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As Lambeth calls conference to co-ordinate industrial action...

CONFRONTATION COURSE

by TED KNIGHT (leader, Lambeth Council).

"NO CUTS! DEFEAT HESELTINE! PREPARE NOW FOR CONFRONTATION WITH THE TORY GOVERNMENT!" That is the battle cry going out to the whole Labour Movement from Lambeth Council's Labour Group. It has voted to arrange a national conference—to be held on Saturday October 25th—for all controlling Labour groups, CLPs and local authority trade unions. The aim is to organize country-wide opposition to the government cuts and—if necessary—to bring local government to a halt by industrial action.

By a unanimous decision Labour councillors have rejected Heseltine's latest demand for a £5.6 million cut in Lambeth's budget. They further decided that despite the worsening financial situation facing the borough, there would be no cuts made in services or jobs.

It is clear that Labour councils throughout the country are in similar difficulties and are finding it impossible to keep pace with the increasing impact of Tory policies. Hyper-inflation, huge interest charges and major cuts in central government grants are leading to a cash shortage for many authorities.

MASSIVE SUPPORT

Lambeth expects massive support from all over the country, and particularly from the inner city areas. It is these areas which stand to suffer most from the cuts and from the punitive legislation now being forced through Parliament.

Elected councillors, public service employees and local communities cannot be expected to stand back and suffer in silence. The Tories must be forced to put more, not less money into local government—or else get out!

UNION ROLE

In calling for a concerted fight to prevent the destruction of local government, Lambeth's Labour Group is emphasising the crucial role to be played by the trade unions.

Last year Lambeth—and many other Labour councils—decided that jobs and services could and should be protected. But this was at the cost of levying very high rate increases.

The problem is that no authority can maintain this approach without building up major liabilities for the future. This would inevitably mean further big rate increases in 1981 or even supplementary increases later this year.

But there is a limit to the burden which ratepayers should be asked to shoulder—especially in areas like Lambeth which contain a large proportion of ardinary working families. So if continuing high rate increases are not the solution, what are the options facing the local authority trade unions in protecting the interests of their members?

BRINGING DOWN THE TORY GOVERNMENT

Lambeth's Labour councillors believe the only real choice is for them to support the struggle to reverse the cuts and force the government to put more money into local government—or be removed from office altogether. The alternative can only be to go along with cuts in jobs and services—and it is no wish of Labour members in Lambeth to be involved in discussions about redundancy agreements!

That is the thinking behind the Labour Group's call for concerted action. The trade unions, with the full support of the rest of the labour movement, must be prepared to use their industrial muscle to defend the jobs of their members. **Anything less will make no impression on Thatcher and Heseltine.**

Working together we can defeat this government's savage policies. **If it refuses to see reason, we can bring the government down this winter.**

G.L.C. SELECTION RESULTS

'Broad Left'

Mike Ward in Wood Green
Deardre Wood in Greenwich
Leslie Hammond in Dulwich
Ed Gouge in Ilford South
Mike Killingworth in Ilford North
Paul Boateng in Walthamstow
Frances Morrell in Islington South
Simon Turney in Islington Central
Peter Pitt in Feltham
Alex McKay in Deptford
John Carr in Hackney Central
Charlie Ross in Holborn

'Centre'

Harry Kay, Dagenham
John Ward, Barking
Gladys Dimpson, Battersea North
Harvey Hinds, Peckham
Neil Davies, Woolwich

'Right Wing'

Ann Sofer, St Pancras
Yvonne Sivee, Southall
Elgar Handey, Erith
Mair Garside, Woolwich East
Paul Rossi, Lewisham East
Tom Jenkinson, Newham South
Barrington Stead, Fulham
Margaret Morgan, Hackney South

'BRIEFING' CAMPAIGN IS LAUNCHED

JULY 5th SAW THE LAUNCH, AT HAMPSTEAD TOWN HALL, OF A MAJOR campaign against Michael Heseltine's proposed Local Government Bill. The Conference—called by BRIEFING and sponsored by seventy London councillors—was the largest rank-and-file gathering of this type for a number of years. Over two hundred delegates, from thirty CLPs and a dozen trades councils (amongst others) attended.

Already, the effects of the campaign are being felt (see front page). In the morning session, Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight announced that he was expecting the Lambeth Labour Group to carry his proposal to call a major national conference of Labour groups, CLP's and unions to combat Heseltine's Bill. "Lambeth is standing firm", he declared, "and with enough support we will bring this Tory government down".

He had been preceded by GLC councillor Ken Livingstone, who opened the conference. Ken made a detailed attack on those Labour boroughs which had yielded to become instruments of Tory policies—exposing the flank of those boroughs struggling to resist the cuts. In particular, he condemned boroughs such as Southwark—where a small leadership caucus clings to power by patronage and by witholding full information from the party. He demanded that the next Labour GLC:

1. Ensure open democratic procedures in all Labour Groups.
2. Switch funds to Labour Boroughs to compensate for Tory cuts.
3. Fund local community groups in Tory areas such as Westminster and Wandsworth.
4. Introduce a 35 hour week for all manual staff to reduce unemployment.

