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G.L.C. MANIFESTO:
THIS TIME WE'LL DECIDE!

JEREMY CORBYN
Member of GLRC Executive

TRADITIONALLY THE PRODUCTION of election manifestoes has been a process steeped in mysticism and intrigue—the actual document emerging from a "smoke-filled room" a few weeks before an election and thrust on the unsuspecting public and received with horror by an equally unsuspecting party membership.

The subjugation of the production of a document as vital as an election manifesto to the need to grab the headlines at the appropriate time has been a serious failing of the Labour Party. Even more disastrous has been the process that allows vital planks of Conference policy to be removed at the crucial stage by the Party leadership.

Had Labour won in 1979, Callaghan would not have been in the least embarrassed by Labour's programme. By a system of "closed door" arm-twisting he had defeated many of the vital conference votes of the preceeding five years. Any battle for a socialist manifesto is inseparable from the battle for real accountability and democracy in the Labour Party.

As a start we must remove the content and production of a manfiesto from the mysticisms of the past and state quite clearly that our actual programme we intend to **implement** is the manifesto! Only by this process will the Party be forced to campaign on all its policies at all times. That way the public political education work can be seen to have a real definable aim.

The NEC has decided to produce a "rolling manifesto". This we all welcome, but it must be backed up with continuous campaigning in support of these policies.

In many ways, the battles that have been fought and lost nationally have been mirrored in London. The 1977 GLC manifesto was produced by a tiny caucus emanating from County Hall and was clearly not representative of GLRC Conference decisions. Our manifesto for 1981 will be different—it will be a socialist policy and will be voted on in its entirity by a full conference of the London Labour Party.

Immediately after the 1979 Conference of the London Labour Party, the newly-elected Executive appointed six working parties to deal with major areas of policy: Industry and Employment, Housing, Transport, Planning, Finance and Management, and Education. Membership of these committees was drawn from EC members, nominees from affiliated bodies and a small number of co-opted Party members.

Their brief is to produce policy documents in line with conference policy, but also ones that could be used immediately by a Labour GLC to enact policy. It is now vital that no excuse for lethargy, welching on the manifesto or obstruction by Council officials should be tolerated. The record of the 1973-77 Labour GLC was indeed one of direct violation of the manifesto in the case of transport and of allowing the bureaucracy at County Hall to spend three and a half years delaying a planning policy that could not then be started before losing office.

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Editorial

Since we last went to press, a number of good things have happened. The T&GWU's demand for a recalled National Conference has been conceded, though how much a real discussion on strategy will occur remains to be seen.

Equally, at London level the GLRC has opened a major new battle in the fight for control of the GLC with its plans for free public transport. These will come under a vicious attack from the Tories, right-wingers in our own party, and, of course, the media. Members **must** ensure that these proposals are fought through—full support from the London Labour movement is essential.

It has been very clear for some time now that a major conference for socialists in local government must be organised. **Briefing** will undertake to help organise this and plans are now afoot. The next issue will carry full details but any enquiries and offers of help should be sent to Mike Davis (tel: 254 8601), who is acting as co-ordinator for this venture. The conference is provisionally booked for Saturday 5th July.

GLC Manifesto

The GLRC Executive, with a large number of amendments to the Education Working Party report, has now approved all of the reports for publication at the end of April. There then follows a period of three months for CLPs to debate the manifesto and propose amendments by the end of July, for a special policy conference on October 18th.

The role of the right on the Regional Executive has been curious. Led by the CLV they have sought to protect the leadership of ILEA from criticism, to the extent of opposing reference to the appalling cuts in ILEA. This is totally contrary to conference policy. Even more pathetic, they are now mouthing allegations of "splitting the party" if free fares become out policy!

The critical test will come this summer: if we are to have a socialist manifesto to put to the electorate in 1981 all trades union and CLP members must be involved in the discussions so we as a Party can fight successfully for Labour to win the GLC next year. If we succeed it will be a huge blow to the Thatcher government: it's up to us to make sure we do.

