LONDON LABOUR 20p

BRIEFING

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SPECIAL VICTORY ISSUE!

LONDON'S OURS!

Ken Livingstone
GLC Leader

After the most vicious GLC election campaign of all time, Labour has won a working majority on a radical socialist programme. The torrent of Macarthy-style red-baiting and gross distortion of the cost of Labour's programme – coupled with extensive media coverage – left no-one in any doubt that this GLC election was the trial run for the next general election campaign. The results need to be seen in this light.

We are not just talking about another mid-term council election showing the normal anti-government swing. Voters in Paddington, where I was the candidate, responded to the campaign on firm class lines. The Social Democractic candidate was crushed, with under 7 per cent of the vote. His only impact was in the safe Tory areas of Hyde Park and Lancaster Gate. In Islington North we won our third highest swing to Labour – clear proof that the SDP took its vote from the Tories.

Rates

The only problem in the campaign was the difficult issue of rates. The emphasis we placed on the need to increase rates was honestly put, but we failed to go on to the attack against the Government on this issue. Our central demand should have been for the restoration of the £300 million Rate Support Grant which Heseltine stole from London. From now on, this demand will be at the centre of our on-going campaign against the Government.



We will go into the constituencies with Tory MPs and lead the demand that they vote in Parliament to restore our Rate Support Grant and Housing programme cuts. Where they refuse, we shall publish their voting records and demand their removal.

We will be working with the NEC's Home Policy Committee to prepare detailed legislation for the next Labour Government. No-one will be left in any doubt that the GLC is now a campaigning organ and a bastion of power for the labour movement within a national context.

Now for the Government

The Regional Executive, London Labour MPs and Local Government Committees will be drawn into the plans for the fight ahead. There is no doubt that the party was damaged in Lambeth and Camden by the supplementary rates which were forced on those councils by the Auditor and Heseltine. We must avoid being trapped in the same way. We must ensure that we plan the way ahead rather than just respond to the Government's attacks as they occur. Part of our task will be to sustain a holding operation until such time as the Tory Government can be brought down and replaced by a left-wing Labour

Continued next page

Labour—Take the Power!

Black Voters Deliver Victory

The February issue of London Labour Briefing listed the GLC constituencies in winnable order. The top 50 were all won by Labour with the exception of Norwood (and balanced by the gain in Hornsey), thus returning London's political map to what it was after the General Election of October 1974. Labour activists can justifiably claim that they had achieved their target.

In order to win the next general election, it will not be enough to consolidate the victories in these crucial marginals – Labour will have to gain another dozen or so constituencies which are mistakenly regarded as Tory strongholds. The breakthrough for socialism can come through the following constituencies:

Acton	Hampstead
Brentford	Upminster
Kensington	Bexleyheath
Harrow Central	Croydon Central
Hendon North	Croydon N.E.
Finchley	Croydon N.W.

The activists in these constituencies need to begin the political campaigning at once. The performance of the wards making up these constituencies in the 1982 Borough Council elections could act as a useful pointer to the target. A crucial factor in the success of Labour's campaign will be the electoral support that the Party receives from the Asian, Afro-Caribbean and the Cypriot communities of London. Useful information about the voting patterns of the minority communities is available from a Commission for Racial Equality publication entitled 'Ethnic Minorities and the General Election, 1979'.

One of the conclusions of this report was that the political awareness amongst the minorities has increased over the past decade. They are responding more and more to speeches and comments which are disseminated by the mass media, particularly during our election campaign, and are preparing to take action, either individually or through organisations to which they belong, to guarantee their future in this country.

Higher Turn-Out

The turn-out rate among Asians, Afro-Caribbeans and Cypriot voters has shown to be consistently higher than that of the white electorate. This higher turn-out was the major reason for the spectacular victory for the Labour Party in Hornsey, and the massive 21% swing to Labour in Brent South. In Hornsey the Labour Party has been in the forefront of the fight against racism. Labour's policies on issues such as the Immigration and Nationality Laws, police harassment of black youth and racism in key areas such as housing, employment and education were explained clearly and forcefully before and during the campaign.

In Brent South, which recorded the largest swing in London, there was a massive turn-out of the "ethnic vote", particularly amongst young West Indian women and the Asian community. Months of controversy in the local press over the new inflow of Asian members under the auspices of the Asian Labour Party Alliance (ALPA) together with the election of Merle Amory, Britain's first black woman councillor at the Stonebridge bye-election in January, are the principal reasons for this. The current battle over selections for the 1982 local government elections has seen the adoption, so far, of at least 10 ethnic minority candidates, and this fact has already gained wide currency amongst the black community.

The expressed voting intentions showed that more ethnic minority voters supported the Labour Party than did the electorate as a whole. This response was partly based on the belief that the Labour Party was more sympathetic to their problems and partly as a reaction to government politics. Preference for Labour was despite the lacklustre performance of the '74-'79 Labour Government, of numerous Labour-controlled Boroughs, low-profile anti-racist campaigning of the constituency Labour Parties and there being only one black Labour candidate.

Manifesto

Against this was the manifesto commitment to set up an Ethnic Minorities Subcommittee of the GLC "to promote equal opportunity in employment, housing, education and social fields, to implement positive discrimination in favour of ethnic minority workers, to advocate implementation of equal opportunities by London borough and other employers, and to advocate the repeal of repressive and racially discriminatory laws and practices". The manifesto also promised that Labour GLC would ban the National Front and other fascist groups from using its premises and would campaign for a democratically elected police authority to control the Metropolitan Police.

The Labour Party Race Action Group launched a "Don't take Black Votes for Granted" campaign in 1980. The Group urged Labour members to take practical steps to involve ethnic minorities in their activities and to show concern for issues which affect them. If such activities do not take place, it could result in greater cynicism and apathy among black voters, the Labour Party would be unable to win the key marginals in the next general election and the Labour Party could be consigned to the opposition for a long period to the detriment of all working people of this country.

Narendra Makanji
Wood Green CLP

LONDON'S OURS!

From Page One

Government enabling us to secure the immense financial resources which London really needs.

The new GLC/ILEA Labour groups have elected administrations totally committed to the manifesto. The GLC group has agreed to my proposals that the full group should determine all policy issues. The Leader's office will now be answerable to the party as a whole. These changes, taken with the removal of all the leadership's powers of patronage (the full group now elects all posts) dramatically break the traditional powers of the Leader and move us towards the party democracy which we have been debating.

Further proposals to open the group to trade union and CLP observers will be brought forward, together with recorded voting. The manifesto working parties must be reformed to provide a liaison between each Council committee and the London Labour Party itself.

We carry a terrible responsibility before the movement as a whole. If we fail, it will be a major setback for the working-class movement and for the left within the Party. The activities of the GLC/ILEA must now become matters of vital concern throughout the London parties. Each step we take must be scrutinized and debated if we are to avoid pitfalls, learn from our mistakes and carry Londoners with us in defence of our full programme.

County Hall now belongs to us. The day following the formal transfer of power, we will welcome the People's March for Jobs into County Hall, where they will be accommodated.

County Hall is a vital resource for our movement – so let's begin to make use of it! The meeting rooms in this empty building will provide an ideal central meeting point for left-wing groups, women's organizations, movements of ethnic minorities etc. etc. Let us know when you want to meet here.

HANDS OFF WORKERS' POLAND

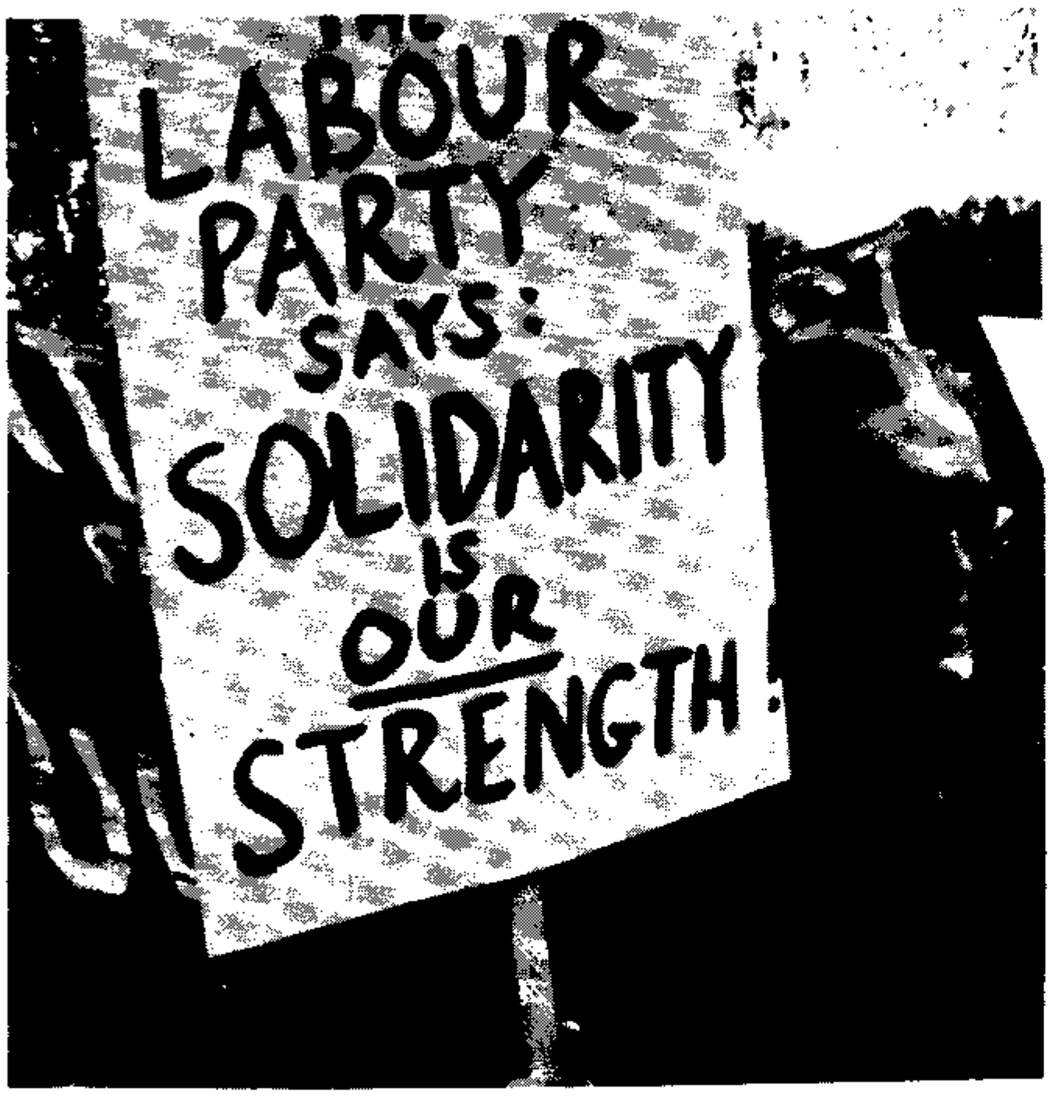
PHOTOS: 'BRIEFING'













