LONDON LABOUR 20p

BRIEFING

No 14 OCTOBER 1981

As media onslaught mounts:

DEFEND THE GLC!

The GLC is under attack, both from the press and from the Tory Government. It must be defended.

The media have focussed their attacks on Ken Livingstone and demand his removal. They seem to identify the public statements he makes with the activities of the Labour GLC and make out that he *is* the GLC. The commitment to a more collective leadership recently made by Ken Livingstone is to be welcomed as a means of sidestepping the press' venom and establishing a base for a campaign in support of the socialist measures demanded in Labour's Manifesto.



by Valerie Wise

Nobody yet knows what Heseltine is planning but there seem to be three possibilities. Firstly a ceiling could be put on business rates, secondly a ceiling could be put on both domestic and business rates and thirdly Councils could be prevented from levying a supplementary rate (as in Lothian). He could of course introduce a combination of these.

At the moment the GLC is not in the same position as Lothian, as it can levy a supplementary rate (which it is doing in order to slash fares in October). And at the moment the GLC can levy what rate it wants next April.

ACHIEVEMENTS

It is a hard battle and we have had some problems. Yes, it was a defeat ILEA was unable to reduce the price of school meals because 20 Labour Members voted with the Tories, and it was a defeat that the GLC did not continue to fight the Government over the transfer of estates. But the record is certainly not all gloom and despondency. A Labour GLC is exceedingly worth having and its achievements must be broadcast loud and clear:

★ In transport the GLC is reducing fares on London Transport by about 30% and the service is slowly being improved.

★ In industry and employment the Greater London Enterprise Board is well on its way to being established in December. Board members will be appointed during the next few months. Already, even with its very limited budget, the Industry and Employment Committee has started supporting worker co-operatives and employment resource units. I think the Industry and Employment Committee's work is the most important area for the GLC because if it succeeds with its Alternative Economic Strategy then it will have shown the possibilities for the next Labour Government.

★ In planning the GLC is determined to plan for people and not for profit. Offices will not be built in areas that are already full of them.

★ In the Arts the GLC is trying to redistribute resources towards the community (although a setback occurred with the Royal Opera House money).

★ In Housing the GLC is fighting a Court battle over the forced sale of some council flats.

★ In Finance the GLC is spending £1m on supporting voluntary and community organisations, like law centres. Next year this will rise to £3m.

ELECTION PROMISES

However if the GLC is to continue to carry out its election promises then, given the present Conservative Government, it is imperative that it is allowed to levy the rate it decides is necessary. The Tory Government has taken £300m away from London in the form of rate support grant. The only way this can be made up is through the rates.

Rates are possibly not the best way of raising local revenue and yet a property tax should not be dismissed out of hand. It may need modifying but remember that rates are the only tax that businesses cannot escape paying.

The GLC must be defended by the labour movement and constituency parties must try and ensure that their own GLC Member votes for all the election promises.

In the inevitable future confrontration with the Tory Government the GLC will need the active support of the labour movement in London. GLC Members should be invited to all Labour Party wards and trade union branches, so that the Councillors can make a stand knowing they can rely on the strength of the labour movement to back them in the struggle and defeat the Tory Government.

The GLC must be defended and supported as it is an important opportunity to show what Labour in power should mean.

Labour—Take the Power!

SDP SCORE OWN GOAL

by Valerie Veness

On Friday 4th September, a rumour started in Islington that 16 Labour Councillors were about to defect to the SDP. Their defection was to be announced on the following Monday at a press conference. Labour Party members in Islington were euphoric. But then there was consternation! On Monday morning at Islington Town Hall, the press turned up to hear the announcement but nobody else did! Was there to be a hitch? No – it was just the magnificent organisation of Islington SDP which gave the press the wrong date!

On the Tuesday, the press conference finally took place. It also announced the greatest event in the history of the Islington Labour Movement – Michael O'Halloran, MP for Islington North, was going too. He failed to turn up at the press conference – and when pursued by journalists to ask him why he had defected his reply was to jump over his garden wall and run away.

YEARS OF STRUGGLE

Labour Party members in Islington welcome the defection of these reactionary anti-working class elements. The years of struggle that many of us have had against Bayliss, O'Halloran and their cohorts have at last borne fruit.

It is important to spell out exactly what these new recruits to the SDP stand for. As members of the Labour Group on Islington Council they have repeatedly



A small step for o'Halloran, a leap of joy for Labour!

joined forces with the Tory Opposition to slash the under fives' provisions, cut the housing programme, sell council houses, cut the Citizens Advice Bureaux, close down the voluntary sector, force homeless families into bed and breakfast accommodation and force through one of the most reactionary housing management policies in London.

WELCOMING HER RECRUITS

Shirley Williams said, in welcoming her recruits, that 'they will be able to help the SDP work out a sensible and humane policy in local government'. But the record of these people, in attacking the old, the young and the disabled, speaks for itself. It is there for all to see because their every vote has been recorded.

If Williams is really looking for 'humane' policies, she is in for a shock. Let's hope that the 16 defectors are as destructive to the SDP as they have been to the Labour Party. We in the Labour Party and Labour Group in Islington can now pursue our socialist policies unhindered.

TOWER HAMLETS PROBE

Amid uproar at the July GMC of Tower Hamlets, combining both Bethnal Green/Bow and Stepney/Poplar Constituency Parties, the panel for local government elections was put to a vote, with the Chairman saying that he did not care about the NEC or Regional Executive of the Labour Party. Tower Hamlets would select the way it always has done, and would not be told what to do from outside.

The procedure adopted was against the party rules. In September last year a note undated and unsigned went out to all branches (but not to affiliated organisations) without a closing date for nominations to the panel, and with instructions that nominees must reside within the branch boundaries. As a result, a number of left members including many of the most active in the constituency, failed to reach the panel.

Some wards proceeded to shortlist and in some cases the number of nominees equalled the number of council seats. In most cases these happened to be sitting councillors who have failed to carry out their council duties. This is so, especially in Bethnal Green and Bow, where the party is dying on its feet and is under serious threat from the Liberals.

WITHOUT CHALLENGE

The GMC had no opportunity to discuss the panel. They were just informed that the EC had met and recommended a shortlist. As a result, the Council Leader, Chief Whip and Party Chairperson were readopted without challenge. The Chairperson would not be persuaded that the selection procedure was against party rules, and together with a group of right wing councillors positioned at the rear of the hall, he made it impossible for delegates to raise objections.

After the meeting, nine branch secretaries met and decided to call on the Regional Executive to do something about the disgraceful way in which the panel was drawn up. The Executive is now to hold an enquiry.

CLASSIC EXAMPLE

I conclude with a classic example of how Tower Hamlets GMC operates. Nominations for Deputy Leader were taken on a constituency basis, Bethnal Green/Bow supporting Tony Benn, Stepney/Poplar not supporting any candidate, Benn's nomination being defeated. Fair enough, Benn got just the one nomination. But at the same meeting, when Peter Shore was nominated for the NEC, the chair decided that the vote be taken as one GMC and Shore therefore received nominations from both constituencies, rather than the one nomination he would have received had the vote been on a constituency basis.

Theresa Shanahan
Stepney/Poplar CLP

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****** STOP PRESS **********

The Regional Executive held a special meeting on 9 Sept. It was decided:
** A special GMC to be called to vet the panel.
** Bill Jones agreed that the information given about eligibility for nomination was "misleading", but he wouldn't allow the special GMC to add names to the panel. So the irregularity has NOT been corrected.

****** STOP PRESS**********
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TOWER HAMLETS LABOUR HERALD

This is a free paper, published quarterly and distributed directly to homes throughout Tower Hamlets. With a print of 20,000, about half the households in the borough are reached.

The aim of the paper is to raise matters, of a social, political and economic nature, that directly affect the people of Tower Hamlets.

Requests for information, booking of advertising space and articles should be sent to the 'Labour Herald' at 40 Perkins House, St Pauls Way, London E14 7AH.

LONDON backs BENN

The final agenda for the Labour Party Conference shows that of the 265 constituencies which made valid nominations for the deputy leadership, 226 (85%) were for Tony Benn. 50 of those nominations came from London, a figure of which we can justifiably feel proud. Only Newham South have nominated Healey, and Deptford their own John Silkin.

Most interesting is the number of London MPs who have nominated Healey while their GMCs have nominated Benn. Those who are so clearly out of step with their own rank and file are:

George Cunningham: Islington South
Bruce Douglas-Mann: Mitcham and Morden
Ted Graham: Edmonton
Douglas Jay: Battersea North
Harry Lamborn: Peckham
Michael O'Halloran: Islington North.

Roland Moyle (Lewisham East) and Bryan Magee (Leyton) have also nominated Healey, but their constituencies have not, at the time of writing, made their intentions clear. **(Editor's note: Lewisham East G.M.C. has now mandated its delegate to support Benn, and has also rejected an early reselection timetable previously agreed between its E.C. and the N.E.C., insisting on time to enable all branches to participate fully in the reselection process).**
In addition, three London MPs have nominated Silkin while their GMCs have nominated Benn. There will be intense interest in how they vote in the second ballot after Silkin's inevitable elimination. The three are:

Guy Barnett Greenwich
Reg Freeson Brent East
Laurie Pavitt Brent South

The following London MPs whose constituencies have nominated Benn have not yet made their intentions known, and there will also be close interest in how their votes are cast:

Ron Brown: Hackney S. & Shoreditch
Tom Cox: Tooting
Frank Dobson: Holborn & St. Pancras
Alf Dubbs: Battersea South
John Fraser: Norwood
Russ Kerr: Feltham & Heston
Bob Mellish (!): Bermondsey
Chris Price: Lewisham West
Sam Silkin: Dulwich
Jock Stallard: St. Pancras North
John Tilley: Lambeth Central.

There are also 40 London constituencies which have not yet publicized their voting intentions. If your constituency is in this position, **please let us know as soon as a decision is made.** We would confidently hope that eighty plus London CLPs will eventually cast their votes for Benn.

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The Day we went to Walsall

By Keith Veness
(N.U.P.E. Shop Steward – Hackney Housing)

Housing management is now becoming a major, and long overdue, topic of debate in both the Labour Party and the trades-union movement. In the process of drawing up the many manifestos for next year's Council Elections, a whole plethora of formulae and slogans have been dreamt-up. The commonest commitments have been to such ideas as "local services", "devolved management" and "neighbourhood control". With the total hand-over of all GLC stock from next April, the London borough of Hackney has been a centre of debate and a major re-organisation in the offing.

It was in response to these sorts of discussions that a group of union members in Hackney decided to visit Walsall – a Labour Authority that has passed from talking about such schemes into actually implementing them. The actual delegation consisted of eight NALGO and three NUPE members, accompanied by four people from other London boroughs (including John Mordecai Housing Chair from the London Borough of Brent).

SIMPLE

We were met and shown around by the Chair of Housing, Brian Powell, and the Council's Director of Housing. We met NALGO representatives, whose members actually operate the system, and many staff in two local offices at Bentley and Darlaston. The system itself is simple – the old style of housing department has been abolished and replaced with 32 small neighbourhood offices. This has enormous advantages, which can be summarised as follows:

a) No tenant is more than a short walk from his or her office;
b) The stifling bureaucracy of local councils has been largely removed.
c) Such a system would prove virtually impossible to dismantle if the Tory group ever got control of the Council;
d) Virtually every officer deals directly with tenants, so all 'buck-passing' is removed.
e) The system uses 'new technology' to create more jobs.

GOOD LOOK

Generally we were very impressed, though some of the maintenance systems I feel would not fit London's D.L.O.s very well. Nevertheless, all of us involved in the fight for a socialist housing policy should take a good look at Walsall. The Labour Council there is most keen to discuss their system, so why not contact them and arrange a party of councillors and trade unionists from your borough to visit? Write to: Councillor Powell, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1XU.

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BITTER STRUGGLE IN MANCHESTER

Seventeen left Labour councillors in Manchester have appealed to the NEC after being expelled from the Labour Group on Manchester City Council for opposing cuts – the second expulsion in 15 months for most of us. It was timed to coincide with interviewing for the panel for next May's elections, where the executive of the City Labour Party is recommending that 28 sitting councillors (out of 71) be dropped, largely for lack of commitment to party policy.

PETER HILDREW
Manchester City Councillor –
one of the 17

Following the expulsions, the City Party executive called for an NEC enquiry into the conduct of the Group; so the remainder of the Group called for an NEC enquiry into the City Party, which council leader Norman Morris says has been taken over by a 'faction of militant extremists'.

Briefing readers may find some of these symptoms rather familiar. A serious and unfortunately very bitter struggle has developed in Manchester, although nobody could pretend to have planned it that way. At present the battle is neither won nor lost and much will depend on how the NEC handles the enquiry which is now pending.

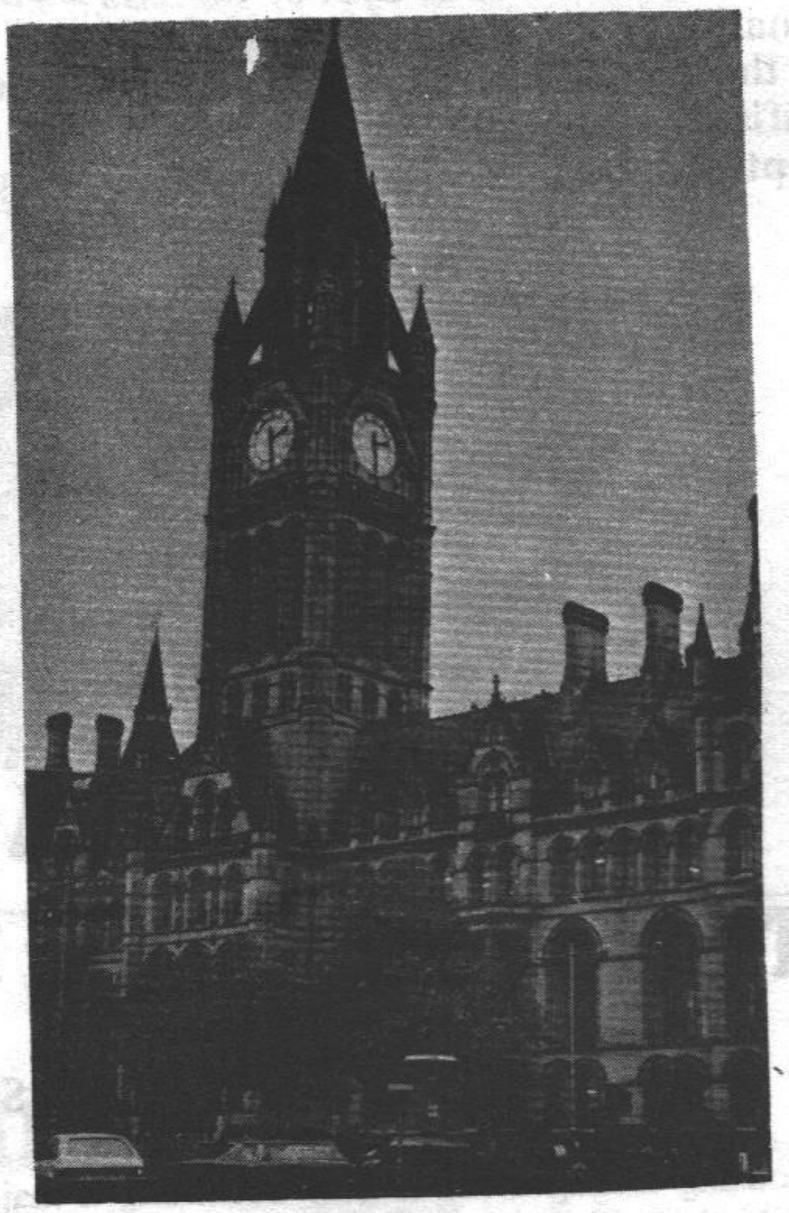
CONFRONTATION

Three developments have contributed to the confrontation. First, in common with London and elsewhere, Manchester has seen the emergence in the last two or three years of a younger generation of party activists looking for more open democracy and a closer degree of accountability than many public representatives have grown used to.

This group is now firmly in control of the City Labour Party (comprised of delegates from eight CLPs and also directly from unions). It is now challenging for control of the Labour Group but has run into a well-entrenched old guard which has reacted with outrage and fought back hard. Last year 30 members of the Labour Group actually clubbed together to buy their own press for printing material explaining why they were cutting services in defiance of the party, but the leader of this enterprise has recently joined the SDP.

The Heseltine axe has sharpened the conflict. Manchester has a good reputation as a high-spending authority which built up the services; all the more surprise, therefore, that some of the Labour politicians responsible for this progress should have shifted rapidly into reverse gear as soon as Heseltine made threatening noises. There have now been four rounds of cuts in the City Council budget in two years, all of them opposed by the City Labour Party which has backed councillors adopting its 'no cuts' policy, even when they defied the whip. The party wanted Manchester to be in the vanguard of the struggle against Heseltine but the majority of the Group ducked under and took themselves out of the front line.

Thirdly, Manchester faces an all-out election next May instead of the usual



one-third, because of the revised ward boundaries. This has brought the struggle out into the open since continuity is no longer assured. Whilst Norman Morris is trying to smear the left in the newspapers, party working groups have been preparing a manifesto for next Spring which at the very least will demand no more cuts and no redundancies, and perhaps some restoration of services. A most difficult situation is developing, however, with the outgoing Labour Group responsible for preparing next March's budget with the likelihood of further cuts – and the Party going to the electorate with two conflicting voices.

The recommendation to drop so many sitting councillors has excited a lot of comment. If these recommendations are confirmed at the full City Party Meeting on September 6th, and most of them will be, the councillors affected will exercise their right to appeal to the regional Labour Party executive and may be restored to the panel. Therefore the final decisions will be taken by the wards in many cases, and some feel that it would have been better all along to let the wards do any sorting out that was required.