BRIEFING has been selling extremely successfully. We received money for over 1,000 copies of the last issue. In view of the fact that BRIEFING is sold almost exclusively at GMCs and ward branch meetings of the Labour Party in London, this represents a considerable achievement. Why then, has this issue had to be reduced from a 12-pager to an 8-pager? It is simply because our income fell short of our expenditure last time by about £75. There is no question that BRIEFING has a future and is going to grow—in quality, circulation and size. But if you want the next and subsequent issues to be 12-page ones (and this is really necessary if BRIEFING is to fulfill its function), we must receive some small subsidy from our contributors, distributors and readers. All we need is for, say, 5 people to commit themselves to donating £5 per month, and 25 people to donate £2—and we're there. Surely this shouldn't be beyond us, if we're at all serious about our politics. It's up to you. Do nothing and we'll stay weak. Fill in a bankers's order form (£2 per month), join us—and we'll be a real force. Go to your bank and fill in a standing order form. Our bank is the Co-op bank, Croydon Branch, sorting code No 08-90-97, Our account no is 50120176 —credit it £2 per month,to "London Labour Briefing".

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL BRIEFING READERS

The GLRC has arranged four meetings to introduce the consultative papers. These have not been widely publicised but it is very important that a large number of Party members attend. The meetings are open to **all** Labour Party members in the Greater London area. The venues are as follows (all meetings start at 7.30pm):

Central London
Conference Hall
County Hall, SE1
Monday 19th May

East London
Civic Centre
Bow Road, E3
Friday 13th June

West London
Council Chamber
Camden Town Hall, NW1
Friday 6th June

South London
Battersea Old Town Hall
Lavender Hill, SW11
Monday 23rd June

BRENT WOMEN ORGANISE

MERLE AMORY
ANGELA SHARIFF
Brent East CLP

When women in our CLP decided there was a need to revitalise a women's section in the constituency, we met with four types of reaction—outright opposition from sexist men; patronising support by the more chauvinist men; whole-hearted support from men who had a basic understanding of women's oppressing; and open hostility from many of the older women. They claimed to be concerned that our section would become a tea and knitting circle as we accept many of our women's sections are.

However, as many of our founder members were feminists, their criticisms and fears were proven totally unjustified.

The women's section was formed 18 months ago and has grown rapidly ever since with 18 members, all active in the Party and most of us on the GMC. Our confidence has grown collectively and we've made a substantial, sustained impact within the Party as locally on issues such as the Corrie Bill; sex differentiation in education and sexism within the Party, as well as being vocal in the rates debate and the cuts. The women's section has continually presented their collective political ideas on all major issues to the Party.

Shortly after being set up the women's section organised a public meeting at Brent Town Hall, with Jo Richardson MP, on whether women should organise separately and by all accounts it was a very successful meeting and we received a lot of support.

But amidst all this activity, we had overlooked one of the most fundamental and necessary questions, that of true women's solidarity.

This was brought home to us by two of our sisters, one of whom had just had a baby and was suffering from severe post natal depression and isolation and the other was suffering from schitzophrenia.

They issued us with a challenge, in effect they said "stop talking about abstract problems—we've got real ones. What are you going to do for us?"

We had discussed women's oppression and the need to give each other support and had expressed this politically, but not carried it out in our personal, private lives They proposed that we set up a support group which would enable us to really get to know one another and build up a feeling of trust and friendship—because this is the foundation on which sisterhood and solidarity is based, which we hope will back up and strengthen our political solidarity. We felt this was the only way to ensure that some of us were not able to adopt the traditional male leadership role, and—yes—intimidate other women in the group, because we knew that our collective strength was dependent on equal participation of all the women within the group. Even though some of us differ politically, we can discuss the ideas without antagonism, because we are united as women.

We doubt that anyone in Brent East CLP would argue against us organising separately as women, even though some of the women in the Party will not become involved because they do not consider they need the collective strength of women behind them—yet!

IRELAND: Labour Committee Formed

Over 100 Labour Party members packed a conference held on March 29th in Islington to set up a campaign to commit the Party to a position of British political and military withdrawal from Ireland.

Forty-four constituency Labour Parties were represented, a half of whom were official delegates. Nearly 30 were London CLPs, reflecting the tremendous vote in favour of withdrawal at the London Labour Conference, as reported in the first issue of this bulletin.

