LONDON LABOUR 20p
BRIEFING
No 15 NOVEMBER 1981

OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE

Ted Knight,
Leader, Lambeth Council

Environment Secretary Heseltine's 'Consultative Document' on local government financing presents the greatest challenge ever faced by Labour councils.

His legislation which will be introduced in the next session of Parliament, fundamentally alters the rules of local government in England and Wales.

It will bring to an end a constitutional and historical relationship between central and local government which has existed for centuries. It calls for a concerted response led by Labour Councils and the trade unions to thwart the legislation and to rescue the jobs and essential social programmes provided by local authorities.

CARVE-UP THREAT

In advance we have been told that Parliamentary opposition cannot stop Heseltine's Bill becoming law before local authorities make their budgets for the next financial year, starting on 1st April 1982.

This means that every Labour controlled local authority is now living in a twilight world of impending Tory legislation which makes its electoral commitments impossible to carry out. If we drift into this situation without a plan of action, then Labour Councils will be mercilessly carved up at the next local government elections in May, next year. The Tories have devised an unscrupulous timetable to achieve this result. We must outline a strategy to counter this.



HESELTINE'S PLANS

First of all we should review the proposed legislation and its implications. These are the main points:

1. Each local authority will have an expenditure cash limit on it, which will be an assessment by Whitehall of what it needs to spend – Grant Related Expenditure – plus a percentage 'tolerance'.

2. The initial rate that a local authority can raise will be the balance of this expenditure limit following the deduction of Rate Support Grant entitlement. This rate will be raised from both commercial and industrial ratepayers, i.e. as the rate is raised at the present time.

3. If the local authority has a financial budget above the Tories' cash limit, then it will have to raise a First Supplementary Rate as soon as practial after July 1st in the financial year. The income permitted to be raised under this First Supplementary Rate will be limited by legislation to a percentage of the initial cash limit. In levying the First Supplementary rate, Heseltine has devised his first trap. Industrial and commercial ratepayers will bear a smaller proportion of the rate to be levied than they would under the present system, and the balance falls on the long-suffering domestic ratepayer.

4. Should the local authority's budget outstrip the income levied in the initial and first supplementary rate, then Heseltine's legislation allows for a second supplementary rate which could be levied after October 1st in the financial year, but this is where the Tory trap is sprung. The second supplementary rate is legally subject to a referendum in which the form of the queston will be determined by the legislation and the result will be binding on the council. But Heseltine's unscrupulous shananigans do not end here.

5. Should the electorate agree to the second supplementary rate, the amount levied would in the main have to be borne by the domestic ratepayers. Once again, the industrial and commercial ratepayers would receive Tory protection. In other words, domestic ratepayers would be callously used to subsidise big business profits.

6. Should the referendum go against the local authority – and how could it be otherwise? – then its budget must be submitted to the Secretary of State who will decide what cuts in expenditure will be made, and will then give the authority to borrow the balance. Furthermore, the local authority will not be permitted to proceed with its following year's budget without the approval of its expenditure pattern by the Secretary of State.

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Labour—Take the Power!

SOUTHWARK: STOP PRESS

The story so far. . . .

The long-running battle for political accountability of the majority Labour Group by the three CLPs enters the final phase. Since the Town Hall debacle which undermined credibility with Southwark's traditional Labour supporters at the General Election in 1979 and nearly causing the loss of the Dulwich seat, the Party has continuously come into conflict with the Group. By 1981, leading electricians' delegate to Dulwich, Chief Whip Frank Brean, has successfully helped to expel a minority group of 11 councillors for defiantly supporting Party policy. Then he defects. . . .

Now read on. . . .

Against the background of Chief Whip Brean's defection, causing a bye-election and then barely managing to come third out of three potential SDP candidates for his former seat, the three CLPs were considering nominations for the panel of candidates for the May 1982 elections.

Peckham met first and kicked out Leader John O'Grady and genial Chair of the Planning Committee, Ron Watts, who incidentally has managed the spectacular achievement of alienating both left and right in his own Peckham ward.

Dulwich then met to consider their EC's recommendations and booted out O'Grady (again), former MP and new Chair of the Finance Committee Ernest Davies and Bob Eadie, close associate of no less than Frank Chapple.

Bermondsey completed the hat-trick for O'Grady, but at least he found himself accompanied by Charlie Sawyer (Housing Chair), Eddie Rowe (Highways Chair), Len Tucker (Establishments Chair), Harold Young (Establishments Vice-Chair), Joe Lees (Chapple's infamous delegate from the now closed EETPU Central London Branch) and Meg White (who?).



So much for 200 years of collected experience, to paraphrase O'Grady.

As the Empire now plans its next move, the Party waits for the appeals to be lodged.

To be continued. . . .

Our Greatest Challenge

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

7. One new factor included in Heseltine's proposals is that the local authority will have to circulate to every elector a statement from those councillors opposing the supplementary rate. This introduces a barrage of Tory propaganda against Labour councils, to add to the media campaign.

TRAP

It is certain that the majority of Labour-controlled London boroughs, plus the GLC and ILEA, will be caught in Heseltine's trap. Other big cities and metropolitan counties such as Sheffield, Manchester, Merseyside and South Yorkshire are also high on Heseltine's 'hit list'. The purpose of Heseltine's whole exercise is to try and force Labour councils to impose massive cuts in essential services and redundancies. It obliges them to adopt budgets in March which would be electorally suicidal. They would either have to make the cuts or propose supplementary rate increases to be levied in July, which Labour voters would deem intolerable.

By March next year we can either refuse to make a budget under Heseline's terms, cut jobs and services, propose massive rate increases, or simply resign and hand over to the Tories.

LABOUR'S REFERENDUM

We believe there is an alternative strategy. We must seize Heseltine's own criteria – the referendum.

Before we propose a budget, Labour councils should go to the people with a clear choice. Do they want Heseltine's cuts, sacking, and rate increases, or not? Do they want a rating system which protects Heseltine's big business friends and penalises working people? Should the Thatcher government be allowed to deny central government funds to deprived inner-city areas?

Labour councils would stand in a referendum of our own, on a clear policy of no cuts, a freeze on rates and more government cash. This would reduce the referendum to a straight 'yes' or 'no' vote.

The GLC, ILEA and the London Labour boroughs should unite together and seek a mandate from the electorate in February or early March to oppose Heseltine's legislation and its threatened massacre of jobs and services.

The GLC would post to the electorate: Do you want to see the cheap fares policy scrapped and the imposition of Tory increases of over 100%? Do you want to see unemployment increased in London by another 5,000?

ILEA would ask: Do you want to see the closure of schools, a drastic increase in class sizes and the educational future of your children irreparably destroyed?

Such a campaign would call upon support from hundreds of community organisations who depend on local government to provide their resources, and on tenants' associations, who would face loss of services and repairs, as well as massive rent increases.

The impetus for the referendum campaign must also come from the trade unions, whose members face thousands of redundancies under Heseltine's proposals. They would unite with local councils in explaining the Tory threat to the whole community and organising the Labour vote.

Private tenants and owner-occupiers would inevitably be drawn into the campaign against the Tories.

Such a campaign will expose the Tories and the SDP-Liberal Alliance who would have to take sides in the referendum.

THE CHOICES

If we win the referendum, then we pose the government with the verdict of the people of London. The onus will then be on the Tories to restore the Rate Support Grant or act in complete defiance of the will of the referendum, a test of opinion Heseltine himself is advocating.

If the Tories ignore the electorate's verdict, then we make the initial rate, without increasing the amount paid by ordinary households, and seek a second mandate at the May elections, announcing that we will make no cuts and will refuse to raise a supplementary rate.

Newly elected councillors, the trade unions and Labour voters will know a confrontation will come in early summer, and the anti-Tory campaign will continue.

If we lose the referendum, we will refuse to propose a cuts budget and let the Tories do it. They will go into the May elections as the Party of cuts and redundancies. We will work with the forces mobilised in the referendum campaign to combat the cuts and to continue the fight into the elections on the platform of the referendum.

The referendum is essential to the strategy of taking the issues in a positive way outside the council chambers and internal Labour Party meetings into the community itself actively involved in defense of its services and its local democracy.

Editorial statement

Ireland:

DEFEND KEN LIVINGSTONE

BRIEFING wishes to place on record that we fully solidarize with the statements made by Ken Livingstone in the aftermath of the Chelsea bombing tragedy. Responsibility for the deaths of civilian Londoners rests *in the first place* with those politicians like Margaret Thatcher whose genuine imperialist extremism contributes only to ensuring that the dreary, bloody tragedy of Britain's relationship with Ireland should stretch on with no end in sight. In this context, the Tory media – and in particular the filthy distorted rantings of pornographic gutter-rags such as the *Sun* – have as much blood on their hands as anyone. We warmly endorse Ken's courageous refusal, even under the most extreme political pressure from the media, to join in the chauvinist chorus of condemnation of "violence" when this condemnation comes from quarters which have consistently supported Britain's own violent presence in Ireland right up to the present time.

Earlier this year, with the election of Bobby Sands to Parliament, followed by the election of Owen Carron, many of us had hoped that the vicious spiral of violence might have begun to be broken as republicanism realised its massive popular *political* strength in the Six Counties, and as Labour for the first time began to question Britain's right to use violence (troops) to impose its solutions in Ireland at all. The stupendous courage of the hunger-strikers and the massive mobilization of nationalist Irish support around their demands introduced a new factor into the conflict, forcing comrades in Britain to *think* about what we are doing in Ireland for the first time. Had Thatcherism, British imperialism and Labour's leadership permitted some hope to the Irish of imminent victory through political action, the entire framework of politics in connection with Ireland would have been transformed, on both sides of the Irish Sea. But it was not to be. The grim, bloody, murderous traditions of the British state in its dealings with the Irish were reaffirmed, and we are now beginning to feel the results. All historical experience goes to show that oppressed nations and minorities, once aroused, *cannot* be permanently crushed by police/military repression, *cannot* be crushed by being denied the possibility of political solutions and treated as "simple criminals". Such measures merely exacerbate political demoralisation and popular despair, from which bombing-campaigns and escalating bitterness inevitably stem.

Ken Livingstone did *not* say that he supported this, and in fact the boot is very much on the other foot. While Thatcher, the *Sun* and the rest in effect *do* support "criminalising" the IRA (they would rather see bombs going off in London than concede politically to republicanism with the risk of seeing it ally itself with the British working class), Ken Livingstone asked: "How about stopping these things happening?" All of us on the BRIEFING team were sickened and horrified at what happened in Chelsea on October 10th. And how could it be otherwise? Our task is to fight for the rights of working class Londoners, and these rights include not only the right to a home, a job, cheap transport and similar things – but also the right to life itself, and to live without seeing one's children or loved ones killed or horribly maimed by a nail-packed bomb exploding in a street filled with Saturday shoppers. Politics and human feelings at this point intertwine, and not simply because, out of the two people killed, one was an elderly widow out shopping for her mother and the other a young Irish Catholic. Even had the bomb killed only soldiers, our feelings would have been far from simple – the labour movement has responsibilities towards such "workers in uniform" at the end of the day, and we should champion their right to refuse to be used in implementing military policies over which they have no say. But the basic point is that the republican movement is overwhelmingly working class, and in recent years has made immense political efforts to secure the understanding of workers and trade unionists in Britain. In London, the gains have been very real: and a symbol of this is the fact that Ken Livingstone – who has made his "troops out" position abundantly clear – is now leader of the GLC. "Why do they bomb their friends?" was a question asked in County Hall with some bitterness following the Chelsea tragedy last month. Perhaps it was a naive question, and perhaps it reflects a failure to grasp the priorities as seen from the Falls Road or from Fermanagh and South Tyrone. But it is hardly surprising that it is asked. Let's say it: such disregard for our people's lives cannot be afforded. And let's make our sense of shock and anger felt. But let's also ensure that our anger is not mis-directed: piling on the repression against republicans just won't help. We've got to get the troops out of Ireland altogether and tackle the historical conflict at its root. Such tragedies cannot be allowed to happen again.

Notes from Lewisham

An application for a sex shop has been made to Lewisham Council and the shop is now open. For two Saturdays women have been picketing outside the shop and collecting signatures from local shoppers. The petition was begun by a mother and her daughter who objected to the change of use of the shop premises and they were joined by the Women Against Violence Against Women campaign. As far as women are concerned, sex shops which sell pornographic material degrade and abuse women. Porn deliberately sets out to humiliate women and make men feel more 'powerful'. In my view, the men who need this sort of equipment must be pretty pathetic to begin with! For some years feminists have tried to find ways of applying limits to the sale of pornography, without getting into the trap of the moralism of Mrs. Whitehouse. However, I think that censorship should begin where it treats women as passive and only as sex objects. Pornography is censorship of women's potential sexuality. The irony of all this is that when the GLC is loaning £12,000 to a feminist publishing co-operative – Sheba Feminist Press – the Tories accuse the GLC of subsidising pornography! To me this just shows that even when Sheba is publishing a Health and Sexuality book for women, the Tories only see women in terms of sexual objects and can't discriminate between pornography and how we as women see ourselves.

There is to be a picket of the full Council meeting against planning permission for change of use on Wednesday 11th November at 6.30pm. Anyone from the Lewisham area should try to attend.

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'Scrape' Nkshona, a local Black Labour Party activist, was beaten up by fascists on Wednesday 7th October as he arrived home at 10pm. He was attacked by men in their twenties with an iron bar. They punched him in the head, and kicked him in the back. He had to go to hospital to be treated for his injuries. He also went to the local police station to report the incident. The advice he was given by the police was 'Don't go to the Press'; the reason, they said, was that it might make their job in tracking down the attackers more difficult. This is not the first time this sort of advice has been given – to hush things up is actually the last thing we should be doing. Judging from what we hear, incidents like these are increasing. What are we going to do about it, to prevent our Black comrades from being intimidated? I think we've got to take some responsibility in protecting ourselves and each other. In my view the police are using fascists as a cover for their own racism and harassment of Black people.

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THE MARCH OF THE MODERATES

Conor McAuley
Secretary
Newham North West CLP

You may have read in the July Briefing, Richard Buxton's article about the pressure certain Newham Councillors and Council Officers have been under arising from their membership of the Newham Freemasons Lodge No. 8627.

On June 10th and 11th, the BBC Radio 4 Checkpoint programme devoted an entire programme to the activities of this lodge and in particular its Secretary Cllr. B. Watts, the Deputy Leader of the Council and until May this year the Chairman (for ten years) of the Town Planning and Housing Committee. Most of the allegations in this programme were already known to Party members and moves had begun earlier in the year to reject certain of their members and associates from the Panel of Candidates for the 1982 Borough Elections.

ALLEGATIONS

One of the allegations concerned the re-housing of Cllr Watts friend and chauffeuse, Mrs Marie Brown and her husband by the Housing Dept. in a flat in the Woodgrange Conservation Area, the "greenest" part of the borough. Mrs Brown did already have a house of her own in Boreham in Essex. This fact was not unknown to the Housing Dept. because her next door neighbour in Boreham was Mr. George Tovey, another Freemason, the now retired, head of Housing Improvements in the Borough.

Even if the procedures surrounding the letting were correct, Mr. Watts when asked about the matter, could not see the political implications of re-housing an owner occupier when Newham has a housing waiting list of over 8,000.

Worse than this was the Woodlands Community Centre (King Edward Club) affair. A disused community centre was "sold" nearly 3 years ago to a Mr Smith, the licensee of the Darmouth Arms pub, for £40,000. The Darmouth Arms had been a regular meeting place for the Newham Freemasons, whose secretary, of course if Cllr Watts J P. The sale to Mr Smith was sanctioned by Cllr Watts on a "Chairman's Decision" which was endorsed at a later Town Planning and Housing Committee meeting.

Subsequently the re-named King Edward Club opened and became a regular lodge meeting place. Two and a half years later however, the £40,000 purchase price has not been paid. Indeed rates were not paid for over a year until other councillors woke up to what was happening. The alleged reason for the delay is a covenant in the original lease prohibiting the sale of alcohol on the premises. This hasn't prevented Mr Smith from doing precisely this since he opened for business. Mr Smith has even refused to pay interest on the outstanding purchase price. Three local councillors have pursued this matter vigorously and at least one has had what he has described as a "heavy visit" to encourage him to lay off the matter.

INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY

Considerable pressure arose from the local Labour Parties and the Newham North West Party called for an independent enquiry into these and other allegations. This call was endorsed by the Newham Local Government Committee but the Labour Group refused even to debate the question.

We now learn that the District Auditor who has been investigating some of these matters, has called in the Scotland Yard Public Corruption Dept. and that Det. Chief Inspector Bob Andrews is now interviewing the participants.

In a sense however, this is only half the story. Over the past few years a large political division has opened up between the party and the Labour Group on Newham Council. No doubt comrades in other boroughs have had similar experiences where their Labour Group and particularly the Group Leadership loses touch with the local Party and rejects new policy initiatives and regards them as attacks on themselves as individuals. In Newham, where labour holds 57 out of 60 seats on the council, relations became quite bitter. The group rejected or in many cases refused to discuss new initiatives on Race Relations, School Governing Bodies, the Cuts and the Rates. So far they have taken little or no part in the drawing up of the Party's manifesto for next year's elections. The Newham North West Party took a particularly strong line when it rejected Cllrs Watts, Billups, the new Housing Committee Chairman, Wilson and Williams, the education Committee Chairman, as suitable candidates for the 1982 Elections. The GLRC upheld the Newham N.W. decision when 3 of the Councillors appealed in August. They had already taken out an insurance policy in the form of nominations to the LGC panel from the Newham South Party.

The Executive of the Local Government Committee which like the Newham N.W. E.C. had interviewed ALL the potential candidates had recommended against accepting the 4 Newham N.W. Councillors and eight others including GLC members Jenkinson and Edwards.



● Cllr Jenkinson ● Cllr Edwards.

At the local government committee on 15th October, GLC member Tom Jenkinson, was rejected from the panel of candidates by 22 votes to 18. Also rejected were Austin Williams, Education Committee Chairman, by 31 votes to 9, Michael Allum & John Hagerty. GLC member Arthur Edwards was successful in overturning the decision of the Executive Committee by 21 votes to 19.

Fred Dance, secretary of Newham South, was also successful in overturning the EC decision by 32 votes to 7. Councillors Undrill, Manley & Group secretary Bill Brown were also placed on the panel by sizable majorities.

FRANK CHAPPLE

On September 1st, a week prior to the full LGC meeting convened to endorse the panel of candidates, a letter from Frank Chapple was received by all EETPU members in the Borough urging them to help in the "fight back" against this "left wing purge" of the Council. The NEC has been asked to look into this.

When the full Local Government committee met an EETPU full time official who is an LGC member arrived late and proceeded to put questions containing personal allegations not against the candidates but against some of the delegates who were present. The meeeting all but shouted him down after his 3rd intervention.

Four Newham Councillors, Watts, Billups, Wilson and Baukam were rejected and 69 party members including many sitting councillors were placed on the panel.

Two councillors who had been rejected by the LGC Executive successfully pursuaded the full LGC to accept them as candidates. A further 9 councillors including Jenkinson and Edwards have yet to be heard by the LGC. Throughout this whole procedure ALL candidates have been permitted to speak for themselves both at the interview stage and at the full LGC.

Concern remains, however that appeals to the GLRC on behalf of any failed candidate may not be dealt with in an equitable manner. On September 17th an appeal on behalf of Cllr. B. Brown, the Group Secretary was heard at County

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FOR A LEAD FREE LONDON

Ellis S. Hillman
London Friends of the Earth
Environment Group

Now that the GLC's FARES FAIR policy is fully operative, with literally millions of passengers benefitting from this massive exercise in support of public transport, the time has surely come to complement this policy with some firm and decisive action on behalf of bicycles and against the juggernaut lobby.

It is encouraging to read that 1% of the transport budget's resources are to be devoted to "bicycles", presumably cycle routes, and incentives to young and old to cycle rather than be dependent on the car.

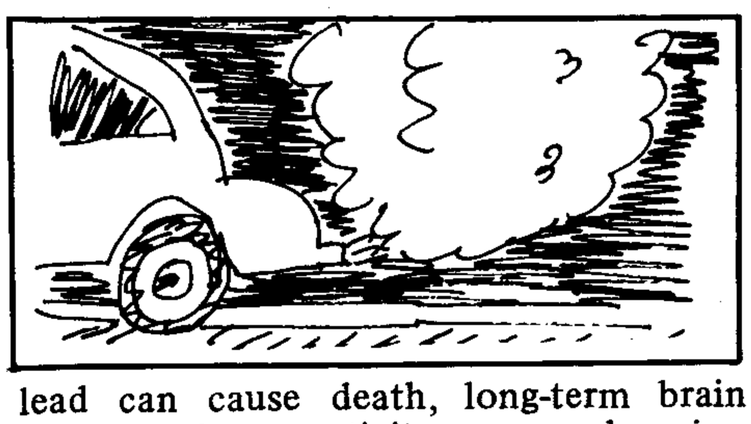
It is also welcome news that the road schemes which the new GLC has inherited from the old have been dropped.

All these policies, however, do not and cannot add up until there is an equal determination to improve the environment for cyclists and pedestrians. Until such time as the GLC declares for a LEAD FREE LONDON by taking positive steps to ban vehicles from areas where concentrations of lead are above acceptable levels – there will be an understandable scepticism about the GLC's determination to make promises a reality rather than pious expressions of goodwill.

CHILDREN & LEAD

Even the previous administration was moved to comment (Allan Greengross, Leader of the Planning Communications Policy Committee) "The probable link between lead pollution and brain damage, especially among children, can no longer be ignored. It has been estimated that reducing the lead-petrol ratio to the German standard would cost up to £450 million a year, but finance must be no consideration when the health and wellbeing of our children is at risk." Mr. Greengross himself admitted that "Traffic management can be only a marginal solution in big cities. The real answer is to reduce the poison at source by reducing lead additives in petrol."

Mike Gilbey, who is Chairman of the Waltham Forest Safety & Public Protection Committee, has gone on record as saying that "Surveys have shown that



lead can cause death, long-term brain damage, hyper-activity, poor learning ability, anaemia, and lethargy. And further, that petrol is the greatest lead polluter and we are asking the Government to reduce the permitted level from the 0.40 grams per litre set in January this year, to 0.15 as it is in Germany."

This situation is by no means new. Reports of tests by the GLC carried out in 28 inner London school playgrounds are said to have revealed lead levels in some of them of 2000 parts per million or more. Tests by environmental health officers in Lambeth, for example, have found average lead levels of 1,840 parts per million in street dust taken from around the London borough. These levels are many times greater than those Americans allow in paint, and more than a hundredfold increase on the 15 parts per million found in unpolluted soil.

LEAD AND THE UNBORN CHILD

"Lead pollution is more damaging to the unborn child very early in pregnancy and around the time of conception than to the human species at any other time." This was said by Arthur Wynn, the author of several books on the prevention of handicap, at a conference on "Metallic and Other Poisons – Hidden Dangers?" recently. He then went on to say:

"Lead given to animals before mating and through pregnancy causes damage to the brain, liver, kidneys and sexual development of the offspring at lead concentrations 5 to 10 times lower than reported as damaging adult animals. Lead too causes severe damage to unborn child at concentrations so low that there are no symptoms at all in the mother or father."

IN CONCLUSION

(1) When then is the GLC going to order lead free petrol for its own vehicles, and thereby set an example and standard for Londoners to follow?
(2) When are we going to see the first lead-free traffic schemes in the worst affected areas?

Newham

(continued from previous page)

Hall. Officers of the Newham N. East Party tell me that John Spellar, the Political Officer of the EETPU chaired the appeal committee at this hearing. I find it staggering that ANY officer of the EETPU should be allowed near an appeal in view of their earlier activities in this area.

NOT INACTIVE

Throughout this whole process the Right Wing/Freemason wing of the Party has not remained inactive.

Secret meetings had started on 10th May to set up the "Newham Labour Party Moderate Group" – membership so far at least, by invitation only. They claim a membership of about 50 including 25 sitting councillors. A more realistic estimate of their strength on the council would be 15. Their principle officers include GLC member T. Jenkinson (chairman), Cllr P. Billups (secretary) and Cllr B. Philpott (treasurer) all of whom happen to be members of the Newham Freemasons Lodge No. 8627.

So far their only contribution to "moderation" in the Borough has been to organise resistance to the GLC precept, levied to fulfill the manifesto commitment to reduce L.T. fares. This took the form of submitting a strong protest to the GLC – stronger indeed than anything sent to Michael Heseltine, and delaying the imposition of a supplementary rate. Their only motive was to embarass the new GLC leadership. This move was orchestrated by GLC members Edwards and Jenkinson.

The "Moderates" initial policy statement released to the press and not to the Party, stated that they would ensure that Newham was "controlled" (?) by "men and women whose roots are in the Borough". Not a policy to commend them to Newham's ethnic minorities.

Some of the "Moderates" have spoken of defection to the SDP. Indeed the local SDP – membership 12 at the last count – has invited them to join. The "Moderates" secretary Cllr Billups was quoted in the Newham Recorder on August 6th "I think the SDP are a bit early in pushing this particular issue. It could antagonise people who may well be interested in joining them." More recently he has said that he had "no immediate plans" to leave.

These "Moderates" do however have a problem. The local Liberals will not accept the disgraced Freemasons as electoral allies.

The Liberal Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Newham North West, has said "many of these Labour Councillors would not be acceptable to us. They are responsible for the bad conditions in the Borough." Indeed one Liberal is reported to have sent Shirley Williams a dossier on some of the Freemasons urging her to resist any defections to the SDP. The Labour Right Wing could however take over the local SDP. The present Newham SDP treasurer is a former Labour councillor and he would welcome his former colleagues with open arms.

The "Moderate" group claim to have an "all for one and one for all" policy whereby if any of their number fail to become councillors for next year, they will all go.

So far they haven't gone but it remains a strong possibility. One thing is sure, the Newham North West Party will not be intimidated by threats of defection. The struggle continues and failure would be damaging to both the party and the people of Newham.

Fighting to Win

Frank Hansen,
(Prospective Candidate,
Carlton Branch, Brent East CLP)

The London Labour Party's special conference on December 12th will face the difficult but vital task of formulating an action programme which unites Labour Councils, trades unions and the labour movement in general, in a united campaign against Heseltine's law and the massive cuts which the Tories are determined to impose.

One thing is absolutely clear: the all-out confrontation with central government which has been looming for the past two years can no longer be postponed. Thatcher's summer Cabinet re-shuffle which ousted the "wets" (now affectionately dubbed "blue chips" by the media) represented nothing less than a declaration of war on the local government public sector. With Tebbit (employment), Joseph (education), Fowler (social services) and Heseltine now firmly at the helm, local authority workers now face a strengthened dose of the monetarist medicine which has already been inflicted on the industrial sector (B.L., British Steel etc.) Hundreds of thousands of redundancies and drastic cuts in living standards are now the order of the day.

Some Labour Councils (not the majority!) have managed to thwart the Tories' plans to 'slim down' the local authority sector by the defensive option of large rate rises. Thousands of jobs have been saved by this 'time-buying' exercise, although the political price in terms of middle (and working) class alienation from Labour, has tended to escalate.

TIME HAS RUN OUT

Time has now run out. The Tories have given up the attempt to coax and push the recalcitrant Labour Councils into large-scale cuts. They have opted for the big stick in the form of Heseltine's law. Even without the new legislation, the level of rate rises sufficient to avoid cuts would have been astronomical. With ceilings on commercial rates and local plebiscites coming into force next year, the rate rise strategy will not just be politically undesirable, it will be redundant as a means of halting cuts. Labour Councils now have a clear choice: fightback and challenge the Tory law or buckle under and implement Heseltine's diktats.

ALL OUR TOMORROWS

Since the Lothian experience represents all our tomorrows, it is important that we absorb the lessons of that defeat. Firstly, Lothian showed that it is possible to mobilise widespread support among public sector workers on a 'No Cuts' platform. However, once the council stepped on to the slippery slope of 'minimizing cuts', support waned and eventually evaporated. While the Heseltine law provides an opportunity to unite the movement, its implementation will undoubtedly be *selective*. Heseltine will try to buy off weak Labour Councils by offering them crumbs. Secondly, there may be pressure from trade union bureaucrats to retreat to an illusory 'second line of defence', such as 'no redundancies', or 'only 100 redundancies' or whatever. This pressure can only be overcome if Labour Groups and local parties forge a firm alliance with rank-and-file trade unionists on the basis of *no* cuts in jobs or services.

Above all, Lothian demonstrates that it is extremely difficult (although not in every case impossible) to fight a central authority on an isolated, local level. Unity in action is the key to forcing the Tories to retreat and make available the funds they have stolen from us. Only when they are faced with a challenge which threatens their power to rule will they make the slightest concession.

RADICAL LABOUR COUNCILS

So where does this leave us in London? We have the GLC, and after May 1982 we will probably have a few more radical Labour councils. The problem is that we can't wait until May 1982. Existing Labour councils must be forced to act. They must refuse to draw up the 'savings' budgets which Heseltine is demanding. If necessary they should immediately disengage rather than endorse cuts budgets, thus challening the local Tories (or Social Democrats?) to do their worst, and then voting down the budget they present. This will provide the Labour Party in London with the opportunity of mobilizing the working class *now* against the Tory plans. Moreover it will clear the decks for an election campaign based on no cuts/no rate rises and a confrontation with the Government.

Of course, there is no guarantee that existing Labour Groups will be bound by the discipline of the London Labour movement. Nevertheless we must bring maximum pressure to bear. Otherwise the election will be utter confusion, with Labour Councils imposing cuts and rate rises, while their local parties campaign against such policies.

AFTER MAY 1982

What happens after May 1982? Clearly at this point we can only outline the bare bones of a strategy. The first priority is to ensure that, immediately following the May elections, the London Labour Party Conference is reconvened to allow the fullest possible discussion on tactics to take place. The essence of the policy, however, can be formulated already: it involves councils acting together, facing up to the threat of surcharge, refusing to make cuts and setting an all-London date – notified clearly in advance – for collective disengagement and confrontation.

MODEL RESOLUTIONS

Following a specially-convened meeting of the BRIEFING Editorial Board, this "Fighting to Win" strategy (outlined in earlier contributions to BRIEFING) was amended and clarified through the tabling of two model resolutions for the December 12th special conference. No doubt, comrades will wish to amend or shorten the texts printed here, but it is hoped that our suggestions will prove helpful. The first is designed to apply to existing Labour Groups, while the second applies to in-coming groups following the elections in May. Wording from either resolution can be used to amend the E.C. statement to be presented to Conference.

FIRST MODEL RESOLUTION

"This Conference calls on existing Labour authorities in London to resist the proposed legislation to be introduced by the Secretary of State for the Environment on the following basis:

1. No cuts whatsoever to be made in services, no matter what the circumstances;
2. (a) No budget at all to be agreed in Council for the year 1982/3 unless the proposed legislation is withdrawn;
   (b) disengage from all positions of responsibility in Council rather than draw up a a cuts budget;
   (c) let the Tories draw up their own budget;
   (d) use Labour's majority to defend services by voting this budget down;
3. If this involves
   (a) the intervention of commissioners to run local authorities prior to the May elections,
   or (b) the surcharging of councillors, these risks to be preferred to the alternative of Labour councils taking responsibility for a cuts budget;
4. Secure the backing of local government manual workers by pressing the negotiating bodies to meet their 12½ per cent claim; support any industrial claim in support of this claim;
5. The election in May to be fought on the programme of "break Heseltine's legislation, no cuts in services"; Labour authorities to commit themselves in advance to disengage simultaneously from the moment when any single authority in London reaches bankruptcy, is surcharged or is replaced by commissioners.

Conference instructs the Greater London Labour Party E.C. to work to secure the implementation of the Labour Party Conference's decision regarding the reimbursement of surcharged councillors by a future Labour Government, and to begin organizing a campaign on the above lines immediatelv."

SECOND MODEL RESOLUTION

"Conference calls on incoming councillors after the May election to act in council on the following basis:

1. No cuts to be made in services, no matter what the circumstances;
2. Simultaneous disengagement across London from the moment when any authority, in opposing cuts, reaches bankruptcy, is surcharged, or is replaced by commissioners. Disengage rather than take responsibility for a cuts budget; use Labour's majority to defend services by voting this down.

