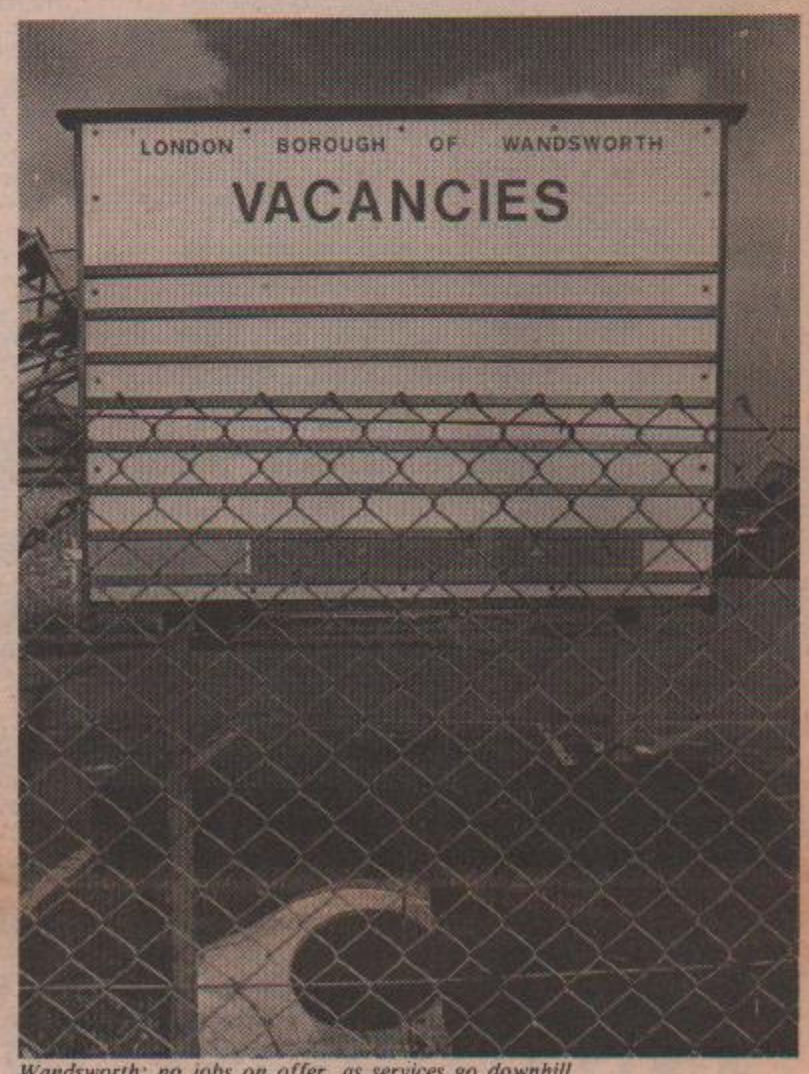
LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
40p
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Wandsworth: the facts behind the "showcase":

STOP THIS TORY MENACE!



Wandsworth: no jobs on offer, as services go downhill.

The nightmare of yet another Tory general election victory hangs over us all.

If the Tories win, privatisation will run rampant — and what has happened to the London Borough of Wandsworth will be used as a model to inflict on the country as a whole.

The Tories are fond of boasting of their achievements in Wandsworth. Yet their propaganda offensive can easily be punctured by socialists willing to learn the facts.

The importance of the Wandsworth experience lies here: if we can expose their showcase achievement, a useful service will have been performed on behalf of all those determined *not* simply to sit back and let the Tories win.

The Tories' contribution to employment

Thirteen different services in Wandsworth have been privatised since 1981. From tree-pruners to toilet attendants, mechanics to sweepers, caretakers to caterers — 1,300 workers have lost their jobs to the privatisation juggernaut. And over twice this many — 3,000 Council employees at least — have been slung out of the Council workforce of over 7,000 for one reason or another since the Tories came to power here in 1978.

As if to add insult to injury, Christopher Chope (Council leader until 1983) chose to describe his actions as doing the workers a favour, asking if they really wanted to be stuck in menial jobs for the rest of their working lives? He pretended to ignore the fact that the lack of jobs (16,000 are out of work in the Borough) would condemn 2,000 ex-Council employees to remain on the dole to this day (in many cases five years after being sacked). Many of these victims would cheerfully break Chope's kneecaps in return for the "favour" he has done them as well as for his crass remarks.

Privatisation — the facts

The Tories have never gone into an election with privatisation as a high profile, and it's easy to see why. All the contracts have fallen into difficulty; and some of the more dramatic failures are worth noting.

Remember Pritchards?

Once a symbol of the "new broom" Pritchards have now been swept out of the Borough.

According to the Council's own default system, Pritchard's road-sweeping contract should have been torn up 6 months after it started in 1982. But Wandsworth continued to look like a tip for 5 years until the contract ran out — because of the high political stakes involved.

But not even this could save Pritchard's gardening contract, fully revealing the hypocrisy of Tory dogma which claims "laissez-faire" yet verges on corruption.

The Council's own bid for this work was undercut only by two "silly bids" from firms which had never done gardening before. One was Pritchards.

So desperate were Chope and his side-kick Richard Hickmet to score another private victory before becoming MPs, that they trod all over reason, deputation and the advice of the Director, and gave the work to Pritchards at a paltry saving of £30,000 (in a contract costing half a million a year!).