Jock Stallard, MP for St Pancras, opened the conference with an unequivocal call on all activists in the Labour movement:

> *We must build mass support inside the Labour Party and Trade Union movement demanding and insisting that we demolish the bi-partisan approach which has bedevilled the Labour Party for so long. . . most of us here oppose Partition. Our task is to move the Party towards that policy.*

The deeply-held desire of the vast majority of the Irish people for an end to British involvement in Ireland and the barrier that involvement represents to progress and developments towards socialism in that island were clearly appreciated by the conference. The debates centred on when and how Britain should withdraw and the following model resolution for this year's Labour Party conference was adopted overwhelmingly:

> *"Conference recognises the evidence that the clear popular wish of the Irish people favours a British withdrawal from Ireland, and progress towards a united Ireland.*
>
> *Furthermore, we recognise that British involvement in Ireland constitutes a major obstacle to developments towards socialism in that country. Conference therefore:*
>
> *1 rejects the current bi-partisan policies of the Parliamentary Labour Party leadership;*
>
> *2 repudiates the policies of successive British governments which have effectively guaranteed the right of veto to the Unionist minority in Ireland, thereby ensuring that the present disastrous situation remains unresolved;*
>
> *3 feels that effective communication between British and Irish working class organisations is essential and urges that measures be taken to ensure that British trade unionists and Labour Party members are provided with accurate information about the views of their Irish counterparts;*
>
> *4 instructs the Labour Party leadership to adopt a policy favouring political and military withdrawal from Ireland;*
>
> *5 calls on the next Labour government to immediately begin the process of this full political and military withdrawal."*

All CLP activists are urged to make this their preferred Labour Party conference motion when Parties debate these at their May or June meetings.

In addition, the conference established a steering committee of 17 members and already Labour Party members in Scotland and the Midlands have indicated their willingness to set up regional committees. In support of the struggle by Republican prisoners for political status the conference agreed that the LCI should sponsor the aims of the 'Charter 80' campaign for the right of prisoners to wear their own clothes, refrain from prison work, for free association, to organise recreational facilities and to full remission.

Lastly, it was decided to publish a bulletin, the first edition of which will be available at the end of April. CLPs, wards and other labour movement organisations should be encouraged to affiliate (£2) to the LCI which can be contacted at: **LCI, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.**

HARINGEY LABOUR MOVEMENT
ANTI-RACIST & ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN
"Conference on the Fight Against Racism"
Saturday 10th May 1980
West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road, London N15

Speakers include:
Reg Race MP, Norman Atkinson MP, Cllr.Bernie Grant
Maurice Styles, UPW, Geoff Crawford and Julian Henriques.

Conference Fee: 50p
Plenty of time for discussion

Details from:
Andy Love, HLMARAF, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL

ALL OUT MAY 14th

The TUC has organised a massive "Day of Action" on May 14th to show opposition to government policies. The march arranged for central London is going to be preceeded by ten different district rallies throughout London—organised by groups of Trades Councils. The total turnout should be very large and national support has been pledged by all major unions.

Len Murray has urged everyone to take the day off—not a general strike you understand—but many workers may decide to strike anyway. What you can practically do is:

- **Contact your local trades council for details of your local activity and how you can help.**
- **See your workplace is on strike on the 14th.**
- **Make your ward/GMC/union branch take its banners along.**
- **Fight for your local authority to support its council workers by shutting for May 14th.**

BRIEFING EDITORIAL POLICY

In this issue we have succeeded in printing every article or letter submitted to us—no matter what the 'line' being argued—without cuts or alterations. We'll do our utmost to continue this policy. The aim is to provide **information** which cannot be obtained elsewhere, not to harangue readers with an artifically-concocted ideological 'line'. Be as polemical as you like, but please try to keep your articles (a) informative and (b) short. We'll try to find space for everything, but the longer your article, the smaller the typeface will have to be! Articles to:

'Briefing', 158 Thorold Road,
Ilford, Essex.

HACKNEY: FIGHTING THE CUTS

MIKE DAVIS
Hackney South CLP

Over 400 lobbiers gathered outside Hackney Town Hall to vent their anger at the Labour council's policy on cuts and finance. A large contingent of local government workers, members of NALGO, joined demonstrators from the Trades Council, the three Labour Parties, play and nursery groups, the Housing Action Campaign, among others, to press for more militant action from the Council against the Tories savage cut-back policies. Notably absent from the lobby was the Tory-led Hackney Rates Campaign, whose demands for no rate rises, but big cuts, seem to have fizzled out.

