LONDON LABOUR
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Every socialist in London — and even those from outside! — must come to Greenwich and work to get Deirdre Wood elected by a massive majority.

Although Guy Barnett's majority had been down to 1,200 in the 1983 General Election, it was a bad year for Labour. Last May's Council and ILEA elections which saw large increases in the Labour vote, show that the Labour vote in Greenwich is in reality much higher.

In fact the recent Harris poll in the *Observer* gave Labour 60% of the vote with the Tories 25% and the Alliance 15%. We must get this 60% out and voting Labour.

Deirdre has twice been elected on the same constituency boundaries — in 1981 as GLC member for Greenwich and 1986 as ILEA member. In 1986 she was elected with 50.3% of the vote and a 4,000 vote lead over the Tories in second place.

The result of the Greenwich by-election may determine the date of the General Election and will undoubtedly influence public opinion, It is absolutely crucial that we win — and win well.

The press campaign of villification is already well underway. The Labour Party nationally continues to come under attack in the run up to the General Election.

Greenwich Council continues to come under attack, despite its recent clean bill of health from the Audit Commission and despite its popularity on the ground. The same Harris poll showed that 55% of people asked thought the Council was doing a good job as against only 27% who thought it was doing a bad job.

The worst attacks have been reserved for Deirdre herself and constitute an effort by the press and the other parties to translate the election into a battle of personalities and not policies.

In fact Deirdre has represented Greenwich extremely well over the last 6 years. Her energy and determination are widely known amongst her constituents; her links with tenants' groups, residents' groups, ethnic minority groups, parents' groups and many other community groups are deep and widespread around Greenwich. Her reputation as a hardworking Councillor goes before her.

A measure of her popularity is that she was selected as parliamentary candidate on the first ballot by more than two thirds of the votes.

She is in many ways exactly the sort of candidate the Labour Party needs: an energetic, dedicated woman of proven ability, well known locally and a holder of strong socialist views.

The Tories are running John Antcliffe — a young, local Councillor and merchant banker of Thatcherite views.

The Alliance's Rosie Barnes was out canvassing before Guy Barnett was even buried. We can expect a dirty campaign with both the Alliance and the Tories attempting to climb out of second place to victory by rubbishing Deirdre and Labour. We must have the strongest presence possible on the doorstep to counter this.

Greenwich is a fairly typical inner city constituency — despite the impression given by the Cutty Sark! — and one which has suffered under the Tories. Half our voters live in public housing and the unemployment rate has increased by 45% since 1981 to more than 14% — higher than the London and national averages. Health cuts have been devastating and the local Labour Council has been ratecapped for 3 years.

There is no doubt that strong socialist policies on housing, jobs, education, health, social security and equality correspond with the changes the people of Greenwich need and want. We must all work to get these policies across and get Deirdre into Parliament.

Claer Lloyd-Jones
Vice Chair
Greenwich Labour Party

February 26th

ALL OUT FOR GREENWICH!



Deirdre will be our next Labour Woman MP

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Campaign for industrial action grows

The campaign for industrial action against the Baker Bill is spreading.

Demands for effective industrial action and the reinstatement of ILTA council have come from Rochdale, Oldham, Knowsley, Ipswich, Norwich, Bristol, Weybridge, Barnet, Harrow, Leicester, Luton, Trafford, Oldham, Croydon, Humberside and North Yorkshire.

The Local Associations Pay Action Conference, with delegates from 35 associations called for a one-day national strike on March 5th; a campaign of outright resistance to any move by Baker to impose a pay and working conditions package. It further called on London controlled education authorities not to take disciplinary action against teachers who refuse to comply with Baker.

Support has been coming from the trade union and labour movement. The Campaign Group of Labour MPs has written to Fred Jarvis in support of suspended ILTA council members. Peter Heathfield has signed the ILTA petition as have executive members of NALGO and NGA as well as hundreds of other trade unionists and Labour Party members.

Hackney South and Islington South CLPs have passed resolutions which include the demand that ILEA continues to recognise the democratically elected officers of ILTA council.

By Paul Foley
Hackney South CLP
Islington NUT

The role of ILEA has been disgraceful. Within 24 hours of the ILTA suspensions, they withdrew facility time from all the ILTA officers and have attempted to conduct negotiations with full-time NUT regional officials, elected by nobody.

