LONDON LABOUR 20p
BRIEFING
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G.L.C. seeks crack~down on

POLICE UNACCOUNTABILITY

Steve Bundred (vice-Chair,
GLC Police Committee)

The Metropolitan Police currently has 60 officers, including two Superintendents and four Chief Inspectors, suspended from duty pending investigations against them. It is the largest number ever, but is only the tip of the iceberg. In the last eight years, 800 have departed under a cloud of suspicion in a force employing only 20,000. At the same time, the detection rate for everyday crime has slumped from 28 per cent in 1970 to a record low of 20 per cent today, and complaints against the force now average one for every three officers employed. Half of the recorded deaths in police custody occur in London – more than 100 since 1970. And Londoners stand a one in twenty-four chance of being arrested, possibly at gunpoint (since the Metropolitan Police use more firearms than any other force).

Yet among the most predictable events at the Annual GLC meeting on May 28th was the attempt made by the Tory opposition to prevent the new Labour-controlled authority from establishing a Police Committee. This was an early indication of the attitude which can be expected from the Tories over the next four years towards the new Committee under the Chairmanship of Paul Boateng. But it will not deter the GLC Labour Group from fulfilling the promises on which we were elected.

These included a commitment to campaign for democratic accountability of the Metropolitan Police under a committee consisting solely of elected members of the GLC and the London Boroughs. We shall be seeking to give this committee the power of appointment over all officers above the rank of Chief Superintendent, and we shall be working for the extension of trade union rights to police officers and the disbandment of the Special Patrol Group, the Special Branch and the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit.

Our firm objective is to create an authority which will have power to scrutinize the day to day affairs of the police force, and to allocate resources to the various police functions, so that Londoners will for the first time be given a say in how the £270 million a year which is raised in rates by the Metropolitan Police is to be spent.

But there are many different ways of achieving this, and in particular there may be several valid approaches towards the problem of ensuring that police accountability also extends into the divisions where local control can be most effective. For this reason the GLC Police Committee will be inviting representations from Constituency Labour Parties and other interested groups before finalizing the draft legislation which we will be presenting to Parliament and to which we hope to commit the Labour Party nationally.

Although the police in London at present are less accountable than elsewhere, we will not be bought off with an authority which is as toothless as those outside London have proved to be. We must therefore ensure that socialists promote discussion on these issues in the constituencies and contribute to the debate which will be taking place over the next year or so in the GLC.

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INSIDE: Reports from: GLC ILEA
SOUTHWARK LAMBETH HOUNSLOW
LEWISHAM TOWER HAMLETS ETC
SPECIAL HARINGEY SUPPLEMENT

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

ILEA: Giving London's Kids a Chance

The policies which the new Labour Group on the ILEA intend to carry out are those in the manifesto on which we fought the recent election. There is a lot of work to be done in implementing these policies and inevitably it is likely to be a slow and undramatic process. Our general aim can be stated quite simply: we shall strive to maintain and improve the education service in Inner London and to protect the interests of parents, pupils and students and staff. We are committed to raising educational standards.

Over the last 12 months or so, we have witnessed a highly successful campaign to defend the very existence of the ILEA; it is now equally important to defend the Authority's expenditure against further cuts and to restore those already made so that standards can continue to improve. We shall campaign alongside the GLC and other Labour authorities for adequate resources to achieve that end.

The Government has already cut its grant to the Authority to almost nothing, despite the widely acknowledged problems we face. We shall not hesitate to bring the implications of this deliberate attack upon us to the attention of the public. It was pressure from parents, teachers and others which changed the Government's mind on breaking up the ILEA. The same pressure can be brought to bear to change its mind and give us the financial resources we need to do the job of providing an education service for inner London.

There are a number of particular areas which are high on our list of priorities. This is not intended to be a definitive list of our concerns. Work in other areas such as adult education and special education has equal priority. We will be working out our programme over the next few months.

Education for employment is the problem of immediate concern. Unemployment among young people undoes so much of the excellent work done in our schools and colleges. The latest figures for inner London are appalling. Comparing May this year with last May, the number of young people out of work has more than doubled (from 3,426 to 7,085); the number of school-leavers in this total has gone up by about two and a half times (from 1,759 to 4,256); notified job vacancies have gone down by two-thirds (from 5,708 to 1,871).

The situation will be much worse in the summer. We shall, therefore, develop with all speed the plans already laid in this year's budget. We shall strengthen our Careers Service and play a full part in the training and manpower programmes being introduced urgently by the new GLC.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

We are fully committed to the system of comprehensive secondary education which was introduced throughout inner London in 1977. While we recognise the achievements of teachers, governors and parents in developing their schools to give pupils the full benefits of the comprehensive system, it is clear that there is a continuing need to strengthen these efforts. We look forward to working together towards the following goals:

* the elimination of streaming;
* an increase in the proportion of places in mixed schools to at least half;
* the elimination of discrimination in the curriculum, whether ethnic or sexist in origin;
* the ending of any remaining selectivity in voluntary school entry;
* the development of a pattern or provision for the 16-19 age group which meets the changing needs of inner London.

NURSERY EDUCATION

We want all children to have access to nursery education. We shall work closely with the inner London boroughs and voluntary groups to integrate full-day care with nursery education and to improve the provision of child care facilities to meet the needs of all under-fives and their parents.

SCHOOL MEALS

We believe as an education authority that more pupils need the benefit of school meals and shall be taking action to enable them to do so. A package of measures is being considered, including in the first instance an experimental reduction in price from the present 35p to 25p.

MULTI-ETHNIC EDUCATION

Inner London is now one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. One hundred and twenty-eight different languages are spoken in our schools. We are concerned about the performance of some children, some with specific language problems. Our policies need to be looked at closely to see how they affect the diverse cultures we have to deal with. The ILEA has probably done more here than any other authority in the country, but more still needs to be done. We shall work closely with the minority communities, some of whom are represented among our new Members.

These are a few of the Labour Group's immediate concerns; there are others and over the next four years many more will emerge from within the Party. In developing our policies to meet them, we shall aim to involve more widely all those concerned – parents, students, pupils and staff as well as improving contacts and building up discussion within the Party. There has been a real change in the leadership of the ILEA and we look for a strengthened relationship with the Party as the basis for our success.

Bryn Davies
Leader of the ILEA

POLICE

From Page One

It is especially vital that CLPs and Local Government Committees also commit themselves on these issues in manifestos for next year's borough elections. If we are to end the taxation without representation for which the police are responsible at present, we will need the determined efforts of a united Labour movement in London.

Meanwhile the GLC Police Committee will investigate complaints against the police and publish reports. It will also act as an authoritative advocate for Londoners on major law and order issues which give rise to questions about police attitudes and tactics. Two special investigations are being launched in tandem. One will deal with racial harassment and attacks, the other with vandalism. The Metropolitan Police and other relevant bodies will be invited to give evidence to both inquiries and it will be open to CLPs, community groups, tenants' associations or individuals to do so if they wish. Both written and oral evidence will be accepted, and the reports of these inquiries, with recommendations, will be published by the GLC and debated in the Council.

The role of the police in the Brixton riots and the Easter disturbances at Finsbury Park, the general belief – especially among black groups – that the Scarman inquiry will be yet another whitewash like the Deptford fire inquest; and the provocative police presence at the Trafalgar Square rally for the People's March for Jobs provide further proof that the new Committee is long overdue. **But it is now up to all socialists in London to see that it works by developing the arguments about accountability at the grass roots as well as using the resources which will be available to the Committee at County Hall.**

As Heseltine Attacks: Defend the GLC !

One thing was missing from the recent GLC election. The whole campaign passed without any sight or sound of Michael Heseltine. The Tories knew that his role as prime hatchetman for the government made him deeply unpopular throughout the country, so they kept him completely out of the County Council campaigns. But no sooner had Labour won than the Tories opened their next campaign – against the newly elected Labour councils – with 'warnings' from Heseltine and Fowler.

Their campaign is based on the fact that in those councils that Labour has won from the Tories, we have inherited budgets which run until March 31st 1982 and which were drawn up by outgoing Tory administrations without any regard for incoming Labour Group priorities.

The only way that councils like the GLC can cut fares in the autumn is to secure a supplementary rate increase in order to fund the cut.

But on top of this we need to pay for several other changes in policy long before April 1982.

The GLC Labour Group has agreed several policy-changes to take place immediately or in the next few months –

- ★ £18,000 spent on our activities for the People's March for Jobs.
- ★ We have decided to boycott the Scarman Inquiry but will submit evidence to and support an alternative labour movement Inquiry.
- ★ £1,900,000 spent on immediately abolishing OAP fares on the tube so that OAPs now travel free.
- ★ We have opposed the plans to build offices on the Coin Street site. As the outgoing Tory GLC had signed a legal agreement with the developer promising not to oppose offices we may now be sued for damages by the Tory-backed developers.
- ★ Preparation of a GLC newspaper is under way, but this will cost £85,000 per issue.
- ★ the first of our public consultation exercises is underway, in this instance to get public reactions on how we should cut fares.
- ★ the Juggernaut Inquiry has been set up and will report its findings within 6 months.
- ★ Ealing Community Relations Council, which had all its funding stopped by the local Tory councillors because of its position on the police murder of Blair Peach, is now to be grant-aided by the GLC.
- ★ The London Tenants Organisation which had all GLC funds withdrawn when they opposed the sale of GLC housing is once again funded by us.
- ★ The Greater London Enterprise Board, G.L.Manpower Board and London Community Builders are already in the first phase of their construction.

What is happening in London is repeated in each of the 15 councils which have moved from Tory to Labour control. Yet even while these new Labour councils were planning to increase spending on the tight budgets they had inherited, Heseltine announced new penalties of £450 million on local government as a whole.

The 15 councils which Labour has won (out of over 500 councils in the UK) have suffered nearly 25% of the total penalty amounting to £103 million between the 15 of them!

Norman Fowler has also warned of further penalties if we go ahead with the fares cut.

Tory strategy is clear. Force Labour councils into a rash of supplementary rates and then try to capitalise on any public reaction by introducing new legislation which removes our power to increase rates in order to defend services and jobs.

Our campaign in London to demand the return of the £300 million London has been robbed of in Rate Support Grant is now being planned, but the movement must prepare to support us. If the Tories go ahead with their plans, it will mean the end of local government's ability to shield working class families from the government and will effectively overturn the results of the May elections.

The threatened Tory move in this direction is a massive attack which will demand industrial action by the Trade Union movement and disruption of Parliament by the PLP if it is to be defeated.

Ken Livingstone
GLC Leader



NEWHAM: time for change

Monday 11 May will long be remembered in Newham as the day the trade union and labour movement was betrayed by the leadership of the Labour Group on the Borough Council. A meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee had been expected to confirm that the disused Eve Road Community Centre would become a Centre for the Unemployed. Instead the Committee decided that it should be turned into a Social Club for Council staff.

Towards the end of 1980 a Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Committee was established in Newham. The three Constituency Labour Parties, the South East Region of the TUC, the Labour Group, the Local Government Committee, the Co-op Party and the Trades Councils all took an active part on the Liaison Committee. The aim of the Committee was to forge a common approach between the two wings of the labour movement to combat the Tory Government. It was agreed that one practical objective would be to establish a Centre for the Unemployed in Newham. This Centre would provide facilities from advice on welfare rights, housing, education and training, to campaigning for changes in policies towards the unemployed and supporting and developing initiatives for saving and creating jobs. The Committee based their concept of a Centre on a similar project that was underway in Tower Hamlets, which used premises supplied by the local authority and had staff funded by the Manpower Services Commission.

The Group representatives on the Liaison Committee were Jack Hart, Leader of the Council, and Bill Brown, Secretary of the Labour Group. Both clearly stated at meetings of the Liaison Committee that the Council fully supported the idea of a Centre for the Unemployed and when the disused Eve Road Centre was identified as a suitable site both assured the Liaison Committee that the process of allocating the premises would be a mere formality.

TOTAL SHOCK

The decision to use the Eve Road Centre as a Staff Social Club came as a total shock to almost everyone on the Liaison Committee. Tom McHugh of the TGWU East London Co-ordinating Committee and Chairman of the Liaison Committee wrote that he was 'totally and utterly dismayed'. Outrage was expressed not only at the decision itself but also at the manner in which the decision had been taken, as no consultation had taken place with the Liaison Committee and the assurances that had been given to the Committee had been totally ignored.

Upon contacting those trade unions with members employed by the local authority it became apparent that whilst they had been pressing for a staff social club the Eve Road Centre had never been discussed with them as a possible site and that they regarded the establishing of a Centre for the Unemployed to be of far greater importance than a Staff Social Club. The Chairman of the Staff Social Club Committee also confirmed that his Committee knew nothing of any proposal for using the Eve Road Centre as a Staff Social Club.

FREEMASONS

At a Special Meeting of the Local Government Committee called to discuss the decision made by the Policy and Resources Committee it was suggested that the proposed Staff Social Club was no more than another attempt by the local branch of the Freemasons to obtain further premises following discoveries of serious financial irregularities involving their former club. A number of senior officers and members of the Council are members of Masonic Lodge No. 8627, including the Chairman of the Housing Committee and the Deputy Director of Housing and although it has yet to be proved that they were behind the Eve Road Centre decision there were many members of the Local Government Committee who thought that very likely.

The reaction of the Policy and Resources Committee to the outcry has been to suggest that part of an unused school could be made available as a resources centre for the young employed. Not only has this proposal little in common with the far broader proposal of the Liaison Committee but it fails to meet the criteria for funding by the Manpower Services Commission.

Councillors unhappy about the Eve Road Centre decision have now collected enough signatures to force a Special Group Meeting in an attempt to reverse the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee and it is still the objective of the Liaison Committee to establish a Centre for the Unemployed at Eve Road.

What has however already been clearly established is that the Group leadership cannot be trusted. Many Councillors and local Labour Party members who have traditionally supported the Group leadership feel betrayed and there is a growing feeling in Newham that the leadership must be changed and that now is the ideal opportunity.

