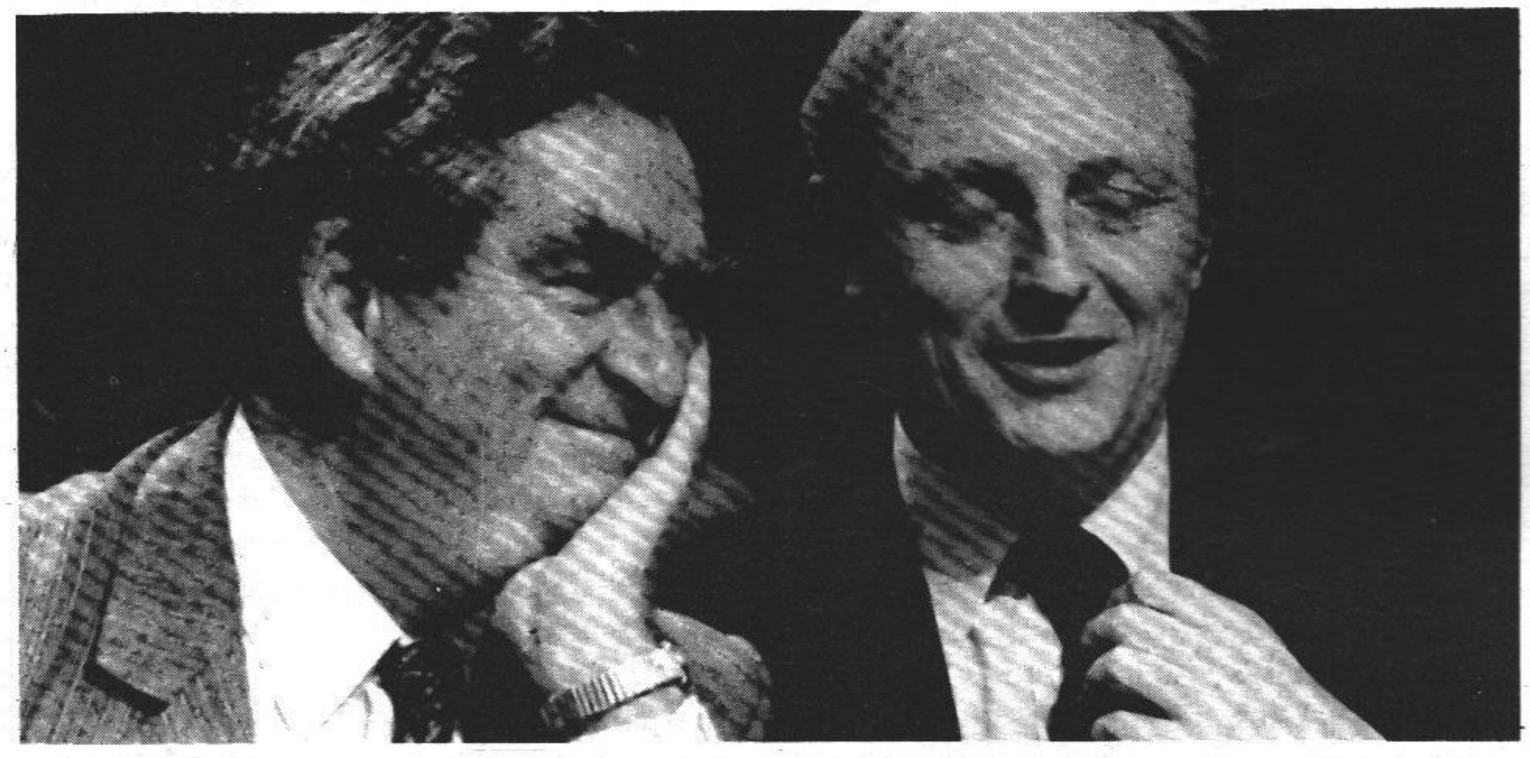
LONDON LABOUR 30p
BRIEFING
No 31 JULY 1983

NO CONFIDENCE IN KINNOCK!



WITCH-HUNTER-in-chief John Golding has endorsed a Kinnock/Hattersley team for the Labour Party leadership, saying that a combination of 'the respectable Left' and 'the moderate wing' is needed.

And indeed Kinnock has done quite enough to prove himself 'respectable' in John Golding's eyes. He sabotaged Tony Benn's campaign for Deputy Leader. As front-bench spokesperson on education, he threatened to resign if Labour committed itself firmly to reversing Tory school meal price increases. And this is his record on six important recent votes on the NEC, as compiled by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Keep commitment to nationalise clearing banks: AGAINST.

Amendment to remove NEC's arbitrary powers over groups in the Labour Party: AGAINST.

Total opposition to incomes policy, support for minimum wage: AGAINST.

Replace Benn by Golding as chair of Home Policy Committee: ABSTAINED.

Allow CLPs full re-selection after the boundary changes: ABSENT.

Expulsion of Militant editorial board. FOR.

Hattersley is an open right-winger: an aggressive advocate of nuclear weapons, of incomes policy, and of the witch-hunt. Kinnock is a 'left-winger' of the stripe of Harold Wilson or Ramsey MacDonald: marvellous left preaching, vicious careerist practice. No wonder the leading trade union bureaucrats think that Kinnock/Hattersley (in whichever order) is a 'dream ticket'. A Kinnock/Hattersley ticket would mean sugary phrases about Party Unity masking a redoubled purge of the Left.

To have genuine party unity around democratically-decided policies, and to rebuild Labour after the election defeat, we need a leadership committed to Labour Party democracy. The Left in the CLPs should support and campaign for Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher.

Even if they are not our ideal candidates, they are on a different side of the fence from Kinnock. On all the six issues cited above, while Kinnock voted with the Right on the NEC or abstained, Heffer voted with the Left.

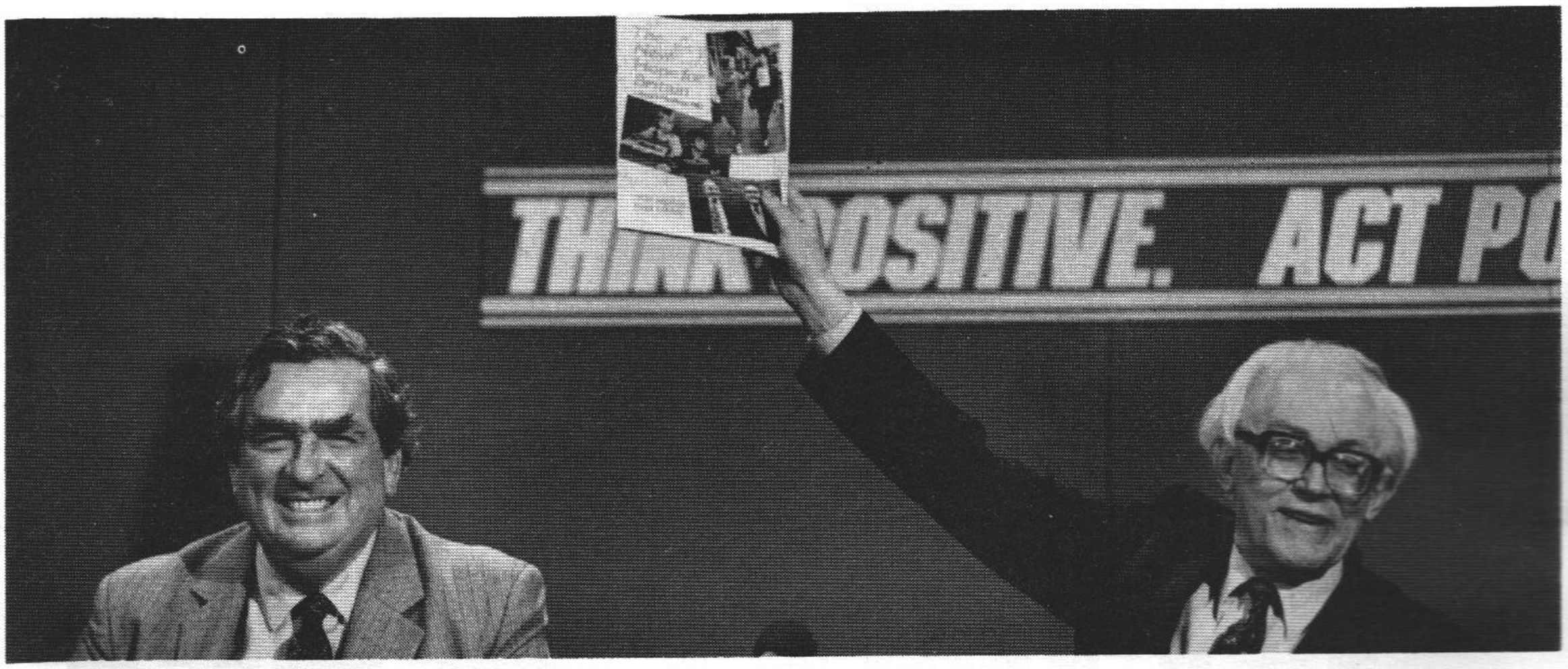
We should campaign not only in the CLPs but also in the broader arena of the unions, where Kinnock has more credit as a left-winger.

The Hattersley camp is pressing for more democratic procedures to decide how unions vote on the leadership. They have their own motives: obviously Kinnock did his groundwork with the general secretaries better than they did. But that should not deter the Left from also pressing for ballots through branches (where a conference vote is not possible) and for maximum discussion at rank and file level.

There is no question of 'letting the Right in'. The leadership vote is by eliminating ballot, not first past the post. If and when Heffer is eliminated, we can (with gritted teeth) vote for the fake-Left Kinnock against the open right-winger Hattersley.

But the first job is to build a real left wing campaign in this leadership contest. And that means a campaign behind Heffer and Meacher.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!



ABOVE: FACES OF DISASTER (Photo: Andrew Wiard – REPORT).

EDITORIAL

It seems pointless to try to disguise the scale and significance of the defeat we suffered in June. It was a historic defeat, almost comparable in its own way to the electoral disaster of 1931. Nothing can be the same again, and it would be better not to try to pretend otherwise.

We had a programme which – for all its limitations, particularly with respect to the economy – broke decisively with the post-war pattern of consensus between the parties. But it was left to be presented to the electorate by leaders who could not possibly have believed in it because they were among the key figures in that consensus themselves. The equivalent would have been for the Tory Party to have mysteriously become known as converted to "Thatcherite extremism" without Thatcher herself ever being allowed to present her case on the party's behalf, with the result that her new and unfamiliar policies were entrusted to be sold to the electorate convincingly by a leadership consisting of Ted Heath, Willy Whitelaw and Francis Pym. "You don't even believe in your own policies!", we would all have screamed day and night. The Tories wouldn't have stood a chance. We didn't.

It was the Tories' great good fortune to have been able to dispense with consensus politics – the out-dated politics of the post-war boom years – by means of a swift 'palace revolution'. Some blood was spilt – notably that of Ted Heath – but once the deed was done, the party soon united around the new leadership which had previously seemed dangerously 'extreme'. Thatcher was the Tories' answer to the threat seemingly posed by Tony Benn. Their answer quickly materialised and found its natural constituency and strength. Our threat is struggling on still in a leadership battle which has far from run its course.

IN PRAISE OF THATCHER

If our leaders in the Labour Party had shown a tenth of the resolution, courage and political principle on behalf of our class as Thatcher has shown on behalf of hers, we would be doing well indeed. Thatcher doesn't tailor her positions to what the pollsters define as the 'middle ground'. When she speaks she concentrates on her ideological line – not on what precisely she or a colleague did or didn't say the previous day. She doesn't say a thing one day only to retract it (Healey-fashion) the next. Thatcher believes in something – it is called capitalism – and she has set out vigorously to defend it. She knew that the post-boom period called for a decisive choice between Capital and Labour – and she has set out to win both the arguments and the power for her side. At first, her ideology seemed to be 'extreme', quaint and almost ludicrous. But force is a powerful persuader, and Thatcher has used it to the full. By provoking and winning the South Atlantic war, she clinched the argument. "Land of Hope and Glory" seemed no longer a nostalgic joke but an impressive and well-armed force. With the outcome of that conflict, Labour's electoral fate was effectively sealed.

For throughout all this period, the Tories had been responding to a 'Bennism' which was never permitted to respond in kind. No 'palace revolution' overthrew Callaghan and installed Tony Benn as leader of the Labour Party. Even a massive restructuring of the Labour Party's constitution has failed to permit the replacement of the old guard. And so we ended up last month with almost the worst possible combination which could have been imagined: a programme which broke with the old consensus politics, spoken for by a leadership clinging to that consensus like grim death.

TWO CHANCES MISSED

The year 1974 marked the end of the post-war boom, in Britain and throughout the western world. In this country, it was a high-point of industrial struggle and a missed political opportunity from which we have still not recovered. Strengthened by the greatest industrial strike-wave since the early 20s, we should have thrown out the Heath Government and the system it defended in one bold sweep while the ruling class was at its most stunned and demoralised. Our failure to do so had consequences the gravity of which we have yet to experience in full. Since 1974, the momentum from those years has been sufficient to lead to a radicalisation of the Labour Party even as, on the more decisive industrial level, the class struggle has ebbed from year to year. Two years ago, Labour's internal process of radicalisation peaked with a second tragically-missed opportunity: our failure (owing in part to our relative isolation from the unions) to win the Benn Deputy Leadership campaign by that all-important half-of-a-percent vote. Since then, we have been pushed back relentlessly on both the industrial and political levels at once.

RECOGNIZING REALITY

Parts of the left-wing press have been using historical voting records to argue that the Tory vote last month was in reality a very low one; others have pointed to the continuing 'crisis of capitalism' to argue that Thatcher's days are numbered anyway. Such points may seem convincing to some, but whether they work in our favour or not will depend on whether we manage to put our own house in order in time. In the context of what has happened, the search for 'mitigating circumstances' is, however, not decisive. We simply could not afford to lose the June 1983 election, and we all knew it. We could not afford to see a fair proportion of our traditional vote slip to the SDP-Liberal Alliance, nor see Thatcher given even the appearance of a mandate for her anti-socialist crusade. Now that one of the worst-conceivable scenarios – for any of us speculating about the future two years ago – has occurred, it is incumbent on us at least to recognise reality as the precondition for being able to measure up to its challenge. For BRIEFING activists, the challenge is to help ensure that the process of transformation and self-realisation of the Labour Party is consummated before it is too late.

TURNING THE PARTY OUTWARDS

By JEREMY CORBYN, M.P.

The results of the election on June 9th need the closest possible analysis; so does the conduct of Labour's election campaign. The Tory Party machine, well financed and well oiled succeeded in conning millions of people into believing that there is no alternative to mass unemployment, nuclear arms and poverty, and that the deprivation of the inner cities is almost self inflicted.

The clear class message of the Tories was not matched with equal clarity by the Labour Party. Since the 1979 defeat the Party, with the exception of the unemployment marches in 1981, has either obsessed itself with parliamentary games or used every opportunity to divide the Party and try to expel socialists from its ranks. The election results showed very clearly where Labour has lost support.But it has also shown where we have held or increased support amongst the poorest people and in the areas where Parties have a record of campaigning and fighting.

IMMEDIATE BATTLE

But the issue now turns on the immediate battle; Thatcher has a very large majority in Parliament and the baying benches of neat suited tax experts behind her are after blood. If Labour plays the parliamentary game the ILEA will be hit, the GLC closed down, inner city local government services destroyed, a new Police Bill brought in, and youth unemployment will be over eighty per cent.

The Labour Movement must now turn itself out to build a campaigning organisation to defend the jobs and services that millions rely on. This cannot be done if the Parliamentary Labour Party continue their cloister like removal from the hurly burly of the battles that are being fought every day by the Labour Movement.

The new Parliamentary Labour Party is markedly different from the last. Its members include comrades who have a wealth of campaigning experience outside Parliament and see their main job as not retreating into Parliamentary procedure but of building links with the movement outside and using the platform to advance these connections. But the first meeting of the Parliamentary Party, just five days after Labour's defeat became apparent, still showed the work that has to be done.

In stead of discussing unemployment, the threat hanging over millions of jobs and the new breed of Thatcherite cutters, and how we should oppose them, the Parliamentary Party discussed the election of a new speaker. The appointment of Tory MP Bernard Weatherill to this post was portrayed as a 'victory' for the back benches and something that we should welcome. There was no debate about the job in hand, or even about the scandal of working conditions at Westminster for new back bench members. The building is well equipped for entertaining on the grandest manner, it abounds with bars and restaurants but seems strangely incapable of providing all members with an office. It shows an odd sense of priorities to allow this nonsense to continue.

LONDON

In London we have a particularly important job to do. The Tories have identified two big issues on which to fight us; the threat to Inner London Education through destroying ILEA's democratic and financial base, and the removal of the powers and existence of the GLC.

The London results for Labour were very patchy, with the inner city seats in general showing good support for Labour with very high support amongst all the ethnic minority communities, but there was a very serious swing against us in the suburban areas of outer London.

The conduct of the campaign must be thoroughly examined. It is no secret that the Tories were able to out-spend us by at least five to one. However this is no real excuse for how we presented ourselves.

Nuclear disarmament, from being a definite bonus to us at the start of the campaign, became so confusing with Callaghan's statement and the fudgings of others, that the supporters of nuclear arms gained the upper hand.

What we must do in London is to revamp the London Labour Party to emphasise its resource to the movement, its ability to identify issues and to unite with all sections of the movement to fight back.

TURNING POINT

June 9th was a turning point in many ways. We did not get our message over clearly enough. The time is now to elect an accountable and outgoing leadership who are committed to campaigning throughout the country. The only way that we will win back over a million voters per year is by showing that there is an alternative to Toryism, that the only way full employment can be created is by totally changing the economic system and that the only way real opportunities can be brought to everyone is by removing the Tories from office.

WELCOME TO EAST OF LONDON BRIEFING

Dear Comrades,
We have recently set up an East of London Briefing group and magazine. This initiative has been taken because the left in the outer-London boroughs lack the co-ordination of both actions and ideas across CLP boundaries. The result of this lack of co-ordination has often been very good local political initiatives but just isolated ones.

It is hoped that the new group and magazine will spawn a contact network and confidence to isolated left groups. The trial run of the magazine will be produced in July. This launch will be followed by a meeting to be advertised in the magazine. If you are interested in the new group or magazine please contact Michael McKeever, Romford 28861 or Jill/John Rodgers 01-517 3876.

Yours Fraternally
Michael McKeever

Where is BRIEFING going?

NATIONAL MEETING OF BRIEFING GROUPS & SUPPORTERS

SUNDAY 3rd JULY at 11.30am at CAXTON HOUSE, 129 ST.JOHNS WAY, LONDON N19 (nearest tube: Archway)

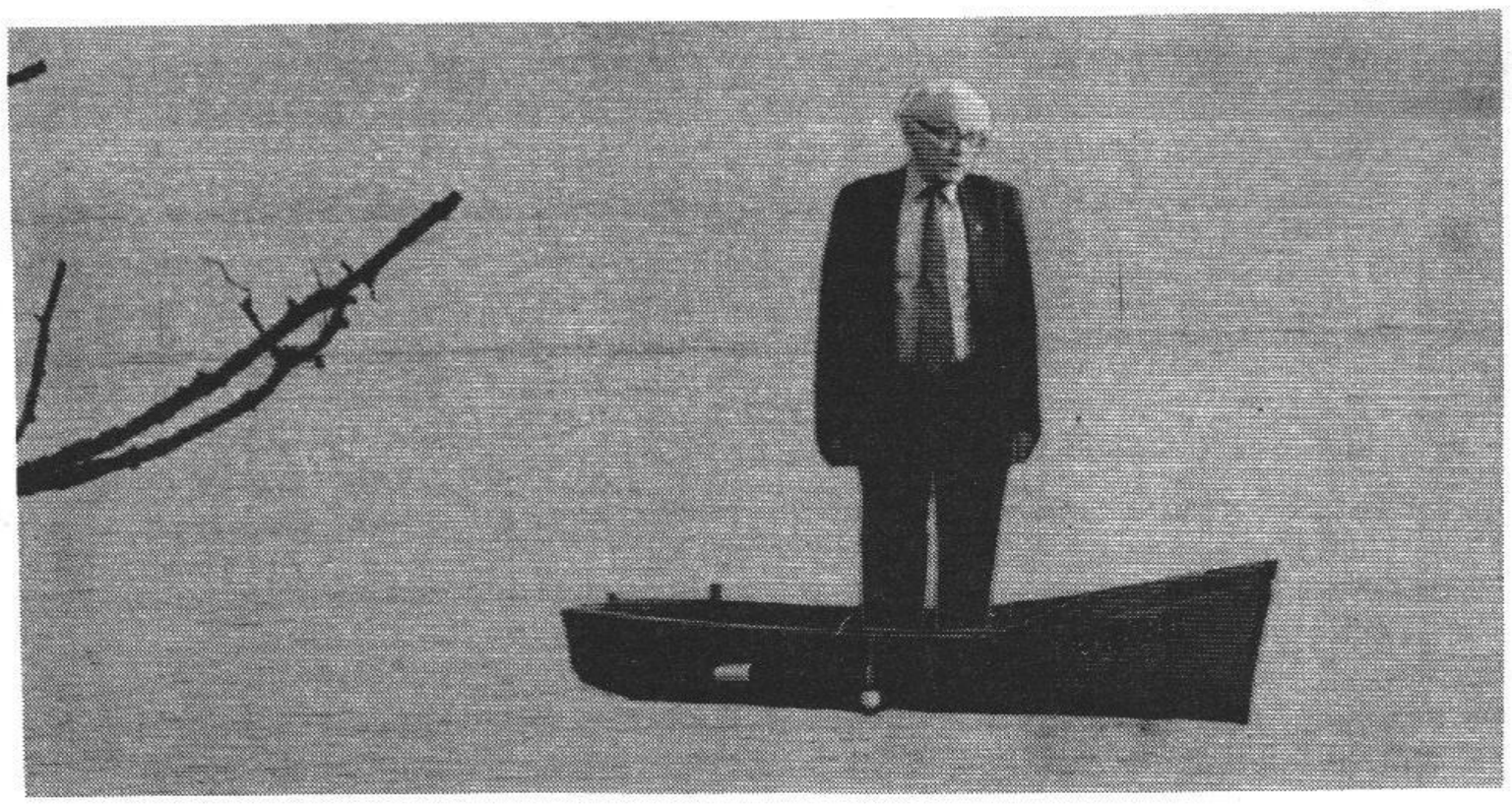
Speakers:
Jeremy Corbyn MP, who will discuss the tasks of the Left after the General Election
Jane Stockton, Editor of London Labour Briefing Streetlife Supplement, who will put forward proposals for a national supplement – so that articles on national and international matters can feature simultaneously in each of the local Briefings.

