LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
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Despite the election of three Black MPs, and good results in campaigning, left constituencies, the overall London result is a disaster for the Labour Party.

We now have fewer MPs, proportionately, than at any time since the war. What is now in question is the ability and willingness of the Party in London to put across a *clear class message*.

The Party leadership has tagged many of us as "fringe" elements. As a result, some people in London have spent too much time apologising for their ideas instead of explaining why we hold them.

We must say boldly that the only way to end poverty and misery in London is by a thoroughgoing socialist programme.

The London Labour Party Conference in July must address itself to this. It must also look at the organisational methods used in the constituencies and the need to be a more active campaigning party *at all times*. We need to select a series of issues to campaign on.

By Jeremy Corbyn, MP



ORGANISE THE RESISTANCE!

Some of the results can be attributed to demographic changes. Property price increases have radically transformed some areas. But that explanation is not sufficient.

In certain constituencies, efficient and active campaigns achieved good results. Mildred Gordon's victory in Bow & Poplar, against many predictions and against the trend, shows it is possible to keep the Labour vote up in spite of huge developments of luxury housing. It also says a lot about the support of the Bangladeshi community and the racism of the Liberal Concil in Tower Hamlets. Hopefully, this is the beginning of the end for the liberal regime there.

The election of Bernie Grant, Diane Abbott, and Paul Boateng, is a major breakthrough. Bernie Grant, in particular, faced the most naked, virulent racism from the Tories seen in this country for decades.

Peter Murphy, the Tory candidate, has been stirring up racism and bigotry of all kinds for some years and succeeded in increasing his vote to 17,500. In this context Bernie Grant's ability to pull in a Labour vote of 21,000 with an efficient local campaign — followed by scenes of joy amongst the Black community in Tottenham — represents an enormous step forward in London politics.

London now faces a renewed onslaught from the Tories. They started in the early eighties with penalties and cuts in block grant (largely aimed at London) and followed this up with rate-capping and GLC abolition. Now they will try to break up ILEA by the withdrawal of certain boroughs, starting with Westminster and no doubt followed soon by Kensington and Chelsea. This will leave the remaining much poorer boroughs to carry an increased financial burden — threatening enormous cuts in ILEA services. We'll see a growth of Urban Development Corporations and the quango-politics that the Tories love so much. The LDDC was only the start.

To be effective in London, Labour must be able to mobilise against these threats. But while in the past we have been good — as we must be — at leaping to the defence of groups under attack, we have not been able to offer people a vision of what the future could be, a vision of the kind of London we actually want to live in. We've been too much into defensive politics and not enough into *demand politics*. The Left in London has to look at the areas where the Tories are going to mount their most violent attacks and those areas where support has to be gathered and co-ordinate both defence and demand.

The Party in London cannot hold its breath between election campaigns. We have to develop new forms of communciation with working class people throughout the city. Radio and television must be mobilised. Most important, some kind of regular newspaper should be produced by the London Labour Party for the whole of London. This must promote popular, campaigning activities of all kinds.

London is a vivid example of social divisions under the Tories. There are more people sleeping rough in London than in any other city — and more millionaires. The Party must seize on that division and use it as the basis of our political appeal.

The role of the Labour Party in London is to be there first — defending Council housing against wholesale giveaways to property developers, defending the jobs of industrial and public sector workers, defending local authorities and education authorities. It must be a Party that does not waste time apologising for the views it holds on race, on positive images of lesbians and gay men in schools, and many other issues. It has to say boldly what it believes and why it believes it.

The London Labour Party Conference in July provides the opportunity for a springboard back to election success. This will only be hindered by attempts by the national leadership to single out the London Party as a scapegoat for our failure to win power. Attempts to abolish the London Labour Party, mooted by the leadership, are entirely counter-productive. We need a *democratically organised* London Labour Party. We have to become a campaigning Party with a socialist vision of London's future.

For details of Islington North's triumphant campaign to re-elect Jeremy Corbyn, see inside, p4.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Debate on the future of local government

The future for local government

In the first few weeks of a third Tory term it is hard to think creatively about the future — or indeed to think at all!

For local government, the future contains more ratecapping, less creative accounting, more compulsory tendering, less council housing, and end to the rates system and the loss of business revenue with it, and the dismantling of local education responsibilities, including ILEA.

Of course a similar vision faced us after the 1983 election, but the crucial difference was that then Labour Councillors were pledging to defend workers and service users from the ravages of Toryism and to campaign for more funds from central government to keep services going.

Today, Labour councillors are hiding behind the much derided "dented shield" approach put forward by Neil Kinnock three years ago. They are rapidly talking themselves into believing it is more socialist to make cuts yourself than let Tories do it.