Against that, in the light of the contemptuous way its views have been treated over the past two years by the Group, the City Labour Party executive has found it impossible to recommend sitting councillors unless they give some commitment to implementing the policy on which next May's election will be fought. We have been looking to the future, not the past, and have tried to assess intentions rather than extract a paper 'oath of loyalty' which might be worthless. We have had experienced councillors coming along and saying that if they leave uncomfortable bits of the manifesto out of their own personal election addresses they are not bound by them; others have tried to say that they will stick by the views of their CLP, or the party's national annual conference, rather than by the City Labour Party.

In our view the NEC must accept that would-be candidates should give at least a basic commitment to implementing the programme on which they are elected. The Standing Orders for Labour Groups ought to include such a commitment. But even the existing official memorandum attached to the model Standing Orders – a document generally favouring autonomy for Labour Groups – states: 'Since the local Party has been responsible for the candidatures of the members of the Group, it must entrust to them the carrying out of Labour policy on the Council'. That implies drawing up a panel of candidates that can be trusted.

BORING

Compared with the GLC, the Greater Manchester County Council, established in 1974, is a new and rather boring body which has failed to make much impression. South Yorkshire has shown what can be done by consistent application of a socialist policy on transport but there is no such coherence at present in Greater Manchester. The county council was regained by Labour this year but progress is unlikely to be startling. What is more, the Labour Group is considered to be to the left of the even more notoriously moribund county Labour Party, which must be a record. The Greater Manchester LCC group, formed last year, has been trying to develop a network of activists and begin to pull things together. As an example of the reception, when the LCC organised a conference last winter on local economic strategy and sent leaflets to all members of the county panel of candidates, the secretary of the county Labour Party sent a letter to them all instructing them not to attend a meeting called by an 'unofficial organisation'.

In an area stretching from Oldham to Wigan, most activists seem to look little farther than their constituency and borough parties but there have been developments in some of the surrounding

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TRANSPORT ACTION UNDER WAY

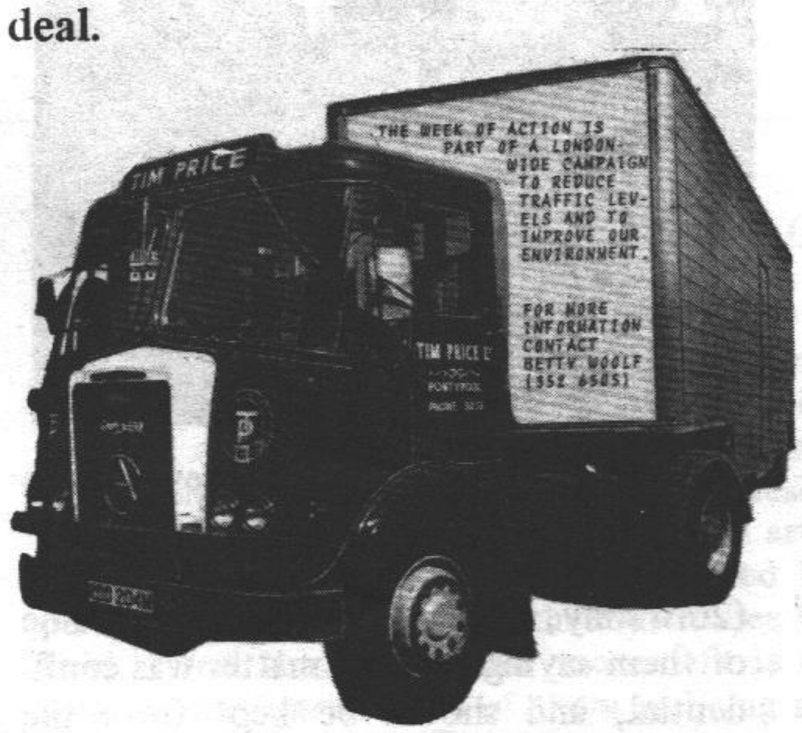
While the fares cut and the N.U.R. pay claim have been grabbing the summer headlines, deep and fundamental changes in transport policy are being impleme ted at County Hall. We are beginning the "complete change of direction" which the manifesto promised when it said we would:

- **+ Expand public transport, giving it priority;**
- **+ Introduce a new lower fares system;**
- **+ Review the road programme;**
- **+ Give pedestrians and cyclists a new deal.**

Paul Moore (Vice-Chair, G.L.C. Transport Committee).

GETTING THE BUSES RUNNING

The fares cut now being publicized is probably our most important single act. But just as important as the reduction itself is the fact that it brings in a new fare *system* which offers—eventually—the prospect of a fully-integrated public transport system (including British Rail services) based on the new zones. Fares, however, are only one side of the equation: equally important is to halt the decline in services. With the recruitment of new bus drivers and conductors under way, London Transport has become an expanding business for the first time for many years. There is now a realistic chance of the full bus schedules being run before the end of 1982, increasing from the 85% we inherited. Adjustments to bus schedules to meet demand, previously a very controversial matter, can then take place in the context of expansion rather than contraction.



FIGHTING THE ROAD LOBBY

The bus's worst enemy—traffic congestion—is being fought with a new programme of bus priority measures (bus lanes, allowing buses to use banned turns, etc.) of which 31 have already been agreed, with potentially hundreds more to follow.

But the G.L.C.'s role does not end there. We are challenging the might of the road lobby, whose supporters still push the discredited theory that more roads and/or wider roads are the answer to London's problems. A number of large road schemes have already been axed. New criteria have been laid down for road building, and plans will be scrutinized as they go through the various stages. The practice of "safeguarding" for road-widening in the distant future is to be scrapped. Pedestrians and cyclists will get a new deal, with programmes designed specifically to benefit them. Cycling is to be positively encouraged by building up a network of cycle routes and eliminating dangerous conflicts with cars and lorries. Pedestrian crossings are now being installed at the request of the Boroughs.

PLEASANTER, QUIETER CITY.

Our enquiry into heavy lorries begins soon. It will examine the repercussions of banning juggernauts from London, and its findings will be acted upon. The prospect of a quieter and more pleasant city lies ahead. Across the whole spectrum of transport policy, action is being taken. We now need to open up transport planning to working people in London. We want to end the sham "consultation" on road schemes of the past, and to involve local communities in the planning of transport services. If we succeed in this we will have achieved changes which will be irreversible.

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BITTER STRUGGLE IN MANCHESTER

(continued from previous page)

boroughs as well as in Manchester itself. Rochdale came closer than most to defying the Government over the sale of council houses, and in both Rochdale and Tameside left-wing chairmen of the Education Committees have taken on the teachers over manifesto commitments to abolish corporal punishment. They have not yet won, but they are fighting.

STOP PRESS

At a Special Meeting of the Manchester City Labour Party on September 6th to approve the panel of candidates for next May's City Council elections, 24 sitting councillors were not accepted. These included the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Group Leader, the Group Secretary and the Chief Whip.

GLC Housing Transfer

Perhaps I'm just getting cynical, others might say realistic. However, I was not surprised by the 'school meals sell-out' (Briefing August 81), despite the fact I was one of those who fought for the policy on behalf of N.U.P.E. The reason is that all those GLC members who voted against the meals reduction had previously voted against the Manifesto pledge not to transfer GLC housing, and they were joined by all but eight Members, without batting an eyelid!

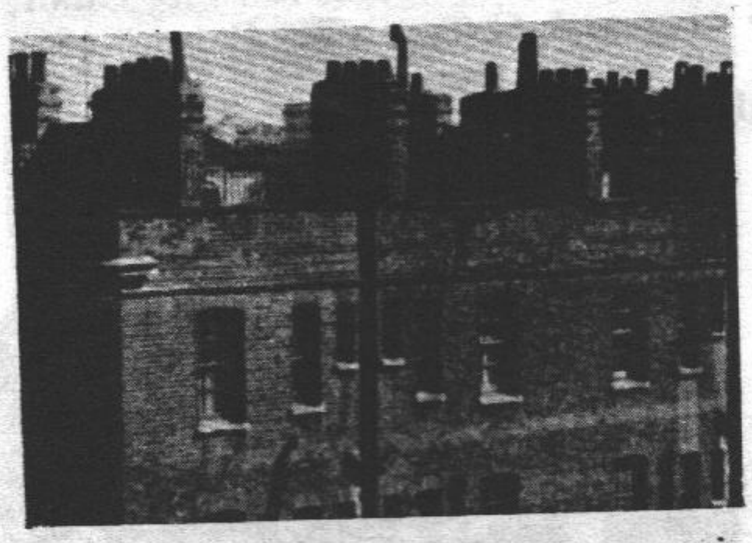
The fight to stop housing transfer is many years old, and has been the policy of the GLRC for many of those years. The 1972 transfers were recognised to be a mistake and as a result it ended up as a clear commitment in the 1981 Manifesto. 'We will refuse to process the transfer....' From May 8th nothing was done to fulfill that pledge, indeed there has been a clear conspiracy from the Labour Leaders, to undermine and/or reject that policy.

In 1980 the Tories transferred many of the estates, and left the incoming GLC with a commitment to transfer the respective housing to Hammersmith in June and Islington in October. The battle has always been to save the 57,000 dwellings in Camden, Lambeth, Lewisham, Hackney, Houslow, Brent, Waltham Forest, and Haringey so that combined with the remaining pockets of housing, the GLC could still perform its role as a strategic Housing Authority unconfined by the limited borough boundaries and parochial attitudes of some Boroughs. This would allow mobility of tenants within London, an ability to expand, outside the inner-city area and to build decent housing for working class people in the suburban Tory heartlands.

However, the eight Borough Leaders were at work. Many believed that their objective in holding out against the initial transfers was just to improve their negotiating position with regard to the financial deal that goes with transfer. This they did. By April they had achieved more money, better maintenance deals and the right to refuse staff due to be transferred with the estates. Lewisham's Solicitor on behalf of the eight Boroughs managed to 'rip-off' the GLC, with the active arbitration (connivance) of the Dept. of the Environment. It was so beneficial that even the Tories complained to Heseltine. The 'Eight' were hardly likely to let this money go. They used their influence with the London Parliamentary Group not to 'pray' (Parliamentary delaying technique) against the Statutory Order laid in the Commons. The matter therefore became law before the GLC election.

DID NOTHING

What of the new Leadership at County Hall? They promised to halt transfer until they could ascertain the position. They did nothing. The process went ahead. May saw the publication of the scheme of transfer (the list of the thousands of staff,



and the Borough to which they will be allocated), two meetings and an agreement between the 'eight' and Livingstone (20th May, 5th June), the minutes of one of them saying that the matter was confidential, and should be kept from the Trade Unions concerned. Repeated attempts by Trade Union Leaders to meet with politicians were left unanswered. Indeed the first that was heard, was when the matter appeared on the agenda of the London Labour Party Executive on 29th June, when following a delegation from N.U.P.E., Livingstone's attempts, heavily backed by Knight, to reverse the Manifesto commitment were clearly kicked out. One week later the Labour Group, following a recommendation from its leadership decided to ignore the Executive, and the Manifesto, and voted to process transfer.

At no stage have Trade Unions been informed that vacancy levels are to be increased (they are 10% down already), that no posts can be filled without written approval from the Borough concerned, no promotions can take place, or that agreement had been reached with the 'Eight' that staff allocated to them could be refused. The latter point means that each person 'rejected' will be redundant. To date Lambeth has refused 250 manual workers, Lewisham is expected to refuse significant numbers, and Camden many building craftsmen. The indications are that the eight Labour Boroughs will be responsible for driving 750 GLC people from their jobs, as Southwark has done to another 170.

I hope also that the tenants transferring don't get too excited at the prospect of money being lavished on their neglected estates. There is nothing in the financial agreement to say that the money will be spent on them. One already suspects it will be used to keep down the rates ready for the 1982 elections!

KNEW NOTHING

Don't either be too surprised if the

It is believed that GLC members who voted against the transfers were:

V.Wise
T.Banks
A.Harris
A.McKay
L.Hammond
F.Morrell.

Borough Councillors say that it's not their fault, they knew nothing of it. Lewisham for instance, has not made any decision to accept, contrary to the story put about by its leader, Hawkins, who has made the decision himself.

At the GLC Livingstone says the battle is not worth the effort, the Chairman of Housing, Dimpson will be the proud, last Chairman having done nothing to stop the process, while Carr as Chairman of Staff, continues on the path of ensuring the loss of 750 jobs.

Housing Staff will not be voting Labour, this May. They learned quickly over the last three months, they can't afford to lose their jobs and in many cases their homes, and I, as a committed Labour Party member will do nothing to dissuade them.

MARK SANDERS
N.U.P.E. Area Officer covering
GLC Housing

THE TYNDALE AFFAIR

It seems so long ago! Some seven years to be precise. Five teachers from the Tyndale School were finally sacked after a long, cumbersome and highly-publicised series of trials, "inquisitions", inquiries . . . It is difficult to believe, looking back on the Auld Report and the plethora of words and media interest that so much effort and energy could be expended on this tiny primary school right in the heart of Islington. Tyndale School was a Lilliputian school with all the attendant problems of a school locked in a difficult and typical inner city closed environment.

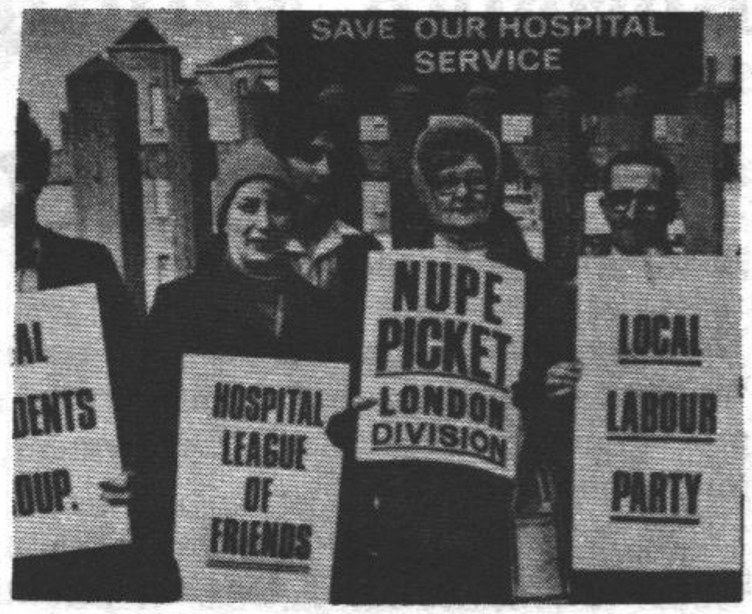
Terry Ellis and his staff undertook an experiment – with the support of the "powers that be" at the time – that "went adrift". Regretfully it became used as a political football by those who wished to discredit the Inner London Education Authority. The Tories, together with certain "brothers" and "sisters" in Islington Labour Party sought to inflame the situation to the point where it became a cause celebre, a national "scandal" which even today is adduced as evidence by the Tory Press of the "breakdown of discipline" and "law and order" in the Authority's schools.

The time has surely come for the new Labour Administration fortified by a radical sweep through its ranks to make amends for this "affair".

Not least it has a duty to review the situation in a positive, constructive and foreward looking manner. It, too, has a responsibility to the teachers who were sacked, to the teaching profession, and the pupils and parents of Islington and London as a whole.

Ellis Hillman
Hornsey CLP

Defend St Mary's



St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, W9 faces the loss of 127 beds and the emergency casuality service if the current District Management Team proposals are approved by the Minister for Health, Dr. Gerard Vaughan.

The plans to run down St. Mary's have been ongoing now for three or four years. These proposals are the latest in a long line, but St. Mary's have never been so close to being run down as it is now.

The cuts are purely a money-saving exercise which the authorities claim will streamline services within the hospital and, while not leading to a reduction in patient care as there are two local hospitals, St. Mary's, Praed St., W2 and St. Charles, which can cope with the added demand for beds at their respective hospitals.

REALITY IS DIFFERENT

The reality of the situation is different, however. When the proposals first came out, in January 1980, the date set for the cuts was October 1980 and it has only been the campaign against them led by the Defence Committee and the Unions which has stopped these cuts so far. Even now, without the beds at Harrow Rd being closed, St. Mary's, Praed St, is barely coping with its work load now! What this means is, if St. Mary's, Harrow Road had lost their beds in October 1980, St. Marys Hospital, Praed St, would not now be able to cope with the health care of Paddington. Obviously the saving of only £450,00 appeals more to the Health Authorities than the health care of the community.

On June 25th this year, the hospital staff at a mass meeting agreed unanimously to occupy St. Mary's Hospital to prevent the run-down of the beds and staff within the hospital before any decision is made by Dr. Vaughan. At the moment this entails monitoring the bed-state and staffing levels, but when the decision is announced, and if it is the cut the wards and casualty, then the staff will move into full occupation and eject any members of Administration who would carry out the cuts.

NOTABLE SUCCESS

So far the most notable success the Occupation Committee has had was when the District Management Team informed the senior Nursing Officer at Harrow Road that no more nurses were to be appointed, which would have meant that within two months the WHOLE hospital would have been closed. The Occupation Committee and Nursing Staff immediately moved into action by organising meetings and plans for action, and within 24 hours the decision had been retracted.

POLAND ALERT!
As we go to press, there seems to be some danger of a Soviet invasion of Poland. If news of this is heard, demonstrate (a) same day, 7.30 p.m. Soviet Embassy; (b) following Saturday, march leaves Speakers' Corner 1.30 p.m. for Embassy.

APOLOGIES!

We have been inundated with articles and letters this month and have been unable to print everything. Some contributions have been unavoidably held over to next month. Sorry, but please keep the articles rolling in. Editor.

