LONDON LABOUR 30p

# BRIEFING

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***INSIDE: FIRST NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT articles by David Blunkett, Valerie Wise, Ken Livingstone, Joy Hurcombe, Jeremy Corbyn, Eric Heffer, Sarah Roelofs.***

# DEFEND LONDON!

by **VALERIE VENESS**, Deputy Leader, Islington Council

**THE ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES – set up by councils who really want to fight the Tory attacks on local government – has launched the DEFEND LONDON Charter, a ten-point petition of popular demands for London.**

**The Charter is going to be circulated over the next few months, with the aim of getting hundreds of thousands of signatures. Local parties, Union Branches, anti-cuts and single-issue campaigns will be getting big bundles of them, with explanatory leaflets to hand out to the public.**

**It is the first part of the ALA's DEFEND LONDON campaign, which will build up to a DEFEND LONDON week in the New Year.**

**These are the Charter's points:**

** THE PROVISION of all the local services required for a decent standard of life;*
** THAT DECISIONS on the levels of these services be made by locally-elected representatives on Borough Councils and the Greater London Council;*
** AN END to all Government interference in local democracy and penalties on local spending;*
** A FAIR SHARE of national resources so that rates can be kept down;*
** A GOOD HOME and a job for everyone;*
** GOOD HEALTH CARE and an end to cuts in the National Health Service,*
** A POLICE FORCE accountable to the community it serves;*
** AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT system, under full democratic control through the GLC, with the lowest fares possible;*
** A GOOD EDUCATION service provided by the Inner London Education Auth-*




*Islington Campaign Press Publicity Unit*

**ISLINGTON LEADER MARGARET HODGE**

## LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

# WHY I WON'T PAY

JAN WALLCRAFT

**I have been asked to write about Can't Pay, Won't Pay, and why I am still refusing to pay my fine, even if it leades to a jail sentence. My first thought was that I should attempt to give a political analysis and a strategic justification of the campaign, answering the charges that have been made of our being an adventurist, middle-class consumer group, that we weakened and divided the Labour movement resistance, discussing individual protest versus trade union collectivism, and assessing whether or not the trade unions have been slow to recognise the changing nature of the class struggle, etc.**

Fortunately, I dispensed with that line of approach, I am not qualified to write that kind of article. If that is what Briefing wants, it can invite Chris Knight or Tony Greenstein to attempt it. All I can honestly say is why I took part, and why I have carried my protest to what form me is its logical conclusion.

I am a working-class housewife, married to a park-keeper and living in a tiled cottage owned by the City of London. After years of cynicism and confusion about politics, a condition worsened by reading the Daily Mirror, I was attracted to the Labour Party in 1981 by the clear, progressive, sensible policies of the GLC, and the way that they were put over in everyday language by Ken Livingstone.



It didn't sound like the lies and claptrap I was used to hearing from politicians. So that when the GLC came under attack, I felt that there was something there worth defending, and that I would do whatever was necessary to fight for a cause that was clear, simple and just, as the fares issue then was. I helped to set up a Fare Fight group, and put all my energy and resources into the struggle. We made many attempts to work with local transport workers, probably ineffective partly because of our lack of understanding of trade unoin structure, but we always tried to keep them informed of our plans, especially when the Can't Pay, Won't Pay tactic was under discussion.

Unfortunately, the issue did not remain so simple. By the time the GLC had voted through the Budget approving the fare rises, it was hard to see clearly any more who or what we were fighting. On the one hand, Ken, Dave, Valerie and the rest were campaigning vigorously and wholeheartedly for resistance to the fare rises, and on the other hand, they were allowing themselves to be made responsible for implementing the Law Lords' ruling. They were, in effect, co-operating with the enemy. This may be an over-simplification, but in the end, that is what it has amounted to. The trade union resistance, which passengers were asked to lay aside their protest for, crumbled miserably.

Now, at a time when unemployment in London is a major problem, and the GLC is working to combat it with the Enterprise Board, and the booklet 'Jobs for a Change', they are simultaneously in the position of having laid off hundreds of bus conductors, with the almost inevitable prospect of presiding over far more serious layoffs in the future, if an effective fightback cannot be mounted. Packing the LT board is a good move, but ultimately, such strategic game playing cannot be successful when the Government has to power to overturn the whole chessboard. Transport workers no longer feel certain who is to blame, and their morale has been weakened by the fact that the GLC have authorised cutbacks and redundancies.

## CYNICAL BETRAYAL

I was trying to show, in my own way, that to co-operate with injustice, however tactically advisable it may seem at the time, must be self-defeating in the end, because it obscures the issue, and confuses potential supporters. It shows a lack of faith by the elected councillors in the labour movement, and can be seen as a cynical betrayal of the powerless and the disspossessed.

I have had plenty of time to examine my motives, and I would admit they are not all as worthy as they might be. There is an attraction in the idea of political martyrdom. It is nice ot have your name in the paper, and to get an unaccustomed chance to air your views and be listened to. Also there is an element of childish obstinacy, having refused this long I wouldn't give in if it killed me, etc. But I do believe, more and more firmly, that to co-operate with Thatcherism is to sign away all our futures. Since the election I have been thoroughly sickened by the attitudes of many in the Labour Party, left and right, who seem to believe that all that is needed is to compete for power on Thatcher's own terms — that is to find a mass market for a set of policies, and then to set about a newer, brighter, advertising campaign designed to win power in five years. While middle-class lefties make their plans in comfortable meeting-rooms, poverty, fear, violence and deprivation are the norms for the dispossessed. My own family in Leeds are suffering the constant stress of unemployment, inability to pay bills, lack of opportunity, poor amenities, and the threat of further cutbacks to their already poor living standards.

It seems to me that if a lead in non-violent resistance is not given by those who have a constructive, hopeful vision for the future, then they will be betraying the people they claim to be fighting for, and the result will be the wrong kind of social upheaval — mindless, fascistic street violence, which will give the Thatcher government the excuse it needs to abandon its pretence of concern for individual freedom, and to crack down with all the force at its disposal.

The threat, and the everyday reality of Thatcherism is now too serious to allow for further academic discussion and power-manoeuvrings. A bit of honesty, courage and commitment would go further than any amount of glossy advertising of re-vamped policies which no-one truly believes in.

# Defend London!

**(Continued)**

*ority and the Outer London Boroughs, with no cuts in spending; and*
** EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY for all Londoners, regardless of sex, race, colour, belief or handicap.*

The main aim is to preserve local democracy and councils' rights to maintain their level of services in the face of government cuts in grants.

The biggest threat looming over the horizon, alongside the plans to abolish the GLC and ILEA, is the so-called "rate-capping" proposal. This will give Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin the power to control absolutely the level of spending and rates for any council he chooses – and there's no doubt that the London authorities who've refused to make cuts will be on his hit list.

The plan came out in a White Paper in August – typically, while Parliament was in recess – and will be brought out in a Bill in January. The ALA campaign will culminate at the crucial time in its Parliamentary progress.

The campaign is specifically aimed, through the Charter and the rallies, meetings and lobbies of Parliament that are planned, at involving the people of London, raising their understanding of the issues involved – while Fleet St persists in presenting them as a matter of "high rates" and "overspending".

The GLC is a member of the ALA and is supporting the campaign. It is vitally important for local democracy that we fight the threat to the Boroughs alongside the fight to save the GLC.

# DON'T LET THE TORIES RUIN LONDON TRANSPORT

**Thatcher's Government is determined to privatise as much of London Transport as possible. Their recent 1983 Transport Act not only tried to make the GLC increase fares and cut services but also gave extra powers to the London Transport Executive in preparing plans for LT's future and directed them to consider privatisation of all aspects of the business.**

At least one Motor Trade magazine has suggested that our success in reducing fares in May was probably the decisive factor that cost David Howell his job as Transport Minister.

The success of our Fares Fair policies are now well documented. Car commuting to Central London in the morning fell by 6% and when fares were doubled car commuting increased by 14% and personal injuries from road accidents went up by more than 3,700.

Our next objective was to meet the needs of travellers by increasing services. During Fares Fair, bus and rail services were expanded with increased recruitment for operating staff. After the Law Lords, the legal advice to the GLC was that in order to make LT break even not only should fares be doubled but that they should continue to be increased until they reached the point of diminishing returns. The effect on services would have been a catastrophe as dearer fares led to fewer passengers and therefore huge cuts in services. Many stations would have been closed and most services reduced to peak periods only.

### Opposition to Service Cuts

The Balanced Plan enabled us to cut fares and introduce the GLC Travelcard but we had no illusions about its undesirable aspects. Although services were not predicted to be virtually destroyed as in the Law Lords approach, LT produced proposals that services should be cut with the predicted falling decline of passengers. Our legal advice was to accept their figures. After the successful ruling in the High Court in January the GLC published a consultation document on the Balanced Plan and it was the opposition to service cuts in the public response that was a major factor in allowing the GLC to reject LT's latest 3 year plan and to adopt increases in services from 156m bus miles (LT Plan) to 170m in our new GLC Plan, with tube train miles increasing from 28m to 30m over the 3 years. We have also successfully opposed station closures and compulsory redundancies.

The Government have announced that before trying to abolish the GLC they intend to set up a London Regional Transport (LRT) as a quango to take over control of public transport in London. This policy is wrong for two reasons. First it splits control of public transport away from roads policy and land use planning. These policies should be operated by one authority on a balanced basis. The second flaw is more damaging to the people of London – the LRT will be a Government appointed quango and there will be no democratic elections for Londoners to decide future transport policies.

The Tories argue that LRT is needed in order to co-ordinate the policies of BR and LT. The Labour GLC wanted to include BR's London fares in our Fares Fair policy and it was only the Tory Government that prevented us from proceeding. BR and LT are now working closer together than ever before. The GLC is helping to finance the building and repair of BR stations, electrifying BR's line from Dalston to North Woolwich, paying for service improvements on the Enfield/Liverpool Street Line through Hackney and from October 11th all London's Pensioners will be able to enjoy half fares on BR services within the GLC area.

### Fares Integration

Our next step of fares integration will be to extend the GLC Travelcards to BR season tickets so that BR and LT Travelcard holders will be able to enjoy complete freedom of London's bus and rails system. If the Government gave the GLC powers over trunk roads and the traffic warden force we could then offer Londoners a truly integrated transport system.

A Tory LRT will increase fares, cut services, close railway stations and privatise as much of LT as possible. There will be no guarantee that our Pensioners will continue to enjoy free travel on LT services. Our task is to mobilise the whole of the Labour Movement and the people of London to defend sensible transport planning policies and our democratic freedom to pursue them.

**Dave Wetzel**
**Member of the Greater London Council for Hammersmith, North.**
**Transport Committee Chair**

# November 12th - Biorex Day of Reckoning

**In the heart of London, just north of the Angel, Islington, is a very sinister building indeed. This is the 'laboratory' of Biorex Ltd., where animal experiments are conducted for the Ministry of Defence. What these experiments are for, no one locally knows because access to the Laboratory is strictly controlled.**

**Many of us question the whole business of using animals for experiments. The results are unscientific, often very different for human beings (thalidomide was animal tested!) and due to business secrecy are duplicated many times over. A mass movement of protest against this sort of barbarism has arisen in the last couple of years – headed by organisations like B.U.A.V. (British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection) and direct action groups like the Animal Liberation Front and the Northern Animal Liberation League. Successive opinion polls have shown 80% of the public are opposed to animal experiments for cosmetics, tobacco and armaments and an astonishing 35% support attacks on property to free laboratory animals.**

**Biorex Ltd. is one of the worst examples of this sort of outfit. They at first denied they were doing armament experiments, but then started sending out letters headed 'Contractors to the Ministry of Defence'!**

**A number of small, local demos have been held outside the building – and it has been the target for graffitti and protests for quite a while. However, many local people have now decided to mount a major protest against this place and an 'ad-hoc' committee has been set up, consisting of local organisations and individuals, to plan and organise a demonstration and meeting for November 12th.**

**The committee is already supported by the Islington Animal Rights Group, the B.U.A.V, the Islington Co-op Party and the local Labour Party Wards in Quadrant and Mildmay. The two Islington MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Chris Smith, are supporting the march and are amongst the speakers at the rally afterwards. Other speakers include local councillors and animal rights activists. It is therefore vital that there is a good turnout on this march by the local labour movement. A march of 4,000 or so is looking likely, so we need a good number of labour movement banners on it.**

**The march starts at Whittington Park, Holloway Road, N19 (nearest tube: Archway) and will form up at 1.30pm, to move off at 2.30pm. It will be followed by a rally and social at Islington Town Hall. Further details from: 'Stop Biorex Committee, c/o 23B, Mildmay Rd., London N1 4PU.**

by Cllr. Keith Veness
(Secretary, "Stop Biorex Committee")

**Important meeting for all conference delegates:**

**"LABOUR AND STRUGGLE FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS"**

**Speakers: Ken Livingstone (leader of GLC), Jim Layzell (CRS Political Committee), Angela Waldor (BUAV), Valerie Veness (deputy leader, Islington Council).**
**Chair: Jeremy Corbyn MP.**

**Thursday 6th October 1983, 5.30pm, at Metropole Hotel (Norfolk Room), Kings Road, Brighton. (A few doors from the Conference Centre).**

**Sponsored by: British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, Socialist Campaign for Animal Rights, CRS London Political Committee.**

# ILEA: Bother In Bermondsey

By a teacher at Scott Lidgett School

**On Monday 12th September, 18 teachers at Scott Lidgett School in Bermondsey returned to work after being on unofficial strike for a week. The dispute was caused by the forcible movement, by the ILEA of two veteran teachers from the school. It was an unusual dispute in so far as it was the longest strike by teachers in the ILEA for nearly 10 years. As a symptom of the malaise of management politics that blights this would-be socialist authority, however, the Scott Lidgett case is sadly typical.**

The school is sandwiched between the Peak Freans' Biscuit factory near Southward Park Road and Jamaica Road, the heart of Mellish and O'Grady land. The local population is predominantly white and the local shops betray little cultural variety.

Scott Lidgett's population of school boys, assessed by Verbal Reasoning tests, N.F.E.R. Mathematics tests and reading age on arrival, shows a pronounced bias towards the lower ability ranges.

## Specialist Teaching

In response to this, the school has placed a great value on providing specialist teaching in small groups or individually for its remdial children. It has also offered a wide range of relatively unusual subjects to its pupils to successfully stimulate interest in pupils who demur from the traditional university subjects. Photography, electronics, printing and pottery have all been very popular. This year, these subjects and a great deal of remedial teaching are among the cuts.

Like many schools in Inner London, Scott Lidgett has suffered, in recent years, from falling rolls and the ILEA's knee-jerk response of compulsory transfer of teaching staff. This year, however, the new intake exceeded the 1982 intake by twenty and there were hopes that the decline might be arrested. Nevertheless, all the Authority's calculators determined that six staff should be moved.