They have circularised secondary school heads informing them of the intention to proceed with the compulsory transfer of 500 secondary school teachers. This decision was arrived at without any negotiation with the teacher trade unions but is also in breach of an agreement reached last year.

Yet the campaign for industrial action against Baker is having success. The demands of grass roots members are forcing the National Executive into some kind of action.

Fred Jarvis has met with other teacher unions with a view to calling a national strike against the Baker Bill. This has not yet been finalised and the pressure for effective industrial action against Baker must be kept up.

The ILTA Defence Campaign is asking all friends in the labour and trade union movement to pass the following resolution:

This (...) deplores the legislation currently being promoted by Kenneth Baker which will take away the rights of teacher trade unionists to negotiate directly with their employers, the local education authorities on pay and conditions of service and will impose upon them the decision of the Tory government.

We welcome the industrial action taken by the Inner London Teachers' Association against this legislation.

We totally deplore the decision of the national officers of the NUT to suspend from membership of the union the ILTA officers, including an executive member and the whole of ILTA council, which includes the secretaries and officers of all Inner London branches, for supporting industrial action against the Baker Bill. We call on the NUT national officers immediately to reinstate as full NUT members all those suspended and drop all disciplinary charges.

Please send copies of this resolution to NUT, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place WC1 and to ILTA Defence Campaign, c/o 25, John Campbell Road, London N16