Ken outlined the coming struggle for the GLC and appealed to Conference to ensure that the forthcoming selection meetings picked candidates who support the new manifesto. "There must be no repetition of the debacle in 1973-77".

After this rousing start, Conference split into workshops up to lunchtime. Significantly, the best attended was the one on the GLC. Education, the wretched performance of the present Labour leadership and the need to send in constructive amendments for the GLC's programme were all hotly debated. It was a demonstration of the amazing recent upsurge in interest in this subject inside the London labour movement—a development in no small way due to the activities of BRIEFING readers and distributors in the constituencies.

The other two seminars dealt with building a Labour/trades union alliance, and with local struggles and democratic control. The latter at one point became an argument between defenders of Lambeth Council's stand on the one hand, and comrades demanding an immediate bankruptcy ("no cuts, no rate rises") course on the other. Those of us defending Lambeth Council argued that the issue really was whether we had the *organization* and *power* at this particular moment to bring down the Tory Government, overthrow the system and finance Lambeth's services from the vaults of the banks. We thought we had some work to do first.

The afternoon started with reportbacks from each workshop. Haringey Councillor Jane Chapman gave the GLC workshop report. Southwark Councillor Carol Turner reported on the trade union alliance discussion and Neil Nerva (Brent North CLP) summed up the local organization one.

Arthur Latham, chair of the GLRC, chaired the conference in his usual forthright manner and commented at one stage on the reportbacks as they affected education. Jane Chapman had pointed out that attempts to reduce class sizes had been thwarted by religious schools and that the size of school rolls should be closely scrutinized. Latham drily remarked that many comrades felt the ideal size of a religious school's roll was nil!

After a large collection for BRIEFING and reports from the BRIEFING production team and from the Labour Mobilization Committee, the Conference moved on to the plenary session and a debate. Probably we all felt (for different reasons) some frustration about this, as usually happens at such conferences. At the insistence of some supporters of the "immediate bankruptcy" position, a vote on a resolution demanding this course was taken (and lost by about a 3 to 2 majority). The conflict reflected the genuine crisis situation which we are all in, and which is gradually threatening to make it impossible for us to carry on work at local government level at all. At the moment, every practical option open to us is painful and in principle unacceptable. We have office—in Lambeth and elsewhere—BUT NOT REAL POWER. To the extent that we lack the physical power to overthrow the Tories and their system, we are *forced* to make difficult choices. The task isn't to pass resolutions "demanding" the impossible. It is to fight for real power. This is what those of us around BRIEFING are beginning to do.

CHRIS KNIGHT
(Lewisham East CLP).

Islington Trades Council: Chaos

The meeting of the Islington Trades Council on 28th June witnessed the amazing scene of the meeting being abandoned because the President, George Martindale (POEU), refused to conduct the business of the agenda. The meeting went smoothly for the first hour, with the usual humdrum points of any such gathering. On reaching correspondence however a major change occurred.

A circular was read from Congress House on the subject of the recent conference on Ireland organised by Thameside Trades Council. The TUC had disaffiliated the trades council for daring to discuss this subject and for inviting a speaker from the IRSP (a republican socialist group). They had also instructed trades councils not to hold meetings on Ireland and issued the usual bureaucratic warning.

I made a short speech suggesting that we write to the TUC and protest, particularly at the attempt to stop political discussion. The reaction of the Communist Party-dominated officers was amazing. They became extremely annoyed and the President refused to even take my resolution on writing to Congress House. After a row lasting half an hour, another T&GWU delegate, Mick Sullivan, moved the chairman out of the chair by challenging the ruling not to vote. He refused to take this either, in clear breach of procedure, and the meeting wrangled on past "standing orders" and was abandoned at that point.

What is clear is that the older CP members are terrified of any challenge to the official leadership of the TUC. Having suffered for years under the lash of bans and proscriptions, these people are now scared of their own shadows. However, this sort of bumbling and bad organisation, coupled with political cowardice, is just not good enough. A major change must occur if trades councils are to play their vital role of local campaigning bodies for trades unionsim.

KEITH VENESS
T&GWU 1/122 Delegate, Islington Trades Council

Democracy: The Fight is Still On

The fight for democracy is still in the melting pot. The decision of the Commission of Enquiry not to give guidance on the three major democracy issues—the method of election of leader, NEC control over the manifesto, and automatic reselection—means that the 1981 conference will become the forum for a dramatic showdown on accountability and democracy within our Party, which is likely to rival the Bevanite controversies in its bitterness.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee, formed with the aim of campaigning for the major democracy issues during the run up to this year's conference, will not be deflected from its purpose by the hollow pleas for 'unity' coming from those whose very attempt to keep power in the narrow hands of the PLP has been divisive, obstructive and downright elitist.

Of course we must unite to fight the Tories, but on the basis of socialist policies arrived at through a democratic process of discussion which gives full participation and power to the 'grass roots' and which is carried through by a leadership which is fully accountably to the Party as a whole. In fact, it is Callaghan who is prolonging the so-called 'divisive' debate on democracy by backtracking on the initial decisions of the Commission, and by trying to re-open debate on automatic reselection which was democratically decided on by last year's conference.