Coupled with this belief is the growing conviction that trade unions have had it too good for too long and should be prepared to negotiate "realistically" on where sacrifices should be made, as a token of our thanks for past generosity.

In Camden, councillors have to make their minds up immediately on what to do

By Jo Fawkes
Chair, Camden NALGO

about the £10-12m gap that's opened in *this year's* budget, as the District Auditor has been threatening to declare the current budget unlawful unless the books are balanced.

Unlike the past few years, there is no chance of further creative accounting measures rescuing us from the abyss: existing arrangements are coming apart at the seams as the City is advised against lending to local authorities and future arrangements have been either exhausted or outlawed.

As Council Leaders abdicated political responsibility for resistance to the Rates Act to their Directors of Finance back in 1985, there is no existing campaign base in the parties or community for a political struggle against cuts.

Perhaps the healthiest organisations still around are the trade unions, which despite (or perhaps because of) relentless attacks by Labour Councils on basic industrial rights, have maintained membership and structures in the past two years.

This is not to say the membership is automatically going to take action. But we have successfully organised against lock-outs in Islington and Ealing, against attempts to discipline Branch Officers in Camden and other erosions of trade union rights — including the right to take limited industrial action without fear of suspension.

The absence of a political campaign in many authorities has increased the power of senior management in the running of Councils and this power has been used largely to curb trade union organisation. However, this has not yet been successful and we still have the organisation necessary for resistance.

The nature of this resistance will be crucially influenced by the stance adopted by Labour authorities in the next few weeks. There are two alternatives:

- the renewed threats by District Auditors against the "rate rebels" of 1985 could spark a distant memory of anti-government activity among those Councillors now looking to the workforce to pay for Tory cuts. It may even be possible to rekindle some loyalty amongst workers to those who stood firm in 1985 and who are now threatened with surcharge and disqualification.

A co-ordinated and public campaign could embarrass a Tory government on anti-democratic grounds.

These Councillors may also be inspired to join forces with the unions in a campaign highlighting the victims of ratecapping in the inner cities and hitting the Tory "caring" PR image — both of which are perceived as Tory weaknesses by the media and Conservative Central office.

Such a campaign could result in a relaxation of the ratecapping ceilings if it were launched immediately, and while this is not a particularly revolutionary demand, our members would be more encouraged if the industrial action had a positive objective, rather than being purely defensive. They would also be encouraged by the support of Councillors in whatever capacity possible.

- The surcharge threats and financial crisis instead convince Councillors that the fudging has to stop and cuts must be made — in as "responsible" and "caring" a manner as they can manage.

This will mean taking on the unions but they may assume that the membership is too demoralised after the election to resist. If they are successful, they will balance the books, but will have removed yet another layer of organised resistance to the Tory government, which can only weaken the whole labour movement.

Our job as trade unionists must be to try and get the first option off the ground, while preparing for the second to happen! We must be ready to take the kind of industrial action in defence of jobs and services that will attract popular support and even make some Councillors change their stance.

We *have* to organise against cuts, whatever support there is from Councillors and public, or we will be weakened irretrievably and less able to participate in future campaigns against poll taxes, etc.

If we have to fight Labour Councils, we will; and we'll be looking for support from Labour Parties, community groups and the left. But, before that becomes inevitable, let's have one more go at the government — not each other.

New realism revisited

There is a clear danger that the return of Thatcher government will produce a new "new realism" both in the trade unions and in local government.

Indeed, there have been clear signs of this from leaders of the teachers' and civil servants' unions who have tried to use the Thatcher victory as a pretext for surrender — the abandonment of all industrial action.

Local government faces a similar danger. With an extension of rate-capping and our creative accountancy chickens coming home to roost, there will be little or no room for manoeuvre financially. Many Labour Councils will be powerless to defend jobs and services.

New legislation enforcing competitive tendering will force Councils to choose between redundancies and cuts in services. Tory housing proposals will be designed to cut Council spending on housing and raise rents — so many tenants and even whole estates will opt for private landlords — who will no doubt be given hidden subsidies and tax concessions by central government!

Against this background, Conservative-minded senior Council officers and Labour's local government spokespersons will be advising Labour authorities to avoid confrontation, to batten down the hatches, to keep within the law... in short to implement Tory policies while blaming the Tories for their results — and praying for a Labour government.

Such action would be disastrous — and divisive - for the whole labour movement. The Labour Party must not be seen to co-operate in any way with the new Tory onslaught.