In January 1983, the school's senior staff compiled a lengthy and carefully argued document showing why the 'superfluous' six staff were needed and the damage that would be done to the school's curriculum if they were lost. The appeal was 'examined' by Ruth Gee, Deputy Leader of the ILEA. The letter of rejection sent to the school was one sentence long and without explanation.

Senior staff remained concerned at the damage that these staff cuts would do to the school's curriculum. Many further representations involving parents and staff were made throughout the year. All were rejected. Teachers attended many lobbies at County Hall and took part in half day strikes. The children even staged an overnight sit-in at the school in protest at the loss of their teachers.

## COMPLAINED TOO MUCH

Throughout, ILEA members listened stonily. George Nicholson, Southward's GLC member told teachers that he thought their job was easy and that they complained too much. John Fowler, Southward Council's appointee to the ILEA remarked that he would only agree to saving staff at a school if the officers recommended it. He felt he was bound to take their advice in case he got surcharged! (Most of the officers and inspectors employed by the ILEA have never taught in inner city comprehensives. If they have teaching experience, it is mainly in grammar schools outside of London.) When teachers lobbied a Schools Sub-Committee meeting. Labour members, including 'radicals' like Andy Harris refused even to speak to them.



G.L.C. PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT

SCOTT LIDGETT SCHOOL, S.E.16.

By the end of the '83 summer term, three of the six teachers named for transfer had left the school, one had been saved by an internal promotion. The two remaining, and Art teacher of 9½ years standing and a Social Studies/English specialist, who had been at the school five years, had been unable to find themselves suitable posts. The ILEA insisted that they both take demotions. After years of carrying out jobs of responsibility, they have both been kicked down to the bottom of the teaching scales.

At the beginning of the 1983-84 year, the two remaining transferees refused to move and returned to their school. 18 members of staff struck in their support. On Thursday, 8th September, representatives of the Scott Lidgett staff met Barrie Stead, Chair of the Schools Sub-Committee, his deputy, John Fowler and a clutch of Chief Officers. Again a detailed case was presented by the staff showing the damage the final loss of staff would do to the curriculum.

Barrie Stead's reply to Scott Lidgett, received on the following day staggered the staff. Many of the points made by the school had been accepted since the letter promised 'exceptio nal help'. The appeal against transfer, however, was rejected.

The crucial sentences in the letter were: 'We are satisfied that the curriculum can be protected *in all essential aspects* by decisions made within the school. If any changes in the alloca tion were made, we would be upsetting the fair and careful distribution of resources between all our schools.'

The ILEA's desire to protect 'essential aspects' of the curriculum is a grim warning to teachers of inessential curriculum ( — anything that is not maths, English or science?).

## WRIGGLE ON THE HOOK

As the Labour members wriggle on the hook of compulsory transfer, they begin to offer the kind of arguments that would seem more in keeping with British Leyland's management. 'If we do not redeploy our resources (i.e. teachers) we will not be able to afford to pay the manual workers.' 'The teachers' objections to compulsory transfer are just being stirred by the S.W.P.' And so on.

The fact is that compulsory transfer of teaching staff is doing immense damage in schools. The morale of teaching staff is being undermined and the curriculum is being pared back to the traditional grammar school subjects or less. In a year when the Tories are certain to attack the ILEA, the Labour members need to fight alongside teachers and not against them.

Resolutions for the London Labour Party Conference have to be in by November. If you care about education in London, see that your party's resolution demands an end to compulsory transfer. See that your ILEA members are mandated to vote against compulsory transfer. Only one member (Paul Moore) of the present ILEA voted against it this year. It is high time the ILEA thought of its teachers as people and not simply resources or property.

## STOP PRESS

*Although the staff have returned to work, the dispute at Scott Lidgett continues and 'voluntary duties' are not being carried out. At the time of writing, the N.U.T. has been negotiating with County Hall on the school's behalf.*

# Newham Reviews Secondary Education

**As part of the Labour manifesto for the 1981 Council Election there was a commitment to have a review of secondary education within the Borough. After a year of long and sometimes violent debate, in which the Left and Right ranks were broken, the review has been completed and a decision finally made. The main purpose of the review was to tackle the "problem" of falling school rolls and the recently introduced parental choice together with an attempt to reverse Newham's poor academic achievement record and post-16 staying on rates, even though Newham's educational budget is high compared to other boroughs.**

Newham has thirteen comprehensive secondary schools and three church schools. Because of falling school rolls and parental choice, several of the less popular schools are being bled to death and Newham is creeping back to a grammar school style education system with express streaming, etc., existing in some schools. Certain schools are finding it difficult to maintain sixth forms. The consortium system had twice been tried and on each occassion it failed. To confuse the situation further, the Borough has two large technical colleges.

## FATAL ERRORS

However, during the review two fatal errors were made. Firstly, throughout the debate the local Labour Parties failed to consider the question seriously and the L.G.C. did not take a decision on the matter. As a result the Labour Group decided to have a free vote on the review. Secondly, the manifesto committed the Council to hold full public consultation. Unfortunately, the Education Committee failed to take control of the consultation and left it in the hands of the officers to organise. The officers, who were not really interested in consultation, published two inadequate consultation documents and failed to make any real attempt to get parents involved. Primary school children were not involved and only those with an interest in maintaining the status quo, because they already benefited from the system, took an active part.

As a result and despite the attempt of several Councillors to widen the debate to include community schooling, curriculum, express streaming and the lack of adequate remedial teaching, the review turned into a battle over which system of secondary education should be used.

A strong pressure group of parents in favour of retaining sixth forms was organised and the local teachers added their support to the campaign, threatening to go on strike if tertiary collegs were chosen. Many Councillors who supported the idea of tertiary colleges were not prepared to vote in favour of them.

## COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN

The decision was finally taken by the Education Committee on 5th July in favour of retaining sixth forms within secondary schools. No attempt was made to tackle the problem of falling school rolls, parental choice or low achievements. The original reason for the review had been completely forgotten. Fortunately, some Councillors and Party members were able to put pressure on at the last minute so that certain other important points were included, such as a commitment to improve pupil-teacher ratio, introduce neighbourhood schooling, for a further review of remedial teaching within the borough and to introduce an across-borough Tertiary Board to direct sixth form curriculum.

The problems still remain. Undoubtedly, there will now be an attempt to push for school closure. Hopefully the Left will now be able to unite, and together the teaching union and the parents will fight the closures. However, the only real solution is to tackle partental choice, fighting the DES if necessary. It is essential that we involve the community in schools, proving that each school is equal and showing the benefits of neighbourhood schools. We must also improve teacher-pupil ratio. More important, we need to find out why children give up at school in the early years of secondary education. The need clearly exists for the expansion of remedial teaching in both the primary and early secondary stages of education.

The Party must learn from its errors. On major issues the Party must discuss the matter fully and come to a decision which it can unite around and then take to the community. A half-hearted attempt at public consultation is doomed to failure at the outset and will totally destroy the credibility of the Party.

**Peter Pendle (Newham Council)**

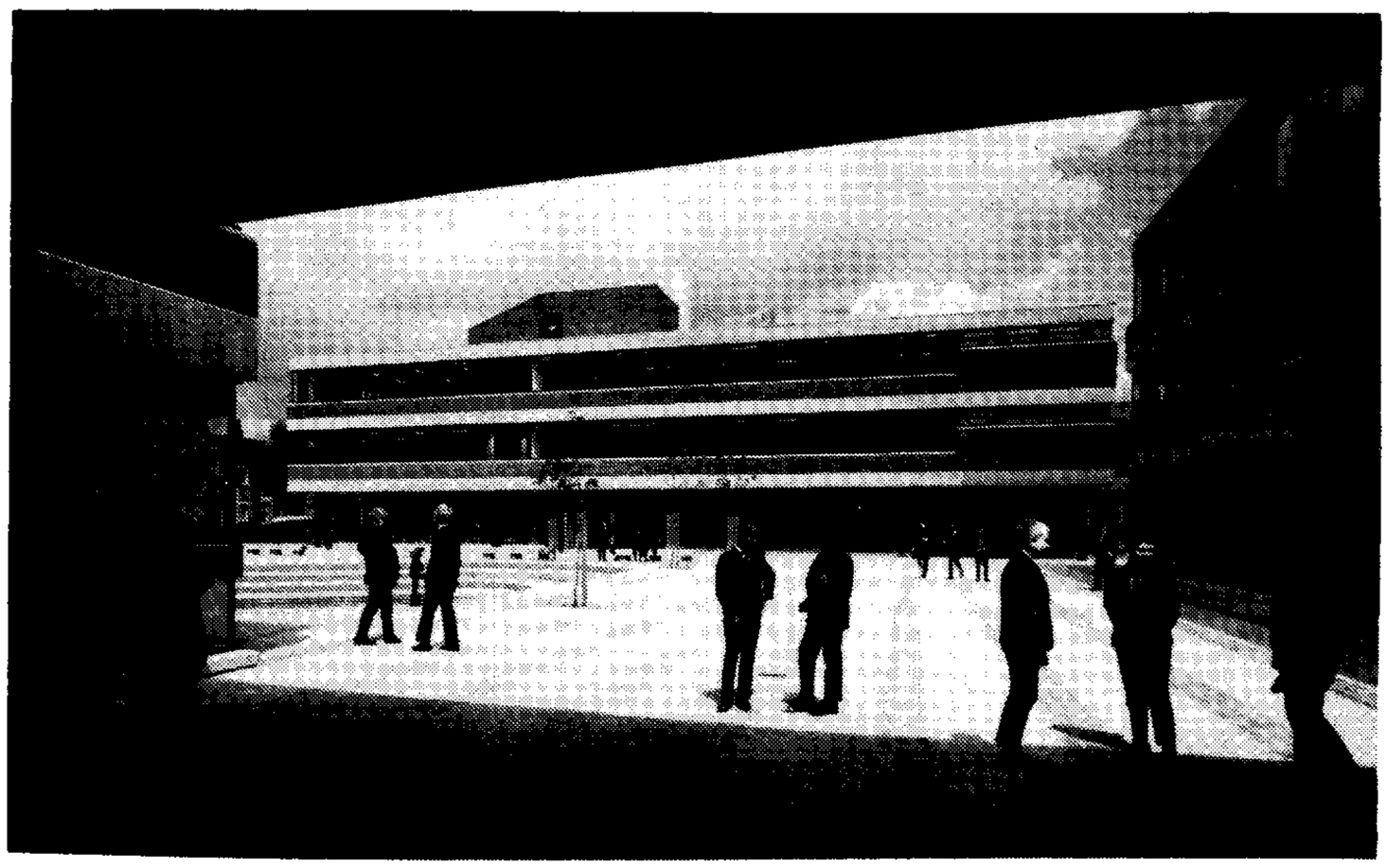


PHOTO: CATH TATE.

# Compulsory Redeployment Doesn't Work

The ILEA are little by little undermining themselves. The policy of compulsory redeployment of teachers (called, laughably, voluntary transfer!) is gradually weakening confidence among secondary teachers and parents.

What is happening is that teachers are being shuffled from school to school, often in the most callous or ludicrous fashion and their union leadership is putting up no fight. The children, of course, suffer through lack of continuity, the teachers affected are humiliated and the parents bewildered. Teachers who transfered soon find themselves moved again to another school — where yet again they don't know the names, backgrounds or courses taught to the children. The result? An increasingly unstable and insecure teaching force who are not given the chance to settle down and become more effective.

To take a few examples from my school:

*1. May: 22 teachers told they have to go. Interviewed: 'You have no choice, you will move'.*

*2. June: Teachers who for good reasons refuse a post in another school told 'think again, there's nothing else on offer'.*

*3. September: Some 6th form courses dropped. Cuts in help for the less able. A teacher moved in from school A (his second move in 2 terms!) and another forced out to go and teach the vacated classes from A!*

*4. Teachers of 3, 5, 8, 10 and 16 years standing forced out against their wills.*

*5. A teacher told to come back but under constant threat of being moved in the middle of the year.*

Many of these teachers ran clubs and knew hundreds of the children in the school. As the news travels back to parents they ask 'but why can't they stay and improve the quality of education in the school?'

And next year? When the ILEA is fighting for its life against government cuts, possibly disbandment? Will those people fight to save the ILEA!

**LES TATE, STREATHAM CLP**

# Newman And The Police Bill

by Louise Christian

**ALTHOUGH he has been in office as Metropolitan Police Commissioner for only a short period of time, Sir Kenneth Newman is already implementing important changes in the policing of London. The new strategies are likely to be adopted elsewhere and can be connected with the new powers it is proposed to give the police. These powers were contained in the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, which fell when a general election was called, but which is shortly to be reintroduced by the government.**

The new vogue words in Met police jargon are "targeting and surveillance". The police techniques they denote were used by Newman in West Belfast as Chief Constable of the RUC from 1976 to 1979. Targeting itself is a strategy that is used in relation to traditional crime detection, e.g. looking for a man with red hair driving a blue car because the victim saw a man answering this description drive away from the scene of the crime. But the new targeting is not based on known facts about specific crimes, instead it relies on and reinforces police stereotypes rather than using specific crime detection to challenge them. Newman purports to be applying a 'sociological' theory of policing, claiming that it is possible to analyse patterns of crime, predict where crimes are going to be committed and by whom; identify potential criminals from local intelligence and make arrests after surveillance.

### Brixton

The first of the new intelligence and surveillance units to be set up under Newman's plans is operating out of East Dulwich Police Station and covers South London, particularly Brixton. Officers from tough Scotland Yard squads have been imported to staff the Centre. They are reported to be using the technique practised by the Flying Squad on tracking down professional criminals in combatting street crime and burglaries. Chief Superintendent Tony Speed of Brixton Division described their work thus:–

> *"We identify known muggers and burglars and then use surveillance techniques to find out what they are up to". (Observer, 21.8.83.)*

Although Newman has presented the new strategies to the public as englightened 'soft' policing this is not borne out by his detailed plans. His report to the Home Secretary makes it clear that covert surveillance is to be combined with a more active role for the SPG and the Instant Response Units (now re-named euphemistically 'District Support Units') in carrying out roadblocks and stop and searches and going on 'anti-burglary' and 'rowdyism' patrols.

The redefining of the police role away from specific crime detection demands a re-orientation of police power. Requirements that powers should be directed at specific crimes were discarded by the Police Bill. Thus under the Bill the police would be able to obtain a search warrant to search someone's home for 'evidence', *irrespective* of whether that person is suspected of any offence; roadblocks could be set up by reference to the 'pattern of crime' in an area and new powers of arrest (and detention for 24 hours) were created for *any* offence however trivial (e.g. parking on a yellow line, dropping litter in the street). The connection between the investigation of a specific crime and the exercise of a police power would be substantially weakened and in some cases completely dissolved by the proposals in the Bill.

The problem with Newman's approach to policing is that there is in reality no 'underworld' of petty thieves which can be infiltrated – only the lives of ordinary people. The new tactics will inevitably criminalise working class people out on the streets, particularly black, young and gay people who are stereotyped by the police as potential criminals. Heavy policing of the kind proposed by the Police Bill actually *creates* crime – resulting in arrests for obstruction, threatening behaviour or assault on a police officer.

