LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
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"Londoners for Labour"

Stand by Labour policies!

The leaked letter from Patricia Hewitt, of Neil Kinnock's office, which suggested that it is the lesbian and gay rights policies of "loony left" Labour Councils in London which are responsible for Labour's decline in the opinion polls, have raised a storm of angry protest from the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights and its powerful supporters in the Party.

The Party's policy commits it to immediate legislation to end all legal discrimination against lesbians and gay men and to make any form of discrimination on grounds of homosexuality illegal.

There is much deep-rooted prejudice against lesbians and gay men, said the LCLGR spokesperson, and that is precisely why we need a change in the law and a major public campaign. The Party leadership must understand that it is dishonesty that loses votes not a principled commitment to equality which is properly explained and campaigned for. Whenever Labour's fought an open and honest campaign around lesbian and gay rights policies or around openly lesbian or gay candidates in the last local elections, the Party returned much improved results. By contrast wherever Labour stays on the defensive and pretends not to support lesbians and gay men it hands the initiative to the bigots and loses votes.

LCLGR calls on the Leadership to stand by Party policy in the best interests both of lesbians and gay men, and of the Party as a whole, and pledges itself to fight vigorously and with all the resources at its disposal to ensure that Labour's conference commitments are not watered down.



CARTOON: Dave Bangs

EXPOSE THIS FRAUD!

The bubbles in the undrunk champagne had scarcely gone flat in the Flamingo Disco in Greenwich, when there emerged a grouping of white, male Labour bureaucrats announcing to the *London Evening Standard* and other gutter-papers their intention to represent the "real" views of Labour-voting Londoners.

"Londoners for Labour" — a direct reply to the strand of politics associated with *London Labour Briefing* — was the result.

The idea that this caucus can speak for the people of London is a joke. London is made up of a rich variety of peoples. Under the leadership of the GLC, its population gained a sense of its own identity as a kaleidoscope of cultures and traditions with something to offer in terms of tolerance, unity and fighting spirit. At long last, over the past ten years, Labour Parties in London — and even, in some cases, Labour local authorities — have started to reflect this variety in their own composition.

By Nadine Finch
Chair of Policy, Greater London Labour Party
(personal capacity)

The "traditional" white, male, middle class, heterosexual monopoly over positions of power within the Labour Party began to crack open, allowing activists representing the real population of London to enter the forbidden precincts for the first time in their lives. And whenever Labour has unequivocally identified with the working class, with Black people, with the Irish and with oppressed minorities such as lesbians and gay men, we have succeeded in turning the tables on the Tories, transforming the terms of the debate and vindicating our policies as a huge electoral asset as well as a better way of running London.

It was by fighting to represent *all Londoners* that the GLC became — and remains in the memory of Londoners — an electorally popular force for social change. Indeed, Thatcher resorted to abolition precisely because she could not defeat us at the polls.

In this context, the management of Deirdre Wood's campaign should be a lesson to us all. It shows that when we are not allowed to speak with our own voice, the electorate naturally lose confidence in us.

The "hard left" label never did Tony Benn or Ken Livingstone any harm — they spoke for themselves, argued back, and managed their own campaigns.

Deirdre and the local Greenwich Party were not allowed to do this. They were sabotaged by precisely the kind of people who are now running "Londoners for Labour". The Regional Office campaign managers succeeded in making Deirdre look like a woman who didn't know her own mind. In place of a hard-working fighter for working class rights, the electorate were shown a Julie Andrews figure walking her kids in the park. Rosie Barnes was then able to attract the floating women's votes, portrayed as she was as a person who understood employment and could speak up for herself.

Yes, there are lessons to be learned from Greenwich. But they are the exact opposite of those which "Londoners for Labour" will seek to draw. The way to win elections in London is not to deny our principles and our commitments. It is to go on to the offensive, exposing the Alliance and the Tories as the utterly out-of-touch, middle-class, capitalist, overwhelmingly white and unrepresentative parties which they are.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Budget round-up

Southwark budget

Biting the bullet

A group of councillors in Southwark are fighting hard to implement their manifesto commitment to defend *and* improve council services and stop *any* council job cuts.

Some councillors who were prominent in "fighting" rate-capping in the past are less keen to "bite the bullet" this year — even though the financial crisis is considerably deeper.

Two years ago these councillors had sufficient financial conjuring tricks ready to hand to save them from actually having to stand firm, now there may well be a *real* budget shortfall for '87/'88 of about £25 million — after realistic leaseback and deferral purchase schemes are exhausted.

In detailed budget discussions, socialists on each committee should be looking for real "efficiency" — to ensure our plans for the commitments are implemented and the money is spent.

