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BRIEFING
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Southwark in chaos: IS THIS WHAT WE FOUGHT FOR?

Piers Corbyn, Bermondsey CLP.



S.N.O.W.

Protesters picket Southwark town hall

1. COUNCILLORS CALL IN S.P.G.

"I regard the use of the SPG – now renamed the Instant Response Unit – against children in care as despicable. But what I find totally amazing is that a Labour Council sanctioned their use and have stated they are prepared to use them again in similar circumstances" stated John Mulrenan, Assistant Branch Secretary of Southwark Nalgo commenting on the Council's ransacking of the Hollies children's home.

News of the raid probably had some believe the Hollies was in Grenada. Indeed the Council leadership's dirty tricks, manipulation of the facts and bad faith in negotiations with NALGO over the residential social workers' claim are a match any day for Ronald Reagan's double talk.

ENTHUSIASM

The claim is for parity with other Council employees. After an overwhelming national vote among residential social workers for industrial action, NALGO members followed instructions to escalate their action by refusing to work unsocial hours, and offered to negotiate a local settlement.

(CONTINUED OVER)

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Councillors call in S.P.G. (continued).

The Council response was to suspend 32 workers who refused redeployment on October 24. The NALGO reply was a walk out upon which the 32 were re-instated and negotiations opened on October 25.

However, on October 27, the Labour Group met early in the morning and reversed its earlier decision to negotiate. That afternoon and evening management started attempting to remove children from the Hollies complex of children's homes.

THUGGERY

In one incident at 11pm, 5 men from Management manhandled a 15 year old girl across a lawn and when they realised they were being watched dropped her and ran. The girl fell to the ground. Shortly afterwards the SPG were sent in.

They smashed down doors and dragged children out, even though keys were available. Many children ran away in terror and were missing for two days. Management then re-entered and systematically vandalised what was left intact in order to render it uninhabitable.

BAD FAITH

Afterwards, Councillor Paula Moore admitted to Residential Social Workers from the Hollies that the police had been on 36-hour alert for the purpose of entering the Hollies. And all the time negotiations were supposedly underway!

DIRTY PICKET

As if all this was not enough, on October 31st a gang of four Councillors tried to stop other Councillors and trade unionists attending a NALGO organised open discussion on the Hollies in the Town Hall! Councillors Tony Ritchie (Housing Chair), Tory boss, John Fowler and John Lauder and some NUPE officers picketed the meeting demanding the Hollies should never be re-opened and there should be no independent inquiry into the events. In using their positions in Southwark NUPE offices branch, they are defying national NUPE policy to not oppose NALGO and undermining the most fundamental principles of Trade Unionism.

INSTANT CUTS

Not surprisingly, social workers now fear the Council intend to close the Hollies permanently, and so implement instant cuts their own special way.

NALGO's call for an independent inquiry into the wrecking of the Hollies is receiving wide support from Labour parties and Trade Unions. Indeed, an increasing body of people find themselves standing four square *against* the Council on a whole range of issues.

The Labour Group meeting on November 7 was lobbied by hundreds of people from; NALGO, campaigns to stop closure of various community resources, applicants for planning permission for a techno-park at the Polytechnic, squatters wanting to pay rent and so on and on.

In the debate on Council spending, one Councillor remarked that "we are not exactly in a good position to organise a campaign alongside Trade Unions against the Government"! Unfortunately her conclusion, along with a 25:15 majority, was to support the "balance the budget" option and cop out of taking on the Tories.

NO MIDDLE WAY

This then is the choice for Southwark and all Labour Councils. Either they fight the Government alongside the labour movement and the community or they fight the labour movement and community at Thatcher's behest. There is no middle way.

Posturing anti-Tory gestures accompanied with attacks on the Labour Movement now fool no-one.

In every borough we must declare the time is up for those Labour Councillors who believe in this way. The time has come for an honest stand to be taken against the Tories and for a Socialist future.

2. SQUATS AGAINST SOUTHWARK

Months before their monstrous handling of the NALGO dispute the unparallelled houdini power of Southwark Council Labour Group to eat its own manifesto was revealed in its dealings with Southwark's 1,000 squatters.

However a vigorous squatters and tenants' joint campaign of lobbies, occupations, flyposting, leafletting and meetings has turned the tables against mass evictions, although not without a little opposition!

ENLIGHTENED!

In September 1982 the Labour Group correctly recognised the disaster scale of its twin crises of empty flats and homelessness and adopted an 'enlightened' policy whereby squatters get tenancies on flats they occupy if they are of the type they may expect had they applied in the normal way.

The policy was just beginning to work when on Aug 17 an ugly alliance resembling the vicious bunch who undermined and defeated Peter Tatchell bamboozled the Housing Committee into a decision to evict all squatters in Southwark.

UGLY ALLIANCE

Their deputation made utterly false claims of a 'mass invasion' by squatters to press for mass evictions. Its supporters included Simon Hughes Liberal MP cruising around behind the scenes, and a number of fascistic elements, one of whom denounced myself (I am on the Housing Committee as the Peckham District Tenants rep) – as a jew.

A squatters and tenants joint campaign was then launched which in 10 days gathered 1,500 signatures for a petition and organised a 100-strong lobby of the Labour Group. There, councillor Tony Goss attempted to physcally attack squatters. The meeting unofficially suspended the mass eviction decision but decided to use the Trespass Law against squatters 'subject to debate in the Party'.

THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

The squatters and tenants joint campaign is winning that debate, and the debate in Tenants' Associations and the press; even in the face of incredible contortions by Labour Councillors.

The campaign relentlessly spells out the truth in the conflict; revealing secret anti-squatting reports from officials, showing how people are being manipulated by Liberals and certain Labour Councillors, and explaining the true nature of the housing crisis in Southwark. The Labour leadership are so scared that although giving generous attention to the Ugly Alliance they have turned down *all* applications from squatters to even put their point of view at Labour Group, Housing Committee and full Council! As a result the last full Council meeting was drowned by squatters chanting 'Rent Books, Yes. Evictions, No!'

RANSACKED!

Meanwhile two squats in Rotherhithe were ransacked by Council employees. This matter is now being investigated by a top level (embarrassed) Council enquiry.

Now, to participate more in local democracy(?) two squatters have applied to join Dockyard Ward Labour Party – and been refused entry on the grounds they are squatters! Well, as everyone knows, determined squatters always get in – one way or another!

The sad thing about this saga is the almost total lack of integrity in the Labour Group and the majority of Labour councillors. The exciting thing is that a small group – the squatters and supporting tenants – have achieved such success, by creating a campaign context which is unassailably just and spelling out what's really going on.

PRICE RISE

From the next issue, the cost of London Labour Briefing will rise to 40p. We have kept the price at 30p for almost two years, and regret having to increase. We are sure our sellers and readers will continue their support.

Residential Social Workers Action

STOP NALGO BASHING!

NALGO's 25,000 members in residential social work have been taking industrial action since 12 September by banning overtime and stopping admissions into council-run residential homes. Now our action is being stepped up because the employers are still refusing to negotiate on our claim, which is for the same working conditions as those of most other local government non-manual workers. The stonewalling of the national employers and the provocations by many local councils has led to over 750 members being on indefinite strike, involving 22 local authorities, and action by thousands of other NALGO members in our support. The dispute is already bitter and looks set to be a lengthy one.

Residential workers care for children, elderly people with mental or physical disabilities in local authority homes. It is a skilled, demanding, round-the-clock job. In Lambeth, as in many other authorities, an average residential worker works eight-day shifts and two weekends in every three. We often have to work up to 70 hours a week. We also have to do regular "sleeping-in" duty and work on public holidays.

Enough is Enough

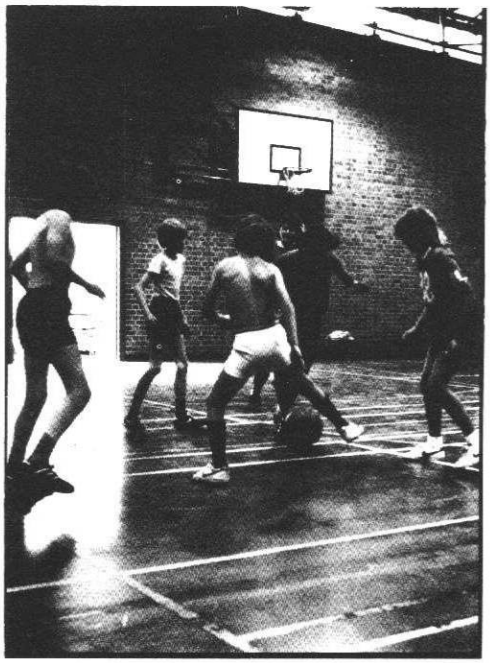
But we receive no higher rates for working shifts and irregular hours. Nor do we receive extra pay for working weekends and public holidays – unlike most other workers in local government and the rest of the country. After five years of fruitless attempts to get the employers to negotiate on our claim, residential workers said "enough is enough" and voted overwhelmingly in a national ballot to take action to end this exploitation.

But the dispute is not just about gaining fair financial remuneration and better working conditions for residential workers. It is also about creating a better service for our clients. For too long the service has been propped up by the goodwill and commitment of residential workers in the face of long hours, low pay, high stress and appalling staffing levels. Verbal and physical abuse of staff is common: in Lambeth, for example, physical assaults on residential workers occur at a rate of one every two days.

These working conditions lead to low morale, and a huge turnover of staff (the annual turnover of staff in Lambeth homes runs at 30%), particularly among basic-grade workers who are the backbone of the service. Inevitable, this has an adverse effect on the service we can offer our clients. It just isn't possible for people to work efficiently under such conditions. The National Association of Young People in Care, the Greater London Pensioners Group and clients in homes throughout the country all recognise this and have supported our action.

Complete Support

Nearly all of the 400 residential workers in Lambeth are NALGO members and the action has had complete support from the beginning. The effects of the overtime ban were immediate. The massive number of vacancies, particularly in the children's homes, meant that some homes had been kept going only by staff working many hours of overtime on a regular basis. By the end of the first week ten homes had closed due to inadequate staffing levels and several others closed shortly afterwards. The Council was informed well in advance in each case and all the children were moved to suitable alternative placements either in private and voluntary homes or in emergency foster care.



WHAT LAMBETH DOES FOR LAMBETH'S YOUNG PEOPLE

Issued by the London Borough of Lambeth

Lambeth Council's attitude was at first conciliatory but this soon changed. By the end of the second week, several Labour councillors were stating publicly that their aim was to stop any more homes closing even if it meant leaving residents without proper supervision. At the same time, the Council refused to meet us to consider the possibility of a local settlement, despite an earlier promise to do so. This attitude, and the abusive behaviour of certain Labour councillors towards NALGO members involved in the dispute, led to a near unanimous vote at a branch meeting of over 1,200 members for **all** branch members to take action in support of the residential workers.

Boycott of Councillors

This action, which has been implemented since 4th October, includes a ban throughout the Council on non-contractual overtime and a boycott on all contact with councillors, including attendance at committee meetings and answering councillor's enquiries. All branch members are now under national instruction to comply with the boycott of councillors, following a massive majority voting in favour of such action in a branch ballot.

Throughout this industrial action, the branch has been willing to meet the Council to start talks about a local settlement. But the Council has refused to do this. Instead, it argues that NALGO must reconsider its rejection of the Association of London Authorities' offer to enter negotiations on an ALA/NALGO basis. This is despite the fact that all the Labour councillors have been made aware of the impossibility of a settlement being reached on a corporate basis between NALGO and the ALA since the ALA is not a part of the recognised negotiating procedures, and negotiations with them could undermine the entire national and provincial negotiating machinery with devastating consequences. NALGO has, however, invited the ALA boroughs to make their offer to their local branches, so that negotiations could be conducted on a local basis. This would allow the ALA boroughs to make a co-ordinated offer without breaking up our negotiating machinery.

The impossibility of negotiations with the ALA on a corporate basis had been recognised by local Labour Party members. Two out of three Lambeth Constituency Parties have passed motions condemning their Councillors for the intransigent position they have adopted and urging them to enter into local negotiations with Lambeth NALGO. Despite this, at a recent meeting of the Labour group only two councillors voted in favour of *opening local* negotiations.

Anger

Apart from this, the behaviour of Labour Councillors during this dispute has, to say the least, caused anger amongst NALGO members as well as consternation amongst members of the local Labour Parties. There is insufficient space here to go into details, but their attitude is illustrated by the recent report of a Labour Councillor to his GMC in which he states...

"... there is also a danger that the dispute is reaching such heated and irrational levels that NALGO is being seen as the enemy within! and that in some melodramatic trial of strength, there can only be one victor! Both NALGO, and the Labour group (hopefully!) will still be there after the dispute is over, and will have to get back to working together. It is in the Party's interests to recognise this as well as the real difficulties that the Council faces and to urge its representatives on the Council not to engage in the latest blood sport: NALGO-bashing!"

Lambeth Residential Workers

WHERE ARE 'BRIEFING'S' COUNCILLORS GOING?

Frank Hansen (Brent Councillor)

One of London Briefing's main objectives has been to influence and change local politics in London. It was launched in a period when the left was beginning to say a lot about what Labour Authorities should be doing – i.e. No Cuts/No Rates – "Take on the Government!", etc. – but had no real practical influence upon the course of events.

Before 1981 only a small handful of Labour Councils, such as Lambeth, were prepared to defend jobs and services. The majority were content to buckle under the weight of Tory pressure to cut. Briefing took the view — correct in my opinion – that no one (or small group of) authority(ies) could have a realistic chance of taking on the Government and winning. They were in a weak, isolated position and had little alternative but to use financial measures (rate increases) to defend themselves. The real challenge to the left wan't to pontificate about "bankruptcy", "Poplars and Clay Crosses" but to actually change the balance of forces to create a practical alternative to the cuts/rates syndrome.

Targets 81 and 82

Hence the Target 81 campaign aimed at creating a left-Labour G.L.C. and Target 82 to strengthen the left in the boroughs. The G.L.C. campaign was undoubtedly successful – although we didn't receive quite the thumping majority we had hoped for. Whatever the criticisms of Livingstone's administration, there can be little doubt that the balance sheet has been positive. Imperfect as it may be, the G.L.C. is a real gain for the left and a position of power from which a fight can be launched.

The borough campaign ran into the iceberg of Falklands hysteria. Labour remained a minority in London. We hung onto Brent and Lambeth (eventually) by the skin of our teeth and failed to recapture Wandsworth and Hammersmith and Fulham. The Tories had undoubtedly some success in making "profligate" Labour Councils unpopular in the eyes of the middle classes and sections of the working class, particularly home-owners. Nevertheless, it was a polarized election. The Labour vote, especially in inner London, was rock solid, producing excellent results in Islington and Camden, etc.

Real Gains

Also on the positive side, the left made real gains on many Labour-controlled authorities, although the right proved to be more entrenched on the G.L.C. and certainly more difficult to dislodge. Perhaps the most signigicant gain has been the formation of the Association of London Authorities (ALA), which comprises 11 Labour boroughs and the G.L.C. If anything practically encapsulates the work put into Target 81/82 it is the A.L.A. Imperfect as it may be, we have at least succeeded in laying the foundations for a united response in London local government. Whether the A.L.A. lives up to expectations remains to be seen. Nevertheless, we have taken a small step forward since 1981. Where we go from here, of course, is no easy matter.



DEFEND OUR SERVICES: Disabled education in Brent David Hoffman

In 1981-82 the left in the Party was at its zenith. We were fighting for Benn to be deputy leader and for a left Labour government, which would really take on the establishment. Target 81/82 was seen as a platform to launch a wider change in society. Radical Labour Councils would hold the front line until the left Labour government came to our rescue, doling out millions in rate support grant and enabling us to cut the rates! Clearly that strategy is now in ruins. Following the Tories' election victory, Labour Councils could hardly be more beleaguered, with abolition of the Metropolitan Counties and rate-capping looming on the 1984/85 horizon. If the Tories succeed in implementing these plans then the Labour left will truly have been routed and smashed in local government

Defensive Campaigns

Of course the A.L.A. and the G.L.C. are now launching defensive campaigns against these attacks. The "Defend London" campaign (perhaps not the best title), will be aiming to build up support in local communities and trades unions in defence of services. Such a campaign must be welcomed and fully supported. The other aspect of the strategy is to focus on the contradictions in the Tory Party between Central Government and Local Government and between Tories in the Commons and the Lords. Of course there is nothing wrong in trying to divide your opponents. However, there are great dangers in this type of strategy, particularly if it's seen as the only solution.

It is true that most Tory authorities are concerned about the plans for "rate-capping". But the proposed legislation divides "rate-capping" into two categories: generalised (affecting all authorities), and selective (affecting the "overspenders"). It already contains the seeds of carve-up whereby Tory opposition will be appeased by abandoning generalised rate-capping, leaving Labour Councils isolated and subject to selective punishment. Indeed it is ominous that the Government has now recognised the A.L.A. as the body to consult about the new legislation!

Lobbyist Approach

On the GLC abolition, the possibility of dividing the Tories in Parliament seems even smaller and too much emphasis on this "lobbyist" approach will undoubtedly weaken the real support which the G.L.C. has built up on the left. Royals opening the Thames Barrier may impress a few Tories and Liberals, but it isn't exactly the best way to mobilise the masses in Brixton or Kilburn. Sooner or later the A.L.A. and the G.L.C. must realise that the only force which can really split the Tory ranks and defeat the Government is a united response

Dagenham Witch-hunt

OF THE 84 London CLPs, Dagenham has the 8th lowest membership of around 400 [the other 7 are all safe Tory seats like Chelsea and Westminster). It is therefore strange that its Executive Committee should indulge in practices calculated to reduce that membership.

The following article is a description of the attempted humiliation of an active Socialist, by the Dagenham EC at a special Sunday morning meeting, by the member himself, Charlie Baker.

The given reason for the special EC meeting was a letter, from the Deputy Leader and Chair of Finance of the Barking and Dagenham ruling Labour Group [George Brooker], to the Dagenham CLP complaining that Charlie Baker had acted in an uncomradely manner.

His 'crime' was that in his capacity as Press Officer to the local Campaign Against the Cuts, an organisation unfortunately unaffiliated to the Party, Comrade Baker drew the attention of the local press to a letter which had appeared in the Hackney Gazette. George Brooker was a senior housing officer in Hackney until he recently accepted early retirement.

On Sunday 17th October 1983, George Brooker — Deputy Leader of Barking & Dagenham Council — had a vision (it was a visit from the Archangel Gabriel) who made George the Thirteenth Disciple, on the understanding that he, and I quote, "cuts out the cancer and the festering sore of leftwing socialism". This is not a joke. This really was stated by George — so all you Socialists had better watch out!!!!

It was pure coincidence that George had this vision shortly before a special Dagenham CLP executive meeting, which turned out to be a 'Kangaroo Court'. I was requested to attend, but received no official communication indicating that George Brooker had accused me of trying to discredit him — as if that were possible. I was accused of attempting to publicise a letter that gave some indication of George's activities whilst working for Hackney Council. Incidentally, the letter was not published locally but appeared in an issue of the Hackney Gazette.

Anyway, the EC decided by a simple majority to pander to George's ego and I was told:

1. To apologise to George for my activities. (I apologised but George refused to accept the apology).

That a motion of censure had been passed on me for uncomradely behaviour — though George has rarely displayed comradely behaviour towards me.

3. That any future communication to the Press by me must first be ratified by councillors — No Way!

George and his Allies had earlier requested my expulsion from the Labour Party. So, to make sure that an inquiry will take place into the constitution of this EC meeting, I nave given my resignation pending the outcome of a regional executive inquiry.

NOTE: At this meeting, George Brooker also stated that he had been approached by the SDP who 'guaranteed' him 10,000 votes. George! For GOD'S SAKE AND OURS GO AND JOIN THEM AS THEY NEED A THIRTEENTH DISCIPLE!

Charlie Baker, Dagenham CLP and TGWU

from the Labour movement and local communities. How to achieve such unity and how to mobilise a working-class based fightback must be at the centre of the debate, not relegated to a secondary role behind some clever gimmicks centred on Parliament.

Eventually the A.L.A. is going to have to make a stand which goes beyond propaganda camapigning and poses a real challenge to the Tories. The issue is when and how. Is rate-capping the best issue to fight upon? After all, even if the legislation is defeated, we will still be faced with the onerous choice of high-rate rises versus massive cuts. Can we develop a mass movement in defence of services which poses as its main demand the continuation of a financial system (rate rises) which place an intolerable burden on many working people?

Even Harsher Penalty System

In the past rate rises have been accepted as the only real means of preserving jobs and services, i.e. as a necessary evil when we are fighting from a position of weakness, not as a solution to the problem. For 1983/84, i.e. even before rate-capping has been introduced, the Tories have announced an even harsher penalty system that threatens to withold virtually all government grant from many Labour authorities. The rate rises needed to compensate for this withdrawal of funds could be astronomical.

One real problem is that Tory threats in the past haven't always turned out to be as bad as they seemed at first. Last year, for instance, Brent was talking about a 50% rate increase just to stand still. At the end of the day we ended up with a 20% increase and significant growth. In a similar way (using special funds) other authorities were able to "muddle through".

If the rate increase can be "massaged" again next year then most authorities will continue to "muddle through" with no cuts/no growth. There will be a strong temptation to do this since it may be, with rate-capping, this is our last opportunity to use rates to defend services. An additional bonus may be that having lost most of our rate support grant we will be in a similar position to Camden and the G.L.C., who now only have to contend with inflation and growth. Although having escaped the frying pan of R.S.G. we'll end up in the fire of rate-capping the following year!

Defy the Government

Politically the Government is forcing us into rate increases this year to prepare the ground for rate-capping. But what if they have gone over the top and the penalty system for this year actually sticks and compensatory rate increases are 50% plus? Surely there is a case for the A.L.A. saying "enough is enough", defying the Government and refusing to implement cuts or rate increases? Liverpool already seems to be taking this path, although nobody is quite clear about the exact details of their strategy of how far they are prepared to go.

Some members of the A.L.A. are not entirely progressive (i.e. not adverse to cuts), and are unlikely to be drawn into a militant stance Nevertheless, this possibility must be placed firmly on the agenda for the A.L.A. Conference in the New Year. In the meantime, no doubt, Labour leaders will be frantically consulting their Chief Executives about possible loopholes in the penalty system and keeping their predicted rate rises under their hats. Financial wizardry aside, ultimately it will be Environment Minister Jenkin who will determine whether or not "muddling through" prevails. Whatever the figures next year, the A.L.A. must prepare itself for a major battle.

After Your Jobs!

The Tory controlled Westminister City Council has found a new way to undermine opposition from its employees and their unions to its programme of massive cuts and redundancies. This threat comes in the seemingly innocuous form of a newsletter containing a questionaire which invites employees to give their views on ways of improving efficiency and asks if they would like to receive personal letters from the Tory leader, Lady Porter, on matters of importance. Prizes of a video cassette recorder and a colour T.V. are offered for the two completed questionaires which contain the most 'constructive' suggestions.

The Tories claim the news sheet is designed to improve communications and to allay anxieties. What is the truth? The Tories in **Westminster,** one of the two richest boroughs in London (the other is the City of London), have always kept their rates relatively low for the wealthy residents and businesses which dominate the area, by rigid economy in the services provided. Now, however, even maintaining this inadequate level of service will need an increase in the rates next year. To avoid this the council has embarked on an extensive programme of cuts and privatisation, which must cause considerable job losses.

Against this background the true purpose of the newsletter becomes apparent. First, it is a public relations job, an attempt to hide the destruction of local services behind talk of the need to restructure the council organisation in the interests of greater economy and efficiency. The Tories have just appointed a public relations officer at an annual salary of £20,000, while talking about the need for stringent economy.

The second aim is more sinister. The newsletter and questionaire is designed to undermine worker solidarity by appealing to employees over the heads of their unions and by putting pressure on individuals to acquiesce in the programme of cuts and privatisation either through fear of the sack or in the hope of future favours. The newsletter hints rewards for those who make no trouble; the less dutiful will be rewarded with redundancy.