### Planned Propaganda Drive

The notion that black people commit crime disproportionately has been actively promoted by the police in order to validate the stereotyping that takes place. In March 1982, as a direct counter-offensive to the Scarman Report, the Met issued criminal statistics of supposed 'mugging offences' broken down according to race and purporting to show that black

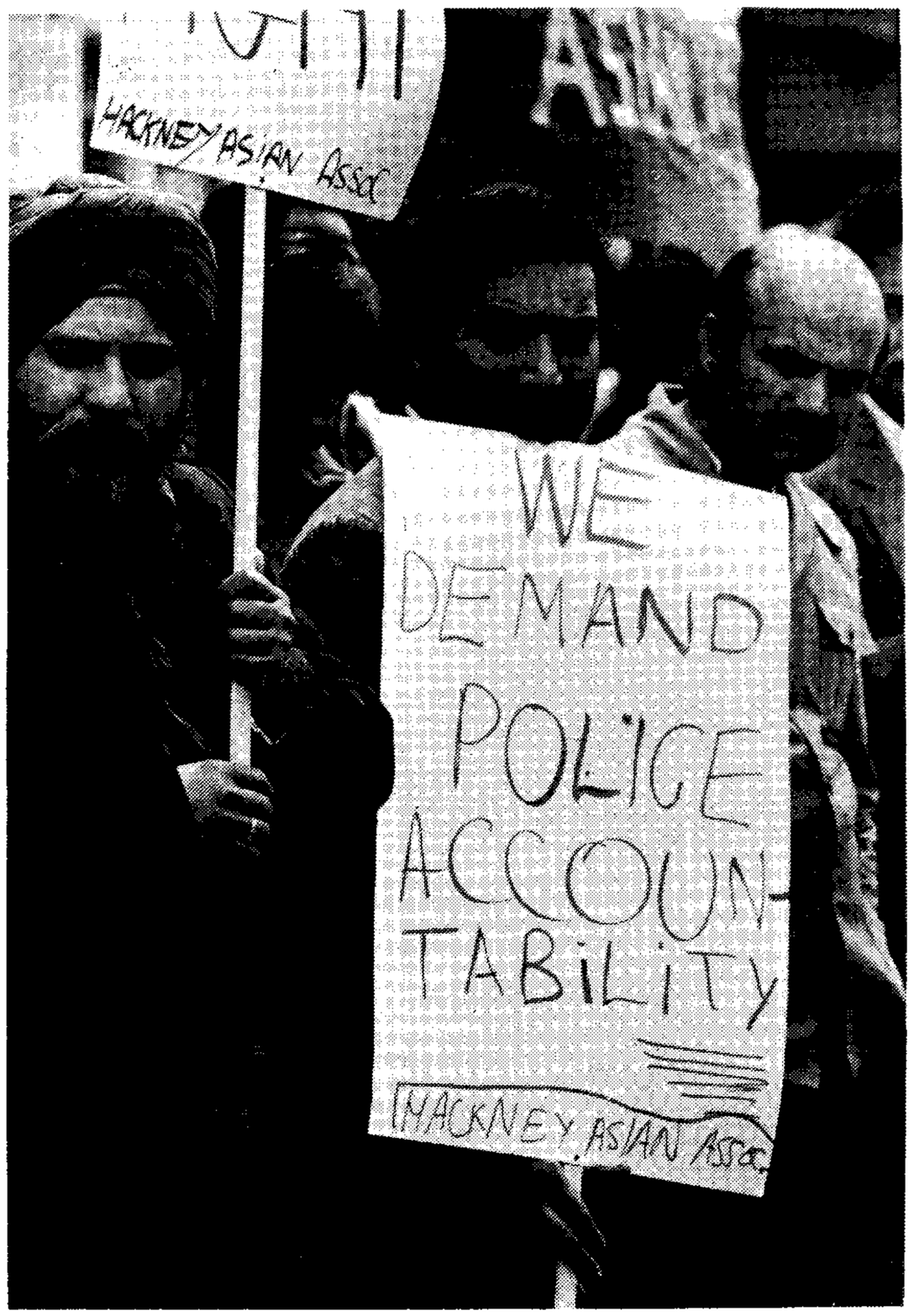



Photo: John Sturrock/Network

*3rd July, 1982, Hackney. Asians protest against police behaviour.*

people were disproportionately involved in them. The selective leaking of these statistics to papers, such as the *Daily Mail*, before they were officially released demonstrated the extent to which they were part of a planned propaganda drive.

The way in which the statistics were presented gave a totally misleading impression. 'Mugging' is not a category made in law or by statistics and the 'robbery and other violent theft' category into which it falls also includes, for example, burglaries from off-licences. Pronouncements from Scotland Yard revealed a tendency to use the terms 'robbery' and 'theft' almost interchangeably in an unscientific manner. By releasing only the so-called 'mugging' (robbery and other violent theft) statistics broken down by race the police had deliberately focused attention on a minute fraction of recorded crime. The exercise was repeated earlier this year after a Parliamentary question by Harvey Proctor, M.P.

### Multi-agency policing

Meanwhile Newman sees the police's job as a kind of social control – clearing the streets of persons targeted as potential offenders – and disclaims responsibility for the low crime clear-up rates. (In London this was only 16% in 1982, less than half that in many other urban areas).

In his first annual Report as Commissioner, Newman said:

> *"Crime control is just one aspect of social control. In that wider context, crime statistics are as much a reflection of the performance of other social agencies as they are of police performance. Critics*

# Fight Racist Attacks

**Racist violence in the East End has increased dramatically in recent weeks. On Saturday, 3rd September, Asian medical student Dipak Amin was attacked by a gang of skinheads in Bethnal Green. He was slashed from head to foot, suffered a fractured vertebrae, leaving him temporarily paralysed, and had the initials 'NF' carved in his wrists. The police claimed that this wasn't necessarily a racist attack — Dipak could have carved the initials himself. Dipak is not the only victim:**

***Ashof Ali and his family have lived under siege in their flat in East India Dock. Several weeks ago a gas cylinder full of highly inflammable paint remover smashed through the bedroom window and exploded above the children's bed.**

*** Amie Jeng, Shegun Faponele and their 14-month-old daughter narrowly escaped death when a petrol-soaked towel was set alight and shoved through their letter-box in the early hours of the morning.**

**East London Workers Against Racism is organising defence for these and other victims of racist attacks. Contact us urgently and get involved in the work. Contact Joan Phillips on 01-274 3951.**

*who ignore this more rounded approach to crime control are working against the public interest by obscuring the role that other agencies must play if we are to secure an improvement in the overall situation".*

But the police do not just see themselves as one of many agencies working towards the same aims. "Multi agency policing" (a phrase coined by John Alderson, ex-Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall) means cooperation directed and controlled *by* the police. The power of the police is also being reassured by a much wider definition of 'crime prevention' involving the government's whole approach to the welfare state and desire to return to 'Victorian values'. Thus a draft Home Office circular on Crime Prevention issued in July talks about strategies which "aim to reduce the motivation of people to engage in crime", increasing the role of Education Welfare Officers to deal with truancy from schools, and the involvement of schools in "the development of responsible behaviour and self discipline in children". The circular suggests regular 'core' meetings of the police, magistrates, social and probation services and local government officers in each area.

Increased police control over inter-agency liaison is likely to result in an expansion of other agencies' policing role and worse, in serious threats to civil liberties. Liaison with schools and youth clubs is one of the police's chief 'targets', and NUT branches in Lambeth and Hackney have already opposed the police's attempts to enter schools there.

## Schools

Recently in Waltham Forest teachers provided to the police descriptions of children at their schools, without the parents' knowledge. This resulted in the police arresting outside the school (in full view of his friends) an eleven year old black kid, who subsequently turned out to be wholly innocent. Before this was discovered, the police had held him at the station without telling his parents.

A new initiative in multi agency policing is the creation of neighbourhood watch schemes, now being heavily promoted by the Met in London. These involve the police in actually **creating** agencies to supply them with information as well as encouraging existing bodies to give it to them. They will inevitably attract the reactionary (and racist)




people in an area who will be openly invited to supply the police with details of 'suspicious types' spotted in their streets. The police publicity for the schemes has a picture with a white youth climbing through a window in the foreground and a black youth with his arm around an old white woman's neck.

The most dramatic example of multi agency policing so far was Operation Major in Oxford in September 1982, when the police carried out a mass and indiscriminate arrest of 283 people purely on the basis of their social status (their homelessness). The elaborate planning for this operation involved extensive co-operation between the police, the DHSS and the magistrates (who set up a special court) but the multi agency co-operation did not extend to warning defence lawyers, probation or social workers who wished to help defendants. 104 people were released without charge after being held for many hours, the others were charged with social security frauds, at least some of which may have been honest mistakes rather than deceptions. Although nothing on the scale of Operation Major has happened since, joint police/DHSS operations on a smaller scale are common, as are joint police/immigration service raids.

Multi-agency policing encourages the creation of criminal stereotypes based on take up of welfare provision. The word 'scrounger' has acquired a mythology of its own which is as powerful as that associated with 'mugging'. The government were forced to drop proposals in the old Police Bill to turn the agencies of the welfare state into open sources of police information (clause 10 allowing police access to confidential files kept by social workers, probation officers, advice agencies, doctors, etc.). But the police intend to persuade the agencies to provide the information voluntarily wherever possible. Speaking to a fringe meeting of the Monday Club at the 1982 Tory Party Conference, Inspector Basil Griffiths said,

*"In every urban area there is a large minority of people who are not fit for salvage. The only way in which the police can protect society is quite frankly by harassing these people."*




Photo: Mike Abrahams/Network

The Police Bill would reinforce the primacy of the police by legitimising special coercive powers to be given to them. It allowed the police to use 'reasonable force' in carrying out many of the new powers and to take from suspects detained in the police station without their consent fingerprints and body samples, to carry out strip searches and even worse 'intimate searches' (of vaginas and anuses). This has been said to be tantamount to a licence to assault suspects and will be accompanied by provisions allowing detention without charge for as much as four days to extract confessions.

But the Bill would not change the constitutional independence of the police (equivalent only to that of judges) and may actually set back the cause of democratic accountability of the police. The Bill allows the Met Commissioner to decide how best to consult people in each borough, by reference to 'guidelines' issued by the Secretary of State. Newman has said that the police will only become involved in liaison with the public as 'free and equal partners' (on a level with the public) and has refused to co-operate with Labour boroughs attempting to establish liaison under the aegis of elected representatives in a Council Sub-Committee. In Newman's own words, the consultative committees will be 'used as a vehicle' by the police.

The power of the police and the special position in which they are being place is an extremely dangerous one. Labour party members should act by alerting people in their area and organisations to the drastic new powers proposed in the Police Bill. A London Campaign Against the Police Bill has been set up and can provide speakers for meetings and further information.

(Contact. London Campaign Against the Police Bill, c/o 50, Rectory Road, London N16. Tel. [01]-249 8334).

*(Louise Christian is a lawyer working for the GLC Police Committee Support Unit, but the views expressed here are entirely personal and not necessarily those of the GLC.)*

# A Fighting Leadership for

**The London Boroughs Association is in its death throes, and it is not a pretty sight. For years it maintained its 'bipartisan' role, striving to represent the views of the elected boroughs in discussions with other authorities such as central Government, the water boards and so on. At times it was useful, at times it was successful. Now the Tories have made it useless to anyone by using it as the platform from which they launched their campaign to smash the GLC.**

Over the last few months 7 Labour boroughs – (Brent, Hackney, Greenwich, Lewisham, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark) have resolved to resign from the LBA, and all the Labour boroughs except Tower Hamlets, have joined together, along with the GLC and the ILEA, to form a new body, the Association of London Authorities. The ALA is designated from the outset to be a campaigning body, working from a basis of fighting to defend local democracy, and public services. This is a serious change from the way the old guard Labour leaders used to conduct themselves in the LBA (whether in majority or minority) as well as on other bodies such as the AMA.

After the 1982 local elections, the hard left took over a number of Councils, but largely ignored making delegations to the LBA and AMA. The old right wingers held on to most of the Labour seats.

As a result, when the Tory group on the LBA began their anti-GLC campaign, the response from the Labour opposition was not as strong as it should have been. (We did manage a walkout from the LBA at one point). Regional Conference took a much stronger line, and demanded that Labour councils pull out of the LBA completely.

From the Tory side there had been similar changes to those that had been happening in the Labour Party. A strong new hawkish Thatcherite faction had developed that made it hard for the Tory leadership on the LBA to make any conciliatory moves towards the Labour right.



Lewisham Leisure Centre. Under 5's gymnasium class.

Pam Isherwood

### Post War Consensus Breaking Down

The old pattern of post war political consensus was rapidly breaking down, and the established leaderships were not equipped to deal with these changes.

This abstract formula can most clearly be understood in relation to a concrete example. The LBA makes a certain number of grants to voluntary organisations whose activities cross borough boundaries, so that some joint funding machinery is obvously sensible. In 1983/4 they have budgetted to give out £750,000 (about the same amount as the GLC is giving just to sports this year). They lose this power if they cannot show that they represent ALL the boroughs. Because seven boroughs have already pulled out of the LBA no grants can be made next year unless other arrangements are made.

This obscure bit of law was unexpected, and created a focus for the debate about the future usefulness of the LBA.

The Tory wets and the Labour right wanted to use this factor to blame the left boroughs for the hardship caused to the voluntary organisations and their clients. They began making contact with the voluntary organisations concerned and seeking to persuade them to bring pressure on the councils that had pulled out.

The ALA, however, was not dull enough to be caught in this trap. ALA leader, Margaret Hodge, wrote to Tory LBA leader Bowness, suggesting joint discussions to arrive at a voluntary joint agreement for grants to be paid. Bowness rejected this out of hand; his hands were tied by the Tory hawks line that the LBA was the ONLY body of London local authorities.

The LBA has never used its grant making powers to the full, and Roy Shaw, former Leader of Camden and new Leader of the LBA Labour Group, was not even willing to argue that it should do so (even though the Group had agreed that this was the line). Paul Beesley, leader of Tower Hamlets, went so far as to agree with the LBA GP Chairman that it was helpful to have a restricted grants budget, because it makes it easier to turn away unwanted applications.

### GLC Grants

When the GLC began to pump out grants money in a serious way, the response of the LBA Tories was to review their own grants with the intention of making compensating cuts if there was any GLC money going to any of 'their' organisations. At least one Tory borough now regularly turns away all grant applicants, telling them to go to the GLC first.

As a result, the Tories attempts to throw responsibility for the voluntary organsations' crisis fell about their ears.

The Labour authorities continued their efforts to bring about some new agreement on a basis for joint funding. Brent Council wrote to all the boroughs offering to co-ordinate a voluntary joint funding scheme, but the Tories would not take part. Recently the Tories on Hammer-

# Local Government

**John Plant (Newham Council)**

**(based on an earlier article for East of London Briefing)**

smith Council have treid to do the same thing, but this has resulted in a hardening of the line taken by the 'hawks'; Bexley said they would only take part in a joint scheme if the voluntary groups so funded refused to work in ALA boroughs!