However, "efficiency" — to those whose teeth are now too false to bite the bullet — is understood entirely in terms of "cuts options": documents circulated by officers, a rumoured massive underspend on the Housing Investment Programme, the closure of parts of certain services, in particular in Social Services, without most Councillors' knowledge; the sudden discovery that money is

By Cllr Piers Corbyn Southwark

probably not after all available for a temporary Travellers' site, and so on.

Two key maxims seem to be "adopting realistic estimates of recruitment drag" and "the need to ban non-contractual overtime".

When concerned Party members (who got us in office) enquire, they are told that "we should be replacing overtime by more jobs and better wages."

Indeed we should, but those who profess they espouse this view have been pushing for the *opposite* when it comes to implementation of key aspects of the council's service action (expansion) — for the women's committee, for example.

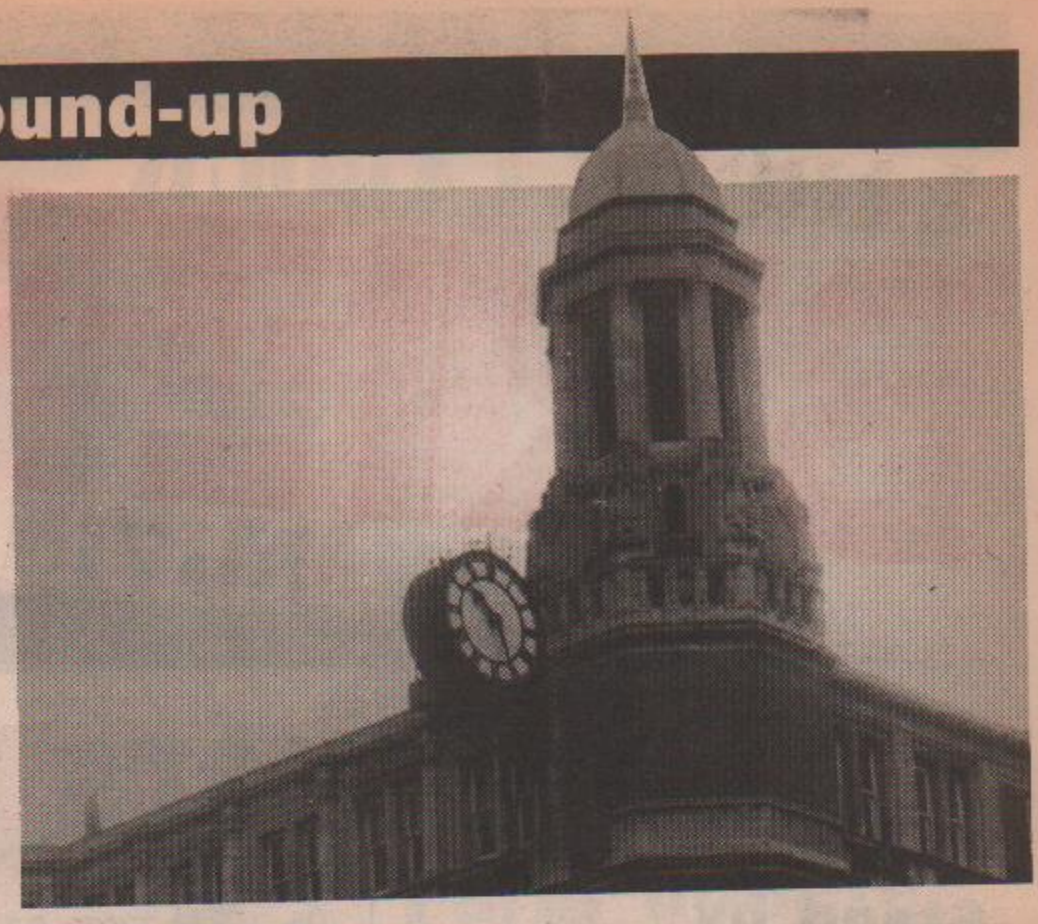
Understandably, the workforce are worried at what is going on. To thicken the mud, the "Southwark NUPE Officers branch" (which contains and works with a number of soft-toothed councillors, and has been used before to attack other Southwark unions) has declared it "will oppose growth posts, in the interests of its members."

No one should be fooled by this smokescreen.

There is only one realistic course of action for socialists:

- Refuse to implement any cuts in jobs or services; improve the service — as we were elected to do (without a rent rise).
- Bridge the budget gap as far as possible by charging certain external bodies (e.g. the police) as much as possible for any services; using our own resources better (e.g. by filling empty flats and starting hard-to-let schemes to increase income, etc.); and adopting all the realistic leaseback and deferred purchase schemes we can (but beware comrades do not pawn your teeth!).
- Full and genuine discussion in the Party and Unions. Open the books! No secrecy! The Party and unions have a right to know!
- Take responsibility for the situation we are in and accept our duty to the movement.

If in the end the books don't balance, be prepared to face the legal consequences. The alternative is doing Thatcher's dirty work.



Brent Budget

Town Hall trade-in?

