LONDON LABOUR 30p

BRIEFING

No 19 APRIL 1982

Borough elections; target '82:

LET'S RUN LONDON OUR WAY!

We, the undersigned prospective Labour councillors for the London Borough elections, pledge ourselves, on taking office, to do all in our power to implement the following policies:

1. Defend the jobs, services, and living standards of the people of London. We will refuse to cut Council provisions no matter what the pressures and threats.

2. We do not recognize the right of the District Auditor to fix the priorities of local authorities as democratically determined at the ballot-box. The District Auditor's directives will be defied except to the extent that they concern investigations into corruption or similar matters.

3. Where threats of legal action – including surcharges – are made, we announce in advance that we will not tolerate these as reasons for abandoning our manifesto commitments; instead we will as necessary, defy not only the rulings of the District Auditor but also the whole undemocratic system of rule by unelected judges.

4. While the GLC and the ILEA have been isolated and forced to retreat on a number of issues, we see Labour victories in May as an important means of providing added strength to these bodies in resisting pressures from the Tory Government, the judges and the establishment.

5. We will not tolerate present levels of racial harassment and attacks on people from ethnic minorities, street assaults, attacks on women and other forms of crime in London. We will work to set up more accountable and more effective methods of policing our own communities, acting on demands made by ethnic minority', womens', tenants', residents', and working class organisations throughout the capital.

6. We are fighting for victory in the May elections in order to strike a blow against the Tory Government, whose rule we aim to end. We will seek to unite Labour Local Authorities and the Trade Union movement in a mass campaign to bring down this Government and the system it represents at the earliest possible opportunity.

7. We will support moves to establish an 'Association of Socialist Councils in London', to co-ordinate action for the above policies.

8. Finally we see our victory in London as necessary in order to secure for a future Socialist Labour Government some part of that base of strength and alternative machinery of democratic rule which it will need in order to defend itself and carry through its programme to the full, in opposition to the forces of the establishment and the State.

The following candidates – at very short notice – have so far indicated their support:

BRENT: Merle Amory, Ron Anderson, Mary Cribbins, John Crosby, Graham Durham, Mark Feeny, Alf Filer, Neil Grant, Frank Hansen, Manubhai Patel, Angela Shariff , Penny Witham.

BROMLEY: Magali Williamson, Nigel Williamson

CAMDEN: Marion Chester, Neil Fletcher, Graham Shurety, Greg Thomson, John Wakeham, Jenny Wilmot.

CROYDON: Janet Pickering, John Pickering, Roger Bourne, Andy Ward, Julian Gannon.

ENFIELD: Jim Ring

HACKNEY: Gus Martin, Ken Hanson, Hilda Kean, David Clark, Mary Chadwick, Lou Eustace, Jack Davidson, Mohamed Iqbal , Ron Heisler, Patrick Kodikara, Jim Warner, John Bloom, Chris Baxter, Denise Robson, Ros Tyrrell, Maureen Colquhoun, Richard Bryce.

HARINGEY: Jeremy Corbyn, Jeremy Short, Pauline Ashbridge, Steve King, Rosie Elsworthy, Dave Davies, Dave Perkin, Yvonne Bonnamy, Helen Peters, Surinder Attariwala, John Brennan, Don Billingsley, Kevin Hargreaves, Ron Blanchard, Lucy Arnold, Andy Love.

HOUNSLOW: John Connelly, Chris Hickey, Neil Matin, Bill Raymond, Heather Wetzel, Enda Donnelly.

ISLINGTON: Nik Barstow, Alan Clinton, Victor McGeer, Derek Hines, Anne Green, Sally Gilbert, Pat Longman, Ken Banham, Charles Chapman, Chris Calnan, Keith Veness, Val Veness, Kathy Bundred, Bob Crossman, Maureen Leigh.

LAMBETH: Siu Ming Cheung, Geoff Slee.

LEWISHAM: Jackie Addison, Ann Bliss, Jim Dowd, Chris Knight, Ron Stockbridge, Ben Walker, *Bob Guis, Dave Sullivan, Bernadette Marjoram.*

MERTON: Christine Bickerstaff.

NEWHAM: Mike Foley, John Plant.

SUTTON: Peter Spalding.

TOWER HAMLETS: Therese Shanahan, Stephen Corbishley, Susan Carlyle, Chris Rackley, Denis Toomey.

WESTMINSTER: Neil Coleman, Andy Gregg, Bill McElroy, Sue Woolf.

This statement is also supported by the following G.L.C. councillors:

GREATER LONDON COUNCIL: Valerie Wise, John McDonnell, Ken Livingstone, Dave Wetzel, *Andy Harris, Peter Pitt, Mike Ward, Tony Banks, Ed Gouge, Alex McKay.*

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

FARE FIGHT:

CAN'T PAY WON'T PAY!

Support for the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' Campaign is mounting amongst London Transport workers and passengers as March 21st, the day of the fares increase nears.

The unions have again confirmed that their members will not be forcing or harassing passengers to pay the increased fares.

The Fares Fight Campaign has also published a new leaflet supporting the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign as a valuable contribution to the overall strategy to save London Transport.

Despite threats of prosecution from LT's chairman, Sir Peter Masefield, support for 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' is growing. In response to the LT chairman's threat of legal action against CPWP supporters the 13 GLC Councillors who have backed the campaign issued a statement urging Londoners to participate in their thousands.

SUPPORT

In the last few weeks detailed organisational plans have been laid for the campaign's operation on the 21st. A Central Steering Committee has been set up consisting of GLC Councillors, rank and file LT trade unionists, CLP and Fares Fight representatives. The Steering Committee meets every Tuesday evening at County Hall at 7.30pm. The meetings are open to any CPWP supporter who would like to help in the campaign. Please come along and ask your CLP or union branch to send a representative. Similarly ask your CLP or branch to pass a resolution in support of the campaign.

THE CPWP ALTERNATIVE TICKET

'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' Alternative Tickets will be available from local CPWP contacts. Details of the local contacts are available from John McDonnell on 633 7417 or Valerie Wise on 633 6287.

As well as supplying the Alternative Tickets centrally the campaign is encouraging local CLP and any other groups to print and circulate the tickets on their own initiative. The Steering Committee is appealing for funds to assist in the printing of the tickets and the publication of leaflets and posters for the campaign. Please assist by sending any donations to Valerie Wise, Room 175, County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Ask your CLP, union branch or organisation to send a donation no matter how small.

RALLY ON MARCH 21st

To get the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign off to a flying start a rally, hopefully with music, is taking place at County Hall at 2pm on March 21st. We are urging people to travel to the rally in support of 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' by refusing to pay the increased fares and paying the old or minimum fare on their journey.

After March 21st CPWP supporters will be travelling to and from work on the minimum or old fares and with the Alternative Tickets. Outings are also to be arranged to enable people to participate in groups in the campaign.

PARTICIPATE

'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' is a desperate attempt to save the GLC's Fares Fair policy and to save the LT jobs and services at risk. For the first time in the history of London Transport the campaign has linked passengers and workers in active struggle. Its success will depend on mass support. Do your best to participate and help organise the campaign, and generate this passenger and worker backlash against the Law Lords and Tory Government.

John McDonnell and Valerie Wise

CAN'T PAY WON'T PAY – SAVE LONDON TRANSPORT

To: London Transport Executive: I travelled today from . . . . . to . . . . . on . . . . . bus number/tube line, and tendered a . . . p ticket. If you wish to recover the sum due, my name and address is:

Name . . . . . Address . . . . . .

. . . . . Signed . . . . . Date . . . . . .

Fill in, tear off, and present to conductors/inspectors/ticket collectors.

Join the Underground Resistance

Just recently London Transport Management met the Railway Trade Unions ASLEF & NUR at Sectional Council No. 3 level. This Council represents the Train Grades employed on London Transport Underground – Guards, Drivers, Atuomatic Train Operators – to inform us about what cuts in Services they intend to introduce from the 22nd March 1982 because of the Law Lords Decision on the Fares-Fair policy.

Only 3 lines at the moment in time intend to stay untouched; they are the Victoria, Bakerloo, Jubilee lines but the rest are for the hammer.

The proposed reduction in Peak Hour Services are as follows:

District Line	*from 74 trains to 60*
Northern Line	*from 95 trains to 82*
East London Line	*from 5 trains to 4*
Piccadilly Line	*from 78 trains to 67*
Central Line	*from 75 trains to 61*
Met. No. 1 Section Hammersmith & Circle Lines	*from 30 trains to 25*
Met. No. 2 Section which includes Amersham, Chesham, Watford, Uxbridge Branches	*from 45 trains to 39.*

Management have informed us that they will not touch establishments at depots yet or alter the weekend time-tables but they have informed us that they intend to close Croxley Green Depot, and that they want to close some smaller depots and merge them into the bigger ones. But they have informed us that in October or November of this year that they will want to bring in new time-tables which reduce the establishments at depots and tighten up rosters.

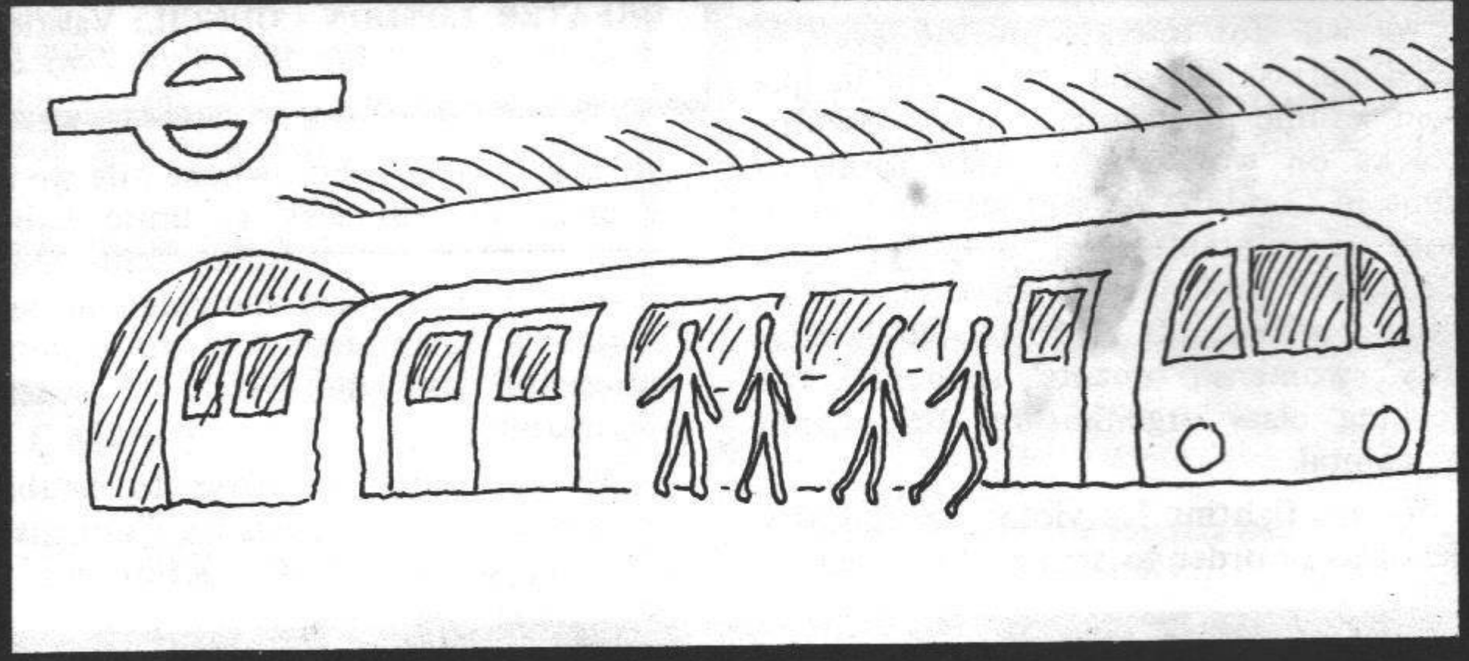
Both Trade Unions have informed Management they do not accept cuts in the service and should Management try to introduce the cuts in the time-table, our Duty Sheet Scrutineers will be instructed not to scrutinize the sheets. Both head offices of the Trade Unions have been informed of our decision.

According to press reports 6 branch lines are under threat of closure. Also some stations are to be closed and it was reported that LT want to close and open the services 30 minutes earlier and 30 minutes later respectively although at the time of writing this we on the shop floor level have not heard this officially from Management from the H.O. of the trade unions.

The Campaign which was officially launched on Thursday 18th February has got off to a good start. Wide-spread leafletting has been started by the activists and train staff in general in an attempt to get passengers to bring pressure on the government to alter the law.

The rank and file train staff will be in the hardest fight they have been in for many years on the underground. We will try to fight any reductions in services and also we will oppose any attempt to introduce flexible rostering.

Stan Godwin
ASLEF Staff Side Secretary
Sectional Council 3



Editorial: IN DEFENCE OF PAT WALL

'Parliament is a minor issue' Pat Wall is alleged to have told a recent meeting of members of the Socialist Workers Party in Bradford.

This was immediately seized upon by Roy Hattersley as 'proof' that Militant supporters are opposed to parliamentary democracy and should be expelled from the Party. Peter Shore too, the very weekend before another disastrous Tory budget, felt that Pat Wall's speech reported in the Sunday Times was more deserving of his attention that the prospect of Sir Geoffrey Howe's latest round of deflationary measures. Mr Wall, he pompously opined, has proved his ineligibility as a Labour candidate.

Others were more circumspect. At the London Labour Party Annual Meeting on the day the storm broke, a leading member of the NEC, not associated with the right, was heard to remark in a tone approaching despair, 'why can't these people just keep quiet?'

But few challenged the right of the Sunday Times to set the agenda for discussion in the Labour Party in this way, and even fewer sought to attempt to defend what Pat Wall is reported to have said.

In fact, in its context, what Pat Wall did say was neither new, surprising nor outside Labour Party traditions. Rather, it was a timely analysis of some of the very real problems the next Labour Government is likely to face.

For it is true that Parliament is only a minor issue *in relation to an understanding of the nature of the capitalist state*. The power of Parliament *is* minor in comparison with the real centres of power in Britain – the City, big business, the civil service, the judiciary, the armed forces, the police, all of which are linked by a thousand threads of wealth, education and social intercourse.

All Labour Governments have discovered that truth, and Tony Benn in 'Arguments for Democracy' has offered as good an analysis of this unaccountable power as anyone.

It is also true that as these sources of ruling class power derailed the modest aims of the last Labour Government, any future Government committed to a genuine socialist transformation of society is going to face pressures of an even more severe nature. The ruling class, as Pat Wall says, 'will defend their privileges and their state' if they feel them to be under threat from a Labour Government.

We do not know to what lengths they might be prepared to go to defend their power and privilege. But we do know that Field Marshall Lord Carver, former Chief of the Defence Staff, has confirmed that 'fairly senior' army officers were seriously talking about the possiblity of a military intervention at the time of the miners strike in 1974.

Pat Wall believes, possibly even naively, that a left Labour Government could deal with 'the capitalist state machine' by abolishing the House of Lords, and the monarchy, and sacking those who wield unaccountable power. He confirmed that Militant believes society can be transformed peacefully through Parliament if we deal with the state machine quickly enough *before it has time to fight back*.

It is those who are reluctant to deal with the problem of the state who, in Pat Wall's analysis would be responsible for the possibility of 'bloodshed' and 'civil war' by allowing the ruling class time to organise precisely the kind of coup of which Lord Carver spoke.

Now most of us connected with London Labour Briefing have differences of opinion with supporters of Militant. We sometimes feel exasperated at what we see as their unwillingness to become involved in a meaningful debate with other sections of the Labour left, and may feel that parts of their programme are simplistic.

But on this occasion, it seems to us that Pat Wall is offering a serious analysis of the most fundamental problem a left Labour Government will face – how can we transform society in the face of a capitalist state apparatus which is going to do its damnedest to prevent us from doing so?

We cannot pretend that problem does not exist. We cannot philosophically say that we will cross the bridge when we come to it. We have to address ourselves to that problem now, and we have to alert our supporters to the very real dangers we face.

Pat Wall deserves credit for doing that, and London Labour Briefing echoes his sentiments in expressing willingness to work with anyone in any organisation to tackle these problems and to advance socialism in a democratic fashion.

A TROUBLEMAKER FROM LONDON

Much has been said and written in the media about the left drawing up so-called hit-lists of MPs. This coverage has been largely inspired by MPs who feel threatened by having to face reselection. In view of their moral indignation on this issue, how many Party members would believe that the PLP is operating its own secret black-list of party activists? Ian Mikardo assures us (New Socialist 4) that the Party has become more tolerant since the '50s and that 'we have no secret-police dossiers'. My own recent experiences challenge this assertion.

'A TROUBLEMAKER FROM LONDON'

I have recently moved to Merseyside from Brent, where I was an active member of Brent South CLP. Naturally, I was keen to continue to be active in my new CLP, but the welcome I received was, to say the least, less than warm. This bemused me, and the plot thickened when, just before the AGM, I was telephoned and questioned to establish my 'political background', membership of 'various organisations' and 'political ambitions'. After some intelligence work it soon transpired that officers and prominent members of my new CLP had been warned to expect a 'troublemaker from London'.

Comrades may feel that this is nothing unusual; I wasn't too concerned myself. However, a few questions revealed that this was not a personal vendetta, but part of what seems to be something more organised and sinister. Apparently the friendly warning of my 'infiltration' came not from some former adversary, but from the Opposition Whips Office! This suggests that the Whips Office is acting as a clearing-house for an organised black-list of activists, presumably with the aim of making life uncomfortable for 'undesirable elements' and preventing them from gaining office. As further circumstantial evidence for this claim, I hear that a certain MP, with connections with the Whips Office, has been seen to read out the names of 'undesirables' from a printed list.

PERSONAL FILES

Several comrades also tell me (despite Ron Hayward's claim that he burned all the personal dossiers which he found at Head Office – Labour Weekly 5.3.82) that as recently as 1979 the National Agent was able to produce bulky personal files relating to well-known left wingers.

In view of the inquiry into 'Militant' currently being undertaken by the NEC, and the likelihood that it will be followed by a witch-hunt against its supporters, the existence of a Whips black-list and secret personal dossiers take on a sinister significance. Probably many comrades who, like me, have done nothing more than argue and fight for greater accountability in the Party, are also black-listed. And, of course, such a list would provide the perfect basis for a right-wing expulsion campaign.

This type of secret compiling of lists of the 'unclean' is the opposite of the left's reselection campaign. We have *openly* criticised our opponents, *openly* reported their *own* statements and *published* their voting records. We must all be prepared to have our political position put to the test, but black-lists are designed to prevent the black-listed from receiving a fair hearing.

For a few years now the Party has been arguing the case for a 'Freedom of Information Act'; we should start by putting our own house in order. As a first step, the NEC should open the files so we can all see what they've 'got on us', and the goings-on in the Whips Office should be urgently investigated.

Stuart Marshall-Clarke
Wirral CLP

Editors Note:
Any more information on the Whip's black-list should be sent to Briefing – urgently!

Last month's Editorial, 'Taking To The Streets', provoked a great deal of criticism from supporters and readers of Briefing. We print below the articles received.

The Case for Withdrawal

an alternative editorial

Keith Veness
(Islington Central CLP)

'*Briefing*' grew out of organisation for a socialist GLC, which culminated in the victory of Labour in last year's elections and installed Ken Livingstone as leader. We worked hard and campaigned hard to not only end the rule of Cutler and the Tories but to see there was no repeat of the spineless Labour leadership previously carried on by the likes of Reg Goodwin, Ashley Bramall and Andrew Mc Intosh.

To this extent, we have registered an amazing success. The group's on the GLC and ILEA have attempted to really implement our manifesto and to support the sort of policies we expect to be part of a socialist administration. In this sense '*Briefing*' remains the staunchest supporter of the Labour administration at County Hall.

END OF THE ROAD

However, we have now reached the end of this particular road! The events of the last two or three months have put both the GLC and ILEA in the appalling danger of doing a U-turn and attacking those groups who have up to now been their most enthusiastic supporters.

As a result of the Denning and House of Lords judgements, the GLC is now being forced to tear up the main plank of our manifesto and will be forced to dismiss hundreds of transport workers and cut services if it complies. Equally, ILEA now has no option, in view of the £11,000,000 it cut from its budget under pressure from the lawyers, but to disappoint many groups of staff and parents who will be knocking at its door this year. A slow, gnawing process of disillusion is being started that will result in a gradual wasting of our support. Only a clear refusal to shoulder the burden of office without power, or administration without control, can keep the chance of maintaining the momentum.

LAST MONTH'S EDITORIAL

In this sense, I must take issue with last month's editorial by Chris Knight and Valerie Wise. There is not now sufficient reason to stay in office, despite the plans in employment, education and housing. These are little more than palliatives and will neither generate the enthusiasm we need nor make up for the failure to confront our enemies in the government and the Law Courts.

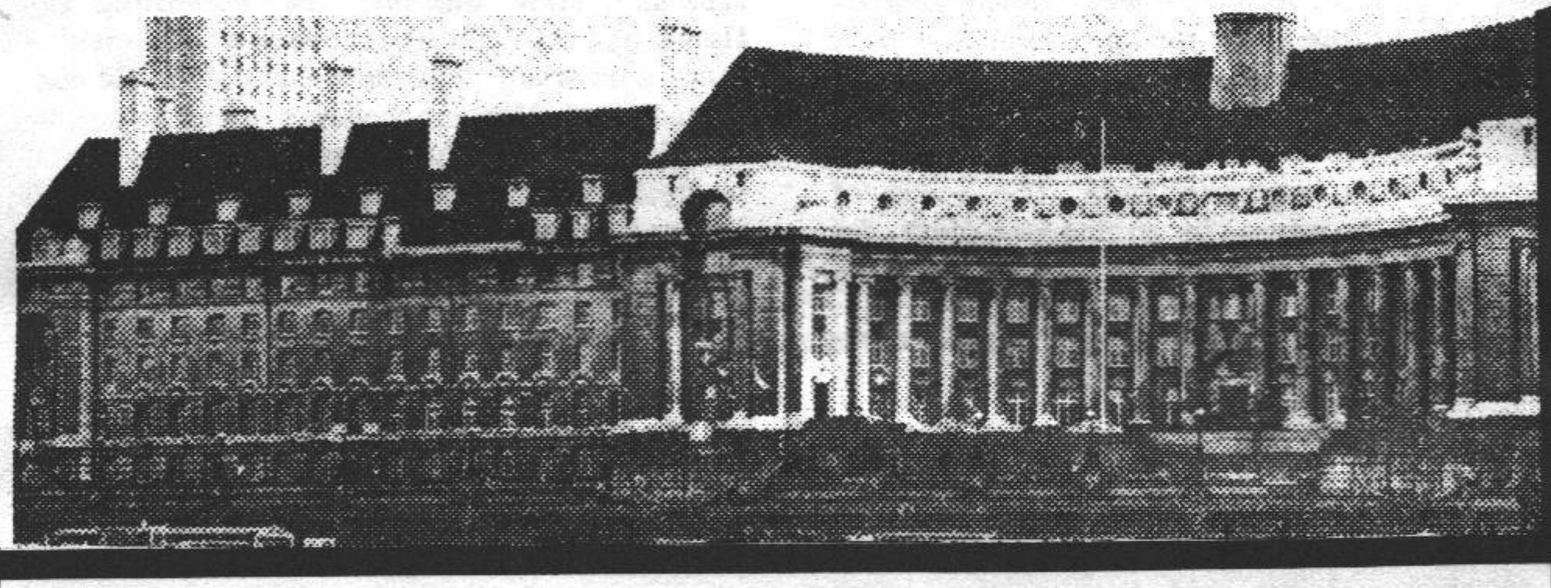
Another aspect must be drawn to comrades attention also. *Briefing* helped to win a majority of 'left' councillors to run these authorities. However, this process of regeneration was only partially complete and on both the GLC and ILEA a large right-wing rump remains that has no loyalty to socialism or even to the manifesto it was elected on. It is sullen and bitter and aims at destroying all the gains made by the left. It has voted with impunity to support the Tories on many issues – school meals, opera subsidies and the fares increases being the most blatant. The movement has allowed these renegades complete freedom to do this and they will repeat this behaviour every time the threat of surcharge or court action is wheeled out by the Tories. The most committed of these people have defected – Sofer, Rossi, McAskill and Kingwell. However the majority remain and constitute a real barrier to any battles needing to be fought.

