LONDON LABOUR 20p
BRIEFING
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Defectors renege on Labour manifesto pledge:

SCHOOL MEALS SELL-OUT

A shameful day for London Labour – this is the only way to describe the behaviour of the right wing of the ILEA Labour Group in voting with the Tories to defeat the resolution to cut the price of school meals.

Despite clear calls from the London Labour Party and from NUPE London Region, and a vote of 21-15 in the Labour Group, these right-wingers chose to save their skins by openly voting with Tories and sabotaging a measure aimed at improving the take-up of school meals, saving jobs in the meals service and providing an incentive for parents to use the provision of proper dinners for their children.

The vote in the Education Committee, of 24 for and 36 against, shows the depth of the sell-out. Only 13 of these 36 were Tories – three were teachers' representatives and the rest (20) were Labour members committed to support the manifesto. Such people were clearly either totally cynical or amazingly stupid – this should be noted by all Labour activists in London.

WATERSHED

The ILEA has a fresh mandate, with the May election only two months old, and now employs more manual staff than any other authority. The failure of the authority to even begin the fight against the Government marks a watershed. Despite a left majority, with a strong socialist manifesto, the ILEA has been baulked by a rag-bag of right-wing defectors who did not have the support of any part of the London Labour movement. **The remedy is in our hands – none of these people should ever be selected for any office ever again by any Labour movement body in London!**

Keith Veness (Co-opted ILEA member).

Those who voted to renege on the manifesto were:

A. BRAMALL	D. KELLY
J. BRANAGAN	M. KINGWELL
N. DAVIES	C. McASKILL
G. DIMSON	M. MOROHN
M. GARSIDE	P. ROSSI
R. GEE	A. SOFER
B. GNANAPRAGASAM	B. STEAD
L. HERBERT	S. TURNEY
H. HINDS	T. WALKER
E. HORSTEAD	A. WARD

JULY 14th ILEA EDUCATION COMMITTEE WHAT THEY SAID:

"Let them take us to court!"
Bryn Davies

"But my husband owns half a house. He shouldn't have to live under the stress and strain of the District Auditor threatening to take this away!"
Gladys Dimson

"Then you should bloody well resign!"
Charlie Rossi

"The surcharge on each of us would be more than £2000. We'd all be disqualified. I wasn't elected in May to be disqualified a few months later."
Paul Rossi

"All those Labour members who vote against us will be pilloried in front of the movement".
Keith Veness

"Let's postpone a decision for six months. Let's do something about it next year. I know that sounds like fence-sitting – I suppose it is."
Lewis Herbert

"We have a clear-cut manifesto commitment – for us to renege on it would be a disgrace!"
Tony Powell

"We say 'Who rules – the electors or the judges?"
Frances Morrell

"The Tories look after their own – it's about time we looked after ours!"
Leslie Hammond

"I was in Brixton during the riots – a kid told me 'You just don't understand – do you know how many of us have to go to bed night after night without a dinner?' No child can learn on an empty belly."
Jean Bernard

Labour—Take the Power!

FIGHTING TO WIN

Brixton-Southall-Toxteth and the events which have followed help indicate an additional source of strength available to those of us likely to be in control of many of London's Borough Councils next year. At last, now, Heseltine and the Tory Government have gained some glimpse of what might be in store for them in our battle-scarred deprived inner-city areas should they try to impose the holocaust of redundancies, poverty, under-nourishment and youth alienation which their planned slashing of our expenditure programmes will entail. In what follows, we would like to outline a proposed strategy taking this new factor into account.

If we are to maintain services as we are committed to do, we need to obtain the necessary money from somewhere. Although "bankruptcy" has been suggested as one course of action, it is not one which we would support. A bankrupt Council couldn't pay anyone's wages or finance any services at all. To suggest we could fall back on "a political campaign" or "demands for socialism" isn't particularly helpful either – campaigns and leaflets about the advantages of socialism don't pay people's wages or buy provisions or facilities.

If we agree that the task is to secure money, then the range of theoretically-possible means which have been suggested – with the accompanying problems – seem to be these:

1. The traditional left-wing position of raising rates or loans within the framework of the constraints which the Government and the system impose. This course is being ruthlessly and effectively blocked – even to those of us who would think it otherwise desirable – by the legislation which Heseltine is likely to have got through Parliament by May 1982 (or soon after).

2. The revolutionary position, according to which we are urged to overthrow the capitalist state, seize the bank vaults etc. and finance services from the proceeds. This course of action – even to those of us who might have no objections in principle – is not possible for us under present circumstances. There is a strong argument for saying that without legal justification in the form of a majority for our movement in Parliament, any revolutionary attempt would be likely to fail.

3. The "bring down the Tory Government" position. This implies forcing a general election, so that we can replace the Tories with a Labour Government which will give us the money. While an overwhelming majority of us would be in favour of this, the chances are that we wouldn't succeed for some time – i.e. some time after winning the Borough Council elections – leaving the problem of how to avoid cuts or bankruptcy (for which many voters might hold us responsible) in the meantime.

4. (a) The "force a Tory U-turn" position.

This implies coercing the Tories somehow until they rescind or abandon Heseltine's proposed legislation and give us the money we need (in the form of restored rate support grant, special inner-city renewal grants, loans on special terms etc.). This seems the most promising strategy, and the one most likely to enhance our prospects in relation to longer-term goals. But when we talk about "forcing" the Tories to do things, the question arises: what kind of force do we have available to apply?

(b) The shock and surprise shown by Thatcher in relation to Toxteth and its aftermath has indicated the nature of one obstacle on which this Government may become shipwrecked as time goes on. This is the brutal fact that young people in the inner-city areas are not going to take things lying down. Behind the young people, there may be more general popular sympathy with them – or at least shared hatred for the Tories – than Thatcher herself knows. It is in this context that we can draw on a weapon we have not used before.

(c) We need to be able to mount some threat to the Tory Government sufficiently convincing to be capable of splitting the Tory Cabinet, producing Thatcher's isolation and defeat in it, and compelling a U-turn, possibly under the leadership of one of those at present branded by Thatcher as a "wet". In this context, what we threaten to refuse to do may be as significant as anything which we attempt to do. The near-insurrections which have occurred to date this year have been of fearsome ferocity, yet they have broken out despite the strenuous efforts made by our own Labour Councillors to cushion the impact of Tory depradations and defuse conflicts wherever we can. We have provided a protective shield for the Tories, so that they have not had to face the people direct. We could remove that shield if the Tories pushed us too far.

SETTING A DATE

(d) We will have to make it clear to the Tories that after our election in May 1982 we will give them, say, six weeks to change course. We will set a date beyond which, if they choose to go ahead with their plans, they will have to face the population of London fully-exposed – i.e. without any of the protective shielding normally provided by ourselves. While not one of us wants to disengage from the administration of local government altogether, we will simply make clear that there is a point beyond which we are not prepared to go. We will allow ourselves to be used by the Tories as the instruments for implementing their own policies not one step beyond that point.

(e) If the threat alone is to be sufficient, in and of itself, to produce the required results, we must begin to organise now. The GLC and every Labour Group in London will have to be brought into line, through local government special conferences and LGCs in each borough, through the London Labour Party Conference and through activists at GLC and Labour Group level throughout London. The disengagement date, once democratically fixed, must be final and irrevocable unless democratically changed by a special London Labour Party Conference. Once the deadline passes, then – in the event of the Tories' still remaining firm – from that moment onwards no Labour Group or Council will be allowed to function at all, and any measures necessary – industrial action, mass pickets or anything else comrades can think of – will be brought into play to ensure complete discipline in this respect. The Tories and others claiming to want to run the Councils will have their bluff called. We will invite them to face the people of London with their cut-backs and redundancies isolated and alone – if they dare.

(f) Let no-one accuse us of advocating or inciting the upheavals which might follow. None of us wants to see our neighbourhoods set alight, shops looted or police stations stormed. We are not calling for a social upheaval in London on a scale never seen before. But we are forced to direct the Tories' attention towards the facts. If is simply no use their continuing to advocate more "law and order" while in practice stoking up the fires. It is no use their resorting simply to more and more police weaponry and gadgetry for dealing with riots. The problems of London have got to be dealt with at the roots.

(g) Our assumption must be that if our threat is sufficiently convincing in material terms – i.e. if we make it absolutely clear that we mean what we say – the Tories (some of whom do have eyes to see) will think again in something of a hurry and give us the money we need, so that none of us will in fact have to resign from Councils or risk the Tories' provoking the upheavals described. But the precondition for success in avoiding all this is that we *do* mean what we say. To make this clear, it would be best if we could write into our manifestos for the 1982 Borough Council elections a commitment to disengage rather than make cuts, pointing out to the electorate, of course, that with their backing we believe our chances of securing money from the Tories are good. We must state that we will *not* make cuts. *Nor* will we set new rates at all (and this is a task for existing Councillors to help us with) until substantial sums of money have been made available to us by the Government – sums which will enable us to avoid raising rates beyond a given low figure (say, 35 per cent or so in most Boroughs). We will give the Tories plenty of advance warning, setting our own deadline for them so as to help concentrate their minds. Beyond that date – we can warn them – all hell might well be let loose if they try to go ahead. They may call for strengthening the police. But if Brixton, Toxteth and elsewhere are anything to go by, they might need troops and tanks to keep us down.

Graham Bash (Ilford South CLP)
Chris Knight (Lewisham East CLP)

HESELTINE'S NEXT STRIKE

Michael Heseltine has decided to take further powers against Labour-controlled councils in order to force massive cut-backs in the social wage.

At the moment the government is moving against Lothian Council in Scotland with their new powers which apply only to Scottish councils. They have the power to direct Lothian to return £53m to the ratepayers (which would involve cuts of nearly 40%) and if they fail to do so then the Tories can ask Parliament to vote to claw back up to £53m of Rate Support Grant.

As Scottish councils don't have the power to raise a supplementary rate to replace the claw-back and as the Tories are saying that it would be illegal for Lothian to borrow in order to carry on with services, they will be faced with the simple choice of cuts or bankruptcy.

Now Heseltine has, in an off-the-record interview with John Carvel of the *Guardian*, spelt out his thoughts on the way to tackle English and Welsh Labour councils.

He plans to announce in the Queen's Speech in November new measures to prevent councils increasing the rates in order to avoid cuts in services and jobs. He says he does not want 'Lothian' style powers as these must inevitably lead to Tory-appointed commissioners to run councils after the members have been removed and this would sharpen the industrial conflicts which would follow a commissioner appointment and drive home the political lesson about who was really responsible.

Instead he proposes to give himself power to set a limit on commercial rate increases and thus force more of the burden onto domestic ratepayers. He will also have power to fix a percentage increase limit to domestic rates. Thus councils would face massive cuts or bankruptcy. The only way out for councils would be a supplementary rate, as borrowing would be illegal, to cover the deficit. But before a council could have a supplementary rate they would have to either hold a referendum on the issue or dissolve the whole council and hold a full election.

Heseltine accepts that these new powers could not come into effect until April 1983 so next year's rate making will not be affected. He is also facing opposition within some areas of the Government and the civil service so that plan may yet be amended.