It seems most likely at this stage that the LBA's grant making activity will collapse completely, leaving a gap which the GLC has indicated that it would probably be able to fill next year. Many Labour activists are involved with voluntary organsations all over London, and it is important that the Tories' arguments are rebutted at every opportunity, and that the Tories should be shown up as the party who have disrupted the work of the voluntary organisations and used them as political pawns.

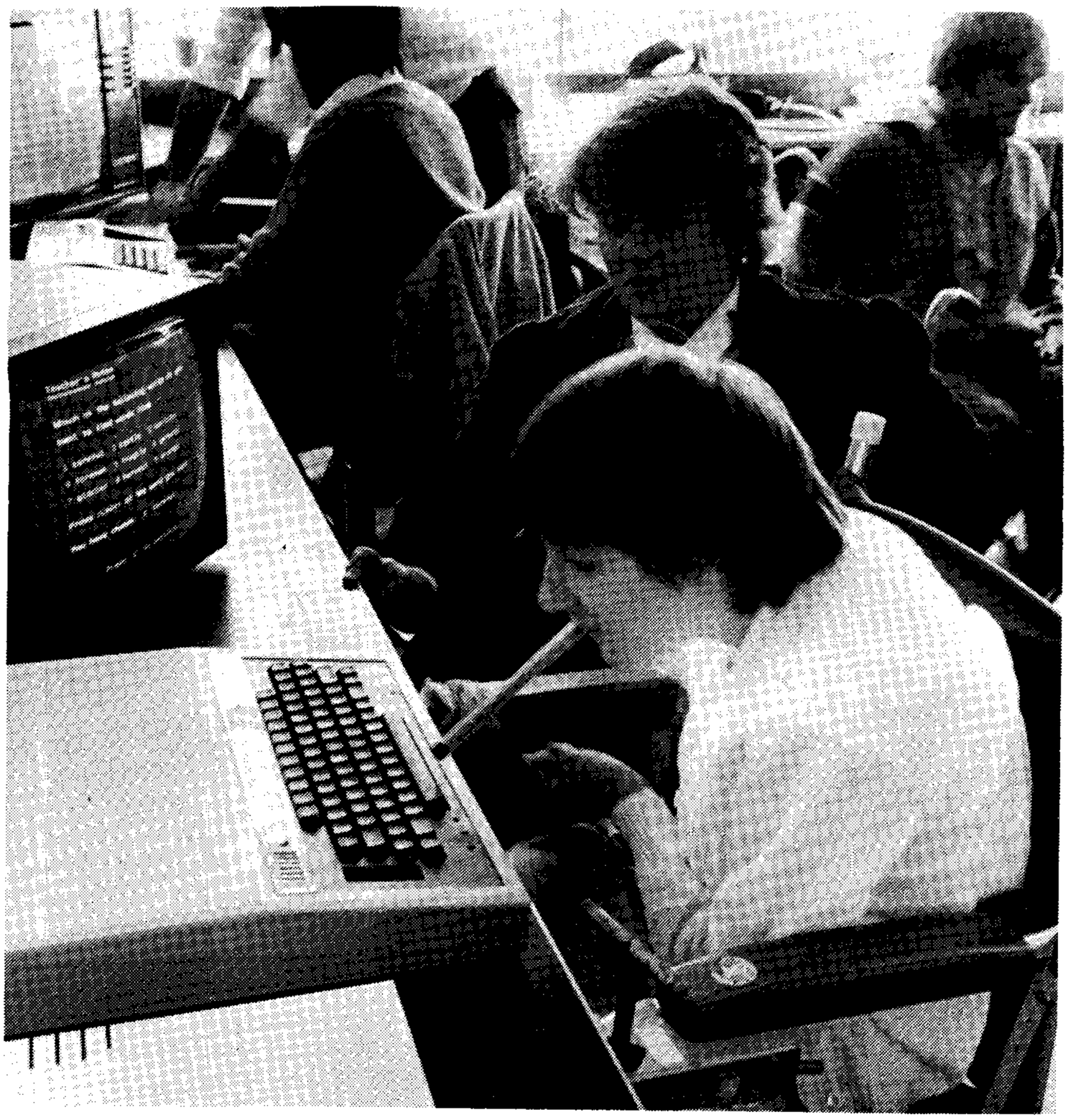
Meanwhile the Labour Right has not sat idly by to watch their chances of collaboration with the Tories evaporate.

Roy Shaw and Jack Smart from the AMA continually pressed the NEC to overturn the Regional Conference decision, on the basis of no mandate other than their private enthusiasm for wheeling and dealing with the Tories. Eventually they gained a tactical advantage. By sheer persistence, they got NEC endorsement for their line. It must be asserted in every discussion on this subject that there is no democratic mandate whatsoever for this interference with policy formulated by Regional Conference. It represents nothing more than the activities of a handful of dedicated right wingers.

What is more, the Labour right are not stupid. Realising that they have lost a lot of ground, they are now looking for opportunities to counter attack, and we can expect organised right caucuses at various levels to begin to operate. In the LBA Labour Group, Barking's Deputy Leader, George Brooker, made an unexpected appearance to voice his proposal that the 'Eastern Bloc' of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham should form the basis of just such a caucus within the ALA.

### Real Fighting Leadership

But the important question is how quickly the ALA can become a real fightin leadership, actually mobilising large numbers of working people in defence of their services. The leaders of the ALA have always said that they are a viable alternative to the old guard, that they can offer real leadership. Over the next few months they will be put to the make or break test. If they can find a way of really building resistance to the destruction of public services it will mark the turning point in the present political retreat of the Labour movement. If they fail the consequences will be incalculably awful for the working class of London.



David Hoffman.

Helping the handicapped to learn in Brent.

## Briefing Slate

BRIEFING calls for a vote for Eric Heffer for leader of the Labour Party in the first round, and for Michael Meacher as Deputy. It calls for a vote for Neil Kinnock in the second round of the leadership election.

In our view the events leading up to this year's conference show that the procedure for 'choosing' the left slate must be radically changed. When, after the near-victory of Tony Benn's Deputy Leadership campaign, the 'truce' of Bishops Stortford was imposed, it initiated a dramatic, self-inflicted change of fortune on the left. The vast majority of those who backed Tony Benn were not consulted. When Jo Richardson was 'dissuaded' from standing for the leadership this year, there was even less consultation. The 'left slate' is traditionally worked out in secretive discussions between self-selected individuals.

The National Briefing Supplement has been created to try and overcome this state of affairs and to help bring into existence a democratic, organised and accountable left.

We hope that next year we will not have to carry an editorial of this character.

Leader Eric Heffer
Deputy Leader Michael Meacher
*National Executive Committee*
*Constituency Section*
Tony Benn
David Blunkett
Eric Heffer
Michael Meacher
Jo Richardson
Denis Skinner
Audrey Wise
Reserve nomination: Norman Atkinson
*Women's Section*
Margaret Beckett
Joan Maynard

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**East of London Briefing has now produced its second issue. It costs 25p and can be obtained from 245 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex.**

**LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING**
**Political Editor: Graham Bash, 23 Leghorn Road, London NW10. Tel: 961 3803**
**Editor of Streetlife Supplement: Jane Stockton.**
**Production Editor: Chris Knight**
**Treasurer: John Pickering**

Next issue will be out on October 20th.
Deadline for articles: Monday October 10th.

**London Labour Briefing Forum**

**'Beyond the AES'**

**24 October, County Hall**
**7.30pm**

# BOOK REVIEW

**The Democratic Alternative - a socialist response to Britain's Crisis (Penguin £2.50) by Peter Hain**

**Reviewed by Nigel Williamson**

**Peter Hain is an able and personable politician. What he has to say, whether one agrees with it or not, is nearly always challenging and always perceptive.**

**He has displayed an ability to put his finger on the pulse of issues the significance of which the Labour Party itself has been appalingly slow to realise. His espousal of community politics has made him something of an ideological figure-head of the so called 'soft left' centred around the Labour Coordinating Committee and the student politics of the Clause Four group. On his departure from the Liberal Party some six years ago, he brought with him the very best of a not entirely dishonourable tradition and attempted to wed it quite excitingly to the collectivism of the Labour Party.**

**Why then, is this book so unremitingly tedious? The answer lies partly in the timing of the general election. The Democratic Alternative was written before the election and reads like it. A short prologue acknowledging the scale of Labour's defeat can do little to alleviate the problem.**

**Dates of general elections and publishers' schedules are clearly beyond Hain's control and it is unfair to criticise on that basis. There are other grounds, however.**

**In an article with Harriet Harman in Tribune (July 29, 1983), Hain complained that the party's election programme 'read like a gigantic composite resolution, expressing a kind of shopping list approach to politics: here's a policy for blacks, there's a policy for pensioners'.**

**Unfortunately, Hain's own book, or sections of it, fall into precisely the same trap. Huge sections read like a slightly more literate rewrite of Labour's Programme 1982. Even the jargon - the 'concerted strategies' and 'comprehensive programmes' - is the same.**

**If there is a little more substance than one would normally find on a shopping list, it is still at best the political equivalent of painting by numbers with each colour carefully and painstakingly filled in but little conception of what the overall picture will look like when it is finished.**

**Hain, however, believes he has found the special magic ingredient which will wash**




**any old policy whiter, transforming unpopular, grey Labour shibboleths such as public ownership into sparkling, clean, fresh and popular causes. Community politics is the name of the game.**

**Only, I fear, it is not quite that simple. Community politics, whatever it means, is not a panacea for all Labour's ills. Take, for example, housing. As someone who had experience of bringing up two young children for five years on a run-down council estate, living in a damp and inadequate flat up endless flights of stairs, I never met anyone who wanted the right to carry out their own repairs. I never met anyone who wanted a council housing officer based on the estate, still less any tenant who wanted to assume personal responsibility for running the damned estate.**

**When I attempted to set up a tenants organisation, its only potential appeal to my neighbours was whether it could be used as a vehicle to get the hell off the estate and as far away as possible. And who could blame them? What does the Labour Party tell a family of six in a two-bedroomed flat on a crumbling housing estate - you're stuck here so you might as well make the most of it and join a tenants organisation to improve the environment?**

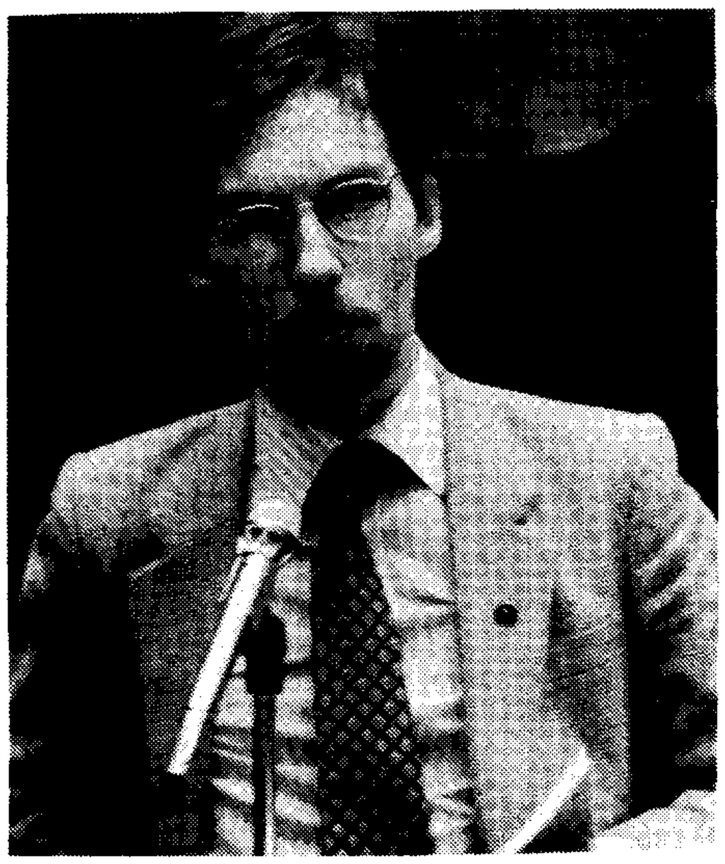
**The only answer to what is a national housing problem is central planning, matching resources to needs. Too often Peter Hain dismisses essential and necessary planning as 'statism'. Too often he offers the glib slogans of the 'mass campaigning party', 'community politics' and even semi-metaphysical appeals to 'raising consciousness'. Too often I wonder if he or anyone else really knows quite what such fine-sounding phrases mean.**

**All of which is a pity in many ways, because Hain's book is not without its good points. The analysis of the extent of the economic crisis and social divisions of modern Britain in the early part of the book is superbly presented and cogently argued.**

**His comments on the continuing relevance of class should give the lie to any Briefing reader who believes Hain to be the ultimate revisionist, although many will find greater fault with his critique, which I believe to be a correct one, of modern trade unionism and some of the romatic notions still cherished on the subject by many on the left.**

**The book's final section on what Labour should do in office to resist the de-stabilising forces of capital and link up with extra-parliamentary struggles is interesting but, tragically, only of academic interest now.**

**I'm not sure if I'm even criticising Hain's book from the right or from the left. What I do know is that the general election defeat**



NIGEL WILLIAMSON

**must cause us to question some of our basic political assumptions of recent years while recognising those broad socialist principles which will always remain unchanged.**

**That debate which must take place over the next 12 to 18 months will be a crucial one and Peter Hain, no doubt, will have an important contribution to make. Much of this book, however, is old hat - and pretty woolly at that.**

# TAKE OUT A SUBSCRIPTION

SUBSCRIPTIONS

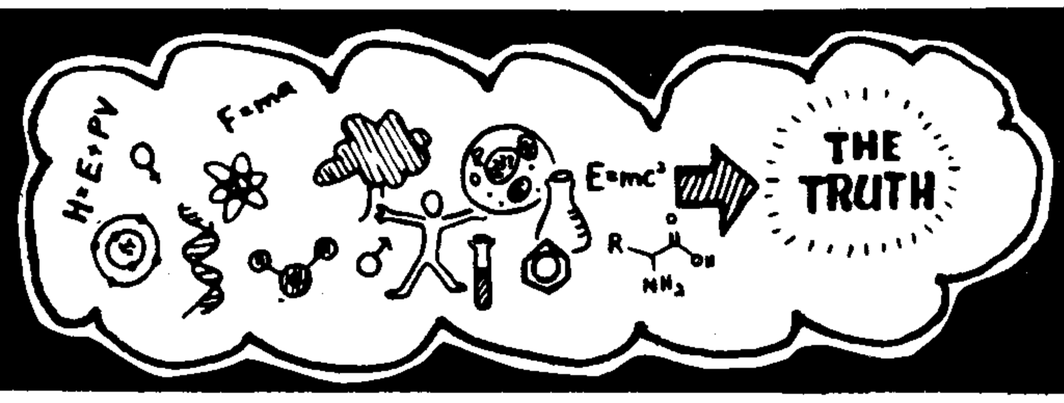
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# science briefing




# A Socialist Science Policy?

There is a serious weakness with the left at present - its blind spot on science! Apart from (fashionable) single issues such as lead in petrol or Sizewell, the left has virtually *nothing* to say about the *direction* of science and technology (S&T) and *no* contribution when it comes to working out Labour's S&T policy. This situation must change.