When the Council was forced to tear up Pritchard's contract 8 months later (they had defaulted not once or twice but 130 times!) they not only refused to reinstate direct labour, but refused to let the Department even submit a

By Dave Benlow

tender in the rearranged "auction". And the firm that subsequently got the work, Tyler's, lowered their bid by over £100,000 p.a. in order to get it.

Ever since this debacle, those Council officers willing to mark up penalty points have found their work increasingly blocked by higher management — a testimony to the organisational "fixing" which accompanies privatisation.

In 5 years, Pritchards never gave their sweepers a pay rise. Yet they were quite happy to take the inflation-proofed increases the Council gave them each year.

But this is just one firm. Nine in all have picked at the fat carcass of Council services.

Grand Met left Paladin bins on Council estates unemptied for 9 to 13 weeks, and have constantly missed them since. They also sent workers out in dustcarts condemned by Public Health Officers as death-traps.

In 1985, after some embarassing moments in the Chamber, the Council decided to award the Old People's Homes catering contract to ARA Services, a firm which community groups in the United States have accused of being linked with the underworld.

The Tories' contribution to solving the housing problem

Initial Cleaning Services are on their second "final" warning — they "clean" Housing Estates after the sacking of resident caretakers.

Initial were first warned ten months after taking over the contract. Small wonder. To undercut the Department's bid, Initial paid workers a wretched £2 an hour and increased workloads by up to 500%.

Tenants' Associations petitioned the Council in horror about the slippery paths and rubbish-strewn passageways, but got no change. Perhaps they didn't expect to — they had lobbied together almost as one to oppose the abandonment of the resident caretaking system, but it had fallen on deaf ears.

But then the tenants' lobby has little effect in Wandsworth these days:

- The Tories have built no Council Houses since 1978.
- They've increased rents by nearly 300%.
- They've flogged off several thousand Council homes (1,000 directly to people who live outside the Borough) and these are now being gobbled up as prime sites by the fat building conglomerates.
- The Housing Revenue spending has been cut by 76% in 7 years!

There are plenty more beans to spill about Wandsworth. Unhappily, the Labour Group — believing the issue to be a vote-loser, have been woefully weak on the issue of local privatisation.

And just for having the guts to publish the kind of material Labour should have been circulating before last year's Council Election, the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and the Trades Council now face prosecution under Tory election laws.

Privatisation is a Tory vote-"winner" we can turn on its head. It's a pity Neil Kinnock doesn't find out more about it — he could use the facts to help *win* the coming election instead of losing it as he seems intent on doing at present.

Don't sit back and let the Tories boast about their "showpiece" council. Find out the facts about Wandsworth, and arm Neil Kinnock, your local Labour councillors, your election agent and everyone else with the facts about Wandsworth... paradise for the multinationals.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Education News

HMI report on Brent schools

Exposing Baker's scare stories

The education service in Brent once again came under national scrutiny on April 24th with the publication of a hastily-prepared report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI).

Back in the autumn, when the "popular" press were running amok with stories about "race spies" and "thought police", Kenneth Baker announced that he was sending an HMI team to Brent forthwith to expose the Council and its evil works.

And yet, while making valid criticisms of education in Brent, the report is not the clear cut indictment Baker wanted.

It is important to remember the context in which the report was commissioned. The impression deliberately fostered by the press was that Brent Council had an obsession to force its anti-racist and anti-sexist policies (in particular the former) on teachers, parents, and students to the detriment of "basic" education — the "three Rs".

This issue has also been adopted by some headteachers and local Union leaders, as witnessed in the Panorama programme last month.

But the report is clear — in

By Colin Adams
Brent NUT
(personal capacity)

the eyes of the HMI the Borough's policies on race and gender are supported locally and are enhancing, not harming education.

It is interesting that the HMI found in the South of the borough (where most black parents live) that many people did not think the policies went far enough. It was in the North of the Borough, mostly, where criticism was met.

The report does make several telling criticisms — low expectations, poor standards of marking, boring work in some schools. Many people in the borough have been saying the same for a long time.

Brent's own report, *The Two Kingdoms*, published last year, said that in many secondary schools, particularly in the South, there was an unacceptably low standard of work.

Morale

The report did point to low teacher morale as one cause — this is generally the situation throughout Britain at present, but in Brent the relationship between Council and local NUT leaders is particularly strained.

Many teachers lay the blame for this at the door of those Union leaders through their reactionary behaviour recently over the McGoldrick issue, Panorama, etc.

What should the Council do? A good start was made in accepting the report as a constructive one.

The HMI team were very embarrassed at being used by Baker in an openly political manner. They obviously met many teachers and parents who support the Borough's policies — the Council must seize the initiative by mobilising these people against the reactionary elements.

Blame

This is an opportunity to point the finger of blame at Baker and the Tories. After all, many of the faults can and should be laid at their door — lack of funds for buildings, intransigence leading to industrial action, lack of material incentive to teach in London, etc.

Should Labour not win the forthcoming General Election, Brent Council will need to mobilise all sympathetic people against the next onslaught. They need to be rallied now.

