LONDON LABOUR
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Sinn Fein comes to London

During October a group of Sinn Fein councillors will be meeting their London counterparts in London.

The councillors will be officially received, either by full council meetings, or by the Labour Group, in several London boroughs between October 20 and 25 (see panel).


Joanne O'Brien/Format

This will be the largest Sinn Fein councillors tour to date and is being organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland with the Troops Out Movement and Irish in Britain Representation Group. The councillors want to discuss common problems faced in local government, and the political issues Sinn Fein councillors have to face in Ireland, specifically the effects and implications of the Accord.

In particular, women councillors will be meeting with many women's committees, as there are no equivalent structures in Ireland and Sinn Fein would like to change this.

The tour is an important part of breaking down the wall of disinformation on Ireland. Already it has stimulated the usual anti-Irish attacks in the local press.

No one expects agreement on all the issues discussed, but the very process of discussion is to be welcomed and supported by all socialists and feminists in the London labour movement.

The labour left can be strengthened by continuing the course of discussing and exchanging experiences with representatives of the nationalist community, North and South.

At its 1982 Ard Fheis Sinn Fein overwhelmingly endorsed its electoral strategy as a success. Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein president, praised the role of their 98 elected councillors North and South. They have shown the SDLP in the North that they will defend the nationalist population, and exposed the rightly incensed by loyalists' bigotry. They are entering local community politics, dealing with a wide range of social issues such as housing, poverty and drugs.

At the same time Sinn Fein is the main nationalist organisation opposed to the Anglo-Irish Accord. It sees that the long term aim, and short term effect, of the Accord is to marginalise support for Sinn Fein and increase violent atacks on the nationalist community.

Sinn Fein is very interested in British politics. They are following the recomposition of the left, the prospect of a general election looming, and how political parties' attitude to Ireland fits in to this. Elected representatives have made numerous visits to Britain since Adams spoke at an LCI fringe meeting at 1982 Party conference.

By Steph Grant

There has been much support for, and positive response to, developing this dialogue, particularly in the London labour movement. The pace was set by Livingstone and the GLC, whose preparedness to speak out on the question of Ireland and talk to nationalist politicians has won a new generation of Irish voters to look with interest at the Labour Party.

The Greater London Labour Party has come into conflict with National Headquarters over attempts to further the process of discussion. The now infamous Composite "O" passed by London Region Conference which included a public meeting with a Sinn Fein representative, has been blocked by Walworth Road, and on the even of this year's conference, Neil Kinnock stated he did not want Sinn Fein within a thousand miles of the Labour Party. This is rather embarrassig for those Labour spokespersons on Northern Ireland who have now shared platforms with Sinn Fein!

Continued support for Irish self-determination among the base of the Labour Party is now tied to the fortunes of the Labour left. Conference has seen massive attacks on major policy issues, preparing the election machinery and the public iamage.

Labour's connivance and bi-partisanship over the Accord, the continuing presence of British troops in the North, repression of the nationalist community and tolerance of loyalist violence will only be challenged by ensuring that Ireland is still on the agenda — that we discuss Ireland: the implications of the Accord; strip searchng of women prisoners; withdrawal of the troops; repressive legislation.

Labour for withdrawal

Sinn Fein councillors will be officially received, either by full council meetings or by the Labour Group, in the following boroughs between October 20-25th
Haringey, Lambeth, Hillingdon, Ealing, Southwark, Hackney, Camden, Islington, Brent, Hammersmith.
Phone your local council for details!
If you can't support the tour any other way — or even if you can — come to the socials:
Wednesday October 22, Hackney Town Hall, 9.30pm
Final Event, Saturday October 25, Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road, Islington N7, 8pm.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Interview

Inside view of ILEA

Frances Morrell, Leader of ILEA, spoke to Nadine Finch.

Nadine: **Could you explain ILEA's position relating to the interim settlement of the teachers' dispute and cover?**
F. Morrell: During the curse of the summer ILEA Members Deirdre Wood and Barrie Stead were part of the National Management team which negotiated both the Coventry agreement and the Interim Cover Agreement. These are signed deals with National Unions, so obviously as a Labour Authority we feel ourselves bound by them.