Scientific issues featured quite prominently in Labour's manifesto but not as much was said during the campaign, though Foot made a half-hearted play for the 'Green' vote. At the moment a row is brewing between opponents and supporters of nuclear energy in the Labour Party.

The trouble with the labour movement's present approach is that it sees S&T as fundamentally progressive - all we need is *more* of it, possibly under new management. This view dominates the Labour Party Science and Technology Study Group (STSG), which sees little wrong in pushing the microelectronics 'revolution' and sees the problem with S&T being merely a lack of investment!

## CAPITALIST SCIENCE

Unfortunately, it will take more than a change of management before capitalist S&T ceases to injure, poison, squander, pollute and unemploy. The left needs to establish the *framework* of a *socialist* science policy. Through articles in Briefing, Science for People and Socialist Organiser, a preliminary discussion is being organised (see below).

## FRAMEWORK

Some points comrades might consider:

1. What is a *socialist* energy policy? After scrapping the *present* nuclear energy programme, do we go all out for coal (despite acid rain)? What about energy from sun, wind, tide, etc.?
2. What is a *socialist* health policy? Do we fight to keep the NHS *as it is*, based on drugs, machines and surgery? Or should we look at alternative approaches that treat the human as a *whole* individual and as a *social* being? And what is a socialist policy on fags and booze?
3. What is a *socialist* food policy? Should we waste food by turning it into milkand meat amid third world hunger and animal suffering?
4. What sort of *research* should we encourage? Is there a place for space science? How can we make a science for the people?

## SCIENCE SHOPS

One policy for bringing science to the people is the Dutch 'science shops'. These provide a clearing-house for groups of workers, tenants, women, etc who need access to scientific information and research to help their struggles against the effects of capitalism on their lives.

My party branch passed this resolution recently:

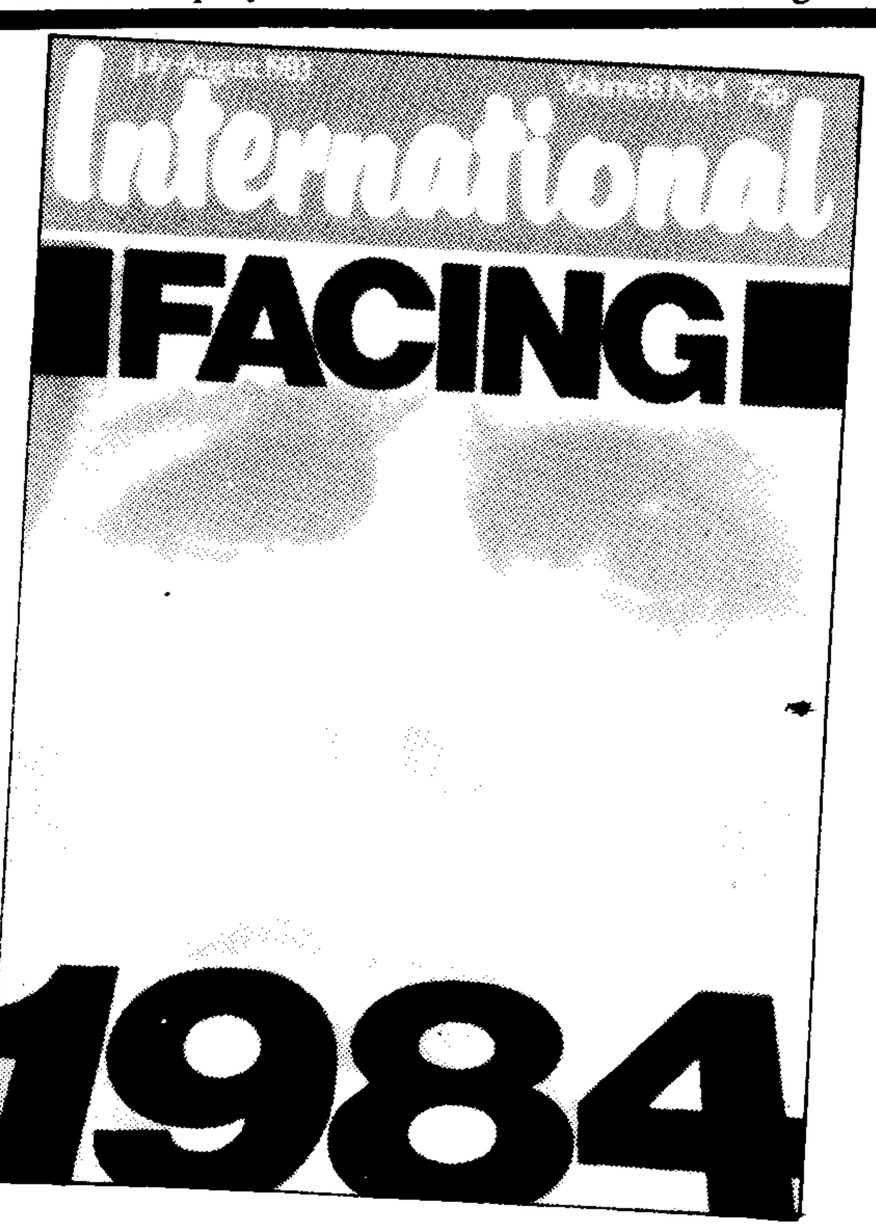
'This...(organisation)...believes that science must be made more accessible and useful to ordinary people. We therefore request that the LP, at local and national level, look into the possibility of providing access to scientific information and research for ordinary people along the lines of the Dutch 'science shops''.

Send successful resolutions to local and GLC Labour Groups and STSG at Walworth Road (copies to Briefing).

by Les Hearn
(Norwood CLP)

## Towards a socialist science policy

**Discussion**
**Sunday 25th September 2.00pm**
**55 Innis House, East Street, SE17**
**(tube: Elephant)**
**Inquiries? Please phone:**
**670 9897 (Les Hearn) or**
**701 5691 (Piers Corbyn)**


**FACING 1984**

A weekend of socialist debate and discussion on political and economic aspects of the British crisis.

■ **Stuart Holland MP** and **Ernest Mandel** debating "Economic Strategy for European Labour";

■ **Andrew Gamble, John Ross** and **Doreen Massey** on "British Politics facing 1984";

■ **Ken Livingstone** and others on "Rebuilding the Labour Party";

■ **Unmesh Desai** and **Jenny Bourne** on the Black Rights struggle;

■ **Michele Barrett** and **Judith Arkwright** on "Women and Family Policy" and many other debates.

October 29/30 at Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth St, off Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

Registration costs £5 for the weekend (but only £4 if you book in advance), £2.50 for one day. Send cheque payable to *International* at PO Box 50, London N1.

# PROFITS BEFORE PROGRAMMES

**London has had commercial local radio for ten years, but Londoners have had no say in its development. In the last two years the GLC has tried to alter this situation by developing a policy on radio. John McDonnell convened London's first Radio Forum in October 1982 to try and develop a strategy which would give Londoners more control over their airwaves. The Forum brought together a wide range of groups and hopes to produce a strategy document this autumn.**

The Council has also backed a report written by local Radio Workshop: *Capital: Local Radio & Private Profit*, to coincide with the readvertisement of Capital Radio's contract by the IBA under the terms of the 1981 Broadcasting Act.

## BUSINESS INTERESTS

The report outlines the history of the pressure from business interests and the Tories for more 'freedom of choice' in radio, and details the appalling record of Capital over the last decade. It also makes proposals for change at the London station and argues for major reforms of the IBA. Capital's record calls into question whether any form of radio financed by advertising can provide a genuinely local service.

Capital's programming is designed to maximise advertising revenue: MOR pop, DJ chat, weather checks and advertisements are the basis of its format. Non-pop programming goes out at off peak times. Local programming has been redefined by Capital and other ILR stations as 'social action broadcasting'. Telephone referral services (Helpline), appeals for charity (Help a London Child) and volunteers (Jobmate) make up 'social action broadcasting' on Capital. The station makes much of this kind of activity, but in fact most of it is not programming — it takes place off air. 'Social action broadcasting' with its emphasis on volunteering and self help has received praise from the Tory minister Patrick Jenkin. Meanwhile the lives and concerns of millions of Londoners are ignored by the station.

## FREE ENTERPRISE RADIO

Capital has failed to provide local radio because, as free enterprise radio, it puts profits before programmes. Capital has made over £12m in profit out of its control over a public resource and has offered very little in return.

LRW, with the GLC's support have made proposals to the IBA about the type of conditions which should be inserted in the new London contract to come into effect in October 1984. The conditions would make the new contractor broadcast material made by Londoners at peak times and provide resources for a full non-sexist non-racist coverage of London's cultural life.

To suggest, as some 'pirates' do, that local control over radio can be gained by promoting more radio stations in London is unrealistic. In the present political climate, and when the economics are taken into account, more radio stations in London means more *commercial* radio. Arguing for more independent community based programme facilities, for more not less public control over broadcasting and for a local radio system free from the stranglehold of advertising and private ownership is central to any strategy for more democratic, popular radio in London. LRW would like other Labour Groups to take up the issues and is willing to speak at ward and GC's.

*Capital: Local Radio & Private Profit*, £2.70 inc p&p from LRW, 12 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY (402-7651)

**TOM O'MALLEY**

## Capital's profits

| *Year (ending September 30)* | *Turnover* (£'000) | *Profit** (£'000) ( ) = defecit | *Dividends* (£'000) |
|---|---|---|---|
| (20 months ending) 1974 | 1,964 | (502) | - |
| 1975 | 2,243 | (283) | - |
| 1976 | 4,001 | 672 | - |
| 1977 | 5,883 | 1,122 | 275 |
| 1978 | 8,319 | 1,865 | 500 |
| 1979 | 12,238 | 3,001 | 750 |
| 1980 | 15,052 | 2,701 | 850 |
| 1981 | 14,436 | 2,167 | 750 |
| 1982** | 15.740** | 1.300* | (?)** |

* pre-tax

** the figures quoted in this table are based on Capital's published accounts, except for the 1982 figures which were reported in *Radio* magazine, May 1983, p.6.

## Shareholders in Capital Radio Ltd 1983

| | *ordinary shares* | | *ordinary non-voting shares* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | % | £ | % |
| Standard Broadcasting Corp (UK) Ltd | 252,525 | 28.26 | 11,914 | 5.78 |
| Dominfast Investments Ltd | 194,709 | 21.79 | 60,448 | 29.30 |
| Rediffusion Radio Holdings Ltd | 150,998 | 16.90 | 31,496 | 15.27 |
| Local News of London Ltd | 102,893 | 11.51 | 54,304 | 26.32 |
| Express Newspapers Ltd | 44,892 | 5.02 | 25,290 | 12.26 |
| Sable Knight Ltd | 44,528 | 5.02 | 18,504 | 8.97 |
| Lord Romsey | 25,414 | 2.82 | 1,180 | .57 |
| Sir Richard Attenborough | 22,813 | 2.48 | 1,984 | .96 |
| Lord Willis of Chislehurst | 11,981 | 1.34 | | |
| holders of less than 1% (62) | 42,959 | 4.81 | 1,168 | .57 |
| | 893,712 | 100 | 206,288 | 100 |

# Mary Archer

*It may be said of Mary Archer, who died on July 28, that nothing became her life like the living of it.*

*Many of us have had political disagreements with Mary, but we cannot help admiring her lifelong commitment to socialism.*

*As a psychiatric social worker, she was aware of the horrors of inequality and poverty which so deform the human spirit in class society. Early in life she decided that the only solution was socialism, and, having so decided, devoted her life to its achievement.*

*During the war, from 1941 to 1944, she was secretary of the British Section of the Fourth International. With her husband John, she was active in the anti-fascist movement of the 1930's and in the anti-H Bomb movement of the late fifties and early sixties, two issues which still dominate political life today.*

*More recently, through she was already desperately ill, she worked hard in the General Election, rushing in a postal vote with five minutes to spare to the deadline. She even completed her collector's round before going into hospital.*

*Both Mary and John are associated with a newspaper in the Labour Party called "Unite and Fight". Mary's last political act was to organise a conference in connection with it, for the purpose of mobilising support in the unions and the Labour Party for appeals to the leadership of the Public Service Unions to combine in common defence of any one body of Public Service workers attacked by the Government.*

*Her last words were, "Flaming Greetings to Everyone!".*

*Joe Hill, the American trade union organiser whom the copper-mine bosses murdered in Utah, told those who survived him: "Don't mourn: Organise!" a sentiment which Mary would recognise.*

*The best way to hail her memory is to struggle for nuclear disarmament, to defend the public services and to oppose any restrictions on political and civil liberties. But, above all, to help to put back socialism on the agenda of British politics.*

**A.L.**

# Letters

## Dangerous, Sexist, Revisionist Nonsense

I should like to comment upon an article written by Sarah Roelofs in the August edition of London Labour Briefing, in which she concluded *"The only socialism worth the name is a feminist socialism and struggle for it must never be abandoned to men and non-feminist women for whom soggy socialism comes first."*

I flatly reject this statement as dangerous, sexist, revisionist nonsense. Socialism — and the Labour Party — was founded upon the principle of egalitarianism, and to suggest that this sexist deviational form is more important is to be guilty of opposing the fundamental goals of democratic socialism.

Sexual discrimination has no role to play in the activities of the Labour Party. One hundred years after the death of Karl Marx we are no nearer the establisment of even a vestige of a socialist society anywhere in the world. Despite this appalling and utterly saddening fact, women such as Sarah Roelofs are actively aiding international capitalism by helping to divide the combined socialist energies of men and women in the labour movement.

The Labour Party is not — and never will be — a feminist socialist organisation. All those women who share the views of Sarah Roelofs should — if they possess a single shred of honesty or integrity — leave the Labour Party and set-up their own independent political organisation.

Yours for Socialism,
JOHN CLAYTON

## Kinnock, Our Best Hope

Dear London Labour Briefing,
Here are a few thoughts on your issue entitled "No Confidence in Kinnock".

It all sounded a bit like "now we have got the embarrassing irrelevance of the general election out of the way, let's get back to what we really enjoy — internecine conflict".

In your analysis of our election defeat, there is no hint of doubt or self-criticism, no attempt to understand the deep rooted unpopularity of socialism, as it is presented to people, amongst the majority of the electorate.

You imply that "if only" Tony Benn had won the deputy leadership election everything would have been different. There is, though, no evidence at all that there is a great untapped pool of latent socialist voters just waiting for the call of uncompromising socialism to come from Walworth Road for the voters to flock into the Labour camp.