● Postscript: Following lengthy discussion, Brent LGC on April 30th decided to hold proper hustings again for Chair and Vice Chair of Education, to implement the Party's democratic procedures. Until these are carried out, the status quo prevails.

ILTA after NUT Conference

Long, hot summer ahead

This is the time of the year, just after Easter, when the London left in the NUT reviews the gains and losses of the National Union Conference.

A number of key issues were defeated, but by a narrow majority.

In fact the left made a great step forward. It can now, in key votes, gain just under half the vote — a major advance compared with a few years ago.

The key issue was opposition to the Baker legislation. There was general agreement that the Pay and Conditions Act was the most fundamental attack on trade union rights by this government.

Means by which it could be fought showed a wide divergence of opinion. Basically the Executive have decided, in conjunction with the NAS/UWT, to work to rule and do no more than is required under the legislation. The trouble with this approach is that it implicitly accepts the basis of the legislation.

In London the attitude of the ILEA will be crucial. Will they try to enforce the contract? All the signs are that they will. This will undoubtedly lead to a confrontation with teachers.

By Mike Loosely
ILTA General Secretary

Linked into this is the question of no-cover action. After a long debate an ILTA motion calling for absolute no-cover in secondary schools and one day no-cover in primary schools was defeated narrowly. It is interesting that an Executive weakening amendment was also defeated.

There is no doubt that the members in London will resist going back to cover. The ILEA already has plans to deduct pay for not covering. It is hoped that they can be persuaded to drop this in favour of doing a local cover deal.

The Conference was more united in accepting a London amendment to reject all forms of National testing advocated by Baker. There is no doubt that the government not only wants to smash teachers' trade union rights but also wants to take education out of the hands of the local education authorities and their electors. A nationally imposed curriculum would be one step in this direction.

Apart from all this the other main issue facing London teachers this coming term is the compulsory redeployment scheme. The ILEA have agreed to meet the NUT for discussions but they need to make a fundamental shift to satisfy us.

The two flanks of our policy are the withdrawal of individual designation and the withdrawal of compulsory transfer. While all this goes on, the queston of the suspension and expulsion of the ILTA officers is still unresolved. We could see a long, hot summer in the ILEA.

I obtained a High Court Injuction just before Easter preventing the union from carrying out their suspension of myself. The case is due to be heard in the coming months.

Support from other unions would be welcome. Please contact the ILTA office, Top Floor, Monson Primary Schools, Hunsden Road, London SE14, tel. 01 732 2514.

TO ALL LESBIANS AND GAY MEN LIVING AND WORKING IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Lewisham Council wants to help end discrimination against Lesbians & Gay Men who live or work in the Borough.

What are the most important issues? How should it be tackling them?

Make sure your views are known — Come to our series of

CONSULTATION MEETINGS on

TUESDAY MAY 12th
TUESDAY JUNE 9th
TUESDAY JULY 14th

at

THE ALBANY CENTRE
DOUGLAS WAY, SE8
starting at 7.30pm

Creche & Carers allowances available
Wheelchair access & Signer
Women's bus leaves
The Albany at
10pm & 10.30pm
Refreshments
There are separate and independent Lesbian only and Gay Men only meetings

A final Conference to prioritise issues and examine how they can best be worked on is being organised for

Saturday, September 12th, 11am-4pm,
Civic Suite, Catford Rd, SE6

Further information from Sarah, Outreach Team — 690 6368

Part-time lecturers demand:

Haringey: set the pace!

Haringey currently employs a large number of part time lecturers in Further and Adult Education, who are at present denied minimum employment rights and safeguards.

Receiving short-term contracts of no more than a term at a time, part-timers often have to look for new work each year or, in some cases, each term.

Because of their status, part-time lecturers are often unaware of their basic employment rights. Not only do they have constantly to worry about their future employment, but they have to compete with their colleagues for the few hours that are available.

To alleviate this, the part-timers campaign has attempted to inform part-timers of their rights and encourage them to join NATFHE. Additionally, many full timers, in spite of the union ban, continue to teach overtime, and thus deny part-timers of any additional work.

Women constitute over 60% of the part-time teaching staff, whereas they comprise only 40% of the full-time staff. Choosing part-time work for various reasons, many women depend on the money they receive from such work as their primary source of income. The maintenance of a pool of casual labour is a clear example of indirect sex discrimination.

Of course, Haringey is not the only Authority where part-time lecturers suffer these injustices. Because we're aware of this borough's Equal Opportunities policies, and because we've just received support from a number of councillors — even the Chair of the Education Committee has admitted that the Authority has been a negligent employer of part-time FE lecturers — we have asked Haringey:

● to offer fractional appointments, which must include such benefits as sick pay, holiday pay, maternity pay, access to pensions, etc., to all part-timers who rely on this work as their main source of income;

● immediately to reform the pay system so that part-timers receive automatic monthly payment on the same basis as full time staff (part-timers now have to wait up to three months to receive their pay);

● to eradicate the practice of systematic overtime by full-time staff;

● to give part-timers access to in-service training on the same basis as full-timers;

● to give part-timers the right to full participation in the democratic procedures of their respective educational institutions.

For further information, contact Woody Haut, 01 372 6094.

London letter

Forward with *what* left?

Dear *London Briefing*,

In the last issue, Narendra Makanji urges us to campaign for a Labour victory by proclaiming our record on equality and democracy. Fine.