Given the set backs in the courts and refusal of a large minority of Labour members to back any real fight, the only course now is one of majority opposition. At a certain agreed date we should simply withdraw from office and use our majority to defeat any proposals from the Tories and/or the SDP.

NO EASY OPTION

This is no easy option. It means many committee chairs abandoning pet projects and it means losing all the subtle 'behind-the-scenes' help given to many groups of people. Nevertheless it spells out in a fairly dramatic fashion what the real situation is. It avoids the dilemma of office without power and means we do not carry out measures forced on us by the Tories and their 'stooges in ermine' in the Law Courts.

Majority opposition is now the only honourable course for the comrades at County Hall to follow. A decision to do anything else is the road to disaster. This is the acid test to distinguish socialists from social administrators. It cannot, and must not, be ducked.



The last two issues of **Briefing** have cost £1,500 each to produce. We're selling more than ever now. Our print run is 3,800. But the more we grow, the greater are the costs. We're desperate for your financial assistance. We receive a subsidy from our readers that has now grown to £90 per month. But we need much, much more. If you want to see **Briefing** continue to expand its influence in the London Labour Movement, please:

1. Send us a donation
2. Complete the Standing Orders Form.

All contributions to Jon Pickering, Flat 10, Scoresdale, 13 Beulah Hill, London SE19.

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IS BRIEFING GOING SOFT?

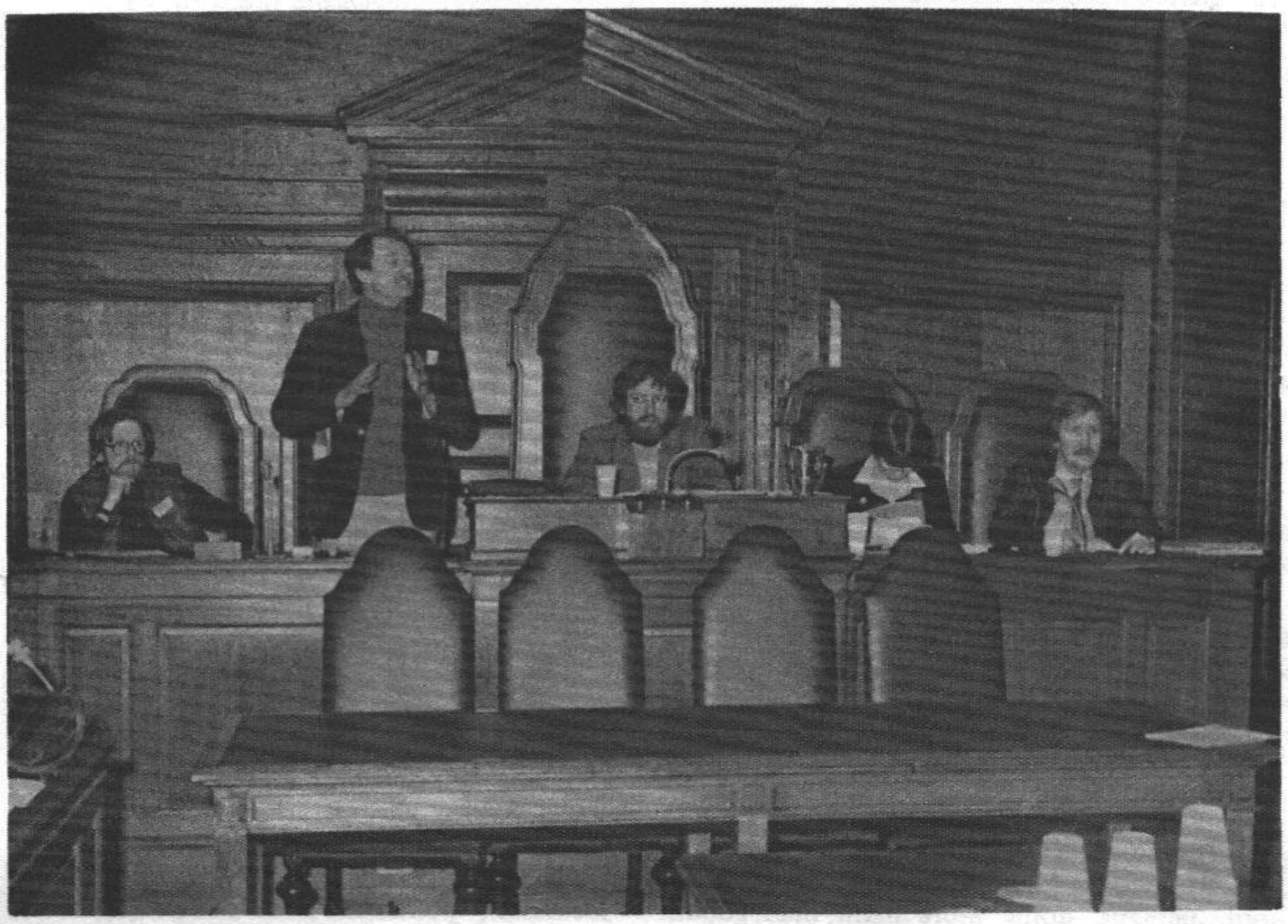
The last number of London Labour Briefing carried two articles, one by Ken Livingstone, the other an editorial, defending the present stance of the Labour group on the GLC. Both were in reply to a vote passed by a large majority at the Target 82 meeting held on 1st February that the Labour Group should vote against their own GLC budget rather than comply with the ruling of the Law Lords outlawing the cheap fares policy for London Transport. Such action would have brought the GLC to a standstill and placed those councillors who so acted outside the law, facing surcharges and possibly prison. The advice of the Target 82 meeting was not followed and the budget was duly passed. Both the articles in question argued that this was the right course because, although cheap fares, together with many other important policies promised in the manifesto, have had to be abandoned under pressure from the Tory government, enough remains for the continuance of a Labour administration at County Hall to be worthwhile. I believe this view to be misguided although I do not question the sincerity of those who hold it.

Over the last 37 years we have been treated to the unedifying spectacle of Labour politicians indulging in a plethora of radical rhetoric while in opposition or during the run-up to an election, followed by a pitiful paucity of radical action once those same politicians came to power. Immediately compromise and expediency became the rule as successive Labour Governments and councils struggling to make a dying capitalist system function. The result has been the growth of disillusion, cynicism and apathy among the electorate and near despair among party activists.

A NEW MOOD

After the 1979 election defeat there seemed to be a change. A new mood swept the party. Important constitutional advances were made and candidates began to come forward who seemed to show a real commitment to socialist ideology. Canvassing in the last GLC election was a pleasure. For the first time, when the electors grumbled that politicians never kept their promises, one could reply that now it was different. There were Labour candidates of real courage and integrity who would stand fast by their manifesto promises. They would not betray their supporters. The canvassers were wrong. When faced with a real challenge from the capitalist establishment our representatives on the GLC surrendered, creating a crisis of credibility. The policies that have been lost on school meals, the sale of council houses, rents and the cheap fares were the very heart of the manifesto and should have been defended at all costs. What is left is the small print, tiny grants to the publishers of feminist and gay magazines and the establishment of committees on such matters as the rights of women and ethnic minorities. These are worthy causes but there is nothing specifically socialist about them. Any regime of pragmatic liberals could do as much.

A great deal has been heard of the 10% growth promised in the budget, but 10% of what? The actual figure appears to be about £40 million for the whole of London, the kind of sum that the Ministry of Defence probably spends on paper clips in a year. There remains the London Enterprise Board, but this is almost certain to be ruled illegal by the Tory government and we know now that our councillors will accept that decision.



JUSTIFYING SURRENDER

So, we are in the familiar position of watching a Labour administration, elected on a radical manifesto, having its policies shot to pieces within a year of coming to power, clinging to office by its fingernails and justifying its surrender with the same weary arguments that any Labour council is better than a Tory/SDP one. This is not true. The sight of politicians refusing to fight or resign when they have been prevented from implementing their policies produces at best mockery, at worst despair among the voters. A stand on principle by our Labour councillors would have produced electrifying results. Nothing would have been more conducive to creating the mass movement so often talked of than seeing our elected representatives actually prepared to fight and suffer in defence of local democracy and their manifesto commitments.

Over and over again history has shown that a stand on principle produces massive support. When John Wilkes, the eighteenth century MP, was expelled from the House of Commons and imprisoned for supporting press freedom, the whole of London came out in his support. The streets were filled with crowds shouting 'Wilkes and liberty'. He won. If only a similar opportunity had been granted to us. Equally history has shown that the compromisers usually achieve the opposite to what they intend. The failures of successive Labour administrations has convinced a large slice of the electorate that socialism does not and cannot work and so, I fear, the present situation will prove again. A direct confrontation with the government or an election fought on the issues of local democracy and the inviolability of manifesto promises were the only two courses consistent with honour, integrity and a true socialist commitment. If the advice of the Target 82 meeting had been heeded the Labour Party would have gained immeasurably in public esteem and confidence.

SAD IRONY

There is a certain sad irony in the last two sentences of the editorial. 'There is another legal verdict higher even than that of the Lords. It is the verdict of the people themselves'. It seems the last thing our councillors want is an appeal to the 'Sovereign People'.

Paula Watson
City of London and
Westminster South CLP

MORE DEBATE ON THE

Open letter: *'The Class Struggle is always now...'*

An open letter from John Bloxam and John O'Mahony of Socialist Organiser to Valerie Wise and Chris Knight, authors of the editorial in the March 'Briefing'.

DEAR COMRADES,

It was with some surprise that we read the editorial in the March London Labour Briefing, not least because it was in flat contradiction to the position adopted at the February Target 82 meeting.

There, it was agreed by a big majority that the only socialist policy for Labour was one of resistance, up to and including voting against the GLC budget. Probably the strongest speech at that meeting, against what is now Briefing editorial policy, was made by Chris Knight.

Now you justify the decision of the GLC majority to 'make the best of it'.

It seems to us that your present policy is seriously wrong. As people who value the collaboration of London Labour Briefing in such enterprises as the forthcoming conference on trade union democracy, we think it especially important to discuss this with you.

Your editorial is a strange mixture of lucid condemnation of what the GLC majority decided to do (and you now justify) and other bits expressing a mood of depression and defeat.

You pose the questions clearly:

"If... we are in *office* without power, are we not, perhaps, doing more harm than good... allowing ourselves to be used as instruments of the Tories and the capitalist state – forced to do their dirty work for them, because our opponents would rather not face the anger of the people in their own name.

"*Is* this what is happening? To some extent no doubt it is. And to the extent that this is so, we are actually *preventing* the working class of London from being able to see the class enemy clearly exposed, stripped of the figleaves...

"Are we not clinging to the trappings of office as real power drains steadily from our hands? Is this not the pattern of all past Labour governments played out on a smaller scale within our own ranks?...

"And if our experience as a left wing GLC is to prefigure the future of the next Labour government, shouldn't we be doing better than this?"

Every word is sharp and true, and inexorably points to *this* conclusion: *those who are determined not to allow a re-run of the experience of past Labour governments must refuse to accommodate now in local government, or accommodate to those who accommodate.*

Instead, the mood of depression and defeat leads you to this conclusion:

"The task is to stay in office and add to our power by winning, first, the borough elections ..." But you know and state the serious left wing case against this, too. You say: "We are almost *forcing* the majority of Londoners to conclude that their real enemies are the forces which are *ostensibly* and *legally* in charge: 'socialism', 'politicians', the electoral process, the Labour Party..."

That is not how to win elections!

Look at the lessons of the rate rise policy.

Because the major forces of the rank and file left tied themselves to Labour councillors who chose to be administrators rather than militants, they gave up the chance to organise tenants and workers to fight back. When the rate rise policy collapsed, there was nothing.

It is not a matter of calling Ken Livingstone 'traitor' – which he is not. But a line must be drawn between the local government administrators and those who focus on a rank and file fightback now, in whatever way possible and with whatever weapons are to hand.

Has London Labour Briefing learned nothing from the rate rise fiasco?

Against your own better judgment, you are now again allowing your policy to be decided for you by those who are – however reluctantly – trapped in local government administration. This is no way to build and sustain a serious Labour Left.

You talk about doing better *next time*, in a *different* fight later. But if the GLC left will not fight for its major manifesto plank, what will it fight for? Comrades, the class struggle is always now. The struggle now is decisive for organising and training a serious Left that can secure the socialist future.

Pass up that struggle, strike your flag in defence to the established leaders who are refusing to give a militant lead, confine yourself now to talk of what you will do in another fight in the future, and unavoidably you contribute to perpetuating the vacuum of militant political leadership in the labour movement.

We hope you will reply in the columns of Socialist Organiser.

Reply: *'The showdown is to come...'*

THANKS for your 'open letter' in response to the Briefing Editorial. This reply is my own alone.

One point I accept. The editorial was not half hard enough on Ken Livingstone or on the leadership of ILEA (who caved in to pressure quite unnecessarily and without a fight). Our editorial said:

"We are not yielding ground to the Tories any more than we are being literally forced to".

For some of us, this may be true, but we should have made a sharper distinction between certain members of the GLC left and others.

At various times, there has been clear dissatisfaction with the way in which Ken Livingstone led resistance to the decisions of Denning and the Law Lords: those points should have been reiterated.

The substantive issue, however, is whether or not the whole Labour GLC should have voted against its own budget last month and resigned. You say that this should have happened, in accordance with the vote at the February meeting of 'Target '82'. My view is that it was correct to say: 'Resign rather than capitulate': anything is better than to be seen by Londoners as politically compromised through collaboration with the rule of the Judges and the Tory Government. But *is* this what is happening? I don't think so. It is not quite fair to describe Ken Livingstone's policy as 'protest against the fare rise but vote for it' (which is how you describe it in *Socialist Organizer*). When the crucial vote came up, Ken Livingstone and the GLC left voted almost unanimously *against* complying with the Lords. It was a combination of Labour right-wigers, the SDP and the Liberals with the Tories which defeated this line. From then on, the question became whether to draw up a budget at all. At the 'Target '82' meeting in question, I felt it necessary to place the hardest pressure on Ken and others to avoid them being seen to compromise in the smallest respect, because of the effect such weakness at the top might have had on the morale of those engaged in the 'Can't Pay – Won't Pay' campaign and the struggle for industrial action in support of 'Fares Fair'. As the budget vote approached, however, there began to develop the most intense bitterness between those who had supported the 'Target '82' line on the one hand, and virtually the entire left of the GLC Labour Group on the other. Should we have pressed the division to the point of splitting the BRIEFING network irrevocably, with the Tories and the press able to exploit this split?

Had we been sure that 'disengagement' – i.e. the immediate resignation of the Labour GLC – was popular with the mass of London Labour Parties, with the trade union rank and file and with all those wanting a fight against the Lords' decision, and had we been sure that this would have strengthened, rather than weakened, our forces in relation to the Tories, we would have carried through the necessary split. But was this the case? Would BRIEFING have carried the bulk of London left activists with us in direct opposition to Ken Livingstone and the GLC? I don't think so. It is important that we are conscious of our own strength – not underestimating it, but not wildly overestimating it either.

My view is that the mass of Londoners see the attempted doubling of fares on London Transport as being *despite* the efforts of Dave Wetzel, Ken Livingstone and the Labour GLC. They are not blaming us for these increases: they *do* see the Law Lords and the Tories as responsible. An editorial in BRIEFING must surely perform a slightly different function from a vote taken by activists at a meeting of 'Target '82': it is more public, and it must attempt to transcend tactical differences and unite the maximum possible range of left activists around us under the conditions which actually exist. Once the 'disengagement' line had been shown to have little support, we had to take account of this, not keep pressing it mechanically and regardless of consequences. You write: 'You talk about doing better *next*

MARCH EDITORIAL

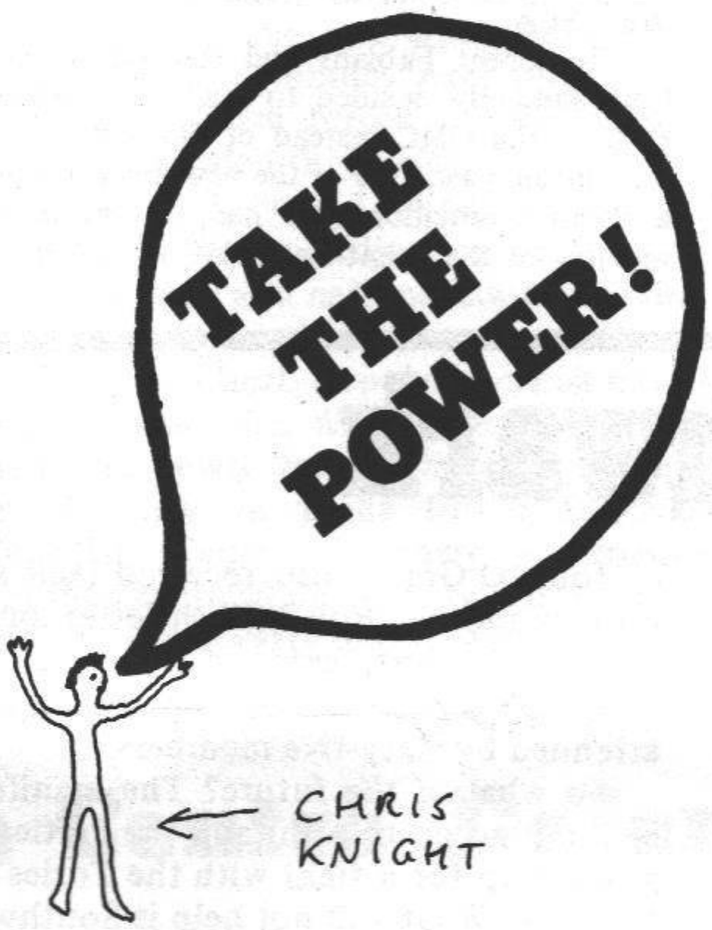
Debate: *'There is no political will on the GLC'*

As Target '82 (the attempt to elect socialist Labour borough councils in May) draws to a climax, it is vital for *Briefing* to begin to look ahead and to draw the necessary conclusions from the combined experience of the GLC, Lambeth and other councils outside London who have tried to resist the Tory government central attacks. It is clear that many alternatives used by Labour boroughs over the last three years are no longer available – including rate rises, 'cosmetic cuts', and 'redundancy by stealth'.

After May it is to be hoped that a group of borough councils in London will exist – or at least a large part of some Labour groups – that are determined not to pass on Heseltine's cuts in any form. This must include a refusal to carry through the financial consequences of any cuts introduced in mid-year by Heseltine under his new powers. A carefully co-ordinated fight from May will be essential and will almost certainly require use of the 'majority opposition' or 'deficit financing' options. Either way, attempts to maintain jobs and services while keeping rents and rates down are *sure to be declared illegal* and will therefore require councillors prepared to put themselves at risk of surcharge or other legal action. Such a course of action will be useless without being backed by unions prepared to fight to defend jobs (as in ASLEF's rostering victory), tenants prepared to withhold rents from auditors' demands and communities rallying behind the defiance of the councillors. This will be the real test of Target '82 – for local parties to mobilise and unify this support.

LIES, DAMNED LIES AND . . . 'LEFT EXCUSES'

In this context, the *Briefing* editorial last month was absolutely correct in its call for a widening, mass scope to the defence of working-class interests in London. Yet the argument used to justify this turn to the masses was entirely dubious. We were told that the GLC, despite all its heroic efforts, was being smashed against the brick wall of the capitalist state. Yet anyone with a passing knowledge of the GLC Labour group would know this to be untrue. Surely the combined talents of Chris 'Take the Power' Knight, Valerie Wise and the *entire*



Briefing Editorial Collective were not trying to invent excuses for the left on the GLC. Alas in black and white they write 'comrades should not doubt us . . . we are not yielding ground to the Tories anymore than we are being forced to.'

THE THREATS TO TARGET '82

Within the last few weeks the Labour group at County Hall have:–

- carried a budget including the smashing of the Labour group's fares policy – without a single vote against from the Labour group.
- in common with many other Labour councils, increased rents to tenants again.
- in ILEA, lopped £11 million off their budget in response to legal threats, which will mean at least £7 million in cuts.

It is precisely because the GLC contains many comrades on the left that we should look carefully at this record of retreat. It is not a question of trust in individual comrades but of drawing and applying the lessons of the GLC and Lambeth for every London Labour council. In essence the GLC has come under pressure from two sources:–

a) the legal threat: There is no political will on the GLC to defy Tory law – not even on the most crucial issue of fares, which would have created tremendous problems for the Tories.

b) the threat of the Labour right: Most of the retreats on the GLC have come after sustained pressure from the unreformed right on the GLC. Beginning with the defeat over school meals, these political scabs have been able to dictate key areas of policy.

Those of us hoping to be elected in May must be prepared to face these issues. We cannot accept political responsibility for attacks on the living standards of our own supporters either from the dictates of Tory lawyers or under pressure from an SDP 'fifth column' inside our own Labour groups.

Finally to clear up one factual error in the March editorial. At the January Target '82 meeting a motion was heavily carried that the left on the GLC should not vote through any part of the Law Lords' decision. This motion did not, as alleged, call for the GLC to resign, which would clearly be a crazy response. The only speeches against the non-compliance position were those of Ken Livingstone who argued that Masefield would simply impose the rises anyway and of Valerie Wise who argued that other parts of Labour's budget were just as important. Neither of these arguments seemed particularly strong to the meeting – all the more odd, therefore, that the entire political leadership of *Briefing* became convinced during February. It seems to me that in voting through the increase the London labour movement has missed a great chance to embarrass the Tories and to boost the trade union and commuter fight against the fares increase.

Graham Durham,
Labour council candidate, Brent

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time, in a *different* fight later. But if the GLC left will not fight for its major manifesto plank, what will it fight for? Comrades, the class struggle is always now.' I would agree that 'the class struggle is always now', but on the other hand a sense of timing is useful sometimes as well.

What I think you inadequately understand is that we are engaged in a struggle not just for propaganda-points, but for power. It is the realities of power which are the problem, not 'incorrect ideas' in Ken Livingstone's (or anyone else's) head. If we had full state power in our hands, we wouldn't have to make difficult choices between almost equally-unsatisfactory alternatives: we could smash through the system, implementing cheap fares (or *free* fares) *without* raising rates, *without* having to bother about Judges or the 'law', *without* having to take account of 'economic realities' in capitalist terms. To the extent that we lack full power, however, things aren't so easy. We have to choose between unsatisfactory alternatives. On the other hand, the fact that we do have to do this just shows that we are living and struggling in the real world, not just in a world of paper, propaganda and resolutions.

When I have advocated 'disengagement' in BRIEFING, I have always made clear the implications of this. Ceding office *may* be an appropriate tactic at times, but ceding power is *always* a mistake unless it is forced on you. The only circumstances in which it would be right to disengage would be those in which we would have *more* power out of office than in. If the Tories and their allies, in assuming the responsibilities of office in place of ourselves, found themselves up against an absolute wall of resistance which made them virtually incapable of ruling at all, then the tactic would have been proved correct. Even then, however, it would only be correct if we were so *permanently* strong that we could soon force another election and regain office ourselves – this time with real power in our hands. It is obvious that the disengagement tactic presupposes a very high state of class-consciousness in the population. The moment of disengagement then becomes a signal for massive, near-insurrectionary upheavals in which something like 'dual power' becomes posed. It would have been nice if that had been the situation this spring in connection with the 'Fares Fair' fight, but unfortunately, it wasn't. It is correct and necessary to state that we will have to 'do better next time, in a different fight, later'. The decisive show-down with the ruling class is yet to come.

Yours fraternally,
Chris Knight.