London socialists march to the Soviet Embassy during the "Hands Off Workers' Poland" demonstration called on the initiative of *London Labour Briefing* in April. We are planning another event – a mass rally in central London – to coincide with the Polish Communist Party Congress due to be held in July. This page is our reply to those right-wingers who, after our victory at County Hall, went to the national and local press to get them to accuse BRIEFING supporters of being "Stalinists".

What Happened in Brixton?

London Labour Briefing spoke to Ted Knight and Derek Prentice the leader and deputy leader of Lambeth Council about the events of April 11th and 12th and the reaction since then.

Brixton suffers all the classic problems of inner city life – 1500 young people without work, and little prospects of getting any, severe housing problems, lack of facilities and a general distrust of the white establishment and political parties who have failed to deliver to Brixton any hope of prosperity.

The policing methods in Brixton have been severe, from the indiscriminate use of SUS in the past to the latest 'SWAMP 81' tactic of flooding Brixton with police from all over London in an intimidatory army of occupation, which arrests many people, and subsequently charges very few of them.

Since the present administration of Lambeth was elected in 1978 there have been consistent efforts by the Council to deal with the police problem. All the fears of what might happen if the police did not change their methods were predicted in an independent report by Turner Samuels QC; and independent examination of policing methods in the area which was dismissed by the police and Whitelaw as a disgraceful attack on law and order.

The actual week end of April 11th and 12th began when the police drafted huge numbers into Railton Road following a stabbing incident. The concern of the police over the injured man was so great that they held him in a car for questioning whilst he was still bleeding.

Throughout Saturday April 11th there was a massive build up of police in Brixton, and the situation exploded over the presence of barricades of frightened people in Railton Road; the people of Railton Road agreed to take them down if the police withdrew from the area. The imagination of Commander Fairburn knew no bounds when he announced that he had a responsibility "to clear the streets". From then on the area exploded and the police, in massive numbers charged into the crowds, but apparently were not prepared to do anything about the looting that was going on, but were more interested in intimidating the population of the area.

250 Special Patrol Group men invaded the Stockwell Park estate and made a large number of indiscriminate arrests and created more confusion and anger.

The police respect for democratic Government showed the lengths it would go to when Commander Fairburn eventually agreed to talk to Ted Knight and Derek Prentice by phone at 00.15 hours on April 13th. Three days later, with massive damage, hundreds of arrests and the most violent policing methods ever seen Commander Fairburn told Lambeth Council that he had "restored the area to normality".

The activities of the police should be warning to all; throughout the weekend in effect they took over an entire London Borough by throwing two rings of police around the area, the second ring extended to Dulwich Village. Anyone in those areas had great difficulty in moving and could only get in and out of their streets by showing identification. Fairburn also told Lambeth Council that if the same thing occurred the following week they would have to arrange passes for local councillors to gain access.

Unity between the Black and White people of the area has been the outcome of the police methods, and the deepest resentment against the police force who have acted like an army of occupation. Intense political discussion amongst all sections of the community has resulted in perhaps the keenest understanding of what the police are actually doing of any group of people in London.

In an effort to get some cash help for Lambeth in the aftermath of the week end Heseltine met Ted Knight and Derek Prentice and finally said:

> "My cabinet colleagues don't like you; they couldn't trust Lambeth with any money. If I went back to them and told them I had agreed to help Lambeth they would have me certified."

Whitelaw, in a heavily guarded lightning visit to the area confined himself to praising the police for their work.

Brixton has shown us how well prepared the forces of Law and Order are, and how ruthless their methods are to intimidate and occupy an entire area of London.

Lambeth Central Labour Party
PUBLIC MEETING

"Policing the Capital"

a conference-debate on all issues around:

- Metropolitan police accountability;
- the conduct of the police: its continuing failure to respond to and respect the community's. needs;
- the future with a Labour GLC

May 26th 8.00pm

Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane, SW2

discussion led and chaired by *Russell Profitt* with

Paul Boateng, GLC Councillor
Basil Manning, Scrap sus campaign
Sarah Spencer, NCCL
Jean Bernard, Lambeth Central CLP
Phil Kelly, 'State Research'

with the support of the London Co-op Society Political Committee

Please help us to take up the campaign on what should be *our* police by coming along and contributing to the evening!

Editorial Note:
BRIEFING publishes *all* material submitted to us, without any political censorship, and guarantees to continue this policy no matter what. In this spirit we welcome Stewart Lansley's contribution, whilst pointing out that many of us would not assent to the judgements seemingly implicit in the description of the near-insurrection in Brixton as an "example of street rioting" which was "worse" even than anything seen in Northern Ireland. An alternative view would be that the street-fighting was excellent, but could have been (and hopefully in future will be) better organized! Some of us feel that there are occasions when, in defence of genuine legality and democracy, insurrectionary methods become necessary. The defence of a future left-wing Labour Government from right-wing military subversion (on the Chilean model) could well be a future task facing us, in which case the events of Bristol last year and Brixton this year might be seen in a more positive light. On the subject of the police, some of us also prefer Ted Knight's courageous statements to the formulations of Stewart Lansley – the task, surely, is to *break* the Metropolitan Police Force as at present constituted and *disband* the SPG, not just try to "educate" these bodies or use them only in areas less "sensitive" than Brixton.

What went wrong

Stewart Lansley

The post mortems on Brixton are now underway. But unless they lead to action and soon, similar or even more serious explosions may be unavoidable. Nobody can deny the seriousness of what occurred. It is difficult to recall a worse example of street rioting outside of Northern Ireland. The physical damage to local community relations is impossible to assess. The years of patient, painstaking work by local residents and community activists has been badly fractured.

There are, of course, a multiple of explanations for what happened. Like so many other inner city areas, Brixton is a poor and depressed area, rundown, where bad housing is rife. Services and facilities, particularly for the young, are hopelessly inadequate. Unemployment is much higher than the London average, and is rising at a frightening rate. While these problems face both the white and the black community, they are not evenly shared. Black people – who account for more than 1 in 3 of the local population – face even greater disadvantage, living, on average, in worse housing, suffering a higher rate of unemployment, and for those in work, receiving below average wages. In Brixton more than half of the *registered* unemployed aged between 16 and 19 are black.

Aggravated

These problems have been aggravated by police methods that have led to a steady deterioration in relations between the police and the local community, especially the black community. The fact is that the police methods used have failed to reduce the crime rate. They have simply undermined community confidence. The black community in particular has suffered persistent harassment, with regular use of the Special Patrol Group and indiscriminate use of the 'Sus' law against black youths. Indeed, an estimated 75% of those arrested on Sus in Lambeth have been black.

Youth clubs and community halls in the area have suffered numerous police raids. Judges rules have been habitually

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ROW IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

A major row has broken out in Hammersmith & Fulham over the Labour Group's attempt to form a minority Administration with Social Democrat and Liberal support. The attempt failed after eight Labour 'rebels' refused to back the proposed Administration in the Council Chamber.

Left wing members of the Group had been unsuccessful in stopping the Labour Leader, Tony Powell, from moving an increase in the Tory rate from 48.3% to 53.6%. While the amendment reduced fears of white collar redundancies, the new rate level still necessitates cuts in services of £4.5m including £750,000 in housing maintenance involving 40-50 lost jobs in the DLBO. The amendment was carried in Council with the support of two Conservatives and the Tories resigned.

Deal with SDP

Despite holding only 21 seats on the 50 seat Council, Tony Powell and Cllr Ian Gray, the Shadow Housing Chairman, brought proposals before the Group for a Labour Administration to implement the 53.6% rate. Apparently a deal had been cobbled together for the support of the Social Democrats, the Independent (ex Labour) and, at least, one of the Liberal Councillors if Labour pursued 'moderate' policies. Two of the Social Democrats had recently left Labour after being major proponents of the 53.6% rate in the Labour Group.

Grassroots Opposition

Prior to the Group Meeting the Hammersmith North CLP AGM had overwhelmingly come out against the proposal and this had been endorsed by the Local Government Committee Executive. The Fulham Labour Party Executive supported the proposal. The Group decided to proceed with the idea by 13 votes to eight in face of this opposition and the resignation of the Deputy Leader and two Shadow Chairmen. The eight, arguing that they held a clear mandate from the Party to fight cuts and not to volunteer to introduce them, abstaining at the Council Meeting on 27th April.