But he misses out one point. Why should we not also go to the polls on Labour councils' fine record of not making cuts, not attacking working class living standards?

Well, John Wray gives the answer on the same page. Rightly exposing those behind the "Friends of Waltham Forest", and condemning attacks on Council leader Neil Garrard, he dismisses — to all intent and purposes — those who marched against a 62% rate increase as, essentially, silly.

He omits to mention just how the Labour Party in W. Forest will go about mobilising these people to defend the Labour Council against the government next year.

Come on *Briefing*, as well as blaming Kamikaze Kinnock for sabotaging Labour's electoral chances, don't ignore the Councils who are asking the working class to vote for a Party which has just reduced the value of their pay packets.

Incidentally, John asks if a 62% rate rise is sufficient to stir up such a backlash, what could a Labour government expect if it sought radically to redistribute economic power on a massive scale?

Hopefully, John, a Labour government will be pressurised to redistribute economic power from the *wealthy*, the ruling class, to the working class. It is the Tories that have been redistributing wealth by inflicting disproportionately greater tax burdens on the poorer sections of society. It's about time Labour stopped following this example.

Comradely,
Jenny Fisher
Tower Hamlets.

Fascists reorganise in Brent & Harrow

STOP THIS THREAT!

Following a secret meeting of a pathetic 31 people, a new branch of the NF has recently been formed in the Harrow area.

While the meeting itself was kept private, the fact that the Nazis feel confident enough to attempt to reorganise and plan public leafletting activities in the Kenton area shows the need for all anti-racist organisations to come together in a united front ready to mobilise against them.

A few years ago, members of the local Labour Party and SWP were arrested by the police for holding stalls in Kingsbury and actively campaigning to get the Front off the streets.

No doubt, with the election as an excuse, we will see the NF attempting to demand their "democratic rights". Once again the left and local black and women's organisations must prepare to deny them any platform at all, in spite of any election laws.

By Alf Filer
Brent East CLP

We should not wait to react to the NF presence, but organise now a series of public anti-facist/anti-racist campaigns which can build the support to develop a mass movement required to stop the growth of local fascist groups and so make it impossible for them to build any base.

In Brent, this means that the Labour Group must use the wide support for their anti-racist/anti-sexist policies to build such a campaign as the most effective way of countering the press and Tory smears.

The difficulty in this is that certain local trade union leaders in the NUT have effectively been campaigning to undermine our anti-racist policies, and the Labour Group have made very limited efforts to campaign publicly. The Trades Council continues to go into further decline with the contraction of local industry. As for the SWP, the present position on McGoldrick and the Black Teachers Group makes their anti-racist policies rather questionable.

The NF may be small and appear insignificant today, limiting their activities to the northern part of the Borough, but the issues they raise need to be challenged by Socialists. Anyone considering tactical voting in the area must be reminded that when it comes to racism, the Alliance have shown little concern for the issue.

Class collaboration with the Liberals and SDP means attacking the rights of Travelling People, supporting the racist nature of our education system, and voting for cuts which will hit the living standards of a predominantly Black population through worsening of local services.

The local Labour Parties need to ensure that central to any campaign must be total opposition to immigration laws, the right to Black self-organisation and self-defence, and no platform for fascists or racists. In the past, Brent Labour Councils have refused to hire out halls to fascists and this remains part of our manifesto.

When an attempt was made last year to set up an Anti-Fascist Action group, only 6 members from Brent Labour Parties turned up, and the conclusion drawn from this was that people felt the NF was not a serious threat.

It was pointed out that certain key Nazis were believed to be moving into the Kilburn area and that some were identified at the occupation of the Town Hall against the Travelling people.

Although the Tories were largely responsible for mobilising the lumpen racists, the Liberals did little to distance themselves from them. The Labour Group's atrocious handling of the issue only played into the hands of racists.

No doubt, there will be those in the Party who will bring out the old arguments of "leave it to the police, you can't break the law, and anyway they should be ignored."

Obvious those comrades still haven't learned any lessons from the '30s and '70s and never will. However, in Brent, with its large Black, Jewish, Asian, Irish and travelling populations, the issue of racism and fascism can never be conveniently ignored and we have to be forever prepared to challenge racism, no matter from which quarter it may come.