Conference instructs the London Labour Party E.C. to convene a special London Labour Party Conference immediately following the May 1982 elections to co-ordinate this strategy. The E.C. is further instructed to begin immediate preparations to implement the above strategy, seeking to secure:

(a) A commitment from the P.L.P. to fight the Tories' proposed local government legislation by disrupting proceedings in Parliament;
(b) A cast-iron guarantee from the Labour Party leadership that all surcharges and penalties will be removed and re-imbursement made by the next Labour Government;
(c) The establishment of a special fund to help councillors in need;
(d) Full backing for the above plans from the trade unions and the TUC, with the establishment of action committees of public sector workers, trades councils and community organizations to organize the picketting or occupation of council chambers and industrial action as required."

DEFEATING HESELTINE

KEN LIVINGSTONE

The Council elections in May of this year presented the Tory Government and Michael Heseltine with a public rejection of their policy of cutting back local government services and jobs. Labour won control of all the metropolitan counties and many County Councils.

The government could have lived with this situation. An increase in local government spending after a cut of 10% in real terms over the last few years would not have been an intolerable burden for the national economy (central government's own spending has increased by 10% in real terms during the same period). The government could have accepted the policies that Labour put before the voters were simply a package of sensible schemes, restoration of the cuts in education and social services) which had received a mandate and should be allowed to go ahead.

Heseltine has decided otherwise. He sees the prospect of electoral advantage in a campaign against labour councils in which the tories are seen as fighting to prevent rate increases. He has been encouraged in this belief by the Coventry referendum and by the undoubted fact that rate increases have not bitten deeply into working class pockets.



Above: Ken Livingstone, speaking at *Briefing*'s meeting at Party Conference.

Photograph John Brennan

DILEMMA

The Labour Party finds itself in a dilemma. For years we have increased the rates in order to provide services and jobs and to minimise rent and fares increases. Because over 50% of rate income is from industry and commerce there has been a redistribution of wealth in favour of ordinary people flowing from this policy.

In Britain the 20 largest private firms paid no tax at all last year so their only direct contribution to the provision of public services was via the rates. This is the reason that industry and commerce have been demanding that the Tories change the rating system in their favour.

This Heseltine has now agreed to do under the guise of restricting rate increases. The new legislation which he intends to push through Parliament before next year's rate making has several features which hit at domestic ratepayers. First Heseltine will decide how much each council should spend. If Councils spend more then the extra spending will fall almost entirely on domestic ratepayers with commerce only paying a small proportion. In London next year the average domestic ratepayer should spend £1.07 a week in order to keep fares at the present level but under the new system the cost would be £2.65.

Those councils most above the new tory guidelines would have to double the rates next year for domestic ratepayers or make cuts in services on a scale which would lead to the loss of a quarter of a million jobs. Already some council treasurers are talking about rent increases of £6 a week, doubling fares and massive redundancies for teachers, firemen, transport workers and other council staff.

If council fails to make the cuts then the extra income required is to come in the form of a supplementary rate in October which would be subject to a referendum. To ask ordinary families to double their rates whilst wages are pegged at a 4% increase would be as unacceptable as making the cuts required in order to avoid the rate inerease.

The basis on which we drew up our manifesto that the community as a whole, including commerce, should contribute to the cost of providing public services, is to be invalidated by a single Act of Parliament. In reality the government is taking powers to overturn the result of local elections which it lost!

OUR STRATEGY

This requires Labour also to revise our strategy. In the first place we must fight the legislation with every means possible. We must also reconvene those bodies which drew up the manifesto in order to determine a response to these changed circumstances.

There is no way in which we can fudge the issue or muddle through. There will be some comrades who will argue that we should resign from councils, let the tories make the cuts and boycott the resulting by-elections or contest the elections on the grounds that we will refuse to take our seats. Such a course would be completely wrong . It would leave the workers in each council exposed to massive attacks because they cannot run away from their jobs. Ordinary families in the community would never understand why the Labour Party failed to defend them and left them to resist the cuts alone. Labour must stay and fight in each Council and continue to contest local elections.

NO CUTS, NO RATE RISES!

But the basis of our policy needs to be changed in response to the government and the new situation in which we find ourselves. Labour councils must refuse to vote for cuts in services or rent and fare increases. But we must also refuse to vote for rate increases under the Tories new system.

There is no way in which Labour Councils can balance the books under the new system. This is the classic case of the final straw breaking the camel's back. Labour councils have struggled through the last 2½ years increasing rates in preference to cutting services and jobs because they saw this as the lesser of two evils.

OUTSIDE THE LAW

By closing off that option Heseltine may now unite Labour Councils in opposition which will take them outside of the law. There is no point in Labour Councils trying to calculate what rate increases they would have supported and refusing any increase beyond that. Labour Councils have been forced into massive rate increases by government cut backs in Rate Support Grant. We should merge our campaigns for a restoration of the RSG cuts with our opposition to the new legislation by imposing a full rates freeze in next year's budget and voting down any proposals from the tories for increases in rents and fares or in services and jobs.

WINTER CAMPAIGN

We must now prepare for this struggle by a major winter campaign involving the trade unions and community groups. Trade unions must realise that the fight is now and they will not be able to wait until after the legislation is carried if they are to defend their members' jobs. Our campaign must unite the widest possible spectrum of opinion behind our stand.

Labour Party Conference in an emergency motion voted to back councils which defy Heseltine's new law. We must now carry that decision into practice.

The movement has been badly damaged by the last two years' debate on rate increases. In uniting us against him Heseltine may be doing more than any other Minister (with the sole exception of Norman Tebbit and his anti-Trades Union legislation) to hasten the fall of this government.

RESELECTION: THE MYTH OF TOLERANCE

'Tolerance' has been a much overworked word of late. In particular, it has been used repeatedly by the group of MPs who abstained in the second ballot of the deputy leadership election.

Tolerance, we were told, was what Mr Benn and his supporters lacked, and this was the reason that, although still considering themselves left-wingers, they could not vote for Tony Benn and his 'bully-boys'. Thus 17 'Tribune' MPs abstained and six actually voted for Mr Healey.

But even here the facts show a very different picture. The CLPs, who backed Mr Benn to the tune of more than four to one against Mr Healey, have shown the most remarkable tolerance to MPs who are clearly opposed, totally and implacably, to the views of their constituencies. Even *Tribune* was moved to suggest that far from bullying MPs, constituencies have been 'sloppily sentimental about MPs whose loyalty to the Labour Party has proved to be much less than those who work for them'.

But what exactly do these MPs mean when they complain of 'intolerant and threatening behaviour' by their constituencies? In fact, all they mean is that they might not be selected to represent that constituency in Parliament again!

That, of course, is a perfectly reasonable, legal and constitutional attitude for any constituency to adopt in relation to an MP who, it feels, does not represent its views.

Had Sandelson, Cartwright or O'Halloran been 'de-selected', no doubt their constituencies would have been accused of intolerance and bullying – and let us not forget the 180 Labour MPs who sent a written appeal on behalf of Reg Prentice to Newham North East CLP.

TIME FOR REALISM

Perhaps the time has now come for a more realistic attitude. Although the deputy leadership is not necessarily the ultimate litmus-test of the relationship between an MP and his/her constituency, it is, nevertheless, noticeable that 66 MPs voted for Mr Healey while their constituencies voted for Mr Benn.

A number of these MPs, far from being thrown out by their constituencies, have already turned their backs upon the Party which gave them their privileged position and defected to the SDP.

It is impossible, then, to accuse of bullying a CLP which finally becomes tired of going for years in one direction while loyally supporting an MP who goes in another.

To 'de-select' such an MP is both legitimate and democratic – far more democratic than for that MP to seek a permanent place in Parliament while fundamentally disagreeing with his/her own activists who will then be expected to do the donkey work necessary to secure that MP's election victory.

In London, most constituencies have yet to re-select. 82 London constituencies voted for Mr Benn, a mere nine for Mr Healey. But only 15 London MPs voted for Mr Benn, while seven abstained and 16 voted for Mr Healey.

It is to be hoped, then, that the next few months will see London abandoning this 'sloppily sentimental' attitude towards MPs who do not represent its views, and the selection of a new breed of candidates, not puppets, but accountable and responsive to the people who put them there.

For the Parliamentary voting records of London MPs on a variety of issues, see either *London Labour Briefing* No 12 (July 1981) or the new edition of *How To Select Or Re-select Your MP*, which also contains a mine of essential information on the re-selection procedure, available from me at 14 Meon Court, Rye Crescent, Orpington, Kent @ £1 incl. p&p. *London Labour Briefing* will shortly be publishing its own list of potential candidates who enjoy our support and backing. In the meantime, we publish a list of selections where the closing date for nominations is imminent, together with the constituency secretary's name and address. Although a number of constituencies have now closed nominations or even already selected, there will be a second opportunity in many of these when the boundary changes are introduced, probably some time in 1982/83.

Closing of Nominations	Constituency	Secretary
October 28	Lambeth Central	Ms Grey, 28 Northland St, SE5.
November 2	Greenwich	John Willatt, 32 Woolwich Road, SE10 0JU.
	Lewisham East	J. Boon, 43 Sunderland Rd, Forest Hill, SE23.
November 5	Islington South	M. McConville, 295 Upper Street, N1 0RA.
November 6	Lambeth Norwood	K. Phipp, 264 Rosendale Road, SE24.
November 15	Peckham	Liz Bendall, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5.
November 16	Tooting	K. Solly, 611 Garratt Lane, SW18 4SU.
November 23	Romford	C. Blake, 23 Jutsums Lane, Romford, Essex RM7 9HH.
December 12	Islington Central	E. Brown, 2 Cumberland House, 16 Highbury Crescent, N5.
December 24	Newham N.W.	Conor McAuley, 78 Osborne Road, E7.
January 2	Dagenham	Harry Kay, 8 Laburnum House, Bradwell Ave, Dagenham, Essex.
January 6	Uxbridge	S. Doel, 4 Caxton Drive, Uxbridge, Middlesex.

HOW LONDON VOTED IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE
(all information refers to second ballot)

CLPs:

Islington Central; Newham South; Stepney & Poplar; Sidcup; Chislehurst; Ravensbourne; Fulham; Sutton & Cheam; London & Westminster South were the only nine London CLPs to vote for Healey. ALL OTHER LONDON C.L.P.s VOTED FOR BENN (except Peckham, whose GMC voted for Benn but which didn't have a Conference delegate).

MPs:

BENN	HEALEY	ABSTAINERS
Atkinson	Brown*	Barnett*
Bidwell	Clinton-Davis*	Deakins*
Dobson	Cox*	Kerr*
Dubs	Cunningham*	Lewis*
Fraser	Douglas-Mann*	Pavitt*
Holland	Freeson*	Silkin J.*
Leighton	Graham*	Spearing
Mikardo	Grant	
Price	Jay*	
Race	Lamborn*	
Richardson	Magee*	
Roberts	Mellish*	
Soley	Moyle*	
Stallard	Parker*	
Tilley	Shore	
	Silkin S.*	

HAD SIX OF THESE ABSTAINING M.P.s VOTED FOR BENN THEN HEALEY WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED

*All those marked * represent constituencies which voted for Benn. All those MPs who actually voted for Benn did so in accord with their constituencies.*

BRIGHTON – Where do we go from here?

There can be no doubt that the left suffered some set backs at Brighton as a result of massive media coverage of the right's activities, aided by lavish campaigning and resources from their apparatchiks.

The contrasts of the Brighton results are clear to see; Tony Benn's near miss in fact represents a massive achievement for the campaign – to lose by less than 1% after an unprecedented media hatchet job shows what support there is in the Labour movement for a leadership determined to carry out our policies.

The new NEC membership amply demonstrate the results of right wing corridor politics and the farce of 'left' Unions voting for right wing candidates to get their favoured person on.

However the Constituency sections of the Conference voted 83% for Benn and solidly for many of the policy changes – much work still has to be done in building support in an organised way in the constituencies, but the priority of work and organisation to get a leadership that will carry out the policies must be in the Trade Unions.

The activities of Union leaderships can be amply demonstrated in the role of the G&MWU in voting for Nuclear Disarmament and then supporting a candidate for Deputy Leadership who has promised not to serve in a Labour Government committed to this policy. Quite clearly a large number of Union conferences took policy decisions at their conferences and then allowed their General Secretaries and delegations to cast the vital votes for both the NEC and the deputy leader of the Party.

The crucial question is where do we go from here?

If the policy gains of the Party are to be carried out and Labour voters are to be given any confidence that the Party means to elect a Labour Government committed to fundamentally altering ownership and distribution of wealth we must campaign for changes in the PLP constitution and in NEC membership.

A new campaigning body is needed that will harness the energies of all the groups who supported the deputy leadership campaign and will transfer the demands to the Trade Unions. A Labour Government will only be sustained in office on massive rank and file Trade Union support, and that support cannot be won and kept during a three week election campaign, it has to be sought now and this means taking the campaign outside all the normal orbits and question the way in which Trade Unions cast thei their votes and how they elect their delegations to Party Conferences.



The first objective of any campaign must be to gain agreement on seven candidates for the CLP section of the National Executive, twelve for the Trade Union Section and campaign for the alteration of PLP rules to end the position where they are in effect, above and beyond the party. The election of women members to the NEC is an insult where the Union block votes were used to dominate this section with members who show no allegiance to the policies of the women's conference and with one exception, no determination to even attempt to represent them

The other objectives must be to ex tend our campaigning and involvement to all the groups who became involved in the deputy leadership campaign who had hitherto not been involved in Labour politics because they felt it was not relevant to them – women's groups, ethnic minority organisations, gay groups. This calls into question the role and state of Party organisation that restricts affiliation to a strictly limited sphere of Trade Union and Party branches and a small number of socialist societies.

The purpose of such campaigning must be to win people to the Labour Party to enforce the carrying out of Party policy by electing leaders who are prepared to do that.

Mass support for the policies of the Party and a determination to carry them out will not be achieved by wheeling and dealing in Conference corridors but only by a thoroughgoing campaign at all levels.

Jeremy Corbyn

THE AGENDA FOR NEXT YEAR

by TONY BENN

The Brighton Conference confirmed and consolidated all the central policies which the Labour Party has developed over recent years.

We re-affirmed full employment as our first priority through the Alternative Economic Strategy.

We renewed our opposition to American Nuclear Bases and our belief in a non nuclear defence strategy for Britain.

We made our commitment to leave the Common Market even firmer.

There were setbacks on the control of the Manifesto and with the reintroduction of the three year rule, though it would be very difficult now to keep our key policies from appearing in the next General Election Programme.

With all that having been achieved the defeat of Norman Atkinson as treasurer and the shift to the right on the NEC can be seen as plainly contradictory stemming from the secret shift of card votes.

The deputy leadership result was much closer and subsequent defections to the SDP have already altered the result.

What then should be our agenda for the next year?

First: To protect our policies from any attempt to reverse them in 1982.

Second: To ensure that they are put forward powerfully from the opposition front bench in Parliament by the Shadow Cabinet and by Labour MPs.

Third: To strengthen the links between the Party and the Unions on the basis of a vigorous political campaign and more united action at the grass roots level.

Fourth: To secure next year the re-election of left candidates on the NEC.

Fifth: To maintain the pressure at every level for greater openness and democracy within the Party.

The campaigns of 1981 have already radicalized the whole movement.

But they have also revealed a great deal of what is wrong inside and have forced the right to disclose its hand – notably by the creation of the SDP and the emergence of a more highly organised right wing within the Party.

What we need now is a real drive for better Labour representation at every level and better organisation to achieve it.

That should be the top priority for us all in the coming year – along with mutual support in the industrial and political crisis which is clearly going to deepen.

We must also be ready for a general election well before the present Parliament has run its course.

In place of Mrs Thatcher we may find ourselves facing an alliance of Tory wets, SDP and Liberals backed up by virtually the whole of the mass media.

That is why we must carry our arguments out to the public in clear and simple language.

Labour with socialist policies, and a collective leadership that supports them, is the only hope for Britain in the 1980s.

CONFERENCE DECISIONS '81

Conference resolutions which DIDN'T get through (or didn't even make it to the timetable or the compositing process, or got lost in categories-of-one devised by our inventive comrades on the Conference Arrangements Committee) make instructive reading.

Brighton 1981, however, as we are all aware, did manage to achieve some significant policy goals in terms of what DID get through. Below is a selection of decisions on some of the major issues.



Disarmament: Conference voted by 4.6 million to 2.3 million for the next general election manifesto to include "an unambiguous commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament"; for the removal of British-based American nuclear bases; for planning alternative employment strategies for defence workers; and to call on Labour-controlled councils to declare their areas nuclear weapon-free zones.