Nadine: **Was there a timescale on the Interim Agreement?**
F. Morrell: Yes, for one term only, until Christmas.

Nadine: **Are you negotiating at this moment for after Christmas?**
F. Morrell: No. We need to concentrate on this term.

The government has a strategy relating to the teachers' dispute and I think we should understand it is to wait for the collapse of the Coventry agreement because of disunity amongst the signatories.

The danger there is that once the government deals nationally with the unions, then local authorities lose input over pay and conditions, and we may find what the government wants unacceptable.

So it is important to resolve these issues on our side quickly, so we can present a united front to Kenneth Baker.

Nadine: **What steps have been taken to resolve the issues?**
F Morrell: The local authorities negotiate together collectively nationally. I understand some London NUT members have reservations about the Coventry agreement — which is of serious concern. The first step is for these to be sorted out within the NUT.

Nadine: **In the summer when the Labour Group met there was a date in the first motion to start taking action against those refusing cover. This was amended out, so it was a fluid situation. Does it remain fluid, or are there moves to fix a date?**
F. Morrell: We said then that we wanted a negotiated settlement. That remains the position.

To explain the advice: the NUT took 2 authorities to court for deducting pay when teachers refused to do certain duties. It lost, and it didn't appeal.

That meant the Judge's reasoning became law: at a stroke, a teacher's contract was defined in law. This was a huge crisis since the basis of the unions' position was that the contract was not defined.

I think we need to understand that the change in the law made the Secretary of State much more powerful in the negotiations.

Nadine: **What do you think will happen towards the end of term? Do you think the interim settlement will be implemented, or will some people try and change the settlement?**
F. Morrell: I really would not feel able to predict that. I would hope the government will cough up the money and there would be a nationally agreed settlement on teachers' pay, acceptable particularly to London teachers. A settlement that isn't acceptable to London teachers is no good to us.

But there is some difficult sticky terrain ahead.

Nadine: **What do you think inner London teachers can do to bring the situation to an amicable ending?**
F. Morrell: I think it is not for me to advise them. I would simply hope that when we deal with the NUT nationally we are hearing the views of London teachers.

Nadine: **On other matters, I gather from our local member that a date has been set for ILEA to leave County Hall.**
F. Morrell: The date we have to be out bas been put back 6 months to March 31, 1986 — a climb-down by the LRB. We believe County Hall should be made over to us and shall firmly stick to this.

Nadine: **What kind of positive steps is ILEA taking in its authorities on the issue of Lesbian and Gay issues in schools?**
F. Morrell: Kenneth Baker's attack on the Gay Rights book must alert us to the nature of the Tory General Election campaign we'll see in London. I think we have to be quite plain that the government — particularly Baker — will try to isolate anbd persecute gays and lesbians in the most despicable way.

In ILEA, I advised the Group that under no circumstances were we to be driven off course. So we came out publicly in opposition to Baker, and a week later published an extensive list of maerial for heads and teachers and all students.

Nadine: **Are there any important other issues this term?**
F. Morrell: There's the budget. Kenneth Baker wants us to spend some £120m less than we need. Since 1979 we have managed to defend and maintain the Service, but I think all local authorities are finding it more difficult, and that includes us.

Nadine: **What about the press coverage of ILEA and the Irish Community?**
F. Morrell: Hilda Macafferty is an Irish teacher and a member for ILEA. She has played a leading role and chairs a working party to look at developing Irish studies. Hilda, Lorna Boreland (Chair of Equal Opportunities) and myself have met systematically with representatives from the Irish community. I hope the working party will give us some recomendations on making Irish studies a reality.

I am keen on that because obviously a large proportion of children in Inner London schools are Irish.

The key issue is that the Irish groups that have seen us differ about how they would like that taken forward. So I would see our position as a commitment in general terms to develop Irish studies, but wanting to hear the different views and reconcile how we do it.



Frances Morrell

Back in County Hall

By Keith Lichman

With the memory of our leader's *tour de force* at Conference impressed on my mind, it was hard to return to the dealings of the ILEA.

At County Hall, it is budget time. This year, the ILEA estimates that it will need about £100 million to run the service "without cuts". The Government has set the ratecap level at £950 million.