So far the union response has been fairly robust. NALGO has returned, unfilled, some 1300 of the questionaires and others have been sent back by individuals either empty or with rude comments. Only about 100 have been returned completed. It will be interesting to see what happens to the rest.

Nevertheless, the warning for all workers in Tory controlled boroughs is clear. Beware the Tories bearing gifts! They are after your jobs and your unions.

PAULA WATSON
(Westminster South CLP)

London's Bleeding

As Norman Fowler's staff cuts follow on the heels of recent financial cuts, a serious fightback from both health workers and local communities is being organised. There are now 21 active 'Health Emergency' Campaigns across the 30 London Health Districts. Local Labour Party activists have been centrally involved in many of these and have found a massive public outcry as the effects of the cuts are beginning to sink home. We are now fighting for the very existence of the National Health Service — there were already 700,000 people on hospital working lists BEFORE the present round of cuts!

Lewisham & North Southwark

As outlined last month, a broad-based campaign is now well-established, having united two separate campaigns that had sprung up at opposite ends of the health authority area. The October District Health Authority meeting was lobbied by around 400 protestors, including a large number of hospital workers from Guys, where all but the teaching unions had called for a strike in support of the lobby. With 3 newly-appointed members, the balance on the DHA swung 10-9 in favour of cuts. St Olaves in Bermondsey and 180 beds across the district will now close. The campaign has been organising regular public meetings, leafletting and petitioning and will be gearing a major part of its future activity towards the action hospital workers can take to save jobs and keep open wards and hospitals. Strong Labour Party support for both last year's pay dispute and the present campaign have caused the COHSE branch at Hither Green Hospital to affiliate to the local Party. Campaign contact: 852-5088.

Haringey

The Prince of Wales hospital was occupied on Wednesday 9th November to prevent the threatened closure. The local Trades Council has been involved in the setting up of a local Health Emergency Campaign, and the Hornsey & Wood Green Labour Party devoted the first edition of their newsletter to the campaign.

Hillingdon

Hillingdon has been leading the fightback in London with *two* occupations of small hospitals faced with closure. The Hayes Cottage Hospital, a small 32-bed unit with some geriatric patients and a weekly surgery, provided excellent local service, a factor usually ignored when determining where the axe will fall. The hospital was occupied a week before it was due to close, and both NUPE and COHSE have made the strike official. The response from the local community has been tremendous, and at a mass meeting of staff, the workers at Northwood and Pinner Cottage Hospital, also threatened with closure, voted to occupy also. The Hayes Occupation Committee have stated:

This is an action we would like to see repeated wherever cuts have been proposed. Is it possible in your area?

Campaign contact: 573-5593 (Hayes Occupation) 652-4182 ex 1 (Northwood Occupation).

Hampstead

In Hampstead, the campaign Labour Party have initiated the campaign, organising public meetings. 99 jobs are threatened.

Hounslow

300 jobs are threatened in Hounslow; the Trades Council have responded with an excellent edition of their local bulletin outlining the effects of these cuts. Campaign contact: Vernon Menitt 570-9961.

Wandsworth

With the closure of the South London Womens Hospital, Wandsworth has lost 36% of its beds in ten years. 210 jobs are threatened, and it has been ordered to cut its budget by £807,000 by the end of next March. A local Health Emergency Campaign has been launched, based at the Trade Union Resource Centre.

Campaign contact: 228-1163.

The Labour Party has produced a campaign pack on the health cuts. They are also sending an ambulance with campaign materials around the country.



Patrick Mc Kitrick.

Camberwell

One of the main threats in Camberwell is that of privatisation. Despite the fact that the District Health Authority admits it has no one capable of processing the applications, it has put the laundry service out to tender.
Campaign contact: Southwark Trade Union Support Unit 582-8555.

Greenwich

The Labour Council in Greenwich has thrown its weight behind the campaign, where cuts include the closure of the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital. Two successive DHA meetings have been abadoned.

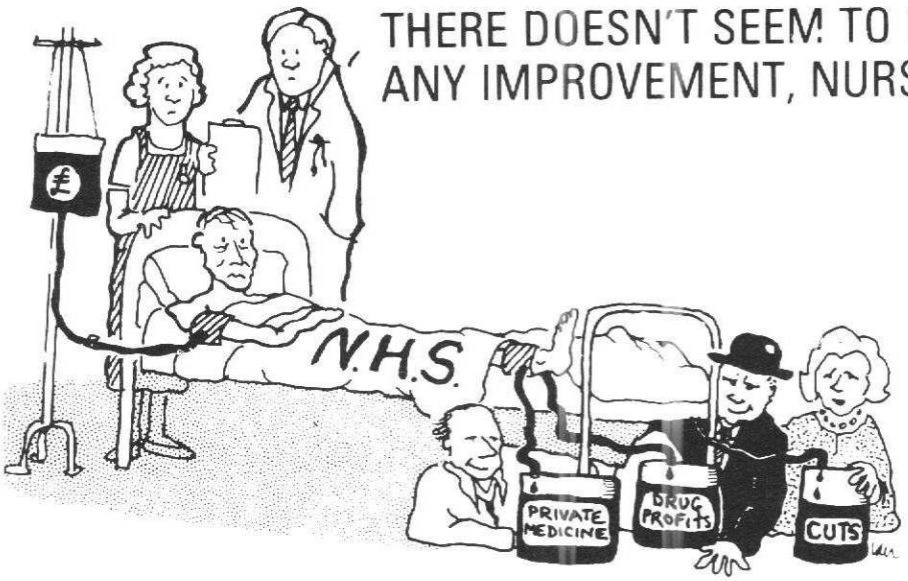
For the first time, job cuts are being demanded in the NHS. 3,526 jobs will be lost in London unless we take action now.

Croydon

The well-established Public Services Defence Committee has been effective in chasing the District Health Authority around the building it meets in, as it attempts to make the cuts in secret.
Campaign contact: Trade Union Support Unit 684-4907.

Islington

A lobby of the District Health Authority on December 5th is being organised. A local campaign, involving the Community Health Council, has been established. The first meeting was chaired by MP Jeremy Corbyn, who has done much to get the campaign off the ground.
Campaign contact: 263-9450.



Brent

This is the DHA that first gave the lead to the rest of the country. Here, the Community Health Council have proved their worth in acting as a voice of the local people. In Brent, Neasden Hospital and Wembley are both targets for closure. 300 staff are threatened. The District Nursing Officer has described the cuts as "horrendous".

Hackney

In Hackney, up to four hospitals and 500 jobs are under threat. Council workers have already taken strike action in support of the health workers. The Hackney Health Emergency, a longstanding community-based campaign, has had demonstrations of up to 1000 people.

Barking, Havering & Brentwood

The Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency has been quick to respond to threats on £435,000 cuts from Lawson and 103 jobs to be lost from Fowler. It is one of the harder hit Outer London authorities.

Hammersmith & Fulham

The fightback has been boosted by the setting up of a local Health Emergency Campaign, and active trade union support from Charing Cross Hospital.

There are also active Health Emergency campaigns in Waltham Forest, Paddington & North Kensington, Redbridge (Save Our Health Services), Victoria and Merton & Sutton. There has also been public campaigning by the London Party, trades unions and community health councils in Bromley, Bexley, Newham, Bloomsbury, and Enfield.

For details of cuts in your area and how you can get involved in your local campaign, ring the GLC's HEALTH EMERGENCY HOTLINE on 633-8523 (24-hour ansaphone).

Fightback in Hampstead

Petitions, organised by Branches, were collectively presented to Hampstead DHA on the 9th Nov — with copies going to the Government and the local MP (the Tory ex-junior Health Minister Finsberg).

The DHA 11:3 decision to implement cuts will result in the loss of 99 jobs at the Royal Free Hospital — where the ward for children's bone-marrow transplants still remains closed, where a kidney unit double the present size is needed, and where patients recovering from major surgery can no longer be sent for convalescence — unless they can pay themselves. Patients from Friern psychiatric hospital, when it closes, will be put at risk because of lack of funds for community care, and jobs and wards at the Whittington Hospital are under threat.

Public response to the petition has been overwhelmingly pro-NHS and hostile to the cuts:— People have gathered to sign outside tube stations and at street stalls, 1000's of signatures have been collected during the week of evening sessions at the Royal Free, and one local member received the support of 95% of residents in her street when taking it round.

In the ten days of so that the petition has been going well over 6000 people have signed. Branch and LPYS public meetings have been crowded, the local CHC has taken a positive stance, but local unions are, unfortunately, being very cautious.

We can now only live in hope that the massive public antagonism towards the calculated and callous actions of the government, the N.E.Thames Regional Health Authority and Hampstead DHA will have some effect...

Alan Rippington
Hampstead CLP



South London Hospital for Women seems certain to close next year in the latest round of health cuts, despite strong local protests. Some of the money saved is supposedly going to improve facilities at St George's Hospital, Balham which serves the same catchment area. A survey of local GP's though has found that most would in fact transfer their patients to St Thomas's hospital which is due to cut some 15% of its obstetric beds (100% used by women) at the time that the South London is due to close. So why is St George's not favoured by many doctors and patients? The answer is that it is badly served by public transport – but that is another question.

Hackney: Labour members support cuts

Hackney Borough Council's three Labour members of the local District Health Authority (DHA) voted *for* cuts in health services on Monday Oct. 31. And it had been decided to do this at the Council's Health Services Sub-Committee the previous Wednesday. An emergency resolution from Hackney North GC condemned the decision as did Hackney Health Emergency (HHE).

As the City & Hackney DHA were obliged to withdraw their 'consultation' document on health cuts by force of public feeling on Sept. 26th, the DHA have come up with new proposals. *They are hardly 'new' and are still cuts.* Yet Labour members, despite clear guidance from the HHE AGM, voted *for* them.

CUT 87 BEDS

As pensioners demonstrated outside, the DHA agreed to the 'new' option 3 (out of 4); to cut 87 acute beds at St Leonards and replace them with 25 beds for long-stay elderly patients and 25 convalescent beds *all drawn from other health services* in the District.

So while the building at St Leonards remains, as a 'community' hospital, its acute services and function as a General Hospital have been cut. The 50 'new' beds are not new at all, as they are all to be taken from other hospitals. The cuts become disguised – but 87 beds are lost, the same as if St. Leonards were closed outright. Plans for nursing homes for the elderly, to the tune of £2.6 billion are also scrapped under this Option 3. Finally, the jobs lost will be *greater* than if St. Leonards was actually closed, because of the reduction in the Community Health Services and the fact that all the jobs at the hospital now would simply be ones transferred from other hospitals.

The original plans to close St Matthews, the German and the Mothers together with this would make the jobs lost *at least* 500.

CRUEL SHAM

But before you think this DHA is completely beyond the pale, they *did* vote not to implement Fowler's Manpower cuts! (172 jobs). But that, as Paul O'Brien, secretary of HHE points out is a cruel sham. He calculates that they've *already* lost 87 jobs through unfilled vacancies etc. this year, and aren't going to suddenly fill all the vacancies that come up now over the next 9 months. That 'stand' against the Government in the context of the jobs already gone and those planned to go, is a sick joke.

The simple truth is no-one can provide a decent health service and stick to the Tory cash limits. There isn't a tactical way of approaching it, an acceptable compromise, or a way of getting round it. If you stick to a reducing budget (which the DHA is) in an area which needs £13.25 million just to stand still, there will be massive cuts, job losses, pain caused and deaths.

The people of Hackney worked this out months ago – but not the Labour members on the DHA. What right have they got to make cuts when they have been specifically told by HHE, the 1,000 strong protests of Hackney people and their own constituency parties not to?

Over the next few months the crunch will come when health workers, other workers and the people of Hackney will say no and act to occupy the hospitals. What will the Labour members do then? Hold a Health Services sub-committee to work out another sell-out?

Paul O'Brien secretary of HHE said, *'We don't get strength by sitting back and waiting for something to happen because we're not strong enough just now. Now is not the time to pull back. Get on and organise* now *for the coming battles. The campaign is gathering strength and will challenge and take on Thatcher. A simple and effective contribution all Labour councils must make is to pass resolutions saying no health cuts . . . and mean it!'*

Next City & Hackney DHA meeting 19th December. Make sure you're there and tell them AGAIN! – no cuts! no job losses!

by JO THWAITES



26·9·83: D.H.A. Chairman Louis Freeman trying to leave meeting after refusing to use casting vote against proposed health cuts.

Andrew Wiard (Report)

'THEY'RE KILLING US SLOWLY'

PEGGY EDWARDS who runs the Regan Way Old People's Club in Shoreditch, and goes to all the Hackney Health Emergency protests and lobbies, including the Pensioners Lobby of the City & Hackney District Health Authority meeting on Oct 31st, spoke to Jo Thwaites (Hackney North & Stoke Newington GC).

When we went to the Health meeting last Monday, they wouldn't let us in. That's wrong, they should let us in – they're deciding about *our* lives. That's why people are angry, and they'll just get angrier. The Tories don't want the people to know what's going on.

Round here, St. Leonards is our only hospital. We need it. Shoreditch is an old people's area, they can't go miles to other hospitals. Barts isn't the same – there's private *paying* patients there and that's who gets the care. It's not like that at St. Leonards, the nurses really care for you, probably because it's a smaller hospital.

They've talked about opening a Homerton Hospital but that's not Shoreditch. We need our own hospital for the old *and* the young – a General Hospital.

It's terrible what the Tories are doing. An old lady said to me the other day, 'If we're ever ill now, we might as well lay down and die. They don't care.' And she's right. I've lived here 24 years. First they took away our Town Hall, then they took Shoreditch junior school, and the comprehensive's due to close next summer when all the kids will have to go up to Dalston; now they're trying to take away our hospitals.

HYPOTHERMIA

Last winter 4 elderly people round here died of hypothermia, because of the bad conditions we have. The Council estates are disgusting; you've got to see it to

HOSPITAL CLOSURES IN CROYDON

Health Service cuts in Croydon have not been so hard or dramatic as in other parts of London. Croydon is officially recognised as under-funded. 38% of Croydon people treated in hospital go to hospitals outside of the area. Thus as each round of cuts is announced the District Health Authority itself protests, the officers trot out statistics to demonstrate our poverty of provision, and cuts are reduced.

When the new surgical block for Mayday Hospital was built to replace outdated buildings, the Regional Health Authority promised £2 million extra to open and run it. Some closures were planned as services were moved into the new hospital. However the Regional Health Authority decided not to give Croydon the money needed and two further district hospitals hospitals and parts of others were lined up for closure.

The Labour Party and community groups organised public meetings, a leaflet campaign, a petition and letters to MPs. The RHA restored £500,000 and the hospital in well-heeled Purley was saved, while Norwood Hospital in the poorer north was closed.

The new hospital is due to open in January, a year late, and the consequent reorganisation of services makes it difficult to identify which closures are rationalisations and which are due to revenue cuts. Previous cuts have been absorbed by deferring maintenance of buildings and spending contingency funds. Now the cuts will hit at the heart of the service. Earmarked for possible closure are casualty and outpatient services at Purley and Norwood, the unit which identifies the needs of handicapped children and plans their long-term treatment, an acute or geriatric ward, the Family Planning clinic and two of ten coronary and intensive care beds.

Hastily arranged lobbies of health authority meetings have been supported by Labour Party members and trade unionists from health service and other unions. A private meeting of the DHA was invaded and had to be abandoned. At the public meeting of the authority it was clear some members were concerned — two voted with the Labour members and four abstained. There was uproar when the vote to refuse to consider the cuts further was narrowly lost. The meeting had to be adjourned.

The Labour Party are organised locally for resistance and expect to have to continue the campaign. Whatever the fate of present proposals more cuts will follow and some services are further threatened by privatisation.

The real battle, however, is with the Government. We must challenge the economic policies which have led to the cuts, and the social priorities which put greed before need. Croydon's struggle is repeated in every district of this country and we must continue to fight for the services we all need at some time in our lives. This is a life and death struggle. To fail will be the death of more of us.

Maggie Mansell,
Secretary,
LP Local Government Committee,
Croydon

Barking and Degenham Health Emergency was set up with the prospect that our District Health Authority was meeting the following week to axe 103 jobs locally.

Some of the proposals to meet this target are the closure of one ward and turning others into five day wards, reducing pupil nurse intake and cutting catering, cleaning and admin jobs.

Thanks to facilities provided by a GLC backed employment resource centre we were able to initiate opposition to these proposals quickly.

Following a well attended public meeting and then a planning meeting a very effective demonstration and lobby was mounted at the DHA meeting. The cuts were not implemented on that day but the axe still looms.

The next DHA meeting, when again they would consider the proposals was on November 17th. And our campaign gains momentum daily. A petition urging the DHA not to implement the cuts attracted more than 2000 signatures in just a few hours in Barking shopping precinct.

Having attracted much local media attention we are convinced that it will be very difficult to carry out these cuts with the weight of local opinion strongly in defence of the NHS.

Further details contact Gill Rogers 595-4252/3

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Next London Briefing Editorial Board Meetings:
Monday 21st November at 6.30pm;
Monday 9th January 1984 at 6.30pm;
both at County Hall.

Next issue out Thursday 19th January 1984. Deadline for articles Saturday 7th January.

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

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING
Christmas Fund-Raising Social.
Friday December 16, from 8pm at 3 Davenant Road, N19 (off Holloway Road). Free food. Cost £1.50 and bring a bottle.

(CONTINUED)

believe it. We went to demonstrate at the Council meeting, which they didn't like, but the next day they came down to make a list of all the repairs – that list came to 2,000!

The Government put food prices up, they don't give a damn about how the poor people live. Thatcher's tried to starve us out, freeze us out, now she's just trying to kill us off, by closing the hospitals. I'd just like them to come here and see what they're doing to us, but they don't care, they can pay, they've got cars and money.

They say Hackney and Shoreditch is the last place to get anything, but that's not true – we *never* got nothing, they always take things *away*. Another old lady said to me we were better off in the war than what we are now. They condemned Hitler for using the gas chambers, but really he was kinder because this way they're killing us slowly.

'TAKE A TAXI'

There's a 94-year-old woman at the lunch club who had to go to Barts which is a long way. They just said 'Take a taxi'. She hasn't got that kind of money. So if we can't get to Barts, which nobody round here likes anyway, and St Leonards is closed, there's nowhere.

The people of Shoreditch, old and young, are worse off than they've ever been. But it's so stupid. They've built up St Leonards, put money into it as they said they would when they closed the Met 8 years ago. They promised then that St Leonards would stay open indefinitely.

OCCUPATION

I know people round here would support the hospital workers if they were to have an occupation. We need that hospital as a General Hospital for the old and the young. We need another uprising like the Jarrow Walk. People won't take any more. The sooner the people wake up and revolt against the Government, the better – before she kills us all off!

Peggy Edwards

WILL THE CAMPAIGNS TO SAVE THE GLC WORK?

The Government have said that in 1986 the Greater London Council will disappear. The Conservative party have gone to great lengths to give a committment to abolish the GLC, therefore the proposals can only be seen as a political manoeuvre resulting in cuts in public spending and a reduction in public services. The Tories overriding aim is clear, but will the Labour Movements response be swift enough and determined enough to stop these proposals.

At the moment there are several campaigns to save the GLC and ILEA and as yet no real co-ordination, although one hopes this will develop shortly. On the 14th Sept. the 'Democracy for London' campaign held its mobilisation conference for all shops stewards, representatives and activists. This campaign is being organised by the trade unions such as NALGO, NUPE, GLCSA, GMWU and TGWU. The idea is that the campaign should involve outside groups in the community such as trade unionists, pensioners, parents, users of public transport etc. in order to publicise the role of the GLC/ILEA and how it provides services for Londoners and furthermore to explain the threats to these services. To do this they are proposing a day of action on the 24th Jan.

The campaign is seen as independent from the Labour Administration and refuses to accept any financial grants. Incidently the GLC has its own Campaign Committee which directs its own campaign.

A further campaign being run independently of the Labour administration and also seperate from the GLC Campaign is the ILEA Campaign led by teaching and non-teaching unions involved in Inner London and representatives of parents organisations. This campaign which is the third 'Save ILEA' campaign is traditionally seen as a broadly based popular campaign. Within the organisation the Inner London Teachers Union (ILTA) are calling for a one-day action on the 8th December, in order to protest about the threat to ILEA and also to mobilise for the 24th Jan.

At the moment all the campaigns, and there are numerous local initiatives, seem to be wide ranging and aimed at producing a climate that will gain a climb-down or significant concession from the Government. I personally do not think this will happen. The Government are determined to rid London and the other Metropolitan Boroughs of this highly successful 'red filth' and however lousy the White paper is they are determined to get it through. When we reach this stage the trade unions have a decision to make; they either take on the Government by way of extra parliamentary activity, and the timing of this will be crucial, or they carry on campaign simply directed towards softening the blow of abolition to their members and users of the services.

Lesley Catchpowle, Greenwich CLP.

ISLINGTON LABOUR CENTRE

129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

Meeting rooms for hire. £16 all day, £8 evenings only. Close to Finsbury Park station and buses.

Ring 607 0425 for details.

Welcome to Camden Labour Briefing

Just weeks after the establishment of a local Briefing group in Islington, Labour Party activists in nearby Camden have followed suit.

At its September meeting, Camden Labour Left — set up in the wake of the general election — decided to transform itself into Camden Labour Briefing.

Members felt that Briefing's national network would provide a valuable boost to local efforts to organise the broad left of the local parties.

The group will have meetings on the fourth Thursday of every month and will produce a regular newsheet.

Editorial meetings — open to all members of Holborn & St Pancras and Hampstead & Highgate C.L.P.s — will be held on the third Monday of each month.

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

Christmas Fund-Raising Social

Saturday December 10th, 8pm to 12 midnight. The Cock Tavern, Chalton St, NW1. Entrance £1.

Next meeting

Thursday 24th November, 8pm, Camden Labour Rooms, 8 Camden Road, NW1. 'What Next for Labour Left?' Speaker: Reg Race.

NOW OPEN

LEWISHAM LABOUR CLUB

The East Lewisham and Deptford Labour Parties are pleased to inform Briefing readers that their joint headquarters and Labour Club is now open in Limes Grove, Lewisham, SE13. The Parties hope that the Club will form a focus for socialist discussion and initiatives in Lewisham and already many organisations from within the labour movement such as the Trades Council and tenants' association are beginning to use the Club.

The Club is open to all who support the aims of the labour movement, and rooms are available for hire for meetings, socials, etc.

Enquiries to Martyn Day, Lewisham Labour Club, Limes Hall, Limes Grove, Lewisham, SE13. Daytime tel. no. 278 8131.

Apologies to Dave Wetzel

In the last issue, we reported on the decision of the GLC to invite royalty to open the Thames Barrier. In the list of those in the GLC Labour Group who opposed this decision, we left out Dave Wetzel. Dave *did* vote against. Sorry!

GLC and Indonesia

In 1969, Indonesia annexed West Papua and since then has opened the country up to extensive multi-national exploitation of its timber, oil and mineral resources. The repressive Indonesian government, which receives military equipment from the British government, has colonised much fertile land with Javanese peasants, and has destroyed indigenous communities.

Yet little is known of this outside of the region. Now SETH RUMKOREM, the guerrilla leader of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) is planning a world tour to raise public support.

In this context the Greater London Labour Party asked the GLC to ask Seth Rumkorem to visit the GLC during Peace Year and suggested a reception should be planned to which relevant representatives of far eastern communities in London could be asked.

The following reply was received by the GLLP from John Wilson, the GLC Labour Group Whip. The issue has been taken up by Andy Harris and the motion below was to go to the Labour Group at the end of November.

NADINE FINCH

Dear George,

You wrote recently (17 June) requesting a reception, to be funded by the ratepayers of London, for Seth Rumkorem and the OPM.

At the present time, with the GLC about to embark on a major battle for existence, what possible sympathy can we hope to gain from Londoners if we are seen to spend their money on entertaining guerillas from what must be to many completely unheard-of parts of the world? To compound this by making it a 'beano' on the rates for the Labour Party will only be harming ourselves and the 'Save the GLC' campaign. I am certain that, on reflection, you will see this too.