Brent Labour Group has agreed a budget package involving creative accounting, massive borrowing, lend-back leasing of the Town Hall and other methods as part of the "dented shield" strategy to save services and jobs, and provide a limited amount of capital growth.

A Labour government will be required to bail the Council out within the next 2 years or less. Otherwise, the level of repayments and interest will be such that massive cuts in future will have to be made by a Labour council, unless a policy of deficit financing and illegality is adopted.

This year's deficit of £26 million has been bridged. This still means massive shortfalls regarding implementing the 1986 manifesto. Social services had a projected budget growth of £6.9m cut by the leadership to £700,000, in spite of protests by the Chair of Social Services.

The Party was not consulted. Many vacancies remain unfilled and the recommendations of the Beckford inquiry are unlikely to be properly implemented as a result of limited resources. A management reappraisal scheme is being prepared to improve efficiency and to deal with the low morale in Social Services.

The bulk of capital growth is committed to repairs to estates suffering major structural faults. Grants to housing associations to help reduce homelessness have also been stepped up.

Education, with the various anti-racist and anti-sexist strategies recently adopted, and attacked by the Tories, has also been earmarked as a priority.

The overall strategy, while its goals are limited, should be welcomed compared to the cuts strategy, based on the need to win the 1990 borough elections by not alientating the electorate through massive borrowing. To even contemplate the 1990s when Labour councils are fighting

By Alf Filer Brent East CLP

for survival *now* is to place electoralism above jobs and services. That does not mean to say that we simply accept the budget as sufficient, nor to deny the need to mobilise mass opposition to cuts, whether implemented by the Tories or Labour.

At the time of writing, Brent also faces a critical choice on council rents: to go along with the Tory laws by putting them up, or to carry out Brent East CLP policy of refusing rent rises in line with the Manifesto. Due to the virtual collapse of the LGC, there is no Borough policy to instruct Councillors on this, although the position should be obvious. No doubt we will be hearing the old line about not breaking the law. Try explaining that to unemployed or low-paid tenants.

The Council should use this opportunity to mobilise tenants in opposition to the Tories and open up a new front for defending Brent Council.

The use of ad-men, publicity agents and the like to improve "Brent's image" is regularly talked about, with the Panorama team and other journalists lurking in the Town Hall shadows. A socialist response should be to put more confidence in the users of the services and to open up the Council so that the Labour Group can draw on the strength and support of the people who voted it in with a massive majority last May.

Unfortunately, the only mobilising being done at the moment is by the Tories, when a collection of racists and reactionaries invaded a Council meeting over the issue of rights for Travelling People. One small step could be for the Chair of Finance to cost the Manifesto, which still hasn't been done, present the books in terms that people can understand and not use accountancy gobbledy-gook, and campaign around why the *whole* manifesto is needed *now*.

Unfortunately, the Group and a majority in the party, have accepted the concept of prioritisation which is another way of accepting cuts.

The challenge to Brent Council is to go beyond the Council Chamber. Having raised community expectations, does it break from the past or repeat the same errors? The budget debate should be about far more than balancing the books.

Lambeth budget

Recalled conference quashes struggle

Lambeth's second Borough Conference, on February 22nd, overturned the decision of the first to fight for a budget which begins to implement the Manifesto and to address the needs of local people.

The recalled Conference, notable for the presence of a large LCC contingent (absent from the previous gathering), was dominated by a debate whose terms of reference owed more to the District Auditor than to the implementation of socialist policies.

The Council leadership put forward proposals for some growth and for no cuts in jobs and services, funded by creative accounting measures.

Heated discussion followed a proposal to take on 10% more staff than are currently in post. Staff vacancy levels are currently said to be well *over* 10%; any proposal to recruit less than the existing establishment is clearly a cut.

Cllr Greg Tucker proposed a resolution reaffirming the previous decision to set a budget based on needs, regardless of a deficit, and calling for staff vacancies to be filled,

By Sian Moore Lambeth NALGO (in a personal capacity)

and for the return of a major proportion of capitalised repairs to the revenue budget to release capital for new building. **This was defeated, and the Leadership's budget was supported by a clear majority.**

Limited information has made much of the budget debate obscure and inaccessible to Party and union members. *Briefing* supporters have demanded that the Council fight now rather than wait till next year when the situation will be dire.

The Council leadership has acknowledged that its strategy depends upon a Labour election victory and the subsequent willingness of the Labour leadership to bail out Labour authorities.

In Lambeth, the leadership say neither the trade unions nor the community is prepared to fight the government. But at no time have they tried to build the political campaign which could lead such a fight.

Even now, the Council, despite its efforts at budget balancing, may find itself open to legal challenge and operating what is in effect a deficit budget. If it continues along this road, rather than making cuts, it will lose the support of right and centre within the Party. Left unity within the Council is therefore more vital than ever. Along with unions and community groups, the Leadership should launch a political campaign which openly declares that illegality is the only means of defending jobs, services and local democracy.