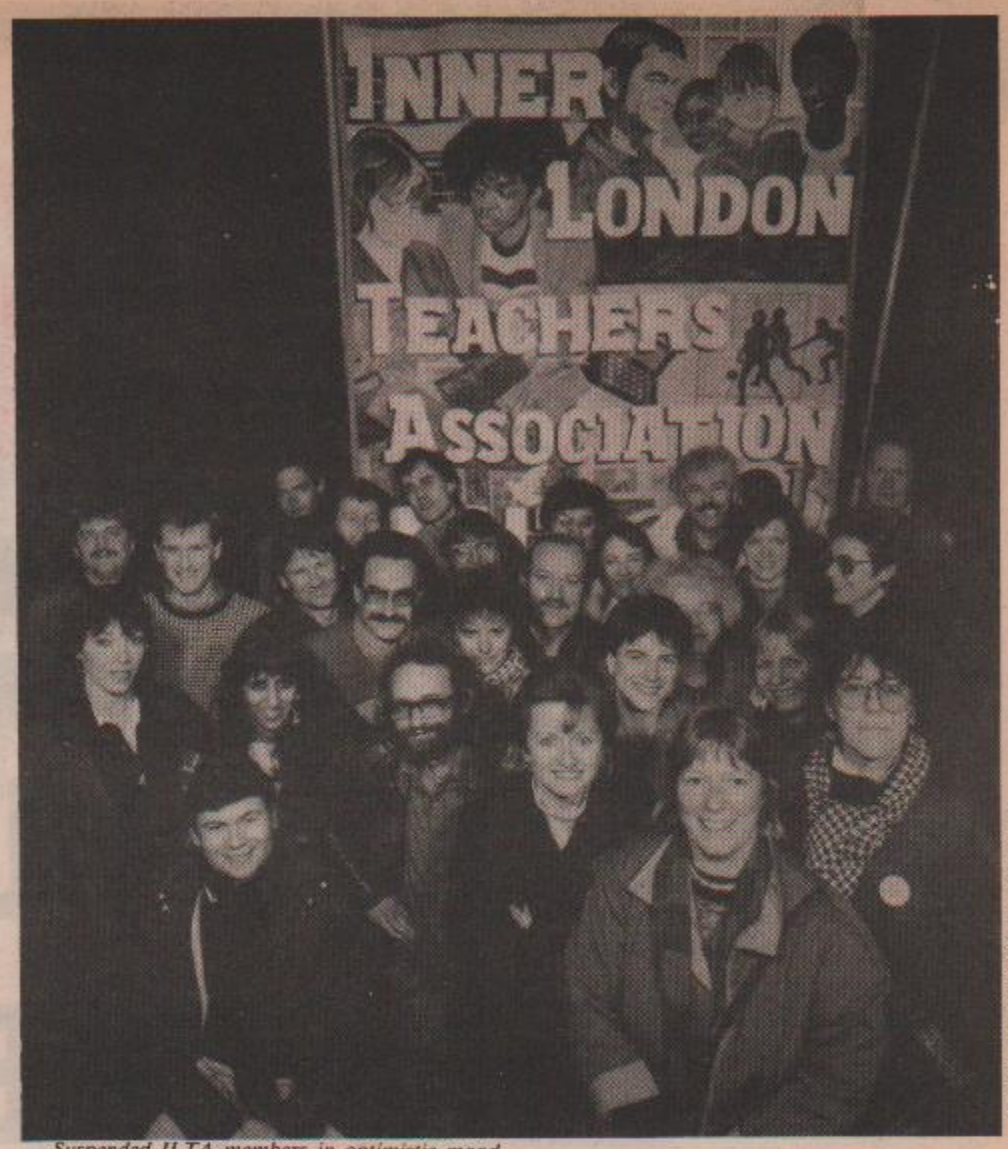


PHOTO: Red Saunders Productions

Suspended ILTA members in optimistic mood

ILEA cash crisis

Without a conference or any form of consultative discussions within the Inner London Labour Parties, the ILEA Labour Group are now considering the final stages of next year's budget.

Officers have outlined possible options, some certainly illegal, which illustrate the sheer scale of the problems facing ILEA. One package involves up to £80m cuts and another involves cuts of up to £50m.

By Steve Cowan
ILEA member,
Westminster North

Everyone agrees that reductions of up to 12% in any single year would spell a dangerous degree of dislocation for the service. The new Director of Personnel made plain his view at a recent Staff Sub-committee when he said that he would anticipate legitimate trade union action in defence of their members were significant cuts imposed.

There is relatively little inefficiency and waste across ILEA, contrary to popular notions shared, unfortunately, by some elements of the national Labour leadership.

Cuts of any kind would entail both loss of jobs and a disruption of service delivery. Recent government initiatives have led to a massive increase in the regular workload of teachers and support staffs.

If non-replacement of teaching posts were to happen schools would be unable to cope with GCSE deadlines, or developing new CPVE courses.

The £106,000 that was the focus for the legal action against councillors in Liverpool shrinks in comparison to the potential £130m deficit which faces ILEA.

The Labour Party must understand the importance of the attack on ILEA. A political defeat inflicted on ILEA in the months before a general election would be a big bonus for Labour's enemies.

Kenneth Baker seems unlikely to lift the precepting maximum by which ILEA could raise around £920 million.

At next year's prices, the current ILEA programme would cost something approaching £1,050m. Added to this is the politically vindictive suggestion from Baker that ILEA, alone of all education authorities in Britain, would be required to finance itself the consequences of any increase in teachers' pay. A settlement could add up to £40m onto the amount ILEA would need to balance its budget.

Some of us, always a minority, have warned of precisely this situation for several years. By delaying a confrontation from 1985 to 1987 local authorities have been made more isolated and more vulnerable.

All CLPs should now send an observer to all ILEA Labour Groups. The ILEA Liaison Sub-committee should have a representative from each CLP. All elected members on the ILEA can be mandated to adopt a policy designed to prevent job losses and service cuts.

A broadly-based forum involving all sections of the labour movement must be established to formulate a joint political strategy for the financial crisis.

At present we are in danger of decisions being taken without any consultation with the Party or with the unions. Within the unions there is a strong resentment at the way that the ILEA leadership and Officers have excluded them from earlier discussions.

If a common political strategy is not created between unions and the Labour Party the seeds will have been sown for divisions within the movement.

It is not good enough to rely upon a populist campaigning strategy highlighting the role of the Churches, the House of Lords, and other middle class interest groups around London.

It is time the Labour Party in Inner London reasserted its influence and control over the ILEA Labour Group.

Waltham Forest budget: Up, up and away!

The article on Ealing's Budget strategy in the last *London Briefing* could just have equally applied to Waltham Forest.

The painful limits of choice and the uncomfortable feeling of all involved shows just how far Labour councils have retreated in the last few years.

By John Wray
Leyton CLP

The LGC and Group in Waltham Forest adopted policies of expansion which would need a rates increase of between 60 and 75% to implement.