We want a new realism — but not one which surrenders without a fight. The new reality is that you cannot appease Thatcherism. You cannot be moderate and hope to be rewarded. Jobs and services can only be defended and Labour's credibility as the alternative to Thatcher can only be maintained if our bottom line is no redundancies, no worsening of pay and conditions, and no cuts in services or living standards.

By Ian Harrison
Hammersmith & Fulham Councillor

But we have to do more than just *face* the new reality — we have to be prepared to lose control of local authorities rather than implement Tory policies.

We have to recognise that the Tories cannot be beaten by councillors in committee rooms and Council chambers. The days of councillors being martyrs are over. We must now base our opposition in the trade unions and in the community.

We should immediately start detailed discussions with local authority trade unions at every level about how to defend jobs and services. We should call public meetings on Council estates to discuss the Tory plans and what they will mean for the homeless, the overcrowded, the badly-housed, the poor and the unemployed.

We can start campaigning from the Town Halls, but we must be ready to surrender that power-base rather than make a single cut or create a single redundancy and where Labour Groups vote for cuts or redundancies the left must be prepared to defy the Whips and risk expulsion.

Many councillors will shy away from abandoning the trappings of office but the new realism of Thatcher's third term means many Labour councils will simply dig their own graves by staying in office and collaborating with the Tories. The fight against Thatcher can only be won in the unions and in the community.

First on the block

No one can pretend we were not warned.

Asked at the end of the election campaign what she most regretted not doing over the last eight years Mrgaret Thatcher talked of not having dealt firmly enough with local government.

Her first commitment on being re-elected was to sort out the inner cities.

It is already clear what "sorting out" will mean: tightening the screw on local government finances, a poll tax to shift the burden of rates onto the poorest in our community, more privatisation, an end to local subsidy on Council rents causing massive rises, selling off council estates, creating more Urban Development Corporations, a free rein to exploitation and the disappearnce of local accountability, hiving off schools, and, in London, breaking up ILEA by letting Tory authorities opt out.

Over the last eight years local authorities have been under attack. Apart from the year of the "No Rate" strategy, the response has been to keep your head down and hope that a Labour government will come to the rescue.

This year every Council has ended up making cuts of one kind or another in jobs and services. In the expectation of a Kinnock victory, many have stretched creative accountancy to the limit. Divided amongst themselves, many have ended up in confrontation with their own workforce.

Whatever your view of the strategy of "wait and see", it is

By Greg Tucker
Lambeth Councillor

obvious that it can longer apply. This year will have to be different.

Rebuilding unity with town hall workers and uniting local authorities across London and nationwide in a fight against the government is now an absolute priority. As a start we need to draw in all those under threat — the community, the workforce, the Party and Councils — into a common campaign based on our real social needs and the level of resources needed to meet them, thus mobilising the maximum number of opponents to the Tory plans.

That's why the *Briefing* recall meeting on local government is so important. *Briefing* supporters can be under no illusion that we can go it alone. Nevertheless, this conference, in bringing together trade unionists, Councillors, and Party members who have been in the forefront of opposition to Tory attacks can begin the struggle to build the campaign of action we need.

We have very little time — some Councils are already in financial difficulty. With its renewed majority, the government is not going to hang around but will be enforcing some of its plans straight away. Come to the meeting — and help make June 27th the start of the fightback.

Recall *Briefing* meeting on local government crisis
Saturday June 27th, 1-5pm
Camden Town Hall
No cuts in Jobs and Services!

Camden

No surrender!

Camden Labour councillors will be deciding how to bridge the £10m gap that's opened in this year's budget at a Special Labour Group on June 29th.

An emergency Labour Group meeting on June 20th heard about the growing reluctance of financial institutions involved in deferred purchasing arrangements to lend to Camden, following clear political interference from the new Tory government.

This in turn has affected Camden's standing with the public workers loan board, which underwrites the day-to-day running of most local authorities.

Council officers spelt out the probability of legal challenge to the 1987/8 budget if financial steps weren't taken at Council meetings on July 2nd and 15th.

These measures include an end to all growth, an immediate vacancy freeze, no more temporary staff, and cuts in overtime working amounting to £6.8m. The Parties will be consulted and a decision made at the June 29th Group, which is likely to be lobbied by the council unions protesting against these cuts.

There will also be wider consultation on the political stance the Labour Group should adopt in the light of this budget crisis and future Tory attacks - there is likely to be a £60 million shortfall by the 1988/9 budget unless massive cuts are made, in the view of Council leaders and officers.

Group officers appear to be backing a "damage limitation" approach, despite the fact this may involve well over 1,000 redundancies and major cuts in jobs and services. Left councillors called for a campaign with the unions, Party and community to target the government, not the workforce, and remind the public that this is a politically created crisis, arising from the 1984 Rates Act, not a purely financial situation.