Borough briefing

BRENT

LEFT VICTORY IN BRENT EAST

Brent East Labour Party has just had the most tumultuous and bitter two months since the constituency was formed in the late sixties. An amazing alliance between the Tribunte Left in the party and the extreme Right just failed to oust the key officers of the constituency, now firmly in the hands of the Left.

The attempted coup started in January at Branch AGMs. At Gladstone Ward, the entire GMC delegation of the previous year (representing a very broad range of political opinion) were replaced by a bevy of local councillors, conspicuous by their absence at previous Branch Meetings. One of the new Gladstone delegates had not attended a ward meeting for three years previous to the January AGM. On the same evening, the *Briefing* supporter secretary of Church End Ward was removed and not put on the GMC.

During February, the campaign against the Left in the constituency continued. The Chair of Kilburn Branch was removed as a GMC delegate because on the day of his election he was not actually resident in the ward or on the current electoral register (even though he had been resident in the ward for the best part of the previous year and was on the following electoral register). On the day before the AGM of the SEA 21 new affiliations were suddenly received; most of these people turned up and attempted to outvote the established SEA membership, who nevertheless elected *Briefing* supporters to the GMC and officerships of the Brent SEA.

The Brent Fabians and Harlesden Labour Club suddenly decided to send TWO delegates each to the GMC instead of the one they had sent in the past. One of the new delegates being a Brent councillor who had not attended a meeting of the Brent East GMC for at least five years before the AGM.

At the AGM itself an attempt was made to rule certain union delegations out of order but a series of close votes led to a resounding victory for the *Briefing* slate over a Right/Tribunite slate. However, the remarkable feature of these events is the way in which the Tribunite Left have totally destroyed the left unity built up in the Party over many years by an alliance with the forces of the right.

This last minute switch of allegiance was signalled by the nomination of a supposed Tribunite as Chair of the constituency in opposition to the incumbent Chair, a *Briefing* supporter. However, only time will tell whether this new alliance is going to be a permanent feature. The strength of the left in Brent East has been amply demonstrated by the election results. But there is still an opportunity for a broadening of left support to ensure socialist policies in Brent in the future.

Ron Anderson

Southwark

On 8 February 1982, the National Executive Committee issued an *instruction* which informed the three Southwark Parties that eight members in Southwark would be placed onto the long-list of candidates endorsed by the Local Government Committee. The LGC decided by a slim majority to not defy this instruction. Since that eventful day, shortlists have been compiled and selections have taken place.

With the selections approaching half way, twenty-five 'broad-left' candidates have been chosen, with five in the centre and two on the right. The future of the 'Southwark Eight' has however not been too good even with the NEC acting out a mixed role of paternalistic godparent and Atillâ the Hun. Only four had been short-listed, one long-standing councillor of fourty-five years continuous experience failed to be reselected and to date one selected, that being John O'Grady by six votes in third place in the ward where he has been a councillor for twenty-three years.

The Right, however, were not giving in without a fight. Some lucky members in Riverside ward in Bermondsey received an encouraging letter from their local MP, one Bob Mellish, to turn out to show that the *real* people of Bermondsey were not going to let their sitting councillor fall foul of anyone with the with the faintest concept that the local council should be following socialist policies as agreed in the election manifesto. Such is life as the result was that the sitting councillor was relieved of her burden by left candidates. Incidentally, this un-representative branch meeting was attended by eighty-six members out of some hundred and eighty!

John O'Grady also received tacit support in another Bob Mellish letter, but in his case, he just scrapped home as third candidate. Dockyard ward meeting was attended by sixty-five members.

So what of the future? The manifesto is about to go to print and the Parties are gearing up for a fight with the Tories and the SDP. What will not help is Southwark Council putting up the rents of its housing stock by £2.50 per week and the fact that the offer from the GLC to keep down the rent of ex-GLC stock to £1.00 per week was refused!

One last time-bomb left behind by the present councillors is the decision of the Southwark Council to withdraw the bonus schemes unilaterally from all the manual workers on 30 April. Having been so badly treated by this Labour Council in the past, the Unions have declared that they must act to protect their members interests. This means an all-out strike of 4000 workers in the week of the election.

With friends like this, who needs a Tory Party? I hope the NEC are taking great pleasure from their decision to place reasonable right-wing councillors onto the panel endorsed by the local parties. Their intervention could very well have lost Labour the chance to win in Southwark, but they will have to learn from their mistakes, at our cost. All quite ironic, since the headquarters of the national Labour Party and the Greater London Labour Party are situated in the Borough. The game, however, will be played out to the end.

David Fryer – Peckham CLP
Secretary Southwark LGC
(in a personal capacity)

BEXLEY

For years now the Right have had control of the 3 constituencies which make up Bexley Borough. The last two years have seen a growth of grass roots Left opinion. Although not organised a few of us are now beginning to develop a strategy to mobilise support in the area to campaign on socialist issues.

Political resolutions are now being submitted to GMC's at an ever increasing rate and issues are being forced into the open, often for the first time. This has meant that the cosy 'unity' is breaking down into the Left/Right conflict evident elsewhere. It is happening later in Bexley because as a strong Tory area Labour rarely has power (71-74 was the only time since reorganisation).

This means that little discontent can be aimed at the actions of Councillors. A recent spate of by-elections and the current debate on Labour's manifesto for the Borough elections has broadened the contact with Left comrades.

MUTUAL FRUSTRATIONS

This has led to an exchange of mutual frustrations directed at constructive remedies. Public Meetings, leaflet campaigns (including the Fares Fight issue) and internal political debates have been proposed and acted upon by the Constituencies with Left comrades as the driving force.

We are now experiencing a regrouping of the Right as the battle lines are drawn. Personal, verbal attacks, are increasing and attempts are now being made to 'amend' (ie. alter) resolutions submitted.

This hardening of attitudes was inevitable but we are stepping up our campaign to break the stifling, inactive, inert stranglehold that the establishment have on the organisation committees (GC's, EC's and LGC).

We would like advice from anyone who has experience of this conflict so that we can speed up the process. Please write to Geoff Dixon, Flat 4, 44 Station Road, Sidcup or telephone 01-302 7983. We will be pleased to meet comrades to swap experiences and learn lessons for our fight for socialism.

HACKNEY: the left in total chaos

Following the defeat of the 'Three Noes' (no cuts, no rent/rate rises) mandate by right, centre and some centre-left delegates at the re-convened January LGC (see March LLB p17) an inaugural meeting of the Hackney Labour Left was convened in mid-February.

The lack of Left co-ordination and agreed policy across Hackney's three CLP's has been evidenced by:

- The comfortable but undeserved re-selection of Stanley Clinton (I'm no Laker man) Davis late last year for Hackney Central.
- The failure to mandate prospective councillors in May's election to a clear No Cuts, No Rent Increases and indexed rate increases platform. This 'fall-back' policy was also lost at the Local Government Committee and currently there are at least three distinct tactical lines being followed by centre/right, left and radical candidatse for Hackney Council!
- The easy manner in which Hackney South's Labour MP, Ron Brown, insolently declared to his November GC his immediate defection to the SDP in order to catch the December 'defecting Labour MP's notice of defection deadline'. This was greeted with light applause and anger from various sides according to reports. His defection was something of a knock-down blow to Labour in the south of the borough. The opportunity of selecting a firm socialist to challenge the Liberal advance in the south of Hackney should be taken by the Left.
- The division between 'broad Left' and radical activists in North Hackney and Stoke Newington in recent months. This separation has occurred due to the insistence of radicals on mandating Party representatives and councillors to a firm 'no rate increase' line on Hackney Council. This tactical policy was given the same principle as the generally agreed one of 'no cuts' in all discussions and has artificially divided Left forces in the Borough. The ease with which other 'broad Left' comrades have allied with right and centre forces on other issues has compounded this division.

Hackney Labour Left agreed that the major goal was co-ordination on the Left both on local and national issues and that discussion on tactics and strategy towards building a radical, popular socialist movement was the aim. We hope to collaborate with the newly formed Socialist Society in Hackney in plans for a Borough Socialist Centre – thereby crossing another artificial divide between socialists in the Labour Party and those outside.

The possibility of a new 'broad Left' majority Labour Council in Hackney after May clearly exists. We have a 'realistic' and reforming manifesto which pledges Labour to de-centralise all Council services down to twenty plus district neighbourhood offices; further plans to develop the nuclear-free-zone approach across the Borough; the setting up of Community forums and other measures of local control without at the same time being paternalist or lacking in substance and a commitment to extend urgent provision in the areas of housing, employment, child care and other social services.

Plans after May include further activity with the valuable work of the local Labour Committee on Ireland, the Women's Right to Work campaign leading up to the June Labour Rally and for a Hackney Labour Rally against Nuclear Weapons in the early summer.

In my view the work of London Labour Briefing has been Left co-ordination and with a firm aim of united socialist dialogue and action. The potential for a popular, socialist movement with mass support can be realised both in London and across the country in the very near future.

Mark Douglas
North Hackney CLP
(in personal capacity)

Clapton Youth Centre Defence Committee

Members of the Clapton Youth Centre Defence Committee feel they have won some concessions from the ILEA in their five month long struggle – but not nearly enough. Back in September 1981 the status of the Centre, which has a 90% black membership, was under threat and so was that of the part-time workers, called Recreational Supervisors (also mainly black). It all arose out of the application by one of the Tutors-in-Charge at the Centre for conversion in February 1981 to full-time Lectureship under the Burnham Agreement 1980. Mr Samuel, a very experienced black worker, had been employed for the requisite twenty hours per week, and met all the requirements of the Agreement. In May 1981 Bill Hope, the Authority's Inspector for Youth Service announced that he was going to block the conversion.

Then the heavy pressure started on the Centre – criticisms of the manner of employing staff, endless demands for justification of the style of work, threats that it should become a Youth Club, etc. Eventually, at a joint meeting of staff and members everybody get fed up. The members like it the way it is: relaxed and with a closeness between members and staff. A Senior Members Defence Committee was formed, which published Statement No.1, widely circulated throughout the ILEA and local community organisations. There were six demands: no change in the Centre; no racial discrimination against black staff; conversion for Mr Samuel; more resources, no victimisation, and meetings with ILEA members and officers. This was a bombshell. Edna Mathieson, Vice Chairperson of the F and HE sub-committee, having recently announced that there was, 'No racism in the ILEA', was put in charge of dealing with the matter.

The fact that notice was taken was due to the efforts of a number of people, notably Paul Boateng, who gave substantial support and spoke at an open meeting at the Youth Centre. Mr Vidya Anand, member of Hackney Area and London Youth Committees, raised the issue on both these bodies and made a Press statement in which he said – 'The ILEA does not reflect the needs of a multiracial society . . . There are so few people of Mr Samuel's calibre and experience.' Support also came from Hackney CRE, local Hackney Councillor Patrick Kodikara and other leaders of the Black community throughout London. Under pressure John Carr, GLC Member to Hackney Central, arranged for a deputation to be received and met at County Hall, but did little else. He seemed mainly to be involved in supporting the officers' misinformation service to members – the members seem unable to direct officers or to be in touch with what's happening. Eighteen months after a new Area Youth Officer had been appointed in Hackney, John Carr was still writing letters to the previous one. As a local representative, isn't it about time he found out what is going on in his own patch?

We are sickened and dissatisfied while we are exposed in such a large measure to outright attacks from some of ILEA members as well as their evident disinterest. Mr Samuel has still been denied a full time conversion – more than a year after the application was submitted. Instead, he is being offered a full time Youth Worker post, lower in status than the conversion. It would mean he could not be in charge of the Centre and could not play a leading role in directing the policy at the Centre as he does at present.

Well – so much for the ILEA's policy on trying to get more Blacks into the Youth Service! The final decision rests with the Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee. Are they going to take a stand on this question and support the conversion of this well experienced and qualified Black Tutor-in-charge, or, are they going to collaborate with this racist policy?

LAMBETH ~ Rates, Riots and 'Red Ted'

Socialism hasn't happened yet in Lambeth. On the doorstep we're still learning our 3Rs – Rates, Riots and 'Red Ted Knight'! These topics keep cropping up. The rates became a burning issue a little over a year ago when Lambeth went for a supplementary rate increase to main existing services. Looking back now that decision was mistaken.

The 48% rate rise we agreed was based on government estimates for inflation, council pay awards and a promise of falling interest rates. All of these items proved to be massively more expensive. On top of that Heseltine fiddled the rules so Lambeth lost £2½ million in the middle of the year. We were faced with the prospect of immediate bankruptcy (and no public campaign to rally support round that particular strategy) or a supplementary.



PHOTO: CATH TATE

ABANDONED BY OTHER COUNCILS

That decision to levy a supplementary rate was taken extremely reluctantly. Lambeth had had easily the most successful London campaign against the cuts. We had held out against the government two years longer than anyone else. We had mobilised 10,000 marchers on a demonstration against cuts. But we were abandoned by other councils. Instead of a mass campaign of broad resistance against Heseltine there was Lambeth – and no one else.

But the mythology might have clouded our judgement slightly. Even the leadership did not make it clear that if we voted for a minimum budget we might have to levy a supplementary to make up the difference. But we were all surprised at the viciousness of the reaction. Posters appeared in hundreds of windows 'NO' to the supplementary rate. Meetings of 3,000 to 4,000 screamed and howled at Ted Knight, who had the guts to turn out, about the rates. The South London Press whipped up hysteria with a vicious personal campaign against Ted. But there was also the problem that Lambeth tenants found their rates exceeding their rents during the supplementary.

SERIOUS COMPROMISES

Still, at that time we were committed to one policy – no cuts. Since then we have made far more serious compromises. Last year's rate rise (thanks to Heseltine) was a non-starter because of the huge 'NO' campaign. The local Labour Parties were presented with a 97 page document to show how we could make 10% cuts with minimum damage. We agreed. The cuts began. Again, with the benefit of hindsight, we were mistaken.

The cuts that have been levied were more than we agreed, about 13%. They have resulted in 120 places being lost in day nurseries and Social Service offices closing one day a week. This is because there has been a ban on new council workers to fill the places of those who have resigned. The children's homes became so short-staffed that the workers almost brought them to a standstill by refusing to do any more overtime. This obliged some relaxation of the recruitment ban. In the meantime libraries and housing advice centres have been working shorter hours while the conditions in all the homes as well as the standard of council meals have declined.

NOT CONSULTED

This year the Labour Parties were not consulted about the rate. Instead we have a budget of a '5p cut in the rate'. That means that apart from a very, very limited sum set aside to restore some services, the recruitment freeze and last year's cuts will largely remain untouched. The council view is that we can offer this election bonanza because we have forced Heseltine into giving us a much more favourable deal than other boroughs. Many people suspect that it is the 13% cuts which have saved us the money.

The third 'R' – riots – comes up canvassing our main supporters; the black community. Lambeth Council has pioneered programmes to tackle racial disadvantage. The councillors keep in close touch with Black Groups. But ironically the local Labour Parties are run largely by white middle class activists. We have made almost no progress in involving black members. The Party has also tended to 'tail-end' the council instead of initiating our own campaigns. In this respect Ted Knight has been head and shoulders above other councillors in posing the political questions rather than just administrating. But the penalty has been that the public tended to identify Lambeth Council too closely with the leader. Recently Ted has taken a lower profile and his remarks on Scarman were generally welcomed by the Black Community. But the first most of us heard about the new budget was when Ted announced it on television.

ATTACKS ON TED KNIGHT

In fact the far left in Lambeth have made disgraceful attacks on Ted Knight in public election materials. This is partly a legacy of bitterness from Norwood Party where an oligarchy of councillors took over the officers positions and booted out the 'bankruptcy' group.

We are left with several unsolved problems. Firstly, the delivery of services is too often arbitrary, muddled and bureaucratic. There is waste, and some poor priorities in the council. The manifesto for 1982-86 promises to localise housing and community affairs to bring them closer to the public – but it will be very difficult to negotiate wholesale redeployment out of the Town Hall with a workforce already fed-up with the results of recruitment and overtime bans.

Secondly, there is the whole problem of the concentration of power and information at the top. This is general to all councils, but it means that 'outsiders' such as Labour Party members have no alternative sources of information, other than the gutter press, about their council's successes and failures. I believe that we should be looking at how we can get a collective leadership, and a real, rather than selective, commitment to 'consultation' and 'information flow!

Thirdly, party members need to campaign more to explain the nature of council services and why they should be protected. To do that effectively we need the councillors to be frank and involved in campaigning rather than just administrating.

Finally, we should recognise that to ask a councillor to do all their work in the evening after a full day's work is an impossible load for any one person to carry.

Les Tate
Lambeth Central CLP

CAMDEN 30

Neil Fletcher, Camden Councillor (was chair Building, works and services committee) Member of I.L.E.A. (currently chair of Further and Higher Education Committee)

On the 29th March the long awaited case of the Metropolitan District Auditor v. 30 Camden councillors will begin before the Queen's Bench of the High Court. It is a case that in its implications for local government autonomy, its threat to the legitimate exercise of political power by a committed socialist Labour group, and its subjugation of genuine local bargaining between local government unions and their employers to the jurisdiction of the courts, is the most significant trial this century.

On a personal level, the case puts at risk the wealth (such as it is) of the councillors concerned, their homes, in some cases their professional lives, the living standards of their families, and of course their rights to hold elected office of any kind. Bankruptcy, the appointment of a receiver, the enforced sale of their home and possessions, are penalties and could be imposed, either at the discretion of the Court, or could follow as a consequence of the ruthless determination of the judge to make public examples of us.

The hearing is expected to last 5 days, but with appeal to the Appeal Court and to the House of Lords a possibility, a final outcome of this month's case could be many months or even years in the future.

Put simply, the District Auditor, one Ian Pickwell, a resident of rural Essex as it happens, is requesting the Court to declare illegal the expenditure incurred by Camden when it agreed in 1979 to pay its manual workers (and also its lowest paid clerical staff) a minimum wage of £60.00 per week, and undertook to reduce the manual workers' weekly hours from 37½ to 35 (the white-collar staff already worked a 35-hour week).

THE 'CAMDEN SUPPLEMENT'

We agreed as a council to these terms, and subsequently negotiated an effective pay and hours package that enshrined the 'Camden supplement' into a contracted term of employment, a settlement reached after three weeks of an all-out strike led by NUPE against Camden council as part of a national campaign for better conditions for low paid council staff.. The main beneficiaries in Camden were those on the lowest grades, earning £43-£45 per week – not bonus-earners, not significant overtime workers – but in many cases part-timers, many of them women, typically cleaners, home-helps, catering staff or unskilled labourers, w.c. attendants and road sweepers. Even were it not TUC and Labour Party policy to adopt a national minimum wage, and to reduce the working week, who can now look back to 1979 and say that the Camden settlement was unreasonable generous, or flagrantly indulgent of rate-payers money?

The investigation into the Camden supplement began when the then Deputy Leader of the Tory opposition in Camden, Councillor Derek Spencer referred the matter to Pickwell, under the provision of the 1972 Local Government Act. Spencer has referred over 10 alleged cases of 'unlaw' expenditure by Camden council to the D.A., and seven of these remain to be determined by him. At this stage we have hanging over our heads the fact that if we are successful in March in the High Court, we may well be dragged back again later in the year, or indeed over and over again in the future, according to the vagaries of the D.A.

It is interesting footnote to the continuing saga that as a result of a split among the Tory Councillors in Camden last year, the litigious Tory leadership were purged by a politically 'soggier' gang of opportunists. The Tory leader and Spencer (who is himself a barrister and deputy circuit judge) were ousted and now sit sourly on the back benches. The reference to the District Auditor, alas, continue apace!

PROFOUNDLY UNDEMOCRATIC

The political implications of the case are, however, profoundly undemocratic and corporatist. If we lose the case the power of councillors to make local settlements with their staff will be seriously inhibited, or even prevented altogether. There are throughout the country hundreds and thousands of such locally agreed variants on nationally determined settlements, and both N.U.P.E. and N.A.L.G.O. are alarmed at the consequences that an unfavourable ruling would bring to their ability to represent their members effectively. The need to vary pay settlements or gradings of posts is especially pressing for Labour councils when the national negotiating machinery is controlled on the employers side by Tory nominees. The perfectly reasonable right of elected members to over-ride the pay guidelines laid down by Governments when those guidelines seriously impede the ability of a council to maintain or improve its services, must be protected from the over-mighty powers of the Secretary of State, and just as fiercely from the arms of the judiciary.

But the case will also raise a question that affronts, not just socialist opinion, but even sections of liberal and the far-from-liberal establishment of this country. Can it be right for a District Auditor to use, or to thereafter to use, (just as potent a weapon given the recent G.L.C.-London Transport Law Lords ruling) powers so weighty, and so out of keeping with the wholly democratic system on which local government operates? The electorate, if they dislike our policies, can throw us from office at an election. The D.A., on grounds that are fundamentally no different from those that our political opponents quite legitimately use against us, can drag us to the High Court and confront us with the prospect of financial and personal ruin. Questions about rent and rate levels, about the quality and quantity of public housing and its maintenance, and about the pay and condition of staff are proper matters for political debate, and irrelevant to the execution of an audit, which should confine itself to the highly important task of ferreting out dishonesty, graft and corruption, wherever it may exist, and to the examination of financial procedures, budgetary monitoring, control and accountability.

CONSIDERABLE COSTS

The Camden 30 are not rich. As Labour councillors go they represent a typical cross-section of activists. They are having to meet the costs of the case from their own pockets as best they can. The cost of our defence are already considerable. If we lost our case this month, in addition to finding whatever part of the sum of £1 million each of us is required by the court to repay, the D.A.'s costs and the further costs of continuing our struggle through the higher courts will bring increasing heavy financial millstones around our necks. A simultaneous case brought against us by the Camden Ratepayers Association and supported (nominally at least) by the Attorney General alleges that we incurred over 3 years, a mere £20 million or £30 million worth of extravagant expenditure. When, if ever, that case gets to court, we could face more legal battles, more affidavits, more hours of discussion with legal adisors, and so on, and more bills! As one sympathetic judge said recently, in a remark of welcome lucidity, local councillors have enough to do already dealing with the pressing business of the borough, without have to defend themselves in the courts from the time wasting activities of the local busy bodies.!

"The most significant trial this century"

Our main need at the moment, as much as the support of those friends and sympathisers who regard the High Court as a disturbingly inappropriate place to settle matters of political principle, is for funds with which to defend ourselves.

Many friends have donated to our defence already. We thank them for their contributions, but ask them, and others who have not showed their support financially yet, to dig deeper now. Labour Parties, Trade Unions, Tenants organisations and community groups, together with concerned individuals should realise that the defence of the Camden 30 is a defence of democratic rights, won over centuries, that cannot be stolen from us by auditors, by state functionaries or by bewigged judges.

Please send your contribution, however small, to help us in this struggle to: 'Camden 30', c/o Secretary to the Labour Group, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, N.W.1.

MEANWHILE IN GREENWICH

I read with interest – if not amazement – the article in issue 18 headed 'Meantime in Greenwich' and felt that having pulled the political knife from my back a response was demanded.

As one of that rare breed of 'right wingers' (Mr Wells description – not mine!) who is a member of CND, believes in the Constitutional reforms, wants out of the EEC, voted for Benn for the Deputy Leadership, *didn't* vote for Cartwright at his selection meeting, *did* vote for Audrey Wise at hers, etc., etc., etc., I did find his description rather strange.

BENN'S ADVICE

Having tried to make a subtle point I would seriously suggest to Mr Wells that he follows Tony Benn's advice and sticks to issues and leaves the Sun and Daily Mail etc. to deal with personalities!

Turning to the more serious issues raised in the article I would agree with Mr Wells that Greenwich Council has been dominated by the right for many years. However I can assure him that I have not been a part of that majority and as for being a part of a 'family group' with enormous influence – I just wish that had been the case.

However, notwithstanding the political composition of the majority Labour Group successes have been achieved such as generating the largest building programme in England (excluding the GLC and Birmingham); pioneering sheltered housing accommodation for the elderly, purchasing a hotel for holidays for the physically handicapped and elderly; reducing the working hours of residential Social Services employees ahead of national agreements; introducing a 35 hour week for the majority of non-manual employees and many other progressive policies – especially in the field of housing.