HEADS TO ROLL AT WALWORTH ROAD ?

Cath Tate Streatham CLP Election Agent

It was most frustrating as a constituency agent in this election to be making gains on the ground and then to have all your hard work totally undercut by the image of the Labour Party that was being presented to the public. We cannot totally blame the press and the media because they can only use what is presented to them.

Perhaps the tone was set at the beginning of the campaign when the headed notepaper turned up fresh from the printers to the Walworth Road offices with: 'Leader of the Labour Party: James Callaghan M.P.' written on it, and for the first few days that had to be used with his name amended with stickers. In truth the campaign was leaderless and flapped around like a rudderless boat. (There is a suggestion that Foot, who would over rule no one in the party was placed as leader in reaction to Callaghan who would over rule *any*one.)



During the recent campaign all reports from Walworth Road suggest that there was no one person or group consistently directing the campaign in *any* particular direction. The campaign committee started off with over 40 people on it with others attending if they wanted to. A totally unworkable number if you want to get anything done. Foot and Healey, nominally in charge of the campaign would sometimes turn up but no one knew when they would. There was above all no overall plan for the campaign, (unlike the Tories who planned theirs months in advance). Foot did not dictate and did not want to dictate to shadow cabinet ministers what line they should be taking, nor did he insist that they should be following party policy.

Individuals therefore, some of whom obviously were not happy with the manifesto, went and said and did as they pleased. Neil Kinnock in fact went and set up his campaign headquarters in Holborn. When issues arose that needed a quick response, no one at Walworth Road had a central record of where leading spokespeople were. For example when the South Africans executed members of the ANC the only Labour Party person who could be tracked down to comment about it for the press etc was Stanley Clinton-Davis who had been a Third World spokesperson but has also been deselected and was not running in this election anyway. When Callaghan made his polaris boob there was no prompt brief issued to the party from headquarters. It took three days for the subject to come up in the daily campaign briefings that was sent out to all agents. And despite the vast quantity of publicity there was about our defence policy only one of these daily documents covered the subject of defence during the whole of the campaign. When Healey made remarks, a year late, about the hypocrisy of Mrs Thatcher's stance over the Falklands and there was a public outcry about it, who in the Labour Party was wheeled out to defend him? That evening on ITN news there was a report of his remarks, followed by interviews with Thatcher, Pym, Parkinson, Col Jones' wife, Steel and Owen. No one from the Labour Party was made available to be interviewed, so Healey was left high and dry.

Similarly the daily press conference went unplanned for most of the campaign, even the one that was given after Callaghan's outburst. Most of the press conferences during the first week were given by Shore about the economy. Journalists in exasperation started asking questions like 'Housing doesn't seem to be part of your campaign does it?' just to change the subject. There is a suggestion that Shore had his eye on a post election leadership contest when he elbowed his way into so many press conferences; but whether he did himself any good by giving himself so much exposure is a matter of opinion. In the second week of the campaign some quite junior staff at the Walworth Road got a plan drawn up, which duly came through to election agents, about what topics would be coming up in press conferences each day so that all our efforts could at last be synchronised and a full range of topics covered. That was a great idea that lasted a few days.

One of the main political figures in the campaign committee that took the political decisions was John Golding because he was one of the few people who stayed all the time at the Walworth Road and did not disappear off to the constituencies to campaign. The full time head of press and publicity in the Labour party though is Nick Grant (at one stage chair of Lambeth Labour Solidarity group). As an election agent you are dependent, particularly in such a short campaign, on the publicity material put out by head office. Seeing the results, some of the people producing the material must have about as much imagination as Marvin, the manic-depressive robot in The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Most of the leaflets produced by head office were unusable on the street by virtue of their dullness and I resented the hours we had to put in in our constituency to produce leaflets that people might even want to read. The exception to this were the montages, 'Are you going to vote yourself out of a job?' and 'Are you going to vote your children out of a future?'. They were produced by an advertising agency, Wright and Bros who were also given sole charge of the party political broadcasts. though they were boring and I would have thought unlikely to keep the floating voters glued to their seats. Having said this though I will add that I was very unimpressed by the draft leaflets put out by the SLV illustrated in last month's Briefing. They were also turgid and verbose and I hope no one tricd to use them as they stood minus illustration. On a positive note, NALGO produced a series of excellent posters against the cuts, which shows that it can be done. It was just a pity they were not allowed to put Vote Labour on them!

Above all this election was won or lost in the media, which is the reason it is a pity that the Labour Party did not seem to be capable of setting up any media events e.g. at hospitals, or on International Women's Day or with the People's March. We had a leader who travelled a punishing 12,000 miles during the campaign, making dozens of speeches and meeting thousands of people. The Tories had a leader who travelled 5-6,000 miles made a handful of carefully prepared and prereleased speeches with an eye to being seen by millions of people on the box in the evening. Michael Foot apparently does not like that system of speech making where policies and politics are reduced to 2 minutes per topic in the 9 o'clock news. Unfortunately for us he was fighting the 1983 election, floating adrift out of his time like King Lear. In the end it did not matter what our policies were. The medium is the message.

AFTER THE SHAMBLES

by TONY BANKS, M.P.

Even given the gerrymandering by the Boundary Commissioners, the feelings of fatalism amongst the electorate and the lack of credibility in the Labour Party it is still hard to grasp that Thatcher won an election when her appalling economic and social record should have resulted in her humiliation. There can be few Party leaders in recent years so revoltingly sanctimonious, and potentially dangerous as the present Prime Minister. She is a creation of smart-arsed ad-men, re-packaged after four years and sold to the electorate like a packet of fish fingers.

Thatcher is also the last hope of a Ruling Class that knows that the days are gone when working class demands can be bought off. We now have reached the stage when marketing skills are used to sell us the unacceptable. But when such marketing techniques and control of the media begins to fail we will move to the last stage in the defence of capitalism which will reveal the naked, coercive power of the state. How fast we move through the latter stages will depend on economic circumstances and on events during the next five years inside the labour movement.

A DISASTER FOR LABOUR

No reader of *London Labour Briefing* needs convincing that the June 1983 election was an unmitigated disaster. From the very outset our national campaign went hideously wrong. The manifesto had its faults but whereas the Left closed ranks behind it the recidivists of the Right made no attempt at unity. Callaghan's attack on unilateral nuclear disarmament was base and unforgiveable and yet he was clearly voicing the opinion of a number of other prominent right-wingers. The same could be said of our policies on the EEC and the Alternative Economic Strategy with the thinly-veiled opposition to them within the ranks of the Party's leadership.

How on earth could we have hoped to convince the electorate of our policies when anyone who was scarcely half-alive could plainly see that a number of those who could be charged with implementing such policies simply did not believe in them?

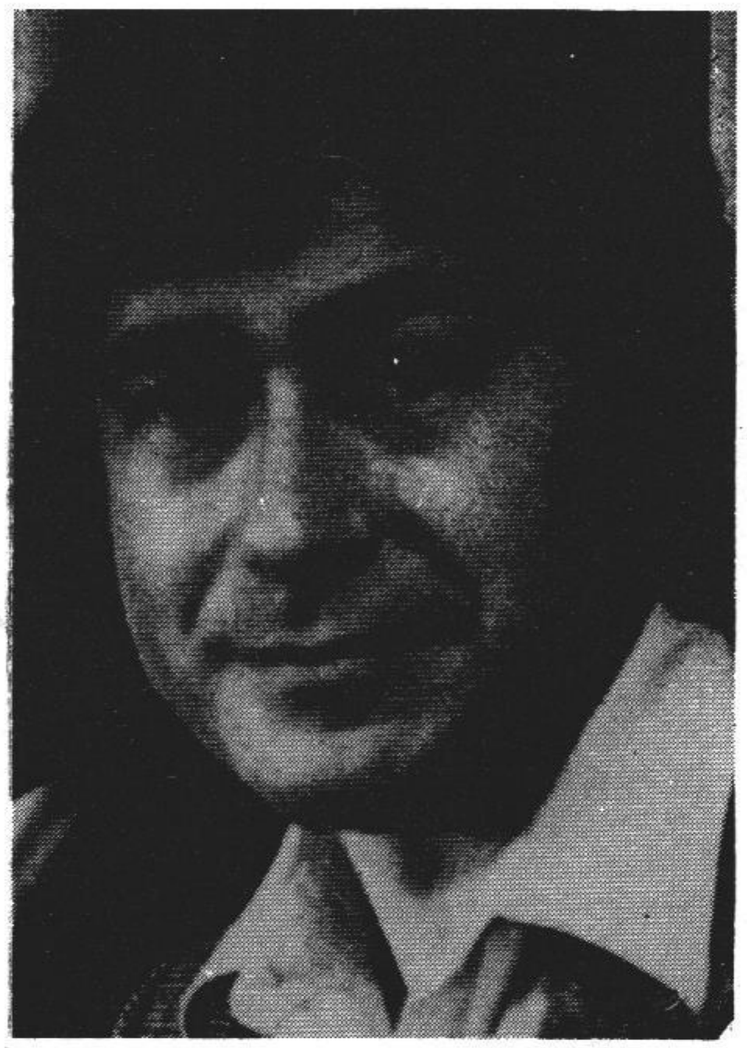
Michael Foot was like a goal-keeper attempting to keep out the other team's forwards and his own defence at one and the same time. The own goals were spectacular.

Defence, the EEC, the Falklands, Terry Duffy and Frank Chapple. Every one a winner for the Tories and everyone stuck in by us. Party workers on the ground could scarcely believe it all.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

In addition to the pathetic shambles of our campaign and sabotage of the manifesto by the Right there were two other crucial factors which contributed to our defeat.

First, the role of the press. Of course, we have won elections in the past despite



the press, but the propagandists of Fleet Street learn their lessons well. The lies, distortions and filth about the Labour Party from rags such as the *Sun, Express* and *Mail* plumbed new depths. There is nothing that Dr Goebbels' Nazi propagandists could teach some Fleet Street journalists who work on the main Tory newspapers and in carrying out their daily tasks of lying and distorting they pose a very real threat to democracy in this country.

If the free flow of information is vital to democracy then action must be taken against Fleet Street in order to put it on a less partisan footing – perhaps along the lines of existing broadcasting requirements.

During the election campaign the great weight of the press in support, at various levels of hysteria for Thatcher and her policies, was like millions of Tory Party propaganda leaflets being distributed every day. Added to this was the national smear campaign of advertisements by the Tories that probably cost well in excess of £10 million. Controlling the costs of national campaigns is obviously necessary if any semblance of fairness is to be established in future elections.

A KEY TO THE FUTURE

The third factor in our defeat is also the key to the future.

It is just not politically correct, nor tactically possible to wait until the dying days of a Parliament and then produce a series of radical policy proposals. Given the loaded nature of the media it is all but impossible for us to argue a case nationally during a three-week election campaign.

During the coming period of opposition we must be concentrating our parliamentary efforts on stressing the socialist alternatives in answer to Tory Government policies. Merely attacking the Government is not enough nor is resorting to clever procedures in an attempt to catch out the Tories. In any case with a majority of over 140 seats such an approach is mere wishful thinking.

Our manifesto was not too left-wing; it was simply not campaigned for. As a Party supposedly dedicated to the replacement of capitalism it is for us to argue for the alternative. Certainly it would be fatal to keep fishing around until we find a set of policies that upset no-one and change nothing and any attempt to dump crucial existing policies such as unilateral nuclear disarmament must be resisted at all costs. Our function as a Party is to offer the people a socialist vision of the future and then campaign inside and outside Parliament to gain acceptance of that vision. This is not a three-week job during an election campaign but an unrelenting task that started on June 10.

Sitting in rooms passing resolutions is not enough and pinning badges on each other, or selling each other newspapers does not amount to raising working-class consciousness. Our message is the socialist alternative and our areas of activity are the doorstep, the factory, the office, the school, the pub, the branch and the meeting-hall. We are spending too much time talking to each other and it is beginning to show.

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CO-OP POLITICAL COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION

Although, of course, an inevitable examination of Labour's election campaign will take place during the weeks and months ahead, no time must now be lost in the urgent and necessary task of uniting and building the most powerful movement for peace that Britain has ever seen.

For various reasons which, of course, must be examined very carefully the electorate although largely against the installation of American nuclear bases, failed to link this question with the election of a Labour government. But for whatever reason, we must not, we cannot remain passive and act like lemmings. The campaign to prevent the installation of American nuclear bases in Britain can be won and must be won if we are to prevent the possibilities of a nuclear war, a war which would unite the British people in death. Let's work to unite the British people in a campaign for peace and life and against nuclear war.

ELECTION BRIEFING

SWING STREATHAM LEFT (NEXT TIME)

The Labour vote held up well in Lambeth. Norwood had an exceptional result, increasing the majority over the Tories by 1,000 votes, Vauxhall humiliated the Alliance, and Streatham confirmed Labour as the only serious challenge to the Tories.

Norwood were helped by gaining a strong Labour ward, but it was mainly due to the unceasing effort of local party workers that they came out to vote. Norwood canvassed everywhere, three or four times, and were knocking up till five to ten on election night. The new ward in Norwood, Angell, nearly went SDP in the council elections, but the constant effort of local Labour Party members brought them out Labour this time. The key to a Labour victory was the relatively poor showing of the SDP in Norwood, they scarcely had a campaign because they sent most of their workers up to Vauxhall — and as a result the Alliance were unable to steal the Labour vote.

The SDP sent their members up to Vauxhall because in the council elections they had won two of the wards. It looked good ground for them, similar to Bermondsey. They put in all their major speakers (twice!) and had 'red scare' swipes at Stuart Holland. But they were humiliated, 7,780 votes behind us. Which just goes to show that local electon results are not a sure-fire indicator for national elections.

In my own constituency, Streatham, the Liberals were similarly squashed. If their results in the council elections had held up they would have been second. In fact they were 4,000 votes behind us and the Tory increased his lead over Labour by only 700 votes. The total Tory vote was down, but unlike some areas nationally, the Liberals were unable to replace us as the party of opposition. This was partly due to Streatham gaining a (narrowly) Labour ward; but the 4,000 margin over the Liberals was largely because of our campaign.

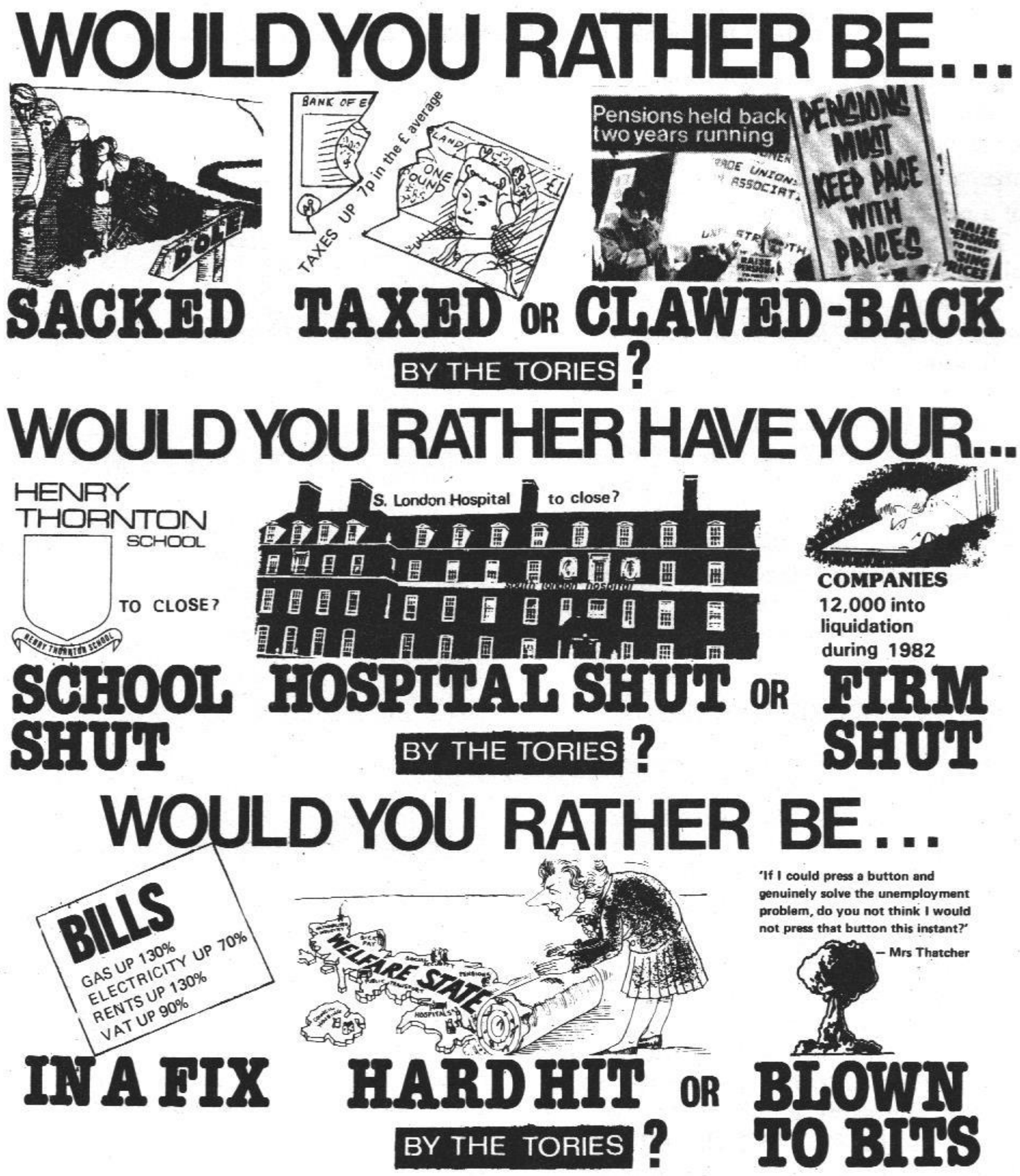
New Party

Starting with a new constituency party which covered large areas that had never been canvassed or leafletted, and never heard of the local Labour Party before, we threw in large numbers of people from the new Labour ward into the 'depths of Tory Streatham'. We leafletted everywhere at least three times, (a picture of our final leaflet is attached to this article), we canvassed and took party activists and the candidate into the shopping centre every Saturday to loudspeak, leaflet, hand out stickers and sell publications on a bookstall. One particularly effective tactic was when we hired a lorry, covered it with posters and balloons, put a jazz band and the candidate on the back, and took it around the estates. The kids rushed out for balloons and stickers and their parents followed. The Labour Party had never been seen like this before in Streatham! On election day we had four loudspeakers touring the area, particularly the estates — you would have thought that the local Liberals and Tories didn't exist!

Of course we were all torpedoed by the national leadership, but in Streatham we had made several permanent gains. Our tactic of lending workers from the stronger wards, once the local vote had been secured, has doubled the party membership in the weaker areas. Next time they should be more able to stand on their own feet. Incidentally, we prefered this method of working in the wards, because a centralised canvassing system weakens activity and involvement at a local level. The result of complete centralisation is often that the activists carry all the load and the wards don't grow as successfully as they should.

Our second achievment in Streatham was to firmly establish ourselves as the party likely to get the Tories out. If we can roll up the Liberal vote we can win Streatham. In fact, with the boundary changes, it is one of the first seats that has to go for Labour to command an overall majority in Parliament.

Thirdly we have learnt what is to be done next. Crucially, we need to go on drives to register all our supporters with registration forms in our hands, and getting them filled in there and then on the doorstep. It is the Labour vote that is under-represented, and it is noticeable that in Paddington, where the local party has been going on drives to register our supporters for a while, our vote



DON'T BLAME EALING NORTH

Here we are again! Within three days of the debacle on June 9th, around half the NEC had stampeded headlong into the press and onto TV to proclaim the 'need to rebuild the Party'.

Yet, in reality, the only reorganisation needed is at national level.

In our Constituency, and I am sure in most others (certainly in London), there has been an almost universal condemnation of any attempt to infer that local parties need rebuilding.

This campaign saw more work carried out by a larger number of activitists, both from within and from outside of our CLP than for very many years, the best organisation, superbly orchestrated by a tremendously hard-working Agent, Ruth Blunt, and a very popular (and equally hard-working) Candidate, Hilary Benn, that we have had 'since 1950'; and a willingness to work and a commitment to our Manifesto which led to over 120 comrades working on canvasses in our Constituency on one morning – including 71 on one mass canvass of two Council estates.

And yet in the middle of this, the Party leadership were perpetrating one cock-up after another, aided doubtlessly by a commitment to the Manifesto of the level of Peter Shore, who, the following Sunday, managed to deny support for virtually all the major planks of that Manifesto (after being elected, of course!).