But whatever finally appears, there can be no doubt that we are entering the final phase of the struggle with the Tories. Either we or Heseltine must eventually lose. The new powers would prevent a fudging of the issue.

We must mobilise total opposition, including industrial action from the trades unions and disruption of Parliament by the PLP, in an attempt to prevent this legislation passing.

If it is carried into law then councillors must be committed to oppose all cuts even if this means a new election fought on the defence of our manifesto.

Ken Livingstone (GLC Leader)

School meals prices ~ why we must fight

The election manifesto for the GLC and ILEA contained a very clear commitment to cut school meal prices to 25p from September.

The reasons for this are very clear:
– for many inner London kids the school meal is the most important one of the day
– many kids go without a decent meal because their parents cannot afford it.



Jeremy Corbyn
Member of the Regional Executive

In the election campaign the proposals from the party to cut the meal price found massive popular support amongst school kids, parents, teachers and school meals workers because it was a clear move to help the worst off sections of society and a genuinely socialist proposal.

Immediately after the election an opinion appeared from a leading counsel to say that, in effect, the reduction in the price was not an 'educational' measure and therefore could result in those councillors who voted for it being surcharged for the increase in the cost of the subsidy.

That this sort of legal opinion should appear is not a surprise; the whole history of the labour movement's attempts to carry through measures to assist working people has been riddled with establishment attacks.

What we are witnessing is a classic trial of strength. We win an election on a clear pledge – a 'legal opinion' appears which threatens councillors with surcharge, and in so doing isolates them from the battle.

How the ILEA Labour Group respond to this is important – not just for the issue of school meals, but for the likely fate of the whole programme of both the GLC and ILEA.

People who voted Labour on May 7th knew perfectly well what they were voting for; and it was not a meek kow-towing to the forces of the state. It was for a programme to help the worst-off people, and in so carrying out this programme for a confrontation with the Tory Government.

In mounting a battle with the Government the ILEA will get the support of trade unions in ILEA, parents, children and the labour movement. The Regional Executive of the party voted by a huge majority to tell the ILEA Labour Group to fight, and many Labour Parties have done likewise. However, the ILEA Labour Group only voted by 21 to 15 to adhere to the manifesto – despite the very clear indications of the views of the party and a joint union delegation addressing the meeting.

The ILEA Labour councillors must realise that, like it or not, they are at the sharp end at the moment and the only way of strengthening their position is to fight back to defend the manifesto.

Any retreat on this issue will not only lose the possibility of a massive campaign in support of our policies, but lead to bitterness and disillusionment amongst Labour people, and reduce the chances of the confrontation with the Tory Government on the Heseltine proposals being successful.

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APOLOGY

In the last issue we omitted Andy Harris' name from the list of those who voted against submitting evidence to the Scarman enquiry. He did vote against, and we apologise for the error.

The District Auditor, Labour Councils and the Law

Robert Latham
Holborn St, Pancras South Labour Party

The London District Auditor, Ian Pickwell, has recently reported on two London Boroughs, Camden and Westminster. Westminster had lost £500,000 on its council house sales through mistakes and giving excessive discounts. Mr Pickwell was able to satisfy himself that the officers 'were alert to the need to overcome these problems and difficulties' and to conclude that there was nothing requiring him to raise objection to the council's policies and practices. Camden had introduced the Camden Supplement (a minimum wage of £60, a level way below the average industrial wage) to settle the dirty jobs strike of 1978/9. Mr Pickwell's conclusion was that this was 'so excessive as to be unreasonable in law' and was therefore 'contrary to law' and he intended to apply to court for a declaration to that effect.

Camden and Westminster had faced one similar problem. Neither had charged commercial users for refuse collection, but were now obliged by law to do so. Camden reluctantly but promptly introduced such a charge. Westminster refused to do so. Having satisfied himself that Westminster's actions were 'contrary to law', Mr Pickwell concluded: 'A duty is placed on me to decide whether or not to go to court. Before deciding, it seems appropriate in view of background . . . that I should invite the Council, as I do now, to consider the position, and, if they wish, to make representations to me about the possible application to court.'

These cases suggest a difference in approach in the way Mr Pickwell views and reacts to Tory and Labour councils, giving only the former an opportunity to reconsider their position. He is a civil servant appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, but it is a well established principle that the Secretary of State has no power to interfere with his independence. Local authorities have the right to opt for their accounts to be audited by an independent auditor instead of the District Auditor, but this right is rarely exercised.

FIRST ESTABLISHED

District Auditors were first established under an Act of 1834 to audit the accounts of the Boards of Guardians who administered the poor law system. While their primary aim was to root out fraud and corruption, they were also authorised to clamp down on what was considered to be extravagance at the expense of ratepayers. They pursued this latter duty with such enthusiasm that a Fabian pamphlet published in 1925 described him as an 'uncrowned king of local government'. In 1912 he directed the LCC that fruit, cod-liver oil and extract of malt were not in his view food within the Education (Provision of Meals) Act and that expenditure on such items would therefore be illegal. In 1908 he surcharged Westminster councillors who refused to explain to him why they had refused to accept the lowest tenders on various items. His most celebrated battle was with the Poplar councillors over their decision to pay a minimum wage of £4 (a surcharge which was upheld by the courts, though they were eventually exempted by a Tory government from paying it). The pamphlet concluded that the need to restrict the powers of the District Auditor was 'far more urgent and far more important having regard to the fact that the highest tribunal in the land had set the seal of approval on what the plain man in the street would regard as a disastrous interference by an appointed bureaucrat in the free and spontaneous discretion of elected councillors to carry out their work in their own way (apart from corruption or an attempt to exceed their statutory functions) and responsible only to public opinion and their own constituents'.

Today the powers of the District Auditor have changed, but they have not been restricted. He was last brought to the public notice when a £7,000 surcharge was imposed on the Clay Cross councillors. That was a different political battle where the councillors breached the clear letter of the Housing Finance Act which required them to increase rents. The

Don't be intimidated by the DISTRICT AUDITOR !

issue at present is rather the freedom of councillors to exercise their discretionary powers as they consider appropriate. The Camden councillors were authorised to pay their employees 'such wages as they think fit'. The ILEA threatened with a surcharge should they reduce school meals by 10p, are given a similar discretion to make such charge 'as they think fit'. Camden who are threatened with a further surcharge over their decision to freeze rents in 1978/9 has a statutory discretion as to the level at which rents are fixed.

In all these cases it is an open question whether a court would hold these decisions to be lawful or unlawful. The courts have given themselves the power to interfere with any such exercise of discretion if they consider that no reasonable local authority, taking the correct criteria into account, could have acted in that way. The courts have imposed a special duty on local authorities to protect the interests of their ratepayers, and they must carefully balance the interests of the general ratepayers with those of the other interested group whether it be council tenant, transport user or school child. In 1954 it was held that it was unlawful for Birmingham Council to introduce free fares for OAPs as they were under a responsibility to operate the transport service on 'substantially business lines'. That question has now been reversed by statute.

The courts have always been ambivalent as to the extent to which a local authority can consider wider issues of policy. At one extreme in the Poplar decision (1925) Lord Sumner concluded that he could 'find nothing in the Acts which authorises them' (referring to the democratically elected councillors) 'to be guided by their personal opinions on political, economic or social questions in administering the funds which they derive from levying the rates' while Lord Atkinson castigated them for allowing themselves to be motivated by 'eccentric principles of socialist philanthropy or by a feminist desire to secure the equality of the sexes'. On the other hand, in the Gouriet case (1977) Lord Wilberforce concluded that 'the very fact that decisions are of a type to attract political controversy shows that they are outside the range of discretionary problems which the courts can resolve'.

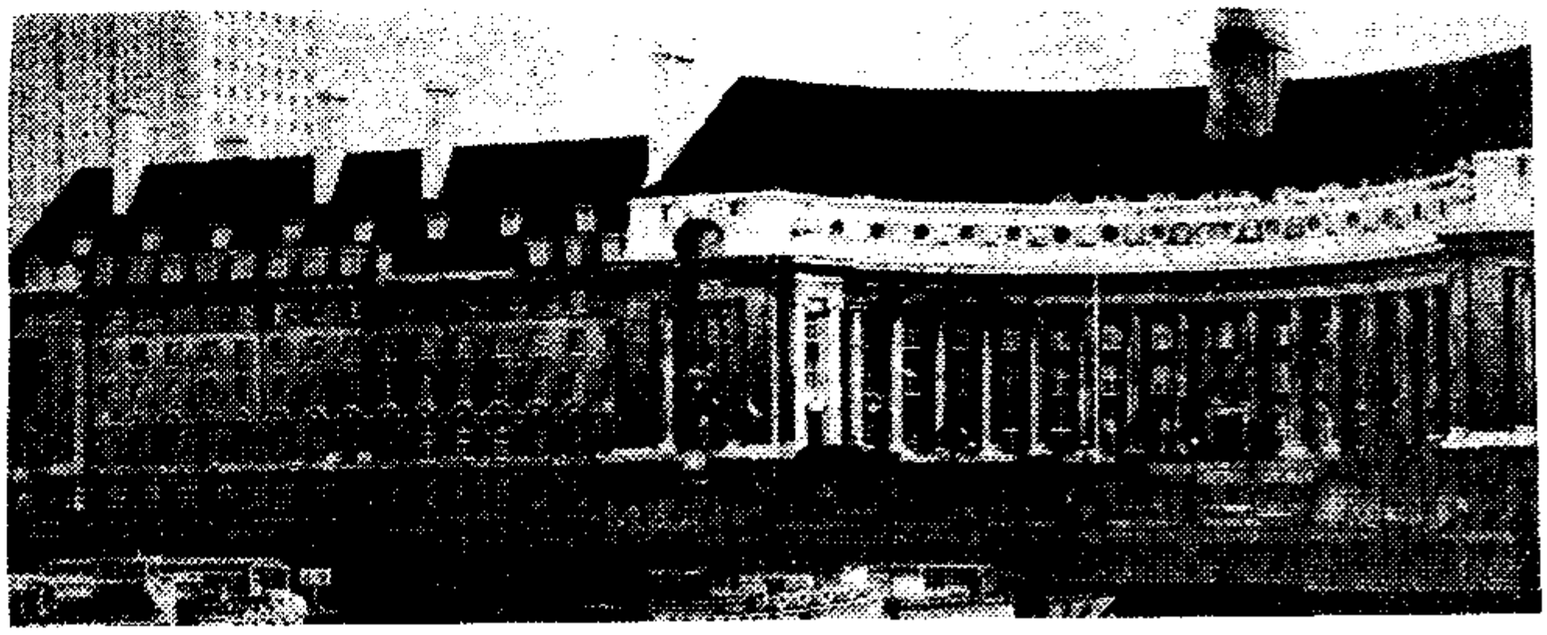
POLITICAL DECISION

Any stand that Labour councils take under the threat of surcharge must be a political decision as much as a legal one. The political issues are whether democratically elected councillors should be placed in a political straight jacket by the District Auditor, and whether councillors who perform their services without reward should face the risk of bankruptcy in performing their duties. No government department is subject to such restraints. Concorde was developed for political reasons with no adequate regard for the commercial returns. The Ministry of Defence through gross negligence has ordered aircraft carriers which are to be put straight onto the scrap heap. The Crown Agents lost millions through property speculations which were totally outside the scope of their duties. These examples of incompetence can be adequately dealt with through administrative action, publicity and the right of the electorate to express their disapproval through the ballot box.