Dear Comrades,

I have just read Labour Briefing No 12. (the first issue I have seen). I am a founder member of a housing co-operative and feel that co-ops (housing and otherwise) are an important aspect of socialism. As you say 'Briefing was established ..... activities in different parts of London' and 'interested in strength, power – not supposedly 'correct ideas' ' I thought I would let you know about our housing co-op. I am afraid I do not write in a particularly polished style or in the usual political jargon and cliches (no insult meant to Briefing which is refreshingly free of such things). I would be very pleased if you could publish my enclosed article/notes and would be delighted if someone in the G.L.C. or a labour controlled local authority housing department could perhaps tell us in Briefing their attitudes towards co-ops particularly in the housing field. I feel that the labour movement is often against housing co-ops because they have a very unreal view of them as being a sort of form of owner occupation which they are not. I think the labour movement should be in total support of them/you/us (I am a member of the labour party). Sorry to be so confusing, I am typing this with a baby hanging round my knees and in a rush.

Many thanks, anyway,
Hope you print it
much love
JOSETTE MORGAN

Housing Co-ops: an answer?

Housing co-operatives are run by and for their members. Anyone in housing need can become a member providing they are in favour of the co-op ideals and are willing to become actively involved and participate. Members are both landlords and tenants at the same time. Finance is loaned to us to buy and convert property by either the local housing authority and/or the housing corporation and in the past the G.L.C. Much of the loan is paid off by a grant from central government (via the D.O.E.) and the rest paid off by a portion of the 'fair rent' paid by the member tenant (the rest of the 'fair rent' is kept for management and maintenance costs, we do our own rent collection etc. and repairs). The housing corporation is a government body and as co-ops are considered politically undesirable by the Tories, funding from the housing corporation has not been forthcoming of late. The co-op of which I am a founder member was set up by and for single parents to incorporate childcare and housing, although we now include some single people and couples amongst our membership. We have houses in both Haringey and Islington. We are in general people who wish to determine where and how we live and would like to live in close proximity to other single parents or people who are interested in childcare. We cannot as individuals afford to buy our own property and in any case we do not believe in private ownership of housing. A housing co-op owns property, not the individual members, there is no profit to be made either by the co-op or individual members. We have a design working party which, with any other interested co-op members helps to design the flats in which members are to live. All co-op policy decisions are made at special general meetings which all co-op members are encouraged to attend. There is an elected committee which deals with much of the co-op business. This committee changes every year. There are working parties to tackle specific areas i.e. childcare, design, management and a political working party.

I believe that housing co-ops are, or could be part of a solution to the 'housing problem' and should form an important part of public housing policy.

Joining a co-op demands commitment and time, but it is a way for people to take control of their own housing. I feel that for co-ops to work properly they need to be part of a socialist system. However, the co-op idea has been seen to work in geographical areas such as Mondragon in the Basque region of Spain where everything from housing, education and medicine to banking is operated as a co-op with everyone receiving equal remuneration and being totally accountable to the people.

Borough Manifestos for 1982:

PLANNING FOR LONDON'S JOBS

The Employment Working Group is organising a Workshop Conference to be held at County Hall on SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER. We want to build on work being done by community-based groups, to get an up-date on progress with implementation of the GLC programme on Industry and Employment, and to help comrades in our Boroughs to argue the case for a more interventionist role for Labour Boroughs.

Labour Briefing supporters in all boroughs must ensure that our manifesto proposals reflect a determination to devise a strategy for London's jobs which does not prioritise the needs of the private sector before those of the working population for homes, services and a right to real and lasting employment.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS – THE WORSENING SITUATION

Figures produced by the Manpower Services Commission show that the already appalling unemployment situation is likely to worsen substantially over the next 3 years, particularly in 3 key areas – youth, the long-term unemployed, and the London region.

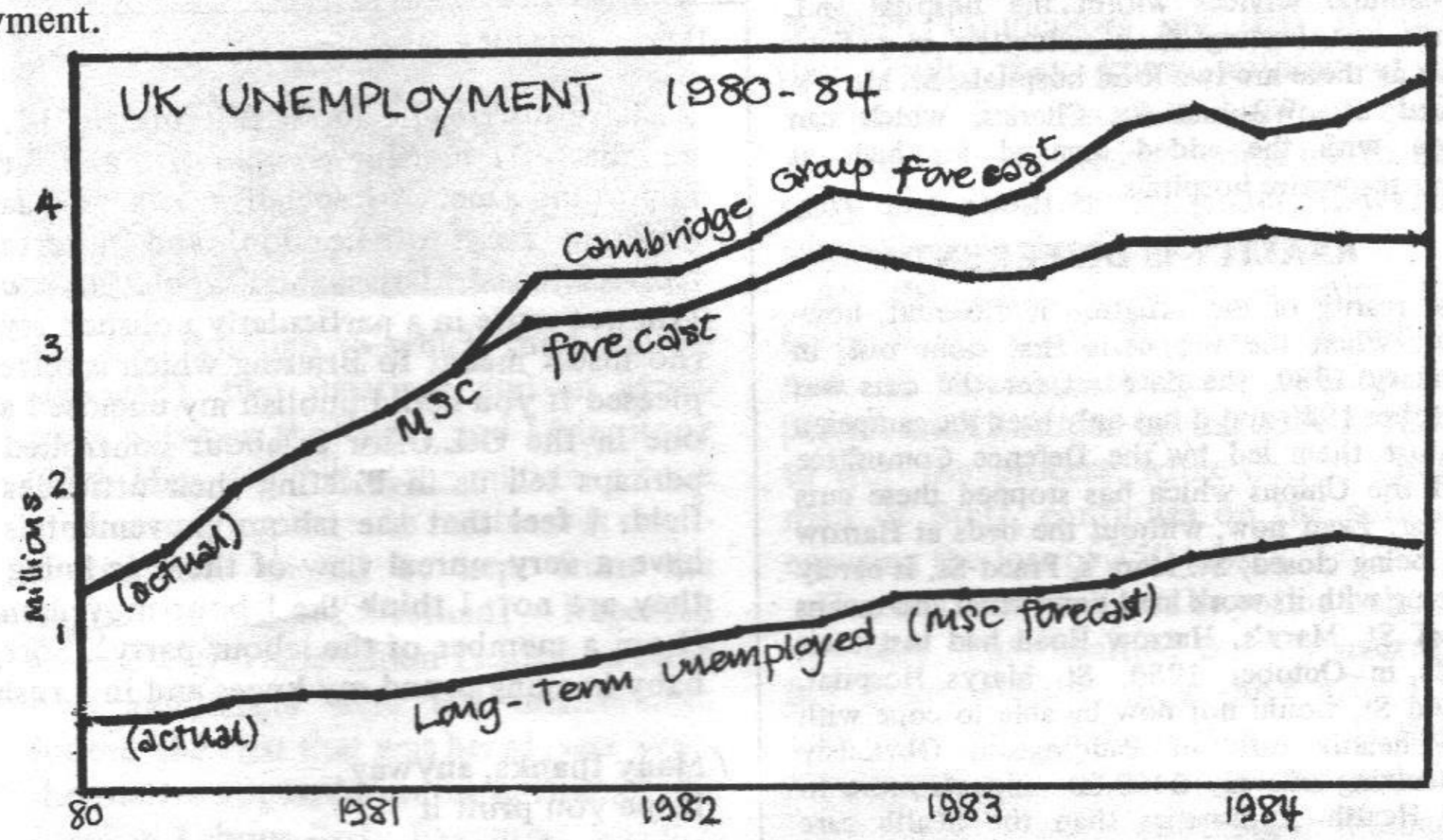
Forecasts for youth unemployment show that whereas in the first quarter of this year 1 in 3 under-18 year olds were without a job, that proportion will rise to a staggering 2 our of 3 by mid-1983.

By the end of 1983 it is estimated that those out of work for over a year will have doubled to over 1 million, and will continue to rise throughout 1984. Some indication of trends for London can be gained from the forecast for the South East – where the projected regional rise to 10.4% by 1984 should therefore see each inner borough having to cope with rates of about 25%.

The collapse of London's economy is clearly shown by the MSC forecast that the South East will be the only region where the unemployment rate will not fall between 1984 and 1985. By the end of 1984, the Cambridge Group forecast 3.8 million compared with the MSC's 2¾ million – both figures exclude school-leavers.

These figures explain the need for Labour Boroughs to coordinate with the GLC to develop a socialist strategy to fight rising unemployment.

Far too many Labour Boroughs have spent at least 3 years if not longer pursuing a so-called 'small firms' policy, which has done nothing to arrest the rising unemployment rates, and in some cases could be compared with pouring public money into a leaky sewer, and merely adding to the paper value of some companies. Very little work has been done on initiatives to retain locally-produced capital, and there has been a lamentable lack of enthusiasm for extending the public services provided by London's councils.



MUNICIPAL ENTERPRISE

We are arguing that Labour Councils must be convinced of the need for, and viability of, municipal enterprise, for instance, to go beyond the traditional role of local authorities merely to act as a major consumer of goods and to enter into the manufacturing field in order to escape from a dependence on private contractors. How could co-ops and municipal enterprise inter-relate?

MODEL EMPLOYERS

We believe that Labour Councils should be model employers – refusing to discriminate against employees or ratepayers on grounds of race, gender or sexual preference, and should apply these criteria to those organisations which receive grant aid of any kind, or those firms which tender for council contracts.

CO-OPERATIVES

We hope that Labour councils will make the political commitment to give financial and advice support to the formation of Workers' Co-operatives, and that the proposal from Lambeth CDA for a 'bank' for co-operatives will be taken up by the Labour Boroughs – the GLC has already pledged £50,000 to start this project.

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

The use of pension funds and other sources of financing is another area which will be covered in the conference and we will examine the plans of the GLC and West Midlands Council to use this source for investment in employment.

DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Some London Councils have already begun to seriously tackle the problems of discrimination and lack of training opportunities for workers from minority ethnic communities and these proposals will be worked on in a group which will also be concerned with the unorganised labour force – homeworkers.

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CENTRES

There are to be a number of Unemployed Workers Centres. These will be especially important until Labour's strategy for full employment takes effect, and we need to keep unemployed workers in close touch with their trade union comrades who are still in jobs. What should the relationship be between UWC's and Trade Union Resource Centres?

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

It is obvious that the most pressing priority for us is to deal with the demoralisation caused by Youth Unemployment, and a workshop will be devoted to this, with an examination of the idea of a local Training Audit. What should our attitude be to MSC schemes?

WOMEN & EMPLOYMENT

Women are the part of the labour force which is suffering most in the present recession and there will be a workshop which will draw on the experience of women involved in special projects and at ways in which local councils can improve conditions for women workers.

The time has come for Labour in London to stop trying to manage capitalism better than the Tories and to put our faith in developing local socialism.

Bob Crossman, North Islington CLP
Jeremy Short, Hornsey CLP

THE HOUNSLOW WHIP STRIKES

HEATHER WETZEL

In June of this year, Enda Donnelly and I had the Whip withdrawn by our colleagues on the Hounslow Labour Group. This was as a result of our having voted against the Whip in full Council when we were unable to support the proposed budget for 1981/82 which, though dressed up as 'savings', meant cuts in services, large increases in charges and a big rent increase for Council tenants. The reason we actually had the Whip withdrawn was because we would not reaffirm our oath to abide by Group Standing Orders.

We have appealed against the decision and the regional Party has heard our appeal and we are now waiting for the matter to go to the NEC. Our appeal is on three grounds – two 'technical' and one, the only really important one, the fact that we were voting in accordance with Labour Party policy.

The first ground for appeal is that the necessary consultative meeting with the Executive Committee of the Local Government Committee was not held because the LGC Secretary had moved without trace and no one knew who was on the EC. So it was replaced with a meeting of the (new) Secretary and Chairman of the LGC and the two CLP Chairmen in the Borough (all of whom incidentally are members of local Tribune Groups) and the Group Officers. This meeting was held the day after our Party's EC meeting where the matter was not raised by our Chairman. The decision to recommend withdrawal of the Whip was upheld by all at the meeting. The second reason for appeal is that, in effect, we were being punished for something we had not then done.

REAL ISSUE

The real issue in our appeal is of course the cuts issue. At that time our Labour Group, our Ward (we both represent Hounslow West Ward) and our CLP (Feltham & Heston) all had 'no cuts in services' policies. Both CLPs in the Borough have since passed resolutions restating their opposition to cuts.

The Labour Group had convinced itself that savings, as proposed in the budget were not cuts. In the 1980/81 budget a 10% vacancy rate was introduced and in 1981/82 it was agreed to continue with this reduction in staff levels even though the results have meant our libraries having reduced opening times and more seriously, Social Services being unable to carry out their statutory obligations particularly where the old and young are concerned. This policy in itself has proved damaging and Enda and I were not prepared to support it continuing.

VARIED REACTION

Reaction to our voting against the Group varied. There were those who were against us because we went against the Group decision and would not support their 'nicer than the Tory's' cuts. There were those who saw it as a breach of standing orders. There were also a few supporters. The whole situation was very depressing. Even some of those on the 'left' of the Party were pressurising us to agree to abide by the Standing Orders and so remain in the Group, even though they knew we would not support the massive cuts that were now inevitable. The fact that the situation has since been discussed and people have realised what cuts will mean within Social Services, has meant that support for us has grown.

Recently, the Labour Group agreed to more than £4m reduction in this year's spending and £3½m in next. There are very few in the Group who are against introducing these cuts and those that are, will more than likely vote with the Group in Council. Indeed, one Chairman opposed cuts in Group and then presented his 'hit list' for his committee!

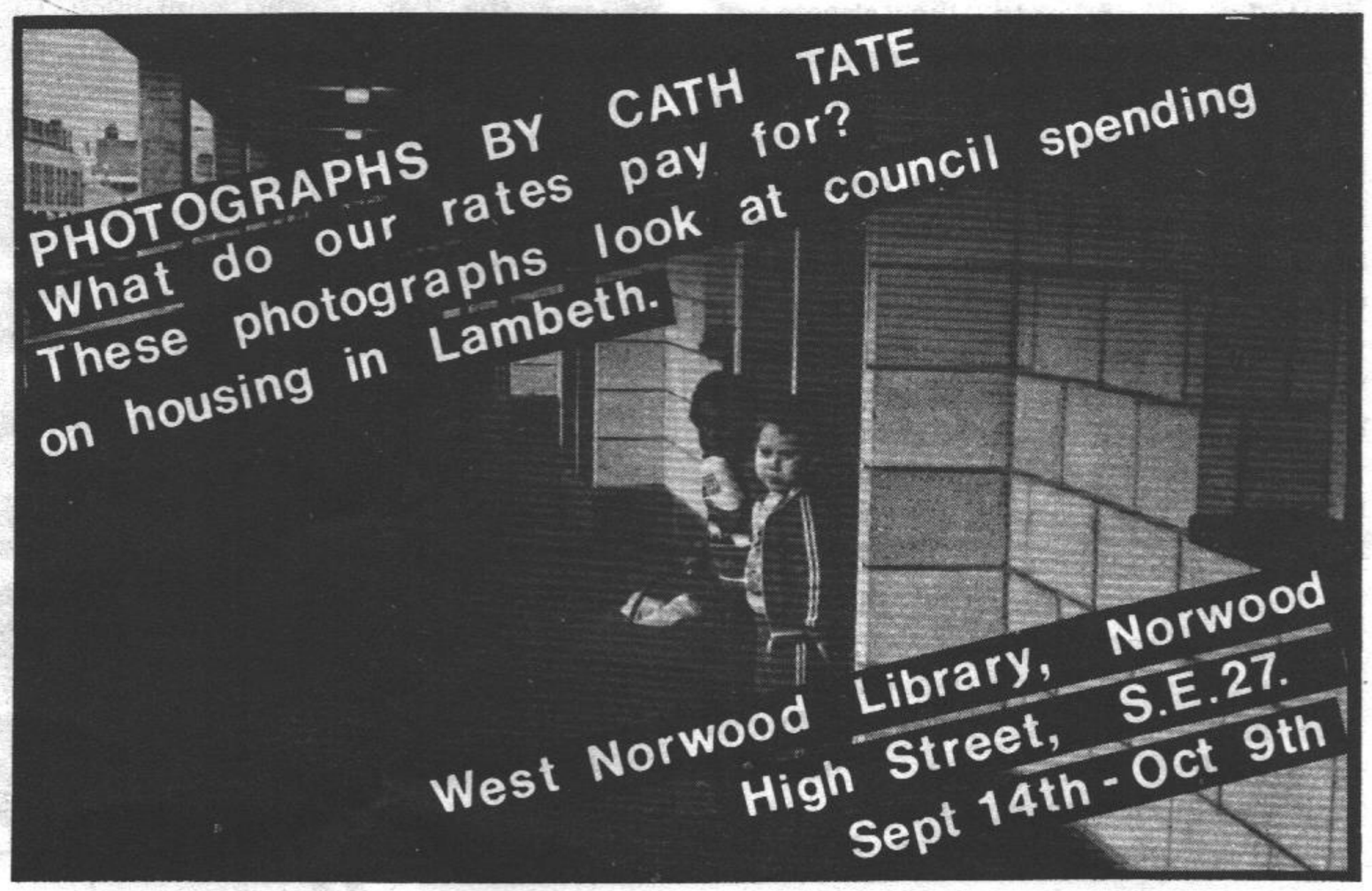
WHY STAND FOR COUNCIL?

This all raises the question of why we stand for the Council. Are we there to administer at all costs or are we there to fight for Socialist policies? If it is the first, then Enda and I are wrong, because there can only be one legal way to continue with a Labour administration and that is to carry out this Government's instructions and destroy our services.

A reduced education level will affect us all for a good many years. Education is our class's path to real freedom, democracy and justice. We are denying ourselves these rights and will remain the servants of the minority, who own and control the wealth of our country, for even longer. Our old and sick who are already suffering because of the deterioration of our National Health Service will suffer even more. Maybe a case today is someone wanting meals on wheels but tomorrow they become victims of malnutrition or hypothermia. Child abuse could go undetected. Who do we blame if a life is lost? Roads and footpaths are already showing the evidence of reduced expenditure. How many accidents already occur because of appalling conditions? The whole feeling of decay and depression affects us all whether it is the filthy and unkept environment we live in or the growing dole queues or the overcrowded classrooms.