The only other option put forward was an increase half that merely to maintain the level of the previous Tory/Liberal administration.

That would have negated any purpose of having won a Labour majority, especially as the opposition in the elections fought and lost on manifestos which said nothing but that they'd kept the rates level for four years!

The prospect of selling a 70% rates increase to the public is a daunting one. The Party will emphasise the expansion of council services and try to pin the blame for the rate hike on central government cuts.

Underlying the campaign will be the sobering thought that it was the only alternative to doing nothing, and that next year will bring rate-capping and pressure to make cuts.

It wasn't a difficult decision to vote for — simply because of the lack of any political alternative. The really difficult decisions will come in a year's time when expansion will quite probably be halted and even put into reverse.

The Labour Party in Waltham Forest will therefore have to start preparing for the second battle before the first is over.

LONDON REGIONAL CONFERENCE

A further meeting to discuss *Briefing's* slate for Regional Conference will be held on Friday February 13th at 7.45pm at Lambeth Town Hall.

CONFERENCE ADVERTS

***London Briefing* is asking all readers to ensure that their organisations place an advert in *Briefing* for London Labour Party Conference. All Labour Party, trade union, women's, lesbian, gay, anti-racist and community organisations are welcome to advertise.**

Let us have the name of the organisation, the message to Conference and the remittance by March 31st. The cost is £5 per column inch (minimum 2 column inches).

Please send to Jane Kelly, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5.

CIVIL SERVICE NIGHT AT WAPPING

Saturday 28th February

Assemble 8.30pm, Move off 9.00pm
Tower Hill tube
Rally Wellclose Square, 9.30pm
Guest speakers include;
Leslie Christie, *General Secretary SCPS*
John Sheldon, *General Secretary CSSU*

Show your support for our Brothers and Sisters fighting for their jobs and trade union recognition.

BE THERE!

Organised by S/E Regional TUC Civil Service Committee.

BARNET PRINTWORKERS SUPPORT COMMITTEE

present

A Valentine's Day Dance to The James Band

8pm-11.30pm
Friday 13th February
Hendon Football Club, Claremont Road, Cricklewood, NW2
Large car park
Tickets: £2.50 (unwaged £1.50)

Brent Labour Briefing: The struggle we face

Brent Briefing Group met recently to consider how to improve the impact of *Briefing* comrades in the Borough and to ensure that the swerve to the right is as limited as possible.

Avenues considered included the setting up of Community Councils, particularly in the areas of the Borough with very high proportions of council tenants.

Recent developments in the Women's Section and YS were considered and discussion covered the production of newsletters (both Party and Briefing ones — the latter would be a new development in Brent unlike Haringey). It was agreed that a Brent Briefing Newsletter would be produced as well as keeping *Briefing* readers informed on developments in the Borough through the paper.

By Brent Labour Briefing

Comrades commented on the need to ensure a presence in the General Election, even though Brent East & South are both safe seats, to press for the policies of the local Parties to be given prominence in the campaign.

The role of the PAs to Committee Chairs on the Council (who are currently being appointed amidst attempts by local Tories to portray them as "political commissars") was considered. The need to make them responsive to the community rather than isolated from it was emphasised, especially in the case of the one covering the police.

The idea of holding joint metings with *Briefing* groups from neighbouring boroughs was floated — possibly around the formation of community councils — and this will be followed up shortly.

Despite a limited presence on the Brent Labour Group we will be continuing the fight to stop backsliding and ensure tht the Group leadership and certain PPCs stick to Party policy which we, at least, believe in and will struggle for in the year ahead.

A small victory was recently gained in overturning a decision to nominate for magistrates.

Letters

Dear Editors,

My article "Hammersmith AA Boycotts theatre" in *LB* 67 had subjoined to it without my being consulted or informed the statement "There are *Briefing* supporters who have different views from some of those expressed in this article. We invite readers to write in and express their views in the next issue of *Briefing*. (Unsurprisingly this did not happen).

The effect of the announcement was to undermine the action described (for this was a factual article, *not* a "view") in the article.

Hammersmith and Fulham Anti-Apartheid are preparing an analytical piece on the boycott action at the Lyric Theatre for publication in a future issue of *LB*, so for the moment I will just point out that on an issue — support for the people of South Africa — on which it is vital for socialists to stand up and be counted, *LB's* performance was inferior to that of the *Daily Mail*.