It is ironic however, that with the prospect of the political pendulum on the Group swinging left we are faced with the most reactionary Government of my life-time which is determined to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of Labour Authorities.

NOT ALL PERFECT

I would not wish to give the impression that all has been perfect in Greenwich. We have had a fair share of failures and have made wrong decisions but then hindsight is always the best form of truth. I happen to believe that mistakes and errors should be viewed positively and that lessons should be learned so that mistakes are not repeated.

Dealing now with the Local Borough Conference and the view put forward by Mr Wells that there was a machiavellian plot to overthrow Conference decisions I can only say that if there was such a plot I certainly knew nothing about it but I would like to give my opinion on the event.

First, the Conference itself was an innovation and one that I welcome, even though I didn't agree with every decision – but then who did? Secondly, I think that it was because the concept of a Conference, to produce a draft manifesto, was a new venture that the number of amendments submitted was so large. As a result, the time spent on discussing even major issues was very limited. Everyone understood however (and accepted I hope) that under the constitution of the Labour Party the Local Government Committee was the body which would finally approve the manifesto and therefore, it was quite appropriate for amendments to be moved at that meeting. Indeed, it has always been my view, which I hope is shared with Mr Wells, that far from expecting the Local Government Committee to act as a 'rubber stamp' it should play a positive and imaginative role in borough politics.

PERSONAL ABUSE

In conclusion may I say that I deplore the current style of some of our national leaders, of both the left and the right of bringing politics down to the levels of personal abuse – I equally deplore such behaviour by local politicians.

Personality politics are destructive rather than constructive, divisive rather than unifying, promote distrust and emnity rather than comradeship and ultimately detract from the aims and objectives of the Labour Movement.

BROAD GUIDE LINES

In this context I do wonder whether this magazine might wish to examine its own role in providing an outlet for that kind of activity and without detracting from the principle of 'no editorial control' whether some broad guide-lines should be established for prospective contributors.

My very final comment is for Comrade Wells – may I wish him every success in his election campaign and I look forward to him playing an active and constructive part in the next majority Labour Group on Greenwich Council.

Chris Jeffrey
son of Jeff and Cath Jeffrey,
husband of Aleyne Friesner
but most importantly, an individual

Burning issue in Tower Hamlets

Rubbish in Tower Hamlets is a burning issue. In the run up to the local elections, next to Rent and Rate increases, the question most people ask is, 'What are you going to do about the Rubbish'. So it is not surprising that the Local Council has come up with an answer 'Privatisation of the cleansing department'. Recently the Policy committee went to Southend to see how it works there, and from reports by the Council Leader to the G.M.C. they seem to be very impressed. But they would do well to look at the real facts.

AT WHAT COST?

It is said that by contracting out, Southend are saving £500,000 a year. If so at what cost? 232 people were made redundant, and one person after 15 years service received £1,500. Can Tower Hamlets afford this with 29% unemployed in the borough, the highest unemployment area in the South east? The area has lost 30,000 jobs in the past ten years with the closure of Millwall and East India Docks. And who will pay the dole and social security of the people who are made redundant? As each unemployed person costs £4,380, the price of privatisation is very high.

And for those lucky enough to be employed by the contractor the conditions are terrible. One contractor operates a daybreak to midnight business, no index-linked pensions, shorter holidays, less sick pay, lower wages and no Trade Union membership. Hardly the conditions most workers would relish.

The philosophy behind what the council are doing needs to be challenged, Labour councils were not elected to increase unemployment and make direct attacks on the Trade Union movement and the working class.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The Labour Party NEC and Michael Foot have been quite vocal and active in recent months attacking Labour Party members, ie Peter Tatchell and the supporters of the Militant newspaper. But what are they prepared to do about Labour Councillors who are behaving like Tories when they have stood on a Labour platform? The Trade Union movement must not stand by and allow its members to be the scapegoats of a failing system. Is it no wonder when we knock on the doors of unemployed people asking for their vote, the answer is 'What's the difference mate?'

Therese Shanahan, Stepney/Poplar CLP
Local Government Candidate
Millwall Ward

Radio Power!

Dear *London Labour Briefing*,

I read a copy of your February issue with growing elation – at last a socialist magazine that doesn't read as if it is translated from Russian (i.e. V. I. Lenin's *Collected Works*)!! Not only have I resolved to get it regularly, but also I enclose an article that might interest you. I am a member of 'London Open Radio', the campaign described in the article, which seeks to put more (and better) stations on London's airwaves. Those of us in the campaign who are also inside the Labour Party are trying to persuade the Party to commit itself to the legalisation of community radio. To this end we have been getting local Branches and Constituencies to pass a model resolution. I am positive that the appearance in *LLB* would help us immensely, if you have room to print (some of) the enclosed. With the recent anti-union hysteria being pumped out during the ASLEF dispute, let alone the bizarre coverage of the Laker collapse, this issue has become more relevant than ever. The country's perception of reality outside their daily experience becomes wildly distorted when it has gone through the filtering system of the state and capitalist media! It is absurd that radical viewpoints can only be occasionally seen on the more technically-advanced forms of media, such as radio and television. In the Netherlands the Labour Party has its own TV station! Hopefully the LOR campaign can be one step towards loosening the consensus grip over mass communications (just as *LLB* is doing within the Party?!).

Best wishes
Richard Barbrook
Hampstead Central Branch

WHY THE LABOUR PARTY SHOULD SUPPORT 'LONDON OPEN RADIO'

Over the last year people within the Labour Party have been made aware of the bias within the media towards views held that differ from those held by the Establishment. This was particularly evident during the Deputy Leadership campaign nationally and the recent treatment of the GLC and Ken Livingstone within London. Therefore attention within the Party has been increasingly focused out of necessity on ways to ensure that all shades of opinion are heard within the media.

AUTONOMOUS

Community radio stations are financed through listener-sponsorship, grants and their own fund-raising. Community radio stations are thus independent of advertising and direct government financing. This means such stations would be autonomous of the so-called 'duopoly' of the IBA and the BBC who at present dominate the airwaves.

The volunteer staff exist to ensure that all people are guaranteed access to the airwaves through participation in groups that make programmes for the station. Thus women, ethnic minorities and single-cause pressure groups have been involved in producing programmes for such stations abroad. Similarly music and entertainment programmes have been freed from the commercial pressures that stultify them on our existing stations.

Community radio stations are neither owned by the State or by business interests. Instead they are run on a collective basis. The internal democracy of such stations ensures that they do not simply reproduce one point of view. Instead they have become the voice for various groups within society that have been effectively silenced through media indifference.

LONDON-WIDE

In November of 1980, 'London Open Radio' was set up to campaign for the establishment of a London-wide community radio station. This was envisaged as a high-powered, 'community of interest' station that would be able to cover the whole city and provide an effective alternative to existing services. The public regulation of such a station was seen to be possible through the license-granting procedure and the existing laws on libel and slander. In spring of this year the Home Secretary released the 'Home Office Local Radio Working Party' (HOLRWP) Report. This gave a lukewarm approval to the idea of community radio. Previously such discussions had only put forward the suggestion that there be low-powered local community stations which would have little range or influence. For the first time the HOLRWP Report mentioned the possibility of a high-powered 'community of interest' station being established. In response 'London Open Radio' sent in an application to the Home Secretary for a license for a test transmission under the provisions of the 'Wireless Telegraphy Act' of 1949. This was turned down. The present Government feels itself under no pressure to alter the status quo on the airwaves, especially as the present situation favours it so much. Yet some expansion of the radio service is inevitable. The choice of stations in London is meagre compared to the variety available in many cities abroad. It is commonly claimed by the Home Office that there are no more frequencies on the waveband that could be used for new stations. Yet in San Francisco, where KPFA (the first community station) is transmitting, there are no less than *sixty* different stations on the air. Already, both within London and from the North Sea, pirate radio stations have sprung up to occupy the vacant spaces on the waveband. CB (Citizen's Band) radio has been partially legalised through such direct action. Radio One and the present commercial stations were set up in response to the pirate stations of the 1960s. Therefore the Labour Party should take a position on this issue now.

$$\nabla \cdot \underline{D} = \rho \qquad \nabla \wedge \underline{E} = -\frac{\partial \underline{B}}{\partial t} \qquad c = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\mu_0 \epsilon_0}}$$
$$\nabla \cdot \underline{B} = 0 \qquad \nabla \wedge \underline{H} = \underline{J} + \frac{\partial \underline{D}}{\partial t}$$

THE MODEL RESOLUTION ON COMMUNITY RADIO

"THIS BRANCH DEPLORES AND CONDEMNS THE ACTIONS OF THE PRESENT HOME SECRETARY IN REFUSING TO GRANT LICENSES TO COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS. THIS BRANCH DEMANDS THAT A FUTURE LABOUR HOME SECRETARY SHOULD GRANT LICENSES FOR COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS USING THE PROVISIONS OF THE 'WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY ACT, 1949'. FURTHERMORE THIS BRANCH DEMANDS THAT THE LABOUR PARTY SUPPORT SUCH CAMPAIGNS AS 'LONDON OPEN RADIO' AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACTIVE PURSUANCE OF SUCH POLICIES. THIS BRANCH BELIEVES THAT COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS COULD BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF AN EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT TORY-BIASED MEDIA."

Excuses of bureaucracy

The last Labour Government appeared to be content on the issue of CB radio merely to repeat the excuses of the bureaucracy concerning lack of frequencies and problems of regulation. This must not be allowed to happen again with regard to community radio. The Tories were able at the last election to masquerade as the champions of free expression by promising the legalisation of CB radio. Though their 'Open Channel' on the FM band is a poor substitute for full legalisation, this example should provide a warning of the penalties of inaction on the behalf of the Labour Movement. How many people voted Tory at the last election to secure the legalisation of CB radio? The Tories are already planning a modest expansion in the commercial local radio network, though this is tempered by 'free enterprise's desire to remain in a radio advertising monopoly within each town or city. However *any* expansion of commercial radio does not solve the problems facing the Party with the mass media. The SDP also could embrace such reforms as community radio as a way of finding the radical credentials it so desperately needs to hide its reactionary intentions. It is necessary for the Labour Party to pre-empt any such moves by affirming its support for community radio now.

'London Open Radio', being a single-issue campaign, seeks support wherever it can find it. However some of us within the campaign feel that support from the Labour Party is especially important. We are therefore approaching the Party's MPs, the GLC, and the individual Party Branches and Constituencies within London. We urge your Branch to discuss this issue and pass the model resolution below. We hope that your GC will be able to adopt support for community radio as Constituency policy. We would like you to communicate such backing for the idea to Labour MPs and councillors, the NEC and particularly the Labour Party Media Group, chaired by Frank Allaun. We are able to provide more details, speakers for meetings and tapes of both foreign stations and locally produced programmes on request. We hope that your Branch will be able to help us in this campaign and, in the future, community radio will be able to help the Party present its views to the electorate.

Yours in Solidarity,
The Labour Party members of the 'London Open Radio' Collective

'London Open Radio' can be contacted at: 2 Warwick Crescent, W2. Tel 289 7164/3. Membership costs £2.

BARKING~The teachers fight back

Paul Jeater
Ilford North CLP

Barking and Dagenham is the final outpost of Labour control in East London. It is an overwhelmingly working class area, which in 1978 returned a 90% Labour council. It is one of the smallest outer London boroughs yet it has the largest number of council houses of any authority in London.

For the last two years the Labour Council has been waging a savage onslaught on its education service. In 1981-82, 60 out of 807 Secondary teaching posts were lost, and 20 out of 621 primary posts. This year the council plan to axe a further 84 secondary and 65 primary posts. In no way can this level of job loss be equated with the fall in pupil numbers.

In the past Barking and Dagenham have maintained a reasonable staffing record when compared to other London boroughs. However they remain firmly in the relegation zone when it comes to spending on books and equipment, and of all London Labour Boroughs they spend the least on nursery education.

The cuts imposed by the council, cut staffing in comprehensive schools by 1 in 5, and would put many subjects such as German, Chemistry, and Craft at risk. The sixth forms at four out of the eleven comprehensives would be under threat with the likelihood that Barking could emerge with a dual system of schools, some 11 to 16 and some 11 to 18. It is forecast that remedial education would virtually disappear as a result of the council's policies.

FULL SCALE STRIKE

Barking N.U.T. soon realised that the only effective course of action against the council was a full scale strike. The N.U.T., which represents 74% of teachers in Barking, balloted its membership for strike action on the magnitude of the cuts rather than the issue of compulsory redundancy. The ballot, which had the backing of the national executive showed nearly 85% of members in favour of strike action.

From the outset it has not been a passive strike, teachers have concentrated on taking the issue out into the community, and a petition supporting the teachers has the backing of 11,000 residents. On 1st March the action entered a new phase with the teachers picketing schools to prevent fuel and other supplies being delivered.

The N.U.T. have attempted to take the fight into the other trade unions and Labour Party branches in the area. The other public sector unions have been slow to respond. In fact some have adopted the position that whatever gains education makes will be at the expense of their service. A Local Cuts Committee was set up some time ago but as it lacks the support of GMWU which is the largest union amongst council employees, it has not had a decisive impact.

LOCAL LABOUR PARTY

Taking the fight into the local Labour parties has been hindered by two main factors. Firstly, only a minority of Barking teachers actually live in the authority. It is indicative that the general committees of the neighbouring Ilford South and Ilford North constituencies have both passed resolutions highly critical of the policies of Barking and Dagenham Council. Secondly, the N.U.T. position of being 'non party political' has prevented it from being able to campaign from inside the party. If the N.U.T. was affiliated to the Labour Party, reselection of councillors in Barking might have taken on a very different complexion.

BARKING COUNCIL

What of Barking Council, at a recent Labour group meeting they voted 24 votes to 7 for continuing their current policy. The seven who opposed have not come out publicly to voice their opposition. In negotiations the council claim to have campaigned vigorously against Heseltine's cuts, yet in reality this has been limited to the financing of a few paper advertisements under the auspices of A.M.A. There has been no effort by the council to take this fight into the unions, local Labour parties and tenants groups. The teachers have made it clear that they oppose any attempt by the council to pass the cuts onto its citizens or employees. However this will remain a policy on paper only until other Barking Council workers and the local Labour parties take up this campaign.

It is clear that the council will be unable to buy off the local N.U.T. with minor concessions. In many ways victory to the teachers in Barking is of great strategical importance. It would give encouragement to workers and especially teachers throughout the country to resist the cuts. It would also show renegade Labour councils that they can no longer hide behind the Labour banner while at the same time working as the local agents of Heseltine.

Telegrams of support, donations, and copies of resolutions passed should be sent to: Ken Jones, Secretary Barking N.U.T., Strike Headquarters, c/o A.U.E.W. Hall, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex.

Teachers in the Labour Party and NUT keen to mount a campaign for Labour Party affiliation should write to: Socialist Teachers Alliance, 143a Ham Park Road, London E7.

Resolution passed at Ilford South CLP:

'This CLP condemns the cuts in education which are being made by Barking and Dagenham Council and fully supports the action being taken by Barking and Dagenham N.U.T. in defence of education in the borough.

'Actions such as these carried out by a Labour council are in danger of losing the party its credibility as a socialist organisation.'

Copies to Leader of Barking Council, Regional Exec. London Labour Party

DON'T BE FOYLED

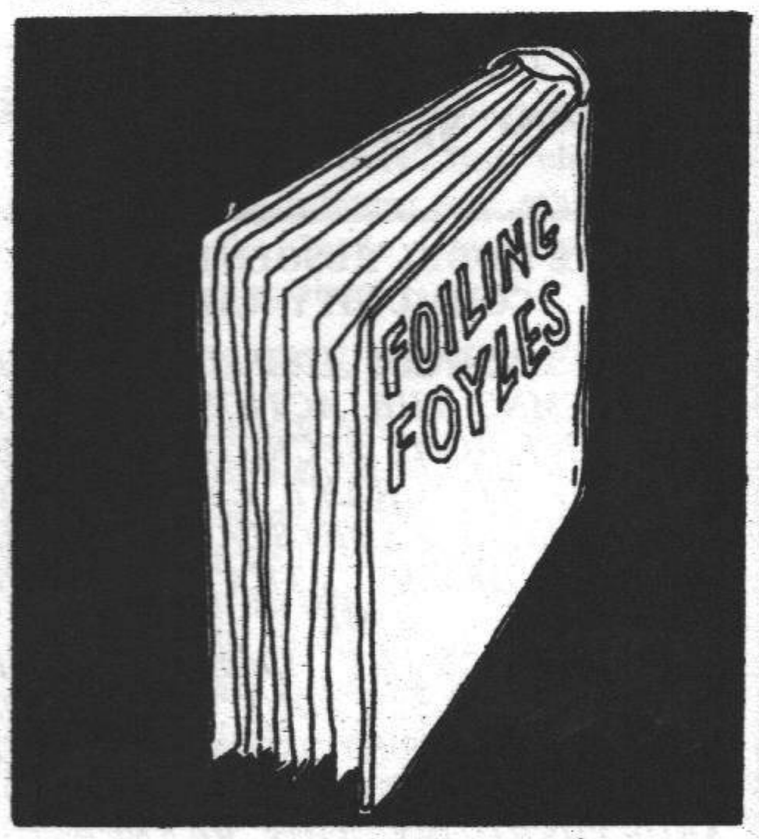
Once again the Foyles Management are changing their name tag from the 'world's greatest bookshop' to the 'booktrade's worst employer'.

Since February 11th there have been picket lines outside Foyles following the sacking of Siobhan Lanigan (USDAW shop steward) and Geoff Alum for Trade Union activities. The 'activity' concerned was attending a Union recruitment meeting at the Seven Dials Club in Covent Garden the previous day. The methods used by Foyles to identify the attendance at the meeting were reminiscent of Ford's anti-Union tactics before the war: two company spies recording the names of the employees seen going to the meeting.

Foyles believe in a high staff turnover, and just to make sure that they get it they put most of their staff on five month contracts which means that the sack can come at a moment's notice for most of the staff, with no internal and little legal redress open to them.

Since then, an official picket line has been in existence outside Foyles and on Saturdays between 12.00 and 2.00pm there is mass picketing to persuade people not to buy at Foyles and to shop at organised shops in the area.

The Foyles management have a reputation hard earned over years of trying to smash Trade Union activity and pay the lowest wages for the hardest work and the most inferior conditions in the book trade. *Briefing* readers are urged to give practical help to the USDAW members



fighting for their jobs by:
SUPPORTING THE PICKET LINES;
GETTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES, EDUCATION AUTHORITIES AND LIBRARIES NOT TO USE FOYLES;
SENDING SOLIDARITY MESSAGES AND DONATIONS TO:
The U.S.D.A.W. Booksellers and Stationers Branch, c/o Colletts, 129 Charing Cross Road, WC2.

Jeremy Corbyn

Combatting racism in education

In recent months there have been a number of significant official reports concerned with aspects of race relations. The Rampton (now Swann) Committee have looked at the education of ethnic minority children, Lord Scarman has reported on the Brixton 'disorders' and the Select Committee have published their deliberations on racial disadvantage. These reports document a sorry tale of institutionalised racism and the failure of government, police and the education system to come to terms with the facts of life in multiracial inner city areas.

Though these reports tell us nothing new they are important for two particular reasons. Firstly they give official credence to issues and arguments that have concerned anti-racists for sometime. For too long Britain's race relations problem has been presented as caused by black people themselves. Scarman, Rampton and the Select Committee make it clear that it is the racism and prejudice of British culture and its institutions that must be scrutinised.

Secondly these reports all contain numerous and specific recommendations for change which, though they will not remove racism and discrimination over night, are the essential prerequisites in the development of a just multiracial society. Government and other agencies no longer have any excuse for inaction and neglect. Nowhere is this more true than in the field of education. The Rampton and Select Committee recommendations for instance make it quite clear what is expected of the DES, LEAs, schools, training colleges and the teaching profession.

GATHER DUST

However a major political problem remains: how are we to ensure that the responsible authorities act rather than simply allow the reports to gather dust on the shelves? We have the official philosophy and rationale for multiracial education, when will we get action, policy and provision?

These are some of the issues to be discussed at the next annual conference of the National Association for Multiracial Education. The Conference, entitled COMBATTING RACISM IN EDUCATION – STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE will be held at Middlesex Polytechnic (Trent Park) from April 14-16th. Speakers include Paul Boateng and Trevor Carter and some of the issues covered will be anti-racist teaching policies, the curriculum, protest, and the implications of the Nationality Act. This is an important conference for all those concerned about racism in education and it is hoped that the conference will go some way towards the development of appropriate strategies for change.

Full details can be obtained from:
NAME General Secretary
Madeleine Blakeley
86 Station Road
Mickleover
DERBY DE3 5FT
Tel: 0332 511751.

HACKNEY~ Black people can speak for themselves

Claims by Hackney Council to be an Equal Opportunity Borough have been hotly disputed by local black groups. Firstly, Hackney Black Peoples' Association asked the Council to look at the economic and social problems confronting blacks in Hackney. In particular, HBPA asked the Council to look at Housing and Homelessness amongst black youth, Social Services and the employment practices of the Council.

Secondly, a number of black groups got together under the banner of Hackney Ethnic Minorities Library Consultative Committee to demand changes in services and staffing of the Libraries, and called for the co-option of black people onto the Leisure Services Committee which deals with Libraries.

HBPA was particularly concerned about the Housing problems. Tenants on Stonebridge Estate, described as one of the worst slums in England, were complaining loudly of racial discrimination. To blacks, the Estate was being turned into a black slum. Black Tenants complained that they had been pressurised to live on the Estate. Promises of being rehoused after one year were not kept. White families were being moved off the Estate and black families moved in.

Then, there is the Tenant who was phoned at her place of work to be told that her family was to be evicted the next day. Despite subsequently clearing up rent arrears and being one month in credit, bailiffs were sent in to evict her.

On the employment front, blacks are getting a raw deal. Despite being an approximate 30-35 percent of the local population, less than 8 per cent of the Council's workforce are black. Of those employed, the majority are in manual and lower grades. Less than three per cent of senior officers and above are from racial minorities. Even more disturbing, a number of black women work with the Council as relief care assistants. When vacancies occurred and they applied to be taken on full time, they are turned down.

THE LIBRARIES ISSUE

When the Council refused to hear a deputation from the Consultative Committee in September, a noisy protest erupted in the public gallery. After two suspensions and protesters being likened to nazis and fascists, the meeting was abandoned.

Feelings were running high since a letter to the Chairman of Leisure Services, Cllr. Kate Hoey, had elicited no response. An earlier meeting with the Acting Chief Librarian ended in uproar after his refusal even to consider any of the demands put forward.

The demands include:

(1) co-option of black people onto the Leisure Services Committee;

(2) more black people to be employed in the Libraries; and,

(3) employment of specialist staff to research and advise on books etc. specifically geared to the needs of minority ethnic groups. Essentially, what the Consultative Committee is asking for is that the services provided by the Libraries reflect the multi-racial and multi-cultural nature of Hackney.

For its October meeting, the Council was well prepared. Policemen were everywhere. Van loads of policemen were out of sight at the back of the Town Hall and reserve forces with full riot gear were parked about a mile away. When the expected protest started in the public gallery, the police were quickly called in.

Councillors eventually heard the deputation at its November meeting. Then, the Consultative Committee widened its scope to talk not only of Libraries, but also of Social Services, Housing, Environmental Health, Employment and police/black relations.

The Council's response was to set up a Race Relations Sub Committee and call for talks on the main service areas i.e. Housing, Leisure Services, Social Services and Administration (employment issues).

With elections due in May, local black activists are beginning to look beyond the elections. The new Council, whatever its complexion will have to understand that black people can speak for themselves and not through intermediaries such as Hackney Council for Racial Equality or Hackney Community Action. As rate payers and tax payers, blacks will continue to press their demands for equality and an end to racism by both Councillors and officers.