ILEA has now reached the stage where the creative accounting methods, such as capitalisation of revenue items, that got them through the past difficulties are now doing as much damage to the service through crippling interest charges as the actual cuts demanded by HMS Government. To make the bad news even worse, there appear to be no magic balances left to be raided.

ILEA's initial response, on September 22, was to go for *redetermination* in the hope that they can shave some millions off the deficit. The Government may well try to extract further concessions, such as staffing cuts, in exchange, but, some members argued, the special constitution of the new ILEA allows ministers to step in anyway, so they would not be giving the Government something it did not already have. Frances Morrell described going for redetermination as "the best thing in the worst ... situation." Whichever way up the omlette falls, there's plenty of reason for concern for ILEA employees.

One thing to watch out for is the Administrative Review agreed at the July Group. Stephen Benn, Chair of General Purposes, assured the Group that the review would not go to external consultants. Meanwhile, unbeknown to most Group members, but apparently known to Lincoln Crawford and Frances Morrell, moves were made to invite the "Audit Commission" to vet the efficiency of the ILEA!

When the whistle was blown some members were considerably perturbed. Further assurances were given that the move would be kept on ice until the next Group meeting.

The Audit Commission would inevitably decide that ILEA was inefficient and over-staffed. The leadership could then invoke its favourite tune, namely "It's my fiduciary duty, not yours," and in order to avoid surcharge and the deficit, jobs would have to go.

The Group on October 7 also discussed the "Knock the Teachers if they Won't Cover" saga; and co-options to the Education Committee. The basic question here was whether to co-opt non-Labour Party people because they were in "interest groups". The Group voted narrowly in favour, and the ILEA Liaison Sub-Committee will make its decision soon.

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Oh yes, and have your members consulted you about an increase in school meal prices? The decision will be made on or about October 14

How I became a Freeman of the City of London

By Paula Watson
City of London and Westminster South Labour Party and freeman of the City of London

The City of London Labour Party, determined to stir up the fat cats who run the City's Corporation, is putting up three candidates in the next local elections.

But to do this we needed three freemen. There were already two in the branch and I was selected to become the third. I needed two nominations from either sitting common councilmen or members of a livery company.

Since the fat cats are becoming a little sensitive on the issue of democracy, I was able to corner one of the less astute ones at a meeting of the Barbican residents and browbeat a nomination out of him.

Then, somewhat to my surprise, one of the branch revealed that he was a member of the Worshipful Company of Solicitors and was happy to be my second nominee.

Armed with my form, I duly trotted off to the Guildhall, where I was conducted to perjure myself by solemnly swearing to, 'Uphold our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth II' and to maintain the 'rights and franchises' of the City of London.

Warmly congratulated by the clerk, I was sent forth into the world as a newly fledged freeman (a woman can be a freeman but there are no freewomen) and possibly the only Briefing supporter who has the right to drive a flock of sheep over London Bridge!

London Letter

Dear Briefing,

I was somewhat surprised by the admissions contained in Peter Chowney's article on the housing situation in Hackney. While I warmly support his call for a London wide campaign to municipalise private rented accomodation, a couple of questions do spring to mind.

Why, if Comrade Chowney is prepared to defy the government on this issue, is he not also prepared to brave its wrath by spending the money necessary to improve and repair the council homes at present empty?

Secondly, if he and his colleagues are finding it so difficult to control their bureaucrats in order to get the empty council houses back into circulation, are they up to the task of implementing socialist policies at all?

I should be interested to hear the views of comrades in Hackney.

Paula Watson
(Westminster South CLP)

The forgotten borough.

On May 9 the new Liberal Administration in Tower Hamlets started to act on their 'mandate' to 'decentralise' Council services.

Rather a lot of inverted commas? Yes, but their mandate rests on a minority of votes cast, and their 'decentralisation' is anything but.

The old committees have been abolished, apart from Social Services (illegal to abolish it); the Housing Sub-Committee (to be abolished in due course); Policy and Resources (running the whole shooting match); and the new Decentralisation Committee (thinks it's running the shooting match).

By Christine Shawcroft
Leader, Tower Hamlets Labour Group

Seven new Neighbourhood Committees have been set up, three with a majority of Labour councillors. Their terms of reference include all the functions of the old service committees, divided into seven!