Also you say that the election result proves that "conviction politics" works and that if we had been as forthright and uncompromising as Thatcher, we could have won. A closer look at the election results tells a different story. The Conservative vote held up in 1983 more or less what it had been in 1979. The real change in 1983 from 1979 was that about two million voters switched from Labour to Alliance. If anything this was a vote against "conviction politics" and perceived "extremism".

The hard truth is that a majority of the population envisage "socialism" as being British Rail and the Central Electricity Generating Board writ large. In other words what drives people to the polling booths to vote Conservative, Liberal or SDP is this image of a society dominated by vast unaccountable, insensitive, monolithic bureaucracies such as nationalised industries.

It amused me the way that you listed opposition to nationalisation of the banks amongst Neil Kinnock's ideological "crimes". I am very glad to say that last year's Labour Party Conference threw out the resolution calling for nationalisation of the banks, so on this at least Comrade Kinnock is fully in line with Party policy.

Can you imagine what it would be like if all credit and finance were in the hands of a single National Bank? It wouldn't matter a damn whether Leigh Pemberton of Ken Livingstone was the Governor. It would still represent an appallingly dangerous concentration of power.

It is about time that nationalisation was recognised as the Stalinist concept that it is. It has nothing at all to do with the "common ownership of the means of production distribution and exchange". "Common ownership" surely implies something which is sufficiently small scale for people to identify with and have some control over, which is manifestly not the case, where nationalised industries are concerned.

As for the ludicrous purge of the Militant tendency, all I can say is that in all probability the N.E.C. will swing to the left this year and the whole sorry episode will be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Despite my disagreements with Neil Kinnock on the Militant, on devolution and other questions, I still reckon that he is presently our best hope as leader to reverse Labour's disast rous decline.

It sometimes seems to me as if London Labour Briefing has a death wish for the Labour Party, seeking to turn it into a slightly larger version of the Socialist Workers' Party, but equally irrelevant. Let's hope that I am wrong.

One last thought, the way forward for the Labour Party in my view must be to become more libertarian, more decentralist and more ecological in other words to learn from "die Grünen" in West Germany. Any other path spells continuing decline.

Yours in critical comradeship,

**John Bradbrook**
**(Islington South Constituency Labour Party)**

NB I would argue that a Kinnock — Meacher ticket would provide the sort of political balance which is now required, as well as being a difficult leadership to shift or discredit. Neil Kinnock wears his poitics with a light touch and has a good iconoclastic sense of humour. As for Michael Meacher, he is the archetypal headmaster figure and the Conservative press would have their work cut out trying to portray him as a threat to civilization as we know it!

## Livingstone Not Accused

Dear Editor,
I am writing as a member of the Troops Out Movement to correct an impression that might have been given in the article entitled "A Programme of Unconditional British Withdrawal from Ireland?". In this article, which was published in an earlier edition of London Labour Briefing, it was stated that some supporters of Troops Out Now have accused Livingstone of "selling out" because he has called for a phased withdrawal.

Now, while the Troops Out Movement does have a policy of immediate withdrawal, this movement has not accused Mr Livingstone of "selling out" either at our conference or in our paper, just because of this difference.

I should point out that there are other groups working on Ireland who also have Troops Out Now as a demand and it may be that they have made such comments in their papers.

The Troops Out Movement always welcomes the opportunity to debate its demands: the call for immediate withdrawal is based on political, moral and pragmatic reasons. Apart from the disagreement over the speed of withdrawal from Ireland, we agree with the points of the programme put forward in that issue of your paper and in fact have been putting forward many of these points in articles and speeches for some years. There is a great need to point out now just what the policy of "Ulsterisation" entails and its dangers. By concentrating arms into the hands of sectarian legal organisations and illegal Unionist organisations, it greatly increases the possibility of a bloodbath in the event of withdrawal taking place.

We were greatly delighted to see the article about our delegation to the Six Counties appearing in the paper. This has now taken place and we are delighted to report that it appears to have been a success. We will be compiling a report on the delegation which will be available at a later date.

Yours, faithfully,
Robert Jones

## London Muralists For Peace

Dear persons,
I would like to inform you that the five 'Peace murals' commissioned by the GLC as part of their sponsorship of 'Peace' year activities in London at the following venues are either underway or finally about to commence.
The locations are:

1. Sanfords Street/Coldblow Lane, Deptford -- Brian Barnes (WARP).
2. Creek Road, Greenwich -- Greenwich Mural Workshop.
3. Vining Street, Rushcroft Road -- Brixton.
4. Uxbridge Road/Cunningham Road, Shepherds Bush -- Paul Butler.
5. Dalston Lane, Dalston Junction, Hackney -- Ray Walker.

An exhibition of the working designs and photographs of the murals in progress will be shown in the entrance chamber of County Hall from October 3rd to 31st.
The artists will be working on the street murals during the autumn and winter and they should be complete in the early spring of next year. We hope that they will be a success and a credit to the peace movement.
Trusting you will spread the news in your publication.

Ray Walker

***MEMORIAL MEETING FOR JONATHAN HAMMOND***

***Friends and comrades of Jonathan have organised a memorial meeting on:***

***WEDNESDAY 28th SEPTEMBER at 8.00pm AT BISHOP CREIGHTON HOUSE, LILLIE ROAD, SW6***

Among the organisations supporting are Solidarnosc Support Group, TOM, NUJ, Fulham Labour Party and CND, Socialist Organiser.

If you are unable to attend but would like to send a message contact: James Ryan, 49 Hawksley Road, N16. Tel: 254-1221.

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

# PORNOGRAPHY

## KEEPING WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE

**'Women are finally getting their own heads straight about pornography - and taking direct action against it'**

So said Barbara Rodgers in Tribune a year ago (June 4, 1982). But only months later in New Socialist (Nov/Dec issue) Jean Seaton warned that the consequences of such action would be to '*inaugurate a puritan counter-revolution with serious consequences for the role of women*'.

The fact is that the issue of pornography has deeply divided feminists, and there is no 'accepted feminist position'. All too often the debate has become polarised between those who want to see a total ban on pornography, and those who see any restrictions on pornography as an attack on the liberty of sexual expression. I would argue that neither of these positions is ultimately advantageous to women.

### STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT'S MORAL CRUSADE

Calls by feminists for a state ban on 'pornography' can only result in the strengthening of the right's moral crusade to repress female sexuality and tighten up legislation on abortion and contraception. Such calls immediately raise the question - what is pornography and where do we draw the line? A definition given by the Williams Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship says that pornography generally refers to material deliberately designed to sexually arouse and usually having this effect. Feminists object to pornography because of its degradation and objectification of women and its links with violence against women. But it will not be feminists who will decide what is or is not permissable if censorship is imposed. The distinction between *sexual* and *sexist* content will not be made.

### PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXUAL FREEDOM

The view that censorship can never be supported by feminists or socialists, and that only a totally liberal climate can allow for the expression of female sexuality, is surely not correct either. Pornography is essentially aimed at producing a 'male' sexual response, and women's sexuality is only depicted as defined by men. The dominance of this male defined female stereotype renders it virtually impossible for women to develop a separate sexual identity. Within our present 'permissive society' there isn't freedom to watch, read or do whatever one wants. Despite the undoubted gains made by women in the last 20 years, the objectified, passive sexual image of women has if anything become even more visible.

### A FEMINIST ALTERNATIVE

Some feminists have begun to try and develop an alternative approach, which sees sexual behaviour as cultural and socially shaped, rather than something natural and instinctive, and which puts pornography in its context as only part of a society which views women as sexually passive and objectified (see for example, Elizabeth Wilson in 'What is to be done about violence against women' and Ros Coward in 'Feminist Review 11'). They argue that a strategy towards pornography must be developed with regard to its sexist content in a way which does not pre-empt explorations of sexuality, sexual desire and identity.

The debate is still continuing and there are many questions to be answered. How do we define pornography, and what is acceptable or unacceptable in literature and the arts? How do we feel about literature etc. which is intended to be sexually arousing? What about 'male sexuality'? Is the subordination and objectification of women an integral part of heterosexual male potency? How can we, as women, begin to understand our own sexuality free from our conditioning and stereotyping as sex objects? How can we feel positive about our bodies and express our sexuality without being exploited by men? what about women who work in the pornography industry?

This issue of the Streetlife Supplement contains some views on pornography which raise some of the points I have mentioned, as well as others of relevance to feminists and socialists. The views expressed are all personal views and are not necessarily shared by the Briefing Streetlife Collective. We hope however that they will spark off a more thorough debate in Briefing on this very important issue.

**Jane Stockton**

# Nasty Video Nasties

BY JOSETTE MORGAN

**I rent a video recorder from Granada, along with a colour television, so not unnaturally I joined their video club (no membership fee charged) and began to rent videos from them. I presumed that although not all of their videos would be 'family viewing' there wouldn't be anything too unpleasant.**

A fairly large proportion of the videos on the shelves seemed to come generally under the heading of 'horror'. 'Zombies rise from the dead' sort of thing. Having exhausted their supply of comedy films (usually pretty safe) my boyfriend and I rented a couple of 'horrors'. It was really very clever. If you are watching a scene where a 'person' is shot, blown up, has their head hacked off or something similar and you are aware that the person is supposed to be a zombie (i.e. already dead) so therefore s/he doesn't scream or show any sign of pain it doesn't affect you so much as if the person was truly alive. You don't empathise much with the living dead!! This first zombie film I saw didn't exactly fill me with joy but I could stand it. The second was quite different.

### HIDEOUS SADISM

Please skip the next bit if you are squeamish. This film contained scenes of people being burned alive, involving much writhing and screaming, scorched flesh etc., then having a hypodermic syringe plunged into an eyeball and left hanging there while the victim was totally bound up, bar the eyes, the next victim was then slashed and cut around the face, finally having his throat cut from ear to ear complete with pleas and screams, then the next victim was tied down and had acid poured into his nostrils so that his face disintegrated from the inside. All of this was incredibly realistically done and amounted in my view to the most extreme sadism. At this point I couldn't handle any more. (Incidentally, this was all before the people were zombified so they were very much alive, so it was normal to empathise with them – at least, I did!) My boyfriend sat and watched the rest of the film while I retired to the kitchen. When it was finished he explained the rest of the plot to me. Quite honestly it was a load of crap and the hideous sadism was in no way integral to what little plot there was.

Continued ...

# Nasty Video Nasties

The following is (word for word, so it is a little rambling) what I wrote, my thoughts, immediately after walking out on the video.

* * *

*"What is a video nasty? Sadism? Hypo in eyeball? Burned alive? Head blown out with acid up nostrils? Throat cut, face slashed? Gratuitous violence. Empathy. Am I the only person who empathises with rape victims, torture victims etc? Why does it make me feel sick? It* ***should.*** *This obsession in such films, blood, screaming, pain, fear, is it intended to dull our senses? What do we feel when we see such scenes? They are incredibly real! Clever special effects. I know it isn't real, but thinking about such things makes me feel . . . ? Horrible.*

*Now I'm told the end of the video was good. I feel the graphic nature of the violence detracts from the plot. The horrible bits take over. I can't just watch, forget, and carry on watching the next bit, they linger. I remember my mother couldn't watch the 'rat on the plate' bit in* ***Whatever Happened to Baby Jane,*** *which was exceedingly mild by comparison. People covered their eyes at the shower scene in* ***Psycho.*** *I couldn't bear to look until it had been on TV 3 times, but it was a good film. Maybe I should cover my eyes when watching (or not watching) videos.*

*What is happening? People want to see this stuff and worse. How much worse? Do things seem tame after a while and cease to shock so you move on to 'harder' stuff?"*

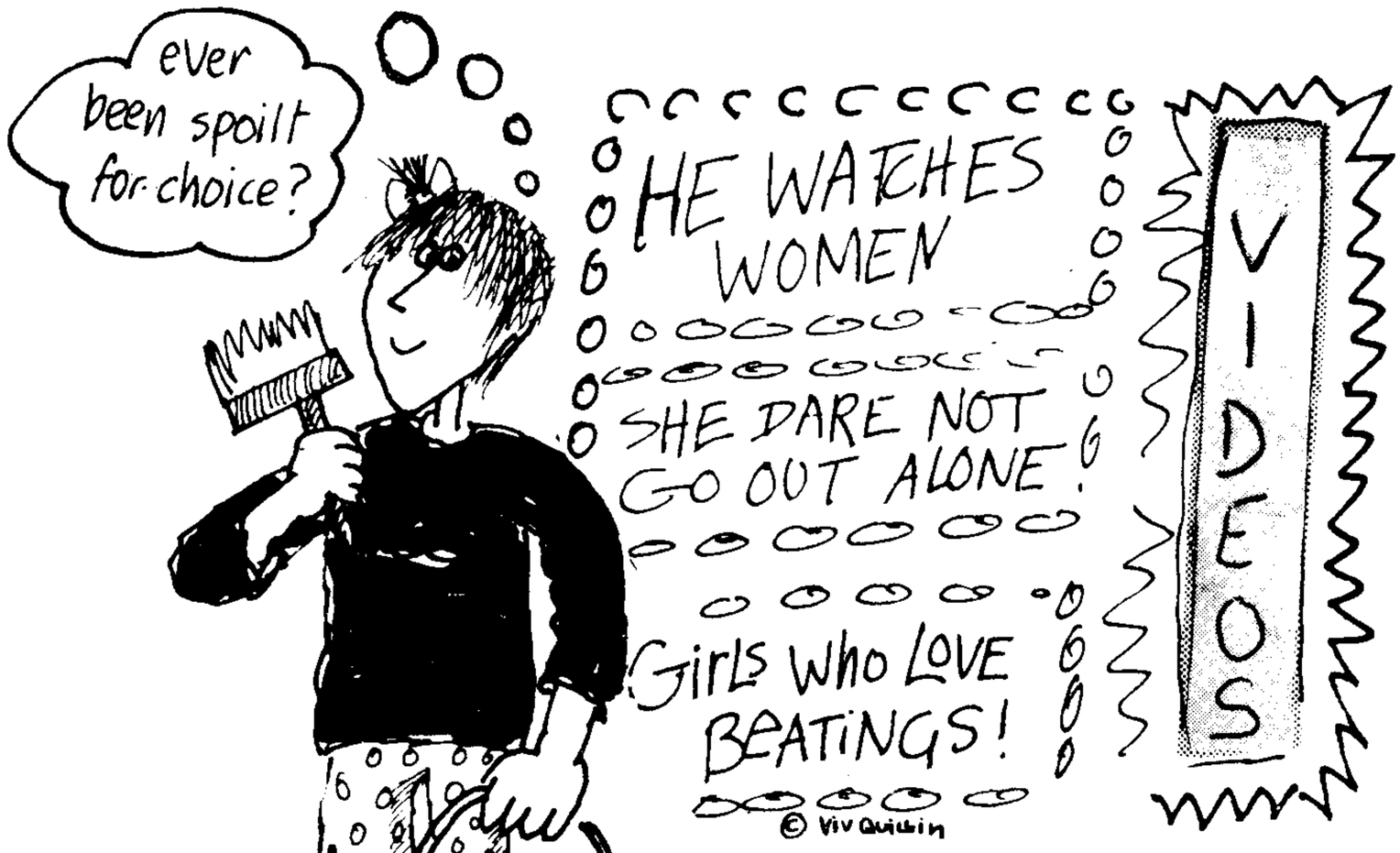
* * *

There are many people in the labour movement who seem to disagree with censorship. They feel that it works against the 'left'. At the moment there are literally hundreds of extremely violent sadistic videos on the market. The video 'I Spit On Your Grave' contains a fourteen-minute gang rape scene. Show me the 'left wing' or feminist film currently being circulated, the existence of which justifies the laxity which allows such films to be seen by men, women and children of any age.