It is easy to say rebel when you know you are not going to have to risk being surcharged but it is also unfair to ask Labour Councillors to risk surcharge without our Leadership promising that the next Labour Government will give dispensation to Councillors who have been surcharged. The fight against the Tories is slow in coming. We have Labour-Controlled Councils introducing cuts on the basis that it is better that we have control of them rather than letting the Tories do their own dirty work. We have workers accepting redundancies as being unavoidable. More and more are homeless and still we allow the rich few to get richer while the rest of us get very poor.

I do not see any easy way out of it all. We must have a national concerted campaign not only to get rid of the Tories and their vile policies but, at the same time, to educate people into realising that it is their right to democratically own and control our natural resources, our industries, our press, our public services and so on. We have to convince people that Socialism will work – starting with some of our own Labour Party Members in London!



LOTHIAN: A LES

Bernie Grant, David Fryer and Jeremy Corbyn visited the Lothian Region and met a number of Councillors, Union Representatives, Party Activists and Community Workers on two separate occasions during the crisis that the Regional Council has faced. We print their report below.

The offices of Lothian Regional Council stand on the site of the last public hanging in Scotland, and perhaps more ominously opposite the law officers building, right in the heart of the Tories stronghold in Edinburgh.

Lothian has been Labour controlled since 1978 and now has a majority of one over all the other parties following the defection of the then Leader of the Group to the Social Democrats. Since coming to power the Council has embarked on a massive expansion of services and although proud of their achievements in Education, Public Transport, Social Services and Leisure, the Council have stated that it:

". . . believes that the quality and extent of its services still fall short of the needs of the community and cannot be regarded as excessive . . ."

The crisis that has faced Lothian Council has been the Tories 1981 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act which empowers the Scottish Secretary, George Younger, to impose spending cuts on any Council to a level which *he thinks is reasonable*. In June, the Tories announced that they were planning to cut £53 million from Lothian's budget, nearly one-sixth of its total expenditure, because they thought that the levels of spending were too high.

ONTO THE STREETS

The response at that stage, and several successive stages has been reported in earlier editions of Briefing. The support that the Council built up for its stance was enormous, principally achieved by the Councillors taking the arguments out of the Council Chambers and into the workplaces and onto the streets of Lothian. This success must also be seen as a remarkable achievement given that most of the region is rural where Labour gains its support from the mining and industrial towns, whereas the Tories gain their support from the Burgers of Edinburgh.

In July, a march of some twenty thousand took place through Edinburgh, from a population of nearly half a million. Think of the size of an equivalent demonstration in London with a population of six and a half million.

Younger then modified his original demand for cuts from £53m to £47m and declared that he would start withdrawing the rate support grant from mid August at a level of £1½m a week. As part of a 'cat and mouse' game, he stated that he would restore grants of up to £17m, but this would be dependent 'on the future conduct of the Council'.

As the deadline for decision making neared, the pressure on the Labour Group to accommodate the new demands of the Tories by making cuts grew, and with it their sense of isolation. Lothian were the only regional authority to mount an effective campaign against the Government and the attitude of other Labour Councils in co-operating with the Tories is similar to many Councils in London. The largest Regional Council, Strathclyde, has consistently made cuts and the Tories have been able to exploit this division as an example of 'responsible' local government. (Heseltine has constantly referred to London Boroughs such as Tower Hamlets and Southwark as models of co-operation and reasonableness.)

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party have supported Lothian and made efforts to attend every Labour Group to ask them to join the anti-cuts battle. Such, however, was the resolve of Strathclyde that they refused admission to George Galloway to even speak for the Scottish Council of the Party.

MAKE CUTS

The Lothian Group eventually voted that in an effort to 'negotiate' with Younger, they would make cuts of some £15 million in maintenance budgets and vacancy levels. Following hasty advice from their Director of Administration that they might be 'slipping into illegality' if new expenditure was authorised, the Labour Group imposed a moratorium with immediate effect.

These 'gestures', however, did not appease the Tories, who continued to demand that nothing less than cuts of £30m would be suitable for discussions to begin on restoration of lost grant. The £1½m clawback would therefore continue. Ironically, it was calculated that the moratorium, if allowed to run through the financial year would save more than the original demand for cuts of £47 million.

The moratorium created enormous opposition from the Unions and Community Groups, as it stopped contracts being signed with some eleven hundred part-time teachers, due to return to schools within days! Over four hundred and fifty Nursery workers were also caught. The Labour Group were now seen as the perpetrators of the cuts, not the Tories.

At the Council meeting when the cuts and the moratorium were voted through, seven Left Councillors broke the Whip and voted against the Group. But hard won support, by taking the struggle into the community, was being lost by the day. The Unions were happy to see a settlement achieved as it was declared that the support of their members could not be guaranteed as the 'political' fight of the Council did not necessarily mean compulsory redundancies.

At the next Council on 1 September, the Group had decided that the moratorium had to go, even though the earlier threat of 'slipping into illegality' could still apply. An amendment by four Right-wingers calling for the moratorium to stay unless there was a copper-bottom guarantee against surcharge was defeated.



SON FOR US ALL

Following the defeat of their own amendment, the four right-wingers abstained throughout the remainder of the voting. This tactic became apparent to all as the Labour Group's proposals for further cuts were reached. Prior to this, an amendment by the seven left members calling for no cuts at all was tactically withdrawn and when the vote came, it was realised that either the Labour Group and cuts of £24 million had to win or it would fall and leave the path open for the Tories amendment of £30 million. It was political suicide, but voting tactically, the seven left councillors supported the Labour Group and their proposals were carried by one vote.

COMPROMISED

Once again, the right proved that they were not prepared to support the Party when the going gets rough, and the left were compromised into minimising cuts in services. If there are hung councils next year in London, then maybe these patterns will be a new feature of voting.

Events in Lothian are not the other side of the world. The powers that Heseltine is now preparing for himself in England and Wales will be applied. The isolation of one Council is similar to the stand taken by Lambeth in particular, and the failure of Councillors to grasp that they must consider the fight to be a united one by all Labour Councils is a lesson still to be appreciated.

Additionally, the one thing that must be clear is that there is never an opportunity to take 'one step backwards'; Lothian tried this approach and have been running faster and faster ever since, because the very act of that step lost them the support to sustain that fight.

The role of the media deserves a mention. Lothian were constantly classed as overspenders, unreasonable and spendthrift and they were subject to vicious attacks by the local ratepayers group, RAGE. This contant exposure of the issues in a superficial manner and the attacks on personalities are not dissimilar to the kind we have witnessed in London on Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone.

The attitude of the Unions also demands scrutiny. Commitment to the struggle was given while the cuts meant that thousands would be made compulsory redundant, yet officials were prepared to see the Council 'negotiate' a minor package of cuts so long as jobs were not affected. The response by rank and file members indicated that the support was there for a fightback but in the confusion that followed, this support was dissipated.

AN ALTERNATIVE

An alternative that might become a major option for Councils next year, in London and in the Scottish regions when elections take place next year, is that Labour could refuse to form an administration that will implement cuts. It is an alternative being tried in Derbyshire at the moment and would have certainly been an option for Lothian, who could have used their majority to block cuts by the Tories and the SNP. The movement must certainly weigh up this option as part of the strategy of a fightback in local government.

The task of London Labour Briefing is to try to unite the London Labour Movement to the task of getting councillors elected in May 1982 who are prepared to mount a united fight against the Tories. Threats of slipping into illegality, unreasonableness, and vilification from the press will follow but the main task will be to unite forces outside the Council chamber to sustain the battle against the Tories. We no doubt will face pressure to retain office and implement cuts, in order to minimise them, to vote 'tactically' by accepting lesser cuts in order to avoid greater ones. But the political price – that of accepting responsibility for cuts – must not be paid by our movement. We must stand for Council on the basis of NO CUTS WHATSOEVER. Beyond that line, there must be no retreat. That surely is the lesson of Lothian.



All Too Quiet on the Western Front ?

KEVIN VENESS
Chair Ealing North CLP
& Vice-chair Ealing LGC

'Our manifesto for 1982 promises to be easily the best I've fought on'. This was how one sitting Labour councillor recently described his impressions of the series of meetings currently taking place under the auspices of Ealing LGC, to prepare our manifesto for next year – and he is not alone in his views.

Certainly Ealing's manifesto has involved a much greater level of participation by various sections of the Labour movement – based on study group reports circulated to individual branches for amendment and comments. Also, now that the first draft is being produced, attempts will be made to ensure that all relevant organisations – not only CLPs and the current Labour Group but also affiliated TUs, town hall and building unions, the Co-operative Party etc. (Ealing's CLPs do not at present possess women's sections) – are formally or informally involved in discussions on the draft paper, before its presentation to the LGC.

However, what must be the major concern for Briefing supporters in Ealing is not the drafting of the manifesto but the lack of opposition so far articulated by the centre/right.

BARELY A MURMUR

A rough costing of only seventeen items in the Education and Local Services/ Amenities sections reveals an estimated increase in expenditure of £2.5M per annum and the total cost of implementing the whole manifesto will be far in excess of this. And yet these proposals have elicited barely a murmur from those councillors who prior to 1978 were only too willing to cut and cut again at the instigation of the Callaghan government! One example: a resolution to the Ealing North GMC, calling for, among other things, a future Labour Government to retrospectively indemnify councillors surcharged for opposing Thatcher was passed nem. con., despite vehement pleas from its supporters for opponents to stand up and be counted.

The reasoning behind this is only too obvious. As with most London boroughs, Ealing's panel of candidates shows a significant increase in the number of 'broad left' candidates but, unlike neighbouring Brent, there is no way that this number is sufficient, nor are enough likely to be selected for safe/'winnable' marginal seats to provide anything more than a minority in next May's Labour Group.

So, many current councillors and prospective candidates are convinced that, if they play it cool until after the selections, it will not matter what the manifesto says – once Heseltine turns the screws, the same old line ('it doesn't matter what policies a Labour council pursues, as long as it is a Labour council') will prevail and they will, reluctantly, of course, be 'forced' to do the Tories hatchet work for them.

WEAK LINKS

For this reason, if the situation which currently seems most likely – that Ealing will be one of the weak links in the chain of London Labour boroughs encircling Westminster – is to be avoided, the pressure for change, which has seen all three CLPs nominating Tony Benn and supporting his deputy-leadership campaign, will have to be greatly intensified. Otherwise we will find ourselves in Ealing preparing our effort for 1986!

LATE NEWS: As a result of actions by their CLPs and/or the LGC, and after appeals, the three sitting councillors and an ex-LGC Secretary have been turned down for the 1982 panel. All belong to the centre/right and one has already revealed his commitment to the Labour movement by announcing his decision to resign the Labour whip. Will our gain be the SDP's loss?

Fighting to win

BRIEFING supporters in Brent have held a series of discussions on future policy for Labour councillors and prospective councillors following the elections last May. In particular, we have taken up the discussion around the 'Fighting to Win' document (see the previous issue of *Briefing*) which took place at the BRIEFING Conference two months ago. The general thrust of that document has been widely supported, and attempts are now under way to break it down into specific policy-commitments which can be supported by BRIEFING activists throughout London. The following is a suggested tentative 'model' resolution for Borough local government conferences, many of which are being held over the next few months throughout London. BRIEFING as such is not necessarily committed to this position, and suggested amendments or substantial changes will be welcome from comrades who feel strongly that some other course should be pursued:

"This Conference recognizes that there is no longer any way in which local services can be sustained within the framework of the legal and economic restraints imposed by the Tories and their system, and that any successful fight to preserve those services must therefore challenge and break through those constraints.

The forces most capable of breaking the resolve of the Tories on a national level are (a) the trade union movement and (b) those popular forces in the inner-city areas whose so-called 'riots' have been the direct and inevitable consequences of the Tory-imposed dole-queues and cuts.

Conference recognises that responsibility for leading the first of these forces – the trade union movement – cannot be said to rest in the hands of the Labour Party at Borough level. It declares, however, that responsibility for offering material assistance and a political perspective to those young people – black and white – who have been the targets of police repression in recent months rests with the Labour Party at this level above all. Conference therefore calls on all Labour councillors and prospective councillors to accept this responsibility publicly and unequivocally, and to link this directly with the fight to force the Tory Government to restore to London the rate support grant and other funds which have been robbed from us, so that local government can continue to function without imposing further cuts.

Conference consequently calls on the Labour Group on the Borough Council, and on all candidates for election in May, to pledge to act in Council on the following basis:

1. **No cuts whatsoever to be made in services, no matter what the circumstances;**
2. **No rate-rises to be imposed except as an interim measure of a short-term nature in the case of the Labour Group accepting in full the strategy outlined below; (*otherwise no rate-rises full stop*).**
3. **If and when government legislation and other measures render the Labour Group impotent to avoid cuts, these cuts are to be left to the Tories to attempt to implement if they dare;**
4. **Borough councillors to work to secure a commitment, as from the date of this Conference, from Labour Groups and councillors throughout London, to set an all-London date (between May 1982 and May 1983) beyond which no representatives of the Labour Party will assume responsibility for local government in London at all should the Tories go ahead with their present plans;**
5. **This date to be fixed so as to ensure that no anti-cuts Labour Council is forced into bankruptcy or resignation in isolation from other Labour Councils and the London labour movement as a whole;**
6. **The Borough Council to accept the collective discipline of all other London Labour Boroughs and the London Labour Party Conference with respect to this date;**
7. **The aim of all the above to be (a) to continue to do the maximum possible to prevent any repeat of the recent near-uprisings in London given the restoration of funds by the Tory Government and (b) to unleash all available forces against the Tories and the state from the agreed date onwards should they refuse to yield."**

Paul Franklin,
Brent East C.L.P.

Has BRIEFING evaded the issues?

by John O'Mahony

"SOONER or later we have to recognise that we are losing the arguments in favour of maintaining services at the cost of high rents and rates [emphasis added].

"We are losing because Labour voters simply cannot afford to pay any more. In council homes the length of Britain, Labour councils are being blamed for the high rates and rents which are the direct result of Tory policies.

"If the slide is to be halted, Labour must take a stand...

"Not only is Labour losing the battle over cuts, it is also getting most of the blame for the consequences. Sooner or later there is going to have to be a confrontation..."

CHRIS MULLIN, Tribune, August 28.

HUNTERS whose 'strategy' is to grab the large wild beast firmly by the tail and, without making the kill, to settle down to preparing the meal, are not quite as in touch with reality as they need to be.

If the animal has sharp teeth and claws, the hunter is quite likely to become a meal himself.

It was such a strategy that led the local government Left to try to respond to the cuts drive of the most indiscriminately vicious government we have had in Britain for 40 years by trying to just quietly get on with administering local government.

This was a major experience of the Left in the last two years. And it was the major dividing point between London Labour Briefing and Socialist Organiser, which we support.

The lessons are vital for the struggle yet to come. We offer an account as a contribution to preparing for the next round. . . . . .

The central truth is that we did not – as some comrades thought we did – have local government 'power'. In a clash with central government over fundamentals there is no such thing.

Local government is at every point, legally and financially (and, in a crunch, by way of the military/police power of the central state) subordinate to central government. There is not – nor, unless the central state has disintegrated, can there be – such a thing as a 'People's Republic of Lambeth' (or Lothian).

After Thatcher won the 1979 election, we were peacefully able to do in local government only what a Tory government bent on savage cuts would allow us to do.

There were only two choices.

Either to comply with the government, thereby turning Labour-controlled councils into mere agencies for carrying out government-decreed cuts and passing them on to workers and small shopkeepers; **or** to confront the government.

Labour-controlled councils had the choice of being centres of sabotage, guerilla warfare and resistance to the government, or being groups of quislings terrorised by Tory threats, agents working for the Tories against their own people.

That is still the choice now.

Nowhere does Tony Benn's proposal (in *Arguments for Democracy*) for non-collaboration and 'disengagement' by the labour movement from the institutions of Thatcherism have more direct and immediate relevance than for local government, which has been assigned to the role of the blade of the Tories' axe.

The fatal illusion to avoid at all costs is the belief that Labour local government can continue to go its own sweet way, more or less humanely administering local affairs and ignoring the central government. The beast is alive and has teeth and claws which it is is certain to use!

Rent and rate rises were at best a species of evasive action – a manoeuvre which had to be carried out on terrain which remained under the guns of the government and ultimately under its firm control. Confrontation, a challenge to the overall central government control by action aimed to rouse a national struggle, was ruled out by the local government Left.

Labour local councils found themselves on a slippery slope. The Tories could and did simply siphon off more than was raised by rate rises by cutting the flow of central government support. Having – to take the case of Lambeth – raised rates to avoid confrontation and thereby cut seriously into the living standards of workers in the area – the leaders of the council found that the Tories' big stick was still there. Capitulation followed.

In Tribune of August 28 Chris Mullin summed up the present situation of Labour councils:

"The 1982 election will simply be a competition between two – and possibly three – main parties to see which shall have the honour of administering the cuts decreed by central government. Opposition to cuts is no longer an option. Instead the parties will be reduced to arguing that 'our cuts are more humane than yours'."

But that has, essentially, been the choice for over two years. 18 months ago, in an open letter to Ted Knight, Socialist Organiser said:

"The central question now is to break the labour movement from class collaboration; to break it from the reformist commitment to bargaining within the capitalist system on a basis of taking responsibility for the system and being confined to options within it.