Whilst no substantial cuts have been made in Hackney services—many councillors say Hackney is "doing a Lambeth" —the real picture is not as simple as that.

* Rents are up 25% or £1.50 for borough tenants.
* Rates are up 48.9% (49% in 1979).
* 190 voluntary redundancies agreed with unions in the Direct Labour Organisation with further redundancies to be negotiated with supervisory staff.
* Staff savings—£1,200,000 reductions in salaries bill planned, equivalent to, say 180-190 jobs.
* Charges up for numerous council services from heating (40%) to meals-on-wheels (up 11p).

In effect the council headership is cutting growth plans, making people pay more for existing services and in some cases in finance for voluntary organisations, for example, not raising expenditure sufficiently to keep pace with inflation. Housing development will also be hard hit with £10 million cut as a direct result of the government's HIPs reductions. Maintenance will be cut by over £1 million—about 20%.

Twelve of Hackney's 59 Labour councillors (one Tory) voted against the proposals, and a number more opposed the rent rises.

The whole problem with the Labour leadership's approach however, is that it lacks imagination or political audacity. A borough-wide campaign to explain the iniquities of the current system of central government finance could help ignite and direct the widespread opposition to the Tories deflationary policies.

The finger must be pointed at central government's control over 60% of direct finance through the Rate Support GRant (which it is intent on cutting and attaching penalty strings to), and severe cash limits—7% less than current inflation—and the bankers and money lenders who claw back over 30% of all council spending in interest payments. Instead of this kind of campaigning using all the borough's resources—newspapers, leaflets, public meetings, local radio, demonstrations, to amke the case against the private enterprise profit system and for public spending, the council leadership has adopted a behind-closed-doors neogtiating approach which sees too much local struggle and activity as a threat to its managerial pussy-footing.

Hackney needs bold action from its elected representatives. Over 6,000 are unemployed, thousands are homeless, on housing waiting lists or living in accommodation in dire need of repair. A recent report found Hackney to be the poorest area in the EEC. It certainly has the highest number of single-parent families in Europe. It is an ageing borough, with the highest dependency ratio of any London borough according to the 1971 census, with a third of over-75s living alone. Hackney has one of the highest numbers of children in care, a high birth rate and perinatal mortality rate worse than the Greater London average.

Hackney's total loan debt per person in 1979 was £1,065.45—up from £772.87 in 1976-77. And yet at the last Labour government's behest—now with a vengeance from the Tories—hospitals have been closed down, six of the borough's secondary school are due for the chop with lost teaching jobs which could have been used to reduce class size. Seriously effected will be hundreds of women workers in schools and hospitals who will either swell the dole queues or simply return to the kitchen sink losing hard-won limited independence and income.

Public services to meet social needs and expand employment was the keynote of the Labour Council's election manifesto. Unless it rapidly becomes the centrepiece of campaigning, alongside pledges for no rent increases, more demoralisation and divisions will open up —as they have in other parts of the labour movement—and united action against the Tories will be a more remote prospect. To build this united action the Labour Parties in alliance with the Trades Council are staging a special conference to thrash out a strategy for the fightback. The provisional date is Saturday June 14th.

Despite
✓ Hackney Council's lack of campaigning and mobilisation of the local labour movement if Environment Secretary Heseltine goes ahead with his penalties for "overspending" boroughs, Hackney could find itself in the same firing line as Lambeth, Lothian and others in November. Defence of Hackney council will then have to be combined with an offensive policy which must be collectively worked out.

All labour movement and campaign groups in Hackney should write to the Trades Council Cuts sub-committee c/o 96 Dalston Lane, E8, for more information.

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send them to 158 Thorold Road, Ilford, Essex

EALING:

TORIES SLASH SERVICES

GARETH DANIEL
Press and Publicity Officer
Ealing-Acton CLP

SINCE TAKING OVER from Labour in May 1978, Ealing's Tory Council has shown a remarkable skill at digging holes into which its own elected representatives subsequently fall.

Their handling of municipal affairs has been characterised by a degree of ineptitude and insensitivity that is surprising even by the low standards of outer London conservatism.

It was Ealing Council, after all, who sanctioned the use of Southall Town Hall last year for a National Front election meeting in an area with a majority of brown and black residents. This crass decision, and the police harassment that followed, has seriously jeopardised many years of community relations work in the area.