And what happens now? New members, active workers all out on the ground and no decent candidate for Leader. Somehow I think the building has only just begun . . .

Kevin Veness (Ealing N.).

SETBACK FOR DEMOCRACY IN BRENT

Once again Brent East and Brent South remained Labour strongholds, following the trend of recent election results. Clearly the fact that Brent East would remain Labour was a prime factor in the NEC not allowing a proper reselection procedure. Brent East was denied the candidate of its choice, because that candidate would have been Ken Livingstone. In the end we had to accept the NEC's imposed candidate, Reg Freeson. Evidently Ken Livingstone is not wanted in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

FEELING BITTER

A majority of Brent East GMC has been left feeling bitter about the imposition of a candidate. We were told time after time that if we were to proceed with selection we would be in breach of the constitution. But at no time has the right wing majority on the NEC been interested in upholding our democratic and constitutional right to mandatory reselection. Most of them, of course, do not believe in it and cannot wait to do away with it. They used any opportunity to defer the agreement of a timetable and there were a few individuals in Brent East who were only too pleased to furnish the wildest allegations to help them.

So it is important to have a National Executive which accepts both the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Apart from the right wing group around John Golding, who were predictably hostile, we were annoyed by the behaviour of Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock. *It will be very difficult to support Neil Kinnock in any leadership contest – his track record in Brent East gives him no left credentials at all.*

L.P. photo Library



Reg Freeson

In the longer term, there will be considerable support for the need to build a strong extra-parliamentary opposition to Tory policies. It is quite clear that the Labour Party through Parliament alone cannot defend working people from future attacks. Issues such as the campaign to stop nuclear weapons are going to become a major focus of confrontation. It is important that local Labour parties become actively involved and do not just sit about for the next five years.

Closer to home, Brent Council is one of the top targets for the new Tory government. One of Thatcher's main aims will be to destroy what opposition remains at local council level. The options available to Labour Groups are gradually narrowing. It is important that these councils at the forefront of the attack co-ordinate their response. There must be discussions soon before the next budget round begins.

Democracy in the Labour Party suffered a setback in Brent East and Brent South. It is important that we bounce back and make it clear we will not be treated that way again. We want an NEC that will accept democratic reselection and an NEC prepared to lead a defence of working people throughout the country. If that is not forthcoming, the Labour Party will indeed be finished.

Colin Adams
(Chair, Brent E.).

held up particularly well. We will also probably issue an advertisment and a leaflet thanking our Labour voters and attacking the Alliance for letting the Tories in. Several of the local Liberals support unilateralism and are not happy with the SDP. If we can play on the SDP's poor performance and right-wing profile we may gain votes and activists from the Liberals.

INVADE TORY TERRITORY

In the future we intend to invade the Tory territory in Streatham, using a mixture of centralised and ward-based registration and membership drives. We intend to continue our presence every Saturday in the shopping centre, and we will be pushing a local Labour four-sided newspaper through every door four times a year. We also, where possible, intend to make use of the local press. The key to our progress so far has been the strong wards firming up their Labour support, then moving into the weak wards to build a presence. That has uncovered a surprising amount of Labour support in so-called Tory areas (particularly multi-occupied houses, though they frequently need to be registered). We're on our way to swinging Streatham Labour next time.

Les Tate,
Streatham Labour Party.

HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN

At least we won against the Boundary Commission. They'd tried to create a safe Tory seat in Hornsey and Wood Green, but after our result Hugh Rossi, the sitting MP and architect of many DHSS 'reforms' is still in a marginal. We got more votes than 1979 and reduced his majority to less than 4,000 — with *a swing to Labour*.

Obviously we're pleased with the result. We see it as a vindication of what was a very positive local campaign — all of our door to door publicity, all produced by ourselves, took a positive approach on all issues. We kept on mentioning socialism, too. Special women's canvasses (Women canvassing women, with our own women's leaflet) got London-wide and local publicity and a very good response on the doorstep. As did our all woman team of candidate, agent, organiser and Party chair.

We didn't fudge unilteralism — but explained it in our own leaflet. In the last week of the campaign we held a huge public meeting attended by over 1,300 — the largest and most positive meeting ever attended by our main speaker, Ken Livingstone.

So when the comrades start talking about toning down our policies, and being out of touch with the electorate — remember Hornsey and Wood Green. We almost did it here and next time on a platform of good organisation, a presence in the community and above all socialism, we'll win through.

Diana Minns
Agent Hornsey and Wood Green

Some lessons...

Piers Corbyn
Southwark & Bermondsey CLP

The general election marks the beginning of a new and decisive stage in the struggle to make the Labour Party lead an effective fight against Thatcher. If the left does not seize the time now, the Labour Party is doomed.

The combination of skilful manipulation and deceit by Thatcher and the media with monumental ineptitude by the Labour leadership has given Labour 28% of the poll, the worst result since 1918. At the same time, it is true, but little comfort, that the Tories received 42%, the lowest percentage poll of any government party ever. The deficit since 1979 (2% from the Tories and 11% from Labour) was essentially lost by people who were – apart from 'tactical votes' – both against Thatcher and unconvinced by Labour, to the party of the Don't Knows – the Alliance.

The ruling class pulled off a sort of national Bermondsey on Michael Foot, ironically lambasting him in the way he made it possible for them to lambast Peter Tatchell.

THE DECEIT DIMENSION

Significantly the Alliance did worst in three-cornered fights where there was real argument between the two main parties. The media are hell bent on making politics "three-dimensional" and establishing the Lib-Social Deceit Party as the (cosy) 'alternative' to Thatcher. The hidden corridors of capitalist power do not want Labour at any price. This has far-reaching implications. . . .

★ **In every fight against Thatcher policies** Labour must play a leading organisational and solidarity role or have its supporters poisoned by Steel-Owen demagogy. Although it is the case that Thatcher may well over-reach herself and generate more opposition, it is by no means the case that we can assume this will lead to positive support for Labour unless Labour does something positive to get that support.

★ **Every bye-election** will be billed as an Alliance v Labour race, making it necessary for Labour Party activists to mobilise nationally in support.

ON THE DOORSTEP

Examination of the mechanics of defeat gives further clues to future work. Labour failed in at least three familiar areas.

★ **The leadership was publicly divided** and did not argue convincingly for the manifesto. The Callaghan-Healey carve-up of nuclear disarmament was a turning point away from Labour for waverers on the doorstep. How pathetic for us to have to rely on Enoch Powell to put our case! The fight for accountability is now a question of survival.

★ **Labour's case** was jumbled and unclear as to how the manifesto could or would be carried out. To many voters Labour appears to be the defender of Council slums, an ineffective NHS, pacifism, trade union restrictive and sectional interests and indeed everything grey and boring. The manifesto must be presented in a visionary and coherent, not a disjointed way. The Tory policy 'loaf' was well and excitingly wrapped in glitter paper. The Alliance loaf was also well wrapped but came with a pop-up toaster. Labour's loaf was already cut up, half tattered and strewn on the floor. We should have been seen to be fighting with gusto

– *For a preventative health care system*
– *For a dynamic **real** Alternative Economic Strategy*
– *For a nuclear free Europe.*

It should have been for, for, for, rather than "Tories are bad" with a belated "Think positive".

★ **Propaganda** (posters and leaflets): Tory propaganda was clear, simple, vindictive, offensive, deceitful and positive:– effective. Labour's was muddled, complicated, weak and defensive:– ineffective. Pleas for better material were made to the national Labour Party to no avail. Some places produced more of their own, but this can never substitute for a national ineffective campaign.

The days are now over when Labour can presume working people will automatically vote for any geriatric dog that carries the Labour label. Thatcher and the media magnates NEVER take their support for granted. They daily excude lies into every household in the land. Labour can no longer take its vote for granted, or Britain will become Bermondsey.

We need:

(i) Regular Labour newsheets in every household in every Ward which take up the fight against Thatcher locally and nationally. Trounce the Liberal Focus crap. This has worked well where it has been tried.

(ii) Papers:- A national Labour Daily? Why must we tolerate the worst press in Europe? We need town and city Evening papers too. A London Evening Labour paper would go well.

(iii) We should get involved more in local and pirate radios.

(iv) At every opportunity LPs, Councils and Labour MPs must project themselves and their achievements to show they are in touch with the people. The catalogue of incompetence by Labour Councils daily drives voters away. Labour MPs must only receive an income equal to the average income of people they represent. The excess should be clearly allocated to secretarial work and expenses, specific campaigns and so on.

We have to go forward!

'CLASS' & LABOUR'S VOCABULARY

Mark Cole
Bromley-Ravensbourne CLP

The Tories have made clear their aim to fight a covert, guerrilla class war rather than have an all-out conflict. They have sought to banish any notion of class from political debate whilst actively pursuing policies which are designed to weaken the working class and to strengthen, in terms of both wealth and political power, the ruling class that they represent. The Labour Party has allowed the concept of class to be removed from political discussion by the Tories without so much as a murmur.

In retrospect, by tacitly allowing the Tories to banish class from our political vocabulary, we have deserted working people and have given them no reason to affiliate, in political or electoral terms, to the Labour Party. Instead, we have left them to the Tories and the gradual process of embourgeoisement. It may be too late to reverse that process.

In place of class allegiance, it is my contention that the Tories have introduced the concept of nation and the citizen's subordination and subservience to that nation. For example, in recent speeches Thatcher has spoken of the Tories ". . . fulfilling the destiny of our nation" and the jingoism during the Malvinas conflict has demonstrated just how Thatcher's espousal of this policy has worked in practice.

It is true to say, however, that the nature of social class has shifted over recent years. The Tories have managed to couple the idea of the property owning democracy with middle-class values and voting trends. In electoral terms, people's perception of their class rather than the actual position they occupy in the stratification scales plays a greater role in voting intentions. Consequently, the sale of council houses has become a central tenet of Tory social (and electoral) policy because it serves to divorce the working class from the Labour Party by depriving them of their class consciousness and by fracturing working-class community peer groups on council estates.

TWO CHOICES

Labour, in the light of these insidious Tory machinations, has two clear choices. It either discards class altogether, and disregards the party's original political constituency, or it reintroduces and embraces class-based politics. On this issue we must be decisive and the party, as a whole, must embrace the final decision and rally round it. This is an issue of fundamental ideology as opposed to political pragmatism and it must be discussed fully.

Without this radical rethink on the doctrine of the Labour Party, we will continue to see the decline of our vote and the growth of a centre party, although not necessarily the SDP.

VICTORY IN THE POEU

The working class of this country suffered a major blow to its confidence on June 9th, 1983. Clearly, the result of the General election is an enormous setback for the cause of Socialism. That is undeniable. What is also undeniable is the utter dejection felt by thousands of our comrades up and down the country who have flogged themselves to absolute exhaustion for a Labour victory, increasing their activity to fever pitch in a desperate attempt to repair the damage inflicted by Labour's right wing Parliamentary Leadership. In the end the firm grip of the right wing on the Election campaign and the stab wounds inflicted by them on the party proved terminal. It is against this background that the victory for the Left in the POEU takes on such significance for the future.

The POEU has traditionally been a right wing trade union, standing somewhat to the right of Attila the Hun. We employ such renowned class fighters as John Golding, who is the Union's Political Officer and represents us on Labour's NEC. The Union's General Secretary, Bryan Stanley is also well known for his right wing views. The right has dominated the POEU for the last quarter of a century by the use of a secret organisation (reminicent of the worst aspects of the Masons) called appropriately enough 'The Bloc'. It was effective enough to be able to ensure the return of a right wing leadership and to totally ignore democratic conference decisions.



DEDICATED LEFT CURRENT

There had always been a small but dedicated left current in the POEU. In 1978 the Broad Left was launched openly in the Union. The production of its magazine 'Spark' began. This was welcomed enthusiastically by sections of the membership who had been lulled to an almost trance like state by the utter bloody boredom of the Union's Journal. Politics had been treated like sex — you didn't speak about it in public.

At this time the Union was faced with the introduction of New Technology, which was rightly seen as a threat to jobs. The left argued at Conference for the introduction of a 35 hour working week. It won the argument and Conference to the position of Industrial Action. The membership of the POEU revelled in the action. The NEC were terrified! They panicked, fearing that they would lose control of the action which was rapidly passing into the hands of the real leadership in the Branches.

The result was that the NEC snatched defeat from the jaws of victory by accepting a 37½ hour working week at 'nil cost' to the employer, thus divorcing the ideas of work sharing with no loss of pay and hours reduction! This blew the strategy of 'cut the hours, not the jobs' to pieces.

The left in the POEU learnt valuable lessons from this struggle. A whole new layer of leadership sprang up in the Branches during the action. The old right wing branch leadership who relied totally on inactivity and non participation were found wanting and in many cases were swept away. This resulted in some gains for the left on the NEC and increasing awareness among sections of the membership.

WIN THE LEADERSHIP

The left always concentrated on the *policy,* taking the arguments to the membership by using its magazine 'Spark' and producing left broadsheets on major issues. We always tried hard to be open, democratic and responsive to the needs of the membership, pointing out that we were winning the arguments at Conference, but that the right were able to sabotage the policy by watering it down or even ignoring it. That's why we needed to fight and win the leadership.

The Broad Left has led the struggle to fight liberalisation and privatisation and to refuse to connect Project Mercury to our public network and switching system. It was clearly demonstrated at this year's Conference that we had won the hearts and minds of the activists in the POEU. It had become apparent that a central part of Thatcher's strategy was the need to privatise High Technology industries like British Telecom. To achieve this aim the powerful and well organised BT unions must be smashed. Nothing less will do. Privatisation of the industry could not be carried through with the non co-operation of the work force. Thats why the POEU Conference opted for a fighting leadership. The old guard had demonstrated their inability to lead and their total lack of imagination, flair and elan. All will be required in the near future.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

During the run up to Conference the Westminster and City Branches were engaged in industrial action against the Thatcher Government. Whitehall and the Bank of England were designated targets and blacked. The response from the membership of those branches was nothing short of magnificent. That action and the determination of the membership to fight and win helped to pave the way for the left's victory at Blackpool. The right wing leadership did almost everything in its power to isolate the action and failed to involve the mass of the membership in support. It has now paid the price. For the first time in 25 years, the left has a 14-9 majority on the policy making executive of one of the potentially most powerful unions in Britain. This could well be the start of a major shift in the balance of forces in the Trade Union Movement.

I do not believe that the POEU left victory is just an isolated incident. The struggle has been carried out in the Labour Party for the last few years culminating with victories for the left on reselection, electing the Leader, unilateralism and the best Manifesto for years.

But, the struggle was one dimensional. To a large extent the fight in the Trade Unions was neglected. The real base for the right wing in the Party is in the Unions. That's where the next round in the struggle needs to be won.

The Broad Left in the POEU was instrumental in setting up the Broad Left Organising Committee in recognition of the need to build Broad Lefts in all Unions and take the fight against the right onto their own ground. This task must be carried out with re-doubled energy. The fine fight by the EEPTU and the NUR have blazed the trail and the POEU Left have underlined those achievements by being swept to power.

The struggle of the Left in the party and the Left in the trade unions are one and the same, we must link them together. The victory for the Broad Left in the POEU is not just a victory for the membership of the Union. It is a significant and important step towards breaking the power of the right wing in the Labour Party.

Before the task of defeating Thatcher can be begun in earnest, the working class needs to defeat the corrupt and opportunist right wing entrenched in the Unions and win back for the working class its own organisations. The victory for the Broad Left in the POEU is the first step along this road.

Dave Ward — POEU NEC.
Personal Capacity.

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING ON IRELAND



NO PEACE UNTIL BRITAIN WITHDRAWS

AFTER Sinn Fein's success at the recent election — we won 43 per cent of the nationalist vote — the British people can no longer accept the constant sea of lies from their government — the lie that the Republican movement has no support, the lie that we are a 'criminal conspiracy' organised by Republican godfathers. We seek an historic peace with the country which has been occupying our country for centuries and which has engaged in a counter-insurgency war against our people for the last 14 years.

by GERRY ADAMS M.P.

We believe that the British people only tolerated this war because of the annual belief in promises of 'progress' and the 'imminent defeat of the IRA', which always proved elusive and in fact is impossible. Generation after generation of Irish people will struggle against the British occupation of their country.

Britain has brought us nothing but wretchedness — the highest unemployment and the worst housing in Western Europe, a working class divided on the basis of sectarian privilege, and widespread civil strife. We call upon the British people and in particular, the labour movement to support the democratic right of the Irish people to national independence, to support the demand for troop withdrawal and an amnesty for political prisoners.

We believe that the counter-insurgency measures refined on our streets may well be used against the oppressed of your own society (the immigrant community, striking workers, the unemployed) and that the laws used to oppress us will eventually come to be used against the British working class.

Ireland can make no real progress — social or economic — until Britain withdraws. Only then can Republicans hope, as dedicated socialists, to realise their struggle for a 32-county democratic socialist republic.

Support the TOM Delegation

Last August GLC councillor Steve Bundred spoke at the annual internment commemoration march in Belfast. Steve was speaking on behalf of the 200 strong delegation organised by the Troops Out Movement who had travelled to N. Ireland to show their opposition to Britain's presence there.

No one can be fully aware of what it is like under British army rule or the strength of opposition to it until they visit N. Ireland. Neither are people prepared for the warmth and welcome the Nationalist people extend to people coming in solidarity. That is why the Troops Out Movement is organising another mass delegation around the 5th, 6th, 7th August again this year.

While the delegation is short it gives a vital insight into the Irish liberation struggle, which is not attainable from books or newspapers. There will be opportunities for discussions with local activists. Last years workshops included the role of women, youth and Trade Unions. There will also be a chance to show our opposition to Britain's occupation of N. Ireland, with such activities as picketing of army forts and of course participating in the demonstration. This year there will be a more international flavour with delegations from the USA and the continent.

As the struggle in Ireland becomes sharper, the Labour movement must identify with the oppressed rather than the oppressor. We must show clearly our oppositon to the continued occupation of N. Ireland and use every opportunity to do so. This years delegation should have as many TU and CLP banners on it as possible. Already some Trades Councils have agreed to sponsor delegates. Comrades should try to do the same with their own party or TU branch. If you want to help personally or financially in organising the delegation please let us know.

For further information, write to: Delegation Organising Committee, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

Pat Williams, London Troops Out Movement.

LONDON COUNCILLORS TO VISIT IRELAND

The visit to Belfast by Ken Livingstone and Kathy and Steve Bundred — and the election of Gerry Adams for West Belfast — highlight the need for on-going contact between elected Labour representatives and elected representatives of the nationalist population in Ireland.

We believe that it is in the best interest of both the British working class and the Irish people that such contacts be maintained and used to discuss the steps necessary to achieve peace. Therefore it is proposed to organise a mass deputation of London Labour councillors, from both the Boroughs and the GLC, to visit Ireland to meet democratically elected representatives of the nationalist community to discuss the means whereby Labour representatives can work for peace in Ireland and between Britain and Ireland, by aiding progress towards a united Ireland with the consent of the majority of the people of Ireland.

Timing of the deputation, which may include visits to Dublin, Crossmaglen and Belfast over one weekend, is flexible. It is proposed to call a meeting in the London area to discuss details of the proposed itinerary in the near future.

Any Labour councillor in the London area who is interested in taking part should contact: Peter Kahn, Deputy Leader's Office, Hackney Town Hall E 8 .

Cllr Peter Kahn (Hackney)
Cllr Steve Bundred (GLC)
Cllr Alan Clinton (Islington)
Cllr Gery Lawless (Labour Committee on Ireland)

A PROGRAMME OF UNCONDITIONAL BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM IRELAND?

Sarah Roelof's discussion of Ken Livingstone's proposals for British withdrawal in the May issue of Briefing made reference to a draft programme for withdrawal. Unfortunately this was inadvertently left out of the article. We therefore print it below.

There is increasing discussion of the process of British withdrawal from Ireland particularly since Livingstone's proposal of "a planned withdrawal within two years". Some supporters of 'Troops Out Now' have accused Livingstone of selling out. Others argue that while immediate military withdrawal is essential there is more to British involvement in Ireland than just the military. To ensure complete and unconditional withdrawal we need discussion of how to deal with the other aspects of British withdrawal. Livingstone's two year formulation, as explained in May's Briefing, might not be inconsistent with this. One of the most obvious problems with allowing time periods for withdrawal is that the Unionists would undoubtedly use such time to postion to a United Ireland. Much of this would be organised through the RUC, UDR etc. Thus, in addition to 'troops out now' other demands are necessary.

This draft programme was written by Geoffrey Bell two years ago and was first published in Socialist Challenge in 1981. An updated version will be appearing in Bell's forthcoming book on Ireland in the 'Arguments for Socialism' series published by Pluto Press.

Suggested Programme for Unconditional Withdrawal.

**Unconditional military withdrawal.*
**Disarming and disbanding of the UDR.*
**Disarming of the RUC.*
**Repeal of PTA.*
**Amnesty for all prisoners convicted of offences arising from the political situation in Northern Ireland.*
**Payment by the British government of reparations to rebuild the shattered Northern Irish economy.*
**Repeal of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, the 1949 Ireland Act, the 1973 Ireland Act and all constitutional legislation giving Great Britain the right to maintain a political presence in any part of Ireland.*
**The withdrawal to be undertaken and determined in accordance with the wishes of a representative body of all-Ireland opinion, such as a 32-county constituent assembly.*

What this programme amounts to and can be so argued in the Labour Party and elsewhere is a demand for the end of British interference economically, militarily and socially in the most important aspects of Northern Irish life. What it attempts to do is to give a more practical application of the principle of Irish self-determination.