Betrayal

The whole episode represents an attempted betrayal of socialist principles. It is regretable that a Labour Group, for the sake of holding office, is prepared to carry out policies substantially the same as those of the Tory Administration they intend replacing.

The objective of the Labour Party in Hammersmith & Fulham should be to work for a clear socialist mandate in 1982 to enable it to align with other Labour Boroughs in opposition to Tory Government policies.

Stephen Clark
Cllr. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

TARGET '82

The weakness of the attack against the Tory Government since 1979 has been the criminal neglect by Labour Councils of the urgency of their banding together on a no cuts stand against Heseltine.

Target '82 is an effort to bring together activists from all London Boroughs to discuss that weakness, and to put forward policies for the Party that would ensure that Labour authorities worked together and that the relationships between Boroughs was on a real level rather than the elitism of the London Boroughs Association and the ineffectiveness of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

The last meeting heard encouraging reports of comrades prepared to come forward and fight the 1982 elections on a policy of outright confrontation with the Tories.

The next meeting of TARGET '82 will be on TUESDAY JUNE 23rd at 7.30pm at County Hall SE1.

Anyone interested in supporting Target '82 should contact Jeremy Corbyn at 28 Lausanne Road N8 0HN.

NORWOOD

Ted Knight's defeat in Norwood on May 7th is the result of two years of sustained media attacks on Lambeth Council and its opposition to the Tory Government.

The vote of the Social Democrat Haseler shows that the Tory running dogs are prepared to intervene in an election, with the active support of the media to defeat left wing Labour candidates if possible.

Workers for Norwood Labour Party found that the support amongst Black people was higher than ever, and that it came out to vote, but the areas of more marginal Labour support either stayed at home or voted against Labour.

Norwood Labour Party are looking forward from the defeat to a massive campaign right up to the 1982 Borough elections for support for the fight against the Tory Government, and recruitment into the Labour Party.

No activist can afford to be complacent in the face of the Norwood result; it is not a recipe for trimming, but a crying demonstration of the need for the whole of the Labour Party to campaign all the time on the basic issues of socialism.

(Continued from previous page)

ignored – especially in the case of juveniles. It was just three months ago that the report of the independent inquiry into local police/community relations in Lambeth* warned of the gravity of the consequences if no action was taken to change basic policing methods. This was simply ignored.

The insensitivity of the police is symbolised by the events of the Brixton weekend. It was the intensive police activity of the previous week combined with the heavy and provocative police presence throughout the Saturday that created the tension, and released the usually submerged frustration and antagonism felt so keenly by many young blacks that triggered the confrontation.

Discontinued

The use of the SPG must be discontinued – it is irrelevant to the problems of areas like Brixton. Race relations training should be introduced throughout the police force. Moreover, the Metropolitan Police is answerable only to the Home Secretary. If the police are to win greater confidence, the community must have a voice in how they operate. They should be made accountable to the elected authority for London – the Greater London Council.

But if changes in police methods are vital they are not enough on their own. Even more sensitive tactics would probably not have prevented a similar outburst at some stage. Many youngsters in this area have been badly scarred by a society which offers them no prospects and a desolate future. Black people are increasingly resentful of their lack of voice in Parliament, the judiciary and the local council. As well as greater representation, the only lasting solution is more and better jobs, better housing, better facilities and amenities. And this means one thing – *more resources.*

Yet Lambeth's housing programme has been halved and its rate support grant cut by a quarter in just two years. Brixton now lives in a state of despair. The bitterness and anger that were vented in the events before Easter have not disappeared. Few people put much faith in Scarman. And whatever Scarman says, the Government has already made it clear that they are not prepared to take the action that is necessary. If that remains so, the costs may be high indeed.

* *Final Report of the Working Party into Community/Police Relations in Lambeth* (available from Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2).

Stewart Lansley is a Labour councillor in Brixton and Chairman of Lambeth's Community Affairs Committee.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bringing Socialist Policies to Life

London needs a dramatic breakthrough to end the senseless spiral of decline in public transport that has marked four years of wasted Tory rule. The Labour GLC is poised to meet this challenge head on – and we are well prepared. But our first six months at County Hall will be crucial.

Public transport is one of the major areas of our Manifesto where we can bring our socialist policy to life because the power to really implement it is there for us to use.

Our strategic objective, to adapt a well-known phrase, is nothing less than a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of road-space and rail-resources in favour of public transport passengers and their families.

This underlies our commitments to cut fares; freeze them; introduce zonal fares; re-invest in the LT service; build our own buses again; extend OAP free travel to rail; reorganize LT; integrate LT with BR services; and critically review the Tory mania for road-building.

Action from Day One

Never before has so much preparatory work been done in advance of a GLC Election on how to implement our policy after we've won. Candidate Working Parties have paved the way for immediate action by the new Labour GLC Transport Committee.

Take Bus Priority Measures. We can act NOW to safeguard the 123 Bus Lane schemes we already have. We can scrap the restrictive Tory policy; issue our own (incorporating priority for 'Inbound' lanes); re-write the criteria for estabishing Bus Lanes to make their adoption less difficult; review those 19 Bus Lanes scrapped by the Tories since 1977; review those 7 schemes which the Tories put on ice and were never introduced; invite LT to submit a list of further measures which (we know) they have had waiting in the wings; and agree the broad strategy of going for 'experimental' schemes on the grounds that they can be introduced more quickly. We can get moving NOW to seek a ban on the movement of Nuclear Waste and Weapons by rail through London using the 7-point programme of action issued during the Campaign by four of us fighting West London constituencies.

Other areas will take longer to tackle. The reorganization of the structure of LT can only be effective after full consultation with the TUs involved. The fares reductions and zonal 'package' will occupy the lion's share of time and attention over these next 6 months – and we must get our major Manifesto commitment right first time.

Meanwhile we can still press ahead in other areas including our critical review of harmful Tory road schemes. We can upgrade the status of, and resources to, cyclists in transport decision-making; crack down on Juggernaut lorries by proper enforcement of the restrictions that are supposed to already exist; and plan the longer-term goals of Labour policy. Not least the integration of LT and BR services.

We can't afford to have LT and BR existing as totally separate rail systems within London.

Nearly 70 years ago early Labour pioneers on the old LCC were fighting for a "homogeneous" system – and we still haven't got it. In 1907 so-called "through fares" were introduced between different Underground lines. In 1981 we need a ticket integration between LT and BR.

Herbert Morrison fought for a "publicly controlled system". In 1981 the radical reorganisation of LT must have workers control on the agenda for detailed discussions.

Campaigning Role

The only difference between May 7th and today is that from now on we no longer need to campaign for our candidates. But we will make a fatal mistake if we stop campaigning for our policy. This Labour GLC must carry the people of London with us.

We need to revolutionize our whole approach to publicity for our GLC. The public campaign we shall now need to begin and maintain must be like nothing we have ever seen before. Nothing short of a massive injection of resources into publicity can counter the Tory press and media bias and win and strengthen and entrench public support for our policies.

The campaigning role of the Labour GLC will be especially vital in those areas where the GLC cannot by itself implement our policy – eg the re-routing of nuclear waste around London – and the Labour GLC must work with the GLLP on every area.

The Socialist Perspective

Compared to the bankruptcy of Tory transport policy we must see the years 1981-85 as but intermediate steps towards the transformation of public transport in London which, by comparison with other leading capital cities, we so desperately need. Nearer home, South Yorkshire has convincingly demonstrated what public support there is for a sane approach.

Without a fundamental shift to public transport, London, like a human body suffering from an unhealthy circulation, is threatened with progressive 'hardening of the arteries' as traffic congestion relentlessly gets worse.

Imposing Our Political Will

Implementing Labour's policy will be a battle – on every front. And it will not just be won by votes in Committee rooms – still less in the Council chamber.

Apart from a running fight with Thatcher's Government, the main challenge now facing the Labour GLC is to exert and impose and maintain our political will over the machinery of County Hall government.

In some areas of our Transport policy we shall have to rely on pitting the political commitment of (part-time) GLC members against what we know in advance will be a sustained (full-time) hostility to our plans by the senior officials charged with departmental responsibilities. The Tory philosophy of the road lobby is particularly entrenched.

Head On Clash

But we must take the bold socialist approach and show London what can be done.

And if the Government (which has cut TSG by 7% since 1979) really wants a fight over our Supplementary 'Transport Rate' – let's see if they dare.

The Labour victory on May 7th has punched the biggest single hole beneath the political Plimsoll line of this rotten hulk of a Government since the General Election.

With the confidence of this victory behind us, and the organised support of the Labour Movement in London, we can probably bale more water into Thatcher's sinking ship with our Transport policies than any other achievement likely in the first 6 months.

This is the real political significance of Labour's policy on public transport.

Stephen Benn
GLC Labour Candidate for Chelsea

BLACK/LEFT ALLIANCE STRENGTHENED IN BRENT

MERLE AMORY

The failure of former leader of Brent Council, John Lebor, to be selected for the ward he has represented for 12 years, and his decision not to stand for the leadership in the coming year, is an indication of the potential strength of what has been called the Black/Left alliance which has been growing steadily in Brent in recent months.

If Comrade Lebor was in any doubt that his racist remarks about members of the newly-formed Asian Labour Party Alliance which have dominated the local Tory Press since the selection process began, had angered the black community, then the position must now be starkly clear even to him.

The Labour Party in Brent has undergone a significant transformation as large numbers of black people – Asian and West Indians – have joined the Party in an effort to secure greater accountability and adequate representation of the ethnic minorities on the next Council.

The most significant factor in this development has been the formation of the Asian Labour Party Alliance, which has helped to recruit up to 700 Asians to the Labour Party in Brent.