So the Isle of Dogs and Blackwall Neighbourhood Committee is responsible for housing, road lighting, street cleaning, entertainments licensing, the mortuary (I have several potential users in mind), in fact everything except the all-important issue of Canary Wharf, which comes under Policy and Resources Committee!

Our Local Government Committee after the elections had to decide our response. Should we go along with the Liberals' plans, disrupt them, or boycott the neighbourhood committees?

There was no support for accepting decentralisation and doing the Liberals' dirty work for them. (As this involves selling off estates and privatising services, that's just as well.)

The boycotting position, taken by a very few comrades, begs the question — what if the Liberals hadn't changed the committee structure, or had tinkered about with it slightly? Surely no-one would suggesting that in that case we shouldn't have taken part in those committees?

After discussion, the Conference decided to use the Liberals' structures against them, to go on the committees and use them as a campaigning platform against the Liberals' policies (a Focus for opposition, you might say).

A recent meeting of London LGCs decided, without discussing it with us, that we should not take the Chair of neighbourhood committees.

I'm delighted that they should take an interest in Tower Hamlets at last, after all these years of fighting the ultra-Right on our own, but I feel they've missed the point. A Liberal or SDP Chair is hardly going to be using that position to campaign politically against the Administation!

We would have lost the initiative as an opposition, and the committees would be neutered.

How is our strategy working? Are we passively accepting the Liberals' plans, or are we pestering them to death?

Experience so far, particularly of the Isle of Dogs and Blackwall Neighbourhood Committee, is that the Liberals are terrified of what we might do next. They're constantly needling us — they'd much rather we sat back and did nothing!

We have organised a series of meetings on Canary Wharf, and a very successful lobby on the issue to the last Council meeting. The Liberals are beginning to realise that the issue is about to blow up in their faces — thanks to our campaign.

We made them a laughing stock over 'HMS Homeless'. We are contantly exposing their decentralisation plans. Someone said to me recently that the Tower Hamlets Council is going to make traffic in the borough drive on the right hand side of the road. They're phasing it in over six months, and they're starting with the blue cars. I think this sums up the situation admirably.

We can continue to develop our policy; and can decide in the future to abandon it, or to change direction. Ratecapping may demand from us a different response. The strategy is not engraved on stone; a future LGC Conference may decide to come off the committees.

But comrades in other CLPs should be clear. We are **NOT** passively accepting decentralisation. We are **not** doing the Liberals' dirty work for them. We are using Labour neighbourhood committees to stop the Liberals getting their dirty work done.

POSITIVE IMAGES



Haringey Council's policy of positive images of lesbians and gay men in schools has been used by the Tories to generate hysteria.

They began during the local election campaign with scaremongering about Lesbian and Gay teachers. The campaign continued with letters, a petition, a demonstration and the formation of various parents "rights" groups.

They have called a special council meeting on the issue and a book burning of Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin is planned.

A community-based fight-back involving Labour activists, trade unionists, teachers, parents, Lesbians and Gay men and members of the SWP and CP is supporting the council's policy. Last week's education committee was lobbied by hundreds demanding the council stand firm.

Many Labour Councils have policies with a strong commitment to combatting the oppression experienced by Lesbians and Gay men, yet Haringey and Ealing have been singled out for the bitterest attacks. This is because they are tackling this issue through education.

For many people any discussion of sex and sexuality is taboo. Putting an oppression based on sexuality on the political agenda challenges these taboos and raises the argument that sexuality is socially constructed and heterosexuality is not a biological inevitability.

Giving children access to this information and enabling them to begin to think through many ideas which their parents are unable to accept is threatening. Many parents do not like to admit their children have any sexuality. They want such issues to wait until adulthood and do not realise that from an early age children are bombarded with images and ideas that tell them that heterosexuality is normal and everything else is perverse. The Tories ahve found it easy to play on people's concerns and whip them into irrational homophobia.

The policy of positive images involves challenging attitudes; we must do this, and win, if we want society to change. Rechannelling resources and posts to cater for the needs of Lesbians and Gay men, women or Black people is not enough; though it is an important beginning to redressing inequalities and ensuring these groups better access to resources.