My only concern is the damage that our enemies will be able to inflict on us — a Labour GLC — when we are seen to be entertaining guerillas from all over the world whilst flirting with the IRA. As yet, we have not succeeded in establishing ourselves as the people who can improve the environment and lifestyle of the Londoners who elected us.

We, the GLC, need the support of London's ratepayers. Let us, as a national Labour Party, entertain Seth.

Yours fraternally,

JOHN WILSON

Motion for GLC Labour Group

"That this Labour Group deplores the reply sent by the Chief Whip to the General Secretary of the London Labour Party.

That the Chief Whip writes a letter of apology on behalf of the Group.

That seeing as all manner of no doubt worthy people are having receptions held in their honour in this building all the time surely a request from the Regional EC for a reception to be held for the leader of the opposition forces in West Irian, whose country is being invaded by the Indonesian aggressor, is not unreasonable.

That in future all such invitations from Labour Party sources be brought to Labour Group for us to decide.

That the request be agreed to."

Moved by ANDY HARRIS

Gay rights model amendment

LONDON Labour Campaign for Gay Rights is pressing its supporters this year to take up this issue in their own parties, aiming at getting a debate at this year's London Labour Party conference.

So far there is one resolution, from Vauxhall CLP, and a debate will be ensured by a number of supporting amendments. LCGR is suggesting the following as an amendment:

"This party resolves to: [a] Affiliate to the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights. [b] Send it a donation of £50. [c] Organise a rally in cooperation with London LCGR. to publicise its policy on Gay Rights and encourage Gay people in London to join the Labour Party. [d] In addition to this produce (i) A leaflet, (ii) Place advertisements in the Gay media, along the lines of 'London Labour Party supports Gay rights, join the Labour Party'. [e] To organise a campaign of education amongst the membership of the party on the oppression of Lesbians and Gays, in conjunction with London LCGR. [f] Encourages Labour-controlled authorities to take up the lead taken by Islington council and adopt similar equal opportunities policies".

To avoid all the amendments being lumped together supporters should alter this model amendment in some way. Comrades seeking advice and further information (plus news of successes!) can contact the following: Mike Haran (659 2938), Martin Goodsell (263 9484), Bob Cant (341 0666), Peter Purton (571 5019).

In addition 'straight' comrades are asked to encourage and support Gay comrades as delegates to conference. All CLPs have 3 delegates so it is quite possible. An *OUT* Gay & Lesbian presence is *vital*.

Supporters are also reminded that I CGR still has a pathetic 6 London CLPs affiliated, and these do not include such well-known places as Islington and Vauxhall even. It is not just up to Lesbians and Gays to take this up! See membership application form!

Dear Briefing, Gay Young Socialists meets at Marchmont community centre, Marchmont St, WC1, *every 4 weeks, on Sunday at 6:00 pm. Next meeting, December 11th. Further details from Martin (01-263-9484).*

London Labour Campaign for Gay Rights meets at Marchmont community centre (see above), on Sundays at 6:00. Further details; Mike (01-659-2983); Bob (01-341-0666).

Gay NUR is just forming. Launch meeting soon. Open to all *Lesbian and Gay Railworkers. Further details, Gay NUR c/o 119 Southwyck, Coldharbour Lane, London SW9.*

Lesbians in the Labour Party, next National *meeting — Saturday November 26th in County Hall, c/o Gays the word bookshop, Marchmont St., London WC1.*

An everyday story of the Labour left

The past eighteen months has seen the gradual disiliusionment of a number of comrades with the Lewisham Left forum which has played a large part in changing the face of Labour politics in Lewisham.

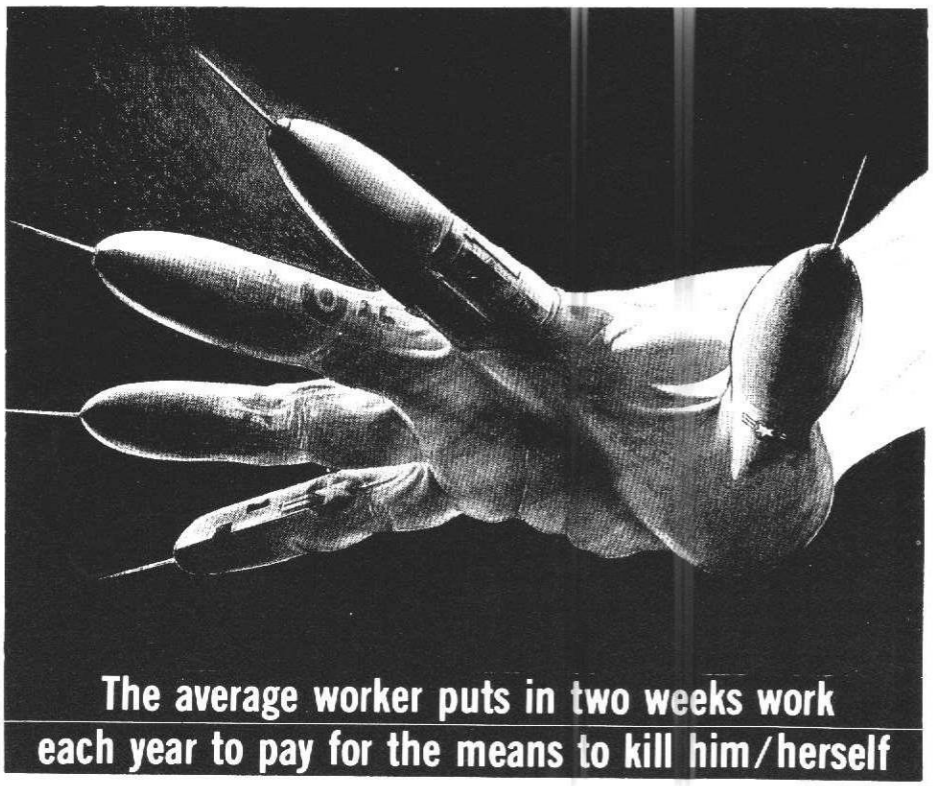
Major advancements have indeed been made in a number of areas but that original unity is wearing rather thin. As far as I am concerned the problems started at the very time when our successes were most marked. When we approached the stage where we were able to put up comrades for all the various positions a number of the left suddenly backed off as if to say 'Hold on, I haven't got time for all that work'. Others who did take on positions have also decided it was not such a good idea and have since backed off. This has meant that rather than the necessary work being divided between all on the left it has fallen on just a few which is the very thing the left, in my opinion should avoid, not the least because it has led to a division in the group between those who are prepared to take on Party work and those who are not.

The second aspect of the problem has arisen from the failure of some comrades to appreciate the difference between criticism of the right and criticism of comrades on the left.

There are a number of examples of this problem with the most outstanding being firstly East Lewisham GC where members of the left hold all the key positions in the Party. Despite this the GC meetings have become increasingly difficult for the Chair to control with a good deal of the 'sniping' coming from members of the left. The second example is that of the left councillors. Immediately following the 1982 elections the left councillors were keen to attend left meetings to take part in the debates and to inform the left what was happening on the Labour Group. Instead of receiving the group's support the councillors found that they were being constantly criticised in a very negative way. That is not to say that the group should not be self critical but it is to say that the criticism should be positive. As a result of these probelms there has been an increasing disenchantment with the left meetings particularly from the councillors so that either they do not attend or they hold back from telling the group what is happening on the council.

Over the past couple of years I have relied heavily on the support, comradeship and discussions from Lewisham Left and I would consider it to be a tragedy if it split up. Unless, however, there is a greater sharing of the work and more importantly, a return to the left meetings being open, friendly and conducive to frank discussions I think there is a strong possibility that some members of the group will split off.

Martyn Day
Lewisham West CLP



An illustration from The Big Bang for Bureaucrats *by Leon Kuhn. This book combines a series of images (cartoons, some quite striking) with a series of quotes, many from Home Office Emergency Services Circulars which pinpoint just how fatuous and hypocritical the Government preparations for nuclear war are. It also goes on to point out that the root cause of nuclear war is capitalism. The ideal Christmas present for that awful aunt and uncle who think Mrs Thatcher is marvellous and voted Tory in the election.*

£3.95 in the shops or £4.60, including postage, from Burning Issues Ltd, 91 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6.

Scott Lidgett answers back

Cllr Andy Harris was kind enough to reply (November Briefing) to my article about the ravages of compulsory transfers of teachers in Scott Lidgett, a typical ILEA comprehensive (October Briefing). Unfortunately, while his resort to colourful language was entertaining, he avoided answering any of the educational issues, and addressed none of the points of concern.

1) A school, with a population of children whose average ability is significantly below the ILEA mean, was compelled to abandon remedial support for many of its children as a direct result of the Authority's cut (transfers).

2) In spite of many assurances by the Authority that the "curriculum" in its schools would be protected while resources (ie human beings) were re-allocated, subjects, which officers and elected members deemed inessential, were struck off, and their teachers were moved. Further cuts in provision next year are inevitable.

3) Pupils studying subjects like Art, which regularly achieved many 'O' level passes, have been downgraded in mid-course from 'O' level to C.S.E. because of the increased class sizes forced by the transfers.

Negligible Experience

4) The elected members, in their anxiety to disguise anti-working class cuts as good educational practice, persist in hiding behind the expertise of a body of inspectors and administrators whose personal experience of classroom teaching in London type comprehensive schools is negligible or marginal. One such expert for example, was prepared to assert that a class of 25 eleven year olds could be taught English, without remedial assistance, even with the spread of ability present in the Scott Lidgett classes. (Reading ages ranging from 12.5 years to below 5, ie unmeasurable, and average about 8 years). Bearing in mind that our task is to teach *all* our children, and not just the ones who can read and write, we would be prepared to be shocked and amazed at the skill and sympathetic understanding these experts could show, were they to be allowed to relinquish the rigours of pen pushing and re-embrace their first love — teaching Bermondsey boys.

5) The morale of London teachers is severely undermined when they see that long loyal service and experience count for nothing and that anyone, no matter how able, can be deprived of his/her post of responsibility and forced to accept the humiliation of a return to the bottom scale.

Socialist Planning?

The last two teachers to be transferred from Scott Lidgett have finally taken up their new posts and the School's fight is over for the present. Their personal tragedy will remain with them throughout their lives. While both took the unsolicited attacks on their careers badly, one has only just returned to work after receiving psychiatric help. The management have had their way, but are the transferees to understand that their fate is the fruit of *socialist* planning?



It needs to be emphasised that the Scott Lidgett case is not unusual. While the details will inevitably vary from school to school, the general effects and consequences are widespread. Hence the unwillingness of the London N.U.T. to give way on compulsory transfer. It would be failing in its duty to the children as well as the teachers were it to do otherwise.

In the face of the Government's onslaught on state education, it is specious, confusing and divisive for the ILEA Labour Group to cut standards in London while claiming to be defending education. Andy Harris, for example, in his letter, states his disagreement with the teachers, but gives no educational reasons. Nor will he be able to.

It is not in question that the ILEA, by comparison with other Education Authorities, is a good progressive authority and worth defending. It is regrettable, however, that the ILEA's Labour Members response to Government attacks is to make teachers in general and the London NUT in particular the scapegoat. The pressure on London teachers to drop their defence of educational standards and unite with the ILEA Labour Group in defending a good authority is increasing. It would be more appropriate for the Authority to unite with teachers in defending standards and fight an honest campaign.

London school children need and deserve the best education. Teaching well in London schools is difficult but far from impossible. The experience and commitment of London teachers needs to be nurtured and valued and not bludgeoned into submission.

Resolutions

Briefing readers should take up the issue in their parties. The ILEA Group and the London Party should receive resolutions supporting the teachers' case. The following motion could serve as a model:

"This (*organisation*) rejects the I.L.E.A.'s policy of compulsory movement of teachers as contrary to the interests of both children and teachers, poor educational practice, and, in the face of Government attacks of the I.L.E.A., destructively divisive.

"We demand that the ILEA Labour Group ends the forced movement of teachers immediately, irrespective of any concessions previously wrung from the workforce and we call on the London Labour Party Executive to ensure that this policy is implemented.

"We believe that the educational needs of London children in ILEA schools will be best met by voluntary co-operation between the teaching force and the Authority, and not by coercion.

"We further demand that the ILEA review its system of Educational Inspectors and Administrators to ensure that the advice and expertise relied upon by Members is appropriate to and in sympathy with the needs of London schoolchildren and comprehensive schools."

A Scott Lidgett Teacher

Thank you, Hampstead and Highgate

Hampstead & Highgate Labour Party,
Secretary,
35a Dennington Park Rd,
London NW6.
1st November 1983.

Dear Comrades,

At the recent meeting of our General Committee the following resolution was passed:

'This CLP appreciates the useful service played by London Labour Briefing to the Socialist Movement in our Metropolis and, in response to the present acute financial difficulties i.e. debts, that the journal faces, resolves to donate £50 to assist in ensuring its survival and calls on individual members also to support it'.

Accordingly, I enclose a cheque for £50.

Steamrollering our Cities

The publication of the goverment's green paper 'reallocation of transport facilities' is the latest in a series of official 'cmnds' detailing the future shape of London. It sets out the priority for transport in London in terms of a greatly expanded network of motorways. This strategic road network was abandoned in 1973 but is now the major priority of the Department of Transport (DTP) and has already been built into the governments road programme. The DTP will assume direct control over large sections of our present road network much of which will then be 'improved' ie transformed into motorway. The main routes for 'improvement' are the north and south circular, A1/A1000 and the north cross route which will link highbury corner with the M22 at Hackney Wick. These developments will blight and destroy large areas of our city. The massive inequalities of housing, education, health and employment will be further reinforced. Powerful developmental pressures are already driving resources out of London. The redistribution of capital to the M25 'sunbelt' will impoverish the inner city leaving it as a business and entertainments centre requiring a non-unionised pool of cheap labour employed in the service sector. This process is already well established in American cities.

ROAD LOBBY

The road lobby has been anxious to regain control of the road network in London as the GLC has abandoned hundreds of road improvement schemes. These will all be resurrected and policies for the restraint of road traffic will be jettisoned. A comprehensive lorry ban will be postponed until 2015 at the earliest. Until then the DTP will rely on the road haulage industry to 'voluntarily' reassign itself away from central London. The record of this industry doing anything voluntarily is nil. Coupled with the deregulation of buses, privatisation of road financing, government policy for transport in London is now completed.

The fragmentation of transport and ment is currently testing the public response to its transport plan through a series of planning responsibilities will ensure popular control over our city is overtaken by market forces determining the allocation of resources. We must organise and mobilise now to challenge these policies. The government is currently testing the public response to its transport plan through a series of public inquiries into road schemes at Finchley, Archway and Enfield. The appeal by the Amos Consortium to run private buses will be heard shortly. We must not abandon these sham exercises in consultation, we must use these inquiries as public forums for the presentation of our policies. Whilst the GLC and some Labour authorities have started to recognise the need for a campaigning attitude their response has been weak and fragmented. The inquiries are taking place in constituencies we must win if GLC elections are held again. We must focus on the central issue of who controls our city.

To be successful we need the full support of Labour boroughs, trade unions, the GLC and ALA. For 40 years, much of it with Labour administrations, the road lobby has wreaked blight and destruction in every other major city aided and abetted by the Poulson style of municipal adminstration. London remains the glittering prize with hundreds of millions of pounds at stake for contractors, developers and other spivs.

LAURENCE SPIGEL,
FINCHLEY LABOUR PARTY

Ethnic Minorities say Defend Labour London

WE HAVE no hesitation in joining the battle to defend the Labour GLC and the Labour ILEA. The Ethnic communities in London have no illusions about the reactionary racist forces being unleashed on Labour London. We know, too, that the Tory government's plan to introduce rate-capping is all a part of Mrs Thatcher's squalid campaign to push London back to the thirties, to the dole queues and soup-kitchens. As usual it will be the black communities who will suffer most from the cut-backs in services which the Tories are hellbent on pushing through despite opposition not only from the Labour movement, but also from many of their own supporters.

The initiatives by the GLC in focusing attention on the plight of the ethnic minorities, in exploring ways to assist our communities by setting up and backing industrial enterprises thereby creating much needed jobs, are and have been anathema to the Tories in central and local government.

The Greater London Labour Party through its Ethnic Minorities Working Party is mobilising the black communities for battle against the Tories at all levels of city and public life in London. A Labour GLC and the Labour ILEA are the only bulwarks against Mrs Thatcher's ferocious assault on socialist values.

The Consultative Conference held on October 29th at Acton was a powerful catalyst in encouraging trade unions, women's organisations and people in streets and shops, in schools and colleges, to join in demonstrations and lobbies that are being planned in every corner of London to focus the public mind on the enormity of the Tory crime to privatise London — to make it a haven for speculators and property developers.

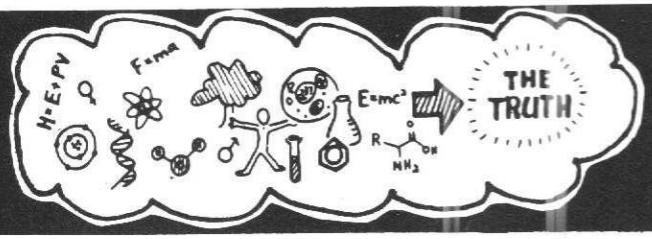
In education too, our support for the Labour ILEA in its fight against the one hundred million pounds cuts being imposed by the Tory government, will be whole-hearted. It is our communities which have always been at the receiving end of the principle of 'last to be hired and first to be fired'. And it is we who are the ones who suffer the consequences in our families in increasingly hostile environments.



Throughout London, the Ethnic Minorities Working Party will be convening further conferences, e.g. in Camden Town Hall on December 10, and hopefully elsewhere south of the river, where a dialogue with the ethnic communities at large will be continued with a view to involving them more in the Labour and trade union movements. Ethnic minorities look to the Labour Party for a lead in defence of their standards and conditions of life. The message from the conference of 29th October was loud and clear. The Tory steam-roller all set to crush the spirit of democracy in London — the product of hundreds of years of struggle by the ordinary men and women of London — must not be and will not be allowed to wreak its havoc.

Vidya Anand
Chairperson
[Ethnic Minorities Working Party of the Greater London Labour Party]
[Ilford South CLP]

science briefing



THE POLITICS OF SCIENCE

To be a scientist in any industrialised country – and this includes the countries of Eastern Europe – is to be part of a middle-class or elite profession motivated by status. Scientific research is governed by the economic and value systems of the society in which it operates. By the distribution of research and development (R&D) funding, science is closely geared to the needs of the military, the thirst for profit and the pursuit of status by the academic establishment.

As a consequence science and technology frequently fail to meet the basic needs of society for improving health, living conditions, communications etc. Some of the best workers in science and technology are diverted into the productive blind alley of armaments. Consequently their skills are lost to R&D for socially beneficial ends while helping to reinforce the power of entrenched elites.

One important aspect of the middle-class nature of science and technology is the competition for research grants. In medicine, for example, cancer research is heavily funded and therefore popular among budding researchers. It has all the glamour and mystique of high technology, wonder-cure medicine while playing on the fears of the general public about disease.

However in health care the basic needs are often interdisciplinary and lack glamour. For example death among new-born children can be reduced not so much by wonder-cures as by steady, plodding work in social and supportive medicine. Such work is mostly done by low-grade, low-status and therefore female health workers while the male careerist attempts to get his TV slot in 'Your Life In Their Hands'. Note the implication of this title: obedient subordination of the ignorant to the high wisdom of the scientist.

'OBJECTIVE SCIENCE'

All too often the professional scientist takes refuge in the disembodied 'objectivity' of science. In a caricature of Bronowski, science is portrayed as a secret sphere of intellect floating high above the turmoil of politics and everyday life.

This is total illusion. Science and technology (S&T) are firmly rooted in the political and economic circumstances of society. Scientific theory cannot be divorced from the process of its discovery. Because scientific 'laws' have universal applicability it can be forgotten what stimulated their discovery and for what restricted purposes they are actually used. High level scientific theory has the potential to enhance life or to end it. The crucial problem is at present that its direction and application are governed by the initiated only. The scientific profession as part of the establishment recruits its own members and directs how money, career advance and status should be apportioned – the ultimate closed shop!

If we argue for socially relevant and responsible science, are we open to the charge of being luddites, of strangling discovery? We refute that charge by stating that S&T are major influences in people's lives and thus their direction should be socially accountable. For example we might choose to direct the attention of physicists away from particle accelerators to the development of low technology energy sources. Such a project, though no less technically challenging, would at present lack the kudos of the former. Is it just coincidence that the S&T which liberates people is seen as tedious and secondary, while the S&T which increases dependence and enhances social and professional control is depicted as heroically exciting?

THE PURPOSE OF SCIENCE

A former editor of *New Scientist*, Bernard Dixon, has written a book entitled *What Is Science For?*. He concludes that society should support science as an essential cultural and intellectual activity, and exploit its hard practical returns. He feels that the confusion of these two motives is the source of much of our contemporary disquiet. Dixon certainly helps to clarify some of the issues, but he misses out some of the crucial ones. As socialists we say science is not value-free. It is to a significant degree an instrument of power and control. It is elitist. It is an arm of the establishment. We say that S&T should be used to aid the development of a socialist, caring society. Socialists cannot ignore S&T. After all, they are a central force behind capitalist change.

SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The trade union movement is already tackling some of these issues. It is examining how employment can be transferred from armaments to socially useful industries (a by-product of this transfer is more jobs, even according to the US Labour Bureau). The Lucas Aerospace experiment, despite its difficulties, is rightly pointed to as the way forward.

Such a transfer of effort needs to be extended right up into high technology R&D. The very foundations of such activities need to be questioned. The education system is central to this enquiry. To become a professional scientist one requires O and A levels en masse, an upper second or first class honours degree, a PhD plus published papers and post-doctoral experience. In consequence a closed and elitist system is perpetuated and accepted values are passed on and on.

Socialists need to decide what level of rigour and technical competence is required from scientific training. How far does this necessitate the narrow and scholastic training currently dispensed by the universities? How far can we extend scientific training to all groups: to the educationally disadvantaged, to older people and especially to women?

A MODEL FOR SOCIALIST SCIENCE

The central problem of S&T is it helps give the establishment further power. Wilson's 'white-hot' technology is not an unmitigated blessing!

The nuclear power station, the word processor become methods for re-invigorating capitalism. Socialist science must break this power. It must enhance the independence of ordinary people and become a liberating force. People must be in control of science and technology. If the 'Information Revolution' means working people suffering the degradation, dislocation and enslavement of the Industrial Revolution then it becomes an instrument of repression. The mass of people will be mobilised for the profit of the establishment who own and control the science. It is therefore essential for this monopoly of control to be broken. So long as S&T is concentrated in the universities and the laboratories of multinational corporations and involves massive sums of money under the patronage of the academic or industrial establishment then it all too easily becomes the curse of working people, and the unemployed!

One move towards a socialist science policy would involve opening up scientific institutions in towns and cities to the local people. This ties in with Les Hearn's advocacy of 'science shops' (October *Briefing*). The direction of control would be reversed by giving local groups and local government strong inputs into these institutions. Much of the funding could be channelled through local government. A premium would be placed on social relevance. The R&D would have to be acceptable to the local community and should be tailored to meet its needs.

Within such a framework there would remain the need for speculative research. The history of science surely indicates the role of chance in some very important discoveries. Such research would probably be best served by national funding, as would large projects e.g. new railway technology. The trade unions would have a central role in this.

Des Atkinson (Vauxhall CLP)

**This article has been edited, and a section on the Third World omitted through lack of space.*

Science Briefing welcomes contributions and letters on any science-related subject. We would also like suggestions for topics to be presented in *Understand!*, a new column of science demystification.

Contact: Piers Corbyn, Science Briefing, 55 Innis House, East St, London SE17. Tel. 701-5691.