Like the Bourbons before them, the Tories failed to learn any lessons from this debacle. Indeed; only months later, their spokesmen were indulging in vitriolic attacks on Ealing's Community Relations Council and cutting its financial support in the name of 'public expenditure restraint' (their euphemism for cuts!).

It is, above all, the Tories' cutbacks that have successfully attacked and antagonised virtually every section of the electorate—the elderly, the under-fives, school pupils and students, Council tenants and the authority's own employees to name just a few.

It is in education however that the Tory Party, spuriously committed to 'raising standards', has applied the axe most brutally. This year, there is to be a cut of £3.8 million (i.e. 8%) in the education budget. This is one of the largest cuts so far announced in Britain. One hundred and eighty teaching posts are to be deleted, nursery education stopped completely, school meal prices boosted to 50p, and adult education classes to cost £35 per session (compared to £10 at present).

In housing, new building has effectively ceased and—as elsewhere in London—Council houses are being sold with enthusiasm (although the take-up on this 'sale of the century' has, happily, been quite limited). Tenants are to undertake more of their own repairs and are being charged an extra 34% in rent for the privilege.

The deprived and the handicapped have not been excluded by Ealing's benign Tory masters. A day centre for the mentally and physically disabled has been closed and the borough's only mother-and-baby home has also been shut down amid much Victorian humbug about unmarried parents.

A similarly anachronistic approach is evident in other policy matters as well. A few of the brasher young Tories are almost rabid in their support for economic policies that threaten to turn West London, once a thriving industrial zone, into a wasteland. Major employers like British Leyland (who no longer flash their nickname as 'makers of London's buses') and Firestones have closed down putting thousands on the dole.

In social policy, the Council has aided and abetted the efforts of the Church of England to take over a successful and multi-racial comprehensive school in Acton for its own elitist and divisive purposes. Naturally, this had been defended as an attempt to ensure greater 'freedom of choice'. Does this sound familiar?

To its credit, the labour movement (and voluntary groups in which Labour Party members are active) has been a consistent and vocal critic of Tory measures. A borough-wide Liaison Committee Against the Cuts has been set up in which the Ealing CLPs played a formative and continuing role. There have been numerous lobbies and protests outside key Council meetings, mass leafletting and petitioning, and a very positive contribution to the local press.

Numerous local campaigns have grown up around specific issues. The Ealing-Acton Labour Party has been active in defence of health and nursery facilities in the vicinity and was co-sponsor of an impressive public meeting with Neil Kinnock against the High School sale to the Church. Other campaigns have developed with greater or lesser amounts of spontaneity on the ending of nursery education, keeping open the borough's one maternity hospital in Perivale, and even against increased allotment charges!

The minority Labour Group has been a determined opponent of all cuts introduced by the present administration although sceptics question if they would adopt a 'no cuts' policy were they still in control. On the evidence of 1976-78, it seems unlikely. There has also been a disturbing hint of 'cuts in the wrong places' in their attacks on the Council which has added to the ambivalence of their stand.

What Ealing's two Tory GLC Members (Sir Malby Crofton in Ealing-North and John Dobson in Ealing-Acton) think about local cuts or any other issue for that matter is purely speculative. Both perform very passable imitations of The Invisible Man. Sir Malby Crofton's closest approach to a public pronouncement was a recent criticism of London Transport's services which even he had to qualify by admitting he didn't personally use the buses very much himself!

So, overall, the incompetence of local Tories suggests a cautiously optimistic future for Ealing's Labour Parties. What remains to be seen is whether we can win the hearts and minds of local people behind a genuinely socialist programme and then implement that programme. Going on past experience, that may not be too easy even with a Labour government at Westminster!

WANT A SOCIALIST GLC?

Don't Know Who To Shortlist?
Not Sure What Policies We Should Fight With?
What's GLRC Proposing?

These and many other burning questions answered on: WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY, COUNTY HALL (Room 166), AT 7.00PM

This meeting is after the big London demo and is a MUST for all party activists who are involved in the GLC selection campaign.

BRENT'S INDIAN FASCISTS!

ALF FILER
Brent East CLP

"If it were National Front or Ku-Klux Klan members being infiltrated into the Labour Party, there would be an immediate outcry. Yet these people are no different. The attitude of some Party members on this question is nothing short of racist."