Lewisham budget

At Lewisham Borough Local Government Conference, on Sunday March 1st, the Labour Group leadership showed their contempt for democracy and accountability. They presented no policy or strategy for dealing with the crisis facing the council.

They seem to be looking to hold on this year by "creative accountancy"; and "re-allocation of resources" (from where and to what?), in the hope that there will soon be a Labour government to bail them out.

This is at best incredible naivety and at worst cynical manipulation.

Whatever happens in the General Election, the Council will be in a confrontation with the government next year. There will be no way of avoiding huge cuts except by a fight.

If we are to stand any chance of winning that battle, then it is vital that we build the campaign now, with the unions and with the people of Lewisham. Next year will be too late.

By Jane Prust Chair, Deptford CLP (personal capacity)

The leadership have done nothing towards this, naievely preferring to imagine that Neil will come riding over the hill on a white charger and rescue them, although he's already said there'll be no cash hand-outs.

The leadership have deliberately concealed information and refused to give the Party a full account of what they are doing — let alone have an open debate. The BLGC Conference wasn't even allowed to vote on the budget.

Many Party members, no longer able to trust the leadership, have become demoralised. The low turn-out at the BLGC Conference was in effect a vote of no confidence in the Group leadership.

The Lewisham Left Forum are standing a slate in the forthcoming Group elections. We need a leadership committed to fighting for socialist policies, who will be accountable to the Party and who will work with the unions and not against them. Most importantly, we need a leadership with the will to fight and to stand out against cuts.

Support the Left Forum candidates!

Haringey budget

Labour votes 6% rent rise

A last-minute meeting of Haringey's Labour Group decided on a vote of 15-14 (with one abstention) to increase Council rents by 6%.

The manifesto for the last Borough elections committed the Party to not passing on the costs of government penalties to Council tenants. Party policy in the past has been clearly opposed to rent rises.

The Group's decision flaunts both the spirit and

By Mike Marqusee

the letter of the manifesto. It was clearly made, following advice from the Borough Solicitor, in an attempt to avoid illegality at all costs — those costs will now be born not by Labour Councillors, but by Council tenants.

***Briefing* supporters in Haringey will be working to hold the leadership to the manifesto, and to build a genuine campaign for a budget to meet the growing needs of Haringey people.**

Camden update

Labour out of Police Consultative Groups!

At the February meeting of Camden's ruling Labour Group, the political bankruptcy of its leadership became more apparent than ever.

With a 21-17 vote in favour of continued participation in the local Police Consultative Group, the Group ignored the appeals of at least 80 Camden-based groups, representing the black community, women, gays and lesbians, the unemployed, law centres, the Irish community, trade unions, etc., which have come out against participation in this unaccountable and cosmetic committee.

And because Borough Conference, Hampstead & Highgate GC, and the LGC have also voted against participation, the Group has also now set itself against the Party.

Yet, by approximately the same vote, the Group decided to drop the disciplinary action against two senior NALGO members for their role in organising the January 22nd picket of the Police Consultative Group. The Group realised that if they did not withdraw the disciplinary action, they were set to become embroiled in a major dispute, simultaneously isolating the Council from the unions, community groups and a good portion of the Labour Party in Camden.

Meanwhile, the right wing "Backbenchers Committee" has arranged a meeting with the District Auditor and the Finance Director to discuss Camden's economic situation. The leadership's appraisal seems to be that they agree with the right, but can't trust them, whereas they can trust the left but don't agree with them. Thus the leadership survives in a political limbo, looking to the right for support and to the left for principles.

Neither the Group nor the party has yet dealt with those councillors — i.e. Hulme and Latham — who allegedly assaulted women on the January 222nd picket. These two councillors initiated the disciplinary action, rather than argue the matter politically through the party and the Group.

By Woody Haut and Steve Taylor Hampstead & Highgate CLP

At the same time, Hulme brought in a Tory member of Camden Ratepayers — an organisation that took the council to court during the rate-capping campaign — to make a statement on his behalf.

So the leadership is now reaping the whirlwind of its own political opportunism, and in doing so it's alienating both trade unions and community groups.

The self-organised groups will have nothing to do with Councillors Hulme and Latham; and they've insisted, quite rightly, that it's up to the Labour Party to deal with them. Until that matter is dealt with, and Camden withdraws from the PCG, these groups will continue to have little faith in the Labour Party.

The leadership argue that continued participation in the PCG is in the manifesto. That commitment has now been overturned by Borough Conference; consequently there's no reason why the manifesto should still be used as a fettish object on this particular issue, and as a way to marginalise self-organised groups.

What the leadership refuses to recognise is the need to campaign amongst that part of the community that might support the PCG, such as TAs, dominated as they are by white males with their more traditoinal labourist attitudes, and to convince them that non-participation is correct.

