tenants won their case Haringey Council stated that it would return the illegally increased rent money to all tenants. But not a single Council tenant has yet received a penny of this rent money.

They have, however, received not one but two letters saying that their rent will rise on August 28th and again on October 2nd by an average of £9 a week.

Local politicians from the LCC to the SWP have attacked Haringey Tenants Associations for resorting to bourgeois courts. They argue that we should be attacking the Tory government not a poor Labour Council like Haringey.

These comrades argue that Labour Councils are only implementing Tory policies.

That is true — but since World War 2 broke out 50 years ago this month it is timely to remind readers that the same pathetic excuse was offered by the likes of Quisling and Martial Petain — namely that they had no choice but to run their countries on behalf of the Nazis.

Collaboraters since the dawn of history have always pleaded that they can alleviate the worst attacks on their people by doing the oppressors' work for them.

The SWP have elevated a useful tactic into a socialist dogma. Along with some *Briefing* comrades, they insist that rent strikes are the *only* way Council tenants can defeat Tory attacks on Council housing.

If they were active in Haringey Tenants Associations, they would know that a Borough-wide rent strike is not on. Nearly half the Council tenants do not even see their own rent money as it is paid directly to the Council by the government.

Tenants who can't get Housing Benefit are putting in right-to-buy applications. They have no option since it is now becoming cheaper to buy your Council flat than to rent it.

The weakness of Haringey Tenants Associations, both organisationally and politically, also explains why a successful rent strike in Haringey is impossible.

Less than 20% of Haringey tenants have a TA which they can join. Most T.A.s exist only on paper. They are almost all dominated by white, conservative-minded tenants.

Given the high percentage of black and Labour-orientated Council tenants in the Borough this is appalling.

The LCC tried to chuck anti-cuts Councillors out of the Labour Group for having the nerve to move a motion against the rent rise.

Then they had the nerve to cite this very same motion in court as a reason why the rent rise was legal (it allegedly constituted sufficient notice to tenants). The cynicism of the Labour right knows no bounds.

Council rent rises and vicious cuts in the Housing Service cannot be seen in isolation.

The Tories, ably aided and abetted by so-called Labour Councils, are intent on destroying the concept of good quality housing at rents that working people can afford. Council housing is rapidly becoming slums for the poor on welfare hand outs.

Next year, Labour Councils will be taking tenants and others to the Tory courts for the great crime of not having enough money to pay the Poll Tax.

Similarly, Labour Councils are sitting idly by while the Tories privatize local hospitals and make good health care once again the preserve of the rich.

In the end, Council tenants and all workers will have to fight back in order to survive.

They will have to tear down the entire shaking edifice of British capitalism and in the process consign the Neil Kinnocks, Margaret Hodges, and Toby Harrises to the dustbin of history.

Looking back on the tube struggle



PHOTO: Martine Stead

"Action Stations" blown away

London Underground management has been defeated in its attempt to introduce wide-ranging and sinister productivity measures under the innocent sounding title of an "Action Stations" proposal.

In a cynical and obscene move it had attempted to harness the deep desire for change resulting from the King's Cross fire to attack the working conditions of those who deliver the transport service.

By a *Briefing* tubeworker

The railworkers were asked to carry the can for a disaster caused by cuts in staffing levels and maintenance programmes, the introduction of contract cleaners, and a failure to plan for the rapidly expanding numbers using the network.

The media painted a deliberately false picture of the railworker as lazy, time-serving, unkempt, incompetent, and the beneficiary of automatic promotion on the basis of "Buggin's Turn".

Under the "Action Stations" plans, the "seniority with suitability" principle for promotion and transfer was to be replaced by the principle of suitability alone.

In reality this meant the end of all job security for railworkers — whatever their grade — and handing over to first line managers — called "Centurions" — the right of hire and fire.

Since October 1988 the London Transport District Council of the NUR has campaigned steadily to defend conditions. By the time of the first ballot for all-out strike action the District Council had distributed over 100,000 leaflets.

After the union won the ballot by a seven-to-one majority, the courts declared the wording illegal. The union balloted again.

Those who had voted "yes" to support the union but would have balked at all-out action switched their votes, but the result was still a solid four-to-one in favour of action.

Eventually a series of one day strikes was co-ordinated with the action on British Rail and also with the official strike for LUL train crews' pay claim.

Within four weeks management had "formally abandoned" the Action Stations productivity proposals.

Superimposed on this struggle was the campaign for substantial additional payments first for drivers and later for guards to compensate for the introduction of one-person operation of trains.