Richard Buxton
Newham South CLP

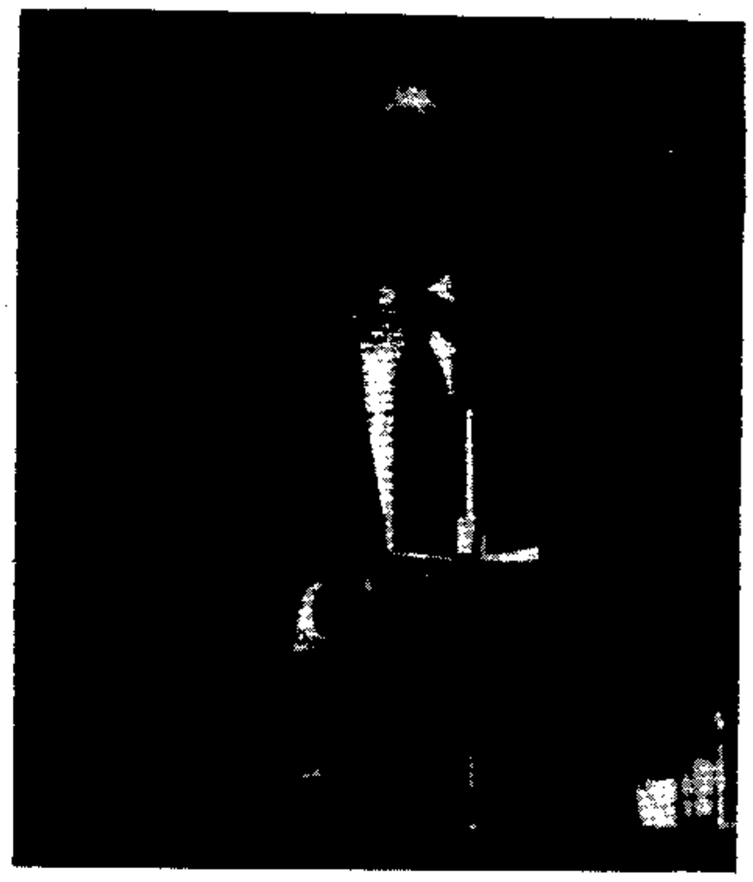
Target 82 in Tower Hamlets

With the selection of candidates for the 1982 Borough Elections starting in September, it is vital that Tower Hamlets returns at least twenty left-wing candidates. Through the 'Target '82' network this can be achieved. The left are in the majority in six wards already, and should return left candidates in these.

In the light of recent events in selecting a candidate for the Weavers Ward by-election, a short-list of five was drawn up by the officers of the GMC and returned to the EC. There was not one candidate which the left could support. Not surprising, when you take into account the moribund nature of the consituency of Bethnal Green/Bow, directly reflecting the policies of the Council (which refuses to challenge the Tories on any of the major issues – rents, rates, unemployment now 21 per cent in the borough, the selling of council houses etc. etc.).

GLC ELECTIONS

In view of what happened at the GLC elections, with Ashley Bramall holding the seat by 1,600 votes (the same seat which returned a 12,000 majority in 1973), there is the possibility of losing Bethnal Green/Bow to the Tories at the next general election if this right-wing trend continues. But the potential for a fight-back is there within the constituency.



Bramall

People are keen to become members of the Labour Party but find it extremely difficult to make contact with the wards. This is true especially with the ethnic community of which the Bengalis make up the greater part. Were it not for the Bengali youth movement getting their people to vote Labour (94 per cent came out!), we would have lost the GLC seat.

INAUGURAL MEETING

Tower Hamlets 'Target '82' held their inaugural meeting on Wednesday June 17th. Our main aim is to recruit people to the party from amongst the ethnic communities, and change the present composition of the GMC.

Out of all the darkness there is a glimmer of light. At our May GMC a resolution was moved by Millwall Ward supporting Tony Benn for the deputy leadership and condemning senior party members for their public campaign against him. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Therese Shanahan (Stepney and Poplar CLP)

Bermondsey junta faces the chop

In an action-packed year Southwark's supposedly Labour council has:

★ put rents up 32%

★ started to sell its stock of building land (the first seven-acre site going to a builder who will be offering one-bedroom 'starter homes' at a *minimum* price of £33,000)

★ decided to oppose the Lambeth- and GLC-backed Coin Street scheme

★ given the Kuwaiti property company the go-ahead to develop the 20-acre Hay's Wharf site (at a meeting where the Southwark Leader commented: 'I regret that some members seem to be bringing politics into a planning matter.')

★ expelled eleven members of the Labour Group who, in line with party policy, opposed cuts, the rent increase and the sale of building land.

BIG ISSUES

These are the big issues. Consider too the fine detail of life under London's most reactionary Labour leadership:

★ at this April's AGM the Group chose Bermondsey councillors for eleven of the eighteen top council jobs

★ at a debate on the transfer of GLC properties a vice-chair Cllr. Joe Lees (someone Frank Chapple has great plans for) remarked: 'As far as I'm concerned all coloureds are problem families.'

★ only this year has the Leader publicly renounced his membership (vice-chairship indeed) of the Social Democratic Alliance

★ having failed in their challenge to the validity of Bermondsey CLP's May AGM, the Leader and his cronies stormed out

★ the majority of them facing de-selection on the grounds of conspicuous disloyalty to their parties, the Labour Group voted to join something called the Association of Labour Groups whose main aim is 'to give collective aid and collective support to any affiliated Labour Group or any individual member of that Group with any problem relating to the proper discharge of the Labour Group or its members' functions.'

DEPARTURE

The good news is that the Bermondsey junta's contempt for party views has so annoyed rank-and-file members throughout the borough that May '82 is likely to see the departure of nearly all the deadbeats and most of the younger reactionaries.

The newcomers replacing them will, after election, be facing almost intractable problems. They will probably disagree – sometimes bitterly – about the best ways of coping with inadequate finance from central government and increasingly restrictive legislation. They will face too a press which will relentlessly denigrate their efforts to democratise the workings of local government. They will, inevitably, make mistakes.

Southwark's deputy leader Cllr Anne Ward recently produced a document sneeringly titled 'Slogans v Practice'. Lambeth's painful experience during the past year has illustrated the vulnerability of those slogans which voice our aspirations. But in Southwark we will have people who are prepared to grapple with the day-to-day difficulties of dealing with a government which is acting with unparalleled fanaticism.

On the facade of the old Southwark municipal buildings facing the new Labour Party headquarters in the Walworth Road (and immediately next to the London Labour Party's offices) is a plaque inscribed with the 2000 year-old message: 'The health of the people is the highest law.' It may be corny, but as slogans go it isn't a bad one to try and put into practice.

Southwark 'rebel'

Once again on Frank Chapple

For those who missed the recent *London Programme* describing Frank Chapple's attempt to dominate Southwark's 3 CLPs, here are a few extracts:

Cllr Brean, Chief Whip: 'I was told without any compunction: "You're for burning, Mr Brean." And this is not unusual with my colleagues. We're seen as the old rear-guard, the old stick-in-the-muds. We don't take any notice of what is said by our party, we don't carry out their instructions. This is really what it's all about: the question of mandating, of having me by the neck of a little bit of string: "You do exactly as you're told, Mr Brean". And I'm not prepared to do that!

(Interviewer: As a chemist how do you qualify as a member of the EEPTU?)

On the face of it that would appear to be paradoxical. If I say that I sell flash bulbs, I sell a few batteries, I switch lights on and off every morning, and I switch them off at night. I dispense a lot of water all day long – plain, and coloured and other thing. Well, there is an element of tragi-comedy in this thing, and actually I agree with you of course there is an element of comedy. But this is also a deadly serious matter since the GMC has a tremendous lot of power.'

Cllr Eadie, EEPTU official: 'The fact is with someone like Frank I think trade union membership is in many ways nothing more than a declaration of faith. Labour Party members ought to belong to a trade union. We are as appropriate as any union to represent him. We do offer a number of friendly society benefits which the union has – and also I think, to quote a late president of our union, he once said: "Anyone who works under an electric light is eligible and should be organised by this union."



'As a trade union official I come across other officials of other unions and I knew previously of a number of union delegates who had dropped out of the scene from major unions like UCATT and AEUW. I encouraged these unions to come back into the picture and the delegates to come along. I'm also quite closely connected with the G&MW and that union too was taking the view that they ought to increase their affiliation to all parties in the South region and Dulwich was a part of that so far as they were concerned.'

Cllr Sawyer, housing chairman: 'I went to Bob Eadie and asked in fact if I were to apply for my EEPTU ticket would I be accepted. And he said that I could only apply and try and see what happened. And that was it, I did, and I asked if I could become a ward [sic] delegate to the general management committee and they accepted that.

'I feel sick quite frankly. It's been blown out of all proportion, by the secretary of the Party for a start off, and I know full well the main aim really is to try and stop some people who have had some influence in the Party over the years and are still active within the Party in positions of power to really come back onto the general management committee, and I think it's diabolical.'

Presenter: 'Frank Chapple's determined to win the battle of Bermondsey. It's clear that for him there's much more at stake than the fate of a few right wing councillors. Well, whatever the outcome of the enquiry going on in Bermondsey, Frank Chapple seems confident he has hit on an effective way of fighting the left at the grassroots in the Labour Party. He's already decided to employ the same tactics in 30 other constituencies all over the country. And there are indications that other right wing unions are going to follow suit.'

County Hall faces both ways on Scarman

The recent furore about Brixton and the anti-police battles there inevitably led to a chorus of squeals for a public enquiry into why the citizens of North Lambeth should behave in a way totally inexplicable to the white, middle and upper gentry who compose the Tory Party. To this can be added the well-meaning and woolly-headed liberals and religious devotees, who still have a habit of surfacing on our side of the political divide, who naively think that Governments can be swayed if they are only supplied with sufficient investigations.

As a result, a Tribunal was set up by the Thatcher government to investigate the causes and accept evidence into the background to Brixton. At its head was Lord Scarman – a man who epitomises the sort of judicial bigot who runs the British legal system. He is a worthy successor to such advocates as Denning, Widgery and Goddard. He has already played a notable role in other tribunals such as the one in the north of Ireland, where he less than endeared himself to the local populace. It is pretty inevitable therefore that his Tribunal will whitewash the police and seek to blame 'agitators' for the battles that lit up Brixton. The attitude to this 'lawyers' circus' must surely be that the labour movement should boycott it and let it be seen as the hollow charade it is.

OVERWHELMINGLY

The newly-elected GLC was indeed of this opinion and at the first Labour Group meeting it followed the advice of Ken Livingstone and voted overwhelmingly not to submit evidence to Scarman. The following night, however, the Labour Group on Lambeth met and agreed, inexplicably, to submit evidence because certain local black groups had asked it to. This served to start a stampede to get out of the boycott decision. When the ILEA Labour Group subsequently met, moves were already in hand to argue that as ILEA was an education authority, it was de facto in a different position to the GLC and should comply with the enquiry. People who usually would not be caught dead supporting Lambeth suddenly began muttering things like 'if it's good enough for Ted Knight, it's good enough for me' and even more brazenly 'we must stand by Lambeth'. In fact, the motion to boycott Scarman was moved by Paul Moore – who is a Lambeth Councillor and whose GLC constituency includes Brixton. I seconded the resolution and Ken Livingstone also spoke in favour. Nevertheless, the motion was thrown out by 25 votes to 14 and we now have the ludicrous situation of the two largest Labour local authorities, with largely overlapping membership, facing opposite ways on a position of vital importance to both the black community and the Labour Party. CLPs should deluge both the London Labour Executive and its GLC members with demands to refuse evidence for Scarman now.

by Keith Veness
(co-opted member of ILEA)

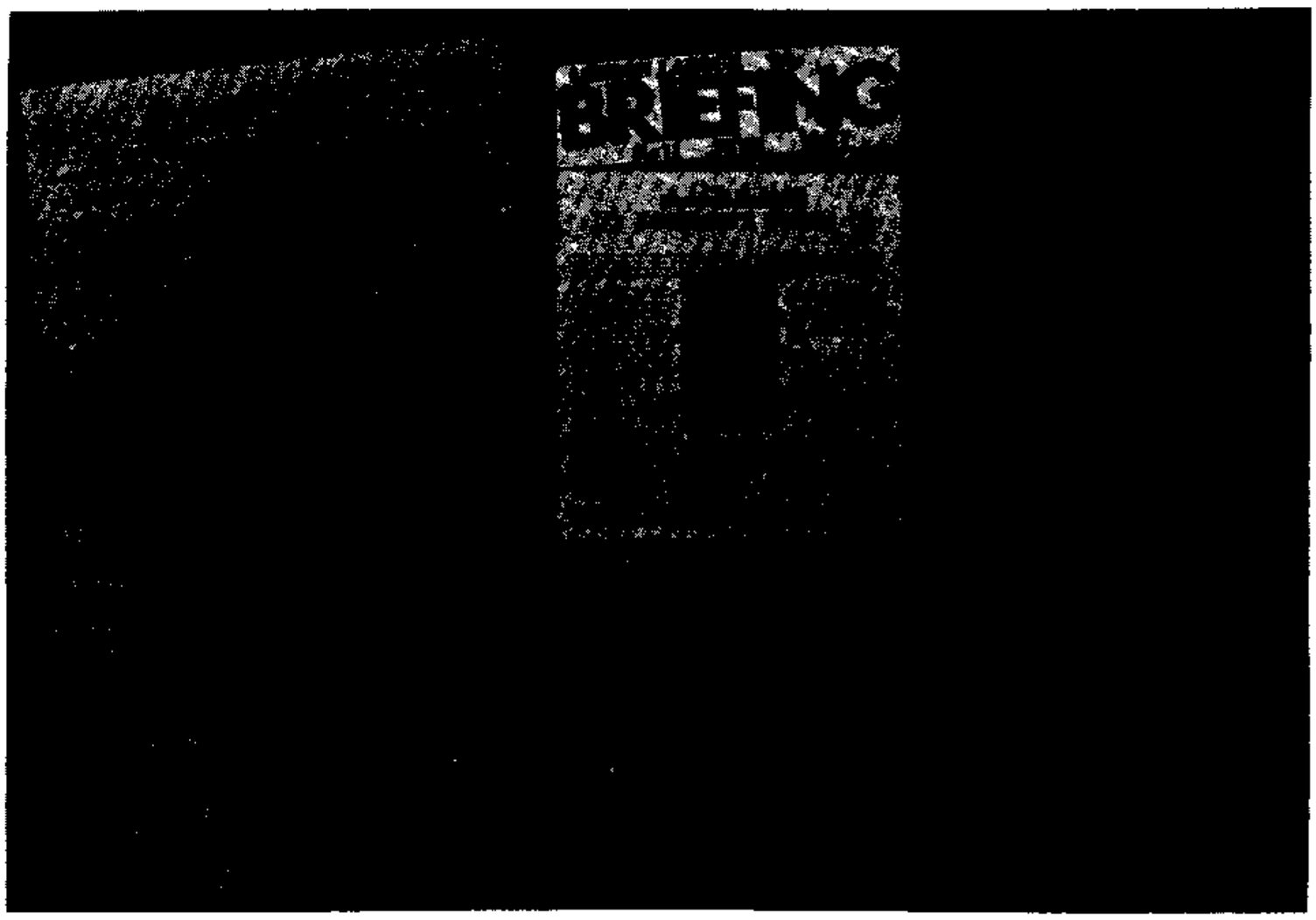
FOR THE RECORD: The 14 ILEA members who voted against submitting evidence were:

Anna Bowman	*Alex Mackay*
Steve Bundred	*Gerry Ross*
David Butler	*Charlie Rossi*
Lesley Hammond	*Dave Wetzel*
Ken Livingstone	*Valerie Wise*
Paul Moore	*Keith Veness*

Deidre Wood

BRIXTON

A Reply To Thatcher



Maggie Thatcher's denunciation of *London Labour Briefing* (she claimed in Parliament that we are a paper which is 'encouraging anarchy') cannot be allowed to go unanswered. We are not encouraging anarchy, and could not spark off street rioting even if we wanted to. There is at present only one force in the country capable of provoking uprisings of the kind seen in Bristol last year and Brixton in April this year – and that force is the police themselves.