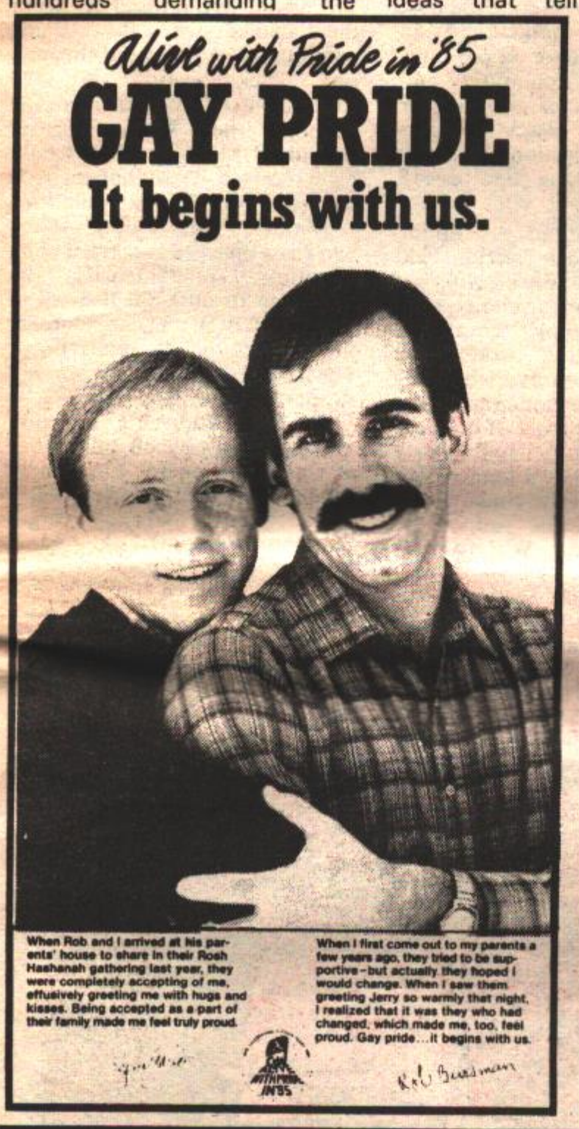
Having an environment where you feel comfortable with and proud of your sexuality, race or gender is a start. But what you can do with that pride is limited if you live in a wider society that is homophobic, sexist and racist. Changing the ideologies and institutions which shape our society is a long and arduous task. The will have to respond to these attacks again and again.

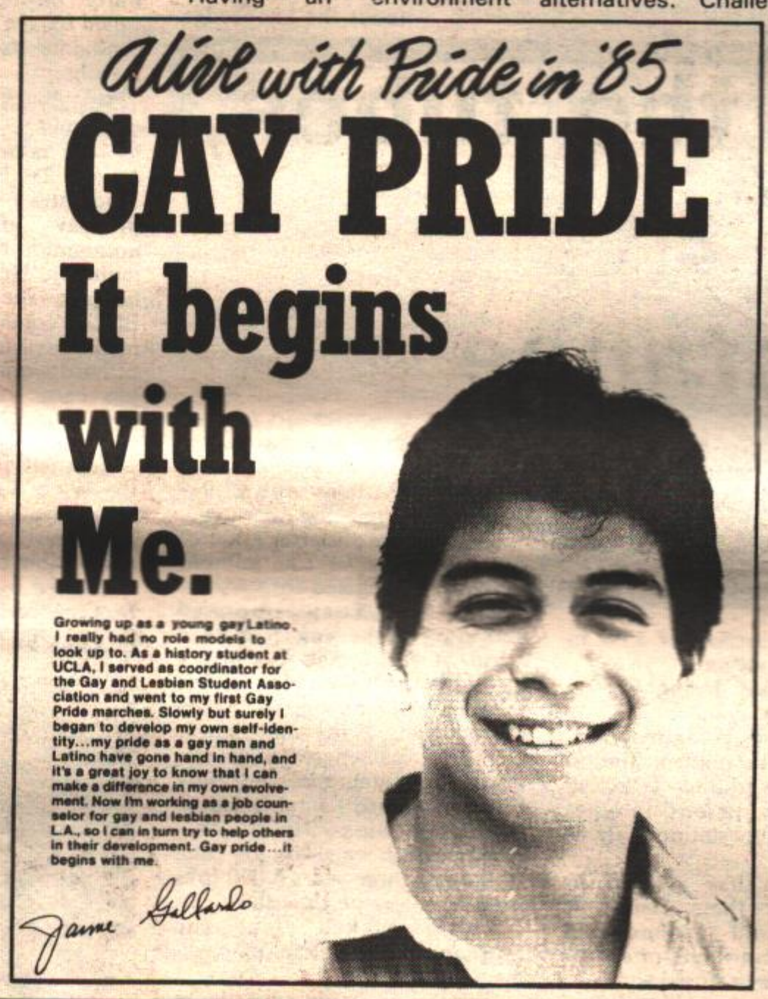
To achieve equality we must expose and disprove the ideologies that say this is how society is, there are no alternatives. Challenging the concept that heterosexuality is the only legitimate expression of sexuality also involves exposing the exploitative economic relationships between the West and the Third World which sustain capitalism.