It was drawn up in 1981 by Geoffrey Bell and first published in Socialist Challenge.

Labour movement conference

July 16th 1983, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.
Doors open 10am

The present turmoil in Northern Ireland has lasted for 15 years. There are no signs that an end is in sight, that a lasting peace with justice will be established. The political initiatives of British governments have been numerous. All have been failures because the underlying causes of injustice and violence have been ignored or denied. The British Labour and trade union movement has not faced up to its responsibilities over the issue. It can and should make a positive contribution to challenging the government's disastrous record by evolving its own policies. The purpose of this conference is to discuss and develop such a contribution.

Sponsors include: Clive Soley, Tony Benn, Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson, Harriet Harman, John Tilley, John Fraser, Reg Race, Martin Flannery, Ron Brown, Dennis Skinner, Dennis Canavan, Stuart Holland, Ernie Roberts, Les Huckfield, Bob Cryer, Bob Parry, Syd Bidwell, Stan Thorne, Ken Livingstone, Allan Sapper, Jonathan Hammond, Hugh Wyper, Harry Courcha, Peter Hain, Geoff Bell, Desmond Greaves, Gordon McLennan.

Proposed Agenda: Morning session from 10.45am opening with speaker from Northern Ireland outlining the situation facing the Northern Ireland trade union movement. Afternoon session from 1.45pm discussing campaigning in Britain. Speakers will be from the British and Irish Labour and trade union movements. Each session will be structured to give the greater part of the time to delegates for discussion.

Tear off and return

Name of organisation .....

Name of secretary .....

Address .....

.....

Please tick

Will sponsor .... Send delegates .... Send observers ....
Please send names and addresses of observers or delegates on a separate sheet. Indicate whether any will want a creche.
Delegates fees £3 each. Observers £2. Make cheques payable to: Labour Movement Conference on Ireland.
Please return to: Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1

Save London's Education

Frances Morrell, ILEA

The publication of the Conservative manifesto produced small reassuring headlines in the educational press, and premature sighs of relief amongst some officers at the Inner London Education Authority. The GLC was to be dis-banded but it seemed the ILEA was to remain: a few politicians would be sacrificed to Tory antagonism, but that was all. The truth of course is very different. The Tories intend to destroy the ILEA, but because they know of the ferocious battles that have been fought to save it in the past they dared not say so in the election, instead they decided to keep the name and destroy the reality.

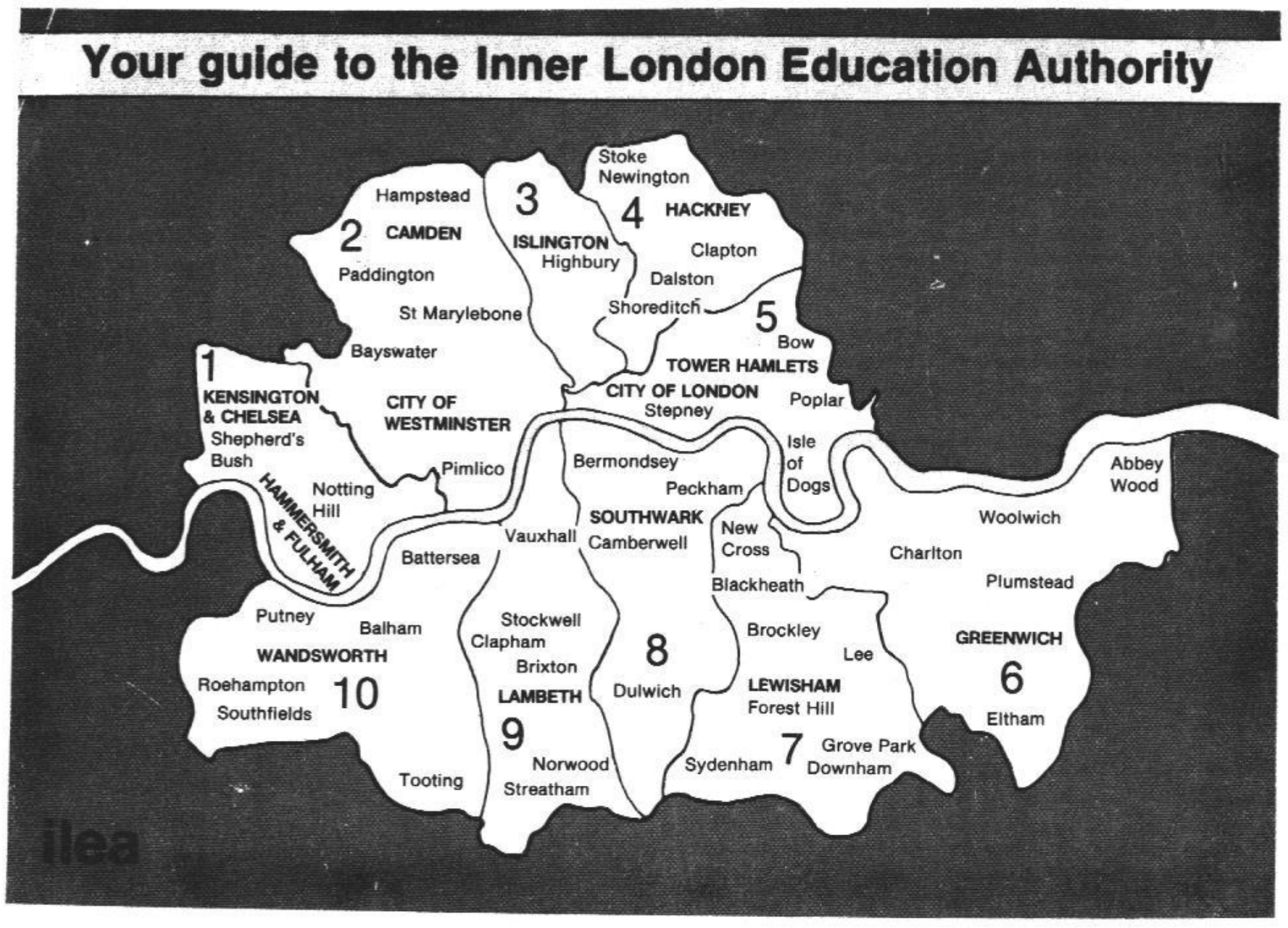
First the money. Proposed curbs on local authority spending would alone be devastating. The government's assessment of what the ILEA needs to spend is £517 million, £352 million *less* than the current ILEA budget and a drop of 39 per cent. The education service would, without exaggeration be destroyed. Though the cuts might be phased, the effects, over a period, would be the destruction of whole sectors of the service such as adult education which are outside the statutory provision.

The minimum provision would be provided for schools and considerable redundancies would be unavoidable.

THE CONTROL

The second threat lies in the proposal to remove control of the education service from directly elected representatives and place it in the hands of a 'joint board' of borough representatives. This act, which would abolish a century-old, directly elected unified education service for the capital is, once again, more threatening than it seems. First, what is to prevent a Wandsworth or a Westminster from declaring UDI and pulling out? What will be the formula for representation? We may be sure it will be weighted in favour of conservative councillors. What will be the constitution: perhaps the Minister will directly nominate 'interests' not now represented. What will be the financial arrangements? Education may have to take its chance within slashed borough budgets instead of being a separately determined levy as it is today.

Yet again ILEA must and will mobilise to fight for its existence, and its provision. Yet again parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and governors will have to organise and fight for the maintenance of one of the most fundamental rights that a society confers on its children — the right to a decent education, free at the point of use, and planned so as to devote greater resources to those in greatest need.



THE MANIFESTO

And because we believed we must and can win, we will not only be engaged in this fundamental struggle. We will continue to implement our manifesto. At the last Education Committee this session we will both be seeking enabling powers to campaign against the government with the full authority of the ILEA. We will also be taking through the Committee proposals for black representation on the spendig committees of the ILEA, and our anti-racist policy proposals which will go to all institutions of the Authority for implementation in September, at the beginning of the next school year.

Get your additional woman delegate to Conference.

It is not too late to organise to get your additional woman's delegate to Conference. Written details must be sent in by 5 August. It will involve some work so share it around. What you need to find out is the number of individual women members plus the number of women in all affiliated organisations (i.e. trade unions, socialist societies, Co-op etc) who are resident in your constituency.

Written evidence presumably a letter from officer of affialiated body) is necessary. And remember it has to be based on 1982 figures. When you've done all that if the total number of women comes to 1500 or more you've got your woman delegate who can be elected at the same time as your 'regular' delegate (who can also be a woman, of course). Your CLP secretary will have full details.

Tessa van Gelderen
Brent South CLP

OPEN EDITORIAL MEETINGS

WE AIM to ensure that Briefing editorial meetings reflect as accurately as possible the views of our supporters in the constituencies. 'For this reason they are completely open; we urge our supporters to attend in person or to ensure that their labour movement organisation or Labour Left group sends a representative.

We want to develop a system where local 'Labour Left' groups begin to take full responsibility for our pages which deal with their areas. We have already made a start with Hackney and want other Labour Left groups to attend our Editorials and assume similar responsibilities.

Our next Editorial Board meetings are:
Monday June 27th at 7pm
Monday July 25th at 7pm
Both at County Hall

Next issue out on July 21st
Deadline for articles: Monday July 11th

GLC & ILEA
Fighting for Survival

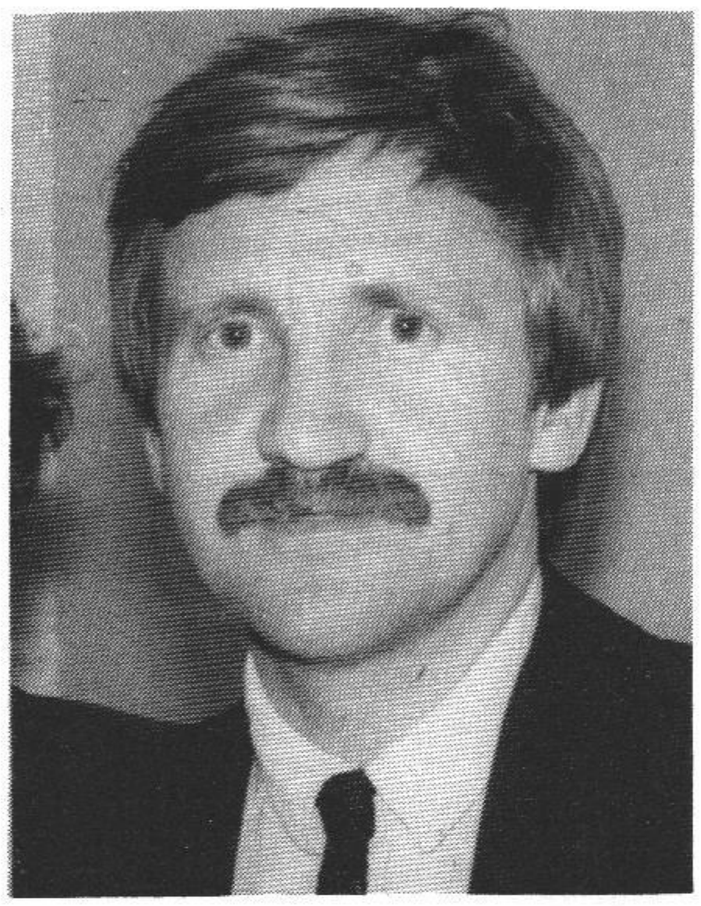
While everyone is dusting themselves down after defeat and planning to extract maximum commitments from the leadership hopefuls the Labour movement faces an immediate threat from the Tories. Their plans are well advanced to attack local government.

Between them the ineffective right-wing leadership of our party and Mrs Thatcher have achieved more for the left in clearing out the PLP than years of carrying through mandatory reselection could ever have done. The sadness is that some Labour MPs who would have campaigned vigorously with us failed to be elected along with some who were no great loss.

Some comrades are loudly saying, whilst wringing their hands, that we must all share some of the blame for defeat. They are wrong. For the left did not confuse and annoy voters with an eclectic range of interpretation of what the policies were, nor did we choose to enter the election with five Militant candidates supposedly expelled whilst smacking the wrists of Militant candidates by not shaking hands on public platforms, nor did we deliberately give away the seat of Bermondsey by a series of incompetences on the part of the leadership.

The right were smugly keen on the spirit of Northfield and Darlington in contrast to the Bermondsey situation — we heard little about either seat when they were lost on Thursday.

I don't think any lessons have been learnt by the PLP and so in the struggle to save local government it has to be the leadership in the Town Halls that will become the focus of resistance.



Andy Harris
GLC/ILEA Member for Putney

GLC and ILEA

In London the attack will take two forms. The Tories are committed to break-up the GLC and to cut the spending and restructure the ILEA. For the first it means that public transport would for instance be controlled by an appointed board, so would the fire service. All the new initiatives in relation to oppressed groups would be scrapped and the planning and roads blocking mechanisms would go. Thousands of jobs would be transferred to the local boroughs, non-accountable boards etc. Whether the Tory desire for job cuts will be realised with the setting up of the new bureaucracies is dubious.

NON-ACCOUNTABLE

Having been involved with the Wandsworth DHA's proposed closure of South London Hospital I know how difficult it is for opponents to make an impact on a non-accountable unelected body. We have to use examples like these to save the GLC as an elected body.

DESTRUCTION OF SERVICES

The second attack will be on ILEA. The Tories plan to abolish directly elected members and make them all borough appointees. The Government will try to pass a law to allow them to call in the budgets of the "major overspending authorities" like ILEA, Islington and Camden. They will go through the budgets with a fine tooth comb and then tell the authority what it is legally entitled to raise as a maximum rate precept. This cannot but end up in a situation where truly massive cuts are demanded backed by the force of law: for ILEA the demand will be for the sacking of teachers, meals assistants, support staff, closure of adult education classes and nursery classes, slashing in budgets for books and resources as a first throw. ILEA will not make those cuts and the resistance will be fought by bringing together the strong triple alliance of parents, teachers and the Labour Movement in London. This strength combined with the strength of those committed to the GLC as a strategic authority for London must try to defeat the Government in its aims.

The size of the Tory majority in the Commons will make it harder to succeed — for whereas the previous ILEA campaigns have rattled enough Tory MPs in London to put pressure on the leadership now the Commons majority is so vast that a few malcontents in London could not have that same impact.

Nevertheless we have a number of factors working in our favour. The shire county Tories on the Association of County Councils are openly unhappy about the plans as they know an attack by ministers ignorant of local government could turn on them. This ignorance was no more seen than in a recent press comment by Norman Tebbit when he said that in the case of the GLC the *ambulance service* should be transferred to the health service and that ILEA should be run by nominees of the *32* London Boroughs. But most importantly it is the strength and ability of both the GLC and ILEA leadership, when working in harness together and with the backing of the movement in London that can provide a very powerful weapon indeed to thwart the Tories.

The movement expects an imaginative resistance to the Tories attack on local government and it is our task to lead this.

Just the Ticket!

A giant "Just-the-ticket" style cheque to pay fines and debts to L.T. on behalf of C.P.W.P. protesters was presented at Lavender Hill Magistrates Court on June 17th.

Courts costs were witheld as a protest against the case having ever been brought and, Jan Wallcroft one of the defenders, and a member of the Labour Party, presented a letter explaining that she is *wilfully* refusing to pay any fines costs or debt charges imposed by the court due to her defiance of the Law Lords.

PRISON ON CARDS

She explained '. . . This is an important issue of democracy – of whether the vote has any meaning or not . . . '. The onus is now on the court authorities to send her to prison or weedle out of it. If she is imprisoned she will be the first political prisoner under this Tory Government.

Significantly the Tories have just announced that they intend to take L.T. away from the GLC – making votes about transport meaningless. Jan's stand is part of the fight against this too.

Piers Corbyn

More funds are needed for CPWP print bills: cash/enquiries about the latest to 'Fare Fight (CPWP)' 28 Wardle Rd, SW17. 672-9698/ 701-5691.

PUBLIC MEETING
East Chelsea Branch, Chelsea CLP
Friday 1st July 7.30pm
Marlborough School,
Sloane Avenue SW3
Soviet and CND speakers
on the Disarmament Issue
Tel: 589 3263 for details
All welcome

JOBS FOR A CHANGE: PR

Are Londoners so well housed; are their homes so warm and so well furnished; are Londoners so well clothed and so healthy that there is nothing for 400,000 unemployed people to do?

In April the Labour GLC published a book 'Jobs for a change' which sets out to answer that question: to relate economics to human needs. It grows out of two years' work on the GLC's industry and employment policies — two years of at times painfully slow progress, hedged about with setbacks and contradictions, but aimed consistently at releasing the potential for new jobs.

The local government employment policies developed over the last ten years have all too often been about incentives to the private sector and nothing else: the uncritical application of public funds to further private gain. A whole range of activities tend in that direction: building access roads, running expensive advertising campaigns to lure restless firms, and above all the stress on small firms. Government, and a number of large firms, have been promoting the idea that action by large companies to help budding entrepreneurs set up on their own can make a major contribution to economic recovery. It is no exaggeration to suggest that many people are deceived into squandering their savings or redundancy pay pursuing a hopeless dream of independence through starting a small firm.

Public Investment

In contrast the policies set out by the London Labour Party in the development of the 1981 GLC election manifesto, and the approaches now also being followed in the West Midlands, Lancashire, Leeds, Sheffield and elsewhere, are based on public investment, on economic planning, on industrial democracy and worker control.

Every time a factory closes or redundancies are declared, Government Ministers announce that 'there is no alternative'. It is the lie at the heart of Thatcherism, and the work of the GLC and the other authorities is designed to show that the alternative exists: a limited alternative, certainly, hesitant, no doubt — but an alternative based on the planned use of public resources under democratic control to save jobs and create new ones, rather than upon the destruction of jobs through the free play of market forces.

The strategy is based upon the propaganda of practise: not just *saying* that there is an alternative, but spending £1 ¼ million pounds to buy a furniture factory out of receivership and open it up again and get workers back to work. In another case the GLC helped a group of London clothing workers thrown out of work when their factory closed to form a co-operative to make children's clothes — giving not just a loan but an element of grant to enable the project to start.

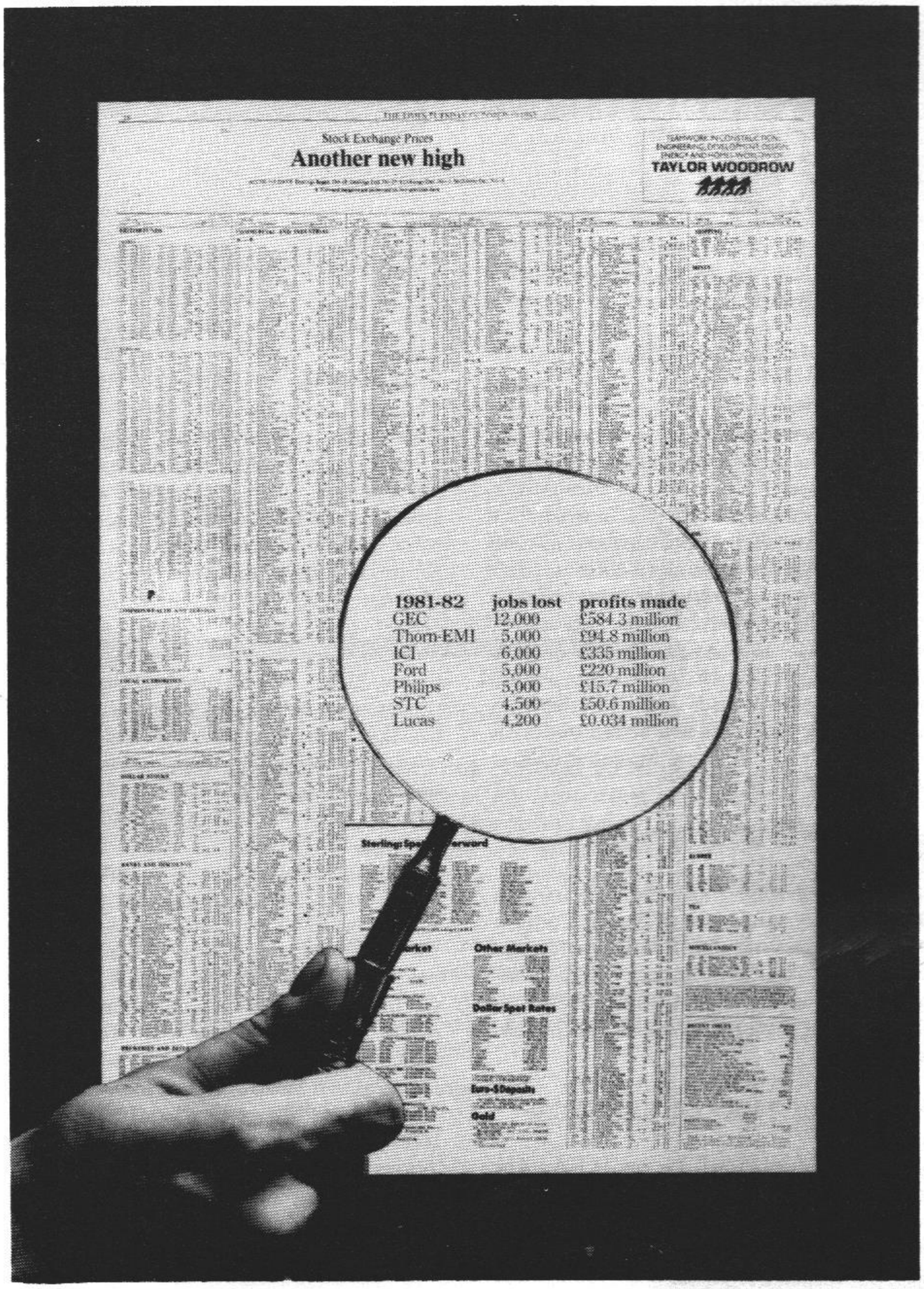
The Labour Party fought the General Election with a fine programme full of measures on industrial democracy and economic planning — but sadly, these ideas did not set the blood racing. The policy paper on economic planning and industrial democracy was not the stuff of doorstep conversations.