In the face of such threats to the movement for greater democracy, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee is calling for:

* defence of automatic reselection as agreed by last year's conference
* election of the leader by the Party as a whole
* democratisation of the PLP
* NEC control of the manifesto
* defence of the present composition of the NEC
* no reintroduction of the three-year rule.

We believe that the NEC should not be deflected from its duty to carry out these six demands which have massive support from CLPs and other affiliated organisations throughout the country. The Commission has flagrantly ignored the submissions made by thousands of Party members to it. Ninety percent wanted to retain automatic reselection, 90% wanted to widen the franchise for the election of leader, and 86% wanted to give the NEC control over the manifesto as agreed by last year's conference. The NEC now has an obligation to bring forward to this year's conference rules changes in order to effect this last principle, and also 'tidying-up' amendments to ensure the retention of atuomatic reselection in the rule book. The NEC meets on 16 July to consider the Commission of Enquiry's deliberations. We need to exert maximum pressure on NEC members in order to remind them of these obligations. The Mobilising Committee suggests the following emergency resolution to the NEC:

This CLP NOTES that despite the decisions of last year's Party Conference and the clear opinion of 90% of the submissions of the Enquiry, the Enquiry has said it can make no recommendation in favour of aut matic reselection;
CONSIDERS that on the question of Party democracy, the Enquiry has served only to put delay and confusion in the way of implementing the wishes of the Party; and
CALLS on the NEC to:

1. oppose restoration of the three-year rule

2. submit the technical amendments necessary to implement mandatory reselection

3. prepare a constitutional amendment for NEC control over the manifesto, as it was instructed to do by last year's conference

4. arrange for a clear choice by conference on the election of the leader—firstly by taking a vote on the principle of a broad Party franchise (backed by 90% of the submissions to the Enquiry), and if this is carried, secondly by allowing a vote on the various detailed proposals, in the form of constitutional amendments, for a broad electoral college.

Send this resolution, even if it can't get to the NEC by 16 July, as they will be meeting again on 23 July, and also on the eve of conference, when final decisions will be made about the agenda.

At the conference itself, it is likely that there will be a vote once more on the *principle* of reselection, for there are resolutions calling for the 'Mikardo' compromise on reselection, and of course, Callaghan is calling for the same method of optional reselection. Every effort should be made to defeat this move, for we could lose automatic reselection altogether.

On the election of leader, we believe that conference should vote first on the principle of extending the franchise to the Party as a whole, as the resolution suggests. Then, if it is carried, conference should vote on the constitutional amendments to give effect to the 50-50 electoral college as suggested by CLPD (50% trade unions, 25% MPs and parliamentary candidates and 25% CLPs). Unlike the half-baked proposals made initially by the Commission, this form of electoral college *is* workable, for *all* MPs and *all* CLPs would have a vote. If the vote is lost on such a constitutional amendment, at least the principle of extending the franchise to the Party as a whole would *not* be lost.

We accept within the Mobilising Committee that many Party members wanted conference to elect the leader, but the CLPD solution is likely to be the most acceptable at this time, and is the most democratic form of electoral college that could be achieved.

The question of the three-year rule is a crucial one. There is a recommendation by the Commission that the three-year rule, abolished by last year's conference, by reintroduced for constitutional issues. This is a bureaucratic ploy which in practice acts as a delaying tactic, denying the rank and file the ability to have any influence over Party rules. It also means that any unsatisfactory decision could not be reversed as a result of rank and file initiative. We must strongly oppose such a move.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee recognises that we have a massive task ahead, and one which demands maximum campaigning effort. This is why we are encouraging the formation of local groups, local meetings and rallies, and sale throughout the country of our broadsheet *Mobilise for Labour Democracy* which has already sold 20,000 copies. On 15 September we are organising an all-London rally, which will be the culmination of our campaign prior to conference. Speakers will include Tony Benn and Eric Heffer. It will be at Camden Town Hall, starting at 8pm. The platform will also include some major trade union speakers and will be chaired by Jo Richardson. We intend it to be a massive rally to show the strength of feeling amongst Party members in London in favour of democracy. Make sure *you* turn up!

What else can *you* do the help win this

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Debate on the GLC Manifesto: A Success?

There is, it seems, a rather crucial gap between what the GLRC Executive suggests is in progress surrounding the GLC election policy discussion papers and the actual practice in the London local branches.

We have been told that the tactic of the GLRC EC is that the draft manifesto, drawn up by various working parties, with its detailed analysis covering nearly 200 pages, is to be submitted (has been submitted?) to the affiliates for what must be careful scrutiny and debate; from these discussions (so the EC theory runs) possible amendments to the document may arise and should be tabled, prior to the end of this month (July), for debate at a special London conference in the autumn. In short, we can read into this EC thesis an intention to initiate a democratic debate around the policies of the draft manifesto; a proposed strategy of full participation by the London membership in the shaping of the strategies with which they will battle with Cutler and Co in the GLC elections. This is a move towards establishing forms of mass participation and accountability in the workings and structures of the London Party and, thus, represents an initial movement in the direction of socialist democracy within it. But if this is the understanding of the EC on this procedure it can only be stated that it conflicts with the actual practices in London localities, at least in my experience.