However, unless other Labour Groups work to defend their achievements in local government and the Parties press for resistance not surrender, the post-election mood may simply result in Labour-implemented cuts in councils across London and Britain, starting in Camden.



District Auditor attacks Southwark

Within days of the General Election the District Auditor sent his long-awaited letters to all Southwark councillors involved in the campaign against rate-capping legislation in the wake of the miners' strike.

The DA is asking all Southwark councillors at the time for their reasons for their voting on resolutions and amendments about the making and the not-making of a rate.

Formally, the delay in the DA's "quizzing" may be because Southwark's accounts for 1985/6 have only recently been published and because what the Council was doing in the campaign was not clear.

However, there can be no doubt that the timing of this attack — whether or not it sheds blood — is part of the Tories' renewed drive to smash all suggestions of "socialism" represented by the NHS, ILEA and local authorities.

For the Tories the decision actually to proceed towards elimination of some Southwark councillors depends on the political price it would incur for them. Their considerations will be not so much in Southwark where the Tories are already no-hopers in

By Cllr Piers Corbyn
Southwark

Bermondsey and Peckham but in London and Southern England, where another deliberate and vindictive Tory attack on local democracy might not go down well providing we campaign effectively.

The Labour Councillors' response to the General Election result and the DA's approach must be:

- to speed up many measures to achieve more effective socialist service delivery.

and at the same time

- to step up campaigning against privatisation and for municipal control of more services, and
- to develop a Democracy Campaign to campaign for democratic control of all publicly-used functions and services whether they be controlled by local authorities, quangos or corporations.

Only with positive campaigns like this — which meet the Tory onslaught head-on — can we maintain the momentum of increasing support for Labour started during the general election, smash Thatcher's hypocritical "power to the people" campaign, and make real inroads into millions of working class and lower middle class people who have been duped by Tory lies and SDP-Liberal deceit into voting against their true interests.

Election results

A closer look at London

The appalling election results in much of London should force the London labour movement to address some serious questions.

The Party failed to win a single one of its 24 targetted marginal seats in the capital.

To make matters worse, it lost three seats that it had previously held — Alf Dubs in Battersea, Eric Deakins in Walthamstow, and Nick Raynsford, who had won Fulham just a year ago in a famous by-election victory.

The support built up during the GLC campaign has been wiped out, and it is only two years since the GLC was abolished.

The necessary debate will be better served if there is no name-calling and no sloganeering. We need a serious discussion about the *long-term decline* of Labour in London.

At the 1979 General Election the Labour Party held 40 seats out of 92. During the 1979 to 1983 Parliament, nearly *one third* of the Parliamentary representation was lost through defections to the SDP.

In 1983, after boundary changes, Labour held 26 seats in London. Now that number has fallen to 23, the lowest in London since the war.

This decline cannot be explained away merely by the Tory media onslaught on the left Councils in London. The reasons for the poor performance are to be found in the deep-seated population changes and, in particular, changes in the working class population of London.

Since 1979, manufacturing industries in London have been decimated. In eight years, unemployment has gone up from 140,000 to nearly 400,000. This has been accompanied by change in the working profile within the London economy. New jobs have been created in finance and other service sectors in both publicly and privately owned companies. There has also been a growth in jobs in tourism, distribution, and catering.

By Narendra Makanji Vice Chair, Labour Party Black Sections

The common factor in all these new jobs has been *the low level of unionisation*. Union membership within London has fallen quite dramatially — only 16% of economically active people are now members of trades unions.

Low-paid and part-time jobs have proliferated — to the benefit of the most unscrupulous types of employers. Above all, Black people and women have been victims of this development and have been left by it with little statutory or trade union protection.

In housing there have also been major changes. The private rented sector has been squeezed out — and not replaced by equivalent accommodation in the public sector.

With many privately-rented houses being sold off for multiple-occupancy and the sale of Council houses under the Tories "Right to Buy" provision, the level of owner-occupation has increased.

The public-rented sector, serviced by local authorities, has been subject to the Tories' massive cutbacks in capital spending programmes. All this has resulted in considerable dissatisfaction with the local authorities' housing management and a loss of support for the Labour Party.

Property speculators have moved in like vultures and house prices have shot up, thus making it much more difficult for people in lower and middle income jobs to secure decent accommodation at a reasonable price.

Faced with these major changes, the labour movement in London has failed to articulate the needs and demands of the working class population of London. The Labour-controlled GLC in its last two years of existence did attempt to reflect some of the changes taking place within London through its various policies — including a long-delayed recognition of the racial and sexual composition of the working class.