'STREET LIFE' SUPPLEMENT

Compelling the state to fund OUR COMMUNITY CHILDCARE

Should childcare be a state responsibility? Or should our demand be for adequate resources which enable local groups to provide care for under-fives according to their own ideas of what they and their children need? If we look to the state to provide day nurseries (or nursery centres) we have to realise the real inadequacy in the nature of existing provision, and not just in the quantity of places supplied. As yet there has been very little, if any, public discussion attempting to understand the nature of state day nursery care, which is bureaucratically and hierarchically controlled. Nor has there been public discussion which could enable us to know the nature of the kind of care people actually want for their children. We have the results of surveys which asked people whether they wanted day nursery places, but there is no evidence that any alternative ways of meeting the problems of those parents were suggested. The problems which became apparent when people's responses were quoted were, predictably, about poverty, isolation and housing conditions, which prevent children and adults socialising, playing and living their lives. I shall attempt to show that there are viable alternatives.

The National Childcare Campaign (NCCC) has been expounding the need to bring to one place the day care provision and the education provision for under-fives. But such centres do already exist and recent research by the National Children's Bureau (1982) has NOT so far shown that they can succeed in either bringing the two aspects together, or in changing the institutional nature of the care provided. In state childcare, as by and large in the state school system, the values and ways of operating of the people and communities the children come from, are in reality excluded, even taking into account the token 'parent involvement' permitted. Care workers and teachers, no matter what their personal background is, must and do conform to systems in which prevailing (ruling class, patriarchal and racist) ideology still rules. Massive reorganisation in the services does not and cannot change the prevailing ethos, because the people at the top who run the services do not need to use them, do not share the experiences of the users, and do not seek the advice of the workers in the service. Those employed in the services who have the imagination and energy to see and attempt to respond to the real needs of people can sometimes make a difference to the service. But they have to fend off the bureaucracy. When they get tired or leave, things return to where they were before. There has been little discussion on the left about workers in the state services, such as day nurseries, schools and hospitals, who are seriously hampered in what they can do, with and for the adults and children they work with, as a result of the establishment auspices they work under, which is why many caring, hardworking people quit.

A universal childcare service would squander human energy in that way, in an



Continued on next page

COMMUNITY CHILDCARE

(Continued from previous page)

end product which would overwhelmingly serve the state's needs rather than our own. Keeping the kids off the streets is one thing, but helping them to grow up confident and questioning of the status quo is another. An alternative is community based childcare.

COMMUNITY BASED CHILDCARE

When I talk about community based childcare I envisage it being funded by the state but set up mainly by women in the localities because of the connexion that most of us feel with our children, and our knowledge of their need for familiar and trusted adults. Patriarchy probably always, and certainly capitalism now, exploits women's concern for their children to the nth degree, but still it doesn't invalidate it. We have to fight to end the exploitation of our labour and to show that it is an essential part of our politics that other people must share the task of childrearing with us. In the struggle to end the sex role divisions, some men will learn, and are learning, faster than others. Nevertheless everything starts from where we are now. And that is with women largely being the ones with the skill and experience to establish the framework within which the other members of the community can take their place.

INVISIBLE WOMEN

Where does the question of responsibility for and relationships with children fit into our struggle for change as feminists? It is my opinion that the NCCC's past method of functioning, working with the Labour Party and the trade unions for a policy which puts the state in charge of providing day care universally from 0 to 5 years, comes out of the invisibility in the labour movement and on the left of the lives of women and their small children. A proper working life, equality for women, is seen largely as the right to live as a man, without day to day responsibility for children. Whilst some men on the libertarian left have been trying to think about the question of children, and have reacted to men's relative deprivation of relationships with children, the WLM has on the whole been understandably reacting against the centuries-old sacrifice of women's lives and self development, to their enforced slave labour in raising their children. Even the more open-minded sections of the left have failed to take responsibility for measuring the validity of socialism's whole ideology, against women's experience. Marx pointed out two poles of human existence: reproduction and production. He and the movement that followed have built their thinking around the latter only.

Women with children have no movement in which to explore the relationship between their struggle in raising their children in this society and the whole spectrum of progressive politics. Because of this ignorance in the progressive movement, a central area of necessary change is being ignored. We need a popular movement which seeks to bring people out of their individual childrearing and challenges the hold of prevailing ideology on the lives of the mass of people, most of whom do have children. The disinterest of the left and of the WLM in this area of life gives the Right the space in which to challenge our freedom to live our personal lives in a more open way.

The continued privatisation of the family is one of the most vulnerable areas of political life, for the forces of progress. A universal extension of the state day nursery scheme would extend and buttress that by

1) taking over and weakening our closest relationships and our influence on the rising generation;
2) extending the state's control over us and our children.

That is a danger in itself in that the last and closest part of our lives is then pulled into the orbit of the capitalist state. But it also removes the possibility of us sharing childcare with others, which would enhance our lives in the communities by offering a productive connection with the people in the streets around us.

WOMEN SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

Working at collectivising childcare in the local communities provides a basis of support for all involved. At the moment Rape Crisis Centres and the Battered Women's Refuges can only support women at their centres. They cannot support the women when they are rehoused or returned to their own homes, where the battle against sex role slavery must ineluctably be pursued. The struggle with men to increase their input into housework and childcare is a very different proposition when other women close by are your friends and when an important part of the work is being done socially with other members of the local community. The struggle for a living wage level of child benefit, which must underpin any real choice for women about whether or not to have children and how to live when they do have them, would be the material base for organisation in this kind of collective childcare network.

We need to not confuse ourselves with the notion that the bond between young children and their parents is a reactionary force. Instead we should recognise the importance of that bonding to people, and base our work in a radical direction on people's right to give their children the affection and security and the support they need to do that. Sharing childcare must not be confused with everything that is involved in handing over our children to state employees, who are not part of our lives or communities, who are subject to low pay, understaffing, cuts and the never-ending deadening control of the state bureaucracy. With the money available to the GLC for childcare, it seems a necessary time to say that groups in the population who have an access to education, employment, money and life experience not shared by the vast majority of women whose children the new day care resources would be used for, must not legislate for those women without their voices being heard. The present GLC consultation meetings do not go sufficiently into the working class involvement we would need in order to understand how best to base childcare on our local communities.

J.G. (with the help of friends)



On having a young child and being an activist...

(or some thoughts between meetings and changing nappies).

I can understand why there aren't more women involved in the Labour Party and public life. It's not that we can't do it, it's just that it's so exhausting with the odds stacked against you.

I first started taking Owen to meetings when he was about a month old. As a single parent I didn't have much choice and it's the easiest thing to do when they're young, dependent and compliant. The meetings just had to cope with our being there. A cold, draughty classroom echoing with a baby's cries does add that extra dimension to the star speaker at a Ward meeting. Owen was generally a good kid, slept well between feeds and it's surprising how many stencils you can type if you've got a 'good' baby. His attendance at General Management Committee meetings was a novelty for all, including him and formed an important part of his early socialisation. He was five months old when I became Constituency Secretary. Whilst he was still confinable to a carry cot and didn't mind where he slept and didn't climb out, it was comparatively easy to attend meetings. Once he got to the eating solids and the mobile on all fours stage, then throwing him and the files into the carry-cot became an impossibility.

This is the stage where you wonder how you'll manage. Suddenly all those offers of help evaporate (we did an appeal for members to join a baby-sitting rota – out of 1300 members we got 8 volunteers). You're juggling between paid and unpaid babysitters, trying to maintain a regular scheduling of bedtime, facing the getting-home-from-work-in-time-to-get-it-all-done-before-you-have-to-get-out problem. Not only that, as the children get older they demand more – socialist fairy tales at bedtime, labour movement nursery rhymes etc . . . You find yourself telling them with one eye on the clock because you really can't miss that executive or that pre-meeting.

I've also been along to conferences (at Regional level and Annual Conference) and led the double life of being a delegate and a parent – rushing to the creche to get him there before the conference opens, picking him up at lunchtime (it's very rarely that lunch is provided), rushing back for the start of the afternoon session, worrying that it's going to over-run and faced with the dilemma of leaving early and missing a vote, or being late for the creche and upsetting the workers. That's if there is a creche. At one conference there were no facilities at all and I had to breast feed him in the Conference hall and change nappies in a draughty corridor outside.

Two year's experience of being with child in the Labour Party has made me realise what a token commitment we have, as a movement, to improving the lot of women. The sexism, the patronising attitudes, are there whether you have children or not. The children add a dimension, that very few recognise. I was quite able, before I had Owen, to ask about the creche facilities or the starting time of meetings, an intellectual commitment, perhaps. Now I realise that it really matters and that until we've got all our demands we can't say we've really begun to involve women.



Owen

We must: Ensure all meetings start at a reasonable time; make sure that creches are near, accessible and available for the whole of the conferences; arrange alternative babysitting facilities, in their own home for children over carrycot age; arrange babysitting volunteers at Annual Conference so that delegates with children can go out to fringe meetings etc; make sure that meetings are effective and essential rather than just another ramble (i.e. cut down their numbers); recognise that financial assistance should be available to those who need to get paid babysitters etc; make sure that meetings are not held in cold draughty inaccessible venues, when children may be present.

Just a few thoughts – there are many more practical suggestions for a Labour movement childcare charter, we must throw out the idea that children are a problem, and then of course there's all the other demands for women like positive action, women's campaigning, one woman on every shortlist, etc. And of course, children have rights too.

I went to the House of Commons the other day . . . now there's a case for reform . . .

Diana Minns
(Wood Green and Hornsey CLP)

COME GEORDIE HOLD THE BAIRN

This song is dedicated to all fathers who are uneasy at holding their baby due to lack of practice. It was written by Joe Wilson, a popular songwriter and publican from the North-East, about 100 years ago. We wonder whether London fathers hold their bairns less uneasily than Geordie shipyard workers and miners of the last century.

Come Geordie hold the bairn
I'm sure I'll not stop long
I'd take the jewel myself
But really I'm not strong.
There's flour and coals to get
And the houseturns they're not done.
So take the bairn for fairs,
You've often done it for fun.

So Geordie took the bairn,
Though sure against his will.
The poor bit thing was good,
But Geordie had no skill.
He hadn't its mother's ways,
He sat both stiff and numb.
Before five minutes was past
He wished his mother would come.

His wife had scarcely gone
The bairn began to squall.
With pacing up and down
Why he let the poor thing fall.
It wouldn't hold his tongue,
Though some old tune he'd hum.
'Jack and Jill went up the hill,
But I wish your mother would come.'

'What weary toil' says he,
'This nursing babes must be.
A bit of it's well enough.
Quite enough for me.
To keep a crying bairn,
It may be grand for some.
A day's work's not as bad.
Oh, I wish your mother would come!'

Men seldom give a thought
To what their wives endure.
'I thought she'd nowt to do
But clean the house I'm sure
Or make my dinner and tea.
It's starting to suck its thumb
The poor thing wants its tits.
Oh, I wish your mother would come.

What a selfish world this is.
There's none more so than the man
He laughs at women's toil
But wouldn't nurse his own.
It's starting to cry again.
I see a tooth through his gums.
My bonny wee pet, now divvent you fret,
But I wish your mother would come.

But kindness never fails
It's no use getting vexed.
It wouldn't please the bairn
Nor ease a mind perplexed.
At last he's going to sleep
And the wife won't see I'm dumb.
She'll think I'm a real good nurse.
But I wish your mother would come.

Policemen are potential rapists too!

AS RESIDENTS of Notting Hill and as volunteers at Kings Cross Women's Centre, we have been taking part in the meetings and other work organised by Kensington Women's Action and Defence to deal with the 'Notting Hill rapist/s'. It was KWAD which first drew attention to the year-long series of attacks, and lit a fire under the police to get something done.

Yet the meetings have in our view been weakened and disarmed by the organisers' apparent ambivalence about the police, an ambivalence more disturbing in a largely Black area like Notting Hill where 'everyone knows' what the police are.

With all the work going on in the Labour Movement to make the police accountable, it seems important that in specific cases like this one, the party should make clear which side it is on in relation to the police.

At the October 6th public meeting, a crowd of 150, mostly women and some men, turned up, and it was great to see so many people ready to move. But we were amazed to see that the only speakers were four white policemen. Half way through the meeting, men were asked to leave so women could discuss their fears and plans more freely. But the police on the platform were invited to stay. Some women considered this to be too much and walked out in disgust.

It was pointed out that any of the men in the audience could have been the rapist. But doesn't this also apply to the police? Had the meeting forgotten Pat Malone, cut up in pieces by P.C.Swindell? And Esme Baker, the Black woman sexually assaulted by Walthamstow police when she went to defend her son whom they were beating? Or Penelope Littlewood, the ballet teacher they dragged naked down the road, in Chelsea?

Or the many Black women strip-searched by the police when they go to look for someone or to make a complaint? Or the Black and white prostitute women harassed and arrested in Queensway and Paddington by police too 'overstretched' to find a rapist? Or the daily interference, searches and beatings experienced by Black people, men, women and children?

What does it mean to set aside all this experience as irrelevant, a 'separate issue', while inviting the police to bring more men into the community? Not to mention the fact that the police don't exactly have a good record on the treatment of rape or rape survivors. None of this could be properly discussed at a meeting where the police were present — and as speakers! And at the following meeting, there was not time.

Not On The State

It has long been the failing of separatist parts of the Women's Movement that anger is focused on individual 'males' and not on the State — police, courts, government, and the charge-hands of the economy, those men, and some women, who are responsible for making our sons and brothers into rapists. When the organisers presented to the meeting the proposal that when the 'men' left, the police (men) could stay, it could only have the effect of reinforcing this pattern of removing responsibility from the State.

The organisers later said they couldn't help it — the meeting had **voted** to let the police stay. But those who call a meeting must bear responsibility for its political — and racial — orientation. They were concerned about the mostly white and middle class women present who might be naive about the police.

But in catering to the naivety, lack of experience and sometimes racism expressed by some of the women at the meetings, we are afraid that KWAD will end up giving the police more freedom to harass other sections of the community: patrolling Notting Hill to 'protect women' they will make Black and many white women's lives that much harder. And to what advantage? A divided community will be much **slower** to catch the Notting Hill rapist/s.

The police depend on information from the public. Yet much of the public is so antagonised by police harassment, racism, entrapment of gay men, violence and illegality that they wouldn't dream of going to the police. If KWAD does not make public that it shares this understanding, people will not go to KWAD either.

Individual men — rapists — are fully responsible for what they do. We cannot excuse them or let them off the hook. But to set aside the truth about **police** responsibility is just as dangerous for women.

Margaret McKenzie, Notting Hill resident and Kings Cross Women's Centre volunteer.
Jo Pacino, Notting Hill resident and Kings Cross Women's Centre volunteer.

Gays confront police in Earls Court

Paul Canning
(Lesbian/Gay YS)

Over the past few months the police in Earls Court have been conducting a clean-up campaign directed at local gays.

Young officers, especially chosen for their 'aptitude' (the words of the local chief inspector), wearing torn jeans and T-shirts, plain clothes indeed, entrap gay men into 'importuning for an immoral purpose in a public place'.

The arrests take place outside the Colherne — a gay pub — and are against even Home Office 'guidelines'; this doesn't stop the police defending it on the grounds of 'complaints' from local residents (when pressed by the local paper he was forced to admit that there had been only 6 in a year — four from police officers and two from someone with a grudge).

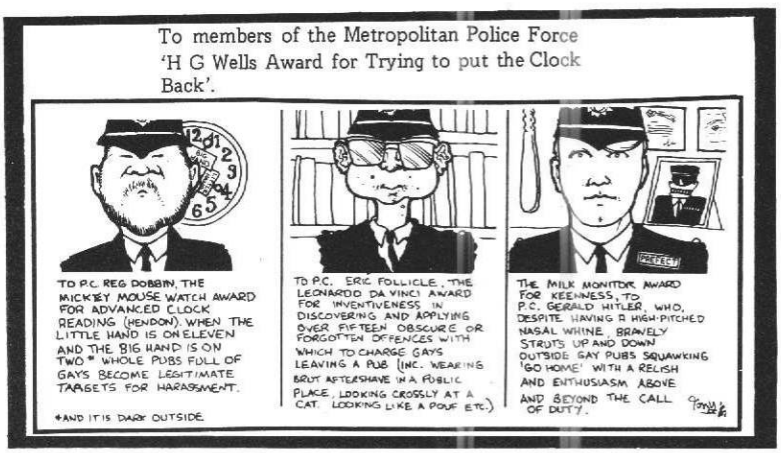
What is clear is that the intention is to confine us to the ghetto of pubs and clubs and to keep us off the streets, i.e. invisible.

The police like this offence, as it's 'easy' (i.e. little time and effort on their part — they make up their stories in the canteen afterwards). It has the highest 'clean-up rate' of all, 97%, so neatly boosting their crime figures. It is this high because nearly all the men prosecuted plead guilty because they are terrified of the real, and unprotected, threat of losing their jobs through publicity and exposure. It is also clear that the state will go to great lengths to keep us invisible. Quite apart from them not using their officers to catch 'real' criminals, it costs upwards of £1,500 to prosecute each time for what is often only a £25 fine!

This is also the same law that is used to harass prostitutes, but, of course, cannot be used against men who sexually harass women.

A defence campaign has been launched, which aims to support those men contesting charges (often isolated and afraid, often poor through being refused legal aid), and to fight to end all harassment.

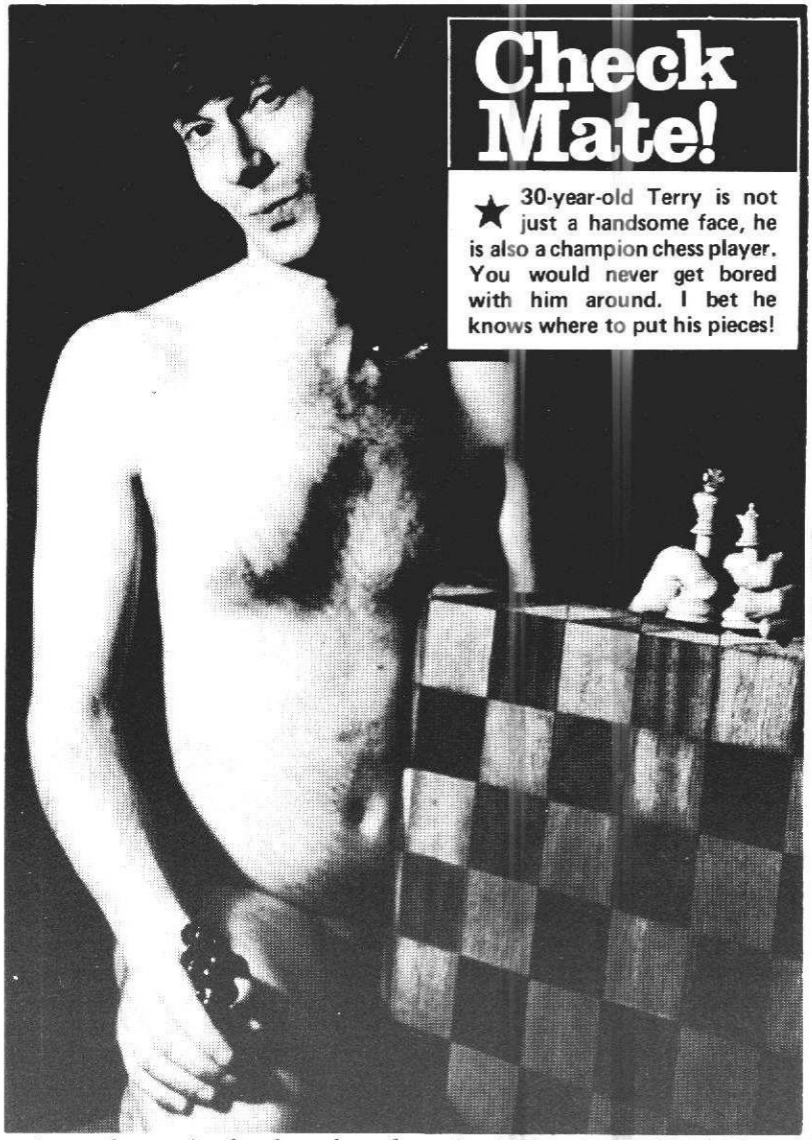
It can be contacted through the gay London police monitoring group, who, in six months of existence, have acquired a thick, London-wide file of cases of harassment. GALOP, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP (01-278 6215). Send messages of protest from your party etc. to the Home Secretary, who is directly responsible, and copies to GALOP.



AN ANTI SEXIST IMAGE?

At a recent exhibition on photomontage at Camerawork, one of Cath Tate's postcards was ripped off the wall by some women who objected to it. She was then asked to write an explanation of why she had produced that image to go alongside the postcard at the exhibition.

We print below both the offending postcard and the explanation and invite comments from other women on what their reaction is.



Cath Tate

I have been asked to write an explanation of this image which has produced a wide range of reactions from people (including a group who ripped it off the wall during the opening of the show). Apologies to those who understand it and take it as it is meant since there is no bigger turn-off than having a joke explained to you.

I did this as a reaction to the type of pin-up you get on page 3 of the Sun. It is directed at men who regard pin-ups as harmless wallpaper to say to them – 'You push my body into this stereotype, this is what it is like if I do it to you'.

I found that I could only get my point across by using conventional images that are instantly recognisable and then changing some of the elements in the image. The pose and the caption are the same as page 3. I have changed the sex of the model and the type of man that is usually depicted in photographs. He is not a stereotype 'he'-man but the kind you might find on the Clapham Omnibus, minus clothes.

In practice there are very set conventions about how women pose in pin-ups which make them into objects for the male onlooker. There are not the same conventions for male nudes (outside gay circles). A man with no clothes on in a passive stance is immediately assumed to be gay, because we expect 'real' men to be macho (and boring). This image is not directed towards gay men but towards the idiotic poses that women are meant to put on in pin-ups to make them harmless for a male audience. Nor is it directed towards the individual women who pose in those photographs, but towards their audience. To blame the women for pin-ups is as idiotic as blaming (as the law does) prostitutes rather than their clients for prostitution, or rape victims not rapists for rapes.

So why not ignore something as despicable as a page 3 pin-up? If women ignore something as universal in our culture as pin-ups they will not just go away. It is downright dangerous for all of us if some feminists live in a separatist ghetto and spend their energies attacking other women who they do not regard as pure enough while the patriarchal society that overwhelms us gets away scot free. Why pull down an image in Camerawork when there are 'adult' bookshops down the road selling oppressive images freely? It is similar behaviour to some of the sectarian far left groups (RCP, RCT, SWP, WRP etc, etc, etc.) who spend their time and energies attacking (usually in an extremely macho way) other branches of the left while the Tories win a massive election victory. No socialist or feminist should be given a blank cheque but we must never lose sight of where our true oppression comes from.

Cath Tate, Streatham CLP

Future issues

The next issue of the Streetlife Supplement will be on the theme of mental health. All articles, letters etc. should be sent to *Jane Stockton, 110 Agar Grove, London NW1* by *9th January 1984.*

* * *

The following is a list of some suggested topics for future issues. If you have a contribution on any of these themes, and/or any suggestions for other topics, send them to the above address, or come along to the editorial meetings! . . . How we organise on personal politics in the Labour Party; the Press and how it affects our lives; the family; coming out in public (in all senses, not necessarily just as gays!); youth; racism.

Streetlife meetings

We are now holding Streetlife editorial meetings on the third Thursday of every month, 8pm at County Hall. The next meeting will be on 19th January 1984 and will be open to *all* Briefing supporters.

* * *

The National Briefing Editorial Committee has agreed to call a national meeting of Streetlife Supplement supporters to build links with people who are interested in taking up personal politics in other Briefing groups (London is still the only local Briefing group which has a Streetlife Supplement). Look out for details in the next issue!

SUPPORT THE PEACE CAMP

Roland Boyes visited Greenham Common on Wednesday 9 November with sixteen other Labour MPs to show solidarity with the peace campers after Michael Heseltine told him, in response to his parliamentary question, that Greenham women entering the base were liable to be shot. We asked him why he went.