The fact that this group and most of the other black people coming into the Party have allied themselves with those on the left or "progressive elements" as we have been called, is neither surprising nor insignificant, because it has always been those on the left of the Party who have taken up the issue of racism, fought to have resolutions on issues affecting black people debated at National Conference and encouraging us to participate in the formation of Party policy.



Looking back to Grunwick, again it was the left in Brent who first took up the struggle of the black workers at the Neasden sweatshop and helped to make it a national struggle, which even today summons up feelings of shame within the Labour Movement, when the full extent of the sell out is realised.

More recently, sections of the Asian community in Brent turned to the Labour Party for help in an effort to stop the Council giving patronage to an extreme right-wing Asian organisation called the HSS, which was receiving money from the Council posing as representatives of the Asian community and using it to discriminate against lower caste members of the community. Whilst the right wing and moderates were murmuring patronising platitudes about these racists, the left were fighting for an enquiry into the allegations about this organisation and succeeded finally in pushing through a motion calling for an end to donations to this organisation and a ban on the letting of Council property to caste based groups who would discriminate against sections of the community.

It is an indication of the state of the Labour Group that this decision of the Local Government Committee, though taken over nine months ago, has not yet been discussed by the Labour Councillors.

So long as this contradictory attitude to the problems of the black community remains, when the Party itself is willing to take up the issues black people feel are important only to find that their representatives in positions of power are unable or unwilling to act on Party policies, then black people will be justified in campaigning against racism within the Labour Party. And if this results in black people dispensing with the services of those whose only thought is for office, with no regard to putting forward the views of the people they claim to represent – then that can only strengthen the relationship between the Labour Party and the black community.

Brent on Course for Target 82

With selection of candidates for the 1982 borough elections now completed in 13 of the 19 Labour-held wards, the composition of the next Labour Group in Brent seems certain to show a marked shift to the left. So far 10 sitting councillors have failed to be reselected and 9 Briefing supporters are set to replace them.

This success must be seen against the present Group's contemptuous treatment of the views of the Party on almost all of the most important issues over the past two years. The main political criterion for challenge to sitting councillors has been their failure to reflect the overwhelming feeling in the three local Parties on the issues of the cuts, council house sales and Barclay's Bank. The deselected councillors all scorned the view of the Party on one or more of these issues by such behaviour they not only showed their unpreparedness to be accountable, but also refused to accept a political role in fighting the Tory Government.

Gains have also been made in the struggle for proportionate representation of ethnic minorities. Support by the left for Asian and Black candidates has ensured that the next Group will be more representative. This success can largely be attributed to the initiative taken by the Asian Labour Party Alliance, together with a group of politically committed Black comrades.

The ascendancy of the left in reselections has, of course, led to attacks by right-wingers, chiefly deselected councillors and their acolytes. An orchestrated, vicious smear campaign, with distinct racist overtones, has been mounted in the local and national press. A common argument of the right has been that the left has achieved a Pyrrhic victory – by challenging large number of 'experienced', 'able' and 'trusted' councillors we are destroying party unity and handing an electoral advantage to the Tories. Recent events show the bankruptcy of these arguments. Recruitment in all three Brent constitutencies remains extremely high, hardly a sign that working people believe the party to be in imminent danger of self-destruction. Even more telling are the results of recent elections. Two by-elections, in Stonebridge and Harlesden Wards, showed marked swings to Labour, and in the GLC elections the swing in Brent South (where reselection actively has been highest) was a massive 21%, the highest in London. To achieve these results despite the barrage of right-wing inspired press attacks on the Party seems to suggest that Labour supporters have a greater political will to fight the Tories than do some of their so-called leaders. This, above all, justifies a determined effort by all activists to carry through a thorough reselection programme right across London.

S. Marshall-Clarke
Brent South CLP

Tony Benn and the

Capitalism the Real Enemy Says Tony Benn

The greatest danger to democracy is cynicism. You hear it all the time when people say "they're all the same" and "you can't trust politicians who tell you one thing in opposition to get elected, and do the opposite in Government". Unfortunately there is some truth in that charge. It is partly because things can be made to look too easy when you don't have the responsibility; and the realities of Government are a lot more complicated than are often imagined.

But that isn't the whole story. It is partly that politics are presented in terms of personalities and political parties attack each other by naming names when what is wrong is deeper, and needs more than a change of Ministers or even policies. And what is needed is a discussion of issues. Britain is in the grip of a really serious crisis with a return of mass unemployment that could be permanent, while our Welfare State is being destroyed at the expense of young and old and especially the weak and sick.

Why is this happening? That is the first question to ask.

The answer does not lie in putting all the blame on the Government of the day however bad their policies are. The fact is that British capitalism – based on the worship of profit and loss at the expense of human values – simply cannot keep people in work to meet the most elementary human needs and, unless we change that economic system, whoever runs it will face the same problems.

The present Government believe that mass unemployment will boost profits by cutting wages and frightening the Trade Unions into accepting unemployment and into accepting cuts in Public Services.

This will only make things worse and it has now even scared big business.

So now we have an attempt to set up a Centre Party made up of more humane conservatives, some right wing Labour defectors who are hoping to build on the Liberal vote.

This crowd believe passionately in Britain's membership of the Common Market, in tighter Laws to control wages and Unions and in a huge nuclear rearmament programme with Cruise Missiles under American control operated from British airfields.

The clear alternative policies which have been agreed after the most intense discussions throughout the labour movement during the last ten years make good sense.

But here's the problem.



Would the next Labour Government really carry them out or would they be abandoned at the first sign of opposition? The only guarantee that they would be carried out would be if the Parliamentary Leadership was really committed to do so.

That is why the Labour Party has been spending the last couple of years discussing democracy within the Labour Party and has now set up an electoral college to allow the whole Party to choose its Leader and Deputy Leader.

Michael Foot will certainly be re-elected at the electoral college and the campaign for accountability is about the Deputy Leadership.

Throughout this campaign there must be no personalities but only a discussion about how we can get these policies carried through by the next Labour Government.

If any candidate who is really committed to these policies is elected Deputy Leader then the Labour Party can answer the cynics and say 'Yes, vote Labour and these policies will be carried through'.

This is a campaign for credibility. It will unite the Party and greatly increase its prospects of winning public support to tackle the crisis directly by electing a Labour Government that will really do what it has been elected to do.

Tony Benn

Why I am

THE DEPUTY LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOUR PARTY

This is the text of the statement Tony Benn issued when he announced his intention of becoming a candidate for the Deputy Leadership of the Labour Party, the election for which will take place at the beginning of the Labour Party Conference in Brighton on September 27th 1981.

"Following the decisions taken at the Wembley Conference to establish an Electoral College, nominations are to be invited from Constituency Labour Parties, Trade Unions and other affiliated organisations for the Leadership and Deputy Leadership of the Labour Party to be elected at the 1981 Conference.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Bristol South East Constituency Labour Party held on February 13th a resolution was passed advising me to accept nomination for the Deputy Leadership.

Nominations to be valid require the support from at least 5% of the Parliamentary Labour Party and the following Labour Members of Parliament have now signified their support for my candidature.

Norman Atkinson MP	Tottenham
Ron Brown MP	Edinburgh Leith
Martin Flannery MP	Sheffield Hillsborough
Stuart Holland MP	Lambeth Vauxhall
Robert Hughes MP	Aberdeen North
Robert Litherland MP	Manchester Central
Joan Maynard MP	Sheffield Brightside
Michael Meacher MP	Oldham West
Ian Mikardo MP	Bethnal Green & Bow
William McElvey MP	Kilmarnock
Reg Race MP	Wood Green
Jo Richardson MP	Barking
Allan Roberts MP	Bootle
Ernie Roberts MP	Hackney N & Stoke Newington
Ernie Ross MP	Dundee West
Dennis Skinner MP	Bolsover

I have decided to accept nomination for the Deputy Leadership because this election will give the Party an opportunity to discuss policy, and to commit the Parliamentary Leadership to a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families as set out in our Constitution and in Conference decisions.

My candidature will therefore be clearly and firmly based upon the following policies:

1. As a first priority, to restore full employment during the life time of the next Labour Government by adopting the alternative economic strategy.

Deputy Leadership

standing

2. To expand and develop Housing, Health, Education, Welfare and other essential public services both to meet peoples needs and to create jobs.
3. To support and strengthen the rights of women, to extend democracy and self-government at all levels in industry and society, to defend the Trades Unions, to protect the interests of the ethnic communities, to enact a Freedom of Information Bill and to end the House of Lords.
4. To develop co-operation with all the countries of Europe to secure the complete withdrawal of Britain from the Common Market and to support the United Nations in its work for peace, international justice and World development.
5. To adopt a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain, to work for European nuclear disarmament, and to secure the removal of all American nuclear bases from Britain.

We must include these and other conference policies in the next General Election Manifesto, and work for its implementation by the next Labour Government, in close co-operation with the Party and the Trades Unions on the basis of a collective leadership, so that all those elected to positions of responsibility will be more fully accountable to Parliament, the public and the Labour movement for their stewardship.

These policies for peace, jobs and freedom uniquely offer a real hope for the recovery and reconstruction of Britain, and if put forward forcefully and clearly by the Labour Leadership they will win majority support in the next General Election.

All those who share this approach should see that the campaign for the Deputy Leadership is conducted on these issues.

We must strengthen the unity of the Labour Party and encourage the widest possible diversity of discussion within it in a spirit of tolerance and goodwill.

I shall be standing to uphold the traditional values and institutions upon which the Party, Trades Unions and the Co-operative movement were founded.

These include a deep commitment to Parliamentary democracy, to the democratic rights of the British people and to the advocacy of socialism by consent."

Nominations for this election are invited from every affiliated organisation in the Labour Party, and will be duly published in the Conference papers.

Has YOUR organisation made its choices known?

ORGANISE NOW!