Yours sincerely,
Steve Parry

Dear Editor,

Brent LCC members have asked for the following correction to appear in *Briefing*.

"While Brent LCC were highly critical of the Brent Council's handling of the McGoldrick case, they have asked that it be pointed out that contrary to the impression given in Alf Filer's letter, a clear majority of Brent LCC members did support the right of Brent Council to investigate the allegation of racism."

Yours,
Alf Filer,
Brent East CLP

Unholy alliance in Haringey

Strange things are happening in Haringey. The Reverend Rushworth Smith's fast against Haringey Council's lesbian and gay rights policy continues to attract support from a wide range of reactionaries.

Meanwhile, the main focus of opposition to the Council's policy, the homophobic, Tory-backed Parents Rights Group, has split.

Reasons for the split remain obscure, but it may well be linked to the emergence of something calling itself the New Patriotic Movement, which recently staged a rally supporting Rushworth Smith in front of Haringey Civic Centre.

The New Patriotic Movement — whose leaflet boldy demanded "Do we want our children to become homosexual? Do we want them to get AIDS?" — appears to be a creature of the infamous "Moonies" sect, well known for its criminal and anti-communist activities.

Another curious, but perhaps not so unlikely, source of support for the hate campaign is the so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers!

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

The scabs are paying the costs of the Parents' Rights Group's much-trumpeted legal action against the Council, which will try to get the courts to outlaw council action on lesbian and gay rights in schools.

UDM General Secretary John Liprott told the PRG: "Your fight is the same as ours was. It is a battle over who controls the country and you must say no to this council."

Now that you know who our enemies are, send your messages of support and *donations* to: Positive Images, c%o Reading Matters, Lymington Avenue,London N22.

Positive Images
Fundraising Social
February 28
247a West Green Road, Tottenham
NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
April 25
Please get your Labour Party Branch, trade union, community group, to sponsor this major demonstration and contribute to its costs.



PHOTO: John Chapman

The ANC is 75: is the cultural boycott policy valid?

Cultural boycott:

No help to fight apartheid

Hammersmith AA's boycott of the Lyric Theatre production of *The Bijers Sunbird* (*London Labour Briefing*, Jan 15-28) in no way contributes to the real fight against apartheid.

It is part of the AAM and ANC policy that *all* anti-apartheid activities must be channelled through them or approved by them. The academic and cultural "blanket boycott" is central to that policy.

As Mike Terry, National Secretary of AAM, is reported to have said:

"Cultural exchange must be done in consultation with the liberation movement and ourselves... Anything short of a total cultural boycott allows all kinds of people in." (*Weekly Mail*, Jan 9-15)

One wonders how this squares with the words of Oliver Tambo? "...No elements from among ourselves should seek to impose their views on others" and "We must combat all manifestations of factionalism, revolutionary arrogance and individualism" (from *Statement of the ANC on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the ANC*, 8th Jan. 1987).

The AAM is not even consistent in its application of the so-called "blanket boycott". There were no orgnaised boycotts when *Wozza Albert*, *Asinamali* and other South African plays which, like *The Bijers Sunbird*, had an anti-apartheid content were staged in London.

By Chalie van Gelderen
Brent South CLP

Progressive Publishers (Moscow) editions of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are on sale in progressive bookshops in South Africa. Has AAM or the ANC made any protestations to the Soviet Government about this?

The valuable radical *Weekly Mail* and the publications of Ravan Press are on sale at Colletts, Central Books and other bookshops in Britain. Why no picket lines?

This attempt at absolute (one is tempted to write "absolutist") control of the anti-apartheid movement was responsible for the break-up of a meeting at Warwick University last November, which was to be addressed by Eddie Webster, a member of the Editorial Board of the South African Labour Bulletin, perhaps the politically most important journal published in South Africa today.

This, despite the fact that a few weeks earlier the same Eddie Webster had shared a platform at the York Symposium on South Africa with Archbishop Huddleston and luminaries of the ANC.