Nonetheless,the campaign to get out of the PCG has had some positive results. The left has actively joined self-organised groups and trade unions in a campaign that has important implications for the future. As a comrade from the Black Workers' Group said, the Labour Group's decision was not the final word on the PCG. On this particular subject, those who are up against the police on a daily basis have the right to set the policy.



"With you in a minute, gov... just stopping to do some consulting with the workers..."

Publishing against apartheid

Why we sell progressive South African books

Third World Publications has for many years imported and distributed a wide range of books published in South Africa.

We have always chosen books which come from the struggle against apartheid. These books reflect a variety of political viewpoints — ranging from liberation theology and black consciousness through to a class based non-racial analysis of conflict in South Africa.

We distribute South African books because we believe that the views of people struggling against apartheid should be available in Britain.

We believe it is practical, supportive and useful to allow these voices to be heard. The British media present only a narrow and distorted range of opinions from South Africa. The publications we import provide a wider and more authentic range of opinions which come directly out of the struggles in South Africa.

By Third World Publications Ltd
151 Stratford Road
Birmingham BR1 1RD

Publishers like Ravan and Skotaville do not merely comment on these struggles from the outside, they are part of them and publish in support of the liberation struggle.

For example, Ravan Press has originated the "Stafrider" magazine and creative writing series (reviewed by "The African Communist")) as part of the idiom of our times) — one of which, "Fools and Other Stories", was a joint winner of the Noma Award for publishing in Africa. It also services and publishes for a wide a range of organisations including: Open School ("Two dogs and Freedom"); History Resources Project ("Thirty years of the Freedom Charter"); South African Research Service ("South African Review"); South African Labour Bulletin ("Essays on South African Labour History"); Sached ("The Right to learn"); History Workshop (the widely acclaimed "Gold and Workers"); Congress of South Africa Trade Unions ("COSATU Workers Diary").

No British political publisher could say that it has such deep roots in struggle, that it publishes for community and political organisations, and that it is, like Ravan, owned by a Trust in which such organisations are represented.

Critical publishing survives despite repression. Books are produced by authors who are in hiding. Stocks are removed from bookshop shelves. Clearly, the South African state has recognised the subversive role of oppositional publishing by censoring, banning and harassing all those involved in critical publishing. For example, the following books have at one time all been banned: *Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter, Egoli, Call me not a man, and Third Day of September.*

It would be an act of political idiocy to collaborate with this repression by refusing to distribute such books in Britain.

Radical writers in South Africa want their views to be known in Britain. To ignore these views, as some supporters of the Cultural Boycott suggest we should, is to suppress them: this is no logical way to support the struggle against apartheid.

This does not contradict our general support for the Cultural and Economic Boycott. The proper target of this campaign should be those goods and services, produced under conditions of exploitation, for the profit of capital, which deliberately or inadvertently support the Apartheid system.

A Cultural Boycott which isolates South African racists is necessary; but a Cultural Boycott which suppresses revolutionary ideas serves only to isolate and weaken those at the centre of the struggle in South Africa.

A Black South African teacher recently told one of our members that to fail to distribute oppositional books was doing Botha's work for him.

It is our intention to support the liberation struggle by selling books that come out of the struggle.

We look forward to the destruction of Apartheid and the creation of a democratic classless South Africa.

London letters

What "wider implications" for the cultural boycott?

The closing of *The Bijers Sunbird* may have been a victory for the Anti-Apartheid Movement, as Steve Parry claims (*LLB*, no. 70). It was not a victory for the anti-apartheid struggle.

As the heading to his article puts it, it is "Victory with wider implications".

His article confirms the fears I expressed in my critique (*LLB*, no. 69) — the AAM's claim to monopoly of the liberation struggle in Britain:

"...Labour Party members must regard themselves as committed to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and should always look to it for guidance on South African issues."

For some reason best known to himself, he excludes Black Sections from this edict. They have "a right to their own positions." Can this be because of the profound distrust among Blacks of the white middle class leadership of the AAM?

We should be quite clear about the "wider implications". Taken to its logical conclusion, Parry is saying that the AAM leadership is always right; its tactics and strategy must not be challenged.

Open and frank discussion of policy, strategy and tactics is the very life-blood of the socialist movement. Where it is replaced by sterial conformism it leads to the horrors of Stalinism and the excesses of Mao's Cultural Revolution; or to Kinnock's witch-hunts, and Ken Gill's scandalous treatment of David Kitson (*LB*, no. 38, p12).

This has nothing in common with the "openness" which demands the "right" of racists and fascists to a "fair hearing".

Parry writes that "The editors of *LLB* would never have printed such an attack if it had been directed at, say, striking miners and printers..."