Such was the shocked reaction of one Asian community leader this week to the revelation that members of a fascist organisation are being infiltrated—with the active connivance of a group of local right-wingers—into at least one of the three Brent Labour Parties.

The whole affair is threatening to explode into a row of major proportions.

It all began last summer when, at its Annual General Meeting, the Brent Indian Association voted overwhelmingly to exclude an organisation, the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), from its executive committee. It was alleged that the HSS was 'linked' to the Indian fascist party, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

DROMEY

Following demands by the Brent Indian Association, Asian party members and local trade unionists, including Jack Dromey of Grunwick fame, the LGC of Brent Labour Party set up a Committee of Enquiry into the nature and activities of the HSS.

The enquiry has been sitting for eight months and is to publish its findings shortly. A perusal of the mass of documentary evidence submitted however, reveals some pretty disturbing facts. Not only are the two organisations 'linked', it turns out that the HSS is nothing less than the British organisation of the RSS itself! This had been denied at first by the HSS, but a comparison of the constitutions of the two organisations showed that whole sections of the documents were identical word for word. Financial connections have also been uncovered.

The RSS in India has a long history of involvement in communal rioting. Ever since Independence, when hundreds of thousands were slaughtered in the Hindu-Moslem bloodbath which greeted partition, the RSS has been a by-word for inter-communal terror. More recently, a vicious spate of pogroms against non-Hindu minorities, Moslems, Christians and low-caste 'Untouchables' has been unleashed by the RSS in India. Horrific stories percolating through to the pages of the British press in recent weeks tell of whole villages being put to the torch, with escaping infants and women being shot down or thrown alive into the inferno.

PARAMILITARY

It had been argued that the HSS, although 'linked' to RSS, was no more than a propaganda front for the Indian organisation. Evidence from HSS internal documents however, show that the HSS in Britain have organised paramilitary training camps in this country, one of which has actually been witnessed by BIA members. Manibhai Patel, Chairman of the BIA, was quite unequivocal in his assessment: "They are training up their youth to be a paramilitary force in this country so that they can be used by the RSS," he said.

What has been the reaction of the Labour Party in Brent? Amid a flood of resolutions from party organisations, mainly from the Brent East CLP, calling for a full enquiry, the initial response of right-wingers who have been closely involved with the HSS was to play the whole thing down.

"They are the kindest, most gentle people I know," said Councillor Len Snow, Chairman of the borough's Education Committee who, as Mayor, was responsibly for building up the HSS's 'respectability' by patronising their functions in recent years. Even with the publication of a whole mass of incontrovertible evidence, Councillor Snow has refused to budge in his support for the HSS. Instead, he has issued thinly-veiled threats against party members who have raised the issue, including extremely uncomradely attacks in the pages of the local press.

DESPERATE

But even worse was yet to come. With the setting up of the LGC enquiry, who was the right-wing's nomination to sit on the committee? One was the wife of Councillor Snow, who was accepted. Another was a certain Arjunlal Sharma. Arjunlal Sharma, who LGC members were astonished to find, had become a member of the Labour Party, is no less than the press officer of the Wembley branch of the HSS! Needless to say, he was not accepted onto the committee. But he does remain, for the time being, a member of the Party.

The tactic of the right-wing has been to stall and, apparently, to use the breathing space to infiltrate HSS members into the Party. Suffering, as have, from considerable reverses at this year's Party AGMs, the right-wing are becomingly increasingly desperate. If what is happening in Brent is any indication, the battle within the Labour Party at national level is set to become a very dirty affair. Let us not have any illusions. If the right-wing are prepared to stoop to recruiting fascists to prop up their waning fortunes what will they stop at?

What the RSS thought about Hitler's Race Theory

"German race pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.

"From this standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinate to the Hindu nation claiming no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights."

M. S. Golwalkar, 'Supreme Leader' of the RSS

'Democracy'— Southwark Style!

CAROL TURNER (Cllr)

BOTH DULWICH AND PECKHAM Labour Parties have recently passed motions calling for an independent enquiry by either the London Regional Council or the Party HQ into the activities of the Southwark Labour Group. This call follows the latest moves in the on-going struggle against the SDA-dominated Labour Group.