Noel James

LONDON LABOUR CONF

It was a pretty quiet affair, this year's Greater London Labour Party's annual conference. Maybe that was because there was little dissent among delegates from trade unions, CLPs and affiliated organisations who gathered in Camden Town Hall on March 6 and 7.

Or perhaps it was because, as Chairman Arthur Latham said in his wind-up, Labour's broad coalition had moved decisively to the left.

Whatever the case, a twin shadow contributing to the sobriety of the occasion fell over the hall, in front of the delegates lay the May local elections, behind them the Denning fares decision. And overhead loomed another, that of the NEC hunting for parliamentary candidates with an extra-parliamentary bent.

Here, *Briefing* records some of the debates, both in and out of the conference hall, and summarises the main decisions.



Selecting Women PPCs

While there was overwhelming support for motions advocating the strengthening of the Sex Discrimination, Equal Pay and Abortion Acts, it was women's position within the Labour Party which provoked the sharpest exchange during the women's rights debate.

In particular, a clause calling for the mandatory inclusion of women on Parliamentary shortlists was the most controversial aspect of Islington North CLP's Motion 45. Opponents, backing a Romford amendmend to delete the clause, tended to think such positive discrimination was 'going a bit too far', that CLPs might in some cases find it difficult to find a woman of merit.

Executive member Mary Honeyball, supporting the motion, argued that it was not a question of merit, but of equal opportunity. For some supporters, however, it was a case as one put it of saying, 'We do believe in a woman's merit.' Such a policy would not result in 'dragging women out of the bin', but would force constituencies to work hard to find good women prospective Parliamentary candidates.

She prevailed, as did the motion which also included demands that the Labour Party Women's Conference be entitled to submit five resolutions to Annual Conference and elect the Women's Section of the NEC.

In moving Motion 49 on abortion, the Streatham delegate drew attention to the recent Department of Public Prosecution's investigations of doctors carrying out abortions as a backdoor implementation of the Corrie Amendment Bill, which failed abysmally to get through Parliament.

The anti-racism debate spilled over into the police debate, and vice versa. The lessons of Brixton had not been learned, with the Scarman Report, Russell Proffitt of East Lewisham CLP said, completely failing to understand that deprivation and harassment were creating a gap between the authorities and all youngsters. Speaker after speaker agreed that platitudes from within the Party had to end, that polices of positive discrimination (Composite F) were the only way to win the trust of the ethnic minorities.

THE STRONG
WE'VE GOT,

Above all else, Conference was domina impact that it would have on the elec poll.

Labour's dramatic introduction to the cheap fares scheme and its subsequent overturning by Lord Denning and the Law Lords virtually excluded all else in the debate exchanges on local democracy, as well.

And, rightly, it preoccupied GLC Group Leader Ken Livingstone, who warned the establishment in his report during the opening session: 'If you continue to block us, you are prolonging our campaign and helping to defeat the Tories.

'Fares won't go away because it's the strongest weapon we've got.'

Livingstone hit out against the press smears that he and others on the GLC were opposing the transport unions' one-day strike on March 10, called in protest against the attack on the cheap fares policy and on their jobs. Describing these reports as complete lies, he cited them as exemplifying how the press hysteria had given way to this more subtle stratagem, aimed at driving a wedge between the Labour GLC and the rest of the movement.

Survival against attacks by the Tories in the press and in the courts was dependent on forging the GLC into a campaigning body.

And the GLC Leader defended Labour's record of les than a year. Despite enormous obstacles, they had for the first time since 1975 planned a growth budget, one which through the Economic Policy Group and the London Enterprise Board was making money available to help create jobs. 'We want it used,' he stressed.

Labour was also reaching out to many previously ignored people, and black, women's and gay groups were among those drawing on GLC funds to support local initiatives. A Women's Committee had been set up with powers to intervene on any GLC matter to ensure that women were not being discriminated against.

The trade unions were sharing in a growing consultation process, best evidenced in the Fire Brigades Union joining with the GLC to find ways of recruiting far more blacks into the fire service.

But it was the GLC fares campaign

ERENCE BRIEFING reports...

EST WEAPON WARNS KEN

ed by the GLC fares issue and the rate in this May's local government

to which delegates were to return, again and again, following Livingstone's opening remarks.

SUPPORT THE STRIKE

During the transport debate, support was overwhelming for the first LT transport strike in London since 1926, provoked by 'a group of individuals who wouldn't recognise a bus if it knocked them down,' in the words of the NUR mover of Composite Motion E backing the GLC fares policy and condemning the Law Lords decision that it was illegal.

The resulting fares increase would result in a 30 per cent reduction in bus schedules and 1100 conductors out of job with another 1100 drivers losing theirs next year, reported T&G delegate Howard Jackson.

Jeremy Corbyn, arguing for the motion on behalf of the Regional Executive, said that the cuts could now only be avoided by a sustained Labour Party/trade union campaign which forced the government to provide additional funds.

The government's attack on local goverment which surfaced in the transport debate was met head-on in the debate on Composite Motion 1 calling on Labour councils to refuse to comply with the Heseltine legislation and for a national campaign against it.

The Camden district auditor on £284 a week was a particularly marked man for his advice that the borough council's £60 a week minimum award to its manual workers three years ago was illegal.

Delegates, among them some councillors even, found it repugnant that local Labour councils were unable to implement manifesto commitments without consulting the minister of the environment.

But there was controversy over an EEPTU clause in the motion reaffirming a December conference decision to stay within the law in opposing cuts. This, it was felt, contradicted the refusal-to-comply call.

The motion only managed to scrape through by a narrow majority.

Bishops Stortford: Villain of the Piece

A lunchtime fringe meeting was the scene of what was perhaps the most surprising revelation of the week-end conference, at least for this observer. It was here that Eric Heffer admitted that, perhaps, he should be seen as 'the villain of the piece' when the history of the Bishops Stortford agreement between Labour Party and TUC leaders came to be written.

Heffer's somewhat rueful remarks, divulged at the RAC/Co-op organised meeting, were a reference to a resolution he had prepared but apparently never put to the test.

His resolution essentially sought to preserve the status quo. In it, he proposed that all attempts by the Right to reverse the advances on re-selection be stopped until after the next election and, conversely, that extending the binding nature of the manifesto should also be pushed no further by the left until after the next election.

According to Heffer, who as chairman of the NEC's Organisation Committee has a particular interest, when he implied that this also meant an end to the witch-hunts, everyone agreed that it was common sense.

Shortly after this, messages were sent out that 'peace had broken out', and ever since everyone has been trying to figure out what that meant. What a pity Heffer never put his resolution.

Back to the fringe meeting, where chairperson Harriet Harman was having great difficulty in restraining Heffer's fellow NEC member Les Huckfield and T&G official Jack Dromey, each of whom had his own but differing interpretation of what had been agreed.

Precisely nothing by the Right, said Huckfield. He wanted to know how it could be interpreted to allow attacks on Pat Wall and others by the likes of Hattersley and Healey, yet tolerance over Peter Shore's not-so-tentative moves in the direction of committing Labour to an incomes policy.

Dromey defended Bishops Stortford on the grounds that it had been necessary to stop Labour's fall in popularity, which he said was a result of a public image of disunity and the prospects of losing the 1984 election.

Bishops Stortford didn't initiate anything, he emphasised, rather it reflected a tide moving in the direction of consolidating around policies. He did concede that there had been no adequate consultation with the rest of the movement.

Dromey then won his audience round by asserting that the essential tolerance and unity must be extended to include the principle of a CLP's right to choose its own Parliamentary candidate. He wanted to see Peter Tatchell endorsed and, while he felt that there had been some 'peculiar' choices as PPCs, he could not agree that Labour's problems would be resolved by bureaucratic witch-hunts.

TATCHELL BACKED

The fringe meeting served as a prelude to the subsequent debate in Conference on Composite G and the PLP, with the theme that Bishops Stortford had been concluded behind closed doors returned to again and again by delegates. In reaffirming the mandatory re-selection procedure, Paddington CLP took on board a Bermondsey amendment asserting CLP's right to choose and endorsing Southwark-Bermondsey's selection of Peter Tatchell.

Although in attendance, the man Labour's NEC has rejected did not speak. The vote of 538,500 to 189,500 should give the NEC some indication of the strength of feeling their action in support of Leader Michael Foot's impromptu remarks in the House of Commons on Tatchell has provoked.

Decisions *taken by the Conference on women's rights, transport, the PLP and local democracy appear in the articles on these pages. Here in summary are the other main decisions:*

Education *(Comp A) – LEAs to implement GLC's election manifesto, especially abolition of streaming, working towards non-denominational mixed comprehensives, staffing to ensure no more than 28 pupils; opposition to teaching and non-teaching redundancies.*

Employment *(Comp B) – in consultation with GLC and unions, develop a programme to create more youth and adult opportunities, especially training, development of London Dockland, involve trade unions in running Greater London Enterprise Board. (Comp C) – Labour authorities to review tendering procedures, employment of private contractors with a view to replacing them with direct labour, monitor contractors on apprenticeship, health and safety obligations.*

Manifesto commitments *(Comp H) – recommit Labour in next manifesto to 1973 Programme aim of taking 25 of 100 largest manufacturing companies into common ownership under democratic control.*

The police *(Comp J) – commitment to democratic control through local authorities' Police Committee, independent complaints procedure, disbandment of the SPG and Special Branch. (Motion 39) – new GLC Police Committee to seek ways of changing police attitudes to attacks of violence on women.*

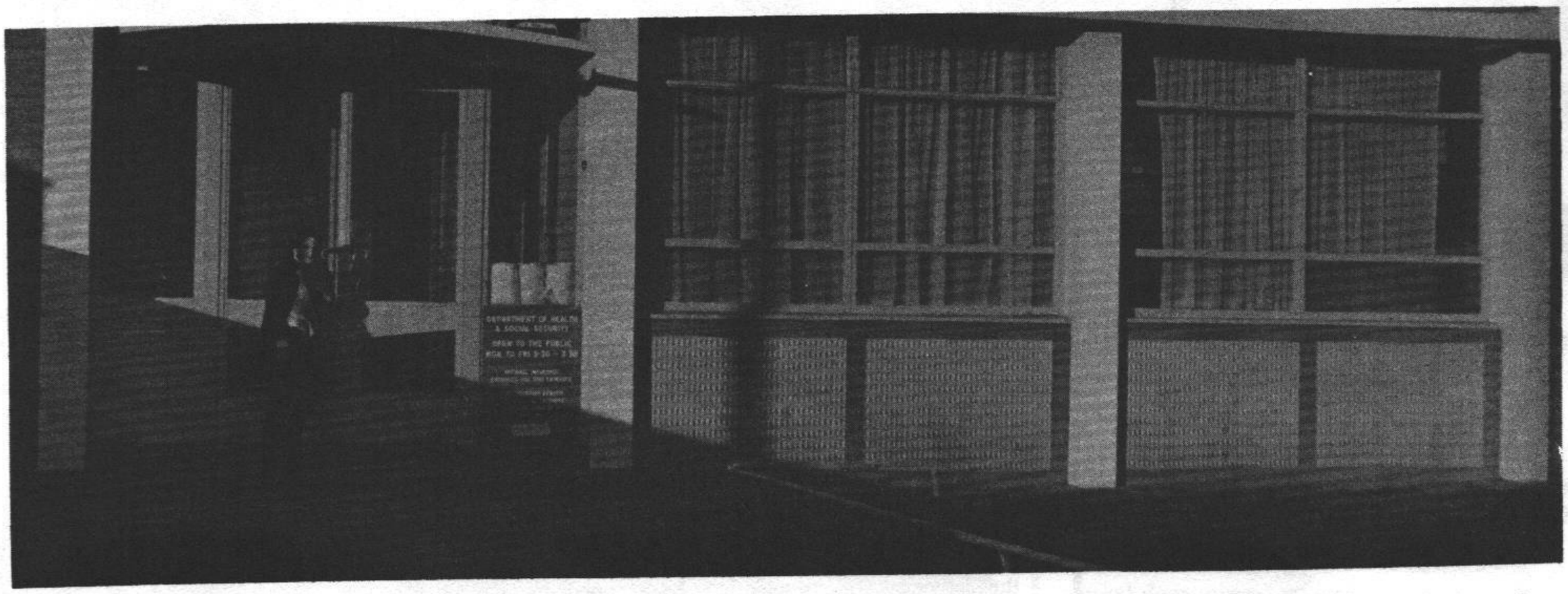
Nuclear disarmament *(Comp K) – Region's Labour authorities to' declare themselves nuclear-free zones, poublicise effects of nuclear war and support local peace groups.*

Health *(Motion 1) – end racist government health charges on non-residents and eligibility checks.*

Employment Bill *(Emergency motion) – join fully in TUC campaign against the Tebbit Bill.*

Conference report by Jim Mallory, (Lewisham East CLP)

Towards a Social-*ist* Security System



After the disastrous record of the last Labour Government in terms of combating poverty, it is encouraging that the Party is taking a serious look at the problem with the publication of a discussion document last September, and now a discussion paper inviting the views of branches by the end of April.

Frank Field in 'What Went Wrong' (ed. Ken Coates, Spokesman 1979) conclusively shows that the last Labour Government presided over a steady increase in the numbers of poor which cannot be explained away by the increase in the realistic value of the supplementary benefit povery line as measured against net earnings. In particular, there was a rise in the number of people dependent upon means-tested assistance; the provision of a new non-meanstested child benefit was almost vetoed; the tax burden on families rose faster than for other groups, and rose fastest of all for families on low incomes.

Labour must now develop a policy on social security which does genuinely reduce inequalities of income and wealth by a horizontal re-distribution.

RADICAL OVERHAUL

The Tory assault upon the social wage and the benefit system presents Labour with the opportunity to develop just such a programme which would be the first radical overhaul since the days of Beveridge. What is required is an adequate income maintenance system incorporating the wages structure and the tax and social security systems.

Last year's Annual Conference carried a resolution which goes much of the way towards instigating such a radical overall strategy. It included the need to abolish the humiliating means-test, an end to the system of linking benefit entitlement to contribution tests which exclude increasing numbers of people, an overhaul of the taxation system to eliminate the poverty trap, greater support for families and the removal of sex discrimination in both social security and taxation systems.

It is unclear whether this was carried because of genuine interest and understanding of the issues involved, or because delegates automatically vote for resolutions on social security, which they safely consign to that damning limbo of being 'worthy', while they sit out the debate in the bar.

But fundamental to a system of meaningful redistribution and economic and social justice must be the following—

- *Firstly*, benefits must be noncontributory. The two-tier system of benefits has failed. National Insurance contribution tests exclude school leavers, married women, the disabled, the long-term unemployed and sick. For those in work, National Insurance is a regressive form of taxation which hits the working class the hardest. It is a clear understanding of this which is behind the Tory increases of over one-third in N.I. contributions, from 6½% in 1979 to 8¾% next year.
- *Secondly*, benefits must be universal, i.e. non-meanstested. Nearly forty years ago Beveridge claimed that 'a permanent scale of benefit below subsistence assuming supplementation by a means test as a normal feature cannot be defended'. Yet this is still the state of affairs today. Means-testing is degrading, is a fundamental cause of the poverty trap, results in large numbers of people eligible for benefits not claiming them, and is expensive to administer.
- *Thirdly*, benefits must be paid to individuals. This is the only way to remove discrimination against women and end the noxious co-habitation rule.
- *Fourthly*, benefits must be paid at flat-rate. Benefits paid at such a flat-rate but financed by earnings related contributions or taxes do redistribute income in favour of the lower paid. Earnings-related benefits merely reflect the inequalities of the wages structure. The unemployed must not be discriminated against by being ineligible for the higher long-term rates available to other groups of claimants.
- *Fifthly*, benefits must be increased and standardised. Child benefit is now worth less than the combined family and tax allowances were worth in the 1950s. The Death and Maternity Grants have been fixed at the same level since the Stone Age. Disablement benefits are an impenetrable maze, full of contradictions and inequities. In addition, a universal housing allowance is necessary to replace the anomalies of the cumbersome rent and rate rebate schemes, and to end the discrimination against tenants whereby tax relief is allowable on mortgages but not on rents.
- *Sixthly*, the tax system must be overhauled in the light of such a programme. It is ridiculous that families start paying tax at less than half the average weekly wage. The freezing of tax allowances by abolishing the Rooker-Wise amendment means that there are many receiving family income supplement and paying income tax at the same time! A minimum weekly wage/guaranteed income for all must be an integral part of the overall strategy to combat poverty and redistribute wealth and income in a meaningful way.

It is encouraging that the Party is now initiating a proper debate about social security. The system at present reinforces the inequalities of the capitalist wages system, has made little impact upon poverty, actually encourages low wages, discriminates against women and is used to discipline labour.

The Labour Social Security Campaign has been formed to encourage that debate and help develop a radical new social security scheme which will help the next Labour Government to challenge the inequalities and injustices of the capitalist system.

Nigel Williamson
Orpington CLP

London Labour Briefing, page nineteen

WORKERS' PLAN for LONDON'S NEEDS

Valerie Wise
Vice Chair of Industry and Employment Committee

It is difficult nowadays to do more than hold on to what you've got. The idea of drawing up visionary alternatives might at first seem a bit out of tune with the defensive mood of the times. But that mood of retreat is exactly the mood which Thatcher is trying to create; by using unemployment as a weapon of fear her intention is to undermine our confidence and lower our expectations. Injecting detailed, credible plans of what we desire into our struggle to defend what we've got, must therefore be a vital part of the resistance to the Tories. We cannot wait for a Labour government to start developing alternative plans for particular localties, services and industries. In fact we are much more likely to achieve a Labour government if we move from general slogans about increased expenditure, full employment and nationalisation to involving people *now* in identifying the needs which that expenditure could meet; in investigating the spare capacity which full employment could put to good use; in showing the needs particular industries could meet if shareholders' profits were not the overriding concern. As trade unionists and community based groups engage in this popular planning process, they would be strengthening their own organisations and alliance with others.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS

At present there is not enough spirit in the T.U. movement itself spontaneously to start to draw up such alternative plans. They need political support and encouragement. In the mid seventies Tony Benn provided such encouragement to stewards' committees like those at Lucas Aerospace, during his brief stay at the Department of Industry. At present such support can come from Labour controlled local or county authorities and from the Labour party.

In London, the GLC is already committed in its manifesto to working with trade unionists and community organisations to draw up its industrial strategy. It has created an Economic Policy Group of five people – two sharing one job – one of whose main tasks will be to stimulate and service such a process of democratic planning. This will help spell out the disastrous consequences of not campaigning for a socialist plan for jobs; it will spell out the powers of investment, purchasing and propaganda available to the GLC to help implement and fight for such a plan; it will help put into contact with each other, groups aware of social needs, for example for better heating, school or medical equipment and groups of trade unionists and the unemployed who could identify the resources to meet these needs; it will point to the national and international economic trends that people of London will need to intervene in.

POPULAR PLANNING

Some of the proposals which come from this popular planning could be funded by the Greater London Enterprise Board, or by the GLC itself. Such proposals could illustrate a new, exciting vision of the future. But they will be set against the gloomy background of unemployment on a scale far too great for the GLC to overcome. The people's plans then, must also be the basis for resisting further redundancies and campaigning withother local councils and trade unions for a change in government policy.

One problem facing such a process of drawing up popular plans in alliance with a Labour council is that the mechanisms do not exist. This is partky because industrial intervention is relatively new, even for Labour controlled local authorities. Moreover, trade unions have habitually seen industrial and economic policy as the responsibility of the Labour party in which they merely pass advisory resolutions rather than take their own initiatives in alliance with the support of the Labour party. Finally campaigns based on particular needs, be it childcare, housing, health or transport, tend to fight for their own corner and ignore the rest.

POPULAR INVOLVEMENT

However, there are many signs of trade union organisations and community based groups making the kind of alliances across industries, across the private and public sector and across the workplace and community which will provide the basis of planning for social need. Islington Trades Council for instance is helping to bring together tenants groups and building workers; the National Childcare Campaign has been organising discussions on the employment implications of the need for more and better childcare facilities; the Fare Fight campaign has generated closer contact between transport users and transport workers; many tutors in adult education are building closer links with local trade unions and centres for the unemployed. But all these beginnings need support and resources since they are going very much against the grain of traditional ways of organising. The GLC could provide some of this support as part of the process of generating popular involvement in drawing up employment plans for London. If popular involvement is to succeed it will need the help of people who are already discussing ways of going beyond defensive action. Would you and the others in your organisation like to help? If so contact the Economic Policy Group at Room 6b, Country Hall.

The District Auditor and `an oversight'

In the August edition of *Briefing* we described how the District Auditor in London was taking Camden's labour councillors to court over their decision to pay the Camden Supplement, a minimum wage of £60. We also described how he had managed to brush aside various illegalities by the Tories in Westminster. More remarkable still is a recent report by another District Auditor on the illegalities of the Epping Forest District Council which appeared on their Council agenda on 23rd February and which resulted in a loss of some £800,000.

Circular 54/70 on the Sale of Local Authority Houses stipulated that the Ministry assumed 'that Authorities will not dispose of houses on such terms that the interest rates they charge represent a loss to the Authority or a concealed subsidy to the buyer'. Epping Forest District Council however were so anxious to dispose of valuable public assets that they were not only prepared to offer 100% mortgages but felt that even this was an insufficient bribe. They therefore agreed to waive the interest repayments on half the purchase price for the first seven years through a Council/Life Assurance mortgage scheme.

The effect of the scheme was to grant an illegal subsidy of about £3,200 per sale – based on a £12,000 purchase price and a 11.5% average interest rate. The Council carried out 160 to 170 such sales selling the assets at a total of about £3m. The District Auditor assess the loss overall to ratepayers at about £800,000.

The Councillors were fully aware of the scheme and even produce an 'Operational Handbook' in 1978. But even though they were well aware of the generous subsidy they were handing over to house purchasers, Councillors in Epping Forest seem to think that such gifts grow on trees. For the District Auditor found that 'members do not seem to have been informed or have appreciated that this subsidy was solely at the expense of the Council'. He goes on to brush aside their breach of the law with words that it was 'an oversight'. He finally exonerates the Epping Forest District Council by obtaining Heseltine's sanction of the illegal expenditure, thus saving the need to take them to the High Court in the steps of the Camden 30.

Robert Latham
Holborn and St Pancras South CLP

Bookspace

edited by
Nick Murray

BOOKS

THE ACTIVIST'S HANDBOOK
Published at £0.85 by Labour Co-ordinating Committee, 9 Poland Street, W1.

LCC argues that a new more strategic approach to socialist change is needed and this will only come about by creating mass popular support through forming new alliances and developing a new style of politics. That new campaigning style, building a presence in the local community, is vital if the Labour Party's popular image is to be restored. The Handbook offers itself as 'a source book of techniques and resources for activitists keen to push Labour into a more accessible and extrovert political approach. It covers community organisation, petitions, public meetings, lobbying, fund-raising, communication, publicity and much more. Every PEO should have one.

HOW TO WIN?
Published at £3.50 by Spokesman

From the team that brought you *What Went Wrong?*, the analysis of Labour's 1979 defeat, comes a companion collection of essays edited by Ken Coates explaining in depth at the international, national and local level, the massive task of regenerating a de-industrialised Britain.

THE TRADE UNION DIRECTORY
Published at £6.95 by Pluto Press

A comprehensive guide to all the TUC unions compiled by Jack Eaton and Colin Gill.

SOLIDARITY: POLAND'S INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION
By Denis MacShane
Published at £3.50 by Spokesman

POLISH AUGUST
By Neal Ascherson
Published at £2.50 by Penguin

Two useful books on Poland and the background to the struggles of Solidarity. Penguin have also published a collective portrait of Lech Walesa first published in Gdansk in 1981 called (with slightly Pythonesque overtones):

THE BOOK OF LECH WALESA
(£2.50)

THE POLITICS OF SECRECY
By James Michael
Published at £2.50 by Penguin

Analyses some of the causes of state secrecy and some ways of breaking it down.

THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION
By Henri Weber
Published at £2.95 by Verso

PAMPHLETS

POOR AND POWERLESS
By Jane Lorant
Published at £1.00 by Child Poverty Action Group, 1 Macklin St, WC2.

Describes one of the major problems facing people on low incomes: fuel debts. This problem will never adequately be solved until the next Labour government attacks its root cause: poverty, unemployment, and inadequate levels of supplementary benefit.

GAY PEOPLE IN N.A.T.F.H.E.
By the TFHE Gay Group
Published at £0.10 by NATFHE

Examines some of the principal demands of the NATFHE Gay Group and considers effective ways of achieving appropriate conditions of service for gay people in further and higher education.

'S.D.P. . . . REFRESHES THE POLITICIANS OTHER PARTIES DON'T WANT'
– BRIEFING'S LONG AWAITED PAMPHLET ON THE S.D.P. ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE MAY ELECTIONS

'I commend this pamphlet to all those who are interested in the real threat posed by the SDP'. ***Tony Benn M.P.***

'My advice is don't have anything to do with it'.
George Page, Secretary Greater London Labour Party

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The writing on the PAT wall

Marked on the wall
In red
There was
An expression of popular will,
Written by a worker,
Inspired by the leaders.

But the leaders reconsidered
And sent other workers to paint it over
In black.
This was done with minimum of paint
So all could read the writing on the wall
in black.

The leaders were displeased
And sent other workers to chisel it out.
This was done with diligence
So all then read the carving on the wall.

The leaders were jealous
And sent other workers to knock the wall down.
This was done perfectly.

Now all can see the gap where the wall stood
And are reminded of many things.

Piers Corbyn

"MY SEX-LIFE" by Chris Knight;
"OUR SEX-LIVES–OUR STRENGTH", by Ann Bliss.

"Thoroughly recommended as a good read".
Simon Hoggart in *Punch* magazine.

"Romantic writing like this puts Barbara Cartland in her place."
Editorial comment, *South London Press.*

"They have gone public and made a brave attempt to dig out the political content of their intimate relations and the connection between their marriage and their public politics."
Marshall Colman, *London Labour Briefing.*

Available from left bookshops in London or send £1 for both pamphlets to the Women and Labour collective, c/o Jane Stockton, 8a Lady Margaret Road, NW5

PERIODICALS

In the last issue of BOOKSPACE we mentioned Eric Hobsbawm's pessimistic book *The Forward March of Labour Halted?*. The latest issue of *New Left Review* has an article by Ken Coates which takes issue with Hobsbawm and argues that the Labour Left must not for a moment retreat but accelerate its advance within the Party if a broad popular movement for socialism is to be a real prospect in the UK in the next decade (*New Left Review*, 7 Carlisle St, W1, £1.50).

BOOKSPACE is still keen to include publications produced by local parties, trades councils; women's, ethnic minority, and community groups as well as more widely publicised material. If you have produced anything of interest to readers of Briefing, *please send details to:*
Nick Murray, Editor, Bookspace, London Labour Briefing, c/o 156b Union St, SE1.

TEBBIT'S LAW

Robert Latham
Holborn and St Pancras South CLP

Norman Tebbit is recently reported to have warned trade unionists who defied his laws that they would be committing an offence against the people. He did not add that had trade unionists not so defied laws whether created by parliament or judges to shackle them over the past 250 years, then no trade union rights would exist today and workers would be defenceless. Reference has frequently been made to the Taff Vale case of 1901 when the courts ruled that trade unions themselves could be sued for any industrial action by their members, a decision which would have destroyed unionisation had it not been reversed by the Liberal government in 1906. 1834 should also be remembered as the year when six farm labourers from the Dorset Village of Tolpuddle were deported for doing no more than to organise themselves into a union. The earliest case is perhaps that of the Cambridge Taylors in 1721 when judges decided that 'conspiracy to raise wages' was a criminal offence.

It is nonsense for Tories to complain of trade union immunities or to suggest that they have special privileges. There is no constitutional right to strike, and the civil liberty to organise to fight for better working conditions has only been won through struggle and martyrdom. The campaign against the Industrial Relations Act 1971 started initially with mass demonstrations, but it took many months to develop into the defiance which was to lead to the jailing of the 'Pentonville Five', the miner's strike and the downfall of the Heath government.

The current legislation will be more difficult to resist. Tebbit knows the fears that mass unemployment has created amongst many union members and the affect unemployment has had on union membership (membership of the T&G having declined from 2m to 1½m in the two years). The Employment Act 1980 was the prelude introduced by Prior which has already made significant inroads into trade union rights. Picketing has been restricted by the Code of Practice and the provisions against secondary action; a second Code restricts closed shops; funding has been made available for secret ballots; and maternity rights and unfair dismissal rights have been restricted, particularly for workers in small firms. Tebbit has now suggested that his bill is the final measure that the Tories will introduce during this parliament restricting unions.

1 DAMAGES AGAINST UNIONS

The Tebbit bill proposes to make unions liable to pay damages where any industrial action is held to be unlawful, turning the clock back to the Taff Vale case of 1901. The damages that can be awarded from any one dispute can amount to up to £10,000 for a union with 5,000 members or less, or to £250,000 for a union with more than 100,000 members. Even these limits can be increased by the Secretary of State. Although certain forms of industrial action will now clearly be illegal, there are other areas of uncertainty which could provide a field day for lawyers. In three recent cases Denning has held strikes to unlawful only to be reversed by the House of Lords.

2 REDUCING RANK-AND-FILE DEMOCRACY

The bill defines those acts for which a union can be held liable and for which they can be made to pay damages. Essentially, the action must be 'authorised or endorsed by a responsible person' connected with the union. The definition of what is 'authorised or endorsed' is so vague that unions will be unsure of the extent of their liability. The union can avoid responsibility if they repudiate the industrial action, or if the action was in breach of the union's rules. The latter provision has the clear purpose of enticing unions to tighten up their rule books to extend their control over their members.

3 REDUCING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

The definition of a 'trade dispute' is restricted in several ways. The action must relate 'wholly or mainly' to a trade dispute. This change will make it easier for Denning and the judges to decide that a strike is mainly political, to declare the action illegal and make the union liable for damages or issue an injunction to prevent the strike. It was suggested that the recent steel strike was mainly political. This description could be applied to local government unions striking to protect jobs threatened by Heseltine or the Lord's fares ruling, or to strike action seeking to force a wage increase above the government's wage guidelines. Disputes between 'workers and workers' are made unlawful, even though many demarcation disputes arise only because of inadequate consultation by management. The bill also makes unlawful any dispute relating to matters outside the United Kingdom unless the persons taking the action are likely to be affected by the outcome of the dispute. This clause will prevent international solidarity against multinational companies.

4 SACKING STRIKERS

Any employer can at present dismiss all strikers without notice. He must however dismiss or take back everyone who has been on strike, and any attempt to single out some strikers will make the dismissals unfair. The new provision enables an employer to give notice to strikers that they will be dismissed if they do not return by a certain date. Providing that all those who stand firm are sacked, the action will be lawful. This provision will give a free hand to the brinkmanship industrial relations tactics of Michael Edwardes and his type.

5 ENCOURAGING LUMP LABOUR

The bill will make it illegal to contract with union labour only firms, or to stipulate such a clause in a contract. It will be illegal to refuse a tender because the firm does not have a union only agreement. These provisions will hit the building departments of most labour councils. Their direct labour departments are already threatened by the Heseltine rules that they must be run at a commercial profit. Private contractors will now be free to undercut them by employing cowboy lump labour, encouraging shoddy work and unsafe work practices.

6 ENDING THE CLOSED SHOP

Ken Gill has aptly described the bill as creating 'a slush fund for free riders'. £2m is to be retrospectively awarded to some 400 closed shop rebels who lost their jobs between 1974-80 because they refused to join unions. The cash bonanza is extended to encourage further workers to refuse to join or to leave unions and who will be able to sue either the employer or the union for large damages. The minimum is fixed at £2,000 with a further special award of between £10,000 to £20,000 if the employee wants to be reinstated but the tribunal refuses to make such an order. If the tribunal orders reinstatement, but this is not complied with, the special award is a minimum of £15,000.

Under Prior's 1980 Act, only the employer could make the union a party to the proceedings. Now the vexatious free rider will be free to involve the union who can be made to pay all the compensation if the tribunal finds that the union pressurised the employer to dismiss him. The size of these awards is many times more than would normally be awarded in unfair dismissal cases and is clearly intended to bribe free riders to undermine existing closed shop agreements. At present some 5.2m workers are covered by these agreements to the mutual satisfaction of both employees and unions.

In order for closed shop agreements to remain valid, compliance with strict ballot provisions are required. Every five years agreements must be supported by at least 80% of those covered by them, or by 85% of those voting, whichever is the higher. In the event of non-compliance, any free rider who resigns from their union and is dismissed in consequence will be entitled to claim the cash bonanza. Tebbit is not joking when he says that he wants to destroy closed shop agreements completely.

OPPOSITION

Two meetings are planned to mount opposition to the bill. Rank-and-file resistance is to be mobilised at the national conference of the Liaison Committee for the defence of Trade Unions on March 27th. The TUC is holding a national conference of union executives on April 5th. Proposals being considered by the TUC centre round a £500,000 fighting fund to support unions caught in the frontline of defiance. No effective campaign emerged against the Prior Act, and when injunctions have been granted by judges to restrict picketing, unions have obeyed them. The 'day of action' was a flop. This time unions will have to fight to survive.

Taking Ireland into the Trade Unions

Don Flynn
Islington North CLP

An important start was made at a large conference at the end of February to the task of involving the trade union movement in the struggle for radical, anti-imperialist policies from the Labour Party on the subject of Ireland.

Nearly 400 people, the majority delegates from CLPs and trade union bodies, heard trade union speakers from both parts of Ireland and Britain, as well as Labour's deputy spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Clive Soley, and Euro-MP Richard Balfe, put forward their views on how the struggle for a new policy, supporting a united Ireland, should proceed.

FORCEFUL

One of the most important speeches of the day's proceedings came from Northern Ireland NUPE official, Inez McCormack. Ms McCormack is also the first woman member to sit on the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the equivalent body to the TUC in Ireland.

In a forceful contribution she criticised the failure of the northern trade unions to deal with the issue of sectarian division within the ranks of workers in the six county state. She spoke of a 'corruption of ideas' within the labour movement, which placed the severest limitations on its ability to fight for the basic interests of the whole of the Irish working class.

It was pointed out how the trade unions actively campaigned for a 'Faulknerite' (after the late, allegedly 'liberal' Unionist prime minister of Northern Ireland) strategy, calling for finances for investment to create jobs and services to be concentrated in the predominantly Protestant areas.

UNIONIST VETO

Ms McCormack identified the central task before the labour movement in Britain and Ireland as being to press home the challenge to the continuation of the 'Unionist veto'. This point was taken up by other speakers, including Matt Merrigan, head of the Irish AT&GWU (a region of the T&GWU). Mr Merrigan pointed to a number of ways in which the question of the ending of partition could be emphatically brought onto the agenda for political debate amongst the Unionist community, including the establishment of a 32 counties-wide constituent assembly which would have the task of establishing the political structures which would replace British rule in Northern Ireland.

BRITISH UNIONS

For the viewpoint of British trade unionists, Chris Robinson, a Lancashire full-time official of NALGO, urged delegates to recognise that progress in the trade union movement would initially be slow. He explained that the neglect of the subject of Ireland in Britain meant that many workers had very little understanding of the issues involved. There was a need for patient explaining, as well as a constructive dialogue with people who might at first be hostile to an anti-imperialist viewpoint, before real inroads would be made.

Lew Lewis, the London District organiser for UCATT, the building workers' union, sparked off controversy with his call for support for campaigns such as the now defunct 'Better Life for All' campaign which had the backing of Irish trade unions in the mid-seventies. It was particularly unfortunate that opposition to the points made by Mr Lewis from a section of delegates should have taken the form of ill-tempered heckling which at times reached the level of barracking. Experience of the trade union movement should alert those who support British withdrawal from Ireland to the fact that the views supported by Lew Lewis are not uncommon amongst many good activists. No doubt such displays of rancour and petulance will leave the very sections of the movement we must win over to our standpoint feeling somewhat less than impressed, if not thoroughly disgusted.

CLIVE SOLEY

This was the first major conference on Ireland which Clive Soley has addressed since becoming a Labour front bench spokesperson on Northern Ireland. Once again it was a controversial contribution, dealing with the topic of challenging the Unionist veto, but pointing this question on a clearly subordinate level to the traditional bogey of 'dealing with the question of security'.

This speech represented a clear indication of the weakening resolve of the Parliamentary left to fight for radical proposals as the basis of a post-bipartisan Labour policy.

TASKS AHEAD

The immediate outcome of the conference was the establishing of contact between individuals in a number of trade unions, and a commitment to build trade union groups which will concentrate on taking up the debate inside their own unions. These groups will spend the next few months broadening their range of contacts by holding national meetings of sympathisers and planning such activities as fringe meetings at trade union conferences and campaigns around the issues of the PTA, the use of plastic bullets, and pressing home the challenge to the Unionist veto.

Enquiries about contact groups which have been set-up in the different unions can be made by writing to Labour Committee on Ireland, B.M. Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

THEY SHOOT CHILDREN



THE USE OF RUBBER AND PLASTIC BULLETS IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

photo shows 12-year-old Carol Ann Kelly in her coffin.

Between April 1972 and August 1981, 13 people, six of them children, were killed in the North of Ireland by rubber and plastic bullets fired by the army and police. Many more people sustained terrible injuries.

They Shoot Children: the use of rubber and plastic bullets in the North of Ireland **traces the history of these weapons, which were developed to suppress mass resistance. It tells how the wooden bullet used in Hong Kong was supplanted by the rubber bullet and this in turn by the plastic bullet. It describes the highly misleading army propaganda that has accompanied them. It sets out the evidence, well-known to the British authorities, that they are lethal and indiscriminate weapons which must be banned.**

The 40-page booklet also includes brief case histories of the 13 people so tragically killed and of several of the seriously injured. The many illustrations include actual-size photos of rubber and plastic bullets. The booklet is carefully researched, well designed and easy to read. It provides a comprehensive list of references.

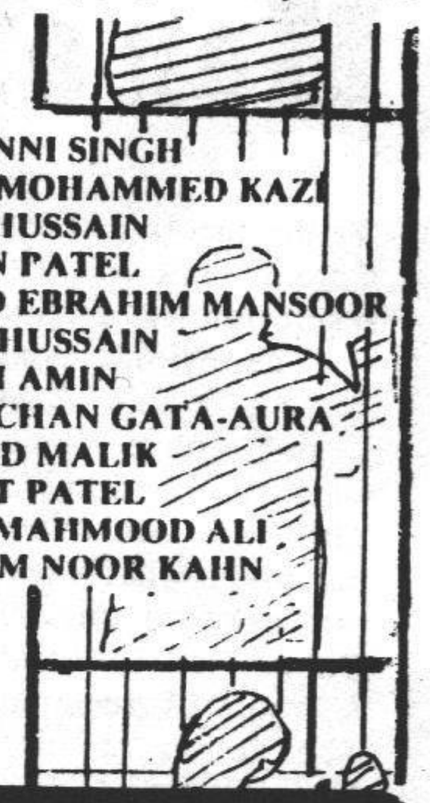
They Shoot Children: the use of rubber and plastic bullets in the North of Ireland**, by Information on Ireland, ISBN 0 9507381 2 3.**

Available by post from: Information on Ireland, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1
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LONDON LABOUR says

FREE THE BRADFORD 12



You would definitely know that London Labour Party supports the Bradford 12 if you went to the Annual Meeting in March. You should know anyway because your delegates were asked to take these leaflets away so that everyone knows that London Labour stands by these twelve Asian militants from Yorkshire.

Who are the Bradford 12? They are twelve young Asian men who on April 26 at Leeds Crown Court face charges of 'conspiracy to manufacture explosives with intent to endanger life and damage property'. Some bottles filled with petrol were found on some waste ground in Bradford. The police arrested these twelve, and after two days of the racist abuse they call 'interrogation', extracted 'voluntary' statements admitting responsibility for these bottles. The Bradford 12 later retracted these statements and ***plead not guilty to all charges.***

They were arrested around the time when (mainly black) youth in many towns and cities refused to take any more police harassment, or any more of the racism that pervades all of British society. They fought the police on the streets. No petrol bombs were thrown in Bradford itself, but the police went in heavy and arrested these 12 on conspiracy charges.

The evidence looks so flimsy that it would be laughable if the charges didn't carry a maximum of ***life imprisonment.*** The Court jailed them for three months after arrest and only granted bail on the condition that they were home by 10pm each night and ***kept away from all meetings organised for their defence.*** By imposing these unheard-of conditions the Court admits this is a political trial.

Why did the police pick on these twelve? Because they are among the best organised anti-racist fighters in the city. Without them Anwar Ditta might never have forced the Home Office to let her bring three of her children home to her in Rochdale. Without them Jaswinder Kaur might have been deported to India because she was no longer with her husband. (The Home Office had deported him too.)

Without them Gary Pemberton would be in jail. Their investigations exposed a West Yorkshire police frame-up of this Black Yorkshireman. They were trying to uncover other funny business in this police force, who kept letting the Ripper slip through their fingers. No wonder the police were out to get them.

This GC/Union Branch condemns:
– the build-up of state harassment of the black community, and in particular the conspiracy charges brought against the Bradford 12.
– the criminalisation of thousands of black youth following the July uprisings;
– the mounting social violence and murder facing black people in Britain;
– the unprecedented political conditions of bail imposed on the Bradford 12.

This GC/Union Branch views the charges brought against the Bradford 12 not only as an attack on the right of the black community to organise politically to defend itself, but also as an attack on fundamental civil liberties. The successful use of the conspiracy charges could set dangerous precedents for the rights of community, trade union and political organisations.

This GC/Union Branch will therefore:
– support the campaign to free the Bradford 12;
– demand for the oppressive bail conditions on the Bradford 12 to be removed and for all charges to be dropped immediately;
– take any relevant form of industrial/protest action as necessary to ensure the success of the campaign;
– affiliate to the campaign;
– support the National Demonstration in Leeds on 3 April, the National Picket of Leeds Crown Court on 26 April, and any other meetings, benefits, action, etc.;
– send a donation to the campaign, and circulate collection sheets to raise money;
– circulate petition sheets and return them to the campaign.

Most were members or sympathisers of the United Black Youth League – an independent radical group fighting every kind of state racism.

The police hope that if they can win they will not only discourage black people from standing up for their rights, but frighten workers from acting to defend their jobs and make all of us more prepared to accept injustice. Remember a conspiracy trial involving striking building workers a few years ago – the Shrewsbury 3? They actually went to jail. This is the most serious political trial ever involving black people. The police like these trials because they don't need much evidence to convict – it's all too easy to pull wool over the jury's eyes. The Bradford 12 Campaign are out to stop them by making sure that everyone knows the truth.

Vigorous campaigning can defeat the police. In 1974 fourteen pacifists who had leafleted soldiers on how they could legally leave the Army and not go to Belfast were acquitted of 'conspiracy to incite disaffection'.

That's where you *Briefing* readers come in. Get your party to affiliate to the Defence Campaign (cost £5); invite a speaker to your next meeting. Find time even at the beginning of the election campaign to pass the model resolution (see below), and generally take a stand on this the most important political trial for years.

If the Bradford 12 are threatened with jail because they opposed state racism, then by supporting them you are joining them in that fight. You cannot explain why they deserve support without at the same time talking about immigration laws that divide black families, about passport checks in hospitals, about the street battles against the police last summer.

It's not much good for London Labour to say 'Free the Bradford 12' unless people can actually hear our voice – outside of Camden Town Hall where these leaflets were distributed. You are the London Labour Party – you go to your branch and get your Party to come out publicly and declare that the only crime the Bradford 12 have committed is to 'conspire' against state racism. Bring your comrades, with your banner, to Leeds on April 3 and April 26.

Send all money for affiliation and donations to 'Bradford Support Group, London' at Unit 265, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (01-250 1293).

Man appointed to organise women

Mary Honeyball
Hendon South CLP

At the meeting of the Regional Executive Committee on 22 February the following resolution was carried:

> 'The regional women's organiser should be a female. A male organiser should not service Women's Section meetings or the London Women's Conference.'

This was amended to add a further paragraph that the Regional EC should put pressure on the National Executive Committee to create an extra post in London of regional women's organiser. The woman appointed to this job would deal only with the women's organisation in London and have no other responsibilities.

The background to this resolution goes back to the autumn of 1981 when Nancy Morris retired as Assistant Regional Organiser. In addition to her other work Nancy serviced the London Women's Sections and the Regional Women's Committee and arranged the annual London Women's Conference. Nancy had a long history of work within the Labour Party women's organisation. This meant that, despite political differences, she was generally acceptable as the organiser for Labour women in London.

APPOINT A MAN

However, all this changed once Nancy Morris left regional office. In spite of strong representations the General Secretary, George Page, decided to appoint



a man, Stephen Morgan, to take over the organisation of women in London. The General Secretary argued that since neither of the two female staff at regional office were prepared to undertake this work than a man would have to do it, and that Stephen Morgan was well qualified as he had done a similar job in Eastern Region before coming to London.

Stephen Morgan's experience is not in question. The central issue is that Labour women in London want a woman to look after their interests. Women are an under-represented group with special problems and difficulties. Men have for too long been the dominant sex. It is not therefore possible for any man, however sympathetic, to take on the job of organising Labour women.

As a side issue, but one that should be raised, it must be pointed out that there have been criticisms of the standard of organisation within the Labour Party women's movement in London. Hampstead Women's Section made several comments about this at the 1982 London Women's Conference whilst members of the Regional Women's Committee have received complaints about the way in which that Conference was run.

WOMEN MUST ORGANISE

If women are to achieve equality within the Labour Party, if we are to have as many female Members of Parliament as men, if the same number of women are to be local councillors as men, if women are to hold offices within the Party to the same extent as men, then it is absolutely crucial that women are organised and gain in strength and confidence. Such organisation depends on women. The person who takes on this task at the London Labour Party office must therefore be a woman.

Involving women in the Labour Party

More and more people are now realising the importance of fighting to improve the situation of women. We cannot wait for a socialist society and then start righting the wrongs. We will never get a socialist society unless the majority of the population – women – are involved. Women are bearing the brunt of Tory policies with unemployment rising faster amongst women than men; with the Law Lords fares decision hitting women harder than men (as greater users of public transport) and with other cuts in public services. We have to ensure that women are fully involved in the fight against the Tories and the SDP. The London Labour Party and the GLC is now recognising this.

At the recent Greater London Labour Party conference the first debate at the conference was on women's rights. The debate was excellent covering such matters as abortion, taxation and the alternative economic strategy and we are now committed to the mandatory inclusion of women on every parliamentary shortlist.

7 WOMEN

However it is not sufficient to pass good resolutions and then forget about them. The gratuitous approaches being made towards women by the SDP must be judged against their own records on women's issues when the leading lights were Labour ministers and on the NEC. But if the Labour Party is to prove that it is the only party that will fight for the improvement of women's rights then it will have to put its own house in order. The new London Labour Party Executive Committee only has 7 women on it out of a committee of 47 people. This is not good enough. Even the National Executive Committee is better than this! If we are to improve this situation we will have to start campaigning for this now. Perhaps a change in the rules will be required so that we ensure there is a proper representation of women.

PLATFORMS

When arranging meetings every effort must be made to ensure that platforms do not turn out to be entirely composed of men. There are many women in the Labour movement who are perfectly capable of speaking and have a valuable contribution to make. Unfortunately often organisations rely on the few women who have become well known or fairly well known. These women cannot do every meeting without dropping dead from exhaustion. Other women may be a little harder to find but it is a necessary task to find them, and not take the easy way out of always using the men with the well-known names.