The seventeen MPs went to Greenham for two reasons: first, to show the struggle against missiles cannot be won in parliament alone. It must be a combination of activities inside and outside, and MPs must be seen working in both sectors.

Second, the media have said abusive and vile things about women at Greenham Common, and it is proper that their elected representatives should identify with them by being with them to give them credibility and respectability in the eyes of those misled by what they read in the press.

It's clear now that what Heseltine said was considered opinion, and not off the cuff. It adds a new dimension to British politics when a leading British minister will emphasise that unarmed peace protestors will be shot by American forces on British soil.



Photo: Raissa Page

This is important for the Labour Party. It isn't enough to pass resolutions at conferences, nor to argue in the House and be defeated by 100 plus votes. It's a battle — to my mind the most important facing the labour movement — and we must be prepared to give support to those who are practicing non violent action against the installation and possible use of Cruise Missiles. Leading figures such as MPs, Trade Unionists and local authority leaders have to be where the action is. We are on the edge of a nuclear holocaust with the deployment of Cruise and Pershing — and we should remember that beside the land based cruise, seven to ten thousand sea and air-launched cruise missiles will be manufactured.

We should not be seduced by the dual key argument, which is a red herring because the weapon is no less dangerous whether in the hands of Reagan, Thatcher, or the pair of them. It's what the weapon means to the USSR — i.e. its installation at Greenham — that is important. Our job is to oppose it and all other nuclear weapons.

I want to emphasise one final point. The fact that Cruise has now arrived means that the call for a freeze is now meaningless. It doesn't stand up to any argument, because Cruise has lowered the nuclear threshold so dramatically, and the potential for nuclear war has been raised so dramatically, that the idea of a freeze has simply no validity or meaning. We have to set our sights on the complete withdrawal of these monstrous weapons.

By Roland Boyes, MP

DECEMBER 11th

CHAIN LETTER from Greenham Common

Women come to Greenham for the afternoon of Sunday December 11th. 1983. The decision by NATO to site Cruise missiles in Britain was taken four years ago in December 1979. By the end of this year Cruise will be sited at Greenham Common prepared to be operational, ready to be deployed around the country at a time of crisis. Women in Greenham Common Support Groups around the British Isles are organising an afternoon of 'Sounds Around Greenham' to demonstrate our continued opposition to that decision and its implementation.

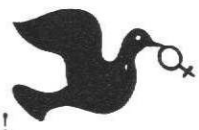
The womens' peace camp has existed at Greenham since September 5th 1981 as a non violent protest against Cruise missiles and all nuclear weapons. It has been a source of inspiration to women throughout this country and many others. Since then women have been meeting and organising actions to highlight the arrival of cruise. During the year there has been mounting opposition to the camp from the Government and the media but we are showing that they don't kill the spirit.

Our suggestion for the afternoon is for women to gather at Greenham and on the hour, every hour, from 1 pm to 5 pm for a few minutes to surround the base with sound. Bring instruments, pots and pans, your voices — we will play, sing, shout our opposition to Cruise missiles at Greenham Common. After the sound at 4pm we could have a silent vigil for an hour to be ended at 5pm with a huge crescendo of sounds. The theme for the afternoon has been taken from the story of Joshua and the walls of Jericho — there a few brought down the walls by trumpet blasts. We want to symbolically bring down the fence at Greenham — it is time to make our voices heard.

Bring wool and ribbons to weave a web around that fence which surrounds the base.

WE DON'T WANT YOUR LAWS
WE DON'T WANT YOUR WARS
WE WON'T FIGHT YOUR CAUSE
CHANT DOWN GREENHAM

SOUND OUT GREENHAM. COPY THIS LETTER. SEND 10 COPIES OUT TO YOUR FRIENDS. ASK THEM TO MAKE COPIES AND SEND THE LETTER ON. SEND THE SOUNDS AROUND GREENHAM AROUND.



URGENT:
Calling All women!
Sunday 11th December '83

Come to Greenham Common
to embrace the base and
show your opposition to Cruise.

For details ring Greenham office
01-251 3133
or your local CND or women's group.

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LABOUR
BRIEFING
NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
No. 3 December 1983

As Tories plan assault on met.counties:

NO COLLUSION!

by Dave Spencer

The Thatcher government's plan to scrap the GLC and the Met counties is yet another attempt to break the back of the labour movement. It should be seen as a political attack first and foremost and our response should be likewise. The questions of higher rates, high spending and bureaucracy are quite secondary.

All these Councils are Labour controlled. They represent nearly half the population of England and cover the major cities. They all have some progressive policies of sorts, for example, Nuclear Free Zones and the South Yorkshire cheap fares policy. If properly organised they could copy each other's policies and stand firm together on issues which benefit the working calss. Already campaigns have been encouraged concerning oppressed sections of the inner cities — ethnic minorities, women, and the unemployed. There are possibilities for organising a fightback — and of the GLC and the Mets forming a direct challenge to central government. This is what the Tories are trying to stop — to break yet another means of expression for the Labour movement.

Provide an Alternative

Some of the criticisms of the GLC and the Mets are of course true. As socialists we need to provide an alternative — some form of Regional government, perhaps, including functions like the NHS, gas, and electricity — that certainly needs to be discussed by us. But there is no way in which the Thatcher government's proposals will lead to more democracy, more accountability, more community involvement in local government. Quite the reverse. It will mean more quangos, more remote committees and probably higher rates. Patrick Jenkin's accusation of spendthrift Mets is a smokescreen. If it costs Thatcher money to scrap us, she will spend it: she is out to break the labour movement, not to save money — as Defence spending and the Falklands clearly show.

The Labour Movement needs to make the links between this attack and other Tory attacks — it is part of the same pattern and should not be fought in isolation. Unfortunately the Mets at the moment are not doing this. They have each contributed £50,000 and have employed 6 professional parliamentary lobbyists to argue the economic case, hoping that Tory MPs and Tory Counils will pressurize Thatcher.

At the same time some leading councillors are getting ready for "the inevitable". For example, in the West Midlands, strictly against County Party policy, at least 12 councillors are members of both County and District Councils, so they see themselves as well placed to be members of the joint boards covering Police, Fire, Transport and so on. Others, like drowning rats, are eagerly seeking nominations to District Panels, for the same reason. On the joint boards, if Thatcher is lenient enough to allow Labour councillors "to serve", they will carry on with the same prestige and expenses no doubt, without the embarassment of a Labour Group to chivvy them!

Labour Councillors

At a recent Liaison Committee of the seven District Councils in the West Midlands called by arch-Tory Bosworth, leader of Birmingham District, a unanimous declaration was made welcoming the scrapping of the Mets. This was signed by leading Labour councillors from Coventry, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Clearly these councillors see the prospect of more positions and patronage for themselves and this can be the only explanation. With the "rate capping" exercise, the insistence on privatisation, the central control of finance for these quangos for the first three years – there surely can be no socialist or democratic argument advanced.

Once again it is left to the Constituencies and rank and file trade unionists to argue for a proper political campaign. This must link NALGO members and other Trade Unionists facing the sack or more cuts, oppressed groups who will have yet another means of expression denied them and the public whose civil liberties are increasingly being curtailed. The Police, for example, are held to account very little under the present system, but what price a quango? We must argue to extend democracy, accountability and community involvement throughout the public sector, not to allow Councils to go the way of the Gas Boards and Water Boards.

Dave Spencer is one of 4 WMCC councillors disciplined this month by the Labour Group for voting against the proposed 3 year Transport Plan which involves bus fare increases. This Plan is contrary to County Party policy and the 1981 Labour Manifesto entitled "Travel Our Way".



Keystone

Toxteth: More riots if cuts continue?

Merseyside County Council Resists Abolition

Keva Coombes
Leader Merseyside County Council

For being able to successfully reduce transport fares twice since 1981; for supporting a whole network of trade union and unemployed centres; for increasing activity aimed at exercising democratic influence over policing and for generally diverting resources in favour of the poorest on Merseyside, the County Council has been much abused by Government, and local Tories and Liberals. Now the ultimate card of abolition is being played. The County's Labour Group is resisting that, not just by using Parliamentary lobbyists but by working together with other Labour Districts to convince the widest possible audience via a public campaign of the truths about aboliton proposals.

In 1981 when Labour won control of Merseyside County Council we had a long way to go. The previous Labour regime had put fares up regularly and generally adopted a low profile stance which alienated both district councillors and many Party members alike. There were concerns about the Council's achievements which led many to query its existence. Most of those doubts disappeared when our policies started to take effect and any lingering ones have now been finally removed by the Government's plans.

The creation of quangos controlled directly by Government and which cover services (transport, police and fire) that currently account for 72% of our spending shows that the only aim of change is to reduce the quality of the services. The Police Joint Board for Merseyside (with one third guaranteed places for magistrates) would damage prospects of real police accountability, not merely because Labour would never on Merseyside have clear control of such a board but also by isolating policing from the aegis of directly elected authorities whose policies directly influence levels of crime and its consequences.

Any hopes that Labour district councillors might gain anything from this Government have been quickly destroyed and if anyone still believes re-organisation is about decentralising powers, then their intelligence is on a par with the arguments in the White Paper. Even our local Tories have now voted unanimously to ask the Government to stop their plans and hold an independent inquiry.

Abolition is an attack upon the method by which public services are provided and improved. Rate-capping and the target system are part of the same attack. The new target for Merseyside by fining Merseyside £65m next year is intended to provoke a precept rise simply to stand still and maintain our present fares policy of no increases. To reach the target is, of course, as even local Tories and Liberals concede, an impossibility. Yet such a precept rise will be used as an excuse to justify abolition and rate-capping. The only possible way through the dilemma (and it may not work) is a public campaign aimed at presenting the facts and by unity amongst Labour Councils – even through there are genuine differences of approach. That is why Merseyside County Council did support the Liverpool City Council in their November demonstration and why they in turn along with other Labour Councils strongly oppose aboliton. We on Merseyside know the damage the Tory Government does to the local economy every week and that is why Merseyside is in the forefront of opposition to the effects of Government policy and will remain so Others should follow our example.

BEWARE THIS BILL!

Robin Allen (Barrister)
Holborn and St.Pancras CLP

The Trade Union Bill 1983 is the Tory Government's latest attempt to fetter Trade Unionists by taking away from them their control over their own organization. But the Tories arguments for reform are as crafty as ever, so they must be carefully considered to see the true underlying motive. The Bill has three main thrusts: strike ballots, elections and political contributions.

Many unions organize strike ballots and there's nothing wrong with that. But the Tories pla n is to ensure that any industrial action taken by a Union without a ballot leaves the Union exposed to the law. Any affected employers could then sue the union for conspiracy to breach of contract, a very serious allegation carrying a right to great damages. Many strikes now start as unofficial action which is then later endorsed by the union. Unions are going to be very wary of such endorsement where the unofficial action starts without a ballot. So the Tories hope to drive a wedge between members outraged by employer action and their union leaders. Members can take powerful action on their own, but, without access to strike pay, organized solidarity from fellow members and union leadership such unofficial action is fearfully exposed. The Tories also aim to use the media to undermine union leadership when a ballot is proposed. Ballots take time and the bigger the action the longer the time. The press will have a field day, scare-mongering, slandering and distracting, doing all in its power to stop the strike.

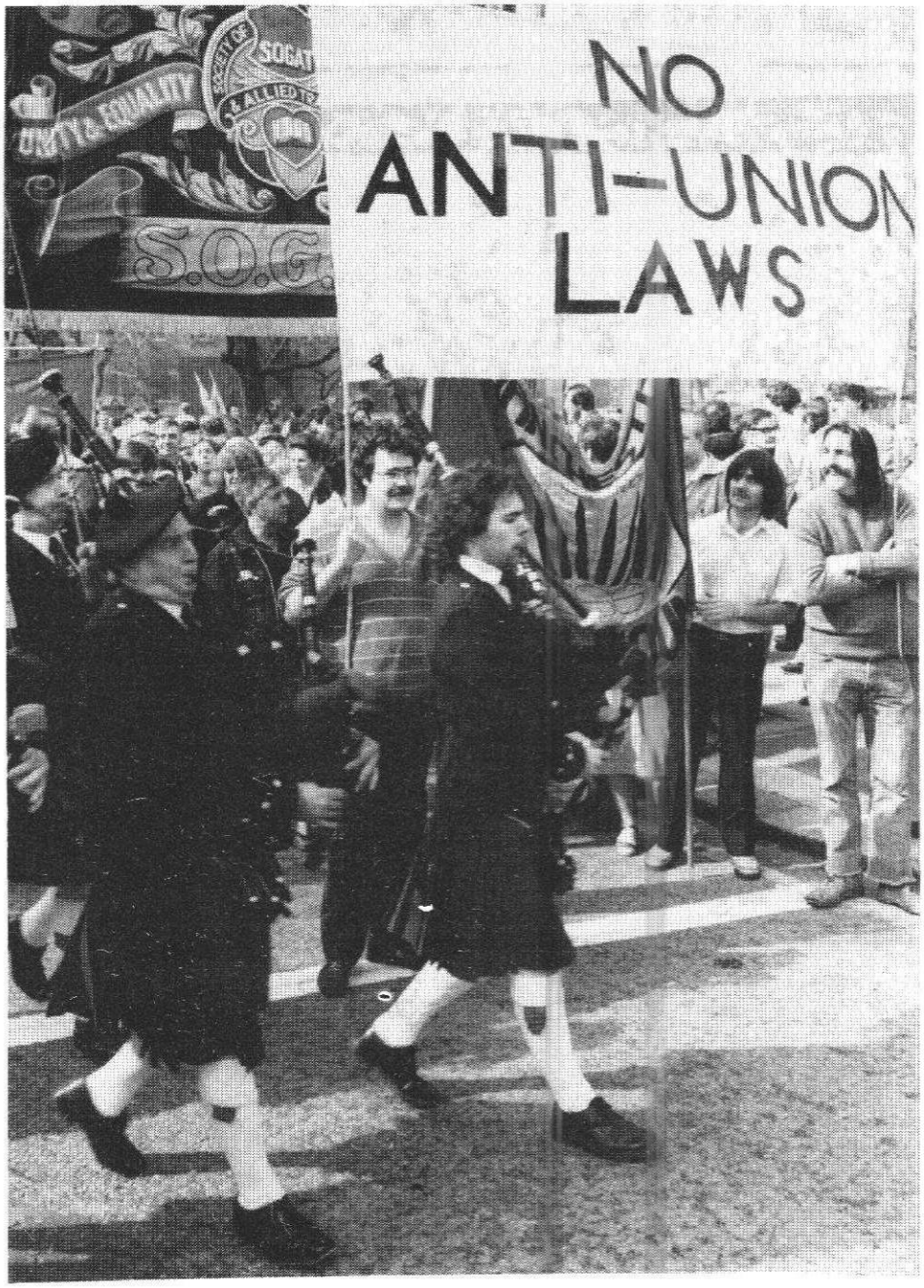
UNDERLYING MOTIVE

This underlying motive, to allow the Tories more room to interfere in Union decisions is behind the new rules on elections. These will require election of Trade Union officials on a regular basis. How Trade Unions chose their officers is a matter for each union. Some use a procedure of regular elections, many do not for all posts. The structure in each union has grown up in response to the working conditions, and the industries in which the union operates.

LABOUR PARTY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Tories hate to see the Labour Party being supported by the Trade Unions. It causes them the greatest possible upset. Only companies should be able to contribute large sums to a political party, their party. So they campaign through the press to persuade union members not to pay a political contribution. This part of the Bill is the silliest; the Tory motives are here most transparent. Every trade union member has *already* the right, often clearly set out o his contribution card not to pay the political fund contribution. But the Tories say the very existence of any political fund should be rediscussed, and regularly voted on by Trade Unionists. They really want those in the union who don't want to support the Labour Party to be able to stop those who do from contributing through their union. They aim to separate the organisations of Labour from the party of Labour.

All Labour Party supporters must fight to stop this Bill becoming law. It is a most serious attack upon the Labour Party and the freedom to organise and defend jobs.



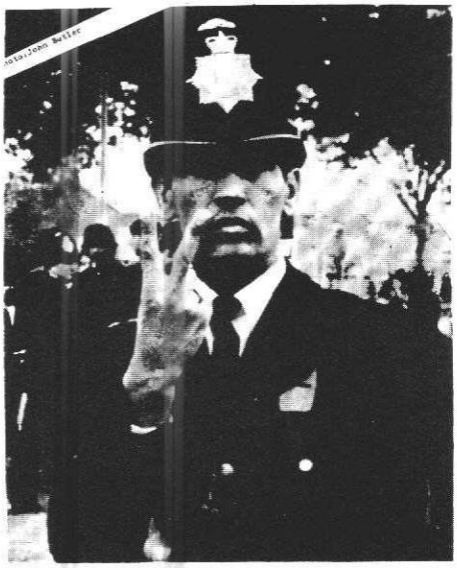
March Against the Tebbitt Bill, Manchester 27.3.82.

Labour Party Photo Library

No Police Bill! No Police State!

By the National Campaign Against the Police Bill

These are lies, damned lies — and Government propaganda. For weeks before reintroducing the new Police and Criminal Evidence Bill the Home Office fed the press with stories about how much better the new Bill was going to be. Concessions here, amendments there, improvements somewhere else: something for everybody who criticised the Bill the last time round.



And the truth? It's the same Bill as ever it was, and every bit as dangerous to the rights of ordinary innocent people. Here are some of the powers it gives to the Police.

* The power to hold you without charge for 96 hours (4 days) and deny you legal advice for 36 hours
* The power to carry out forcible strip searches and intimate body searches (of the mouth, anus, vagina) against your will and without a doctor being present
* The power to search your home even if you are not suspected of any offence
* The power to set up road blocks at random
* The power to stop and search you in the street using 'reasonable force necessary'
* The power to arrest you for any minor offence such as dropping litter or parking on a yellow line on certain grounds.

One of the grounds is if the police believe you have given a false name and address. This would mean that if you are homeless you will end up in a police station for any minor offence. Another ground is 'obstructing the highway' which basically means that you are standing in someone's way. This provides a very easy pretext for arresting trade union pickets or campaigners such as CND activists. Yet another ground is that you are likely to cause an 'affront to public decency'. This gives a free hand to the police to harass gay people — two gay people holding hands could be interpreted as an 'affront to public decency'.

* The power to take fingerprints from ten-year old children without the child's or the parent's consent — in other words, by force.

It would be hard to imagine a more vicious piece of legislation. The Government is out to destroy rights and freedoms which working people have fought for for centuries.

These new powers are not designed to reduce crime. They are needed to control the social unrest created by the mess the Tories have made of the economy. They will be used to step up the harassment of black and Irish people. They will be used against people campaigning against Government policies. They will be used against trade unionists in dispute. The Police Bill must be stopped. The National Campaign Against the Police Bill was formed last May to do just that.

The last Labour Party Conference unanimously passed a motion opposing the Police Bill and supporting a national campaign. This resolution has to be turned into a reality. Labour Party members should join the Campaign and get their wards, CLP, trade union or other organisations to affiliate. They should organise public meetings, invite speakers to their organisation and help distribute the campaign's literature. Finally, they should support the National March and rally, from Brixton to Trafalgar Square, against the Police Bill planned for Saturday, 21st January 1984.

The National Campaign Against the Police Bill can be contacted at NCAPB, c/o 50 Rectory Road, London N16.

The National Campaign Against the Police Bill can be contacted at NCAPB, c/o 50 Rectory Road, London N16.

Affiliation is £1 for individuals and £10 for organisations.

Cuts in Scotland

The decision taken earlier this month by the Tory Government to claw back another £45 million within the current financial year from Scottish local authorities perpetrates yet another turn of the screw upon the predominantly Labour controlled councils.

In the passing of this measure through Parliament Michael Ancrom, Scottish Home Affaris Minister, claimed that their spending was this year £121 million in excess of Government plans or 4.5% higher than had been assumed in the rate support grant settlement.

Ordered to Reduce Increase

This drive to cut the level of grant is being accompanied by measures to force councils to reduce the level of rate increases. Earlier this year Glasgow District Council was ordered to reduce its intended 5p increase in rates by 3p, leaving them with the option of a £10.5 million cut in the spending on services.

This year the District Council waged a moderately vigorous campaing, involving the trade unions organising the Council employees, a public meeting, a lobby of Parliament and a meeting in Sheffield with other Labour controlled authorities facing similar attacks.

Unfortunately the ultimate outcome was the decision of the Council to cut the £10.5 million, a measure which secured the approval of the District Labour Party with only 11 votes against.

Rate Fixing

This rate fixing approach will soon be tangled up with the enactment of rate-capping – a procedure which will allow the Government to set an overall limit for local rate levels in advance of council budgets being drawn up.

In face of this threat even some Tory councillors on COSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) have been heard muttering about "dangers to local democracy".

COSLA has, however, been singularly ineffectual in genralising opposition to the Tory offensive. Since the defeat of Lothian, the general mood of Labour controlled authorities in Scotland has been that of a cautious "protest and survive". Moves to go beyond that to a more offensive counter-strategy are not yet in sight.

Ian McCalman
Strathclyde Briefing

LPYS: A

Labour polled disastrously amongst youth in the General Election. Young people abstained from voting in their millions. And yet during Thatcher's first term of office it was the youth who were at the forefront of all of the anti-Tory battles: in the disarmament movement, in the trade unions, in the women's movement and in the struggles of the black community. It is clearly time that a discussion took place on the left on the question of youth. How do we channel the radicalisation that has undoubtedly taken place into the Labour Party and into the struggle for a Labour Government?

The best channel that we have for this task is Labour's youth organisation, the Labour Party Young Socialists. A youth wing of the Party with its own branches, regional and national structures and its own paper provides the best mechanism for winning young people to the Party. Its existence is a gain for the Party and for the working class that should be defended at all costs against any attacks or witch hunts from the

CPSA: why Labour lost

Steve Battlemuch, DHSS South Notts CPSA branch and Nottingham South Constituency Labour Party.

THE DEFEAT in the postal ballot for the CPSA to reaffiliate to the Labour Party is a setback for CPSA activists. But it is not an outright disaster.

The vote — 31,479 for, and 65,922 against — was better than a lot of activists expected.

More significant, however, is the fact that only 51% of members returned their postal ballot forms. The CPSA campaign, if you can call it that, consisted of one leaflet. Its front page said, 'Affiliation to the Labour Party: the choice is yours'. That was the sum total of what was supposed to be a positive campaign in favour of reaffiliation.

It was not surprising, because the CPSA National Executive Committee (NEC) is controlled by the right wing, spearheaded by general secretary Alistair Graham. The right wing did not want to campaign for the ballot. Most of them have more in common with the SDP.

When someone from the Broad Left minority suggested inviting Labour MPs to speak at meetings, the idea was virtually laughed out of court. If the Broad Left had been in control, the campaign would certainly have been more positive.

But enough to swing the vote? It is debatable. The campaign could have centred on sections like the Post and Telecommunications group and DHSS, where members are fighting privatisation and government cutbacks every day.

A full analysis of the failure, however, has to go deeper than just who was running the union at the time of the ballot. The role of previous Labour governments has to feature in the discussion.

In Labour's last term of office civil servants were still low-paid, and the first cutbacks were started by a Labour administration. Labour will have to come out firmly in support of future CPSA pay and staffing campaigns if it is to win the support of civil servants.

Alistair Graham, new darling of the TUC, will no doubt be pleased with the result. He will use it, as will the Tories, against unions' involvement with the Labour Party. The right wing of the CPSA will be strengthened. (Their faction, called 'Daylight', issued a leaflet during the campaign against affiliation, while as CPSA National Executive Committee members they were supposed to be campaigning in favour).

Although for the foreseeable future CPSA will be kept out of the national political battle in the Labour Party, the left must not be despondent. We must campaign and build Labour Party workplace branches.