Just a few facts here which demonstrate that this point has some validity: note first that the Camden meeting on 6th June which was organised, along with others in different areas, to commence the process of debate on the manifesto was poorly attended; if I said that as many as 20 comrades sat in the wood-panelled Camden council chamber it would be a generous estimate for the meeting's organisers. No doubt, this was a result of the fact that few members at ward level were informed of the event. Further, nobody, except perhaps a few GMC members 'in the know', in my local branch, South Hampstead, had any knowledge of the draft manifesto or the discussion process the GLRC EC presumes is materialising; under these conditions our branch will be excluded from any possibility of discussing and amending the document by the end of July. Lastly, the document as it stands at some 200 pages is considered by some comrades to be far too lengthy to digest given the limited amount of time they are able to put aside for active politics; the GLRC EC must have instituted a certain distance between itself and the mass base of the London Party if it understands, quite unrealistically, that Party activists will easily find time to read it: the constant struggle of day-to-day existence in Thatcher's Britain offers to many no such chance.

Of course there are real problems in generalising (i.e. advancing a picture of London as a whole) on the basis of a single instance (i.e. the particularities of a local Hampstead branch). Therefore, I must accept that variations will exist in the state of the debate throughout the areas of London. But, however, these limited facts do suggest, concretely, that there is a wide gap between what the EC feels is in progress in relation to the manifesto and what is developing in the local areas. And an explanation for this contradiction is not too hard to uncover. We can say that, whilst the EC saw the need (I hope) for a mass, democratic debate on the issue of the strategy of the GLC election manifesto, they did not construct the necessary preconditions for this debate. That is, the possibility of full participation by the membership has been blunted by the EC's failure to institute the structures and procedrues to make this a reality. In less general terms I am talking about the EC's failure to give the necessary time to local affiliates to discuss the document, its inability to initiate properly the debate, its unwillingness to make the manifesto strategies more approachable to the mass of the London membership.

I do not wish to finsh here on a purely negative note. Thus, I want to suggest, very tentatively, a few improvements to the procedure that the GLRC EC have already commenced for a democratic debate on election strategy. These points may be pertinent given that borough Labour organisations will start soon (as I notice Camden is) the process of delineating policy for the coming borough elections in 1982, and may wish to mirror and copy the tactic (and, thus, the limitations) of constructing the GLC manifesto. A few suggestions:

(1) The drafting of the provisional manifesto, through working parties, must be completed with ample time left, prior to the submission date for amendments, for branches to engage in a through debate on its issues; a period of sic months would have to be left for discussion, during which time branches could arrange meetings on policy statements.

(2) As well as a detailed manifesto, a short precis of it must be produced (at a cheap price) outlining its central policy theses; through ' is a larger section of the membership could participate in a process which is, unconditionally, theirs.

(3) The EC itself must be far more aggressive in its promotion of the process, giving a lead and showing a will to be educated by the collective understandings of Party members.

Only provisional suggestions, but hopefully, they portray a certain realism in terms of a strategy for socialist democracy in the structures of the London Labour Party.

We can accept the statement of the GLRC EC at its word: it accepts the need for mass debate on policy issues in London. However, we must ensure, through the means at our disposal, that the EC keeps its word and, thus, is forced to dismantle any vestiges of elitist or beaucratic thinking and practice in manifesto drafting which, unfortunately, filtered into the debate on next year's GLC manifesto.

DAVE JOSEPH
Hampstead CLP

DEMOCRACY FIGHT

(Continued from previous page)

historic battle?

* pass the model resolution *now* and send it to the NEC. If your GMC is not meeting soon enough, get your organisation to write direct to the NEC.

* buy the Broadsheet and place bulk orders.

* get your organisation to sign up to sponsor the Rank and File Mobilising Committee. Contact John Bloxam, Organiser (tel: 607 7182), or Jon Lansman, Secretary (tel: 548 1501) immediately.

* form a local group to support us. There are already groups, and/or meetings planned in: Haringey, Brent and Paddington, Islington, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets.

* make sure that your delegate to Annual Conference is mandated to support all the democracy issues along the lines suggested by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

JANE CHAPMAN
(Haringey Councillor).

SOUTHWARK GAGGING BID IN RUINS

BOB SMYTH (Peckham Councillor).

SOUTHWARK'S ANSWER TO BARBARA WOODHOUSE, CHIEF WHIP COUNCILLOR FRANK BREAN, has been trying to introduce measures which would ensure two more years of discord within the Labour Group. At a special Labour Group meeting this month (July), he moved the first of a series of amendments to the Group's standing orders designed to effect the following:

1. **Councillors would no longer be allowed to ask questions at Council, unless they had the permission of committee chairmen or the Group.**
2. **Councillors would no longer be permitted to vote against Group decisions in the circumstances laid down by the present standing orders.**
3. **Councillors would not even be allowed to speak against Group decisions.**
4. **Criticism of councillors would be 'wholly confined to the Group meeting.'**

It had been decided to withdraw a fifth amendment, to the effect that Group officers and committee chairmen would have unlimited speaking time when presenting reports.

But Southwark's ruling caucus (7 out of 8 of its chairmen are from the Bermondsey constituency) is getting careless. Normally, their wishes are automatically accepted by a compliant Labour Group (whose longest serving member went on the council in 1934). But the special meeting of the Group was thinned by holiday absentees and the Policy Committee's plans became painfully unstitched.