Conference also voted to call on the NEC to draw up guidelines for local authorities to follow in order to maximise the effectiveness of local declarations of nuclear-free zones, endorsed the decisions of some local authorities to cancel their civil defence programmes and proposed that all authorities cease such preparations.

Composite 33 called, additionally, for immediate withdrawal from NATO, and the removal of foreign electronic spying bases from Britain. The NEC, represented by Joan Lestor, asked for this to be remitted on the grounds that they did not accept that we needed to come out of NATO in order to disarm. However, the movers decided to put the resolution to the vote of conference, and after being passed on a show of hands it was defeated by a card vote of 1.6m. to 5.2m.

A multi-lateral resolution, no.68, moved by the EETPU, was defeated.

E.P. Thompson speaking at the packed Labour Action For Peace meeting



EEC: Conference approved the NEC Statement on withdrawal from the EEC, which includes the commitment that "the electorate will be given the opportunity (at the next general election) to vote for Labour on the clear understanding that we will take Britain out", by 6.2 million to 782,000. Conference also agreed by 5.82m. to 1m. that the NEC should present to next year's Conference a report on the full economic and political consequences and opportunities in withdrawal, in order to draw up a manifesto commitment on the mechanism for withdrawal, and that the NEC should also extend the AES to include "specific provision for managing our trade and the national economy on socialist principles after leaving the community."

A call for a referendum on Britain's continuing membership of the EEC, moved by Bill Sirs of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, was lost 1m. to 5.8m.

The Economy/Public Ownership: Conference called for the next Labour government to institute a crash programme of re-industrialisation involving massive investment in new technology and for a plan of production, including a programme of useful public works, to be worked out now with the trade unions; affirmed that "there is no way forward for the working class within the framework of capitalism" and pledged the next Labour government to bring into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy.

However, a call for the public ownership of land, huge tracts of which in rural Scotland were described as being held by "socially irresponsible elements", was defeated narrowly on a card vote of 3m. to 3.5m. after the NEC asked Conference to remit the resolution on the grounds that it "didn't go far enough".

Conference also rejected on a card vote of 1.3m. to 5.3m. composite 13, which called for the next Labour government to take into public control the financial institutions and re-nationalise without compensation all sections of publicly-owned industry hived off by the Tory government.

Education: Tertiary colleges were supported. Conference passed composite 29, which instructed the NEC to call on local education authorities to "introduce a comprehensive system of 16-19 education based in tertiary colleges wherever possible". It also called on the NEC to support local councils "fighting to protect their education provision from cuts initiated by central government".

Racism: Conference called on the next Labour government to repeal the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts and the Tory Nationality Act, called on the NEC to bring proposals to next year's Conference that will form the basis for a future White Paper on nationality, and called for the inclusion of such measures in the next manifesto.

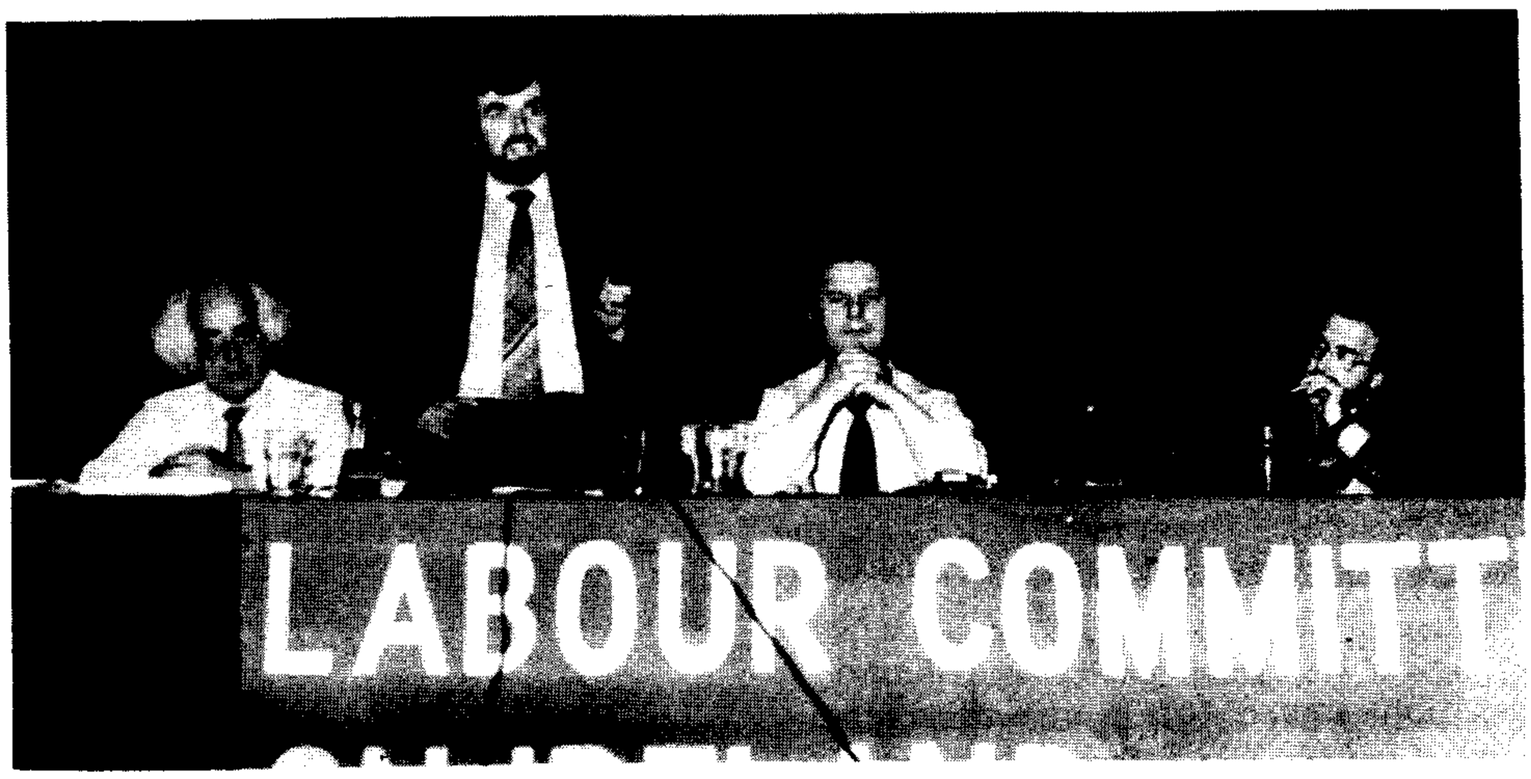
Inner Cities: Conference expressed its "deep concern at the recent events in Brixton, Croydon, Toxteth, Moss Side and other inner city areas"; cast the blame on the Tory government's policies of "mass unemployment, industrial dereliction and the virtual collapse of education, health, housing and other public services in the inner cities; called for help for ethnic minorities defending themselves against right-wing violence, positive action programmes to ensure equal opportunities for ethnic minorities, and extension of provisions of the Race Relations Act to government departments and the police.

Local Government: The resolution on local government cuts which made the strongest demands, composite 40, moved by Liverpool Toxteth CLP, was defeated. This called for a national campaign by the NEC to oppose cuts, the involvement of the TUC in mobilisation of support for Labour-controlled councils, and a refusal by Labour councils to cut services, raise rates or rents or make workers redundant. It also called on the next Labour government to repeal the new Scottish local government legislation, to remove penalties imposed on councillors for fighting cuts and to redefine the role of the District Auditor "to ensure that he cannot act as a political agent of the government".

Two resolutions on local government cuts were passed. An emergency resolution moved by Norwood CLP (Ted Knight) called for a major campaign to defeat Heseltine's proposed legislation; in the event of this failing, a refusal by Labour councillors to "make the cuts that will be needed to balance the books"; the co-ordination by the NEC of "the struggle of Labour councillors making this stand" and the use by trades unions of their strength to defend Labour councils in this fight. The other successful cuts resolution (Cardiff North West) called for the NEC to take the lead in campaigning against cuts, to co-ordinate guidance and support, and to give clear commitments for the next Labour government to restore services, finances and real local democracy (no card vote).

Despite an NEC recommendation to remit, composite 19 on local government reform was carried. (Repeal of the new Scottish local government legislation and the Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980; NEC to initiate provision for a bill which would reduce excessive interest rates and introduce new methods of financing local authorities; support for returning services such as education, highways, planning and social services to local authorities which were previously all-purpose authorities.)

The subject of the powers of the District Auditor was returned to two days later, in Composite 48, which sought to restrict the powers to seeking out fraud and corruption, and "prevent both the District Auditor and the judiciary from interfering with the exer-



Owen Carron, speaking at the Labour Committee on Ireland meeting

cise by a local authority of any discretionary power." Joan Maynard, asking Conference, on behalf of the NEC, to remit this resolution to the NEC, argued that it sought to curb external audits of any kind, whereas some kind of central audit was necessary. Conference agreed to remit.

Ireland: The only proposals approved by Conference were those contained in the NEC Statement on Northern Ireland, which called for unity between North and South based on agreement and consent, achieved through negotiation between Westminster and Dublin "with the support of the people in both the North and the South" and accompanied by the introduction by the next Labour government of radical socialist economic policies in the North; called for repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and high priority for a review of the N.Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978.

Of the four resolutions taken on the subject, two were lost and two remitted to the NEC, in accordance with NEC recommendations, presented by Alex Kitson, who left the chair for this debate.

LOST were composite 25 (calling for reunification of the 32 counties, action from the next Labour government immediately to begin the process of full political and military withdrawal, and support for the demands of the H-Block hunger strikers) and composite 26 (supporting reunification and calling on the next Labour government to set a programme for withdrawal and, in the intervening period, to convene an Irish constitutional conference involving all sections of Irish opinion, north and south).

REMITTED were composite 11 (calling on the NEC to give political and material aid in the convening of a conference of trade union and Labour organisations in Northern Ireland to discuss the formation of a trade union-based party of Labour in the north) and resolution 164 (to hold a one-day conference of the Party to formulate a policy for the next manifesto).

Women: The decision by Conference Standing Orders Committee not to give a firm place in the timetable to resolutions on women's issues aroused opposition. Conference voted to approve the proposal by Paddington and Hemel Hempstead delegates that women's issues be debated.

When the debate came around, conference agreed, on the advice of the NEC, to remit resolution 29, with amendments (that the annual Women's Conference should be given policy-making functions and be allowed to submit five resolutions each year to Party Conference, that the women's section of the NEC be elected by the Women's Conference, and other measures be taken to encourage women's greater participation in Parliament, local government, NEC sub-committees and trade union delegations to Party Conference.) The section of the NEC Report covering Women's Organisation was successfully referred back on the grounds that more resources were needed.

Energy: Conference rejected by 1.7m. to 5.1m. composite 23 opposing expansion of all nuclear power programmes and supporting the introduction of combined heat and power and district heating schemes.

South Africa: Conference passed composite 16 calling for the inclusion in Labour's next manifesto (no card vote) of support for mandatory UN sanctions against South Africa; embargoes on oil, arms, trade and investment; bans on nuclear collaboration and the import of South African and Namibian uranium; direct financial and material aid to South African liberation movements.

Proscribed list: Conference defeated an attempt by Sid Weighell, NUR, to have motion 26 on



proscribed organisations included on the Conference timetable. The motion, and an Iron and Steel Trades Confederation amendment, called for the reintroduction of a list of proscribed organisations and an investigation by the NEC of "organisations known to be present within the party" which contravene Clause II.

Police: Conference called on the next Labour government not to implement Royal Commission proposals for additional sweeping police powers; to establish effective democratic control on the police; to allow the police to take part in normal trade union practices and join unions; to disband the SPG; to end the surveillance of political and trade union activists.

Industrial Relations: Conference agreed to repeal all of the present government's industrial relations legislation (no card vote).

Three year Rule: Alternative constitutional amendments about the reinstatement of the Three-Year Rule for constitutional issues only were put to Conference. The NEC-backed amendment, which would have allowed constitutional issues on a particular subject to be put to conference in successive years provided that they had the support of 30 or more affiliated organisations, was lost 2.1m. to 4.8m.

The alternative to this, which arose out of a recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry passed at Conference last year, reinstates the three-year rule for constitutional issues, the only exception being amendments that are in the opinion of the NEC "of immediate importance". This was passed 5.2m. to 1.5m. A complication has since arisen in that, due apparently to an error in drafting, the words "on that subject" were omitted from this amendment. The effect is to give NEC members the power to keep constitutional amendments they oppose off the Conference agenda indefinitely. It seems that the new NEC will look at this situation at their first meeting.

Reselection: Problems in the re-selection of MPs caused in some constituencies by the use of shortlists of one were raised (but not voted on) when the NEC Report was taken. Delegates from affected CLPs asked that the NEC look into the matter of reselection guidelines not being properly observed. Sam McCluskie, replying on behalf of the NEC, acknowledged: "We *do* have the Mikardo compromise."

Manifesto: Conference voted by 3.6m. to 3.4m. in favour of composite 18, which said that the general election manifesto should be drawn up by the PLP and the NEC with final approval by the NEC, and that this proposal should be put to Conference this year as a constitutional amendment. After a reply by Michael Foot on behalf of the NEC, Conference then voted 3.8m. to 3.2m. to reject the constitutional amendment.

Party Organisation: Membership subscriptions were raised to £6p.a. from January 1982 (£3 of which has to be sent to head office as affiliation fee) and £2p.a. for the unwaged (£1 affiliation) with 50p for OAPs remaining unchanged. The minimum amount a party has to send to Walworth Road rises to £500p.a.

The Constitution was amended to provide for workplace branches of the Labour Party, which will be able to send delegates and resolutions to GMC. (The NEC still has to approve their rules and standing orders.) (Lord) Reg Underhill, former National Agent, went to the rostrum to oppose the whole idea.

The power of General Committees over the setting up of Young Socialists' branches, Women's Sections and Women's Councils was replaced by a provision that they be organised "in accordance with regulations sanctioned by the NEC".

Composite 34 calling for the integration of the "virtually autonomous" PLP into the Labour Party by means of constitutional amendments at Conference next year, and at the same time to review the standing orders of the weekly PLP meetings, was remitted to the NEC.

Pauline Ashbridge
Hornsey Labour Party

Photographs: John Brennan

Ireland: a Step Forward?

Don Flynn
Islington North C.L.P.

What is the left to make of the debate on Ireland which took place at this year's party conference?

In a sense, given Labour's past record of virtually ignoring the issue altogether, we should be glad that the debate took place at all and that a platform was provided for the broad range of opinion that exists on this subject in the labour movement.

But the debate revealed many weaknesses in the emerging alternative to bipartisanship and there is an urgent need for those campaigning for British withdrawal from Ireland to address themselves to these points in a critical but constructive way.

The three main composites before the conference offered delegates the choice between a 'hard-line' position, calling for speedy withdrawal and support for the five demands of the H-Block prisoners; a more tempered version of the withdrawal stance which was clearly pitched at winning support amongst the trade union sections; and a third composite which frankly embodied all the dangers to be found by introducing secondary issues into the heart of the debate.

MAJORITY SUPPORT

Of the three composites, the one which came nearest to polarising more trenchant criticism of the NEC's own inadequate recommendations was the second composite; moved by the delegate from St. Pancras CLP and seconded by Putney.

The wording of this motion could no doubt be criticised in some of its aspects. But it had the undoubted virtue over the more hard-line version in that it attempted to argue the case for a programme of withdrawal from the starting-point of the existing consciousness of British labour movement activists, rather than abstract principles. As a result, on a hand vote, the second composite picked up a clear majority of delegates. Not unexpectedly however, the call for a card vote brought the trade union delegates into line, producing a heavy defeat.

Before dismissing the significance of the second composite we should be careful to note its considerable success in winning such broad support from amongst the CLPs and even a small section of the trade union delegations. Supporters of campaigns such as the Labour Committee on Ireland are really obliged to look at this composite once again to see if its approach could not be assimilated into their activities.

LABOUR FETISHISM

Something should be said about the position argued for in the third composite, which was referred to the NEC for further consideration at their own request. This composite represents the total blind-alley of labour fetishism which, if allowed to preoccupy the time of the party over the next period, will only succeed in delaying a solution to the problems of Ireland for decades to come.