Letter

Dear Briefing,

I read the article in October's *Briefing*, "There is a Left Alternative," with much approval. There seemed only one thing seriously wrong with it — surely the attribution of authorship to the name "Ken Livingstone" is a stupid misprint! The article, which incisively shreds to pieces the "Haddock" team of Kinnock and Hattersley, surely cannot be the same man who, in the run up to Annual Conference, first flirted with Roy Hattersley as potential leader, then, at the Labour Briefing fringe meeting at Annual Conference, practically jumped into bed with Neil Kinnock! Surely the article wasn't thought up by the same person who viciously attacked the right of Francis Morrell to stand for the leadership of I.L.E.A., spitefully using his contacts in the capitalist press to put in the poison! It is inconceivable to me that it was written by the same person whose crucial intervention at the G.L.R.C. of the Labour Party Executive ensured that the vote on the issue of I.L.E.A. teacher policy should go in favour of compulsory redeployment!

It is impossible that this article, which attacks the politics of "compromise", could be composed by the same person who (with the able assistance of Cllrs. Valerie Wise and Tony Banks — have we got a royalist wing of Labour Briefing now?) swung the G.L.C. Labour Group in favour of inviting a "Royal Personage" to open the Thames Barrier! Or that it was written by the same comrade who has conducted the most visiously anti-trade union policies on the G.L.C. — including currently a pay offer in line with Thatcherite policy — and is closely identified with the mass creation (at least 140 posts) of sinecures, highly paid ones, for "political commissars", for which G.L.C. staff need not apply since they are, de facto, unworthy (i.e. are not members of the "friends" network)! Nor could the article be written by the man whose true record on ethnic opportunities is to be seen in the considerable number of "Uncle Tom" appointments at the G.L.C.

I am all in favour of *Briefing* producing Ken Livingstone Special Supplements, provided, that is, that they are honestly entitled Schizo-Political Supplements. At least then readers will be able to read them with the correct degree of scepticism. Cllr. Livingstone said a few months ago that he was as close to the W.R.P. as he was to the Conservative Party. Since he likes to appear on W.R.P. platforms now and then, surely he must be appearing on Tory platforms from time to time, about which we are hearing nothing. I plead with *Briefing* to give us more and more of "our Ken". He really is the Barry Manilow of London Labour politics.

Harold Macguiness

PRIORITY FOR US ALL

By Dave Shepherd (Secretary Oxford West LPYS)

right. But if Labour is to have any chance of returning to power and implementing its socialist policies it will not be good enough for the left merely to defend the LPYS as it currently exists. It must make building the LPYS a core component of its strategy over the coming period.

ORGANISE THE YOUTH

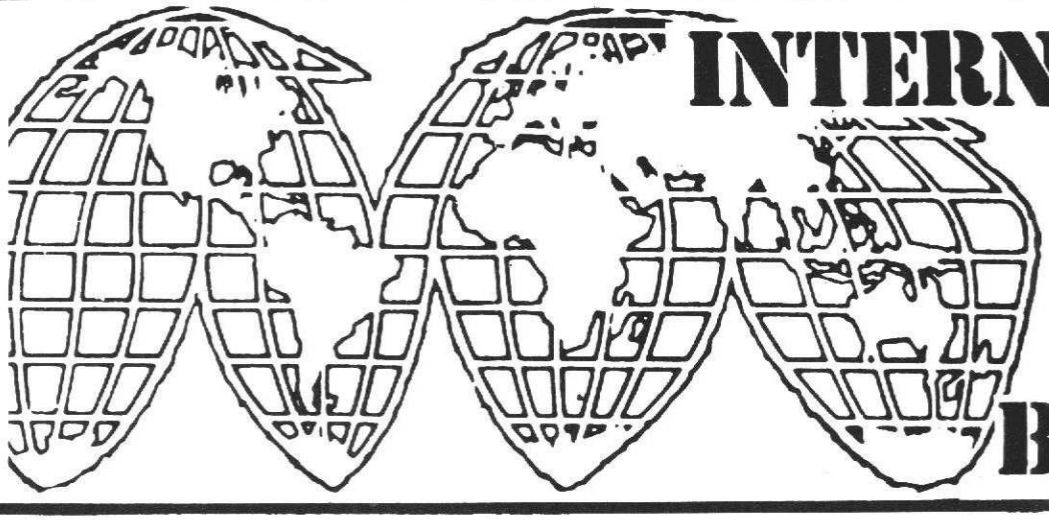
A mass campaigning LPYS involving not thousands, as at present, but hundreds of thousands of young people, is an essential pre-requisite for the kind of Labour victory we are fighting to achieve. A youth wing of the Party which organised the youth who have swelled the ranks of the disarmament movement over the past few years, the young women who have been involved in taking the question of Cruise missiles into the centre of British politics, the black youth who have organised against the Nationality Act and deportations and against the Police Bill, and the young trade unionists in the Health service, in the car industry and elsewhere would be a powerful force indeed on the Left of British politics. Not only would it be the best ally for the Left in the Party and in the trade unions against the ability to channel the energy and dynamism of young people into the fight for a Labour victory.

ABANDON SECTARIAN PREJUDICES

The task of building the type of mass campaigning youth wing that the labour movement needs is, however somewhat hampered by some of the attitudes and policies of the present leadership of the LPYS. It is up to the Left to take up the debate on how to build the LPYS with the comrades of the Militant, to explain the necessity of abandoning sectarian prejudices and transforming the LPYS from a small propagandist organisation into a campaigning youth wing of Labour, oriented towards the struggles and campaigns that young people are involved in now. This must be done in the context of building the LPYS as an integral part of the Left, encouraging the involvement of the YS, at local and national level, in such forums as the women's councils, Briefing groups, trade union broad lefts and so on. Some progress has already been made inthis direction with the co-operation between the Women's Action Committee of the CLPD and women in Oxford LPYS on the question of campaigning for a national LPYS Young Women's Conference.

There is a fast growing minority in the LPYS which is fighting for the kind of orientation outlined above. At the last National Conference of the LPYS the combined opposition votes for candidates for the National Executive were 20% of the total.

But the task of building a mass campaigning youth wing of Labour should not simply be Left to those of us under 26. It is the job of the whole of the Left, and one of its most important ones at that.



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR BRIEFING

IRELAND

With their whole 'supergrass' strategy collapsing around them the British soldier resolutely and blindly onwards. As the Irish Republic's Garret Fitzgerald met our Margaret Thatcher the media, like a stuck record, kept reiterating that Fitzgerald was seeking British support for the report of the Northern Ireland Forum expected early in the New Year. The Forum has the support and involvement of all the major nationalist parties — so the media would have us believe. Yet Sinn Fein are not participating in the Forum. They weren't invited to.

Labour Briefing has always supported Sinn Fein as the largest anti-imperialist party in Northern Ireland. Their recent electoral successes have shown the degree of support for Sinn Fein in the nationalist community. Their voice must be heard and though the Forum attempts to ignore them, Labour Briefing defends Sinn Fein's right to speak directly to the British people. Here we continue to offer a platform to Sinn Fein to state their views.

STOP THE 'SUPERGRASS' TRIALS

Paddy Molloy, Press Officer, Belfast Sinn Fein.

In his book, *'Low Intensity Operations'*, Brigadier Frank Kitson states *"The law should be usea as just another weapon in the government's arsenal and in this case become little more than a proper cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. The activities of the legal services have to be tied into the war effort in as discreet a way as possible."* These principles have been applied to the legal system here in the North of Ireland.

So far over 400 people have been charged or sentenced on the word of individuals who have a vested interest in their conviction. With the prevailing legal system in the Six Counties it is not necessary for the evidence of these people to be corroborated

Massive Cash Inducements

The use of immunity and massive cash inducements by the RUC to persuade these individuals to collaborate in a judicial farce emphasises the fact that they are not simply informers — supplying to the RUC real information which they have — but are in fact agents handsomely paid by the RUC to give false and contrived evidence in court to secure convictions. The use of this perjured evidence has been sucessful precisely because the RUC has not been called upon to provide corroborating evidence for the agents claims, and Loyalist judges presiding in no-jury courts have shown no hesitation in making these convictions. Although the RUC have defended this system and claim that the perjurers are 'converted terrorists' who give 'evidence' out of disillusionment or because of conscience, the testimony of men who have been remanded on the word of perjurers who have subsequently retracted tells a different story.

Sean Seamus O'Hara, the brother of Patsy O'Hara the dead hunger striker, has told how in March 1982 the RUC offered him £50,000 and a new identitiy if he would incriminate people who the RUC told him were members of the INLA. Some of these people he didn't even know. Clifford McKeown, a Loyalist who retracted his testimony in July 1982, stated that he had been promised £50,000 by the RUC for giving 'evidence'.

The thinking behind the perjury strategy is two-fold:

First its aim is to demoralise the nationalist people and create disillusionment within the Republican movement. The British government is attempting to create an atmosphere of suspicion both inside and outside the movement by turning people's attention to an alleged enemy within, rather than the real enemy — the British presence in Ireland. By so doing, they hope to create confusion and shatter the unity of the nationalist people.

Its *second* aim is to enable the British government to take out of circulation people they regard as a threat to the occupation of the Six Counties. Robert Lean, who was recently forced to make a dramatic escape from RUC custody despite claims that he was a free agent and giving evidence freely, stated at a recent press conference that the RUC prepared statements which he signed implicating 28 men and women. He also stated that the RUC wanted him to implicate Gerry Adams MP but he refused. A number of men released after Lean retracted reported that they had been offered large sums of money to implicate leading members of Sinn Fein.

It is clear that the British government will continue the use of this strategy in a continued attempt to remove those that oppose their presence in Ireland. Only strong and concerted pressure against this injustice will force its termination.

The Cause of Ireland

PLATFORM Films would like to publicise the London premiere of the uncensored version of the film 'The Cause of Ireland', at the Brixton Ritzy on Wednesday 7th December.

'The Cause of Ireland' is a film made by British and Irish socialists, which looks at the political situation in the North of Ireland from a class perspective, arguing that Britain must leave the area, as a pre-requisite to any form of peaceful settlement.

The film was shown by Channel Four on October 3rd 1983, after the Independent Broadcasting Authority had ordered four cuts to be made. The uncut version was shown at the Tyneside Film Festival, where it was awarded first prize — the Tyne Award. Geoff Bell and those involved in making 'The Cause of Ireland' will be present to discuss the issues raised in the film.

'The Cause of Ireland' will be shown with 'A Free Country' — a film about the effects of the Prevention of Terrorism Act on Irish people living in Britain, and its use in suppressing political opposition to Britain's role in Ireland.

'The Cause of Ireland' and 'A Free Country'
The Ritzy Cinema, Brixton Oval
Wednesday 7th December, 7.30pm.
£2.00 (plus 30p membership), £1.50 with UB40 or student card. Contact the Ritzy, 01-737 2121, or Platform Films, 01-278 8394).

What is Labour Zionism?

Moshe Machover was a founding member of Matzpan, the Socialist Organisation in Israel. He now lives in Britain and is a member of the Labour Party. He was interviewed by Tony Greenstein.

TG: Do you see any major difference between Labour and Revisionist (Likud) Zionism?

MM: No the two camps of Zionism have always agreed on anything that is essential and disagreed on, often important, tactical questions. They themselves admit they are part of the same movement. The differences between them are secondary. This applies to mainstream, so called Socialist Zionism, including MAPAM (the United Workers Party, the 'left' of the Israeli Labour Alignment — TG).

TG: Do you see any difference in the class basis of Labour and Revisionist Zionism?

MM: There is definitely a class difference, though not the one that most people believe to be. Likud is made up of 2 sections: one of them the so called Liberals represents the bourgeoisie proper and the dominant party, Herut, the petit bourgeoisie, it also has a lot of working class support. But it is not a party of the working class. The Labour Alignment represents a class which is almost unique in Israel, ie the bureaucratic or collective bourgeoisie. The people who dominate the Alignment and Mapam are Israel's equivalent of the landed gentry. The structure of Israel is such that the so called Trade Union Federation, Histadrut, owns about ¼ of the economy, some of the biggest firms in industry and a bank, Hapoalim, which is amongst the hundred biggest banks in the world. In Israel the economy is partly owned by private capitalists but an important section is owned by a corporative, bureaucratic form of capital including the Kibbutzim (collective agricultural settlements — TG) which to a very large extent live off hired labour. The Kibbutsniks play the role of managers and actually extract surplus value from other workers. The ILP is very different from the British Labour Party which is unmistakably a party of the working class. The workers hate it and recognise it as a class enemy. The tragedy is that in Israel no party represents the working class. In Israel the Histadrut is an arm of the biggest employer in the country.

TG: But why do you see an absolute contradiction between Socialism and Socialist Zionism?

MM: Well Mapam represents a section of the bosses in Israel, their Kibbutzim own a lot of capital and by now its clear to every Israeli — only people outside have illusions about co-operatives living off their own labour — what they are. They are very rich co-operatives mainly living off exploited hired labour. If you visit a Kibbutz you may not notice it because a lot of the Regional enterprises are situated outside the Kibbutz and jointly owned by several Kibbutzim in the region, where only hired labour is employed. I read in an internal bulletin of a Mapam Kibbutz a report about the situation in such an enterprise and it said very frankly that the occasional workers are Arabs, the regular hired labour is Jewish and the managers are Kibbutzniks. So what is the connection between this and socialism. In Mapam you have a movement which creates so called socialist Kibbutzim where Arabs are not admitted as members. And these Kibbutzim themselves are constructed on land confiscated from Arab peasants. You come to a country expel the peasants, create farms that have a co-operative form but which exclude the native population, and the start employing it as hired labour. If this is socialism, so be it. The kindest thing you can say is that in the past, when they created the Kibbutzim it was influenced by socialist ideas. That was when they had some qualms about living off hired labour. Those days are long gone. Certainly if Labour Zionism represents socialism, then it is a variant of national socialism which I don't recognise as socialism. But as far as Mapam goes, they're not socialists for two reasons — first because the whole Zionist project excludes the indigenous population, and secondly the social class they represent are not the workers.

Hong Kong 1997

CHEUNG SIU-MING (Deptford CLP & Socialist Organiser supporter)

"Labour believes in a closer understanding with China, and hopes that China can become more directly involved in international discussions on peace, disarmament and the world economy. We will hold talks with China with the aim of securing a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Hong Kong." — Labour Manifesto 1983 (last page).

The Tory government have been holding talks with China on Hong Kong's future for nearly 2 years. Yet there has been total silence by ALL sections of the Labour Party!

The "lease" which runs out in 1997 stems from unequal treaties forcibly imposed on feudal China by British imperialism after the Opium Wars. The People's Republic has never recognised these treaties. Even Thatcher has virtually given up challenging China's claim of sovereignty on Hong Kong. The problem is that China has, until these talks, not acted on its claim. It needed (and still needs) Hong Kong as its major source of foreign exchange.

Since 1949, Hong Kong has undergone astronomical economic growth, led by its manufacturing exports of textiles and electronics. It has attracted massive investment from all major capitalist states, and a powerful local Chinese capitalist class has developed.

The economic relationship with Britain has changed. Hong Kong's reserves were Sterling's major prop during the devaluation crises in the 60's. Since then Britain had to let the Hong Kong economy go its own way; the HK Dollar and the HK reserves are no longer tied to Sterling and the Bank of England. Hong Kong is a de facto city-state (like Singapore) but for the fact that it has a British colonial administration, while doubling up as China's main port. Its "free-market" economy is an international speculator's paradise.

The good news is that this cannot last forever! Both the world recession and competition from Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore have cast long shadows over the Crown Colony even before the 1997 talks started. During the past two years, the economy has taken a nosedive, with land prices, companies, banks and the Hong Kong dollar collapsing like a pack of cards.

The talks have reached stalemate. China wants Hong Kong to remain capitalist, but wants sovereignty and full control. Britain is insisting on a post-1997 administrative presence (echoes of a Falklands leaseback deal?), arguing that this is essential to maintain the "confidence" of investors! Meanwhile the economy continues to slide as Britain waits for China to weaken.

Hong Kong's overwhelmingly Chinese population have yet to be convinced of socialism, although they have no love for British colonialism. Bureaucratic misrule and economic hardship in China during the past 3 decades have disillusioned them. Those most likely to be sympathetic, especially to the post-Maoist regime under Deng Tsiao Ping, have been sickened by the regime's ruthless suppression of the Chinese Democratic Movement.

For all these reasons, the Chinese leaders know that Hong Kong's 6 million are virtually indigestable — this fact, and China's economic benefits from Hong Kong's status as a free port, governs China's negotiating position. This opens them to economic blackmail from Britain.

The one special force which could transform the situation is the Hong Kong workers. When they begin to struggle for control of their destiny, they will have a profound influence on the workers of China itself. Therefore what happens in Hong Kong is crucial in the building of socialism in China.

Socialists here should demand that Britain withdraws totally from Hong Kong. Let the Hong Kong people elect their own local assembly to determine their relationship with the mainland.

Anyone interested in taking up the issue of Hong Kong 1997 in the Labour Party should read "The Hong Kong Crisis" by Greg Benton (Pluto Press) and get in touch.

GRENADA: LET THOSE WHO

FORWARD EVER! BACKWARD NEVER!

by

BUZZ JOHNSON

From March 13th, 1979, the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada, led by the New Jewel Movement steered the economy and all other sectors – from education to social relations – in a direction which saw great leaps.

Of course, there were major problems. After 400 years of slavery, colonialism and economic dependence, the N.J.M. inherited a country with $35.00 in its treasury. The basis for development in terms of infrastructure, educational opportunities and employment prospects were non-existent. Grenadians, in fact, by and large, found it impossible to earn a living there and had fled to Trinidad and Tobago, the U.K. or the U.S.

Gains of the Revolution

The immediate aim of the N.J.M. in 1979 was to create a society in which all Grenadians benefitted. This meant that the economy and its related sectors had to be properly planned. The people had to be educated and the resources of the country developed for the benefit of all.

Within 4½ years, the gains made surpassed those made in 400 years of mainly British domination. These advances were in all areas – from women's rights to literacy; in cultural development, in open government and consultation and participation.

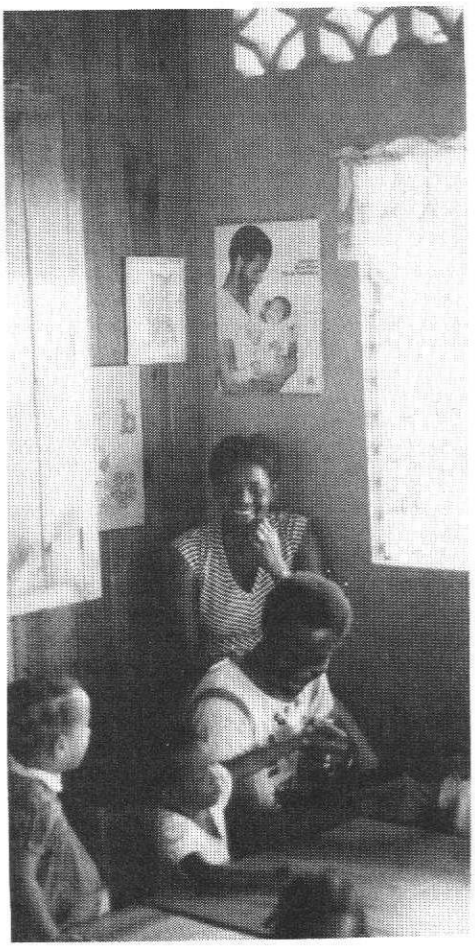
The basis was being laid and the whole world knew that it was working and only one threat would stall the process. That threat, of military invasion by the United States, became a reality on 25th October 1983.

Countdown to Invasion

The invasion, contrary to other opinion, was planned a long time ago. The U.S. in 1981 tested the operation in an exercise in the Caribbean code-named "Amber and the Amberines". They also set up the Rapid Deployment Force to fight the newly emerging nations of Grenada and Nicaragua. These forces were also to be used to effect U.S. military options.

As early as 1979, the U.S. had already made certain decsions on the matter. They refused to finance development programmes in Grenada, but discussed arming the Barbadian Security Services and training a proposed Barbadian Army. They also intensified their intelligence work in Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean. Assistance in both training and weaponry was provided for Jamaican forces loyal to Edward Seaga to terrorise both the entire population of Jamaica and the PNP government of Michael Manley. They also started training anti-NJM elements.

In 1980, attempts to mount military operations against the NJM were uncovered. In that year, too, a bomb planned to



wipe out the entire NJM leadership exploded prematurely killing and maiming Grenadians and assembled for a mass rally in St George's, Grenada. The NJM exposed these and other plots geared towards propaganda and economic destabilisation.

US Allies

With the help of Reagan, right-wing governments were retained in Barbados and St Vincent. In Jamaica and Dominica, Edward Seaga and Eugenia Charles came to power and were soon used as local agents in an anti-Grenada campaign and formed the wedge of the anti-communist axis. The US policy did not work in Trinidad and Tobago, where the party financed by the CIA lost at the polls in 1981.

By December 1979, the precedent of military intervention was set when Barbadian military personnel went into St Vincent to 'quell' a small uprising. Since then, US military aid to Jamaica and Barbados has increased rapidly. In Jamaica schools built under Manley have been transformed into military camps.

The 'Grenadian Threat'

It is clear that the US did not invade on 'invitation'. Plans were laid a long time ago. Seaga, Charles and Adams knew. The real example of progress in Grenada was a threat to their backward governments, and so, to protect their own skins and the guarantee of US finance, they agreed to side with the US. They legitimised an illegal and inhumane military act, and this will not be forgotten by the Caribbean people.

Grenada is devastated. Up to 2,000 have been killed and most buried unceremoniously in mass graves or left to rot in the open. The agricultural sector, roads, houses and buildings, hospitals, shops have all been damaged beyond repair. Many people have been shot, blown up or assaulted and raped, indiscriminately, by US troops.

In addition, the US has brought in their own interrogators and US-trained Jamaican torturers to back up Gairy's Mongoose gang, who are now free to torture and kill Grenadians and especially members and supporters of the NJM.

The eradication squad from Jamaica is doing key work in this area. They help door-to-door searches and road-block investigations, which are intended to capture people associated with the NJM or PRG. Their torture chambers are at Queens Park (cricket ground) in St George's. Remember Chile.

We know that, in line with the proposals being laid out in the dummy run of 1981, the intention is to totally wipe out the NJM and all vestiges of the process that was developing. The propaganda emanating from the US State Department is directed to create confusion in the minds of people.

They have also flattened all structures symbolising the March 13th Revolution. The leaders are being portrayed as criminal elements and attempts are being made to instill the lie about Grenada being planned as a military colony of the Soviets and Cubans.

It is all this, and more, that we have to combat. Any approach must first recognise the situation we are in — one of war — and that the super-power declared it on us. It is not a unique situation for the people of the Caribbean. What we have to do is continue building our organisation rooted in the mass support of the people. We must not

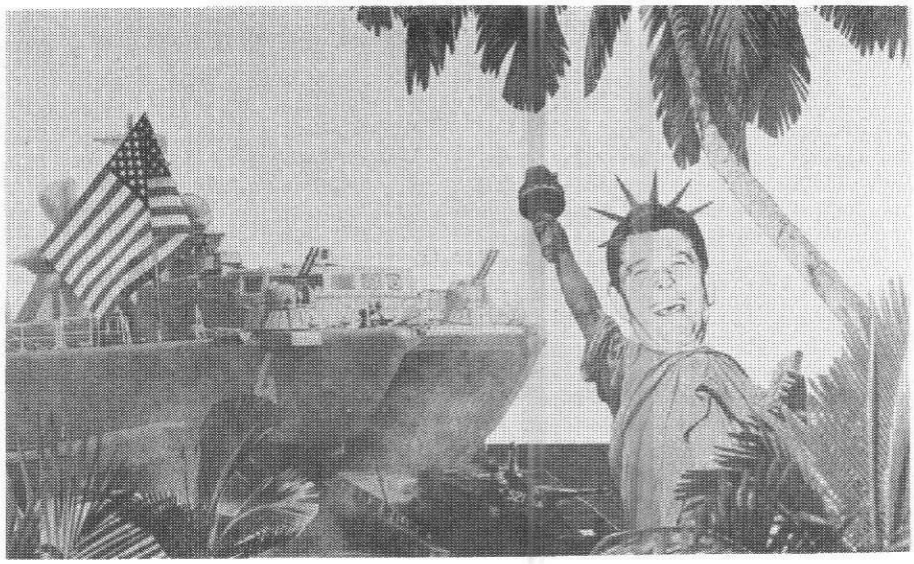
LABOUR HOLD THE REINS

Countdown to Invasion

Below we print an eyewitness account from Liesbeth de Bloch, who had been working on anti-racist and anti-sexist curriculum development on the island for the past three years.