In the background here were the rapid cuts in living standards felt by all workers due to the big interest rate increases.

In the foreground was the sectionalist grievance felt by drivers already doing OPO that drivers who still worked crew operated trains had since the previous autumn been getting the same rate of pay. ASLEF led this sectionalist drive.

But potential divisions were put aside when, after the first unofficial one day strike, management proposed a draft Train Crew Agreement which tore up all existing local and national agreements and introduced continental rostering, salaried pay, compulsory unpaid overtime, and local depot recruitment.

Unity between guards and drivers and other grades on the tube was cemented, even though this was by no means given expression at some of the earlier traincrew-only mass meetings.

The collective power harnessed by the mass meetings and the "Co-ordinators" unleashed 14 one-day strikes in the capital. All the productivity proposals were blown out of the water.

The tube workers showed their capacity and willingness to fight back after ten years of defeats.

The ballots showed they wanted a fighting lead from their unions not, as Jimmy Knapp claimed at a mass meeting, that they wanted to stay within the law.

It is the union bureaucrats, desperate to safeguard their material privileges from expropriation by the courts, who want to stay within the Tory laws.

The workers want to defend their conditions and living standards and they proved they will take unofficial action to do so.

Ten years of setbacks caused initial caution and the imposition by one section of tube drivers of the "one-day" strike tactic on the whole of the subsequent struggle.

As the strikes went on the tactic of limited action gave the impression of equally limited commitment from the membership. This wasn't at all the case but allowed the union full-timers and the media to suggest that it was.

The rank and file activists "conservatised" by ten years of setbacks and unsure of the membership felt this pressure acutely.

Once the annual pay issue had been settled in both LUL and BR and the Action Stations proposals buried, the desire to settle quickly while "the going was good" infected the negotiations at ACAS over the LUL traincrew pay rates.

Accountability to the members went out the window. NUR NEC member for LUL Martin Eady has subsequently been forced to resign, thus restoring accountability in the NUR at least.

The membership as a whole have gained enormous confidence in their strength and organisation — which they will need very soon when management comes back for a new productivity deal.

Equality for All

Developing Lesbian and Gay Equal Opportunities Policies in the 1990s

National Conference
Newcastle upon Tyne Civic Centre
September 27th/28th
Sponsored by ALA, LGIU, AMA, NALGWC.
For further information and registration forms contact:
Robin Hillward, AMA, 01-222 8100.

NOTTING HILL POLICE RIOT

Continued from front page

disapprove and hand it over to a business-orientated group.

Frank Crichlow's brother Victor was ousted as Chair of the Carnival Organising Committee and is now under much-publicised police investigation over the financial management of last year's Carnival. He was replaced by barrister Claire Holder.

Meanwhile, the Carnival's previously modest public funding has been slashed.

Local Tory Councils Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, never that keen on Carnival in the first place, have pushed hard for it to be organised on a commercial basis by "professionals".

This, of course, would mean an end to Carnival as a grass-roots expression of community self-organisation.

However, in the wake of the disgraceful events that marked the end of this year's Carnival, even new Chair Claire Holder confessed that she was "somewhat critical" of police tactics.

Jonathan Martin, an Assistant Supervisor with official stewards Mercury Security was more forthright. "They behaved like they were in South Africa," he said of the police.

Kensington Labour Party has demanded a public inquiry into policing in North Kensington and the suspension of Chief Superintendent Pearman.

In support of this demand Kensington and Chelsea Labour Group has requisitioned a special Council meeting on September 21st. You're welcome to attend the meeting in the public gallery of Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall, Horton Street, at 6:30pm.

March and rally against the Ban

October 19th is a year to the day since the Home Secretary imposed the ban on broadcasting interviews with members of Sinn Fein and other organisations in Northern Ireland.

It was the first use of these government powers to censor broadcasting since the last world war.

Censorship means people cannot be told the whole truth about what is going on in Northern Ireland. An elected MP and dozens of local Councillors cannot be properly reported.

October 19th

12 noon: assemble outside BBC, Portland Place, London W1 (Oxford Circus tube).
March to rally.
1pm: rally at Dominion Theatre (Tottenham Court Road tube).
2.30pm: Lobby of Parliament, St Stephen's Entrance, House of Commons.
Organised by the NUJ. Supported by BETA, ACTT, CPBF, Article 19

Free speech means free reporting!
Lift the ban!

Leaflets for the march and rally are available in bulk.
Phone Tim Gopsill, Editor of "The Journalist", 01-278 7916