After a brief speech attacking the proposals as 'barmy' and 'provocative', 14 councillors walked out out—leaving the remainder one short of a quorum. Despite valiant attempts by the chairman to continue the meeting, it was declared void by regional office visitor Kath Butler, no doubt relieved to have avoided for the time being the mass expulsions which are likely to follow the proposed changes.

Cllr. Brean, who carries out his duties with the intelligence and sensitivity of a parade-ground drill sergeant, is expected to be working rather harder before the next special Group meeting—called to approve the Leadership's response to the Government's housing fin-

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Open Letter to Ron Hayward

Ron Hayward
General Secretary
The Labour Party
144-152 Walworth Road
London SE17

Norwood Labour Party
264 Rosendale Road,
London SE 24

17th June 1980

Dear Comrade,

In recent months, Lambeth Council has found it difficult to carry out the agreed policies of the local Labour Parties without being under threat of individual councillors being surcharged. We understand that a growing number of Labour Councils throughout the country have found themselves in the same situation. It is clear from proposed Tory legislation that Labour councillors will be increasingly at risk as a result of implementing local Labour Party policies.

The same problem will face Labour councillors throughout the country when trying to implement national policies as agreed by Conference, because central government has made it clear that it is prepared to use unprecedented and dictatorial powers to enforce the implementation of its policies whatever the circumstances.

We are concerned that the Labour Party has no clearly-defined policy on these issues, and that as a result, individual councillors are increasingly isolated and in danger of being "picked off" one by one. We believe that it is both urgent and vital that the Labour Party develops a policy in this respect, and ask the NEC to call a conference at the earliest possible moment for this purpose. Such a conference should certainly take place before there is any repetition of the Clay Cross situation, which clearly demonstrated the lack of effective support the Party was able to mobilize.

We would expect the conference to decide on ways in which the immediate problem could be dealt with, and just as importantly, to lay the groundwork for a policy to be adopted by the next Labour government. In view of this we suggest the following subjects for inclusion on the agenda:

1. Mobilization of political and financial support for councillors who are surcharged for following party policy.
2. Review of the sanctions that can be applied to councillors for political rather than criminal actions.
3. The role and powers of the District Auditor.
4. The repeal of legislation which gives individual Ministers sweeping powers to act without the explicit consent of Parliament, (eg the Local Government Act is an example of what concerns us).
5. Legislative proposals which a future Labour government would be committed to implement.

We would ask the NEC to obtain and distribute clear, comprehensive legal advice on the above issues where appropriate. This should be done well in advance of the conference so that delegates are adequately briefed, and also so that Party members can be well-informed about the legal position of Labour councillors, within the spirit of this letter.

Yours fraternally,

Rosie White (Party Secretary).

ENQUIRY SUBMISSIONS: THE FACTS

Figures divulged to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy show that the so-called 'Commission of Enquiry' rejected overwhelming evidence in some of its proposals. In particular, the shameful suggestion that—contrary to the decision reached by Labour Party conference in Brighton in 1979—an electoral college composed of mainly MPs and trade unionists should have authority over Labour's manifesto is directly against the weight of submissions from Party branches, CLPs and other organisations.

The cosy weekend in the ASTMS country home was, you will recall, the climax of a Commission of Enquiry set up largely as a distraction from the democratic reforms—mandatory reselection by GC, and the authority of the National Executive over the manifesto—agreed by conference 1979.

Considerable publicity and effort was given to submissions by Labour Party groups, affiliated organisations and parties—supposedly to be reflected in the Commission's findings. But their majority report flies in the face of what we now know were the real suggestions made to it.

The following table shows who said what to the Commission:

Mandatory Reselection:
For It—190 CLPs (of which 137 wanted the task undertaken by Management Committees, and only 55 advocated mass-membership reselection), plus 7 trade unions, 3 socialist societies and 5 regions.

Optional Reselection—14 CLPs, 6 unions, 1 socialist society and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

"Back to Prentice"—1 CLP.

Manifesto:
No Change—4 CLPs, 4 unions, 1 socialist society, the PLP.

Joint Control of a different kind—11 CLPs, 2 unions.

NEC Sole Control—133 CLPs, 4 unions, 2 socialist societies, 3 regions.

Leader:
No Change—13 CLPs, 5 unions, 2 socialist societies, PLP.

Change of some kind—160 CLPs, 5 unions, 2 socialist societies, 3 regions: of which, election by conference—52 CLPs; election by college—72 CLPs, 4 unions, 1 socialist society, 3 regions; election by council of Labour—1 union; election by all LP members—19 CLPs.

So these figures confirm the suspicions! The table above is accurate, and was leaked to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy by a member of the Commission.

Where did they get the idea that Labour should have its manifesto drawn up by an electoral college, half of which would be MPs reflecting the unnatural right-wing bias of the PLP? No Labour submission suggested such a scheme. . . .

And why an electoral college with such a peculiar composition (50% MPs/25% unions/20% constituencies/5% others) to elect the leader? When the electoral college was mooted, the emphasis was on downgrading the representation given to MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates (but not excluding any group). Instead, we now have this bastardised college which—surprise, surprise—is composed mostly of those within the patronage of the Labour Party's existing leader. Democracy, eh?