If Maggie Thatcher wants to prevent a recurrence of such events, she should stop denouncing us and instead allow Labour Councils to secure the funds necessary to end the deprivation of inner-city areas such as Brixton. Secondly, she should stop objecting when we support those forces capable of deterring the police from provoking riots. In my view, those forces are precisely the popular forces which defended themselves with such determination in the so-called 'Brixton riots'. It is good to learn that in Brixton today – alone of all places in London – the police are now apparently under instructions not to keep racing their cars through the streets with lights flashing and sirens blaring as they do everywhere else. This is a step forward – there are some others – but does anyone think such things would have been achieved if the police had not met with such fierce opposition in April?

It is true that some of the targets attacked or burned down in the course of those events were somewhat indiscriminately chosen. But if more organised, disciplined resistance to police heavy-handedness is what we require, then the first precondition is that we make such organisation possible by lending all the support we can.

Graham Bash
Ilford South CLP

Lewisham: Moyle Miscalculates

At the June GMC of East Lewisham CLP everything suddenly came alive, and it looks as if our MP, Roland Moyle, is now in some trouble.

In the past I have always assumed that I was going to be either bored or frustrated at most of our Labour Party meetings. It seemed that an unaware, apolitical Labour Party suited the past and present leadership both locally and at higher levels. In particular, it seemed to me that like so many others, our MP treated his GMC with a certain paternalism, on the understanding that his 'work' in 'the House' should never be questioned too much and that as long as his parliamentary reports concentrated on the evils of conservatism ('keep the natives happy by bashing the Tories') it wouldn't be noticed that it was the present Parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party which, when last in office, laid the foundations for much of what the Tories are now doing (a prime example being the Labour Government's public expenditure cuts in 1976).

But since our June GMC, all that has changed. Giving his Parliamentary Report, Roland Moyle spent 17 minutes out of the 20 minutes allotted to him in an emotional outburst against Tony Benn. He reminded us that he had voted for Denis Healey against Michael Foot in the election for Leader last year, and said that he would vote for Healey in the Deputy Leadership contest at present being fought. He attacked Benn specifically for his speech at Labour Party Conference last year and for his call for troops to be withdrawn from Ireland. And he read out long sections of Michael Foot's ultimatum (calling on Benn to contest for the leadership) in full.

The GMC came alive. No doubt Moyle had totally miscalculated the mood in the party, and had expected everybody in the GMC to share his euphoria that the Leader had at last hit back at this 'villain' who had dared to suggest that MPs should be made more accountable to their CLPs for the actions they took in Parliament. What actually happened was that speaker after speaker – including two respected older GMC members not previously identified with the left – dissociated themselves from Moyle in no uncertain terms. There was real anger that his report had totally failed to express our concerns over Northern Ireland, unemployment, Heseltine's most recent attacks on Labour authorities, the Nationality Bill etc. etc., concentrating instead on an attempt to turn us against Tony Benn.

We had earlier at the same meeting announced the formation of Lewisham Labour Left, a discussion group formed by members committed to the Wembley Conference decision but welcoming everyone interested to attend. We had not realised how appropriate a meeting it was going to be to make that announcement. After that, we found that the left were perhaps a little stronger than we had thought – one straw in the wind, perhaps, being the fact that I was elected as the delegate to this year's annual conference.

MPs must realise that the Labour Party has changed and that they can no longer get away with their previous platitudes and cliches. Socialism is being demanded by CLPs and trade union activists. MPs who are out of touch with this will suffer the consequences. It is to be hoped that the words of the person sitting close to me during the meeting – 'At last: this constituency has come alive!' – will prove prophetic, and that the spirit of the constitutional changes agreed at national level will percolate through this and other constituencies. We could then build a party committed to democratic socialism and able to attract ordinary working people once again into our ranks.

Barbara Stockbridge,
Lewisham East CLP

LEWISHAM LABOUR LEFT.
Discussion forum for Lewisham socialists.
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Left Sacked in Hounslow

Recent developments within the Labour Group on Hounslow Council must give cause for concern to all Socialists who have so far supported the Council's attempts to preserve services in the face of Tory attacks.

At the Council rate-making meeting in March, two Labour Councillors, Edna Donnelly and Heather Wetzel, voted against the Group decision to abandon its formal 'no cuts' position in order to limit rate increases to 48%. Instead, a 10% vacancy rate within Council departments, operating in the previous year, was retained in spite of the evidence that this had caused a deterioration in services, including the closure of libraries for an extra day a week, and was producing great strains upon social services in particular. Additional cuts, dubbed as 'marginal' by Council Leader Alf King, and an additional £1 per week increase in Council rents, formed the rest of the package the two Councillors opposed.

At the March GC of the Feltham and Heston CLP, Alf King assured delegates that there was no question of the 2 councillors being expelled from the Group. However, following the refusal of the 2 councillors to give an undertaking that they would support all Group decisions in future, a meeting was convened of Group Officers, Local Government Committee officers, and the Chairmen of the 2 local CLPs to discuss the matter. Despite the doubtful constitutional basis of this meeting, it nevertheless decided to recommend the expulsion of Councillors Donnelly and Wetzel from the Labour Group.

The crucial issue which arises from this decision is the question of accountability of Labour Groups to Constituency Parties. At no time was the decision of the Group to abandon its 'no cuts' stand referred back to the CLPs for comment before Council decisions were taken. Without such a reference back, surely the Group felt bound to retain the 'no cuts' policy which had been endorsed by a Local Government Conference held in the summer of 1980? Similarly, the decision to expel the 2 councillors who supported the 'no cuts' position was taken without consultation with the CLPs.

Whilst this approach may suit Alf King and his allies in the Association of Labour Groups, it must be hotly opposed by rank and file members determined to exert greater democratic control over our elected representatives. Socialists must fight for the reinstatement of the expelled councillors to the Labour Group, stressing the need for a united defence of Council services against the renewed attacks from Heseltine and the Tory Government. The recent inability of Hounslow's Social Services to cope with increasing demands shows the need for services to be preserved and expanded. Hounslow must stop the gradual attrition of its services provision.

John Connelly (Feltham and Heston CLP)

LAMBETH : what the cuts really mean

Ann Bliss
Lambeth NALGO

I work as a social worker for Lambeth Council. Having previously worked for Southwark I can say that Lambeth compares favourably in terms of the provision of services and as an employer. However, the cuts which Lambeth are now making in social services are much more savage than most people realise:

ELDERLY

20% cuts in food and provision budgets for elderly people in residential homes and day centres.

Other cuts include 80% off furniture, fittings and equipment for establishments and 100% cuts in money for sweets, newspapers, tobacco and recreation for old people's homes.

DISABLED

Scrapping of four rehabilitation advisers and four rehabilitation aides who work directly with disabled people (ICP funds withdrawn and the Council has refused to fund these posts).

A cut of 20% in budgets for aides and adaptations.

A cut of 50% in provisions for telephones.

A cut of all places for elderly physically handicapped people in a specialist club, King George IV Centre.

CHILDREN

Similar cuts of 20% in food budgets for children's homes and day centres and for furniture, equipment etc. Scrapping of 15 posts at Myatts Field Under Fives Centre (ICP funds withdrawn and Council refused to fund them).

Intermediate Treatment budget cut by £69,000.

Cuts in payments to private and voluntary homes of £200,000 which will put increased pressure on Lambeth homes and may result in more inappropriate placements, assaults on staff etc.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

100% cut in the grant to King George IV Club, stopping all attendance by Lambeth disabled elderly people, some of whom had been attending there for twenty years. (Ted Knight gave personal instructions for the clients to be prevented from attending.)

10% cuts in other voluntary organisations, including Age Concern, which may mean loss of jobs as well as services.

COMMUNITY WORK

Scrapping three community work posts, one in Area 4 (ICP funds withdrawn, Council refused to fund) and two in Area 1 (cut even though funding was there).

VACANCIES

Vacancy discount up from 11% to 14%. This will mean much longer DELAYS in filling posts and a virtual standstill on recruitment. Council has given priority to children's homes and day nurseries, but what that will mean in practice when these services could not recruit before this remains to be seen.

There will be no temps for maternity or sickness.

This mean that NALGO's national no cover policy is even more important and jobs should not be covered until appointments are made.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The cuts in recruitment and training make a total farce of the Council Equal Opportunities policy, part of which was aimed at recruiting more local black people. Lambeth Council has less than 1% registered disabled among its workforce, although legally it should have 3%. No temps for maternity leave will put even more pressure on pregnant workers who know there will be no-one to do their job while they are away.

TRAINING

Cuts in secondments of 75% from 40 new secondments each year down to 10. At least 60% cut in other training budgets for outside courses, tutors, etc. Will have major effects on staff and services especially in services with low proportion of qualified staff, e.g. residential homes and poses a very serious attack on NALGO members in the training section who may be threatened with redeployment.

OVERTIME

Major cutbacks in overtime provisions will make it even more difficult for members to claim payments for overtime worked. This will put particular pressure on groups such as community workers and homes and day-care staff, and has already threatened services such as client holidays. It's obvious that management will try and pressure people into taking time off in lieu.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The cutbacks in expenditure on maintenance means that already deteriorating buildings will get worse through neglect of necessary repairs to lighting, general fixtures, etc., placing staff and members of the public at risk in injury and ill health.

It is noticeable that the axe has fallen heaviest on those groups in Lambeth who are the least organised and the least able to exert pressure on the Council. But in a way I don't see Lambeth Council as entirely to blame. Let's be clear: this is where inflexible opposition to rate-rises leads. I know that there are many people on the left who oppose all rate-rises on principle, saying that Lambeth ought to go bankrupt and confront the Government head-on. But whilst agreeing that matters must come to this at some stage, I can't see that a bankrupt Lambeth Council would be much good to any of us until the whole might of the Labour movement has been brought into line and the prospect of overthrowing the Government is immediate.

COLLECTIVISATION

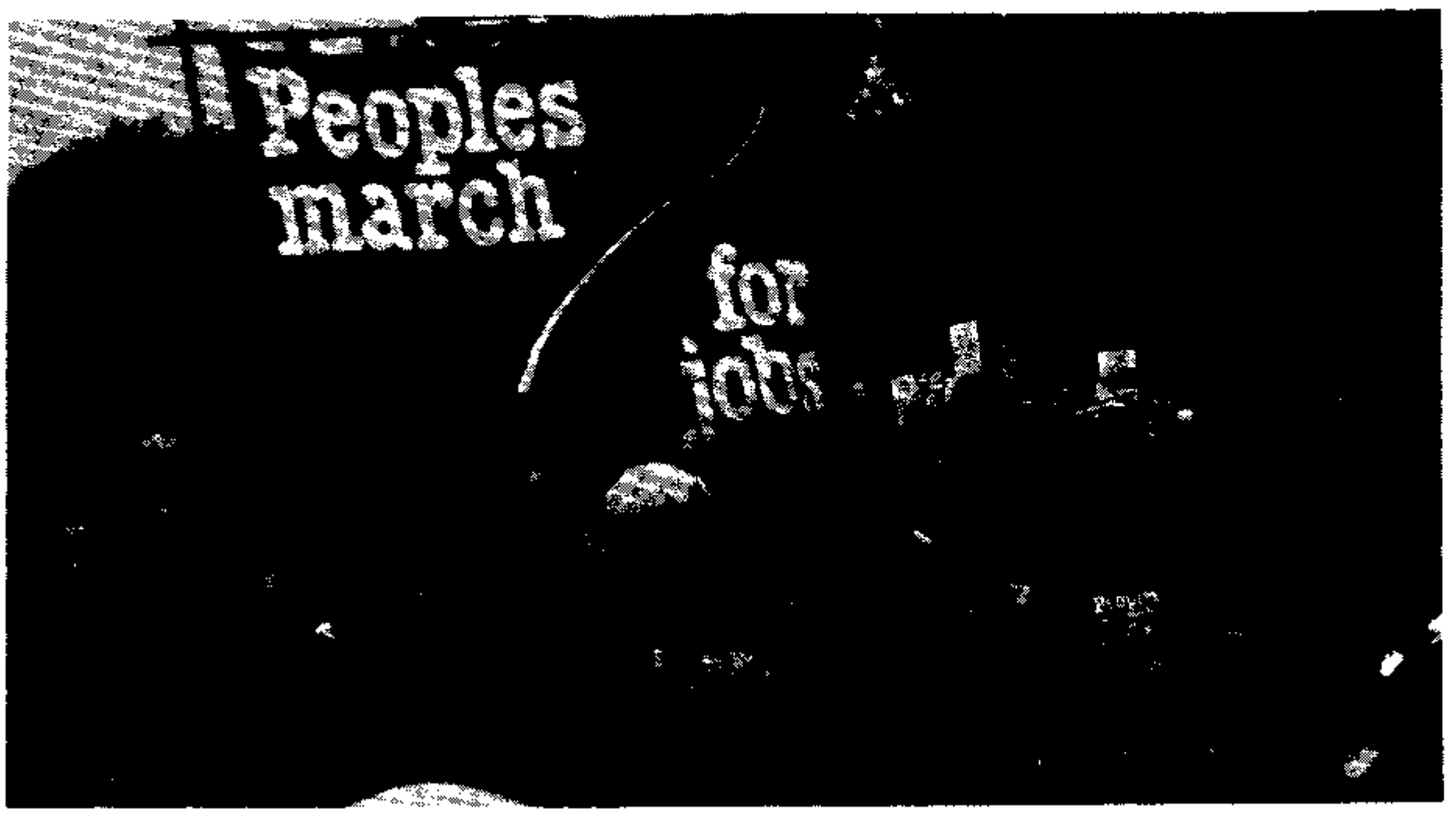
Secondly, I realise that many comrades say that to raise rates is to rob Peter to pay Paul. But these comrades seem to think of everything in terms of money and economics alone. For me as a working mother, I would say that the maintenance of services which enable us to get out of the home and collectivise our roles as providers of care is something to be defended at all costs. Even if in purely financial terms we were paying out as much as we gained in services (which I dispute in any case) it would still be in women's interest to defend services on that basis. And I think that Lambeth should have increased the rates still more last April to avoid cuts in the short term.

JOBS OR SERVICES?

More pressure from the trade unions might have helped. However, many people throught that their jobs might have been in jeopardy if cuts were not made. So the pressure from the trade unions has been to get the Council to save jobs *at the expense* of services! For example, the quality and quantity of meals in residential homes for children and the elderly has been reduced to £7.00 per week per head. In effect this means that in the unions we have been putting the interests of Lambeth's employees over and above the interests of the community which we as social workers are meant to be serving! Old people still have memories of the workhouse and it's still very difficult to convince them that going into 'residential care' (i.e. old people's homes) is really any different. And it has to be admitted that despite all the efforts of the staff in such homes, cuts are resulting in conditions not too different from those which old people fear so much. I don't see how we can possibly put the interests of trade unionists over and above those of such old people, most of whom are ex-members of trade unions. I know the only answer is to bring down the government and the whole rotten system it upholds, but if we are to maintain the support necessary to achieve this, we simply can't go about favouring ourselves at the expense of the defenceless. We shouldn't have to make such choices, and in the short term the only way we can refuse to make them is to insist that rates are levied to a level sufficient to pay for both services and jobs. I think this is the only possible position a class-conscious feminist can have.