For the truth is that the language of socialism has been stolen from us — by the Daily Mail, by the Tory Party and Margaret Thatcher. The popular press can barely write of planning or public ownership or the nationalisation without the addition of words like 'grey' or 'bureaucratic' or 'Eastern European'.

Breathing Life

The 'Jobs for a Change' approach means taking these concepts and breathing life into them. Economic Planning will not work unless people believe that it is an activity that matters to them — that is carried on with their involvement and support, rather than by unaccountable and anonymous Regional Economic Planning Councils or National Economic Development Councils. That is why the Popular Planning Unit in the GLC is working with community groups in Silvertown on alternatives to big business's plans for an airport in place of the Docks. The People's Plan Centre in North Woolwich is being used by the local community as a base for building up this alternative.

Too much traditional local authority policy towards industry relies on working solely with private industrialists. The alter-



Investigating the corporations — *Peter Kennard*

RODUCING FOR NEED

Michael Ward

native approach rests on the belief that economy is too important to be left to the private sector; it's *our* economy, *our* prosperity, *our jobs*.

But capitalist also has its own *definition* of the economy. In the industrial strategy the GLC is now preparing, the economy is seen not merely as related to offices and factories, but to domestic life and domestic production too. Male definitions of work have *excluded* childcare, laundry and cleaning from 'the economy'. In North Kensington, the GLC has assisted a group of women, initially involved in a struggle with the Borough Council to defend a public laundry against closure, to develop their notion of an alternative laundry, based on serving the needs of the community. GLC funds are providing for equipment.

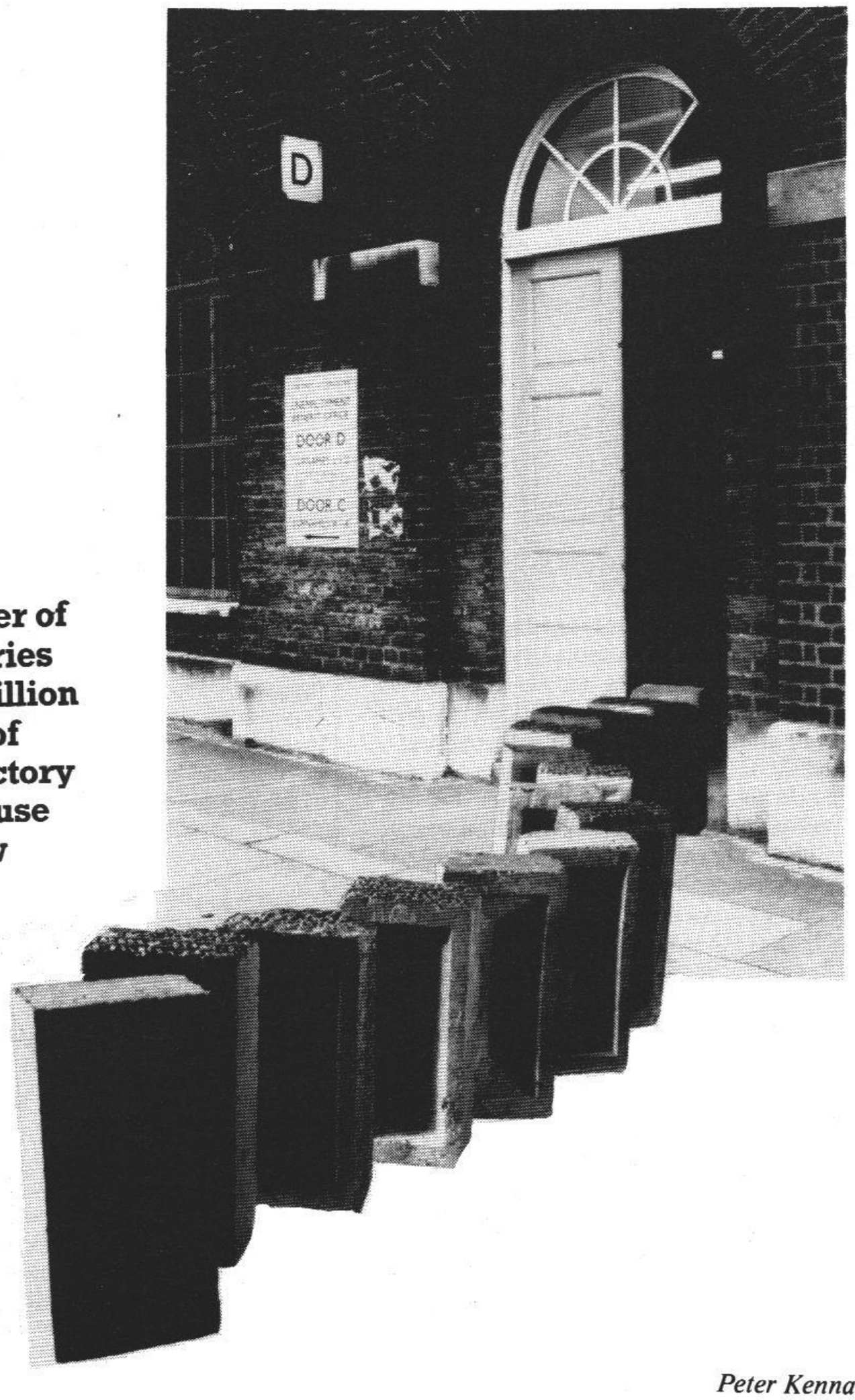
GLC Initiatives

'Jobs for a change' looks also at other GLC initiatives: supporting workers in the armaments manufacturing industries in the development of alternative products; backing up the opposition to the nuclear power station at Sizewell by developing alternative energy plans based on conservation, insulation and district heating. The GLC has now funded — in many cases jointly with borough councils — co-operative development agencies to enable local groups to turn their ideas into reality. Through the Greater London Enterprise Board, 'technology networks' and are being established, linked to Polytechnics, to give workplace groups access to research and laboratory facilities to develop new products.

In order to fund new jobs the Greater London Enterprise Board has been set up. In 1983/84 it has a budget of £30 million, and has already been involved in saving jobs in both the clothing and the footwear industries. Unlike banks or traditional government bodies, GLEB's terms of reference require it to look at every scheme that comes to it from the point of view of women, of ethnic minorities and of the extent to which it gives working people greater control over economic decisions.

The economic policies being followed by the GLC and by other socialist authorities mark a new departure of the Labour movement. They involve using the power available to public authorities — even under the most adverse conditions — to support and encourage workers' initiatives. Not every project will be successful. But the importance for the movement of showing that the alternative is better than Thatcherism is critical.

Michael Ward chairs the Industry and Employment Committee of the GLC
'Jobs for a Change' is available, price 90p, from County Hall. Please write to room 175.
The 'Jobs for a Change' broadsheet — a bimonthly newspaper based on the progress of the policy — is also available, price 10p.



The number of empty factories grows: 33 million square feet of London's factory and warehouse space is now empty.

Peter Kennard

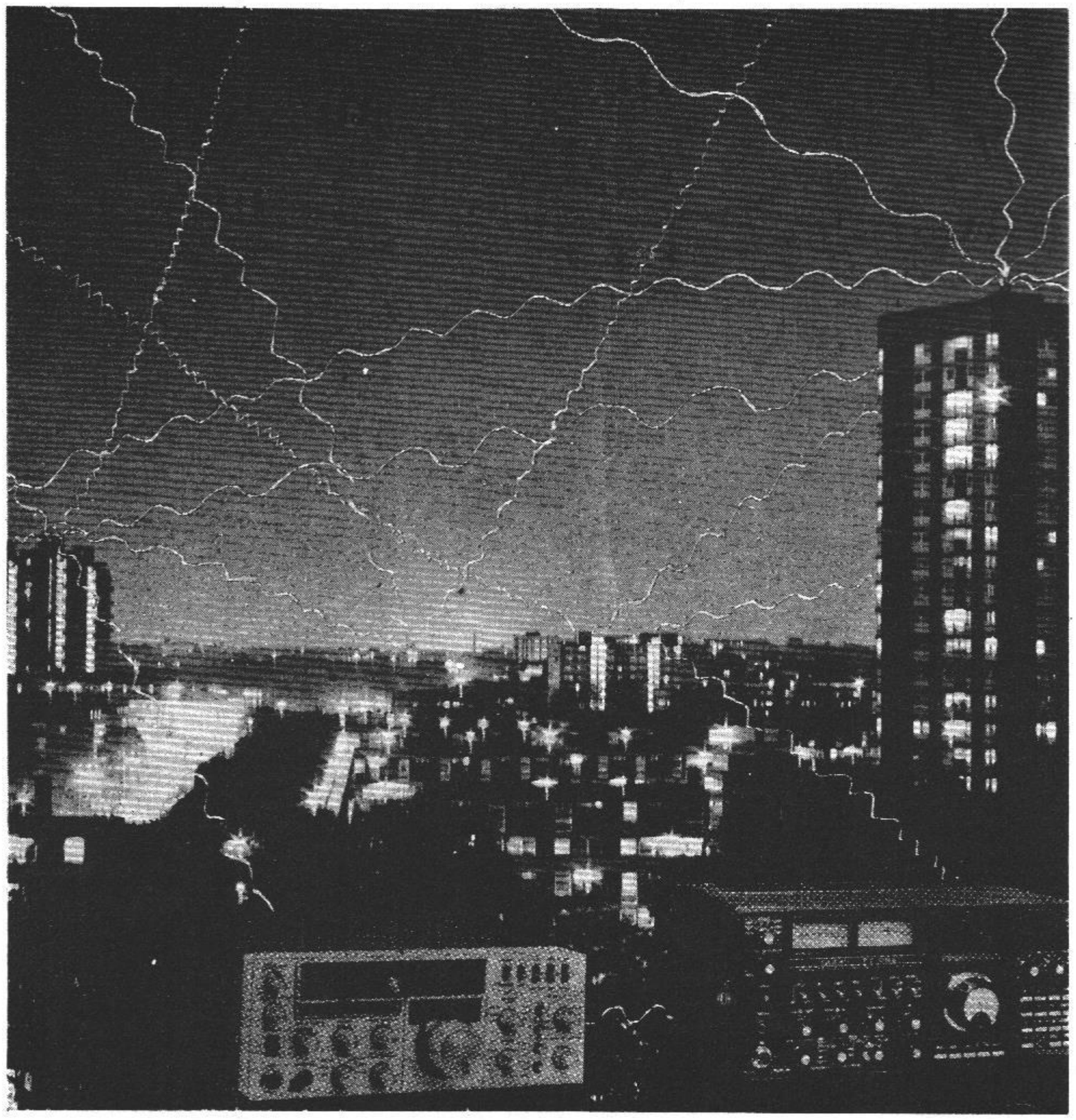
London has lost half a million jobs in a decade. This means that one in seven of the jobs that existed in 1973 has now disappeared – and not been replaced.

In Memoriam

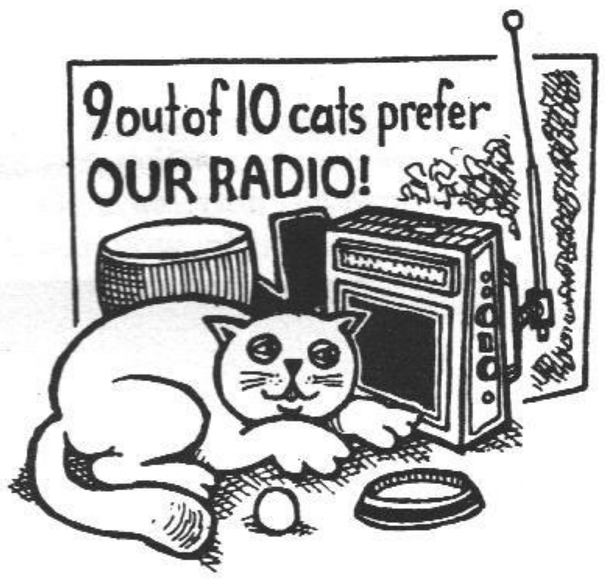
Firestone	2,186 jobs
Hoover	2,000 jobs
Lesneys	1,000 jobs
Park Royal Vehicles	565 jobs
Heinz	600 jobs
GEC	400 jobs
Callard and Bowser	500 jobs
Walls	400 jobs
Unilever	500 jobs
United Biscuits	1,700 jobs

A 'BRIEFING' ON

If we are to take the power and change society, one of the most essential weapons to seize from the Tories is their monopoly over the media. While seizing the main radio and T.V. transmitters is a prime task in any full-scale revolutionary situation, there are less ambitious tasks which we can set ourselves long in advance of an eventuality of that kind. In London, a realistic possibility is to establish our own alternative radio station — a "Briefing on the airwaves".



The mass media today are usually seen by Labour Party members as weapons of the Tories which we can do little about. Since Harold Wilson allowed the Daily Herald to die, the movement has been without an effective daily paper. Both the unions and the party have in recent years found real problems in communicating ideas to our supporters. The electronic media of radio and television have added to our problems. The content of programmes is generally reactionary. There is the further problem that, quite regardless of content, television by its nature tends to isolate and reinforce the nuclear family and pull people away from participation in their communities or in the real world. 'Public ownership' is clearly no answer — ironically, it has been countries



that have adopted a more 'free market' boradcasting policy, rather than a reliance on state-controlled systems like the B.B.C., which have come nearest to realizing the participatory potential of radio and T.V. when organised in different ways. Though the commercialism of 'prattle 'n' (bad) pop' predominates in most cases, in many countries the sheer number of licenses issued has allowed some interesting experiments to occur. From these has emerged a model of organisation which the Labour Party in London would do well to examine.

Because of its low capital costs and easy production methods, the major site of experiments with the media abroad has been radio. There has been a strong tendency for the initiators of alternative radio-stations to align with the left. It was Quaker pacifists, opposed to McCarthyism, who set up the first listener-controlled radio in San Francisco. It was Onde Rosse (Red Airwaves) that proved at its trial that Italy's broadcasting laws were unconstitutional, in a case which opened the airwaves there to a myriad of stations. In France, the Socialist Party was actively involved in the free radio movement, with both Mitterand and Mauroy receiving summonses for offences under the broadcasting law. But it is not merely getting left-wing viewpoints on the air which distinguishes these community radio stations. Many stations do not see their role as a propagandist one, and are happy to provide an alternative source of information.

More importantly, they have reconstituted the manner in which news is collected and transmitted to the audience. Radio Populare Milano encourages its listeners to telephone in their reports, reporting things sometimes as they actually happen, be they strikes, sit-ins, meetings or other events. This station attempts to invert the traditional effect of broadcasting, which is to atomise people in positions where they can only listen passively or, at best, participate in well-disciplined phone-ins at the mercy of the broadcaster at one central source. Using the phone creatively with the station can turn radio into a facility, a source of collective strength through which listerners can communicate effectively with one another.

In this, the station performs a function rather like that aimed at by London Labour Briefing itself, which has constituted itself as an open access paper for Party activists — a sort of noticeboard made available as of right to everyone on the left. A London community radio could take this process further by helping to bring this method of information-sharing out into society as a whole.

A Source of Collective Identity

London Labour Briefing has also sought to give voice to specialised interest groups. A London Community Radio could do this as well. It could act as a source of collective identity and self-awareness for a multitude of minority groups, be they cultural, ethnic, sexual of political. In France, such groups have organised themselves, either alone or in collaboration with other groups, to run stations serving the needs of particular communities. For instance, in Paris there is a station called Frequence Gaie, which caters for male and female homosexuals. This allows members of a group which had long been silenced to talk among each other openly on the air for the first time. Moreover, it is not merely gays who listen

THE AIRWAVES!

in: it is estimated that up to 40 per cent of this station's audience is heterosexual. As both Labour candidates and councillors in London have had to endure attacks in the media for our advocacy of gay rights, this listening figure perhaps indicates one way in which minority groups can be enabled to communicate beyond jthe boundaries of their own communities. And the potential or radio for facilitating self-organisation among ordianary women, particularly housewives and women at home with children, is immense. In Rome, the Housewives Collective posed such a threat when it began organising broadcasts that the fascists attempted to put a stop to it by a machine-gun attack during a studio-recording.

It is quite possible to conceive of a situation in the future in which each area of London was served by its own low-powered radio-station, linked in with the telephone and perhaps with CB networks, so that people could quickly and frequently tune in to each other and to what was happening in their own neighbourhoods and streets. The gains in terms of breaking down isolation, overcoming apathy and organising streets housing estates to combat sexual or racial harassment, vandalism and other problems would be immense. In the shorter term, with the Labour Party in London looking at plans for decentralisation in the boroughs, a neighbourhood station could provided a crucial part of a more accountable local government. Many councils face severe problems in trying to bypass the local right-wing press when explaining their policies to the electorate. There is little doubt that neighbourhood stations could have an appeal and would be an invaluable way of creating community involvement in local affairs.

Labour Party Problems

The experience of community stations abroad therefore indicates one way of solving some of the Labour Party's problems with the media. In the 1960s, the Labour Party took a negative attitude towards the sea-based pirates. This was because it saw any alternative to the BBC as inevitably commercialised and right-wing. With a large number of vacant wavelengths on the dial, the Tories, should they survive the next election, will be tempted to open up radio to all comers. Labour can avoid looking as if it is a killjoy, with nothing but negative responses, by adopting the model of community radio. Successful experiments in this field might also offer a viable model for the expansion of cable TV and even the reorganisation of the newspaper industry. Though Labour's present proposals on the right of reply and in defence of the 'public service' element in boradcasting are preferable to the narrow-minded commercialism of the Tories, too many of the existing proposals rely on greater state control over the mass media. Not only is this likely to be politically unpopular, striking many as a form of censorship. It seems



also to be based on chasing the phantom of 'unbiased' or 'ideologically-sound' material. But nobody wants 'correct' information or entertainment.

We want a real choice. What we need to do is to maximise the number of different sources of information which are available to us all. This is what the Italian stations have argued all along. In other areas, the GLC has shown that it understands this well, giving aid to autonomous groups in ways which allow them to maintain their own freedom and disseminate information as they see fit. The Labour Party now needs to adopt a similar policy in relation to the mass media, moving away from its old reliance on statist solutions to a more libertarian strategy of helping to fund and legalise community media. Our suggestions include:

1. Party members helping both actively and with cash the existing land-based pirates such as OUR RADIO.
2. Funding of community radio projects by the GLC and local councils. There already exist two neighbourhood stations in London, restricted to broadcasting on a cable network. These and other projects should be supported along with schemes that provide the basis for city-wide community stations once legalisation has been achieved.
3. An all out struggle by C.L.P. activists (a) to commit the Labour Party to press the Government to issue licenses for experimental stations and (b) to commit an incoming Labour Government to issue licenses as an urgent priority on assuming office.

by Richard Barbrook and Chris Knight

(Hampstead and Highgate CLP ; Lewisham East CLP)

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REVOLT IN PLO RANKS

In a previous Briefing article, 'Palestinians at the Crossroads' I wrote that the PLO's diplomatic strategy was rapidly leading it into a dead end. It is worthwhile looking at some developments since 1967 to put the present revolt into context.

In the '67 War, the Arab armies were smashed as Israel expanded 4 fold and the Arab regimes were discredited. The PLO originally a creation of these regimes, was taken over by Fatah the largest guerrilla group. In the War of Attrition which followed, it was the PLO which spearheaded the fight against the Zionist state. In March '68 an Israeli incursion into Jordan was repulsed at Karameh with the Israelis suffering heavy casualties. For the first time it was the Zionists who fled. But in 1970, Hussein struck back and there followed Black September when thousands of Palestinians were killed and the PLO was forced into Syria and Lebanon. The 1973 War of Syria and Egypt, when the Israelis were forced onto the defensive re-established the credibility of the regimes. OPEC used the oil weapon for the first time ever and it was this which shifted the PLO towards the diplomatic strategy which aimed at achieving a Palestinian West Bank state through the pressure of the regimes in alliance with the PLO. The very same regimes which feared their own peoples and allied with imperialism. In 1974 the Arab League formally recognised the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians, and Arafat addressed the United Nations with a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Based in Lebanon the PLO found itself drawn into the Civil War alongside the Lebanese National Movement against the Phalangists. Syria intervened with Israel's blessing in order to prevent a victory of the Left.

Knowing that Syria may possibly quit the Bequaa valley in Eastern Lebanon, Arafat prepared to pull the PLO fighters back. Having reluctantly left Beirut and seen their families massacred in Sabra and Chatilla as a result of worthless US guarantees, the appointment of commanders in the Bequaa whose only talent had been to run on sight, over the head of Abu Musa who had led the resistance in Sidon, was the last straw. The revolt grew and has spread as Arafat first tried to cut off supplies and then to evict them militarily. The revolt is not against Arafat personally but the Fatah Right. The attempt by Arafat to bring Hussein into US sponsored negotiations was itself only averted at the 11th hour.

The consequence is that Fatah, the largest group in the PLO, has split into a left headed by Abu Musa and Abu Saleh and a right. But while the left has rebelled at the consequences of the Diplomatic Strategy, it's hard to see how they have broken POLITICALLY. In many ways their differences are tactical. Although it is absurd to claim that the revolt is the work of the Libyans and others, there is no doubt that various Arab regimes will try playing off one group against another. Syria in particular is interested in emasculating the PLO. It remains to be seen whether the rebels abandon one of the PLOs central tenets on non interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries, because the PLO needs a base in an Arab country from which to strike at Israel. And it is also doubtful whether they will adopt a social programme on eg. land. It is to be hoped that one result of the revolt will be a change in the PLO's strategy — both in terms of going for a mini-state bantustan on the West Bank and their attitude to revolution in the Arab world. Our role remains to give unconditional support to the Palestinians against the Zionists.