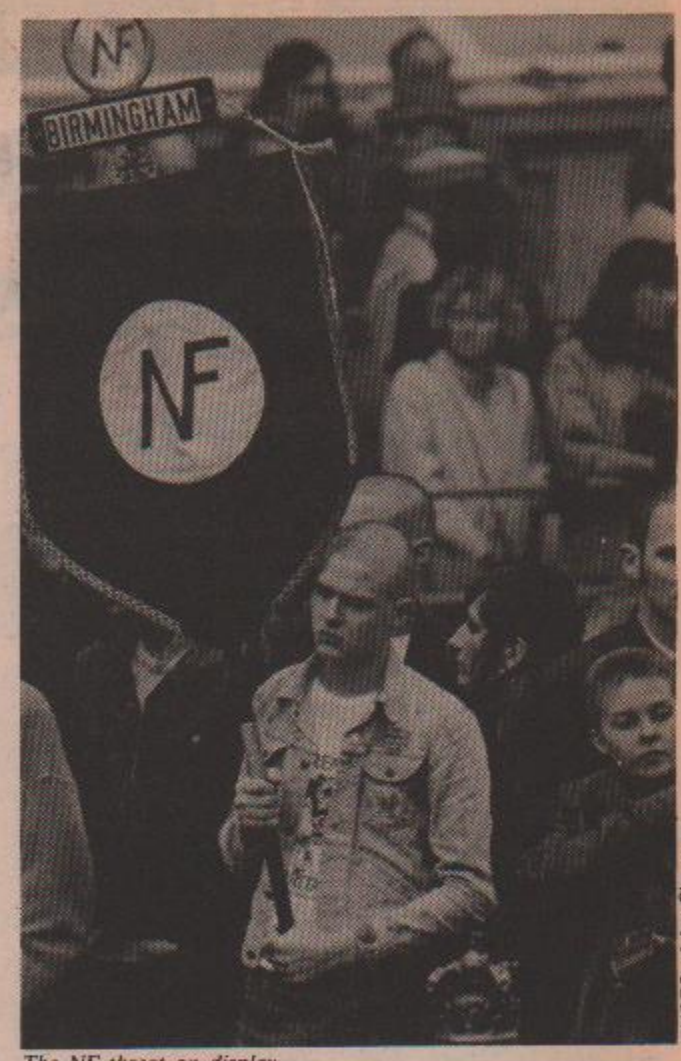


PHOTO: John Chapman

The NF threat on display

Labour Party Round-Up

Hillingdon AGM

Biggest reshuffle in history!

Hillingdon Labour Group has emerged from its Annual General Meeting with its first ever left of centre leadership.

The old guard right wing lost substantial ground, and by the end of the evening were devastated by the result.

The victory itself was more important given the intimidation and unfounded allegations and attacks made upon local Labour activists including a number of key councillors.

The attacks were waged by an ex-Labour councillor who left the Party in disgust at Labour's policy on lesbian and gay rights, and Reg Taylor, the ex-Trades Council Secretary, who has not attended a ward or GC meeting this year or last year.

By a *Briefing* correspondent

The two have teamed up with a friend of Brian Nicholson — journalist Richard Littlejohn, self-proclaimed "Trot buster" of the *Standard* — to try to smear a number of activists locally.

One of those earmarked by Littlejohn for expulsion was Cllr Chris Rogers who in the words of the *Standard* in "an act of defiance" was elected the new Chief Whip by 23 to 8.

The left also made other important gains in the leadership, notably Mark Gage as Secretary, who beat off a right wing challenge by Cllr Harmondsworth in the battle to replace the retiring Secretary Cllr Michael Walker.

The left also made substantial gains on the policy group, with another councillor, Cllr Michael Walker, earmarked by Littlejohn for expulsion being elected to the Policy Group as the left took all but one place on it.

On the leads (chairs) of Committees (Hillingdon is a hung Council with Labour the largest group), right wingers were removed en masse in the biggest reshuffle in the history of Hillingdon Labour Group.

No fewer than five leads were removed: Establishment, Finance, Leisure, General Services, and Planning.

The right had only secured the positions last year on the tenuous grounds of experience — this year it was time for a change, with radical people elected to a number of key leads.

There is little doubt the result of these elections will result in yet more "defeated" opponents running to the capitalist press. The gorup was determined not to be influenced by the ravings and downright lies of the *Standard* and we are ready for a new round of attacks from wherever it comes.

Leader, *Peter Fagan*
Deputy Leader, *Brian Hudson*
Chief Whip, *Chris Rogers*
Secretary, *Mark Gage*
Leads:
Establishment, *Chris Rogers*
Education, *Brian Hudson*
Housing, *Jon Davy*
Social Services, *Michael Walker*
Finance, *Pete James*
Leisure, *Ray Travell*
General Services, *Bernice Crow*
Planning, *Mark Gage*
Works, *Phil Kordun*

Haringey Council

Crisis Crossroads

At its most recent meeting, Haringey Labour Group refused to adopt any clear strategy for dealing with its growing financial crisis.

***Briefing* supporters proposed a series of measures to prepare us for the conflict to come.**

These included: no rent rise this year, a concerted effort to fill all vacant posts, a minimum wage for Council staff, the reinstatement of items cut from the base budget in March, the publication of a "needs budget", and numerous campaigning activities designed to forge links with the workforce and the wider community.

The Group voted down this package and no one tried to amend it or propose anything in its place.

Our only response to threats made in a recent District Auditor's letter is to call a Policy and Resources meeting and seek legal advice.

This is not an adequate response for a socialist council to a crisis which we have all anticipated for some time. *Briefing* supporters have argued all along that a legal challenge and a conflict with the government was both inevitable and necessary. Now the crunch time is here we seem to be doing all we can to appease the District Auditor.

A 6% council rent rise is no way to kick off a popular challenge to the Tory government. The handling of the whole issue by the majority of the Group has been dishonest. Councillors made it clear that they were intent on raising the rents in order to avoid surcharge.

By Craig Brewin
Haringey Council

After passing the rent rise at the Council's budget-making meeting, they agreed to refer the question to the Party and then reconsider the decision. The Party voted decisively against the rent rise, but Labour councillors claimed — dishonestly — that the Party did not understand the legal position and therefore the matter should be referred to it once again. In the meantime, the rent rises will have gone into effect — and the Party's opinion will be made irrelevant.