The curfew period had been calm but tense. Grenadians are not people who stay indoors and many had, in fact, broken curfew and walked unharmed along the streets. Some had even gone down to the beach for a bathe. On Monday October 24th most people turned out for work and the city of St George's was busy with people thronging the streets. The American Medical School resumed classes.

It was quite clear from investigations made by British, EEC and US officials that very few foreigners felt in danger of their lives and wanted to leave the country. Those people who tried to leave on that Monday were prevented from doing so *not* by Grenadian authorities but because outside forces were not allowing flights in or out of the country.



Cath Tate

The invasion came at dawn on Tuesday October 25th. Radio Free Grenada announced the landing and called on Grenadians to defend their homeland and for women with children to get to a safe place.

Meanwhile members of the People's Revolutionary Army around our house, in the road and on the beach remained calm and very controlled. They organised a runner to keep people informed and to ensure our safety.

All day jets screamed overhead in a programme of intimidation, and heavy fighting continued. Part of our house was hit and a helicopter was brought down into the sea directly in front of us. The Grenadian army and militia were putting up strong resistance in the face of incredible odds.

Fighting continued that night and through the next day. The battle of Grand Anse began at 4.00pm on Wednesday 26th. Jets pounded the hills behind the hotel belt while helicopters flew in relays machine-gunning the area.

After the main attack US helicopters came in flying low, machine gunning into a row of wooden barrack-like houses killing whoever was inside.

That night Butler House, the offices of the Prime Minister, was bombed and a major attack on Fort Frederick on the hills above St Georges was carried out with fighter jets pounding Grenadian positions.

By Thursday morning looting began of shops and empty buildings. There was no electricity, water or telephones. The prison had been opened and all inmates, including members of Gairy's secret police (Mongoose Gang) released.

The US marines arrived in our area at 6.00pm. Fighting in the hills around St George's continued into the night. The next day the US troops set up station in a nearby hotel and started to pick up anybody known to have been active in the process of building the Grenada Revolution.

Road blocks were set up and house searches carried out. Meanwhile looting continued and there was no evidence of any transportation of wounded to hospital. News people were only allowed in on conducted tours. Pockets of fighting around St George's continued up to Sunday 30th.

Meanwhile the regional and international media ignored and continues to ignore the fact that the fabric of Grenadian society and the lives of Grenadians have been destroyed by an enormous invading force which has broken all international treaties in order, they say, to save the lives of foreign residents who had never felt in any danger until the invasion.

Liesbeth de Bloch

fear the vast odds, for any foe has a weak spot. It is here that the fatal blows must be struck.

Mass support for the movement to get the invaders out of Grenada has intensified despite the use of lies in the press aimed at confusing people. In all parts of the world people have taken to the streets, organised meetings, rallies, petitions, etc.

Grenada Fights On

In Grenada, the People's Revolutionary Army and People's Militia responds in the only way possible and have done well. The Cuban workers who fought on their side shall also go down in history as defenders of the Grenada revolution, resolute believers in the cause of peace and driving forces in the movement for a free united Caribbean.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Organise a discussion of the invasion at your trade union branch or Trades Council and follow up motions of condemnation so that trade unions consider boycotting, not Grenada, but the Caribbean aggressors — Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitt's and Nevis, Monserrat, St. Lucia.

2. Arrange discussion in your CLP and then join the pickets of the US, Barbadian, Jamaican and East Caribbean Embassies every Tuesday or Thursday 5-7pm. (For details call Carila: 01-359 2270). It is important the pressure is maintained

3. Organise meetings and events that bring the issue to the fore in your own community and especially involve black comrades. Any monies raised should be sent to NJM Relief Fund, 4 Windus Walk, London N16. They will be channelling medical and other aid through War on Want. They will also supply speakers for meetings.

4. Begin to organise through Labour Movement bodies to ensure that the planned 'free elections' in Grenada are monitored by international observers who see the NJM and progressive forces as the legitimate Grenadian government and who would oppose their exclusion from any election.

5. Protest in all ways necessary at the present deaths and interrogations and call for the release of the NJM comrades.

Nadine Finch,
Islington North CLP.

Labour CND under attack

You might imagine that in the days before Cruise Missiles finally arrive in this country, CND would be concentrating their efforts in uniting their broad based movement in order to organise their most effective protest yet against the Thatcher government. Therefore it may surprise you to learn that on Saturday, November 5th, CND Executive took time off from discussing the arrival of Cruise, to oust the present, elected Labour CND committee and "supersede it with an interim committee". This arrangement follows closely that set up after this year's Youth CND committee was dismissed in a similar way. Labour CND will therefore be unable to mobilise mass action, as they did for the October 22 demonstration. For the time being they have been silenced. This action came as no surprise to the committee or to the members against whom the action was directed who had fought for "no compromise" on unilateral nuclear disarmament. The committee had circulated a model resolution in June for the Labour Party Conference which re-affirmed the policy of the party and called for a clear commitment that Polaris should be unconditionally removed, together with all other existing nuclear weapons and bases. Their resolution had also called for a future Labour Government to "unconditionally scrap all nuclear weapon systems immediately on taking office". It called for the setting up of an anti-nuclear weapons campaign committee by the party to organise demonstrations and activities

Weaker Alternative

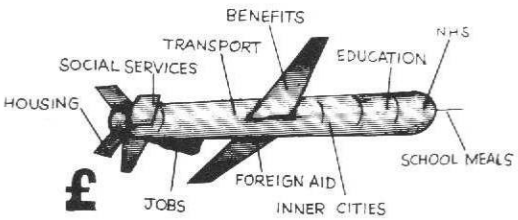
A minority group on the committee started to organise to present an alternative, weaker resolution and gained the backing of the Labour Disarment Liaison Committee, chaired by Robin Cook. This resolution concentrated on the need for a comprehensive non-nuclear defence policy "to adequately protect the interests and add to the security of the people of this country". This approach was supported by Joan Ruddock who specially attended the liaison meeting which adopted that resolution. In the event few constituencies used it and substantially more adopted the Labour CND resolution with very little alteration.

At the conference it was the Labour CND resolution which was used as a basis for the composite resolution 40 which was put to conference by Ron Todd for the TGWU and which gained such an overwhelming vote. It was this resolution which Neil Kinnock wanted remitted by the NEC.

However, writing resolutions was not the only action adopted by the minority group on the Labur CND committee. A week after the liaison meeting they wrote to CND Executive with a long list of complaints about the unrepresentative nature of the elected committee and the difficulty in getting a consensus. Central to their charge of "sectarian attitudes" was that the Labour CND resolution would endanger the 2/3 majority gained the previous year. That particular criticism now looks particularly unjustified in light of the massive vote at conference. Conference clearly endorsed the political strategy of Labour CND in adopting the full programme of unilateral nuclear disarmament and clearly spelt out opposition to Polaris and all nuclear weapons and bases.

High-handed intervention

On receipt of the letter CND Executive acted quickly and called a mid-week meeting on June 29 to discuss the serious differences of opinion on the committee. Very few committee members outside London could attend and others refused to attend believing there to be no grounds for such high-handed intervention. Unfortunately this gave ample opportunity to the minority to voice their complaints without the fear of contradicton. The next step was the CND National Executive agreed to place four members of their Executive on the committee of Labour CND with power of veto. In a private meeting the secretary was assured that this intervention was politically motivated in order to control the role of certain members who were named as extremists. Quite apart from the fact that CND is supposed to be a broad alliance those named happened to be the ones taking the most constructive and positive role. Despite individual opposition in principle to the idea of a veto, Labour CND welcomed the Executive Officers and continued to organise activities and events. These centred around the conference. A successful demonstration was organised — the biggest yet at any Labour Party Conference. Leaflets for meetings were distributed — including 5,000 for the October 22 CND demonstration. A fringe meeting at conference organised by Labour CND attracted a lively audience. Meanwhile however, certain other allegations against this committee had been taken up in the press. At the August meeting of Labour CND, an emergency resolution was sent to CND Executive requesting that a press release be issued to correct the false impression that Labour CND was not representing the broad spectrum of support for disarmament found within the Labour Party. CND Executive chose not to issue such a statement.



Walter Wolfgang

Later, after conference, a further opportunity was found to attack Labour CND despite the success of their activities and the endorsement by conference of their basic approach. Now the attacks became more personal and bitter. Walter Wolfgang, Vice-chair of Labour CND, and well known throughout the movement for his forthright manner and commitment to CND was criticised for publicising Neil Kinnock's role in trying to get the TGWU resolution remitted. The secretary was attacked for writing in Labour Briefing and the left press. These accusations



were made at the November National Council Meeting by a member of the minority group who organised nine resignations from the committee (of 28) to coincide with the meeting.

It now seemed evident that the real intention behind all these manoeuvres was to make sure that Labour CND did not criticise the present Labour leadership and to ensure that next year's committee would have a totally new, centralised structure. To facilitate this, the existing Labour CND could not be left in control. Three weeks later, at the November Executive meeting, the interim committee was agreed. It is all set up so that a retreat from the clear commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament could be made by the Labour Party without any opposition from Labour CND. The Executive decision can, however, be over-turned at CND Annual Conference in December. We need 25 CND or affiliated groups to support the following emergency resolution:

"This Annual Conference supports the work Labour CND has done to build support in the Labour Party for the resolutions passed at recent conferences supporting unilateral nuclear disarmament.

We deplore the action of the CND Executive in "superseding" the elected committee by appointing an interim committee. This Annual conference therefore reapoints the committee elected by the Labour CND AGM as the Labour CND Committee".

Copies please to, Joy Hurcombe, 11 Pembury Road, Worthing, West Sussex.

JOY HURCOMBE
(elected Secretary Labour CND at Labour CND AGM Feb 1983).

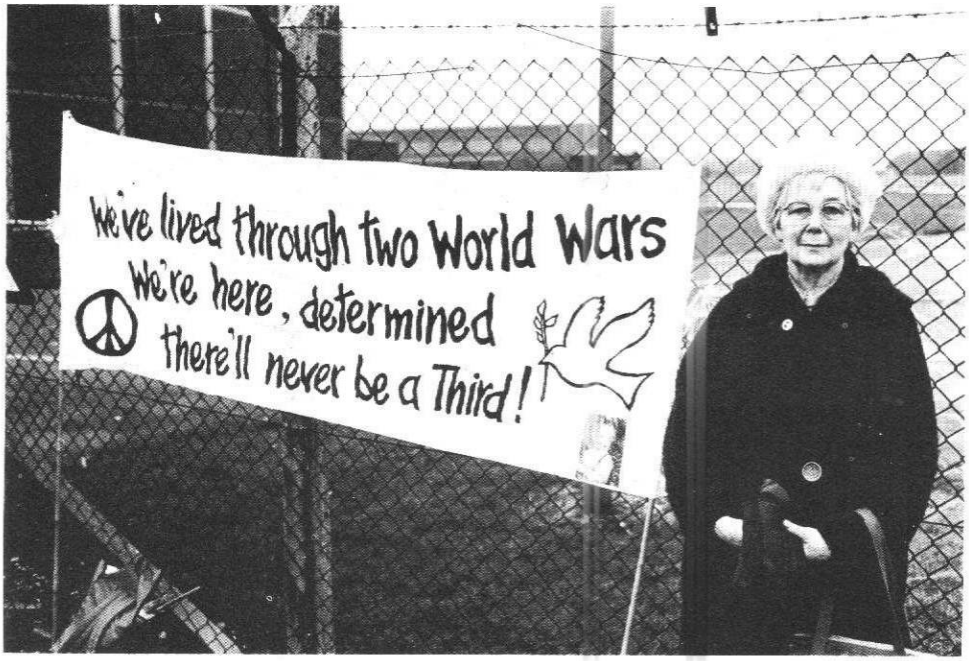
To freeze or not to freeze

CND has had an enormous impact on the Labour Party, and developments there will continue to be very important for us. So how has CND reacted to the General Election? Some sections of CND want to adopt the slogan 'Freeze the arms race' as CND's main aim. The idea is to dilute CND's demands in order to appeal to 'broader forces'.

Many of the people pushing this strategy believe that Labour cannot win the next election and the best we can hope for is a hung parliament when we should form a coalition or come to an agreement with the Alliance. It is felt that unilateralism is not popular and we should concentrate on demands that are popular like 'No Cruise' and 'No Trident'. Tory charges that 'one-sided disarmament' would leave us defenceless are to be answered by calling for a 'non-nuclear defence policy'. When Neil Kinnock spoke at CND's rally in Hyde Park on October 22nd he endorsed this approach, so it is bound to be taken up in the Labour Party.



The first thing that must be said about the Freeze is that it does not only freeze the development, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons; it also confirms existing weapons in place. Freeze is not the same as No Cruise, No Trident. Freeze accepts Polaris. By the time you read this Cruise missiles may have been deployed and a Freeze would confirm them in place.



Unilateral or Multilateral

There is some confusion as to whether the Freeze is unilateral or multilateral. CND chairperson Joan Ruddock sees it as both.

The Freeze demand first appeared in the US and it is being exported here along with Cruise missiles. I'm sure those of us that are opposed to import controls will make an exception for Cruise and I hope the same applies to the Freeze. In the US the Freeze is bilateral between the US and USSR. In the US this is progressive but here there is a huge unilateralist movement and it would be a step backwards. Events in the US should sound a warning note. The movement is financed by organisations like the Rockefellers, the Stern Fund and the Field Foundation. These people are not opposed to using nuclear weapons to 'defend' America. They just disagree as to the best way of doing it. When the Korean airliner was shot down, supporters of the Freeze in Congress who had opposed the MX missiles system gave in and voted for Reagan's defence package which included MX.

Basically the Freeze is an attempt to move CND towards the centre of the political spectrum. When the leadership of the Labour Party wanted to do the same they launched the witch-hunt. Here events in the Labour Party are mirrored in CND. Labour CND and Youth CND are the two specialist sections most likely to oppose the omission of unilateralism. They have both been dissolved by CND's National Council.

How is the Freeze to be achieved? Direct Action is now 'symbolic'. There will be no Labour movement orientation or militant actions in case these alienate the middle ground. What we are left with is persuasion and negotiations between governments. In fact we would be back where we started 5 years ago. More than 30 years of multilateral negotiations have not reduced armaments by a single rifle. Exactly the opposite has happened and there have been massive increases in nuclear arsenals in this time.

Having spent several years marching us up the unilateralist hill CND's leadership now wants to march us down. Why? To appease our critics and search for allies who have already betrayed the Labour Party. One of the reasons the SDP split from the Labour Party was their opposition to any unilateral moves towards nuclear disarmament.

The other demand being adopted by CND for a 'non-nuclear defence policy' is equally worrying. The trouble with alternative defence theories is that they imply a Russian threat and give credibility to Tory propaganda. They legitimise British Chauvinism. The Falklands War showed what a potent force this is and it also showed that it is the Tories who benefit from it. In fact the west was first to develop nuclear weapons, the only side ever to use them, and has always been ahead in the arms race. Russia has been invaded from the west three times this century and has far more reason to be worried by NATO than we have to be worried by the Warsaw Pact.

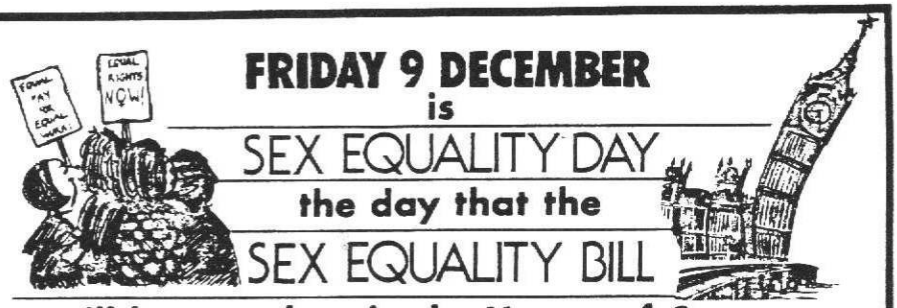
On October 22nd Neil Kinnock repeated several times that "we must defend our way of life". "Our way of life" is capitalist and based on vast investments abroad. Defending this does not provide a logical basis for nuclear disarmament. I joined the Labour Party to change the status quo, not to maintain it. Talking about the best way to defend our country is fighting the Tories on their own ground. The argument should be around 'Jobs not Bombs' or 'Hospitals not Bombs'.

Unilateralism is not the only policy Neil Kinnock is trying to change. He seems to have decided to throw in his lot with the EEC. France is greatly expanding its nuclear arsenal. Within the EEC, military muscle would give France political leverage and economic advantages. Is this why Kinnock is less committed to getting rid of Polaris? The EEC elections offer an opportunity for a European wide campaign against the missiles. In the meantime the struggle against Cruise has reached a crucial point. Once again the Greenham Women are showing the way. **It is vital that they get the maximum support from the labour movement.**

In the 1960s Labour's commitment to unilateralism was watered down then washed away completely. We must not let this happen again. The Tories cannot solve Britain's economic problems. As this becomes clear their support will crumble. This is an opportunity to go on the offensive.

Craig Robertson (South Islington and Finsbury CLP)

Support the Sex Equality Bill



FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER
is
SEX EQUALITY DAY
the day that the
SEX EQUALITY BILL
will be voted on in the House of Commons

THE SEX EQUALITY BILL is a private members bill, introduced by Jo Richardson MP. It will fill the loopholes in the present sex discrimination law and introduce new rights to fight inequality and discrimination.

THE SEX EQUALITY BILL will:

- allow part-time workers to claim equal pay (proportionately with full-timers
- make sexual harassment at work unlawful
- make paternity leave a right for all fathers
- make it unlawful for private clubs to exclude women members from using club facilities
- introduce stronger measures for positive action at school and at work
- make discrimination against homosexual people at work unlawful
- stop discrimination against single people at work
- stop occupational pension schemes giving different benefits to women and men who are members of the same scheme.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR SEX EQUALITY DAY?

1. WRITE to your MP, if s/he is likely to be sympathetic to the Bill, asking her/him to be there on 9 December to vote. It is crucial that 100 MPs are at the House of Commons to support the Bill – less than 100 and a vote will not be taken and the Bill will fail. Fill in the form at the bottom of this leaflet and send it to your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1

2. Be at the House of Commons yourself, in the public gallery from 9.30 am on December 9 to hear the debate and to show that women are concerned.

3. Write to NCCL Women's Rights Unit, 21 Tabard Street, London SE1 for more of these leaflets to circulate among your friends, trade union branch, at work, your political party branch and anywhere else.

4. Write to Jo Richardson at the House of Commons, telling her that you support her Bill.

5. Ensure your local paper carries a feature on the Bill on 9 December.

Published by the Women's Rights Unit
National Council for Civil Liberties
21 Tabard St. London SE1



JO RICHARDSON,
Women's Rights Spokesperson

THE SEX Equality Bill is vitally important to women. The existing legislation, though useful as a framework, is full of loopholes and badly needs tightening and extending to eradicate inequality and discrimination.

The European Court of Human Rights, which ruled last year that Britain was not carrying out its obligations on Equal Pay for work of Equal Value, has now ruled that the Government is discriminating illegally in two further respects.

I urge you to write to Labour MPs (who do have difficulties on Fridays because of surgery commitments) to ask them to be in the House on Friday, 9 December, and to show their support for Sex Equality Day.

Work-place branches: let's get moving!

In Tribune (21st October) Eric Heffer wrote *"One of our immediate tasks must be to build our factory and workplace branches..."* There are several dozen official Workplace Branches (W.P.B.'s) and many dozen more in the embryo stage of formation. At the Brighton Conference this year the Institute for Workers Control provided a forum for an exchange of ideas and experiences

The role of a W.P.B. must be to politicise the workforce and convey Labour's message. W.P.B's can become the spearhead of the New Campaign. The Business Press International and Camden Libraries W.P.B's are co-ordinating a call to all W.P.B's to establish a Steering Committee in January with a view to organising a national conference in the late summer. It is hoped to set up a National Newsletter to act as an exchange of information and ideas. We also need to produce an information pack on "How to start a Workplace Branch".

The most fundamental need at the moment is for CLP's to campaign for W.P.B's in their area. Meal break discussions, paper sales, and recruitment are proving to be effective. Recruitment is particularly easy.

The Tebbit/King anti-union proposals intend to break the link between TU's and the Labour Party and W.P.B's are in a unique position to challenge a political response and W.P.B's can be the vehicle for that response.

Please write to: Geoff Dixon, 1, Pelham Court, 44 Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent. Tel: 01-302 7983; 01-661 3411 (work)

The NAC/LARC Trade Union Liaison Committee is calling a national conference on Abortion Facilities on February 25th 1984 in London. For leaflets and further details write to 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 8BB.

TOWARDS A NATIONAL NETWORK

Next National Briefing will be out on January 19th. Deadline for articles: January 7th.

Next National Editorial Board will be on Sunday January 22nd in Manchester. For details ring 01-961 3803.

REVIEW: RAYS OF SUNSHINE

A hand-book for socialism: Peter Tatchell — The Battle for Bermondsey, Heretic Books, £2.95.
Reviewed by Sarah Roelofs

Every so often in our rather bleak and barren lives comes a veritable political ray of sunshine. Peter Tatchell's account of the Bermondsey by-election and the immediately preceding years as the left struggled to democratise and reactivate a party long gone rotten and worm infested, is just such an inspiration. So lacking in the usual left cynicism as to cause wiggles of embarassment, the book is both readable and moving. It is also a political handbook — page after page of instructive history told neither dogmatically nor patronisingly, but simply and unpretentiously.

Tony Benn in his preface to the book also feels it can teach us important lessons. He picks out three issues which he presumably thinks are the most crucial — the witch-hunt, the media, and the behaviour of the party leadership. Undoubtedly the book underscores in graphic detail the absurdity of believing you can win elections if you are witch-hunting within your own party. Particularly if the party leadership is witch-hunting its own candidates.

Michael Foot, as the book clearly describes, in many instances actually led this attack which was fundamentally a refusal to respect party democracy. And the conduct of the media, before, during and after the Bermondsey by-election, shows just how far beyond redemption Fleet Street is. As Tatchell wryly notes — "the rubbish shute outside my flat was blocked by journalists so they could sift through the contents of my garbage ... thereby adding a new dimension to the term 'gutter press' ".



Curious Omission

But the preface has a curious omission. Is it possible for a leading left Labour politician to introduce a book by Peter Tatchell on the whole Bermondsey fandango and not mention the word gay once? It is. Benn doesn't. There is a very polite and ambiguous reference to Tatchell's "personal background". Nothing else.

Yet the issue of lesbian and gay rights, with all its implications and ramifications, is *the* lesson of Bermondsey. Post election blues led many on the left to retreat into the comfort of the Kinnock crusade for a Labour Party fit for the upwardly mobile. And for a party born out of, and wedded to, electoralism, votes won and lost constitute the stuff of life. From Bermondsey to Islington the word is out — lesbian and gay rights (and Ireland as well) are bad news — literally. Bad for the image, bad for the press, bad for the votes. The upwardly mobile need for 'suitable' candidates (ie white, male and certainly heterosexual, preferably with a child or two to prove it), and bigotry and prejudice must not be confronted — it must be discussed, preferably as discreetly as possible (do we explain to black people also that they mustn't confront racists with their prejudice, but discuss it instead????). And the last thing needed just after two by-election defeats in Islington is a resolution on lesbian and gay rights. Word is out — Kinnock calls them fairies, Hattersley calls them poofs. So — it's okay, some of your best friends are gay and *you* know *you're* not really anti-gay, its just that people don't understand and for godsakes it loses votes. Just look at Bermondsey.