At present it looks as if Labour councils will be fighting the District Auditor on issues around which it should be easy to build up campaigns of public support, and on which there are good legal arguments to justify their actions. Low pay and school meals are popular issues. Camden can justify their decision by the need to settle the strike, which was necessary to enable them to resume the provision of their statutory services. The ILEA can argue not only that they were carrying out an election commitment (a fact which would not of itself justify their decision in law) but that this was an essential element of their policy to increase the uptake of school meals. A court would be embarrassed to find against a council on either issue which had such popular support.

Any lawyer advising on the risk of surcharge is likely to err on the side of caution. Council

Continued next page



The left grows up in Islington

Local papers have recently been announcing a left wing take-over on Islington Council. The real situation is a little more complex. The left of the Labour Group now occupy the officerships of group and most of the chairs of committees. But unfortunately we don't command a council majority.

There is also still only a purely formal relationship with the Local Government Committee and local parties. Nevertheless, the situation is looking better than it has for (literally) years.

The groundswell for constructive change in the wards and local unions is solid and this will solve some at least of the present problems. The process is going to take a little longer than some comrades wish, but to rush into patched-up solutions now in the vital year before council elections would be to ruin many years of building in the party.

In North Islington, the swing to the left in wards and on the GMC was the result of a long process of restoring interest and trust in the local Labour Party. Many new members were recruited and unions urged to affiliate. All this took place as a background to the key political debates in the constituency. Three issues were constant: the need to put forward a radical line on Ireland; opposition by party members to the cuts in council services, which many of our councillors were implementing and proposing; and most importantly, accountability by all members, be they councillor, delegate or MP.

The debate crystallised around selection of a GLC candidate. Steve Bundred represented the new style of North Islington. His campaign moved out of the committee room and into the estates and tackled the problems of racism, women's inequality and unemployment head on; and the community responded by turning out to vote in much higher numbers than before.

The reaction of the old guard was to defect to the social democrats, resulting in the slight shift on the council which gave the council left its chance.

WIDER INVOLVEMENT

However, the momentum for change was still coming up strong from the wards and unions. They had expectations of much wider involvement and an outward-looking party. They did not want officer cliques and expected everyone to respond as delegates, not individuals. This led to changes on the Trades Council and on the Local Government Committee. Both these bodies now are setting up systems to involve members in on-going discussions which will share information and skills and improve decision making. They are also opening up to community groups and other trade unionists who want to raise issues and adopting an outward looking high profile for a change.

It is at about this point that the left realised it had not finished the struggle. In fact, it had hardly begun. For although there was broad agreement on a number of issues, there were very different styles and goals.

The 'tactical' arguments ultimately brought about the beginnings of what will be a valuable tenant/union/party relationship and made comrades fully aware of the immense task they had set themselves as representatives of a community who had waited a long time to make its voice heard. It has also moved the party out into the community.

There will still be a lot of business to get through, but job sharing and a devolving of tasks should help. There is also a lot of new energy being generated.

It is now involved in its first major consultation of the renewing of relationship with the Labour Group. Councillors are providing party members with information on the council's political and economic situation and the parties are discussing this and also what expectations they have for the future, to ensure a meaningful dialogue.

It is going to be a hard year for the council and the party, but it should set the foundations for the wind of change to continue.

Nadine Finch
North Islington CLP

(Continued from previous page)

THE DISTRICT AUDITOR

officials who also face responsibility are naturally cautious in the advice that they give. There is evidence that they do not always word the questions in the right way, or put the case for the councillors in the most favourable light when outside advice is obtained. Michael Mann, Q.C. gave his advice to I.L.E.A. on the basis of an understanding that the officers did not know whether or not a reduction in price would increase the up take. This was incorrect. It was known that a price reduction would increase the up take, but the extent of the increase was unknown.

NOT INEVITABLE

Even if the courts do rule that the decision was unlawful, a surcharge is not inevitable. The court can neither disqualify from office, nor surcharge if satisfied either that the councillor acted reasonably or if they acted in the belief that their actions were authorised in law. In the St. Pancras Borough Council case (1961) the court was prepared to accept that councillors had acted in the belief that their actions were legal even though they had ignored the advice of their Town Clerk. Councillors are bound to consider any advice that is given to them, but they are not bound to accept it if they honestly believe that the issue is an open one. In the worst eventuality a court could rule not only that a councillor had acted unlawfully but also in the knowledge that it was unlawful, and both disqualify and surcharge the councillor. He would, however, almost certainly escape bankruptcy as the court must have regard to his means and his ability to pay, before any surcharge is fixed. In the past the courts have been reluctant to take any draconian step that would affect the councillor's family.

A councillor can only be surcharged if he was 'responsible for incurring or authorising' the illegal expenditure. It would be difficult to conclude that a councillor who abstained was so responsible, but this is an open question. An interesting quandary faces the tories in Camden. The District Auditor is still investigating the effect of the Council's decision to extend the Camden Supplement to the lower paid NALGO officers in July 1979. It is understood that this proposal was passed without any dissent from the Tories. If the District Auditor, as he seems bound to do, refers this aspect to the High Court, he will find it impossible to exclude the Tories from responsibility.

TEST CASES

The threat of surcharge will be ever present unless test cases are fought in the courts, and some attempt is made to clarify this vague area of the law. The spectre of the District Auditor presently haunts every council chamber that considers issues ranging from rents, fares, direct labour organisations, support for community groups to the use of free council newssheets. Council Officials advised Lambeth that they even risked surcharge if they voted to maintain services knowing that Heseltine would penalise them by reducing their block grant. It was only later that this advice was withdrawn.

The threat of surcharge is being used by local ratepayers associations financed by local commerce, to terrorise labour councils into making cuts. The Camden Ratepayers Association has taken this one step further by bringing a novel action against thirty labour councillors seeking to make them personally liable for the effect on the rates of a low rents policy, alleged inefficiencies in the building department, and 'defiance of government' which has resulted in Heseltine withdrawing £26 million of government grant. After a three and a half day hearing, the councillors are awaiting the decision as to whether the action will be struck out as being frivolous and vexatious, on the basis that the ratepayers have no standing to bring the action, and on the argument that the action in any event has no legal merit. If the action is allowed to proceed to trial, every councillor in the country, will risk personally incurring the vast legal costs necessary to defend themselves from action brought by the political minority who are denied power through the ballot box.

Local democracy is facing an unprecedented attack from central government with the eventual possibility of some authorities facing backruptcy. The Lothian Regional Council stand to lose 1/6th of their budget and stand in the front line. In the face of such an onslaught, labour councils must choose the right issues on which to be challenged by the District Auditor. If they fail to fight they will lose all credibility with the electorate. Even if the first skirmishes with him are lost, the law is so unclear that councillors are entitled to argue that they believed their action to be lawful and thereby saving themselves from surcharge and disqualification. The extent of the draconian powers of the District Auditor need to be clearly demonstrated in public, if they are finally to be curtailed.

County Hall News

TUBE PAY... THE STORY

The GLC Labour Group has taken a most unfortunate position on this claim. At the Labour Group meeting on 29th June John McDonnell proposed the following resolution:

"In the light of the failure of London Transport Management to interpret in the present wage negotiations the policies of the Socialist GLC in terms of the maintenance of their employees' living standards and the creation of employment opportunities by reductions in the working week, this Group:

(i) calls upon the Transport Chair to impress upon LT management the GLC's view that the present NUR wage claim should be settled immediately on the basis of an 11% cost of living increase;

(ii) calls for a paper from the Transport Collective reviewing the present relationship between the GLC and London Transport and setting out the options available for providing the GLC with more direct control of the management of LT, particularly with regard to its industrial relations policies;

(iii) calls for a paper from the Staff Committee Labour Group discussing the underlying principles and strategy of a Socialist wages policy for the GLC in the longer term."

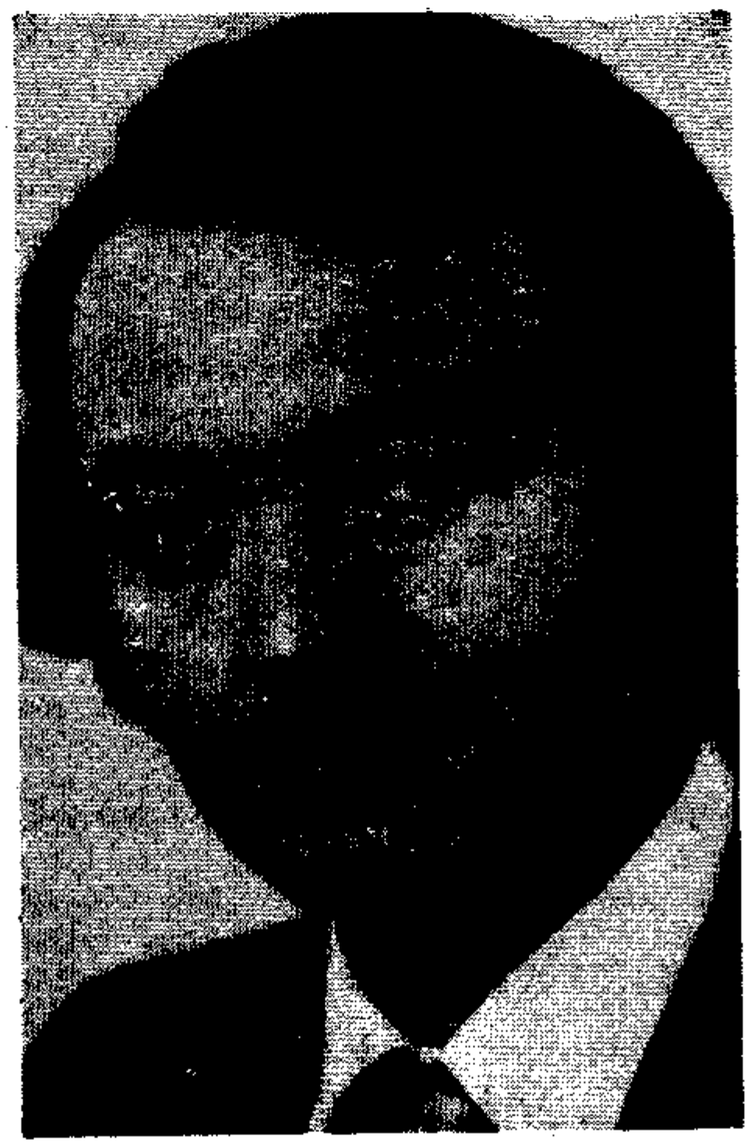
In moving the resolution John said he felt the pay claim for a cost of living increase is a modest, just and fair claim. NUR members on LT comprise some of the lowest paid LT workers, with basic rates for many below £70 per week. John also said that as a Socialist GLC we should not allow a wage deal to be forced upon them which actually reduces their living standards.

In supporting the resolution I quoted the section from the Manifesto where we stated "we emphasise the importance of LT wages and conditions being the leader in the field". I feel this is the Labour Group's chance to show that it means to carry out Manifesto commitments.