This resulted in an improved level of support for the Labour Party in London. However, this opportunity was not seized to revitalise the structure and the activities of the London Labour Party, the South East Region of the TUC, and other regional trade union and labour movement organisations. With the abolition of the GLC, much of the initiative was lost.

The failure of Labour-controlled Councils to put together new structures quickly has compounded the problem. The initiative to establish the London Strategic Policy Unit (LSPU) was hampered by the non-participation of Labour-controlled boroughs such as Brent, Waltham Forest, Newham, and Hammersmith & Fulham.

Labour was left without a mechanism to articulate the new developments and the changing demand of London's working class.

The total Labour vote in London increased by 2% over 1983, but the level of representation went down by 12%. Questions have to be asked about the regional and national organisation that delivered such a disaster.

There is an urgent need to restructure the London Labour Party. It cannot be right that three organisations (namely, the Transport and General Workers Union, the National Union of Public Employees and the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society) can together out-vote the rest of the London Labour Party.

There is also a need to improve the staffing and the structure of officers at the London Labour Party Headquarters. A thorough discussion within the regional executive is needed to address these problems.

Lessons need to be learnt from regions such as Scotland where, despite gentrification in certain areas, the Scottish Labour Party managed to increase its political support and carried with it many of those who have prospered out of Thatcherism.

We need to learn the lessons of the GLC and bring them up to date so that we can face 1990 with fresh and relevant policies to tackle London's problems. Thatcher has already made the Inner Cities her priority in the coming years. We know what that means for London's working class!

The Labour Party has to prepare now to oppose any new attacks on democracy within the Inner Cities. We have to show that the Tory initiatives will be a disaster for the inner cities — and counterpose to them a strong, clear socialist programme for reconstruction.

Bounced out of Battersea

Disaster hit Labour in Wandsworth on June 11th.

In Putney, Tory David Mellor — once described as "about as agreeable as a mouthful of Brylcream" — increased his majority over Peter Hain and in Battersea Alf Dubs saw his 3,200 majority turned into a 900 vote defeat.

In Tooting, Labour right winger Tom Cox saw his majority cut again to 1,800.

"Gentrification" and sale of council houses, flats and whole estates for luxury penthouse conversions obviously forms the backdrop to the loss of Battersea — solid Labour since time immemorial. But this is only part of the story.

While the Labour vote increased in all three constituencies, the decline of the Alliance vote seems to have disproportionately benefitted the Tories, as it did in last year's Council elections. By contrast, in neighbouring Lambeth, Labour was the main gainer.

By Pete Cooper Wandsworth

There was a low turnout on the council estates in crucial north Battersea. Clearly significant numbers of working class voters did not feel inspired by Labour's low profile campaign to turn out and cast their vote for Labour.

Wandsworth Labour is paying the price of its continued failure to campaign against privatisation both before and during the election.

Briefing's supporters will be continuing this fight and the campaign to defend ILEA against a pull-out by Wandsworth.

Swings to Labour in Southwark

Contrary to London's average swing to the Tories, thousands of Southwark voters switched to Labour in all 3 constituencies.

The swings to Labour were 6.9% in Dulwich (from the SDP), 3.6% in Bermondsey (from Liberal) and 0.7% in Peckham (from Tory).

The Bermondsey result was achieved by a vigorous and effective campaign in the face of the usual "Big M" red scare against the Labour candidate John Bryan. In Dulwich Kate Hoey missed victory by only 180 votes. Next time Labour must win Bermondsey and Dulwich.

By Cllr Piers Corbyn Southwark

Steve Jomoa

Canary Wharf

Rip-off of the century!

Tory policies in London's Docklands are costing taxpayers billions of pounds in the form of public subsidies to private developers.

And it looks like Thatcher's bid to throw Docklands to the wolves in the property world is about to produce the rip-off of the century.

This history of Canary Wharf reads like a sick joke. Envisaged is a development, which at 12 million sq. ft, is 2m sq ft larger than the World Trade Centre in New York. It will consist of office and trading space (9m sq. ft), shops and restaurants (at least 75, we are told), and swimming pools, gyms and pubs.

Inside the 71-acre development will be a traffic roundabout larger than Trafalgar Square and three skyscrapers, which at 850 ft will dwarf the Nat West Tower.

Canary Wharf is to be built within the Isle of Dogs' Enterprise Zone (EZ), where the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) — a public body — is landowner. This holds many benefits for potential developers. Because of its location, Europe's largest office development needs no planning permission. Developers also enjoy a 10-year rate-free holiday along with tax relief on capital investment in building.