Tony Greenstein

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'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

Images of Socialism

As the argument and debate continues about the causes of the Labour Party's disastrous result at the polls, one thing is clear – the Labour Party failed to 'sell' to the public a positive, credible image of itself and its policies. In this issue of the Supplement we have taken the theme of images, and have examined it both in terms of the images of socialism we convey to people, and in terms of the power of visual images as a means of conveying political ideas.

So what images do the Left convey to the 'person in the street'? Often they show suffering and deprivation and are worthy, virtuous and **boring** – and people switch off from them! But they need not have that effect.

For example, there is a trendy novelty shop in Upper St in Islington that sells a poster of mine showing Mrs Thatcher pinching someone's purse with the caption 'Prevent Street Crime'. They also sell cards that depict Mrs Thatcher as a



Cath Tate

A 'non-political' card.

hooligan and Norman Tebbit clambering onto a bike. The proprietor explained to the person who sold him the cards that he didn't sell political cards because he didn't like people who had an axe to grind. He didn't regard these anti Tory cards as political cards because they aimed to amuse.

He would certainly recognise the Labour Party's 'New Hope for Britain' as a political pamphlet though. Presumably the Labour Party did not want to attract anyone to read it who was not already firmly entrenched in the Labour Party because it didn't put any illustrations or photographs in it whatsoever and made the lettering on the cover as worthy, virtuous and boring as they possibly could. Think for a moment of the hours of debate and argument that went into producing the words for that pamphlet and then reflect on the fact that it was probably only read by people who had made up their minds a long time ago about the issues discussed in it.

But again there are alternatives! What about the pamphlet 'Jobs for a Change' produced by the GLC's Popular Planning Unit? Thought has gone into its appearance and it is quite unlike any pamphlet the Labour Party has produced, in terms of the striking images used and the presentation of information. It might not tell Labour Party activists much more than they think they know already, but it is having a far-reaching impact. The Popular Planning Unit reckons to get rid of the entire 50,000 print run. Many orders have come from trade unions but it is also selling well in W. H. Smith's! It does incidentally have plenty of information in it that can be used in CLP leaflets about employment in London.

People (even Labour Party activists) always look at pictures in publications before they read the words and most don't delve too far into the words. It is a good idea, therefore, for future campaigns, to keep an eye out for interesting photographs and cartoons – photos of demonstrations and mugshots are *boring*. If you find a photograph or illustration you want to use, it is only fair to trace its originator through the publication/photo library/postcard etc. that it is found in, and ask their permission. Many photographers/illustrators are quite happy to have their stuff used so long as they know, are credited and get a copy of the publication. Editors would not put an article into a publication without asking the writer's permission but photographs are seen as fair game. Photographers earn their bread and butter by taking photographs. Like most photographers I know, if my photomontages are used uncredited and unasked for I usually find out and send bills in where I might not had I been asked!

It's more important than ever now that we begin to create a new, positive image of socialism. We all need to become more visually aware. Some dreadful, dull,



Cath Tate

Which publication inspires hope?

uninspiring and worthy leaflets and publications go out in the name of the Labour Party (some not a 1,000 miles away from the Walworth Road). We need to do things like look at publications like 'Jobs for a Change' or to look at how information is presented in photographic exhibitions, for example the anti-nuclear ones that were in the foyer of County Hall, that are also trying to attract casual observers. Above all though, we need to remember that a decent photograph is much more effective than hours spent agonising over dots and commas in a worthy text.

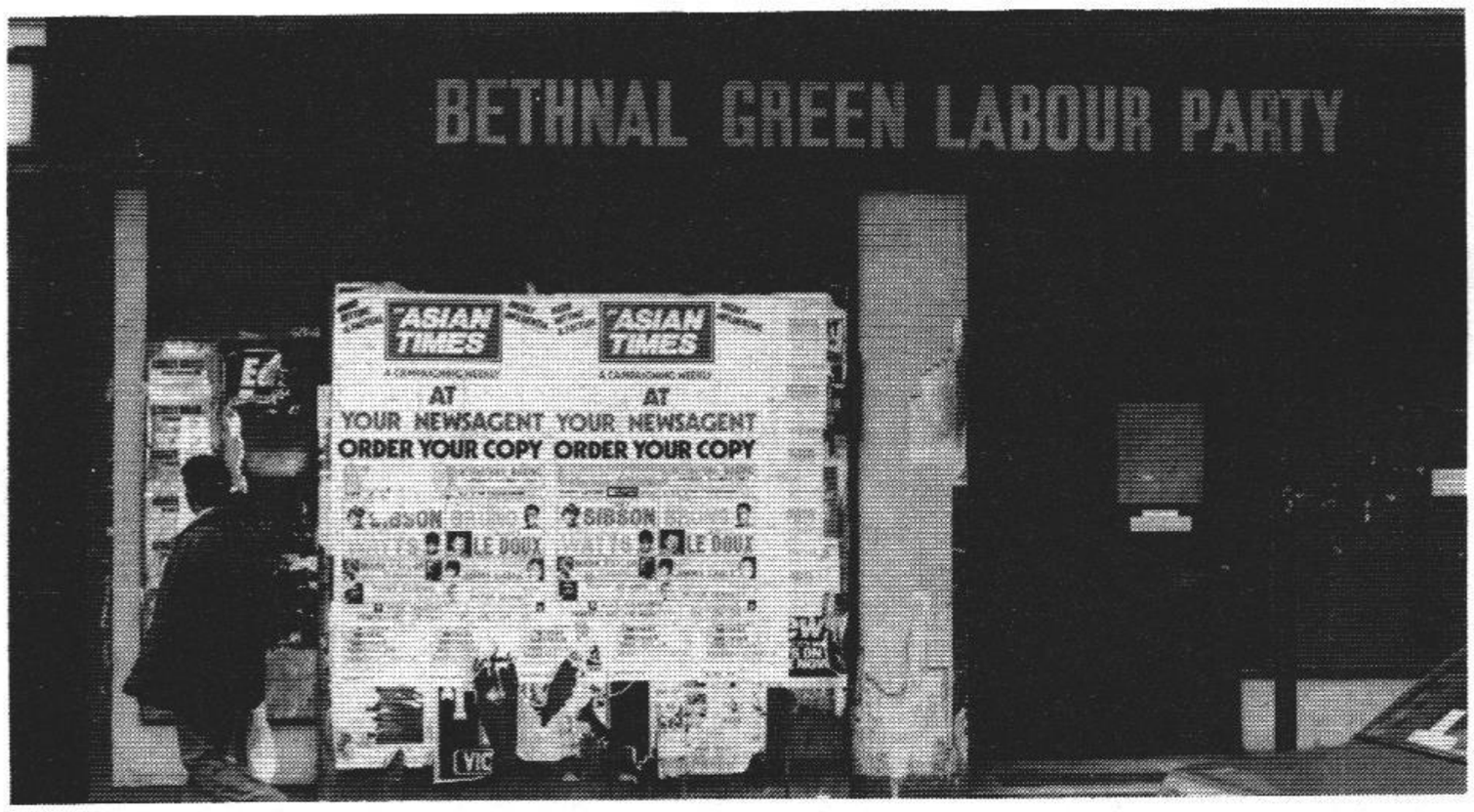
Cath Tate, Streatham CLP

WOMEN—TAKE THE POWER!

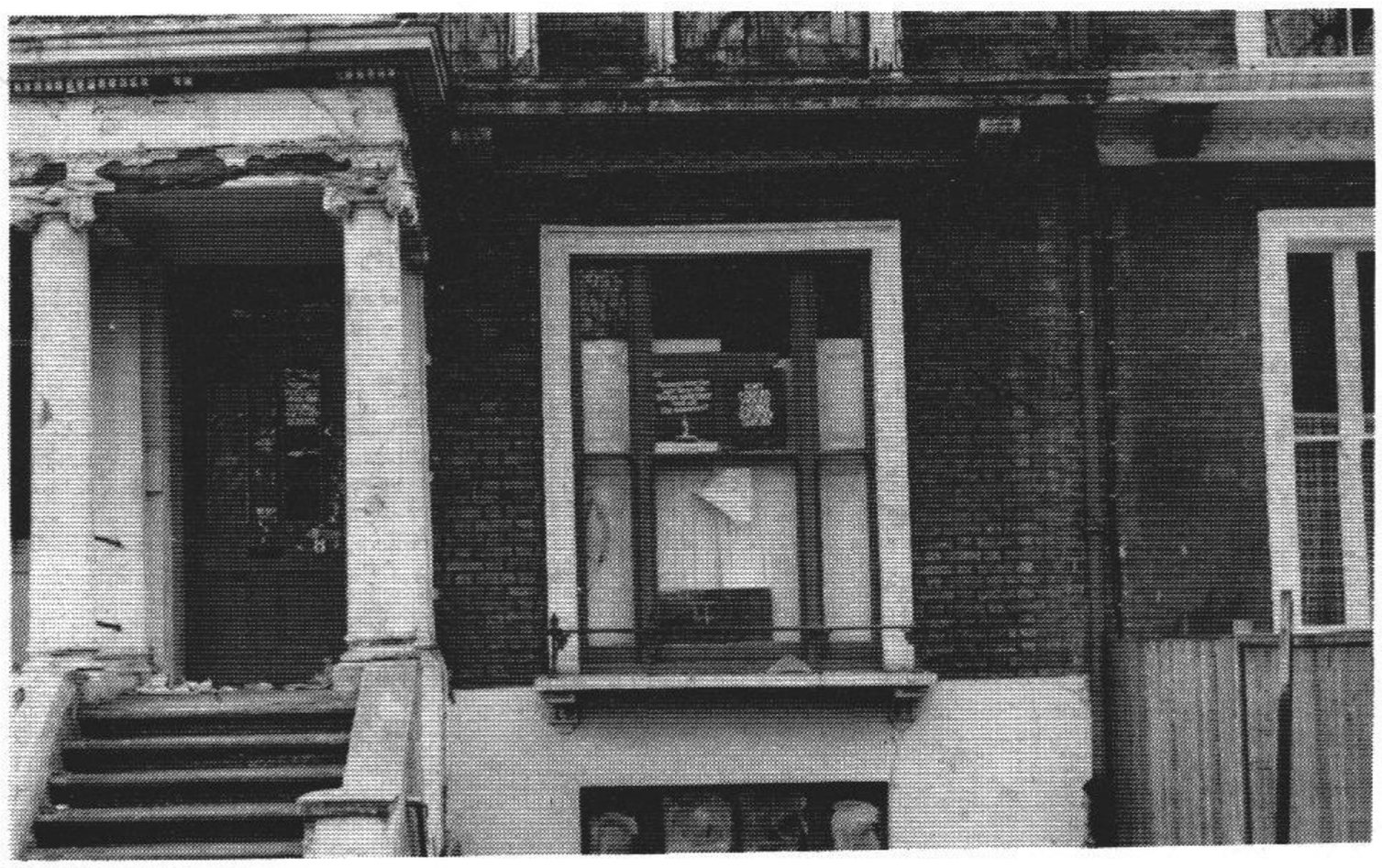
UNDESIRABLE PROPERTIES

I joined the Young Socialists when I was fifteen, full of idealism and hope for a glorious socialist future. This was in 1959. The YS branch met in a local cafe and I remember those meetings still very well. Friendly, comfortable, with good discussions. Then I got elected to the GMC and one evening set off for my first important Labour Party meeting in Southend, five miles away, *where they had their own hall!*

I imagined a well-used building, full of books, portraits of workers' gatherings, photographs of demonstrations, banners around the walls, a library perhaps, lots of different books and pamphlets for sale, a meeting place steeped in history and struggle. I found it eventually, there probably wasn't even a notice outside saying what it was, and opened the door and found myself in what I thought to be a disused clinic. Grey-green paint, a smell of disinfectant, bare walls, and three or four bare rooms filled with tatty, ripped tubular chairs. ('Tubercular chairs' a friend of mine called them.) My heart sank. Here was the party that was going to change everything, put the world on a new course, and it inhabited the dullest. dreariest building in the whole town. I should have known better.



Peter Kennard



Peter Kennard

IT WASN'T ALWAYS THE CASE

I do now. For I have come to assume that Labour Party members' ability to organise their own surroundings and care for them seems to be non-existent. Yet this wasn't always the case. In the 19th century the various strands of the working class and labour movement took great pride in creating buildings and centres for their activities which were often the most cared for and loved of any institutions in their communities. The Chartists built many halls and libraries, as did the Owenites. The Co-operative movement did so too, and was an early provider of free libraries and reading lessons for thousands of working people. The workingmen's club movement, when it started and before it fell into the hands of the brewers and the commercial bookings agencies, paid great attention to spending their members subscriptions on libraries, reading rooms, organised lectures, play-readings, family entertainments, music evenings and so on. The autobiographies of many 20th century working class socialists contain warm references to early meetings held in Co-operative Halls and other buildings owned by pioneering organisations of the labour movement. What happened?

AN ELECTORAL MACHINE

It would seem that as the Labour Party became pre-occupied with being an electoral machine at a local level, it didn't really need premises for anything other than addressing envelopes and licking stamps.

And so, mostly since the war, the Labour rooms owned by the Labour Party have become more and more neglected. The photographs here give the picture, and they were taken in just a couple of hours without really trying. So what is the image of Labour people get as they pass by these mostly tatty shop-fronts? What political and cultural traditions are consciously or unconsciously evoked?

1. The Labour Party is the party of *austerity* and Orwellian puritanism.

2. The Labour Party is a party of ideas, some of them good, but has no interest in the *details*. (Eg. council housing, state welfare services.)

3. The Labour Party is the party of *rhetoric* – yesterday's posters and promises in the windows, now faded and dirty, just a series of slogans).

4. The Labour Party is essentially *masculine*, and has no concern for trivial things like cleanliness, hospitality and other 'domestic' virtues. Politics is about grim-faced meetings in grim conditions with bare light bulbs and no ashtrays and drinking tea with powdered milk.

But there is something even more worrying about the cultivation and acceptance of this *Mock-Proletarian* social architecture and the social relationships which it embodies. And that is the gap between what party activists accept as reasonable conditions in 'politics' and those they would accept in their 'private' lives. A very wide gap, I suspect. For it is hypocritical, particularly for people who call themselves socialists, to condone different standards and conditions between the 'political' and the 'domestic', between the public and the private. And until the Labour Party takes a serious interest in its own meeting rooms and material conditions of political work, then other people will continue to regard it with suspicion and wariness. How come they say they can change the world, when they can't even change a light-bulb? For we mustn't forget that remark made by a Tory in the 1945 election when asked about canvassing: 'You can tell the socialists by the fact they don't wash their milk-bottles'. It was a terrible lie of course. And anyway, things are different now, aren't they?

Ken Worpole

Capturing the imagination

by Mike Hughes

Photographs surround us every day of our lives, from newspapers and magazines, to shop windows, hoardings and television. Some have a specific political aim, others without an awareness of their political implications nonetheless contribute to the way we perceive the world. and so enter into the political relationships that need to be understood to change the world

Camerawork magazine, gallery and darkrooms have been centrally involved in the politics of representation for several years. The magazine through featuring a range of photographic theories and practices, the gallery through its exhibition programme and the darkrooms as a resource centre The questions pertinent to these practices are: 'How do you represent struggles without appropriating them?' 'How can individuals and oppressed groups speak for themselves?' 'What are the most politically effective ways of making and using imagery?'

VISIONS OF STRUGGLE

In the past, people like John Heartfield made brilliant montages savaging the Third Reich through the magazine AIZ, a communist workers magazine – and set a trend in photo-montage that has dominated ideas since. In my opinion it was not until Temporary Hoarding (Rock against Racism/SWP) in the 70's that left imagery caught the imagination of a wide range of people and expressed graphically and photographically a contemporary vision of struggle. This was achieved by opening the design of the broadsheet to new ideas, less rigorously geared to demands for a 'professional' look and using popular images of struggles (from demonstrations, rock concenrts and style) to directly appeal to young people. It was the identification of unorganised elements of popular anger with a specific political aim through the medium of imagery that successfully (if temporarily) stemmed the rise of the Nazi's.

The left generally has tended to use photographs as if they contained some kind of 'truth', something solid that can be pitted against the easy assertions of the right. But dependence on this mythical quality of photographs is precisely how the right and advertising use them and they have flooded our daily lives with them. The 'truth' of a photograph came about because it apparently shows something that once was actually in front of a lens. This picture existed once in real life. But once a picture appeared in *Camerawork* captioned 'Fascist thugs attack peaceful demonstrator' which reappeared in *Bulldog* captioned 'Anti-Nazi League thugs attack innocent passer-by'. The photograph was silent.

IMAGES OF DECAY AND DEPRIVATION

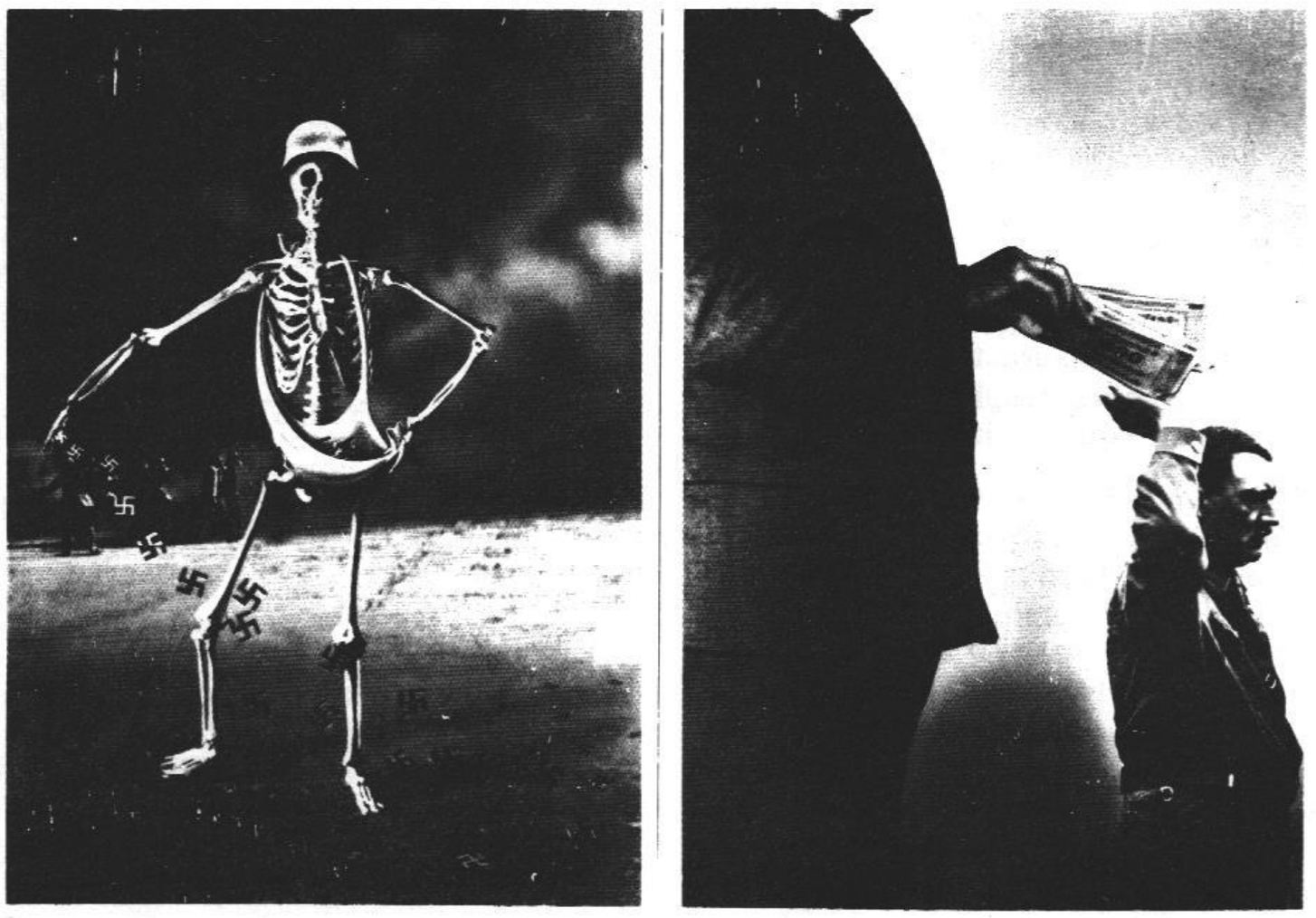
There is also a tendency to use images of decay and deprivation; witness the recent GLC rates campaign. But what hope do these have, however 'truthful', when people can turn to promise-filled advertising images? There at least is something within grasp – to be able ultimately to buy that commodity and appropriate its promises. And the truth in that image is no less 'real' for it being disappointed time and again when the purchase of that commodity turns out not to bring happiness, sex appeal and status.

The central issue is the terrain of this battle between left and right. Must we spend all our time answering the statements and contradictions of the right (often when we seem to be on the attack, we are only in fact answering) and their vision of the future. Capitalist relations are so well established, the accumulation of commodities the accepted way to perceive plenty and a future of material increase, that the right has no need to amplify current advertising techniques. The left, on the other hand, needs to capture the ground of the imagination, to portray a present and a future in words and images in which the hopes and ideals of socialism are already current, can be augmented and most importantly, are what people want to attain.