How mistaken can he be? If striking workers were led along the wrong road, it would not only be right but the duty of *LLB* to give voice to criticism of that leadership. Pete Cooper's articles on Wapping and the NCU strike are topical examples.

The trouble with Parry is that he confuses *unconditional* support with *uncritical* support. All socialists must give *unconditional* support to the liberation struggles in South Africa, Ireland, the Philippines and elsewhere, but they must never hesitate to voice constructive criticism where they consider it justified.

The Paul Simon affair is only one more example of an attempt to impose the totalitarian cultural boycott. I would have thought that the anti-apartheid credentials of Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masakala are more deeply-rooted and certainly longer established than Steve Parry's.

They have openly supported Paul Simon's efforts to give the great musicians of Soweto a wider audience. It is important, also, to realise that (though the AAM in practice does not acknowledge this) while the ANC is the dominant political organisation in South Africa's liberation struggle, there are other legitimate organisations with a proud tradition and a sizeable following, AZAPO being, perhaps, the principle one of these.

These organisations, too, are open to criticism and the ANC has never hesitated to voice strong criticism of these rival organisations. And so it should be.

The existence of more than one organisation fighting apartheid, and the strong democratic conditions of the independent Trade Unions are the surest guarantees against the establishment of a one-party state in post-apartheid South Africa (Azania).

Finally, it is essential to stress that writers, artists, the theatre, have a big part to play in the liberation struggle. Despite the repressive laws and censorship, an alternative, grass roots culture has been created in the townships. Those of us who oppose apartheid must encourage and not suppress these efforts.

Never forget that it was the Nazi, Herman Goering, who said: "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my gun."

Charlie van Gelderen
Brent South CLP

Correction

*In the last **London Labour Briefing** the article "Disaster in Docklands" incorrectly implied that "a highly profitable US/Swiss banking consortium ... (which) is to be subsidised by up to £2 billion of public money" was active in redeveloping the Royal Albert and Victoria Docks. The consortium, and the £2 billion, are in fact going for the development of **Canary Wharf**. This was an editorial mistake.*

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Socialist Action responds to critics

Dear Comrades,

Towards the end of last year you published an article accusing supporters of *Socialist Action* in Southall of racism. The writer/s, using a pen name, asserted that because we did not support the local Black Section candidate rather than another black candidate in the reselection process, we were using neo-colonial methods.

A recent issue of *Briefing* carried an article by Cllr Kevin Vanness strongly criticising us and supporters of *Militant* for failing to support a massive rate increase of an estimated 80% for the residents of Ealing Borough.

In both cases we are atacked from a supposedly "left" position. I would like to briefly reply through your letters page.

Supporters of *Socialist Action* in Southall had campaigned for two years before the reselection for a black candidate to be adopted. We had also asked the Black Sections to propose a candidate, but to no avail. As the reselection neared, we supported Valerie Vaz, a local supporter of Black Sections.

After "battle lines" had been drawn, people committed to one candidate or another, and nominations had started coming in, the local Black Section made a last minute nomination. Along with most of the left and black members, we did not think this was serious.

In the event this candidate only attracted two sympathy votes. Valerie Vaz was the closest challenger to the sitting MP, Syd Bidwell. Obviously in such local situations there is more involved than we could fit into a letter, but we felt we had made the right tactical decision. Unfortunately, the comrade who stood from the local Black Section felt very bitter and we found ourselves attacked in the pages of the local right wing newspaper as well as in *Briefing*. Perhaps *Briefing* could have contacted us before attacking us for racism and failing to support "the candidate of the black community".

Ealing Labour Group justify their huge rate increase on the grounds that this would allow them to implement their election manifesto. Even if this is true, which is arguable, it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. Thse hardest hit will be low wage earners, pensioners and especially those just above eligibility to claim a rebate.

It is a cut in the standard of living for thousands and will divide the local working class and badly off people. Furthermore, under new Tory rules, people on benefit will have to find 20% of their rates. Nobody pretends that the Labour Group have an easy choice, as a deficit budget or defiance of the government on this issue is a fight the left have been on the losing side of. But better to defy the government and put blame where it belongs than for a *Labour* Council to cut living standards.

Unfortunately, Kevin's article was deliberately very one-sided, which is a sad reflection of the narrow attitude taken by the left of Ealing Council.

Yours comradely,
Oliver New
Southall

ILEA fudges its budget again

ON COURSE FOR CUTS



PHOTO: Sally & Richard Greenhill

ILEA leader Frances Morrell

By Mike Loosely Secretary, Inner London Teachers Association

For the last two years the ILEA members have set a maximum legal precept (their part of the rates) under the rate-capping legislation and have tried various means to bridge an inevitable gap between making no cuts and the money available to them.

Each year this becomes more difficult. This year it has become almost impossible, but once more it is being tried.