By John Turkie Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP

Rates have soared in the Docklands area. By the time the rate-free period comes to an end, the total cost on the Exchequer of this and other tax reliefs will be over £1,000 millon. Moreover, this exclusively private project is to enjoy an extra public subsidy of around £2,000 million going into the transport infrastructure — the Docklands Light Railway and a new urban motorway stretching from Newham's Royal Docks to the City — on which Canary Wharf is dependent.

Canary Wharf will have a devastating and far-reaching effect. It will confirm the trend in London and the South East of rapidly rising land values with its consequent social, economic and political effects. Coupled with the Tories' intention to privatise housing, how long will it be before council estates — on land considered prime for development — are bought up? Already sharks are lining up throughout Bermondsey and the Isle of Dogs.

The Canary Wharf Consortium, led by New York developer G. Ware Travelstead, has been told, in no uncertain terms, that the government wants a deal sorted out quickly. And Liberal-controlled Tower Hamlets have certainly been doing their best to ensure a smooth passage for the developers.

They are dropping objections to the Compulsory Purchase Orders related to the new urban motorway. In return, the Consortium will "use their best endeavours" to create 2,000 jobs for local people. This is less than 4% of the 57,000 jobs said to be associated with the development.

The signing of the Master Building Agreement (MBA), the "contract" between the LDDC and the developers, is already 18 months overdue. Though it is difficult to find out exactly what is going on, it is obvious that a number of obstacles inhibit the scheme.

East London's "Wall St on water" remains massively speculative. The only potential tenants that Canary Wharf has are its original backers — Credit Suisse First Boston and Morgan Stanley. They have always needed other prospective tenants to take up at least 4 million sq. ft for the project to become really viable. There has been a great reluctance on the part of the financial and property world to move out of the City. To make matters worse, raising enough private capital seems to be beyond their capacity.

However, the LDDC are so keen to entice the developers that they are offering the land at a knock-down price: £400,000 per acre, while the going rate for land in Docklands is anything from £3 to £5 million. And government ministers have made it clear that there will be no independent investigation into the land deal. So despite the problems, we can expect a deal to be struck. After all, it's a cheap gamble for the developers.

London letters

Setting the Hillingdon record straight

Dear *Labour Briefing*,

In the London issue 22nd April-12th May I wrote an article about the attempted witch-hunt in Hilingdon and the smear campaign mounted with the help of the *Evening Standard*.

I was disturbed, however, to read in the same issue an article in the Periscope section headed "Standard mistakes". This piece alleges that "better informed circles are pointing the finger of suspicion" for the smears in the *Standard* at GMBATU official Paul Kenny.

I don't know who these better informed cirlces are but, as the main figure in the witch-hunt, I certainly do not regard Paul Kenny as being involved and nor does anybody else who I have spoken to in Hillingdon.

This sort of allegation made without checking the facts cannot be seen as helpful from any point of view. In fact Paul Kenny has been working with me on a number of issues recently and is certainly making more of an effort via TUFL than virtually any other local trade union official.

Yours in solidarity,
Steve Clare,
Hayes & Harlington CLP

Rates rage on

Dear *London Briefing*,

The argument over how Labour councils should tactically fight govenment economic controls on their budgets seems to be raging on with Jenny Fisher's letter (*Briefing*, 75).

In my original article I didn't mean to imply that anyone marching against a "62%" increase in their rates is "silly". Neither, however, would I even think of attempting to mobilise members of the Tory Party, the NF and their supporters who formed the bulk of the protestors, happily singing God Save the Queen and land of Hope and Glory outside the Town Hall.

I am also aware that rates are hardly a progressive form of taxation and do hit working class people hard. However, not many working class people live in large semis in Chingford and the protest is being led very strongly by people who through political malice resent paying rates for essential services for the poorer areas of the borough.

Of course, we would all like a wide campaign of councils taking on the government through direct confrontation but that battle died two years ago and does not look likely to re-emerge in the near future.

I am also aware that it was an electoral liability at the general election but we have been out putting forward arguments in support of a rates increase, however large, that is the first for five years and is aimed at providing better services for those who depend on them most.

I am well aware of the repercussions but, even after paying my first rates instalment, I prefer to be economically poorer than politically purer.

In solidarity,
John Wray,
Leyton CLP

London Region Labour Party Conference
BRIEFING FRINGE MEETING
Sunday July 12th, 12.30pm
Wallworth Town Hall
Walworth Road (opposite Labour Party HQ)
Speakers:
Mildred Gordon, *MP*
Sharon Atkin
Jo Fawkes, *Chair, Camden NALGO*
Mandy Mudd, *Positive Images*
Chair:
Jeremy Corbyn, *MP*

What future for education?