## VIDEOS AND CHILDREN

A recent Broadside programme on Channel 4 looked at children and videos. They interviewed and talked to families where all sorts of videos including rape and sadism where available to very small children. At one point a man explained that he felt it was 'normal' for his son to enjoy watching this type of video. What sort of world do these children think they are growing up in? Girls, however, showed the attitude that they didn't like the videos at first but got used to them. Many videos show scenes of rape where the 'victim' not only gives in but appears to enjoy the experience!!! What attitudes will the small boys who can watch these videos form and how will this affect their views on women?

Recently, a man (said to be of low intellect!) argued in court that when he committed rape it was because he really believed that the women would enjoy the experience because he spent most of his time watching videos where this happened. There was also a case where a young man murdered his best friend after they had been watching 'nasty' videos together. The media described the aggressor as a sexual psychopath. I shouldn't imagine that watching the videos had caused the problem, but there is a likelihood that it triggered off the behaviour which led to the young man's death. Police involved in the 'Glasgow rape case' said that the hideous razor wounds inflicted on the victim were very similar to those shown in pornography circulating in the area at the time. I don't think there is any doubt that people do get ideas from watching videos. I certainly do. I recently saw a cover on a video which depicted a man screaming while a skewer (complete with kebab) was being driven through his mouth and (presumably) out of the back of his neck! This was only the cover! However, it did give me an idea: a skewer could be carried for self-defence in much the same way our grandmothers used to carry a hatpin. It could be concealed easily in (for example) the seam of a pair of trousers.




## CLOSING OUR MINDS TO SUFFERING

Another interesting point raised in the Broadside programme was that the children who watched 'nasty' videos said that at the beginning, when they first started watching them, they had nightmares. They then went on to say that they no longer had nightmares. Why is this? Is this because the children are 'closing their minds' to the videos and not really watching them and taking it in? Surely the ability to close one's mind to the suffering and pain of others (real or simulated) is not a desirable attitude! I know that my children (aged eight and three) find it very difficult to differentiate between fact and fiction. When they go to the cinema, by and large, most children know that what they are watching is not real, but some of what they see on television *is* real, i.e. news programmes and documentaries. Can children tell the difference between videos and television programmes? Then, of course, some 'nasty' videos are based on fact, i.e. *SS Experiment Camp* and videos about crimes such as the 'Manson' murders (Sharon Tate's murder etc.). I am sure it is only a matter of time before someone produces a video about the Moors Murders and the 'Yorkshire Ripper'.

## VIDEOS MUST BE CENSORED

Personally I have no well thought out answer to the problems of censoring videos. I only know that I believe that they must be censored by some means. Until a more satisfactory way to censor is found, present criteria relating to films could apply with certificates. Parents would know that 'society' did not approve, and if children got to see videos which were deemed unsuitable, the parents would be breaking the law as only adults would be able to hire or buy 'adult' videos. Shops who rented videos to minors which were suitable for adults only would have to be prosecuted.

I think it is sad that, although it is expected that it will get all-party support, the Private Member's Bill relating to videos and their censorship is a Private Member's Bill put forward by a Tory. Censorship has long been a dirty word among socialists but I feel it must be discussed seriously by men as well as women in the Labour movement. At present the censorship which exists in the world of video is the censorship of profit. If it doesn't make money they don't make the video, and what makes money is rape and mutilation. I want censorship on my terms, not on the terms of the exploiters.

# Excerpts from a debate in Merseyside Briefing on CENSORSHIP

So what's wrong with pornography? People tend to think that objections to it must derive from a Mary Whitehouse/prudish stance. In any case, shouldn't people (men) have the freedom to read and view what they want? They're not hurting anybody – it's a bit of innocent fun! Censorship itself is seen as a dirty word, not pornography. But which is more oppressive? Which curtails more freedoms?

Pornography portrays women as objects for sex – to be fucked, humiliated, mutilated, and sometimes even killed. Women are shown as disposable consumer items, to be used, abused, and then thrown away. Okay, try reading this paragraph again, and substitute the word 'blacks' for 'women' our society finds the degradation of women far more palatable than racism.

### BAN PORN

There has been an enormous increase in the availability of pornographic literature and videos, which reinforce an extremely dangerous misogynist attitude. We believe that this increase has direct links with rape and violence towards women. In Merseyside alone, the 1982 figures for reported rapes have soared. WE ARE ANGRY. WE ARE MORE THAN ANGRY. WE ARE BLOODY FURIOUS. WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO STATE THAT WE FEEL THAT ALL FORMS OF PORNOGRAPHY SHOULD BE BANNED. . . .

### LABOUR MEN

We believe that the issue of pornography is crucial in the struggle for social injustice. We also believe that it is not within men's interests to take this issue seriously. When the issue is raised, it is greeted by jokes, yawns or patronising smiles. Men, including those within the Labour Party, do not appear to give a shit about women's oppression – not while it conflicts with what they seem to want – profits, a cheap thrill, and maintaining the sexual status quo. Men are the perpetrators. Men are the users, and it's long past time that they got up off their arses, and joined in our struggle.

**Pam Blain and Sheila Hughes**

## VIEW FROM A MALE

With so many pressing issues all around us, one hesitates to use precious space refuting the ideas of Pam Blain and Shiela Hughes on the matter of pornography. Nevertheless, as some of their views are tendentious to the point almost of being sinister, it is perhaps a worthwhile exercise.

### WHO IS TO DECIDE

First, there is the issue of censorship. To any libertarian socialist, the very word engenders suspicion. The case in favour of censorship must surely be very strong before socialists can accept it. Blain and Hughes do not make such a case. Central, they call for the banning of all pornography, without bothering to define what pornography is. Is page 3 of the *Sun* pornographic? Is *Mayfair* magazines pornographic? Is *Gay News* pornographic? Is *Spare Rib* pornographic? Is *Lady Chatterley's Lover* pornographic? All all these to be banned, or none of them? Who is to decide? Blain and Hughes? The Police? Magistrates? Mrs Thatcher? Me? How are they to decide? What criteria are to be used? How is the law (if there is one) to be enforced? Can we expect extra police powers to raid shops and homes because there is a possibility that (ill-defined) pornography is to be found there? Surely one does not have to have much knowledge of history to know where that sort of thing can lead.

Secondly, Blain and Hughes seem hopelessly ignorant of what is available in sex-shops and the like. Perhaps they will allow me to enlighten them? a) 'Girlie' magazines such as *Fiesta* and *Playboy*. These show almost entirely women with no clothes on. Harmless enough, or does the banning start here? b) Male Gay pornography. How does this fit in to Blain and Hughes' scheme of things? As a man, presumably I should feel humiliated by it. Sorry, but I don't. c) Magazines portraying people have sex – intercourse, oral sex etc. Given that these do not show acts of violence, and they do not, why should people take exception to them? Why should a photograph of a man and a woman having sexual intercourse be humilating to women and not to men? I don't follow. d) Violent pornography. And here we come to the heart of Blain and Hughes' argument. At first glance it seems a strong one. Violence is distasteful, many people would say, and censorship justified. Yet even here, on close examination, the issue is far from clear cut. First, the violence is obviously simulated, and the end result, frankly, utterly ludicrous. Second, and I can't emphasise this enough, the violence displayed is just as likely to be by women on men as the other way round. Again, as a man presumably I should feel humiliated and degraded by this. Well, I'm sorry, but I don't. I can't take it seriously enough. . .

. . . Aneurin Bevan once said - 'Why look at the crystal ball, when you can read the book?' There are in fact plenty of societies around which have just such laws as Blain and Hughes apparently favour. One such is on the other side of the Irish Sea, where a woman's naked breasts can never be revealed in published material. Another, until recently was Spain. Are these the sort of societies where Blain and Hughes want to live in? The fact is that heavy censorship of alleged pornography almost always goes hand in hand with other forms of sexual repression, to the great detriment of all women.

**D.A. Rainbird**

## A REPLY

It was with sadness that I read the contribution from D.A. Rainbird.

Mr. Rainbird regurgitates the same old censorship story I have heard so often, usually in the context of racism – the type of blanket condemnation leads to the abhorment of what organisations like the NF say, alongside vociferous defence of their 'right' to say it. As feminists and socialists, we do not sweep aside the issue of censorship, but it seems to me that to condemn any sort of desire to control the publication and distribution of material that portrays and seeks to engender hatred, be it on the grounds of class, race or sex, harks back to the type of 19th century laissez-faire society that earlier socialist men and women fought long and hard to destroy.

Mr. Rainbird's trivialising description of what is actually on sale in sex establishments, leads me to conclude that he has never visited one. I say only that one of the most appalling, and personally devastating, examples of pornography I have ever read – the slow death of a woman submerged in a pool of leeches – I read in one of the 'harmless' 'girlie' magazines, that can be bought in W. H. Smiths' any day in the week. Other material on sale in these places defies description and I urge anyone in any doubt to go and see for themselves.

Mr. Rainbird speaks of tragedies, I think it a tragedy that such an apparently well-intentioned article, should have generated such an testerical attack – Mr. Rainbird must feel himself very threatened.

**Sarah Lewis**

## OBJECTIVE VIEW

'To objectify a person is a crime against that person' – a statement with such all libertarian socialists must surely agree – or so I would have thought. An object is by definition passive; if it acts in any way it does so only as directed. An object is a piece of property to be used by the owner as he chooses. No socialist could ever accept the treatment of human beings as objects – or so I would have always assumed.

The capitalist objectifies the people, who becomes the 'labour force' to be used to his own financial advantage. Similarly men objectify women as sex objects to be used to provide pleasure/profit for men: As an object a woman should be pleasing to the eye, the sense of smell, the sense of touch. Her clothes must at all times meet with male approval by emphasising the sexual aspect of her body. Her face should be made up to signal her availability and, of course, the natural smell of her own body must be well camouflaged with liberal doses of perfume. Her skin should be soft – her legs and armpits shaven. In men's eyes, only as properly packaged sex objects can we consider ourselves to be 'real' women.

The process however does not end here. Women's bodies – as objects available for sex – are used to sell many products from motor cars to daily newspapers (yes, page 3 of the *Sun* is pornographic by the literal definition of the word). In pornographic magazines, films, and videos, women become things: things to be degraded, disfigured, mutilated, raped, murdered. Pornography is a vicious manifestation of the process by which men objectify women. It is feedback from pornography that supports, maintains and further fuels the process itself.

In whatever context, for whatever reason, to define a person as a 'thing' is to deny that person's humanity. No socialist could ever condone such a denial – or so I would have believed. However, an article in a recent copy of Merseyside Labour Briefing suggests that this is not necessarily so. The writer, a man, in his arguments in support of pornography, failed to realize that there can never be any grounds to justify the dehumanizing of any individual be it for profit or pleasure. It would seem that, all too often, male socialists forget ideals of human dignity/human rights when the humans concerned happen to be female.

**Lynn Pharaoh**

# 'Thatcher's Girls' reply to occupation of Soho

*The following article is made up of extracts taken from an open letter to all women written in reply to the action of Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) and Pornography is Violence Against Women (PIVAW) in organising 2 weeks of action against pornography, including burning pornographic books and magazines and an 'occupation' of Soho (on May 28th).*

**In calling for the closing down of sex shops and massage parlours, and a clamp down on all pornography, and by attacking the sex industry in general, WAVAW and PIVAW have never made a distinction between the sex industry and the women who work in it, whose livelihood they are threatening.**

## POLICE THANK FEMINISTS FOR CLEANING UP THE STREET

We have already pointed out that in Canada the Chief of Police thanked anti-pornography crusaders from the women's movement for helping to clean up the streets. In Sweden, too, the authorities have publicly thanked 'Vigilantes' in the women's movement for helping to close down sex shops and nightclubs, forcing women back into the dole queue. One stripper's appraisal of the 'Vigilantes' attacks was "I imagine I shall be back in the dole queue before long".

In Kings Cross, Labour M.P. Frank Dobson and some of the right wing residents have called for a police crackdown against prostitute women, as though this could increase the safety of any woman in the area. The police have already told women that they are 'too busy' (arresting prostitute women) to spend time on protection – e.g. in response to the Kings Cross Women's Centre's reporting an arson attack on its building.

## BLACK WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINE

Many of the women working in the sex industry are Black women. Because Black women have least access to money, those of us who are Black are most often forced into areas of the sex industry which are the most visible and open to police harassment – beginning




with soliciting on the street. This, combined with the fact of police racial and sexual harassment of Black women generally, means that we are on the front line against the police, and in the greatest danger when the police feel that prostitute women are isolated and they can move against us.

## SEX AND MONEY

We have pointed to the government, whose economic crisis is forcing more women into prostitution at every level, as the biggest pimp. Lack of alternative jobs for women means more women are being forced onto the streets as the only way women can make enough money to live independently of families or individual men, to the point where newcomers coming down to London from the North, with its skyhigh unemployment levels, are known as 'Thatcher's Girls'. The connection between economic vulnerability and sexual vulnerability is evident for all to see.

The Police Bill now under discussion proposes to give the police wider powers to stop and search, invade people's homes looking for 'evidence', and hold people on any charge for up to 72 hours.

In this context, to be burning books and magazines – and calling by implication for censorship – is to line up with the right wing and the repressive forces in this society.

## BASIC QUESTIONS

In attacking the sexual exploitation of women by the sex industry the questions are:

a) is the women's movement going to fight for more power for women, *including women in the sex industry*, (for example by the abolition of the prostitution laws) or more power for the police?

b) will the starting point be more sexual choices for all women or the imposition of sexual 'standards'?

c) are demands going to be made which bring women more choices, or are women in the sex industry to be blamed for violence against women, and hounded out of making a living?

d) will the actions women propose bring women together or drive them apart? In other words, are they going to build a movement or build a backlash?

Anne Neale
(for the English Collective of Prostitutes)

*Copies of the complete letter are available from the Kings Cross Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St., WC1. (please enclose 20p in stamps)*

# Left must fight for gays

Campaign for Homosexual Equality and Labour Campaign for Gay Rights carried out a survey during the election of all Labour Party candidates, and the replies received reveal some very interesting things that people might wish to note, particularly during re-selection.