Tony Benn's declaration as a candidate for Deputy Leader will be welcomed by the overwhelming majority of London CLP s. Having an election is the only sound way of defending the decision reached at the Wembley Conference since the Right are now forced to campaign for a change in the college at the same time as running their own candidate on the original formula.

Benn is basing his candidature on five sets of policies, agreed by conference, which readers of the 'Sun', 'Daily Mail', 'Daily Express' etc will not have read amidst all the character assassinations which greeted Benn's declaration in the media.

Choices to be made

The reaction from the media has been predictable. Hysterical, abusive but always fearful in case Benn's message gets to be understood by working class people. The reaction of the bulk of Labour MP's has highlighted both their distance from constituency views and their naivety. Did those in the Party who are advising Benn to withdraw not expect the electoral college to be used after all the trauma of setting it up? No doubt it would have been most convenient for the Right if Denis Healey was allowed another walk-over, but if that were to happen this year then opposition to Benn, or anyone else, standing in 1982 would have been overwhelming.

When all the panic and hysteria has died away and the Party accepts we are going to have an election, then choices will have to be made. The election itself will have significance beyond that of choosing a deputy leader. We will really be choosing what sort of a Party we are going to be in the future. A socialist party with someone in leadership who accepts and fights to implement conference decisions, or a party with leaders content to pick and choose from conference decisions with no real wish to challenge the basic assumptions of the economic system. These fundamental divisions remain within our Party. They have not departed simply because thirteen Right-wing MP's have gone elsewhere. Eventually the real choice will have to be made and the contest for deputy leader is part of that choice.

Organise Now

Constituencies have now received the nomination papers for the electoral college and the closing date is August 15th. It is essential that in London we take the following action immediately:

1. Secure Tony Benn's nomination at Ward, section and General Committee levels.
2. Discuss with Labour MP s how he/she intends to vote. Each CLP is entitled to know this information since, in any case, the vote in the electoral college is to be recorded.
3. In Trade Union branches resolutions should be passed calling for support for Benn or for candidates for Deputy Leader to appear before the Union conference or executive where there is no conference before next October.
4. Emphasisethe policy issues. The media will do its usual job of diverting attention by concentrating on personalities, but our campaign must be to stress the issues. After all, everyone, inside and outside the Party, is entitled to know where Labour's leaders stand and the coming election campaign for deputy leader will give us an excellent chance to find out.
5. Contact "London Labour Briefing' with requests for leaflets and offers of assistance in the campaign.

Tony Banks
Tooting CLP

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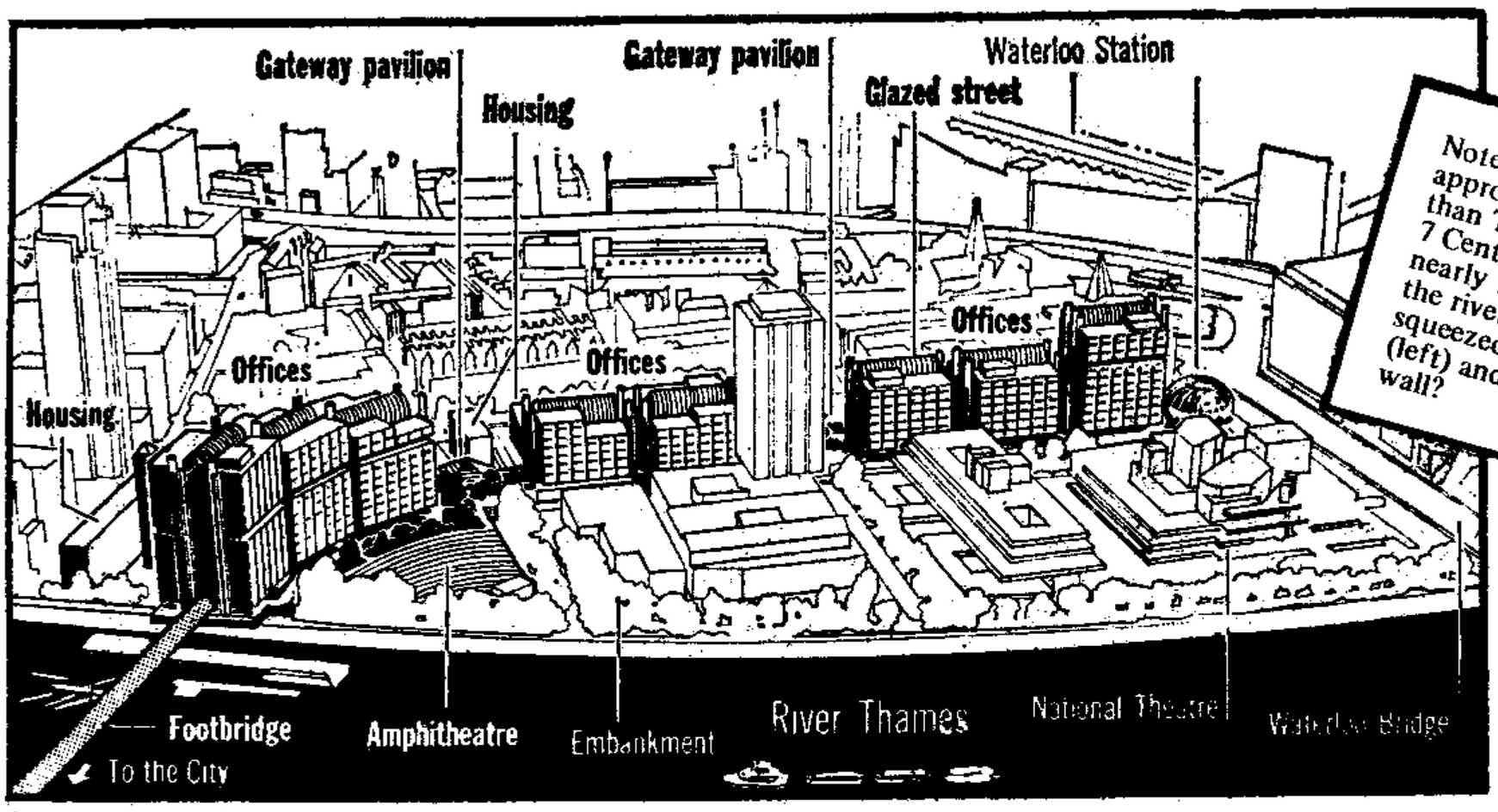
We desperately need "key people" for our coverage. If you will volunteer to write short articles each month on your borough/constituency, please fill in below:

Phone (if any) .....

CLP .....

Name .....

Address .....



Note the wall of offices which is approximately 1/3 of a mile long (longer than The Cut!) and equivalent to nearly 7 Centrepoint blocks. The wall could be nearly 20 storeys high where it meets the river. Can you see the housing squeezed in between the office blocks (left) and between the main road and the wall?

COIN ST. SITE massive developments recently proposed by Greycoat Commercial Ltd. **If this is what a pigeon would see, can you imagine walking underneath it? Do we really want this monstrosity built between South London and the river?**

Coin Street - victory in sight?

George Nicholson
GLC Bermondsey

This article is a mobilising call to all Labour movement, tenant movement and community organisations throughout London to muster for a massive demonstration of support for the newly elected GLC, Lambeth Council, and local residents of Waterloo in their battle against property speculation in Central London.

The successive plans on the Coin Street sites in Waterloo for homes, then offices, then hotels, then offices and homes, has focussed attention on the planning profession in this country, and it has not stood up to that critical look at all well. The forthcoming public inquiry due to start on June 2nd will hopefully provide a platform for the last few shreds of respectability to be torn away from the woolly mantle that the planning profession has so shamefully dressed up its pathetically thought-out agenda for the future in.

No doubt we shall hear again this most tired of professions trying to smear our arguments with the brush of dogma. But this inquiry promises to be different. This time WE will be putting forward the PLANNING arguments. We always have, mind you, but we didn't have the weight of the GLC or its resources behind us.

The recently completed Hays Wharf Inquiry just along the riverfront at London Bridge was a watershed, just as the first Coin Street Inquiry was, and our confidence in our arguments, and in the evidence to support our case, is now such that we know all the previous evidence put forward by planners and their promoters in the property world is little more than estate agents' talk.

How arrogantly the property speculators claim the mantle as the 'saviours' of London, and how willing the planners to carry their coat and gloves. Well at the Coin Street Inquiry all this nonsense is going to be exploded.

We in the Labour movement, newly elected on a mandate to stop speculation in Central London, will show once and for all that the needs of Londoners – that is, a home, a job and services at a price we can afford – are not going to be taken away from us, or if they are, they are not going to get away with doing it in the name of planning.

If our arguments are political, and of course they are, then their arguments will be exposed as such.

For the first time we shall at least be on an equal footing with the opposing forces.

Planners in County Hall have been instructed to bring forward evidence that will expose the speculators' greed and expose the seriousness of the housing and job situation in Central London.

For the first time *we* shall have a QC working for us and putting our arguments; not that we need QCs, but they have an unnerving habit of being heard and we are in the business of being heard.

For the first time *we* shall be landowners, albeit that the Tories have tried desperately to sell the land. We have yet to stop that, but if it is at all possible to do we will.

For the first time the GLC, local council and community groups will be united in a common cause, against the common enemy, the property speculator.

For the first time, *we* will not go short of resources to put our case.

For the first time the battle will be fought on OUR ground, and if the marchers from Liverpool can be persuaded to stay for a couple of days, what better arena to make their point than at the start of the Coin Street Inquiry.

We will not lose the Coin Street battle if enough of you come forward and make your voice heard.

We have won the arguments but not yet the battle, and battles are won with people not words, so please come to the Coin Street Inquiry in force and we will win.

Manifestos are important, but winning is the real test.