FEMINISTS

I don't underestimate the short-term conflicts of interests that we all face whether as workers, councillors or members of our communities having to foot the rates bill. But I think that for me as a woman, the priority is to defend services at no matter what cost in terms of rates. If, as women, through our trade unions and local Labour Parties, we can put on enough pressure to get this accepted I think we will be serving the best interests of us all. For this reason, I think that it is crucial that we get as many class-conscious feminist councillors as possible elected in 1982.



The People's March hits London last month

HARINGEY LABOUR BRIEFING SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

As a Borough, Haringey suffers from many of the problems that other parts of London do: tremendous housing shortage, industrial decline, rapidly rising unemployment, cuts being imposed by Heseltine.

Of course, in times of hardship, as in times of relative prosperity, the burdens and the benefits are not evenly spread.

In Haringey the people who suffer most in terms of opportunities, housing and jobs are the young, and more especially black youth.

Haringey has a strong and vibrant Labour movement – the fascists were dismissed in one of the earliest of the mass demonstrations against them in 1977; the 1979 local authority workers' strikes were strong and now, for the first time in history, Hornsey, Tottenham and Wood Green have returned Labour members to County Hall in the GLC elections.

The Borough has been Labour controlled since 1971 and, as we face the run up to the 1982 Borough elections, comrades are discussing how the Council should act and in whose interests.

Is the job of a Labour Council to pass on the Heseltine cuts and become an administrator of central government policies?

or

Is the job of a Labour Council to defend the living standards of the worst off people by fighting for resources for the Borough?

Since the Thatcher Government came to power, their main policy planks have been to divide the labour movement by creating high levels of unemployment, spending more on defence and slashing public spending on the welfare and social services. Because of the very high profile that local government takes and the relationship of central to local government spending the task of a united response has been the most serious weakness of the labour movement.

Party activists in Haringey have continually called for united work with other Labour Councils and with the trade union movement to defeat the Government; quite clearly, isolated no Labour Council will defeat or reverse Tory policy.

The demands on the Labour Party national executive and the TUC to mobilise to oppose the latest £400,000,000 cut from public spending must be stepped up; and commitments extracted from the National Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party on how they will operate after we have won the next election.

Haringey Briefing has been put together by comrades active in the Labour Party, the Campaign Against the Cuts and the Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Campaign; it is designed to unite activists in the Borough to strengthen the fight against the Tories.

HARINGEY'S 1982 MANIFESTO

The time to begin working on Labour's manifesto for the 1982 Borough elections is now.

The Party has been in control of the Council since 1971 – the time has come to evaluate the successes and failures of Council policy and to set a direction for the Council to go in.

The aims and manifesto of the Party should not be constrained by the narrow parameters of the existing local government establishment, but an expression of the day to day situation in the Borough, and how a Council works as both an administrator, a pressuring agency and a campaigning body.

1. **Council activities and thrust of policy:** Partly due to the onslaught of Tory Government the whole purpose and nature of Council activity has changed and its relationship with the community has also altered to a very considerable degree. It is therefore suggested that one of the key parts to the manifesto making process must be how a future Labour Council would operate in terms of the Borough's economy, employment and unemployment, the Council's role as an employer, the development of cooperatives. In this whole field the ability of the Council to campaign and confront the Government, and to cooperate with the GLC and other Labour Boroughs, is vital.

2. **Youth, community, ethnic policies:** The continuing decline of employment in the Borough and elsewhere has a disproportionate effect on the people of the area, and quite clearly youth, and more especially Black youth, are the worst hurt. The Council must therefore adjust its whole approach to this area and treat youth, community affairs and recreational policy as one major entity in the future.

Continued next page

Haringey

COME TO THE BRIEFING MEETING

Sunday 28th. June

7 p.m.

28, Middle Lane, N.8.

Muddling Along with Cuts

Haringey Council's budget for 1981/2 involves expenditure on Haringey services of £180 million. Of this, around 43% goes on salaries and wages for those providing the Council's services and another 23% on loan repayment and interest, with the remainder being accounted for by premises costs, supplies, equipment etc.

The biggest spending committee is Education with 37% of the total, followed by Housing with 28%. Social Services and Civil Amenities lag behind with 12% and 8% respectively.

Haringey's vulnerability to pressure from Heseltine arises from the fact that over 45% of its revenue (£80 million) comes from Government sources, as grants and subsidies. (The ratepayers provide another 36% of revenue with a further 9% coming from council house and other rents.) This large pool of Government grants means that Heseltine can easily penalise Haringey and indeed he already has done so. Two years ago 54% of Haringey's revenue came from grants and only 25% from rates. Since then Haringey has been forced to put up its rates by 96% to compensate for the reduction in Government support.

Now Heseltine threatens that another £4 million will be docked from Haringey in the current year, unless an equivalent sum of money is found by cutting services. This is the equivalent of a supplementary rate of 11½p in the £ or around £1.10 per week for the average ratepayer if levied from 1 October – on top of the likely increase in the GLC's precept of around the same again.

The Labour Group has not discussed its response to Heseltine's action and indeed is not due to meet until July 16th. However, already Robin Young, the Leader of the Council, has said that the Labour Group's policy of no cuts (a bit of a misnomer in any case) and no redundancies will have to be 'reviewed'

To make the cuts demanded will in practice be impossible, since so much of the Council's budget is already committed for the year. However, if the leadership attempts only a fraction of the cuts, the results will be dire with severe damage done to services and redundancies amongst the Council's workforce almost inevitable.

For too long most of the Labour Group in Haringey has tried to muddle along in the hope that Heseltine and the Tories will go away. Time has been wasted in not taking the case for public services to local people years ago and not pinning the blame for increasing rates on the Government who have caused them earlier. Too often 'administrative' decision have been taken rather than 'political' ones. This must not happen on this occasion and this time there should be full consultation with the Labour Party and trade union movement in Haringey, together with an effort to coordinate effective action with other Labour local authorities.

Toby Harris

Manifesto

(Continued from previous page)

3. **Council services:** The basic service committee structure of Housing, Social Services, Civic Amenities, Public Works, Planning, Personnel, Finance and Education has remained without major change over the past few years. In the manifesto making process we believe that there should be a thorough discussion of the methods of centralisation of services, the need for de-centralisation, increasing community input from the working class areas and above all some method of 'community modelling' of our delivery of services. It is quite clear that the record of Haringey has brought disproportionate benefits to the different areas of the Borough. This whole area must be examined and areas of deprivation identified and demands put on all services to act for those areas.

If any policy in this area is to be successful then there must be harmonisation of geographical areas and much better communication by Councillors and officers with their areas.

In making the manifesto it is hoped that the Local Government Committee of the Party will establish a series of working groups, drawn from nominees put forward by branches and affiliates who can then develop policy statements around the main issues for discussion by branches in the autumn.

The final decisions will be taken by policy conferences in the winter, but if the Party is to be able to sustain a radical and aggressive Council administration in office then the support of union branches and campaigns who can contribute to the manifesto will be much needed.

It is up to us as a party to represent all those who suffer disproportionately in Haringey – unemployed, Blacks, Cypriots, Asian people, women, and to offer to the worst hit areas some form of hope for better environmental standards.

Jeremy Corbyn

School closures con:

PICKING UP THE PIECES

The cracking of Heseltine's whip has been having its effect on Haringey's education system. Some of us have been fighting a joyless battle to prevent secondary school closures and the disruption of the service.

The hope of many enlightened parents and teachers was that our Labour councillors would have seen falling rolls as an opportunity for smaller schools and smaller classes.

Our education hierarchy, encouraged by a CEO inspired by Briault, produced so-called educational arguments for closing schools which included trying to convince people that smaller schools and classes would actually be bad for good education. It is to the credit of the majority of the parents and teachers who contributed to the so-called 'consultative procedure' that they dismissed such arguments as phoney. My analysis of the representations made during the 'consultations' showed overwhelming opposition to school closures, but in spite of this the Education Committee decided to embark on a severe programme of closures.

As a result of some very clever spade work within the Haringey parties, who allowed themselves to be ensnared in a numbers game, our Local Government Committee finally backed closures. This agreement was obtained without the Parties ever knowing the financial implications, and were assured throughout that all the recommendations were on purely educational grounds. It was only after the fatal decision to close was taken by the Schools Sub-committee that a Treasurer's report was issued showing that the closures would create massive savings of £1.6 millions per annum and an eventual saving of £3.25 millions per annum as a result of the loss of 345 teachers. 'Corn in Egypt' when we are starving for money.

But at what price? It will mean the disruption of eight schools out of only fourteen and the closure of four with the intention to amalgamate two more after 1983. Because admissions to the four schools will stop, these schools will slowly die, with dire effects on the morale of staff and pupils. The amalgamated schools will initially have as many as 1900 pupils on split sites which in one case will be as many as six sites. The four host schools will therefore have enormous problems of organisation; all this must surely threaten the effective education of the unfortunate pupils. Incidentally it will also mean that two terms after building works costing over £1¼ million have been completed at Alexandra Park School this highly successful school will close.

It is sad to see Haringey destroying what has been a good reputation in the educational world. It has flown in the face of all the trade unions involved in the education service.

The Tories are determined to deprive our services, thus forcing more and more people into the private sector and therefore consolidating elitism.

We shall be electing new Councils next year, our new councillors must be brave socialists who will not flinch at the mention of that Tory ogre, the District Auditor. In Haringey they will certainly have to pick up the pieces of the Haringey education service.

Don Billingsley

SOCIAL SERVICES

With unemployment rising in Haringey, as elsewhere, and with other social pressures growing, the importance of social services is clear. The leadership of Haringey Council pays lip-service to giving them priority, but the tragedy is that this is not being translated into action and into resources.

At present, the social services budget in Haringey is around £21 million, which goes to look after the 600 children who are in care, and some 700 elderly people in residential establishments (with a further 600 in warden-assisted sheltered accommodation). It is also spent in providing services for the physically and mentally handicapped and for the mentally ill, to provide day care facilities for 'at risk' children under five, and to provide community services and field social work for other vulnerable groups.

In some respects these services provide quite a good coverage when compared with other Boroughs: more than 4,400 people have home helps and over 600,000 meals were provided for the elderly last year in luncheon clubs or via meals-on-wheels. Other aspects are acknowledged as being of good quality, but not meeting the need. For example, intermediate treatment provides remedial education, industrial training and counselling to 300 young people, as an alternative to institutionalised care in perhaps a borstal or detention centre. It is recognised that another 500 would benefit from intermediate treatment if it were available.

There are serious gaps in other areas. For example, more than 500 'priority' children are on the waiting list for the Borough's six day nurseries. There is a major failure to cope with the needs of elderly people from the various ethnic minority communities in Haringey. Similarly, far more should be done in working in the community with elderly people, by promoting local activities so as to reduce loneliness and to help them stay in the community rather than move in to residential care. Other areas of concern are the lack of social work support for mentally handicapped adults and the large holes in the services available to the mentally ill and their families. Similarly, even where there is provision – for example, children's homes – standards could be improved.

Labour members of the Social Services Committee have always fought hard within the Labour Group to try and protect (and indeed improve) social services. On one occasion, they refused to implement cuts approved by the Group and forced the policy to be reconsidered, and on another occasion, the then Chairman (Angela Greatley) resigned rather than preside over a package of cuts imposed by the Group leadership. The effect of that package is still working its way through. Amongst other things it required that an unrealistic level of vacancies be maintained amongst social workers and not surprisingly this led to serious industrial action. As a result morale is rock-bottom in the Department.

If Social Services in Haringey are to meet the increasing demands placed on them, not only must the short-term resource crisis be resolved, but in the longer run significant sums will have to be made available to deal with the gaps in service and the areas where improvement is long overdue. This will require a major change in direction for the leadership which keeps *saying* social services are important but never *does* anything to support them.

Toby Harris

THE NEGLECTED ISSUES

Comrades,
For our contribution to 'Briefing' we would draw your attention to the environmental issues which are at least as important as the current 'Hot Potatoes' and if not given some urgent study could result in the negation of all issues.

Nuclear Waste/Spent Fuel is currently passing through the borough on the Gospel Oak – Barking line (every fifth load is being directed by this route).

One container (flask) can have the capacity in radioactivity of 100 Hiroshimas. The original idea of placing reactors as far away from habitation as possible has been undermined. Tests in this country have only been made on ¼-scale models of flasks at collision speeds of 30mph, (trains carrying nuclear material are supposed to be limited to 25mph). A collision of two locos can result in a 100mph smash. No material/element yet known is totally radioactivity proof (railway workers are warned and given time limits and distance from flask limits). Fire tests have been carried out only on models to 800°C. Chemical fires alone have been recorded at 1,000°C+. Six minor derailments are known of to date. How long before a major accident?

When asked to explain what a limited area/time period of evacuation would be, a council official had to agree "that an area of 5 square miles for 6 years would be contaminated 'if a major leak of "Short-life" activity occurred.

British Rail guards are supposed to be able to know if an accident warrants an emergency call to the nearest NAIR establishment (National Arrangements for Incidents involving Radioactivity establishments), as per the current 'working manual for Rail Staff'.

Transport & Handling of Toxic Chemicals.
Each day, lorries of various sizes and condition trundle loads of various capacity through this borough. Unless the dimensions of the container are oversize, or of unusual shape, there is no control on the carrying of dangerous chemicals other than to place a coded sign on the vehicle rear and/or sides. As this is invariably painted on – once action of fire or contents have removed said sign there is less chance of speedy accident control. Surely some embossed signs plus a sealed log book and some notification to the local authority is called for here?

Heavy Lorries & E.E.C. Proposals. There has been for some months a Royal Commission sitting to consider the effect of the various E.E.C. edicts on the weight/size limitations on the 'Juggernaut' heavy lorries that are becoming more and more a part of our everyday life.

Lucy Arnold & Ron Blanchard

FORGOTTEN TOTTENHAM

Tottenham has its occasional moments of glory when Spurs come up trumps – usually these are the only occasions when most locals feel anything approaching 'civic pride' – but as the football fans pour out of Seven Sisters tube, not many people stop and consider what the quality of life is really like in N17 and N15, or how much a Labour local authority has done to improve the generally downbeat surroundings. The fact is that despite many years of Labour rule, and major council interventions (mostly in housing where financial and bureaucratic constraints plus lack of imagination have resulted in the slums of the future) Tottenham is still a twilight area. South Tottenham, that I live in and represent, is referred to as 'marginal' by the planners – which doesn't mean that it could go Tory at the next election – quite the opposite. To planners it means that business doesn't want to go there. The sociologists call it 'urban deprivation', but whatever the label for the malaise, one can't help but notice that all the grandiose civic projects are in Wood Green – the Shopping City, new showpiece library, big new council offices, et al. Local shopping is in decline, traffic is heavy and lead levels high because of the presence of trunk routes, racism is overt, housing often in decline, and the industry that remains is small, struggling and usually considered to be an environmental hazard to those who live next to it. Given the mistakes of the past and the restrictions of the present, no Labour council will ever make Tottenham a beautiful place, but they could make it more bearable – safer, cleaner, more comfortable and convenient, happier and prouder. So where do we start?