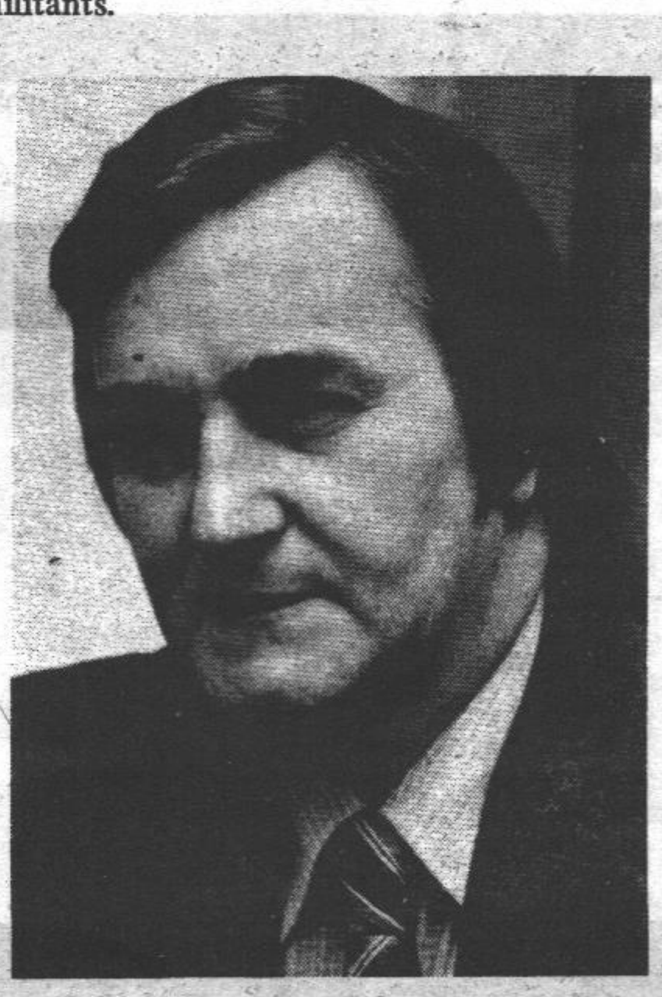
"But you see your role in Lambeth as only that of a humane administrator. That Lambeth Council has avoided any serious cuts is something to be proud of. But how has it been achieved? By backdoor cuts in living standards.

"... A socialist militant, as distinct from a professional councillor, is concerned with the social overview and the general consequences of what he does...

"In order to avoid the risk of losing your position in Lambeth (as a result of taking on the Tories and being surcharged or disqualified) you pass on the Tory cuts, translated into cuts in income by rent and rate rises. You refuse to stand and fight the Tories now, and cling to the power to decide from which area of working class income the siphoning-off should take place".

It is not mainly a matter of recriminations. It is a matter of learning the lesson that we are faced with either destroying the Tory government or living under its anti working class measures – and, in local government, with either using it as a base for operations against them, or being forced to be their instruments.

It is a matter of learning that for serious socialists the 'option' – i.e. illusion – of 'assuming local power' was no alternative to the only realistic option, of being revolutionary militants.



Ted Knight: made cuts

For in essence the local government rent and rate rise option was a decision to be administrators, humane administrators, not militants concerned with the overall effects of the Tory onslaught.

The delusion that we already had little chunks of 'power' locally and could exercise it, was misleading.

For even if an armed labour movement held real power in London, as the workers in Paris did for two months in 1871, it would have been necessary – if we were not to repeat the mistake made, according to Karl Marx's analysis, by the Paris workers in 1871 – to go on the offensive against the government of the rest of the country. And Labour councils do not hold state power, even locally.

The rent and rate rise strategy meant turning the left local councils into schools of class collaboration. There was not one of the arguments in support of the rent and rate rise policy that could not be applied to explain and justify 'the need' to cut. Even a cutting Labour council is still preserving some jobs and services, and wouldn't Tory commissioners be even worse....

And every one of the arguments about local government being 'realistic' and 'responsible' faced with the national Thatcher government could be applied and extended to a British Labour government facing the IMF. Indeed, they were so applied by the leaders of the last Labour government, and the same arguments may well serve a Labour government again.

Now we have cuts in Lambeth and Lothian. Both the councillors and the labour movement were softened up for these cuts by all that went before, especially the pseudo-left rationalisations. The local labour movement could only be turned away from the Labour council by rent and rate rises which cut living standards; the eventual option of confrontation at the 11th hour to stop cuts could only be made more difficult. Inevitably the price of the rate-rise strategy was loss of support from tenants and others who would be decisive in a fight.

The rent and rate rises were for that reason alone counterposed right from the start to ever standing up to the Tories. All it needed was for the Tories to tighten the screws, and the rate-raisers did what they had always been doing – cut into workers' standards, this time by 'cuts'.

There was no reason to expect that – to stick to the Lambeth experience – the 'left' talking council leaders could choose to fight in the last ditch, if it got that far. Nobody should have been taken in by Ted Knight, who tried (though he was overruled by the local Labour Party) to impose cuts a mere two months after the Tory victory. Yet Knight's performance is the best measure of the rent and rate rise strategy.

One, two or many Clay Crosses would have been much better. That was a 'defeat' that shook not the labour movement but the Heath government, and helped force the repeal of the 'Fair Rents' Act.

Now we have a worse starting point than two years ago, because the experience of Lambeth and Lothian must depress the movement to some extent. Yet the fight goes on.

Chris Mullin in Tribune suggests a way forward, and we urge London Labour Briefing to unite with Socialist Organiser and others to fight for it. Even now Labour-controlled town halls can be forts for the resistance to demolition squad Toryism, not seats of its (reluctant) local agents.

Mullin proposes:

* Cast-iron Shadow Cabinet guarantees that surcharged councillors will be indemnified by an incoming Labour government.

* Labour Local Government Committees must coordinate a mass refusal by Labour councils to either increase rates and rents unreasonably or slash services.

* If the Tories send in the commissioners, councillors could occupy Town Halls and organise resistance by staff.

County Hall News

As the GLC is in recess at the time of writing I am taking this opportunity to raise an issue for discussion – that of high pay. We have all been more inclined to discuss the problem of low pay, but that of high pay is important too. This isn't just a problem that arises with local government officials; it also faces Labour Governments in the form of salaries for the Chairmen of Nationalised Industries.

This problem has arisen at the GLC because we are currently advertising quite a lot of new posts. I think there is more to good trade unionism than getting a massive wage for some of your senior members. I think it is more important to ensure that everyone is earning a decent wage. I am more bothered about the wages most people earn, rather than just the few who earn big salaries. And I think this should be the attitude of the Labour Group at County Hall.

The GLC is currently in the process of appointing staff to work with the Police Committee, the Ethnic Minorities Committee and the Industry and Employment Committee. The salaries the GLC is offering are as high as £27,000 (Director of London Community Builders).

SIZE OF SALARIES

When I objected to the size of the salaries we were offering for the Economic Policy Group (25,000 for the Chief Economic Adviser and up to £16,000 for the Senior Economic Advisers) I was told that we had to pay these sorts of salaries so that our Chief Economic Adviser has 'Chief Officer Status' and couldn't be told what to do by another officer. What on earth is the point of being in power if we cannot establish the working status of the chief Economic Adviser?

Grudgingly I accepted this but when it came to the salaries of the full and part-time members of the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB, which is not going to be part of the County Hall machinery) I realised that this argument did not apply.

So I raised the GLEB salaries at a Labour Group meeting and was this time told that we shouldn't choose our own institution to make an example on high pay. However I am not sure that many unemployed Londoners will see the wisdom of paying the Chairman of GLEB at least £25,000. Some Members of the Group said that you had to pay the rate for the job and that we wouldn't get the right sort of people applying unless we paid these levels of salary!

Perhaps I am naive but the sort of people I want as Board members of GLEB won't make the offer of their service conditional on these exorbitant wages. Of course I want everybody to have a good standard of living but you don't need to earn £25,000 to have that.

EQUAL PAY

One reason I supported the *Time Out* strikers (and will support them with their new magazine *City Limits*) is that all the workers, no matter what they did, earned the same salary of about £8,000 a year. I am sure that some of the journalists could have earned higher salaries elsewhere or at *Time Out*, but decided the principle of equal pay for a decent salary was worth fighting over.

I think it is ridiculous that the Labour Group is so concerned about paying people high wages and yet refused to get involved with the Tube dispute where most people are on wages of £70-80 per week. The Labour Group ought to take a stand on pay, but on eliminating low pay and not propping up the old system. Must we believe the Conservative propaganda that the most important people have to be paid the most?

VALERIE WISE
Vice Chair Industry and Employment Committee
Member of the Greater London Council for Wandsworth, Battersea South

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The fight for our universities

by G. Beagley

The Tories have decided to step up their attack on universities. 18% over the next three years – that's the kind of cutback in financial allocation this Tory government wants.

It's a straight-forward cutback, and worst hit are Aston University in Birmingham and Salford in Manchester. However, all universities are expected to take some cuts in financial support. With only two universities – Oxford and Cambridge – escaping.

London University grant is also cut, with the added problem of rationalisation. In the Medical and Dental Schools the Flower Committee and its derivatives are hard at work trying to close one Dental School and amalgamate various Medical Schools.

On the non-medical side, cutbacks threaten whole sites with closure and merger. In this respect Chelsea College is most liable for the chop. The number of jobs at risk nationally is hard to establish, but it is probably around 3,000. It looks certain that this will involve early retirement, frozen posts, non replacement of staff and redundancy.

The national union response has been muted, and limited to circulars and publicity material from Head Office – with the devastating catch-word: "A Nation which cuts off University Funds – might as well cut off it's head!"

Quite, but the point is we need to stop Thatcher now!

Because Thatcher and co. are determined to attack education services and the rights and trade union organisation of all those who work in education.

A more appropriate slogan might have read "No Cuts, No redundancies, stop Thatcher and Co."

Some redudancies have been successfully resisted, at the Institute of Orthopedics ten redundancies have been cancelled by management. After the local ASTMS group decided to support industrial action, a new union group has been formed at St Barts Hospital Medical School gaining over 40 new members.

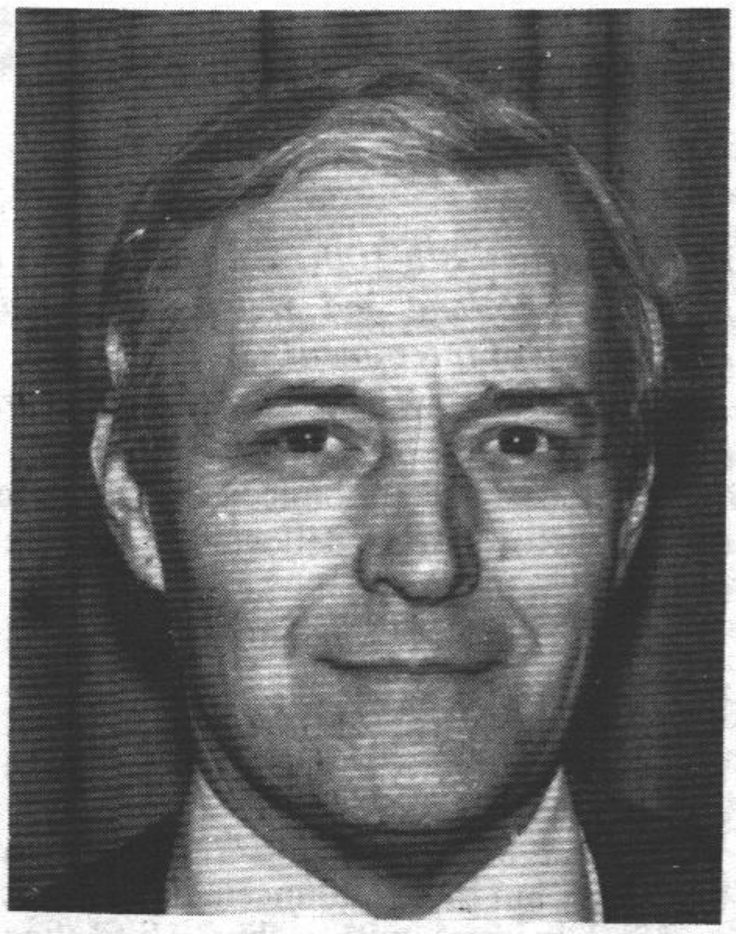
The London Medical Schools and Institutes Advisory Committee of ASTMS (LIMSAC) has circulated its own leaflet to all members. The cutbacks provide the opportunity to organise local site Joint Shop Stewards, to encourage unionisation and help defeat the feeling of isolation.

Hopefully LIMSAC will organise jointly with the London University Technicians Advisory Committee (LAUTAC), to establish a London-wide campaign.

In this respect local Labour Parties and supports of *Briefing* can play an important role in aiding the Trade Union campaign in the workplaces. Local Trades Councils and local Labour Parties and other shop steward organisations can help build up community and working class resistance by forming Anti-Cuts committees and campaigns. Local Labour Councils and especially the GLC should condemn these cuts, assisting local univerisity workers where possible with facilities for meetings and publicity.

Brighton Conference 1981

There is a danger that after the deputy leadership election on the Sunday night, the rest of this year's Conference will be regarded as an anti-climax. That would clearly be a mistake. Whatever the result of the electoral college, there are other vitally important elections for the NEC and a need to consolidate and extend the victories won on both policy and consitutional reform over the last two years.



It has always been the policy of *London Labour Briefing* to see a non-Parliamentarian elected in the constituency section of the NEC. That remains our long term aim, but the practicalities of the situation this year mean that this must become of secondary importance.

If Benn wins in the electoral college, there will be a vacancy in the constituency section of the NEC. In order to prevent Ashley, Shore or Hattersley from filling this, a co-ordinated push behind one agreed left candidate is essential. The candidate with the greatest chance of successfully beating off the intolerant wreckers of 'Labour Solidarity' is *AUDREY WISE.*

Although we are not pushing a full 'slate' of candidates, attention should also be drawn to those who are most threatened by the right – *BERNARD DIX, NORMAN ATKINSON,* and *JOAN MAYNARD.* All London comrades should be working to maximise support for these three candidates.

Additionally, BARBARA SWITZER of AUEW-TASS must stand a good chance of election in the Women's Section. As a replacement for the wretched Shirley Williams, *London Labour Briefing* would regard her election as very welcome. *PETE WILLSMAN* of Woolwich East received 51 nominations for the new-created constituency place on the Conference Arrangements Committee. 27 of those nominations were from London CLPs, and we would urge all other London constituencies to support him. We confidently look forward to seeing Pete ensconced in the Imperial Hotel in Blackpool next year, and expect a far more receptive ear than the CAC usually give to our many complaints!

PARTY DEMOCRACY

Although the UCW have tabled a constitutional amendment to reverse the Wembley electoral college, this is almost certain not to be debated this year now.

Relieved of the burden of having to fight a defensive battle over Wembley, we can hopefully concentrate our energies on winning control of the manifesto, closing the 'shortlist of one' loophole in mandatory re-selection and the 'three year rule'.

Four constitutional amendments have been submitted on the manifesto and eleven general resolutions and amendments. The composite that will hopefully come before Conference will contain the principle of NEC control and will also be an enabling resolution permitting the constitutional amendment to be brought before Conference immediately.

The constitutional amendment last year was defeated by only 117,000 votes. Since then the APEX Conference has for the first time carried the principle that "the manifesto be drawn up by the NEC and PLP, but final approval to be by the NEC". Their 109,000 votes would be enough to give us victory this year.

The 'shortlist of one' represents the last in a long series of manoevres against mandatory re-selection. In fact, it is an attempt to prevent genuine selection conferences.

Paddington CLP have tabled a constitutional amendment to finally close this loop-hole. Nine general amendments have been tabled to enable the constitutional amendment to be debated this year, and as this simply makes binding what is already part of the NEC 'Guidelines', the chances of success must be fair.

Last year's Conference endorsed the Commission of Enquiry's recommendation that the three-year-rule be reintroduced for constitutional issues. This was despite the fact that Conference has swept the rule away by 5½ million votes only the previous year.

This means that the NEC are obliged to place a constitutional amendment before this year's Conference. Fortunately, they are presenting two options. The best of these would exempt from the three-year-rule any issue which attracted the support of 30 or more resolutions and/or amendments. This option must be supported as the lesser of two evils.

THE POLICY DEBATES

There is insufficient space to deal adequately with all of the policy issues here. Nevertheless, one or two pitfalls are worth pointing out. The two lengthy documents, 'The Socialist Alternative – The AES' and 'Economic Issues Facing The Next Labour Government' nimbly beg the question of incomes policy, while leaving the way open for it to be slipped in 'through the back door'.

NEC and TUC-Labour Liason Committee documents are not open to amendment, and so the only way to tighten up these documents is the more drastic and unpopular step of moving their reference back to the bodies which drafted them.

On disarmament, it is important that one unilateralist composite is carried on a two-thirds card vote, and that the multilateralist composite, however worthy-sounding, is defeated. This is the only way Healey and co. will be prevented from claiming Conference policy is contradictory, allowing them to advocate the option they prefer as "Party policy". It is worth remembering that a unilateralist is merely a multilateralist who means it!

With the current crisis in local government and remembering the experience of Clay Cross, this Conference really ought to give a cast-iron assurance that the next Labour Government will retrospectively indemnify Labour councillors surcharged for what are essentially political decisions. There are eight resolutions or amendments on the district auditor, hopefully enough to ensure debate. However two calling for this have been strangely placed under the heading 'Rating of Vacant Property' (sic), and this may be used to prevent a debate. The two CLPs concerned, Newham North-West and Acton, are advised to contact the CAC immediately to rectify this.

Resolutions on Ireland will be debated alongside the less than adequate NEC document. The compositing session will probably produce two motions, one which includes all the demands such as support for the H-Block hunger strikers and immediate British withdrawal, and one which merely seeks to commit the Party to one or two simpler objectives such as support for the re-unification of the 32 counties and a timetable for British withdrawal. While most *Briefing* comrades will support the first, clearly the second will have a far greater chance of success and would represent a significant advance in terms of Labour Party policy. Therefore, although the second likely composite may be inadequate in a number of ways, it would be unwise to oppose for this reason.