The controversial part of the resolution was part (i).

Ken Livingstone in opposing part (i) said that he was against a percentage increase and would prefer a minimum wage to help the low paid. But with the Camden Councillors being threatened with a surcharge for introducing one, he thought it unlikely that the Labour Group could get such a policy through the Council due to surcharge defectors. He felt it was more important to move towards the Manifesto commitment of a 35 hour week. Ken also said it was important that we did not get involved in pay claim negotiations.

Tony Banks said he was not opposed to a settlement in line with inflation but he felt it was not for the Labour Group to get involved in negotiations. These then were the arguments used against the resolution.



KEN LIVINGSTONE writes on the NUR claim on back page.

The argument about percentage increase was irrelevant because at the moment it is a percentage increase that is being offered. I personally am opposed to percentage increases and want more help given to the low paid – but nobody moved an amendment to this effect. We need to settle this claim now and then think about future claims and what we do as a Labour GLC for the low paid.

I also feel that it is ridiculous to say that the Labour GLC should not become involved in wage negotiations. When the miners went on strike in 1972 and 1974, we all knew they were taking on the Tory Government and not only the NCB. If you work for a state-owned industry, the final arbiter is the government. It is the same if you work for London Transport – the final arbiter is the GLC. Dave Wetzel has appeared on television saying that if the tube workers go on strike he will join them on the picket line. This is nonsense coming from someone who voted against the GLC getting involved. I don't think the strikers would appreciate Dave's support on the picket line!

There was justified anger among members of the Labour Group at the attacks made by Syd Weighell against the new GLC leadership. There is suspicion that Weighell is using the dispute as part of a political campaign against the Left but those in the Labour Group who are swayed by their dislike of Weighell's methods and politics into opposing a cost of living settlement are in fact playing right into his hands.

At the Labour Group meeting Mike Ward proposed that part (i) of the resolution be deleted. This amendment was carried by 21 votes to 8. I observed how the following people voted:

For Amendment: Ken Livingstone, Mike Ward, Tony Banks, Dave Wetzel, Frances Morrell, Deirdre Wood, Peter Dawe, Simon Turney.

Against Amendment: John McDonnell, Bryn Davies, Valerie Wise, Paul Moore, Lesley Hammond, Peter Pitt, Steve Bundred, Andy Harris.

Abstentions: Gladys Dimson, Ed Gouge.

It is imperative that the Labour Group sees its error and urges LT to increase the offer to the tube workers so as to prevent a strike. Pressure needs applying to the Labour Group urgently.

Other than the issue we have to consider now, namely that as socialists we cannot allow these workers to suffer a further cut in living standards, there is also a more general political issue at stake. We have said from the beginning that our policies would lead us into confrontation with the Tory Government, which we can only win on the basis of mass support. If we fail to support workers seeking to protect their living standards, how can we expect their support when that battle occurs?

Valerie Wise
(GLC Member for Battersea South)

STOP PRESS:
It now appears that progress is being made on the negotiations with LT and that a settlement should be reached.



WEIGHELL

As we go to press, negotiations are under way to settle the transport workers' dispute. Our GLC leaders seem to have responded to the pressure which has come from the labour movement rank and file to recognise the legitimacy of the NUR's claim.

Before this development, we received an article from Ian Williams of the NUR Executive, which – for the record – we are pleased to publish. Valerie Wise comments on the conflict as seen from the standpoint of a member of the GLC Labour Group.

The NUR isn't Weighell's

There is a prevalent idea in the Labour Movement, that the NUR is Sid Weighall's personal right-wing satrapy, and nowhere was this more disastrously shown than in Ken Livingstone's intemperate remarks on the subject of the forthcoming strike on London Underground.

Of course Sid often behaves as if this were the case, but that is no reason for the Leader of the GLC to pander to his dreams on the subject. As a member of the NUR's National Executive, I must hasten to point out that it is we alone who have the power to call a dispute of the NUR, that it was a unanimous decision to stop the Underground on the 20th of July, and that the decision was not one prompted by any malice of Sid Weighall against the Left.

I am no apologist for Sid Weighall – on the contrary I am one of his more vociferous opponents on many platforms, as my colleagues in the NUR Broad Left would, I hope, testify, and so it is distressing for me to see Ken Livingstone's reported remarks against our attempts to break Thatcher's public pay restraints.

Let us put it in context. The NUR has had to settle for lower than inflation pay increases in several of the companies that we negotiate for, such as National Carriers, because of the low rate of settlements achieved generally in the road transport industry, by, among others the T&GWU. But the two places where we have the strength to make a determined stand are naturally British Rail where we have recently rejected a 7% offer – and London Underground where we had rejected a similar offer from the Tories when Dave Wetzel's busmen had accepted it!

Because of the peculiar 'metropolitan-centred' nature of our media and power structure – especially noticeable to a Merseysider like myself – an Underground strike will cause the Government more sleepless nights than if *every* provincial were walking to whatever little work is available to us, and so not only do our LTE members have the power to win for themselves, they are able to provide a lever for the pay of our other members to at least equal the rate of inflation.

FRUSTRATION

In the immediate context of the GLC and LTE, Sid Weighall acerbically but accurately expressed the frustrations of our union. The NUR did spend some £20,000 on the GLC elections. Every NUR member in the GLC got a letter from the Union telling him that his livelihood and the future of public transport in London depended upon the return of a Labour GLC. Hundreds of thousands of commuters were given NUR leaflets with the same message. In all we can claim a fair share of credit for Labour's reoccupation of County Hall, and indeed have had a letter of thanks from Ken himself. *BUT* we also expected to benefit from the idealism and militancy of the new leadership and looked forward to more constructive talks on the pay claim than previously. What we *have* had is a letter from the LTE offering a paltry 8.5% conditional upon a whole list of productivity concessions which had not been mentioned in negotiations until then! These included: the extension of one-man operation; elimination of night-cleaners or station foremen's jobs; and introduction of split shifts for supervisors – all in all, unacceptable job losses. These were the obvious production of the LTE management, so we asked for direct talks with the Labour leadership, and were offered instead a sort of 'round-table' discussion with LTE management – precisely the group which we wished to isolate – and all the other unions involved.

As far as I personally am concerned, this is more a test of whether the elected councillors or the bureaucrats of LTE are in charge, than a test of strength between left-wing and an allegedly right-wing NUR. The 'right-wingness' of the NUR can no longer be taken for granted, as our strike call last year on May 14th demonstrates and as our opposition at our recent conference to the 50/25/25 formula for the electoral college testifies. But unless Ken Livingstone reconsiders his position in the light of the de facto Tory pay policy, many of us will be forced to question whether we can take for granted *HIS* leftness. There is still time for us to bypass the LTE management and jointly defy the Government by paying London's Underground workers the increase necessary to maintain their living standards. Let's do it!

Ian Williams
NUR National Executive
(in a personal capacity)



BRIEFING supporters at the Cardiff unemployment demonstration

Labour Party Wakes Up

At first glance Southall CLP seems an unlikely candidate for the list of Thatcher's 'rotten boroughs'. In May 1979 it was one of only two southern constituencies to register a swing to Labour and 18 of its 26 councillors are Labour.

Yet in many ways it is this electoral success that has contributed to the moribund state that the constituency was in. Sitting councillors unlikely to fail renomination drifted further from the party and we had as our representatives a few people whose commitment to the labour movement was zero and who would have quite happily stood for whatever party seemed likely to win. The activity of the constituency was just about non-existent. One ward with three sitting councillors had 33 members for many years and membership of a division that recorded 16,700 Labour votes in May 1981 was always less than 500 and averaged at about 50 members per ward. Until 1980 we were without even the most basic party premises for five years as we had finally withdrawn from the old Trades and Labour Club that operated a rigid colour bar. The strong streak of racism that taints the Labour Party, even in areas like Southall, showed itself during the furore over our leaving the club which has contributed to the credibility gap between party and community. Numerous other examples, such as the Labour-controlled council refusing to change the borough bank account from Barclays, have encouraged the fringe groups who claim that Labour may say one thing but usually does another.

Beneath the surface of an apparently strong constituency party we had a typical sterile product of the Wilson/Callaghan years. A gradual shift towards becoming an election machine – and an undisguised greed for the spoils of power without consideration of the voters – are all too typical phenomena of the Labour Party and were reflected in Southall. We grew out of touch with anything beyond our own petty and avaricious power plays and seemed to come to life only on occasions such as the frantic lobbying by potential Mayors who longed for the good sound socialism of a chauffeured Daimler and lusted after the deadweight of debased ironmongery round the neck that pulls the wearers head down to a suitably servile angle when meeting the Chamber of Commerce.

OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY

Although there have been individual villains and backstairs crawlers it would be wrong to blame the rottenness on just them. What squeezed the life out of Southall CLP was the crushing leadenness of a party out of touch with reality or its roots.

The creep's anthem of 'let's paper over the cracks and attack the real enemy' was always heard when someone suggested that it may just be inappropriate to have an admitted racist as a Labour councillor or dared to suggest that a little democracy should be brought into the party.

Up to now many people will recognise similarities between Southall and a multitude of safe Labour seats. There's nothing special or extraordinary about the decline and it mirrored the sort of Labour Party whose commitment to democracy was characterised by rewriting our manifesto in contempt of Conference and the NEC.

It was the sort of party which defended Reg Prentice strenuously against the hordes of bedsitter Trotskyists who threatened this great and good ornament of this movement of ours. What is interesting about Southall is that what happened next owed little or nothing to an influx of activists and happened without any formations of pressure groups or radical caucuses, secret meetings or hit lists. What happened in Southall was that even we got infected by the sheer excitement of the genuine democratic possibilities opened up by the Wembley conference decision and by the debate about the deputy leadership. The dawning realisation that democratic socialism wasn't just an empty catch phrase changed the face of this constituency.

The GLC elections were a revelation to many of us. Over the years we had fallen into the habit of assuming that socialist ideals were impossible dreams that would never come true and which very few actually wished would come true. Like Clause IV we felt a sentimental attachment to what we considered an unreachable goal.

The presentation of Labour as Toryism with a more human face was not confined to Southall but perhaps we were more guilty than most. Wilson damaged the party more with his 'pragmatism' than ever Tony Benn could.

Labour's GLC manifesto was an article of socialist faith and directly challenged Tories and backsliding Gaitskellites alike to do their worst.

In Southall the victory finally finished off the school of thought that urged secret socialism behind a bland neo-conservative face as the only alternative to annihilation at the polls.

UPSWING IN RECRUITMENT

The combined effects of this campaign and the wider movement to democratise the party has resulted in the biggest upswing in recruitment anyone can remember. Last month one ward alone heard 112 applications for membership and this is reflected across nearly the whole division. Increased participation in the party has led to the failure of three sitting councillors to gain the previously automatic renomination, and the longest list of candidates for the '82 elections since the constituency was created shows the determination of the long silent rank and file to pull this party up by its bootstraps and get at the Tories. At last we hear political discussion at wards and the GC and we have finally set out to rebuild the bridges between the party and the ethnic community. In years gone by we had demanded their vote at elections and ignored them outside. This policy is no longer possible or acceptable.