First by listening to what the people in the area have to say – simple, but it's not often done.

Secondly, by giving residents an opportunity to be involved in the decisions that affect their area in a more positive way than at present.

Thirdly, by questioning the wisdom of a policy of centralisation of services which adversely affects peripheral parts of Haringey like South Tottenham. We should be moving away from showpiece amenities to efficient and reliable local services.

Fourthly, by ensuring that the existing services are run more efficiently and effectively in areas that need them more. If football crowds cause more litter and vandalism in N17, then that area should have more resources to cope with it. Selective positive discrimination is needed. Lastly, more sensitive planning is needed, which means better co-ordination between GLC and borough, and a positive desire to foster a sense of community.

Already South Tottenham has a Housing Action Area, but its impact has been shattered by the Tory cuts. Soon we will have an Area Management Project which will give local people greater access to decision making, and will take up local issues and campaigns as they arise. But there are some problems which require more than a few leaflets and a team of community workers to tackle them. My ward seems to be a haven for scrap metal dealers, car breakers and demolition yards. They flock here, to every available piece of land. The council tolerate them, the locals hate them, they don't provide many jobs, but they do create a health nuisance for people living next to them, and an eyesore. It raises the issue of how you keep jobs in London without destroying the environment for those who have to live next to small businesses: what sort of industry should we have, and how should it be controlled? Everybody agrees that we need more jobs, but nobody wants that new factory next to *their* house. The council should stamp on the cowboys, give preference to more labour intensive, but environmentally safer forms of industry, only allowing developments that local people support, which means thinking a lot harder about the sort of planning procedures we adopt and their effect on whole areas. People before profit should be the answer. It sounds an easy old cliche, but there are very few council officers who sincerely believe it, and all too few Labour councillors when their backs are against the wall.

Jane Chapman

Must we sell to survive?

The Tories are determined to cut public expenditure by £3 billion over the next three years and 60% of that cut is to be on housing expenditure. The picture nationally is bleak but in Haringey it is particularly grim. Housing in the borough is reckoned to be amongst the worst in London and according to the Greater London House Conditions Survey 1979, Haringey has the highest proportion of bad housing in London. Over 40% of homes in the borough are unsatisfactory, with the worst conditions occurring in the private rented and owner-occupied sectors.

In 1977 the Labour council approved a strategy which would deal with all the bad housing in the borough. The main aim was to improve and preserve the condition of public and private rented accommodation and to maintain the overall supply of rented homes. The major plank in this strategy was to be widespread municipalisation followed by repair and improvement. Largely because of the cuts, that strategy now lies in tatters. The conditions in the private sector continue to decline, council houses are being modernised to lower standards and there is still a crude housing shortage in the borough.

This year the council bid for the Housing Programme was in itself a reduction on the amount needed to carry through the strategy, but the allocation of £27.5m was half of that amount. Most of that was already committed to contracts signed before the end of last financial year and by the end of June it is likely that the whole programme will be committed.

Further cuts in the rehabilitation programme are likely and many empty houses will get minimum repairs and have to wait for improved facilities until some unspecified future date. The modernisation programme for council estates to deal with years of underspending on repairs, condensation and lack of modern equipment is now a shadow of its former self. As the council has now run out of easily developed large sites, the new building programme has dried to a trickle. There is every likelihood that Labour members of the housing committee will be asked to consider selling off land or empty houses in order to finance other housing projects.

One of the major achievements of the last three years was the introduction of Haringey's own Tenant's Charter which was drawn up in consultation with the tenants' associations in the borough. The biggest advance in that was the introduction of a priority system for repairs, an area in which Haringey had amongst the worst records in London. Now, because of cuts in the amount of revenue money made available by the Council, it seems that the brief spell of a good repair service is at an end and tenants are being made to wait longer for repairs to be done. This was to be seen in the context of two rent increases last year and massive increases in estate heating charges which have almost doubled rents since 1979, and the prospect of the imposition of even higher rents threatened by Heseltine with no signs of resistance by the Labour leadership on the council.

On the issue of sales of council houses the Labour Group took a position of reluctant cooperation and devised a lengthy bureaucratic procedure to frustrate would-be buyers. So far none of the 1,000 applicants have bought their homes but with a waiting list of over 10,000 people who will continue to wait for co-operation with the Act, there is no justification.

The transfer of families from tower blocks is already behind programme and every house sold will further delay progress. It is hard to see how the Labour group can justify avoiding the issue of sales.

In the face of the onslaught by the Tories on public housing there is some support for the view that the private rented sector can still be dealt with even without money for municipalisation. The council, however is not up to the task of dealing with bad landlords effectively. There is no real coordination between departments to actively seek out bad landlords and deal with them using the strongest powers available. By reacting only to complaints from tenants and dealing with those complaints in a limited way the council puts the burden on those who are in the weakest position and least likely to complain or be aware of their rights.

In all a very depressing picture of avoiding problems and retreating from previous commitments. Like so many London Boroughs, Haringey needs more cash even to contain its housing problems, never mind to move towards any improvement in conditions. Faced with a determined attack by the Tory government, Haringey council has abandoned its own Housing Strategy and is showing no political will to defend its own tenants or those others in housing need in Haringey.

Colin Sherriff

ACTION NOT PROMISES

At least 50% of the people living in Haringey (often grouped with the minorities!) are partially ignored by the Labour Party; thrown a few sops by the Labour council; are being affected most by the Tories' strategy of cutting public expenditure and creating unemployment. Who are these people? Why are they being ignored? What is being done about their situation?

The answer is they're women and their situation is not unique to Haringey.

The Labour Party is at last nationally taking up women's issues in a public way (though the recent Women's Week of Action passed with little beyond a gathering of worthy women at the House for a ten minute of so debate). Local parties such as those in Haringey must follow through and exceed this commitment, not just by passing pious motions acknowledging the difficulties/prejudices women face in a party and a council dominated by men. (10 out of 41 Labour councillors are women, most ward secretaries are women, most chairpeople are men, only one Head of Service is a woman – and she's Head of Personnel). Although women don't just make the tea anymore, they still do the servicing jobs within the party, the jobs that entail the 'slog' without the glory.

The Labour Council – publicly thought radical but just reeling from a right-wing coup which has 'tidied-up' the front bench for the forthcoming elections next May – has been supposedly committed to pursuing equal opportunities as part of its 1978 election manifesto. The negotiations with the unions are still continuing. They founder on the provision of a creche – initially promises in the rate making exercise of two years ago but one of the first promises to disappear when the budgets were trimmed when the Tories came in. Women as employees are still concentrated in the 'service' departments – social services, housing, etc. and in the lower grades. It is likely to be their jobs that suffer first, as vacancies are not filled and 'rationalisations' take place. And as consumers of the services that are pared they will be taking on the burden of bad housing, reduced provision for the elderly, the handicapped and children with little or no say in how these decisions on priorities take place.

If the Labour Parties and the Labour Council are to accord women the rights they deserve, then a programme for action must be drawn up. In the party, more consideration must be given to the timing and format of meetings; creche or child minding facilities must be considered; women's sections (which exist in two out of the three borough parties) must be a forum for discussion and involving those women who feel discouraged by the male domination of other party meetings; we must have more women chairing meetings and more men doing the secretarial work and organising bazaars: in the current selection of potential Borough election candidates women must be encouraged to stand; when it comes to selection, wards must include at least one woman on their shortlists.

On the council, there must be a clear committment to equality, not just the tokenism of a woman or two in a more senior job; the manifesto for next year's election must acknowledge this need for positive action and recognise that half of the electorate is female; the possible new structure outlined by Jeremy Corbyn in his article should include an input from women who must be involved in formulating the services provided by the council.

Just a few suggestions for change not exclusive and not likely to improve everything overnight but with years of neglect to wipe out who can expect miracles?

Diana Minns

The case against the 'Met'

One of the most politically important tasks of the Labour Greater London Council will be to carry out its manifesto pledge on reforming the Metropolitan Police and democratising its structure. But it will face considerable opposition – from the Tories, the police, the media, and sections of the general public.

Graham Norwood

We therefore need fighting policies which we can express to the public, and a catalogue of faults in the Metropolitan Police which will justify our demands and actions.

There is no shortage of evidence to back up Labour's programme of change: the case against the Metropolitan Police can best be split into four separate charges.

1. **It is costly, yet inefficient.** Home Office figures running up to March 31 1981 show a total Met budget of £415m, giving a gross expenditure per officer of £20,656 – compared with £13,735 for each officer outside the Met. For every one thousand Londoners, the Met spends £65,526 – for every one thousand outside of London, the figure is £34,140. The Met has more police vehicles than any other police division – 2,054 cars, 532 bikes, and 1,071 assorted other specialist vehicles. The London vehicles cost more to run, per mile, than other forces.

With all this money spent, do we get a commensurately better service? Not at all. In 1970 the clear-up rate for crimes within the Metropolitan Police area was 28 per cent. By 1979 it was down to 20 per cent. With the clear-up rate for serious crime being around 70 per cent, the emphasis on poor detection is concentrated on the basic offences which hit most people, like burglary, assault, and vandalism. Confidence in the police has consequently hit a new low, with indications that only a minority of offences are now ever reported to the London police.

2. **It is undemocratic and out of control.** The popular argument centres on the new Labour GLC's call for a more democratic system of accountability. The Metropolitan Police is answerable only to the Home Secretary, whereas all other authorities are answerable at least nominally to the local Police board composed of two-thirds local elected councillors, and one-third magistrates. But there is more to the undemocratic nature of the Met than its structure of accountability. Its whole system of operation is rapidly going out of control.

The day-to-day tactics of the police in London are becoming dangerous and in the case of certain individuals almost fascist. The accounts of private arsenals being held by police officers concerned with the death of Blair Peach in 1979 have been highlighted by some private weapons being used by police officers during the Brixton riots. A report in the *Guardian* (April 13 1981) claimed that a Brixton family's home had been stormed twice by police officers, who on one occasion beat up members of the family, including the breaking of the father's left arm. *Time Out* (April 17-23 1981) chronicles the police activities in detail – including abuses, physical and verbal, and a critique of the policing tactics. Private weapons are reported to have been used by some plain-clothes policemen who themselves were thought to have been rioting youths when seen by other, uniformed officers.

Equally sinister, though more covert, is the increasing use of police files. In the Metropolitan area this has become more widespread than in most forces. 'Appendix B' of the Police Commissioner's consolidated instructions is reputed to contain records of those who have no criminal records but are believed to be 'troublesome'. The list includes firms of solicitors who assist minority groups, former police officers who have criticised the Metropolitan Police, plus some doctors, left-wingers, and a Fleet Street press agency.

All these activities – combined with the complete lack of accountability to those people whose streets the police roam – makes the Met an almost uncontrollable force.

3. **It is, in parts, corrupt.** The 'Operation Countryman' exercise is only part of the growing file of evidence indicating corruption within the Metropolitan Police. When 'OC' was investigating the Met in 1980, it passed over a number of 'lesser' complaints to the normal Complaints Investigation Bureau in Scotland Yard. Now, according to a report in *The Times* (April 10 1981), the CIB has had to set up a separate squad to deal with 82 cases of alleged corruption by London police officers.

This trend is not new. Even though 800 officers had left the Met under clouds of guilt or suspicion in the eight years up to 1980, as far back as 1976 things were evidently wrong when Frank Hooley, Labour MP for Heeley, commented that:

'I wonder if there is any other public body in this country, employing 20,000 people, which has had 400 members of staff depart under a cloud of suspicion in the last four years?'

4. **The Met wants still more power, without outside control.** In 1977, in the first report by Sir David McNee, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, the task of the police was described as being 'unwarrantably difficult by certain restraints of criminal procedure.' The Commissioner not only called for much higher pay for Met policemen than for those outside of London, but wanted much higher levels of facilities and training, sanctioned the use of riot gear, and spoke out against what he termed the 'excess of liberty'.

Since 1977 the Police Federation and other bodies have advocated still more power to be given to London's officers, including more freedom to police the streets as *they* want – irrespective of the needs of local areas as determined by local people and their elected representatives – and more access to high profile techniques, including the use of anti-riot gear, including continental style facilities.

Those are the problems with the Metropolitan Police that we must get across to the public, and the media. The pledge by the GLC, as written in Labour's manifesto, will meet fierce opposition. Yet it is essential if we are to improve police/community relations. Fight for it, and fight now.

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

GLC

Leader	Ken Livingstone
Deputy Leader	Illtyd Harrington
Chief Whip	Harvey Hinds
Group Chairman	John Ward
Deputy Whip	John Wilson

Chairpersons of Committees

Finance and General Purposes	Tony Hart
Staff	John Carr
Housing	Gladys Dimson
Transport	Dave Wetzel
Industry and Employment	Michael Ward
Planning	Ed Gouge
Public Services and Fire Brigade	Simon Turney
Arts and Recreation	Tony Banks
Policy and Performance Review	Illtyd Harrington
Police	Paul Boateng
Ethnic Minorities	Ken Livingstone

ILEA

Leader	Bryn Davies
Deputy Leader	Frances Morrell

Chairpersons of Committees

Education Committee	Ann Ward
Schools Sub-cttee	Frances Morrell
Further & Higher Education Sub-cttee	Neil Fletcher
Development Sub-cttee	Margaret Morgan
Finance Sub-cttee	Barrie Stead
Staff and General Sub-cttee	Deirdre Wood

The nine Labour nominees to be additional members of the Education Committee are:-

Stephen Benn	Edna Mathieson
Jean Bernard	Anthony Powell
David Butler	Keith Veness
Ruth Gee	Anna Bowman
Bala Gnanapragasam	

Time to Reselect

Nigel Williamson
Orpington CLP

The round of Parliamentary re-selections in London is now under way. The following dates for closure of nominations have already been announced.

Woolwich East	June 22nd
St Pancras N	June 24th
Deptford	July 10th
Hayes & Harlington	August 28th
Croydon NW	September 7th
Enfield North	September 10th
Walthamstow	September 11th
Fulham	September 14th

More will follow in the near future. As a service to readers we print here the voting records of London Labour MPs on ten crucial issues over the past six years. They have been extracted from a booklet shortly to be published by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy which will contain the voting records of all Labour MPs.

We would point out that the records do not indicate abstentions or absence from the Commons.

In addition we print a series of questions based upon Labour Party Conference decisions which are the sort of thing London Labour Briefing believes activists should be asking prospective candidates.

THE RIGHT TO KNOW

We make no further comment on either the voting records or the questionnaire – we believe they should be allowed to speak for themselves. However, we would emphasise that this has nothing to do with loyalty tests, 'hit-lists' or any of the other accusations the right will make in their fundamental opposition to accountability. This is merely information which 'London Labour Briefing' believes Party members have a right to know. It is then up to them how they make use of it.