ILTA struggles on

At least 4,000 London teachers went on strike on Tuesday June 16th in an attempt to end individual identification of teachers for compulsory redeployment in secondary schools.

For the last two years we have had a voluntary redeployment agreement with ILEA, which they have now decided to abandon in favour of compulsory redeployment.

ILEA have refused to negotiate with us on the central issues of individual identification and compulsion.

Already this year 397 teachers have been moved under the so-called voluntary phase. I say "so-called" because this voluntary phase was always going to have the back-up of compulsion at the end of the day!

As we were marching on Tuesday, June 16th, letters were going out to 317 more teachers, compulsorily redirecting them into new placements. That was the reason for our actions.

We should recall that 859 teachers were originally designated as having to move. Following the "voluntary phase" and the most recent letters, this still leaves 162 teachers still to be designated.

The stupidity of all this is shown by the fact that the ILEA still have 204 vacancies, which they admit the designated teachers cannot fill.

Over half those on strike on June 16th came out onto the streets and marched from Temple Place to Central Hall, Westminster, where a rally was addressed by London and national union speakers. The rally called for further action, but also for a more effective campaign, which would involve the reinstatement of over half the ILTA leadership which has been suspended by the union leadership. The form of action suggested is a series of rolling strikes borough by borough.

By Mike Loosley
General Secretary, ILTA

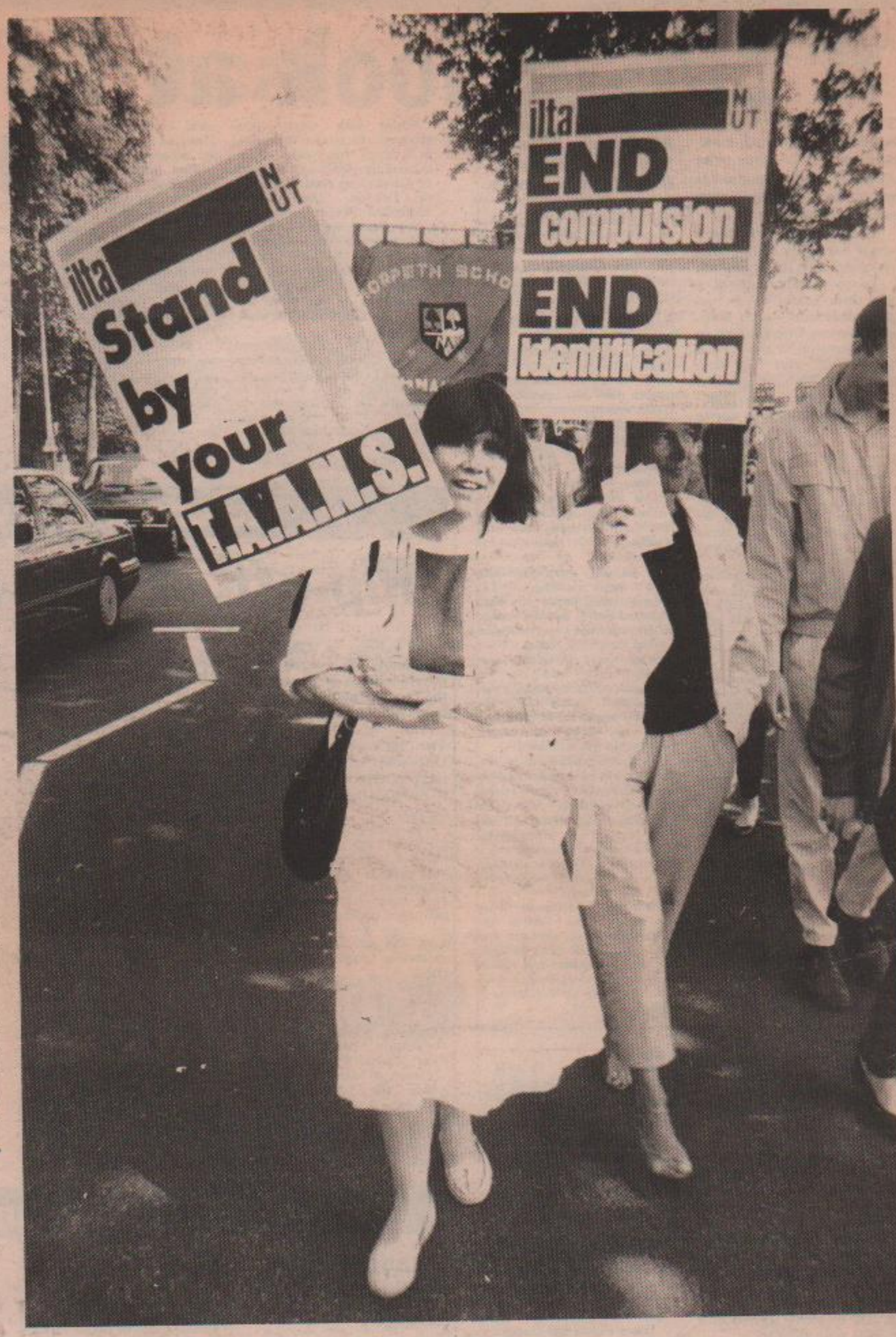
After the rally a delegation met Barrie Stead, Chair of the Schools Sub-committee, who is in charge of the ILEA redeployment scheme. A small delegation had to take place because Neil Fletcher, the new leader of ILEA, had refused a booking of the Conference Hall for a larger delegation.