London controls well over 15% of the constituencies' voting strength at Annual Conference. This means that through the *Briefing* network we can have a considerable influence on Party policy, and we look forward to meeting as many London delegates as possible at the *Briefing* fringe meeting in Brighton (details elsewhere).

Nigel Williamson

A Day in Belfast

From August 8th-10th, a Troops Out Movement delegation of 350 people from England, Scotland and Wales visited Belfast and Derry to commemorate the tenth anniversary of internment.

Derek Brough (Hampstead Labour Party) gives a personal account of the first day of the visit.

'Your mons dead' announced an elderly man to the packed bar of McGuinesses pub on the Falls Road, West Belfast. The man he was referring to was the ninth hunger striker to die, Tom McElwee.

That date and moment in time will stay imprinted in my memory for ever. 12.15pm Saturday, 12th August. One of those 'Where were you when war broke out dates'.

We had been in Belfast for less than two hours but that announcement brought us down to earth with a thud. Until then I think there had existed an almost 'day tripper' atmosphere, even the sun was shining. One of the locals was heard to remark jokingly as we quenched our thirstwith pints of cool Guinness – 'Is this the tourists' bar?' We must have looked a strange sight!

As we began to emerge into the Falls Road a chorus of bin lids and whistles sounded by the women and younger kids of the neighbourhood summonsed us to action. The smell of burning drifted towards us from transit van blazing away on a barricade further down the road. Balaclavered youths were distributing 'p' bombs to their comrades out of milk crates, like tickets for a raffle. A huddle of women stood outside the Republican Press Centre saying the rosary.

SILENT VIGIL

Members of the delegation lined both sides of the road with banners unfurled for an impromptu silent vigil. I compared the vigils that had taken place in Kilburn Square with the thoughts that were going through my head in what could only be described as the war zone.

I plucked up the courage and ventured closer to where the barricade was and crouched in a doorway to take a couple of photos. Across from me sitting in the middle of the road was a boy about 8 or 10 nonchalantly banging a bin lid on the road. To him this must be an almost everyday event! As an armoured RUC Landrover broke through the barricade a bombardment of glass rained down on it. Fearing for my safety I retreated to where Graham, Frank and Tony were standing, holding the Harlow Troops Out banner.

We then assembled in the middle of the road for an impromptu meeting addressed by Tom Hartley (National Executive member of Provisional Sinn Fein). Overhead hovered the obligatory army helicopter. His speech was brief and to the point. We then formed ourselves into three single files, republican fashion, either side of the road, and one down the middle, banners stretched across the middle of the road at well spaced intervals. We marched off in silence to picket the army forts which saturate the staunchly



nationalist area of West Belfast. No-one is farther than ½ mile away from an army fort or RUC barracks in West Belfast!

En route we passed the RUC Springfield Road barracks, a modern red brick block shaped building surrounded by a high heavy steel mesh fence. Clustered around it are little streets of old red brick terraced houses with their corner shops. Women who were going about their Saturday afternoon shopping looked on bemused, reading the names on the banners as we wound our way around the maze of streets. 'Birmingham? didn't the provos bomb that place?' one of the local kids asked his mate upon sighting the Birmingham TOM banner.

BEAUTIFUL MURALS

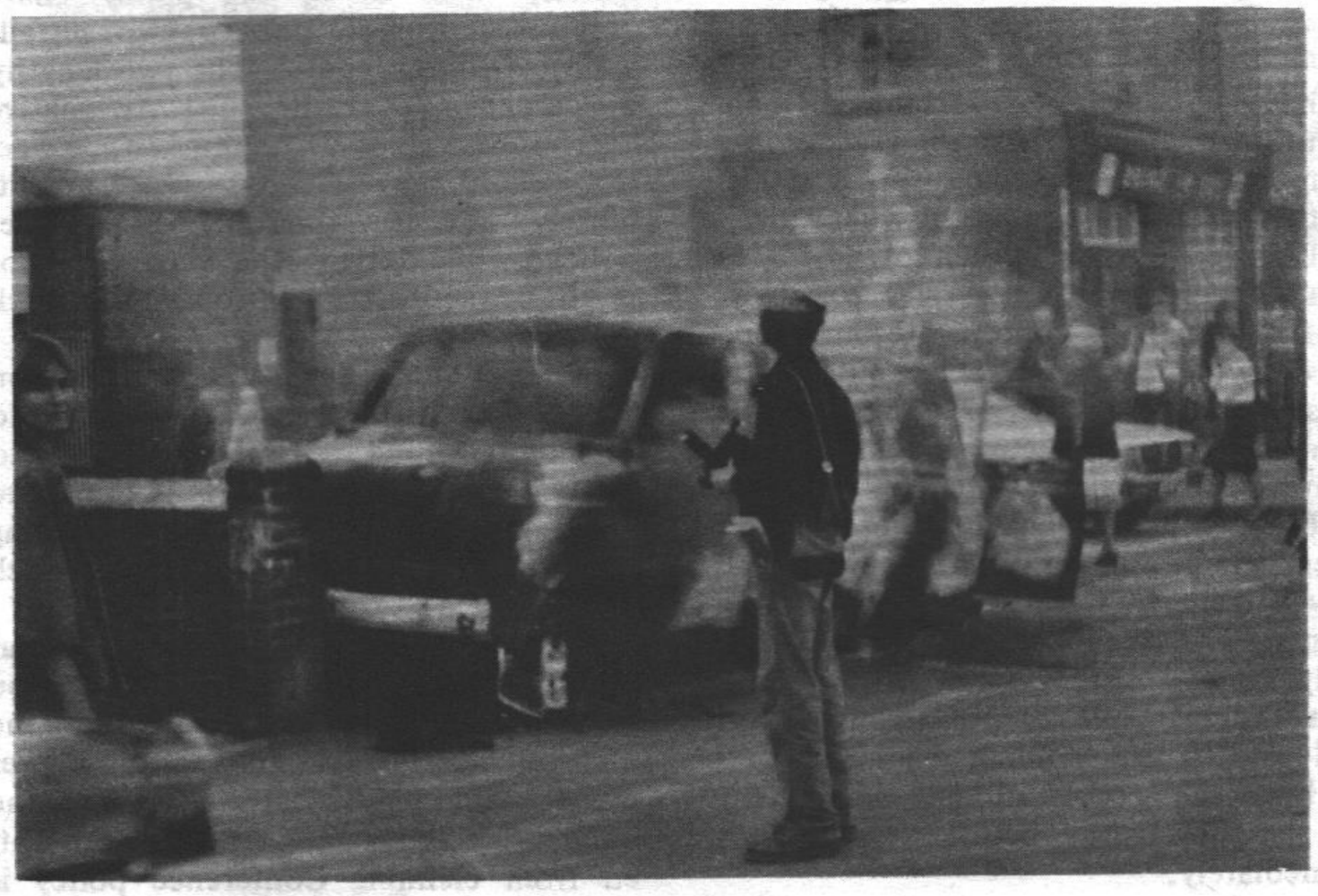
On many of the gable ends of the terraces beautiful murals had been painted depicting support for the hunger strike and the cause of republicanism. Soldiers always waited until they were completed (some take up to 3-4 weeks to complete) then throw cans of paint at them. Many houses flew black flags of displayed 'Wanted' posters of Thatcher. The walls echoed the defiance of a risen people. We re-emerged onto the Falls Road. It was now raining but today thunderstorms would not have stopped us. Passing a petrol station we saw two masked motor-cyclists getting an empty cider flagon filled with petrol, then ride off along the pavement. We smiled at their resourcefulness.

At the Andersontown barracks we stood in silence for several minutes. As we moved off I heard the 'Brits' shout from the safety of their lookout post such taunts as 'Thank you come again', and 'We'll get you fuckers when we get to Norwich' as the Norwich TOM banner passed.

Then up the hill and through the Turf Lodge estate. If you think you've seen bad housing you've not see Turf Lodge. All the shops, or should I say the few, are boarded up. Many flats look burned out or vandalised. We passed the smouldering remains of yet another Transit van, the road is litter stewn with broken glass. Huge bonfires are dotted throughout the area, some as high as 15-20 feet. I was puzzled as to where all the wood came from to make them, so I asked one of the local kids. 'The Falls Park,' he told me.

The most eerie sight was a line of balaclavered youths (about a dozen) lining the road at the top of the hill near

Continued next page



Azania: The Struggle Continues

June 1981 marked the 5th anniversary of the uprisings in *Soweto* and elsewhere, when thousands took to the streets to demonstrate opposition to the oppressive apartheid regime. The deaths of hundreds of young people – some clandestinely killed – remains an 'open' secret, officially the numbers murdered will never be known.

The 'Soweto Uprisings', as it has popularly become known, was again commemorated this year, when thousands of workers, residents and students in the black ghettoes gathered, in defence of the ban on public meetings to demonstrate that they will not be silenced or forced into acquiescence. A meeting at Regina Mundi Cathedral in Soweto on 16th June, organised by the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) was attended by close onto 10,000 people.

16th June 1981 is often misconstrued as an isolated outburst of youthful anger – This interpretation fails to recognise that the uprisings are the results of the mobilisation and political consciousness of black workers, residents and students undertaken by a wide range of Black Consciousness (B.C.) organisations in the late '60's and early '70's. The growth of B.C. Organisations across the country during this period, came after a lull in internal political activity in South Africa after the banning of the older liberation movements; the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

CLAMPED DOWN

In October 1977, a month after the murder in detention of Steve Biko – an early exponent of B.C. ideology – the regime clamped down and banned 17 B.C. Organisations including the Black Peoples Convention: However, these repressive measures together with the detention of community activists, increased security police surveillance and intimidation could not stem the growth of new forms or resistance. Spearheading the mass action of the people amongst workers, residents, and students has been AZAPO. Nationwide workers strikes, strikes against rent increases, bus boycotts, school and university boycotts have all been utilised to heighten the peoples awareness and encourage mass-actions in the peoples struggle for liberation.

In May 1978 when AZAPO was officially launched as a national organisation, just 7 months after the banning of the Black Peoples Convention and other B.C. organisations, the regime immediately stepped in and banned and detained its entire interim committee. This did neither intimidate or silence the people who regrouped and relaunched AZAPO in September 1979. The intimidation and repression has continued as AZAPO continues to organise in the factories, the townships and the schools. Several of its national committee have been banned or detained, several of the branch officials detained or banned, but the resistance throughout the country continues.

MOBILISING

Five years after the 'Soweto Uprisings', black consciousness continues to be a major mobilising ideology in South Africa. At a two-day (23rd/24th May) symposium organised by AZAPO to charter the future direction of the Black Consciousness Movement, 200 delegates from Organisations throughout the country reaffirmed the role of B.C. ideology in the peoples struggle for liberation. The President of AZAPO, Kehla Mtemba, speaking at the symposium summed up B.C. ideology as follows:-

> Blacks are the most ruthlessly exploited and oppressed in S.A. for they are the dispossessed they don't own land, they do not own the means of production, they do not wield any meaningful or significant power, they are dominated and oppressed, by the white minority settler group. The material position which the black man finds himself in is determined in both, racial and economic dimensions, thus reducing all blacks to a class of workers. Therefore in South Africa race is a class determinant.'

Five years on B.C. adherents forced into exile after the 76 uprisings and scattered in some 12 countries across the world have also formed themselves in a unity external wing on the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania – to mobilise international support for peoples struggles inside South Africa and to train cadres for the peoples liberation army.

BASIL MANNING

Further information on B.C.M.A. may be obtained from BCMA 42 Danbury Street, London N1 8JU. (01 226 7153)



New banner presented to the Belfast H-Block Armagh Committee by the New York H-Block Armagh Committee

Ireland

Continued from previous page

the army fort. Slits were cut for their eyes and mouths. They stood in silence, holding petrol bombs in their hands as we passed. I wondered what they were thinking of us. However my doubts were dispelled when later that afternoon some of them drove passed us in an Escort van giving us clenched fist salutes and a cheer.

After picketing (silently) the army fort, we marched down to the Martin Forsyth Centre, the local tenants social club named after a 'volunteer' who was shot dead by the SAS, I was told. So much for having no community support!

BREAK LABOUR'S BI-PARTISAN POLICY!

After a very welcome tea a meeting and discussion took place, platform speakers included Paddy Balger (national executive Sinn Fein, with responsibility for trade unions) and Sile Darragh released from Armagh prison only a couple of days before, after serving a five year sentence. During the discussion period one member of the delegation asked if the best way we in England could support their cause was to support the armed struggle? Paddy Balger's answer was quite clear. If one thought the military struggle was the most important aspect of the struggle then one could always come over and join in. However the most important thing we in England could do was to break Labour's bi-partisan policy, Paddy replied to the amazement of the majority of the delegation.

Efforts are now being made to organise a Troops Out delegation of Labour Councillors to the Six Counties. Would those interested Labour Councillors please contact the editor of Briefing.

WORKERS POWER IN POLAND

by Graham Durham (Hands Off the Polish Workers Committee)

Poland in the late summer of 1981 is not steeped in euphoric revolutionary fervour. Rather the atmosphere is one of grim daily struggle between the workers, poor peasants and technical intelligentsia organised in *Solidarnosc* on the one hand, and the bureaucratic leadership of the so-called "Polish United Workers Party" on the other.

The reality of life for the urban working-class centres around the *kolejka*, the endless series of queues in which long lines of workers – primarily women – stand for hours to try and redeem their official ration of bread, cheese, butter and, rarely, fish and meat. These queues begin to form at 4am and continue throughout the day. As well as acute food shortages, other essential items such as paper, toiletries, medicines and baby foods are virtually unobtainable. The *kolejka* is universal across Poland.

HUNGER MARCHES

The 'hunger' problem is the central issue in the eyes of the Polish working-class. In early August the transport strike which crippled Warsaw was followed by marches in every industrial town. On August 7th I marched in a crowd of 8,000 through the southern city of Cracow. At the end of the march a petition was handed in to the city authorities demanding 'reforms not hunger' and media access for the union. The demonstration grew in confidence as it moved along and was greeted by enthusiastic applause as it approached the city. The stewards from the tram and coach drivers section of the union were in control and no uniformed police were seen although the secret police were amongst the demonstrators.

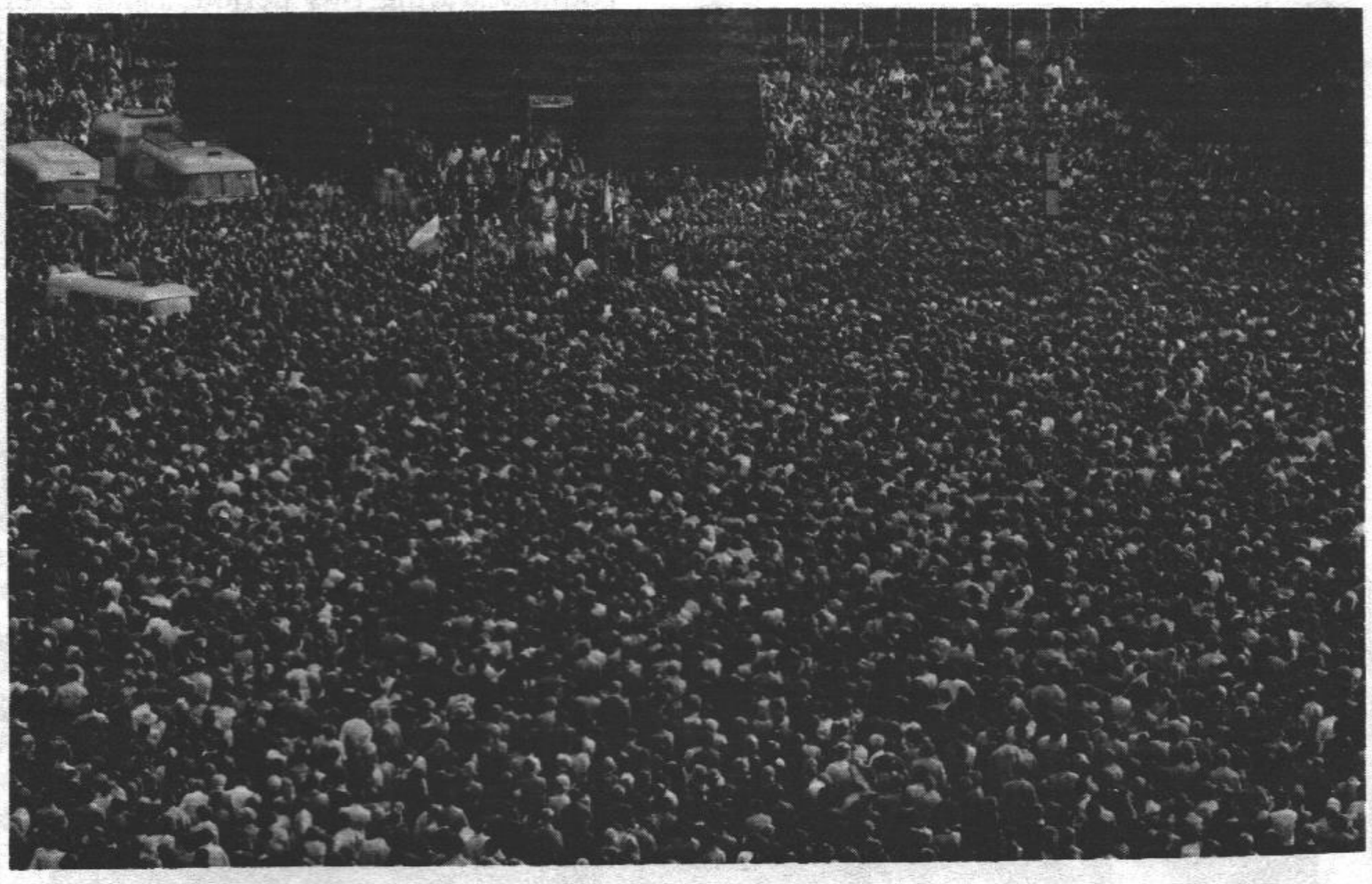
SOLIDARNOSC

Although the union officially is ambiguous, most Poles believe that the government is deliberately holding back food in order to demoralise the solidarity of the Polish workers and peasants. *Solidarnosc* demands that the government makes all import and export statistics available as well as details of food distribution. The government has so far refused this demand arguing that this would involve a transfer of political power to *Solidarnosc*. Both the government and the leadership of *Solidarnosc* hide behind the controversial clause of the Gdansk agreement conceding the 'leading role of the party' (sic) whilst conducting a clear-cut struggle for power in the country.