During the past month or two there have been more ructions than usual in the Group. First of all there were moves from the right-wing to prevent the attendance at Group of the newly-elected Dulwich Liaison Officer, Mick Dalton (who, incidentally, happens to have been a left-winger on the previous council). This was followed at his next meeting by threats from the Group chairperson, Steve Kippin, to "do" Mick as he leapt across the benches in an attempt to fulfil his promise.

BACKDOOR METHODS

This comradely act was followed a week later by a motion from Council Leader John O'Grady, well-known member of the SDA, to prevent one of the 'rebels' from putting his motions to a Group meeting specially convened (by back bench signatures) to consider outstanding motions, most of which came from the Parties. The grounds used by O'Grady for this clearly unconstitutional act were that the member had not followed Group policy on a number of previous occasions. After unsuccessful protest against this backdoor attempt at discipline, a number of councillors left the meeting.

SPECIAL GMC

Sick of being ignored, the Dulwich Party called a special GMC to discuss the relationship between the Labour Group and the Party which resulted in the motion calling for an independent Labour Party enquiry. Many members feel that things have got so bad that there is no longer room to believe that 'a bit of effort on both sides' can ever untangle what is clearly a fundamental political rift between the Party and the majority of Southwark councillors. At its ordinary GMC last week, Peckham Party supported Dulwich's motion and likewise called for an enquiry.

Meanwhile five councillors appeared before the Group for disciplinary proceedings. One member, John Fowler, was accused of asking a question in council for which the Group had not given permission. The question happened to be about an issue which has had some unfavourable press coverage of late—the Group's decision to spend a few thousand pounds on taking its councillors to a seminar in Brentwood, held in a Trust House Fortes hotel.

The other four being disciplined were accused of voting against (Alan Davis and George Nicholson) and abstaining (Carol Turner and Jim Wheeler) in Council on the issue of this year's rates. All five argued correctly that there was no case to be answered under the Group's own standing orders. This did not deter the right-wing from calling such a meeting, nor did it deter O'Grady from his threat to bring disciplinary action each time any councillor stepped out of line in future.

WINDOW-DRESSING

The result of the evening was no action on all counts. Why bother then? The right's intention to make a comeback within the Party was noted by the number of occasions on which O'Grady and the Deputy Leader, Ann Ward, referred to the Labour Party during the discussion around Cllr Fowler's question in council. Their main concern, they would have us believe, was the embarrassment caused to the Party by the press coverage. (Neither are noted for their reference to the Party when attempting to justify their actions in the past.)

Party activists may be forgiven their cynicism when heard asking if this latest move on the part of Southwark Council's right-wing is an attempt to window-dress their ragged Party image with an outfit of tolerant generosity.

ISLINGTON CHAOS

To outsiders, it may seem strange that a Labour Council with a majority of 50 to two has had its budget rejected and then only got its amended one through by 26 votes to 24.

Nevertheless, such is the sorry state of Islington's Labour Group that such events now happen. In a period of just over a year Islington has changed from being a progressive borough with the largest housing programme in London and the largest budget for voluntary groups for any comparable authority, into being the borough not just forced into cuts but actually making more cuts than even the government demands!

This year's budget proposed a rate rise of 41%, a rent rise of £1.50 and very savage cuts. The package was then found to be inadequate and even more cuts were suggested. This provoked a straight split on the Labour Group and this proposal was defeated by 23 votes to 22 at the Council meeting on March 18th. A number of concessions offered by Council Leader Southgate did not amount to much more than a slight increase in Council housing management and maintenance and a saving of one or two projects. Nevertheless, this was deemed to be sufficient by two or three councillors and the budget was passed at a special Council meeting a week later by the slender margin of two votes!

Such a record can only be considered disastrous and there can be little doubt that most leaderships of Labour Groups would have done the 'decent thing' and resigned—but no Islington's!

Now, to cap everything, a scheme has been announced to sell off a great many houses owned by the local authority and awaiting rehabilitation. This is, for many party members, the final straw. As we go to press a revolt is brewing of some sizeable proportion. A group of at least 20 councillors are considering what to do if this blatant attack on both the policy of GLRC and the manifesto that elected the Islington Labour Party materialises.

The local constituency parties and the LGC have begun to voice opposition and are preparing to fight. How this develops remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that a major confrontation is brewing in Islington.