PORTRAYING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF SOCIALISM

Socialism cannot be bought but can it be sold? There is a certain queasiness in asking this question. It seems to be an admission of defeat, employing advertising techniques to put across what is essentially a commitment to a material and ethical struggle. But it does not necessarily follow that to employ such techniques means importing the spurious claims and intentions of advertising agencies. On the contrary the transformation of the hopes and aspirations of socialists into a vision is a concrete and necessary task, requiring deep and critical thinking about not only the aims of the movements but also how these are related to the differing aspirations of the oppressed groups in society. The weapon of guilt and moral rectitude is double edged. It is not enough to illustrate the wrongs of capitalism and patriarchy with photographs in the expectation of guilt-tripping people into joining the fight or instigating moral outrage. The danger is that by depending on this kind of imagery it will come to stand for our vision so that we will be associated in people's minds as the producers of that which we seek to change.

CAMERAWORK is at 121 Roman Road, E2 (01-980 6256).



Heartfield – Archiv

John Heartfield, who put his artistic skills at the service of the German Communist Party and anti-fascist struggles in the inter war period was one of the first to realize the possi bilities of a new type of caricature involving photography.

Photomontage involves the combination of photo elements to create a new message. Today photomontage is commonplace, above all in advertising. What distinguishes socialist photomontage is its concern with popular political education. Whereas commercial artists use photomontage to create an aura around a commodity, socialist artists often use the technique to reveal real, hidden relations and to encourage action against these relations. The former seek to mystify, the latter to de-mystify.

Graffiti and Fly-posting

Graffiti and flyposting can give a new dimension to your political work. The ruling class plaster their ideas on every available piece of newsprint, wall and open space, but you can steal their thunder with carefully placed messages.

Flyposting and graffiti have been going for a long time. In the last few years feminist graffiti on big adverts has had an important impact; and flyposting is a must for any big event or campaign.

In London, especially the south, graffiti and flyposting were used in a big way during the general election — the examples set should undoubtedly be emulated elsewhere.



To be effective this must be POW: Powerful, Ostentatious and Witty. A little slogan shyly scribbled up a back alley is no use. Go for a powerful message, on prime sites, with a witty connection to the surroundings or political situation, and you will hit the big time. . . . One of the masterpieces in Bermondsey got on BBC *Nationwide*, and two into *City Limits*. It's a pleasure to travel on a bus and hear people laughing and talking about graffiti you did the night before.

TECHNOLOGY

The best graffiti instrument is the cellulose spray can (about 80p). It should be shaken very thoroughly and used boldly — large letters *after* you have worked out exactly what you are saying and where the words go! Silver spray paint goes down excellently on dark brick. Black or red is best on posters. The tin and brush approach only works if you have time; although it is cheaper!



FLYPOSTING

This is for more complicated messages — argument, adverts for benefits etc. The best sites are tube station entrances, disused shop fronts, and bus stops.

TECHNOLOGY

Recent experiments show that Polycell Heavy Duty (or equivalent) plus unibond make an ideal paste which dries rapidly and is *very* difficult to remove even from quite rough surfaces. Add about as much unibond as there was Polycell before the addition of water.

The best way of carrying paste and brush is in a polythene carrier bag lined with a waterproof rubbish bag.

IF CAUGHT

The main thing is not to worry. If the police catch you in the act, make a joke. If you end up in court make sure your works of art are read out and reported in local papers!

Piers Corbyn
Burgess Ward, Bermondsey CLP

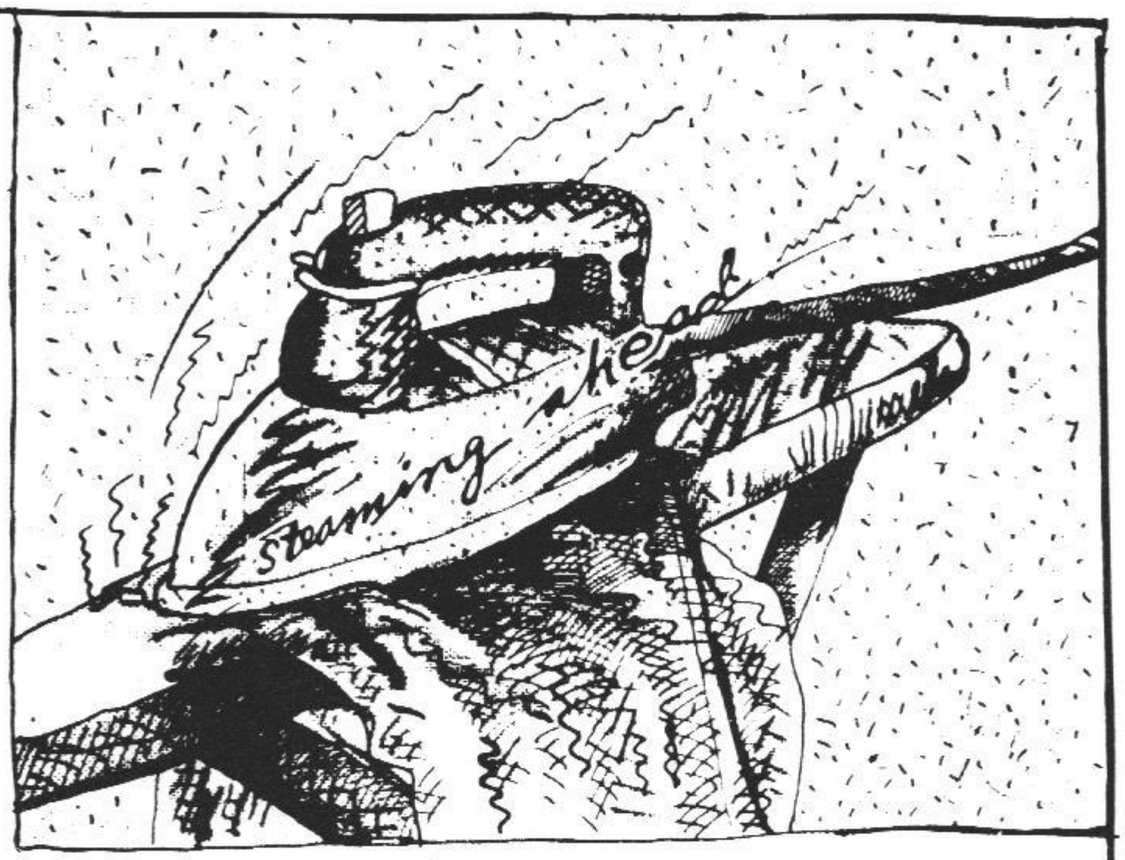




Poster from the Independent Campaign to Offset Tory Lies in the Mass Media. Flyposted around London

THE WOMEN'S PRESS

RECLAIMING OUR IMAGES



The logo of The Women's Press is an ordinary iron. At first this might seem like an image of women's oppression – once again all we are doing is pressing out the creases from the clothes of our menfolk. But as the symbol of a feminist publisher it is completely transfomed. It becomes the symbol of the age-old and potentially revolutionary power of the printing press, which women are now claiming as our own.

This type of transformation of received meanings is a feature of images throughout the women's movement – Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology* transforms words, making 'hag' and 'crone' positive terms for women, and the Greenham Common women have transformed the despised spider and its flimsy web into reverberating images of the power of co-operation.

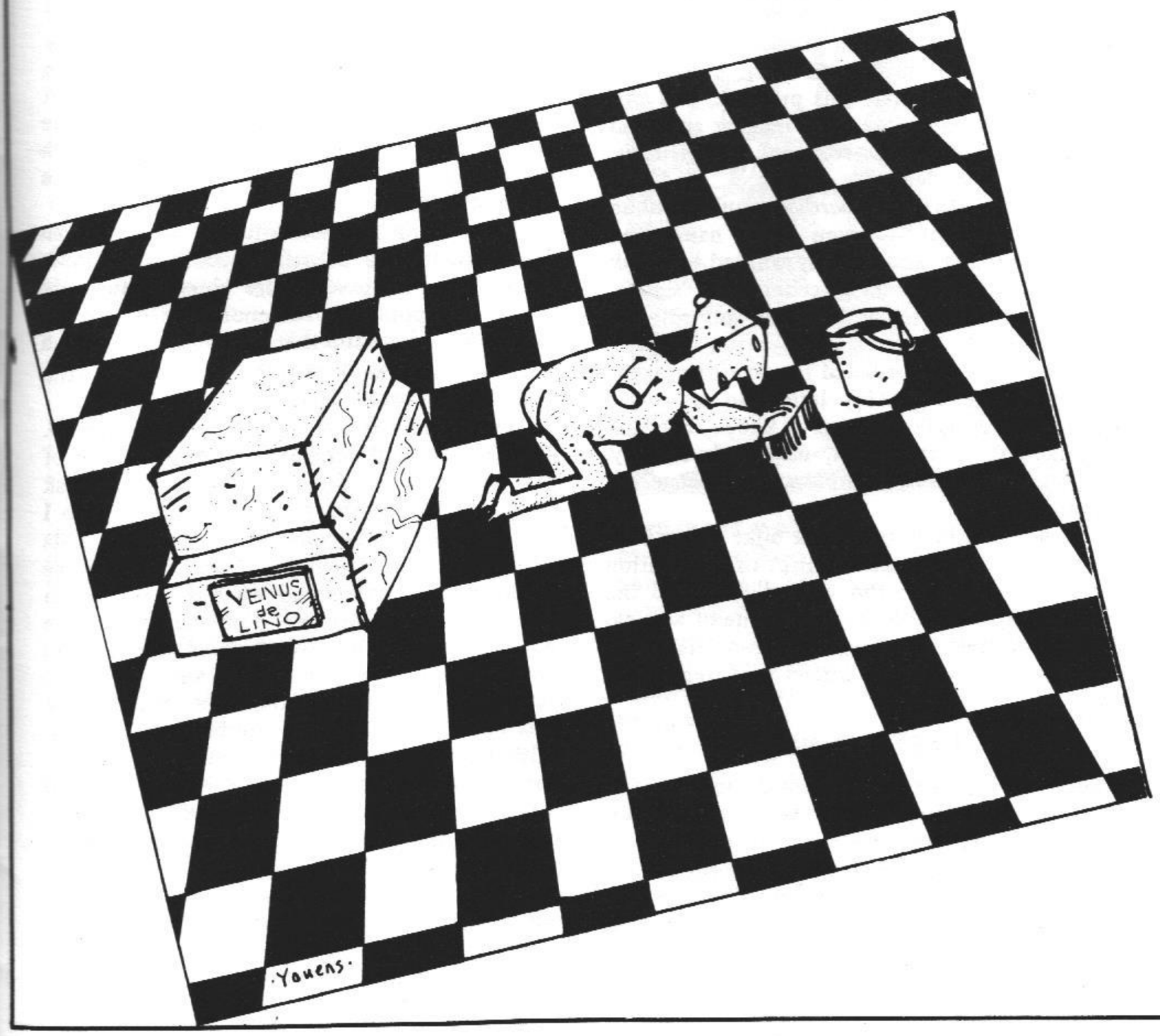
This activity is no accident. In a male-dominated world women just don't have many positive images they can call their own, so often transforming male meanings is the only way to create them. But of course this act in itself explodes with radical energy – and so do the images that result.

These symbols are deadly serious, but they also allow scope for play, for celebration of pure fun and joy in women's creativity. The iron of The Women's Press is a steam iron, so posters have the slogan 'steaming ahead'. It is definitely an electric iron, so publicity material describes the books as 'electric' and even 'stunning'. And the stripey black and white lead of the iron turns up again and again as decoration for posters and, of course, in the stripey black and white spines of all The Women's Press fiction titles, while the logo for The Women's Press Bookclub is an iron with wings.

The image-making of The Women's Press goes further. Only woman artists create the covers of the books, so that each jacket becomes a space where women can show life through our own eyes. Some jackets are very naturalistic, others create whole new mythologies for women, like the cover of a new book *Womansize: The Tyranny of Slenderness*, which turns Eve's sin of taking the apple into a triumphant grasping and affirmation of creative knowledge. The original artwork for this and others of The Women's Press books (including the glorious picture on the front of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Color Purple*) are all on show at the Battersea Arts Centre in September, as part of the literature festival there.

Cartoons can also have great impact – Paula Youen's 'Venus de Lino' cartoon (on the front of her book (*Lone Thoughts From a Broad*) for instance, exposes in a single drawing the huge contradictions behind the stereotype of the ultimate in female beauty. And The Women's Press has now opened an invitation to other women who draw cartoons to submit their work for a book, *Women Draw 1984*, to be published this December. For further information contact The Women's Press, 124 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6JE, or ring 01-729 5257.

Katy Nicholson



Kim Chernin
WOMANSIZE
The Tyranny of Slenderness



The Theory of Gossip

Do you remember Deirdre Barlow and Mike Baldwin's affair on Coronation Street? Well, we on the Streetlife Supplement believe we could have written a more interesting script. Deirdre need not have chosen between Ken, her husband, and Mike. She could have cut the secrecy from the start and told Ken that she would continue her affair with Mike, but would also live with Ken and help him look after their daughter. Ken, of course, would also be free to seek a lover. Maybe both these lovers could help with the childcare – so could Uncle Albert. You're right, it probably would not work out – but it would be good drama.

When Ann wrote in Streetlife about her miscarriage and her second pregnancy, Alan Rusbridger, the *Guardian* diarist, retold her story as if it were another soap opera played by fictitious characters. He wrote a nasty, facetious, sneering column that trivialised hers and her partner's grief. There were many who sympathised with Ann but could not understand why she had written so publicly and thus exposed herself to quite predictable attack.

Those who questioned Ann's wisdom in going public were not saying, "speaking about your miscarriage is too controversial". They would usually applaud speaking out for abortion, against the Falklands War or even for troops out of Ireland. They were really saying, "A political journal is not the place to write about your personal life. What concerns you most is not in fact political". They seemed to agree with Rusbridger that Ann's story was just 'gossip'. This article, therefore, is about the theory of gossip. What have our closest relationships, the area of our life that concerns us most, that is so popular when played on Coronation Street, to do with 'politics' – with changing the world?

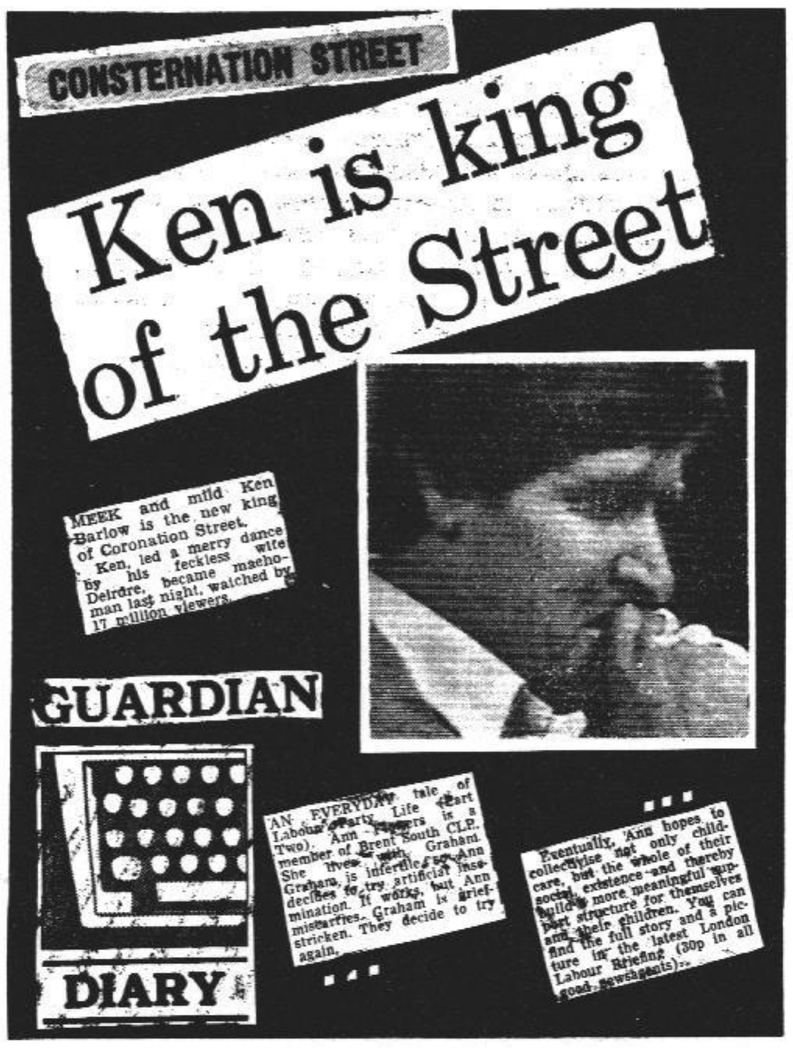
The Right certainly believe that the 'personal is political'. Hence their insistence on Victorian values and their desire to return to a mythical era when all mothers were married and stayed at home to look after their children and did not stray into extramarital relationships like Deirdre Barlow? They believe that conservative authoritarian families in which women are especially dominated and sex is repressed create people who are more likely to accept this authority outside of the family.

OBSESSED

They are obsessed with sex – especially gay or 'deviant' sex. A Streetlife supplement on gay liberation provoked pages of distortion in the *News of the World* and the rest of the gutter press. These contributors to the supplement were not coming out and declaring, for example, "I am a transvestite. That is nothing to be ashamed of," but adding, "why does it bother you?" Not just, "I am a lesbian" but "It's nice, you should try being a lesbian too." They were not asking for toleration but were trying to challenge their readers' view of their own sexuality. For example; a straight man who supported gay liberation would not only wish for an end to discrimination against gays, but would have to reconsider how he related to other men.

SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES

This challenge is what we attempt – not always successfully. Not all contributors are gay. What unites more of us is a belief that if we want to change our society as a whole we have to begin to change our lives now. For example, to stop concentrating on politics so much (going to so many meetings) that we have no time for friends and lovers and convey the impression that to be involved in politics is like taking Holy Orders; for men, with or without children, to build relationships that do not oppress women (quite so much). We haven't drawn up The Alternative Moral Code, but we can, through the supplement, encourage our readers to share their experience and thus realise that other people's lives are in a similar mess to theirs. There is no way of writing about this in terms of resolutions and programmes. You have to write honestly from your own experience.


CONSTERNATION STREET

Ken is king of the Street

MEEK and mild Ken Barlow is the new king of Coronation Street. Ken, led a merry dance by his feckless wife Deirdre, became macho-man last night, watched by 17 million viewers.

GUARDIAN

DIARY

AN EVERYDAY tale of Labour Party Life (Part Two). Ann Rogers is a member of Brent South CLP. She lives with Graham. Graham is infertile so Ann decides to try artificial insemination. It works, but Ann miscarries. Graham is grief-stricken. They decide to try again.

...

Eventually, Ann hopes to collectivise not only child-care, but the whole of their social existence and thereby build a more meaningful support structure for themselves and their children. You can find the full story and a picture in the latest London Labour Briefing (30p in all good newsagents).

There's a nice word – 'relationship' – which is of course a euphemism for sexual relationship. Up till two years ago I had no problem with relationships. The only problem was no relationships – none at all for years. Three years ago Jill Tweedie, in the *Guardian*, interviewed three women who regretted that their male friends were reluctant to remain friends unless they became lovers. I wanted to reply. I was conscious that women felt this pressure, and this inhibited me even more from making any kind of sexual advances – even to close friends. Should I sign the letter?

I doubted that the *Guardian* would print an anonymous letter – even with name and address supplied, and I really wanted to speak up for all the unwilling celibates. I signed, popped the letter in the box, and immediately regretted it.

Next Thursday I opened the *Guardian* at the Women's Page. I saw my letter. So did everybody, but everybody, that I knew. They all commented on the letter, usually favourably. Not that anyone came forward to change my situation.

Now I'm a little more like Mike Baldwin in the Streetlife Alternative Script of Coronation Street. Except that I'm unemployed and the relationship with Hilary, at the time of writing, hasn't yet finished. Also, Alex and Hilary are quite open about their affairs with Jenny and me.

LAST SUMMER

These two affairs began simultaneously last summer. Jenny and I joined Alex and Hilary on holiday. It was not quite my first sexual relationship, but the first without a great deal of tension, and that had a chance of continuing. From the start I was certain that I did not want to take Alex's place. In fact I feared that Jenny and I would take too much energy out of Hilary and Alex's relationship and leave them only with the demanding commitment of caring for their young child. I need not have worried for them.

Right from the start we tried to maintain a balance. I would sleep with Hilary when Alex slept with Jenny. This exchange took place about twice a week till Xmas, apart from a wonderful week in the autumn when I went on holiday with Hilary.

By December Hilary said that she didn't have the time or the emotional energy to see me twice a week – what with Alex, her job, her child and her politics. I was being pushed out of her life. As her political commitments increased during the election campaign I was almost totally pushed out. She once suggested how I should fill in a job application form. "Name: B. Misrahi. Address: —. Sex: Friday nights." Very apt! Friday nights are fine (not always!) but Saturday nights are very lonely – and a long way from the next Friday. And there is no summer holiday to look forward to.

BIT ON THE SIDE

So what's new? A man gets involved with a married woman who wants to ease some of the pressures of her marriage without actually jeopardising that marriage. She picks up a bit on the side. The naive man expects too much and is soon disappointed. The only twist to the old story is that the relationships are very open – but these days even that is not so rare.

Is this story a warning that these alternative lifestyles aren't so wonderful after all? But surely there are ways out of this common predicament. Why not find a second lover? Obviously this is easier said than done for a shy soul like me. Besides, it suggests that sex is a commodity that can just as well be obtained from many sources. I don't want to be someone else's bit on the side. It is a forlorn hope which I shall have to relinquish, but I want to see more of Hilary.