But there is one cloud on the re-selection horizon. For the second successive month the NEC has rubber-stamped clearly improper parliamentary re-selections without even an enquiry. The decision to strengthen the guidelines is meaningless if once again they are not upheld in practice. It seems the only way to stop the shortlist of one abuse is through a further constitutional amendment specifically prohibiting one person shortlists where there has been more than one nominee.

Therefore, we urge all constituencies to submit resolutions to the NEC demanding that they bring forward such an amendment to Conference this year. This is the only way to prevent the by-passing of mandatory re-selection.

SUPPORT TONY BENN

Never before has the election of any Parliamentary post been fought by the labour movement; massive backing for Tony Benn's bid for the deputy leadership is the best way to defend the democratic gains of the past years.

Support for Tony Benn is growing continually; several unions have already pledged their block votes for him against the expressed wishes of their executives and national officials. We are witnessing another phase in the growth of democratic accountability in the movement.

The campaign is being fought on the five principles of FULL EMPLOYMENT, EXPANSION OF HOUSING, EDUCATION AND WELFARE, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COMMON MARKET, NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee have circulated all *Briefing* supporters in London and all Labour Parties with copies of the campaign statement. The task now is to translate this into nominations and votes for Tony Benn both at constituency level and vitally through union branches. The strength of the campaign is the depth of discussion that is taking place and the power that this will give to a future Labour Government to carry out its commitments.

London Labour Briefing fully supports Tony Benn and campaign material is available from *Briefing*.

Jeremy Corbyn
Hornsey CLP

QUESTIONNAIRE

Would you support legislation to bring about:-

1 'the immediate restriction of the export of capital' (Conference 1980)

2 'the immediate introduction of a wealth tax' (Conference 1980)

3 'the introduction of a 35-hour week linked to a national minimum wage' (Conference 1979)

4 public ownership of '25 of our largest manufacturers' (Labour's Programme 1973)

5 'the nationalisation of the private banks and insurance companies' (Conference 1976)

6 'the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Economic Community' (Conference 1980)

7 'the total abolition of the House of Lords, and the reform of Parliament into an efficient, single chamber . . . without delay' (Conference 1977)

8 'the repeal of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts' (Conference 1976)

9 'women's right of choice on abortion, in law' (Conference 1977)

10 abolition of 'NHS pay-beds completely, all private medicine and charges' (Conference 1980)

11 an end to 'British participation in any defence policy based upon the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons; a pledge to close down all nuclear bases, British or American, on British soil or in British waters' (Conference 1980).

NOTES RELATING TO VOTING RECORDS

1 Those marked voted against the proposition 'that this House approves the recommendation of Her Majesty's Government to continue Britain's membership of the EEC' (9 April 1975).

2 Those marked voted against the White Paper incorporating the £6 pay limit (22 July 1975).

3 Those marked voted for the House to adjourn indicating their opposition to the Labour Government's economic policies following the IMF loan (21 December 1976).

4 Those marked voted for the House to adjourn indicating criticism of Merlyn Rees' handling of the deportation of Agee and Hosenball under the Immigration Act 1971 and concern for the civil liberties implications of the case (3 May 1977).

5 Those marked voted for Brian Sedgemore's amendment to strengthen the inquiry into the busting of oil sanctions against Rhodesia (1 February 1979).

6 Those marked voted for Frank Allaun's amendment to the 1979 Defence Estimates re-affirming Labour's 'commitment not to proceed to a new generation of nuclear weapons' (27 March 1979).

7 Those marked voted against the Corrie Abortion Bill (13 July 1979).

8 Those marked voted for the motion 'that leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish the House of Lords' (6 May 1980).

9 Those marked voted against the continuation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (4 March 1980).

10 Those marked voted against the continuation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act (10 December 1980).

	Against EEC Member-ship	Against £5 Pay Policy	Against Labour's economic policies	Critical over Agee and Hosenball	For stronger inquiry into oil sanctions	Against increase in defence expenditure	Against Corrie Abortion Bill	For abolition of House of Lords	Against PTA	Against N. Ireland Emergency Provisions
	7.4.75	22.7.75	21.12.76	3.5.77	1.2.79	27.3.79	13.7.80	6.5.80	4.3.80	10.12.80
JO RICHARDSON, Barking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DOUGLAS JAY, Battersea N.	✓						✓			
ALF DUBS, Battersea S.							✓	✓	✓	✓
BOB MELLISH, Bermondsey										
IAN MIKARDO, Bethnal Green & Bow	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
REG FREESON, Brent East	✓						✓	✓		
LAURIE PAVITT, Brent South	✓					✓	✓	✓		
JOHN PARKER, Dagenham						✓				
JOHN SILKIN, Deptford	✓						✓	✓		
SAM SILKIN, Dulwich							✓			
TED GRAHAM, Edmonton							✓	✓		
JAMES WELLBELOVED, Erith & Crayford										
RUSSELL KERR, Feltham & Heston	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
GUY BARNETT, Greenwich	✓						✓	✓		
STANLEY CLINTON-DAVIS, Hackney Central	✓						✓			
ERNIE ROBERTS, Hackney N. & Stoke Newington							✓			
RON BROWN, Hackney S. & Shoreditch							✓			
CLIVE SOLEY, Hammersmith N.							✓	✓	✓	✓
NEVILLE SANDELSON, Hayes & Harlington										
FRANK DOBSON, Holborn & St Pancras							✓	✓	✓	✓
JOHN GRANT, Islington Central							✓			
MICHAEL O'HALLORAN, Islington North	✓									✓
GEORGE CUNNINGHAM, Islington South	✓						✓			
JOHN TILLEY, Lambeth Central						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ROLAND MOYLE, Lewisham East							✓	✓		
CHRISTOPHER PRICE, Lewisham West	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
BRIAN MAGEE, Leyton								✓		
BRUCE DOUGLAS-MANN, Mitcham & Morden	✓						✓			
RON LEIGHTON, Newham NE							✓	✓		
ARTHUR LEWIS, Newham NW	✓	✓					✓	✓		
NIGEL SPEARING, Newham S	✓									
JOHN FRASER, Norwood	✓						✓			
HARRY LAMBORN, Peckham							✓	✓		
JOCK STALLARD, St. Pancras N	✓							✓	✓	✓
SYD BIDWELL, Southall	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		
PETER SHORE, Stepney & Poplar	✓						✓	✓		
TOM COX, Tooting	✓							✓		
NORMAN ATKINSON, Tottenham	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
STUART HOLLAND, Vauxhall							✓		✓	✓
ERIC DEAKINS, Walthamstow							✓			
REG RACE, Wood Green							✓	✓	✓	
JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Woolwich E							✓	✓		

Briefing links up with Soviet Opposition



ABOVE: *Ken Livingstone with Pyotr Egides in County Hall, where the interview took place.*

Chris Knight
Lewisham East CLP

Ken Livingstone, Eric Heffer and several others prominent on the left of the Labour Party have joined forces to set up a committee in defence of 'Poisky' ('Searches'), a left-wing paper published by a group working for trade unionism and democracy within the Soviet Union. With the threat posed to Poland by the Soviet bureaucracy by no means over as yet, the urgency and fighting for changes within the Soviet Union itself should be obvious to all. The interests of Londoners may not seem to be directly involved, but it would be wrong for us to imagine that the future of Labour in London can be isolated altogether from our responsibilities to the wider movement of which we are a part. *Briefing* has so far recognised this in a variety of ways, one of which has been our concern to ensure solidarity action in support of workers' rights in Poland. Please help to ensure the maximum attendance at the 'Hands Off Workers' Poland' rally (see advertisement on page 19), and also help us secure financial support to enable 'Poisky' to become printed in Russian under the auspices of the workers' movement in the West. *Briefing* supporters in Brent have already donated £50, and we really ought to be able to raise this to a target of £250 through a London-wide effort over the coming two months.

One Russian comrade with whom we are in contact is Pyotr Egides. He explains the background to his appeal in the following interview which I conducted with him for *Briefing*:

CHRIS KNIGHT:

Most Soviet dissidents coming to the West turn out to be right-wing. Why is this, and how can *Briefing* readers be sure that *Poisky* represents something we would want to support?

PYOTR EGIDES:

There are many reasons why dissidents in the West are right-wing. Left-wing dissidents on the whole want to remain in Russia rather than try to emigrate. Those who emigrate, moreover, find themselves courted and financed in the West with the result that they tend to become even more divorced from socialism than they were while struggling in the Soviet Union.

KNIGHT:

So why did you leave?

EGIDES:

I didn't want to leave Russia at all. I didn't voluntarily apply to emigrate. But having been imprisoned twice (for a total of eleven years) I was told that I had a choice: either get out of the country or face another term of imprisonment. The Editorial Board of *Poiski* held an all-night meeting to discuss the situation and decided that the best thing would be for me to go to the West. I was mandated by them to go to the workers' movement in the West to seek support for the journal.

KNIGHT:

So how would you define your political position?

EGIDES:

We represent the socialist wing of the opposition movement within the Soviet Union. We believe that without democracy, you can't have socialism. In our country the state mafia controls all the means of production and exploits the working class. The means of production are *not* owned and controlled by the producers themselves. That is, there is no socialism in the USSR. We don't agree with those so-called socialists who say that what we have in the USSR is socialism with 'certain deformations'. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a name which belies reality on every count: there is no voluntary union between the peoples concerned, there are no soviets, there is no socialism and there are no genuine republics. Our programme is to create real soviet power, that is, democracy, to build socialism and to fight for the self-determination of nations.

KNIGHT:

How does this differ from the positions of other dissident trends?

EGIDES:

There are three basic trends within the dissident groups: (1) People like Solzhenitsyn, Monarchists, who represent great-nation chauvinism and are anti-democratic and pre-capitalist. (2) Pro-Western, pro-bourgeois, capitalist believers in democracy. (3) Fighters for democratic socialism.

KNIGHT:

But in the West, the term 'democratic socialism' is used by almost everyone on the left and can mean very different things.

Many of us have had to distinguish ourselves sharply from social democracy, which works hand in hand with capitalism just as semi-oppositionists in the Soviet Union in the final analysis collaborate with the ruling regime. In the Labour Party, much of the so-called 'hard left' believes that we will need to take revolutionary measures at some stage – e.g. to defend and keep in power a left-wing Labour Government threatened with extra-parliamentary resistance from the ruling class. And quite a few of us – myself included – look for inspiration to the original ideas motivating those who won the Russian October revolution. Where would you stand in these respects?

EGIDES:

I feel we have much in common. The problem is that we've come from such very different experiences of struggle. In our case, these experiences have been horrific ones with the constant threat of long spells of imprisonment and not even the opportunity to exchange ideas or read or publish literature of our own choice at all. In many respects we feel the need for a new vocabulary. It was Stalin who changed for us the meaning of words such as 'socialism' and 'revolution' and we need to start afresh.

KNIGHT:

Do you feel that you have nothing in common at all with the traditions of the October revolution – Trotskyism, for example?

EGIDES:

I personally feel very ill-informed on these questions. You must realise that in the Soviet Union it is impossible to read Trotsky. And so far although my wife and I have been in the West now for one year, we just haven't had the time to read and catch up on all that we have missed out on in our reading and self-education. But I must say that we have met very nice people in Europe who are Trotskyists, real friends, comrades, who have helped us so much!

The October revolution in its ideals was socialist. We have no doubts about that. Subjectively, the Bolsheviks really wanted to build socialism. But objectively, they were not able to do it. My own view is that their methods conflicted with their ideals. To achieve socialism through a one-party system is a contradiction in terms: yet that is what the Bolsheviks tried to do almost from the start. The result was that the basic demands of the October Revolution – for Land, Peace and Bread – were not fulfilled. There was no peace. The land was given to the peasant only to be taken away again. Economic shortages have continued to this day. The factories were not given to the workers – the managements were *always* appointed from above, even under Lenin. And genuine Soviet power was rapidly replaced by the dictatorship of the top party leaders. So the aims of the October revolution have yet to be fulfilled.

I think I know the basic positions of the Trotskyists. As far as concerns Trotsky's criticism of Stalin and Stalinism, I am on Trotsky's side. Trotsky was right. But I think that had he lived longer, Trotsky would have changed his views on a number of counts. To describe the Soviet Union as in any sense a 'workers' state' seems to me quite wrong, and nor am I happy about such phrases as 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Continued next page

BRIEFING INTERVIEWS K.O.R. ACTIVIST

The People's March brought to London hundreds of examples of struggles which show the way forward for the working-class movement in this country. On an international scale the struggles in Poland since the Gdansk strikes of July 1980 have provided a sustained example of workers' solidarity and identified the workers movement with democratic control. In early June **Anka Kowalska**, a member of the K.O.R. (Workers Defence Committee) visited London and spoke at County Hall to a meeting of the 'Hands Off Polish Workers Committee'. Below is set out a summary of her contribution.

ORIGINS OF K.O.R.

Could you say something about the origins of K.O.R.?

A.K. We began with material help for workers after the events of 1976, for those sacked, imprisoned and even tortured in the jails. We helped provide medical and legal help, we appealed to all of Polish society. This was the first ever appeal for solidarity against a particular group.

The Polish authorities saw our activity as political – this always happens in a totalitarian society. In the first year we collected 3 million zlotys for the victims of 1976.

We organised an underground press, not subject to official censorship. New ideas saw the light of day for the first time. For the first time workers saw details of their first attempts at strikes and details of their past history.

We set up an intervention bureau to stand up against the abuses and an information bank to attempt to correct the false information of the media. The magazine Robotnik (The Worker) appeared, the peasants produced their own magazine and all the different strata were able to comment on Polish affairs.

Two years after this activity the first Peasant Defence Committees and the earliest worker unions appeared. This took place during repression, arrests, beating up. Many of us were searched and arrested – but each time it was followed by mass protest. From July last year each time a strike took place we were informed and we informed the whole of Poland. The Gdansk shipyard strikes took on the role of spokespersons for the strikes. Well before this a group had been producing 'The Coastal Worker' as part of a free trade union movement and this group took on the leadership of the strikes.

SOLIDARITY

How did the name Solidarity ***originate?***

A.K. The unity of solidarity gave the name Solidarnosc such significance. We have had miners going on strike to boost the pay of nurses. Workers, student and peasant organisations remain closely co-ordinated. Only in this way has the government been forced to negotiate.

What is the relationship between Solidarity ***and the Party?***

A.K. Membership of Solidarity does not preclude party membership. In most regions officials of Solidarity are not allowed to be officials of the party. In Gdansk there has been a strained relationship and some members have left the party, but this is not official policy. Solidarity does not involve itself in party matters.

Do you want a socialist society?

A.K. Of course. We all want socialism, otherwise why bother?

INVASION THREAT?

In London we organised a demonstration to the Soviet Embassy to protest against any plans to invade Poland? Is such a threat a major fear in Poland?

A.K. K.O.R., like Solidarity, has a greater esteem for the commonsense of the Soviet leadership than have people in the West. It would not be in the interests of the Soviet Union not only in relation to the bloodshed but also economically an occupation would be an immense load to take on.

How does Solidarity view the food shortage and the economic crisis?