There is a gap of £102 million between what is needed for a no cuts budget and what a maximum legal precept will give in income. By creative accountancy, reduction in contingencies and balances, and capitalisation, they will leave a gap of £51.2m to bridge — how will be decided during the year.

There is no talk of a "no cuts" budget — an *illegal* budget — from any quarter. It is another gigantic fudge, in the hope that the cuts will not be noticed.

Several matters have been of great concern to the Unions in the weeks up to the budget:

- a total failure to meet and consult us until the last minute, despite assurances and impressions to the contrary;
- the members have been unwilling to take the Unions into their confidence, insisting "trust us, we cannot reveal our hand to the government."

Nevertheless, they will have to find the £51.2m during the year. We fear that the authority will have to pursue non-filling of vacancies, as well as other cuts in all budgets.

They are already committted to attempting to save £19m on the compulsory redeployment of teachers. We remain implacably opposed to this. It is a financial cuts measure, despite their dressing it up as "improved career oopportunities for teachers."

There are still many things facing us which require more teachers not fewer (the budget cuts the teaching force by over 200 teachers): GCSE resourcing, mother tongue and English as a second language teaching, children with special needs in ordinary schools... just to mention a few.

The Authority have completely overturned the good features of the previous redeployment agreement: that there would be no individual identification of teachers and all movement would be voluntary.

This is completely opposite to Greater London Labour Party policy, which lays down that there should be no compulsory redeployment of any staff. This is a matter of concern to all unions; what they can get away with for their largest workforce they can do for others.

Defend ILEA!
Tuesday March 24th, 7.30pm
County Hall
Speakers include:
Mike Loosely, *Secretary ILTA*
Steve Cowan, *ILEA member, Westminster North*
Hilda Kean, *President, Westminster NUT*

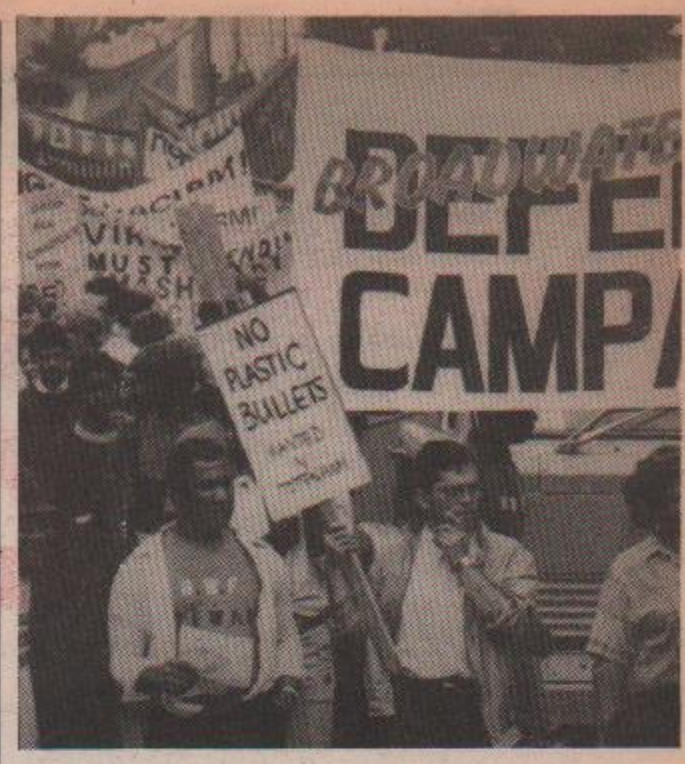


PHOTO: Jez Coulson (IFL)

Broadwater Farm update

Two of the defendants standing trial for the alleged murder of PC Keith Blakelock have been acquitted following the judge's ruling that police evidence against them was inadmissible.

This is a major victory for the people of Broadwater Farm and for the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, which has insisted throughout the Old Bailey trials that police evidence, based on false confessions signed under duress, is bogus.

The judge was quick to advise the jury that the acquittal of two of the defendants should have no bearing on the remainder of the trial. We can only hope the jury disregard this biased remark.

Already, a key prosecution witness has been discredited by defence counsel. Jason Cobham admitted in court that he was living under 24-hour police protection in accommodation provided by the police and that the evidence he had previously given against defendants was false.

The prosecution allegation that "a mob of youths" planned to cut off PC Blakelock's head and plant it on a pole is based entirely on a single statement made by a youth in police custody — a statement since vehemently denied by the youth in question.

Find out more from: Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, 78 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm Estate, London N17.

Hackney's boxing ban

From the Red Corner...

Charlie Chaplin and my grandfather had things in common.

They were born around the same time in the last century in the same neighbourhood between the Walworth and Old Kent Roads in South East London, and having had very little or no formal education they each found an opening for their different talents in fields that had always been open to working class people — one was the music hall and the other boxing.