All this makes the Council's programme on consulting with the community and with council tenants a charade. The real division has at last surfaced on Haringey Labour Group — between those devoted to a "legal" budget at any price, and those prepared to make a political stand in defence of our manifesto and our commitment to working people in Haringey.

Unfortunately, the Council leadership has played a negative role in this debate. They failed to support the *Briefing* resolution and leader Bernie Grant made a long speech in opposition to it. He attacked the positions adopted by Liverpool and Lambeth surcharged councillors and derided group members' pleas to resist the Tories. The lesson he has drawn from recent struggles is that there is no point in fight now and risking surcharge.

Bernie Grant has now adopted the "dented shield" strategy and the LCC position of "legality no matter what".

Briefing supporters on the Council and in the local Party will continue to urge the Group to stop backtracking, to recognise the need for a political challenge to the government, and to adopt a campaigning strategy to win the coming battle.

Lewisham Group elections

Left forum makes gains

The Left candidates for the leadership of Lewisham Council and its Labour Group are celebrating despite having lost their recent elections.

The Left Forum succeeded in its aim of opening up debate on accountability of Councillors and the way the Council should be run.

It put up a clear, campaigning alternative to the present leaders. And in many ways it won the arguments if not the votes. This can be seen by the fact that a majority of branches which mandated their delegates to the election meeting voted for the Left slate.

Ron Stockbridge, the Left's candidate for Leader, won 40% of all votes cast — and despite the fact that the present leadership insisted it had no slate, the voting figures were almost identical for every post contested at borough-wide level, bar that of Secretary. The left candidate for Secretary, Jon Lansman, was the one success of the evening, as he ousted maverick councillor Sinna Mani.

By Dan Carter

The Left Forum can congratulate themselves on an open and well-fought campaign, with a number of leaflets being sent to every delegate to the Local Government Committee and in speaking to over half the branches in the Borough.

Where branches mandated delegates to the election meeting, the Left won a majority of mandates. The right/centre coalition have also returned to the position of having an all-white leadership following the defeat of one of the Left's candidates for deputy Leader, Steve Padmore. It is a situation they will have trouble reversing as the vast majority of black councillors are supporters of the Left Forum — and there's no way they could bring themselves to vote for one of them!

The Left will now regroup to fight again another day — when the elections for the Chairs of Committee come up in three months time.

The one thing the voting did show is when the Left councillors turn outwards to the branches they can be successful.

We must now end our obsession with the work of the Council and concentrate on the wider struggles taking place throughout Lewisham — and even beyond.

New women on Regional Exec

Another eight women have recently been elected to the London Labour Party Executive to directly represent Regional Labour Women.

Normally these women would be elected by ballot at the Regional Women's Conference, but this year it had regretfully to be a postal ballot due to the delay to regional conferences in London caused by the Greenwich by-election.

By Nadine Finch
GLLP Executive
(personal capacity)

The 8 women will take up their seats after the Regional Conference on July 11-12th.

Comparing experiences with other women on the National Labour Women's Committee, it is clear that having women elected by and accountable to a Regional Women's Conference on the Regional Executive does give women additional space to voice the needs of women and argue for wider policies, supported by Labour women but not, as yet, the Labour Party regionally or nationally.

The present eight women have been instrumental in raising support for the Ministry of Women, ensuring that the London Party produces a major leaflet on policies for women for the General Election and supporting the needs of lesbian and Irish women.

Next year, a conference for trade union women and a further day conference on the Ministry for Women are planned.

But women throughout London should also let the eight women know of all the issues and concerns affecting Labour women in London, so that other initiatives can be planned.

Jacqueline Abbot, Linda Bellos, Nadine Finch, Pat Healey, Lilian Henning, Jane Prust, Sarah Roelofs, and Sue Styles can all be contacted via Herbert Morrison House, 195 Walworth Road, London SE17 1RP from July 11-12th.

Police back up Tower Hamlets Liberals

Homeless families campaigners undeterred!

I'm not sure when I last attended a police-free Council meeting.

I think there was one in March, before the budget, which had nothing particularly controversial on the agenda and passed off without incident.

Usually, members of the public who dare to heckle Liberal councillors are dragged out by the police, who are getting progressively more violent, as the Party they're protecting get progressively more vicious in their attacks on the working class in Tower Hamlets.

Anger and frustration is building up fast, and there was a large lobby on Monday April 27th, organised by the Homeless Families Campaign, a non-Party political community group.

There are many Bangladeshi SDP members active in the campaign, and a deputation to Council was allowed by the Chair which consisted of one Labour Party member and one SDP-er. After hearing the deputation, the Chair then refused to allow a debate on the recent evictions! This is standard Liberal practice and has happened many times before.

The Labour councillors moved suspension of Standing Orders, and lost. When this was communicated to homeless

By Christine Shawcroft
Leader, Tower Hamlets Labour Group

families meeting downstairs, they took a vote to occupy the Council Chamber.

Initially, the Chair showed great commonsense. The police (who seem to be on permanent standby outside Bethnal Green Town Hall) got into the Chamber, and the Chair asked them to leave, for which he was applauded.

But he then adjourned the meeting, and left the Chamber himself. Hurriedly.