A.K. Solidarity cannot help as a trade union, although we do debate these matters. For once the real economic theorists are able to take decisions, not just the party hacks. We will have control over food supply and over production and distribution. The government has no hope but to grant these reforms, then Polish workers will agree to work normally and the economic situation will improve.

PARTY CONGRESS

How do you see the forthcoming Party Congress?

A.K. There seems to be a dying down of radical voices from below. I personally want to see a strong party; for the USSR there is nothing worse than the decomposition of a party.

Might the Party be able to absorb and eventually strangle the independence of Solidarity?

A.K. I don't think this can happen. A party of 3 million is in no position to strangle a 10 million strong union.

Is there hope of free trade unions in other countries?

A.K. I hope so. We have contact with Charter 77. However this is now broken, many people in Czechoslovakia are in jail, the border is closed.

What support does Solidarity need?

A.K. We need two levels of help.

First, inter-union contacts. This entails material help. Basic office material and particularly printing ink is very hard to get in Poland.

Second, to explain that what is happening in Poland is not a counter-revolution but a revolution. To make it clear that the USSR would damage itself by an intervention. To support the status quo means leaving world hegemony in the hands of the USSR.

(Continued from previous page)

KNIGHT:

Most of us would strongly sympathuse, but personally I would still say that if the Soviet Union did not exist, the position of socialists in Cuba, Vietnam, South Africa and throughout the world would be much more difficult than it is today. There is a distinction to be made between the external effects of the existence of the Soviet Union and its internal regime. Moreover, Poland has shown how powerfully a communist party and state can be swung to our side through mass working class pressure working its effects up through the system from below. The bureaucrats have virtually no social base once the element of fear and military terrorism has met an obstacle stronger than itself. Nothing can save the bureaucracy in Poland now except a Soviet invasion or clamp-down in some form based on forces outside the country itself.

EGIDES:

The key to the world situation is the struggle within the Soviet Union. Once we win our struggle, we won't need solidarity action from anywhere else: we will be impossible to defeat!

KNIGHT:

What has been the effect of events in Poland on your struggles in the Soviet Union?

EGIDES:

I know for certain that the influence of Polish events has been immense, but you must realise that until some breakthrough is made in the Soviet Union we are simply unable to disseminate information at all. This is why I am so excited by the prospect of left-wing Labour Party help for our journal, *Poiski*. We need this journal to publish the most elementary information without which no struggle can go forward. At the moment, of course, the people of the USSR are told that what is happening in Poland is counter-revolution, that *Solidarity* is an anti-socialist, anti-working-class movement of workers 'bought off' by the CIA. In the Ukraine, workers are being taxed additionally, with slips put in their reduced wage-packets explaining that the money is missing 'because we have to subsidise the Poles'. The frontiers are sealed, and there is an effective blockade on accurate information getting through. And even when there are strikes within the Soviet Union itself, word of them takes a very long time to disseminate.

Of course, I'd love to be able to appeal to the Soviet soldiers should the threatened invasion of Poland take place: 'Soldiers, don't believe what you are being told!' But this would be the very *worst* crime, far worse than any of the things for which I was imprisoned. In issue no. 3 of *Poiski* we published the diary kept by a soldier who took part in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The whole invasion is seen through the eyes of the invading army. It was 100 pages long: the soldier just didn't understand why he had to fight the Czech communists and workers. His eyes are gradually opened as the diary records the events of each day.

KNIGHT:

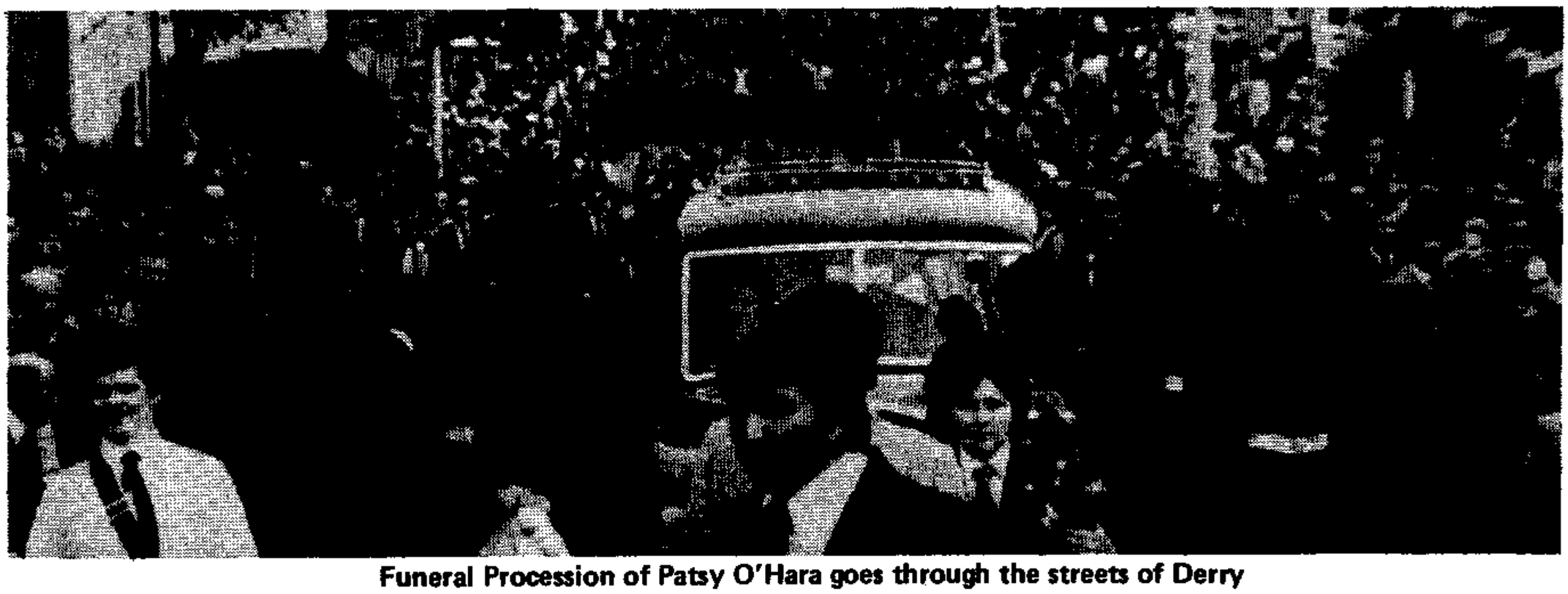
How is *Poiski* connected with the fight to establish autonomous trade unions in the Soviet Union?

EGIDES:

We have real workers – manual workers – on the Editorial Board, and many of the intellectuals have preferred to take manual jobs rather than compromise themselves with the regime by carrying on in their professions. Some of us have been involved in SMOT, the 'free trade union association' of the Soviet Union. In all this we differentiate ourselves from such oppositionists as Sakharov, who don't see it as a priority to make contact with the working class as the basis of any moves forward. We are waiting for events to make possible our Soviet version of Poland's *Solidarity*. We try to work to a certain extent in the same way as KOR does, taking up cases of harassment at work and so on. In the same way as you are hoping that the movement of Tony Benn will take power, we want our Russian *Solidarity* to take power! We need support from the left throughout Europe in this. Don't tell us that *if* we had a movement like *Solidarity* you would support us – as I say, once Russia has its own *Solidarity*, we won't need help from anybody!

HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY –

PLP cover~up



Funeral Procession of Patsy O'Hara goes through the streets of Derry

It is obvious that Liam McCluskey, the republican socialist prisoner (whose letter from H3 Long Kesh was printed in the last issue of *Briefing*) and his comrades are in the revolutionary working-class tradition of James Connolly, Ireland's finest socialist and trade union organiser.

Liam McCluskey's appeal to the British labour movement to save the lives of the hunger strikers has gone unheeded and in May 1981 four young Irish revolutionaries have, like James Connolly in May 1916, been murdered by H. M. Government.

Throughout the world there has been huge, angry, militant condemnation of the arrogant imperial stance of the British government led by Thatcher.

ORGANISED

In the US, after the death of Bobby Sands, MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone, the stevedores organised a 24-hour boycott of British ships. In Chicago, Boston, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, thousands marched and demonstrated.

10,000 protestors besieged the British Embassy in Athens. 12,000 marched in Paris, 5,000 in Milan. Buses were burned in Glasgow, the Dunlop factory in Toulouse was bombed, in Zurich a British car showroom was bombed and there were other bombing attacks against British property in Corsica and Milan.

On the deaths of each of the four hunger strikers – Bobby Sands, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara – messages of sympathy were received from all the revolutionary organisations fighting against foreign domination, i.e. People's Mojahedin organisation of Iran, the Sandinistas, the Basques, Catalans, the PLO, the ANC.

DISGUSTING

The reaction of the Parliamentary Labour Party has been disgusting. Concannon's obscene pro-Thatcherite declaration at Bobby Sands' death bed is only matched by the behaviour of Arthur Henderson MP, who, on hearing of James Connolly's execution by firing squad, led the Labour MPs in thunderous applause.

Michael Foot's continuing pledge of Labour bi-partisanship on Ireland is a betrayal of the Irish people's struggle for domination. Why not have bi-partisanship on all issues which might upset the Tory overlords – unemployment, housing, Trident missiles, the NHS?

Those who support imperialist interests in Ireland and the economic, political and military subjugation of its people must be relentlessly opposed by all true socialists during this historic final phase in the struggle by the Irish people for national liberation and socialism.

ABSTAINED

The Irish people in Britain abstained in the recent local government elections or else spoilt their votes as a direct result of Concannon's action or Foot's nauseating 'me-too-manship'.

Before another republican socialist prisoner dies in Long Kesh we must break the link with the Tories on the Irish question and declare from the grass roots upwards our support for the reunification of Ireland and a sincere commitment to a British political, military and economic withdrawal from the six north-eastern counties.

James O'Brien

ILEA NEWS

ANOTHER BRICK OUT OF THE WALL?

The ILEA has approved, in a piece of business left over from the last authority, a scheme at Quintin/Kynaston school in Westminster for a youth club to be run under the auspices of the school's headmaster. When you were 18 years of age, I wonder how you would have fancied a youth club run by your old head?

SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Now is the time for all CLPs to consider the appointments to school governorships. All the boards of ILEA schools are being re-constituted and *Briefing* supporters should see that they are well represented. Too many times in the past we have been content to allow senile right-wingers to represent Labour in the day-to-day administration of our schools. This time we must be present in force ourselves!

CURRENT JOKE

Heard in the corridors:

'If putting right-wingers into office is taking prisoners – we must be looking like bloody Parkhurst.'

CHINLESS WONDER CORNER

What a sight the Tory Group on the ILEA make now! Very sparse in numbers, they seem mainly to behave like a group of refugees from the Carlton Club. The only real stirrings came at 'question time' when a few cheap sneers were made about Andy Harris (who is an ex-ILEA teacher and may therefore be guilty of knowing a lot about how schools work) and long boring demands were made for statistics which highly-paid chief officers would happily have provided anyway. Perhaps this is just training for when they can get across the river?

Getting the blacks in....

It is blatantly obvious that in these turbulent economic and political times, the traditional batallions of the labour movement, the trade unions, are keeping their heads well down. It is also true that the groups which are forced to carry the battle to the Tories are the disadvantaged groups – blacks, women, Irish, anti-nuclear movement etc, all the groups that are most affected by the reactionary nature of the Tory Government. Alongside this development is the increasing polarisation of the classes which is forcing the disadvantaged groups towards the Labour Party despite the Party's poor record on disadvantage.

In the last issue Narendra Maranji pointed out the increasing involvement of blacks in elections, especially the GLC. The overtly racist nature of the Government, as illustrated in the Nationality Bill, has demonstrated to blacks on which side their bread is buttered. Blacks realise that they could soon be in a 'no vote' situation like guest workers on the continent. The consequence of this would be that they would be totally ignored by the politicians. Some blacks argue that there would be no significant change in attitude!

So what shape is the Labour Party in to accommodate an influx of minority ethnic groups? Recent events in Brent South illustrate that any large scale recruitment of blacks causes panic amongst so-called socialists. If there had been an influx of white trade unionists, for example, they would have been welcomed with open arms. There would have been banner headlines stating that the Labour Party was truly representative of the working class in Brent. Not so the blacks. All sorts of spurious reasons are advanced to frustrate this healthy development in Brent. If the Labour Parties of Brent, Haringey, Lambeth etc, are to be truly representative of the working class, then their membership has to reflect the proportion of disadvantaged groups living in those areas. That means that at least 30% of their membership should be black!

The Labour Party has to change because blacks will not attend Ward/GC meetings that treat their particular issues as secondary. Institutional racism is not a secondary issue to 40% of the people of Haringey; neither is US/British aggression in the Caribbean, because most of our folks still live there!

The Labour Party should set up sections comprised of minority ethnic people solely, to examine and formulate policy that affects minority ethnic people. These sections would be able to prosper without that awful feeling of being in a minority, as at present. The sections would be set up at GC level and would have direct representation on the GC, EC, LGC and LGCEC. This structure would carry on through to regional level and end up with seats on the NEC. All elections of representatives would be by minority ethnic members only. Hopefully, this arrangement would be in the short term only as was the original intention with women's sections.

There are no valid reasons why this system would not work. A similar scheme has been developed in one union branch and the participation of minority ethnic members in union affairs has increased tremendously. This system should be applied for *all* disadvantaged groups, making the Labour Party more democratic and accountable. People might then find that disadvantaged groups are in the majority in the Labour Party. The point is that they would be organised. The Labour Party would be reasonably certain that policy reflected the opinions of disadvantaged groups within and without the Party.

The danger is that unless the Labour Party changes its present structure, blacks and disadvantaged groups will organise unofficial sections within the Party and this could be damaging in certain respects.

Bernie Grant
Wood Green CLP

WHY "LABOUR – TAKE THE POWER"

At the meeting of the editorial collective responsible for this issue we decided, after a discussion, to endorse 'Labour – Take the Power!' as BRIEFING's masthead slogan, with the proviso that other slogans might be adopted from time to time in the light of events.

What does 'Labour–Take the Power!' imply? During the meeting there was some discussion on this, and as one of those responsible for the choice, I set down here my own reasons for favouring it as a contribution to discussion. So this is a personal view.