The theatre, the arts and literature have an important role to play in the struggle against tyrany in South Africa as elsewhere. It is a tribute to the advances made by the liberation movement that they have succeeded in breaking through the "blanket" stifling of all opposition culture which Verwoerdian apartheid imposed on South Africa. This should be encouraged by all who support the fight against apartheid.

How can we take seriously the ANC's declared aim, reiterated in the 75th Anniversary Statement, that "The revolution will guarantee the indivudal and equal rights of all South Africans... and include such freedoms as those of speech, assembly, association ... the press" when today, when it is not yet in power, it seeks to coerce all forces fighting apartheid into a rigidly controlled straitjacket?

In his speech to the Lusaka meeting, celebrating 75 years of the ANC, President Tambo indicated that, while the ANC still stood by its call for a blanket academic and cultural boycott, this was being reconsidered.

We can only add — and about time too!

Fulham Witch-hunting:

Fight expulsions now!

Predictable as always — the Fulham Party passed the resolution at the January GC which has opened the door for expulsions.

The wording makes it quite plain that should anyone step out of line that "appropriate action" will be taken to deal with the miscreants.

By Iain Coleman
Fulham CLP

The Chair brushed aside an impressive plea from one of the *Militant* comrades on why the resolution was out of order and contravened both the rules of natural justice and the rules of the Labour Party.

We were subjected in the "debate" to a whole succession of narrow minded homilies of home-spun philosophy. One particular classic which characterised the entire discussion was one comrade who complained about people "spitting on my floor"!!

One of the most ironic aspects of the whole wretched affair is that the mover of the resolution and the guiding light behind the witch-hunt is a former member of the International Socialists.

The most frustrating part is that many of us will now inevitably be wasting precious time and energy defending *Militant* at a time when we should be gearing up for the election campaign that we will face shortly.

I confidently predict that if any member of the Fulham Party is observed selling a copy of *Militant* then the Fulham EC will spring into action and report the individua. concerned to the NCC.

We will resist these attacks that are now certain to follow the passing of the resolution. Comrades everywhere and especially on the Regional Executive should be aware that the first expulsions in London will have to be faced soon.

History has shown that the second and third will flow quickly unless we stand firm and reject the vicious attacks of the hard right.

*For a report on the first meeting of the National Constitutional Committee see National *Labour Briefing*, p.9

Black Section victory in Hammersmith



PHOTO: John Chapman

At last: a voice in Hammersmith!

Hammersmith Labour Party has recognised the Hammersmith and Fulham Labour Party Black Section at the second attempt.

The first attempt was blocked in November when a resolution inviting the Black Section to send delegates to the GC was ruled out of order by the Chair.

Even at the second attempt comrades who have strongly opposed the use of constitutional rules to gag and expel *Militant* supporters from the Party, quoted Party rules as if they were tablets of stone.

By Ian Harrison
Hammersmith CLP

This was a pathetic effort to disguise their real opposition to the principle of autonomous Black organisation. It is hardly surprisng that the same "dinosaurs" viciously opposed the establishment of a women's section only two years ago and have done nothing but pour scorn on its activities ever since.

Now the Black Section can send delegates to the Party AGM in March on the same basis as the Women's Section does.

Hopefully this decisive move will lead the Party to recognise how it fails to represent and serve the interests of Black people and women. The next step will be for us to become an active, campaigning Party — doing something about it!



PHOTO: John Chapman

Demonstration in support of Newham 7

Police fail to stop racial attacks:

"We have to defend ourselves"

Newham in East London now has the highest recorded rate of racial attacks in the country — 228 this year.

Yet the police in Newham have cleared up only 22 of these, less than 10%.

This compares with an average clear up rate for racial attacks of about 12% in the Metropolitan Police area, and 15% nationally.

The clear up rate for racial attacks is about half that of other crimes.

Against this background, the Met Police have been pushing a number of solutions, none of which will help our situation.

In the first place, they initiated the "Racial Incidence Squad" pioneered in Newham and Ealing since December.

This squad consists of 6 officers, 2 of whom are sergeants and 4 constables, and 2 of the squad are to be from the black community. The aim of the exercise is to improve the clear up rate. But we say this is too little, too late — a cosmetic exercise to prevent criticism of the growing number of racial attacks.