I am the first to admit that these few changes won't herald the socialist millenium in Southall. We still have much to do. Trade union links must be forged and the burst of recruitment has to be maintained and the new members involved as widely as possible in the life of the constituency. The accountability of all our elected representatives must never be taken for granted but demanded and the mechanisms for this must be strengthened. We must prove to the ethnic community that we mean more than mere words and, on a wider scale, we must start to do our bit for the all-important process of party democratisation.

If there is a lesson to be learnt from Southall it is that when a system is as rotten and corrupting as Wilson/Callaghan labourism was then even the most active will be frustrated. A fairly inactive constituency party can be suffocated.

LIFEBLOOD

By contrast with representative elitism the accountability that is loudly declaimed as the ruin of the party is in fact its lifeblood. The transfusion of Wembley is bringing us to life, not killing us. There are no secret societies in Southall and those who have reason to regret the changes that have occurred have no target to aim their abuse at except for the old system that they represented and were responsible for. No democratic socialist has anything to fear from the changes happening in the party but the Prentices have and the experience of getting shot of them is like a breath of fresh air to a party that has been half asleep for far too long.

Southall CLP has benefited from a fall out from the struggles for democracy waged by others in the party. As we come blinking into the daylight we must make our own contribution and not rely on the efforts of a few. If even these small changes can come about in Southall then there really is a real hope for a democratic socialist Labour Party.

Stephen Pound
Southall Labour Party

Southall

Asians Defend Their Streets

On Friday 3rd July 1981, Southall was invaded by Skinheads. People saw Skinheads marching on The Broadway while they were doing their shopping. Skinheads smashed the shop fronts and attacked the shop assistant. Many passing by were harassed. Police were informed of the incident. In the meantime Asian people were panicking as the news went around. Asian youth gathered and when the Skinheads were challenged by the youth, they ran towards the pub and hid there. They were holding their concert there. The police arrived at the scene about 45 minutes late. Community people informed the police that trouble makers were in the pub and they offered to assist to identify the Skinheads who smashed the windows. The police completely refused to accept this offer.

The Skinheads were given full police protection. Police started to use their old tactics to push the Asian youth and tried to use force to disperse. This was not a new experience. People have faced the police brutality in 1979 when Blair Peach was murdered. Asian youth did retaliate. They threw the bricks but police used the shields and protected the Skinheads. But the police failed to protect the Asian youth from the attack when Skinheads were throwing those bricks back.

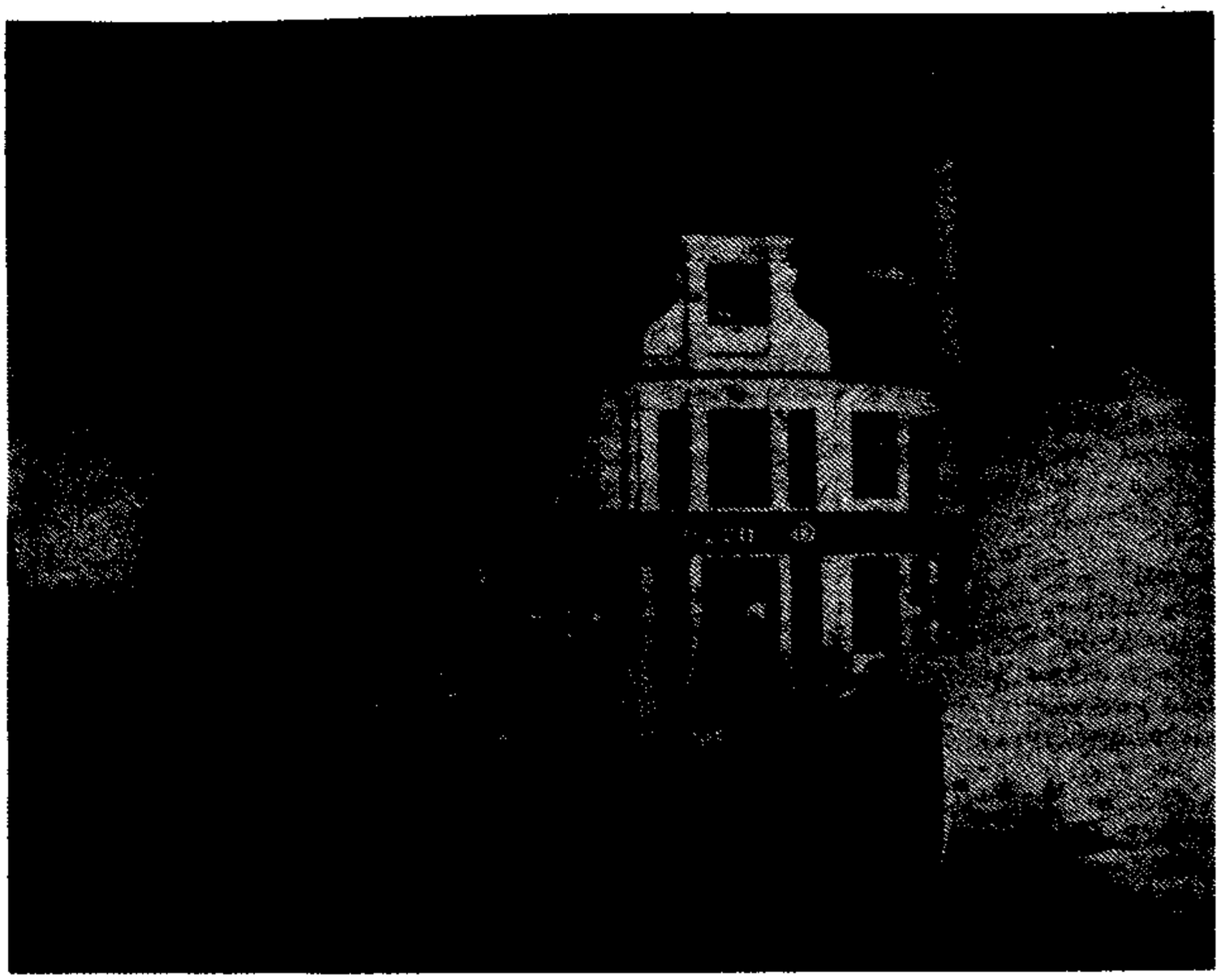
DEFEND THEMSELVES

I am not advocating any violence and do not support any kind of violence. But it is not reasonable to say that Asian people should not defend themselves when they are attacked. Those Skinheads came from outside and attacked the local residents, and smashed the shops. What should the local residents do?

Unemployment is rising day by day. When politicians use racial terms very often and give them respectability then you will get racial tension. Many politicians and media give more and more respect to racist elements and that is the reason incidents like those in Southall normally happen. It is more serious when the police do not admit the racial nature of the attacks.

On the weekend many questions were unanswered. Police showed complete ignorance of the situation. Now the local residents are not accepting the police version but they ask the questions:

1. Why did the police intelligence network not know about the organised arrival of 400 Skinheads from all parts of London in several coach loads into Southall?
2. Police had admitted that they had concentrated their presence in Greenford when it was only about a mile away from Southall. Why did it take about 45 minutes to come to the scene of the trouble which was only a few hundred yards away from Southall police station?
3. Why did the police not try to arrest the Skinheads and send them away to avoid further serious disturbances?
4. There are also strong feelings amongst the community that the pub was definitely set on fire by the Skinheads while they were leaving.



Tension in Southall

COMFORT

On Saturday 4th July, Ken Livingstone with Cllr. Paul Boateng visited Southall. Their visit was arranged well before the incident. Their presence in the area gave a little comfort to the Asian people. When both leaders addressed about 500 people, mostly the youth after such a serious matter, the people were given a full assurance that the GLC would support the community. They also asked for unity. There was a clear division amongst the young and old leadership, but that can be cleared up. But people felt a little uneasy when the local MP failed to give any assurance and said no word at all at the meeting.

Southall was injured on Friday night but was given comfort by these two young leaders. It is a general feeling amongst the public that they will play a good role for the good future of ethnic minorities in this country. If they stick to their principles the people will support them.

In the end I feel it is another organised attack on the black people and the police had completely failed to protect the black people. People of Southall should be grateful to those young people who saved Southall. The police should also be thankful to those who protected the lives of the people and businesses in the town, rather than charging them.

I hope that the whole nation will awake after this incident and should realise what these thugs are doing. The Labour Party should come out forcefully and play a role to protect the interests and lives of ethnic minorities in this country.

Virendra Sharma
Southall Labour Party
and Officer of National Association for
Asian Youth

The Labour Party and Ireland

Since last October a spate of hunger strikes have focussed the world's attention on Northern Ireland (N.I.). The election of Bobby Sands to Westminster, his subsequent death and those of Francis Hughes, Ray McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, and more recently Joe McDonnell, each followed by intense rioting, have undone years of carefully planned British propaganda to represent N.I. as a normal democratic part of the UK, and the IRA and INLA as a handful of lunatic terrorists with no popular support. This lie has been further undermined by the wholesale rejection of 'moderate' politicians such as Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin. The wave of support for the prisoners in the South has resulted in the nomination of two of them to the Dail (Irish Parliament) as well as upsetting the elections to the extent of creating what can only be described as a 'hung Parliament'.

THATCHER REAPS CALLAGHAN'S "BITTER ORANGE" FRUIT

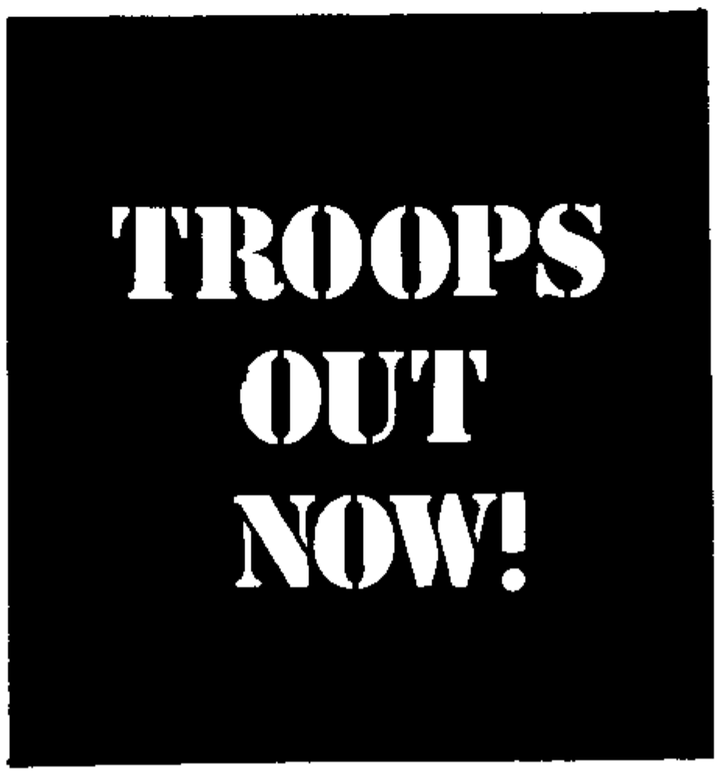
Fortunately for the Labour Party these events have occured during a Tory administration, allowing the very architects of present British policy in Ireland – Merlyn Rees and Jim Callaghan – to disown their own policies. Suddenly the 'British guarantee' is no longer a great stumbling block and can be jettisoned with the same nonchalance as that with which the leadership have disregarded manifesto promises. Jim Callaghan's elaborate scheme for setting up an independent N.I. is merely a device to rid Britain of an embarrassing problem while at the same time continuing to maintain the reason for the problem: the statelet of N.I.