There is still time to prevent this farce from becoming reality. Let the Labour Party know why you think the Commission was wrong, and quote our figures—the correct figures—when you complain.

Write your letter to the Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Let's get some **real** democracy into this Party of ours.

SOUTHWARK GAGGING BID IN RUINS (continued).

ance policies. Will Southwark show the way for London's other socialist boroughs? Will Leader O'Grady tell Heseltine to get stuffed? Or will he recommend selling the borough's building land to the highest bidder? (The answer to these and other exciting matters in the next BRIEFING).

Unfortunately, a document recently discovered on a County Hall photocopier suggests that the Labour leadership may be intent on a witchunt. Headed 'Details of the Council voting record of a number of members of the Labour Group since May 1978', it lists in paranoid detail the voting records of eleven councillors: from Bermondsey—Alan Davis and George Nicholson; from Dulwich—Tony Ritchie, Carol Turner and Jim Wheeler; and from Peckham—John Fowler, Mike Greater, Jeremy Gordon, Jim Greening, Ann McNaught and Bob Smyth.

In particular it concentrates on nine votes since August last year, which mainly revolve around the following issues: the exclusion of backbench councillors from the confidential section of meetings of the Policy and Resources committee; the need for an enquiry into housing allocations policy and practice; the Recruitment and Retention proposals which produced Cllr. O'Grady's memorable line: 'Forget they (Group members) were misled'; and the 5 per cent cuts in council expenditure.

Most Party members would probably consider that votes in these circumstances might very well be justified, particularly since the Group's standing orders allow for such votes 'where public matters (as distinct from purely personal opinion) warrant it'. It is precisely this clause that the Chief Whip is attempting to expunge.

Top of the crime chart is Mike Greater with 18 'misplaced' votes. But, ironically, the most aggrieved among those on the 'sin sheet' was lowest-scorer Alan Davis, with only five black marks against his name. 'Why am I included?' he was heard to ask plaintively. 'I've been a *good* boy'.

The more charitable Peckham councillors suggest that these 'Gagging Acts' are a temporary product of Cllr. Brean's recent 'study tour' of the USSR. Others are alarmed that the leadership has decided to back the proposals, despite the fact that they will provoke steadfast resistance on the part of the Group's democratic socialists. As the Peckham Secretary writes: 'The Labour Party is committed to promoting open government; let us support this locally'.

ON GOOD TRANSPORT PROPAGANDA

If we allow ourselves to be floated to electoral victory, locally or nationally, simply on a tide of hostility to the Tories, we will have thrown away the best opportunity in many years of persuading voters of the necessity of socialism.

It must be clear to all of us that the majority of voters do not understand the need for socialism. How could they, in view of the anti-socialist and pro-capitalist propaganda of the media? In any case, it is always easier to defend the existing order than to persuade people of the need for fundamental change.

A party committed to bringing about far-reaching social change must take account of this and deal with it realistically. This does *not* mean, as too many on the right of our Party argue, that we should abandon socialist aims. But in campaigning for socialism, our tactics and propaganda must take account of what ordinary people are thinking, and why.

This means that we must listen to what people are saying, and understand why they are saying it. We will find that the propaganda of the Tories, and of the Labour government before them, has convinced people, outside the left wing of the Labour Party, that the cuts in public expenditure are necessary because "we cannot afford all these public services". Most of us can still remember the unctuous tones of Mr Callaghan and Mr Healey assuring us repeatedly that "there is no alternative" to public expenditure cuts.

It is absolutely essential for us to make a reasoned reply to this argument. Mere slogans, such as "Fight the Cuts", "Tories Out", are simply not good enough; neither is personal abuse of Mrs Thatcher. I don't believe this kind of propaganda has the slightest effect on a single voter, though no doubt it is emotionally satisfying to us.

To make a reasoned reply we must do some hard thinking about things we have taken too much for granted for a long time. We have to *argue* the case for public services as against private enterprise, explaining *how* we can afford them, and *how* they are better than private enterprise. We have to boil the argument down until it can be put, without leftist jargon, on posters and leaflets, and used in a few sentences when we canvass or circulate petitions.

There is no public service which can be defended more directly and simply in terms of socialist principle than public transport. Not everybody, every day, depends on health and social services, or on housing, tremendously important though these are. But nearly everybody, nearly every day, needs public transport. The inadequacy of private enterprise is glaringly obvious, once it is spelt out: the advantages of a good public service provided by taxes can be argued simply. And from this it is easy to argue the general principle of social provision of services, as against the Tory principle of dependence on private greed.

We have a great opportunity to bring these arguments to the many millions of public transport passengers in London. It is very important to draw up a good manifesto, to hold a few meetings and press conferences. But it is not enough. There must be a continuing campaign. Such a campaign should be conducted in association with the many local public transport users' organisations, for example, the lively Lewisham Campaign to Improve Public Transport. They have made an effective videotape; and they are preparing "Transport Action Packs", containing transport information and ideas for publicity and lobbying, with badges, complaint cards, drafts of letters and petitions, etc, which are to be supplied to local groups and will be followed up with joint activities coordinated by the Campaign, e.g. transport day, information displays, socials.