We stressed to Barrie Stead that the teachers' morale in London was at an all-time low, and that the single most effective move he could take to reverse this was to end compulsion now.

We also pointed out that in the light of the recent General Election result, boroughs like Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, and Wandsworth have already put in plans to opt out of the ILEA.

He supported our fight to maintain the ILEA but we had to point out that this support could not be automatically assumed if ILEA continued to treat its teachers so badly.

The behaviour of ILEA comes on top of the imposition on teachers of the withdrawal of negotiating rights by the Tory government, and we would have hoped for — and still demand — a united front between ILEA and the teachers against this threat.



The *Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights* has called a lobby of London Labour Party Conference on July 11th in support of Resolution 93. This welcomes the initiatives of Haringey and Ealing and calls for a sustained campaign against homophobia by Labour as the only party with a firm commitment to lesbians and gay men. This is *not* a lesbian and gay only lobby! The whole of the left needs to be there — the fightback starts now!

LCLGR Lobby of London Labour Party Conference
12 noon, July 11th
Elephant and Castle Recreation Centre (opposite Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre)
Support Lesbian and Gay Rights!
Support Labour's policy!
Lobby London Labour delegates on July 11th!

No cuts in jobs and services! Resistance not surrender!

Recall *Briefing* meeting on local government crisis.

Saturday June 27th, 1-5pm
Camden Town Hall

As the articles in this *Briefing* make clear, there's not a moment to lose in discussing a united way forward.

Briefing supporters welcome — a vital meeting for councillors, town hall trade unionists, and loal government activists

ILEA under threat

Even before the dust settles after the election a major opportunity has arisen for Labour to launch an attack against the government with the guaranteed support of all involved in the issue.

The future of the Inner London Education Authority is again under attack and the Tories have to allow for whole boroughs to split away and form separate LEAs.

All informed educational and local government opinion supports the retention of a single unitary authority for Inner London. All informed opinion recognises the special features of the ILEA's extensive range of services, from pre-school to continuing education.

A further round of rate-capping will inevitably squeeze the resources and resourcefulness of ILEA to its limits. Privatisation of the Polys will deliver a substantial blow to the pattern of continuing education across the authority.

By Steve Cowan
ILEA member, North Westminster

Some schools, notably those with an inherited foundation, will seek direct grant status and a handful of City Technology Colleges will undermine existing allocations policies for surrounding schools. The aim is to recreate a selective tri-partitite system which in turn reproduces and strengthens class divisions. This audacious Tory political move must be stopped.

A campaign rooted in the workforce and its unions, joined by Labour Parties, Trades Councils, Dioceasan Boards and Parents Groups can mount a formidable challenge to the government.

Four times this coalition has defeated Thatcher and Baker and Joseph. The strength of the coalition is only strained by the heavy handed and vindictive manner in which the ILEA Labour Group imposed compulsory redeployment upon teachers.

This rift must not be allowed to divert attention from the urgent need to renew the Save ILEA campaign, but this time the initiative must come from the Unions and CLPs rather than from the bureaucracy and Leader's Office at County Hall.

The fightback begins at Noel Park!

Linda Clarke, long-time *Briefing* supporter, has been selected to fight the mid-July by-election in the highly marginal Council seat of Noel Park in Haringey.

Linda lives on the Noel Park Council Estate in the middle of the Ward and is well-placed to resist the Tory campaign, which is bound to be full of bigotry and smears.

This will be a crucial test for Haringey's socialist policies and the beginning of our campaign to defend jobs and services from renewed Tory attack.

All *Briefing* comrades — please make an effort to come to Haringey and help! Call Gary, 881 1479.