A REAL "SOVIET"

So far this struggle has been entirely one-sided. The political authority of the bureaucracy, which has always been sustained by the ability to divide workers at the workplace and terrorise those workers who could not be divided, lies in ruins. *Solidarnosc* represents nothing less (in fact not in name) than a national "Soviet" – i.e. a workers' parliament – within which all political, social and economic questions are discussed. At a local level the factory and plant based regional organisations are the real source of information and legitimate power for the mass of Poles. It is clear that *Solidarnosc*, with its membership of 9 million, actually exercises hegemony over at least twice that number. The party, by contrast, derives support only from a narrow section of bureaucrats, from a dwindling section of the cultural intelligentsia and passively from the richer farmers.

The real source of strength for the bureaucrats lies not within Poland but essentially in Moscow, Prague and east Berlin – in the threat of an invasion by the armies of the other Warsaw Pact countries. Although *Solidarnosc* activists are reluctant to discuss the Soviet threat it is clear that the Polish workers would fight and that the party has too little authority to use the Polish army against the workers as it did in 1956, 1970 and 1976. Only the secret police remain firmly under the control of the bureaucracy and so far they have suffered a series of defeats at their attempts to infiltrate *Solidarnosc* and stage provocations.



WORKERS' POWER

The social base of the power of *Solidarnosc* lies in the factories, mines and industrial plants all over Poland. Not only the Lenin shipyards with its booming *Solidarnosc* tourist industry, but the whole of the Baltic coastline from Szczecin to Gdansk constitute the heart of workers' Poland. However in virtually every plant in the industrial towns in Katowice, Radom, Lublin, Lodz, Nowa Huta, Bydgoszcz and others, reports flood in of the discrediting of former directors or demands for elections. Inside and outside every plant stand huge *Solidarnosc* information bollards with the latest strike information. In the Huta steelworks at Katowice the union has run its own ballot for a new director, and in response to Premier Jaruswelki's plea that "directors must not be removed in wheelbarrows", workers promptly placed a wheelbarrow outside their director's office. Whilst the government has formally conceded the need for some autonomy and workers' control, *Solidarnosc* workers have exerted real power over production targets and working conditions and have created the primary conditions for workers' self-management.

TIGHTROPE TO BE WALKED

The success in registering the union, in defeating the Bydgoszcz provocation and in confronting the party monopoly over the media, as well as the creation of an alliance with the poor farmers in Rural *Solidarnosc* – all these battles have cemented a national alliance behind the *Solidarnosc* leadership. At the same time many weaknesses begin to reveal themselves in the Polish political revolution. The recent proposal of the Walesa leadership to give up 8 of the recently won free Saturdays, albeit in return for the union controllling production on those days, met severe opposition from the Silesian miners. A possibility exists that the union will make too many concessions to the needs of the economy before a thoroughgoing political revolution has occurred. Narrow tightrope needs to be walked in which, whilst a wary eye is kept on Soviet intentions, the union continues to assert the independent power of the working-class.

BATTLE FOR THE MEDIA

The government control over the media has already broken down. The banning of state TV from *Solidarnosc* Congress and the two-day strikes in which seven million out of nine million newspapers did not appear demonstrates the current state of this vital battle for media access. In Gdansk on August 20th-22nd the first ever free song festival was held under the title *Zakozane Piosenki* ("forbidden songs"). This attracted political satirists from all over Poland who openly mocked officialdom and the Soviet bureaucracy. Lech Walesa was involved in the 'negotiations' to allow *Solidarnosc* to stage the concerts. Although the government restricts the weekly paper *Solidarnosc* to 500,000 copies, a host of bulletins are produced locally. Many new pamphlets appear investigating the history of the post-war Polish workers' movement and also analysing controversial issues such as the Katyn massacre and the Warsaw uprising. This new freedom is a vital matter for *Solidarnosc*, for within the union there flourish many historically-reactionary ideas. The nationalist cult around Josef Pilsudski – the inter-war anti-Soviet and anti-trade union dictator of Poland – is a good example of this trend. Only the opening up of Polish history to genuine popular scrutiny and debate can alter the current identification of communism with national oppression at the hands of Stalin, Brehznev and Kania.

'REACTION' ON THE LEVEL OF IDEOLOGY

In the new 'free' conditons made possible by *Solidarnosc*, it is inevitable that some reactionary ideas previously banned should appear in the open. For example the Church now feels

Continued next page

GRENADA is no one's back yard!

Nadine Finch
North Islington CLP

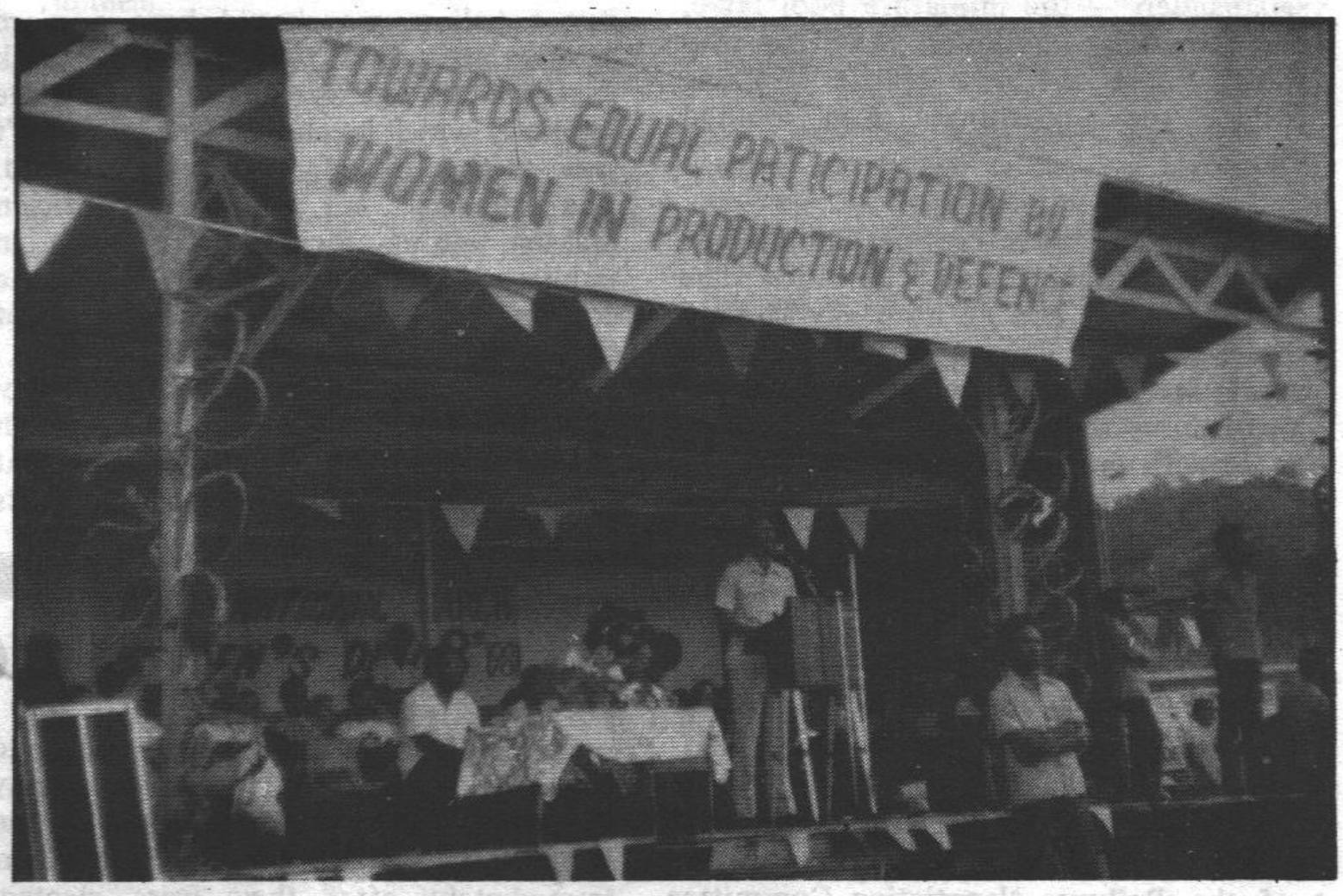
On May 13 1976 Maurice Bishop's revolutionary socialist government took power in the small caribbean island of Grenada. Successful programmes in health care, education and agriculture have flourished despite a freeze on funds from the United States and its allies. This has been owing to an immense amount of work on the part of the Grenadians themselves, both at home and abroad.

A system of local delegate meetings drawing on village groups, women's organisations, trade unions and youth groups is evolving, which will lead to the formation of an accountable national assembly. They are tackling twin problems of unemployment and expensive imports by developing their own alternative agro-industries and employment projects. They have all the disadvantages of a poor Third World country, but have taken on the might of the multi-nationals and their Western allies.

There have been accusations of repression, a police state and lack of democratic elections, but objective visitors have been impressed by the government's evident popularity. The government is obviously anti-racist and anti-sexist, and genuinely community-minded. It has had assurances of support from the British Labour Party and the French socialist government. But in August 1981 Mr. Stanley Arthur, the British representative to the Eastern Caribbean, said that Whitehall was unlikely to renew any aid agreements with this former British Colony. As it is, the threat of a U.S. invasion is still hanging over Grenada, with 250 U.S. ships, 1,000 aircraft and 120,000 troops exercising in the Caribbean on an island very similar to Grenada. The June 1981 edition of the Journal of the American Defence Preparedness Association ran an article entitled: "Grenada – Threat to America's Caribbean Oil Routes." It painted a fabricated picture of Grenada as possessing a highly-sophisticated arsenal of weapons and Soviet troops stationed on the coast. Meanwhile in Atlanta and elsewhere, mercenaries have admitted on television that they are training for possible invasions of Grenada and Nicaragua.

Support groups for Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chilean resistance movements will be holding a fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference on the Thursday evening, where there will be a speaker over from the Grenadian government. For more information contact:

The British Grenadian Friendship Society, c/o 4 Windus Walk, London, N.16. Messages of support would be appreciated.

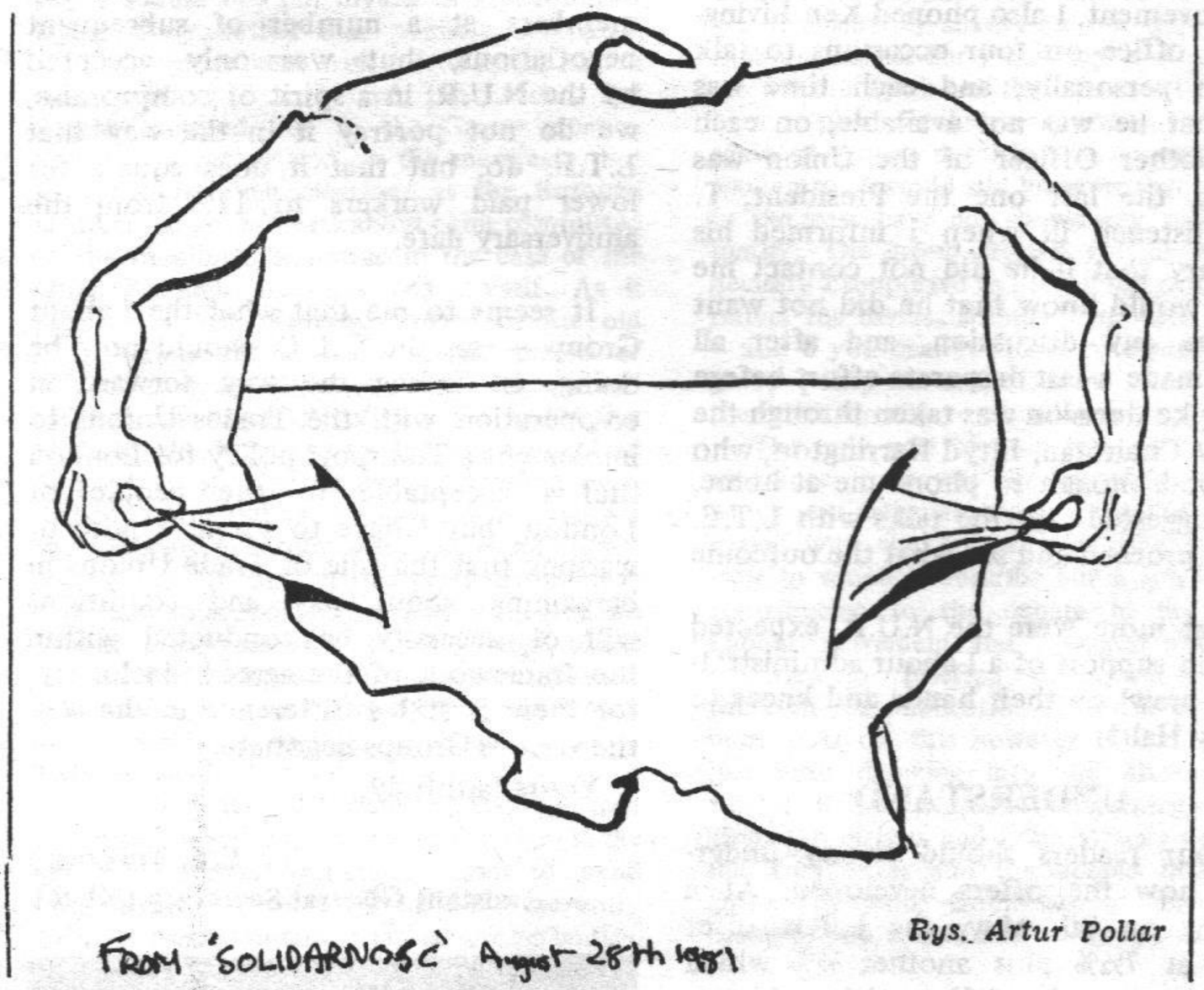


POLAND continued

confident enough to launch an open anti-abortion campaign. The role of the church hierarchy led by the late Cardinal Wyszynski and the Pope has been to warn the working-class to take things slowly and attempt to compromise with the party. Whilst 90% of the population are Catholic, many of these being practising believers, it is obvious that the church retains a considerable ideological hold.

SEXISM RAMPANT

The majority of devout Catholics in Poland are women, particularly women of the older generation and from the countryside. Given the harsh reality of life for the Polish woman it is hardly surprising that the spiritual appeal of the church remains strong. For most women, life is a constant round of queuing, shiftwork, more queuing and domestic chores. Work conditions in textile factories, hospitals and other female work areas remain appalling. Although the crisis in Poland has started to undermine the role of men in 'supplying' their familes, Polish men treat women in a patronising way unusual even by Western or British standards. Coarse, sexist language is common in Polish gatherings and survives, typically, alongside a formal 'honouring' of women with flowers, hand-kissing etc. Since 1975 the far from perfect contraceptive and abortion facilities have seriously declined in quality whilst kindergarten places have become almost unobtainable. *Solidarnosc* is almost exclusively run by men – despite the dozens of women activists in the *Solidarnosc* offices – and so far the union has totally failed to recognise the separate needs of women. This weakness will be ruthlessly exploited by both party and church, and it shows the critical importance of the emerging women's movement in Poland.



Rys. Artur Pollar

FROM 'SOLIDARNOSC' August 28th 1981

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' POWER – THE ANSWER

Poland has the potential to become the first democratically-run workers' state since 1917, but only if it receives massive international political and material aid. Otherwise the western banks and the Soviet bureaucracy acting in ultimate unison may succeed in strangling the Polish revolution. So far, British trade unions have provided no aid at all to *Solidarnosc* – in contrast to other European unions. Please rush printing equipment or donations to my committee through *London Labour Briefing* or direct to:

Anna Fotyga,
International Affairs Department,
ul. Grundwaldska 103. GDANSK.
tel no. 41-02-65 telex 0512184.

This is Ken talking.....

Nick Murray
(Assistant Secretary Bermondsey CLP)

By now most of us will have read half a dozen or so Press profiles of Ken Livingstone. Like Royal Wedding souvenirs one keeps falling over them without really intending to. Hands up those who don't know about the famous Maida Vale bedsit, the tank of newts – sorry, salamanders – the miniature pool table, the Streatham childhood, the Dad who wasn't racist, the posh teacher' training college the unfortunate Ken loathed etc. etc.

Where does all this get us? Should Ken Livingstone have devoted so much time to the media? Did he have any choice? There are those who say that because the media are so obviously and so virulently anti-Labour that we should have nothing to do with them. Unfortunately we can't ensure that they have nothing to do with us and into the vacuum left by lofty silence on the part of Labour spokespeople would creep yet more reactionary drivel. We have, at the very least, to keep our foot in the door.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

But I believe we should have a more positive attitude to the media and I think that Ken Livingstone has so far used the publicity which he almost certainly didn't seek in the first place very well indeed. The spectacle of a Labour politician making strong socialist statements in public without any apologies to the conventional expectations of Fleet Street is very cheering. Imagine Denis Healey . . . Labour politicians don't usually say enough. They don't try and get through to their rank and file supporters that they are still thinking socialist thoughts and not capitulating to the discreet silences of the Establishment.