By Nishit Kanwar
Newham Monitoring Project

Connected to this, the Met Police launched its campaign against racist attacks on January 15th. This consists of a pack in five languages, telling people to report all crime to the police. It is summed up by its symbol — a serpent with a black hand holding its head and a white uniformed police hand holding its tail, and the caption reads "Together we can beat racial attacks."

The Met Police have started a campaign to recruit officers from "ethnic minorities". This campaign started on February 2nd and centred on a few areas including Newham. But we say that recruiting a few black officers will make no difference to the institutionalised racism of the police force.

Why do we have no faith in these initiatives? It is because of our experience of the police in action. Let me give some examples.

On January 3rd, there was a black party in Canning Town. At 1am tear gas was put through the letterbox. Two white men were seen running into the house opposite.

The police were called, and 2 CID officers said they would keep an eye on both houses. But they disappeared and at 3pm another tear gas cannister was put through the letterbox.

Two members of the party went out to confront those responsible but were jumped on by 20 boys, one of whom smashed a bottle over Trevor Ferguson who was blinded in one eye as a result.

The police were called again, and they put down the phone. To date no one has been charged.

This is one of many examples. Since the New Year there have been 23 racial attacks in an area of a quarter of a square mile in Canning Town. The Police have made no arrests, though the perpetrators are known.

The lesson we are drawing is that if we want to walk through the streets, **we shall have to defend ourselves.**

Can we make the Met accountable?

New proposals to make the Met Police more accountable have been drawn up by the Police Monitoring and Research Group of the London Strategic Policy Unit (the so-called GLC in exile).

By Dan Carter

The proposals include:

- that a new police authority for London be created as part of any legislation setting up a new strategic authority for London;
- new powers are needed to ensure that research into policing and monitoring of the police can be properly carried out by local government;
- that parts I and II of the Public Order Act 1986 and the whole of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 be repealed;
- that the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 be repealed and replaced by an act *limiting* police powers and introducing legally enforceable safeguards.
- lay the duty to enforce the law on police authorities and confer the status of local government officers on police officers.



"Community coppers" in action

The debate around the proposals will cause socialists to consider the whole question of whether or not an arm of the state, such as the police force, can ever be accountable to the people.

The Met Police already stand out as exceptional not just for their viciousness in industrial disputes (the miners' strike and Wapping, for example) but also as the only police force in the country without an elected police authority.

A major part of the proposals include taking control of the Met away from the Home Secretary and into a new London-wide strategic authority.

The whole issue of democratising the police is being avoided by the Labour leadership as too controversial to touch. With "law and order" likely to be a major issue at the General Election, we must ensure it is debated in a positive way.

The Met's fantastic PR budget, the mushrooming shop-your-neighbour (neighbourhood watch) schemes, and responding to the rising crime rate by sending "community coppers" to miners' and Wapping picket lines, will ensure its high profile on the political agenda.

The fact that local councillors could withold payment of the police precept (local rate levied to pay for the Met), and face surcharge for so doing, is another important issue to discuss.

The fact that the police investigate complaints against themselves, and rarely produce any convictions; that they refused to agree to an independent inquiry into recent events at Wapping; and their abysmal record on dealing with racial and sexual assaults all add to an increasing public dissatisfaction with the Met.

The police sub-committee of the London Strategic Policy Unit, comprising representatives from Camden, Haringey, Hackney, Lewisham, Southwark, Greenwich, Ealing, Islington and Lambeth Councils welcomes comments on the proposals for a new authority. A copy of the pamphlet can be obtained from: Police Monitoring & Research Group, Room 801, Middlesex House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1 2SB.

Southall colour bar

For the last three months, angry black people in Southall have been picketting an all-white social club which operates a colour bar.

The strong protest outside the Southall Trades & Social Club in the Broadway has been organised by the Black Section of Southall Labour Party and the Indian Workers' Association.

This picket is supported by many voluntary organisations, trade unions, religious bodies and local community groups.

The club has no black members amongst its 850 membership. It refused entry to black people. It operates under the pretext of a private club.

In the thirties, this club was a working men's club. The Labour Party was affiliated and associated with it. Trade Unionists and Labour Party members used its facilities.

However, when the population of Southall started changing during the '60s and '70s, the club started barricading itself with various discirminatory rules to keep out the surrounding Asian population.