OLD LEOPARDS DO NOT CHANGE THEIR SPOTS

The true nature of the N.I. statelet was exposed to the world in 1969. A brutally repressive police state where the gerrymandering of constituency boundaries and the existence of property voting ensured that no true democracy could exist. The spectacle of a 'British' police force beating peaceful civil rights demonstrators off the streets gave rise for concern, but it was not until the people of the Bogside successfully defeated the repressive sectarian RUC with petrol bombs that the then Home Secretary, Jim Callaghan, saw fit to send in troops, ostensibly to protect the nationalist population, but in fact to maintain the status quo. At a cabinet meeting in August 1969 Callaghan unequivocally stated the British position, '. . . to work through the Protestant Government. The Protestants are in the majority and we can't afford to alienate them.' The old leopard Callaghan has not changed his spots in the last twelve years; his token gesture towards breaking with bipartisanship is no more than resurrecting the same Orange state that so irrevocably floundered amid the rocks and bottles of the Bogside in 1969.

VAGUE, MEANINGLESS WORDS

Neither has the report by the Labour Party's N.I. study group addressed itself to the problem; the long-term policy of



reunification through 'consent and agreement' is no more than an empty gesture. How is it proposed that 'consent and agreement' will be achieved? Since 1969 there has been much talk (and nothing more than talk) within the Labour Party for democratisation in N.I. Yet after nearly a decade of direct rule the wards of Derry are still gerrymandered in such a way that the two-thirds nationalist majority of the population only returns 8 councillors to the Unionists' 12. Neither is it by accident that the disenfranchised constituency of Fermanagh-South Tyrone is numerically the largest constituency in Westminster. Indeed, the very state of N.I. is gerrymandered; partitioned from the rest of the island in 1920 against the expressed wishes of the Irish people (in 1919 73 out of 105 Irish constituencies voted for independence). N.I. was created in order to give the Unionist elite power in perpetuity – in the words of the late Prime Minister of N.I., Lord Brookborough: 'A Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

GUERRILLA STRUGGLE

In the absence of an effective democratic process, is it any wonder that a sizeable proportion of the repressed population resort to armed resistance and, as the recent Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election has proved, the vast majority of that population support them? A guerrilla war of national liberation is taking place in Ireland; the guerrillas have the support of the mass of the nationalist population and their cause is justified by the repressive undemocratic nature of the N.I. statelet, set up against the majority wishes of the Irish people. Any future Labour Party policy on N.I. must be viewed in the light of this reality. The role of all socialists is to oppose imperialism and support liberation struggles everywhere. All attempts to retain control of N.I. by vague references to 'consent and agreement' must be resisted as must be all attempts to resurrect a quasi-independent Orange state. Immediate withdrawal is the only moral stand to take, the only socialist stand to take.

T. O'Maitiu

A NEW PUBLICATION

THE H BLOCKS:
An Indictment of British Prison Policy in the North of Ireland

This new booklet from Information on Ireland is a short, very readable account of the issues involved in the H Blocks hunger strike. It was produced in response to the many requests for information we have received, since the tragic death of Bobby Sands MP, from British people anxious to understand the prison conflict.

The H Blocks: An Indictment of British Prison Policy in the North of Ireland traces the history of the prison protest from its roots in changes in British strategy way back in the early seventies through to the death of Bobby Sands, which awoke worldwide concern.

It takes up key issues such as what kind of young people now fill the prisons of the North of Ireland, and presents the overwhelming evidence that most are only in prison because of the political situation. It explains the prisoners' motivation for their protests, and the long Irish tradition of prison struggle that lies behind them. It explains that the prisoners' demands can be met through prison reform, and that it is the government's not-an-inch stance that is preventing a resolution of the crisis.

The booklet also contains a wealth of basic information on the prisoners, the prison system and the emergency legislation, presented in a clear way. It will be a useful source of reference for activists.

It is very well designed and is illustrated with a series of new full-page graphics.

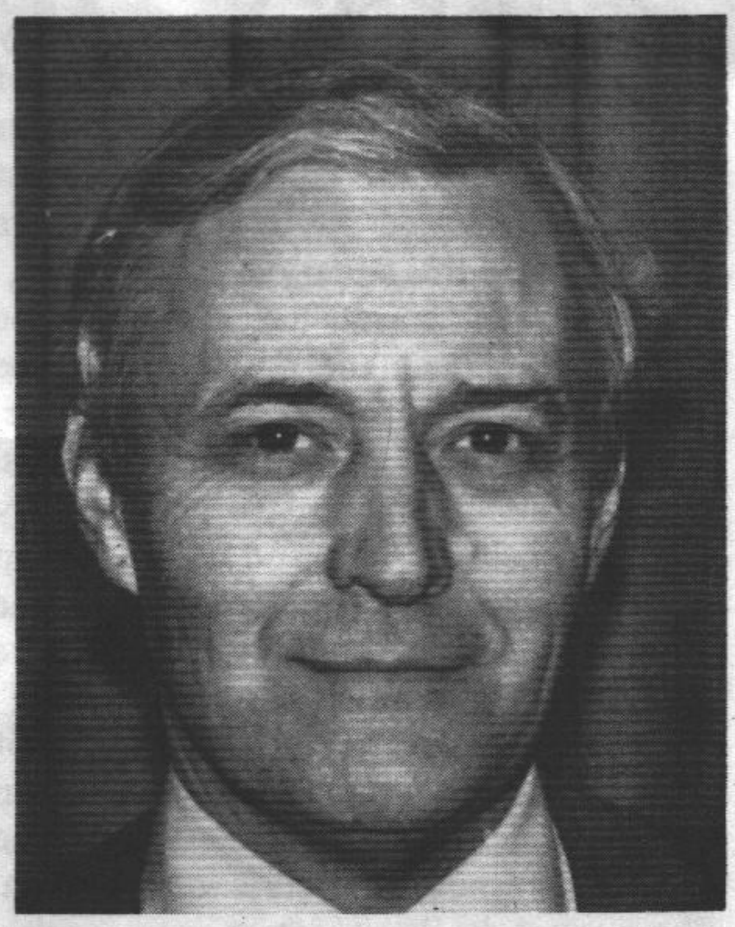
The H Blocks: An Indictment of British Prison Policy in the North of Ireland is available by post from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W14 8ST. One copy costs 40p plus 15p p&p (50p p&p overseas), 10 copies cost £2.70 plus 80p p&p (£1.80 p&p Europe, £3.80 p&p elsewhere). Make cheques/POs payable to Information on Ireland.

BENN CAN WIN

Nigel Williamson
Deputy Leadership Campaign Committee

Despite some setbacks (such as Gormley's manoeuvres in the NUM) the deputy leadership campaign continues to grow from strength to strength. Tony Benn is picking up strong support in all three sections of the electoral college which has his opponents seriously worried. Smokescreens, like the fuss about the financing of the campaign, are created in an attempt to obscure the policies on which the campaign is based. When that fails, deliberate distortion and lies are resorted to, like Silkin's suggestion that Benn is a proponent of incomes policy.

But the five central planks of the campaign, FULL EMPLOYMENT, EXPANSION OF PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES, CIVIL LIBERTIES, WITHDRAWAL FROM THE E.E.C. AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, cannot be obscured and continue to rally enormous support. Over 30 MPs have now agreed to nominate Benn, who can now hope to pick up at least one third of the PLP. Many will be in the vulnerable position of facing re-selection in the near future in the knowledge that their constituencies are overwhelmingly pro-Benn.



As expected, constituency support is immense, and many London CLPs have already nominated Benn. Secretaries should note, however, that all nominations must be accompanied by the candidate's written consent to nomination. This can be obtained by writing to Tony Benn, c/o House of Commons, London SW1.

In the trade unions, too, Benn is making big inroads. The feeling of the recent T&GWU Biennial Delegate Conference was so strongly in favour that it must now be extremely likely that their 1¼ million votes will be cast for Benn right from the first ballot. However, the biggest victories are for the policies on which the campaign is based. USDAW, ISTC and COHSE have adopted policies of unilateral nuclear disarmament, and the ISTC and GMWU have now committed themselves to withdrawal from the EEC. These are major victories and it must be highly probable now that unilateral nuclear disarmament can be carried at this year's Conference on the two-thirds card vote necessary to ensure that it is included in the next manifesto.

Please let us know if your constituency is nominating Tony Benn. Financial contributions to the campaign can be sent to the Rank and File Mobilising Committee Deputy Leadership Campaign Fund, c/o 14 Meon Court, Rye Crescent, Orpington, Kent.

S.E. REGION T.U.C. CONFERENCE ON ALTERNATIVE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Martine John
Wood Green CLP

The conference on Alternative Industrial Strategy at Congress House on 20th June, addressed by Clive Jenkins and Eric Heffer, enthusiastically welcomed the plans to remedy the problems of the South-East, through the Benn-backed TUC Alternative Economic Strategy.

In his speech Clive Jenkins talked about the vast sums of money from pension funds that go to build office blocks abroad, and finance research in West Germany. He remarked that although unemployment is up by 89% in London and the South-East in this last year, it is up by 92% in England as a whole in the same period, and that we had not yet seen high unemployment as experienced in other regions. Unemployment in the S.E. will more than double in the next two years, he prophesied, and called for the next Labour Government to make the 35-hour week and five weeks' holiday compulsory.

Ray Allen and Nick Sharman detailed the particular problems facing the S.E. – the unequal distribution of unemployment with extremely high levels in coastal towns and inner-city areas like East London. Women and blacks face particular difficulties finding any sort of work. The past two years, and particularly the last year, have shown an incredible slump in manufacturing employment in the whole of the region, combined with a decline in office and service jobs.

Eric Heffer discussed the origins of monetarism in this country, and then went on to declare the need for National and Local Enterprise Boards with worker and community



control as set out in the Strategy, and already seen in GLC Councillor Michael Ward's plans for a London Enterprise Board.

Among the many excellent contributions from the delegates, the conference's overwhelming support for Tony Benn was perhaps best summed up by Frank O'Brien of Brent Trades Council. Before a silent, enrapt audience, in rich Irish tones, he made a powerful speech proclaiming the need for the right Labour Government to carry these policies through, which was his reason for supporting Tony Benn's campaign for the deputy leadership. This was met with enthusiastic applause.

In his detailed and constructive summing-up of the issues raised, Jack Dromey added that Britain put more money than any other country excepting the USA, into countries of non-unionised labour, i.e. Chile, and that Government intervention in industry in Britain is lower than in any other country.

This encouraging conference showed how a strategy of increased public investment and industrial development, the right manpower and financial policies, coupled with good planning and extensive industrial democracy, if led by a strong Labour Government, could bring about a period of greater prosperity in the South-East and Britain as a whole.