KEITH VENESS

LETTERS

DEAR COMRADE,

In his article in the first issue of **Briefing,** Kevin Moore gave a parody of the position against rate increases, and added insult to injury by quoting us as saying "why should the Council cut the income of rate payers in the Borough?" Kevin is well aware of our position, and although he opposes it, it is also the policy of the Princes Branch Labour Party which both he and Neil Turner represent. We can only conclude that he has reasons of his own for this distortion.

What we have repeatedly said is that to pass on Tory cuts in the form of cuts in living standards will penalise the working people of Lambeth. Many Lambeth tenants will have to find as much as £5 per week extra, as a result of the increases in rents, rates and heating charges. Our fear is that as the 1982 elections approach big rate increases will give way to drastic cuts implemented by Labour Councils.

Although we may disagree on tactics, we must always remember that our battle is against the Tories.

Yours fraternally,

Neil Turner (Cllr), Steve Stannard (Cllr)

DEAR COMRADE,

At a meeting of the Islington **Briefing** Supporters Group, the following resolution was passed, and I am sending this on to you:

> *That this meeting supports the setting up of the London Labour Briefing and would like to suggest the following ideas for discussion of its editorial board:*
>
> 1. *that the format of Briefing should resemble that of a newspaper–i.e. be of larger size;*
> 2. *that there should be a letters page;*
> 3. *that the inside double page should be kept as a discussion forum, or platform, for socialist theory and programme.*

Concern was expressed that **Briefing** should not remain merely within the realm of organisation and co-ordination, but should engage the interest of the rank and file by providing space for controversial ideas and issues.

With all good wishes.

Yours fraternally,

Bert Atkinson

DEAR COMRADE,

To continue the saga of Peckham Labour Party–as was suggested in the last copy of **London Labour Briefing,** the left are in the majority in Peckham. Within Southwark there are three constituency–Peckham, Dulwich and Bermondsey– all three are now dominated by the left, we now look forward to a year where Labour Party, and in particular conference decisions are carried out.

A vicious campaign has been conducted throughout the country against the YS. Before the YS came to Southwark we were slowly becoming stagnant. What the YS has generated in Peckham is nothing more than healthy politics. They have openly campaigned for greater democracy in the Labour Party (Reg Underhill–please note!), they have campaigned against every injustice that has raised its head in Peckham, in particular many CLP members are proud of the YS and its stand against racism.

I have come to the conclusion that the wind of change is coming to Peckham. I believe over the next few years we will have a new MP, a new GLC member and a new batch of local councillors.

The right-wing are now running scared, shouting about caucus meetings being conducted. But they can take it from me that there is no need for caucus meetings within the left, because we have always agreed on the common ground we have to fight on.

We have witnessed what a Tory party can do in the GLC and now that they are in government they will conduct a campaign to try and smash the new and healthy Labour Party, the Labour Party is now on the move and no smear campaign by the media will stop it!

The Labour Party must continue to oppose the vicious attacks on the working class, unlike the Tories we take it as a right to decent housing, education and health facilities. The Labour Party will reverse any measures taken by the Tories against the working class.

There is a need to expose the Tories for what they are–a motley bunch of capitalists who want to keep the status quo or even reduce the living standards of the working class.

Inflation is rising so fast that union negotiators must continue to put in massive pay claims to keep up with it. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer (Len Murray–please note!).

The fight is on, but with the policies being put forward from Labour Party conferences we can win so let us go forward on socialist policies and victory will be ours.

Yours fraternally,

Danny McCarthy
Vice-Chairperson, Peckham CLP

LABOUR SCAB!

EXTREME RIGHT-WING Islington Councillor, Sybil James, has been a leading light in the cuts made by the local Council. Now she has gone one better and sponsored a rally by the "Freedom Association" (formerly NAFF) in support of the Sheerness Scabs during the steel strike.

It is quite incomprehensible that the Labour Party can allow one of its public representatives to endorse this sort of blacklegging and an avalanche of resolutions and protests have descended on Islington Central Labour Party demanding they take action against James.

However, as we go to press, it appears that the EC of Islington Central is only recommending that she be "severely censured and debarred from Party office" –in short not much more than the proverbial slap on the wrist!

A concerted effort will be made at the next GMC to "beef-up" the proposed action and to get her out of the Party altogether. We will cover these developments in more detail in the next issue of **Briefing.**

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