Comrades must stand firm on the issue of positive images, not just to show solidarity with Lesbians and Gay men, though this is important, but because their struggle is part of a wider struggle. The same group who want to maintain the consensus that the only sexuality is heterosexuality are the people who oppress women and Black people and keep the working class subservient and exploited. They benefit from the system the way it is and they have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Haringey's policy of positive images will be debated again at the special council meeting on Ocobter 20. Come along and show your support, join the demonstration on the steps of the Civic Centre.

Mandy Mudd
Tottenham CLP







Lewisham rejects Sinn Fein

On Oct 6 Lewisham Council Labour Group voted 24-12 against inviting Sinn Fein to address the Council.

In a debate dominated by issues such as the marginality of East and West Lewisham, the main speakers against were Leader David Sullivan and West Lewisham PPC Jim Dowd.

Sullivan argued that Sinn Fein did not represent the Nationalist community, had no support in the 26 counties and that they already have a platform in Westminster which they have churlishly turned down. He claimed that the tour was designed to mask declining support and to undermine the SDLP.

Jim Dowd, ignoring centuries of British terrorism, concentrated on the irrelevant issue of IRA bombings, claiming

By Nick Ronan
Deptford CLP.

that there was no support for the visit in his constituency. In fact the ward he represents on the council passed a motion of support last month.

The meeting heard that Sinn Fein was "anti-working class", committed to the "destabilisation" of the 32 counties, and that electorally damaging bad publicty should be avoided, whatever the cost. Apparently, as far as Ireland is concerned,the opinions of the press an the Tories count for more than the constituents.

Supporters of the motion pointed out that there was no shortage of publicity for other Nationalist parties' violence was a product of 800 years of British imperialism, resulting in unrecognised oppression and a colonial war which could only be solved by dialogue.

Russell Proffitt, East Lewisham PPC, reported hearing Sinn Fein councillors at Blckpool and argued that it was the duty of the council to help unravel the confused issues of colonial struggle in Ireland.

One theme of the debate was a new-found concern for the local Irish Commuity. But so far only 7 councillors have bothered to reply to Lewisham Irish in Britain Representation Group's June letter requesting information, support and councillors' opinions on a range of issues affecting the Irish community. In fact, it was only as a result of pressure from the IBRG that the Sinn Fein invitation was discussed at all, since the Leader had ignored LCI's original overtures.

Lewisham IBRG decided unanimously to ask the Council to facilitate the visit in September. Even though the council chamber may not be the best of platforms, at least it would have offered the chance of hearing elected Nationalist representatives in a setting free from fear of initimidation, surveillance and arrest.

The council's decision betrays a level of ignorance and misinformation unthinkable on any other subject. But it is not a total defeat. A public meeting with Sinn Fein has been organised on October 23 in the Amersham Arms, Deptford.

Tactical expressions of concern for the local Irish community can be called in when further demands are made.

A motion to the BLGC calls on the council to open a dialogue on Unification and the Anglo-Irish deal. A Deptford LCI presence has emerged. The experience has also been an educative one for the IBRG — while confirming many members' suspicions of the council, the issue has further politicised the group and exposed the nature of the debates and campaigns which will need to be taken up in future.