1. Briefing was established not to harangue people with a rigid, pre-determined ideology or artificially-concocted 'programme'. Our aim was to provide rank-and-file activists with a paper which was 100 per cent their own, which provided information about their activities in different parts of London and thereby enabled them to become better aware of their own strength across the capital.
2. We are interested in strength, power – not supposedly 'correct ideas'. Socialist consciousness, feminist or black consciousness, revolutionary consciousness – these things are necessary but they don't come from books or from being preached at. People will always develop the ideas which correspond to their own lives' experience, and they have the right to such ideas.
3. Genuinely revolutionary consciousness is oppressed people's consciousness of their own real, collective, strength.
4. So we should have a completely libertarian position in relation to ideology. The task isn't to force people to think the way we do. It is to facilitate their own self-organization. It is to permit them to discover how strong they really are as their collective forces combine.
5. Because we are an umbrella-organization, we in the Labour Party are in the best position to do this. To the extent that we become habitable for *all* sections of the oppressed, including black people and women, we can transform ourselves as a party into an organized force with real power which people feel to be their own.
6. In the past, we haven't done this. We have gained office in the Council chambers and in Parliament, but we have not gained power. Even when we have had majorities for our party, we have consistently left all real economic, military and state power in the hands of the same old ruling class who have always governed us under the Tories.
7. As a result, the people we are supposed to represent have felt that 'politicians are all the same'. We make promises before we are elected, and then do the opposite once in office. This demoralizes and weakens our supporters, testing their loyalty to its limits in a way which borders on being criminal and driving some of them to vote even for the extremist organizations of the right.
8. There is no answer but to observe the parliamentary rules on a national and local level properly – i.e. to take real power when we are elected to do so by our supporters. To assume office while leaving real power in the hands of unelected officials and moneyed interests is to collude in a conspiracy against democracy and parliamentary rule. The original *Chartists* might as well not have won the right to vote if we are ruled by the same clique of property-owners, top civil servants, military men and international bankers no matter whether we win elections or not.
9. In London, we have gained office at GLC level as a step towards real power. The so-called 'County Hall coup' was a fiction of our opponents' imaginations. What really happened was that the BRIEFING network enabled activists throughout London to organize perfectly openly so as to change the political complexion of the GLC Labour group. We went for power and we got it, because that's what most Labour parties in London wanted. Far from organizing a 'Marxist conspiracy' we are proving that an informal, open, egalitarian and libertarian approach to politics generates trust and an atmosphere of spontaneous co-operation which is simply far more effective than the conspiratorial and bureaucratic methods of the old-guard right-wing in the Labour Party who have monopolized power for so long.
10. The next step – 'Target '82' – is to win the London boroughs. And the next step – 'Target '84'(?) – is to help win Parliament itself by ensuring the maximum Labour vote from London when the general election is held. Once we have firm majorities on all these levels, we can begin the real struggle for power.
11. Once we have won Parliament, resistance to our implementing our programme will come to a head. We in London will have rather special responsibilities towards the movement nationally for the obvious reason that London is the power-centre for the country – whoever holds London holds Britain.
12. A left-wing Labour Government will need mass physical support from Londoners in order to implement its programme. The likelihood is that any attempt to take over profitable industries and abolish the House of Lords will be branded as 'unconstitutional' by the ruling class. The Crown would almost certainly be advised to refuse the Royal Assent to any Bill aimed at the House of Lords.* The army swears allegiance not to Parliament but to the Crown. To win, we would need to legislate trade union rights for servicemen, gain the troops' support by pulling them out of Ireland and physically defend our power-base in the capital by all available means. In my view, 'Labour – Take the Power!' will be a central slogan of the British revolution through which – assuming we win – the principles of parliamentary rule and democracy will be extended and assured.

Chris Knight (Lewisham East C.L.P.)

* EVEN under the 1964-70 period of Labour Government there was talk in the press on this point. When Patrick Gordon Walker wrote in a book early in 1970 that the Crown could no longer refuse Royal Assent to an Act of Parliament, a number of Tories protested. Charles Curran for example wrote in the *Sunday Telegraph* (19.4.70) that such 'sweeping statements fail . . . to recognise the reserve power of the Crown in a revolutionary situation. Like a bees' sting, this could be used once only. Yet it might change the course of our history.'

LABOUR'S GAY CONSTITUENCY

Tony Benn's recent addition of the gay rights campaign to his political portfolio came as a major boost to gay campaigners in the labour movement. Speaking at a House of Commons press conference in January 1981 to launch a new NCCL booklet called *Gay Workers: Trade Unions and the Law*, Benn called on the Labour Party and trade unions to take a lead in the political battle for gay rights.

This welcome development followed quickly the endorsement in December by the Party NEC's Home Policy Committee of an important and impressively comprehensive discussion document entitled 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women'.

Such an atmosphere has already resulted in a strengthening of many gay activists' commitment to the Labour Party, and to a left wing party pledged to ensuring that future Labour Governments and Labour Local Authorities implement party policy and manifesto promises.

Following a conference in Manchester on 6 June of lesbians and gay male Labour Party members, the seven-year-old national Labour Campaign for Gay Rights was reorganised and revitalised, with an inflow of new members, many of them veterans of gay politics now focussing away from the 'ghetto' into Labour Party and trade union work, and with a grass roots approach based on regional campaigning groups rather than a national bureaucracy. LCGR's first priority is to win the Labour Party and the trade unions to a 'full and firm position and action on gay rights'.

To secure a full and informed debate in the labour movement, members intend to raise the gay issue, using the NEC discussion paper, and hopefully responding to Branch and CLP invitations for speakers. LCGR aims thereby to get a gay rights motion passed at the 1982 Party Conference, and a manifesto promise for the next Labour Government. It is clearly arguable that gay people see sense in supporting the kind of Labour Party which is based on full internal party democracy and the accountability of MPs and councillors to implement party policy.

The challenge is enormous and not one lightly taken for the obstacles remain immense. It still seems impossible to get any article on gay rights published in *Labour Weekly*, and many other Party journals including some left papers. Furthermore, the NEC discussion paper, vital to LCGR, has itself been the object of discrimination: its format and printing is poorer quality than other party consultation documents, and it has not been widely distributed to constituencies in the normal way, but remains available on request (priced at an outrageous 40p for less than ten pages) from the Walworth Road offices. As a first priority, the NEC must be pressed to instruct full circulation and publicity for this document, and at a more reasonable price.

This Tory Government's disastrous policies, and the general tide of reaction among those in authority, high-lights the vulnerability of gay people like other minorities as for example in housing disadvantage and discrimination in employment. John Saunders, who was dismissed from his job as a maintenance handyman at a youth centre in Scotland, just because he is gay and through no allegations of misdemenour, has seen his unfair dismissal claim rejected by an industrial tribunal, an employment Appeal Tribunal, and the Court of Sessions, and has now sent his case to the House of Lords for appeal.

In May this year, Barking and Dagenham's Labour Council has sacked Susan Shell from her job at a social Services community home, quite simply because she is a lesbian. Without attempting to 'come out', but not denying that she's gay, Susan found no problems with her workmates but the Authority's reaction was different. LCGR has organised a picket to support Susan Shell at the last Barking Council meeting, petitions have been organised, and NUPE has rightly taken up the case of its member. A general response of amazement and disgust at the plight of these individual victims of discrimination, however, must be transformed quickly into a positive policy and action by securing in all Labour local authorities new clauses in contracts of employment ensuring no discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The negotiation of such guarantees must come both from the Councils' trade unions (as in Haringey), and also from Labour Parties, this being an item to be included in all manifestos for the 1982 Borough elections.

It is not new for sections of the Labour Left, including many 'Briefing' readers, to look for the support of the gay community, often listed along with the women's movement and minority and ethnic groups as part of the broad base among the electorate whose support the Left needs in order to win the Party for socialism. For too long, however, the main thrust of gay activists has been outside the arena of party politics. Within the Labour Party and trade unions, meanwhile, the line taken has usually been at best token support, with gay rights motions passed with little or no debate.

Gay men support feminists' demands within the Labour Movement for a wider and more challenging discussion of sexual politics. LCRG will pursue the debate on how the oppression of lesbians and gay men is part of a wider pattern of inequality, authoritarianism and oppression. 'Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation' must be clearly seen as part of the total framework of class, sex and race inequality, and the gay rights campaign as directly linked to the struggle against racism, sexism and capitalism.

Philip Jones
Hornsey CLP

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING:

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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 .....

.....

County Hall News

County Hall will never be the same again since the People's March. This was the first time that ordinary people had come in substantial numbers to the building. The few Labour Members who were there to welcome the Marchers to County Hall witnessed an incredible sight and the Civic Reception in the evening was completely different from any other Reception held there before.

On May 28th the new Labour administration formally took power in a very long, tedious AGM. We introduced some useful rule changes, but from the point of view of the average Londoner the most significant achievement at that first meeting was the introduction of free fares for OAPs on the tubes. The Tories tried to delay this and then abstained in the voting. They didn't have the courage for outright opposition but accused Labour of rushing ahead while they hinted that the cost might be too high! This is the first instalment of our cheaper transport policy. Make sure you talk about it at work, with your neighbours, etc, so that this extra help for the elderly makes the biggest possible impact.

Unfortunately immediately after the AGM at a special meeting of the Finance, Legal and Parliamentary and Staff Committees eleven Labour Members voted with the Tories against giving paid time off for GLC staff attending the People's March Rally held at County Hall.

MORE DEMOCRATIC

The new Labour Group is trying to operate in a more democratic manner so that for example Chairmen do not take unilateral decision on policy matters, but bring them to the Policy Committee and then to the full Labour Group, so that everyone can participate. Also it has been decided that there will be no collective responsibility operating for members of the Policy Committee and each member can fight for his/her own position at full Labour Group meetings.

The difficulty at County Hall at the moment is the dilemma between the Manifesto commitment to evening meetings and the determination of many of the new Members that the Labour GLC will be a campaigning GLC and to be this it is important that GLC Members are not incarcerated in County Hall in the evenings but are out in their constituencies and in the rest of London. This dilemma still has to be resolved.

A majority of the Labour Group have decided to set up regular meetings called GLC Briefing to which any member of the London Labour Party is welcome to come. Meetings will be on the first Thursday in the month at County Hall at 7.30pm (room booked in Valerie Wise's name) (no meeting in August). The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss policy in a more relaxed, unhurried way than is possible at Group meetings and also to discuss issues with other Party members.

Valerie Wise
GLC Member for Battersea South

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I wrote recently to Ken Livingstone. While congratulating him on his election as leader of the Labour Group I expressed the fear that he is not as concerned with some issues as he ought to be. I would very much like to be proven wrong on this. Among other things I am deeply concerned about the selection of additional members to go on ILEA. My reasons are not hard to comprehend. London's schools suffer from an overdose of racism, largely emanating from the staffrooms. A comprehensive survey of the careers of teachers from the ethnic minorities would show how common it is for them to be unfairly time-tabled, given a subject not their own to teach, to be subtly devalued and even openly slandered in racial terms in the staff rooms. Further, in many schools there is not even a single governor from the ethnic minorities to monitor the racialism there.

A third of ILEA's children are from the ethnic minorities, so this percentage should be reflected in the members of ILEA. At the Standing Conference on Racism (GLRC) I moved that members of the ethnic minorities should be represented on ILEA. I believe those members should have a knowledge of the English Education System and be a representative of an ethnic community. But we have only been given a token of two members who do not meet the criteria.

The point has arrived when the ethnic minorities will have to forcefully retaliate against the discrimination meted out to them. They fulfill their duties as taxpayers and ratepayers and should not be shrugged off by tokenism and stonewalled out of the polity of this country.

S.Mani

Dear Comrade,

Whilst in London for the People's March yesterday, I picked up a copy of your June 1981 edition. It makes a change to find a publication for left-wing activists giving details of what's happening in local government and the local parties – keep up the good work. I only hope that those of us on the left in Greater Manchester can get something going.

Please accept the enclosed cheque for £5.00 as my subscription (£2.50) for the year, and the remainder (£2.50) as a donation to your funds.

Yours fraternally,
Kenneth W Bagnall,
Labour Councillor for Cale-Green, Stockport

WHAT'S ON

Wednesday 1st July

GLC Briefing Women's Caucus
at County Hall Room 175. Inaugural meeting. All women Labour Party members welcome.

Thursday 2nd July

GLC Briefing meeting 7.30 County Hall (Room 175). Speaker Robert Latham on 'The District Auditor' Open to all Labour Party members.

Saturday July 4th

Labour Party Rally for Jobs
Assemble 11am National Museum, Cardiff
Tickets from London Labour Party
Tel: 01-703 6511 (£7 return)

Saturday July 4th

Demonstration on Ireland
Assemble 2pm Mansfield BR Station
Coaches leave York Way, Kings Cross at 8.30am and Kilburn Square at 9am. Price £5.
Sack Concannon!
End Bi-Partisanship!
Support the Hunger Strikers!

Saturday July 18th

Labour Co-ordinating Committee Conference
'Trade Unions and Socialism'
At Central Hall, Westminster, 10.30am
Delegates Credentials from LCC (TU Conference), 9 Poland St W1.
£2.50 per delegate
Conference open to up to 3 delegates from bona fide local trade union and Labour Party bodies and 10 from regional and national bodies.

Saturday 25th July, 7.30pm-11.30pm

North London
Chile and El Salvador Solidarity Campaign presents
a Latin American Evening
AT the Carlton Centre, Granville Rd NW6
(5 minutes from Kilburn Park Station)
WITH Chilean Folk Group Pueblo, Raul Valenca and others. Disco, food, bar.
COST £2 for waged, £1 for unwaged.
Further details from Judith Ironside, 01-431 2643 or Jack Anderson, 01-451 3093.

'HANDS OFF THE POLISH WORKERS' rally

Room 143 (small council chamber) County Hall
ThursdayJuly 9th, 7.30pm

Tony Banks has informed *Briefing* that the GLC Labour Group will be urgently considering a proposal that London should be 'twinned' with Warsaw as a gesture of solidarity in the face of the invasion threat which appears to be mounting as we go to press. There are some procedural difficulties, but preliminary indications are that the proposal will receive widespread Labour Group support.

BRIEFING
NEXT EDITORIAL MEETING
FRIDAY JUNE 26th 6.30pm
County Hall, SE1
(room booked by Tony Banks)

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING

CONFERENCE:

TARGET '82

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

KEN LIVINGSTONE	'The GLC – Lessons for the Local Authorities'
BRYN DAVIES	'ILEA – Lessons for the Outer London Boroughs'
TED KNIGHT	'Co-ordinating Local Authorities in the Struggle to bring down the Government'
MERLE AMORY	'Selecting Councillors who will fight'
JEREMY CORBYN	'The Struggle for the Manifesto'

Plenty of time for discussion

WORK GROUPS ON:

1. EDUCATION
2. PLANNING
3. SOCIAL SERVICES
4. EMPLOYMENT
5. HOUSING
6. POLICE AND ETHNIC MINORITIES
7. WOMEN
8. VOLUNTARY SERVICES
9. DIRECT LABOUR
10. STAFF AND INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Following our victory in winning control of the GLC we need to centre all our efforts in struggling for power in the local elections next May.

Briefing is holding a conference to prepare the ground for these elections. Our tasks are twofold:

★ We must ensure that the Labour Party enters these elections with manifesto commitments which enable us to defend and extend our services and stand up to the attacks from the Government.

★ We must select Councillors who can be trusted to be accountable to the Party and to lead the struggles required.

All Labour Party members are urged to attend this important Conference. There is no limit to the number of people who can attend from each Party.

Delegates' credentials are £1.00 and can be obtained from Graham Bash, 158 Thorold Road, Ilford, Essex. (Cheques: London Labour Briefing)

NAME ..... CLP .....

ADDRESS .....

Saturday July 11th County Hall 10.30-5.30

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