GLC

The GLC Labour Group has also decided that women's rights has to given more importance and has agreed to the setting up of a Women's Committee. This will be a full committee of the Council. Lewisham Council has already given a good lead on this with their Working Party on Women and the GLC's Women's Committee obviously has to work closely with Borough Councils on such initiatives. The GLC already has started to do work on women's rights through the Staff Committee and through the Grants Panel.

However more can be done and the idea of the Women's Committee is to start to develop a cohesive overall strategy both for the GLC and for London as a whole. The Committee will work closely with women's groups on this. Obviously the GLC acting alone cannot counter all the disadvantages faced by women, but as the capital's strategic authority it is in a unique position to make a significant contribution by direct action in areas where it has prime responsibilities, such as transport and employment and indirectly by campaigning alongside women for other necessary changes.

It is important that this committee is not merely a gesture but actually does get down to work. Women outside the GLC need to get involved to ensure that this happens.

Valerie Wise

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

BRIEFING ON PERSONAL POLITICS

Review: *The Shame is Over*

'The Shame is Over' by Ania Meulenbelt is published by The Women's Press Ltd at £2.95.

'I can't any more preach feminist theories without showing how little I can fulfil them, how difficult I find it to live them. Are the theories therefore untrue, or must we allow ourselves to fail, openly, without shame, proud to fail and to begin again?'

This is the theme of Anja Meulenbelt's honest and moving account of her life, in her book *The Shame Is Over*. As she says, women have long carried the guilt and shame of our oppression, particularly in our individual relationships with men – shame when they beat or rape us, shame when they leave and reject us. Now as feminists, we feel shame when we still seek love and warmth from men, and when we fail to live up to our own ideas and theories. And yet it is only through our personal experiences that our ideas are formed. It is only through sharing our lives, including the failures (and how can we do other than fail, when men still have the power), that we will become strong, that our ideas will become strong, and we can begin to overcome our oppression.

The book follows Anja's life from childhood through to the present – she actually describes her feelings as she is writing the book. She gives a sketchy description of her marriage at the age of 16, the birth of her son, and the coldness and brutality of her life with her husband, until she gains the strength to leave him. From there she begins to become involved in left wing politics (it is by this time the late 1960s), giving some insight into what it is like to be a woman in this male-dominated sphere – the difficulty in being taken seriously, her inability to gain any support or understanding for the fact that she is also having to care and provide for her son alone, and the blatant sexism of the individual men. Finally she outlines how she begins to become involved in the women's movement and becomes a feminist. Perhaps if there is any criticism of the book it is that all these aspects are only just touched on, particularly her relationship with her son. But then in one book it is just not possible to cover a whole life's experience.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

The real heart of the book and where she writes with most feeling, is in her description of her personal and sexual relationships. Feminists too, need love, warmth, sex, companionship and emotional security, and Anja looks for the fulfilment of these needs in her sexual relationships. She leads us through a series of relationships in which, as she puts it, she looks for 'someone who belongs with me'. But she seems doomed to fail. Often the men who give her most sexual satisfaction are those with whom she cannot share her political beliefs. Invariably, her relationships with men are on their terms, and she is left waiting for when they can spare time to fit her in. She is jealous if her partners spend time away from her, and when she begins to make demands on them to 'choose her', they run away or choose someone who will provide them with the housekeeping and childminding services that she refuses to give them. She has a relationship with another woman, Anna, but again the demands she makes are too much for one person to cope with, and when made to 'choose', Anna ends the relationship. So, for one reason or another, all her relationships end. The endings are always very painful, and she is left totally empty.

GLIMPSES OF A THIRD CHOICE

Anja seems to see for herself only two choices. She can continue to have successive relationships with individual men (if she tolerates their sexism and accepts their terms) or women, trying not to get too involved, not to care too much, stopping before it would become too painful for them to end. Alternatively she can avoid relationships altogether, learning to satisfy herself. Of course, neither of these choices actually gives her the love and security she needs. However I think that there are glimpses in the book of a third choice. She realises that often when she has sex, it is not really sex she wants, but that this gets confused with her other needs, such as a need for warmth, a need for reassurance, a need to talk. She also describes the love and warmth she experiences from some of the women she becomes involved with in the feminist movement – she describes her first experience of being in a women's group as 'that strange, warm feeling in my belly. Almost as if I am in love.'

OUR EMOTIONAL NEEDS

To me, these brief glimpses, strengthen my ideas that there is a real alternative way to fulfil our emotional needs – ideas that have arisen through discussion and support from comrades in the Women and Labour Collective (the group which was responsible for most of the contributions in the 'Street Life' supplement in the last issue). It seems to me that if we look for fulfilment of all our emotional and sexual needs in one relationship we are placing an unbearable burden on one person. We are bound to be jealous since we risk losing everything if we lose this one person. As women in individual relationships with men we are powerless to fight their oppressiveness and sexism. Instead I feel it is possible to fulfil many of our emotional needs through a much wider (and yet stronger) commitment and support from comrades, especially other women, with whom we share socialist and feminist beliefs. If we have love and security in this way, we will not have to hold back in our individual sexual relationships for fear of losing them, for we no longer risk losing everything. Through our solidarity with other women we have the strength to challenge the sexism of individual men. Hiding our failure, or withdrawing from the society of men will not overcome women's oppression. Only by confronting men, and through our collective strength, depriving them of their power, will we succeed.

Jane Stockton, St. Pancras North CLP

male violence

"So you oppose the violence of other men – but what are you doing about it yourself?" This would be a fair question to put to British anti-sexist men. Perhaps American anti-sexist men were challenged in the same way when, in 1977, women from a Boston shelter for battered women asked sypathetic men to try to work with batterers. Thus Emerge was set up.

Now, not only in Boston but also in St Louis, Denver, LA and many other US cities, groups of men "counsel" batterers. Not to "help" these men or enable them to cope with their violent nature but to challenge their assumption that violence is reasonable or justified.

Tom Jones, living in London this year, has worked with Emerge and here explains more about this opportunity for men to oppose male violence.

In order to be effective in working with violent men, we in Emerge feel that the analysis used to structure our organisation has to go directly to the root cause of why men batter women. The shelter workers believed that not only was society male dominated but extended this analysis further by proving that violence is often the method of maintaining that supremacy. The acceptance by much of society that men can batter women and can use violence to solve differences we feel has to be confronted where it is, in the men who batter women.

In 1977 we began to put into practice, through the group counselling of men who batter, the methodology we developed. In the counselling process, the practice can be broken down roughly into two parts. These are the constant challenging of men's traditional attitude that violence against women is an acceptable means of communication and the creation of a supportive environment of men within which this confrontation does occur.

NEW PEER GROUP

Through our group counselling process, we are creating a new male peer group that challenges the traditional image men's groups usually reinforce. We think that the group can also break down feelings of social isolation and marginality that many abusers often have.

A little over 50% of our clients initially contact Emerge as a result of their partners informing them of our existence after she learned of us from the shelter. Nearly thirty percent of the men contact us after learning about us from mental health agencies, hospitals, police, family members or friends. Some (14 percent) men are referred from the court system. The remainder contact us on their own after hearing about us through media interviews, members and former clients.

When a man does contact us we make it clear that we will try to work with him to confront his violence but will not assist him in reuniting with his wife. This places the man in the position of continuing with counselling to **change his behaviour, not to save his marriage.**

CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

When we begin to counsel men, we ask them to commit themselves to the counselling process. The commitment takes the form of signing a contract in which they agree to attend a two hour counselling session weekly for an eight week period. Our counselling cycle extends for three eight week periods with an evaluation by the two counsellors as to whether each man needs to continue after the eighth and sixteenth week.

Underlying all of our work with batterers is the principle that while the family perpetuates male dominance and encourages men to devalue women as people, individual men must still admit that they can stop beating the woman they are living with. They can't say, "I lost my temper", "I lost control", or even "I'm just a product of sexist society."

At Emerge we have developed an extensive community education programme designed to address and confront such attitudes. Since the abuse of women is treated so frequently as a personal or family matter, we think it extremely important to make men's violence against women a public issue. In identifying abuse as a problem that extends beyond the family, we are trying to identify abuse as a prevalent problem, to dispel myths about causes and to encourage men to think of alternatives to violence.

Through our descriptions of battering and other options available to men, we try to talk with as many groups of people as possible. They include predominantly male groups such as rotary clubs and union branches, service agencies, school students, police departments and community organisations. In milieus such as these we can answer many people's questions about our organisation, our analysis and our approach to counselling. It is also an opportunity for us to inform as many people as possible that services do exist for men who batter.

THROUGHOUT AMERICA

American anti-sexist men are now focussing on women abuse. Last June at a conference on Men and Masculinity in Boston, a resolution was passed, which said that the establishment of centres to work with men who batter women is to be the top priority of the men's movement over the next five years. These groups will hopefully realise that to succeed they must be able to work with and maintain the trust of feminist women in the shelter movement.

There are many groups throughout the United States (39 States and the District of Columbia) currently working on male violence. These include social service agencies, health centres, and hospitals. There are also groups in St. Louis, Los Angeles and San Francisco that are similar to Emerge in structure and methodology. Hopefully all these groups will continue to grow as more people realise that men's violence against women must come to an end.

Most of the information in this article is drawn from an unpublished 'Organising and Implementing Services for Men who Batter', 1981. Emerge.

For more information the author can be contacted through Briefing and Emerge at 25 Huntington Avenue, Suite 324, Boston Massachusetts 02116, USA.

men's responsibility

Could British men emulate their American brothers and form groups to challenge batterers here? Could Labour Party members take the issue of male violence seriously enough to at least discuss it at beanch meetings and GCs? I suppose that even a resolution at Annual Conference calling on the next Labour Government to do something about women abuse would be a step forward. At the moment, the Labour Party just doesn't seem interested in any of the "personal" matters that concern people so deeply.

Well, dear readers of Briefing, what do you think?

CHILDCARE ROTA

Dear Briefing,

Let me congratulate you on the 'Street Life' Supplement on Personal Politics. At last a section of the Labour movement is taking practising what we preach seriously.

Time and time again we pass resolutions at Labour Party and trades union meetings about equality and the needs of the 'less fortunate' and then everyone goes home, feeling very self-satisfied, shuts their own front door and that's an end to it. How can we be taken seriously as socialists if we don't appear to care in a practical way about the day to day problems people have to face. The attitude of the majority of activists would be laughable if it wasn't so serious. And they don't even realise – which is worse.

Imagine the scene. . . A LP recruiting drive. Knock on the door. A woman answers with one child in her arms and another hanging onto her skirts and obviously a little harassed. Party member gives out the usual spiel about joining the Party and the benefits to people like herself. They have a very good discussion and the woman is obviously very keen to join and take an active part. But, and here it comes, she is a one-parent family and who would look after the children while she was out?

'Well' says the member 'I'd like to help you but I have so many meetings to go to myself – perhaps you would just like to join and we'll let you know what we are doing'. ('We' normally being male). Sounds familiar?

I know at most Party conferences now there are creches organised. Also some CLPs are looking at ways to cope with members' babysitting problems. But we must take more positive action than just this if we are not only going to keep the members we already have but recruit more 'less fortunate' into the movement.

My own CLP (Croydon North West) has just circulated to all members a form for them to join a 'care rota'. This is yet one more step forward. Needless to say the idea originated from our Womens' Section but the fact that our GMC took action was excellent.

I hope 'Briefing' re-print this form so that other comrades can take the idea back to their own CLPs and TU branches.

Comradely,

Janet Pickering.

Meetings: Can you attend:– Branch/CLP/Union/Women's Section/Other

Comments.....

Do you have dependents you can't leave alone:– Under 5s/5-10years/10-16years/ Sick adult/Disabled Person/Handicapped Person/Elderly Person.

Are you prevented from attending meetings by:– Poor Health/A Handicap/Your Age/ Poor Transport/Fear of coming home late/Cost of transport.

Would you like to have another member care for your dependents so that you can attend meetings?.....

Comments.....

Would you like a lift to meetings, if so which.....

Can you volunteer for the care rota:– I could sit for another member to attend meetings/I have my own transport/I have not got transport

I can give .....members a lift to branch meetings/GMC/Womens Section/Others.

Name & Address . . . . . .

. . . . . .

Non-parents don't think

If you're unattached, childless or separated the Labour Party's the place for you. But people with young children often drop out, or rarely come to meetings. And if 'childed' people do sometimes gain influence in the party it's usually because they're men who rely on women to cover for them at home.

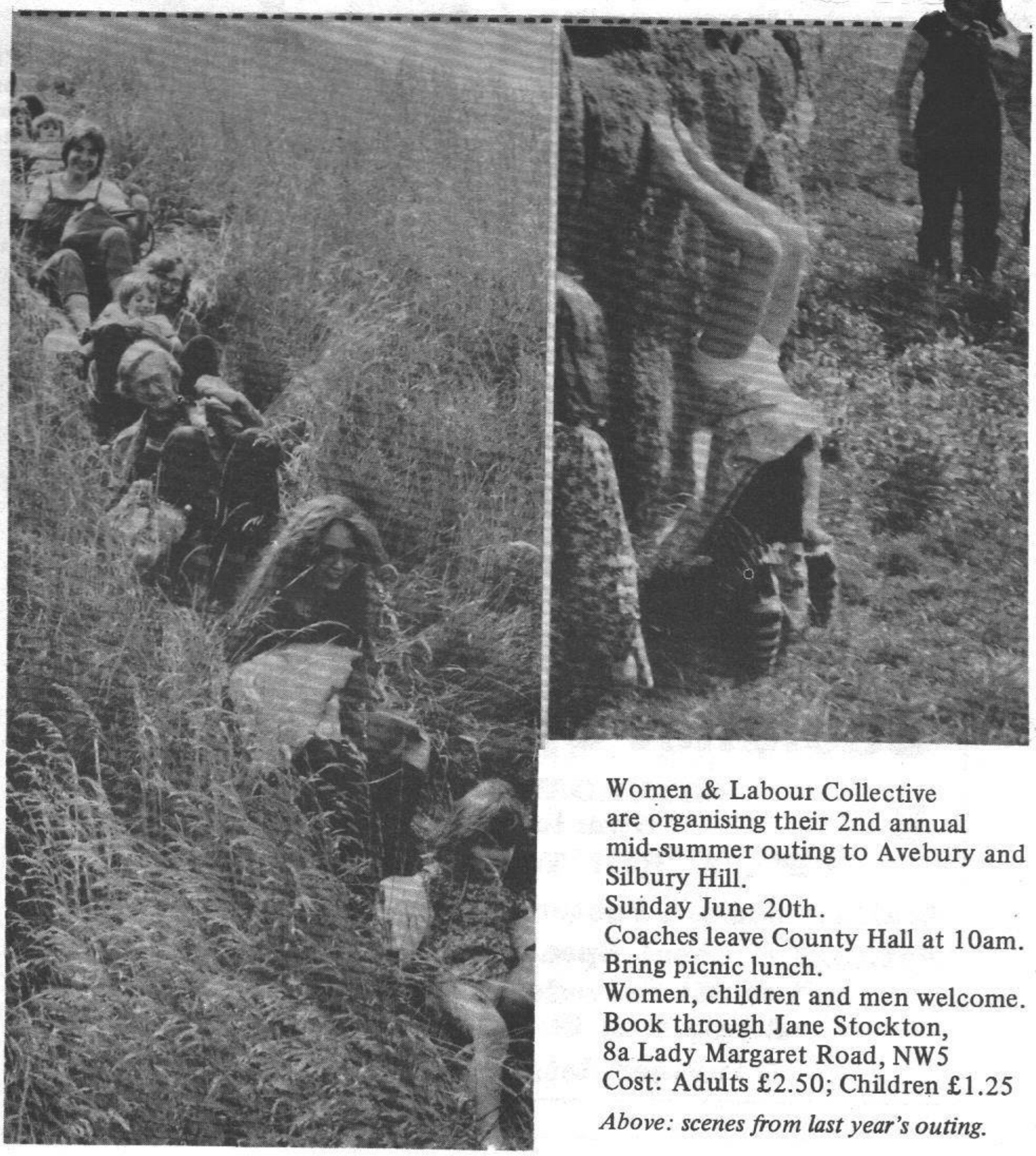
The lack of creches or babysitting between different wards is one obvious difficulty, but having children is far more exhausting and problematic than that. Firstly it means lack of sleep. There is a myth that most children soon settle down into regular habits, but it seems more common that they go on disturbing parents at night for several years.

Secondly there's the continual emotional drain of the fights, power struggles and rows with other children, the screaming, shitting and breaking things; and the added worry that they'll break their necks, which usually ends in shouting and prohibitions.

Thirdly there's a whole range of possible guilt complexes – am I too harsh? too lenient? unstimulating? neglectful? going out to meetings too often? And there's so many different expectations about children. Grandparents and unattached activists love to pet them just as long as they don't have to keep it up. Other parents often blame the 'adult in charge' if a child is vicious, aggressive, jealous or violent– and all children can be like this. It adds up to so many ways that children and their parents are marginalised and demoralised. No children in restaurants, pubs, clubs, theatres, cinemas, shops, meetings; long flights of stairs which force you to carry the pushchair into the estate or shop, narrow spring or swing doors, and the social disapproval of children who won't be pinned down on a bus or tube.

What we should be aiming at is to include children and their parents in all social situations and our political discussions, arranging creches, shared child care, and most important of all discussion groups to share the stress of having children. We also should be fighting for work-sharing and more realistic education about what parenthood is like. Otherwise parents will only seek quick, light relief on the odd occasions that they have the energy to go out – rather than involve themselves in our political grind. The loss will be ours.

Les Tate
Lambeth Central CLP



Women & Labour Collective
are organising their 2nd annual
mid-summer outing to Avebury and
Silbury Hill.
Sunday June 20th.
Coaches leave County Hall at 10am.
Bring picnic lunch.
Women, children and men welcome.
Book through Jane Stockton,
8a Lady Margaret Road, NW5
Cost: Adults £2.50; Children £1.25

Above: scenes from last year's outing.

LETTER

Dear *Briefing,*

In his opening address tc the London Labour Party Conference, Arthur Latham referred to the previous week's editorial in the *South London Press.* It's complaint has been the usual one – that we in the Labour Party aren't interested in 'Law and Order', and that there was nothing on this subject on the agenda for the conference. In actual fact, though, there was one resolution calling for more effective policing in relation to at least one category of crime in London – that of sexual and other assaults on women in London.

Resolution 39 (Kensington C.L.P.) was moved by Mary Evans, who gave a harrowing account of the extent to which women in London these days have reason to fear going out at night. If we in the Labour Party are seen by Londoners as in any way responsible for the policing of London while women – black or white – feel, as they do, increasingly afraid to go out or to walk home in their own neighbourhoods for fear of being assaulted, robbed or raped, then how on earth can we expect the mass of ordinary women in London to feel that we are their party, the party of the oppressed? *This* is oppression, comrades!

Briefing readers who had the courage to read the article in last month's issue by the Hornsey sister who was raped at knife-point may have had their eyes opened as a result – particularly if they are men. The author felt it relevant to her experience to mention the colour of her assailants: the article was about how *she* actually felt in being raped. When I mentioned this in supporting motion 39 during the conference, there were cries of 'shame' from someone on the platform. I understand the dangers, but the real 'shame', surely, was that a woman was raped, not that she had the courage to write about her experience of those who did it. If our anti-racism gets in the way of our anti-sexism – *or* vice-versa – we should stop and think what we are doing. I know a lot of women in our own movement who *do* feel genuinely frightened and intimidated, fearing to come home from labour movement meetings at night unaccompanied, and yet they are made to feel afraid to admit such things publically or politically, lest the issue be exploited by the racists and the right wing press. Surely, people's feelings have just *got* to be brought out into the open, because otherwise we're just collaborating in the oppression of women – whether they be Asian or black women harrassed by white racist thugs, or to take the inverse case, white women who *have* felt that they were picked on in the streets by non-white violent males, teenagers perhaps, venting their frustrations at a racist society on which seem to them to be the easiest apparent targets. Women's justified anger in this case is directed at *violent men,* regardless of whether they are black or white. And while I recognise everything which is said about the 'root causes' of such violence – unemployment, alienation generally, the break-down of traditional family and kinship links etc. etc. – it doesn't alter the fact that women have to defend themselves *now.* It may well be that we'll never mobilise the social forces necessary to conquer state power and transform the economic system *unless* we gain support from the mass of ordinary women in relation to such issues in advance.

The South London Press editorial referred to a prospective Lewisham Council candidate who was – they wrote – so angered by the incidents of racial harrassment and street-assaults in his street and neighbourhood that he, with his neighbours, was thinking of setting up 'some kind of vigilante group'. The person concerned was me. As I told that paper, however, when it's a question of working-class neighbours, black and white, keeping an eye on each other, sweeping the pavement in front of the doorstep, talking over the back fence and generally making a neighbourhood feel *inhabited,* so that intruders *are* more likely to be deterred, I don't think 'vigilante group' is a very good term. When it's a question of black people learning to defend themselves against racist assaults, or women learning karate or basic self-defence so that they will know what to do if attacked, then again 'vigilante group' is the wrong term. On the other hand, I'm not going to quibble too much about words.

policing ourselves

What seems undeniable is that we can't rely on the police to solve our problems for us. In some areas, you'd need a policeman in everyone's back garden! None of us wants that. Resolution 39 called for a specially-trained squad of police women to deal with rape cases. An improvement, no doubt – *some* police women may be somewhat less sexist than most policemen. But surely the sexism – *and* – racism of the police force generally is so institutionalized as to be ultimately unchangeable. In the long run, we are going to have to start policing our own streets and neighbourhoods ourselves – women and men, black and white – with women learning self-defence techniques and so on.

I'm writing this letter because I think we're all too afraid of the 'Law and Order' issue. We shouldn't run away from it – we should confront it head on and turn it on its head. Let's say it: the *fundamental* lawlessness, the *fundamental* criminality, violence and theft is the lawlessness of the racist, sexist and capitalist system itself, which robs *all* of us all the time. Rape is a part of this system, and so are crimes by working class people against other working class people, black or white. Tackle the fundamental criminality – of which the police are, unfortunately, a part – and we'll be tackling the related problems we experience on our streets as well. But only if we make a start now, while the issue is being posed from all sides. And if we're talking about extra-parliamentary activity and the struggle for power, this is really where it's at – in our own neighbourhoods and streets.

Fraternally,
Chris Knight.
Lewisham East CLP



★ hornsey labour party ★

Socialist Spring Festival

SATURDAY 27 MARCH
3pm to midnight
Y.M.C.A. Hall Tottenham Lane N.8.

Stalls □ Books □ Posters □ Badges □ Theatre Groups
National & Local Speakers □ Band □ Bar □ Food □
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□ Admission £1 (50p unwaged) □
□ further details 340 7546 □

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The Target '82 mailing is being developed as a regular service for activists on the left.

To cover costs the subscription is £5 per year (£1.00 if not working) and this should be sent to:

Jeremy Corbyn
28 Lausanne Road
N8 0HN

LILLI LUCZAK IS HERE TO STAY

IT would, of course, be naive to expect the quality of compassion to be a motive force of any great significance in the doings of our rulers. However, Timothy Raison seems to have an even more peculiar notion of this quality than most.

He has stated that he can see no compassionate grounds for Lilli Luczak to be allowed to remain in the UK.

Lilli is a young Canadian woman who lives in Islington, with her 6-year old daughter, Jessie. Jessie was born in England, of a British father, and has never lived anywhere else. Lilli, for the last three months, has been living under threat of immediate deportation. This is where the 'compassion' comes in. Jessie – as a British citizen – will be allowed to stay.

Lilli has no police record, she has not tried to dodge the immigration authorities, and she is not even (perish the thought) living on 'public money'. She has a good job as a secretary and switchboard operator, and Jessie is happily settled at a local primary school.

Lilli has lived in this country for nearly nine years, and has never been harassed in this way before. What awful crime has she committed that she is suddenly being treated as a threat to the British Way of Life As We Know It? She is no longer living with and dependent on a man.

She never married Jessie's father, as he was already legally married, but she lived with him for five years. During this time, her temporary leave to stay was extended with no quibbles, because it was understood that she and the child were being supported by this man. However, about two years ago, Lilli and Jessie left him, because of his repeated violence (Lilli finally had to take out a non-molestation order) and then the trouble started.