There were calls to continue the meeting and have a debate, and Jan Alam, the deputy Leader of Labour Group, was asked by demonstrators to take the Chair and ask the only Black Liberal, Cllr Appiah, to speak.

He did, but was so totally unsympathetic to the plight of the evicted families, he was shouted down. After conferring with demonstrators, Jan agreed to ask a Chair from the community to take over the meeting.

The Chief Executive asked everyone to leave the Chamber, but only the Liberals did so. Jan was just asking for nominations for a Chair when the boys in blue burst into the Chamber and started attacking the Bangladeshi people and "target" councillors such as Paddy Little and Philip Maxwell.

Seven people were arrested and taken down to Bethnal Green nick. Paddy was released after a chat in the police van revealed him to be the ward councillor for one of the policeman's mum.

A demonstration gathered outside the nick, and over the next few hours those arrested were let out. With the tact and sensitivity for which they are well known, the police let out the white men first, and the Bangladeshis last.

Following the police invasion, three men are to be charged with assaulting the police, which is to be expected in Thatcher's Britain — where if you're thrown out of a moving car you get done for obstructing the highway.

Labour councillors are to protest to the police about their over-reaction to a peaceful demonstraton. In their zeal to get hold of one councillor, a highly dangerous pacifist in his late sixties, police ripped up furniture which was fixed to the floor.

We are also protesting to the Chief Executive about the Council meeting, which went on as if nothing had happened, although minus press, public, and Labour councillors.

Meanwhile the fight for the homeless through the Courts, Parliament, the Council Chamber, on the doorsteps and on the streets, goes on. To the bitter end.

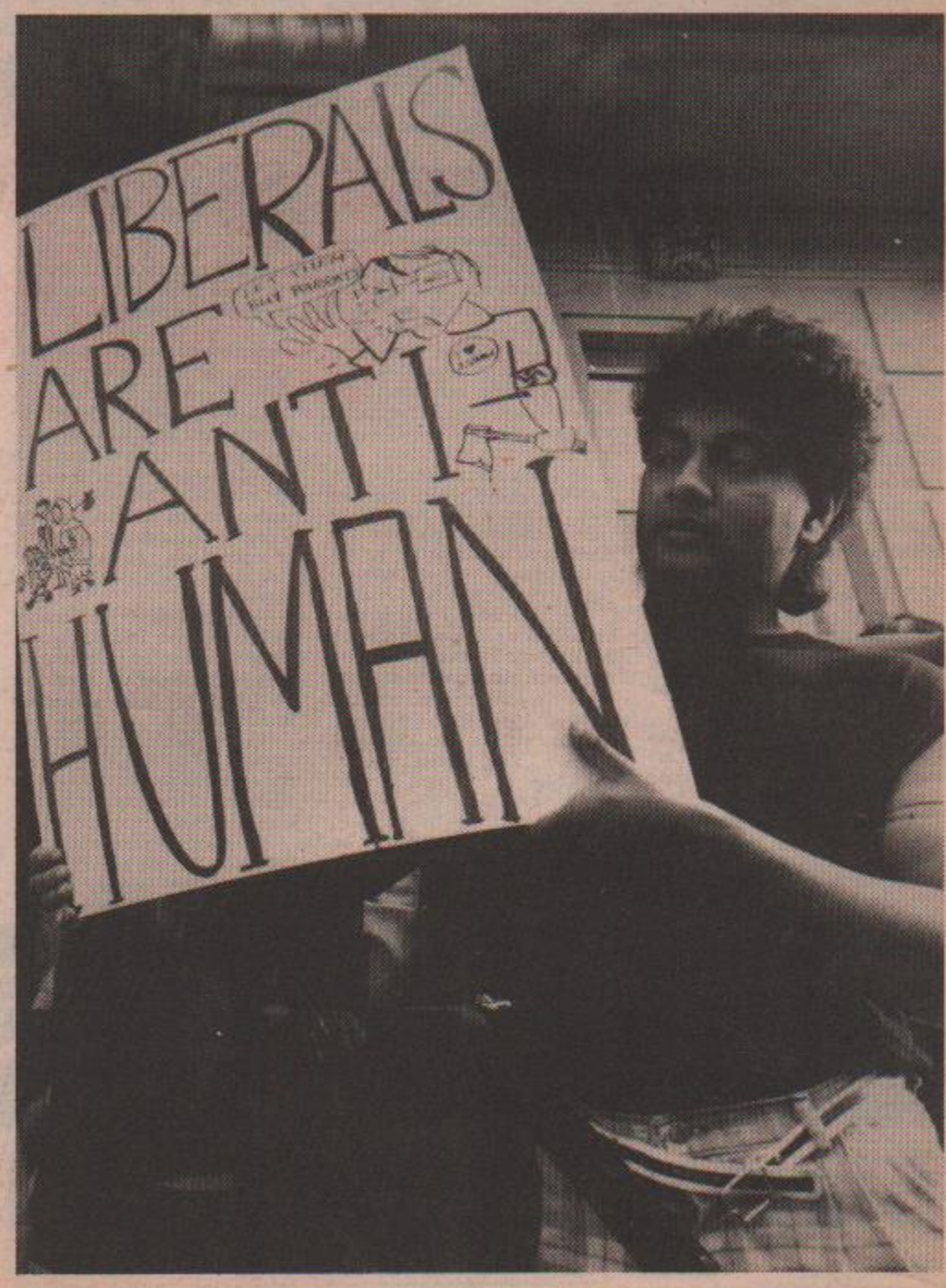


PHOTO: David Hoffmann

Protestors against evictions of Bengali homeless families picket Bethnal Green Town Hall, April 27th

Trevor Monerville

Trevor Monerville, a black youth aged 19, disappeared on New Year's morning at about 1.30am after spending the evening with relatives.