By Naresh Banga
Southall Black Section

The management of the club have devised such rules that it is impossible for the members of the minority communities to join. Under the strict vetting procedure for prospective members, applications must be nominated and seconded by existing members and approved by the managing committee — all whites!

In the past, a number of well-intentioned attempts were made to break the walls of apartheid, but without success. Unions like the TGWU and AUEW tried to penetrate into this fortress of racism but ultimately they had to disassociate themselves from the racists. The Labour Party tried hard to enroll a few black people into membership of the Club but eventually the members who tried were in turn expelled!

Taking into account these past experiences Southall Black Section felt that it was their responsibility to take the club on and only direct action will force the racists into surrender!

At lunchtime on Thursday November 13th white drinkers at the club were startled by a confrontation with the pickets. The club was picketed by crowds of protesters shouting "Smash Racism", "Smash Fascism", "No place in Southall for racism". However, protestors were met with stiff resistance. "Go back to your country", "Pakis go home". One picket was even spat at in the face.

The strategy of direct action and the deployment of the picket at peak hours was masterminded by Cllr Madhar Patil, who is Chair of Southall Black Section and chair of the Anti Racist Committee of the Greater London Labour Party.

He was supported by Piera Singh Khabra, president of the Indian Workers Assocation, which has 18,000 members and is the largest ethnic minority organisation in the UK.

Periodic mass pickets, to create an impact, were so successful that many left wing groups from outside the area came to join. However there is no guarantee that the attitude of the racists would change through picketing only.

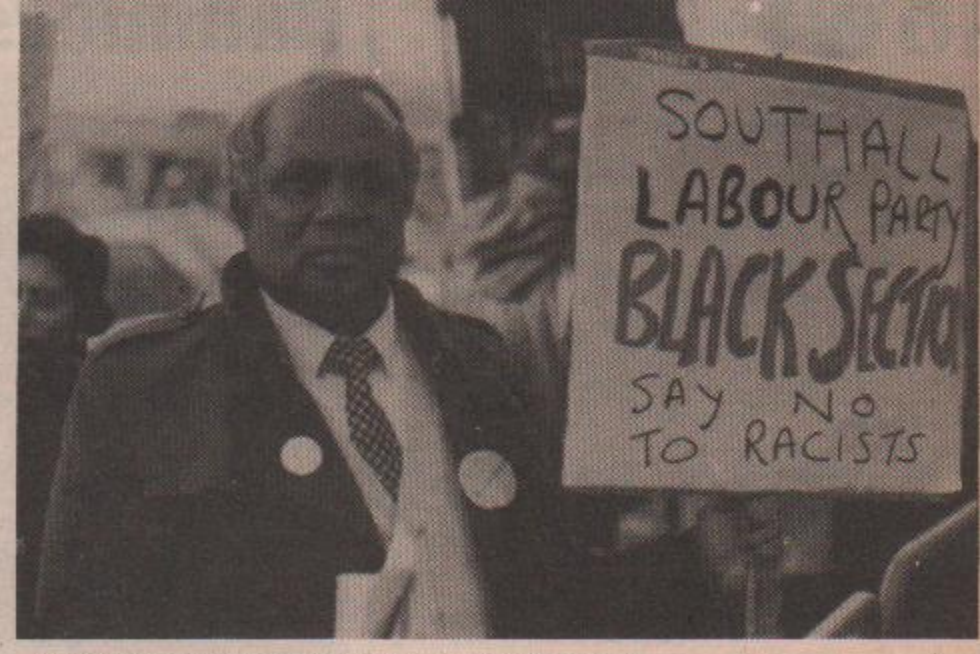
Therefore, Cllr Patil has asked the Commission for Racial Equality to take the Club to court under the Race Relations Act. The CRE has already started an investigation into the practices of the club.

Ealing Council has been asked to look into the club in relation to rates, services and licences.

The impact of the campaign was, such that the management of the club are saying that now they have two ethnic minority members! If it is true then certainly it must be a window-dressing!

Cllr Patil says "We are not going to be fooled by this tokenism. We will keep our campaign going until the racists are defeated and the doors of the club are opened to working people of all races."

For further information, and details of future mass pickets, phone 01-574 2434.



Cllr Patil, leading a mass picket at the racist club in Southall