A SOCIALIST POLICY FOR THE ARTS

The reaction from the Establishment and its right-wing press to the discussion paper on future GLC arts policy has been predictable, ill-informed, abusive and hypocritical. The call from the Tory Arts Minister to keep politics out of the arts is a case in point. Decisions to appoint members of the Arts Council and determine its budget are made by him and clearly reflect Tory ideology.

The way the Arts Council then spends its pathetically small grant becomes a reflection of the values of those ministerially appointed members and all the time politics are involved as they are inevitably involved in all social decisions.

The objective of a Socialist authority is first to recognise this fact and then to ensure that arts policies are taken as an integral part of the wider social policies being pursued by the Council. In our discussion paper we have expressed a wish to give greater priority to arts policies which recognise:

1. the need for community involvement of professional performers;
2. the unemployment crisis in London;
3. the need for closer links with the ILEA and Borough Councils;
4. the multi-ethnic nature of London's culture.

There are many ways to serve these priorities and the following list is by no means exhaustive:

1. seek involvement of communities through encouragement of street theatre and entertainment in parks; attachment of performers and companies to housing estates and identifiable communities; arts activities in schools and factories;
2. organise far more of our own arts events rather than act as an agency for the disbursement of funds. As an example, the organisation of a Londoner's Festival for May Day 1982, etc.;
3. give less emphasis to capital expenditure and more to the revenue side, particularly in respect of the innovative arts;
4. seek discussion with the performing unions and the Independent Theatre Council on the role and funding of theatre co-operatives;
5. review all currently owned theatre freeholds by the GLC and seekways to extend this public involvement;
6. make a study of possible ticket allocations to schools, working clubs, pensioners and tenants associations, etc. in order to secure their greater involvement in arts activities;
7. recognise the need to encourage and greatly expand the ethnic arts in London together with jazz, rock and popular music.

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

It should be the objective of the GLC to fund London's arts activities across the spectrum and from the local community group through to the great centres of excellence.

However, it is a sad fact that probably a majority of Londoners have never set foot inside those halls which their rates have helped to build and sustain. It must be the intention of the GLC to do all we can to change this situation.

Centres of excellence must not be allowed to remain the preserve of those who by good fortune or privilege, recognise the true value of such facilities. It would be complacent to state merely that such centres exist and all are free to use them and not recognise that if people are economically disadvantaged they are also inevitably culturally disadvantaged.

London centres of excellence are not simply there for the advantaged citizen and tourists. They must represent the highest but not in a state of isolation. They must be based on a mass understanding of their value and this will only be achieved by far more arts activities at the community level where appreciation must be created and nurtured.

The London GLC is attempting to encourage the widest possible debate on the arts in London and in order to do this we need the maximum involvement of the labour movement. It would be helpful if 'Briefing' supporters could initiate discussions in Branches and General Committees about the GLC's future arts policy.

Tony Banks
Tooting Constituency Labour Party

This article was written before Labour's plans to terminate further payment to the Royal Opera House Building Fund were defeated by one vote at the GLC meeting on 7th July, as a result of the following Labour abstentions:

M. Garside	*N. Davis*
Y. Sieve	*J. Brannigan*
A. Bramall	*T. Judge*
A Sofer	*P. Rossi*
M. Morgan	

As a result, grants to a wide range of community-based arts organisations will either be drastically cut or dropped altogether.



Tony Banks (centre of picture)

SOLDIERS' CHARTER

Briefing has been asked to publish the following text for a leaflet seeking support for trade union rights for the forces: 'Soldiers' Charter '81.

We are initiating this Soldiers' Charter because of our concern at the lack of representation for Service Personnel. This is an issue which has long been neglected and we hope to stimulate discussion and debate on the subject by 'serving' and ex-service personnel, as well as political organisations and the labour movement as a whole. The basic Human Rights continually denied to Service people must be brought to the attention of the general public. A steady stream of cases in the past few years has made it obvious that Service people are not informed nor have easy access, in fact are actively discouraged from seeking information about their present limited 'rights'. The Armed Forces Acts are, we feel, so out of date that it is time to bring them, and the predicament of the rank and file soldier, out of the 18th and into the 20th century.

1. **We demand the absolute right for all Service Personnel to join and participate in a trade union.**
2. **It should be at Company, or equivalent, level that they must have representatives.**
3. **All representatives must have immediate access to the Officer Commanding.**
4. **The union must have freedom of speech.**
5. **The union must be allowed to affiliate to the TUC.**
6. **Representatives must have the right to work for the union without fear of prejudice from senior ranks.**
7. **Representatives must have the right to call union meetings within working time.**
8. **Military law must be brought more into line with civilian criminal law.**
9. **People facing military disciplinary action must be allowed representation by a union official.**
10. **Service personnel must have the right to join any political party.**

VOTING RECORDS:

ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

We understand that some Labour MPs have objected to the publication of their voting records on certain issues in the last *London Labour Briefing*.

Their objections are largely based upon the protestation that they were merely voting in line with policy laid down by a Labour Government which often barely had a workable majority. Putting aside the fact that if their votes were so crucial they should not have allowed the Cabinet to railroad them into supporting policies which were in direct defiance of the rest of the labour movement, it is certainly true that recorded votes in PLP meetings on these issues would give a clearer picture than the 'Hansard' records, which are at present all we have to go on.

But at the moment PLP meetings are nothing more than a farce. Backbench MPs play no role in policy formation, which is exclusively the preserve of the Front Bench, and votes are scarcely ever taken. In the last Labour Government the late Tom Litterick said that he 'watched "Labour" policy emerging, as if by magic, at the despatch box every Thursday. Sometimes it actually was Labour policy, but whether it was or not, the PLP would be told every Thursday evening what 'Labour ' policy would be in the following week and it was clear that we were expected to vote for it'.

PROPER CONSULTATION

Given that, those who object to publishing 'Hansard' voting records could make their case more credible by supporting reforms of the PLP which would allow proper consultation between the PLP, the Front Bench and the NEC, for recorded votes in PLP meetings, and which would make Conference policy binding on the PLP.

However, they don't. When Willie McKelvey and Ernie Ross recently moved such reforms at a meeting of the PLP, only six MPs were in favour! The truth is that they are fundamentally opposed to accountability in any form.

Until such time as these MPs support reform of the PLP, their protests that reprinting voting records from 'Hansard' is somehow 'unfair' are both cynical and hollow, and we will continue to publish voting records as a crucial instrument in ensuring the accountability of Labour MPs to the party they are privileged to represent.

Already we are compiling a further set of voting records on relevant issues of recent months. Highly interesting and revealing votes have taken place on the Tory Defence Estimates (20/5/81), Jo Richardson's Abortion Facilities Bill (1/7/81) and the renewal of the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act (2/7/81). Most interesting of all will be MPs' recorded votes in this autumn's electoral college deputy leadership election.

If you feel that there has been an issue where voting records would be of use to Labour activists in London, let us know and we will do the necessary research.

Nigel Williamson
Orpington CLP

AN APPEAL TO OUR READERS AND SELLERS:

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WHAT'S ON

Chile Solidarity + El Salvador Solidarity Campaigns: Social Evening
Friday July 24th 7.30 p.m.
Carlton Community Centre, Granville Rd. N.W.6. Music, bar, food.
Tickets: £2 (£1 unwaged)

Labour Committee on Ireland: planning meeting for South London activists 6.30 p.m. County Hall (check rm. no. in entrance lobby).
Thursday July 23rd.

'Policing the Capital'
July 22nd. 7.45 p.m.
Clapham Community Project, Venn St, S.W.4.
Further info.: ring Mark K. Sealey: 326-0983 (h); 272-7973 (w).

Next BRIEFING E.B.: County Hall, 6.30 p.m. Friday Aug. 28th.

'TARGET '82': County Hall Sep. 15th. 7.30 p.m.

Boiling point in Wood Green

Bernie Grant (Haringey Councillor)
Narendra Makanji (Wood Green LP)
Jeremy Corbyn (Haringey Councillor)

Pent-up frustration amongst youth in Wood Green and other parts of Haringey reached boiling point on July 7th.

Large numbers of police were drafted into the area to protect the most expensive stores in Wood Green 'Shopping City' and High Road from hundreds of youth.

The problems faced by people in Haringey are not very different from other parts of London.

Unemployment in the Borough is already at the levels of the thirties; nearly 12,000 are out of work, including most of last summer's school leavers.

As the schools close down for the summer nearly 1,000 more will be joining the dole queue. The outlook for school leavers in Haringey, in common with other parts of London and the big cities, is grim.

Training schemes are hard to get on, but with no job at the end of it are of very little benefit, and the long-term prospects of employment are no better than the immediate crisis.

Relationships between the police and the community in Haringey have never been good. Memories of police protection of the fascists in 1977 are not lost and the more recent snail-like detection of the writers of racist graffitti confirm suspicions of police attitude to Black youth.

For most unemployed youth in Haringey the only occupation open to them is wandering up and down shopping centres like Wood Green past shops piled high with consumer products way beyond their reach; with the constant heavy presence of the police who treat parts of Haringey like a frontier town.

Increased police presence and activity, together with SPG tours, forced a flare-up and it was property that was hit; hi-fi and camera shops, clothing stores, off licences were hit the hardest.

It is clear that the attacks on living standards by the Tories are hitting home – what is needed is for Labour to lead a battle for a real alternative that can harness the energies of the unemployed to fight back against racism and unemployment.

Toxteth, Wood Green and Moss Side are only the start; police riot shields and CS gas are likely to be more and more prevalent this summer as the Tory repression, fanned by the media, tries to fight the tide.

(Little typesetter's comment on para. 10: it is NOT up to the white left to 'harness' (i.e. control) the black youth movement – it's an extension of colonialist mentality to try to do so. There is long standing profound mistrust in the Black and Asian communities of the white British left, based on the fact that too many 'socialists' think they know all they need to know about racism. Labour will not lead the battle against racism: black people will, and it's up to us to listen to their autonomous organisations and learn.

Just a harmless bit of fun?

Recently the Labour Party and trades union movement in Croydon have been making considerable efforts to combat racial hatred in the Borough. One of the reasons that urgent action has been felt to be necessary is the alarming level of racialist violence and harassment taking place locally.

Sexual violence and harassment, both at home and on the streets, is also increasing. Many women have now reached the point of being frightened to go out alone at night because of the fear of male violence.

So what do we find at Ruskin House – our Labour Party and Trades Union Headquarters? On June 26th they promoted a men-only event with a strip show. They would certainly never consider holding events in the club which encouraged racist values. When challenged the participants said 'it was just a harmless bit of fun'.

AMAZING REACTION

Women and men from the labour movement in Croydon demonstrated against event on that evening in a peaceful but noisy manner. We were met with the most amazing reaction. Not only were the police called to evict members from their own club but myself and another member of our Women's Section were physically attacked by two of the participants of the 'men only event' – one of whom was brandishing a chair.

After some negotiation between the police, a Management Committee member (who had no knowledge previously that the event was being held), and the demonstrators, it was agreed that a deputation would present their case to the Management Committee on July 1st.