The thrust of the position argued in this composite is that the Northern Ireland trade union movement is a bastion of working class unity across sectarian divisions and therefore a labour party should be formed in the six counties based on this trade union movement and its traditions.

What this simplistic approach avoids saying is that trade union unity in Northern Ireland only exists (and even then this is a dubious proposition) providing the unions studiously ignore the question of the border and Britain's presence in Ireland. Any political party based on the Northern Ireland labour movement would be obliged (as all political parties in the area are) to state its position on what is popularly felt to be the most momentous issue in six county politics; namely whether it is for or against the Union with Britain.

It is inconceivable that a trade union-based party, with the majority of its members being Protestants and Unionists, would accept a party which adopted the socialist position of opposing the continuing partitioning of Ireland. Thus a Northern Ireland labour party would inevitably tend to move in a direction of becoming just one more of the numerous Unionist parties that clutter-up Northern Ireland politics; with the possible difference of having a slightly more progressive position on social welfare issues.

A large element of the campaigns of the left over the next twelve months are going to have to concern themselves with developing a systematic critique of the crass labourism of this type of approach.

INCREASING NUMBERS

What we are also going to have to take on board is the fact that an increasing number of people in the labour movement (including the trade unions) are coming to favour the approach which seeks to end the British involvement in Ireland. What these people are asking for from the supporters of campaigns such as the Labour Committee on Ireland is substantial political arguments and not just slogans. It is crucial therefore that anti-imperialists should be able to find ways of drawing closer to the current represented by the majority of delegates who voted for the St. Pancras/Putney composite – and by doing so break out of our present remote isolation on one of the fringes of the Labour party. It is a challenging task, but one which we must prove equal to.



Above: Merle Amory, delegate from Brent East, speaking in the debate on Ireland, seconding the 'hard line' composite.

APOLOGIES!

We have been inundated with articles and letters this month and have been unable to print everything. Some contributions have been unavoidably held over to next month. Sorry, but please keep the articles rolling in. Editor.

TOWARDS 52%

Janet Pickering
Delegate, Croydon North West CLP



This year we were 14% of the delegates, a slight increase on last year's 11½%. But this year we were more organised. From the start we showed a determination to be heard.

On Sunday women gathered together because of anger and frustration felt at the exclusion of any debate on women's issues at Conference.

At the beginning of Conference a successful reference back was moved on the Conference Arrangements Committee report who had ruled out Resolution 29 from the Women's Conference plus the fifteen amendments calling for positive discrimination. The reference back was carried much to the surprise of conference and the CAC. Derek Gladwin: 'I don't know what to do now!'. One reason for the success was that some 20 women were there in front to give support to the comrades on the rostrum. We used the Party's own slogan 'Listen to Women'.

Unfortunately because of this victory many women met with uncalled for antagonism from mainly trades union delegates for the remainder of conference. Of course it's OK to pay lipservice to women's equality within our movement but when we start having an effect they feel threatened.

RESOLUTION REMITTED

The debate on resolution 29 was eventually called on Thursday. The debate was not as long as it should have been and the resolution was remitted. If it had not been remitted the issue could not have been raised again for three years because of the decision taken earlier in the week. The movers had been informed previously that it would not get passed because of lack of TU support. After the debate Alex Kitson, who chaired conference with his usual male charm, was presented with a hideously pretty bunch of flowers. He appeared to miss the point but conference didn't.

This year there was, I am pleased to say, an abundance of 'fringe' meetings on a variety of issues to which women in the Labour movement relate. My problem was not being able to split myself to get to more than one at a time.

I made a mistake in attending the meeting organised by the newly launched Women's Action Committee of the CLPD. At this Joe Ashton MP and Austin Mitchell MP debated Frances Morrell and Carol Worthington. Carol Worthington, a Labour Party agent, made the best contribution from the platform stressing why women were not encouraged to take an active part in LP politics. Apart from this and some good contributions from the floor the meeting just gave an opportunity to the two MPs to give vent to their disgusting chauvinist attitudes – which we all knew about anyway!

ADDITIONAL DELEGATE

Another meeting I attended was organised by the LP Women's Rights Study Group and chaired by Jo Richardson. I found this meeting extremely useful. Did you know any Party member can be considered as a member of a LP Study Group? Send your names in comrades! Did you know if your Party can prove it has 1500 affiliated women members (this can include an affiliated TU) you are entitled to an additional delegate to conference who must be a woman? Look at your GMC!

I think we showed the way at this year's conference. It was a woman – Margaret Beckett – who publicly took on the soft Tribunite left, remember. She showed in doing so the kind of determination we have.

From the lessons learned this year we should be moving towards being 52% of conference delegates. We are 52% of the population and it is time this proportion was reflected in Labour Party membership figures through a serious recruitment campaign.

Sisters as well as Brothers

Women remain one of the most under represented groups at conference. This year saw the union block cast between 3 and 6 million votes for sisters Summerskill, Boothroyd, Dunwoody, Hart and Maynard.

Yet their views or record on women's rights and their willingness to work for positive discrimination, better child care and employment opportunities or abortion rights were almost certainly irrelevant in the unions' decision to vote. More unfortunately these issues are also not a high priority for the majority of the women elected either. There are many women activists in the CLPs (and some in the unions). And yet, it took argument, public stunts and a bouquet of flowers to get 15 amendments on positive discrimination even acknowledged by the all male conference arrangements committee. There is a Labour Party Women's Conference, but it can send neither motions nor delegates to the Labour Party Conference. There are NEC Women's Sub Committees and Study Groups, but there is no representation for active and feminist women on the NEC conference arrangements committee or in the mainstream of party policy.

As part of further extensions of real representation, there needs to be a commitment to the election of women members of the NEC by women at a national delegate conference. To do this the unions will have to acknowledge sisters as well as brothers in the Labour movement.

by Nadine Finch
(Islington North CLP)

HELP!

We're still desperate for regular financial assistance. So far we have received standing orders in the sum of £40 per month. This must urgently be increased to £100. Please complete the Standing Orders Mandate and send to Jon Pickering, Flat 10, Scoresdale, Beulah Hill S.E.19.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To. . . . . Bank Limited . . . . . (address of your bank)

Please pay Co-operative Bank, Croydon Sorting Code Number: 08-90-79

for the credit of LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING Account number 50120176

the sum of £ . . . . . (amount in figures). Amount in words:
commencing . . . . . (Date of First payment). Amount of first payment: . . . . . .
and thereafter ever month until you receive further notice from me/us in writing.
and debit my/our account accordingly.

Account to be debited:

Account Number . . . . . .

Signature(s) . . . . . Date . . . . . .
. . . . . .
NAME (PLEASE PRINT) . . . . . ADDRESS . . . . . .

WOMEN, THE GLC AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Pious words are not enough. The new Labour GLC and ILEA have the opportunity to *show* that they believe in equality for women.

The GLC Labour Manifesto offers very little in terms of policies which will promote equal opportunities for women. This is hardly surprising, as the working parties which produced the manifesto (later amended at a Special Regional Conference) contained few women:

Industry and Employment	– 0 women out of 19	Planning	– 0 women out of 7
Finance and Administration	– 0 women out of 11	Transport	– 2 women out of 19
Housing	– 3 women out of 14	Education	– 4 women out of 11

8 members of the 49 strong GLC Labour Group are women. A higher proportion than on the Manifesto Working Parties and similar to that of the Regional Executive. Members of the GLC and ILEA who consider themselves Socialist-Feminists have begun to meet regularly with other similarly committed women Labour Party members. They are looking at the Manifesto and trying to broaden it to reflect the needs of women in London.

The main area of the Manifesto which does make a positive contribution to the position of women is the part dealing with the GLC as an employer of women. There are commitments to providing day care facilities for the children of GLC employees, to developing job sharing and part-time working, and to having an Equal Opportunities Clause, along the lines advocated by the TUC General Council.

However, we must go further than this to achieve real equality. We should be looking towards policies which will extend maternity leave, introduce paternity leave and recognise that both parents may need to take leave to look after a sick child – Camden Council which has a very progressive maternity scheme (40 weeks maternity leave, with 16 weeks at full pay and the remainder at half pay for women who have been employed for at least two years) has found that 74% of their female employees return to work following the birth of their child, compared with 15% who return under the statutory arrangements.

EMPLOYMENT

Women do not figure very much in the rest of the Industry and Employment section of the Manifesto, apart from homeworking. The Industry and Employment Committee is trying out aspects of the Alternative Economic Strategy (A.E.S.) with great emphasis being placed on the Greater London Enterprise Board (G.L.E.B.) which will be investing in industrial co-operatives, new public enterprise and municipal enterprise, amongst other things. However, like the national A.E.S. women need to be written into these policies.

G.L.E.B. will be involving the local community and shop stewards committees in planning what they want in their communities. Any intervention by G.L.E.B. in terms of investment will be conditional upon there being a local planning agreement. These planning agreements need to include a Positive Action Programme for women. The lease agreements G.L.E.B. has with enterprises could include clauses about: the number of part-time jobs, the provision of day care facilities, equal pay for work of equal value.

When the GLC sets up its new direct labour organisation, London Community Builders, there is a commitment to have 1 apprentice for every 5 skilled workers. Here is an opportunity to introduce guidelines about the number of women apprentices.

Women also need to be involved in the decision making bodies – on G.L.E.B. and surely women trade unionists should be co-opted on to the Industry and Employment Committee? This would follow on from the Greater London Manpower Board which has already decided to have specific women's representation on the Board.

The GLC could also take a very positive step forward by organising a conference on women and employment so that women in London can get together and work out what the GLC Industry and Employment Committee should be doing.

DECISION MAKING

Women need to be actively involved in all aspects of GLC policy. Whenever *any* new committees are established, we must ensure that women are represented on them: whether it be on the GLC health advisory group or on housing district committees. There has never been a woman on the Board of London Transport and yet women are forced to rely on public transport far more than men. When the Transport Committee devolves some of the LT Board's power to local district committees, women need to be involved both as LT workers and consumers.

Women are often exploited and degraded in advertisements and films. The Transport Committee is considering, with the help of new women members, looking at the kind of advertisements that London Transport accepts. The Arts Committee has set up a film committee to look at the viewing categories given to films. Committed women also need to be involved in this committee which will have the power to change 'X' films to club viewing only.

EDUCATION

The ILEA has begun to recognise that girls are disadvantaged by their education. It must now ask some fundamental questions.

For example: Why is it that girls tend to take CSE mathematics (53.5% of entries) whilst boys tend to take 'O' level mathematics (61.9% of entries) (ILEA statistics 1978).

There are specific steps which the ILEA could take now to bring about equal opportunities in schools:

* Appoint advisers who would be responsible for promoting Equal Opportunities in schools;
* Inspect schools to see that they are providing Equal Opportunities;
* Monitor the appointment and promotion of female and male staff;
* Develop in-service training which would encourage teachers to develop non-sexist practices;
* Establish non-sexist guidelines for schools which are re-organising as co-educational schools.

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

The GLC and ILEA must clearly involve women in decision making and ensure that they develop policies which will benefit girls and women in London.

But women must also be involved in all levels of decision making in the Greater London Labour Party. Unfortunately, the Regional Executive has a poor record here. It is still very male dominated.

The composition of the Regional Executive is as follows:

	Female	**Male**
Chair and Treasurer	0	2
CLPs		
Group 1 (North East Region)	2	2
Group 3 (South West Region)	0	4
Group 4 (South East Region)	0	4
Co-operative Organisations	0	5
Trade Unions	1	15
Socialist Societies	1	0
Y.S.	1	1
Women's Organisations	2	0
Leader of the GLC	0	1
Leader of ILEA	0	1
Grand Total	**8**	**38**

There may be some element of truth in the argument that women do not stand for the Regional Executive and so they can't be elected! If this is the case, then the Party must examine why this happens.

– There are many women in the Party who are Socialist-Feminists – why aren't they on the Regional Executive?
– What happens in your CLP or Trade Union when nominations are made for the Executive? – isn't it often assumed that the Regional Executive is the prerogative of male activists? Aren't women dismissed as being too inexperienced? – Too needed to do the donkey-work of running the local Party?

A CHALLENGE TO THE PARTY

What commitment is the Party and the Trade Unions going to make to ensure that women are equally represented? Are any left-wing men going to stand back as of right on the Regional Executive?

The GLC and ILEA have a clear opportunity to promote equality for women.

What is the London Labour Party going to do?

by Valerie Wise (GLC member) and Kathryn Ridley (Regional Executive)

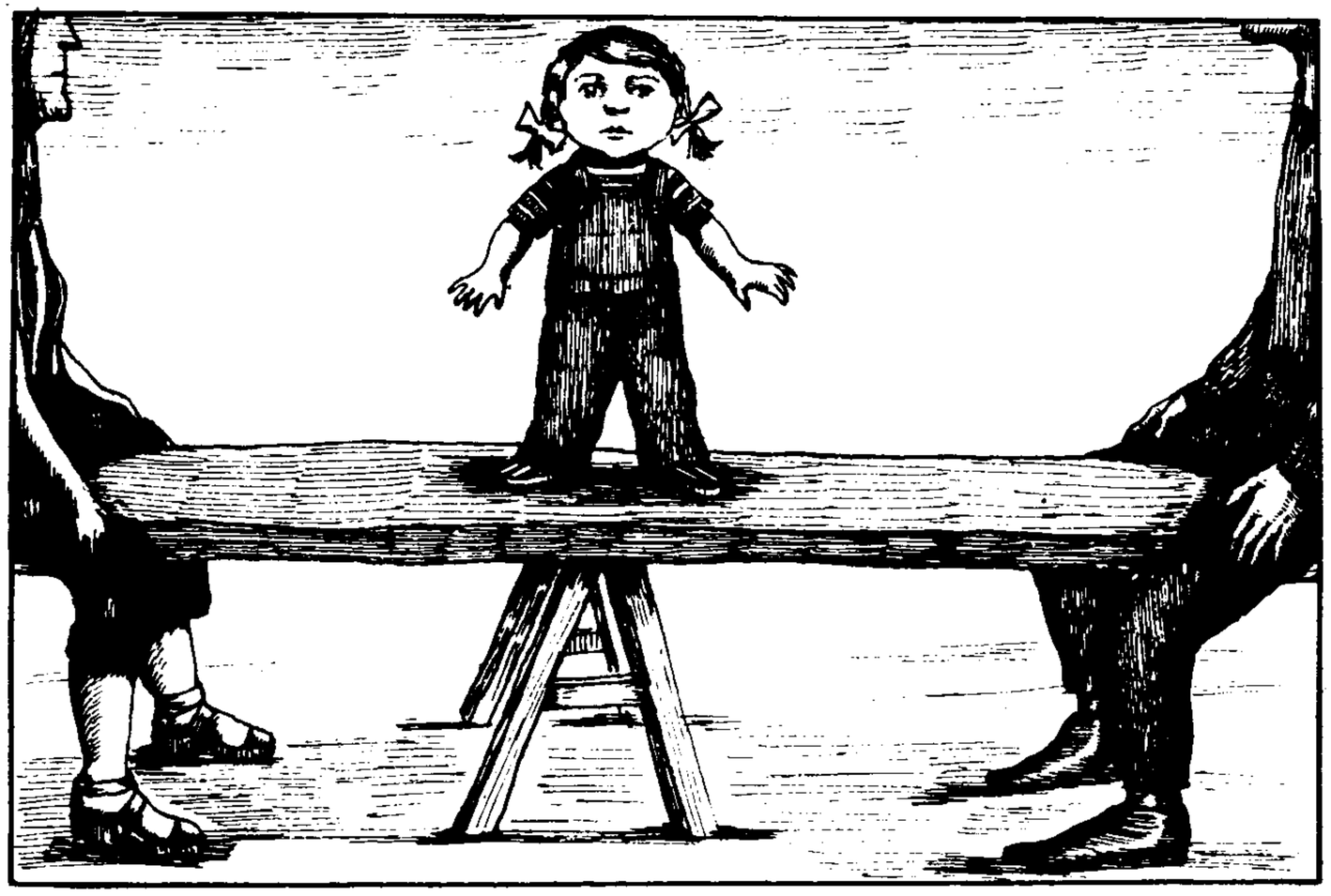
WHO DOES OPPRESS WOMEN?