When I heard the news of Hackney's boxing ban I felt real pain and outrage. After all the sufferings and attacks the working class has had to put up with from the capitalist class and even from their own labour movement leaders, here was Hackney Labour Council doing the same.

By Linda Clarke (Leading with the Left!) Haringey Briefing Supporter

I am fed up with middle class morality, and it's no better when it comes from the mouths of socialists. You are insulting the working class of Hackney, including those local boxers whose successes you should be proud of. You should be offering more opportunities to working class youth in Hackney, not reducing the few that are available.

I've heard two arguments against boxing: one, that it reinforces male violence, and two, that it is medically dangerous.

On the first, as a woman I can only say what about your average film shown on TV and in cinemas? Are those going to be banned? I hope not: let people choose for themselves. Censorship is not the way forward.

On the medical question, surely there are no more injuries in boxing than in many other sports (including football, rugby, and contact sports like karate and kung-fu, widely sponsored by Labour Councils) and you should be working to improve medical controls. As with most other things, banning what you don't agree with is counterproductive.

Music Halls died out, and in our society sport, including boxing, remains the only opportunity for many working class people to advance or express themselves personally, one of the few areas where they will be judged for their abilities, and not on their background or colour.

Hackney Council should concentrate on attacking the enemies of working class people and improving opportunities for youth. *End of Round 2.*

Conference Adverts

Briefing **is asking all readers to ensure that their organisations place an advert in *Briefing* for London Region Labour Party Conference.**
Let us have the name of the organisation, the message to Conference and the remittance by March 31st.
Cost £5 per col. inch (minimum 2 col inches).
Send to Briefing, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5

Ealing weighting

Yet another "left" Labour Council has decided to test its machismo by trying to break white collar union NALGO.

NALGO members in Ealing are on all-out strike over their claim for London weighting. The cost of living in Ealing is as high as anywhere in inner London but the Council's wages are less.

Whilst Labour leader Len Turner accepts the justice of the claim he uses the old cry "We can't afford it", as the Council slaps on a 65% rate increase.

When NALGO members implemented the official ballot decision to ban overtime, not co-operate with councillors and not collect money the Council responded with an immediate lock-out of some 30 people on March 2nd. That afternoon other sections came out in support, and the planned one-day stoppage turned into an indefinite strike which has overwhelming support, closing down the Town Hall.

The Council has miscalculated the degree of strength and it is mistaken in its view that the union would easily be crushed. Many NALGO members — especially women — are low paid, and London weighting is no luxury.

By an Ealing NALGO member

EVENTS

Send details of events in London to *Labour Briefing*, 26 Crofton Road, London SE5, or phone them in on 733 7016. Please include access details.

FRI MAR 13
★*LLB* no. 72: deadline for articles to be notified to EB; EB meeting.

SAT MAR 14
★**March for Mandela.** 1pm, Whittington Park, N19. Support the non-stop picket

MAR 16-24
Central America Week. For details of London events and publicity material, contact 82 Margaret St, W1N 8LH, 631 5173.

WED MAR 18
★**LLB No. 72.** Deadline for articles to arrive in office.

THU MAR 19
★**LB Editorial Board meeting.**

THU MAR 26
★**Islington Labour Briefing.** Meeting for all readers/supporters to discuss General Election campaign. Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N4, 8pm.

FRI MAR 27
★**Conference on criminal justice.** Islington Town Hall, 9.30-5.30, organised by Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice. £10 waged, £2 unwaged (includes info pack and coffee). Further details: LCCJ, 12 Cromwell Road, Alperton, Middlesex, HA0 1JS.

SAT MAR 21
★**Deptford Labour Party Social.** Disco, food, political pub quiz. Labour Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham SE13.

★**Booksale.** *Briefing* on sale at secondhand booksale, 12-3, Labour Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham SE13.

SAT/SUN MAR 28/29
★***Labour Briefing Conference*** at Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton. See *Building Briefing* page.

TUE Mar 31
★Benefit for **Wheelers Strikers,** Peckham. Details 379 5098.

SAT APR 4
★**London Health Emergency** AGM. 1-4pm, Camden Town Hall, Judd St. Details 833 3020.

SAT APR 4/SUN APR 5
★**Labour Committee on Ireland** AGM. You have to go to Manchester Town Hall for this one!

SAT APR 11/SUN APR 12
★**GLLP Conference, Poplar Civic Centre.**

SAT APR 11
★**Women's Health.** Tower Hamlets Women's Council, GLLP fringe/public meeting, lunchtime. Mildred Gordon, Paula Uddin, TH Health Campaign, Chair Andrea Campbell, DHA.

SAT MAY 2
★National **Demonstration for Lesbian and Gay Rights,** Haringey. Sponsored by Positive Images, c/o Reading Matters, Lymington Ave, London N22.

Left wing members of the London Executive will be calling an open meeting shortly after Regional Conference to organise the fightback and to defend London Labour Party policy.