Meeting October 25 Amersham Arms Deptford



Broadwater Photographic

The Broadwater Farm campaign marks the anniversary of the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett during an unwarrented police intrusion into her home by candelit vigil outside Tottenham police station on Sunday October 6.

This was followed by a mass picket of the old Bailey the following Monday to mark the opening of the third trial for "affray" arising out of the uprising by youths on the Broadwater Farm estate which followed Mrs Jarrett's death. Some 75 defendents await trial for offences allegedly committed during the uprising. The majority of them have been charged with affray which carries a maximum sentence of 8 years.

In the second trial an old Bailey Jury found Simon MacMinn guilty of affray and burglary — he allegedly threw stones three times. He received a seven year sentence.

Further events, including a march through central London and more mass pickets will be ararnged shortly. For further details contact Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, 12-16 Tangmere, BWF, London N17. 01 808 1667, 885 3752.

Labour opposes Bantustans

The London Labour Party has voted to withdraw its four representatives on the Bantustan 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee'.

A week before the start of the Annual Conference, the GLLP Executive voted 16 — 14 in favour of a motion put by Madhar Patel (Southall B.S.) and Linda Bellos (Lambeth B.S.). This action brought the number of 'refuseniks' to twelve and spelt the death of BAAC.

BAAC — during its short life — had achieved nothing positive. It had tinkered with an equal opportunities survey of the Party's Black membership. Some who had joined the Committee expecting serious initiatives and actions saw through the farce and resigned, disillusioned.

One member of BAAC, at a fringe meeting in Blackpool, bitterly attacked the motives and the commitment of those who had dreamed up the idea.

Further embarassment hit the BAAC when it was revealed that Labour's front bench representative on race, Alf Dubs had his own 'advisory committee' consisting of white worthies such as John Carr (ex-GLC) and Alex Lyon (ex-MP). This group was meeting, without the knowledge of BAAC, to prepare Labour's initiatives on topics such as 'non-racist' immigration laws and contracts compliance! Thus, the BAAC was advising no-one at all.

By Narendra Makanji

The Black Section campaign has exposed the two prong strategy devised by the Labour leadership; the first was to co-opt some Black members arbitrarily and the second was to dish out the heavy treatment to the radicals — such as Amir Khan. The NEC will fail to implement this stategy.

White racists in Southall

Sixty-nine year old Sid Bidwell was re-selected as the Parliamentary candidate for Southall Ealing on September 19.

Southall Ealing, Neil Kinnock's home constituency, has Britain's largest Asian electorate, well over 50 per cent. Both the Black community and Black members of the Labour Party through Black Sections called for the selection of a Black candidate as long ago as 18 months.

The Southall Ealing constituency Black Section held its own nomination meeting on August 23. From a choice of 6 candidates Ealing councillor Madhav Patil won the nomination by an overwhelming majority. He demonstrated that he enjoys the support of both the Black community and Party members. Madhav's long record of hard work in the constituency has earnt him the support of both Black and White Party members.

Southall Black Section holds the White Left members of the constituency, and mainly the supporters of *Socialist Action*, responsible for the debacle.

Alerted by the Southall Black Sections campaign to secure the nomination of a Black candidate the white left set abut finding their own "servile candidates". The white left refused to acept the choice of the Black community as expressed through our Black Section. At the selection itself they divided the support the Black Section candidate Madhav Patil would have received. We condemn such tactics as colonial manipulation.

By Naresh Banga Ealing/Southall BS

The Southall Ealing Black Section has announced its intention to intensify its campaign to oust Sid Bidwell in favour of a Black candidate at the next round of reselections. The National Black Section will support these endeavours.

We fear Bidwell's selection will lead to a boycott of Labour at the next General Election in Southall. The Labour Party Black Section strongly urges Southall Ealing's Black electors to remain loyal to Labour.

In the light of the Southall experience which has been reflected elsewhere we call for an all black shortlist for the safe Labour seat of Deptford for the selection process due to begin early November.

As jobs go down the tubes, *buses must form underground resistance*

The 24 hour boycott of all staff canteens on London Regional Transport's buses and tubes on 15 September was an overwhelming success.