His father made enquiries at Stoke Newington Police Station that afternoon and was told to return the next day to make an official report.

He was told there was no news of his son, and though throughout the next two days the family continued to make enquiries it was not until Sunday January 4th they learned that Trevor was at Brixton Prison.

Police state that Trevor Monerville was arrested on the morning of January 1st, when he was found asleep in a car. He was detained at Stoke Newington Police Station for 3 days and charged with criminal damage. He was seen at Highbury Magistrates Court but was too ill to appear in open court and was from there referred to the hospital wing of Brixton Prison.

Trevor Monerville was referred from Brixton Prison to King's College Hospital. On arrival he was found to have the following injuries: bruises around the left eye; clotted blood in the nose; bruises to the left elblow; grazes and bruising to both knees and shins; some bruising to both shoulders.

Trevor needed major surgery to remove a blood clot on the brain. He is now recovering and completely paralysed on one side. Prior to his detention in police custody, Trevor Monerville was a healthy, able-bodied young man. His family have mounted a campaign to discover how he obtained his injuries which led to his present condition.

The Trevor Monerville campaign are asking the Labour Party to support the following demands:



Trevor Monerville

- that the Parliamentary Labour Party tables a motion for a public enquiry or that Hackney Council support and finance and independent enquiry;
- that the Labour Party request that the General Medical Council carries out an inquiry as to their doctors' conduct in relation to Trevor's medical treatment at Stoke Newington Police Station;
- financial support that will enable the campaign to achieve their objective — justice.

Islington HAC

Open letter to Margaret Hodge, Leader of Islington Council, from locked out Housing Advisers

We condemn your tactics

Dear Margaret Hodge,

A recent article in *City Limits* notes "a growing power struggle between the unions and Labour-controlled authorities in London."

As Housing Advisers who have been suspended without pay for four weeks by Islington Council, we find ourselves at the sharp end of such a struggle and the use of adopted Tory tactics by a Labour controlled council.

It seems your Council is seeking a confrontation with trade unionists in Islington as you are also refusing to negotiate on two other disputes.

Your tactics appear to be somewhat naieve and short sighted. In the short term your tactics are aimed at the "divide and rule" of trade unionists which may lessen our opposition to enforced cuts in the next few years. In addition, a protracted strike may certainly cut the council's budget deficit, hence the confrontational tactics.

But in the long run, any united efforts by Labour controlled councils and the trade unions to fight what seems an inevitable Conservative government will be utterly destroyed by such tactics.

The Conservative attempt to smash the power of Inner London Labour boroughs will only be fought by a concerted and united effort, from the unions and the employers.

We deplore your Council's action in suspending us without recourse to recognised staff code procedures.

As if this were not enough, the Labour Group of the Council have fallen to the level of obscene comments and threats of violence to Housing Advisers addressing the Group's meeting on Monday April 6th. Indeed, a member of the public had to restrain a Labour councillor from punching a Housing Adviser in the face after she had attempted to address the meeting.

We condemn this abuse as the lowest and most deplorable "tactic" to date.

We demand an unconditional apology.

Cut the Tory tactics in Islington, reinstate the Housing Advisers and allow your workers their rights as Trade Unionists.

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.

See *Building Briefing* (National page 10) for details of further events.

MON MAY 11

★Lambeth Labour Briefing How do we fight the cuts? Meeting to discuss Lambeth budget; ILEA elections; building a local *Briefing* group. 7pm. Lambeth Town Hall.

★Peckham CND, with Harriet Harman MP, at SCVS, above Times Furnishings, 135 Rye Lane.

SAT MAY 16

★Booksale. 12-3, Labour Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham. Buy your *Briefing* here. Deptford & Lewisham Labour Parties.

THU MAY 28

★Islington Labour Briefing meeting, Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N4. 8pm.

SAT MAY 30

★Travellers Rights. Labour Campaign for Travellers Rights General Meeting. Details: Martin Hudson, 0992 39377.

WED JUN 3

★London Childcare Network. Childcare & you, with Harriet Harman MP. 7.30pm, Conference Hall, St Matthew's Meeting Place, Brixton Hill. Come along and say what sort of childcare you want.

Saturday 27th June 1-5pm
Camden Town Hall
No Cuts in Jobs & Services in '88/'89!

Recall *Briefing* meeting on local government crisis

Called by:
Greg Tucker, Rachel Webb, Steve French, Lesley Hammond, Jonathon Oppenheimer, John Harrison, George Huish, Bill Houghting (Lambeth councillors)
Hilda Kean, Ken Jones (ILTA, STA)
Jo Fawkes (Camden NALGO)
Joan Twelves (London Region EC)
Ian Harrison (Hammersmith & Fulham councillor)