What about sex with friends? Somewhat to my surprise this actually recently happened. These few experiences were pleasant but only made me appreciate the more the difference between a friendship that becomes sexual and a sexual relationship. Some may call it the difference between friendship and love.

This article is about the theory of gossip. Why is writing about our personal lives part of our politics and so important to us that we risk harassment from the press? (I'm not gay, so I doubt if they'll be interested, but journalists please note: the names have been changed.) We write to help understand what is going on, to glimpse alternatives, to pour scorn on the alternatives. To hint how personal problems are shared by many others and to suggest that to resolve them we may have to begin to change relationships in our society quite fundamentally. Although, in the end, no-one will solve our personal problems for us, we might feel less isolated when we try to make our own decisions.

Of course the press will turn our experiences and our insights into gossip. Of course gossip is interesting because it is about the mainspring of our lives. If we leave ourselves out of our politics then our politics will be narrow, abstract, arid and unconvincing.

Bernard Misrahi

TONY BENN SPEAKS ON 'STREET-LIFE'

Before the election, BRIEFING conducted an interview with Tony Benn concerning the themes of the Streetlife Supplement. The interviewer was Chris Knight.

Have you read the Street-Life supplement in Briefing?

I've seen it. But what point do you want to raise on it?

Well, the supplement is quite a breakthrough. It is entirely run by women. It's essentially feminist, and it's about organising people — particularly women with children — in their homes and in their streets, and tackling the problems of lack of organisation, of isolation, of atomisation which the trade union movement solved at workplaces decades ago. Perhaps I could make this a question by recalling there there was some criticism of you by feminists some time ago when you said we must attack non-political feminism in the same way that we attack non-political trade unionism. I must admit there was a feeling that maybe there's something which all of us have to learn, which is that all branches of the women's movement at the moment are political in their own terms, and that merely to organise is a political act, and is a challenge to the structures of the system even if it's the structures of male power over women in the family, and that that is intrinsically political and perhaps we need to give more unconditional support.

Well I was specifically attacking the kind of feminism which is not connected with politics. I mean there is a group called the "300 Group". It brings together Labour, Conservative and Liberal women to get into parliament, and they're called the "300 Group" because they want 300 women members. And they sent me their stuff. It's run by a Liberal woman and on the latest bit of material I got sent to me the other day it said "support a woman candidate next time." Now what does that mean? If I live in Barnet have I got to vote for Mrs Thatcher because the Labour candidate is a man? I think it is important that socialism should get into every discussion. Perhaps I should have said "non-socialist" rather than "non-political". But it seems to me that the future of this country should be a debate about the future of socialism. Socialist trade unionism, socialist feminism, socialist development of the rights of ethnic communities and so on, and there is an aspect of feminism — although I don't know whether I'm doing the radical feminists an injustice — who see feminism as a replacement for socialism, instead of feminism and socialism both being engaged in parallel and in co-operation in dealing with exploitation. And exploitation occurs in the home in the guise which has nothing to do with the ownership of the means of production, because women work at home and that's work, and it's just assumed that a man may be an active trade unionist, but when he comes home, even if his wife also has a job, she cooks his meal. And this I would regard as political feminism, and I think if you complete the quotation of my words as I remember them, non-political feminism would regard the election of Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister as the greatest triumph for their sex. So I wasn't criticising personal politics, indeed quite the reverse. I've been slow to appreciate it, like everyone of my generation, but I think I understand that. And I think moreover, and I've said this many times, that the women's movement, as at Greenham Common, has shown that you can achieve astonishing victories in the realm of ideas without the hierarchies that men like to have.

The chairman, the vice-chairman, the social secretary, the press officer, the youth officer, standing orders and the help of Walter Citrine's ABC of chairmanship ... And actually, without writing any pamphlets or having any spokespersons at all, the Greenham Common women have made a point which is of paramount importance, and it's been a women's contribution not just to peace but to ideas about the structure of politics and political campaigning. So I think if what I said has given offence, it was based on misunderstanding, but perhaps I should have put it more clearly. I accept that entirely. I think that the neglect of feminism by the labour movement is one of the reasons why it has lost its appeal to an awful lot of people. And looking at the next



election and at what the pollsters call "the gender gap" — horrible jargon! — to say that the major political issues that we're going to be debating now have got a special appeal to women who want really radical socialist change is true. And it gives us a hope that we might be able to extend the umbrella of protection to a whole sex who have been very largely ignored in the past by the male-dominated labour movement.

Perhaps the problem isn't so much that feminists, or radical feminists, aren't socialists. It's that they haven't been shown in many cases that socialism does take up the issues of their own oppression, where they experience it — in sexual relationships, in the home, with childcare, in streets and neighbourhoods where the issues are simply not the same as the problems which people face once they're organised and at work. In the "Street-Life Supplement" women have been saying "Give us back our streets", "Give us back our neighbourhoods!", "Give us back our families!" — Women want restored to them the links between them in their family lives, links which have been robbed from them as the traditional working-class back-to-backs and street-complexes were destroyed through the slum-clearance programme, the building of tower blocks, modern housing estates and so on ...

Well, I agree with that a hundred per cent. And people become socialists out of their experience. After all, when people first organised in trade unions, it was simply unity against the boss. And when they thought about that struggle, they realised that it wasn't just fighting the boss, but fighting the system which put him on top and them down below. And similarly, when people start looking at the actual problems of a woman who is locked into the home, and if she may not be able to get work then the welfare state is dismantled and she is expected to pick up the bits and there's no support for her, and then they find that they're presented in the press in a way that exploits their sex and ignores their contribution and breaks their confidence, then out of that experience, they will come not to adopt the characteristics of the old characteristic trade unionist socialist, but to say: 'We want our socialism to embrace and extent to the areas of *our* lives which are important.' Now, I have probably been slow to understand this. I'm lucky in that I have a daughter who is a very radical socialist feminist, and when at the age of sixteen she attacked Citrine's *ABC of Chairmanship* I simply didn't understand. It's like somebody saying: 'I don't like Nelson's Column. It should be removed.' It's something which you regarded as part of the furniture. But the more I thought about that — it's only one angle of it — the idea that you can only organise in the traditional way associated with a male trade union movement, and that everything flows from that, including the fact that Citrine was General Secretary of the T.U.C. — the more the thing came home. But it does involve a very big change. And in Labour's programme, we actually say, for the first time ever, something about the right of men and women to share in the rights and pleasures and enjoyments of the home. We've actually gone beyond the front door. So when we canvass, we're not simply saying: 'Come out of the kitchen and vote for us!' but: 'We have something to say about whether you *ought* to be in the kitchen and your husband not!' I think the women's movement has had a very profound effect already. I'm not saying the argument is won, but that was all I was trying to say. No more than that.

The discussions around the Street-Life Supplement have been quite far-reaching. In discussing the lessons of fascism, we've felt that Thatcher's support, to a very large extent, is based on the kinds of resonance which she can get for stressing the importance of the family, of order, of structure, given that people feel there have been so

(continued on next page)



STREETLIF

WOMEN ALONE CAN'T STOP THE

Dear Comrades,
I would like to agree with something Lynne Jones wrote in May's Issue of London Labour Briefing. She said that her nightmare was that we would never be able to stop Cruise because we never get to the root of why we've got it. There the agreement ends. I think that her analysis of the problem and the way forward she proposes are wrong. As a socialist (and a woman) I want to try and explain to Briefing readers why I am opposed to the theory of Patriarchal Society and separatism and why I think that we will never get rid of the bomb without the concerted self-activity of the mass of the working class – both women and men.

Cruise will be here in less than six months. The disastrous Tory election ensures this because I don't think that CND will stop it with its present policies. The ambiguous and wishy washy advice to the electorate (vote for no-cruise candidates) weakened the politics of Unilateralism. Bruce Kent would like to see door to door canvassing backed up by non-violent direct action. The outcome of W. German election should have alerted CND to the folly of these tactics. The Social Democrats and Green party concentrated their campaigning on the Bomb without linking it to other important issues – i.e. unemployment and the World economic crisis. These anti-bomb parties were defeated by the Right (sounds familiar?)

Growing passive support, no matter how strong, won't bring success unless it is linked to the immediate issues and problems which face working people. Our only chance of stopping the Bomb depends on turning this passive support for political ideas into active support where people have power in the work place, and that means taking up political arguments against the bomb where workers are engaged in struggle. This failure to connect with workers' problems is seen on any big CND demonstration where the number of Trade Union banners is small and the number of workplace CND groups is tiny.

I want to try and show that there is a connection between the separatist movement and CND in that they both fail to make the link with the everyday concerns of working people and so lack the power to defeat the state and the Bomb.

There is much talk about women developing 'female' forms of protest. Feminism and the fight for women's rights have emerged as a secondary issue, especially for the women of Greenham Common where the general feeling seems to be of enthusiasm and excitment. These separatists who have taken the initiative in camping outside the Bases in all the terrible conditions they have to endure have been sheltered by those people who take the view that their (undoubted) courage and perserverance places them above criticism. Admiration for their style however, should not be reverence for their tactics.

I think that many women in the Women's Movement no longer seem to believe that the struggle for equality is part of the class struggle as a whole. Patriarchy, some feminists argue is the oppression of women in society as a direct result of male violence and power. It's men who cause everything from wars to rape and domestic brutality and so, it's women who must, through their essentially non-violent nature, lead the way to world peace. This, I believe, smacks of elitism. Some women (but not the majority of women) will, by example, lead the rest of the world to peace. The belief that men have the power to shape society logically means that men are the enemy.

As socialists who accept patriarchal arguments, this assumption presents massive problems. For example, women workers in industrial struggle don't see the men beside them on the picket line as the enemy. Grunwick women appealed to women and men Trade Unionists to support them.

The Bomb can't be explained in terms of male power. The Bomb, as with conventional weapons, is the means by which our rulers defend the system which gives them their way of life. It's those people whose economic survival depends on holding down the wages of

TONY BENN INTERVIEW (CONTINUED)

many changes, and given that people's securities are bound up with these concepts of family and order and neighbourliness and so on, things which many working-class communities feel have been undermined by planners, architects and those they may associate with 'socialists'. And in the supplement we've been feeling that these concepts have been stolen by the Tories. And in many ways they belong to us. We're the partyof real 'order', we're the party of law *in a real sense — I mean who are the real lawbreakers, who are the real vandalisers of our industrial heartlands, who are the real 'criminals' in many ways? Aren't they the people who profess to be in favour of 'law and order'? We're trying to say that what we need is* more *'family', not less,* more *order, not less. We need to link, somehow, our struggle against capitalism with our fight against vandalism and criminality generally and recover for ourselves some of this language which the left with its libertarianism has left to be stolen by the Tories...*

Yes I agree with that. I mean the issue of violence against women and pornography is not an issue for Mary Whitehouse:it's an issue of the feminist movement and they've taken it up. If you take one phrase in our campaign document, I've had a word added: instead of just 'law and order', 'law, order and justice', because justice is what law and order is about. Law and order without justice is what any dictator will give you, he just fires in the street and people dissolve. Now I'll give you a very interesting example. My grandfather was the chairman of the L.C.C. in 1899, before the Labour Party was formed, and I've got at home a lot of posters which the Progressive Party (which was his party) produced. The Progressives projected themselves in their posters as — guess what? — as policemen! Now you imagine having a posters now in which the Labout Party is symbolised by a policeman! But what was so interesting — I mean it absolutely confirms what you've said — was that these posters and cartoons show the monopolies and cartels plotting with each other, and then in the poster they say: 'We can't do it while *he's* around!' And there was the Progressive Party dressed as a policeman! It was the Dixon of Dock Green image. But that was exactly the point you make, and the Labour Party's got to be reassuring. Now then you've got to fit in that analysis with what you've said about the need to get rid of the Monarchy and all our old institutions. Do you see? I mean there is a reassurance element that we want to have: if not a coronation, then Coronation Street. And what *is* the relation between a Coronation and Coronation Street? Or your street politics? I mean, you've got to present this as being reassuring. Now that also relates to what you said about whether, in the Labour Party, this continued ferment of what you called 'polarisation', but I called the Deputy Leadership election, is whether now that we've settled upon the broad lines of what we want to do, we don't have a duty to be reassuring ourselves about how we treat each other, how we approach the public.

And then — you're quite right — all the neighbourliness, the friendliness, the 'love your neighbour' principle — all these traditions, which are not to be sniffed at, because they're very, very important, these traditions belong to us and not to *her*. And to that extent, I think the Labour Party, partly because it's been male dominated, partly because it has lacked analysis, partly because it's been electoral in character, partly because it's been managerial in concept, has vacated a whole territory that belongs to the left, and to women and men and children and old people, and allowed *her*, with her totally superficial explanation of what makes communities, appear to be convincing. But she's only, really, a squatter in territory which belongs to us. It's a *very* important point and I'm glad you brought it in.

E LETTERS



BOMB

workers – both women and men – who are to blame. Separatism, as a means of getting rid of the bomb, is not the way forward. The ideas which are prevalent in society are those of the ruling class. Changing men's attitudes will never happen when they (men) are excluded from struggle. When the Greenham women refused to support the strikers from Daleside Haddon (by calling it an 'unsisterly strike') they exclude masses of people (including working class women) from any chance of involvement in direct action. Support isn't just a one-way process! Even those women who are involved in action against the Bomb are only asked to embrace the base and not to blockade it.

The International Women's day of Action on May 24th succeeded in raising the issue of Unilateralism and thousands of women demonstrated throughout the country. Yet is was also a miserable failure because even before the arguments against the bomb could be raised, workers were divided against each other, into men (who were deliberately excluded by the way the argument was proposed) and women who were asked to take strike action (a very serious demand to make of any worker) isolated from their fellow (!) workers – the men!

I believe that the only power that can ever match and defeat the power of the nuclear state is the power of organised workers – both women and men – struggling together, to win.

Jillian Charlton,
Camden North SWP.

CHRIS KNIGHT AGAIN!

Dear Street-Life,

Sorry, Jan! (Jan Wallcraft, *Letters*, May Briefing). I should have written more clearly and simply. What I was actually trying to *say* was exactly what Jan herself says, but since she doesn't realise it, it must be my fault, not hers. Yes, practice is primary and concrete articles about our experiences of oppression are worth a million ideological tracts. Sometimes, though, you have to try and get this message over to all the 'high-powered intellectuals" whose publications tend to intimidate people from writing simply and uninhibitedly about themselves. And then, to some extent, you have to write in their own rather jargon-ridden 'Marxist' language. This is what Christine Delphy has been trying to do, and I thought it worth while to draw on her achievements in this field. Incidentally, I don't hate men. And I do like sex. My experience is that more of it happens as the power-problems between men and women are talked through and sorted out.

As for Kevin Heron's letter on 'law and order', I find it touching but not very relevant. Rapist and racist thugs no doubt 'need help' in real ways, but in the meantime women and black people need to defend themselves against them, and this *may* mean, however sad it seems, hitting them quite hard before proceeding with the help. This applies to thugs and criminals in uniform, as well as to vandals and hooligans generally. Yes, crime is caused by society. But how can we change society without collectively resisting crime in general and capitalism/racism/sexism in particular? How can we uproot the causes of crime without first taking the power into our own hands?

Yours comradely,
Chris Knight,
Lewisham East CLP.

Does Briefing need a problem page ?

Dear *Briefing*,

Was the letter from Mr Anonymous, Brixton (Letters, May Street-Life Supplement) a joke? If it was, it wasn't funny and if it wasn't, it needs a reply. Firstly though, I would question whether *Briefing* is wise to publish anything from anonymous contributors – including letters – why give precious space to people not prepared to identify themselves? Secondly, I would ask *Briefing*, shall we have a problem page; an Agony Uncle for all those poor men who find the only thing wrong with feminism is their difficulty coping with it – 'feminism is fine and fun – so long as I still get a fuck'. Or to give a few helpful hints on how to pull a bird.

It is hard to decide where to start my reply. Why does he look to women to help him with his 'decline in physical and mental health' – what's wrong with his gentle, shy, sensitive (Buddhist) male friends lending him a helping hand? – and thereby solving some of their problems of loneliness at the same time.

That some women are 'riding round in Rolls Royces dressed in high fashion' (the spoils of their position of exploitation) proves little more than the well known fact that people have different levels of consciousness. Obviously such women are better off materially than many hard up men – but wait till they get old or fat, many will be tossed aside by their Sugar Daddies for a younger, fresher model.

Thank you anonymous, for accepting that male violence is worse than the female kind – but your empty wishes in the last paragraph not to offend or hurt fall on deaf ears – such a letter, could not fail to offend!

Finally, why did you leave the Labour Party? Your views on women and your self pity oozing all over women is very common within the party, the only difference with you is you present as a defenceless, helpless case while others favour the more common, macho dominant presentation.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Evans

MACHO MEN NO THANKS

Dear Street-Life,

So women prefer macho dominant men, do we?

After reading the claptrap of the letter from some boring anonymous male (May issue of Street-Life letters) I did a small survey.

I picked at random, a sample of five women friends, and would you believe, not one of them preferred macho dominant men? In fact, not one preferred men at all. All have a nicer, more interesting, stimulating, loving and honest time with women.

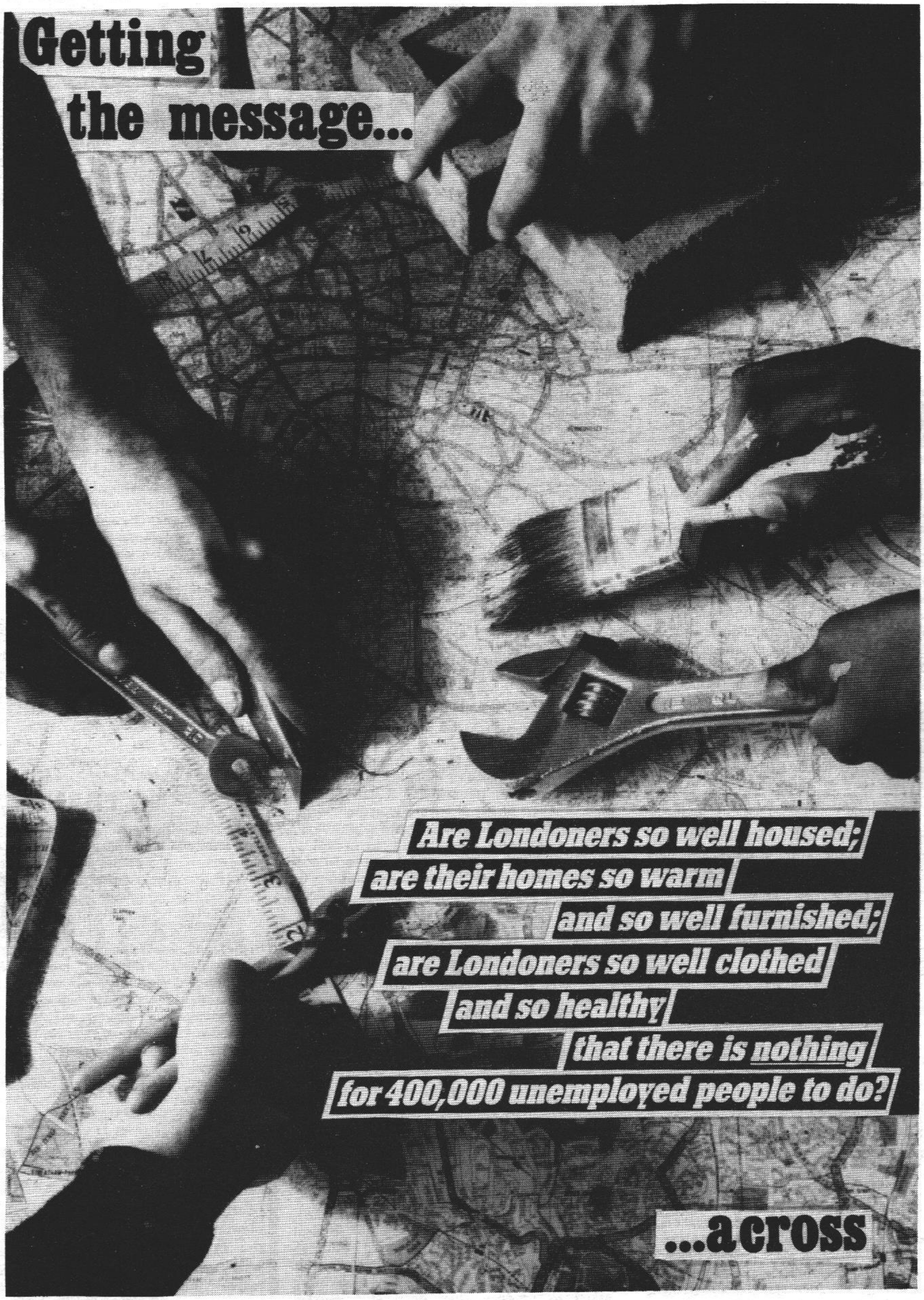
Brenda Pike
Brent South CLP

Some months ago, the Tory advertising agency, Saatchi and Saatchi contacted the political caricaturists Fluck and Law (they did a Norman Tebbit and a Roy Jenkins for a couple of covers of *New Socialist*). This time they were being asked to produce Tony Benn in a Russian General's uniform holding Michael Foot in the form of a glove puppet (!). Being Labour supporters they declined this offer of work. I wonder if it occurred to the Labour Party to make use of their talents.

NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue of the Streetlife Supplement we are intending to focus around the broad theme of health, and would welcome articles in particular on preventative medicine, alternative medicine, self-help groups, sexually transmitted diseases, and contraception.

All articles and letters should be sent to Jane Stockton at 110 Agar Grove, NW1 by 9th July.



From the G.L.C.'s pamphlet, 'Jobs for a Change'

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