At this year's Labour Party conference there was a debate organised by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. The motion was that 'Women are oppressed by the class system and not by men.' It was a very well-attended meeting with a mixed audience of about 700. In many ways the debate and discussion were fairly predictable. One of the statements made by the first speaker, Joe Ashton, was that positive discrimination actually worked against women's best interests. Women would never be equal whilst they wanted positive discrimination and in any case there was no point in having such discrimination in such things as the selection of MPs, because, as he put it, 'women just don't put themselves forward'. Everything was discussed in terms of the internal framework of the Labour Party and whether this should be changed or not. There was not a hint about the factors outside the Labour Party, such as in the home itself, which were stopping women from even imagining the possibility of going to Labour Party meetings in the first place. Austin Mitchell, the second speaker, even had the nerve to say that women were only 'making excuses' when they pointed to their family commitments as the reason why they couldn't be as active as men!

Frances Morrell was very good at showing up the chauvinism of male 'socialists', and Carol Worthington, the agent for Preston, gave lots of examples from her own experience to illustrate the sexism and discrimination that takes place in the Labour Party against women. A lively debate followed, where in general the women opposed the resolution and the men blamed the class system for women's oppression.* A couple of men at the end objected to the fact that no male speaker had been invited to oppose the motion; Frances Morrell replied that perhaps the best way men could support women was to listen to what *we* said for a change!**

Some of the comments that were made by the two male speakers reminded me of what men might have said in the 1930s. They don't seem to have caught up with the lives of women in the 1980s. More women than ever since the end of the Second World War are employed outside the home, despite increasing levels of higher unemployment amongst women. Working outside the home does give women some level of economic independence and social life. But in any case, 10% of women are bringing up their children as single parents, and because of inadequate childcare facilities, they are forced to take jobs which fit in with their childcare responsibilities. The emotional security which we are told to get from the nuclear family appears to be a total myth, judging by the increase by 50% in the last two years of known child-abuse, and the ever-increasing reports of battered women and the need for refuges or safe houses for women. For women in these sorts of situations, what changes has the Labour Party offered them and what chance do they have of ever being able to participate equally on existing terms within the Labour Party?

The pressures of the capitalist/patriarchal system are transmitted to individual women through the agency of their individual husbands or male sexual partners. The precondition for collective action between women in caring for each other's children is the breaking of these exclusive sexual bonds. Who hasn't felt the conflicts between on the one hand wanting to be able to give our children



all the love and care that any child needs and which we continue to need all through our lives – if we're honest – and on the other hand, the tremendous efforts we have to make under the present family system, if we also want to avoid letting motherhood turn us into a sort of cabbage? We as mothers/workers and Labour Party activists need immediate practical solutions. I believe we can only find answers by going beyond the limits of the nuclear family, which is too small a unit to be able to meet our emotional and practical needs. We need a much wider support-network of friends and neighbours to help us. I'm well aware that many women do belong to baby-sitting rotas and have informal arrangements for childcare to enable them to go out in the evenings for a change. But this issue of childcare is never made political – it is not seen as our labour movement *collective* responsibility.

Like workers in relation to production under capitalism, women have the responsibility of childcare, but no control over the facilities we need to ensure we get the stability and security we require.

Men often appear to be threatened by the subject of sexual politics and women's liberation, but if men's stability stems from their ownership of women, then sooner or later it's got to go. When the old forms of stability are threatened, we are bound to be accused of being 'destructive'. It is what the ruling class accuse workers of when we go on strike. When Black and white youth riot against police harassment it's also seen as 'destructive'. But we won't go on silently bearing the brunt of our oppression! Yet whilst appearing to be 'destructive', the struggle by women to create a new stability will hopefully resolve the contradictions we face in all our 'personal lives', rather than suppress them and continue to paper over the cracks. As socialists, I think we have to begin to find ways of living together without repudiating in our personal lives everything we are fighting against in capitalism. I'm quite convinced that through women's organisations, including Labour Party women's sections, we could begin to organise alternative support-structures which would seem credible to increasing numbers of women who up till now have not gained any help or support from the labour movement in these areas of their lives which matter most.



Ann Bliss
Lewisham East CLP

* A woman who worked at the Houses of Parliament as a secretary said that in fact the Houses of Parliament were not dominated by men but by women. What she meant was that for every male, there were two females, but the women were secretaries, cleaners, canteen workers, etc. – i.e. women who serviced the men. Whereas the MPs had eight canteens, the workers had two. She asked the two Labour MPs if they were prepared to give up their privileges by putting their own House in order. She was enthusiastically applauded!

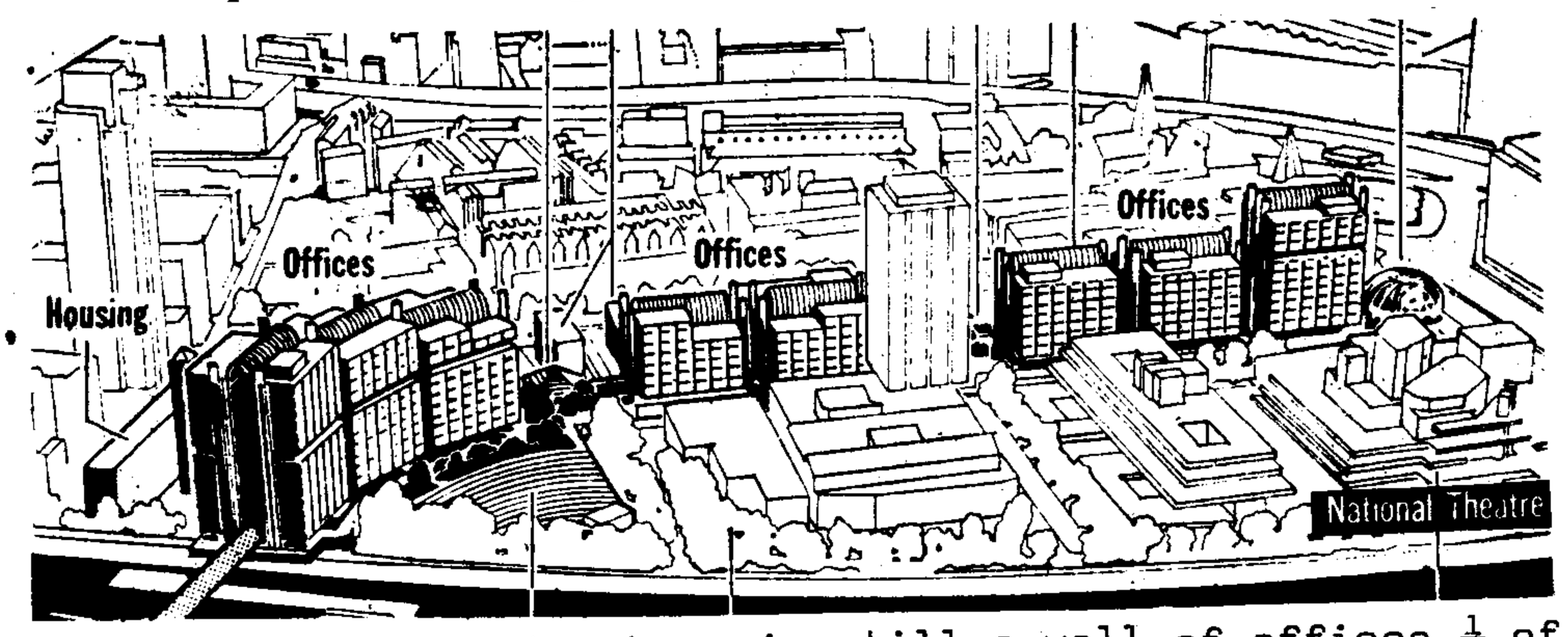
** In the end the motion was overwhelmingly defeated.

PLANNING FOR LONDON

Within the next month the GLC will be giving evidence at the planning inquiry into the future of Coin Street in support of the local community groups' case that this South Bank site should be developed for housing and not for offices. The Coin Street Inquiry has achieved a lot of publicity but is only part of a broader battle that the Labour GLC and Labour Boroughs have to fight to develop London to the benefit of local communities and against the wishes of powerful property interests. The GLC will be turning down office applications and commiting resources to the developments that working class communities in London need.

The first part of the battle ahead is to explain to people the effects of office speculation and demolish the myths being put about by the Tories and the property world. The expansion of the office centre of the City of London into surrounding working class areas and onto the South Bank has been presented as a 'natural process' which is essential to provide alternative jobs to those lost in industry and to bring about the 'commercial revitalisation' of the inner city. In fact, the continuing pressure to grant planning permissions and build offices at a time when there are few office firms to fill them is part of the process by which capitalism stores up wealth in land and buildings that could be invested in industry. There is already land allocated in Central London for 15 years supply of offices at current rates of building.

The GLC has now put restrictions on the areas in Central London in which it will grant planning permission for offices. This is basically designed to protect working class areas from the rise in land values and blight which follows from office speculation, pushes out local industry and shops and makes it expensive to build housing or provide new open space. Communities in areas such as Spitalfields, Covent Garden and Hammersmith are under threat from these sorts of changes. The GLC will be designating areas such as these in Inner and Outer London as Community Areas where office permissions will not be given. It is important, however, to realise that planning controls are not a substitute for direct control over the financial institutions themselves; the GLC office policy can only be a holding operation.



This second Greycoat scheme is still a wall of offices ⅓ of a mile long. It is nearly 20 storeys by the river, and is 227 ft high there.

MAJOR OPPOSITION

The major opposition to office speculation has come from groups representing their local communities. The GLC is now working with and through these groups in carrying out its new policies and will look to involve them in decisions. The Association of Waterloo Groups were a vital corrective to the advice of GLC officers in key decisions about Coin Street. GLC voluntary agencies funding has helped a number of groups.

The prevention of office speculation can be only one half of a socialist approach to planning. The GLC manifesto pointed to the use of GLC resources in community areas in London to provide the industry, housing and community facilities that are needed. This is important in order to give both local people and Labour Boroughs some hope that empty sites will be developed. Our ability to even start this programme depends on winning the fight with Heseltine this winter. It will help us gain public support if we can show that we have a picture of the future development of London which is different to the one which the market says is inevitable.

Ed Gouge,
Member of GLC for Ilford South.
Chair of Planning

Review:

ANDRZEJ WAJDA 'MAN OF IRON'

(Academy, Oxford St.)

The film provides, in its use of illegally shot film of the 1970 massacre of dock workers, a startling confirmation of the liberalisation from below that has accompanied the Solidarnosc strikes. 'Man of Iron' has become a symbol of the revolution with huge posters dominating the main streets of Polish cities and month long advance bookings where ever the film is shown. Poster and cinema art represent the highest achievements of Polish artists since the war and this art has often been in the forefront of anti-Stalinist sentiment. 'Man of Iron' has become a record of an element in the struggle for a democratic workers state in Poland.

The film follows Wajda's earlier 'Man of Marble' whose central character, a Stakhanovite bricklayer, falls foul of the repressive state police. 'Man of Iron' shows the fate of this character shot dead during the 1970 strike. Flashing to and fro through the years 1968 to 1981 we are given a satisfactory account of the failed revolts of the 1970's and the fusing of intellectuals and workers in August 1980. As usual, Wajda provides a story hung around a semi-villainous media figure – this time an alcoholic stranded in dry Gdansk during the 'August days'. In this film the morality of the media, set against the heroism of Solidarnosc, is a symbol of the old sickness in Polish society as against the idealism of the new.

The picture of Walesa and Walentynowicz at a fictional wedding is a typical touch of Wajda humour. Whether or not Walesa's reference to a democratic marriage is conscious irony is for the audience to decide! The weaknesses in the politics of the film reflect the weaknesses of the Polish revolution to date. The role of women is 'supportive' and everywhere Wajda produces images of big-fisted Catholic men in boilersuits heroically fighting leather jacketed Catholic men armed with guns and cameras. The projection of these too real men produces a certain sentimentality which may seem odd to British political activists – although not to those into Leninist orthodoxy.

The questions inherent in the film as well as its historical uniqueness make it a film NOT TO BE MISSED.

Graham Durham

COUNCIL HOUSING FED TO THE WOLVES

The Labour GLC has failed to keep its election pledge to halt the iniquitous Tory policy of selling off new and rehabilitated vacant Council housing which was built for people on the housing waiting lists.

The decision was taken on October 6 at the GLC Finance and General Purposes Housing Committee after a five month showing of the now tired three-part theatre of the absurd: Fiery Declarations by those most involved, 'Expert Legal Opinion', and the ghost 'Surcharge'. However the abstainers and faint-hearts will get nightmares after the show. For they have reckoned without the fightback from below by those who have nothing to lose.

To start with, the Labour GLC will have to evict 70 homeless people, including twelve children in the Elgin Avenue Squat Against Sales (SAS) in order to carry out Tory policy of selling off these flats and hundreds more on other estates. The squatters in Elgin Avenue who began occupation on GLC election day (May 7) to remind the new GLC of their election pledges are not moving and declared: *"The GLC election has been made superfluous by this disgusting surrender to the Tories. Every home sold off is one less for the Waiting List and the homeless so we will carry on the fight to implement Labour GLC policy through an indefinite campaign of harassment of all efforts to sell the 354 flats at Elgin Avenune (Paddington), Kilner House (Lambeth) and St Paul's Court (Hammersmith). The GLC has been bamboozled by the biased opinion of Tory lawyers which they have not even bothered to test in Court, despite alternative legal opinion. The sales must be stopped. We urge all supporters to contact 47 Marble House, Elgin Ave. W9, 701-5691."*

AS SAFE AS COUNCIL HOUSES

As with all reversals of this sort the crucial decisions are shrounded in something intangible – (Tory) Legal Opinion. The last Tory GLC fixed up contracts with buyers of vacant flats and the ESTMANCOs (Estate Management Companies) set up to run them, to sell off all neighbouring flats in the relevant estates. The Labour GLC intended to break these contracts (Councils break contracts all the time, so this is nothing new). They were promptly taken to Court by a bunch of Tories. Labour's legal advice *was* that the GLC could win. However QCs Layfield and Brodie in discussion with a lone councillor, Gladys Dimson, advised after a preliminary Court hearing that the GLC 'would almost certainly lose', *must* sell, and *should not even contest the case*.

The first thing one can conclude from this is that lawyers' words are as safe as (council) houses. To first argue the legal toss, it should be noted that the squatters' alternative legal opinion, from the Housing Emergency Office, shows there are ways of contesting the case without the ghost Surcharge popping up. The GLC legal department should be aware that the squatting activists involved in this matter have beaten Labour GLCs before both IN and OUT of Court. Funnily enough the place was Elgin Avenue in 1974 and '75 when the Labour GLC rehoused 200 squatters from the barricades, pulled down the old houses, and started to build the present flats. The point about legal opinion is that if the GLC went about getting it in a different frame of mind it would get different (better) advice.

INJUNCTIONS FOR SOCIALISM

The QCs' Legal Opinion and the campaign now developing have prompted a number of questions among GLC Labour councillors:-

- Since QCs Brodie and Layfield are saying Tory policy of selling off vacant council housing is binding on this Labour GLC even though the construction of the flats was started by Labour for the Waiting List; could they possibly draw up recommendations on how this GLC can make all its policies legally binding on future Tory administrations?
- The Elgin Avenue flats have been kept empty two years awaiting sale. For how long will the Labour GLC carry on spending £2,000 per week (per site) on security while flats stay unsold? Bearing in mind that if the campaign against the Sales and Estate Agents is successful, and the slump in the housing market continues, this may well be years. Is this spending £300,000 in one year for the three sites' security, money well spent?



Children's tea-party at Elgin Avenue

WHAT THE GLC SHOULD DO:

- **Contest the Tory Court challenge to its election mandate**
- **Withdraw the eviction orders against the Elgin Avenue Squat Againts Sales**
- **Halt the squandering of £6,000 per week on security on the three estates where flats are being kept empty awaiting sale.**

THE CAMPAIGN:

Supporters are invited to:

- **Lobby Councillors and pass resolutions supporting the fightback and calling on the GLC to keep its promise to offer rehousing to *all* the homeless squatters in Elgin Avenue.**
- **Join in the three independent action groups resisting sales on the three estates.**
- **Get speakers and petitions from 47 Marble House, Elgin Avenue W9, c/o 701-5691, and join in pickets and actions.**

LABOUR CONFERENCE SELLING OFF

The decision on Sales is all the more worrying because it follows what should have been important positive developments at the Labour Party Conference. A future Labour Government is expected to pay any surcharges made against Councillors for defying Tory policy, and end disqualifications on their eligibility for office. Ken Livingstone himself declared to vigorous applause at the London Labour Briefing fringe meeting that Labour Councils should refuse to carry out Tory policies and 'if that means breaking the law, we shall break the law'. Next day he was back in a meeting of his local Labour Party selling the 'no fight' line.