By Patrick Sikorski NUR

Takings in canteens usually patronised by thousands of LRT workers round the clock were down to an average of a few pence as the unions united to protest against the refusal of LRT to give canteen staff a wage increase and instead cut their wages by at least 30%.

Most other LRT workers received around 5% this year. Intent on implementing the terms of the 1983 Transport Act, which makes it a statutory duty for LRT to introduce competitive tendering with outside private caterers, LRT Catering managers were, and still are, going for;

- a one-off buy out of London Weighting,
- payment of basic rather than average pay rates for holiday and sickness,
- and elimination of overtime rates for late shift and weekend working.

It is of course only these payments which lift rates for this section of workers, most of whom are women and many of whom are black, above absolute poverty levels.

Support from the bus workers was especially strong. Strike action on the day paralysed several bus routes in north London. The following week, routes in south London were similarly hit as crews were pulled in off the road for branch meetings in protest at the use of agency staff to cover vacancies in depot canteens.

The reaction from the bus workers comes after major threats to bus crew rates of pay resulting from the tendering out and subsequent loss of outer-suburban bus routes to private coach firms.

But in the 30,000 leaflets published and distributed by the London Transport District Council of the NUR in conjunction with their head office, it was made clear to all London Underground Limited staff that no-one working for LRT in any department is now safe.

The NUR campaign clearly shows that management are aiming at the following for all operating staff:

- an initial reduction of 35% in wages and conditions;
- operating staff losing £51 in take home pay;
- 1500 more jobs going from stations due to the implementation of the Underground Ticketing System ('open stations' in outer zones — i.e. no station staff at all).

The Union has pledged to withdraw all these claims if management will guarantee that they will not cut wages or conditions. This they refused to do.

Indeed they would find it impossible to do so. The facts are of course that with all its faults the massive overhaul job started by the GLC is solely resposible for the continuing success story on the tube as far as increased revenue, increased passengers carried and increased investment are concerned.

Last year the Underground:

- carried 762 million passengers more than ever before.
- increased reliability with 97.9% of the schedule being operated.
- produced a profit after grant of £41.6 millions — £30 millions more than budgeted for.

But the Tory imposed budgetary framework demanded a cut of £96-£100m cut in the grant for the 3 year plan ending this year as a first step to 'reducing unit costs' at the same time as increasing passenger usage; introducing integrated ticketing (the 'Travelcard') and upgrading trains and stations. This can only come through wage and job cuts. In the last three years 6,000 jobs have been lost on the tubes.

Ridley makes clear the medium to long term management strategy:

'While we still have large capital investment requirements, there is no prospect of privatisation for the foreseeable future.'

The canteen boycott was a small but very important step towards halting this onslaught on the workforce after four years of defeats. Confidence in being able to take effective action was restored.





Jim Gee

Kensington DHSS

SCPS and CPSA members at Kennington DHSS office have been on indefinite strike since September 16 in support of a suspended CPSA member.

The member had been taken into the local police station and questioned about alleged irregularities over the issuing of National Insurance numbers. She was released the same day without charges.

DHSS management, flouting natural justice, suspended her indefinitely, despite the fact no charges are likely to be made against her. (Another CPSA member remains suspended while a 'holding charge' hangs over him.)

By Howard Fuller

Union members were quite rightly incensed by management's heavy handed action, and a majority of CPSA and SCPS members voted to strike. Supportive action was taken by the CPSA Inner London and SCPS Thames branches to demand the immediate reinstatement of their collegue.

Whilst the CPSA has made the strike official and plans are afoot to extend solidarity action, the SCPS bureaucracy are refusing to back the SCPS members with strike pay.

The attitude of the SCPS leadership was summed up by Andy Gee of the Executive Council who at a meeting of the SCPS Central London District Committee told the Thames delegate that 'it was management's right to manage' and that SCPS members 'should go back to work!'

Society members remain determined to fight for justice and the strike continues in earnest.

This strike shows the need to build a democratic, open and responsive SCPS. This strike brings to light the true nature of the SCPS leadership, the time has come for radical change. The Kennington strikers must be supported.

Further information/donations and messages of support should be sent to; the Strike Committee, c/o 76b Avonmore Road, London, W14.