On July 1st a deputation of four arrived at Ruskin House to meet with the Management Committee. They waited patiently for some three quarters of an hour only to be told they were not going to be allowed into the meeting. I would add that during this time they were subjected to verbal abuse from members of the club. One of whom was proudly displaying a badge with the slogan 'A Ruskin House Sexual Fascist', which appeared to be very much in demand.

WOMEN AS OBJECTS

The Trades Union and Labour Party have taken strong positions on equal rights for women and say they wish to encourage women to participate in the labour movement. Holding an event such as this, treating a stripper as an object, is part of treating all women as objects. How can women, knowing they are regarded in this way, feel they are being encouraged to take part in our movement? To promote strip shows at a Labour Party and Trades Union Centre is effectively to sanction attitudes that directly oppress women.

Sexual segregation in social life reinforces sexual segregation at work and elsewhere. The labour movement should be combating such segregation. With men and women, as with black and white, separate is not equal.

The organisers of this event knew that it would be offensive to a great many club, union and Labour Party members, both men and women. They knew that women could not help but take it as an insult and a challenge. It should never have taken place and will not be allowed to happen again.

Janet Pickering,
Women's Section,
Croydon NW CLP

LETTERS

RATES - Two replies to Ann Bliss

Dear Comrade,

I wonder if you would consider printing the following response to the article by Ann Bliss in the July issue?

There has been a great deal of discussion already in the Party over the question of rate rises and the cuts. Perhaps comrades will forgive me if I repeat much of the previous debate, but I feel that it is vitally important for the left to resolve this issue in advance of 1982 local elections. If we have no united strategy then many other councils will go the way of Lambeth, and end up by imposing cuts at the same time as massive rate rises.

In the July issue of *Briefing*, Ann Bliss set out in some detail the effect of the cuts being effected in Lambeth. Having worked closely in the past with Ann when we were both NALGO shop stewards in Southwark, I am loth to launch an attack on her article; however, I am sure she will remember that we have had this argument before, both inside and outside of trade union meetings.

The first thing that struck me about Ann's article was that it did not talk about the effect of the rate rises on the people of Lambeth, but concentrated instead on the effects of the cuts. This selection of information, of course, suits her argument that we should maintain and extend services no matter what the cost to the ratepayers. I believe this to be a short-sighted and extremely dangerous tactic, which could well end in defeat for the Labour Party at the ballot-box, despite the disastrous record of the Tories. I know that many people will immediately leap on me to say that the major burden of any rate rise always falls on business, rather than working people, but when one takes into account the effect on wage rises that the Government's policies are having, and the fact that council tenants always face two rises, the rates and the rents, the picture becomes clearer. Whilst the percentage figures, etc. may show business as paying the most, they are obviously the best set up to pay it. The smaller percentage that falls on working people actually represents far more of their available assets.

DISAGREE

Ann insists that her strategy is the only 'possible position' for a 'class-conscious' woman to adopt, and that 'as a woman' the priority for her is the defence of services at whatever cost. I would suggest that many working-class women would disagree, when their rate bills and rent are increasing to the extent that they cannot afford to adequately clothe themselves and/or their kids etc. etc. Obviously they still want to have day nurseries, with enough staff to run them and enough resources to ensure they are run properly; obviously they still want to have services provided to their elderly or handicapped relatives, but should they be expected to pay enormous amounts for these 'luxuries'? It seems to me that the rate rise argument smacks of making the working class pay for the bosses' crisis, and that, surely, is not what we are seeking to do.

Leaving aside all these arguments, however, is it not yet clear to those who argue for rate rises instead of cuts that the Tories are intent on simply taking away equivalent amounts to those raised by increased rates to enforce their policy? There seems to be an attitude which prevails which says that the Tories are simply wicked people and that their enforced cuts are based on no political ideology. This is stupid. They have an economic theory entirely based on reducing public sector spending. Do comrades really believe that they will let us get away with simply raising the rates to get around their stated objective? Anyone who, after two years of Tory rule, still believes that has been living in another world. It is surely clear that the Tories have embarked on class warfare. They are determined to get through the current capitalist recession keeping the interests of the class they serve intact. As a socialist, who happens to be male but who still needs services provided by local authorities, I am determined to see the interests of the working class promoted at the expense of the bosses. Therefore, my position is diametrically opposed to that of the Tory Government, meaning that a struggle is inevitable. The way in which we can win that struggle is to stand on the platform of no cuts and no rate rises, causing a major confrontation with the Government, around which the labour movement can mobilise. It is no use only doing it in Lambeth, or only in Southwark, or only in London, even. We need a massive campaign, backed by as many councils as possible, with full backing from the Party at all levels. Our position must be made clear – we believe in the redistribution of wealth, meaning that we need financial control of the national economy through the nationalisation of banks, insurance companies, building societies and financial institutions (and British branches of multinationals) in order to provide more and better services to working people as cheaply as possible. That is a strategy for victory, not telling workers that they must pay through the nose if they want a decent society.

Cheers!
Yours fraternally,
Tony Goss,
Peckham CLP (personal capacity)

Dear Comrade,

I read with interest Ann Bliss' article on how the cuts approved by Lambeth Council are affecting services, and hitting those people least able to defend themselves. Of course, those of us in Lambeth who opposed these cuts – always knew this would be the case (and, I suspect, so did most of those who voted for them).

Although an article containing information like this is very useful to cite in future fights against the cuts, I must disagree with the conclusion which Ann Bliss reached, i.e. that rates must keep going up indefinitely to pay for services.

Ann Bliss admits that at some stage Lambeth will have to confront the Government head on but says that would not be much good until 'the whole might of the Labour movement has been brought into line'. Of course it is true that the Labour movement must support a confrontation, but the decision taken in the past by Lambeth Labour Group have only served to alienate sections of the Labour movement, i.e. working class residents in Lambeth.

Large rate rises and, particularly, the supplementary rate increase drove working class people into the hands of the Tories – this could be seen quite clearly on the numerous anti-rate rise demonstrations. We also all know that a bad press for Ted Knight, as a direct result of the rate increases, kept Norwood a Tory seat in the GLC election.

Large rent increases pushed council tenants away from supporting the council, and council house sales alienate more people by depriving Lambeth of some of its best housing stock (if not immediately, eventually).

The writer says that Lambeth employees accepted cuts in services in order to avoid job losses, but she herself says that vacancies are up, and each vacancy is a job lost to someone. Hence, sections of the Town Hall unions find it difficult to support Lambeth Labour Group.

Each time an issue was raised which could cause confrontation, i.e. rate rises, rent rises, council house sales, etc., we were told that this is not the issue on which to confront the Government, we must save ourselves for the next major issue. By continually putting off the confrontation and losing working class support Lambeth is now in a situation where there will be more cuts (and even more massive than before), more rent increases (£2 in October has already been agreed) and more rate increases.

I think comrades now agree that there will be no confrontation in Lambeth, and after May we shall not even have as many Labour councillors – certainly not the healthy majority we have now, although like Ann I hope we have many class-conscious, feminist ones.

Fraternally,
Helen Crossfield
Norwood CLP

LONDON TRANSPORT PAY

Ken Livingstone (GLC Leader)

In the run-up to the GLC election we said openly that we did not expect that London Transport Workers should be bound by the government's 6% pay limit and that we would be prepared to underwrite a higher figure than the 6% which the GLC tories had put in this year's budget.

On the Monday afternoon following the election, Dave Wetzel (Transport Chair) and myself met the London Transport Executive and told them:

- **that they were no longer bound by the 6% limit and**
- **we would underwrite whatever deal they reached with the unions, provided that the deal had the full support of London Transport Unions.**

We received no request from any transport union for a meeting in the weeks that followed and were therefore somewhat taken aback to open the pages of the tory press and see that Sid Weighell and Charlie Turnock were attacking us for having refused to meet them and accusing us of putting a limit of 8.5% on the pay offer.

IMMEDIATELY

We immediately called a meeting with London Transport Executive to remind them of our policy and encountered no resistance. We also called a round table meeting with all L.T. unions and management with myself in the chair. Unfortunately the N.U.R. did not attend and denied that they had been invited. In anticipation of this we had delivered the invitation by hand to N.U.R. HQ on June 18th!

At this meeting the other transport unions made several points clear. They do not wish to negotiate their wages and conditions directly with the GLC Labour group but merely wish us to underwrite whatever deal they reach. We gave that undertaking in front of both unions and management.

OBJECTED

The unions objected to the delay in reaching the annual wage agreement and we therefore instructed LT to begin negotiating next year's wage round in the autumn.

On behalf of the Labour group, I said we would like to see the introduction of a 35 hour week without loss of pay in order to create more jobs on London Transport. We also wished to see special measures in next year's wage round to deal with the low paid. Unions and management agreed to negotiate on these two issues.

Following this meeting London Transport convened a meeting of the three rail unions for Tuesday 14th July at 9.30am. At 11.00 Sid Weighell gave a press conference to announce that he was rejecting the new offer of 11%. Yet he had organised the 11.00am press conference the day before and the NUR press officer when calling the conference had told journalists that "Sid Weighell was going to make a major attack on Livingstone and the GLC".

At the Tuesday morning negotiations Sid Weighell refused the request of the bus side unions and ASLEF that there should be a round table meeting of all unions and L.T. management. Others present at the meeting came away with the news that "Sid Weighell's main interest seemed to be to screw the GLC".

This attitude is in marked contrast to his views when the right wing (now SDP) Transport chair Jim Daly pushed through massive cuts in manning and services and fares increases with Sid Weighell dragging the NUR along in compliance.

Negotiations will reopen on Thursday 16th (after Briefing goes to press) with Charlie Turnock saying he is prepared to negotiate up to Sunday midnight. This may make good publicity in Turnocks campaign to inherit the mantle of general secretary but this nonsense damages the whole Labour and Trade Union movement. Bus and Rail unions must come together in order to defend their industry. We have again confirmed to L.T. management that there is no upper figure on the pay negotiations but we have to know if Sid Weighell wants to negotiate a pay deal or merely discredit the left and undermine the Trade Union unity we will need to defeat this government.

Editorial Statement:

Is the police ban on marches legitimate?

BRIEFING readers will know that marches and demonstrations in London are supposed to be "banned" until August 14th. Without even a pretence at consultation with the G.L.C. – which claims the right to control policing in the capital and won an electoral mandate from the people of London on that basis – the Home Secretary last month granted to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner a blanket ban which may be extended at any time.

At our special Conference at County Hall on July 11th, a decision was taken by an overwhelming majority to oppose the ban. A resolution was subsequently passed by the I.L.E.A. Labour Group agreeing to approach the GLC Labour Group, G.L.R.C. Executive and other major labour movement bodies to sponsor a march in a key working-class area of London before the ban expires. BRIEFING wishes to make it crystal clear that we dispute the legitimacy of blanket bans on marches, or any other decisions affecting the policing of London, when these are not endorsed by a body which is accountable to the people of London themselves. Until or unless the police committee set up by the G.L.C. is consulted and endorses the ban, we dispute the right of the Home Secretary or the Metropolitan Police Commissioner to attempt its enforcement.

Additional Note: *Convenors of all manifesto work-groups at last month's conference are requested to ensure that articles on the progress of their work-groups are submitted for the next issue.*

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