Contact me at County Hall for more information on the Inquiry.





Photos: 'BRIEFING'

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE RACIST NATIONALITY BILL

Sunday 5th April 1981
LONDON

The WRP, 'Socialist Organiser' and the Courts

The last issue of *Briefing* outlined the facts of the present libel case being brought by Vanessa Redgrave and the WRP against *Socialist Organiser* and its printers. Since then, Vanessa Redgrave has returned to the capitalist courts to get two further writs, including one against the secretary of *Socialist Organiser* for writing a letter to supporters explaining what was happening and the need to raise money to cover the legal costs.

It is more than ever clear that the aim of the writs is not only to 'settle' an argument by using financial and legal threats, which money has given Vanessa Redgrave access to. It is also to prevent *Socialist Organiser* and others campaigning in our defence, and to stop any criticism of the WRP. The case forced the old printers of *Socialist Organiser* to delete *all* reference to the WRP from the paper, including a simple financial appeal.

The case contrasts sharply with the treatment recently given to the criticisms of the WRP in both the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Observer*. While a labour movement paper gets High Court writs, the rich Tory papers get detailed replies in the pages of *Newsline*.

One of the basic issues involved in the case is the principle that we should sort out disputes inside the labour movement, and not bring the courts in. Whatever the rights and wrongs of *Socialist Organiser's* criticisms of the WRP, Vanessa Redgrave's legal writs fly in the face of that principle.

Socialist Organiser believes those criticisms were justified, and could be backed up. We also believe any debate about them should be *within* the labour movement, and have therefore organised a petition calling for a jointly agreed labour movement inquiry. Already this has received wide support, including 8 Labour MPs (Tony Benn, Reg Race, Jo Richardson, Ernie Roberts, Dennis Skinner, Bob Cryer, Ron Brown and Jim Marshall), Labour councillors (Ken Livingstone, Mike Ward, Jeremy Corbyn, Tony Banks, Paul Moore and Matthew Warburton amongst others) and a large number of labour movement individuals and organisations. We would urge all readers of *London Labour Briefing* to add their name to this petition.

Despite standing their own candidates in the recent local elections, the WRP's and Vanessa Redgrave's resources must be large. *Socialist Organiser's* are not. Already the refusal to be intimidated has involved us in heavy costs, at a time when our meagre resources are stretched by our much more important work in the local elections, in the Labour democracy campaign and all the issues arising out of the Tory onslaught. We would appeal for donations to help withstand the financial threats.

John Bloxam
Tottenham CLP

Women and Labour Collective: Midsummer Children's Outing to Avebury and Silbury Hill (Wiltshire). Grown-ups welcome. Coach leaves County Hall car park 10am Sunday June 21st; tickets: £3.00. Children £1.50. Contact: Mandy Graham, 19 Caversham Rd., N.W.5., tel. 482-0789. Slide show on Silbury, Stonehedge etc. at Camden Institute, Holmes Rd, N.W.5 (anthropology course); Thursday June 11th, 7.30-9.30pm.

Appeal for funds
Labour Movement Press Defence Fund

Send donations to Jonathan Hammond (Hon. Treasurer), c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to 'Labour Movement Press Defence Fund'.

A LABOUR INQUIRY, NOT THE COURTS

We, the undersigned, condemn Vanessa Redgrave's and the WRP's use of the courts against the labour movement press. We support the proposal that a labour movement inquiry be set up to investigate the statements made in the Socialist Organiser article.

NAME **ORGANISATION**

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Return to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

MAKING LABOUR GROUPS ACCOUNTABLE

The election of large numbers of Labour-controlled councils on radical platforms now makes the need to reform Labour Party local government structures even more pressing.

The assault we can expect from Heseltine will be complemented by pressure from Labour's own right wing to abandon manifesto pledges which will take us into direct confrontation with the Tory Government as we are told "don't rock the boat" and to "await the return of the next Labour Government". These pressures must be resisted, and that resistance can be made concrete by cementing into Labour Group standing orders a commitment that Labour councillors must seek to implement Party policy. Above all, it is clear that Labour's local government representatives can no longer be allowed to operate in isolation from the rest of the movement.

But the resistance to reform is, if anything, going to be even more bitter than the constitutional battles we have fought and won nationally. Alan Taylor has done the movement a great service by exposing in the pages of 'Tribune' the bogusness of the 'Association of Labour Groups'. A letter circulated by John O'Grady, leader of Southwark Labour Group, indicates that the main aim of the ALG is to resist the attempts of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to raise the issue of accountability of Labour Groups. And the kind of resistance we can expect from a certain element is, perhaps, epitomised by an ageing councillor, unable to come to terms with the new spirit and views in the Party, who was so angry when I introduced a paper advocating accountability of Labour councillors to their local parties at our GMC, that she has written to leading Labour MPs, the General Secretary and Uncle Tom Cobley and all, asking for their assistance in putting a halt to my effrontery and impudence!

The NEC, of course, is currently examining the model rules and standing orders of Labour Groups and is likely to produce proposals incorporating most of the necessary reforms. CLPD submitted evidence to this enquiry, and that evidence is available at a cost of 20 pence plus sae from the address below.

Unwise

However, we feel that it may be unwise to bring these proposals before Conference this year. As no trade union has policy on these issues, the chances must be that in the absence of any definite policy, several large block votes will inevitably be wielded in favour of the status quo and against reform. Therefore, CLPD are this year circulating a model amendment to Labour Group standing orders, which under Conference rules (Report of the 67th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool 1968, pp. 9-10) would not appear until 1982. This model amendment is also available on request.

By delaying until 1982, we would permit ourselves 18 months in which to build a rank-and-file campaign, and ensure that trade unions adopted policy in favour of reform.

Nevertheless, there is much that can be done this year. The Labour Co-ordinating Committee and SERA are circulating a resolution that includes a demand that the next Labour Government retrospectively indemnifies any councillors surcharged for defying the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act, and that the powers of the District Auditor be re-defined so that councillors can no longer be surcharged for political decisions. This is likely to gain wide support at Conference this year, and would neutralise much of the argument against Labour councillors being bound by local Party policy in that it would remove the threat of penal action against councillors who followed Party policy.

Secondly, we can begin to compile evidence from the growing number of Labour councillors who have been expelled from their Groups for the 'crime' of supporting Party policy. This evidence could then be produced in booklet form and would make the case for reform quite overwhelming. Any councillors with such 'horror stories' to tell should send details of their experiences to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Local Government Action Committee, 10 Park Drive, NW11 7SH.

Nigel Williamson
CLPD Local Govt. Action Committee

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MODEL STANDING ORDERS FOR LABOUR GROUPS ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Standing Order No 5
DETERMINATION OF GROUP POLICY AND ACTION

Standing Order No 5 reads as follows:
(a) The Local Government Election Policy shall be determined by the local Party in accordance with the terms of its Constitution as approved by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.
(b) It shall be the responsibility of the Labour Group on the Council to take decisions on matters coming before the Council. If the local Party desires to express a point of view upon any such matter, it may do so either by communicating with the Group Secretary or through the Party representatives at Group meetings.
(c) The selection of nominations for civic offices (including chairmen and vice-chairmen of committees when the Group has a majority of members of the local authority, and allocation of members of committees of the local authority shall be made by the Labour Group on recommendation of the officers (or the Policy Committee or Selection Committee). Where a vote for nomination to civic offices is necessary it shall be by secret ballot. The local Party may submit names to the Labour Group for consideration, but the final selection shall rest with the Labour Group.
(d) The policy of the Labour Group shall be determined by the Group Meeting on the recommendation of the Policy Committee or otherwise; provided that in cases of emergency, where action requires to be taken by motion or otherwise, such action may be taken by the Policy Committee, which shall report its action for approval to the next Group Meeting; and provided that in cases of still greater urgency which do not admit of delay, the Leader of the Gruop, or in the absence of the Leader his deputy (in either case consulting, if possible, other officers or members of the Policy Committee), shall have power to act, and such action shall be reported on the next meeting of the Policy Committee and/or the Group for approval.

AMENDMENT
Delete existing paragraphs (b) and (d), and insert new paragraphs as follows:

"(b) All members of the Labour Group on the Council shall be bound by all policy decisions included in the manifesto of the local Labour Party for the election at which they are elected.

"(c) In all matters of policy where the Labour Group feel they have new information which would make them wish to vote in Council in a manner contrary either to manifesto pledges or to the expressed policy of the local Party, the Group Secretary shall request a joint meeting of the Labour Group and the local Party to discuss the matter.

"(d) Decisions on new matters coming before the Council shall be taken at a joint meeting of the local Party and the full Labour Group, called by the Group Secretary. In matters of great urgency which do not allow delay, the leader of the Labour Group, or in the absence of the leader his deputy (in either case consulting other officers) shall have power to act. Such actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the Group for approval and ratification, if agreed, and to the next meeting of the local Party."

Renumber existing paragraph (c) as new paragrpah (e).

Letter from the H Blocks

BRIEFING has received the following letter, smuggled from prison by a republican socialist and dated March 23rd, 1981:

Comrades,

As a fellow worker, I appeal to you on behalf of my comrades now on Hunger Strike here in the H Blocks, to support our cause for the restoration of Political Status to the Republican prisoners. That is not the only cause which is at stake here, the implications of this Hunger Strike are many. Ireland's whole future may depend on its outcome. A victory on this issue will further loosen the imperialist stranglehold on this country bringing us closer to our ultimate goal of a socialist-workers Republic.

We the protesting prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh find ourselves in the position of Hunger Strike after a long struggle in these prisons for our rights and after a Hunger Strike a few months ago which ended when a commitment was made to the strikers from the government to make changes in accord with our demands. But once the tension had ebbed and the situation returned to normal, they reversed their decision in a calculated gamble that it would be enough to break ou our morale, leaving us no option but conformity.