No war was ever won without a battle being fought. In this case the GLC have backed down without a fight or even an argument, but merely after a chat behind closed doors with Tory lawyers. *There has not even been a threat of the ghost Knight Sir Charge*, and a great opportunity to show the electorate that Labour does at least start to fight for real policies for them, has been lost. Of course the GLC housing leadership have said they will make a 'special effort to sell the flats to people on the waiting list'. It has also recently been announced that Rolls Royce are making a special effort to sell cars to the unemployed.

There is no point in Labour politicians adopting rules which only allow them to fight on condition they lose. They might just as well join the Social Deceit Party.

Piers Corbyn,
Squat Against Sales Campaign;
member of National Housing Liaison Committee Steering Group
and Peckham CLP

Working to Rules

One of the last refuges of de-selected right wing councillors and MPs seems to be an appeal to the National Executive to 'investigate' the Labour Party wards which have de-selected them. We have seen this already in Birmingham, Manchester and Brent. It is important, therefore, that when carrying out short-listing and selection procedure the bodies responsible make sure that they carry out to the letter the proper constitutional procedure.

It should go without saying, that one of the major problems is in fact that the letter of the law is not at all clear and seems in fact subject to the interpretation of full-time officials – an interpretation which in Brent (where we have nearly finished our re-selections for the 1982 Borough Elections) we have at times found to have been not always consistent.

The main parts of the procedure are laid down in the National Agents Memorandum of 1977. However in some areas there is room for discretion by the Local Government Committee (e.g. the quorum necessary for selection meetings).

I think the best way to deal with the question is to go through the procedure necessary for election in chronological order, commenting where I think necessary on problems which we have had in Brent.

THE COMPILATION OF THE PANEL

Any person wishing to be nominated to the panel of candidates may be nominated by any affiliated organisation. This nomination must then also be approved by the GMC. In Brent we also vetted all candidates for the panel. The criterion on which vetting is based is to be decided by the LGC. If candidates are turned down, then they have the right of appeal to the LGC and then finally to the Regional Executive.

One point about vetting is that the criteria should be known to all those doing the vetting and also that they should be applied strictly and consistently.

SHORT-LISTING

Branches are then sent lists of the Panel of Candidates, and must shortlist from this list.

Firstly the branch should decide how many names it would like to have on the shortlist, and then the Chairman may call for nominations. When nominations are completed voting takes place by secret, eliminating ballot.

One tactic the right wing have used is the filibuster, so if you are voting for four people and there are, say, sixteen nominations and you are using a secret eliminating ballot, then obviously it is going to take a lot of time. Also any member of the branch who wishes to be considered for shortlisting must leave the room before the process begins. Anyone arriving after shortlisting begins may take no part in the shortlisting.

SELECTION

Candidates shortlisted must speak to the meeting, and then answer questions for periods of time which are decided by the branch at the beginning of the meeting. Candidates draw lots at the beginning of the meeting to decide the order in which they speak.

When they have all spoken the chairman moves that the meeting proceeds to ballot. If this is passed (and there can be no discussion) then again the branch votes by secret eliminating ballot.

GENERAL

There are a number of things which apply to both shortlisting and selection meetings. Firstly a notice must be delivered to all members at least seven clear days before the meeting. Secondly, membership cards must be checked before any meeting begins. Where there is likely to be a dispute about membership, then the CLP should clear this up before the selection process is started.

The proper procedure for membership is that all members must be approved by firstly the branch and then the GMC, and new members must be nominated by both the branch and the GMC.

Now, the National Agents Memorandum states quite clearly on page six: 'In case of any dispute arising in connection with a selection, the LGC shall have the final decision'.

This in fact is not the case, because the LGC has had decisions overturned by the NEC, although what the procedures are for appeal is unclear.

In Brent, in wards where right wingers were de-selected, there appeared to be a pattern whereby a small number of ward members deluged Regional Office with phone calls and letters – making allegations about irregularities in meetings and specifically the conduct of these meetings by the LGC.

What is needed therefore is a clear direction from the Regional Office about procedures and especially procedures for appeal. The new NEC is likely to be sympathetic to claims made by de-selected right wingers, so it is vital that LGCs must be seen in the selection procedures as upholders of constitutional propriety.

Mark Feeny
Secretary, Brent Local Government Committee

Nuclear Free Zone

by Ron Blanchard

During the summer many Labour councils took the decision to become "Nuclear free zones", including the GLC. This proposal is often easily accepted, but action may well prove challenging and difficult. Yet it is essential that it should not be an empty resolution.

On the 11th of July "Briefings" Conference, several comrades asked for a working party on this issue; but due to lack of time it was decided to hold a discussion during the working party on Planning.

The London area contains no Nuclear Weapon bases, and no Nuclear Power plants; so Councils are not able to undertake the most difficult and important struggle against these most crucial installations. It was decided that the two main areas for local Councils and the GLC were Civil Defence expenditure, and the use of their planning powers (especially the leasing of sites to the Ministry of Defence, the Army etc.). In these matters Councillors are often very ignorant, and the boundaries of local authority power are unknown and untested.

It was suggested that we take steps to ascertain exactly how deeply each council is involved in Civil Defence. Budgets may appear to be only a few hundred pounds per year, but other funds may be available under deceptive headings e.g. – miscellaneous/contingency funds, emergency relief, safety health and protection, etc, etc.

NUCLEAR SHELTER

Most, if not all, London boroughs have at least a form of nuclear shelter, intended as a local administrative centre in the event of nuclear war, incidently providing some degree of protection for those few senior Officers and Councillors selected to hide within. There are other features such as sirens, bunkers and networks of "local worthies" supporting nuclear war preparations (e.g. Haringey radio "hams" who would bring their sets to the Civic Centre during "emergency alerts").

Certain Civil Defence measures may be legally binding on Councils (and this needs investigation). It is clearly the duty of Labour groups to find the sources of funding for Civil Defence and refuse to vote monies for them. Simultaneously they should expose nuclear war preparation, explaining how pathetically inadequate these are for the protection of ordinary people.

As regards M.O.D. installations where we can prevent new buildings by use of planning powers we must do so. Where Councils lease land they should seek to evict these tenants, or to make the rents prohibitive where this is not possible; as in the case of the Royal Observer Corps bunker at Alexandra Palace, leased by Haringey at a "peppercorn" rent.

SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

A point of special importance in London is the transport by rail of Nuclear Spent Fuel and Waste through our city, via local lines; not only a threat to our people in case of accidents, but the artery linking "peaceful" Power Plants with the extraction, at Windscale, of weapon Plutonium/Uranium from the spent fuel. Blocking this artery is a most important task.

Finally, since our discussion a further strategy in pursuance of our aims of Nuclear Free Zones has appeared; Haringey has not only passed a resolution calling for the showing of the "War Game" on B.B.C. television, it has also committed itself to promoting the showing of this film in schools/community centres and in accordance with a further resolution also moved by Councillors Ron Blanchard and Toby Harris,

Continued next page

Token Opposition or Real Resistance?

Nowadays the Labour Party seems to have lost much of its early radical tradition of resistance to Tory government edicts.

The militant direct action and mass political campaigns which once stirred the hearts and minds of working class women and men is no longer the cornerstone of Labour Party activity.

Our local Labour Party was fairly typical of that tradition in the 1920's and '30s.

RADICAL TRADITION

Nineteen Bermondsey Party members were imprisoned and tortured as conscientious objectors during the 1914-18 war.

As Bermondsey's MP, Dr. Alfred Salter was gaoled six times for political offences. For several months at the time of the General Strike, he donated his entire MP's salary to the Welsh miners.

From 1922 onwards, the first Bermondsey Labour Council clashed repeatedly with Tory governments over its right to clear the slums and build a garden city of cottage houses for the working class people.

More confrontation followed the Council's defiant decision to send desperate TB cases to Swiss sanatoriums on the rates and its establishment of a municipal health centre in advance of the NHS.

In 1935, our Labour councillors refused to spend public money on a civic reception to celebrate King George V's Silver Jubilee.

The Bermondsey Party even held secret fund-raising campaigns in defiance of Labour headquarters to aid Republican Spain and the anti-fascist resistance movement in Hitler's Germany. It turned out thousands of dockers to rout Mosley's blackshirts when they attempted to march across Tower Bridge in 1937.

Such militancy is the authentic tradition of the Labour Party – though the right-wing and media strenuously seek to deny it.

But sadly, Labour has long lost this radical and defiant spirit of its early pioneers.

TALKING SHOP

We now seem stuck in the rut of an obsessive legalism and parliamentarianism.

This 'talking-shop' style of committee politics implies that the realisation of socialism can basically be left to a handful of wise and articulate MPs and councillors debating and voting through the committee structures of Parliament and local Councils.

Mistakenly, it is these leaders, rather than the Party's rank and file membership and the working class at large, which are seen as crucial to the success of our struggle. Indeed, leadership often becomes a substitute for the masses. Work in committees frequently overshadows popular struggles. But these are vital, both inside and outside the forums of electoral democracy.

Without such a mass popular base consciously demanding and organising for a thorough-going socialist transformation of our society, the prospects of electing a radical Labour government look bleak indeed. So do the prospects of halting this Tory government's remorseless attacks on working class living standards.

No matter how Left our MP's and councillors may be, the battle for socialism needs a large and active Labour membership committed to mass campaigns of real resistance to Tory rule. Reliance on the present token and ineffectual Parliamentary opposition will advance us nowhere.

Thankfully, there have been some welcome signs of change in the last couple of years. The NEC has taken the initiative in reviving a more campaigning style of mass politics. Its series of demonstrations against unemployment and nuclear weapons have been numerically impressive and of commendable intent. But they have nevertheless been characteristically passive events – the traditional Sunday afternoon stroll from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. They have hardly given expression to people's deep-seated frustration and anger at Thatcher's fuelling of mass unemployment and the nuclear arms race.

DEFIANCE

Surely more imaginative and defiant forms of protest are justified in response to the callous policies of this government? Indeed, perhaps they are even necessary to motivate and inspire a large-scale popular opposition which can seriously challenge the authority and legitimacy of Tory policy.

Such challenges, especially when combined with the industrial might of the trade union movement, are probably the only means by which this government will listen to the voice of the people and be deterred from its monetarist course.

Debates and parliamentary divisions are fruitless cosmetic exercises given the Tories present Commons majority.

And if we recognise this, we are either forced to accept Tory edicts as a fait accompli, or we must look to new more militant forms of extra-parliamentary opposition which involve mass popular participation and challenge the government's right to rule. It is not perfectly legitimate to confront and defy the government when its actions so tangibly threaten the essence of our Welfare State, the living standards and trade union rights of working class people and the equality of women and ethnic minorities? Are not some freedoms so fundamental to the poor and disadvantaged in our society that we actually have an obligation to challenge the governments present attempts to deny these to the people?

Though the Party's marches against unemployment have been very worthwhile, surely the gravity of three million jobless justifies bolder protests?

DIRECT ACTION

Perhaps we should be thinking more in terms of a 'Siege of Parliament' to demand jobs – a march on the House of Commons led by 250 Labour MP's and a thousand Labour mayors and councillors and involving an afternoon's sit-down occupation of the Westminster area.

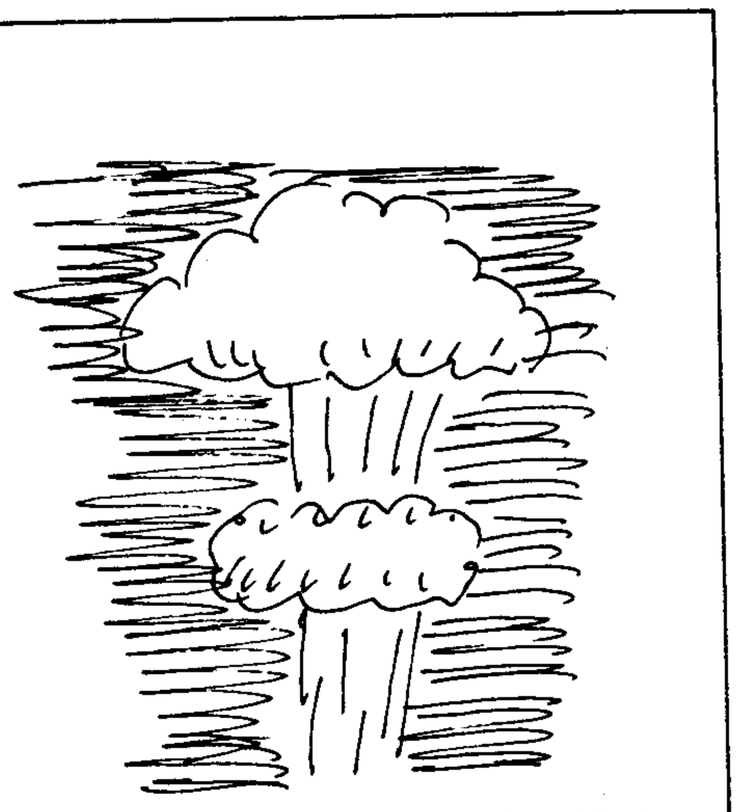
Or possibly the Labour-controlled GLC could sponsor a 'Tent City' of the unemployed and homeless in the grounds of County Hall and within sight of the House of Commons.

During the riots earlier this year, it seems remiss that neither the NEC nor Regional EC held extraordinary meetings in response to the crisis. Shouldn't they have given a lead by calling an emergency mobilisation of the Labour Movement around appropriate demands such as 'Jobs and Better Housing For All, Democratic Control of the Police, and Freedom of Assembly and Demonstration'?

In particular, we ought to be defying the Home Secretary's increasing use of blanket bans on political demonstrations which are by stealth undermining our most basic civil liberties.

We can but try more dramatic and daring forms of protest as an alternative to our present unimaginative passivity. We might even be surprised by the extent to which a more direct challenge to the legitimacy of government policy actually inspires popular support.

Peter Tatchell
Secretary Bermondsey CLP
(personal capacity)



will be showing other films/videos about Nuclear Power and its alternatives, (available from Socialist Environmental Resource Association).

Inventiveness and determination are needed if local authorities are to succeed in the goal of achieving Nuclear Free Zones. Harringey in its preparation for the 1982 Manifesto are including a Working Party on the Environment/Energy/Ecology/Transport.
(Details from Ron Blanchard 800 8183, S. King 444 8911.)

The Mondragon Debate:

SOCIALIST CO-OPS – AND OTHERS

'The enterprise would become a unity; the whole thorny problem of the "relationship" between capital and labour would pass into history. So, I suspect in due course, would the trade unions as we know them today. . . .'

It sounds like Arthur Scargill's favourite nightmare – 'the castration of the trade union movement', as he puts it in IWC pamphlet no. 64 on workers' control. In fact this vision of industrial 'unity' comes from Robert Oakeshott, Liberal proponent of certain forms of workers' co-operatives. In his book *The Case for Workers' Co-operatives* he examines, among others, the Mondragon complex of co-operatives in the Basque region of Spain, and finds much to admire in them.

The reason why I am raising the issue at the present moment is, firstly, because of an article on housing co-ops in the last issue of *Briefing*, and, secondly, because discussions on types of workers' co-operatives and support structures will form part of the wide-ranging ***Briefing* Target '82 Conference on Employment manifesto proposals on Saturday, October 24, at County Hall.**

To tackle the immediate cause of alarm first – Josette Morgan, in her otherwise most interesting article on Housing Co-ops, concluded by referring admiringly to the Mondragon co-ops, which she described as being 'totally accountable to the people'.

The problem about adopting an uncritical attitude to Mondragon is that their particular pattern of development, if instituted on a wide scale here, might well lead to a great flourishing of democratic co-operation – but there would be precious little chance of the achievement of socialism at the end of the road.

STRUGGLE TOWARDS SOCIALISM

This is not to say that *all* types of workers' co-operative should be uniformly rejected. On the contrary, many committed socialists argue that workers' co-ops with the right priorities, structure, and support are one of the essential elements in a combined strategy that we need to adopt in our struggle towards a socialist society.