Look at Bermondsey indeed. Read Tatchell's book. In particular read page 167. Tatchell writes: "I agreed that winning the seat back was important, (but) at what price? Post-Bermondsey there was a lot of talk within the Labour Party about the need for more 'suitable' ... candidates. More suitable to whom? Doesn't that argument effectively mean ... more in conformity with popular prejudices? People who questioned my appropriateness should have first reflected on the history of the Bermondsey Labour Party. If ever there was an 'unsuitable' candidate, it was Dr. Salter. A Quaker, teetotal pacifist and militant republican, he used to go around during elections promising to tax beer and tobacco ... These ideas were not at all popular to begin with among the dockers and working men's clubs of Bermondsey. Neither was his championing of home rule in Ireland and independence for the colonies. Taking in a black conscientious objector to lodge with him ... created quite a local stir as well. But the response of Salter and the Bermondsey Party was not to renege on their principles. ... In the end ... Labour did win a majority ... the Bermondsey party had won local people to a real and positive socialist commitment which was to last almost another sixty (years)."

Nearly a year after the Bermondsey by-election Peter Tatchell is still being physically attacked and verbally abused. Bicycle tyres slashed, NF and swastikas daubed on the bike and his flat, flat door keyhole filled with nails, stones thrown at him from a passing car , assaulted on a late night train — the list grows daily.

Page 147: "In the last few days of the by-election campaign, the atmosphere of hatred and irrationality reached fever pitch. It was an almost fascist-like mass hysteria,... reminiscent of Germany in the 1930's or McCarthyite America."

Just under a quarter of a century ago, as the United States slowly lumbered out of the dark ages of Cold War and McCarthyism, the Black Civil Rights movement began. Among the first hundreds of young people to travel to the Deep South, where racist bigotry and prejudice knew no bounds, to help register black people to vote, were three who were murdered. Their bodies were not found until years afterwards. The post mortum showed every major bone in all three bodies had been broken before the young men were killed.

Anti-semitism led to Hitler's concentration camps. Many in Britain supported him in his crusade against the filth of society. A lesser publicised fact of the camps is the thousands of lesbians and gays who were also murdered because they would not deny their sexuality. In the camps Jews had to wear a yellow star, homosexuals a pink triangle. Years later the pink triangle became a symbol of our resistance to oppression.

It's all there in Tatchell's book. Lessons of history writ large.

Democracy. Making MPs fully accountable. And again and again the way non-elected full time officials intervened making a travesty of even the Labour Party's semblance of democracy. To talk of a bureaucracy is an understatement. And extraparliamentary action. Community socialism. The hypocrisy of the Liberals. The book needs an index.

The book is also an inspiration, for beyond the despicable behaviour of the Labour Party and the media, beyond the horror stirred up by bigotry and prejudice, beyond the political lessons, we catch a glimpse of possibilities, of the real meaning of socialism. For that alone the book would be invaluable. It is as unusual and abnormal as many would have us believe homosexuality is. The hardened politicos, the hacks, those who have all the answers talk disparagingly of lifestyle politics, libertarianism and utopianism. And naivety — meaning a lack of cynicism. But Tatchell's book, lacking as it is in macho political headbanging, reminds us — or those of us who wouldn't mind being reminded — of what we're meant to be fighting *for*. Its there in the history of Bermondsey with Ada and Dr. Salter. And its there in the positive and supportive mail that Tatchell received — it was not all venemous hate mail.

Page 155: "A woman from Reading wrote: 'My mother, an old Irish Catholic, lit a candle for you at church. All of us, suffering the same brand of cynical politics, were praying for you."

Labour Against the Witch

One LAW for the NEC, another for us?

It is just over a year since Hackney North Labour Party, appalled at the oncoming mayhem initiated by the Right, called together London Labour Parties and set in train the steps which led to the establishment of Labour Against the Witch Hunt (30 October 1982). LAW's first Annual Meeting is on 26th November.

A year ago, the National Executive Committee had just established, with the help of the Trade Union block vote, and with the acquiescence of many organisations and individuals usually considred to be on the left of the Party, the Register of non-affiliated groups. Most constituency Parties opposed the Register. Many of those organisations and individuals who supported it also assured the sceptics that it was not to be used for a witch hunt.

One Year Later

One year later, 5 Militant journalists, Stan Crooke and Tariq Ali have been expelled from the Party; Bermondsey, once a rock solid Labour seat, has been lost twice to the Liberals because of the Leadership's attacks on the local Party's chosen candidate; Wythenshawe Labour Party has been suspended for the last 7 months for trying to select local councillors willing to carry out the Party's manifesto; Brent East CLP was prevented from carrying out the re-selection of its MP, mandatory under the new constitution, in case it selected Ken Livingstone; Bradford North was obliged to select Pat Wall twice, only to have him slighted by the Party's leaders during the election and see the seat lost; sales of the Militant newspaper have been banned by the NEC; sellers of Socialist Action have had transfer of their membership refused in Birmingham; Halifax CLP has been threatened with suspension for not wishing to interfere with newspaper sellers; and Tribune continues to exit left hotly pursued by a millionaire and a noble Lord. While all this has been going on, Labour managed to achieve its most convincing election defeat for years.

Then, suddenly, our winter of discontent is made glorious summer by this sun of Wales. A new spirit of unity is abroad within the Party. The witch hunt is over we are told. And Neil Kinnock's first act of Party unity is to argue successfully at the NEC for the expulsion of Tariq Ali.

Remain Sceptical

Naturally, we in LAW hope that the witch hunting is now over, but we remain sceptical. Everyone in the Party would like to see a Labour victory in the next election. Equally, everyone is saying that a united Party is a prerequisite for such a victory. Such a unity, however, needs to be genuine and democratic — not the craven silence of those so hungry for office that they are prepared to see justice and honesty swept aside in the belief that that would make the glittering prizes more accessible. What was true for the last election, however, remains true — while the witch hunt continues, the Party cannot be united and a Labour victory remains a pipedream.

The last year raises many questions for the Party, and they are most acute for those who consider themselves on the Left. One does not have to be a supporter of Militant to be ashamed of the Party's treatment of the five journalists. Allegations were made against them on the basis of evidence, that to this date they have never been allowed to see. Audrey Wise exposed the nature of the evidence collected by the Party's full time officials in a Tribune article earlier this year. It proved to be unsubstantiated gossip and tittle tattle. The NEC further compounded the injustice by preventing itself (ie preventing the left minority) from even asking the Militant 5 any questions.

Yet at Annual Conference, the Left was obliged to give its support to Michael Meacher, a candidate for the Deputy Leadership who would not commit himself to the reinstatement of the expelled Militants. Why? If we can be so inflexible in our support of human rights in far away places like Chile, why is there such a flexible approach to similar issues inside the Labour Party? Though the stakes may be lower, is not a fair trial a basic democratic right?

Greenwich Amendment

LAW gave its support this year to the Greenwich Party's constitutional amendment, which could have ended the witch hunt by legitimising pressure groups within the party, provided they supported the Party's objectives in Clause IV and did not oppose the Party's electoral candidates. A number of Parties tabled supporting motions asking for the Amendment to be debated on the floor of Conference. That the Party's managers ensured that these motions were never heard was no surprise. Nick Costello, however, one of the delegates from Tottenham CLP and a member of the CLPD executive, actually tried to move next business when the witch hunt was discussed. Did this reflect the CLPD's position?

No Discussion

Jon Lansman, the Greenwich delegate, estimated quite correctly that the Greenwich Amendment would be lost because there was insufficient Trades Union support for it. In the event, Lansman withdrew the Amendment so that the issue would not be affected in the future by the three year rule. With no discussion at all, has the cause of Party freedom been helped? How will the debate in the Trade Union movement be progressed when the rank and file have no clear record of their delegation's positions?

Regrettably, LAW still has a role to play in the Party. Parties and individuals are still approaching for aid. This year, some 50 CLPs and numerous individuals and branches backed it with their affiliations. It is vital that these affiliations are renewed at our Annual General Meeting to enable the campaign to continue. We have also been grateful for the help and encouragement given us by the Campaign Group of MPs, and we hope the new enlarged Group will continue its support.

Finally, LAW owes its thanks to those members of the outgoing NEC who consistently voted against persecutions and expulsions. The burden of the defence of Party democracy fell very heavily upon them and they set a fine example.

For many others, the lesson has still to be learnt that the Party cannot bring about a fair and just socialist society until justice and democracy are firmly established within its own organisation.

Keith Lichman, Secretary, Labour Against the Witch Hunt (personal capacity)

Labour Against the Witch Hunt Annual Meeting
Saturday 26 November, 12.00 midday
Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London N.W.1.
Affiliations to 11, Wilderton Road, London N16.
CLPs and TU branches £10, LP branches £5.00, other LP organisations and individuals £3.00

Wythenshawe

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is circulating a model resolution on Wythenshawe which is supported by Labour Against the Witch hunt. It reads:

"This Annual Meeting expresses its deep concern over the suspension of Manchester Wythenshawe CLP by the NEC following an internal dispute. In particular this Annual Meeting regrets
(a) that the CLP was suspended before the CLP officers were given a chance to state their case;
(b) that the section of the 1983 NEC Report dealing with the matter states only the case against the CLP officers;
(c) that the NEC enquiry has still not been completed five months after the suspension, thus depriving the CLP of the right to take part in the 1983 Annual Conference and to answer the one-sided account given in the NEC Report.

This Annual Meeting accepts the right of the NEC to intervene in a CLP where necessary, but considers it essential for the NEC to only do so with due regard for natural justice, and not to abuse the powers it has been granted."

-hunt

Wythenshawe Labour Party are still suspended

Wythenshawe Labour Party, suspended now for six months, had its Annual General Meeting closed by the national agent on 4 November with no definite commitment to re-establish the party.

With Euro and council elections coming, Wythenshawe party is thus still not functioning despite Russell Tuck's promises to the Labour Party annual conference that Wythenshawe would be re-established at a 'fair' AGM.

The meeting was closed after a series of irregularities came to light. On David Hughes' insructions, membership cards were not checked. But as Courtney, a UCATT delegate explained, 'I challenged one of the delegates from my own branch of UCATT, who isn't even a Labour Party member. He told the AGM that he wasn't a party member "but I've come to help you out".' Two and a half hours of challenges revealed these could not be solved until the 'problem' of the district party has been dealt with.

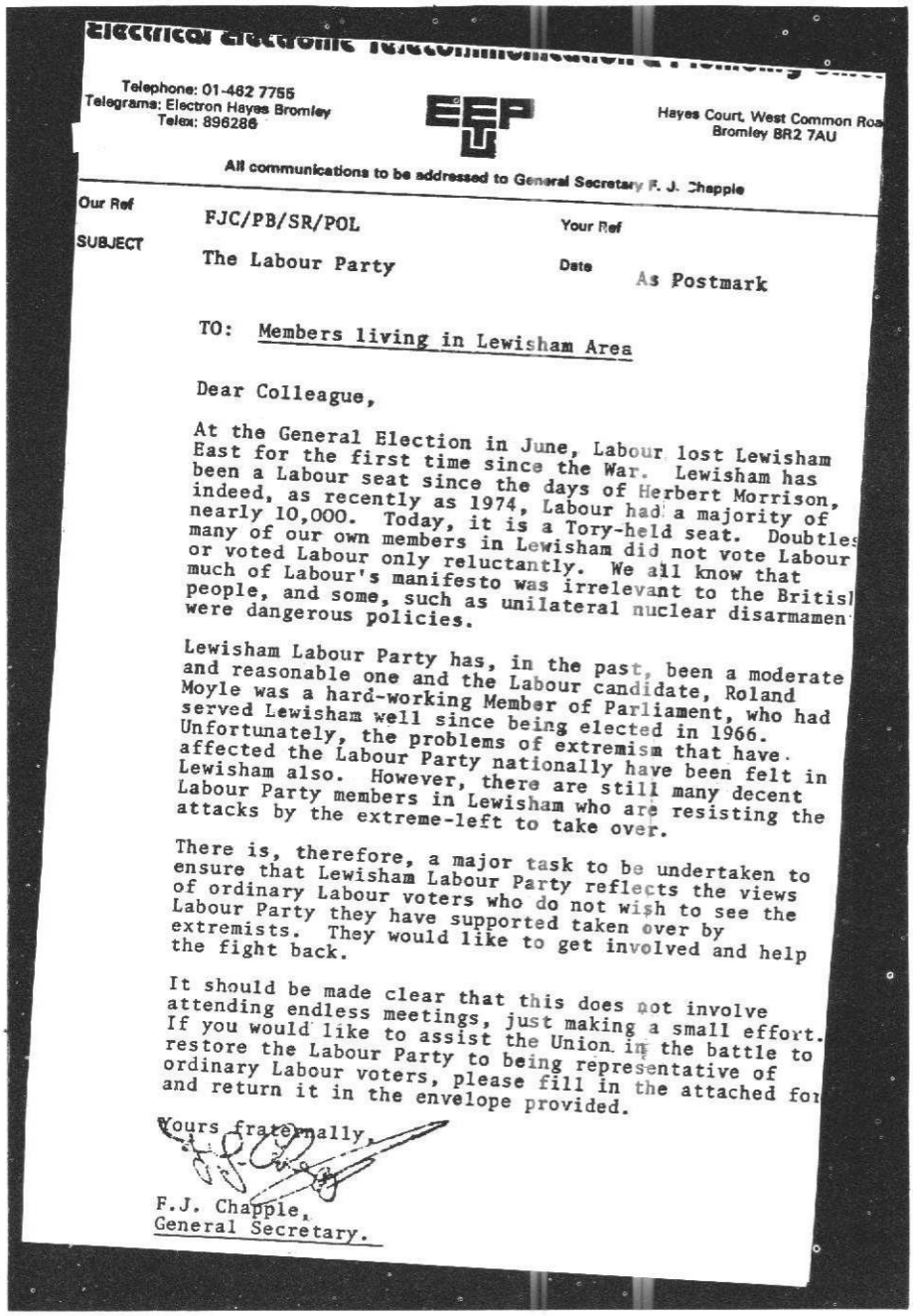
This has ominous implications. The District Party is at the centre of a dispute with the right wing council which could have been resolved in the normal democratic manner, had the NEC not intervened six months ago, removing the whip from twenty-six councillors who have been carrying out party policy, and suspended Wythenshawe party after it ratified the selection of further left wing councillors.

The NEC's intervention to date, far from resolving the dispute has complicated and intensified it. The arbitrary and high-handed attempt to 'impose' a solution from without has failed to produce any result and hinders the Machester parties turning outwards to fight the Tories. If the NEC now extends the scope of its activities to the district party, and similarly attempts to pursue a vendetta on behalf of the rightwing minority, it bodes ill for the unity which the new party leadership has promised.

There is an obvious solution; the Manchester parties should be allowed to run their own affairs, and the NEC should let them get on with it. There is a simple way to do this; the district party should be allowed to convene the regular Annual General Meeting of the Wythenshawe Labour Party, which is due to meet on February 4, in the normal manner, with the national agent supervising and checking the delegations to satisfy himself there are no irregularities and discussing any disputed cases with the party officers.

Dick Widdecombe

Chapple in Lewisham...



Electrical Electronic Telecommunication & Plumbing Union

Telephone: 01-462 7755
Telegrams: Electron Hayes Bromley
Telex: 896286

EEPTU

Hayes Court, West Common Road
Bromley BR2 7AU

All communications to be addressed to General Secretary F. J. Chapple

Our Ref FJC/PB/SR/POL Your Ref

SUBJECT The Labour Party Date As Postmark

TO: Members living in Lewisham Area

Dear Colleague,

At the General Election in June, Labour lost Lewisham East for the first time since the War. Lewisham has been a Labour seat since the days of Herbert Morrison, indeed, as recently as 1974, Labour had a majority of nearly 10,000. Today, it is a Tory-held seat. Doubtless many of our own members in Lewisham did not vote Labour or voted Labour only reluctantly. We all know that much of Labour's manifesto was irrelevant to the British people, and some, such as unilateral nuclear disarmament were dangerous policies.

Lewisham Labour Party has, in the past, been a moderate and reasonable one and the Labour candidate, Roland Moyle was a hard-working Member of Parliament, who had served Lewisham well since being elected in 1966. Unfortunately, the problems of extremism that have affected the Labour Party nationally have been felt in Lewisham also. However, there are still many decent Labour Party members in Lewisham who are resisting the attacks by the extreme-left to take over.

There is, therefore, a major task to be undertaken to ensure that Lewisham Labour Party reflects the views of ordinary Labour voters who do not wish to see the Labour Party they have supported taken over by extremists. They would like to get involved and help the fight back.

It should be made clear that this does not involve attending endless meetings, just making a small effort. If you would like to assist the Union in the battle to restore the Labour Party to being representative of ordinary Labour voters, please fill in the attached form and return it in the envelope provided.

Yours fraternally,

F.J. Chapple,
General Secretary.

MILITANT SELLER SUSPENDED

Moves to expel a Militant supporter in deepest Kent came to a dramatic non-conclusion two weeks ago.

Gillingham Labour Party Management Cmte, decided, at one and the same time, to both suspend the member for three months, and not take any disciplinary action!?!

By some oversight the right-wing found themselves without a motion for expulsion on the table. Had there been one this could have got passed too.

As predicted two moderate wards had motions up, which watered down the disciplinary action to be taken. The "new mood of unity" was evident among this layer of people, and the best motion, simply calling for a reprimand was narrowly passed. However the motion calling for suspension got a larger majority.

The first motion also contained a reference to the N.E.C. recommendation that sales of Militant be forbidden — describing this as "inappropriate" in the light of what the new leadership had said. This is not however a clear-cut victory as the leadership has said a lot about the political basis for Labour Party membership, in recent weeks. We expect this issue to be revived in three months time, or whenever the next Militant supporter plumbs the depths of his or her plastic bag.

Les Hartop

Support Black People's Sections

One of the oddest facts of life is that most white people become uneasy, in some cases positively terrified, as soon as they see or hear of two or more black people getting together to possibly discuss, or, worse still from their point of view, to plan ways of combatting racism in general, or countering specifically the racist consequences of working or existing within institutions over which white people have total control.

To be honest, having always lived with racism and therefore accepted – however reluctantly – racist definitions of situations, even some Black people find such events unacceptable. "How," they may ask, "can we possibly create racial change by working outside the context of a mixed race situation?"

The Failure of Past Approaches

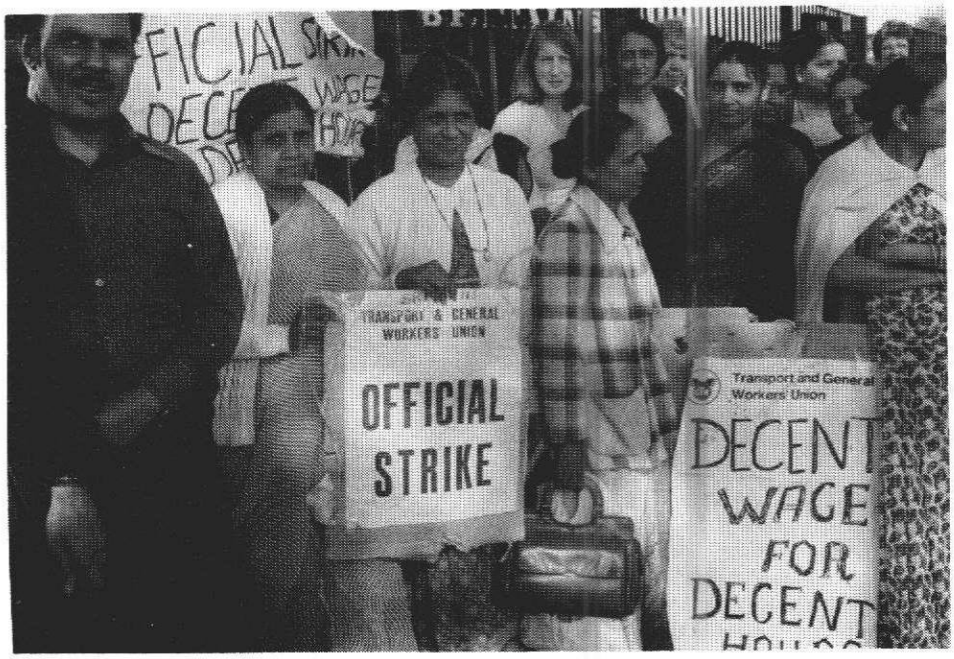
In answer to the above, it needs to be emphasised that, some generations after the arrival of large numbers of black people in Britain, despite their involvement in all manner of mixed race situations, political and otherwise, racism continues to remain a rife and rampant feature of everyday life. Its pervasiveness not only dienies justice to the children or other relations of recently arrived "immigrants", but also equality of opportunity in employment, in education, in housing, and in virtually every social, as well as political, aspect of life, for those Black people who were born here in Britain.

Such a reality is not just an outrage. To many of us it demands that action be taken to bring about change. And this, given the fact that black people are not at all sure that the established political framework has any relevance whatsoever to them, plus the reality of racism in the Labour Party and Trades Unions generally, explains why several of us are now working towards the creation of Black People's Sections in the Labour Party and in the Trades Unions. These, we hope, will lead to direct black people's representation at every level, locally, regionally and nationally of the Labour Party and of Trades Unions.

The Issue at Stake

The essential issue is whether racism can be effectively countered if the only avenue open is the very racist institution, which, with its inbuilt racist majority, itself is the target in need of change. Seen in this way, surely Black People's Sections must be a welcome development and one which deserves the whole-hearted support of all who are seriously concerned to see the creation of genuine racial equality.

Parallels exist of course. Women's Sections are a case in point. It ought not to be forgotten, as history shows, that the most effective way in which change is ever brought about is through basing action on the solidarity and collective strength of organised and dedicated "minorities", working purposefully towards specified objectives. And please note, reactions against such moves, as history again shows, often come strongest from those with the most to lose.



200 mainly Asian workers on strike for over a week at Britains Ltd. toy factory in East London

Stefano Cagnoni (I.F.L.)

Added urgency in the present situation derives from the fact that black people are no longer prepared to accept that "our time" is coming. To many of us "our time" is not only long overdue, but seems ever suppressed by circumstances, or often because of complicity.

The Message of Brighton

The message coming from the Black community is that Black political activists must become more organised and more determined, in order that real changes be made.

The efforts of Black politcal activists at Brighton to get Composite 28 on "Positive Discrimination" on the Order Paper was, therefore, not yet another case of bandwagon jumping by failed politcal mavericks – though in some cases it should be seen as such – but much more a case of black people recognising the fact of racism in political life and doing something about it.

At Brighton, we also ran, possibly for the first time, a Black Activists' organised fringe meeting, well attended and at which several key issues were raised. These are now being followed up.

The Westminster North Black Section initiated meeting, held at Herbert Morrison House last September led to the setting up of a steering Committee which was asked to consider how Black People's Sections could be created within the Labour Party.

That committee has met on several occasions and is now organising a recall conference, which is to be held at Camden Town Hall on December 10th, starting at 10.00 am. This meeting, which will be open to all black members of the Labour Party, will discuss and try to sort out how this matter can best be progressed. (Please contact me if you wish to have any further details.)

Where do we go from here?

Clearly, as black people living in a racist, white dominated society, we know that in the end many of the changes we desire must be discussed and brought about within a mixed race context.

In any event, as Socialists, we too wish to see urgent and radical action taken to put an end to private schools, private health care, class privilege, exploitation at work, Thatcherism/-Reaganism, the nuclear arms race, as well as positive action taken to create equality of opportunity for all. That, after all, is why we joined the Labour movement in the first place and why we wish to see it grow from strength to strength.

What, however, we do recognise, and we hope white comrades also will, is the fact that black people's perceptions of situations often require considerations outside of the totally mixed race context particularly if these are not to be mis-understood or mis-directed before they are given a proper chance to see the light of day.

Arising from such a recognition, therefore, we hope that support for the idea of Black People's Sections will follow.

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