But in this they have underestimated our resolve not to accept the criminal tag. We are not criminals and no amount of parliamentary legislation will ever change that fact. We are prisoners with deeply held political convictions who have been subjected to martial law-type powers with torture in special interrogation centres, non-jury courts and all the brutality of the H Block-Armagh system.

One wonders if this type of system were to arise in Britain, how long the British Unions would remain quiet about it? Yet the silence of the vast majority of British Trade Unions is deafening. Are they so short-sighted that they can never see a situation where workers and a capitalist government will come into direct confrontation, in these days of the deliberate policy of mass unemployment? Or is it as long as human rights are only being abused in N.I., it doesn't matter?

I would ask you not to reject this appeal out of hand, as coming from a nationalist extremist, but to give it careful consideration. For the prisoners here and in Armagh are of working-class backgrounds, socialists, who believe that as long as free enterprise continues, the people will be exploited and that is something we cannot and must not allow. We believe that the nation's wealth should be held in common by all the people and that people are put before profit. As workers you must be acutely aware of problems such as these under a capitalist system. We lay the blame for the social evils of this country on Britain, not that that is any reflection on her workers but her imperial masters.

It is such issues that lie below the surface of this Hunger Strike. The winning of Political Status will help us along the road to a Socialist Republic free from the chains of capitalism. Once again I ask your help, your support could help save men's lives. Give it now.

Yours hopefully,
Liam McCloskey, Republican Socialist,
H3 Long Kesh

'TROOPS OUT': MODEL RESOLUTION

The Labour Committee on Ireland is suggesting the following as a model resolution for this year's annual Labour Party Conference. Some BRIEFING supporters will be submitting an amended version, inserting the word "immediate" before the words "British political and military withdrawal" under point (d), and adding the following point (e): "Support for the demands of the H-block hunger strikers."

"This Conference notes the work of the NEC study group on Northern Ireland over the last twelve months in its efforts to formulate an independent Labour Party policy on Northern Ireland.

Conference expresses its concern, however, that the documents produced to date by the study group do not reflect either the views of the Irish Labour and democratic movements or the debates which have been taking place inside the British labour movement.

Accordingly, Conference rejects any policy-recommendation from the study group which fails to base itself on the following points:

(a) Opposition to bipartisanship with the Tories;
(b) Renunciation of the right of veto over British policies in Northern Ireland currently extended to the Unionist community;
(c) Support for the reunification of the 32 counties of Ireland;
(d) Commitment to a British political and military withdrawal from the six north-eastern counties."

Ban Transport of Nuclear Waste

Peter Spalding
Croydon Trade Union Council

Each week a massive container filled with nuclear waste from the nuclear power station at Dungeness passes through Purley Oaks, South Croydon, East Croydon, Selhurst and Thornton Heath on its long rail journey to the nuclear fuels reprocessing plant at Windscale in Cumbria.

The Central Electricity Generating Board, which runs the country's nuclear power stations, has no less than 51 of these containers. Each container weighs 52 tons and is made of 14½" thick steel. The nuclear waste itself is transported within two smaller containers which are immersed in 220 gallons of what is officially described as "slightly contaminated" water inside the main container.

Because the containers, with their deadly contents, weigh more than the 32 ton maximum weight limit for British roads they must be carried to their destination at the plant in Cumbria by rail. Officials of British Rail have stated that the transport of nuclear waste by rail is "as safe as it possibly can be" and that they "hope" that the huge containers will be strong enough to survive the most serious accident which is likely to occur on any of this country's railways.

This sounds reassuring and the containers are, in theory, expected to be able to withstand an impact of 30mph and an 800° Centigrade fire lasting for 30 minutes without suffering any appreciable damage. No full size container, however, has ever been tested to these standards and there is evidence available which proves that some of the welding inside the containers has been defective. There is also no guarantee that the containers will not be involved in a rail crash where the impact is more than 30mph. Most trains, especially the inter-city services which pass through Croydon, travel at speeds very much greater than 30 mph. There is also no guarantee that the London Fire Brigade, with its outdated equipment and drastically reduced manpower due to the Tory Government's public spending cuts, would be able to contain a major fire within the 30 minute safe period.

In the worst possible circumstances of a high speed crash followed by an intense and uncontrollable fire a major disaster would be inevitable. If such a crash, capable of damaging a nuclear container, and a fire, capable of converting nuclear waste into gas, were to occur in Croydon, the wind could disperse a cloud of radioactive gas over a wide area of South London, North East Surrey and Kent.

There must be a concerted campaign on both British Rail and the Central Electricity Generating Board to shake them out of their apparently complacent attitude. And there should be the strongest possible representations made to central government to force them to impose a ban on the transport of nuclear waste, and indeed all other dangerous waste substances, through urban areas.

'Mobilise for Labour Democracy' – new issue of the magazine of the Rank & File Mobilising Committee.

STIFFENING LABOUR'S BACKBONE

* Stick to Wembley
* For a committed leadership
* No one person shortlists

also including 'Why I am standing' by Tony Benn and articles on 'Who writes the Manifesto'; 'Stop the Right-wing purge of the NEC; Labour MPs – must they be Lobby fodder' by Ernie Ross/Willie McKelvey; how to build a multi-racial Labour Party and many more.

Available from Jon Lansman, 16 Tyler St, London SE10 9EY @ 20p + 15p p&p per copy; bulk orders (10 or more) @ 15p incl. p&p.

The Methods Stalin Taught Frank Chapple

The unacceptable face of right-wing unionism has raised itself in the EETPU's underhand and bullying attempts to dictate right-wing control of Bermondsey CLP.

Within the space of two weeks in November 1980, Bermondsey CLP suddenly received eleven new affiliations from EETPU head office in the name of branches from all over London (the total has since risen to fifteen).

In some cases, these EETPU head office affiliations and appointments of delegates were made *on behalf of* EETPU branches without their knowledge or consent – and in certain instances, despite the branch members' strenuous objections!

Last year, for example, the Bermondsey Party received a letter purporting to come from the London Electrical Engineering Staff Association (EESA) Branch of the EETPU. It requested affiliation and the appointment of a delegate, Charles Sawyer.

But when the Party contacted the secretary of the London EESA Branch, Ken Linney, it was informed by him that the Branch had *never* agreed to affiliate to Bermondsey CLP or to nominate anyone as a delegate.

However, the EETPU recently changed its rules so that the head office can directly affiliate and appoint the CLP's delegates who cannot get elected by their local EETPU branch.

The Bermondsey Party subsequently received confirmation from the EETPU Political Sub-Committee that it was exercising its right to affiliate *on behalf of* the London EESA Branch and appoint Charles Sawyer as a delegate – though once again, according to the Branch secretary, without the knowledge or consent of the London EESA members.

Likewise, the London Central Branch of the EETPU was ordered by head office to appoint Joe Lees, a Southwark Labour councillor, as a delegate to Bermondsey CLP.

The Branch members refused on the grounds that he was retired and never attended Branch meetings. In any case, they felt that he was unrepresentative of their views and had voted against the interests of the union in his capacity as a Southwark councillor.

Earlier this year, Bermondsey CLP appealed to the NEC for a ruling on the constitutionality of the EETPU's actions. The NEC's response was to insist that all union delegates must be 'elected or approved' by the branch members.

The EETPU leadership reacted to this ruling by threatening recalcitrant branches with suspension if they continued to refuse to 'elect' head office nominees.

Indeed, the London Central Branch, upholding its right under the EETPU constitution to put forward its own delegates, refused to capitulate.

As a result, the Executive Council of the union recently suspended the London Central Branch – one of the biggest in the country with over 7,000 members – in blatant defiance of the NEC's ruling.

This saga of intrigue has also revealed that the EETPU is apparently prepared to appoint delegates whose occupations bear no relation to the trades covered by the EETPU, and who are members of other unions and have only recently been signed up as members of EETPU branches. Charles Sawyer, the delegate appointed to Bermondsey CLP by head office in the name of the London EESA Branch, is a housing officer with Lewisham Council and a member of NALGO. He clearly has no occupational connection with the electrical or engineering trades in which EESA recruits.

The EETPU's actions without doubt negate both the spirit and the letter of the Labour Party constitution.

The head office practice of *appointing* hand-picked right-wing delegates over the heads of the branch members is contrary to Clause IX (1) of the Rules for CLPs and Branches which states that GMC delegates must be *'elected'*.

It also denies the long-established Labour Party system of *delegate democracy*. This is based on the principle that GMC delegates should be elected by and accountable to their branch members – that they should represent their branch members' views within the Labour Party and regularly report back to them on Party affairs.

But if delegates can be appointed by union head offices without the agreement, and even despite the objections of branch members, they cannot be genuinely representative and they cannot be true delegates – particularly if they do not even work in occupations covered by the union branch they ostensibly represent.

What the EETPU is doing in Bermondsey potentially poses a serious threat to internal Party democracy. If tolerated, it opens up all CLPs to packing by a union leadership which seems prepared to sign up anyone as an EETPU member and to appoint them as a union delegate, regardless of their occupation or the wishes of the branch members.

It cannot be justifiable for genuinely representative delegates to be swamped by EETPU head office appointees.

For these reasons, Bermondsey CLP is urging the NEC to stand firm by insisting that all trade union delegates must be freely *'elected'*, without duress, by the branch members. If there is any doubt as to the constitutionality of such a demand, then a Rule change at this year's Annual Conference must be a priority and we would urge the NEC to give a lead in this direction.

If unchallenged, what the EETPU is doing in Bermondsey will no doubt be repeated elsewhere on a vast scale and by other major right-wing unions as well. This is a serious threat to the struggle for democratic control and accountability and we ignore it at our peril.