Lewisham also has a Lewisham Passenger Transport Users' Committee, established earlier this year, by the Borough Council. This consists of representatives from various organisations in the borough; nine councillors are members, two of whom, Cllrs Reed and Jennings, are Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Perhaps the most potentially significant thing about this Committee is that Catford Garage is represented on it. It would be politically immensely important to develop a continuing association between trade unionists and passengers' organisations. It would demonstrate in practical terms that public transport workers are on the side of the passengers, and that there is no conflict between the interests of workers and the public. Transport workers can provide very useful information and suggestions to the passengers' campaigns; and they could enlist the informed sympathy of the passengers with their problems of pay and conditions of work. At present there is a good deal of hostility and suspicion between passengers and workers due to ignorance and misunderstanding, and to the media propaganda against all trade unionists. There would be no opposition to trade union representatives from the passengers' organisations; and it would be politically very valuable for the Labour Party if the trade unions began to take an active interest in them.

Another active organisation in South East London is the Southwark Campaign Against the Relief Road. It was set up in September last year to oppose the Tory GLC's inadequate, ill-prepared, and potentially disastrous proposals to build the Southern Relief Road from Woolwich to Southwark. It has a large membership drawn mainly from tenants' associations and community groups, with a committee of over 30 members. Listed amoung their activities is "encouraging and supporting the minority Labour Group of GLC councillors in its opposition to the road."

With groups like these as allies, local meetings on local transport problems should be held, at which the contribution of Labour speakers should be to relate the local complaints to general political principles; and these meetings should be accompanied by leafletting campaigns at bus stops, and tube stations, and at local gatherings of all kinds.

The campaign should also be conducted in association with the trade unions. Trades councils and trade unions should ensure that every staff canteen should have *argued* posters and broadsheets displayed, and they should be included in leaflet distributions.

If we want to gain support for our socialist principles, rather than put up with a mere anti-Tory backlash, the time to begin organising such a campaign is *now*.

ELEANOR LEWIN
Finchley CLP

BRIEFING

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

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

BRIEFING BOOK AND PAMPHLET REVIEWS

CUDGELLING THE EMOTIONS

My Sex-Life by Chris Knight (50p); *Our Sex-Lives, Our Strength* by Ann Bliss (10p). *Published by the Chartist minority tendency and the Women and Labour Collective. Available in left bookshops in London and from 158 Thorold Rd., Ilford, Essex.*

The women's movement is coming out of the ghetto and is beginning to make inroads into the stolid machismo of the labour movement. Feminists have begun to be active in the Labour Party women's sections (traditionally used for fund-raising and tea-making), the Clause Four group have a women's caucus; and the Chartist tendency has spawned the Women and Labour Collective.

These pamphlets are written by two active Chartists. *My Sex-Life* is an account by Chris Knight of his relationship with Ann Bliss, and *Our Sex-Lives, Our Strength* is an account by Ann Bliss of her relationship with Chris Knight. They have gone public and made a brave attempt to dig out the political content of their intimate relations and the connection between their marriage and their public politics.

Writings like this have an immediate appeal. It's always fascinating to read about other people's lives, especially their sex lives, not just because we're voyeurs, but also because we're vain: in other people's stories we can read our own stories. We can make connections that it's hard to make with abstract political writings Reading about Chris' feelings I read my own feelings; reading about Ann's I read the feelings of women I have loved. These pamphlets are easy to read not only because of their content but also because Chris's in particular is written with great vividness. He re-creates crises–like a scene in the kitchen when Ann states her intention to sleep with another man–with almost a novelist's skill.

To summarise the plot. Chris and Ann meet while canvassing at the Lincoln by-election, and meet again to discuss politics, anthropology and *The Chartist*. She is married to a man who is impotent; Chris is impotent too. They fall in love, and at the 1973 Labour Party Conference succeed in making love for the first time. After a week in Blackpool, all fish and chips, donkeys and sand, love and political debate–Ann leaves her husband and starts living with Chris. (Her husband is a shadowy figure who seems to be beyond the pale of all this political intensity and sexual self-revelation). They have two children and Ann gets the seven-year itch. Chris is too possessive and dominating. Ann is increasingly involved in the women's movement. Determined to escape from the cage, she decided that although she wants to stay with Chris she wants to sleep with other men. Chris, intellectually convinced of feminism, finally accepts it in practice, relinquishing his hold over Ann, renouncing his need for monogamy and becoming a house-husband. The story reads like a cross between *Women's Own* and *Labour Weekly*.

Both come to similar conclusions. (There is remarkable unanimity in these pamphlets, even in the phrases they use). Marriage doesn't work, especially for women because it isolates them, but nor does it work for men. In apparently successful marriages both parties "delude themselves and sacrifice themselves unendingly for the sake of the relationship." Ann's answer is to open up the family and collectivise the home. It is not so impracticable an answer as that of many people who advocate collective living, because she describes how it can be done without breaking down the walls of our small flats and houses. Chris's answer is far more utopian: drawing on his anthropological research, he argues for the separation of love from sex, saying we should find love not in one sexual partner but in our collective relations. "Marriage should be made our *political* comradeship, our 'clan solidarity', our indestructible commitment to each other." This way we can eliminate dependency and the sexual jealousy that "lies at the root of all bourgeois ideology." Whether this solution is applicable to people who aren't political activists is a question Chris doesn't answer.

