CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

RATE-CAPPING OPTIONS: "FUDGE AND SEE" OR MASS CAMPAIGN

ATTACKS ON Local Government spending and democracy are only a part of Thatcher's general attack on the working class.

Last year Local Authorities, faced with a major onslaught, were advised by Kinnock to opt for the 'Dented Shield' approach - to defend jobs and services as best they could, within the law. Councils such as Camden, Lambeth and Liverpool saw such an approach as inadequate in the face of an unbending and determined Tory Government. Many of them went to the brink in refusing to set a rate until the Government made concessions, only to be sold out at the eleventh hour by Labour Councillors who put their own personal interests before Party policy and socialist principle. A betrayal that has left the campaign fragmented, and with Lambeth and Liverpool isolated with the real threat of surcharge and disqualification.

Yet in such a situation, where Liverpool actually fought for and defended national Labour Party policy, instead of being defended and supported, they are being 'witch-hunted' by Kinnock and the rest of the Labour Party leadership. While many of us in the Labour Party have strong differences with the policies of 'Militant' and would make many criticisms of the tactics they have adopted in fighting this Tory Government, they have attempted a genuine fightback unlike most other 'left' authorities. The struggle against the Rates Act took place during the miners' strike and could have conceivably been a second point of the battle against the Tories.

Kinnock and his trade union allies have made vague committments to change the Tories anti-union laws - yet they say they will keep secret ballots before striking, and will not unshackle the unions from the state. Re-nationalisation will not be a priority for a future Labour government, there will be no unilateral nuclear disarmament, nor will there be a withdrawal from the EEC.

Today, after the collapse of any fightback from the trade union or Labour Party leadership, we are told in Phil Turner's paper that the only realistic option for a Labour council in Camden is to 'fudge and see' its way to the next Labour government. This is the same as the 'dented shield'.

This option is no solution as Kinnock has promised absolutely nothing if Labour managed to achieve a majority at the next General Election. He refuses to guarantee any indemnity to Labour Councillors who may undergo financial and personal ruin in defending Labour Party policy. Kinnock also urges Labour councils to act within the law through creative accountancy measures, but does not promise to bail them out when the bills have to be paid in the near future.

The 'dented shield' or 'fudge and see' approahc will mean doing the Tories work in Camden for thrm. This option must be rejected by borough conference. Instead conference should support the Gospel Oak resolutions which proposes to organise a campaign in defence of a budget set at a level to implement the manifesto.

KATE ALLEN, ANGIE BIRTILL, GRAHAM SHURETY, SANDRA PLUMMER.

CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

PUBLIC FORUM: TUESDAY 18 MARCH, 8pm CAMDEN TOWN HALL

"WHAT KIND OF SOCIALIST ECONOMIC POLICY FOR LABOUR?"

with Andrew Glyn, author of the Campaign Group of MPs pamphlet 'A million jobs a year'.

BOYCOTT THE Sun NEWS OF THE WORLD THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

WAPPING: FOR REAL ACTION TO DEFEAT MURDOCH

Rupert Murdoch, with the connivance of the EEPTU, has put the print unions on the rack. Now other newspaper owners are proposing for the same sort of measures. Mirror owner and Labour Party member, Robert Maxwell, has sacked 400 workers at his Glasgow plant. The Daily Mail has demanded an immediate 20 per cent cut in staff and a further 30 per cent by 1988. The Telegraph has likewise demanded cuts of up to 50 per cent.

This widespread offensive by the bosses could be met by a generalised response if only the union leaders sought to organised it. But they are not interested. Their main is to ensure that no other publisher shuts the unions out of the new printing plants. To prevent that, they are prepared to sign away everything members have won in the on jobs, wages and conditions. The only respose response so far by Dean and Dubbins to the sacking of 5,500 workers has been to launch a public relations campaign and to appeal to a consumer boycott of the Sun and The Times. The refusal by workers to distribute Murdoch's titles at wholesalers or to print the Times supplements has had little effect.

The mass pickets that have occured at Wapping have been solely due to rank and file pressure to stop the scab papers. SOGAT and NGA have 30,000 members in Fleet Street, yet none have been asked to join the mass pickets, or to take solidarity action. Unless the union leaderships rapidly change their strategy a defeat will occur.

But it is possible to stop attacks on workers by Murdoch and the other Fleet Street newspapers owners. To do this, the following measures are necessary:

* Real mass pickets, not token demos, at Wapping to stop deliveries.
* Strike action against all Fleet Street papers to defend jobs and the unions.
* A call to all trade unionists and socialists to join the pickets, collect money and distribute literature in support of the printers.

FRED LEPLAT

CAMDEN PRINTWORKERS SOLIDARITY MEETING

SUPPORT THE PRINTWORKERS!
DEFEND JOBS AND TRADE UNIONS!

FRIDAY 14th MARCH — 7.30pm.
Council Chamber, Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, WC1

speakers

SOGAT and NGA members sacked by Murdoch
Frank Dobson — MP for Holborn & St Pancras
Liz French — Kent NUM
Ron Leighton — SOGAT sponsored MP
Chair — Camden Councillor

Meeting sponsored by Holborn & St Pancras Labour Party

Camden Printworkers Support Group meets every Monday at 6pm at 102A Cromer Street. Come to the meetings to help organise support. Donations for the printworkers should be made out to "Camden Printworkers Support Group".

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