Peter Tatchell
Secretary Bermondsey Labour Party

Dear Comrade,

The EETPU has affiliated up to twelve EETPU branches per constituency which can elect up to six members per branch.

It now seems that the right of local branches to elect their own delegates has been taken away by the Executive of the EETPU who can now appoint their own nominees which can mean up to 72 delegates per constituency.

The question arises who then will dictate policy in the constituencies and what constituency will be next.

It is and must stay the right of any union to affiliate to local Labour parties.

But it must also be the right of local union branches to elect its own delegates without interference by the Executives of any union.

I attach a copy of London Central's press statement.

Yours fraternally
D McCarthy

Press Statement:

REOPEN LONDON CENTRAL EETPU BRANCH

London Central EETPU has been suspended by the Executive. The branch, one of the oldest and biggest in the union, with 7,000 members, is based on contracting but includes many industries.

The reason for the closure is stated in a letter from Frank Chapple to every branch member, dated April 9th, and is that the branch refused an instruction from the Executive. No rule is quoted.

The instruction was that one Bro. J. Lees be a branch delegate to Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party. The EETPU rules are clear. Rule 14 clause 10, on branch powers, states: 'A branch may send delegates to the local or divisional Labour Party . . .'

The Executive only has the power to instruct members (Rule 4 clause 4a) within the rules of the union which give branches the right to elect their own delegates to local Labour Parties.

Bermondsey Labour Party had refused to accept J. Lees as they knew he had not been elected by the branch. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party held an inquiry and said that Bermondsey should accept J. Lees provided the branch 'approved' him as their delegate. The EETPU Executive instructed the branch to 'approve' him and when they did not closed the branch.

In trying to force London Central to elect J. Lees the Executive are breaking the rules and acting completely un-

Continued next page

Forward From May 7th!

"Alienation all round" could sum up our experiences 'on the knocker' in Homerton/King's Park (Hackney Central), over the few weeks before May 7th. The experiences were gained mainly from intensive canvassing in an area of about 3,000 electors on a close group of Hackney Council estates. No doubt the situation will be familiar in outline to readers of this piece, but the following conversation is typical:

"Vote Labour after an £8 a week rents, rates and heating charges rise? You must be joking!"

"But you know how much cash the Tory government has taken away from us?"

"Always the same excuses! I've always voted Labour, but not this time!"

"Look here – (pointing to leaflet which places Transport as the first of four prominent aspects of the manifesto) – we know things are rough in this borough, but this is not about the borough. It's about the GLC which the Tories have controlled for the past four years. In that time, as far as I'm concerned, they've destroyed London Transport. Labour will do something about that!"

(Elector brightens up) "Yes, I know that, mate. I work on the buses."

Further conversation followed, in which an outline of Tory policies on transport and other subsidies was contrasted with Labour's approach, and the man's own experience at work was linked to his experience as a tenant and ratepayer. It ended with him and his wife saying they would vote Labour 'just one more time.'

From this conversation, and many others which, however varied their specifics, revealed similar types of problem, a picture emerged of what we may call 'alienations', or disjunctions. Three key ones stand out:

Alienation, as Labour supporter, from a Labour Borough Council.

Alienation, as worker and Trade Unionist, from self as Labour supporter.

Alienation, as worker and Trade Unionist, from self as tenant and ratepayer.

Broadest Basis

As the principle of carrying the electors with us, on the broadest possible basis, is a fundamental part of the new approach of the Left in the Labour Party, particularly of those associated with Briefing, and will be essential to the success of Labour in defeating the Tory Thatcher/Howe/Heseltine clique and building democratic socialism in the future, I put forward some ideas which readers ought to take to themselves, and make part of a 'programme of action'. The ideas must be spread, and organisation built on their basis.

As I see it, the needs are:

1. 'Community politics' style campaigning at grassroots level, including the use of regular ward broadsheets allied to regular canvasses and other personal contact. Aim: to heal the Labour supporter – tenant of Labour Council alienation.
2. Forging closer links at ward level upwards, with local (and other) TU branches, in ways which strengthen, and where necessary parallel, existing structures.
3. Out of the foregoing, to build party membership and organisation, and raise consciousness in such a way as to heal the self as worker and Trades Unionist – self as tenant and ratepayer alienation.

Obviously, comrades active in Tory boroughs will modify their approach so as to apply the above principles to their local context. I can only say that success in Labour boroughs, and Labour areas such as that of the GLC, in delivering the goods, and healing the alienation, will be a corner-stone in a Labour victory of 1945 proportions at the next General Election – with victory in 1982 along the way.

Get hold of the correct information, analyse it and make it your own, then pass it on.

Sell Briefing at your ward meeting, TU branch etc.

Link with like-minded people and organise.

Be committed!

Brian Powell
Homerton/King's Park Branch,
Hackney Central CLP

(Continued from previous page)

democratically. Chapple's letter also states that the crucial motion to refuse the Executive was moved by a Socialist Workers Party member and seconded by a Communist Party member. This is irrelevant. Members should have equal rights within our union without political witch hunts. The vote in the branch was almost unanimous and united members from many sites and of differing political views.

The branch did not delegate Bro. Lees because he had not attended for 14 years and had made his opposition to the branch's views clear within the Labour Party. The branch already has delegates to Bermondsey Labour Party.

The attack on the branch has made the issue one of lack of democracy in our union. The members attending London Central have great belief in our union and do not think it should be run as a dictatorship. We call on all EETPU members and trade unionists to rally to our support and on branch members to attend as usual on the second and fourth Tuesday in the month. We are asking for donations to help us campaign for our right to exist as a branch by lobbying EETPU Biennial Conference, and attending as many meetings as possible.

Send all messages and donations to:
CROLOC
The Campaign to Reopen London Central
c/o Lansbury House
41 Camberwell Grove
London SE5

NAME. . . . . .

JOB . . . . . .

AMOUNT . . . . . .

All Right in Haringey

Less than twenty four hours after the Labour Party in Hornsey raced into the history books by taking the seat from the Tories for the first time ever the right hit back.

At the annual meeting of the Haringey Labour Group the candidates of the right mounted a clean sweep to once again swell the back benches with the left; the prospects of carrying out all the 1978 manifesto looking dimmer than ever.

Activists in Haringey are putting together articles for a Haringey Supplement to the June issue of London Labour Briefing, which will be in time to sell before the Council election panel closes and the Wards start their selections in September.

FANCY YOURSELF AS A PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE IN CROYDON? Croydon Co-operative Party (affiliated to 4 CLPs) is organising a brains trust/question time session to enable the local Labour Movement to hear individuals interested in standing for any of the Croydon seats. No selections immediately pending. Write to Secretary, Flat 10, 13 Beulah Hill, London SE19.

Open Door policy: Dave Wetzel, new GLC chairperson of Transport, has given this message to BRIEFING. He is determined to ensure that manifesto promises are implemented and that an "open door" system of consultation operates. He wants all individuals and pressure groups who have any ideas or "bees in their bonnets" about Transport Policy to contact him at County Hall in room 185.



ABOVE: *Briefing* supporters (and many others) challenging the police ban on marches in a demonstration of support for Bobby Sands, Kilburn, April 26th.

PHOTOS: Ian Nicol ('BRIEFING').

Benn joins campaign -

Troops Out of Ireland!

Chris Knight
Lewisham East CLP

"Do you support Tony Benn's demand that the late Mr. Robert Sands be allowed to take his seat in the Commons?", asked *New Standard* reporter Max Hastings, interviewing Ken Livingstone immediately after he had won the leadership of the GLC. Ken's reply, published in the *New Standard* (11.5.81), apparently took the interviewer's breath away. "If I had been living in Fermanagh, I would have been working for Sands's election. The IRA are fighting for their national freedom and their prisoners are as much prisoners-of-war as our soldiers in Germany in the war. If we want to see an end to violence, we should get out. That obscene gesture by Concannon – a member of the Labour Party nobody has ever heard of – visiting Sands's bedside to tell him he would get no support from Labour cost us a lot of votes in London on Thursday. Lots of Irishmen in seats like Camden and Paddington were stopping Labour workers on the streets to tell them they would never vote for us after Concannon did a thing like that."

Now Frances Hughes is dead, and at last Labour's leadership has been thrown into internal turmoil – forced at last to look at its shameful historic role where Ireland has been concerned. Tony Benn's demand for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland must be backed to the hilt by all socialists in London from now on. As Benn put it, the partition of Ireland is "a crime against the Irish people." "I do not believe", he told interviewer Robin Day, "there is any future in a policy which hinges on a pledge that leaves British troops in Northern Ireland and prevents the Irish people from coming together and finding a solution themselves."

BRIEFING, in association with the Labour Committee on Ireland, will be making the withdrawal of troops from Ireland one of its principal campaigning demands. The call for reselection must be stepped up to make sure that eventually Concannon, Mason, Rees and their ilk are despatched from our midst. It is vital that as many CLPs as possible submit resolutions on Ireland to this year's Conference. The Labour Committee on Ireland is again suggesting a model resolution, addressing itself to the issues raised by the NEC Study Paper on Northern Ireland.

In the short term, CLPs should submit emergency resolutions to the PLP and NEC condemning Concannon and other PLP spokesmen, including Michael Foot. It is also vital that when events on Ireland are arranged nationally or locally, Labour Party banners are seen, and that Labour Party activists don't just stop at passing resolutions. If necessary, organize something yourselves.

The struggle for Irish liberation is at a crucial stage. It is vital that socialists on this side of the Irish Sea lend as much support as possible to lessen the impact of imperialists like Concannon and to show Irish people on both sides of the water that the Labour Party is part of an international movement which belongs not to imperialism but to working people and the oppressed wherever we are.

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