There's no doubt that traditional sexual relationships–monogamous, male-dominated, possessive, claustrophobic–are unsatisfactory, but I'm suspicious of Chris's conclusion. It seems like cudgelling the emotions. The overwhelming impression I get is of a breast-beating ex-sexist with a masochistic streak, of an attempt to quieten emotional turbulence with political theory, of a public act of self-criticism done in order to win the respect of a strong woman. He writes a genuine and touching account of his first feelings for Ann, only to pull himself up short and whip himself back into line: "I was wallowing in the fantasies of bourgeois sex-love". He is clearly a man who prefers monogamy to the bewilderment and uncertainty of multiple relationships, but he has decided such a preference is ideologically unsound. He talks guiltily of wanting to hold on to Ann, writing off his need for security as a wish to treat her as moveable property. He completes the work of self-criticism by following Ann smilingly into affairs with other people, but the smile on his face is the smile of a parachute jumper about to leap into free fall for the first time.

Although both Chris and Ann reject self-sacrifice for the sake of the relationship, they accept that for Chris it's OK. The marriage was undoubtedly a denial of Ann's needs, but a fulfilment of Chris's. Conflicting needs can't always be put down to the structure of patriarchy or capitalism. Conflicting needs, expectations and feelings mean that certain individuals are simply incompatible, or that, as they change, they become incompatible at a certain time. When the incompatibility is too great the only thing to do is to part, even though love may remain on both sides.

"All of us have to suffer to become revolutionaries", says Chris. "In my case the suffering was primarily sexual." But why, if we are not to sacrifice ourselves unendingly for the sake of relationships, are we to sacrifice ourselves unendingly for the sake of the revolution? And how, I wonder, are socialists going to get the commitment of the uncommitted if all they can offer is more suffering than people have already experienced? "To get socialism, we've got to put need–our needs–first", says Ann. But in the personal politics movement there is a considerable denial of needs for the sake of principles. Ironically, a movement that rejects the traditional left's indifference to personal experience at times demands that we mould and squeeze our feelings into the shape of a rational society. But, to me, personal politics is not a planned economy of emotions: it is the recognition of our needs, the acceptance of our feelings.

Marshall Colman (Leyton CLP).

FABIANS INTO THE FRAY

"A Radical Agenda for London"– Edited by Peter Hall. *Fabian Tract 469 (£1.00). From: 11 Dartmouth St., SW1.*

BRIEFING is apparently not the only publication to stress the importance of the battle for next year's GLC. Now the Fabian Society have waded into the fray with a pamphlet about what they suggest London Labour should do.

Not surprisingly, for a Fabian tract, the society itself points out that this represents an individual view and not a collective one. It represents solely the opinions of the disparate group of contributors. For all this, however, it is interesting as a coherent attempt to put forward a social-democratic alternative to the policies BRIEFING has campaigned for. This actual platform is well to the right of the official GLRC draft manifesto and approximates to the sort of manifesto the current ILEA/GLC leaderships would like. For this reason also it should be scrutinised by the movement.

The idea that this is a "radical" platform depends, of course, on your vantage point. As a real alternative to Cutler and Co. it fails lamentably. Its best section is on education, prepared by Ian Wilson–who is well to the left of most of the other contributors. This section outlines the real problems of ILEA and suggests a number of major reforms in areas like under-5s, ethnic minorities and post school provision. It avoids taking up the miserable record of cuts and capitulations of the present ILEA leadership but at least its major proposals are in line with those of the manifesto.

The undoubted worst part is the Transport section, prepared by (among others) Jim Daly and Andrew McIntosh. Totally devoid of anything other than pious phrases about the "need to improve public transport", it opposes free fares, fails to mention the need for the GLC to produce its own buses and proposes another quango to run London's transport system. It has all the hallmarks of a solution written by bureaucrats for bureaucrats.

Housing is discussed in detail, but what it does not say is as relevant as its actual proposals. The need to take on the Tory Outer London Boroughs is largely glossed over: "struggle" is not a word beloved of Fabians. The document also presupposes a measure of goodwill from central government that is patently lacking at present and it has no reference to the role of direct labour in sustaining good building maintenance. Conversely, its support of IBNS and its warning that the GLC should not restrict itself to being London's 33rd Borough are to be welcomed.

Overall, the pamphlet does contain a number of good suggestions and it can be recommended for a critical perusal by Labour activists. It falls far short however of the sort of programme needed for a socialist GLC. If we are to avoid the mistakes of the 1973 Council, most of the answers are not to be found in this tract.

KEITH VENESS

Next BRIEFING Editorial Collective meeting: Friday August 8th, 7.00 pm, Ken Livingstone's room, County Hall. Articles for next issue in by August 22nd.

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BRIEFING has received a suggestion that we produce a special supplement on issues raised in London by the women's movement–perhaps for the October number. Themes might include women's sections, provision of creche facilities at meetings, street-life, architecture and the politics of the family. Send your suggestions or contributions to Thorold Rd as usual.