There is another violent man in Lilli's life – her father, from whom she escaped when she left Canada in 1973. Lilli remembers vividly many of his choice habits, such as carrying her around the room by her hair. He has threatened to kill her if she ever returns. If Lilli declines the Home Office's 'compassionate' offer to leave Jessie here (having, presumably, been taken into care), the only refuge the two of them will have in Canada is with Lilli's father. Some refuge.

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from this appalling case is that the only way for a woman to be treated properly is to live under the protection of a man. And if that man happens to want to knock shit out of you, well, that's just part of the deal.

Lilli's case must be won; for the sake of her, of her daughter, and for the sake of *all* women. Experience has shown that such cases *can* be won, if there is enough pressure and publicity to embarass the authorities into backing down.

A campaign to publicise Lilli's struggle is just starting to get off the ground. We have leaflets, stickers and petition forms available, but we need money, and we need help.

If only one-tenth of the comrades who read this paper were to organise a whip-round in their Labour Party/Union branch, and were to distribute leaflets and stickers and get the petition signed, it would take us a long way towards winning.

Contact: The Friends of Lilli Luczak, c/o 3 Tranmere House, Morgan Rd., N7, or telephone Anne or Rachel on 607 9052/5268.

For a Shorter Working Week

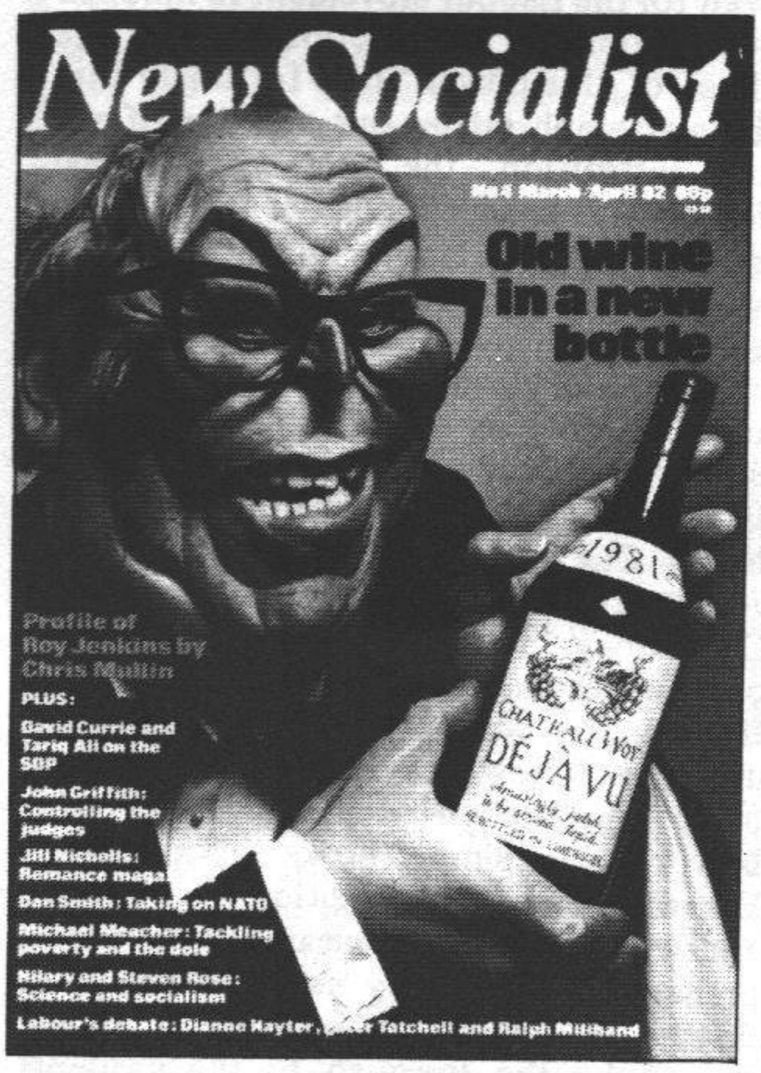
The Liaison Committee of Broad Left Organisations have launched a campaign for a shorter working week. They are asking CLPs to consider the following model resolution for Labour Party Conference.

MODEL RESOLUTION

This conference calls up on the TUC/LP to step up the campaign for the 35 hour week as part of our answer to mass unemployment. The conference recognises that mass unemployment is a result of the capitalist system in crisis and the disastrous anti-working class policies of the Tories. In order to safeguard jobs both from the threat of new technology and a further erosion of the industrial base due to outworn machinery and lack of investment, we call for the following strategy and policy to be adopted by the entire labour movement:

1. The TUC&LP to re-invigorate the 1978 TUC campaign. The campaign to consist of mass meetings, demonstrations, leafleting and a popularising of the campaign in a mass way including a party political broadcast emphasising this issue. Also a call to unions to hold industry wide inter-union conferences.
2. To encourage and support further claims for the SWW especially tied to recruitment as part of any settlement to make up for the subsequent reduced manhours.
3. To seek a firm commitment that the next Labour Government will introduce legislation making a maximum 35 week hour without loss of pay or productivity string attachments a legal obligation on every employer within the first year of taking office.
4. To encourage the European Trade Union Confederation to hold further strikes and demonstrations on the issue.

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THE WINTER WAS YOURS! THE SPRING IS OURS!

This defiant slogan put up by student supporters of Solidarity in the southern Polish town of Cracow during the demonstration there in February sums up the feeling among Poles that the days of the military dictatorship are numbered. Despite the large numbers of internees and the hefty jail sentences the Solidarity union is still alive and able to function.

In January an appeal was launched in *Briefing* to raise money to be used by Solidarity. So far we have collected over £200 in our Labour Poland Solidarity Fund. But we set ourselves a target of £500. Surely the London Labour and trade union movement can raise this amount to help our sisters and brothers in Poland launch their spring offensive. MAKE SURE YOUR LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION HAVE CONTRIBUTED.

Meanwhile thanks to:

Hornsey Briefing Group	£33
ASTMS (Computer Staffs)	£25
Brent East LP	£10

Send your donation to:

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund
c/o Co-operative Bank,
110 Leman St,
London E1.

Further details from Graham Durham, Treasurer, 89 Gladstone Park Gardens, London NW2.



DOWNRIGHT LIES

Dear Editor,

Marion Chester's article on 'Camden – Labour Group and CLP's in conflict' is a tissue of smears, half-truths, inaccuracies and downright lies. It is obviously not possible to deal with all of them. We must, however, refute the most serious allegations.

Contrary to the impression created by the writer, all major decisions have involved prior consultation with the three CLP's. We have never made anyone compulsorily redundant; nor will we. The estates modernisation programme was brought to a halt by the Tory government; not by the Labour council. The housing repairs service was not run down. There was never a group decision in favour of low cost housing by private developers. Whilst it is true that the group agreed the sale of unusable sites this was the inevitable consequence of the Tory government's savage cut in the H.I.P. allocation and was discussed at many meetings with the C.L.P.'s.

Camden held rents frozen for 2½ years after the 1978 elections. All councils (and Camden was no exception) were forced to increase rents last year and we face the same situation again this year. The reason for the increases is a combination of the Tory government's new requirements on local authorities and the legal constraints within which Councils are forced to take such decisions. The increase this year will be less than the figures quoted in the article and will be the minimum required by law. No one likes taking such unpalatable and unavoidable decisions even when taken in full consultation with the CLP's.

Notwithstanding Tory legislation and policies Labour Camden has done more than any other local authority to preserve services and defend jobs. In the process Camden Labour Councillors have put themselves under immediate threat of surcharge and disqualification through the District Auditor's action. We also doubt whether there is any Labour group which consults in more detail on a regular basis with C.L.P.'s.

The article as a whole raises a serious question for all party members: namely the relationship between the Labour group and its local party. In all the circumstances of Camden, should not the author's venom (and that of like-minded party activists) be better directed to attacking this vicious Tory government?

Yours fraternally,
Ron Shaw – Leader
John Mills – Deputy Leader
Andrew Bethell – Chief Whip
John Lipetz – Chairman
Camden Labour Group
Members Room, Camden Town Hall,
Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

Dear Comrade,

I would like a year's subscription to BRIEFING and enclose cheque. I find the magazine the most comprehensive and informative left wing magazine I've ever read. Keep up the good work.

Yours fraternally,
Paul Walsh, Hackney, London E9.

WRONG

Dear *Briefing*,

There is nothing wrong at all with poetic license, kept within moderation. But your list of 'London Parliamentary Selections' seems to have gone over the top in labelling Kate Hoey, candidate for Dulwich, as 'left'. The Hackney left have great difficulty in reconciling the 'left' Kate Hoey, who hovers south of the river, with the most bureaucratic right winger on Hackney Council.

The Labour Co-ordinating Committee, on February 22nd, issued a statement supportive of Tatchellite 'extra-parliamentary activity'. It was a good statement. In paragraph 4 the comment is made that 'There are many centres of power in society – multinational companies, the City, the media and others – which are not subject to effective democratic control through parliament or other structures . . . It is as essential today as it ever has been for the Labour Movement to mobilise public opinion and action against the abuse of this power.' It is fortunate that this paragraph misses out mention of one key institution, the acid test of real democracy: local councils. If it had been included, Kate Hoey, in all honesty, would have been unable to have become a signatory.

Cllr. Hoey's track record on local accountability is, to be frank, appalling. But let the facts speak for themselves. In 1979, when Stoke Newington and Hackney North CLP mandated its councillors to vote against a particular rent increase, Cllr. Hoey, with a routine that later became regular, left the Council meeting five minutes before the critical vote came up. The following year, with a similar party mandate on rents, Cllr. Hoey was braver – and simply broke the mandate. Her ward and CLP's position on abortion and women's rights is clear cut and comprehensive. Cllr. Hoey switched her vote finally in favour of granting a house owned by the Borough to the virulent anti-abortion group 'Let Live'. Dulwich CLP was under the impression they selected a feminist. More recently, we have seen Cllr. Hoey's administrative charms at work, she having been rewarded for her services with the chairpersonship of Leisure Services. Her attempt to bulldoze through Council a £6½ million scheme for a luxurious swimming pool at the Britannia Centre (the Hackney equivalent of the Southwark O'Grady white elephant) has come a cropper, I'm glad to report. However, Cllr. Hoey has had one great success. She has managed to steer through Council the 'privatisation' of the Spring Hill Sports Ground, under which, in effect, it has been handed over to the control, and for the use, of a private Rugby Club, none of whose activists live in Hackney. A great consultative exercise took place in which everyone was consulted except the local organisations. Cllr. Hoey's casual treatment of the Hackney Ethnic Minorities Library Consultative Committee provoked major disturbances at two full Council meetings and she, with her colleagues in the Leadership, called in the police to clear the gallery eventually. Her masterly speech on democracy and free speech was worthy of Tony Judge or the GLC.

One could go on almost indefinitely. Having not heard Cllr. Hoey's explanation, I am reluctant to criticize her for saying in Labour Group (I've been told this by several people), when the question of Hackney rehousing a token number of Vietnamese boat-people families came up, that 'these are not the sort of people we should be rehousing'.

Briefing has done an excellent job in providing a reliable news service for the Labour parties in London. But it must aim at the highest standards even in its personal judgements of parliamentary candidates.

Cathy Warnock

. . . . AND WRONG AGAIN

Dear Comrades,

The information published in the March edition of *Briefing* about London Parliamentary selections would have been useful had it not been for the bizarre 'comments' on the selected candidates. Specifically Chris Price is described as 'right(?)' yet reference to the article in the July '81 edition of *Briefing* on reselection by the same author reveals that Chris Price has a voting record which indicates his support for so-called 'left' issues. He also voted for Tony Benn in BOTH Deputy Leadership ballots.

This type of unsubstantiated opinion only damages the very causes *Briefing* sets out to support. Lewisham West is a united party which does not carry out its business in public. Chris Price was reselected from a shortlist of 3 and he enjoys the full support of his party, which has a record of support for 'progressive' policies within the party. While understanding that *Briefing* gives its contributors a free hand it would be helpful if Comrade Williamson could be prevailed upon to check his facts in future or, if he was aware of the facts in this instance, to accept that some party members who are neither active members of CLPD nor contributors to *Briefing* are nevertheless worthy of and indeed entitled to the description 'left' if it is absolutely necessary to indulge in such pigeonholing.

Yours fraternally,
Steve Bullock
GC Delegate, West Lewisham CLP

WORKING TOGETHER IN BERMONDSEY

Dear *Briefing*,

Tony Goss is right. In the present climate of Left-baiting I shouldn't have been making digs at IMG, and I agree with Tony that we should all be working together just now. I made what I thought was a fairly jokey aside about IMG for two reasons.

(A) I wanted to make the point that what has happened in Bermondsey has been the result of a local movement and hasn't been stirred up by outside groups. Perhaps that isn't a very important point to make, but our opponents are constantly alleging that the new Left orientation of the Bermondsey Labour Party has been caused by people 'who have come into the area' foisting an alien politics on reluctant local working class people. I find it worth noting that local people do find the Left relevant and something they want to support.

(B) Those of us who have been Labour supporters ever since we learned how to scratch an 'X' on a ballot paper do have a problem about IMG, however, and I think Tony should recognise this. I have constantly been derided by friends in the IMG over the years for what they see as a pathetic attachment to the illusions of 'Labourism'. Now all that has changed, apparently, and ex-IMG comrades are ripping up their IMG cards as fast as they can and joining the Labour Party. Fair enough. But those of us who have been battling away all this time, caught between the denunciations of ultra-left comrades on the one hand and the machinations of the Right on the other, can surely be forgiven for letting the odd sardonic remark escape our lips, however naughty that might be of us.

As regards Tony's point about separate organisation of Left against Left which he says takes place in Peckham, I share his condemnation of it. We need now more than ever to work together to consolidate the recent impressive gains of the Left. I also deplore 'Bermondsey parochialism' (if it exists) and Tony can rest assured that Bermondsey comrades are as keen as anyone to work with fellow socialists everywhere.

As might be expected from a Liverpudlian entrist in Bermondsey I sometimes make jokey remarks. I promise to be more serious in the future.

Yours comradely,
Nick Murray,
Southwark-Bermondsey CLP

P.S. Any opinions I have expressed in *Briefing* are of course my own and not necessarily those of the Bermondsey CLP.

Dear Comrades,

Your titling of my article 'Toads in Hackney Marshes' was unfortunate because, by introducing an insulting tone, the real arguments are in danger of being obscured.

Yours fraternally,
Andrew Hornung

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Socialist Organiser | **LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING**

Trade union conference Saturday APRIL 3 Digbeth Hall, Birmingham 10.30-4.30

THE LABOUR movement is indivisible. You cannot do anything serious with the Labour Party unless the trade unions – which have the decisive weight in decision-making – agree to it. And at present that means – unless the trade union leaders, agree to it.

In the battle for democracy in the Labour Party, we saw the paradox that unions like NUPE played a positive role in that struggle while being far from democratic themselves. We were dependent on men who were bureaucrats in their own organisations to help us win democracy in the Labour Party.

It was *impossible* that such trade union leaders should go all the way for Labour Party democracy. All the setbacks for the Left at Brighton and since have come, in the last analysis, from the failure of the Left to organise independently among the rank and file in the unions.

Had the union rank and file been organised for Labour Party democracy, the Right would have been rendered powerless and the self-interested squealings of the MPs would not have mattered much.

In the Labour Party we have focused on reselection and PLP accountability. Its equivalent in the unions is the fight for elected, accountable, and easily recallable trade union leaders who will serve the interests of the rank and file, against the employers.

The trade union bureaucrats were as much a pillar of the last right wing Labour government, which prepared the way for Thatcher, as the PLP was – and probably the more decisive one.

Most of the unions are scandalously authoritarian and bureaucratic. Leaders and officials at all level are mostly either appointed or elected once and for life

The rank and file cannot control their own organisation, even during bitter battles with the bosses. Even in one of the least undemocratic unions, the AUEW, the leaders can, once elected, act with impunity as saboteurs and scabs against their own members in dispute – as Duffy and Boyd did for Edwardes and BL last November and for Arthur Snipe at Laurence Scotts.

The bureaucrats form a distinct interest group. Their living standards are above those of the members, and in no way linked to their performance for their members. They feel and know themselves to have distinct interests, and act accordingly.

Now they are peacefully letting the Tories bring in laws to shackle the unions as fighting organisations, because they think *they* can comfortably live with them.

The unions too need to be democratised. Even if we could make the rest of the labour movement democratic while the unions remain as they are (and we can't), the lack of democracy in the unions would set crippling limits to what the movement could do.

It is a commonplace on the Left by now that the great tragedy of 1973-4, when trade union direct action forced Heath into kamikaze tactics and a lost election, was that the working class only had a right-wing-led Labour Party to turn to in politics – a party which pledged itself to secure a 'decisive shift in the balance of wealth and power' for working people, and whose leaders and Parliamentarians in office inflicted wage cuts and social service cuts instead.

The mirror image of that situation would be, and *is*, a powerful Labour Left with no trade union clout, cut off from the most decisive energy and strength that the working class possesses and can at will use – industrial direct action. One of the factors now pushing a segment of the Labour Left into assuming the role of local government administrators is the lack of adequate links with the trade union rank and file.

The great central task we face is to construct and organise a coherent Left that can fight the class struggle on both the industrial and political fronts, and integrate the different fronts into a coherent strategy to achieve working class power in society.

Unless we win the rank and file of the unions for socialist policies and for a renovated, democratic labour movement, willing and able to control the leaders and Parliamentarians – the possibility of achieving a Labour government different from those that have gone before *simply will not exist*, no matter how big the Left is in the constituencies.

The lesson of the fight for Labour Party democracy is that the Labour Left – especially when it is a middle class Left, as it often it – must turn to the unions or be content to remain forever (or until they expel us) at the political mercy of those who have the decisive weight in the Labour Party – the trade union bosses.

We must continue the work of taking the political struggle into the unions belatedly started in the Deputy Leadership campaign, and build on it. *And we must develop a parallel but linked campaign for trade union democracy.*

The conference for trade union democracy called by London Labour Briefing, Socialist Organiser, and others, will be a major opportunity for the Labour Left to discuss these questions, to propose a response to Tebbit's onslaught on the unions, and to begin to prepare the organisational sinews for a fightback. Labour Party activists will be able to discussing building Labour Party factory branches with shop floor militants and leaders from BL, Laurence Scotts, etc. *There will be special discussion, with comrades from Women's Fightback participating, on how to go about wiping out the shame and scandal for the labour movement of the way the trade unions treat their women members.* And there will be a chance to air views on how to organise the Left in the unions and on the possibility of setting up an ongoing campaign for trade union democracy.

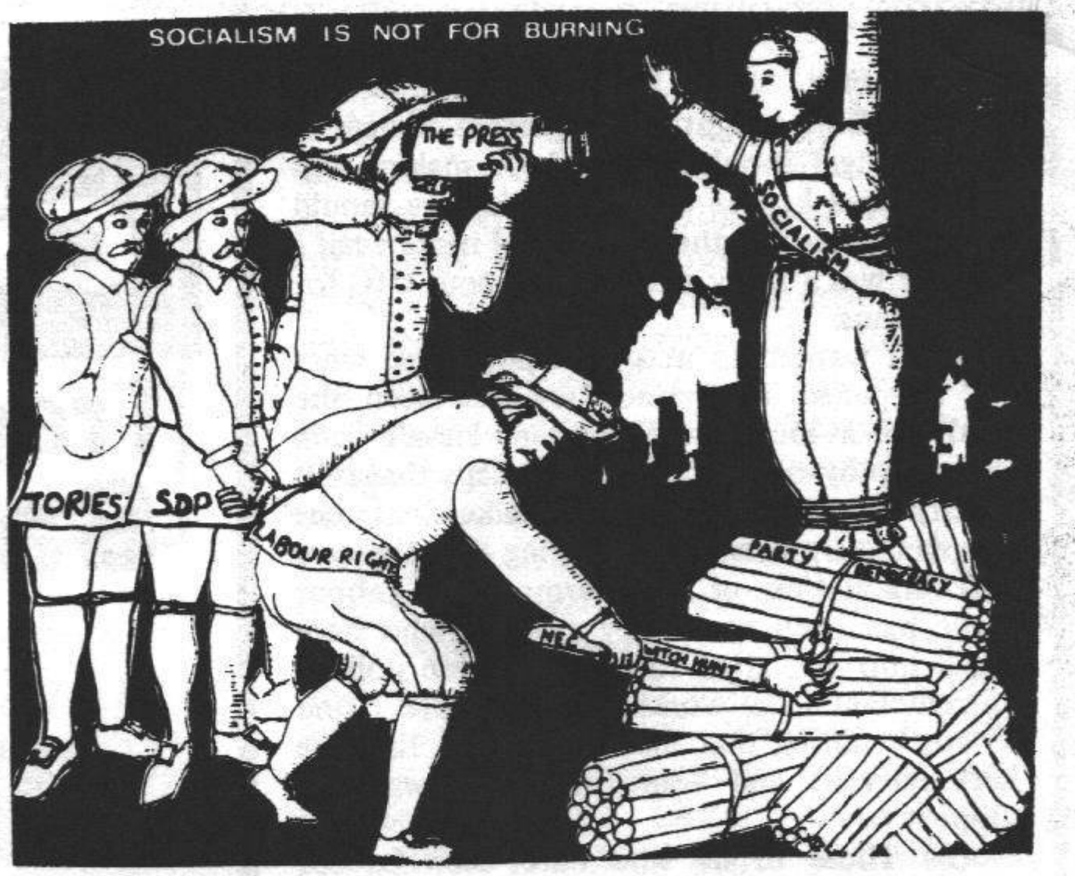
Credentials: Democracy Conference, c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

JOHN O'MAHONY and JOHN BLOXAM

BRIEFING against the WITCH HUNT

5p per copy, plus postage
20 copies or more, post free

from Ann Matthews c/o Bermondsey Labour Party
133 Lower Road, London SE16.



The so-called truce has done nothing to stop the outcry from the Right over re-selection.It has not brought the endorsement of Peter Tatchell as Bermondsey Labour Party's prospective candidate, nor that of Pat Wall for Bradford North.

BRIEFING AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT has been produced to rally a fightback. As Peter Tatchell writes in the broadsheet, 'None of us were part of Bishops Stortford. We don't know what went on. We don't know what bargains were struck. The whole way that Bishops Stortford was organised is the antithesis of a democratic party. It really is like feudal monarchs and their barons organising how the kingdom is to be run, with the serfs and peasants locked out from the castle gates.'

SAVE LONDON TRANSPORT

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TOGETHER WE CAN WIN!

Remember the equation: Fare increase = loss of passengers = cuts in services, overtime and jobs.

For details of Labour MPs' parliamentary voting records see the latest edition of
HOW TO SELECT OR RESELECT YOUR MP

This important pamphlet also contains the complete, unexpurgated official Labour Party guidelines for parliamentary selections.
To: CLPD, 206 Brixton Road, London SW9
please send.....copy/copies of 'How to select or re-select your MP' by Chris Mullin and Charlotte Atkins. Price £1 each or 85p for five or more (including postage). Cheques payable to CLPD.

Name . . . . . .

Address. . . . . .

Congratulations to Jeremy Corbyn who was selected as prospective parliamentary candidate for Islington North. Jeremy will be writing an article for Briefing setting out his views on Peter Tatchell and extra-parliamentary action, and on Pat Wall and the smashing of the capitalist State – as soon as his candidature has been ratified by the N.E.C.!

TARGET '82
Monday April 5th at 7.30pm
County Hall

Next Editorial Meeting. Monday March 29th at 6.30pm. Room 175, County Hall. At this meeting we will discuss whether to produce any further issues prior to the May elections.

Articles for *Briefing* must be typed by the contributor. Hand-written articles will not be accepted in future. Use triple spacing and a very wide (2") margin each side; type one side of sheet only. NOTHING will be accepted after the deadline published

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