One of the most revealing profiles I have read turned up in of all places *The Spectator* (1 August) where Ken Livingstone was speaking with more than usual eloquences. Herbert Morrison, he said, was the first populist leader of the GLC, Horace Cutler the second, and he meant to be the third. There can be no doubt that Cutler used the GLC as a platform for his own blend of crude Tory ideology and tatty showmanship. The GLC gives Labour politicians a platform to speak out vigorously on behalf of working class Londoners and the Labour movement in the capital. They should not be afraid to take advantage of the opportunity offered by that public platform to argue the socialist point of view at every point. There are plenty of people out there waiting to hear it.

...and this is Charlie Turnock.

Dear Sir,

To have replied to all the inaccurate statements and comments that have been printed and said over the period of the Railway Negotiating Committee Deliberations on pay, would be time wasting and difficult, but the extensive coverage given in your No. 13 August issue by the three people concerned calls for a reply by me.

Let me first of all say that Sid Weighell did not attend any of the meetings of that body and any statements attributed to him are untrue, he was simply not there.

It is a part of my function in the Union to lead the negotiations for L.T.E. Railway Staff and the two N.E.C. members directly elected by our members are always there.

So far as Ian Williams is concerned, he is a new member of the N.E.C., and naturally, as yet, does not comprehend the intricacies of L.T.E. negotiations as a whole, for there are a large number of different negotiating bodies, one which includes Road and Rail staff, and he has no authority to suggest that L.T.E. Management should be pushed aside and direct negotiations take place between G.L.C. and Unions, it was always the policy of the N.E.C. that we should continue negotiations with L.T.E., but that it was the proper function of the G.L.C. to give clearer directives to them on financial limits they should negotiate within.

INVECTIVE

So far as Ken Livingstone is concerned, it seems he should always keep in mind as Leader, that he speaks for all his colleagues, and some of the personal invective he puts in the letter is unbecoming of a person holding such office. He also knows that it is untrue to say that he had no request from any Transport Union for a meeting, as Sid Weighell and myself met him and others immediately after they were elected, and in a short meeting spelt out the Union's position, and I repeat that between that meeting and the N.U.R. executive strike decision, I first of all had a long telephone conversation with D. Wetzel, Transport Chairman, in which he repeated all the problems that the Management had already told me of, and the financial difficulties of reducing fares, and had the Tories gained control they would have increased fares, from which I did not hold out much hope of any movement, I also phoned Ken Livingstone's office on four occasions to talk to him personally, and each time was told that he was not available, on each call another Officer of the Union was present, the last one the President, T. Ham, listened in when I informed his Secretary that if he did not contact me then I would know that he did not want to have any discussion, and after all this, I made a last desperate effort before any strike decision was taken through the Deputy Chairman, Illtyd Harrington, who was good enough to phone me at home, who suggested that the talks with L.T.E. should proceed and see what the outcome was.

What more were the N.U.R. expected to do in support of a Labour administration – crawl on their hands and knees to County Hall?

UNDERSTAND

All your readers should clearly understand how the offers developed. At a meeting on 7th May, the L.T.E. offer stood at 7½% plus another ½% which could be used for differential problems, or put on the base rate, a clear 8% before the election, and over a number of meetings since, it was advanced by the princely sum of another ½% if a host of strings were acceptable, not much of an intervention by the G.L.C., and am I to now understand that what Ken Livingstone is saying, that L.T.E. should negotiate the least they could get away with, and the Unions fight for, as much as they could get – hardly a socialist wages policy.

In the event, a settlement was reached, but not one that totally suited the N.U.R. for the £50 one off lump sum has been condemned by rank and file members at a number of subsequent negotiations, but was only accepted by the N.U.R. in a spirit of compromise, we do not portray it in the way that L.T.E. do, but that it does equate for lower paid workers to 11% from the anniversary date.

It seems to me that what the Labour Group – on the G.L.C. should now be doing, is finding the way forward in co-operation with the Trades Unions to implement a Transport policy for London that is acceptable to the people of London, but I have to sound a note of warning that the role of Trade Unions in bargaining about pay and conditions will of necessity be conducted within the framework of the agreed Machinery, for there is still a difference in the way the various Groups negotiate.

Yours faithfully,

C.E. Turnock,
Assistant General Secretary (NUR)

ELSIE HORSTEAD SPEAKS OUT...

The front-page article ("School Meals Sell-out") in the previous issue of BRIEFING provoked some lively correspondence, which we print below:

Dear Keith,
I have now had an opportunity to see your disgraceful attack upon a number of your colleagues in the ILEA Labour Group, of which you have not even had the courtesy to send me a copy.

I had already said to Bryn and Frances that in view of your attack upon us in the Education Committee I saw no reason why I should spend the summer working hard to reconstitute all the governing bodies in order to have votes of censure or whatever passed upon me in September, and that I had thought of holding a special Group meeting to settle this matter at an early stage. He replied, 'I am replying on behalf of Frances and myself in your letter of July 20,1981. As you point out Group voted that the Whip should not be on, which means that they will take no action in respect of those members who did not vote in line with Group policy. I do not favour a special Group meeting to hold an inquest into the matter. First the decision by Group is absolutely clear i.e. it will take no action arising from that vote. Second, members are now dispersing far and wide; any Group meeting before September is bound to be sparsely attended. Neither I nor the Group are responsible for the critical comments made by certain individuals following the vote.' This, of course, was before you had gone into print.

I note that you say of us in *Briefing*: '. . . 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 activitists in London' and '. . . the ILEA has been baulked by a rag-bag of right-wing defectors who did not have the support of any part of 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.

Speaking only for myself, I took the issue of the considerable risk of surcharge to my Labour Group in Lambeth, and they agreed that I should not put myself in a position of highly likely, rather than possible, surcharge, with its consequent risk of disqualification from public office. Indeed, the Leader, Ted Knight, pointed out in the Group meeting that I was not elected on the manifesto, but after the Borough elections as the Borough Member. So your remark about being committed to the manifesto is untrue in the case of the other Borough Members and myself. As it happens, I had previously voted in the old ILEA Group for an experimental period of reductions in the price of school dinners, and had had my name left off the list in *Briefing* of those who had done so, for which they had to print an apology. It would therefore seem that both you and the publisher of *Briefing* are endeavouring to mount some campaign against me, and to say that in this particular context that I had no support of any part of the London Labour movement is a lie. The vulgar abuse 'cynical or stupid' and 'rag-bag of right-wing defectors' is, of course, merely that, and is only too common nowadays in certain Labour Party circles.

Until such time as I receive an apology from you, and a promise to put the matter right in the next issue of *Briefing* I see no reason to spend every night and week-end as I am currently doing on the reconstitution of governing bodies, and my share of this work will now cease.* Whether I have to take further action will depend upon the nature of your response.

Yours sincerely,
Elsie H. Horstead

Copies to all Members of the ILEA Labour Group; to the General Secretary and Chairman of the GLLP; the Leader of Lambeth Council; etc.

* What the other two Whips, whom you have similarly attacked will do is, of course, up to them.

...KEITH VENESS REPLIES

Dear Elsie,
I am in receipt of your polemic of the 27th ult. concerning my conduct in writing about people who voted with the Tories to destroy our manifesto commitments. I must admit that this outburst has taken me slightly by surprise as I never thought in my wildest imagination that you could consider yourself as the "injured party" and indeed if I had voted the way you did I would have had the good grace to keep quiet about it. Nevertheless, as you have taken the trouble to write to me I will reply to the points you raise paragraph by paragraph.

I did not "have the courtesy" to send you a copy of the last issue of *London Labour Briefing* because you are quite capable of purchasing a copy the same way everyone else does. Indeed if we sent gratis copies to every right-winger attacked in it we would have to double the print order!

As regards your letter to Frances and Bryn, I talked to comrade Morrell before she went on holiday and she did not mention to me your demand for a special group meeting, but anyway Frances was much more interested in sorting out vital education matters – quite rightly so. I have spoken to Bryn Davies since you wrote and he feels that there is very little point in a group meeting to discuss your status – a view which I heartily concur. The actual contents of your letter show that you have not really grasped the point made at both the Labour Group meeting by Ken Livingstone and in the Education Committee by myself: namely that the left does not favour hauling people in front of the group for "votes of censure" or anything else. The bodies to which we all ultimately answer are our GMCs and the London Labour Party and any votes of censure are the prerogative of these bodies. I personally have no plans to rake over this wretched business again at group, nor has any comrade I have spoken to. I would add however that our critics in the past have not shown any such magnanimity. The group elected you as whip – a decision I supported as I think the group should reflect the diverse strands of thought within it – and if you cannot square your voting against group policy on school dinners and the rate, then that is really your problem.

The only part of your letter with any real substance in it was the fourth paragraph in which you articulate a political defence of your voting with the Tories. It is obviously not a view to which I subscribe but it is a legitimate contribution to the debate in the London Labour movement and I suggest you submit this view to "Briefing" or anywhere else you think fit for publication. The one comment I must pass on this however is that I do not like your dragging into the discussion Ted Knight. It is a cheap and nasty thing to do and given the vicious and lying attacks on Ted by the Tory press and the people in our own movement who should know better, it ill becomes you to add fuel to this particular fire. However, I'm sure Ted can look after himself and I will refrain from developing this point further.

Your demand for an apology is really beside the point. Nothing in that article was factually wrong, the voting figures agree with the minutes of the meeting and the quotes next to it are verbatim. Whilst I do not in any way control the content of *Briefing*, I have spoken to its officers and the editorial collective and they are quite happy to publish any article of yours prominently as part of the on-going discussion about the ILEA and a socialist education policy. Please feel free to be as polemical as you like. *Briefing* has in the past published letters from Andrew Mackintosh, Vic Butler and many others who would normally be thought of as on the centre of right of the party and any contribution of yours will be printed in the same spirit.

More generally, I do feel that you could more profitably have spent your time not writing to me but to Frances and Bryn to apologise for not supporting them in a crucial battle against our mortal enemies. In the debate, they both behaved in an exemplary fashion: listening to the debate inside the group and the wider movement, supporting the majority view of both, and then trying in the short time available to rally support for a stand. They should have been able to count on your support as chief whip. That you chose to with-hold that support and work against a group decision is, in my opinion, a fact that the London Labour movement should know. If you can still keep a straight face when asking people in future to support the whip, so be it. The threat to hold up the appointment of vitally needed Labour school governors again does not rebound to your credit.

One does not have to be a political nostradamus to have foreseen that both the ILEA and the GLC would rapidly come into confrontation with the Tory government and I for one accepted co-option on that basis. At some stage we will have to say to Thatcher, Heseltine and their cronies "Do your worst". Indeed our comrades in Lothian are already facing this dilemma whether they wish it or not. The sooner you and the other nineteen comrades face up to this, the better for everyone.

In the coming months we will have to prepare the London CLPs for the battle ahead. That may require a considerable risk by all of us and the fact that we have lost the first round by defection from our own ranks will not help any. If you can really assert that you never believed we would have to fight the Tories over surchargeable issues, it shows a myopia ill becoming someone in the leadership of ILEA. If you did realise this, cynical is hardly too strong a word for such behaviour.

I have tried to be as detached as possible in this reply and have not adopted the strident and vitriolic tones of your letter but I, and many others in both the Labour Party and the trade unions, am appalled at recent events. Your attempts to evade your responsibility in this matter by deflecting the argument will be seen as little more than the old ploy of finding a scape-goat. If honest political argument and discussion offends you, I can only say that for my part I welcome it and see it as the way our movement progresses. Finally, whatever "further action" you may be contemplating, I can assure you that I will lose no sleep over it. You might just like to think though that perhaps you could better deploy your energies in fighting the Tories,

Yours faithfully,
Keith Veness

C.C. All ILEA members, Arthur Latham, Ted Knight etc.

P.S. As regards to other whips, as you so rightly observe, what they opt to do is entirely up to them.

LETTERS

Ben Walker,
Downham Branch,
East Lewisham CLP

Since John Henry, our Previous GLC Councillor, was defeated over four years ago, Lewisham Constituencies have been unrepresented for four years. We had a Tory Councillor who did not care one bit about the people of Lewisham until this year when we were fortunate to have a Labour Councillor elected to the GLC.

We in Lewisham worked hard for the election of Paul Rossi, but I am becoming very concerned indeed about Paul. Our people in Lewisham did not elect him to side with the Tories, but it seems that is exactly what he is doing. The people in Lewisham elected a *Labour* Councillor, and when we see our Councillor going *against* Labour Party Politics what can we think? What shall I say to the people who have children at school in the borough about all our promises? What should I say to them when they ask me about the GLC giving grants to the Royal Opera House? I would say to the GLC Councillor it is about time we got out priorities right.

The working people have suffered long enough and they will take no more. The people are beginning to ask questions, and they are not very nice ones. How long shall see the people betrayed? We cannot find money to carry out re-wiring of council houses here in Downham, yet we saw the councillors voting for money for the Royal Opera House! We cannot find money to give to our old peoples' homes who need it to employ more staff! This is where the money is needed. The disabled, in the schools, rewiring homes for our council tenants who have paid for their homes brick by brick – not the Royal Opera House.

Bob Walton
36 Hamilton Road,
Southville,
Bristol, B53 1PB

I've managed to get my hands on occasional copies of *London Labour Briefing* and found it extremely stimulating to make comparisons between the methods, aspirations, successes and difficulties of the Left in London and the perhaps – more – modest activities of the Left in Bristol and Avon. Looking for a more regular source of such stimulation, I'd like to take out a year's subscription and enclose a cheque for a fiver – a few bob extra to swell the coffers.

If you can do me a favour: I want to find out more about the GLC Enterprise Board, to provide an input into Bristol District Working Party on Economic Development, of which I am convenor. Any suggestions as to whom I can contact or what I can read would be much appreciated.

Diane Lawrence
2 Laurel Cottages,
Cowley,
Nr. Wells,
Somerset BA5 1RB

I bought a copy of the July issue of *London Labour Briefing* while I was on an unemployment rally, and thought that it was excellent. I found it very informative and well-presented. I edit a local newsletter for Wells and District Labour Party, and I wish I could achieve something as readable as *Briefing*. Congratulations!

I noticed that in one article by Jeremy Corbyn it was stated that campaign material for Tony Benn as Deputy Leader was available from *Briefing*, and I wondered if it was possible for you to send me a copy. I realise that rural Somerset is well outside your circulation area but if this could be managed it would be much appreciated. If you can let me know the postage costs I will gladly forward it to you together with a subscription for *Briefing*.

"FIGHTING TO WIN"
(Accountability and Socialism in Local Government)

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING FRINGE MEETING

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27th,
9.00p.m.

Queen's Hotel,
1-5 King's Road, Brighton.

Speakers:
MERLE AMORY
KEN LIVINGSTONE
AUDREY WISE
TONY BENN
Chair: Jeremy Corbyn

SOCIALIST ORGANISER GOES WEEKLY

Socialist Organiser is now a 16 page weekly. Be sure of getting your copy ever week by subscribing.

Special offer for the new weekly: £3.50 for three months, £6 for six months, £11 for a year. Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Notice to all BRIEFING contributors: Our typesetters have complained about the standard of presentation of copy submitted. In future, we would like contributors to make every effort to keep to the following standards:

Type on one side only of A4 sheets. Use strong white paper. Leave two-inch wide margins at the left AND the right, and leave space at the head and foot of each page.

A double line space (4 clicks of the roller knob) gives the typesetters well-spaced lines – much easier to read! – and also leaves space for substitution marks and minor amendments to be inserted.

To indicate a new paragraph, indent three spaces. Never break words at the end of the line

Finally, remember to number the pages of your manuscript in the right hand corner.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Finally, a message from BRIEFING's editors:
Writers must break up the copy and insert plenty of sub-headings themselves.

WHAT'S ON

CROYDON WOMEN'S DAY
October 10th, 10.30am to 5pm.
At West Thornton Community Centre, London Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon.
Workshops, bookstalls, displays, creche, food.
Women Only.
7.30pm to 10.30pm. Evening event. Mixed.
Details: Emily, 651 3643

"Inner Cities in Revolt", "Fighting Unemployment", "Local Government in crisis" three-theme conference organised by Lewisham Fightback, September 26-27, Lee Centre, 1 Aisilbie Road, SE12.
Enquries to Eric Goodyer, secretary Lewisham Fightback. 692 7826 (home) 467 2636 (work).

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING
TARGET 82
WORKING FOR LONDON'S JOBS
Conference organised by the Employment Working Group at COUNTY HALL on SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER
10.30am-5.30pm
Details from: Bob Crossman, 64 Brecknock Estate, N19 5AN
Workshops on
* **Unemployed Workers Centres**
* **Youth Unemployment & Training**
* **Municpal Enterprise & Industrial Democracy**
* **Women in Employment**
* **Alternative foroms of funding**
* **Briefing ourselves on officers' briefs**
* **Co-operatives**
* **Disadvantaged groups**
* **Structural change – a sectoral approach**

Registration £1 (50p for unwaged) payable at the door.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER CONFERENCE FRINGE MEETING

'Forum on Labour's Strategy'

Speakers include:
Hilary Wainwright, Dennis Barry,
Convenor Laurence Scotts

Thursday, October 1st. 7.30pm

'Hungry Years', 8 Marine Parade, Brighton (opposite Palace Pier)

Followed by social, with Irish singer.

SOUTHWARK PEOPLES' FAYRE
SAT. SEPT. 26th 1p.m.-5p.m.
AT NUNHEAD GREEN, S.E.15.

CHILE + EL SALVADOR
SEPTEMBER FESTIVAL: CULTURAL EVENTS: POETRY, MUSIC, THEATRE, EXHIBITIONS, WORKSHOPS. SEPT. 24, 25, 26; UNIVERSITY OF LONDON STUDENTS' UNION, MANNING HALL, MALET ST., W.C.1.

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