Let us look, however, at the evidence on 'other' co-ops, including Mondragon, and at the sort of support which they attract. Their advocates are many:

- Kenneth Carlisle, Tory MP for Lincoln, wrote in the *Guardian* in June this year: 'The perfect vehicle for achieving such a revolution (a property-owning democracy) is a vastly expanded profit-sharing system, in which employees share in the profits of their enterprise by the allocation of shares. . . . Such schemes will be especially valuable when profits improve as we leave the recession, and when restraint in wage awards will be as important as ever.'

- Robert Oakeshott, the Liberal co-operator mentioned above: 'By making the workforce the owners of profits as well as of wages, and by assigning to it ultimate responsibility and control, we will induce positive feelings about at least a partial and modified market system among much larger numbers of working people – that at any rate must be the hope.'

- Even *Labour Weekly*, on 2 October, joined in with an article on 'The Co-op Developers', and quoted a national Co-operative Development Agency spokesman as saying: 'Although the co-op is a radical concept, we don't just want radicals doing it. It is really an alternative form of business where a worker can use all his resources as well as take part in decision-making and sharing the profits.'

One of the reasons why Mondragon attracts support from people such as the above is that all its workers are required to have a large financial stake in the enterprise. An individual worker's income consists of salary plus interest on his capital stake, the interest being added to the capital stake. In addition, the share of profits which goes to the individual worker is proportionate to income, and is also paid into the individual capital account.

FINANCIAL STAKE

Supporters of the Mondragon style of co-operation may very well be correct in their view that the fact that workers have a financial stake in the prosperity and growth of the co-op contributes to their motivation and 'loyalty'. But whether all this has much to do with building socialism is quite another matter.

There is no doubt that Mondragon has much to teach us in the way of setting up linking and supporting organisations, and creating, from one small initial co-op, a vast complex of enterprises.

But if we see workers' co-ops as part of a strategy for socialism we need to reject many of the principles underlying Mondragon and similar types of enterprises – and indeed, many people in the Labour and co-operative movements already do so.

As we work on manifestoes for the 1982 London borough electins, and search for means of funding co-ops as part of a socialist employment strategy, we should have a clear view of the kind of workers' co-ops we want to support, and our political reasons for doing so.

The *Briefing* Employment Conference on 24 October will, we hope, provide a useful forum for the exchange of ideas on this and many other employment issues.

Pauline Ashbridge
Hornsey CLP

County Hall News

This month the GLC dramatically reduced fares on London Transport whilst at the same time it is beginning the battle with Heseltine to prevent local government being decimated. In the process of decimation services would be cut, with massive rises in rents and fares.

The Heseltine legislation is explained elsewhere in this issue of London Labour Briefing. However, one suggestion made by Lesley Hammond at a recent Labour Group meeting needs discussion in the Labour Movement: Lesley mooted the idea that we should not instantly dismiss the question of referenda. She said that perhaps Labour Borough Councils, the GLC and ILEA should take the initiative and call a referendum in February. The referendum could provide the focus for the Labour Movement's campaign against the Government. If we call the referendum we can decide the questions.

They could be:

(a) Do you want a cut in services provided by the Council?

(b) Do you believe that a large proportion of the money required for these services should come from Central Government?

The referendum would have to be fought like an election.

HOUSING

Heseltine is not satisfied just to try and massacre the GLC through his legislation on rates but is doing all he can to stop the GLC having a housing role. It is important that the GLC does still maintain a housing role as many Boroughs in London are under Conservative rule and are not building homes that are urgently required. The GLC won the election in May promising to start building homes again in London. If Heseltine gets his way then this will mean the GLC will have hundreds of staff without any work to do. Many of us in the Labour Group will not support a single redundancy being made.

ESTMANCOS

The last Tory GLC managed to bring in policies that are irreversible. They set up Estate Management Companies to sell off houses and flats. The Labour GLC has been told in Court that it must go ahead and sell off these homes. Otherwise the Labour Group will be breaking the law. Eleven Members of the Labour Group (Bryn Davies, Dierdre Wood, Valerie Wise, Lesley Hammond, Andy Hamm, Alex Mackay, Steve Bundred, Tim Banks, John McDonnell, Peter Pan and Charlie Rossi) voted that we should pursue this matter in spite of the consequences. 27 Members felt unable to go along with this.

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Fact & Fiction at County Hall

The Press is still trying to make London RATEPAYERS believe that since 8 May the Red Flag is floating at County Hall, hoisted by Comrade Ken and his acolytes in the Trade Unions.

If only this image which is being desperately projected was some way towards what the situation really is. Since 8 May as far as GLC/ILEA staff are concerned, there has not been the revolution which so many of the long established and loyal servants of the London RATEPAYERS feared. In fact, the Trade Unions have not noticed any change in the practice of the Council from its predecessors.

The Manifesto led us to believe that a Labour GLC would develop a number of policies to put its Socialist principles into practice once Labour is back into County Hall.

It is only 5 months since the new administration has been in County Hall and so far the record is not good and does not lead me to believe that there will be any significant change for our members.

I do not deny that there have been changes: after all who would have envisaged 400 People's Marchers being put up for 3 days in County Hall by Sir Horace? The Trade Unions in County Hall worked together with the Administration to make this an overwhelming success, although the staff was not allowed paid time off to attend the final rally in fear of the 'District Auditor'.

FEAR OF THE DISTRICT AUDITOR

This fear of the District Auditor seems to be the one factor which determines whether manifesto commitments will be implemented or not. Witness for example what happened to the school meal price reductions; 'Members would be discharged if the ILEA went ahead and reduced the price and helped to save some jobs as well. In the GLC the most important issue as far as staff are concerned is the Transfer of the remaining Housing stock to the Boroughs. Of course there was a promise that a Labour GLC would stop this, although some of us in the Trade Unions could have told the Labour Group that this was a non starter. So what now?

The staff still do not know what will happen to them next year; how many will be wanted by the boroughs and how many rejected to be deployed or offered enhanced redundancy terms. NALGO has tried to talk to the Chairs of both Housing and Staff Committees about this and so far the only information has been through the 'Official agreed procedure'. Meanwhile our Shop Stewards are having their salaries stopped when they attend meetings called by the boroughs to discuss Transfer of Estates matters.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Is this how the Industrial Democracy will work at County Hall? Reports going to Committee for approval before the Unions are consulted?

The GLC/ILEA are directly or indirectly responsible for over 100,000 staff. These are potential supporters for Labour, but they are ignored when decisions which affect them directly are taken. What's the point of going to SERTUC to seek approval for a socialist wage? Surely the thing to do is to discuss this and develop a strategy with the Unions directly involved. Maybe the new administration is pinning its hopes on those staff who will be employed only for the life of the administration, judging by the number of staff who will be on short term contracts as is intended by the Industry & Employment Policy Committee.

So far therefore: No change. The politicians at County Hall are ignoring their workforce and yet will need our support when Heseltine's axe falls on the GLC next year. It will be too late then. The consultations with the Unions must start now if there is to be a united front against Heseltine.

Christiane Ohsan
NALGO Branch (GLC)

HOMEWORKING- POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

With 3 million unemployed nationally and unemployment rates in Inner London climbing towards 20%, it would be dangerous if the plight of the thousands of Londoners working in their own homes were to be forgotten. This is not only because homeworkers are amongst the worst paid and most exploited sector of the work-force, but because homeworking is an integral part of many industries – clothing, electrical engineering, etc. – and many of the largest firms, including GEC and C&A, ultimately rely on homeworker assemblers, sewing machinists etc. Moreover, the scope of homeworking is widening, with predictions of VDU's and word processors placed in workers' homes to save on office overheads (several computer programmers already work from home).

Fortunately, the campaign for change has not lost the impetus of the late 70's, which saw the TUC adoption of a progressive policy, the setting up of a government Advisory Committee and the introduction of Frank White's Homeworkers (Protection) Bill, backed by the GMWU, NUTGW and NUHKW.

Despite the Tories scrapping the Advisory Committee and blocking the Bill, the Commons Select Committee on Employment made homeworking the subject of early investigation, with a report and hopefully full debate due in October. Also due is the publication of a Wages Inspectorate report on a blitz on wages originally ordered by John Grant in 1978.

In London, many Trades Council union offices, Law Centres, women's groups and CRC's have been active with the London Homeworking Campaign and the Low Pay Unit in pressing for change. For example, Haringey have recently followed Hackney's example in deciding to appoint a Homeworking Officer, and have also relaxed planning regulations to reduce homeworkers' fear of the authorities. Other Labour Council's have launched initiatives and supported the London Campaign, and the London Borough's Association have now set up a Working Party to draw up a co-ordinated approach to homeworking.

The GLC Manifesto contained several specific proposals and many Borough Labour Parties are already discussing proposals to include in next May's manifestos. Although some of the major problems (e.g. employment status) can only be solved by legislation, there is much that local councils can do, including:

- appointing a full-time officer to help individual homeworkers and liaise with unions, women's and ethnic minority groups;
- imposing 'good employer' clauses on contractors, suppliers and leaseholders to secure fair wages, payment of overheads and access for trade unions;
- encouraging and funding homeworker co-ops;
- adopting Haringey's policy on planning;
- supporting research into the structure and extent of homeworking;
- issuing publicity in the major ethnic minority languages.

Hopefully the LBA Working Party will come to these sort of recommendations, support for which should be included in all manifestos. They would certainly gain enthusiastic support for Labour policies from many of the ethnic minority and women's groups, as well as from homeworkers themselves.

Jeremy Short
Hornsey CLP

LETTERS

Dear Comrades,

You will find enclosed postal orders to the value of £2.50 for one year's issue of *London Labour Briefing*. I am sorry I cannot donate any more money, but I am unemployed at the moment. I would like to firstly congratulate Ken Livingstone and all of the other Labour workers on the GLC for attempting to bring out socialist measures and wish them every success in the face of Heseltine's Tory bureaucracy. I obtained my first copy of *Briefing* at the "Fighting to Win" meeting on September 27th at Party Conference. I thought it was an excellent meeting, apart from the fact that only an hour or so before, the Labour Movement was, as usual, sold out by the so-called left wing MPs and right wing union chiefs. I hope this is just a minor setback on the road to socialism.

I am a member of the Romsey branch of the Eastleigh CLP in true blue conservative Hampshire, and feel it is important for socialists all over the country to support, in whichever way is possible, the fight being carried on at the moment and also in the future to bring about the message of socialism. I would therefore close by congratulating you once again on the ground you have covered and pledging total support to you in the future.

If you think this letter would help the readers of *London Labour Briefing* to know they are not, despite what the Tory media say, standing alone, I would be more than happy for you to print it in whatever form you wish.

Yours fraternally,
M. Moody
Romsey,
Hants.

Dear Editor,

Though there is nothing wrong with going to Belfast just to have a look, like Derek Brough in your last issue (*A Day in Belfast*), there is certainly something ironic about British visitors to Ireland carrying a banner saying "End British rule in Ireland now", when it is clear that only the British themselves can do that. Derek Brough reports the Sinn Fein speaker as saying that the most important thing for people in England to do is to break Labour's bi-partisan policy. At the Brighton Conference this year delegates again voted overwhelmingly against the composite resolution for withdrawal and therefore for keeping bi-partisanship on Ireland with the Tories, while endorsing the timid NEC statement that a Labour Government's ultimate goal will be unification by consent. This was a victory for muddle and wishful thinking, the waters being rendered even murkier by the various speakers – *Militant* representatives and Alex Kitson alike – who seem to believe that it is somehow a function of the British Labour movement to organise workers in Ireland for their own good. Colonialism posing as working class unity is probably worse than colonialism pure and simple, as the record of Labour in office suggests.

The Sinn Fein speaker was quite correct; and no breakthrough can be expected until a Labour Government takes office committed to both political and military withdrawal from the Six Counties. Time for achieving that commitment is running out. Meanwhile, the Labour Committee on Ireland is the Labour Party organisation which is trying to achieve it, and whose "withdrawal" resolution was again voted out this year.

The London area Secretary of the LCI is Bruce Robinson, and Labour Party members interested in joining and working for it should contact him at 4 Burnhill House, Norman Street, London EC1.

Yours,
Pat Wheeler
(Labour Committee on Ireland)

Dear Comrades,

By the time this reaches you, St. Pancras North C.L.P. will be fighting the final stages of a G.L.C. bye-election, called following Anne Sofer's defection to the S.D.P. and the resignation of her seat. The election is on October 29th and the Labour candidate is Mildred Gordon (from Hendon South C.L.P.). It is the first test of the popularity of the Labour G.L.C. and its policies. However the seat cannot be taken for granted for Labour. The supplementary rate increases have just been sent out, and Anne Sofer, who is standing as the S.D.P. candidate, has the advantage of being well known in the area and of having the media on her side.

If you can help with canvassing, or on election day contact John Braggins (agent) at the central committee rooms, 8 Camden Road, NW1 01-267 1676. Committee rooms are open Monday to Friday 6.30pm–9p.m. and Sunday Mornings 10.30am –1pm.

Jane Stockton
St. Pancras North C.L.P.

Dear *Briefing*,

I read the article on the transfer of estates written by Mark Sanders in the October edition of *Briefing*. In that article it was alleged that I was impassively 'presiding over the loss of approximately 750 jobs'. The Leaders of the eight Labour Boroughs that supported Party policy and held out to the very end against the transfer, together with Ken Livingstone and Gladys Dimson, were also implicated in this alleged dastardly plot.

Quite on what basis Mark made the allegations I do not know. I had repeatedly told him that according to our information, whilst it was true that because of organisational differences between the GLC Housing Department and the Boroughs' Housing Departments, surpluses in certain areas were likely to arise, given goodwill, co-operation and some flexibility, we could practically guarantee that no GLC staff would be made compulsorily redundant. That is our determined objective which we are confident we can deliver.

In the event, far from jobs being lost, within the newly-structured Housing Departments in the eight Boroughs, there will be approximately 800 vacancies arising. With those 800 vacancies, and other measures which we and the Boroughs will pursue, we have every reason to believe that everyone in the potential surplus areas will be found a job.

However in the event of these measures still leaving us with a group of staff that the Boroughs feel unable to accept voluntarily, because of skills mis-match, we have made it clear that, under the terms of the statutory Transfer Order, we will be obliged to include the staff in the Transfer Order and thus they will go over to the Boroughs unless the Boroughs make successful appeals against our decisions

We hope and believe that such a situation will never arise. I am sure the difficulties can be ironed out to everyone's satisfaction. It is essential that they are because in the months ahead, with Heseltine's worst attacks now clearly on the horizon, the maximum unity of the London Labour Movement is essential. If the Labour GLC, the Labour Boroughs and the Unions cannot hold a common line and defeat Heseltine's proposals, then the issues arising as a result of transfer will pale into utter insignificance as tens of thousands of local government jobs go under the Tory axe.

John Carr
Chair, Staff Committee

WHAT'S ON

HARROW BOROUGH COUNCIL BY-ELECTIONS 29th OCTOBER 1981

The party faces two difficult by-elections in Labour-held seats in Kenton East and Marlborough wards on 29th October. We are bound to face opposition from Liberal/SDP candidates and it is essential that we hold these seats if we are to win Harrow in 1982.

The candidates and agents are as follows:

Kenton East:
Candidate, Cyril Davies.
Agent, Keith Burchell, 56 Weighton Road, Harrow Weald (863-1844).

Marlborough:
Candidate, Ann Groves.
Agent, June Pegg, 68 Boxtree Lane, Harrow Weald (428-5816).

Please do your best to help us in these by-elections.

GREENWICH LABOUR PARTY

IRELAND – A WAY FORWARD?
Day Conference
Goldsmith's College
Student's Union, New Cross SE14
Saturday 28th November
9.30a.m. to 5.00p.m.
Richard Balfe, MEP Inner London S
Mike Biggs, Former Officer British Army
Carl Gardner, TV Editor, City Limits
Paddy Logue, H Block/Armagh Cttee
Prof. John Murphy, University Coll. Cork
Des O'Hagan, Sinn Fein Workers Party
Clive Soley, MP Hammersmith N

TARGET '82 Meeting:
Tuesday November 3rd, Room 166, County Hall, 7.30 pm.

Items for discussion include:
- Fighting Heseltine
- Parliamentary Reselection
- Reports from Manifesto Work Groups

Next Editorial Board meeting:
Friday October 30, 6.30pm
Room 175, County Hall.
Deadline for articles: November 9th.

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