CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

CAMDEN POLICE CONSULTATIVE GROUP

NEXT MEETING: 22nd April 1987

7.30PM CAMDEN CENTRE, BIDBOROUGH STREET, NW1

PICKET: FROM 6.30PM ONWARDS

When the first of these collaboration exercises with the police took place on 22nd January, the mass picket and demonstration during the meeting clearly showed that the people in Camden who feel the full brunt of police brutality against them do not want these cosy chats with the police to take place. Black groups, women's, gay and lesbian groups, the unemployed, trade unionists and Labour Party members were all in agreement that meeting with the police in this way does nothing to change the increasing number of police attacks that are being made against them, but instead draws attention away from growing crime rates of racial assaults, muggings and domestic violence.

Right-wing Councillors Hulme and Latham savagely barged their way through women picketers to get to the meeting. In response, the police singled out a black picketer who was protecting herself against this onslaught and she nearly got arrested - further proof of police racism at work.

Following the picket disciplinary action was to be taken against two women members of NALGO's Executive for having taken part - a fundamental trade union right, and it was only when industrial action was threatened that the victimisation was dropped. A clear example of the Right's attempt to hit out at trade unionism.

At the Borough Conference on 31st January, there was a decisive vote for Council withdrawal from the Police Consultative Group (PCG) that was endorsed at the subsequent LGC meeting and which was in line with Hampstead and Highgate CLP policy. Yet at the next Labour Group meeting on 23rd February, by a majority of 21 to 17, it was agreed to continue with PCG meetings for the remainder of the year, just to see if they would work or not! - thus totally ignoring the growing views in Camden that call for the Council to pull out, and disregarding the damage to community relations with the Council that will take place as a result. The significance of that vote was to isolate those 21 councillors from the community that they should be accountable to.

How is it possible to continue having a PCG when community groups refuse to participate? It's an insult for the Right to say that given time and a little persuasion, they will see the error of their ways and will then take part, as if they're not capable of making up their own minds.

But the police must be really laughing at what is happening. The Labour controlled Council is blindly following a piece of Tory legislation by complying with the hated Police and Criminal Evidence Act, all at the cost of Camden's own Police sub-committee that has been weakened by community groups quite rightly boycotting it as a result of the Council's participation in the PCG. In addition the sub-committee's Civil Rights Unit is doing work that is not being placed on sub-committee agendas but is being given to the PCG for discussion. So a Council committee, comprising elected councillors, is systematically being destroyed by a free-standing body that's answerable to no one - a PCG that condones its own racism, sexism and anti-working class stance - with the connivance of the Right Wing on the Labour Group. It's vital, therefore, comrades that we give our support on the picket line at the April 22nd meeting and that we let the collaborators know that playing into the hands of the police is not the way forward for Socialism in Camden.

Kate Allen
Brian Bell
Angie Birtell
Una Doyle
Jill Entwistle
Woodie Haut
Mary Helsdon
Caroline Holding
Tom Kane
Heather Kenmure
Anthony King
Gloria Lazenby
Fred LePlat
Piers Mostyn
Christine Olney
Sandra Plummer
Fran Rayner
Graham Shurety
Andre Simonoviescz
Adrian States
Steve Taylor