The main fudge seemed to be over the age of consent, with the following, who had bothered to reply, supporting a discriminatory age of consent of 18:

Palmer (Chelsea), Smith (Chipping Barnet), Brookes (Croydon South), Honeyball (Enfield Southgate), Graham (Edmonton), Kerr (Feltham), Powell (Fulham), Roberts (Hackney North), Cox (Tooting), Mikardo (Bow), Shepherd (Chingford), Nicholas (Mitcham and Morden), Dixon (Sutton) plus others such as Robin Cook, Neil Kinnock, Ron Brown and Joan Lestor.

There was also disquiet on Armed Forces and employment protection legislation.

With fudge and inequality becoming more acceptable the Left must ensure that next year's Party Conference commits the party to a full and positive position.

# Defend the Kiltdale 7

**It's nothing new to get the sack simply for being gay. Many will remember the case of Susan Shell, sacked by Barking Labour Council for being a lesbian in charge of children, and, of course, this is only the tip of the iceberg, but mass sackings of gays is something new. A Cheltenham computor games form, Kiltdale, drew up a 'hit-list' of its gay staff — on the orders of its straight (?) owner. They claim it was due to falling production but this was completely the opposite, and the same day as the sackings they applied to the Job Centre for four more staff. Other gay staff have been threatened and they have been told that joining the union (General and Municipal) means the sack.**

**A defence campaign is being organised by CHE and Gay Rights at Work with the full support of the GMWU branch who is taking Kiltdale to a tribunal. You can help by passing this motion: 'this branch/etc. condemns Kiltdale for sacking gay trade unionists and demands their unconditional reinstatement.'**

**★ Getting copies of petitions and Pink Postcards from Gay Rights at Work, 7 Pickwick Court, SE9 4SA.**

**★ Writing to trade papers and Atari/Commodore who use their games.**

**Kiltdales are at, Unit B, Liddington Estate, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos. (0242-517480).**

Paul Canning
Norwood YS and Gay YS

# Porn for sale—Porn for male .... some thoughts

by Alan F. Rippington
Hampstead and Highgate CLP

**Many views have been aired over recent years concerning the exploitation and morality involved in the commercial marketing of sexually stimulating products -- whether these be people, illustrations of people, cosmetics, clothes and all sorts of paraphernalia concerned with eliciting sexual responsivity from oneself or ones present/potential bed-mate. Of course, it is not just sexual attractiveness or satisfaction that is being marketed but the promise of 'happiness' or inter-personal fulfilment in which sexual attraction/performance is over-emphasised as the vital quality of one's life and relationships. (One inflatable doll package has a heart shaped cut out.) Such an emphasis on sexuality is understandable in the context of young people discovering their maturing biological capabilities and pleasures -- but even in this there is a strong undercurrent of satisfying social relationships. Pornography abstracts the sexual and places it in a void that is divorced from the human life cycle.**

Much of recent comment has been from the woman's point of view on women's place in the orgasmic marketplace. I'm attempting here to explore some ideas on sexually arousing material — pornography — as it relates to its major consumers —heterosexual men — though I believe the principles involved apply to all men of whatever sexual preference. In the main I limit my discussion to 'soft' porn 'cheesecake' — the major product.

My two major themes are: (l) that the consuming of the soft-porn by men inhibits the creation of mature personal relationships — and that this is explicable in a culture that operates a taboo on tenderness given to and received from men by women, and that suppresses intimate male sensuality in the cause of promoting purely genital pleasure/satisfaction, and (2) that public/popular porn, eg as in the *Sun*, performs a social function in reinforcing male identity as men — a social reassurance indicative of how relatively fragile male sexual identity can be in a time when a major definer of 'masculinity' ie the contrast of 'femininity' of women, is undergoing considerable change, and, additionally, homosexuality is gaining acceptance and more social prominence — increasing anxiety for the less than cast-iron men.




## NOT PRISONERS OF BIOLOGICAL FORCES

My first point is that one of the reasons pornography exists has to do with the widely held notion that men possess an 'instinct' or 'urge' for sexual satisfaction that is biologically programmed and must therefore require release - by masturbation -if a woman is not available. In this situation pornography provides some learnt visual clues for sexual arousal. I maintain that this 'hydraulic' reservoir model - deriving from Freud - is completely erroneous. Men, and women, have a physiological potentiality that is shaped by the ideas and personal experiences of our biography as it is created within out culture. However, men, like women, are not prisoners of biological forces or cultural history. But to choose to reject such self-fulfilling prophesies requires that new ideals of sexual behaviour are necessary. This requires personal experimentation - with associated vulnerability to possible unwarranted embarrasment, anxiety, or ridicule - eg being called 'effeminate', 'passive' or being wrongly identified as gay.

In this respect pornography is reactionary in that it portrays fantasies of sexual relationships (models) that are devoid of sensitivity and sensuality and has no place for the erotic - eg the scents, sounds, secretions, tastes, sensations and sights of one's own and partner's bodies. 'Man' is portrayed as gaining pleasure/relief from 'Woman' - but this is not a relationship between people - it is rather the interaction of two mechanisms. Such an interaction is highly transient, lasting only the duration of the sexual performance. There is no place for joy, affection, fondness, or the more enduring qualities of trust, appreciation, concern, caring, reciprocity, the sharing of lives, or any qualities or behaviours that may be subsumed under the term 'loving'. Fathering does not exist and it is very rare to see a man, or woman, in a porn-mag actually smiling, and never laughing.

## 'SELF SUFFICIENCY'

Pornography, used as an aid to masturbation, encourages narcissism and notions of personal and sexual 'self-sufficiency' in men - the creating of sexual sociopathy. Though sexual self-pleasure is a valid activity, the mode of this and the situation in which this takes place are important in shaping expectations of what heterosexual activity is all about. Much masturbation takes place as an antidote to loneliness, depression and anxiety - but also operates to reinforce one's sexual identity as a sexually capable male when in isolation from women. However pornography is not very comprehensive in educating males as to their sexual role as men - bare breasts, open legs, grimaces and contorted postures are unrealistic and simplistic as cues for male sexual arousal, as are the associated paraphernalia of black undies, stocking tops and high heels. If a man masturbates with such items pictorially represented then chances are that he will in future find such items and female body parts stimulating - leading possibly to fetishism and partialism. (This is not that dissimilar from having an attraction to long or short haired women, bearded or shaven men.) Pornography, probably more so in the written form, can be seen as an inadequate form of sexual education about what is sexually exciting and how to do it. I maintain that sexual theatre - be it corsets and silk stockings, tattoos or chains, hairstyles or shaving are all valid for the people who enjoy them - provided one is alert to the fact that it is just a sort of theatre. All people are both sexual objects and sexual subjects but they should not be merely sexual commodities and sexual consumers.

All human behaviour is learnt in the social-cultural milieu of commodity Capitalism. Capitalism preys on our sexuality, like all other aspects of our lives, transforms it into commodities and sells it back to us - and in the process alienates and creates fear between men and women.

There is societal pressure on men to succeed in Capitalist economy in order to earn the reward of women's sexuality. There is pressure on men to be good sexual performers, and for women too. For the 'unsuccessful' porn is cheaper than a Porsche ... Or is it?




# THREE LETTERS FROM MEN!

## Sexist Advertising

Dear Comrade,

According to the August edition of *London Labour Briefing*, the theme of your next issue of the Street Life Supplement will concern pornography.

Over the last year or so, I have become accustomed to using public transport. It may be the novelty of the experience that is responsible for my registering the shock of such blatantly sexist forms of advertising as are manifested on the Underground. I know that I am not alone, for on one occasion the words 'Sexist Shit' had been written over a somewhat more blatant variation.

Might I therefore suggest that a campaign be set up by socialist women in order to examine and remedy the content of advertising displayed throughout the London Transport area. As you know, LT is under the direct control of the GLC and, whilst they may be experiencing some difficulties in gaining adequate advertising revenues due to the current Great Depression, I am sure that you and other socialist women should be able to make representations to them concerning the content of permissible advertising through LT establishments.

This could be achieved in possibly one or two ways:

(i) Organised groups of women (and men?) could conduct 'spot checks' of LT advertising content and notify the GLC of any considered unacceptable. The GLC would then undertake to order the removal of such advertising from LT establishments whilst simultaneously notifying the advertising agency AND CLIENT that the advertising has been withdrawn as indecent and offensive to public morality.

(ii) A regular Vetting Committee to be set up by the GLC for the purpose of granting prior approval for the content of advertising proposed for location within LT establishments. The Women's Committee to nominate representatives to the Vetting Committee.

If these proposals are implemented, then sexually offensive advertising will be highlighted and both advertising agencies and their clients will become more responsive to standards of advertising decency and fairness.

These proposals may not be exactly what you had in mind when contemplating the theme of pornography. It is my belief that the increasing public use of 'soft' pornography is very dangerous because it trivialises women, frustrates men, and opens up the way for more and more extreme versions of hard pornography. We are all adversely affected by any form of pornography, so let's remove this offensive and unnecessary form of exploitation from our lives.

Yours for Socialism,
John Clayton

## Points on Supplement

Dear Briefing,

Having meant to write to you for some time can I take this opportunity to cover a couple of points at once.

In the last edition you had someone write about alcoholism. While not quite agreeing that 'drink is one of the main and pressing problems of this society', I do feel it is a growing problem that is normally ignored, or treated almost as a music hall joke. These problems are the ever-increasing number of young people that are displaying signs and symptoms of alcohol dependence; the number of isolated women who are turning towards drink; the changing drinking consumption patterns where more spirits are now being consumed; the prison revolving door where homeless alcoholics are placed in prison as opposed to decent accommodation or treatment. In short, there is a lack of concern with the problem, and in consequence a lack of not only effective treatment, but even places where treatment can be carried out.

In many ways I am pointing towards alcohol as a drug, which in many cases and people is exactly the situation. But this is really a problem for the left, who have traditionally been tolerant towards drugs. In the 1960s we even saw drugs mistakenly as some form of revolution in their taking. We forget that a docile, dependent, unconscious (in the sense of drugged) population is a good ingredient for capitalism to operate. Especially when that drug is a repeatable consumer item, where its tolerance level is low and increased amounts have to be taken, such as alcohol. We also forget that alcohol is a great capitalist enterprise. Five companies almost completely control its production, distribution and selling in the UK. Besides the profits for these companies the Treasury got in 1980 £3,000 million. How many war weapons did this buy, because it was definitely not spent on any form of alcoholic rehabilitation. While not completely condemning alcohol I do feel we should rethink our positions on drugs in general, and in particular on alcohol.

In the July edition you had an article by Bernard Misrahi on alternative lifestyles, or sex and the single man. In his view women should be responsible for, and responsive to, the demands of men in their sexuality and time. So this is an alternative? I thought this was what feminists have been fighting against for years.

Sincerely,
Michael Knight

## Putting it Straight

Dear Comrade,

What is meant by the catch-phrase, 'Extra-Parliamentary Activities.' This is a phrase that is now being used to denigrate almost every action taken by groups outside Parliament. The Tories used it to good effect during the General Election campaign and, unfortunately, some of our own members followed suit.

Any Rally (even if its objects are opposed by Members of Parliament) is, by its very nature an 'Extra-Parliamentary Activity', inasmuch as its activity is out-side the Palace of Westminster.

Many of the things which today we take for granted were as a result of action taken outside Parliament. Trade Union organisation (although Tebbit is trying to re-write history), the Reform Bill and Votes for Women are but a few of the freedoms that, in the first instance, were won from outside Parliament.

As a result of the General Election, the fight against 'Tebbits' Law', the fight against increasing unemployment and the fight against the deployment of Nuclear Missiles will have to be undertaken by activities which may be considered 'Extra-Parliamentary'.

Another fight, which requires the active support of the general public, is the 'Save the GLC Campaign' – as well as the Government's general attack on the Metropolitan Authorities and local democracy. It will only be through agitation and demonstration can we harness support and, hopefully, persuade MPs as a result.

Of course, if we lived in a perfect world demonstrations and the like would be unnecessary, but we live in a most unfair and imperfect world and thus we act accordingly.

Yours fraternally,
Harry Kay.

*From 'Give us a Smile' a 13 minute cartoon film about violence against women made by Leeds Animation Workshop and available as a postcard, distributed by Leeds Postcards (P O. Box 84, Leeds 3). 'Wish you were here', the first ever alternative/radical postcard, poster and badge fair will be held in London on Friday October 7th and Saturday October 8th 10-5 at the Africa Centre, 38 King Street WC2. It will be an ideal opportunity for Labour Party members who are producing leaflets and newspapers to get hold of good and effective visual material.*




# THE BRIGHTON CASE

**One of the sickest aspects of the hysteria that has surrounded, and is still continuing, from the case of the gang-raped Brighton boy is the abuse of the boy himself by the media.**

Many people were sickened by the treatment of the Ripper case, but this is amazing and sums up the pure profit workshop of Fleet Street. The press is part of the society responsible for the double standard towards sexuality that creates these very attacks.

On the same pages as 'You Scum' we saw photos of Karen or Jane when they were children and what they've grown up to be - women to be draped across papers for titilation and humiliation.

The same day as the Brighton case, a very similar case occurred to a Crawley girl - do we hear about that? The case of the Edinburgh woman who was brutally raped and murdered has received nothing like the same publicity. It seems clear that boys are of more value than girls!

GAYS LIVING IN FEAR

Brighton's gay population is now living in fear. It is not possible to walk down the prom without fear of assault. This was a very 'liberal' town, one of the 'gayest' in Britain, but this just shows how near the surface people's real attitudes are and that to be against discrimination is not enough. The press has spent years linking gays to 'child molesters' with the result that gays working with children, especially teachers, are liable to lose their jobs. We are all now 'outlaws'. That most attacks are by heterosexual men, and horror of horrors, in the home, is not reported - its not good copy.

Socialists have a duty to condemn *all* sexual attacks, and *defend* those sections of society under attack from capitalism. That means not getting caught up in the moral panic, and fighting back!

Paul Canning
Norwood YS and Gay YS

## Who looks after the children?

**The next issue of the Streetlife Supplement will be on the theme of childcare. We would welcome contributions from women and men on how they have dealt in their own lives with the caring of children -- as single parents, lesbians, heterosexual couples, in communal households etc.**

**And in the future -- should we be demanding state nurseries and childcare facilities? How can childcare be made compatible with equal employment opportunities for women and men? What about children's rights?**

**Contributions on these and any other issues should be sent to: Jane Stockton, 110 Agar Grove, NW1 by 10th October.**

## Streetlife Supplement Readers Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 20th October, 7.30 at County Hall.

Please come along and share your views if you have any comments, criticisms on this or any other issue of the Streetlife Supplement, or if you have any ideas on where we should be going from here! If you need help with childcare arrangements please contact Jane Stockton (110 Agar Grove, NW1) as far in advance as possible.

Next editorial board meetings:
Monday 26th September at 6.30pm
Monday 24th October at 6.30pm
Both at County Hall.

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